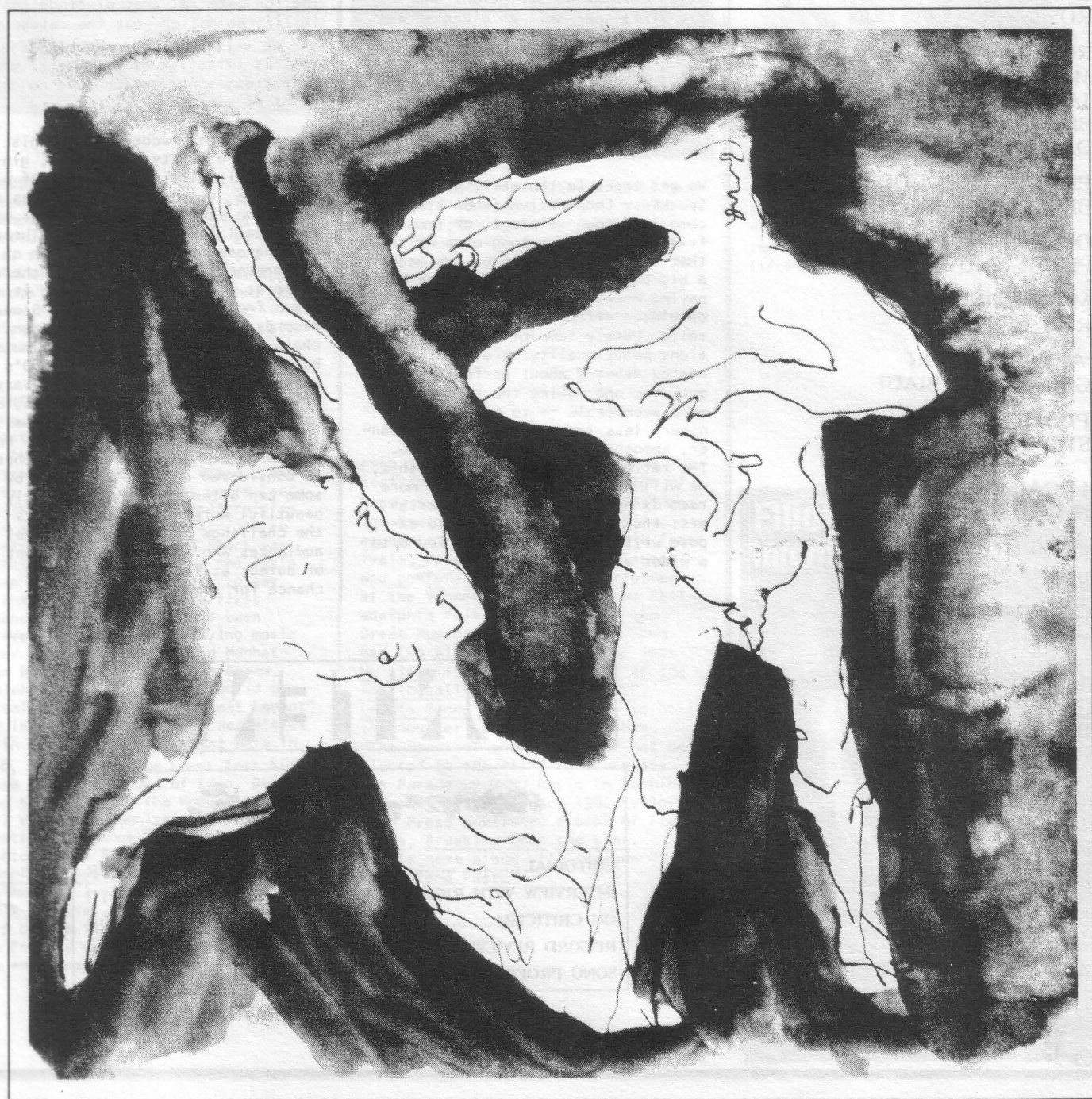


FAST FOLK

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

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Volume 3 No. 10



FAST FOLK

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

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FAST FOLK

MUSICAL MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL: "NICE"

by Richard Meyer

Nice: Foolish, stupid, to be ignorant, not knowing; a general term of approval.

Peace: Freedom from war or civil strife, an undisturbed state of mind. (Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 1964)

The question of submissions to FAST FOLK has increasingly become serious in the light of our wider distribution through subscriptions and record stores, as well as wider access to songwriting communities across the country. FAST FOLK strives to build a community to support and encourage contemporary songwriting that is based in the folk genre, but that works to refine and develop it.

We get tapes in the mail, at the SpeakEasy Cooperative (when singers come into town to play), or from friends who know a song or a writer that should get exposure. We made a big push this year to improve by paying more attention to the accumulated effects of technical details. Lately some of the conversations about quality have also been heated debates about performance quality, and making the records more acceptable -- to make them nicer, less jarring, prettier, cleaner, smoother, easier to listen to. The rationale is that by doing this, we will get more airplay, sell more records and attract more subscribers; thus having the chance to expose writers FAST FOLK has found to a wider audience.

Most of the tapes we get are inappropriate simply because the writers don't know the first thing about FAST FOLK. They have very often stated in their cover letters that they have never seen one of our records, but have only heard that we have put out a few (now 50) compilation albums. FAST FOLK is looking for songs, and most of the tapes we get are productions. We are looking for material that distinguishes itself, no matter what the category and we will pass over material that is imitative of the majority of mainstream songs, which have no point of view.

Many important recordings of this century are gritty, sun-baked, gin-soaked, high-living, and most of all immediate responses to the lives of those who sang them. Recordings on many small labels and in the Library of Congress attest to the power of performances by people living their music at the moment, even when it is drawn from older traditions. Blues records from the Delta to Chicago, chain gang recordings, country music before corporate Nashville, 1960's garage bands, and the edges of Jazz all aimed at different audiences, but had one thing in common: they challenged the niceties of the day. People who feel free to make art that is considered ugly or primitive by some can often create disturbingly beautiful work. Art that accepts the challenge of rawness may repel audiences who are numb, complacent or bored; at least it offers the chance for some stimulation.

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Today, studio recording is so facile in its ability to make lush and processed recordings that we start to forget what bare instruments really sound like, just as airbrushed pictures of young lovelies in print have offered an unreal expectation and one-dimensional view of female beauty. We are not discussing here the merits of one machine over another, and their ability to reproduce a particular sound. Rather it is the idea that sonic fashions may get in the way of the artist faithfully conveying his emotional point to his audience. The benefits of digital equipment and high grade technology are attested to by many great recorded performances. Sonic fashions are fine if that is the artistic goal; if the goal is the clear presentation of a song or reaching an audience with a strong lyric, then clarity may be more in order. A great aural experience does not imply a great song.

Many of the songs we are offered are nice. They are sung properly and gently, like folk music is "supposed to be." This is unusual in the light of many conversations with songwriters who count brash, unpredictable, raw or arcane writers as their inspiration. It seems as if the singers have not connected their emotional selves to the material they write. They have not often looked for the complex side of human beings in the situations that they construct in their songs. Many songs we get are unremarkable and polite. This is not to say that inspiring songs can contain no melodies of beauty, or sentimental ideas; the great ones, however, present them in the context of personal/emotion contrasts, or a precisely articulated performance. Prettiness is not enough to stand on its own for long.

This is a fine point, but in pursuing the idea of "nice" a bit farther, "nice" songs are reminiscent of greeting cards and wallpaper music, or paintings chosen to match a couch for cocktail conversation. I have no doubt that the writers of the nice songs we get work very hard; one can only ask them to take another look at their goal. For a music such as we work to write, drawn from the roots of our history and common raw personal experiences, the idea of "nice" is anathema.

"Nice" is the product of an art unwilling to take a stand. "Nice" is okay for awhile, but in the end has no substance, and will leave an audience feeling cheated and hungry, drained and numb, without realizing the cause is an art without commitment and devoid of stimulating content.

"Nice" is a lack of opinion. Brecht, Dylan, Coleridge, Auden, O'Casey, Tom Waits, Robert Johnson, Turner, Muddy Waters and many others who have been acclaimed as great supported that claim with work that takes chances. I can think of very few artists who have made a lasting mark based on niceness. For even songwriters who have a reputation for prettiness, such as Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon have been complex in their ideas and reached down deep for the hardest parts of themselves. Their work is dirty on a psychological level. Contrasts in art stand out be it style, subject matter, or the beauty of watching an artist take a risk his audience hasn't. Moves of this kind extend the scope of an appreciative audience and the arts as a whole.

At the editorial desk we are looking for songs that push or pull the listener. "Nice" is to be avoided because it does nothing for the listener and offers the idea that "niceness" is how society should be, and how man ought to be. Striving to be nice will force people to repress their shifting changing feelings, and desensitize themselves while they think they are being soothed. Politeness, compassion and tact are not the issues at hand, lovely craftsmanship and good musicianship are not either. "Nice" in the context of this discussion, is an absence of emphasis and a lack of commitment on the part of artists struggling to please an audience instead of themselves. We get tapes that are watered down derivatives of commercial ideas of folk music and songwriting. I understand why many people have stopped listening to it. They are not so interested in music that commands attention by sheer volume or fashion. The folk scene of previous years offered material that was poignant and sophisticated. The mean age of our audience is 28-40. These are people who were young when folk music became lyrically ambitious. Now the same audience deserves a music that can mature with them.

"Nice" is a cover for suppressed or absent feeling, and may represent an inability on the part of people to communicate the substance of real conflicts. Much of the music that we get as FAST FOLK is so watered-down both in arrangement and by studio ambience as to be unobtrusive. We want our records to be listened to and appreciated on many levels. We do not want them to be unobtrusive. Some songs take strong lyrical stands, but undermine themselves by not carrying through musically. Love can make

as strong a subject and as controversial a one as politics if it is handled seriously. The roots of the style that is now called folk are political, work songs, murder ballads and emotional love songs from all points of view. What stands for love now in many songs is often a saccharine prelude to innocuous sex, double entendres of cliché passion without the darker traits of humankind allowed to show through. Albums such as the solo record by Peter Case (on the Geffen label), and Elvis Costello's King of America are examples of mainstream records that maintain their lyrical and production integrity in a unified way. Each of these is lush and well-produced.

When a society abandons its feelings so that no outrage is acceptable, people become devoid of power. Art has been one place where we can hear the sorrows of life, the trials of kings and common people, and come away renewed by the insight and experience of the presenting artists. If people become devoid of the power to renew themselves, they become more limited in their ability to understand alternatives. If people are unable to act and react to changes around them, political structures grow up to take advantage of the vacuum by making strong rules. It is better to have ferment, and rely on the resiliency of people to see their way through. A numbed society can only appear inept and incapable to leaders who have been charged with the management of social problems. Art that is soothing and mostly a panacea will apparently make people more loving and sweeter. But art that is so sweet as to cover over its real heart is as repressive as hard laws. It is also more insidious, since it comes from the population at large and so is seen as representing the spirit of people.

