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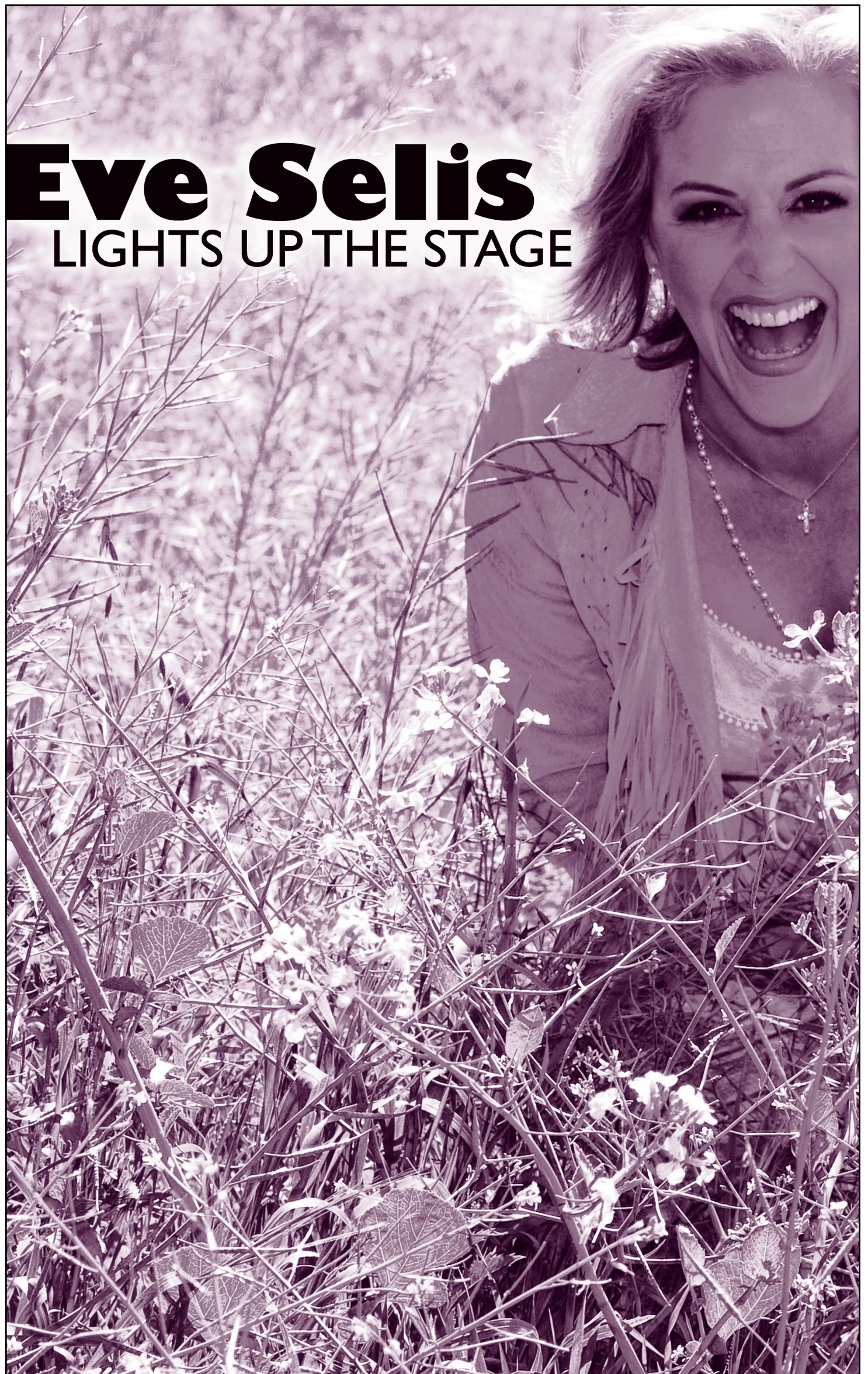
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Email your gig date, including location, address, and time to info@sandiegotroubadour.com by the 23rd of the month prior to publication.

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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.

Annual Sea Chantey Festival Celebrates California's Rich Musical Maritime History



by Ken Graydon

*So ho, boys ho for Cali-for-nay-o
There's plenty of gold so I've been told
On the banks of the Sacramento*

California has a rich and colorful seafaring history dating from well before its entry into the United States. Most people are familiar with Dana's memoir in *Two Years Before the Mast* and most know of Sir Francis Drake's claiming Northern California for England. There are also records from Spanish, Russian, and Portuguese landings on her shores. The area we know as San Diego has seen most of these explorers and, indeed, has developed its own history involving hides and tallow, tuna fishing, ship building, timber booming, and the whole gamut down to today's commercial shipping and cruise terminals.

The mission of the Maritime Museum of San Diego is "...to engage members and the public in the study of maritime history while promoting scholarly research." In the pursuit of this mission the museum has gathered an impressive fleet of vessels of different types, each with a fascinating history of its own. The reigning queen of the fleet is the *Star of India*, nee *Euterpe*. Her life as *Euterpe* began in 1863 as an East Indiaman carrying cargo from Liverpool to Calcutta and other exotic places, a career she would pursue until 1871 when she was sold and refitted as an emigrant ship carrying settlers to New Zealand. This was her life until the early 1890s at which time she became a freighter again. In 1898 her British flag was replaced briefly with Hawaiian registry and then with the Stars and Stripes as she hauled sugar from Hawaii to San Francisco.

In 1901 she was again sold to Alaska Packers Association and refitted for the salmon fishing that was to be her final working life. In 1923 she dropped anchor in Alameda and her working days were over. She would languish there until 1927 when a few San Diegans with a huge dream and a \$9,000 benefactor purchased her and arranged for a tow to San Diego.

Now in 2008, at 145 years of age, she is again a living ship, thanks to extreme devotion by both a museum with a vision, and years of faithful dedicated "sweat equity" from hands-on volunteers. She is a living link with our past human contests and with conquests of the oceans that separate our continents.

If the *Star of India* could sing, her concert would include Hawaiian and Maori chants and drinking songs from pubs from Melbourne to Liverpool, Glasgow to Iquique, and all in between. In her crewmen's voices she would carry the songs of Mexico, Norway, Australia, Germany, Holland, and others as well as those from the British Isles and North America.

However, other than the hum of wind through the rigging and the percussion of waves pounding her iron hull, she is mute, so we must sing for her. On May 18, the San Diego Folk Heritage's Annual Sea Chantey Festival, now in its 16th year, takes place on her decks. Again, her sails will be set by a crew of hard-working volunteers who have devoted themselves to learning-by-doing the duties required by a ship. And under those sails on her decks, another crew will musically relate life at sea from the decks of hundreds of ships that she represents: songs of pubs and waterfront dives from around the world, songs of pirates, merchantmen, naval battles, and songs of just plain adoration for what the *Star of India* represents.

This year the line-up includes the ever-popular Jackstraws, with their high energy and flamboyant dress; Bill Dempsey, instrumental in Dana Point's maritime celebrations; the Westlin Weavers, an all-female group with stunning harmonies; and Gilman Carver, a mainstay of these festivals. It will also feature Holdstock and McCloud from the San Francisco Bay area with an emphasis on seafaring and landside songs of the Pacific coast, reaching as far back as the gold rush. In addition, this crew will join in the chanting while demonstrating the mastery of ship's lines, capstans, and canvas. They join a distinguished list of featured performers from years past, including Tom Lewis, a Canadian who has sung on the *Star* numerous times; Skip Henderson, a seafarer from Alameda; Lou Killen, now returned to England and a master of a capella sea music; Pint 'n' Dale, a duo from Seattle; and most recently, Oceans Apart, blending Scottish and Welsh influences.

The foundation of all this must rest securely on the shoulders of San Diego's own Sam Hinton and Johnny Walker, who for so many years were the bulwarks of this event.

Of all music of and about the sea, the chanteys are unique. They were, and, thanks to events and participants in events of this kind, are a window into the work-

ings of a ship that relied on the winds of nature to propel her on her way. While it is true that the wind is the force that moves the ship, it is also true that the muscle of the crew was the force that raised the anchor, set the sails, and accomplished all the other work she required. The roaring call-and-answer of the chanteyman and crew set the rhythm for the mighty pulls these jobs needed so that they all heaved together. The responsibility of the chanteyman (or leader) was to set a pace and alter it if need be, suitable to the effort and length of time required for completion. A chantey for raising anchor might require as little as five minutes if the chain ran vertically but if many lengths had paid out away from the bow, it could require up to an hour to work her up to the anchor's position and then to hoist away. In contrast, a walkaway chantey like "Blow the Man Down" seldom ran more than a minute. Pumping chanteys could cover a wide span of time depending on how wet the bilge had become. Many chanteys could be used for different tasks - hoisting sail, raising anchor, setting and resetting sail - while some had specific applications and were used for nothing else. Add to these the work songs of the dockside stevedores, the cotton stowers, and the grain and coal loaders, and the rich tapestry of sea music emerges. The one common thread of all sea music, whether chanteys, docksiders, forebiters, or drinking songs is that they had a leader with a strong voice and a roaring, rousing chorus to respond with their parts, such as:

Leader: *When I was a little lad 'twas then my mother told me...*

Chorus: *Way, haul away, we'll haul away Joe...*

Leader: *That if I did not kiss the girls their lips would all get moldy...*

Chorus: *Way, haul away, we'll haul away Joe.*

So, come along. Fulfill a childhood dream. Run away from home and go to sea for a day, never leaving the Embarcadero side. Feel the sea breeze as it fills the sails of a living ship. Join the rousing chantey chorus as you heave on a line and maybe, just maybe, go into the waterfront pub afterward for a friendly libation upon your return to dry land.


The *Star of India* is docked at the San Diego Maritime Museum at the foot of Ash Street on the Embarcadero. This event opens at 10am on Sunday, May 18, and is free with a ticket to the museum.

CORRECTION



In last month's cover story about Joey Harris, Skid Roper's name was inadvertently omitted in the caption accompanying the adjacent photo. It should read:

Country Dick and the Snuggle Bunnies (left to right: Dan McLain, Robin Jackson, Nino Del Pesco, Skid Roper, Paul Kamanski, Joey Harris)



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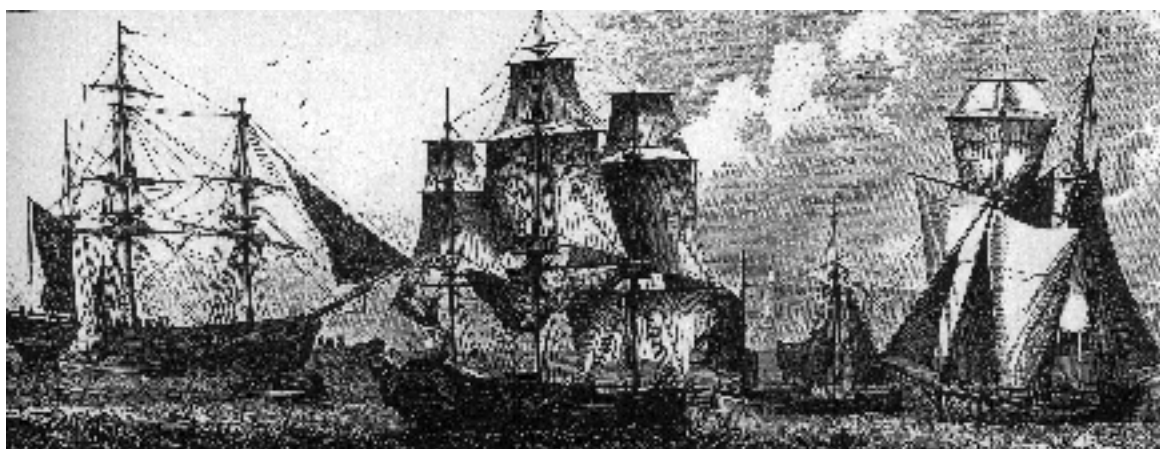
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GARY TILLERY





David Grisman and his Bluegrass Experience Come to the Roots Festival

by Dwight Worden

Few have had a greater influence on modern acoustic music than David Grisman. "The Dawg," as he is affectionately called, has played with everyone from Bill Monroe, the father of bluegrass, to Jerry Garcia. Since the Dawg is coming to town as part of the Adams Avenue Roots and Folk Festival, let's take a closer look at the man and his music.

While perhaps best known for his brilliant mandolin work and his playing in Old and in the Way with Jerry Garcia, Peter Rowan, and Vassar Clements in the 1970s, Grisman's musical background actually began with jazz. As a teenager in New York, Grisman was already playing the piano, saxophone, and mandolin. While at New York University in 1963 he began playing with the Even Dozen Jug Band, which included, among others, Maria Muldaur and John Sebastian. Then in 1966 bluegrass standout Red Allen invited Grisman to join his Kentuckians. In this standout group the still young Grisman honed his already considerable mandolin chops and bluegrass style. He reports what a thrill it was to play with some of his bluegrass heroes and reminisces about the hours he spent listening to old LPs of the bluegrass pioneers and the effort he put in learning their licks. To this day, at the drop of a hat, he can rip out, note for note, any of the Bill Monroe mandolin licks one might like to hear.

In 1967 Grisman joined Peter Rowan in the progressive bluegrass band called Earth Opera. With Rowan, Grisman created an avant garde sound that was a blend of jazz, country, folk, rock, and pop music. Grisman then met Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead and played on the Dead's classic *American Beauty* album. It was through this connection with Jerry Garcia, an avid banjo player and bluegrass fan himself, that Grisman and Garcia, along with Peter Rowan, put together the now legendary Old and in the Way band.



Grisman with Jerry Garcia

Word has it that Jerry Garcia was a great admirer of Florida-based fiddle player Vassar Clements, and the chance to play with Vassar was a driving force in Garcia's pulling Old and in the Way together. As Grisman told it in one of his workshops called "An Hour with the Dawg," as they were driving Vassar in to town from the airport, Vassar noticed a billboard with Jerry Garcia's picture on it advertising a Grateful Dead concert, to which Vassar commented in genuine surprise, "Hey, Jerry, that guy looks a lot like you."



Old and in the Way album cover

Ever moving forward, after Old and in the Way, Grisman went on to form the Great American String Band with Muleskinner fiddle player Richard Greene. This group produced innovative music that, for the first time, was

characterized by the lengthy and intricate solos that would become a Grisman trademark.

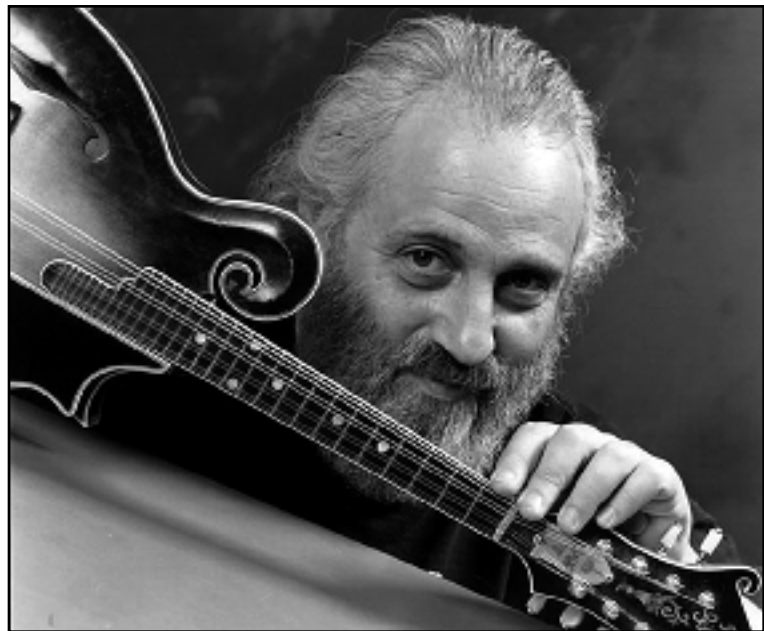
In 1976 Grisman assembled a new group comprised of Tony Rice on guitar, Todd Phillips on mandolin/bass, Joe Carrol on bass, and Darol Anger on fiddle. The David Grisman Quintet released its self-titled *Quintet* album on Kaleidoscope Records in 1977, soon becoming one of the seminal influences in the "newgrass" movement of the times, in large part due to its jazz influenced and intricate solos and harmonies. The Quintet's follow up album in 1978, *Hot Dawg*, was in many ways Grisman's break-through recording. It was released on A&M's jazz imprint, Horizon, and featured jazz violin legend Stéphane Grappelli (of Hot Club de France fame).



