

Folk Beat: Ectofest, Newport, Philly, Rhythm & Roots



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NEW HAVEN ROCKS!

THE NEW HAVEN SCENE - STILL ALIVE AND WELL

by Steve Bornstein

Almost every day I get asked, "Why are you always driving to New York or Boston for shows? What about bands right here?" I have to admit it's a good point. There are plenty of talented artists and bands right here. The problem is there aren't a whole lot of places for them to play. If you look at their schedules, they are doing the exact same thing I am - driving for hours to get to a gig. But it wouldn't hurt to sing the praises of these local acts, in the hope that local clubs and promoters will consider booking them.

There are actually a good number of clubs that book local acts. *Toad's Place* devotes several nights a month to them. *Cafe Nine*, *Tune Inn*, *Christopher Martin's*, *Rudy's*, *Bar*, and others are amenable to hiring bands who have reached a certain level of professionalism and prominence. It's tougher for acts just starting out to find places to hone their chops and build a following. This is especially true for acoustic-based performers. The demise in recent years of *The Greater New Haven Acoustic Music Society*, *The Daily Caffe*, and *Roca*'s has made an already difficult situation even more so. *Koffee?*, *Barnes and Noble*, *The Acoustic Book Trader*, and the recently reconsidered *Cape Codder* have been picking up the slack, but right now the supply is greater than the capability. It's always been easier and cheaper for club owners to provide a jukebox or hire a DJ. *Toad's Place* has conceded almost all weekends to DJ-spun dance parties. I can't really blame them: if people are going to be out on a Friday or Saturday night anyway, why hire a band when a DJ will do? It is really up to us, the audience, to insist on more and better live music. It's out there, we just need to bring it in.



There are some encouraging signs. The property at 71 Whitney Avenue, which has housed a succession of clubs over the last two decades, is now *The Blues Cafe*, featuring mostly local blues bands Wednesdays through Sundays. *Chris Buskey of The High Lonesome Plains* and *Kriss Santala of The Who Who's* are trying their hands at running shows at *The Cape Codder*. And less than a half hour away *Rich Franzino* (who ran *The Acoustic Studio* at *The Rich Forum* in Stamford for two years) has opened *The Acoustic Cafe*, dedicated to featuring talented newcomers as well as more established performers at reasonable prices.

Recently New Haven hosted two festivals highlighting area talent. The First Annual Animal Awareness Day was celebrated by a concert event called *Wildlife Rocks!* on the historic New Haven Green on Saturday Sept. 11. A wide variety of talent graced the World Stage: *The Folk of Sweeter Than Wine*, the country of *Queen Of Hearts*, *The Funk/soul of Rear View*, the all-female power-rock trio *Milk*, *Swivel Hips'* pop/rock, *Mighty Purple's* rhythmic celestial pop/rock - all were in fine form, representing their various genres.

The Eli Whitney Folk Festival returned after a five year hiatus. The evening concert featured nationally-known acts *Dar Williams* and *Odetta*, but the afternoon's offering were a cross section of local talent: *Anne Marie Menta's* Americana-tinged folk, *The Heaths'* unique vocal styles, *Alison*

Farrell's singer/songwriting expertise, *Homemade Jam's* sweet bluegrass, *New Moon's* old-timey folk. It was refreshing to hear this quality of musicianship at a local level, and encouraging that a festival of this size, which could easily have gone elsewhere for this program, elected to feature local artists.



left: Denise Blake and Dawn Mastro of *Sweeter Than Wine*; above: Holly Masiello
photos by Bobby Torres

The Who Who's, frequent winners in area polls although they perform infrequently and have never released an album, are still regarded by many as New Haven's premier vocal group. A recent show at *Toad's Place* confirmed this, even though they were breaking in a new singer. *Barbara Shephard* and *Kriss Santala* have been with the band since its inception, most of the nucleus of a trio of female vocalists. They started out sounding like the original *Jefferson Airplane*, a mix of folk, rock, and jamming, though now the focus is on the voices. A parade of musicians has marched through, including original member *Clark Kuckaby* (now in *The Motel Preachers*) on fiddle and mandolin. And we believe the name is indeed a colloquialism for a certain anatomical feature.

Milk is an all female power trio - *Mary O'Hare* on guitar (mostly rhythm) and vocals, *Arlene Tessman* on bass and vocals, and *Kathy Steahle* on drums. For four years they have been playing solid pop/rock with a bit of folk, owing to Mary's use of amplified acoustic guitar. Their first CD, an 8-song effort, will be out in the spring. Keep your ears open for "Tell Me," a sure-fire hit ready to happen, with its chugging rhythm and clever tempo changes. They are opening for *Michelle Malone* at *The Acoustic Cafe* in Black Rock December 11.

Sweeter Than Wine's a Valley-based power pop band fronted by *Denise Blake* and *Dawn Mastro*. After years as an acoustic duo they added musicians and went electric - and caused no riot. Denise is an accomplished guitarist who focuses on her strengths as a team player rather than overreaching or ego-tripping. She and Dawn have strong, compelling voices and good taste in material, both on covers and originals. Denise's interest in Latin music shows occasionally, adding to their sound's variety. They have earned a weekly gig at *The Hungry Tiger* in Manchester every Tuesday. They also are popular at *Toad's Place*, and several times a year headline an evening of female bands. This will happen next on December 19, with *Milk*, *Swivel Hips*, and *Sans Cherubs*.

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MIXX TALKS WITH HOLLY MASIELLO, LEADING LIGHT OF WILDLIFE ROCKS!

by Steve Bornstein

What was the original idea for *Wildlife Rocks!* and how did you ever get started with that?

The original idea was to create awareness for animal organizations in the state through music.

Was there already some sort of Animal Awareness Day planned?
No, I created the whole thing.

I thought this was somehow a national or statewide observance.

As far as I know no one has ever taken bands - local entertainment, unsigned bands - and combined them with the various animal organizations, from shelters to food companies, in the same place. If they have, great! I want to know who they are. Maybe they can help me next year!

Yeah, please sign up. How did you choose the bands?

I contacted a couple of the groups I knew. I knew Kathleen from *Milk*, I knew Mike from *Creepin' Charlie*, and I went from there. *Swivel Hips* and a couple of other bands came through Kathleen. One of the bands came through the Connecticut Songwriters Association. People just started responding. Word got out, I got calls from bands from all over the place. I tried to select the bands so there was different music all day long. Like *Rear View* is real funk, *Swivel Hips* is really musical and funky as well, and had a lot of girls in the group. Mine was country, *Mighty Purple* was alternative/acoustic - everybody got a chance to be heard. That's the way I want to do it next year, too. But I also want to get out who's going on when so those kinds of fans can be there to see the kinds of bands they want, what contests are going to happen when. That was not done this year, a lot wasn't done that I want to do, but for the most part it went great.

Did people donate their time?

Yes.

You must have done some powerful talking.

Yes. I had a budget of \$3700 that I needed to raise to cover permits, electricians, sound, lights, porta-potties, and things like that, and I raised \$4050. I was a little over, so I got T-shirts made, got a one-day phone service put in for the girl who does the website. So I did a little of the extras that I didn't think I was going to be able to do. I raised that money myself from businesses here in New Haven.

So there wasn't any money donated by organizations?

No, there was not, and that's something I want to do differently next year, too. The New Haven Green does not allow money to be exchanged. So places like *Edgerton Park* or *Lighthouse Park* would - that way I could charge vendors, food vendors, and also I could charge admission and get the bands paid. People are allowed to make donations. We did have food donations but we didn't have monetary contributions.

It would be nice to be able to give money to the animal shelter or whatever.

Yep, you bet.

I think it was by and large successful.

Yes, for the first time. We learned a lot. There's a lot of things we want to do differently next year, but it went off without a hitch.

What's your musical background?

I'm one of the lead singers for a country/rock band called *Queen of Hearts*. I've done everything - rock and roll covers, to heavy metal in the city with a GVAR-type group, to doing backup in the studio for a couple of different bands, and now country. I'm trying to find my way.

How long has *Queen Of Hearts* been around?

We had the band together before with a completely different lineup. This lineup has been together since June. In fact, *Wildlife Rocks!* was our third gig as a band. So, it's very new.

Are you guys playing out?

We're just starting now because we just got our demo done. So now the clubs are paying attention to us because nobody will book you unless you have a demo. We've got two gigs a month now through February. November 13

we're down at *Boomer's* in Groton. We're at *The Terrace Club* in Stamford January 27, at *Boomer's* again in January. We're doing two to three gigs a month starting in January, but right now it's been kind of slow going.

Do you have any plans for next year, things you'd like to do different?

Different location, get the bands paid, get animal organizations donations, have a national act.

Now there's a thought.

It's not a thought, I'm definitely going to do it. I just have to raise the money. It's probably going to be thousands of dollars, but when I get a corporate sponsor that'll happen. Someone like *The Pretenders* or *The B-52's*. *Chrissie Hynde* is really into PETA. They're the first people I'm going to contact. I'm going to try and get a huge organization behind it rather than try and raise the money myself. Which wasn't bad, I did really well, but I could do even better if I have a name behind me, and funding.

k d lang also.

k d lang, Ani DiFranco, Mary Chapin Carpenter - we'll see what happens. I don't want it to turn into something really huge, more like a guest appearance, because the unsigned bands are really the focus.

It's better to feature local acts anyway.

You bet. So those are some of the changes - location, ticket sales, going to the animal organizations split evenly, the possibility of them raising monetary contributions at the event, and a bigger act, which I'll open up for because it's my event.

Hey, that's right

Hey, you know, people don't come to you, you have to go to them. What better way than to create an environment for yourself that puts you right in the position you want to be in. That's at least what I'm aiming at.

I like the way you think. Next year can you include cats?

No. Absolutely not. Cats must stay home. This is not an environment for cats. A guy brought a 20-foot python named Jake.

Jake the snake.

Yeah. He was awesome. I had him get up on the stage and show the audience. I was really impressed with that. Dogs are great, people have those little reptiles they want to show off, that's fine.

Gotta draw the line somewhere.

Absolutely. Cats are too rowdy. They get out of line, they throw things, they get drunk and really ugly. It's a known fact.

Uh huh. Yeah, I read *Garfield*, I know. Besides, they drive the dogs nuts.

Exactly. I really appreciate you guys taking an interest in what I did. It's definitely for the good of music and the animals. Getting the word out in your magazine may spark some interest in other bands that I may not have heard of that may be further along than the ones I booked. I'd like to get the bands that are really on the cusp of making a deal for themselves because, with a national act here, I'm going to have a lot of press and promotion. It's a good event to get your name out in. It's a good place to be seen. I want to make it a place to be seen for bands and also the animal organizations, make it a real "you have to be there" kind of thing.

You've really thought about a lot of aspects of this.

Thank you. I've wanted to do this for a long time. So I challenged myself, picked a date, then I had to do it once I got the permits. It's like, oh shit, now I've got to do it.

Suddenly you're faced with a deadline.

It makes a difference. It's like a band rehearsing in a garage. Until you have that first gig that you have to go out and play, you're really not trying as hard as you will be when you get in front of people. It just gives you that focus and commitment.

Sounds like you've done your homework. Good luck! Thanks a lot. Seeya.

CYNTHIA LYON ROARS!!!

Interview by Steve Bornstein

Cynthia Lyon is the leader and driving force behind Eight To The Bar, the swing/ R'n'B band that is the longest-running band in the area. They have survived personnel changes and musical fashion changes that would have forced the demise of most groups. They are living proof that it is possible to support yourself, indeed live well, as an independent artist. Just remember, it's work - they play 3-5 times a week, almost every week, and travel a lot. Now that this music is enjoying an upswing in popularity, it seemed appropriate to find out the story behind someone who has been making it happen all along. Ms Lyon took the time to talk with us recently.

• It's very impressive that Eight To The Bar has been around for nearly 25 years. Did you ever think it would take off like it has, and keep going for so long?

I didn't know when I started the band 25 years ago that it would take off like it has or that I would be in a band for 25 years. It's a real shock!

• Is it fair to say the band started as something like Asleep at The Wheel, Commander Cody, and Dan Hicks, with some Bette Midler thrown in?

It's fair to list all those influences except Bette Midler. Not that I don't like her, but I was emulating my mother, who sang during World War II in a vocal trio with her two sisters. As a child, I would listen to their trio quite a bit and they sang World War II songs that Bette later covered. Therefore, I wasn't emulating Bette but my mother's trio and her sound.

• I am so glad you straightened me out about that. I guess when people from our generation hear songs like "Bugle Boy Of Company B" we just go there without digging deeper. I envy you growing up with music in the family like that. Maybe that's one reason why you have succeeded where others haven't - it's not an act for you, this music has personal resonance and relevance. What was the original impulse behind forming the band?

The original impulse behind starting the band was and is still unknown to me. I just woke up one morning, realized that I was not able to work a "real" job and decided to make my own job.

• Did the original lineup include your sisters Barbara and Todd? And when did each leave?

The original lineup (as far as female vocalists) was: myself, my sister Janet, and her friend Carlene

Rowley. Both Janet and Carlene were only in the band for a matter of months; they left before we started playing out. Barbara and Todd came into the band right after Janet and Carlene left. It was probably still 1975. Todd was in the band for a year and then left. She later rejoined the band in 1987 and stayed for another 3-4 years. Barbara came in as I said in 1975 and stayed until around 1982 - 83.

• Are you originally from this area?

I was born in Boston in and we moved to Orange, CT in 1959 and lived there until I grew up.

• When were the following singers in the band - Rob Jockel, Polly Messer, Anne Donohue?

Rob was in the band from 1975 to around 1979. Polly was in the band from around 1977-1982. Anne was in it for something like 1991-1995 or so. I might be off by a year or two. I just can't remember. So many years, so many people.

• It seems to me a big stylistic change occurred when Bubbs Brown left - less western swing, more R'n'B.



Do you agree?

We decided replacing the steel with a sax would be more commercially acceptable in bars - and it was.

• What were you doing musically before ETTB? What about "regular" work?

