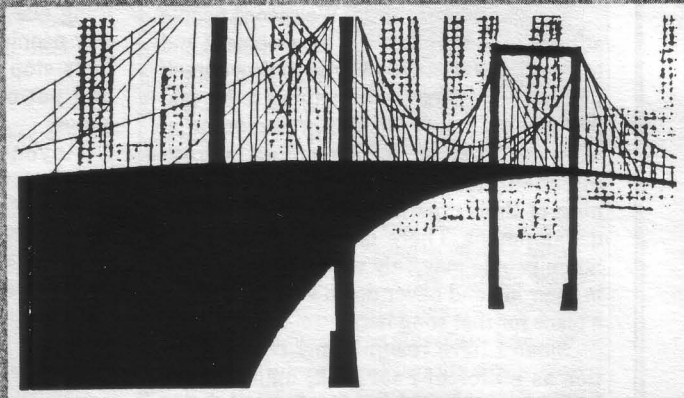
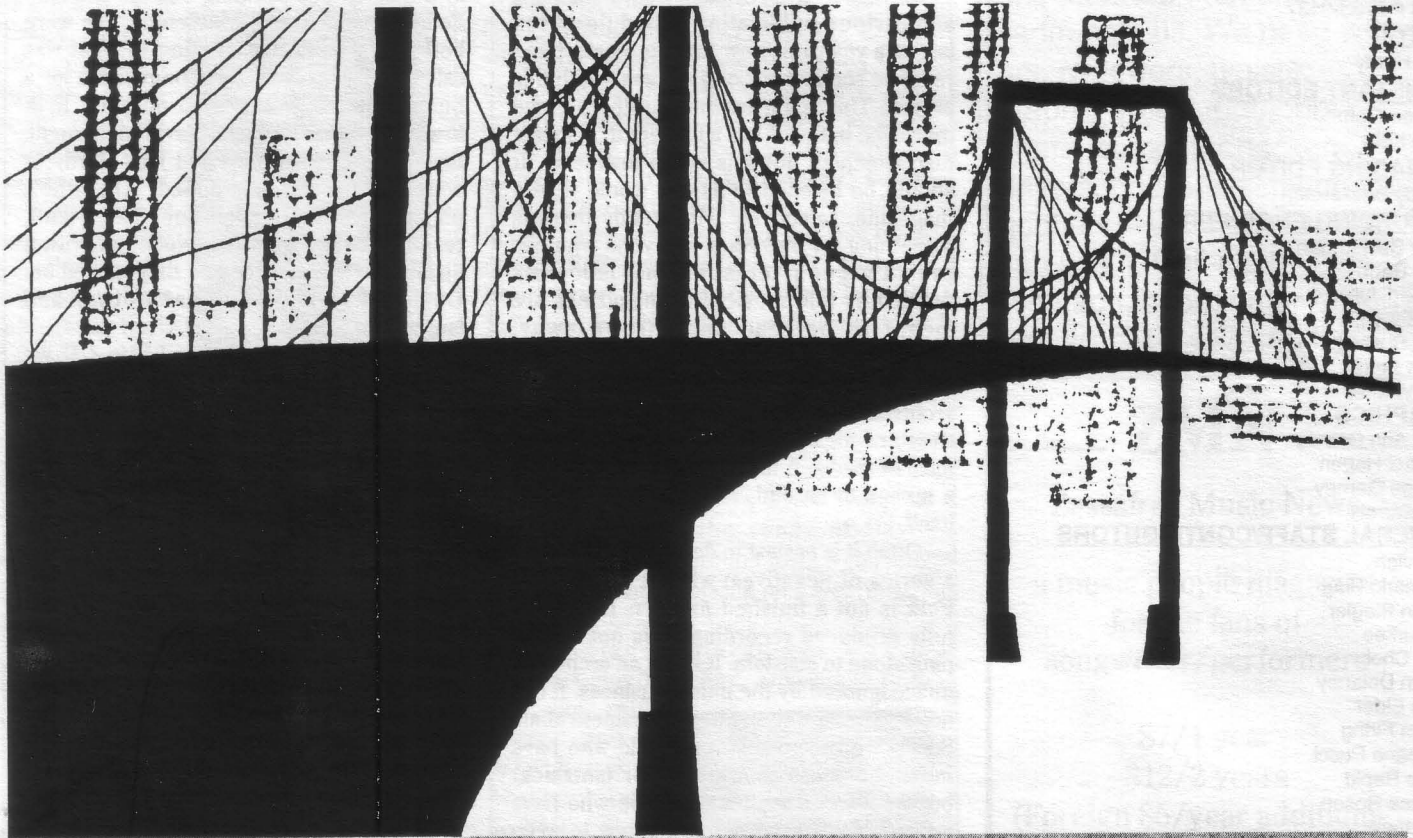


# FAST FOLK

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## On Guerrilla Recording and Being Inclusive

*Guerrilla: one who engages in irregular warfare, especially as a member of an independent unit, carrying out harassment and sabotage.*

Since we have resumed Fast Folk's fast and furious publication schedule of ten issues a year, it is now time to reassert and redefine some of our original goals with this project. This is a magazine, a rather unique magazine in that it has a full-length compact disc attached, but it is still a magazine. It should be listened to as one would read a magazine: selectively. Hopefully there is something for everyone, everyone who has even a vague interest in what is loosely defined as folk music. But magazines are meant to be read and thrown away. Occasionally they are collected for future reference like *National Geographic*, or archived in libraries, but for the most part they are an immediate, urgent, transient form of media. A magazine is a catalyst. It is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

Often it is easiest to define something by a series of negatives: what it is not. Fast Folk is not a finished *product*. It is not a fully produced recording. It is not a stepping stone to stardom. It is not an archive of music ignored by the music business. It has nothing to do with the music business at all. Surely we record a lot of people who have music business aspirations (or fantasies) but we also record many people who have no such aspirations and are happy to write songs as an avocation. These songs are no less valid.

Back to the magazine. We record people at many different levels of development and to compare them critically is to do yourself a disservice. There is something to be said for hearing a true master craftsman at work but there is also something interesting about hearing someone at the beginning of their creativity and watching their development. There is room for all here. Some people may only write one good song in their life and never do an album. There is a place for that song here.

Since I have resumed my responsibilities as editor of Fast Folk, many people have taken me to task privately (and not so privately) saying the quality of songs is not what it used to be. To this I say bunk! Hindsight is always 20-20 and to look at old

issues of Fast Folk now, noting how many artists are household names (at least in folk circles) is to ignore the fact that, at the time, they were nobodies. I remember back in the early '80s standing outside the club Folk City with David Massengill. We were both performing that evening in what was called a "Dollar Nite." Six songwriters for a buck. The list was posted outside: Erik Frandsen, Suzanne Vega, David Massengill, Ilene Weiss, Brian Rose and Jack Hardy. A couple of passersby stopped. "Oh, who's playing tonight?" asked one. The friend, reading the list, replied, "Nobody," with a disgusted tone of voice and they moved on. David and I looked at each other and laughed.

Once we changed from LP to CD we increased the number of songs we could record. With 16 or 17 songs in each issue, no one should expect to like them all. Hell, even I don't like them all. I may only like two or three. You may only like two or three, but I'll bet you they are not the *same* two or three.

With the return to what we call "guerrilla" recording certain sacrifices in sound are risked in the interest of getting these issues out. But I would also remind our subscribers that this is where we started: recording whole issues in a matter of hours with almost no overdubs, mixing our effects. There is something refreshing about hearing music the way it is played. Sure, on a given day, any of these people could play the song better, and a big studio could doctor it until it sounded like everything else. But that is not real. This is the way people sound! Why are we afraid of it? Let's stop putting our faith in technology and put our faith in ourselves, and our songs.

Anyone who takes the time (and the risks) to write a song deserves a certain amount of honor and respect. Even if we do not like the end product, we should respect the process, enjoy the differences, rejoice in the ones we like and at least be tolerant of the ones we do not like. Like clipping articles, we can tape the ones we like and throw the old magazine away. Or we can save the old magazines and watch the inevitable metamorphosis of nobodies into household names.

— Jack Hardy

## Pop Music & Classical Music, and Elvis Costello & the Brodsky Quartet

by Brian Rose

In 1967 Phil Ochs released *Pleasures of the Harbor*, an album with many of his most beautiful and evocative songs. Unfortunately, many of these songs were weighed down by classical music arrangements that were intrusive and merely ornamental—that is to say, not well integrated with the songs themselves. What's more, the arrangements echoed the tonalities of the nineteenth century seemingly without regard to more than five decades of modern music from Stravinsky on down.

Ochs was apparently attempting to transcend the type-cast of "protest singer with acoustic guitar." Dylan had already shaken up the folk-music world by going electric at Newport, and the Beatles had been experimenting with strings, sitars, and various electronic sounds and recording techniques. "Eleanor Rigby," with its double-string-quartet score by George Martin, was particularly noteworthy and influential.

