

T SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR

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



March 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.

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

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SUBMITTING A CALENDAR LISTING

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

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There's Something for Everyone at the San Diego Indiefest

by Paul Hormick

Americans love their independence. Since 1776 we've declared it, celebrated it, and made it part of the fabric of this country. So, when in the course of human events it becomes necessary to have a festival that honors the music and art of independent musicians and film, how can any red-blooded American resist?

Independence and tradition may sound like an oxymoron, but it does happen. The San Diego Indiefest is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year with a lineup of more than 80 independent musical acts that will perform on eight stages on the March 28. The festival will be held in its usual location in North Park, along University Avenue. In recognition of his contribution to independent music, Indiefest producers Danielle LoPresti and Alicia Champion have named its new stage the Craig Yerkes Acoustic Stage in honor of the talented young musician and member of the Grams who tragically passed away last year. The San Diego Troubadour, for whom Yerkes was a long-time friend and contributor, is proud to be sponsoring the Acoustic Stage.

The term indie, short for independent, goes back to the early eighties, when the echoes of Foreigner, the Doobie Brothers, and other corporate rock bands were still heard on the airwaves. Alternative rock, punk, and New Wave cropped up in reaction to the music that was controlled, homogenized, packaged, processed, and treated with red dye number seven by the executives of mega-big record companies. Indie originally described rock bands that did not have a recording contract with a large record company or who were contracted with smaller record companies. Now the term can describe any independent band or musician, including the ones who now have their own homemade studios and crank out their own CDs on their home computers.

Two very independent women, Alicia Champion and Danielle LoPresti, came up with the original Indiefest back in 2004 and have ensured that San Diego has enjoyed this musical *pot pourri* ever since. Besides producing the Indiefest, both

Champion and LoPresti are themselves musicians with successful businesses. Singer-songwriter Champion established her own record label, Champ Records, eight years ago and has served as producer and arranger for her two CDs as well as a for number of other musicians who have signed up on her label. She has also warmed up the stage, sang along with, or otherwise rock and rolled with Melissa Ethridge and Steve Tyler of Aerosmith. LoPresti also has her own record label, Say It Records. Collaborating with others, she created "Indie by Design," a series of independent music showcases that has had bookings in San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Both Champion and LoPresti will be performing at the festival.

At bluegrass festivals you get an earful of banjos and fiddles, and at blues festivals you get a cornucopia of tunes with wailing guitar solos and lyrics that start out with "Well, I woke up this morning..." No such sonic overload of one kind of instrument or form will dominate the Indiefest. All different styles of popular music will get their due, from hip-hop to metal, ambient to Latin, soul and punk. The festival caters to folks who like a wide variety of music, or at least to attract fans of one style of music who are nonetheless open to hearing a thing or two that are new.

Besides the music, independent films will be screened at the Indiefest. Like the music, the films are made by independent film producers that cover an assortment of subjects and themes that you won't find at the local Edwards Megaplex. About the only things that these movies have in common is that neither Reese Witherspoon nor Steven Spielberg had anything to do with making any of them. Among the films are *Day of the Grackle*, a short feature comedy and *The Story of Stuff*, a documentary about the production-consumption society that we have created and the resulting waste and strain on our environment. Five other films will be shown as part of the Indiefest film series.

There is not enough time or space here to describe all the performers in full, but among them will be the full-throttle rockers Saucy Monkey. For those who like their



Photo: Dan Chusid

Indiefest producers Danielle LoPresti (top) & Alicia Champion

rock and roll with a bit of Appalachian inbreeding, there are the Cousin Lovers, who combine hard-driving southern rock, backwoods harmonies, and a quirky outlook on life for an exciting musical brew. At the other end of the spectrum is Black Raven, a band that features Native American flute with guitar, bass, keyboard, and percussion to produce an evocative New Age sound. One of the best performers ever to combine lyrics and music, San Diego's own Joe Rathburn have a spot on the acoustic stage. And Daniele Spadavecchia will offer a lively mix of Italian folk and pop tunes, Django Reinhardt classics, and American pop standards, all with his unique Sicilian flair. Other performers include Chris Klich, Aaron Bowen & Lee Coulter, Citizen Band, the Grams, Veronica May and the To-Do List, Greg Friedman, Merle Jagger, Jane Lui, Lindsey Yung, Alyssa Jacey, Eric Himan, Austin Jennings, Francesca Valle, and Lisa Sanders.



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Experience Erin in Song and in Dance

by Steve Thorn

Is your Saint Patrick's Day celebration lacking authenticity? Has it really come down to concocting green beer in your basement or consuming an entire box of Lucky Charms in one sitting with the hope that Lucky the Leprechaun will magically appear?

This year, there are several musical enticements to get you in the true spirit. Holy Trinity Church in Ocean Beach will host a concert featuring the critically lauded Irish group Gráda; Dizzy's night club will take you on a tour of Ireland where passports won't be necessary; and the historic Balboa Theatre will host veteran performers the Irish Rovers.

GRÁDA



The performance by Gráda promises to expand the boundaries of Irish folk music. Judging by their biography and sound bites, this young group appears to be kindred spirits of the equally charismatic Beoga, an Irish group whose Holy Trinity concert last year was one of the top live performances in any genre of music heard in San Diego in 2008 (see the *San Diego Troubadour*, March 2008 issue). Gráda, like Beoga, is also an interesting choice for a group moniker.

"Gráda means degree or gradient and is actually a fairly common Irish surname," said band member Andrew Laking, who sings and plays double bass and guitar. "Some people say it means renowned as well. We chose the name because we thought we were going to play at a resort in Italy and needed a title that the Italians could pronounce. As it turns out that debut tour was canceled and we ended up in Japan. Of course, the Japanese have no way of pronouncing the letter "R" in their language, so it wasn't such a user friendly choice after all.

"Dyslexic Irish people often get it confused with the local police force, who are called Garda (and actually have a band called the Garda Caeli Band, which has made for some interesting misunderstandings over the years)."

Such are the cultural juxtapositions that Gráda has accepted as part of the job. Just where is home? "We started out in Dublin, and that's probably the place where we are best known," said Laking. "However, in recent times we have moved further west toward Mayo and Galway. At one stage we had band members residing in Florida, Manchester, Amsterdam, Dublin, Galway, Foxford, and New Zealand – quite an achievement considering there are only five of us. Probably the most accurate answer to your question is that our home base is really just a series of hotels.

"Our music is essentially Irish without adhering to any particular region of the country. In recent times there has been a slight South Pacific shift, as two of us have spent lengthy periods in New Zealand."

Laking said Gráda doesn't "go out of our way to add non-Irish elements to our music. It's not like we think: okay, let's take this Bulgarian choral suite and merge it with an Irish jig. However, we all come from different musical backgrounds and have had dif-

ferent musical encounters – not purely Irish traditional ones. These influences inevitably find their way into the music."

Gráda's hearty band of seasoned globe-trotters and freeway flyers also features Alan Doherty on flutes, percussion, and vocals; Nicola Joyce on vocals, bodhrán, and guitar; and Gerry Paul on guitar and vocals. David Doocey (fiddle, concertina, whistle, and vocals) replaced departing member Colin Farrell, who opted for a career in America.

Laking's road stories reveal a common theme echoed by many traveling musicians: the continuing Japanese infatuation with Irish folk music. "There's a small but highly dedicated Irish music scene in Japan. It seems that when the Japanese take to something, they really go for it, which makes it a great place to tour. I'd say they know more about our music than we do, apart from our name of course, which I'm sure is still a complete mystery to them."

The cover art work for Gráda's current CD, *Cloudy Day Navigation*, is a painting of what appears to be a van or VW bus. "We have realized after eight years of touring that we have no idea where we might end up, musically or geographically," said Laking. "Cloudy day navigation is a reference to sailors from times gone by using "dead reckoning" to find their way around. They knew what they were doing until it became overcast, at which point there was a lot of guesswork involved.

"The album itself does have several references to travel, change and being lost, so I suppose you could call it a concept album – although it's no *Dark Side of the Moon*."

Cloudy Day Navigation comes with a bonus DVD of Gráda in concert. "We felt like we had to start the new millennium with a bang," said Laking. "Unfortunately, by the time we got there, in 2007, everything had switched to YouTube, which has no place for high definition video recordings."

"Our main worry on the night we filmed the DVD was whether anyone would turn up, because we had been so busy in the time leading up to it that we somehow forgot to advertise the show. Fortunately the word got out and our Dublin faithful turned up in droves, which meant that we didn't

have to overdub the crowd scenes."

A TRIP AROUND IRELAND IN SONG



Gerard Nolan

Gerard Nolan and Eamon Carroll.

Nolan was one of the three Dubliners (along with Brian Baynes and David Page) featured in the March 2008 "St. Paddy's" edition of the *San Diego Troubadour*. Primarily schooled in jazz, where he excelled on saxophone, Nolan began to embrace the traditional music of Ireland and grew to be a familiar face at numerous Irish jam sessions around San Diego, performing on the pennywhistle and the bodhrán. Cashel (translation: "tribute stone") is the name of the Irish group where Nolan is a band member; it is also the name of his entertainment company. Nolan promises something special for the upcoming show at Dizzy's.

"The audience can expect a fun experience with real Irish performers singing songs from different parts of Ireland and traditional Irish dance," said Nolan. Eamon Carroll seemed to be at all places at once during the San Diego music scene during the '80s. Rosie O'Grady's in Normal Heights, the Blarney Stone in Clairemont, and the Blarney Stone Too in La Mesa were the venues for some of Carroll's most memorable gigs. In 1989 Carroll returned to Dublin and over the last two decades has developed an international following at the

"A Trip Around Ireland in a Song" will spotlight on the talents of



Eamon Carroll

Dubliners in Stuttgart, Germany, and Fox's Irish Pub in Chicago. His eventual goal is to have the best of both worlds: summers living in Ireland and winters spent in Southern California. In 2003 Carroll released an album titled *Autumn Shades in Ireland*.

Carroll and Nolan will be joined by the Dublin Down Band, and Nolan promises a group of pretty *colleens* who will perform traditional Irish dance.

THE IRISH ROVERS



The Irish Rovers' version of Shel Silverstein's "The Unicorn" has become an integral part of American pop culture. But as is the case with so many novelty hits (Chuck Berry's "My-Ding-a-Ling" easily outsold both "Johnny B. Goode" and "Roll Over Beethoven" – go figure), it carried for the group a double-edged sword. While it is heard every St. Patrick's Day, it has overshadowed the many fine recordings the Irish Rovers have made for more than four decades. The Balboa Theatre show will allow the group to explore its substantial discography.

Originally comprised of Northern Irishmen who emigrated to Canada, the original lineup featured brothers George and Will Millar, their cousin Joe Millar, and Joe Ferguson. After initial success north of the border, the Irish Rovers found a welcoming atmosphere at San Francisco's shrine to the jazz and folk movements of the Bay Area: the Purple Onion. The Irish Rovers rise in popularity was not unlike that of the earlier Kingston Trio. The eventual record contract (with the Decca label)

was made and the band toured endlessly.

Ironically, when it became time for the inevitable live recording (a rule etched in stone for all folk groups at the time), the tape machine wasn't running at the Purple Onion but several hundred miles south at the equally prestigious Ice House nightclub in Pasadena.

Wilcil McDowell joined the band in the late '60s, and the Irish Rovers, in one incarnation or another, haven't slowed down. The 2009 lineup playing features McDowell, George and Joe Millar, Kevin McKeown, Joe Reynolds, and Wallace Hood. Working in a utility capacity is Sean O'Driscoll, who works with the band in the studio and occasionally on the road.

Expect crowd sing-alongs and the clapping of hands at the Balboa. And if the audience is well-mannered, the elusive unicorn will make an appearance.

Ticket Information for the Three Shows

Gráda at Holy Trinity Church, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., Ocean Beach, on Friday, March 6, at 7:30pm. Tickets: \$25. Phone (619) 222-0365 or visit www.holytrinityyob.com

A Trip Around Ireland in Song at Dizzy's, on Sunday, March 15, at 2 and 6 p.m. Dizzy's is located in the San Diego Wine and Culinary Center at the Harbor Club Towers, 200 Harbor Drive, downtown San Diego. Tickets: \$20 for adults; \$15 for students/children. Call (619) 708-1636 or visit www.dizyysandiego.com

The Irish Rovers at Balboa Theatre, 868 Fourth Ave., on Sunday, March 15, at 3pm. Tickets: \$50, \$45, or \$30. Phone (619) 570-1100 or visit www.sdbalboa.org



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Recordially, Lou Curtiss

OF BENEFITS AND THINGS

Well, I've been involved with putting on music festivals, concerts and various and sundry folk, blues, and jazz events going back to my first involvement playing records for the summer sock hops at Imperial Beach Elementary School back in the late 1950s. I've done radio shows (mostly my own) since 1968 at a variety of stations (KPRI, KGB, KDEO, and for the last 20 plus years KSDS "Jazz Roots" on Sunday nights 8-10pm). During that time the money taken in was to cover expenses. I've never taken money for myself - not from the folks sponsoring events, not from radio stations, not from anybody. I did this because I love the music. I want to give San Diego folks the chance to hear and get to love the kind of things that I've heard, loved, and collected over the years. Three or four years ago we started a project to take a bunch of the unreachable things in my collection of some 90,000 hours (that's my personal collection, not what I have for sale in the shop) and transfer them to digital format with copies going to the ethnomusicology archives at UCLA and to a special Lou Curtiss Collection in the Folk life archives at the Library of Congress. This project got under way with a grant from the Grammy Foundation. So far we have taken tapes of the first nine San Diego Folk Festivals (1967-1975), concerts at Folk Arts Rare Records (1971-1974), tapes from the collection of our very own folk treasure Sam Hinton (running from the early 1950s to the early 1970s), and various concerts (mostly taped by myself) at the Sweets Mill Folk Festival, at San Diego's Heritage Coffee House (in Mission Beach), and elsewhere.

This is only a dent in a huge tape library that includes the other 11 San Diego Folk Festivals, more Folk Arts Concerts (and its successor at Orango's Natural Foods Restaurant, the Hand of God Pottery, the

Normal Heights United Methodist Church, Robinson Street House Concerts, and the new series of festivals including the Adams Ave Roots Festival and the Adams Avenue Street Fair. Also to be included are a series of concert tapes from In the Alley Coffee House in Escondido, a series of concerts recorded in the San Diego area by Jack Van Olst, a series of live concerts from the early 1960s that took place at the Sign of the Sun Bookstore and a whole lot more. It's a big job, and while my associate Russ Hamm and myself are compensated by the Grammy folks for the actual work, there are a lot of incidentals that just aren't covered by grant money. They include keeping equipment up to the standards required by the Library of Congress folks and the UCLA people, and travel to various meetings that require me to close my store and thus lose income and the ability to pay rent and put food on the table (eating is a bad habit I've become used to) so the next part of this article is about directly addressing this problem.

A Folk Concert has been planned to benefit the Lou Curtiss Sound Library Preservation Project. It will be held on Thursday, March 12, from 7-10pm and take place at Old Time Music, located at 2852 University Ave. in North Park. Featured on the program are Tanya Rose and her Buffalo Chip Kickers, Gregory Page, Chris Clarke and Plow, Sarah Petite, Curt Bouterse (who has played at every San Diego Folk Festival and Adams Avenue Roots festival that I've worked on), Los Californios, Phil Boroff, Robin Henkel, Wayne Brandon, Patty Hall, Allen Singer, and a surprise or two. Tickets at the door are \$10 with no maximum. It ought to be quite a show and I hope you'll all be there.

A FINAL THOUGHT OR TWO ON FESTIVALS

I've been putting on the Adams Avenue Roots Festival for quite a few years now and

while the music has been terrific, the whole festival format just doesn't measure up to the old San Diego Folk Festivals. I think the reason for that is the lack of workshops at the Roots Festival. The interplay among various workshop musicians led to unusual combinations in the concerts. I recall norteño accordion players running into cajun accordion players at one of our festivals and within the next few years you ran into mexocajuns or maybe a group called Bayouseco. I remember East and West Coast string bands, blues singers, and a whole lot more that were allowed to interact and what became of that interaction. I only wish I could, or someone could put on a festival like those old 1967 to 1987 get-togethers. They were really exciting. Check out my website for music from some concerts and the first four folk festivals (FolkArtsRareRecords.com). More to come. See you at the benefit!

