

# January, 1997

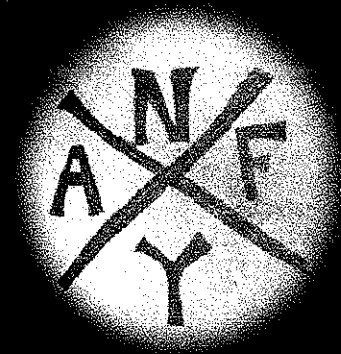
# AntiMatters

cover by bob



King & Queen  
of  
Antifolk

Laura D



Hello, and welcome to 1997. If this is the first you've heard of it, check your calendar, be amazed that you're such a slowpoke, and ask yourself if you could really beat the hare in that archetypical race some eons ago.

In 1997, the AntiMatters creative staff has chosen to make certain collective decisions. Among them:

- Help all humankind.
- Avoid sexist remarks.
- Get laid by at least 12 really hot chicks.
- Try the lemon chicken.
- Sound sincere when saying, "I'm not bitter."
- Be nicer to nympho junkies.
- Remember to work on that sexism thing.
- Eat less donuts.

The dedicated readers should feel a responsibility to AntiMatters to keep the staff true to their goals.

In return, we at AntiMatters hope to keep you up on all matters Anti, or at least the ones we see fit to publish.

**AntiMatters**  
150 W. 95th Street, Apartment 9D  
New York, NY 10025

Uncle Folk@aol.com  
Jonberger@aol.com

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#### Contributors

Jonathan Berger  
S Biederman  
Elizabeth Brody  
Seth Doolin  
Steve Espinola  
Harold Goldberg  
Charles Herold  
Billy Kelly  
Lach  
Auntie Matters  
Tom Nishioka  
Geoff Notkin  
Gustav Plympton  
Jocelyn Ryder  
Jonathan Segol

#### Editors

Jonathan Berger  
Tom Nishioka  
Gustav Plympton  
Mr. Scarecrow

NEXT, in ANTIMATTERS...

The Big SellOut. AntiWriters confront the desire to make it big... Beck. Where will it end?

## What's wrong with AntiMatters?

(Excerpts of Letters from an Adoring Public...)

*Was Tom Nishioka really the bass player on Lenny Molotov's Illuminoids' demo?*

No. Despite the fact that AntiMatters reported Nishioka to be the bassist, he was in fact exclusively producing the album. Annie Husick played bass on the recording, and is with Lenny's band, as a real live Illuminoid.

*I've noticed that, while the spelling in AntiMatters is phenomenal, there are often gramatical errors and sentences with no syntax. Why?*

Spellcheck™ is easy. Grammarcheck™, not so much. Anyone who wants to volunteer their services as an editor for AntiMatters should speak now or forever hold their piece.

*Who is that sexy Auntie Matters?*

Mysteriously, one day, Uncle Folk@aol.com, the premier email address for all things that AntiMatter, received a piece from askanti@aol.com, which was the incredible first appearance of Auntie Matters. Despite our constant efforts to have her (him?) come out of the closet, Ask Anti remains distant, discreet, and diffident about her iDentity. Now, in public, AntiMatters asks Auntie Matters to come forward. Please?

*Who the hell were those people in What is Antifolk?*

The December issue's closing article, "What is AntiFolk," featuring the best minds of some neanderthal generation speaking of their opinions on the definition of AntiFolk. Everyone, except this anonymous guy, had a name credit next to their quote, but who were they?

**Gene Morris** is in Gene & Mimi. He's Gene.

**Gustav Plympton** writes essays and edits things for AntiMatters. He resents being called a curmudgeon, as he's only 31.

**Jocelyn Ryder** sings songs and is beginning to play guitar. She sometimes writes words about singing songs and playing guitar.

**Dan Schurtman** is in a band called the Humans with his brother, Dave.

**Dave Schurtman** is in a band called the Humans with his brother, Dan.

**Heather Woodbury** is a huge performance artist, and we're not talking weight. She performed the 100-character Heather Woodbury Report over a ten month period at the Fort, and is presently taking her act on the road.

**aGNELLI & rAVE** play the Fort when they're not touring in Canada, or working on critically acclaimed albums.

Anonymous offers no comment.

**Jonathan Berger** has too often been called a god among men to continue denying it. He is the architect of the increasing literary form known as useless writing, and is presently beginning a new project, which involves typing these words on the page.

*The zine looks so good, but why aren't their more reviews?*

Like so many things wrong with zines today, it lacks your involvement. When you start writing more reviews for AntiMatters, we'll start printing them, assuming they live up to our exacting standards.

Look at the inside cover for mailing credits, submissions, subscriptions, and subliminal advertising.

## Report From the Fort

Nothing stops AntiFolk!

12/22- 2a.m - Antifolkadelic night at The Fort. Mr. Scarecrow opened the night with a great set of songs. However, by arriving late, he ended up playing as a lot of fans of the next band were arriving and talking loudly. This was unfortunate as he is a great writer and player. I wish he'd focus on his own solo stuff more even though it is fun watching him wail on the electric.

Bill Popp & the Tapes were next and played a pop set of the usual Beatle/Herman's Hermits style songs. Bill dressed as Santa for the first number and the crowd enjoyed the band.

Next was a triple bill of Starchile, Cycomotogoat and G'Nu Fuzz. This bill really made me work hard. They have a big set-up, a lot of equipment. Also, they bring in a big pothead crowd and I had to constantly ask people to douse their joints. One guy I 86'd and saw him later outside throwing up badly. Ain't drugs fun?

Musically, I found G'nu Fuzz the most interesting. But, I tell ya, I never liked hippies or that whole "peace and love as long as I'm stoned" crap.

The coolest part of the triple-bill was their friend Lego-master who brought in and displayed a six-foot long Lego sculpture of a praying mantis. It was made of over ten thousand pieces and took over three years to build. It had flashing lights and everything!

I'd probably book this bill again but I'd wait until the summer so they could all get low outside and we could keep our liquor license. (A bar can lose its license if there is drug use going on). (lach)

12/31 - The Sextet Offensive played *another* reunion show. It was good to see Lach's last band playing together again, though they seemed pretty ragged. Word is, they don't practice, just get up there and do their thing. It showed.

bicycle, the two-wheeled rock and roll group, followed, with what was, without doubt, their most experimental show ever. The four members, including Sidewalk regular Tom Nishioka newly on bass, ripped through a series of song-fragments, operatically delivered by lead singboy Kurt Liebert. Snippets of actually songs could be heard, but it was basically a mishmash pop jazz session, which failed to hold the audience's, and sometimes the band's, attention. Perhaps the least enjoyable performance from a very exciting live band.

Floater closed the evening, playing for hours and hours and hours on end. Their style of frat boy whitefunk kept the crowd dancing, and the front room of the Sidewalk was cleared of its traditional seats, so the dancing could continue unabated. The audience loved them, and were moving with rhythmless abandon for well over two hours. For their extensive set, Floater owned the room.

(S Biederman)

1/1- The Antihangover Party. A big success. I bet we were the only packed club on this day after New Year's Eve. Great show. Ross Owens played a set that was a cross between Hank Williams and The Grateful Dead during the Workingman's Dead era. Jocelyn Ryder followed with a strong set to an enthusiastic crowd. Fur Dixon wailed along with her excellent guitarist, Josh. Fur opened with a new song, I forget its name but it was another "keeper". Julianne Richards played next with Jimmy Zhivago on guitar and piano. Julianne is growing into a great, torchy performer. A cool mix of her old punk roots with the acoustic Antifolk sound. I

played next, blah,blah,blah and then Rick Shapiro debuted at The Fort. I first spotted Rick three weeks ago at The Pink Pony on a recommendation from Heather Woodbury. Within the first few minutes of his set I knew he was a special performer. He is sort of a mix of Lenny Bruce and Robin Williams, mixing storytelling with improv. His stuff is hilarious and though it would be rated X by any fogbrained committees, he is really compassionate and poetic in his attempt at getting to the root of honesty. (lach)

1/3-Samsara opened the night with a fine performance. She played her already classic songs such as "Bliss" and "Cornflakes" as well as new ones like the beautiful "Juliet's Refrain" which she performed on piano.

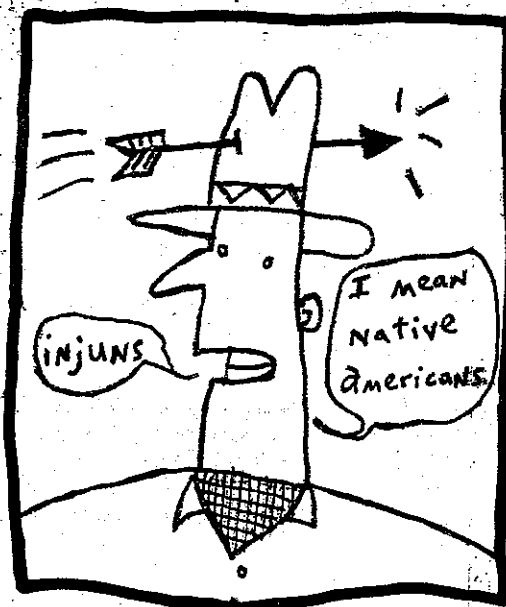
Billy Kelly followed in his guise as Earl Pickens and the Trail of Tears. A wonderfully solid set of countryfied tunes complete with stand-up Bass.

Superhuman's bass player had a blow-out on the L.I.E. which was weird as Earl Pickens played the song "Bury Me Not On The L.I.E.". The band performed without the bassist and did quite well. The audience dug the melodic songs and the band's spirit.

Daniel Harnett played last, just Daniel on Guitar with his drummer Ahmed. They did a two-hour set and the crowd still wanted more. Harnett is a very unique and gifted writer and he rounded out a great night at the club. (lach)

1/4- Another great night at The Fort. Dave Foster opened with a guest appearance by Deni Bonet on violin. Deni is one of The Egyptians from Robyn Hitchcock's band. Foster's songs are some of the best as evidenced by the people, such as George Usher, who ask to write with him.