Before ETTB I had done several different weird jobs ranging from janitor at Yale dorms to a solo piano gig at a restaurant to working at an insurance company to playing in a soul band.

• How many albums have you put out so far?

We have put out 6 albums, the first two on vinyl, the next four on CD. We have also been on four swing compilation disks in the last year.

• When were you able to build your own studio?

We built our own studio, Bar None Studios, back in 1992, and since then it's become not only our own studio

but it is booked full time by other bands. It's run by our sax player, Collin Tilton, who has recorded and produced our last three CDs. [Ed: Collin Tilton used to work with Van Morrison; that's his flute work on "Moondance."]

• What has been your weirdest gig? Your best gig?

Our weirdest gig would be impossible to name, but one that I remember would be the time we were playing at Nellie Green's in East Haven in the late 70s. One of our crazier fans came into the bar high as a kite, screaming jubilantly "LSD got a hold on me." A couple hours later his joyful delirium turned to violent panic as he screamed "I can't feel my legs!" As he was wheeled out of the club on a stretcher in a strait jacket, my bass player suggested that we stop playing the perky little Bonnie Raitt number we were singing and have me sing a more serious tune out of respect for the suffering he was going through, so we

switched to "Love Has No Pride".

Our best gig would also be impossible to name because many of them have been great for many different reasons. Lots of times a gig is just great only because we're playing in a new and exciting place where we've never played. This past June, for example, we played at the Derby in L.A., the number one swing club in the country. The club was gorgeous and the swing dancers were wonderful. Similarly, we played in June at Disneyland in Anaheim. Another wonderful gig with a great sound system. Playing in England for 10 days in 1990 was also a thrill because we were in England. Opening for Manhattan Transfer at Toad's back in the eighties was also wonderful. Opening for Ray Charles at the Oakdale several years ago was also a thrill, as was opening for the late Roy Orbison at the Charles Ives Theater in Danbury. Playing in Roanoke at the Coffee Pot is one of the most fun gigs I've ever done with possibly the most appreciative audience we've ever played for, even though the room probably doesn't hold more than 250 people. So, there are different reasons for why gigs are good or bad.

• You play mostly the east coast, right? Have you ever gone to the West or Midwest?

We play mostly in the east but have played in L.A., England, the Caribbean, and a lot in Florida at Disney World. Also, in Texas once for a private party and in Chicago for a private party. • I think "Cold, Cold, Cold" is the best song I've ever heard by a New Haven area songwriter (besides myself, of course!) How often do you write, or is that not such a big thing for you?

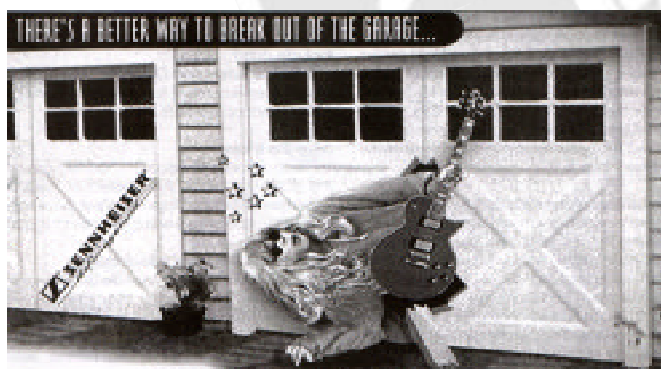
I'm very flattered that you think that way about "Cold, Cold, Cold." I don't write very often because it is a big, big deal and a very difficult and agonizing process for me, but usually ultimately gratifying.

• 25 years is truly a remarkable record, considering how times and tastes change, how many bands have come and gone in that time, and how hard it is to keep a band going for even two years. Why do you think you have succeeded where so many have failed?

The reason I've "succeeded" is because I've never felt that there was anything else in life that I *could* do, so I had to do whatever it takes to keep it going. By the way, we'll have a big 25 Eight To The Bar reunion this year, probably in February, like we did when we hit 20 years.

I would like to add that one of the most exciting things for me right now is that Rolling Stone - the German edition - selected one of our songs, "Demon Rum," for their swing compilation disk. The disk came out in October and was inserted in every one of their October issues. I'm trying to press our advantage right now and get us some swing dates in Germany and England.

• Next stop, MTV! Thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule. Best of luck always.



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Folk Beat

Before we plunge headlong into winter, let us enjoy this brief brisk autumn and reflect once again on summer's fading glory. It was not so long ago we were swimming, boating, lolling about in the shade, living from one cool drink to the next. Soon enough we will be struggling with snow, sleet, and ice; let us bask in balmy breezes just a little more.

The first full weekend of August means it's time to head up to Rhode Island for the festival by the sea. This was the 40th anniversary of **The Newport Folk Festival**, and it could hardly have been more special. The opening Friday night concert at The Hotel Viking featured **Nerissa** and **Katryna Nields** opening for **Cry Cry Cry**, this year's folk supergroup of **Lucy Kaplansky**, **Richard Shindell**, and **Dar Williams**. It was lovely to hear just the Nields sister's delicate harmonies without The Daves bashing away. This put Nerissa's songwriting right up front, and whenever that happens one can't help but marvel at how effectively she couples heartfelt emotions to distinct imagery with clever wordplay, and just the right touches of irony and insouciance when appropriate. She is one of the most insightful current songwriters, a fact which is often obscured by her delight in rocking out with the band. This was a hard act to follow, but **Cry Cry Cry** managed quite well. Both singly and in various combinations they weaved their way through their repertoire of originals and covers, each song performed with precision and clarity, revealing the depth of emotions as written.

The outdoor festival was almost anticlimactic after that: It's probably a good thing most people didn't know what they'd missed. There was plenty to hear even so, even before the gates opened. **Hear In Rhode Island**, a local production company, set up a stage outside the gate to entertain people waiting in line. Performers included **Jack Hardy** and **Chris and Meredith Thompson**, who grow more charming every time I see them. Newport is hip enough to have arranged for a **Respond Showcase**, and close enough to Boston that a large crowd appeared at the side stage for them. **Respond Inc.** is a women's shelter in Somerville MA, and one of the big buzzes this past year has been generated by the double CD compilation of 27 Boston and Massachusetts artists which benefits the program. Groups of three or four of these women have played such showcases throughout New England. This day featured performances by **Lori McKenna**, **Merrie Amsterberg**, and **Pamela Means**, all of them very different from each, all very good at what they do. Merrie especially shone this day, with her dreamy vocals wafting over the field, and the dozens of strings she and **Peter Linton** strummed ringing in harmony. Those who left early to catch **Catie Curtis** on the main stage missed a stirring performance from Pamela. After bumping into her in the audience for years, it was a delight to see her finally play at the festival. Maybe next year she'll be on the main stage. But many of those came back for **Melissa Ferrick's** Harbor Stage closing set, including Indigo Girl **Amy Ray**, who sat in rapt attention holding her girlfriend's hand. This made Melissa a little nervous, but fearless as ever she tore through her set, whipping



Performing at Country On Columbus - Above: Eudora; Below left: Mehuman Photos by Seth Kaye

the crowd into a frenzy. I have yet to see her in a bad performance, though she is so willing to push herself beyond what she's already done she often veers dangerously close to disaster. But this day she was on fire, and really made a name for herself. Even though I was one of only two to request an interview, soon after we started we were ringed by writers and photographers. Word goes out that fast sometimes.

Over on the main stage there were also a few surprises. **Beth Orton** somehow warmed up beyond the cool detachment of her recordings, and proved as endearing as **Stacey Earle**. **Steve Earle** turned down his bad boy image and turned in a fine set of acoustic country and bluegrass, ably assisted by **Tim O'Brien** and pals. **Susan Tedeschi** blew a lot of peoples' minds with her full-throttle blues, coming from a demure young lady on a floor length sleeveless floral dress. But the big surprise involved the crowd's reaction to **Martin Sexton**. He has risen far in the folk community, due to his natural talent in songwriting, singing, and guitar technique, and his winning stage presence. Even so, I was surprised that he was permitted to return for an encore, in the middle of the afternoon, a nearly unheard-of honor at this precisely-run festival. That alone is a tribute to his esteem.

The Philadelphia Folk Festival is how I have bid farewell to summer for the past fifteen years. Held in the countryside an hour's drive outside of the city on the last full weekend in August, it features the most extensive and diverse range of performers in the land. There are three workshop stages plus a dance stage in addition to the main stage, ensuring a wide variety of entertainment all afternoon and into the evening for three days in a row. There are also a nearly endless number and variety of jams going on around the clock in the campgrounds, many of which rival the paid performers. This is where the folk fest most resembles a festival, as hundreds of campsites are decorated well beyond the norm with architecture, flags, banners, and various often weird displays. Of all the things jokingly referred to as "the most fun you can have with your pants on," this is the real thing. For four days these hills become the most enjoyable ambience one could want - filled with music, revelry, kids at play, grownups too - and as long as no one gets out of hand everyone has a great time, year after year.

Philly has such a grand reputation that it's easy to attract topflight talent. It's almost too much, for some of the best must be relegated to short sets. Even so, **Dar Williams**, **Steve Forbert**, and **Ray Wylie Hubbard** were able to move the hillside in their allotted times. Saturday night's concert ended with a one-two punch of humorous acts, **Loudon Wainwright** and **Moxy Fruvous**. Loudon was scheduled to close, but the festival made a last-minute switch, counting on the frenzy that Moxy often incites. Whether he felt slighted or just wanted to throw down the gauntlet, Loudon did such an incredible job of working the crowd with his mixture of poignant ruminations and sarcastic observations that he was nearly impossible to follow. Moxy Fruvous was humbled, and said so. Their set was the most subdued and schtick-free I have seen from them, which worked for me but may have disappointed the Fruheads. This showed off their skills as writers, arrangers, and performers, the underlying

talent that gives their tomfoolery resonance.

But as always some of the best performances came from relative unknowns. I knew the workshops featuring Boston-area artists would be great; it was gratifying to see they won over these music lovers from far afield. The **Respond Showcase** was outstanding, as **Deb Pasternak**, **Barbara Kessler**, **Jenny Reynolds**, and **Colleen Sexton** played and sang so well, both solo and with each other. This was followed by a delightful performance by **Cry Cry Cry**, a one-two punch that was the highlight of the festival for me. At another workshop I finally caught up with **Terri Allard** from Virginia, whose album "Rough Lines" had intrigued me for a year. But this year the darling of the festival was surely **Stacey Earle**, whose moving songs, musical expertise, charming personality, and winning smile made fans instantly wherever she went.

The following weekend was Labor Day, and for those disinclined to celebrate with a backyard barbecue or picnic in the park or trip to the beach for summer's last hurrah there were several musical events within easy driving distance. **The First Annual EctoFest** was held in Danbury CT that Saturday. Ecto is a term coined by fans of **Happy Rhodes** music (it's the name of her fourth album), leading to an e-mail discussion list centered on her music and that of related artists, mostly female, somewhat intellectual and New Age-y. This marvelous little event was dreamed up by **Meredith Tarr** and **Chuck Stipak** two fans with no previous experience beyond Chuck's running the Danbury Folk Festival for three years, literally while waiting for **Susan McKeown** to start her set at **The Towne Crier** back in the spring. They pitched this idea to Susan that night, and her verbal agreement was all they needed to put the wheels into motion. They contacted artists based on very simple criteria - whom did they know, and who would return their phone calls. Unafraid to dream big, Meredith e-mailed **Happy Rhodes** personally, and fate lent a hand when their paths crossed the very next night at a **Sloan Wainwright** gig. Happy said, "I'm so there," and everything else fell into place. They set up the event as a benefit for two charities, The Interfaith AIDS Ministry of Greater Danbury, and The Danbury Women's Center, tying the music to the community and tapping into the volunteer resources, presumably a win-win-win situation.

The lineup for this first-time event was extraordinary, including **Rachael Sage**, **Sloan Wainwright**, **Mila Drumke**, **Susan McKeown**, and **Happy Rhodes**. Rachael turned in a delightful set, even though she insisted on dressing very kitsch-y. Mila's band including a rocked-out violinist, and I must point out that after so many people have credited **Kate Bush** as an influence, this was the first time I've heard anyone actually cover one of her songs. I heard Sloan's set while cooling off in the lake, and it was lovely to hear her throbbing alto filling the sultry air. **Susan McKeown** showed up with just her wonderful guitarist **Jon Spimey** and proceeded to hold everyone spellbound with her unique blend of traditional Celtic and progressive folk styles. But the big treat for me was to finally hear **Happy Rhodes** live.

The bucolic setting on the shores of Lake Kenosha was perfect for a warm summer's day. A beach was just on the other side of a hedge row, though one had to step carefully to avoid

droppings left by a flock of geese. On the way to take a dip I noticed Happy and a band member conversing in the umbra of an enormous willow. I remarked on the coziness of their "dressing room," to which the drummer drolly replied, "Yes, the green room." She hit the stage as the sun was setting, a natural light show. Her keyboard-driven stately space-pop was a little more rocking than I might have expected given the leanness of the instrumentation (backed by just bass, drums, and guitar), an unexpected pleasure. It was thrilling to hear her multi-octave voice filling the summer air, and to see she could relax and throw some humor into her set.

Given the short lead time and the competition for the public's attention on a holiday weekend this was an extraordinary success. It's proof that all it takes to put together a concert is the will to do it, the ability to find out how, and enlisting enough help to pull it off. They are not discouraged by the low turnout and are already working on putting together next year's festival. Merrie Amsterberg has already expressed interest in playing it. Keep tuned for updates, and check the website www.ectofest.org for more information on ecto music and other related developments.