MOLLY BEE 1939-2009

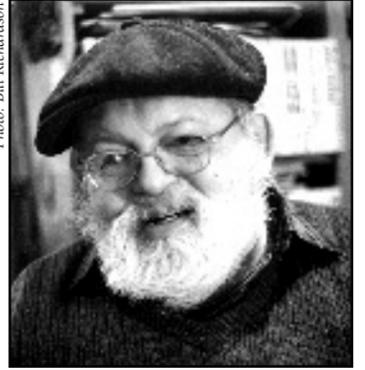


I used to see Molly Bee with various country music travelling shows that played in San Diego, or at Cliffie Stone's "Hometown Jamboree" held at the El Monte Legion Stadium in L.A. She was a terrific singer, yodeler, and country music showperson who went on to a career in television (with Tennessee Ernie Ford and Pinky Lee) and in movies and the Las Vegas nightclubs. In recent years she returned to Oceanside to run a night spot. Molly was a show person who I always thought was underrated in the country music field. One of last of the truly West Coast country scene that flourished in the late '40s and '50s. She died last week in Carlsbad, ending a generation of country performers that spoke to a generation of

soldiers who came home from WW2 and flocked to those country dancehalls and clubs in the post war era. She will be missed.

Recordially,
Lou Curtiss

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

Benefit Folk Concert

For the Lou Curtiss Sound Library Preservation Project

Where: Old Time Music
2852 University Ave.
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When: Thursday, March 12
7:00 - 10:00 pm

Who: Many local music treasures, including:

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Los Californios

Why? Over the course of 40-plus years as a record collector, folk music impresario, record shop owner, entertainer, and radio host, Lou Curtiss has been intimately connected with the San Diego folk music scene -- and he has the tapes to prove it. For the past 4 years, Lou has been working with OCLC, the Library of Congress and the GRAMMY Foundation to preserve his vast library of multi-racial tapes of San Diego performances of many of the greats of American Roots Music.

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Play Guitar Naked



by Bart Mendoza

There are many great blues artists, past and present, but few have had the cross-over appeal of guitarist Robert Cray. While many performers in the genre are household names, precious few have shifted large numbers of their albums. Though they cast a very large shadow, a check of the records shows no gold (500,000 copies sold) or platinum (1,000,000) for the likes of Howlin' Wolf or Muddy Waters, while Chuck Berry only rates in relation to his 1972 novelty hit, "My Ding-a-Ling." Meanwhile, it's a testament to Cray's popularity that he isn't just a platinum artist, he's multi-platinum.

Born in 1953, in Columbus, Georgia, Cray, who performs at Viejas Casino's Dreamcatcher Lounge on April 10, originally wanted to be an architect as a child. His calling as a guitarist came the same way it did to other musicians growing up in the sixties; he discovered the Beatles. "I first played guitar in 1965," he recalled. "All the hype started around the Beatles in the year prior when I was in elementary school. Everybody was geared up about it and the Beatles were the most popular thing—the band, that is—and the guitar was the most popular instrument, so I wanted to be a Beatle," Cray laughed.

His father was in the army, so his family moved a lot, with stops in Germany, Virginia, and Washington State. In 1968, at age 15 he played his first gig, with a band called One Way Street. "It was more of a showcase thing; we just did a few songs," Cray recalled. "We built our own strobe light and did songs from Sam and Dave to 'Purple Haze,'" he laughed.

He formed his next band, Steakface, while in high school. The quirkily named combo shows up regularly in biographies, a fact that amuses Cray. "It's just the way the Internet is, I guess [laughs]. We played two gigs, so it wasn't that big a deal, except for the fact that a high school friend, Bobby Murray, who plays with Etta James off and on, was also in that band," he said. Steakface specialized in a mix of rock and blues-oriented tunes, including Quicksilver Messenger Service, Spirit, and the Faces.

The discovery of the blues came by way of his father's record collection as well as guitar playing with friends. Cray formed his own group, post high school, circa 1973, paying his dues through endless club dates for the next few years before finally getting recognition in 1980 with the release of *Who's Been Talkin'*, on Tomato Records. The album was re-released in 1990 as *Too Many Cooks*.

ROBERT CRAY This Blues Brother Gets Better with Time

Although it was uncredited and unheralded at the time, Cray's first national exposure came in 1977 through a chance meeting in Washington State with then-rising TV star John Belushi. The 1978 John Belushi film, *Animal House*, features Cray in two key scenes, the club and the toga party, as bassist with the R&B group, Otis Day & the Knights. "Curtis Salgado was fronting a band called the Nighthawks and I had the Robert Cray Band. We also had a splinter band called the Crayhawks. On Monday nights we would play at the Eugene [Oregon] hotel and Belushi would come in to see us. We didn't know who he was at the time, to tell you the truth. 'Saturday Night Live' had only been on a year or so. Other people recognized him though and he asked to sit in with us and we said okay. He did his Joe Cocker impersonation." Though Cray performs in the movie, he and his fellow musicians are miming to a pre-recorded track made by session men. "All the musicians, outside of the actor who played Otis Day, were local guys from Portland and Eugene, Oregon, where I lived at the time. We were just extras, we didn't even get listed when you see the credits roll by, unless it's been updated in one of the reissues. We were on the set for three days. But we had a lot of fun. We even choreographed our own dance steps."

Cray notes that the meeting had much larger ramifications. "To make a long story short, Curtis and I were the inspiration for the Blues Brothers Band," he said. "Curtis is the one who wore the dark prescription Ray-Bans and turned Belushi onto a lot of music. They dedicated their first album to [him]." For their first performance on "SNL," band leader Paul Shaffer, doing his best Don Kirschner impersonation, introduced the Blues Brothers to the world. "With the help of Curt Salgado and the Cray Band, we give you, the Blues Brothers," he quotes. "That all came from *Animal House*." Cray himself was musical guest on "SNL" on February 28, 1987.

He next signed to Hightone Records for

1983's *Bad Influence* and 1985's *False Accusations*. That same year he released the first of his many all-star collaborative efforts, *Showdown*, (Alligator Records) with guitarists Albert Collins and Johnny Copeland, scoring his first Grammy in the process. He's since performed and recorded with a long list of music icons, including Chuck Berry and Keith Richards, as seen in the film *Hail, Hail Rock 'n' Roll* as well as numerous others, including John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Eric Clapton, Willie Dixon, and B.B. King. Even from his vantage point as a music icon in his own right, you can hear the respect and thrill Cray feels for these musical matchups. "They all have great importance to me, both when these things happened and now, in my memories," he said. He pauses to reflect on a storied career. While he considers it difficult to spotlight a favorite collaboration, one thing does stand out. "There are moments that I've spent with Chuck Berry and Keith Richards, or Eric Clapton that are special, but I had a long friendship with John Lee Hooker," he mused. "We did a lot of touring, and I even got to record with him on a couple of his albums, [*The Healer* in 1989 and *Boom Boom* in 1992, both re-issued by Shout Factory in 2007]. John Lee would call me on the telephone, [impersonates Hooker's raspy drawl] and say, 'I've been thinking about you, Robert...'" Cray laughed at the memory. "It was a great friendship."

Cray hit his stride in 1986, signing to Mercury Records and releasing the first of seven albums for the label, *Strong Persuader*. The album earned him a second Grammy and by 1996 had surpassed double platinum status. The pace built at this point, with numerous network TV appearances and his music showing up in places as varied as TV's "Miami Vice" (1987) and the Uma Thurman film comedy, *The Truth About Cats and Dogs* (1996).

In 1988 Cray's hit streak continued with the album *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* also going gold and another Grammy added to his collection, but the ultimate honor for Cray



Robert Cray

came in 1990 when Fender Guitars issued two signature Stratocaster models bearing Cray's name. He's succinct in his love for the guitar. "I like the basic sound of a Stratocaster and the easy access to everything; it's just all there in one little package. It's really simple," he laughed. While he could have made extensive changes in the instrument, he chose to be more subtle with the notable difference being in the pickups, because "the tone comes from your hand and where you pick on your guitar." Cray was a key participant in the 2007 documentary *Stratmasters*.

The mid to late-nineties became a blur of activity, with albums following in quick succession: *Midnight Stroll* (1990), *I Was Warned* (1992), *Shame + a Sin* (1993), and *Some Rainy Morning* (1995). Meanwhile Cray's music began appearing in yet more films, including *When a Man Loves a Woman* (1994) and *Mother* (1997), the latter coinciding with his final album for Mercury, *Sweet Potato Pie* (1997).

Now an independent artist, Cray found himself with Rykodisc for a pair of releases—*Take Your Shoes Off* (1999), and *Shoulda Been Home*, (2001). Ironically, though no longer officially a major label artist, 1999 was also the year that Mercury began to repackage his music, issuing a "best of" disc titled *Heavy Picks: The Robert Cray Band Collection*. A follow up compilation was issued in 2002, *The Best Of Robert Cray Edition of 20th Century Masters / The Millennium Collection*.

The last few years have been extremely busy for Cray, with an endless string of tour dates and work in progress on a new, as yet untitled, album, set for release later this year. His last disc of original music was 2005's *Twenty* (Sanctuary Records), but the delay in a follow-up is down to a desire not to over saturate the marketplace. "We're in the studio now, but the wait on a new CD is due to

scheduling. We just didn't want too many irons in the fire," he explained. "We released *Twenty* and then did Clapton tours in 2006 and 2007, so there wasn't a lot of time to record." Highlights from the tour included seven days at the Royal Albert Hall, with a live souvenir of the first road trek released as a two-disc CD, *Live from Across the Pond* (Vanguard Records). The chance of a new album was further delayed in 2008 with the release of *Live at the BBC* (Mercury), a collection of tracks recorded between 1988-1991 for British radio. With the vault-clearing releases out of the way, Cray looks forward to taking the music from a new album on the road. While he always includes melodic surprises in his music, he notes not much has changed in his musical influences. "I'm still influenced by all the things I grew up listening to and that includes all kinds of genres, from country to jazz," he remarked. However, one current musician does stand out. "We've done a lot of touring recently with Keb' Mo' and I look at him as someone to aspire to. He's a great human being and he's a great songwriter."

Now more than three decades into his music career, Cray notes the uncertainty of music projects when you're a seasoned road warrior. Any recording for the new disc is once again taking place around an ever-extending tour. "I could say we'll have it done in spring and then it'll take until fall," he joked. "We'll just have to see." It's clear from his laugh that the years haven't diminished his love of music or taking the stage. "I enjoy it big time," he said. "It's the one thing over the years that hasn't changed."

See Robert Cray live on April 10 at the Dreamcatcher Lounge, Viejas Casino. For tickets, call 619.220-TIXS.

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by Frank Kocher

FARMERS MARKET FOLK

The tomatoes are huge, the size of small melons. The organically grown peppers shine bright red in the morning sun next to them in the stand at the La Jolla Open Air Market on a brisk Sunday morning in early February. Nearby, another stand offers mocha lattes, another handmade jewelry. It is 9:30 a.m. and shoppers amble down the rows, glad that the rain of the previous two days has moved to the East, listening to the harmonies of folk singers Coco and Lafe echoing their sentiment with "Here Comes the Sun" from beneath a canvas canopy. The stand across the row from the pair has two bearded vendors under a large banner that says "Certified Organic Fruit," with neatly stacked oranges and apples in boxes with free samples. In between songs, Lafe Dutton peers from behind his frameless glasses and over his harp rack while tuning his guitar, as Coco Kallis prepares to join him on harmonies for "Cambridge Underground" from their new album *Café Loco*. Lafe tells the onlookers that song was based on a fire experienced by Coco at age six, and took only 20 minutes for the two to write together. The mix of Lafe's firm tenor, deft finger-picking, and Coco's soft soprano paint a musical picture of a moment frozen in time.

Several young couples pass by; two stop at the same time from opposite directions. One young woman has a pretty violet orchid bought at one of the stands, another a large, colorful bouquet of cut flowers. They each shoot a glance at the others' gift. It is a week until Valentine's Day, and Coco is starting to sing "Here With Me," a hauntingly lovely song of loneliness, written in a Borders bookstore.

"You people are all wearing sweat shirts and jackets," the T-shirted Lafe says about the high-50s weather. "We're from Vermont. This is great. I want to go swimming."

Lafe strums the opening chords to Dylan's "I Shall Be Released," and his harmonica playing captures the tune's soul. One of the bearded vendors, wearing a surf T-shirt, from the booth across the row darts across and drops a \$20 bill into the tip box, making a folded-hand gesture as if in a prayer of thanks as he darts back. The duo follows with Dylan's "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry," a musical way of saying "you're welcome."

A young boy about three years old wearing a baseball hat is frozen in his tracks by the couple and his mom is tapping her feet along as well. He inches forward as they prepare for the next song, his blue eyes glued on Lafe. Coco asks if he'd like to play along, and, unsure, he nods. Mom smiles as she hands him a small blue maraca and takes one to play herself as they launch into "Paint Me Blue," a bluesy original from Lafe's solo 2005 disc *Am I Gone*. The youngster starts shaking it, and by halfway through he's on the beat every time. A per-

cussionist makes his debut.

As the couple plays "Mr Bojangles," a few people hustle past, unmoved. More do so slowly, many break a smile, and, if they stop, it is usually for at least until the end of the song. If they stay more than one song, there's a good chance they will buy at least one CD from the two they are offering, *Café Loco* and 2008's acoustic *Dream Streets*, an acoustic album featuring some early versions of tunes on *Café* and choice covers of tunes by Dylan, John Prine, and other artists.

Mike, a senior gentleman from Michigan, is bargaining with Lafe after asking him about his guitar and boasting about his Gibson acoustic, given to him 45 years ago.

"If you buy two CDs, they're \$20," Lafe tells him. "If you buy four, they're \$30. If you buy enough, they're free."

"He needs a business manager," Mike laughs. He leaves with the new CD, while Coco is selling both to the bearded vendor who is back for more.

Lafe sums the duo up as "really just two back-porch songwriters...starting a new career as budding senior citizens". Coco echoes this, and their enjoyment playing in "friendly little parks" and farmer's markets. At the moment, Coco and Lafe are relaxing with their pet beagle Lilla at Jungle Java in Ocean Beach.

The baby-boomer pair, who split their time between Cambridge, Massachusetts, and San Diego during the seasons (fall and winter here, spring and summer there), come from diverse backgrounds. Coco was a former cast member in the Boston production of *Hair* and a longtime member of the Lonesome Road Band, winning awards for a 1976 hit composition "New England Song." More recently, she contributed a song and backup vocals on folksinger Rebecca Pidgeon's *Four Marys* CD, as well as recording a CD of music called *Environmental songs for Children*.

Lafe wrote his first song at the age of 16, "but didn't have the voice then." He was in a band and did odd jobs before landing in the business side of the music industry. His positions included manager of an independent record label and general sales manager jobs with lots of travel.

"I took my guitar everywhere. I played on the road all those years," he says. "I would be on the road for a week, at home for a week. My guitar was always with me."

The two started performing together two years ago after Lafe had a solo gig and invited Coco to sing a few songs with him.

"Instead of practicing for the gig, we started writing new songs for it," he says. "Writing together is just magic."



Coco and Lafe

"That's our love, that's our passion, the passion is the songs", adds Coco.

"We just make stuff up when we're playing. We'll just make up lyrics as we go," says Lafe. "We've gotten a lot of great stuff that way — new verses, new directions. We've already got a big chunk of the next album written. We'll start putting them into sets now. We've already got studio time here booked." The plan is to record an album in the same studio in San Diego as *Café Loco*, in October and November.

"So far, we've been avoiding all the standard folk clubs, all the conventions. We don't go to any of them," says Lafe. "We don't enter songwriting contests." The duo intentionally has a goal to "find our own niche and remove ourselves from the competition."

"Nobody's ever done a national tour of farmer's markets to our knowledge, and we're going to do it twice in less than six months. Our market is really house concerts and farmer's markets."

"Not that we wouldn't play clubs," says Coco.

"We'd be happy, anytime we have an audience that sits down, we'll do it," says Lafe.

"We've met some great people playing markets and playing in the street," says Coco, "some phenomenal people from all over the world."

Though they are impressed with the momentum they have developed in the San Diego area and the friends they have made here, they plan to return to Boston and Cambridge in April. Their favorite venues there include Irish Famine Park and Copley Square Farmer's Market.



Coco and Lafe at a farmers market



Lilla, the duo's constant companion

"Other musicians fight to get gigs; at least in Boston, we have one anytime we want, which is five days a week," says Lafe.

Coco starts the second set solo with a rousing version of Stephen Foster's "Hard Times." As she sings, a tall, burly man in a windbreaker passes, drops several bills into the tip box, and gives her a "thumbs up" as he nods and walks past. The two launch into the spirited duet "Let's Get Away" from the new album and the funny lyrics draw smiles from the listeners, who nod their approval as the pair sing, "Let's sell the kids and fly away".