It is dangerous to deny passion. We seem intent on repressing it in this age even within our libertarian society. Fear, hunger, greed, ecstasy and desire are part of human nature. We have very deep motivations for these, and it is the motivations that are repressed. Desires get covered over with change of fashion, and well-articulated madness is disguised as good living. Art is one way to allow emotional energies their life. When they merge to influence and recreate themselves, it is one of civilization's great functional achievements. There is no morality in feelings. They simply exist. Art's formidable strength is to give the audience a chance to see themselves from various points of view. Ultimately



ately, nice songs produce the opposite of nice, the opposite of peace. "Nice" reduces our complexities to generalizations, and worse, tries to convince us that pleasant feelings are appropriate in spite of complexity and conflict.

We are creature of extremes, and to pretend otherwise denies us our totality, our ability to create and the enjoyment of our greatest triumphs. "Nice" will give us a false sense of oneness and a monochromatic perspective that minimizes what individuals have to overcome to achieve their goals. Great songs reflect the impossibly subtle shifting nature that we are part of as we belong to each other.

If art is to be a success, i.e., have an impact on an audience, it has to embrace and confront some part of that audience's experience. In order to mean something, it must challenge the preconceptions of that audience, or risk the banality of preaching to the converted. Everything must be fair game, from hate to love. All the connections of history must be allowed to shed light on a subject. "Nice" is a screen; it allows us to not see what goes on around us. "Nice" allows us to destroy our surroundings and fellow living things in the name of fashion and experimentation. In the face of overpopulation and epidemic we are caught between contemporary needs and age-old social and religious restrictions. The idea of "nice" allows us to live with self-destruction in these ways and others that appear small at each moment, although they are not small.

If we as artists do not confront our demons and joys, we cannot expect our audience to grow or accept new ideas, become more complex and responsive, and grow stronger. If the songs we hear and write don't reflect as many sides of human experience as possible, then we are settling for stagnation and mediocrity.

FAST FOLK is looking for songs that will push to the edge, that will make us angry and uncomfortable, better informed and stronger. If they are love songs, let them make us swoon and fall into a reverie. The microphone is an anonymous thing which cannot help the singer communicate if he is not sure of his material. No amount of dressing, no matter how well-recorded or aurally luscious, will enhance something without commitment, or something dull. An honest performance will support almost anything, and can transcend a certain amount of ragged musicianship. One need not be a facile performer to write great songs. One must, however, believe deeply in what is being written.

The writer must be willing to go to the wall with his ideas, popular or not, to see if he is being honest with himself.

by Richard Meyer and Normi Noel

To All Involved:

Just a note to let you know how much your efforts are appreciated.

Hope you're able to continue with your work for many years to come.

Also, those of you who performed at Sugar-Loaf this Summer were a blessing to this usually broke, amateur folk-singing special-ed woodshop teacher (that's a mouthful).

Yeah, thanks sincerely,

Alfie Ragonese
West Milford, NJ

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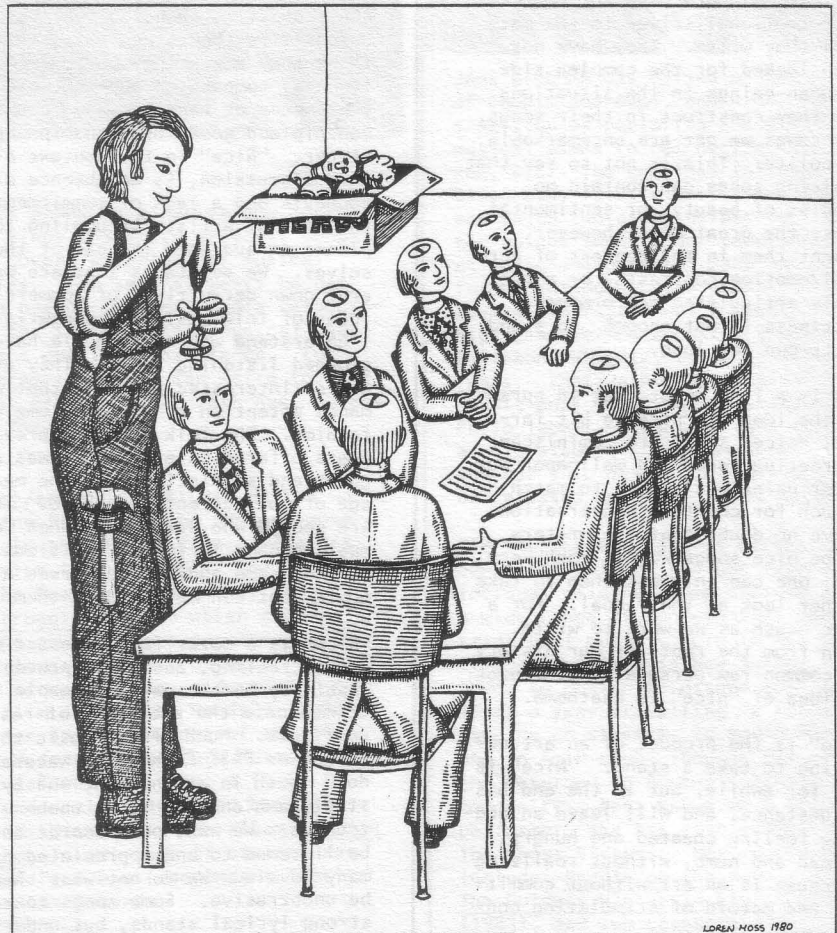
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LOREN MOSS 1980

ON ANALYSIS

by Rosemary Kirstein

I believe that thinking about Art, analyzing it on a theoretical level is a good thing to do, but most especially a good thing for an artist to do. By analyzing, we become more familiar with the nature of the processes involved, and more aware of them. Knowing what they are, we can direct them more easily, and be more effective in the use of our talents.

Furthermore, as listeners, the more we know about the nature of Art, the deeper we can see into the meaning of any particular artwork. Layers (or lack of them) are revealed; subtleties, depths become more easily and naturally perceptible. We are more able to appreciate the artwork itself, and the talent it took to create it.

I like to study the songs I hear, and try to discover what makes them work; but also on a more abstract level, I'm interested in what makes songs in general work, what elements come into play. Sometimes I learn a great deal, even from the experience of failing to discover something I was looking for. Here's an example of what I mean:

There's an old literary rule that says that showing is better than telling. If you want a story to be effective, you need to dramatize your theme, not merely expound it. You create events, simulate reality, so to speak, and show your reader what's happening. The events, characters and style have to be controlled in such a way that the reader necessarily arrives at your own conclusions, intellectually and emotionally.

As a songwriter as well as a writer, I began to wonder how or if this principle applied to songs. The songwriter does recreate reality, in both the content of his or her lyric and the actual enactment of the artwork as he or she performs it onstage. Essentially, the songwriter creates an experience for you, the listener; an experience which is intended to cause you to feel the emotion the songwriter is trying to express, and to understand the ideas he or she is trying to communicate.

The lyrics of songs which affect me strongly do seem to follow the literary rule of showing versus

telling. The songs I like best don't just tell me what to feel, they make me feel it by demonstrating and illustrating, and almost never by just expounding. So, I started to consider the way in which songs recreate reality, and what types of experience they use to do it.

When you think of experience, it seems that there are three very broad categories, which might be defined by how closely you yourself are involved in the events:

First, the event can actually happen to you; you experience it directly.

Next, you can watch it happen to someone else; you are the observer.

And last, you can have the events related to you; you can read about it, or have it told to you by some other person.

In fact, all songs really fall into the last category, because there is a person onstage who is using words (lyrics) to pass on the experience to the listener. But in a figurative sense, the songwriter tries to emulate all three types of experience.

For example, in David Massengill's "On the Road to Fairfax County," (FFMM Feb 82) the song begins, "Oh, once I loved an outlaw..." Here the listener is being told by a narrator about events which occurred to him (or her, depending on the performer). The song begins, then on what we might call the relational level.

But the song doesn't stay strictly on this level. If it did, the second verse might continue, "On the road to Fairfax county, a highwayman held me up, and I was frightened," and it just wouldn't work. But Massengill brings the listener deeper into the experience. The phrase, "I spied a highwayman" puts the listener on that road, seeing what the narrator sees, and "my heart beat like a drum" brings one a sharp sense of the fear he experiences. He continues with a moment-by-moment re-enactment of the events, with the listener as witness. Finally he returns to the first verse, now more poignant for our knowledge of the events that followed. Massengill

manages to show us, rather than simply tell, using the relational level as a sort of envelope for the body of the story. He gives the song an air of truth by making the narrator present, seeming to speak to the audience, and then lends it more power by making us more like observers than listeners. It happens because seeing something is more immediate than hearing about it.

It's difficult to write a good song that stays purely on the relational level. And seductively easy to write a bad one. John Denver is a writer often guilty of taking this easy way out. His song "Looking for Space" (from his Windsong album) begins:

On the road of experience,
I'm trying to find my own way,
Sometimes I wish I could fly
away.

When I think that I'm moving,
Suddenly things stand still,
I'm afraid 'cause I think they
always will.

And I'm looking for space,
And to find out who I am,
And I'm looking to know and
understand...

In this song, Denver is essentially telling us about what he feels, and trying to impart what he believes is a universal truth. But we're just told; nothing is demonstrated, proven, if you will. When at the end he tells us, "if there's an answer, it's just that it's just that way," my personal reaction is a sort of "So what?" Denver has failed to involve me in his questions, and his answer carries little force.

But the fact is that this is not a bad song. What saves it is what I think is Denver's greatest strength as a songwriter: the man can write great melodies. Shorn of its lyrics, the melody alone is enough to move the listener. It's one of the few tunes I don't mind hearing on the Muzak in the office where I work.

(I'm not going to go into any detailed discussion of melody in this article. It's not that I don't feel it's important. A song consists of melody and lyric. Without either, it's not a song at all, but something else; an instrumental or a poem. But I can't include every aspect in one article [or even many], and here I've chosen to focus, for the moment, on a certain attribute of lyrics. This is not to say that I'm unaware of the other factors involved in a good song.)

Another way to use emulation of experience in a song is to remove the narrator completely. In this case, the listener becomes purely an ob-

server. In Brian Rose's "Open All Night" (FFMM April, 1984), the all-night diner is delivered directly to the listener's eye:

Newspaper blows down this tunnel
of love,
Tumbleweed in the city light,
Pissing neon in the pouring rain:
Open All Night.

