

Contact AntiMatters

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WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Subscription

Twelve dollars can net you six whole issues of AntiMatters. It's like a party in your mailbox!

Who contributes to AntiMatters? Excellent question. Mostly, they're artists on the scene, like our exceptional cover artist Jeff Lightning Lewis. That's lightning, like the stuff out of the sky, not lightening, like he's an octoroon who dyes his skin - not that there's anything against octoroons...

Sometimes, they're band leaders, like Joe Bendik, who seems to have a mission to report what's happening in the life of the original AntiFolk superstar, Mr. Bob Dylan. It's been suggested that Joe become AntiMatters' exclusive Goes Electric Correspondent, but we at the zine on the scene hate to tie ourselves down.

Sometimes, AntiMatters is contributed to by crochety old men like Gustav

Plympton, who really has little good to say about anyone, but does sooo enjoy saying it. He's been the esteemed assistant editor here at AM Central for almost a year now. Maybe we'll get him a watch. After all, he deserves to know what time it is!

Most of the time, we get articles about recording strategies by the Founding Father of AntiMatters, Tom Nishioka. He started the 'zine with some MIA performer named JT Lewis in 1995, and, after stepping down as editor, has had something of a role in AM's development since.

Dave Wechsler is just now wrapping up his three part series that is nominally about Philosophy, but appears to really be about the Aesop's Fable that is his home life. He threatens to continue to contribute in some fashion in the future. Charlie Starkweather is perhaps our west coast correspondent, living in Portland, or Seattle, or something.

Tom Warnick claims to be involved in the zine. We see no reason to argue with him. Ms. Stephanie Biederman enjoys being a girl, and helps Mssrs. Plympton and Berger with the regular features, Report from the Fort, and the still unnamed and infrequent Recording Reviews column. She's a damned good writer, no matter what anyone says.

Joe Bendik Jonathan Berger Stephanie Biederman Borge Haine Paul Hones Jeff Lightning Lewis Tom Nishioka Gustav Plympton

Contributors

Tom Warnick

Charlie Starkweather

Finally, there's that writing dynamo named Jonathan Berger, who appears to be taking a break in the writing of the zine, to devote more time to his first love, masturbation. There are others who write semi-regularly for the zine, but they're not in this issue, so you won't hear nothing about them this time around. Sorry. JВ

Contributions are wonderful things. They make you feel useful, because you contributed. They make us feel useful, because you wanted to contribute. Yep. No question. Contributions are the stuff of angels.

And like snowflakes, no two are alike. And like snowflakes, you just can't get enough of them. We love 'em. AntiMatters endorses the concept of contributions. As of this issue, we come out pro on this important 1998 issue. (Gustav Plympton)

Master of Disaster Jonathan Berger

Master Plaster Caster **Gustav Plympton**

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Report from the Fort

(Note: Not all contributions to Report from the Fort are in fact, Reports written at the Fort. Nor are they necessarily reviews of events that have occurred at the Fort, or even in proximity to said locale. Not all submissions have any relation to the Fort whatsoever, other than a cosmic, holistic connection that all things share, if you go in for that sort of thing. The title of this column, Report from the Fort, is just a title. It is not a code of belief. All right; carry on...)

October 15, 1998, 8.30PM - Coney Island High - Nothing hurts worse than seeing talent self destruct. There can be other factors that lead to it, different reasons that try to excuse it... The sound engineer always makes mistakes, after all; and bad lighting can also add a certain sense of discomfort; and possibly, the wrong combination of drinks before a show, or maybe some bad seafood, or maybe – enough already. No excuses, no rationale. Nothing hurts worse than the promise left unfulfilled.

Joe Bendik can sing. Joe Bendik can play guitar. He's got one of those rare voices, able to growl one phrase, ham up the next, slip into a soft sensuous croon, all in a single verse, all believable. His guitar sings just as well -- or better -- than he does. Matching the vocal diversity, raising the level of intentional intensity, complimenting the listener's ear, these two well-oiled instruments mesh wonderfully. Could everything work as smoothly? The Heathens, a front person's dream (wish I knew them ten years ago), rise to any task. Tight, pounding, groovy, they lay down a solid rhythm. They lay back, coolly blending with whatever's before them: a frozen margarita-machine, serving a jumbo. So have a smoothie, to smooth over Joe's borderline psycho-physiological antics. On stage, he's the man, he's got it going on, he's got all the right elements working for him, with a band from heaven following him through his hellish, ill-conceived performance. What takes all these great pieces and tears them apart? Too many delays, too many lingering pauses, too many complaints. Some occur in between songs, some in the middle. Joe loses his cool, giving the impression he's trying to copy the natural dysfunction of systems which are supposed to fall apart. Or is that just the natural process of the artist? Not in his medium. Rock and roll promises to overcome stagnation. Joe Bendik cannot. Am I supposed to clap for this? I do, but hesitantly. (Paul Hones)

October 16, 1998, 10PM - Sidewalk Cafe: Mozart's Grave hadn't played the Sidewalk in well over a year. "We were banned for playing to loud," Dave, the group's singer/songwriter half-joked in his set. Still, it's not hard to imagine the possibility. The band sounds more like Nirvana than anyone else, even in their stripped down, semi-acoustic Fort incarnation.

The three-piece has got hooks like nobody's business, with pulsing bass, hardass drums, and the time-changes that make you constantly wonder if Mozart's Grave is actually a Seattle cover band. It's obvious from their songs, their stance and their staccato delivery that they're meant to be playing the dirtier, harder clubs, like CBGB and Coney Island High. Still, the song craft, in this quieter setting, worked well for them. It especially worked for their set closer, a song about

a loser band that's entitled, appropriately enough, "Mozart's Grave." Also included in their set is the mighty "Poet", about -- maybe -- the commodification of rebellion, ala Kurt Cobain? Nirvana again, but cool! (Gustav Plympton)

October 23, 1998, 8PM - Acme Underground: Nobody cares anymore. In what could have been a shining moment of compassion and consideration, we instead got... what? Some piddling display of vague support. What happened?

The Steve Dansiger Benefit had the loftiest of motives: to collect money and good karma for the aforementioned drummer, songwriter, bandleader. As a member of Pianosaurus, King Missile, Maggie Estep's outfit, and most recently, the Polanskys, Dansiger had a lot of musical friends, and the organizers could call on heavy hitters Steve Wynn and David Poe, as well as excellent artists Life in a Blender, Bianca Bob, and Regular Einstein, to build a pretty mighty bill that could satisfy any thousand audience members, well beyond the capacity of Acme Underground. Despite the promise of the artists, though, and the goodness of the cause, the show never reached critical mass. While often reaching a point of



DECEMBER...