A young woman stops after Coco finishes "Snow," a New England-inspired ballad from the new disc, introduces herself as

Sherl, and asks Lafe where they are playing. Soon she is recommending UCSD and some clubs that cater to students and feature organic foods. Meanwhile, a senior gentleman is telling Coco about a huge farmer's market in Lincoln, Nebraska, that would love to have them play. Business cards are going fast from the stack next to their CDs and tip box.

After Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," a tall man with dark glasses approaches Lafe to say he's been trying to track the song down. After Lafe gives him a full rundown the history of the song and its best-known covering artists, it comes to light that the visitor is also an East Coaster who spends his winter months in San Diego and the rest of the year in New England.

A little girl about the age of the maraca player earlier in the morning has given daddy her Daffy Duck stretch balloon toy and it's clear she wants to dance. At Lafe's urging, she stays to dance to the brisk "River Boat Song," and her initial shyness disappears as she sways back and forth in the aisle, lost in the music while mom and dad watch. Lafe breaks into the words to say, "I wish we were videotaping this," as the pretty young dancer moves up and down her stage.

Lafe counts Dylan, John Prine, and Tom Waits as influences, the last two apparent in his solo album songs and some of the imagery of the lyrics on the new album, in such songs as "Leaving Town," "Ocean Beach," and "Reservation Billboards." He draws on experiences like hitchhiking across the country and a period of homelessness in his youth. Coco's musical influences are "all over the place," from opera to '60s folk. She loves Mary Gauthier, and describes herself as a "sucker for the minor keys." She feels that Lafe is a big influence on her writing, a "great editor" who helps her "look for the metaphor."

For *Café Loco*, Coco said, they decided to expand their sound to a fully produced CD with a full band, though some songs were recorded with a single mike, like their live show. After an exhaustive search, looking for a "third artist" to bring their songs to life, they found local producer Chuck Schiele.

"We had some ideas, but he just took it and ran with it," says Coco. "He was so creative and added these little touches and flairs. Plus he kept us in stitches the entire time we were recording." Among touches he added were a mariachi band for a cut called "Bandido" and New Orleans-style horns on "Leaving Town" and "Introduce Myself to You."

Early returns seem to show that the approach is working. Their stated mission is to eat well (Lafe is a gourmet cook), write and perform songs, and make a living at it.

His experience and connections in the music biz have made themselves apparent in the group's website (cocolafe.com), a slick press kit, and radio presence. They sent their new disc to numerous radio stations and have a spreadsheet that tracks which songs are played on the over 40 stations now playing songs from their album, especially "Cambridge Underground" and "Let's Get Away." Highlights in this area include the spotlight in a "Midnight Special" show by Rich Warren in Chicago, and having the disc picked as Best of Music of 2009 by a station in Princeton, New Jersey. Though the disc was released January 15, a CD release party is planned for late March (a location has yet to be determined).

It's the final set and Coco is singing Woody Guthrie's "Roll On, Columbia, Roll On." Some of the passers by are singing along with the chorus. She smiles and says while singing, "I love it when people going by are singing along. Never be afraid to sing along."

Woody would approve.

For more info and where Coco and Lafe are playing this month, visit www.cocolafe.com. Their new CD, *Café Loco*, is reviewed in this issue. Please see page 17.

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gayle skidmore offers musical healing

by John Philip Wylie

We've all heard about love at first sight, but how about love at first listen? I was about midway through my initial spin of Gayle Skidmore's signature song "Paper Box" when I decided that she would be an excellent subject for my next *Troubadour* feature.

Right off the bat the song's beautiful melody caught my attention. Then I was drawn to the sheer beauty of her voice. Midway through the song, I enjoyed the blending of her distinctive voice with that of backing vocalist Rheanna Downey. And the sparsely orchestrated addition of guitar, percussion, and banjo seemed a perfect complement to Skidmore's voice as it projected pain and vulnerability out in front of this melancholy tune.

Best of all were the song's lyrics. They dealt with the notion of escaping to an imaginary world after suffering the pain that lost love leaves in its wake.

*Here inside my paper box, there is no room for angry thoughts
Unhappy tears are out of place upon a paper face
My heart is made of paper maché and painted red
And taught to move with every kiss I give away
And taught to love this paper room...*

After hearing the songs on Skidmore's most recent EP, *Cowley Road*, I realized that this up and coming singer/songwriter is far from a one-trick pony. The album offers six solid songs and there are plenty of others available on several websites. According to one of them she has already penned more than 1,500 tunes. We spoke recently at East San Diego's Beauty Bar as it was preparing to celebrate its third anniversary.

"Paper Box" was a song that I wrote about being lonely. When I grew up I lived out of the books that I read. I would assign the characteristics of the characters in my books to the people that I knew. The song means different things to different people. I get a lot of letters about that song in particular," Skidmore said.

After hearing it, it is easy to understand why "Paper Box" was the *San Diego Reader's* most downloaded song last June. And it has become a fan favorite during Skidmore's frequent forays out on the road. Having turned

music into a full-time passion, this Spring Valley native performs not only in clubs throughout San Diego but up and down the west coast as well.

"I am hoping to head out to New York later this year for a tour that will include Rheanna Downey and Valerie Lopez. I'd also like to get to Nashville. I've spent most of my time on the west coast so I think it is time to branch out a little," Skidmore said.

Her music has certainly branched out. Having demonstrated a natural gift for music as early as four, she began by studying classical music for piano. She later taught herself to play the guitar, banjo, dulcimer, glockenspiel, and melodica and to write music of her own. *Cowley Road* demonstrates her musical versatility and finely tuned songwriting skills.

"I both love [the life of a singer/songwriter] and hate it. Touring is really fun because I get to keep in touch with friends that I haven't seen. In one way it keeps me from being lonely because I am frequently in L.A. where I can visit my friends from college. On the other hand it can be really lonely and exhausting when you are driving by yourself for long periods of time. I am managing myself at the moment and that is a lot of work."

Skidmore is quick, however, to point out the positive aspects of her chosen path.

"I love to meet new people and I am always meeting new, weird, interesting people wherever I go. I am also getting to meet a number of people that I have admired for a long time. One of them was Jason Mraz. He did some recordings for me last year that I am going to put out soon. I got to meet Lisa Loeb who I have always really loved. And I got to meet Chris Carrabba a couple of years ago from Dashboard Confessional when I was really into that. So it has a huge plus side in that I get to hang out with these people."

Hobnobbing with the rich and famous is far from the only benefit of a life behind the microphone.

"Songwriting can be very cathartic. It is a great way to process your life especially when you are in hard times like those that everybody is experiencing right now. Music is so important to help people get through whatever it is they are going through. You can use it to mellow out, to process something, or maybe to escape. It can also fulfill you and help you hang on to hope. I can't

imagine what my life would be like without being able to do that."

Skidmore's music is unique in that she draws on a number of influences and then recombines them in unusual ways. Her lyrics, which tend to lean toward themes of loneliness, heartbreak, and love gone bad, would often fit well into a blues framework. But her music doesn't sound anything like traditional blues. At times, she pairs a variety of instruments, many of which she plays herself, with the classical sound of cellos and violins.

"I do like to experiment with different instruments. I picked up the dulcimer last year and I guess that is pretty unique. Nobody ever knows what it is. I also love to write parts for my strings players and while other people do that it is still a little different. Sometimes I whistle on my songs and that is kind of fun and I am very lyrically different. I am very conscious of lyrics and I like to listen to people that use thoughtful lyrics. I hate clichés, uncomfortable lyrics, or meaningless lyrics. I think songs should mean something."

Skidmore's process in churning out songs doesn't follow any particular formula.

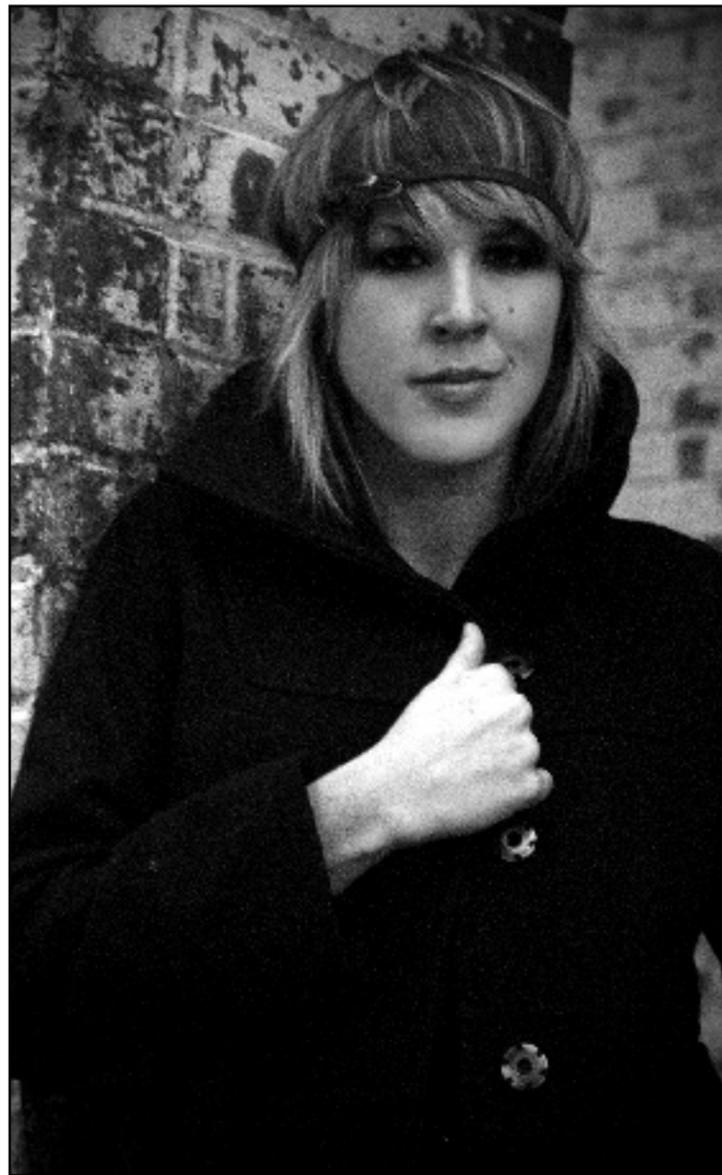
"Writing songs has become part of my day to day routine. I will either hear something in my head and start humming it, or I will start playing one of my instruments and come up with an interesting melody and then add the lyrics later."

While she usually composes alone she sometimes collaborates with other artists.

"I have written several songs with my friend Rheanna Downey. She plays eight instruments and our voices go well together. She and I write well together too. We released a couple of Christmas songs together last year and we perform a lot together. We back each other up and it is really fun collaborating with her."

Skidmore has worked with a number of other individuals and bands as well. Each pairing creates its own unique sound. She has a positive approach to working in a demanding field that is truly lucrative for only a relative few.

"I have been playing shows for over 12 years now and from what I have seen there is really no one way to 'make it.' For me, the most important thing is creating good music, expressing myself, and connecting with people. I try to write about all aspects of my life, especially faith, despair, and



Gayle Skidmore

friendship. I went through a lot of pain while I was in college so my music is mostly about helping people heal. As long as I am doing that I am happy. Regardless of whether or not I ever make it big, I am going to continue to do that. So, I try to just press forward and focus on my music and maintain a healthy approach to it. If God has [commercial success] in store for me then it will happen."

* Skidmore's upcoming re-release of "Paper Box" should be out in a few months. Her albums can be found on iTunes and on a dozen or so websites including www.GayleSkidmore.com. Skidmore's latest EP, *Cowley Road*, is reviewed in this issue. See page 16.

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by Paul Hornick

Perhaps you're driving on 805, parked between the Volvo and Prius in bumper-to-bumper traffic; or maybe you're gliding along Highway 15, merging to 163; or maybe you're still at home, finishing up breakfast and enjoying the last bit of java before heading out the door. Wherever you might be or whatever you might be doing when the clock ticks to 7:06 or maybe 7:07, if you're tuned into KSDS, the familiar voice of Joe Kocherhans will let you know that it's time for "Coffee with the Chairman."

A mainstay of San Diego radio, with a voice that might be described as Atticus Finch but with the capacity for levity, Kocherhans is the host the morning show at KSDS, the jazz radio station licensed and

sponsored by the San Diego Community College District. Decades ago a sponsor came up with the idea of playing a Frank Sinatra song every morning and calling the feature "Coffee with the Chairman." Sponsored or not, Kocherhans makes sure that San Diego gets its morning buzz from "Ol' Blue Eyes" Monday through Friday.

Born in Rapid City, South Dakota, Kocherhans' parents moved to San Diego with its guaranteed clement weather when he was but a tyke. His involvement with KSDS goes back to 1972, when Kocherhans was a student at City College. He had determined that a career in radio was the path for his future and, impressed with the local community college's broadcasting program, pursued his studies there.

Brief spots, such as reading the news, were Kocherhans' first assignments. At a

time when CDs were beginning to edge out vinyl, in 1987, he went to full time at the station. His gig was the usual for the new kid, the overnight shift, in which he salved the sleepless nights of the third shift workers and insomniacs with doses of Coltrane and Chet Baker. It was also when KSDS broadcast with the power of 800 watts. San Diego's jazz lovers resorted to ingenious antennae placements to keep the weak-as-gruel signal coming in, and any reception north of Clairemont was extremely questionable. The station now pumps out Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, and other jazz icons with 22,000 watts of power. And jazz lovers worldwide can listen in through the magic of the Internet, too.

After passing an announcer's test, part of which consisted of properly pronouncing the names of such composers as Dvorak and Saint Saëns, Kocherhans worked for about five years at KFSD, the über-megawatt station that was the classical outpost of San Diego. Two of those years were spent as the station's program director. For a while he could be found at the "Sunny 103.7" on the FM dial, filling in for disk jockeys when they were on vacation or otherwise off the airwaves. And he continues to freelance, narrating voice-overs for various radio spots.

Each day, an hour after "Coffee with the Chairman," Kocherhans features "Song for Sarah," in which he plays a tune from his favorite jazz singer, Sarah Vaughn. His other Monday through Friday show, "Portraits In Jazz," starts at noon and focuses a full hour on a great jazz singer or musician, every once in a while spotlighting a great jazz composer. Interspersed between the music, Kocherhans recounts the performer's biography, musical history, and explains the significance that the performer has in the history of jazz. He says, "I used to give all the biographical and musical information up front and spend the rest of the hour playing the music, but I intermix it more now."

Kocherhans also serves as the station's librarian, a position he has held since 1990, and one half of his office is taken up with metal shelving that hold the station's CDs. Each recording receives a card that tracks its use. When the disk jockeys check the CDs out of the library to play on the air, they mark what they have played, along with the time of the airplay on the card. If a tune has been played recently, then the deejay has to choose something else to play, ensuring that no musical selection gets overplayed. "With other radio stations, their objective is to

Meet Joe Kocherhans

Photo: Paul Hornick



KSDS music director, librarian, and deejay Joe Kocherhans

play the same tunes over and over again," says Kocherhans. "We avoid that. We want to keep things fresh." The disk jockeys also have to maintain to a format clock. During each hour deejays are required to play three current tunes and no more than two tracks that feature vocalists.

As the music director for the station, Kocherhans has the job that any teenager or other music lover dreams of. He listens to every CD that record companies send to the radio station. He spends Mondays and Tuesdays with all the latest disks and judges whether they fit the classification "mainstream acoustic jazz," the type of music that KSDS decided to play in 1973 and hasn't veered away from in the 35 years since. No matter what the title of the disk may be or even if the musicians on the disks are already getting a lot of airplay, Kocherhans listens to each and every selection on the CDs. "All of them no exceptions," he says.

Putting a finer point on what KSDS means with the format of "mainstream acoustic jazz," Kocherhans says, "This is the music in the tradition of Duke Ellington, Lester Young, and Miles Davis. Notice that I say 'in the tradition,' because if I simply said

that we play Ellington and Lester Young, that means that all this station would play is Duke Ellington and Lester Young. If we did that, we'd be playing the same material all the time. We want to play new music as well. This station wants to keep the music lively and interesting."

Sometimes Kocherhans decides that a musical selection is suitable to be played on KSDS but is perhaps a bit too distracting for those morning commuters or a little too jarring for afternoon listening. These musical selections are "day parted." They will only be played in the evening. You'll hear electric guitars wailing the blues and honkytonk music during certain times on KSDS. These specialty shows, such as the apotheosis of rhythm and blues, "Honkin' and Screamin'," and Ida Garcia's "Rugcutter Swing," have their separate musical libraries and play lists.