Attendance at EctoFest meant missing the first day of **The Second Annual Rhythm And Roots Festival**, a considerable but necessary sacrifice, but I made it there that night and even got in some good late-night jamming. In so doing I made some new friends, one of the unpredictable bits of magic that make festivals so worthwhile, when people of similar tastes meet. Formerly known as the **Cajun And Bluegrass Festival**, it inaugurated its wonderful new site at **Ninigret Pond State Park** near the shore in Charlestown RI. Some sort of falling out between the promoters and the owners of the previous site, **Stepping Stone Ranch** in Escoheag, had prompted this move. Perhaps out of spite, **Stepping Stone Ranch** held a **Cajun/roots** festival head-to-head on this same weekend, but the R & R folks had an overwhelmingly better lineup. Sunday's lineup included **Boozoo Chavis'** down and dirty, fat and funky Zydeco, **Laurie Lewis'** snappy new-grass, **Natalie McMaster's** captivating Cape Breton fiddling and step-dancing, and **Steve Riley** and **The Mamou Playboys'** saucy Cajun. Dr. John closed out the night with his trademark Nawlin's-style boogie-woogie and showmanship.

What really made it for me was **Rosie Flores**, the **Rockabilly Filly** in a stripped-down trio form that included Austin stalwart **Sarah Brown** on bass. She proved for all time that any musical form can be adapted to personal self-expression if you know what you're doing. When it's not bluesy rockabilly is a cross between country and bubblegum pop - real easy to dance to but nothing much to say. Rosie is really a singer/songwriter who plays rockabilly, and slips some pretty weighty topics in there between the beats sometimes, if you listen closely. "Who's Gonna Fix It Now," a moving, loving elegy to her father, hushed the activity for a few minutes, and I felt a chill on this summer day. Of course she jumped right back into finger-snapping, toe-tapping good time music, but you could tell she'd won over lots of people with her heartfelt songcraft. She is right up there with **Lucinda Williams** and **Kim Richey** in this field, even though her songs are more akin to dance music.

Country On Columbus came on a delightful day, brisk but sunny, the first weekend of fall. Promoter **Beth Davis** had assembled a handful of very talented country-esque bands from NYC, somehow managing to survive in that urbane urban area. Nearly thirty blocks of the avenue were blocked off, filled with pedestrians strolling past hundreds of vendors. We were fortunate to

Jess Klein

Photo by Seth Kaye





Patty Larkin

Photo by Seth Kaye

be located right next to the main stage at the north end and got to hear some great music. First up was **Schecky Davis and The Twang Tones**, a loose band of friends who have grown tight through years of jamming. Next came **Miss Babs and The Kickin' Boogie Band**, who would prove to be the most country sounding band that day. Miss Babs wore a classic Nashville-style western outfit, full of fringe and spangles, and had a big voice that belied her petite stature. **Eudora** turned in the best set of the afternoon. Singer **Emily Hofstetter** gave a spirited performance, backed by a solid band that included a cello. One song, "Tomorrow Today," veered way out into a dark Neil Young-like space. Look for it on their fine CD, "Marathon Girl." **Tandy** received the biggest reception, and sold out all the CDs they brought. Closing act **The Imperial Pints** rocked harder than anyone else, with hardly any country in their sound at all. We have to give props to Beth Davis for putting together such a well-organized event and providing such a high level of quality performers, and also for mentioning us at least fifty times from the stage!

It was killing me, and Beth too, that this very day in southern New Jersey there was a festival that featured **Kim Richey**, **The Mavericks**, and **Lucinda Williams**, a virtual Woodstock for Americana fans. I've been saying for sometime Kim and Lucinda are a natural double-bill, and you throw **The Mavs** in there... I did get to see Kim at **Tramps** in New York this summer, and it proved to be one of the most delightful evenings of the year, as **Amy Rigby** opened. Amy is one of the most brilliant songwriters I have encountered, a stylistic chameleon equally adept in whatever color she chooses. Pop, rock, country, bossa nova - they all seem to spring full-formed out of her inventive mind. Although she averred humility in the presence of the talented Ms Richey, she proved more than up to the task. Amy has since moved to Nashville, hoping to break into the lucrative songwriting scene. **Kim Richey** has made a name for herself as a songwriter, but her own albums show a consistently high level of accomplishment, the equal of any other artist in craft and import. Being based in Nashville and having her songs covered (and turned into hits) by country artists have gotten her tagged as country herself. While her music would fit into country radio, it also would be at home on rock and pop stations. What keeps her from being strictly country is this very versatility, and that she uses keyboard instead of pedal steel in her live band. She is second only to **Lucinda Williams** in the broad-based Americana genre, and her album "Glimmer" is a lock to be on my Best Of 1999 list.

The **Paradise Club** in Boston presented me with the opportunity to hear two of my favorite singer/songwriters with a band for the first time. **Melissa Ferrick's** set on June 11th showed her versatility and range. She opened with a half hour of blistering solo work, following with over an hour with full band. It's hard to say which was more thrilling - her sound is so complete, her songs so compelling, her rhythmic sense so driving, that she can move a crowd all by herself. Even though you can sense the force implied in some of her more forceful material, it was a treat to hear the spirit made flesh by the additional instruments. The packed house was thrashed within an inch of its life and screamed for more. Now I know why she autographs with the phrase, "Rock on!"

Sonia Rutstein's CD release party on 9/9/99 was a little different. The club owner dropped the ball on the advertising, and hardly anyone turned out. That didn't keep her from giving her all, wowing all who did show up. The opener took the unusual approach of walking out onto the stage, unpacking her guitar, playing her songs, then putting her guitar back in its case and walking off, just as if it were a sidewalk gig. Sonia played to the sparse room as if it were packed, a real

trouper. Her band followed her effortlessly, belying the fact they had been together only two weeks. Although she performs with so much energy and charm by herself that a band isn't needed, it was a treat to hear her able to perform her songs fully realized, much as **Melissa Ferrick** had done, at the same club, three months before. One humorous remark is worth mentioning. In response to shouted requests, she suggested people buy her new album so that next time they would be able to yell out songs from it. Works for me. The album, "Me, Too," is one of the year's best, adding to her already excellent catalogue, a body of work that ranks among the best. She is one to watch for.

A couple of weeks later Sonia did a benefit concert for the **Gloucester Land Trust**. This community-based fund provides financial assistance to potential residents of Cape Ann, making living on this lonely spit of land more attractive. An old church with high ceilings and comfortable pews welcomed attendees, providing warm acoustics to go with the delicious baked goods. Sonia was in fine form, high-spirited and charming as always, but even more so because her sister **Cindy Frank** was lured out of semi-retirement for this special occasion. I had not seen them together since the first time I saw them, at Falcon Ridge back in 1995, and they seemed to have lost none of the magic and instantaneous interaction. The band was more relaxed and practiced, enabling them to really groove together, and a good vibe filled the room. The contact high was extraordinary, and left me a little overamped. I took the opportunity to drive out to Rockport at the tip of the peninsula, to nose around **Paula Cole's** old stomping grounds and gaze out to a spectacular view of craggy New England coastline, breathtaking even at night. Gotta stop and smell the night blooming jasmine.



Lucinda Williams

Photo by Dan Hott

Club Passim hosted the **Vinal Avenue String Band** on October 9. This trio of **Sean Staples** on mandolin, **Kris Delmhorst** on fiddle, and **Ry Cavanaugh** on guitar, got their start at **Tir Na Nog**. They spent a year in residence, even recording a live album there, although they play more country and bluegrass than Irish music. This night they augmented their fine trio work with a three piece horn section, making for a delightfully offbeat experience.

Patty Larkin packed them in at **The Acoustic Studio** in Stamford November 6, selling out both shows. She gets more out of the apparently simple concept of a singer with a guitar than anyone besides **Ani DiFranco**. Her deft use of open and standard tunings enables her to create an extraordinary variety of moods and sounds. Add to this her clever songwriting and evocative singing, and you have something rare - a complete artist. When she is on, no one is her equal, and this was one of those frequent occurrences. Every song rang true, from the bracing opener "The Road" on her turquoise Strat to the deamy closer "Carolina." Oh, sure, there may have been an off note here and there, but when you strive as hard as she does to reach the ultimate expression of her inspiration a few sparks will fly. She is one of those exceptional performers who is always rewarding no matter how many times you hear her.

Ani DiFranco has also been selling out houses for years. Her appearance at Hartford's venerable **Bushnell Theatre** continued as a reminder of her success. Openers **Bitch** and **Animal** left me puzzled. Repeating the names of genitalia may have value in psychotherapy or self-help groups, but you have to do more than just say unspoken words and shock to create art, or meaningful messages. By contrast, Ani has progressed far beyond this stage in her development. At least

"New Haven," Cont'd from Page 1

Washboard Slim And The Blue Lights have been on the scene for nearly fifteen years. As one of the area's most proficient exponents of the blues, they have transcended the uniformed perception of jug bands as novelty acts. **Peter Menta** and **Howard Horn**, veterans of the Ten Years Late Jug Band, are one of the most solid rhythm sections around, despite their unusual instrumentation. Howie's rich baritone has been a consistent factor in the strength of the group's vocals, and a veritable who's-who of New Haven's vocalists have served as lead vocalist - **James Velvet**, **Miss Dee Menchaca**, **Anne Donohue** (a former Who-Who), and now **D.W. Armstrong**. Instrumental expertise is provided by **Mat Kastner**, who built his reputation as a master guitarist while in **Randy Burns' Sky Dog Band** in the 60s - 70s and **The Phabulous Phermones** into the 70s - 80s, and **Brooks Barnett**, proficient on a wide variety of instruments, including keyboards, accordion, banjo, mandolin, and guitars. This band long ago disproved the notion that jug band music is hokey. The general public just hasn't caught on yet.

Eight To The Bar began nearly a quarter of a century ago as **Cynthia Lyon**, inspired by the boogie-woogie of such bands as **Commander Cody** and **Asleep At The Wheel**, and the hip/camp of **Dan Hicks** and **The Hot Licks**, decided to try it for herself. She has not lacked for work ever since. The band is constantly in demand up and down the eastern seaboard, playing private parties as well as regular gigs. They traded in the pedal steel for a sax, leaving western swing behind to concentrate on R'n'B, rock, swing, and funk, without missing a step. Cynthia's pumping piano and stirring vocal as well as occasional songwriting propel the band. Her "Cold Cold Cold" is my personal favorite song written by a New Haven area songwriter (besides myself) - sharp, snappy, saucy. Numerous vocalists have served the cause: **Rob Jockel's** vocal gymnastics matched his stage antics; **Polly Messer's** cool blonde demeanor couldn't mask her fiery vocalizing; **Anne Donohue's** sultry bluesy approach was the perfect counterpart to Cynthia's swinging style. **Zanny Gaudet** shares the singing on their latest album, "Behind The Eight Ball," continuing the band's tradition, but has since left the band (apparently another tradition). They have a large and loyal following, and are almost too big to play anywhere in the area besides **Toad's Place**, though they do pack **The Chowder Pot** in Branford pretty regularly. What sets them apart from the newer bands riding the current swing craze is they have been doing it for much longer, they have a real feel for the genre, and they draw you in with music rather than hit you over the head with schtick. Check them out for a rockin' swingin' good time. [See accompanying interview]

At least one of their contemporaries, **Bob Elliott** from the late lamented **B. Willie Smith Band**, is still making music. His current band, **The Bandidos**, is a power-packed trio keeping the tradition of rockably alive and vibrant. With drummer **Tom Smith** and guitarist **Jim Montez**, who also plays in **The Convertibles**, they have a full yet uncluttered sound, and are able to rock and swing with more punch and pizzazz than most bands twice their size.

There are at least two ways to enjoy local music without leaving home. **WPLR** relaxes its classic rock formatting on Sundays to bring you **Giants** games in the fall (and winter, hopefully) and local releases in a locally-produced show called "Local Bands." **Hosts James Velvet** and **Rick Allison** hold forth from 10 - 11, playing nearly everything they get regardless of style or genre. They have been known to go to bat for bands they really like, so it's worth a shot. Send tapes and CDs to: **Local Bands**, P.O. Box 6508 **Whitneyville CT 06517**.

Central Connecticut residents who subscribe to **Cox Cable** have yet another way to enjoy music. Every Thursday night at 7:30 they broadcast a local access production called "Euphonious Mode." The brainchild of **Harvey Riggs** and **Tom Hearn**, this program features a broad spectrum of popular music. Live performances recorded at the **Cox studio** range from solo artists to the 11-piece **Steely Dan** tribute band **The Fez**. They have built up an impressive library since the inception of this series in 1992, a who's who of local and national acts. They add to this by taping once or twice a month. I attended a session with **Mighty Purple's Steve** and **Jon Rodgers**, and was impressed with both their performances (no second takes) and the professionalism of the crew. Using only one tape machine means mixing on the fly, and the finished footage looked polished and exciting, with fades, dissolves, and superimposed images. It also sounded great, as sound engineer **Tommy Martello** lends his **Neumann** microphones to the project and operates a professional quality mixing board. Many artists cheerfully pay for a copy of the video to use in their promo kits. Interested artists can email **Harvey at EuphoMode@aol.com** or send a CD for consideration to **Euphonious Mode**, PO Box 3079, **Stony Creek CT 06405**. **Cox** serves the towns of **Cheshire**, **Meriden**, and **Southington**. I am going to have to start inviting myself over to my friends in **Cheshire** on Thursday nights.

Now, if you've read this far and wonder why I haven't mentioned your favorite band, or performer, it could be because there are too many for me to do justice to all of them in this space. Maybe that's a good indication that the **New Haven music scene** is thriving even in these difficult times. At least it seems promising enough to inspire kids to put bands together - you can't play if there aren't places to play. I look at the list of bands who have tried to make a go of it here - **John O'Leary**, **Randy Burns**, **The Rich Kids**, **The Shags**, **The Simms Brothers** - and the few who have succeeded - **The Five Satins**, **The Carpenters**, **Michael Bolotin**, **Emily Salliers** of **Indigo Girls** - there's been a lot of good music played here, even if their records were lucky to get regional airplay. You can still hear good music nearly every night around here, even Mondays - **Garry And The Moodswingers**, **The Barrelhouse Boys**, **Big Bad Johns**, **Stacy Phillips**, **Mollycoddle**, **Motel Preachers**, **Cyd Sidoroff**, **Allison Farrel**, **Nancy Tucker**, **Shellye Valauskas**, **Anne O'Meara**, **Heaton**, **Anne Marie Menta**, **Del Crandalls**, **Gershwin's Roommate**, **George Baker**, **Bill Brown**, **The Mocking Birds**, **The Honeydews**, **Cobalt Rhythm Kings**, **Robert Crotty**, **Psychedelic Breakfast**, **Robert Messore**, **The Bernadettes**, **D.W. Armstrong** and the **Rent Party Band**, **Rafter Bats**, **Lynn Malavolte**, **Sister Brother**, **Triple Threat Blues Band**, **Kitty O'Shea**, **13 O'Clock**, **Zen Tricksters**, **Eclectic Nobodys** - any or all of these acts could be playing on any given night. I'm sorry if I've missed someone - please let us know whom you want us to check out.

