

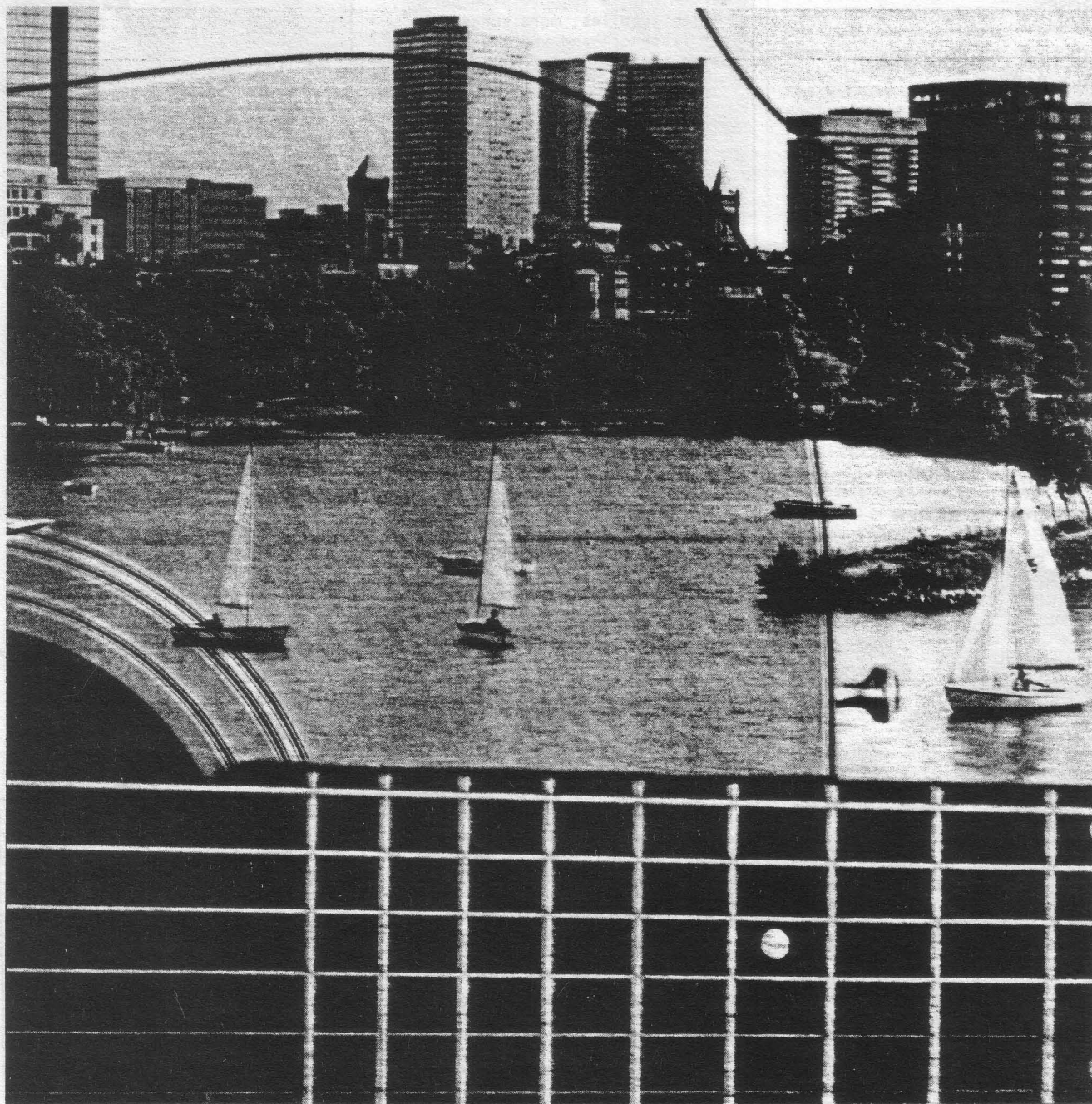
# FAST FOLK

M U S I C A L M A G A Z I N E

APRIL 1986

BOSTON ONE

Volume 3 No. 4



# FAST FOLK

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## FAST FOLK MUSICAL MAGAZINE

The Fast Folk Musical Magazine is a not-for-profit corporation and donations to us are tax-deductable.

We are unabashedly soliciting donations for items such as a computer capable of laying out the magazine and a laser printer to accompany it. We feel that this item alone would substantially increase our productivity. We are looking for a better cassette machine to review tapes on, an accountant, a fund raising person, office supplies, more songs from our listeners and your opinions as we continue to grow.

Thank you.



Fast Folk,

I got your address off of the KUT Folkways broadcast from University of Texas at Austin.

I've heard quite a bit of wonderful music that has come from Fast Folk recordings, and I'm very interested in purchasing some of these recordings

Sincerely,  
Allison Austin  
San Marcos, TX

Dear Gang,

I feel like apologizing for not having sent you a subscription long ago. This check is for a one year's subscription, plus assorted back issues if you have any.

The reason I'd like a batch of back issues is so that I could write some sort of review, either for SING OUT! Magazine or for some of the magazines over in Europe.

Carry it on,  
Pete Seeger

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# EDITORIAL

A lot has been going on at Fast Folk even though the last few month's issues have been behind schedule. We have changed plating and pressing plants to improve the sound of our discs and will be working more on technical quality control in the future. We have engaged Giancarlo Biagi to oversee the design of Fast Folk jackets; he has made the overall graphic changes you have seen since January, including the introduction of color on the March issue. We have begun to use more various recording situations; Mark Dann has continued to expand his studio and indeed has moved from the legendary attic in Brooklyn to the East Village. Bill Kollar, who recorded the February record in his home studio, has recently expanded it and recorded the Fast Folk Revue at the Bottom Line digitally. He will be producing more issues in the future. As you can see from this issue, we have again recorded out of town to document the Boston scene. We recorded for the better part of three days and are planning more trips to other areas to see what we find.

Changes in the office are not so audible or visible, but are equally important. Jack Hardy, who founded The CooP in 1982 (which grew from a committee at the SpeakEasy Musician's Cooperative on MacDougal Street into the Fast Folk of today), has taken on more and more of an advisory role over the last year.

The momentum he created is carrying forward in a way that we feel is very good. Hugh Blumenfeld has accepted the post of Associate Editor, and Steve Key has taken on the tangled world of advertising and promotion. We are looking into significant fundraising efforts to support the larger projects that have often been discussed, such as a schools program for the writing and history of folk songs, contemporary and traditional, and compiling a sequel to the CooP songbook with lead sheets and lyrics for all the songs since the first year. We are planning a widely advertised song contest to again expand the public awareness of Fast Folk and to try to find new writers who have not yet found an outlet for their work. We are taking stock of our past material and looking into the fiscal realities of releasing out of print issues of the CooP and Fast Folk on cassette. We want to acquire a computer, which we feel will increase our productivity.

In the Office, Peter Brown has maintained the nebulous and top-heavy position of office manager magnificently in the face of an ambitious though understaffed project that Fast Folk has been.

In the last month we've met lots of new people who are excited by the potential of the magazine and want to help get things moving faster. The staff is still all volunteer: the artists recording as well as those doing the studio and magazine work. They believe in the longer range goals of Fast Folk.

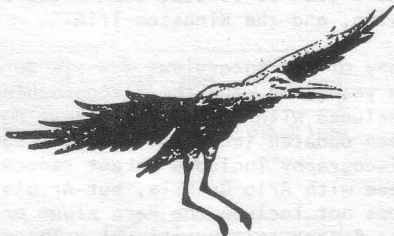
These, simply stated, are rather grand in implication. We want to document songs, songwriters and singers in the current and developing folk tradition. Our work will show, and has already shown, that there is a great variety of material being written today that is generally not picked up by the larger record companies, but is worthy of attention. We want to continue developing Fast Folk as a Journal of Songwriting and focus less on the scene and its events per se, important as they are to the social side of the music. Rather, we want to go to the source which makes those events happen in the first place: the songs. We mean to explore regional trends as we have begun to do annually with the Boston issue, and see how they feed each other in the historical growth of what is now called folk music. We mean to break down the "What is folk music?" barriers so that good songs can stand for themselves without pigeonholing and flagwaving based on opinions about chord structure and instrumentation that may result from narrow and overly protected points of view that have little to do with the music. We plan to continue encouraging 'artistic songwriting,' by which we mean those songs that expand the limits of their particular style. We are interested in material that is political, humorous, bittersweet, biographical, disturbing and joyous, experimental and thoughtful. The idea is to expand the scope of the recorded section of the magazine while bringing the quality of the commentary up to meet it.

One of the ways we look at Fast Folk is to take a long view contrary to the pop song view even though we are, many of us, great appreciators of pop. We

Continued on pg 15

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## OUR BACK PAGES: Two Books Look at Folk's Recent Past

by Steve Key

There is an unfortunately prevalent opinion among the general public that folk music is something that used to be popular twenty or thirty years ago, but is now practically non-existent. It doesn't help when so-called promoters of folk and its hybrid styles publish books focusing on the good ol' days and those legendary performers -- with brief mention at the end of today's emerging performers.

Artists of American Folk Music (GPI Publications/William Morrow) is a compilation of interviews and overviews previously published in Guitar Player and Frets magazines. Edited by Phil Hood, these thirty articles range from early innovators such as the Carter Family, Woody Guthrie, the Lomax Family, and Bill Monroe to '60s stars such as Odetta, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and the Kingston Trio.

