CURRENTLY APPEARING

THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE FAST FOLK

MUSICAL MAGAZINE
1 ROD MACDONALD American Jerusalem (B. MacDonald/Universal Polygram Intl. Pub., Inc., ASCAP) 5:55
2 DAVID MASSINGILL What's Wrong with the Man Upstairs? (D. Massingill/MB Music Corp. 0/8/0/4/4/9/4 and David Massingill Music, ASCAP) 4:34
3 GERRY DEVINE Old Factory Town (B. Ross/Bean Rose Music, ASCAP) 5:08
4 LUCY KAPLANSKY You Just Need a Home (Spotlight) (J. Kaplanisky/Lucy Kaplanisky, ASCAP) 3:34
5 DAVE VAN RONK Another Time and Place (D.Van Ronk/Folklore Productions Inc., ASCAP) 4:27
6 SHAWN COVIN I Don't Know Why (J. Cohen/Vil Music Corp. 0/1/0/0/0/0/0 Sacred Songs, ASCAP) 3:42
7 JOHN GORKA Geez's Walking Ways (J. Gorka/Blue Police Music, ASCAP) 3:50
8 DAVID INDIAN Romantic (D. Feldman/DAVID Indian Music) 4:00
9 TOM INTONDI High Times (T. Intondi R. Rosini/Chic Dance Music, ASCAP) 4:32
10 CHRISTINE LAVIN Don't Ever Call Your Sweetheart by His Name (E. Lavin / 001946 C/2DreamWorks Songs, adm. by Cherry Lane Music Pub. Co., Inc., ASCAP/Mountain Music, ASCAP) 3:50
11 FRANK CHRISTIAN Where Were You Last Night? (P. Christian/Wich's House Music, ASCAP, adm. by) 4:14
12 GERMANA PUCCI Introduction to Carpo Gocce 0:28
13 GERMANA PUCCI Carpo Gocce (G. Facco & G. Bolog) 5:08
14 LAURA BURNS & ROGER ROSEN Kilkenny, Ireland (P. Jones & S. Jones/Some Sweet Music, BMI adm. by Copyright Management Services, Inc.) 5:54
15 ERIK FRANDSEN Introduction to The Viking Rag 1:32
16 ERIK FRANDSEN The Viking Rag (E. Fransd) 2:32
17 JACK HARDY Forget-Me-Not (R. Hardy/Jack Hardy Music, BMI) 4:16
18 ENSEMBLE Watchful (B. Bachmann) 2:41

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2 LAURA BURNS & ROGER ROSEN
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6 JACK HARDY
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PRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY RICHARD MEYER; JACK HARDY, AND JEFF PLACE
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MacDonald, David Massengill, Tom Intondi, Nancy Talanian, and myself, as editor, like Tom Sawyer making sure everyone had fun whitewashing the fence. Suzanne Vega was our first subscription manager; she entered each subscription by hand into a book.

At the last possible minute, we found ourselves sitting around trying to decide what we were going to call the magazine. David Massengill wanted to call it "Blaze" in honor of Ezra Pound's magazine. I wanted to call it "Fast Folk." Dave Van Ronk wanted to call it "The Coop," like the Harvard Coop in Cambridge across from Club Passim. We all agreed that it should be a musical magazine: hence The Coop/The Fast Folk Musical Magazine was born. Everyone was sworn to secrecy until the first issue came out.

We sold the first issue at cost ($2.00). By the time it hit the stands, we were well into production of the second issue, which focused on songwriters interpreting other songwriters' work, reinforcing our philosophy that the song was more important than the singer. We felt strongly that what we were doing was part of a longstanding tradition. Subsequent issues, to name a few, focused on songs of social commentary, traditional songs, women's songs, humorous songs, and street music.

By the end of the year we had 400 subscriptions; by the end of the second, 700. Actual listenshipe was enhanced by radio airplay across the country as well as copies being passed around.

The first year, for the album, we used plain white covers marked with a rubber stamp. After a year, we started to print covers with the same graphic that was on the magazine stuffed inside. Paul Kaplan produced a songbook containing all the songs from the first year of the Fast Folk. At the end of the second year, Christine Lavin arranged with Allan Pepper at the Bottom Line for us to produce our first Fast Folk Musical Magazine Revue. The stage manger for that show was Richard Meyer, a relative newcomer who was later to take over as editor of the magazine. The show featured 12 songwriters and a house band. Each performer sang one of his or her own songs and covered a song by another writer. The emphasis was on variety and group numbers. Hundreds of posters were put up around the Village by freezing volunteers.

Over the next several years, The Fast Folk Musical Magazine (incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1984) put out more than one hundred issues, recording well over a thousand songs.
Fast Folk: For the Art of It  

by Richard Meyer

My immersion in all things Fast Folk began on a Monday evening in 1982, observing from a distance a fracas meeting at “The Speak.” The membership, led by Darryl Cherney (now a leading environmentalist), was arguing the merits and legalism of an advertising sandwich board on MacDougal Street. Calendars were being folded and stamped, guitars tuned for the open mike, the waitress Olga was breaking bottles or throwing her tips back at the few actual customers. The SpeakEasy wall at 107 MacDougal, only a few steps from Bleeker Street. There was always someone writing a song. For a $2.00 membership and some bathroom-clearing-calendar-folding, you could see any show for free.

I had been playing open mikes and left a demo for Jack Hardy at the suggestion of David Massengill. The next week Jack walked over after 15 minutes and said, “Isn’t Communism wonderful?” He often brought half a dozen performers to the early recording sessions at Mark Dannis’s attic studio in Brooklyn and urged them to keep it simple. Once there, arrangements developed and harmonies were added, making the songs more dynamic. Recording for Fast Folk taught everyone studio techniques and improved their musicianship. Often Mark would be left with a reel of solo songs to which he added appropriate parts; and yes, he ran the multi-track tape machine with his toes, so he could simultaneously record bass and guitar. The music was recorded on a home tape recorder in about 17 hours of performance, mixing, and editing time.

At the time I worked as a designer out of town and made the two-hour drive to the Songwriter’s Exchange with a new song most Mondays, and I was not the only one.

A guiding principle of Fast Folk recordings was that the singer would have one take to commit a song to tape. He could have a second chance but had to erase the first take. This kept everyone focused. We didn’t waste time or tape.

Hardy’s apartment, the “Houston St. Hilton,” became an open forum and editing room. It was not unusual to hear someone casually mention their new song, only to have the work stop until the song was played and discussed (and often appear on the next Fast Folk). There were no rules except to honor the song. It was a place to hang and hear, and be heard, and enjoy arguably the finest $2.00 pasta dinner in New York prepared by Fast Folk’s Editor-in-Chief songwriter, Germana Pucci.

The recording engineers who worked on later Fast Folk issues — Jay Rosen, David Seitz, David Van Der Haden, and Bill Kollar — inherited a tradition of quick recording (some might say impatience), and added their expertise to the songs they cut. In addition to traditional studios, we held recording sessions wherever we needed to in order to get the song. The SpeakEasy, of course, was the primary location. Another, for example, was when Willie Nininger sang “The Star Spangled Banner” at Shea Stadium, and Christine Lavin recorded it on a Walkman. When the Fast Folk Revue was invited to Boston (1985–87), Jay Rosen set up his recording equipment in the basement of the Nameless Coffee House and produced three albums of Boston songwriters.

