

AntiMatters



Inspiration!



July 1998

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A month or so back, Seinfeld ended. Maybe you heard of it: some series on a major network... The principals of the show said they wanted to end on a high note, go out on top. The Larry Sanders Show, another revolutionary sitcom (if your vocabulary allows such things), also packed it in. The star, Gary Shandling, wanted to stop while the series was still good, while still having fun. Both these series, perhaps, chose to get out of the race before the show suffered. Perhaps they thought their audience deserved more. If that's the case, then that is an admirable, laudable goal: to give only their best.

AntiMatters has no such goals.

After coming off a cycle of nine increasingly excellent issues (a run that began with September '97's Obsession Issue), we at AntiMatters knew the good times couldn't last. We knew it would have to end some time. Sometimes, after all, inspiration doesn't strike.

Pundits and Prophets at AntiMatters fully expected it to be during the summer months when the next dearth of brilliant independent publishing would strike, and when the theme Inspiration was arrived at, it seemed almost foreordained that this would be the issue where it would all slide down down downhill.

Luckily, it didn't happen. Yet. This AntiMatters is as good as any, better than most, and, frankly, is the best damned AntiMatters yet.

Still, we faithfully anticipate a lapse in quality, and, in response to the courageous actions of such literary luminaries as Jerry Seinfeld and Gary Shandling, we swear the following oath: it won't stop there.

So long as there's a dollar to squeeze from the AntiFolk Constituency, AntiMatters will be there, to collect it. So long as one single buyer exists, AntiMatters will as well. Quality is



irrelevant. Inspiration is irrelevant. Enjoyment is irrelevant. So long as one person cares to cashier, we are there. This is our oath. We stand by it until AntiMatters' dying day. Quality will sink, standards will drop, interest will wane, but AntiMatters will be there.

Until the end of the world...

Jonathan Berger

I have no idea what he's
talking about.
Gustav Plympton

AntiMatters!

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Old information.

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Today!

Yeh.

ADVERTISING

1/4 Page Six Huge Dollars!
1/2 Page Eleven Colossal Bucks!
1 Page Twenty One Fucking Smackers!

Contact

AntiMatters

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Report from the Fort

5/31 - <The Fort> Little Oscar introduced his brand new AntiSection, featuring a little bit of the old and a whole lotta new. Mr. Scarecrow, former guitarist for a thousand and one bands on the AntiFolk scene, joined his frequent bandmate, the diminutive drummer affectionately known as Little Oscar, in the new line-up, but that was all that was familiar for old time AF viewers. On piano was the mad genius, Peter Dizozza, and on bass, a position formerly held by Craig Gordon, was Christie, the chick from Animal Head.

The band played all the songs that Little Oscar always plays, but with a little more punch. The AntiSection was visibly missing the bookend counterpoint to Little Oscar's shortness, the delightfully diminutive Debbie MacDougal. She was in the audience, though not playing her violin at all. It lent to the air of rock that was in the room.

The AntiSection, led tonight by Little Oscar, sounded crisp and cool, but the vocals, always pretty tinny (Oscar has a real high voice) got somewhat lost along the way. This became especially clear when Animal Head's Patrick guest vocalled for one song, "I'd Really Like To Kill You (But I Can't)." His bombastic, over-the-top vocals were exactly what the song needed, and sounded a lot more powerful than most anything else in the set. Oscar's songs seem pretty cool, but it's hard to tell, since the voice leaves it damned hard to understand what the hell he's singing about. The guest vocalist idea was a wise one. He should consider expanding on it. (GP)

6/13 - <Mercury Lounge> - MaryAnn Farley debuted her new band at her debut Mercury performance, before an appreciative audience who clearly had her debut CD, *Daddy's Little Girl*.

She didn't play many songs from that years-old release. Instead, she rehearsed songs from her soon-to-be recorded sophomore slump. New songs included "Life of Crime," "Strange and Wonderful," "I'm Your Girl" and "Buried Little Girl." (a theme, perhaps?) The new material was potent, sounding more kinetic than the crafted works on her first CD, though all seem to feature strange vocal soloing. Lots of "Ooh-ahs" and "Baad-aaps" throughout, a retro doo-wop thing. It's an interesting device once or twice, but sound more like placeholders for additional instruments that couldn't make it to the show that night. Maybe, though, the limited number of instruments helped give the impression of visceral strength in the newer songs. All told, a powerful set.

Eddie Skuller followed with a soulful solo acoustic set that sounded sweet, and rich. His one guitar was an army of sound. Skuller sounded much more real, less slick than on his recording. If he doesn't play solo regularly, he certainly should. <JB>



6/22 - <Continental> The Adverteasers have this gimmick. They're the world's only all-commercial band. Not sell-out, mind you, but *commercial*. Bumble Bee Tuna. Twister. Almond Joy. You know: commercials.

A lot of times, they reinvent the song, though never embellishing. You won't hear an eight minute solo added to the "Good and Plenty" jingle. But you will hear a Neil Young-alike belting out "Food Emporium."

The show's funny, and entertaining, though, of course, no one will ever be satisfied. I, for one, severely missed "There's Always Coca-Cola" and "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing." Still, with most songs running a high end of a minute, there's more than enough for everybody — though your hands do get somewhat tired with the frequent clapping.

With 6 members on stage, it gets confusing to figure out who to watch, who's leading the song. But it's obvious the performers are having a blast, and, soon enough, so are you. (SB)

6/24 - <The Fort> Lenny Molotov self-released a cassette a year or so back. Six songs. Almost all of them are out of his set now. A number of those songs were political. With the possible exception of "The Ballad of Richard Nixon," they've all been exorcised from his live performances. Still working with the same musicians, the Illuminoids, Lenny Molotov has moved increasingly from the political to the personal. His songs are about love, and, perhaps just as much, hate.

Which is what the audience got at his Wednesday showcase at the Fort at the Sidewalk Cafe: songs about love and hate. Eschewing his traditional band format, Molotov played alone, and well. He adds a certain dynamic to his acoustic performances that can be lost with his full-on jam-band. Solo, the creepy things he does with his voice can be more fully appreciated, each cracking line can be more fully dreaded.

A solo Lenny Molotov show is a wonder to behold. (GP)

6/24 - <The Fort> Jack Pedlar opened his set with "Dumpster Juice," employing an imperial roar that bludgeoned several senses at once. His tortured bellow and confusing between-song explanations carried him through his songs of living life past the edge. There was some new material in the set, songs that probably aren't on his upcoming Mutiny CD. Pity, because there was at least one mighty new rocker there. (JB)

6/24 - <The Fort> Charles asked where I was going. "Rick Shapiro's going on," I explained, "I always leave before he starts."

"Have you seen him?" he asked.

"Oh, sure," I replied, "I'm not a fan."

"Really. I've never seen him. What's he like?"

KEY:

JB - Jonathan Berger

GP - Gustav Plympton

SB - Stephanie Biederman

AR - Arnie Rogers

"Well," I said, "He's quick, and it's mostly improv. It's pretty impressive, but I'm into it. Watching him makes me queasy." "Uh-huh," Charles said.

"But you should definitely stick around. He's really popular, and a lot of people can't be wrong. You should watch."

"All right," Charles said, just as the announcer said, "Ladies and gentlemen... Rick Shapiro!"

"That's my cue," I said, and headed out.

Charles waved at my after-image.

Outside, I glanced at the Avenue

A traffic. It was a warm night,

around 10:30 with a bunch of tourists

walking the strip. The number of tourists

seems to grow most every week. When

something's hot, it's hot. I took out a Camel, and lit

it, watching the Sidewalk scene.

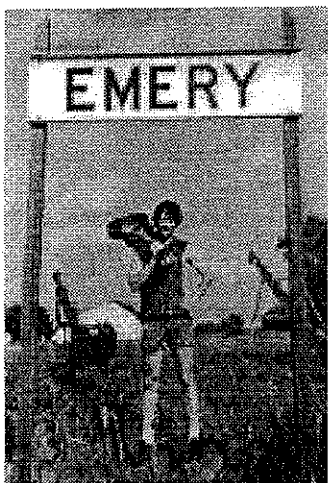
A minute later, Charles joined me.

"That was quick," I said.

He nodded and walked off into the night. (AR)

6/26 - <CB's Gallery> The Third Seasonal Heart and Tongue Festival was also the release party for the Dan Emery Mystery Band's debut CD, Love and Advertising. It was a comically styled evening, with such quirky and confusing acts as Full Throttle Aristotle, Jessica Kane and White Knuckle Sandwich beginning the evening. Between musical acts were a variety of comedy performers, most of whom were musically themed themselves. White Knuckle Sandwich was three people on three thousand instruments, mostly originals, but including a frustrating version of Chess's "One Night in Bangkok."

Piñata-Land, who puts together these Heart and Tongue shows, was nowhere to be found, because they broke up. Members could be seen trolling through the audience, asking for change. The highlight of the show was the Dan Emery Mystery Band, with many different members from when they recorded the CD, playing many song unheard on the CD. Still, with "Student Loan," and "I Am the Only One Who Loves You," and "Space Renegade" in evidence, it no doubt helped sales of the new CD. Since most of the audience was made of executive producers who came to pick up their pre-ordered copies of the disc, sales were probably only so brisk. Not one to bask in accomplishments, Dan says there's talk of recording the sophomore release this summer. (GP)



If you saw a show that you liked, and can articulate why, do so. AntiMatters is always looking for reviews of bands in the East Village community. Comment on what makes you move. Get it out there. We'll get it published.

6/27 - <The Fort> From his stool, Neal With An "A" introduced his band. The group was the pre-existing Serene,, on loan for his own diabolical purposes.

"He was such a shy kid," Neal's uncle Bob with an "O" said, "To see him like this..." Bob didn't finish his thought. Neal didn't notice, as he continued his set of soulful, smart songs.