Many of the interviews are six to seven years old, and the discographies included with each article have not been updated (curiously, Pete Seeger's discography includes recent records he made with Arlo Guthrie, but Arlo's does not include the Harp album or other Seeger collaborations). The only mention of newer styles of music is a five-page section on David Grisman and Tony Trishka's "Newgrass" and a half-page epilogue noting Folk City's 25th Anniversary and the Washington Squares, a group to whom few folk fans would attach their hopes for the future.

On the plus side, there is much here for guitar players, since Frets interviews often focus on musical techniques: Richie Havens and Tom Paley discuss the open tunings they use, Jean Ritchie advises on the best strings to use on a dulcimer, and Gordon Lightfoot explains what a "High-strung" guitar is.

Many of the same names are threaded into Bringing It All Back Home -- Twenty-Five Years of American Music at Folk City. The nightclub's co-owner Robbie Woliver (who bought into the Village landmark with two partners six years ago) weaves his own observations with those of more than one hundred fifty musicians, bartenders, fellow club owners, and Folk City founder Mike Porco.

Exhaustive as the list of the interviewees may be, there are huge gaps in Woliver's account of Folk City's history. Bob Dylan is mentioned on almost every page, yet he is only quoted directly once, from an old Rolling Stone interview. Fast Folk and the SpeakEasy are deliberately omitted from the Village scene, as are the principles at the Musician's Cooperative, notably Jack Hardy, Rod MacDonald, and Erik Frandsen, all of whom headlined at Folk City for years. One interviewee politely called Woliver a "revisionist."

But reading Woliver's collection of anecdotes helps to explain such slights. Folk music came to Gerdes Restaurant long after William Gerdes sold the place to Mike Porco, and it was introduced by two outside promoters. After their mild success in running the club as The Fifth Peg, they were dismissed by Porco, who took over the entertainment booking himself. He chose folk music, according to those on the scene, because it didn't require an elaborate sound system and the entertainers came cheap.

Porco could've had the debut of Peter, Paul and Mary, but wouldn't pay Peter Yarrow the extra \$20 a week to bring in his two friends. There are other accounts of the big fish who got away: Barbara Streisand, who refused to work in a duo with then-unknown Bob Dylan; and Bruce Springsteen, who was auditioned by John Hammond Sr. at a Gaslight hoot night, but couldn't get a gig at that popular folk venue.

By asking performers about their fellow players, much back-biting ensues. Eric Anderson gets to call the late David Blue a "pot-head" and Joni Mitchell a "bitch." Sonny Ochs vents her bitterness towards Bob Dylan by doubting Dylan's authorship of "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Masters of War." A Folk City waitress relates how John Denver stiffed her on a \$50 check. A Village Voice writer confesses that Roger McGuinn gave him his first dope.

In his final chapter, "The Eighties: Just Like the Good Old Days," Woliver lists a few of the rising folk players singling out Suzanne Vega and Ferron.

Then he mixes in interviews from the rap group Run-DMC (who performed at the Woliver-produced New York Music Awards but never at Folk City) and the rockabilly group, The Blasters, as if to say that Folk City had its finger on the pulse of pop as well as folk music. A brave claim.

Woliver's ignorance of the grassroots forces that have kept folk music thriving through the lean times can be best explained by his own Author's Notes. He relates his childhood, when he would stare at the picture of Odetta on her album jacket. A few months after buying the Folk City legend, Odetta sings at his wedding. What a guy. There is a telling photo of Woliver in the book, showing him between Phoebe Snow and Tracy Nelson, both of whom are looking away from the camera. Perhaps a more objective source who wants to document the legendary days of the Village once again can find out what it was they were looking at.



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## WHERE'S BOSTON?

Boston is wildly different from the place I left in 1980. It was a town then in a lot of ways--Beantown--but now it is a city and no mistake. The population has probably not increased dramatically--there have always been a sufficient number to rank it as a city. But the composition has changed, the skyline has changed, and the outlying area has changed.

In the last ten years, the computer industry has blossomed, and Boston has been one of its chief centers. Boston's collegetown feel used to result from the fact that 200,000 college students used to make up half a district worth of consumers and culture. And the fact that most of them had to move elsewhere to find professional positions after graduation. They'd make their mark and vanish. But the new software industry with its related technologies now offers enough positions to keep the whole crop close to America's favorite adopted home. Of all the pre-professionals and engineers I knew at school, the only ones who are not still in Boston and its suburbs are in Northern California. With the sudden explosion of high paying high tech jobs that exploit the region's chief resources (over-educated kids), New England's long commitment to higher education is finally paying off.

First of all, Boston is no longer a college town. It is a service industry city with an economy to match. The downtown area has been thrust up like the Himalayas; what used to be a localized grove of office towers downtown has spread from Government Center to Copley Plaza (formerly Copley Square).

The expansion has jumped the Charles River, revitalizing Kendall Square. That once-depressed area used to be home to a modest restaurant named Legal Seafood and a greasy spoon called F & T's where the beer was cheap and service was lousy. Now a \$1 billion office complex rises from the spot home to warehouses, empty lots, a very modest restaurant named Legal Seafood and a greasy spoon named F & T's where the beer was cheap and the service was lousy, thank God. Now a \$1 billion office complex is rising from the spot. Legal Seafood is housed on the first floor of one building there, and, if you're equipped with suit & tie and a credit card, you can power lunch with only a 15-20 minute wait. F & T's has survived across the way, but it is literally an island, surrounded by 20-ft deep construction trenches where the street used to be. The beer is still cheap and the service is still lousy.

Farther up the river, Harvard Square has received a complete facial. But the real change is more subtle. Harvard used to be the end of the line on the MTA, and it had that feeling of being a terminus of Boston, almost a suburb. But since the Red Line has been extended several miles out, Harvard has become more central, part of the city proper. Cambridge residents have been fighting MIT and Harvard for years over their rampant expansion, but the problem has evolved into something larger than the universities themselves. It's their solid waste--their graduates--that now accounts for much of the neighborhood takeovers.

Boston has no ordinary condo problem. Jamaica Plain has the fastest rising real estate prices in the country. Areas that were once considered the stix--JP, Brookline, Watertown, Arlington, and Somerville--are Boston's new Park Slopes and Brooklyn Heights. Farther out, the changes are perhaps more dramatic. A friend of mine just moved to Londonderry New Hampshire, once a rural village outside the rural town of Manchester, one hour from Boston. It now looks more than anything like suburban New Jersey, with lawns, sidewalks, and aluminum siding sprouting where cows and maple trees once roamed. And all the highways leading into Boston are paved with the space-age architecture of offices for DEC, Prime Computers, Inc., and scores of other large and small firms.

And so Boston is becoming wealthier and more expensive, faster and more corrupt, secretive and apathetic. Yet Boston also manages to retain some of its old character. At least if you were a college student there. If college was paradise for you, then Boston is college heaven now, eternal college, college with spending money to boot (assuming you graduated to a software-and-related-industries job). You'll still find intelligent bookstores, crowded gourmet ice cream restaurants with their walls plastered with notices advertising vegetarian non-smoking activist roommates, every single person outfitted by Eastern Mountain Sports, and folk music.

Boston is still the undisputed home of mellow, traditionally influenced, feel-good, think-right folk music. Although many different types of folk music do thrive here, from Suzanne Vega to Norumbega, the Boston area has a unique ethos and generates a style you can't mistake and which you won't find anywhere else. Boston is the spiritual home of Lui Collins, Bill

Morrissey, Bob Franke, Bill Staines, Cindy Kallet, and most of the performers on this record. This is the home of the infamous "Erica Levine," and other works of sociology, ecology, and political science (the Hudson River Sloop Singers are all secretly from Boston). This is the only place you can play three sensitive ballads in a row without being booed off stage.

The centers of cultural life for this special and constant piece of Boston are still Passim, the Nameless Coffeehouse, and the streets and back alleys of Harvard Square, though more places thrive as the campus becomes less central to Boston life. Some local radio stations like WERS, WUMB, WHRB and WBUR also have extensive folk music programming and admirably large audiences. Sandy's Music in Central Square is still a folkie haven. When you go to Boston you can skip Faneuil Hall, Legal Seafood, and Beacon Hill, but keep your radio tuned in, make a pilgrimage to Harvard Square, see if there's a Folktree concert at Arlington Town Hall, or just hole up with some mellow alumni/friends and raid their record collections. New acoustic music is part of Boston's daily bread as it is nowhere else.

-Hugh Blumenfeld

### A FOOT FORWARD AN EAR BACK

## FOLK ROOTS

From our base in the British folk scene, we cover music with roots from anywhere in the world. From English traditions to the latest in "rogue folk", from Zimbabwean folk/rock to Tex-Mex, this magazine is a *monthly* feast of interviews, features, news, reviews, opinion, adverts and much more.

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# RECORD REVIEWS

By Josh Joffen

Stealing Fire was recorded in 1984 by Bruce Cockburn (pronounced Coburn). Trying to think of a premier record to review, I remembered it for the cut that got him some airplay in the U.S., "Rocket Launcher." The songs on Stealing Fire were mainly written in 1983. They are a fine introduction to Cockburn's excellent writing and musicianship, and explain his growing influence here.

