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AntiMatters

At Long Last!
The *Joe* BENDIK
Interview

N/E
P/H

AntiMatters

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When I was a little girl, I remember listening to the hit singles of the day: "Yesterday," "Only the Good Die Young," "Funky Cold Medina," stuff like that. They don't make songs like those anymore. Well, they do still make songs like "Only the Good Die Young," which is really a pity. Thankfully, some good songwriting does exist in the City, somewhere, and that's what this zine trumpets. If you're interested in good performances by good artists, then you should probably close this zine and listen to the sounds around you. If, however, you're interested in good writing about good performances by good artists, well, you just might have come to the right place.
If you disagree: well, then, fuck off. SB

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The Jester

By Lach

She played the trumpet and the walls turned into fish
flopping on the carpet, man, she didn't even flinch
I guess she didn't notice as the sky poured through
the room
and filled my soul with a tenderness like a Louis
Armstrong tune

And I always love the girl who lives in a private world
I become a jester just to get her to smile at me

Caught in the current of her alchemistry
my blood turns into gold and mercury
Like young Elvis' blue falsetto moon
I understood alone when she walked through the room

And I always love the girl who lives in a private world
I become a jester just to get her to smile at me

Well, our eyes performed a ballet
like the hands of Dorothy Hamill
Little birds reflected
in a pond of Olympic ice

And I always love the girl who lives in a private world
I become a jester just to get her to smile at me

DOWN BY GOTHAM FALLS

Arrested at just 17, a little confused
resisted and screamed for her life, but that
wasn't news.
Wild and untamed, she was a tough
firecracker
Toughest among us and part of our crew,
we knew what... She wanted

If she's still here, then she is our leader
If she is gone, she is part of our world
Yes I believe she's transmissions from Venus
I was the jester, she was the last great girl.

Really something way back when trouble
hung from her floor
Alone she would cry to her beads, real bad
case of nerves
Might ask what she's thinking
That's not what she needs
She was one of them
She got delirious, hallucinated
We called her crazy.

If she's still here, then she is our leader
If she is gone, she is part of our world
Yes I believe she's transmissions from Venus
I was the jester, she was the last great girl.
Last great girl... Kamau Rucker

A black acoustic, sprinkled with stickers and indescribable screaming sounds. Joe Bendik is one of the most powerful songwriters and performers I have ever seen.

His songs always have a surprise element that will keep the ear wanting more. It's a fucking crime he is not famous.

- Dave Schurtman, the Humans

Over the last year several solo Antifolks have added backing bands to their acts. Joe Bendik is the leader of the pack. He combines Strummer's sense of no bullshit lyrics and raw stage energy with early punk's (Stiff Little Fingers, X-Ray Specs, Buzzcocks) sense of a good melodic left hook.

-Lach

He's loud and I like him.

- Ross Owens

The AntiFolk community speaks about:

Joe BENDIK

Joe is rock and roll. He's got a lot of raw energy, wit, soul; a real intense sense of liberating anarchistic rhythm that rock and roll is based on.

Now, we've heard everything; it's easy to forget what rock and roll is all about. He captures that, which is really good.

- Dina Dean

See Joe Bendik run.
See Joe Bendik play.
See Joe Bendik scream.
See Joe Bendik fall.
- Mr. Scarecrow

A Joe Bendik song is an anti-folk delicacy, fresh from the pressure cooker! His performance puts the pow in pop!

- Peter Dizozza

A strange resemblance to Norman Fell probably haunts the man, but the artist hits with an authority that dispels any cosmetic demons. An effective performer who cares. - Dan Kilian

The man is a maniac, in the best sense of the word. He's one of the most energetic performers I can think of. He's aware of the healing power of completely losing your shit as you perform, holding nothing back, becoming completely unselfconscious.

He's sort of a deadpan/anti-deadpan comedian, too. He flies into these musical tantrums, completely straightfaced, but he's often hilarious as he's doing it, and he must know it. There's a level of irony and self-perspective going on, and the lyrics make that clear. Even though he's sort of at an opposite energy extreme from Buster Keaton, they share the knowledge that sometimes refusing to smile is the funniest thing you can do.

I hope other people are going to write about his tunes, too. Joe writes kick-ass pop songs. Eminently melodic, and lots of unexpected chord changes that somehow make total sense.

I've learned a heck of a lot from him as a performer. Or maybe I've just flat-out ripped him off. I can't quite place it, but I know that at times I'll be performing one of my songs and I'll suddenly say to myself, "Oh, I'm trying to do a Joe Bendik again." Probably most of the freaking out I do when I bang the Electric Tennis Racket is my vain attempt to match what Joe seems to do so effortlessly at the end of most of his solo Antihoot sets.

And he chews gum better than John Lennon or Nigel Tufnel.

- Steve Espinola

Joe Bendik's band is the best group around. Joe Bendik's record is the best music around. Joe Bendik live... is growing on me.

- Jonathan Berger

Joe Bendik is straght-ahead hardedge rock and punk. Driving, thriving, rooted in a dozen and one traditions, none of which are lounge. He's cool.

- Stephanie Biederman

I loved running sound for Joe Bendik. See, some nights there were a bunch of bands with a bunch of stuff to set up and they all wanted to play 12 songs, and then afterwards they tore down slow, which meant that sometimes it was hard not to be running forty minutes overtime. Joe Bendik and the Heathens would get up and play 12 songs, too - 12 songs in 20 minutes. Brief and bracing, like a splash of hydrochloric acid right in the face. So then I'd be refreshed and back on schedule. I loved running sound for Joe Bendik.

- Dan Emery

He's the Pete Seeger of old school punk who stays untuned enough to stay in vogue. Joe Bendik is punk rock's profiling prophetic smart guy.

- Kamau Rucker

Joe is a great friend and a great musician. Overflowing with talent, he possesses the powerful feeling which most "powerful" music lacks and his songs all have killer hooks. I'll sing Joe Bendik songs all week. Joe is one of the Last Real People in the world. Instead of being threatened by him, just listen to his words. Joe rocks!

- Dan Schurtman, the Humans

Joe BENDIK

Gustav Plympton

Punk rock reactionary Joe Bendik has been part of the AntiFolk aristocracy since lighting onto the Fort at the Sidewalk in 1994.

A musical visionary with a voice of gold (A slightly malleable yet still metallic substance), Bendik writes like a demon and plays like something worse. At the open mics, he brings an effects box that's bigger than he is, and uses it for the two songs he's allotted. To suggest that he's possessed on-stage might overstate the power of possession.

His solo live shows, exciting and enthusiastic as they may be, are really nothing compared to the audio festivals he records in his home studio. It is there where he has the greatest control over his vision of sound.

The recordings, fully accompanied monstrosities of volume and force, crash into the ear, the brain, and the SOUL with an energy unbelievable. Played loud, Bendik's sound is simply breathtaking.

Which is not unlike his band's showcases. The Heathens, Bendik's three backing musicians, flesh out his imagined arrangements live. While not the perfect, multitracked titan imagined under Bendik's furrowed brow, the Heathens put on an amazing, colossal show, with costumes and noise and music costumed as noise.

After a several month break, the Heathens are back on the East Village AntiFolk circuit, and... well, they're great. Their return show on May 23rd was, if anything, louder than ever, and as tuneful as everything you could imagine.

Joe Bendik took time to talk about the band, his recording, his musical past and his musical present.

I was always in three-piece bands for the most part. And I wanted to do that again, but I realized that I was missing something that I get from playing with The Heathens. There's a spirit because these guys play together all the time. They're a real band. They are more my band than the other guys were, because they were more like session guys.

So what was the benefit of the three-piece?

Flexibility, you can change the arrangement. The song called "Stay Away From Me," they would just freak out, go on. Different time changes, they would just look at each other and go back right into it. That's really easy to do with a three-piece. With a four-piece band, it's a little bit more difficult. But it was almost too good. It's like when you hear early rock and roll, these guys are playing two chords and they're playing with everything they have, that sounds amazing. That's what I want to hear. I don't want to lose that. Lots of musicians, they are so good, when they're playing two chords it sounds like they are just sleep walking.

It's like spirit versus technique.

Exactly. Well, The Heathens have great technique, not to knock them. Little Oscar's an awesome drummer. Scarecrow speaks for himself. Craig plays all these different instruments. It's just that, they're songwriters; they know where the music's coming from. That's what I realized after not playing with them for a while.

The Heathens were just about the best band around, then the show started dwindling and then they disappeared, and we started seeing the New Heathens and the Joe Bendik Trio. What happened?

I think we needed to get away from each other for a while. They learned a lot of stuff in a short period of time. They worked real hard...I wanted to try other things at that point, wanted to keep it fresh, now I think we have a real good approach. They know the songs; it's almost like they're a band. I walked into the first rehearsal session in months, and went through 17 songs without even stopping to announce the next song.

So it was a respite from one another?

Sure. There wasn't anything personal going on.

How was your show?

I had a lot of fun. These guys really encouraged me. It was a great show! I liked the two guitar sound -- guitar dueling is back, I guess.

The Heathens dress up for your shows.

I think they are seeing something in the music and they are just tapping into it and that's cool. I can't dress up like that; I would die. I don't know how Peter (Chance, of the Novellas) does it.



KAREN TREMOR

You have something going on with the Humans.

We're shooting for June 13th. I'll be on octapads and congas.