The observer is a very privileged one, for he or she can see directly into the minds of the characters in the scene, and their inner worlds become part of the observations, a fine mix of sense-image and thought-image:

Outside, the street is a mine-
field
To the ex-soldier with the ta-
toed arm,
Cigarette stuck to his lower lip,
He thinks of his mom back on the
farm.

The literary principle of showing versus telling is used most consistently in this type of song. We do see.

And I believe that it's this need to see that causes the observational level to be used so much. It's mixed in greater or lesser amounts into songs on the relational level. It stands alone in observational songs. And it's a sort of default result in songs that try to reach the listener through the third type of experience: direct experience.

For example, in my own song "Baffin Bay" (FFMM Jan 1986), I very carefully made no abstract statements. I gave no opinions, asserted nothing -- not directly. I, as narrator, am not present. I put the song in the second person ("you" instead of "he" or "I") as part of an attempt to bring the listener as close as possible to the events. I tried as much as I could to use only sense images, things you would experience if you were there yourself -- the wind and space, the movement of the sun, the things you'd see in your room at night, the light from a house as you walk down a road. I even tried never to state the emotions you would feel, attempting instead to orchestrate the events so that the right emotions would occur naturally, and I hoped, inevitably.

I think the song worked, as a song, and the point of view I used did give it the starkness I wanted to be present. But the one thing I could not do was actually insert the listener directly into the experience. The performer is the the medium of the artwork. However close one tries to bring the

listener, the fact is that there is someone else there onstage, relaying the experience. The only way to remove my own presence would be to have the listener sing the song alone.

So the song automatically ends up as an observational one. The "you" transforms into a sort of generalized indefinite you, which helps to make it more universally applicable, but which cannot specifically be the listener.

Now, here I'd like to confess to a little fit of intellectual conceit. As I was considering the different types of experience, it occurred to me that since direct experience was the strongest type of experience possible, it had to follow that songs written on the experiential level would be the most emotionally effective, and that observational songs would necessarily be less so, and narrated or relational songs less still. I constructed a rather elaborate stratified system by which to justify this.

This sort of error occurs when you fall in love with your own cleverness. You stop looking at the actual evidence, and start pre-selecting evidence designed to support your own ideas. You lose track of the wider context.

I got my comeuppance when a friend, hearing me expound my theory, did nothing more than name one song; a song long a favorite of mine, a song which, by my little system, should not have been as powerful as it is.

I stopped short, backedpedaled for a while, and finally realized I had taken my observations too far. Naturally, the type of experience a songwriter chooses doesn't determine the effectiveness of the song. There are simply too many factors involved, not the least of which is the degree of skill the songwriter possesses. John Denver may not be able to write a good song on an almost purely relational level, but someone like Pierce Pettis certainly can. (Take a look at "Moments" from FFMM March 1986.)

But if this kind of mistake can happen, you might ask, what is the point of doing this sort of analysis at all? Why not simply write a song, without trying to see why it works?

But the exercise was by no means a total loss. I learned about the uses of one particular aspect of

songwriting, learned to recognize it at work, how it fits in with other factors. My house of cards may have collapsed, so to speak, but as a result I know a little more about architecture.

I know that there are many people (perhaps some of you reading this) who react violently against attempts to analyze. The claim that it destroys their enjoyment, removes the magic -- as if art were some trick played upon the audience, an effect dependent on ignorance of the means.

But no sleight of hand is involved, only the skill and beauty of the human spirit and intellect. Art does not exist to conceal, but to reveal.

I don't know what causes some people to be so antagonistic to attempts to understand the inner workings of Art. From observation, I can recognize some possible reasons, but I know they don't apply in all cases.

Some of these people are clearly (often self-admittedly) people who do not like to think. They maintain this attitude in all the aspects of of their lives. They're likely to know a great many facts, but few reasons, and vigorously resist any investigations of ideas. Their commonest reaction to attempts to analyze is, "Why do you want to figure it out? Why can't you just enjoy it?" The statement is very revealing. Their enjoyment cannot include thinking because, to them, thinking precludes enjoyment.

But for all my esoteric justifications of analysis, I neglected to mention the one I find most personally compelling; that is, it's fun. I enjoy it. Behind my enjoyment lies all the other reasons I mentioned, and they are probably the cause of my enjoyment, but the fact is that I do it mostly because it's fun to think, and especially fun to think about something I love so much. And I'm not alone. I have a number of friends and acquaintances, not all of the musicians, who delight in discovering the reasons behind the effect Art has on them. And if anything, their enjoyment is sharper after their investigations. So I know by both experience and observation that thinking does not destroy enjoyment.

Another group of people who are antagonistic to analysis are what one might call the "artistic egalitarians." Their belief is that all Art, and every work of art, is equally valuable, equally important, shares equal esthetic standing.

Now, I know the demands artistic creation makes on a person. I recognize the massive difficulties, the total involvement of the artist, the acceptance of hard work and (sometimes) anguish that any artist accepts as payment for the soaring joy of creation. And for that reason, I do revere, in every artist, that internal spark that drives him or her to create. My admiration of the creative act is to great that you might call me a worshipper of the artist.

But although I can admire every creative urge, I cannot admire every artwork equally. Because, no matter what the artistic egalitarians may say, not every work of art is equal.

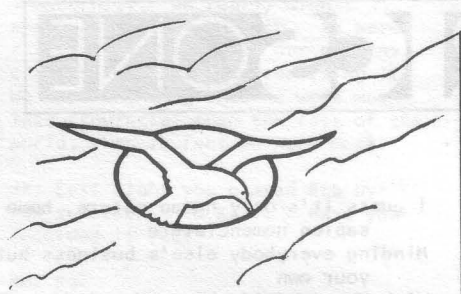
We've all heard bad songs (some of them get on the radio). Sloppy songs, unevocative melodies, infantile lyrics, near-random chord progressions. But the artistic egalitarians want us to give the same regard to these half-assed attempts as we give to the songs that connect with our deepest feelings, that delight us, cause us to dance, or sharply etch our starkest realities.

They want us to give equal esteem to bad songs and good songs. I can't stress this point enough: they want us not to know the difference.

Naturally they will oppose analysis. To accept well-crafted and poorly-crafted songs as equal, one has to maintain a sort of mental fog, to blur out the differences. Scrutiny dispels the fog.

I'm sure there are other reasons people use to argue against analyzing songs. In fact, I'd be interested in hearing some more. But the ones presented to me so far have been just indefensible.

So it seems like a no-lose situation; nothing to lose from studying the means of artistic expression, and everything to gain, including the joy of discovery. And, trying to be true to my own maxim, I've done my best to show you this, and not just tell you.



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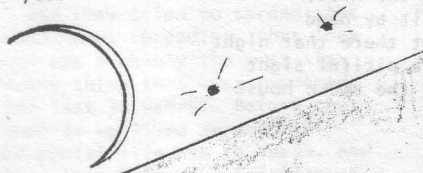
Since April 1986, the Fast Folk Musical Magazine albums have been mastered by Joe Brescio of The Master Cutting Room. Through an oversight, we have neglected to add his name to our regular list of credits. We'd like to apologise to Joe, and to bring to the attention of our listeners his very fine work.

WANTED: POSITIVE SONGS ABOUT AGING

Hats Off to Old Folks: A Celebration of Songs About Aging is currently being researched and edited by Bob Payton and Denise Dreher. They are actively soliciting books, records and songwriters for songs which reflect the positive aspects of both growing old and being old. Their book is intended for use by the general public at sing-along gatherings, in senior centers, nursing homes, churches, music therapy, family support groups, aging conferences, college courses on aging, elementary and secondary schools, and most importantly, by performing musicians everywhere. The book will include chapters on ways the young look at the old, the emotional and physical experiences of aging, family relationships, cultural changes, love in later life, reminiscences, issues of faith, and finally, facing death. The editors plan to include fifty to seventy-five songs, both traditional and modern, humorous as well as serious, which will be written with lyrics, melody line and chords for guitar and piano. Songs with strong sing-along choruses are especially needed.

Payton is a recreation therapist and folksinger who has worked as a music therapist in nursing homes for over six years. Dreher is a playwright and editor currently researching and writing about the final stages of life. Both feel a gap in our education and media regarding positive images of aging. "Our culture often stereotypes old people as nonproductive and useless," says Payton. "This view is changing, however, as the older generation increases in number and becomes more assertive. We need positive role models, images and ideas to help foster that change. Older people can continue to learn and grow, even after retirement or confined to an institution such as a nursing home, and I believe they need to be treated as such. A book of songs which expresses the good feelings and experiences of our older generation will make it easier for all of us to accept, look forward to, and celebrate aging."

Anyone who has written a song or knows of songs which should be considered for this anthology may submit a tape or the written song to Bob Payton, P.O. Box 7596, Minneapolis, MN, 55407. The deadline for submission is June 30, 1987. All song rights will be negotiated accordingly. For more information, you can contact Payton and Dreher at (612) 722-8951



SIDE BYRDS ONE

SHOULD ON YOU

Late last night before repose my
sweetheart called to me,
"Darling, you should come to bed, I'm
cold,
You shouldn't keep your baby waiting,
you should be cooperating,
You should learn to do the things
you're told..."

Something in her tone of voice was
somewhat less than kind
This person telling me the things I
should or shouldn't do,
A bell went off inside my head, I
marched right up beside the bed,
Said, "Baby, YOU should learn a thing
or two..."

(Like) you should squeeze the tooth-
paste from the end, not from
the top
You should pay attention to the prices
when we shop
I think you should know better than
to tell me things that I should do
Don't should on me and I won't should
on you...

While we're on the subject here are
certain other things my dear
That you should be aware of I should
think you shouldn't show
Little things but ones I'm sure you
really should take care of
Like the way you think and everything
you know...

You should change the way you eat, I
think you're eating too much meat
I think that you should change the
clothes you wear
You should change your TV channels,
those polyester sheets to flannels,
You should change the way you do your
hair...

I only want what's best for you, why-
ever won't you listen
I should know by now what you should
put your emphasis in
We should both know better than to
tell each other what to do
Don't should on me and I won't should
on you..."

So nowadays we're understanding, now
my baby's less demanding
No hard feelings, best regards, sin-
cerely yours, it's true
And when we start to say "You should..."
we stop because it's understood
Don't should on me and I won't should
on you...

I guess it's only human nature, homo
sapien nomenclature
Minding everybody else's business but
your own
With "You should this..." and "You
should that..." you know what I've
been getting at
Sometimes we should leave well enough
alone...

This song is almost over, I'm amazed
that I got through it
I know it was a shouldy job... but
someone had to do it
We should all know better than to
tell each other what to do
Don't should on me and I won't
should on you...

Don't should on me and I won't
should on you...