No matter where it was located, the Songwriter’s Exchange was never the place to lobby for a gig at the SpeakEasy — although we did find a fair share of songs to record between glasses of Bourdeaux (the doleful of a turntable or a microphone on a napkin was a reminder to catch the writer later).

David Seitz, a doctor, took on the lion’s share of the recording sessions after 1987. He produced our first Toronto album in association with the CBC, and also produced a CD at the Postcrypt/Columbia University. We issued more Boston albums, two from Los Angeles, and one recorded in Texas by the banks of the Guadalupe River, using a sock and a park bench for a microphone windscreen. We were there in 1997 at the Maine Festival. We were there at the 25th anniversary of the Cafe Lena in Saratoga Springs, New York. Fast Folk had gone nationwide.

Even though our subscribers voted against switching to CD, we did so in 1990 as it allowed more songs to be included in each issue. The Fast Folk Revue shows grew more ambitious. There were exciting musical combinations that required some serious rehearsals. For our 10th anniversary we sold out six standing-room-only shows, featuring an 11-piece band and 35 songwriters on the stage. Erik Frandsen couldn’t make the 1992 show because he was appearing in his own off-Broadway musical The Song of Singapore, so he brought the whole cast down for one number. A van full of fans came from Chicago, and even some of our Italian fans arrived from Italy. What brought us all together was the same as it had been in 1982: the local audience coming to hear the new songs of their neighborhood songwriters.

The purpose of Fast Folk was to create the myth of a contemporary scene in the Village with a club, recordings, and press, and then live up to it. This wasn’t hard because these were prolific writers who were writing great songs, as Fast Folk’s 105-album series testifies. Songs that had been casual standards around the club became “legitimized” by national
The Songs, the Writers, and the Performers | by Jeff Place

The singer-poet with guitar performance in a small New York venue, coffeehouse, or club is an image easily conjured up. New York, and specifically Greenwich Village, has always been a destination for artists. For most of the 20th century there was a thriving artistic community there. In 1982, a group of singers and songwriters came together in order to mutually promote their own work and to publicize its existence. Initially they referred to themselves as the Coop, eventually settling on the name Fast Folk (see article by Jack Hardy). Founded by Jack Hardy and Brian Rose, the group created their own performance space at the SpeakEasy restaurant and started on an ambitious project to create monthly a magazine that combined the publication of new and important songs with an LP (later a compact disc).

The SpeakEasy was located on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village, which was fitting because the Village had for years been home to various artistic communities. During the early years of the 19th century, the Village was populated by wealthy residents who had moved from lower Manhattan to build new homes and offices (Groce, 1999). By 1900, the wealthy had left, and the Village was home to a number of poor immigrants. Its low rents began to attract the “starving artist” and bohemian (Groce, 1999).

One story has it that in 1935 Dominick Parisi imported the first espresso machine into his Café Reggio, and the first Village coffeehouse was born. Others like the Rienzi, the Cafe Wha, the Lion’s Head, and the Fat Black Pussy cat would follow (Cantwell, 1996).

Over the years many artistic groups gravitated to the Village. The folk song revival began in New York in the 1930s and by the late 1950s was moving into the period of its greatest popularity. During the last years of the 1950s and the early years of the 1960s, folk music was the most popular music in the land. Students quit college, picked up banjos and guitars, and formed musical groups. Every record label scout signed a group to be its Kingston Trio, a group which had broken out big time in 1958 with the Appalachian mountain ballad “Tom Dooley.” Important Village performance spots of the era included the Bitter End (with its famous brick wall backdrop), The Kettle of Fish, The Gaslight, and especially Gerde’s Folk City. Washington Square Park became the home to large gatherings of musicians trading songs and learning from each other. Many a group formed from these loose “jam” sessions. One could encounter members of groups like the Shanny Boys, the New Lost City Ramblers, and the Greenwich Boys in the park. Even folk music legend Woody Guthrie was known to make an occasional appearance. During the 1960s the Village was also the home to many of the Beat writers and poets who split time between there and San Francisco. Allen Ginsberg’s apartment was a hub of activity.

After Bob Dylan arrived in New York in 1961, other folk singers began more and more to write their own material. The era of the singer-songwriter was born and grew over the next decade. Frequently the movement mimicked the master. Mr. Dylan. Dylan began by writing topical songs, and some, like “Blowing in the Wind,” became instant standards. When he began to move away from topical songs into more poetic, introspective songs, many other songwriters moved with him.

During this period many singer-songwriters were offered record contracts. If you fast-forward to the beginnings of the 1970s, singer-songwriters were selling enough large quantities of records to earn the admiration of the press and the record companies. James Taylor’s Sweet Baby James and Carole King’s Tapestry albums were two of the biggest sellers of 1970 and
1971, respectively. Other writers such as Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon, Jim Croce, John Denver, Harry Chapin, and the members of Crosby, Stills and Nash were among those whose records filled record bins.

Things changed in 1977 with the emergence of New Wave and punk rock. The arbiters of popular music taste switched their allegiances to this new music. Record stores now displayed large posters of groups with big hair and skinny ties (somewhat Steve Forbert managed to break through this). Most of the clubs in Greenwich Village that had catered to folk singers and songwriter began to exclusively book New Wave music. New and emerging folksinger-songwriters who five years earlier would have had a good chance at wider exposure now had difficulty finding gigs. As Jack Hardy explained in his introductory essay in Issue No. 1, "Not only is folk music cursed with a label of being non-commercial by the multi-national record corporations, but this curse has been championed in the press. Somewhere along the line critics began reviewing success or potential for success and ceased reviewing music. It no longer mattered what a performance contained or whether it was good, but rather whether it was commercial, commerciality thereby being dictated by the economics of lowest common denominator."

It was in this environment that Fast Folk was born. If they were able to create their own music scene in the Village and let it be known that the scene was thriving artistically, they felt they could publicize their work. The group worked out a deal with Joseph Zbeda at a local Middle Eastern restaurant on MacDougal Street to take over the back room and book music. They kept whatever money came through "the door," and Zbeda kept the bar profits. The Speakeasy became the headquarters for the group. New songs were debuted and new artists discovered there. The club lasted until 1989, when it closed. Looking for a new space in 1994, the new Fast Folk Cafe was opened in Tribeca to serve the same purpose.

In explaining the reason for Fast Folk in Issue No. 1 Hardy stated: "The banding together of musicians into a cooperative, musicians who are generally noted for their egotistical nature, is a significant event. To issue a musical magazine, not at all backed by profit motive is a significant statement. It is saying that this music exists, and that it is no longer being ignored. Those who continue ignoring it will be less comfortable in their ignorance. To assemble twelve musicians, all donating their talents to record an album is a significant statement. Word of mouth is where folk music began and is where it must return. Actions speak louder than words, a picture is worth a thousand words, and a song is worth a thousand pictures."

The magazine served a role within the singer-songwriter community. Members of the community spoke out, articles appeared on the craft of songwriting, and "new faces" were spotlighted. Articles were written offering advice to new writers on the scene (Vol. 1, #5), addressing problems of recognition for their work (Vol. 1, #7), advice on how to make a record (Vol. 1, #8). Other songwriters' groups elsewhere were spotlighted, and eventually the magazine and the recordings branched further out from New York and published issues on Boston, Toronto, Philadelphia, New Jersey. Los Angeles, Oregon, and other areas. Recording engineer David Setz traveled down to the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas to record for one issue (Vol. 5, #5, 1990). Issues of the magazine were sent to radio stations nationally to further broaden the exposure of these artists.