*Pleasures of the Harbor* should have represented a conceptual leap forward for serious pop music, but like almost everything else in 1967, it was overshadowed by the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, an album of such vitality and experimental range that it made Ochs' effort appear almost musically decorous—not at all the intention or the content of this interesting group of Ochs songs.

Other attempts were made in those days to integrate classical and pop music, but most were unsuccessful, if not ignominious. I offer as examples Rick Wakeman's *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, and Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Throughout the 70s and 80s producers and arrangers padded pop

songs with billowy clouds of strings (see the Moody Blues), and occasionally the credits of some overstuffed pop concoction boasted the name of the London Symphony Orchestra, or some other classical group gone slumming.

Few rock or folk songwriters have had the training or knowledge of classical

music was generally inaccessible to the majority of people, including pop record producers. There was serial music composed primarily by music/academics for other music/academics, and there was the freewheeling, but sometimes baffling, improvisation of John Cage and his followers. Much of the abstract atonality of the

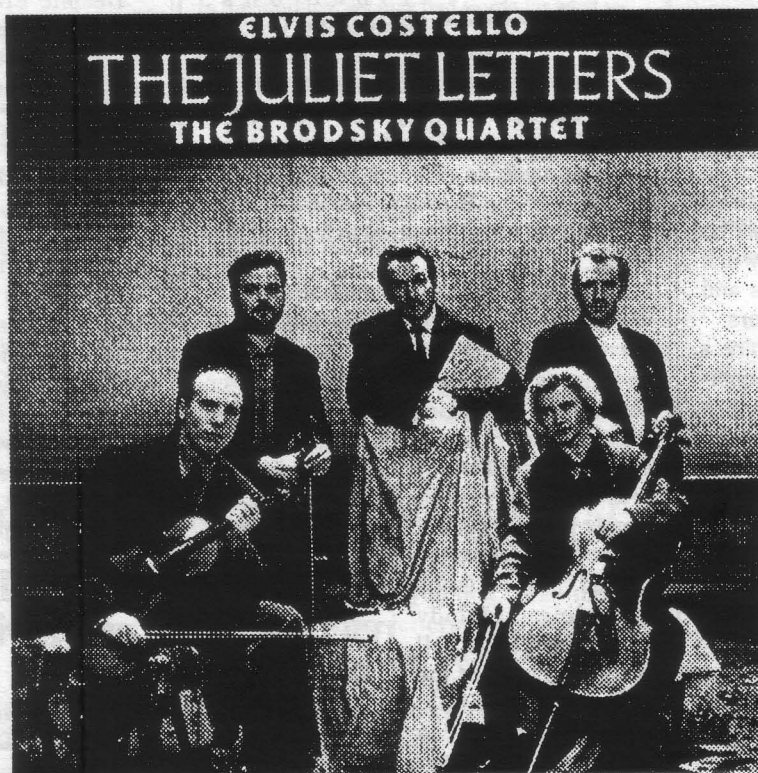
former group, and the pine-cone scratching and other sonic excursions of the latter group, may have been brilliant, but it wasn't having a big impact—to quote Phil Ochs in the wrong context—outside of a small circle of friends.

Younger composers, however, were beginning to find other avenues, and there is no question that the new minimalists like Philip Glass were influenced by pop music as well as non-western and "primitive" ethnic music. Glass's opera collaboration with Robert Wilson, *Einstein on the Beach*, which premiered in 1976, had repercussions in both the pop world and the classical world. Glass and other composers like Steve Reich and John Adams, who worked in related rhythmic and tonal styles, helped draw the baby-boom generation into classical music at a time when the music appeared to have lost

much of its relevancy to modern life.

Yet despite the success of these composers, minimalism has not actually come to dominate contemporary classical music. The back-and-forth between classical and primitive, western and non-western, and a willingness to borrow, quote, or sample from the past, has created a rich pluralistic atmosphere in which different kinds of classical and sophisticated pop music co-exist in the same postmodern frame.

Glass himself took a stab at a so-called crossover album, *Songs of Liquid Days*, on which he set lyrics by songwriters such as David Byrne and Suzanne Vega to his own music. It wasn't altogether successful—I



music necessary to achieve a successful synthesis of these two musical worlds. And in fact, the vitality of rock and folk is partially linked to its primitive, rooted qualities. It doesn't require Gershwin or Bernstein to write it, nor a conservatory-trained band to play it. One might reasonably ask why such a synthesis is desirable at all.

Putting off an answer to that question for the moment, I would like to suggest that recent developments in art and music have created a rather different creative environment—one in which many kinds of cross-pollination are possible.

In the 60s, contemporary classical

felt that the lyrics and music were often disconnected—but the album was an example of a willingness on the part of pop and classical artists to collaborate.

The Kronos Quartet, beginning in the mid-80s, best exemplifies this phenomenon. They have scavenged the twentieth-century musical landscape for their recordings, which include an arrangement of Jimi Hendrix' "Purple Haze," a collaboration with New York avant gardist John Zorn, a quartet by the Russian composer Alfred Schnittke, and recently an album of commissioned works by African composers. While they have not neglected the minimalists, e.g. *Different Trains* by Steve Reich, the range of their work extends across many musical styles and crosses many real and imagined borders.

Kronos' success has helped inspire a surprising re-emergence of the string quartet as an important purveyor of modern music. Other quartets like the Arditti, the Mondrian, and the Brodsky now bring music to audiences of a diversity unthinkable ten years ago. The string quartet has become the classical equivalent of the four-piece rock and roll band, each with its own musical and visual identity. And despite the discomfort some traditional classical music fans may feel regarding all this hoopla, the potential is there for reconnecting the 18th- and 19th-century repertoires to the unruly present. Because of Kronos and others, the doors of the museum have been flung open.

One of the best examples of both musical synthesis and the rejuvenation of the string quartet is *The Juliet Letters*, a just-released collaboration between Elvis Costello and the Brodsky Quartet. The album is essentially a series of letters, presented as songs, sung by Costello with string accompaniment. According to Costello, the inspiration for the project came from a newspaper article about a Veronese academic who for years answered letters addressed to "Juliet Capulet;" the mystery of these letters written to an imaginary woman inspired the composition.

**The string quartet has become the classical equivalent of the four-piece rock and roll band.**

*The Juliet Letters* is a remarkable integration of classical music and pop song. Though one is tempted to refer to this as an "Elvis Costello record," it is truly a collaboration, and Costello, in the liner notes,

describes their method of working together, and generously credits the Brodsky members for their lyrical as well as musical contributions. Significantly, Costello and the Brodsky

were mutual, though unwitting, fans for some time before they met each other. Costello for a number of years had been listening avidly to classical music, and the members of the Brodsky, who are in their thirties, had found it natural to listen to pop music.

The music they have come up with is illustrative of the present-day practice of borrowing, stealing, and transmuting bits and pieces from the past, yet they never succumb to nostalgia or the retro pandering of (I'm sorry to say) Paul McCartney in his Liverpool Oratorio. The melodies are broad and well developed, but they are not simply given a generic classical treatment as in the aforementioned Phil Ochs recording. Melody notes rise and fall within the logic of the overall composition, sometimes embraced by sweetness, other

times by dissonance, and different musical styles and colorations are used throughout, sometimes with direct sincerity, other times with irony and satire. Often the songs extend beyond the usual verse/chorus structure, and what would appear to be a bridge turns out to be a completely new musical section that leads to the end of the song rather than returning to the beginning.

Each song on the album, of course, is a letter, and as such transmits a particular person's hope, anguish, or some point of view. Costello's vocals skillfully give expression to the messages of these different characters. It is particularly that his singing avoids pretensions to lieder or

operatic styles, though he does sometimes take on musical-theater mannerisms. One song, "This Offer is Unrepeatable" (a piece of junk mail), is written as mock Gilbert and Sullivan, and one almost expects to hear laughter at the end from an imaginary audience. The recording of *The Juliet Letters* was done essentially live, and occasional vocal glitches are left in, which gives the album an immediacy and emotional presence that it might have lacked otherwise.

Despite Elvis Costello's alleged tendency to cleverness, most of the lyrics in *The Juliet Letters* are quite direct and reflect the intensely personal world of the letter writer. The first song, "For Other Eyes," is a confessional letter written by a woman who admits to a friend (or lover?) that she is unable to forgive her husband for having an affair. "Why" is a child's note suggestive of the John Lennon fragment "My Mummy's Dead" at the end of his first *Plastic Ono Band* album. Other songs start out simply and develop in unexpected ways. "Dear Sweet Filthy World" is a suicide note (or is intended as one), but it ends with the writer singing "I can't go on, I can't go on" as if in an exalted state. In between those darker songs are satirical and comedic epistles including one about a

time machine that can bring people back from the dead. And indeed, death hovers closely over many of the writers of the *Juliet* letters, though at the end

**Though one is tempted to refer to this as an "Elvis Costello record," it is truly a collaboration.**

Costello offers some consolation with the lyrics, "Banish all dismay / Extinguish every sorrow / If I'm lost or I'm forgiven / The birds will still be singing."