Violin legend Stéphane Grappelli and Grisman

Inevitable turnover occurred in the make-up of the Quintet, and by the time *Mondo Mando* was recorded in 1981, the group included Rob Wasserman on bass, Mark O'Connor on fiddle, Tony Rice on guitar, Darol Anger on fiddle, and Grisman on mandolin. In all, Grisman recorded four albums for Warner from 1980-83, with 1982's *Dawg Jazz/Dawg Grass* notable as the second release featuring Grappelli and presenting a creative blend of half swing and half bluegrass music.

As the Quintet years ended, Grisman



David "Dawg" Grisman

moved on to play with banjo player Béla Fleck, who to this day credits Grisman as one of his major influences. In 1985 Grisman formed yet another new group called Svinging with Svend, featuring seasoned jazz musicians Svend Asmussen on violin, Jim Kerwin on bass, Dimitrie Vandellos on guitar, and George Marsh on drums. This group produced music that was solidly jazz oriented, and was followed by the more traditional bluegrass recording *Home Is Where the Heart Is*, released in 1988.

which is a solidly traditional bluegrass band. Featuring the Dawg on mandolin and vocals; the Dawg's son, Samson Grisman on bass; Jim Nunnally on guitar (of John Reischman and the Jaybirds), Keith Little on five-string banjo (of Dolly Parton and the Country Gentleman); and Chad Manning on fiddle, this new group plays rockin' good traditional bluegrass, featuring the music of Bill Monroe and other bluegrass stalwarts. Started in the Dawg's home territory of San Francisco, performances of this new Grisman group regularly generate a line around the block.

Through it all David Grisman has remained a down-to-earth "regular guy." The following story tells a lot about the man and his attitude toward musicians and music. In 2001 the Wintergrass Festival in Tacoma, Washington booked as its head liner a 25-year reunion performance by the David Grisman Quintet featuring its original members. The huge auditorium was a quick sellout, with many people begging, pleading, and bargaining trying to get tickets. As I returned to my hotel room for the night, at about one in the morning the night before the concert, feeling sorry for the folks who couldn't get tickets to see the Dawg, I noticed a cluster of folks jamming in the hotel lobby. I looked closer and saw David "the Dawg" Grisman himself at the center of the circle, jamming away with whomever wanted to join in. To me that said it all: you couldn't get a ticket for love or money to see this famous man on stage, but hey, if you wanted to jam until the wee hours bumping shoulders with him in the lobby, come on down!

The David Grisman Bluegrass Experience will be appearing in a special concert on Saturday May 3, 2pm, as part of the Adams Avenue Roots Festival. Visit www.AdamsAveOnline.com or call (619) 282-7329 for tickets and information.



Original David Grisman Quintet (l to r): Todd Phillips, Grisman, Tony Rice, Joe Carrol, Darol Anger

Grisman then went on to found his own label, Acoustic Disc, producing a steady stream of recordings, including his highly acclaimed releases in 1991 with Jerry Garcia of Tone Poems. A series of duets and tours were wedged into this time period as well, including Grisman's duets with Tony Rice and with Doc Watson – the Doc and Dawg Tour and release. The Doc and Dawg Tour played San Diego at the El Cajon Performing Arts Center. Ever eclectic and ever on the move, Grisman then released his Latin influenced *Dawganova* in 1995, presenting yet another creative side to his multi-faceted musical persona.

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COMING HOME TO THE ROOTS

For a long time the Roots Festival and the San Diego Folk Festival was a homecoming for performers. There would be a whole series of festivals and concert bookings that lasted throughout the spring, summer, and fall with a layoff through the winter months and then it all started again. For many of the regulars in the 1970s through the early Oughts, our festival here in San Diego was a chance for many musicians to get together again, swap stories (good and bad), rebound, and along the way make some good music together for a much appreciative audience. It was also a chance to meet new people and carry the word about the San Diego music scene across the country. If someone found a new fiddle tune, or guitar tuning (ask Mary McCaslin about that), or a really exciting new or old set of lyrics to a song, or the telling of a story, it was going to come out here, and for the next year people would be singing it or playing it or telling it and each one in the doing adding their bit to the Folk Process.

That homecoming has sort of dropped off during the past few years, but it's making a kind of comeback this year at the new processed Adams Avenue Roots and Folk Festival. Some of the people who played some of those early festivals are coming back and hopefully bringing some of that homecoming spirit with them. Kathy Larisch and Carol McComb will be back with us again. In the very beginning the festival was sort of born in Carol McComb's living room behind the old Blue Guitar on Midway Drive. That was back in 1967, and Kathy and Carol would play at

Recordially, Lou Curtiss

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

the first three festivals, help with the founding of Folk Arts Rare Records, and then move on to other things, getting back together three years ago and now back with us again this year. Ray Bieri was also part of the festival that first year and he is back with us this year both solo and with the all-star aggravation High, Wide and Handsome. That group will also include Clark Powell and his dobro guitar (Clark played with Ray at the third San Diego Folk Festival in 1969). Another returnee who first played at that 1969 festival is Mary McCaslin, who has been at many Folk and Roots Festivals over the years. She has expanded the western songwriting genre to new limits and pioneered a unique and much-copied singing style not to mention those ever present unusual guitar tunings into a unique career. San Diego folksinger-songwriter Bob LeBeau was writing and singing his own hand-crafted songs before most anyone talked about singer-songwriters and was an established part of the San Diego folk scene when he first played at the fourth San Diego Folk Festival in 1970. He's been back too few times over the years, but he'll be with us this year. Curt Bouterse has been with the festival since the very beginning and it wouldn't be a festival without his banjar, hammered dulcimer, and Southeast Asian pipes (on which he plays Southern Appalachian fiddle tunes naturally). Curt has finally gotten around to recording a couple of

CDs (for the Dancing Cat people). The new one is a duet with old buddy Bob Webb and Curt ought to have some to sell at the festival. Expect Curt and Kathy and Carol to team up for a duet or two as they did in the early days.

Tom "Tomcat" Courtney will be with us as he often is. Tom first played at the fifth Festival in 1971 (the first year he was in San Diego) and has played a pile of them since. He's another one with a new CD out finally after 35 years playing around San Diego (he did record four sides on the old *San Diego Blues Jam* LP in 1974). This is the best he's done and he's booked for national touring and European Festivals in the fall. See the CD review in this issue on page 18. Martin Henry also first played at the fourth Folk Festival in 1970 and he'll be back this year. Walt Richards (of Trails and Rails who'll be here this year) played at the first festival in 1967 as part of another group. Patty Hall joined us in the mid-'70s for a festival or two and she's with us again this year with her songs and stories. Those are most of the folks who are coming home to the annual Homecoming, which has taken place on Adams Avenue for the last 17 years.

If you are reading this after May 3-4, you missed it, but you can inquire about next year's dates by getting a hold of the Adams Avenue Business Association and telling them you want more of the same and want to bring your uncle down from Enumclaw, Washington, so you need those dates now.

Now there are lots of good people who have come to these homecomings more recently (some of them for the first time this year even), and I've been talking them up in previous columns so you'll know who to check out. So do it, and enjoy it.

like to talk about the real old time country songs. (Ray will be 82 this year and I know they'd love to hear from San Diego fans who remember their 11 visits to San Diego.) You could probably get an address from Fred and Cathy Zipp (good friends of the Pattersons) at this year's Festival. I also heard from Sue Draheim and then Mac Benford about a reunion of Dr. Humbead's New Tranquility String Band (who, along with opening for the Grateful Dead at the Fillmore and Avalon Ballrooms, played at the third San Diego Folk Festival). That would certainly be special.

Right now in the digitization process Russ Hamm and I are up to the 7th Folk Festival, which featured Wade and Julia Mainer, U Utah Phillips, Norman Kennedy, Michael Cooney, Hank and Sandy Bradley, Fiddlin' Red Simpson and the Old Scratch Band, Dr. Avery P. Snootful's Medicine Show, the Sweets Mill Mountain Boys, the Old Hat Band, Jim Ringer, Otis Pierce, Mary McCaslin, Sandy and Caroline Paton, and a whole lot more. That was the 1973 Festival and along with that, we were doing concerts at Folk Arts Rare Records, so all of them will be digitized too and added to the collection (some of those concerts include Sam Hinton, Tom Waits, Wayne Stromberg, Johnny Walker, Sam Chatmon, Ringer and McCaslin, Martin Henry, Holly Tannen, and even the Oak Farts Ramblers). Some of the stuff is being posted at Folk Arts Rare Records.com for your listening and downloading pleasure.

There's so much of this material that we've even talked about an online radio station that would play nothing but material from these festivals and other live stuff from the Sound Library, recorded and collected by yours truly.

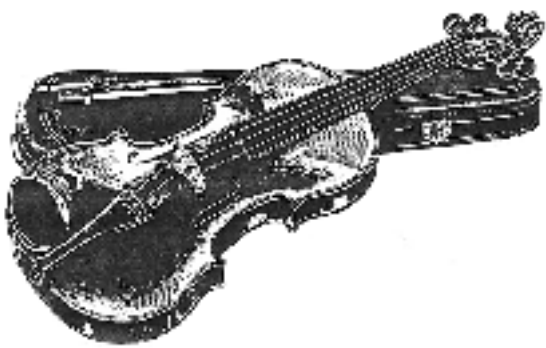
Considering that no radio station in San Diego is willing to play any kind of folk or traditional music (Shame! Shame! Shame!) and hasn't for a long, long time, playing it on line might be the only way. I've sure got the material. I just need a few people to speak up and tell folks what kind of music you want to hear.

A FINAL THOUGHT

I've put 20 San Diego Folk Festivals together (mostly at San Diego State), 17 Adams Avenue Roots Festivals (whether I got credit for them or not), four Blues Festivals (with varying degrees of success), and 13 Adams Avenue Street Fairs (from 1994-2003). So that makes 54 music festivals I've organized. I'd like to see THE 55th LOU CURTISS OLD TIME SONG FESTIVAL. Anybody want to help me with that one? Blues, jazz, folk songs, doo wop, rockabilly, honkytonk country, old timey, bluegrass, vaudeville, i.e., all the old time songs that Lou Curtiss likes to listen to and none that he doesn't. Is that only a dream? Probably. Have a good musical month.

Recordially,
Lou Curtiss

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DIGITAL UPDATE

Now this process I'm currently working on, thanks to the Grammy grant to digitize the reel-to-reel tapes from all those early concerts and festivals for inclusion in a Lou Curtiss Collection at the Library of Congress and the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology Archives, has been very gratifying for me. For one thing, it's put me back in touch with a lot of musicians who played at some of those early festivals like Ray and Ina Patterson who aren't playing professional anymore but still

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10 YEARS AFTER, LOCAL SINATRA FANS ASSESS FRANK'S CAREER

by Steve Thorn

On May 14, 1998, millions of television viewers watched the final episode of "Seinfeld." At 10:50pm Pacific Standard Time, Frank Sinatra died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles following a lengthy illness.

The following day, media pundits turned in mixed reviews for the grand finale of Jerry Seinfeld's critically acclaimed sit-com "about nothing." However, Sinatra's lengthy career had certainly been about something, and journalists and popular culture historians were faced with the daunting task of summarizing the contributions of arguably the greatest popular singer of the 20th century.

A decade later, Sinatra's legacy remains assured. The Frank Sinatra Estate, created and operated by his family, are creating entertainment product for the market place with the same efficiency as Elvis Presley's TCB (Taking Care of Business) Enterprises. Most notable among the giant array of reissues set for release this month will be *Nothing but the Best*, a 22-song CD featuring selections from Sinatra's tenure at Reprise, the record label he created in 1960. The album will come with a previously unreleased version of "Body and Soul," and a commemorative United States Postal Service Sinatra stamp. (Post offices will also be selling the stamp on May 13.)

The *San Diego Troubadour* recently contacted a distinguished group of local Sinatra aficionados for their memories of Frank, ten years later.

Harry "Happy Hare" Martin is a San Diego radio legend, whose intuitive knowledge of what was hip allowed him to make a smooth transition between the end of the big bands and the arrival of rock and roll. His philanthropic projects outside of the radio studio were also admirable. This hare has a tale to share.

Harry Martin: I doubt that any episode captured his spirit more graphically than the adventure when I, along with [my wife] Carol, were his sole invitees backstage when Frank

performed one of his "Frank Sinatra, a Man and His Music" television shows at NBC Burbank.

Carol and I arrived amid the controlled back stage bedlam as the minutes ticked down to Don Costa's downbeat and Ed McMahon's brisk opening show announcement, all aimed at heralding Frank Sinatra's take-over of their lives for the next hour. Frank's had a gravitational pull stronger than anyone else I ever knew.

A deafening silence fell over the back stage area. I looked to McMahon and mouthed, "What's happening?" He subtly motioned to me to look behind us. It was Frank, sweeping out of his dressing room, smiling broadly, those blue eyes twinkling, and he was headed straight for Carol and me.

We turned and ran toward him, closing the distance between us. Carol had known him in Miami when he came to star in *Tony Rome* at her dad's "Flipper" Studio. During the *Tony Rome* shoot, acting as her producer father's administrative aide, she often dealt with Frank and the "Rome" company, which had leased the studio.

Apparently she had done a good job; she got the first hug.

I had seen him alone several times in the past years, the most gripping being in Miami on the *Tony Rome* set. I had come to pick up Carol, marry her, and whisk her back to Detroit where Specs Howard and I were to begin our new radio show. I happened on him in a corner on the set when he was on the phone, speaking heatedly with his wife, Mia Farrow, apparently dusting her off with finality, because she wouldn't come join him in Miami during her production break on *A Dandy in Aspic*, a film she was shooting in London. Realizing what was going on, I started to leave him to his call, but he had grabbed me by the arm, making me a reluctant witness to one of the seminal events in his life.

But, that sad event happened a couple of years ago. Frank was aglow at our Burbank reunion. Mainly, he asked playfully about our marriage and how it was going. Realizing that we were on a short tether, I started to give him

a short version review when his sharp blue eyes lost focus, and he went into an alpha state that all good entertainers enter just before a performance. I recognized what was happening and cut it short, when his handler jumped in to clear the path for his entry on stage.

Frank smiled at us through a mental fog this time and turned toward the stairs that led up a flight to the stage and his mark where he would stand when the theme hit the air. He reached the foot of the stairs when he stopped to greet Florence LaRue, the darling cupcake of the Fifth Dimension, who just happened to be standing where he would have to pass her on his way to the stage. Florence was grinning expectantly at Frank, and we saw why. Frank, his fog momentarily lifted, reached out, swept her up in his arms and almost shouted, "Hey baby! Do you want to go with me later?" Florence exuberantly shouted, "Yeah!" Frank had accomplished this transaction, barely breaking stride on his way to the stage.

I recall that he sang "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "One for the Road." I learned that most of the songs he sang were from his classic *Songs For Swingin' Lovers* LP. Time compressed for us, and soon Frank finished the show and left the stage, obviously enraptured by his performance. Carol and I walked toward him, but his attention was focused on his manager who had arrived at his side, smiling. The manager's smile vanished by the time we arrived. We heard Frank say, "I can't do better than this. We're going with the dress rehearsal show," apparently meaning that he would not do the actual show, intended for the NBC brass, Budweiser distributors, and their bejeweled wives, waiting in the sweltering line outside.

His manager was aghast. "Frank, these are important people who have been standing out in the boiling sun for an hour. You can't do this."

Frank's tone hardened. "Who says?"

His manager, subdued by Frank's ominous tone, walked off to make the announcement out front, that Mr. Sinatra's performance had been cancelled. I have often wondered how he framed that one. Carol and I fell in silently



with Frank when his handler asked him to walk to a microphone into which he would record a promo for radio and television.

The production man, handling the mic, told Frank, "It will take just a minute, Mr. Sinatra. We have to rewind the tape." Frank, with an icy stare, said, "You mean the tape isn't ready?" He walked away from the man like he wasn't there. We waited for him to come out of his funk, before thanking him and saying goodbye, but the ice melted as he walked over to Florence and took her arm. With Florence in tow, he walked to the huge doors, paused, turned, and waved goodbye to us. We waved back, but he had already faded away as if the doors were a star gate: one minute there, the next gone. Where? To Frank's galaxy, no doubt.

You may ask if this was the end of Frank's relationship with NBC and Budweiser. The ratings for his dress rehearsal show came out and scored big. Budweiser quickly re-upped for another show in the series. The principal reason he got away with it was he was right. The dress rehearsal was a dazzling show that could not have been improved upon, the greater truth. Everyone falls silent before the truth.

I'm sensitive to the number of young people in the media now who, reading this, may not relate to this allegory about Frank. This is not really about him, but about the spirit that he symbolized, a warrior who gave no ground and won when he knew he was right.

There is a disclaimer here. Do not try this at work unless you are damned good at what you do.

