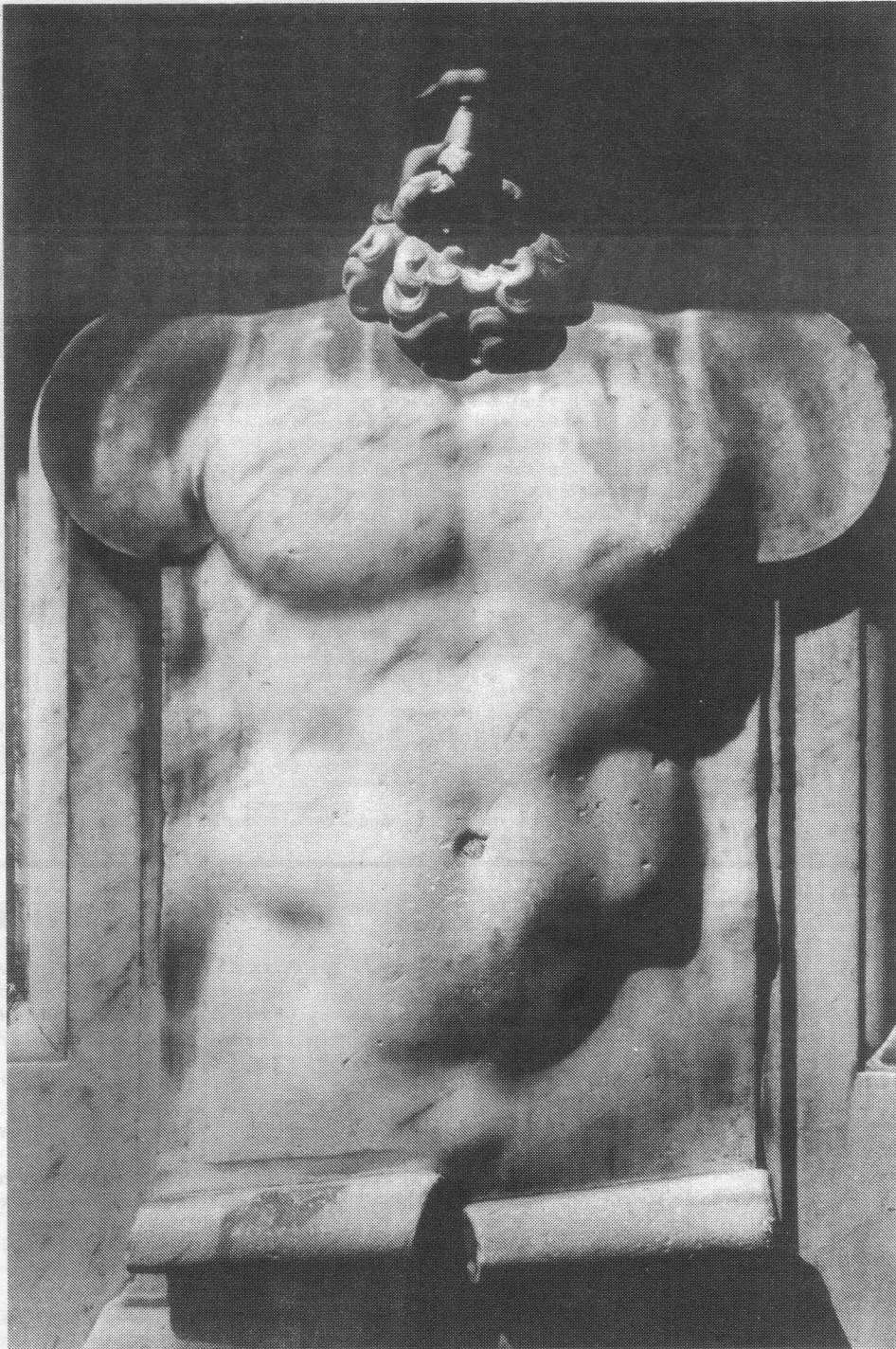


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Second Annual
FAST FOLK AT THE BOTTOM LINE

by Links Booth

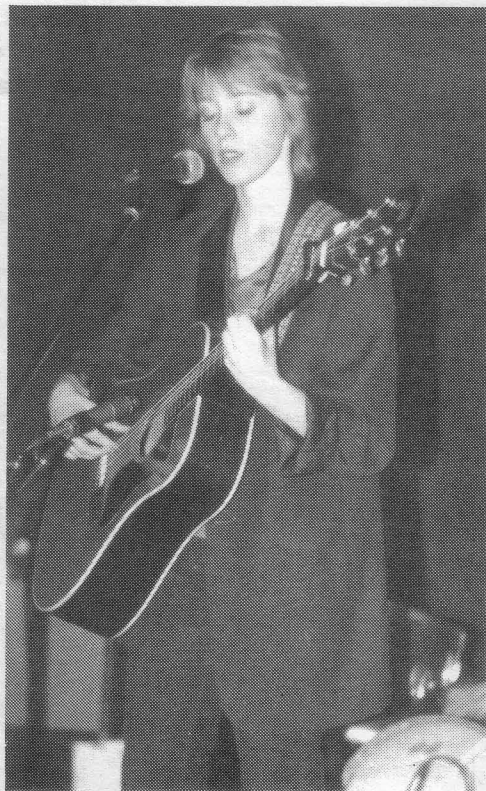
The second annual Fast Folk show was held at The Bottom Line in New York City January 26, 1985, to two standing-room-only crowds. There were only a few changes in the lineup from last year's show, but these changes made a big difference, especially in the group numbers.

The addition of Shawn Colvin, not only for her song, "I Don't Know Why," but for her work with Lucy Kaplanski on David Massengill's "Sightseer" and Rod MacDonald's "Every Living Thing," gave the show a fuller sound this year. The other new additions, John Gorka and Richard Meyer, added depth and power to such group numbers as Josh Joffen's "Crazy Horse" and Tom McGhee's "Rock Breaks Scissors."

The other regulars proved up to snuff, with Erik Frandsen and Christine Lavin stealing the show with their humor, Frank Christian with his smoky blues, Suzanne Vega with her austere introspection, Lucy Kaplanski with her powerful voice, Jack Hardy with his eclectic word games, and Germana Pucci with her Mediterranean passion.

The backup group of Jeff Hardy on bass, Mark Dann on lead guitar, and Howie Wyeth on drums seemed much better rehearsed.

This would be a hard show to top, ending up with Jack Hardy's "May Day,"



Suzanne Vega

and then with the whole cast coming back to do Rod MacDonald's "Song of My Brothers" as an encore. The energy was there, and the group camaraderie.

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erratum

Quotes were inadvertently left out of the first sentence of last month's editorial, "Why Not a Scene?". This typographical error led readers to believe that the sentence was a comment on Maggie Roche. In truth, the sentence was a quote from Maggie Roche, which should have appeared as follows:

"There ought to be something to fall back on, like a knife or a career."

- Maggie Roche

We apologize for any misunderstanding that may have resulted from this error.

But what I liked best about the show was the variety and the risk. There were no repeat numbers from last year's success. This show built from where that show left off, showing other dimensions to these many-faceted songwriters.

Standouts of writing were David Massengill's "Down Derry Down" and Richard Meyer's "The January Cold." A standout in interpretation was a group rendition of David Indian's "Ragman," a song that didn't impress me on the November '84 issue of Fast Folk, but that came to life with three-part harmony and a lot of energy among Gorke, Hardy, and Meyer.

As if all this were not enough, surprise guest appearances by Dave Van Ronk in the first show and Steve Forbert in the second show put the icing on the cake. ■



David Massengill (center), accompanied by Jack Hardy, Shawn Colvin, Lucy Kaplanski, and Jeff Hardy



John Gorke warming up backstage



(left to right) Frank Christian and Mark Dann back up special guest Steve Forbert



(left to right) John Gorke, Christine Lavin, Lucy Kaplanski (partly hidden), David Massengill, Mark Dann, Germana Pucci, Chuck Hancock, Rod MacDonald, Jack Hardy, Shawn Colvin, Frank Christian, Jeff Hardy, Suzanne Vega (mostly hidden), and Richard Meyer

folk heaven in Peterborough, New Hampshire

THE FOLKWAY

by Nancy Talanian

Folk music fans venturing into The Folkway for the first time may feel that they've stumbled into Paradise. So much love, care, and good taste have gone into creating and operating every aspect of this establishment that it would still be one of the finest, most charming places to dine and spend an evening in all New England, even if it didn't offer music.

But as its name implies, folk music is The Folkway's *raison d'être*. All its charming details are there to enhance our enjoyment of the music.

It comes as no surprise that The Folkway has not only survived but flourished for the past ten years (February 28, 1985, marks its tenth anniversary), or that it consistently draws audiences from an 80-mile radius and attracts musicians from all over North America and occasionally from points beyond.

The Folkway is and always has been more than just a folk club. Its building is filled to overflowing with good music, an excellent restaurant, a comfortable bar, a craft shop, and three bed and breakfast rooms. It offers scheduled performances by folk musicians from Thursday through Saturday. Wednesdays are Open Stage nights, which include a featured performer. Tuesdays during dinner The Folkway is currently presenting compositions and improvisations on piano, flutes, and instruments from all over the world. And Sundays a jazz trio performs during brunch.