Neal's good. Has been since he appeared on the scene. with his false nail lacquered acoustic guitar, Jane. Now, with a full band backing him, he's good and commercial. And since his songs were so strong to begin with, that's a good thing. (SB)

6/27 - <The Fort> AntiHoot! As Andrew McCann played a miniset on the theme of defecation, Lee Chabowski was talking to Dina Dean.

"I'd like to sign up," Dina said, "But I'm not into it."

"Me either," Lee said.

"I just don't feel inspired," continued.

way I see it, though, practice."

don't want to "But I'm afraid I'm

she

"The

I need the

Dina laughed. "I

just... play," she said,

just chickening out."

"I think you're just chickening

"You do?" Dina asked.

Jon nodded. Lee shrugged.

"I'm gonna go sign up," Dina said, standing to walk to the MC's spot.

"Here's a guy who should have a CD out... Mr. Joe Bendik."

"Actually, Lach, I do have a CD coming out in August," Joe said, which elicited an impressive smattering of applause.

Joe did his new oral sex anthem, "It's My Party," and followed with a cover, he explained, "In honor of my Fourth of July show." He went into a blistering "Star Spangled Banner," rockstyle. The audience ovated him at the end.

In the newly reinstated mid-evening one-song-wonder round, there was an amazing quadruple threat: Charles Herold, Steve Espinola, Tom Nishioka and Dina Dean, all one after the other. They were all great, so it was good that Dina signed up. (SB)

7/1 The New Mourn Babes would be a super-group, if anyone had heard of any of them. Featuring Lonesome Trouser's Jerome Rossen on accordion, Piñata-Land's Dave Wechsler on percussion, and Full Throttle Aristotle's Tom Warnick and Anne Kadet on guitar and piano, respectively, the group decided to band together to write songs about angels and devils. It was an unadvertised, underrehearsed, unrepeatable experience. Immediately after the show occurred, the band broke up, citing 'irreconcilable differences.'

So I guess there's nothing more to say. (AR)

INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

"You're about due for an epiphany," Steve said, "I've got a feeling."

It took me a few days to process that, and to remember a few months back, when I narrowly averted just such an event.

When Michelle Shocked came to town, I was excited on a couple of counts. She's one of the most successful purveyors that old-time AntiFolk, still successful, still following a fairly folkly vision. She's talented, and, cool, and I loved her long before I loved AntiFolk. When Michelle Shocked comes to town, I go to see. But this time, for her shows at CBGB, friends of mine were opening for the lady. After Steve finished a phenomenal set, Michelle, "The First Lady of American Music," took the stage, and tore it apart.

To say she was great does no justice.

To say she and her band, the Anointed Earls, were phenomenal, gets in the ballpark.

To call the first performance of their residency epiphanal — well, epiphanal just about covers it.

Incredible. Gorgeous. Indecipherable... words fail.

I loved most every minute.

Michelle Shocked seemed so natural, so smooth, so perfect...

The show scared shit out of me.

"That was life-changing," I said to Steve afterwards, "I think."

"How so?" he asked.

"I don't know," I replied, and stalked off.

Something about that show had been so meaningful. Inspiring. Thought-provoking. All this is strange, because her new songs are funk-sendups, not especially deep. Some of the subject matter (faith, ecology, media manipulation) was important, but — and I'm not a musician anyway. How could I feel so inspired by a medium that was untranslatable for me anyway?

Still, the show was stirring up stuff inside me, and it was frightening. I knew from the sound of her voice, the poise in her step, that a change was gonna come.

Change is scary, and I didn't know what to do. I had no idea the music, the show, the artist was calling on me for. I was near a

vision, but I don't like visions. I have no control over them.

I spent the next day or two in a stormy funk, completely different from what the show had meant to instill.

Luckily, I did something that's always a mistake. I saw Shocked again two nights later. Thought I enjoyed that show, too, I heard some of the same between-song banter, the same impromptu fills and breaks. So much that seemed so original the first time around now seemed scripted, uninspired, and lame.

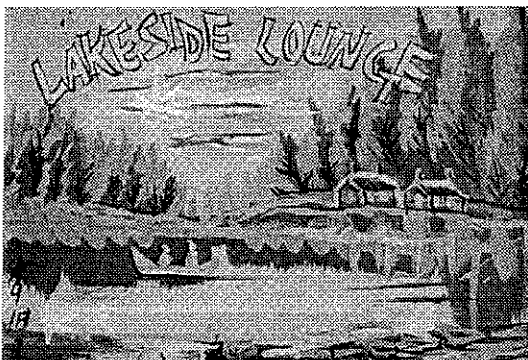
It was still a good show, but I was no longer inspired. It was hardly epiphanal. Crisis averted. I had my excuse: no change was necessary.

"What'd you think, my man?" Steve asked, after that second night.

"I feel so much better."

Three months later, Steve told me I ought to have an epiphany. I agree, I guess, that I *ought* to, but I can see how I'm nowhere near ready.

Jonathan Berger



Two Girls and A Guy

...Arnie Roger's Sunday in the East Village...

Running all around the east village looking for a

dina dean's show started at nine, and not nine thirty, which i realized when i got there, which was too late to appreciate the whole show but not too late to clap loudly and tell



place to call home, looking for a place to rest my bones, at least for an hour at a time.

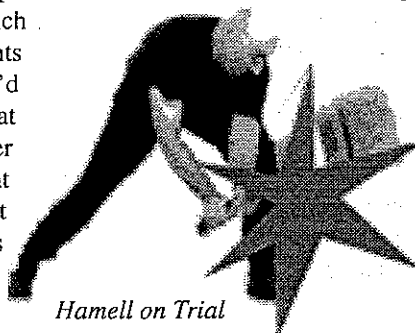
amanda thorpe played arlene grocery at eight o'clock on sunday, june 28, with a 2-piece backing group who were both british, just like her, which may be good and may be bad but i don't know. amanda thorpe is so lucky to have such a prolific multi-instrumentalist as peter keizwalter (that can't be how you spell it), who played keys, sax, and accordion throughout the set. the bassist, keith christopher, also played a mean lead guitar, all of which added to the great voice and arrangements that amanda thorpe brought to the show. i'd talk about the words but i don't know what they were. they were lost, along with her accent, deep in the mix. the show ended at nine fifteen, which got me late for my next gig seven blocks away at the fort which is at the sidewalk which is in the east village — but another part of it.

her she was great along with all the other well-wishers. she played some really fast songs which some pretty intricate parts, and it was good to see her again, especially after so long (she hasn't played a full set in months and months and months). she finished at nine forty five, so i hiked out to get to the lakeside to see hamell on trial.

hamell on trial was explosive, on stage, and when i went to get a seat he said, 'thank you, good night!' just to get my goat. i didn't laugh because i wanted to see hamell play.

he did. he was good. he was better than good. he played new songs that i hadn't heard, and played guitar faster and stronger than anyone under any sun anywhere in the galaxy. his riffs become more powerful and his shows become more breathtaking. i love hamell on trial.

at eleven o'clock, hamell finished his set, and, sweaty and tired, he talked to people at eleven ten, i went home.



Hamell on Trial

DEMO TIPS

by Tom Nishioka

I must say that one of my most informative and useful columns appeared two months ago -- how to use stereo tricks for big sound and spatial movement within your mix. Due to layout constraints at AntiMatters, however, it was a bit hard to find. I recommend checking it out, or getting a back issue of AntiMatters.

I have two topics for this month's column: a multiple mic trick, and mic positioning on acoustic guitar. While the first topic might only apply to those of you going in to larger studios, the second, I hope, will be informative even if you're recording on a boombox or 4 track.



Multiple mic tracking is simply using more than one mic on an instrument. You do this to take advantage of a microphone's character. I better go into this a bit. Every microphone has a personality -- two major factors of which are the pickup pattern and the frequency response. The vocal mics used at the Sidewalk are a very common mic, a Shure SM-58. This picks up sound in front and slightly to the side of the windscreen, but doesn't really pick up sounds in back of it. It's frequency response is not flat. The high mid range frequencies are boosted (around 1-4k). This is the range in which consonants in our speech reside. The 58 was designed to be used as a public speaking microphone, so they accentuated that response in the mic (by the way, frequency response just means the ability of a mic to pickup and output the frequencies present around it -- from the 32 Hz of a low E on an acoustic bass to the 16kHz in cymbals. A "flat" mic does not impart any boost or cut to a particular frequency range <see earlier AntiMatters for a map of instruments and their frequency homes>).

Since every model of mic has a different pickup pattern and frequency response, choosing which mics to use to record an instrument is a first step towards having a "full" bass sound, or

a guitar sound that "cuts", or a vocal that doesn't sound "harsh." But that's another topic -- what I wanted to write about was using multiple mics on one instrument.

I recorded a solo free jazz guitarist last week using multiple mics. For one, on a solo recording, since there is only one instrument (duh), it has to do a lot of work. It has to be full on the low end. Clean and pristine on the high end. Articulated but not harsh in the mid range. It makes sense to use a bass heavy mic, a mid range mic, and a clean condenser as a team to fill out the mix. But here's a trick: split all the mics to their own tracks, then pan the tracks hard left and right and center. You can do this to taste, of course, but what you'll get is a cool stereo effect where notes of different pitch jump around the stereo field. The bass mic, which is panned say, hard left, picks up the lower notes better than the other mics, so the note is more present at the left speaker. Vice versa for the high notes and the other mics. While I did this for a guitar only recording, it would be a great effect for a singer songwriter demo--just add the vocal full and up front for a wide, moving mix.

Well, I've run out of room for my other topic, so I'll do that next month.



I don't wanna die here!!!!!!