So the local scene may not be what it was in the mid-70s, when the town was fairly bursting with bands, solo acts, and places to play. Raising the drinking age to 21 really dried up the fan base and put a lot of clubs under, and the rise of disco put a few nails in the coffin of a lot of live acts. Still, the human spirit is so resilient and the urge to create and experience something new and undefinable is so indomitable that there will always be a live music scene in some form. Maybe if the **Y2K** bug really crashes computers and power grids, people will be forced to turn to acoustic musicians for their entertainment fix. Could be a blessing in disguise.

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Continued on Page 14



by Christopher Marz

Adam - Self-titled 3 song CD
Original and captivating are two words that came to mind when I listened to this CD. This band doesn't sound like anybody but themselves. Laced with spacy echoing synth and sustained heavily effected guitar notes and chords, the music conjures up an atmosphere of its own that the listener experiences more as a voyeur than a participant (you're not gonna dance to this). As you travel slowly along, the thought-provoking vocals ride with the music at the same pace. You are taken on a trip and then suddenly you're dropped off back at the real world. It's very trippy music, meant to move the mind rather than the body. A thinking man's music - Yeah, that's it! Michael Fleet, guitar/vocals; Tito, bass; Dan Starcher, guitar/vocals; Kyle Nauman, drums; Dru, keyboards Contact: Adam, PMB 348, 2479 Murfreesboro Rd. Nashville, TN 37217 <http://www.adam.org>, adam@kidpowered.com



Buck Dewey Big Band - Friday Night Chicken Waltz 12 song CD Fruitpunch Records
Hey! You gotta swing and slide before you funk and jive or you can switch the order and still enjoy the ride! Did I just make that up? Well if I did, then maybe I can become a songwriter just like the Buck Dewey Big Band bunch. If you ever heard them, then you know where I'm a-comin' from. Not for the too-serious crowd, but sure to be a crowd pleaser for those looking for fun collage music. Did I do it again? I think I just coined a new genre - collage music! Not quite college and definitely not garage! How else do you describe a band that does rap, jazz, reggae, swing, funk, hip-hop, ragtime, etc? These guys can romp and stomp with the best of them, and with swing music the latest "big thing" who knows how far they'll go? They can be whimsical, often silly, sometimes profane, but always proficient in execution, especially that unbelievable trumpet and trombone, and the great songwriting. This would make great asylum elevator music! Chris Barrett, vocals/keys/trumpet; Jimmy Fox, vocals/guitar; Daigo Fujiwara, vocals/bass/flute; Matt Myers, vocals/drums; Rob O'Dwyer, vocals/percussion/trombone. Contact: Buck Dewey Big Band, P.O. Box 15493, Boston, MA 02215 buckdewey@fruitpunch.com <http://www.fruitpunch.com>



Marie G

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
MIXX MAGAZINE

Thanks to Noel and the whole Mixx crew for all of your support with my solo project and back in the Grooveyard days.

Looking forward to working with you again with upcoming projects.

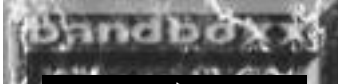
Peace, Marie G.



Chin Ho! - Everything You Know Is Wrong 11 song CD Citizen Records
Well, it's pop, it's quirky (some of it), so I guess that makes it, partially quirky pop! It's a mix of strange wording like in the songs "Weird," "Girl," and "Alien Corn" with exceptional musicianship and more "normal" wording as in the song "New Haven." It's also mainstream modern rock - not real heavy stuff, more middle of the road. Lead breaks with solid I-know-how-to-play-lead-guitar stuff and funky bass lines that say "I know how to play this bass." Not the kind of stuff that has only rhythm for me, thank you. I really like a well-rounded sound where a player can play when a song calls for it, and that's what Chin Ho! does. They give what it takes when it's called for and they do it so well. A line from the song "Girl" gives you an idea of the lyrical content: "If I was a girl and you were a girl too/Would you like me, like I like you?" Andrew Smith, vocals; David Morency, guitars; Chris Parizo, bass/vocals; Gary Williams, drums; Bill Mullins, guitar/vocals; Dave Barnett, bass; Pat Coyne, drums. Contact: Good Citizen Records, P.O. Box 5373, Burlington, VT 05402. <http://www.chinho.com>




Crown Jewels - Linoleum 8 song CD Thunderdog Music
Have I said it a thousand times? Even so, I'll say it again. Always put the attention-getter



Bobby Torres

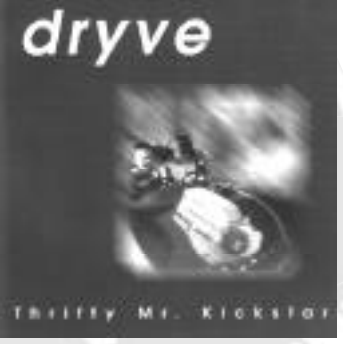
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first. Whether intentionally or not, Crown Jewels did just that, with their song "Lovers on Earth." The show shows off the unique characteristics of their songwriting style. Late 80s influenced modern pop! Very nicely polished, produced, played and packaged - which means of course they got all the four P's. These are by no means newbies though. Some of them have played with Jill Jones, Dr. John, Johnny Winter, Iggy Pop, and so on. It's apparent that acquiring all these credentials hasn't been wasted. The vocals, sometimes breathy, sometimes raspy, are similar to Glen Frey and others. Great harmonies, good music composition and variety in tempos, none straying from the pop genre. Some of the lyrics are awkwardly funny like "Toughest Girl in the Neighborhood" and "He's So Zen," which are countered by songs like "Camille." Most of the CD is a light hearted view on various life situations. Steve Conte, lead vocals/acoustic and electric guitar; John Conte, upright and electric bass/backing vocals; Paul Garisto, drums; Rich Mercurio, drums; Chris Palmaro, Hammond B3 organ/Wurlitzer/piano; Mark Stewart, cello Contact: Sandra Sauder, Screamin' Porch Publicity, (419) 446-9408 wordup72@aol.com



Dryve - Thrifty Mr. Kickstar 10 song CD SaraBellum
I had to listen to this CD twice before I could even attempt coming to any opinions at all. The sound eluded me, perhaps because of their self-description as rock. The CD, with the exception of the song "Television," was more roll than rock. There were the buildups and other moments when the proficiency of the musicians was very apparent—especially the lead guitar and drums—but for the most part it was more of a slow Hammond B-3 backed southern rock sound, or the sound of The Eagles' "Peaceful Easy Feeling." There were really good songs on this CD like the song "Rain," which lasted about 7 minutes and the last song "Manifold," which somehow reminded me of Oasis. But I would categorize this as straight up alternative. Keith Andrew, drums/percussion; Michael Pratschner, bass; David Pratschner, Hammond B-3 organ/accordion; Paul Donovan, vocals/acoustic and electric guitar; Cory Verner Buck, vocals/acoustic and electric guitar; Steve Pratschner, lead guitar/acoustic guitar. Contact: Dryve, 974 Home Ave., Carlsbad, CA 92008 <http://item.netcentral.net>

If Inertia - In Absentia 3 song demo CD Sometown Maybe Music
Though the vocals are often flat, I hear enough well-sung words and lines to know that they don't have to be. A few more takes could have fixed it! That being said, this is poetically interesting and obviously deeply felt. It comes across very clearly that this group really cares about their art. I could feel their heart being poured into their sound. There's a potential here for big things. They have a distinct enough sound, very well-written and -played music. I could hear some influences, like Pearl Jam, Ozzy, Jane's Addiction and so on. Though with a lot of groups a 3 song demo doesn't get their sound across, that's not the case here. I clearly once again see POTENTIAL. I'd like to hear a full CD from this group, with all the bells and whistles. Joseph Pierson, guitar/vocals; Benjamin Sage Young, bass; Salvatore Giancarelli, drums Contact: If Inertia, Sometown Maybe Music, P.O. Box 117, Northampton, MA 01061-0117. <http://www.inertia.com>; email: info@inertia.com

The Limit - Stages 7 song CD Dreamline
If I were a guitar player I would sound something like Mark Daniel. Who's Mark Daniel, you ask? Well, he's the guitarist/singer for The Limit, a fantastic three piece rock group from New Haven, CT. From the first few guitar riffs on the first track "Holding On," I had a feeling this was gonna be good, and I was right! The sound is a blend of a modern day Page (very hard to achieve), Eddie Vedder-influenced vocals, traces of U2 - need I say more? Who ever taught

this guy to play deserves an award! The whole group has a very tightly grained flow to it and a unique enough sound to put them far ahead of most other bands I've heard in a while. There's no sense in telling you which songs I liked best, because they're all excellent. You've gotta hear these guys for yourself. Very highly recommended! Mark Daniel, guitar, vocals; Bob Chmiel, drums; Todd Grosberg, bass Contact: The Limit/Mark Daniel, 81 Linden Drive Milford, CT 06460, USA. (203) 878-7368 www.RealTimeRecords.com



email: mdlimit@hotmail.com
Lower East Side Stitches - STAJA 98 L.E.S. 14 song CD NG Records

True to their roots, The Stitches punch out the anthems for a new generation of punkers. The early 80s style of punk they do is updated yet remains credible. "Down The Drain" is a frantic rocker that lets you know right away that these guys can really play their instruments. It brings back memories of the early 80s CBGB's scene where punk was king. I don't know which song I liked best, but one of note is "Jungle Man." You can't help but notice the playing on this CD. The drums are live sounding and endlessly energetic with fills added at every opportunity. The bass is another endless flow of energy with real catchy progressions, setting up a good backdrop for the rest of the band. The two guitarists and singer also are a perfect match to the sound. Great leads, rhythms and lyrics are the rule, not the exception, for this group. A worthy sound for the New York underground! Mick Brown, vocals; Curtis Stitch, lead guitar; Lorne Behrman, rhythm guitar; Damian Branica, bass; James Baggs, drums Contact: L.E.S. Stitches P.O. Box 1272, New York, NY 10010. band: <http://www.nytrash.com/stitches.html> label: <http://www.ngrecords.com> email: drnkmonkee@aol.com

The Mondays - Self-titled 13 song CD Harborage Records
We have some good stuff here. The musicians are very well-rehearsed, and the songs are very singable and most are really good. I was reminded of Collective Soul—not that they sound like Collective Soul (although there are tinges of similarities), but when you play the CD a second time, you're singing along. The songs are very user friendly. The second song "What I Want" has an uncanny resemblance to the Gin Blossoms' song "Jealousy." In fact, the whole sound is similar to the Gin Blossoms. Song six "Neurotic" really kicks some pop music ass, especially the lead guitar. If you like either of the two bands I mentioned then you'll probably like The Mondays. I think they can give most pop bands a run for their money! KC, vocals/guitar; Ken Carmen, vocals/keyboards; Steve Lobmeier, drums; Steve Caroppoli, bass Contact: Harborage Records, P.O. Box 457 Plainview, NY 11803



Playback - Perception is Reality 12 song CD Bandwick Productions
Playback weaves a rich tapestry of

mesmerizing soundscapes. I was enthralled by the material and its production quality. The audible space is filled with enough synth instruments and effects (though not overdone) to satisfy the most ardent of synth gurus. The music is all very finely fitted and honed. I really liked some of the chord changes on the acoustic guitars and the breathy low keyed vocal style. I found myself drawn into the sound which is a Pink Floyd/Moody Bluesy AOR. Most of the songs can easily stand on their own, and as a whole CD it's a fine piece of work. Well done fellas! David Goodwick, Joshua Swetts, Paul Tofinchio, Bob Evans. Contact: Bandwick Productions, 117 South Main Street, Newtown, CT 06470 email: bandwick@goodwick.com URL: <http://playback.iuma.com>



Seven - Self titled 8 song CD Self
Seven is a voice with multiple personalities and multiple yet similar textures. The first song, "Reality," has a Chrissie Hynde flavor. The second song, "Straight to Somewhere," brings to mind Courtney Love, while the last song on the CD, "Home," recalls Stevie Nicks. These are all just traces, mind you: Seven's own sound dominates the entire album. It's a very clean, soothing style—the vocals sung like a pro and everything on the mark. She puts herself out there, holds it, and I don't think I heard an off-key note at all. The recording is of good quality and the arrangements (all done by Seven) are also very well fit to the lyrics. I found everything very easy to listen to, as it is a very smooth flowing sound. Pure, heartfelt, sultry, eloquent! Seven, vocals/guitar; Carlos Savetman, guitar, Eric Presti, guitar Contact: 69-41 Little Neck Parkway Glen Oaks, NY 11004 email: soscharf@aol.com

Spider Rockets - Self titled 4 song CD Self
New Jerseys' Spider Rockets are just one of many groups still smelting the metal. I hear so often that metal's out, but I beg to differ. I went to Woodstock and I think I saw Metallica get three encores before the largest audience I've ever seen for any type of music. Well let me tell you the metal scene is still alive and well! Spider Rockets is living proof. The first song "Here with Us" is Queensryche revisited, only with a female singer. They continue to carry the torch with the quintessential power-chords and group shouts in songs like "Hey Man" and "Times Up," ending with "The Predator," a metal 101 song. Everything necessary for a working formula: the aggressive guitar leads, ballsy vocals, attitude, beats, and drive. The next generation has arrived to reinforce the troops. On the frontline are: Helena Cos, vocals; Matt Goida, drums; Rob Klingebiel, bass; John Nappi, guitar Contact: Spider Rockets P.O. Box 5225 Hazlet, NJ 07730 <http://www.spiderrockets.com>