"I've always liked music," Kocherhans says. "It doesn't necessarily have to be jazz, although my parents were always playing records of Stan Kenton, Dave Brubeck, and the big bands. I've always liked music that had some thought going into it. That's one of the reasons that I've always been happy here at KSDS."

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by Simeon Flick

You walk into a certain Mission Valley Hotel on a Friday night because you've heard they have live music there a few times a week and won't for much longer. The lounge is called "Postcards," and you chuckle to yourself because most hotel bars and restaurants seem to have sentimental, touristy monikers like "Memories" or "Reflections."

You pass through the lobby into the lounge proper and see gig flyers for a guy named Christopher Dale fanned out on the long bar counter and luxuriating on tables of myriad height and design throughout the room. The lighting is low-key and sultry, and you're wondering what record they're playing over the hotel PA...no, wait – the music is actually emanating from a stage off to the right, in the deep heart of the lounge alcove!

There's a blondish woman up on the small riser flanked by two gruff and capable-looking musician dudes who probably roll out of bed in the morning and eat music for breakfast. Blondie croons strong and true, with a voice like a steam train whistle resounding down a long valley; the two gentlemen occasionally sing along, creating tight three-part harmonies reminiscent of Crosby, Stills, and Nash in their seventies heyday (no wonder you thought you were hearing a record), but less pretentious, more believable in this day and age. No bones about it: the acoustic trio in front of you is performing in a way that makes you feel like you're watching a sunset on the South rim of the Grand Canyon with your lover at your side and your favorite alcoholic beverage in your hand.

The music you still can't quite believe you're actually hearing is monolithically strong in its vulnerability, highly personal but somehow universal at the same time, familiar and yet hard to place like the name of that A-list actor on the tip of your tongue who cameo'd in that great indie film. The sound is memorable, full of hooks like a veteran stream fisher's hat, but without overstaying its welcome. You want to call it country or Americana but that wouldn't be entirely true. You want to compare her to other American female artists like Melissa Etheridge or Emmylou Harris, but that would denigrate the singularity of what you're hearing. And calling it Joshua Tree-esque arena rock isn't quite accurate either. The bottom line is, it's just good music, plain and simple, and you can imagine these songs going over just as well at Qualcomm stadium as in this lounge or late at night around a campfire. And you can also imagine this woman being rich and famous...who knows, maybe she already is.

The blonde banter between songs with a mixture of humility and sass, grabbing a drink from a special caddy that hangs off her mic stand and taking a hearty swig. She and one of the guys – the hand drum player – drop less than subtle hints that any "donated" Patron tequila shots and/or beers would not be turned down. Off-color jokes and sly innuendo inspire honest smiles and spontaneous laughter in the relaxed, appreciative crowd, and short but revealing stories about the next song surprise you with their illumination of an element of your own life experience. She is confident, a consummate professional who for all you know has been doing this since she was in diapers. She's making this look ridiculously easy.

You detect something southern in her demeanor, the kind of hospitable charm and engaging verve you would expect of someone from that part of the country. She seems to be the same person offstage as she is on: a brightly smiling spark plug emanating an innocuous salaciousness (at one

Photo: Gail Donnelly-Seaholm



THE AESTHETIC

BARBARA

point, you seem to overhear her cleavage entering the conversation) and an ease of being that would seem to inspire a feeling of simpatico with anyone she might meet.

Before she leaves the stage, she introduces the band and discretely mentions the CD of original music for sale and then convinces you to sign the mailing list.

She says her name is Barbara, Barbara Nesbitt...

A cotillion in the American sense is a long-standing tradition wherein young debutantes celebrate their societal coming-out in a formal setting, usually after a series of instructional classes on manners, social graces, and the like. It's essentially a rite of passage or coming of age party for the benefit of the celebrants, who are seen as full-fledged adults from that moment onward; sartorial frocks are donned and hair is done up and fancy dancing happens with potential life partners. These suarets still occur in many states of the union, and some of them once brooked the subtext of elevation to high(er) society.

Since Barbara Nesbitt moved here from Virginia roughly three years ago, she has experienced a kind of aesthetic cotillion as a songwriting performer.

"It wasn't until I moved to San Diego that I began to REALLY write my own songs," Barbara relates. "I had written a handful of songs over a handful of years, but something happened when I moved here. I don't know if it was because of my relationship troubles, or the culture shock of moving across the country, or the support San Diegans seem to have for original music—the ones I've met, anyway—but I

just started writing more than ever and have been lucky enough not to have stopped. I finally feel like I am expressing my own true voice."

She has quickly made a name for herself here in San Diego with these wonderful new songs and powerfully consistent live shows; first briefly on her own with solo gigs (props to Listen Local SD's Cathryn Beeks for getting her plugged into the scene) and a guitar-and-voice demo EP recorded at svengali producer Sven-Erik Seaholm's Kitch & Sync Production, then gradually bringing in other musicians (including percussionist Billy Coomes and guitarist Mike Spurgat of Deadline Friday—the two "music dudes" mentioned earlier—and ubiquitous bassist Marcia Claire, all three of whom Barbara is immensely proud to know, even just as friends) for full-band gigs and a fully produced CD out of producer/engineer Jeff Berkley's Miracle Recording studios.

A Million Stories is remarkable for a debut in that it contains such an individualized sound as to virtually create its own sub-genre. Nesbitt sounds only like herself on these recordings, which makes accurate comparisons virtually impossible. The pathos of some of her life experiences is laid bare in the album's lyrics, but gently softened and exalted by the music—songs like the title track, "Broken Girl," "Don't Bother," and "It Is What It Is" transform moments of sorrow and frailty and longing into tracks of uplifting, poetic and anthemic fortitude. Instead of wallowing in self-pity or playing the victim card, Barbara catalyzes a universal connection by conveying a coping strategy through the transmutation of her

Photo: Dennis Andersen



Barbara Nesbitt Band: Mike Spurgat, Nesbitt

suffering into art.

"My writing has been my therapy," Nesbitt confirms, "and it hasn't exactly sprung from the most relaxing and happiest moments of my life... My songs are about relationships and overcoming hardships and thank yous and loss and leftover s... from my childhood and crap that came out when I was drunk and telling people off. For the most part, my songs include a positive note... a strength that I hope comes through. I am happy most of the time, but when I am happy, I am too busy enjoying



ETIC COTILLION OF
NESBITT

Diego Music Scene Cream of the Crop singer/songwriter competition soon after rolling into town, which was an auspicious beginning to the Southern California segment of her career.

Barbara Nesbitt seemed to appear out of nowhere in 2006, fully formed like Venus de Milo emerging from her shell. And if you're entering her life at this particular point in time, this will indeed seem to be the case. But every comet has a trailing tail, and every artist has a long road of trial-by-fire development behind them. Because of, or perhaps despite her difficult formative years in the Petri dish of hardship, and the self-doubt and struggle inherent in anyone's early aesthetic development in obscurity, Nesbitt emanates a comfortableness in her own skin and a sureness of purpose derived predominantly from internal validation. Like any relatively fresh face, but especially one so vivacious and charismatic, Barbara arouses curiosity. The *San Diego Troubadour* recently succumbed to this curiosity and interviewed her briefly via email to find out a little more about this dynamic artist in her own words.

Tell us a little about your formative years and influences.

My first musical influence would have to have been my mother. She sang and played guitar and they're some of my earliest memories... and I loved what she loved, and therefore I loved the Carpenters. Does that make me a bad person?

My formative years were difficult. My mother went to prison when I was young, and after she was gone, music became something that linked me to her. I would listen to the Carpenters and have day-dreams of her rescuing me from what was an unhappy home.

In the basement, I found a box of old 45s like Righteous Brothers, Sam Cooke, and Elvis... I would put on shows in my bedroom for no one, singing and dancing and thinking, "maybe I can't sing, but I can remember the words really well!"

There was no rescue. Eventually I rescued myself and left home at 15. I lived on the street, went from shelter to shelter, and eventually wound up in Virginia where I met a keyboard playing Deadhead named Alfred. He had inherited a pretty decent-sized house in Virginia Beach and a bunch of us lived there, where he and his friends would jam in the living room.

When I was 16, I met Bernie Lee [who joined Barbara onstage at Tim Flack's birthday gig during a recent visit]. He would play music with my roommates, and he eventually was the one who gave me my first guitar, and gave me the courage to get up and sing in front of people for the first time. I don't think I actually believed I could sing until many years later.

"It's kind of funny... for a while, we [a group of would-be hippies living in this inherited house, with little or no source of income] were so broke, the only food we had was a 15-lb bag of waffle mix and a waffle iron. So I would make waffles for everyone to eat, and I would sing along in the background while they were jamming.

"One night, Bernie started playing 'Vincent,' by Don McClean. Knowing it was one of my favorites, and having heard me shyly singing it to myself before, he convinced me to come into the living room and sing it through the microphone. Two weeks later I was singing backups at our first gig as Rare Daze at a bar called Cogan's in Norfolk, Virginia.

After years of playing and touring with Rare Daze, our guitar player, Keith Hudgins, tragically passed away. Keith was very much the glue that held Rare Daze together... and though we tried to play for a couple years following his death, Rare Daze finally ran its course, as most bands do. I also



Photos: Dennis Andersen



spent many years in a money-making duo called the Perpetrators [with Bernie], playing cover songs in pubs and sports bars to pay the rent. It was fun, but not exactly creatively satisfying.

Bernie Lee and Rare Daze were very much the pivotal point in my musical career... he and the band brought me out of my shell and helped convince me that I was good enough to do in public what I had secretly been passionate about in private: singing.

What does the future hold for Barbara Nesbitt?

I don't know what the future holds for me, but as long as it holds music in some regard, I can't complain too much. Don't get me wrong—I would love a big pile o' money and stadiums full of people singing the lyrics to my songs [if anyone knows how to do that, feel free to email me at any time: Barbara@barbaranesbitt.com]. But I already feel like I'm a pretty lucky person. I'm looking to get more gigs, I would like to tour [email me], and I'm getting ready to go in the studio again.

I will be working with the amazing Mr. Berkley again. I think I might do it a little different this time. I'm torn between two approaches to making this record. The first would be a record that would be easy to replicate live, at my shows, with my band [which, by the way, is called the Barbara Nesbitt Band]. The second would be a record with my fantasy instruments and

things that would be difficult to replicate live; for example, a cello, a timpani, or me harmonizing with myself. So, who knows? Maybe I'll do a little bit of both, but I haven't really fleshed all that out yet.

Ultimately, I would like to see me writing and touring and performing for people who value my music until I can't walk on stage by myself anymore. And then you can bring me out in a wheelbarrow.

Perhaps the best note to end on, and the best way to illustrate the resilience underlying her now flourishing art, is to share an anecdote Barbara related a few days after the interview.

"The song 'Fly' from *A Million Stories* was written after I had gotten my heart broken," Nesbitt recounted. "I was fairly devastated, and after some time passed I decided to do something for me, something to improve my life and my attitude and get me out of my funk. I got a second job and saved up the money and went and took flying lessons. By the time I got my pilot's license, I was over the heartbreak and had a great new passion in my life."

www.barbaranesbitt.com



Nesbitt, Marcia Claire, Bill Coomes

myself to sit down and write about it."

"I'm grateful that I have the outlet I have in music and in writing," Barbara continues, "because my other career choice was to be a hooker. Seriously though, music for me is a need I have, a catharsis...and I would be a lost little girl without it."

A Million Stories garnered a 2007 San Diego Music Award nomination, and Will Edwards' HAT (Honoring Acoustic Talent) awards have also honored her with two nods so far since its inception three years ago. Barbara also entered and won the San



Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



Bluegrass music has its Hall of Fame into which the International Bluegrass Music Association inducts the most important and influential people who have had the greatest impact on bluegrass music. Every bluegrass music fan should have at least a passing familiarity with these icons of bluegrass music. So, to get started let's take a look at some of the earliest, and most important, inductees into this place of highest honor in the bluegrass world. Following are the writeups on those who were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1991 and 1992, the first two years for the Hall. I have added photos. In future columns I will examine some of the later inductees. Many thanks to the IBMA for allowing this reprint from their Hall of Fame website. If you wish to read more, visit the IBMA Hall of Fame at www.ibma.org and click on "Awards" and then "Hall of Fame."

Bill Monroe: born September 13, 1911



The Father of Bluegrass Music, Bill Monroe is one of the only people to have bestowed upon America an entire musical genre. Monroe began his professional

career in music in the early 1930s and as a member of WSM's Grand Ole Opry for more than half a century he nurtured the music that took its name from that of his band. Born William Smith Monroe in Rosine, Kentucky, he wrote and recorded with his famous mandolin hundreds of compositions including "Uncle Pen" and "Blue Moon of Kentucky," the latter of which is an official state song of Kentucky. Honors accorded by heads of state and countless organizations are numerous and bear testimony to the fact that the music of Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys has expanded to virtually all parts of the world.

Earl Scruggs: born January 2, 1924



One of the creators of bluegrass music, North Carolina native Earl Scruggs perfected the three-finger roll on the five-string banjo and introduced it to the Grand Ole Opry around Christmas of 1945 upon joining the Blue Grass Boys. From 1948 until 1969 Scruggs and his partner Lester Flatt were a major force in introducing bluegrass music to America through national television and at major universities and coliseums, in addition to appearances at rural schoolhouses and in small towns. Earl composed and recorded one of bluegrass music's most famous instrumental, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," used in the soundtrack for the motion picture production of *Bonnie and Clyde*. In 1969 he established an innovative solo career with his three sons as the Earl Scruggs Revue. Earl Scruggs is one of the most important musicians in America. No other instrumentalist has had such a profound impact on bluegrass music nor influenced so many.

Lester Flatt: born June 19, 1914



Widely considered bluegrass music's premier singer, Lester Flatt was born and lived his early childhood in a clapboard cabin overlooking a spectacular

mountain valley atop Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau. With Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in the mid '40s, Lester Flatt was a member of what many refer to as the

Original Blue Grass Band. With Earl Scruggs, Flatt organized the Foggy Mountain Boys in 1948 and went on to achieve long standing success and prestige unprecedented in bluegrass music. "Lester and Earl" became a way of life to countless fans through their own syndicated TV show, several hundred recordings and on WSM's Grand Ole Opry. Often appearing before a nationwide television audience, Flatt preferred to perform his music in front of his own kind of people in rural hamlets and small towns. Parting with Earl in 1969, Lester continued successfully with his own Nashville Grass until shortly before his death in 1979.

The Stanley Brothers
Ralph Stanley: born February 25, 1927
Carter Stanley: born August 17, 1925



Two eminent first generation figures in bluegrass music, Carter and Ralph Stanley were reared on isolated

Smith Ridge in southwest Virginia's mountainous Dickenson County. They began playing professionally in late 1946 on Bristol radio station WCYB's daily "Farm and Fun Time" broadcasts. During the ensuing 20 years the Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys recorded more than 400 titles, comprising some of the finest authentic American music in existence. Despite changing times and musical tastes, the Stanleys are the only major early bluegrass artists to have never compromised the rigidly traditional format in their recordings. The favorite lead singer of many fans, Carter authored endearing classics such as "The White Dove" and "The Lonesome River." Following his death in 1966, younger brother Ralph, composer of timeless songs and instrumentals such as "Clinch Mountain Backstep," launched a long and successful solo career faithful to the plaintive, soulful mountain sound that endears the Stanley Brothers' music to purists throughout the world.

Reno and Smiley
Don Reno: born February 21, 1927
Arthur Lee (Red) Smiley: born May 17, 1925



South Carolinian Don Reno and North Carolina native Red Smiley began a partnership in 1949 that was to be extended until Smiley's death in 1972, except for

two interruptions totaling about seven years. With their Tennessee Cutups, the duo recorded a large and priceless catalog of classic music, which is a rich legacy for present and future generations. Smiley's rich baritone lead voice and splendid rhythm guitar work were ideally complemented by Reno's tenor vocals and complex eclectic five-string banjo style that became his trademark. A showman, versatile multi-instrumentalist and prolific songwriter, Reno co-wrote the unit's signature songs, "I'm Using My Bible for a Road Map" and "I Know You're Married." After Smiley's passing, Reno continued with the Tennessee Cutups until shortly before his own death in 1984.