They're a pretty arrhythmic group, and so is Joe Bendik.

I see where they're coming from. They are like early music where the whole emphasis is on the words. And the phrasing of the words would add beats to the measure. I think the danger of them hooking up with a good drummer it would be trying to make them more boring. There will be songs of theirs that I won't play at all. We might do it more often. It's fun working with them. I'm a big fan. I like the songs.

You wrote a Human song.

"Mad." I do it every now and then, to break up a set. It's slow; it's sensitive. Maybe they could return the favor and do backups on it some day.

You have any thoughts on producing The Humans?

I'd love to. I'd like to take them to my place, have them play live, load it into my computer, do a lot of shit to it.

Your production work is astounding. You've worked with Matthias of Fellini's Basement. Is that something you are interested in doing more of?

Yeah, it's fun to do, because you learn something yourself, too. With Matthias, heavy editing was involved. I had an argument with his drummer; he stormed out, I said, "Get the fuck out of here!"

The music benefited greatly.

That's the thing. We had creative discussions. Nothing personal; we're really good friends. We'll probably do some stuff together again.

Anyone else in the anti folk scene you'd be interested in working with?

I think Dina Dean would be kind of cool. I hear some ancient quality in her voice. So many people...I would love to be in the situation to go into a big studio with someone. I have an old Mac that's souped up and an EMac sampler ten years old, four track, I have a DAT, a really nice mixing board, a couple of modules, octapads, a couple of guitars bass.

Pretty high tech equipment for a basic punk rock sound.

The thing about this equipment is that a lot of people get rid of it to update, upgrade. And they through out great stuff, stuff that's hardly even been tapped into.

You just finished a video.

With Mad Media. For the song "Everybody's Watching," the original version of the song, a kind of a dance version. They're showing it as their work to other labels, managers... It's pretty cool. I didn't really have anything to do with the vision.

Is the video appropriate for the song?

Yes and no. I've very appreciative that they did this. The video tapes a surface approach to the song, but maybe that was necessary. Just scenes of this woman, very slick. She's looking at herself in the mirror, and she's fondling herself, and there's a guy watching her on close up TV, watching, also fondling himself. And there's us at the bottom of the elevator shaft, which was cool. I could have done without the other scenes. I'd just like to go in and do a straight rock number. The video was my brother John on drums, and Roger Miller pretending to play bass.

The recording is all you, though. Like all of your tapes.

I think I have to do that to get exactly what I want. I will go into the studio with the Heathens, though. I want to capture that. But I'm working on some stuff right now - solo stuff.

Why is it easier to do the recording solo?

I don't have to make someone play what I want someone to play. I hate doing that. It's much easier just do it yourself, have a computer do it for you. Getting a human being to do it exactly how you want is not fair.

Are you a hard taskmaster?

No. There're certain things - breaks, maybe a bass line that has to be exactly right, maybe a guitar part that HAS to be there, that's different...

The Heathens have heard my tapes, and we've played together a lot. Some songs - like "Glacier," which I think was the best song we did the other night - they just know it. We worked a lot on that song. "Inconsiderate" was done before I even did the demo.

Your live solo band is very different than the band approach. The same songs sound varied depending on how you perform them.

A long time ago, I used to go out with backing tapes. I'd bring the song with me. I thought that would be the way to get it across. But it sounded so stagnant. I decided this time around I'm not gonna do that. I'd go out by myself with a guitar, try to make it work as a song with an acoustic guitar, even if it's plugged into everything!

The great thing about the AntiHoots is you try out stuff, you know what works and you know what doesn't really work,

and you change it. Some songs I really do enjoy playing solo.

People really like what you do at the AntiHoots.

I think a lot of it is really context. You hear a string of ballads, then some guy comes up and does a loud rock song, it stands out.

You've been involved in music --

Since I was four. In high school, all these people would come over, have this party in the basement, my parents would have no idea what was going on. I got to open for some good bands. Chili Peppers, when they first came out, in a station wagon... Husker Dü was probably the best one. Huge crowd. After the first hour, they stopped playing, and then, about half hour later, Bob Mould said, "Now that all the assholes are gone, we can do the real set," and they started doing Beatles songs. And acoustic stuff. Then they brought us out, and started a fifties rock. "Rock Around the Clock," "Blue Suede Shoes," it was fucking awesome.

We moved to New York, and, I always wanted to play folk clubs, acoustic, show my songs, as a songwriter. And, same story, we went to Speakeasy - which no longer exists - and it sucked. They hated my band (Called Folk You), hated me. I met Roger Manning there, and he told me about Lach's scene, at Sophie's.

After a while, Folk U broke up, and I started doing soundtrack work. I think Lach moved to San Francisco around that time, too.

What kinds of musical work have you done?

Well, I've done soundtrack work for "test commercials." Production stuff -- today I'm doing production for a classical/ Armenian singer. We're finishing her demo.

I taught music for a year at this alternative high school in Pittsburgh. Bad kids...

One kid in the class went on to form Operation Ivy, which became the Offspring. He got kicked out, so I don't know how much he had to do with it.

Would you like to do any other kinds of musical jobs?

I'd like to score, because I have a background in classical. I was a guitar major, piano minor.

...I'm working with my brother now, on Music From Big Punk. Basically, he's recorded stuff on ADAT: drums, bass, couple of guitars, slide, and vocals. I dubbed on that accordion and piano, and did various speed stuff, so it sounds like The White Album, I put on electric slide guitar, and he doubled his vocals. You can hear everything, because it was all reduced to DAT. It's songs about chopping people up and stuff - I didn't write it!

You've been talking about a jungle project.

Yeah. I'm been talking to this jazz group, too, down at the Lion's Den, maybe translating some of the stuff I'm doing now, dance stuff into their style. Calling it dance, though, it's sort of like calling my stuff "folk."

You're always very excited on-stage, and always in danger of hurting yourself.

Well, that's rock and roll to me. Abandon. It's freedom. It's the way to get away from the shit you're dealing with. And it's not the stuff that you can practice.



KAREN TREACH



So my boyfriend and I are going to the beach, and I'm driving, which means that Eric gets to play DJ.

"What is this stuff?" he asks, looking through the tapes that lie, along with the emergency break, between us.

"This is what I listen to," I shrug, changing lanes, "I have some of these to review."

"For what?" He says, studying some Shanachie release.

"AntiMatters," I say, "the zine?"

Eric and I are kind of new.

"Right," he says, and pops Outside the Beauty Salon into the tape deck.

The song that's cued up is "Lincoln Hotel," and Brenda sings about her loser boyfriend. Eric smiles at the line that goes, "I read you like a daily paper: disasters and hard times," and he's even tapping along by the coda.

"Pretty cool," he says, "Who's this?"

"Brenda Kahn," I reply, and she goes into "Guillotine," which is kind of slow. It turns him off right before he does the same to it.

Eric idly fingers a pink tape cover. "What's this," he asks, "Julia Douglass?"

"Well, that would be a tape by Julia Douglass," and he swats at me. "She's one of the coolest songwriters around."

"She part of the antifolk scene?"

"I dunno," I respond, easing onto the BQE from the bridge, "She hasn't been around much lately."

"My Boyfriend is a Genius," he reads on the front cover, then turns to me and grins. "Let's play it, shall we?"

He shoves it into the machine, and the keening voice introduces us to the song. As we dip South and the song continues, his grin just grows and grows. I begin to wonder about a guy who just loves this song about a woman's undying loyalty to her abusive guy.

At the end of the song, he puts his finger onto

the EJECT button, but stops, when he hears the beginning of "Ode to Billy Joe." He recognizes the song, I think.

"Let's hear it," I say, almost in a whisper.

We do.

I listen silently to this powerful suicide song, and even slow down a little bit, out of respect for Billy Joe.

"I think," Eric says at the song's end, "That Howard Stern did a parody to that, 'Ode to Billy Joel,' about his motorcycle accident. What's it about?"

I swallow hard, wondering why my boyfriend's interest in Howard Stern didn't come up before now. "The song's powerful, isn't it?"

"It's about this guy who committed suicide because he's dating this girl, right?"

"Well, sort of," I say, and we get into this whole convoluted discussion about the origins of the song. The rest of Julia Douglass' tape plays, but neither of us hear it over our own voices.

"But why do you think the preacher wants her?" Eric asks, "What kind of proof do you have?"

"I don't need any proof. I can just see it."

"Well, I dunno," he says, and then grabs another tape, "Mary Ann Farley! I like her!"

I smile a little, noticing we're almost at the beach. We'd first made out to the sounds of Mary Ann Farley's CD, Daddy's Little Girl. "You didn't hear this, though," I state, "First Few Words is older music of hers, from before."

"Do you mind?" he asks, as he gestures to play it.

"We're almost there..."

"Just for a minute, then."

"Sure."

Side One starts with "I Hear Them Singing," which is all keyboard, and all keyboard programming. It doesn't have the natural, maybe supernatural feel of what she's doing now.

"Uh..." Eric says.

"Fast forward," I cut him off, "It gets more interesting."

He shrugs, does as I command, and, just as I find a spot on Neptune and 23rd, we hear the beginning of "I Heard it Through the Grapevine."

"What do you think?" I ask, pulling into the spot.