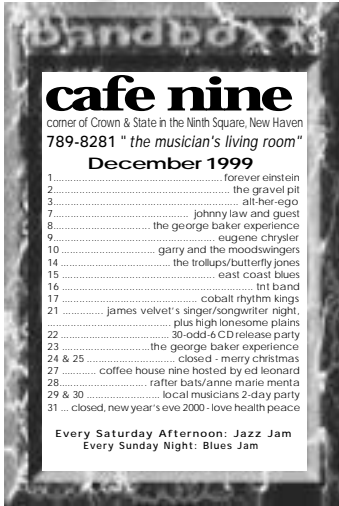


Yokeshire - Masque Of Shadows 10 song CD Zygo Records
Do you believe in faerie tales of Merrie Olde England? Do you think the art-rock of Yes and Jethro Tull and Genesis represent a high point in rock and roll history? Then this one's for you! Even if you don't, there is plenty to like here. Concocted

by a trio of warlocks, this foray into the wilderness of wonder leads the listener into realms both unknown and familiar. They sound like the above bands from time to time, with the mood swings from electric to acoustic, the grinding bass, the syncopated drumming, the clearly distorted guitars, the mystery conjured by the lyrics. But while these influences are apparent, the results are more modern and unique. The chugging rhythm of "Black Tower" and its invitation to indulge in explorations of forbidden pleasures yield in the end to a Santana-like groove. "Magic Circle," with its mandolin and dulcimer interplay, minor modes, flutes, and faraway-sounding guitar recall Led Zeppelin in the brief acoustic venture on their third album. The middle of the album is a suite of three songs totalling nearly 17 minutes designed for a musical excursion. Very trippy stuff. They proudly announce that "all the sound effects you hear... were evoked from musical instruments." I'd like to hear them do all this live! Craig Herlihy, writing/zillions of instruments/lead and backing vocals; Brian Herlihy, electric and acoustic guitars; Brad Dillon, drums/percussion/backing vocals
Contact: Zygo Records P.O. Box 397 North Chelmsford MA 01863 www.yokeshire.com



The Nonchalants - Drive 11 Song CD Found Dog Productions [review by Steve Bornstein]
The duo of Jean Synodinos and Steve Uhler cover a lot of ground in "Drive" - thematically, stylistically, emotionally. They seem equally at home with folk, pop, country, rock 'n' roll, calypso, and down home front porch blues. All this in a scant 36 minutes! Their easy-going charm and offhand delivery belie the seriousness of many of their themes. So does their clever use of humor to inject some emotional release in their tales of heartache, longing, and overcoming disappointment. The album kicks right off with the snappy title tune, about leaving a failed love in the dust as the singer speeds down the road into "a mighty big state populated by people who ain't you." There are stops along the way in New York and Los Angeles, dreams of Italy and Montego Bay - a travelogue of the heart. Living in Austin affords them access to some excellent musicians to round out their sound. They even get the forever fabulous Sara Hickman to sing some sweet harmony on "Home." There is quite a variety on this brief but delightful album. Clear, uncluttered production by Glenn Kawamoto brings their well-considered but breezy music to the fore - not really nonchalant at all. Contact: Found Dog Productions, 2503 East Oltorf Street, #1831 Austin, TX 78741 <http://www.thenonchalants.com> TheNonchal@aol.com




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by Robert J. Sodaro, Dylan J. Sodaro, and Kayla Rose Sodaro

Okay folks you all know the drill. Put your feet up and your chairs back in the reclining position: we're about to go to the movies. As with last time the contributions of Dylan (DJS), and Kayla Rose (KRS) come first (followed by their initials), and run at the top of the column. Ready? Set? Go!

Movie List w/ Dylan and Kayla Rose

The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland "G

Elmo lost his blankie, it went into Oscar's garbage pail and Elmo fell in afterwards. The blankie then went through a door into Grouchland, and Elmo followed it. I really liked the movie. It was very good but it is really for littler kids. (DJS)

No, I didn't like this movie, because of that big grouchy guy who took everything (Huxley, played by Mandy Patinkin). Elmo was walking along to get to Huxley's house to get his blankie and his friends got out of jail to help him. I didn't like it because it was scary. Elmo doesn't go anywhere without his blankie. (KRS)

Yet another cute, if uninspiring, Muppet movie. Not nearly as entertaining as Muppets in Space, but not entirely awful. However, its dark overtones and the grimness of Grouchland really did get Kayla upset. She wanted to leave about halfway through it. Ah well.

Dudley Do Right - Rated "PG"

Snideley Whiplash was the bad guy and Dudley is a Royal Canadian Mountie, and was the good guy. Snideley did bad things. The actor who played Dudley (Brendan Fraser) also played George in *George of the Jungle*, and was in *The Mummy*. I liked the movie, it was great. (DJS)

I liked *Dudley Do Right*. It was a very funny movie. The one that wore black (Alfred Molina), was a bad guy, and then that girl (Sarah Jessica Parker as Nell Fenwick) was dressed pretty, like me and mommy. (KRS)

Another uninspiring remake of a classic Jay Ward cartoon. While Brendan Fraser tried his comedic best, he just couldn't get the material above the dull direction and mediocre script. Too bad, this one could have been a hoot.

For Love of the Game - Rated "PG-13"

Billy Chapel was pitching a perfect game against the Yankees. His best friend was the catcher, and he never pitched a game without his friend. A perfect game is when nobody gets on base and nobody gets a hit. Billy Chapel was played by Kevin Costner. He was in two other baseball films *Field of Dreams* and *Bull Durham*, but I didn't see those two movies. (DJS)

It was funny because that boy (Billy Chapel/ Kevin Costner) kept throwing strikes. I like baseball, and that's what this was about. (KRS)

This could be one of the all-time classic baseball movies. Here Kevin Costner truly shines, and it is

so obvious (yes, even as a hired actor) that he has a passion for this game. Costner plays Billy Chapel, a distinguished 19-year pitching veteran, who is reminiscing about his life while pitching what could possibly be the very last game of his professional career. Just to make the movie more interesting, the game itself is a pitching duel that could turn out to be his only perfect game. A priceless moment occurs at the top of the eighth inning when Chapel notices all the zeroes on the scoreboard for the first time and asks his catcher, "Anybody been on base yet?" "Not so far as I've seen" comes the offhand reply.

Costner loves and understands baseball (*Field of Dreams*, *Bull Durham*), and it shows. Here, Chapel is agonizing over his crumbling relationship with his girlfriend of five years (Jane Aubrey, played by Kelly Preston), his team's recently-announced sale, and his possible trade (after 19 years with the team), all while pitching the best game of his life. America loves baseball films, and this one will be no exception. It has all the right elements, to make it a classic; especially considering how baseball itself has made a comeback in the eyes and hearts of America over the past few years.



While not quite in the same league as *Jerry Maguire*, *Love of the Game* skillfully blends both the sports and romance elements of the film (although I personally could have used more baseball and less "relationship"). Still, *Love of the Game* successfully captures the thrill of high-stakes baseball, keeping the eventual outcome every bit as much in doubt as it would be in an actual game. So, if your favorite team missed the playoffs this year, then go to the movies and root for Costner/Chapel and the Detroit Tigers as they go up against the New York Yankees in a game that will have you jumping out of your seat and cheering, even if you aren't a fan of either team.

Mystery Men - Rated "PG"

I really liked this movie, but it really should have been rated "PG" not "PG-13". The movie was about these three crimefighters who fought evil, but they were no good - they stunk! They were

looking for people that could fight crime so they had this party for crimefighters to come. The first person they saw was Invisible Boy who told them all about his super powers and he told them that he knew lots of people that could fight evil. And he knew The Spleen - when he farts he gives gas away, and seven feet away people go sleepy-by. They had to fight this evil guy named Frankenstein. Invisible Boy was Kel Mitchell from *Kenan & Kel* and *All That* and *Figure It Out*. All those three shows are on Nickelodeon. I really liked the movie. (DJS)

I really liked the part where Kel turned invisible and he said "Hey I'm invisible, can you see me?"



and everybody could see him. (KRS)

I'm a comic book fan, have been for the better part of the past four decades (yes, I'm really that old), and I have to say without reservation that *Mystery Men* is far and away the very best comic book movie that I've ever seen. Based loosely around Bob Burden's ("Flaming Carrot") heroes of the same name (published by Dark Horse Comics), the *Mystery Men* are a bunch of losers who are more like hero wannabes than any super team you may have ever seen before. Consisting of Mr. Furious (Ben Stiller), The Shovel (William H. Macy), and the Blue Raja (Hank Azaria), the hapless trio are not only constantly getting their butts roundly whumped by second-rate villains, but are routinely ignored by the media and constantly upstaged by Champion City's premiere superhero Captain Amazing (Greg Kinnear).

When Captain Amazing begins to lose his corporate sponsorship (his logo-covered uniform makes him look like a Formula-One race car), he determines to return to glory by getting his arch foe (Casanova Frankenstein, played by Geoffrey Rush), released from the sanitarium where he has been incarcerated. Only this plan backfires when the Captain is subsequently captured.

When the *Mystery Men* get wind of this, they go on a recruitment drive to enlist the aid of other heroes - The Bowler (Janeane Garofalo), Invisible Boy (Kel Mitchell), and The Spleen (Paul Reubens), and The Sphinx (Wes Studi) - to rescue him. What ensues is a pluperfect translation of the comic book genre to the silver screen. Utilizing sets that look like they were left over from the Batman travesties, Champion City takes on the look and feel of someplace that could only exist on cheap newsprint and in four color.

I'm telling you, this flick had all the look and feel of what I have always wanted to find in a comic book movie, but have rarely located (the first *Darkman* came close, as did *Superman II*). Interestingly enough, while I totally loved the movie, I wasn't as happy with the Dark Horse adaptation of it. On the other hand, Dark Horse's companion (ongoing title "Bob Burden's Original Mysterymen," substantially differing from the movie adaptation), reads much better. It is almost as if having seen the movie, the comic book adaptation was bled of all life, while Burden's original series seems novel and innovative. Check out both the movie and the comics.

Movie List

American Beauty - Rated "R"

With this flick Kevin Spacey not only cements his own place in the firmament as an actor's actor, but makes his bid for another Academy Award. This bittersweet, quirky tale of one man's struggle against a midlife crisis and ordinariness throws an interesting spin on everyday life in

suburbia. He is a writer/researcher for some nameless, boring trade publication (where he has worked for years), his wife (Annette Bening), is a boring, controlling, uptight bitch who sells real estate and has the hots for a competitor, and their daughter (Thora Birch) is a typical disaffected teenager. Their lives drone on in the ordinary (the film opens up with Spacey whacking off in the shower), and descends to



the ninth circle of middle-class Hell from there.

Spacey, who has been in a deep blue funk for probably the past decade, suddenly comes alive when he spies Angela (Mena Suvari), his daughter's very blonde and very fetching friend. He then proceeds to have numerous fantasies about this unspoiled "American Beauty." He quits his job and begins to work out and jogs with his gay neighbors. His wife takes up with her main rival, his daughter becomes attracted to his neighbor's oddball, pot-selling son, while the neighbor himself (a tight-assed, jar-headed marine with his own issues) is trying to puzzle out precisely what is going on in this screwball neighborhood into which he has just moved. Newly unemployed, Spacey befriends his new neighbor's son (by purchasing pot), and gets himself hired at the local fast-food dive; all the while sculpting himself a new bod so he will become attractive to his daughter's nympho friend.

This fine film shatters conventions with its interesting approach to the age-old problem of the everyday sameness of life, as well as delivering an ending that is not what you expected from it (there's a lot of that going on this season in films). When all is said and done, Spacey turns out to be not only the most moral person in the film, but the most stable as well. If you haven't



seen it already, you owe it to yourself to do so. *The Blair Witch Project* - Rated "R"

At the outset let me make this clear. I admire what the producers did with this film (the mockumentary style way it was produced, as well as the grass roots/internet way it was marketed). I'm glad it made everyone associated with it a dump truck full of money. Only I'm growing weary of all the *Blair Witch* knock-offs already around (WLR, an otherwise great, Long Island radio station, is airing two or three commercials with *Blair Witch* riff, and all are lame to one degree or another, as were the WABC-TV fall promo ads).

My problem is that the film itself turned out to be 87 minutes of people swearing and bad camera work. It wasn't scary (until the very end), it wasn't all that good, and it just didn't make any sense. None of these film students owned a cell phone? I know teens who have one. Also, as a former Boy Scout, I know that if you are lost in the woods, you find a stream and follow it downstream. Eventually it has to go somewhere. And you don't even have to be a Boy Scout to know that.

However, if you want to watch a very good concept, as well as learn how to market your student film, this is one you have to study.



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Blue Streak - Rated "PG-13"

I'm not a big **Martin Lawrence** fan, and it's films like this that take me there. While the film itself is funny, Lawrence spends way too much time mugging for the camera (in sort of a smug "B" Richard Prior "Hey, I'm bad" way).

The premise is that Lawrence has stolen a huge blue diamond which he has to hide in a construction site when the heist goes awry. He gets caught, does his time, and returns to claim his prize. Only the site is now a police station. So to recover the gem he needs to disguise himself as a cop and get inside. Only he gets caught up in some real police work in the process, arresting some major criminals, as well as some of his friends who are crooks. The hijinks are all predictable and the action is more of the same. Not a bad film, just not a really good one either. Wait for it to show up on HBO.

Bowfinger - Rated "R"

Steve Martin does it again and skewers Hollywoodland with this very funny sendup of how movies are made. **Bobby Bowfinger** (Martin), is a truly awful filmmaker who actually believes in his talentless cast and crew as well as a horribly bad script. He resolves to make it on the sly by surreptitiously filming the hottest actor in Hollywood, **Kit Ramsey** (**Eddie Murphy**). What follows is a farcical treatise that is wildly funny and every bit as wonderful as his classic *LA Story*.