So, why try to bring pop songwriting and classical music together? The pleasures of *The Juliet Letters* answers the question for itself. We are living in a time of great cultural mobility and creative hybridization. Experiments like this reflect a growing democratization of the arts and a freedom to break down traditional barriers.

*The Juliet Letters* is a challenging album, though more accessible than one might think, and it offers an entrée into a wider musical world.

# Jim Allen Speaks

interviewed by Brian Rose

FF: You're from the Bronx, right? What was it like growing up in the Bronx in the 70s and 80s?

JA: My section of the Bronx that I grew up in, and where I still live, is pretty far removed from most people's picture of the Bronx, which is the South Bronx, and the burned-out buildings and drug dealers. Where I live, it's more, not quite suburban, but leaning toward that extreme more than the other.

FF: I want to ask you about your mother. I understand she's got a music background.

JA: After she got out of high school, she went into radio. She worked as a DJ in the 50s in a number of places, some places upstate, but mostly in Louisiana around Lake Charles. This was around '56 when Elvis was starting to be hot shit, and she used to play that kind of stuff. She's the first one to play a lot of stuff that I would eventually come back around and say, "What was that stuff you used to play for me?" A lot of old country stuff and R&B and mid-fifties rock and roll, which I love as much as anything.

FF: I think it's interesting and definitely a generational thing that your mother actually had some influence on your musical background. People from my generation, for instance—our mothers never had any influence on our musical backgrounds.

JA: Oh, Mantovani, he's so cool. That Vaughn Monroe just gives me the shivers.

FF: The question I'm trying to get at: you're from the Bronx, but your songs I find difficult to locate geographically. They don't sound like songs from the Bronx.

JA: What's that supposed to sound like?

FF: I don't know, I'm asking you.

JA: Does that mean I would have a rap beat and a salsa horn section, or a bad heavy-metal band?

FF: Yes. How did you escape having

this part of the world showing up in your songs?

JA: Partly because where I grew up it was kind of like Wayne's World. It was just this flat place. There wasn't a great deal of local color. It was kind of, here you are, so what?

FF: A lot of your lyrics could be called

atypical. I think of it as atypical of my writing style because there's more metaphor and symbolism in that song than in most of my others. There's much less direct stuff going on. It's actually a song that I don't even play that much. It turns out that I played it at the Bottom Line show because it worked with the other songs in the show.

FF: Let me try something out on you. I'm just proposing this, and this may not be at all what you have in mind.

JA: Actually, I don't really want to talk about this song at all.

FF: We're talking about a song that some of our readers are familiar with. We'll move on, but I still want to ask you about it. I actually like the song, and have every right to ask you about it.

JA: It's an all-right song.

FF: It would seem that the song is about an impending war or some kind of conflagration. Were you thinking of war literally or more metaphorically?

JA: I was thinking mostly of civil war; specifically, at the time I was thinking of the L.A. riots. I wouldn't say that I'm apolitical, but I like to separate the church and the state. I like to keep it out of my songs because I don't feel like I have any great socio-political insights.

FF: In a previous conversation we had, we were talking about the alleged surrealism of some of your writing, and you mentioned that you were trying to be more direct

these days.

JA: Right. When I first started writing songs, they were complete gobbledygook—you wouldn't have been able to make any sense of them whatsoever because they were so indirect and woefully obscure. When I first started to write seriously, when I was 14, I was so unsure about what I was doing that I was afraid to say anything directly understandable for fear that people would reject it or think that it was stupid. So, as I went along, and

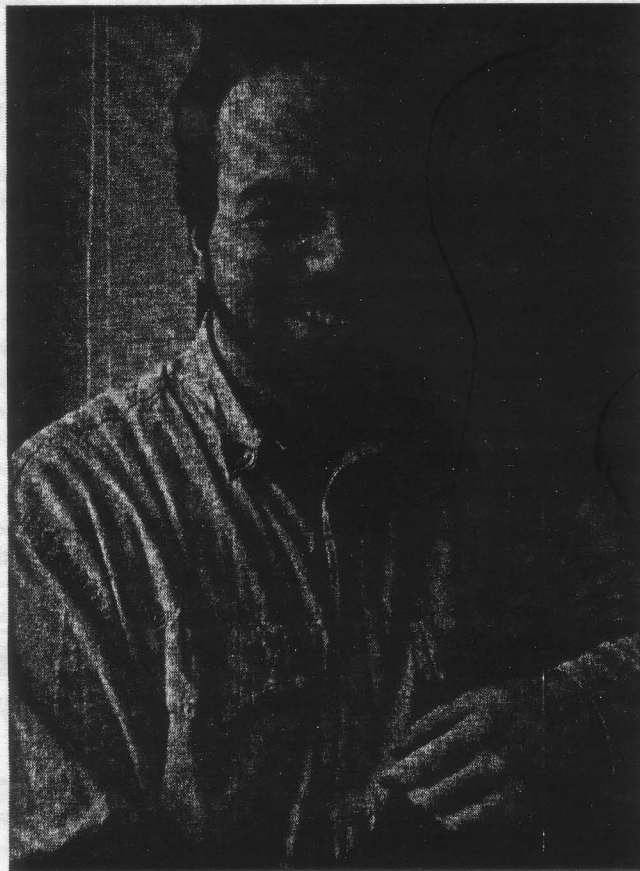


Photo: Brian Rose

surreal. Let me give you an example from "As the Crow Flies," which is the song you performed at the Bottom Line as part of the 1993 Fast Folk show [can cut this underlined section if this appears in Bottom Line issue #702]. Here's one verse: "Now little bird, fly away home/Your house is on fire and your wife is alone/A newspaper moon shot full of holes/A bulletproof clock sits on a pole." Do you deny the surrealist mantle?

JA: Partly. Well, that particular song is

even still now, in this long process of getting more direct, I have always had a certain affinity for imagistic lyrics.

FF: Let's talk about a specific song. Something like "House by the River." It's a fairly simple song structurally, but it is very imagistic. You use archetypal images like the river and sky, and in other songs, the moon. These things invite speculation.

JA: That song was just me trying to paint my little picture. With something like that, you can take the basic image and go as far as you want with it,

drawing it out into meaning bigger things, but I leave that up to whoever's listening to it. They're the classic poetic images because they're perennially relevant. I am a great advocate of songs that use corn flakes and Styrofoam as central images as well. The only reason I don't write those kinds of songs is that I'm not as good as it as I'd like to be.

FF: Sometimes it seems that you're striving for some kind of metaphysical or theological framework for your songs. It seems to me your songs are occupied by the great mysteries—forces of nature—and there may or may not be a God.

JA: When you write a song, you're to a certain extent playing God because you have the whole world at your control and you control the forces of nature and control the elements and the people, and in that sense you can sort of create the universe in your own image if you so desire.

FF: Well, Jim, there are times when you don't seem to be a very benevolent God, I'm sorry. For instance, "Inch Worm Blues," which is full of all kinds of nasty stuff. You're a vulture in one verse.

JA: "I wish I was a vulture high above the city streets/I would know just who to follow for to find my kind of meat." To go back a couple of steps to this idea of the metaphysical and the theological—I feel very closely aligned in spirit if not in technique with the ideas and philosophies of Jack Kerouac. He was awed by the mysteries of nature and by the possibilities of the metaphysical plane. One of the deriva-

tions I've heard for the term "Beat" was that it came out of "beatific." I don't know if it's true or not, but it seems true now. In Kerouac's work, he cultivated this sense of exulting in being part of these mysteries. And he knew no greater joy than pulling up his sleeves and rolling around in them, and describing them as he did.

FF: There's a lot of death and doom in your songs. You're right up there on the death-and-doom meter with Woody Allen. What's going on? You're only 25 years old.

JA: You've got to realize that for some-

body like me who's still relatively in the developmental stage of things, that things are always changing, and over the last year or so I've been trying to defuse that whole doom-and-gloom ethos that seems to have developed in my songs. I've been trying, not to blot it out, but to transcend it and go on to other stuff.

FF: I have a theory that a lot of your earlier songs—even some of the very elliptical songs—that almost all of these songs were about unrequited love or unattainable love, and that in more recent songs you've widened your horizon thematically even as you've become more direct and less all-encompassing.

JA: It's easy to be all-encompassing when you don't know what the fuck you're talking about. When you go through more of the basic kinds of human experiences in the course of living it becomes easier to focus on the details of different situations, and to talk about them with some degree of specificity.

FF: So what about the unrequited thing giving way to other concerns?

JA: Like I say, on that level, stuff in my songs probably just reflects the events that are going on in my personal life.

FF: You're not answering my question very directly here.

JA: How much do you really want to know? How much does Joe Blow really

want to know about my personal life?

FF: We're not asking about your personal life. We're asking you what your songs are about. What about "Hole in the Sky"? Being buried under a hole in the sky?

JA: I was just trying to write a Hank Williams song. I listen to Hank Williams as much as I listen to anybody. I think that he's as great a songwriter as anyone else you could name.

FF: A lot of your writing, particularly musically, is roots oriented. It seems to have country or blues origins.

