

FAST FOLK

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The 1995 Fast Folk Revue

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Letter from the Editor

An extra-credit essay question

For extra points: Identify and expound upon three flaws in a seemingly seamless thesis.

Thesis: I received a letter the other day suggesting that I help this person put together a benefit concert for Amnesty International. The "theme" of this concert would be the bringing together of *Fast Folk* and some of its luminaries (Tracy Chapman, John Gorka, Christine Lavin were mentioned), and the anti-folk scene as represented by artists associated with New York City's Sidewalk Cafe (Ani DiFranco, The Humans, Daniel Cartier were mentioned).

The concert was to be dedicated to the memory of Victor Jara, a singer and poet who lost his life during the CIA takeover of Chile. Sounds like an unimpeachable concept and a great show for a worthy cause. But according to the title of this essay, I have to find three flaws in this thesis.

Flaw #1: Labels (such as "folk" and "anti-folk") are created by and for lack of thought. They are part of packaging. They are an offshoot of our academic world that loves to classify. If something can be classified it can be controlled. If it can be put in a category, then we don't have to think about it. We know all about it. If it can be named, it can be owned, copyrighted, patented, trademarked, and sold. For profit. Amen.

Fast Folk has never been a label, in either sense of the word. It is not a type of music. It exists solely for artistic reasons and art by its nature is dramatically opposed to the business of labeling. Art must be free of labels and categories to be truly creative. There's no point in reducing what we have accomplished with one hundred and three issues of *Fast Folk* to a label, and then using this label to perpetuate a nonexistent rivalry that was created for advertising purposes. This is divisive.

Divisiveness has always worked against art. Much work that is of an inferior artistic quality can hide underneath a label, the public having been programmed by media to accept that label. Over the years we at *Fast Folk* have recorded artists of many different "schools" of songwriting, including ones associated with the "anti-folk" label. It is all folk music in that it is played by "folks." Whereas this word is already archaic, reminiscent of "the old folks at home" sort of thing, the newer vernacular gets outdated even faster. Consider for a moment "dude" music, dudes. So "folk" music, like democracy, will have to do until something better is found.

Flaw #2: Just because we once recorded

certain people does not mean that we have immediate access to them or that they owe us anything or feel a kinship to us or even want to be associated with us. They may even be told by people (with business interests in their career) to keep a distance from anything having to do with "folk" music. Folk is still a dirty word in the music business (four letters beginning with "f" and ending with "k" being enough circumstantial evidence to convict).

Let's take Tracy Chapman, for example, because she was one of the names mentioned in the letter. I first heard of Tracy Chapman from Eric Kilburn, a Boston area songwriter who was helping us put together a Boston issue of *Fast Folk*. He played me a cassette of three of her songs (I remember one of them was "For My Lover"). Try as we did, we couldn't track her down that year (she didn't have a phone and was still in college). But we did record her the following year for another Boston issue. But by the time that recording came out there was already record company and management interest in her and there was even talk of trying to keep us from releasing the song. I have not heard from her or seen her since. I might add that once her album sold over a million copies one stopped seeing the word "folk" associated with her. She was now a "rock" or "pop" star.

Others we have heard from. Some have mentioned *Fast Folk* in liner notes (Shawn Colvin and Christine Lavin), some have done benefits for us (John Gorka, Suzanne Vega, Michelle Shocked), but it does not mean we can call up anyone we ever recorded at the drop of a hat and have them drop everything and do a benefit. Even if we had that power we wouldn't want to abuse it that way.

Flaw #3: This point is harder to address. It has to do with invoking Victor Jara's name and the motivation behind the letter I received. The author of the letter suggested in a subsequent phone call that this benefit concert had to be put on by March of this year as he is putting this together as part of a college course he is taking. I had already taken the time on the phone to address points one and two, and had suggested some alternative approaches (see addendum).

The addition of this qualifying information gave me a sinking feeling that I and my work were not being taken seriously. I take the art of songwriting very seriously. I have also dedicated a good portion of my life to helping others who take songwriting seriously (editing *Fast Folk* is and always has been an unpaid

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Writer's block: No big deal

Just put the first word down on that blank sheet of paper, then another and ...

by Richard Meyer

I led a songwriting class this past July, and was intrigued by the issue of writer's block. It is an indefinable and big problem for many people, however I think it breaks down simply if you employ some discipline.

A simplistic definition is a writer who feels they cannot write. The cause might be unadorned procrastination, an unfocused mind, fear of having to come up with something as good as your greatest hit, lack of discipline, fear of success, the lack of anything to say or some personal psychological cloud. There is a way to address the problem no matter what the underlying cause. It doesn't matter if you are blocked from fear or overwork, or beaten down by some harsh critic; the result is the same, no new work. Each person has their own rhythm and some writers simply gush material. Of course quantity doesn't always translate into quality. We all die and only the work will survive us. In the end if you produce no work you can't be considered in the context of other writers.

If you desire to be a writer then you've got to confront any obstacle in the way of putting down on paper what is indefinable until it actually is on paper, because to be a writer you must write.

Potential may be exciting, but finished writing is a tangible thing. One way of getting to work is to bring the process of writing down to a mechanical level. Inspiration is not a reliable catalyst for all artists. There are hundreds of books with systems and philosophies about the inner and outer writer, loads of quotes and anecdotes. What works is sitting down and sweating it out, even when inspiration hits.

Begin with an arbitrary choice. Understand that the blank paper in front of you can be filled with anything. Reconsider for a moment that imagination is the free and unrestricted combination or use of anything that has ever been in pursuit of expressing a new idea. You can turn that humble piece of paper into a sweeping historical ballad, an absurd comedy musical parody or a lascivious example of pornography or a repressive religious diatribe. You create a world by declaring it into existence. Paper is neutral, expressionless, like masks used in some theatre and dance pieces which the actor fills with his own character. The mask never changes. In *The Recording Angel*, a book about history and art of recording the author explains that in a world of silence all one needs to do is take one of the millions of albums ever recorded and drop a needle (now laser) to be instantly transported to Mozart's day, an aboriginal ritual or a thrash-punk mosh-pit. The songwriter who understands this can go anywhere, and will never say they don't know what to write about. Steal ideas if you must from the best seller list in *The NY Times*, a succession of business listings in the phone book, or a fragment of overheard conversation you didn't really get.

As an experiment start by writing one word, any word. One might argue that the first word committed to paper is of fundamental importance even if it gets edited out later. Each succeeding word narrows the field of possibilities in the progress of songwriting while at the same time demanding more focused imaginative attention from the artist. For example on the white paper write 'He'. Once you've put that word down you have, by

implication, eliminated the entire female world (at least for the duration of the word) from your song. Also, obviously, by writing 'he' the writer is eliminating the first person position in the narrative. You get to this state with one isolated word.

What is important to notice is that with a single word there is an implied structure and direction. If you continue, again very simply, by writing 'He saw' or 'He said', (or broke, or spit, or died, or kissed, or wished); that again divides the possibilities in the world of the song into action or inaction. 'He saw' is passive, while 'He said' or did is active. At this point, only two words into the song the writer has to make an imaginative leap and decide to form the song based on description. Writing involves paying attention to what you are writing as you write it (while not simultaneously editing) is another. On the other hand, you can turn the value of each statement around by writing 'He saw himself jump' and 'He said nothing' In these cases we are reversing with one word, the assumptions we saw earlier. One phrase becomes

active that was passive and vice versa all from the addition of another word.

Once written a song or story can seem so natural as to have always been in existence, but it is not so. Tear apart some classic songs and see how they would not be as effective if they were written differently. The more sophisticated a song you are writing the more critical it is to refine each

word. Refinement may take the form of eliminating extraneous words of enhancing the language you use to be more specific and detail oriented. It may sound contradictory to consider every word as you write and not edit the process. For the purposes of these exercises it is essential that the writer begin to discipline his mind consciously so he can be more intuitive in the future.

Now these examples might seem unspeakably simple and obvious. The idea however, is to offer blocked writers a process to get out of their hole. Once you start to pay attention to each word you can begin to see if your images are consistent within each song. You'll see your songs in a new way. Don't mix sea images with farm images unless you have a very clear reason to do it. Hopefully, if you can force a few words out with an admittedly artificial technique then at least you have something tangible that you've written. Every word is a crossroad. A blocked writer can ask themselves direct questions about where a work is going. If you don't want to be as literal you can set yourself exercises but apply more abstract language to the process as long as the development of imagery is consistent. Always be open to the possibility of the word you haven't written down yet and let the song go where it wants. If you are not writing the song you imagined you can always come back and get that that you were conscious of later.

