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SAN DIEGO
ROUBADOOR

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



November 2009

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

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

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

Hoffer's Cigar Bar: Where There's Smoke There's Fiery Jazz and a Whole Lot More

by Raul Sandelin

Ask anyone with a PhD in musicology (or any stoner, for that matter) what music is. And, he or she will tell you that music is a metaphor for something. The vibrations of the universe, the hard-wiring of the human brain, love, hot monkey love, pain turned outward, joy turned inward, the libido turned upward, the unstated turmoils of class or gender, God with a capital "G," god with a lower-case "g," God-damn-the-guy-who-stole-my-woman, God-bless-the-woman-who-stole-my-man. These are only a handful of the signifieds that have danced the semiotic samba alongside music's signifier.

To say that music is simply good or music is simply fun is not enough. We in the Western world have to place a deeper meaning onto the music we listen to. But, if music is always the metaphor, what is the metaphor for music? We talk about music as a symbol for something else. We seldom turn the tables of logic and inference in the other direction.

So, I'll posit an idea here: Smoke. Smoke is the perfect metaphor for music.

Unfortunately, we're trying to purge smoke from our lives. Witness the clean coal industry and catalytic converters. This is a darn shame considering all the good things we owe to smoke's carcinogenic presence. Think of the great episodes of modern history: the Industrial Revolution, the trenches in France during WWI, Keith Richard's morning sit on the loo. All involve billows and billows of smoke. Smokestacks, mustard gas, Chesterfield non-filters. The world was built upon smoke.

If we turn to high-culture, let me just

say six words: Cheech & Chong's *Up in Smoke*. Actually, that's five words and a squiggly line. Shoot me. Just don't leave a smoking gun. There's also that charming indie film *Smoke Signals*, which convinced Sherman Alexie to stick to writing short stories. Look high and low. Smoke is everywhere. Here one minute, gone the next. And, it deserves a "thank you."

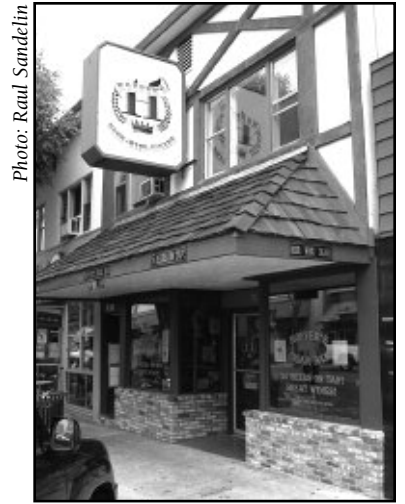
But, a big *tergum quo nos caepi* to all my brethren in the hills east of El Cajon. Let's get back to the beginning and my main point: Smoke is the perfect metaphor for music. Not only does it swirl around a room, so physical yet untouchable, smoke also has a storied role in the making of the music we love. What would the roadhouse, honkytonk, and juke joint of yore look like with smoking ordinances posted on the walls? Where would our croaky, old blues singers be if it weren't for cigarettes and whisky? How would the Beatles have ever held a press conference? What would Tom Waits stuff into the corner of his mouth? Why would Kurt Cobain have sat through yet another MTV interview? Smoking has become an indispensable prop in popular music. And, it seems like the music died when we tried to legislate away the smoke.

Fortunately, the whole world doesn't think like those killjoys over at the American Lung Association. Hoffer's Cigar Bar in downtown La Mesa is doing it old school.

Walking into Hoffer's is like walking into a *film noir*. Wood paneling and brick gladly replace the all-too-current faux finishes and neon one finds elsewhere. The room is enveloped in rich shadow and mood lighting. The sunlight beaming in from the doors reminds the patron that there's a world worth escaping out there. However, thankfully, "I'm in here and not a part of it." Hoffer's is an escape to another place and time.

For this bar, smoke means elegance. This ain't no smoky liar's club for sharecroppin' crackers. It's where one can come and savor the rich tobaccos from far off tropical ports with names as exotic as the names of Angelina Jolie's children. "A cigar is a vacation," the bar's owner Phil Hoffman reminds us. And, all of the seats are first class.

Given that Hoffer's is such a buttoned down operation, it's amazing to learn that Hoffman is only a year into his first business. Groomed in the automobile industry, Hoffman is a trained mechanic who spent the past 25 years in wholesale tire sales. He even helped the Price family spearhead the



Hoffer's, 8282 La Mesa Blvd.



Hoffer's patio performance space



Bruce Cameron at Hoffer's

Price Club tire outlets in the early '80s. Running contrary to common sense, he decided to start his first business when the economy got really bad. "We owned the building," he explains, "and watched a number of tenants come and go." By summer of 2008, he said *basta Rasta* to working for someone else. At that same time, the latest tenant on La Mesa Boulevard wanted out of her lease. The challenges were many, but Hoffman decided it was time. Hoffer's Cigar Bar opened its doors in August of last year.

Combining his passions for a good beer, sports, music, good conversation, and, of course, a good cigar, Hoffman installed everything he would need to entertain patrons as he would want to be entertained himself. "We put in a state-of-the-art sound system," he says. Two wide-screens adorn the bar for Sunday and Monday night football. "We have 24 beers on tap, 20 wines, four ports, and 40 to 50 different cigars." Two humidor rooms allow customers to journey through the vast selection of stogies. Hoffman has even developed his own rating system, ranging from mild to full-bodied to help find the "right cigar for the right person."

Not ready to light yourself afire? Never fear. All of the smoking is done out on the patio. The inside bar is kept smoke-free by a couple of de-smokifier doohickies (I never was good at mechanical nomenclature) that blow the smoke back out the doors before it enters.

But, I know you've been waiting to feel some déjà vu all over again. So, another *tergum quo nos caepi* to all who have wondered why there's a diphthong in the word "Budweiser." Let's get back to the main point of this whole thing and see if we can get some smoke and music swirling in unison.

In May, jazz trumpeter Bruce Cameron walked into Hoffer's and proposed to provide a professional jazz combo on Saturday nights. Phil Hoffman replied with an immediate "yes." The rest is history. And, Cameron along with local guitar pro Mark Augustin and bassist/drummer Ted Williams have been packing 'em in on the patio, the same patio where all of the smoking is going on.

Bruce Cameron, many may remember, is the former musical partner of the late Hollis Gentry. Cameron and Gentry started the group that would go on to become

continued on page 14.

ERRATA

The people in the photo below were incorrectly identified in last month's Troubadour. They are the Pony Tales, a trio that performs at Wood 'n' Lips Open Mic on Thursday evenings.



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The California Rangers

by Erik Pettersen

In Oceanside, on the corner of Tremont St. and Oceanside Blvd., across the street from a small dirt lot, a light blue building framed by shrubs and a small asphalt parking lot remains hidden from the view of many travelers and locals. A sign outside the beach tavern says McCabe's Beach Club; however, the name recently changed to Larry's Beach Club. Only regulars, like the members of the honky tonk country music band California Rangers, know that little secret. They know the story of why Larry's Beach Club still boasts the sign that reads McCabes, because they started playing there seven years ago to a crowd of fans who come to enjoy a style of country music from another generation.

In 2001, Tom Boren (rhythm guitar, lead singer) started the California Rangers because he wanted a band that just wanted to have fun playing music. Jim Dougherty (drums, vocals) joined Boren a short time after the band's inception. Over the years members have come and gone, though now they feel they have found a group of guys that plays well together. Dougherty said of

the members of California Rangers, "It's like a good pair of boots. It just fits."

When Boren named his band, he chose California Rangers because of his family history. Boren can claim Captain Harry Love of the original California Rangers – the lawmen – among his ancestors. Now, more than a century after a bullet took Captain Love's life, Boren's California Rangers carry Captain Love's badge around with them. Boren spent his childhood on a ranch in Rainbow, California, a community of about 2,000 northeast of Fallbrook.

Apart from Tom Boren, lead guitarist Bob Ryan also pursued a music in San Diego with his brother Kevin. For 30 years, Ryan and his brother entertained various San Diego crowds in bands like Nashville Ensemble (1978) and West Coast Flyers (1997) with Rick Schmidt (pedal steel and midi guitar), another member of the California Rangers. Around the time Ryan played in the West Coast Flyers, drummer Larry Mitchell got him an audition with Heather Myles. Throughout the next 12 years, Ryan, Schmidt, and Myles performed honkytonk country music in 29 countries and appeared on various television and

California Rangers: The Comeback of Honky Tonk

radio programs. Ryan spoke of opening many shows for Merle Haggard, playing at Willie Nelson's birthday picnic, and appearing on the Grand Ole Opry stage, along with such performers as Loretta Lynn and Ricky Skaggs.

Aside from Boren and Ryan, the other members of the California Rangers hail from elsewhere. Dougherty moved to San Diego from Washington D.C., Rick Schmidt comes from Colorado, and Mike Silver (bass guitar) comes from North Carolina. Each of them can tell stories about how they came to share the stage with Boren at Larry's Beach Club. Schmidt also played at the Grand Ole Opry, and Dougherty played with performers like Merrill Moore and Wanda Jackson, the first lady of rock 'n' roll.

Before country singers like Shania Twain and the Dixie Chicks gave country music a rock 'n' roll sound – before Tim McGraw and Nelly came out with a song that blended country music and rap – country signers like Johnny Paycheck, Willie Nelson, and others sang a type of country music similar to what the cowboys played. The California Rangers want to give people a place where they can listen to that type of music, and Larry's Beach Club provides that venue.

Now in their seventh year entertaining audiences at Larry's Beach Club every Friday from 4:30 – 9:00 pm, Boren and the rest of the California Rangers feel ready to begin working on a CD. It will consist of music written by Tony McCashin and Heather Myles, along with music originally performed by the likes Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, Johnny Paycheck, Ray Price, and Wynn Stewart.

When it comes to secrets about Larry's

Beach Club aka McCabe's, the California rangers know many. They started playing there before many of the employees started working there – and perhaps before some of the employees reached an age when they could work there. Aside from Larry's Beach Club, the California Rangers bring their

honkytonk country music to various other local spots like Swallow's Inn in San Juan Capistrano. They also play the occasional fair and rodeo, but their loyal followers can always rest assured that every Friday night they will appear at Larry's Beach Club.

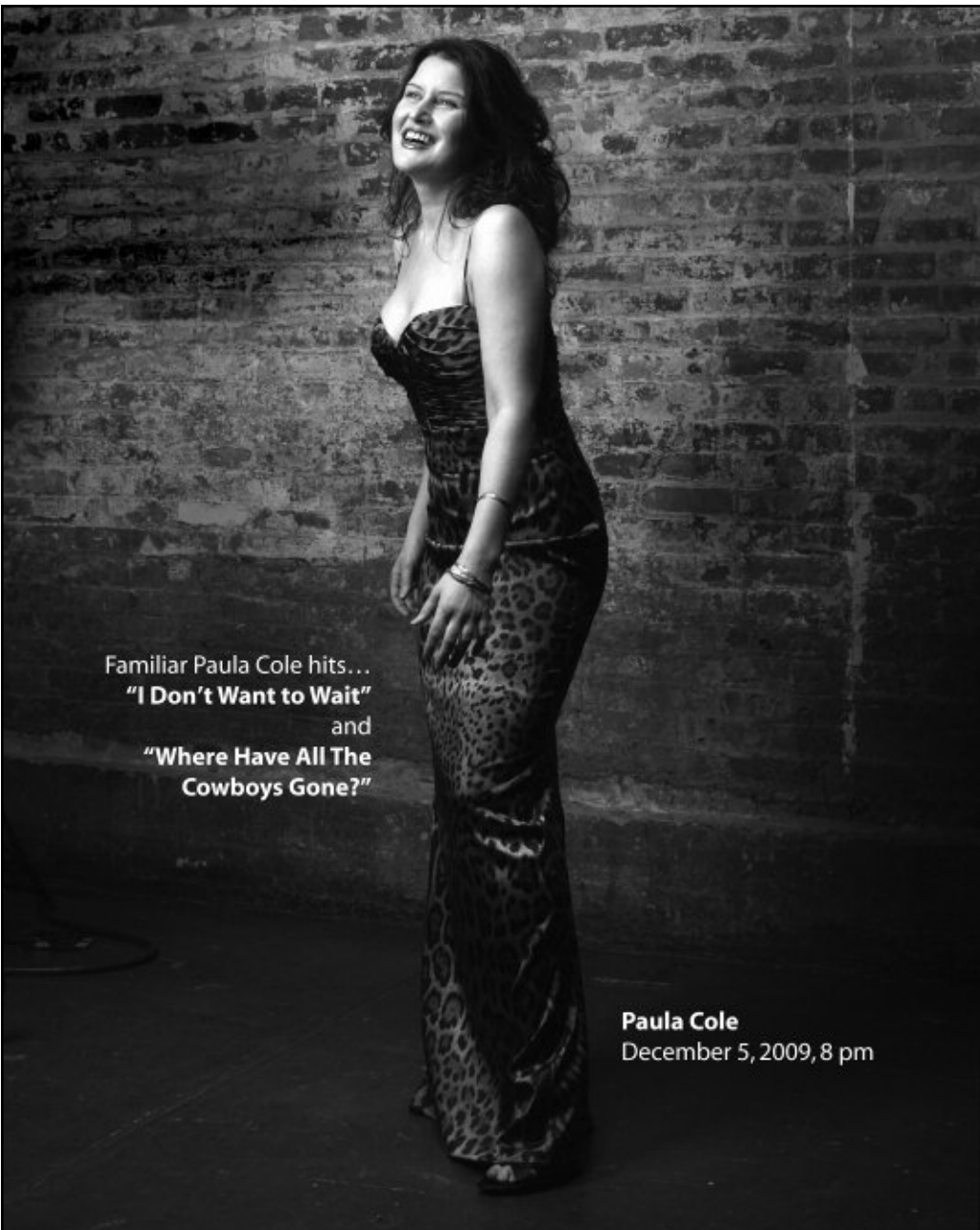
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Recordially, Lou Curtiss

MIKE SEEGER SCHOLARSHIP AT FOLK ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL

I recently heard from Mary Katherine Aldin, a long time friend and supporter, about the Folk Alliance International's establishment of the Mike Seeger Scholarship Fund.

Created in memory of Mike Seeger, who as a founding member of the New Lost City Ramblers received a 2004 Folk Alliance Lifetime Achievement Award, this fund will pay for transportation and an honorarium to bring a traditional musician or other tradition bearer to attend the FAI Conference each year to participate in panels and performances; the artist's conference registration fee and hotel accommodation will be donated by Folk Alliance International.

