

FAST FOLK

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LIVE AT THE POSTCRYPT COFFEEHOUSE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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MAGAZINE

As New York has grown noisier, more violent and less hospitable to fragile institutions, some still survive. The Postcrypt at Columbia University is one. Housed in the basement of Earle Hall, it is a reminder of an era of basket houses and listening rooms that are all too rare today. While the endless and absurd debate about what folk music is continues, the survival of the Postcrypt illustrates the bankruptcy of the subject.

In this small stone-walled room with wonderful natural acoustics, no sound system, a tiny concession counter, true candle light reinforced by a few electric lights - a wide variety of music is presented and applauded. What makes the Postcrypt so inviting is the opportunity for an audience to hear a performer absolutely live and physically within reach.

Many clubs, some of them quite fine, have designed their stages in ways that cut the performer off from the audience. Quality lighting and sound systems further separate the musician from his crowd even as the equipment allows them to be heard better. Performers and audiences alike have grown so used to hearing reinforced sound that even in living room-sized clubs instruments are amplified to occasionally uncomfortable levels. Overamplification can lead some who perform to rely on electronics for their impact. The more inexperienced ones may try to bludgeon an audience with sound rather than connect themselves. There is, of course, nothing inherently wrong with electronics used with thought, but the tendency is often to plug in everything no matter how close the audience.

At the Postcrypt, the challenge for artists is to find a balance on stage without electronic support and to truly reach an audience. The challenge is a formidable one. Mics and lights can be effective and functional props. It is exhilarating, however, for an audience to hear an unadorned voice. Such moments can be revealing to an audience and performer alike. Forced to listen to a performance over which they cannot talk without interrupting. When people argue about the nature of the 'folk experience' they rarely include the sense of a teacher, elder, or story teller leading one's fellows through a mutually connecting ritual. It's no wonder when most clubs present acts (and the acts act as if they are just that, and no more) that concerts are rarely transporting experiences.

The Postcrypt offers no refuge from intimacy. It is at once intimidating and exhilarating for a performer to know they will have no choice but to look into the eyes of the audience that has come to see them give something of themselves. If there is a 'folk experience', this aspect of the Postcrypt is a great part of it.

Richard Meyer 7/7/91

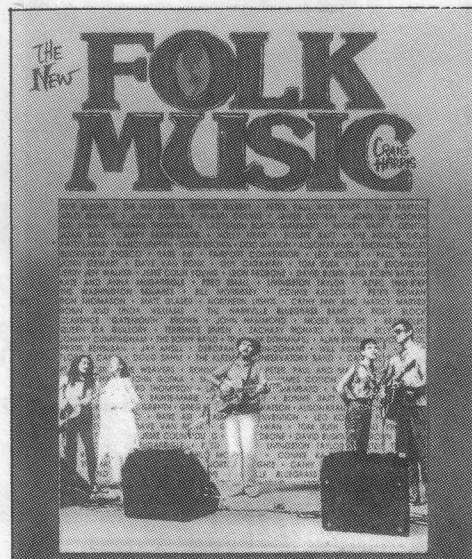
"This is a vital primer for new and old folk music fans."

—Steve Morse, Arts Editor, The Boston Globe

A V A I L A B L E N O W !

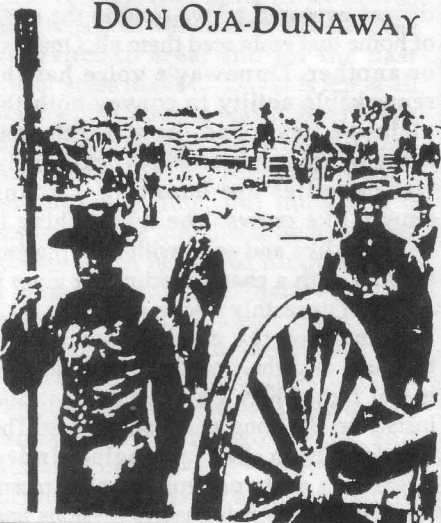
THE NEW FOLK MUSIC by Craig Harris combines rare photographs and interviews with folk luminaries from Tom Paxton to John Gorka, Shawn Colvin and more, documenting the major trends in folk music as it moves into the 1990s. 8 1/2 x 11, 160 pages, over 90 photos.

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KENNESAW

DON OJA-DUNAWAY



KENNESAW (1989) DON OJA-DUNAWAY

By Hugh Blumenfeld

Down in St. Augustine, Florida is a small club called the Milltop, and any Thursday night you can hear Don Oja-Dunaway perform there. His fans include Pierce Pettis, Chuck Hall, and Field Horne (who now runs Lena's Cafe), his inspirational song "Sparrow" ends Pettis' first album, Moments. His early work is mainly religious and personal, but his latest release is a historical project that is the most ambitious collection I've heard since Greg Brown tackled Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience. Kennesaw's eleven songs rise up from the still-unquiet graves of the Civil War. They revolve around the war, but in all of them the historical events form a shared, almost peripheral landscape. At the center are always individual characters whose lives unfold around a personal crisis - like the narrator of the first song, "Uncle Jubal," who lays the deaths of his brothers and his own disillusionment at his foolish uncle's feet:

All my life I wanted to be a soldier

Bobby fell at Fair Oaks,
Owen died at Cold Harbor

Just a couple of boys
I'm sure no one will miss

I'm standing on the south side
of the Chattahoochee River

My childhood dreams of glory,
they was never quite like this

Uncle Jubal, do you remember
how we hung on every word you said

You'd say goodnight to your little
troops,
and then you'd tuck us into bed

There was so much that you never told
us
in your stories around the fireside

Uncle Jubal it hurts to say this,
but sometimes I think you lied

In struggling to finally accuse his beloved uncle, this soldier finally grows up not only to the realities of war but to the realities of love - and it's the latter that makes the last line so poignant.

The sense of place and of real lives is always palpable in these songs. Dunaway never misses the mark - the stories unfold with a kind of inevitability. He has drawn on some powerful novels and histories for his events and some of his characters, but each of these songs is a finely crafted gem that shines on its own. The overall effect is reminiscent of Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio or Masters' Spoon River Anthology, but Kennesaw is neither Southern gothic nor urban ironic.

My favorite tale is "Paducah," in which a luckless drifter reveals his whole life story - which includes an encounter with the raiding Border Ruffians in Lawrence, Kansas- through the story of his dog which he'd originally given to a young girl he was courting.

She named the little dog Paducah
in honor of my hometown

She smiled when I asked her to marry
me,

and politely turned me down

Always seem to put my worst foot
forward
with a singular lack of grace

Bitter memories lose their sting
sometimes
but not in this particular case

There wasn't no way that I could stay,
she took a chunk out of my pride

I took back the little dog I'd gived her,
I was hoping I could make her cry

It was the clumsiest thing I ever done,
no wonder she shunned my advances

She stayed on in Lexington,
the dog and me come on out to Kansas

After losing everything he has except for "a hand full of roasted acorns and a dollar and nineteen cents" in the Lawrence raid, he and the dog follow the railway out to an abandoned depot station. Its dirt floor and leaky roof are about as much home as they expect in life now, in this makeshift hovel they are "fat as two rats in a cheesekeg." I love this man's matter of fact confessions, his plain, understated poetry. A whole nation's history and a man's wandering life hang on the tale of a dog.

"Keaton Miller's Farewell" is simply a man saying goodbye to his family - his two daughters, his wife, and an infant son- a verse for each. Again Dunaway's genius is able to suggest the complexities of history beyond the small frames of his stories with simple strokes, as in the verse addressed to the older daughter

Mary Beth, come let me look at you,
stand in the light here by the door

You make your Mamma and me right
proud,
no one could love you more

'Cepting for maybe young Henry
Sims,
now that you're nearly a woman full-
grown

I 'spose he'll have something to ask
you,
just as soon as he gets back home

These lines give some of the only hints in the whole song that Keaton Miller is leaving for the war. You can feel he has already spoken to young Sims, letting his daughter know without saying so that the young man has asked already and that he approves, so she can bear their absence better and so she will be sure of how things stand in case either father or lover - or both - never return~ And so the unspoken grief of knowing how things really went for these men and women steals into a song whose uttered part might otherwise merely be sentimental. The power of Dunaway's songs is often in what is not said but only evoked.