The best method to break out of writer's block is to sweat it out and write everyday even if it is only one line. Set aside a time to work each day and work each day. Carry a notebook with you and write down those stray lines that come to you that seem so clear that you'll remember them. You probably won't remember them. (the discussion of memory is a whole other ball game) Keep your notes and don't leave your desk until you have written something. Make an appointment to meet the muse and one day she'll be there.

Inspiration is not a reliable catalyst. What works is sitting down and sweating it out.

The touring stops, but the music never will

After 25 years on the road, a heart attack forces Utah Phillips to slow down a bit

Dear Friends: This is U. Utah Phillips, a.k.a. Bruce, talking to you from the home front. The simple story is this: Several years ago I was to have my left hand operated on for Dupetryn's contracture. A pre-operative electrocardiogram revealed that my heart was in serious trouble. Echocardiograms, angiograms, and angioplasts followed. I was told (in fact, shown) that a good part of my heart doesn't work anymore. Apparently I had had a heart attack some time ago (unknown to me) and a bunch of muscles died. I said to the cardiologist, "It must have been some lousy day, to miss a heart attack." Well, there it is: congestive heart failure. In September, my friend and doctor Brad Miller examined me just before I was to leave on tour. I felt tired, anxious, generally out of sorts. His examination revealed a slow heartbeat and very low blood pressure. So I canceled the tour – and the next, because we were unable, through shuffling medications, to arrest the symptoms.

Now I know that there are a number of alternative therapies besides "western" medicine out there. But remember, I live in Nevada City, California, the new age capital of the western world. There are so many healers here that it makes me sick. So don't think for an instant that I lack therapeutic advice. I get it all, from mushroom tea to channeling Rudolf Steiner. For now, I'll stick with basics: a sound, consistent, well-monitored program of medication, exercise (mostly walking), stress reduction, and diet (I'm well into Dr. Dean Ornish's regime and find it more than adequate). I am clear about this. The coronary damage can't be undone. In my risk category, 50% of the people who have this condition live past five years. 50% don't. The idea, then, is longevity – getting into the 50% who do. After talking a lot with the doctor, the cardiologist, and most of all with my wife, Joanna Robinson, I have decided to stop touring and to reduce performing to a minimum.

I know that this is a chore and a trial for those who have put so much effort into producing upcoming shows, especially for my old friends and comrades at Fleming, Tamulevich & Associates who do the booking. I despise canceling. But I'm at a place where very difficult choices have to be made. So I'm making them. Joanna and I will have to figure out another way to make a living.

Prospects? Well, there's the song book which, with the help of the Rex Foundation, is nearing completion. Also, recording projects, one with Ani DiFranco, another with Rosalie Sorrels, and hundred of hours of live performance tapes (currently being reviewed and indexed by Mark Ross in Butte, Montana) that might be boiled down to self-produced recordings. How about a syndicated radio show of interview, ruminations, live recording excerpts, and rational politics? (By the way, this would be a good time to ask that live recordings of past performances be sent to me here at home.) Also, how about just plain storytelling? I'd like to engage that world, find out what's going on, and add my bits. In any case, there's more than enough to do. And a lot to get done that I need to see before it can't get done anymore.

I'm leaving a trade which I love very much. When I left Utah over 25 years ago, I had a slim hold on what folk music was, \$75 in my pocket, a head full of songs and stories, and no prospects. When I landed at Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs, New York, I found gradually that I had stumbled into a family that was in fact transcontinental. I found great numbers of people who, as part of their pattern of social or social responsibility, were committed to the task of making sure that folk music existed in their communities. I found singer-circles, camp-outs, picnics, concert programs, festivals great

and small, celebrating a common heritage of song. And I found my community, singers and makers of songs, plying the axis from San Diego Folk Heritage to the Denver Folklore Center to The Ark in Ann Arbor to Lena's and beyond, eking out a bare living sharing what we had together, but, most of all, in each other's company. A family behaving like a family – a trade without bosses where I felt partners with those working in organized folk music, a trade in which I could own what I do, make all of the creative decision, be free to say and sing whatever I chose to, courting criticism from peers and loving friends.

Front porch, kitchen, back yard drunk and sober, young and old, coast-to-coast folk music, a world in which I discovered that I don't need power, wealth, or fame. I need friends. And that's what I found and still find. You folks out there! Comrades! We've created together a whole small world of song, story, travel, love and food, face to face, in every corner of the land, mutually supportive and happening at a sub-industrial level, below the level of media notice. Hooray for us! Who needs the "entertainment" industry? Who needs mass media? Small is beautiful! To hell with the mainstream, consumed with self-love and the absurdity of greed. Please. Don't give our world up. There are many places I want to be that I will miss. Many people. Many an odd, quirky story waiting to be found, sung, told as the road unfolds. I've been there. Now it'll have to come here. I'll keep most of the irons in the fire, writing, talking.

You younger ones who want to take your song over the road, let's talk. Anyone who wants to be in touch, I'm at P. O. Box 1235, Nevada City, CA 95959. I don't have an "e-mail" whatever, but maybe someone here abbot's does. If so, have them pass missives along to me when they see me on the street.

Love, U. Utah Phillips

Letter from the editor

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position). I have also (like all folk singers) performed at and helped organized more than my share of benefits, including ones for Amnesty International. To do a benefit like this correctly, to truly make money for and cause awareness for Amnesty International, takes a lot more time and effort than can possibly be expended between now and March (less than two months away).

In order to invoke the name of Victor Jara, someone who literally gave his life for his art, and the political freedom that that art represented, one must be willing to spend a little more of one's life and energy in something that does not fall into the confines and classifications of curriculum. It is called real life.

Addendum: My suggestions concerning a benefit concert for Amnesty International: Numerous artists, including but not limited to numerous luminaries, loosely associated with folk music be asked to write a specific new song having to do with freedom. These pieces could then be performed by the artists themselves or by someone else at a large event (Town Hall, Carnegie Hall). Six months would be allowed for the writing of the songs and a year allowed for the planning of the event. All royalties and revenues from the concert and the subsequent recording would be donated to Amnesty International. This would be more in keeping with the artistic mission of Fast Folk, and something in which I (and the editorial "we") would gladly be involved.

Jack Hardy

Folkies on the Web

The Internet explosion is proving good for fans, good for performers

by Jeff Furman and George Agnos

infinite: 1) lacking limits or bounds; extending beyond measure or comprehension: endless; immeasurable. 2) very great; vast; immense; inexhaustible. 3) in mathematics, greater in value than any finite number however large. Noun: something infinite, as space or time.

- Webster's New World Dictionary.

There is already so much on the Internet that it truly approaches infinity, by all of the above definitions. Millions sign on every day to hundreds of thousands of web pages (browseable on-line documents), with more being created and updated all the time,

around the clock and all over the world. As an alternative to archaic correspondences such as monthly magazines or old-fashioned Beatles conventions, much of the same kind of stuff is now available in your living room, updated daily or even much more often. And you really will find all kinds of things there that you wouldn't be able to find anywhere except on the Web.

All you have to do is hook up a modem, connecting a PC to your phone, and subscribe to one of the Internet provider services, such as America Online, Prodigy, or Panix, about the same way you might subscribe to cable.

Unlike TV, it's not a passive medium. Web Pages include interactive discussion groups where you can "chat" live with whoever else is signed on at the moment. For the music buffs, there are also discographies, schedules of upcoming concert tour dates, newspaper and magazine articles and reviews, and online photo galleries of acts. There is even sample music you can download from the Web (for free) and play on your home equipment.

As an example of how much is out there, we counted more than 100 Grateful Dead pages *before* Jerry Garcia died. Then, on the night of his death, we watched as one after another new Garcia memorial pages sprang up instantly, like mushrooms. Though it might sound like just a fad to someone not connected, many fans around the world obviously were quite glad for an outlet to pay their respects, and connect with other Deadheads in this most modern way.