Bruce Cockburn, a Canadian, is one high-test songwriter. Not a mainstream songwriter. For one thing, much of what he writes is intensely personal. For another, much of what he writes is mystically spiritual or political. For a third, while Cockburn is an excellent acoustic musician, he hasn't stuck to the traditional folk forms at all. He builds his songs on foundations of jazz, funk, rock and reggae.

Cockburn's musicians (Jon Goldsmith on keyboards, Fergus Marsh on bass and sticks, Miche Pouliot on drums, and Chi Sharpe on percussion) are sensitive to the nuances in his music and hot enough to give each song a life and identity all its own. Excellent engineering by John Naslen and producing by Jon Goldsmith and Kerry Crawford, by the way--the instruments sound great and crystal clear. With this album, Cockburn joins my list of top-notch Canadian performers and songwriters. It makes me wonder about everyone we don't get to hear.

The album begins with "Lovers in a Dangerous Time." It's always a dangerous time for lovers, depending on what it is that you love. Catacomb Christians, revolutionaries, patriots, gay men and women; there's a lot of room for resonance to this song:

these fragile bodies of touch  
and taste  
this vibrant skin this hair  
like lace  
spirits open to the thrust of grace  
never a breath you can afford to  
waste  
when you're lovers in a dangerous  
time...

The second song, interesting but ultimately unsatisfying, is "Maybe the Poet." Over a funk bass and electric

guitar riffs, Cockburn expounds upon the role of the poet in society. It's interesting to hear this approach, but he isn't saying much here that hasn't been said elsewhere.

"Sahara Gold" and "Making Contact" juxtapose Cockburn's reactions to different relationships. There's a sultry power to the music of "Sahara Gold," in the tension of different rhythms and assonant melodic lines. This power is at odds with the lyrics, which vividly describe a night of passion.

half moon shining through the blind  
paints a vision of a different kind  
and your hair tumbles down like  
Sahara gold  
wet limbs striped with silver light  
locked together at the center of the  
night  
and your hair tumbles down like  
Sahara gold

I'll bet the combination works great in performance, but on the record it feels a little oppressive.

By contrast, "Making Contact" is musically much freer, more open, a song about a happier time. Set to a Latin beat, the song has as much energy as "Sahara Gold," but it's kinetic energy--the energy of release. Cockburn seems to have room to breathe, and he is able to make the spiritual connections that are clearly so important in his life.

so many ways to understand  
one for every woman and man  
been that way since the world began  
making contact...

The last song on Side One, "Peggy's Kitchen Wall," is a reggae-based song with some lively guitar work. There's some nice concise imagery about a party where somebody fires off a gun but everyone is blissfully ignorant when the police come. But so what? It's a fine arrangement of a throwaway song.

"To Raise the Morning Star" opens side two. Despite the strong imagery, this is Cockburn's most elusive song on Stealing Fire.

rising like lightspill from this  
sleeping town  
like the light in a lover's eyes

rising from the hearts of the  
sleepers all around  
all those dreamers trying to light  
the sky  
burning - all night long  
burning - at the gates of dawn  
singing - near and far  
singing - to raise the morning star

Sung to a slow reggae beat, the song's very elusiveness points to it being about a very personal, and powerful, experience. The listener is invited to glean what he or she may.

The remaining block of three songs are based on, and written during, Cockburn's experiences in Central America. The first one of the three is "Nicaragua." Over graceful chord lines, Cockburn records his impressions of a nation at a crossroads in history, making clear his idea of who the bad guys are:

breakfast woodsmoke on the breeze  
on the cliff the U.S. embassy  
frowns out over Managua like  
Dracula's tower

War and peace go hand in hand in Nicaragua. Cockburn highlights the irony of our current involvement, and suggests another reason for our government's fascination:

they peek from planes  
eavesdrop from ships  
voyeurs licking moistened lips  
'cause in the flash of this moment  
you're the best of what we are  
don't let them stop you now,  
Nicaragua

The second song in the trilogy is the one that stuck with me. It is an extremely well-produced rock song (with the possible exception of an overlong Cockburn electric guitar solo). The only reason I can see for the limited airplay "Rocket Launcher" got south of the U.S.-Canadian border was its politics.

here comes the helicopter-  
second time today.  
everybody scatters and hopes it  
goes away  
how many kids they've murdered  
only god can say  
if i had a rocket launcher...  
i'd make somebody pay.

This song is about victims of the fighting in Guatemala, and implies



something about the conditions that create revolutionaries.

i want to raise every voice-  
at least i've got to try  
every time i think about it  
water rises to my eyes.  
situation desperate echoes of  
the victims cry.  
if i had a rocket launcher...  
some sonofabitch would die.

This is peaceful, spiritual, Bruce Cockburn providing an object lesson in what outrage and the proximity to violence can inspire.

In the last song, "Dust and Diesel," Cockburn blends revolution and religion on the inter-American Highway in Nicaragua.

dust and diesel  
rise like incense from the road--  
smoke of offering  
for the revolution morning

Cockburn knows that the individuals are the heart of the movement:

tired men and women raise their  
voice to the night  
hope the fragile bloom they've  
grown will last.  
pride and passion and love and  
fear  
burning hearts burning the throats  
of the past

A revolution is an act of faith.

(Josh Joffen is a singer/songwriter. He recently released an album with David Roth, "Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other," which he promises will be reviewed by someone else.)

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## TIME FOR A CHECK-UP

### AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. JOHN

By John Kruth

Doctor John is a big man, not just physically. Sure he's got those big bear-paw hands that roll intricate rhythms out of any piano he sits down at and when he strides into a room with his walking cane and gris-gris necklace sparkling, one can't help but notice. He's a bit of a show stealer. Remember when he played "Such a Night" with The Band in Martin Scorsese's "Last Waltz"? He didn't hop all over the stage like Van Morrison or try to be slyer than Muddy Waters. He was cool and direct, his inimitable Mardi Gras self. As Michael Tearson of WMMR in Philadelphia wrote in his liner notes to Mac's elegant solo piano album Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack: "He is the rare kind of artist that other musicians invariably drop to hushed tones to discuss."

After a number of phone calls, we finally set a time and place for this interview. I met the good Doctor at his Manhattan brownstone. As I waited for someone to answer the door, I noticed the full moon burning brightly over my shoulder. He opened the door and I followed him down to his basement, "The Funky Lagoon" as he called it. He apologized for the mess. He was in the process of vacating the premises. He switched off the presidential debate and said that he was very tired. He had been doing a lot of session work. He talked soft and slow in a jazzy growl. We covered most of the bases from his early days as a session guitarist and A&R man in New Orleans right up to a recent session he just played with Maria Muldaur for her new album Sweet and Low. I sat on the floor amid stacks of records (many were albums that Mac had played on) and listened for nearly three hours.

Not only does the man have big hands and an enormous reputation (his studio credits are endless) but he's got a lot of soul. Whether in the guise of a chanting blues shaman or a boogalooin' Dixieland aristocrat or a street-wise trash-talkin' hipster, Mac Rebennack, or Doctor John if you prefer, is one "Big Chief" who is sure to "set your head on fiyo."

John Kruth: When did your Dr. John persona first start to take shape?  
Dr. John: When I went out to California, I had some album ideas in my head. They weren't exactly commercial ideas that I could give to



a label. They were just lookin' for singles. It was various album ideas which I had. I had guys in mind to be the front guy, Ronnie Barron in particular. He was gonna be Doctor John at first. He was kinda like a protege of mine. He started singin' with my band when he was about fourteen. He was always a good front man. He didn't mind gettin' out and workin' the house. I was plannin' on just producin' the album. I went to different labels and they wasn't interested at all. It was always the same shit. Everybody in the record companies are just lookin' for some money. Gold, platinum or somethin' and this was somethin' that didn't even have a single on it. I didn't think it was gonna be a money maker anyway. It happened that when I was workin' a gig for Sonny and Cher, Harold Batiste was directin' the horns and strings and I was strawbossin' the rhythm section. I was workin' with Cher on her album and Sonny and her were doin' a movie and blowin' some studio time. We just kinda snuck in one night and started it. We played the tapes for 'em and Sonny said go ahead and do it on the studio time. So we did the Gris-Gris album (Atco Records) and it wasn't no hell of a success right off but it did fall into the slot, 'cause free-form radio was just gettin' started and there was a lot of open formattin'. We started playin' the be-ins and love-ins 'round '66 and '67. The record came out 'round '67 or '68.

JK: What did you have in your band?

Dr. J.: I had two or three singers

and a dancer, a couple of horns, two or three percussionists, two drummers, two bass, a couple of keyboard players. We were doin' atonal music. The keyboards were tuned to quarter tones. We were into playin' freer stuff. The Gris-Gris music was a picture of south Louisiana hoodoo music. The Babylon album (Atco Records, 1969) was a picture of California Psychedelic music.

JK: The music you were playing was very rhythmic and tribal. How did the Gumbo album (Atco Records, 1972) with its classic New Orleans sound come about?

Dr. J.: Jerry Wexler had come by the studio one night with Leon Russell during the Remedies album (Atco Records, 1970). He was talkin' to me 'n' found out I played piano 'n' knew all this old New Orleans stuff. He got all hot on the idea of doin' an album which was real nice with me, 'cause it was somethin' real dear to my heart.