The Folkway is nestled in Peterborough, New Hampshire, a community of only about 5,000 people that has a long list of distinctions. For example, it was the first town in the United States to have a free library, funded by local taxes. It is believed to be the 'town' of Thornton Wilder's play, *Our Town*. It is the site of the MacDowell Colony for artists. And it was recently chosen by *Money* magazine as one of the five most appealing places to live in the United States. I would guess that The Folkway had something to do with the town's selection for this honor.

Much of what makes going to The Folkway such a pleasure, besides the quality of the music performed there, is old-fashioned New England charm and hospitality. Owner Widdie Hall and

all the people who work there seem intent on seeing to it that all who go there--musicians and audiences--enjoy themselves.

Most modern businesses seem to define success as 'getting the greatest return for the least effort and expenditure.' The Folkway, however, seems to flourish on an opposite principle: cramming the most quality into every detail. For example, the ever-changing menu has so many exciting selections that it is difficult to choose among them. And the meals (prepared by Chef Daniel Thibeault) and desserts (creations of Carla Kardt) are more delicious than they need to be to 'sell'. Unlike many folk clubs, The Folkway does not 'turn over' a house in the course of an evening, so the audiences are able to hear two full sets of their favorite performers. And where many folk clubs offer performers a 50-percent discount on drinks, The Folkway goes so far as to provide both accommodations and meals to the musicians who play there.



Widdie Hall, owner of The Folkway

These are only a few examples of the many ways that Widdie and The Folkway's committed staff show that in their eyes nothing is too good for the performers and the audiences who come there. This attitude seems to bring out the best in everyone, for audiences at The Folkway have traditionally been rated as excellent by the performers who've played for them, and vice versa.

Talking with Widdie gives folk music performers and fans a wonderful sense of belonging to a 'folk community' because of their shared interest. It soon becomes apparent that The Folkway exists because of her love for the music, and that it is so good because of her taste and creativity. In a recent interview with Leda Hartman (*Leisure Weekly*, Keene, New Hampshire), Widdie explained:

Folk songs paint a picture of life you might never have seen yourself. I get creative inspiration from the musicians that come here over and over again. They acknowledge in music the gifts they've been given--spiritually, and through life's experiences with others. The messages in their songs are of human kindness, honesty and courage. They are inspirational, and help us give to other people.

All The Folkway's many facets are so well done and coexist so harmoniously that it is hard to imagine what the building was like in its previous life. Widdie describes it as having been a "nondescript, mid-Victorian tenement wreck with a barn attached." Finding and purchasing the building, and converting it to its present configuration of 'folk spaces' was the realization of a dream for cofounders Widdie and Jonathan Hall.

Although their dream to have The Folkway had been one of long standing (five years), its transformation had to be extremely rapid, due to zoning amendments introduced after the property was purchased. The Halls had only one month's warning that the amendments were sure to take effect at the next town meeting, and that they stood no chance of getting a variance if they weren't already operating by then.

Folk music fans can be thankful that the Halls managed to pull off this feat against all odds. Widdie relates that, at that time, she and Jonathan were teachers and the parents of two babies. The building was then tenanted, and the tenants moved all their furniture into one room to allow the first coffeehouse to happen. The tenants did the baking, she did the cooking, and they all served simple deli sandwiches and delicious pastries to their first audience of 60 people, who assembled in three small rooms while the musi-

Nancy Talanian



The Folkway, as seen by artist Randy Miller.

cians wandered from room to room to entertain them. (Although the Halls had gutted the barn by that time, its conversion to the present music room was not completed until a few months later. This room accommodates about 80 people.) Jonathan was the MC and one of the evening's performers. The Halls even managed to organize a small craft shop (on seven shelves) and an instrument shop (on one wall) in time for their opening. During The Folkway's early months, the room that now holds the restaurant's refrigerators and wait station served as both office and bedroom for the four Halls.

From the start, Widdie and Jonathan exhibited imagination, vision, and the commitment and hard work necessary to bring their ambitious project to fruition. In return they received support, beginning with the tenants, who must have found themselves energized by the Halls' ideas and enthusiasm, and continuing with the people who have worked at The Folkway, and the musicians and audiences who have been enchanted with the club and keep going back.

Singer/songwriter Lui Collins feels a very strong tie to The Folkway, and has enjoyed watching it grow and flourish over the years. She began playing there in 1975, the year it opened, and will be performing at the tenth anniversary celebration on February 28th. (Other participants will include Garnet Rogers, Bill

Morrissey, and Jonathan Hall.) Part of Collins's second album, *Baptism of Fire* (Philo Records), was recorded live at The Folkway.

One of the things Collins has enjoyed seeing over the years has been the way the club has grown from an informal, small, simple coffeehouse to a larger, more ambitious undertaking. "The music has always been the most important thing," she observes. "In the early days it was on a smaller scale--good, but more local. Now there are more national acts.

"The food has always been excellent and beautifully presented," says Collins. That too has been expanded over the years. "Years ago The Folkway offered a choice of two meals--one vegetarian and one nonvegetarian--but always good." It now offers a wide array of selections from all over the world.

Collins notes, "Widdie has always embraced change rather than fighting it. An example is the way she introduced liquor to the club. When The Folkway first began, it was a coffeehouse; no liquor was served. Once it was established that The Folkway was a listening club, she gradually introduced liquor. First they let people bring their own wine, which was served from the kitchen. Eventually they got a liquor license. But these changes were made carefully, so that it was

never a question of the music being there to enjoy while you were drinking. The drinks were introduced to enhance people's enjoyment of the music."

Collins's observation about changes at The Folkway applies to all facets of its operation. It seems that changes that would improve it are made with care. But changes are not made simply to make life easier for Widdie and the staff or to follow the trends of other establishments.

For example, Widdie recently acquired an answering machine, but it is only used from Sunday afternoon at 3 to Monday morning at 8, when The Folkway is closed, to tell callers about upcoming events. (Widdie's 12-year-old son Isaac makes the recordings.)

But most of the old-fashioned customs remain. The menus and monthly calendars are still beautifully handwritten by Widdie, not typeset. An abundance of lush green plants hang in every room year-round, despite the time that must go into caring for them. Performers are always introduced: the last time I was there, MC and sound person Siddhartha Tomarkin gave one of the nicest and most sincere introductions I have ever heard to a performer who was new to Folkway audiences. And as previously mentioned, out-of-town musicians are generously given accommodations and meals.

To The Folkway, a bright spot in folkdom, happy tenth anniversary, and many more to come.

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ELLIOTT MURPHY

by Charles Bogle

On stage, in the middle of a song, Elliott Murphy starts to tell a story. "When I first moved to New York, a friend of mine told me, 'Elliott, the secret to living in Manhattan is to never look down. And I didn't. For five years I rode around in limos, and had someone carrying my guitar case for me, and I never once looked down...' The band is pulsing behind him. "And then I got dropped by Columbia, and I started to have to carry my own guitar case and I started to have to look down, and I started to see people sleeping on hot air vents. I saw people huddled in the doorways of the Haagen Dazs Ice Cream shops. And they'd come up to me and say, 'Hey, pal, can you spare a dime?' And I'd tell 'em, 'Hell, no. You'll spend it on three things: drugs, booze, and women.'

The band continues its steady beat, a slightly reggae-tinged rhythm. Murphy leans into the microphone. "You know, one day, my accountant called me up, and he said, 'Elliott, I got good news and I got bad news. Which do you want first?' And I said, 'Give me the good news.' And he said, 'Elliott, we've figured out a way to solve your financial problems forever. You'll never have to worry about money again.' And I said, 'Great, what's the bad news?' And he said, 'You're bankrupt.'

"And I said, 'Whoa, wait a minute... what happened to all my money. I'm supposed to be a star, this shouldn't happen.'

"And he said, 'Elliott, you spent all your money on three things: Drugs, Booze, and Women.'

The band is picking up the speed and volume behind him, and he almost shouts, "And so now, when I'm walking down the street and some guy comes up to me, I make sure I have some change in my pocket... 'Cause it's just a story from America..." and he launches into the final chorus of the title song from his 1977 album.

Good news/bad news jokes figure prominently in Murphy's repertoire of stage anecdotes, a kind of sardonic, black humor that contrasts strikingly with the quest for belief that permeates many of his songs. But Murphy has earned his wings as an observer of human circumstance. In the early seventies Murphy's first album, Aquashow, was lauded by critics, and



Kate Simon, © 1983

Murphy found himself cast as a fair-haired, golden-boy New Bob Dylan from suburbia. When his next three albums all failed to sell in the millions, the record companies and critics headed off for Newer Dylans, and Murphy was left in the dust, trying to figure out what the hell had happened.

HE hadn't called himself 'the new Dylan.' HE hadn't written the article in the Village Voice that opened, "Elliott Murphy is going to be a monster." HE hadn't raised the stakes so high on his career that modest success was read as failure. That was all done for him. Murphy was neatly discovered, recorded, packaged, promoted, and then spit out and abandoned before he ever really knew what hit him.

Murphy wrote some extremely moody songs after that period, in which the metaphors of love and success and women and the record industry are all inextricably tangled. In one unreleased song, "Razor Love," he wrote:

I was sold on a golden platter
I got Leopold and Loeb on my brain
And once you follow that mad hatter
It won't ever, ever be the same
And sayin' that I don't need money
Is like sayin' that I don't need you
Even a saint gets hungry
I think a blind man could appreciate
your view...

But today Murphy is still around, this time at the helm of his own record company, Courtisane. His latest album, Party Girls/Broken Poets, was recorded "trying to get the best sound we could for the least amount of money we could," and sold to Warner Brothers International for European release, where it did very well. In order to avoid being burned by the music industry again, Murphy has placed himself firmly in control of his own career.