Another important role that Fast Folk had within the music community was the Songwriter's Exchange. It began in 1977 at the English Pub on 6th Avenue and 3rd Street, then moved to the Cornelia Street Cafe, eventually settling into Jack Hardy's living room on Houston Street. Participants gathered each week; new songs were performed and subjected to critique from the other members, often harsh. Wendy Beckerman described it as a "weekly session of naked criticism that is not a safe place for the ego" (Vol. 6, #1, 1992). Those that survived found that it made them work harder at improving their craft.

Starting in 1984, the yearly Fast Folk Revue Bottom Line shows were very successful and helped promote the scene, playing to sold-out audiences. The shows were orchestrated, rehearsed, and used the same house band to make them run smoothly. Some of the Coop's members became well known. Suzanne Vega was the first artist to really break through with her first album in 1983. The following year she had a huge hit with the song "Luka," which included background vocals by Shawn Colvin, who has become a multiple-Grammy-winning star. John Gorka also has succeeded in becoming well known outside New York. Some famous Fast Folk alumni still feel a kinship to the group and have helped with later projects and shows, others have moved on and haven't looked back.

The magazine continued into the 1990s, but started to appear more sporadically, losing energy and regrouping. Some newer writers came along to replace others. But the world was changing. When Fast Folk started, there were not the media outlets that there are now. There were large newspapers and a few specialty magazines like Sing Out! By the late 1990s, you could find Dirty Linen, Folk Roots, and later Performing Songwriter, as well as dozens of other smaller record
Rod MacDonald, vocals and guitar

Words and music by Rod MacDonald; from Fast Folk FF104, Vol. 3, No. 4, April 1984, recorded at the Bottom Line, New York City, 28 January 1984.

Rod MacDonald (b. 1949) was an important member of the Fast Folk organization from the early years and throughout its history. MacDonald was also heavily involved in running the Greenwich Village Folk Festival. Based in Connecticut, he attended Columbia Law School and briefly worked as a staff writer for Newsweek. However, MacDonald decided his calling was in music, and that is what he has pursued ever since, touring extensively. His songs have been covered by other singers such as Garnet Rogers, Dave Van Ronk, and Gordon Bok. His composition "Sailor's Prayer" has become a standard among shanty singers.

MacDonald currently lives in South Florida, splitting his musical time between playing in an Irish music group with Tracy Sands and performing his own music. He still spends time playing in Europe, especially Switzerland.

Other recordings by MacDonald include And Then He woke up godly 224; Highway to Nineteen Seven 2011; House Concert 1999 (unreleased recording cassette); Into the Blue Godly 250; (see Honey and the Moccasins Blue Tape); Live at the Speakeasy, 1983-1985 Blue Tape; Live at the Speakeasy, 1984-86 (unreleased recording cassette); Live at the Upstairs Coffeehouse *2 Blue Tape; Man on a Ledge, Sharonic 801; No Commercial Traffic Massachusetts Railroad 52087; Some Lives from the 1970s (cassette); Live of the 1970s Blue Tape; Voice on the Line; Tracy Sands & Rod MacDonald I Remember White Buffalo Godly 211; He appears on Songwriter's...
GERRY DEVINE
Old Factory Town

Gerry Devine, vocals and banjo; Mark Dann, guitar and pedal bass. Words and music by Brian Rose; from Fast Folk SE102, Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1982.

Gerry Devine was a one-time member of the Song Project. Raised in Delaware, he first met the members of the Coop at Gerde's Folk City. Devine recalled playing at various venues in the city from 1980 to 1997, alternating between playing in the electric rock band The Floor Models and his own acoustic compositions with the crew at the Coop. The Floor Models eventually evolved into the group Gerry Devine and the High-Beams, which released two recordings on the Gauldy label.

He has since moved to Kentucky, where he plays with the bluegrass band Ever Since Now and hosts a radio show. Songwriter Brian Rose was one of the founding editors of The Fast Folk Musical Magazine and was a fixture at the Coop musical events at the SpeakEasy. In addition to being a songwriter, Rose is an accomplished photographer, with his work on permanent exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. He currently lives in Amsterdam.

Other recordings include: Coming Up for Air (Flying Fish 70590; Great American Bootleg Tupelo Water, the Kitchen Tapes Bootleg Wyoming: The Return Tour 9302); Twilight at the Magic Hotel 9001. He appears on a collection on Gaelic; Houghton Miller, Highlights Silverwolf 1050; Legacy: A Collection of New Folk Artists Wynwood Hill 1086; What's That I Hear: The Songs of Phil Ochs Solid Days 71176. Two videos, A Visit in the Czech Republic and A Visit in the Highlands, are available from Blue Horizon.

4 LUCY KAPLANSKY
You Just Need a Home (Spotlight)

Lucy Kaplansky, vocal and guitar; Mark Dann, bass. Words and music by Lucy Kaplansky; from SE202, Vol. 2, No. 2. 1983

Lucy Kaplansky (b. 1960) moved from her home in Chicago to New York City when she was 18. She became very active in the Coop, performing solo, as a member of the Song Project, and as a duo with Shawn Colvin. Kaplansky is a wonderful interpreter of other writers' work as well as a songwriter in her own right. Even as many of her Village contemporaries were achieving popular success, in 1983 Kaplansky decided her future lay in going back to school. She pursued and earned a Ph.D. in psychology, opening up her own practice. In 1994, her old friend Shawn Colvin offered to produce Lucy's first compact disc. She made an about-face and decided a music career was where she really belonged.

Her first album was released by Red House Records to rave reviews. She has since recorded three additional solo recordings as well as a recordings with the folk super group Cry, Cry, Cry. The group formed in 1998 also included Richard Shindell (disc 2, track 8) and Dar Williams and was known for their strong interpretations of other contemporary singer-songwriters.

Other recordings of Lucy Kaplansky include: Cry, Cry, Cry, which Cry, Cry, Cry, Razzle Dazzle and Tie 82340, Every Single Day Red House 156; Trash and Bone Red House 92; Till Year Night Red House 126. The Folk Red House 65; she appears on House on Fire Mus 57; live on George Washington University: Just a Memory 9125; No Drums Names Wheels/Follow 5005; Peter and the Wolf Alacaz 104; Songs, Ballads, Blues and Rockabilly Follows 9181. Sings a couple Wheels/Follows 9005; Somebody Else Not Me Philo 1055; Staten Island Blues EPM Music 15784; Tenderly Story Philo.
I think the importance of [Folk Folk] has diminished a little bit; it reached a certain pinnacle a couple of years ago, but people have gone in different directions now. Folk is a vehicle; their premise—"I think it's really as great as a folk thing—is that they want to present songs to the public that would never be heard otherwise, because folk musicians by large and large have even less of a chance of getting recording deals and great songwriters don’t always choose to hang in this ridiculous lifestyle and this ridiculous profession and try to make a go of it—they find other jobs, they have families, and they continue to write but they’re never going to hear their songs. So Folk Folk endeavors to take songs from anyone who they think is good and is interested in recording for them and puts them out. It’s a great service to anyone who appreciates songwriting and to the musicians who want people to hear what they do.