Jeremy Wallace played next. He is a very talented blues-rocker who brought in a great crowd. John S. Hall (formerly of King Missile) followed and read selections from his new book "Jesus Was Way Cool" (Soft Skull Press). It was way cool having John back at The Fort reciting such gems as "Take Stuff From Work" and "Nickles For Ned". All in all a steller evening. (lach)





Stars Peter Dizozza and Kerrigan Webb



## Prepare To Meet Your Maker!

ABOVE: Tyr Throne, Director. Performers: Erika Belle, Jamie Cosnowsky, Charles Herold, Kerrigan Webb, Steve Espinola, Peter Dizozza, and Dan Emery  
(Out of picture: Lisa Dery: choreographer, performer, inspiration)

For many a month now, AntiFolk's own Peter Dizozza has been writing and producing variations of Prepare to Meet your Maker, an always increasing collection of characters, creations, and crackpot concepts about a hunchback undertaker and Cementaria, the corpse he necrophils back to life.

It's a sick, twisted, abstract musical theater extravaganza, absorbing and spitting out multicultural religions, nymphomania, film theory, infidelity, dance, jealousy, acting, necrophilia, unrequited love, and chicks chicks chicks!

Since first performing the first version of Prepare to Meet your Maker on Bastille Day, the original 20-minute song cycle has evolved into a lumbering hour-long multimedia porterohouse.

In the process, as more people have gotten involved, adding their expertise and experiences, the show has gotten more chaotic, sprawling, and fascinating.

The show has changed as it's gained directors, choreographers, and daily script and music rewrites from Dizozza. The structure, the plot, the inspiration, the execution, all seem to be fairly mutable.

Still, there are constants. Dizozza plays piano, Dizozza writes the material, and Dizozza sings the dizzying line "as long as we keep fucking, so too will all be well in the world," from his anthem to the corpse, "Cementaria."

Among the changes is increasing AntiFolk involvement. Regular performers in Dizozza's smorgasborg are Dan Emery, Steve Espinola, and, more recently, Charles Herold. With all that, Prepare to Meet your Maker is worth seeing twice: once to get a sense of it's psychotic scope, again to understand what the hell's going on.



Kerrigan Webb with Charles Herold

## Anti-Review: Leah Coloff

by Charles Herold

This is my first anti-review. What's an anti-review? Is it a review with only negative statements? You know: "The guitar playing wasn't too bad, and the vocals could have been worse." No, an anti-review is just a review by someone who doesn't know what the fuck he's doing. And doesn't care.

I became a reviewer because Jon Berger, Anti-Matters' editor, was pestering me to write something in the same way he pestered you to buy this issue. Not having any clever ideas (I used to have clever ideas), I offered to review a singer-cellist names Leah Coloff, and give her 1/12 Sidewalk gig a bit of publicity thereby.

I had discovered Leah at Gary Seven's short-lived open mike at St. Marks Bar and Grill. It was on the first and last night I was there, and the last night of the open mike altogether. As so few people had signed up (all of them good, as it happens), everyone got four songs. The second performer that evening was a cellist. She started to play, something sort of weird, and then started talking quickly -- I couldn't make out the words, I was in the back near the door, where an occasional puff of oxygen blew through the door to dilute the thick, choking smoke.

I wondered if she was a spoken word artist, doing poetry over music, and I was just thinking about how little I enjoy poetry and hoping this wouldn't be too painful when she started singing. How do you explain being totally blown away by a performer? I mean, reviewers do it all the time, using phrases like "pomo deconstructualized melodic tonality" whose purpose is to let you know that they're smarter than you. But I'm an anti-reviewer for some little fanzine, so you're probably smarter than me. It makes the whole thing more difficult.

Her cello playing is like nothing you've heard in your life. Well, unlike anything I've heard -- honestly, I haven't seen as many Anti-Folk cello players as you may have. She does everything she can think of with that cello, short of setting it on fire. She manages to be original and innovative without ever reaching the point of seeming to be making noise whose only purpose appears to be originality at the cost of any sort of musicality (i.e. John Cage). Her voice is gorgeous, and she sings her decidedly offbeat songs with a sort of dark abandon. It's been at least five years since I saw someone perform who left me slack-jawed and dizzy. But there she was.

She did four songs, all brilliant. Gary told me she had shown up months ago at his previous open mike on Ludlow, said it was her first time playing, and, in Gary's words, "did this." What she was doing was so stunning that you could just refer to it as "this." She never came back, he said, and months later people who had seen that performance were still talking about her. Then she had resurfaced at The Fort's open mike and Gary had persuaded her to come to St. Marks.

So I think she's brilliant. But why should you believe me? You don't know what goes on in my mind. You know nothing of my judgment or discernment. Maybe I liked Leah because she has big breasts or reminds me of my mom or I'm just a cello freak (none of which is the case, but you don't know that). But here's something unusual. There were maybe seven people who played the St. Marks open mike. At least five of them attended Leah's show at CB's (counting Leah). For all I know, they were all there. I'm bad with faces.

When is the last time over half the people at an open mike ran out the following week to see a performer from that open mike? Huh? When? She hadn't even announced her upcoming gig, and only gave you a flyer if you went up to her and specifically asked if she was playing anywhere, which means the people who came had gone out of their way just to find out about her gig. So there.

I'd never been to CB's before, at least not as it's set up now. It's a nice place, good sound system and a really, really sexy cocktail waitress. Leah showed up with a band -- a drummer and a guitarist -- both of whom were quite talented. But I felt the band songs were inferior to her solo pieces (Gary Seven was there, and disagreed. Anti-reviewers, unlike regular reviewers, don't act as though they're bringing you the word of God). With the band, the cello was sometimes pretty much relegated to being the bass, and if Leah sounded like the best bass player you've ever heard, a brilliant bass player in a pretty good band seems to me inferior to a brilliant cellist by herself. Not that I think Leah shouldn't have a band -- solo cellists don't get much air time on MTV. She just needs a different band. I mean, the band is good -- but they're not doing anything you've never heard before, and Leah is. A performer who pushes her instrument as far as she can needs to work with others of the same level of originality, or her own brilliance can be smothered by the prevailing competence. Leah needs something that is perhaps impossible -- musicians of her caliber.

Which is not to say she wasn't still amazing. The cello was featured prominently, and was consistently imaginative and original, and the other musicians were quite good. Her singing was terrific, and her songs are pretty damn cool.

The lyrics are offbeat, which may be how she wound up booked on Sidewalk's Strange Folk night (which I thought was bizarre, like booking Kate Bush for a Strange Folk night. Sure, she's offbeat, but she's not prone to novelty songs in the way some performers -- including myself -- are. She's only a novelty in the way of being better than everyone else). In "Cold Fish," in which she describes herself as the title creature (as opposed to another song in which she describes herself as x-rated -- she's a multi-faceted girl) she sings, "So slice me down the middle/and fry me in a pan/and serve me as a main course/on some romantic first date," a rather dangerous sentiment to express in the East Village, which has had its share of eccentric chefs.

Leah did half an hour at CB's, and then I ran backstage and gushed to her in that excessive way I gush at brilliant people which makes them take a step or two back and eye me as a potential stalker. She told me she would play Sidewalk January 12, which I realized meant my review would be coming out too late to do her any good at all.

And then something truly wonderful happened. Something that shook my world. I told Leah that I was going to write a review of her for a little anti-folk fanzine, and SHE GAVE ME A DEMO TAPE.

I was stunned, I was reeling. I was actually being given something for writing. Normally I write these little humor pieces and get nothing but a copy of the magazine and Jon telling me no one seemed to get my genetically-coded waitress piece. Now I was a reviewer (or anti-reviewer, but Leah didn't know that), and I discovered that if you review people they will give you samples of their work! (Stay tuned for next month's review of lap dancers.) It was like a whole new world had opened up.

But, after the way I've raved about Leah, how can I write another review? Anyone else would just feel insulted that I wasn't hailing them as a musical genius, too. We all want to think we're as good as a Leah Coloff.

Then I went home and listened to the tape. The nice thing about Leah on tape is you get a chance to catch the lyrics that you didn't quite hear live, such as the snippet from "Paranoid" in which she's lying in bed with her lover: "I spread my legs open/and as soon as my eyes are closed/you're hacking my limbs off." (Leah seems to keep getting cut open in her songs -- do you think there's some significance to that? If I were an anti-psychoanalyst I could probably tell you.) There are four songs on the tape, all good, although the least interesting of the four happens to be the nine-minute one. I don't think she's selling the tape (it's only got songs on one side), so if you want one you should probably tell her you're a reviewer.

# RACING IN THE STREETS

Jonathan Berger

"They'll never make it on the Great White Way," Dad said.

We were road tripping in the Bronx, of all places, with the album *Life-O-Phobia* as soundtrack. I was jockeying at both the wheel and the radio dials. Dad didn't seem all that pleased by either of my circles of influence.

"Really," I said, "Why do you say that?"

It's a device I learned from the man himself. Rather than offer an opinion immediately, bide your time, listen to the other person's argument, then whale into them with your own accurate opinions, full force.

"Well, it doesn't sound like anything. 'You don't get to have fun,' over and over again. It's ridiculous."

I grinned. The Lookalikes' recording in question actually had other lyrics, but clearly, they were foreign to my father. "It's experimental?" I suggested.

"Too much for me," he said.

I fast-forwarded to the next side. Maybe there'd be more pop-appropriate material for him there.

"Just a second," I said, rewinding across from the diner. We'd just had a late-night snack, and I was about to drive Estelle home. But first, I needed to share something with her.

"After this, I have a feeling you'll feel the same way I do."

"I really respect your taste in music," she said.

That was as good a time as any to start the tape.

"...His heart is the size of his first, and it's tightening up again..." Tom sang, and then left room for the bombastic, incredible, orchestral guitar part to take the entire car over.