It amazes me how all these songs dance around the Civil War without ever being about it. In "Thomas Martin," the narrator describes the execution of a young Union spy. Young Thomas marches heroically to meet the firing squad, and the speaker remembers only how they were turned out of barracks too early that morning, how the rain turned to mud, how Thomas smiled a small smile at them. The joylessness of executing this spy, the despair even in a small victory, speaks worlds about the war. In "Dance With Me Julie Anne" a gentleman soldier finds a pre-battle night of love at a September ball

She came down from Cartersville
in a velvet ballroom gown

She set the heart of Atlanta aflame
long before Sherman ever burned her
down

He never says that it is the night before a battle, and he never tells what happens beyond the one dance he recalls. But the way the dancers prolong that moment - even in the way they speak in repeating phrases fills out the story

"If I had one wish," she said,
"one wish," she smiled, "just one,

I'd dance with you until the dawn,
and the morning would never come "

Dance with me, dance with me, Julie
Anne
My heart is at your command,
Tonight I'm just a soldier boy
Tomorrow I'll be a man

Or listen to the apology of the man who sings "Kennesaw Line":

I am but a simple man,
I got no command of the written word

I can only try and tell you of the things
I've seen and heard

So listen to the picture,
forever etched upon my mind

The day that Hell broke loose
just north of Marietta

All along the Kennesaw Line
The day that Hell broke loose
just north of Marietta

And then listen to his oral epic poetry, made from telling and retelling - made for remembering:

The sun rose high above us that
morning
on a clear and cloudless day
A peckerwood tapped on a tree
that would soon be shot away
The heat blistered down
through the leaves on the trees
The air seemed to be made of brass
The sun rose higher and higher
Everything got real still and quiet,
my old mess mate
Walter Hood
Says "I believe them boys down there
are up to something,
And I know it's no damn good "

In the last few songs on the album, the perspective shifts from the immediate here and now to the distant look back

Sammy has engraved in his mind the fateful day on the Kennesaw Line. Then there is the old, battered veteran in "Enoch Ludford." His memory fades as his body fails: "I swear they was actually a time . . . It shames me for young boys to see me like this." Finally, "My Enemy, My

Brother" hangs in the air like an epitaph, sung after all who fought are silent. It could be the voice of the wind. In the end these songs are one long lamentation for distant lives and a love-song to the earth of home that embraced them all. One way or another, Dunaway's voice has the remarkable ability to convey both the plaintive strain and the strength; it is gutsy but also has a rich, lyrical beauty. His melodies are haunting, circling slowly like crows. The whole thing is recorded live and solo, with Don playing a guitar with a cheap pickup that gives it a kind of unearthly whine.

Somehow, the combination of this bareness and the frankly iffy production is just right. There's a modesty to it that insists on the song and nothing else. The whole album has a single-minded intensity, a gritty presence that the recent releases of Robert Johnson's sessions and Dylan's Bootleg tapes also capture.

Though each song seems perfect in itself, perhaps the album could be improved by some change of pace now and then. There is a drunkard's mad song on side one that could be remade into an upbeat dance tune instead of a lament, and "Dance With Me Julie Anne" on side two offers another chance to change the mood and offer some respite from a war-weary vision. But the truth is that the album is difficult not because of any lack but because of the unrelenting fullness of other lives in the stories. Buy this album, stare at the lyrics as the songs make their slow way into a memory you didn't think you shared.

Kennesaw
Don Oja-Dunaway
15 South Comares Avenue
St Augustine, FL 32084
(Cassette only, request lyric sheet)

Five Chinese Brothers

By Beverly Greenfield

Five Chinese Brothers is named after a children's story about quintuplet brothers who each have special powers that work to the others' advantage. It's an appropriate name for this band. "Everyone in the band believes what they're doing is good," says lead singer and songwriter Tom Meltzer. On stage, all of the Five Chinese Brothers (no, they're not Chinese or brothers, but there are five of them) visibly appreciate each other's talents. That makes the music seamless and joyful, and also makes it clear that this is not just a backup band for a couple of songwriters.

"Bands are like families," Tom says; "they don't always interact in the most healthy ways." He's quick to point out, though, that this one is healthier than most. Maybe that's part of the reason Five Chinese Brothers has managed to stay together in its current form for about three years. In addition, the band has tried to minimize "high aggravation, low return" gigs, where condescending club-owners obviously care more about beer sales than music. "We were playing a lot of those gigs for a while, and that's when we came closest to losing the band—it puts you in danger of burning out. You see these guys in bands who have become really cynical. I can't stand watching that," Tom says. For the rest of us who can't stand watching that either, this is definitely an alternative music that Tom calls "fun but not frivolous."

Tom and songwriter/bass-player Paul Foglino first teamed up as Columbia University undergrads in The Special Guests, which began in 1983 as a rock'n'roll cover band, gradually evolved into an r'n'b bar band complete with horn section, and eventually shifted its focus to original material and the "country/folk/rock thing." "Cezanne" (which Tom had written some time before and was already performing at solo gigs.) worked its way into the band's repertoire and opened the way for more original songs. By 1988, the lineup of The



Special Guests had undergone a complete turnover, except for Tom and Paul. So, with drummer Charlie Shaw ("he used to come to all our gigs"), guitarist Kevin Trainor (another Columbia alumnus who also writes, sings, and fronts a band called the Surreal McCoys), and keyboard/accordion player Neil Thomas (also recruited from the Surreal McCoys), they became Five Chinese Brothers.

Tom and Paul still write most of the band's material and agree that their writing styles have become gradually less distinct over their eight years of collaboration. "Paul and I write separately," Tom says, "but we edit each other's stuff." He credits Paul with the more "ethereal" songs. From Paul's wry perspective, "it was pretty clear [at the beginning that] Tom wrote the funny songs and I wrote the pretentious ones. I don't know if I'll ever get the funny thing down, but Tom's songs have gotten more pretentious." Tom describes his own writing as "straightforward," adding that he's not sure if he uses irony more as a tool or a crutch. Paul (who doesn't sing — "I'm more a stylist than a singer") says Tom taught him about songwriting — "You write a verse and then you write a

chorus..." "I figured if Tom could write songs, so could I." (This, incidentally, seems to be the way a lot of songwriters got started; Guy Clark tells a similar story about meeting Townes Van Zandt—"Hell, if he could do it...")

Their songwriting influences include a lot of the usual suspects — Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, John Prine, Hank Williams — and both Tom and Paul like to think of themselves as part of the great American tradition of songwriting.

"There's a large faction today that is enamored of the cutting edge," says Paul, "but I don't think you have to be doing something completely different." If you define yourself as part of a tradition that includes people like Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie, though, "you better be good at it," he adds.

Five Chinese Brothers has a devoted local following, a wealth of performing experience that shines through on stage, and a sizable stockpile of strong material. Still, it is only in the last year or so that the band has seen any tangible successes — Tom laughs them off as "Pyrrhic victories, at best." Diesel Only records, a small label that has become something of a focal point for local bands doing the rock'n'roll/country thing in New York City, released "Baltimore/If I Ain't Falling" as a 45 RPM single (and plans to release a second one from the band soon). The band has also made it to the finals and semifinals of a couple of corporate-sponsored band competitions (the names of which are omitted to protect the integrity of the band) and the finals of the New York Music Awards for "Best Unsigned Band." Tom Meltzer also recently received a songwriting grant from ASCAP. (They also deserve to win an award for best promotional mail.) It was last year that Five Chinese Brothers hooked up with Fast Folk, after the editor of said publication happened to be at the Postcrypt one night when the band was playing. "Who are these guys?" the editor asked excitedly. "They're terrific! We've gotta get them on a record!" "Baltimore" is Five Chinese Brothers' third song on Fast Folk. They can be seen fairly regularly at The Rodeo Bar, The Levee, and other clubs in New York City.

(aka "Flathead")

By Beverly Greenfield

I discovered Ned Landin (aka "Flathead") with a friend in Central Park one fall afternoon in 1988. It didn't take long before he had us mesmerized, with his long hair, purple genie pants, and a freshness that belied his mostly familiar repertoire of Simon & Garfunkel, Don McLean, and the Beatles. The unfamiliar originals and old blues songs in open tunings made us perk up our ears and pay attention, and the folk-rock standards were given new life - anyone who can sing all the verses of "American Pie" and "The Boxer" as something more than just singalongs, but still make you want to sing along, is obviously doing something right. He played for hours with never-failing energy and enthusiasm. He used friendly heckling to his advantage, and involved the audience and passersby at every opportunity. Wild and wacky aside, though, it was clear that underneath the act was some extremely solid musicianship, songwriting, and experience. In fact, by then Ned had spent about seven years busking in North America and Europe.

The roots of his journey started ostensibly in 1981, when Ned visited New York to study at what he calls a "wacko zen music school" in upstate New York (where it turned out he didn't learn much). While he was in the area, he checked out the scene in New York City and found he had a hard time getting booked into clubs, so he went back home to Minnesota. "But I saw some people playing on the street with amps, attracting little crowds;" the way he says it even now, you can imagine the wheels that must have started turning in his head. Back in Minnesota, he decided that he "didn't like flipping burgers," so his dad helped him build his first portable sound system, and he left on a cross-country road trip with a friend, playing in towns along the way and winding up in New York, where he stayed for a couple of months until the weather got colder. In the years that followed, he played in 46 States, stopping in towns up and down

the Mississippi, New Orleans, San Francisco, along the West Coast all the way to Canada, and lots of places in-between. Hitchhiking most of the time, New York became an annual autumn stop for him until he got the chance to go to Europe (opening for a band on tour). They flew to Luxemborg, and Ned "drove their bus around for a while" before taking off on his own through Brussels, Germany, Amsterdam, and eventually the south of France and Spain, of which he still speaks fondly. He liked the ancient cultures visible in the region—"fishing villages that were, like fishing villages, just like in fairy tales. It was all so romantic," he says, "and I'm kind of a romantic." He contemplated continuing on around the world, "but I realized that if it was anything like Spain, it would take me forever, going from town to town, because I'd meet people...and soon it would be, 'stay and marry my sister,' and I felt like I really wanted to stay, but I couldn't, you know. And I'd go to the next town, and it would be the same all over again." So, relinquishing the romance of the Old World, Ned returned to New York to see about fortune and fame. He played regularly in Central Park on the weekends and was a semi-permanent fixture in the evenings at Astor Place in Greenwich Village. Eventually, some of the local studio musicians got to know him, and sometimes they would sit in, Ned says, and "it would be magic."