Mike Seeger spent his entire life tracking down the many strands of old-time music tradition, including singers, dancers, and instrumentalists from many corners of the United States and from dozens of cultural and racial groups. Over the years, right here in San Diego, Mike was responsible for

working with me to bring the best of the best to the old San Diego State Folk Festivals including a wide range of musical styles from Kentucky's great "High Lonesome Sound" Roscoe Holcomb, to Virginia's supreme finger-pick blues guitar of John Jackson, to Napoleon Stricklands Fife and Drum Band from Como, Mississippi, to San Antonio's Lydia Mendoza, to the Golden Eagles, New Orleans' Indian group and the great cajun band the Balfa Brothers. Other people Mike brought us included Wade and Julia Mainer, Leonard Emmanuel, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and the great banjo and fiddle man Tommy Jarrell. Mike was always a hands-on presenter; he taught the music in person and collected material wherever he went. He was also responsible for a succession of vinyl records, cassette tapes, VHS, and DVD recordings. As much as anyone could, Mike got people to learn to play and gave exposure to the old music and musicians at the same time.

They are proposing to continue that practice within Folk Alliance for the same

reasons and in the same ways. There are two invited recipients of the first Mike Seeger Scholarship: 93-year old Violet Hensley of Yellville, Arkansas, a fiddle player and fiddle maker; and Sharde Thomas, the late Otha Turner's 19-year-old granddaughter, who carries on the traditions, in rural Mississippi, of making and playing cane fife.

This project is ongoing and you can become involved, contribute, or whatever. From the early 1960s at the old Sign of the Sun bookstore through a wide number of San Diego Folk Festivals and up to his last trip out here just a couple of years ago, Mike was always a fountain of information and a lot of entertainment. He always encouraged local musicians and played with them whenever he could. Just a couple of weeks before his passing, I had sent Mike a track of Sam and Kirk McGee of Knoxville Blues from the 1975 San Diego State Folk Festival, which Sam had also recorded in 1926. Sam had dedicated it to Mike and I got a nice long email from him, remarking on the similarity of the two recordings although they were nearly 50 years apart. Mike also said, "You have to share these tapes with the people. They may not think like we do but they have to hear this stuff." That's the way Mike was, always supportive of the music and someone who was doing anything worthwhile with it. Find out more about these scholarships at www.folk.org.

FACEBOOK: You can sort of see a mini-folk festival on my Facebook page and also find out what I'm playing each week on "Jazz

Roots" (Sunday nights at 8pm on KSDS 88.3 FM and Jazz88.org). Just go to "Louis F. Curtiss." My sister Leona set this page up, so it's my full name. "Louis" (pronounced Louie), F Stands for Fredric (my Mom liked the actor Fredric March) and as my Dad always said, "We ain't one of those half S'd Curtiss Folk". It's a two S word like my fifth cousin who built airplanes. Now didn't you want to know all that?

GRANTS FOR THE DIGITIZATION PROJECT

Well, our money for the Folk Festival and Concert Digitization Project has run out and although we've done the first 420 reels (up to about 1975), we still have about 2000 reels that need attending to. We've applied to the Grammy Foundation folk for a second grant, but so far we haven't heard anything. We really need people who know about funding to come forth with some financial help. I'm surprised that, besides encouragement from the Library of Congress in Washington DC and the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology (our co sponsors), there has been no support from San Diego State (which hosted the event for 20 years) or the Adams Avenue Business Association (which hosted the festival for



Lou Curtiss

another 15 years), or in fact any other major San Diego Supporter of the Arts. It would seem to me that having a major San Diego Folk Life Collection in the Library of Congress and at one of the great California Universities would be a feather in San Diego's cap. Some of those folks who give big bucks to other artistic endeavors in San Diego ought to give a nod to us just once.

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More Memories of Sam

by Allen Singer

Sam Hinton passed away on September 10 at the age of 92. Time has taken Sam down many roads and he has touched us all along the way. I've always wondered how people can give so much while staying committed and not having their egos choke off their creativity and kindness. Sam has left a musical imprint on our world and the many people with whom he has crossed paths. He has provided us with a road map and a key to doors of enjoyment and satisfaction that no amount of money or power can buy. Every time we get together and play we all gain from the common interest we share. We're a lucky group of people who share a special part of life that allows us to express ourselves creatively and also brings enjoyment to others. Thank you again, Sam, for sharing your generous musical spirit with us.

Sam Hinton wore many hats in his life. He's an original – a folk singer, songwriter, scientist, artist, father, and diatonic harmonica player. In December 2006, Sam moved up to Berkeley to be near his daughter Leanne. The San Diego folk music community already misses him, but treasures the time he lived and sang among us.

Sam created the San Diego Folk Song Society back in 1957, and we'll be celebrating our 53th year next March. What can I say about Sam that hasn't been said already and felt by the many he sang to and educated? I met Sam in 2003. I've treasured his coming to our SDFSS meetings over the years. In my earlier years, Sam had been just a face on a record cover and a real joy to hear on my turntable. Sometimes you meet people who are famous and sometimes you meet people like Sam, who while being famous hadn't let the stars get in his eyes and kept him from seeing the real world.

When I think of great American folk musicians, Woody Guthrie comes to mind, joined by Cisco Houston, Pete Seeger, the Weavers, Ledbelly, Ramblin'



Sam with Tanya & Larry Rose, 2006

Jack Elliott, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and, yes, Sam Hinton. Sam knew Woody and spent time with him in California. Both were born in Oklahoma. I've felt their connection every time Sam's been around us.

We've been lucky to have shared music and many things more with Sam. Words can never capture the gifts we received from him. Many of our members are folkies because Sam sang at their schools. Sam sang to children, not at them. He respected them, brought them the gift of music, and left them with a life of joy and interest that continues today.

When I shook hands with Sam at his farewell party, I teared up a bit. I felt the comfort of Sam's big, warm hand and caught the smile in his eyes. I knew we'd meet again and wished him peace.

from Lou Curtiss

You would have thought that during the years that Sam was active in the San Diego folk scene that quite a number of Sam clones would have sprung up but that just isn't the case. Sam had a real unique guitar style but

I don't think I've ever heard anyone discuss it and while local performers might have done one or two of Sam's songs, I only know one who ever did Sam's songs like Sam did them. That was a guy named John Yount who used to play at the Heritage in Mission Beach back in the 1960s. He did Sam's material exclusively. I don't know whatever became of him. I've thought a lot about why more people didn't do Sam's material and I've come to the conclusion that people just didn't want to offend Sam by stealing his material and performance style. So many of us could sing along, and did, to Sam's songs.

I think it would be a nice acknowledgement of his legacy if people sang his songs more often and maybe even played them more like Sam did on that old Washburn. Maybe a portion of the Sam Hinton Festival in Poway, could be set aside for singing and playing Sam's songs each year. Think about it.



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Brooklyn Finds her "Blue Skies" in San Diego

by John Philip Wyllie

Growing up in conservative and largely Mormon Utah, Brooklyn Mackintosh often felt like a fish out of water.

"I didn't feel free at home and I never really fit into the Mormon community that well. My family put us into the Mormon community so that we would fit in with the culture there and with the kids around our neighborhood. The moms there wouldn't have let us play with their kids if we weren't Mormon. After a while, my sister and I decided that we should delve into the religion and we got sucked in pretty good."

While she was struggling with her faith and her identity she discovered that she found incredible joy through music. Her mother used to tell people that her little Brooke could sing before she could talk. Born with considerable and varied artistic talent she found that things like drawing, dancing, and gymnastics came easily to her, but music was her first and deepest love.

At 15, her father taught her to play his Fender acoustic guitar. Born with that natural gift, it wasn't too long before she began composing her own songs. Piano came just as easily. For a while the music kept her content despite the underlying feelings of unease.

Not wanting to rock the boat, Brooklyn tried to go with the flow as much as possible, but at 20 she married a guy against her parent's wishes.

"He was older than me and he wanted to mold me like a piece of clay. I stopped writing music because he didn't like it. He didn't like the fact that I was playing the guitar and felt I that should be spending more time with him. Mostly, he didn't like the fact that I was doing something for myself. I didn't realize that at the time. I thought he just hated my music. I began to feel worthless. I put my guitar down for what seemed like forever

and then one day he hit me."

Their marriage ended shortly thereafter. Mackintosh stayed in Utah for another five years searching for her true identity. Eventually, she came to the realization that the Mormon faith was not for her. Sensing her pain, her father bought her a guitar following her divorce in the hope that music could work its healing magic.

"I found my peace and therapy in that guitar and began writing songs immediately. I didn't start getting really good on guitar until after I moved to San Diego [five years ago]. I watched people like Matt Silvia, Barbara Nesbitt, Christopher Dale, and a lot of other people play. They were all a huge influence.

"She's got a beautiful, sultry voice, adventurous musical appetite, and a love for collaborating with other artists. Her tireless work ethic and constant networking creates countless opportunities to share the spotlight with other talented singer/songwriters. She showcases many of them at her weekly shows," Dale said recently.

Cathryn Beeks gave Brooklyn her first opportunity to play in a club. She also turned her on to game songs and through Dale, she expanded her musical even horizons further. The last five years have been years of tremendous growth for Mackintosh musically and in many ways.

That growth is on display each Thursday evening beginning at 9pm at Hennessey's in Pacific Beach. She will often invite two friends to join her on stage; sometimes they will focus primarily on originals. Other nights they might cover everything from originals to arena rock, to '80s pop. It is always different and always interesting.

"We often end up playing a lot of covers. The artists that I am inviting tend to focus on music that will get people moving. It is very exciting to see them create different repertoires and I love it that they are putting so much effort and

soul into it. Playing music in front of people is one of my greatest joys in life. I have come to realize playing is not about the money or making the crowd dance, it is about making them feel what you are singing. Learning to play other people's songs has made me a better songwriter."

With a unique voice that can sound alternately sultry, bluesy, or just downright beautiful, Brooklyn particularly shines on the songs from her aptly named eight-selection debut CD *Blue Skies Await*. These songs reflect the freedom and joy that she now feels in spreading her wings after being stifled and smothered for so long.

Another soon-to-be-released CD is a collaboration that she is working on with studio wizard Sven-Erik Seaholm. Seaholm produced *Blue Skies Await* and countless other projects for a long list of artists. Brooklyn anticipates continuing on as both a solo artist and as half of their recently formed duo, Seaholm-Mackintosh.

"I feel like I am growing in both directions at the same time. So, I think that there is an equal chance and opportunity for me to progress as an artist in both ways," she said.

Last month Seaholm joined Brooklyn on stage at the La Jolla Art and Wine Festival when she opened the musical portion of the festival with a splendid six-song set. The harmonies they produced that day will no doubt be one of the many highlights of their upcoming joint release.

Blue Skies Await is a solid first effort for Brooklyn. "Carnival Ride" is the song from it that has been getting the most airplay.

"It is probably the most earthy and uplifting song on the album," Mackintosh said. "It is true to the fact that relationships are like a carnival ride. Sometimes they end prematurely and sometimes you want to just continue riding them even though they make you crazy. That one is

Photo: Dennis Andersen



Brooklyn Mackintosh

probably the most popular song on the album."

It is not, however, her favorite. That honor goes to "Scared of Love."

"That one takes me back to a place where I knew who I was, but I just didn't know how to get to where I wanted to be. It is really about anybody being afraid to love somebody else because they are afraid of getting hurt. In reality, if you give love then you will receive love. I didn't realize that when I was a teenager."

A third album cut that has drawn a positive response is entitled "Believe." "A number of people have told me that they want me to record "Believe" in an acoustic style. I may or may not do that because I have kind of moved on from all of those songs. They are a part of my history. At this point, I am working on newer, better songs and I am hoping that the next album will show significant proof that I have come a long way since I have found my blue skies."

Talented musicians sometimes come equipped with giant egos, but that doesn't seem the case with Brooklyn. She comes off as humble and grateful for the success she has enjoyed. She has often been known as someone who gives back to the local community.

She organized and performed a show for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Awareness Project a while back, which included a group of other artists.

"It was really cool raising a lot of money for that. I have also enjoyed supporting animal rights initiatives, but I haven't mixed that with my music. But given the opportunity, I will. Sven and I were also involved in Envirofest. We are both interested in raising people's awareness for the things that need to change."

"I would like to thank everybody from San Diego that is a part of local music and who support local music and let them know that they really matter. I owe my art to the many people that have reached out their hands to me and supported me. If I had to name names it would be a pretty long list, but I think most of them know who they are. To really know who I am, I think, it is important to stop and listen to the music that is coming out of me."

Once you do, I think you will agree that Brooklyn Mackintosh is the best thing to come out of Utah in quite some time.

For additional information:
www.reverbnation/brooklynmack

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Dave Humphries: From Northern U.K. to SOCAL

by Steve Thorn

For Dave Humphries' youth, timing was everything. True, Englishmen of earlier generations were swept up by the "trad" jazz and skiffle movements. But Humphries came of age during the '60s British Beat era, better known over here in the "colonies" as the British Invasion. More than four decades after the Beatles appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the musical impact of those heady days continues to resonate. The recently remastered Beatles catalog flew off the shelves last month – not shabby for a band that broke up in 1970.

Humphries, a musician who has lived in San Diego since 1996, shared his thoughts on why a small island in the North Atlantic became the seismic center for the rock 'n' roll earthquake. "I think a lot was down to the effect people like Buddy Holly and Elvis had on us after (skiffle artist) Lonnie Donegan had made it easy to be in a band – only three chords – so the move to rock 'n' roll was pretty fast," Humphries explained. "Buddy would be the one responsible for the British Beat groups writing their own songs. I imagine it became successful because everybody was bored and fed up with the 'pretty boy' pop music; you had Fabian et al. in the U.S. and we had the same type of thing – nothing threatening...just boring. Then BANG!! The Beatles/Stones/Kinks/Animals and more, it was like somebody just turned the light on and, of course, after a few months they were taking it back to America...pretty amazing really."

Humphries is from Durham City, a major university center near Newcastle. Judging by the photographs displayed in the Mission Valley condo he shares with his wife, Robbie Taylor, Durham's rolling hills and classic architecture resembles a smaller Edinburgh. Humphries' description of his home town compels the globe-trotter with any sense of wanderlust to get the dusty passport up to date. What would be on the itinerary for the first-timer? "That would be the Durham Cathedral and Durham Castle (a world heritage site). There's also little winding streets, some with cobblestones, and an old market place with statues. Lots of pubs but not as many as there used to be – the smoking ban and price increases on beer have killed a few already," said Humphries.