© 1986 David Roth
ASCAP

I BELIEVE IN YOU

I look upon the morning sun
To find another day.
And the thought of you
Came to me.

I try and try to hold the feeling,
But time after time
I find myself
Right back to you.

'Cause the way that you believe in me
Is the way that I believe in you.
(twice)

I look for love that never came
But dreams got in the way,
And I knew that
You were gone.

I wish you could have stayed with me,
To watch the morning rain
And see winter
Turn into spring.

'Cause the way that you believe in me
Is the way that I believe in you.
(twice)

CECIL'S GONE

Today she gave his dog away
The A.S.P.C.A.
Tied a chain around its neck
And stuck it in a big white truck
She pulled the crepe down off the door
She took the clothes and the shoes he wore
And gave 'em to a man in Cordova
Whose family was down on their luck

Cecil's gone on home now
Said a last good bye and bye
Cecil's gone on to glory
Through a six foot hole
Clean off to where the angels fly

Her daughter and her son-in-law
Came out with the kids and all
They drove over from Georgia
Squeezed in their Japanese car
They stuck his razor and his pistol in a box
They took his Coca-Cola pendulum clock
Back to their house in Atlanta
And they hung it up over the bar

(Chorus)

Her son brought her a color TV
And gave a second-hand trailer and he
He went and boarded up the house
That his daddy had built by hand
When the fire truck got there that night
Man, that trailer was a pitiful sight
And she was hid behind the smoke house
Holdin' a kerosene can.

The wind will come
And bring a song
And see me through the season
Every time that I'm alone
Another day will come to be.
And I long to see you again,
And the need is here to stay.

'Cause the way that you believe in me
Is the way that I believe in you.

I know it's gonna take a while
For you to understand
What the world
Is all about

What not giving the love you feel
As long as you are here
For tomorrow
You never know

'Cause the way that you believe in me
Is the way that I believe in you.

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CEMENT LAMENT

It was that kinda mistin' rain
It was the kinda night
Nothing was wrong
It just wasn't right

(Refrain) It wasn't the blues
It wasn't low rent
It was just a cement lament

All these late night alleys
All these late night alley cats
It starts raining harder
He adjust his hat
(Refrain)

A streetlight goes out
He makes his wish
A taxi turns the corner
The puddle makes a splisssh
(Refrain)

How many years has it been
Since you left that old hometown?
Both eyes on your feet
Both feet on the ground

(Refrain) It's not the blues
It's not low rent
It's just a cement lament

It's not superstition
It's just playin' it smart
Don't step on the cracks, now,
Don't break your mama's heart
(Refrain)

The sun is rolling up the East River
The sky is turning kind of blue
Smokin' your last cigarette
S'pose there's nothing left to do

But try to shake this mood...
Someone's got to pay the rent...
Someone's shift just started
Singing this cement lament
This cement lament ...
Cement lament

© 1986 Michelle-Shocked

DON'T LOOK NOW

(Chorus) Don't look now but we're standing on the brink
The clock is ticking faster, it's later than you think
Time is running out now, it's the eleventh hour
Where we've got to turn is to each other for the power

Take a look around you, take a look at what you see
Ordinary people just like you and me
Take a look around you, take a look at what you see
Ordinary people who are fighting to be free
(Chorus)

Time is running out now, we've got everything to lose
Their finger's on the trigger, the match is to the fuse
Underneath the table, locked behind closed doors
They decide the future, but it could be mine and yours
(Chorus)

Little children in the sun, room enough for everyone
They don't know enough to hate, help them now, it's
not too late

Take a look around you, take a look at what you see
Ordinary people, just like you and me
Take a look around you, take a look at what you see
Ordinary people who are fighting to be free

© 1985 Parallel Films
By Brewster Paley and John Amato

ONE LOOK BACK

Sitting here watching the time crawl on
Haze in the air, the wind's long gone
Mud in the river, snakes in the pond
It's one or the other before too long

It's too hot to go downtown
I wish my baby would come around
One more day down this track
One step forward and one look back

Kicking up the dust and gravel
This old road wasn't made for travel
This old hill wasn't made to climb
With weary bones and a worried mind

It's too hot to go downtown...

When this old life is over
Lay me down in a field of clover
Let that old honey bee
Make sweet honey out of me

It's too hot to go downtown...

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SIDE BY R (S) TWO

ON THE LINE

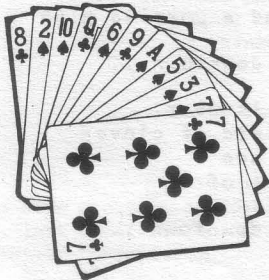
Buddy Mondlock

I saw the singer in a bar,
It was crowded, it was hot,
She was close, she was far,
She wasn't sure what she was not,
But through the smoke and sweat
She brought it all out anyway,
And hung it on the line still wet,
Like laundry on a hot day.
On the line.

It wasn't that she played so long,
It wasn't that she played so hard,
But she was careful with each song
And the laundry filled the yard.
Once she looked a little puzzled there,
See all of us across the fence
Looking at her underwear,
Wondering what she'd put up next
On the line.

Then all is up and nearly dry,
And the line becomes a curve.
And seeing it there with her own eye,
She wonders where she got the nerve.
Then there's just the briefest pause,
In the thunderstorm of our applause
Everything gets wet
On the line,
On the line,
On the line.

copyright 19 Buddy Mondlock



TO THE FUTURE

1. When I was just a small boy
Upon my mama's knee
She said, "Son, I can remember
When our people were free."
She said, "It wasn't paradise,
But at least it was our own.
And now when I remember
I feel so all alone
So all alone.

2. "When the white men came to Africa
And kicked us off our land
And they chained your father's labor
To this copper mining plant
And they left me this worthless land
While I was having you,
The told me I had rent to pay
For land where nothing grew.

(Chorus)
'Sing with me children
'Cause I feel so all alone
(2nd time: "cause you know that was our home)
Sing with me children
'Cause the echo will be all that is known
To the future.

3. "Been a hundred years of suffering
And a hundred years of strife,
But a hundred years has taught us
We either suffer or we fight
And I hadn't seen your father
In over twenty years
I hardly recognised him
When he came to me in tears

4. "He had only one arm
The other had been cut off
And he had only one pound
To pay the white men off
So when they came to get us,
Our friends didn't let us down,
And they were dancing in Harrare
When we cut them all down.

5. "Comes the time we expected something
We got our independence
But that amounts to nothing,
'Cause we still can't pay the rent.
Now they ask me if I'm Marxist,
I still don't know what that means.
Just know who I am, what I got to do
So that they should let us be."

c1986 Peter Brown

GONE TO HIS HEAD

Gone are the days when he'd look up night's skirt
And he'd laugh at the stars
And he'd reach out to touch
The master of innocence in the heart of his heart
says you got what you need but you need oh so much
He wrote in a fever
A letter to God
He sent it to an address unknown
Three small years passed
Until one day at last with no answer
He set out
On his own

Gone are the people like you and like me
In our hand to mouth shoes
In our spectator's coat
Out to the mermaid beyond all the seas with his
Pocket of songs and his basket of hope.
Oh those angels are nowhere
They're just hometown girls
They bleed for his autograph
While his mistress is drowning herself in Vermouth
As she answers the fan mail
and takes out
The trash

Gone is his mistress she left no letter
He searches his pocket for something to prove
He looks out of the window a couple is walking
His head on her shoulder like they used to do

He walks through the city a mixture of diamonds
And perspiration caught by the snow
He thinks of his brother and his sad decision
In the world up above or the world down below

Gone are the days when I'd look up night's skirt
I'd laugh at the stars
And I'd reach out to touch
The master of innocence in the heart of my heart
says I got what I need but I need Oh so much
I write in a fever
A letter to God
I send it to an address unknown
Thinking
How much time will pass
Until one day at last
With no answer
I set out
On my own

Glory to God Alleluia
I make my bed by the fire
There are things deep inside
That I know I must hide
The truth is set free
By the liar

-Lillie Palmer
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TALL CAROLINA PINES

My love and I first met
When we were only nine,
And we played catch and hide 'n' seek
In the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

Like coffee was his skin,
His eyes were dark and fine
Needles in his curly hair
From the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

At sixteen I was told
Stick to your own kind,
And stay away from the brown-skinned
boy
And the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

Still we met everyday,
Near the old tobacco sign
And we'd chew grass and tell our
dreams
'Neath the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

The wind still blows in the trees
The sun and moon still shine,
And white men still lynch honest
black men
In the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

The tore him from my arms,
And with their rope of twine
They hanged him from the strongest
branch
Of the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

Well, I left for Detroit,
I took only what was mine.
And I never will go back again
To the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

Now it's been fifty years,
But as I write these lines
I see him hanging once again
From the tall, tall Carolina Pines.

c 1986 Kim Wallach

(Note: this came to me while I was driving through the Carolinas. I don't know why, and find it a little frightening. Thanks to Joyce Woodson & Kristina Olsen & David Roth for help in editing.)



I WILL STAND FAST

by Fred Small

The echoes of childhood whisper violence,
Cold wind beating out of the past
Rage in your throat muffled silence,
Hold on -- I will stand fast.
In the darkness your guardians have left you
Cold wind beating out of the past
Not to hear your cries, none to defend you,
Hold on -- I will stand fast.

Chorus:

I will stand fast
I will stand fast
You are safe in the daylight at last
Nightmare and fear
They have no power here,
I will stand fast

I will listen to the terrors that tried you,
Cold wind beating out of the past,
I will cradle the child that breathes inside you,
Hold on -- I will stand fast.

Though you take the shape of a hundred horrors,
Cold wind beating out of the past,
Though you strike at me and flee into your sorrow,
Hold on -- I will stand fast

Birds flash on a branch in winter,
Cold wind beating out of the past,
Ice in the sun begins to splinter,
Hold on -- I will stand fast.
You will walk with no fetters to bind you,
Cold wind beating out of the past,
All the love you have wanted will find you,
Hold on, I will stand fast.

