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Revisited*

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On the Cover:

Warming up on the veranda in Melrose, MA during recording of FF606.

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A Reply

Editor's Note: Richard Meyer is replying to a letter written by Christian Bauman published in Fast Folk 605.

Dear Private Bauman,

I must reply to your letter to the editor. I've recently returned to the life of a folk civilian, but the editorial you referred to (in FF 510-Live at the Bottom Line 1991-concerning planning the Fast Folk Revue of that year, in a time of imminent war) was written by me. You misunderstood my point. I stated clearly that in private and group discussions the cast's feeling was not unified. Although many did, not all opposed the war, or felt obligated to oppose it by virtue of owning a guitar. Remember that at the time preceding the ground war we were constantly propagandized about the Iraqi army's possession of Gerald Bull's 'supergun' and the superiority of Hussein's elite guard. I don't recall a more real pervasive political chill on the streets since some 60's demonstrations. But my editorial was not about the war. It was about our need to make individual statements in ways true to ourselves.

The main reason I have to respond, Private Bauman is the exception you took to my statement that the scene is predominated by white, middle class, insulated people who rarely if ever have to stand up for the issues in their songs. Prove me wrong. Long before I became editor of Fast Folk in 1986, I was listening to most tape submissions (all the way through), going to that era's incarnation of the songwriter's exchange, booking the SpeakEasy club and thereby obligated, and interested to hear as many new faces in town as possible. The color of the crowd was white, the guitars were often shiny, new, name brand and the songs were awful - by and large. The songs were awful because they lacked context and bravery.

Fast Folk issued albums co-edited with local leaders of the songwriter's communities in Los Angeles, Toronto, Boston and central Massachusetts. I was invited to participate as a tape reviewer and speaker at the Los Angeles Songwriter's Showcase national conventions in 1988 and '90. These exposures as well as hanging out in clubs-even the Anti-Folk scene, buying too many records, attending and appearing at festivals makes me comfortably able to say that I heard a majority of the songwriters during

those years who actively aspired to our style of writing. I could probably count the ethnic singer/songwriters of any genealogy on two hands.

Discussions heard on the radio as well as some in which I've participated have grappled with this problem. We have a music which derives half of its legacy from black influences but has few black performers today. The generation of performers from the days of the 78 were largely ignored, by mainstream audiences, (black and white) until the late 50's folk revival contributed to this. Some passed away before they could be rediscovered. While some white city pickers were discovering the blues and searching out its artists and recordings, white pop music had already absorbed black R&B. Black artists themselves were onto other styles. What we are left with is a scene that recognizes substantial black influences but is no longer fed by that portion of American culture.

When Josh White Sr. sang about the banker's daughter "I want to do to her what her daddy does to us" to white audiences in the 50s he was putting himself on the line. Last year at the Hosting of the Bards Festival in upstate New York we were greeted at the performance pavilion by two busloads from a Brooklyn Methodist church with a wide a range of ages. I was unsettled by those among us who said "What are we going to play for them?" Finally we had to lay it on the line, not sing our little songs to only the converted and and comfortable. It was a lesson to some and lost on others. When I play my song 'Uneasy Nights' I know that it would be a risk to play that song in the sort of country it describes. In fact I received hostile reactions to my song "A Burning Leaf" because of its religious subject. It would be interesting to hear from writers whose

writing has elicited reactions other than applause.

World music is thriving. Artists of every ethnicity are recording and cross pollenization is common. Paul Simon is the high profile artist in this regard but he's not alone. Too many singer/songwriters at the street level however are stuck in a rut. I'm not proposing that everyone must jump on the world music bandwagon to be valid. I am hungry, however, for more variety and invention in the folk-guitar form of music. The 60's ones are stuck in a cycle of imitating traditionalism without the learning the root forms, singing about a hard life they don't know, and spouting politics because it is the correct posture to take. Lost 60s folkies (which has nothing to do with age) put on the clothes of a style, but don't recall that it was risky to write political songs once. Nobody cares now. Political music is safe because it generally stays in the coffeehouses. Coffeehouses are safe havens from the dispossessed in our society and polite places of entertainment. They coddle us, intimating a community of social action without demanding real action. Our society is struggling under the weight of destructive and mindless television and arms of factions in the pop music business which makes style the thrust of their artists. I realize this has probably always been true but now its even so blatant that some individuals go into pop for business regardless of art. One in our own community told me he switched his New Wave band to folk because he heard the cash registers ringing. Its so cool to be complacent. Most writers are unable or willing to take risks with language, politics or stylistic development that their progenitors did.

Let me digress a moment and, for the sake of brevity, generalize. Folk/singer/songwriter music is, broadly, the combination of the anglo-ballad tradition and afro-american blues. The blues, whose origins were rural, came to be played predominantly by urban whites. Ballad singers were removed by an ocean and a couple generations from the roots their songs. Folk magazines, Sing Out! -Vol 14 #6 in January of 1964 for example, contained an article about the question of authenticity. The authenticity of whites taking

on the language and sound of rural blacks, playing to white audiences and thereby co-opting and undermining the very material that excited or inspired them; to whatever extent they understood it. Delta music grew out of the delta. Many of the classic blues songs describe local events and individuals. The delta artists were not recorded under conditions fraught with pretensions to art. Some blues lovers have described the early music as a reflection of the heat and oppression its players lived through. Our songs grow out of an urban intellectualized environment which has grown increasingly sterile, selfish and socially segregated. These days when we walk into a studio there is a lot of useless baggage, expectation and posturing when the red light goes on.

The question for Fast Folk and similar organizations is twofold; do we owe it to ourselves and each other to expand the ethnic/ and musical bases of our scene, and if we don't, how can we claim to be forward thinking experimental artists? It is fair to say that the art of any cultural group will reflect the homogeneousness of it and tend to be distinct. It becomes problematic and false in 'folk' when part of the style is an affected primitivism. In the letter preceding yours the writer said David Massengill's Bloods and Crips would be funny if it weren't pitiful. In his case, his catalogue of strong political songs, using traditional melody (as in that song) not to mention the allusions to Romeo and Juliet make it a successful piece to my ears. Would the Blood and Crips like it? Maybe not. Is the elegant style contrary to his purpose? Reactions I've heard to the song reinforce my belief that he was successful in using beauty to move his audience and make them think.

Often, I asked writers submitting tapes who they admired. They were inspired in large part by Dylan, Cohen, great old ballads and so on. They were envious of the risks taken by their heroes, but unwilling to do the same. By risk I mean dedication to developing an individual voice. The now twenty-five year old joke about 'the next Dylan' says it. Commercially oriented audiences and artists alike seem to get stuck in a cycle of imitation when one person succeeds. The

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Letter to the Editor

I am now a "Faithful Subscriber," but there are a few things I'd like to say.

First, your renewal letter. It's the kind you get for a third notice, not a first. I was expecting 3 more issues which I expect should be about 9 months. Instead you skip to the end and say "we're going to miss you." This is not very cool.

I believe in supporting music, especially new music. But the tone of this letter sounds more like something I'd get from the George Bush campaign stuff.

My next point is other magazines (the 10 or 12 I receive), will give their "Faithful Subscribers" a chance to renew at the older rate. Especially, if you're going to impose a 54% increase, with no explanation. I may have missed it. I don't read all the fine print, but I think that some form of notice would be nice.

Otherwise, keep up the good work. Piss people off, make them think. That's the only way to change the world.

Sincerely,
John P. Mahoney

Dear Faithful Subscriber(s),

Well, at least we got your attention. Seriously, though, as most of our loyal and avid readers know we are a not-for-profit organization. This means we are a not-for-paid staff organization. Everyone who works here has something else they are doing to put food on their table. Most have some sort of a music career going also, so what ever time they have to give to FastFolk is both small and rushed. It is quite a task to get an issue into the mail each month (and we have been a lot better at that, haven't we? Nine months for three issues. Indeed!). Things like renewal notices are inevitably the last thing anyone thinks of as in: "Before I staple these do any of them get renewal notices? Oh! Did anybody Xerox any renewal notices?" Please accept our apologies, and thanks for reminding us that we have to get better at stuff like that.

As for your second point, we are not-for-profit. We are also supposed to be not-for

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The Boston Area: Passing It On

by Chuck Hall

Sitting in Kevin and Elizabeth Connolly's place watching and listening to some of Boston's finest players and singers was a tremendous treat to this veteran of such affairs. It brought to mind the time eight years ago—can it really be that long?—I first encountered a Fast Folk gathering. That was held at the Nameless Coffeehouse in Harvard Square, and I remember being surrounded by some of my heroes—Bob Holmes was there, Lorraine Lee was there, Bob Franke, Geoff Bartley, many others—and being thoroughly intimidated by the level of talent, and terribly grateful for the opportunity to rub shoulders with folk I still regard as some of the most talented people in the world. It was a scene repeated a number of times, and it was a treat every single time. And it was a treat this time, too, but it was different this time. Different, but the same, in the same way the world is different but always the same. And I had to explore the differences and similarities to understand and appreciate the folk process for what it is: the seeds sown by the first group are bearing the fruit in the next. We call it "passing it on."

This is a different group of people from the first, to be sure, and their music reflects that difference. The earlier group seems to me to have had roots in what we tend to think of as "traditional" music, though "traditional" may better be applied in some cases to form rather than content. The current crop of singer-songwriters seems to have roots in music which has roots in traditional styles. It seems to me they have added a step to the stairway, just as the group which recorded in 1985 did. It is the glory of this music, and this community, that we pave the way for one another, as the glory of a great building is truly found in its foundation.

Perhaps the accumulation of years has addled my brain, but this collection of folks seems younger than the one I encountered in '85. Younger, and a bit louder, and with

There is no question that this group of singer-songwriters has been influenced by the sudden and recent commercial viability of acoustic music.

a slightly hard edge, which the times and the temperament of the "music business" have conspired to produce. This is a group of people who have had to learn to sing loudly because we do not live in an age which values the soft voice. Most often, it is not the soft voice which is heard by those who control the markets, and that leads directly to another mark of the difference between these generations of singer-songwriters.