Go online and you will find that many of your favorite music ians already have Web Sites. In a random search, we found multiple sites for classic artists from Sinatra to Springsteen, to folk-rockers like the Nields and Dar Williams. We also found several sites for folk-related organizations, including a Vin Scelsa web page and Idiot's Delight interactive newsletter, dedicated to that legendary New York DJ's legendary show, not to mention a Fast Folk newsletter created by our own Webmeister, Nich Haber.

For fans getting started, the newsletters are the easiest Web items to access. For instance, to join the Vin Scelsa Idiot's Delight Newsletter, all you have to do is send one e-mail to the internet address: idiots-delight-request@netcom.com, with the text reading "subscribe." From then on you will get e-mail every day from the many fans already connected to that group. And if you get the urge to take keyboard in hand, your letters to idiots-delight@netcom.com

will be sent electronically to all the members of that group. It's that easy.

For performers who want to take advantage of the free advertising the Internet provides, there are several ways to go. The quickest, cheapest, and easiest way is to join a service like America Online and set up a mailing address in the name of your band.

The handle T2Dresses@aol.com should ring a bell for anyone who enjoyed Fast Folk issue #804, especially the song "Two Dresses" as recorded by our own dear Tamara. (aol.com indicates that she makes her cyberhome on America Online.) This not only shows that she's techno-hip, but also makes it easy for her fans and business contacts to easily correspond with her and receive mailings about her upcoming shows.

Beyond e-mail, a more complex (and expensive) approach some performers are taking is setting up an actual web page for themselves or their bands. This requires a knowledge of HTML, the Hypertext Markup Language, the computer program code that builds all Web sites. Some performers pay someone to do this for them, some learn HTML and do it themselves, and still others are lucky enough to have fans voluntarily do this for them.

Since he was nice enough to create and maintain the "righteous" Vin Scelsa Web page for free, "as a way of giving something back," we will give one deserved plug here: Fred LaParo is President of Planet Access Networks, and part of his business is setting up Web Sites for artists: (201) 691-4704. (The only one he does for free is Vin's, but it is immediately obvious on speaking with Fred that it's a "labor of love" for all the musicians he provides this service for). Fred is also the guy who provides the "hot-links" connecting all the artists mentioned on the Vin Scelsa Web page back to the artist's own Web pages, and vice-versa.

We interviewed Fred and several others heavily involved with musical Web pages:

"Once your home page is created, it needs to be maintained."

John Senft and his wife Janet "spend a few hours of desk time each week working on the NieldsWeb. If there is a new feature

that we're putting in, it will take several hours to write, format, test, and deploy."

When the artist himself has computing knowledge, he may create a

home page for himself or his band. Jay Cosnett, the bass-player for the Portland-based jazz rock group, Julie Jones and the Things You Are, is a case in point. His knowledge as a multimedia designer allowed him to create an interactive press kit for his band. According to Cosnett, their online press kit, which includes lyrics and sound samples from their EP "Think Picnic", has been "downloading like hotcakes, both from the web site and from AOL and Compuserve." "It's exciting, we've had visits from as far away as the Czech Republic - the Internet enables us to expose ourselves and our music to a potentially huge audience for a small investment. It allows direct interaction between the audience and the artist. In some ways it helps put indie bands on

Continued on next page

**Even the quaint and antiquated
Fast Folk Musical Magazine has
finally gone high-tech and on-line.**

**The web's instantaneous news
unites joins lone fans around the
world into a true community.**

From preceding page

a more level playing field."

Even if the artist doesn't create their own Web Pages, he or she can still help the people who do. Nerissa Nields, guitarist and chief songwriter for The Nields, "has been the focal point of contact with the band, providing a great deal of info and material," says John Senft. "We sat together after a concert with some lyric sheets and Nerissa wrote down the music chords on them, which we will transfer to the NieldsWeb."

This interaction can be crucial to setting up an effective web page. Fred LaParo: "Vin [Scelsa] was more than willing to share a treasure trove of pictures, articles, and his guest book that his in-studio guests had signed when they were on. All kinds of stuff – memorabilia from previous Vin incarnations (e.g. the Butch and the Brick), and a copy of the published 'Me and Razoo Kelley' letters he used to read on the air – all this and more are slowly making their way onto the Page."

Tom Neff, author of the Dar Williams Web Page, testifies to the "free advertising" value in this process. "People come up to Dar and her manager at shows and tell her they heard about it on the Web," says Neff, "We get about 150 visitors a day during the school year and perhaps half that, so far, in the summer." In addition to scanning in the latest Dar photos, Tom does all kinds of other related creative things, including design, creation, and distribution to fans of the Dar Williams Worldwide Web button!

To make it easier to find your favorite artists on the Web, following are several URLs (Universal Resource Locators) which group various artists together for you in menu format:

- 1) Yahoo Entertainment:Music:Artists
<http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Music/Artists>
- 2) Ultimate Band List

- <http://american.recordings.com/WWWoM/ubl/ubl.shtml>
- 3) Musical Web Connections
<http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~hauben/music-index.html>
- 4) Library of Musical Links
<http://www.scf-usc.edu/~jrush/music/www.html>
- 5) People and Places
<http://web.cgrg.ohio-state.edu/folkbook>
- 6) Idiot's Delight Web Page
<http://www.planet.net/id>

Last but not least:

<http://www.users.interport.net:80/~stevens/ff/fastfolk.html>
'nuff said!

Even if you're not a savvy Web navigator, you can sit back and let the news come to you with a free subscription to the various news mailing lists (assuming, of course, that you have net-connected e-mail at your home or office.) Our two favorites:

The Folk_Music list, moderated by Alan Rowoth, focuses primarily on contemporary singer-songwriters and their music, but wanders off into lots of other musical fields. Lots of overnight concert reviews, announcements of upcoming recordings, festival reports, news about artists. Best of all, it's carefully packaged into a daily digest, with the wheat sorted from the chaff. It's the closest thing the folk world has to its own daily newspaper. To subscribe, send a message to listserv@nysernet.org reading *subscribe listserv youraddress@whatever.com*.

The Folk DJ List, managed by Tina Hay, includes playlists from radio shows around the country, news of specific interest to radio hosts, news of new record releases as well as lots of general music news, reviews and commentary. To subscribe, send a message to listserv@psuvm.edu reading *subscribe folkdj-l*.

CD review: Jeff Tareila's *A Thousand Faces*

Powerful, graceful guitar married to songs of an uncommon depth and clarity

by Joel Harris

He is both rocker and crooner, everyman and bard. He can cling to faith in a hopeless world or throw away his cares and bear it to Mississippi. Incorporating elements of country, pop, blues, folk, and rock, Jeff Tareila is the man behind a thousand masks. All his styles and perspectives come together in his wonderfully cohesive debut, *A Thousand Faces*.

Jeff Tareila is a songwriter for an America facing the new millennium. His songs tell of love and loss, faith and despair in ways that touch the heart and broaden the mind. They also communicate the daily struggle each one of us goes through when we pull ourselves together to face the world.

The 13 songs on *A Thousand Faces* are not snippets from the lives of assorted characters, but rather detailed explorations of one man's ability to reach inside himself and attempt to explain what he finds there. Whether that inward journey leads to faith or fear, this smart songwriter is aware of the need to express the truth of both.

With Mike Sloski on drums, Fergus Jemison Marsh on Chap-



man stick, Kevin Breit on lead guitar, Hugh Marsh on violin and David Hamburger on dobro and assorted guitars, Tareila surrounds himself with a formidable, veteran back-up band that provides solid support in songs like the country-tinged "Down Here in Mississippi" and creative energy in the exquisitely grooving "Draw Me a River." Hamburger, on dobro, is masterful at creating and sustaining mood, which he does to superb effect in a haunting homage to true love, "Will you still love me?"

Tareila himself is no slouch with a guitar in his hands. He is an accomplished and versatile player, comfortable driving the rhythm with a powerful strum lending grace and emphasis to seemingly effortless bounces and bends.

Besides being a gifted musician, Tareila writes songs with a depth and clarity uncommon in these days of one-hit wonders and recycled successes.

Consciously tuneful, this young artist is aware of his place in the music world, with an album full of radio-ready songs for a variety of formats. He sings and plays it like he means it, like life depends on it, and you know what? He's right.