UNTIL JUST NOW

I was thinking last night
I was doing all right
I was keeping you out of here somehow
I was on the right track
I was on the way back
I was doing all right until just now

I was saying last night
I was seeing the light
I was starting to sort it out somehow
I was going alone
I was holding my own
I was doing all right until just now

I was thinking last night
I was winning this fight
I was keeping you out of here somehow
I was gaining some ground
I was coming around
I was doing all right until just now

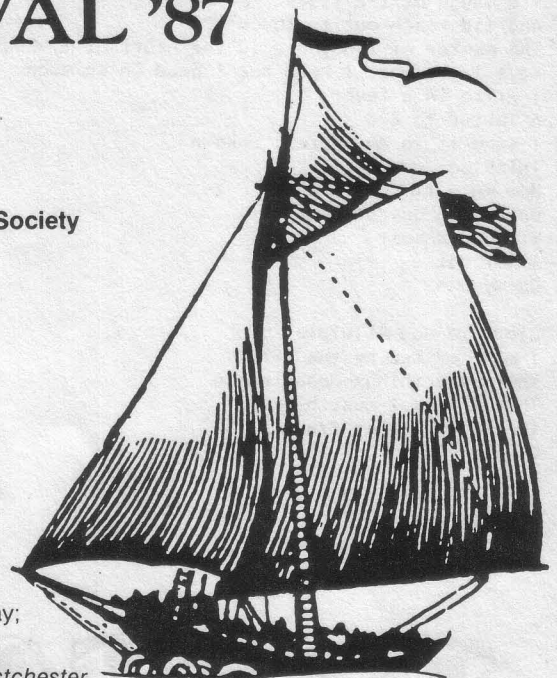
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Backwards Piano and Clear Sparks:

An Interview with Richie Havens

by John Kruth

Many "folkies" are unfamiliar with anything that Richie Havens has done since his electrifying performance at Woodstock, fifteen years ago. He still continues to play soulful acoustic folk ballads and pop tunes with Paul Williams beside him as always, shyly augmenting every chord. Whether he is interpreting an old song or working out a new reggae number with a funky electric band, Havens' distinctive voice still carries the same message it always has. Words of love and brotherhood and concern for world survival are voiced and punctuated with magnificent syncopation, strummed in Havens' inimitable style. At times there were traces of Marvin Gaye or Peter Tosh when he sang, and danced as his four-piece electric band laid down a steady groove.

I met with Havens at his busy midtown office. Telephones were screaming off their hooks. His manager, Connie, and her two assistants were running in circles. There was a lot of business to take care of. Everyone was jumpin' except Richie, who sat calmly across the table from me, smoking cigarettes and answering my questions. In the room was a bookcase which revealed his preoccupation with esoteric knowledge. There were astrology books, books on Buddha and Houdini, voodoo and pyramids, tao and alchemy, the bible, the gita, books on astral projection and the Jewish encyclopedia. Here was a man with an open mind and a warm heart.

John Kruth: What was your musical experience before recording the *Mixed Bag* album in 1967?

Richie Havens: Singing in a doo-wop group with my friends in Brooklyn in the 1950's. I was the baritone. I never sang the words, tho' I wrote a lot of them. I did the choreography and the teaching of how to sing. (Laughs) That's when I was thirteen to nineteen years old.

JK: When did you pick up the guitar?

RH: At twenty-one or twenty-two. I had been singing, not professionally, just on street corners and at amateur contests.

JK: You didn't play any other instruments before the guitar? No piano or drums?

RH: No, no instruments.

JK: You play the guitar in an open tuning.

RH: Yeah, the key of D.

JK: How did this unusual guitar style of yours evolve? Fretting chords with your thumb over the neck...

RH: There used to be a chord that I would hear when I was singing with a gospel group in Brooklyn. A friend of mine who used to sing rock 'n' roll with me, his mother had a group, a family gospel group and the deal was, he could sing rock 'n' roll with us, and we'd sing gospel with them. It was a good deal and he was a heck of a singer. I went to Greenwich Village after that. I left Brooklyn and it wasn't 'til after I left that I started thinking about singing by myself. Watching the traditional folk singers in the Village and a lot of guitar players, I got a guitar, a friend of mine lent me one, and I tuned it to that chord I used to hear.

JK: So you started barring chords, with your thumb over the top of the neck. Was that because of the size of your hands?

RH: No, I always had big hands. I used to lay the guitar flat on my lap and bar the chords almost like a dobro or a Hawaiian guitar, using my thumb as a steel bar, basically. Eventually my wrist loosened up enough for me to pick the guitar straight up in my lap.

JK: As a singer, who would you say has influenced you? Your phrasing is rather unusual. Do you listen a lot to jazz or blues singers?

RH: After rock 'n' roll, I listened to jazz a lot. I think the singer that influenced me, mostly through suggestion of how she sang was Nina Simone, as an influence of taking other people's songs and singing them the only way you can.

JK: The songs you sing deal with a universal and global awareness as well as brotherhood and love. Do you feel society has progressed at all since the cultural revolution

of the sixties?

RH: Absolutely. Thank God they have or I'd probably be in a cave right now.

JK: Do you write much these days?

RH: "Things Must Change" and "This is the Hour" (from his new album *Common Ground*). I only write when it comes because what comes happens to be what is going on right at the moment. So it's very much in the present, inspirationally. When I write a song, it comes out all at once, finished. I end up rewriting everyone else's tunes to a certain degree. I change a word here, a word there.

JK: You strum really hard. How many guitars do you go through in a year?

RH: One and a half at least. I just play a lot.

JK: At what point is the guitar finished? When you've worn a hole through the top?

RH: That's about it!

JK: So what do you do with all these guitars? Use them as firewood?

RH: Lots of things, give them away. People ask me for them, they get auctioned off for different charities, all kinds of things. Mostly, give them away.

JK: Rhythmically, you tend to stretch and reshape songs with your free-form strumming style. So you wind up singing and phrasing it differently.

RH: I think it's not so much that the songs get stretched out as much as the double or triple guitar rhythms versus the ballad that I'm

singing. There's a juxtaposition.

JK: It seems that Paul is playing a lot of half-time things in between what you're doing.

RH: That's right, that's right.

JK: I was watching Paul's foot. Yours is going double time. Paul's is going half time.

RH: Yeah.

JK: How long have you been playing together?

RH: Since 1962. We grew up in Brooklyn together. I went to school with his brothers.

JK: There's a real special relationship going on between you, where you might be tuning your guitar and he'll start playing a little riff and you'll both fall into a tune together. There's a real timeless quality about it. The way you build rhythms 'til they reach an emotional crest.

RH: Rhythm, a lot of rhythm. (Laughs)

JK: From your song introductions last night, it seemed like you saw progress as a cyclical thing. You mentioned that the Reagan age is very similar to a summer repeat of Eisenhower times.

RH: Well, to a certain degree it is but it's a mixture of both Eisenhower and Nixon because the Eisenhower years, if you lived with Eisenhower and really listened to what he said, when he was president he was a general who became a president, he was the first one who said that nuclear proliferation was a bad thing, yet he was a general. While he was in the military received the most money they ever got as a budget, in the history of the United States. But the point is that he was against those things verbally. I don't know if it was true or not, but he said those things. When you take him and the militaristic buildup and you add him with Nixon, who was determined to create a certain amount of patriotism again, which failed...

JK: Because he built it on a completely false foundation...

RH: And it fell, right in the middle of it and there was this antibody that was built up because of it. Then that antibody went off to experiment and came up with a concoction called "love, peace and harmony," and they tried to spread that around. Now, spreading that idea around was probably the most significant thing that ever happened in the last 30 years. Before that, as much as we lived an uncomplicated social life, so to speak, and getting into the sophistication of

"modernity," we really didn't speak about it very much. We were really very archaic in our provincialness without even realizing it. We were thinking that we were much less provincial than the rest of the world, when in fact we were more.

JK: Last night you played Bob Dylan's "License to Kill." Have you recorded it yet?

RH: No.

JK: It was very strong.

RH: It's a good song.

JK: It brought to mind that a lot of your best material and the songs that you are best known for are songs that you interpret, like Dylan's "Just Like a Woman" or George Harrison's "Here Comes the Sun." You seem to breathe a certain spirit into the songs you cover.

RH: That's what I'm doing because the songs really moved me, and I'm just repeating the movement I felt when it moved me. So really it's just an interpretation in the sense that my feelings, when it moved me, are what I use to sing the song, what I based singing the song on in the first place. So it's very much the same for me as it is for everyone else, to tell you the truth.

J.K.: Do you write much these days?

R.H.: "Things Must Change" and "This Is The Hour" (From Common Ground). I only write when it comes because what comes happens to be what is going on right at the moment. So it's very much in the present, inspirationally. When I write a song, it comes out all at once, finished. I end up rewriting everyone else's tunes to a certain degree. I change a word here, a word there.

J.K.: Do you change the chords as well?

R.H.: It seems that way but a lot of them are exactly the same chords. I adjust the structure of the sound because I tune the guitar differently but they really are the same chords for the most part.

J.K.: So songwriting is not a discipline for you. You don't know how many songs you might write over the period of a year?

R.H.: No. I may write none during a year because everything is status quo from last year. On the last album, I didn't write any of the songs until I got to Italy and Pino Danielli...

J.K.: Did he produce the album?

R.H.: It was really a collaboration. Some of the music, he was creating, to which I

wrote and then started to write more songs. Some of them I came up with as well, having been inspired by his music. The thing about it, for me, it was what it was supposed to be, a collaboration, going to Europe on a quest, to collaborate with a person I had heard on the radio, who knew me. It was really great. It followed my steps of albums and was a very present day happening 'cause we collaborated day by day. I mean, I wrote 10 songs in seven days.

J.K.: Wow! That's quite intense for not having written for some time.

R.H.: Yeah, I hadn't written for a long time, maybe three years but it all came out in Italy. When the light lights up, you see the words written on the board. It just gives off a clear spark.

J.K.: There's a certain openness about your music. It has the feeling that when you and Paul are on stage, that to a certain extent, you're jamming, improvising as you go.

R.H.: I think it's that way every time I play, even though it might sound the same, it might be a little slower, a little faster. I put different rhythms in different places because that's the way I feel that day.

J.K.: Do you listen to any African music like Fela Ransome Kuti or King Sunny Ade?

R.H.: I saw Sunny Ade once and I was blown away completely. I was given a gift, sometimes at night I might run into a trance that transports me out of the system for a rest, y'know? (laughs)

J.K.: When I was in Berlin in '78, I met a Nigerian named Idowu Awe who played guitar. He came over and sat in the kitchen tuning this old Framus electric. He tuned it for what seemed like half an hour while I sat there wondering if he knew what he was doing. He was tuning the pegs every which way. It seemed so arbitrary. Then he cracked this cheshire smile and said, "I tune to me head." And he started chunking out this wonderful rhythm. I sat there listening holding my flute. After a couple of minutes, it all became very clear to me and I could play along. It was great. There were all of these elements of music that I'd heard before going on in it.

R.H.: Sure, I think that people arrive at getting it out of the instrument however they can. Guitar has a standard tuning that most people can learn to play by but that's not necessarily the only tuning that can be played. If they want to play it bad enough they'll invent a way to play it because they have the music inside their heads and when they hear it, they know the right notes. So if they have to jump from here to there to get two notes in a row, they do it. Y'got blues singers that play funny and everybody says

"Boy, they play funny!" but it's because it's the only way they know how.