LOCAL SCENE

Two Local High School Students Hit Big. On the local scene, congratulations to John Mailander and Michael Brooks, both young fiddlers extraordinaire, on their admission to the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston. Both young men are graduating from high school this year and are off to college at Berklee in the fall. We wish them well.

continued adjacent →



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

LAWYERS HAVE BOOKS...

I love my collection of music. Good thing, because I have quite a lot of it. Probably too much, in the estimation in many. I've got several hundred CDs and vinyl records, hundreds of cassettes and reel-to-reel tapes, hard drives full of the songs of other artists and a seriously large amount of DVDs full of videos, documentaries, and live performances.

It is my acknowledged conceit that I thoroughly enjoy the look on people's faces when they see it for the first time (and due to its location in my home's front room, folks can't help but see it), but there is also the ironic twist that there will always be some who eye the whole thing with great suspicion. Those who look at all that time and money spent and think of how else it could have been used. To these individuals (the ones who say, "Wow, you really have a lot of CDs and records," with that unmistakable timbre of cautious inflection), my reply is always, "Lawyers have books. I make records all day. This is my library of reference materials." This is just how I feel about it.

My music collection is also a significant representation of how I came to hold many of the musical opinions that I rely upon every day in making the multitude of decisions that go into producing a record. That said, it is cer-

tainly not the only contributor either.

With very few exceptions, people who work in music do so out of their love for music. It's a calling that beckons in myriad ways, be it songwriting, recording, performing, or even becoming head of marketing at Warner Bros. The point is, regardless of how you have come to be involved in the creation, performance, or delivery of it, your unique contribution comes from your current perception of what you know music to be at this time.

The word that encompasses all of this is often referred to as a person's *musicality*.

Some people have a gift for musicality. They can sit down with a group of musicians they've never met before, playing a song they've never heard before, and always manage to make good music from it. Others might be far superior players, but given the exact set of circumstances may have fewer successful results.

Why does this happen? Wouldn't it follow that the better a musician you are, the better the music you will make?

Musicality isn't necessarily something that comes from being a virtuoso. It's what is attained along the way to becoming one. It is the sum total of everything you have heard or experienced musically, added to everything you wish to hear or long to express, all tempered by your ability to convey these things, be it musically or verbally. In this context, a tone deaf matron whistling while doing the dishes can display just as much musicality as a seasoned jazz trumpeter or a classically trained pianist. Each of us carries this unique relationship with us always, like fingerprints and DNA.

I suppose the best example of what this feels like is, well, *common sense*.

How many rehearsals or recording sessions have been halted at some point by a significant difference of musical opinion? You know the situation: the bass player is using a major interval under a minor chord and the guitarist is adamant that it sounds wrong. The bass player may have a certain song in his head that utilizes this interval to dramatic effect, but without the benefit of this musical reference, the guitarist just can't wrap his head around it. The drummer and the singer, meanwhile, are just shrugging their shoulders, unable to hear much of a difference either way and are just hoping to resolve this situation and get back to work.



Sven-Erik Seaholm

It matters less about who is "right" in this situation than how the solution is arrived upon. Sometimes it's a matter of just picking your battles, but even that can be a slippery slope. Let's say the bassist prevails because the guitarist eventually caves for the sake of keeping things moving. If that one note really bothers the guitarist that much, he'll probably wince every time he hears it. The only way to move past such a seemingly untenable musical impasse is to be able to trust not just your own musicality but to respect and recognize the musicality in others as well.

Earlier, I mentioned that one's record collection is not the only contributor to one's musicality; it's probably more of a symptom than anything else. Mine surely represents a healthy musical enthusiasm, but so does my catalog of songs and my personal discography.

As I stated before, it comes down to those three factors: everything you know, everything you strive for and the results of one's success or failure at being able to reconcile those two things.

For example, let's say that you are an excellent banjo player, but you love listening to and playing jazz. Your knowledge of jazz music, coupled with your talent for playing the banjo, will result in something wholly unique, to be sure, but it is your *musicality* that will ultimately help that unlikely combination to make sense to a casual listener.

For my part, I am a rabid fan of music, but I also look at these discs, tapes, and platters as language books, a way to speak in the tongue of most any artist by having at least a passing familiarity with the music they love most.

Whether it's within the context of a casual jam session or a high profile recording project, good musical communication and a common quest for what is the best music to be made is arrived at by nurturing not only your own musicality but that of others as well.

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent record producer and recording artist. Find him on the web at SvenSongs.com, KaSPro.com, Lynda.com and myspace.com/SvenSeaholm

Bluegrass Corner, continued



The Claire Lynch Band. Don't forget that the Claire Lynch Band will be appearing at the Del Mar Powerhouse, cosponsored by the San Diego

Bluegrass Society and the Del Mar Foundation, on March 19. For tickets and info visit www.delmarfoundation.org. Claire is a prior winner of IBMA's Female Vocalist of the Year Award, her guitar player Jim Hurst is a two-time winner, as is bass player Mark Shatz. Claire has one of the sweetest and most respected voices in bluegrass music and this is one great band working with her.

Spring Bluegrass Campout. If you haven't signed up for the Spring Bluegrass Campout in Chula Vista, scheduled for April 17-19, stop by any SDBS event and pick up a flyer and sign-up form. This is always a great event.



Saint Phil O'Harmonic Sez

"Hell is full of musical amateurs."

— Winston Churchill



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Hosing Down



José Sinatra completes a self-portrait

BOTTLING TIME IN A BOX

Even as it was happening, 1968 seemed to be the Ride of the Century. It zoomed along Time's highway, blindly changing lanes and bouncing off guard rails in dented, drunken determination to find its way home. That it had absolutely no idea where that destination was didn't even seem important at the time, but it got there eventually — all sweaty and exhausted within the souls of its passengers and the pages of history books.

I had been transplanted from San Diego to a strange new town a few miles outside of Washington D.C. during the Summer of Love, where I was to do grades nine through 12 and return after graduation. It might just as well have been in another country. I was just overcoming a powerful dose of culture shock when 1968 kicked into gear.

So many things happened then in our country and in the world that the enormity of it all can seem unreal to those who weren't on the ride. In my case, it was also a furious, awesome setting for the torments of adolescence to come screaming into life. The longings were intense, the joys immense, and the fear was always near. Never before or since were weekends so anxiously anticipated. Friday afternoons would signal two and one-half days pursuing pleasure in a world that was losing its marbles. There was some sort of instinctive drive to make every moment memorable. I'm happy to have recognized that drive and grateful that I never resisted it.

But the fear and dread would begin to come back every Sunday night around 10pm, right after "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" had ended. The theme song during the closing credits became to me a tower bell proclaiming the imminent, compulsory return to the Real World. The magical weekend was essentially over; time to get some sleep before having to face the mysterious dangers of the upcoming week. That song's evocative power was somehow blocked from my memory for 40 years, until the Truth paid me a surprise visit recently and damn near set me free.

It was in the current issue of *Filmfax* (a sublimely entertaining, overpriced quarterly) where I learned about the availability of a new DVD boxed set, one that had me scurrying over to Frye's within minutes of noticing the title. As it turns out, this set had been self-absorbedly sitting on the shelves and waiting for me since last September. "You would have known about me if you only had a computer and Internet access, you retarded freak," it chuckled to me from its bag as I drove us home. I was far too retarded to respond.

Very soon, I was watching all four discs of this arrogant bitch. It was 1968 again; the awe and fear began to return, and I began turning into jelly.

I haven't been so affected by any session of television viewing since I first saw *King of Kings* one Easter afternoon back East a long time ago. When was it? Ah, yes. 1968. Channel five. Unmistakable. Quite a year.

I gave up cable long ago and was unaware that these shows have had many subsequent runs on (I think) the E! channel. Maybe others as well. But I hadn't seen even one second of any of them since they were first broadcast in late '68 and early '69. Hadn't even heard that theme song since Damon and Keenan Ivory Wayans used it on

their first "Brothers Brothers" sketch on "In Living Color" in 1990.

But I was hearing it now. Big time.

This wonderful collection is the real thing, boys and girls. Or at least most of it. Unfortunately, the set's single defect turns out to be a real pisser: the episodes are the cable versions, which were severely shortened in order to accommodate some new intros and a lot more commercials. A fabulous stand-up spot by the greatest Nixon impersonator of all time, David Frye, is over in about 20 seconds. Several announced guests have simply disappeared. Lovely Leigh French, whose appearances would hauntingly engorge my loins, is barely present. But as maddening as the abridgements are (did someone think I wouldn't notice and warn the world?), anger is soothed, nursed, burped, and bathed in the passion and power of what remains.

For me, the crown jewel is an outstanding performance/medley from the musical *Hair*, which features the co-authors Gerry Ragni and Jim Rado singing and springing their hearts out in their original Broadway roles. We all became friends two years later; Rado came with me to my high school graduation and Ragni would have fun showing me the seamier sides of New York City. Gerry has since died, but seeing both of them now, so happy and vital and superb and right in front of me grabs my heart and squeezes it like the joy of a high, triple-digit Draft Lottery number.

There's plenty more music in these discs, from Tom and Dick, the Doors, Harry Belafonte, Ike and Tina, Ray Charles, Joan Baez, Donovan . . . all suddenly transcending the decades to provide the musical score to a magical return to one's past.

I'm used to (and thankful for) frequently reuniting with departed loved ones in dreams, for all sorts of conversations and adventures. The most curious aspect of these reunions is a very natural acceptance that these departed branches of my life thrive again as if they'd never fallen. No "God I've missed you; how did you come back?!", just precious business as usual until I wake up and once again begin to feel like the victim of some tragic robbery.

The deal with these Smothers Brothers shows is that, to me, they become like a *waking* dream. Those dead with whom I watched the programs four decades ago or those who were my dearest friends during their pre-mortem years are suddenly alive all around me, watching the shows with me, only now I *can't* see or hear them and I start shaking and sobbing in frustration. I'm back in 1968, I'm merely *feeling* them; I'm wanting them more than I'll ever want anything again and I'm frightened beyond belief.

The Smothers Brothers theme arrives, the credits roll, the reverie has ended again. Only some more sleep is left before the next cautious steps into a dangerous year. Sure, it's happened before; it's just that there's so much less of me now. Somehow I've got to find more.



RADIO DAZE



Jim McInnes

by Jim McInnes

COLD, COLD, COLD

On Inauguration Day, a day that should have been celebratory for all Americans, Clear Channel Communications fired some nine percent of its employees nationwide. About 1,800 people were canned, give or take a few.

Locally, anywhere from 54 to 62 folks (whatever...a lot) were "made redundant," including many disc jockeys.

The terminations were probably carried out in a *cold* and impersonal manner.

That's how they kicked me to the curb on October 11, 2002.

During the final hour of my Friday afternoon show, an overworked management guy I'll call Jay walked into the studio and said, "Hey, come upstairs after your show. I have something for you." The first thing I quipped was, "A pink slip, perhaps?" No response.

After my shift I went upstairs to Jay's office, where sat Jay, along with the tearful HR woman and another guy I'll call Richard, who, inexplicably, was in charge of all local rock programming. Right away I knew I was toast.

Richard said, in a voice completely devoid of feeling, "We're making some changes. Here's your last paycheck, your vacation pay, and your severance check."

I signed a couple of legal papers, picked up my checks and tried to remain calm, because I wanted to strangle these guys!

Jay then escorted me to my locker, watched as I dumped all my stuff into a cardboard box, took my key to the building, and walked me to my car in the now-deserted parking lot.

"Who's gonna get my shift?" I asked. "I hear it's Mojo [Nixon]," Jay replied. "Mojo? No sh*t? I think the first time he was ever on the air was on the "Homegrown" show [my local music program]!"

So now he'd be taking my place. I was cool with that, though, because Mojo and I go way back, to when I just knew him as Kirby McMillan.

The irony was not lost on me. The following Monday, it was as if I had never existed. Later that week, there was a short blurb in the trade papers saying, "Veteran KGB afternoon jock Jim McInnes has left the station to pursue other opportunities." (And be unemployed for 10 months!)

I was on KGB six days a week for 28 years, five months, and 11 days but *I never got an opportunity to say goodbye to my audience*, many of whom had grown up listening to my shows. Did they think I would use an opportunity to bow out with dignity to spout obscenities and wreck my future in the medium I love? That still makes me angry. I am a friggin' *professional!*

Nobody in the Clear Channel management ever said so much as a simple "Thanks, Jim."

Many good *radio people* were purged in January. By that I mean those who really *love* the medium and don't just work in it because they need a job.

continued adjacent →



by Peter Bolland

HE PLAYED REAL GOOD FOR FREE

He opened his case and took out his violin. He sat on a stool in the metro station and began to play. It was a cold January morning. The good people of Washington D.C. hurried by on their way to catch a train or make an important appointment. Rush hour.

A few people glanced over at the musician. One middle-aged man slowed down, pausing for a few seconds before moving on. A minute later a woman dropped a dollar bill into his open violin case without missing a step. Soon another man stopped to lean against a wall. Then he looked at his watch and walked on, late for work.

Children seemed to be the most interested — especially one three-year-old boy who was being pulled along by his mother. He stopped to listen. His mother yanked him away without even looking. The boy never once took his eyes off the violinist as his mother pulled him on through the crowded train station. This happened again and again. All the parents, without exception, dragged their children away from the music.

The violinist played for 45 minutes. He collected \$32.17 from 32 people. Everyone who gave him money continued walking — they never even slowed down. Out of the 1,097 people who passed by, only seven people stopped to listen. When the music stopped, no one applauded or even noticed. He packed his violin and left.

It had all been an experiment initiated by *Washington Post* writer Gene Weingarten in January 2007. The violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played six of the most challenging and beautiful pieces Bach had ever written for the violin. The violin itself was a 1713 Stradivarius worth 3.5 million dollars. A few nights earlier Bell had performed to a sold-out crowd in Boston where the average ticket price was \$100. Bell plays over 200 sold-out shows a year.

Weingarten's and Bell's experiment shows us many things. Marketing experts have long claimed that packaging is everything, and research bears them out. When you take two identical products and place them side by side, people invariably prefer (and will pay more for) the product in the fancier package. It's not that people are stupid — it's just that we're particularly vulnerable to illusion. We don't see the "real" world. We see the world our pre-conceived notions show us. Perception is never an objective event — it is profoundly colored by our emotional conditioning. To our enduring embarrassment, we are easily and willingly played, despite all our proud protests to the contrary.

On a deeper level, another truth is revealed. If we don't stop to hear a free Bach performance by Joshua Bell on a Stradivarius (because the context is wrong), what else are we missing? How much beauty are we walking right on by?

Musicians often talk about these problems because we've all had the same experience over and over again. When we charge \$5 for a show, seven people show up, and when we charge \$15, a hundred people show up. On the surface none of it makes any sense. Obviously there is a dynamic of perceived value at work here. Economists call it the "price point," that magic number at which you create the heightened allure,

Radio Daze, continued.

I have a placard in my office that reads: **WILL THE LAST REAL RADIO PERSON TO LEAVE THE BUSINESS PLEASE TURN OFF THE TRANSMITTER?**

Mojo quit after two years, telling me that Richard drove him insane... and Jay and Richard got fired this year.

The irony is not lost on me.

PHILOSOPHY, ART, CULTURE, & MUSIC

STAGES

the maximum perception of "hey, this costs a lot so it must be good" without tipping over into "hey, I ain't paying that much for that!" If you charge \$5 for CDs you will not sell twice as many as when you charge \$10. In fact, you'll sell fewer. But \$20 is just too high these days when people can download your entire album off iTunes for \$9.99.

Nevertheless, any artist struggling to reach a wider audience ought to pay close attention to the Joshua Bell experiment. Ask yourself several important questions. How do I present myself, on and off stage? What kind of rooms do I play? What do my photos look like? What am I doing to create a milieu, an environment in which my art can really be seen and appreciated? As artists we need to gently wean ourselves from the unexamined assumption that quality and beauty will be instantly recognized and rewarded by a discerning public and that we needn't give any thought to packaging or context. You have to do more than write great songs, play brilliantly and sing with power and grace. You have to mount those jewels in the right setting. It's one thing to be good. But what are you doing to create the *perception* of quality? The Bell experiment shows us that even the greatest music in the world gets overlooked in the wrong context.

We all know artists who, after years of struggle, slip deeper and deeper into contempt for the very audience they purport to seduce. Perhaps all this pain can be avoided by gaining appreciation of the subtle and insidious psychological dynamics at play. Artists must be willing to expand their sphere of creativity to include the entire environment in which they ply their art. You're not just making music. You're creating a multi-dimensional reality.