"Sh!" He says, and we keep the car running, waiting for the song to finish up. The slow eerie strains leave it almost unrecognizable from the Motown original, but still familiar. Finally, at the end of the tune, he says, "Cool."

"Yeah, right?" I say, wondering about this guy in my car. He doesn't know about my music, he doesn't remember the zine I work damn hard for, he doesn't even appreciate the complexity of "Ode to Billy Joe."

But he loves Mary Ann Farley. And he's so damned cute. Blond hair, blue deep eyes that look out to the water with such enthusiasm... I give him a quick kiss in the car. We get out, and go to the beach.



stephanie biederman

To The Beach

Tales from the Underground: The Jester

jonathan berger

"Oh! We over shot my block! How'd we do that?"

I would have directed her, if I'd known what our anticipated path was. I wasn't even sure of the specifics of our destination. I was walking her home after an entertaining evening at the open mic. She lived across town, and I had offered to protect her on the way home. She'd laughed at that, but still let me walk with her.

You can do a lot of talking a cross-town walk. Not that we did.

"Great show," I eventually said into the space.

"Yeah," she agreed.

That was it. I'd planned all my lines, all the things I wanted to talk about, to share, but that was hours and miles ago. It had all evaporated or been lost. Luckily, she came to the rescue.

"That was a really cool song, 'The Jester'," she said.

"What?" I was lost somewhere else, in the street, watching couples pass by this late night.

"'The Jester.' Lach's song, in the middle."

"Right. Oh, absolutely," I nodded. I'd heard it before, and liked it from the first. It was one of his regular songs.

"You know," I said, "He says he wrote that song after he discovered Brenda Kahn played trumpet."

"Hm?"

"The line, 'She played the trumpet, and the walls turned into fish'?"

"Pretty psychedelic, huh?"

"Yeah, but based in truth. Well, not the fish part -- I hope not -- but the trumpet."

"Really?"

"Yeah, definitely. He said that one of the first times I saw him play."

"Oh."

The conversation was far from sparkling. We were only blocks away from her place, and I hadn't wowed her with my intellect and charm. Unless she could hide her astonishment well. Very well.

"It's kind of cool," I went on, "It's one of my favorite songs, because of that fact. It's so rife with potential: I can entirely imagine what the scene was."

"Really?" she said, her voice and mind somewhere else entirely.

"Yeah," I forded ahead, "I figure after some open mic -- like tonight -- they walked back to her downtown loft or something, and, after a bunch of meaningless conversation, she pulls out this trumpet, and they talk about it."

We'd approached the west side, and I knew this was where she lived. The flavor of the neighborhood was entirely different over here. Not so young, not so couply. There were less people around us.

"So, eventually, she kicks him out, and Lach, thinking how cool it is that this fellow musician is working on a new instrument, goes off, with this idea in his head. He goes into some diner somewhere, orders a coffee or three, and jots down all these schizophrenic images in the song."

"Why a diner?"

"Where else do you write in the middle of the night after an Antihoot?"

Diner's are cool. They're like the most romantic places in the world to go alone and think your deep thoughts and embarrassing meanderings. Hopper knew it; Lach probably knew it too.

"He spends most of the early morning there, just him and bums, writing the song on napkins as he soaks up coffee, tea, soda, whatever. He spends the whole night in the diner, writing, composing, coming up with the song."

"Lach makes a point to invite her to the next Antihoot, cuz he has this song all about her that he wants to share, and when the show begins, she's not there. He doesn't play it right off, but then, later in the evening, she comes in, with one of the other antifolk regulars, say Paleface or someone."

"I dunno about Paleface," she said.

"Me either," I replied, but full-steamed ahead with my imagination, "He gets up on stage, takes someone else's spot, and plays 'The Jester'." I smiled, and sang, in my very bad voice, the chorus:

"And I've always loved the girl
Who lives in her private world;
And I become the Jester, just to get her
To smile at me..."

She laughed at my questionable ability to carry a tune, "Not bad."

"Not just bad," I agreed, "bad and beyond. So he plays the song, and when he gets a chance, he comes up to her and Paleface, but they're in the back corner somewhere, and he didn't notice before that they were sorta... involved in their conversation."

"Meaning?"

"Lach talks to her, and Brenda says, 'Cool song. I didn't hear too much of it. Isn't Paleface cute?'"

"Oh, man," she said, shaking her head in sympathetic pain for these imaginary character's imaginary events, "You think he really fell for her?"

"Who wouldn't? Lach, who's got nothing against Paleface, agrees with her, says he's happy for them, says nothing about the song, and leaves them to make out in the back of the club."

We just had one block to go to reach her loft.

"He slumps away, never successfully letting her know they way he feels, kind of like the character in the song. And he writes another song that night, that no one ever knows about."

"Any of this true?" she asked with a smile, her face looking direct into mine.

"Could be. I think Brenda Kahn had a loft, and I know the whole scene was pretty incestuous in those days."

"Hm," she responded, "Lot of dating within the artistic community, eh?"

"I guess," I shrugged.

We fell silent again.

"You've really got an active imagination," she said.

"Thanks. I think. So," I said, as we reached her door, "What're you doing tomorrow? You want to catch some music, maybe have dinner?"

"Ah, that'd be fun," She fumbled for her keys, "But, I've got plans."

Oh. "Hanging out with --"

"Yeah... we haven't seen each other all weekend and..."

"I gotcha," I said, "Well, maybe some other time."

"Oh, sure," she said. "Hey, thanks for the walk home, it was really nice of you."

"My pleasure," I said.

We looked at each other for a minute, saying nothing, waiting for some kind of official closure. Her slight lips had said no to me, but her incredible eyes had said nothing that I could read whatsoever. Finally, she turned to open her door. "Bye."

"Bye," I repeated, and watched her get safely into her building. It was late, but I had time.

When the elevator took her upstairs, I began to trudge away.

I needed to find a diner somewhere.

Aphorisms and other useless thoughts

Seth A. Doolin

i

The only way to act like you are in a coffee shop is to try as much as you can to act like you are not in a coffee shop

ii

There are two kinds of writers: the kind that want to be absolutely different from everybody else, and the kind that want to be absolutely like everybody else

iii

I cannot have thoughts. I cannot fully and wholly possess them. The squirm and twist of their own accord, not according to my will. I do not have the discipline of mind to hold them firm. Perhaps in Zen I may find the discipline to have and hold thoughts. But they teach to have no thoughts.

iv

I have nothing to do. All day I look for "things" to "do". Things to do while I wait for things to be done. Then I have nothing to do.

v

When in doubt, hit the accelerator.

vi

Do surrealists realize they are being surreal?

vii

If you don't have the answer, order more scotch.

viii

Thinking is something done well after the fact.

ix

Ice is part of the drink.

x

I see memory as a film. I see pictures and frames of the past with a top and bottom border, like how films are transformed for television. I always seem detached from the scene, and I can freeze the image. I can impose one picture upon another and switch soundtracks. Some memories have a will of their own, however, and play and replay without my cooperation. Often, they come when I don't want them to.

xi

The thoughts form slowly. Actually, it is not the thoughts themselves that are slow in forming, but the words I use to label things are often hard to get a grasp on and put in place in the internal sentence. For internal use only. I am not referring to what the words refer to, but the words themselves. Words as words and not as a sign and signal or symbol of something else. Deal with the words themselves. Manipulate the building blocks, move up the referential ladder.

xii

The most horrifying sound is men barking incoherently. Man, who has the potential for articulate thought and speech, potential for rational thought and introspection, can transcend above the bestial level. A potential that lies dormant by its own choice is evil.

xiii

People are proud to have a "science" behind any of their endeavors. The word science has glutted our verbal economy in a frantic rush for people to validate themselves in the face of a permeating and imposing over-rationality. Balance is essential to the health of any organism, whether biological, social, or intellectual. The experiential mode must be tempered with reflection and analysis or it becomes outright hedonism.

xiv

Freud wore a hat. So did Napoleon. Bush and Reagan have been photographed wearing hats. Mussolini wore a hat, as did Chaplin. I hate hats. I never wear them. I even hate the word hat. Too simplistic. Monosyllabic. Dirt.

xv

We often ascribe a god-like quality to our parents. When we are young it is because they are our first example of authority. Knowing nothing else, the parents ARE authority, not merely authority personified, for we do not yet know the concept yet to personify it. Freud has said that we generalize and project our feelings of obedience and subservience to our parents onto the personage of God. As we get older, we realize our parents are human like us, with their own faults and flaws. We also learn that we are largely responsible for God's actions.

xvi

Mother is the child's first experience of love, as well as his first experience of guilt.

xvii

I was concerned that when the tape ended, I would be driven crazy by silence. Then I realized that it wasn't silence at all: it was the sounds of cars driving by my window, a dog four blocks away, the steps of someone upstairs. Absolute silence cannot be known by us. Cage spoke of a room specially designed for silence. Upon entering one heard a high and a low pitch: the sounds of our nervous system and the sound of blood coursing through the veins. Absolute silence would be terrifying.

xviii

I am trying to figure out how I can play my Black Sabbath compact discs backwards so I can hear Satan.

