

APRIL 99
ONE DOLLAR

ANIMATERS



GREY¹⁵ RISING!

THE CALIFORNIA KID SURVIVES
HIS FIRST YEAR OF MAKING WAVES
IN N.Y.C. (and his first winter)

Contact
AntiMatters

150 West 95th Street
9D
New York, NY 10025

antimatters@excite.com

CREATORS INVOLVED

Joe Bendik
Jonathan Berger
Stephanie Biederman
Wayne Gladstone
John Kessel
Jeff Lightning Lewis
Mark Humble
Penner MacBryant
Gustav Plymton
Arnie Rogers
Charlie Starkweather

HAIKU FOR A MONDAY NIGHT

Anti-hoot sign-up.
Will I get a low number?
Not this time. Beer please.

s biederman

Dear AntiMatters:

"My music was a bottle that
I threw once out to sea
Now the day is coming for
it's return to rescue me"

I didn't know what the
result of making Blang! would
be. I only knew I wanted to
make a record that I wanted
to listen to. The idea that
other people would also want
to listen to it constantly
amazes and encourages me.
Your Blang! issue was a
wonder and I am honored and
humbled by the comments from
so many songwriters whose
work I admire.

Geez, I'm one lucky man.
Thanks to one and all.

Lach

AntiMatters on the WEB: <http://www.geocities.com/sunsetstrip/club/3794>

1999 USA Songwriting Competition

Attention Bands, Solo Artists and Songwriters! The USA Songwriting Competition in association with Billboard Publications, Fender Musical Instruments, Musician's Friend and other sponsors has announced the launch of this world's leading international songwriting event. Entrants stand to win a grand prize of over US\$22,000 value in cash and music merchandise. Hurry to enter now!

Contact: <http://www.songwriting.net>

No web access? Then you're hit outta luck. mv friend...

I don't know a damned soul who did a damned thing for April Fools' Day. What's the point in some twisted genius coming up with a holiday that justifies treachery and deceit if no one's going to take advantage of it?

Gustav Plympton

Adam Brodsky told me to read PLEASE KILL ME, the oral history of punk rock. It's only about New York punk rock, but the text is making a pretty strong case that they're one and the same thing.

Adam told me to read it, I think, because of the similarities between early punk and AntiFolk. Early Punk was, according to all those quotes, about a hundred people who hung out in a couple of clubs. From thence came a revolution. It's inspiring reading. I'm not done yet, so if you've already read it, don't give away the ending. If you haven't, pick it up. By Legs MacNeil and Gillian McCain...

Advertising in AntiMatters

Simple as 6 = 11 = 21!

For one quarter of a page you pay six dollars!

For one half of a page, just 11 smackers.

For a whole page of the promotion in the zine on the scene, pay just 21 (my infinitesimal US units of currency)

You Can't Lose!

Mooch-Master Excellant
Jonathan Berger

Report...

<March 8th, 1999> Stephanie – You didn't come! You promised and you swore, but you didn't come! I feel so betrayed, especially since I wore my lucky socks and all...

HARPING ON A HOOT

You missed a cool AntiHoot. To be honest, I didn't stay all that long

(how could I, without you?), but I saw some cool stuff.

Lach was late. He was just wrapping up his five day tour of Canada with erstwhile stalwarts Rick Shapiro and Joie (you know, that Dead Blonde Girlfriend guy?), and didn't expect to hit the Fort until about eight, so Anne Husick was setting stuff up.

"I'm so nervous!" she said, but Kenny – that piano guy – Davidsen sat by her side and held her hand, despite never having run an open mic in his life. Between the two of them, though, they kept the matters clean, and got things running on time.

I picked number 30, so, behind everyone's backs, picked again. I got 27, and knew my destiny would keep me from reading. Shit.