Prior to journalist and Beatles confidant Bill Harry covering the early days of British rock in his publication *Mersey Beat*, Humphries recalled his father "listening on an old radiogram to Bing Crosby, Frankie Laine, and a chap called Michael Holiday who was an English Bing Crosby. As he puttered around the house he would sing his Bing songs or 'the Horse Operas' [cowboy songs]. We only had the BBC Light Program and Radio Luxembourg in England at that time. My dad got a cheap guitar because he wanted to learn to play cowboy songs, but all he managed was 'Little Brown Jug.' The guy next door tried to teach him but it all faded away. I would mess around with guitar but didn't want to play until I heard the Shadows. Things got serious when the Beatles arrived. Once I learned

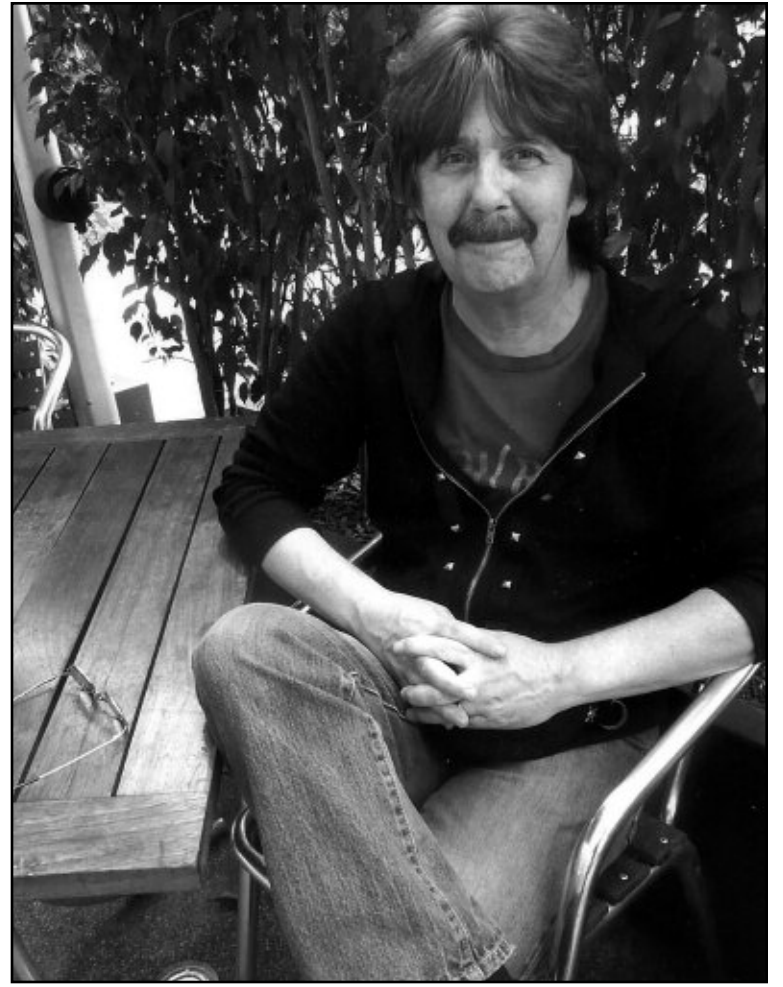
three chords I performed at the grammar school and I played one of my originals. I formed a little group and started playing youth clubs and working men's clubs around the North East of England. We told them we were much older than we were!"

Humphries and his band mates eventually set their sights on London and the South. Their pilgrimage in search of a recording contract resembled the male counterpart to the fictionalized *Smashing Time*, a forgotten swinging London comedy about two "birds" from Northern England (brilliantly portrayed by Lynn Redgrave and Rita Tushingham) who travel to London and endure culture shock and mishaps. The film gently poked fun at Carnaby Street fashion and the recording industry politics of the day.

The real life adventures of Humphries and his musical cohorts resulted in four valiant attempts (and, subsequently, four rejection letters) to land a recording contract with the Beatles' fledgling record label, Apple. Undoubtedly, many other bands were chasing the same dream, but one of Humphries' rejection letters gained immortality. In 2006, a compilation titled *An Apple a Day* was released on the RPM label. A collection of rarities from Apple, the accompanying booklet used one of Humphries' rejection letters as an illustration. No one was more surprised than Humphries when he unwrapped the CD and spotted the letter, a "thanks but no thanks" note from Dee Meehan, Apple's lead secretary.

In 1991, Humphries met the woman who would be his future American wife. At the time, he was unaware that the door to California was opening for him. Robbie Taylor reminisced on their first meeting. "I was in Liverpool in 1991 and a friend said, 'Let's visit my friend in the Northeast. So we arrived and met Dave in the pub next door to his house. He was wearing his slippers because the pub was virtually a few feet from his house and he was comfortable. The minute I sat down he sat next to me and for two hours he [rambled] on about the American music scene and all his inspirations like Brian Wilson, John Sebastian, J.J. Cale, Ry Cooder, etc. The 'American' music chat was so intense I finally told him to come for a holiday and I would make him a 'Star.' Four years later he arrived with his cousins for that visit. The rest is history."

Speaking of history, Humphries experi-



Dave Humphries

enced a musical milestone when he established a rapport with British rocker Tony Sheridan, the entertainer who provided the Beatles with early recording work and suggestions for survival during their wild years in Hamburg, Germany. "Since I came to San Diego, Robbie and I had been involved in the San Diego Come Together Club," said Humphries. "The club started a grassroots Beatles fair and grew to an international club by 1999. We would have 'headliners' from around the world that had connections with the Beatles. Tony Sheridan was our 'headliner' for July, 1999. I personally had loved his music since I was a boy in England and got hold of the Tony Sheridan and the Beatles LP. Tony was famous in the UK for being the first person to play an electric guitar live on the telly. He was also in the backing band for Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran when they toured the UK. He was always rated as a top class guitarist and referred to many, along with the Beatles as the Teacher.

"Robbie and her dear friend Janie met the plane when it landed in San Diego. The next thing I knew when I came in from work was Tony Sheridan in my house, sitting in my chair, drinking my beer. Wolfgang Grasekamp, the German keyboard player, went home with Janie but Tony stayed with us. He made us tea. Although Tony had lived in Hamburg all those years our English roots bonded us and we have been close friends ever more. He has played on various CDs of mine of the last years. I stayed with him in his Hamburg home and he showed us the Reeperbahn...who better? Luckily, Wolfgang continued to stay with Janie and we became a band."

(Sadly, Jane Anne Duggan-Grasekamp died from a severe intracranial hemorrhage last January. Humphries said she was an early member of the Come Together Club and an avid supporter of the Dave Humphries Band.)

It is a band that has blended well together in the studio and on the stage. Humphries' latest CD, *And So It Goes*, has earned critical accolades (see *San Diego Troubadour*, June 09), with stellar compositions like "Heartbroken Angel," "Run Away for the Day," and the haunting ballad on the problem of the homeless population, "38 Days." Concert appearances have included a set at the International Pop Overthrow-San Diego music festival and the popular nightclub haunts around the country.

One of the most unusual concert venues was the rooftop of the Mariposa Ice Cream parlor in Normal Heights. It was



Humphries (far left) at 16, with his band



Humphries with wife Robbie

on that elevated "stage" last November where the Dave Humphries Band shared a bill with the Baja Bugs and recreated the Beatles famous rooftop concert of 1969, captured on film for the *Let It Be* movie. Police eventually arrived to tell the bands to call it quits in Normal Heights, but there was considerably less tension than what the Beatles faced when confronted by London's finest on that cold day 40 years ago.

Humphries is excited about his current studio project. On first hearing, the new songs show Humphries branching out in new directions, with the music going beyond the "Beatles-like" categorization that many people have heard in his prior releases. "The CD I'm currently working on at Mike Kamoo Studios will have a totally different sound from previous releases. I'm looking for an early Christmas release so folks can include it in their Christmas boxes. I'm fortunate to be working with great artists like Mike, Regina Leonard, Hector Penalosa, Annie Rettig, and Bart Mendoza. Of course all of my bandmates, Toby Hinkle, Todd Hidden, Wolfgang Grasekamp, Fin Park, and Dana Garrett, who played a great sax on "Rollin' Up to Heaven." There will hopefully be more guest appearances from others who will pop in."

www.myspace.com/davehumphriesmusic



Durham City, Humphries' home town

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Irish Folk Music: Culture and History Through Story Songs

Saint Patrick's Day aside, have you ever wanted to tout your connection to the Irish? What do enduring images of the troubles, the Blarney Stone, the potato famine, the pretty maid, the wild rover, and Danny Boy tell Americans about our love for the Irish? There is a compelling story to be told in many Irish folk traditions, especially the rousing and sentimental folk songs. Folk singer, Jim Hinton, in the great tradition of the village bard,

will lead, through songs, a class called for Irish Folk Music: Culture and History through Story Songs, beginning this month. The nine-week course will highlight Hinton's rich repertoire of folk songs, revealing many pertinent Irish topics. Hinton's experience includes more than 30 years of performing in this folk music genre. Accompanied on traditional instruments, his performance of these classic songs will explore their meaning in his study of

Irish thought from writers, historians, contemporary artists, and, naturally, the pub. The songs will be followed by discussion and lively *craic*, the Gaelic word for banter and good times. In addition, Hinton's wife, anthropologist Cheryl Hinton (University of San Diego lecturer and Director of Barona Cultural Center and Museum) will lead a discussion about native Irish culture.

Although the class is still a work in progress, topics include:

- the enduring Irish image: come to the Bower
- the fairy folk and other pre-Christian mythology
- the Irish rebel: the Troubles
- the Blarney Stone: tourism and hospitality
- the stories, humor, and wit: the great tradition of the bard
- word play: the twists and turns of the Irish context
- the water of life, craic, and the public house
- the Irish Diaspora
- the Irish experience of Americans



Jim and Cheryl Hinton in County Kerry, Ireland

- Danny boy and Celtic woman go to the River Dance
- the wearing of the green: a St. Paddy's Day tradition
- Tura lura lura: Irish cops, Irish priests, and me old Irish grandma
- returning to the roots: the homeland and the potato famine
- Archetypal Irish folk characters
- the lovable rogue
- the passionate patriot
- Irish women: flirty maidens, spurned women, victimized good girls
- the wry and wise town forum
- Irish world view through song
- history
- legend
- modern culture

The next class, November 10 through January 26, will be held at the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, 8450 La Mesa Blvd. in La Mesa, Tuesday nights at 7pm.

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DATE: Sunday, December 6, 2009

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S

Benefit Concerts to Help Friend and Fellow Musician

STEVE WHITE

Steve White was rushed to the hospital at the end of September. He was having difficulty breathing. Examining him in the emergency room, what the doctors found choking Steve was a cancerous growth on his larynx. Shortly after this discovery, Steve underwent an 11-hour operation to remove the growth. To completely remove the cancer, the physicians had to remove Steve's larynx as well. The operation was successful, with subsequent pathology tests showing no trace of remaining cancer.

Steve's life and health are no longer in danger, but the operation also left Steve unable to talk, sing, or play the harmonica.

A musician all his life, he is now unable to continue his career. Steve was a whizbang performer. From funky blues to ballads, he could seamlessly blend an interplay of vocals, guitar, rhythm, and harmonica in his one-man show. And the songs he wrote, the ones he sang in his strong baritone, could cover just about any subject from his experience or imagination. They were sometimes sad, and sometimes they were bust a gut funny.

These following benefit concerts will celebrate all the wonderful music that Steve brought to us through the years. If you only heard him once, or were a regular fan, we hope you can attend at least one of these events.



For updates and further information, visit Steve's website at stevewhiteblues.com

Steve needs your help!
To help pay for mounting medical costs, the San Diego Troubadour urges you to make a donation to Steve's cause. Please email sew@earthlink.net to find out how. Or email the San Diego Troubadour info@sandiegotroubadour.com.

NOVEMBER

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For tickets and further info: Steve Mendoza, mstevemendozamusica@hotmail.com
or 760.434.4567

JANUARY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 4PM
BENEFIT FOR STEVE WHITE
Old Time Music

2852 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, NORTH PARK
Donations welcome.

Featuring Kev, Dave Beldock, Jim Earp, Robin Henkel, Jeffrey Joe Morin, Chuck Perrin, Joe Rathburn, Lisa Sanders, Berkley Hart, and more.



by Annie Dru
photos by Steve Covault

As I sat with Peggy this week in the College area home she shares with husband Alan and dog Chloe, what struck me was the combination of youthful energy and quiet wisdom this mother of two grown daughters projected as we spoke of her long history in the San Diego music community. At times she almost bounced off her chair like a teenaged girl as she expressed her passion for music and performance, speaking quickly and with animated hand gestures. At other times, she embodied a calm resolve and mature acceptance of life's many compromises, especially as they relate to the music business.

Says Peggy, "There were times in my early thirties when I toyed with the idea of going on the road and try to do this full time. I was sending out demos and attempting to get a record deal, but, ultimately, I guess I didn't have the drive to 'make it' the way most people do when they hit that certain level of local celebrity. I have no regrets." She did tour once. "It was mostly just a great camping trip!" she says with a laugh.

Touring or not, Peggy performed locally often throughout her early mothering years. "I had a husband who was so loving and caring and taking care of so much for me that I felt justified sometimes going off to gigs." But with the maturity of a woman who's spent many years contemplating the human condition, she reflects back on the age-old enmity between art and normalcy.

"There are times I wish I hadn't spent so

much time on my music, when I wish I would have given more of my time to my girls. You know, music is inherently self-centered if you're a professional. You're trying to promote yourself; you're trying to be noticed. Most of us who make music thrive on the recognition and the acceptance and love we get from our audience, but you have to be willing to work for that. When you have a family and a full-time job, that's very difficult to do. You're always wondering, am I going to damage my relationship, am I going to take something away from my kids? So you're making these decisions all along the way."

I asked Peggy if she'd ever had a brush with "the big time." "Yeah, there was this guy who had managed some big acts back in the sixties; he said 'You've got a great voice, and I'd like to take you on, but we've got to do it now because you're getting old, and we've got to change your whole style; you can't do those kind of songs.'" "Well, that was that. I told him, 'Thank you, but no thank you. This is what I do!'"

When I ask her what ignites her passion Peggy lights up like a firecracker. "I am fascinated by sound!" she said. "I can't listen to music and concentrate on anything else; it completely captures my attention. If I hear a beautiful melody, I start seeing it in my imagination." Not surprising, as Peggy says, her mother was singing all the time when she was a girl.

"I always knew my mother had an absolutely amazing voice. In my mind there was no doubt that she could have rivaled Jeanette McDonald or any of the great singers of her time, although I don't think singing professionally ever even occurred to her as a possibility."