JA: It's because I'm playing it myself on the acoustic guitar that I fell into that. And like I said, I listen to as much country and blues as I listen to anything else. But then again, I also listen to as much rock and roll or jazz.

FF: Hank Williams had a very economical writing style. What you do lyrically is much more complex.

JA: Therein lies the rub. It's kind of like the carrot at the end of the stick. I have this thing I'm striving for, and even as I get closer to it, it becomes something else so that it moves further away again. It's always equidistant somehow. I hold up a guy like Hank Williams or, say, Robert Johnson. What they do, I hold it up as an objective. I want to be able to say things

as powerfully, with as much emotional impact, and with as much simplicity and directness as they did.

FF: But of course it's 1993.

There's been a lot of water under the bridge since Robert Johnson.

JA: Robert Johnson recorded in 1929 or something, and Hank Williams recorded in the '40s and '50s, but to me, those records—I mean, they sound like antiques now because they're all crackly and the recording quality is so poor—but the songs and the delivery of those songs doesn't sound dated to me at all. To me the greatest songs are the ones that, even though they may be of a time, they're not bound to it, like Muddy Waters or Dylan or Leonard Cohen or Townes Van Zandt.

FF: As far as contemporary songwriters, do you feel any close affinity for any in

**When you write a song, you're to a certain extent playing God because you have the whole world at your control.**

**How much does Joe Blow really want to know about my personal life?**

particular? Let me throw on the table the name Tom Waits for your comment.

JA: I'll go on record as saying that Tom Waits is the ginchiest.

FF: The ginchiest? Tom Waits is very much contemporary...

JA: ... though he takes elements of traditional styles and tosses them in with all the other stuff.

FF: Along with the kitchen sink sometimes.

JA: Literally. I think Tom Waits is brilliant. He's one of the best songwriters there is. I'm certainly influenced by what he's done. Some detractors might say too much. But then again, I don't think my songs would have sounded any different had there never been a Tom Waits. But his songs are certainly inspirational to me. I think *Rain Dogs* is one of the greatest albums anybody's ever made.

FF: I know that you've also been an admirer of Frank Tedesso's songs. This is true, right?

JA: All right, I'll 'fess up. When I first started coming around playing in the Village, pretty much my ultimate songwriting goal was to be like a junior Frank Tedesso. The very first time I came down to the Village with the intention of being a songwriter, I went down to SpeakEasy on open-mike night—this was in 1987—one of the first people I heard was him, and I picked my jaw up off the floor and said, okay, this is what I want to do. Since then I've found my own direction, but during that time his sensibility spoke to me in a very profound way.

FF: You have a distinctive way of tuning your guitar—an open tuning with one string missing and the bass strings on the bottom.

JA: I play the guitar that way because I never learned any other way to play it. I'm sure that my songs would sound a lot different in standard tuning. I'm sure that half the melodies I've come up with or pro-

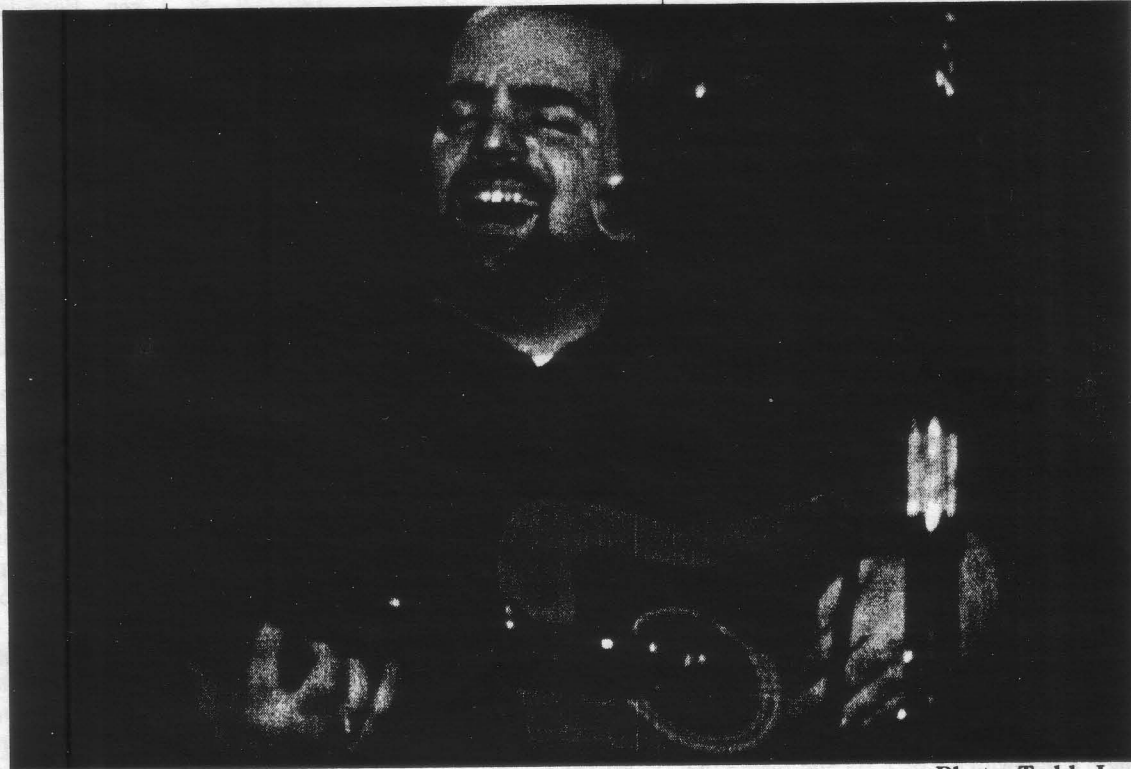


Photo: Teddy Lee

gressions I've come up with I never would have come up with otherwise.

FF: Often you make use of rather warped chords in an otherwise ordinary progression. Sometimes I think there's a willful attempt to deconstruct a conventional melodic structure by moving off base a little bit in the way the chords are voiced or notes are added.

JA: I don't have any agenda about it or anything. I'm not trying to deconstruct anything. I just do it because I like the way it sounds.

FF: That's a good answer. Now we're getting direct. I wish I'd gotten more of those kind of answers.

JA: Are you going to ask me the questions again?!

FF: How do you see what you do fitting in to the context of pop music? How do you fit in, or find your way?

JA: I certainly don't think what I'm doing is so unusual that nobody's going to be able to relate to it or find a place for it.

There are things that are much more out-there than what I do, that have found their place. I'm not one of those guys who says I'm so avant garde and deep that nobody's going to dig me because they just can't deal with it. I hate those guys that do that.

FF: Do you have any recording plans?

JA: I'm in the process of recording an

**To me the greatest songs are the ones that, even though they may be of a time, they're not bound to it.**

album's worth of songs, and if I can't rook anybody else into putting it out, I'll probably put it out myself. The best thing I can say about that as a sort of capper is, I went in to see this guy at BMI [the music

licensing group], and he was asking me what I'm doing with my music and what I want to achieve and all that, and I said something like, "It's whatever I can get away with."

FF: And did Mr. BMI have any sage word of advice for you? Any follow-up?

JA: No, not really. Actually, I'm still trying to reach him on the phone.

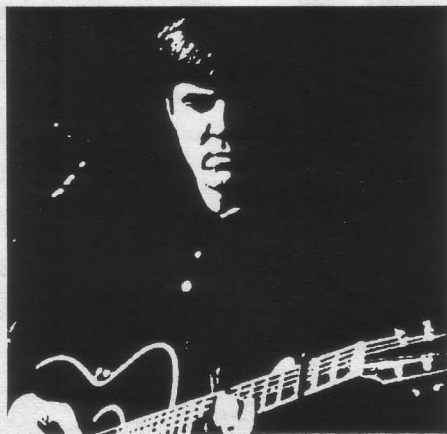
## Album Review: Brian Rose

by Jim Allen

Longtime subscribers to this magazine are probably already familiar with the work of Brian Rose. His songs have frequently been featured in *Fast Folk* since its inception, and he has been a mainstay of the annual *Fast Folk Revue* at the Bottom Line. Recently, Rose made available a collection of 11 of his songs, spanning various phases of his songwriting career.

This eponymously-entitled cassette affords the uninitiated the opportunity to encounter the full breadth of Rose's musical vision. Many of the songs here are touched by poetry without sounding overwrought or hyperliterary. Rose has the gift of making the commonplace seem almost mystical through his adroit lyricism. In "The Street," he uses the everyday images of an unremarkable urban landscape in a manner that transforms those details into something more; "From the roof there is splendor, a city in the sky / Lost to the skylight's dull-witted eye / As she plants her feet on the concrete sod / She says to her husband, 'We are closer to God.'" While elevating the mundane to the spiritual, Rose nevertheless maintains the even-handed objectivity that is present in much of his work. In the song's chorus, he sings, "There is a street of hope / There is a street of despair / There is a street balanced 'tween neglect and care." Here as in many of his songs, Rose takes the role of impartial observer, drawing no conclusions, offering no opinions, and making no statement save that which is created by focusing the listener's attention on a particular situation. In this, one is reminded of the Jack Hardy lyric, "Anything is a work of art if you take the time to frame it." Often the characters and scenarios chosen are not the ones that seem ostensibly ripe for artistic plucking, yet Rose has the ability to make them resonate.