ROCK STAR /JUNK YARD

Joie 1998

Hello readers. Do you ask yourself the same question week after week? Will I ever make it out of the Monday night anti-hoot and become the next big sensation? You might or might not. If you are a Regular at the anti-hoot, like I am, you do. But I have opened my eyes to a little bit more than just the playing aspect of the night. I have used it as a learning experience, not just a showcase for my songs. I have met some really inspiring and intelligent people who have shared their thoughts about life, song writing and their deepest dreams and fears. They have helped me become a better player, performer and writer, not to mention a better person.

I have met some really cool down to earth people at the anti-hoot. I look forward to playing it every week. It has become a highlight in my shitty workweek, as well as being a bigger kick in the ass for me to keep writing and playing better than the week before. People do pay attention. They do listen. I know because I do.

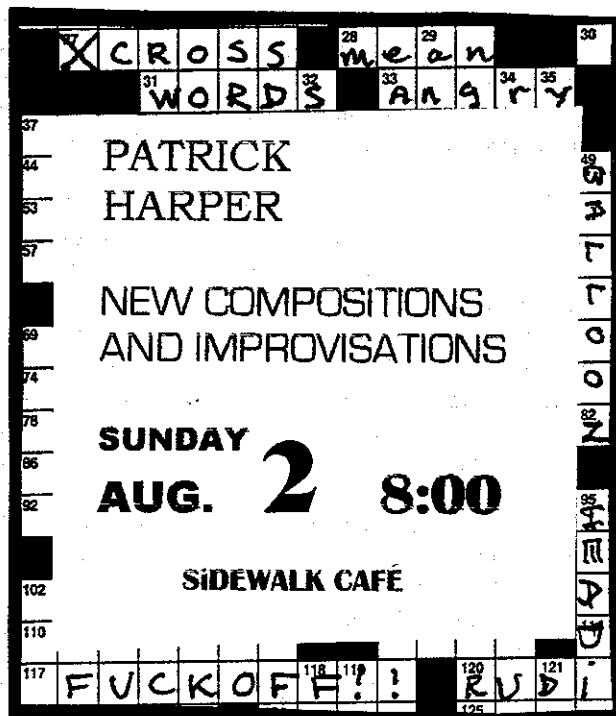
OK, maybe not all the time. But if I see a player I like and he or she is doing something different and it catches my ear, I will pay attention. I will watch them work the crowd and play their music. I walked into the Monday night anti-hoot not knowing anyone and now can sit with a bunch of players and just talk about almost anything. I even hang out with some of them outside of the hoot. There are a lot of people who have inspired me in ways that I thought I could never be. And I would like to say a few words whether they like it or not and thank them for the inspiration and the knowledge that they have given me for the past year. They make my Monday night worth while.

If I leave anyone out, I apologize, you all are good just for showing up. But these following players have shown me that there is more than just playing your song and splitting for home.

Clay, Marilee, Joe Bendik, David Dragov, Grey, Cal, Dave the poet, Pat Harper, Lee Chabowski, Rob Ryan, Jonathan Berger, Anne, the Humans, Pat Mattingly, Rick Shapiro, Michal Towber, the A.M.A's, Neal with and A, and last but certainly not least Lach, the man who started the whole anti-folk movement and who is always listening.

Some of you I have never talked with, but I have been inspired by your playing as well as your songwriting from afar.

The anti-hoot as well as open mikes around the city inspired the following song...



I'm going outta my mind
I'm going outta my head
Let's pack up the plantation and go sailing away
I'm losing control
I'm losing my nerve
I am not going to hell because hell is here on earth

With shitty sound and the cigarette smoke
And all of the cheap beer
Beat up guitars litter the room
And the strings are breaking like my dreams

In the rockstar junkyard
In the popstar junk yard
I just wanna get the hell outta here

It sounds so funny I don't have any money
I work a shitty job where I can't make ends meet
Times are getting hard
Times are getting rough
In every way that I can think of

And the waitresses they get me drunk
So I will tell them my name
They all look so different to me
But they all act the same

In the rockstar junkyard
In the popstar junkyard
I just wanna get the hell out of here

I don't have fame
I don't have glory
Just a drinking problem a bunch of songs that tell my story
Put me on a plane
Put me on a bus
Before my platinum dreams start to rust

Play my song on the radio
Put my face on MTV
So I won't forget anyone
Before they forget all about me

In the rockstar junkyard
In the popstar junkyard
I just wanna get the hell out of here

Pragmatic Inspiration

charlie starkweather

Of all the different kinds of inspiration, this is a type that I had never considered before. I call it pragmatic inspiration because it was borne out of necessity. I had always been a solo singer/songwriter. Without realizing it, that defined how I wrote my songs. There was no one to add a great vocal harmony, no one to solo over an otherwise empty bridge.

That changed when I joined a band. It wasn't just me anymore. I was writing for the whole band.

Up until about a year ago, I had never played original music - my music - in a band. It had always been solo. I had assumed after doing it for so long that I would always perform alone on stage. It was at that point, of course, that I found a band.

Or they found me. Or we stumbled into each other. Something like that. We all worked at the same place. And, worse yet, we actually knew that each of us was a musician, but we never simply put 1+1+1 together to add up to a three-piece band.

Once we got together and started playing gigs (about two per month), we started noticing a couple of things. First of all, the reaction of the crowd to

some songs in preference to others was obvious. Secondly, as a band we simply sounded better on some songs compared to others.

That was the beginning of a new kind of inspiration for me. Before the band, I wrote and played whatever felt good to me. There was no worry about a set list (slow, fast) or about



more difficult songs. But now, that kind of selfishness had to be abandoned.

The first thing I did in this "new inspiration" was toss out all but one of the slow songs from our set list. Even songs that I thought we performed well, but didn't work for the audience, were history. The second part of my plan was more difficult.

I knew that audiences preferred our uptempo and danceable numbers. But that wasn't how I had written music in the past. The subtlety allowed even in AntiFolk is lost when the whole band kicks in. At that point, you're doing your best just to have the chorus recognized by the people hanging inches off the front of the stage.

I was back at the guitar with a whole new game plan. First, it was time to think simple: 1.4.5 for chord progressions. And fast. Ditch the slow, moody songs. Keep it straight-ahead and obvious and no one will get hurt.

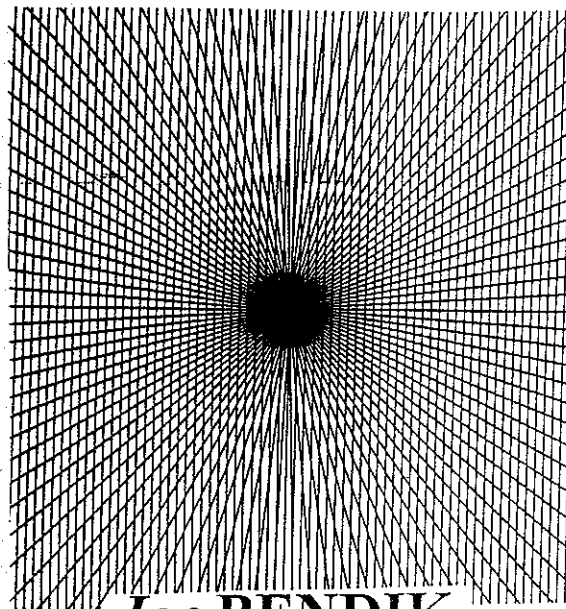
A band also brings with it a whole new opportunity to utilize other player's talents. I wrote a song with a chorus that was much too high for me to sing. But I knew our bass player could do a terrific job with it. He did of course, and we had a new song. That's something that couldn't happen when I worked solo.

There were also disappointments. Some songs that I thought would be great just didn't work in the band. Other players weren't inspired, or simply didn't like the song and couldn't get into it. But that's a whole other story regarding band dynamics & you.

Overall, I think inspiration is what happens when you're not looking.



"YOU BRING THE ASSHOLE OUT OF ME"



**Joe BENDIK
& The Heathens**

the FORT
Saturday, July 25, 11:00 PM

BEFRIENDING A BLAKE BABY

Chrissi Sepe

It's destiny, I thought, as I looked at the address printed on the album cover. It was the summer of 1988, and I was living in Boston, right down the street from Symphony Hall, and had just purchased the self-financed album of a local band called "the Blake Babies." They had just finished performing at Tower Records where I worked, and I was completely swept away by their songs. It was the first time I had felt that way from only seeing a band perform live. Their singer, Juliana Hatfield, had the most unique voice, unlike any other. It was high-pitched but passionate. I noticed that the songs I liked the most were written by her. I couldn't believe that she actually lived across the street from me! The more and more I listened to the album, the more I wanted to meet her, I mean, I might as well, being that she's so close...

One night, I threw my friend a party for her 21st birthday. I told her all about the Blake Babies and how they lived across the street. "Put on the album," she said, and we threw open the windows and blasted it. "Maybe they can hear it," she said whimsically. But I wasn't meant to meet her yet.

Shortly afterward, the Blake Babies got signed to Mammoth Records, an indie label. Their first record was called Earwig, and if I wasn't hooked before, now I was truly insane. Juliana sang everything that I felt. It is a heavy album, a lot of depressing subjects about having to vomit even though your mother isn't calling and asking someone to bless your soul 'cause everybody hates you. Finally, someone I could relate to! I listened to the record solidly in the fall and winter of 1989, and then, the impossible happened! I was on my break from Tower, headed for Dunkin' Donuts to get an egg and cheese croissant sandwich with ham, when I spotted Juliana waiting at the bus stop. I looked at her, and she seemed to recognize me too. I really wanted to talk to her, but I couldn't. I was too scared. I wanted to tell her that Earwig was practically the only album I listened to these days, how I listened to it every day, how it has become my life, but I couldn't say anything. I mean, what if I poured my heart out to her and she said, "Yeah, so what? Who cares what you think!" So I just passed her by. But I told myself, if she's still there waiting for the bus when I come back, I'll definitely stop and talk to her. I went for my sandwich and secretly wished that she had gotten on her bus. But when I came back, there she was. I took a deep breath and ignored the chill in my stomach. "Are you in

the Blake Babies?" I asked.