The gathering at the Nameless Coffeehouse in 1985 was not marked by a strong sense of purpose beyond a



Catie Curtis



The author, the spouse, and the editor

celebration of the nature of the music and the community. There were no "stars" present. Singer-songwriters were not "stars" then, except within what was then the limited universe of what people interested in folk music had been able to keep going by their own efforts. There hadn't been a significant commercial voice from these ranks in some time. That was about to change. Commercial interests found voices like those of Suzanne Vega,

This is a group of people who have had to learn to sing loudly because we do not live in an age which values the soft voice.

Nanci Griffith, and John Gorka to their liking, and suddenly the whole universe of the singer-songwriter went nova. "Stars" were being created. And the universe of the singer-songwriter changed. It suddenly became possible to "make it," even if the cost was art and the thing bought was extremely perishable.

It's important to realize that in the end, this is an alternative music. Those who can make money for others will find their way to the charts, and their reflected glory, temporary though it may be, is a great boon to those of us who love the music and

the community. The step they have added to the stairway is nearer the top than most of us, and we benefit from the light shone on them. There is no question that this group of singer-songwriters has been influenced by the sudden and recent commercial viability of acoustic music. It would be completely unnatural if that were not the case. It would be completely unnatural if they did not in some way imitate what they see and hear. And it would be completely unnatural to not mention that though imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, such sincerity has a cost. It is a cost every artist pays.

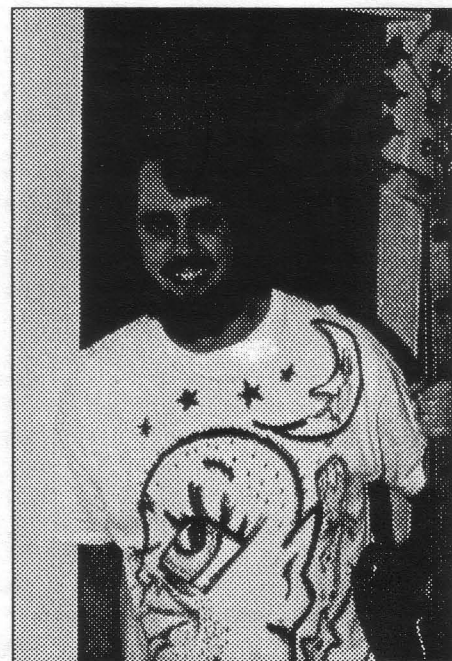
There is one important respect in which the present generation of singer-songwriters far outdoes the previous generation, and that is in the area of business sense—the simple art (ha!) of getting things done. They are better at making contacts, sending out mailings, arranging interviews, and such, the lack of which will prevent any artist from plying his or her trade. They are more streetwise, aggressive, and better at finding work than their predecessors.

The overriding similarity between the 1985 and the 1992 groups is a love for the music. The fire in the eye is the same. This is a passionate music, after all. The same passion for peace and justice issues appears now as before. The same passion for telling a story. The same passion for telling THEIR story. In all of the ways this music is significant, this group of players honors the muse that brings it forth, most especially in the striving to do it well.

The Boston area has in recent years enhanced its reputation as a market for

folk and acoustic music. It is difficult to imagine that a typical reading of community events includes as many “open stage” or “open mic” events, or nearly as many, as concert and coffeehouse events. It is equally hard to imagine, but true, that there are still too many people for the available work. A folksinger traveling in time from the mid-seventies or even the mid-eighties who found himself suddenly standing in Harvard Square (a jolt for anyone at any time) reading a folk music events list from greater Boston would be stunned at the number of available venues and quickly dismayed that the competition for them was as fierce as ever. This has had an interesting effect on the budding singer-songwriter. On the one hand, it is hard to be heard when so many voices compete. On the other, lots of open stages means lots of opportunity to learn your craft.

It would not do to forget to mention that Boston has great media support for this music, and has for some time. The listener can find folk music (of one sort or another) seven days a week in the Boston area, and most often find it in more than one place on the dial. The people who write about



Dennis Pearne

acoustic music in the two major Boston newspapers are people who not only know the music, but more importantly, know how to write about the music. Taken as a whole, the folk and acoustic music scene in

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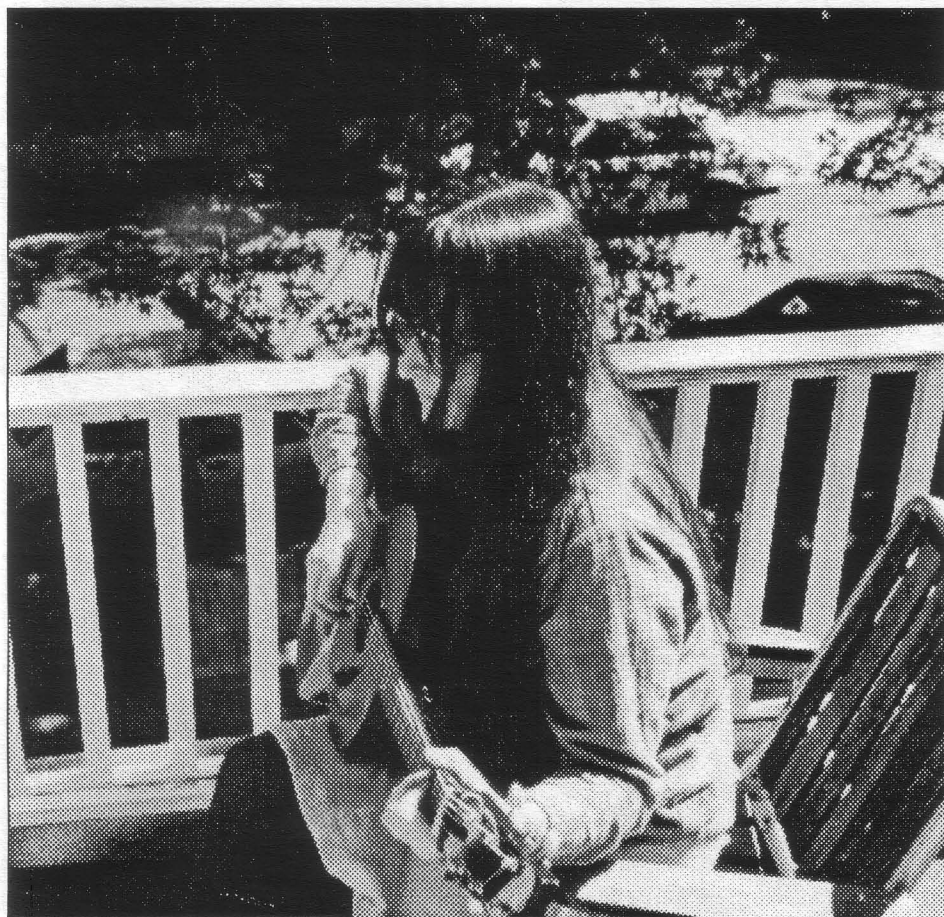
Chuck Hall manning the console at WUMB

the Boston area has an air of professionalism which has tended to serve that scene—from the perspective of the media, the club owners, and the musicians themselves—very well.

And the real heroes of this story, if we are really talking about “passing it on,” are not the musicians, writers, or club owners, though each of those have a part. The real heroes are the volunteers, and every folk musician working in Boston owes some part of his or her livelihood to them. They are, if you will, the facilitators of the process. They allow it all to happen. It takes folk like Ron Comeau, who for years has been the soul of one of the finest venues in New England, “Saturday Night in Marblehead,” to make it all work. “Saturday Night in Marblehead” has been working for fifteen years. Ron Comeau has given over a good many Saturday nights to “passing it on.” I mention SNIM and Ron because I know them well, but they are not



Steve Brennan, Elizabeth Connolly, and Meg Rayne going out of their minds rehearsing



Sheila McDonald whoops it up on the veranda in Melrose, Massachusetts

the only heroes in the story. Every coffeehouse has them. The Boston area is rich in heroes.

All of which brings me back to Kevin and Elizabeth's place on a wonderful Sunday afternoon, where a group of very talented singers and songwriters are frantically trying to teach one another harmony parts to new songs, bass parts to older songs, and talking to one another about strange gigs, untrustworthy promoters (from places I can't pronounce, much less spell), and recently learned tunings. It reminded me of 1985 at the Nameless Coffeehouse. Some of the faces had changed, and the songs were different, but it reminded me once again of how much I love this music, this community, and especially this place. I confess to some small pride that I was there in 1985, learning songs, and singing them, and making friends I will have for the rest of my life. These people have some great music ahead of them, obviously. What may not be obvious is that they have some great friendships ahead of them, because this really is less about sharps and flats than it is about hearts and souls. It is a joy to watch a new group of people push one another toward excellence. And it is fun imagining the view from the new top of the stairway.

John Mark Heard 1950-1992

by Jeff Tareila

Songwriter, producer, father, husband, and visionary, Mark Heard passed away in August 1992 after suffering a series of heart attacks.

Mark was one of the most thought-provoking songwriters of our time. Heard's music pursued and conveyed a realism often avoided in contemporary music. His realism was a healthy mix of the bad, the good, the danger, the grace, the mercy, and the hope. His lyrics were spiritually provocative and refreshingly deep. For example, the chilling song "Orphans of God" (recorded on Satellite Sky) reveals a world that accepts the lie that God is dead and no longer relevant: "... they have packaged our virtue in cellulose dreams and sold us the remnants 'til our pockets are clean / 'Til our hopes fall 'round our feet like the dust of dead leaves and we end up looking like what we believe / We are soot-covered urchins running wild and unshod / We will always be remembered as the orphans of God."