Two of the most powerful songs here employ this technique from opposite ends of the narrative lens. "Old Factory Town" is a first-person account of a day in the life of an unexceptional man. We find him lying in bed before dawn, dreaming of nothing more exciting than the local watchman making his rounds. He rises to



the familiar din and clatter of his wife and children in the house. We see him punch into his job at the factory "where I cast the clappers of church steeple bells," and then retire to the bar when the whistle blows. Night time finds him dreaming once more, this time "of the clamor of all the church bells / Cast in iron and brass at J.T. McTell's."

"Old Factory Town" is the most emotionally charged song here precisely because it seems on the surface to be so devoid of emotion. At no time does the narrator give us an indication that he has any feeling whatsoever about the events that make up his daily life. It's through the expert use of minimalism, a technique which has blossomed in the hands of everyone from Miles Davis to Raymond Carver, that Rose makes these images speak for themselves. As is the minimalist tradition, that which is left unspoken speaks the loudest. The narrator is so completely absorbed by the mundanity and empty horror of his life that he cannot even step outside himself to describe it. Even his dreams are occupied by the same flat, bleak visions that pervade his conscious mind. We learn more about this man's life by what he doesn't tell us than we ever could from his most effusive observations. Clothed in a traditional-sounding, minor-key folk melody perfectly punctuated by bell-like synthesizer tones, the song is easily the centerpiece of the collection, even though it comes at the very end.

On "Open All Night," a similar narrative device is used, this time in the third per-

son. Rose depicts the goings-on in a late-night diner, observing from a distance the waitress, the patrons, and the passersby outside—"There's news of a murder up at 14th and T and the waitress shivers with fright." Just outside the door, "the street is a minefield for the ex-soldier with the tattooed arm." Again, Rose makes no statement about these characters and draws no conclusions. The effect is highly atmospheric, reminiscent of nothing so much as an Edward Hopper painting (say, "Nighthawks") describing the scene from outside while placing you smack dab in the middle, making you feel rather than see the loneliness and isolation.

There isn't space enough here to examine all the different approaches that Rose employs in his songs, but there is one composition in particular which differs so markedly from the rest that it shouldn't pass without comment. As the liner notes explain, "Cities on the Aerial Paths of Communication" is a song about the idealistic utopianism of turn-of-the-century Russia before the coming of Stalin. In sharp contrast to some of the more spartan offerings here, "Cities" is a wildly imagistic, almost surreal song which attempts to encompass a broad subject through poetic twists and turns. Rose lets loose the literary muse that he holds in check on most other songs, delivering lines like "architects descend the Odessa Steppes to their blueprint islands on the Black Sea." Wisely, there is little attempt at making these lyrics scan metrically. Rather, they float freely over the dissonant chord progressions that are often Rose's trademark, creating an element of tension. It's easy to have mixed emotions about a song like this. On one hand, it may be a bold piece of work that forsakes convention in pursuit of high art. On the other, it may be unforgivably highbrow and impossibly pretentious. I prefer to think that it's both, wonderful and irritating at the same time, but regardless, one must respect the artistic courage that it takes to write a song like this. The important thing is that Rose is not afraid to take chances, or to venture far enough out to reach for what is otherwise unattainable. This alone is more than enough of a reason for anyone interested in originality and inspiration to seek out this recording.



## Lyrics - FF701

### SHE LOST HER MIND

(Eddy Lawrence)

She lost her mind when she found Jesus  
He took her soul but He threw away her brain  
She ain't been right, my friend, since she's been  
born again  
No, she's just been lost since she's been saved

There was a time when she would gamble  
She used to drink until the bottle was bone dry  
She invented dirty limericks and rented filthy  
movies  
And she kept me up till day most every night  
Then she was cruising through the cablevision  
stations  
When she found the Lord on channel 31  
Then she started sending money in  
And let me tell you, sonny  
Then I knew it was the end of all our fun

No, she ain't been right since the day she saw  
the light

I tried everything to bring her to her senses  
I bought her lacy lingerie and fancy wine  
But no matter how I'd tempt her  
I never could pre-empt her  
From thinking about her Saviour all the time  
Then one night I came home early from a tavern  
And in our driveway was a black Mercedes-Benz  
And in our bedroom was a preacher  
Who had found a way to reach her  
In a way that I had not since God knows when

©1992 Eddy Lawrence (BMI)

### A LITTLE CAFFEINE

(David Hamburger)

Well, if you're ridin' 'round town in a coupe de  
ville  
Drinkin' French champagne just to let it spill  
You ain't got a worry, ain't got a care  
'Cause the road looks sunny and life seems fair  
But maybe if you're feeling low  
Baby if you're moving slow  
A little caffeine is good for the soul  
A little caffeine is good for the soul

When Moses led the Jews out of Egypt  
Just one thing he brought for the trip  
'Cause he raised his arms and parted the sea  
And you can't do that drinkin' herbal tea  
Well, he drowned the Egyptians just for show  
Sayin' over his shoulder to the Pharaoh  
A little caffeine is good for the soul  
A little caffeine is good for the soul

Well, you can help yourself to the liquor cabinet  
That don't do it for me like it's s'posed to  
Baby go ahead and smoke that cigarette  
I'll just drink my percolated rocket fuel

Well, I met this girl for coffee last night

After three or four cups we felt all right  
Back at her place she asked me to stay  
Maybe that's why they call it café au lait  
Well, I might be wrong but I don't know  
We were still having fun at a quarter to four,  
because  
A little caffeine is good for the soul  
A little caffeine is good for the soul

### THE ZEPHYR

(Jack Hardy)

Take it slow, take it easy  
Take it any way you can  
Take it all, take it freely  
Take it like a man  
Take it down a lonesome highway  
Down a lonesome railroad track  
Take it any way you want to  
But never take it back

Some people have such neat houses  
All of their flowers in a row  
No surprises in their closets  
Nothing the neighbors do not know  
And that's why God made railroad ties  
To keep the flowers in their place  
And that's why God made railroad watches  
To keep the rats in the race

Some people lead such neat lives  
No screaming in the halls  
No prescriptions in their pockets  
No crutch called alcohol  
And that's why God made the corporate ladder  
To make the others feel so small  
And that's why God made Jacob's ladder  
So we can all climb the walls

Some people pay such neat dues  
To the devil or their boss  
At the crossroads, at the station  
Or at the stations of the cross  
And that's why God made the Burlington  
Northern  
Atcheson, Topeka, Santa Fe  
And that's why God made railroad whistles  
So we can blow it all away.

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### I HAVE DREAMED

(Wendy Beckerman)

I have dreamed  
That I could fly  
And you were there  
The blue of sky

The sun was low  
The spring was new  
The earth was pulling  
And still I flew

I have dreamed  
That you were rain  
So bold your touch

Against my pain

I have dreamed  
The night had come  
I kissed the stars  
I kissed the sun

Dream I may  
And dream I might  
I live the life  
I dream tonight

©1992 Wendy Beckerman Music (BMI)

### ENGLISH ROSE

(Jim Allen)

I remember when I saw her first  
I'd only come to cool an evening's thirst  
But soon I'd find myself entwined  
She was older far than me  
But didn't show the wear  
Her countenance as fair  
As any you could find  
My heart struck dumb and blind  
I love her, I suppose  
My little English rose

I'd blown all my money at the games  
She let me keep on drinking just the same  
The night wore on, my senses gone  
As she edged closer in to me  
Her hand upon my knee  
'Til all that I could see  
Was her in all the world  
Was her in evening clothes  
Was her in one of those  
My little English rose

Now the river is so high  
The barges hit the bridge  
The sidewalks scrape the sky  
And in the harbor I  
Climb to the highest bow  
To see which way she blows  
My little English rose

©1992 Jim Allen

### ANONYMOUS FAME

(Richard Meyer)

So beautiful under their shawls  
In crinoline at the height of the day  
Perhaps the dresses were red  
They are black and white now  
They smile and they are playing croquet  
On the Berkshire lawns that are now run down  
And the servants were all underpaid

Bound in the book of an elegant time  
There are few left now to dispute that claim

In the scrapbook, family histories  
The grown-ups worked and the young ones  
played  
All the modest young ones now dead and  
decayed

Who is innocent now, no one can say  
The page is discreet and secrets are safe  
What time has healed, no one can say

Bound in the book of an innocent time  
With only the orphans to wonder today

In the Triangle Shirtwaist factory  
Picture the seamstress laughing and gay  
Then after the fire only three survived  
Another snapshot, so what is their fate  
Fame assured and the photographer gone  
Their work worn out and thrown away

Bound in the book of the laborer's woes  
There is little left to repair or reclaim

The front page blows new victims up large  
Public in their terrible fate  
A chalk line gets drawn and the body removed  
The picture is hot and the blood's washed away  
In the street a crowd thinks nothing has  
changed  
The spot that was news is not news today