And for those of us in the audience, the Joshua Bell experiment raises some equally challenging questions. Perhaps we need to gently wean ourselves from the unexamined assumption that pretty packaging signifies quality content. Let's meet artists half way. Be willing to do the foot work. Maybe the best songs aren't on the radio or at the giant amphitheater. Grow better ears.

Thirty-nine years ago in 1970, Joni Mitchell addressed this issue powerfully in her song "For Free" from *Ladies of the Canyon*. In it she portrays a successful, wealthy musician (a not so subtle self-portrait) who wistfully laments her own apathy as she passes by a brilliant street musician. "Nobody stopped to hear him, though he played so sweet and high. They knew he had never been on their TV so they passed his music by...he played real good for free."

It's the catch 22 of the fame game. No one comes to see you unless you're famous. And you can't get famous until people come to see you. New artists are forced, initially anyway, to create the illusion of popularity. But these are the very dynamics of celebrity culture so many of us lament — the ubiquitous and dehumanizing blare of tabloid journalism and the subsequent erosion of kindness and depth. Manufactured "stars" who haven't (yet anyway) created one damn thing of value clog the airwaves and prevent real quality from breaking through. (I won't name names — a whole list of celebrities is springing to your mind without my help). Yet it is the very world our collective psyche has created. We have each laid a brick of this edifice with our own hands. Our habitual inattention and unexamined consumerism had a baby — and it's called pop culture.

On that cold January morning in the Washington D.C. metro, only 32 of the 1,097 people who walked past Joshua Bell put money in his case. Only seven people stopped to listen. Only one person recognized him. And he played real good for free.

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



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Blame Sally Brings Light to the Darker Days of Our Recent Past

by Terry Roland

It's time for me to finally write this article. I know those who watch the deadlines will breathe a sigh of relief as this feature comes in, well, late! Right now I'm in danger of having my limited prose and this one procrastinating writer bounced out of San Diego and the *Troubadour* for good! Just joking. But, I can say with certainty, this feature was meant for me to write. First, and most important, it is in praise of one of the finest Americana bands in the country right now who hail from San Francisco: Blame Sally. It's also an opportunity to pay homage to those of us whose voices have shouted the loudest lasted through eight dark years of the Bush era as we witnessed the near ruin of our country's morale and economy in the name of ideology over any form of compassion or reason. Often, we have felt unheard. Even our best voices and givers of insight have been ignored and suppressed. I'd even argue the last 28 years of the Reagan era is where this all began. Over the years the swing from one political view to the next, like so many silhouetted monkeys jumping from branch to branch, has taken the poets, the artists, and the prophets of hope to keep our spirits alive as both Americans and a culture. In my opinion, they most strongly represent those who tell the truth. They've been there throughout history.

There have been times, like during the late '50s McCarthy era, when the edge was taken off of the truly cutting folk song in the name of the Cold War and the false implication that to protest is equals lack of patriotism. So many lives were ruined during that time. But, I was never more proud to be an American than dur-

ing the recent pre-Inaugural concert when Pete Seeger literally overshadowed Bruce Springsteen as they sang the forgotten, intensely more radical version of "This Land Is Your Land," including Woody Guthrie's sarcastic verse about "private property."

*I was walking, I saw a sign there
and on that sign it said Private Property
On the other side it didn't say nothing
that side was made for you and me.*

Also heard on that day were "This Land's" visually dramatic lines, linked so closely to today's current events:

*by the shadow of steeple,
at the relief office, I saw my people
as they stood hungry, I stood there wondering
if this land was made for you and me.*

Of course, the record company dared not include these verses in the popular version of the song. Even Woody's classic original recording exclude these critical and powerful lyrics. Woody, who could barely speak or play in his later years, his body ravaged with the long term effects of Huntington's Chorea, taught these banned verses to his young son, Arlo, telling him to never forget these verses in hope the complete song would still live.

There, on that wintery January day a few weeks ago, the song and the songwriter stood tall and loud above the corruption, lies, and arrogant disregard of the Bush administration, personae in Pete Seeger, who half-century ago, went to jail for singing songs such as these. In the presence of his grandson Tao, Bruce Springsteen and millions of others sang out, via television, those original words around the world. In the end, the song and Woody

Guthrie have won the recognition and the audience it deserves. And so the time goes from generation to generation to songs like these that heal and help all of us to see.

Today, the songs still go out. As in times before, they are ignored, called unpatriotic and suppressed. This is why the San Francisco-based Americana quartet, Blame Sally's poignant song and accompanying video, "If You Tell A Lie," is like a surviving piece of art from the ruins of a long, unholy apocalypse. Written by keyboard player, Monica Pasqual, over a period of time beginning on Inaugural Day 2001, the song conveys the feelings of the millions of people who watched the first president appointed to the executive office by the U.S. Supreme Court. Fortunately, the truth of the words can speak volumes, outlast the years to come, and, like the best prophetic, topical songs of protest, they will remain a timeless condemnation of the manipulation of the powerful over the powerless as expressed in the words to the chorus of this song:

*Water isn't wine
Brass isn't gold
One day you'll account for
all the lies that you told*

An oft-heard criticism of the modern topical folk song is that as soon as recorded, they are irrelevant. Arlo Guthrie has said of his more topical songs, "It's not only out of date, but it's long over due." Blame Sally has managed to eclipse other songs written about these times and what can now safely, and with no small amount of disdain, be called the Bush Years, by addressing the ageless accounts of political and government corruption since time began. Like Dylan's "Master's of War," and "Blowin' in the Wind," this one rings true to times past, present and future.

With the opening lines of the song, the power of the folk singer's voice as prophet and truth teller rings:

*If you tell a lie again and again
It does not become the truth in the end
If your voice is loud and your lies are well heard
Still it does not mean transformation has occurred*

Finally the song was finished in the spring of 2008 when Pasqual wrote another verse that could apply to the Crusades as well as the days of the war in Iraq:

*You can speak of God while you lead your Holy War
As if your hands weren't stained by the oil you adore
More innocents will die and more soldiers will fall
You name your church for God but it was greed that*



Blame Sally

built those walls.

It's the passion, creativity, and stamina of the modern-day American singer songwriters that we depend on to punctuate the ends and beginnings of epochs of eras such as these transitional times. With "If You Tell A Lie," Blame Sally has accomplished this with a beautiful melody, direct lyrics, and eloquent instrumentation. All the tools one needs to tell the truth. That, and a few chords.

While airplay is limited Blame Sally has gained national acclaim with "Lie" by landing on Neil Young's Living with War Today website, which is dedicated to anti-war anthems from known and unknown songwriters. The song has been among the top five most listened to songs on the site, which numbers in hundreds and thousands of songs.

All that said, however, I wasn't assigned to write about topical songs and the end of the Bush era. This is a feature about an influential, creative foursome on the rise from San Francisco: Blame Sally. By virtue of their all female line-up (I'm not sure this is relevant; how often do we describe other bands as the "all-male-line up?"), their proficient folk-based original material and instrumentation, they may beg comparisons to the Dixie Chicks (well, without all the flash and make up and stuff) or the Indigo Girls. Funny, but while I'm not fond of offering comparisons to artists who have created a distinctive sound of their own, I find them closer to a folk-based U2. Listening to the lead singer breathe out her words in the song "House of the Living," combining subtle piano with hypnotic background vocals, there's something powerful about such lines as:

*I don't want to waste away another precious day
snap me out of this before I throw my life away.*

"House of the Living," which presents the urgent message to live life to its fullest or lose all meaning, seems an equally significant personal call as "If You Tell A Lie" is to the country. Looking at the instrumental diversity on their three albums, with *Severland* being the latest, it's easy to see how most fans of Americana music will be drawn to Blame Sally. What is a surprise, however, is the breadth of their style - bordering on light jazz and alternative rock lined with latter-day Beatle back-

ground vocals that are choral, harmonic, and ethereal. Mixing these musical virtues with lyrics that are in depth, memorable, and accessible, suggests a band with a future of growth and an ability to draw a mainstream following - that, of course, with the right promotion and exposure. But those two factors are hard to come up in the bright-eyed underground of house-concerts, small folk clubs, and spring outdoor music festivals. Like many other independent musicians, they handle most of their own promotion, bookings, and publicity. However, while lacking in mass popular success, they have gained a great deal in consistent critical acclaim. For example, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* has written "The four-piece group effortlessly goes from spunky kiss-offs that bring to mind Lucinda Williams at her most decisive to political barnstormers that come off more as lyrical smackdowns than folkie polemics. The band's spirited, take-no-prisoners attitude is a welcome contrast to traditional folkie navel-gazing, and the band has the songs, chops, and pipes to back up their tough-talking, clear-minded folk rock." Indeed, even the more reflective songs from the new CD, *Severland*, are more inclusive than introspective, which gives the listener a shared experience inside the song rather than the feeling of being an outside observer, an easy, indulgent trap for songwriter's to fall into.

Consisting of Pam Delgado on percussion, guitar, and vocals; Renee Harcourt on guitar, bass, banjo, harmonica, and vocals; Jeri Jones on guitar, bass, dobro, mandolin, and vocals; Monica Pasqual on piano, keys, accordion, melodica, and vocals; Blame Sally maintains a busy tour schedule of folk clubs, house concerts, and among the most reputable festival circuits in folk music today.

In a day of hope dimly beginning to light our way through the topical and transforming time of this new century, Blame Sally has given us the kind of music that brings hope a little closer to all of us by speaking truth in a personal and universal way and being true, most of all, to the songs they sing.

Blame Sally will perform at Jimmy Duke's Dark Thirty House Concert in Lakeside on Sunday, March 22, 7:30pm. Call for reservations: (619) 443-9622.

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Lindsey Yung Opal Essence

by Julia Bemiss

The melodies themselves don't sound particularly tropical, but several lyrics on Lindsey Yung's latest album *Opal Essence* are ripe with sun and sand, turquoise waters, crystal blue skies, and warm ocean breezes. It's no surprise then, to learn that Yung wrote these songs while in Hawaii, which she visits frequently, photographing and writing about its natural beauty.

"Away from It All" appropriately jump-starts the album. Though San Diego itself has a healthy portion of sun, sand, and surf, it certainly has its share of "pavement and break lights/sirens and bustle" too. The intensity of the daily grind is heard in the opening pulse of drums and from then on the song balances a tension between up and down tempos for both piano and drums; it's a clever aural reflection of the lyrics.

Yung's instruments of choice are piano and ukulele, but it's her strong and crystalline voice that commands every song and is custom-made for power ballads such as "Should Be." Even though a few songs sound overproduced instrumentally, her vocals always rise to the top without overreaching. Evan Bethany on violin and Ray Suen on violin and viola accompany Yung on many of these songs, sounding as if they'd given their arms and shoulders impressive workouts.

Lyrical, Yung is unafraid to wear her heart on her sleeve. Whether it's the adamant holding onto individuality in a world of conformists in "Like Them," the in-your-face, brutal truths of "Authentic Counterfeit," or the awareness of life's fragility in "With Every Breath," Yung's writing is personal and her vocals are emotive without being sentimental or melodramatic. She is self-expressive without being self-absorbed, not an easy thing to accomplish with such intimate song writing.

Other reviewers have noted the lack of acoustic guitar in her compositions, which might make Yung a bit of an anomaly in San Diego. Though Yung may stick out as one of the few pianists in San Diego's acoustic scene, it doesn't keep her from performing at numerous bars, clubs, coffeehouses, and open mics. Yung is a native San Diegan, after all, and she does play ukulele.

In fact, it's surprising that ukulele is only heard in three songs on this album. On these songs Yung's vocals are mellow and languid and her ukulele, accompanied by bass guitar and djembe, meanders breezily along in tandem. It's a nice respite from the high energy heard throughout the rest of the album. It also begs the question as to whether Yung might eventually create an entire album of such songs, if she hasn't already. And if she hasn't, well, another trip to Hawaii just might be the ticket.



Janell Rock Performer

by Paul Hormick

Janell Rock succumbed to breast cancer in July of last year, and until four days before her untimely death she was in the recording studio, singing and playing piano, to complete her disk *Performer*. Except for "Over the Rainbow," Rock wrote all the music and lyrics for the CD, each tune tinged or colored, or an outright meditation, on the disease that she fought and the loss of life that she faced.

As you have probably assumed, this is not a happy, carefree recording. And yet, surprising as it may seem, the overarching theme that Rock puts forth is one of hope. In a voice that is often plaintive, often quite strong, and sometimes revealingly weak, she sings that she can still be grateful, can still rejoice, can still fall in love, while being worn down with hospital stays and disappointing news from physicians.

Filled with the adoration of the lover, "Il Bella Amore" is as passionate a love song as any paean to teen love. Nonetheless, the song contains the lyric, "I fell in love as autumn leaves fell from above," and makes other references to the closing of the year, to fall and winter. Rock is caught up in the swirl of beating hearts and kisses, yet all around are chilling reminders of her life's shortness. Like "September Song" or "Autumn Leaves" these contrasts are greatly touching and carry a resolute poignancy.

Directly confronting the hell of living with cancer is "I'm Gonna Be OK," which describes the inner strength needed to fight the inevitable fear the strikes in the night. Raw and emotional, Rock repeatedly sings the title refrain, that she will be OK, friends and family are near, that she will live. It is not a denial of death; Rock knew that she was dying. It is rather a rally to life, embracing the power that she had facing her disease.

There are preachers and sages who will illustrate and diagram the afterlife as if it were a program for a society ball. But when pressed as to where they cribbed their notes from, they're all a little sketchy as to their source material. When it comes right down to it, mortality is the greatest mystery. With "I Wonder What It's Like?" Rock contemplated the unknown that she faced. More pain? Angels? To know all the answers? To "forever disappear?" As the questions pile up, Rock finds solace in the things that give her life certainty, the love and emotions that have carried her through.

With the pairing of a strong and appealing tune with an equally well-crafted lyric, it's almost impossible to make a bad cover of "Over the Rainbow." Rock taps the tune's universal appeal, which goes beyond the yearnings of an unhappy girl on a Kansas farm. No matter how old we may grow, all of us from time to time would appreciate our troubles melting away like lemon drops.

Rock is the star of the show on *Performer*, singing and playing piano, but she gets some help from some of San Diego's best musicians on a tune or two. You'll find the voice of April West and an accordion played by boogie queen Sue Palmer. Pete Harrison and Evonna Wascinski lay down bass lines; Phil Rawley plays the drums; and Karin Kajita plays piano on "Over the Rainbow." Profits from the sales of this disk go to the breastcancerfund.org.





Gregory Page Bird in a Cage

by Jennifer Carney

Earnestness is not the virtue it once was. Today it is regarded as a relic of simpler musical times, when a songwriter could be genuine without being suspect. But in these days of crumbling economies and unprecedented avarice, sentimentality is – to say the very least – both reassuring and refreshing. Gregory Page gets away with being so earnest because his music is so good.

The prolific Page is in fine form again with his latest offering, *Bird in a Cage*, which is a work of tuneful country-western and Americana. Page limns his observations of life and love in a lush, rolling aural landscape; *Bird in a Cage* lets you ride shotgun with Page on his musical road trip, poking in here, ducking out there, checking out dive bars and old cemeteries.

The album lopes along delightfully from start to finish. Page's voice is so sweet and *Bird in a Cage* is so heartfelt, that even a casual listen evokes the finest work of Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, and even Neil Young.

The album opens with "Diamonds and Rocks," a jovial country tune with a two-steppin' rhythm that sets the tone for an album filled with good-natured lover's scorn. Other standouts include the upbeat yet introspective "Old Photographs," the sleepy love song, "Swoopin'," and the slide-heavy "Right or Wrong," which features a lyric that calls to us from the aeons: *It's never too late to be the person you were meant to be.*

"I Don't Like You (Anymore)," "Foolish Heart," and "My Greatest Love of All" belong on a juke joint Wurlitzer, amid the sounds of cowboy boots on a gritty floor and clinking beer bottles. "Dusty Road" describes the essence of the road trip perfectly, calling roll for the towns and states you'd see along Route 66.

Page does melancholy very well; in fact, he does it beautifully. He diverts from the country theme for three down-hearted songs: the Beatle-y "The Love for Me," "Charlotte's Grave" – a song that would have fit well on Gregory's "Eurocana" album, *Love Made Me Drunk* – and the title track (including its haunting "hidden" remix), which might be his darkest song to date. "Bird in a Cage" pulls the listener down like cement shoes in a murky lake. It is a somewhat startling musical departure for Page – who usually isn't morose – but it works here, bringing the album full circle by evoking the Southern gothic, dipping down into the ugliness of an outwardly pleasant life.