Peggy

a conversation with

Watson



Peggy shares that after caring for her mother at home for some time, she recently placed her in a full-time eldercare facility at the age of 93. "I have regretted not recording her. There were many times, even when she was getting old, that I could have recorded her, even just with a tape recorder, and I didn't. I don't know why. I've really regretted that; I'd really like to hear that voice."

She continues, "She sang with me constantly. She taught me to sing harmony at six or seven years old, and we sang Christmas carols and songs from musicals." I asked Peggy if her mother tutored her budding vocal style. "She was the ultimate supporter. She never corrected or criticized me in any way. She didn't believe in saying anything negative about one's children. I don't know if I would have done what I did if she hadn't been there telling me what a great voice I had."

It wasn't until Peggy was 15 that anyone gave her the impression that she might have a way to go vocally. "I met this older guy when I was in Big Sur camping on the beach, and by older I mean maybe 35 or something, who sang sea shanties and toured professionally; when he heard me sing he said, 'You're okay, for a 15-year-old.'" She laughs, "It hurt my feelings!"

Around that same time, budding activist Peggy wrote her very first song. "It was an environmental song – about the sea." Political activism informed Peggy's music in a big way as she grew into young adulthood. "I was really involved in politics at that time; I got involved in anti-war activities in El Salvador and Guatemala. I was doing a lot of work with an organization that was trying to bring peace to that part of the world. I went to South America with a women's theatre project; that was a time when my political songwriting really became

important to me. When I came back from there I was really into writing songs that had a message." She continues, "I was learning Spanish at the time. I was taking classes, I went with my family to Mexico for three months, and we were taking in refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala who didn't speak any English. I was really obsessed with learning Spanish. Language and music were my two first loves; they kind of go together."

I asked her if politics was still influencing her music. "I still enjoy singing those kinds of songs; my album *In the Company of Birds* has a song called 'Who's Going to Save Us?' that I wrote after the invasion of Iraq. I certainly have a different take on it than I did way back. One of the things that changed my approach to writing political music was the music of Chilean songwriter Victor Jara of the Nueva Canción. Many of his songs were incredibly political, but he wrote them with a lot of romantic poetry. They're not preaching at you; they're telling a love story. Those beautiful songs from South America taught me that you don't have to preach at people; you can write in a way that implies a political situation without having to hit someone over the head with it.

I was curious about Peggy's non-music work chronology. "My first real job was as a printer; I just went around asking until someone gave me a job." Next she worked as a hospital admitting clerk, then decided she wanted a better paying job that might also allow her to work with a union, so she became a pipe fitter in a shipyard as well as a union organizer. That was followed by a job as a typesetter and offset camera operator. "Then I decided that I really wanted a career; I wanted to become a teacher. I really didn't start college seriously full time until I was about 29. I just dug in and did it and got my B.A. when I was 34



At a recent concert with Peggy's trio *Tryplich*. Above: Peggy with Joe Rathburn Below: David Beldock

She continues, "You know what the ingredients are; let's set aside melody, because melody is the inspiration for probably 90 percent of what I write, but when I look at songs that I think are great, at least for my own taste, I think of songs that paint a big picture with few brush strokes; one line in the song will be a comment on the whole human condition. I think of that song that John Prine wrote with the line 'There's a hole in daddy's arm where all the money goes.' I hear lines like that and I think, you have to have this global view, and at the same time, take something personal and small, and make it a statement about all of us. Because of the way you've framed it, the imagery in that line, the listener is able to relate to it, and to make it their own."

Her example reminds me of a line in one of my favorite Lisa Sander's songs, "Angels," which starts "I drink beer in the morning to start my day." Peggy audibly sucks in her breath and nods; a close and long time friend of Lisa's, she concurs, "It speaks volumes; it's so powerful. When the song is true, and maybe it's not true for the person who wrote the song, but it's just true, I think that's what moves people."

"I always laugh when I think of myself and other songwriter friends who are so concerned with the production of an album, how perfect the sound is. When I think of one of my favorite albums, I think of this little six song cassette Gregory Page made years and years ago when he was first kind of going out on his own; it was so simple. I must have listened to that cassette a million times. It was just Gregory and his guitar, and that moved me. When things get really big and involved and there's tons of instrumentation, sometimes I feel separated from the feeling that was there in the beginning, even though I'm tempted too, to add on things and do this and do that, because in this day and age it's so easy to add on things. When I first started, it wasn't that easy."

Then, "I'm also thinking of one of Joni Mitchell's early albums, 'Clouds.' It was so simple, just guitar/voice or piano/voice, maybe a couple of instruments; that's what grabs me."

I comment on the Joni Mitchell vibe she conveys in her own music. "Yeah, she is probably one of my main influences; she and John Prine. I just love them both for completely different reasons. Well, I guess they're both great storytellers."

She shares an experience she had recently, where she put the stripped-down concept to the test with longtime friend, co-writer and collaborator Dave Beldock. "David and I made an album not too long ago at Jeff Berkley's house, where we took the approach that we were just going to do this living room thing, but it was scary to be so exposed, to just do this thing with no bells or whistles. You never know how it's going to go over in the midst of albums that are so produced, but in the end it was satisfying."

I note that Peggy's guitar playing conveys a strong groove, and her voice is warm, yet clear and controlled. Sea shanty troubadour notwithstanding, I wonder if she's worked hard to hone her vocal technique, or if she was just born with it. "I didn't start singing professionally until I was about 26. I had gone out and I heard this guy named Red Grammer, a really great singer, he had replaced Glen Yarborough in the Limelites for a while. Anyway, Red just had this

beautiful voice, and I asked him literally, 'Where did you get that incredible voice?' and his answer was Linda Vickerman."

She continues, "I studied with her every week for years. The more I studied with Linda, the bigger my voice got because I became less inhibited. I don't have a naturally huge voice; it's rather small. I think I'm lucky to have a pretty tone to my voice, but the bigness came through work. I worked for years, lessons and practice on a weekly basis to develop it." Develop it she has; her singing radiates a confidence that one rarely hears outside of the long-time professional touring musician ranks. I tell her I can't imagine her straining to reach a note. In typical Peggy fashion, she graciously diverts my compliment, and goes on to compliment someone else.

"At the time I met Lisa Sanders, there was this whole movement of female singers with these very small, breathy little girl voices. Then there was Lisa with this huge woman's voice that just knocked my socks off, just swept me off my feet; she sings with her heart and soul."

I asked Peggy more about her gal posse. She starts by mentioning Deborah Liv Johnson, "Deborah and I have been the best of friends for 28 years. I've sung on some of her albums, she's sung on some of mine. Our voices were a match made in heaven; we became really close friends, and we inspired and supported each other in the early years at the Old Time Café and Drowsy Maggie's. We were really tight; still are. As a matter of fact, we just did a show together a few weeks ago."

She continues, "Then in the early or mid-nineties – Lisa probably remembers this better than I do – there was a group of women: Joy Eden Harrison, Elizabeth Hummel, Jewel Kilcher, Mary Dolan, and Lisa Sanders. We met and had dinners together and did some shows together where we sang on each other's songs. Jewel's career took off very quickly, but she got together with us and had dinner a few times."

I asked Peggy if she knew upon first hearing Jewel that she was going to be a star. "I had no doubt. She was phenomenal. She had that... well, what John Katchur and I call that 'it' quality. That woman just had this thing when she sang that you can't describe; some kind of charisma."

She stops herself, "Although, I remember one night when she was over here, and Lisa and Joy were here, and my daughter Wendy was about 17 at the time. Anyway, Jewel sang her song 'You Were Meant for Me,' which I thought was really, really cool, and then Lisa sang one of her songs, and all of the sudden Wendy ran out of the room. Lisa's singing just blew her away. Later I went in there and she was crying and she said 'I just can't believe... she just... it just... made me cry listening to her sing... it was just so beautiful.'"

"So yeah, Jewel was very hard working and fortunate, both, and also very driven; you need to be very driven if you're going to make it in this business. She was young at that point, only two years older than my daughter Wendy, just 19. But no, I had no doubt; the first few times I heard her sing I thought, 'She's gonna make it.'"

I wondered if Jewel's success inspired or encouraged the other women in the group. "The things that happened to her and Steve Poltz

definitely lit a fire under people; we thought, 'Wow, San Diego is a happening place; let's go for it, get noticed, get a record deal.' And there were some little record companies in town. Cargo was one that Lisa was on, and Joy was on another, and Cindy Lee Berryhill, I always thought she was super talented too. I remember hearing her sing a song about the trolley, and I thought 'Oh man, she is really clever, she is just a great wordsmith.' Yeah, Cindy Lee is a very, very talented woman."

I asked her what all the "buzz" in town at that time meant for her personally. "You know, I was older than everybody; I was getting close to 40 and feeling very old compared to everybody else." She directs me to a photo on the wall, "That's a picture of us taken during that time period – Lisa, Mary, Elizabeth, and me – taken at one of our shows." I thought it really fun to see the gals wearing the nineties' hair-dos and fashions.

"But yeah, I think I felt like I was fighting the time factor, you know, I was in a competition with time. I went through some painful periods because I knew I was probably too old to get recognized in any kind of mainstream way. It hurt. There were times when I felt like I was a day late and a dollar short, you know? There were times when it was very painful actually, because I'd see these younger people around me, and there were many, I mean John [Katchur] and Jeff [Berkley], and Gregory and Steve..."

She contemplates a moment, then continues, "But also, I did not feel like I was hip... well, I don't think I was... I'm just not; I'm not hip, not in that sense. I didn't have that, whatever it was that people had, or needed to have, to be considered hip; I didn't have that. I think I was just a person who'd had a very varied life. I was a good musician; I am a good musician, but I wasn't focused on my career. I just wrote songs, loved to perform, loved to entertain people, and still do! But now I'm so old that it doesn't matter at all! I don't feel any weirdness about trying to make it. I feel incredibly comfortable in my own skin, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I love my age. I embrace it. I don't care who knows how old I am. Besides, people with money are getting older; they by the CDs!"

And CDs are something that Peggy knows quite a bit about having made eight of them as well as two early cassette recordings. They are: *Cholla Blooms* (1986) self-produced *I Live in This World* (1989) self-produced *Knee Deep* (1992) self-produced *Orion's Skies* (1995) produced by Peggy and Jeff Forrest *A Thousand Wishes* (1998) produced by Peggy and Dave Blackburn *Love Songs* (2000) produced by Peggy and Dave Blackburn *Wild Grace* (2001) produced by Peggy and David Beldock *In the Company of Birds* (2005) produced by Peggy and John Katchur Beldock and Watson, *Just Like You and Me* (2007) produced by Peggy, David, and Jeff Berkley *A Christmas Album* (2008) produced by Dave Blackburn

To me, sitting in the late afternoon sunlight, Peggy reminds me more of a bookish hippie teenager than a baby boomer. "Well, I have youthful genes in my family, I can tell you that... although, this hair has to be colored on a regular basis!" I tell her how well I sympathize. She continues, "I think it's good to look good on stage; to feel good, to feel good about yourself and your appearance. I think I probably take that more seriously now than I did when I was younger. I remember when I used to play at Drowsy Maggie's, I would frequently just wear a tee shirt and jeans, and one time somebody put a note in the tip jar, no money mind you, just a

Continued on page 14.

I try to write meaningful songs, and it's really important to me that my songs serve a good cause when possible.

– Peggy Watson



Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



THE ANNUAL IBMA AWARDS

Last month we looked at some of the all-time winners that have been taking home International Bluegrass Music Association Awards since the IBMA was founded in 1985. We reported, among other tidbits, that Ronnie McCoury of the **Del McCoury Band** has the most awards overall with a staggering 29, while Rob Ickes, dobro player with **Blue Highway**, has the most individual awards with 10 for Dobro Player of the year (now 11, with his win this year). In this issue we will take a look at this year's winners who were announced at the annual IBMA Awards Show held in the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville in early October.



Jamie Daley & Darren Vincent

Winning IBMA's most prestigious award, Entertainer of the Year for 2009, was **Daley and Vincent** who repeated their win from last year. Daley and Vincent also took home top honors for Vocal Group of the Year and for Gospel Recorded Performance of the Year. A nice haul for this great group that burst onto the scene last year taking home 6 top awards including Entertainer of the Year, Emerging Artist of the Year, and Male Vocalist of the Year (Jamie Daley).

Taking home the honors for Instrumental Group of the Year was **Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper**. Michael's band mates Jesse Brock (mandolin) and Marshall Wilburn (bass) also took home top awards as individuals on their instruments. This is one smokin' hot band that some of you may have seen when SDBS presented them in concert in Carlsbad a couple of years back.

Dan Tyminski, of **Alison Krauss and Union Station**, who has stepped out with his own Dan Tyminski Band while AKUS is on hiatus, was honored with the Male Vocalist of the Year Award, even though he had such bad laryngitis he could only whisper in accepting the award. Dan and his great band (Ron Stewart, Jesse Brock, Barry Bales, Justin Moses and Adam Steffey) also took home the prize for Album of the Year with their **Wheels** album.

Female Vocalist of the Year honors were claimed by **Dale Ann Bradley** for the second year in a row, showing that the professional voting members of IBMA still value and respect the authentic, traditional singing represented by Dale Ann.



Chris Stuart and BackCountry

In a real thrill for locals, San Diego's own **Chris Stuart (Chris Stuart and BackCountry)** took home the award for authoring the Song of the Year, co-written with Ivan Rosenberg. Chris' song "Don't Throw Momma's Flowers Away" was recorded by **Dan Paisley and the Southern Grass** who, according to Chris, really brought the song to its full potential.

Recorded Event of the Year honors were taken by the **Daughters of Bluegrass** for

their Proud to be a Daughter of Bluegrass recording. And, the red hot **Steeldrivers** took the award for Emerging Artist of the Year.

Finally, here's the rundown on the individual instrument award winners: Banjo, Kristen Scott Benson; dobro, Rob Ickes, bass; Marshall Wilburn, mandolin; Jesse Brock, guitar; Josh Williams and fiddle, Michael Cleveland.



Steve Martin's IBMA nominated CD, *The Crow*.

To cap the night off the **Dillardards** and the **Lonesome Pine Fiddlers** were inducted into the IBMA Hall of Fame and **Steve Martin**, yes that wild and crazy guy, performed on the banjo during the awards show as he was a nominee for banjo player of the year and for song and album of the year. Steve Martin's album won the award for Best Liner Notes for a Recorded Project and for Best Graphic Design for a Recorded Project for his album **The Crow**, but alas he didn't win, although he was nominated for his recording or for his banjo playing. As one who attended the awards show, however, and having heard Steve Martin perform live, I can confirm that he is an outstanding banjo picker and, based on merit, was a true contender for Banjo Player of the Year.

