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From Beyond the Balance Sheet: Another approach to coffeehouses

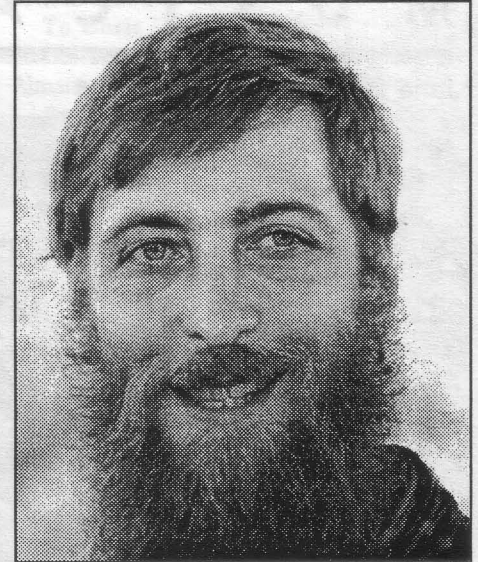
by Timothy Mason

Much has been said and written about the grassroots nature of folk music and coffeehouses in New England and around the country. It is a fact that without the dedicated volunteers and welcoming stance of the Unitarians New England's folk scene would be the poorer. The old joke that if a folkie annoys a Unitarian they've lost half their work in New England does hold a grain of truth. (and yes, it is fortunate that Unitarians are remarkably hard to annoy) It is also true that without the house concert (where individuals open their home as a venue) in Texas and elsewhere much of the nation would have little chance to see and hear many talented performers at all. However this somewhat romantic notion of the genre lacks completeness when it overlooks the role of the commercial venue.

Many of folk music's fabled venues began and endured for decades as commercial operations. Cafe Lena and The Folkway developed such a community around their businesses that after the death of their owners the staffs and audiences refused to let go; both re-emerged as community-based nonprofit organizations. Venues such as The Iron Horse, Passim and The Old Vienna Kaffeehaus (where I assume responsibility) continue to operate year round, presenting literally hundreds of concerts a year. During 1992, The Old Vienna presented over 300 shows. The staffs at these venues aren't there as volunteers; this is how they make their living. And while they may love the music, they are there day in and day out because they have children to feed and clothe and bills to pay. It strikes me that keeping people employed during the economic brutality of the Reagan-Bush years has been as noble a task as any sanctioned 501.c.3 endeavor.

So here are a few tips for anyone with the ambition to install folk music in a commercial venue.

First, be sure that both you and the venue understand the concept of respect. What is involved here is the development of a mutually beneficial relationship. The music will draw new people into the club and provide the opportunity for media



Poet Tim Mason, featured on this issue's CD, is manager of the Old Vienna Kaffeehaus.

exposure which literally can't be bought. The club will provide a space for the music to be heard and for musicians to survive. It is important that both ends of the deal be kept. If you are promoting, promote. Get out there and get the word out, bring people in the door or at least give it your best shot. If you are the presenting club, present the music. Give it a stage, a PA and take pride in the entertainment you are offering. Introduce the acts and maintain an atmosphere where they can be heard.

Second, don't try to be what you are not. Each venue and clientele has a personality. Keep your offerings consistent with it. Develop a niche that is comfortable and find ways for the music to fit into and enhance the ambience of the club. Look at what other clubs are doing and find ways to make yourself unique. Often referring to comment one will be sufficient.

Finally, be consistent. Don't expect to pack the houses overnight. Give it a fair shot, put together a series of shows, work your mail list and get to know your audience. Listen to them, talk to them, learn their names and their tastes. Let them know that if they are there you will be there too. Oh, yes: Above all, enjoy what you are doing.

The Old Vienna Kaffeehaus From Empty Banquet Room to Premier Folk Club

by Scott Alarik

(Reprinted from New England Folk Almanac, March 1992)

At first it might not seem like it was a very smart move. Pam and Bill Graves had a successful coffeehouse and cafe going on at the Coffee Kingdom in Worcester. Joined by new partner and kitchen manager Karen Hunter, they started a much more ambitious Old Vienna Restaurant and Kaffeehaus, combining a fine Austro-Hungarian and American restaurant with an upstairs folk club that sought to evoke the best of the European coffeehouse tradition — all in little, off-the-beaten-path Westborough, Mass.

Since opening Old Vienna at 22 South Street in Westborough Center, however, Kaffeehaus manager Tim Mason has turned the little upstairs room into one of the most respected, adventurous and successful folk venues in the country. The proudly hippie-esque Mason, part poet, part P.T. Barnum, has done this with nerdy showmanship, a sharply creative business sense and a deep belief in the powers of folk music.

The Graveses' first encounter with Mason says a lot about the grassroots heart that so well suits him to his work. Their first day running Coffee Kingdom in 1983, he stopped in for coffee, only to find that, as he put it, "everyone in Worcester had the same idea."

They were so busy, Mason just grabbed an apron and started waiting on tables. At the end of the night, they offered him a job, and he has been with them ever since.

"I just wanted to get my coffee," he says with a soft wise laugh that he uses often. "That seemed the most expedient way to do it."

Asked about undertaking such an ambitious and unique business outside a major urban center, Mason laughed again. "When we opened, nobody thought we could do it. Westborough, where's that? You're crazy, and on and on. At the time, they might have been right; I wasn't going to argue with them."

The upstairs Kaffeehaus was designed to offer more than just a folk stage, Mason



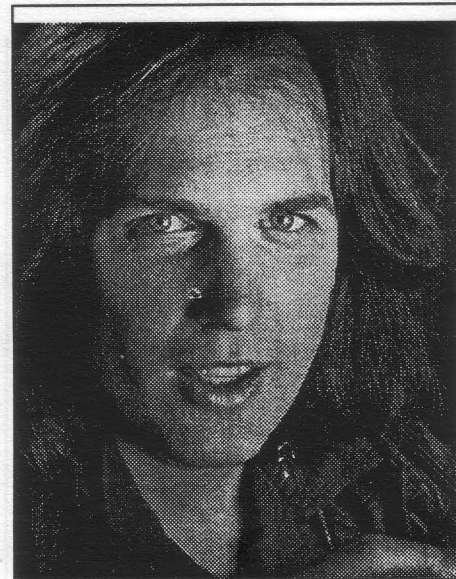
Author Scott Alarik performs his song "Mexico" on this issue's CD.

said. "We were inspired by folk clubs like The Folkway in Peterborough, New Hampshire, Cafe Lena in Saratoga, N.Y., Passim, The Iron Horse: all the clubs that had a history of being both friendly and classy at the same time, and of really making performers feel welcome.

"In Pam and Bill's visits to Austria, they had seen the kind of beerhalls where there's discussions, songs, what-have-you. That was the original concept."

They deliberately designed seating arrangements so that people often have to share tables with strangers. The aim is less for seating efficiency than for encouraging people to have a more social evening than they otherwise might. It is a gentle coercion that has helped make Old Vienna the sort of place people feel comfortable coming to alone, and that many enjoy coming to whether they have heard of the act or not.

Also to that end, they offer a light-fare menu of pizza, nachos, sandwiches and salads, pasta, sausage, dessert specials, and a full bar with a dizzying array of 40 domestic and imported beers and a host of coffee drinks, teas, juices, etc. Mason said the



Old Vienna favorite Greg Greenaway performs "Ghost Dance" on this issue's CD.

menu, like the booking policy, was designed to appeal to a broader audience than many folk clubs aim for.

"We wanted it to be comfortable for a lot of different people and performers. On the one hand, I'm just looking for whatever is on stage being very good. But there's an element of trying to touch on as wide a range of styles and tastes as possible, so we're not asking the same group to come back all the time. We have different genres, different audiences."

Just two visits to the Kaffeehaus last month attested to that. Much of the audience for the very friendly harmonies of the Shaw Brothers — the first act ever to sell out Old Vienna — was, like the gray-haired Shaws themselves, decidedly on the far side of the Baby Boom. One week before, exciting, thoughtful and romantic young songwriter Greg Greenaway enjoyed the first sold-out show of his own career, the crowd as peppered with fans in their teens and early 20s as the Shaws' crowd had been with people old enough to be Greenaway's parents.

