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JOHN KATCHUR



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Creative Stitchery
by Liz Abbott

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

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

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A Fresh Look at Vintage Art

by Tim Mudd

When you think of “stitchery,” your grandmother probably comes to mind – complete with the bad wallpaper – maybe a craft fair, possibly even the blankie you’ve held on to your whole life for fear your grandmother will return from beyond and curse you with exceptionally poor interior design skills. This is the stereotype that plagues fabric artist, and publisher of the *San Diego Troubadour*, Liz Abbott. “I’m naturally a very artistic person, and I put as much time into my work as a fine artist would, but because I’m working with fabric, people always lump me in with the Julian quilt festival crowd.”



Applying a technique that combines machine embroidery and appliqué, Abbott has developed a unique style all her own that bursts with color and life to render stunning recreations of early orange crate labels, vintage magazine covers, old travel posters, and photos of musicians from the 1920s and 1930s, which she found on jazz and radio his-



Liz Abbott

tory websites. “It all began when I checked out a library book on orange crate art,” says Abbott, who has produced more than 90 of the highly collectible labels in fabric, complemented by hand-made frames painted in bright, vibrant colors.



“After I had spent a few years sewing orange crate labels, I became interested in vintage posters [primarily from the

early twentieth century], old magazines, and other advertising art, which gave me a lot to get going with! My favorite category relates to California history as seen in orange crate labels and railroad posters that were used to draw people to the West Coast,” says Abbott.

“During the past five years or so – probably because of my involvement with the Troubadour, which has broadened by appreciation and knowledge of music – I’ve been using photos of cowboy singers and jazz musicians as my inspiration,” she continues. “The cornier, the better. Boy, people used to take great promo shots back then. Among my favorite pieces that I’ve stitched are the Ink Spots, which sold within a week, and the Girls of the Golden West. I have hundreds of print-outs of photos from the vintage days of music that I hope to get to some day.”

A treat – and a tribute – for those of us who have come to find ourselves in this part of the country lays in wait as Abbott curates and unveils an exclusive exhibition of her unique “creative stitchery” art this month. It’s also a celebration of a milestone birthday she had in late September. The show will be held on Saturday, October 11, 7-10pm, at Tecolote Guitar Works, 1231 Morena Blvd. (between Brick by Brick and O’Connell’s Pub). It should be a fun night. The Zzymzzy Quartet will be playing and refreshments will be served. The show runs through December 31.



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Johnny Walker

by Lou Curtiss

I don't remember when I ran into Johnny Walker, the man, not the Scotch, for the first time but it was probably in the late 1950s at a San Diego Folksong Society meeting. I can't remember in those early days any meeting he wasn't at, leading the singing and doing the paperwork. If he wasn't president or fearless leader, or whatever they called it in those days in name, he surely was in actual fact. I didn't get to know Johnny right away. I was a bit of a musical snob in those days and they were all singing songs

out of *The Song Fest*, a yellow-backed book that seemed to be the Folksong Society's bible. I sort of remember being impressed with Johnny because he would sing songs he'd learned from A.L. Lloyd or Ewan MacColl or even from a guy he knew back in Yorkshire. I was impressed with that. By the early '60s I was in the Folksong Society out at SDSU (Being very proletariat, this organization, which was started by Michael Cooney and revived by Curt Bouterse and myself, called itself "the Campus Organized Folksingers." You almost expected a CIO icon after the name.) and the San Diego Folksong Society included "those straight laced

JOHNNY WALKER

SAN DIEGO'S YORKSHIRE LAD

guys who sang words out of that yellow book," but they were okay because Sam Hinton got them started and Johnny Walker kept them going. The Folksong Society did a small Folk Festival out at what was then Cal Western University (now the site of Point Loma Nazarene) in 1965 and Johnny had a lot to do with putting that together (it featured Bess Hawes, Hedy West, Sam Hinton, Stu Jamieson, and the Kentucky Colonels). I could never understand why Johnny didn't do more performing in those early days. He sure had a lot to share. He knew lots of songs and he knew something about the songs he sang. I guess the first time I saw him on a stage was at the Heritage in Mission Beach and he did his first concert for me on February 2, 1974 at Folk Arts Rare Records. He played and was one of my emcees that same year at the eighth San Diego Folk Festival and at every one from that time until the festivals ran out.

There were three or four people I always went out of my way to impress with my lineups at the folk festivals. Sam Hinton, Curt Bouterse, and Johnny Walker always topped that list (along with my father, my wife, Virginia, and some short termers). With Johnny to lead the way in a ballad workshop, or worksongs, or collecting songs, he'd help to introduce other singers and musicians from the British Isles like Frankie Armstrong, Jon Bartlett, Lou Killen, Stan Hugill, Silly Wizard, Dave Surman, the Boys of the Lough, and others. Being part of both worlds he was very good at pointing

out the connections between British and American folksong. You always left a Johnny Walker performance with a full cup and you knew some things about what you had heard that you might not have known before.

Johnny was always up for telling me when I wasn't doing it right and although I may not have shown it at the time, I always appreciated that he was straight with me. I remember one year we broke one of the evenings of the festival up into a dance room and a singing room. In the dance room we had a lot of different kind of folk dancing and I decided to end the evening with a 1950s-style rock 'n' roll sock hop. I got William Kidd to get some of his rock buddies who could play that stuff and they came and did some Chuck Berry, Elvis, Little Richard, Danny and the Juniors, Bill Haley, and the lot. Well, Johnny didn't like it. "That music's got no place in a folk festival and you're making people take off their shoes so we have to smell their stinkin' feet." I tried to make the argument about "folks sing it, so it must be folk music," but Johnny wasn't having any and in retrospect he was right. I remember one thing he said, which was "that kind of music gets all the work in San Diego. It doesn't need the kind of exposure that these other kinds of music get at this festival." I guess he was right. At least I never tried to do another sock hop at a folk festival.

It wasn't only ballads and folksongs that Johnny came to be known for. His Ramsbottom recitations in the Lancaster dialect that he learned as a boy from the works of Stanley

Holloway and other music hall people like his "Sweeny Todd" song, which I heard him do long before the Broadway play brought new life to the character. Other favorites like Lou Killen's "Cushie Butterfield" and Ewan MacColl's "Rambler from Manchester Way" Johnny brought new life to, as he did to songs like "The Vicar of Bray," Burns' "Lassie w' a Yellow Coatie," and a host of traditional sea songs and chanteys.

As time went by Johnny became known at Christmastime for his seasonal traditional concerts with Sam Hinton. He probably rivals Sam with the astounding number of good traditional folksongs that he has passed along to others at festivals, concerts, and all those Folksong Society meetings. Fortunately, nearly all of the concerts he has done for me have been captured on tape and thus with all my tapes going to the Library of Congress and the UCLA Ethnomusicological Archives (at least digitized copies of them). There'll be a good bit of Johnny's Walker around for folks to learn from for a good piece of time.



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**GARY TILLERY**



Recordially, Lou Curtiss

GOOD MUSIC, HUMAN FOLLY, AND HAVING A GOOD TIME

There are three things that are without a doubt real to me: good music, human folly, and having a good time. That middle one is beyond comprehension, so we have to make do with the other two. At the moment I'm trying to make do without the constant interruptions of the middle philosophy (it is, after all, an election year and some local folks don't have their rear end on too straight either). I'm finishing up the first Go Around grant we got from the Grammy Foundation. With that we digitized the San Diego Folk Festivals from 1967 to 1975 (the first nine festivals) and we also copied a whole bunch of material from Sam Hinton's collection of radio shows, TV shows (audio only), and live concerts he put on (some of it going back to the mid 1950s with people like Jimmie Driftwood, Seamus Ennis, Michael Cooney, Pete Seeger, Thomas Shaw, and, of course, Sam himself. In addition, we included a bunch of live performances at the Sign of the Sun (mostly from 1962 or thereabouts) with Rev. Gary Davis, Hedy West, Bessie Jones, Jean Redpath, Guy Carawan, Jack and Marilyn Powell, the Chambers Brothers, Jean Ritchie, and others (the Sign of the Sun was a bookstore on College Ave. near El

Cajon Blvd., owned by Harold Darling who later owned the Unicorn Theater in La Jolla and the Green Tiger Press as well). The digitized tapes also include concerts I was involved with going back to 1960, including concerts at the Heritage (in Mission Beach) and my own concert series at Folk Arts Rare Records in the early to mid 1970s (featuring artists like Jim Ringer and Mary McCaslin, Ray Bierl, W.B. Reid, Del Rey, Sam Chatmon, Tomcat Courtney, Martin Henry, John Bosley, Tom Waits, and so many others). There are also a bunch of tapes from other festivals such as Sweets Mill (in central California) that include people like Larry Hanks, Kenny Hall, Kathy Larisch & Carol McComb, the Sweets Mill Mountain Boys, and so many more. A bunch of reels from collector Jack Van Olst that include more Kathy and Carol, Wayne Stromberg, Nicolette Axton and Clyde Tyndale, and others. Of course those first nine festivals are the shining spot in this first go around (at least for me, as I put them together) and they include Frankie Armstrong, Harmonica Frank Floyd, Jean Ritchie, Roscoe Holcomb, Model T Slim, Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers, Merle Travis, Robert Pete Williams, Jean Redpath, Cousin Emmy, Cliff Carlisle and Wilbur Ball, Wade Mainer, U Utah Phillips, Sam Chatmon, Norman Kennedy, Sam and Kirk McGee, Tommy

Jarrell, the Desert String Band, Carl Martin-Ted Bogan and Howard Armstrong, John Jackson, Benny Thomasson, Patsy Montana, the Highwoods String Band, Sady Courville and Denis McGee Cajun Band, Lydia Mendoza, Tom Waits, and a whole lot more. All these digital copies will become part of the Lou Curtiss Collection at the Library of Congress and at the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology archives on the West Coast. So this next week or so we are putting in for grant number two to the Grammy people with again the San Diego Folk Heritage people acting as our local sponsoring organization, and UCLA and the Library of Congress as our co-sponsors. Letters of support have come in from longtime friend and supporter Mike Seeger (who also played at a lot of our festivals over the years), Dr. David Evans at the University of Memphis Department of Music (who also played at those early festivals and at Folk Arts a couple of times.

Our goal is to continue to add material from the first 20 Folk Festivals (including such artists as the Balfa Brothers, Lily Mae Ledford, the Boys of the Lough, Stan Hugill, Lou Killen, Rose Maddox, Hank Penny's Radio Cowboys, Johnny Bond, Doye O'Dell, Glenn Ohrlin, Silly Wizard, Jody Guthrie (Arlo's brother), the Beat Farmers, Johnny Walker, Bodie Wagner, Kate Wolf, Hally Wood, Big Jim Griffith, Kirk McGee and Blythe Poteet, Kyle Creed, the Hoosier Hot Shots, Smokey Rogers, Mark Savoy Cajun Band, Bob Stewart, Tom Paley, Artie Traum, the Bluegrass Cardinals, Blind Joe Hill, Robert Lowery, Vern Williams and Ray Parks and the Carroll County Country Boys, Sister Helen Sanders and family, Ruthie Gorton, John Bartlett, Napoleon Strickland and the Como Ms. Fife and Drum Band,

plus more concerts at Folk Arts Rare Records, concerts at Orango's Restaurant we did for a couple of years, more Sweets Mill Festival, digitize material from our Blues Festivals and finally get into material we recorded at the Adams Avenue Roots Festivals and the Adams Avenue Street Fairs we were involved with. I think we've got a fair number of interviews, miscellaneous concerts, audition tapes, TV, and radio shows that probably need to be preserved too. I know we did concerts with Red River Dave and Frankie Armstrong at the Normal Heights United Methodist Church (long before Carey Driscoll) and nice tapes of those have survived. So I'm having a good time (#3) and listening to good music (#1) without a lot of #2 to get in my way.

Along with the digitization process I'm finally getting a hand on material at Folk Arts Rare Records. I've got a major collection of vintage bluegrass on long-play vinyl and a whole bunch of limited edition cassettes that were pressed in lots of 500 or so for sales at Bluegrass Festivals, Brush Arbor meetings, and other places where bluegrass is played (both secular and gospel). I also have a major collection of jazz guitar stuff in (again on vinyl) with a good amount of it going back to the early and mid-1950s. I don't normally brag in this column about things at the shop but some of this stuff is so nice (stuff I don't see in a blue moon) that I just had to mention it.

Watch out for my big "Halloween Spooktacular" on "Jazz Roots" on the Sunday before Halloween (8pm, October 26, KSDS-FM 88.3/Jazz88.org). I'll be playing such favorites as "When the Skeleton in the Closet Rattled his Bones" (Louis Armstrong), "The Ghost of the St. Louis Blues" (Emmett Miller and his Georgia

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

Crackers), "Halloween Spooks" (Lambert, Hendricks and Ross), "The Graveyard Boogie" (Buck Wayne and the Buckshots), "The Boogy Man" (Todd Rollins Orchestra), "Haunted House Blues" (Bessie Smith), "The Ghost of Smokey Joe" (Cab Calloway), "Murders" (George Grossmith: 1915), "The Creature from the Black Lagoon is Your Father" (Lord Melody),"Phantom of the Opry" (Jerry Reed), "Voodoo in Harlem" (from a cartoon), "Mr Ghost Goes to Town" (the Five Jones Boys), "Ghost in the Graveyard" (the Prairie Ramblers), "Ghost Riders in the Sky" (Scatman Crothers), and a whole lot more with the occasional creak and appropriate groan thrown in. This is our twenty-second annual "Spooktacular" on "Jazz Roots" and as I find new stuff and play the best of the old, it just gets better and better.

Boo!

Lots of ego and self this time and every damn bit of it deserved. Back to some San Diego musical history next month.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss



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The Kmak Brothers

San Diego's Rhythm Kings from Hell

by Raul Sandelin

In a city with a lot of heart, a city that has given more than its fair share of talent to the world music industry, the Kmak brothers have been a huge part of the heartbeat of San Diego's music scene. For nearly 40 years, Jef and Joel Kmak have not only played in some of San Diego's best known rock, punk, country, roots, and Americana bands, they have also fostered the personal relationships that have helped an actual scene and sound congeal.

They've been called the rhythm section from hell, one playing bass, one playing drums. But those who have watched this city's music develop from the 1970s into the new millennium might think they are heaven sent.

Often overshadowed by the frontline musicians they've played for, the Kmak brothers have always been local heroes in the west El Cajon neighborhood they grew up in. Their father, the late John Kmak, was a beloved teacher at Emerald Junior High, just two blocks from the Kmak home on Chase Avenue. And, that home itself, with its constant pulse of band rehearsals emanating from the garage, has gained its own mystique as generations of school kids, including this writer, have stopped to read the inscriptions "sympathy for the devil" and "mutt" inscribed in the sidewalk out front.