JK: It was like a condensed history of New Orleans music.

Dr. J.: Gumbo was a good name for that album, 'cause gumbo means everything thrown together, 'n' that's just what that record was. By the time we did that album, the Gris-Gris show had pretty much played out and was gettin' more expensive to carry dancers and stuff.

JK: Was Gumbo the first album which showcased your piano playing?

Dr. J.: It was the first one that I did that was pretty much piano. I did three tracks on guitar.



JK: Had you taken any lessons from Professor Longhair?

Dr. J.: I played guitar for Fess back in the fifties. I worked with him for a while and did his version of "Mardi Gras in New Orleans", the one they play every year at the Mardi Gras. At the time I played guitar for him, I'd sit on a stool and watch his hands, not to see what the chords was, but how he played 'em. His fingerings was different. I did the same thing with Huey Smith, James Booker and Allen Toussaint, but they played much more correct, more piano player style. Longhair played his own thing very unique and different.

JK: It was a real shame that his music was rarely played outside of the south. Crawfish Fiesta (Alligator Records, 1980) was his most popular album, but he died right before its release. His rhythm was so infectious.

Dr. J.: It was a real shame. Back in the late forties and early fifties, he more or less invented the funk rhythms that we still use today. But the guys that worked with him... he literally would have to teach the drummers how to play.

JK: Can you describe the rhythms he used? The interplay between the piano and drums is so unique. You don't hear it anywhere else.

Dr. J.: (Starts snapping his fingers and sings) It's syncopation. There's three rhythms. There's a six-eight thing goin' on between a straight four-four. So y'got a slow rhythm, a kinda half-assed rhythm and a real fast rhythm. The people could dance to all three of those rhythms. That's what his music was about. Longhair's music was so ingrained with inside rhythms. What made it all work was he would have everybody play particular parts that brought it out. To me his best records were "Mardi Gras In New Orleans." He cut that in 1959 or '60, and "Hey Now Baby" with John Boudreaux (on drums). That was a new sound that Longhair came up with. Prior to that he did "Tipitina" with Earl Palmer (on drums) which was a new sound at the time. At times he did some real innovative recordings that showed what he was all about. The version of "Tipitina" he did for Atlantic, that record changed it all! It was a calypso eight bar blues that changed the entire market around. Earl Palmer did

a really great job of playin' the drums on it. "In The Night" was real good too.

JK: So after Gumbo came Right Place At The Wrong Time (Atco Records 1973) which you did with Allen Toussaint and The Meters.

Dr. J.: Yeah, it was like a continuation of Gumbo in some ways.

JK: A lot of your best-known songs appear on that record, including the title cut, "Such A Night" and "Qualified". Had you written any of the material on Gumbo?

Dr. J.: "Somebody Changed The Lock". I could've taken credit on some of 'em for arrangement but I didn't want to do that. I wanted to turn people onto the people I got it from. Even if they didn't write it the way I played it. Say with "Little Liza Jane" I put Huey Smith. So people who heard "Iko Iko" would learn about Sugarboy Crawford or The Dixie Cups. That's why we included that piece of paper about the origins of the songs.

JK: After Right Place came Desitively Bonnaroo (Atco Records 1974) with Allen Toussaint producing again.

Dr. J.: On Bonnaroo there was "Everybody Wanna Get Rich Right Away" and "Make A Better World" but there weren't top ten records like "Right Place" was. He (Toussaint) was handlin' The Meters so we did the album and went on the road together. It was a real nice show, kind of a Mardi Gras show.

JK: In 1977, you worked with Van Morrison on his Period of Transition album (Warner Bros.). Your influence was really strong. Were you arranging the horns and rhythm section?

Dr. J.: What happened on that record was me and Van co-produced it. I had written out the horn parts but when we went and did it, it came out different. We wound up not agreein' on what was gonna happen. I also got the rhythm section together for him. It was Reggie McBride and Ollie Brown. At the time they were Stevie Wonder's band. The guitar player was supposed to be Ray Parker Jr. ("Ghostbusters") but Van didn't dig the way Ray worked. Ray was into overdubbin' and Van didn't dig that so we cut the date with no guitar player. It was strange, he brought Ray all the way over to England and then sent him home. It's tough 'cause I can never see a record through his eyes and he can't see it through mine, but it's his record so I gotta respect what he's doin'.

JK: Morrison is notorious for being tempermental but what a singer!

Dr. J.: I always did want to work with the cat 'cause me and Henry Glover were interested in takin' this cat to a studio and have him do standard R & B ballads. He can sing the hell outta that stuff but hasn't recorded anything like that. I think it would be a real turn-on for the public to hear him sing that stuff.

JK: Still, it must've been one of your more interesting sessions.

Dr. J.: Y'gotta figure that at the time I was workin' with Aretha (Franklin), Ray Charles, Bobby Womack. Everyone I was workin' with was interestin' people in those days. I was doin' everything from Dolly Parton and Emmylou Harris, doin' country dates and stuff. During that time I worked with alotta people that maybe I wouldn'ta got a chance to work with if I'd been on the road giggin'.

JK: How did the Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack album come about?

Dr. J.: I always had a fear of doin' something like that. It was like if I did a solo record, I'd go play the Holiday Inn circuit. I wasn't very gung-ho on doin' it. I started playin' "Moonlight in Vermont" and the kinda shit we'd do in an after-hours joint in New Orleans, the kinda stuff like if some guy tipped us bad to do a song and we wanted to throw it in his face. I look at it now and think, well, maybe I should've practiced for it, woodshedded 'n got it together and all that...but on the other hand if I had did that, I probably wouldn'ta did the record.

JK: How long did the session take?

Dr. J.: About three hours. It mighta been two three-hour dates. I did The Brightest Smile In Town for Clean Cuts too. I like the concept of Clean Cut Records. They make a decent sounding record. A guy like Jack Heyrman can do some things that other labels can't 'cause he's not goin' for a big money scene.

JK: Could you talk a little about your piano technique?

Dr. J.: I really don't have any technique. I can fall into a thing like Professor Longhair or Allen Toussaint and do somebody else's thing a little bit and the easiest thing for me to do is Huey Smith. But my own stuff...I have no idea what I'm doin'. I just play. Sometimes at night I'll get out my tape recorder and just listen to Art Tatum and Ben Webster and that'll get me inspired. But that's as close as anything to me practicing.

JK: Do you find anymore freedom in playing solo? Do you improvise a lot more?

Dr. J.: Y'know, it's funny, when I first did those dates, now and then I feel freer but I'm more equipped to hookin' a band together and makin' a group sound tight than I am to just sit down and play that way. Sometimes when I have a good instrument then it'll be nice, but when I play on a bad instrument it's so stupid! It doesn't make any sense at all. It's a hit and miss proposition.

JK: So what's next?

Dr. J.: I might go to Japan and make a record there. When I go to England, I play with a band called Diz and the Doormen. They do a lot of New Orleans stuff, lots of Professor Longhair. Diz plays piano. The drummer's from Ireland, he's really funky. Him and the bass player, Pete, play really good with me. They go out and do their set, then I do mine. Then I'll go get out the guitar...

JK: So you're still playing?

Dr. J.: When I have a guitar to play. I had a (Gibson) Byrdland that got ripped off and I was so depressed I didn't even wanna think about gettin' another one. I had it 20 years. I'm not one of those guys who own 50 guitars. I just had one. I gotta guy who's gonna try and make me one. I can't play a regular guitar with a big neck 'cause when I got shot in my fingers\*, so I gotta play one with a small neck.

JK: Just one last important question, what does "Jockomo Feena Hey!" mean?

Dr. J.: Somethin' like kiss my ass, chew my drawers!

\*According to **the Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll**, Dr. John suffered a hand wound in a 1961 barroom gunfight which forced him to take up bass with a Dixieland band for awhile.

Suggested Listening:

- Gris-Gris - Atco Records - SD33-234 (1968)
- Remedies - Atco Records - SD33-316 (1970)
- Gumbo - Atco Records - 7006 (1972)
- In The Right Place - Atco Records SD-7018 - (1973)
- Desitively Bonnaroo - Atco Records SD-7043 - (1974)
- Plays Mac Rebennack - Clean Cuts - 705 (1982)
- The Brightest Smile In Town - Clean Cuts 707 - (1983)
- Such A Night (with Diz and The Doormen) Spindrift Records (available as English import) - Spin 107 - (1984)

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By Elaine Garfield

## IN PROFILE

### PIERCE PETTIS

Boy, New York really is a hell of a town, isn't it? No place for sissies. And here comes this young guy from Carrboro, North Carolina, with guitar, harmonicas and independently-produced records in tow. He gets up on stage at the proverbial - indeed, the only - Greenwich Village folk club. Sings a song about his grandmother. And in less than a year, he has half the media in town singing the praises of his singing.

His name is Pierce Pettis, and the consensus is that he's among the most talented additions to our stable of singer-songwriters in recent years.

It's hard to discuss his gifts, because that requires a decision about where to focus first. There's his voice: smooth, deep, and possessed of a strong emotional range. His enviable skills on guitar and harmonica, both of which, his performances remind us, can be used to elevate an audience collective pulse rate while remaining within the "folk" idiom. But it's the songs that are, perhaps, most impressive. Pierce Pettis writes the kind of song you want to learn as you're hearing it for the first time.