Or at least as firmly as one can get in the quicksilver world of the music industry. Murphy is not in a dominant enough position to call all of the shots in terms of promotion, release of singles, and all the fine points of career planning. But he does have complete artistic control of his records and tours.

"When I go over to Europe, I'm the one collecting receipts and stuff at the end of the evening. It keeps you honest, making sure everyone gets up in the morning," he notes.

It's ironic that Murphy got pigeon-holed first as a New Dylan, and then later, and more sneeringly, as a "new Springsteen" as his music is very different from that of those two men. Murphy's songs often center around themes of searching for meaning and justification, usually through the context of relationships.

Of course Murphy has written a few clinkers. Who hasn't? But as a whole, his work represents one of the most articulate and deeply felt bodies of work extant by a singer-songwriter. In a long article on Murphy in the Miami News last fall, critic Jon Marlowe wrote: "'Last of the Rock Stars,' 'Isadora's Dancers,' 'Euro-Tour,' 'Drive All Night,' 'Dusty Roses,' 'The Fall of Saigon.' Listening to Murphy deliver these stone-cold beauties (at Tramps in New York), one can't help but have the sense of watching a man who somehow got burned by some bizarre twist of fate. It's this simple: all these songs are better than 90%

of what passes for rock 'n roll music today. Yet here he is--Elliott Murphy, musical genius--playing for 35 people, 13 of them his close friends.

Murphy of course is hardly unique in the fact that he is laboring in obscurity in America. He is fortunate that, in a phenomenon shared with a number of American performers, he is considerably more popular in Europe.

"There are a whole bunch of people who do real well in Europe," says Murphy. "And I think it's because for Murphy the corporate mentality wasn't as dominant over there. The countries are all so small that the marketing muscle of record companies couldn't get lined up behind one person or act like it happens over here. So you could go over to France with a real simple tour and do very well."

But Murphy is afraid that that situation may be changing.

"In France the rock music industry used to be about ten years behind America in terms of marketing sophistication. That's changing now as France gets more Americanized. They're starting to get those huge tours and consequently the market is being shut off to the independents. Spain and Italy are now like how France used to be."

Aside from the politics of the music industry, Murphy is fascinated with the politics of relationships, and it is a subject he returns to again and again in his songs. "The Fall of Saigon," on 1982's Murph The Surf, for example, carries that concept to an extreme. America's confused withdrawal from Vietnam becomes the central metaphor for the dissolution of a relationship. Or perhaps it's the other way around; the song is so skillfully written that the images intertwine seamlessly without one gaining the upper hand over the other.

...Just like Southeast Asia, I don't know if I'm right or if I'm wrong

Some things are worth fighting for,
Some things, well, they're just gone
But I remember the night
We watched the fall of Saigon.
And, hey girl, it's over
Goodby, White Cliffs of Dover
Sail on to Free Lands
The boys all come home.
And darlin', I'm lying
And you're right, I'm just sick of trying
And that romance is ending
And that feeling is gone

"When Saigon fell, it really was the loss of innocence for America," says Murphy. "It was the first time Americans ever sat in front of a TV and watched the myth of an invincible America come apart right before their eyes."

"The Fall of Saigon" is certainly a bleak song, and a song that beautifully captures the confusion and betrayal of ideals that the war engendered.

But Murphy is not always so dour. A song from Party Girls/Broken Poets, "Winners, Losers, Beggars, Choosers," a song written in dialogue between a prostitute and her client, ends on an almost giddily exuberant note, reaffirming the sense of awed joy that romance and a foreign city can produce:

"Have you ever been to Venice?
You know, I could take us."
"I need to get away, I need...."
Then she started to cry.
He said, "You don't need to say nothin'."
And the gondolas were lined up
The Grand Canal was shined up
They were sipping cappucino and the pigeons flew in harmony
And he smiled, and said,
"This is really something."

You don't tend to hear Murphy on the radio, but then most intelligent music isn't really storming the charts these days. It is enough that he, and others like him, are producing good music, and that it is reaching an enthusiastic, albeit small, audience. As Murphy has said, "At this point, my goal in life is just to keep putting out the best records I can, to keep writing about the grey areas of human life, and to die in bed at the age of 80 with a 16-year-old girl."

discography

Aquashow--Polydor
Lost Generation--RCA
Night Lights--RCA
Just A Story From America--CBS
Affairs--Courtisane
Murph The Surf--Courtisane
Party Girls/Broken Poets--Courtisane/
Warner Bros. (Europe only)

All are available from the Elliott Murphy Information Society.

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TRIXIE THE WONDER CHICKEN

by Roger Deitz

Trixie was one of those special chickens, the kind you meet once and never forget. You could tell right from the start that Trixie had star quality. I don't know if it was any one thing in particular. By all outward signs Trixie seemed just another scratching-around, barnyard-variety hen. But to the trained eye, Trixie had "it".

While other of her coop mates seemed content with life on the farm, Trixie looked beyond her day-to-day, egg-laying existence into a world of glamour and adventure. It was there to see...it was evident that day the talent scout came to old man Price's farm.

It was a Tuesday. Tuesday the 25th of June last year. I remember it well because it was my brother Jack's birthday, and I had gone to old man Price's farm to purchase a dozen eggs so that I could bake Jack a cake for his party that evening. I like to bake, and I take every opportunity to practice baking because I don't get a chance to do so much lately. I like to try out new recipes for main dishes and for soups. I am always complimented on my soups.

I consider myself to be a pretty fair cook, and I know that everyone at the party that night enjoyed the meal very much, including Jack who is always quite kind about such things. Jack told me that he had never tasted a better rum-raisin fandango supreme cake. He wanted to take some home with him. I informed him that there was nary a piece left, but if he wanted, I could give him a quart of soup to take home with him. Jack was overjoyed.

Anyway, it was midafternoon, and I was talking to old man Price about the sizes of eggs and why it is that jumbo is larger than extra large when up walked Maxwell (Three Ring) Binderman, the greatest carnival side show exhibitor on the planet Earth. That's what his card said. He introduced himself, handed each of us one of his business cards, and said he was with the circus that was in town for the week.

He asked if any of the chickens might be for sale. "They are if you know the right Price," was the farmer's response. Price laughed at this little piece of folk humor which he had been springing on unsuspecting and suspecting customers for nearly four decades.

Binderman smiled, but it was a pained smile. Given his own name, he had little use for puns.

"What about that one over there?" he asked as he pointed in the direction of Trixie. "How much do you want for it?"

Trixie was making an awful fuss. Perhaps that's what first caught Maxwell's attention. She was pecking wildly at a small piece of thread hanging from an old burlap feed bag that had been discarded in the corner of the yard. Repeatedly, she attacked the thread with lightning staccato while the other chickens did little more than watch the show.

"That's the one I want, that scrawny one, how much for that chicken?"

Price was taken aback. "If anyone was in the market for a chicken," he thought, "why pick the smallest when there are plenty of plump pullets around?"

Why indeed! Binderman hadn't been in show business all of these years without developing a keen sense for recognizing true inherent talent. Binderman was a sideshow impresario without peer. Remember Gottlieb the Gill Man? Binderman. Remember Mr. Plotz the Incredible Yiddish Speaking Parrot? Binderman. And do you recall a roller skating chimpanzee on a morning network television program? Binderman! Yes, Binderman had known the big time, and once you have tasted French Baked Alaska Flambee, you're never again really satisfied with a plate of lime gelatin.

Maxwell Binderman could once again taste the familiar flavor of baked Alaska as he pointed his finger at Trixie. "How much do you want for that chicken?" cried Binderman.

Old man Price gave a fair market estimation of what a skinny chicken might be worth, and the deal was consummated. Trixie was carried off in the burlap bag while the farmer laughed and counted the few dollars he had sold the chicken for. "City slicker!" remarked the farmer. "He don't even know how to buy a chicken." Time would show that it was Binderman, however, who made the better deal, and old man Price would live to regret the hasty transaction.

I remember inviting old man Price to Jack's birthday party. He consented,

much to my surprise. He didn't appear to be having a very good time that night. He sat alone most of the evening, but he did mention that he appreciated the invite, and that he particularly enjoyed the meal and the kindness I showed by asking him by.

I guess old man Price didn't get invited out much. He had a reputation for being a bit odd. He dressed in overalls and a red flannel shirt all the time, even when he went to church, which wasn't very often. I myself like eccentric people and would never have noticed that there was anything odd about him at all, but there were stories about him...most of which were perpetrated by the neighborhood kids, who if you ask me were themselves more than a little bit odd.

Perhaps the farmer just scared the kids. He had that time- and weather-worn face that most farmers seem to have. He was tall and very thin and looked like the villain in a Stephen King novel about killer squash or something. As a matter of fact, he looked like a supernatural scarecrow as his skinny frame shuffled about in his red flannel shirt and overalls.

I'm certain that he never really threw a pitchfork at Jimmy Jacobs or treed Bobby Henderson, leaving him to fend off a pack of howling coon dogs. I'm sure that old man Price never locked up Bobby's kid brother Larry in the feed shed when he caught him setting off firecrackers in the dairy barn last Fourth of July. The cows gave buttermilk for a week, and Larry at the age of fourteen still sleeps with a night light on in his bedroom, but I'm sure that the tale was just another product of a child's over-active imagination.

Anyway, about a year went by from the time of the party. I was preparing another birthday extravaganza for Jack, and I thought that I would take a break and pass a little time by going to the circus side show which had just set up for the week outside of town.