Pacific Beach businessman Joe Randazzo is the best-known Sinatra archivist in San Diego. He co-hosted the long-running radio show "Sinatra on Sunday" with the late Rod Page on KFMB-AM and, later, KPOP. Page, Randazzo, and this writer collaborated on a seminar titled "A Frank Discussion: Sinatra's Music" for Coronado Adult Education in 1999. By his own account, Randazzo estimates he saw Sinatra perform over 100 times.

Joe Randazzo: When did I first notice that there was a man named Sinatra? I cannot recall my first recollection of Frank Sinatra as he was there when I was born and now, ten years after his passing and in another century, he is still very much a part of my life and a positive influence on how to conduct myself.

My "baby song" as I recall was "Polka Dots and Moonbeams," a very successful tune that he did with Tommy Dorsey. I remember asking my parents about this man and why he stood out way above the other singers of his day. They always told me that he was the best and was very serious about his craft. I thought were they saying that just because we were also Italian, but then again they didn't say that about Perry Como or Johnny Desmond, Frankie Laine or Tony Bennett, and so many other Italian-Americans in the music business - only Frank Sinatra.

As the years went by I grew to appreciate Sinatra's talent more and more. In the '50s and '60s my appreciation grew even more with his work in films. How could such a mortal man become such a giant? And as time passed I dis-

covered that Sinatra was always there for every occasion in my life with his songs. Sinatra was there when I was sad, glad, or bad; there is a song for every mood and a song for every occasion in your life.

It is extremely difficult to pick a favorite Sinatra album as that again goes with mood and occasion and every stage of life. I am very fond of *Trilogy* because instead of dealing with a concept or theme, it deals with songs from different periods of time: the past, the present, and the future. "The Future" is a score of what Sinatra thought he should do before his time ran out; it was considered controversial by most of his fans, but I thought it was in great taste and Sinatra was very courageous in putting his ultimate ending in song. I have also grown to appreciate *Come Dance with Me*. Billy May teamed with Sinatra to do an album, now almost 50 years old, and yet it sounds as fresh as if it were pressed today.

My favorite song is not a Sinatra signature song. In fact, not many people even know that there are words to the very beautiful "Moonlight Serenade." Glenn Miller's song was given words by Mitch Parrish ("Stardust," "Volare") and I think it has a very special place in my heart. Incidentally, behind it is "Just the Way You Look Tonight" and "Old Devil Moon." I do believe that the best recording of a tune that Sinatra ever made, considering the Nelson Riddle arrangement, the precision of the orchestra, the beautiful creation of Rogers and Hart and especially Sinatra's voice, which was at an absolute peak, was when he recorded "Spring Is Here." I find that to be the best of his best.

Local writer Dirk Sutro is the author of the best selling *Jazz For Dummies*, a popular text in the continuing "Dummies" series. From 1999 to 2004, Sutro hosted KPBS-FM's "The Lounge," a community arts talk show. He is currently the publicist for UCSD's music department.

Dirk Sutro: Frank Sinatra, to me, was a jazz singer - he did not have the usual prerequisite improvisational skill, but his interpretations of dozens of the finest American popular songs swung like crazy. Over the years he performed with countless jazz greats ranging from Tommy Dorsey to Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie, who always had hot improvisers in his band, and his strong presence regardless of context is a testament to his subtle talent. My favorite Sinatra LP [I have it on vinyl; it sounds great] is *Come Fly with Me*, for songs including the title track as well as "Autumn in New York" and "Isle of Capri." Titles on this album run a global gamut as Sinatra captures the optimism and wanderlust of the late '50s, when the idea of jetting away for an exotic vacation was being discovered by middle class America.

Don Freeman wrote about entertainment for the *San Diego Union-Tribune* for more than 50 years. He was a guest on "The Lounge" in 2001 and recalled an interview he had with Sinatra backstage at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas during the '70s.

continued on next page.

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Frank Sinatra, continued.

Don Freeman: I met the publicist at Caesar's Palace, and he said, "Look, I've got bad news. Frank's got a tough schedule, and he can only give you 15 minutes." Well, I didn't like that. But we went in and he introduced me and we sat down at a table. I said, "Mr. Sinatra, Frank, you take these harsh consonant sounds and you make them come out so musical. How do you do that?"

Well, 45 minutes later, he was still talking about singing. Of course, I asked other questions in the interim, but mostly we talked about singing. For one thing, he told me that his hero was Bing Crosby, and that when he was growing up in Hoboken, he had a picture of Bing Crosby in his room. He said, "All of us would-be singers were Crosby-struck."

He talked about how he learned to sing from watching Tommy Dorsey. When he was the boy singer for Dorsey, he would sit there with Jo Stafford, and Frank would look at Tommy Dorsey playing the trombone. He couldn't figure out what he [Dorsey] did to sustain the long notes. What did he do? And Dorsey knew he was being watched, so after a couple of nights he said, "Well, kid, did you see what I did?" Frank said, "Well, I think so... what is it?" Dorsey said, "Well, I use what is called a pinhole. I open my mouth just a little bit on my side and I let a lot of air in, so that means I can play the note much longer than it's written."

Ida Garcia is the charismatic hostess of "Rugcutters Swing," heard Saturday mornings on Jazz 88.3 KSDS-FM. Her broadcasts always contain a segment devoted to Sinatra.

Ida Garcia: I feel he had style and class in the way he sang. He wanted things just right. He was one of the artists of his time to take pride in his work. And he worked with some solid band leaders like Count Basie and Billy May. [My favorite Sinatra song is] "The Lady Is a Tramp," because it's me. [My favorite Sinatra album is] *Come Dance with Me* for the album cover alone. And the songs are wonderfully fun.

Few local entertainers have done more to keep the Sinatra songs in circulation than David Patrone. The vocalist's current CD is titled *Uptown*.

David Patrone: I never really knew much about Frank Sinatra as a kid. When you grow up in a place like Philly, you certainly hear him everywhere, but it just becomes a part of the landscape – like something you never notice until it's gone. Sometimes you feel it when you move to another part of the country or the world. I joined the Marines at 17 and in the next ten years, I found myself in some strange places. Maybe it escaped me at first what was different about these new places, because the soundtrack still played on in the background; familiar music always drifted from some café or lobby nearby and I felt at home, without even knowing the words.

I hated pop music as an adolescent, preferring to listen to classical music and Americana, but when I saw the movie *The Blues Brothers*, something in the music tugged at my core. Both Johnny Lee Hooker and Cab Calloway planted seeds in my soul and I couldn't get over the dichotomy of holiness and criminal that the Blues Brothers embodied. A sympathetic chord vibrated throughout my being. There was something true underneath. I had an emotionally troubled childhood and although the blues too had always been playing in the Philly background, I never heard it until that movie.

When I got into the Marines, I started to hear different music. I started to hear the blues in the places I was stationed. Dirty blues from down south, Mississippi, Memphis, South Carolina, and North Carolina, not to mention being around people who were very different than a white Philly boy, wannabe blues man who was knockin' on their daughters' doors, courtesy of the USMC. I played harmonica back then, although I was horrible and knew virtually nothing about how to play the instrument. I searched for the blues [not knowing it was already inside me] and the social aspect that came with it. I tried to make it happen. I drank myself poor and stayed out all night. I heard the blues in my voice when I called running cadence for the company and I felt an amazing wellspring of power that I tapped into when I sang it out.

Despite the comfort I felt in the blues, I soon began to yearn again for something. The



blues wasn't enough. The music was repetitive and I found that the only thing I was really listening to was the soul of the singer. I can remember saying to myself, "I wish some of these guys would sing classical music, it would be amazing." [Someone should have slapped me and given me an old gospel album.] About the time that Garth Brooks began to wail about low places and whiskey rounds, I found Ray Charles.

Without knowing it, I was beginning to yearn for jazz. I didn't understand what I thought was jazz at the time – way out ruminations by cats who were trying to be Dizzy or Coltrane. None of that made any sense to me. I was yearning for something though and yearning hard. I learned every Ray Charles song from the Atlantic recordings, every one. I couldn't afford the CDs, so I shoplifted them out of a Marine Corps seven-day store on Cherry Point, North Carolina. That was the only time I had ever reverted back to my pre-Marine Corps street ethos and having just remembered that, I'll have to find a way to make amends. That's how strong my need was for the music. I risked the Marine Corps brig to get my hands on a three-CD compilation of Ray Charles' Atlantic recordings, not even knowing what it would sound like. I read the liner notes on the back and whatever that cat said was what I thought I needed, and we were right. I couldn't wait for my roommate to leave so I could use his CD player. When no one was around, I tried to play along on a trumpet I had picked up in a pawn shop for \$75 in Havelock, North Carolina.

A couple of years later I was 21 and I found myself standing in front of a CD display looking for a classical piece, "Romance For Strings No. 1 in G" by Beethoven; that never fails to bring tears to my eyes [except when it's played too fast]. They didn't have the conductor I was looking for. I glanced to my left [the jazz section was next to the classical] and there was Frank Sinatra tipping his hat to me from the cover of the *Best of Reprise* CD. I thought, "I should check this guy out. He's got the right kind of hat, I've heard his name all my life, and I have ten bucks burning a hole in my pocket."

\$8.99 had never changed so much in a man's life. Here it was: a man singing the "complicated blues" tunes I was looking for in a way I immediately connected with. It was the stepping stone for a young man who somehow missed the beginnings of jazz while growing up in the town that produced the likes of Dizzy, Coltrane, and Philly Joe Jones. Without Sinatra I would have languished in a musically unsatisfied existence, not sure where I fit in between modern pop, hip hop, and soul/blues/R&B, drinking my nights and working my days without a musical compass and without a spiritual leader.

Since that day, Frank has traveled with me all over the globe. It started with the song "Nancy" because I had just broken up with a girl named Nancy and I didn't know anything about Nancy Sinatra or Jimmy Van Heusen, or Sammy Cahn, or Cole Porter or Frank's Conductor/arrangers at the time, Nelson Riddle and Billy May. His recordings and that music, American Standards, CHANGED EVERYTHING. Maybe it was the sum of all my circumstance and emotion. At 21 I'd already seen quite a few harrowing things and here was a guy whose voice said what I was feeling, perfectly, without remorse, in perfect pitch and effortless phrasing in a tonal quality that said "I love you" and "come and get me you bastards!" all at the same time. This was the "me I wanted to be" singing to the "me I was," only better, because I couldn't sing like that [that didn't stop me from trying though].

His library of recordings is so extensive that even 15 years later I haven't heard them all. My favorites change from season to season, moment to moment. Sometimes as soon as I hear my favorite, it's done and my new favorite

is whatever is coming up next.

A couple of years ago, I picked up a recording from somewhere called *Only the Lonely* and it kills me, slays me dead, right there when I hear it. It's too slow to sing at a show, people just gloss over and die; but that song catapults me into the nethersphere where I flop around and writhe on the floor of my mind from relating to that pain he's laying down. I wonder if it's Ava he's thinking about, or Nancy Sr., or his own failures [or victories]. He sure wasn't immune to negative introspection. He called himself a "24-karat manic depressive" and it was true. You can hear it on the whole album but that song rips me to shreds, especially the last line and the last three notes: "the heartbreak only the lone-ly-know." *Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely* was another of his many stunning collaborations with Nelson Riddle.

I also love "Just One of Those Things" from *Songs for Young Lovers/Swing Easy!*, arranged by George Siravo and conducted by Nelson Riddle. It's a perfect arrangement and it swings while staying poignant. It's also the first album after Sinatra's "Great Slump" and the beginning of his work with Nelson Riddle. I believe it's considered one of the first "concept albums."

You hear this phrase a lot: "The thing about Frank Sinatra is..." Well, that's just it. Sinatra did it all – his life, his music, an Oscar, 11 Grammys, two Golden Globes, uncountable other awards, his philanthropy, his failures, his ups, his downs, his pain, his love, his luck [both good and bad], and his success tell an amazing story. His was a full life and if you haven't had a chance to read about it, you really should. You could learn a lot about livin' from Frank Sinatra. He climbed to the top and landed at the bottom and pulled it back up to the top again several times in global proportions. He was loved and hated and revered and despised, sometimes by the same person. His

actual life was a piece of art, simultaneously beautiful and ignoble in the making, sublime and terrible in the examination. I've never heard anyone discount Sinatra as an artist; they may say something like, "I like so and so better" or, "that guy was a real @\$\$@!" but I've never heard anyone say, "I don't like Frank Sinatra." He was bonafide. He was 100 percent real.

Musically, his phrasing is pure natural and yet tremendously difficult to duplicate without sounding contrived. He worked with the best musicians in history, and he sang songs written by the greatest songwriters and lyricists of all time. His was a voice that still touches

everyone, in every walk of life in and out of America.

Often I hear people say they remember where they were on September 11th or when JFK was shot. I remember where I was when I first heard Frank Sinatra had died. I was married at the time and we were lying in bed as my wife was flipping the channels on the TV. When I saw a glimpse of his face and heard the word "was," I yelled out, "Wait! Go back!" to the news that was briefly reviewing his life at 2am. I wanted to correct the reporter when she said, "Frank Sinatra was..." She should have said, "Frank Sinatra will forever be..."



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The Ballad of LARRY GRANO

by Bart Mendoza

San Diego has many top-notch musicians in its geographic boundaries, but few could match the schedule of drummer Larry Grano. A multiple threat, Grano is a mainstay of the San Diego music scene, a larger-than-life musician known for his percussive skills, soulful voice, and razor-sharp wit. Currently drumming for the Eve Selis Band, Grano is one of the town's musical unsung heroes, rarely in the spotlight but responsible for laying down the rhythm at countless great nights of music in San Diego over the decades.

He was born at Mercy Hospital in October 1961, growing up in the Allied Gardens area and attending Patrick Henry High, class of 1979. As it is with most children, music wasn't Grano's first choice for an afternoon's activity. "In our neighborhood we had about 20 to 30 kids," he recalled. "Baseball, football, basketball, hockey - we played everything." Grano did own a snare drum, but sports took precedence over music. "After realizing I wouldn't be pitching in the World Series, I went back to the drums," he joked. Tom Boyd of the legendary local band Listen was giving lessons at a local music store and Grano's father signed him up.

He considers the "melting pot" of his family's listening habits to have been an influence. His personal musical influences, however, are harder to pin down. He includes the Beatles, Elvis Costello, and Charlie Parker as favorites, but adds, "that's a big question. Do you mention Mozart and leave out Beethoven? Buddy Rich but not Max Roach? If there's a performance on a track that gets me, that's an influence. Local or international, I don't care who it is. It could be the Beach Boys' backgrounds on [Elton John's] "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me," or one note by Thelonious Monk while his foot is scraping the floor... or someone at Lestat's." He does consider his instructors/teachers key to his success, citing Boyd, Malcolm Rosenberger, Enola Williamson, Mike

Holguin, Manny Cepeda, and Cliff Almond.

He first began performing in Jr. High, alongside guitarist Craig Goldy and bassist Greg McKinney. "Both much more advanced players. A failed attempt at the talent show broke that up," he said. "I think the band that won played Chicago's 'Color My World.' They had a ringer on flute," Grano laughed. Since then he has been a perennial on local stages. In the '70s it was with Wizard. During the '80s he performed with Artisan, 3-D, and Pranx. From 1990 to 1995 he had a stint with Private Domain. Meanwhile 1996-2005, he was a member of Rockola. Currently he can be found drumming with Selis as well as Mark DeCervo and Four Eyes.

More recently, he has become one of the area's top session drummers. "I've been in groups all my career, playing both covers and originals," he pointed out. "When I left Rockola, I made a decision not to join a band for a while and test the waters of independence. For me, it's made a great difference."

Initially the session world was not easy to break into. "Early on, as I grew in confidence with my playing, I went to some studios to look for work," he recalled. Grano found that it was a very small pool of talent that did the lion's share of the work. "Every place I went, I got the same answer, 'To get studio work in town, you'll have to get rid of two guys - Jim Plank and Duncan Moore.'" Grano did eventually pick up the odd production work, but it was a Selis session with acclaimed producer Alan Sanderson (Rolling Stones, Burt Bacharach, Elton John) that got the ball rolling.

"Unlike most drummers that just lay down a groove, Larry's performance usually comes from what the vocalist is doing. He has a great understanding of playing to the artist's feel, lyrics, and vocal melody, probably due to the fact that he is an accomplished singer himself," said Sanderson. "I don't think there are any styles he can't play. I would compare him with the great studio drummer Jim Keltner;

this community is very lucky to have him."

Grano's work can be heard in the Reelin' in the Years production of *Soul to Soul* on Atlantic records as well as albums by Dove Linkhorn's *What's in a Name?* and Four Eyes' release *Sweet on the Vine*. This year will see Grano appear on numerous releases, including new discs from DeCervo, Eve Selis, Mark Jackson, Carol Ames, Anthony Molinaro, and Paulo de la Rosa. The bulk of his time away from the studio is spent with the Eve Selis Band, with whom he's now toured England twice, and the side project Cactus, Twang, and Whyte. "They're great to work with, easy-going," he opined. "The music is the focus."