There's that song about his grandmother for instance, a live version of which appears in the December '85 issue of *Fast Folk*. With disarming simplicity, he recounts the growth of this "gangly girl," a secret poet of Mississippi, who as a young mother sees her marriage cut short by the Depression. Late in life, when "a hardening of the arteries (and) a softening of the mind" confine her to a hospital bed, "the family worries in the whispering dark if she's got her religion right." While Pettis laments, in the last verse "I mean to go and see her, but I cannot ever seem to find the time," it is clear that he has seen and thought a great deal of her. It is our good fortune that he is so generous with his memories.

His debut album's title, *Moments* - taken from the song covered by Folk-ano in the March 1986 *Fast Folk* and also slated for a new album by Dion (of "Runaround Sue" fame) - is aptly chosen. Pettis' songs are endowed with so many striking musical and lyrical moments, it's possible to continue to make fresh discoveries after hearing the record many times. There's the dream in which President Lincoln attends a party, for example, "and the ladies all wanted to dance with ol' Abe, 'cause he looked like



five-dollar bills." Or the way vocals and instrumentals build to a masterwork of heartbreak in "The Song at the End of the Movie," which appears on a recent Joan Baez album.

Discussing his approach to songwriting, Pettis says, "It's good to have a hook line. It's even better to have five." Not that he expects to hit the pop charts any day now. "Music is so hard," he says. "If you're going to put that much effort in it for money, why not just go to law school?"

Then, too, there is Pettis' *First Maxim on Commercialism*: "The best way to offend people is to try to please them." That's not the kind of attitude with which one endears oneself to the brass at Columbia or Elektra-Asylum, but Pettis says his experience has led him to the conclusion that better records come out of independent recording, anyway. "It forces you to get more for less instead of the other way around. It's as if I had invested in a small business." Conversely, he says, "It's real easy to spend record companies' money."

What he lacks in financial resources is more than compensated for, on stage and in the studio, by that voice, that playing and those songs,

which now get regular airplay on WNEW's Sunday morning "Mixed Bag" program. The show's host, Pete Fornatale, who devotes one program each year to "alternate music awards," lists Pettis among the best new singer-songwriters of 1985.

Listeners also heard Pettis in an extended interview/performance on the show; which aired July 20.

Don't miss him or his record. After all, you're probably as big a sucker as the rest of us for a Southerner singing about his grandmother. Especially when he does it so well.

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FOR MY LOVER  
(Words and Music by Tracy Chapman)

Two weeks in a Virginia jail  
For my lover, for my lover  
Twenty thousand dollar bail  
For my lover, for my lover

And everybody thinks  
That I'm the fool  
But they don't get  
Any love from you

The things we won't do for love  
I'd climb a mountain  
If I had to  
And risk my life  
So I could have you

Everyday I'm psychoanalyzed  
For my lover, for my lover  
They dope me up and I'll tell  
'em lies  
For my lover, for my lover

I follow my heart  
And leave my head to ponder  
Deep in this love  
No man can shake

I follow my heart  
And leave my mind to wonder  
Is this love worth  
The sacrifices I make

(Copyright 1983 Tracy Chapman)

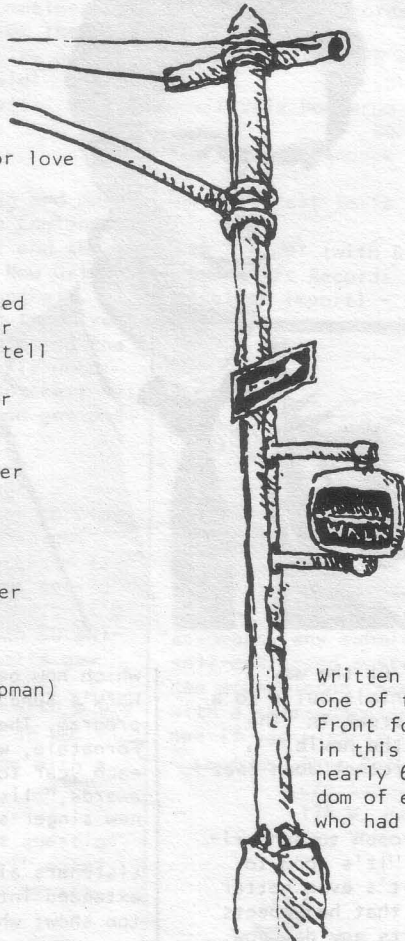
UNITED TOOL & DIE

When I was a kid I used to spend some time  
Ridin' the busses, just ridin' the lines.  
Get off at Michigan Ave., past the pawn shops and dives  
To a place my daddy worked, United Tool & Die-  
United Tool and Die, United Tool and Die,  
My Daddy worked United Tool and Die.

Grey was the metal and grey was the mill,  
When I close my eyes I can see him there still:  
Blue was his apron and blue was his collar,  
Workin' all week for the family dollar -  
For the family dollar, for the family dollar,  
Workin' all week for the family dollar.

Now United Tool and Die was just a little "job shop,"  
Thirty-two men from the bottom to the top.  
In every corner of the shop there was a place for each man,  
And next to every machine there was a blueprint stand -  
Yes a blueprint stand, just a stand and a man,  
Next to every machine there was a blueprint stand.

'Cause a tool and die maker's gotta follow a plan,  
And the labor is skilled if you're a journeyman  
'Cause you're makin' the tools and you're makin' the dies,  
That'll stamp out the parts they will use on the line -  
They will use on the line, they'll use you on that line  
Stampin' the parts they will use on the line.



**SIDE LYRICS ONE**

Now United Tool and Die it was a union shop,  
U.A.W. bottom to the top.  
My dad was shop steward back in '63,  
He used to talk about Reuther and the old Big Three -  
Although they're not as big as they used to be,  
But that was all back in 1963.

For twenty-seven years that man he put in his time;  
I remember him sayin' that he usually didn't mind.  
They had a little set aside and an old house to sell;  
They moved to the country and it's just as well -  
You know it's just as well, yes it's just as well,  
They moved to the country and it's just as well.

'Cause United closed down back 'round '78,  
Seems they fell onto hard times.  
Call it foreign competition, call it laggin' behind,  
People out of work, they call it "standing in lines" -  
Yeah they're standing in lines, you know they're  
standing in lines,  
People out of work standing in long lines still.

(Words and Music c 1986 Leo Kretzner)

Written in honor of the literacy crusade that took place in 1980  
one of the first programs to be implemented by the Sandinista  
Front for National Liberation. Duo Guardabarranco participated  
in this successful effort, which lowered the illiteracy rate from  
nearly 65% to 12%. This song expresses gratitude for the free-  
dom of expression that the literacy crusade brought to those  
who had previously been unable to read or write.

QUE LINDO TENER PAPEL  
How lovely to have paper  
- Salvador Cardenal, Nicaragua

Que lindo tener papel,  
lapiz, manos, gana,  
y a vos, amor, volando en  
el cielo de mis inquietudes  
para dejar salir  
estas palomas que hacen letras  
y que leeras vos  
se hacen palomas que  
atrasiesan las ventanas de tus ojos,  
llevandote el mensaje de decirte  
que son tuyas, nada mas  
que son tuyas, nada mas

Que lindo tener papel,  
pencil, hands, desire,  
and you, my love flying in  
the sky of my aspirations,  
trying to free these doves,  
freeing them as they turn into letters,  
and as you read these words,  
they turn into doves that fly,  
passing through the windows of your eyes  
bursting with the message that they bring to you  
These are your words, only yours,  
these are your doves, only yours,  
These are your words, after all



May They Be Blessed

Some people's houses are on good firm ground  
Where tall and sheltering trees stand  
They are safe in their homes  
Their roots are well known  
They can welcome the winds as they blow

But some people go to the edge of the woods  
Where the dark and the wild things grow  
And their lives blow like leaves  
In more dangerous winds  
For reasons they may never know

May they be blessed who live in those woods  
whether in them their lives rise or fall  
For their danger teaches us much of love  
fear graces us all

Some people walk in small clean steps  
every movement is carefully planned  
They may never see all their heart longs to see  
But they will always be sure where they stand

Oh but some people move with a lurching step  
Always reaching for much too much  
They may never find what their heart needs to find  
Always reaching beyond what they can touch

May they be blessed who run through this life  
Where it would be so much wiser to crawl  
For their passion teaches us much of love  
And their fear graces us all

Now some people love with a measuring heart  
While balancing chances with gains  
They will love safely or love not at all  
And they will have no time for their pain

Oh but some people love with their reckless hearts  
Never bargaining pleasures or costs  
And they often burn in the heat of their own flame  
And when they lose it is much they have lost

May they be blessed whose hearts are this way  
Who will love fiercely or love not at all  
Their loneliness teaches us much of love  
And their fear graces us all

But I hope I live in a good strong house  
And I walk down clear roads sure but slow  
I hope those I love might be those who love me  
But I'm not lost where the wild things grow

But let me never forget those whose lives burn  
too brightly for reasons they may never know  
And may I not stand too long in dangerous winds  
But let me never forget how they can blow

(Repeat 1st bridge)

c 1986 Scott Alarik

NOBODY BUT YOU

I'd rather see the sunshine than the rain  
I'd rather see you back on your feet again  
I want to help you up, over and through  
'Cause nobody loves me like you do

Nobody loves me like you do  
Nobody thrills me like you  
Nobody scares me as much as you  
Nobody but you

Sometimes I'm a stupid and a selfish man

Some days I do the best I can  
I would be a sorrier man indeed  
If not for you

Chorus

The moon behind the clouds on a windy night  
I wonder if things are going to turn out right  
You make me feel that dreams come true  
Nobody loves me like you

Chorus

c 1986 Cormac McCarthy/ Frozen Rope Music

EVERYBODY NEEDS A HUG

Well, lets hug mama, lets hug daddy  
Let's hug the kids from here to cincinatti  
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT EVERYBODY NEEDS A HUG!