What was more remarkable, though, was the real range of people who came both nights. Nearly any night the Old Vienna will welcome people dressed in denims and dress suits; teens to seniors and lots of family people in their 30s and 40s. Along with the obvious care that is put into the

sound system, the service and the welcoming ambience, this mixed audience is a central reason the Old Vienna is known as a favorite of performers. Last fall, the notoriously meticulous British singer June Tabor said it offered her the best small club experience she has ever had in this country.

Another reason Old Vienna is such a haven for performers — and that it remains on the cutting edge of the new songwriter scene — is its hugely successful Thursday Open Mikes. Hosted by the cheerfully supportive Robert Haigh, it generally draws a full house — and not just of performers and their friends. The Open Mike has many loyal fans who come just to listen, to hear the just-penned song, the hot new talent. A different professional feature act each week ensures that some quality entertainment will be presented, which encourages more seasoned acts who are past the audition stage of their careers to come play on their nights off.

"The open mike is a really important aspect of what we do," Mason said. "It's the chance we have to basically throw the doors wide open, and it gives us the ability to work with people who are literally just starting out or unknown in this area. And because there's no cover charge, it gives us the chance to consistently offer something for people who are really affected by the economy, and for whom seeing a show is a real luxury. We're very happy about the general audience turnout we get for the open mikes."

According to Mason, the open mike has also helped spread the word that the club is not so remote, right off 495 and the Mass. Pike. "The open mike performers have really helped spread the word that it's easy to get to, a half-hour, 45 minutes down the pike and you can park free when you get here. We get about a third of our audience from greater Boston now, with another third from the Worcester area and a third from the greater 495 belt, along with a scattering from New Hampshire and Vermont."

The Old Vienna has also developed a reputation for doing the little things right. Its poster-sized calendar, filled with performer photos and bio information is mailed out to several thousand people, and has become such a respected resource that

quotes from it appear in many performers' press kits. With the help of Melville Park Recording Studio, the club offers cut-rate digital cassettes for open mikers. In addition to the heady fare of nationally known headliners and hot new folk talents, Mason, who is also an acclaimed poet, has had success integrating poets, storytellers and comedians into the lineup.

To see that people trust Old Vienna, that they feel a certain homey sense of belonging to the club, is really a more important tally for Mason, the Graveses and Hunter than the profit ledger.

Laughing that wise laugh again, Mason said, "People are in this business for a whole lot of reasons, not just money. Sure, we want to be able to live comfortably, but that alone is no reason to get into folk music. This is a family business, and it's run that way; people get to know the staff, the regulars. It's consistent with the whole genre of folk music. The world gets smaller and smaller, but not necessarily friendlier and friendlier. This music operates on a scale that makes it possible for people to get to know people. We always try to operate Old Vienna with that in mind."

Fast Folk Revue at the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival

**July 23, 24 and 25, 1993 (Fast Folk Revue Saturday only)
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(at the Tri-State corner of NY, Mass. and Conn.)

A 3-DAY COMMUNITY OF FOLK MUSIC AT THE FOOT OF THE BERKSHIRES with camping, dancing, song swaps, political theater, recycling, family stage, workshops, ethnic foods, crafts, comedy, activities for kids, roots music, musics of the '90s and beyond.

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Basin Brothers, Sat evening
Coaticue Las Colorado, Sun
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Rick Danko, Sat
Fast Folk Revue, Sat evening
John Gorka, Sat/Sun
Greg Greenway, Sat
Kim & Reggie Harris, Sat/Sun
Pat Humphries, Sat/Sun

Justina and Joyce, Sat.
Sheila Jordan, Sun.
Rick Ilowite, Sat/Sun
Peter Keane, Sat/Sun
Kips Bay Ceili Band, Sat
Patty Larkin, Sat/Sun
Jay Mankita, Sat/Sun
Magpie, Sat/Sun
Donna Martin, Sat
McDonnell-Tane, Sat
Northern Lights, Sat

Bruce Pratt, Sat/Sun
Tony Parkes and Uncle Gizmo
Fri evening
Salt & Pepper Gospel Singers, Sun
Fred Small, Sat
The Story, Sat/Sun
Nancy Tucker, Sat
Laurie's Stories, Sat/Sun
Leslie Elias, Sun

Plus a Friday Afternoon Showcase

Contras & squares Friday night with Tony Parkes and Uncle Gizmo

Midnight Hour Cajun dance Saturday with the Basin Brothers

Plus an all-day Fast Folk workshop, 10 am-6 pm Saturday

Three-day tickets with camping: \$30 until June 7, \$35 until July 17, \$43 at gate.
Children under 8 free. Ages 8-14 \$8.

Dogs \$20 with proof of rabies vaccination. (Dogs must remain at campsite.)

Day tickets: Friday \$10, Saturday \$23, Sunday \$19.

Rain or shine — no refunds.

Gates open 11 a.m. Friday. Music starts 3 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday

**For more information and advance tickets: Falcon Ridge Folk Festival,
74 Modley Road, Sharon, CT 06069. (203) 364-0366.**

Home-Brewed Music The New England Coffeehouse

by Chris Flisher

It's like an old-fashioned barn-raising. Friends and volunteers, lugging equipment and containers of food, gather from local neighborhoods and adjoining towns. They exchange greetings and begin to work. Chairs line up in neatly spaced rows and microphones, monitors and props stand on temporary stages. Workers on steadied ladders aim stage lights and hang banners and signs with logos and announcements. Speakers are placed, plugged in and technicians test sound systems.

The artists' sound checks echo through the halls as the lines begin to form for the evening's show. The music carries, and the evening's patrons receive a sneak preview of the entertainment to come. Finally, the doors open and for the next few hours, enthusiasts of folk, country, bluegrass, blues and even jazz enjoy the tradition known as the "coffeehouse."

Like miniature circuses or traveling roadshows, the coffeehouses of New England transform halls, churches, auditoriums and parish houses into intimate concert venues and festive listening rooms. The phenomenon known as the coffeehouse is a weekly, biweekly or monthly community event that is so deeply rooted in the tradition of New England it is hard to separate the two or find a community that doesn't have a coffeehouse in its past, present or future.

Dating back to the 1960s, the New England folk coffeehouse, in its current form, is a volunteer organization that puts artistic and cultural control into the hands of the community. The concept of providing entertainment free from commercial attachments is a grass-roots movement predominantly found in this region of the country. The evolution of the listening room, as it is also called, resulted partly from the negligence of the commercial music conglomerates. Local folk musician Bob Franke recalls, "In the '60s there was a rediscovery of American traditional roots music, seen in the works of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and so forth. The music industry

took it up and as long as it made money they kept at it. Once it lost its mass commercial appeal, they dropped it."

Since the artists and the people who supported the music were essentially abandoned by the music industry, it became apparent that the only solution was to become culturally assertive — taking the power into the hands of those who created and supported it. Franke, who was also a founder of one of the area's oldest coffeehouse organizations, "Saturday Night in Marblehead," continues, "People finally came to the realization that the only way to hear this kind of music was to bring it to town yourself or to make it yourself."

It became a mutually beneficial forum for both artist and listener. Before the coffeehouse, folk artists were playing bars and clubs where the demand for original music was minimal. Many patrons wanted to hear songs they recognized — cover versions of the current Top 40. Seldom could an artist sustain an audience with introspective lyrics and unfamiliar melodies. Folk singer Bill Morrissey recalls playing bars before the coffeehouse boom: "I played many bars in the early days. You had to think on your feet and often had to avoid fights that would break out." Hardly the environment for soul-searching, introspective music.

It was a similar situation for the listeners. Folk music is far too intimate and personal to be enjoyed over the din of crowds. A typical coffeehouse is so quiet that it is easy to hear the nuances of the acoustic instruments and the vocal shadings. It is also an environment free of pretense and glamour that combines the intensity of live music with the intimacy of an oversized living room. For the patrons, the coffeehouse became the ideal place to see and hear their favorite local and national folk artists.

The artists create the music, the fans support the artists, and the folk movement thrives free from the conventional commercial music machine.

Steve Jerrett of the Coffeehouse Association of New England explains, "The music industry was not able to control the folk musician. Just by definition, folk music and

musicians cannot be confined and controlled.