Having released fifteen records in less than as many years, Heard was equally involved in supporting and in collaborating with many other artists, such as Sam Phillips, Joan Baez, Pierce Pettis, Phil Keaggy, Fergus Jemison Marsh, and Michael Been. Heard's last three recordings, *Dry Bones Dance*, *Second Hand*, and *Satellite Sky*, are a must for anyone's music collection. These recordings are all jam-packed with over fourteen songs, twice as many moods, and amazing musical arrangements. Heard's song "Look Over Your Shoulder,"

"Toward the end of Mark's funeral, someone offered a toast of Irish whiskey in his memory and vowed to keep the legacy of his songs alive. Everyone agreed."
—Pierce Pettis

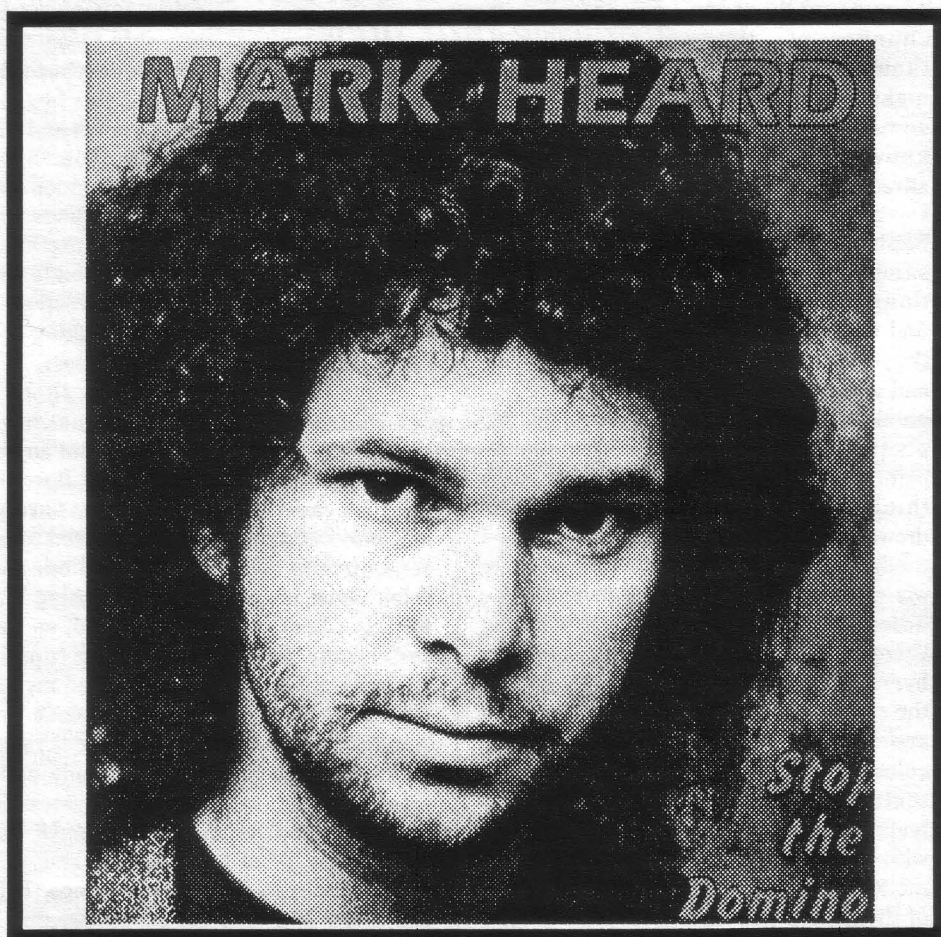
(previously recorded on *Second Hand*) was included on *Legacy II: A Collection of New Songwriters*, released by Windham Hill/High Street Records in the summer of 1992. "Look Over Your Shoulder" was also

the last song Mark ever performed. Ironically, the song ponders the afterlife and questions our existence. Also, Mark's song "Rise From the Ruins" was used as the finale song at the 1992 Fast Folk revue (included on issue 603/604).

Unfortunately, the majority of Heard's songwriting career existed on an almost underground level. Pierce Pettis states, "Toward the end of Mark's funeral, someone offered a toast of Irish whiskey in the memory of Mark and vowed to keep the legacy of his songs alive. Everyone agreed." Mark's songs need to be heard and need to be kept alive. If you have not

experienced Mark's recordings, please do yourself a favor and obtain as many as possible. You will not be disappointed! I did not know Mark personally, although I had the pleasure of following his career for the past ten years. I was able to contact many people who knew Mark and who were able to shed much light on his personality. Throughout my conversations with these people, much emphasis was put on Mark's humor. "Along with Cliff Eberhardt, Mark was the funniest man I ever met"—Pierce Pettis. But with this humor was also a deep longing for something more than an earthly life. This longing came through in many of Mark's songs.

The following is an article which I feel most accurately sums up Mark Heard and his life. This article, entitled "A Journal," was written by Heard in 1992 and is reprinted with permission from *Image* magazine. Mark, you will never be far from us. We'll miss you.



A Journal

by Mark Heard

(©1992 Image Magazine)

Music is a solace for me now. As I age, contrary to common sense, I am more and more drawn into it and apt to spend more of the waking and some of the sleeping hours thinking about it. It is my escape. What with earthquakes, medical insurance, taxes, correspondence, fatherhood, traffic, lack of job security, I am increasingly irresponsible, it seems, in that I take on the mantle of Peter Pan and follow the second star to the right directly between a pair of speakers, or to the case that holds my mandolin. To feel the wood in my hands makes up for a variety of stress and pressures that I probably should spend

more time worrying about, things which never go away regardless of how caught-up you feel. They do go away for chunks of time, though, when I am making music of some sort. I don't know why the attraction is so strong. I am surprised haphazardly by the same deep resonations inside when I find myself thumbing through a magazine and come upon a particularly striking photograph, or see a

painting hanging someplace where such things are not ordinarily noticed. I'm drawn into the mood of the photograph—I think of feelings I have had when stopping my car on a cross-country drive in the desert and just getting out and standing there in the windy loneliness for awhile, hearing nothing, seeing shadows, feeling the extreme largeness of the outdoor room and its horizonless walls, noticing subtle color differences in different heights and textures of blowing grasses; or of the feeling of waking up in the musty woods with daylight barely filtering through the motionless leaves overhead, the dampness of the ground felt as an unheard thud; or

the smell of piñon wood burning, and feeling the cold air entering my nostrils with the aroma, as the sun drapes red dirt and rocks with the crimson curtain of a melancholy sunset; or of the feeling of standing helplessly in a fluorescent hospital corridor, watching the minute hand of a cheap wall clock stand still while my Daddy dies a grueling death and steps into eternity. It is the primal-ness of these feelings that I seem drawn to—to try to capture them, and preserve in my memory forever; to try and conjure the magical feeling of something good waiting around the corner, over the hill, tomorrow, the morning of the resurrection. Music is my job, so it does not always fulfill this purpose, but usually at the least, sets me on the path to it. It is difficult at best

Maybe those inclined towards the arts are spiritually retarded to a degree that they must go through the whole process of cathartic expression just to discover how they really feel . . . I only know that I am cursed with the fact that I must do it.

to reveal one's true self to those who are closest, much less to friends and acquaintances and audiences. But when you are able to catch a glimpse of your true self, of the beauty you have felt and the despair you have burdened under and how the feelings felt, that is something that transcends the antiseptic responsibility of making the daily ends meet.

Would that I could just not have to think about any of this and could drone away my life. It would be much easier. I have worked in a factory, and one becomes a bit hypnotized after some time to the point where all one can think about is going home, watching TV, having a beer, and going to bed, so the cycle may be repeated. The music business can be like this, but I find myself ever thankful that I have not lost the resonations inside when the music is right. I have no idea how we have made ends meet thus far, as I am rather useless in other arenas when pursuing this muse. But increasingly, it has become a catharsis of a spiritual sort to me to write songs. It is something I have to do. Dare I say that it

becomes an experience of worship for me at times. When you can see through the fog for an instant, and you understand haltingly and briefly what good is, and how God is connected with that, it cannot help but put a bit of perspective on things that you perceive as problems, and help you discover multiple ways in which you have been numb. For that brief moment you feel that God's in His Heaven and all's right with the world. I've tried to explain this to family members who are not of artistic persuasion, and they find it difficult to understand. I find it difficult to understand myself, and sometimes wonder if normal people can feel these strong pullings of the strings of the stars at any given moment of their lives. Maybe those inclined towards the arts are spiritually retarded to a degree that they must go through the whole process of cathartic expression just to discover how they really feel. It might be seen as a Darwinian protection device for the psyche of fragile individuals, for whom the contact of the outside world with the senses is too much to bear, and is repressed, and must be brought up and thrust out into the open from time to time at great effort in order to simply survive. I only know that I am cursed with the fact that I must do it. I must at least tell somebody, even only God and myself, what I have seen and felt. As soon as I think of how I have felt, the words to describe it come, and only need to be written down; the melody is there, and it works its way out of my larynx onto a cheap dictation recorder, to be forgotten or to be listened to later and fleshed out as part of the job. Maybe I'm just a selfish maniac who is wasting his time which perhaps no one cares about onto a fretboard and a piece of magnetic tape. Maybe it's the modern petroglyph, or the modern way to blow pigment around your hand on the wall of your cave to say "I was here." Maybe it is a cry to God about how much I hate the bad things and how much I love the good things.

Mark Heard's recordings are available through:

Fingerprint Records, Inc.
Box 197
Merrimac, MA 01860

Frandsen Tackles the Tough Ones

by Dave Elder, with Keith Kelly

The five-way Presidential race was enlightened this week by a long-awaited press release from the cool-cat candidate, Erik Frandsen, in which he outlined his positions on the major issues of the 1992 campaign, and announced his projected appointments to some key Cabinet posts.

This information comes after weeks of inquiries by the media, their curiosity sparked by the candidate's ongoing refusal to comment publicly, acknowledge his candidacy publicly, or even appear in public. Commented one stringer, "Even Morris the Cat says more than this." Campaign manager Jack Hardy explained that, with the continuing campaigns of George Bush, Bill Clinton, and Morris, and with the reappearance of Ross Perot, the Frandsen campaign was concerned that their man's views might be overlooked. Frandsen was in fact slated to conduct a press conference at SpeakEasy, his favorite (and the closest) New York venue, but, characteristically, absolutely refused to show up. Handlers dispatched to Frandsen's apartment were greeted with drawn shades, deep growls, and pieces of broken 78s thrown at them from a third-floor window.

Though the conference had to be scratched (Hardy's offer to at least give the press corps a free drink was instantly vetoed by a scowling little club owner snarling in Arabic), fate intervened in the form of a mysterious Oriental woman who smuggled a copy of the proposed questions to the campaign; her relationship to Frandsen is unclear. The party then prepared a statement of the candidate's responses to these inquiries, derived from the lyrics to some of Frandsen's many songs.