—Shawn Colvin

I Don’t Know Why

Shawn Colvin, vocals and guitar; Lucy Kaplansky and John Gorka, background vocals

Words and music by Shawn Colvin; from Folk Folk, FF205, Vol. 4, No. 5, May 1985; recorded at Arlington (MA) Town Hall, 09 March 1985.

Shawn Colvin was born in 1956 in South Dakota, and lived in a number of locations before coming to New York in 1981, initially to join a country band (made up of musicians she had known while living in Texas). She began to be involved in the New York singer-songwriter scene, falling in with the Cornelia Street Songwriters’ Exchange. She performed solo and as a duo with Lucy Kaplansky. Eventually, through Christine Lavin, she got a job in Boston opening for popular artists and within a year was starting to draw her own audience.

Of all the Fast Folk alumni, Shawn Colvin has achieved the greatest success. As a writer she has been collaborating with John Leventhal. Her recordings for Columbia/Sony have received three Grammy Awards (Best Contemporary Folk in 1989 and Record of the Year and Song of the Year in 1997). This song, “I Don’t Know Why,” was also nominated as Best Female Pop Vocal in 1992. Her 1997 recording, A Few Small Repairs, contained the smash hit “Sunny Came Home.” Colvin continues to perform and record and is one of the top performers in popular music today.

Other recordings include: Case Girl Columbia 57985; For Columbia 47122; A Few Small Repairs Columbia 6719; Holiday Songs and Satchel Columbia 69550; live 988 Tump 590; live tapes (casette only released). Bound of the Blue Columns 61 012, Deadly On Columbia 45209. What a Wee Folk 59849. She appears on the following Folk Folk compilations: FF102, FF103, FF105, FF108, FF203, FF205, FF206, FF207, FF208, FF209. For more information see www.shawncolvin.com. Another version of “I Don’t Know Why” by Colvin can be found on FF102.

Geza’s Wailing Ways

John Gorka, vocal; Mark Dann, guitar, bass, and drums


One of the successful Fast Folk alumni is John Gorka. The New Jersey native has released a series of acclaimed albums since the 1980s for labels like Red House and High Street, and has attained a high degree of popularity on alternative radio. His career started when he became involved in the coffeehouse scene while studying at Moravian College in Pennsylvania. He then teamed up with Richard Shindell in the Razzy Dazzly Spasm Band. In addition, he spent a period as the Assistant Editor of Sing Out! Magazine. He was the winner of the “New Folk” award at the Kerrville Folk Festival in 1984.

After having been involved with Fast Folk for a number of years, Gorka spent the early 1990s living and working in Nashville. He has since relocated to Minnesota to raise a family. He is still actively recording and touring.

For more information see www.johngorka.com.
DAVID INDIAN
Ragman!

David Indian, vocals and guitar, Neil Salant, electric guitar, Mark Dann, bass
New York native David Joshua Ruderman (b. 1952), from Brooklyn, is a self-taught guitarist, songwriter, and poet. He received a trip from a chance encounter with a street musician that he should check out the music happening at the Speakeasy. He came, he found, and soon was attending the shows and the songwriter’s exchanges regularly. He chose the pen name David Indian, as he became tired of hearing his given name misrepresented over and over (personal communication, 2001). Indian recorded on six Fast Folk compilations, the first being the inclusion of his song “America (The Indian’s Dream of America)” in 1983. In 1986, he became a bibliographic editor of Near East materials at New York University, continuing to write songs and poetry. He feels “that most of my best material from the mid- to late 80’s, when I was at my most prolific — ‘American Rhythm and Blues,’ ‘Airwave in El Salvador,’ ‘Lend an Ear,’ ‘America,’ ‘Green Bird,’ and a dozen others — have never been widely heard” (Ruderman, 2001). His musical life found him as a number of folk-rock bands and playing in clubs on the Lower East Side. With Steve Schwartz Indian co-produced 39 videos of local songwriters. In 1996, he moved to Hanau, Germany, where he is married with a daughter. He works as an associate editor for an Army newspaper.

He appears on the recording NYC Fortune’s J3 week 2001, and appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF101, FF109, FF203, SE106, FF203, FF304, FF403.

I started writing ‘Ragman’ on a friend’s roof top in Park Slope. My father used to support the Southern Poverty Law Center in Birmingham, Ala., with an annual contribution, and I continued to do the same after he passed away. It was from their newsletter that I learned about the firebombing of their offices. At the time the Sunday New York Times Magazine ran a feature on Ferdinand Marcos, which included a full-page photo of a mountain peak outside Manila being sculpted into a bust of the dictator. That pissed me off, I can tell you. That was the origin of ‘Ragman’? At the time I didn’t consider it one of my better compositions, but people responded to it and continued to respond to it. It’s basically a three-chord song, but maybe that’s one of its virtues. I have written dozens of verses to it over the years, and I imagine anybody else could do the same. Kind of like a folk song. My old friend and musical fellow traveler from high school days, Neil Salant, played electric lead guitar on the original recording.

—David Indian, 2001

TOM INTONDI
High Times

Tom Intondi, vocals and guitar.
Words and music by Tom Intondi and Frank Rossini, from SE106, Vol. 1, No. 6, July 1982.
Tom Intondi (1946–1994), was an important member of the Fast Folk Coop, having been featured in the magazine from the earliest issues. Intondi was a strong interpreter of others’ songs as well as a writer himself. Over the years he collaborated with Frank Rossini as a co-writer. Intondi wrote some of the standard tunes in Greenwich Village in the 1970s and 1980s such as “High Times” and “House of Water” (Richard Meyer, All-Music Guide).

Intondi was a driving force and the person who revived the group, the Song Project. The Song Project was a collaborative group of performers who specialized in interpreting some of the cream-of-the-crop of songs crafted by other songwriters in the Greenwich Village scene. The group consisted at various times of Lucy Kaplansky, Tom Intondi, Gerry Devine, Frank Christian, Martha Hogan, and others. They only released one commercial recording, so the bulk of their material recorded on Fast Folk. He spent his last years living in Eugene, Oregon, where he helped put together Fast Folk Oregon issue.