Unusually for a drummer, he can also be found fronting a band in the funk and soul group the Soul Persuaders. Grano actually came to the group late in their career. The combo was formed by well-known local musicians Mark and Steve Siers. "They had a great group in town, along with their brother Ken," he explained. "[But] the clientele for parties or dance clubs demands a certain play list. When the Siers put together the Soul Persuaders, it was a chance to play stuff they wanted to play."

Grano joined up with the band at local watering hole Jose Murphy's. "Like other musicians, I would go and sit in. I was always looking to drum, but Steve Siers, aka Sonny Drysdale, would give me a pep talk and have me sing." Initially, he wasn't very confident in his performances. "Once I was so nervous, I put my jacket over my head and the mic just so I could get through the song," Grano laughed at the memory. "I was later told that it helped their food sales when I covered up."

Always up for a challenge, Grano also keeps the beat for the Coronado Big Band. "I joined a year ago last August. With encouragement from SDSU drum instructor Mike Holguin, I've been playing a style that I've enjoyed, but never tackled," he explained. Occasional gigs with Four Eyes, alongside former roommate Mark DeCervo, continue.

Photo: Dennis Andersen



Drummer Larry Grano

Aside from those four groups, he considers himself a free agent. "I have mostly clients. But aside from these [groups] that I've mentioned, I'm in a band called Larry Grano," he quipped.

It's hard for him to pick a favorite show in his career as performer, but concerts with Rockola, backing music notables such as Denny Laine (Moody Blues/Wings), Joey Molland (Badfinger), and (Peter) and Gordon Waller are high among them. Meanwhile, near the top of the list during his tenure with the Soul Persuaders is a show with sax legend Tom Scott sitting in. "That was a great six-minute music lesson," Grano laughed. Close to his heart, however, is the time Was Not Was keyboardist Sir Harry Bowen spent as a member of the Soul Persuaders. "That came about through Dr. Feelgood and the Interns of Love," he recalled. "He was friends with one of their singers and came in and saw our band.

Being a fan, I told him, 'Anytime you want to sit in.'" To Grano's surprise, Bowen took him up on the offer and for the next year would drive down each week to perform with the band at Dick's Last Resort. "I learned so much just from watching him on stage," he enthused.

In addition to his drumming duties, Grano is a music teacher, giving private lessons and teaching at the Paul Green School of Rock. "Passing on what was given to me is a great way to say thank you to everyone who took the time to help me," he said.

After more than 30 years as a major part of San Diego's music scene, Grano still considers himself lucky. "Is it still fun? I'm blessed," he mused with a smile. "After all, music is all I've done for a living since Patrick Henry High said 'get out!'"

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by Chuck Schiele

I met Paul Abbott in the late '90s when he was playing guitar in a group called Rckless Abandon. I remember being quite impressed with their concern for quality and integrity as a band – and also in terms of the individual talents within. Namely, Paul Abbott. He struck me as being “one” with his guitar, “one” with the band, and “one” with the room. I was impressed because I don’t know many musicians who concentrate as such and therefore produce a result as such. Not knocking anyone, but just noting that his zen is obvious – especially in his music. Uniquely so.

Things change. Paul is good at riding changes. I see him from time to time and the thing that always strikes me about Paul Abbott is the fact that he is always collected, stable, confident, and firm about things – incredibly clear when both listening and speaking. He has the friendliest way of being very matter of fact about things.

Nowadays he doesn’t play in that band anymore, having chosen a path that led him to the art, science, and passion of mastering. About six months ago, I ran into him at some music event. We got on the subject of recording, mixing, and mastering when he told me that his business, ZenMastering, is the *only* dedicated mastering facility in San Diego. Others offer it on the side, but his facility is built and designed solely for this purpose.

Only? I couldn’t believe it, and there before me was the premise of an article worth writing.

Ohm!
Paul became increasingly interested in mastering and sound quality, which was reflected in the column he wrote for the *San Diego Troubadour* (2001-2004). He eventually became so expert on the subject that he moved on to writing for national publications that are leading authorities on the topic of recording and mastering. Meanwhile, he’s been busy with hundreds of projects from all over the globe.

We got together a few times for the purpose of this interview, appropriately in each of our studios. While visiting my studio, Paul pointed out a few things with regard to natural acoustics, making suggestions and music chat while nursing a hot cup of tea. We decided to record Paul on acoustic guitar, letting him call the day’s recording technique in order to illustrate how our mix will result following his mastering process. While visiting his studio we listened to examples of music while discussing the objectivity that goes into the process. Regardless of the array of little meters, dials, knobs, and computer gear, it’s a remarkably simple, yet efficient space.

I have collected our conversations from these visits into this interview.

CS: How long have you been mastering professionally?

PA: 10 years. I began mastering in 1998, and officially launched ZenMastering in 2000.

CS: How many projects have you mastered?

PA: Between 400 and 500. I’ve mastered music for artists in over 30 states in the U.S. and more

than 15 countries around the world, from folk and classical to country to punk...and everything in between. Clients run the gamut from indie garage bands to world-famous names.

CS: This studio is probably the cleanest studio I’ve seen in a while. What is it that makes your facility unique? What’s under the hood?

PA: Well, to begin with, ZenMastering is San Diego’s only dedicated mastering facility. There are recording studios that offer mastering on the side, but ZenMastering is the only local studio built from the ground up for mastering. This includes four main components: the room, the playback system, the mastering equipment, and the engineer.

Mastering is a completely different ball game from mixing, and it takes a different mind set as well as specialized equipment and knowledge. It begins with the room. The room I master in has been designed by George Augspurger, one of the world’s best-known acousticians. I hired him to consult on setting it up as a critical listening environment in which objective decisions could be made that guarantee that the mastered work translates successfully to the outside world. Then there’s the equipment. All the world’s top mastering facilities use audiophile-grade equipment, which is much different from the equipment you find in a recording studio, and ZenMastering is no exception. This includes speakers, amplifiers, converters, cables, equalizers, compressors, and limiters all chosen for accuracy and transparency. Finally, there’s the engineer: me. Mastering is all I do. And after years of specializing in a field, one develops a discerning sense for making informed decisions as well as specific knowledge and skills. All of the above-mentioned are things that no standard recording studio can offer, and I would imagine only a handful of mastering facilities anywhere can surpass ZenMastering for the combination of quality and consistency.

CS: You’ve written on the subject of professional sound in some pretty heavyweight publications.

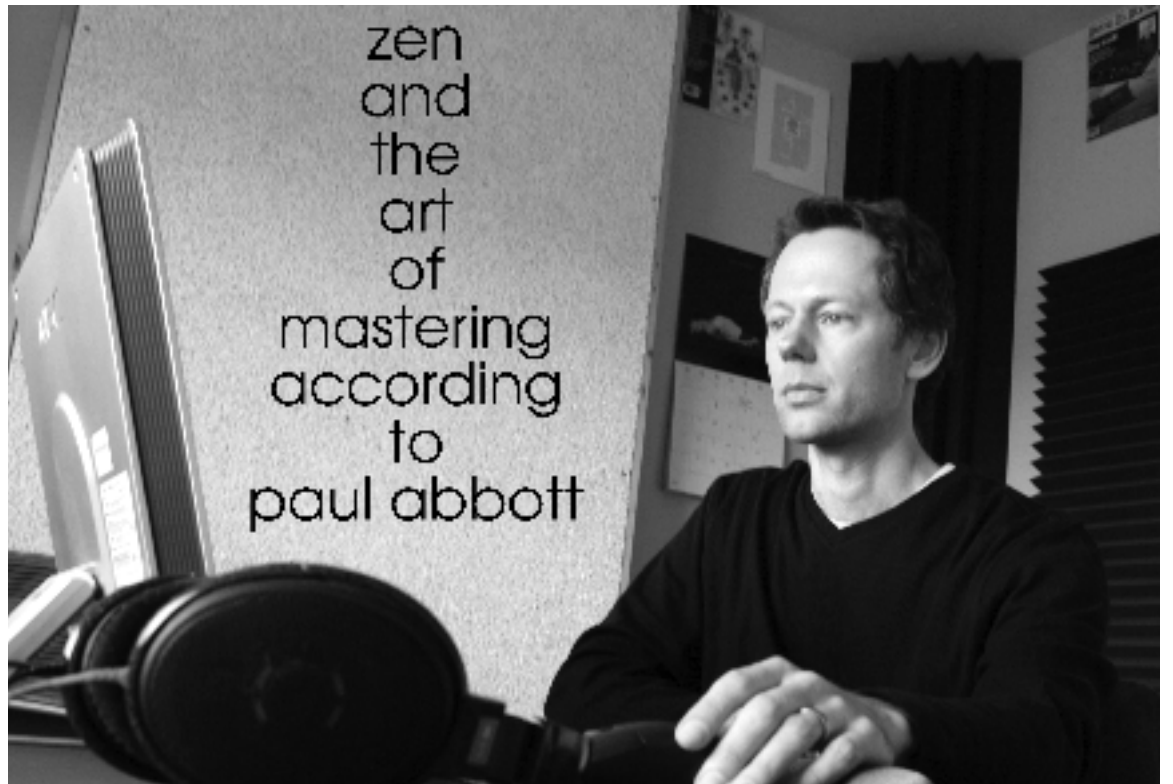
PA: I’ve been fortunate to have my audio articles published in some of the music industry’s most prestigious magazines. *EQ*, *TapeOp*, and *Sound on Sound* have all run articles of mine about recording and mastering. I’ve also been featured in *Music Connection’s* annual Masters of Mastering issue as one of the “hottest mastering engineers working today.” That was a very nice compliment.

I think about sound a lot, and I enjoy writing articles about my ideas and experiences in mastering. So, getting the articles published is a real bonus for me. I have also launched a web site dedicated to promoting articles about music production:

<http://www.audiorecordingadvice.com>.

CS: Tell us about your music endeavors as an artist in years past.

PA: I’ve been a musician most of my life. I began playing guitar when I was eight and have spent a lot of my musical life refining my skill as an instrumentalist as well as a composer. Along the way I dabbled in related areas like



music transcription. It was my experience as a recording musician, though, that led me to mastering. After years of recording in the studio – both solo and with bands – I was always curious why the finished product never had the “polish” that my favorite recordings had. The missing ingredient, I discovered, was professional mastering. This was what really led me to where I am today.

CS: We know that much of mastering has a lot to do with gear. But it’s still about music. What is your philosophy on mastering?

PA: Do what’s necessary to make a recording sound its best – no more, no less. Sounds simple – and obvious – but it’s like a chess game. You first need to understand what a specific recording should sound like, and that’s based on years of listening to music and understanding different genres. Then you need to understand the recording and mixing process, their purposes and limitations. Finally, you have to understand the most effective way to process recorded sound to improve it. In the end, mastering should really be transparent – sonically and conceptually. It’s the job of the mastering engineer to make sure the music sounds its best in all listening environments, not to prove that they have mad skills or insanely expensive equipment. And that requires all the things listed above: a balanced listening environment, audiophile playback system, objectivity, and years of experience. It also requires professional maturity and confidence. A good mastering engineer knows when to leave something alone.

CS: What’s the best thing an artist or engineer or producer can do to ensure the best possible outcome when handing off mixes to the mastering facility?

PA: First, make the recording sound the way you hear it in your head. The artist is the creator. Follow your gut.

Second, if you’re not sure why you’re adding something – whether it’s reverb, compression, limiting, or equalization – then don’t add it. Think of recording like cooking; don’t add a spice unless you know what it tastes like and what you want it to add to your recipe.

Third, don’t be obsessed with making your mixes loud. That’s the final step in mastering...after everything else has been done. If you try to make your unmastered mixes sound like your favorite album [that has been mastered], you’re going to ruin it.

Finally, read the articles on the Audio Recording Advice web site (<http://www.audiorecordingadvice.com>). There’s good, easy-to-understand information there about making your recordings sound better.

CS: Are there any trends in music and/or mas-

tering and/or production that you’d like to acknowledge or discuss?

PA: One thing I think people need to understand is that recordings are done in three distinct sections: recording, mixing, and mastering. Each one has its own purpose, which the other steps can’t replace. This is the way professional recordings have always been made. And just because music is being recorded and stored on a computer – as opposed to a tape recorder – doesn’t change that fact. In the era of the computer-based home studio, people are starting to do everything themselves: write, record, mix, and master. This is a good way to learn, but isn’t a realistic way to make a world-class recording. Let me put it another way: find one recording on the Billboard charts that was recorded, mixed, and mastered by the same person in the same studio. When you do, I’ll buy you lunch. Bottom line: professional quality results require specialists, not generalists.

CS: It’s kinda the same reason why they only let the kicker on a football team kick. There’s a lot of wisdom in that.

Let’s change the subject a bit. You are a member of the San Diego scene. Any thoughts on it artistically speaking? The city-wide recording environment itself?

PA: San Diego has some of the most talented musicians I’ve ever met – and I’ve lived in various cities across the country as well as collaborated with musicians from all over the world. So, from that perspective, it’s a great place to make music and be involved in the music community. However, I think it sometimes suffers from a small-town mentality. Because there are seemingly fewer opportunities here to be discovered compared to a place like New York or Los Angeles, artists have a tendency to be protective and guarded. What I’ve learned in my 20-plus years of working in different facets of professional music is that the most successful artists are not the most talented; they’re the ones that network the best and collaborate within the community the most. And the same thing goes for local studios. We’re all part of a network...so let’s work together. The more people that succeed, the better.

CS: That’s what I say! What are the things that an artist or engineer should look for when considering mastering services?

PA: The most important thing is to understand the value that mastering brings to a recording. If someone understands the importance of mastering, they’ll do their homework and choose a mastering facility carefully. If they think it’s a bunch of smoke and mirrors, they’ll have the recording studio they recorded the album in master it. And, in the end, you’ll be able to tell who chose what. But as a rule of thumb: repu-

tation, previous work, the mastering engineer’s personality, and price are all things to consider. No one mastering studio is right for everyone, just like no one guitar is right for every guitarist.

CS: Name a few examples of what you consider to be superior executions in recording production mastering, etc. Your favorites that come to mind. Works, producers, etc.

PA: Well, this brings up an interesting point: no mastering engineer is an island. If I do great mastering, it’s because the recording and mixing were done correctly and it really allows me to fine tune the work to a high level of sonic quality. The irony is that really good recordings need less work than so-so recordings. Marginal recordings are where you need to really pull a rabbit out of the hat to bring it up to par with a great recording. That said, I think that what impresses me most when listening to other people’s work is when I hear four distinct elements: clarity, impact, power, and detail. That’s what I try to bring out of the recordings I work on, and I think it’s just the aspect of focusing the recording so it really shines.

CS: What is the most satisfying aspect - enjoyable part - of “mastering” for you?

PA: Hearing a mix and figuring out in my head how I can make it sound its best. That chess game mentality...it’s always a challenge.

CS: Here is the most common question I hear as a producer - from a new recording artist - when it comes to mastering their recorded project. Ready? “What does mastering do actually?”

PA: This question can be difficult to answer if you don’t understand the recording/mixing/mastering sequence. It’s sort of like asking, “What does an editor do for a book?” It can be a lot, or sometimes it’s just a little; sometimes you’re adding, other times subtracting; regardless, the process is invaluable. Whatever is done in mastering, it’s always in the interest of creating a balanced sound and making the recording sound as good as possible.

In the simplest terms, mastering is a process of sonic analysis. An objective, experienced mastering engineer utilizes a high-quality, audiophile playback system in a professionally designed listening environment to analyze a recording and decide if it needs adjustment. It’s a huge plus that the mastering engineer has not been involved in the recording and mixing process, because he or she will hear things that people who have been involved in the production of a recording have lost their objectivity about long ago. The end goal is to guarantee the recording sounds balanced and consistent in all listening environments: car stereos, iPods,

continued on page 16



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by Mike Alvarez

Eve Selis

LIGHTS UP THE STAGE

It's no secret that music is a hard business. Dominated by huge conglomerates that hold a virtual monopoly on essentials such as production, marketing, and distribution, it is a daunting mountain for the aspiring artist to climb. Those lucky enough to be anointed as the next flavor of the month stand to gain fame and fortune, but often at the cost of creative and personal freedom. They are groomed and tweaked to perfection, then fed into a machine that fulfills every dream and whim so long as they deliver a look and sound that can be marketed to the masses.