Let's hug the neighbors (They'll all be suprised!)  
Hug politicians (loosen up their ties)  
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT EVERYBODY NEEDS A HUG!

Let's hug flowers, let's hug trees  
Let's hug the birds, let's hug the bees  
Let's hug the rich, let's hug the poor  
if they think we're crazy,  
we'll just hug 'em some more

Let's hug the lonely, let's hug the famous  
Let's hug each other, who could ever blame us?  
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT EVERYBODY NEEDS A HUG!

Let's hug some kitties, let's hug some doggies  
Let's hug some turtles, let's hug some froggies  
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT EVERYBODY NEEDS A HUG!

Words and music c 1985 M Streetpeople  
LaLa's Kitchen music- BMI

ONE MORE ROUND

CATHARINE DAVID

In my childhood textbook, the world's a different place,  
Lovely sphere of green and blue in space.  
Now that we know better, the photographs are in,  
Swirl of clouds where continents have been.

One more round, let's go out and paint the town,  
One more round, can't take in what I have found,  
One more, one more round.

On the office table, give the globe a spin,  
Who paints England yellow and red Berlin.  
The more my eyes are opened, the more the colors run,  
so let's step off this crazy quilt for fun.

It's not that we don't care anymore,  
It's just not the way we planned it.  
It's just that it's not there anymore,  
my imaginary planet.

**BREAKFAST IN BED**  
(Words and Music by Bob Halperin)

I'm just a simple man  
my pleasures are few  
One small favor, though  
I'll ask of you  
It ain't so hard  
so don't worry your head  
All I want is my  
breakfast in bed

**CHORUS:**

Breakfast in bed, aw honey  
Breakfast in bed, you know  
what I like  
Breakfast in bed, aw honey  
All I want is my  
breakfast in bed

A tall glass of orange juice  
nice and cold  
Squeezed in the kitchen  
just ten minutes old  
Bacon and eggs sitting  
on that tray  
Hold it now honey,  
don't you go away

Maybe after breakfast  
if we have a little time  
You could jump in  
and share this bed of mine  
We won't leave til the sun  
turns red  
Oh, what a joy to have my  
breakfast in bed

**Chorus**

(Copyright Bob Halperin)

**LOVE COMES TO THE SIMPLE HEART**  
(Words and Music by Chuck Hall)

Love comes to the simple heart  
in the simplest of ways  
In the face of simple malice  
she will simply find a way  
She will find a way to love  
though that way be locked  
and barred  
Though uninvited, in her wisdom  
Love comes to the simple heart

**CHORUS:**

Love comes to the simple heart  
Not the mocking or the proud  
Always slain and resurrected  
Love comes to the simple heart

Love comes to the simple heart  
though her pain remain concealed  
Finding freedom in forgiveness  
no wrong against her she reveals  
Bound by her determination  
that retribution have no start  
Seeking out a new creation  
Love comes to the simple heart

**Chorus**

Love comes to the simple heart  
in the simplest of ways

**SIDE LYRICS TWO**

In an unprotected moment  
touched by unexpected grace  
Then how weak our sad defenses  
how useless the facade  
As through a thousand veiled offenses  
love comes to the simple heart

**Chorus**

(Copyright 1985 Cheap Hotel Music  
Publishing Company, BMI)

**CLOSE TO DREAMS**

When I can't fall asleep at night  
I count my blessings, one by one  
Soon I am floating somewhere  
close to dreams  
Could it be heaven  
Soon I am floating somewhere  
close to dreams  
could it be heaven

I have no wings, have you  
an extra pair  
I have no breath, it's vanished  
into thin air  
Don't make me go back there  
I'd rather stay up here  
Don't make me go back there  
I really love it here

**TAKE ME I WANT TO GO WITH YOU**

(Jason Threlfall)

In this world there are so many  
people  
Each a river taking different  
channels  
To the open sea  
Wherever that may be

And everybody has got their own story  
Filled with dreams, tears and some  
glory  
From this life we breath  
And most will tell it for free

**(Chorus):**

So take me I want to go with you  
Way up high in your big balloon  
And travel straight up to the moon  
Take me I want to go with you

I met a woman from Tuscon, Arizona  
Young and free and traveling all  
alone  
This vast country  
Just takin it day by day  
She said she left behind her all  
her family  
But not their love for that she did  
carry

**HOUSE FULL OF FORTUNE**

**Chorus**

In a house full of fortune, both cruel and kind  
A man and a woman spun out their lives  
They raised children and rustled for dreams  
Through the blossoms and brambles of the years' passing scenes.

Now the children are scattered, on weekends they call  
While memories gather on frames on the wall  
It's not age that startled him, chilling his bones  
But that he's completing the journey alone.

He tells me he's fine when I call on the phone  
That he's been to a play and played cards down the road  
But I know that every day round about noon  
He's walked to her grave and told her the same news.

His house stands guardian over the past  
Each portrait and pillow where she placed it last  
Three years now we've urged him to move on  
But it's there he finds shelter from the pain that she's gone.

I ache to protect him from life's last cruel turn  
I wrestle with fate's great lack of concern  
For this sweet man's devotion to his dearest friend  
And his bittersweet longing that but fate will end

words and music c 1986 by Deborah Silverstein



In her heart and dreams  
And shared it with the people she'd  
meet  
And I said

(Chorus)

I met a man in Pittsburgh, Pennsyl-  
vania  
A steel worker by trade  
He was standing in the welfare line  
Just waitin his time  
He said this ain't no way to make a  
living  
But times are hard and so will be  
changing  
This life I've known  
But my spirit will carry me on  
And I said



THE RAIN TODAY

1 Rain beats wet  
And snow dries cold  
Please give me the black you hold  
Oh, I loose my bold

I guess the rain today  
Was a giveaway  
Cynics fire  
And the saints they pray  
Given rain today  
White glass, red glass  
Broken staining watercolors

Oh baby please don't go away  
We'll find some jewels  
That we won't have to throw away

2 Swans can cry  
And lovers can scar  
I want your breaths  
Just as they are  
Don't want to look at the stars

Chorus

Oh how can you just fade away  
You leave me here  
The comfort becomes dear  
Oh my dear, my dear

3 Pain is planned  
By the Gods in their thrones  
We gnash through words on telephones  
Grow thin plywood bones

Chorus

But I only touch  
Your eyes to care  
If gestures lie  
These eyes they cry  
We love, we dare

c 1985 S. Amelia White

(Chorus)

I met a girl in Boston, Massachu-  
setts  
Five years old with freckles and a  
blue dress  
Her mother wore  
So many years before

She took my hand and placed into it  
gently  
A string of colored beads and she  
told me  
These are yours to keep  
They're friendship beads  
And I said

(Chorus)

BALLAD OF A FEMALE SHANTY SINGER

I can't say I've been sailing long- ten years is not that much  
But I know the ropes o' the ol' big boats - b' God I know the songs  
I've hauled on many a halyard, and I've sailed up and down the coast,  
But ye seem t' think that a gender change is what I need the most!  
I'm a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts;  
I may not have the register - at least I've got the guts

I started out in Mystic - a museum by the shore,  
And they all said; "What a natural! Never heard such a voice before!  
You may be the best shanty-man that we ever had,  
And when it comes to being authentic - well it really is too bad that  
You're a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts;  
You haven't got the register - at least you've got the guts!"

When I sailed on board the Unicorn as Festival Shan  
I took the place o' the bo'sun's mate, and I worked as a deck hand;  
I had an idea as I worked on board, to record some songs at sea.  
But when it came to the recording - of course they couldn't use me!  
For I'm a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts;  
I haven't got the register - at least I've got the guts.

When I signed on Young America I tried to play down my sex,  
I went out drinking with the boys, and I did my work on deck;  
I tried to prove I was in their league, and to impress them all  
I worked day and night seven days a week, but even then they'd call;  
"You're a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts  
Ye haven't got the register, and ye haven't got the guts! "

The engineer came out on deck, he thought to give us a hand,  
But when I showed him what to do - this he could not stand!  
So he went and got a gang of men, and threw me overboard,  
And as I swam back to the pier the anger in me roared:  
"You're a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts,  
You may not have the register - at least you've got the guts!"