Jef, the older of the two, began playing guitar and bass in 1966 as did many young kids caught in the tide of the British Invasion. Joel picked up the drums in 1970. "As soon as I started playing drums, we were already forming bands and looking for gigs."

Their first experience on stage came performing as part of the band at Christ the King Church, a famously liberal congregation in Southeast San Diego, which the Kmak family was part of. Around this time, Christ the King made national news when several sailors protesting the Vietnam War went AWOL and sought sanctuary inside the church. As a standoff ensued, the church was surrounded by FBI and SWAT officers.

Once in high school, the brothers, always with an eye on booking shows, began playing Grossmont and El Cajon High School dances. It was at this time that they met a fellow Grossmont student named Dan McLain, who was fronting a band called the Screaming Chickens, which, as later years might justify, dressed like farmers on stage.

By 1972 their musicianship was attracting attention from well established local musicians. Jef was asked to play bass in the glitter, prog-rock band Mutt. "That was a band that almost made it," Jef says. Mutt rose to the top of the San Diego scene, selling out local venues including SDSU's Montezuma Hall. Finally, they headed to L.A. where they were wooed by Polydor, Atlantic, and Elektra. But, sadly the band was never signed and all but broke up by 1976.

Meanwhile, Joel and Dan McLain, after the latter's Screaming Chickens foray, stuck to a more retro formula and formed Queenie, a band dedicated to Stones, Beatles, and Kinks B-sides. With Joel on drums and McLain on upright piano, Queenie continued circuiting high school dances. At this time, McLain also rose up as the impresario of the local garage rock and burgeoning punk scenes. Musicians such as Ron Silva, Scott Harrington, Steve Kelly, and Chris Sullivan came into the fold forming the nucleus of such future bands as the Penetrators, the Crawdaddys, and the Hitmakers. As the 1970s crept forward, the Lion's Club in North Park became the home turf where these bands held court.



Joel Kmak (r) with Dan McLain, the future Country Dick Montana, during the Queenie years in the early 1970s

Once Queenie had run its course, Dan McLain, switching from piano to drums, went on to form the Crawdaddys and the Penetrators. McLain also opened a record store – Monty Rockers – in the San Diego State area. Joel, meanwhile, joined the Hitmakers, asking Jef, who had just left Mutt, to join too. This was 1977 and the Ramones had just turned the local music scene on its head. Glitter was out. Punk was in. The Hitmakers were soon reigning kings of local punk along with the select stable of bands that played the Lion's Club. In 1978, the Hitmakers toured the East Coast including New York's Max's Kansas City and Boston's Rat Cellar. Soon, they headed to London in search of a contract. In England they ran into problems with British immigration over their visa status and, unable to work, were forced to return home. Unfortunately, the band didn't survive the turmoil.

Returning from England, the brothers went their separate ways musically. Joel joined the Crawdaddys in 1979. Newly married, Joel also chose to come home to San Diego to raise his family. Around 1980 Jef formed Johnny Danger and the Little Strangers, the first of many projects over the years in which Jeff would step into the front line as vocalist and principal songwriter.



Mutt in the early 1970s, with El Cajon in the background. (L to R) Jef Kmak, Bob Gartland, Larry Kusnitt (aka Eliot Wilder), Dan Linck, Keith Seagal

In these years the mold was cast: both brothers dedicated themselves to the harder edge of what was now being called New Wave. This harder edge stuck to more '60s sound preferring, for instance, the Vox Continental organ to the cheap synthesizers that would come to define New Wave in the '80s. They also stayed true to earlier influences like electric blues. For some time, McLain had been harboring a Johnny Cash collection, an anomaly in punk circles. The country baritone of Cash, along with other country and country-tinged singers, from Hank Williams Sr. to Gram Parsons, soon began festering in the post-punk circles that would define the San Diego Sound.

Joel continued playing in the tightly knit scene, rotating between the Penetrators, Joyce Rooks, and Blond Bruce. The Sidewinders, Farage Brothers, and DFX2 were also part of this inner circle. Many of these bands were held in orbit by McLain's poker games and Sunday softball games at Grossmont High. Led by the Sidewinders, the scene found a home at Mandolin Wind (later Hamburger Mary's) in Hillcrest where a "Cavalcade of Stars" would function as part open mic and part

jam session, a place for those drawn to the rootsier, bluesier, rockabilly edges of post-punk. Out of this scene, McLain morphed into Country Dick Montana and soon the Beat Farmers were born.

Jef left for the Bay Area in 1982 where he formed Hank's Army, which, like Mutt a decade before, was right on the heels of a major recording contract. After Hank's Army's two-year flirtation with fame, Jef returned to San Diego – the Kmak's garage in El Cajon to be specific – and dedicated himself to producing. With only an 8-track in the now insulated garage, Jef went on to produce a number of local artists including Guy Goode and the Decent Tones, the Seventh, guitar wiz Joseph D'Angelo, the Penetrators, and Joyce Rooks who had been weaving through their circle of musician friends for years.



The Hitmakers at the North Park Lions Club, early 1978. (L to R) Joseph Marc, Jeff Scott, Joel Kmak, Jef Kmak.

In 1989, Jef married and returned to the Bay Area where he played with a number of people including Village on Fire, Judy Baker, and the San Francisco Blues Band featuring two older blues musicians: Willie Pitts and Memphis Dave. In this period, Jef got a taste of the "real thing" as he followed Pitts and Memphis Dave into the all-black blues clubs and house parties in Oakland and the East Bay.

Meanwhile, the San Diego scene that first began at McLain's record store, poker parties, and softball games was attracting national attention. Mojo Nixon had penetrated MTV airwaves and the Beat Farmers were gaining a national cult following; critical praise from the likes of Dwight Yoakam and Kevin Costner; and a degree of mainstream recognition.

For five years, from 1986 through 1991, Joel held down the drum throne for Paul Kamanski in Comanche Moon. Kamanski, best known as the songwriter of Beat Farmer classics "Bigger Stones" and "Hollywood Hills," utilized Comanche Moon to showcase his skills as a front man and his ongoing talents as a songwriter. Comanche Moon soon gained its own local following, opening for Chris Isaak, the Georgia Satellites, Molly Hatchet, and the Beat Farmers while sharing the bill on occasion with Mojo Nixon. At this time, Joel fell heavily into country music and even played for a short while with the Michelle Rose Band.

In 1992 Jef returned to San Diego, and the brothers played for a time with Saint James and the Voodoo Rockers, an outfit led by James Wood, brother of Warren Zevon's former guitarist John Wood.

Then in 1995 the larger-than-life Country Dick Montana died. Joel had already been filling McLain's shoes as far back as the Penetrators. He had also sat in for him on a number of Beat Farmers' shows. So, when Jerry Raney picked up the pieces of the now-dissolved Beat Farmers, it was only natural that he would call Joel to play drums. With original Beat Farmer Buddy Blue back in the fold, the new band Raney-Blue started gigging in 1996 with Jef on bass and Joe Longa on keyboards.

In 1997 the second post-Beat Farmer band Powerthud was formed with a near-identical lineup as Raney-Blue. In this new band, however, Beat Farmer Joey Harris



Jef (L) and Joel (R) today in the the garage that launched a thousand bands. Set lists from many immortal gigs hang on the wall. At their feet is a painting of the Farmers by local artist Barry Woolery.

joined and Buddy Blue stepped away. It was with these two bands that the Beat Farmer legacy continued and grew in new directions. Raney-Blue showcased its two namesakes. And Powerthud featured Joey Harris. All the while, Jef and Joel provided the rhythm section for both bands.

The two bands even united on occasion to play Beat Farmer reunions in 2000 and 2001.

With the departure of Jerry Raney in 2002, Powerthud evolved into the Joey Show in which Harris played ringmaster to a number of guest artists including Gregory Page, José Sinatra, Sara Petite, the Truckee Brothers, Robin Henkel, the Coyote Problem, and the late John Stewart. When not backing up guest artists, the Joey Show became Joey Harris and the Mentals, which to this day includes Jef, Joel, and Mighty Joe Longa.

In 2003, Jerry and Buddy reformed Raney-Blue into the Flying Putos with Rolle Love on bass and Joel still holding down the drums. The Flying Putos finally settled on the simple yet nostalgic name, the Farmers. The Farmers remain together despite the death of Buddy Blue in 2006.

From 1970 to 2008, the Kmak brothers have seen a lot. And what's more, they've seen most of it together. Yet, despite this symbiotic relationship, the brothers are distinct individuals with very different visions. On one hand, Jef is the more introspective. A guitarist and singer in addition to his skills on bass, Jef has written many songs and fronted bands as noted earlier. Jef's tastes, although grounded in rootsy rock, also span everything from Big Band and jazz to acoustic and folk. The Big City Hicks, which includes his wife, is proof of Jef's diversity.

Joel, on the other hand, is forever the hard-hitting rock drummer. Known affectionately as "Bongo" to all, Joel has honed the singular craft of banging out good time rock 'n' roll. Of course, "rock 'n' roll" is a big term, incorporating the American panorama and Joel's own 38 years behind the drum kit. But, when it comes to beating those drums with singular abandon, nobody in town carries the pedigree that Joel does.



Joel and Jef Kmak, still the "rhythm section from hell," with Powerthud in 2002.

Yet, there are distinct threads that continually bring them together. They are both are strong family men. They run a frame company together. And, they still migrate back to the garage on Chase Avenue in El Cajon for weekly band practices.

At the time of this writing, a small French film crew was in town doing a documentary on not just the Beat Farmers but also the entire San Diego Sound that Jef and Joel helped develop. And, for several days, that film crew also migrated back to that house in El Cajon for a place to stay between filming expeditions. In fact, that house has become more than the Kmak family home, it's become a home-away-from-home for the heart and soul of the San Diego Sound.

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by Will Edwards

Every musician starts their career by gluing together bits and pieces of their important musical influences. But, crafting a personal and unique identity remains one of the most common and difficult challenges for every musician. Over the last four years, Curtis Peoples, a singer-songwriter originally from San Diego, has had a broad range of experiences that has resulted in a broad range of perspectives – perspectives on success, friendship, pop-culture, and ... identity. Having shrugged off some of his inhibitions, he's now leveraging a new record deal and a new album to expose his music – and his personality – to a wider audience.

"This is the first record that's come out on a label," says Peoples. The Control Group – part of Warner Music – has committed to getting the album heard and it's up to Peoples to take advantage of the opportunity. Full distribution, publicists, and licensing are just a few of the advantages of his record deal and Peoples is finding the new possibilities refreshing. "It hasn't made me work less. It's just that there are other people [working as well], which is just amazing."

Four years ago, Peoples was playing at Twigg's and met Tyler Hilton – an up-and-coming singer-songwriter from Los Angeles at the time. The two struck a friendship that led to Peoples developing a whole new perspective on music and performance. "I met [Tyler Hilton] playing here at Twigg's. Things were really blowing up for him, because he was owning his opportunities and people respond to that." Peoples saw in Hilton the personification of confidence and a new performance mentality. Coming from a laid back family with a reserved approach to personal interactions, Peoples discovered something important – that he could take the stage and make it his own. "[Tyler] came around and gave me that confidence ... I didn't have to be so timid. That was a big deal."

After touring as a solo singer-songwriter for a couple years and moving to Los Angeles to pursue music, Peoples was introduced to a series of new friends, each of whom would offer a complementary viewpoint on self-realization and (as they do in L.A.) self-promotion. "When I realized I could just be as crazy and as 'me' as I wanted to be and people would get it more and respond to it, that's been the most liberating

Curtis Peoples Makes Coffee Shop Arena Rock



Curtis Peoples

thing in the entire world." This phase of his creative growth gave rise to his own performance style and ultimately his new album. "I coined my style of music 'coffee shop arena rock' and I really feel like that's what it is." Having better targeted his music, he also found that being just as much at ease with an acoustic guitar as he was in front of a band could be an advantage at shows. "I feel like I can diversify," he says, referring to touring solo or with a band. "Doing acoustic was really hard for me for a long time. Touring for four years [solo] made me a better performer."

His new self-titled album draws influences from rock standards and such influences as Tom Petty. His show betrays his singer-songwriter roots and showcases his arena rock ambition. "I'm more comfortable [and] I've figured out what I'm trying to be. For me, that was melding the singer-songwriter thing with my arena rock side."

You can catch Curtis Peoples live at Lestat's (3343 Adams Ave., San Diego) on Thursday, October 23 at 9pm (\$10). You can also learn more about him online at www.curtispeoples.com.

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David Jones' Locker Is Full of Violins

Story and photo by Paul Hormick

Above the Starbucks in Kensington, on the second floor, sits David Jones' violin shop. A large loft with windows that take up the entire south side, light fills the workspace, cathedral-like, and seems to push the walls back and make the room seem even larger. The sunshine accentuates the warm colors of the violins and violas that hang on the walls. A few cellos are on the floor, and a pair of string basses lay on a shelf. Like a couple of beach balls making an appearance at an NBA game, two guitars – one of them an electric! – incongruously hang on either side of the large windows.

Jones stands just inside the doorway. A soft-spoken man, his handshake lets you know that his livelihood requires a lot of manual work and elbow grease. A full head of hair lies atop a face that looks like it should be carved into Mount Rushmore or at least engraved on the face of some denomination of U.S. currency. The gravitas of his appearance, however, belies a quiet sense of humor.

Jones' life is one of fine wood, pieces of maple and ebony, as well as varnish and glue. His work is also filled with history, art, some science, and, of course, music. He has spent his entire adult life as a luthier, making, repairing, and restoring violins, as well as the other members of the string family.

Sitting on a sofa in the center of the shop, Jones picks up the back of a disassembled violin from a coffee table

and points out how the wood had become misshapen. There are ripples and bumps at the bottom. He explains that fixing these problems is not quickly solved. "What we do is take the back and place it into a plaster of Paris mold. I then carve the mold to the shape that the back should have," Jones says. He then places the back of the violin in the reshaped mold and weighs it down with sand that has been heated in an oven. Over days, possibly weeks, the wood reforms to its original shape.

Picking up some other parts of the instrument, Jones demonstrates that taking apart a violin is in many ways more difficult than putting one together, and care must be taken to avoid turning a finely crafted piece of art into fiddlesticks. He is about to remove the top of the soundbox away from the ribs and aims a knife to the curve where they meet. "I first look for an opening, a good starting point," he says. He taps the box of the violin, listening for a rattle or telltale sound that indicates an opening in the gluing. "You don't want to start over here," he says, indicating with his knife the sides along the ribs. "It's easy to break the wood along the grain." He slips the knife between the violin's top and body and begins to pry them apart. "This is very important. To hold the wood as you go along. If something goes wrong, you'll feel it before you see it or hear it."

"This work for me started out back in the seventies. I'm a guitarist, and I'd work on guitars. I learned how to fix

them up," Jones says. After he learned a good deal on his own, he then moved on to violin making and repair, spending two years in Boulder, Colorado, studying with David Goodrich as an apprentice. After Boulder he moved to San Diego, where has had a number of shops in the intervening years.