...REPORT FROM THE FORT...

mandatory standing for new people in the crowd, there were lots of times when anyone in the crowd could come in and take a seat. Maybe the night wasn't promoted as well as it could have been. Maybe the ten dollar ticket-donation for Steve's well-being was high. Maybe the fact that Dansiger wasn't crippled in a horrible drunken accident, or doesn't have MS, precluded people's attendance. Whatever the reason, the show never gelled into a moment of critical community response. Even the Wirebirds reunion show only garnered so much attention from the assembled.

It's a pity. When so many talented performers put on such excellent shows (highlights were Life in a Blender, the Wirebirds and Charles Curtis and Will Dial opening the night with a half-hour instrumental outing), it's a shame response, let only population, wasn't greater. (S Biederman)

November 10, 1998, 8PM - Sidewalk Cafe: On this Tuesday night, Jon Berger, the semi-well known editor of AntiMatters magazine spewed forth a barrage of brief poems, sentimental and sarcastic. Most often the subject matter was interpersonal relationships. Love unrequited, love lost, love forgotten, more humorously - love forgettable. Other works dealt with dislikes and hatred. Many of the pieces were heartfelt, bearing wounds in a way that any soul could identify with. If this sounds maudlin, you got the wrong idea! Berger moved around the stage like a pissed off sailor, berating the microphone when it didn't respond to his commands. He pestered the audience, I think he spit on the floor. Among the verbal rocks, heavy and strangely shaped,



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was a gem called "I'm Leaving": An angry man has 'had it' with his teenage-minded, dim-bulb girlfriend. Very funny. If you enjoy words don't miss the next time Jon Berger takes the stage. I thought there was a 50/50 chance this show would be awful. I was prepared to say so. Turned out more like 'awesome'. Best act of the night! (Borge Haine)

November 14, 2.30AM - Sidewalk Cafe: Lach lights a cigarette, and I carefully refrain from coughing, knowing that if I do, fearing illness like a boy in a bubble, Lach will leave. That's not something I want to happen. I haven't begun to congratulate him.

"That was a lot of fun," Geoff Notkin, sitting beside me, says. It was obviously fun for him. Early on in Lach's post-midnight set, Geoff joined his old-time band-mate on-stage, helping out on punk rock harmonies. Also joining Lach's make-shift group was Kenny Davidsen on piano, and, on vocals, some of the earlier acts of the evening, Joe Bendik and Dan & Dave Schurtman, aka the humans.

"The problem with Lach's sets," Kenny says, just out of range of smoking Lach's hearing, "Is that they always wind me up. No matter how late he plays, I need some serious wind-down time afterwards."

"That's a problem, all right," I acknowledge, adding almost begrudgingly, "This was a mighty cool set."

"So, tell me how great I was," Lach smiles to the table.

We all rush to offer congratulations.

"I love this part of the night," Lach says.

The show wasn't a bad part of the night, either. Lach was loose, didn't harrass the audience for inattentiveness, gave props to the stars of the evening, the humans, who had just released their latest EP, <u>Plastic</u>, during their eight o'clock set. He was flexible, and encouraged audience participation from the dwindling late-night crowd. And, for the first time in a long time, Lach's crowd seemed to grow as the evening played out. The spirit of community was palpable.

"This is what I expect should be happening every night," Kenny says to the group, "People joining in, jamming, not worrying if it's all right. People playing together."

"Well, there was a good vibe tonight," Lach says, "It was the humans' night, and they're favorite sons around here."

The humans are certainly favored performers, as evidenced by their standing from only show. Featuring the brothers

their standing room only show. Featuring the brothers Schurtman on vocals and guitar and keyboards, as well as Fort regulars Joe Bendik and Andy Morris as the rhythm section, the band was both potent and poppy. They were showy and rhythmic, offering rock-star pomp without the attitude that usually comes with it. Theirs was a great show, leading into great shows by friends Dave Dragov and Joe Bendik with his band, the Heathens. The incredibly different sounds of Bendik, Dragov and the humans didn't dissuade the audience from staying, the people from clapping, or the freaks from dancing.

"That was a great night," I repeat unnecessarily, just before getting up to go. On my way out the door, I pass Dave Schurtman, the guitar and harmony of the human sound. "You created a magic here tonight," I tell him, "It was just great."

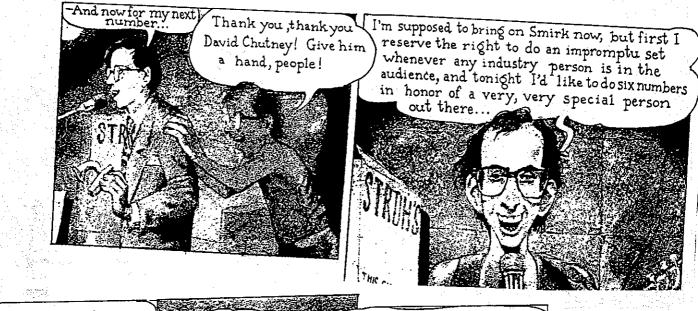
"Hey, man, thanks," he says.

I don't think to correct him as I leave. Certainly, I realize, I should have said, "No, man, thank you." (Jonathan Berger)

Cartoning for Fun and Profit

Did you know there was a graphic novel published about the AntiFolk scene? Do you even know what a graphic novel is?

Prepare to be schooled. A graphic novel, for those not in the know, is a comic book that's trying to get props as art. It's a bound volume, found in book stores, not a stapled item, available at news-stands and comic shops (well, it is available in comic shops, but also in such respected book-sellers' as Border's and Barnes & Noble). In 1995, Kitchen Sink Press released Welcome to the Zone, David Chelsea's roman a clef story about a collection of East Village types. Using a strange, unclear, dot-based style, Zone features characters like Lunch, who hosts an Anti Folk Hoot, as well as characters with names like Puffy Prawn, Folkie Joe, Hollis A Jones, Smirk Smiley, and Candy Lou Heatherhock. These characters all have equivalents in the real-live world of AntiFolk (Brenda Kahn, Roger Manning, John S Hall, Kirk Kelly and Cindy Lee Berryhill, respectively).