And when I got back to the ship - Oh I began to fume!  
I found that blackguard cowering down in the engine room;  
It made me loose my temper, and I drew out my knife --  
I may be a woman but I'm man enough to threaten your life!  
I'm a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts;  
I may not have the register - but at least I've got the guts

Well, the first mate brought us both to terms and I finished out the season  
I was happy to get off that boat - ye know I had good reason!  
I moved up north to Boston, to finish my degree  
In History of Music- Ethnomusicology  
I'm a female shanty-singer, no ifs ands or butts  
I may not have the register - at least I've got the guts

And now I'm settled on the land - I've married the second mate  
I'm happy with my family, but there is one thing I hate  
To hear my favorite shanty songs sung in Glee Club style  
By men who've never been to sea - to me the sound is vile!  
For I'm a female shanty singer, no ifs ands or butts  
I may not have the register, but at least I've got the guts!

c 1984 Talitha Claypool Nelson

Continued from pg 3

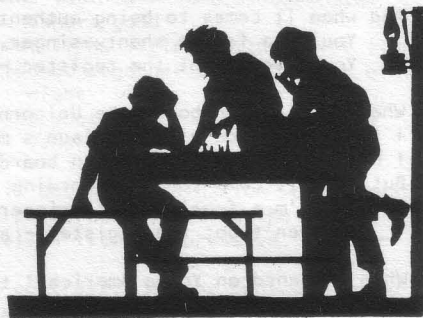
are interested in songs that have enough substance to survive repeated listening and are suitable for interpretation by singers interested in exploiting their content. A basic tenet of Fast Folk since the CoOp days has been that the song is more important than the singer. While not intending to denigrate ourselves in anyway, what we mean is that the spirit of the magazine is to put forth songs and enjoy songwriting and not concentrate much on the building of personalities as it is logical and profitable for a more commercial record company to do. While stating this as a biased editorial point of view we are also excited about the fact that so many of the writers we have worked with are very good interpreters of their material and others as well. The Fast Folk revue this year was composed of songs written by each performer as well as one by someone else we have worked with.

We also take a historical view about what is going on here. The generation that grew up on folk and acoustic music can look back at its context now. What Fast Folk can do is document the vitality of a scene in progress which is national in scope and various in its personalities. Fast Folk has already shown itself to be a legitimate force simply in the frequency that cuts are played on folk radio shows across the country. Our mail also tells us there is a sizable audience for many of the different kinds of songs we record. Our continuing requests from radio stations for back issues and information about the organization supports the drive to keep going as do the request from the Library of Congress for current issue when we happen to fall behind.

The growth of Flying Fish and Rounder as well as many independent record distributors is clear evidence that there is a folk audience to be stimulated, capitalized on or entertained depending on your point of view. The fact is that the audience is willing to buy records if they find material they like. It is there in large quantities.

The impact of Fast Folk is all the more impressive considering the ridiculously low pressing runs of some of the early issues. Some were produced on the 400-700 copy range. We had until recently, equally limited distribution. Now we are distributed by Rounder, but still rely in large part on new subscriptions and back issue sales to pay for new issues.

What is important is the amount of attention many Fast Folk artists have received through appearances and recordings on the magazine. We don't take credit for their creativity, but we have given our public a chance to hear them and the response has been very good.



In the village a new songwriter's exchange in the style of the Cornelia St. Songwriter's Exchange has been born at the Village Corner on Bleecker at La Guardia. Some of the best songs from the first years of the CoOp came out of Cornelia Street and the stimulating friendly competition it provided. The idea was and remains to bring in a song, in whole or in part, written the week of the meeting. It is a writer's round table, not an audition for anything including this magazine. The SpeakEasy is now the only full time folk club in New York since the demise of Folk City which in fact had not been a full time folk club for a few years. The SpeakEasy still carries on as a musician's cooperative run by and large by the people who make up the acoustic scene in the village. New singers keep showing up at the hoots and the scene goes through waves of solidarity and fragmentation as

people go off to explore their own work and bring the fruits of it back.

Another child of the Fast Folk work has been the proliferation of recordings by artists who have seen that that a record of their work is within reach. The scene is one of growth. I hesitate to use the word scene because of the trendy implications it has; because in the end what goes on here are many individual songwriters working on their own, struggling with their own craft for their own reasons. Fast Folk is not designed to pass judgment on the scene or even be so arrogant as to pretend to direct it. We do however plan to extract whatever we find that is good and innovative from the working population of writers hoping that they, the writers, will lead the scene as good artists often do.

We are interested in Fast Folk being a responsive voice for people who enjoy songs and what they can do for individuals, and the population at large. The writing, listening, and playing of songs can entertain and transform people and we at Fast Folk enjoy all the forces that songs have. We invite submissions and criticism from any source.

Richard Meyer

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FOR MY LOVER

© by Tracy Chapman

Em G D C Em G D C

Em G D A Em G

1. Two weeks in a Virginia jail for my lover, for my lover Twenty thousand dollar bail  
2. Everyday I'm psychoanalyzed for my lover, for my lover They dope me up and I tell em lies

D A C A

1. for my lover, for my lover  
2. for my lover, for my lover

Every body thinks that I'm the fool  
" " " "

D C Em

1. they don't get any love from you The things we won't do for  
2. " " " " " " " "

A Em G

1. love I'd climb a mountain if I had to I'd risk my life so I could have you  
2. " " " " " " " "

D C C

(you) you you you you you you you (I) follow my heart  
2. " " " " " " " " 3rd time to ending →

Em D C

and leave my head to ponder deep in this love no man can shake

C Em D

I follow my heart And leave my mind to wonder is this love worth the sacra-

C → Em (ending) G D C

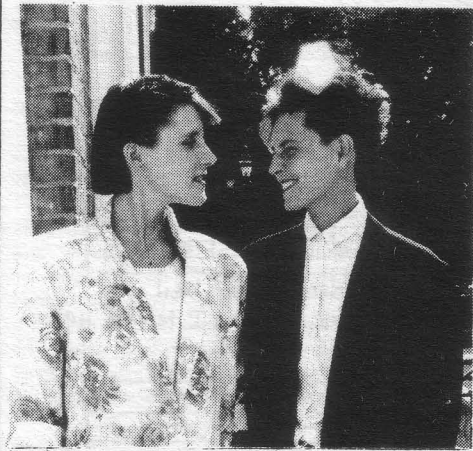
fices I make (→ to beginning)

Em G D C

©1983



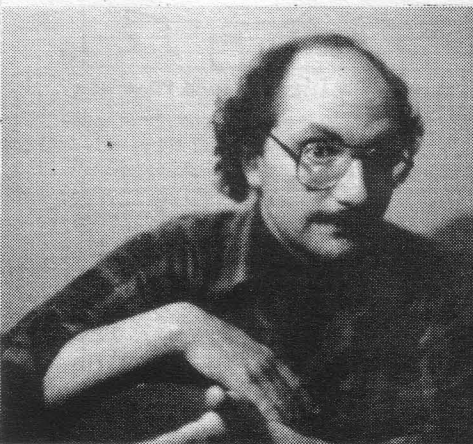
**ON THE RECORD**



AMELIA AND JENNIFER have been performing together since summer 1984. An eclectic acoustic duo, their original repertoire ranges from traditional to "folk" and jazz/blues to rock. They perform regularly in local clubs and coffeehouses, and have recently completed an eight-song cassette with Blue Jay Studio engineer Stephen Selzer.



BOB HALPERIN has been playing blues and ragtime music on the East and West Coasts and Europe for the last 15 years. He now lives in Portsmouth, NH, where he is working solo and in various musical combinations.

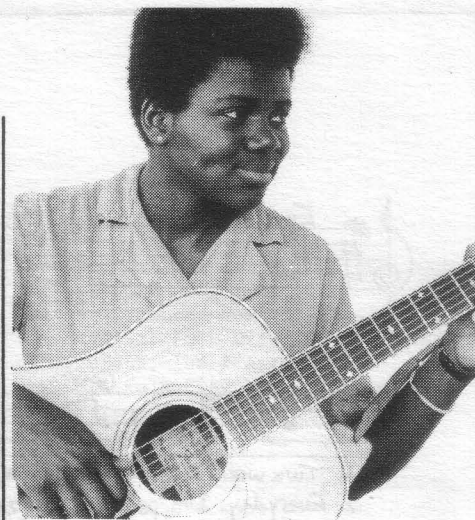


LEO KRETZNER is a singer of a wide variety of modern and traditional folk songs, accompanying himself on the guitar and mountain dulcimer. He is respected as one of the foremost innovators of the dulcimer, playing everything from Irish jigs to rock and roll tunes in a lively flatpicking style. His songs with guitar and dulcimer range from old-time to original, from ballads to sing-alongs and topical songs. He is known to intersperse droll commentary with his music.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Kretzner now lives in Watertown, MA where he performs and teaches music. He travels widely and has presented concerts and workshops across the country.



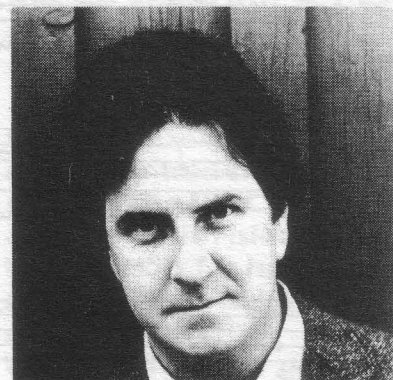
TALITHA NELSON has been hailed as both a fine singer of sea songs and a brilliant balladeer. Having worked at Mystic Seaport, South Street Seaport, and as a deck-hand on board a couple of tall ships, she brings unusual authenticity to her maritime music. This is complemented by a wonderful knowledge of Gaelic songs which she has developed through a lifetime interest in Celtic music. Her recent tours in New England and the Midwest have included appearances at Passim, the Eagle Tavern (NYC) and the Ohio Scottish Games (Oberlin). Talitha accompanies herself on Anglo concertina, guitar, recorder, pennywhistle and Celtic Harp.