Page is a tireless composer and seems genuinely happy with every new album; each one becomes his (self-described) masterwork. Indeed, few artists can boast such quality of catalog. If you're a fan of Gregory Page, or if you just love good music, be sure to get a copy of *Bird in a Cage*. Your ears will thank you.



Gayle Skidmore Cowley Road

by Josh Damigo

For anyone who hasn't had a chance to meet the beautiful and incredibly talented Gayle Skidmore, her new EP *Cowley Road* is only a hint of the artistic ability that she holds. One may be surprised to realize that almost everything about the CD was orchestrated by Skidmore, including the artwork and many of the instruments on the recording. Gayle is easily one of the most talented lyricists in town as well and proves that in songs like "Cheap Imitation" and "Still," which are filled with anguish over a broken heart.

Gayle's voice is similar to that of Feist, Sarah McLachlan, or Beth Gibbons (Portishead), but different in the sense that it is less polished and much more organic or folk inspired. By using only real instruments in the recording, the CD has an early 1900s' feel, with lyrics that would be similar to many of the current European songwriters such as Damien Rice and Glen Hansard.

Gayle's songs may seem simple, but are much more difficult than they appear. With drumbeats coming in and out of different time signatures and a clever placement of tasteful (and not overly busy) background pieces, the CD could also be very enjoyable as an instrumental project. There is a musicianship following Gayle that simply is not present in the normal San Diego scene. One of the reasons for this master craftsmanship can be attributed to Skidmore's unusual influences, which include Sufjan Stevens, Andrew Bird, My Brightest Diamond, Ihasa De Sela, and Brandi Carlile.

"Crazy" is easily the best song on the album. The song starts with classic Aaron Bowen banjo and lap steel, but out of the blue comes a whole new version of Gayle Skidmore. Gayle sings this song with a different attitude and style that honestly is the way she should sing every song for the rest of her life. There is a hint of cockiness that seems to replace the usual melancholy sound on many of her other recordings. This song is definitely the sound that could propel Gayle Skidmore from a local artist to a national recording star.

Cowley Road is a masterpiece that deserves much more buzz from the local media than it is currently receiving. She has more talent than many other songwriters in town and a work ethic that is second to none. Even if Skidmore's style doesn't appeal to your musical taste buds, do yourself a favor and download her single "Crazy," because she is one of those people who has greater things ahead of her – you are definitely going to wish you could say that you heard her before she made it.



Wayne Riker Fretology

by Frank Kocher

Guitarist Wayne Riker is a clear exception to the old saying "those who can't do, teach." He has been a columnist for prominent guitar magazines, published books and instructional DVDs, and taught guitar in a variety of styles for over 35 years. His new CD, *Fretology*, shows that he not only knows his subject but can also compose and play complex styles, ranging from bluegrass, funk, and jazz to blues and genre-bending improvisational tunes.

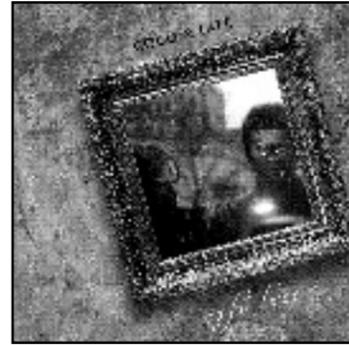
Riker's earlier disc, *Fretful*, showed the same approach, using a single, finger-picked, steel-stringed acoustic guitar with no overdubbing. The new disc's production, by local jazz guitar icon Peter Sprague, seems crisper than the earlier disc, which helps the harmonics and intricate pattern-picking cut through the simultaneously played bass lines and chords. Riker recorded the disc's 12 original cuts using eight different tunings, a way that he enhances his jaw-dropping technique by getting additional voicings from the guitar by tuning certain strings to open chords or tones.

"Tumbleweed Trot" starts things off with a breezy chord figure that Riker spices up with an alternating conversation on the strings that climbs the neck as the song progresses. Any remaining doubt about his prowess is extinguished on "Blue Sunset," which follows with a speed-picked, bluegrass-inspired lick that resolves, several times, into a bluesy roll only to pick up steam again. "Vertigo Waltz" features rapid-fire fretwork in the mold of early Michael Hedges, while "Hopscotch" is a funk exercise, with plucked staccato notes and a strum pattern that simulates a slap bass and reggae shuffle. "Integrity Blues" shows blues chops in the midst of some smooth country-blues finger-picking that brings to mind the best playing of Steven Stills. On this nearly six-minute tune Riker is cooking, which is the blues highlight of the disc. The title tune, "Fretology," is firmly on jazz footing, showing Riker can play a straight ahead, finger-picked jazz tune with a good feel for taking his time.

Throughout, Riker makes this disc a departure from many other acoustic guitar discs, avoiding the temptation to use studio gimmicks like reverb. At the same time as refraining from fast scales that would not fit his one-take presentation, he also avoids a boringly restrained, unadventurous, sonic wallpaper sound by keeping lots of notes flowing evenly, and there isn't a missed note or a buzzed fret anywhere on the album.

"Soul Stroll" is another showpiece, moving back and forth from an unassuming jazzy structure into a funk bridge with quirky scales and blues figures. String harmonics, used sparingly elsewhere, dominate "Tintinnabulation Whispers," a piece built around them and sounding like rain drops splashing. "Rest Easy" is difficult to peg but has a catchy hook and folk-bluegrass feel. The closer on the disc is a classically influenced piece, "Introspection," with baroque tones – almost a punctuation by Riker to show his ability in one type of music not yet covered on the disc.

Fretology is a great listen, easy on the ears, and presented with the mastery of an accomplished teacher.



Coco & Lafe Café Loco

by Heather Janiga

East coaster folksters, Coco and Lafe, traveled cross country to record their recent release, *Café Loco*. Their ride broke down in Tucson, and, for a moment, they believed they might not make it to their destination: a quaint little studio in Ocean Beach. Be it luck or fate, they managed to fit those extra few hundred miles in, arriving in time to lay down 14 tracks that would befit even the ficklest folk junkie.

From the pluck of the first guitar string your ears will be roused and stay tuned, anticipating each next move. "Cambridge Underground," a solemn tale of love lost and still longed for, is perfectly poised as the album's intro. A lone acoustic guitar lies against the sorrowful bellow of a cello, and Lafe's voice commands with brazen beauty – exposing hints of some of yesteryear's greats, with a touch of Cat Stevens, a pinch of Pete Seeger, and a well rounded scoop of James Taylor.

The duo sways from songs of heartache to light and carefree jubilees, such as "Let's Get Away," a contagious composition that will have your toes tapping and the chorus line ringing through your head for days. Though they claim Boston and Vermont as their stomping grounds, after hearing this song you have little doubt that their true home is the open road.

"Reservation Billboards" carries you to the hot dry heat of the Arizona desert, where the only color comes from cactus blossoms in springtime and the ominous air feels hundreds of pounds heavier from the scattered "rusted trucks and big RVs." This song is delivered with flawless precision and packed with clever imagery. I visualize large tumbleweed rolling down a steamy highway as the chorus line howls out the cowboy cry "Aye yi yi..."

"Bandido" is a western tale of a search for love that roils into armed robbery, desperados, and, of course, tequila. Here, we are introduced to Coco's lead vocal, which sparks an instant comparison to a vintage Kate Bush. When singing background harmonies she rings out like a Joan Baez, offering further insight into her versatility.

In my opinion, the standout track on this album goes to "Ocean Beach." This type of song was made for the repeat button on your player. The song flows with a gorgeous and catchy melody line and is composed with poetic phrasings.

Throughout the album, Coco and Lafe are accompanied by several of San Diego's all-star local musicians, such as the late great Craig Yerkes, Robin Henkel, John McBride, and Bill Ray to name a few. Each adds a bit of their own personal touch while leaving the songs room to breathe, so that the folk essence isn't buried under too many distractions. Chuck Schiele, producer and owner of StudiOB where this album was created, did a fabulous job of organizing and executing his vision for Coco and Lafe and has once more added a fine piece of work for us to feast upon. *Café Loco* will fit nicely into any music lover's collection.



Thom Landt Bordertown

by Mike Alvarez

If I were a gambling man, I'd bet good money that Thom Landt is a huge Bruce Springsteen fan. His immensely likeable new CD *Bordertown* often calls to mind many of the sounds and feelings that can be found in the Boss' most potent recordings. Those who favor the rock in their country-rock will have much to enjoy here. As can be expected, the music is guitar-centric, with many of the instruments played by Landt himself. This is not cause for concern, however, because he is a very proficient all-around musician. There is no danger that he spreads himself too thinly. He manages to create a tight ensemble sound with a good measure of chemistry and interaction between the tracks.

Landt establishes his sound from the get-go with the songs "Lonely Town" and "Drivin' Wheel." Layers of acoustic and electric guitars and a solid rhythm section give his husky vocals a solid foundation. Pedal steel guitar is used to add to the western vibe. Back-up harmony vocals provide the final ingredient in the sonic mix. While he channels some of the emotional mannerisms of Springsteen, oftentimes I found myself comparing the timbre of his voice to Glenn Frey of the Eagles.

A standout track is "Blue Sunday," a Tom Petty-like tune that showcases his songwriting and arranging abilities. He has an ear for interesting chord changes and song structures that naturally arise from the way a song progresses. He has a keen instinct for arranging his songs, whether it's by embellishing with extra production or just keeping things simple. It keeps things fresh and interesting. Perhaps his most Springsteen-esque effort is "Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained," which tells the tale of ordinary people with dreams. A series of blazing electric guitar solos over a pumping rhythm really gives this song an emotional lift. A real attention getter is his muscular cover of the Bob Dylan's "My Back Pages," a song made famous by the Byrds. It's performed with great enthusiasm and obvious affection for the original.

If I were to single out some nits to pick in an otherwise solid album, they would be these: lyrically it's not a home run. "Angel Of Mercy" is a terrific tune that is somewhat hobbled by a patchwork of clichéd images and phrases. "Isn't It About Time" suffers from some awkward phrasing in the chorus. I also felt that Landt's influences sometimes took center stage much of the time. Perhaps too much. Although I mentioned the Boss on a few occasions, there are also other muses informing this music. Tom Petty, Jackson Browne, the Eagles ... all giants who cast long shadows. Thom Landt is an obviously gifted artist whose work need not stand in them. This album is ample proof that he's got a lot to share. I find myself looking forward to a follow-up.





MARCH CALENDAR

sunday • 1

Shady Side Players, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 10am.
Skelpin, Encinitas Library, 540 Cornish Dr., 1pm.
Coastal Communities Concert Band 26th Anniversary Concert, Carlsbad Comm. Church, 3175 Harding St., 2:30pm
Bayou Brothers Zydeco Matinee, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 4pm.
Mellotones, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 6pm.
Atom Orr/Itai/The Predicates, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 2

Chet & the Committee Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Donnis Trio/Astra Kelly/Soundscape, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.
Bill Rhoads/Ted Matzen & Friends/Cowboy Jack Johnson, Larry's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 8pm.

tuesday • 3

Trails & Rails, Rancho San Diego Library, 11555 Via Rancho San Diego, El Cajon, 6:30pm.
Chris Stuart & BackCountry, NCBFC Mtg., Round Table Pizza, 1161 E. Washington Ave., Escondido, 8pm.
San Diego Songwriters Guild Performing Songwriters Contest, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's Tavern, 2777 Roosevelt St., Carlsbad, 9:30pm.
Trophy Wife, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9pm.

wednesday • 4

Lighthouse, Friendly Grounds Coffee House, 9225 Carleton Hills Blvd., Santee, 7pm.
Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Rhythm & the Method/Chimney Fish/Greens of Mind/Mary Dolan, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
The Soul Persuaders, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 8pm.
Happy Ron Re-Premature CD Release III w/ Rev. Stickman/BViolin, Lestats's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Jordan Reimer/Brooklyn/Vernazza & Miller, Hennessey's, 708 4th Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 4650 Mission Blvd., 9:30pm.

thursday • 5

Barbara Nesbitt w/ Mike Spurgat, Indulge, 4550 La Jolla Village Dr., 6:30pm.
Joe Rathburn & Suzanne Reed, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Sue Palmer, Bing Crosby's, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Peter Sprague String Consort, Del Mar Powerhouse, 1442 Camino Del Mar, 7pm.
Me & Steve/Paul Cannon/Colin Clyne/Locked Out of Eden/Scott Wilson & the Complications, Backstage @ the Bitter End, 770 5th Ave., 8pm.
The Riders, Second Wind, 8515 Navajo Rd., 8:30pm.
Jordan Reimer/Karma/Kenny Eng, Lestats's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Taylor Hicks, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9:30pm.

friday • 6

Heloise Love, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., P.B., 6:30pm.
Grada, Holy Trinity Church, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., 7:30pm.
Stephen Bennett, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield Ave., 7:30pm.
The Keys to New Orleans w/ Allen Toussaint/Henry Butler/Jon Cleary, Birch North Park Theatre, 2891 University Ave., 7:30pm.
New City Sinfonia, First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4190 Front St., 7:30pm. Free.
Noche de Rumba Y Ritmo w/ Gene Perry, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Chet & the Committee, Ramona Mainstage Nightclub, 626 Main St., Ramona, 8pm.
KeV, Escondido Joe's Coffee House, 119 E. Grand Ave., 8pm.
Fielding, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Gregory Page, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Molly Bloom's, 2391 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 9:30pm.

saturday • 7

Grand Canyon Sundown, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Wayne Riker/Steph Johnson/Charlie Imes/Barbara Nesbitt, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
KeV/Partners in Rhyme, The Living Room, 2541 San Diego Ave., 7pm.
Freddie Roulette/Henry Kaiser & Friends, Museum of Making Music, 5790 Armada Dr., Carlsbad, 7pm.
Joey DeFrancesco, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Sue Palmer Trio, Bing Crosby's, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Tiempo Libre, Balboa Theatre, 868 4th Ave., 8pm.
Shady Side Players, The Marquee, 835 25th St., 8pm.

Dean Brown w/ Tripp Sprague/Scott Kyle/Cliff Almond/Dave Curtis, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Tommy Dahill, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Trophy Wife, Ramona Mainstage, 626 Main St., Ramona, 8:30pm.
Cross Canadian Ragweed/Stephanie Briggs, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Terry Matsuoka, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

sunday • 8

S.D. Folk Song Society Mtg., Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 2pm.
Acoustic Alliance w/ Brooklyn/Laura Kuehl/Paul Cannon/Roxanne/Miff Laracy/Misdirection/David Hermens/The Randles/Matt Haack/Chad Farran/matt Molaris/John Katchur/Shady Side Players, Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Ave., 7pm.
Danielle French/Eleisha Eagle, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 9

Michele Lundeen, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Sheila Sondergard/Astra Kelly/Paul Cannon, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.

tuesday • 10

Folk Arts Rare Records Singers' Circle, Kadan, 4696 30th St., 6pm.
Songwriters Showcase, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Paul Marshall Lecture (Club Date Collection of Live Jazz DVDs), Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., La Jolla, 7:30pm.
Scott Wilson & the Complications, Second Wind, 8515 Navajo Rd., 8pm.
The New Mastersounds, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., OB, 9pm.

wednesday • 11

Tom Boyer, Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Library, 9005 Aero Dr., 6:30pm.
Bill Evans Tribute w/ Tommy Gannon/Ted Hughart/Kirk Hoffman, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
Danny Green CD Release, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Jen Knight/Eric Polyn/Bigfellas/Roxy Monoxide/Hugh Gaskins & the G-String Daddies, Backstage @ the Bitter End, 770 5th Ave., 8pm.
A Night of Belly Dancers & Music, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Robin Henkel & Jeffrey Joe Morin, Hennessey's, 708 4th Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 12

Shady Side Players, Neck & Neck, Oceanside Sunset Market, Mission & Tremont St., 4pm.
Lou Curtiss Benefit Concert w/ Patty Hall/Curt Bouterse/Chris Clarke/Robin Henkel/Wayne Branton/Tanya Rose/Phil Boroff/Gregory Page/Sara Petite/Allen Singer/Los Californios, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
Joe Rathburn & Barbara Nesbitt, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Still on the Hill, House Concert in South Park, 7:30pm. Reservations: cwilson148@cox.net
Jane Monheit, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Adam Levy, Lestats's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Jordan Reimer, Hennessey's, 4650 Mission Blvd., P.B., 9pm.
Adam Levy/Geoff Pearlman/Marvin Etzioni, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 13

Joe Hutchinson/Randy Ryden, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Sue Palmer, Bing Crosby's, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
The Blokes, Elks Club, 1393 Windsor Dr., 7:30&9:30pm.
Jane Monheit, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Heidi Hughes, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Mother Hips/Billy Midnight/The Traditionalist, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Sligo Rags, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.
Kim Divine/The Turtle Project/Tim Mudd, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Scott Wilson & the Complications, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 10:30pm.

saturday • 14

The Blokes, St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival Main Stage, Balboa Park, 2:30pm.
Robin Adler & Dave Blackburn, Cafe des Artistes, 103 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 6pm.
Mark Jackson Band, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Sara Petite & the Rocksliders, Barn Dance & Potluck Dinner, Snyder's Barn, Valley Center, 6pm. Contact: rsnyder1956@yahoo.com or 760/749-6416
Sue Palmer, Bing Crosby's, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Peter Sprague & Jennifer Lee, House Concert in Cardiff, 7pm. Tickets: www.peter-sprague.com/sq/store.php?crn=246&rn=897&action=show_detail
Cyrus Chestnut Trio, Birch North Park Theatre, 2891 University Ave., Lecture: 7pm. Concert: 8pm.
Sinatra & Martinis, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Gilbert Castellanos & Mikan Zlatkovich, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, California Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., 8pm.