All in all it was a great year for bluegrass and we send our congratulations to all the winners for their contributions to our music.

LOCAL NEWS

The San Diego Bluegrass Society presented the legendary **Eddie Adcock** in concert on October 17th with his charming and gifted wife Martha. They did a great show following a strong opening set by local band **Highway 76**.

Coming up on November 22nd is the annual SDBS sponsored bluegrass concert at St. Mark's United Methodist Church at 3502 Clairemont Drive. This year's show will feature the music of three of bluegrass music's greatest founders. The show will present the **SDBS Board of Directors Band** performing the music of Bill Monroe, the **Bluegrass Ramblers** presenting the music of Flatt and Scruggs, and **Gone Tomorrow** featuring the music of the Stanley Brothers.



KSON's Wayne Rice

radio show (broadcast every Sunday night from 10 pm to midnight on KSON at 97.3 on your FM dial and 92.1 in North County) will be the MC for the evening and he will record the program for later broadcast. It should be a great concert and we hope you all can attend.

The show starts at 7 pm, admission is free (donations will be solicited) and the public is welcome. It also looks like Wayne Rice of KSON's **Bluegrass Special**



THANKS(FOR)GIVING

As we enter the long-shadowed days of autumn, we are presented with both its beautifully changing leaves and slowly dropping temperatures, along with the prospect of being in closer contact with friends and family over the coming holiday season. While this brings with it a bright sense of anticipation for many, it can also, in some cases, inspire a modicum of trepidation.

Family dysfunction is something that maybe we all have had to deal with on some level, at some time or another. In fact from all of the movie and sitcom scripts that have been devoted to it, one could even say it's become somewhat of an American cliché. Thankfully, this often passes, or perhaps we just eventually agree to peacefully disagree on whatever outstanding issues remain.

We do this through forgiveness. While the word may hold a somewhat religious or spiritual connotation for many, I prefer to look upon it as a concept that comes into play every time we pick up a guitar, open our mouths to sing or hit "record."

Think about the last time you played a gig. At some point, even for the briefest of moments, you may have faltered. Maybe you sang a note slightly off pitch, or said "and" instead of "but" or played a "C" chord instead of a "G." What happened next?

For myself, what has usually followed was the nagging voice of the little scorekeeper in my head that can't shut up about it. Often, I have been able to recover and put it out of my head. Other times, the remainder of my set came off the rails in a train wreck so spectacular that little else of it was remembered, or even worth remembering.

Throughout the last several years, whether performing solo or in various groups (where your partners are relying on your personal consistency to find their own solid footing), I have learned that *this* is an excellent opportunity to exercise forgiveness. When we falter,

we simply reveal our own humanness – there is no shame in that, is there?

So forgive yourself, already. Release yourself from the guilt of that nanosecond of human imperfection. You'll be able to address that issue when you next rehearse. Right now, you have a song to sing. In the grand scheme of things, it's simply a small mustard burp: momentarily tangy, then gone forever. Most folks won't even remember. Many won't even notice. Just let it go for now.

As for those in the audience too busy talking to even realize you're pouring out your heart and soul up there, forgive them too. You know what you have to share is worthwhile. They're just missing it. It's their loss. Don't make it yours as well.

Forgiveness plays a very significant role in the recording studio too. There is, of course, the obvious parallel, where we know we messed up and are upset with ourselves, but the knowledge that we'll probably get another shot at it in a few minutes makes it a bit easier to let up on ourselves. Still, there have also been many hours spent coaxing better performances from great performers with low self-esteem than I'd care to recall. Most often, it's the knowledge that you've done this song a million times perfectly, and now that you're under the microscope, you can't seem to get through four measures without some sort of flaw. I'm certainly not immune to such situations, either.

In the studio in particular, I have been frustrated by subtle vocal pitch issues that have long plagued me. Even though I felt that I had really improved that aspect in my game enough to be able to sing in a variety of harmony groups live, I couldn't feel entirely confident about my contributions until I heard several live recordings, which illustrated that I was indeed singing totally in key. "How could this be?" I wondered. How could someone with as much recording experience as I have accumulated have difficulty singing in the stu-



Sven-Erik Seaholm

dio? To find the answer, I had to first admit that this was the case and then forgive myself for that. Once that business was dealt with, I found it much easier to find a solution to my problem.

The difference seemed almost immediately apparent: the only difference was headphones. So I set up my PA just like a gig, with all of the mics set up the same way, etc. but with the speakers faced *toward* me at a very low but perceptible volume. Once I was all sound checked, I then added a high-quality studio condenser mic just above each PA vocal mic, tilted slightly down to compensate for the elevated mic's position. The guitar was plugged into a direct box, which was sent into the studio along with the condenser mic signals. I took a split off of the direct box and plugged it into the PA, so I could monitor that along with the vocals. I also placed an additional condenser mic in the front of the guitar, so that I was getting a more natural sound for the recording than was afforded by just the direct signal. This was not put through the PA.

Lo and behold, I was able to capture great vocal takes with no pitch correction, live and with the guitar thrown in as an added bonus! I was able to not only record some quick demos and the bulk of an upcoming Seaholm-Mackintosh EP in just a few hours, but with far less stress and post-production.

I don't know if I would have come upon such a workable solution so quickly had I not owned up to the problem and forgiven myself for it in the first place. Now if only my stomach will forgive me for what I'm going to do with it this month!

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent record producer, performer, and recording artist. His company Kitsch & Sync Production (kaspro.com) provides recording, mastering, consultations, graphic design, and CD manufacturing services. He hopes you'll forgive him for wearing all those hats.

Radio Daze, continued.

"You must be telepathic because who the hell ELSE would you be thinking to?"

"Awesome," anyone? It used to refer to an expression of awe, which is "an emotion variously combining dread, veneration, and wonder that is inspired by authority or by the sacred or sublime," according to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Having lunch with God would be awesome.

I was at a Jack in the Box drive-thru recently. I ordered my usual, a large iced tea with lemon. The teenaged girl's voice on the speaker exclaimed, "A large iced tea with lemon? That's awesome!"

A guy called me during my radio show years ago and said he was having "nostalgic memories of the past," and wanted me to play some Pink Floyd.

I referred him to the Department of Redundancy Department.

Later...or as the youngsters say these days, "Late."

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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra



The piercingly incisive José Sinatra

NUMBERZ

I wrestled with 1968 in April's *Troubadour* and in my heart, I won. Still flush with victory, this time my target is 1969, but just an eenie weenie bit of it, a hibernating relic, now 40 years old. It's difficult for me to make that amount of time realistic, understandable, or remotely sexy. Jesus Christ never even made it to 40 (on paper, at least, although he did hold the most unique health insurance policy ever conceived, provided by an agency many of us spend a lifetime attempting to locate). Forty would be the beginning of middle age if it weren't suddenly the new 14.

The word itself is either intimidating or ridiculous, with the excision of the *u* from *four*, its mother. Someone sometime saw something "cool" in changing the spelling of the root, just like so many "cool" bands have been doing with their own names for entirely too long. Def Manatee, the Byrds, Rocking Mountain Oysterz, etc.

Sure, just like rock itself, it's defiant and meaningful. Yes, and as clichéd and transparent as the latest remake of *Fame* or *Psycho* or *The Sorrow and the Pity* (just check out the recent *Whip It*, a thinly disguised update of the latter).

It is that by-now-obvious transparency (which the "young set" seem unable to grasp) that causes many of us "oldsters" to deride and/or pity most of the current top-of-the-charts artists, even as their malignant wealth and fame renders all reason obsolete. Let me repeat that. No, please don't.

Recently, I did spy a kind of hope. The young, beautiful scholars and geeks at Winston's "Think and Drink Trivia"™ really seemed to get into the music I had decided to play in five-to-seven minute squirts between rounds during the two-and-a-half hour tourney. I hadn't actually listened to the album myself in a couple of years, and I, too, was struck anew by its supreme beauty.

The album, now 40 frigging years old, is called *Odessa*. When someone among the gamesters asked who the artist was, even Jesse-San (aka Jesse Egan, the creator/host/announcer and a man who has as eclectic a love of music as anyone I've never porked) didn't believe me at first when I provided the answer.

The 40-year-old relic was the *fourth* album by the Bee Gees (not counting the mountains of material they recorded as kids in Australia). Their first, *The Bee Gees 1st*, which included "To Love Somebody" and "I Can't See Nobody," was recorded before any of them had even reached the age of 20 (the new three).

I loved that the kids at Winston's were getting into something they were hearing for the first time, but was saddened when I realized that few were aware that the Bee Gees had actually done anything worthwhile during the decade before their *Saturday Night Fever* transfordiscomation or, as Jesse-San noted, "Barry Gibb's castration."

I recall *Time* magazine being amazed at

The Bee Gees 1st and the group's occasional derision as "Beatles sound-alikes" during the next two years disappeared under mountainous appreciation of their outstanding songwriting talent. They were, and remain, the Teen Band for the Ages (my apologies to the Bantams; Dino, Desi, and Billy; and four of the Partridges).

That earlier era Bee Gees, even as they deserve our honor and eternal thanks for the bangs they returned for our bucks were, like everyone but myself, not without fault. It took them a stupefying amount of time – 'til about 1975, actually, to get the message that there were easy alternatives to using a live orchestra with them on their tours. They were certainly anything but retarded, even though one of them (no names, please) often looked kinda like a geek.

My friend Jason recalls seeing the Bee Gees in L.A. in 1971 and how he was nearly literally knocked out by either their awesomeness or the LSD he'd taken before the show began.

The Gibb brothers had *very* little formal education, indeed could barely write their own names in those fruitful teenage years, but were blessed to be the conduits of some of the most divine melodies heaven has been gracious enough to release. Their rhymes were simple. There was a lot of "my face/your face" in their lyrics, which they tempered with a nearly equal amount of morbid themes. Questionably laudable ones as well: *Odessa's* "Whisper, Whisper" is backed by a sort of childish, taunting, my-dad-can-lick-your-dad (mom?) melody that cradles what may be the most outrageous lyrics they ever wrote. And none of the Gibbs had yet reached 21. The song is nothing less than a call for the liberalization and acceptance of committed adolescent sex. The atypically spare vocal harmonies in the song, indeed the entire structure and execution, has convinced me that the gifted lads may have originally written this for the Rolling Stones, which (if true) forces one to admire the size of the Gibb's own stones at the time.

Other *Odessa* standouts include the gorgeous "Melody Faire," "I Laugh in Your Face," "In the Morning," and "The Sound of Love," which was covered and possibly bettered (!) by Angeline Butter in 1970. In any case, the number of gems is quite high, the misses miniscule.

The double-disc LP *Odessa* was first released in 1969 with a red velour/gold-stamped gatefold cover and subsequently in normal shiny red/gold cardboard. Eight years later RSO released a blasphemous single-disc truncation. The CD, thankfully, is the complete 65-minute original.

I would propose that if any 20-something music fan who has never heard *Odessa* would pick up a copy during the next two weeks and listen to it at one sitting, I, in turn, will obtain and fully absorb, at least once, the latest timeless masterpiece by Da Poonanage of Pimpy D or Jizzy DippanDaDopahs or anyone else you suggest.

But I'd be lying.

RADIO DAZE



Jim McInnes

by Jim McInnes

NOVEMBER

It's November. Happy birthday to me (11/3) and Happy Thanksgiving to you.

CHICAGO BLUES

My wife and I recently went to the Chicago area to visit family and friends. The first thing we wanted to do was catch some live Chicago blues. We considered going to Kingston Mines, a club in Lincoln Park we had visited a few years ago but chose instead to go to Buddy Guy's Legends, which was a shorter cab ride from our hotel. Good choice. The man taking the money at the entrance to the (surprisingly dumpty) bar chuckled when I said we'd never heard of Carlos Johnson, the evening's only artist. "Oh, you'll be a huge fan after tonight!"

WOW. This is one smokin'-hot band. Johnson, a hefty left-handed guitarist and singer who plays his right-handed guitar upside-down (like Jimi, maaaaan), is a master of both blues and swing. His repertoire included stuff by Duke Ellington and Stevie Wonder as well as classic blues and original material. The other guys in the Carlos Johnson Blues Band were equally amazing. Seven-string bass wizard Bill Dickens (the Buddha of Bass) doubled on some guitar leads because of the range afforded by the three additional strings. He's simply amazing. Stevie Wonder had Dickens flown by private jet to accompany him at an Obama rally in D.C. last year. That's how good the Buddha of Bass is. Keyboardist Roosevelt "Hatt" Purifoy was outstanding, too. I was a little worried when he strapped on a keyboard like a guitar, a la Billy Preston or Gary Wright, but when those distinctive Hammond B3 organ tones came out of the speakers, I was in heaven! The drummer, Pookie Styx (sic) is a powerhouse who drove this band like a locomotive. One of the best drummers I've ever seen, in fact. At one point Johnson, Purifoy, Styx, and Dickens were able to shift gears, on the spot, from a full-on high-powered blues jam into a Santana-like Latin groove without missing a beat. It would have been impossible in lesser hands. When that piece of magic ended, the entire crowd rose to its feet, threw their arms into the air and screamed.

The Carlos Johnson Blues Band blew our minds. Somebody bring them to San Diego, because we can't wait to see them again.

TALK AMERICAN GOOD (PART 6)

Whenever I hear someone preface a sentence with "I was thinking to myself...", I think,

Radio Daze, continued on page 12.



by Peter Bolland

WHAT WINNING MEANS

I used to think poetry contests were totally bogus. Then I won one. I took third place for one poem and honorable mention for another. Two poems in one contest? What about all the other worthy entries? I felt greedy. Then I felt guilty. Then I felt stupid for feeling greedy and guilty. Then I felt confused.

What does it mean to win an art contest? As a songwriter and musician I'd won a few awards through the years, and now this. It was unnerving. The trophy shelf in my music studio was getting crowded. I had to figure out what was happening. Why was the least competitive guy I knew winning prizes?

Schopenhauer talks about how life, as it is being lived, seems random and chaotic, shaped by one accident after another. It is only in retrospect, looking back, that one sees a pattern, an undeniable order, choreographed not by the individual will but by a metaphysical force beyond anyone's control. All the chance encounters and unsought influences sculpt the course of our lives like a river carves a canyon. I can't help but wonder along with David Byrne in the Talking Heads classic, *well, how did I get here?*

Naturally, it began with my family. My brothers and I grew up under the loving guidance of Hilbert and Amy Bolland, Dutch immigrants who brought their European sensibilities to the California shore. Our home was a place of music, conversation, and art. Their wide-eyed wonder and belief in the infinite creative power of the American dream extended to their three boys. My parents made it clear that the only limitations we had were the ones we placed on ourselves.