To survive, the coffeehouses needed tangible support and a location for the music. That support was found in the churches of New England. The churches (60% of all local Unitarian Universalist churches have a coffeehouse) took the risk by providing the largest resource — a place to play in the heart of the community.

Serving the community is in keeping with the role of the church. Since New England was first settled, churches of all denominations have served as a common, focal point for the community. Aside from its spiritual role, the church provided the meeting place — the room — for town meetings and other communal events. In their highly visible location the churches could also raise enough interest to support a coffeehouse cultural event. As a result, the churches sponsored the coffeehouse as a service to the community, free and clear of religious overtones.

Local and national artists were booked into the listening rooms and the fans came. Franke recalls, "People were drawn into the listening rooms through sheer persistence and consistency. Consistently good artistry coupled with the fact that if they went enough times and were happy [got their money's worth] they would come back and spread the word."

To date, there are over 60 community-sponsored coffeehouses in the greater Boston area, drawing nationally known artists such as David Wilcox, Patty Larkin, John Gorka and Livingston Taylor. From the oldest to the most recent, the lure of self-produced concerts continues to appeal to a large portion of the community.

The Me and Thee Coffeehouse, the oldest local, church-based coffeehouse, came to life in the meeting room of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Marblehead in 1970. Seen as more than just a vehicle for live music, founder Anthony Silva explains its evolution. "The role of our coffeehouse has changed. In the beginning, one of the reasons we started the coffeehouse was to attract kids off the street. We did that and it helped provide an outlet at the time. From that we have changed to providing non-alcoholic, family-oriented entertainment at a reasonable cost. Places with that type of

atmosphere are few and far between." The Me and Thee continues to thrive with over 70 volunteers putting on weekly Friday-night concerts. Sliva concludes, "The music works because it is similar to what the church offers, which is a free-pulpit. The stage allows an artist to speak their mind freely."

Bill Schaet of The Joyful Noise coffeehouse in Lexington, describes the role of their coffeehouse as a "musical outreach program." Held in the parish hall of the First Baptist Church, The Joyful Noise donates all proceeds (after expenses) to local charities. Founded in November of 1991, The Joyful Noise is one of the newest coffeehouses in the area. The Joyful Noise presents music on the first Saturday of each month and seats up to 300 people, depending on the popularity of the artist.

Aside from the church, another reason for the popularity of the coffeehouse is the dynamics of region Boston. This diverse and culturally rich environment of the region sustains folk music as an art form. The colleges and universities provide a mecca for musicians and help support the music through non-commercial, university-sponsored radio. WUMB (91.9 FM), radio station of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and WERS (88.9 FM) of Emerson College both provide extensive folk programming on a daily basis. WUMB is all folk throughout the day and WERS airs

"The Morning Coffeehouse" from 6 to 11 a.m. each weekday. These stations also provide direct support for the community coffeehouses by announcing concert schedules.

The coffeehouses also received an added boost with the founding of WADN (1120 AM) in Concord. The realization of an idea partially driven by WGBH radio host Dick Pleasants, WADN (Walden) is a mostly folk AM radio station. The first of its kind in the country, WADN fills the need for mass-appeal folk music. By mixing well-known artists (Van Morrison, The Band, Crosby Stills & Nash, etc.) with local and nationally recognized folk musicians, listeners are exposed to talent they wouldn't usually hear on the radio. As Pleasants explains, "We are trying to present the best of the singer-songwriters, and by broadcasting well-known artists with lesser-known musicians we do the unknown artists a favor by exposing them next to artists with more mass appeal. We are trying to make ourselves more of a community station by supporting local music." One hand washes the other — the music is played by the radio and performed live in the coffeehouses while the artists, the listeners and the community reap the rewards of both.

In typical New England fashion, the coffeehouses retain their distinct individuality.

Some take pride in their diversity, presenting storytelling, poetry reading and classical music in addition to folk. Others point to their unique atmosphere, providing fresh-ground coffees and home-baked pastries. All are part of the coffeehouse experience.

Their names identify their clear personality — Uncommon Coffeehouse, Nameless Coffeehouse, The Naked City Coffeehouse, The Homegrown, John Henry's Hammer Coffeehouse, New Moon Coffeehouse and The Orchard Coffeehouse. Other coffeehouses announce meeting times as their title; Second Friday Coffeehouse or simply Friday's. No two are the same and yet the warmth of community is in them all.

As the show draws to an end, the applause calls the performers back to the stage for an encore. Soon the entertainment ends and the hall begins to empty. Volunteers begin stacking chairs, emptying coffee pots and taking down lights. The artists come out of their dressing rooms and sign autographs for lingering fans. The drone of vacuum cleaners replaces the sound of music and the walls are stripped of their temporary festive attire. The lights go out and the doors are locked until another night — in a month, a week or every other week — when the coffeehouses will, again, come alive with the sound of folk music.

Producing a Coffeehouse (Or, How to Succeed in Show Business Without Really Trying)

by Chris Flisher

Producing a coffeehouse is like a campaign. It requires the collected efforts of many people over a short period of time. The outcome is, hopefully, a successful show. A successful show doesn't mean a fat wallet, guaranteed self-employment or rubbed-off fame from dallying amongst the talented. Rather, a successful show is a balanced checkbook with enough money to help finance the next show, a happy audience and a crisis-free evening of home-brewed entertainment. You do not start a coffeehouse with money in mind. As a matter of fact, there are times when I

wonder what I had in mind when I got involved in a coffeehouse.

I soon found out. On a whim I answered a letter sent to my home requesting help with a community-supported coffeehouse in Burlington. I knew I liked the music, I knew I liked people and I knew I had enough of what it took to help. It's been five years since I volunteered to help and I haven't stopped smiling yet.

There have been times when I looked worried, but I hid it well. Like the bitter cold night in January when the Listening Place was filled with a sold-out crowd who had come to see the main artist (name

withheld to protect *his* sanity) for the evening. The opening act had been there since 6:30 and had done their soundcheck (a brief rehearsal where levels are set by the technician who monitors the sound system). The clock read 7:55. The opening act was pacing the dressing room floor waiting to go on stage and the main act had yet to arrive. Before the opening act went on, I made an announcement stating that the main act had not yet arrived and that if he did not arrive, then people were welcome to have their money refunded and we would pass the hat for the opening act. At 8:05 in walked the main act. At 8:25, he was on stage, performing to a happy crowd as I breathed a sigh of relief.

The stories go on. Like the February night Texas singer-songwriter Townes Van Zandt drove 350 miles in a Chevy Sub-

urban with no heat to play. Or the snowy December night when John Gorka, still a newcomer and driving a 1972 Plymouth Valiant, arrived early and had to wait in my house until the doors to the coffeehouse were unlocked while I fed my children.

Patty Larkin would pack the house with nary an inch of standing room to spare, and yet a gentlemanly old blues musician drove 300 miles to sleep in a kerosene-heated van only to perform for 28 people.

These are the memorable times, as most of them are. But then there are the times when you have to tell a new artist you have no room on your roster because they haven't yet found their voice. Or the

nights when you truly believe in an artist and the hall sits lonely with a small audience. It is tough for the artist. It is tough for the coffeehouse.

The phone in my house rings continuously before a show and the mail I receive comes from as far away as Seattle and Texas. I juggle schedules and deal with managers who juggle their schedules. ("I'll move this band to a Saturday in March only if I can get Bill Morrissey on a night in June. What about John Gorka? No? What about Garnet Rogers in December? Yes? Great, sign him up.") And so the conversations go.

The word gets out. The names of coffee-

houses are published and the artists and the artists and managers descend, looking for a gig that will open the door to a lifestyle filled with long hours, endless miles and, if they're lucky, eventual reward.

The coffeehouses are one of many stepping stones in a path across a fast-moving stream. For the artist they provide a nurturing environment for artistic expression, for the audience, they provide an intimate forum for discovering the next "big" singer, and for the coffeehouse volunteers and producers they provide an immensely rewarding glimpse at a world called show biz.