"Yeah," she said really friendly. "I am."

"I love your new album, Earwig. I listen to it all the time."

"Oh, thanks, thanks a lot," she said.

"My name's Juliana."

Like I didn't know. "I'm Chrissi," I answered. Like she really cared.

"I see you around all the time," she said.

"Yeah, I see you too. I work at Tower. I saw your band play there. You were great."

"Thanks," she said again, smiling.

"Well, it was really nice meeting you."

"You too."

I walked back into Tower and was on a high the entire day.

By springtime, my husband, Dave, and I got ready to move to Toronto, Canada. About a week before we moved, we were walking down Mass. Ave. when someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around and it was Juliana.

"Hi!" she said.

"Oh, hi!" I said, completely surprised. "We just saw you play at 'the Paradise'." It was a great show."

"Thanks a lot," she said as the 3 of us walked down the road.

"So, what's up next for the Blake Babies?" I asked, trying to make conversation.

"Well, we just got off the road from a three-week tour with 'the Chills', and now we're going into the studio to record our next album."

"Oh, that's great," I said. "Great." But what I was really thinking was: Great! Juliana Hatfield finally taps me on the shoulder and I'm moving to Canada!

The new Blake Babies album was called Sunburn, and after I listened to it, I wrote Juliana a detailed letter telling her which songs were my favorites and why I loved them. I even sent her a picture of myself so she'd be able to connect my name with the person she used to see all the time on the street. We had been living in Canada for less than a year now, and the transition was a really hard one for me. I had come from being a student at Berklee College of Music in Boston where I had a lot of friends and was so used to seeing people I knew out on the street, and suddenly, everything was totally new. Juliana's new song "Out There" was something I could completely relate to: "I'm gonna leave this place, gonna leave this life's a waste. Gonna put on a new face." I really did want to leave that place. Juliana's depression on that album seemed to be in absolute synch with my own, and if I couldn't meet any friends yet, at least I could have a psychic comrade.

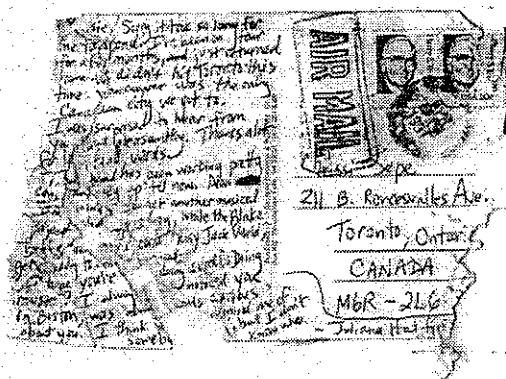


The artist in happier days



BEFRIENDING A BLAKE BABY

Then, the even more impossible happened! Juliana sent me a postcard! I couldn't believe it. It was like those dreams that you have when you meet a famous person and have some sort of contact with them but then you wake up and you're all pissed off because it isn't true, only this time it was true! Unfortunately, our dog Taffy was teething at the time, and she ripped half of the postcard up before I could even read it. I stayed in my bedroom for an hour with all the tiny bitten pieces spread across the bed, and me kneeling on the floor leaning over them, desperately trying to piece the postcard together. Eventually, I managed to read and scotch tape the entire thing. She thanked me for writing and told me she had been on tour, was sorry she couldn't write sooner, and was now starting a "new project" while the Blake Babies' new album Rosy Jack World gets ready to come out. But the last few sentences were what really blew me away. She said that she had always noticed me in Boston and was curious about me, that I reminded her of someone but she didn't know who. She also said that she didn't get to go to Toronto this past tour, Montreal was the only Canadian city that they went to. But maybe next time...



Finally, about a year later, next time came. It was July 1992, and Juliana had just released that new project she had written me about which was actually her first solo album called Hey Babe. I was now working at HMV Canada — doing the record store tour, I suppose — and everyone there knew how much I loved Juliana and the Blake Babies. Juliana was going to be opening up for the Lemonheads with a solo set at a Toronto club called "Lee's Palace," and my supervisor, Paul, was supposed to get us free tickets through the store. When the free tickets fell through and Paul would have to pay, he left me flat, and I wound up dragging Dave to the show, who wasn't very happy. Back in those days, he was a crabby graduate student who never wanted to be pulled away from his piano. But he knew how much I wanted to see Juliana so he begrudgingly came along.

When we got there, the club was almost completely empty, and they were playing 70's disco music over the sound system. There were two guys dancing to "Boogie Nights," and everyone else was sitting down at the tiny tables. Dave and I sat down at one and ordered some drinks. I immediately spotted Juliana briskly walking in from outside of the club. "Go talk to her," Dave said, so I went up.



"Juliana!" I said loudly and she stopped suddenly. "Do you remember me?"

"Chrissi, right?"

I was so pleased that she remembered my name. "I got your postcard," I said. "Thanks."

"I just got your last letter," she said. "I don't know if I wrote back yet."

"Oh, I hope you can," I said, trying not to sound too eager. "I miss talking to people from Boston."

"Really? I'm getting sick of Boston," she said. "That's why I'm glad I'm on tour now."

"Yeah, your solo album is great. Are you going to do another album with the Blake Babies too?"

"Actually, we broke up."

"Really? I just saw an article about the Blake Babies in NME. It didn't say you guys broke up."

"I don't think our record company wants anyone to know. So, are you still doing music?" she asked.

"No. I've been doing some writing lately. Short stories mostly. I may try and write a novel."

"Oh, I'd love to do that," she said. "But when I'm older."

Then the opening band, a local Toronto band, started to play, so we couldn't hear each other talk. "Well, I have to go and change my guitar strings," she said. It seemed like she really wanted to stay and talk but she had to go backstage, so I headed back to our table. One of the guys who'd been dancing to "Boogie Nights" had been sitting in my chair and just got up.

"He asked me for my lighter," Dave said, "And he sat down like he wanted to talk. I just gave him a dirty look. I'm glad he left."

"Oh," I said.

"So, are you happy you got to talk to her?" Dave asked. "Was it worth coming here?"

"Of course it was, you know I love her music."

"Her music maybe. That opening band sucked. Just a bunch of loud, mediocre noise. I'd like to see that singer get on stage with just a guitar and a microphone. Or to try to compose and perform a piece on just the piano, like I have to do every day at school. Let's see him do something acoustic. Then we'd know if he could truly write a song!"

After that "bad" local band, Juliana took the stage, so I got up and stood in the front. There were only three of us in the first row — me, this girl with a nose ring and that same "Boogie Nights" guy. As Juliana played, he was really starting to get on my nerves. He kept on staring at me while I tried to groove to Juliana's music. He shouted things to her while she tried to sing and even threw some of his beer onto stage, splashing me with it. I felt like punching him because I knew Juliana would be freaked out by this crazed fan. But all



she said was, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Evan Dando of 'the Lemonheads'." Oh, he's from the Lemonheads, he's not a crazed fan. What a relief!

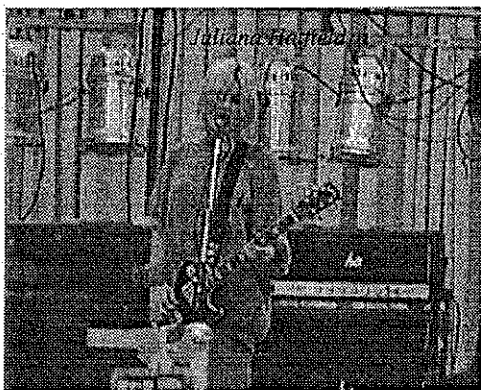
BEFRIENDING A BLAKE BABY

So then I became a Lemonheads fan and a Juliana fan. 1993 was actually a really good year for both of them. The Lemonheads had a hit with their cover of "Mrs. Robinson," and Juliana and Evan were constantly featured in magazines like NME, Rolling Stone, Spin, and People. That year, Atlantic Records bought Mammoth Records so now Juliana was officially on a major label. Her new album Become What You Are came out, and again, I listened to it solidly.

Before the album came out, we had Juliana's name written on our New Release Board at HMV, and one of my friends wrote "Chrissi's Friend" beside her name. The next day I noticed that someone had crossed out the word "Friend" and wrote the word "Idol" beside it instead. Okay, so maybe she wasn't really my friend, but it really offended me that someone had the nerve to cross the word out. They were obviously making fun of me and didn't believe that I had ever really met her or that she'd sent me a postcard. Some people would say, "Well, you met her, I believe you, but it's not like she'd remember who you are!" "She would," I'd assure them. "Yeah right!" These people weren't my true friends, I told myself. They didn't know who I really was inside. The more I tried to relate to my co-workers, the more I realized how different we really were. None of them were married, none of them had come to live in a new country, hell, none of them were from New York! I listened to Hey Babe over and over again. I got out my anger while I listened to her song "Nirvana," and when I felt completely alienated, I listened to the song "Ugly," and at least I knew there was somebody else in the world who wasn't feeling very good about herself either. I became more determined than ever now to become Juliana's friend.

I heard that she was set to do an acoustic set at "the Bovine Sex Club" that July, and my supervisor, Paul, managed to put our names on the guest list. But I wanted more, so I actually called up the Attic Records rep who was in charge of bringing Juliana around to the gig and all her interviews once she came to Toronto.

"Yeah, I'm, uh, Juliana's friend," I told him over the phone. "I haven't seen her in a while, and I was wondering if I could meet with her, ya know, before the show."



"Oh, maybe we can arrange that. Let me have your phone number."

But of course he never called.