Brett Sanders, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Lisa Sanders & Friends, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Trophy Wife, Bar Leucadian, 1542 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Leucadia, 9pm.
Haute Chile, Anthology, 1337 India St., 9:30pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 708 4th Ave., 9:30pm.
Roy Rogers & the Delta Rhythm Kings, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 9:30pm.

sunday • 15

Shady Side Players, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 10am.
The Blokes, O'Sullivan's, 640 E. Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 1pm.
Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, California Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., 2pm.
Gerard Nolan & Eamon Carrol w/ Dublin Down Band, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 2&6pm.
The Songs of Joni Mitchell w/ Robin Adler & Dave Blackburn, House Concert in Encinitas, 3pm. Reservations: http://robinadler.com/calendar.html
Irish Rovers, Balboa Theatre, 868 4th Ave., 3pm.
Jordan Reimer, Bondi, 333 5th Ave., 3:30pm.
Paragon Band, St. Patrick's Day Dance, La Mesa Adult Ctr., 8450 La Mesa Blvd., 7pm.
The Blokes, Hooley's Tavern, 5500 Grossmont Ctr. Dr., La Mesa, 7pm.
Robin Henkel Band w/ Horns, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 8pm.

monday • 16

Chet & the Committee Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Raul Malo w/ Shelby Lynne, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Jane Lui/Astra Kelly/James Lanman, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.
Ron Bell w/ Kren Benson/Beth Fitchet/John Shipe, Larry's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 8pm.

tuesday • 17

The Blokes, O'Sullivan's, 640 E. Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 7pm.

wednesday • 18

Lou Fanucchi, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 6:30pm.
Ashley Matt/Beth Preston/Veronica May, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Chet & the Committee, Islands Saloon, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 8pm.
Rusty Jones/Sven-Erik Seaholm/Brooklyn, Hennessey's, 708 4th Ave., 8pm.
Soul Persuaders, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 8pm.
Anna Troy Band, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 19

Joe Rathburn & Gary Seiler, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Claire Lynch, Del Mar Powerhouse, 1658 Coast Blvd., Del Mar, 7pm.
Barbara Nesbitt w/ Marcia Claire & Mike Spurgat, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
George Duke, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Robin Henkel, Wine Steals, 1243 University Ave., 8pm.
The Riders/Soul Plovs, Backstage @ the Bitter End, 770 5th Ave., 9pm.
Dvid Choi/Jane Lui/Kina Grannis, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 20

KeV/Tom Boyer, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., P.B., 6:30pm.
George Duk, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.
Band in Black, Hensley's Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 8pm.
Peter Sprague & Fred Benedetti, Fine Arts Hall Rm. 220, Grossmont College, 8pm.
The Howell/Tordella Project, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Chet & the Committee, The Harp, 4935 Newport Ave., Ocean Beach, 9pm.
Pine Mountain Logs, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
The Blokes, O'Sullivan's, 640 E. Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 9pm.
Silverleaf CD Release/Tom Freund, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Rhythm Jacks, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9:15pm.

saturday • 21

Robin Henkel, City Heights Farmers Market, Wightman St. between Fairmont & 43rdm 10am.
Trails & Rails, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Patty Hall & Allen Singer w/ Dane Terry, Templar's Hall, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Rd., Poway, 7pm.
Tom Baird & Friends/Folding Mr. Lincoln CD Release, Rebecca's, 3015 Juiper St., 7pm.
Dave Mason, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Michelle Shocked, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield Ave., 7:30pm.
Nathan Welden CD Release, The Marquee, 835 25th St., 8pm.
The Shadow's Edge, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Stepping Feet/Deadline Friday/Sky Held Sun, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Allison Lonsdale/Bad Credit/Molly Jensen, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Laurie Morvan, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 9pm.

W E E K L Y

every sunday

Shawn Rohlf & Friends, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Bluegrass Brunch, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 10:30am.
Daniel Jackson, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 11am.
Open Blues Jam w/ Chet & the Committee, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 2:30pm.
Celtic Ensemble, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 4pm.
Open Mic, Kensington Cafe, 4141 Adams Ave., 4pm.
Traditional Irish Session, The Field, 544 5th Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic, E Street Cafe, 125 W. E St., Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Joe Mendoza, Surf & Saddle, 123 W. Plaza St., Solana Beach, 8pm.
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).
Jose Sinatra's OB-oke, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9:30pm.
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10pm-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Zapf Dingbats, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise, 7pm.
Open Mic, Lestats's, 3343 Adams Ave., 7:30pm.
Pro-Invitational Blues Jam, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 8pm.
KPRI Homegrown Hour w/ Astra Kelly, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 8pm.
Songwriter's Showcase, Larry's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 8pm.

every tuesday

Traditional Irish Session, The Ould Sod, 3373 Adams Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic, Cosmos Coffee Cafe, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa, 7pm.
Open Mic, Beach Coast Grille, 710 Seacoast Dr., Imperial Beach, 7pm.
Chet & the Committee All Pro Blues Jam, The Harp, 4935 Newport Ave., 7:30pm.
Jack Tempchin & Friends, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Open Mic, The Royal Dive, 2949 San Luis Rey Rd., Oceanside, 8pm.
Patrick Berrogain's Hot Club Combo, Prado Restaurant, Balboa Park, 8pm.
Shep Meyers, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Open Mic, Portugalia, 4839 Newport Ave., O.B., 9pm.

sunday • 22

Timmy Curran/Alex Woodard/Astra Kelly, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 4pm.
Blame Sally, Dark Thirty House Concert, Lakeside, 7:30pm. 619/443-9622
909s/Big Toe, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 23

A 5th of Blues, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Justin James/Astra Kelly/Jesse Johnson, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.
Steve Orr/Christopher Cash Band, Larry's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 8pm.

tuesday • 24

Folk Arts Rare Records Singers' Circle, Kadan, 4696 30th St., 6pm.
Bayou Brothers, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.

wednesday • 25

Chase Morrin & the Latin Connection, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Charles McPherson w/ Gilbert Castellanos, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Dan Hicks & the Hot Licks, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Road Dogs, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 8pm.
Yale Strom & Hot Pstromi w/ Salman Ahmad & Samir Chatterjee, Lawrence Family JCC, 4126 Campus Dr., La Jolla, 8pm.
Clay Colton Band, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.
Buddy Wuddy Blues Show, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 4650 Mission Blvd., 9:30pm.

thursday • 26

Barbara Nesbitt w/ Mike Spurgat, Indulge, 4550 La Jolla Village Dr., 6:30pm.
Peter Sprague, Romy Restaurant, 517 S. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7pm.
Joe Rathburn & Michael Tieran, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Robin Henkel, Wine Steals, 1953 San Elijo, Cardiff, 7pm.
Chad & Jeremy, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield Ave., 7:30pm.
Trevor Davis/Carney/Aaron Bowen, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Dan Reagan/Gunnar Biggs/Mike Holquin, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Ruby & the Red Hots, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 8pm.
Dave Booda/Louis Buhler, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

every wednesday

Chuck Schiele & Friends, Newport Ave., Ocean Beach, 4-7pm.
Christopher Dale & Friends, Handlery Hotel, 950 Hotel Circle N., 5pm.
Paul Nichols' Pro-Am/Pro Jam Invitational, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 5:30pm.
Scandinavian Dance Class, Folk Dance Center, Dancing Unlimited, 4569 30th St., 7:30pm.
Tomcat Courtney, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Thornton's Irish Pub, 1221 Broadway, El Cajon, 7pm.
Open Mic, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4605 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Open Mic, Skybox Bar & Grill, 4809 Clairemont Dr., 8:30pm.

every thursday

Chet & the Committee Open Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main, El Cajon, 6pm.
Wood 'n' Lips Open Mic, Friendly Grounds, 9225 Carleton Hills Blvd., Santee, 6:30pm.
Joe Rathburn's Folkey Monkey, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Open Mic, Turquoise Coffee, 841 Turquoise St., P.B., 7pm.
Moonlight Serenade Orchestra, Lucky Star Restaurant, 3893 54th St., 7pm.
Traditional Irish Session, Thornton's Irish Pub, 1221 Broadway, El Cajon, 8pm.
Open Mic/Family Jam, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 8pm.
Jazz Jam, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 9:30pm.

every friday

California Rangers, Larry's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.
West of Memphis, House of Blues, 1055 5th Ave., 6pm.
Acoustic Mayhem w/ Sven-Erik Seaholm & Jesse LaMonaca, Bondi, 333 5th Ave., 6pm.
Jazz Night, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Bella Roma Restaurant, 6830 La Jolla Blvd. #103, 8pm.
Open Mic, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.

every saturday

Jay Dancing Bear, The Living Room, 1018 Rosecrans, Point Loma, 8pm.
Blues Jam, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 9pm.

friday • 27

Mountain Tribal Gypsies, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., P.B., 6:30pm.
The Steely Damned, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.

KeV, Borders Books, 1072 Camino del Rio, 8pm.
Hugh Gaskins & the G-String Daddies, Main Tap Tavern, 518 E. Main St., El Cajon, 8:30pm.
Mad for Marg, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Sligo Rags, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.
Dave Yaden/Melissa Vaughan, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 28

San Diego IndieFest, 7 Stages on University Ave. between Kansas and 30th Streets, 11am-2pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, noon.
Ramona Music Fest w/ Sara Petite/Earl Flores/Full Circle/Friends in a Chord, Dos Picos Park @ the Pond, 17953 Dos Picos Park Rd., Ramona, 2-6pm.
Lani Stuart Gonzales/Gemma Romano/Joe Hutchinson, Wynola Pizza Express, 4355 Hwy. 78, Wynola, 6pm.
Motown Revue, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Chad Farran, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Wild Child, Anthology, 1337 India St., 9:30pm.
Chris Duarte, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 9:30pm.

sunday • 29

Book Lovers & Collectors Gathering, Maxwell's House of Books, 8285 La Mesa Blvd., 2-4pm.
Chris Klich Jazz Quintet, Coyote Bar & Grill, 300 Carlsbad Village Dr., 5pm.
Pasquale Esposito, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Rosi Golan/William Fitzsimmons CD Release, Lestats, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Robin Henkel Band w/ Horns, Bar Pink, 3829 30th St., 10pm.

monday • 30

War Stories/Astra Kelly/Larry Robinson, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.
Nathan Welden/Jacqui Foreman/Clay Colton, Larry's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 8pm.

tuesday • 31

Bransford Marsalis, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30&9:30pm.

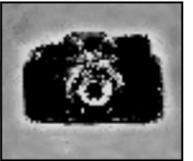


Photo: Dennis Andersen

Nathan Welden @ Canyon Folk



Photo: Steve Covault

Louden Wainwright III @ Acoustic Music SD



Photo: Steve Covault

Eric Hutchinson @ UCSD's Porter Pub



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Cindy Cashdollar @ Museum of Making Music

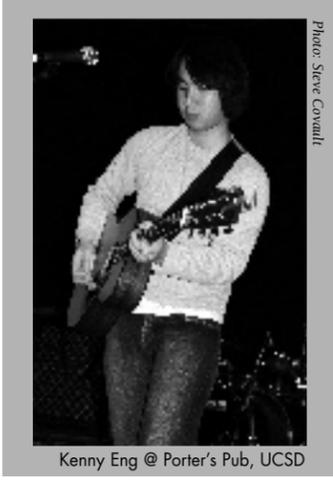


Photo: Steve Covault

Kenny Eng @ Porter's Pub, UCSD



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Gregory Page @ the Oasis



Photo: Dennis Andersen

The Carolina Chocolate Drops at Sherwood Auditorium



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Sharon Whyte @ Anthology



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Albert Lee w/ Jim Soldi @ Anthology



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Larry Grano @ Anthology w/ Eve Selis Band



Photo: Steve Covault

Tomcat Courtney's 80th b-day @ Humphrey's

WOOD 'N' LIPS OPEN MIC



Photo: Steve Covault

Shady Side Players @ Rebecca's



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Happy Birthday Tim Flock!



Cody Kirk



Kared Rodgers

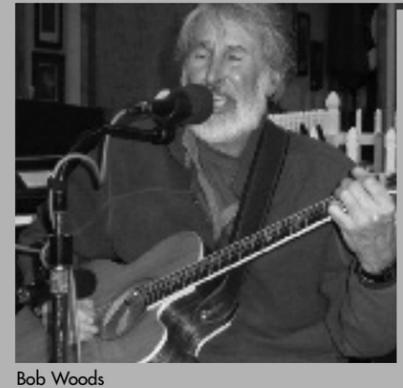


Art Nobilette



Photo: Steve Covault

Todd Hidden & Dave Humphries @ Tio Leo's



Bob Woods



Opal McCracken

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March 7th (Sat) -- 7:00 P.M. Admission \$15
Wayne's World - Concert
Wayne Riker- solo acoustic guitar

Featuring: Singer/Songwriters Barbara Nesbitt, Charlie Innes and Steph Johnson.

March 12th (Thurs) 7:00 - 10:00 P.M.
Benefit Folk Concert- for the
Lou Curtis Sound Library Preservation Project

Featuring: Curt Bouterse, Gregory Page, Patty Hall, Robin Henkel, Phil Boroff, Sara Fetite, Chris Clarke and "Flaw", Tonya Rose and The Buffalo Chip Kickers, Wayne Branson, Allen Singer and Dore Terry, Los Californios. Admission \$10.

April 4 **Bill Evans and Megan Lynch**

April 16 **Guitar Great - Doyle Dykes**
Limited Seating- Call to reserve tickets (619) 280-9035

Old Tyme Fiddle Jam

First and third Thursday of the month (7:00-8:30)

Bluegrass Jam

Fifth Tuesday of month (6:30-8:30)

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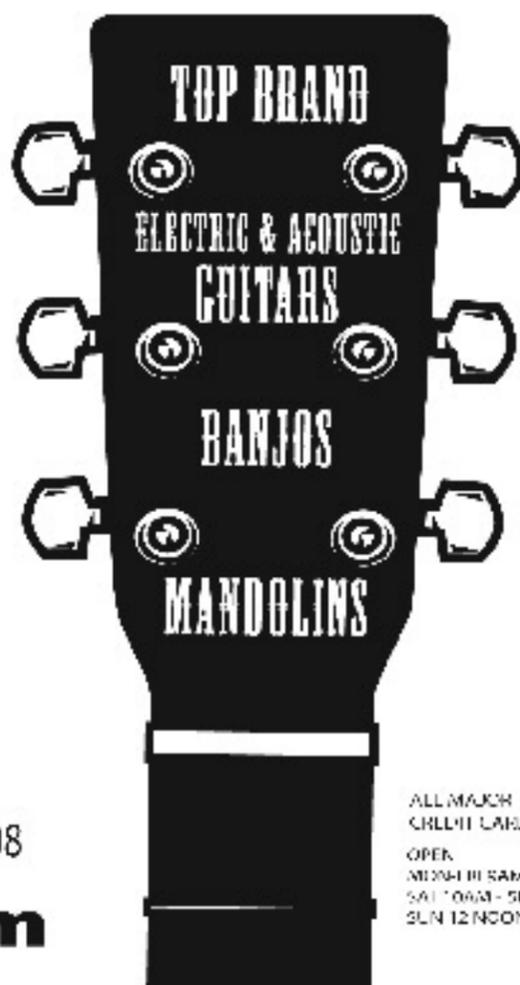
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