The Q&A session that never took place ran as follows:

Q: Your ethnic background is half Scottish, half Danish; you have been described as possessing "the charm of the Germanic people and the discipline of the Celts." Governor Michael Dukakis frequently marveled at how a person of any heritage could run for President. As a semi-Scandinavian-American, do you welcome all immigrants to our shores as openly as he did?

Oh, the Vikings are coming to town
So maybe you shouldn't hang around
'Cause when they get here,
they'll drink all your beer
And probably molest your livestock
("The Viking Rag")

Q: You met privately with Ross Perot just before he dropped out of the race in July. Did he give any reasons for his change of heart?

Just give me those Franklins, Grants,

and Jacksons
I'd put them to good use
'Cause I got just what it takes
To be a rich recluse
I'd get invited to the White House
And I'd flat out refuse
If I had a lot of money
Just like Howard Hughes
("Howard Hughes' Blughes")

Q: Perot has been criticized for his perceived selfishness, and lack of appreciation for natural resources. He recently proposed a 50¢-per-gallon tax on gasoline, and once had a coral reef destroyed when his yacht got stuck on it. What would you do in the same situation?

I went down to S.M. Rose and bought
myself some wheels
But before I left I punched holes in the
gas tanks of several of their
automobiles
Moments later, smoke and flames
were all that could be seen
Thanks to that old cigarette-in-the-
matchbook trick from Stalag 17
("I Shot Jack LaLanne")

Q: The other candidates have presented widely disparate plans for economic recovery, particularly in the area of taxation. Where do you stand on tax



Eric Frandsen still looking presidential reform?

That Infernal Revenue Service
They won't forgive him
'Cause when old Howard went
He took it with him
("Howard Hughes' Blughes")

Q: Vice President Quayle has made a large issue of "family values," and lately—perhaps forgetting his boss' attacks on Boston Harbor—has grown fond of deriding Senator Gore's views on environmentalism. The thesis of Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*, according to Quayle, is that the planet and its inhabitants comprise a "dysfunctional family," with Earth the parents, and humans the unruly children. Do you see any valid relationship between "family values" and the environment?

I was driving around Brooklyn in my
brand-new car
And what do you think I seen
I seen Bill Fugazy shtuppin' Mrs.
Potamkin
In the back seat of a rented limousine
I forced that car off the B.Q.E.
(Another problem solved)
They fell into the Gowanus Canal
Where they drowned, and then
dissolved
("I Shot Jack LaLanne")

Q: Both George Bush and Bill Clinton have been suspected of extramarital affairs. Although you're not married, are there any similar female skeletons in your

closet?

If I had a lot of money
Just like Howard Hughes
I would have me any woman
That I might choose
I would even buy Chicago
So I could have the blues
If I had a lot of money
Just like Howard Hughes
("Howard Hughes' Blughes")

Q: The riots in Los Angeles demonstrated the destructive force one ethnic group can unleash when angered. Could it happen again?

They're unkind, and you don't want 'em moving in next door
'Cause you'll find you got a lot more trouble than you did before
There'll be Danes like rain, Swedes like weeds
Legions of Norwegians in a big-ass boat
And if you slander the Icelanders
it's kippers to kroner
That they'll come and cut your throat
("The Viking Rag")

Q: On the related issues of population control/ethnic purity, do you advocate stricter immigration laws, or more attention to birth control methods?

Oh, the Vikings are coming today
So maybe you should try to get away
'Cause when they get to work
they'll go berserk
And make a nasty splash in your gene pool
("The Viking Rag")

Q: During the Summer Olympics, the Hungarian athletes drew attention for competing in Grateful Dead T-shirts, causing the shirts to become a brief fashion fad in the USA. Should the Olympics be used to promote fashion designs or designers?

I was the one who put the cobra
Into Bruce Jenner's warmup jacket
I gave Gloria Vanderbilt a hormone shot
Now she talks like Buddy Hackett
("I Shot Jack LaLanne")
In the interest of full disclosure,

transcripts of the neo-gathering were provided to all the other candidates. Response from those parties was quick. The Bush/Quayle team immediately exclaimed, "How do we know he's telling the truth? Frandsen has no experience conducting press conferences. He should leave this sort of thing to experts like us." Clinton/Gore headquarters commented, "We would have done this completely differently from Erik or anyone else. We always include a Fleetwood Mac tape and a pound of Hillary's cookies with all our press releases. That's what America really needs." Ross Perot merely said, "I sure hope that boy didn't rehearse for this thing. Lord knows Stockdale and I never do. But we would have printed each release on heavy gold-leaf paper and bound them in expensive hand-tooled leather. And there's not a damn thing anybody could do about it." Morris the Cat faxed the shortest reply: "Thanks for the litter."

Cabinet Members Named

In other campaign developments, Hardy also released a partial list of Frandsen's finger-picked appointees to key Cabinet posts. "For once, we fully agree with George Bush," Hardy announced. "Those old boys have got to go. The folk-music community is sitting on the largest group of qualified unknowns the country has never seen. Just on the East Coast alone, we've had no trouble coming up with the ideal replacements for most of these jobs." A thirsty reporter asked, "Has Mr. Frandsen okayed all these names personally?" Hardy assured that he had. "The process was somewhat delayed while Erik was on an extended trip to Singapore. Not Moscow, Singapore! But I have his definite stamp (or was it a stomp?) of approval all the way down the line." Although some posts remain to be filled, the current picks (with Erik's endorsements) are these:

Secretary of Defense: Christian Bauman, Private First Class, U.S. Army. "Chris has been in the Army for like months now, and he must have picked up a few ideas. Experience has demonstrated that he firmly believes in dealing with the hot issues, and in not wasting any time." Pfc. Bauman's initial reaction was, "Where in flaming HELL were you when I needed you? Do you know how long I've been

waiting to hear about this? Did you miss the bus or what?"

Attorney General: Rod MacDonald. "Rod went to law school for one year, instead of the usual three. So I'm sure he could resolve any sticky legal problems in a third of the time." MacDonald, currently living in either Boston or Rome, could not be reached for comment.

Surgeon General: David Seitz, M.D. "Dave's the only guy I know who plays doctor three days a week and runs a record label the rest of the time. He's promised to set that warning on cigarette packs to music. I suggested a ragtime melody, but he prefers show tunes." Dr. Seitz, however, had reservations. "I don't think I could grow a beard as funny-looking as that last guy's. I don't do talk shows, either." An offer to provide a Quaker Oats package for guidance was politely declined.

Secretary of the Interior: Brian Rose. "Brian studied under James Watt, and I'm confident he has very concrete plans for our beautiful nation. And he can take lovely photographs of the great outdoors before they disappear."

In a unique move, Frandsen proposed that three related positions, Secretary of the Treasury, budget director, and chief economist, be filled by the two-man team of David Massengill and Eddy Lawrence. "Southerners are in this year."

Secretary of Housing: Dave Elder. "Dave has lived in communes from coast to coast with up to twelve other people under one roof, and currently lives in Brooklyn with a constant parade of very strange roommates. Anyone who can put up with that can find homes for everybody." Elder expressed interest, "but only if someone else takes my turn on the dishes."

Secretary of Education: Keith Kelly. "Keith was an English teacher in some dinky town in Ohio from 1983-1985, and no one has called him 'Mr. Kelly' since. Besides, he's been unemployed much too long." Kelly, who suffers from chronic insomnia, has not responded.

In conclusion, Hardy declared, "This is going to be the closest race ever. But we remain convinced that the next President of the United States will be Erik Frandsen, by a whisker."

Boppin in the Burbs. . . Part II

by Stuart Kabak

A frog with a saxophone and a "folkie" with his trusty six-string pass each other while walking down MacDougal Street in the Village. What is the difference between the two? Answer: The frog is more likely to be on his way to a *paying gig*.

Amphibians and second-rate attempts at comedy notwithstanding, it is no secret to anyone who has wandered the streets of the Big Apple in search of acoustic venues (or anyone who read Part One of this article in FF60?) that a serious shortage of such commodities sadly exists.

Had Horace Greeley of "*go west, young man, go west*" fame been so inclined, he may well have advised a frustrated folkie to "*go suburban, young musician, go suburban*". Previously we talked about a few of the "upstate alternatives", acoustic venues so excellent that a city musician could only wish for. Well campers, there's lots more of 'em listed here in the sequel. So depending on the season, it is time to pack your bug repellent or snow shovel and go **BOBBIN' IN THE BURBS!**

Good Folk Coffeehouse 7 Pennoyer St. Rowayton CT 203-888-4450

Contact Persons: Bill and Brandy Hayden

Before I say anything else about this coffeehouse. I would advise anyone who is considering the trip to **not** have dinner before coming. The food served here is excellent and goes far beyond the usual cakes and pastries found in most other coffeehouse. The quality of the performers are usually every bit equal to that of the food. The *Good Folk Coffeehouse* happens on the **fourth** Saturday of the month and offers both an open mike opportunity for up and coming performers and a featured performer slot. Featured performers are paid and are selected through open mike appearances and/or a demo tape. Private sales of tapes are encouraged and the room is non-smoking. Sign up is at 7:30 but I strongly advise you to get there early. With a seating capacity of 100 plus (standing room only is not uncommon), the Good Folk Coffeehouse should stand high on your must-visit list.

Karen's Kitchen 55 Main St. Cold Spring, NY 914-265-1083

Contact Person: Steve Kelman

Karen's Kitchen is a club much like the Town Crier except it is smaller as it has a seating capacity of about 50 people. Like the TC, there is no smoking allowed in the listening room and good food at moderate prices is available. It should be noted that the menu is *health-food* oriented and is prepared by a Culinary Institute graduate chef.

Besides the cost of your ticket, tables have a \$5 minimum. They do not have any open mikes. To have a chance of being hired to play (this is a *paying gig*) you must be a well-established performer and/or have a first-class press-kit with a *finished* broadcast-quality CD or cassette tape. Mere "demo tapes" are not acceptable. Entertainment happens on Friday & Saturday.

Borderline Coffeehouse Rt. 45 Spring Valley, NY (@ the Green Meadow School) 914-422-9176

Contact Person: Steve Kelman

Well, it seems our man Steve Kelman must really love acoustic music for in addition to running the shows at Karen's Kitchen, he also runs the show at the Borderline. There are some major differences between the two. First of all, the seating capacity is much larger at around 150 and is a *coffeehouse* as opposed to a club/restaurant. Smoking is prohibited in the listening room. The premium-quality press-kit is still a requirement for consideration but if you have what it takes, you could be selected as a *paid opener* if you don't have the notoriety to be the featured performer. The Borderline is open on one Saturday per month. Check with Steve or get on the mailing list to find out all the details.