—Tom Intondi, 1982

CHRISTINE LAVIN
Don’t Ever Call Your Sweetheart by His Name

Christine Lavin, vocals and guitar; Mark Dann, bass
Christine Lavin is one of the most successful songwriter to come out of the Fast Folk Coop. Involved from the debut issue, Lavin is known for her lyrical commentaries of the nature of relationships and the world from a woman’s perspective. Lavin has released numerous recordings since 1984 on a variety of labels including, currently, her own christinelavin.com label. She has also been involved in promoting the work of other singer-songwriters and has taught songwriting and performance courses. In 1991, she formed a musical group, The Four Bitchin’ Babies, which still exists; it is made up of an all-star cast of women songwriters, although Lavin is no longer a member. She is the recipient of four ASCAP composer awards. Lavin has recently begun to incorporate theater more and more into her performances. She lives in New York.
I always felt that the Fast Folk recordings would eventually be "discovered" and are much better documentation of life and music in the '80s than most anything released by the established music business. I think I produced two issues [Ed. It was three.] — one was all women singer-songwriters — and I was most happy to get (eventual Grammy winner) Julie Gold and another fine performer Raun MacKinnon on that issue, along with Shawn Colvin and a bunch of other really talented people who were still not widely known. I forget what the theme of the other issue was (maybe it was funny stuff). My experience with Fast Folk was the impetus for my eventually putting together compilations on Rounder and Shanachie and my own label (chrstinelein.com), though when I did those I focused on singer-songwriters who were seriously pursuing careers. Jack Hardy was much more open-minded about what he included on Fast Folk—he didn't care a whit if the writer wanted to have a career in this or not, he was after good songs, period. I remember staffing the discs in the mailings along side Michelle Shocked—her head was half shaved, half braids. Nobody even knew she was a musician, she just wanted to hang out and help. So many people passed through Fast Folk, so many wrote songs that would otherwise not have gotten written —Sally Fingeret says it's like before we had places to record we had these pretty party dresses, but no place to wear them. Fast Folk gave us a place to put these unvinyl and get heard. Jack Hardy was (arguably) the most influential person in songwriting in the 1980s, though he would probably never say that himself. Nanci Griffith, Lyle Lovett, Tracy Chapman, Shawn Colvin, Lucy Kaplansky, and Suzanne Vega are just a few of the singer-songwriters whose early works were documented by Fast Folk, and who may not have had the careers that they do without that early encouragement. I'm worried about what has happened to music in the 21st century—the craft of songwriting is all very much now an underground thing because good songs are not making the charts these days, not making money, so there's little interest in it. But songwriting continues, and hopefully will flourish again.

—Christine Lavin, 2001

Frank Christian
Where Were You Last Night?

Frank Christian, vocals and guitar; Mark Dann, bass

Musician and songwriter Frank Christian (b. 1952) was originally from Newark, New Jersey, but moved to Greenwich Village while attending New York University, where he received a degree in music and literature. Christian was one of the early members of the songwriter's cooperative and appears in the first magazine. He recalls having played backup guitar on 20 or 30 of the early recordings made by the Coop (personal communication, 2001). He was also a one-time member of the Song Project.

Christian has only released three records under his own name (two of them are in recent years) but has appeared as a guitarist at a number of recordings by others. Among his credits are albums by Suzanne Vega, Jeffrey Gaines, Marti Jones, Christine Lavin, Jack Hardy, the Smithereens, Dave Van Ronk, John Gorka, and especially Nanci Griffith. Griffith recorded his song “Three Flights Up” on her acclaimed Other Voices, Other Rooms recording.

Christian remains active teaching music, recording as a sideman, and playing his own concerts. He continues to reside in New York City.
LAURA BURNS & ROGER ROSEN
Kilkelly, Ireland

Laura Burns, vocals and guitar; Roger Rosen, vocals and guitar; Mark Dunn, mandolin

Words and music by Peter Jones and Steve Jones; from Fast Folk

Singers Laura Burns (b. 1953) and Roger Rosen were based in Boston and were invited to come down and play in the Fast Folk shows. Burns has worked in a number of musical vehicles, initially playing drums. Rosen, a former street singer, teamed up with Burns from 1978 to 1987 and recorded one album for Flying Fish Records, after which Burns became interested in Latin music and was a member of the group Flor de Caria from 1983 to 1994. She also performed with Flor de Caria member Willie Sordillo. Her interest in music is paired with a strong political conscience.

Maryland songwriter Peter Jones composed this song after discovering a bundle of family letters from Kilkelly, County Mayo, Ireland, which traced the experiences of his and his brother’s family over 130 years. Peter and Steve Jones recorded it for their self-produced album (Clouds Records).

ERIK FRANDSEN
Introduction to The Viking Rag

ERIK FRANDSEN
The Viking Rag

Erik Frandsen, vocals and guitar


Erik Frandsen is best known in the world of theater; he is one of the authors and songwriters of the well-known off-Broadway production The Song of Singapore. Although he still plays music, most of his energies go into acting. Frandsen has also accompanied other artists including Dave Yan Ronk and Bob Dylan on their recordings.

JACK HARDY
Forget-Me-Not

Jack Hardy, vocals and guitar; Jenny Hersch, bass; Mark Dunn, guitar; Wendy Beckerman and Louise Taylor, vocals

Words and music by Jack Hardy; from FF806, 28 January 1995.

Jack Hardy (b. 1947) is the founding and guiding force behind Fast Folk. Hardy, a songwriter and playwright, is known for his literate writing, a mix of "themes ranging from the American West to ballads and jigs of Celtic ancestors" (www.jackhardly.com). Hardy is a major force among the songwriters in New York, through his playing, his role in the Coop, and his hosting of the Songwriter’s Exchange at his Houston Street apartment. Hardy alternated with Richard Meyer as editor of the magazine.

Hardy is a major touring artist in Europe; his entry in an Italian encyclopedia of rock is larger than that of many prominent rock stars (www.jackhardly.com). He has records on 1-800-Prime-CD.

Other recordings include "Me and the Night" (Flying Fish 376); Laura Burns only also recorded with Flor de Caria. Dancing on the Wall (Flying Fish 461); Mokhove Flying Fish 461. She appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF103, SE207. Another version of "Kilkelly" performed by Niko Matheson can be found at FF106/7.

Fast Folk regularly programmed theatrical performances like this into their live shows. This 1986 Bottom Line performance of Bill Bachmann’s song “Vacation” features an all-star cast of members of the Coop from that period. Many of these artists have selections and biographies elsewhere on this recording, but others deserve mention. Nikki Matheson was a Fast Folk regular and one-time member of Malcorne. She moved to Paris in 1987. Willie Nininger (b. 1952) has had a varied career performing in the Boston and New York areas singing his own songs, writing songs for the television show “Captain Kangaroo,” and singing the national anthem at Mets games five times. He currently lives in Switzerland. Robin Bateau (b. 1948) has performed solo and as a member of the duo Buskin and Bateau.

Writer Bill Bachmann recorded both solo and as a member of the Song Project for Fast Folk. He remembers being a member of a dozen bands in the 1980s (personal communication, 2001). He has recorded as a backup musician for Paula Lockheart, Jon Sholle, Kenny Kosek and Matt Glaser, Tom Intonii and Josh Jollif. He is no longer active professionally but enjoys playing music socially.

Bill Bachmann appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF102, SE107, SE109, FF305. Another version of “Vacation” by the Song Project can be found on SE109. Bachmann also performs with the Song Project and accompanies Paul Seibiel, George Gerdes, and Peggy Atwood on tracks in the Fast Folk Collection.

Suzanne Vega

Gypsy

Suzanne Vega, vocals and guitar; John Caufield, fiddle; Mark Dann, pedal bass

Words and music by Suzanne Vega; from Fast Folk SE105, Vol. 1, No. 5, June 1982

Suzanne Vega is one of the early members of the Fast Folk collective who has gone on to success in the popular music field. Her albums have been critically acclaimed, and the song “Luka,” about child abuse, became a hit single in 1987. Vega was born in Santa Monica, California, in 1959. As a teenager she attended the famed High School for the Performing Arts in New York and later Barnard College. She has experimented with different musical styles over the years, incorporating dance rhythms. Vega has been supportive of the Fast Folk organization, returning for shows. Her latest recording was released in Fall 2001.