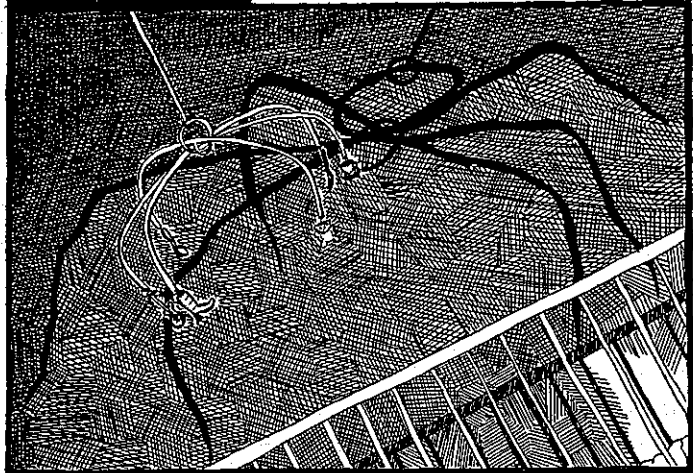
Our outermost skin cells are dead. We are a living form surrounded by death. We are always dying. Death validates life.

I almost had a breakdown on the Haight. After the nineteen thousandth slacker asked me for money for a burrito, man, I saw a woman with a shaven head and a dirty bandana playing a badly tuned acoustic guitar. She was singing: "We are dancing, we are dancing, we are dancing". I almost struck her.

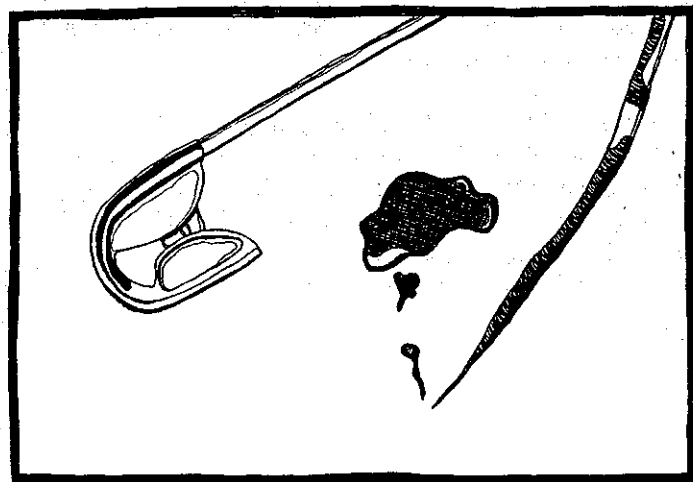
Once I have conceived of the idea, the piece is done. To write it down is a repetitious act that sullies the immediacy of the work. If I conceive immaculately, there are no witnesses.

Iron gates in the window of the corner store tell me it is closed. Its only ten thirty. What the Hell is going on around here? Why bother selling beer at all if you're not going to bother being open late? This only encourages daytime drinking.

THE SNEAK BY CURTIS ELLER AND JAMIE WOLCOTT



WE COVERED UP THE BABY'S EYES
WHENEVER BABY CRIED
SHE NEVER SHED A TEAR THE NIGHT
A SNEAK GOT INSIDE...



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Jon,

You gotta help me. I come to you because I know you are truly the player in the scene. I know Lach is just a beard. You don't have to acknowledge this, it will be our secret. Anyway the reason I write is a matter of the heart. You've got to hook me up with that waitress at the Fort. Y'know, the beautiful one with the piercing, who never smiles. I just know she digs me. It's practically embarrassing the way she ignores my pleas for more coffee, almost imperceptibly speeding up her already rapid gait as she strides past my table atop those beautiful legs (hers not the table's). And when I get My 8 minutes on stage, her passions all but overpower her, for during my 2 songs, (each a tender and gentle brushstroke of brilliance in homage to her effervescence) she is either nowhere to be seen, probably in the kitchen dabbing away tears of pure emotion, or she is busily taking drink orders, careful not to even cast the quickest of glances toward me. I am sure all in the Fort have taken notice of her attitudes toward me and I have received much in the way of jealous animosity, almost all guised under the cover of *constructive criticism*:

"you aren't funny, and you can't sing"

"you play guitar like a retard"

"you stole that melody from Dylan"

"you ate all my fries"

"you only know 3 chords"

"you used to get beat up at my bus stop"

"you suck"

It is obvious these barbs can all be translated to:

"you make me jealous, you are so effortlessly talented -- and not to mention those Semitic good looks, impeccable grooming habits -- and on top of it all you have clearly won the heart of that waitress. If only I had one 14th of your talent, brains, and beauty, I could then arise in the morning and walk the New York streets proud as a \$500/night hooker"

Jon, help me, please let my little downtown flower know that I reciprocate her feelings in kind and would love nothing more than to take her back to her tiny apartment (preferably when her boyfriend is at work) and strip off her trendy clothes, lie her down on her futon and show her the true meaning of antifolk.

Thank you, Jon, you are a truly great man. No one should punch you in the stomach.

PS: Whatever you do don't print this in AntiMatters. I would simply be mortified!

Your humble scribe,
Adam Brodsky

ROCK FOR RENT LAWS - A BENEFIT FOR RENT ACTION

"We're playing at The Sidewalk so we won't be living on it..."

(with Brenda Kahn, Agnelli & Rave, Bianca Bob, George Usher, Gene & Mimi, Kirk Kelly)

If rent laws expire on June 15th, New Yorkers may have to hoof it to Columbus, Ohio to find an affordable place to live..... With guitars swinging, an eclectic group of NYC musicians are taking action, banding together as ROCK FOR RENT LAWS, a night of acoustic music at The Sidewalk Cafe to raise awareness and funds for The NYS Tenants & Neighbors Coalition.

The performers (Brenda Kahn, Agnelli & Rave, Bianca Bob, George Usher, Kirk Kelly and Gene & Mimi) will sublet The Sidewalk Cafe for twenty minute acoustic sets. Martin Brennan of The NYS Tenants & Neighbors Coalition will also do a "set," speaking on the rent laws situation and what New Yorkers can still do to keep their homes safe & affordable.

There is no cover. All proceeds & donations benefit The NYS Tenants & Neighbors Coalition, a leading tenant advocacy group fighting to preserve rent laws for all New Yorkers. To find out what you can do to keep your rent laws in place, call Tenants & Neighbors 212-695 8922

June 15th is the day the rent laws and protections are due to expire in New York. It will affect everyone in some way, not only people who lived in stabilized or controlled apartments. As proposed, the expiration of these tenant protection laws will affect some co-op and condo dwellers as well. The impact on our communities could be drastic, further segregating neighborhoods by class and race. This issue is complex -- not only a matter of rents going sky high, it is about dismantling legal recourse for resolving disputes and protections for all New Yorkers.

Tenants and Neighbors group in NYC suggests the best action to take at this point is to focus attention on the two key people in the June 15th vote. These two have the most at stake politically to not take a stand, and are least likely to. These two folks are:

Governor George Pataki and Senator Alfonse D'Amato.

If you care about keeping tenant protections in place, it is very important that you put the pressure on these folks who need to be held accountable for their flip flopping.

Call them. Fax them. Email them. Tell them you want your rent laws renewed and No Vacancy Decontrol, period.

ROCK FOR RENT LAWS - THE LINEUP

June 6, 1997

8PM MARTIN BRENNAN (TENANTS & NEIGHBORS) will speak on taking rent law action

8:25 GENE & MIMI, the Sonny & Cher of avant-pop, have lately been banging away on a follow-up to their acclaimed last release, This Is Gene & Mimi. Acoustic music magazine Dirty Linen loved their "clever harmonies and sparkling musicianship" while Songwriter's Monthly called their last CD "A treasure filled with insight and a lot of personality". Gene & Mimi live in Manhattan and want to preserve New York's rent laws so they can see someone besides rich people when they walk outside.

8:50 AGNELLI & RAVE combines the talents of Lauren Agnelli (Nervous Rex, Washington Squares) and Canadian pop fave Dave Rave (Teenage Head, the Shakers), blending unusual smart melodies with haunting harmonies. Fresh from their swing through Memphis and Nashville, Agnelli & Rave will return home to play this benefit so they can have a home to come back to next time they tour.

9:15 BIANCA BOB is a musician and filmmaker who has been described by some as Sondheim meets the Buzzcocks. Bianca recently assembled a group of NY film/videomakers and made a series of short humorous ads to preserve rent laws; they start airing this week on public access & the web (www.onlinetv.com). As a native New Yorker, the idea of living anywhere near Columbus is deeply disturbing to Bob.

9:40 GEORGE USHER is a critically acclaimed songwriting collaborator for many New York musicians including Richard Barone, Kate Jacobs, The Schramms and The Health & Happiness Show. His first album, Miracle School, has just been released in Europe on Rough Trade Records. "Usher's exquisitely crafted art-pop...marks him as one of the New York scene's most underappreciated resources" -- Pulse

10:05 BRENDA KAHN recently released her fourth record, Outside the Beauty Salon, displaying her ability to continue undaunted through the decade. Having survived suburban New Jersey, Minnesota winters, major label record deals and indie ones, Brenda is now residing back in New York City, where her ceaseless eye for the poetic defines her songs.

10:30 KIRK KELLY is described by HIGH TIMES as "...a James Deanish folk-punk with working class Irish roots" with influences ranging from The Weavers to the Sex Pistols. CMJ New Music Report calls him the "PHIL OCHS of the 90's" while The LA Times pegged KELLY "New York's answer to English folk-punk troubadour Billy Bragg".