David Chelsea's published art

The

just about as sense as you'd Cartooning for Fun and Profit

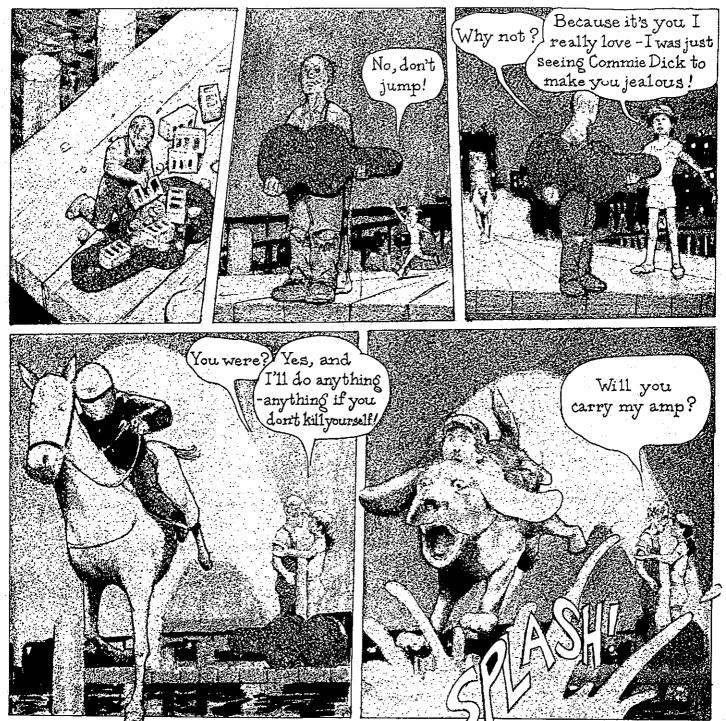
aliens, eating

from a cartoon bipedal ducks, David Chelsea's Melcome to the Zone

much expect featuring humangiant

makes

dogs, walking skeletons, and Japanese kite people, all side by side with your favorite AntiFolk semi-celebrities. The origins of the Zone lay in the original AntiFolk fanzine, Exposure, in which David Chelsea produced a strip called Lach's Lair, or Lunch's Lair, or the Zone, depending on the issue. Chelsea was a straight-laced singersongwriter in the scene who was, evidently, multi-talented, producing this strip years after leaving the scene. Now, Chelsea is on the West Coast, living the life of a graphic artist.





Chelsea was an effective story-teller. Evidently, Chelsea's presentations of his characters were dead-on. According to those who were around at the time, he perfectly captured characters and moments, and even the most absurd elements of his story have moments of truth. The Mr. Bony Zone riot that leads to the climax of the story is likely a psychedelic revision of the Turn of the Decade Tompkins Square Park police actions. The soap opera elements of the musician's lives are probably equally true, though in some strange, mind-altered way. The collection is hard to find, but is available in the public libraries in both Queens and Brooklyn, and is well worth reading. You could also call 1-800-365-SINK. (Stephanie Biederman)

I don't want to upset you, but the very first session you do on your recording project can have drastic effects on your final results. I'm not talking about sound quality, but the logistics of

building your record. Of course you'd

like to be rehearsed, but even how you should be rehearsing is determined by how you're going to track. I'll refer to some recordings I've done in the past year to give examples of different strategies (and you might talk to these people and check out their recordings to see how their approach worked for them).



close mics for power or intimacy in the chorus). Makes for a more over the top but still realistic recording.

2. *Track by track*. Here, you perform each track separately.

Lay down the guitar first, then sing a vocal later.

Advantages:

- You can really concentrate on the individual parts

You can easily punch in and fix mistakes, so the final mix can a lot closer to perfect.

You will have more options in the mix for eqing or effecting the parts, since changes in one track will not change the sound of the other (there is no bleed).

THIS MONTH:

Recording strategies for solo singer songwriters.

Advantages:

- Puts you in your own element, reduces weirdness of being in studio

1. Au naturale: I don't really know how to spell this, but

this is the type of recording where you just sit and play like

you do at home. Just hit the guitar and sing along.

- Records music how you make it

Disadvantages:

- Almost impossible, and certainly expensive, to record drums on top of existing tracks (though Billy Kelly did it by allowing some rhythmic looseness)
- Almost impossible to repair vocal or guitar tracks. The vocal mic will pick up guitar and vice versa. (We call this one track bleeding onto another). If you mess up a lyric, you can't just replace the vocal track because your mistake will still be present as bleed on the guitar mic.

Tips:

- Try doing it without listening along in headphones. Even though they are there, you might not be used to hearing yourself that way, and it might throw you.
- By using many, many mics at different points around you and the room you can make a very full sound out of just your two instruments, or mute and switch mics for changes of space in the mix. (Major Matt Mason did this. We might start a song with far away room mics and then fade in

Disadvantages:

- You really need to rehearse your songs playing guitar without singing. It might seem easy, but you will soon realize that you need to be aware of numbers of repeats-- something you never think about when you just key off your own singing along.
- You'll need to know energy flow in your song better. When you play and sing together, you hit the guitar harder and sing harder at the same time. When you separate them, you might realize that the vocal is rising up for effect, but the guitar is not supporting the energy.
 - More chance to be self-conscious.

Tips:

- Rehearse beforehand. Know your stuff.
- I suggest working with a click track if you can (if it doesn't destroy your performance). You might not need to if your recording is going to be just you and guitar, but the more instruments you start adding on, the more a click helps-especially drums. By doing this at the outset, you can leave the option open to let the project grow far beyond what you play solo.
 - About the click track--use a sequencer

Demo Tips is a regular column in AntiMatters. Like it? Got specific questions you want addressed? Let AntiMatters know, and we'll do what we can to satisfy your needs, because we care…

or drum machine pattern. It's a lot easier to play along with than just tick tock tick tock. Make the pattern stylistically fit the rhythm of your song.

3. Combination. One of the top dogs in the country scene. Bob Grant, took this approach. In this strategy, you do a reference track first. Play and sing at the same time, and record to tracks 1 and 2. Get a performance that you like, and then go back and overdub. Play guitar along with your reference and record that on tracks 3 and 4 (stereo). Then put the guitar down, mute out tracks 1 and 2 and sing over your new guitar track. You get no bleed, the right number of repeats, and easier energy while thinking about it

Advantages:

- No bleed, less thinking
- You can think about each track
- You can fix any and all mistakes

Disadvantages:

- Might take a bit longer, since you do both approaches

Tempo, rhythm fluctuations in your first pass get duplicated in your overdubs.

Tips:

- When you do your guitar overdub, pan your original take all the way left, and your new track all the way right in your headphone mix. Otherwise it's hard to tell what you're doing now and what you did then.
- Also, you can thin out your first take with eq (take out lows and low mids, leaving high mids. You will still hear your first take, but you'll hear through it like looking through a faint double exposure in a picture...you know?)
- Try to match the energy of what you did spontaneously in your first take. If you don't like it, do another first take.

Well, this has gotten long. Enough for now. There are some other approaches for bands or for electronic accompaniment, but those will have to wait. Many happy punch outs to you.