Songwriting: No day at the beach (or is it?)

A report from the fourth annual Martha's Vineyard Songwriters' retreat

by Michael Veitch

With seagulls chattering away overhead, and the occasional ferry horn blasting out a b flat, the Wintertide Coffeehouse has a near beach front seat in the center of Martha's Vineyard's most active port. Located at "Five Corners", Vineyard Haven, virtually everyone coming on island must pass by the Wintertide sooner or later.

Maybe that's where the club's chief guru and mentor, Tony Lombardi, gathers the vast quantities of energy he needs to fuel his many and varied community interests. Or maybe he recharges on the consistently great acoustic music the Wintertide has become so famous for presenting all year round.

Christine Lavin dug the vibes so much, she helped organize the first and second "songwriter's retreats" as they came to be known. Starting the first year with invitations to her many friends on the acoustic music scene, she attracted a star-studded cast to the island to write songs, dissect the music business, generally hang out, and perform nightly at the Wintertide. It was a hit.

While Christine is no longer organizing the yearly gathering, her spirit, concepts and format for the Retreat have lived on and prospered. (The Black Dog Bakery next door still features Christine Lavin's Favorite Chocolate Chip Cookie.) This was my second year of being invited to the MVSR, and it looks like this is fast becoming a permanent singer/songwriter's institution. It's a whole lot of fun and it runs like this:

The focus has shifted slightly since the first year to giving more exposure to those artists who are "on the edge" of breaking through, past the "opener" level, and on to split bill/headliner status. To be considered, it really helps to have a CD out, a good press kit, a buzz on the internet, or a well-established local reputation. In addition to new and upcoming artists, several veteran participants are invited every year.

This time, there were performances by Cliff Eberhart, Peter Nelson, and Joe Keenan. A big part of the Retreat is the workshop scene, where each week 2-4 afternoon seminars are held. I attended most of them over the two weeks I was on the island, including catching Peter Nelson's discussions on songwriting, Flora D'Canto teaching us all how to use percussion instruments, Cliff Eberhart opining on the music biz, and even my being asked to do my own workshop on stage presence.

Performance opportunities included sold out houses four nights a week throughout the Retreat. Wednesday is set aside for "New Faces", or (anybody who just made it onto the island for that week's Retreat) Thursdays are traditional "Open Mike" Nights, hosted by Eric Hawkes, and Friday and Saturday nights, the Main Stage Showcase Nights.

During my stay, I caught performances by Leslie Tucker, Amy Fairchild, Stan Moehler & TS Baker, Jemima James, Michael Holland, David Crossland, Pete Nelson, Michael Jerling, Joe Keenan, Cliff Eberhart, Mike Duffy, Flora D'Canto, David Corcoran, Beeb D'Elia, Greg Greenway, and Max Cohen (who lent his stunning backup guitar work to many of the performances).

I also got to do quite a bit of playing and have to say that it is a real treat to be able to perform in one club over a series of nights. The local crowd gets to know your material and you get to know

them. Too often, I am only playing in a town for one night, never enough time to even unpack the suitcase.

High points for me? Seeing Kate Taylor again, who this year came as a spectator and has always been a great supporter of the Retreat and of up and coming songwriters. Great sound and recording work by the able duo of Mark Frink and Adam Blackburn. Being at the club when the CD collection of last year's Retreat, called *Love Keep Us Together*, arrived by boat. It's a great

one, with songs by Martin Sexton, Barbara Kessler, Hugh Blumenfeld, Jemima James, David Crossland, Max Cohen, Laura Coyle, Mike Duffy, Joe Keenan, Dayna Kurtz, David Corcoran, Beeb D'Elia, and yours truly.

If you want to order it, send \$15 plus postage to Wintertide Foundation, P.O. Box 29, Vineyard Haven MA 02568. Or call first- (508)693-8830 (Tell 'em I sent you!)

And of course, last but not least, being able to hang out with the Tonymeister, and the Wintertide family is always a great part of being at the MVSR. And then there's the time to write new songs, and the great food, and the Vineyard scenery, and the radio interviews and the.....see you next year!!

The focus has shifted toward exposing artists 'on the edge' of breaking through.

discmakers ad

String quartet meets the mosh pit

Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac crosses trad tunes, rock rhythms

by Jan Vanderhorst

Let me tell you about a concert I went to last summer.

It's a warm July night in Fergus, Ontario, a scenic rural town celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Scottish festival. Hundreds of people are lined up outside the local arena for the show. In the crowd you see moms, dads, young kids, grandparents and young people with purple hair, pierced body parts and army boots. Now, what kind of concert would bring together this meeting of Doc Martens and Dr. Scholl's?

Well, let's go inside and find out.

Ther warm summer's evening is quickly becoming hot and sticky. Well, what do you expect for a hockey rink in July? Once everybody is settled in, a young man with short curly hair, goatee and glasses walks on stage to enthusiastic applause. He places his fiddle under his chin and begins to play a soft, sweet melody. Then suddenly the beautiful moment is broken as the young man is transformed in a flurry of flying horse hair, flying glasses and churning arms. The crowd goes wild as hands are clapping, toes are tapping and the mosh pit is forming. And this is all before the band comes out!

Welcome to an Ashley MacIsaac concert.

This 21-year-old Cape Breton fiddler has created a sensation in Canada the past couple of years through his dynamic, sometimes controversial, approach to traditional fiddle tunes. His first CD, *Close to the Floor*, recorded when he was a mere lad of 17, was conventional in its interposition of traditional tunes: fiddle and piano. His latest record, *hi, how are you today*, is a melding of traditional tunes set to urban dance rhythms, grunge rock beats and even a string quartet arrangement.

What in the world could cause this transformation?

"I had an opportunity to go to New York in 1993, my last year in school," Ashley recalls, "and I got the idea that I could do a dance music record. Everything I was doing with the fiddle was organized around step dancing and stuff. I was also hanging around at clubs, I became a club kid, wearing my platforms and bell bottoms and stuff. So I decided I'd like to do a disco album."

"Over the next three years I ended up meeting other musicians, getting to have opportunities spring up because of media [attention] and to play in different situations."

One of those musicians was avant-garde compose Phillip Glass. Working with Glass led to playing with Paul Simon, Edie Brickell, David Byrne and The Chieftains. While he has yet to do the dance record or the disco record, *hi how are you?* is very alternative in its treatment of fiddle music. Was it a matter of throwing out the rule book?

"Completely to one degree. Any type of arrangement you could put the fiddle tune in, that's what I wanted to do. There was one element I wanted to retain ... I wanted the fiddle tunes to sound the same. If you take most of the arrangements away, all the fiddling I'm doing is the same way I'd play if I was playing solo. If it didn't happen that way, the track didn't make it to the record. That's why the album took almost two years to record."

While the shock of hearing hundred-year-old fiddle tunes given hard rock, grunge rock or dance rock treatments can be somewhat disconcerting, MacIsaac's ability to then play one of his own's compositions, the beautiful "MacDougall's Pride," with string quartet Quartetto Gelato can be puzzling. But Ashley

doesn't see this as a problem.

"There are two elements of the music I would like to present with the fiddle. And that is energy. That's what I've been doing for the last couple of years, playing with a band and telling people to get up and dance and enjoy themselves. Basically doing fast tunes, reels and jigs and some strathspeys. Putting the punches on things and accentuating them. That whole energetic appeal is what adapted alternative music for a lot of young people. I'm only 21 years old and I've always wanted to play for people my own age, so the way I've felt a connection is through that whole energy thing."

"On the complete opposite scale, there's nothing I love more than playing the sweetest slow airs, and marches and hornpipes and clogs and stuff like that. That's what I've listened to my whole life. Most of my audience was over the age of 40 and 50, and I hung out with a lot of older people. That's how I learned to perform in a sense. I like playing soft stuff and I don't find any problem crossing from the two. I don't see that people shouldn't enjoy both."

But through all the media attention, hype and collaborations with high-profile artists, how does one keep some sort of grounding or perspective?

"I would say two or three times a day you might get caught up in the whole thing, but it only takes a couple of minutes. The fact that I'm from Cape Breton might have drove that into my head enough that ... we all wipe our arse the same way, when you get down to it."

Well, that's one way of puttin' it.