The time to act is right now, not June 14th.
It is urgent that you take a few minutes now and email, fax or call these folks and let them know how you feel and that you vote (by the way)....

ADDRESSES/TELEPHONE/FAX/EMAIL CONTACTS:

CALL TOLL FREE 1 -800-767-6336
to speak with the governor, state
senator, and assembly member

MAYOR RUDY GUILIANI
guiliani@www.ci.nyc.ny.us
CITY HALL #5
NY NY 10007
212 788 9600 - press (1) then
(0) to get a real person
212 788 2975 press office fax
212 406 3587 -additional fax

GOVERNOR GEORGE PATAKI
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SENATOR AL D'AMATO
senator_al@damato.senate.gov
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Washington DC 20510
and/or
7 PENN PLAZA # 600
NEW YORK NY 10001
212 947 7390 office
212 564 5066 fax

Sample Letter

Please DO NOT mail this letter. It is a form, and would be stupid.
Write your own email or letter, preferably on your letterhead.

Date

Name/Address

Dear (Governor, Senator, Mailman, etc.):

I am outraged that you have taken a position in favor of ending the rent laws that protect 2.5 million tenants. I know you consistently voted against tenants when you were a legislator.

These laws protect tenants from skyrocketing rents and unjust evictions. They ensure that landlords behave responsibly, while keeping housing affordable, neighborhoods livable and families stable.

I URGE you in the strongest terms to renew the laws that protect tenants without any damaging concessions to the real estate barons.

In an area where getting by is often a struggle, we need you to support--not undermine--hard working people and their families.

Please respond to this letter.

Sincerely,

Your Name, Address and Phone

The Road, Part 1: To Band or Not to Band

by Kamau Rucker

A band is like a newborn. You have to constantly give a band new ideas and tangents to feed on. You have to practice often to keep yourselves sharp. You have to nurture a relationship between band members. This is the part people forget sometimes. The best bands, with the finest material, have broken up because they did not get along as people. People are what makes a band truly a band. Think of the word "band" as a verb rather than a noun. The songs are really just a reflection of the band members attitude toward them. A band must play out as often as possible. Hanging out and dining together are good tools for getting through hard times as a unit. Gigs are the fullest realization of what a band is meant to do, that being to bring their music to the people in a live setting. Finally, contrary to what most people think, a band cannot succeed as one person's vision. In this case that "band leader" is really just a solo artist with a backline of players. The word band implies that everyone has an equal stake in all facets of the band's affairs from laying out the money for basic expenses to contacting the press and the agents. Everyone also loses equally when the band takes a financial or developmental loss. The band should never be work for one member and leisure for another, but an adventure for everyone involved. It is this ideology that kept the great bands like The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Doors, Jimi Hendrix --who always had a interactive approach with his band, so fits in this category -- and Nirvana. A band is a social contract as serious as the blood oaths all kids make in their youth.

I was in this band in my last year of college. We lovingly called ourselves Kankersaur to the obvious derision of the more conservative public. We played punk music mixed with a little absurdist rock, along the lines of King Missile and the Rheostatics. From the birth of the band, which was my friend Kevin Swaluk a.k.a. "Coach" on bass, Colin Smith on drums, and myself on guitar and vocals, we started working out my ideas. I say ideas because the songs only fully realized themselves from the individual creativity of the band members involved. We would practice two hours a day, two or three days a week, in the basement of the house I lived in, going over every change. You see, we were absolutely dedicated to the song truly representing our musical intentions. When we mutually decided we were gig-ready we started a long path through upstate style open miss, which are really more like music showcases, and into more formalized local gigs. Along the way we picked up a lead guitarist, my friend Dave Arkema. Our good fortune still prevailed and led us into local gigs, offering full concert sized sets, and allowed us to open --in one action packed day-- for the prevailing campus band Mission Impossible at the college's outdoor cookout and a national act called The Other Half at one of the best night outdoor frat parties I've ever seen. I booked the afternoon gig. Dave booked the night gig. We continued on, though the semester was near a close, to open for the national act Buzz at an upstate an upstate bar called Lily's. Sadly, with the semester over, a drummer gone back to New York City, the gigs coming in slower numbers, and band members -- myself and Coach being seniors while Dave was choosing between theater and music -- making critical life choices, the band came to a well practiced but inglorious end. However, we still keep in contact as friends so we did fulfill our social contract as band members, enjoying both the high roads and the low ones together. It was four months of pure bliss. It was the best band I've ever been in and the greatest musicians I've ever played with. When Kankersaur was finished we knew as more about each other as people than we did as musicians.

New York City is tough for bands. First of all, very few people can stomach the risk of being in one band or bust as a musician. That's why you have musicians holding residency in four or five bands at a time. They are hedging their bets and waiting for the best offer. This is especially true of drummers. Personally, I think this undermines the basic trust system that is necessary for a band survival. You already have club owners who treat you like a piece of old steak if you aren't a star or if they don't trust your music inherently. They ask, should I microwave you or throw you out? Money is the bottom line. Few are non-expendable. The key here is not to see yourself as a musical superstar unless you absolutely are. By definition, you are a nine to fiver until your music pays all of your bills plus gives you a nice profit. A star is born every minute and another one dies in the same. How many people play an instrument in New York City? Why are there about 200 booking agencies, management firms, music publishers, and promoters on the isle of Manhattan alone? In general, studios cost too much money for both practice and recording. Music reviewers in the tri-state area are mostly pretensions and otherwise self-involved, A&R reps have been scouting outside of New York City for some time now.

The best gigging moment the Revolution Suns (my newest band -- whose name will soon change -- fronted by Juan Alejandro on bass, Dan Emery on 2nd guitar, and the evershifting polymorphing drummer) had was when we did four gigs in four weeks. While not the same devoted group as Kankersaur, we've been an assembly of musicians who all believe in a band ethic. That's spared us some heartbreak but if you are a believer in band or nothing your soul can be crushed pretty easily in this city. Our four week run started at the Fort at the Sidewalk cafe, went on to the Roseland to play at a private party hosted by a real-time internet music broadcast, followed up at the West End uptown, and closed at the Sidewalk.

The first fort show was great. The Sidewalk Cafe is always a great place to play. You can go nuts, and experiment, and vary styles and the crowd will still be their will you waiting for your next hat trick. It's the greatest confidence builder. The show at the Roseland was your basic rock and roll romp, not great but good enough to say we played the Roseland in

style. Looking down that long bar, called the Rosebar, was like looking up the slippery slope of destiny.

The West End was like torture. We had to pay this drummer \$50 bucks to play at the last minute, after trying to bail on the show all day. Then, we find out that he can't even keep a basic backbeat. We were still holding on. We were in the upstairs room, right off the main bar room. Only, no one knew because the manager kept closing the door that separated the band bar room from the main bar room and every time we opened the door back up he closed it. So, here we are in a room with two audience members (Our mailing list didn't show. I think because the show actually cost something to attend) who turn out to be one very drunk artist trying to coach us on being "one voice" as we played our set and his girlfriend telling him he's being an ass. The drummer still sucks and after one half of our set we decide that's all she wrote. The closing moment at the Sidewalk summed up the whole show. Envision bass and guitar -- two strings broken on the guitar by the way -- going through every technical difficulty you can imagine. The effect pedals didn't want to work. The guitar cord dislodged twice. Two string on the guitar broke with no replacement and having to improvise an atonal song. Finally, the West End flashback kicked in and that was all folks. Band hiatus.

Quite a few weeks have passed since, and the band's played again. It wasn't the greatest performance ever, but it was pretty damned cool. Maybe the renamed Revolution Suns still has some life in it yet.

There's a story of a person who was trying to bring down a wall with a butter knife. Many said he was insane, a crackpot, but he stood chipping away at the wall for many years morning till night. Finally, he made a crack in the wall. He continued to chip at this crack in the wall until it created a fissure that ran up to the top of the wall and brought the whole thing down. In New York City both internalizing, and living in a musical fantasy world, is death. If you love bands like I do, and you love to be a part of to remember the story of the man and his butter knife, There's just something special about sharing the kudos of a great performance with trusted comrades.



STRAW POLL

Antifolkies of Armenian descent -	012%	Sellout muthafolkas lookin' for tha Big Deal -	096%
Antifolkers living in the East Village -	070%	Yearly tonnage of canine flesh served at Papaya King -	24
Antifolkers living in Park Slope, Brooklyn -	005%	Antifolk who believe in God -	020%
Antifolkers living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn -	010%	Antifolk who believe in god -	040%
Antifolkers living in Staten Island -	003%	Antifolk who believe in Go (Japanese board game) -	020%
Antifolkers living in Living Death -	003%	Antifolk who find straw poles to be useless activities -	100%

Interview with Mr. Death

Mr. Death, you were at the first AntiHoot in 19 aught 84. What was it like?

Was I at the first anti-hoot? What was that, that thing in Lach's apartment?

What kind of people were there?

I don't know, musicians, I guess.

What did Lach say to open up the proceedings?

It was 14 years ago, give me a break.

What songs did you play? How did people react?

Were there any A&R scouts in the room?

It was some guy's apartment. When do you see A&R scouts in some guy's apartment?

What was the square footage of the space?

Do you think you could go away now?

Were the legends really true?

I didn't know there were any legends. If any of them involve a bunch of folk musicians who couldn't get booked so they started their own club, they're probably true.