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Jeff Lang, the lightning-fast

melodic guitarist from the byways and highways of Australia, came to New York Fort, sandwiching shows in kind of travelling is far from Ireland to come to the US, home, to continue his lifetime

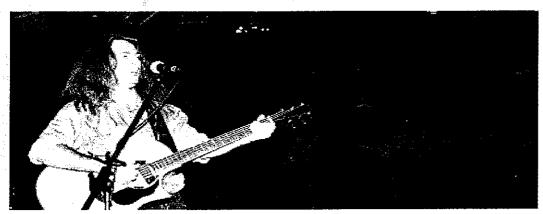


by Gustav Plympton

City for two gigs in at the Memphis and Utica. That rare for the troubadour, who left

and left here to hit New Zealand, all before returning regimen of touring and recording (Since last visiting New York

in the summer of 97, Lang has released three long-play CDs). He plays increasingly large clubs back home, down under, in his native land.



It's hard to see why. flashy With a guitar style that borrows from the blues, rock, soul and folk: a voice that's heartfelt and powerful; and lyrics that are both thoughtful and descriptive.

perceptive and clever; Jeff Lang presents a show that's simply hard to miss. I mean, you could miss it, but who would want to?

During part of Jeff's stay in New York City, I had the pleasure of putting him up. During this time, despite my constant efforts to get him to play free gigs for me and mine, we talked, ate pizza, and listened to lots of music.

Jeff says Devo is a guilty pleasure.

Jeff says his three months in New York last summer is the closest he's had to a home since beginning his musical life out of high school.

Jeff says you can't make money touring America, "if you can call it a tour." He says he comes here for exposure, but he doesn't say if it's us to him, or him to us.

Jeff says he hates playing people his CD, "but you really have to listen to how incredible Ashley (his drummer) is." He makes a point to emphasize the CD-ending Dylan cover, with the all-band jam, showing off everyone's respective skills. Time and again, Jeff points out his bandmates and says, "Isn't he great?"



IEF SIIS

Jeff says everyone in Australia knows "Kesan," this late 70s folk rock anthem about the trials of post-war trauma of Vietnam Vets.

by Gustav Plympton

Jeff says Chris Whitley's new album is the best he's ever done, and he wishes the boy would play the Fort.

Jeff says Hamell on Trial is great, and he can't understand why our friend Casey doesn't love him, "but we don't all have the same taste, after all."

Jeff says he's worked it out so, back home, he can go into any town and pick up a band, if he wants, but the troubadour thing is what he prefers. "It's just easier."

Jeff says there's a lot of great music coming out of Australia. "You gotta listen to Fitz," he says, "And Ashley and Matt are even better than this CD."

Jeff says thanks for the place to stay, and he can't wait to come back again.



The Bottom Line is...

Mary Ann Farley at THE BOTTOM LINE!!!

Thursday, November 19th, Mary Ann Farley is featured on WFUV's "Nightbirds" series, hosted by Meg Griffin. Also appearing will be Ferron, Lucy Bonilla and Pam Houston. Two shows: 7:30 and 10:30 p.m.

Mary Ann Farley will be playing with her band, Steve Meltzer on drums, Dennis Ambrose on bass...who continue to bring the songs to life in new and wonderful ways.

The Bottom Line is a gorgeous room with a great line-up, so come enjoy yourself!

The Bottom Line

15 W. 4th St. (corner of Mercer), NYC 212-228-6300 Doors open at 6 pm for 7:30 show, 10 pm for 10:30 show. \$15 all seats — WFUV "Required Listening" cards honored at all performances.

Check out the webbie at www.hobokeni.com/farley/maffahome.htm

A Page of Reviews!

Ariana

Ariana Daner's debut five-song CD represents her songs well. It's presented as a songwriter's release. Minimally produced, with a skeletal 3-piece support band, it puts the voice and words up front. Therein lies the problem.

The first song, "WonderTwins," is perhaps the strongest. The image, from the 70s cartoon show <u>Superfriends</u>, refers to alien fraternal twins with superpowers. When they touch, they gain superpowers. Ariana sings it out in the chorus: "Won't you please say you'll be my WonderTwin, we will activate our powers and then we can be anything we ever

wanted, and we will never be lonely again."

From a literal standpoint, there's a certain inaccuracy. The WonderTwins had limited metamorphic ability. The boy could turn into any form of water, such as steam, ice or fountain, while the girl could be come any form of animal life. They stretched the definitions in the series somewhat, as the male-child could become "Form of Ice-Venusian FlyTrap Monster that can move and bite and stuff," but it was an excellent example of female empowerment, as the sister could SO easily kick her brother's butt. In any case, when Ariana sings her sweet bridge, "WonderTwin powers activate, take the form of my soulmate," she's going well beyond the bounds of her reference point. Sort of like saying, "Hey Romeo, why don't you delusionally talk to your dead dad, since you're so in love." It just doesn't apply. The verses continue the problem. They are predominantly suggestions of what each can become with their WonderTwin powers in full effect. "You can be a baby and I'll be your lullaby." Now that's a great lyric. It not only resonates way cool, but it also supports symbolic gender issues, with the female singer offering to envelope her presumed male partner (Not a hetero-centric supposition, as the point of reference of the song is a female-male couple), to comfort and support in the most maternal way possible. It's just good. Then it mixes it up by offering "You be the ocean and I'll be the wind," which eschews the traditional roles of gender politics. Intentionally attempting to skew popularly held mores, or just lazy song-writing?

But there's a sicker problem with the image. It's right there in the title, and frankly, it ought to be clear from the title alone. She's singing about asking someone to become her brother figure. Not just any brother mind, but a twin. And while the representative alien couple weren't identical, they were damnably close, which suggests a certain narcissistic element to the song. All of which is fascinating, but if you don't find it the slightest bit creepy, you should get

professional help. (Gustav Plympton)

Contact: Ariana Daner - 558 Route 202 - Suffern, NY 10901 / ArianaDaner@hotmail.com

Gene & Mimi: 36th Street

It's hard not to rave about Gene & Mimi. Their songs are thoughtful, clever, eclectic. Their singing is excellent, their playing appropriate for the material, their music poppy and their lyrics smart.

And yet...

Dammit, I don't have any "and yet." I like listening to Gene & Mimi a whole lot, which means, in my experience, that any recording they make is going to be lousy. Any band that does it just right on the stage finds some way to do it wrong in the studio.