I'm not really a big circus fan. A large crowd of people makes me uncomfortable. The food makes me sick. Although each time I visit the circus I order the same garbage to eat: cotton candy, stale peanuts, green hot dogs. The noise of people and animals chattering, of wheel of fortune barkers calling out the marks, and of music blaring from carnival

merry-go-round rides makes my head feel like it is one big, raw, pulpy, absessed tooth begging for extraction. Then there is that special smell that comes only when the combination of monkeys, lions, and elephants are housed in close quarters. I return year after year, but one hasty deep breath and I am reminded of why it is I throw up every time I watch reruns of Wild Kingdom on television.

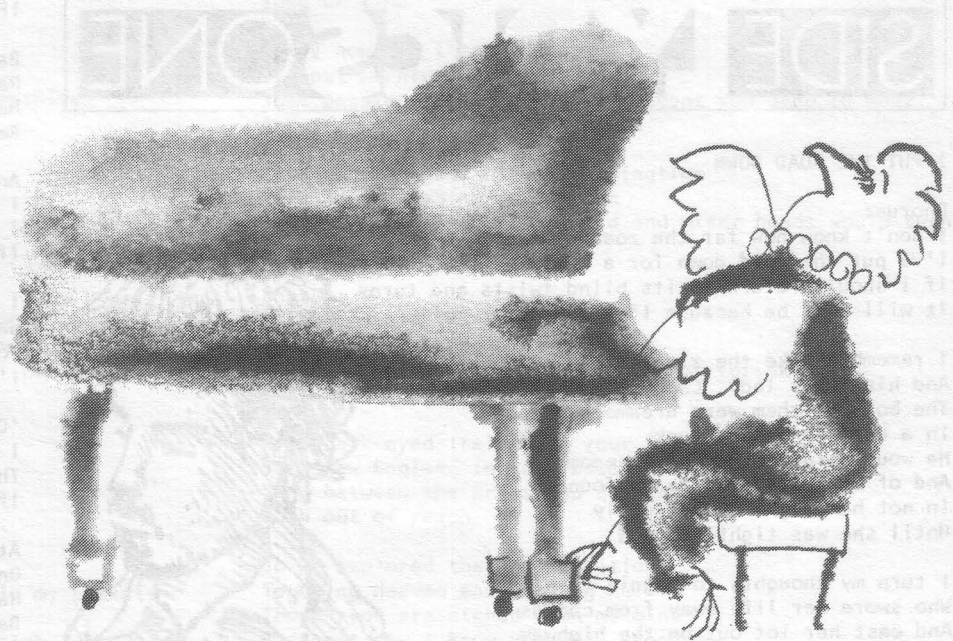
As I walked down the midway, carefully avoiding most of the games, rides, and foods, I noticed a great crowd of folks gathered about one of the attractions. In the back of the crowd, watching very intently, was old man Price. He was scowling, and had his arms folded in front of him. I approached, but before I could say hello, he motioned with a nod that I should take note of what was happening at the front of the crowd. I looked up front, and there was the object of everyone's attention; there was Trixie, now rather plump, sitting on a stool in a large chicken wire enclosed box. Next to Trixie and the stool was a full sized piano.

Binderman was standing in front of the box shouting about Trixie being the eighth wonder of the modern world. He was pointing at her with a cane and comparing her to Paderewski, Rubinstein, and Horowitz. "Listen to the music of Chopin and Brahms played perfectly by Trixie the Wonder Chicken. Come on in folks, it's only a dollar for the greatest thrill of your life. Hurry! hurry! hurry! The show is about to begin."

Just think. The music of Chopin played perfectly by a chicken. And even if Trixie missed a note or two, I'm sure there wasn't anyone in this audience who would know the difference.

Some big bruiser pushed Trixie's box on into the tent, and Maxwell Binderman started selling tickets at one dollar a pop. About a hundred dollars later the show began with old man Price and me taking it all in. Trixie started pecking away at the keys, and I'll be damned if it wasn't Chopin's "Etude in E Major." I couldn't believe it, but there was this chicken not only playing all of the notes correctly, but playing them with feeling as well!

I made my way up to the front of the room. I just had to have a closer look at what was going on before my disbelieving eyes. I managed to reach the rear of the cage and remain undetected by sticking to the side of the tent. Close inspection showed what was going on all right.



Dennis Di Vincenzo

Binderman had ingeniously rigged up an apparatus which dropped chicken food pellets on the piano keyboard in just the proper sequence so that Trixie would correctly reproduce the music of Chopin's etude as she pecked at the food being deposited on the keys. I had to hand it to the man, he was indeed "the greatest side show exhibitor on the planet Earth." And if my estimation was correct, Maxwell Binderman was going to clean up on this one. Both Trixie (who was now eating an enormous amount of food at each performance) and Binderman were getting fat on this scam, at a hundred bucks a performance, a performance every twenty minutes, and enough suckers to keep the gravy train running forever.

Old man Price watched carefully, but he didn't say much. He was most obviously shaken. The economics of this thing was not lot on him. He had sold a gold mine for a few bucks. Somehow the city slicker had managed to get the best of him, and Price was not happy about it. Even the quiet farmer was more silent than usual. This is the point in the Stephen King story where the farmer changes into the killer squash.

I didn't have the heart to prolong his misery by telling him what I had found. Instead, I tried to cheer him up by inviting him to Jack's birthday party that evening. He thanked me but declined. Instead, he asked me if I would be his guest for dinner the following night. I accepted and gave him

a consoling pat on the back.

No one that night believed my chicken story. They all laughed at me as I sat at my piano and attempted to play Chopin as the chicken had. I played until my nose turned red. I told my friends that if they didn't believe me they could go to the circus and see for themselves. This wasn't a circus crowd, and the party was not the success that last year's was, although most of the gang did enjoy seeing me play the piano with my nose.

I was rather upset the next evening as I made my way to old man Price's place. What with people laughing at me, and my meal not being a success, and a chicken having better piano forte than me, I was feeling a little glum. That's why when Price answered the door in such a cheerful mood, it made a big impression on me.

I told him that I thought that he was taking things pretty well. A three dollar investment was netting thousands for Binderman, and even if it was a fair deal, it was a bit upsetting. Price laughed and told me not to worry so much, that in the end all is equalized in the great scheme of things. Not bad philosophy from a farmer.

We sat down to our meal and about half way through our soup Price starts whistling. He is whistling Chopin's "Etude in E Major." Suddenly I don't

(Continued on page 17.)

SIDE LYRICSONE

I PUT THE ROAD DOWN

Chorus:

I don't know how far the road can go
I've put the road down for a while
If I should return to its blind twists and turns
It will only be because I've lost your smile

I remember Mike the singer
And his Texas lady, Cathy
The both of them were dreamers
In a beat-up gypsy truck
He would sing to her of freedom
And of the pleasures to be found
In not hanging on too tightly
Until she was tightly bound

I turn my thoughts to Maggie Becker
Who swore her life away from chains
And cast her lot out on the highway
Just to hitch a ride with luck
But underneath her songs of freedom
You could hear another sound
As she cried inside for someone
Who would hold her tightly bound

Now I have the sweetest lover
With auburn hair and earth-brown eyes
And hands as gentle as the sunlight
Whose touch would make me rise
With her freckle constellations
And her laughter soft as rain
Come to cool the summer evening
And wash away the sorrow stain

© 1985 by Bert Lee



YOUR CALCULATIONS LIE (for J.T.)

If the sun don't bring my morning fix
this day I'll surely die
clouds so dark doom the morning light
come and take me to the sky
no one told me it could be this way
that your friends just up and die
Lord, you sent me down to pay my last respects
I think that your calculations lie

Say a prayer my friend for the water man
who wouldn't quit just to turn it to wine
you know the further off we get from where we're going
we're bound to cross that line
no one figured there'd be room for this
in our cluttered corner lives
Lord, you sent me down to pay my last respects
I think that your calculations lie

Do we sit and wonder about Judgement Day
no, we never think it's time
do we wash our hands and look the other way
maybe find some place to hide
but life is much less than a thumbnail sketch
situations but a blink of the eye
Lord, you sent me down to pay my last respects
I think that your calculations lie

© 1984 by Billy Jones

IF I HAD STAYED WITH YOU

Back in that stage I can see myself
Part of an act, a short story for two
Making scenes from a second-rate play
Reading the lines that you wrote me to say

And if I had stayed with you
I might have never known
I was playing the part of a fool
If I had stayed with you

I had my doubts wonderin' if I should go
Was lonely with you better than being alone
Your cruelty kept me from feeling unsure
I'm so glad I walked out the door

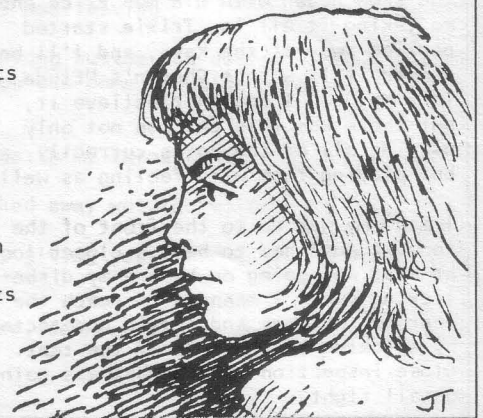
'Cause if I had stayed with you
I might have never known
That all love isn't cruel
If I had stayed with you

