

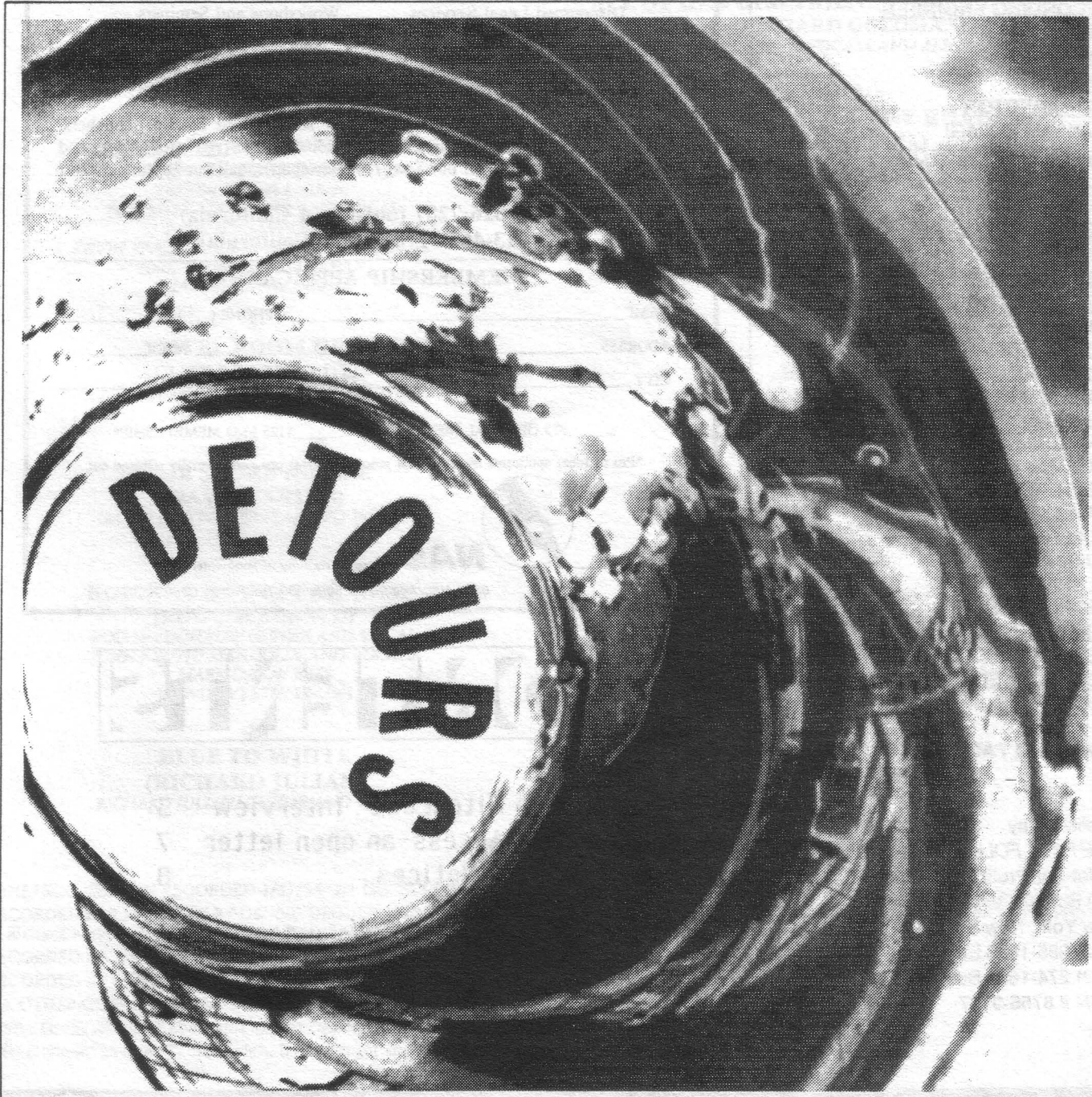
# FAST FOLK

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**CONTENTS**

Robyn Hitchcock : Interview	3
Music Access—an open letter	7
Concert Notices	8
Lyrics	9
Record Reviews	14
On The Record	16
Credits	20

## Robyn Hitchcock: Man With the Lightbulb Head

By Jim Allen

Robyn Hitchcock first began to make noises in the public ear in the late '70s with British cult favorites The Soft Boys. Hitchcock was the lead singer and main songwriter for the band, which at the time was playing some of Hitchcock's earliest absurdist anthems like "Where are the Prawns?" and "Old Pervert." The Soft Boys disbanded around the turn of the decade, and Hitchcock has been releasing solo albums ever since. From the beginning his reconstructionist vision of modern pop music has put his songs in a category all their own. His songs move freely through the realm of imagination and make frequent and stirring use of some of the most unusual imagery you're likely to hear this side of sanity. Rules are bent with joy and reckless abandon to extremely satisfying results. To quote the man himself, "People get what they deserve, time is round and space is curved, honey have you got the nerve to be Queen Elvis." Hereafter lies a discussion with the songwriter on his recent U.S. tour, where he vents his spleen about his recent acoustic album, writing, performing, fish and insects (frequent subjects of Hitchcock songs) and more.

**FAST FOLK:** What was it that first made you want to write songs?

**ROBYN HITCHCOCK:** Having heard them, probably, like everybody else. I don't think I'd've invented the medium of the song if it wasn't already there. I remember trying to make one up when I was about ten. There was nothing there. It was like trying to draw on an empty bank account. So I had the impulse long before I had any ability. I didn't actually manage to write a whole song by myself till I was 19 or something like that.

**FF:** What were some of the songs you heard then that made you want to write your own?

**RH:** There's a tune by The Shadows called Atlantis which I really loved. Their association with Cliff Richard has

tarnished their credibility somewhat, but they were quite unique, really. "Rhythm of the Rain" by The Cascades, "Telstar" by The Tornadoes. That was another instrumental, actually. Instrumentals were more haunting than songs. And then The Beatles stuff. I liked "Don't Bother Me" by George Harrison. They were pretty simple songs, just kind of haunting in a tacky, early sixties pop sort of way. If John Waters had grown up in England, they're what he'd be using in his movies.

**FF:** Why did you print a manifesto on the back of the album "Globe of Frogs?"

**RH:** I was being defensive about what I thought the limitations of my own songwriting were. I could imagine somebody saying in court, "Mr. Hitchcock, your songs have no political relevance, they have no relevance to the outside world. They are totally solipsistic. You are navel-gazing. How do you defend yourself?" So my defense was that I didn't believe songs should be dogmatic, or that songs should preach, which I still think is true. I'm not saying songs shouldn't be political, songs can be anything you want. Some things work better than others in songs. A song has to persuade, has to put you in a point of view where you come out saying, "Yeah, you should rush out and give ten dollars to the first homeless person you see" or whatever it is. It's no good just writing a song saying, "The streets are full of homeless people, we are in a big hotel. This is bad, bad, bad." I mean, who cares, if you put it that way?

Ever since "We Shall Overcome," the converted have liked having their own songs to sing while they hold hands, and it means absolutely fuck-all to the outside world. I know I'm going to play to by-and-large liberal white middle-class types wherever I go. So why bother to reconfirm their opinions?

**FF:** Are your songs making some kind of personal statement?

**RH:** They're not making any statement at all. You simply have to open up the crack between whatever lies deep inside you and your surface. It's like literally letting off steam or letting out whatever it is that powers a volcano or

an earthquake. You just have to open the crack between the core of your being and the surface and let something out. You don't know what it is. Without it coming from right down inside it has no power, whether it's a song about a bottle of ink or a song about crack dealers.

**FF:** What role do you play in your songs?

**RH:** I'm not sure I'm even in my songs. I act as a medium between it and everybody else. I can decide when to change key or whatever, but without that impulse the thing is sterile, really.

**FF:** What can you tell me about the song, "I'm Only You?"

**RH:** It's a fairly devotional song, I suppose, where, in moments of intensity the singer actually becomes the person he's singing to. The singer is all sorts of things. There's a house with a mountain inside it, and there's a jail you can't get out of and there's a policeman working by himself in a deserted building. There's a lot of solitary situations which this person feels like, and at one point he becomes the listener. It's chronic insecurity. It's one of my better ones, I think.

**FF:** A couple of things that do seem to crop up with some regularity in your songs are fish and insects.

**RH:** Well, why not? There's fish and insects all over the place. I mean why don't they crop up in everybody else's songs? Let's turn this one around. Why doesn't Madonna sing about them? There's enough fish and insects, God! I mean if Madonna goes to a restaurant, what happens if there's no fish? I'm sure she's got some goldfish tanks, I'm sure she's got some expensive jewelry in the shape of fish. Same with Michael Jackson. I'm sure if you took the fish out of their lives they'd notice it. Fish is an all-pervasive symbol. Look around everywhere in human culture, there's fish. The early Christians used the sign of the fish; they're used in commercials; they're used for jokes; countless rock musicians use fish; Jimmy Page used to wield fish on groupies in the seventies; there's a singer called Fish; there's a group called "An Emotional Fish"; "A Fish Called Wanda." Insects; there's insects everywhere. Movies like *Them*—giant ants who live out in the desert.

They're just so pervasive, but for some reason very few people sing about them. What do they sing about? They sing about relationships.