So how'd they do it? The long-time couple discussed the recording of their album in an earlier AntiMatters (September 1998 - Back to School issue), so I won't belabor the point. As opposed to their previous CD, G&M this time stayed closer to their live sound, but were still willing to flesh out the recordings with a full band sound. Well, sometimes. The arrangements, made in conjunction with occasional band member Rich Grula (who overdubbed what "sounded right" over the basic tracks), fit the material excellently. These are productions made to benefit the songs, and it works wonderfully.

It wouldn't work so well, of course, if the songs weren't so thoughtful and smart. Maybe my favorite moment is the 1-2 of "Lose My Mind," about the obvious, followed by "Exact," about losing of life. "I'm not worried bout a thing," Mimi sings in "Lose My Mind," perhaps the poppiest song that Gene Morris has ever writ. Then, in "Exact," Gene himself sings the chorus "Let me be exact about it, it is only the unknown one fears." It's all true, baby, and we can tell how anxious and furious the narrator is, trying to quantify the unquantifiable, categorizing the contents of his hospital room.

The duo reprises their "We Never Talked Much," from an early 45, and reprises various newspaper articles, in two of the final songs, "Lobster Boy," about the true-life "murder of a shellfish man," then "Little Lost Satellite," about missing hardware.

So, the songs are good, the production is good, the playing - like on any recording anywhere -- is good. The voices are great. I'll give lip service to Gene's very impressive falsetto, which is as unsettling as can be imagined. Then I'll add that I could listen to Mimi sing David Foster Wallace stories and remain interested. The verdict? Well, fucking duh, man! Buy the album! (Jonathan Berger)

Contact: Pensive Records - Box 2012 -Madison Square Station, NY NY 10159

Bruce versus Springsteen

Here's a warning about success and age.

The desire that sent you down the road, the fire that demanded that you create because to do anything else would burn you alive, that desire can be extinguished.

And when the fire grows cold, the embers may never get restarted.

That's what happened to Bruce Springsteen. Call it *The Ghost of Tom Nebraska*.

I say this with a personal sense of loss because he's the guy who taught me how to write songs.

Not that I've ever met him, but Springsteen unveiled the craft of songwriting to me. He kept it simple but so incredibly powerful.

ANTIFOLKER SPRINGSTEEN

Springsteen was signed to Columbia Records in the early 70's based on his folk songs. In fact, he essentially sang for his first contract, playing and singing three songs while in the office of Columbia's president John Hammond.

So Springsteen got signed as a folk guy. And he did what anybody trying to make money while being a guy in the record machinery would do.

He made two quick rock and roll albums, Welcome to Asbury Park, NJ and The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle. Thus breaking the record for the longest titles of any album.

Eventually he wrote his 1975 masterpiece Born to Run, got himself on the cover of Newsweek and mything Time (the same week, no less) and got widely accepted as a rock and roll guy.

With a folk-record contract.

BEFORE HE WAS BORN IN THE USA

Fast forward to 1981. It's been 6 years since Springsteen had his first top ten hit. Everyone knows him as this rocker who plays hockey arenas. In a death-defying career move, he releases an album recorded on a four-track in his basement. It's just Bruce and his acoustic guitar.

Sonically, personally, he felt like he was in the middle of nowhere, so he called the album *Nebraska*.

Pinhead Columbia execs, thinking they had a record that would sink as soon as it was released, wanted to sell it for a couple of bucks cheaper than usual.

Nebraska went to number one. It hit a nerve. In the early 80's, America was locked in a recession. Springsteen's album was as desolate as those millions of laid off workers in the rust belt were desolated.

It was an Antifolk move of brilliance. From songs about looking for a lucky break in Atlantic City to riding in the backseat of his father's beat up used car, this was an album chronicling the struggles of middle-America.

It was Nebraska at the end of the road.

This is Springsteen at his Antifolking best. There's





bite to the guitar, a grit in his voice and passion in his songs. Play it on your stereo and you'll notice the dirt miraculously appearing under your fingernails.

These are the songs that taught me how to be a songwriter. They're so deceivingly simple. "State Trooper" has just two chords, "A" and "D."

From interviews, Springsteen has said this was an album inspired by his years on the road, the struggles he faced growing up and a concern for those fans whom he met along the way. This was a piece of work based on real-life experience.

BOOKISH BRUCE

Fifteen years is a long time for an artist. Between 1981 and 1995, Springsteen had stadium-rock success with his Born in the USA and Tunnel of Love releases and tours. The hard work and incredible payoff made him rich beyond the dreams of that guy from Nebraska playing in Atlantic City.

It also made it nearly impossible for Springsteen to live a normal life. He married and divorced a TV actress. He married again and had kids with a backup singer. He broke up the band.

He moved to California.

Springsteen was too rich to identify with the struggles of his constituency in the rah-rah 90's. He was also too famous now to simply put on his coat and go hang with them at the local tavern. Besides, there are no neighborhood bars in Beverly Hills.

In his personal life, he had settled, at last. Springsteen and his wife Patti had two children now and, rightfully, he wanted to spend time with them.

Life had overtaken his art.

The Ghost of Tom Joad shows it. More wordy than Nebraska, it is too slick to be Antifolk. It is a passionless

plea for passion. Some of the old characters are there. There's the fella looking to do some armed robbery in "Straight Time," which is much like the outlaw in either "Highway Patrolman" of "Nebraska."

As the title track suggests, many of the songs are inspired, not from personal experience, but by books.

Tom Joad is the main character in John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath. We don't really believe Springsteen when he says he'll be there "whenever there's a cop beating a guy, wherever a hungry new born baby cries."

Why should he? He's got kids of his own to feed and a home with walls thick enough to block out the sound of those police sirens.

The most obvious case of a song that is not grounded in personal experience is? It's about Mexican boys who prostitute themselves in San Diego. Springsteen has said he got that from a newspaper article.

That's a long way from the personal pain he confronted on "My Father's House."

END OF THE ROAD

Not that a good song can't be inspired by a book, newspaper article or really good bathroom graffiti.

Hell, "Streets of Philadelphia" won him an Oscar. But that was one song that fit into the context of a movie. Had Springsteen written an entire movie about the struggles of an AIDS patient, it would have sounded superficial. It could not have been real.

What had happened to Springsteen between *Nebraska* and *The Ghost of Tom Joad* was a disconnection between his world and the one he wrote and sang about.

And that, my friends, is what can happen when life and fame get in the way of your art.

charlie starkweather

Joe Bendik reviews the greatest bootleg of all time

Dylan: Live 1966

So this thing has finally been released. What has been called the greatest rock n roll live album' is now officially out — 32 years after the fact and 25+ years of being bootlegged. True to form, Dylan's only comment on all of this was "If I thought this was any good, I would have put it out a long time ago." Sounds like he's still pissed about the gig. By now you've probably read all about the "Judas" and



"I don't believe you, you're a liar" retorts. Real scary stuff. To hear these stuffed shirts get so UPSET at Dylan mind-boggling. Considering the fact that they're witnessing truly amazing ònly performance confirms that these book-heads just didn't get it. Probably still don't either.