Paul and I showed up at "the Bovine" and I drank a lot

of Canadian ice beers. When Juliana finally came on stage, I was unintentionally smashed. I immediately went right up to the stage. "Hi, Juliana!" I said.

She smiled. "Hey, you're blonder now."

"Yeah," I said. "It's streaks."

"I'm thinking of dyeing my hair too."

"Oh yeah? You should streak it like mine. Don't dye it all blonde, everybody does that." I was sounding stupider by the minute. I told her that I'd like to send her some of my short stories, but I've gotta write some good ones first. Yep. Stupider by the minute!

She played a great set and actually answered some audience questions afterward. I didn't ask her any. I mean, if I asked her a question now, it would seem like I couldn't ask her one privately, like she wasn't really my friend. Next, people lined up for her to sign their glossy pictures from the promo kits they had given out. I stood right beside her the entire time.

"So, what are you doing after this?" I asked. "Going back to the hotel?"

"Yeah," she said. "And then I might go see the Posies play at 'Lee's Palace'."

And I said, "I wish we could sit down and talk."

"Yeah," she answered. "Maybe when I come back in October we can."

"Well, do you want my phone number, and if you have time, we can get together?" So I gave her my phone number and address.

Of course, she never called.

She actually came back one month earlier than planned, in September. She was playing at "Lee's Palace" again, and that afternoon, she would be signing CD's at "Sam's Record Store" — our competition down the street.

"Why couldn't we get her?" I said to Paul. He just shrugged.

When I got there, I immediately saw my friend, Mike, who had published a very favorable review of Juliana's album, Hey Babe, that was actually included in the promo kits at "the Bovine." We waited in a crowd of people till she finally arrived.

"Sorry, I'm late," she said to the crowd. "But it wasn't my fault."

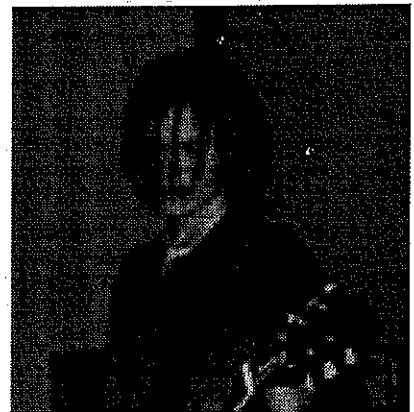
She played a short, acoustic set and then took requests from the audience. Everyone shouted out song titles. Mike shouted out for the song "Watch Me Now, I'm Calling."

"Feed Me!" I shouted, and Mike laughed at me. Well, it is a song title!

Then we all waited in line for her to sign our stuff. Mike and I went up together, and she spotted me while I was near the table.

"Hey, how are you?" she said.

Mike whispered in my ear. "Okay, now I



BEFRIENDING

A

BLAKE BABY

believe you!" he said.
We went up to the table.

"This is my friend, Mike,"

I said. He wrote one of the reviews
of Hey Babe that was included in your
promo kit."

"Great," she said.

I gave her my CD booklet of Become What
You Are to sign. Mike told her, "I don't have
anything to sign, I'm just here
to keep an eye on her!"

Juliana took the CD booklet. "Is it
for you?" she asked.

"Yeah."

"Is it an 'I' or an 'E'?"

"An 'I'." I answered. "We're going
to be at Lee's Palace tonight, at your
show."

"Great. I'll see you there." Then she
turned to Mike. "Now you take care of
her!" she joked.



That night at Lee's Palace the place was packed. We wound
up standing on our chairs at a table on the side. I couldn't believe
what a difference a year could make! It was worlds away from
the intimate set I saw her play with the Lemonheads. I was glad
for her, she was now the headliner and had so many fans. She
played a great show. I never got to talk to her, never even got

close enough to make eye contact. She seemed unreachable
now. She never wrote back to me, probably didn't even have
my phone number anymore. But the truth is, I didn't really need
her anymore. I had enjoyed a great summer and was now
beginning to become closer friends with people from Canada,
people like Paul and Mike. I even began taking writing classes
and workshops and made friends from there too. I will always
feel that Juliana and I have a mental connection, though —
about two years after this concert, we moved to New York City
(well, Staten Island, so sort of), and the funny thing was that at
around the same time, Juliana moved to New York City too —
It's destiny, I think.

END



I wrote this piece at work the morning after a wild show at the Lion's Den with my then-band, Siberia. I was still drunk from
the night before.

(I'd joined Siberia as bassist in August of '95 after doing one show with them as a hired gun. Their producer, Richie, was a
real perfectionist -- that's a nice way of saying he was a total control freak -- so I was surprised when I was asked to join the band.
I wasn't very good at that point. I guess Richie saw my potential. We rehearsed often, and I'd have to say it was at this point
that I became a real bass player.)

The band had mistakenly been booked on *heavy metal* night. We were as far from heavy metal as possible. Our lead singer
had one of the softest (and most hauntingly beautiful) voices in rock history.

We were about to "abandon ship" when we decided that it would be an incredibly unprofessional thing to do, so we got
completely shit-faced instead.

Not only did we surprise ourselves, we blew the audience away!!!

the lion's den

Anne Husick

WRITE FOR ANTIMATTERS:

Your thoughts matter! If you have
an opinion about a demo, an
album, a single, a cassette, what-
ever, AntiMatters wants YOU to
review it. Contribute to
AntiMatters, following the infor-
mation on the inside cover...

oh yeah, we're up there on that stage, smoking, loaded,
playing loud and fast, louder than we'd intended but you
know how it is, driven by the heat of the moment, by the
boozy sway of the metal heads who are just as surprised by
their own reaction as we are. in a moment of mismatched
inspiration we are an island of purposeful, aching melody,
surrounded by a sea of tortured souls.

the sweat pours off our collective brow. a sigh of relief is
audible above the din as we realize that we've done the right
thing, sticking around, fulfilling our obligation and our
dream, taking advantage of chemical enhancement to give us
that last little push off the edge of fear.

together...that's what we are, together. we present a united
front. we back our front. we fall into each others' eyes
during moments of comic misfortune and divine inspiration.

I'M ALL FUCKED UP BUT IT KEEPS ME GOING STRONG



Canada's Johnny Sizzle tells us how to stay inspired.

What can I say... I guess you can find inspiration in God or Satan... but let's not bore each other with that form of competition. What I "think" you really have to do is ask yourself "who R U? " When you "think" you know, why not prove it to yourself? As a songwriter, I start off many of my songs intuitively, but when I have writer's block, this is how I like to fight it. You can do a few different things. Please let me take you through the program in these 3 easy to follow steps:

Doing what you "think" you really want to do can be a way to exploit your inner feelings. Especially if you ask yourself -- during or after you are done with your activity or events --

Step #1: Do exactly what you "think" you would like to do.

others through your newest of song(s) why what you agree with is the best to do, be or have. Bring along pens and a pad of paper.

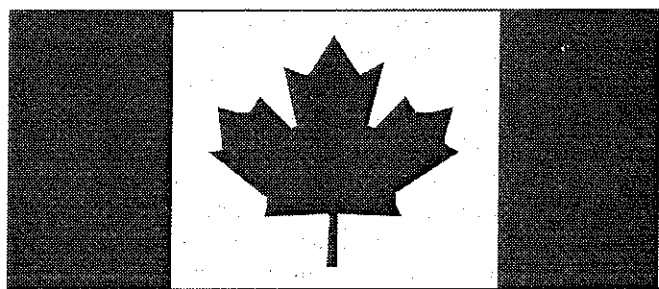
Doing some thing royally different from what you "think" you wish to do can help with complexing and competing with yourself mentally. For example, let's say you "think" you are skittish about SEX with prostitutes. Then why don't you rent out a \$10 street whore and screw him or her really hard, just the way you've always really wanted to? After the experience(s), ask yourself, "are you enraged or are you engaged?" What ever your decision about yourself is after or even during the possibly unwanted experience write down what you feel. Don't be shy and insecure about your feelings because you might find yourself expressing them in front of complete strangers at the Fort any way. It comes down to this: you ultimately give a shit or you absolutely give a fuck. Equip yourself with pens and a pad of paper.

Step #2: Do the complete opposite of what you "think" you would like to do.

A few months ago I never gave much thought to this way of finding inspiration until I was chosen to be in a masked wrestler movie in Toronto. At first I took this role that I was given dead serious, for I was an actor in a film, but then the director took me aside and told me,

"JohNNy, it's a stupid wrestling flick. Just act like crap and you'll do fine!" After the shoot, rushing back home on the subway, it hit me, you can be graceful within stupidity as long as you know that you are comfortable with being stupid. Right away I stormed into my apartment room and started rattling off some of the most idiotic stanzas that I "think" I've ever been involved in. After a hour or two of having fun, I strictly looked at what I wrote down and thought about what words I'd rather use instead. This inspired me to write down words that I "thought" of as intricate, but I worked them in with the prior "dumb" poetry. By the end of that night I felt that I had completed 2 songs and crashed out asleep in midst of a third item of tunage in a disco-dancing cowboy wrestling outfit. When I awoke I took the new possible songs and tried to whack in the guitar and there you are. Pesto majik!

Step #3: Intentionally write lyrics that you "think" are stupid! (N.B.: as a rough draft)



Well these are the options that work for me -- and they may not work for you -- but it's worth a try, if you're up for it. Basically all I'm really doing is living life and taking a few chances on myself (animal-like insanity). It is what I do to get inspired to write again and again and again. I hope this helps you out, my friend, or at least gets you fucked up, you asshole.

I am, That's right, You know it!
JohNNy SiZZle



Acts of Necessity

by Penner MacBryant

Interview with LEZLEE (continued)

You want MORE? The following is the completion of a two part interview with the beautiful talented songmaker LEZLEE. In it, she speaks about the songwriting inspiration for her recent excellent album, Just Being.