For many people, Ashley MacIsaac's way of playing traditional tunes is the most innovative development in fiddling in years. Whether you agree with them or not, you must admit the future of fiddling looks to be very eventful and colorful in his hands.

Hudson Valley Musicians Alliance Westchester CD Release Concert

Help celebrate the release of issue #805, *Undercurrents*.

Saturday, February 10th, 8 PM

Northern Westchester Center for the Arts

272 North Bedford Road (Route 117)

Mount Kisco, NY

Donation: \$10

Information: (914) 739-2694

Here's your chance to see the perpetrators of FF #805 do their thing live. Due to late scheduling, the January 5 debut party at the Fast Folk Cafe was not announced in that issue. You will not want to miss this one!

Scheduled performers include:

Lora Lee Amram

Katherine Archer

Bill Bless

Carrie

Fraunty Dunn

Dean Friedman

Joe Giacoio

James Hovan

Stuart Kabak

New Middle Class

Out to Lunch

Dan Pelletier

Mark Shepherd

Sloan Wainwright

Bios

Wendy Beckerman, originally from New Jersey, has been active in the New York acoustic scene for several years. She has two CDs, *By Your Eyes* and *Marina's Owl*, on the Great Divide label. She's been part of the Fast Folk Revue since 1989. Info: Great Divide Records, 178 W. Houston St. #9, New York 10014. ("The Weasel" and "If I Were You")

Patrick Brayer is not an entertainer. "I don't do concerts. I only do ceremonies." Working quietly from a region known as the Inland Empire somewhere in Southern California, he hosts a weekly radio show, "Starvation Cafe Radio Archives," writes on the arts and collects his raw and vivid songs in an ongoing series of cassettes titled *The Secret Hits of Patrick Brayer*. Info: Ivory Jackson & Assoc., 17586 Pinedale, Fontana, CA 92335; phone (909) 823-2016. ("Bourbon as a Second Language" and "Funeral Town")

Annie Gallup has a brand new album, *Backbone*, on 1-800-Prime-CD, follow-up to the most excellent *Cause and Effect* on Flyaway Hair Records. She was a finalist in the Telluride Bluegrass festival's 1994 Troubadour contest. She recently relocated from Seattle to Asheville, N.C. Info: 1-800-Prime-CD, 111 E. 14th St. Suite 300, New York 10003. ("Fight The Devil")

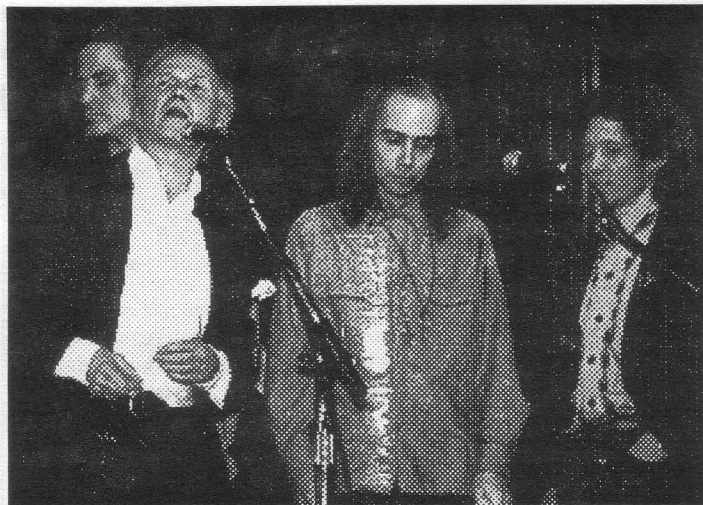
Jack Hardy has, since last year's show, had a tribute album of other people singing his songs released on BCN Records. Usually you have to be either famous or dead to receive such an honor. Jack claims to be neither. He has survived a trip to Texas, a goatee, and the cancellation of his latest children's play due to controversial subject matter. He has also acquired a witch's hat which he has been spotted wearing around Greenwich Village. He is about to record his 11th album and looks forward to a spring tour of Europe. He is still the once and future editor of *Fast Folk Musical Magazine*. Info: Great Divide, 178 W. Houston Street #9, New York, 10014. ("Forget-Me-Not" and "Go Tell the Savior")

Jim Infantino, based in Boston, has released two albums in the past year. *the world of particulars*, on the Gadfly label, is a solo effort that includes some performances less manic than tonight's. *More Songs About Me* from Tangible Music, features the complete band, Jim's Big Ego, in which Mr. Infantino plays a pivotal role. He's also appeared on the recent *This is Boston... Not Austin* compilation on Black Wolf Records and the Postcrypt anniversary CD from 1-800-Prime-CD. ("Stress")



From the stage of The Bottom Line (from top):
Jim Infantino, Jack Hardy, Tim Robinson



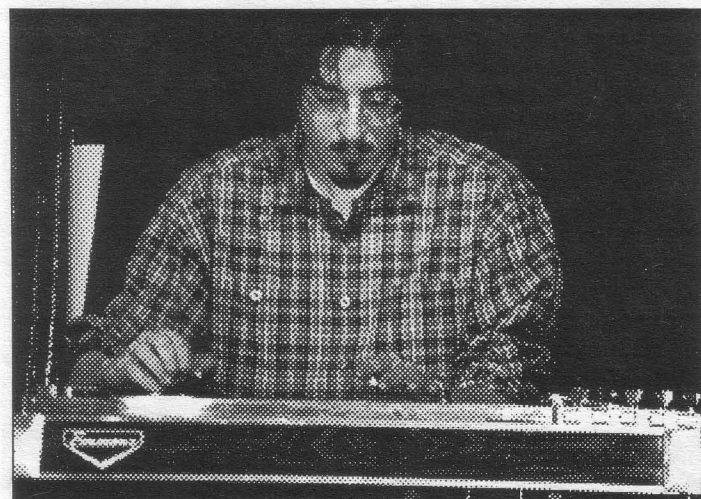
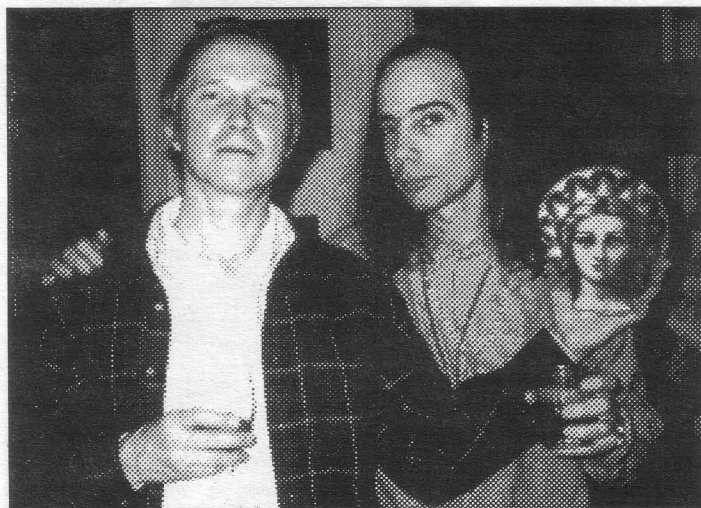


Top left: Richard Meyer. Top right: Tim, Jack, Patrick, David. Below: Jack and Patrick offstage. Bottom left: David Hamburger on pedal steel. Bottom right: Lucy Kaplansky

Lucy Kaplansky has been a part of Fast Folk since our second LP. She recorded almost two dozen tracks for our albums over the first few years. She took an extended break from music to earn her doctorate in psychology (yes, you may call her Dr. Kaplansky if you prefer), then decided to return to music after all. The angels wept for joy and the masses cheered. Her first album, *The Tide*, on Red House Records, has taken off like a rocket and she's been touring nonstop this year. Rumor has it that a new album, collecting many of those songs from the '80s, is in the works. ("*The Tide*")

Tim Robinson is from Croton, NY by way of Park Slope, Brooklyn. He has been writing songs of one sort or another for years but has most recently become active in the NYC folk scene. Tim recently released *Disassemble Yourself*, a nine-song effort culled from his extensive, quirky catalog. He believes it is best to write while disassembled, and since he writes often, he is seldom otherwise. Tim makes his living as an illustrator. Songs are pictures and he can draw. Info: 688 President St. #4, Brooklyn, NY 11215; phone (718) 789-5707. ("*Mother and Her Airman*")

Louise Taylor was born and still lives in Vermont. On her 12th birthday she was given her first guitar, a Stella Harmony. A self-taught guitarist, she left home at 16 and traveled extensively, playing street music. She later studied voice with Frank Baker of Bennington College. In 1992 she wrote and released *Looking for Rivers*, found the perfect guitar and married its maker, Michael Millard (Froggy Bottom Guitars). Her new CD, *Ruby Shoes*, produced by William Ackerman, will be released in March on Signature Sounds.