What is so impressive is Dylan's

command of the audience. Despite all of the attempts to disrupt him and the Hawks, Dylan is never off of his game, only on top of it. He even PLAYS with them. This is how it's supposed to be done. The onstage backdrop is a GIANT American flag. Now, this is the time of Viet Nam, and while others might've been burning it or at least acting like they were ashamed of it, Dylan throws it in their faces. Also, he causes a damn near riot by just INTRODUCING a song. In a slow, narcotic style with plenty of pauses he says: "This is called--- 'Yes I See --You've Got Your--- Brand New--Leopard Skin----Pillbox------Hat'!" The place goes NUTS. Maybe 20 seconds of disruptive stomping and hollering. Then, Dylan and the Hawks kick into the most fierce version of this tune that you've ever heard. Since this song was reportedly recorded just a few days before, it's one of those rare times when Dylan is playing a song with the same band that recorded it, around the same time of the recording. Punk rock at it's finest.

Well, after that tune, the place is really upset. They won't let him do the next song. After a noticeable LACK of applause, they start the anti-rhythmic stomping & clapping again (they are just so white). This is where Dylan's mastery really comes into it's own. He improvises a folk-cadence accapella melody with mostly nonsense words, occasionally actually using some real folksy words ('this is a story', 'on the outside of town' etc.) until the place quiets down to dead silence. While never missing a beat he finishes this little improve folk thing with "if you just wouldn't clap so hard." It worked too. For a while, anyway.

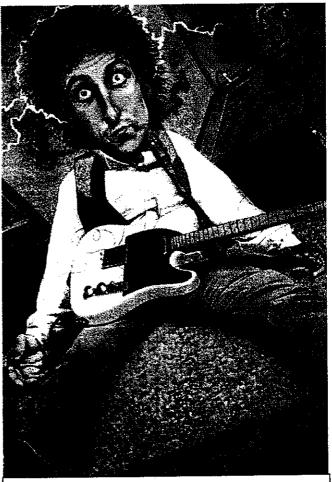
Really this whole thing was a big battle. I have yet to hear another rock concert (or punk, metal, rap or any genre) that comes close to the drama of this event. It's really funny, too. I mean, this was a time period when bands played 20 minutes sets and here's Dylan doing



2 full sets (the first set was solo acoustic) that were 45 minutes each. You'd think these people would be grateful.

Oh yeah, "Ballad Of A Thin Man" and "Like A Rolling Stone" (which follows the 'Judas' comment) are actually better than the originals. Much more threatening and vital. In fact, the whole concert is better than the recorded versions.

My only regret is now that it's officially released, I won't feel that 'breaking the law' feeling when I listen to it. I listen to this thing before every gig I play. It's the best. It's the standard. Buy it. ***** - Joe BENDIK



DYLAN GOES ELECTRIC ...

Everyone in our household has different names

Philosophy Corner

with Dave Wechsler

should mention that yes, our cats

for the kittens. We all love them so much that it's hard to accept the fact that anyone else could be responsible for divining their

true name. This situation came up once before when we rescued a dog from our negligent neighbors. I always favored calling him "the judge" but when Jessica moved out and took the judge with her, he reverted to her name for him, "Sir." Whenever I visit them, I always call him the judge and I think he appreciates it.

My names for the kittens are inspired more by their effect on me than by the names I believe that they would enjoy. As I mentioned in Part I, I have been allergic to cats since a young age. I have however always loved other animals. Growing up, I almost always had a furry canine companion. My favorite dog I've had was named Mushu who was sadly put to sleep a couple years ago. But perhaps my favorite pet was my bunny. I had a bunny for a year at college and he caused all kinds of mayhem in my life, which I sorely miss. His name was Hal, (Named after the computer in 2001, Hal would often give me that, "What are you doing, Dave?" look whenever I would try to keep him out of the food or try to keep him from chewing on all the power cords in my room) and if I can believe my sources, he's living quite comfortably in New Hampshire somewhere.

Accordingly, my names for the kittens are "bunny" and "puppy". They've arrived at these names since, as I briefly mentioned before, I am no longer allergic to cats. And I believe firmly that as long as do not acknowledge the fact that they are cats, I can continue to be unaffected by their catlike essence. Puppy is a male black kitten with a white underbelly (The kittens will be 6 months old when this comes out) and Bunny is his black and white sister. Puppy is, in fact, more puppy-like than Bunny, whose attributes are more lagomorphic. Puppy craves attention. He will sit and meow at you until you pet him, and if you studiously ignore him, he will attempt to scratch your leg to shreds.

Bunny is the more mysterious of the two. She often speaks in riddles and will lurk about in the background, apparently unconcerned with the world of humans. Every once in a while though, she craves attention and is even stronger than

Puppy in making to babble on a little;

is, the big

It

sure she gets it. Puppy tends the weather, how hungry he dog in the yard next door.

becomes very clear that his world is small and that he is unaffected by anything

outside it.

I suppose at this point that I

can talk. I believe that at some point in the last chapter of this saga I mentioned that miracles had taken place and this is the

second of three. The first was the disappearance of my allergies. The third must wait for its appropriate time to be told. But this second one is the one that concerns us now. At first the kittens mewed as kittens often do, in that plaintive yet cute way that makes it not as annoying as you might think it would be. Even their incessant caterwauling of hunger (despite a full food bowl, I might add) fall under the denomination of "cute" and they seek refuge in the nunnery of their cuteness. Eventually the mewing gave way to small words and now at 6 months old, they are better equipped to hold a conversation than I am. At first we were

all impressed, but their incessant babble wore on the nerves after a while and now we long for the days of the plaintive mewing.

"What's that?" "Can I have some?"
"That looks good." "Are you going to
finish that?" are some of the phrases
preferred by Puppy. Bunny tends

more towards the surreal. "That heaven is not as good as the last one." "Head me off at the pass, I dare you." "If I climb and can't come down, bury me in the tree." Having uttered some indecipherable phrase she trots off, head held high until a few feet later when she jumps up; lands with her back arched; and scurries off around a corner (even where there are no corners in the vicinity).

The conversations between the cats and me will run something like this:

DW: Get off the table! Puppy: I'm sleepy.

Bunny: That is not the table I want to be

on.

Puppy: Stay still so I can lie in your lap. DW: Look Puppy, I have to get up.

Bunny: There are infidels about.

DW: Bunny, quiet!

Bunny: People never act the way you think they should.