Ironically, at the same time that he was having some measured successes - - MTV did a video on him and a couple of magazine articles got written - New York was becoming an increasingly unfriendly place for street musicians. He was being hassled by cops, sometimes fined or arrested, having his equipment confiscated, being pushed out of the park by new regulations. Finally, last fall (in 1990), he left New York for Boston, where he says he enjoys the community and gets to play a lot both in clubs and out on the street. In a way, he says "I sacrificed a sense of upward mobility in New York City for a sense of control over my life." How have his years of busking and traveling affected his music? He says that playing on the street, "you get a

generalized picture of what people want. It has to be a little crazy, it has to stand out even more than the average performer. It's like capturing people with a net." When people book you into clubs, they want to know what you are -- folk, blues, whatever. But having trained out on the streets, Ned said he was able to "define himself as Ned," instead of typing himself into a particular genre. He was free to develop a unique, individual "Ned-ness" without the constraints one often finds indoors. He also describes a wildness that comes with playing on the streets - "You're not just competing or comparing yourself with other folksingers. You're competing against the salsa band, or the jugglers, or the magician. That means you have to develop a certain kind of humor, and maybe a certain kind of hardass attitude to protect your turf." All that, he says, comes out in his music.

These days, you can find Ned and his magic around Harvard Square and in clubs in the greater Boston area; he also hopes to be making a few day trips to New York from time to time. He has two self-produced cassettes full of Ned originals for sale wherever you can find him.

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LYRICS

COOL CONCEPTION

She rushes home on an early train
feeling half insane
From hearing his refrain
now she's let down again
Daybreak comes like an only son
and she's left undone
Love is on the run
A tiny breakfast for one

She remarks at the lack of spark
As the moon makes a move over Central Park
And she curses her luck and the stars above
And refuses to see its a reflection of
Her cool conception of love
Her cool conception of love
Her cool conception of love

She picks a man who's not exactly free
and thinks he's more than she
She doesn't dance with ease
can't see the forest for the trees
She hides her heart but claims it's on her
sleeve
sometimes she really believes
Another woman deceives
claims she's a victim of thieves

She remarks at the lack of spark
As the moon makes a move over Central Park
And she curses her luck and the stars above
And refuses to see it's a reflection of
Her cool conception of love
Her cool conception of love
Her cool conception of love

She's too cool to let her feelings out
She's too cool to blame herself with doubt
She's too cool to trust in higher love
And she refuses to see it's just a reflection of
Her cool conception of love
Her cool conception of love
Her cool conception of love

Words and Music © 1989 Susan Firing

TEACHER OF THE GAME

You tried to change me
But it did you no good
You tried to make me
Into what you thought you should

Why change the way
A bird flies south
Why change the way
The clouds turn into rain
You're not a teacher of the game
I do not play

Why must you take my wings away

You walk on water
Or so I've heard
Maybe they were lying
About every word

Why change the way
The wind calls out to every soul
Why change the moments
That keep you from growing old
You're not a teacher of the game
I do not play
Why must you take my wings away

You tried to follow
But I was too alone
You swore against me
Anger was your stone

Why change the way
The years can make you sad
Why turn the truth
Into what you never had
You're not a teacher of the game
I do not play
Why must you take my wings away

SPARROWS POINT

My name is William Taylor
And I was born in twenty-four
Too late to know the great fallen
But in time to know the great fall
When my father died of money
And my mother lived in spite
We laughed when nothing was funny
But how we wept when nothing was left

So I left her there in boom town
When I reached fifteen years
And I traveled mostly northeast
With my head held mostly down
Cause they said there was more in Baltimore
Where those shipyards never close
You can sell the man your labor
And send the money home

Broadway found me pennyless
And the mission found me last
They gave me a coat and three days rest
And when I awoke and left
A shroud of steam surrounded me
And I was borne away
I found myself at Sparrows Point
With a sling-shot in my hand

And standing there around me
Two thousand idle hands
With their heads bowed low

Their hopes not high
Their hearts weaned of their homes
And their pockets full of photographs
And their eyes full of good-byes
I took my place among my kind
And I held my place in line

Now I'm twenty-one and well employed
And I send home most my pay
Which leaves plenty left for cigarettes
To help me pass the days
With beloved friends surrounding me
The cold street so far away
Three days west of Normandy
With a rifle in my hand

Words and Music © 1989 by Richard
Shindell/Shanachie music works (ASCAP)

TAKE ME TO JUAREZ

Out to see America and where do we land?
Some West Texas town with a guy named Dan
In the Dairy Queen, with a root beer float
He had Buddy Holly glasses and a Sgt. Pepper
coat
Broke the empty bottles on the railroad tracks
Lights of the town burning at our backs
Dan said he'd been a cowboy, if we had our
doubts
The time and the wine finally drove them out

Take me to Juarez I'll show you the town
I speak the language, I'll show you around
Nothin' as sweet in this whole round world
As the big brown eyes of a Mexican girl

West to Juarez was an all-night ride
On a table-top highway as blank as the sky
The liquor wore off with the rising sun
I wanted to die or at least to throw up
Dan got us lost down dusty back streets
Dark eyes stared, dogs nipped at our heels
And the only Spanish that he could speak
Was por favor and buenos dias

(Chorus)

Thought we'd head west, put Dan on a bus
When he got real quiet and his eyes glazed up
He started to twitch and kick at the door
He started to shake and he fell to the floor
He foamed at the mouth, I just wanted to run
Jim said, "Don't let him swallow his tongue."
And when it was over, he just fell asleep
We started the truck and pointed it east

(Chorus)

Out to see America and where do we land?
Some West Texas town with a guy named Dan
He pointed the way to a small bungalow
Walked up the front porch, through the old
screen door

Ooo... Take me to Juarez, I'll show you around
Ooo... Take me to Juarez, I'll show you the
town
Ooo... Take me to Juarez, I'll show you around

Words and Music © 1990 By Michael
Jerling/Shanacie Music Works (ASCAP)

YOUR HAIR

Well ever since you went to the beauty shop
I've had a hyperventilation that just won't stop
It's a state of distress that you inspire
Because the sight of your hair sets my heart
on fire

Well, it's a devastation and a crime for sure
What you do to me with that coiffure
I don't even know if you meant to
but you stole my heart with your hair-do

I'm a slave to your permanent wave
under the spell of your fixative gel
I'm a wreck if it's draped at the nape of your
neck
And it's just no use if you use that mousse

Well, you seem to be lacking the significant
notion
Of your lasting effect on my state of emotion
But scissors, comb, and a little blow drying
Done arrested my heart without hardly trying

Well, it ought to be a crime impris'nable
The way you make me so mis'erable
But it's a pain I don't want to see end
I sure wish you'd get your hair done again

Chorus

Words and Music © 1990 By David Hamburger

SWIMMING TO THE OTHER SIDE

Chorus:

We are living 'neath the great big
dipper

We are washed by the very same rain
We are swimming in the stream together
Some in power and some in pain
We can worship this ground we walk on
Cherishing the beings that we live beside
Loving spirits will live forever
We're all swimming to the other side

I am alone and I am searching
Hungering for answers in my time
I am balanced at the brink of wisdom
I am impatient to receive a sign

I move forward with my senses open
Imperfection can be my crime
In humility I will listen
We're all swimming to the other side

Chorus

On this journey through thoughts and feelings
Finding intuition, my head, my heart
I am gathering the tools together
I am preparing to do my part

All of those who have come before me
Band together and be my guides
Loving lessons that I will follow
We're all swimming to the other side

Chorus

When we get there we'll discover
All the gifts we've been given to share
Have been with us since life's beginnings
But we never knew they were there

We can balance at the brink of wisdom
Never realizing that we've arrived
Loving spirits will live forever
We're all swimming to the other side

Chorus

Words and music © 1990 by Pat Humphries

RODEO WEDDINGS AND ROCKABILLY LIVES

He was a rodeo groom, she was a rockabilly
bride
They galloped down the aisle side by side
Nothing gonna keep 'em from the loving that
they had
That rockabilly woman and her rodeo man

Jamie had her eye on Billy from the start
She wrapped a little lasso 'round his rodeo
heart
He never knew what hit him when he heard the
woman sing
And it was rockabilly lovin' for the rodeo king

Chorus:

There's matches made in heaven
And there's loving that goes to hell
Well, Jamie, she ain't no angel
Married to Billy it's just as well

They had a little honeymoon in Billy's Chevy
truck
Parked in the back lot at the Cafe Lady Luck
But early in the morning Billy was off to be a
star

Jamie took a lock of Billy's hair and dropped it
into her guitar

She took a little piece of Billy everywhere she
went
Smokey little barrooms to Grand Ole Opryland
She was makin' records and Bill was makin'
"friends"
But when they'd wind up in the same town,
They'd wear them weddin' bands

Chorus

Now it's back in the barroom at Cafe Lady
Luck
Billy's all in rhinestones, Jamie ain't in much
And they sparkle like diamonds when their
pinky fingers touch
Like lightning in the sky when the wind is
coming up

And you'd never know they married back in
1955
You'd never know that woman had four grown
kids
And Billy loved 'em all the same never knowin'
which were his

Chorus

'Cause he's a rodeo groom, she's a rockabilly
bride
They gallop down the aisle side by side
Ain't nothin' gonna keep 'em from the loving
that they had
That rockabilly woman and her rodeo man
That rockabilly woman and her rodeo man

Words and Music © 1990 by Beverly
Greenfield

BALTIMORE

Once we won the series, took it going away
Once we sat on top of the NFL and the NBA
But that's all over now, time went and slammed
the door
And even I packed up and left the city of
Baltimore
You know the older we get the more we stay
the same
I just found out my radio can pick up the
Orioles games
I tune in every half an hour just to get the score
And remember the days when I was growing
up in Baltimore