Jones and his wife, Suzanne, moved to the shop's current location in 2004. It is, coincidentally, next door to where Jones had his first shop in the late seventies. In the nineties Jones built a stone house in the mountains outside Julian and moved his shop nearby. Unfortunately, the Cedar fire of 2003 destroyed both the house and shop. With the help of the Mennonite Disaster Service, a network of religious volunteers that help those in dire straights, the Joneses were able to rebuild their house in the hills, but they decided to move the violin shop back to San Diego.

Despite the fire, the Joneses were able to hold onto their vineyard. It's smiles all around when they speak about the grapes and their winemaking, an enthusiasm they have both shared for years. Don't expect to see any bottles lined up next to the violins for sale. The harvest winds up as gifts to family and friends, as well as being served on the Joneses' dinner table.

The heart of Jones' shop lies just to the left of the entrance to the shop. This small room is lined with workbenches and hand tools of all sorts; chisels, awls, and files hang neatly along the wall. The most common repair Jones performs is bridge adjustment and replacement. "A properly fitted bridge has a life span of about 20 years," he explains. The first step he takes to fitting a bridge is adjusting the feet to fit firmly on the top of the violin. Jones demonstrates at his worktable, showing how the feet stand on top of the violin. Jones uses no measurements or calibrating instruments, he just goes on feel, eyeballing his work. Using a pencil, he draws a few lines, tracing out the arch of the finger-



David and Suzanne Jones in their violin loft

board so that the arch of the bridge corresponds to that of the fingerboard.

"When I'm fitting a bridge I try to fit it to the way a violinist plays," says Jones. "For a fiddler who always plays in the first position, I'll make a flatter curve, so he can bow the double stops. I'll set the bridge lower for beginners, so their fingers don't get hurt. But I'll set it higher for more advanced players. For people who play in the higher positions, if you flatten out the curve of the bridge they'll get interference from the other strings when they play up in the higher positions."

He carves out the spaces above the feet, the spaces called the kidneys. He leaves untouched the heart-shaped hole in the middle of the bridge. "I've learned to leave the heart alone," he says, as he holds up and examines his handiwork in the light. Sometimes Jones winds up fixing the botched jobs of other people's repairs. Often amateurs try to fix cracks in their instruments with superglue, which adheres the wood too strongly. Amateurs also often fail to line up the wood correctly, leaving gaps and an instrument that does not meet its potential for making music.

Across one wall of Jones' loft shop hang enough violins for a small string section, some of them dating back to the late 1700s or early 1800s. This is Jones' stock in trade, finding quality instruments for the musicians who can bring great music out of his finds. A good number of the violins that he runs across are not in the best of shape. These get the repair and restora-

tion treatment before he puts them on the market.

Jones selects an instrument, holding the scroll between thumb and forefinger. "The scroll tells a lot about the instrument – where it came from and the violinmaker whose handiwork it is," he says. "See, this is an Italian violin. The scroll is round and it flares out." Jones then picks up a violin that was made in Germany and points out its flatter and narrower form. He glances back and forth between the instruments. After a long pause he says, "You can get lost in a scroll."

Jones has been in business so long that most of the violins, cellos, and violas he acquires are from musicians he has known for years. Somehow or other a musician winds up with an instrument that he wants to sell; so he contacts Jones to see whether he's interested in purchasing it. Jones also buys instruments at auctions. "I review the instruments to figure out how much I want to pay for them. During the auction I keep my hand up until the price goes past what I want to pay for it."


Jones doesn't play violin or any of the other instruments that he deals. So when he's purchasing an instrument, how does he know that it's any good? After decades of examining scrollwork and the carving of F holes, Jones can tell the quality of a violin by the look and feel of the instrument. His instincts are so good that he can ascertain that a viola or cello is one of quality, even when the instrument itself is not in the best of shape. Despite these well-honed talents, having some additional literature on the subject is helpful. A file cabinet to one side of the shop overflows with names and charts and prices for every notable violinmaker in Europe and the Americas. Jones consults these documents the same way a stockbroker consults Dow Jones or a farmer his almanac.

Although he doesn't play any of the violins, he is still a musician. Remember the guitars hanging on the wall? Those are the instruments that he plays. Jones strums and plucks while Suzanne sings old-time jazz standards. They also perform with a Renaissance trio based in Julian. The couple founded the annual Julian Blues Festival. And David performs big band era jazz with the San Diego Legacy Big Band.

It's still sunny, but the leaves on the trees now cast their dappled shadows into the loft. Back at the file cabinet David and Suzanne pour over the literature of the violinmakers. Dates, names, and prices fill the pages, and all is quiet. Like the maple and ebony, and like the scrolls of the instruments, this is yet another aspect of Jones' work that a person can get lost in.

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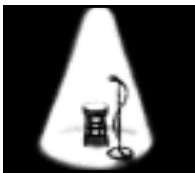
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by Sven-Erik Seaholm
photos by Gail Donnelly-Seaholm

Standing outside Croce's Top Hat Bar & Grill in San Diego's historic Gaslamp Quarter during a particularly hot, humid summer night in 1991, one could take in a multitude of sounds swirling around Fifth Avenue like some sort of gritty, urban fever dream. Saxophones reaching as far outside the key as the player's muse will carry them. Loose-tied men in business suits hailing cabs as their comely dates catch their heels and swear at the grates that dot the sidewalks. Pedestrians, cars, buses and bicycles vie loudly at the change of every light.

Somehow, through all of this symphony of chaos, I heard the voice of a young woman call to me. She had the posture of a much cooler climate.

"Hey you like acoustic music?"

"Do I like what?" I ask, immediately realizing that having a conversation downtown at night with a stranger regarding "what I like" may not be the best course for one follow.

"Songwriters. You like singer/songwriters?"

"Well, actually, I do!" I replied, with a sardonic mixture of pride and curiosity born from the knowledge that there were at that time about two and a half places that anyone with an acoustic guitar could even *walk* near, much less play inside of.

She pointed into a wide, subtly foreboding doorway. "Go upstairs. Trust me. You'll like it."



The *Insomniac*, as it was called, was three tastefully adorned brick walls with a fourth that was basically just windows that faced out onto Fifth, all of them opened and allowing pretty much the same aural experience I had downstairs.

But then I heard a new sound join the mix. Somebody was playing guitar with equal measures of grace, complexity, and fearless confidence. I spun around and took in the outline of John Katchur.

He seemed a bit frail and thin, his now trademark lengthy hair making him actually appear to be lifting upward, like some sort of harp strumming angel.... Seriously, he was even back-lit.

He approached the microphone and revealed an unbelievably effortless, sonorous, aching voice.

"You will never make it home from

JOHN KATCHUR

Mercy Road..." he intoned with restrained tension and pathos, as if something even darker and more powerful lurked just below the surface. His large, but delicate-looking hands playing the guitar like it was a magic trick, wrists and fingers bending and swaying like reeds in a stream, while melodies twisted through hard sixth string thumps and plucked harmonic octaves.

Just as one song was ending and the next beginning, his newly acquired acoustic amp gave him some unexpected trouble in the form of some high-pitched feedback. Pfffffferrrrrrr!!

"I'm just gonna take a second to address some technical difficulties, so ummm...yeah," says Katchur in a way that brings to mind a kinder, gentler Woody Allen, spins 180 degrees, and makes his way to the amp, which is beginning to really howl by this point.

As he turns the volume down on the amp, I make my way over to the side of the stage.

"Hey, man, do you need any help with the sound or anything?" I ask.

"No, but thanks. I just got this thing and I'm still getting used to it."

He stands, turns and puts his guitar back on, "Alright then...where were we?" The room erupts again and John starts into the next song, as if to surf in on that wave of laughter.

The next 45 minutes or so revealed John Katchur to be a simultaneously sincere, funny, creative, and engaging performer, and all of these traits are still in abundant evidence throughout all of his performances and recordings.

A week or two after my brief encounter with Mr. Katchur, I met him again outside of a Bruce Cockburn concert and asked if he'd like to play at the Village Emporium in La Mesa with myself and Carlos Olmeda. He said, "Yes. Sure." And so our friendship began.

From there, John soon showed himself to be not only a very entertaining performer but also an excellent organizer and promoter of music events. Before too long, names people had never heard before became part of an exponentially growing list of performers at Java Joe's in Poway, where John had established a weekly residency. Many of those names you still see: Dave Howard, Steve Poltz, Gregory Page, Joel Rafael, Peggy Watson, Dan Connor, Jim Earp, the Swamp Poets, Mary Dolan, Joy Eden Harrison, Jeff Berkley, Calman Hart, Lisa Sanders, Frank Lee Drennen, John Bishop, Joe Rathburn, Carlos, myself, and a blonde Alaskan girl named Jewel who worked behind the counter. More on her later...

Now I'm not saying John did it all himself, but he was sitting smack dab in the



LIVING THE LIFE AU

middle of it anytime I looked – introducing people and accommodating everyone as if they were guests in his home. Getting everyone onto the stage and lighting the way with his increasingly polished stage patter and its deadpan delivery (an effort necessitated by the frequent tuning breaks required to navigate among his myriad altered tunings), all in the service of an amazing set of music that featured, hands down, some of the greatest songs I had ever heard, including David Wilcox's "Leave It Like It Is" and "Chet Baker's Unsung Swan Song."

Katchur opened concerts for Wilcox several times subsequently, and one time I actually witnessed Wilcox say some of the nicest things to John with regard to his writing and performing, even taking time to give a few words of advice as to how to live life as a musical artist. As it turns out, John has gained a pretty good handle on that as well.

"Whatever you do, if you do it in an authentic way, where the work is what's important to you...you can make some kind of living from that. You'll figure it out. Then you'll have not just artistic freedom, but financial freedom."

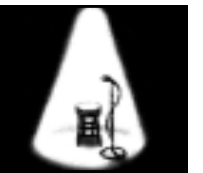
So it has been for John for some time now. In addition to his often stunning performances, he also gives guitar lessons, produces and records albums for other artists and for a time, was teaching music and introducing recording to children at a private school. He's traveled a bit as well, much of it with his wife, Margaret, who teaches piano and is also an accomplished puppeteer. The two even relocated to New Zealand for a time before eventually returning to the states to start a family. Their daughter Leah is four and a half now.

John's path to a life in music started at almost as early an age.

"I asked for a guitar when I was five, but being the youngest of six, I didn't get one and start playing it until I was 14. I was always musical though, and I'd pick little melodies out on the piano and stuff.

"I wrote my first song when I was 16 or so. It was written for a psychology class project. It was about domestic abuse. It was called 'Make You Stay,' as in *I'm gonna make you stay in this relationship*. It was about 10 minutes long, with a big heavy metal solo during the 'beating' part and everything."

This illustrates the disparity between



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John's easy going demeanor and his penchant for addressing the darker issues that many songwriters might flinch away from. The previously mentioned "Mercy Road" was the title song from his first CD and dealt with the highly publicized murder of Cara Knott by a highway patrol officer near Katchur's home. In addition to a hauntingly beautiful melody and gorgeous lyrical imagery, the song's timeliness and its performances' proximity to the actual event resonated strongly within the community. Despite the impact of the song, Katchur seems almost casual in assessing his role as its composer.

"I went to school with girls who were also pulled over by that guy. It just seemed like an obvious thing to write about."

The roots of Katchur's innate ability to integrate these types of weightier issues with such starkly poetic imagery might well be found within what might seem an unlikely source, at least for an acoustic guitar-wielding singer/songwriter.

"I basically learned guitar listening to Black Sabbath. I was immediately attracted to the more song-oriented music from these really heavy rock bands. Like Led Zeppelin

III...I was waaay into that."

I can personally attest to John's love for playing electric guitar. One day while driving together to a gig several years ago, he pulled a weathered looking cassette tape out of his pocket.

"Wanna hear something cool?" he asked, with a particularly mischievous smile.

"Sure!" I replied as he pressed the 'play' button.

What followed was a mind blowing assault on the senses. The instrumental piece featured meticulous Dio-esque classical runs, whammy-bar dive bombs and a ridiculously well arranged army of distorted electric guitars, all of which were rendered at the breakneck speed of a runaway locomotive.

"That," said Katchur, grinning from ear to ear as he ejected the tape at the song's conclusion, "is something I really love doing."

Of course, reconciling a songwriter's sensibility with his inner rock god guitarist can be a somewhat tricky proposition, and it appears that over time he has finally come to terms with these apparent contradictions.

Katchur's latest CD, *Beauty and the Terrible Things* will celebrate its release on Friday, October 3 at the Handlery Hotel in Mission Valley, and Katchur's professed penchant for the electric guitar will be found in greater evidence than on previous recordings. Also appearing with greater frequency are drums, organ, electric piano, and ambient textures that carry elements through the lush soundscapes like magic flying carpets. The dark hip-hop/jazz fusion instrumental "Warcraft" showcases these fresh ingredients nicely.

Longtime fans will still be rewarded with several of his longtime hallmarks: beautifully intricate acoustic guitars, the airy high end sheen and hi-fi recording and, of course, John's voice, uniquely his own yet



"I don't care about fitting into one thing anymore. I want to make the music that I like to hear and play, and with this [new] album I feel like I've totally done that. That is the most accurate illustration of where I'm at now."

— John Katchur

That he shows such a keen perspective on his past work is no accident, as it would appear that Katchur has made a concerted effort to make the music he most wants to this time around.

"I was always trying to fit in with the House Concert scene or whatever...the singer/songwriter acoustic thing...I moved from genre to genre to find one that I could truly claim, where I could find a home. But the truth is I ended up taking little bits from each one, and I'm just going with that now. I realized I just don't care. I don't care about fitting into one thing anymore. I want to make the music that I like to hear and play, and with this album I feel like I've totally done that. *That* is the most accurate illustration of where I'm at *now*."

John Katchur does seem to carry himself with a much more contented manner. When asked about that, he seems eager to explain. "My life seems more seamless now.", says John. "I have so many things that I am interested in, and I become so obsessive about every hobby that I pick up, that in the past...it made it difficult to be successful at any one of them."

My mind wanders down memory lane again, recalling John's almost unnatural pre-occupations with things like fishing (and in particular, the Pocket Fisherman infomercials that prompted his purchase of one), professional poker, teaching, and altered tunings.

"Now, after a lot of years gone by, it all just feels like one activity. I try to approach everything I do in an artful way. From that perspective, the harvest that you reap all seems like the same paycheck. When I was younger, there was a lot more angst because I felt so scattered."

His past examined and the present revealed, our conversation turns toward the future, and his plans for it.

"Musically, I'd like to do an instrumental album of like, acoustic guitar. I've got that sort of mapped out – songs in my head that I want to record. I'm really just trying

universal in its timbre and delivery.