Top: Louise Taylor, Mark Dann, Lucy Kaplansky.



Left: Lucy Kaplansky, Tim Robinson

Bottom left: Patrick Brayer.

Bottom center: Louise Taylor.

Bottom right: Wendy Beckerman

Info: Blue Coyote, RR1 Box 1505, Newfane, VT 05345. ("Your Face" and "Dangerous")

Plus songs by:

Catie Curtis has a brand new CD, *Truth from Lies*, due momentarily on EMI/ Guardian Records. Her previous album was *From Years to Hours* on Mongoose Music. Info: John Porter at Mood Indigo, (212) 665-2482. Catie returns to *The Bottom Line* stage on February 15 to unveil the new CD. ("Radical")

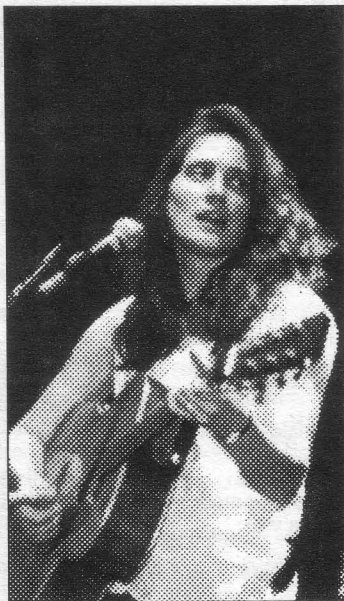
Richard Shindell has two CDs on the Shanachie label, *Sparrow's Point* and *Blue Divide*. He is currently working on his third record. For booking call 201-358-8785 or 505-242-5028. ("Ballad of Mary Magdalene")

The band:

Mark Dann (acoustic and electric guitars), along with Jack Hardy, holds the distinction of being part of every Fast Folk Revue. He currently lives in Tribeca, a mere four blocks from the Fast Folk Cafe ("I was here first..."). He spends most of his time producing and engineering records in his 24-track recording studio, building and repairing guitars, fixing other peoples computer nightmares, and talking on the telephone. For relaxation, he plays gigs. He can be seen around town playing bass with The Robert Ross Band, up in Woodstock with the Tibetan rock 'n' roll band The Dharma Bums, and once a year or so on tour in Europe with Rod MacDonald, where he catches up on sleep. He can be reached at the studio at (212) 941-7771. E-mail: Mark107@aol.com.

David Hamburger (dobro and pedal steel) has done the Fast Folk Revue three times now and has yet to be offered a drum solo. Despite this oversight, he's been keeping busy, playing on recent albums by 5 Chinese Brothers, Hugh Blumenfeld and Michael Kroll, writing for *Guitar Player* magazine, and learning to give his cat, Finley, daily insulin shots without losing the skin on his fingers. David's solo CD, *King of the Brooklyn Delta*, is available from Chester Records, P.O. Box 170504, Brooklyn (where else?) NY 11217.

Jenny Hersch (upright bass) has played frequently on the Fast Folk Cafe stage, on albums for many of tonight's performers and at numerous festivals, including the Philadelphia Folk Festival. This is her second Fast Folk Revue.



Lyrics

1. Your Face

Louise Taylor

I keep looking for your face
In the morning sun
Coming round the corner bend
It's that time of year again
When you should appear
Like apples red and clear
Between the green and my missing you
It's a melancholy time
It's the scent that's been defined
It's the air as sharp as waking

And I have seen your lion's mane
Shaking untamed without you
And your clothes laze
On other shoulders and legs
But they don't move like you used to
They're just misfits in your place
Looks like trouble's in the waiting
I keep looking for your light
There's no yellow in sight
A lifeless painting

I keep looking for your face...
©1994, Louise Taylor

2. Forget-Me-Not

Jack Hardy

And though you say that you'll be mine
I hear another voice in time
And that voice plays a bitter song
Says I will stay but I won't stay long
But who's to say who's true and who is not
With eyes as blue as forget-me-nots

When first I held you to my breast
I would believe that east was west
I would believe that right was wrong
When first I heard your silken song
Believe that false was true and cold was hot
With eyes as blue as forget-me-nots

And though you stayed when lilacs bloomed
Within the waning April moon
And though you stayed 'til summer's end
There was no way to stay as friends
But who's to say this love was misbegot
With eyes as blue as forget-me-nots

And in the still light of the morn
You come to me a dream forlorn
You come to me upon the wind
Says those who stay are born to sin
And this I knew was true yet soon forgot
With eyes as blue as forget-me-nots
©1994, Jack Hardy

3. The Weasel

Wendy Beckerman

He parts his hair down the middle
With a ruler and a knife
He brings to the party scene
His razor sharp wife
He bends your ear with a secret
About his new lover
But what good is a secret
When everybody knows
There's a weasel in the house of monogamy

The weasel is a slender active
Carnivorous mammal
His feeling of devotion
Are measured as minimal
He looks at her so lovingly
Over breakfast
But you know he's going ratting
When he looks his best
There's a weasel in the house of monogamy

Watch his eyes look right look left
Look right through your paisley dress
Watch his hands the left the right
He left you for another bite of vermin
There's a weasel in the house of monogamy

The rat is a dirty biting
Omnivorous rodent
She meets him in the basement
Of her slum tenement
He drives from the country to the city
On a midsummer's night
He loves the way she
Takes pleasure in the fight
There's a weasel in the house of monogamy

He will kill too much to eat
She will spread disease in heat
What an ugly way to kiss
What a lovely pair is this vermin
There's a weasel in the house of monogamy
©1994, Wendy Beckerman

4. One Rose

Richard Meyer

Though she's steady when she comes to me
I can't catch her in my moving arms
She knows better than to hold her breath
I can't touch her when my heart is dark

Chorus: One rose
All I have to give her is one rose
One rose
That blooms in clear water and stands on its own
One rose

She's read the lifeline in my open hand
And showed me where the lover's knot untied
In this city of eight million sights
She's all I see through these crowded eyes

Repeat chorus

Heart to heart survival is a good luck charm
Down the years comes this Chinese coin
Each life we've been together it has followed us
As our love and our lives entwined

If I can show her that the change in me
Will outlast the night this time
A dozen reasons are not needed
When one is true as one true love survives

Repeat chorus

©1994, Richard Meyer

5. Mother And Her Airman

Tim Robinson

Thank God for small favors said Albert
His lighter under his spoon
While somewhere in San Bernadino
His sweet mother's tulips had bloomed
In went the needle out came a vase
Mother cut tulips in sandals
While Albert shot junk in his veins

Chorus: And he calls her on Mondays
Just to tell her they're fine
But work's kind of slow, Ma
Could you spare us a dime

Now Albert's muse was Theresa
A sixteen year old with a past
And mother had once loved an airman
Who had died from flying too fast

Down went the jet plane
Up rolled the sleeve
Mother spoke softly to photos
While Albert was finally relieved

Repeat chorus

There's a hole in the desert
Where a soldier fell from the sky
When it rains it fills up with water
But mostly it's dry

Now the dreams that were swimming
through Albert
Would cause him to scream in his sleep
While mother awaited the airman
So patiently counting on sheep

Roar went the engines
Of a two-seater plane
And mother cried out for Theresa
The airmen were crashing again

There's a hole in the desert...
©1994, Tim Robinson

6. The Tide

Lucy Kaplansky

There are demons in the water
There are devils in the sea
There are dangers in the current
When the tide goes out of me
I could drink you under the table
I could drink you out of town
I could drink you off the planet
Drink myself into the ground

Chorus: And I have nothing for you tonight...