Hurdy Gurdy/Zeke's Place Central Unitarian Church 158 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ 201-488-8281

Contact Person: Judy Rogers

Only a few minutes from the George

Washington Bridge, the Hurdy Gurdy and Zeke's Place may have the biggest seating capacity (500+) of any coffeehouse previously mentioned. These are actually two separate coffeehouses held in the same building, but in different rooms and at different times of the month. Smoking is prohibited in both rooms and food/refreshments are available. The larger of the two is the Hurdy Gurdy, which happens at the first of the month. The format of operation consists of an up-and-coming act opening for a well-established one ie. Tom Paxton, Aztec Two-Step, etc. There is no open mike at the Hurdy Gurdy.

This is not the case at Zeke's Place which is held in another room on the fourth Saturday of the month. Playing the open mike at Zeke's may well-afford you the opportunity to be the opener at the Hurdy Gurdy or to be the featured performer at Zeke's. While it is quite possible to secure either the opener or featured position by submitting a good quality demo tape and/or press kit, your chances for selection are greatly improved if you do well as an open-mike performer.

To play the open mike you must have a reservation, you can't just show up and expect to play. This open mike is no place for beginners, if you don't have a decent act spare yourself the embarrassment. To be selected for the open mike, you must call the contact person sometime before the fourth Saturday. If you have a real good demo, you might improve your chances by sending it in first. Featured performers and opening acts are paid. The show begins at 8:00.

The Turning Point 488 Piermont Ave. Piermont, NY 914-359-1089

Contact Person: "Ben"

The Turning Point offers a cozy listening room with a restaurant in a larger room upstairs. Open Mikes are usually held on Wednesdays but it would be to your advantage to get on the mailing list for their bi-monthly calendar or call as this is not always the case. The listening room seats about 75 people and there is a bar in the far corner. Smoking is allowed only for certain shows and unfortunately, the open mike may be one of them.

Continued on page 18

Lyrics

I Know This Road

Words and Music © Steve Brennan. All Rights Reserved

I know this road.
I know it well.
The midnight sirens, street light signs,
the sounds, the smells.
And this bridge it will get slippery
When it gets cold, I know this road.

I know this road.
From long ago.
There's a baseball field just over there
behind St. Joes.
Playin pony league
Fourteen years old
I know this road.

The crack of the ball
On my Louisville bat.
I'll trade you this truck
For a feeling like that.
I stood at the plate
As the ball disappeared.
My father jumped up
And the people all cheered.

I know this road.
She still lives nearby
We'd park right there and sear
Our love would never die.
We made our vows
At old St. Joes.

I don't know
You do the best you can.
Sometimes these things just don't
Work out the way you plan.
Too many days,
Too far away,
I can't go home.

But I can pull twenty ton
At the drop of a hat.
You can sure fall in love
With a feeling like that.
I know this machine
I know what it can do.
Twelve hundred miles,
Without stopping for fuel.

I know this road.
It never ends.
It'll take a million miles
To bring me back again.
If I hustle, I'll make Waterville
By six A.M.
'Cause I know this road.

Crocodile Tears

Catie Curtis

Crocodile tears, that's what you cried
When I wanted to leave your side
And you said "hey baby, look at me!
Don't you have no sympathy?"
I should have known better
I could have been free
But I walked too close and you nearly swallowed
me.

They said you were low
They said you were mean
But I just thought you were really green
When you said "hey baby, this is so new.
I have never loved like I love you."
Well I should have known better
I could have been free
But I walked too close and you nearly swallowed
me.

One day I went walking by the river side
Just wanted to see your crocodile eyes
And I hear you say "baby please!"
So I turned around but you weren't talking to me
I should have known better
I could have been free
But I walked too close and you nearly swallowed
me

Crocodile tears, that's what you cried
When I wanted to walk on by
And you said "hey baby, can't you see?
I just need your sympathy."
I knew better
Now I'm free
And you look best as the boots on my feet.

The Night Bird's Song

by Sheila MacDonald

In darkest dawn from fabled fields of memory's
green
Waits the night bird's song with a well of woken
streams.

Chorus
And I but a poor beggar boy would sew my only
seed
Tossed in a tin of nothing more to plead.

Through streets forlorn mirrored before time's
broken space
Goes the night bird's song unconscious cry from
memory's trace.

Chorus

Chorus

I'm Confused

Words and music by Hugh M. O'Doherty

Mikey told me that his sisters don't stand up
when they pee,
I asked him, "Hey, do they use the urinals in the
lavatory?"
He said, "Ladies' rooms don't need 'em, girls
aren't appointed that way!"
I didn't ask him how he knew, but from that very
day...

Chorus

I've been confused, confused; I am confused,
Can't claim I've been teased, betrayed nor
misused.
I'm just confused, confused; I am confused.
Can't help it, but I am confused.

Years later, Janet asked me, would I walk her to
her Dodge;

It was dark; it was the city; she was small; I was
large.
But when I held the car door for her, like I
would for any chap;
She told me that my gesture was chauvinist
crap.

And Kate and I were close friends for a couple of
years;
When I won this concert contest to see Blood,
Sweat, and Tears.
But when I asked her, she shuddered, "A date
could make our friendship end!"
So, I went with someone else; Kate hasn't talked
to me since then...

Chorus

Bridge

I was taught that it's wrong to tell a woman she
looks OK;
Then I heard that's exactly what she wants you
to say;
Then this expert on TV said, "That demotes her
dignity!"
These rules of gender warfare sound like
Murphy's Law to me!

But I try to do what's right; I've read Steinam
and Greer,
I've popped all the rivets of my macho veneer.
I attempt to be the model of sensitivity;
Now Christine Lavin's out there, mockin' guys
like me.

And there's 3 wonderful females livin' in my
house;
Two lovely teenage daughters, one beautiful
spouse
And sometimes they argue, and if Mom takes a
stand,
The girls say, "Wait, 'til Dad gets home, cause
he understands!"

But they're confused, confused! Don't they
know I'm confused?
Can't claim I've been teased, betrayed nor
misused.
I'm just confused, confused; I am confused.
Can't help it, but I am confused.
Just clueless, and very confused.
Don't mind it, but I am confused.
Copyright 1992 Hugh M. O'Doherty

Digging

Barbara Kessler

you let me read her letter
said you had nothing to hide
it seems she knew you no better
could never read between the lines
I'm digging for the essence
the sacred ruins of the man
but I only scratch the surface
maybe that's all there really is in the end

Chorus

I dig but don't get thru
I've been mining for your soul
I bare mine to you
but it may as well be coal

I don't go thru your pockets
or all that stuff in your top drawer
more skeletons in your closets
than any candidate before
but you're as candid in the flesh
as you are shrouded in my mind
won't you tell me what you're thinking
no, I asked you first this time

Chorus

My dad used to read the paper
with the t.v. on
you couldn't get away with murder
but you couldn't get him to put it down
his world was a mystery to me
but I guess he had nothing to hide
like a treasure chest before me
that I'll never get inside

Chorus

Goin-Out-Of-Mind Sale

Words and Music © 1992 Elizabeth Connolly.
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You didn't get home again on Saturday night, till
Sunday 5 AM

You sat down on the bed and you turned on the
light, I smelled that whiskey breath again
That's when I said "it's over and you're moving
out," you can't call this home
Don't want to see another sign of you about,
we're gonna sell off all we own.

Chorus

We'll have a going-out-of-Mind Sale, sell all we
own
We'll have a going-out-of-Mind Sale, sell all we
own
We'll have a going-out-of-Mind Sale, sell all we
own
I'm going out of my mind, to get you out of my
mind, sell all we own.

We'll sell off all the furniture you had to have,
that isn't paid for yet
The velvet blue recliner where you drank your
beer, and smoked your cigarette.
There's a hole on the arm from the burning tip,
of your Pall Mall Gold,
From the times you fell asleep with Donahue,
slept through the Carson Show.,

The king-size bed that wasn't big enough, every
time we had a fight
I burrowed up and lay awake while you just
snored, I stayed that way all night
It was always kind of soft and now the mattress
sags, the way you do
Well I'd be better on the floor or on a pile of
rags, than here with you.

Chorus

Guess we'll sell the solitaire engagement set,
the 20 carat stone
They told us we were buying for a lifetime yet,
we're better off alone
Sell it to a couple with their faces still, unlined

and young
Hope they'll be the lucky ones to weather well,
find them as one.

Chorus

Natural Home

© 1992 Maria Sangiolo

Just past Medina, there is a meadow
down by the third river bridge.
I went to find some kind of heaven
some space to rest my head.

I have been torn, tattered and broken
all by my own neglect.
A dream called me here, the door is wide open
but I can't get out of my way.

Down by the river, black-eyed susans
live wild and yellow and free.
No one to fool them, no one to feed them,
no one to cut them down.

This is nature, the way that God made it
beautiful, wild and brave.
If only I had, the will of this river
to ride my soul to its natural home.

Chorus

And I feel the tremblin' of these waters.,
I know the blowin' of these winds.
But I can't control the timin' of the tides
that'll carry my soul to its natural home.

I have been dreamin', I have been talkin'
of finally takin' a chance.
I found a penny down by the river
but its head was facing down.

No! All my life, I've believed in so many
superstitious ways.
Yes, If only I had the strength of this river
to carry my soul to its natural home.

Chorus

The other night, up on the hill
a wind chime sang for my heart.
And as I was leaving, a snake crossed my path
I thought that maybe my fears would part.

But now I know that though he left me
free to walk on by.
Fears never leave, they only remind us
of our river's raging tides.