Back then I lived in a house, not a one room
flat
I didn't have to work or buy food or do anything
like that
And the first girl I ever loved lived right next
door
At night I'd take my dad's car and drive around
Baltimore
But something tells me this picture isn't right

Like I'm forgetting how I smashed my dad's car driving

stoned one night
How my parents fought, how I never even dated the girl next door
How I was just a lonely mixed-up kid in Baltimore

Well, looking back now, you know I do believe
When I lived in Baltimore, well, I couldn't wait to leave
Go somewhere else and get a brand new start
Now I'm dressing up the past 'cause the present is falling apart
The older we get the more we stay the same
Chasing after something that doesn't even have a name
We'll always trade what we've got for what we had before
Everybody's a fool for something, I'm a fool for Baltimore

Words and Music © 1988 by Tom Meltzer (BMI)

THE WORLD OF TOMMORROW

Scene 1 (The Subway)
A man throws a dollar bill in front of a wheelchair
that supports another man, black and with a beard,
with an orange, fuzzy cap, and Dunkin' Donuts cup
He is missing a leg, and he claims to be a Vietnam Vet;
asking everyone waiting for the subway for some spare change.
The tall man stares intensely
His silk scarf wrapped around his strong neck smelling of cologne.
His leather soles grind on the subway platform.
He waits, like a duel for the wheelchair victim to move.
The train pulls in.
The man in the wheelchair can't reach to pick up the dollar bill.
The two just wait. Staring at each other.
Hating.
The tall rich man boards the train,
grabs hold of a strap, and as the train slowly begins to pull away,
looks through the window, and sees the beggar lift a leg
from beneath a pillow and bend to pick up the dollar.
He sees the rich man watching him and screams, "Damn the rich".
The tall man laughs in glory and swears, "Damn the poor".

O, if love could find its way into this world

O, I would never run, I'd never long to be

Way out past the world of tomorrow
Way out past the world of tomorrow

Scene 2 (The Apartment)

Meanwhile, uptown, a broken neon light flashes on and off,
S-E-X, S-E-X, S-E-X.
Up here even the churches seem confused nowadays.
Their voices don't sing to the sky like they once did.
The broken man sits in abandoned apartment with a toothless cat
that tries to chase the rats.
The two look out upon the dirty river that floats downstream
out past Staten Island to the sea.
They dream together, with a faint idea of destiny
A deep humility beats within his soul

O, if an angel of mercy could bring justice to this land

O, I would never run, I'd never long to be

Way out past the world of tomorrow
Way out past the world of tomorrow

Scene 3 (The World Of Tomorrow)

The Tylon and the Perisphere sit and rust in the air surrounding Queens
Designers admire them for their symbolic content
Out here no strains from Baptist choirs rise.
No flaming sword descends upon the cruel and merciless..
Only visions of men and women, sexless, in X ray specs,
probing the future.
And ah, what a future!
As the advert says, "You're soaking in it, Madge".
Just men in orange, fuzzy caps, with red, swollen, red eyes,
Desperately trying to swindle upright cads in navy blue cashmere coats.
Ah- what a world, what a ride.

O, if love could find its way into this life

O, I would never run, I'd never long to be

Way out past the world of tomorrow
Way out past the world of tomorrow
Way out past the world of tomorrow
Way out past the world of tomorrow

Words and Music © 1990 by Jeff Wilkinson/
Red Truck Publishing (BMI)

FALL IN MONTREAL

Listen to the bells ring
Listen to the people sing
In half time
There's no place for a boy to be
No place for some Yankee
Reading French signs
So don't ask me why

I never left home all alone
Or felt the cold freeze up my bones
They say it's like this every year
It's crazy while the calendar still tells me
It's spring time in New York
Then why does it still feel like it's
The Fall in Montreal

I never thought it could matter much
All I know is home is such
A long way
I thought I'd find it safe up here
I didn't care
I thought I'd be OK
By Dominion day
But every poster that I see
Is my face staring back at me
Whoever knew that I could be so crazy
To think I'd go unnoticed
And just blend into the wall
And try to stay a free man
'Til the fall in Montreal

Now all that's left are lonely nights
Sitting here with Northern lights
In the big sky
The arranger of my destiny
Has finally surrendered all of my pride
For the other side
Now every night I run around
This separated border town
I can't believe that I must sound so crazy
While its just another country
I feel stuck outside a wall
And hope I'll stay a free man
'Til the fall in Montreal

Listen to the bells ring
Listen to the bells
Listen to the bells ring
Listen to the bells

Words and Music © 1987 by Tom Dickie (BMI)

I'LL CRY TONIGHT

I can't do anything
No wind
No wing
No flight
But I can cry
So I'll cry tonight

The door is open
One look
One foot
Inside
I can cry
So, I'll cry tonight

In my arms I hold my heart
Feel the broken wall
In my heart
I hold my doubt
Find me as I fall

I can't do anything

No beast
No teeth
No bite
But I can cry
So I'll cry tonight

My body's shaking
In fear
No dove
In sight
I can cry
So I'll cry tonight

Words and Music © 1991 by Wendy Beckerman

GHOST OF A GIRL

in the mirror, at the bar
a familiar reflection
wearing a shirt she'd stolen from my collection
one time with affection
before he was sitting there
with my ghost of a girl

i remember when we first met
i was baptized by her eyes
but my mind, like the weather always changed
at sunrise
now i envy these guys
and her cigarette
smokin' my ghost of a girl

so don't go playing 'misty'
that's just a broken old rhyme
the wrong melody
played in the wrong time
just pour me some whiskey
let it tingle my spine
let it kidnap my mind
let the truth just recline

to the mirror at the bar
with that lunkheaded louse
my heart must be as blue as that familiar
looking blouse
like a beautiful house
where I used to live
stands my ghost of a girl
i must have been
too insensitive
to my ghost of a girl

Words and Music © 1990 by Richard Julian

WHISKEY AND RAIN

Tomorrow is crackin' just like a broken egg
July is but a hot wind now
sizzling in my brain
The hangman's noose
The hoola-hoop
Forever laughs until God goes "oops"

Whiskey and rain
Whiskey and rain

Who made tomorrow so far away?
When Jesus died the hobos all cried
Tears of Whiskey and rain

Tuesday night it's a bone white moon
There's pigeons sleeping in the church tower
They found a body in the lagoon
His face was the icy blue of the Milky Way
His eyes were stopped like a broken clock
But his soul was on holiday - alright yes....

Whiskey and rain
Whiskey and rain
Who made tomorrow so far away?
When Jesus died the hobos all cried
Tears of Whiskey and rain
Tears of Whiskey and rain

And the stars fly shining above
Lost in the sky
And they wish upon men's lives
Imagine the stars' surprise

"But the hemlock's all gone," said Socrates
As he put his head down between his knees
It was just before his insides sneezed
And blew his glorious fucking brains to smithereens
(His last words were)

Whiskey and rain
The stars are looking kind of crooked
Soon they'll be calling me by my
name
And when Jesus died the hobos all
cried
Tears of Whiskey and rain
Tears of Whiskey and rain

Words and Music © 1990 by Frank Tedesso

THE TVA WALTZ

Well, the night that we met
We both both crashed a party
At some old rich fool's house up on
Gunnersville lake
I raided his pantry and she pilfered his brandy
And we stayed out night fishing until the first
light of day

Then we drove back to town she feigning
innocence
And me knowing she'd been down that road a
few times
She was smooth as new asphalt
As loose as fresh gravel
I mean she was coarse
But she was sure fine

And the Tennessee river it glittered
and glimmered
Like slivers of mirrors it shimmered
and glowed
And the TVA towers
Stood guard up on high

Watching over the water
Where the kilowatts flowed

Then we pooled our food stamps
And our Good Will furniture
And in the eyes of the common law
Became man and bride
God knows her wishes
Were never ambitious
Just one step beyond the most I could provide

I should have seen the warnings
That led to the morning
That she climbed up that cold concrete bridge
by herself
With no hand there to stop her
And none there to nudge her
And no eyes but her own
Looking down as she fell

And the Tennessee river it glittered
and glimmered
Like slivers of mirrors it shimmered
and glowed
And the TVA towers
Stood guard up on high
Watching over the water
Where the kilowatts flowed

Now I sit on this hard bench
And stare at St. Francis
And the pigeons that stain his stone mendicant
robes
And I look up at her window
And the vain sterile glow
Of the machines that are the only life she'll
evermore know

So tell me St. Frank
If God in his mercy
Has such small respect for the newly departed
What cruel fate indeed
Is waiting for me
For finishing up for her
What she has started

And the Tennessee river it glitters and
glimmers
Like slivers of mirrors it flashes and
shines
And the TVA towers
Stood guard up on high
But there'll be one less job for them
Down here tonight

Words and Music © 1990 by Eddie Lawrence

THE PHENOMENOLOGY SING-A-LONG

There goes
Henri Bergson
He's a great opponent
Of Cartesian Dualism
He resists the
Reduction of psychological phenomena to a
physical state

And insists that
There is no point of contact between the
extended and the unextended

And there goes
Edmund Husserl
Sitting all alone
With his transcendental ego
Oh why did he
Get rid of his non-ecological, pre-personal
model of consciousness in his philosophical
investigations
To us
That was an abomination

Write on
Phenomenologists
Write on
Write on
Write on
Phenomenologists
On the creative mind
And ideas

There goes
Jean-Paul Sartre
Sitting in a cafe
An intellectual frog
Oh why did he
Describe Phenomenology and Existentialism
as merely parasitical ideologies of Marxism in
his Critique of Dialectical Reason
Was he serious
Or just teasin'