At last I'm learning what life really means
One gentle lover not a series of dreams
He makes me laugh and he takes my fears
Bad times are better whenever he's near

And if I had stayed with you
I might have never known
A love so strong and so true
If I had stayed with you

And he holds me close in the night
And he knows the right words to use
And his love I wouldn't have found
If I had stayed with you

© 1984 by Nancy Lee Baxter



DEEP BLUE NIGHT

in your cold stare i'm laying low
lost in a pair of indigo
please don't cry should you care to sympathize
your brilliant eyes took me by surprise

in this deep blue night
deep blue night
deep blue night
as blue as my song
for you

locked outside i am cold i am only a humble suitor
but low down in my soul i carry a six-shooter
if i'm bound for a fall there's little i can do
for time takes all but my solitude

in this deep blue night
deep blue night
deep blue night
as blue as my song
for you

this wild world of wars puts its hands in my pockets
and robs me poor except for this locket
where i peek now and then and secretly sigh
with love to defend i was born to testify

in this deep blue night
deep blue night
deep blue night
as blue as my song
for you

© 1985 by Brian Rose

ENDLESS HIGHWAY

Don't know where I'm goin'
But guess I'm on my way
Leave this man alone
And this man he will stay
You know I'd like to leave with
At least with what I came
And hope the love we freed was
Worth the love we tamed

I guess I'm like the devil
There's no tomorrow for me
The sun it never rises
And never sets really
And comin' off these mountains
Everything that's travelin' must lay low
All I see that's tied down
Leans towards where both you and I are goin'...

Goin' down this endless highway.

I'm really gonna miss you
Babe you are the best
I'm glad at least I risked all that I am
For no one less
The times this hard cold concrete
Makes me long for something warm and soft
I never will forget that
Nobody but you can get me off...

Get me off this endless highway

© 1985 by Eric Wood

SONG OF TIME

Every now and then it happens
Without warning when it comes
Some passing stranger with the scent you used to wear
And I am lost, I am young again

Blue denimed angel in the springtime
Bare legs flashing in the sun
And from their books, the old and wiser heads would turn
To watch you run

Chorus:
I fool myself that I'm retaken
By your siren song of time
It is the old dreams reawakened, not forsaken
I am not free; these chains are mine

With dark-eyed Ireland in your features
Soft New England in your speech
Torn between the Cross and dancing with the Moon
Both out of reach

So we explored the new sensations
Touching Heaven and tasting Hell
Though you are etched upon my mind
I cannot say I know you well (Chorus)

We all are sailors
Across the gulf of years we sail
Cold, grey Atlantic rolling in
Success and failure
Don't we remember when we fail
But we go sailing on again (Chorus)

© 1983 by Josh Joffen



SIDE LYRIC TWO

WHO NEEDS TIMES SQUARE?

Oh, they say that New York City's the place
To see the whole world in just one day
And everyone you're gonna meet
Will be there one day
But I met you outside of the concrete world
There's no bright lights
And the streets don't swirl
Without money we could still have a fabulous day

Chorus:

We could go for a laugh in the rain
Pretend we're rich and dream of the Seine
It doesn't matter if it's Paris or my house or Rome

Well I'm a crazy boy brought up in that town
Of total confusion and running around
I'll never go back
I know it'll be just the same
But the whole world begins outside your door
Roads lead home
But they still go far
When we're restless we can pick up and be on
our way (Chorus)

So they say everybody that you're gonna meet
You're gonna meet in Times Square
But all I know is that I didn't meet you there
They say that New York City's the place
To see the whole world in just one day
But I'd have missed the whole world
If I'd stayed
Yes I really would have missed the whole world
If I'd stayed

© 1985 by Richard Meyer



AMAZING LOVE

It seems to have started with your hand on my hair
I don't know why you put it there but we were
saying goodnight in a parking lot somewhere
over and over again

Or maybe it started when I stumbled and tripped
Your arm flashed out and I caught it and gripped
at a party we didn't like so we slipped like
children away in the rain

Chorus:

Amazing love, I never thought this blazing love
would start raising the heavens above
this amazing love

You seem to remind me that we met in a saloon
Though fireworks don't start up in the icecubes and spoons
sparks and the flames came up sooner than soon and
neither felt the need to explain

© 1985 by Raun MacKinnon Burnham

BUTLER'S AUNTY

Butler and his Aunty were driving into town
The day before I left New Zealand,
"David, where you goin'? Won't you join us for a cup of tea?"
He said, "My lady finally left me, after three years in my home,
In my home..."

"I'm Butler's Aunty, and we're the only family
Either one of us got left now,
I lost my husband after fifty-two years of marriage,
And I know how Butler feels, because my husband was my life,
He was my life,

It's not an easy thing to lose your love,
But you just got to carry on, carry on..."

I always felt bad that I just didn't know what to say to them.
There's no way around it, losing your love is cruel...
You offer your shoulder and try to tell 'em it's okay and then
You sit there like a fool...

A long silence broken, I told them I was leaving
And my next stop was Australia,
He said, "If these jokers push the wrong button and decide to have a war,
You can come back to New Zealand, you can come and hide with me,
Hide with me..."

Our cup of tea was over, my heart was in my throat
As we said our goodbyes,
The last thing I remember, as I walked away was the voice
Of Butler's Aunty,
"What a good thing you done, Butler, giving your friendship to that man,
To that man,

You know that we still got each other, so honey, come and take my hand,
Take my hand, take my hand..."

© 1981 by David Roth/ASCAP

OUTSIDE

I'm outside the insane asylum
Where I've flung down my words
Into its shadow
I could never make them fit
Anyway
Never twist them
Make them moan
Make them say
What the outsiders inside the insane asylum
Can make them say

Outside the insane asylum
I'm peaking through the window
Trying to see--
But I only catch a flash of lightening
Now and then
But I'm dreaming to myself
About the storms that must rage
The thunder that cracks
The rains that must pour
Inside that dark, enlightened cage

Outside the insane asylum
I'm thinking to myself,
"Maybe I'll go crashing through that window
And be one of them!"
But I'm fooling myself
Lying--
The earth is sucking at my
feet
And won't let me be anything
But what I am

© 1985 by Thom Morlan

THE GOLDEN VANITY

Once there was a ship and she sailed the Lowland Sea
And the name of that ship was the Golden Vanity
And she feared that she'd be taken by the Spanish enemy
As she sailed upon the lowland, lowland, low
Sailed upon the Lowland Sea.

Up spoke the cabin boy the age of twelve and three
And he said to the captain, "What will you give to me
If I swim along the side of the Spanish enemy
And sink her in the lowland, lowland, low
Sink her in the Lowland Sea."

"Oh I will give you silver and I will give you gold
And the hand of my daughter if you would be so bold
As to swim along the side of the Spanish enemy
And sink her in the lowland, lowland, low
Sink her in the Lowland Sea."

Then the boy he got ready and overboard jumped he
And he swam along the side of the Spanish enemy
And with his brace and auger in her side he bored holes three
And she sank beneath the lowland, lowland, low
She sank beneath the Lowland Sea.

Then the boy he swam back to the cheering of the crew
But the captain would not heed him for his promise he did rue
And despite the boy's entreatings and how bitterly he sued
He left him in the lowland, lowland, low
He left him in the Lowland Sea.

The boy turned around and he swam to the port side
And up to his messmates full bitterly he cried,
"Oh messmates pull me up for I'm drifting with the tide
And I'm sinking in the lowland, lowland, low
Sinking in the Lowland Sea."

Then his messmates hauled him up and on the deck he died
And they stitched him in his hammock which was so clean and white
And they threw him overboard and he drifted with the tide
And he sank into the lowland, lowland, low
He sank into the Lowland Sea.

Traditional English Ballad

SIGHTSEEING

She's a sail on the ocean
She floats, she's a notion
She's just an opinion, she's anyone's guess

Always the lady
She always says maybe
She'll never, no never, no never say yes
No she'll never, no never, no never say yes

Chorus:
She goes, oh she goes sightseeing
And she knows when the summer is over she goes
Nothing can hold her, she goes
The girl and the summer will never get old

She's the road and the riptide
She's the wild, she's the wide-eyed
She's the view from the outside, she's never been true

She can't stick around
And you can't put her down
But she'll never touch ground, boy, she'll never touch you
No she'll never touch ground, boy, she'll never touch you (Chorus)

Does she find that the nighttime can get kind of cold?

In the heart of the country
At the height of the party
She's the glimpse and the memory that you never knew

She's the jade, she's the jewelry
She's the girl of the century
She's the eyes that are empty you're looking through
She's the eyes that are empty you're looking through (Chorus)

But does she find that the nighttimes can get kind of cold?

© 1985 by J. Hogan/ASCAP

THOM MORLAN

by Frank Mazzetti

It has been said that writers love to write about writing. This is certainly true of Thom Morlan. In his songs the theme of the artist grappling with creativity usually crops up about once a year. Although the angles are different, these Writing songs reflect the following concerns: the source of creativity, the conflicts that arise between self-expression and outside expectations, and the importance of persistently examining the integrity of each song. This article attempts to outline Thom's involvement with this subject from a song written when he was 18 to his newest one.

In "Goin' For the Real Thing," a song of beautiful innocence and reminiscence of Steve Forbert's early pieces, Thom, just out of high school, photographs, in rhythm, rhyme, and melody, a sharply contrasting picture: one split between the security of a petit bourgeois, suburban lifestyle and the often lonely, economically marginal and insecure existence embraced by the artist.