**FF:** What does the song "Insect Mother" mean to you?

**RH:** Well, that's a love song. It's a woman with a big, black shiny head, that the man is courting, basically. He wants to have sex with her. She's a human female, but with a spaceman's helmet that's blacked out from the inside. It's like the reverse of a mermaid, a human body but an insect head.

**FF:** Who are some current songwriters that you admire?

**RH:** Right now I like Julian Cope, bits by all sorts of people. I don't like an awful lot by anybody. There's no one I'm nuts about.

**FF:** How do you feel about Tom Waits?

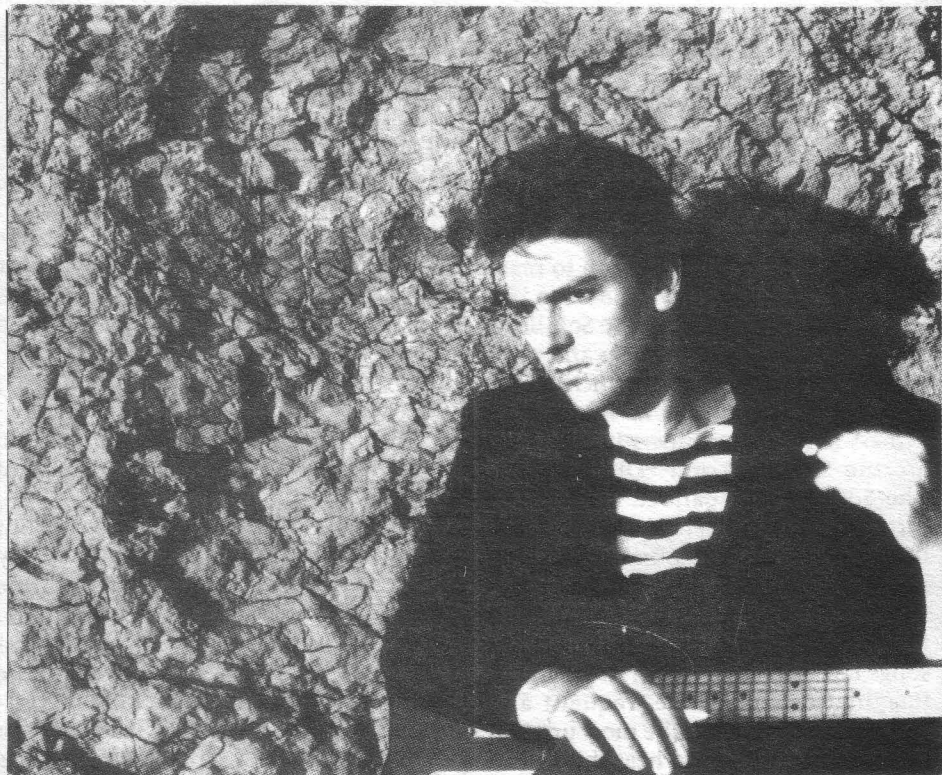
**RH:** I don't like Tom Waits at all. I hate his voice. That whole Tom Waits vibe really bugs me, and it bugs me even more when I see him in films. I don't like the whole sort of "Nighthawks at the Diner" schtick. I'm sure it's quite sincere, but it just doesn't attract me. I prefer Captain Beefheart. I think he's brilliant. Maybe it's because people used to say, "If you like Captain Beefheart, you'll like Tom Waits," so I went with the wrong expectations. It just sounds really dreary. Same as some people don't like Dylan. I love Dylan, but some people just can't stand him. It just turns them right off.

**FF:** Are there any authors who you think have had an effect on your writing?

**RH:** J.G. Ballard, Mervyn Peake, T.S. Eliot, hundreds of authors. Gabriel Garcia Marquez. He has the concept of dead people walking amongst the living in the same places that they used to be. So he's another one. Everything is absorbed whether you like it or not. You don't always just replicate things you like.

**FF:** Do you think of your songs as surrealist?

**RH:** No, not particularly, but I see how they could be described that way. Surrealism's a bit naff, you know. It's like the concept of a jug on an open plain: there's a big water jug, or a bathtub and there's a head poking out of the



sand. Maybe a big ear trumpet coming through space borne by two winged cherubs or something. It all seems like some sort of druggy poster from the early seventies — the reassembling of random objects in the wrong context. Surrealism was probably at it's best before they knew what it was called. It's like anything else in art, I mean they have to have a name for themselves and define what it's called before they can find their own purpose.

**FF:** There do seem to be certain leaps that you take from verse to verse in songs, a kind of non-linear logic.

**RH:** Well I don't know. Who's linear? Do people think in a linear way? I mean even the great detectives probably make leaps. I don't have a mind like a Hoover, that goes around picking everything up one thing after another and filing it. I'm a restless person, I just pick a few things up at random and go off somewhere. To go into any greater detail, you'd actually have to go to a neurosurgeon and see how my brain worked compared to yours, because we're really just talking about electrical impulses in our heads. We just really don't know anything about it.

**FF:** Do you have a hard time recon-

ciling your artistic intentions with the sort of inherent music business bullshit that you inevitably have to deal with?

**RH:** Sometimes. You know that there are lots of people who have a vested interest in you, making you go through the same machinery as everybody else, standardizing you. There's money in safety. If I went, with the mastery I have of the F, C and B flat chords, and wrote a bunch of totally standard, identikit, mid-metal rock or something like that, the companies would be delighted, and then I'd get interviewed cause everybody loves a winner. And they'd say, "Why is this utterly mediocre stuff so successful? Why does everyone love it?" Because nobody's actually got the nerve to object to it. I was in a motel once, and I asked them if they could turn the Muzak down in the lobby, and they said, "No, we can't. It's pleasing," and looked at me helplessly. We are all pleased by it, something in our chemical makeup.

**FF:** Do you ever feel like you're being made to jump through hoops by industry machinery though?

**RH:** Well, everybody's made to jump through hoops. Most people have to do

a job. I'm lucky enough not to have to clock in for work at 8:30. I can't think of anybody who doesn't feel the're not jumping through the hoop sometimes. I'm lucky enough to be self-employed and make my own way around the world. So anytime there's a point where you don't want to do things, you just have to put up with it, otherwise you may be in line to work at a bank where you have to be everybody you meet, screw your individuality.

I'm doing all this to my greater glory, and if I'm good eventually when I'm sixty, someone will write my biography. So there are hoops which are some of my own making. The companies all want to make money, I understand. But I have to watch out that I don't get diluted, because they don't know quite what it is they're selling.

**FF:** What do you think the term "pop music" means?

**RH:** Well, originally it meant popular music, which might have meant Gershwin or Irving Berlin or something like that - people who wrote witty songs that were sung by flamboyant women with feather bows or men in dinner jackets. Then it meant Elvis Presley. Then maybe it meant the Carpenters and, later, maybe it meant The Cars or The BeeGees or something. Then maybe it meant ZZ Top, and now it means New Kids on the Block or Public Enemy or 2 Live Crew. It's really whatever is selling. There's more and more of it now for people to define.

**FF:** Do you think you make pop music?

**RH:** No. I use that medium, but I'm not making pop music. If by chance I sold a lot of records it would just be some fluke, some crack, almost like a space warp. Some bizarre leap from one dimension to another. I use what was defined in the sixties as the pop medium: guitars, harmonies, bass and drums - the same palate The Beatles used. But for years I've produced non-commercial pop. Not unlike John Cale or Elvis Costello or Richard Thompson.

**FF:** The inherent assumption in calling something pop seems to be that anything else is "serious" music.

**RH:** Well it was. I mean that's how we thought when we were kids—it was pop or classical. Either something that

was good for you that didn't taste very nice, or something sugary that made you feel sick if you had too much of it. You always go for the sugary thing because it is nice and bright, not the frumpy old oatmeal bowl with spinach in it. You want the nice shiny bun with icing on it, and the same goes for now: you go for the thing with the bright colors and the pizzazz, not the worthy stuff written by some worthy guy with his shirtsleeves rolled up, which the fanzines tell you is jolly good. Also most folkies, certainly in England are a lot of old frumps with no sex appeal. Those of us who are producing non-commercial pop aren't necessarily serious. Maybe we're out of time, that doesn't mean to say we shouldn't be doing it.

**FF:** What made you want to make this last record alone, acoustically?

**RH:** Well, I got fed up with having other people. Especially as we've had a bit more success everything gets done more by committee. If we make another record, it looks to me like there's an even bigger committee looming on the horizon, and I think two or three times about how I want to do this, because everyone has a vested interest. There's a lot of people throwing in their two cents worth, until my cents worth gets proportionately smaller and smaller. Then it got to where I made the last record myself, played everything myself, didn't tell anyone anything about it. I don't need my songs to satisfy anyone.

**FF:** Would you like to make records that way from now on?

**RH:** If you can't satisfy yourself, in the end you're not going to satisfy anybody else. The acoustic thing, I think it'll last as well as anything else I've done. I wouldn't want to listen to my records anyway much, because I've already heard them. I love talking, I like verbalizing, but I don't like the sound of my own voice as a singer much. That's why I double track it and stuff. I put reverb on it. I don't like to hear it too close. On mic, it is very close, but that's the way to perform.

**FF:** What's the difference for you in dynamics playing or recording acoustically instead of with a band?

**RH:** The dynamics of actually playing are different because you don't have

somebody else keeping time, so if you wanted to put bass and drums on it after, it might be hard. You can have your own half-beats or whatever, that you shove in, and no one's going to argue with you. When I'm recording, again, you don't have to worry about spill from the bass and drums and all that. You don't have to worry about, "Let's get a good backing track and then sing a vocal over it." There's none of that "one thing is conditional on the other" crap, "let's build our house slowly out of little bricks, brick by brick." You just go in with the bloody guitar, set the mikes up, make sure it sounds good and then sing it like you would at a gig.