Anne did three songs at the beginning, all fairly familiar material ("I wrote a new song on the train," she said, "But I'm not gonna do it."), but with a notable exception. The third song was "Letter to Evangeline," but it featured that same long-haired Kenny on piano, and it sounded incredible! He started off sounded like some kind of trickling rainfall, then became some bass notes for the song, then ended up jamming at the end, sounding like a whole symphony. It was incredible!

All the energy came to a dead stop with Ron hit the stage. This brand new guy hit number one, and spent maybe 75 minutes trying to put his capo on the guitar. Eventually, he got to a couple of songs that sounded straight out of the west village, sensitive and sweet. We clapped, and he got the hell off the stage.

Immediately afterwards was another newbie, a cutie by the name of Sharon, who started off in a typical old folkie kind of way. It sounded sort of dull, until I caught up with the lyrics. She took a guy home, took off his clothes, and he was the hairiest motherfucker in the galaxy. Like she was shagging sasquatch or something. She moved on to a song she says she played at her ex-boyfriend's wedding, "Why do you take so long to come?" or something like that. Funny as shit, and each song, I thought, she was singing right to ME!

Evan Samuel played, John Kessel played (also with Kenny, my choice of the sideman of the hour), Joe Bendik came up with a couple brand new songs, Gilligan Stump! with some new stuff and some old... in the audience was Tom Nishioka, Major Matt Mason, Jesse Murphy, Tricia Scotti

with her cute teenaged cousin, Grey Revell, and eventually, Lach! He returned, a little dazed, straight out of the car I think, and took over without missing too many beats.

"You all know who I am?" he asked, "Anyone wondering why this guy has suddenly come up here?" Nobody seemed to complain, or notice. And things got back to normal.

So what am I saying? I'm saying you missed quite a Hoot! Hang your head down in shame! Go go go to the next one! YEAH! (Arnie Rogers)

Rainy Day Canadians

<March 14th, 1999> I was there to see Johnny

Sizzle. I was the only one there to see Johnny Sizzle. It was a rainy day, and the poor guy from up Canada way didn't know hardly anyone in town. After the experience of a couple of his excruciatingly Do-It-Yourself tapes, I knew I had to see what was up with him. His songs, like something a tiny Johnny Rotten would come up with, having had a couple head injuries. It's good, mind, but a sensibility like nothing you've experienced before.

Well, the show began with no one but me in the front room, a couple stragglers around the club, and little Johnny Sizzle up on stage, screaming his heart out.

"I'm pissed!" he said at first, and later, "Fuck all of you!"

It wasn't really directed at anyone. I didn't think so, at least. He sang songs like "Blue Mohawk" and "Ron Jeremy for President," and he spat on the floor every couple of minutes. The people who were there couldn't help but laugh occasionally, but mostly, they just ignored him. It was really punk rock, really really AntiFolk, really a fascinating study in... something. It's just a pity there was no one there to appreciate it. (Jonathan Berger)

Critiquing the Critique

Hey, this is a response to Adam Fieled's

Report From the Fort last issue (March '99). First off, let me give a couple props where they're due. Adam had the guts to use the column for some real criticism rather than the usual mutual congratulation society stuff. I'm all for that kinda thing; who wants to read about a buncha songwriters telling each other that all their songs are nice? Now I've got to do some criticism myself, 'cause Adam's review of Dina Dean is kinda faulty. He disses Dina for lifting her song "Decent Grave" "almost note for note from Bob Dylan's 'Masters of War'" and goes on to say that "there is a tradition in folk music of borrowing, but some subtlety is required to make it work." BULLSHIT! "Decent Grave" uses a similar chord progression, but considering that all two or three or four chord progressions are going to sound

Write for AntiMatters!
(say something meaningful)

Report...

rock song, one techno song, etc. Part of the magic of working in a folk tradition is that timeless and powerful song forms are available for anyone to use as channels for their own stories. The simpler reason these progressions are used a million times is that they work.