When I was younger, I flirted with
an older man's game
Tested the water, never took a dive
Touched elbows with those who played
for keeps
But all along I knew I didn't have
to play to survive
Now I walk the streets alone
I try to get so far from home
And end up disappearing in the night
Now my brain is thinkin' strange
My stifled soul beckons for a change
Someday I'm gonna set this whole
thing right

Using black and white effect, Thom captures his focused details, then shades them with his own impressions. Those impressions tell of a society that not only stifles individual expression but, in so doing, weakens itself.

Just tonight I took a look out my
window
Saw so many people limpin' by
Draggin' their feet in fits of
hopelessness
Cursin' themselves 'cause they
never tried.

Not only are the people lame; they also suffer from the bitterness and despair of unfulfilled, but more importantly, unexplored dreams. The rest of the song finds the young artist acknowledging

the fact that the alternative, the life of the artistic songwriter, though difficult ("no matter where I find my feet/Poundin' that hard concrete/My mind will always be miles away"), is the one he must choose. He will allow his imagination to grow, no matter what, or where.

Just how much of a fine art is songwriting? Highly judgmental poets and musicians would dismiss much of it. Each would probably point to the constraints that the other art places on the song. Constraints there are. Every songwriter's felt it.

But that's how it is in a relationship. One party imposes itself on the other and vice versa. This is so even in the most liberal of arrangements. Also in extremely one-sided relationships: even the dominant party must make certain concessions toward the weaker one.

However, a successful relationship, with all its restraints, takes on beauty all its own and an ability to do what no solitary effort is capable of doing. So when Thom Morlan in "Burnin' Churnin'" sings:

Some will call it a talent
While others badge it a craft
Some will put it down as a waste

he may be exhibiting a certain defensiveness in his recognition of what highbrow critics might say of the muse. The important thing is that he sees the beauty in the song. For him, the "real thing." "Burnin' Churnin'," a somewhat verbose (though not tedious) song, is like "Goin' For the Real Thing," a passionate declaration as to what moves Morlan above all else (the song) and a commitment to that art form.

By 1982 Thom was recognized in Village circles as an important new writer on the scene. He appeared on the third issue of *The Coop*, the youngest ever recognized in this way. His song on that issue, "Gallery 14," was singled out by reviewers. Thom was getting decent gigs. He was soloing in the Village and playing with his band in New Jersey.

Then he tried moving the band across the Hudson. He played CBGB's, the Other End, and the like, but to his audience, used to hearing an onslaught of very literate words and sweet melodies, Thom's band came on like a drunk's rattling and blaring December

31st instruments during a reenactment of the Nativity scene at a church service on Christmas Eve. The truth was that the band was erratic, and his act started to unravel. It started to unravel much faster than it had come together.

Thom received some negative criticism of his music, turned it inward, and went through a crisis in confidence. Outwardly he became somewhat hostile toward the Village environment.

In terms of overall output, 1983 was a bad year for his writing. The songs Thom did write were to accommodate his band. His style changed somewhat: he became more involved with hook, his lines more repetitious. A few of these songs were great ones. "She's a Dancer" and "Pretty Things" were particularly memorable.

Playing New Jersey bars, however, proved less rewarding than dealing with the Village scene. Annoyed by the audience's mindless involvement at these bars, Thom resurfaced at the Cornelia Street Songwriters' Exchange with a song echoing his aggravation:

You can't dance to this one
You can't dance to this one
It just lies here
Soft and unassuming
Like the paper
It was written on.

Thom wasn't exactly welcomed back with open arms. Gigs, few in number, were given begrudgingly and on off nights (like Tuesdays). The writing, on the other hand, was magnificent. "Ana," "Nothing Shines For a Tarnished Man," "Spring Cleaning" (the first humorous, albeit black humor, song about suicide), and "Inner Eye" were standouts.

"Inner Eye" was the one about creativity. Also sprinkled with black humor, it stands as a challenge to those who flirt with artistry but refuse to commit themselves to their art.

Well, you wanted to be a painter
Painted yourself blue
Then you were going to be a poet
Poetry burned you too
So you decided to go in business
Join the real world
The last time I saw you
You were such an unhappy girl

If "Goin' For the Real Thing" shows us what happens to people who long ago

succumbed to the Shopping Mall Society of Contented Consumers, "Inner Eye" portrays an individual in transition; one who vacillated between two worlds, like the young artist in "Real Thing," but chose the security of the business world.

In a world of fads and fashions
You worship the god Retail
But all the while
You wonder what's really for sale
And all that hair-tearing
Over what you are
A passion-spitting artist
Or a clerk with a shiny sports car

The person wants what the TV commercials and magazines tell us we should want, but she also feels empty and split inside. Instead of working toward resolving the conflict, she loses herself in fantasy, daydreaming about becoming a photographer.

Many have an attitude that photography is button snapping and something anyone can do. Snap the shutter enough and you'll eventually get a great picture. To them photography does not carry the same agony of creation as other art forms. An artistic photographer's portfolio should belie this idle thinking, but...!

Oh! Rimbaud and Van Gogh
And the price they paid for their art
But you don't think of that
When you start

It's never clear whether the subject of the song lacks imagination or the willingness to work hard at developing an inspired idea.

Do you still feel
the artist's flame?
Do you still need
the artist's gain?

This false rhyme (flame/gain) may seem awkward on paper. Sung, it never disturbs. What is clear about the subject is her fear of where her expressed feelings might lead her.

Did you ever buy a camera?
You were going to buy a camera
And use your inner eye.

Although the songs mentioned so far are specifically about writing and creation, many other Morlan songs, though basically about other subjects, refer to aspects of creativity. For example:

"Reasons for Staying" raises the issue of suicide and the impossibility of the world's problems. Only the writer's

love for his work keeps him going. This song should be examined juxtaposed with Anne Sexton's poem, "The Dead Heart," wherein the heart, that which keeps everything else going, dies when the poet concludes that her "words stink like vomit."

"She's a Dancer"--the artist moves with a special glow. It's sensed even when none of the obvious trappings are there.

"Little Marine"--a comic put-down of a former band member who chose Marine life over rock 'n' rolling. This is a lighthearted look at the same theme that "Inner Eye" explores.

"Rhetoric" is a song all songwriters love for at least one reason: experts who've never worked at their professed expertise, and who have little or no insight but think they have plenty, freely tell songwriters what's wrong with their work. Comments like "not commercial enough," "outdated," "sixties-ish," "too spacy," "too clichéd," "the audience can't relate to it," "no one else can cover it." Thom's response: "Sometimes you make me sick/All you do is hand me rhetoric."

"Penguin in the Window"--the frustration involved when communication is blocked.

"Pretty Things"--basic theme is to have or to be? For Morlan, necessary to being is artistic expression. Artistic expression, however, means often doing without the things money buys, or not having. This leads to conflict with a very materialistic mate. ("Friends ask, was she untrue?/No, she just wants pretty things.") For a variation on this theme, heckle him to play "Wish I Was a Mustang."

Thom's latest work, "Outside," returns to specifically examining creativity. The song is a gem.

I'm outside the insane asylum
Where I've flung down my words
Into its shadow
I could never make them fit
Anyway
Never twist them
Make them moan
Make them say
What the outsiders inside the insane asylum
Can make them say

The insane asylum is a metaphor. It is the oft-expressed notion that madness is the source of artistic creation. Critics have been quick to correlate

physical or mental anguish and artistic genius. (Read *The Wound and the Bow* by Edmund Wilson.)

In the first verse quoted above, an artist who does not consider himself afflicted questions his efforts. ("I've flung down my words into its (the asylum-madness-source of creativity) shadow.") He questions if his words are able to convey the same depth of feeling: "Never twist them, make them moan," etc. Frustration turns to despair. Hence the words "flung down."

The next verse is both an homage and an acknowledgement that, yes, madness can indeed be a wellspring to creativity. It bursts with imagery and introduces his next metaphor for madness, actually the outpourings of those who are mad, the storm. The storm rages inside the asylum, which he refers to as a "dark" but "enlightened cage." Dark because madness is difficult, perhaps impossible, to understand; enlightened because madness often brings out a new perspective and a new insight.

In the third verse Morlan muses about putting himself out there, somewhere in the realm of madness, but ultimately he realizes it would only be a pretense.

The bridge contains a great double entendre, "Sparks spit through every cell." The "cell" as a place of confinement, but also the brain cell with all the mystery therein.

The fourth verse finds the unafflicted artist mysteriously reconciled to his previously discarded words. He suddenly sees them with an objective eye and recognizes their aesthetic.

The song is really over, but Morlan has nagging doubts, and the last verse is used as a vehicle to convey those doubts. He creates a feeling of puzzlement. Why? Well, we still don't really understand the source of creativity. All we've learned is that you don't have to be crazy. Thom's emotional stability, to hear him tell it, and the song's obvious beauty bear testament to that.

I hope I'm not ruining a good song,
but I happen to think Thom is crazy
as a loon.

RECORD REVIEWS

Bill Morrissey

by David Massengill

Of all the up and coming folkers who are ripe for the picking, just about the juiciest berry is Bill Morrissey. His debut album, *Bill Morrissey*, has just been released on Reckless Records, whose catalog includes the Great One Hissell, Dave Van Ronk, and self-proclaimed shirtmaker Elijah Wald.

How good a debut album is it? Rough (yes), coarse (certainly), and inelegant (hallelujah), it stands up song for song absolutely the equal of Dylan, Prine, and Goodman. It is an extraordinary work. With a voice and a guitar, this is the album Springsteen's *Nebraska* almost was.