Tom Nishioka's song "Up and Under" overwhelmed the car, and me, like it usually does. Even now, after a billion listens, there are lines I don't understand, and never need to. It's one of the most moving songs that I feel.

"Well," I said, fading out at the end, after Tom had held the final note of "unglued" longer than any pain-wrought singer would need to, then longer still, "That's it. I love it."

"Wow," she said, "That was great."

"Yeah," I inhaled, relieved my opinion was justified, "On the AntiHoot album, it's called 'He Comes Unglued.' To me, though, it's always 'Up and Under.'"

"I liked it a lot."

We drove home.

"Can I put the bass up a little?" Steve asked.

"Sure," I said. I could never get those knobs to function properly.

"Yeah," he said, "Much better."

"And now..." Lenny Molotov brayed through the speakers, "She feels... OK."

"Who's on bass?" Steve asked.

"That's Annie Husick," Mark said from the back.

"Wow. She's good."

"Tom's producing, right?"

In the darkened back seat, Mark nodded. I think.

"Another stellar Tom Nishioka production..." I muttered.

The Lenny Molotov and the Illuminoids tape sounded incredible, capturing so much of their live energy, but with finer mixing touches than I've ever heard. I would have enjoyed it a lot more if I didn't want to drop people off and get moving to my place. My foot was on the break, waiting to get the car back on the road. Music in a stationary car has its purposes: romantic, emphatic, erratic, but this was too late for any of them. I wanted to get home.

"That sounds great," Steve said. Mark chatted about it.

Eventually, I got moving.

"Who's this?" Sarah asked, as I drove to work.

"Estelle. You met her last night."

"Nine Days' Wonder" was just beginning, and the vocals in the chorus were going through their soaring bit. The word "Nine" continued to rise, until the rest of the song-title was uttered, going on about a vacation paradise, or something else. It's a lot easier to concentrate on music in the car, but not so easy to pick up lyrics.

"I like it. Can you tape it for me?"

"All right."

Racing to work alone with some Dan Emery tapes in the car as company. I got to hear some lost cuts he never plays anymore. "Ridge Street," "The Box Song" and "Big Hands" were especial favorites.

I came close to jamming my fender into somebody else's, so excited was I by the music. I'm glad I didn't. I don't think I could explain to my insurance agent that the accident was justifiable due to "Dan Emery."

"You want my thoughts?" My mother asked, after the first cut ended.

"Why not?" I said, and shut the Lookalikes tape off before any further music might escape.

"It's very nice. The music is beautiful, his voice works well, and I liked the guitar."

"The guitar?" I said, gunning through a light, "You could hear the guitar?"

"Of course."

"Hm." I was used to seeing Steve Espinola play the song solo, with only his piano accompaniment. I hadn't really thought that his tape had a guitar in it as well.

"So it's good?" I said.

"Yeah, it's good."

"You want to hear some more then?"

"Sure?" She replied.

I put the tape back on and shut the hell up.



# LEARNING GUITAR

By Jocelyn Ryder

January 1997

Guitar playing is a current - anger, joy or frustration - that shoots from my fingers into the chords.

Guitar playing is the promise I make to myself every day: I can be guitarless, jobless, boyfriendless, penniless or homeless and still be O.K.

Guitar playing is a blue sky walk on a winter morning and a fifteen minute coffee break to hear about last night.

Guitar playing is my aching forearms, *but who the fuck cares cause this sounds great!*

Guitar playing is six months worth of lyrics I haven't sat down to work into a song yet.

Guitar playing is all the crying I've done since Thanksgiving.

Guitar playing is wondering what I'm gonna write about this month.

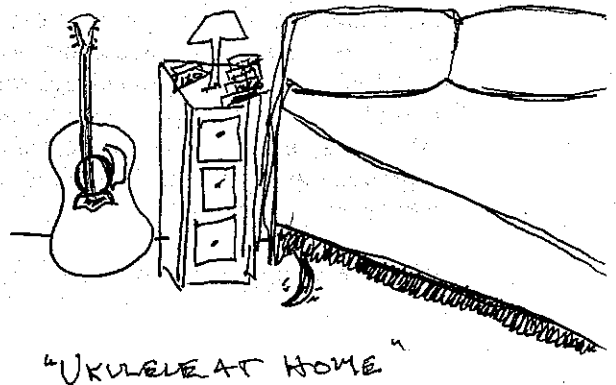
Guitar playing is the tuneless, low E thud at my last gig, but playing "Proctor & Gamble" anyway.

-\*-

*My calluses are back. The strings on my guitar are the same ones I've had since last winter. I keep trying to break them. I broke a guitar pick.*

*I want to learn a new chord. I know A, A-minor, E, E-minor, E-weird and maybe E-7th (or something--it's in "Hey, Joe"), C, D, G.*

*I want to spend an hour or two playing guitar with Scarecrow, Billy Kelly, Dina Dean, Tom Nishioka, Ed Hamell...the list goes on.*



# Demo Tips

i think last time i wrote i touched on compressors, and vowed to come back to them to explain more. well, i will, sometime, it's just that this issue i'd like to talk about EQ.

does your vocal sound "boxy?" "thin?" is it "too present?" does the mix sound "dead?" today's demo tips sets out to get your hands on the knobs that are gonna change that.

EQ, or equalization, is something we're all a bit familiar with. on basic stereos, bass and treble are the eq. in live or recording music setups, there is a lot more to eq. first, a little theory.

EQ is a turning down or turning up of the 'volume' of a certain range of the frequency spectrum. what's the frequency spectrum??? well, we humans can hear from about 25 cycles per second (hertz) up to about 20,000. this cycles per second term refers to the vibrating speed of the thing making the sound. —for example, if you sing the pitch A, your vocal cords are vibrating 440 times per second back and forth. that's 440 cycles per second, or 440 hertz (abbreviated Hz). if you pluck the A string on your guitar, the string vibrates at 440 Hz. if you play C, it's something like 238 Hz. if you hear 60 Hz, it sounds real low rumble. if you hear 12,000 Hz, it's a squeal.

so far so good. now. something that's vibrating at 440 Hz is not only producing that signal, but a bunch of others at the same time, called overtones. 440 is the fundamental, the main one being produced, but the overtones are in there as well. so a guitar string plucked is broadcasting a signal is most powerful at 440, but has content lower and higher than that in the frequency spectrum. so does a voice. so does everything. in fact, overtones are how we tell instruments apart. each instrument produces it's own characteristic set of overtones along with the fundamental. a trumpet produces a lot of overtones in the 2000-10,000 Hz range. it sounds bright or brassy. a cello produces more pronounced overtones in the 400-1000 Hz range. it sounds warmer. this is one of the ways in which music synthesizers fake the sound of acoustic instruments—they reproduce the overtone "fingerprint" of an instrument. anyway.

the point is, any signal you work with—guitar,

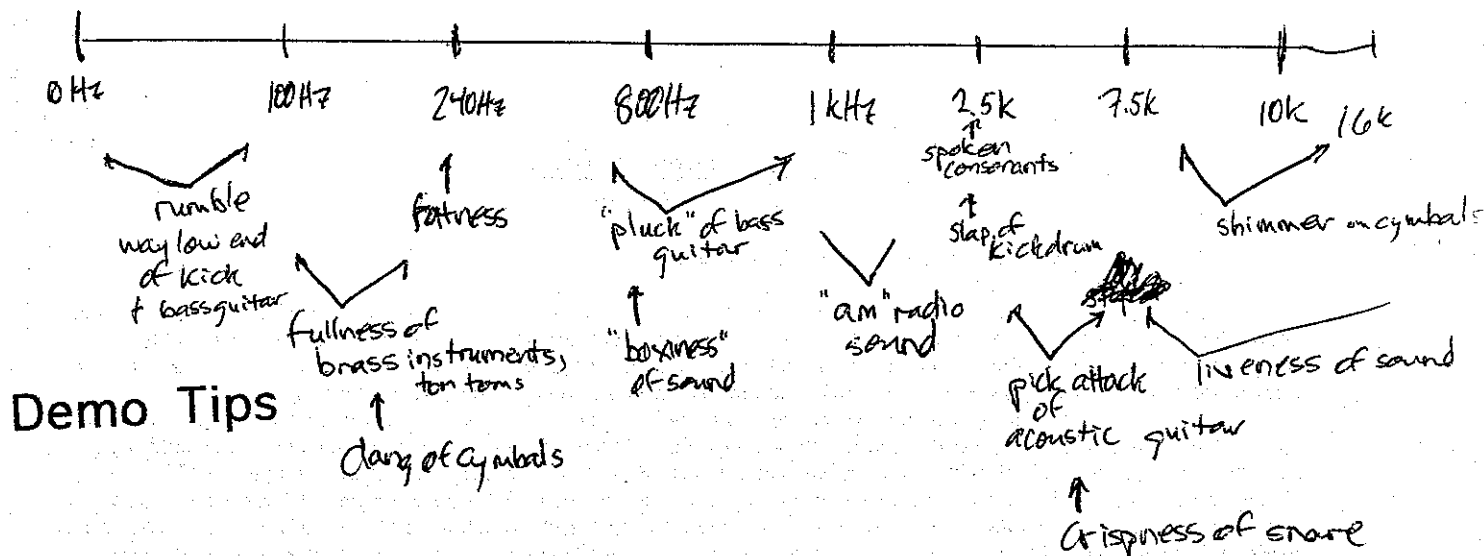
voice, etc. has content all over the frequency range. use EQ to boost or turn down part of the frequency range and you will change the sound of the instrument.—or, as is very important in mixing, you will change how close the instrument is perceived to be to the listener. (this is called proximity effect, but i will have to deal with it later.)

following is a chart of the frequency spectrum and a list of common adjectives used to describe the boosting of frequencies in the given ranges. with experience listening and correlating your impressions with numbers, instead of telling the engineer or soundperson "it sounds boxy" you can say "could you cut a little 400 Hz out of that?"

before i get to the spectrum layout, let me just mention the two basic kinds of EQ you can use. Fixed Q (Graphic) or Parametric. Q is bandwidth. Graphic—you can't change Q. Parametric—you can. what Q means is sort of like focusing the beam of a flashlight you are shining at something. higher Q numbers are like widening the beam of the flashlight. if you're "pointing" your EQ at 400 Hz and cutting down on the amount of signal there, with a high Q you might be lowering a big swath of the frequency spectrum like from 100 Hz to 1600 Hz. if you lower the Q, it focuses the beam and you might only be lowering frequencies from 380-420 Hz. this is like putting a notch in the frequency spectrum. this is useful for getting rid of ringing frequencies without decimating the signal; while higher Q's tend to make the EQ function more gently. Aside from how wide a swath you work with, parametrics also let you aim up and down the frequency spectrum. on a graphic EQ, you have to move over to the next fader—and depending on how minutely your graphic EQ breaks up the spectrum, you might have a fader boosting or cutting at 200 Hz and one at 1000 Hz (thousands of hertz are often abbreviated by k. 1000 Hz = 1k) while the frequency you need to deal with is a 600 Hz.

i know all this hurts, but look at the chart—you can start slimming and fattening your sounds in the studio with EQ.