J.K.: Albert King tunes his guitar to C sharp minor or something.

R.H.: Right! Right!

J.K.: Did you used to listen to a lot of blues singers like Howlin' Wolf or...

R.H.: I heard Howlin' Wolf not as a blues singer but as an R 'n B singer when I was growing up in the '50s on black AM radio. When I was a kid, he was a big, famous singles-selling Chicago recordmaker and it wasn't my music at the time. It was older people's music. My mother and my aunts and uncles were into it. I grew up with it 'cause they listened to it on the radio. It wasn't special to me until I went to the Village and learned a little bit about folk music and the "classicalness" about music versus the "commercialness" of music.

J.K.: Well, making meaningful music and commercial success have very little to do with each other usually.

R.H.: They really do have very little to do with each other.

J.K.: You must've been under some pressure at one point or another to produce mass marketable music by either your manager or record company or yourself.

R.H.: I really had no pressure.

J.K.: When you hear a song like "Dreams" (written by Stevie Nicks) which you recorded on Connections...

R.H.: It's a great song, that's why I sang it. For me, words describe a certain strata of sophistication and under-

standing, already assumed adult thinking and there are songs that are less than that which we tend to call bubble-gum or novelty or throwaway music. The thing about it is, that songs to me, is what I sing. I'm not a certain kind of singer. I just sing songs. If I'm any kind of singer, I'm a song singer and that's it. So to me, it's song by song.

J.K.: The production level on your records has increased to make you more palatable to the mainstream, yet the message of the songs you sing is very much the same as it's always been. These days there is so much emphasis placed on the beat. Drums are mixed to the foreground and the majority of people couldn't care less what the singer is saying because less what the singer is saying because so much of the lyrical content of the songs is meaningless.

R.H.: Exactly, exactly. It comes down to the "classicalness" of the music being played behind the song. What it means to

me is that the changes I've made in the last six years was to go with people who have already played together and who have a feel or a sound. There's got to be a gel between the people. It doesn't have to be in the music. It could be that they like each other. It doesn't really matter which side of the fence it is. But there has to be a certain kind of homogenous ability to be as spontaneous as I would like to get. With a band, I just try to have them learn the song and then pick the songs on stage and go song by song, the way I feel it, rather than write a list or make that kind of structure. Not that I wouldn't do it. When I had a band in New Orleans five years ago, for two years, I went around the world with this band, we were so tight because we were together for two years.

J.K.: Either it's gonna be great or you're gonna kill each other.

R.H.: Exactly, exactly and even if you were gonna kill each other, if you know how to negotiate, you can be nuts and play well together. (laughs) They just can't get along but they play well together. The crazier they are, probably the less they get along, the better they play and that's possibly true y'know but the point is that it's the individuality that really makes it and if people are not forced to feel insecure then they don't try and take over anything. If everybody feels secure then everybody plays their best and they're spontaneous enough to play whatever they feel and it's magic! So it comes down to letting everybody be who they

really are and that's probably my biggest prerequisite in playing with bands. It's really trying not to tell them what to play. I don't tell Dino (Paul Williams) what to play. In fact, in all the years we've been playing, I've probably heard him play with me...five times, because the sound was good enough for me to hear him play.

J.K.: Last night on the first set, I could hardly hear him at all. On the second set, I sat up front and all of a sudden I could hear this exchange happening.

R.H.: We hear it onstage because it's right next to us but it doesn't mean that it's going over the micophones.

J.K.: Some of the numbers you played with your band reminded me of Marvin Gaye or Smokey Robinson's soul tunes.

R.H.: Interestingly enough, I came out of that territory before I moved to the Village and started singing music that moved me more because it had a deeper meaning. Most of the music on the AM radio was that kind of music in the '50s, that we bought as kids.

J.K.: Is this a conscious step to connect you past gospel experience with your folk music and shape it into something new?

R.H.: It's a mixture of all I've ever done. I've never really begun as far as I'm concerned. If it was left up to me, it would take a stage full of musicians to please what I think I hear in

my head, in all its different facets, song by song. I would have a string quartet on the stage. I would have a rhythm section. I would have a Latin section on stage. (laughs)

J.K.: You've used all of those things on your records.

R.H.: Because song by song, you need that. You need the latitude of mood changes y'see? You can suggest it with one band but unless you got enough time to rehearse, you don't pull it off. But I think it's cultural, to tell you the truth. I've learned this because I've had enough bands to realize what their uniqueness was. Their uniqueness was the elements that made them up rhythmically. Each culture has a basic rhythm inside their bones that as babies they can play.

J.K.: You must've driven your mother crazy in the crib!

R.H.: Yeah, (laughs) I'm one great bang-in' guy. I'm still a frustrated drummer, that's how I play the guitar.

J.K.: Last night, watching you and Paul play, it brought to mind Ravi Shankar and

Ali Akabar Khan. There's a similar relationship happening, you set and change the time with your guitar much like a tabla player would. I can see a clear relationship to what you do and to Indian music.

R.H.: Yeah, the way I play, the "acousticness" of the guitar and the open chord as well, there's always a suspended note which stays there, even though the chords change. It's a long line which holds the various rhythms together. It's the tabla, the sitar and the drone all at once!

RH: It's a mixture of all I've ever done. I've never really begun as far as I'm concerned. If it was left up to me, it would take a stage full of musicians to please what I think I hear in my head, in all its different facets, song by song.

JK: Watching you and Paul play, it brought to mind Ravi Shankar and Ali Akabar Khan. There's a similar relationship happening, you set and

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RH: Yeah, the way I play, the "acousticness" of the guitar, and the open chord as well, there's always a suspended note which stays there, even though the chords change. It's a long line which holds the various rhythms together. It's the tabla, the sitar and the drone all at once!

JK: You both play Guilds.

RH: Yeah, D-40's, and the interesting thing about it is that he (Paul) learned to play guitar tuned to the same key that I play in. He learned to play with his fingers and I learned to strum.

JK: So, together you're like...
RH: one guitar.

JK: Or a backwards piano, actually, because there's this powerful right hand pounding chords while this left hand plays lead.

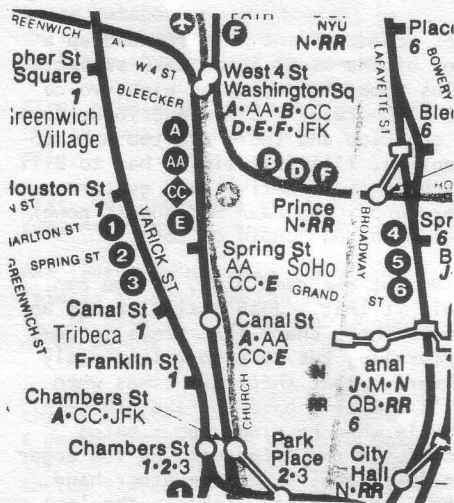
RH: That's right! That's absolutely right! It's not really two guitars, it's something else!

Suggested Listening

- Mixed Bag - Verve Records (1967)
- Something Else Again - Verve (1968)
- Richard D. Havens 1983 - Verve (1969)
- Alarm Clock - Stormy Forest Records
- On Stage - Stormy Forest (1972)
- Common Ground - Connexion Records

(1984)

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MICHELLE-SHOCKED

RECORDING BUDGET—a set of batteries

SETTING—the dying embers of a campfire at Kerrville Folk Festival. June 1, 1986

RESULT—one of the most unusual and intriguing discs made this year

The Texas Campfire Tapes showcases twelve of Michelle's own songs accompanied only by acoustic guitar, the incessant chirping of crickets and the occasional rumble of a truck going down a nearby track.

Born in Gilmer, East Texas and currently squatting in Manhattan Michelle is something of a hobo—when she's not travelling around the States she finds time to play the odd gig around the folk club circuit in New York, although her current ambition is to sail from NY to Florida in her recently acquired dinghy.

Andy Kershaw from Whistle Test is a recent convert to the work of **Michelle-Shocked** and the response from the 'session' he broadcast recently on Radio One has prompted the release of this LP—one of the most amazing 'field recordings' ever made. Don't miss it!

THE TEXAS CAMPFIRE TAPES is released on Nov 10—Catalogue No. is COOK 002



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RECORD REVIEWS RECORD REVIEWS

DAVID ROTH AND JOSH JOFFEN: Side D: David Roth Side J: Josh Joffen



JOSH JOFFEN: REVIEW

I first got to hear Josh Joffen because his song "Chain of Love" preceded one of mine on a Fast Folk album. Sung in stunning three-part harmony by Josh, Ruth Ann Brauser, and Judith Zeman, it had some nice poetry: "Wind so cold that it burns like fire," it begins. Half the time when I went to play my song for a friend, the needle would land on the last, starting, suspended chord of "Chain," and it always left me wanting to hear more.

Josh's first album offers five new songs in addition to a new recording of "Chain" with full instrumental accompaniment in an unusual collaboration. The other side of the album belongs to his friend, David Roth. Working with a broader palette -- a lot more voices and some excellent acoustic musicians -- Josh makes the most of a talent that was apparent even in that one Fast Folk song: a mastery of texture. His earnest vocals, never obtrusive, float on warm layers of sound. The result is tasteful and very musical.

And the songs are very romantic. "Crazy Horse" is the true story of a man who devoted his life to carving a statue of an Indian hero out of a mountainside. "Miami" is the place of redemption for a man who has thrown away his love. "Cascade" (filled with running-water effects) is a similar reflection on lost love. "Heather's Tune" is a musical love poem almost classical in structure and feeling. The only exception is "Video Arcade,"

a funny, funky comment on modern electronics.

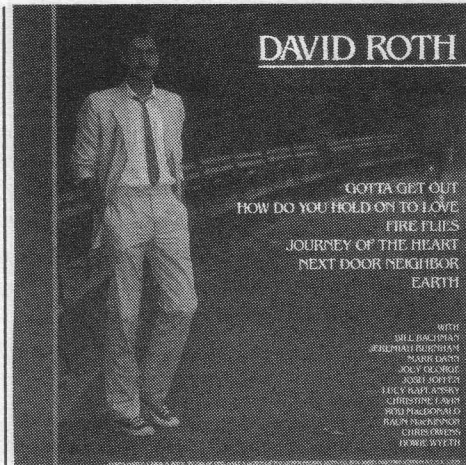
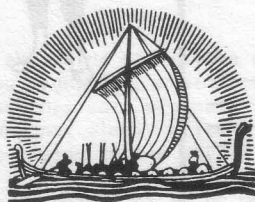
While I wouldn't call the songs groundbreaking, they're all poetic, well-realized, beautifully played and sung. My favorite remains "Chain of Love." The relative simplicity of its changes, the anthem-like quality of its chorus, the strength of its images, and the universality of its message all give it my vote as Most Likely To Be Sung.