About Mr. Morrissey's voice. Me, I like an edge; it shows character. Some would say his voice is gruff, others that his hard R's imitate the far-off sound of farm machinery. Still others would swear it's the devil dying of strangulation. You too can sound like Bill Morrissey if you gargle with sawdust. He sells his own special brand at concert appearances.

Mr. Morrissey performs a live show that is nonpareil. His between-song patter is the stuff cults are made of--he's a one-man Monty Python. But I must warn you, he takes no prisoners. He's your original guerilla folkler, and not above the sneak attack. First he makes you double over in laughter, occasionally spitting out your drink in the process (management and the person in front of you love this); then he makes you straighten up in awe at the sheer gall of that man writing that damn good. He splits your gut, then lumps your throat. The audience gets wrung out but good.

From the record some notes and quotes:

side one

1. *Barstow*--on the road, stuck where "the freight yards sound like a drunk in a metal shop"--the sure intimacy of lunatic strangers--observing a hobo, Parks, whose "eyes shine like brake-lights"--grabbing the communal bottle back and forth, "he tips it up like a trumpet"--"I can't believe it gets this cold in Barstow": our hero longs for long-gone baby--pissed his what away?

2. *Small Town on the River*--every line is perfect--"at the Legion and Eagle halls no one seems to age"--the history of a factory town, pre-WWII to the present--the effects of war: "the whores left for the harbor towns where the business was still good"--the aftermath: "most men tried but could not forget and some wound up on the skids;" though "all of them were heroes, no man was left alone"--years later a bartender's advice: "this town died 40 years ago; son, get out while you can"--yes, a masterpiece.

3. *Darlin' Lisa*--playful--"I got a wife who sings like thirteen drunken Joseph Spences"--sounds like one Woody Guthrie tossed off to charm the pants off his latest darlin'--from "stern to bow," she's shipshape--short (1:33), but hey?

4. *Oil Money*--reminiscent of "City of New Orleans"--New Hampshire boy on a Louisiana oil boat--"worked my way up from deck hand"--"they take me for a native here," but "I heard my speech turned soft and slow"--from the pipeline, "college boys work as roustabouts"--the myth of long hours, big pay--"a million dollars waiting to be made"--the hard life--he calls a New Hampshire operator just to hear her "talk the way I used to"--a heart-breaker.

5. *Morrissey Falls in Love at First Sight*--our hero offers a unique bio: "my mom looks like Betty White"--his favorite drink: "bourbon with a splash"--his qualifications as a beau: "I'm lousy on the first date, better on the third;" and he's a "Red Sox fan," so he's obviously a masochist--why does this song remind me of Don Murray pursuing Marilyn Monroe in *Bus Stop*?

6. *Texas Blues*--blues is right--a beautifully sad song--it's midnight on the highway, I'm coming back for you"--stuck in Texas, "like a sailor on his way back from sea; he trips and stumbles, rarely passes gracefully"--this cuts to the bone: "you spoke of some old lover like a lonesome paradise"--undaunted, he's "gone to Arizona to win you back again"--there's no fool like a fool in love.

side two

1. *My Baby and Me*--happy to be alive--"gonna hit the bars in town"--Jack London kicking up his heels, drinking for the high old time--"we're gonna mingle with the flatlanders and buy them all a round"--"going out for one last fling;" 'cause "once the snow hits round here, all you can do is dream and dream and dream"--hibernation with style.

2. *The Packard Company*--a man's looking to get the foreman's job--"I don't want to hear your ideas, I finally like it here"--small comforts count twice--"my wife's let herself go some, I've let myself go, too;" for "every man breaks down with time"--growing older in the wrong century--"if I had to do it all again, I'd have been born in flight" is the greatest, most tragic line I've ever heard--whiskey can't cure some things.

3. *A Problem with Logic*--another losing -his-girl-to-some-crum-bum song--at first he's nonjudgmental: "who did right and who did wrong?"--tries to just be friends, but then some knave "swept you right off your feet and right into his bed" knocks logic right out the window and into the green-eyed monster.

4. *Run You Through the Mill*--a defining of himself: "I'm a walking 12-bar blues"--take it or leave it: "I get as trite as jazz lyrics"--his drinking habits: "I get tanked, I stay drunk all the time"--I can certainly see why AA is forming a campaign to ban Bill's songs from the radio (nip that in the bud)--also about the sad, sweet love that keeps desperate people together longer than they imagined.

5. *Grizzly Bear*--the trials and tribulations of courting a pampered prep-pie princess--she wants him to "meet her girlfriends, one named Pookie, one named Claire" and to fly "to the Bay of Fundy just to watch the tides reverse"--polar opposites here; still, "I never seen a girl so pretty with a dollar stuck up her nose"--she wants to dance at the discos, while he wants to take her home "to dance the Grizzly Bear"--amid this impossible seduction is a slick-fingered guitar.

6. *Rosie*--my favorite song--lovely and poignant, it sends shivers--a man

leaves to make things right financially and how is he repaid?--"you don't sound right on the phone; from the tone of your voice I know you're not alone"-- Rosie is no Penelope--"they tell me this place is the last frontier" and "the rain don't stop this time of year"--how many ways can a man lose a woman? --"you know you must be crazy just to talk this way; Rosie, yesterday..."--heartbreaking.

Mr. Morrissey has a knack for the language of yearning. With unsentimental but rich and precise images he hammers out his version of the Rugged Individualist, the blue-collar type, haunting the bars and highways and the factory where pink slips turn men into ghosts. In the tradition of B. Traven, Morrissey explores the dilemma of the ordinary man of extraordinary heart caught in the gears of a life that seeks to diminish him.

Morrissey's central figure becomes the pioneer man made obsolete and sent into exile by modern times. His life confines him to the perimeter of things. He is a remote man, intellectually disobedient but not a bigot. He hangs out with the guys at the P.A.C. (Polish American Club) and owns a gun, but these are gestures of independence, not brutality.

Not only is Morrissey's perimeter man resigned to his exile; he seeks it, in some cases: follows modern gold rushes, seeks places to hide, cool corners to wait in, cold drinks to numb, waitresses to wish for. To him these are far places to begin again in, to return from with a hero's pay.

Terrible sights and sad ones are not wasted on Morrissey. They are converted to a powerful statement. No operatics. No dancing fancy minuets with the muses. No such animal as an art song. Rather a direct emotional reaction to experience, always with a poise and a pained detachment.

While Mr. Morrissey's Everyman seems unaccustomed to sobriety, he does have a code of honor to live by. Not exactly Hemingway with a guitar, but close.

In America the surest way to increase a new work's popularity is to accuse it of being wicked. Bill Morrissey's debut album is so good, it's wicked. ■

(Continued from page 9.)

feel so good. I drop my spoon and look into my bowl...it's chicken soup... I look up at Price, and a great broad smile comes over his face.

There was never much doubt about it, although Price never admitted to anything. The next day I rushed to the midway to find a sign reading "CLOSED" hung on the door flap of Trixie's empty tent. When I later questioned Price directly, all he would say was that he never much cared for the music of Chopin as played by amateurs. The only thing I know is that ever since that meal, I have always been able to play the "Etude in E Major" quite brilliantly. ■

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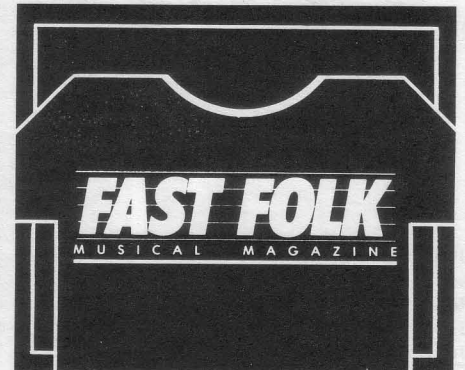
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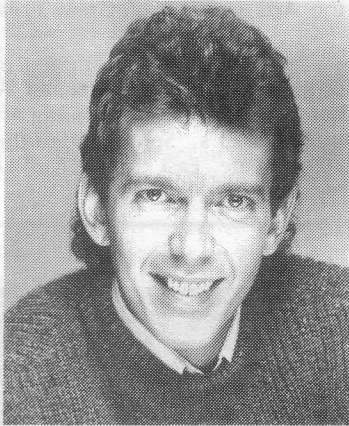
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ON THE RECORD

NANCY LEE BAXTER has played and sung in many clubs in the Northeast, such as The Other End, Kenny's Castaways, and SpeakEasy in New York City; My Father's Place on Long Island; and Passim in Cambridge. She can be heard on Tom Paxton's Heroes album. She is currently working on a single with a video release. She is making a living teaching jazz dance at Seiskaya Ballet Academy, and singing TV and radio jingles.



Jonathan Hogan

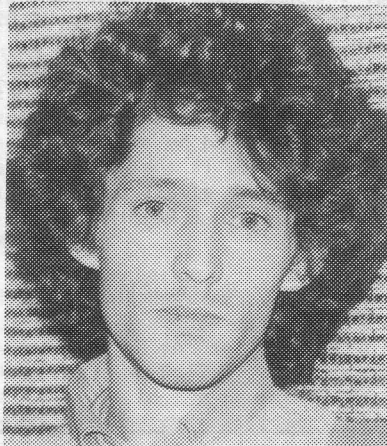
JONATHAN HOGAN is primarily known as an actor, having worked with Circle Repertory Company and on and off Broadway in such shows as Fifth of July, The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, and Balm in Gilead. He has written music for Leonard Melfi's Taxi Tales and Fifth of July.