Double Jeopardy - Rated "R"

Now here's a promising premise for a film. A woman's husband fakes his death and pins it on his wife. She (**Ashley Judd**) is convicted of the crime and sent to prison, even though there is (obviously) no body and the evidence is all circumstantial. While in jail she learns that her husband is still alive, has a new identity, and has managed to get their son to live with him. This horrifying news is tempered by some legal advice given by a convicted lawyer-turned-murderer (who actually did kill her husband). This disbarred lawyer explains the real legal term "double jeopardy" wherein a person can't be tried for the same crime twice (which is why the State couldn't retry O. J. and had to leave it up to a civil jury to smack him up for money). Our heroine concocts a plan to kill her husband for real and get away with it. The premise is sound (you really can't be tried for the same crime twice), but the execution is abysmal, because:

A. Since she really didn't kill her husband the first time, she indeed can be tried for killing him a "second time." Convictions can be, and are, overturned if new evidence turns up. Didn't the writer of this crap see *Clint Eastwood in True Crime?*

B. Even if the facts that her husband wasn't really dead and she really didn't kill him weren't more than just "technicalities," there's more to double jeopardy. If someone were arrested and convicted for beating up another person, served his time, got out of jail, and beat up that person again, that would be a brand new crime; not just a rehash of the first one.

Having said all that, if you ignore everything I said in those first couple of paragraphs, as well as the fact that *Star Wars* was far more believable than this nonsense, it really isn't a bad film. Unfortunately, I couldn't ignore the inconsistencies, and didn't like it very much at all. This is one of those "all men are bad" bad TV-movie-of-the-week films masquerading as a real movie.



Fight Club - Rated "R"

Now here's a film that you simply want to go out and see with the boys, leaving the wimmin at home. I don't care that it headlines a pair of hunks like **Brad Pitt** and **Ed Norton**, this one is really for guys only. It is an ugly, gritty, darkly humorous tale of a sad sack loser (Norton), who gets caught up in the nihilistic life of an amoral and charismatic anarchist (**Tyler Durden/Brad Pitt**).

Jack (Ed Norton), like most of us, hates his ordinary, boring, everyday life. Only he has the unique and dubious distinction to fall into the web of Durden, who convinces him to live on the edge. The two of them form *Fight Club*, where grown men in suits and ordinary lives go every night to beat the living crap out of each other. As Durden puts it, "We were all raised on television to believe that we'd all be millionaires and movie gods and rock stars, but we won't."

Only this flick isn't what we think it is, and we

don't find that out until near the end. I do so love it when a film does this to me (The first time it occurred was with a little, easily-overlooked film called *Crossroads* starring **Ralph Macchio**, check it out, seriously, it starts out ordinary and turns out quite spectacular, I kid you not). *Fight Club* is easily an Oscar contender, as are Pitt and Norton.



The Sixth Sense - Rated "R"

This film crept me out more than any other film I've ever seen. Not only is it not the film that you think it is (it has the biggest twist ending since *The Crying Game*), but the film itself isn't quite what I expected.

Personally, I was looking for a scary film; this wasn't that film. It was, however, the first real ghost story I've ever watched (Patrick Swayze's turn notwithstanding). **Bruce Willis** proves that he really is an actor, not just a guy who can grimace in front of a blue screen. He is wonderful in this film, and hopefully he will now gravitate to these types of roles in the future.

Briefly, he plays **Malcolm Crowe**, a child psychiatrist who ministers to a young boy who can see dead people. He latches onto this child (**Cole Sear**, played by **Haley Joel Osment**), because he (apparently) failed another child several years earlier, and is savagely made aware of this when the now grown young man breaks into his house on the eve of his receiving a humanitarian award. What follows is eerie, twisted, and twisted beyond anything you've ever seen.

Stir of Echoes - Rated "R"

Unfortunately, this is almost the same movie as *The Sixth Sense*, only it comes at very nearly the same circumstances (a child who can apparently see dead people), but from a different angle, and with a different agenda. In this one it is **Kevin Bacon** who is suddenly made aware of the vagaries of an afterlife when he is hypnotized and through a posthypnotic suggestion told to be "more receptive to new ideas." This proves his undoing, as he soon begins to see a young girl he believes to be dead, and buried nearby.

Here again, what he thinks he sees, and what is actually going on, are not quite the same things. One of the main differences between this and *The Sixth Sense* is the impact of the ending. *Sense* is creepy with a capital "C" while this one is far more frightening. You'll just have to see the both of them to understand why.

Three Kings - Rated "R"

Ah, a funny, poignant war film to come out



of the insanity of the Gulf War. Harkening back to a simpler time, this film rekindles images of WWII and a silly comedy called *Kelly's Heroes*. However, where *Heroes* was intentionally a comedy, this one purports to be a serious film, albeit with humorous overtones.

In both films a group of American soldiers (here it's **George Clooney**, **Mark Wahlberg**, and **Ice Cube**) learn of a cache of gold and determine to steal it (in *Heroes* it is the Germans, and they actually get away with it; while in *Three Kings* it is Kuwaiti gold stolen by **Saddam Hussein** and . . . ah, but that would be telling). From the trailer, this looks like a silly, goofy laugh-fest at the expense of Arabs; however, the film itself proves to be far deeper and richer than the trailer lets on. And that is a good thing, for if the audience realized what they were getting into I don't think the film would have proven to be as successful as it has been.

Additionally the film goes to prove something I've been saying all along. **George Clooney** is a better actor than you might have believed if all you saw him in was *Batman and Robin*.

Funnybook City

by Robert J. Sodaro

From *Dark Horse* we have *Mystery Men* (the movie adaptation), as well as **Bob Burden's Original Mysterymen**. The first is the official adaptation of the second, while the second is the comic book version of the first. Confused? No problem, so am I. Apparently **Bob Burden** introduced The Mystery Men back in his comic *Flaming Carrot*. This seems to have somehow metamorphosed into a movie adaptation which took his concept of loser superheroes and translated it into the hit movie starring **Ben Stiller** as **Mr. Furious**, **William H. Macy** as **The Shovel**, **Hank Azaria** as **The Blue Raja**, **Janeane Garofalo** as **The Bowler**, **Kel Mitchell** as **Invisible Boy**, **Paul Reubens** as **the Spleen**, and **Wes Studi** as **the Sphinx**.



Well, I've read not only the adaptation of the movie, but a number of issues of Burden's original series and while I love the movie, I feel that Burden's comic reads much better than the movie's comic book adaptation. As to why this is so, I'm not sure, except to say that since I already knew the outcome of the movie, the comic book adaptation was static, while the original series was quirky and new. In any event, both are actually quite good, and should be sought out if you are a

fan of either the movie or of comic book superheroes.

I was also recently sent a digest **Manga** book entitled *Magic Knight Rayearth*. I'm not a big fan of either Manga or role-playing games. As this comic was not only Manga but based on a magic-based role playing game, I found it incomprehensible (I tried to read it, I really did, several times in fact, I just couldn't get past page 10 or so). Sorry folks, but if this is your bag, I'm sure that it is just fine. Personally, I like my comics with superheroes in them.

Speaking of superheroes, **The Toy Box** has issued



a set of comic book superhero action figures based on **Kurt Busiek's Astro City** characters. So far I've seen two versions of *The Samaritan* and two of *The Confessor*. These figures are definitely way cool. Fully articulated and all that. Definitely a step up in the action figure category (you might recall they also did several *Lord Of The Rings* characters several months back). These are every bit as good, but have the added advantage of being superheroes.

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MIXXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JOHN PAUL JONES

Interview and photographs by Dan Hott

• Where does the title of the album come from?

Instrumental albums are pretty difficult in choosing titles. There is no handy lyric you can just pluck out. That riff, that particular track ("Zooma") was written on Zuma Beach where I was producing a band in California. But I just actually liked the sound of the word. It's got a forward feeling. The sort of energy of the track and that's kind of what you have to look for, some little resonance within an instrumental track.

• What inspires and influences the songs on your new album? When you decided to create this album what was the thought process like, as an artist?

I have quite a lot of musical interests. Here is a selection of the magazines I bought this morning. Okay, I've got *Bluegrass Unlimited*, *Avant-Garde*, and *Music World*. I've often thought of doing a solo album or just working on my own material mainly and I really didn't know what to do. So I needed some focus and the focus came about five years ago when I went out on the road with Diamanda Galas. Basically I enjoy performing live and I suddenly thought, well I can actually put the two together, and have a body of music, my own music, that I could then go out and play on stage. So then that re-informed what type of music it was going to be. Which was blues-based rock, because that's actually one of the most exciting musical forms, you know. I like making that sort of noise.

• I was reading some of the press on your web-site and in a *CD Now* interview you said, "I wanted the record to be listenable and enjoyable without compromise." I personally want to tell you I think you really succeeded.

Oh, thank you.

• How do you feel about the album? Is it everything you set out to do?

It's a start (laughs). The next album will be built from that album. I have to start somewhere, but yes, pretty much. When I first started playing the riffs I wasn't really quite sure how experimental it would be. And then when I got the first three, "Zooma," "Goose," and "B. Fingers," it really cemented the direction. It's kind of blues-rock but not really very straight-ahead rock. Especially things like "B. Fingers," which is almost boppy. I mean you have a be-bop bass riff, but it still sounds rocky, not jazzy. I quite like that direction, though I still like the intensity of rock, its energy. But then just take from jazz perhaps a little more of the harmonic development.

• I know you have worked with the Butthole Surfers. Is Kyma similar to the computer system they use on stage?

Kyma is different. It is in two parts, a huge box of processors. In the software side you could actually build what the Butthole Surfers use if you wanted to take the time. It does a lot of stuff and if you don't like what it does you can tweak it until it does it the way you want. It is just a very open system. The word "kyma" is Greek for wave.

• In the song "Snake-eyes," Kyma is credited with the organ solo. Yes?

No. Kyma does have a part in the middle of the song there is a break, a swelling up of sound, which is Kyma, but the organ is an old Hammond C-3 that I have.

• I really like the organ part in that song.

Oh, thanks (laughs). It took a long time getting that organ sound. I'm glad you appreciated it.

• It reminds me of Ray Manzarek of The Doors a bit.

All right, yeah. It was probably more Ray Charles inspired than anything else. He was my favorite organist when I was young. He just had that screaming sound.

• In the song "Grind" there appears the only voices on the album. What is that passage about?

There are voices in "B-Fingers" too. Right at the end it's in a café somewhere in Tijuana. I like the sound, the texture of voices, but I really didn't want lyrical content, or even specific meaning to anything. So in fact in "Grind," there is this strange conversation and it doesn't mean anything. Or does it? (laughs) It does for me. I think people should make of it what they like. But I like the texture of the speaking voice.

• It reminds me of a Danish roommate I had that went to a party, took a bunch of drugs and was unable to understand English, so the voices became - kind of what you are talking about, a texture of sound.

Yes, maybe that's where I got it from (laughs).

• So there might be some similarities there?

It is quite possible (laughs). Some distant memories.

• Which song on the album do you think most listeners would feel is most influenced by Led Zeppelin and why?

Well, a lot of the rhythm sections do. It is a style that John Bonham and I worked out. I am definitely informed by the work we did in Zeppelin. And also as an epic style "Snake Eyes" definitely has a Zeppelin feel to it, the way it goes with the orchestra and also into different - "Okay, we've done that" - and now the organ comes in, and

then the strings happen. So you've got this sort of journey, this movement forward, which... I've always thought that Led Zeppelin was not...not...don't get me wrong but I always thought Led Zeppelin was actually more of an instrumental band than a band that was about songs because Robert used to use his



voice in an instrumental way a lot of the time, with that high range. There were songs where the emphasis was more on the lyrics, but generally I always thought it was more about the sound of the band. So there is quite a lot of re-influence, because I influenced them (laughs) as Diamanda once pointed out rather forcefully to a journalist, "Don't you think Led Zeppelin is John Paul Jones influenced?" But yes, Led Zeppelin has influenced me. When you spend twelve years with a band, it's bound to rub off a bit. We perfected a lot of the techniques I still use in that band, and why not?

• You have said you weren't overly enthusiastic about bringing the album to a major label. Why?

Well, I knew that they would ask me tricky questions, like, "Where is the singer?" (laughs) Where is the video? How are we going to play this on the radio? And all of those sort of boring record company things, and I wouldn't be able to provide any of the answers. When I finished the album and I was thinking about labels, I happened to share management with Robert Fripp, of King Crimson. I was talking to my manager, asking him about Robert's situation, and he said he's got this label, Discipline Global Mobile, and there is no contract between the artist and the label. I thought that's great. In fact, there was precedence in my case, because we didn't have a contract with Peter Grant in the early days until Atlantic found out. So I'm used to the trusting, and it was really refreshing to see somebody else try, and a bit brave of him too. I mean, if this album did really well and somebody offered me a fantastic deal, I could go on. "Thanks guys, bye," and I can go off and leave them with whatever. So there is trust on both sides. Plus they really liked the album (laughs). I met Robert Fripp and had tea and cakes with him, which was really nice.

• David Singleton (Manager of Discipline Global) states that anything instrumental is difficult to get on radio. Do you feel it is more challenging to promote an instrumental album without a single or a video?

Basically the way I am promoting it is I am coming out on the road and playing it to people. For some reason they don't play instrumental music on the radio. I don't know why. Somebody pointed out to me the other day, before the Beatles there was a lot of instrumental rock and roll on the radio. Duane Eddy made a whole career of instrumental music, you know. The Ventures, The Shadows, Booker T and The MG's - there was a lot of instrumental music. They played it as popular music, but they simply don't anymore. It's a shame. I don't see why you need

lyrics. Jazz musicians don't have to do it, nor do classical musicians.

• What are your personal hopes for the album beyond just sales?

I want to promote the album as much as possible because I want people to listen to it and make up their own minds whether they like it or not.

But if you don't promote it then anybody even knows it is out there. So I don't know. It is different music in a way although there is a lot that is familiar and traditional about it. I want to make this music and I want to play it, obviously nobody is going to buy it (laughs). I may be financing road shows for the rest of my life, you know, but I want to play and this is a good way to do it. So the hopes and expectations are all bound up in that. I am not competing with Aerosmith but then again I don't want to. I've done the stadiums: I've been up there. I don't want to do stadiums again. Ever! (laughs) They have their own vibe but it's not very conducive to making in anyway intimate music. It is just really nice being able to see the people you are playing to and getting the vibe back and all that, which was missing on the huge stages. But I've done that and I don't need to any more. You know, I'm quite well set up. I have a nice studio, I can play whatever music I want, it's pretty much luxury. But I needed as a musician to play live, to stretch myself and put myself on the spot.