Enter the independent artist. These do-it-yourselfers often pay for expenses out of their own pockets, book their own gigs, play to smaller crowds, and generally have to do all the unglamorous behind-the-scenes leg work to get their music out. Many hang on to their day jobs and consider themselves lucky if their musical pursuits end up breaking even. Yet in spite of all this, many find that the career autonomy and artistic freedom far outweigh the obvious advantages of having a label's support. One such "indie" artist is Eve Selis who has become something of an iconic figure in the San Diego music scene. A striking, slender blonde with a powerful voice and commanding stage presence, she has released five albums since 1998 and has a new one called *Angels and Eagles*, due to hit the streets shortly after this article goes to press. She glowingly reports that it was produced by herself and her band, and that they were able to make an album that isn't "an obvious follow up to the last CD. A label would have nixed some of our songs and ideas."

Following her own beliefs that "hard work always pays off" and "nobody will care about your music or career as much as you," she and her supporters have taken full advantage of Internet technology as well as some very ingenious marketing ideas to get

their music to the listening public. "You can't stop a tidal wave. Technology is what it is, and the music industry needs to change its paradigm." Her last album, 2004's *Nothing But the Truth* was financed by loans from her fan base, all of which were repaid from subsequent sales. *Angels and Eagles* was funded by donations from fans who were compensated with exclusive rewards based upon the amount of their contribution. Media coverage, networking, and a professional work ethic have resulted in over 2.5 million legal Internet downloads, brisk album sales, a clutch of music awards, and a full touring schedule that frequently takes her across the country and overseas. Concert performances in the UK have garnered her an enthusiastic British fan base and an impressive amount of

"You can tell when someone is giving a song lip service. If they don't believe in it, why should I?"

exposure in their press and over their airwaves. She and her band are currently looking forward to breaking into other countries with a number of dates in Norway coming in the near future. As for the music? It's an irresistible mix of rock, country, R&B, gospel and pop music, delivered with great skill and sincerity. This latter quality is particularly important, as she makes sure to point out, "You can tell when someone is giving a song lip service. If they don't believe in it, why should I? It's very humbling when somebody comes up and says one of my songs touched their heart. That's the ultimate compliment because you write songs as an outlet for your soul." Often called "the Queen of Roadhouse Rock," Selis' music appeals to fans of artists like Lucinda Williams, Melissa Etheridge, the Eagles, and Steve Earle. She has also been compared to Sheryl Crow, Emmylou Harris, and Bonnie Raitt. While reluctant to give her music a label, she allows that the term Americana might do. It's descriptive of her sound but it's also an open-ended genre that encompasses a wide range of styles.

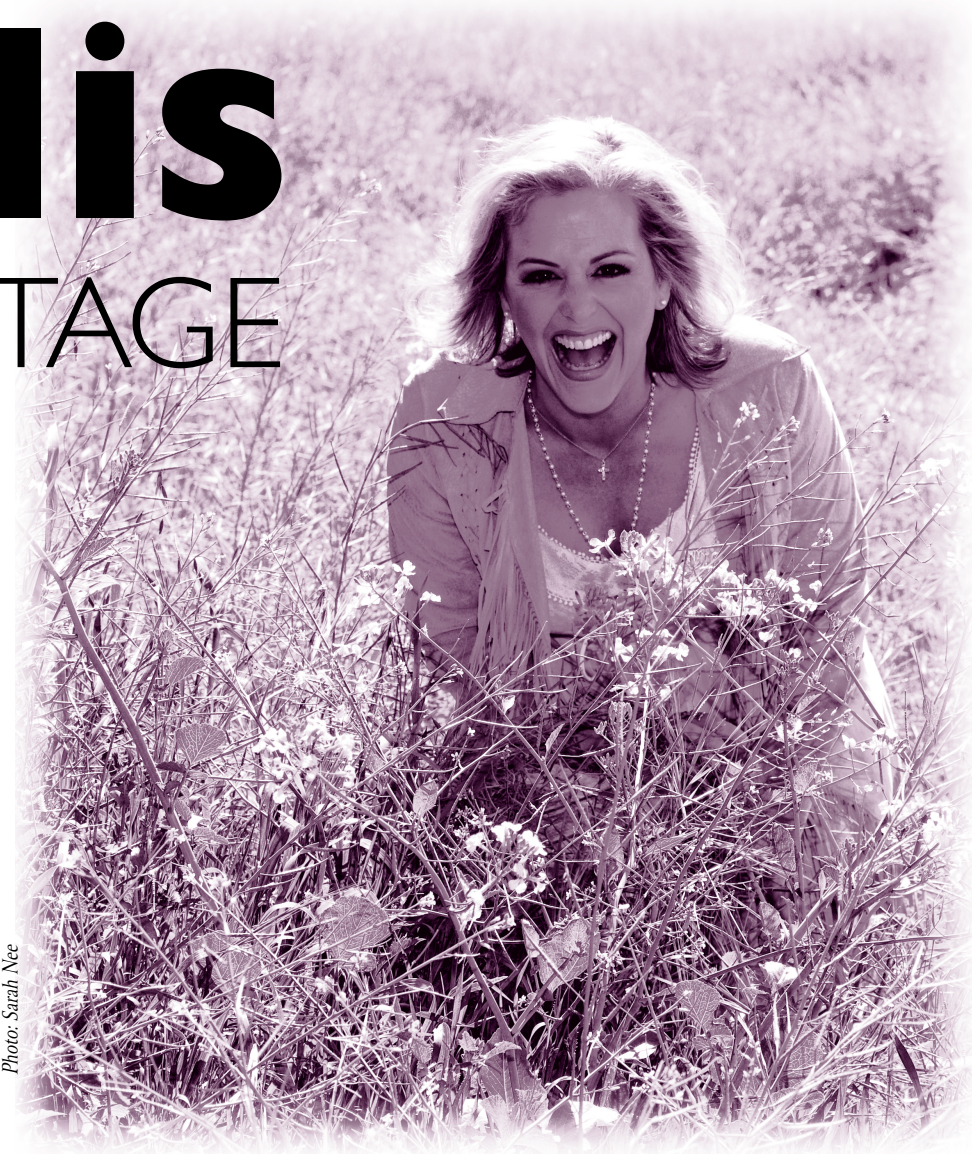


Photo: Sarah Nee

Although she now enjoys a respectable amount of success on the strength of her own songs, it hasn't always been that way. Selis recalls the days when she fronted the Heroes, a highly regarded cover band that performs spirited renditions of classic songs. While it was a good gig, she notes that much of her effort was spent mimicking others. Yet as a result, she learned a lot about delivering a vocal performance because "you figure out their techniques and then you start taking chances and risks... you take your influences and make them your own." Because of all the work she put into perfecting her technique, she has become a highly sought-after vocalist for studio sessions, weddings, and corporate events. Her voice can be heard in some enduringly familiar commercial jingles.

In the early '90s she found herself working with guitarist Marc "Twang" Intravaia. Both were doing a DoD (Department of Defense) tour, entertaining troops overseas during Operation Desert Storm. They already knew each other from having played in various bands but had not yet joined forces to write songs. During a sound check, Selis improvised something over one of Intravaia's original guitar licks, and it was then that they realized they were onto something. Before long they wrote their first song together. As she tells it, it was the start of a "great creative relationship

that never existed with others I've worked with before." She fronted their band Kings Road before deciding to go solo (but keeping him close at hand). Selis says that Intravaia has always been encouraging and supportive, telling her that she should sing songs "the way you'd sing it." His own musical resume includes playing with such high-profile artists as Kenny Loggins, America, Kim Carnes, and B.J. Thomas, but it is his role as Eve Selis' guitarist and musical partner that gives him his greatest success and satisfaction.

Other members of the band are "Cactus" Jim Soldi, an amazing guitarist who has played with the likes of Ricky Skaggs, Johnny Paycheck, Waylon Jennings, and the legendary Johnny Cash. He has toured the world and has appeared at the Grand Ole Opry, the Royal Albert Hall, and the Forum as well as a host of television shows. His wife, Sharon Whyte, holds down keyboard and accordion duties. Among the people Whyte has accompanied include Kim Carnes, Juice Newton, Dan Seals, and Tim Flannery. She has recorded with Chris Hillman and Herb Pedersen, and was recently a member of the house band in the *Primal Twang* stage show. Bassist Rick Nash's credits include Comanche Moon, the Steely Damned, and Robert Vaughn. Rounding out the rhythm section is Larry Grano, a relative newcomer to the band, filling the



The Eve Selis Band (l. to r.): Selis, Marc Intravaia, Rick Nash, Larry Grano, Jim Soldi, Sharon Whyte

drum throne long occupied by Bob Sales. Grano is a multiple San Diego Music Award winner who is also an instructor in the San Diego branch of the School of Rock. He has opened for and backed up an impressive lineup of musical legends like Denny Laine, the Everly Brothers, Tom Scott, and Alan Parsons. (See page 8 in this issue for an article about Larry Grano.) As the Eve Selis Band, this group has shared stages with such big name acts as the Doobie Brothers; Crosby, Stills and Nash; Counting Crows; Joan Osborne; and Jewel. Needless to say, Selis holds her musical partners in very high regard and is never more pleased than when they all receive praise as a band. "I'm the one standing out front holding the microphone, so when people go out of their way to say how great they are, I'm very proud."

Live, they put on a highly-charged



Eve with husband Tom and baby Henry

show in which Selis is clearly the focus. She flashes her megawatt smile and immediately establishes a warm rapport with the audience. At a recent house concert, she and the band demonstrated a loose confidence, connecting with people they knew and making newcomers feel welcome. As experienced performers, they appeared to be as comfortable in front of a crowd as they were with each other. Immediately shifting into high gear without any warmup, it was as though there was a telepathic connection between them. Their highly polished playing contrasted favorably with their casual stage presence. They work together superbly, creating a unified sound that perfectly frames Selis' high

octane voice. The soaring vocal harmonies, courtesy of Marc Twang, Cactus Jim, Sharon Whyte, and Larry Grano are the perfect final touch. These guys could write a textbook on ensemble playing, so flawless is their execution. When it's time for a solo, everybody makes room to let the featured performer shine, and it's not just the guitarists who create the fireworks. Bassist Nash and accordionist Whyte each had moments in which they were able to demonstrate their considerable abilities. Perhaps the greatest surprise was the comic relief provided by Grano. In addition to drumming, he is a master of lightning-fast quips and improvised song parodies. His leering re-interpretation of "The Girl From Ipanema" (retitled "The Girl With Emphysema") had Selis, the band, and the audience rolling with laughter. Yet through it all, Selis holds it together with a tremendous presence of mind and a seasoned sense of showmanship that keeps things entertaining, even in the face of distractions or technical difficulties. Expressively punctuating the songs with an impeccable theatrical sensibility, she savors each note and lyric, making sure that the audience does too. As good as their recorded work is, it's their live show that properly showcases the incandescent chemistry among this group of musicians.

While the Eve Selis Band has accomplished a great deal in the world of music, she maintains that "we still have a life. If you're signed to a major label, you're at their beck and call. Someone like Jewel toured continuously for years. To me, family is more important than selling a million CDs." She and her husband Tom (who supports the cause with his skills in graphic art and computers) recently added a son to their family, which also includes their 13-year-old daughter. So it's yet another benefit of doing business independently that they are able to book tours of reasonable length in order to maintain a normal and balanced home life. The rest of the band sidelines with other artists and projects, and they even have their own act called Cactus Twang and Whyte, which frequently takes the stage at many San Diego venues.

Selis professes to a strong belief in angels. "I want to see one, and I believe we have it in us to become like

angels through our actions. We all have the ability to do or say the right thing to make the world a better place." True to her word, she participates in several charity events every year, raising funds and awareness for causes like breast cancer research, cerebral palsy, and relief for San Diego wildfire victims. One of her best friends and biggest fans is Jessica Smith, who has cerebral palsy. Though wheelchair bound, she enthusiastically attends concerts and even convinced Selis to get a "Heart-Shaped Tattoo" with her to honor the song with the same title. Both displayed them

"We still have a life. If you're signed to a major label, you're at their beck and call.... To me, family is more important than selling a million CDs"

proudly at the house concert, though Eve reported with a grimace that hers was still fresh enough to smart! In keeping with the theme of angels and hearts, Selis and her band are committed to giving back in any way they can. Their song "65 Roses" is available exclusively

as a download from iTunes, with all proceeds going toward cystic fibrosis research.

Interestingly enough, she had a brush with a different kind of winged spirit while singing the national anthem at Phoenix's America West Arena. As part of the show, an American bald eagle was released, but before landing on its handler's glove, it briefly lighted on Eve's head. Later, a Native American said that she was anointed and blessed by her contact with the sacred bird. One would be hard-pressed to argue with that. Eve Selis is indeed blessed with a powerful voice and anointed with a gift for making music that touches people. She has a true entertainer's spirit and an artist's soul that informs her work onstage and off. Through hard work, ingenuity, and perseverance, she and her band have taken concert stages, airwaves, and Internet servers by storm. With a gleam in her eye, she asserts that, "I want to sing until I'm 80!" Rest assured, people will be listening.

The Eve Selis Band's new album *Angels and Eagles* debuts at the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art in La Jolla on Saturday, May 31, 8 pm. Go to www.eveselis.com for more details.



The many faces of Eve. Photos by Dennis Andersen.



Bluegrass

by Dwight Worden

There are quite a few bluegrass shows coming up in May that San Diego bluegrass fans won't want to miss. Here is a quick run down.



Friday thru Sunday, May 2-4: The Stagecoach Festival in Indio, California. While this festival is primarily a big-time country music event, there is also a bluegrass stage with some outstanding bluegrass music and, I'm told, smaller crowds. Bluegrass entertainment includes Earl Scruggs and Friends, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, the Dan Tyminski Band, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, J.D. Crowe, Cherryholmes, Sam Bush, the Greencards, Ralph Stanley, Jerry Douglas, the Isaacs, the Carolina Chocolate Drops, and others. Visit www.stagecoachfestival.com for info and tickets.



Saturday & Sunday, May 3-4: The Adams Avenue Roots and Folk Festival. This great free festival features a variety of acoustic and old time music and is a *Troubadour* favorite. This year the Roots Festival also presents the David Grisman Bluegrass Experience, a top-notch bluegrass show, in a special ticket-only concert. See the article on page 4 about David Grisman, and visit www.adamsavenueonline.com for further information.

Tuesday, May 6: Sara Petite appears as the featured performer at the North San Diego County Bluegrass and Folk Club monthly meeting at the Round Table Pizza on Washington Ave. in Escondido.



Wednesday, May 7: Hall of Famer Eddie Adcock of the original Country Gentlemen will be appearing with his wife, Martha, at Old Time Music, 2852 University Avenue, in North Park at 7:30pm. For tickets and info visit www.sdoldtimemusic.com.

Saturday, May 10: John McEuen of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band will appear at Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield Street in Normal Heights at 7:30 p.m. For tickets and

info contact: www.acousticmusicandsandiego.com.

Tuesday, May 13: San Diego Bluegrass Society meeting with open mic, jam sessions, pick-up bands, bluegrass karaoke, and entertainment at Fuddrucker's in Grossmont Center, La Mesa 6:30-9pm.

Wednesday, May 14: Lighthouse will perform at Borders Books and Music, 156 Fletcher Parkway in El Cajon, 7-9pm. Admission is free.

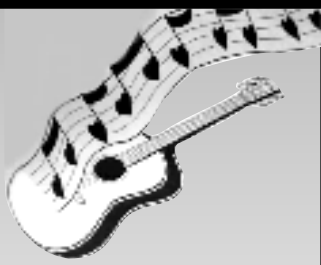
Sunday, May 18: The 48th Annual Topanga Banjo and Fiddle Contest on the UCLA campus. Lots of bluegrass performers, contests, and events. Visit www.topangabanjofiddle.org for more information.

Tuesday, May 20: San Diego Bluegrass Society meeting with jam sessions, open mic, pick up bands, bluegrass karaoke and entertainment at Fuddrucker's on 3rd in downtown Chula Vista. 6:30- 9 pm.

Tuesday, May 27: The San Diego Bluegrass Society Featured Band Night at the Boll Weevil restaurant at 7080 Miramar Road in north San Diego with open mic, jam sessions, bluegrass karaoke and a Featured Band band performance by the Bluegrass Ramblers. 6:30-9 pm.

How's that line up for one month's line up of bluegrass right here in little ol' San Diego? Be sure to get out and see some of this great entertainment. Last month wasn't too shabby either in terms of bluegrass music in San Diego. Bluegrass Day at the Flower Fields in Carlsbad was a big hit with lots of great bluegrass music. The annual spring bluegrass camp out in Chula Vista was also successful, with lots of jamming, camaraderie, and great food. Roland White, who has played with Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys, Country Gazette and the Nashville Bluegrass Band appeared at Old Time Music on April 23, and the Yonder Mountain String Band performed at the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach. And, of course the SDBS and North County Bluegrass clubs had their usual Tuesday get-togethers with a great performance by the Virtual Strangers as the SDBS featured band of the month.