TRACY CHAPMAN is originally from Cleveland, Ohio where she began putting her lyrical poetry to music at age 13. Her mother taught her the blues, gospel, Motown soul and R&B, and these influences stayed with her when she discovered folk music in high school. She soon became a regular at the campus coffeehouse--a scene that was repeated when she was discovered on the campus of Tufts University in 1982.

While pursuing a major in anthropology there, she began taking the Boston club scene by storm, playing the Nameless, Modern Times, Somewhere Else, Somerville Books and Records, & the seminal Harvard Square street scene. Since 1985 she has opened for Linda Tillery, Odetta, Chris Williamson and others at Passim, Boston's Opera House, and Arlington Town Hall.

She was featured in a Boston Globe article this spring.



Cormac McCarthy is a songwriter who lives in Kittery Point, Maine. Cormac grew up in southwestern New Hampshire, a rural area supported by mills and lumbering. He earns his living as a musician performing from Washington, D.C. to northern Maine.

Cormac has completed his first album which should be out in mid-86. Anyone interested in being put on Cormac's mailing list can write to him at: Box 4675, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 03801





FLOR DE CANA creates an exciting synthesis of original music and Latin American "New Song" through the work of six performers with strong ties to the cultures of both North and Latin America. Formed in 1984 while participating in a cultural exchange program in Nicaragua, the ensemble has played in a wide variety of community settings both in Nicaragua and the U.S. Performance sites have included colleges, coffeehouses, churches, elementary and secondary schools, rallies and multi-media events.

The Nueva Cancion or New Song movement is the inspiration and primary musical influence for the group. It joins Latin American musical traditions with contemporary social realities in an eloquent expression of hope for a better life.

Flor de Cana's members are versed in a wide variety of musical idioms including folk, jazz, classical and flamenco. Among the instruments represented are the charango (an Andean stringed instrument made from an armadillo), the tiple (a 12-stringed Columbian instrument), acoustic and flamenco guitars, electric bass, saxophone, bombo, conga, bongos (Caribbean and Andean drums), and small percussion.

About ¿QUE LINDO TENER?: composer Salvador Cardenal is a Nicaraguan "Nueva Cancion" singer/songwriter, a member of Duo Guardabarranco, a popular Nicaraguan duo, along with his sister, Katia. They recently recorded an album, produced by Jackson Browne, entitled "Si Buscabas."



CATHARINE DAVID

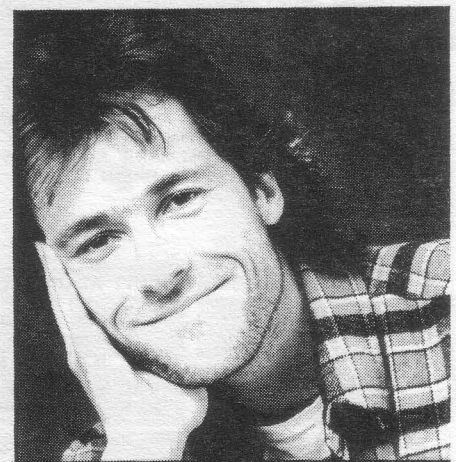
Returning to Boston after living for a while in Los Angeles, CATHARINE DAVID has established herself on both the pop and folk fronts. As a back up singer with Didi and the Amplifiers, she recorded an album for CBS records, and sang briefly behind Laurie Sargent of Epic's Face to Face. Her distinctive voice is also on Patty Larkin's album on Rounder Records.

Catharine has played the Idler, the Tam, Passim, Nightstage and Jonathon Swifts, going both acoustic and electric, alone or with a band. Her album "Hands on the Wheel" has received regular airplay and she recently won a WXXS Starquest night at the Paradise which has given her career a boost.



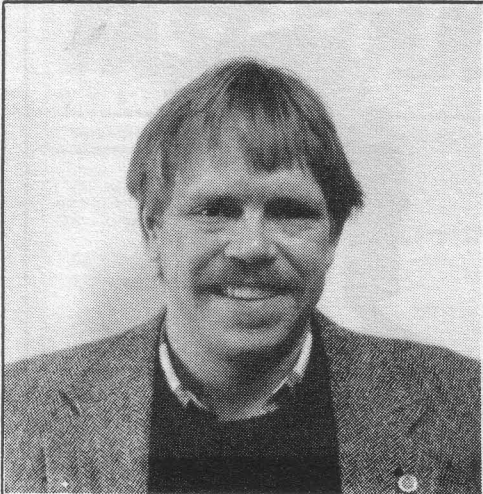
DEBORAH SILVERSTEIN has been singing and writing since her childhood spent in Johnstown, a small town in the Allegheny mountains of western PA. She began performing extensively in 1973 when she moved to Boston and became a founding member of the New Harmony Sisterhood, a five woman string band. New Harmony performed around Boston and the east coast for six years. Rooted in the traditional Appalachian stringband style, their repertoire grew to include both traditional and contemporary music concerning people from all walks of life, focusing particularly on the lives of women. As a guitarist, singer and songwriter, Deborah's contribution was significant in establishing the band's popularity and success. "All Our Lives - A Women's Songbook" and "And Ain't I A Woman" (an Album) are two of the lasting achievements the group produced.

In 1980 Deborah joined a new group of musicians to form Fire on the Mountain, a traditional bluegrass band. Since the spring of 1982, Deborah has been focusing on her solo repertoire in clubs and coffeehouses in New England. Her song "Draglines" is somewhat of a folk standard.



JASON THRELFALL: "Originally from New Jersey, I've been performing folk music in the Boston area for nearly two years now. I've been manager at the Nameless Coffeehouse in Cambridge for the past year and am currently involved with the possible establishment of an east coast Bread & Roses."





CHUCK HALL studied classical guitar and applied music at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire, and fingerstyle guitar with Vic Hyman. His songs reflect the variety of jobs he has held, and the characters he has known. Chuck's album "One Night in a Cheap Hotel" is due to be released in January. For more information write P.O.Box 3087 Beverly, Ma. 01915.

MARIAN STREETPEOPLE and BARBARA HERSON have been performing together throughout New England for the past three years. Their music ranges from folk to country to soft and hard rock. Drawing original material from personal experiences, they have entertained audiences in a variety of settings including coffeehouses, clubs, concert halls, & special community sponsored events.

The Streetpeople/Herson repertoire approaches issues of personal and political interest, and their performance invites a range of imaginative audience participation.

Singer/songwriter SUE KRANTZ is known for a candid dynamic stage presence insightful lyrics and stirring melodies intertwining the topical with the reflective, the critical with the embracing; with humor, and poignancy Sue navigates across the full range of emotions lending a voice to social issues and personal concerns with compassion and courage. In a clear vibrant voice Sue Krantz sends out a vision from her heart to yours and is sure to leave a lasting impression.



SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

-1-  
FOR MY LOVER  
(TRACY CHAPMAN)  
TRACY CHAPMAN/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-2-  
UNITED TOOL AND DIE  
(LEO KRETZNER)  
LEO KRETZNER/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-3-  
QUE LINDO TENER PAPEL  
(HOW LOVELY TO HAVE PAPER)  
(SALVADOR CARDENAL)  
FLOR DE CANA  
(LATIN AMERICAN NEW SONG MUSIC ENSEMBLE)  
ROSEMARIE STRAIJER/VOCAL AND PERCUSSION  
BRIAN FOLKINS AMADOR/GUITAR

-4-  
MAY THEY BE BLESSED  
(SCOTT ALARIK)  
SCOTT ALARIK/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-5-  
NOBODY BUT YOU  
(CORMAC McCARTHY)  
CORMAC McCARTHY/GUITAR AND VOCAL  
RICK WATSON/PIANO AND VOCAL

-6-  
EVERYBODY NEEDS A HUG  
(STREETPEOPLE & HERSON)  
MARIAN STREETPEOPLE/GUITAR AND VOCAL  
BARBARA HERSON/HARMONICA AND VOCAL

-7-  
ONE MORE ROUND  
(CATHERINE DAVID)  
CATHERINE DAVID/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-1-  
BREAKFAST IN BED  
(BOB HALPERN)  
BOB HALPERN/GUITAR AND VOCAL  
RICK WATSON/MANDOLIN AND VOCAL

-2-  
LOVE COMES TO A SIMPLE HEART  
(CHUCK HALL)  
CHUCK HALL/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-3-  
CLOSE TO DREAMS  
(SUE KRANTZ)  
SUE KRANTZ/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-4-  
TAKE ME, I WANT TO GO WITH YOU  
(JASON THRELFALL)  
JASON THRELFALL/GUITAR AND VOCAL  
NAN DONALD/MANDOLIN

-5-  
THE RAIN TODAY  
(S. AMELIA WHITE)  
S. AMELIA WHITE/GUITAR AND VOCAL  
JENNIFER STATON/PERCUSSION AND VOCAL

-6-  
HOUSE FULL OF FORTUNE  
(DEBORAH SILVERSTEIN)  
DEBORAH SILVERSTEIN/GUITAR AND VOCAL

-7-  
BALLAD OF A FEMALE SHANTY SINGER  
(TALITHA CLAYPOOL NELSON)  
TALITHA CLAYPOOL NELSON/VOCAL