"*Cumulus clouds in the sunset / bloom like flowers of flame / The black palms bow to the savior breeze / but I get to feel its kiss,*" he sings at the album's opening, the poetry unfurling as effortlessly as morning breakfast conversation.

"Most of the songs on *Mercy Road* were 'message' songs with short, concise stories," explains John. "You knew what the point of

the song was, with little 'morals' or whatever. Whereas when I did the next record, *Friend of the Moon*, it was much more poetic...I didn't know what I was saying and I actually like that approach better."



to put one foot in front of the other and keep going."

"I've been thinking a lot about touring, about playing more shows in general. Really, since Leah was born I haven't been interested in playing out much these last few years."

That John has chosen to stay closer to home and family should come as little surprise to those of us who know him. His parents, Jack and Wanda, were always front row fixtures at his shows, fervent supporters of not only their son's music but also the scene in general until their move out of state. They've since recently relocated back to the San Diego area, and they still stand as a shining example of how much power familial encouragement can hold for fledgling artists.

You can see that love paid forward in listening to John describe showing his daughter how to eat ice cream with a French fry.

"She said, 'You do what? Nooooo.' like it was the most bizarre thing she'd ever heard of," he says with a laugh that could only emanate from the proudest of parents. He falls silent for a moment and then says quietly, "She's so awesome."

Obviously a family trait, that awesomeness.



The Katchur Family



Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden

WOMEN IN BLUEGRASS: OUT OF THE KITCHEN AND ONTO THE STAGE

In this day and age we may take for granted that there are women in bluegrass, but sadly, it wasn't always so. Bluegrass bands, by and large, reflect the times in which they were playing. In the 1940s and '50s and into the '60s women were pretty far in the back seat in bluegrass. Most of the top bands, and most of the regional and local bands, were all male.

There were some notable exceptions, however. In particular was the inclusion of Wilene "Sally Ann" Forrester in the gold standard band Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys back in the 1940s. Additionally, Sally Ann played the accordion in that seminal band, attesting to Bill Monroe's willingness to be innovative on many fronts.

Other notable exceptions include Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard who attained prominence in the early years of bluegrass. But, if you attended your typical bluegrass dance or concert in the 1940s, '50s, and into the '60s, chances are you would not see a woman in the band. And, even until recently, the women who were in bluegrass have been overwhelmingly bass players and singers, with the stand-out instrumentalists and soloists on guitar, mandolin, dobro and banjo being few and far between.

It is only in the last two or three decades that women have begun to be regulars in bluegrass bands and to perform on other than bass and vocals. Laurie Lewis has been a leader since the 1970s, not only as a great vocalist and songwriter but also as an outstanding award-winning fiddle player. Likewise, Kathy Kallick has been on the scene for about the same amount of time, playing very competent guitar and doing great vocals. And, of course Rhonda Vincent of Rhonda Vincent and the Rage is and has been a top performer with great chops on mandolin and fiddle for many years. Likewise, Missy Raines has earned herself a well-deserved slot as the top bass player in bluegrass. Sally Van Meter has also been a sought after dobro player for several decades, making a name for herself based on technical skills.

The newer generation of women includes such true stars as Alison Krauss of Alison Krauss and Union Station, who is not only a top vocalist but also a fiddle player with great chops, and Sara Watkins of Nickel Creek who also sings and plays a hot fiddle. In addition, Alison

Brown has won an IBMA award for banjo player of the year, showcasing her great banjo skills. There are even some hot female lead guitar players on the bluegrass scene now, such as Nina Gerber (if you haven't heard her pick the heck out of a guitar, you need to!), Rebecca Frazier of Hit and Run Bluegrass, and Megan McCormick, recently departed from the Missy Raines and the New Hip band.

All well and good, but the number of women who have won the coveted IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) award for instrumentalist of the year is limited to just two: Alison Brown (banjo, 1991) and Missy Raines (bass, 1998-2001; 2004-06) We still have

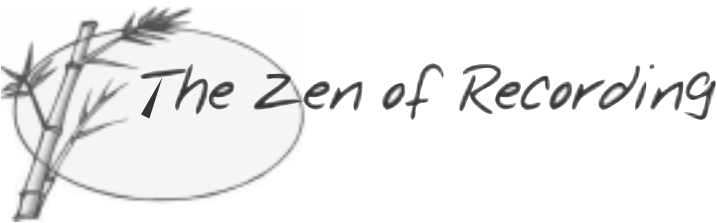
yet to see our first female guitar, dobro, or mandolin player of the year. The good news is that these remaining barriers are likely to fall soon, with the likes of 16-year-old Sierra Hull ripping up the mandolin, and the hot guitar players mentioned above. I am told

there is also a crop of teen female dobro players beginning to make their mark. Certainly, these young women have the talent to be tops on their instruments and to take the top awards, and the remaining barrier may be as much about the willingness of the IBMA members to vote for a woman and about how strong the male talent is on these high profile instruments as it is about the talent of the women themselves.

Here on the local San Diego scene we are pretty much reflective of the larger bluegrass world. We have women in bluegrass bands, but the ones who stand out are predominantly not youngsters and are bass players (Yvonne Tatar of Virtual Strangers, Becky Green of 117 West and Scott Gates Band, Mary Birkett of Shirthouse Band, and Lou Ann Preston from the Soledad Mountain Band). We also have our share of top female singers, such as Regina Bagley (Grateful Hooligans) and Ramona Ault (Second Delivery). And, Janet Beezley, although from Orange County, has strong San Diego ties and is a top banjo player with Chris Stuart and Backcountry. Another transplanted local of note is Marianne Wurr who plays a hot lead guitar and fiddle and who has come to San Diego from Switzerland (Grateful Hooligans). In the younger generation we have some talented local young women such as Bonny Jean of the Scott Gates Band (guitar), and Beth Mosko of Second Delivery and Last Transit (fiddle).

It is likely that the teenagers growing up on bluegrass now will take for granted that girls and women can play any position in a bluegrass band and that the sky is the limit for them. This is how it should be, but as students of history we must acknowledge that this is not how it has always been. And, we should give our thanks to some of the women on the national scene and to those on the local scene mentioned above who have contributed to opening bluegrass to women participants. We are all the better for it!

Keep pickin'!



TOUGH LOVE FOR SONGWRITERS

Competition can be a very good thing. I often cite Tiger Woods in this column, not because I'm the biggest fan of golf in the world (I can fall asleep watching the U.S. Open with the best of them), but because he seems to embody the finest aspects of competing: sportsmanship, excellence, and the knowledge that regardless of any other competitors, it is *yourself* that you most need to best.

Recent weeks have seen San Diego's music scene weathering a somewhat contentious, stormy season of events, like *Rock Star: San Diego*, *The San Diego Music Awards* and a recent songwriting contest for which I was one of the judges.

In the days that followed these events (and really, immediately after the winners had been announced), hurt feelings wafted through the air like the sulfur smell of rotten eggs. Somehow, the judges had gotten it wrong.

At the San Diego Music Awards for instance, I recognized an artist I don't know well but have seen perform several times and own CDs of. I rushed over to her and gushed, "I'm so glad to see that you were nominated. I really love your music!"

Her response was not what I expected.

"You'd think I would've won, wouldn't you? I mean, everybody f*cking knows that my album was the best f*cking album in that f*cking category. I JUST CAN'T F*cking BELIEVE IT!"

I couldn't believe it either. I was speechless and mortified. It was like being shown the most amazing luxury automobile of your dreams and discovering a turd on the driver's seat. She totally ruined it for me. How will I ever hear her music and not remember the jarring ugliness of her tirade of disappointment?

Similarly, I heard rumblings and cries of "foul" after the event I participated in, and even received one particularly venomous email, which, contrary to its obvious intentions, evoked only pity from me.

Not that I don't feel the pain of those artists. I've lost more contests and awards than I will ever be in contention for, though I am proud to say I've won a couple. In a few past losses, I have also shown my disappointment publicly and regretted it's nasty stain – like a faded tattoo still bearing the name of an ex-lover.

Friends who have played poker, bacci ball, *Pictionary*, *Risk*, and even the card game *Uno* with me will attest to my competitive nature. It's not that I have to *win* at any cost, it's more about *honor*. Honoring the sport, the effort, and achievement. Honoring the time we're spending together right now. I want my opponent and myself to feel like we've won or lost either despite or because of the effort made. If it were only winning that mattered, I would have probably given up on all of these pursuits long ago. You could add music to that list as well

The bottom line here is that while

awards are great things to mention in bios and bylines, for a songwriter there should be no greater reward than that found in the eyes of someone who has been truly moved by one's words and music.

I love songs. Regardless of the way songwriters are perceived by the world at large (and I'm honestly still not sure), the marriage of word and melody dates back to an era not long after the very beginnings of mankind's existence. For nearly as long as there have been humans with words to speak, someone has sung them.

Think about it. Think of a culture that doesn't at some point lift its voice in song. The harvest is bountiful – let us sing. A loved one has passed – let us sing. We are oppressed and forced into a harsh life of slavery and cruelty – let us sing. Today is your birthday – let us sing. Regardless of context, the heart, to paraphrase Neil Young, seeks expression.

The craft of songwriting has an incredibly long and proud history. The earliest recorded days of Northern Europe speak to the news of the land being delivered to its people via troubadours who sang of the latest events.

In 1970, stunned by the shootings of Kent State University students by National Guardsmen, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young recorded and released "Ohio" just days after the event occurred, galvanizing an entire generation by embodying its rage and helplessness in a simple song with four chords, two verses, and a bridge.

So yes, songs are important and not just to me.

This is why I was more than happy to be a panelist in the songwriting event. After all, it was songs that got me into this mess in the first place.

As amazing as many of the performances were that night, a great many of the songs fell short of being *good*, much less *great*. Many had too many verses, as if there were more to say than there was room for.

Melodies were in particularly short



Sven-Erik Seaholm

supply.

Fair enough, we can surely credit excessive exposure to hip-hop's monotone and the over-modulating divas that crowd the pop, country, and R&B charts for their role in diminishing melody's rightful place within our culture's musical pantheon.

Overall, less original musicality and wordplay were in evidence than I personally expected. Many of the performers were such amazing vocalists that they could have sung the proverbial phonebook to rapturous applause. I couldn't escape the feeling that some just weren't *challenging* themselves and, consequently, *us* enough.

Now, I'm not trying to get all Simon Cowell on anyone here, and I'm sure I've opened my entire song catalog up to critique and ridicule at the very least, but I've also thrown away more songs than I'll ever keep. I am competing not only with myself, but with every great song I've ever heard, every time I sit down to write one. I definitely fail more than I ever succeed, but it is the trying, the playing of the game, if you will, that is most important.

Songwriters of San Diego, I beseech you to join me – if you already haven't – in this effort. To make this world a better place by what we put into it. By what of ourselves we can invest into our art. By pushing ourselves that much harder to do something *that much better*.

I believe in you.

Sven-Erik Seaholm has written hundreds of songs and recorded thousands of them. He will leave this world with one in his heart, and he will hopefully be happy with the lyrics in second verse.

Phil Harmonic Sez



"Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things."

— George Carlin



Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

SOUL MAINTENANCE

I can only wonder if, while he was still alive, in some compartment of his very great heart, Chuck Valverde felt the tonnage of admiration, affection, and love he inspired among those who knew him. A few (like D.G. Wills and Bill Burgett) spoke about Chuck at his recent memorial service and briefly made all those feelings easier to define and share. Chuck should have heard such testimonials from us every time we'd meet.

Mightily deserving of the many printed accolades in recent weeks, Chuck is now most certainly curating the Library of Heaven. He's too modest a soul to require true justice regarding his newest enterprise, but if we send enough prayers up his way, by the time we're fortunate enough to see him again, maybe *Wahrenbrock's* will have been appended to the institution's name. Wahrenbrock's Library of Heaven. Sounds fitting.

He left us a bit of heaven, of course, as Wahrenbrock's Book House still survives downtown on Broadway. If long time manager Jan Tonnesen is allowed to keep the Gift of Chuck going and growing, no one could be happier than I. He's a superb scholar (and musician!) and bears such a resemblance to my lamented partner Troy Dante, that it haunts me.

I never regretted a single purchase I made at Wahrenbrock's over the last 37 years, and have never gotten rid of a single item I obtained there. Or a married one. (Sometimes they rid themselves of me, but that's another story.)

Eighteen years ago when Chuck Valverde found me a copy of Walt Disney's *Zorro* (252 pages, Whitman, 1958), I cried. He charged me a buck and it's worth a fortune. When I left him after our last encounter a year ago, I was in tears again.

*Out of the night, when the full moon is bright
Comes a horseman known as Zorro
This bold renegade carves a Z with his blade
A "Z" that stands for Zorro*
— Norman Foster and George Bruns

Remember that song? Fifty-one years ago this October 10, I heard it for the second time (it had been been revealed earlier on the "Mickey Mouse Club") on the series premiere of Walt Disney's fantastic "Zorro" show. Just as a piece of music, it still gets me tingly down there, if you catch my scent.

Well, I haven't noticed anyone else celebrating even the 50th (unbelievable!) anniversary of this two-season wonder, which formed and/or honed my appreciation of flashy apparel and the dashing mustache. (What, exactly, made the mustache *dashing*? I used to assume it was because those who wore them always seemed to be dashing about. More mature reflection suggests a more literal reason: the anorexic little caterpillars above the lips actually resemble printed dashes. Pity the hero who'd dare sport semicolons.)

And music! Foster and Bruns composed many other songs that somehow ended up being sung on the show (usually by the



José Sinatra

lusty baritone of Henry Calvin's Sergeant Garcia) and the lyrical, often moody, always exciting background score was composed by William Lava. Let this be a public thank-you to these fine musicians, and everyone else who half a century ago had a hand in molding a vibrant, timeless work of art.

If they ever release it on DVD, watch for the fourth episode, which premiered on Halloween night in 1957. The second half — even the last 13 minutes alone — is unlike anything else Disney had ever done; the story, direction, music, and photography seem to have all been suddenly dosed with some strange chemical that all these many years later is certainly illegal.

Two more footnotes to this love letter to Zorro:

The series was like my childhood wife. 'Til death do us part and all that. But there was a mistress three years later, when on television I first encountered 1940s' *The Mark of Zorro* with Tyrone Power, music by Alfred Newman. The feeling was nearly what I imagined it would be to see the face of God. By mutual consent, the marriage became (and remains) happily open, a *ménage à trois* without a hint of sleaze.

And, finally, a gracious pumpkin patch of love to author Isabel Allende, whose 2005 Harper Collins masterpiece, *Zorro*, included this knowing, sly, eye-moistening passage:

To the thrill of the children . . . his mount whirled and reared; then he pulled out his sword and flashed it . . . and sang a verse that he himself had composed . . . about a valiant horseman who rides out on moonlit nights to defend justice, punish evildoers, and slash a Z with his sword.