Write on
Phenomenologists
Write on
Write on
Write on
Phenomenologists
On Noesis
And No Exit

Words and Music © by Mitch Fitzco

MISSING KEYS

Well, I never been too good
At keeping track of what I need
I take the leash
Leave the dog behind
I'm somewhat absent minded
For these sins, I'm on my knees
Searching for my missing keys

I've abandoned my belongings
With my sensibilities
I count the breaks and hope the stars are kind
You can duplicate the hardware
But the heart's a casualty
Searching for my missing keys

You could fill my clothes with name tags
Sew my mittens to my sleeves
Never worried they might leave and not return
But there's no company insurance

There's no lifetime guarantee
'Cause when you lose something of value then
you learn

Well, I discovered you were absent
One day almost casually
The bed was made
The crossword left unsigned
Was I stoned when I misplaced you
If you'll have me here would you please
Return to me my missing keys
Return to me my missing keys
Return to me my missing keys

Words and Music © 1990 by David
Ray/Missing Keys Music (BMI)

WAKE UP

wake up! wake up
levatate, wake up man
lost in the steel and cement of new york city
we have got to wake up
lost in monday to friday slavery
selling our precious lives for a few jive little
dollars
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of tv
watching archie bunker re-runs
the racist with a heart of gold
there is no such thing
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of tv soap operas
all happening in fine big houses where no one
ever gets laid off
no one gets cut off welfare, no one wakes up in
the winter with no heat
no hot water, the roaches in charge, the
landlord in florida
hoping you will move so he can get more rent
from the next tenant
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of tv watching
supercops
really super killers, really just super schmucks
wasting 25 bad guys a night
with karate chops and automatic firepower
the good guys on these shows are just as
nasty as the bad guys
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of tv
where no one ever gets cheated by the electric
company
cheated by the supermarket, cheated by the
phone company
cheated by the department store and cheated
by the boss all in the same day
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of tv
commercials
big magazine advertisements - smoking
marlboros will not make you a big strong man
It will only give you nicotine on your fingers and
cancer in your lungs
we have got to wake up
drinking miller high life will not help you make it
with beautiful expensive women

It will only give you a beer belly and a
headache
we have got to wake up
coca-cola is not the real thing
its a cheap chemical poison that eats up your
stomach
rots your teeth and makes scrambled eggs out
of your brains
we have got to wake up
you will never own a new lincoln continental
if you buy one you will find it on the street three
weeks later with the battery ripped off
the radio ripped off, the tires ripped off, the
windows broken, the insides burnt out
and you will still have three years of payments
left to make
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of hollywood
fantasy movies
everyone so rich and so clean
they never go to work in the rush hour on the
number two train
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away saying your boss is a
good guy
because he buys you coffee in the morning
every single thing he buys is with money you
made for him
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of tv news that's
says muslim people in iraq are our enemy
and the exxon oil company is our friend
the exxon oil company owns the tv station in
the first place
we have got to wake up
do not sleep life away in front of the stealth
bomber
george bush, robo cop, dan quale, pepsi cola,
budweiser beer or the citi-bank
that never sleeps but stays up all night long
ripping you off while you sleep
we have got to wake up
we are ripped off, bought off, paid off, laid off,
turned off, stuffed off,
jerked off, more off than on
we are oppressed, depressed, impressed,
excessed, compressed, and repressed,
we are discriminated, medicated, enervated,
inundated, overpopulated, masturbated,
castrated, incriminated and incarcerated
we are analyzed, advertised, anesthetized,
hypnotized, spiritualized
psycadelicized, polarized, depoliticized, and
lobotomized
we must not sleep life away
in tv dream land until jp cooks funeral homes
comes to roll you out to the cemetery in long
island
on the installment plan your family pays later
a real lay away plan
you lay they pay
we have got to wake up
Yo man we are alive!

everyday the wind blows in the trees, the sun
lights up the sky
every night the darkness falls down on
everything

we are not separate pieces of someones big
money machine
we are all one human family going back
thousands of years
all colors of the rainbow
we have got to wake up
yo man we are alive

the kids play on the floor
the touch of your sweatheart at night
we were born to breathe fresh air
to breathe clean air to
to dance all night without the radio
we were born to move together to remove
forever
this money mad corporate monster robbing
and poisoning us everyday
we were born to eat the fruit off the trees, the
plants from the ground
we were born to respect the old people to be
kind to the children
to respect the earth we live on
we were born to make a brand new world for
the babies to share what we have
all day long and love all night deep into the
midnight hour
but first from the get go number one
from jump street in the beginning
before anything else
we have got to wake up

Words and Music © by Victor Lewis

MOMENTARY LAPSE OF TASTE

Bar light eager to insist
Throws its weight against the wall
Starlight dances on my wrist
Though I can see no stars at all

Strange how absence makes you real
Strange the desperate notions I've embraced
Strange too, the clothing that you peel
In your momentary lapse of taste

Who's the prize tonight
Victim of your power to persuade
Who believes your eyes tonight
Who else's dreams do you pervade

Each day turns up some new thrill
Some souvenir discarded or misplaced
Tossed off in your hurry to fulfill
Some momentary lapse of taste

Whose the prize tonight
Victim of your power to persuade
Whom do you despise tonight
Who else's dreams do you degrade

Here's to all you left behind
Shattered sleep the passion and the waste
That's how I see myself defined
A momentary lapse of taste
I was just your momentary lapse of taste

Words and Music © 1990

TRACY

Well, Tracy's lost the pieces to a puzzle that
she found
Among the misplaced packages when garbage
day came 'round
Some nights she goes collecting when the
busy day is through
It doesn't have to be quite perfect
Doesn't have to be so new
Just a little bit of something for the closet or the
den
Might just come to nothing - well, you never
know, but then...

Some days she finds a little piece of kindness
Some days a whisper and frown
Some days she thinks we all just walk in
blindness
But one day she knows an answer will be
found

There was a story written and rolled into a
rhyme
Made to finest offering and given to mankind
You know the sea grows tall at harvest
It is reaped by those who've sown
Made to finest offerings while the sun and
moon looked on
You know the gift of all creation and the joys of
daily bread
But somewhere past awaking they've all left
her head

Some days she finds a little piece of kindness
Some days a whisper and frown
Some days she thinks that we all just walk in
blindness
But one day she knows an answer will be
found

Now, Tracy holds the handle on the bank with
Gabriel's horn
She found it down off Mercer Street with the
flannel shirt that's hardly worn
There's a place behind the night stand on the
collected works except one book
Of some illustrious statesman who turned out
to be a crook
She got the hopes and fears of all the years
collecting dust until that day
But Tracy finds the last piece missing, she
turns this world back to its way

But for now some days she finds a little piece
of kindness
Some days a whisper and frown
Some days she thinks we all just walk in
blindness
But one day she knows an answer will be
found
But one day she knows the answer will be
found

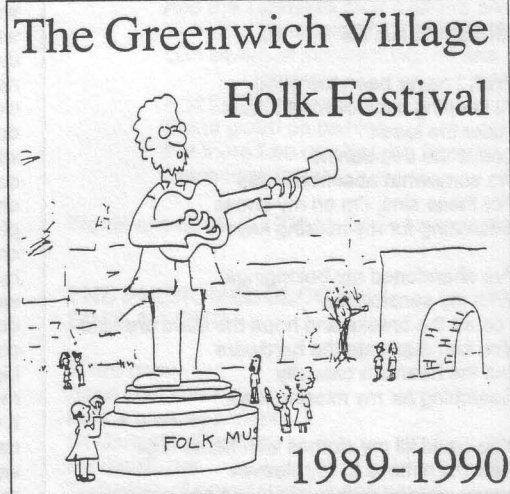
Words and Music © 1990 by Ned Landin

The Greenwich Village Folk Festival 1989-1990

This collection of performances from the last two Village festivals showcases a wide range of artists, from the solidly established to the quickly rising. At the same time, the range of musical styles represented on the album reflects a diversity that has been part of the festival since it began in the mid-1980s.

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- *Andy Breckman*
- *Frank Christian*
- *Hugh Pool*
- *Ilene Weiss*
- *Five Chinese Brothers*
- *Dave Van Ronk*
- *Cliff Eberhardt*
- *Erik Frandsen*
- *Jack Hardy*
- *Guy Davis*
- *Mark Johnson*
- *Tom Paxton*