Bound in the pages of yesterday's news  
Tomorrow it's trash and soon thrown away

Bound in the pages of yesterday's news  
Bound in the book of the laborer's woes  
Bound in the book of an innocent time  
Bound in the book of an elegant time  
And there are few left now to dispute that claim

©1992 Richard Meyer (ASCAP)

Richard Meyer appears courtesy of Shanachie  
Records

**DREAMTIME**  
(Jeanette Miller)

Where shall we go tonight?  
Where to shall be this flight?  
Out of body out of mind  
Words will blend and colors rhyme  
Out of context out of time  
Welcome welcome dreamtime

Who shall be my captain's mate?  
Who shall guide the ship to fate?  
Ship of dreams, ship of sleep  
Into waters dark and deep  
Ship of hunger, ship of sheep  
Into waters dark and deep

Chorus:  
Sleep, the waves on which we float  
Each in our own boat  
Tethered by a silver line  
Break the line and you are caught  
In your thoughts like a fish  
Caught up in the nets of time

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick  
Jack jumped o'er the candlestick  
Jack jumped into outerspace  
Landed out on Mars someplace

Bring him back before morningtime  
When the colors cease to rhyme

Chorus

Repeat first verse

**DADDY TURNED GREY**  
(John Sontag)

All I'm asking is who knows the name  
Of the man who came to town and sold us out  
Like a piper, man, tell me what it's all about  
To take a good town down

And who remembers his proposition  
Those fine graphics and his forecast  
Blinded by cash, man, believed it was gonna last  
I witnessed my old man deceived

Chorus

Daddy turned grey when they locked up the  
gates  
And my town turned grey overnight  
Daddy turned grey when they shut out the last  
light  
And my town turned grey overnight

I was young when the mills were open  
Downtown streets were like New York City  
Who'd he call on and where's the committee  
I've got the odds that they're doing well

Chorus

Promised to carry on, carry on they did  
Carried everything right out of town  
Well, they shut it down and packed it up tight  
And sent everybody home

You know the word was if you couldn't find a job  
here  
You ain't gonna find nothin' anywhere  
Now I visit my town that's on welfare  
See my old man and just hold him tight

Chorus

©1990 John Sontag

**DRAW ME A RIVER**  
(Jeff Tareila)

Jamie talks with his pen  
He details Italy  
He draws a monk in a monastery  
And shows me where he used to stay  
He says the monk is an archetype  
Of the perfect man  
And through his eyes are shown the sight  
Of the fall of every man  
Jamie details Italy

He turns the page to a beach  
Lost somewhere in Pompeii  
He's in the jigging motion of a drunkard's dance  
Around his lover's escapades  
Jamie's on his hands and knees

Sifting through the grains of sand  
For something lost or something found  
By the curse of fate's second hand

Jamie, draw me a river  
Deep enough to jump inside  
Don't come out, no, not ever  
I've finally found a place to hide

Jamie works with clay  
He molds himself another day  
He builds a man in a box  
Sits and listens to what it has to say  
His mouth is molded in such a way  
That his words flow silently  
Not in human sounds  
But through expressions spoken perfectly  
Jamie details Italy

Jamie, draw me a river  
Deep enough to jump inside  
Don't come out, no, not ever  
I've finally found a place to hide

Jamie, draw me my dream  
And make it come true  
You feed the fever and fill the hunger  
Whenever I need you to  
Jamie, draw me a river

©1990 Jeff Tareila

**BLOOD**  
(Katy Clements)

Blood no river runs deeper  
I never asked to be my brother's keeper  
He took off like a loaded gun  
Don't expect me at the party of the prodigal son

Blood starts turning colder  
Funny what you feel as you get older  
Is it love or is it obligation  
One can never tell under the strain of relation

So far apart, so much the same  
So close to tears when I hear your name  
There was a time when I turned to you  
You took my side, you saw me through

Blood flows through a jealous vein  
Sure as the knife was raised by Cain  
We are tied by an invisible thread  
I tell you that as sure as Abel fell dead

So far apart, so much the same  
So close to tears when I speak your name  
There was a time when I turned to you  
You took my side and saw me through

Blood there's no bond stronger  
I couldn't stay there any longer  
I took off and I followed your lead  
Trying to cut the ties that continue to bleed

So far apart, so much the same  
So close to tears when I speak your name  
There was a time when I turned to you

You took my side, you saw me through

**THIS HEART OF MINE**  
(Ansel Matthews)

I'm not going to spend all of my time  
Trying to please everyone  
Whatever I want to do, that's what I'm going to do  
I'm entitled to my fun  
No I'm not trying to be someone  
I'm just trying to be true to this heart of mine

I'm not going to spend all of my time  
Pretending I'm something I'm not  
If I'm not good enough then that's just tough  
I like myself a lot  
No, I don't want to be someone  
I just want to be true to this heart of mine

I've just got to keep searching  
For things that I need to find  
'Cause I've lost all the things that I've left behind  
Following my heart wherever it goes  
It's the only thing I need to know

I'm not going to spend all of my time  
Regretting mistakes that I've made  
Though I might never be king of the hill  
It's the price that I'll pay  
Maybe I will never be someone  
But I will always be true to this heart of mine

©1992 Ansel Matthews

**NERO'S FIDDLE**  
(Richard A. Schere)

When this world starts to play like some  
Madison ad  
And, although I keep taking, I'm sure I've been had  
Then I start to chew dollars, I go slightly mad  
Dancing in circles with ghouls in a dream  
And I hear Nero's fiddle again

Although I'm a lover, I live all alone  
I own secret faces I never have shown  
And in person I'm not what I seem on the phone  
And my mirror's reflection laughs hysterically  
And I hear Nero's fiddle again

On Sunday I'm kind, but on Monday I'm cruel  
I'm occasionally brilliant, more often a fool  
And I burn up inside while I'm keeping my cool  
As this bucking wild horse of life keeps bucking me  
And I hear Nero's fiddle again

I hear Nero's fiddle again  
I hear Nero's fiddle again  
This madness will stop, but I do not know when  
And I hear Nero's fiddle again

**IT'S A HARD LIFE**  
(Margo Hennebach)

I woke up this morning

Ain't nothing on my mind  
But a handful of that dreaming  
It visits me sometimes  
It told me I'm something  
A seer and a sage  
And I told it, you're crazy  
Grow up and act your age

Well, what's the age of dreaming  
Does anybody know?  
Is it older than the mountains  
More ancient than the snow?  
Well, I'm buried deep in winter now  
I've never been so cold  
That dreaming's just a memory  
I can't begin to hold

Chorus  
Well, it's a hard, hard life  
No one knows that more than I  
Though I reach for the stars  
I can't even find the sky  
I'd be easier if I knew the reasons why  
Why it's such a hard life  
We're born, we live, we die

Well, dreams don't make you famous  
And they don't pay no bills  
They leave you wild with wanting  
A better life until  
You're stuck here on this island  
Made of concrete and of stone  
And you wonder where you're going  
And will it be alone

Chorus

So you can keep your dreaming  
And I'll take winter ice  
And though it leaves me colder  
I know it will suffice  
So that maybe in the springtime  
When I begin to thaw  
I'll remember what you told me  
And the promise that you saw

©1992 Margo Hennebach

**ODE TO JOY**  
(Ludwig van Beethoven/Brian Rose)

Schadenfreude, in a funk  
These bureaucrats of tedium  
Arm in arm we march so drunk  
Into our soccer stadium  
Politicians think they're shrewder  
Think we need a commonwealth  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder  
United by a single Geld

He who has the great good fortune  
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein  
He who's born of noble kin  
Let him rejoice and drink our wine  
Yes, he who has the antecedents  
Hungers not or lives alone  
But he who fails the right requirements  
Let him weep and go back home

Take our embrace, you troubled world  
And learn from our prosperity  
Protected by the Yankee bombs  
Our freedom and our subsidies  
Do not shrink before our billions  
You our former colonies  
Seek out our goods and services  
And please pay with hard currency

Schadenfreude, in a funk  
These bureaucrats of tedium  
Arm in arm we march so drunk  
Into our soccer stadium  
Politicians think they're shrewder  
Think we need a commonwealth  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder  
United by a single Geld

**TO THE END OF THE WORLD**  
(Kelly Flint)

I'm going down to the end of the world  
I'm going to catch me a sinking ship  
Christopher Columbus really knew what he was doing  
The world was square but he thought he was hip

I'm going down to the bottom of the ocean  
I'm going to catch me a big starfish  
You're going to say, "Yeah, I used to know her  
She's the one who could live on a wish"

I'm going out to the top of the stratosphere  
I'm going to catch me an astronaut  
He's going to hold me and cook me some dinner  
He's going to show me where the sky pirates fought

I'm going to wake up and you'll be beside me  
We're going to ride horses on the trail by the river  
I'm going to stand very still so that you can catch me  
I'm going to let you show me how to forgive you

I'm going down to the end of the world . . .