For accompaniment Josh rounded up a lot of the usual Speak Easy suspects plus some, including an eight-voice "O.K. Chorale." Since everybody does a good job and there are too many to mention, I'll just tip my hat to Bill Bachmann's inventive lead guitar throughout and Raun McKinnon's powerful piano on "Chain of Love."

I've got one complaint, if you can call it that. Josh's singing has an unflappable charm that seems to come naturally, but it's so relentlessly cheerful that there are times when it's a little hard to take him seriously when he sings about being "confused and frightened by the anger in (his) soul." On the other hand, there are moments, like in the last verse of "Chain," when his feelings really show through, and it's all the more exciting in contrast to his usual restraint. I'd love to hear more of those moments on his next album.

Josh's obvious good taste also makes me think he could probably tackle even more ambitious arrangements, more exotic instrumentation. Not something I'd recommend frequently. Meanwhile, we've got a very fine first half-album here.

(Bob Norman is a singer, songwriter, and guitarist, a member of the Speak Easy Cooperative, and a former editor of Sing Out! Magazine.)



Roth/Joffen Side "D"

by Bonita E. Taylor

This recording bursts into life with sass and verve. With vitality and gentle directness, it inspires vivid images, evokes poignant emotion, instructs and entertains.

Presenting us with a wide variety of moods and rhythms, David Roth guides us with honest music that mirrors his own warmth, wit and enthusiasm. His strength is describing situations that encourage us to draw upon our personal daily experiences, taking us on a tour of life's vexations that leaves us feeling confident despite some of our disenchantment. A lucid writer, Roth's soft-hued voice expresses deep feeling, winsomeness, and a trusting quality

some of our disenchantment. Roth is a lucid writer, whose soft-hued voice expresses deep feeling, winsomeness and a trusting quality. Enhanced by reflective melodies and a fine instrumental approach, his heartfelt and intelligent lyrics open our minds and reach our emotions.

The recording opens with "Gotta Get Out," a cheeky look at Adam and Eve (with Christine Lavin making a cameo appearance as the First Lady). Set here in modern times, the song introduces Roth's sense of humor and flair in this remake of an unfortunate saga:

That blind date you got me Lord
That woman name of Eve
She tryin to start some trouble in
my life

The way she act... the way she make
it sound
Like she's the only gal on Earth
could be my wife.

Next, we are taken on a wistful, bit-
tersweet, romantic odyssey -

I've fallen in love with a girl in
a photo
She's kissing a boy who I swear I
once knew
The picture is faded, the image is
distant
But I think that the girl must be
you

"How Do You Hold On To Love" mixes
gentler, happier moments with the
realities that often perplex us in
relationships.

All of this time we've been hang-
ing together
Our fibers and threads touching
days after days
Sometimes so soft I could never
remove you
Other times rubbing wrong ways

With up-front sentimentality, Roth
gives his subject a slow introspec-
tive treatment, and heightens the
exquisite pain and emptiness felt
after the demise of this once-nur-
tured, still-treasured love -

I'd like to know how those clothes
in the closet
Survive all the wrinkles, the rips
and the stains
What do we do when our sizes are
changing
How do we grow with the gains

Roth's musical capabilities are ec-
lectic. In "Fire Flies" he uses a
lilting Brazilian melody to further
his plaintive lyrics -

Somebody get an umbrella
We are heading into a storm
And I'm worried about all the
things we've gotta do today
Just to stay warm

But while he yearns to "fly away"
to his childhood days of innocence -

Now I know what Mother meant
when she said
Things were different when she
was young
'Cause now I can't imagine any-
thing
so carefree ... carefree

- the music has already carried us
away.

Roth is also skillful enough to use
music to temporarily mask an emotion-
al message as a way of increasing its
impact. "Journey of the Heart" ini-

tially appears to be a sprightly
ditty in the Celtic vein, but quick-
ly turns into a fable about warring
belief systems concerning manliness.
Roth presents an imaginative and
vivid portrait of a young boy who
receives one message from his father-

Whatever you may do my son,
wherever you may go
Don't be unprotected, don't let
your feelings show
Every man is for himself, on that
you can rely
You have to hide behind a shield
to stay alive

and another one from his mother -

Whatever you may do, my son,
wherever you may go
Don't you ever be afraid to let
your feelings show
And if you grow to be a man,
I think you will have found
It was the day you learned to
let your armor down.

In a mature interpretation of these
mixed messages, the young man de-
cides

So when I have my own boy I'll
know just what to do
And foolish pride won't interfere
with what he's going through
We'll wash him up with laughter
and we'll dry him down with
tears
And we'll fill him up with loving
that'll last him all his years

This is one of the best songs to
buck the macho mystique since Harry
Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle." In
some ways it's better: Roth's young
man makes his decision in time to
make a difference.

Roth is an idealistic, endearingly
wholesome artist. He understands
that music can raise consciousness,
inspire thought, and shape choices.
He is an unequivocal spokesman for
social change, and utilizes an im-
pressive diversity of styles to make
his points. Adept at humor, he
treats the MX-Missile affair in the
wry satire, "Next Door Neighbor" -

I don't want a missile to be my
next door neighbor
And I don't know of anyone who
would
They're messy, they stay up all
night they're noisy and
If they come there goes the neigh-
borhood.

By personalizing the issue, he sim-
plifies it without trivializing.

In "Earth," his anthem for world
peace, he combines a message of ex-
traordinary clarity and power with
meditative, almost hypnotic music.
Even as it quiets us, it arouses
our spirit, our intelligence, our
courage.

What do you do with the darkness
but look for the light

he says, affecting us viscerally,
personally. Surpassing other peace
songs, it is also Roth's maxim for
private peace. It puts responsibi-
lity for personal and world survival
where it belongs, for "Each of us
has the power to bring about changes."
With words worth trying to live up
to daily, he calls on us to

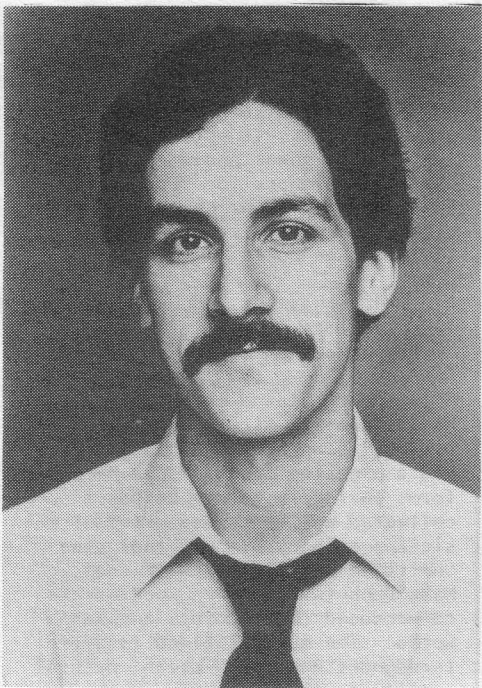
..know that our thoughts and our
actions
Are honest and clear.

All aspects of the execution of this
half-album are first class. Roth
himself is an accomplished guitarist
and a pleasing singer - and he per-
forms perfectly here. He has also
collected an impressive group of mu-
sicians to back him up, including
Christine Lavin, Raun MacKinnon,
Mark Dann (who also engineered and
co-produced the record), and John
Gorka. The musical blend is artful
throughout and has a clean, natural
quality to it.

In this long-awaited recording, Da-
vid Roth presents the foundation of
what promises to be an enduring
body of work. Judging from other
songs performed in concert and re-
corded over the years for Fast Folk,
Roth will continue to delight record
listeners after this album with more,
equally good. The poet Marianne
Moore wrote that "any writer over-
whelmingly honest about pleasing
himself is almost sure to please
others." This is a fine example of
what she meant.

A few words about the album: It is
called "DAVID ROTH/JOSH JOFFEN."
Each of these long-time friends has
contributed six songs to this album
which, held one way looks like a
Roth album and held the other way
looks like a Joffen album. Although
their styles and themes differ, they
complement each other. The concept,
successfully executed, offers lis-
teners an opportunity to get a real
feel for the music of each singer/
songwriter while making the invest-
ment for one. It may be purchased
from Six Of One, Half A Dozen Of
The Other Productions, P.O. Box
20685, Midtown Station, NY, NY 10129.

ON THE RECORD



DAVID ROTH was a national songwriting finalist at the 1985 Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas. A native of Chicago, David has been in New York for six years and recently released his first album for Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other Productions. This also marks his sixth appearance on Fast Folk

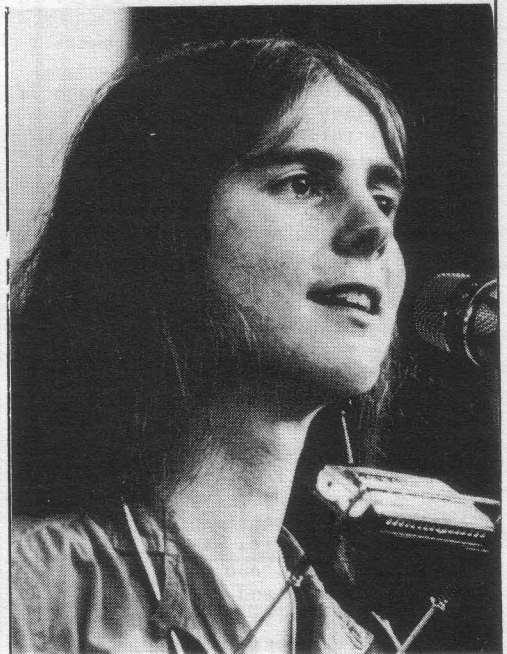
LEFT FIELD is Liz Emmert, Deborah Griffin, Bill Bly and Bill Neely. They perform original acoustic music in the NY - NJ area and have appeared regularly on Music You Can't Hear on the Radio (WPRB 103.3 FM, Princeton, NJ). They have recorded several songs for FFMM over the last few years.

PIERRE is a professional athlete whose volleyball team tours in the tri-state area. In his travels, he has met and made friends with a number of musicians, who heard his music and were impressed enough to encourage him to perform for the public. He ventured out to the open mike nights at both SpeakEasy and the now-defunct Folk City, and both clubs decided to book him. Pierre continues to perform and write songs.