I'll do likewise for you if we happen upon each other this Halloween.

José Sinatra performs with Phil Harmonic at OctoberFest in Ocean Beach on Saturday, October 11, early enough not to miss Liz Abbott's gallery art show later that same day (info on page 2).



by Peter Bolland

THE SILENT CHURCH

On August 18, 1963 Jean-Luc Poirot set out of Boston Harbor in a fully stocked 32-foot schooner, intent on sailing solo around the world. He was never heard from again. Twenty years later, in 1983, a merchant vessel blew off course in a storm near Malaysia and spotted a signal fire on a tiny, uninhabited island out in the middle of nowhere. Drawing closer they saw a man with a very long beard jumping up and down on the beach. It was Jean-Luc Poirot.

The captain of the merchant vessel and a few of his men dropped a skiff into the water and ferried over to the island. They landed and stepped out onto the beach where Jean-Luc stood in disbelief, tears of joy streaming down his face. As the men helped Jean-Luc gather up his meager belongings to take back to the ship, the captain noticed that Jean had built three beautiful huts from driftwood and palm fronds, decorated with shells and strands of betel nut and dried flowers. The captain was very impressed.

"What is that building there?" the captain asked, pointing to the first shelter.

"That's my house," Jean said proudly.

"What's that second building?" the captain asked.

"That's my church," Jean said, a hushed sense of reverence coming into his voice.

"Then what's that third building?" asked the captain.

"Oh," Jean said, "that's the church I used to go to."

I have to laugh every time I hear that story. Many of us have "churches we used to go to." And some of us, if we ever went at all, stopped going to church a long time ago.

About 50 percent of Americans attend a weekly worship service of some kind — a mosque, a synagogue, or a church. That number is much lower in Europe, especially northern Europe where in some countries it hovers well below 10 percent. And like Jean-Luc, most church goers are not attending the church they used to go to.

In the nineteenth century American Christianity began to split into nearly infinite variety. Buffeted by wave after wave of immigration and a steady stream of new ideas and practices, American religion became as fractured as American individualism. Alternate spiritualities spread like fire through the dry and desiccated theologies of our forefathers. By the twentieth century the transformation was complete. We became a nation of seekers. A new paradigm of religion as an individual path of discovery replaced the old paradigm of religion as a socially binding tribal affiliation. The gale force winds of religious freedom had blown down all the doors. Our individualism and commercial consciousness turned spirituality into a marketplace and each of us into shoppers.

Many of us call ourselves "spiritual," not "religious." We are no longer fed by the old institutions and rituals, preferring instead the direct experience of spirit in manifold forms. We know that the God of our understanding, and the God that surpasses all understanding, is bigger than any church. That's what makes Jean-Luc's story so funny.

Some of us feel the sacred presence in nature, and as we walk alone in the woods or on a lake shore we sense an infinite expanse no scripture or doctrine could convey. As Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "scriptures are of little use to the illumined man or woman who sees the Lord everywhere."

Some of us broke down the walls of our perceptual prisons with drugs. Like Carlos Castaneda, and usually without the tutelage of a Don Juan, we roamed the desert stoned out of our minds, seeing the world with new eyes and riding waves of consciousness to distant shores and back again. Then, after time, the drugs themselves became a prison, dulling our sensibilities and driving us deeper and deeper into lonely lives of isolation. We grew small and hunkered down into the

long night, a beer in one hand, a bong in the other, caught up in the pseudo-rapture of our own egotistic fear, craving, and resentment until the only thing we really cared about was the next buzz. Sometimes you need medicine. And then you get sick from the medicine.

Some of us uncovered our spirituality in recovery. In church basements and cafes, AA and NA and other 12-step movements presented a new vision of freedom, a vision the ego has no chance of understanding. Laying bare the mechanics of our compulsions, we learned that it is only through surrender of the ego that real joy emerges. The discursive mind chafes against the illogic of gaining power by admitting powerlessness, but through direct experience we came to understand.

Some of us found the truth in organized religion. Faith communities centered around a specific scriptural tradition gave us the necessary framework within which we could experience the divine. We all remember Dylan's born-again phase. Sometimes a powerful theology and, more important, the community that embodies it draws us into its loving embrace. At its best, this approach heals us and softens us into our deeper humanity. At its worst, this approach leads to provincial or even bigoted thinking and the delusion that one's religion is better than all the others. As Joseph Campbell quipped when asked to define mythology, "Mythology is *other* people's religion."

Some of us find our joy in service. Through the attainment of professional mastery we cultivate skills that enable us to be of use to others. We become doctors and lawyers and writers and musicians and builders and counselors and creators of all kinds. We use our work to experience the depth of our connection to the source energy that runs through all things. In a life of duty and service we feel a vast, divine presence gently wresting the reins away from our fading ego.

Some of us draw profound sustenance from a life of study. We read great books by poets and philosophers and geniuses of all disciplines and through their polished lenses we come to see a little farther and deeper than before. Religious experience is not always about leaving the intellect behind. "The mind is indeed our prison," the Maitri Upanishad says, "but the mind is also our liberator."

Mohandas Gandhi was asked by a journalist once to sum up his philosophy in three words. "Renounce and enjoy," he said, quoting the *Isha Upanishad*. Surrender the ego, give up attachment to *this* outcome or *that* outcome, release all petty desires, learn to love the world and all the imperfect people in it just the way they are. But stay fully engaged, vitally alive, and completely committed to the creative path you have been given. Grow your business, write your book, heal the wounded, plant an orchard, harvest the fruit. Make something beautiful out of the seeds you have been given. Then give it away. You will be paid in full in ways your ego can never even imagine.

You might not need the preacher's sermon or the theologian's doctrinal argument. You might not need the ancient scriptural passage. You might not need the sacred ritual or the solemn hymn. Each of these are spokes of the great wheel, and all spokes lead to the center. But none of them contains or fully expresses the mystery of the center. "We shape clay into a vessel," Laozi writes in the *Daodejing*, "but it is the emptiness within that holds whatever we want." We grow attached to the outer forms of things — our doctrines, our churches, our ideas — and we forget the treasure those forms were made to hold. Emerson remarked, "I like the silent church before the service begins better than any preaching," and we know exactly what he meant. Out of the depths of our own being, heard only in silence, we hear the one wordless voice, the voice that speaks to each *continued adjacent*

RADIO DAZE



Jim McInnes

by Jim McInnes

A HORRIBLE WEEKEND

A few days before this issue went to press, September 25, 2008 marked the 30th anniversary of the crash of PSA flight 182 into North Park. The death toll was 135, a record number of fatalities at that time.

On Sunday, September 24, 1978, the temperature in San Diego was in the high 90s to low 100s. I remember playing softball and then going to a barbecue where I met a cute blond woman who invited me to come to her place — only much later, like 3 a.m!

Over the ensuing eight hours, though, I had a "few" beers. I bought a six-pack of suds before I left to visit "blondie." It was still really hot, so I popped open a beer as I hit the 805 North. At one point I dropped something on the floor of my car. When I leaned over to retrieve it, I swerved. Oooops!

There was a CHP car right behind me, so I poured the rest of my beer out the window . . . with his search light on me. Genius!!!

After the usual tests, like singing the German national anthem, patting my head while rubbing my tummy, and reciting the Hebrew alphabet, I was handcuffed and put in the back seat of the cruiser like a common pickpocket.

I was in the slammer for 12 hours. At one point, all the other inmates had a laugh at my expense when one of the Trustees wrote something on a slip of paper and told me to give it to the guard so I could get out early. Ha ha. My dumb.

When I was being fingerprinted, one of the deputies asked me to autograph something, "for my son."

I called KGB's general manager, Jim Price, at 4 a.m., to ask him to bail me out. He could have fired me! If I were him, I'd have fired me!

At about 9:15 the next morning, Monday, September 25, 1978, one of the guards told me that an airliner had crashed in North Park. I knew one of the passengers on the PSA flight. He was a record company representative I'd met at KGB. I'd also played basketball with him.

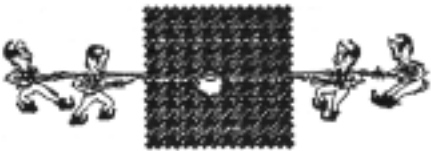
It was a horrible weekend. The woman later accused me of standing her up. I beat the charge, by the way.

Stages, continued

of us in our own language. As we walk our paths, sometimes alone, sometimes together, sometimes in song, sometimes in silence, we finally realize that in all our restless seeking not one of our steps leads away from the truth. Your true church is right where you are.

Peter Bolland is a professor of philosophy and humanities at Southwestern College and singer-songwriter-guitarist of the Coyote Problem. You can complain to him about what you read here at peterbolland@cox.net. www.thecoyoteproblem.com is the ethereal home of the Coyote Problem.

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Drama Comes to the Holy Trinity Church

by John H. Cochran

Holy Trinity Parish in Ocean Beach will present Alfred Uhry's acclaimed play, *Driving Miss Daisy*, Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 23-25 at 8 p.m. This is the premiere production of the parish's growing drama program, open to the public. Uhry was eager to direct this play, because I saw it as a contemporary production that "sings out" like a strolling troubadour about how time and circumstances can change the lives of people, despite their differences.

Driving Miss Daisy is a character study detailing the growing friendship between a crotchety, rich, old Southern lady, Daisy Werthan, and her black chauffeur, Hoke Coleburn, "driven" to be together by Daisy's son, Boolie Werthan. Daisy and Hoke are as

different as night and day, both physically and temperamentally. Miss Daisy, a formidable Atlanta Jew, fixed in her habits long before her husband dies and living on her own, is not about to give up her independence. Hoke, a 60-year-old black man, who cannot read but is able to discern the Bible, maintains his integrity as a foundation for life. He is the unchanging element in this journey of circumstances. Always protective, but never subservient, Hoke breaks through Miss Daisy's crusty façade as she teaches him to read and write.

The setting is the Deep South; the year, 1948. Yet Uhry takes us atavistically to the past, when Miss Daisy was 12 years old (1888), while Atlantans were still recovering from the Civil War. As Miss Daisy says, they were "proud of the spunky fight their granddaddies put up against Sherman, who burned

the town during the W.H.A." Daisy and Hoke come together when Atlanta is "full of hope, boiled greens, fried chicken with cream gravy, and damn yankees." By the mid-1940s, the population was one third black, two thirds white. Virtually all of Atlanta's people were Baptists and Methodists, native-born Americans, and this group ran the town and the state as well. For Hoke, the so-called "Negro Problem" was severe. The one party system disenfranchised the Negro in local

Southern elections, because all decisions were made by a "white man's primary." The Wage and Hour Act, legislation designed to help the poor (black and white), was beneficial to Hoke and Idella, Miss Daisy's housekeeper. The average white adult had ten years of schooling, compared to five and one-half for the Negro. One dollar per day was spent on each white child's education, while the education of Negro children averaged thirty-four cents per day, per child.

A risk I have taken with this production is the affirmation of the directing process. During two thirds of the rehearsal process, the



Producing director, John H. Cochran

continued on page 15

Driving Miss Daisy

A play by Alfred Uhry

Thursday through Saturday
Oct. 23-25, 2008

All Shows 8 p.m.

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Taj Mahal: 40 Years OF THE RAINBOW BLUES



Taj Mahal

by Terry Roland

"The blues is a tone that puts me in contact with a lot of things, culturally, spiritually, cosmically. I really enjoy it, and I'm not going to let it go, because it's that good."

— Taj Mahal

What do you do when you're a kid born into a musical family and you grow up with styles as diverse as gospel music Caribbean jazz, and the rainbow of styles on the radio during the 1950s? If you're Taj Mahal, you soak it in and create never-heard-before kinds music.

Arriving on the scene in the mid-'60s when envious British youngsters were trying to learn from the legendary elders of American blues, Taj was the effortless heir apparent who seemed to be able to emulate the founding fathers (and mothers) of blues without needing to imitate anyone. It was already a part of his being. Still, he had the edge of an original, personalized guitar style that added an ethnically pure dimension to the trendy blues movement of the day. While he made his mark during this period, the then burgeoning rock scene didn't know quite what to do with Taj. Being an important figure in the blues movement of the day, he was kept busy. However, during the '70s, as American rock music scene lost its identity, Taj Mahal defined himself through the exploration of international music.

A true innovator and musical wanderer, Taj Mahal didn't sit still after the short-lived blues revival faded. He always stayed true to his country-blues roots. Indeed, his view of blues was not static but as a progressive musical experience that absorbed his entire

being.

Taj drew his roots from the gospel music of his mother and the Caribbean jazz influence of his father. Notably, when he moved to L.A., he formed the Rising Sons with Ry Cooder in what must have been a musical collaboration made in heaven, or at least on some blues-soaked Caribbean island. In 1965, he helped to fire up the blues revival of the late '60s, but it was Clapton, Mayall, Canned Heat, and other white acts who reaped the commercial rewards. Still Taj kept traveling and he was soon experimenting with various forms of world music, bringing it together with some of the best of American rock, blues, and soul styles. He didn't just create the roots of this movement; he became the roots. Today, no world musician can approach the fusion of styles without drawing on Taj Mahal's influence, even if they don't know it. It is a collective musical movement and the tide was formed by Taj and few others.

It seems wherever he has traveled, he has absorbed the musical styles of the culture. Beginning in his youth in North Carolina where, in his teens, he mastered Piedmont blues, he then moved on to the diverse styles of Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, and Lightnin' Hopkins. In later years, as he traveled, he explored the music beneath the African-American blues, including the earliest forms of the music of the African slaves. Over the next four decades, he studied music from Africa, Caribbean, India, Hawaii, and Jamaica. He recorded several children's albums and spoken word projects

The reward for these innovations, like so many groundbreakers, has yielded limited commercial success or fame. However, through the years he has created what can easily be regarded as some of the best of American music. He won Grammy awards for his albums *Señor Blues* and *Shoutin' in Key*. He has also experienced new generations rise up directly from his influence.

Today, Taj lives in Hawaii. From this, he has brought Hawaiian music and blues together. He also gained a reputation as an excellent fisherman. At times, he can be coaxed off the islands to tour, which he is doing now, arriving at the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach on Tuesday, October 23, for

a concert. Also, available for pre-order on his website, is his new album, *Maestro, Baby*. Song samples are available for the hearing at his website: www.tajblues.com. It appears this will be another fine album of new originals and influential songs of the past. And, all of those international styles are there, which he has explored for the past 40 years. The new album will also include special guests Los Lobos, Ben Harper, Jack Johnson, and Ziggy Marley.

As Taj Mahal continues to explore the music of the world, if we are willing to follow and listen, we will discover, not only the soul of American roots music, but the pot of gold in the myriad of music formed in a rainbow of styles. It's a road well worth walking.