Josh Joffen

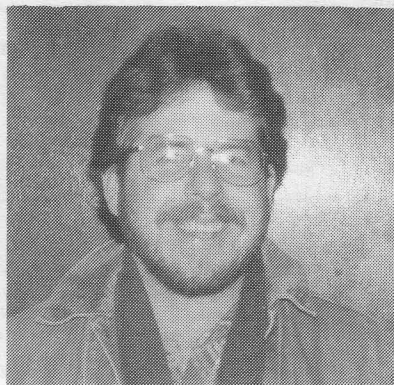
JOSH JOFFEN is a prodigal son of Brooklyn, New York. He spent his winter dreaming of skiing, and

playing at colleges and clubs throughout the Northeast with singer-songwriter David Roth and Mark Dann.



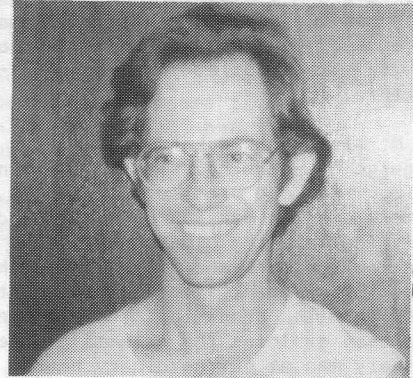
Richard Meyer

RICHARD MEYER is a professional designer of scenery and lighting for the theatre. He is currently the resident designer for the Berkshire Public Theatre, and recently was technical director for the Mabou Mines production of Through the Leaves. He has done lots of shows indoors and out, large and small. Richard is working on his first album, which will be ready soon. He is available for bookings and can be contacted at (212) 927-1831.



Billy Jones

BILL JONES is a resident of Edgewater, New Jersey. He has a B.A. degree in social relations from Ramapo College of New Jersey. Bill's grandfather was a New York City cab driver who was given a guitar by his friend Burl Ives. When Grandpa Jones died, Bill inherited the guitar at 10 years old. He taught himself to play it, and has been playing ever since.



Bert Lee

BERT LEE was born in Mexico City and was raised all over the world. He came to the Village in 1967 and played with three bands over the years. These days he spends summers in New York, writing and singing songs and performing magic. During the winter he can be found in Key West, Florida, playing with a swing band called the Striders and occasionally traveling as stage manager for a professional stage musician.



Raun MacKinnon

RAUN MACKINNON lives with her first husband, Jeremiah Burnham, in New York City.

THOM MORLAN (see article in this issue)

BRIAN ROSE is a 30-year-old New York songwriter and photographer. He was one of the founders of The Coop magazine and the musician's cooperative at SpeakEasy in New York City.

Alan Beck

Bob Zaidman

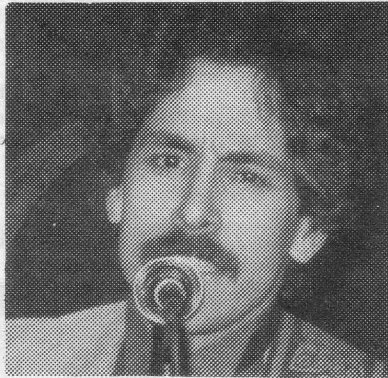
Susan Spelman

Alan Beck

Alan Beck

DAVID ROTH gains inspiration from Dan Fogelberg, Paul Winter, Tony Bird, David Buskin, Robin Batteau, and Bruce Cockburn. In the musical off-season he works as an audio engineer at the United Nations and ABC-TV

ERIC WOOD was raised in Cleveland, Ohio, until he was 14 years old. He spent the next ten years in as many cities before arriving in New York in 1976. Performing began to take on greater importance for him there after he had spent four years in Nashville, Tennessee, publishing and recording houses concentrating mostly on songwriting.



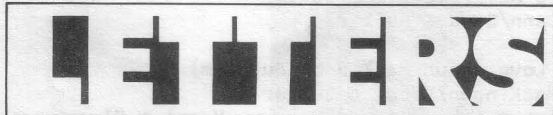
David Roth

Alan Beck

erratum

The "On the Record" page of our January 1985 issue included a photo which the caption claimed was of Shawn Colvin. The photo was of Libby Reid, the artist who drew the cover art for our October 1984 "Women in Song" issue.

Shawn Colvin's photo appears in this issue, on page 3 of the article on the second annual Fast Folk Concert at The Bottom Line.



A belated thanks for the latest Fast Folk releases. The album of women's songs particularly wonderful with a number of stunning new (to these ears) voices/writers.

May '85 be a year of health, music and recognition.

All the best,

Ira Mayer
New York Post

Dear Mr. Hardy,

I have recently been listening to several folk radio stations broadcasting from Boston (WGBH and WUMB) and my local radio station, WATD, Marshfield, all of whom frequently air cuts from your magazine anthologies.

In a very short time I have become extremely impressed by two artists who I understand have been recording with you for the past several years.

I have been calling and requesting to hear songs by Suzanne Vega and especially Shawn Colvin at these radio stations and have been received enthusiastically. It seems, from what the disk jockies tell me, that I am not alone. I cannot understand why there are so few recordings available by

these fantastic artists and this is why I am writing.

I would greatly appreciate any information regarding as to when Shawn and Suzanne are going to record full LPs and how I may go about obtaining them. It seems such an awfully long time coming for such talented artists.

I would also like to obtain more information about your magazine.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Dunkel
Marshfield, MA

Dear Fast,

Got my renewal notice the other day, and I have to say thanks, but no thanks.

I think you've got a great concept, but the execution is weak. I'm not really bothered by the erratic delivery schedule, or the somewhat uneven quality of the pressing. I'm discontinuing because the records are just plain uninteresting.

I don't think I've played any of them more than twice, and some I still haven't opened. The material is ok and

the performers are fine, but the albums never have any real focus. The cuts seem pulled together at random, not related to each other or to the magazine. You get the feeling that the disk was put together out of whatever was lying around the studio at the time.

By way of comparison, my brother did sound for and recorded the FMS June Days festival last summer. The Fast Folk show there was vital, witty, thoughtful and completely entertaining. The big "Great American Dream" number was terrific live, and is still terrific on tape. Same performers, same material. The tape gets played around here a lot. The records almost never.

Anyway, I wish you luck. I think the "Women in Song" issue is a step in the right direction. Maybe I'll tune in again next year.

Regards,

J. C. Riemer
Morristown, NJ

Dear Mr. Riemer,

Thank you for writing to let us know what you think about Fast Folk.

(Continued on back cover.)

(Continued from preceding page.)

What I find most intriguing about your letter is that you have not "played any of them more than twice, and some I still haven't opened." How can you be so judgmental about something you haven't even heard. Also, we have never entertained any pretensions that this project represents "the best of" concept, only this month's "slice of." Nor have we ever thought that, with the variety of musical styles and levels of development, that every song would appeal to every subscriber. They don't even all appeal to me as editor;

but I will still defend their inclusion in this magazine format. We are calling it a musical magazine. How many times do you read the same issue of *Time* magazine? (Perhaps if people read the news more than once it might sink in.) I wish I could afford to be so judgmental while keeping my head in the sand.

Also I might add, as to "the erratic delivery schedule," that our whole operation is still run entirely by volunteer slave labor. No one gets paid for anything. Not myself as

editor, not Mark Dann or Jay Rosen as recording engineers, not Nancy Talanian for putting together the printed portion of the magazine, nor Tom Nash for getting the subscriptions in the mail. Seeing as you profess to know so much about music, perhaps you could offer some of your expertise to the project, instead of your negativity.

Jack Hardy, Editor

P.S. Your albums are in the mail.

SIDE ONE CREDITS SIDE TWO

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I Put the Road Down (Bert Lee)
Bert Lee/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass
John Kruth/Mandolin | *1. Who Needs Times Square? (Richard Meyer)
Richard Meyer/Vocals & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass & Guitar |
| *2. If I Had Stayed with You (Nancy Lee Baxter)
Nancy Lee Baxter/Vocals & Guitar
Mark Dann/Guitar & Bass | 2. Amazing Love (Raun MacKinnon Burnham)
Raun MacKinnon/Vocal & Guitar
Jeremiah Burnham/Bass & Harmony Vocal & Flute
Mark Dann/Bass |
| 3. Your Calculations Lie (for J.T.) (Billy Jones)
Billy Jones/Vocal & Guitar | 3. Butler's Aunty (David Roth)
David Roth/Vocal & Guitar |
| *4. Deep Blue Night (Brian Rose)
Brian Rose/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass
Background Vocals: Nancy Lee Baxter &
Richard Meyer | 4. Sightseeing (Jonathan Hogan)
Jonathan Hogan/Vocal & Guitar |
| 5. Song of Time (Josh Joffen)
Josh Joffen/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass | 5. Outside (Thom Morlan)
Thom Morlan/Vocal & Guitar
Mark Dann/Bass |
| *6. Endless Highway (Eric Wood)
Eric Wood/Vocal & Guitars
Lillie Palmer/Background Vocals & Fingersnaps
Richard Meyer/Fingersnaps | 6. The Golden Vanity (Traditional)
Michael Soloway/Vocal & Guitar |

Note: Songs indicated with (*) were recorded at Fast Folk Studios in Brooklyn, Mark Dann--Recording Engineer. All others were recorded by Jay Rosen at SpeakEasy in Manhattan.