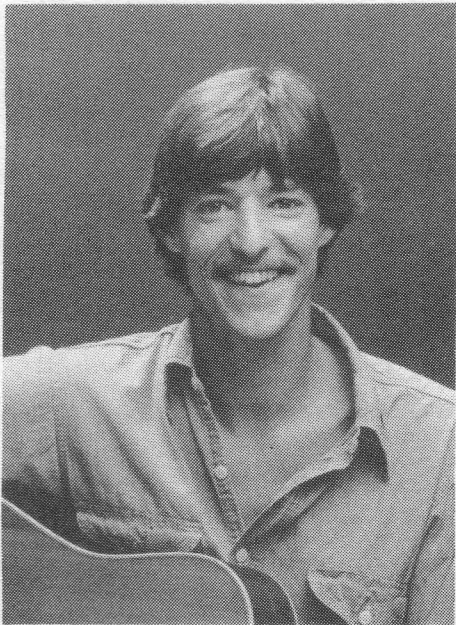
PETER BROWN is a native New Yorker who sings and plays original songs, and covers a variety of musical styles. For several years he has been one of the key people responsible for the Fast Folk Musical Magazine's continued existence. For booking info, you can write to him: Peter Brown, 111-27 78th Ave, Queens New York, 11375

Singer/songwriter RICHIE HAVENS was a leading figure of the protest movement in the 60's and maintains his activism into the 80's. He appears in the feature documentary A Matter of Struggle, a film which centers around the problems surrounding the U.S. large military budget. He has also served as the producer for a new film about Jimi Hendrix, and is curator and co-founder of the Northwind Undersea Institute Museum in City Island, New York, a facility for underprivileged and handicapped children. His new album, Common Ground, is only one of several releases from his independent label, Connexion Records.



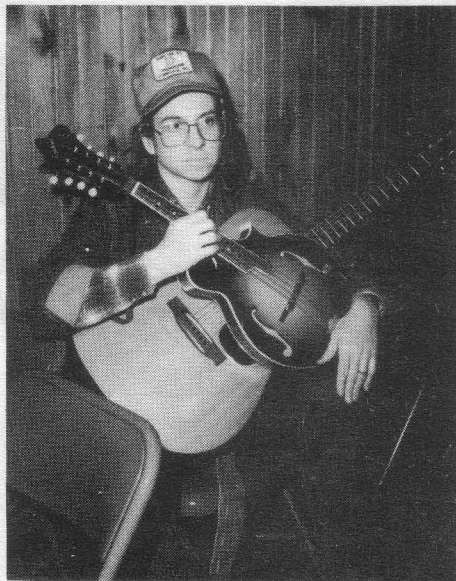
JANE GILLMAN was raised on the strains of Chopin and Bach, and broke family tradition by exploring the diverse musical scene in her native Washington, D.C. The combined influences of bluegrass, folk, blues, rock, ballads, and Cajun two-steps helped to create her unique sound. Her repertoire is eclectic and upbeat. Jane has performed throughout the country. For several years she was a member of the highly-acclaimed acoustic group, Eaglebone Whistle, based in Austin, Texas. Their album of original and traditional songs was released on the Philo label. Recently, Jane completed a solo album of original songs, marking her solo debut. The album will be released on Green Linnet Records.

KIM WALLACH accompanies herself on banjo and guitar, and her repertoire includes original compositions and a wide range of contemporary and traditional music. Born in New York City, and raised in New Jersey, she moved to Boston to attend college. After a year travelling in Europe, singing on streets, in youth hostels and in folk clubs (honing her craft) she returned to Boston's lively folk community. Best known as a solo performer, she has also worked with The Short Sisters. Her recordings include: Paddle on the Rahway (1985), The Coldest Winter in Living Memory (1983), and two cassette and booklet sets of children's songs



BUDDY MONDLOCK lives in Chicago and appears regularly at many clubs and campuses in the area. He has been featured on the nationally syndicated show, The Flea Market, and was picked as one of the "Best of Open Stage" at the Earl of Old Town by some of Chicago's pop music critics. His material includes ballads, bluegrass, and a few old standards.

MICHELLE-SHOCKED grew up a Mormon Army brat, which is kind of a double negative if you stop to think about it (which she has). When she was sixteen, her step-daddy retired and they moved to East Texas where Leadbelly did a lot of his hell-raising and where everybody was kinfolk to everybody else and where black was black and white was white and let's keep it that way--needless to say Michelle lit out of there first chance she could and she's been travelling 'round and playing music ever since; kicking 'round Manhattan being Consolation to a Dream, which is to gad about the world on a sailboat. The song "Cement Lament" is inspired by Michelle's activities with the squatting movement here in NYC, down around the Lower East Side, Adam Purple's Garden of Eden, Doug and the Boys from the Homeless Union, St. Valentine Committee on Housing Justice, and Rock Against Relocation. Michelle's first album, The Texas Campfire Tapes, recorded on a Sony Walkman at last year's Kerrville Folk Festival, has been riding at the top of the Independent Label charts in England where she is currently on an extended concert tour.



Eddy Lawrence of duo **SID & ELMER** was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1956. He began playing guitar at an early age, playing his first professional gigs while still in high school. He moved to New York in 1982 and immediately began playing with various rock and roll bands. He recently released his first solo acoustic album, Walker County, in the summer of 1986. Jeffrey Glenn, originally from Memphis, Tennessee, has been Eddy's partner in various musical projects since 1982.

FRED SMALL is an attorney-turned topical folksinger in the tradition of Woody Guthrie, Malvina Reynolds, and Tom Paxton. He tours nationally, appearing at coffeehouses, folk festivals, benefit concerts, colleges and conferences. He has performed at the Vancouver, Winnipeg and Philadelphia folk festivals, and the Great Hudson River Revival. Fred has two albums on the Rounder label, No Limit (1985) and The Heart of the Appaloosa (1983). His debut LP, Love's Gonna Carry Us (1981), is on the Aquifer Label. Fred's song, "The Heart of the Appaloosa" has been elected to the All-Time Bluegrass Hit Parade by WAMU Radio in Washington, D.C. In February 1986 Yellow Moon Press published a book of Fred's songs, Breaking from the Line. Fred's next album will include "I Will Stand Fast."

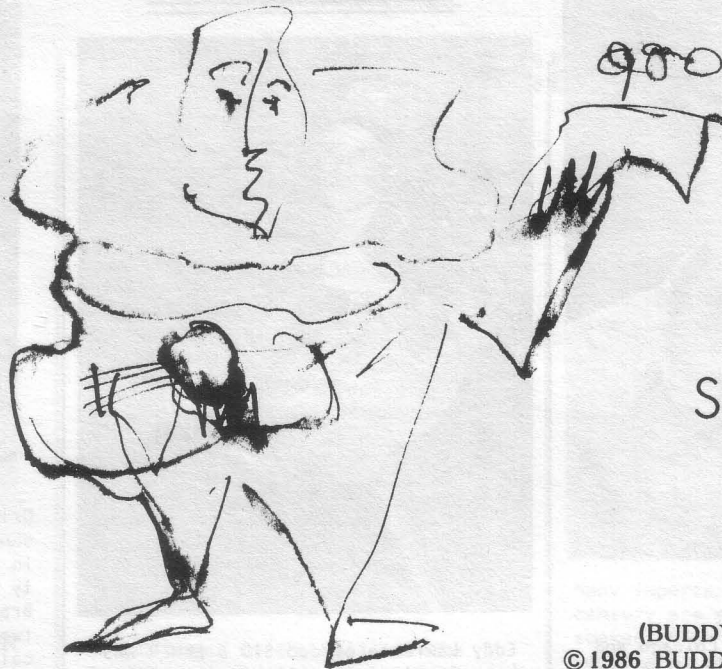


Originally from Connecticut, singer/songwriter **LILLIE PALMER** now resides in New York's East Village. Formerly a member of the duo Palmer & Bragg, she has been writing songs for two years. She has sung backup vocals on many albums by other New York based musicians, and will perform this year in the Boston edition of the Fast Folk Musical Magazine's fifth-year anniversary revue.

Elliott Murphy Information Society



We publish a bi-monthly newsletter to keep you informed of Elliott's touring and recording plans. Plus we offer hard to get Elliott Murphy items; records, teeshirts, posters, songbooks, etc. For more information or membership, please write **THE ELLIOTT MURPHY INFORMATION SOCIETY** P.O. Box 209, Ludlow, VT. 05149, U.S.A.



SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

- 1 SHOULD ON YOU
(DAVID ROTH)
©1986 DAVID ROTH ASCAP
DAVID ROTH/GUITAR AND VOCAL
MARK DANN/BASS
- 2 CECIL'S GONE
(EDDY LAWRENCE)
©1986 SNOW PLOW MUSIC BMI
SID & ELMER:
EDDY LAWRENCE/GUITAR AND VOCAL
JEFFERY GLENN/GUITAR AND VOCAL
MARK DANN/BASS
- 3 ONE LOOK BACK
(JANE GILLMAN)
©1986 PTERODACTYL MUSIC
JANE GILLMAN/APPALACHIAN DULCIMER,
HARMONICA AND VOCAL
PETER CUNNINGHAM/BASS
- 4 DON'T LOOK NOW
(BREWSTER PALEY & JOHN AMATO)
©1985 PARALLEL FILMS
RICHIE HAVENS/VOCAL
JOE HUDSON/BASS, ACOUSTIC GUITAR
JOHN AMATO/ELECTRIC GUITAR
MARK DANN/ORGAN
DRUM MACHINE PROGRAMING
- 5 I BELIEVE IN YOU
(PIERRE MILLERY)
©1986 PIERRE MILLERY
PIERRE MILLERY/GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 6 CEMENT LAMENT
(MICHELLE-SHOCKED)
©1986 MICHELLE-SHOCKED
MICHELLE SHOCKED/GUITAR AND VOCAL

- ON THE LINE 1
(BUDDY MONDLOCK)
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BUDDY MONDLOCK/GUITAR AND VOCAL
MIKE LINDAUER/FRETLESS BASS
- TO THE FUTURE 2
(PETER BROWN)
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PETER BROWN/GUITAR AND VOCAL
DARRYL CLARK/BASS
MARTIN SONNENFELD/DRUMS
- GONE TO HIS HEAD 3
(LILLIE PALMER)
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LILLIE PALMER/GUITAR AND VOCAL
MARK DANN/ELECTRIC GUITARS,
MIRAGE KEYBOARDS, DRUM MACHINE
- I WILL STAND FAST 4
(FRED SMALL)
©1987 PINE BARRENS MUSIC, BMI
FRED SMALL/GUITAR AND VOCAL
- TALL CAROLINA PINES 5
(KIM WALLACH)
©1986 KIM WALLACH
KIM WALLACH/BANJO AND VOCAL
RECORDED BY DAVID ROTH
- UNTIL JUST NOW 6
(W.D. NEELY)
©1981 W.D. NEELY
LEFT FIELD:
BILL NEELY/GUITAR AND VOCALS
BILL BLY/GUITAR AND VOCALS
DEBORAH GRIFFIN/VOCALS
ELIZABETH EMMERT/VOCALS
MARK DANN/BASS AND KEYBOARDS