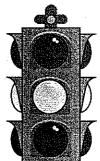
Puppy: I can't get comfortable. Maybe I'm hungry. Is there

food? Can I have some? (Puppy leaps off lap.)

DW: You just ate. There's no food. Stay away from that! Bunny: (Jumping on the table and licking a piece of cheese) I wonder where I've gone today.

DW: Bunny! Stop that! Get off the table.

Puppy: (Sees cheese. Hops on table) Is that for me? (Gets distracted by self-cleaning frenzy)





94 Avenue A @

I wish for once that the cats would talk to me. I forget that they are just 6 months old and that perhaps they don't have much to talk about. Bunny always seems to have something on her mind, but I can't for the life of me fathom what it is and her non-sequitor phrases throw me into doubt of her even having any idea what she's saying. Puppy can't quite get past the basics in life.

As for me, I'm constantly bickering with the kittens. But it's a comforting kind of bickering. Having grown up Jewish, I enjoy the constant chatter that bickering produces. There are far too few people in this city that I can safely bicker with. People tend to take themselves very seriously and simple friendly bickering gets blown up into argument proportions too easily. The cats are young, but they understand the difference between affectionate badgering and actual attacking. I suppose I'm the only one who's bickering, but the cats seem to enjoy it even when they totally ignore what I'm saying. I suppose it's just a way to show that I care.

Next issue, more miracles await. I hope you will join me for the third and final chapter of Philosophy Corner, or Kittens Amok.

David Wechsler



A Word about Spoken Word Night (a night of 'p-o-e-t-r-y' featuring Jon Berger, Pat Harper, Shena & Lach) by Joe BENDIK

Let me start this thing off my admitting that I'm really not a 'spoken word' fan. It all seems like one big harangue to me. You know, 'shut up already'. At the same time, I do have respect for the handful of 'spoken word' artists that I like, because the genre is so damned hard. You're up there naked. No instrument, no songs, nothing but these words. Why anyone would want to subject themselves to this is beyond me, but good luck.

So, having said that, here's my review of Spoken Word Night' at Sidewalk. Up first was Jon Berger's debut gig. He starts off with this thing about not being gay. Pretty funny stuff. His delivery was much better than his previous night's performance at the open hoot. He's been cultivating this bad-ass persona with the tone of voice and attitude that he keeps using in the majority of his poems. Now, since I know him (along with most of the audience), I saw the humor in it. I just wonder what some stranger might've thought? Funnier still would be the idea of someone actually thinking that he's always like that. One of his highlights was an accepella rendition of "Wake Me Up (Before You Go Go)"- truly one of the worst pieces of industry pop to ever worm it's way into pop culture. It was really funny. He also started this slow striptease thing here by removing his jacket. Very soon, the turtleneck sweater was gone, leaving him up there with a combination hairshirt/ripped tee shirt. A bit of advice: Jon, put your shirt back on man. Something else that I dug though, was when he walked up to Paula Carino and pledged his lust to her. He used the performance to say

things he never could in real life. A lot of my songs are like that. I look for that in a performance, and it's good to see that Jon has the ability & guts to do it. Another minor complaint (something I get too): either do longer pieces sometimes (to break it up), or string a few together. Since most of his poems are so short, you can risk audience applause burnout- quite a nasty thing. All of this will develop over time though, and I hope Jon keeps doing it.

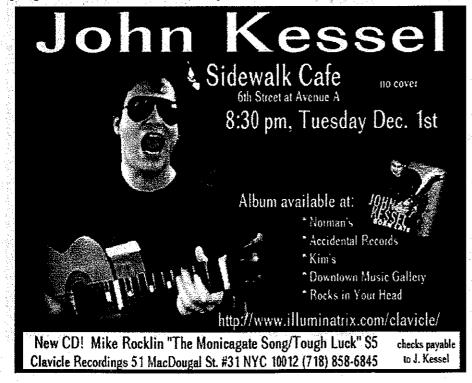
Next up was Pat Harper. Pat really is the Andy Kaufman of anti-folk. No one can be too sure if he's merely adopting a persona, or inhabiting one. He was in top form too. Funny, scary, tragic then funny again. What a trip. This cat should be headlining Knitting Factory shows. He's the perfect anti-spoken word artist. I loved his 'song', which consisted mainly of him tuning (endlessly) his guitar; asking for a pick; asking for a specific kind of pick; asking for a capo; asking for an electronic tuning device'. Finally he broke into a blast from his harcore punk past by doing this punked up tune "You Tell Me". Needless to say, it rocked.

Sheena is a goddess. I really don't have to say anymore, but in this day and age of post-alterna irony being played to death, it was so refreshing to hear (and see) her bare her soul. She did her whole set off mic (very effective, but due to my increasing deafness, rendered some of her words inaudible). By mixing Biblical imagery with a near rap sense of urgency, she expressed so much beyond words, that to call her a spoken word artist really misses the point. I really don't want to use

that awful Performance Artist term either. She's an artist- she don't look back.

Lach capped of the spoken word section. He read some things that I never heard before. Kind of beat poetry without the forced hipness that can mar that genre. My favorite work of his was the one about being warm instead of cool. That seemed to sum up the entire (surprisingly) enjoyable evening. The fact that these guys just put themselves up there, without a net and without pretense made the whole thing worthwhile and (oh god) meaningful(?).

I still want to rock though.



See Joe BENDIK & The Heathens at CBGB (the club/dive) Tues 12/8 @8:30 & at The Fort Friday 12/18 @11 (our last show of 98)

ANTIMATTERS CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted

Damn Dirty Apes. I need more than a boatload full of apes hell bent on destruction of the planet Earth. Must know how to shoot a rifle, ride a horse and drive stick shift. Will consider shy apes willing to learn the ins and outs of world ape domination. Apes who kill other apes need not apply. Call 555-URKO

Storyline editor. Can you enter a world famous comic strip, make observations and try to explain what the hell is happening in their strange, twisted world? Must have no history of mental illness in your family and be able to refuse a swig from "the jug." Conact Gasoline Alley c/o Kings World Features.