Open Stages Make a Hearty Comeback And the Old Spirit has Returned with Them

For a while, it seemed that open stages would go the way of bongos, berets and incense on stage; relics of the bygone folk revival of the 1960s. As the professional stakes got higher and higher, the happy-go-lucky hootenanny camaraderie was replaced by a brisk and increasingly less friendly sense of competition. By the late '70s, most open stages, also known as open mikes, had become dour, often bitter audition marathons. All the Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell wanna-be's had moved on to better things or had turned into never-gonna-be's, pestering audiences week after week till there were no audiences left. Crowds were pretty thin for even the best folk music in those days.

Happily, like much of what was best in the spirit of the '60s folk revival, open stages are making a huge comeback in New England. Cecil's in Boston and the Colonial Inn in Concord have added open mikes to their schedules each week, joining the 35-40 already listed each week in the Folk Almanac calendar.

Even better news is how many different kinds of open mikes there are, from singer-songwriter song swaps to picking sessions to Irish ceildhs and sessions. The BookCellar Cafe in Cambridge's Porter Square boasts a hopping Scottish session Sundays and a traditional song swap on Wednesdays, hosted by folk freelance writer, ace fingerpicker and blues scholar Elijah Wald.

But the best news is that the old spirit has returned. Sure, the bulk of the performers are trying to build careers for themselves, but sour competitiveness has been replaced by real camaraderie again; a real excitement about the simple joys of sharing songs, thoughts and ideas, and by a deep respect for originality.

Robert Haigh attributes that to the personality of the new singer-songwriter movement. Haigh, in addition to producing the popular cable-TV program "Acoustic Cafe," hosts the Thursday night open mike at Old Vienna Kaffeehaus. It has become one of the most respected open stages in the country, a must for up-and-comers desiring entry to New England's busy folk circuit.

"A lot of people are discovering that their thoughts mean something to other people," Haigh said of today's rising crop of songwriters. "That concept has been somewhat suppressed by rock music in recent years, by all the electronics, and the one-on-one feeling of you, your guitar and your thoughts on a stage in front of people — I think that whole idea has met with a lot of excitement by college-age people. Music is becoming more personal; it's a reflection of our coming out of the Me Generation."

Haigh went on to say he has been overwhelmed by how good the average open-stage performer is. The emphasis is on songwriting, and in the belief that a song can say something. The song can be a

reflection of real-life and the world around us, rather than the pop pap that dominates so much of today's commercial music.

Geoff Bartley concurs. A 20-year veteran of the Cambridge folk scene, a nationally known guitarist and songwriter, Bartley hosts the Monday night hoots at Central Square's Cantab Lounge. In vivid contrast to the coffeehouse hush of Old Vienna's open stage, the Cantab is a happily funky, chatty, friendly barroom hoot. Bartley, for one, likes that just fine.

"There are so many places at the Cantab where people can mingle or listen as they choose," Bartley said. "And I love that, frankly. I mean, rent must be paid. So I have to provide a certain level of entertainment for people to come in. I think the Old Vienna audience gets maximum return because they listen so well. But I also think the scene at the Cantab is good; good for the club's business and good for the performers. They have to stretch some."

One thing the Cantab shares with the Old Vienna is its structure, a model for the area's open stages. Each week, the round of open stagers is interrupted by a feature performer, often drawn from the ranks of regulars, but more accomplished professionally than the norm. The audience is guaranteed some solid, professional entertainment at mid-evening, the regulars can see the possibility of good work being rewarded, and acts just ready for the next step up from the two-song shuffle of the open mike are given a break. Good news all around.

(Reprinted from New England Folk Almanac)

Lyrics – FF 704

Witness To Joy (Vance Gilbert)

It's hard to go home
when there's a storm in your heart
the bitter cold wreckage
has torn you apart

you been treated unkindly
misunderstood
you've got paralyzed emotions
your soul's turned to wood

but this time is different
there's a reason that you're here
sure as you're living
it's sure to come clear

you're the proud owner
of a mirror and a pair of eyes
and you can seek salvation
even through this disguise

Chorus:
Be a witness to joy
get a clear view from the mountain top
there's a happiness on the horizon
take a good look around and you'll see
you can be a witness to joy

Now we can all stand in the starlight
we can laugh at the moon
we can rest assured the sun will rise
and set on us too

But you cast your own shadow
thin as a knife
your original creation
stays with you for life

So when you look up to heaven
when you're lookin' at the evening news
or you look for inspiration
at the bottom of a bottle . . .

Choose a new direction
that's yours and yours alone
it's your vision that's calling you
closer to your home

Chorus

You'll
See
Laughing
Children
How can you help but feel so much hope
How can you help but feel so much joy

So if you're standing in darkness
or just standing in line
or you stand in front of Goliath
standing up for what is right

Take time for celebration
Sing out, it's a jubilee
with every note you sing you're
one step closer to being free

Chorus

©1992 Disismye Music (ASCAP)

One Who Got Away (Diane Ziegler)

For as long as I remember
He cast his line over the water
He'd pass my house with his pole and a
fishing cap
With a bucket of bait and that boy would
not be back for hours...

He'd rise up early in the morning
and untie the rope around the mooring
Plotting his direction as he left the shore
He hoped to find a cove he'd never seen
before

Chorus:
So cast a net over the water
Sink the anchor to the floor
Bring us back the best part of your day
Always remember the ones who slipped
away
Who found their graves in these fickle
waves...

They say there are spirits in these waters
the ghosts of the ones who went down
under
and sometimes they speak under a raging
wind
to center the sail and safely guide you in

Chorus

He heard the warnings about the weather
but no one could reel him in forever
so out he went on that December day
and left with us memories of the one who
got away

Chorus

For as long as I remember
He cast his line over the water
He'd pass my house with his pole and his
fishing cap
With a bucket of bait and that boy would
not be back

©1993 Diane Ziegler

Sidewalk Sam (Diana Kirk)

Do you know a painter
By the name of Sidewalk Sam
Arranges all his colors, sets up
Anywhere he can
He draws in chalk all over the street
Stops to talk to everyone he meets
All the while he's layin' out his plan

Chorus:

Sidewalk Sam he's a middle man
Draws in the middle every chance he can
Dreams in the middle – between the sky
and the street
If the rains don't take 'em
If the wind don't shake 'em
If the sun don't evaporate 'em
You can take 'em home
On the soles of your feet.

Sam can draw from memory
Or sometimes from desire
He can draw you something sweet
Or set your heart on fire
You can stay / You can go
Didja have to be at work half an hour ago
Sam can draw the world that is required

Chorus

Some people stop for coffee
As he works the street for free
They say, Sam you should be famous
For your skill and artistry
But Sam says No – I'll take my stand
Where the roads cross below the chalk in
my hand
South of Heaven
North of Tremont Street

Chorus

If the earth don't quake 'em
And the ice don't break 'em
And the kids don't come around
And Johnny Ace 'em
If the snow don't flake 'em
And the shill don't snake 'em
And the weeds don't rise up
And Queen Anne's Lace 'em...

You can take 'em home
On the soles of your feet

©1993 Diana Kirk

Can't Let Love Pass By
(Kim Trusty)

Tell me how long must this dream go on,
Will I be foolish enough to let it last forever.
I'm not able to ignore the circumstances I
find myself in.

Only time, only time will tell what the
future can bring for me.
Cause who knows what the future can
entail for either you or me.

Chorus:
I know that I just can't let love pass me by,
because of foolishness and selfish pride.
Don't let me be foolish enough to let a good
thing like love pass me by.

I can't let things remain the way they are,
I've got to let them go and grow.
No matter how painful that may be, that's
what I need to do for me.

Chorus

I can't let love pass me by. (repeat) Oh no...
Don't let me be foolish enough. (repeat) Oh
noo...

©1992 Kim Trusty

Ghost Dance
(Greg Greenway)

In the back of the paper
was a lone photograph
from a century ago,
of a young pony soldier
mounted on guard,
blankets strewn across the snow.
It was a time whose time had come.
Through the years of the picture
past the look of a soldier
I see somebody's son,
somewhere inside him
were the words that divided
his heart from his gun.
It was a time whose time had come.
Hidden from the camera
Underneath the blankets
Were somebody's sons.
When there is no hope, there is only hope.
When there is no dream to carry through,
It is all for a moment of twisted romance,
It is only a ghost dance they do.
From the vision of a Holy man
whose race was clinging
to its place in this world,
he gave to them the Ghost Dance,
He knew that our lives

are just a shadow of the real.
It was a time whose time had come.
Hidden from the camera
Underneath the blankets
were somebody's sons.