We are truly blessed to have so much great bluegrass in San Diego, and we can show our appreciation by getting out and enjoying some of these great concerts. I promise, you won't regret it!



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

TINKER, TAYLOR THE T5 ELECTRIC/ACOUSTIC 12-STRING

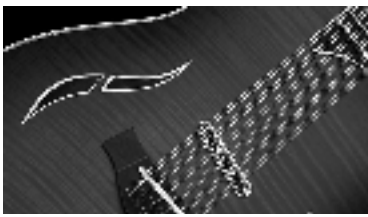
When I received word from Taylor Guitars' Andy Robinson that the new Solidbody® Standard and the T5 12-String models I had expressed interest in reviewing were ready for pickup, he said simply, "I have guitars for you, and they are beauties!" True that. I hustled down to their El Cajon-based complex at the next available opportunity and made sure to take the tour of the factory (presented each Monday through Friday at 1pm) while I was there.

The factory tour offers an incredible amount of information and an insightful peek behind the scenes of its manufacturing facility. Apart from the marvel of efficiency that comprises the bustling goings on within, what most impressed me were the amount of ingenious solutions not only in evidence, but also in actual daily practice. Unique tooling, woodworking methods, and even complex robotics that were all invented and utilized by Taylor's builders to fulfill a need or meet one of the myriad challenges that presented themselves somewhere along the line, during this successful company's sure and steady growth into the juggernaut acoustic guitar maker it is today. It is this very emphasis on intelligent innovation that led to the development these two excellent electric guitars.

The T5 is an obvious child of Taylor's commitment toward applying its understanding of acoustic tone with an amplified version that not only does it justice but also expands upon the instrument's functionality. The guitar's natural finished Sitka Spruce top was an eye catcher that seems to beg you to pick it up and play it. Upon doing so, you can instantly hear the guitar's beautifully balanced tone and an amazing array of upper harmonic overtones via its chambered mahogany body. The neck actually feels quite a bit narrower than many other 12-string electrics that I've played, and I'd say it plays a bit "faster" for it as well. The T5 12-string employs the company's Dual Compensated™ saddle, which improves intonation and actually levels all the strings along the top surfaces, so that the fundamental and octave strings are struck more evenly. This makes playing riffs and leads easier, with less mis-striking and more of what 12-string electric players want: that unmistakable *chime*.

Whether you're looking for the tones exemplified by the Byrds, the Smiths, Tom Petty, Leo Kottke, R.E.M., or even

Leadbelly, chances are you'll be able to find it easily via the T5's unique and versatile pickup system. A humbucker pickup is hidden under the neck, and there's also a visible gold bridge humbucker that actually looks like a vintage "lipstick" type. Additionally, a body sensor mounted to the inside surface of the top adds in the warmth of the guitar's previously mentioned acoustic tone.



The T5's ergonomic center-detented treble, bass, and volume knobs were obviously inspired by the company's Expression System®. These are conveniently located in the soundboard's upper shoulder, at the top of which lies the five-position switch, which is housed nearly flush with the guitar's surface. For a basher like myself, the "up and out of the way" location of these controls not only prevents accidentally hitting them while performing, but they're also just plain easier to get to when you *do* want to change tones.

Changing tones is where a lot of the fun really begins with this guitar. The first position engages the hidden neck pickup and body sensor, yielding the most acoustic-like tones. This is great for going directly to the PA, or for recording. In fact, I had great success recording multiple layers of this guitar in that manner, which resulted in a heavenly 48-string orchestra that would give any mid-'70s era Fleetwood Mac fan a nostalgic twinge or two. Position 2 utilizes the neck pickup only, for a richer darker solo tone. The middle position engages the bridge humbucker, where you'll find more of the "classic," sharper electric guitar sounds. Adjusting the tone and volume controls here gave the most varied results, from subtle edginess to grinding overdrive. The fourth position uses both humbuckers and



Sven-Erik Seaholm

the fifth uses the bridge humbucker with the body sensor. By this time, you really begin to realize that just about any sound you've previously heard associated with the 12-string electric is easily attainable, as are a veritable cornucopia of unique tones yet to be discovered. You may want to play it through a few different amps to find your personal faves.

Of course, 12-string guitars in general and electric models specifically have long given fits of dubious intonation to those brave enough to undertake the task of getting them in tune, not to mention keeping them there. In addition to the compensated saddle, the Grover tuners and Taylor's T-Lock neck design go a long way toward keeping you in "performance" rather than "tuning" mode. Those of you with any experience in this area can fully appreciate the significance of this, yes?

Overall, I found this to be a beautifully crafted and manufactured instrument. The frets were even and beautifully dressed, and the white binding along the neck, body, and f-holes was as smooth as it is visually striking. I found the extra endpin at the bottom a bit disconcerting at first, but I guess it's there for more stable "footing." The narrowness of the neck, while helping the guitar's playability for single-note runs felt a little cramped for complicated chord shapes, but these were the only things I could find to nitpick about.

All in all, the Taylor T5 String Electric/Acoustic guitar is a well-crafted winner, with enough versatility to inspire even the most wary of us in search of the perfect chime.

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent producer and performer. He can teach and/or consult with you on any of your recording endeavors. Websites: www.kaspro.com, www.sven-songs.com, myspace.com/senseaholm

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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

REDEMPTION: TEARS FOR BEERS

"...and my belief is: if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably Posh Spice..." It was the voice of my mentally challenged niece Danielle "Duh" Sinatra, and the words were spoken against a background of some heavenly choir doing an a cappella rendition of "Somewhere" from *West Side Story*.

Reality punched its time card and began its work once again. The music was coming from my television, a concert presentation on KPBS. Danielle's voice was coming through the earpiece of my telephone, which had slipped down toward my shoulder when I'd fallen asleep some time before. Let's see... I'd picked up the phone when she'd decided to call me at 2:30am; she thought it was the middle of the afternoon. She wanted to complain to me about her most recent boyfriend. Pretty much the same story as usual, which had put me back to sleep within a couple minutes. She loves to talk and was on another of her marathons, obviously, as my clock now read 3:25.

"Hey, Duh," I interrupted, the TV demanding my senses and soul, "I've gotta go. I'll call you back tomorrow."

"But what about Trevor? I mean, like, his parents are gonna ground him forever if they find out. How are we supposed to have our relationship get to the next level if we can't even party anymore? And don't say he's a jerk and I should dump him like you always do. Trevor's different. He's intelligent. I let him get to second base before he even was able to ask, 'cause I always know what he's thinking. I mean it's scary, but it's so cool. He says he's never felt like this about anyone..."

"Dump him. He's a total squid."
"You don't know him!"
"Put him out of his misery. Kill him before his parents do. Bye."

And now I was hearing the angelic voices from the television undisturbed. I was gazing at the gorgeous faces of five goddesses, and I began to cry. Perhaps because of the natural awe at witnessing perfection of art, perhaps partially that these untouchable divas from heaven's citadel would likely never be given the opportunity to absorb my seed.

I learned during the pledge break that I was giving my heart to a group called Celtic Woman.

Superb music by awesomely beautiful chicks is a rarity. Early Kate Bush, Mary Hopkin, and Michael Jackson are hard to eclipse.

Before calling Duh back the next afternoon, I went down to Borders and bought the DVD of the Celtic Woman show that had so enraptured me on television hours before. And again I was shaken and again the fountains flowed from my eyes.

"Are you crying Uncle Hose?" It was Duh's voice on the phone again, a bit later.

"I won't lie to you, darling. Yes, your Uncle Hose is not ashamed to weep on occasion."

"What a pussy."
"Nothing wrong with that. Hey, have you ever heard of a group called Celtic Woman?"

"Uh-uh."
"Five women and a band and chorus



José Sinatra

that are able to rip your heart out, kiss it, clean it, and give it back to you until you beg them to do it again."

"Oh, you mean like the Spice Girls?"
I think she got the shock of her young life when I didn't hang up.

The reason I had loathed Trevor so intently was that he had been among the drunken fools whose stupidity last year in Pacific Beach guaranteed the end of any adult's right to drink alcohol on our city's beaches.

These are the jerks who cost us another of our precious liberties. I remember a lengthy debate with the young turd shortly after we had first been introduced. How I was able to keep my composure while merely looking at this civil assassin was due either to my maturity (that old generation gap again) or my keen awareness of the prodigious diameter of his tattooed biceps.

So many sweet memories, I told him, could never be relived or revised in the new reality that you and your irresponsible, idiotic friends have forced on us. I've not forgotten his last statement that ugly day: "Hey, man, everyone parties!"

Time has moved on with its own selfish cackle, which I've continued to block from my ears. I'd much rather hear the sweetness of Celtic Woman, which somehow calms me even as it hurts. I took the DVD over to Duh and suggested that she watch it with Trevor if she ever gets the chance. And I told her that I recently began to understand that the blame for the beach booze ban simply can't be directed at the rowdy group on that fateful day in P.B. Everyone who has ever had a run-in with the law that involved alcohol at our beaches is equally responsible. Those of us who never have, and who are angry or likely to become angry once summer rolls around, could do a lot worse than finding enough heart to forgive every one of the thousands of culprits.

And then relax with some Celtic Woman.

Celtic Woman perform at the Coors Amphitheatre on May 9. José Sinatra is becoming more and more of a wuss. Duh Sinatra is forming her own all-female group Amazon Chick. Trevor has entered the priesthood.



RADIO DAZE



Jim McInnes

by Jim McInnes

JACK IS MY PAL

When Star 100.7 turned into JACK three years ago, I was doing the afternoon drive show on 103.7 The Planet (now known as Sophie@1037). I remember hearing almost everyone at the Planet saying, "JACK? What a stupid concept! What a stupid name!" (*This* from current and former employees of a station calling itself *Sophie?*)

Yes, I am employed by JACK as their weekday afternoon traffic reporter, but I'd have been a fan anyway, because I really love what they play! I've always been a sucker for great pop music.

All the songs JACK plays are upbeat and catchy as hell!

So I find myself playing air guitar or singing "air vocals" to great one-hit wonders by Gavin DeGraw, Sister Hazel, and Diesel, with their immortal "Sausalito Summer Night!"

The musical mainstays of JACK's programming include the Cure, AC/DC, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Cheryl Crow, Depeche Mode, Foo Fighters, Rolling Stones, the Go-Go's, KC and the Sunshine Band, and U2. The format truly is, as they hype it, "like an iPod on shuffle."

JACK plays a good percentage of classic rock hits as well, but not many of the *burnt-to-a-crisp* numbers you hear on KGB, like "Stairway to Heaven" or "Bad Moon Rising." They dig deeper, spinning lesser-known semi-hits like "Black Betty" by Ram Jam and "Cult of Personality" by Living Colour, both of which I heard on a recent Thursday afternoon. JACK plays tunes by Joe Jackson, Jack Johnson, Joe Walsh, Jackson Browne, Johnny Hates Jazz, and Jimmy Eat World, too.

As a guy who was on KGB during its heyday from 1976 to 1990, I think that, in modern terms, JACK best personifies that station's credo at the time: If it's popular, we'll play it! During my tenure, that included John Denver, Black Sabbath, Donna Summer, Led Zeppelin, Frank Sinatra, Joni Mitchell, Stevie Wonder, Jeff Beck, the Beatles, the Stones, Can, Velvet Underground, B.W. Stevenson, and George Benson. (KGB's mid-1970's playlist totalled almost 10,000 songs!)

I'm sure that JACK plays far fewer tracks than that, but they're still San Diego's most *adventurous* commercial radio station.

Try it at 100.7 on your FM radio. Tell 'em J.M. sent ya.



Philosophy, Art, Culture, & Music STAGES

by Peter Bolland

DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

"Writing about music is like dancing about architecture." — Elvis Costello

Music is essentially mysterious. Talking about it makes you sound like an idiot. Yet here we are, day after day, night after night, arguing about our favorite bands and our favorite songs, analyzing why this song sucks and why that guy's a genius. In chat rooms, on telephones, in bar rooms, on talk shows, and in esteemed publications like this one we never tire of grasping for the right words to capture the ungraspable experience of music. Songs are catapults and there we are, feet off the ground, flying through the air, awash in waves of sound and sense, tears welling up, fists clenched in righteous assertion with the truth of *this* song, *this* moment, *this* emotional ecstasy, *this* transcendent eternity — and then we have to muck it up by trying to talk about it. We just can't help ourselves.

The Quakers don't talk much. They haven't wasted a lot of time developing a theology or a creed. They don't have a professional clergy or any real hierarchy. They don't tell each other what to think. They're much too smart for that. The emphasis is on the individual experience of God, or Spirit. When Quakers gather together in church each Sunday, they sit in silence. There is no sermon. If someone wants to stand and speak they can, with this caveat in mind: speak only if you can improve upon the silence. Many times, an entire service passes without a word.

But everything has its counterpoint. After the inhalation of silence comes the exhalation of expression. After all, we can't stay silent forever.

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is Music."

— Aldous Huxley

Music rises out of the silence like dawn rises out of the darkness. And the best music is never fancy or busy or clogged with pointless ornamentation. The best music is simple and direct and honest because it trusts the silence. Maybe the Quakers can help us scour the banality and insignificance from our songwriting and performance: do not sing unless you can improve upon the silence. Drawing from the depths of silence, we dare now to speak and to sing, not of the fancies and follies of our own darkness, but of the timeless universal truths that surge up in us like fountain-streams.

"Now I have learned to listen to silence. To hear its choirs singing the song of ages, chanting the hymns of space, and disclosing the secrets of eternity."

— Khalil Gibran

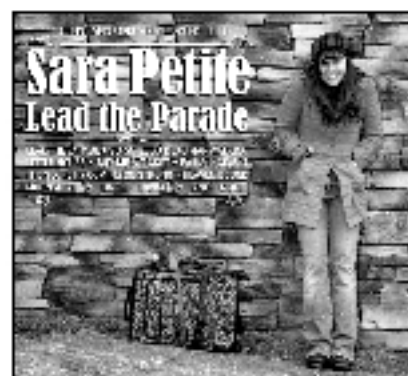
When we emerge from these solitary depth experiences we feel the countervailing pull of

communion. Like scattered stars we gravitate together into galaxies that inform and define us. We need each other. Even the Quakers meditate together in groups. We grab our guitars and gather in rooms, around dinner tables, in cafes, or on stages, and we speak the blurry language of our hearts. We weave our songs from the threads of the One Song (*uni*: one; *verse*: song), and mixed through the weave are threads of our dreams and nightmares. We exorcise our demons. We tread with angels. We sanctify the beauties. We eulogize the passings. We praise in song the courage of those who love without fear. We break the unbroken silence with our shimmering strings, the golden peals of our horns, and the reverie of our radiant voices and with language and rhythm we carve the uncarved whole of the universe into songs that carry us over the endless sea of our lives like ships pressed on by a sacred wind, lifted on the shoulders of innumerable waves, unmoored forever over an infinite depth. Without our songs we would surely drown and never reach safe harbor.

Music is like a crow bar — it pries us open. It slips past the security guard, crawls under the gate, navigates the twists and turns of the labyrinth of our pain-drunk consciousness, grabs us by the collar, and drags us squinting and blinking out into the sun. Here in the open we unfurl like a flag and finally feel the depths of our own belonging, our own value, our own beauty. A good song burns away all the lies the way sunlight burns away shadows — all the lies our pain tricks us into believing — that we're forlorn and alone, that it's hopeless, that we don't matter, that nothing matters. Music takes us back to our original state — oneness with the nameless, sacred source from which we and all things come. Our boundaries dissolve and we rejoin boundless Reality.

Then the song ends and the show is over and we pack our instruments and head home. We got some of it right. We got some of it wrong. We try to talk about the music — what worked, what didn't work, and why. Like dogs chasing our tails, we never really get close to the truth, no matter how clever our words, no matter how immediate our insights. I mean, we were standing *right there*. But it's gone. The truth was in the song. It passed between us like a ghost, ungraspable and fleeting, a shimmer of eternity in the river of time. There's nothing we can do to bring it back or frame it or explain it. Music is its own language, its own reality, its own realm. Music rubs up against our reality and leaves its scent on us. There's nothing to say. Because talking about music is like dancing about architecture.

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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Telemagica Works Its Magic in Jacumba

by Paul Hormick

In the bible Jesus wandered the desert for 40 days and nights, and Carlos Castaneda experienced his great exploration of wisdom and power with his spiritual mentor, Don Juan, in the deserts of the Southwest and northern Mexico. There is something magical and otherworldly that deserts do to our souls. It's as though the strangeness of the landscape pulls us out of our everyday notions of who we are and what reality is.