Aide-de-camp to artist I need someone to arrive before me at painting exhibitions to make sure I'm not going to be enrolled in an art competition against a painting chimp. The joke was only funny the first time! Besides that, the Village Voice keeps picking the chimp's work over mine. My banana still lifes are just as pretty—and more colorful! 555-DANZA

DNA expert. Since our testing of Thomas Jefferson's DNA proved to be such a wonderful hoot, we're going after William Howard Taft. We hear he's related to Moe Howard! 555-PREZ

Administrative Assistant:
Answer phones, take notes, keep
my minions of the damned in
chains, torture Hitler and help
me write the dialogue of the
"Roseanne Show" and "Two of a
Kind." Contact The Devil at 555HELL

General help: Patton has gone haywire and slapped another of our fightin' boys while visiting a hospital. Help! 555-ARMY

Help Wanted

College Grad—Gen'l Office Help. Do you enjoy delicious frozen treats? Are you immune to ice cream headaches? Would you like to work for two world-famous ice cream icons? Answer calls, take notes and bury bodies of Mr. Softee workers. Contact Cookie Puss or Fudgy The Whale at 555-CRVL

Announcements

Legitimate Psychic Readings "Yeah, sure," you're thinking, but we happen to know about the time you set your dad's toupee on fire and tried to blame it on a wily microwave oven. Or something really close to that. Convinced? You better be, or we'll reveal more secrets if you don't call! 555-KRESKIN

Need Space For Your Next Event?

How about just some space in your relationship? Then buy my new book: "101 Way To Make Your Tiresome Beloved Stay On The Other Side Of The Room—At The Very Least." Chapters include "Unsane: Soup and its Many Sounds" and "Pipe Cleaners: You Never Clean Pipes With 'Em, So Stick 'Em in Your Ear While Yelling, 'Coco rico, I'm the Spanish Rooster!" Comes with audio version of book read by Mike Ditka. 555-GOAWAY

Uncomfortable With Food? Do you have trouble making eye contact with your chocolate Easter bunny? Do you have a panic attack every time someone mentions rutabaga? Does Paul Prudhome give you the Psychodrama/Food willies? forming. Making Group speeches will be former N.Y. Yankees who conquered their fears. (Goose Gossage used to be scared to death of oranges and Bucky Dent got the shakes when near pez.) 555-COOK

Lost & Found

Lost: American male, shaved head.Wandered off during puppet show in Tompkins Sq. Park—he loves puppets! (But he might have been scared off by the Howard Safir puppet). Needs medication, and if not found soon, will begin howling and doing dangerous handsprings (what with him not being very agile). Answers to the name of "Jon." No reward, but if returned we won't ask you what your name is. Call 555-HOUSE-OF-BRGR

Lost: My date of the night of November 6. We were enjoying a dramatic reading of "Walker. Texas Ranger" (episode #38) by Sir John Gielgud at Town Hall when she trotted off to the WC and never returned. (Was it Gielgud's cowboy hat you hated or me?) This "Funny Girl" is a well-known singer and diva. I'm worried she may be married but I don't care! Call Prof. Lesse Sr. at 555-YENTL

For Sale

Brillo pads. These near-mint condition brillos from the '80s and '90s are sure to be collectors items in the future. I have the "Leo DiCaprio Titanic" brillo pad, the "George Michael Memorial Rest Stop" brillo pad and the "Vanilla Ice Comeback Tour '98" brillo pad. Great for conversation pieces or cleaning your plate! Go brillo! Call J. Segol 555-BRLLO

Porcelain Antifolk figurines. Captured in cool hand-painted action poses: "Begging for a Show." "Baring Soul at Antihoot," "Sticking it to 'The Man'" and "Turning Nose up to Big Money Record Executive." Also have enthralling "Baggot Inn" and "Lion's Den" figurines. Many of them in action "drunk" poses. Call G. Lesse II 555-PORC

ANTIFOLK USA!

Is located at the Fort at The Sidewalk Café (94 Avenue A – right on 6th Street in the heart of the East Village)!

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

Tues.Nov. 17 - 7:30- 3/5 of Verb, 8:30- Jon Protas, 9-Patty Murray, 10- Jocelyn Ryder, 10:30-Eric Neher

Wed.Nov. 18 - 8- Grey Revell, 8:30- Amanda Thorpe, 9-Verb Birthday Bash, 10 - Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Nov. 19 - Honky-Tonk Thursday! 7:30- Vida Loca, 8:30- The Big Galoots, 9-Rob Ryan, 10- Howard Fishman, 11- The Open Country Jam

Fri.Nov. 20 - 8-Gilligan Stump, 9-Alan Andrews, 10-Lunchin', 11- Jack Peddler Record Release Party, 12- The Trouble Dolls

Sat. Nov. 21 - 8- Amiel, 9-Mia Johnson, 10- The Adverteasers, 11- Paul McMahon

Sun.Nov. 22 - 5-7: Art Opening for Dagon, 8-Trey Bouscaren, 8:30- Mr. Scarecrow,

9-Adam Brodsky 9:30-Lenny Molotov, 10-Sam Camus, 11-Yuri Tsarev (From Russia!)

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

Tues.Nov. 24 - 7- Joie/DBG, 8-Tony Hightower, 8:30-Anne Husick, 9-Nancy Falkow,

9:30-Tricia Scotti, 10-Grey Revell, 11-Ivan Klipstein

Wed.Nov.25- Deaf Aides, 8:30- Butch, 9-Dan Kilian & National Anthem, 10-Rick Shapiro Thurs Frl.Nov. 26 - No Show. Happy Thanksgiving!

Fri.Nov. 27 - 8-Kenny Davidsen, 9-Chris Hamilton, 10- Neal with an A, 11- Kevin Brady, 12-The Bones

Sat.Nov. 28 - 8- Blasco, 9-Agnelli and Rave, 10- Bruce Charlap, 11- Blues To Venus, 12- Dots Will Echo

Sun.Nov. 29 - 8-Claudia Acuna, 9-Positive Rythmic Force, 10- Jeremiah Lockwood, 11- Howard Fishman

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

Tues.Dec. 1 - 7:30- Wayne Gladstone, 8-John Kessel, 8:30-Scott Forman, 9-Carmaig Deforest, 10- Enid and The Boys, 11- Joey John

Wed.Dec.2- 8-Jeffrey D, 8:30- Yhe Valentines, 9-Joe Bidewell, 9:30- Jack Pedler, 10-Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Dec. 3- Honky-Tonk Thursday: 8-Susan Guinn, 9-Rob Ryan, 10-Bill Carny's Jug Addicts, 11-Country Jam

Fri.Dec. 4-8-Jim Kemp, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Johnny Seven, 11-Matthew Puckett, 12-Larry Goggin

Sat.Dec. 5 - 8-Curtis Eller's American Circus, 9-Trina Hamlin, 10-The Humans,

11- David Dragov, 11:30-Bionic Finger

Sun.Dec. 6 - Strange Folk Sunday: 8-Andy If, 8:30- Leroy Montana, 9-Zipthunk, 9:30-Gary Heidt, 10- John Mars, 10:30-Bibi Farber, 11-Ronda Johannessen

Come once, come twice, come three times, it's just as nice!