Chorus:
That was so long ago,
The world is so much different now...
In the middle of a no man's land
on the side of a building
in a desert of concrete,
is a small graffiti tombstone
for a disconnected life
that barely made it to nineteen.
It is a time whose time has come.
He left for us the ghost dance
the world that needs more blankets
and doesn't need its sons.
When there is no hope, there is only hope.
When there is no dream to carry through,
It is all for a moment of twisted romance,
It is only a ghost dance we do.

©1993 Greg Greenway

Thoughts of a Would-Be Pony Rider
(Timothy Mason)

Tacked to the wall, poster reads "Pony
Express
Saint Joseph Missouri to California, 10 days
or less
Wanted: Young, Skinny, Wiry Fellows
not over 18. Must be Expert Riders,
Willing to risk death daily,
Orphans preferred
Wages twenty-five dollars per week
Apply: Pony Express Stables, Saint Joseph
Missouri"

Well the dust is settling on the streets
those little devils, curling off Frederick
and down round the slaughterhouse, lay
down
flat as the Kansas plains.
Now this city kid has heard the talk of the
'shockers
waves of that golden grain, everywhere, far
as the eye can see.
and beyond that, the Lakota People,
Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud
riding hard for Little Big Horn, for Wound-
ed Knee
with the look of a coyote eating off its leg to
be rid of the trap
look of a warrior riding against the tide of
genocide
Now old Jacob, down at the soldier's rest,
he says

it's sheer madness to lock eyes with a brave
whilst doin' battle
"There's no repentance in those eyes, no
sir, none at all"
Well, old Jake's tales must be true or they
wouldn't be offering no
twenty-five dollars per week to no carpet-
bagging orphan kid
for riding haywire, through the middle of it
all
just to make California in ten days
with some I Love You note
or other Official Business to Urgent to send
'round the cape
No those wild tales must be speaking fact.

Now I ride real good, can use my pistol too
why I can take down a squirrel in any field
but I don't know about locking eyes with no
brave
making no orphan outta my parents
but I sure would be likin' to see that wheat,
wavin'
and to be riding, to beat the wind
carrying every Christian's hopes for me to
do it
And *that* would be a change
It would make no never mind
that Vincent is riding with Cantrell
or that Nathan went East, with Mister Lee
or that Steven stayed put to plow the field
But it would sure beat kicking the dust to
revive
these devils here off of Lafayette Street.

©1990, Timothy Mason

Run For Your Lives
(Rick Tarquinio)

from the hour of your birth your fate could
be known
the worth of your lifetime written in stone
for you were born greyhound bred only for
speed
a winner or loser with no in between

Chorus:
so run for your lives as fast as you can
in circles of ignorance for the pleasure of
man
the slow are put down the swift shall sur-
vive
it's almost October so run for your lives
be off at the gun and never look back
give us good reason to keep you on track
just put them behind and bring home the
prize
or sleep in the shadows of November skies

Chorus

the blink of an eye
shall separate you
one of the fallen
or fortunate few

Chorus

(Just Like) Christopher Columbus
Nerissa Nield

I watch you come out of nowhere
Your three ships and your hunch
You take my hand and kiss it
Then you ask me out to lunch
You say I'd be all right with just a little pain
Cause sweetheart, everyone around me
ends up insane
And you start by saying "don't let my bunch
get you down"
Just like Christopher Columbus you don't
know what you've found.

You know it may not be that bad
It's part and parcel of this brave new game
The more you try to find yourself the more
you are the same
But please don't leave me out in the cold
Don't let me die alone
Don't let me die old
It may be time to swim for my life
While so many others drown
And did Christopher Columbus get rich
from what he found?

So I'm driving down the same roads,
I'm finding nothing new
But every road I take seems to bring me
back to you
So now it's time for me to choose
Cause the rules of this game are use or lose
So I will wait for you to tell me where I'm
bound
I'll be like Christopher Columbus who lost
what he found.

©1992 Nerissa Nield

Stress
(Jim Infantino)

Chorus:
I'm addicted to stress that's the way that I
get things done if I'm not
under pressure then I sleep too long and I
hang around like a bum and
I think I'm going nowhere and that makes
me
nervous
Everybody's out to get me but I feel alright

Everybody's out to get me but I feel alright
Everybody's out to get me but I feel alright
Everybody's thinking 'bout me
It's the little things that get you
It's the little things that get you
It's the little things that get you when you
weren't paying
attention. (2x)

Verse 1: Our hero experiments with stimu-
lants, noting the pros and
cons as they relate to his work.

Chorus

Verse 2: Our hero shows us a splice of his
work-a-day world noting
favorite hobbies, love interest, vacation
plans and nautical phobias.

Chorus & End.

©1991 Jim Infantino

Conversations with a Ghost
(Ellis Paul)

I'll respond to you in letters
sorry so slow so few
in a nutshell, I'm much better
So far the complaints are few

Chorus:
So how have you been —
have you been to the races?
did you take my mother?
Is your sister in braces?
I wish I could've been there
to see you through...
Hey, are all those things
you told me once still true?

Do you remember that time
It was cold in the park
you were running a race
I was there on a lark
who would've thought that New York
could be such a small town

Now Margaret is tired
lets let her get some sleep
Bored with these letters,
let her count her sheep
So goodbye, love
Goodbye, love...

©1992 Ellis Paul

Charlie and Maureen
(Don White)
Copyright 1989

Maureen has been drinking sombreros all
night
she's been staring at John who is perhaps
half her age
maybe fifteen years ago even though she
wasn't beautiful
she might have had a slim chance at him
anyway,
the chance is substantially slimmer today

Charlie is giving her the eye and she recalls
his first wife
and their reception at the old Legion Hall.
He was muscular back then. What happens
to mid age men
the muscles in their chest start to fall.
Now he looks like he swallowed a basket-
ball.

She says you know something Charlie, if
you lost about forty pounds
and worked out sometimes at the gym,
bought some new clothes to wear,
once in a while combed your hair, shaved
those whiskers off your chin
— I think you'd still be ugly as sin.

He says give me a break Maureen. You
ain't no beauty queen.
No matter how much rouge you put on.
She knows he would rather be taking home
Sarah
He knows she would rather go home with
John —
Dream on mid age divorcees - dream on

Chorus:
Charlie and Maureen aren't the king and
the queen
they're just grabbin' whatever they can.
When they get on she imagines he's John
he imagines she's Sarah McMadd
It ain't love, but hell it ain't so bad

He says hey you wanna hear funny one,
soon your daughter will be 21
and drinking down here with her mom and
I want to see the look on your
face when she comes up to you one day and
says I'm moving in with a
guy in the mornin' — It's that cute guy at
the bar who's named John.

She says have you heard that age old line
"they all look good at
closing time cause you're drunk and your
options are few" Well I've had
ten drinks give or take a few. It's last call
now ten till to two and
Charlie I am looking at you — and I don't
think that old line is true.

Chorus

He says I just had a strange thought. I think you and I are like the Red Sox — we're always tryna to catch up from behind or we score big in the first inning and through the whole game we're winning then we give up the grand slam in the ninth — Maureen — I think we're the best fifth place team of all time.

She says that's brilliant, it's philosophical, Lord I need another sombrero. Here's the keys please warm up the Pinto. It's a story without a miracle. The ending is predictable. The drunk Juliet the fat Romeo — they're not exactly inspiring but at least they're not alone.