• How did the European dates and the Northampton Mass live shows go?

It's going really well so far. Well, people are turning up, that's the best thing.

• Did you actually question whether they would show up?

Sure, I mean, who knows? It's not a given. None of this is given. Not many people turned up in Holland because I don't think they knew about it. It was part of a festival, it was late, or this or that, so I ended up playing to very few people. But all the other dates were packed houses. That was really great. There were a lot of people there last night and they were really enthusiastic. It was a good show. I was deeply heartened after last night (laughs), thinking oh well, at least they've come with an open mind. Some audiences, especially in the south of England, they come and say, okay what can you do for us now, you know, come impress us, and they can be hard work.

• I read that in Europe you did "Black Dog," "When The Levee Breaks," and "No Quarter." Will tonight's set include any Led Zeppelin?

Yeah, yeah, "Levee Breaks" is built for steel guitar it's just the perfect song. I did it in a sound check once with Diamanda and it sounded so good I thought I must do this. It turned out really good.

• So tonight's set will include some Zeppelin?

Yes, those three or four.

• Will there be a second set of dates in America after the European dates and Japan?

Well, if all goes well, if people turn up, and promoters will book me then I'll come back. That's what I want to do. And I want to get into another album. A lot of this tour is preparation, giving me more resources for the next album. I have a third

to half of it in my head, stylistically. I just need to get some notes down on paper. The next album will be quicker (laughs), not another 19 years.

• Could you talk a little bit about that? Why did it take 19 years?

After Zeppelin, I didn't know what to do. We were just about to start on a new lease on life, as it were. We were just changing gear. We kind of musically stripped down quite a bit. Everyone was in good spirits and pretty good health and just ready to go off again, so it was a real blow, besides the deep personal loss. I stayed around and looked after family for a while because they were growing up. Then I thought I would do some film scores for a bit but nobody gave me any. You know - "You're from Led Zeppelin. You don't want to do film scores." "Yes I do" - so I didn't get any of that (laughs). I didn't want to join another band. I really didn't want to do that because I'd been in the best one, so what do you do? I did some composition, then I did quite a bit of production and some arranging which went very nice. I think I did some nice work but it was too much production. I had a choice because I am very picky with production. I turned tons of stuff down. But I had a choice to be a career producer - just take the money, do everything that comes along whether you like it or not. If it's not so glowing, oh it'll be over soon and another one will be along. I felt I didn't want to do that. So then I started thinking about my own work again. It's just taken its time.

• As far as any of your worst memories on the road, are any of them coming back now?

(laughs) No, not really. It's different now. The worst thing about those big tours was waiting around, doing absolutely nothing, waiting for something to happen or for people to wake up. I have chosen people really carefully on this tour. The crew, the band is quite close knit and everybody is really good at their job. Everybody is really efficient. When they say they will be there, they'll be there. You can plan so you know you will have an hour off. All that type of stuff is different. In the Zeppelin days you could wake up and sit around forever waiting for people to wake up. So all that is gone and it's nice. It is like normal people doing normal things.

• What do you think of Jimmy Page's collaboration with Puff Daddy on the rework of Kashmir?

(laughs) Uh well, theoretically I suppose it's all right. It is sort of like a dance band with that phrasing. Oh dear, it's what was.

• Most Zeppelin fans I have spoken to wonder what Jimmy Page was thinking. Many of them dislike it.

Well, I guess somebody asked him to do it and he had the time, probably. I know there is a lot about sacrilege and how the music is sacred but I don't feel that. Once the music is out there it's no longer mine, it's gone. I'm looking for the next thing which is mine. As far as that's concerned there are some pretty horrible versions of "Stairway" out there (laughs). But I'm not really sure what he was doing. I've never asked him.

• Of all the collaborations you have done the one with Cinderella seems strangest. What exactly did you do with Cinderella?

I just did some string arrangements. They asked me and it was at a time when I wasn't doing much else. I got to go to New York for the week. They seemed like good songs at the time, so why not? The REM was much more satisfying. I think the songs are much better. They were really nice to hang out with for a few days.

• You performed with Lenny Kravitz at an MTV music awards show. How did that happen?

He called up. He was very nice. He asked me nicely (laughs). He said a rather nice thing as well when people ask him why he called me up. He said, "Well, I was thinking about it and I thought I decided to get the guy I stole it all from in the first place." I thought that was a cool thing to say. One of the things I like about collaborating is getting out there and meeting with people. You can end up a bit insular, especially when you have been with a band that was as large as Led Zeppelin. People tend to avoid you, they think you don't want to know about this or you're probably such an asshole you probably wouldn't want to do it anyway (laughs).

• The last thing I wanted to ask you is what do you think about this quote from the Rolling Stone review: "It took him nearly twenty years, but with *Zooma*, Jones has outpaced his more flamboyant former band mates in the adventurousness department. Maybe now Page and Plant will ask to join his band."

Well it was nice of them to give me a nice review, but people have different tastes, different takes on that. It was a funny thing to say.

• Thanks for taking the time to speak to me. I'm looking forward to hearing the live show.

[Ed: The Who's bass player John Entwistle recently brought his solo tour to the state. Trend?]

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Pixx by Seth Kaye



From the Kiss 108 FM Concert at The Tweeter Center, clockwise from upper left: Melissa Etheridge, Natalie Merchant, Donna Summer, Eagle Eye Cherry, B-Witched, Run-DMC



Respond Inc. celebrated its 25th anniversary with a concert at Somerville Theater featuring some of the Boston area's best singer/songwriters, including (below, from left to right, Faith Solloway, Mary Lou Lord, and Jennifer Kimball with Jenny Reynolds



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Muddy Waters said, "The Blues had a baby and they named it Rock and Roll." The blues will always be with us in some form, and they have been performed on area stages plenty recently. Clockwise from above: Kenny Wayne Shepherd, B.B. King, Susan Tedeschi, and Shannon Curfman. Two bluesy veterans who use blue as just one color in their musical palette are Lucinda Williams (below) and John Paul Jones (bottom)

Pixx by Dan Hott



"Folk Beat," Cont'd from Page 5

beyond this stage in her development. At least in one song she avers that she is "not angry any more." There is more to passion than anger. She walked out on stage, dramatically backlit, to the screams of her adoring fans, and proceeded to wail, cajole, chuckle, admonish, and thrill the audience as only she can. Ani is a dynamo of emotional invention. As much as her songs cover a vast range of emotional states, interpersonal relations, and sociopolitical issues, her performances run wild and free. More than anyone else beside Bob Dylan and The Grateful Dead, she reinvents her material nearly constantly, finding new meaning and depths of meaning in interpretation.

The short tour by **Bob Dylan** and **Phil Lesh** hit the **New Haven Coliseum** full force November 10. Deadheads turned out en masse for this, and although I was reminded of some of the reasons why I stopped going to Dead shows (packed houses of inebriated fans, massive amounts of silly behavior, lines for everything), I did get caught up in the spontaneous fun. Phil Lesh's band included the formidable guitar tandem of **Warren Haynes** and **Derek Trucks**, both of whom have played with The Allman Brothers Band. This gives them plenty of training in the ins and outs of jamming, as well as a tendency toward the blues, which pleased me no end. Phil is a better bass player than band leader, so their set was loose and loped from song to song, though tie-dyed fans had plenty of fun dancing. There was a nice version of "Scarlet Begonias," and Warren led the band through a song he wrote in tribute to **Jerry Garcia**.

I expected the crowd to clear out after they were through, but though it thinned somewhat most stayed for Dylan. They were rewarded with a thrilling show, an expert lesson in how to rock as vibrantly at almost 60 as at 19. Never content to just serve up his songs as close to the classic recordings as possible, he reworks them constantly if inconsistently, so they are new every time. Indeed, he has probably done more different versions of his songs than all who have covered his songs combined. The second song, a mind-bogglingly slow version of "My Back Pages," illustrated how effectively he could refute expectations and still meet them. Early on, he started grinning, and kept his joviality throughout his set, often going into Buddy Holly-like stances. His mood was infectious, and just about everyone there seemed to be having a good time. During "Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat" someone tossed just such a piece of haberdashery toward the stage, and incredibly it landed on a mike stand, spun and stayed. At one point a naked man tried to jump from the bleachers, but was restrained by security before he could damage himself. Dylan's band managed to keep up with his paces, though they seemed more competent than daring. What made The Band so great was the individual characters of each member, both musically and personally, so their interactions were unique and each propelled the others to excel in their turn. This band, while composed of capable musicians, seemed rather bland, and

deferred to Dylan. He played more guitar solos than **Larry Campbell**, and tended to play harmonica over the ones he did take. His crude yet effective style has improved a good deal over the years, but he's still more of a rhythm player than lead. But these are minor quibbles compared with the overall quality of the concert. Phil came out during the encores to jam on The Dead's "West L.A. Fadeaway" and Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away." Old jammers never die, they just fade out, not away.

Another who just gets better with age is **Lucinda Williams**. She may have been around for twenty years, but she has just hit her stride over the last year and a half, since her phenomenal "Car Wheels On A Gravel Road" was released. Or rather, since the general public has finally caught up with her. Erroneously perceived as country by many, critics and listeners alike, her live shows are full of unabashed stomping rock and roll. I guess this perception is formed by cursory readings of her studio work, which do feature some country leanings and distinctive southern drawl. People who write her off this way only deny themselves the enjoyment of one of rock's true poets, if not original (who is?) then an original and unique combination of influences and interests who will surely one day come to reside in VH-1 Valhalla. Every show is a daunting example of the promise of Americana - roots/rock with real heartfelt emotion, transcending the limitations of its parts. As if a full hour-long set isn't enough, she plays so many encores that you get two complete shows. At **Roseland Ballroom** in New York November 19 she did it again. Ostensibly bidding farewell to The City after this long tour, she seemed ready to keep at it for who knows how long. Towards the end of her set she told the audience she felt funny having to say goodbye when she was just warming up. Then she proceeded to turn her band loose on "Changed The Locks" and "Joy," the latter being a ten-minute one-chord stomp that gave guitarists **Kenny Vaughan** and **John Jackson** a chance to wail. She came back out twice to do nine encores, including such gems as "Crescent City," the rarely-heard "Am I Too Blue," and "Sweet Old World," which moved me to tears, as always. I've seen her play New York four times in the past two years, each time at a successively larger venue, packing them in each time. She may not be a household word yet, like **Sarah McLachlan**, but people who know good music know her, and pretty soon she won't be a secret anymore. Maybe she should headline an all-female Americana tour.

Some of you may remember my rave review of **Pal Shazari's** "Woman Under The Influence." This is one of my favorite releases of recent years and may well become one of my all-time favorites. The long-awaited follow-up, "Safe," is finally out, and this was celebrated with two shows at **The Knitting Factory** and **The Living Room**, the first with band. Although they clearly were a little underpracticed, the rhythm section had a good feel for Pal's material and pacing, and her songs, which sometimes seem underdressed when done by just her, filled out rather nicely. It would

be nice to have a screaming guitar in places, but it was great to hear her sound sketches filled in with color and shading. You'll hear more about the new album next issue, but for now just let me say it is well worth the wait.

Also worth the wait is "Amen," the new album by **Paula Cole**. Much has been made of its emphasis on soul music and references to weighty political, social, and religious concerns. But anyone who has paid attention to Ms Cole's previous work should be well aware of her fascination with both the lyrical and musical content this implies. She seems to have embraced a religious or philosophical enlightenment, and sees herself as a link in a chain of spirit going back to ancient Egypt. Her songs have often espoused deeply felt beliefs, mostly concerned with finding one's place in the world. Placing these ruminations in a religious context isn't that much of a stretch. Still, such issues become irrelevant when she performs, as her passion overwhelms any skepticism. In a concert at New York's **Bowery Ballroom** on Columbus Day she previewed her new band and material for an audience of industry insiders and devoted fans. Now billed as **The Paula Cole Band**, with longtime cohorts **Kevin Barry** on guitar and **Jay Bellesore** on drums, they were joined by **Doug Wimbish** (from **Living Colour**) on bass and **Rakhia Diggs** on keyboards. From the opening "Rhythm Of Life" (which starts "to the critics and the cynics who don't understand the lyrics") to the closing final encore she held everyone in rapt attention, bringing all to a state of rapture commensurate with her devotion. One unfortunate side effect of this is that many audience members sang along with every song they knew (mostly on songs from "This Fire"), an annoying and inescapable distraction. Even so, with her band rocking together and propelling her forward, she burned with an intensity I've rarely seen in anyone. To say this was one of the best concerts of the year barely does it justice. This was pop music at its most fulfilling.

But the most fulfilling pop music I've heard this year came from **Fleming & John**. These imaginative dreamers showed up on Conan O'Brien one night, singing a lounge jazz/pop ditty called "Ugly Girl," a verbal nose-thumbing at a former boyfriend's new girlfriend. Anyone twisted enough to serve up such nasty sentiments so disarmingly has to be investigated. Their first album, "Delusions Of Grandeur," just wiggled me out, and their new release "The Way We Are," is one of my favorites of the year. I drove up to Boston for an appearance at **MidFest**, an all-day free festival at Government Plaza, mostly just to see them. They were every bit as much fun as I expected. **Fleming McWilliams** has flaming red hair, a voice that swoops through several octaves, and a brilliant touch with lyrics. **John Painter** is a virtuoso on dozens of instruments as well as a brilliant arranger, producer, and engineer. They recorded their album in their home studio, and the ability to tinker with it at a moment's notice enabled them to capture inspirations as they arose. The result is a phenomenal collection of brilliant pop songs, in all manner of tempos, vibes, and themes. In concert they conveyed their sense of enjoyment and invention, creating something new and fun out of whatever caught their interest. They live in Nashville, which could mean they tour a lot. Still, some people are hip to them - when **The Dixie Chicks** taped their appearance on "Sessions At West 54th," lead singer **Natalie Maines** wore an Ugly Girl t-shirt for the whole show. And they are friends with **Ben Folds**, doing duty as his opening act, and recently flew to London to conduct string and horn sections for the **Ben Folds Five** at Royal Albert Hall. You'll be hearing more about them, from me at least!