THE SNEAK BY CURTIS ELLER AND JAMIE WOLCOTT



TONIGHT MY BONES ARE CREEPY
SUCH A CROOKED LITTLE GATE
LIE STILL WHEN YOU ARE SLEEPY
A SNEAK CAN'T WAIT...



Getting High

Christopher Dillon

Sometimes it's time to come down
sometimes it's time to dry out
I've got too much at stake to keep on
pushing now
to where the feeling is real, to where the
daze is bright
past mindless behavior, I found my new
light

ask yourself the same old questions, you
can't ever answer straight
give yourself the same solutions, and if it
just won't keep getting you by...

Find a new high.

So now it's time to come down
promise our life won't dry out
I've got too much at stake to change it all
around
don't try too hard to find just where the
boundaries are
they're gone, pushed them out, decided I
don't need 'em

ask yourself the same old question. He
won't ever answer straight
give yourself the same solution and if it
just can't keep getting you by

Find a new high, and get high

So now it's time to come down
promise my eyes won't dry out
clear sight just frightens me I don't know
what I'd see
And if you have the cure, bring it on to me
clear head is a buzz when time last is not
remembered

ask yourself the same old questions. He
won't ever answer straight. Give yourself
the same solutions; if it just can't keep
getting you by...Find a new high!

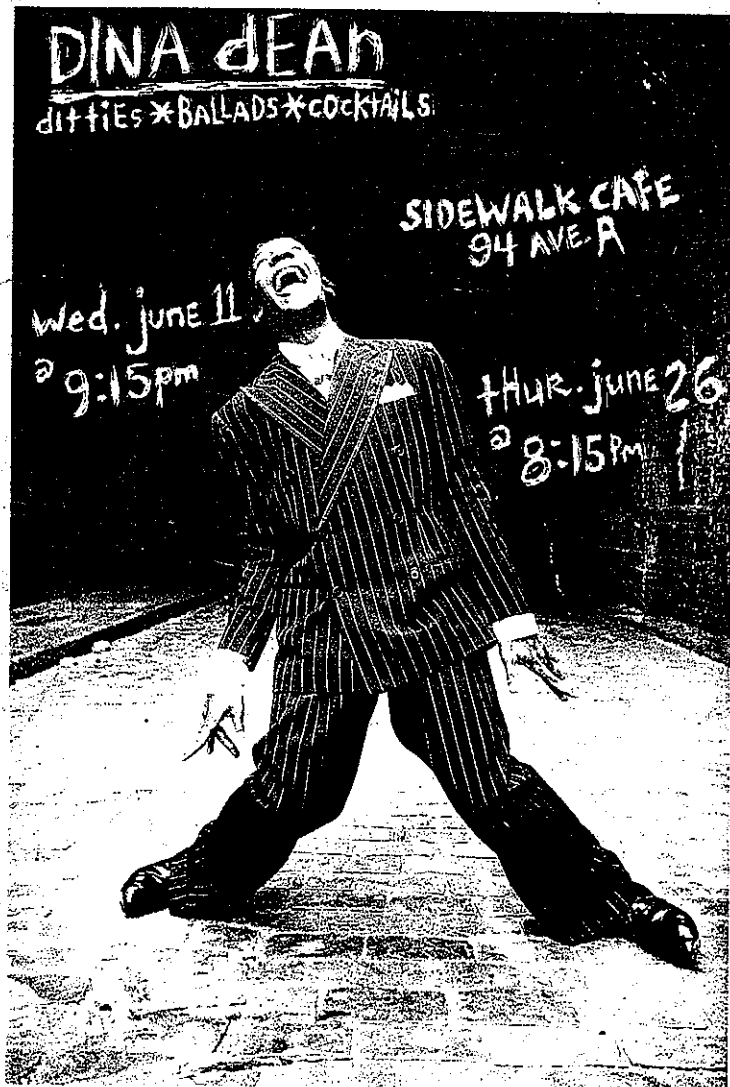
end.

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Tales From the Outer Boroughs

Around Albany with Michael Eck

Upstate Anti-Folk continues to exist, thrive and flourish. If you haven't heard of it, it's just because you New Yawk snobs are too busy patting each other on the back to hear the sound of Albanians (that would be people from Albany, not Eastern Europe) patting each other on theirs (and it's also hard for us to find the \$50 for the round trip to the Anti-Hoot on any kind of regular basis). So anyhow, perhaps a lil' scene report from your friendly, yet rather boring state capital -- one time home of that Hamell on Trial fellow (who was evicted for practicing the "face solo" and the snail jokes on stray dogs and homeless people). I'm Michael Eck and frankly I'm the best thing Albany has to offer in Anti-Folk, anti-disestablishing or anti-anything else you can think of. I can say this without reservation or remorse simply because I'm writing this here anti-thang and you're not. You should probably buy my lovely album "Resonator" as soon as possible. 'But how do I do this, oh anointed one,' you ask in mock terror. It's simple. Come to my goddamn gigs at the Fort already! 8:30 pm Thursday, July 3 would be a good start (although I'll also be at Hotel Galvez at 9 pm Tuesday June 10). Okay, enough about me. Who else is happening in Albany. My cronies, Stephen Clair and Rob Skane and his Guitar, are always worth a prop, a howdy and a shout-out.



So here's one for them. Clair's sort of a warm-hearted smart-ass who writes smashing solo pop

songs that manage to shift most of what you thought was right about the world into a slightly different place -- all in about 3 minutes and 10 seconds. I once described Skane-r as sounding like Johnny Thunders and Bob Dylan in a knife fight in a back alley. Y'know what? I'd say it again. Some people can't walk and chew gum at the same time. The Skane rocks and chews gum at the same, but you'd have to get off the duff and see him live to know that. On the chick-rawk front there's the always magnificent Paddy Kilrain. She twitches like a coffee-drunk live-wire all day long, and sings about all the stress that causes all night. It's a beautiful thing, the Kilrain thing. She and I played a regular old folk festival recently and sat in the back of my car complaining about the high sandal factor and acting cynical in general. Who else? Well, as the fingers of the anti-folk thing spread out into other realms we find the frantic, godhead zen blues of Mitch Elrod -- who's playing more and more with his band The Spellhounds, but still finds time to sit down by himself onstage here and there. And if that is one of life's minor blessings, I'll take it. Howe Glassman, leader of the mudflap-thunder rocking Coal Palace Kings, does a bang-up job by himself, singing songs about beer, drinking it, crying in it, swimming in it. But he does it with a real undertow of humanity that on a good night reveals him to be a lot deeper than just drinking songs. Finally on the less-anti, closer-to-folk front, Albany offers the incomparable Rosanne Raneri, Michael Bassett (soon to be a New Yorker himself), Meg Hutchinson and Jim Gaudet. They're not so loud but they are good. And there's also a new wave of very young pop kids playing solo; the likes of John Brodeur, Brett Rosenberg and Rich Baldes. And, of course, there's also a lot of boring rock bands that think they're the bomb, but they're not. OK, I'm done now. Come see UNYAF at the Fort!

Threat!

Barring unforeseen circumstances, this will be the last regularly scheduled issue of AntiMatters.

This zine, the only one dealing with matters Antifolk, has been putting out regularly scheduled issues for much of the last year, offering facts, fiction, and fitful fabrications along the way.

Until now.

To be a regularly scheduled magazine, one must have content. To have content, one must have contributions, wherein lies the problem.

Submissions to AntiMatters have decreasingly trickled, to the point where the only contributors to the zine are those that staff members capture and enslave.

Without material, the zine ends up being 20 pages of nothing. So, unless a grand outpouring of community spirit gets the AntiFolk public to contribute to their zine, there ain't nothing to put out least no regularly.

See you next month?

I don't think so.

The Problem With Antifolk

(Views From An Empty Room)

In many ways Antifolk is bigger than ever. Beck talks about the scene constantly. New releases from acts that originated out of the scene include Hamell On Trial (Mercury) and Brenda Kahn (Shanachie). MuchMusic (the MTV of Canada) has devoted an entire music special to the scene. In addition to AntiMatters there is the on-line e-zine Odelay and Dan Emery's Danamatic, making three zines about the scene. There is a website devoted to the scene (<http://members.aol.com/folkbro/fort.html>). There is even a major NYC club (The Fort at Sidewalk Cafe) devoted to the music.

With all of this attention it would seem improbable that the scene suffers from the fact that lately, at The Fort, the Antifolk acts have less of an audience draw than the more "mainstream" acts. Over the last few months the acts with the biggest and most consistent draws have been Ruth Gerson, Robert Scheffler, Sweetfeed, Kahn and similar acts. The only acts out of the Antifolk/Antihoot scene to have steady, large draws (over fifty in attendance) have been Lach, Dina Dean, Homer Erotic and Rick Shapiro. Superb performers such as Lenny Molotov, Mr. Scarecrow, Chris Moore, Karen Davis, The Reachers and even Joe Bendik regularly have audiences of less than 25 people! If this continues to be the case then I could see how The Sidewalk's owners would be hard-pressed to come up with reasons to continue to host the scene.

I think The Fort at Sidewalk is one of the best venues to perform in. The sound system is excellent and the soundmen are great. Admission is free and before 8 p.m. drinks are 2 for 1. The baby grand piano is a pleasure to play, the overall vibe in the room is the best in town and the Anti-crew are writing great songs and giving fantastic performances. So, why aren't these acts bringing in more people? There are a few basics to creating a draw. If the anti-acts are not doing these basics than they have no one to blame but themselves. Let's go over a few basics, now, shall we?