His other recordings include Best of Suzanne Vega: Tw�l and True AMM 540645, Days of Open Hand AMM 5293, In Concert Cox World 910006, Nine Objects of Desire AMM 540832, 999-AMM 314540005, Sessions at West 54th Impor 32092, Softline Standing AMM 5136, Suzanne Vega MM 5977. She appears on Heart of Rock Columbia 44381. She appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: SE101, FF101, FF104, SE105, SE108, SE201, SE205, FF203, FF205, FF502, FF903. For more information, see www.vega.net.

Steve Forbert

Thirty Thousand Men

Steve Forbert, vocals and guitar; Frank Christian, guitar; Mark Dann, bass; Jack Hardy, mandolin


Steve Forbert (b. 1953) was considered one of the great discoveries of the late 1970s, one of many to be saddled with the “New Bob Dylan” moniker. After signing with the Columbia Records affiliate Nemperor, he released a number of critically and financially successful albums. His song “Romone’s Tune” made the Billboard Top 20 chart. Forbert was born in Meridian, Mississippi, moved to New York at age 21, and became involved in the Greenwich Village club scene.

Learning the music business and honing his songwriting in New York, Forbert thought that that experience was “a trial by fire” and “a much needed thing” (Steveforben.com). Eventually, Forbert returned to the South and has since lived in Nashville, continuing to work as a songwriter and performer. He has continued to release new projects on various labels, the most recent being Young Guitar Days on Koch Records, which marked the first appearance of “Thirty Thousand Men” on record.

4  
ELAINE SILVER
Share the Failure

Elaine Silver, vocals and guitar; Mark Dann, bass; John Kruth, flute; Pierce Pettis, guitar

Frank Tedesco is a native of Chicago, Illinois, who "ran away from home at age 34" to come to New York (Richard Schere, Vol. 4, #7, 1988). Tedesco became involved with the Fast Folk Coop after his move. He recorded on nine albums for Fast Folk. In recent years he has been involved musically with the Independent Project. He has one full album, Einstein's Violin. Tedesco moved back to Chicago in 1989.

He is accompanied by Margo Henneback, a classically trained keyboardist who appears on many Fast Folk recordings. A Queens, New York native, she currently tours and records as a duo with Mark Saunders.

Other recordings include Songs from Einstein's Violin Polygram 532840. He appears on legacy A Collection of Seger's High Street Song 10014. He appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF430, FF410, FF502, FF507, FF509, FF510, FF502, FF607, FF902, FF904.

5  
PATRICK JOHN BRAYER
Young as a Second Language

Patrick Bray er, vocals and guitar; Jack Hardy, vocals and mandolin; Jenny Hersch, bass; Mark Dann, guitar; David Hamburged, pedal steel; Jeff Berman, drums

John Patrick Bray er came East by invitation for the 1995 Bottom Line show. He is a longtime resident of "The Island Empire," the area east of Los Angeles. His hometown, Fontana, was a dusty desert mill town. Bray er is a prolific songwriter, having recorded 35 volumes of his own songs which he sells through his website.

He recorded the album The Secret Hits of Patrick Bray er in Dennis Hopper's kitchen and is a source of interesting new songs to perform as diverse as Michael Hedges, Alison Krauss, Ben Harper, and John Doe. His song "So Long, So Wrong" is the title track on Krauss's Grammy-winning album. Bray er plays more than 30 world instruments, which he puts to use on his own recordings. A writer on the arts and a radio host, he currently lives in Upland, California.

His other recordings include Secret Hits of Patrick Bray er Bray er: Achromatic; Sinne imagination Ann X7001. He appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF902, FF903, FF908. For more information see: http://www.tommyg.com. Bray er's recordings can be obtained through www.izering.com.

6  
PAUL KAPLAN
King of Hearts

Paul Kaplan, vocals and guitar

Paul Kaplan was born in Philadelphia in 1948. He moved to New York in 1968 and had some of his early songs published in Broadside Magazine (see Smithsonian, Vol. 40, No. 330). Kaplan started taking part in the Cornelia Street Songwriter's Exchange around 1980, and was part of the Fast Folk group when it started.

He played in a band called the Darby Rams, who were the house band at the Eagle Tavern. The Darby Rams played a mixture of Scottish and Irish folk music, and this music began to have a profound effect on Kaplan's own songwriting. He remembers playing with the Darby Rams and
The idea was simple: play good music, and they will come. It had worked in the '60s, and could work again. But people had to know it was there.

"So Jack, already a prolific producer of his own albums, came up with an audacious idea: put out an LP each month with twelve songs and a magazine to document and publicize the scene.

The combination was electrifying—a recording project where we could learn about making records, and get our latest sound out to the world. Along with that, a club, the SpeakEasy, open every night, where we could work on our performing and writing skills while we hung out and listened to each other and some of the best touring artists. If the club didn’t always work, from a fiscal standpoint, if Sharon Calvin opened for Jean Ritchie for an audience of eight people, still it was a stunning success. Some high points for me: watching a tall stranger named David Roth volunteer to play for nothing, and blow us all away; the annual Bob Dylan Imitators’ Night; Jack, making beer consumption into an artistic statement while performing his “Drinking Song,” and, step by step, watching Suzanne Vega go from college student to star.

—Paul Kaplan, 2001

JUDITH ZWEIGMAN
Heart on Ice

Judit Zweigman, vocals and guitar; Tom Daval, electric guitar, bass; Mark MacColl, percussion, Mark Dann, synthesizer


Songwriter Judith Zweigman has been a longtime fixture on the Long Island folk scene. She also was involved with Fast Folk throughout its history. Zweigman is a poet, songwriter, artist, dancer, and astrologist. She has been in a number of musical groups including Eliss Kitchen, Folkano, and Late for Dinner (see disc 2, track 18). She has also lent her background vocals to many of the other albums by her fellow Fast Folk composers.

Other recordings of Judith Zweigman on Fast Folk compilations include: FF105, FF108, FF190, FF201, FF405, HF10, HF204, HF807, FF110.

RICHARD SHINDELL
The Courier

Richard Shindell, vocals and guitar, Jack Hardy, vocals, Mark Dann, electric guitar; Lisa Gutkin, violin; Margo Henneback, keyboards; Jeff Hardy, bass; Howie Wyeth, drums


New Jersey native Richard Shindell (he professes to having been from Lindenhurst, the site of the Hindenburg Disaster), is a master wordsmith. For a while Shindell was a seminary student, and many of his songs incorporate spirituality. Early in his career, he was a handmate of fellow Fast Folk alumnus John Gorka in the Razzie Dazzle Spasm Band. Starting in 1992, Shindell recorded a number of albums for New Jersey-based Shanachie Records, but his greatest exposure came when he helped form the successful folk super group Cry, Cry, Cry with Lucy Kaplansky and Dar Williams. Their recording sold well, and the group was one of top-grossing acts of the first half of 1999 (Shindell web page). Cry, Cry, Cry, was similar to the Song Project in that they interpreted some of the best songs they knew by other writers. He currently lives in Argentina.