Chorus

©1989 Don White

The Glider Ride
(Greg McConnell)

He could sit across from her and watch that smile all day
And never feel a moment had been wasted
But now a clock inside was pushing him to get up on his way
There was a lot the two of them just hadn't tasted

So Eddy reached into his pocket where for days he held the prize
They danced around like children when Laurie realized

Chorus:

It was the glider ride, the glider ride
For years he talked about it, for years the young man tried
A gift of love from Eddy
To his one and only bride

On the way to the airfield Eddy clutched his side in pain
They both knew the drill and turned back on the green
"An hour at the hospital we'll be on our way again,"
he said, but Laurie read him like a magazine

Again he reached into his pocket, but this was not the way he planned
fingers 'round the envelope he kissed her trembling hand

Chorus:

It was months before she found them in the jacket that he wore
while she was packing all his memories away
The quiet flooded over her — her thoughts began to soar and
there were still a couple hours left that day

So she headed to the airfield and she climbed inside the plane
There was a tension in the take-off but the release felt warm as rain

Chorus

©1993 First Sight Music

Mexico
(Scott Alarik)

Never much traffic on Old Coast Road
Since the glassworks moved down to Mexico
Bill Pick drives slow to his part-time job
Selling bait and beer down at the S&O

Not much like the glassworks where he worked twenty years
Sixteen an hour, pension guaranteed

And he always looks away on Old Coast Road
When he passes the old house that he almost owned
And tries not to think where the family's gonna go
When the savings are gone, because he just doesn't know

For Bill Pick's pension, the house he almost owned
It's all gone, gone to Mexico
Bill Pick's pension, the house he almost owned
It's all gone, down to Mexico

Chorus:
Mexico, oh Mexico
They took it all to Mexico
Mexico, oh Mexico
It's all gone, gone to Mexico

Gravel getting hot on an unnamed road
A little border town, north Mexico
Rosa Cruz walks a mile from her mudflat shack
To the new glassworks, down by the railroad track

She's working by the hour, a dollar-sixty-five
Just barely enough to keep the family alive

No school for the kids, no windows for the shack
Like they make all day at the glassworks plant
She wonders what she's gonna do if the family grows
She's got Bill Pick's job but you'd never know

For Bill Pick's pension, the house he almost owned
Never made it down to Mexico
No Bill Pick's pension, the house he almost owned
Went somewhere else, not Mexico

Chorus

©1993 Scott Alarik

Living on the Edge
(Amanda Carr)

Sitting in a corner
with a menu in her hand
it's a life she can't afford no more
and she tries to understand
the way the new girls seem like school girls ridin' in their Daddy's cars
but that's the way it looks before the years leave all their scars...

Another grim audition
is like a weeding of a garden
it's what you said or didn't say
"Yes sir, I beg your pardon"
Gotta find another way to be
and still maintain some dignity
It's downhill all the way on up
the dead-end road to stardom...

Chorus:

LIVING ON THE EDGE of a town that passed her over
She's another hour older
in a time that's movin' fast
In the morning she is wakin'
with a heart too strong for breakin'
and it's getting hard to fake a dream
she knows can never last

He's steadyin' the camera
She's powdering her nose
He comments on her stamina as she holds another pose
She's smiling, but they both know

the tears you cry that never show
are the same ones that'll make you grow
a little harder every day...

Chorus:

©1993 Amanda Carr

The Bottom Rung
(Thomas Keene)

Let's send them all back to Saigon
let's send them south where they came
from
send them north, send them east
in the mirror see the beast
still climbing rung by rung

We can't grow enough to keep 'em fed
the only good injun is one that's dead
lynched body in a tree
casts a shadow on we
who ignore a history unread

Their Angel Island may be JFK
or LAX or the Rio Grande
they need us we need them
to remind us of when
we were on the bottom rung

Give them one chance they'll know the way
they'll climb the ladder day after day
they'll clean where you piss
but don't blink or you'll miss
their kids bringing home straight A's

And just like Brahmin like we're heaven
sent
some say stop the experiment
but the melting pot boils
because they will toil
for your neighbor to whom they pay rent

Their Ellis Island may be JFK
or LAX or the Rio Grande
they need them
to remind us of when
we were on the bottom rung

In our silence we do protest
we don't have room enough for the rest
turn it back turn clock
blow up Plymouth Rock
now tell me where did grandpa come from

He came across the ocean blue
freedom and a chance to start something
new
he died young died poor
but he opened the door
for me and for you

son, for me ... for you

Their mythic rock may be JFK
or a stone on the shore of the Rio Grande
they need us we need them
to remind us of when
we were on the bottom rung
once we were all on the bottom rung
we are all on the bottom rung

©1993 Thomas Keene

Uranus
(Mike Duffy)

We've walked on the moon and we've land-
ed on Mars
and one night last June I was looking at the
stars.

While I was gazing I came up with a plan
That's gonna make this world a better place
for every
woman, child and man.

You see I'm gonna cash in all my empties
and get myself some loot
Go out and rent a rocketship and navy blue
spacesuit.
Right before I blast off I'll start the count
down at seven
and when they get to zero they can blast
my ass into the heavens and
I'll be on my way after all these years.

On my way to being rich
On my way to being famous
On my way to being the first guy from earth
who gets the chance to walk on Uranus

I've read a lot of books and asked a whole
bunch of questions
and Timothy Leary was kind enough to
give me directions.

He taught me everything he knows about
this planetary mass
such as there ain't no air to breathe up
there, all there is gas
on Uranus...But I'm going away.

'Cause I'm gonna be rich
and I'm gonna be famous
for being the first guy from Earth
who gets the chance to walk all over
Uranus

This ain't a pleasure trip I'm taking
I'll have a lot of things to do
I've got experiments to run
and I've got to photograph the view.

I'm taking my instruments

So I'll have to inspect them
I just hope that the impact of the touch
down
hasn't wrecked 'em

I'm travelling light just taking what I need
extra hankies and bromos and maybe
something to read
when I return I'll be leaving soon
'cause after I check out Uranus I'm taking a
crack at the moon

And I'm gonna be rich
and I'm gonna be famous
for being the first guy from earth to go to
the moon
when he gets back from Uranus.

©1992 Mike Duffy

**If you like what
you hear here...**

The Old Vienna Tapes Vol. 1 (1992)
was independently produced as a joint
effort by Steve Friedman, Robert Haigh
and Timothy Mason, and released in
September 1992. It represented our
effort to celebrate the talent and diversity
we were seeing cross The Old Vi-
enna's stage every Thursday at our open
mike.

As on this disc, our intent was to
select songs which captured the variety
of voices, topics and attitudes which we
felt reflected what is best about the
genre of contemporary folk music. Not
every song is for everybody, but give
them a listen. We're confident there are
many that are for you.

Volume 1 of the Old Vienna Tapes
may be ordered from The Crow Coll-
aborative: 945 Main St. #807 Worcester
MA 01610. CD's are \$15, Cassettes \$10
and please include \$2 for postage and
handling.

We are very grateful to Fast Folk
Musical Magazine for their willingness
to collaborate in introducing Volume 2
to a wider audience.

Bios - FF 704



It took **Vance Gilbert** little over a year to go from walk-on phenom of the New England open mike circuit to bona fide headliner and crowd pleaser at the region's most discerning listening rooms. A recent tour with Shawn Colvin as well as appearances with Tuck & Patti, Jay Leno, Jerry Jeff Walker and The Bobs have helped make Vance one of the most promising unsigned acts on the national circuit. This Philadelphia native is known for his rich and soulful voice, his heart-warming spontaneity and powerful material. (Management: Jordi Herold, Iron Horse Management, 20 Center St., Northampton, MA 01060 (413) 584-0610 Booking: Joe Brauner, APA, 888 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10106 (212) 582-1500)



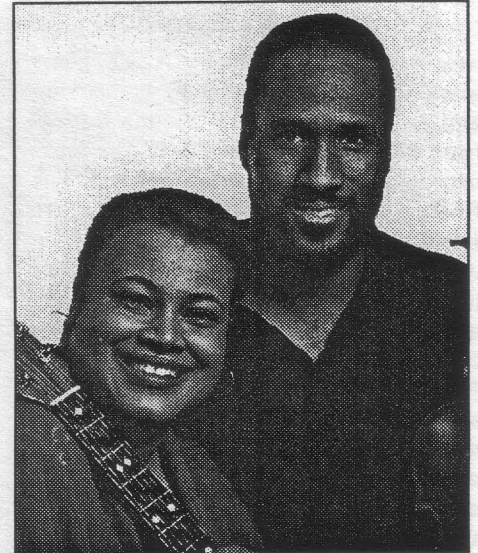
Vermont-bred **Diane Ziegler** is the winner of three national songwriting awards, the 1990 Sugarbush Folk Festival