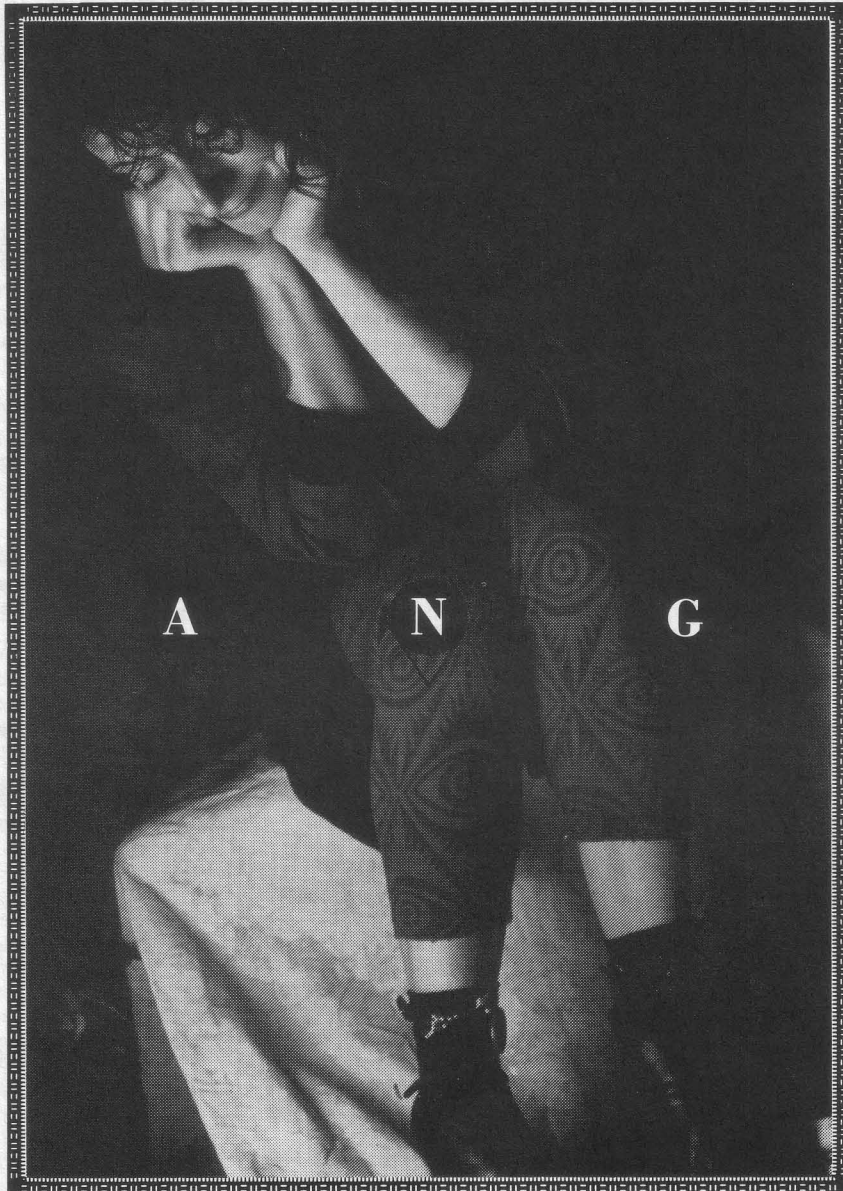


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RECORD REVIEWS

The songs of MARK HEARD SECOND HAND Fingerprint Records 9102CD DRY BONES DANCE Fingerprint Records 9001CD

By Richard Meyer

These two CDs, which came in the mail unsolicited, are beautifully produced collections of highly melodic songs by California songwriter Mark Heard. His overall style can be compared to a synthesis between T-Bone Burnett/ Los Lobos and Peter Rowan.

The 1990 release, *Dry Bones Dance* is almost exclusively acoustic and the arrangements drive along with an authoritative crisp beauty. *Second Hand* (1991) is more like Heard's two previous albums *Ashes and Light* (1984) and *Mosaic* (1985) in that the band is primarily electric. On *Second Hand* however, the dynamics of the band support each of the songs absolutely and allow Heard's strong humanistic lyric to come through clearly.

The songs are mostly spiritually based meditations on the state of a person in decision in an imbalanced world. The writer of these songs is looking for clarity beyond what obscures the simple in beauty of the world is evident in many lyrics.

Just when I can touch clouds
There is rain on my fingertips
Everything Is Alright

There ain't nobody asks to be born
Ain't nobody wishes to die
Rise From the Ruins

The writing on these albums is a fine

example of contemporary songwriting whose evident religious basis never comes across as grandstanding or dogma. The spiritual message is direct but because the songs are cast on the level of a single person they gain strength from the intimacy.

The songs on *Second Hand* are more political than *Dry Bone Dance* but respect and focus on the existence of the individual.

These two CDs (and Heard's earlier two cassettes) should be tracked down by anyone interested in the contemporary songwriter's scene. The productions are object lessons in taste and restraint while at the same time it really rocks. The songs *House of Broken Dreams* and *Dry Bones Dance*, for example, uncoil with beautifully rising melodies. Mr. Heard's production can also be heard on Pierce Pettis's new album *Tinsletown*.

Fingerprint Records
P.O. Box 834
Montrose, CA 91021

Cruel Inventions Sam Philip Virgin Records 2-91617

By Richard Meyer

This is Sam Philip's second major label release. Like the first one *The Indescribable Wow*, it was stunningly produced by T-Bone Burnett. The album is a collection of knowing songs that like Mr. Heard's bring politics down to the level of the individual.

Two men with empty pockets
Put lipstick on a little girl
and another dream goes by
They make her ride the rockets
That fall into a sea of pearl
and another dream goes by
Cruel Inventions

We lock the hurricane in doors
Looking for shelter,
We deny and ignore
afraid that our words bring clouds
we talk in code
Private Storm

Each of these songs are set in exquisitely crafted arrangements. Studio effects and processing used to create the backgrounds only serve to support the dark lyrics.

Ms. Philip's previous album contained mainly love songs including the beautiful 'Flame'. On *Cruel Inventions* she has turned her epigrammatic writing more toward a wider modern world and its apparent collapse.

This record is filed in the rock bin, but it (and the earlier *Wow*) will certainly interest record buyers who enjoy energetic intricacy of late period Beatle records.

In The Anti-Gravity Chamber Poto & Cabengo (Judith and Carol Ficksman)

By Jane McCaulley

When the story of the two sisters Poto and Cabengo came up twice within a couple of months, I figured it was not pure chance. It must be something in the air - a new metaphor for human experience in our time. According to the liner notes for a tune called "Poto and Cabengo" on the new *Fiddle Fever* anthology, the sisters were Janice and Jane Kennedy:

"Raised amid a profusion of linguistic stimuli, with at least three languages spoken around the home, they developed a language all their own. It sounded like Martian, was fast and complicated, and seemed to possess its own grammar,

syntax and morphology. They called each other Poto and Cabengo.

"Linguists were perplexed, but succeeded in teaching the girls to speak English, at which point their own language dried up and disappeared." The fiddle tune is described as a "lament for lost meaning."

There is no such explanation given by the Ficksmans for taking the names of these twins, but Judy says that according to her source, their language was not a creation of genius but of low mentality stemming from malnutrition and poverty, which kept them from grasping and separating the languages around them. Apparently their created language was some kind of triple pidgin centering on potatoes and cabbages, the food staples of their household.

Taking this angle, the songs on the Ficksmans' album delve into Poto and Cabengo's world as an impoverished, unsharable experience. At its best, the album does capture a primitive and alien strain that haunts you after listening.

The opening song, "Water In My Veins," has a chant-like quality that invokes a mystical kinship with all forms of water including the vast ocean, snow, mist, spring, and river. Using a minimalist style that is characteristic of much of the album, the whole song uses only three of the notes contained in a fourth, and the chorus uses only two. However, there are two ballads on the album that are quite beautiful despite their themes of emptiness and wandering. The first, "Ain't Going Down No More" creates an unlikely allegory of love between a desert cactus that has all the water it needs and a small, wandering cloud that refuses to fall as rain in this barren place again. The second, "I May Be Sorry Forever" is, as the title suggests, an eyes-open refusal to take any chances on love.

Two other songs deserve a listen. "On Missing Your Call" is a humorous story about a woman who takes a visiting friend out for tea in order to avoid having to tell her lover (if he calls) that she is not alone. "Send Me Your Best Wishes" is a daughter's attempt to reach out for her mother without abandoning her nomadic life-quest. There is always in these songs

a shifting balance between sheer avoidance and purposful moving on. When the songs on this album fail lyrically, it is by falling into the New-Age-speak of reincarnation (as in the too silly "Last Transmission From Earth") or the language of co-counseling ("I'm not unforgiving / Just compelled to be honest").

Musically Poto and Cabengo are a combination of the Indigo Girls' rough edges, early Simon and Garfunkel's laid back folk sound, and the minimalist school's tendency to drone. For some reason known only to themselves, they have chosen to make their album before performing together in concert, and the lack of experience is reflected in the guitar and vocal tracks as well as in the overall blend. Also, Judy Ficksman's lyrics tend to have rhythmic lapses syllables and beats fail to come together, this can break the spell even of a song as good as "Water In My Veins."

Finally, the question is, do Poto and Cabengo's minimalist style, rough performance, and sometimes prosaic lyrics add up to a pattern of avoiding commitment to craft or a serious study of Eastern-influenced asceticism? Either way the result is a kind of spiritual weightlessness, which is what the album promises. My sense is that they need to develop a more convincing command of their medium and drop the cuteness of a flight attendant's voice telling us: "You have now entered the anti-gravity chamber..."

JACK'S CROWS JOHN GORKA- (HIGH STREET RECORDS)

By Jim Allen

A thirteen song collection and not one woeful tale of lost love in the lot? Is this the same John Gorka we've come to know these past years or just some brazen usurper of the name? Well, it's the same Gorka whose voice emanates as strongly from his pen as it does from his larynx, possessed of the same literary command and riveting vocal prescence.

It's also a different Gorka, who has become considerably more expansive in his outlook both musically and thematically since his last outing, *Land of the Bottom Line*. He sounds equally at home with the aggressive rhythmic attack of songs like "Where the Bottles Break" featuring the powerful bass and drums of Michael Manring and Brian MacLeod or with the more introspective stance and arrangement of a ballad like "The Mercy of the Wheels".

One significant new development is the presence of a strong sociological perspective in some of the songs. In the afore-mentioned "Where the Bottles Break" Gorka delves into the subject of gentrification with an almost poetic aplomb and a barely suppressed rage that provides one of the most cathartic moments on the record.