*happy demoing, Tom*



## Demo Tips

## Reviews for the Mighty

**Jeff Wave: Songs for Working People** - Jeff Wave's album cover makes me queasy. It shows a city street, but with a ripple effect, like -- like a wave has passed. I get it! The music is similar. The nine cuts for the most part sound like Wave was on the way to making a cool sounding album -- you know, riffs and hooks -- then turned his demos on a 90 degree angle. Everything's turned around, put through the wave machine.

His sound, slightly off-key, somewhat out-of-tune, might be intentional. The first song, perhaps his *raison d'être*, is "If You Don't Wanna Be a Pop Star," (which follows with the line, "don't be one.")

It could be that Wave has made a decision to do what he can to avoid being a pop star. With songs like "Happy Earth Day," musically very much a Weird Al Yankovich rip-off (Can such a thing happen?), I think he's succeeded admirably. He could easily be a missionary whose intent is to restructure what is considered 'pop'. Mission (God, I hope that was his mission) accomplished, for some, but not. (Gustav Plympton)

zen pop records - zenpop@fretless.com

**Dan Emery** - Six songs on each side (the same songs, unfortunately), including the deceptive "Big Hand," about urges of stalking. Most of the cuts are of the soft variety, suggesting Emery is a sensitive singer-songwriter, with only the aforementioned "Big Hand" showing up to suggest he has a different style of playing. His voice is better suited for the rockers, though Emery, alone with his guitar, pulls out some interesting emotions in the falsetto "Cold Sore." (S Biederman)

Dan Emery - PO Box 20528 ~ NY, NY 10019  
(212) 642-5294

**Julia Douglass** - Julia Douglass has a demo tape for sale. It's seven dollars for five songs, which, on the face of it, might sound like a raw deal. Buy it.

You may argue that one of the songs is a cover ("Ode to Billy Jo"). "Four originals for seven dollars!" You may cry in outrage, "It's not fair!"

I don't care. Buy it anyway. Gladly. Immediately.

No, wait. Scratch the last: go to a show, where, between songs, you can hear Douglass complain about being boringly poor, and her hiring history, and the songs she'll be performing in just a moment.

Among the songs she just might play next are "Free Pancakes," "My Boyfriend is a Genius," "Thank You," and "Long Hair," which fits in, since they're on the tape.

My favorites are the start and finish of the release, "Boyfriend" and "Thank You," which are both about relationships, I guess, that aren't quite working out.

What's so good about the songs? They sound beautiful. They're so carefully laid out. Each lyrical phrase, each sound, seems so specifically chosen. There's an especially eerie "Uh-huh" at the end of the bridge in "My Boyfriend" that's... stirring. When she paused between words, it means something.

Her voice is great, soft and scary in turns, sometimes within the same phrase. She sounds like she could be a straight-out folkie, but chooses, instead, to redefine music with every syllable.

While you're watching Douglass, check out your own perceptions of her as the night progresses. She's fairly non-descript, but by the end of her entrancing show, you'll want her. Very much.

Go. Buy the tape, or see her. Or both. Now! (Gustav Plympton) Contact (212) 995-8832

**Bill Popp & the Tapes - Insides** - Bill Popp's sweet voice is backed by a hard-sounding three piece combo. The pairing of voice to instruments seems to fit poorly. An identity crisis permeates the album, evidenced by the back cover shot, showing the band in black and white over a 78 record player looking quizzically at this newfangled CD device. A rocking cover of "Eleanor Rigby" shows such LP influences quite clearly, some reasonable bonding of the Beatles and Badfinger. The album -- especially "Sidewalk Dance" -- grows on you, but not too quickly. (Jonathan Berger)  
121st STREET RECORDS ~ 22-18-121st Street  
College Point, NY 11356  
(718) 359-4110

**Mr. Scarecrow** - Mr. Scarecrow, guitarist for the AntiSection, mentor for AntiMatters, and general Fort raconteur, has just released five songs. Among them, the AntiHoot inspired "Baby Doll," the perhaps Television derived "Johnny Chalk," and the rock and roll anthem, "It Wasn't Enough."

They sound good. He's recorded with the AntiSection, and, while it lacks some of the energy that their live shows have, it fairly replicates what it is that makes Scarecrow the force to be reckoned with: the guitar. The sounds that escape his machine are phenomenal. He rocks out in all possible ways, causing electric carnage wherever he lays a lick.

Of course, as Fortified's AntiHoot album can attest, Scarecrow also has a sensitive singer-songwriter side, that can make all the young girls cry (as opposed to the guitar-playing, which tends to do it's work on the little boys). What I hope Scarecrow someday does is record both his soft, sensitive shit, as well as his kick-ass band material. Then, I can die a happy youth. (Gustav Plympton)

## Getting Drunk on Water

*by Seth Doolin*

Then there's the time Glen and I got drunk on water.

It was Saturday, March 17th. St. Patrick's Day.

I was unaware of the holiday as I tend to repress meaningless holidays like this one. Especially with my Boston upbringing, I have come to dread this day. I have worked in too many restaurants and liquor stores and have had to put up with drunken belligerent assholes wearing green and babbling about the Blarney Stone, Top O' the Mornin', and the Luck of the Irish. That's a good one . . . the "luck" of the Irish: Belfast, bombs, and bums. Some luck.

So I was painting in the kitchen that morning, working on a portrait of Crowley, drinking my second cup of coffee. Glen was on his way out and asked if I wanted anything. He always refused to get me cigarettes, but would bum them from me. He comes back with a three gallon bottle of Deer Park water and then asks how much liquid I had had already (I was quite used to his strange questions and comments at this point. He once asked me if I knew *exactly* how many discs I owned, and another time he woke me up to inform me that there were three kinds of roads: regular roads, bridge roads, and tunnel roads. I thanked him for that most useful piece of information and proceeded to dream about strangling him). He decided that our liquid intake at this point in the morning was equivalent, and began to make rules for the water drinking contest.

We were to drink out of pint glasses and keep track of them on a magic marker board he had found on the street (that apartment was full of found furnishings - there were construction cones, a newspaper rack, blueprints that served as wallpaper, plastic forks stapled to the wall, and, after Nancy moved in, a trail of string, twisting and turning in weblike configurations). We had agreed to trust one another in our counts. You can trust Glen up to a point. He won't cheat after making an agreement, but he will try to find a loophole, some semantic wording which will allow him to bend a rule, thus putting him over the top (an example, in our budget contest, in which we were to only spend \$49 that week, Glen considered quarters to be "laundry tokens" rather than currency).

Like a Mexican standoff, we stood in front of one another and slammed down the first three pints each. He then went to his room to do Godknowswhat and I continued painting. In intervals, he would emerge and put a tally mark on his side of the board, and then look at my total. Every now and then I would get ahead of him, and he'd slam down two pints to keep ahead, at which point I would slam three.

At seven pints, the effects kicked in. I found myself rolling around the kitchen floor, laughing hysterically. I was uncontrollable. This takes special poignancy if you've ever seen that kitchen. All the rainforests of Brazil with their millions of different insects couldn't hold a candle to that apartment. It got so bad one night that the roaches held a coup d'etat.

I think it was at about ten to twelve pints that we went outside and stood in direct sunlight, shivering. We felt like junkies. The shaking wouldn't stop and it was seventy degrees. Even the bums felt sorry for us. With every drug I've taken, this was a new experience for me. I was coming close to a theory on the narcotics of everyday life: anything, ANYTHING can be an intoxicant if taken in large enough doses. My mind started reeling thinking about how the Velvet Underground might have been different had Lou been hooked on water instead of smack. Johnny Thunders and Marc Bolan might still be alive today. Bloated, but alive.

Seventeen pints became the limit for me. My perception had become viscous, I believed I saw bubbles before my eyes. I announced to Glen that I was kicking, getting the fish off my back. We were tied at that point, so he slammed down three more pints to have a comfortable margin. He was always pulling shit like that. Like my older brother, for who it's not enough to beat you at Monopoly, but then he gives you money and sees how many turns it takes for you to be flat broke again.

I think we went to Benny's for dinner after his victory drink. The waitress brought two glasses of water to our table and we begged her to take them away.

Later that night we went to Phoebe's for a few beers. There was a full carafe of water with a rose in it at our table. Appreciating the gesture, we drained the carafe and asked for another. Four days later we were still arguing about whether Joan, our waitress, was impressed, or convinced we were total idiots.

My bets still hedge for the latter.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anti-Matters does not endorse or condone the excess intake of water to "get high." There are known cases of people who have drowned from drinking too much water in a short amount of time. Anti-Matters suggests drinking whiskey, beer, or another liquored liquid for use as a safer, friendlier intoxicant. When it comes to water, our official policy is "Just don't do it."