©1991 Kelly Flint

**IN THE SHELL OF A CITY CATHEDRAL**  
(Nicholas Samaras)

Listen. We have moved into this story without reason.  
There is only the same darkness.

numbing the New York buildings in dusky silhouettes  
and anonymity. At such midnights, on such streets,

my eyes have always hurried ahead, my footsteps anxious  
for a lobby's light. But this night is not done with us,

and Svetozar is suddenly agitated, paces, stops.  
He breathes as though he's been gut-punched,  
makes me

look up. The brownstone rides into deep  
shadow,  
scarred with boards, sleeping bodies along its  
alcoves.

Svetozar turns to me, his face urgent. They're  
tearing  
down this cathedral. We've got to get inside.

I look at him for the first real time.  
We have got to get inside.

What is it that turns, at times, in each of us?  
I cannot see a name, a christening, a hinge on  
this church.

Yet I know there are reasons for actions, rea-  
sons  
beyond verbalizing. Some things are crazy.

I see it is important to him,  
this friend I know truly little about, but often  
think

mad in the finest sense,  
both of us half-immigrants,

half-natives to ourselves, both of us  
fluent in assimilation. I think of risk, the imprac-  
ticality

of good clothes. Yet, our lives at rest  
have held emptiness in their hands.

Strife has filled them. In this black hour, I think  
of every man who has forgotten his fourteenth  
year

and decide. There is nothing worse than a safe  
life.

I nod my head, almost smile at the way my body  
turns

easily to the narthex, the boarded archway, how  
we  
hunch our shoulders together, pry the plywood  
off

and squeeze ourselves in.  
Darkly, we enter the husk of our time.

I am blind and cannot move.  
Svetozar is a black shape next to me, breathing  
in the dry smell.

Slowly, our new world adjusts.  
Dull shards of moonlight filter in.

Men whisper in the face of holiness, or terror.  
I see to the nave a long floor of wreckage, ten-  
drils of wires

from walls, dark tubings like anacondas, the  
twisted filigree.

Mindless wreckage, the holy and the profane  
strewn at my feet.

Above us, a staircase descending into air, black-  
pocked space.  
A banister with missing rungs, the ornate spin-  
dling

of the wicks. Beyond that, the disembodied  
choir-loft,  
the hellish chorus. Mindless. The sight  
exhausts me.

Svetozar swears in as many languages as he  
knows,  
stares ahead and whispers

to no one:  
This was a Church.

There is no question or answer. In this place  
now,  
all words are a curse, or a prayer.

I have always been afraid of the unstable.  
How such a building, such solidity

can fall to man's priorities.  
When first we met, Svetozar, and you witnessed

my English grammar, my undefined American  
accent,  
my mediterranean laughter, you said,

You and I are of uncertain histories.  
Now tonight, amid this—when what was this  
solid falls,

erhaps all histories are uncertain.  
All priorities hold the dry horror of change.

I move forward.  
Stepping on razed planks that creak

under my weight, stepping over ruin,  
silenced rites, the corpses of Saints,

where is the Altar, the four corners  
to secure the world?

There is one way to the fractured staircase. Past  
the tiny bulldozer with its hard, sleeping teeth.

A ten-foot climb to the landing. Svetozar clam-  
bers  
up into shadows, treads heavily. Thick dust spi-  
rals

own, motes in moonlight. One quick cry.  
He lumbers above me, cradles his foot, pulls

slowly, pulls largeness from himself:  
a board, a nail gone large and wet.

I shove my bag up. He reaches down for my  
arms.  
Hoisting up, a splinter takes half my sleeve.

plucks my forearm and, for a long second,  
the skin is white like light.

Breathless, I cannot see his leg  
and he whispers, Keep moving.

Skuffing down debris,  
coughing through dust,

I go over this city's  
progress, the devolution.

Ascending, I can believe I am  
shedding time, unraveling myself.

This is not here.  
This is Bratislava. The darkness of stones  
falling.

The air whistling for death,  
for boys in shiny buttons who went off to be

so quickly wounded.  
This is New York City. This is a picture of  
Dresden.

It is my beloved Foxton, the Cambridge alcove  
against London's blitz, the bomb shelters bloom-  
ing with heather.

It is this year ascending to apex.  
It is the one enduring war.

Ascending, these are not my footsteps.  
Yet, whose body is this climbing?

Whose body is this next to me, limping  
upward, balanced precariously against pain?

Far over the apse, the sky opens to us through  
half a roof.  
Our boots scrape away a space to sit. Svetozar  
leans against

black tile, a cinderblock retaining wall,  
exhausted,  
opens a match and sucks the crippled night and  
tobacco-smoke

through his teeth. He grimaces with happiness,  
exhales the ache of air,

our effort and the dull pain, feeling the heavy  
pulsing in his fingertips.

I think of the earlier meal,  
the Tibetan cabbage, its hard, little leaves like  
shrapnel;

think of below, the broken, laid-out vagrants  
who watched us  
warily from their stoops, their cardboard beds.

Above us: a vivid half-moon, the city's rusty  
glow.  
This place, so like tonight,

a tomb for faith.  
To the right of us, a blue space for prayer

and a hundred-foot drop.  
But the nail through your foot.

This is the price of trespass: to come  
down and away different.

Svetozar, I sense this is as far as we may go  
together.  
You hold alone the private holiness of your own  
folded hands.

In matchlight, we see his foot's dark puncture,  
the skin  
gone shiny and red. Left alone, black lines will  
ascend

the calf—but he draws on his cigarette, exhales.  
Shoe back on, he wobbles upright, helps me up.

In another time, Svetozar, your hands  
have worn the dash of gasoline.

The starless nights when tanks rumbled  
through your home-border  
and there could be no sleep.

Your small hands, then, that cradled a thirteen-  
year-old's chin  
and what signs that could be turned,

what could be learned in a night's resistance.  
Perhaps, tonight, we've climbed to resist

ourselves in a complacent country. What of our  
own  
histories, shared or alone, is certain?

What choices did we assume slowly, like old  
clothes that wore  
our shoulders, our soft bruises like flannel?

To enter this edifice, this cathedral  
was necessary. It was both our choice

and in this we were equal.  
In the morning, we may find words for what we

expected, or didn't expect, to find,  
why we came in the first place, why then we  
chose to remain.

We have climbed this far. We have climbed  
to sturdy, stained-glass stars, climbed to view  
the ground.

I have all my life been climbing to such—  
a clear height, a level footing, an icon

and a dusty mirror.  
All through a palpable darkness, the ginger

feeling for where the foot should go next,  
the leaning of my weight into it.

Wind filters through our clothes. For a  
moment, I thought  
I heard the connected lives of others,

human cries, voices  
that had traveled far north.

Now, we descend carefully.  
In the end, Svetozar, we are earthbound

and resume our bodies.  
In the early light, what

can be the same?  
For days, I know my hands will not be

my own. They hold now  
the weight of the banister, the stubborn, faithful  
broadbeams.

And our eyes, our eyes held  
the shells of city cathedrals.

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noted

## Chris Bauman at Postcrypt Coffeehouse

by Dusty Lisenby

"Where are you from?"  
"New Jersey."

Friday night, late autumn, the Postcrypt  
Coffeehouse in the basement of St. Paul's  
at Columbia University. The question  
comes from a curious listener, the answer  
from singer-songwriter Chris Bauman.

"I'm from New Jersey . . ." Since John  
Gorka made that admission in song a couple  
of years ago, a trio of "Jersey boys"  
from the Clinton area have wedged their  
feet into the cracked doors of a number of  
coffeehouses and folk clubs around the  
Northeast. If you've spent any time around  
these haunts you might have heard Jeff  
Tareila or Gregg Cagno. Chris' roots, both  
personal and musical, twist and tangle with  
those two, and while he may not boast of  
the same guitar and vocal talents as they,  
"Chris has the songs," as the other two  
readily admit.

And he put the songs across in a short  
tight set at Postcrypt—"You know what my

letters say, though you don't read them/I  
know what your letters say, though you  
don't write." From the opening song,  
"Throwing Twigs," Chris made it clear that  
he has something to say, and an interest-  
ing way of saying it. He followed with  
"Sweet October," a song that paints an  
autumn landscape. "I'd like to take a bite  
out of sweet October, and let the juice run  
down my chin." Not hard to imagine.

The crowd, mostly Columbia students  
who likely hadn't heard Chris before, took  
a couple of songs to warm to the "Jersey  
boy," but by the time the conversation  
about where he was from came along, he  
had the audience on his side.

"Actually, I'm in Virginia right now."

"No, you're in New York."

(This one went on for a little while; a  
complete transcript may be available from  
Fast Folk Communications in the future.  
Stay tuned.)

Near the end of his set Chris got into a  
whimsical mood on "A Grave Situation,"

which features a sing-along chorus about  
someone who's been dead a long, long  
time and who doesn't have time to play  
games or drink wine because he's "busy  
being dead, keeping the worms fed." Then  
he switched gears for "Places You Will  
Go," (available on Fast Folk Volume 6, No.  
1, Shut Up and Sing the Song.) Taken  
from an instruction manual for "new" sol-  
diers, it builds from the small irony  
implicit in the way the Army expects a sol-  
dier to look—"a sloppy soldier degrades . .  
. his country"—to the larger explicit irony  
of "In exchange for your life we'll give a  
flag to your wife/The Army takes care of  
its own." Yes, necessary "information for  
the new soldier" indeed!