Driving Miss Daisy, continued

actors actually become directors. The production budget did not allow us to fantasize luxurious lighting, scenery, stage, and hand props. My approach to the text comes via Selective Realism, where realism fragments to suggestion, impression, and atmosphere when the actors reveal their actions. We run the risk of Miss Daisy, Boolie, and Hoke being melodramatic in their confrontation, and patronizing their characters. But, if we achieve the balance that I believe the play requires, what we will have is a restatement of the belief that one day, Jew and Gentile can live together in harmony, and that is what the tradition of America at its best is all about.

John H. Cochran, producing director of Holy Trinity's drama program, is a retired Professor of Theater. He was a member of the Stanford Repertory Theater, where he taught acting and directing and also founded the Black Performing Arts Department. He taught acting at the Drama School at Yale University and was a member of the Yale Repertory Theater. He has headed up theater departments at Biola University and Westmont College.

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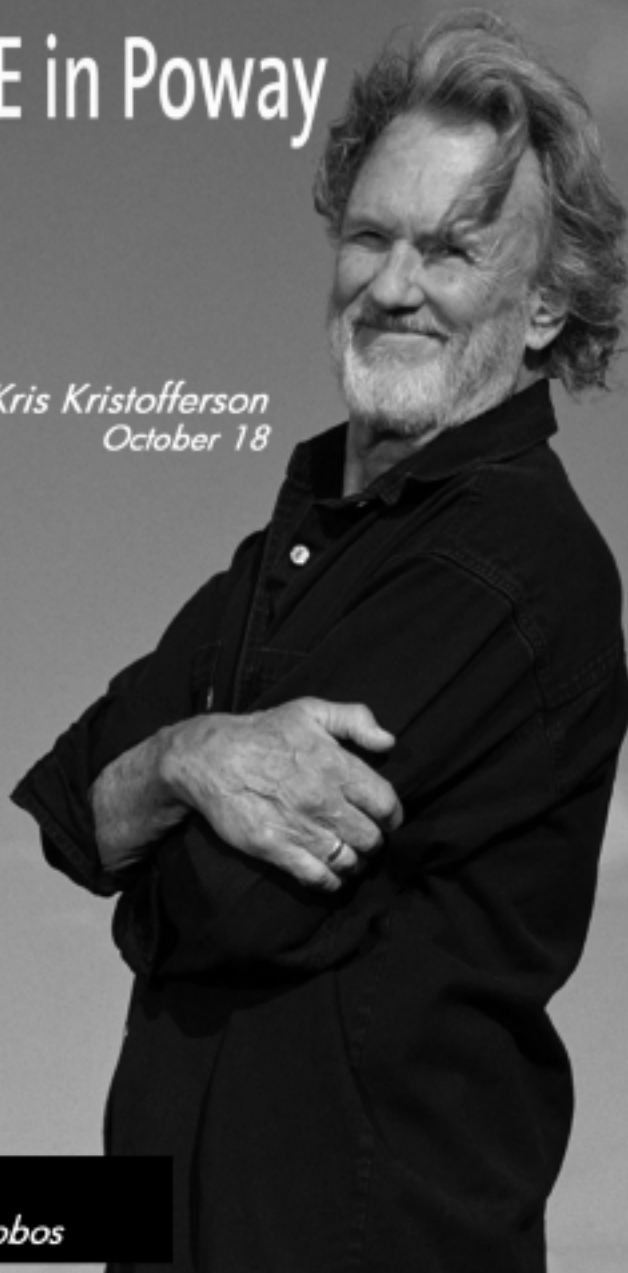
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Scott Wallingford Mostly Blue

by Mike Alvarez

Since its inception, jazz has taken on a myriad of musical forms. From Dixieland and Bebop to today's fusion and "smooth" jazz genres, the term is used to describe a broad range of sounds. Imperial Beach bassist Scott Wallingford explores quite a bit of territory on his debut album *Mostly Blue*. As the title suggests, he is firmly anchored in blues-based music, but he makes forays into swing, bossa nova, and Latin jazz. The majority of the songs are original compositions. There are also three cover tunes, but they bear a unique improvisational stamp that makes them distinctive.

The opening drum blast of "One Shade of Blue" immediately establishes the jazz credentials of the musicians on this disc. It's a complex and infectious groove that the rest of the band uses as a foundation for a monstrous blues riff. As the song evolves, bass, trumpet, sax, and guitar play in unison, in harmony, and as soloists. The arrangement allows for some very inventive improvisation from each player but when it's time for the ensemble to come together, they do so cleanly and precisely.

"Blue Shoes (No Suede)" is guided by the same mindset yet Wallingford and company manage to create a completely different vibe. Propelled by tasty piano chords and horn blasts, it's a song that's sure to get toes tapping. "Mimi's Eyes (Are They Blue?)" and "Blue Bossa" could easily be dance floor favorites with their high energy Brazilian rhythms. "Mimi" is noteworthy for its use of the bass as the lead melody instrument. They slow things down with "Off Blue," a New Orleans-style song with a melancholy melody played on trumpet and sax, but subsequent songs pick up the pace once again. The album comes full circle with the last song, titled "Another Shade of Blue." This energetic piece wraps things up nicely. The real beauty of this album is that these musicians find something interesting and unique to say within their chosen musical parameters. Instead of being limited by them, they revel in them.

Wallingford is a very articulate bassist. His tone is fluid and his intonation is precise, whether he is laying down the groove or taking off on some agile flight of fancy. As a band leader he is very generous, giving the spotlight to his players many times over. He understands the role of his instrument in the overall sound. He has a great sense of dynamics and plays with impeccable taste. Notable among his accompanists are trumpeter Burnett Anderson, saxophonist Tim Nunnik, and guitarist Robert Sebastian. All have great jazz chops, whether they're creating a groove or improvising a solo.

This album sounds like it was cut live in the studio. It has a "tight but loose" feel. You can feel the breath in the horns. The drums reverberate naturally, as if they were played in a spacious room. The guitar sounds like a classic hollow jazz box. And finally, the bass has a fat, organic tone that is perfect for this style of music. This album has a fresh and raw sound that lets you know that this music was played more than it was produced. And that's a very good thing.



Blues Lyne Restoration

by Mike Alvarez

When you adopt "Blues" as your first name, you had better be good. Luckily that happens to be the case with Blues Lyne, a guitarist and vocalist from North County. My first exposure to his music was at a live show where he and his band demonstrated great musicianship as well as deep soul. Few would argue with my assertion that they were the best band of the night. Even more remarkable was the fact that it was their first "real" gig (although in all honesty, they honed their chops as the worship band for their church). Interestingly, Lyne and his band are the first to assert that their music isn't pure blues. Instead, it's a very polished blend of blues-based rock and R&B that would be very much at home on the play list of any classic rock radio station. Hints of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, Bob Dylan, the Allman Brothers, and even some Motown surface from time to time as you listen to their music.

Restoration starts with a short vocal and tambourine excerpt from "Let Us Make a Record" by Sister Gertrude Morgan. After that brief introduction the band immediately blasts into high gear with "Learnin' How to Live," a high-energy tune that's fueled by a tight rhythm section, tasty Hammond organ licks, stinging guitar riffs, and, most significantly, Blues Lyne's vocals. He sounds somewhat like Darius Rucker of Hootie and the Blowfish fame but with a little more grit. This is followed by "Enough," a tune that is anchored by a wicked clarinet lick that might have been borrowed from the Stevie Wonder songbook.

The songwriting on this record is astonishing. Lyne has a real talent for crafting songs with memorable melodies and hooks. They feel almost familiar, but at the same time they are all new and original. From time to time there will be a sly homage to his influences, so confident is he in the strength of his own material. For instance, "The Dawn" is based on the chords from "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," but it's a completely different song. "Let You Down" does something similar with the "Crimson and Clover" chord pattern. On "Love," he sings "Ain't no mountain high enough, ain't no valley low enough..." but then he goes and does his own thing. There are raving rockers, there are heart aching ballads, and there is the blues. The lyrics can be melancholy at times, but underneath it all is a feeling of yearning and hope.

In addition to being a strong and confident vocalist, Lyne is a very accomplished guitarist. He can pull off blazing solos, but he also has the sensitivity to lay back when the song calls for it. His rhythm playing is crisp and restrained when it needs to be. The rest of the band is also exceptional. Their tracks are as polished as any laid down by the best professional session players in the business. Every element comes together perfectly on this immaculately produced album. Musically it's dynamic and exciting to listen to. Technically, it's a textbook example of the professional results all independent musicians should aspire to. Artistically, it's a cohesive and uplifting statement from someone with something meaningful to say.



Joanie Mendenhall On a String

by Mike Alvarez

In her new album, *On a String*, Joanie Mendenhall brings a plethora of musical influences to the table. From the power pop song structures of British Invasion groups like the Beatles and the Byrds to inventive orchestrations and arrangements reminiscent of Brian Wilson and George Martin, her new album is a cornucopia of classic touchstones, brought together in one big melodic synthesis. Because her vocals are at the forefront, their unforced pixie-like quality invites comparison to another artist with a similar sound and equally similar pop sensibilities. This could very much be mistaken for a solo album by Susanna Hoffs of the Bangles.

The opening song, "Total Wreck," starts with a Phil Spector-like intro before transforming itself into an all-out rocker, propelled by electric guitars and horns. Next up is the ethereal "Cakewalk." With an upright bass as its foundation, it has a trippy-folky feel that calls up memories of a more psychedelic era. It's a song with a lot of space in it and makes for a nice interlude. "On a String" starts with a bouncy rhythm and sing-song melody that kind of sounds like the theme from "Sesame Street" (and I don't mean this in a bad way at all). It develops into a complex pop tour de force that goes in a number of surprising directions. The process of arranging its multi-layered instrumentation and vocals must have been a real labor of love, earning it the honor of being selected as the title track.

"Nocturne" is a more sparsely arranged song that just breathes with atmosphere. Also rooted by the upright bass, her vocal and the accompanying trumpet line seem to float over jazzy guitar chords. The shuddering string parts are the perfect finishing touch to this moody piece. Then it's back to power pop territory with "Empty Your Heart," a song with great melodic hooks and deliciously crunchy electric guitars. This is perhaps the one song on the album that sounds the most Bangle-like. On "Metal Box," Mendenhall and her cohorts show their versatility by delving into rockabilly territory, and they do so with a great deal of credibility. With its chugging melody, driving rhythm guitars, and vocal harmonies, she does a surprising Johnny Cash-like vocal, only several octaves higher.

Mendenhall boldly goes retro with "Good Time Jo," a song distinguished by vintage electric piano and mellotron flute sounds. Its leisurely pace and gentle melody are hypnotic. The electric slide guitar licks played by Ray Suen are a nice touch and reminiscent of Pink Floyd's David Gilmour. Closing out the album is "That Old Blackbird," a mid-tempo piano ballad with a friendly major key vibe that would make it a feel-good finale for a live show.

These are terrific songs from an artist who has undoubtedly absorbed a lot of great music. It's obvious that she lived with them for quite a while before going into the studio. Much thought went into the production of this album, and it shows. The musicians are top-notch, the sound is crystal clear and well-balanced. Most of all, the songs are smartly written. Joanie Mendenhall is a musical treasure who is surely destined for greater things.



Christopher Cash Invisible

by Bart Mendoza

With a name like Christopher Cash Perkins, incorporating as it does, the surnames of two of the founding fathers of rock music, the standard is always going to be high when it comes to both musicianship and songwriting. His first album, 2005's *Hollywood Mirage*, hinted at what was possible. *Invisible* delivers.

As might be expected of an artist who cites watching "The Ed Sullivan Show" on February 9, 1964 as a key influence, *Invisible* is a pleasing mix of sixties-era pop rock with country and folk overtones. The album wears its influences on its sleeves with a sound somewhere between the Smithereens at their hit-making best, a Chris Hillman jam, or Richard Thompson in his pop prime. Cash is backed by an excellent band that features bassist Bill Maine; guitarist Mark Schmidt; and drummer Kevin Walker; with Barry Hovis contributing keyboards; and an all-star group of backing vocalists, including producer Jeff Berkley, Cathryn Beeks, Bill Coomes, and Barbara Nesbitt.

Invisible kicks off with its strongest track, "Morning Star." Any disc that opens with radio static and sitar is going to grab your attention, and this song does just that. Beatle-esque without being obvious, "Morning Star" has hooks a mile long, capturing the musical innocence of a sixties pop hit, but with a modern edge, particularly noticeable in the layered harmony vocals before the choruses.

The title track is also a winner. A mid-tempo ringing guitar riff adorns a melancholy melody line that would sit comfortably in a collection of Townshend demos. Also interesting is "Tangled Wire," which mixes angular new wave-sounding keyboards with a more traditional rock sound. It's an ear-catching aural experiment and clearly shows that Cash isn't afraid to take chances with his music.

Indeed, Berkley and Cash must be commended for *Invisible's* warm, lush production. Case in point, "Houdini Knew." A great title to be sure, and it has nice hooks. But where many performers might be happy to have your basic guitars, bass, drums, and overdubbed vocals, for Cash this is just the starting point. Percussion, synthesized strings, spoken-word parts, electronica, and more are blended in, complete with counter melodies. The arrangements really bring out the best in these songs.

Even with excellent production, songwriting, and playing, the secret weapon here is the diversity in song and sounds. Cash has his foot in a lot of musical stylings, so *Invisible* will appeal to a broad spectrum of music listeners, particularly country, power-pop, singer-songwriter, and indie fans. All will find an excellent album worth investigating. *Invisible* manages to maintain a high standard from start to finish and shows that Cash really know his way around a melody. Once you hear these songs, you'll want to hear them again and again.



Lillian Palmer Like a Lover

by Paul Hormick

78s and 45s could give a listener only a gulp of two or three minutes of music before an interruption. LPs stretched the listening time to 15 to 20 minutes. Taking advantage of this increased playtime, "mood" recordings, meant to enhance a little romance, hit the shelves of record stores in the fifties and sixties. A lot of these platters were instrumental renderings of popular tunes and easily forgotten, but there were also legit jazz artists to make these musical aphrodisiacs. Even hard bopper Dexter Gordon made an LP, *Music for Lovers*, that got spun a few times when folks had *amore* in mind.

Lillian Palmer reprises the mood recording – the good kind, the jazz kind – with *Like a Lover*, a collection comprised of standards, most of which are ballads and torch songs by Sonny Burke, Johnny Mercer, the brothers Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart, and other authors of the American songbook.

Arrangements today differ from the large Nelson Riddle sounds that brought back Sinatra's career. Smaller ensembles back up today's jazz singers, with a number of performers taking advantage of this quieter sound. Competing less with horns and reeds and using close microphone technique, they don't need to project or sustain their notes. They rely on their phrasing, as guitarist-turned-singer John Pizzarelli has done. Others, like Stacy Kent, have used the distinguishing timbres of their voices to set themselves apart.