Secondly, Dina's melody in "Decent Grave" is certainly not "note for note" from Dylan's in "Masters of War," and I don't think I would have ever made the connection. Hum 'em in your head right now. See? Not only that, but Dylan was stealing wholesale from all over the place himself, to a much greater extent than I've ever heard in Dina's work! "Some subtlety is required to make it work" you say, but I disagree. To all aspiring songwriters, I would heartily recommend you try "stealing" from tradition and see what happens. It worked for Dylan.

As to your comments on "Show Me the Stranger," I totally disagree with your judgement of Dina's Jesus story as "pretentious." I think it's a great perspective on the mythos, and the chorus is really very beautiful, but I guess that's a matter of opinion. About Dina's being too "hesitating [and] tentative with her instrument" and "lack[ing] confidence" I must say I'd rather see a dozen hesitating, unslick performers with something to say than one so-called "professional musician" (Gimme Rhonda Johanssen and Patsy Grace over Whitney Houston anyway). All of this is not to say that Dina is the world's greatest singer-songwriter or that Antimatters shouldn't be used for real analysis once in a while instead of just a circular pat on the back. I just thought the criticisms leveled at Dina were poorly founded. For myself, I thought "Decent Grave" was a riveting and chilling little urban anecdote from the first time I heard it, except the end falls a little flat (I think there should be another line where the kid's mom kicks his body in the head and dumps him in a river or something; but that's just me). (Jeff Lightning Lewis)

Critiques About Critiquing Critiques

Great. Just great. I just love how the audience makes their point known. "Well, I want there to be more criticism, but if you actually make any, I'm afraid I'm going to have to complain..."

Adam Fieled is now nowhere to be seen in these pages. He has no contributions in this issue, and even though he had no access to the above critique of his writing, I can't help but feel it is somewhat responsible.

And this is exactly the kind of namby pamby crap I'd expect from a loser like Jeff "So-Called Lightning" Lewis. Why is he 'Lightning' anyway? Because of his rapid-fire guitar playing? I don't think so!

similar, if there was something wrong with sounding similar to another song the music world would consist of one blues song, one or two folk songs, one

Look, the only thing worse than some freakish hypocrite who wants criticism, just so long as it isn't actually directed at someone (or did I miss the point entirely? Who cares?) is a long-haired freakish hypocrite who wants... well, you get the idea.

I'm sick to death of people who want something, but aren't willing to bite the bullet enough to get it. You want more money: earn it. You want more biting critiques, swallow it. You want zero growth population, go out there and kill some babies. You do what's gotta be done to get your needs met. Am I right? AM I RIGHT?

Ah, whatever. Go see see Jeff Lightning Lewis' next show. Go see Dina Dean's next show. Go see Adam Fieled's next show. Just be sure to be polite about it. (Gustav Plympton)

Hyp-MO-tized!

<March 21st, 1999> Grey Revell's one-year anniversary show was intimate. It wasn't all that

well-promoted (the *Grey is Rising* signs were up, but I don't think there were any dates on them), so the crowd was small, but appreciative.

Grey continued to fuck around with his songs, playing with tempo, toying with rhythms, making sure that anyone who thought they knew the songs, didn't.

Despite a variety of superficial difference to his songs, though, Grey kept a core of hypnotic power. The attention of the entire audience was his, and remained his, for as long as he was on the stage. (Stephanie Biederman)

Shameless Promotion

<March 27th, 1999>

The turnout was tremendous. And

why not? Every single act on the bill was babes babes babes. Was it any wonder that the crowd was overflowing all night long? 'Course, it didn't hurt that it was the record release party for Anne Husick's band, Shameless. Anne Husick has become an increasingly important figure in the AntiFolk scene, and attendance, it seemed was mandatory to this important event.

On the bill were AntiFolk regulars Marillee, Tricia Scotti, and Nancy Falkow, all of whom have voices to die for. The multitasking Bionic Finger played minus one of their regular members, but ably replacing him was some guy in drag. Even the boys looked good on stage that Saturday!

Friends of Anne, Mich Van Hautem and Briana Winter also played sets, impressing unfamiliar audiences with their hooks, voices and arrangements.