## Annotated Bibliography

Our Noise, Jeff Gomez (Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1995) - The book is some snot-nosed twenty-something's pointless meanderings about a bunch of soul-lost youths. Pretty poor book, all told, but the initial quote in the books is from Brenda Kahn's *Mint Julips and Needles*: "We are the people our parents warned us about." Whoo-hoo! Go Jeff; great choice in songs, if perhaps an insipid choice in lyric.

Sound Views, #42 - Featuring reviews of Andrew Vladek, Coyote Shivers, Michael Packer, and, of course, Lach's Antihoot: Live From the Fort at the Sidewalk Cafe, inadvertently winning the issue's longest title in a review award.

AntiMatters, December Issue - The paper of record for all things AntiFolk. The 'zine of the scene. Photo-essay, interviews with Lach and the AntiSection, the conclusion of the vitamin Fortified Serial... Without doubt or question, "The Best best AntiMatters yet!"

# THE HIDDEN FORT

Secret Origins of Anti-Folk  
A continuing series by Geoffrey Notkin

## Episode IV: *From the Mouth of the Lizard*

*"Mr. Bitterman, don't you know,  
The world has changed?  
Electricity's in our bloodstream, T.V.'s in our veins.  
Got rid of Nixon, Vietnam, all bad things,  
Then you gave us Reagan, Nicaragua, cocaine kings"*

From "Mr. Bitterman," by Lach

LACH'S *CONTENDER* CAME OUT IN 1990, AND WE THREW OURSELVES A SPECTACULAR RECORD release party at The Pyramid Club to mark the occasion. It was one of the best crowds we ever played to: people plastered right up against the stage; heads bobbing under the hazy red and green spotlights. Lach started off the show on his own, then a couple of guests came on, and finally the whole band edged up the spiral staircase that threaded its way from the below stage dressing room through the drum riser, and out onto the stage itself. We opened up with "The Edie Effect"—the first track from *Contender*—and by the time we got to "The John Glenn Song," I was watching a gang of cute girls up front, their eyes bright, mouthing the words: "I wanna be an astronaut, I wanna be an astronaut." I thought to myself: *Now, it's happening. People I don't even know, know our songs, and they're singing along with us.* And then I spun around, so the spotlights would illuminate my newly-painted jacket.

I never cared much for painted jean jackets. They reminded me too much of kids I'd grown up with in England. Kids who had Status Quo and Pink Floyd painted on their jackets. But I wanted to wear something unique for the release party (after all, Lach had commissioned a green jacket that looked like something out of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and had the 'LACH' CD logo embroidered across it, one letter on each pocket, and wasn't going to be upstaged by that!), so just that one time, I painted myself a Proper Id jean jacket. I tore the sleeves off, and decorated it with a psychedelic multi-colored Id logo, a gaggle of studs, a brass marshall's badge, the image of a gecko, and the words: "You look like a lizard, jealous of the Empire State Building. Proper Id Record Release Party, July 21 '90." Not your everyday quote. And like the music that inspired us, the tale of how it came to be there is not a linear one.

I arrived in Boston in the fall of 1980. Nineteen years old, thin, wide-eyed, alone, and not knowing a soul in the whole of Massachusetts. I had tangerine-colored hair, a motorcycle jacket I'd bought for £37 on Carnaby Street, and a pair of well-worn Dr. Martin's boots.

An inventory of my possessions at that time: A Fender Musicmaster bass with no case; a litre each of Wild Turkey and Stolichnaya vodka (luckily, I had discovered ahead of time that the drinking age in Massachusetts was 20); my indispensable Jam, Damned, and Clash tapes; a portable cassette player; a small piece of red Lebanese hash that I'd smuggled in from the UK; my London band scrapbook; a paperback edition of Philip Dick's *Do Androids Dream of*

*Electric Sheep?*, an Indian pill box that a girlfriend had bought for me at the Portobello Road Market; and a palm-sized brass lizard.

Less than 24 hours after my arrival I'd met Lach. We smoked the hash. Then we listened to my punk tapes. He wanted to read the Philip Dick book. He asked if he could have the lizard. I told him he could borrow the book if he promised not to lose it, or crease the spine, but that couldn't have the lizard because it had been a birthday present from my mother.

Like many reprobates of college age, we had a *thing* about The Doors. Or rather, I should say, Lach had a *thing* about The Doors. I already had a *thing* about The Jam, and although these two *things* didn't seem like they should ever really be able to meet on any kind of agreeable plain, they did for us. The Jam had zip and attitude, but The Doors had spiritual resonance. "I was here with my Led Zeppelin and Grateful Dead and Doors albums," Lach would later say in radio interviews. "And then I discovered the Sex Pistols, and I thought they were the most exciting thing I'd ever heard. Then Geoff showed up from England with all his Damned and Jam tapes, and I thought 'Yeah, *now* we've got something happening here!'"

How do you combine the energy and focused tightness of The Jam—that choppy cursive sound of tight black trousers and narrow ties—with the conceptual spaciness of The Doors and The Grateful Dead? It seemed obvious at the time: take a lot of acid, listen to punk music and sixties music at the same time, and allow the cosmos to shunt us down the correct path of supernatural adventure. It almost worked too. Within a few days we'd begun experimenting with a three piece band called The Aliens: Lach on keyboards and vocals; Geoff on bass and backing vocals; and a series of different drummers.

No guitar.

"I had two guitarists in my last band," Lach told me. "I find it quite refreshing not to have any in this one." It caused us a good deal of amusement when we realized that we had the same line-up as Emerson, Lake, and Palmer.

At various times during The Aliens' brief but apocalyptic career, we were chased out of a venue before our own show by the Fire Marshall and a large part of the Boston

Fire Department (we escaped to the street in a food elevator); shut down *during* a show by the police; banned from playing in various buildings and clubs; ejected from a well-known Boston studio during a live album recording concert; forbidden to play at friend's parties and shows; and eventually forbidden even to show our *faces* in various parts of town (including, unfortunately for me, the building where I lived). All of this in a few short months. Naturally, like any self-centered maniacs, we assumed that being the focus of such tremendous attention and interest could only mean that we were doing *exactly* the right thing. So we kept on with it, but decided to get more people involved.

Lach was hungry. Boston was too small, too collegy. And despite his comments about guitarists, he was missing Norman and Mark—his former band mates from New York. He started getting phone calls from them, and there was hushed talk of making a 45 in New York over spring break. A studio had been found in New Jersey. An old friend of Lach's might put up the money in exchange for a production credit. We were considering two Aliens' songs: "Electric Boy," a five minute grinder about a guy who's jealous of his girlfriend's vibrator, and "Sound the Alarm," a keyboard-driven popper. One song was too long for radio airplay; the other too short. But we were sure—we were *certain*—that the unparalleled brilliance of these songs would force every important rock station in the country to play them, no matter the length.

Now, one of Lach's favorite records at the time was The Doors' *Absolutely Live*, and we'd been listening to it almost daily. It's probably hard for Americans to believe, but growing up in England I heard almost nothing by, or about, The Doors. Everyone, even me, had heard the tiresome "Light my Fire" of course, but this live album was a revelation. It was, in places, very close to what we wanted to do: it had an ethereal mood; it was somewhat hallucinatory; it at least *appeared* to have an aleatoric, or improvisational quality; and it bubbled with sexuality and barely-controlled energy. Also, as every sixties scholar knows, The Doors took their name from Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, a slim book which recounts the English author's experiments with hallucinogens. And don't you know that, coincidentally, *The Doors of Perception* was one of our favorite books? How often, after all, do find actual *literature* about tripping? But Lach had to take it one step further.

"William Blake implied," Lach told me, "that in order to see the world as it truly is, infinite and beautiful, we must cleanse the doors of perception. A method of doing this is by undergoing 'ego-death.' The main symbol of our ego is our name. Therefore, our name is a latch on the doors of perception. By being called 'Lach' it is a constant reminder that I am not just some ego-survival-brained creature, but part of a great cosmic consciousness. And I dropped the 't' just to fuck with them." I didn't know exactly what Lach was talking about, but he was very interesting. I'd never heard anyone talk about such stuff before, and I certainly didn't have any other friends who could quote Blake. I didn't know for sure if he was serious, or just kidding with me; if he was a genius, or crackers, or both. I gambled that it would all become clear later. I'm still waiting.

Of course, it was very retro, uncool even, to be into The Doors in 1981. By then punk (or should I say 'new wave'?) was seeping into the mainstream—even in Boston—and would-be scenesters were suddenly big into Adam and the Ants, Blondie, The Cars and other bands that were, to us,

merely pop. But we'd been into punk for years and so, by employing reverse snobbery, we were now both willing and able to go back and take what we wanted from '60s music, often doing so with Strummer's lyrics from "White Man in Hammersmith Palais" echoing in our scrambled brains: "The new groups are not concerned/With what there is to be learned/They're all too busy fighting/For a cooler place under the lighting." Profound and pertinent.

Of all the cuts on *Absolutely Live*, there was one that cobbled around constantly in my short-term memory: the "Celebration of the Lizard" medley. In fact, the only other piece of music that got as much turntable time was thematically quite similar: Eno's "Somber Reptiles," from *Another Green World*.

And then there was our friend who lived downtown on Commonwealth Avenue in a very swank apartment that, like much of Boston, was infested with roaches. She fought back at them with lizards—African geckoes, if I remember rightly—that she bought from an enterprising local pet shop. They were cute things with bug eyes and suction pads on the end of their delicate, transparent fingers. They were considerate roommates too: they liked dark places; pretty much kept to themselves (although every now and then you'd see one hanging upside down from the ceiling like Peter Parker); made absolutely no noise; and ate up all the roaches. Lach and I liked to go over to there, smoke some hash, pull our jackets up over our heads (I imagine that was meant to be some sort of lizard impersonation, but I'm only guessing), and leap about the place looking for the geckoes, and shouting over and over: "I am the lizard king! I can do *anything*." All part of a good college education. And things do with with lizards just on kept cropping up.