1. Mailing Lists: Mailing Lists work only if you work them! That means sending out your invites two weeks before the shows; always announcing your list and always adding more names. Play other clubs and open mikes in order to add more names. A %5 -%10 return on a list is normal so if you only send out 50 invites you can expect maybe 10 people to show up. When faced with an empty room an artist will turn to me and say "But I sent out 40 invites where is everybody?". Send out 300 invites and you will have your 30 people show up. If you can't afford it then try putting your whole months gigs on one postcard size invite. If you still can't afford then get a job. Seriously, this is NYC and if you want to make it here it takes WORK and if you won't do it, someone else will and they will be the ones getting the Friday night slots and the record deals.

2. E-Mail lists: Start one. I find these are very effective. Somehow the novelty of e-mail still grabs people's attention. If you don't have a computer than go to a cybercafe and send out your invites from there.

3. Phone calls: Call people the day before your gig or the day of your gig and invite them again!

4. Flyers: Make them interesting. Just your name and the gig time is not going to matter to anybody who doesn't know you. If you have quotes about your act, use them. Sloppy xeroxed collages suck. Check out flyers by Dan Emery, Reid Paley, Rick Shapiro for inspiration. Note: Be careful posting flyers in the East Village (especially St. Marks) as the cops will bug you.

5. Tapes: Promo tapes are cool but put your best song FIRST.

6. Press Releases: Send out press releases to every NYC paper, magazine, fanzine, radio station. Along the top of the page, left hand corner type: For Immediate Release. On right-hand corner type the date. Your release should be short, neat and to the point.

For example:

For Immediate Release

June 3, 1997

The Bad Draws will be playing on Date at Time at The Sidewalk Cafe (94 Ave.A). Admission is free. The Bad Draws have been called "press quote". Their new CD, The Bad Draws Suck, is available now at local stores.

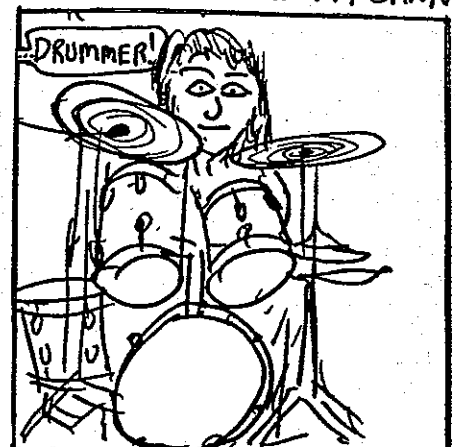
Include a black and white photo and CD or tape, if you have one.

7. Play the Antihoots and support other acts: The Antihoot is the best chance to let others know your stuff. Don't just sit at the hoots, by yourself, grumbling about what number you got. Get up and meet other people. These are the people who will come to your shows. **SUPPORT OTHER ARTISTS!** Come out to the shows during the week and see other acts. You will have FUN and they will be more likely to come out to see you!

8. Don't crossbook: If you get a gig in the East Village than don't play another local venue for, at least, two weeks before or after. This will split your draw and make both clubs mad. Yes, we do check the listings to see where else you are playing. Use this open time to play out of town. Philly, for instance, is a great music town and it is only an hour's drive away with a whole new market for you to get into.

9. Do the above for EVERY show. Again, it takes hard work on a daily basis to create a draw but the people who make it are the people who do the work. Sure, lightning strikes, but more often than not, it hits the guy who went out and built a lightning rod.

STORIES FROM THE SIDEWALK ©1997 BY ANDREW MCCANN



RACING IN THE STREETS

Jonathan Berger

At a light, I looked at the case, the cassette had come in. It didn't have much information, just the name of the album and the eleven cuts on it.

"The Chord is Mightier than the Sword," I read, and snorted. It was a silly name for an album -- although, I knew, for Hamell on Trial, it made a certain sense.

The album was new, and no one had heard it yet. At least, no one had told me about it.

On my way downtown, on the FDR Drive, I put the tape in to initiate my first experience with the new album.

A dumbass introduction that will sound goofy in three weeks' time played, and then the first song began. "Mr. Fear." With bass and drums and volume beyond anything that even Hamell could create on his own, with soundbites of acoustic guitar to hearken to the old days when things were simpler and Ed Hamell was simply one man, not an army.

My foot unintentionally revved. The car inadvertently passed everything on the road. I was on a road trip in Manhattan, just me, and Hamell, and our psychic link through the record. It was exhilarating. It was incredible.

I had to share it with someone...

"Look at all those people, looking bored and ignored," Roger Manning whine-sang out of my weak speakers.

I shrugged as I heard it, thinking that the song was somehow familiar. Maybe live, maybe somewhere else, I'd experienced it. But never, I had to admit, amidst all the snippets of sound available on Short Sharp Shock.

At a light, I couldn't help but glance at the cover. Again. Either a take-off or an homage to Michelle Shocked's cover, featuring her being choked by a couple of cops, Roger Manning looks like his arms about to get twisted off by some brute of a bully boy.

The album was political. He insults the police, the municipality, the feds -- he tells President Bush between songs to eat shit and die. It's no wonder that it's a home tape that Manning distributed outside of his various short-term record contracts. The over-riding theme seems to be to piss people off, but there's at least one moment where information is effectively passed. During some kind of panel discussion, Manning, along with what sounds like Lach, defend the then-current state of AntiFolk. Fascinating to listen to... I just wish I liked the songs more.

If I had more energy, I probably would have put another tape in, but it was late, I was tired, and I was almost home. Besides, it somehow seemed right to be leaving the West Village and driving up Sixth Avenue, with AntiFolk's own Village expatriate.

It looked like a bootleg, and it had no cover, but it said Dots Will Echo on it, and I was hoping it was some new material from the group who gave us "Sandra."

I pushed it into my tape deck, stalled at yet another yellow.

The jazz funk workout starting the album told me I was in for another kind of disappointment. There was no evidence of the rocking accordian that made Dots Will Echo so memorable.

None of the...

When the instrumental excursion ended, a thousand voices delineated, "I feel fine," and I knew I was home.

Sitting at a light in midnight traffic, I heard the entire new Dots album, from "I Feel Fine," to the beautiful piano end to the album, which sounds so sensitive and different, until you realize it's the Flintstones' theme. In between, I got to hear their faux Boys II Men song, a Beatles' cover, a perhaps unintentional Night Ranger homage, "Tele-vision," and the New Wavey hard rock of "Killing Time."

Stuck for the entire length of the album between 14th and 59th Street, I don't believe I minded one bit.

"So what should we hear?" Steve asked.

"The first cut. That's the thing," I said, struggling to get the words out, "That's the shit."

Hamell's album was in the machine already, and I'd rewound it, so that Steve could hear that same rush I did when the album began.

The song started. The same ridiculous introduction I'd scoffed at half an hour ago, and then the song. "Mr. Fear," in all its glory, repeated for me for the third time.

As I jumped around in my seat, Steve fiddled with the equipment, improving the sound, offering his thoughts.

"Is he playing all of the stuff?" he asked.

"I don't think so," I replied, wondering how he could think of anything but listening. Didn't he appreciate the beauty, the divinity of this experience?

"That was pretty good," Steve said, the song fading.

"Pretty good," I repeated his understatement, "That was incredible. It's so different."

"It's different," he agreed, but without the right enthusiasm, "What else should we hear?"

"Uh," I said, "'The Vines.' That's pretty cool, too."

I fast forwarded, and he smiled, hearing a more familiar Hamell on Trial. He hadn't felt the proper rush of joy, the epiphany. I felt like I should get in the car and drive. Maybe then he'd appreciate it.

But no. I'd get the chance to that later. Then it'd be me, the car, and the greatest songs in the world. Sometimes, I guess, the best person people to share with is yourself.

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Reviews

(Warning: Not for the weak of heart!)

Bernadette McCallion: This disc is an example of how to make a record that people will truly enjoy learning something from. The songs are mostly ethereal and emotive, almost sweet, but they also employ a good measure of both gift and well placed lyrical cynicism. The musical arrangements are full bodied. They also maintain a restrained tension towards the basic issue of how challenging life can be so that we are not inundated with how sad and defeated Ms. McCallion is. This is one of the few demos that actually display a complete picture of the artist's intentions. All the credit should be given to Ms. McCallion who, on her own, recorded the quality music of full band. She should be welcomed into the assembly of women like Brenda Kahn, Lisa Germano, and Ani DiFranco who are making cutting edge music without bowing to the male dominated screech rock empire. A (Contact: Jacobson & Colfin P.C. at 212-691-5630.)
Kamau Rucker

Coyote Shivers (self-titled): Coyote Shivers is an individual, and a band, which also features Jack Pedlar, who doesn't play out as much as he used to. Neither does Coyote Shivers. At least, not in the affordable coffee houses he used to play in, back when the Fort's own Lach was his rhythm acoustic man, and his songs sounded like Lou Reed brought forcibly into the nineties. Back in the days, Coyote Shivers, who was only an individual then, not a band, would play an electric guitar with the Lach backing him up. The songs were terse, tight, and strong, all minimal in word and thought, and virtually all great. It was good songwriting. It was strong.