I was made to be a good girl
Carried buckets made of stone
Full of envy full of sorrow
On a tightrope all alone
All the time I was on fire
I burned with every stride
And now I see this anger
Is the horse I choose to ride

Now you say you want something nice from
me
Well if you find it, take it, it's on me
In the meantime don't bother me
The tide has washed the nice from me

Repeat chorus

In nothing are the voices
And the pictures of my life
In the nothing of the sky
Is an ocean made of light
In the nothing of my silence
Is a sad-eyed little girl
On a tightrope she is singing
As she passes through this world

Repeat chorus

©1994, Lucy Kaplansky

7. Funeral Town

Patrick Brayer

Some people have so much money
They can't afford to tell the truth
They're like an apple that the sun is biting
With its big old golden tooth
When love is tied to possession
It never has to hit the streets
We're at the walls of this baptismal
We've lost our roots and sprouted feet

Chorus: In this funeral town
Rocking out on the shifting sand
You can't put a violin back in the trees
With words of silk and diamonds
In this funeral town
Da na na...

If you loved your children so much
Why put 'em in a sinking lifeboat
Here's to the edible twilight
And the kindling in its coat
If the yucca should fail to bloom
In defiance of the smog
Covered in untamed housing
In the fragrance of the fog

Repeat chorus

There's a language for us to understand
In the whiteness of the sage
You can't kill the tree to build a book
That will heal this day and age
Balance is a big word
That knows no walls and glass
Everybody can't be a mortician
And expect the future to last

Repeat chorus

©1994, Patrick Brayer

8. Radical

Catie Curtis

It's alright
We're gonna be fine
But let's give my mamma
And my daddy a little time
'Cause I've been good
Up 'til now
They see you and they think
That I have changed somehow

Chorus: But I'm not (being) radical
When I kiss you
I don't love you
To make a point
It's the hollow of my heart
That cries when I miss you
And keeps me alive when we're apart

We go downtown
Some people they stare
But there are lots of people
Who really don't care
And I just want to
Hold your hand
I don't feel like making
Some big stand

Repeat chorus

It's alright
We're gonna be fine
Even if this world

Is taking so much time
And 'though I mind
What people say
Love is stronger
Than words anyway

Repeat chorus

©1994, Catie Curtis

9. Century's End

Richard Meyer

I may be the last one who can say
That I rode the trains
Or marched with my congregation
Through a black forest rain
Past gypsy camps and the open pit chain
I was twenty one and shackled
And now I remain
As the last one who can say
That I rode the trains

I may be the last one who can say
That I saw the ash
Or felt the fresh cut of barbed wire
In no man's land
Between all the farms gone blind and afraid
To see the trains come full
And leave with no blame
I am the last one who can say
That I saw the ash

At century's end
Though our births were not noted
Our deaths as survivors
Must not be forgotten
Blood in mass graves
Will soak past the bottom
Until all the names
Of our towns are forgotten
I am the last one who can say that I saw

In the textbooks our pictures
Are anonymous quiet and flat
And black and white grains
Remain families splintered and shot
But to look in the eye at it
That's past and done
It's second hand memory
For those are too young
To have stood in the gas
Wearing a star
Or heard our names called
From the cattle cars
To be left for fillings
And piles of shoes
Or feel our memories dying
At century's end

©1994, Richard Meyer

10. Fight The Devil

Annie Gallup

She wore her hair in a long blonde braid
You thought she'd be easy to understand
You couldn't have been more wrong but you
didn't know it
'Til you saw her hair loose and fanned
Across your pillow and then it was too late
You were woven in her web of masquerading
In a way you would be unraveling forever
Like her long wild strands of hair unbraiding

Those hot endless August nights
When you knew for certain that she was gone
You sat in your attic room you were sleepless

and burning
With a pain as fierce and raw
As a razor, as a tearing at your skin
You were crazy with the pain, crazy with the
heat
A sort of fever dream floating on
The sounds drifting up from the street

Chorus: If you loved me you would bring me
roses
You would lie for me, steal for me
Fight the devil
You would call me Angel, forget your own
name
You would lie awake all night, lie awake all
night

How trusting you were, how unafraid
Of falling, of surrender, of the devil, of the
dark
When you called her name it was singing in
your veins
But it seems when she called you sweetheart
It was just a title you vied for and won
Then lost in the next round to a worthy foe
Who met your standard and raised it
And you were powerless then but to let it go
chorus

©1994, Annie Gallup

11. Kismaayo

(Christian Bauman)

Three days in the sun
And this lion tattoo is turning brown
Its legs are bent to run
And my feet are firmly fixed on foreign
ground
Three days in the desert
And now we are Mafaso bound

Chorus: You can see Kismaayo
You can see Kismaayo from here

Robert told me he could see
Fear in a fistful of sand
Standing watch at midnight
The ocean fears nothing but the man
Shootin' through the atmosphere
Signals on the short wave band
And all I know is what I know
Fear escapes this letter in my hand

Repeat chorus

Forty constellations here
North south equators equinox
There are forty possibly deaths here
The bullets I bring in this box

And last night in Kismaayo
A Frenchman found a bullet in his head
An argument over wages
Regarding what the fat folk said
Fat folk are coming
Fat folk are shooting
Little folk sometimes shoot back

Repeat chorus

©1994, Christian Baumann

13. If I Were You

Wendy Beckerman

If I were you
I'd tell her I don't mind your crying
And I'd say don't be afraid of dying
While the day is passing
I'd tell her, nothing you could do
Would make me find my other shoe
And walk away from all your sadness
If I were you
I would not see her as a liar
When all she ever wanted
Was to hide her imperfections from you

Chorus: But I'm not you
And I don't see the world the way you do
And when I sleep I dream
And when I wake I can remember
All the motion in the monster
All the flicker in the fire
You say you don't dream at all

If I were you
I could rise early in the morning
And write a simple letter to her
Saying I am sorry
And she would cry
If she were someone who could love you
And forgive you for the days
When you would keep her from her living
If I were you
I'd understand that all you wanted
Was to take her in your body
Just to keep her from the danger of the dark

Repeat chorus

©1994, Wendy Beckerman

14. 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 goin nowhere
And that makes me nervous...
Everybody's out to get me
But I feel alright...
Everybody's thinkin' 'bout me
It's the little things that get you...
When you weren't paying attention

I'm trying to cut down on my caffeine consumption
And so when I get up I just have one cup of coffee
And I like to have another cup of coffee with my breakfast
And on the way to work I like to get a cup of coffee
Like the kind of cup of coffee that you get with a donut
'Cept I never get the donut, I just have the cup of coffee
And when I get to work I like to have a cup of coffee
'Cause I like to have a coffee when I'm talkin' on the phone
But it usually goes cold and then I need to get another cup of coffee
And it's lunch and I have an espresso

And when I get back it's not morning anymore
So I have a diet cola and another diet cola
And by then I'm feelin' fine and I'm feelin' pretty sharp
And I'm feelin' pretty wired and I'm gettin' things done
But right about two I get this little tiny migraine
And it starts behind my eyes and it moves to the back of my neck
And it moves to the bottom of my spine
But it doesn't get there 'til about five or six o'clock
Which is the end of the day
So I'm fine, so I'm fine, so I'm fine
Except when I have to work late when I have to work late
Which I usually do

Repeat chorus

I love to work I love to run I love to play real hard
And I love to steal little things from the grocery store
Like a piece of bubble gum
Or sometimes I just stick my thumb in a peach
And leave it there
I love to work I love to run I love to waterski
snowboard
Jetski skydive parasail hangglide
Rollerblade mountainbike Bungee jump
Well, I mean I'd love to do these things
If I ever had the time
I love to work I love to work I love to work
And after work I love to spend a little time
With this woman I'm seeing
Except we never really get a little time to spend together
So we call each other up and we talk about work

But what I think I'd really love
Is to get all by myself on a little tiny island
In the middle of the ocean
With just me and a book and a cellular phone
And a personal computer
In case something came up
And I'd eat and I'd drink and I'd run and I'd sleep
And I wouldn't do nothin' 'cept swim all day
'Cept my beeper doesn't work underwater
Where are the sharks where are the sharks
And there's this kind of anemone that sticks in your foot
And the poison goes up to your brain and you die
Sandfleas! Sandfleas! Yuck!