**FF:** When you're performing alone, do you feel you have to work harder to draw people into it?

**RH:** No, the reverse, because all there is is the guitar and the voice for them to listen to. Now, if they're not accustomed to listening to acoustic music, they're used to hearing the sound of the snare (imitates metronomic drum beat), it's gotten bigger and bigger. Most rock, pop, whatever you call it that you hear on the radio is still the voice and the snare. All that's happened in the last thirty years is that the snare has tripled in volume. So maybe in the sixties it was guitar and voice and now it's (mim-

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ics drum machine). So if people are turned off by that then that's too bad, but otherwise it's much easier. There's only the voice and the guitar to deal with. You've got all the dynamics. Assuming that you know how to perform and you could sing in a club to a hundred people and keep their attention, you should be able to make an interesting record.

**FF:** Do you think that the rhythm of a song or something in the way the sounds of the words relate to each other, there is an intrinsic meaning which would exist even if you took away the literal meaning of those words?

**RH:** Yeah, completely. Although having said that, we don't listen to much French rock'n'roll. A lot of people say that the emotion from another language will drain through to you. I think it's all important. I don't think words matter a bit. It's the sound. Well, words do matter, but that's the thing with writing a song: it's no good just having a set of words that mean something and expecting them to have an effect when you sing them beneath. Once you're singing it becomes an incantation. It has a small element of magic in it. I'm beginning to sound like David Crosby or somebody, but I think it's true. Song, like painting and drawing is a form of ritual magic. You're doing it to invoke something, to summon up some force or other. So it's no good just singing a recipe or a shopping list, I mean, you could, but maybe all the groceries would come flying in the window if you sang it.

**FF:** When you write, which side of that do you go for first?

**RH:** The incantation, get into a trance and see what comes out. Then you formalize it a bit, use a bit of intellect. If you're singing in a trance, you might find that you start to sound like somebody else, or that you've got a section from somebody else's song coming through, so you have to sort of prune out the derivative bits. You have to use willpower and detached intelligence to push it somewhere. To get back to the original thing you have to actually have that sort of primal eruption coming out of you before the song has any life and then you just sort of channel it. You say, "This way please mister eruption,

we'd like you to go down this hill.

**FF:** Most of your albums feature short prose works on the inner sleeves. Have you thought of expanding those into book form?

**RH:** If I could concentrate long enough, I'd be the first to write a book, but songs are quicker, you need three minutes to do it. A book, you need, whatever it is, 40,000 words. I can't concentrate. I can't sustain it for that long. I'd love to write some short stories. In my twilight years, I'd like to picture myself as somebody sitting under a tree somewhere writing short stories, getting longer and longer as I get older. Finally as my head just sort of thumps on the page like some over-ripe fruit from the tree above, I finally write my first novel and fall dead just before I write the last sentence, which would probably boost the sales.

**FF:** In the process of songwriting, do you feel that there are an infinity of possibilities, or that you can only go so far before you wind up back where you started?

**RH:** Well, in the nature of physics, you always wind up where you started, time is a spiral. You wind up where you started or above where you started. Everyone of those leaves in Central Park out there is going to die, but this time next year an almost identical set of leaves will have replaced them. Is there any progress? I never really think of myself as going anywhere. It's always a fresh start in the morning and then you fall asleep at night. There are an infinite number of possibilities. There is an infinite number of words, both meaningful words and meaningless words, foreign words and English words that can be stuck together and no one's going to exhaust that possibility. While we're still functioning in this basic way as primates with six strings and two hands, one of the great things about being a songwriter is that you will never exhaust the possibilities. You may well run out of steam or run out of ideas, but you won't run out of what there is out there. Someone else will carry on, and that's very exciting.



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## An Open Letter to the Community: What Is Music Access?

by Bar Biszick

Public support of the arts is in serious jeopardy. As a result of the current economic decline, it's harder than ever for an emerging artist to break into the business. Public support of the arts is in serious jeopardy. As multinationals continue to consolidate, vertical market control of distribution networks and promotional media have tightened. Record companies are less willing to take chances on new artists who do not fit mainstream categories, or who cannot show a proven track record. In addition, some might say whole pieces of our national cultural heritage have been sacrificed to foreign entities by sales of companies such as CBS and MCA.

The complex music industry is the result of machinations put in place some 50 years ago. Since there wasn't as much money in it back then, I believe the founders were motivated by the belief that increased distribution of entertainment would document and encourage the arts, foster the appreciation of culture, and make them some money.

But corporations have a life of their own. Over time it simply became a matter of corporate competition in a largely unregulated free market economy. As a result the value of art and culture was subordinated to the value of creative marketing and promotion. Since then, success has been largely measured in volume sales and dollar return. It's not so much the people as it is the structure of the industry within the current socio-economic climate that is the problem.

Since most of us are of legal voting age, and since most of us buy commercial music and listen to commercial radio stations, can we really deflect the blame from ourselves? Is there some way to chip away at the structure and break through the barriers? The answer is, no—absolutely not. The most debilitating fallacy within the independent music community is that you can change the system. You can't, so don't

waste your time trying. Well, then what do we do in the meantime?

I am not the first to have said it: we need to set up a networking structure that really works—one that increases revenue and productivity at every level of the independent arts community, one that generates money that will fund low cost artist resources and support services that will encourage the arts. Only in this way will we be able to support creative artists through this difficult period.

MUSIC ACCESS NATIONAL NETWORKING NETWORKING PROJECT FOR INDEPENDENT MUSIC will act as a national networking organization for the independent arts community, and to raise money for the arts and artists. Its principle tool is the MUSIC ACCESS SYSTEM, a centralized interactive database accessible by telephone on a pay per call basis from anywhere in the continental U.S.. This system allows consumers to select and listen to segments of hundreds of hard to find new music releases in a wide variety of categories.

The system allows independent artists and record companies to circumvent existing national promotion and distribution barriers by minimizing consumer purchase risk. In other words, the system allows one to listen to records before one goes out and buys them as one used to be able to do in record stores. The most important aspect of the system, however, is its ability to act as a central national repository for information and an interactive forum for the independent arts community. As of January 1st, we have added a "Music Resource" area to the phone system that will dispense information on magazines, fanzines, record companies, arts organizations and other services of national interest to artists. This service is free to all organizations that register with us.

Secondly, attached to each music and information module is a message box that allows callers to leave comments, messages, questions or a request for further information (record catalogue, magazine subscriptions, etc.)

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from the artist or company. Messages deemed of interest to other callers are cleared and added to that modules "bulletin board of remarks". For a quick example of excellent networking, call the system at 718-398-2166 and push in ACCESS #2021. When the music begins, push the star button (\*) to exit the piece, followed by "4" to hear remarks. The cost is 95 cents per minute. Finally, MUSIC ACCESS intends to begin moderated board discussions on topics of interest to the community, and to launch a series of modular tutorials on entertainment law, business and career development. We hope to do this under the guidance of existing regional and national arts service organizations with professional staff support. We hope to make this information conveniently available to developing artists even in the most remote parts of the country by using the national phone system.

By pooling our national community resources and sharing contacts and information, we can set up a synergistic relationship between each member of the community. Everybody who gives a little will reap greater rewards in the long run. Most importantly, emerging artists will have low cost access to information critical for their development and survival.

A consumer can use the telephone key pad to review records, allowing people to hear and buy what they like. Use the system to make contact with other artists or music buyers who might share similar music interests. If you call be sure to leave your contact address or number so they can contact you directly, or simply leave a note of encouragement for them. Leave a question or message for magazines or record companies. We'll be sure to notify them as soon as they are received. Unless you make it confidential, your question and its answer will be added to the bulletin board. Be sure to include your name and city so they can respond directly to your question (i.e., "This is John from Kansas City, Oklahoma").

The MUSIC ACCESS SYSTEM is but one aspect of what MUSIC ACCESS, the organization, is committed to achieve. Our central goal is to use every means to assist developing artists in their careers.

If you'd like more information, please call MUSIC ACCESS at: 718-398-2166. Or, leave a message for me in

ACCESS #9999. To get into the system, call 1-900-454-3277. (Remember, it costs ninety-five cents per minute).

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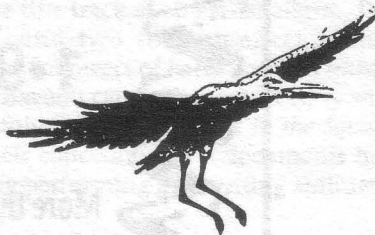
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## Concert Notices

Ten folk musicians will gather together on June 28th at 8:00 PM to present Folk Music Friday Evening, a folk festival and benefit which will be held at the Tusen Theatre in Narrowsburgh, NY. The evening's emcee will be Willie Nininger. He will share the stage with Jack Hardy, David Massengill, Wendy Beckerman, Germana Pucci, Lisa Gutkin, Richard Shindell and Stuart Kaybak. This concert will benefit the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance, The arts council for Sullivan County. In the fifteen years since its founding, the Arts alliance has provided a framework which has allowed hundreds of performing artists, composers, writers and others to create and present their work.