Closing out on what's probably a more  
personal note, "Jody Got My Girl and  
Gone," Chris left the audience with "If you  
don't care for what you love, someone else  
will." That, and the impression of a song-  
writer worth paying some attention to. It's  
enough to make you wonder what's going  
on in Jersey. (For some possible clues,  
check out Fast Folk Vol. 6, No. 7, Songs  
from the Garden State.

## Bios - FF701

**Eddy Lawrence** was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama and has been living in the NYC area for ten years. He has released four albums on his own label, Snowplow Records. Contact him at 309 11th Street, Union City, NJ 07087.

**David Hamburger** was born and raised in the Boston area. He has lived in New York since

1986 and is currently performing solo and with his band, the Brooklyn Delta Kings. "We call it 'Southwestern music with a Northeastern attitude.' The mailing list is incredibly selective, but we're always considering new applications." You can send yours to 82 Sterling Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217. Would-be Southwesterner that he is, David also plays pedal steel and dobro in various bands around the city.



**Jack Hardy** has nine albums and six plays to his credit. He can be contacted at 178 W. Houston St. #9, NYC 10014. (212) 989-7088.

**Wendy Beckerman** is originally from New Jersey and now lives in New York City. She performs in various coffee-houses and folk clubs in this country and has toured Italy. You can order her newly-released debut, *By Your Eyes*, by sending a check to Wendy Beckerman c/o Great Divide Records, 178 W. Houston Street, Suite 9, NYC 10014 (CDs are \$15 and cassettes are \$10).



**Jim Allen:** See interview in this issue.

**Richard Meyer** has been an elevator operator, an electric-train installer, Christmas-tree decorator, stage designer, carpenter, telephone salesman, record producer, frustrated graphic designer, fool, photographer, antique-plaster restorer, lumber mill worker, welder, rigger, opera performer, unemployed, Christmas-gift wrapper, short-order cook, children's game salesman, and patient. He used to edit *Fast Folk*; now he doesn't. Go buy his new album, *The Good Life!*, so he can be a full-time something or other. Richard's favorite photograph is a portrait of Countess Castiglione, mistress of Napoleon III, hiding her face behind a picture frame, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Classically trained for many years as a pianist, **Jeanette Miller** switched to writing songs four years ago after moving to New York from Pennsylvania. Since then she has played the New York club circuit and received airplay on local radio stations. Currently she is recording with her band. She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Pennsylvania-born singer-songwriter and guitarist **John Sonntag** has an extraordinarily strong yet intimate style of performing his own blend of American roots (country, jazz, blues, and rock) music. The combination of his musical and lyrical content enables John to draw in and win over nearly all his listeners. He performs in the tri-state and Washington, D.C. areas, and has opened for many performers including Richie Havens, Maria Muldaur, and Commander Cody. John released his first cassette, *Make More Memories*, in 1991. For more information,

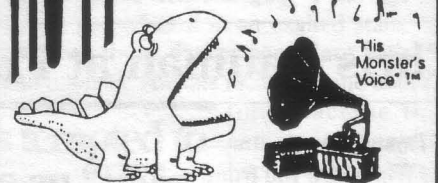


contact Tall Boys Entertainment, P.O. Box 837, Pearl River, NY 10965, (914) 620-1094.

**Jeff Tareila** is a songwriter and singer from New Jersey. He would travel many, many miles for the benefit of someone's left foot. Jim Allen has called Jeff the "Rodney Dangerfield of folk" (among other things). Jeff has recorded six times for *Fast Folk*. His CD, *Dust Devils Dance*, can be obtained at Tower and HMV Records, or by writing Jeff Tareila, P.O. Box 5015, Clinton, NJ 08809-5015.



## 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



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FAX (410) 337-6735

**Katy Clements** grew up in Decatur, Illinois. She has been performing for the last five years in New York City. She studied guitar with Dave Van Ronk, and most recently participated in New York's Greenwich Village Folk Festival.

**Ansel Matthews** arrived on the Greenwich Village music scene in the early Eighties. A self-taught musician, he has been playing the guitar since the age of nine. He was recorded on the very first Fast Folk album back in February 1982. He performs regularly at the Bitter End and generally works as a musician three to four nights a week.



**Al Schere** has been active in the Village folk scene since 1975. A compilation of twelve of his songs,  *Holding On*, will be released early in 1993. Al insists he is only twenty-five, and that his white hair is the result of stress that can be traced to experiences attending singer-songwriter meetings at Jack Hardy's house.



**Margo Hennebach** travels a lot with her music, and will soon be playing at a coffee-house near you. You can also catch her near her home in Hoboken (birthplace of baseball and the zipper). Then again, you can get a copy of



her debut album, which East Coast Rocker named number five in its list of Top Ten folk records of 1991. Tapes, CDs, and other bits of Hoboken trivia are available from Fireflies and Windows Music, P.O. Box 1194, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 656-0850.

**Ludwig van Beethoven** was born in Bonn, Germany but later moved to Vienna where he became a standout in the local music scene. His compositions have been covered by many major artists, and his "Ode to Joy" has become the unofficial hymn of the European Community. **Brian Rose** first heard Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" over ten years ago, but this issue of Fast Folk features their first collaboration. Brian has recorded often for Fast Folk, and his first album is available from the HEAR Music catalog.

**Kelly Flint** has been writing songs for a few years, and singing and playing since she was small. She is currently involved in a project called Dave's True Story, in which she sings the songs of David Cantor. They play around town frequently and are currently working on a recording.

**Nicholas Samaras** was born in Foxton, Cambridgeshire, England, in 1954. He was raised there and in Woburn, Massachusetts, and later settled in New York. Samaras received his undergraduate degree from Hellenic College, Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1978 and a Master of Fine Arts in 1985 from Columbia University. He is currently working on his Ph.D. in English and creative writing at the University of Denver. His poems have appeared in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and *American Scholar*. Among his honors and awards are a New York Foundation for the Arts Poetry Fellowship in 1986, a Taylor Fellowship for study abroad in 1981-82, and a prize from the Academy of American Poets in 1983.



## HELP!

We need help! Fast Folk is 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, gophers – you name it, we can use it. Call Carl Alderson, coordinator of volunteers, 718-447-1601.

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**Musician Credits**

FF 701

-1-

**She Lost Her Mind**  
(Eddy Lawrence)

Eddy Lawrence: guitar, vocal

-2-

**A Little Caffeine**  
(David Hamburger)

David Hamburger: guitar, vocal

-3-

**The Zephyr (Take it Slow)**  
(Jack Hardy)

Jack Hardy: guitar, vocal  
Eddy Lawrence: lead guitar  
David Hamburger: dobro  
Jeff Tareila: bass  
Jim Allen, Richard Meyer,  
Jeff Tareila: background vocals

-4-

**I Have Dreamed**  
(Wendy Beckerman)

Wendy Beckerman: guitar, vocal

-5-

**English Rose**  
(Jim Allen)

Jim Allen: guitar, vocal  
David Hamburger, Jack Hardy,  
Eddy Lawrence, Richard Meyer,  
Brian Rose, Jeff Tareila: vocals

-6-

**Anonymous Fame**  
(Richard Meyer)

Richard Meyer: guitar, vocal  
Eddy Lawrence: guitar  
Jack Hardy: harmony vocal  
Jeff Tareila: bass

-7-

**Dreamtime**  
(Jeannette Miller)

Jeannette Miller: synth, vocal  
Wendy Beckerman, harmony

-8-

**Daddy Turned Grey**  
(John Sonntag)

John Sonntag: guitar, vocal

-9-

**Draw Me A River**  
(Jeff Tareila)

Jeff Tareila: guitar, vocal  
David Hamburger: dobro

-10-

**Blood**  
(Katy Clements)

Katy Clements: guitar, vocal

-11-

**This Heart Of Mine**  
(Ansel Matthews)

Ansel Matthews: guitar, vocal

-12-

**Nero's Fiddle**  
(Richard A. Schere)

Al Schere: ukelele, vocal  
David Lawrence: guitar  
Nero: fiddle  
(with help from Dave Rimelis)

-13-

**It's a Hard Life**  
(Margo Hennebach)

Margo Hennebach: ???, vocal  
Dan Krimm: bass (courtesy of Overtone  
Records, Inc.)

-14-

**Ode to Joy**  
(Ludwig van Beethoven/Brian Rose)

Brian Rose: guitar, vocal

-15-

**To the End of the World**  
(Kelly Flint)

Kelly Flint: vocal  
Richard Julian: guitar

-16-

**In the Shell of a City Cathedral**  
(Nicholas Samaras)

Nicholas Samaras: vocal

Recorded at Mark Russell Sound Studios  
Brooklyn, NY

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