(Vermont), the 1991 Napa Valley Folk Festival (California) and the 1991 Columbia River Folk Festival (Washington). 1992 found her on the mainstage of Ben and Jerry's One World One Heart Festival sharing the bill with The Band, Shawn Colvin, Loudon Wainwright III and the Blues Travelers. She was also Vermont's Best Actress in 1989 for her performance as Mary Magdelene in Jesus Christ Superstar. Diane's stunning voice, unique guitar tunings and well-crafted songs have caught the attention of Artie Traum's Roaring Stream Music. Look for a debut CD this year. (Contact: 30 Swan Place, Arlington, MA 02174 (617) 646-6393 or 204 Pleasant Ave., Burlington, VT 05401 (802) 863-3206)



Between New York City's Broadway and bop, **Diana Kirk** caught the musician's inspiration. She taught herself to play guitar - at age 13 - influenced by Mississippi John Hurt, Hank Williams and Bob Dylan. Her blending of America's roots in folk, country and blues with today's urban sensibilities make her style unique. Diana's songs explore but never underestimate the tangible power of real love. Diana has recently entered the club and coffee-house circuit of Greater Boston. (Contact: The Crow Collaborative, 945 Main St. #807, Worcester, MA 01610 (508) 791-5876 & (508) 829-9412)

On a road trip from her home in Pawtucket, RI, **Kim Trusty** recently stopped into the open mike at The Old Vienna. She



immediately found a musical home. Writing and performing for 16 years she has opened shows for Koko Taylor, South Side Johnny and Richie Havens. Her musical tastes range from jazz to pop to folk, blues and even the beloved classical. She has recently joined forces with **David Eure** whose formal training in both violin and viola has earned him a proficiency in jazz and classical music. Together they bring a refreshing new approach to writing and performing in the folk world. They are now at work on a debut album at Melville Park Studio in Boston. (Booking Contact: K & D Productions, 286 Concord Ave. 3A, Cambridge, MA 02138 or call (401) 726-6331)

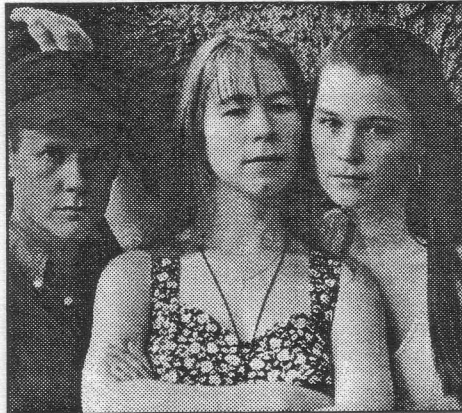
Virginia native **Greg Greenway** has made a mark in Boston both on the folk circuit and on the rock circuit. His return to the acoustic world about two years ago has met remarkable success demonstrated by Greg's garnering of two 1992 Boston Music Awards Nominations. An energetic and charismatic performer, Greg retains a distinct social consciousness while reaching audiences with a pop and folk appeal. This versatility has been reflected in appearances on such diverse stages as the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in a benefit for the Chinese Cultural Institute and a place on the WBOS Copley Square Music Series roster. (Management & Booking: Robert Haigh, Land's End Promotions 11 A Poplar La., North Chelmsford, MA 01863 (508) 251-3546 or Days (617) 224-0300)

Performance poet **Timothy Mason** wears a variety of hats on the New England scene. He supports his family by booking and promoting The Old Vienna Kaffeehaus, he is an active member of The International Poetry Slam performing with The Boston Slam Team and publishing the International Slam Newsletter. His spoken word poems and stories have been heard in a variety of coffeehouses around the country and on National Public Radio when his topical poem Saddam's Insane caught John Hockenberry's attention and proved to be ominously predictive. Raised in Utah and around the nation his works often evoke images and phrasing from a diverse and western background. (Contact: Crow Collaborative, 945 Main St. #807, Worcester, MA 01610 (508) 791-5876)

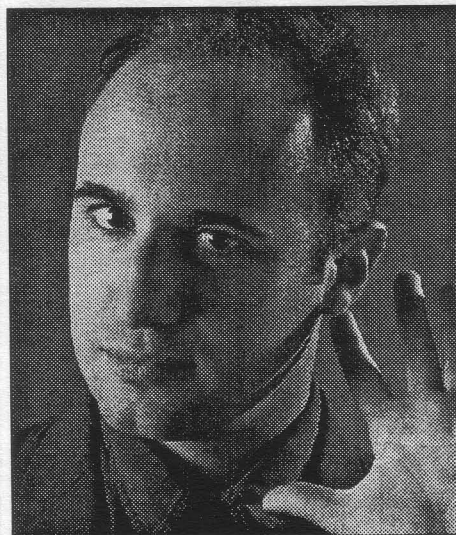


New to the New England scene, **Rick Tarquinio** is a veteran of the Jersey Shore circuit where he performed at numerous festivals and regional events. Currently working toward a May release of his debut album, Rick is a writer who draws from personal experience to evoke story-type songs with imagery and believable characters. As he says, "I'm not here to shell out answers but to share in the questions." (Contact: 1620 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA 01701 (508) 620-6816)

Formerly from Washington, D.C., **The Nields**, sisters Nerissa and Katryna and Nerissa's husband David (who took their name) are now one of Connecticut's most

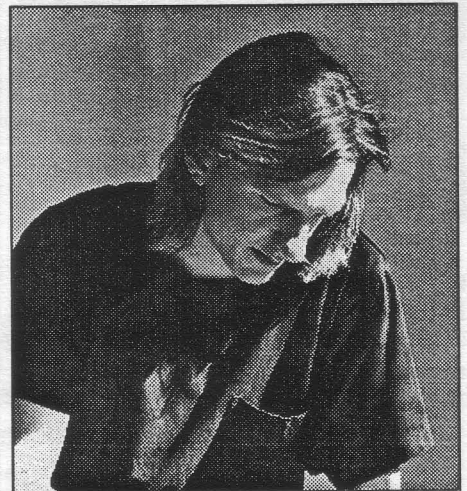


widely praised young folk groups. Often compared to The Indigo Girls and The Roches, they have begun to earn a dedicated following, with a recent sold out show at Northampton's Iron Horse emphasizing the point. Nerissa, the main writer, sees the trio as "a cross between the kind of inclusive folk that was popular in the sixties and today's new bands." They have come a long way since the summer of '91 when they turned to the music professionally. (Management & Booking Contact: Michelle Yules, MY Productions (212) 713-5676)



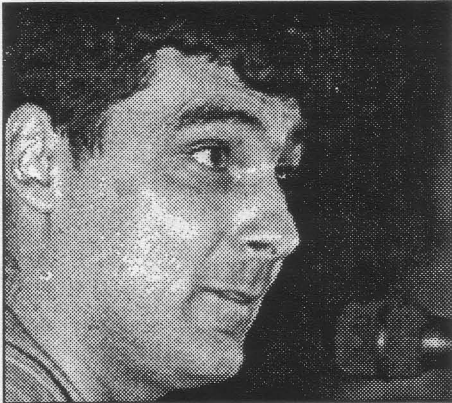
A native New Yorker, **Jim Infantino** grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan where at the age of 15, he started playing open stages at Gerde's Folk City and The Speakeasy. He studied Eastern and Continental philosophy in Philadelphia, then defected to Boston. Lyrically sparse and philosophically rich, Jim has found

himself on the cutting edge of contemporary folk music. As one Boston DJ put it "Only a few of this generation of singer-songwriters have found an original voice, and Jim Infantino is several of them." (Booking: Strawman Booking (617) 464-4351; Management: Bill Verdier (203) 938-8777; Correspondence: Jim Infantino, Box 3095, Cambridge, MA 02238)