Admission is \$8.00 in advance and \$10.00 at the door. Advance sale tickets can be purchased by sending a check payable to Delaware Valley Arts Alliance. Po Box 170 Narrowsburgh, NY 12764. For more information call (914)252 7576

### Fourth annual CATSKILL MUSIC FESTIVAL

The fourth annual Catskill Music Festival-"THE HOSTING OF THE BARDS" will take place at Mountindale Park over the weekend of August 2nd, 1991.

This open air festival is open to visiting musicians. Official performances will begin at 7:00 to 10:45PM on Friday in a round robin format. Daytime performances are scheduled on Saturday including a childrens stage. Late night informal campfires will begin after the formal stage shuts down. Gourmet Dinner and Breakfast will be provided, though donations are encouraged to offset the cost. Artists are encouraged to bring their records and tapes for sale.

Campground fees are \$3.00 per day per person. The campground has some amenities such as showers, a pool and small boat rentals.

The date again is August 2nd, 3rd and 4th 1991. For information call Jack Hardy at (914) 887 4432 or Stuart Kaybak at (914) 434 1267 (before 8:30 PM please)



# LYRICS

## DRIVE ALL NIGHT

Darkness folds around the car like a moth  
We are driving just to be driving  
The heater's blaring  
And the radios on low  
You hurt so deep I know  
And I will stay real close

And we will drive all night  
We will keep the road in sight  
We will survive this night  
This hard night

God has left us stranded in the dust  
All I know is what I see  
And what I see makes me believe  
That He has lost his mind  
There's a madman in the sky  
That one so young should die

### CHORUS

Bridge: I remember when we were younger  
We would fall but it did not matter  
Glass would break  
But it would not shatter

From this night our innocence is gone  
The bell has tolled a final sound  
I wake up and I look down  
To find your empty arms  
If I could pray I would  
But that's one thing I have never understood

### CHORUS

Words and Music © 1990 by Kelly Flint

## I ALWAYS KNEW

I always knew you were too good for me  
I always knew you knew it too  
I did what I could  
I knocked on wood  
I hoped you understood  
I could never measure up to you

And now it scares me when I hear you talk  
I knew I never had a chance  
But I'd rather be a nickel on the sidewalk  
Then a penny in a rich man's pants

Now you've got someone to take care of you  
He gives you everything you need  
All those pretty things  
Engagement rings  
All tied up in strings  
I only gave you what I got for free

## FISHING TRIP

Throw out the anchor and tie away the line  
Let tomorrow have its own day  
For today I've got mine  
Give myself a fishin' pole  
Cast it in the stream  
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen  
La de da da

Nowadays the answers  
They're a little harder to get  
As much as I'd like 'em to  
Sometimes they just won't fit  
So tell me something water  
Water wha d' ya know?  
And the water it answered  
"In both directions I flow"  
I watch a leaf fall from a tree  
It has no point to prove  
It's just taken by the winds of fate  
just like me and you  
So tell me something water  
When will I know to make my move?  
And the water it answered  
"There is nothing I know  
That doesn't lie within you"

So pull up the anchor and untie that line  
Let tomorrow have its own day  
For today I got mine

Words and Music © 1987 Al Peterson - Norton Music

## MEMORY OF YOU

It's uncanny  
It's something strange  
It's something I have long tried to ignore  
Behind the curtain  
Behind the door  
If I keep my eyes cast down  
It just might go away

It's got no name  
And it's got no shape  
It can't be photographed  
And it lives in no one place  
It's got no shame  
And it knows no grace  
And it's got two long arms  
reaching out for me

I hit the light  
I'll take my stand  
Let's have your best  
Show your hand  
The shadows run  
And I see true  
It's just the memory of you

So what's your pleasure  
My phantom friend  
What thing could bring you out  
To haunt this world again  
Some sweet revenge  
Some dread command  
Or do you only need  
Someone to hold your hand

Why did you leave  
Your will so vague  
Just three blue lines  
Across the page:  
You keep the vase  
I'll keep the rose  
And the memory of you

Words and Music © 1990 by Richard Shindell (ASCAP)

But now it scares me when I hear you talk  
I knew I never had a chance  
But I'd rather be a nickel on the sidewalk  
Then a penny in a rich man's pants

I always knew you were too good for me  
That's what you always used to say  
So hard to protect  
Your self respect  
In fact that's all I can do  
That's the only thing you gave away

But now it scares me when I hear you talk  
I knew I never had a chance  
But I'd rather be a nickel on the sidewalk  
Then a penny in a rich man's pants

Words and Music © 1990 by Paul Foglino

**BLUE MOTEL ROOM DREAMS**

There is no city just somewhere in mid-west  
No blue ribbon hotel just any old room  
And I won't stop for supper before I retire  
No blue plate special to remind me of you

Two dollars for TV and a dollar for ice  
The linens are nameless like I feel tonight  
A touch incognito to protect me from you  
So how do you find me each night in these rooms

Tomorrow to Denver, a Mexican dinner  
Hotel on Colfax, an overnight stay  
A single room rental, a single room special  
I still trip over things when you get in the way

You found me in Memphis and appeared in St. Louis  
Tomorrow to Denver you'll be following me  
But I never will lose you, you always will find me  
And appear every night in these motel room dreams

*Words and Music ©1986 Cliff Eberhardt*

**ROUTINE DAY IN PARADISE**

There's much I would forget later  
I wouldn't know the time of year  
If I hadn't been listening to someone reading the baseball scores in here  
And my landlord walking out on the street in a brand new satin jacket  
And I'm think about making some sweet lover into a nasty habit

And it's a routine day in paradise  
You've seen it once  
You've seen it twice  
Everything's alright I know  
Who do you love  
Where do you go

Well, the bully boys are out playing chicken  
Planting missles in the wheat fields  
Got a high priced payroll  
Salutin' these beauties is a winged and deadly ideal  
Gonna go out in the moonlight and serenade this nuclear Venus De Milo  
She's sleek, she's shiny, she's fully equipped with  
A billion dollar silo

And it's a routine day in paradise  
You've seen it once  
You've seen it twice  
Everything's alright I know  
Who do you love  
Where do you go

I wake up later go down to the tunnel of love still barely dressed  
The amusement park owner sits in his

**DIME STORE NICKEL**

I found a two headed nickel in the street one day  
And a red headed baby in the store  
They were a loaded pair of dice  
I wouldn't trade at any price  
Cause I 'd never seen their like before  
Kept that two headed nickel in my pocket  
Held that red headed baby in my arms  
Thought the day before we met  
Was as bad as things could get  
But I 'd not lived my whole life yet

Now the flesh is willing  
But the spirit is slow  
And the world moves on and you lose your touch  
And a dollar won't get you where a nickel used to go  
No a dollar won't get you much

Goodbye to the nickel that a dollar couldn't buy  
Goodbye to the river where the breeze would blow  
Goodbye Darlin' Rosie the apple of my eye  
There's a time to hold fast  
And a time to let go  
A time to hold fast and a time to let go

I got some ten cent whiskey for my liver  
Got a dime store novel for a heart  
Ever since the day we met  
Seems as bad as things could get  
But I've not seen the whole world yet

Now the flesh is still willing but the spirit says no  
The world moves on and you lose your touch  
And a dollar won't get you  
Where a nickel used to go  
No a dollar won't get you much

Goodbye to the river  
Where the willow would cry  
And the taffetta dress would billow and flow  
Good by to the nickel no Vanderbilt could buy  
There's a time to hold fast and a time to let go  
A time to hold fast and a time to let go

I found a two headed nickel in the street one day  
Found a two faced baby in my bed  
Now it seems this last regret is as bad as things could get  
But I've not lived my whole life yet

Goodbye to the nickel  
That a dollar couldn't buy  
Goodbye to the river  
Where you billow and flow  
Goodbye darlin' Rosie  
The apple of my eye  
There is a time to hold fast and a time to let go  
A time to hold fast and a time to let go

*Words and Music © 1991 David Cantor*

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corner  
Counting quarters and looking depressed  
And if you gimme two tickets  
Then you and your sweetie get a ride like nowhere else  
And if you got no sweetie you can keep your ticket  
I'll take you riding myself

And it's a routine day in paradise  
You've seen it once  
You've seen it twice  
Everything's alright I know  
Who do you love  
Where do you go

*Words and Music © 1985  
By Rod MacDonald/ Blue Flute Music (ASCAP)*

**ALL OF HER GIRLFRIENDS ARE BRAIN DEAD**

She looked like a girl with a lot on her mind  
But that's where the parallel ended  
I offered my help  
She politely declined  
And almost seemed slightly offended  
She crossed the street as if traveling through time  
An Iranian guy almost fainted  
Men only seemed to have one thing in mind  
And alas, all her girlfriends are brain dead  
Yes all of her girlfriends are brain dead

She got in her car and drove thirty miles  
To the place that the aliens landed  
'Course they were gone  
It was no big surprise  
Yes, everyone leaves this girl stranded  
She slips through the cracks  
And cries in her sleep  
It's not what her good Lord intended  
The last thing she wants is to be with a creep  
And alas all her girlfriends are brain dead  
Yes, all of her girlfriends are brain dead

She hangs on to life like dog with a sock  
The public is all but forgotten  
She toys with a pillow and stares at the clock  
And takes off her make-up with cotton  
Maybe I love her and maybe I don't  
Or maybe I'm just her intended  
There is just one thing that we know for sure  
All of her girlfriends are brain dead  
Yes, all of her girlfriends are brain dead  
Yes, all of her girlfriends are brain dead  
Every one of those chicks are all brain dead