PM: Let's talk about a few of the songs on the new album, and songwriting itself. How do songs take shape for you and how did these particular ones come about? Is the process a disciplined one for you, with a set time for writing or otherwise?

L: A lot of times the melodies and lyrics come together or a melody will come [before] but then I have to have an idea about what I want to say before the words can come. It happens differently. Right now I'm writing a song where I have a riff in my head that developed or was born — I don't know how. And then I'll go to the piano and I'm playing the riff and then over the riff, I fit the words and lyrics in between it and it's developing that way. I play the guitar when I sing normally, but piano is lately becoming more of a vehicle for writing, and I think the songs I write on the piano are a little bit different than songs that I write on the guitar. A lot of times though, I'll start songs on the piano and then learn them on the guitar, but they'll be born on the piano. I play guitar better than I play the piano, but the piano [for me] is a much easier instrument to visualize music upon. I enjoy the instrument — it was my first instrument — but I like the sound of guitar with the sound of voice a lot. Or sometimes I'll be walking — in motion or whatever. If I'm thinking about something at that time, a melody and lyric will develop naturally that way. Rarely do I sit down—you know, and consciously plan from six to eight, let's say, to write a song, you know. I usually have a kind of thing to myself where, if a melody is good, it'll stick with me and I'll trust that I'll remember it. If I can't remember it, it wasn't that good to begin with. So it's sort of something that I'm stuck with. I will say that now that my vocal range has increased, I'm more conscious of increasing the range in my songs, so that they start off in one register and, like, go higher. I'm trying to expand that, the octave ranges. I really think [the song I'm working on now] is good, so it's worth finishing. There've been times when I've started songs and either I've gone to the next and I've kind of set that one aside and then sometimes I'll come back to them. There are places in my brain, I feel like, where I've got a song [idea] here (laughter, pointing to a section of her forehead) that's kind of like sitting there, waiting to be finished, and a song [idea] in the back over here (pointing to another part of forehead), and maybe I'll take a piece of each and put them together. I'm happiest in my life when I'm writing, when I'm actually in the process of writing something. I just feel like I'm somehow doing what I'm supposed to be doing in life. I just really enjoy the process. Sometimes a song just develops on its own and I'm just like a vehicle, really. It's something that marvels me as much as anything.

PM: Speaking of piano songs, the last track on your album — probably the most dramatic — is written for solo piano and

voice. What can you tell me about the origins of "Dear Ani"?

L: I was sitting down practicing on the piano, because I really hadn't played in a while and I was supposed to be doing a vocal exercise and that's how it came together. The opening phrase was part of an actual vocal exercise, wedded to a piano exercise. And it was actually Adam [Chalk, the album producer] who came into the room at the time and said 'Develop that. That's good.' Sometimes you need somebody to point out something's worth continuing for you to then do so, which is what happened in that case. So I was, really happy that could play and sing that [song] alone But then when Adam sat down to play it, it was like, now this is how it's supposed to be done!

PM: Let's look at some others. "Seduce Me (With Your Words)" stood out for me because of two things: the prettiness of the arrangement and the song's motif, touching someone through letter writing. I also think it's the first time I ever heard reference to e-mail in a romantic ballad.

L: Yeah. In fact, somebody once said to me everything but that line I like. But e-mail has become such a daily part of our lives.

PM: It didn't come across jarringly. But I guess there had to be a time when the use of the word telephone in a popular song would have sounded alien to the ear of a listener.

L: That's a good point. It's funny you mention that tune because I don't really write love songs as much. A lot of my songs grow out of lessons to myself, to give myself a perspective.

PM: A seemingly recurrent theme in a few of these tunes is the mercurial nature of human fortune. "Rolling Wave" deals with that interesting subject and has actually begun to earn you a limited amount of radio airplay. Tell me about that one.

L: There were two thoughts on that song. It was one of the first songs I actually did consciously sit down and write because someone said to me 'you know it would be interesting if you wrote a song from other people's perspective, rather than your own.' Third person. So I thought I'd write a song about mak-



Acts of Necessity: *Penner MacBryant completes his interview with LEZLEE.*

ing a point through illustration; different stories. I guess the whole idea of fame is interesting to me, because people that are famous, that must be a strange concept, to know people are looking at you all the time and recognizing you and wondering what they're thinking—whether it's good or bad. But you get caught up in this wave. And I see how things can happen so quickly. You could be struggling for years, you could have a hit and suddenly you're the biggest thing. Well, I've noticed that you can only kinda get so big. After a point, people are sick of you and they almost want to see failure from you. Everything seems to be happening great for somebody and then there's a scandal. It's just the way life is. You really can't be too comfortable sometimes. The net can suddenly drop and life can change overnight. Just look at Christopher Reeve.

PM: Indeed. Was the last verse, with its reference to a writer dying just before his project becomes a Broadway smash, inspired by the death of Jonathan Larsen, the author of *Rent*?

L: You are correct.

PM: I thought so. So many songwriters in folk rock have addressed the subject of racial harmony (or the lack therein) in their music over the years, directly or indirectly. You did so in your song, "Red," directly, without a great deal of lyrical device or sophistication. Did you intend this to be a musical statement that achieved impact through its simplicity?

L: Yeah, it is. And it sounds so simple. A simple concept, but then if it's so simple, why is it constantly overlooked? And I do mean that, because, in the past, I've been accused of being too simplistic. But sometimes I like to take the direct route rather than going all the way around the perimeter. We look physically different, you and I. But the makeup of who we are is the same color. And we talk a lot about color in our society. And so, if we're going to talk about color, let's talk about the color that binds us together. And that's sort of where it came up from. I was just thinking of the color itself. If you go to another country, for instance, and you can't read the language and you're driving, what is it about that color that makes you know that you need to stop? The color itself represents universal concepts—danger, passion. Musically speaking, that song went through a lot of changes and I like where it is now.

PM: "When I Need" strikes me as the most upbeat and radio-friendly cut on the whole album. There's such a gentle yet uninhibited joy that comes through in the production. It felt good to feel the way I felt after listening to it. How do you feel about it now and what gave birth to this one?

L: I wrote that song, as I did many of the other songs on the album, in a period of nine months, when I was coming out of a deep emotional depression. And when you come out of something like that, you just want to be lifted up from darkness. So the song is mostly about the simple joys of life and being able

to live in that perspective. I'm not heading back down by any means, but I'm able to explore darker subjects without letting them envelop me. So I'm interested in the songs I'm writing now because they're about some sort of a reaction to some negative stuff happening — though not necessarily in my life—where there's a kind of pushing forth. At times, musically, I'm my own cheerleader, because otherwise you can just sink down. I've been there and I don't want to go there again, believe me (laughter). I think it's important, if you are in that place, to just wait it out and believe that it will get better, and when it does and when you pull yourself out of something like that, it is a very empowering feeling. And "When I Need" was one of those songs that helped pull me out of this period and was very empowering for me. It helped me get out of my own way—and I was in my own way for a long time—and give to others.

PM: The title cut itself. It has a hypnotic, almost sensual beauty to it in the musical arrangement, illuminated by the clear vocal you give to it. Why did you choose this as the title track and how did this come into existence?

L: Again, it was the result of pulling myself out of emotional darkness, and being capable again of relishing in the art of being rather than the pressure of doing. Being happy with the moment, with the special person in my life and realizing that we create our own world, sometimes the two of us. It's just so nice to be able to be with somebody else without having to impress, without having to prove anything other than the fact that you exist and someone is with you who's happy that you exist (laughter) and vice-versa. There's just total acceptance and unconditional love and there's nothing like that feeling. Relishing those precious moments that can exist in stillness between you and those dearest to you.

PM: You're quite a performer and this is quite an album. Thank you for taking time out to talk with *AntiMatters*.

L: It's been a pleasure.



Inspiration or Confrontation?

Joe BENDIK

It was a Saturday night. I got this mysterious phone call from a guy named Pat Harper (poet, spoken word performer and more) informing me that "there will be some type of jam session tonight, would you like to attend and bring your guitar"? I said "well alright;" packed up the old piece of crap guitar of mine and headed over to Pat's place on East Houston.

Once I had arrived, I was surprised to see the humans there. Dan had a megaphone & melodica, and Dave brought his guitar. There were plenty of party goods too: food, drink and some



unmentionable items as well. Well, I started to partake in these items while unpacking my guitar. I almost never play while partying -- too much work, but this time I thought, "what the fuck" and started to play. We made some noise, stopped a little, played some more, etc. At some point, someone (I forgot who, exactly) made the suggestion about going into the street.

By this time, we were fairly blitzed, and made our way to the streets with instruments (guitars, megaphone) and video camera in tow. The streets were packed with the usual Saturday night crowd. All of a sudden, Dan whips out the megaphone and starts to make 'announcements'. They include "step to the right, you have no rights" and similar sentiments. Dave and I were jamming some chord/lead type of guitar things, while Pat videotaped the whole spectacle.

This, however, was only the beginning. Pat started to follow people with his camera and attempted to interview them all. At one point, Beastie Boy Ad Rock appeared on the street, ready to get into his limo. Pat walked up to him with his camera and asked him his opinion of Giuliani. Of course, Ad ignored him and gingerly got into his mega-ride.

I'm wondering by now, why all of this political stuff, I mean, I'm not all that political, you know. Beyond the political thing though, it soon dawned on me that people were really uptight. When someone goes out for a good time, they are so on-guard

that anything out of the ordinary becomes a threat to their outer 'cool'. Now we're getting somewhere.

We continued to walk the street, stopping occasionally to perform a few tunes. It was great. Someone would always stop by, watch, comment briefly, shake their heads and leave. Yeah, rock n roll.