The **Somerville Theater** hosted two extraordinary concerts on successive weekends in November. On the 13th, **Stacey Earle** and **Mark Stuart** opening for **Greg Brown** with **Bo Ramsey** was a special coupling of distinctive voices and excellent guitar work. Stacey has surely made inroads into the northeast, playing the Boston area almost every month this year. This night showed her in fine form, endearing herself to the audience with openhearted warmth and charm. She even earned an encore, a rare treat for an opener.

Greg Brown is the consummate folk singer. He writes image-driven ruminations on a wide variety of subjects, and sings them with a voice as deep and craggy as his Iowa hills, rippling over the notes as would a trout stream over rocks. Even his rough-hewn image seems drawn from the land. He has worked with **Bo Ramsey** enough so their interaction is natural, and **Bo** is able to follow Greg's spontaneous inventions and subtle nuances. This night was another rewarding excursion through life, love, and adventure, as described by one of modern folk music's great poets.

The next Saturday **SongStreet Productions** presented its annual **Great Women's Voices** concert, with headliners **Voices On The Verge** and three opening acts. **Kris Delmhorst** started the evening with a fine set. I'd never seen her as a solo before, and I was quite pleased to see she carries a room by herself as well as in a group context. She enlisted **Sean Staples** on mandolin for a few songs for good measure. **Lori McKenna** seemed more relaxed than I'd seen before, and this helped her rapport immensely. She got Kris

back out to play violin and sing on a couple of songs. But this segment went to **Faith Solloway**, in the first time I'd seen her with a band. Her taste for irony and twisted sense of humor make for a fun listen, and I often did a double-take, wondering if she really said what I'd heard. After intermission **Voices On The Verge** thrilled the audience with their vocal interplay. This quartet of singer/songwriters - **Beth Amsel**, **Erin Mckeown**, **Jess Klein**, and **Rose Polenzani** - has been touring occasionally all year, when their respective schedules would permit. Having been friends for years, and fans of each other's work, helps them achieve an easy sympathy. Whether alone or in various combinations they provide a high level of enjoyment. Each time I see them they get more polished, which I sometimes think detracts from their spontaneity. Still, they are one of the most rewarding folk acts around, four rising talents whose voices blend magically. Rose has let her hair grow out, which helps to diffuse her earlier somewhat frosty image. Erin is still the mischievous imp of the group, and snuck in a few witticisms that helped break up the serious nature of much of their set. It was great just to see Beth again, still recovering from a serious accident. And Jess once again proved she has an abundance of talent, with her multifaceted voice thrilling when she sang - in turn throbbing, whispering, pleading, nearly screaming - though she hardly ever opens her mouth all the way. She also looked smashing in a floor length red velvet dress, cut low in the back, and her ever-present **Doc Marten's** - the epitome of a well-dressed modern folk singer.

Melissa Ferrick played to a packed house at **AS220 Gallery/Cafe** in Providence. OK, it's a small space, but it was full to overflowing. Most people pressed up to the stage, many singing along with every song they knew, but a few hung out by the bar engrossed in chatter. If you think women are the fairer sex, guess again. One striking blonde, a predatory alpha female if there ever was one, swam like a shark through the room, breaking up with two girlfriends and picking up a new one, all very vocally and distractingly for anyone within earshot - like half the place. I still wish someone would explain to me why some people spend sizable amounts of cash to go see someone play and then pay no attention whatsoever. But those who were listening got to hear an outstanding performance by a thrilling artist, including most of the songs from her new album, to be released in March, some in their first performance, one just completed that day. Look out for this one, folks - Melissa shows no indication of slowing down her creative output in either quantity or quality. A personal breakthrough is "Drive," the first time (by her reckoning) that she's written a really sexy song. It's a powerfully moving description of desire and release seven minutes long, coupled to a driving, throbbing bass run that lures listeners in and then thrusts them toward a final rush. After six encores she was spent, having played her heart out for over two hours of frustration and joy, anger and humor. She is probably the most honest, daring, and alert performer I've seen. She will lose her place sometimes, or try to segue from one song to another when she feels the vibe pulling her that way. Rather than stop for a moment and start again - as if to do that would mean accepting defeat - she will try to work her way to where she wants to go musically. That means sometimes a song will get done very differently than ever before, or an old song with a linking groove will get pulled out of her bag of tricks, and all the while she will extemporize a commentary about what she's doing. I don't know how she does it but it's a very entertaining sideshow. If you ever have a chance to see her, make the effort. She does not disappoint.

Sorry to end this on a sad note, but some things must be said. **Eric Von Schmidt**, a member of the folk boom of the 60s, a living embodiment of Americana, had a tragic brush with death. A tumorous growth on his vocal cords necessitated their removal, effectively ending the performing side of his multifaceted career. Some of the high points include: writing "Joshua Gone Barbados" and rewriting and arranging "Baby Let Me Follow You Down" being mentioned by Bob Dylan on his first record during the introduction to that song; and compiling with **Jim Rooney** a book by the same name, a definitive history of the Cambridge folk scene. For many years he has concentrated on painting and illustrating, both historical and commercial projects including cover art for several blues-oriented releases, including CDs by **Paul Geremia** and **Washboard Slim** and **The Blue Lights**. It was during my residence in the latter that I came to know him, as we lured him out of semi-retirement to do some gigs, rekindling his interest in performing. He repaid us by recommending us to the **Winnipeg Folk Festival**, a high point for all of us. I am forever indebted to him for his example of generosity, of a life devoted to creativity lived to the fullest, and for introducing me to a higher level of the music scene. He will recover, of course, and continue with his art. It is sad, though, when such a vital voice is silenced, and someone must speak up in his stead. You may e-mail well wishes to evonschmidt@compuserv.com.

Tell someone how much they have meant to you while they can appreciate it. Happy holidays from all of us at Mixx!!!

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MILLENNIUM MUSIC CONFERENCE 2000

February 10th through 13th, 2000

Hilton Harrisburg & Towers Harrisburg

Millennium Music Conference

The Fourth Annual Millennium Music Conference will be held from February 10th to the 13th, 2000 at the Hilton Harrisburg and Towers on Market Square in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The weekend music showcase and symposium will feature three nights of showcase performances and two days of panels, workshops, clinics and trade show.

The goal of this year's conference is to provide the registrants with the contacts and skills to help further their music business careers. The 2000 edition of the Millennium Music Conference will focus on the registrants' interaction with panelists, speakers, exhibitors, musicians and professionals from all aspects of the music industry. As we approach the next century, and technology changes our everyday lives, we must recognize how these changes impact contemporary music, the plight of emerging artists and music industry related business.

Conference directors John Harris and Vikki Walls are available to help make your attendance at this years conference contribute to your success. John Harris can be reached at 717-221-1124 and Vikki Walls is available at 717-234-4342. Please do not hesitate to call during normal business hours.

Individual Registrations

Register early for the Millennium Music Conference. Early registration for the St. Valentine / Presidents Day weekend conference is only \$55.00 if you register before October 28, 1999. Currently matriculated students and showcasing musicians can also register for \$55.00. This conference is the most affordable and musician friendly event of its kind in the country. Your band or music industry business needs to be represented at this event. Networking at the Millennium Music Conference will provide you with the knowledge and the contacts to take your music business skills to the next level; but you must register to attend. Each registrant receives a listing in the conference directory, the Buzz Bag full of promotional items and a personal Millennium Music Conference laminate. Your laminate guarantees full access to all panels, workshops, clinics, trade show, hospitality parties and showcases. The laminated access pass is also good for discounts from conference exhibitors, advertisers, sponsors and select downtown businesses. Plan to register early and save. Simply mail in the registration form with your check, money order or credit card information. To register by phone, call John Harris at 717-221-1124.

Trade Show

Place your business in the high traffic heart of the Millennium Music Conference at this year's trade show on the Hilton's Millennium Meszanine. Maximum visibility for two full days with all the best and the latest, national and regional, products and services. Each trade show booth includes one six-foot table, two full registrations and a listing in the conference directory for \$500.00. Several prime placement booths are available for \$750.00. Call John Harris for more information on Trade Show participation at 717-221-1124.

Showcases

The Millennium Music Conference will host over 200 original acts and artists on Thursday, Friday and Saturday on more than 20 stages at Harrisburg area live music venues. Select acts will be offered afternoon showcases at the host hotel. It's your act's chance to be seen and heard; and could be the most important performance of your career. Submissions for band and artist showcases will be accepted up until December 16, 1999. A completed application form, two black & white 8x10 photos, a biography, a minimum three song demo on CD or cassette, a forty-word description for the showcase & nightclub guide and a \$15.00 processing fee is required. Simply mail in the showcase application with the requirements before the deadline to be considered for a showcase performance. For more information contact John Harris at 717-221-1124.

Panels, Workshops and Clinics

The Millennium Music Conference will feature two days of panels, workshops and clinics at the Hilton Harrisburg and Towers. Meet and learn from managers, producers, agents, promoters, talent buyers, publicists, studio engineers, indy and major label A&R representatives, computer and internet pros, radio station programmers and promoters, lawyers, publishers, songwriters, recording artists, record manufacturers and distributors from the national and regional music

industry. The panels are designed for maximum participation with direct questions and answers and the panelists and speakers will be available for one-to-one contact with the addition of listening and mentoring sessions. For more information on the business sessions contact Vikki Walls at 717-234-4342.

Hotel Accommodations

The Millennium Music Conference will be held at the prestigious Hilton Harrisburg and Towers. Every amenity imaginable is available at this luxurious property in the heart of historic Harrisburg. The Whittaker Center for the Arts & Sciences and the specialty shops and casual eateries of Strawberry Square connect directly to the Hilton by way of

enclosed arcades. The host hotel is within walking distance of all the inner-city showcase venues, restaurants and historic sites. It's where you'll want to be; and where the action will be all weekend. A special conference rate of \$89.00 per room is available to those who register for the conference. To make your reservation, call 717-233-6000 or 1-800-HILTONS and ask for the Millennium Music Conference rate before January 14, 2000.

Sponsorships

Opportunity rocks for sponsors at the Millennium Music Conference in 2000. Be an integral part of one of the most exciting, progressive and highly publicized events in Central Pennsylvania. Reach the thousands that participate and even more that hear about the fourth annual event. If you have an idea for your company, choose your own sponsorship vehicle and we'll help create a package that gets your message seen and heard. Several levels of sponsorship are available so that your business, product or service is front and center at this year's dynamic event. Call John Harris at 717-221-1124 for sponsorship opportunities at the Millennium Music Conference.

To register by phone, call:
717-221-1124

717-234-4342

www.johnharris.com/mmcc2000

Hilton
Harrisburg & Towers



Fees and Deadlines

Registration:
Full registration before December 29, 1999 \$75.00
Full Registration before February 3, 2000 \$95.00
After February 3, 2000 and walk-up \$125.00

Make checks payable to:
"Millennium Music Conference"
and mail to address below. MasterCard rates are valid and all post mark deadlines. All rates and packages are non-refundable.

All prices and fees must be paid in U.S. Dollars. Photographs of this form are acceptable.

Please return this form to:
Millennium Music Conference
PO Box 1012 Fed. Sq. Station
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1012

To be considered for Millennium Music Conference showcase this application form by December 16, 1999 with a black & white 8x10 photo, a biography, a minimum three song demo on CD or cassette, a forty-word description for the showcase and nightclub guide and a \$15.00 processing fee. Make checks payable to "Millennium Music Conference" at:
Millennium Music Conference
PO Box 1012 Fed. Sq. Station
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1012

Submitted materials cannot be returned. Unusable or incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications must be postmarked by December 16, 1999. Notifications will be made by January 9, 2000.

Millennium Music Conference Registration Form

Name _____	Phone _____
Company / Band / Artist _____	
Address _____	City _____
State _____	Zip _____
Country _____	
Profession / Title _____	
Payment Method: <input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> Money Order <input type="checkbox"/> Discover <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Credit	
Amount Enclosed _____	Name on Credit Card _____
Card Number _____	Expiration Date _____

Millennium Music Band / Artist Showcase Application

Band Name / Artist _____	Number of Members _____
Contact Person _____	Phone _____
Address _____	City _____
State _____	Zip _____
Country _____	
Performing Rights (PRO) ASCAP, etc. _____	Label _____
Live performance in Harrisburg _____	
Management Name and Phone Number _____	
Agency Name and Phone Number _____	
Check for interest: <input type="checkbox"/> Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Buzz Bag <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing in Harrisburg or Guest <input type="checkbox"/> Live Show <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsorship	

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- InterMixx is a unique online community of serious musicians and music industry professionals
- **InterMixx is the IndieGate, your gateway to everything indie!**
- InterMixx is The InterMixx MusicList, one of the web's first global email discussion groups, and a truly professional internetworking environment where musicians can interact with A&R Reps, Entertainment Attorneys, Managers, Publicists, Producers, Recording Engineers, Magazine & Radio personnel, and hundreds of veteran musicians
- InterMixx is The InterMixx Hotline FTP Server, where you can chat with Industry Pros in real time, private chat with others, transfer files and download MP3s and other files!
- InterMixx is The InterMixx/MP3.com Alliance, where you can get your very own MP3.com page created by us, just for our members, and advertised with 500,000 impressions on MP3.com!!!
- InterMixx is The InterMixx Alliance, an online collective of awesome music based websites
- InterMixx is the Alliance Festivals, live concert festivals featuring dozens of great InterMixx Bands!
 - InterMixx is the InterMixx Gig Swap, a resource where our members can organize tours and set up gigs with each other, arrange for places to stay and make touring safe and affordable!
 - InterMixx is all this and even more. Check out the InterMixx Website for more information on this awesome resource that no Indie musician should be without.

www.IndieGate.com