*Words and Music © 1989 Richard Goldman*

**BLUE TO WHITE**

when Frankie held out his hands,  
he begged for a lot  
and he couldn't get nothin' from  
nobody  
he couldn't even get shot  
so he called his own  
when there was nothing left to say  
but on account of a heart  
he went to heaven anyway

some thought it was a sin  
they said he got off easy, alright  
but he just had to pack it in  
blue to white

blue to white  
he just got tired of tryin'  
and tired of the fright  
so he left it to the blind to find  
what was left of the light  
and he went blue to white  
blue to white

the shadow of a woman  
was the last thing he'd see  
as he drowned in the ocean  
of her memory  
he once told her how he loved her  
but she didn't take it personally  
now they'll make him a saint  
in the next century

and what was hard for all to see  
will shine like diamonds in hindsight  
just forgive and let it be  
blue to white

blue to white  
you don't have to look for the dark-  
ness  
in the middle of the night  
so you leave it to the blind to find  
what's left of the light  
and hope for blue to white  
blue to white

and when Frankie did his deed  
he knew that it ain't guaranteed  
you better pray with all your might  
for blue to white

*Words and Music © 1989 Richard Julian*

**ON MY BLOCK**

On the block where I used to live everybody had a dream  
Somethin that would lift you up off the block, outta there  
to another place  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream  
cross the hall, don't you wanta have a dream, hitting the  
number  
going back to Puerto Rico, buying a house  
bringing all the children and grandchildren back with her  
to live together in the same little town where she was born  
high in the mountains, looking out at the sea  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream

On the stoop, Little Wille sold loose joints  
he had a dream knowing the really big hustlers  
making really big dope deals, an apartment on the West  
side  
staying high all the time and never ever again going to  
school  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream

In the schoolyard teenage Rosie dances to the big radio  
she had a dream, a well dressed serious, respectful young  
man  
who would marry and take her away to a fine white house  
in Queens  
In her dream this guy also loves to take her dancing five  
nights a week  
in high priced fancy discoteques  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream

On the corner fat Ralphie the wino actually watches like a  
hawk  
every day when the Brinks armored car goes by  
He has a dream one day a bag of money will fall off the  
truck  
and he, fat Ralphie will get it cause he has been watching  
In his dream he knows exactly how he will scoop up the  
money,  
slip it in a paper bag from the garbage and step slow  
around the corner  
never coming back to the block again as long as he lives  
He couldn't make it through the week without a dream

On the top floor, home from work, Sammy with the long  
hair has a dream  
rock n roll, Madison Square Garden, one move of his guitar  
sends thousands of teenage girls screaming  
they tear their hair, they storm the stage, they pull down  
his pants  
In his dream Sammy forgets the guiter he got for Christmas  
long ago  
lays under the bed broken and anyways he never learned to  
play  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream

Down the block in the True Light church  
A whole bunch of people had a dream one day  
The clouds would open and Jesus Christ himself  
would come down in his robes all white and shiny  
He'd lift them up off the block  
To the place far, faraway that was clean  
Pure, spotless and had no alternate side of the street park-  
ing  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream

Some dream the daily double at Yonkers Raceway  
Some dream robbing a bank and buying a farm in New  
Jersey  
Some dream the New York State grand Jackpot Lotto  
Some dream killing the boss and running with the money  
in the safe  
Some dream an accident- getting just a little crippled  
And collecting three million dollars  
So many pipe dreams  
Some dreams with a pipe  
And me too

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I had a dream that one night  
In that one quiet minute just before the dawn  
The whole block would dream the same dream together  
And that day like the morning after a gigantic soul satisfy-  
ing party  
We would know that we don't need to be movie stars  
Or go to Heaven with an electric amplified harp  
But right here on the block we might start out together  
In the long and lifetime struggle for the survival of our  
souls  
And we would know anything is possible  
If we dream the same dream together  
Because on the real side on that block  
You couldn't make it through the week without a dream

*Words and Music © 1990 by Victor Lewis*

### THE TEMPORARY ROAD

He is skating on a river that's been frozen since December  
He's a soldier on a river off to war  
And he just received his orders, they're in his pocket with his  
quarters  
But they never cut his leave like this before

He skated nights when he was younger though he always  
knew the danger  
But it seemed so much is here and gone so soon  
And his buddies know he's crazy but they'll meet him by the  
bridge  
And he has the light of more than half a moon

Well the ice talks to the river, the geese talk to themselves  
Will they fly all night if there's no place to land  
The place to land is open water, and open water he can't use  
Then it's hard enough to find a place to stand  
When the ice gives in beneath you, you know it changes  
how you dream  
And you will never be the same again

He's going where there is no winter, the only ice is in his  
veins  
He may kill someone who's face he'll never see  
He always knew he'd be a soldier since his parents could  
remember  
Now he's skating down this temporary road

He is skating on a river that's been frozen since December  
He's a soldier on a river off to war

Words and Music ©1990 John Gorka

### WHEN THE COUNTRY MOVED TO TOWN

On the wings of a Silver Eagle  
A country legend and his band  
Fifty years out on the highway  
Fifty years of one night stands  
Keeps the music clean and simple  
Like the farm boy learned to play  
But the legend never noticed  
That the boy has moved away

Back in the Great Depression  
Her lifeline was a radio  
Listened to the delta blues  
Jimmy Rogers, Bill Monroe  
And I grew up on that sound  
Before the country moved to town

On a cheap flat top guitar  
A little black kid sure could play  
Rode the blues up the river  
Like the mercury on a summers day

From the juke joints on the south side  
To playing for this college crowd  
Who don't know nothing 'bout the blues  
They just like it fast and loud

#### CHORUS

Nothing pretty about hard times  
Those days are gone for good  
Color TV in the Hollow  
Shopping malls in the piney wood  
Listen to the money talking  
Nothing argues with success  
And there's nothing clean and simple  
In a modern wilderness

#### CHORUS

© Words and Music Michael Jerling / Moonlight Music

### BLACKBIRD

Cool fall night  
wind is blowing  
powder gust  
snow starts falling  
Somewhere, in the changing skies  
Blackbird, trembling as he flies

Blackbird, you are my brother  
Like you, I'm trying to keep flying

Blackbird dreams  
of warming sun  
wonders when  
dawn will come  
Seems like it is always storming  
Lightning never sends a warning

Blackbird, you are my brother  
Like you, I'm just trying to keep flying

Some fly south  
they turn around  
I'll fly north  
till south is found  
For me, just one way to wing it  
One song, though it's hard to sing it

Blackbird, you are my brother  
Like you, I'll keep trying to keep flying

Words and Music ©1990 Al Schere

### THE HUGE GRAY BLOB

Once upon a time there was a Huge Gray Blob.  
Many people tried to solve the mystery of the  
Huge Gray Blob, but the mystery of the Huge  
Gray Blob was just that — that it was a Huge  
Gray Blob. One day, Man discovered the Huge  
Gray blob. What is it? What is it made of?  
Why is it here? How can I benefit from the  
Huge Gray Blob? Man asked God for an answer,  
but God said nothing. God had respect for the  
Huge Gray Blob. This was not a mystery to be  
solved. And yet, Man continued to dig, to study.  
Inside the Huge Gray Blob, there was only  
gray. Outside of the Huge Gray Blob, more gray.  
They formed a circle around the Huge Gray Blob.  
They danced. They chanted. They threw fire at  
it. But try as they might, they could not change

the Huge Gray Blob. For it was the Huge Gray  
Blob, and always would be. But we know men,  
don't we? They poked and prodded. They  
laughed. And then, one day, one group of men  
claimed, "This is our Gray Blob. No one else  
shall touch it." But other men said, "No, this  
is our Gray Blob. You may not touch it." A  
stone was thrown. A man died. Many stones  
were thrown. Many men died. Soon, all men  
died. And there still existed the Huge Gray  
Blob. God came down. He walked on the Earth.  
He looked, and he touched, and he smelled. But  
still, even God could not figure out the mystery  
of the Huge Gray Blob.