Elsewhere, he employs a newfound simplicity of lyrical tone which he uses to fine effect the rhythmically propulsive "Good", which rather matter-of-factly lists one by one the things the singer claims to be good at, with no further extrapolation or implication.

His straight-ahead assessment of the world still looms large and powerful, giving us statements like "people aren't saints/ no, people just are" and "you pull your own weight or else it pulls you".

A more superficial yet more obvious contrast between "Jack's Crows" and "Land of the Bottom Line" can be found by glancing at their respective covers. The latter is a black and white photo of Gorka looking like someone just shot his dog. On the former we see a just photo which shows Gorka resplendent in oversized fire-engine red shoelaces and a face not unlike that of a cat with a mouthful of canary feathers.

**In Her Dream:
Bob Wiseman Sings
Wrench Tuttle**
Risque' Disque distributed by
WEA Music of Canada

Mutton Intrigue: Kalvin Membrane Dancing Bear Records, P.O. Box 598, Eastbound, WA 98245 (\$7.50 ppd.)

By Jeff Wilkinson

Both a musical and an attitude similarity exists between these two releases that justifies a shared review. Besides, they were both recorded in Canada, though "Mutton Intrigue" was made in Windsor, Ontario, which barely passes as Canadian content. I first heard Bob Wiseman about a year ago when a friend from Winnipeg passed me this tape. I took an immediate liking to the songs, all of which tend to keep you on the edge of your seat. The basic idea here is that Bob Wiseman sets to music the poems of one Wrench Tuttle, poet, traveller, activist and philosopher, who when inspired, mails Mr. Wiseman his verse. The fourteen songs included on this release are an assortment of Wiseman's favorites collected over the years. The recording intersperses songs with phone machine messages and news items. There are live recordings mixed with studio recordings which could make for a very disjointed project, however, "In Her Dream" has been produced in a way that makes for a successful montage.

Wiseman's voice is an acquired taste. I must admit he does sound like a 90 year old hay bailing machine in bad need of oil. However, he sings with a frightening passion and conviction plus the songs are first rate. I especially like "Older Brother", "Ship At Sea", and the title track. By the way, Wiseman is the keyboardist for Blue Rodeo. At their last show in New York I had a chance to talk with Wiseman who told me his solo album had been done many years ago and was finally released in Canada in 1989. My recommendation is that it is worth the drive to the border to get it.

Whereas Wiseman added hiss to get that old 8-track sound, (Many years before the Chickasaw Mudd Yuppies), Kalvin Membrane's budget probably assumed it would happen anyway.

Though not a big studio project, this is a cassette worth trying. For two years I have listened to demos from Kalvin Membrane. They would arrive in old Wheaties boxes postmarked from Grawn, Michigan, with poorly typed lyric sheets. I've been a fan for as long. I have always hoped these tapes would see the light of day and finally my dream has come true. "Mutton Intrigue" was recorded a few years ago by the Detroit duo of Kalvin Membrane and Dave Fragale. After finishing the recording the duo began to argue and it is believed Fragale left because of the potential pressure of being a cult-pop star. Membrane fled North to Upper Michigan where he tied flies for a year and then decided to move to Seattle. Well Seattle, you've gained another ex-urban, whitetrashintellectual folk-rock star. This first release reminds me alot of Jonathan Richman and Lou Reed combined. There's something very raw and intelligent behind the music like the early MC-5 without all the hair and drugs. My favorite song is "What More is There to Life" which includes the lines "What more is there to life besides girls and cars?/ And what more is there to life besides dead squirrels by the side of the road as you drive by in your automobile?." Membrane's playing and voice are sometimes a little shaky like a wornout corn crib, but I say give it a chance. If you don't like it, I might mention I've had good luck with it trolling for walleye. They seem to like the ones without Dolby "B".

Anson P. Spiggs



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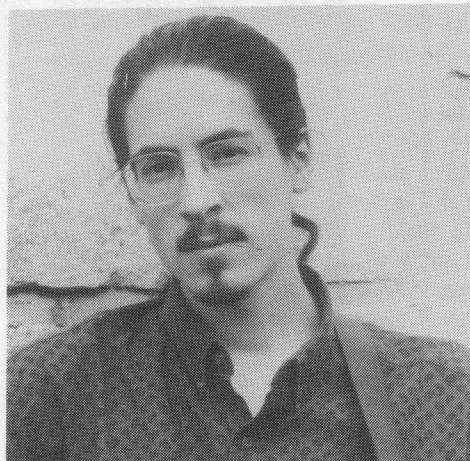
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ON THE RECORD

David Ray was born in Concord, Mass., raised in Milwaukee, Phoenix, the San Francisco area, and for the past thirteen years in NYC. David is not at all certain which athletic teams deserve his unflagging loyalty. He started playing clarinet at age 10, later bass clarinet, even bassoon for a time, but none was a saxophone so he quit. Later he picked up a ukelele which he played furiously until his younger brother accidentally put his foot through it. Transcending this tragedy, our hero soon discovered that large ukeleles are called guitars. David attended the American Academy of Dramatic Art for two years and graduated in 1975. After an illness cut short his acting career and sent him to California to recover he managed to meet Bobby ("I Think I'm Goin' Out of My Head") Weinstein while cab driving. David subsequently signed with BMI as a "Bonus Baby." At present he tends bar, writes wonderful songs and makes a mean margarita. He would trade all his best recipes for one top 40 hit on the billboard charts.



David Hamburger was born and raised in the Boston area. Since moving to New York in 1986 he has performed his own material as a soloist, done recording sessions on pedal steel, dobro and guitar, and performed with jazz, blues bluegrass, country and rock groups. He is currently working on the followup to his 1990 recording Southwestern music,

Northeastern attitude.

Tom Dickie was born in Providence, R.I. in 1952... Moved to Boston in 1972 to study arranging and composition at Berklee College of Music... Became road manager and soundman for critically acclaimed Boston band Orchestra Luna.... Formed the band Susan in 1975, and after being included on the LP Live At The Rat, relocated to NYC in early 1977... With Susan recorded the album Falling In Love Again for RCA Records in 1979 ...major tours followed with Graham Parker & the Rumour, and Hall & Oates... Formed Tom Dickie & the Desires in 1980 and released two albums on Mercury Records, Competition (1981) and The Eleventh Hour (1982)... With the Desires, tours followed with Cheap Trick, Hall & Oates, and the Stray Cats... Since 1984 Tom has performed solo on the east coast. He recently recorded and produced the EP, The Sun, The Moon, And The Seasons.

Eddie Lawrence is an Alabama born and bred songwriter/musician who has lived in New York City since 1982. His musical background runs the gamut from studying classical violin as a child to playing guitar in country and bluegrass bands around the southeast to being a member of the critically acclaimed Lower East Side roots rock and roll band L.E.S.R. His 3 solo albums, WALKER COUNTY, UP THE ROAD, and WHISKERS AND SCALES AND OTHER TALL TALES have been released on his own label, Snowplow Records. The albums recieved significant airplay on college and public radio stations around the U.S. and gathered rave reviews from American, Canadian and European critics.

Beverly Greenfield has spent the last few years writing and performing songs and running the Postcrypt Coffeehouse in New York City. Her songwriting reflects the influence of her brief foray into fiction writing, which she gave up when her guitar, long abandoned, began calling to her from its corner of the room. Born and

raised in New York City, Beverly lives in Manhattan on her boat on the Hudson, but admits to a fear that she will never overcome having been born in Flushing, Queens instead of Austin Texas.



Pat Humphries is a singer/songwriter, teacher, student, lesbian and puppeteer for social change. Her powerful anthems have traveled to numerous communities around the world where justice and equality are sought. In addition to touring, Pat is active with the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Arm of the Sea Theatre and the People's Music Network for Freedom and Struggle. She is also in the process of releasing her first recording.





Jane Byaela is a singer/songwriter with a unique and captivating style. Her lyrics combine powerful poetic images with intimacy and deep feelings, while her vocal quality ranges from high and haunting to deep and gutsy. Equally evocative is her guitar style, which possesses strong musical sensitivity as well as a high degree of technical mastery. Her music is influenced by many sources - from classical to blues, folk, and jazz. She is also an accomplished classical guitarist with a wide repertoire. Ms. Byaela's first album, *On the Edge*, was released in the United States in 1986 (Spark Records) and on compact disc and LP in Europe in 1987 (Line Music). She is currently nearing completion of a new album. Ms. Byaela has performed extensively at clubs and festivals throughout western Europe and the United States where she has established a strong following in cities such as New York and Boston.

Frank Tedesso: My will is dust, a little rain could make it into mud. Many things are made of mud. Why not life? Perhaps I should stick to description. I live in three small rooms with many pictures on the walls. Faces, many pictures of faces. Also a picture of a windmill and one of some boats in a small harbor in the early

summer like a teacup filled with flowers. (Not exactly, but sort of). Though mostly faces. Oh yeah, also a small picture of two flowers that look like faces. But only one here and now human sort of real face - mine. Real in the sense that I'm the only one who can scratch his nose. As for wonder, pain, tenderness, signs of life - the pictures of the faces are at least as real as me. At least. Two cats live in these rooms, this home, also. They get on my nerves a lot. Sometime they make me laugh. They got a lot of nerve. Too much nerve for three little rooms. They have their fun. I'd like to have a house that was all paid for with a back yard. Nothing grand, just a yard with enough room for a few small trees with branches and sunlight as bright as it would like to be and some flowers and tomatoes and onions and birds on a fence (maybe a white picket fence) and a couple of chairs. Wife comes home. She smells supper cooking away in the kitchen. She kisses, perhaps me, in that simple small way that women sometimes kiss men, where the littlest kiss is jam packed with meaning. I know there are people who live like this. A little work, a little bright sunlight, supper, small kisses, conversation in the kitchen, wash the dishes, bitch a little and live happily ever after. Why not? I know a girl with soft brown hair. There is danger in her underwear. I'm tired. I'm gonna try to get some sleep. I look forward to the spring. I'm not sure why. Just a feeling. A soft breeze rippling across my soft head. I shall plant blue flowers in the spring and pepperoni. Pepperoni growing wildly by the Pepsi-Cola tree near where the Reese's peanut butter cups twineth among the roses. A wondrous spring may yet be waiting.