I enjoy these singers, but after listening to a few of their disks, I'm more entertained than engaged in what they're doing. The feeling isn't necessarily ho hum, but there is not much excitement either. That's why I was so glad to listen to Palmer's new disk. She uses a pared down ensemble on *Like a Lover*, but she sings in a full, strong voice. There is support to the notes. Her voice has substance and maturity, yet she retains a youthful quality, a lightness that refreshes these well-visited standards.

In reworking these chestnuts, it's tempting to try to distinguish your performance from the cornucopia of recordings that have been made over the decades, to add a bit more drama or try to express a bit more subtlety from time to time. As all such efforts always devolve into bathos, Palmer steers clear of these hackneyed gestures. Her phrasing and sense of timing are in the traditional mold of the jazzmen and jazz women of yesteryear, such as Ella Fitzgerald, Sinatra, Nat Cole. As the vocalist, Palmer is in the spotlight, out front of the ensemble, but she sings as part of the band. She does not sing ahead or behind the beat, as has become a fixation of many of the new interpreters of the American Standard Cannon. (Before collecting their Social Security checks, many aging rockers and hippies, such as Rod Stewart and Carly Simon, are trying to establish their credibility by putting out disks of standards, and some of them clearly overuse this approach to jazz singing.)

Palmer matched her talents well in choosing pianist Bill Cunliffe to produce and arrange the CD. He is among the most lyrical of today's jazz pianists, and this sensibility enhances Palmer's renderings of these tunes. This is a top-notch recording from a capable and talented performer.



SweetTooth

by Simeon Flick

This kick-ass rock and roll record, which was rightfully nominated for Best Local Recording at this year’s San Diego Music Awards, is a miracle on many levels, not the least of which is the sheer fact that it is finally seeing the light of day. Having commenced recording in 2006, the quartet took a retrospectively justified two years to refine the tracks after waiting for bassist Jeff Johnson to return from hiatus. But what really stands out about this album is the huge statement it makes through its fidelity to erst-while ideals, the return to integrity metaphorically inherent in the promise exhibited by Barack Obama’s presidential candidacy.

SweetTooth exudes a kind of revivalist musical patriotism (witness the presence of a majestic American flag fluttering over the back-sleeve inscription “Made in USA,” and the shout-out to dear friend and Iraq war veteran Captain Don Ross in the valiant, Tolkien-inspired “There and Back Again”) and it cleaves to the cultural utopia represented by the seventies, a time when public taste was in perfect sync with the commercial demands of the record industry and the magnanimous heritage artists it represented. SweetTooth recalls the golden age of the album as a complete entity, an artistically tolerant time when musical expression had the potency to inspire tangible societal change.

This decidedly old-school album – down to its LP-like matte board packaging, reprinted Lester Banks-style endorsements from *CityBeat*’s Edwin Decker and engineer/co-producer Jeff Berkley, and the hearty encouragement to “wear headphones” and “PLAY LOUD” – practically bursts with urgency; even the love songs bristle with the fierce impetus of protest cuts like CSNY’s “Ohio” (or perhaps more like Neil Young’s “Cinnamon Girl” in the case of “Lovergirl” and “Bring on the Love”). The d-tuned, raucous cuts, like “El Cajon” and “Bleeding Nerve,” are vaguely reminiscent of King’s X, Tool, or AC/DC (whom they’ve been known to cover live), and are seamlessly blended in with mellower moments like “The Rain,” which take after Pink Floyd (whom they’ve also been known to cover live).

Singer/guitarist Matt Silvia, arguably the best rock vocalist in San Diego, validates the latent proselytizing of songs like “Part of We” and “TV” with his mind-blowingly high tenor, which inhabits the predominantly inhospitable aural stratosphere with a rare, palatable ease. The sagaciously ambitious production of lead guitarist John McBride and Jeff Berkley imbues the meticulously ordered cuts with a classic, colossal vibe.

At its worst, SweetTooth may be too much of a backwards glance for anyone not born during or before the seventies to enjoy...it might also push too much purpose, focus, and raw earnestness for the ADD-addled, iPod-enslaved masses to handle. Nevertheless, SweetTooth is a massive sonic achievement, which will, if you open your eyes, ears, and mind, inspire you the way music used and ought to do, and bestow something that’s been missing in music and politics for years: Hope.



Barry Scott Why Did I Do Whatever I Did?

by Julia Bemiss

Barry Scott isn’t inclined to put up a fight, unless he’s affirming his belief that Patty Loveless is the greatest female country singer of all time. And it’s no wonder: on the back cover art of his new CD is a California license plate whose frame reads “I Love Patty Loveless.” It may be this passion Scott obviously feels for Loveless’ musicianship that infuses his own work, at least in part.

Saloon-style piano solos and fiddle bring to life a true honky-tonk feel in the opening track “Last Night.” It’s about meeting someone in just such a place, but with a nice twist: both strangers remember each other’s name the next day.

“Tell Me Linda” channels Dwight Yoakam’s trademark style that’s a little bit rockabilly and a whole lotta hillbilly – elongated syllables and notes that jump from low to high without skipping a beat, literally, and a jumpin’ accordion gives this tune an undeniable taste of zydeco.

Scott’s songwriting is what you’d expect for traditional country. There’s a lot of singing about drinking and women but the lyrics aren’t cliché: “I know I should be tryin’ to slow/this road to dyin’/instead of stayin’ out I know/...but it’s more likely to happen/that a bird would be caught nappin’/and whistling ‘Come and get me’ when/the cat breaks in,” he sings in the title track. Sometimes it’s easy to forget how much humor can be mined in country music even when its themes of hard livin’ and harder lovin’ remain constant.

Scott employs a small chorus of background singers that brings a lively, almost gospel styling to “Please Stay (Gone Away).” Saxophones and trumpet throw in a big band sound reminiscent of Lyle Lovett and his Large Band.

The mood darkens with “A Woman Has the Power,” which makes a case for who holds the reigns in a relationship. It begins with banjo, electric guitar, and cautionary lyrics: “If you need some proof/take notes throughout the day/then count the times you get your way/because God made a woman/to have the upper hand/then he put insur-ance in her sway.”

Eve Selis duets with Scott on the album closer “The Memory of Her,” a country-bluesy ballad with a torched, emotional resonance about a couple trying to get beyond a past infidelity. Both partners agree, in their own ways, that the “someone who has to go” is actually the memory of the woman who came between them to begin with.

Scott’s sound is described as “Virginia, Nashville, and Bakersfield,” though his album thus far has sold well, especially in countries like Sweden and Spain, not exactly known as country music havens. It’s all the more reason to grab a cold one and kick back in your boots and Stetson to not only discover Scott’s brand of country, but also to rediscover the great artists he so earnestly holds in such high esteem.



Chris Leyva Singled Out

by Bart Mendoza

Restless to a fault, Christopher Leyva has to be one of the most prolific artists to emerge from San Diego’s music scene in the last decade. A tireless promoter, Leyva has the hustle to get his music and bands noticed, but without the goods to back it all up it would all come to nothing more than hype. Thing is, Leyva really knows how to craft a song and has production ideas that take his music far beyond the basic rock most bands churn out. Leyva’s influences include seventies glam, white album-era Beatles, and more modern groups such as the Rembrandts.

It’s true that his vocals, high and a bit nasally, are different from just about anyone else plying their trade around local stages. But listen to the way his melodies envelope his tones and you realize you are in the presence of someone who really understands the way sounds interact. With his voice a part of the instrumentation, the fact that he can pour song hooks on top of that equation, just adds icing to the cake.

It’s been a busy year for Leyva, with multiple releases by his other groups, Blizzard and Revolution 89, but clearly he held back some of his best material for his own release. Not everything works, of course. There seems to be less production on the last half of the album for example; too many of the tracks here start with a stark voice and guitar combo. And nine songs is at least one too short for the full album effect. Still, this is a confident disc. When *Singled Out* finds its mark, it hits big.

With another local favorite, Lee Coulter, behind the mixing desk, the album starts strong with the one-two punch of “Beautiful Sky” and “Deja-Vu.” The opener’s moody folk rock vibe perfectly balances the power-pop syncopated rhythm and harmony blend of the latter.

There are all manner of ways to describe the music found within: eccentric, hook-filled, quirky, catchy, and rockin’ come to mind. The key to Leyva’s take on music is evident in the word play of the title. The lyrics deal with the aftermath of a relationship. He is now “singled out.” It’s the sort of thing songwriters have been mining for ideas for centuries, but Leyva’s heartfelt conviction carries the songs where others might resort to clichés. However, the title also refers to Leyva’s penchant to write songs in the classic three minute radio friendly mold, à la T-Rex, the Kinks, and classic Rundgren. Indeed, each of the tracks on this album could be pulled as singles. Hence the album is *Singled Out*.

If you’re a novice to Leyva’s world, this album is the best place to start.



Picus Maximus The Tragedy of Johnny Patriot

by Mike Alvarez

Picus Maximus is a band with great ambition. Their debut CD, *The Tragedy of Johnny Patriot*, is a sprawling 16-song rock opera that tells a tale of romance and tragedy in the post-9/11 era. The plot is summarized in the CD booklet in a single sentence: “A marriage is torn apart by the events of 9/11, and a young husband’s solemn promise to return home from the war leads to their separation for all eternity.” There is an overture, three acts, a finale, and an encore. The songs are interspersed by a series of written interviews with various characters, unveiling the tale in hindsight. While the lyrics are vivid and descriptive, the text is really essential in getting the full story. It asks the listener to make a greater than normal investment in time and attention, but it’s well worth reading.

While describing themselves as a “country rock” band, Picus Maximus aren’t afraid to cover a lot of musical ground, from the sentimental balladry of “Endlessly” to the unabashedly Pink Floyd-influenced rocker “Four Horsemen.” “Cowboy Anthem” sounds exactly the way you would expect it to, with its bouncy country rhythm and patriotic message. In “Shadows of the Street,” they switch to a minor blues progression whose menacing atmosphere effectively conveys the inner turmoil of the main character. A lot of thought was put into the styles that would most effectively set the stage for each scene.

The core of the band is Jim “Picus” Soldi, who played with Johnny Cash and is now with the Eve Selis band, and Rick “Maximus” Sparhawk, a veteran of the bluegrass and country scene. Sparhawk has an expressive voice that I would describe as an interesting combination of Janis Joplin’s grit and Sam Kinison’s power. (Yes, Sam could be an amazing singer when he wanted to be!) Soldi’s fluency with many guitar styles is very much in evidence. His command of the instrument is renowned, and he does not disappoint on this album. He does it all, from blazing leads to crystalline textures and all things in between. They are accompanied up by a fine group of versatile musicians who create the emotional backdrop against which the events unfold. While Sparhawk’s voice and Soldi’s guitars are very much at the forefront, credit must also be given to the seamless performances delivered by the band. They make a huge contribution to the professional sound of this recording.

Listeners can enjoy this album as a collection of diverse songs with singable melodies and a butt-kicking beat, or they can dig deeper to have a much richer experience. *The Tragedy of Johnny Patriot* is a bold artistic statement that rocks.



Podunk Nowhere Based on a True Story

by Mike Alvarez

In all honesty, my initial reaction upon being given a recording by a group called Podunk Nowhere was a mild case of trepidation. The very name creates an image of you-know-what kicking yokels playing their gee-tars in the back country. The album art did nothing to allay this impression, portraying as it does, a kitsched-out couple in front of a trailer. So it’s little surprise that the first track, “Before You Go...,” starts as an acoustic country ballad, but it’s not long before the band shows its true colors. The chorus is introduced by some heavy-hitting electric guitars playing a huge Beatles-esque hook. At this point, the listener is on notice that this is a multifaceted act that takes its influences from all over the musical map. While they are rooted in country chords and rhythms, it’s only a point of departure. In addition to guitars, bass, drums, and keyboards, they add unexpected sounds like the glockenspiel, marimba, vibraphone, and flute to the mix.

They list the scraper, cowbell, and shaker among their instruments, so it’s to be expected that their country and bluegrass roots are prominently on display in a number of songs. “If I’m Drinkin’” allows vocalist Heather Marie Janiga a chance to sound a lot like a young Linda Ronstadt. “Soul Spinning” features Johnny Janiga’s nimble mandolin playing. In it, Heather Marie’s voice takes on a hint of a drawl as she spins a tale of reminiscence. That drawl is even more pronounced on “Tangled,” a slow ballad marked by an evolving arrangement. Starting with just guitar and voice, it slowly builds up to a full band featuring a shuffling drum beat, walking bass, and sparkling vibes. It’s fascinating to hear it unfold.

Yet Podunk Nowhere is equally at home in the alternative rock vein. “Something Worth Saving” has a heavy hypnotic beat and relentlessly driving bassline. Its interesting chord structure is played by a combination of jangly guitar and chunky piano. It immediately became an early favorite of mine and remains so. They continue in this direction with “Given,” a psychedelic pop tune that contains a great jazz guitar line throughout. It’s a bold choice that pays off big. It’s perfect for this song’s densely layered arrangements and inventive melodies. “Tin Pan Alley” is an interesting hybrid of both approaches. While it’s definitely a modern rock song, a harmonica played throughout lends it a bit of country flavor.

The album closer is a surprisingly sunny jazz number called “Junkee Reprise.” Its bouncy beat and frolicking flutes are propelled by an intricate chord progression played on guitar. Over all of this, Heather Marie sings optimistically of renewal and hope. It’s an unusual choice for a last song, but it’s a very nice note to end on. Podunk Nowhere is an object lesson in not judging a book by its cover. At times they’re exactly what you’d expect but more often than not, they’ll pull something out that is a complete surprise. Listeners with broad tastes will find a lot to sink their teeth into.