Words and Music © 1989 By James F Dean

### STEPHEN FOSTER

Kind friends and gentle hearts  
that is what the letter said  
in the hand of a man who had been in Bellevue  
from the morning they found he was deaf

He had written the songs that an entire nation  
whistled and sang under it's breath  
his song on their lips, but his name was forgotten  
he died a derelict's death

There was a time when a nation so wild and wide  
was drawn closer by ribbons of steel  
They had horse-drawn trollies, but soon Fulton's follies  
gave us steam piston flywheel

At elegant balls and bawdy beer halls  
his songs could be heard loud and clear  
pianos would play and his songs drift away  
in the smoke and the smell of stale beer

It is late afternoon, a New York saloon  
a working crowd starts to appear  
a man from the streets, his arm full of song sheets  
asks, is there one you'd like to hear

A penny a pint a bed for the night  
is all I ask for my song  
"Man you're a nuisance, but here is a few cents  
now good man please run along"

In a Bowery boarding house a broken down bum  
fell down a flight of stairs  
When the men from Bellevue came to take you  
they whistled one of your airs

O sing softly of Susanna, old folks at home  
or the girl with the light brown hair  
Does anyone know just who wrote those songs  
I wonder does anyone care

Weep no more my darling, weep no more tonight  
we will sing a song for my old Kentucky home  
for my old Kentucky home  
goodnight

Words and Music ©1990 Kirk Kelly

### IRREGULAR HEART

He fell down at work  
they thought he bought the farm  
he fell down at work  
and he was clutching his arm  
doctor talked about some little straw  
that could break a camel's back  
doctor said that this little straw  
was gonna make his heart attack

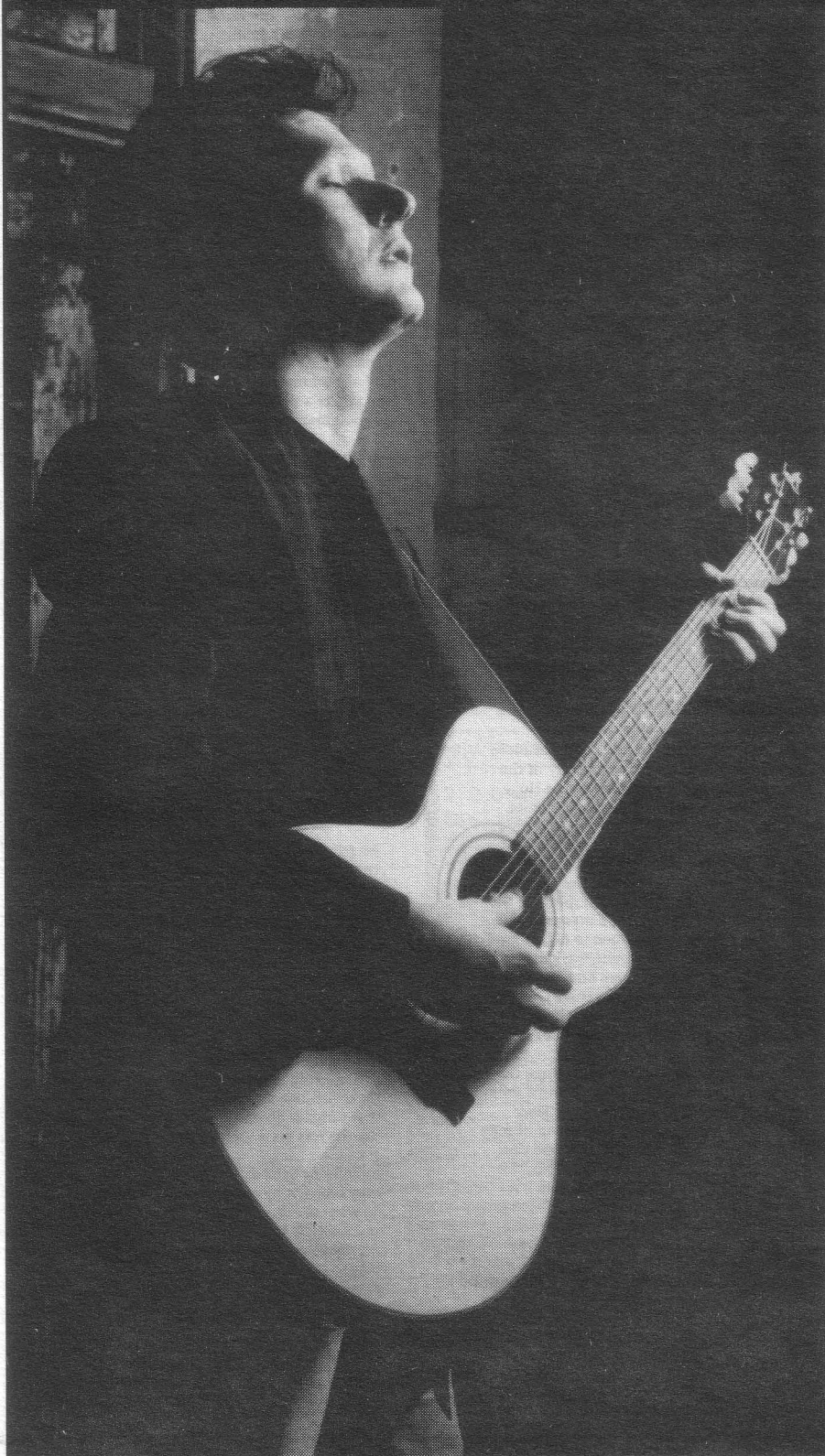
so don't get him angry  
might be more than he could take  
don't get him too happy  
this too would be a mistake  
it's rotten like an apple  
that tumbles down the cart  
that he was born with an irregular heart

so he went back to his room  
they brought him things to eat  
he went back to his room  
and he lived from beat to beat  
they gave him pills to forget all his problems  
pills to forget his family  
pills to forget all his problems  
like the way life used to be

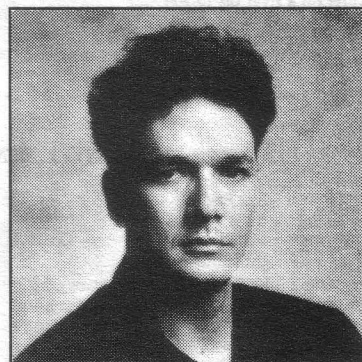
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# PIERCE PETTIS 'TINSELTOWN'



His awaited follow-up to *While The Serpent Lies Sleeping* scores with twelve songs; topical and pointed observations on the politics of humanity.



"...putting enough of a contemporary spin on folk music to assure its prominence in the '90s."

- *CD Review*

"...reveals some of the range and depth of a folk scene exploding."

- *Pittsburgh Press*



# RECORD REVIEWS

## BOB DYLAN: THE BOOTLEG SESSIONS: Vol. 1-3 (Columbia Records)

Now for less than \$40.00 (or the cost of one average bootleg record) you can get a large chunk of previously unreleased Dylan material. Before this it might have cost in the thousands to have these songs. While nearly all of this material has been floating around for fifteen years or more, there are some surprises; such as *Farewell Angelina*. Some artists might be thrilled to have this retrospective represent an entire career, and we have this work representing the castoffs of a prolific and diverse artist. When you consider the *Basement Tapes*, the unreleased material on Biograph, the extra cuts on *Greatest Hits Vol. 2*, and various singles that all of these were castoffs is even more impressive.

Of course it's great to compare standard performances with the demos and rehearsals, but it is the wealth of 'new' material that makes having this set worthwhile. The feel of his legendary one take, live recording method comes across

This set gives one a chance to reconsider the productivity and quality of Dylan's more recent periods of work. Sixties' material remains strong, but cuts like *Blind Willie McTell*, *Series of Dreams* and *Foot of Pride* are also excellent. The demo of *Every Grain of Sand* is as intimate and focused a performance as the 1960's outtake of *Moonshiner* which has often been used as an example of how well Dylan can sing.

This is essential material. Buy this set and keep an eye out for follow-up volumes.

## JONI MITCHELL: NIGHT RIDE HOME (Geffen Records)

By David Kesler

The struggle between "high art" and "popular art" defines our age. It is precisely in the world of so-called "popular music" that this issue is so cogently addressed. Joni Mitchell belongs at the top of a list of contemporary musicians that have attempted to reconcile these two far-off worlds. Like Paul Simon, David Byrne, Peter Gabriel and others, Mitchell attempts musical linkages between disparate influences. Her primary inspirations have come from jazz and a decidedly post-modern literary capability that both distinguishes her work and earns her a place among the cultural samplers mentioned above.

Mitchell's 16th album is a personal marking of her passage into middle age. The album's narrative begins with its title song. *Night Ride Home* is a turn of phrase indicative of a journey towards the end (or beginning) of life. The song paints a picture of what the album will be—a series of literal and figurative sound paintings: "like some surrealist invented this 4th of July".

Mitchell hardly abstracts this pop/painting metaphor, referring to color and the process of painting in almost every song. Take as an example this passage from *Passion Play*:

in come the multitudes,  
in Exxon blues,  
and radiation rose

Likewise, the song *The Only Joy in Town* opens with the line:

I want to paint a picture  
Botticelli style,  
instead of Venus on a clam.

Virtually all her melodies are jazz-influenced, albeit through the filter of a pop/folk sensibility, in that they are all

eminently accessible. *Ray's Dad's Cadillac* borrows the smooth electric pop rhythms of Steely Dan, her painterly lyrics again returning us to the album's theme:

Pink fins in the falling rain  
Rollin to the blue lights  
by the water main.

Her lyrics are increasingly lucid, infused with a knowing vision and commentary on our time as well as on the passage of time in a person's life. In *Nothing Can Be Done* she mourns the trappings of time:

I am not old  
I'm told  
But I am not young  
Oh and nothing can be done.

Of course, perhaps the most satisfying thing about this album is that Mitchell is attempting to confront herself and her mortality. This album is an attempt to overcome time by freezing it in still-life. The songs are not generalized commentaries like *The Circle Game* or pleading love songs like *Help Me*. The songs are moments of Mitchell's life past and present, heightened, crafted, and delicately oil-painted. Her voice contains a hint of raspiness, a worn quality suitable to her desire to create a patina of years not unlike some verdigris goblet of red wine. In the album's most hauntingly beautiful song "*Come In From The Cold*, we can feel and hear her fears:

I am not some stone commission  
Like some statue in a park  
I am flesh and blood and vision  
I am howling in the dark.