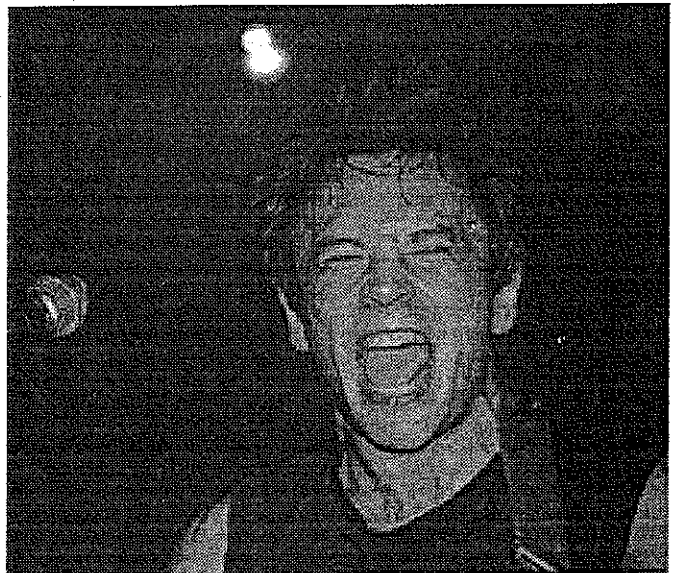
At this point we were getting near Sidewalk. It was around 2 and the bands had finished playing. As we walked in, we realized that we still had our instruments with us, and naturally walked up to the stage area.

There was no PA at this point, but still quite a nice crowd. We decided to do a little mini concert. First, we all jammed on the humans' "Blue Sky". It was so cool. I got to play lead guitar and sing harmonies. Afterwards, I broke into "Inconsiderate (song for the children)" with everyone joining in on the chorus. This felt so different than just playing a gig. No amplification (at least in the traditional electric sense). The crowd really seemed to dig it too. We didn't want to push our luck though, and left right after the song. Somewhere there's a video tape of the whole thing.

After a couple days of recovery, I noticed that a lot of new ideas were coming into my head. It took this weird trip into the unknown to unlock something. Something that lies underneath all of the control, theory and cool. Inspiration?

<http://members.aol.com/joebendik>

*Catch a Full Heathens' show on
July 25th (at 11 @ Sidewalk)*

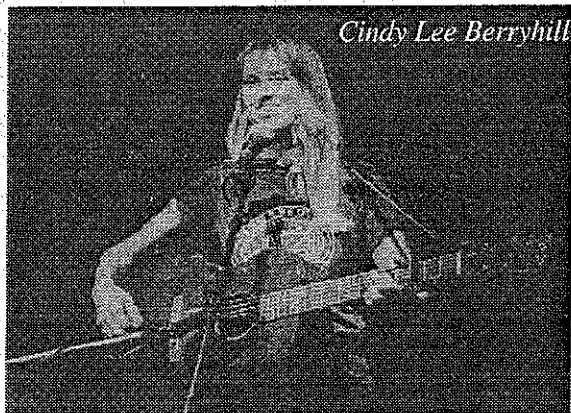


Greetings from Chicago.

Thomas Dunning posted the Cindy Lee Berryhill discussion group (@ <http://www.mwpssoft.com/clb>) abouty his first hearing the artist, and what she meant to him in advance. This is his story.

My name is Tom and I finally got to see Ms. Berryhill last night at Martyr's. Sadly, I only got to see the last 3 songs of her set. I had never heard them before and I have only a limited relationship with Cindy's music, but they were gripping, to say the least. I had a chance to talk with Cindy after the show, finally. I guess I should give you a little background on how I've come to be so affected by CLB's. Before last night I could only tell you names of 2 songs. "What Is Wrong With Me?" and I think "Baby, Should I Have The Baby Or Not?".

Of course these 2 songs are from Naked Movie Star which I believe is out of print and if you have an extra copy or know where I can get one please contact me. Anyway, the reason I know these 2 songs is because my best friend Nora O'Connor who is a singer/songwriter here in Chicago had that CD and she also played those 2 songs in her live performance sets.



Here's the personal stuff, I know I'm a total stranger — so please excuse... but I promised someone I would share this.

It was July or August 1993. I was having a particularly difficult time in my life; feeling completely alienated from the world, feeling like a freak, detached from my own emotions, abusing alcohol and other drugs on a daily basis and quickly heading towards my very own bottom line. On this particular night I went to a concert by Cris Williamson whose deeply moving music I had loved for years — something was wrong, the music didn't penetrate me, I felt nothing from it. I panicked, I knew I had gone too far and feared I would never get a sense of myself back or be able to feel real feelings again. I called my friend Nora and asked her if I could come over, I was shaking and scared. We sat on her bed and I asked her to get her guitar and sing me CLB's "What Is Wrong With Me?"

As she played and sang the beautiful song, I had my little breakdown (after not having cried for well over a year and a half). It would be only another month and a half before I would ask for some help, get sober and work to put my life back together. As I mentioned, I'm not as familiar with CLB's music as I would like to be, but I've carried that very special moment with me for years now. I would always hear about CLB's performances in Chicago after the fact. Once, I was even in the same building but in another room as she performed. UGH!

I picked up the Garage Orchestra album last night and I look forward to getting to know it. So that's my Cindy Lee Berryhill story. I look forward to getting to see a full performance. I hope you don't mind the personal nature of my story. I'm sure I'll ask her to play that special song the next time she comes to Chicago.

peace and grace,

Thomas Dunning

Sunday, 31 May, 8:58 pm.

A Search for Inspiration

By Patrick Harper

At this moment many artists around the world are afflicted with a common malady known as "writers block." A pleading echo in the mind repeats "must find inspiration, must find inspiration." Lack of inspiration can lead to a lack of motivation, this is especially depressing when one is engaged in a project he or she does not relish, such as writing an article for a "zine" that has a total readership of 17 people.

Enough bellyaching, let's take a little trip into the big bold world of inspiration and see if we can come up with something to run on. First let's try to get excited! If you cannot get excited about the project, pretend.

Now, the oldest trick in the book: establish a deadline. Say, this project has to be finished in the next 10 minutes. Rewrites can wait. Our motivation here is to finish the project according to the schedule.

The very word "inspiration" is full of imagery. We may wish to study it... my dictionary offers up this definition of the word "inspire": "To breath in."

Next we can approach the project in a more abstract fashion and merely "free associate" with the word, "inspiration": The Bible, God, human rights, despots, money, power, greed, charity, the jackass on the subway last night, poverty, war, hate, death, flowers, loved ones,... Love.

A balmy summer night on the beach, a small camp fire crackles as you gaze into the smiling eyes of a pretty girl with long soft hair.

**Buy Back Issues of AntiMatters -- before
it's too late!**

IDLE WORSHIP

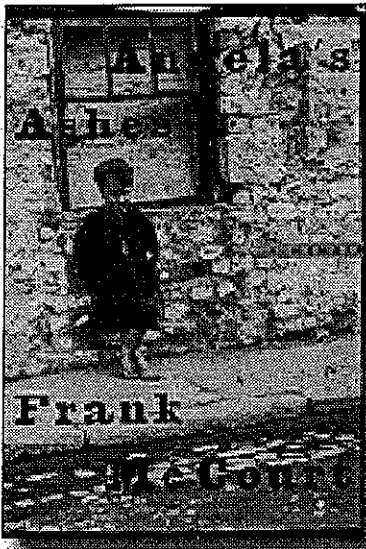
Jonathan Berger

Chatting with John S Hall

When John S Hall came up to me, we didn't talk about his band. We didn't talk about his poetry. We didn't talk about my poetry, or how I'm trying to model it directly on his. We didn't talk about how he's the most admired contemporary writer I know, the poet laureate of the AntiFolk scene, or how I noisily lusted after his ex-girlfriend. We didn't talk about his career, or his fame, or my zine, and its range, and we didn't talk about the CB's poetry reading that had just ended. Instead, we talked about high school. Rather, a high school teacher.

"You went to Frank McCourt's Ceremony at NYU," I said knowingly.

"Right," Hall said, "I was an alumn. Did I say hi to you there?" I shook my head, "I don't think so." Hall never said hi to me anywhere. He might recognize me, but would never come up



and speak. I'd been told that the former leader of the prolific King Missile was fairly shy. I could never quite understand that, as he was fucking JOHN S HALL, a public figure, a virtual celebrity.

"Yeah," Hall said, "I was a student of his in high school."

"I know. You asked him a question."

"That's right...!"

At the Award Ceremony to give Frank McCourt — Pulitzer Prize winning memoirist — an

Honorary Master's Degree from his *alma mater*, Hall had raised his hand. He'd reminded McCourt about something the teacher had said in class years ago, at Stuyvesant High School. Hall asked him if he still thought it was true.

Watching from a couple rows apart, I'd been impressed that Hall — whose King Missile albums were all the rage and national successes at the turn of the decade — had found fame before Mr. McCourt, but had come to NYU to pay fealty to his creative writing professor.

"Let me ask you," I said to the spoken word guru, "What'd you think of McCourt at Stuyvesant?"

"Oh, did you go there, too?"

"Yeah," I replied, dismissively "After you got out, though." Hall had told me so a few years back, back before he'd shaved his head, before I'd seen him read "Jesus Was Way Cool" and "Martin Scorsese" and "Planky the Plucky Plankton" over a dozen times. Before I shaved my head, maybe subconsciously in tribute, or considered buying a hat, certainly in tribute.

"I liked him," Hall said.

"Did you think he was a good teacher?"

"Sure. I think that was the first time I did any real writing — in his class"

My experiences with Mr. McCourt were more mixed, my feelings more ambivalent. I never wrote in his class, and, in retrospect, felt that McCourt, with his desire to practice standup monologues, really discouraged other's creativity.

"Interesting," I muttered, "Have you read *Angela's Ashes*?"

"Immediately," Hall said, "It's a great book."

I swore to myself for the eight billionth time to pick it up.