Competitive sports were not a part of the picture, not at home anyway. I can't remember a football, basketball, or baseball game ever being on TV in my house when I was growing up. Not once. Of course we boys became irreversibly Americanized, but for me, sports never quite stuck. The only "sports" I liked were surfing, long meandering bike rides, and aimless hikes through the hills, three activities that do not require, upon completion, that there be a loser.

If you were a Bolland, you were a musician. We all played. Cultivating, voluntarily or not, the discipline to master difficult tasks was an everyday activity in my house. But on the other end of all that hard work was something unspeakably beautiful and infinitely valuable. Not a bad deal. I never forgot that.

And I remember the letter writing. On weekends, my dad would sit on the patio and type long letters to his parents and siblings back home in the Netherlands. To this day, the sound of a clacking keyboard makes me feel connected and alive. In loving hands language becomes a fire that turns to ash the constraints of space and time.

And then there were books. When I was very young it was the Hardy Boys. Later it was Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* and *The Martian Chronicles* convinced me to my core that language was the most potent force in the universe. How could these lines and squiggles on this dry dusty page evoke such heartbreaking majesty, such wretched misery, such endless longing, such transcendent bliss? And then I read *The Lord of the Rings* – three times. I never looked back. I read everything I could get my hands on.

When I was about 12 I bought my first two poetry books with lawn-mowing money – Charles Bukowski's *Burning in Water, Drowning in Flame*, and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The earthy grit of Bukowski and the celestial power of Whitman made plain the infinite range of poetry. Who knew that the English language itself could become a musical instrument?

In high school it was Herman Hesse. Me and my bookish friends read everything Hesse wrote. Was it any wonder we looked upon jocks and cheerleaders with such pity? We were peering into the abyss and touching the

PHILOSOPHY, ART, CULTURE, & MUSIC

STAGES

flames of the mystery of existence. They were chasing a ball around and singing silly songs about it. The condescension and arrogance of youth knows no bounds. Perhaps it was just self-defense for the way they looked at us or, I should say, didn't look at us. To them, we were invisible while the entire apparatus of the school orbited around the heralded glory of their athletic achievements. We barely noticed, sticking our noses back into our books.

I remember one morning in elementary school the teacher asked for volunteers to read their one-page story to the class. Before I realized what had happened, my hand shot up in the air. I'll never forget that feeling, that feeling of reading my story out loud in front of the class and the way they leaned into it in rapt attention. They laughed at the funny parts and drew hushed breaths at the suspenseful parts. All I remember about the story is that it had something to do with a cow who rode a motorcycle to the top of the Matterhorn in Disneyland. But I do remember as if it were this morning exactly how it felt to wield the conjuring power of language and what it was like to possess, if only for a moment, the ability to mesmerize people with mere words. Experiences like that shape you.

In high school and college I wrote some poetry, most of it awful. Then I got into songwriting. I loved playing cover songs of course. Neil Young, Dylan, Gram Parsons, and all the rest. I had great teachers. But I couldn't stop myself from trying my own hand. I still write songs – it is one of the singular joys of my life. I've written about two albums worth of decent material since the last album *California*. With five albums behind me, it would be nice to keep it going. But these days I'm too busy writing poetry.

Three years ago I enrolled in Steve Kowitz's creative writing class at Southwestern College. I liked it so much I did it again the following year. Maybe it was Professor Kowitz's light touch and deep mind, maybe it was the exercises and deadlines, maybe it was the rich and insightful peer feedback in the weekly workshops – maybe it was all of it. In the alchemy of this humble but electrifying process lead turned into gold. Under the loving lash of Steve's insistent encouragement, I began to submit poetry to journals for publication. He was right. They were good enough. It worked.

I published three poems this last summer. In the flush of that success I entered a poetry contest. You know the rest.

So what does winning a poetry or a music contest mean? It doesn't mean you're the best. It doesn't mean you're better than anybody else. It doesn't mean you're special or different.

It does mean that you've worked hard, learned some things and honed your craft. It does mean that your work has a living, emotional core and is not simply clever or well-made. It does mean that your poems or your songs have caught the attention not just of well-meaning friends and family but also of total strangers who have no stake in your success and who have devoted their lives to the pursuit of excellence in their medium and genre.

But it also means this: now the real work begins. Winning awards for your artistic creations is as much a responsibility as a privilege. Getting admitted to the club means that your work will forever be judged against a higher standard. I'm an "award winning poet and singer-songwriter" for gods sakes. Yikes. No more drivel. No more mediocre, derivative treacle. From now on, just the good stuff. Time to get to work. That's what winning means.

[Visit <http://www.perigee-art.com/> to read the winning contest entries *Yosemite* and *The Last Battle of the Civil War*.]

Peter Bolland is a professor at Southwestern College where he teaches eastern and western philosophy, ethics, world religions, and mythology. After work he is a poet, singer-songwriter, and author. He has a band called the Coyote Problem. He also leads an occasional satsang at the Unity Center and knows his way around a kitchen. You can write to him at peterbolland@cox.net



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Hoffer's, continued from page 3.

Fattburger in the 1980s. Cameron himself has been playing the professional jazz circuit between San Diego and L.A. since 1972. He has also acted as promoter, booking shows at Croce's, Elario's, and Humphrey's. In 1984, he and Gentry were invited to play the national anthem before a Padres' World Series game at, then, Jack Murphy Stadium.

In 1978, Cameron had a national hit with the album *With All My Love*. The album featured Nathan East, now of Fourplay and Eric Clapton fame. Today, Cameron's playing reaches back into the American songbook. With the occasional vertical surprise, Cameron's trumpet traces the melody in a way reminiscent of Chet Baker. Understatement allows lush open spaces to emerge. Timber and tonal introspection reign over speed. Cameron pulls out the mute a la Miles, even the flugelhorn a la Chetty for accoutrement. However, the accoutrements only underscore a set already woven of smoky lyrical webs. The listener could sit alone for a week straight with nothing but Bruce Cameron and his horn and still hear new sonic crevices opening up at the end of Day 7.

Mark Augustin has been a mainstay in San Diego for years. Befriended and mentored early on by his hero – the late Joe Pass – Mark can either breathe fiery bebop or lay back behind the beat and beneath the surface of the music. In addition to playing with the likes of Gilbert Castellanos and Bob Magnusson, who appear on his 2006 CD *Soul Purpose*, Augustin is owner of Mark's Guitar Exchange near the Sports Arena.

Ted Williams, in addition to playing for

the Boston Red Sox (or is that a different article?), is a trombonist extraordinaire. However, he has developed a technique by which he can play both electric bass and drums at the same time! This is no novelty act. Williams frets the bass with his left hand, shucks the bass drum with his right foot, sticks the snare, a tom, and hi-hat with his right hand (and, of course, shags fly balls for the Sox with his left big toe...but, again, that's a different article). The result is a tightly harnessed, one-man rhythm section in which bass and drum snap back and forth with intuitive precision.

The trio is called Full House. Besides giving the small crowd a tasty sampling of both smooth jazz and the rough stuff, the band also steps back each week to allow guest artists to play out in front. Jaime Valle made a recent appearance on Hoffer's patio. Torch song dynamos Cynthia Hammond and Janice Edwards have also fronted the stage.

With the Full House trio of Cameron, Augustin, and Williams intact, every Saturday night guarantees the listener several sets of some of the finest jazz this side of a Spazio or Dante's in L.A. The guest performers keep it fresh and different each week.

So, there you have it: smoke and music. Jazz and fine cigars. Hoffer's also has an agreement with several restaurants in the area. If you get hungry, you can order snacks or dinner right to your table. It should be mentioned that there is a \$5 cover on Saturday nights to help pay the band. But, this charge is minimal compared to the range of talent being showcased. Hoffer's is open seven days a week. When the band isn't jamming, there's still great beer, wine, conversation, and, lest we forget, a fine cigar. ☺

Peggy Watson, continued from page 11.

note saying 'Why don't you come by my salon; I'd like to do something about your hair.' and another time 'I'd like to talk with you about what you wear on stage.' I guess you could say I was kind of style 'unconscious.'" Maybe so, but I can't imagine too many 50-something moms who have dedicated 30 years of their lives to creating and performing their own special and unique brand of music, and then going bravely out into the world to perform it; pretty "hip" and "stylish" if you ask me.

Finally, we talk about the changes she's seen in the music industry in the course of the last 30 years. "I almost feel like making CDs at this point is, well, pointless; I don't buy them. I download – legally mind you – anything I want. I just go on iTunes and get it. I don't go to the store and buy a CD, or order a CD from Amazon.com. Once in a while I'll find a CD on iTunes where I listen to three or four of the songs and I love it, so I'll buy it, but most albums for most people have only one or two songs that they want to hear."

What Peggy does believe will never change is the need for and her desire to serve social causes through benefit concerts. "Although I don't write that many political songs, I try to write meaningful songs, and it's really important to me that my songs serve a good cause when possible. For that reason, I always have, and will continue to perform benefit concerts. I don't have tons of money to give, but I can donate my voice and my songs."

She leaves me on this last note, "I love to entertain people. There are few things in life that give me more pleasure."

Peggy and David Beldock, with their backing band Paul Beech and Gerry Reva, will share their joy of entertaining and giving back at a Thanksgiving concert to benefit the local food pantry at Christ Lutheran Church on Cass St. in Pacific Beach on November 21 at 7pm. For reservations call (858) 483-2300.

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Richard Thompson: A Modern Troubadour's Thoughts on Folk Music, Storytelling, and Spirituality

by Terry Roland

A Renaissance troubadour with blues and roots rock influences...and a Celtic musical vision with a leaning toward William Blake thrown in is a unique mix that would define one artist: Richard Thompson. His successful career dates back to his earliest days with the innovative, original post-British invasion folk, jazz, and rock influenced Fairport Convention. After leaving the band he went on to produce *Shoot Out the Lights*, one of the strongest albums of the singer-songwriter movement of the early '70s. For the last few decades he has forged a solo career that has been as prolific as it has been rich in the musical textures of Celtic, blues, rock 'n' roll, jazz, and British and American folk influences. He has been named by *Rolling Stone* as one of the top 200 guitarist of all time. For good reason. Listening to him play live defies logic: it is hard to tell if this is one man or an entire band. He draws on such influences as Django Reinhardt and Les Paul on his instrument, while his songwriting and vocal approach seem to come from no blueprint but his own.

In the following interview, we dis-

cuss everything from his unique storytelling approach to the Sufi-Muslim influence on his music.

San Diego Troubadour: A great deal has been said over the years as to what a folk song actually is. How would you define the folk song?

Richard Thompson: It's hard to define, actually. If we're talking about traditional, it's one thing. Some people look at it as roots music and that's another. Calling the festival "Acoustic Music" is a good way of putting it so we don't box it in. Some people feel it's just that, acoustic music. But, that's not traditional. I've heard it defined as music of the under class, you know, the working people.

Often from this emerges storytelling. Folk singers and songwriters have been some of our best storytellers. Can you comment on this?

Absolutely. There's always been the storyteller through music in one way or another. Some songs actually have structure, a beginning, middle, and end. The telling of it can be very economical while it says a lot. The idea is to get into a person's head, to see the through their eyes. When I write, I don't necessarily go with this form. You know, you can just drop right into the middle of the

scene and never say anything about the beginning or the end. You just create this one scene.

I've noticed most of your songs are stories told from the first-person perspective.

Yes. I find this more interesting. You know, the most traditional story songs have been called ballads. These tell a straight story. But, I've tried to change that a bit by taking unique perspectives and making the narrative one from inside the character's head.

How do you get the ideas for your songs?

[Thompson laughs] I wish I knew! It's like writing fiction. Sometimes you just have the words and it evolves from there. Sometimes you can see a scene. In fact, this happens a lot of times. The music goes visually and images move from there.

I heard a story about a time when Fairport Convention played at The Troubadour during the club's golden period in the late '60s?

Yes, yes. When you'd play the Troubadour you were booked for a week. There would be two shows a night for six days. It was perfectly criminal, really. It was our first shows in L.A. There was one period where we'd made \$2,000 in two weeks and our bar bill was \$3,000.

I heard there was a time when Led Zeppelin sat in with you.

Yes. They came up and joined us on stage. We had a really good time. There are master tapes of that show that are missing.

Tell me about the Sufi/Islam influence in your music?

Your belief is going to permeate through everything you do. What you believe may come through a story or something in the background. It will express itself. You know, I've read a lot of Arab poetry and that's been an influence.

This seems like a good representation of the Muslim world view. Often Islam as a whole is confused with Islam extremists.

Yes. Well, there are extremists out there, but they're a serious minority. But, in Arab countries there is no freedom of speech. They're a post-colonial govern-

Photo: Ron Slezniak



Richard Thompson

ment. I think they need a bit of a revolution to bring back stability

What is the song "The King of the Bohemians" about?

It's about my daughter. It's a scene in London unfolding. Some people try to find something in it.

It's like that storytelling approach we discussed, coming into the middle of a scene.

Absolutely. That's it. Some people try to read things into it. Some people think it's about Bob Dylan. But, it's more obscure than that. You just have to listen to the words and picture it. It puts you there into that time and place.

Can you tell me about some of your influences?

I have two kinds of playing that are very different. Acoustic and, of course, electric. For acoustic, Bert Jansch really helped me. Doc Watson, also. You know, I started with acoustic guitar at a young age. It helped to be able to get the finger technique going then. There's also a lot of Scottish influence and Appalachian. As far as electric goes, my start was with jazz. Django and Les Paul were guitar players I heard when I was in my home growing up. A good place to start.

How about today's young songwriters? Who do you hear out there with promise?

There are some really good writers going now. You know, every generation has their great ones. It's easier to see in the acoustic world because the music is clear. With bands it's harder to get a hold of the actual songwriting. They have so much to do with style first.

Can you give me some names?

I knew you were going to ask me that (laughs)? I'm horrible with names! Jackie Greene comes to mind. He's great. He has the Dylan "Blonde on Blonde style." He's a very charismatic performer.

We'll have to be sure he reads this interview.

Oh no!

Richard Thompson will appear, along with Loudon Wainwright III, at the Belly Up Tavern on Wednesday, November 11.

Phil Harmonic Sez



"Wise men speak because they have something to say; fools because they have to say something."