His other recordings include Blue Train Shanachie 8014; Cry, Cry Cry Radio and The B2840; Ravenna Hill Shanachie 8027; Somewhere a New Passion Signature 1256; Santa Rosa’s Point Shanachie 8032. He appears on Big League Riter, Vol. 1: 168-Page CD 17, Kidmore Folk Festival, and on The Mercury album, Track 1008; The Kidmore Folk Festival. We encourage you to support the music of...
You don't have to know much about the French Revolution or any other revolution or sad tale of tyranny to look at the people involved and realize that they're on the same side, and it's just history that tends to split us apart. I got the idea for this song when I went to see the film Danton. People ask me why Danton is never mentioned in the song, and the reason is that this is from Danton to his friend Camille. They are thrown in their jail cell the night before they're about to be killed, and Camille turns to him and says, "I guess this is the end, Danton, 'cause I can't think of a joke," and Danton turns to him and says, "I guess this is the end because I can't think of a song to sing." So this is from Danton to Camille.

—Lillie Palmer, introduction to song. 23 April 1988

You don't have to know much about the French Revolution or any other revolution or sad tale of tyranny to look at the people involved and realize that they're on the same side, and it's just history that tends to split us apart. I got the idea for this song when I went to see the film Danton. People ask me why Danton is never mentioned in the song, and the reason is that this is from Danton to his friend Camille. They are thrown in their jail cell the night before they're about to be killed, and Camille turns to him and says, "I guess this is the end, Danton, 'cause I can't think of a joke," and Danton turns to him and says, "I guess this is the end because I can't think of a song to sing." So this is from Danton to Camille.

—Lillie Palmer, introduction to song. 23 April 1988

Folk compilations: FF504, FF507, FF509, FF510, FF601, FF603, FF605, FF701, FF702, FF705, FF802, FF804, FF806, FF808. Contact her at WBeckerman@aol.com

Folk compilations: FF504, FF507, FF509, FF510, FF601, FF603, FF605, FF701, FF702, FF705, FF802, FF804, FF806, FF808. Contact her at WBeckerman@aol.com

Lillie Palmer, vocals and guitar; Mark Dann, bass; Margo Hennebach, keyboards

Lillie Palmer performed at many of the Fast Folk shows both as a solo performer and as a duo with Gladys Bragg. Palmer has recorded one full album, Butterfly Zone, for Demon Records in England and is included on the Windham Hill compilation Legacy. She continues to write and perform.

Georges Jacques Danton (1759–94) was an important figure during the French Revolution. Danton urged the end to the bloody policies of French revolutionary leader Maximilien de Robespierre (1758–94) and a peaceful revolution to the Revolution. He was convicted of treason and became a victim of the guillotine.

In 1982, Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda made the film Danton starring Gerard Depardieu.

Lillie Palmer's other recordings include Butterfly Zone Danton 778. She appears on Legacy: A Collection of New Folk Artists Windham Hill T090. She appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF108, FF110, FF301, FF309, FF310, FF407, FF502, FF503, FF507.

His other recordings include By Your Eyes Great Divide 1772, Canyon Heart, Mango Man Bandana, Woman's Owl Great Divide 1774. She appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF108, FF110, FF301, FF309, FF310, FF407, FF502, FF503, FF507.

His other recordings include By Your Eyes Great Divide 1772, Canyon Heart, Mango Man Bandana, Woman's Owl Great Divide 1774. She appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF108, FF110, FF301, FF309, FF310, FF407, FF502, FF503, FF507.
ANDY BRECKMAN
Railroad Bill

Andy Breckman, vocals and guitar

Words and music by Andy Breckman; from Fast Folk FF110,
Vol. 3, No. 10, December 1984; recorded at the SpeakEasy,
1984.

Andy Breckman is best known as a comedy writer. He is a veteran
of the “David Letterman Show” and “Saturday Night Live” writing staffs.
Since the late 1980s, Breckman has been involved in writing screenplays for
Hollywood comedies. His screen credits include Sgt. Bilko, Arthur 2,
IQ, Moving, and the 2001 release Rat Race.

Breckman is no longer active musically but had a ten-year
period when he performed in New York, including a
couple of times with the Fast Folk group (personal commu-
nication, 2001). As one might expect, his specialty was
humorous songs. He made two compact discs of his songs
for the Gadfly label. In addition, he has a long-running
radio program on WFUM Radio, Jersey City, called “Seven
Second Delay,” which remains his “outlet for his musical
energies” (WGAE Newsletter, 23 July 2001).

Breckman’s song “Railroad Bill” remains a classic. Even
though much of his work these days is in Los Angeles, he
and his family reside in New Jersey.

Other recordings include Death Defying Radio Stars Gadfly, #02, Don’t Get Killed Gadfly
121089, Proud Dad Gadfly 201. He appears on Big League Babe, V. 2 1800PM
CD 39. He appears on the fast folk compilation FF110. Another version of “Railroad Bill”
performed by Rod MacDonald can be found on FF 350.

RICHARD JULIAN
Gravedigger

Richard Julian, vocals and guitar; Richard Meyer, Lisa Gutkin,
and Margo Hermanbach, background vocals

Words and music by Richard Julian; from Fast Folk FF507,

Richard Julian was raised in Arden, Delaware. When he
was in his late teens, he decided to move to Los Angeles,
looking for greener pastures, but only got as far as Las
Vegas. He soon found himself backing up cocktail singers
in local lounges, a fertile training ground for a future
career in the Greenwich Village folk scene. Julian remem-
bers discovering an article in Ladies’ Home Journal about
the blossoming Village scene while waiting in a dentist’s
office (Richard Julian web page) and decided to relocate to
New York. He had first heard about Fast Folk from a radio
DJ while still in Delaware. Julian recalled, “I showed up at
the Houston Street office” and handed Richard Meyer a
demo. I was 18 years old. He advised me to go to the
Speakeasy open stage, which I did, and ended up being
employed there as a bell as a soundman and booking
manager. That is basically where I fell into the scene”
(Julian, personal communication, 2001).

He has recorded two albums for Blackbird/Site Records and
continues to tour both the United States and Europe. His
song “Big Big World” reached number 16 on AAA
radio in 1999. Randy Newman referred to Julian as “one
of the best songwriters and record makers I’ve heard in a
very long time” (Julian web page).

His other recordings include Richard Julian Blackbird #20014, Smash Palace Blackbird
38005. He appears on Rejoice: A Benefit for the People of Kosovo ARC 2472,1996.
Scenes from the Speakeasy 2007. He appears on the following Fast folk compilations: RF 4030,
RF 5054, RF 5065, RF 5067, RF 5088, RF 5109, RF 6012, RF 6036, RF 7020, RF 8028,
RF 8037. For more information see www.richardjulian.com.

Julian’s music has since evolved, and he
reflected on this early period of his career:

I wrote the song “Gravedigger” when I was 20
years old, and it was sort of my personal anthem
at the time. That was a dozen years and 100-
plus songs ago, and I confess that, for me,
this archeological dig has unearthed a cloaking,
if youthful, angst in the lyric—and perhaps in
the singer as well. If I’d counted off the tempo
any faster, the audience may not have realized
I’d even been on stage—but don’t let me ruin it
for you. Somebody must still like it, or it would
not have included on this compilation on which
I am honored to be featured amongst many
artists whom I respect. Hats off to Fast Folk for
providing a nurturing environment for develop-
ing young songwriters, among their other
achievements.