Coyote Shivers then became a band, originally called Sex, but then, well, you can assess the final results. They stopped playing the Sidewalk, got a lot of press, and made an album on Mutiny Records, which is 12 cuts of many of the songs that Coyote Shivers played back when he was great. "Living With Me", "Classic Car", "Leather Jacket Weather", "Bisexual Girl" and "She Drove Me To Drink and Drive" are all songs I remember fondly from way back when. They're now full-band rockers, featuring the kind of sensibility that made Shivers decide that sparkles were the fashion accessory of the decade. They're glummy, and loud, and the songs are still good, but they don't carry any of the punch and pow they did back then. Maybe I'm older. Maybe Shivers just got pompous.

"Sugarhigh" is another old song from way back when, which is featured on the Empire Records soundtrack, which culminates in a cute chick who isn't his step-daughter Liv Tyler singing the song before hordes of teenagers in a bacchanalia of mid-seventies proportions, during which the entire community gives Coyote and his cronies all their cash. It's a good song in the movie. The movie doesn't present him playing his own song, but the soundtrack does, and so does his album.

So much more interesting with be Jack Pedlar's release, which Mutiny expects to put out within the next year or so. Look out for it: it will herald the end of all you hold dear, which is probably a good thing.

Gustav Plympton

Matt Keating - Killjoy: I've read a couple of places where Matt Keating's been compared to Matthew Sweet, probably because of that first name thing. I don't see it. I mean, they're white males, part of the patriarchal hierarchy, sure, but the music? Not quite.

Matthew Sweet's has a perfect name. He's sweet. He's about hooks and harmonies, and sugarcoated fun. His lyric? Sure, they have bite, but you can't hardly tell, not unless you listen. Keating, though, one of our local boys, he sounds sad as you listen. His voice carries melancholy, and, though he, too, is hooky, it ain't no Matthew Sweet. Harmonies, too, are something that Keating lacks. Or chooses to avoid. Or something. Some pretty damned cool cuts on the release, foremost among them are "By The Way," a song about all the different ways he knows he's broken up, "Emily," about all the different ways he knows he shouldn't be broken up, and the opener, "Killjoy," about a relationship that he clearly wishes would be broken up. Pain and bitterness throughout, clearly, not the least bit Sweet.
S Biederman

The Rooks (self-titled): When you see The Rooks live the first thing you might think is that they look like your ordinary well traveled road band in for yet another show at yet another place. What the Rooks bring to a stage is an almost limitless amount of pop driven books that make you wonder if there's not actually a bright side to everything. Simply put, they're perfect musical fun. The self titled album is one part psychedelic, one part 80's guitar hooks, one part 60's vocal harmony, and one part 90's live distortion free rock madness. Some of the great songs are "Apology," "Love Said to Me," and "Down." They deal with all facets of modern day sentimentality. The Rooks unabashedly give their music that dubious title of "pop" and give pop music a hero, which it has been lacking for some time, and thus rescue music from the arms, legs, and crotch by returning it to the head and heart because their brand of pop music is really something more learning intensive. It is almost as if they've reached that state of musicianship all performers strive for, the point at which you realize the songs you write become entities that must exist completely apart from you after the production. What really impressed me was that this was the first show where I have seen a singer/guitarist play so hard he bled. Michael A. Mazzarella did this at Sidewalk Cafe during the Winter '97 Antifolk Festival and instead of showing off, he simply found a band aid and started hanging out. A (Contact Info: Elektra Entertainment Group, Licensing Dept./26th Floor, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC 10019. You can also buy A Double Dose of Pop, which The Rooks share with 20 Percent Crush, and to which they contribute 6 new songs that are equally as good.)
Kamau Rucker

SCHEDULE: The Sidewalk Cafe (94 Ave.A) is proud to present the following schedule for your publication. All shows are free and begin at 8 p.m.. For updates please call the club at 212-473-7373.

Mon. June 2 - AntiHoot! Hoot! Hoot! Sign-up at 7.30. Ask for Lach!

Tues. June 3 - 8-Doug Larcey, 8:30-Rick Soshin, 9-Novice, 9:30-Ruff, 10-Brian Seymour

Wed. June 4 - 8-Rob Ryan, 8:30-Ashley Cox, 9-Amanda Thorpe, 10-Curtis Eller, 10:30- B.Blush, 11- Dan Kilian (King of AntiFolk; Spring '97)

Thurs. June 5-Jude Kastle, 9-Mimi Schneider, 9:30-Key Wilde & Mr. Clarke, 10-Kenny Young & The Eggplants

Fri. June 6- Benefit for Rent Action with Brenda Kahn, Kirk Kelly, Agnelli & Rave, Bianca Bob, Gene & Mimi, George Usher, 11- Reid Paley

Sat. June 7 - 8-Shameless, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Homer Erotic, 11- The Bitter Poet

Sun. June 8- Strange Folk Sunday 8- Fellini's Basement, 8:30- Andy If, 9-Little Oscar, 9:30- Mary Prankster, 10-Jessica Kane, 11-Dan Emery's Mystery Band

Mon. June 9 - The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tues. June 10 - Piano Night: 8-Steve Mosto, 8:30-Jerome Rossen, 9-Calliope, 9:30-Megan Fogarty, 10-Rachel Spark, 11-Rachel Sage

Wed. June 11- Marc Farre, 9-Ben Eyler, 9:30-Dina Dean, 10-Julianne Richards, 11-Animal Head

Thurs. June 12-Dave Foster , 8:30-Puckett, 9-Tom Clark, 10-Lach (w/ Billy Ficca & Geoff Notkin)

Fri. June 13 (Unluckiest Day, Lovely Music!) - 8 - Raving Noah, 9-Trouble Dolls, 10-Richard X Heyman, 11-The Humans, 12-Bill Popp & the Tapes

Sat. June 14 - 8-Jim Allen, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Ann Klein, 11-Kirk Kelly 12- Torn & Frayed

Sun. June 15 -(5-7pm Art Opening: Knighthawk Rules!) 8-Oliver Zeltner, 8:30-Bernadette, 9-David Morrison, 10-Scott Wilson's Foreign Legion of Bellydancers

Mon. June 16 -The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tues. June 17 - 8-Venus Envy, 8:30-Slappy J, 9-Alexis Shepard, 10-Shakti 11-Trina Hamlin

Wed. June 18 - 8-Laurie Cagno, 8:30-Ellen Cross, 9-Tricia Scotti, 10-Rick Shapiro (Fortified) 11-Youngblood

Thurs. June 19- 8-Jocelyn Ryder, 8:30-Bonesugar, 10-Joe Ferland (of The Reveals) and Joe Mannix (of Oral Groove) 11-Huw Gower (of The Records)

Fri. June 20 - 8-Betsy Thomson, 9-The Meanwhiles, 10-Starchile, 11-Cycomotogoat, 12-G'nu Fuzz

Sat. June 21 - 8-Major Matt Mason USA, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Gene & Mimi 11- Cecil's Bait & Tackle, 12-Amandla (Featuring Claude of Ween)

Sun. June 22 (Songs in the Key of Sunday) 8 - Ivy Bautista, 8:30 - Lynn Bongiorno, 9 - Lee Chabowski, 9:30 - Mike Younger, 10 - Jessica Kane, 11 - Matt Sherwin

Mon. June 23- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tues. June 24 - 8-Cementhead, 8:30-Kaz, 9-Joshua Russell, 9:30- The Camaros, 10:30-Pal Shazar, 11- Bibi Farber

The Antifolk Festival Summer 97

Wed. June 25- 8-Dan Kilian, 8:30- Ripe, 9-Chris Moore, 9:30-Mr. Scarecrow (featured on Lach's Antihoot {Fortified/Shanachie}), 10-Rick Shapiro (Fortified) (Comedian featured on Conan O'Brien), 11- Hamell On Trial (featured on Lach's Antihoot. Signed to Mercury, his latest release The Sword Is Mightier Than The Chord has received raves), 12-Brenda Kahn (Shanachie)

Thurs. June 26 - 8-Dan Emery, 8:30- Dina Dean, 9-The Reachers, 9:30- John S. Hall (of King Missile), 10-Lach (founder of the Antifolk scene) (New band features Billy Ficca <Television> on drums and Geoff Notkin <The Sextet Offensive> on Bass. Currently in the studio with Richard Barone producing)

Fri. June 27 - 8-Jen's Revenge (featured on Lach's Antihoot), 8:30- Karen Davis, 9-Mike Rechner, 9:30-Kamau, 10- Paleface (Recent Elektra release produced by Andy Paley), 10:30-Zane Campbell (featured on Lach's Antihoot CD), 11-Reid Paley (Subpop), 11:30- Kirk Kelly (Mugsy Records)

Sat. June 28 - 8-The Humans (Chosen by Timeout NY as one of the top ten bands in NYC), 8:30-Mary Ann Farley (Her latest release Daddy's Little Girl was a pick hit in Billboard), 9-Fur Dixon (formerly with The Cramps), 9:30-Ville, 10-The Novellas, 10:30-Joe Bendik & the Heathens, 11-Lenny Molotov

Sun. June 29- Jazz Sunday - 7:30-My Dog, 8- Blue Saracens, 9-Chris Petz, 10-The Joel Newton Situation

Mon. June 30-The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.