But actually I think it'd be really relaxing
Just me by myself in the middle of the ocean
And that's what I'd really love to do more than anything else
Except I'd really hate it

Repeat chorus

©1994, Jim Infantino

15. The Ballad Of Mary Magdalene

Richard Shindell

My name is Mary Magdalene
I come from Palestine
Please excuse these rags I'm in

But I've fallen on hard times
Long ago I had my work
When I was in my prime
But I gave it up all for love
It was his career or mine

Chorus: Jesus loved me, this I know
But why on earth did I ever let him go
He was always faithful, he was always kind
But he walked off with this heart of mine

But I remember nights we spent
Whispering our creed
Our rituals our sacrament
The stars our canopy
There beneath an olive tree
We'd offer up our plea
God's creation innocent
His arms surrounding me

Repeat chorus

A love like this will come but once
This I do believe
And I'll not see his like again
As I live and breathe
And I'm sorry if I might offend
But I will never see
How the tenderness I shared with him
Became a heresy

Repeat chorus

©1994, Richard Shindell

16. Dangerous

Louise Taylor

I'm a warm wind
Blowin' in your summer kitchen
I'm a cool breeze
Squeezin' through your back door
Won't say for sure
How long I will stay
'Cause I like danger
Danger in a dangerous way

I'm a tightwire
I'm a tattoo where the sun don't shine
I'm a leotard
Watch me leapin' in the spotlight
One more time
I'm a freefall down your black hole
Kind of girl
And I like danger
Danger and it's a dangerous world

When I grow up
I'll never grow up so tall
I'll wear mother's high heels
On little bare feet still small

I'll take your married man
And I'll give him back again
I'll take your junkie
And I'll hold him all I can
I'm your lover
I'm your Mother Theresa
And I like danger
I'll take your danger
When it comes out to get ya

And I'm a cigarette
And I'm burnin' down my house
I'm a tight skirt like a bracelet

I'm a pretty silk blouse
I'm a wheel that's turning
In against itself
You could say
I like danger
Danger in a dangerous way

I'm a warm wind blowin
©1994, Louise Taylor

17. Bourbon As A Second Language

Patrick Brayer

Chorus: Bourbon as a second language
Trail across mankind
Bourbon as a second language
I'm gonna speak my mind
Bourbon as a crowning touch
El Tormente come and soften me up
Somewhere in the echo
Of a baby's cry for more
My first language is no more

Dirty little steel town
Where even the birds sound dry
The reflection of a hard hat
Still in your mama's eye
You can put your ear up to the bottle
Hear the world as it stops
And almost hear the sound of the wind
In the Georgia treetops

Yes it's a scholarship for strangers
Your cheap perfume and danger
Before the immigrants of loneliness
I will sing my song
It takes a neon education
To keep things this long and thin
'Cause when you double me
I.W. Harper is my friend

Repeat chorus
©1994, Patrick Brayer

17. The Heart

Tom Russell and Greg Trooper

Go to sleep my darling
Lay down upon your bed
May the rhymes of childhood songs
Dance inside your head
When nighttime falls around you
I know that you're afraid
But the heart will bring you home again
The heart is built that way

Chorus: The heart will bring you home again
It hasn't failed us yet
The heart will bring you home again
The heart does not forget

So close your eyes my darling
Close your eyes and dream
The world is full of promises
And love is all it seems
Yes there will be the hard roads
That lead us all astray
But the heart will bring you home again
The heart is built that way

Repeat chorus

The sun will rise my darling
And glisten off the streets
So close your eyes and believe in love
And feel safe inside your dreams

'Cause no one's going to harm you
Or carry you away
But the heart will bring you home again
The heart is built that way

Repeat chorus
©1994, Tom Russell and Greg Trooper

18. Go Tell The Saviour

Jack Hardy

This is the last weary road
I'm gonna travel
The last weary night in a cheap hotel
And it's hard to kneel down and pray
And thank the lord for another day
When the morning only means
You missed another meal

Chorus: Go tell my mama
That I was wrong to break her heart
Go tell my papa
That he was right right from the start
Go tell the patron saints that they forgot
To watch out for where I roam
And go tell the saviour
I'm coming home

Well I must admit
It was my childhood dream to travel
From the stories that you hear
About wine women and song
But if the wine don't burn your eyes
Them women might make you realize

That they are taking off their clothes
Just to put you on

Repeat chorus

This is the last weary road
I am gonna travel
The last weary night in a cheap hotel
And I'm a feelin' all I got
Are my feelin's all tied up in knots
And the mornin' just might find me
Halfway to hell

Repeat chorus
©1994, Jack Hardy

Sing Out ad

Dirty Linen ad

Credits

Fast Folk Volume 8, Number 6
January 1996
The 1995 Fast Folk Revue

1. Your Face

Louise Taylor, vocal, guitar
©1994, Louise Taylor

2. Forget-Me-Not

Jack Hardy, vocal, guitar
©1994, Jack Hardy

3. The Weasel

Wendy Beckerman vocal, guitar
©1994, Wendy Beckerman

4. One Rose

Richard Meyer, vocal, guitar
©1994, Richard Meyer

5. Mother and Her Airman

Tim Robinson, vocal, guitar
©1994, Tim Robinson

6. The Tide

Lucy Kaplansky vocal, guitar
©1994, Lucy Kaplansky and Fred Litvin

7. Funeral Town

Patrick Brayer, vocal, guitar
©1994, Patrick Brayer

8. Radical

Wendy Beckerman, vocal, guitar
©1994, Catie Curtis

9. Century's End

Richard Meyer, vocal, guitar
©1994, Richard Meyer

10. Fight the Devil

Louise Taylor, vocal, guitar
©1994, Annie Gallup

11. Kismaayo

Jack Hardy, vocal, guitar
David, Patrick and Richard: backing vocal
©1994, Chris Bauman

12. If I Were You

Wendy Beckerman, vocal, guitar
©1994, Wendy Beckerman

13. Stress

Jim Infantino, vocal, guitar
©1994, Jim Infantino

14. Ballad of Mary Magdalene

Lucy Kaplansky, vocal, guitar
©1994, Richard Shindell

15. Dangerous

Louise Taylor, vocal, guitar
©1994, Louise Taylor

16. Bourbon as a Second Language

Patrick Brayer, vocal, guitar
©1994, Patrick Brayer

17. The Heart

Lucy and the company: vocals
©1994, Tom Russell and Greg Trooper

18. Go Tell the Savior

Jack and the company: vocals
©1994, Jack Hardy

The Band

Jenny Hersch: upright bass
Mark Dann: guitar
David Hamburger: dobro, pedal steel
Jeff Berman: drums

Artistic Director: Jack Hardy
Master of Ceremonies: Ben Soper
Recording Engineer: Peter Beckerman
Mastering and Editing: Mark Dann

*Special thanks, as ever,
to Alan Pepper,
Stanley Snadowsky
and the staff of
The Bottom Line.*

Coming to the Fast Folk Cafe

February '96

Fri 2/2 Annie Gallup/Patrick Brayer
Sat 2/3 Dave's True Story
Fri 2/9 Danny Kalb
Sat 2/10 Pierce Pettis,
Chuck Brodsky and Greg Greenway
Fri 2/16 Tamarack
Sat 2/17 Cormac McCarthy
Fri 2/23 Jim Infantino
Sat 2/24 Jack Hardy

March '96

Fri 3/1 Rosalie Sorrels
Sat 3/2 Geoff Bartley
Fri 3/8 Tom Russell
Sat 3/9 Mike Agranoff
3/15-16 Aztec Two-Step
Fri 3/22 To be announced
Sat 3/23 Kevin Connolly
Fri 3/29 Whirligig
Sat 3/30 Scott Alarik

April '96

Sat 4/6 Cliff Eberhardt (tentative)
Thu 4/18 Garnet Rogers
Sat 4/20 Michael McNevin
4/26-27 Rod MacDonald

May '96

Sat 5/4 Lucy Kaplansky
Sat 5/11 Louise Taylor
Sat 5/18 Salamander Crossing

The Fast Folk Cafe is at 41 N. Moore St., Tribeca (Two blocks below Canal St., east of Hudson St.)
Franklin Street Station on #1 subway, Canal Street Station on A/C/E trains.
Call 212-274-1636. Showtime is 7:30. Tickets are \$10 (\$8 for Fast Folk Musical Magazine subscribers).