Chorus

Good, Good, Good
Meg Rayne 1991

It's gonna be good with you I know
Something in my heart is telling me so
there's something in your eyes that won't let go
Good Good Good I know

It's gonna be good good good I know
they're setting up the chairs I'm sitting in the
first row
I'm watching you move oh your such a pro
Good good good I know

Take a chance on it, gonna jump right in,
I'm giving out lessons in sink or swim
gonna do just what I know I'll like
forever's a minute in the middle of the night

good good good I know, it's lighting up the sky
yeah it's starting to glow,
it's burning up the night like a fireworks show
good, good good I know

Watch me I'm fired up, a candle in a silver cup
I'm running to your waiting arms I've got
nothing to lose tonight

Break

First verse

Wooden Bed

written and published by Ephraim Lessell,
ASCAP

Come sit down right next to me
I have for you something I want you to see
The farm that worked us to the bone
You can now work it, and work it alone

For I will never be young again
He said to the boy as he turned his head
I'm glad for the things that I've done and I've
said
And he gathered a smile on his wooden bed

I will always wait for you
When you are out on the ocean blue
I will stand right by your side
And fill you with joy as you filled me with pride

If they take arms to you
You'll beat them back by their hands

When I'm gone they'll speak of me
They'll show you a man that they want you to
see
They'll list my name amongst the strike
But you can go write it wherever you like.

Raining in Boston

© 1989, Chuck Hall

I have always loved Virginia for her green and
her pace of life
All the way from the Eastern Shore to the west
of 95
I rolled in to Norfolk, past the bridge and past
the beach
She took me to her bosom when my heart was
out of reach
And I found an old hotel room with free cable on
TV
With a question for the Weather Channel man to
answer me

Is it raining in Boston tonight?
Is it cloudy on Cape Ann:
Is the fog rolling in upon the Gloucester
fisherman?
Are my friends tonight all gathered
As they do when there's a storm?
Are they sound and safe and warm?
Is it raining in Boston tonight?

I have always loved St. Augustine for the Castle
and the Gator Farm
Sure mend for a broken heart in the palm trees
and the sun
I played tourist all day Saturday in a polyester
shirt
To try to find five minutes where homesickness
didn't hurt
That night I played the Milltop and this guy in a
Red Sox hat
Leaves a twenty for a tip and the feelings all
come back
Is it raining in Boston tonight?
Is it cloudy on Cape Cod?
Are the Red Sox in the race?
They'll just blow it again, by God
Did you get to the festival in Marblehead last
week?
Did anybody ask for me?
Is it raining in Boston tonight?

I will always love "The Waterside", but it's not
"La Motif"
I will always love the Milltop, but it's not Passim
It's a summer full of work and play and being on
my own
Without the little comforts that tell you that
you're home
But it won't be long past Labor Day I'll climb
down from the shelf
My phone calls get no answers so I'll find out for
myself.

Hellhound Blues
Sherli Sherwood

Robert had hellhounds on his trail
And you know I've run from mine.
Stop and listen to how they wail
Across an endless time.
Down the road the shadows chase
Turn around in time and face
The voice from long ago
And everything you fear it knows!

Chorus:
oooooooohhhhhh they're chasin' me
oooooooohhhhhh won't let me be
oooooooohhhhhh till I turn and see!

You can run here and run there
But there's no way out no more.
Those low, long, lonesome howls
Are callin' you for sure.
The Hound is closin' in real fast
Wind is blowin' his icy blast
Giant shadows bearing down
Run to the corner and look around!

Chorus:

But still at night I hear the sound
Of pawing on the ground.
The cold, wild, Northwind cannot
Conceal a whining sound.
He won't give up till I am his
So I keep the door locked and hid
Whoa! Nothing but my soul will do
Open the door and walk on through!

Chorus:

Flesh and Bone

© 1991, John Nicholas

They can fight for wealth and power
And crush the grapes of wrath.
They can march out all the soldiers
And make the clocks run fast.
They can fill the jails with widows,
Make the children beg to eat.
They can force a reign of silence,
But there's trouble underneath.

Bridge:

The world is turning, it just keeps turning,
It keeps spinning and the sun keeps burning,
We can try to kill this soul deep yearning...

We can raise the highest tower
And seize the farthest star.
We can level all the mountains
And conquer near and far.
We can damn the mighty rivers
And poison all the seas.
We can never kill this longing
The struggle to be free.

Bridge:

Chorus:
I'm only flesh and blood, only skin and bone,
Only flesh and blood, hold your sticks and your
stones,
I'm only flesh and bone.

We can blame it on the world,
We can blame it on the past,
We can throw it off our shoulders,
But it never leaves our grasp.
We can break each other's hearts
And chase our crazy needs,
We can run the risk of ruin,
We can damn-well do as we please.

Bridge

Chorus

Future Homemakers

© 1991 Jenny Burtis

At 18 you rode the back of Butch's Harley and
took his hand
He tattooed your name and built you a house on
your father's land
You fixed up the kitchen with blue flowers
everywhere
Sportin' a cheap diamond and a souped-up Bel
Air

I missed the wedding on our old dirt road
But I saw the pictures when they were about a
year old
And I think your dress was cut a little too low
But you all look happy, I suppose.

Chorus:

Well my old friend, I've got to hand it to you
Because I was a future homemaker too
But come Sunday I'm heading back on Route 2
To my home where I don't know anyone like you

At 21, the first baby came, a little girl
And diapers, vacuums and inlaws became your

world

Then two daughters and Butch said, "Let's try
again."
Serves him right, because you had twins -
GIRLS!

Butch let us talk at Christmas this year
While he watched the game holding toddlers
and beer
You folded pink laundry and showed me around
To the new master bedroom and the bargains
you found

Chorus

I'm back in the city, looking for the real thing
I buy my paper in the square where it's all
happening
I don't think much of what they told us we
should be
But today I keep seeing tattoos and pink laundry
So do you really love him? Are things really fine?
Do you ever wish your life were more like mine?
Thinking I'm beyond the ways that we knew,
Wishing I were a little more like you

Chorus

When the Buffalo Come Back

© 1992, Dave Crossland

O, you roll your shotgun rails over endless
prairie grass,
The wild and rocky mountains you shatter with
your blasts;
And the iron horse comes rumbling through the
valleys and the plains
With a fire in its belly and a thirst for gold and
gain.

You come hunting us for pleasure, you come
murdering in greed,
And you slaughter us by thousands with your
foreign-born disease;
The eagle and the grizzly and the setting sun we
join,
and you romanticize our memory on the back
side of your coin.

Chorus

And what have you learned, and what have you
gained since you laid those iron tracks?
O, you best be running from the thunder when
the buffalo come back;
O, you best be running from the thunder
because the buffalo is coming back.

O, once we numbered millions on this land so
green and wide,
We sent the earth and heavens rocking with the
thunder of our tide;
But we gave our kin our bone and blood, our
hearts and hides and souls,
Deliverance from hunger and a shield to
winter's cold.

Chorus

Do you remember hearing silence in the singing
of the wind?
Do you remember running water flowing clean
against your skin?

Do you remember how the sunshine once washed your face with light?
Do you remember stars uncountable rolling round and round the night?

Now I ask you for your future, I ask you for your plan,
I ask you for your own children whom you bring into this land;
You poison all our rivers and you smear the seas with oil,
The wind blows like a furnace, burns your crops and steals your soil,

The skies are growing hazy and the rainfall kills the trees,
The fish you catch grow smaller and they shine with mercury,
You're addicted to your suicide, you are slaves to your machines,
And you drive us ever closer to the end of living things.

Chorus

This Rockin' Chair
© 1991, Jan Luby

Little girl, little girl
You are my whole world now
Daddy's workin' and we're alone
and outside, there's so much goin' on
There's people buyin' and sellin' and talkin' and prayin'
and lovin' and fightin' and singin' and playin'
and here in the quiet night
is the warmth of you and I

Oh little girl, little one
little family just begun
anything you want you know, Mommy's here
for now tiny one, you've got nothin' to fear
We'll turn on the heater and the radio
tonight there's nowhere we need to go
And this life I lead is so new
And this is home now because of you

Chorus

This rockin' chair
the scene this window frames
and my baby daughter
are all I know these days
I always wanted to rock
and I'm rockin' now, I'm rockin' now

Little girl, little face
lookin' up from my breast in my embrace
Dawn gave a lift to our sleepy eyes
reflected on wings we saw the sun rise
and now the ice on the trees shines and melts
in the afternoon sun
And I feel it a part of me too, you know
this thaw that's just begun

Chorus

Art Necro
© 1992, Eric Kilburn

I saw Elvis in a club in Soho, pounding beers
with Natalie Wood

Jim Morrison was busy tending bar and Marilyn was lookin' good
Sam Cooke was groovin' on the main stage,
Lenny Bruce was tellin' jokes
And in another corner a skinny little kid was playing something he called "folk"

Such a scene I tried to call Star Magazine
I thought they should have known
The scoop of a century and just my luck
Bogart was tying up the phone
I ran outside to flag a taxi it was James Dean behind the wheel
I said, "Man, this dream is going way too fast".
He said, "I think I know how you feel".

Chorus

Jack, They're dead, dead, dead, dead, dead
When you ever gonna get it through your head?
There's a missing piece, relentless grief, and not much relief in sight
You better get a life, Jack baby, get a life

I stumbled back into the clubroom thinkin' I'd be better off inside
I asked Robert Johnson the secret of success; he said, "My big break came when I died.
See, I never had much money or fame when the poison stopped my heart
But the company loves you when you're six feet down
Now I'm sailing up the charts!"

Chorus

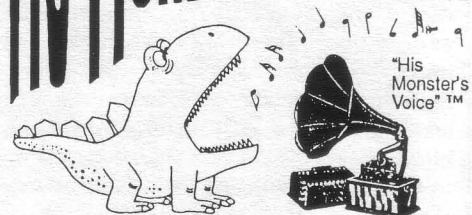
In the land of the free, home of the slave, We all want to stay twenty-one
We abuse our heroes while they're alive but we love them when they're gone
Where nothing succeeds like excess and nothing exceeds like death
So come on down to the art necro bar it's like they never left

Chorus

Continued from page 3

-loss. Unfortunately we are also not-run-by-accountants. It should not take much explanation on my part to convince you that anyone who charges you \$6.00 for a 17 song CD with a 20 page magazine, and then mails it to you at a postage rate of over \$1.00 is losing money. We tried an intermediate rate hike of \$85 but when we looked at the cold hard facts they told us that we needed to do more and do it immediately. We don't have a surplus of funds to fall back on while we renew a lot of people at old rates and such. We wish we did and we could but we can't.