If you feel that your ideas of reality need a little tweaking, or you just need to experience something outside of your workaday world, in the arid lands of Jacumba on Memorial Day weekend, the Telemagica Art and Music Festival promises to expand your consciousness, knock on the doors of perception, and maybe allow for some fun as well. Under the banner "Breaking Through" it says that this festival is "dedicated to the evolution of the human spirit through the arts." If it were 40 years ago the festival might be called a "happening," but let's just say that there's going to be plenty of art and music to experience there.

The event is sponsored by the Institute of Perception, an association of artists founded by Kirk Roberts established to "enhance, activate, and broaden perception for the individual and the greater community." And the karma from this extravaganza is meant to last longer and go further than the five days planned for this event. It is aimed at instigating a big, long-lasting change for the entire world. The Manifesto for the festival states: "With our creative vision and steadfast passion, we intend to use our spirit-given talents as tools to shape a new world. These times demand intense separated and clarified from any lukewarm virus. Our passionate cause is the complete rearranging of the current fashion of the times."

Indie doesn't come close to describing the band line-up. It's more like Indie - Outie - Roundaboutie, and just about anything else that strays way out of the way of the mainstream. I don't believe that any of the musicians playing for the festival will list Kenny Rogers as an influence. There's Mystery Hangup, an all female experimental, indie (with a little punk thrown in) band from L.A. who look like they are NOT trying to be the girls next door. And have you ever gotten into your parents record collection? You know, those vinyl things that they play on a turntable. And have you ever played one of their old hippie records? Well, if you've enjoyed some of those old records, you might



take a fancy to Suishou No Fune. They are spacey and ethereal, a little like Brian Eno or some of the earliest Pink Floyd. These are two of the bands of the dozens scheduled to play.

If you have the notion that art fits in a frame and is hung on a wall, or that music is something you can tap your foot to for the three-and-a-half minute duration of a song, you've got another think coming once you've experienced this festival. Toss away the old idea that there are artists who create and then there are the rest of us. Telemagica encourages the full participation of each participant as an artist. Whatever your inclination, be it spoken word, dance, poetry, or even something artistic that hasn't yet been classified as an art form, you are welcome to share at the festival. This includes diversions at the cafeteria as well as workshops held in what is called the Infinity Room.

Besides the Infinity Room there will be other places to explore and experience creativity. Sounding as though it was christened by Douglas Addams, the Inner Galactic Research Vessel for Improv and Cool will be performing research on improv and cool. There will also be an innerspace perceptual gallery. At night, under clear skies, telescopes will be fixed on the celestial wonders for hours of stargazing.

Tired bones and sore muscles can be soothed at the large jacuzzi or hot tubs. You can also splash around in the hot spring-fed swimming pools or check out the sauna. If you brought your tent and sleeping bag, there are camping accommodations. There is also lodging for those who don't like to sleep on the ground.

The Telemagica Music Festival Takes place in Jacumba from May 22-26. For information, go to www.telemagica.com



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Carl Evans Jr. A Remembrance



by Bart Mendoza

San Diego's music community suffered a major loss on April 10 with the passing of keyboardist Carl Evans Jr., from complications of diabetes. Though it was well known that Evan had been ill for some time, his passing was still a huge shock to friends, family, and jazz fans world wide.

Best known as co-founder of the group Fattburger, Evans was a mainstay of the San Diego jazz scene for three decades. Of course, he was also much more than that.

Born February 19, 1955, in Portsmouth, Virginia, he moved to San Diego with his family at the age of five. He first came to local attention circa 1969 in a high school funk group called Power (which also included legendary bassist Nathan East) and he never looked back. He was still a teen when he backed Barry White, later going on to tour with Stevie Wonder, Ricky Lawson, Cannonball Adderly, and Anita Baker. However, it was the founding of Fattburger in the early 1980s (first gig at the Triton) that pushed him into the full glare of the spotlight.

Although Fattburger is often underrated by locals, their accomplishments are legion. The group released its first album, *One of a Kind* in 1986 (re-released by Syndrome Records in 1994,) soon landing a deal with Capitol Records affiliated Intima Records and scoring a major hit on contemporary jazz radio with 1987's disc, "Good News." The band went on to release 14 albums, with a shift to acclaimed indie label, Shanchie, in 1994 and a *Best of* disc released by Manhattan Records the following year.

From 1991 to 1994 Evans and company took home four SDMAs for Best Pop Jazz, scoring another one in 2005 for Best Jazz Album with their most recent album, *Work to Do*. But more impressive is their run on the Billboard Charts with 11 straight top 20 placings on the Top Contemporary Jazz Chart, including four top tens. "One of a Kind" also charted at #39 on the R&B chart in 1986. Evans recorded one solo album, *My Romance*, but Fattburger remained his focus.

Though he was in poor health, Evans continued to collaborate with other musicians whenever possible, including Jaime Valle, Patrick Yandall, and singer-songwriter Lauren Silva, who worked with him in 2006. "I got to spend 10 or 11 hours [recording] with Carl when we were working on my song "Perfect Love," Silva recalled. "At the time I was just starting to record the songs for my album and still learning how to get comfortable in the studio. [And this] was the first time I felt comfortable in the studio because of Carl's presence and uplifting words."

I first met Carl Evans in 1986 and found him to be kind, witty, charming as well as an extremely gifted musician, sentiments echoed by all those he came into contact with. Though he may no longer be with us, his influence on jazz in general, and San Diego musicians in particular, is incalculable and will continue to yield dividends for decades to come.

JAMIE LAVAL FINDS A HOME IN CELTIC MUSIC

by Paul Hornick

Although he could have continued to make movies, Arnold Schwarzenegger ran for governor of California and won the election. Instead of reciting lines in front of a camera, he now signs bills, makes speeches, and does the governor thing.

Sometimes a career change is just what you need.

Like the governor, Jamie Laval also changed careers. A life of Mozart and Mendelssohn lay ahead for the classical violinist, but he left it all behind for reels and the music of the highlands. Laval specializes in the music of the Celts, the people of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany. For good measure he performs Cape Breton, Appalachian, and other New World folk music that comes from the Celtic lands.

On a trip from his home in Asheville, North Carolina to record his latest CD in Knoxville, the interference of the Smokey Mountains interrupting his cell phone line from time to time, Laval told me about his life and his music. He was hoping to finish as much work as possible on the recording in the next few weeks, as his upcoming touring schedule will be keeping him quite busy for a few months.

Laval is interested in performing and recording the original, untrammelled Celtic music that a woman in Brittany or a Scot may have heard long ago in the western end of Europe and has worked at researching the music and its history. For example, the material planned for the new CD will be adaptations of Scottish bagpipe melodies. "The oldest preserved Celtic music is bagpipe music. That's because, starting in the 1700s, the British went on a campaign to wipe out the Scottish bagpipe and Scottish music in general," Laval explained. The British were successful in wiping out the musical heritage of the Scots throughout Scotland except in the Hebrides, the very remote archipelago that skirts the northwest coast of Scotland and where the Scots continued to play the pipes and preserve their music. "So if you're interested in getting to the roots of this music, the way to find it is through the music of the bagpipes."

Laval grew up in Washington state, listening to the classical recordings that his parents had in their collection. Determined to play a musical instrument, he delivered newspapers and mowed lawns until he had enough money to buy a clarinet. He pursued guitar and even the French horn until finally settling on the violin. As a teen Laval started a regimen of practicing for to six hours a day. Burning the midnight oil and working, the elbow grease paid off. Before graduating from high school he was off to a musical conservatory.

He studied at the Victoria Conservatory of Music and later became a member of the Victoria Symphony and the Northwest Chamber Orchestra. "That seemed to be the way to go, if you wanted a career in music, I thought at the time," he says. One night, however, he wound up at a barn dance somewhere on the plains of western Canada and heard his first bit of barn dance music. The spark took hold. "As soon as I heard it, this music resonated with me," he says. He learned more and more about Celtic music and began playing some of the ancient tunes. A meeting with the then reigning Scottish fiddle champion really sealed the deal. Laval quit the symphony, said goodbye to the orchestra, and made the commitment to a career as a Celtic violinist.

His classical training is apparent in his music. He plays assuredly, with a confidence that usually comes from decades upon decades of performance and practice. In addition, his tone is fully developed, what you might expect to hear from the concertmaster in a classical concert hall. The pair-

ing of the classical sensibilities and folk materials is quite refreshing. "I try to use the training that I received in conservatory – the tone, tuning, and advanced techniques. In classical music it's as though you have to examine each and every note. But I have to shed some of that. This kind of music that I play now is much more rhythmic. Rather than examining each and every note, it's more important to keep the groove going."

Most of the pipers in the world only play Scottish music, and there are a legion of fiddlers who only play the reels and jigs of Ireland. But for Laval specializing in just one Celtic music is a bit too constraining. He plays music from all of the Celtic lands. "All the different Celtic music have beautiful styles all their own," he says. "If I were to only play Scottish music I wouldn't have the beauty of an Irish tune. Or if I played only Irish fiddle tunes, I wouldn't have what Brittany has to offer. And there is so much to enjoy in the music of Appalachia. I think it gives me an exciting mix of music to play. And for the audience it gives them a variety."

The variety, obviously, is appealing to audiences, and it keeps folks coming back to his performances and buying his disks. But Laval also feels that the music of the Celts has a particular appeal for everyone. He says, "I believe that this music is universal despite whatever heritage or background someone might have. There is a pleading and yearning that this music has that I think everyone can relate to."

In preparing for his recordings and performances Laval picks through his material, painstakingly arranging and rearranging their order to weigh their mood, tempo, key signatures, and feel, to find the succession that will create the desired effect. He has performed throughout the United States. Overseas performances have included the Scots Fiddler Festival held in Edinburgh



Jamie Laval

and a royal concert for the Queen of England. In 2002 he won the National Scottish Fiddle championship. Besides his own recordings, Laval has recorded with Dave Matthews, appearing on his CD *Some Devils*. He can also be heard on the soundtrack to the movies *Wild America* and *Finding Home*.

Noted for the strength of his performance, his first CD, *Shades of Green*, won praise throughout the folk and roots community. On his next CD, *Zephyr in a Confetti Factory*, Laval teamed up with then college student and California mandolin prize winner Ashley Broder for a collection of duos. Just as the higgledy-piggledy and colorful image of the disk's title suggests, the results are an inventive and spark-filled collaboration. Broder also plays cello – an unusual instrument for the Appalachian and bluegrass tunes that received her cello treatment on this recording. The arrangements are nonetheless convincing, with the two musicians using their instruments to imitate the twang and thump of washboard, clawhammer banjo, and Dobro.

Laval and Broder continue to record and perform together. Broder, classically trained, has a resume that mirrors her musical partner's. Having won the Western Open Master Picker Championship in 2003 and 2004, she went on to study classical cello and vio-

lin at Moorpark College. She met Laval at a jam session. Among the picking and stomping, Laval could detect the classical training underlying Broder's playing. He says, "We met about three years ago and started playing together about two and a half years ago. It took a little while before we found our own style. We work as a duo, and that's a slightly unusual instrumentation for this kind of music. There is usually much more going on in the background. I think it gives us a distinctive sound, and people have been responding to it."

Jamie Laval and Ashley Broder will perform for the San Diego Folk Heritage on May 10, 7:30pm, at the San Dieguito United Methodist Church in Encinitas.



Jamie Laval & Ashley Broder

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Paul Abbott, continued from p. 9.

boom boxes, home theater systems... wherever. That the message of the music comes across everywhere it's listened to. As the engineer analyzes the recording, specialized processing tools (equalizers, compressors, limiters, and other "sonic enhancers") are utilized to make the necessary adjustments to get what the engineer feels is the desired result. These tools are specialized in that they are designed for very accurate, fine adjustment; much more so than general tracking and mixing equipment. So, in essence, it's a person with specific skills and specialized equipment listening to a recording and saying, "this sounds good...now I'm going to add a few elements to make the good aspects sound better and minimize the elements that are problematic." Emphasizing the strong points and minimizing the less-than-stellar aspects of a recording is what makes it translate successfully to the myriad of listening environments. And to do that you need objectivity, skill, experience, and the right tools. Chief among these tools is the accurate playback system. If you can't really hear what's been recorded then you're just guessing and that's not professional mastering.

In a more subjective way, mastering has evolved into a specialized "secret sauce" step that takes a recording and pushes it to the next level of production, utilizing the above-men-

tioned equipment. It used to be that playback formats (cassette tapes and vinyl records, for example) had physical limitations. Too much bass in a master would make a record needle skip, and analog tape would distort if it was pushed too hard with limiting. So the format set the limitations of what was done in mastering. Now, with CDs, DVDs and MP3s, those same "format limitations" don't exist. So, mastering engineers are asked to push the limits of a recording beyond what can be accomplished in recording or mixing. This is a newer aspect that's been around for about the past 10-15 years and, in some form or another, is part of the whole process for mastering in general. The degree to which it's done depends on the style of music being mastered and the desire of the artist to create a "produced" sound.

But make no mistake about it: every recording you hear today gets part of its sound from what the mastering engineer did. You can learn more about Paul Abbott and the mastering process at the following related links:

ZenMastering web page: <http://www.zen-mastering.com>

ZenMastering MySpace: <http://myspace.com/zenmastering>

Audio Recording Advice web page: <http://www.audiorecordingadvice.com>



Patty Hall Jump on Up!

by Allen Singer

In some distant corner of one of those soon-to-be-gone music stores, in between show tunes and spoken word CD albums, you might still find a children's section with discounted, overly dusty, but still in alphabetical order children's CDs. There might be some wonderful children's song collections there and Patty Hall's new CD would be a perfect addition to any child's home library of songs.

Jump on Up! is a joy for both children and adults. It's a 12-track musical surprise consisting of five of Patty's original children's songs, six American traditional tunes, and an excellent original tune called "Little Dancer" by Jason Weiss. The folk songs all lend a sense of continuity and provide a historical grounding for her CD. Knowing Patty, this is not an accident of musical roulette with the tracks or style, but a way of enriching what children and even adults hear. The CD welcomes children in and invites adults to join them in a quality music experience. *Jump on Up!* provides kids with a wake-up call to be yourself and appreciate who you are. It's a CD with a beat and a distinct rhythm, providing a musical place where kids' differences and similarities can be universally appreciated.

The CD starts out with "Wrinkly Knee Blues," a song played as a Chicago-style blues tune that lyrically points out the uniqueness of each of us while giving voice to our own little quirks. Patty has definitely moved on with this CD by adding blues to her trunk full of musical styles. Whether doing old traditional tunes or her own wonderfully written songs, Patty performs heartfelt music. Her award-winning song, "Raggedy Candy Heart," is a complex but heartwarming song that feels very real. Patty Hall really is Raggedy Ann! In fact, she has written many books about the doll, her adventures, and her stories.

The old traditional tunes on the CD showcase Patty's core as a musician who is dedicated to the very roots of American string music and her special talent as a banjo player, vocalist and guitarist. Patty plays "The Keeper," an old camp that brought me back to when I was a kid away from home at summer camp, enjoying the comfort of a great group sing around the campfire.

Jump on Up! is comforting, educational, and musically diverse. Unlike many children's musical CDs, it's not condescending or overly commercialized. Adults can learn a thing or two by giving this children's CD a listen. You'll definitely shake your tail feathers to this wonderful collection of timeless music.

Patty will be performing her *Jumpin' Up* songs at the Adams Avenue Roots and Folk Festival on Sunday, May 4, 11am on the Park Stage.



Derrick Oshana Carousel

by Tim Mudd

Maybe it's just me, but I feel as though being a successful songwriter these days is not so much about setting your stories and experiences to music as it is creating music through stories that others can relate to and make their own. Like a church for those who practice religion, songs can help people without creative outlets give voice to their feelings and emotions. Another key element to this is not simply writing a pretty melody, but creating a vibe, in fact, this element should almost come first as it sets the tone and energy from which interested parties can explore, relate and grow from the lyrical content. That said, allow me to introduce you to Derek Oshana's debut EP *Carousel*, which receives not-so-shabby marks from this reviewer on both of these points.

Immediately, Oshana's voice jumps out as incredibly steady and soulful for all of his 24 years. Although his words are obviously directed toward lost and found love of his age group and the search for experience that accompanies his peers at this juncture in their journey, he executes them sincerely and without a hint of short-sightedness, which I'll admit made me feel a little nostalgic for a time where everything seemed a little purer and heartfelt than what we can discover beyond our twenties.

With regard to the vibe, the production of this record is fantastic and deserves as much recognition as the body of songs it dresses. As steady as Oshana's voice, the instrumentation swells around the vocal focal point and surprises every now and then whether it be in the form of a snare loop burst or some tastefully layered harmonies to break the rhythm of your concentration and keep things a little more exciting than usual.