— Plato

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Baja Blues Boys Gone Away, Someday

by Paul Hormick

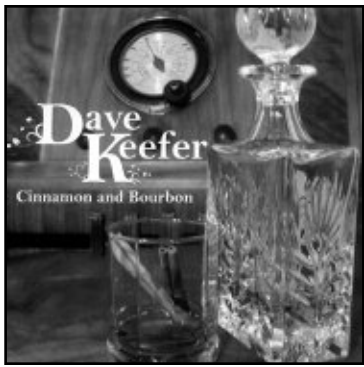
Just as nature abhors a vacuum, once a suburban garage is left empty for too long, it will fill with guitars, amplifiers, and somebody playing a harmonica. What was once a void will now be filled with a blues band. This interaction between quantum physics and music theory recently occurred in Lakeside to give us the Baja Blues Boys, an ensemble that plays old style blues with a slightly new spin. They have committed 16 tunes to a new disk, *Gone Away, Someday*, which captures their blues, rock and roll, and boozy ballads.

Blues musicians tend to fall into one of two camps: the progressives, such as Stevie Ray Vaughn or Eric Clapton, who take the basics of the music and move things ahead harmonically or through the technicality of their playing, or the traditionalists, who try to retain the sounds and themes of the Old South, Chicago, or Memphis. Although performing new tunes that the band members have written, the Baja Blues Boys for the most part fall into this latter camp. They are not strict reconstructionists, trying to recreate the wax laid down 80 years ago by black men in the American South. Rather, they rely on the strumming and wailing of old 78 recordings for inspiration for their approach to the tunes and their licks and lines. They do tip their hat to the old blues musicians, covering a Robert Johnson composition, "Love In Vain," and singing of rambling, fishing, and, of course, trains. *Gone Away, Someday* is back porch, garage, down-home blues, and rock and roll, straightforward and uncomplicated.

Tim Atkins does the lion's share of the singing on the disk. He has a strong deliberate baritone that comes to the fore on a couple of the disk's quieter tunes, such as the minor-keyed and ponderous "Roof of Hell" and the sweet and breezy "Simple Time." With these tunes he keeps his delivery loose, often letting his voice trail off to some indeterminate resolution. These are some of the best moments of this new disk.

Andre Perreault blows the harp and, as I said before, this is down-home music. He does not use a bullet microphone or perform a great deal of note bending or chording. He has no intention of being Magic Dick in any way here, preferring to comp simply behind the singing and occasionally blowing a back porch solo.

It's hard to think of swampy with a name that includes the name Baja in it, but the Baja Blues Boys rhythm section, bassist Hank Hiskes and Mac MacWilliams retain a swampy feel, even on the disk's most up-tempo tunes. This sometimes creates an effect more reminiscent of early rock and roll than blues. Of particular note are the guest musicians Bud Mayhew and Frank Lucio. Mayhew brings some electricity to the disk with his guitar, and Lucio can really cut loose with the two tunes on which he plays tenor saxophone.



Dave Keefer Cinnamon and Bourbon

by Heather Janiga

"Light a cigarette and fill my cup/I can't think of nothing else..." David Keefer sings sullenly in the opening track "Hating Me," from his self-released debut CD *Cinnamon and Bourbon*. Draped in acoustic swagger and set to the solid tapping of an Alt-country beat, a deft guitar squeals riffs laden with longing, and a fiddle sweeps its way across the searing soundscape...just seconds in and the audio senses have officially been activated. I had a feeling the rest of this 13-track ride would be one worth taking, and it turned out I was right.

Keefer's world of rock-sung Americana is laden with heartache and self-loathing, professional musicianship and well-written songs. He carries it all with a voice that can hold up to the best of them, at times reminiscent of James Taylor, Steve Earl, and John Mayer. Keefer sings with emotional intensity and, when appropriate, depravity. In the title track, "Cinnamon and Bourbon," the hair-raising radar dial tilts toward max as he croons the lines "Cinnamon and Bourbon on your lips/I remember your sweet kiss/We were innocent/Lord it's such a shame we couldn't stay that way."

Lyrical, Keefer sings words that matter without any extra clutter. Carried by a sense of bar room poeticism his drunken angel verbiage is harmoniously wed to the melody lines, which emit memorable magnetism. You can hear Keefer's influences seeping through: Whiskeytown, Lucinda Williams, and Son Volt to name a few. No doubt that years of listening to his favorite songsters have sealed into his brain a knack for writing hooks that can stay on the tip of your lips for days, which is clearly demonstrated here.

This album intermingles acoustic and electric aspects that add an explosive dynamic and aims to keep things interesting. Keefer fires off catchy riffs in perfectly placed caches so as not to over embellish an already well-rounded song. There is a sense of consistency with the music, yet each track claims its own essence, such as "You're Breaking My Heart, Bitch," which abandons earlier hints of guilt with fed up fury. He reminds of me Ryan Adams from time to time, in where the songs convey a sense of originality even though it's all closely related.

Thirteen tracks later, down to the final swig of *Cinnamon and Bourbon*, it's easy to look back without a bump in the road. This is one of those rare collections of music, especially when obtained at a local level, that you can listen to all the way through without pounding the skip button once. Keefer has found his niche and he works well there. Listener beware: once that final swig is gone, you'll want to get yourself another round of *Cinnamon and Bourbon*.



Bad Science Fiction Therefore

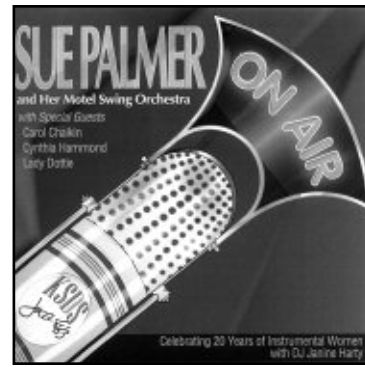
by Frank Kocher

Bad Science Fiction is making waves as a "new" San Diego band, with a live show that includes go-go dancers with snakes and psychedelic lights, as well as a strange sound that can't easily be labeled. The musicians are hardly newcomers, though. Chuck Schiele, a singer/songwriter in the acoustic Americana group the Grams, wanted to plug in and rock, and Bad Science Fiction became a side project. In 2007 he was joined by friend and guitarist Mike Head (of Country Rockin' Rebels), who became a partner in the project, which eventually became a band. Other local musicians joined to record their debut disc, *Therefore*.

The 11-song disc is produced by Schiele, with four instrumental tracks cowritten and coproduced by Schiele and Head. Since both guys are experienced producers with their own studios in Ocean Beach, the production is flawless. The sound is designed to be unusual and is tough to peg; a sort of post trip-hop fusion of electronic background noise overlaid with a pounding house beat, overdriven electric lead guitar riffs, spacey keyboards, and clever lyrics. The dense sound mix is so smooth that the multiple loops, computer effects, and percussion fill the empty spaces perfectly without crowding the central vocal and guitar focal points.

"Rise Up" is a strident call to action with lead singer Schiele taking a political stand, invoking Dr Luther King at one point. Hypnotic keyboards weave in and out of aggressive, distorted guitar by Head. A lighter touch is given "92107 (yeah...)", about OB, as Schiele sings about "another beautiful day" and Head answers with some quicksilver licks. The next three tracks are "Candyman Suite," beginning with the percussion instrumental "Ghetto Hash," and moving into "Work It Out." This track plows forward with an almost straight-ahead guitar rock approach, a highlight with a strong vocal by Schiele and more good work by Head. "Bad Requiem" is another instrumental, the best on the disc, built around computer effects, percussion, and a guitar riff; the next tune adds funny lyrics and some funk chords to a similar structure for "Go James Brown." "Love Factory," which shares its title with the Grams' latest album, is more funk, with a big dance beat and background vocals, while the vocals and instruments in "Judas" seem to fade in and out of an electronic fog. Things get heavy on "Voodoo," another highlight that recalls late '60s psychedelia, with an almost straight-forward, bluesy guitar riff rock tune augmented by some nice acid rock guitar touches and plenty of reverb; it is like a lost cut from a Love or Quicksilver Messenger Service album.

Therefore has an experimental sound, which samples freely from electronica dance music and heavy rock to form a hybrid that succeeds on its own terms. Bad Science Fiction hasn't reinvented the wheel, but has found a new and very enjoyable way to roll.



Sue Palmer & Her Motel Swing Orchestra On Air

by Paul Hormick

On Air, a recording of a recent KSDS "Jazz Live" performance broadcast of Sue Palmer and Her Motel Swing Orchestra gives us everything that we've grown to expect from Palmer and her ensemble through the years – some snapping fingers, tapping toes, and maybe a smile or two.

Palmer's forte is barrelhouse boogie-woogie, and for such music you won't find a better piano player in town. Throughout this disk, boogie or other strong rhythms make up the musical backbone, from the rocking "Mustang Sally" and "Big Boss Man" to the up tempo "Sue's Boogie." Even Duke Ellington's "C Jam Blues," usually given a jazz treatment, is put through the boogie-woogie processor.

While Palmer's background is the barrelhouse, the other musicians of the MSO have obviously been steeped in other genres, such as swing, blues, and jazz. There may even be a few reformed rock-n-rollers among the ensemble. You might expect a cacophony from this musical amalgamation, but the effect is addictive in a good way. During the performance the soloists have a playful tug-o'-war with the rhythm section to see which direction the music will take. A little blues, jazz, and maybe a little bebop come from April West, Jonny Viau, and Carol Chaikin, who play the trombone and saxophones. And guitarist Steve Wilcox channels some ancient Chicago bluesmen on his solos. It would be interesting to find out about the time machine that he has, too. The one he uses go back to 1951 to buy those amplifiers that give him the best guitar sound possible.

While we're concentrating on the MSO personnel we should mention that bassist Pete Harrison and Sharon Shufelt hold the rhythm section together. Shufelt plays with verve and spunk. There is not a livelier drummer in San Diego. Her sense of time is so good that you can set your watch by her. Continuing her long association with Palmer, Deeja Marie sings on a few of the tunes, including a fairly up tempo rendering of "East of the Sun." KSDS radio personality Cynthia Hammond joins in on a couple of the vocals as well. With about as much moxie as anyone should be allowed to have, Lady Dottie steals the show on "Mustang Sally" and "Big Boss Man," singing with the rough edge that those tunes call out for.

Never showy, Palmer's playing and compositions are always clever and fun, and none more so than "Swango." As the musicians make their way through a section of said tango, the anticipation that they have to take the tune into the swing section builds and builds. You can hear how much fun that they're having with it. The ninth greatest composition in the history of Western Civilization is Billy Strayhorn's "Take the A Train." No other tune mixes pluck and elegance like this one, and the MSO performs it to a fare-thee-well.



Peter Hall Schwagtown

by Frank Kocher

Peter Hall is a San Diego musician who plays rock, blues, and folk music. He appears in local coffeeshouses and clubs and has self-produced CDs that feature both acoustic and electric styles, both of his own compositions and covers. His new disc *Schwagtown* follows the same template.

Produced by Hall and Shawn Power, the disc stays with a simple presentation of Hall singing without background or harmonies and with a stripped-down band; most of the time guitar, harp, bass, and drums (which are mixed too loud throughout). The five originals are supplemented by a sort of grab bag of blues and folk covers. The project as a whole relies heavily on Hall's central vocal presence, and he gives an admirable effort. For many of the 12 tunes his amiable voice works with a sort of goofy charm. On others, especially the bluesier numbers, he lacks the power to make an impact and the result is a sort of "jam session" cover sound.

Things get started with "You'll Never Break My Heart," an original that illustrates some of the strengths and problems with the disc as a whole. The song is a pleasant mid-tempo rocker, but the arrangement is thin and Hall's voice struggles to pull the vocal off. Things improve considerably with another Hall tune, "Pay Attention," a song with good lyrics about the state of the world. This time the song is more brisk, and Hall adds overdriven guitar licks that move the protest-rock song forward.

"Rattlesnake" is a blues cover that shifts gears from light originals to boogie; Hall growls and blows harp okay but the song is lifted by Power on lead guitar. Hall's "Anesthesia Bound" is the best of the originals on the disc. This highlight sounds like an outtake from a Phish disc from the '90s, with the guitar solo edited out and a catchy hook and breezy feel. Irish folk singer Bap Kennedy's "Mostly Water" continues a jam-band vibe as the band tries for a reggae flavor. Hall does Dylan next with "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," done with acoustic guitar and mandolin prominent in an arrangement that shows his voice in best form when not having to boom past a rock band. The next four covers are a blues session, with Hall playing some nice guitar in spots but making little vocal impression. "Champaign and Reefer," "You'll Be Mine," and "Who Do You Love?" all suffer by comparison to superior versions by other performers; "You'll Be Mine" probably should have been scrapped from the disc altogether.

"Busted" is the chestnut made popular by Ray Charles, and Hall tries a different take using acoustic guitar with slide guitar accents for a country flavor to good effect. The disc wraps with the title cut, an original that mixes in some sly observations about what sure sounds like OB with some nice slide guitar work.

Schwagtown is interesting, with some quirky originals featuring incisive lyrics. Several of the covers here amount to throwaway filler, but others are well-executed and show that Hall is a well-rounded rocker as well as a songwriter with something to say.



Two Earth Hours About Anya

by Jennifer Carney

"Geek" isn't the pejorative it once was. These days, there's geek chic, geek pride, and even a geek "mafia" (don't ask).

And then there's geek rock, which may not be what you think. If you dig bands like They Might Be Giants, Barenaked Ladies, and Ben Folds, you're into geek rock.

San Diego's own Two Earth Hours is doing geek rock up right. Their first CD, *About Anya*, is the pet project of Scott Jackson and brought to life by producer/arranger David Randle and a host of skilled musicians, including Tim Foley of Skelpin fame. Jackson doesn't appear on the album; instead, he collaborated with Randle, allowing his work to be interpreted through Randle's production and Foley's excellent vocals.

About Anya is a geek concept album in the truest sense. It's a paean to a science fiction character of Jackson's creation, the space-hopping Anya Turgenova. *Anya* has all the hallmarks of what makes geek rock popular – songs about perpetually lost love and an abundance of sci-fi references. Yet Jackson and Randle have crafted a work that is very accessible. The lyrics are thoughtful and cheeky, and the music is straightforward pop with unusual instrumental flourishes. The overall sound is reminiscent of Third Eye Blind – if they sang love songs using computer and math analogies.