—Richard Julian, 2001
January Cold" was written as a response to a challenge from Jack Hardy during the Songwriter's Exchange to go home and bring back a song about the Teapot Dome Scandal in one week (R. Meyer, personal communication, 2001). Meyer grabbed a history book and heeded up his knowledge, and he admits, "I do know that [Coolidge's] inauguration was in March, but January fits better in the song." (Meyer, 2001).

His career has included a stint in Nashville, where the music establishment failed to understand his music, and a long career in New York City playing jazz and becoming part of the growing singer-songwriter movement based in the Village in the 1980s. Wood finally released his first full-length album on Tangible Records in 1997. He has toured extensively in Europe and the United States.

His other recordings include "Naked Night Appaloosa 136; Tales from the Earth Tangible 56809. He appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: SE109, F202, FF303, F505, F510, F604 and F609. For more information see www.ericwood.com

HUGH BLUMENFELD

Raphael

Hugh Blumenfeld, guitar and vocal; Jenny Hersch, bass; Mark Blum, guitar; Jeff Tarella, Richard Meyer, and Susan Piering, background vocals.

Words and music by Hugh Blumenfeld, unreleased track; recorded live at the Bottom Line, 01 February 1997.

Hugh Blumenfeld (b. 1958) was at various times associate editor, contributor, and a member of the board of Fast Folk. He was born in Brooklyn but has long been associated with Connecticut, where he now lives. In addition to his music, he has been a university professor and has a Ph.D. in literature from New York University.

A past winner of the Kerrville (Texas) Folk Song Competition, Blumenfeld was Connecticut State Troubadour in 1999–2000. In addition, he spends his time editing a folk music website, The Ballad Tree (www.balladtree.com), and Fenario, a monthly MP3 ezine. He currently records for 1-800-Prime CD Recordings.

His other recordings include "Bookender 1:600 Prime CD 1; Big Red Band 20000; Meez and Money 1:800 Prime CD 21; My Littlest and Dr. Hyde mp3.com/Artists/Robert Schenken 1:800 Prime CD 43; The Strong is East 1:800 Prime CD 5; Open his third album: "Ballad Rodeo, vol. 2 1:800 Prime 20 Q. The Folk Heart Door: #1, 2, 4, 7; Home for the Holidays WMWM Records, Memorial Day American Impressions Videotape, 39 Postal Fast Folk CD 1. His songs are on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF303, F202, FF606, SE109, F505, F510, F510, F604 and F609. For more information see www.hughbl-

LOUISE TAYLOR

Your Face

Louise Taylor, vocals; Jenny Hersch, bass; Jeff Berman, drums; Mark Dann, guitar; David Hamburgo, steel guitar.


Vermont Louise Taylor started on the road at 15 years of age, playing her songs on the street. Well traveled, she has picked up musical influences along the way ranging from Appalachian ballads to Celtic storytelling, incorporating many musical styles. Taylor recalled that Jack Hardy and Wendy Beckerman of Fast Folk had heard her first album, and, being impressed, invited her down from Vermont to perform at a Fast Folk show (personal communication, 2001). She still resides in Brattleboro, Vermont, records
and tours and teaches workshops on creative songwriting. She records for the Massachusetts-based Signature label.

Her other recordings include looking for Allies Coyote 77, Ride Signature 1241, Ruby Shoes Signature 1233. Written in Red Signature 1229. She appears on Snow Angel: A New Music Holiday Collection Compass 74237. She appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: FF105, FF107, FF109, FF111, FF201, FF210, FF201, FF202, FF204, FF205, FF105, FF404, FF403, FF500, FF503, FF502, FF101, FF809. More information see www.signaturerecords.com/soc/colovolks.html

Ann Brauer. A Brooklyn native, he continues to perform, currently living in Long Island.

His other recordings include Fast Folk (available from joshjoffen@bcast.com), Josh Joffen with David Roth: 6 of 1, Half Dozen of the Other. He appears on the following Fast Folk compilations: SE103, FF105, FF107, SE111, FF201, FF202, SE202, FF204, FF205, FF105, FF404, FF403, FF500, FF502, FF101, FF809. Another version of "Crazy Horse" by John Giorno and the Fast Folk Revue can be found on FF405.

Josh Joffen & Late For Dinner

Crazy Horse

Josh Joffen, vocals and guitar; Ruth Ann Brauer, vocals; Judith Zweiman, vocals and guitar; Mark Dann, bass

Words and music by Josh Joffen; from Fast Folk SE111, Vol. 1, No. 11, November 1982.

Josh Joffen was another artist who recorded frequently for Fast Folk and was involved with the organization throughout its history. Joffen won the 1987 Kerrville Folk Festival “New Folk” songwriting competition in 1987 and 1988. His songs were published in Sing Out! and Broadsides magazines. Joffen released a recording 6 of 1, Half Dozen of Another in 1987 with singer-songwriter David Roth, where each artist has one side of the cassette.

Crazy Horse (Tashunna-ucito, 1899–77) was a legendary Lakota Sioux Indian warrior and leader who was committed to preserving the cultural traditions of his tribe.

On this track Joffen performs with the group Late for Dinner, consisting of Joffen, Judith Zweiman, and Ruth

18 | DISCOGRAPHIES/SUGGESTED LISTENING

For a complete listing of all Fast Folk magazines and recordings, go to www.si.edu/folkways.

Anthology of American Folk Music Smithsonian Folkways 40000

The Best of Broadsides (recordings from the pages of Broadsides Magazine) Smithsonian Folkways 40130

Big League Baby, Vol. 1: The Christine Lavin Tribute Album 1-800 Prime CD 37

Bleecker and MacDougall: The Folks Scene of the 1960s Elektra 60381

Bleecker Street: Greenwich Village in the 1960s Astor Place 4012

Cunningham, Sis, Sundown (Broadsides Ballads, Vol. 9) Folkways 5319

Fast Folk Musical Magazine (105 recordings with the original magazine) Fast Folk Musical Magazine

Greenwich Village Folk Festival 1989 Gadfly 100591

Greenwich Village Folk Festival (Selections from) Gadfly 222

Guthrie, Woody, The Asch Recordings, Vols. 1-4 Smithsonian Folkways 40112

_____, This Land Is Your Land (The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1) Smithsonian Folkways 41000

Legacy: A Collection of New Folk Artists Windham Hill 1086

Millions of Musicians: A Documentary of Musical Expression in Everyday Life (recordings of music on the streets of New York by Tony Schwartz) Folkways 5581

Original Folk: Contemporary American Songs Performed by 10 Singer-Songwriters of the 1980s Folkways 5565

Pastor, Tom, I Can’t Help But Wonder Where I’m Bound Rhino 73315

The Postcrypt: Commemorating 30 Years 1964–1994 1-Prime-CD

Scenes from a Scene Gadfly 207

Smithsonian Folkways American Roots Collection Smithsonian Folkways 40062

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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES


ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available by special order on high-quality audio cassettes or CDs. Each recording includes the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Paredon record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. They are one of the means through which the center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Paredon recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Mail Order
730 9th Street, NW, Suite 4100,
Washington, DC 20560-0953
phone 1 (800) 410-3813 (orders only)
fax 1 (800) 985-5011 (orders only)

(Discour, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the center, please consult our Internet site (www.st.edu/folkways), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on database search). To request a printed catalogue write to the address above or e-mail folkways@adc.com.