Despite what I've already said about Oshana's voice, my only grumble is the distinct parallels my mind draws to the tone and intonation of John Mayer. Although Oshana's personal appearance and the packaging of this record helps to steer my mind away from this point during listening, moments occur when this similarity is a little close for comfort; at least it appears natural and not forced.

All in all, *Carousel* is a breath of fresh air in the smog of songwriter records, hitting the mark in structure, flow, attention to detail, and mood. Whether you enjoy it during a summer sunset or a rainy afternoon, Oshana and his cohorts have produced a truly easy record for all seasons.

The CD release will be held on Saturday, May 17 at Grace Chapel of the Coast, 102 N. Freeman, Oceanside, 7pm.



Steven Ybarra Love Love Love

by Tim Mudd

iTunes has led me to become an über-geeky musical pragmatist. If it hasn't got my interest within 30 seconds, I move on. Sometimes I wonder what I may be missing and wished that I refrained from executing my fickle musical nature, to which Steven Ybarra's debut CD *Love Love Love* would almost certainly have fallen prey had it not been left on my desk for review.

Before I continue, it's worth mentioning that Ybarra is a self-professed Christian artist. Think about that for a second. Keep the picture in your mind; now read on...

Having listened to *Love Love Love* a number of times, now it appears I may have discovered a new twist to this heavily trodden genre; although you may expect its tracks to be an open statement of Ybarra's faith, he has produced a beautiful collection of songs that could be applied to anyone's faith, even if it's a simple faith in love or faith in a loved one. Each song is written so simply and with so much universal meaning that Ybarra's words can be adapted to fit any particular race, color, or creed, which is not only brilliant but damn hard to achieve on any level. From this I would propose Ybarra to be mislabeled as a Christian artist and instead retitled as a talented pop songwriter. Ignoring the extremes of these tendencies, the production of this record is clean and tasteful under the direction of Brian Darnell, with just enough edge and interest to keep Ybarra off the road that leads to syrupy pop heaven.

The true beauty inside this CD is its ability to follow a central theme while keeping the music interesting enough to satisfy every cross-genre listener. Each track offers something a little different, whether it's the SoCal swing of the title and opening track to the boy-band soul of "All I Am" to the Seal-Hendrix of "The Beauty of Your Love" or the camp fire crooning of "Lifetime Valentine," Ybarra is always moving and always skirting the stylistic boundaries without ever committing to one particular groove.

Despite each song being incredibly palatable, in my mind *Love Love Love* heralds two completely stand-out prime-time songs. The stable longing of "Please Please" drills to the core of anyone who's ever wanted to change for the better with bluegrass-ballad charm and a chorus that won't leave you once you've felt it. "No More Lonely Days" rolls to looped desert-blues that lifts you as much as it grounds you. Although Ybarra's voice is incredibly strong throughout the disc's 11 songs, it's the takes on "No More Lonely Days" that will persuade you that he's truly singing from his soul.

Whether you practice faith or not, this is an uplifting record for everybody.

Phil Harmoniz Sez

I would personally like to thank all the musicians who participated in the Troubadour open mic. We had fun. Hopefully we'll do it again in the near future.



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Bill Dempsey Shanty Man

by Paul Hormick

In our cubicles, in front of our computers, it's hard to imagine that long ago the distinction between work and play was not as sharp as we draw it today. To pass the time while performing chores, and quite often to help set the pace and accompany the rhythm of nailing, shoving, and lifting, people sang work songs. Today we have our iPods, but long ago folks had their voices and often passed the time in shared songs.

Shanties were work songs that sailors sang while they mended sails, loaded keels, or otherwise kept the ship under sail while they made their way across the ocean or while Ahab searched for the white whale. Bill Dempsey, with his new disk *Shanty Man*, offers up an appealing collection of shanties that go back to the times when the great tall sailing ships crossed the open seas. Included are some of the familiar ones – “Blow the Man Down,” “Shenandoah,” and “(What Do You Do with a) Drunken Sailor?” – that you might remember from nights around the campfire, along with others that delight with their quirky lyrics and memorable tunes.

These songs, repeated over and over, usually lasted as long as the chores. But Dempsey knows that we're not squaring a rig on the poop deck, so he keeps the selections short at two or three minutes. The instrumentals, “Shenandoah,” “Soldier's Joy,” “The Sailor's Hornpipe,” are especially short, clocking in at about a minute apiece, but their brevity keeps them sweet and the listener wanting more.

The men who sang these shanties were not choir boys, but men who lived hard lives and sang hard as well, their voices tempered by waves, winds, and hard whiskey. Dempsey sings in a full baritone, and his rough-hewn delivery of these shanties, no vibrato and sung with the gusto of every beer commercial ever made, keeps the music true to the way it must have been heard on the great tall ships more than a century ago. For the one or two polkas and reels, Dempsey sings with more restraint, and the effect is quite beautiful and touching. As mentioned earlier, these shanties were sung to set the pace of work, and Dempsey does an excellent job of bringing out the rhythm. Even though there is no strumming guitar, bass or drums, I found myself tapping my foot throughout the disk.

Besides an occasional banjo, harmonica, or accordion, Dempsey sings a cappella, as these songs would have been sung while setting sail or battenning down a hatch or two. One only wishes that, to really be true to form, accompanying Dempsey on a few of these were a chorus of scalawags, ne'er-do-wells, and other men who would have spent their lives on the seas.

Bill Dempsey will be performing his shanties at the San Diego Folk Heritage's Sea Chantey Festival on the Star of India, Saturday, May 18, at 11am.



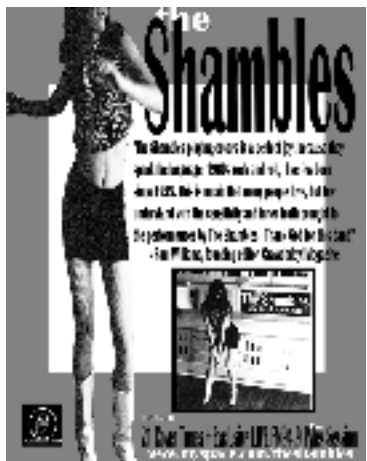
Rhythm & the Method

by Tim Mudd

I think I'm getting old, because it's the only reason I can explain why I'm becoming so intolerant of artists who a) use fake names, b) use an initial instead of their full name and c) use nicknames. Fake names are for practical jokes, initials are for letters to the *Troubadour* about their mean English writer, and nicknames are for your friends. ANYWAY, I also seem to be getting overly antagonized by artists who passionately spout off political or sociopolitical dogma as though they should be taken any more seriously than the next amateur pundit. I understand each generation's need to test and protest the “system,” but there comes a point when you realize that singing songs as black and white as the powers they deride to coffeehouse ghosts who prefer to not vote for “ideological reasons” is pointless, candlelit vigils are a highly ineffective use of energy, and even Ani DiFranco bought a ranch in Texas to raise her heterosexual family... But I guess that's just a personal opinion.

Rhythm & the Method's debut EP isn't bad, but it's not great either. Their sound takes me back, very specifically, to 4 Non-Blondes' 1993 debut (and only) CD – which was actually an incredibly underrated recording as long as you disregard their worldwide smash-hit “What's Up?” – just nowhere near as tight, nor as well structured. Front-woman Rhythm Turner's voice also bears a striking resemblance to the Blondes' own Linda Perry, which is probably the band's (and the record's) strongest asset. It's not that the band is not comprised of relatively good musicians (and there are moments when each member shines), it's just that there are places where the timing is lost, which is a major infraction on a studio recording and sloppy attention to detail on the part of the producer. Another production issue, which screams from this CD, is the tsunami of reverb that appears to spring forth and engulf the room from each tracked instrument, including Turner's voice; it's as though the recording itself took place in a large hall rather than a professional studio. Were it not for this, the whole affair would sound a lot warmer and possibly even a little tighter.

As I've already said, this isn't a bad record overall. As long as the band continues to grow together and pare down its excessively repeated verse-chorus combinations in favor of a succinct attack, their next effort should be a lot stronger. You never know, people who are younger than 18 and older than 25 may even appreciate it too.



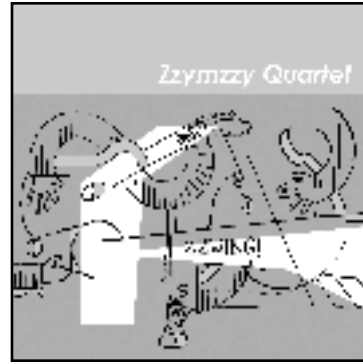
Tomcat Courtney Downsville Blues

by Lou Curtiss

It's hard to be objective about an old friend who first played music in my store in 1971 and appeared at his first San Diego Folk Festival in 1972, but I really believe this is some of the best work he has ever done. Tomcat's lyrics on the original material (particularly the title song and the one about hurricane Katrina) are exciting and memorable, and the production by Bob Corritore (who also plays some tasteful French harp that doesn't get in the way of the singer) is top rate. This is the first time in 40 some years that Tomcat has had any first-class studio time. Most of his home recorded efforts were done with portable equipment and without the care of anyone who knew about record production. Tomcat has spent all this time paying dues. So many young guitar players came into this blues business learning under Tomcat and playing with him at a myriad clubs from the old Texas Tea House in Ocean Beach to his currant assignments in more classy joints in the Gaslamp and elsewhere. It was one of his students, Chris Jones, who started playing clubs with Tom before he was old enough to do that legally, which brought him to the attention of the Blue Witch people. Chris also does some guitar work on the CD as does another of Tom's old students, bass player Patrick Rynn. Drum duties are split between Brian Fahey and ex-Muddy Waters sideman Willie “Big Eyes” Smith.

The notes are informative and even give credit to an interview John Payne and I did with Tomcat back in the early '70s for *Living Blues* magazine (March-April, 1975). Tomcat has been one of San Diego's best kept secrets for a long time and it looks like with the release of this CD we are going to have to share him with the rest of the world.

Tomcat grew up in the tiny town of Downsville just outside of Waco, Texas. His daddy ran a juke joint and Tomcat got exposed to the blues at an early age. He joined a tent show as a tap dancer but moved on to singing and the guitar in the '40s and '50s. He spent time in Lubbock, Texas, Denver, and Flagstaff, Arizona, before moving on to L.A. in 1966 and San Diego in 1971. I don't think he was in San Diego too long when someone brought him down to a blues concert I was doing at Folk Arts and he sat in for a number or two. And that's where it started. I've forgotten how many Folk Festivals, Roots Festivals, Street Fairs, and other events I've had Tom play at, but it has certainly been a lot. It's great to see a good friend have the kind of success Tomcat will have with this CD. He's come a long way to get here and he's certainly deserving of every accolade that comes to him. You'll want to own this CD mostly for the music but also for the fine notes by Bill Dahl and some excellent photography by Nena Anderson. You can see Tomcat perform at the Roots Festival on Saturday, May 3, at 2 and 3pm in the Mansfield Beer Garden. For more information, go to www.bluewitchrecords.com.



Zzymzzy Quartet Zzwing!

by Lou Curtiss

Those Gypsy swingers sure get around and the Zzymzzy Quartet is no exception. From Django Hot Club licks by Caravan to South America and New York City, the group covers songs by major songwriters and personalities (Hoagy Carmichael, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, and others) and do some of their own stuff too, which happily doesn't suffer by comparison. The songs range in a time capsule that covers the late 19th century, and mostly the 1930s (even the 1893 Gnossonne No. 1, Lent has a 1930's klezmer touch). Even the Dukish “Caravan” sounds a bit like these guys are hauling bagels from the East Side to Tel Aviv with a stop at the Hot Club to give Django a bite.

We are living in a time when Django Reinhardt is being revered as a minor (at least) deity and every city has a Hot Club or Gypsy swing group of its own. I only have to play Django on my “Jazz Roots” radio show (KSDS 88.3 – a shameless plug) to have the phone light up. There are quite a few people out there playing this music, but very few people playing it as well as these guys. They do all of it well, from the latin “Tico Tico,” the slow standard “What'll I Do,” and even a touch of Les Paul and Mary Ford on “The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise” although that Gypsy swing guitar creeps in here too.

The group consists of lead guitarist (and harmony vocalist where needed) Beston Barnett who is mighty fine on old time tunes and his own compositions as well. The clarinet player is Matt Gill who lets good taste keep his solos in bounds (he doesn't try to be Benny Goodman or Dave Taras, he plays what's needed). Pete Miesner is sort of in the same category with his vocals. He doesn't try to sound black or British; he doesn't mumble – just the words that you can understand presented in a pleasing format (his solid rhythm is okay too). Patrick Marion's bass is just what's needed to round out the sound. Guestings by Ray Suen (always a good choice in whatever group he plays that hot violin with) and Rob Duncan's accordion really adds that French cabaret sound. I hadn't heard Chloe Feoranzo's tenor sax before, but she really gives that Johnny Hodges-Harry Carney-Otto Hardwick sound to “Caravan.” Chad Farran's doumbek is a nice touch that even Ellington didn't think of.

I only have one criticism of this group. The recording should have been issued on 78s so I could play it on “Jazz Roots.” This is one I would hope is in the KSDS record library so that folks around there and other jazz radio stations will play it. The only problem is that with a name like Zzymzzy, they're not exactly going to be first up in alphabetical listings. Maybe that just means an extra special surprise when you get to the end.

The CD release will be held on Thursday, May 1 at the La Jolla Firehouse YMCA on Herschel Street in La Jolla at 9pm.



The Turtle Project Intopaz

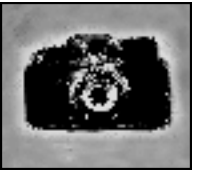
by Will Edwards

Intopaz is an unusual and interesting debut CD by the Turtle Project. It is a record that is broad in scope and incorporates advanced musical arrangements with pop, jazz, and rock compositions that should appeal to both the lay listener and the academic musician. The sonic experience is varied and fun. Tracks like “Day Five” do exceptionally well to blend digestible pop production with thoughtful and focused songwriting. The record, overall, exposes some limitations in the production and performances that the band's future releases will hopefully resolve. Nonetheless, *Intopaz* dares to explore territory that most independent bands are either afraid to explore or lack the necessary skills to do so. For that I believe much credit is due.

More complex timbres and strong jazz-based progressions throughout the album's 11 tracks make it hard to call *Intopaz* a pop record, however some songs are just too catchy for any other genre (“Taking It On” and “Miles In-Between”). Remnants of Toad the Wet Sprocket, one of Jason Yamaoka's big influences, can be heard throughout *Intopaz* as well as Jason's solo work. For example, “Maya and Adam” is a bouncy-feeling song written about a serious topic – alcoholism – in which the light-rock style mingles with the reflective subject matter in a manner that's highly reminiscent of Glen Phillips (Toad's former front man).

There is heavy usage of horns, which I'd like to hear tighten up considerably on several songs in which I felt that they conflicted with the vocals. But, that being said, I think the horns are an important reason why this record stands in its own musical category – for the better. They are used to great effect on specific tracks such as “Magic Eight Ball.” I'd also level criticism regarding the vocal levels – I'd like to see Jason's voice take a more prominent place in a few of the mixes where they blend into the background too much to really command attention (“Growing Up Slowly”). The songwriting often offers up an interesting variety of topics, but their message is occasionally muted by overpowering and complex arrangements. Whether due to artistic direction or common oversight, I feel that the limitations on *Intopaz* often break even with the record's many strengths – this is the hallmark of a good musical exploration. Sometimes the music falls victim to an excessive array of instruments. Other times, the record feels clear, concise, and innovative (listen to “Miles In-Between”).

In support of *Intopaz*, the Turtle Project will be filming a live music video on May 24 at Channel Twelve25, a sizeable, all-ages venue at 172 E. Main Street in El Cajon. You can also learn more about the band online at <http://www.theturtleproject.com> or on MySpace at <http://www.myspace.com/jturtle>.



Chris Smither @ Dark Thirty



Charlie Musselwhite @ the Belly Up



Sara Petite CD Release @ the Belly Up



Asleep @ the Wheel's Ray Benson @ the Belly Up



The Grams CD Release @ Anthology



Bluegrass Day in the Flower Fields



Chuck Schiele & Simeon Flick @ Grams CD Release



Look out! The Grams' Craig Yerkes



Sara Petite @ Belly Up CD Release



The Palominos open for Asleep @ the Wheel @ the Belly Up



Ramblin' Jack Elliott @ AMSD



We Five @ AMSD

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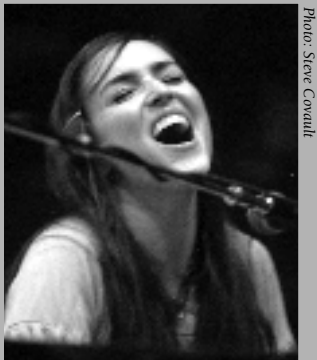
Thanks Chelsea!



Chelsea brought a cake! (with Phil Harmonic)



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