OCTOBER CALENDAR

wednesday • 1

Mary Dolan, Lakeside Library, 9839 Vine St., 6pm.
Sue Palmer Motel Swing Quintet, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friars Rd., 7pm.
Hard to Travel Bluegrass Jam, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
Antonio Sanchez's Migration, Neurosciences Institute, 10460 Hopkins Dr., 8pm.
Edie Carey/Elana Arian, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Bayou Brothers, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

thursday • 2

Joe Rathburn/John Foltz, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Old Time Fiddlers Jam, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
David Byrne, Humphrey's, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7:30pm.
Stephen Kellogg & the Sixers w/ Pat McGee, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Dave Hemot/Kristen Marlo, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Sue Palmer w/ the Blue Four, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

friday • 3

Paragon Jazz Band, Casa de Oro Cafe, 9809 Campo Rd., Spring Valley, 6:30pm.
Interntional Book Fair, Saville Theatre, S.D. City College, 7pm.
The Swell Season/Iron & Wine, Open Air Theatre, SDSU Campus, 7:30pm.
America/Anna Troy, Humphrey's, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7:30pm.
Stanley Jordan, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
John Katchur CD Release, Handlery Hotel, 950 Hotel Circle N., 8pm.
D.R. Auten & Gas Lamp Jazz Band, Phra Ram No. 9, 3705 Avocado Blvd., La Mesa, 8pm.
Danny Green Quartet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Dr. John & the Lower 911 w/ Janiva Magness, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Katy Wong/The Predicates, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Len Rainey & the Midnight Players, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

saturday • 4

Train Song Festival, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Rd., Poway, 10am.
Interntional Book Fair, Saville Theatre, S.D. City College, 10am.
Lady Dottie & the Diamonds, Valley View Casino, 16300 Nyemii Pass Rd., Valley Center, 4pm.
Robin Henkel Band, Miramonte Winery, 33410 Rancho California Rd., Temecula, 5:30pm.
The Blokes, Gallagher's Irish Pub, 5046 Newport Ave., Ocean Beach, 6pm.
Dan Papaila, Trisler's Wine Bar, 8555 Station Village Lane #C, Mission Valley, 7pm.
Shady Side Players, It's a Grind, 204 N. El Camino Real, Encinitas, 7pm.
Greg Campbell/Patty Hall, Upstart Crow @ Seaport Village, 835 W. Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
Eric Andersen, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Back to the Garden/Project Warmth Benefit w/ Eve Selis/Berkley Hart/Cactus Twang & Whyte/Jim Earp/Grano & Nash, Seaside Ctr. Auditorium, 1613 Lake Dr., Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Stanley Jordan, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Kenny Eng, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
R&B Revue w/ Tommy Castro Band/Magic Dick/Kenny Neal/Deanna Bogart, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Derren Raser/Kim Divine/Lindsey Yung, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Anna Troy CD Release w/ Greg Douglass, Bar Pink, 3829 30th St., 10pm.

sunday • 5

Jeffrey Joe Morin, Bondi, 333 5th Ave., 3pm.
Classical Cabaret by Serenati w/ Lisa Elliott, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
David LaFlamme & It's a Beautiful Day, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Cecilio & Kapono, Humphrey's, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7:30pm.
Jenn Grinels/Trevor Hall, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Nathan James & Ben Hernandez, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

monday • 6

Lori Bell w/ Joey Corano & Rob Thorsen, Educational Cultural Complex, 4343 Ocean View Blvd., 1pm.
Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 7:30pm.
Nick Lowe/Paul Cebal, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Jeff Krantz, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 10:45pm.

tuesday • 7

Peter Sprague String Consort, Crill Hall, Pt. Loma Nazarene University, 7:30pm.
Acoustic Alchemy, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Blue Largo, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

wednesday • 8

Billy Mintz Trio w/ Coral MacFarland Thuet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Zzymzzy Quartet, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Acoustic Alchemy, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Bill Magee Blues Band, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

thursday • 9

Joe Rathburn/Peggy Watson, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Sue Palmer Trio, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friars Rd., 7pm.
Michael Tiernan, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Coast Hwy, 101, 7:30pm.
Daisy Chapman/Stasia Conger, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Joan Osborne/Matt Morris, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
The Blokes, O'Sullivan's, 640 Grand Ave., Ste. A., Carlsbad, 9pm.
Missy Andersen, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

friday • 10

Lady Dottie & the Diamonds, Valley View Casino, 16300 Nyemii Pass Rd., Valley Center, 4pm.
Global Drum Project, Birch North Park Theatre, 2891 University Ave., 7:30pm.
Catie Curtis, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
The Steely Damned, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Hugh Gaskins & the G String Daddies, Thornton's Pub, 1221 Broadway, El Cajon, 8pm.
EJP/Rob Deez, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Jason Tarwick/Lee Coulter, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 11

Blues Benefit for Fergie, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 2pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Talmadge Neighborhood Black Party, Adams Ave. & Euclid, 3:30pm.
Hot Rod Lincoln, Valley View Casino, 16300 Nyemii Pass Rd., Valley Center, 4pm.
Liz Abbott Art Show/music by Zzymzzy Quartet, Tecolote Guitar Works, 1231 Morena Blvd., 7pm.
Peter Sprague & Fred Benedetti, Mission Theatre, 231 N. Main, Fallbrook, 7:30pm.
Kevin Welch, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 7:30pm.
Gilbert Castellanos New Latin Jazz Quartet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Squire/The Modlins/The Shambles, Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Ave., 8:30pm.
Lisa Sanders & Friends, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Big Sandy & his Fly-Rite Boys, Casbah, 2501 Kettner Blvd., 9pm.

sunday • 12

S.D. Folk Song Society Mtg., Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 2pm.
The Sicilian Swing, Italian Festival, Little Italy. Main Stage: 10am; India & Grape Stage: 2:15pm.
Afro-Cuban Ensemble, Encinitas Library, 540 Cornish Dr., Encinitas, 2pm.
We Are Scientists/Kings of Leon, House of Blues, 1055 5th Ave., 6pm.
Jolie Holland, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Aaron Bowen/Nick Jaina, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 13

Sue Palmer Quartet, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., La Jolla, noon.
Will Edwards/Jenn Grinels/Sene Africa, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., La Jolla, 7:30pm.
Anya Marina/Melko/Priscilla Ahn/Brooke Fraser/Jaymay/Erin McCarley/Holly Conlan, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.

tuesday • 14

Patty Hall, Farmers Market, Otay Ranch Town Ctr., 2015 Birch Rd., 4pm.
Daniele Spadavecchia & Jason Durbin, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 6pm.
Dizzy Gillespie's Band, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Jordan Reimer, Hennessey's, 4605 Mission Blvd., P.B., 8pm.
Sue Palmer w/ the Blue Four, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

wednesday • 15

Joe Rathburn/Natalia Zukerman/Adrienne, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friars Rd., 7pm.
Dizzy Gillespie's Band, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
The Blokes, Gallagher's Irish Pub, 5046 Newport Ave., Ocean Beach, 8pm.
David Ramirez, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 16

Old Time Fiddlers Jam, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
Peter Sprague & Leonard Patton, Old Town Temecula Comm. Theatre, 42051 Main, 7:30pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Oceanside Museum of Art, 704 Pier View Way, 7:30pm.
Cyndi Harvell/Gayle Skidmore, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 17

Sue Palmer Trio, S.D. Museum of Art, 1100 Kettner Blvd., 6pm.
Paragon Jazz Band, La Mesa Adult Center, 8450 La Mesa Blvd., 7pm.
Paul Brown's Guitar Trio w/ Marc Antoine & Chris Standing, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Astor Piazzolla Tangos performed by Mas Grande, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Katy Wong/Bryan Bangerter, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
The Wellingtons/True Stories/The Shake Ups/Bleu, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 8:30pm.
Alyssa Jacey/Sara Haze/Tommy & the High Pilots, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 18

Zzymzzy Quartet, Ocean Beach Library, 43801 Santa Monica Ave., 11am.
The Blokes, Gallagher's Irish Pub, 5046 Newport Ave., Ocean Beach, 6pm.
Allison Lonsdale, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 6pm.
Gaelic Storm, Birch North Park Theatre, 2891 University Ave., 7:30pm.
Thomas Baird & Friends, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 7:30pm.
Eve Selis, Baja Foghouse Concert, Clairemont, 7:30pm. bajafoghouseconcerts@gmail.com
The Subbudes, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Kris Kristofferson, Poway Ctr. for the Arts, 15498 Espola Rd., 8pm.
Bob Boss & Jaime Valle, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Chuck Richards/Heidi Hughes, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Gregory Page, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Michele Lundeen & Blues Streak, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.
Candy Kane Band w/ Sue Palmer, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.

sunday • 19

Peter Sprague & Leonard Patton, Seaside Church, 1613 Lake Dr., Encinitas, 9&11am.
Leonard Patton Group, Lambs Players Theater, 1142 Orange Ave., Coronado, 7pm.
Terry Holder, Dark Thirty House Concert, Lakeside, 7:30pm. 619/443-9622.
Gordon Lightfoot, Humphrey's, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7:30pm.
Mark Murphy, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Sue Palmer & Candy Kane, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Coast Hwy, 101, Encinitas, 8pm.
Holding Air Hostage/Veronica May, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 20

Sue Palmer Quartet, Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza, noon.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 7:30pm.
Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Laurie Anderson, Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD Campus, La Jolla, 8pm.

tuesday • 21

The Quarrymen, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.

wednesday • 22

Peter Sprague & Fred Benedetti, Rancho Bernardo Library, 17110 Bernardo Ctr. Dr., 7pm.
Zzymzzy Quartet, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Nicole Henry, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Taj Mahal, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Eric Heim, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
145th St. Blues Band, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

thursday • 23

Sue Palmer Trio, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friars Rd., 7pm.
Driving Miss Daisy, Holy Trinity Parish, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., O.B. 8pm.
Curtis Peoples/Ernie Halter/Tony Lucca, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Bill Magee Blues Band, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

friday • 24

Steve Poltz, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Natalie MacMaster, Poway Ctr. for the Arts, 15498 Espola Rd., 8pm.
Driving Miss Daisy, Holy Trinity Parish, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., O.B. 8pm.
Hugh Gaskins & the G String Daddies, Thornton's Pub, 1221 Broadway, El Cajon, 8pm.
Opa Cupa/Fishtank Ensemble/Slavic Soul Party, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Zzymzzy Quartet, Claire de Lune, 2906 University Ave., 8:30pm.

W E E K L Y

every sunday

Shawn Rohlf & Friends, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Bluegrass Brunch, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 10:30am.
Daniel Jackson, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 11am.
Celtic Ensemble, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 4pm.
Traditional Irish Session, The Field, 544 5th Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7:30pm.
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).
José Sinatra's OB-oke, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9:30pm.
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10pm-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Open Mic, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 7:30pm.
Pro-Invitational Blues Jam, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 8pm.

every tuesday

Traditional Irish Session, The Ould Sod, 3373 Adams Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic, Cosmos Coffee Cafe, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa, 7pm.
All Pro Blues Jam, The Harp, 4935 Newport Ave., 7pm.
Jack Tempchin & Friends, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Coast Hwy, 101, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Open Mic, E Street Cafe, 125 W. E St., Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Open Mic, Channel Twelve25, 172 E. Main St., El Cajon, 7:30pm.
Open Mic, The Royal Dive, 2949 San Luis Rey Rd., Oceanside, 8pm.
Patrick Berrogain's Hot Club Combo, Prado Restaurant, Balboa Park, 8pm.
Shep Meyers, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Open Mic, Portugalia, 4839 Newport Ave., O.B., 9pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 2777 Roosevelt St., Carlsbad, 9:30pm.

every wednesday

Music at Ocean Beach Farmer's Market, Newport Ave., 4-7pm.
Christopher Dale & Friends, Handlery Hotel, 950 Hotel Circle N., 5pm.
David Patrone, Clay's, 7955 La Jolla Shores Dr., 7pm.

saturday • 25

Hot Blues Engines Live #3 w/ Robin Henkel/the Freemonts/Billy Le & the Swamp Critters/ Nathan James & Ben Hernandez/L.A. Jones, 715 N. Rose St. Escondido, 3pm.
Let's Play! Benefit Concert w/ Slim Man/Justin Hines/Gabriella/Randi Driscoll, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, 5:30pm.
Fire Victims Benefit Concert w/ Great White/Dokken/Sweet/Asia, Qualcomm Stadium Practice Field, 6pm.
Jim Earp/Kev, The Living Room, 2541 San Diego Ave., 6:30pm.
Eliza Gilkyson, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Driving Miss Daisy, Holy Trinity Parish, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., O.B. 8pm.
Happy Ron CD Release, Channel Twelve25, 172 E. Main St., El Cajon, 8pm.
Gregory Page & Erica Davies, Rock Valley House Concert, University City, 8pm. wonder-woman@san.rr.com/858.452.1539.
Mario Escovedo, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

sunday • 26

Barbara Nesbitt, Bondi, 333 5th Ave., 3pm.
Martin Taylor & Mundell Lowe, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Acoustic Alliance w/ Mary Dolan/Fabianne/ Kevin Danzig/Colin Clyne/Jesse LaMonaca/ Mimi & Elkin/Endozi/Ephraim Sommers, Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Ave., 7pm.
The Young Dubliners, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Nathan James & Ben Hernandez, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Blue Largo, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

monday • 27

Robin Henkel Band, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Carlos Olmeda/Don Triesdail/Mary Dolan, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., La Jolla, 7:30pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 7:30pm.
Alyssa Suede/Anna Troy/Julie Mack, Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Ave., 8:30pm.

tuesday • 28

Daniele Spadavecchia & Jason Durbin, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 6pm.
Judy Wexler, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Vince Gill, California Ctr. for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido, 8pm.
Ravi Coltrane Quartet, Neurosciences Institute, 10460 Hopkins Dr., 8pm.
Mountain Goats/Kaki King, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Shamey Jays, Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Ave., 9pm.
Bayou Brothers, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

wednesday • 29

Neil Young/Death Cab for Cutie, Cox Arena, 550 Campanile Dr., SDSU Campus, 7pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friars Rd., 7pm.
Amel Larrieux, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Larry Ochs Sax & Drumming Core, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Buddy Wuddy Blues Show w/ Robin Henkel/ Anna Troy/Nathan James/Olivia Pierson/Billy Watson, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Umphrey's McGee, House of Blues, 1055 5th Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 30

Liz Carroll & Daithi Sproule, Holy Trinity Parish, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., 7:30pm.
ESP Quintet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
Amel Larrieux, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Damion Wolfe/Joni Bishop, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Cowboy Mouth/Ingram Hill, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.

friday • 31

Halloween Party w/ CC & the Bondage Boys/The Loaded, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Zzymzzy Quartet w/ Hal Smith and lap steel virtuoso Bruce, Dance For 2 Studio, 7528 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., 9pm.





SAN DIEGO MUSIC AWARDS



Photo: Steve Covault

Kevin Hellman presents Bob Taylor with check



Photo: Steve Covault

Steve Poltz



Photo: Steve Covault

Anya Marina



Photo: Steve Covault

Lifetime Achievement Award Winner Mundell Lowe

TIM MUDD BIRTHDAY PARTY AT LESTAT'S



Photo: Liz Abbott

Jimmy Lunsford



Photo: Liz Abbott

Kenny Eng



Photo: Liz Abbott

Heidi Hughes



Photo: Steve Covault

Joel Rafael



Photo: Liz Abbott

Jasmine & Matt Commerce



Photo: Liz Abbott

Tim Mudd



Photo: Liz Abbott

Katy Wong



Photo: Liz Abbott

Jen Mudd



Photo: Liz Abbott

Desert Rose Band @ the Belly Up



Photo: Liz Abbott

Brindl



Photo: Steve Covault

Adam Levine of Maroon 5



Photo: Liz Abbott

Will Edwards' CD Release @ Y1 Studio



Photo: Liz Abbott

Kenny Newberry @ Belly Up



Photo: Steve Covault

Dave Millard Jazz Quintet @ Turquoise Cafe Europa



Photo: Liz Abbott

Robin Henkel does brunch @ Chateau Orleans

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