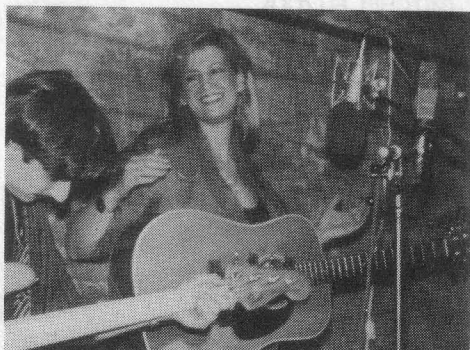
Blue to White is Richard Julian's seventh song on FAST FOLK. Richard has performed at the Newport Folk Festival, The Bottom Line, and the Bluebird Cafe in Nashville. Richard moved here from Las Vegas in 1986 after spending a year taking requests and playing the cheesiest chords he knew in the land of slot machines and neon cactus trees. He performs frequently 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. In the last year he has performed at the Newport Folk Festival, the Fast Folk Revue at the Bottom Line in New York City, and the Bluebird Cafe in Nashville, along with a 4-week European tour with Jack Hardy and Buddy Mondlock. Although he is currently performing in the folk medium (solo, acoustic guitar), Richard's music leans more toward pop and blues influences. He has recently released his third cassette, entitled *Living with Ramona*. He was reading 100 Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez when we saw him last, and suggests it to any one who promises not to call him to discuss it (that is, if they haven't already read it.)



Jeff Wilkinson has been gaining a reputation as an up-and-coming songwriter. His first album *Pitchin' Pennies* included such gems as "Postage Due" and "2 ft. High Umbrella Man." The London-based magazine *Folk Roots* hailed Wilkinson's poetry as "Riveting, some of the best since Dylan," and the *Ann Arbor News* called *Pitchin' Pennies* "Just too good to be true." Since the

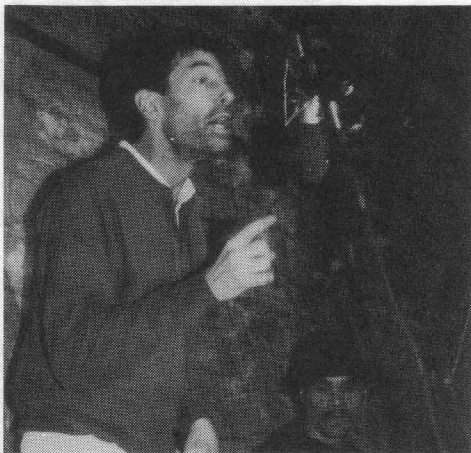
release of his album, Jeff has headlined at such noted clubs as the Ark in Ann Arbor, Berkeley's Freight & Salvage and New York's Speakeasy, and has opened for such noted acts as Jesse Winchester, Peter Case, Rod McDonald, and Garnet Rogers. Two CDs titled *Ballads in Plain Talk* and *Brave and True* have been released on the Brambus label in Europe. *Pitchin Pennies* is available on Blackbird Records and is distributed by: Canadian River Music, 4106 Tyler St., Amarillo, TX 79110, and Old Fogey Distribution, 1100 N. Washington, Lansing, MI 48906 (517) 372-7888.



Susan Firing has been referred to as one of the best vocalists on the scene today and has the following to prove it. Her band Adima performs powerful, intelligent acoustic rock and roll; integrating folk blues and jazz. She has headlined at the recent New York City 'Maraton' as well at other benefits such as New York's 'Earth Day' and 'Stop Cancer' events, Philadelphia's 'Holiday Project' and annually at the 'Greenwich Village Folk Festival'. Firing is a high profile fixture on the New York club and cabaret circuit and she can be heard on numerous national television commercials. After pursuing a degree in Sound Technology and Music she worked as a recording engineer, and then decided to follow her heart to the other side of the studio glass.

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 Razzzy Dazzy Spasm Band with John Gorka, he now lives on the Upper West Side of

Manhattan. He has just finished his debut album, tentatively titled *The Courier* for Shanachie records. It will be released in January '92. He is now bi-continental and lives in Paris and New York.



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.

David Seitz owns and operates Synergy Sound in Great Neck, Long Island. His recording patients have included (soon to be Dr.) Hugh Blumenfeld, the Canadian group Catchpenny, and many others. David applied his boardside manner to the recording of our *Season's Greetings* and *Live at the Hoot* albums. While none of his work can be called sterile, David is proud of his state of the art analog recording instruments and leaves no scars when making incisions on multitrack tape. When artistes are in the fever of recording he has been known to make sleeping space available to them until they recover sufficiently. He prescribes a mean electronic tuner and occasional practice, his perfectionism

indicates adherence to the tapeocratic oath. As soon as he completes his impending residency we will be calling him Dr. Seitz.

Michael Jerling is originally from Illinois and has performed at hundreds of clubs, colleges and coffehouses from California to New York. He has just completed his third album *Evil Twin* for Shanachie Records; it will be released in early '92. Jerling has opened for the likes of Roger McGuinn, Commander Cody, Dan Hicks, Nanci Griffith, Paul Barrere, and Michael Martin Murphy. His first two albums, *On Top of Fool's Hill*, *Blue Heartland*, are available from Moonlight Magic - Box 718, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. For bookings call (518) 587-3307.

Hugh Blumenfeld has released, aside from appearances on FAST FOLK, two albums, *The Strong in Spirit* and *Barehanded*. He recently received his doctorate in poetics and so is highly qualified to perform such an intellectual folk song as he does on this digital excursion. He performs frequently around the Northeast and was a finalist in the New Folk competition at the Kerrville Folk Festival.

David Cantor enjoyed a previous incarnation as the Vlad the impaler. Payback is a bitch.



Wendy Beckerman is originally from Teaneck New Jersey. She recently graduated from Brandis University. She has been in the Fast Folk Revue twice once as a goddess and once as herself, or vice versa.

**Live at the Postcrypt COFFEEHOUSE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY:
JANUARY /MARCH 1991**

- 1-
BALTIMORE
(PAUL FOGLINO)
THE FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS
TOM MELTZER/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
PAUL FOGLINO/ BASS AND VOCAL
NEIL THOMAS/ ACCORDIAN
CHARLEY SHAW/ DRUMS
KEVIN TRAINOR/ NATIONAL STEEL LEAD
- 2-
TAKE ME TO JUAREZ
(MICHAEL JERLING)
MICHAEL JERLING/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 3-
WAKE UP
(VICTOR LEWIS)
PROFESSOR LOUIE/ VOCAL
FAST EDDIE/ CONGAS
- 4-
I'LL CRY TONIGHT
(WENDY BECKERMAN)
WENDY BECKERMAN/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
TOM SPANARDI/BASS
- 5-
YOUR HAIR
(DAVID HAMBURGER)
DAVID HAMBURGER/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 6-
SWIMMING TO THE OTHER SIDE
(PAT HUMPHRIES)
PAT HUMPHRIES/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 7-
THE TVA WALTZ
(EDDIE LAWRENCE)
EDDIE LAWRENCE/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 8-
SPARROW'S POINT
(RICHARD SHINDELL)
RICHARD SHINDELL/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 9-
RODEO WEDDINGS AND ROCKABILLY LIVES
(BEVERLY GREENFIELD)
BEVERLY GREENFIELD/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 10-
COOL CONCEPTION
(SUSAN FIRING)
SUSAN FIRING/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
BASS/ ROB GLICK

- 11-
MISSING KEYS
(DAVID RAY)
DAVID RAY/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 12-
THE WORLD OF TOMORROW
(JEFF WILKINSON)
JEFF WILKINSON/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 13-
TEACHER OF THE GAME
JANE BYAELA
JANE BYAELA/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 14-
THE PHENOMENOLOGY SINGA-LONG
(MITCHEL FITZCO)
HUGH BLUMENFELD AND THE POSTCRYPT NEO-
EXPRESSIONISTIC MEMORY RETENTIVE POST ANTI-
DISESTABLISHMENTARIANISTIC CHOIR
- 15-
FALL IN MONTREAL
(TOM DICKIE)
TOM DICKIE/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 16-
MOMENTARY LAPSE OF TASTE
(DAVID CANTOR)
DAVID CANTOR/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 17-
TRACY
(NED LANDIN)
FLATHEAD/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 18-
GHOST OF A GIRL
(RICHARD JULIAN)
RICHARD JULIAN/ GUITAR AND VOCAL
- 19-
WHISKEY AND RAIN
(FRANK TEDESSO)
FRANK TEDESSO/ GUITAR AND VOCAL

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AT THE POSTCRYPT COFFEEHOUSE

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16th, 1991
FOR FAST FOLK BY DAVID SEITZ/ SYNERGY SOUND
ASSISTED BY GEORGE TREPANI AND DUANE BERGMAN

DIGITALLY MASTERED BY BILL KOLLAR AT:
LONDON BY NIGHT - WOODBRIDGE, NEW JERSEY

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GREENFIELD