Anya opens with "Walk," an uncomplicated pop tune that starts the concept off with a lighthearted bang, flush with unrequited lust. It's followed by a mid-tempo love song, "Horseback or Plane," which replaces the initial lyrical yearning with quieter infatuation, accentuated by synthesized strings and acoustic guitar. "Space Blonde" introduces the more overt sci-fi themes of the album, complete with wobbling synth. "Dreams That Die" is the first glimpse we have of the doomed nature of love; "Action Figure" picks up the mood a bit with an electro-Latin feel that compares competition for a girl to dueling action figures of unequal coolness. "Math and Science" takes the geek rock love song concept by the megabytes and runs with it; "Alien" follows – another love song that replaces the math, science, and computer analogies with straight sci-fi and a mellow rock shuffle. "All About Anya" is the genesis of the project, written by Jackson in 2001. It's another acoustic/electric ballad that begs for Top 40 play, despite its unusual subject matter. A two-song suite follows: "Time for Time Part 1" has a similar plaintive pop ballad sound; "Part 2" is more upbeat and electric. The album rounds out with "His Masochist," an acoustic reality check as the object of infatuation is finally seen as fallible. The "bounce, baby" backing vocals give the tune a baroque feel.

This album is a promising and ambitious project for Scott Jackson and David Randle. *About Anya* was long in the making, but if this collaboration continues, San Diego might have another music scene in the making.



Paper Moon Little Venices

by Frank Kocher

In 1977, jazz guitarist Al DiMeola invited flamenco player Paco de Lucia to sit in on an acoustic number on his *Elegant Gypsy* album, and the resulting flashy hybrid of gypsy jazz successfully combined the souls of both Django Reinhardt and Sabicas. Since then, guitar enthusiasts have never had a shortage of acoustic artists who could keep the flame burning. Many of these sound like clones of the original nylon/steel templates of Acoustic Alchemy's tame precision on the one hand and Strunz and Farah's riff-riddled jams on the other. *Little Venices*, a new disc by San Diego's Paper Moon, uses the same instrumentation but with a different approach, to good effect.

Recorded with Scott Taber on nylon string acoustic and Daniel Dever on steel string and electric guitar (Joe Amato recently filled the second spot), *Little Venices* follows up the duo's 2006 offering, *Miniatures*. All but one of the 12 songs are originals and draw from Latin, swing jazz, even a bit of blues-rock, and plenty of flamenco. The compositions score points for variation of approach, showcasing the guitarists in each song flashing a different side of their musical personality.

After sharp unison playing on "Anthem," the title tune has Taber laying down some Spanish-themed framework, onto which he and Dever add tasteful touches. The uptempo "Cirque de la Song" has a swing feel, Django licks, and even speeds up at the end. "Of Daydreams" is more straight-ahead bluesy jazz with Taber evoking Wes Montgomery, his inspired playing giving way to Dever with an electric rig firing off a rock-inspired solo. On "Hammerhead" a brisk brew of harmonics, intricate finger picking, and fretless bass combine for a disc highlight while "Latitudes" uses a brisk Brazilian rhythm, the closest the pair comes to Strunz and Farah here.

The disc was recorded at San Diego's Archival Sound, and the board work manages to capture both guitars, giving each space and enough volume, without some of the echo or excessive fret and finger noise sometimes heard in other acoustic guitar recordings.

Taber lets his fingers go on "Vignette" to create some impressive flamenco filigree. The playing on the disc is generally subdued, but he proves here that he can put together scales like Ottmar Liebert and Jesse Cook when the moment is right. For "Needles" some fine interplay between Taber's jazz-funk picking and some string accents by Dever lead into the complex unison scales of "Another Window," as the two tunes combine for a satisfying musical statement.

Little Venices offers a mixed bag of instrumental guitar music that is very well performed. It changes tempo and styles a great deal, helping to keep it an interesting and enjoyable listening experience.



East West Quintet Vast

by Frank Kocher

Brooklyn's East West Quintet is a jazz group with a sound that combines fusion elements with hard funk as well as keyboard and guitar-driven jazz-rock. This approach requires considerable skill from the performers and composers, and the EWQ has this covered. Their new disc is *Vast*.

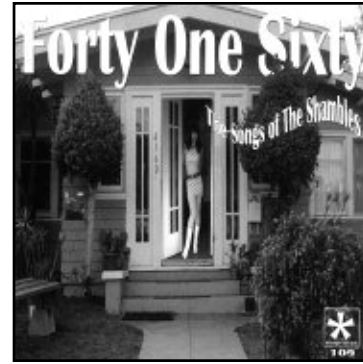
The personnel include sax player Dylan Heaney, guitarist Simon Kafka, Mike Cassidy on keyboards, bassist Benjamin Campbell, and drummer Jordan Ferlson. While Heaney and Cassidy get most of the solo spots, the backbone of the band is Ferlson. He has the versatility to move from a bouncing jazz rhythm to a funk groove to a heavy rock boom, at times in the middle of a song and seamlessly. On some of the heavier fusion tracks there is a hint of Billy Cobham's command and drive in his playing.

Heaney is featured on most cuts and is another big part of the story. He fills the role of horn-playing front man without turning this into a project that sounds like it was built around him. His quick, interesting solo scales dart in and out of beats that can be light, piano-based jazz one tune and hard fusion guitar another-he is at home in either element. Cassidy's keyboards and Kafka's guitar are not lightweights, either, and the two wrote eight of the ten original tunes on *Vast*.

The album opener sets the tone for what is to come. "The Triumph" sounds just like one, starting with a quiet guitar noodle and building up, as the band (along with guest trumpeter Phil Rodriguez) join gradually to a power crescendo over the top of power guitar chords. "Catalyst" follows, and Ferlson is all over this fusion churning, giving Rodriguez and Heaney some space to take flight in the solo bridge. The title tune is in two parts (really two movements of one song), first a soft, contemplative guitar figure, then with gradual bombast becoming a pounding piano/bass hook for Heaney to explore. The nearest thing to a straight jazz tune here, and one of the clear highlights, is "Over the Falls," using a Latin-flavored beat in an ear-catching time signature, a memorable melodic hook, and Cassidy in the spotlight. Things don't let up; "Comet" is powerful, horn-band rock, like the first Chicago or Tower of Power album minus the vocals as Ferlson again shines. Kafka relishes the opportunity for some speed-strumming on a heavy-guitar break, and when he is done Heaney digs in with some more exuberant playing than elsewhere.

"Gangster Rap" seems designed to get radio airplay. The recurring bass line and hand-clapping percussion shift in and out of dance and funk rhythmic textures while Heaney gets an opportunity to carve some hot lines, give way to Cassidy for a mellow segment, and eventually melt away in a jazzy fade. The slow jazz closer is "Brooklyn."

East West Quintet is sure to make many fans in fusion jazz circles with *Vast*, which pushes all of the right buttons.



The Shambles Forty One Sixty

by Frank Kocher

The term "power pop" is attributed to the Who's Pete Townshend, and his 1965 song "I Can't Explain" remains one of the earliest and best examples of the form. Other originators were the early singles by the Kinks, Byrds, and the pre-psychedelic Beatles; the two and a half-minute, catchy rocker with a hard but not heavy beat will never go out of style.

San Diego musician/journalist Bart Mendoza has been a fixture in the flourishing local power pop scene as a songwriter and performer for nearly three decades. In the Mod-revival group Manual Scan (1980-1992), and more recently the Shambles, he wrote or co-wrote numerous songs. His influence on other pop artists is clearly evident on *Forty One Sixty: The Songs of the Shambles*, a compilation of 24 tunes by 24 different artists with one thing in common: they love power pop.

Released on Mendoza's Blind Spot Records, the performers are an international array that includes no household names. No problem, the energy level starts high and never lets up, thanks to the strong material and the earnest efforts of the bands and singers.

The worst thing that can be said for some of the groups is that they sound like well...earlier, great, bands. There is plenty of music here, lots of variety, and the 73 minutes flies by.

Locals Static Halo blast into "The American Way," an opener that sets the tone with some hard-rock attitude while keeping a pop edge. Mendoza wrote 21 of the 23 tunes, but Donaker-Ring's "Don't Know Where to Start," rendered by Mark Le Gallez and the Eddies, will stay in the listener's head with an Oasis groove. The most memorable slow tune here, and maybe the best song on the disc, is Denmark's Liebling playing "Survive." Jeppe Riddervold teamed up to cowrite this with Mendoza, and the track is beautifully produced. San Diegan (soon to be New Yorker) Anna Troy contributes some Blondie flavor to "31968," and fans of the Zombies will hear their sound in the Andersons' "Rain or Shine."

Mendoza has a gift for capturing and distilling a lick. He also consistently avoids trying for a punk attitude or studied grunge heaviness, which is refreshing.

Both "Innocence Becomes You" by the Ringles and "I Believe" by Jeremy both could have been sneaked onto a 1966 Byrds album and no one would have noticed. "Change" is another Donaker-Ring song, and no wonder it made it onto the disc – this version by the Hipnotes soars on a Paul Westerberg-feel guitar drone and drives its riff home. The Eddies, sans Le Gallez, play "Jungle Beat," using surf drums, great guitar buildup and a killer hook for another highlight. San Diego's Truckee Brothers recall the Byrds' psychedelic phase with "The Waiting Game," wacky keyboards complementing jangling guitar.

There really are no slow spots on *Forty One Sixty*. For fans of the Shambles, Manual Scan, and anyone who enjoys power pop or just plain great rock music, this is a must.



Mike McGill Enjoy the Journey

by Mike Alvarez

The title of Mike McGill's album, *Enjoy the Journey*, undoubtedly refers to the path each one of us takes through life. The lyrics have a ring of autobiographical truth, offering up vignettes of everyday existence in modern-day Southern California. The bouncy, happy tenor of this album is well-suited to the subjects McGill writes about, which range from an evening in front of the TV to the emotions of fatherhood. These mostly uptempo tunes are delivered with a very back-to-basics approach to songwriting and arranging, driven primarily by the acoustic guitar and McGill's vocals. He is backed by a rhythm section that does a great job of supporting the songs, never overplaying or eclipsing the artist's intent.

Opening with "Southern California," a sunny tune with a tropical feel not unlike Jimmy Buffet's "Margaritaville," McGill expresses his joy at moving out West, even over the objections of his East Coast family and friends. Occasional references to San Diego give this song a certain local charm. "Watching ESPN" is a jaunty celebration of temporary bachelorhood ("The wife is out and the kids are gone. It's not that often I get time alone.") as our hero breaks out the snacks and the remote control. The real appeal of this song lies in how easily many listeners can relate to the lyrics. Its message is simple: a guy just needs to channel surf to be happy. McGill continues to share his story on "He Just Plays for Love," detailing his love for music and his reasons for making it. Although it is written in a minor key, he still manages to inject the song with the kind of ebullient energy that is a hallmark of his style.

Things take a somber turn on "Where's the Love?" as he makes a social statement, lamenting the state of humanity. Some electric guitar licks and rhythms bubble beneath the surface, giving this song a different texture from those that preceded it. Melancholy is the mood that defines the ballad "You and Me" while a wistful joy suffuses "My Sweet Simone," an ode to a daughter. The mood brightens with "Little Miss Sunshine," a sprightly number that takes its inspiration from early British Invasion groups like the Kinks. "Emo Escondido" keeps the energy flowing with its driving beat and electric riffing. The rest of the album leans more toward his acoustic folksy side. "Friday" has a real Loggins and Messina feel, bringing to mind their hit "Danny's Song." "Our Remember When" continues very much in this vein as does the quiet album closer "So Long."

McGill's songs are easygoing and optimistic. His sentiments as well as his music are straightforward. The one exception to this is "Once A Rising Star," but it still manages to avoid being too much of a downer. The music is pretty easy on the ears, perhaps leaving one hungering for something a little more challenging at times, but in the end it all works out just fine. At times he stretches to make the lyrics rhyme, but it's all done in good fun. And really – who can complain about that?



Photo: Lois Bach

Bass Clef Experiment in Balboa Park's Spanish Village



Photo: Lois Bach

Lindsay Tomasic w/ String Planet @ Canyonfolk



Benjamin Clarke is a quick learner



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Regina Leonard @ Portugalia



Photo: Steve Covault

Richie Furay @ the Belly Up



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Dane Terry w/ the Zapf Dingbats



Photo: Steve Covault

John Bosley w/ Lu & Virginia Curtiss @ Lou's Song Circle



Photo: Steve Covault

Jason Mraz @ Crickett Wireless Theatre



Photo: Steve Covault

Steve Earle @ the Belly Up



Photo: Steve Covault

Tony Furtado @ Acoustic Music San Diego



Photo: Steve Covault

Robert Cray @ the Belly Up



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Laura Lei @ Portugalia



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Wes Davis @ Portugalia



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Coco & Lafe @ Swedenborg Hall



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Chelsea Flor @ Swedenborg



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Jefferson Jay @ Portugalia



Photo: Dennis Andersen

The Zapf Dingbats @ Turquoise Coffee



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Friday November 15 • 7p.m. Dick Weissman Banjo

On Friday, November 15th, Dick Weissman will be at OTM. The concert will start at 7:00pm. Admission is \$20.00. Dick is a versatile and accomplished frailing and picking banjo player. He came out of the New York folk scene of the 50's and 60's and has enjoyed a long and successful career in Folk Music. He also has written a wonderful book "Which Side Are You On" which documents the history of North American Folk Music since the turn of the 20th century.



Saturday November 28 • 7 p.m. Chris Clarke Folk

On Saturday, November 28th, OTM will present a concert of Old Time Songs and instrumentals by San Diego Favorite Chris Clarke. Chris sings, plays mandolin and guitar and will be supported by a band. Concert at 7:00 pm. Admission \$20.00.



Friday December 4 • 7 p.m. Bruce Molsky

Bruce Molsky, another great Old Time fiddle and banjo player with a national reputation, will appear here at OTM. Bruce is considered one of the finest exponents of this music in the country. Admission is only \$18.00. Concert starts at 7:00 pm.



Thursday December 10 • 7 p.m. Wayne Henderson

Workshop Friday December 11

A very special occasion will occur at OTM with our presentation of Wayne Henderson. Wayne is a Flat pick style Guitar player from the deep South who plays with his thumb and index finger in place of a pick. Disguised as a mild mannered retired postman, he has played all over the world and is also admired as one of our greatest Luthiers. He has made some of the finest guitars, mandolins, and ukes anywhere. The concert will take place Thursday, December 10th. Admission \$20.00. A workshop is scheduled for The following Friday. Call us for more info.



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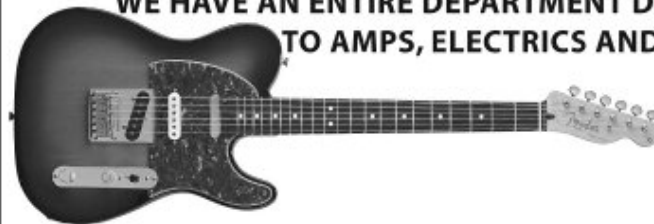
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