One brisk spring day, our important work was interrupted by exciting news from New York. We were going into the studio, everything was arranged, and Norman—Lach's inseparable childhood friend about whom I'd heard so much, and Proper Id's lead guitarist—was driving up to Boston to get us.

We first met, symbolically enough, at a party thrown by the current brewmaster of The Brooklyn Brewing Company. When Norman appeared at the front door, I recognized him from pictures Lach had shown me, but instead of introducing myself in the normal human manner, I welcomed him with a traditional Zanti greeting: "Trantzini Gembabwey!" (see "The Zanti Misfits," an episode of the original *Outer Limits*, which Lach had assured me was Norman's favorite). Norman looked at me strangely, but later confided that he knew instantly we'd be friends for life.

Norman stayed for a few days, and did one show with The Aliens. Lach had already given in and added a guitarist so we were expanded—just that one time—to five members. Our performance was part of a sixties party, and so we threw versions of "Hello, I Love You," "All Along the Watchtower," and "Jumpin' Jack Flash," in with our bag of originals.

When the show ended, and the lights went on, a knot of acid-riddled audience members remained huddled and motionless in front of me. I packed up my gear, watching with amusement, and later terror, as they shuffled slowly towards me like some monstrous multiple organism. When they were close enough to touch me, one of the girls reached out with a graceful slow-motion arm, and pointed at the black and white striped tie tied to my bass' headstock.

"Your tie," she said. "It's *fantastic*." I unwrapped it from

the bass, and waved it in front of them, the same way you'd jiggle string for a cat. All eyes were fixed in wonder on the tie. I gave it to one of the girls, and she held it up reverently, gazing into my face with such gratitude and joy that it seemed I must have presented her with something of incalculable value and wonder.

That night we returned to Lach's quiet apartment on Buswell Street, excited about the following morning's departure for New York. Norman was surprised to discover that, despite my obvious English accent, I'd been born on Sixteenth Street in New York City. And then I remembered something on *Absolutely Live*. There's a moody, floating segment in "Celebration of the Lizard" when Morrison says: "Tomorrow I enter the town of my birth, and I want to be ready." So we had to listen to the whole of the medley immediately, and everyone had to be quiet when Morrison said "Tomorrow I enter the town of my birth, and I want to be ready," so that I could fully absorb the impact of the statement as I perceived it to apply to myself (with my eyes closed, while taking a massive hit off a joint that Lach had rolled). I went on to quote that line so many times during the evening, and the next morning, and even during the four hour drive to New York, that I was eventually ordered to shut up or get out of the car and *walk* to the town of my birth.

The full story of "Electric Boy" will have to wait for another day, but suffice to say for the moment, that we did make the record, and I spent a pleasant week in Rockland County getting to know people who would later become neighbors, friends and bandmates. All four minutes and forty-six seconds of "Electric Boy" made it onto the radio quite a number of times (even though, in true punk style, we put it out on our own label), and it remained a staple of Proper Id's live set all through the band's many incarnations.

By 1988 we figured we really better get our shit together. It had been seven years since "Electric Boy" had first aired on WNEW. Since then, the band had done well, done badly, broken up, had a few reunion shows at parties, passed itself off as Spock's Brain, and participated in my revenge on Steve Jones.\* Lach called a meeting. He had a good shot at a record deal, and he needed a serious band to back him up. He wanted Norman, Jon (the Id's original drummer), and me to work with him regularly and without fighting. One thing was made very clear from the beginning: this was going to be Lach's band. He had a scene going downtown, he had a manager, and contacts. He even had a little money. There would be no more arguing about what songs we'd do, or when we'd play. Lach would cover rehearsal costs, and pay us for shows. If we got signed, we'd all get a percentage of record sales. It seemed like a fair deal to me. We'd change our name to Proper Id,

featuring Lach. But Norman hated that. He said it sounded like a Vegas lounge act. So, we became Lach and The Proper Id. The fact was, Lach was getting well-known, and the rest of us weren't. He was getting press all over the place: *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, even *High Times*. And the problem with Proper Id had always been control. You couldn't put three conceited high-energy sources like Lach, Norman and me into a democracy and expect anything other than self-destruction by incandescent combustion. And so we ceased to be a democracy, and became a benevolent dictatorship. There was very little arguing after that.

We started rehearsing at an elite and somewhat snooty Tribeca studio called Dessau, favored by The Talking Heads and the B-52s. The staff never seemed able to fully decide if we were famous enough, or cool enough, to be using their facility. But they were polite, and the equipment was first rate. I got to play though a Peavey stack that gave my new Steinberger bass such a rich, deep sound that, for the first time ever, I could actually hear what I was playing. The drum riser had small casters at each corner, so you could wheel the entire thing around the enormous live room whenever your drummer started to get on your nerves. They had a real P.A. and mixing board, and would run cassette tapes of your sessions at no extra charge. Those Dessau session tapes—to which we gave names like "The Persian Flaw," after whatever was happening in that week's episode of *Star Trek: Next Generation*—are some of the best documents of the Id years.



*The famous Proper Id 'lizard' jacket*

The first time we went to Dessau, we ran through "Electric Boy" (devising a more modern, more complicated arrangement), and all the other old Id songs we could remember. Then Lach said he had a new song to show us. It was called "Mr. Bitterman," and it became my favorite Proper Id song of all time.

Later, I asked Lach about the odd lyrics: "You look like a lizard, jealous of the Empire State Building/You hate anybody that doesn't share your feeling/That everybody's stealing, from the floor down to the ceiling/Anything not nailed down by the logic of your fear/But logic is a re-run of a *Star Trek* long gone." I considered them to be some his best, and asked what it all meant. He smirked. "Don't you remember that Lone Star gig?"

It was a misty spring night in 1987. I'd just started seeing a sexy and somewhat shy artist from The School of Visual Arts. She was into the downtown scene and, by coincidence, was casually acquainted with Lach. For our second date, we went to see him play at 61 Fifth Avenue. It's now just a salad bar and deli, but was once the famous Lone Star Café, best known to New Yorkers as "that building with the lizard on top," because of the enormous reptile

\* See "The Truth About Spock's Brain" in *AntiMatters*, November 1996; and "How I Had my Revenge on Sex Pistol Steve Jones" in *AntiMatters*, December 1996.

that squatted menacingly on its roof like something from *The Lost World*. Despite the lizard, or maybe because of it, The Lone Star was a prestigious gig. "You have to either be really happening, or be one of the good ol' boys to play here," Lach told me. I'd recently seen Billy Bragg at The Lone Star (I assumed he was in the "really happening" category), and since I had myself described Lach as "a more punk Billy Bragg," it seemed appropriate that his first solo show in a big-name venue should take place in "that building with the lizard on top."

That night turned out to be one of those bizarre reversed moments in time: I was sober, and Lach was smashed out of his head. I remember him swaying a little on the high stage, with the collar of his leather jacket turned up, heckling the bewildered audience. I couldn't help comparing Lach with Billy Bragg. Okay, Bragg's guitar playing might have been more solid, but Lach had better songs, and he didn't deliver a twenty minute lecture on the evils of capitalism before each number. Lach had in fact confided to me, that very night, that he'd once been thrown out of the Lone Star for throwing a cigarette packet at Bragg during just such a monologue, and calling him a "commie bastard."

Lach spent the evening worrying that he might be recognized.

When he jumped off the stage, Lach headed straight for Evelyn and me. He wanted to know the usual things: How was the sound, could you hear the words, was it obvious that I fucked up such and such a song? And all the while was towing us both upstairs. "Come on, there's food and stuff in the dressing room, let's grab some." Lach stole a mostly full bottle of Jack Daniels from the bar, and was going on in a loud animated voice about how he wanted to go up and see "that big lizard!"

"Come on! Let's all go up on the roof!" he bellowed, waving the bottle of Jack over his head. The backstage area was busy with hangers-on, but when the going to the roof business started, their cool veneer started to fade. There were a few uncomfortable smiles; a couple of punters headed downstairs to see the Anton Fier band who'd just gone on, and the rest of them busied themselves in trite conversation. Lach was disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm for his idea, and the after-gig illumination started to fade from his face.

But Evelyn was always a good sport. "Come on, Geoff," she said. "We'll go up to the roof with him." She took my arm, I grabbed the cuff of Lach's motorcycle jacket, and we went out into the windy night.

I had no idea how blustery it had become until we were outside. We cowered under the lizard's gigantic torso as it creaked and swayed over our heads. The thing was the size of a small jet airplane, and it didn't look very stable. "Do you think it's safe?" Evelyn asked. I didn't. So I didn't say anything, I just held onto her tightly, and kept my eyes on the hulking shape above us. Lach walked over to the edge of

the building, and stood under the thing's throat, on a narrow brick ledge, three stories above Fifth Avenue. "Look!" he shouted. "This lizard is looking right at the Empire State Building." He pointed north, towards The Empire State, lit up and glimmering through the rainy haze. Every few seconds a minute burst of light twinkled down to us like a microscopic neon diamond — flashbulbs from tourist cameras on the 86th floor. "You can tell it's jealous," Lach yelled through the wind. "It wants to see the view from up there, instead of being stuck on top of this bullshit place."

"Lach, I think you ought to keep away from the edge." I didn't want to sound like an old nag, so I added: "These old buildings get very slippery in the rain, you know." Lach staggered back over, and I was startled that he'd actually listened to me. He handed me the bottle of Jack Daniels. "Here, hold onto this." He bounded back towards the edge of the building leaping, at the last moment, up into the air and grabbing onto the lower jaw of the lizard's gaping mouth. He hung there, swaying, leather jacket and plaid shirt flapping in the awful wind, with his feet dangling over the honking Fifth Avenue traffic about 80 feet below, whooping and cackling and shouting out crazily into the night: "I am the lizard king. I can do anything!"

It was spectacular, but I was fairly certain that he'd either fall to his death through sheer recklessness, or tear the lizard's jaw off and then fall to his death. Or, more likely, bring the entire lizard crashing down on our heads, and then fall to his death, clutching half a giant lizard jaw.