No Monstrous Music!



Dirty Linen extends the range of folk music with "a wild sense of dedication matched only by good humor and intelligence." (*Library Journal*) Acoustic to electric, traditional to progressive. Artists, festivals, new releases, news, reviews, interviews, photos, and more. Comprehensive tour schedule of North America listed by artist. From John Prine to Fairport Convention, Mary-Chapin Carpenter to Béla Fleck & the Flecktones, Bulgarian Choir to 3 Mustaphas 3, Jody Stecher & Kate Brislin to Battlefield Band, Nanci Griffith to Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown.....Now with oat bran!



Dirty Linen

P.O. Box 66600
Baltimore, MD 21239
(410) 583-7973
FAX (410) 337-6735

Things are looking up, however, as long as people renew their subscriptions. We ARE getting out in a timely fashion; we have lots of renewed interest among staff and readers; we are selling off some old inventory in places like the "HEAR" catalog. (By the way, when someone buys a real old copy from Hear and then tries to subscribe at the old rate, you should see how fast they find out about their 54% increase.) and we are pissing people off and making them think.

Thanks again,
George Gerney
Assistant Editor

Bios

A native New Englander, **Steve Brennan** is a singer/songwriter and fingerstyle acoustic guitarist. His songs distill beauty and significance from everyday events in a way that is immediately accessible to his audiences. Steve brings humor, insight, goodwill, and just a touch of irreverence on stage with him wherever he performs.

Catie Curtis is a 27 year old singer-songwriter originally from Maine. She is known for her warm and interestingly textured voice, strong guitar playing, and thought-provoking lyrics ranging from poignant to just plain silly. Catie has been performing extensively in folk venues throughout the East Coast and Midwest for the past year. In late 1991, Catie recorded her second album, *From Years to Hours*, with producer Darleen Wilson. (Both *From Years to Hours* and the first recording, *Dandelion*, are available through Mongoose Music, PO Box 124, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130) The song "Crocodile Tears" is one of the new batch of songs Catie has written for her next disc, which will be recorded in the spring of 1993.

Sheila MacDonald has been writing songs and performing since 1991. "The Night Bird's Song" was inspired by thinking about the past's role in the present.



Hugh O'Doherty is a former member of the Greenwich Village songwriting community, and has recorded on FAST FOLK. He performs his songs, plus the songs of his friends (Jack Hardy, Hugh Prestwood, Rod MacDonald). His live

performances take the audience on a journey from romance to satire and from riveting emotional issues to downright self-deprecating silliness. He live in and sings about the real world, and puts the human condition into perspective with tunes of humor, love, and contemporary topics (such as adoption reform and discrimination).



Barbara Kessler has been winning audiences at such venerable listening rooms as Passim, The Iron Horse Music Hall, The Old Vienna Kaffeehaus, and many others. For info: Johnny Brock Management, 51 Maxfield St., West Roxbury, MA 02132. (617)327-6470



Elizabeth Connolly is a songwriter/singer from Melrose, Massachusetts. She prides herself on her ability to sing, talk on

the phone, send electronic mail, and play guitar all at once. The idea for "Goin-Out-Of-Mind-Sale" came from some electronic mail she received in 1986. She is scheduled to become a mother (her third career) several weeks after the taping of this FAST FOLK, and is looking forward to writing/singing many songs for her new baby. For information or other songs, you can write to her at 72 Orient Ave., Melrose, MA 02176.



Since entering the Boston Folk Circuit a year ago, **Maria Sangiolo** has gone from open mics to opening for such prominent national folk performers as Bill Staines, Garnet Rogers, Bob Franke and Geoff Bartley. She is featured on Greg Greenway's new album *A Road Worth Walking Down* and has recently shared the stage in the Boston area with Orrin Star. End Construction Productions has asked her to be on their second compilation album featuring hot new performers coming out of the Boston acoustic music scene. Maria is celebrating the release of her debut album *Hard Words*. Center Stage Management c/o Toby Goldberg, 27 Lake St., Arlington, MA 02174, (617)648-2548.

Meg Rayne (formerly Daley), is a singer songwriter from Haverhill, MA. She is featured on and co-produced the CD *For Our Children - Heal the Earth*, an anti-nuclear album with 22 artists from around NE and the world. recently she has been performing with Steve Brennan and together they have opened for the likes of Maura O'Connel and Patty Larkin. She is classically trained and hits a sweet high

note but her rock & roll roots lend a mean growl to her style. She can be reached at P.O. Box 808, Haverhill, MA, 01831. (508)372-8866.



Ephraim Lessell's best performances are usually in his basement in Lexington, MA. However, he does play publically sometimes and in the past he has played in several pop and folk acts. All his business decisions are made by a raccoon named Fielding Melish, who told him to accept any large record contract.

Chuck Hall first appeared on FAST FOLK in 1985. In 1987, he released *One Night in a Cheap Hotel*, to date his only album. He is the afternoon drive time host of WUMB-FM's "Acoustic Images". Contact: Chuck Hall, P.O. Box 84, Waltham, MA 02254 (617)893-4827

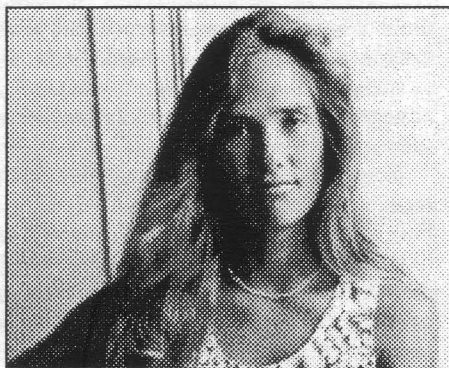


Sherli Sherwood plays acoustic blues and folk on steel and wood guitars from her home base of Somerville, MA. She

released her debut cassette just before her spring '92 tour of the South, Southwest and Midwest. *Dirty Linen's* review of her tape says "Sherwood's gift is the naturalness of her slide guitar playing and keen songwriting." She plays original and traditional music with power and a sense of humor and she can be reached at P.O. Box 116, Somerville, MA 02144.



Dreamwork's Rachel and John Nicholas live on Cape Cod. They met and married in Santa Barbara, CA before moving to NYC and finally to the Cape. They've been performing coffeehouses and concerts for the last four years throughout the New England area. They finished their first album, *When Mystery Calls*, in Feb '92. For information or bookings call (508) 548-2965.



Jenny Burtis was raised in Southern Vermont in a household where Bob Dylan,

Judy Collins and Peter, Paul & Mary dominated the family stereo. She played classical piano throughout her childhood and began playing folk guitar in 1987. She is a member of the Boston Songwriting group and her influences include Shawn Colvin, Iris Dement, and Bruce Cockburn. For Info: (617) 648-8318.

Dave Crossland is a 27 year old singer/songwriter with a clear, honest and powerful voice. Having grown up in a musical house in Ohio, his material mixes the traditional with the contemporary, and ranges from gentle love songs, to songs of hometown and family, to passionate expressions of concern for the human condition. This year Dave has released his first CD *Here's to the Ride* produced by Darleen Wilson. For info: Purple Beech Music, PO Box 177, Cohasset, MA 02025. (617) 383-6424.



Jan Luby is a spunky performer, full of feeling and real-life gusto. She was born on the road to vaudeville parents who schlepped her around in a trailer until settling in Coney Island, NY when she was seven. Her musical roots are a mix of vaudeville/cabaret and soul and motown. She established the Open Mike at the Nameless Coffeehouse in Boston in 1988. For info: 945 Main St. Suite 807, Worcester, MA 01610. (508) 791-5876.

Eric Kilburn has 6 albums on Wellspring Records (961 Beacon St., Newton Ctr., MA 02159) and was nominated for a Boston Music Award in 1990. He also owns and operates Wellspring Sound, a recording studio in Newton, where he's recorded over 70 albums for Boston-area songwriters. He divides his time between performing around New England, working in the studio, and his two year old son, Benjamin.

Boppin' in the Burbs

(Continued from page 11)

Sign up is at 7 P.M. but it wouldn't hurt to get there early. Open mike performers are not paid, however, *if* they like you, there is a good chance you will land a paying gig as an opener for a headline act. The headliners appear on the weekends and if you are one of the lucky ones to be selected, you may find yourself opening for people like John Gorka, Livingston Taylor, Christine Lavin, etc. At this writing there is no admission fee for musicians who get on the open mike list.

Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse

Harvey School, Katonah, NY 914-232-3161 or 232-4584

Contact Person: Mike Lopes

Anyone who is familiar with environmental activist movements may well know the Clearwater name as it has been in the forefront to clean up this planet. Five years ago they established their coffeehouse in the Harvey School and it has been going strong with such luminaries as Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Bill Staines and Sally Rogers to name a few. Concerts take place once a month at the school and if you get there early enough, you will have an opportunity to become involved in an environmental teach-in. There is no open mike per se, however, group singing led by the folks from the Walkabout Chorus will keep you well-entertained. The listening room is actually an auditorium located in the Harvey School and seats about 400. Average attendance is around 250 with some of the more renowned acts filling the room to capacity. People who are interested in becoming openers for headline acts should contact Mike Lopes for further information.

HELP!

We need help! We are an all-volunteer organization. If you can spare even one evening or one weekend afternoon a month you can help us. We need writers, reviewers, typists, graphic artists, photographers, computer hackers, drivers, packers, schleppers, go-fers, you name it, we can use it.

Call Carl Alderson, coordinator of volunteers at (718) 447-1601.

A Reply

(Continued from page 3)

work might have been weak either way, but I would rather have heard bad adventurous work than banality. I listened to writers who wanted to break out but were too timid to turn up their volume, use rhythm, dynamics or challenge their own use of language. Regarding the subject of your letter; the majority of political songs I received at Fast Folk were depressingly derivative of the genre's established leaders without breaking any new ground, lyrically, or stylistically. Contrast Tom Waits' first album, which is pretty straight singer/songwriter material with his subsequent growth.