Raised in Fort Kent, Maine, **Ellis Paul** was lured to Boston by a track scholarship at Boston College. After college he worked as a caseworker for inner-city teens and began taking his guitar out to the open mikes. He quickly gained recognition, being chosen as the highest scoring finalist in the WGBH/Nameless Coffeehouse New Songwriters Showcase in 1989 and winning Boston's Acoustic Music Underground Competition in 1991. His writing depicts life with an honest and piercing gaze. His lyrics reflect his small town upbringing and his amazement at urban life. His recently released debut album, *Say Something*, on Black Wolf Records was produced by Bill Morrissey. (Booking & Management: Ralph Jaccodine, The Berkeley Group, 100 Boylston St. Suite 800, Boston, MA 02116 (617) 426-1918)

Don White hails from Lynn, MA, what can he say? By day, he installs alarms, by night he travels the folk and comedy circuits with his guitar, his wit and his humanity. Burning his candle at both ends to support his family and to bring to his listeners humor, tears and compassion. He



succeeds with an impeccable sense of timing and an undeniable honesty. His are songs for the Bud drinker, sonnets for the seamstresses and toasts for workaday world. (Booking Contact: Roz Cummins (617) 623-8974)



Amanda Carr is a Boston native who grew up surrounded by music. Her father was a big band trumpeter and her mother Nancy Carr is still active as a jazz vocalist. The mid '80s found her involved in a musical project with Dave Guard (of The Kingston Trio) which resulted in Dave's last album, *Up & In*. In 1991, within a three day period, Amanda's fiancée, Terry Jackson and her musical mentor Guard both died tragically. Terry, Reba McIntyre's bass player died in a plane crash with the rest of the band. Dave died of cancer. She returned to Boston with a love-hate relationship with music as well as much pain. Her performance on this CD is significant in that "This is the first time I have ever performed as a soloist, and the first time I

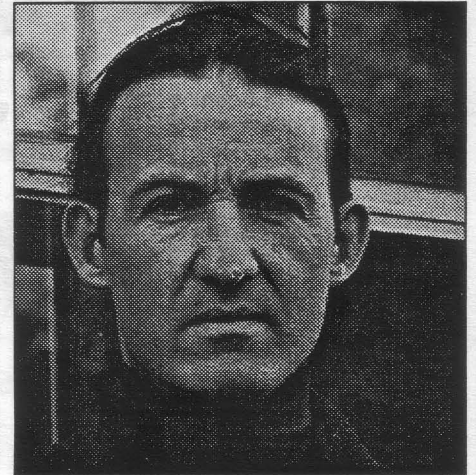
have publicly performed a song of my own composition." (Booking & Management Contact: The Crow Collaborative, 945 Main St. #807, Worcester, MA 01610 (508) 791-5876)

Minnesotan **Scott Alarik** has become a part of the backbone of the New England folk music scene. A founder of *The New England Folk Almanac* and frequent critic for *The Boston Globe* Scott's offstage contributions have been invaluable to maintaining the vitality of the Boston scene. It is now a real pleasure to be welcoming this veteran performer back to stage. Scott, who has three albums to his credit has been a frequent guest on "A Prairie Home Companion" and retains that distinctive Midwestern charm in his live performances. (Contact: (617) 661-4708)



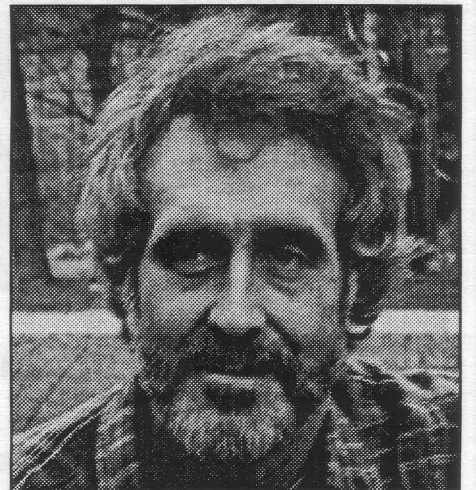
Stories of friends, family and selves are the forte of **Greg & Michelle McConnell** of Athol MA. Performing together for 12 years the McConnells often choose lyrics that tug at the melodies exploring alternate tunings and unique harmonies. They have recorded and performed with the group SELAH and are currently editing a collection of songs for a CD of their own. (Booking Contact: First Sight Music, 200 Orange St., Athol, MA 01331 (508) 249-7878)

Thomas Keene dwells in a cottage on the shores of a Massachusetts harbor where he pursues the craft of songwriting with a relentless focus. His songs are complex, songs of childhood and family, of love past and present, of nation and village, of coat hanger and plague. His recent debut CD, *Searching for Ward and June*, has propelled him out of the cottage and onto the



stage. It has also occasioned numerous excursions to Nashville where he has taken part in "Writers in the Round" at The Bluebird Cafe. (Booking Contact: The Crow Collaborative 945 Main St. #807, Worcester, MA 01610 (508) 791-5876).

Mike Duffy of Worcester, MA, a semi-employed electrician, has been called many things including "the most dangerous man in folk music" for his off-beat pursuit of the most exquisite double entendre. Armed with construction worker sensibilities he has pioneered a genre of folk aptly dubbed the scratch-and-sniff love song. When not pushing the envelope of taste, he is active as a folk DJ for Worcester's community radio station, WCUW, and as an organizer of the "Sober in The Sun" Festival, a drug- and alcohol-free Labor Day weekend festival held annually in Spencer, MA. (Contact: Mike Duffy (508) 829-9412)



Credits - FF 704

1. **Witness to Joy**
(Vance Gilbert)
Vance Gilbert - Vocals, Guitar
2. **One Who Got Away**
(Diane Ziegler)
Diane Ziegler - Vocals, Guitar
Geoffrey Cary Sather - Bass
3. **Sidewalk Sam**
(Diana Kirk)
Diana Kirk - Vocals, Guitar
Seth Connelly - Bass
Al Gould - Violin
4. **Can't Let Love Pass By**
(Kim Trusty)
Kim Trusty - Vocals, Guitar
David Eure - Violin
5. **Ghost Dance**
(Greg Greenway)
Greg Greenway - Vocals, Guitar
Doug Wray - Bass
6. **Thoughts of a Would-Be
Pony Rider**
(Timothy Mason)
Timothy Mason - Spoken Word
7. **Run for Your Lives**
(Rick Tarquinio)
Rick Tarquinio - Vocals, Guitar
Seth Connelly - Bass
Al Gould - Violin
8. **Just Like Christopher Columbus**
(The Nields)
Nerissa Nield - Vocals, Guitar
Katryna Nield - Vocals
Dave Nield - Guitar
9. **Stress**
(Jim Infantino)
Jim Infantino - Vocals, Guitar
10. **Conversation with a Ghost**
(Ellis Paul)
Ellis Paul - Vocals, Guitar
11. **Charlie & Maureen**
(Don White)
Don White - Vocals, Guitar

12. **Living on the Edge**
(Amanda Carr)
Amanda Carr - Vocals, Keyboards

13. **Mexico**
(Scott Alarik)
Scott Alarik - Vocals, Guitar

14. **The Glider Ride**
(Greg McConnell)
Greg McConnell - Guitar
Michelle McConnell - Vocals

15. **The Bottom Rung**
(Thomas Keene)
Thomas Keene - Vocals, Guitar

16. **Uranus**
(Mike Duffy)
Mike Duffy - Vocals, Guitar

Acknowledgements

This CD was made possible in part by the behind-the-scenes efforts of project coordinator Robert Haigh, who has hosted the Open Mike for the past 5 years and is sound coordinator for the Old Vienna. He spends his days as general manager of WCAT, a community television station where he produces The Acoustic Cafe cable television series. His Lands End Promotions provides artist management services for emerging talent.

It also required the efforts of audio engineer Steve Friedman of Melville Park Studio, where he has been recording and producing albums for Boston area musicians since 1986. Among other compilations he has worked on was the first-ever street musicians anthology. His philosophy is a simple one: "Seek out good music, record it with respect and always remember it's the artist who's doing the hard part, not me."

Producer Timothy Mason was voted "most ambiguous" when he earned his master's degree in management at Antioch University. His appearance on both sides of the mike on this project is a glimpse at why.

Thanks to:

All the artists who gave so generously of their time and talents.

To Chris Flisher, Craig Harris, Scott Alarik and The New England Folk Almanac, Guy Jones and Jake Kensinger.

And, as always, to Pam, Bill and Karen, and the Old Vienna audiences.

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