"I'm thinking of reading Malachy's book first," I said, "Maybe be the only person to do it in that order — had you seen *A Couple of Blaguards*?"

Hall looked a little confused.

"Frank and Malachy put on a show about growing up in Limerick," I explained, "A two person show. When I saw it, it really looked like Malachy McCourt was the Alpha Dog of the pair. Now look at them."

"Yeah, I think I remember something about that. Did you have Mr. McCourt?"

"Yeh," I said, and began to talk about how I didn't do any real writing until after I got out of high school, how I didn't think he was a teacher so much as a performer. I told him about when I soured on McCourt.

"After I got out of my first semester in his class, I saw him in the hall, and went up to talk to him. I could tell, just by the way he was looking at me, that he didn't recognize me."

It shouldn't have been so surprising. I'd never spoken in his class; never written a thing, let alone anything memorable. I was just a name on a piece of paper for the teacher.

"It hurt —" I said, then amended, "It really bothered me that I'd left no impression on him."

"Oh, I completely understand that," Hall said, "I meet people all the time, and I don't remember names and I don't remem-



ber faces. When you meet so many people, you just can't retain them all."

I nodded. I guess I'd never been in a position to meet more people than I could keep track of. Or maybe I just had better recall.

"I do understand it better now," I said, "That's why I sometimes avoid using people's names. I try to just find something contextual about them to say, like, 'how's the dog?' or 'that was a great album!'"

Hall nodded, but he had no idea what I was talking about.

"I doubt that Frank McCourt would recognize me," he mused.

I snorted. I'd spoken to McCourt right after the awards ceremony, where Hall had spoken up, and I'd spoken to him about six weeks before. I was hardly surprised that not once did he mention my name. Now, of course, he's a real celebrity. Now, McCourt isn't being paid by the Board of Ed to know who I

am. I can understand being a pebble beneath him these days. Still, back when he was a teacher, merely a celebrity at Stuyvesant...

"He wouldn't know me," Hall said, "I understand that. You should understand that."

"Celebrity breeds contempt," I thought, but said, "Do you think Martin Scorsese would recognize you?"

"Oh no," Hall said, "Absolutely not."

One of Hall & King Missile's most recognizable cuts is "Martin Scorsese," which is, as I read it, a rant on iconifying of celebrity.

.....
She had nothing to say.

Well, that's a start she thought to herself

And she picked up the pen and the small note pad

And lay down on her bed.

Paralyzed, she held the pen, oh, maybe eight millimeters from the page

For at least a half an hour and then thought to herself,

Oh, who am I kidding, I know I have nothing to say;

She wanted to throw the pen away.

No, she wanted to take a hammer,

Pound the pen into her skull

Blood gushes out like Old Faithful

World engulfed in a red sea, the final flood.

No, screw the pen,

Keep the hammer,

Get a chisel,

Scult away at the skull

Reveal the ivory woman in agony hidden within

No, screw those ideas,

She said,

I don't care if I got nothing to say,

I'm just gonna scribble away until I find something.

But she's crossing out every other word

And she knows she's not fooling anybody

She knows she had nothing to say

Just like me.

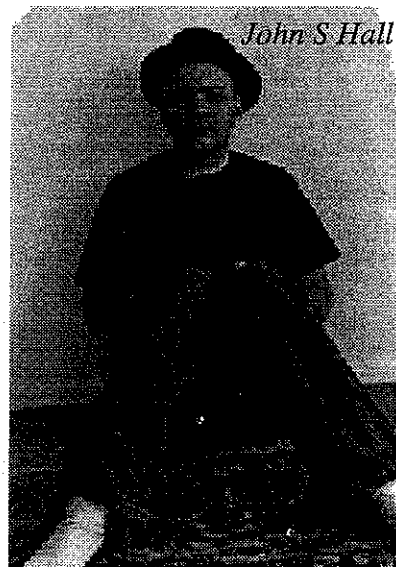
She Had Nothing

by John S Hall

(a poem unscrupulously lifted, without permission, from King Missile's They.)



This is yet another example of a stolen panel of gorgeous artwork from the incredible Jaime Hernandez, one half of the team that brought you Love and Rockets for 16 years. Fantagraphics still publishes his stuff. Buy it now, if only to assuage the guilt over viewing this justify this theiving crime again his good work.



MUSIC AT THE FORT

The Sidewalk Cafe (94 Ave.A) is proud to present the following schedule for your publication. All shows are free with a one drink minimum. (<http://members.aol.com/folkbro>)

Tues.July 7- 7:30-Nick Patrick, 8-Chris Wiedeman, 8:30-David Quimby, 10-Three Normal Humans, 11-Tony Hightower

Wed.July 8- 8-Michelle Riganese, 8:30-Christopher Dillon, 9-Dave Dragov, 9:30-Anna, 10-Rick Shapiro

Thurs.July 9- Rob Ryan's Country Thursday! 7:30-Little Oscar, 8-Billy Dove, 9-Rob Ryan, 10-Limberjack County, 11-Country Jam

Fri.July 10- 8- Jesse White, 8:30- Full Throttle Aristotle, 9- Animal Head, 10- Bicycle, 11- Jarrod Gorbel

Sat.July 11- 8-Jessica Kane, 8:30- The Swimmies, 9-Sinde Kise, 10-Little Shining Man, 11-Blues To Venus, 12- Low-Fi

Sun.July 12- 8-Starchild, 8:30-Brian Seymour, 9-Matt Sherwin, 9:30- Joe Bidewell, 10-Randy Kaplan

Mon.July 13- Lach's Antihoot - Sign up at 7:30. Open stage for Antifolkies, Speechifiers, Comics, Jugglers, Magicians, Poets and, yes, Songwriters.

Tues.July 14- 8-The Valentines, 8:30-Jolie Rickman, 9:30-Malcolm Holcombe, 10:30-Michael Berke

Wed.July 15-8-Wish, 9-The McCarthys, 9:30- Closer (Revolution Records), 10- Rick Shapiro

Thurs.July 16- Rob Ryan's Country Thursday! 8-Earl Pickens and the Trail of Tears, 9- Rob Ryan, 10-Shoot me Now, 11- The Country Jam

Fri.July 17-8-Lezlee, 9-Alan Andrews, 10-Delta Garage, 11- Porkchop

Sat.July 18- 8-The Artisticks, 9-Yucca Flats, 10-Vertigo Blind, 11- Lenny Molotov

Sun.July 19- 8-Mighty Vitamins, 8:30-Stellan Wahlstrom, 9-Shameless, 10- Marilee, 10:30-Lunch Bucket

Mon.July 20- Lach's Antihoot - Sign up at 7:30.

Tues.July 21-8-Grey Revell, 8:30- Nancy Falkow, 9-Joy Zuzulo, 9:30-Rome 56, 10:30- Mr.Boltgun

Wed.July 22- 7:30-E.J., 8-Luke Miller, 8:30-Don

Lennon, 9-Lee Chabowski, 9:30- Jack Peddler, 10- Rick Shapiro

Thurs.July 23- Rob Ryan's Country Thursday! 8-Amy Alison, 9-Rob Ryan, 10- Julie Grower, 11- The Country Jam

Fri.July 24- 8- Curtis Eller's American Circus, 9-Kenny Young and The Eggplants, 10- The Cucumbers, 11- The Gripweeds, 12- Chocolate Genius

Sat.July 25- 8-Neal W/ An A, 9-Steve Espinola, 10-Mr.Scarecrow, 11- Joe Bendik, 12- Bionic Finger

Sun. July 26- 5-7- Art Opening for Laurie Usher's Androcles and The Lion (performance by George Usher at 7 p.m) 8- Eric Sarmiento, 8:30- Chris Buskey, 9-Princess, 9:30- Butch, 10- Style Martly

Mon.July 27- Lach's Antihoot - Sign up at 7:30.

Tues.July 28- 8-Tom Shaner, 8:30- Elizabeth Anka Vajagic, 9- Jeff Lightning Lewis, 9:30- Damion Wolfe, 10- Oren, 11- Troy Campbell

Wed.July 29 - 8-Sport, 9-Thomas Covenant, 10- Rick Shapiro

Thurs.July 30- 8-Tammy Faye and Timmy Raye, 9- Rob Ryan, 10- Vida Loca, 11- The Country Jam

Fri.July 31- 8-Gilligan Stump, 9-SVA, 10-Delta Garage, 11-Daniel Harnett

Announcements

• See bicycle on July 10. They make their return to New York and the Fort on July 10th, after a year and a half and a fairly disastrous New Year's Eve show. With mostly new members and a substantially hip-hopier style, the gimmick-ridden group (they always bike to their gigs — much more impressive when they tour than when they play local gigs) continues to confound, and delight. Let's just hope they still rock.

• Looking to annoy your neighbors at the local open mic? The AMA wants you! Crash jams with a select few, rush the stage, be obnoxious. Talk to Joie <Beallindall@aol.com> for details.

• Philadelphia needs AntiFolk! George's 5th Street Cafe has seen NYC acts like Mr. Scarecrow, Lach, MaryAnn Farley and Lenny Molotov in recent months. It's a no-smoking, no-drumming coffee house, where the people are so desperate for entertainment they'll actually go to see you! Call Butch Ross, Wednesdays, 6-8pm @215-925-3500.

• The Gripweeds are returning to the Fort on Friday, July 24th. It might be two years since we've heard from this anglopop revival act that rocks harder than the Rooks (but with fewer cute chicks). It's time. Check it out.

NEXT ISSUE IN ANTIMATTERS:

VICES

You know you have them...

Search Tetris Sunday, to say and he will. This cry on a woman's feet. Sunday at binary Musings. Impossible crowd experience. Not that I have been but maybe it has today one finally had by his good + cool.

Views are our perspective. The spotlight on the advertisement has been met almost like offering results.