Descriptions of the late 50's early 60's village folk scene recall a group of interpreters not writers. Contemporary recordings of performers such as Susan Reed or Richard Dyer-Bennet were typical, and anything but ethnic. Even contemporary albums of bawdy songs by Oscar Brand and Ed McCurdy were sanitized. They apparently strove to make the bloody and dynamic ballads of the past palatable. In doing so they drained a lot of them dry. The influence of the D-man happened and writing became and remains the thing. Except for performers like Jack Elliot and Van Ronk, the village became a place for writers. Now a few generations down the line Rap is more truly folk than 'folk', and large numbers of the 'folk' songwriters don't even know their own roots. They are largely ignorant. Ignorance has become accepted and institutionalized. They say ignorance breeds contempt. The same mentality that applauded bowdlerized versions of old lusty ballads has embraced timidity in songwriting. Also, as I said in an article a couple issues back: it is no surprise to me that the musically adventurous embrace rock/alternative scenes for their openness.

You mentioned a few songs we didn't record as cutting examples of what Fast Folk did not accomplish. I will be the first to admit that I did not get as many records/magazines out in my seven years as editor that I wished; for a wide variety of economic and organizational reasons. I will however stand firmly by the politics, romance or humor in the hundreds I did record and release. I would not be

surprised to find out that you have listened to few of our 72 issues to date. I remember one argument with a writer who would not listen to the LA issue because it included a song entitled "I Feel Like Makin' Art". His conclusion, having never heard the song, was that since he felt the title was stupid, in his opinion, that the song must be as well; and the entire album must therefore be frivolous- both untrue. Remember too that leaders of the day refused to look through Galileo's telescope at Jupiter's circling moons because they "knew" that whatever they might see could not be true, therefore why look.

When I said that we have to write with an incisive edge I meant it. I don't want boring politics, played dully. I consider Sherwood Ross's 'United German Appeal', Al Peterson's 'Ying Chi Wu' and Brian Rose's 'The Magic Kingdom', or 'The Statue' and Big Jimmy's "Huge Grey Blob" as political as any song about a soldier. Jack Hardy's "Paglia Y Fieno" and, Richard Shindell's "the Courier" were direct political songs included in the '91 show presented on the eve of the ground war. Part of the problem is that there is less of an activist audience that there used to be. Songs do not drive the society the way they used to, nor do I see other art forms doing so. For those of us who were teen and 20's in the sixties there was a palpable excitement at the release of a new record tied directly to contemporary politics and an apparently expanding society. Partly it was a youthful, sexy, wild time and folk only became big, big business as the 60's ended. Although I believe the threat of the draft for the sons of the middle and upper class fueled much of the 60's resistance. The dynamics of the time brought a broad range of economic, racial and military issues into our daily lives via art.

I do not feel the same excitement at the release of albums now. The ones in our scene that generate hype are not attuned political works. Mary Chapin Carpenter, Greg Brown, Roseanne Cash, and others are taking a more personal approach to their writing. It may be that the writing has matured and come home to roost. As I said in my editorial many of us feel that addressing specific domestic subjects is a microcosmic way of addressing the larger breakdowns in society.

You may feel that Fast Folk's purpose is to be a musical/political broadside. I agree that it is one of its components. I would not, however, like to only collect songs whose specificity makes them obsolete within a year. Erik Frandsen's "I'm So Fucking Sensitive" lays it out harder than a lot of war songs when he jokes that 'I've never been oppressed personally, but I've been inconvenienced a lot'. There are lot of levels to politics in song. Some audiences find the work of Fred Small pointed and articulate, others feel that it is opportunistic overly politically correct and lacking grace. He does well, so in many ways the marketplace has determined that his work is strong.

I was as interested in allowing writers to develop as I was in finding the hot song of the moment. I was quite interested in finding people who would break the form. Carol Lipnik, Big Jimmy, Professor Louie, Jim Allen and Lillie Palmer for example—and their work is not what I would consider Avante Guard by the standards of the greater artistic community. Jack Hardy's songs sound remarkably traditional and retro to casual listeners though he's taken off in a particular complicated and very personal direction. Brian Rose too has succeeded in defining his specific area of artistic work which he can discuss and defend. There are many examples.

Bravery in art, to me, is not exclusively defined even by quality. It is exemplified by a person willing to investigate the most inner parts and display evidence of the journey for the rest of us. That display can be romantic. Art that helps relieve our misunderstandings and integrate a society is a wonder that doesn't have to wave a flag. We all know the emotional strength of art can be manipulated. I included 'From A Distance' on the 1991 CD because the emotionalism of that moment, not sentimentality which the song may have to some under other circumstances, demanded it. The song had been the finale of the Fast Folk Revue in 1987 and didn't come off well on tape. It seemed appropriate to issue an unexpected focused, unanticipated performance of this song—otherwise unrecorded—by its author, Julie Gold, who had won a grammy for it two night earlier.

Julie didn't write her song for the Gulf

war, but its impact on the troops stationed there is incontrovertible. How many of our pointed overtly political songs will ever effect anyone? It can be argued, and I would agree in principle, that if a song affects one person in an audience to action then that can be counted success. Part of what disturbs me is how little expectation I feel from audiences for anything other than pure entertainment. As bad as our social situation is, we, the folk scene, have no mainstream platform for effective political discourse.

Chris, I hope you understand that I always considered *Fast Folk* to be as much a political organization as an artistic one. Its very existence is a political act. There would be no scene in the village today without it. All of us who put in our volunteer time know that. No one beats down our door to either replace us or assist, even within the scene. While other groups are issuing compilations with increasing frequency, I know of none that has a particular artistic philosophy and political bent. Providing a place for artists at various levels of development to display and test their work free of commercial constraints is as political as one can get these days. Both Jack and I have our artistic biases (acknowledged and denied) and some songs will be passed over as a result. The overriding belief we (and the volunteer staff) carry that Fast Folk is worth years of our time, paying attention to writers, regardless of their community or commercial standing, remains.

It is a sustained group statement by Fast Folk, that one need not have their creative life stimulated, justified and evaluated by another. It was gratifying, in retrospect, that hard artistic work combined with a desire to engage in the music business catapulted an unusual percentage of our family of friends to fame. It was as important or more, to me to be able to record single songs by individuals without a ghost of chance of getting corporate or indie label support for their work. Remember that our famous friends began humbly. Your inference, Mr. Bauman, that it took too long to get around to 'Metal Drums' is a flaccid argument. I suppose that you are equally disdainful of Patty Larkin that she didn't write about Love Canal or other superfund dumpsites, that

John Gorka had not written a folio of Viet Nam songs before 'Temporary Road', that John Lennon didn't write 'Revolution' in 1964, or that I wrote about presidential corruption of the 20's and not today. Artists work in their own time. If you are concerned however, that there is a paucity of political material on Fast Folk I submit that you have not listened to the heart of many of our songs. I also recommend that you consider what is political, and learn to find the politics that underlie many seemingly moderate songs. Politics is not exclusively military. Where are the folksingers wearing red remembrance ribbons, for example? Where are the folksingers expressing concern over restrictions on free speech proposed by the NEA and the PMRC?

I ran into a singer/songwriter who by chance had been held hostage in the Baghdad hotel preceding the gulf war and had written some songs there on the spot. They were not very good. Saying this does not diminish the intensity of his experience or the sincerity of the writer. I simply did not feel moved by the result.

Your assertion, Chris, that we should take to the streets, that "some of us make a living with our songs on the road" implies firstly that you do it, we don't, and that it is the only way. I question these assumptions and wonder what your motivations are. I have paid many years rent as a freelance artist, street singer and also as a workaday construction gang carpenter. I know what it means to depend on wits and one's artistic product for survival. I know that the root of one's art is more mysterious than just what job one holds. I firmly reject that there is only one kind of 'folk' music and that one must emulate the dust bowl Woody-Ochs-Neo-traditionalist-troubadour (as the big D once posed) to be considered authentic. It's also no secret that all of us and our audiences have turned away from the homelessness, pollution and disintegration of our society at some time. This is also why I believe that inner city music is more true to the nature of folk as you define it than a lot of singer/songwriter material, which has become more art for art's sake.

By the way there are a lot of back issues for sale. Hope to see you on your next leave.

Richard Meyer

Musician Credits

-1-

I Know This Road
(Steve Brennan)

Steve Brennan/Guitar & vocal
Dennis Pearne/Bass

-2-

Crocodile Tears
(Catie Curtis)

Catie Curtis/Guitar & vocal

-3-

The Night Bird's Song
(Sheila MacDonald)

Sheila MacDonald/Guitar & vocal

-4-

I'm Confused
(Hugh M. O'Doherty)

Hugh M. O'Doherty/Guitar & vocal
Dennis Pearne/Bass

-5-

Digging
(Barbara Kessler)

Barbara Kessler/Guitar & vocal

-6-

Goin-Out-Of-Mind Sale
(Elizabeth Connolly)

Elizabeth Connolly/Guitar & vocal
Dennis Pearne/Bass
Steve Brennan/Lead guitar & harmony vocal
Meg Rayne/Harmony vocal

-7-

Natural Home
(Maria Sangiolo)

Maria Sangiolo/Guitar & vocal
David Crossland/Harmony vocal
Steve Brennan/Lead guitar
Dennis Pearne/Bass

-8-

Good, Good, Good
(Meg Rayne)

Meg Rayne/Guitar & vocal
Steve Brennan/Guitar & vocal
Ephraim Lessell/Bass

-9-

Wooden Bed
(Ephraim Lessell)

Ephraim Lessell/Guitar & vocal

-10-

Raining in Boston
(Chuck Hall)

Chuck Hall/Guitar & vocal
Maria Sangiolo/Harmony vocal

-11-

Hellhound Blues
(Sherli Sherwood)

Sherli Sherwood/Steel guitar & vocal

-12-

Flesh and Bone
(John Nicholas)

Dreamwork
John Nicholas/Guitar & harmony vocal
Rachel Nicholas/Vocal

-13-

Future Homemakers
(Jenny Burtis)

Jenny Burtis/Guitar & vocal
Dennis Pearne/Bass
Steve Brennan/Lead guitar

-14-

When the Buffalo Come Back
(Dave Crossland)

Dave Crossland/Guitar & vocal
Dennis Pearne/Bass

-15-

This Rockin' Chair
(Jan Luby)

Jan Luby/Guitar & vocal
Dennis Pearne/Bass

-16-

Art Necro
(Eric Kilburn)

Eric Kilburn/Guitar & vocal

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