"Hey Lach, come over and look at this," I yelled, trying to feign wonder, or at least enthusiasm, and keep any hint of tremor out of my voice.

"What!" He flung himself onto the roof. "What is it?" I ran over, grabbed him, and dragged him quickly back inside. Lach stayed on after us, but promised he would not climb up onto the lizard again. He later related to me how, after we'd left, he had been accosted by a bitter old folkie who complained relentlessly about his lack of fame and success. The folkie's jealousy and complaints merged, in Lach's mind, with the lizard outside and "Mr. Bitterman" came down out of the ether and became a song.

Back at The Pyramid, that night of the release party, we hammered through "Mr. Bitterman," and there was no doubt in my mind that it was much stronger than the old material. The band was changing; had already changed. It was as if all the playing and all the songwriting had somehow, under its own power, moved up to a new and higher level.

I still had my eye on the sing-along girls in the front. They were enjoying the new songs, too. They didn't know the lyrics to "Mr. Bitterman" yet, but our record was finally out, and all seemed right with the world. In the stagelightr euphoria of the moment, I thought it would be only a matter of time until everyone knew the words.



Norman, Geoff and Lach after the last Contender session, 1990

# Dan Kilian!!!

by S Biederman



"There is nothing so dangerous as a geek who has nothing left to lose." That was my last thought during the last performance of the excitable, energetic Dan Kilian, recent émigré to AntiFolk.

While he does a fair variety of exciting covers ("Billie Jean" & "Borderline" are recent favorites), there's also an array of exciting "Songs about girls, creeping fascism, and hell." The songwriting is vital, but more than anything else that makes Kilian an excellent showman is his performance.

With his black blocky glasses and his loud snazzy clothes, he immediately attracts attention. Following with a stunted stuttery loud form of speech, he invariably introduces and reintroduces himself.

"Hi, I'm Dan Kilian. That's Dan Kilian..."

You get the idea. If there's a gig to plug he does that repeatedly. If not, he'll just talk at length into the mic until suddenly, he strikes his guitar and begins the song. The voice of the incarnate nerd is gone, though the clear loud tone remains. But before that can be noticed, he's well into the song, and there's nowhere else to put attention but on him. When he plays, he plays like demons possess his very hair. He's totally out of control, but everything sounds just right. Just as Elvis Costello looked like Buddy Holly on shock therapy, Kilian looks like Costello on amphetamines. And, little as you may think you want to see that, in person, you will find it frighteningly compelling.

## *What is Splurge?*

Five people, two guitars.

Splurge is a really cool band. We just got a new drummer. It's the democratic version of what I do. Some of their songs, some of my songs... I do most of the lyric writing. I get enough of my way... for the egomaniac in me. We almost break up every three minutes, and we're planning to take over the world.

## *When did you start playing at the Fort?*

I guess it was a few months ago. My first open mic was an audition or whatever, and I got a gig later that month.

## *What did you perform?*

Goodness, songs that I never play. Songs I can barely play that anymore. I practice more as a band than I do alone. We sound accomplished as a band. I'm the lead singer. I'm a bit of a faker. I need to practice more. I don't; have the strongest hands. I flub a lot of notes. You know, I want to be a professional rock star, and I can't play the guitar. I mean, Michael Bolton may suck, but at least he could play guitar, and -- wait. Bad analogy. Richard Marx. He could blow me off the stage. I'm too lazy. "Don't mean nothing..."

## *Your stage show is... unique. What do you do on-stage?*

I try to articulate. I've been in bands for a few years. When I first started, I was Mr. Energy, and had good visuals, but if you ever actually had to hear a tape back of it. It was awful. Awful singing. So I try to do a David Bowie kind of minimalist thing. And I blow up balloons.

## *Why do you have both Splurge and the solo thing?*

I write a lot songs, and I can only do four or five of them with the band. We have a short set list, so the band only plays once or twice a month, so you have to keep hammering the same songs home. Whereas at the AntiHooty no one gives a rat's ass, and I get to vent the frustrations of a democracy, and be a fascist with myself.

## *Talk about the way you perform solo.*

I'm rocking. I'm doing a persona thing. A distinct persona thing. I'm trying to be funny, or stupid. What am I trying to do... I start talking, and I'm letting the mojo work. I'm trying

to cover up for nervousness, so I talk all wise-assy, or rat's assy. I do my flaky stuff, being a geek in high school. Like if you're working at the office, there's this cute girl down the hall you have to say something, or say something stupid. So it's like the audience is this cute girl down the hall. It's a bunch of schtick. I usually think of funny things to say, and forget them. I try to say words in a Norwegian accent... you know, at the AntiHoot, I'm playing two songs. I've got to milk it. If you're going to entertain, you've got to at least try. I'm definitely trying to compete, trying to entertain.

## *You seem to undercut your solo playing.*

That's cuz I'm neurotic. I get to do more fun songs solo, than with the band. I tend to take the open mic mentality with me, when I'm playing solo. I want to play this stuff professionally.

## *Talk about your superstar dreams.*

I wanna be a rock star. I'm in my mid-twenties now and I'm getting kinda panicky. You get desperate, if I don't do it, I'll start robbing banks. I can't work jobs, I just can't. I don't have casual clothes. I'm either gonna be a total faker at my job or I'm gonna start killing people. I've either got to be a rock star or win the lottery. Those are my only two chances. I'm doomed.

## *What's the inspiration for you songs?*

I like to write songs with a girls name, because that's rock and roll. I haven't written many songs about creeping fascism lately, but, since the fall of communism, that's the thing. I've got a few songs about the devil, because I'm catholic, and I'm going to hell. Course, as a catholic, I'm already burning.

## *Your quote sounds like something from Elvis Costello.*

I try to rip his style a lot. Dorky glasses and chatty songs. I used to be exactly like Elvis Costello, now I try to tell a story, instead of cut a dictionary with a chainsaw. His thing was revenge and guilt.

## *Any last thoughts?*

We're all doomed.

# The Diabolical Return of Auntie Matters!

Dear Auntie,

I have a problem and I hope you can help. I have a real big crush on one of the girls who plays regular at the open mike. I've always wanted to date a female musician, as I think we could really get attuned to each other's needs (if you know what I mean). I'm a bit shy about approaching her, as there always seems to be a whole load of adoring fans flocking around her each time she plays. But I can deal with that part. My real problem is this: I can only "get it on" (if you know what I mean) while listening to heavy metal music. I'm afraid that this person who I adore, and who plays only the coolest hip music on the scene, would be really turned off if I got her back to my place, and then just when we were getting down to it (if you know what I mean), I stopped to put on some Judas Priest or Ratt. What should I do? Please help.

Cobalt

Dear Cobalt,

There's lots of metallic sounding stuff in AntiFolk, if you want to maintain your musical... preferences as well as your credibility.

Try out some Mr. Scarecrow, acoustic Little Shining Man, Heathens, or Torn & Frayed, for some some of the sounds you love to love, and still look like the most happening of guys for your girl!

Or you could just be honest...

Dear Miss Matters,

**I think we should have a lot more exposed female parts down at the club. Yeah yeah I know the girls what play down there are real sensitive and have a lot of stuff to say about what it's like being a chick in today's world and their relationships and all that hooney, but what good is it having babes playing in bands if they wear doofy coats all the time? I mean why can't these girls let it all hang out once in a while? How about some spandex or some of those really tight tshirts what show almost everything? That piano player who comes in sometimes is real good, and damn she knows how to dress! All the girls who play down the club should dress like that. Just a white satin slip! Ouch! That was just BAD FOR THE EYES, man!!!**

**Also, how about having some girls dance in cages when that punk band (what's their name, you know, the real loud one) plays? Or some strippers. I think it would really increase the attendance at the fort. Also, you should think about showing more sports, especially wrestling, on the TV in between bands. Otherwise the club and your mag are real cool, and I dig it big time.**  
Boss Hogg

Dear Hogg,

You're the boss in my book!

I've been looking for a man like you for the longest

time now. I want to meet someone who's not afraid to speak his mind, no matter what anyone (including himself) thinks.

Tell you what. I want you to come by my place Saturday at midnight. I live on 125th street, on Lenox Avenue. I'll recognize you if you wear a hundred dollar bill taped to your chest.

If you're half the man I think you are, you'll do it. See you on Saturday.

Dear auntie matters:

I noticed that a lot of times at the anti-hoot, Lach gets up and leaves his post after a performer has gotten settled in. Should we (the performers) take such actions personally?

signed

insulted (?) under the lights

Dear Insult,

There are two schools of thought:

a - Lach has faith in you, the performer, to not mess up the equipment, to entertain the audience, to keep things running smoothly, while he has to go off and do something, like use the toilet or talk to some chickie. He trusts you, which is why he left you alone. You're the substitute teacher.

b - He's sickened by the very sound of your music, the sight of your face, and your friends smell. He has to get out of there asap.

You can decide for yourself which you feel applies better. Have other people left your show? I think I remember you: short guy, fuzzy beard, 3,000 dollar guitar and ripped t-shirt?

I'd give your friends a bath.

Hey anti,

Yer mag is cool! I gotta prob tho' know what I'm sayin? I dig the heavy stuff, but I wanna get into the solo singer songwriting thing too. I wanna write songs about somethin' other than drinking and slammin, but I'm afraid that my bros in Heavy Machinery will think I'm a pussy if they find out. How do I go about gettin into the solo deal without comin off like a dweeb?

Yer pal

Jokko

Dear, dear Jocko,

It's hopeless. I'm sorry, but there's no way that they'll think your on the hardcore tip if you try out the singer songwriter scene. And what's worse, Heavy has a subscription to AntiMatters, so they're reading these words as you speak.

I'd start running if I were you, dweeb.