The primary criticism of this album is its lack of the sweetness found in her early work, the major-chord cheeriness, if you will. I for one do not mourn its passing in her post-Mingus years. This is not an album that will return her to the top of the charts, or sell out arenas as

Paul Simon has recently done. Mitchell's work does not come from arena-sized ambitions. Though the album is specialized, rarefied, and a bit precious, it deserves the highest praise for remaining true to the spirit of great painting. A vision of life is addressed here, distilled and produced from the heart of the matter.

## PATTY LARKIN: LIVE IN THE SQUARE (Philo Records)

by Keith Kelly

New England singer-songwriter Patty Larkin's third album is, in her words, "dedicated to the spirit of live music and to the musicians who bring us their song." Recorded on one night at the Sanders Theatre in Cambridge, Mass. at Harvard Square, it offers an impressive cross section of Larkin's serious, humorous, and instrumental compositions.

Using her expressive voice and energetic guitar style, accompanied only by Richard Gates on bass, Larkin begins the album with a modern version of the 1960's Box Tops hit, *The Letter*. This and Andy Barnes' *Last Leviathan*, a powerful song sung a cappella, are the only cover tunes. The remaining twelve songs are Larkin's own. Of these, there is a generous helping of sweet/bittersweet love and ex-love songs. The country-tinged *Had to Be (Deja Vu)* finds the singer finally sure she's found the right love:

I know I've seen love float by  
On a whispering wind and a lullabye  
Like an old sweet song that I once knew  
Now look who's got me singin' 'bout  
the birds in June.

On the other hand, in *Rescue Me* Larkin is not so sure she is in that much love:

Do you want to be a knight in shining armor  
Do you want to be the one to rescue me

Can you read between the lines in the darkest hour  
Can you read my mind, may take a little bit of time  
Come and rescue me.

More contemporary selections include *Metal Drums*, the frightening true story of a Massachusetts town's discovery that its chemical plant had for years been dumping its drums full of toxic waste in an empty pasture, resulting in the poisoning of children who played there:

All the soil from the ground to the bedrock down there  
Was ruined by the bastards  
Thanks to the corporate mind  
They protected their assets, they're doing fine  
Too bad about the Holbrook disaster.

This, the Barnes song, and *Ruby (Like a Jewel)*, the sad tale of a homeless woman, reflect Larkin's strong social conscience.

Other songs are more lighthearted. *I'm White* is a jazzy tune strongly (and admittedly) reminiscent of Rickie Lee Jones, in which a younger Patty wishes for more coolness in her suburban Midwestern upbringing:

I'm white, I grew up in the suburbs  
I like to use adverbs to show I went to school  
I learned how to be hormonal dancing at the CYO  
I was normal, high heels and formals,  
'till I split for San Francisco.

The crowd-pleasing *Me* is a parody of the self-indulgent 1980's. *At the Mall* describes a typical Saturday shopping trip, and allows Larkin to show off her Marlene Dietrich, Carmen Miranda and Ethel Merman imitations, all to a driving samba beat.

The album also features a live version of the title track of an earlier album, *I'm Fine*, and two instrumental guitar pieces. Followers of Patty Larkin's music who haven't caught her act recently will certainly want to add *Live in the Square* to their collections, as it documents her strong performing and writing abilities.

AND..... ASIDE FROM THIS WE HAVE NOW, AFTER A FOUR YEAR JOURNEY IN THE GREENWICH VILLAGE DESERT, SETTLED IN A NEW OFFICE AT THE CORNER OF WEST BROADWAY AND BROOME STREET IN SOHO: ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER- 2nd FLOOR-LOOKING WEST AT A "DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY" SIGN. SO, STOP BY WHEN YOU ARE IN THE AREA. WE NEED TO SUPPLY THIS OFFICE WITH EQUIPMENT SUCH AS PENCILS, PAPER A GOOD TYPEWRITER, A FAX MACHINE, A FEW CHAIRS, SOME NON-FLUORESCENT LAMPS, A POSTAGE SCALE, A CD PLAYER AND STEREO AMP, A FILE DRAWER AND MANY OTHER THINGS.

Letters to the editor are always welcome

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Please ask for our back issue catalog which lists all the songs and performers from all of the 66 Coop and FAST FOLK records. Many are in stock (LP only) some in very limited quantities.

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**Kirk Kelly** is from Brooklyn. He has been performing around the East Coast and recording for *FAST FOLK* since 1984. His first album *Go, Man, Go* is on SST records. His second will soon be released on Gold Castle. Kirk can also be heard on the *Broom Closet Sessions* LP on 109 Records, and on Windham Hill's *Legacy* compilation.



**Al Peterson** began his professional career as a singer/songwriter performing in coffeehouses in Dearborn, Michigan. Performing solo on guitar, piano, and harmonica, Al plays contemporary acoustic folk-rock. He is currently based in Cambridge, Mass.

Al recorded with the late John Hammond, Sr. in New York and Nashville. In San Francisco, he has recorded with Don Taylor at Wally Heider's. In Sausalito, he recorded with Bob Johnston, with whom he was also involved in music publishing. During the past eighteen years, Al has appeared in concert at coffeehouses, colleges, festivals, folk and rock clubs, as well as in streets, homes and churches. He has played across the United States: from NY to Ann Arbor and from San Francisco to Nashville. Al has also performed extensively in France and Germany. He has opened for artists such as Suzanne Vega and Richard Thompson. His live radio credits include WUMB and WERS in Boston. His lyrics speak of the joys and sorrows of love, and the experience of everyday life. What is important to Al is how his music reaches and moves the listener through expression and feeling. His influences range from the classical guitarist John Williams to Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee; and from jazz pianist Bill Evans to John Lennon.

**Rod MacDonald** is from central Connecticut. He is considered to be one of the finest singer/songwriters working today, and many of his tunes have become contemporary classics. *American Jerusalem* has been recorded by Garnet Rogers. Rod tours constantly and has performed all over this country and much of Europe. In addition to his numerous recordings for Fast Folk, he has released three albums, *No Commercial Traffic*, *White Buffalo* (also released in Germany as *Album for 2 for Sale*), and *Bring on the Lions* (released in Switzerland in 1989 on Brambus Records). He was also featured on the *Cornelia Street Album*. Rod is also the guiding force behind the Annual Greenwich Village Folk Festival. He is currently living in Italy.



**Richard Goldman** lives and writes in Los Angeles. A friend once said that listening to his music is like hanging a "Do Not Disturb" sign on a motel door and having the maid come in anyway. His music cuts straight to your heart, like a surgeon in a big city hospital. His voice can reopen old wounds and close them again. If you were to connect the dots of his myriad talents, you might come out with the outline of a small bird ready to take flight. His deep, abiding passion for the world at large helps

one overlook his complete lack of musical training. But in the end it is you, the public, who are his judge and jury. Will he be the next Suzanne Vega, or just another hapless creature, frozen with fear in the headlights of an oncoming Oldsmobile?



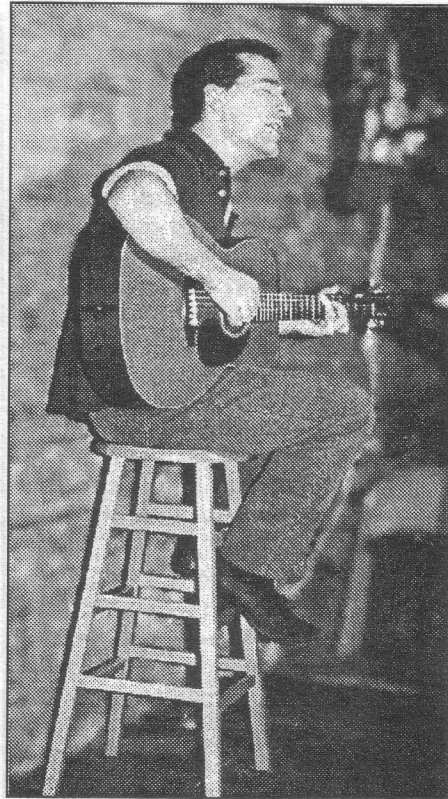
**Milo Binder** has been attracting attention around Los Angeles with his original and eclectic acoustic performances for some time now. In addition to his own successful club dates, he has opened shows for the likes of the Cowboy Junkies, Steve Forbert, the



Balancing Act, Maria McKee, Hunter S. Thompson, Michelle Shocked, and Shawn Colvin. His stature in the critical world is continually growing. His praises have been extolled in the pages of *Bam* and *Cash Box* magazines as well as the *Los Angeles Times*, among others. Constant performing has won him a core audience and local name recognition. Today, Binder finds himself playing clubs that, a couple of years ago, would have most likely frowned on an acoustic act. Binder's music defies easy classification, but it is poignant, powerful and often satirical. He plays with conviction and sings with passion and honesty. But don't call him a folk singer. "I look at [that label] with bemused resignation," laughs Binder. "I don't know why it's hard for people to believe that an artist can have any more than three dimensions. My game with it is to consistently have them change what they say about me. If one person is calling me folk, and another is saying alternative, and yet another is calling me sensitive and funny or whatever ... somewhere in between the truth will lie." Milo recently released his first album on the San Francisco-based Alias record label.

While the Midwest has known about Michigan singer/songwriter **Kitty Donohoe** for some time, the release of her first album, *Farmer in Florida*, is making her name familiar to an ever-widening circle around the country. Although her songs have for years been sung and recorded by other artists, two recent Public Television documentaries feature Kitty, appearances on National Public Radio and an expanding touring schedule are bringing her wider recognition as a performer as well as a songwriter.