Dear Auntie,

*I feel so ordinary! How will I ever ever get Lach to look at me? I mean he's just so sexy, especially with that new beard. He looks like*

# Auntie Matters!

*that Riker from Star Trek The New Generation. I always go to the open mihe just so I can see him running the show. I'm too nervous to just go up to him and ask for a date, but I sure would love to! Oh what should I do??*

*Miss Perturbed*

Dear Perturbed,

Lately, I think Lach looks more like Riker mixed up with Picard in the beam tube, if you know what I mean... yeah, the height thing.

Here's some lines to use when dealing with the Lachmeister:

"I really liked that song, FILL IN THE BLANK. Did you really write that yourself (coquette's giggle)? "

"Could we talk sometime, about getting a gig here? Maybe... tonight?"

"Your such a versatile songwriter!"

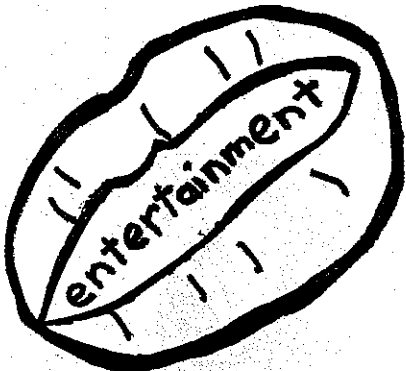
"Here's a twenty for the tip jar. Do you mind if I stick it in myself?"

Try any or all these lines - but not on the same night.

You want more? Mail to AskAnti@aol.com, or to the offices of AntiMatters, where's they'll be forwarded.

**DAN  
KILIAN**

Sunday  
Jan. 19th  
9:30 PM



@ the fort

## Fort Report News IBits

### In The News:

Great Reviews of Mary Ann Farley's new C.D. and the surprise Robyn Hitchcock show in the new issue of Musician's Exchange. Mary Ann was also featured in the latest Billboard and given an excellent review!

Beck on tour has been acknowledging Antifolk and The Fort in various interviews as the birthplace of his songwriting. Go, Beck, go! (for on-line Beckheads: check out the Beckzine available through e-mail from Iluvdaven@aol.com, tell em AntiMatters sent you!)

### On Tour:

Roger Manning and John S. Hall have been doing a double-bill tour of the U.S.A., culminating in a hometown show at the Luna Lounge in our own beautiful East Village.

Brenda Kahn is out on tour promoting her latest release on Shanachie, Destination Anywhere.

Hamell on Trial has been touring as an opener for such bands as Squeeze, Syd Straw and rumour has it he may hit the road with The Henry Rollins Band.

Lach will be in Toronto Feb.13-15 at The Folk Alliance Convention. He will hold his own Rebel Alliance at the same time with an Antihoot at Graffiti's Bar on Thurs. and then he will turn his hotel room at the convention into a nightclub for Friday and Saturday Night! Scheduled performers include: Lach, Strange Angels, Bob Wiseman and Carmaig Deforest.

### In The Studio:

Muckafurgason and Major Matt Mason will release a joint single of children's songs with a party at The Fort on Friday, January 31.

Box Of Crayons have a new E.P. and a release party at The Fort on Wednesday, February 5.

Jane Brody has a new C.D. scheduled for release with a party at The Fort on Friday, February 21.

Gene & Mimi are in the process of recording a new full-length product. A concoction of AntiFolk personalities and hangers-on were invited to sing chorus for the perfectly poppy "Beginning to Lose My Mind." It may actually be released sometime in 1997.

Tom Nishioka is presently giving birth to his new studio in beautiful downtown Williamsburg, home of, presumably, William.

And, of course, Lach's Antihoot: Live From The Fort at Sidewalk Cafe (Fortified/Shanachie), the definitive Antifolk compilation, is now available at fine stores near you -- though presently unavailable at the Fort.

### Royalty:

Laura D appointed, by unanimous Lach decision, King AND Queen of AntiFolk. The delightful Ms. D responded to the honor by putting on her best fishnets and roaring down the street screaming, "We're Number One! We're Number One!" The 'we' in question was never actually discovered.

### Festival:

February 6 - 9, 1997, the Sidewalk Café plays host to the second bi-annual AntiFolk Festival, featuring luminaries of the AntiFolk establishment, including... Special Guest!



Laura Ogar



Mark Humble



Steve Espinola



Lisa St Ann



Heather Woodbury & Lach



Leggo Sculpture by Eric



Zane Campbell



Joe Bendik



Fur Dixon



Tom Nishioka



Jocelyn Ryder

Dan Emery



Ruth Gerson



Peter Chance & Laura



Christopher Dillon



Paula Carino

Some of My Favorite Artists

by bob strain

january 1997

sidewalk cafe



Heather Woodbury



Roger Manning



Mr. Scarecrow



Annie  
Husick



Mike Rechner



Charles Herold



Betty Alvarez



Basya



Heather  
Eatman



Julianne Richards



Ross Owens



Mary Ann  
Farley



Reid Paley



Rachel  
Spark



Mark Johnson



Gene & Mimi



Samsara



Tom Clark



Kamau Rucker



George Moore



Peter Dizozza

Some of My Favorite Artists

by bob strain

# Fort Schedule

For the most Fortifical events in the world, come to AntiFolk's homestead, the Sidewalk Cafe, 94 Avenue A, right on 6th Street. Most nights, the musical festivities begin at 8PM, with the merest charge of a three dollar minimum purchase. You can't go wrong! Especially with acts such as:

Mon. January 13 - The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30  
 Tues. Jan. 14 - 8 - Clay, 8:30 - Mike Young, 9 - M.E. Johnson, 10 - Nancy Falkow  
 Wed. Jan. 15 - 8 - Bari Koral, 9 - Pal Shazar  
 Thurs. Jan. 16- 8-David Clement, 9-The Hush, 9:30-Betsy Thomson, 10:30-Dean Kostlich, 11-Jack Peddler  
 Fri. Jan.17- 8-Dina Dean, 9-Robert Scheffler, 10-The Singleman Party, 11-Ruth Gerson  
 Sat .Jan.18- 8-Kitsch In Sync, 9-Gene & Mimi, 10-Richard X Heyman, 11-Little Shining Man, 12- Paleface  
 Sun. Jan.19- 8-Peter Dizozza, 9-Billy Kelly, 9:30-Dan Kilian, 10-Jack O'Hara, 11-Dan Emery's Mystery Guests  
 Mon. Jan. 20- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30. Naked Jello Twister at Midnight.  
 Tues. Jan. 21- 8-Jocelyn Ryder, 8:30-Tracy Kash and Surrender Dorothy, 9-Johnny Seven, 9:30-Dan Zweben, 10-Jack Derman  
 Wed. Jan. 22- PIANO NIGHT With: Jerry Rossen, Steve Mosto, Rachel Spark, Steve Espinola, Pat Daughtery, 11pm-Comedy with the Best: Rick Shapiro!  
 Thurs. Jan. 23- 8-Topless, 8:30-Tricia Scotti, 9-John Brown's Body, 9:30-The Humans, 10:30-Matt Keating, 11-Trina Hamlin  
 Fri. Jan. 24- 8-Mike Rimbaud and the Subway Sun, 9-Revolution Suns (with Kamau), 10-Tom Clark, 11-Bicycle  
 Sat. Jan. 25- 8-Raving Noah, 9-Benjamin Wagner and his Pop Band, 10-Ross Owens, 11-Torn & Frayed  
 Sunday. Jan. 26- 7:30-My Dog, 8:30-Kolos, 9-James Graham,9:30-Little Oscar, 10-Olivia Cornell, 11-Dan Emery's Mystery Guests  
 Mon. Jan. 27- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30. Forty Drink Minimum.  
 Tues. Jan. 28- 8-K.T. Blue, 8:30-Chris Moore, 9-M.E.Johnson, 10-Jeff Boyd  
 Wed. Jan. 29- 8-Temple of Intergalactic Vibes (featuring Francis and Holly of The Halfbreeds) 9-Pal Shazar, 10-Dina Dean, 11-Rick Shapiro  
 Thurs. Jan. 30- 8-Tara, 8:30-Mark Humble, 9-Dean Kostlich, 10-Alice B Talkless  
 Fri. Jan. 31- 8-Major Matt Mason, 9-Muckafurgason, 10-Reid Paley,11-Julianne Richards  
 Sat. Feb.1- 8-TBA, 9-Fur Dixon, 10-Homer Erotic, 11-Kingstone  
 Sun Feb. 2- 8-TBA, 8:30-Ellen Cross, 9-Eletfa, 10-TBA,11-Dan Emery's Mystery Guests  
 Mon. Feb. 3- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30. Either you know or you don't.  
 Tues. Feb. 4- 8-Lee Feldman, 9-Adam Vane 9:30-11-TBA  
 Wed. Feb. 5- 8-Bankhead, 8:30-Michael Packer, 9-E.P.Release Party for Box Of Crayons, 10-Rick Shapiro, 11-plan b

## THE WINTER ANTIFOLK FEST:

Thurs. Feb. 6- 8-Jen's Revenge, 8:20-Laura D, 8:30-Mr.Scarecrow, 9-Dina Dean, 9:30-Ruth Gerson, 10:30-Julianne Richards, 11-Lenny Molotov, 12- Jack Peddler  
 Fri. Feb. 7- 8-Major Matt Mason, 8:30-Kirk Kelly, 9-The Humans, 9:30-Mary Ann Farley, 10-The Novellas,10:30-Joe Bendik, 11-Reid Paley, 12-Special Guest (?)  
 Sat. Feb. 8- 8-Surprise Guest (Who could it be?), 8:30-Fur Dixon, 9-John S Hall, 9:30-Hamell On Trial, 10-Lach,10:30-Paleface, 11-Little Shining Man  
 Sun. Feb. 9- 8-Surprise Guest (The most popular artist at the festival!), 8:30-Mike Rechner, 9-Michael Eck, 9:30-Muckafurgason,10-Tom Nishioka, 10:30-Steve Espinola, 11-Dan Emery's Mystery Guests  
 Mon. Feb. 10- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30. Rock the fuck out!

And many more playing. Come one, come all... come come come!  
 Call at 212-473-7373.