Kitty grew up in a large Irish-American family, 50 miles outside of Detroit. Her strong sense of connection to that heritage becomes apparent when she performs traditional songs, augmenting the twisting lyrics and storylines with guitar and bouzouki. That same proximity to the Motor City has infused Kitty with a great love and respect for the blues. Rounding out a concert are 'new' folk songs (some by other artists and many of her own) which draw on the world of the common man.



**Richard Shindell** was born more or less on the exact spot where the Hindenburg crashed, although several years after the fact. No kidding. Once a member of the near-legendary Razy Dazy Spasm Band, he now lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. He and his first record will soon be looking for a home. He may be contacted at Fast Folk.



**Big Jimmy**

**Big Jimmy** writes: "I was born outside Chicago, had my ears opened when the *White Album* came out, and never knew what I wanted to do after college. I wanted to be Elliot Ness for a long time. I kicked around in D.C. theater for a while, then moved to California. I got lucky and found a good woman, and have a great family — the rock from where I cast my stones at the lame-brains. I played all the instruments on these songs: a used Ibanez electric guitar, a Yamaha REX 50 digital effects machine, a Roland 505 drum machine, and a sick mind. Imagine there's no heaven. Now turn off the lights. Kind of frightening, isn't it?"

**Five Chinese Brothers** is a New York-based band whose music draws equal amounts of inspiration from folk, country, and rock and roll traditions. Founded in 1983 (then called The Special Guests), the band originally played bar-style rhythm and blues, at times complemented by a full horn section. As band members changed and the tastes of the band members expanded, Five Chinese Brothers evolved into its current manifestation—an ensemble equally at home in folk clubs, country and western bars, and CBGB's. The original songs are penned mostly by lead singer Tom Meltzer and bassist Paul Foglino, although all band members contribute to the band's repertoire, both with their own compositions and with the vital additions of each's sound and savvy in arrangements. The band's material reflects the diversity of its influences: Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, Nick Lowe, O.V. Wright, The Coasters, Gram Parsons, John Prine, The Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, The Louvin Brothers, Billy Bragg, Ry Cooder and many others.

Says Jay Cocks, *Newsweekly* music critic: "I don't know what the sound of the 90's is, and neither do the Five Chinese Brothers. That's why they're so good. The music is fine, and it runs footloose in time. It doesn't sound like it belongs to any period, and trend, any Sound. It's just solid. It's just good. And sometimes a good deal more than good. Whenever I want a little foundation, I play the Five Chinese Brothers: I wish there were more of them."

Cliff Eberhardt and John Gorka at the Bottom Line 1987

The Five Chinese Brothers are: Tom Meltzer, lead vocals and acoustic guitar; Paul Foglino, bass; Kevin Trainor, lead guitar, dobro, and vocals; Neil Thomas, piano, accordian, and vocals; and Charlie Shaw, drums.



*Blue to White* is **Richard Julian's** fifth song on FAST FOLK. Richard has performed at the Newport Folk Festival, The Bottom Line, and the Bluebird Cafe in Nashville. He performs frequently in New York City, and will let you know about it if you send him your address. He can be contacted at: 794 9th Avenue, #1rs, NY, NY 10019. He has recently released his second cassette, entitled *Bones*. He is currently reading *100 Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and suggests it to any one who promises not to call him to discuss it (that is, if they haven't already read it.)

**Professor Louie**, the Poet of the Streets, comes from Brooklyn, NY, "right across the park from where I was born". **Fast Eddie** (on percussion), who is also from Brooklyn, is a keeper of the great round heartbeat of the world—from the motherland to the islands to the ghetto streetcorners of the urban wilderness. They play clubs, halls, dances, festivals and hundreds of community events in New York City. He has two albums, *Professor Louie* and *Sit Down at the Table*. Both are available from Free Brooklyn Now, 3999 14th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215, (718) 768-8728.

**Cliff Eberhardt** is from Berwyn Pennsylvania. His record, *The Long Road* was issued by Windham Hill Records in 1990. His song, *My Father's Shoes* is represented on Windham Hill's *Legacy*



compilation. In addition, Cliff is a winner of a New York Music Award. He's been touring the world on his own lately, knocking people out with his high energy performances and great songs. Cliff says he is always working and never satisfied.



**Michael Jerling** is originally from Illinois and has performed at hundreds of clubs, colleges and coffeehouses from California to New York. Jerling has opened for the likes of Roger McGuinn, Commander Cody, Dan Hicks, Nanci Griffith, Paul Barrere and Micheal Martin Murphy. His first album, *On Top of Fool's Hill*, was released in 1981, and his latest, *Blue Heartland*, is now available at Box 718, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. For bookings call (518)587-3307

**John Gorka** has just released his third album, *Jack's Crows* on the Windham Hill/ High Street label. He is from Bethlehem, PA and has been a part of FAST FOLK since before dinosaurs roamed the planet. He tours constantly and has the added distinction of being a cool dude. Look for him in your town.

**David Cantor** enjoyed a previous incarnation as the Marquis De Sade. Payback is a bitch.



**Kelly Flint** was born this way. As a child her mother took her to specialist after specialist who all threw their hands in the air and cried, "Oy Vey!"



**-1-  
DRIVE ALL NIGHT<sup>4</sup>  
(KELLY FLINT)**

KELLY FLINT/ GUITAR AND VOCAL  
RICHARD JULIAN/ GUITAR AND BACKGROUND VOCAL

**-2-  
FISHING TRIP  
(AL PETERSON)  
AL PETERSON/ GUITAR,  
VOCAL AND HARMONICA  
RICHARD SHINDELL/ GUITAR  
RICHARD JULIAN/ BASS**

**-3-  
MEMORY OF YOU<sup>3</sup>  
(RICHARD SHINDELL)  
RICHARD SHINDELL/ GUITAR AND VOCAL**

**-4-  
I ALWAYS KNEW  
(PAUL FOGLINO)  
The Five Chinese Brothers:  
TOM MELTZER/ GUITAR AND VOCAL  
PAUL FOGLINO/ BASS  
KEVIN TRAINOR/ LEAD DOBRO AND VOCAL  
NEIL THOMAS/ ACCORDIAN  
CHARLIE SHAW/ DRUMS**

**-5-  
MOTEL ROOM DREAMS\*\*  
(CLIFF EBERHARDT)  
CLIFF EBERHARDT/ VOCAL AND GUITAR  
MARK DANN/ BASS**

**-6-  
DIME STORE NICKEL<sup>3</sup>  
(DAVID CANTOR)  
DAVID CANTOR/ GUITAR AND VOCAL**

**-7-  
ROUTINE DAY IN PARADISE<sup>1</sup>  
(ROD MacDONALD)  
ROD MacDONALD/ GUITAR AND VOCAL  
JOHN KRUTH/ MANDOLIN AND VOCALS  
MARK DANN/ BASS  
HOWIE WYETH/ DRUMS**

**-8-  
BLUE TO WHITE  
(RICHARD JULIAN)  
RICHARD JULIAN/ GUITAR AND VOCAL**

**-9-  
THE HUGE GRAY BLOB  
(JAMES DEAN)  
BIG JIMMY/ DOES IT ALL**

**-10-  
ON MY BLOCK  
(VICTOR LEWIS)  
PROFESSOR LOUIE/ VOCAL  
FAST EDDIE/ PERCUSSION**

**-11-  
ALL OF HER GIRLFRIENDS ARE BRAIN DEAD  
(RICHARD GOLDMAN)  
RICHARD GOLDMAN/ VOCALS AND ALL INSTRUMENTS**

**-12-  
THE TEMPORARY ROAD  
(JOHN GORKA)  
JOHN GORKA/ GUITAR AND VOCALS\*\***

**-13-  
WHEN THE COUNTRY MOVED TO TOWN  
(MICHAEL JERLING)  
MICHAEL JERLING/ GUITARS AND VOCAL  
TONY MARKELLS/ BASS**

**-14-  
BLACKBIRD  
(AL SCHERE)  
AL SCHERE/ VOCAL  
RICHARD JULIAN/ ALL INSTRUMENTS  
KELLY FLINT/ VOCAL**

**-15-  
STEPHEN FOSTER  
(KIRK KELLY)  
KIRK KELLY/ GUITAR, VOCAL AND HARMONICA**

**-16-  
IRREGULAR HEART<sup>2</sup>  
(MILO BINDER)  
MILO BINDER/ GUITAR AND VOCAL  
MANDOLIN/ MARVIN ETZIONI  
DENNY CROY/ BASS**

<sup>1</sup>REHEARSAL SESSION RECORDED 1/17/86 ON THE FLY ON CASSETTE BY MARK DANN/ BROOKLYN, NY

<sup>2</sup>RECORDED FOR FAST FOLK BY DENNIS DEGHER AND SCOTT LOVELIS AT RED ZONE STUDIO: BURBANK, CA - 9/28/88—LA Sessions produced by Richard Meyer and Marvin Etzioni (Marvin produces courtesy of Peer Productions)

<sup>3</sup>RECORDED LIVE AT THE POSTCRYPT, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

<sup>4</sup>RECORDED BY MARK DANN

ALL OTHER CUTS RECORDED BY DAVID SEITZ: SYNERGY SOUND/ GREAT NECK, NY

\*\*John Gorka and Cliff Eberhardt appear courtesy of Windham Hill/High Street Records

Special thanks to Dave Tamuelevich, Doug Yeager and Bob Dusks

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