But the star performance of the night, no shock, was from the band everyone was there to see, Shameless. Playing some new, some old stuff, in the band's recent, three-piece format, the set was par for the course for the excellent band. But Anne seemed to feed off the great energy of the night, and built a memorable gorgeous show.

It was one of those sublime musical evenings, marred only slightly by the absence, at this record release party, of any records from the artist. Label difficulties. Go figure. (Jonathan Berger)

The Interview of the Century!

You asked for it. You knew it was coming. Finally...

Many of us at the Fort have become intimately familiar with the scene's newest star. A bright, young upstart with an elusive, yet impishly coquette-ish demeanor. A talent that can be all at once wistfully nostalgic and painfully immediate. Of course, I'm referring to Jon Berger's left nipple. Sure, we've all shared laughs and almost orgasmic shouts of joy with Mr. Berger's nipple, but how many of us really understand what's going on behind the magic and chest hair? I caught up with this oval enigma after a recent performance at Lach's Anti-Hoot in order to get a glimpse into this mad world... Wayne Gladstone

WAYNE GLADSTONE: I guess my first question is, "What should I call you? Do you have a name?"

JON BERGER'S LEFT NIPPLE'S LAWYER: Due to the extreme popularity of The Artist Formerly Known as Jon's Left Nipple, all interviews are enacted in the presence of counsel. All answers to potentially leading questions must be processed through said counsel, and, as such -

JON BERGER'S LEFT NIPPLE: I've been going by Sven, lately.

WG: Really? I had heard that friends called you "Nip." Is that not true?

JB'sLNL: This interview is over!

JB'sLN: Take a pill, Jerry. It is true that I've gone by the appellation Nip in my earlier days. Everyone had to pay their dues. I've found that now that I've come into my own, I can choose my nicknames more carefully, more maturely. I don't want to alienate my Japanese fans. So you'll understand why I say that anyone who calls me Nip is, frankly, gonna get an ass-whooping.

JB'sLNL: Though my client does not condone violence upon anyone, under any circumstances.

WG: I was just knocked out by your performance tonight.

JB'sLN: Why thank you. I thought I was rather on for this last one.

WG: When I see you perform, I'm reminded of a young Leif Garrett. Is he one of your heroes?

JB'sLN: Ironically, I've always further appreciated Garret's later performances. While his work on Saturday Night Live was admirable, I tend to believe his work on such series as It's Your Move and the early Martin are some of his finest moments to date. And, of course, he looked great shirtless.

WG: Um, Sven... I think you're thinking of Garret Morris. I mean no disrespect but I was referring to Leif Garret -- teen wonder from the seventies.

JB'sLN: I knew that.

JB'sLNL: He knew that.

WG: Okay, then. Let's play a little word association. Say the first word that comes into your... uh... head. "Spleen"

JB'sLN: Not-Nipple.

WG: "Corkscrew"

JB'sLN: Not-Nipple.

WG: "Wayne Gladstone"

JB'sLN: Not -- I'm sorry. I guess I'm bad at this game.

WG: What's your relationship with Jon Berger like these days? I had heard that after the head shaving incident, that you two were no longer on speaking terms.

JB'sLN: Now, I'm not one to lay blame, but a man who decides to shave himself, he's got to be prepared to take a certain responsibility for his actions.

Here's a warning to the kids: If you need to shave your head, for god's sake, be careful! And if you wear glasses, keep them on, because otherwise, you might just miss your head, and slit your nipple, and trust me, nobody wants that. Now, I'm not saying that Berger wasn't upset about the incident, but rest assured, he was nowhere near as put out as I was.

WG: I also understand that it was Jon Berger who convinced Lach to let you perform at the Anti-Hoot.

JB'sLN: Almost as a direct result of that incident. My first show was something of a purging, getting all the crap out. I kind of milked the performance for all it was worth, reaching peak performance through hard work and a cold, erect style.

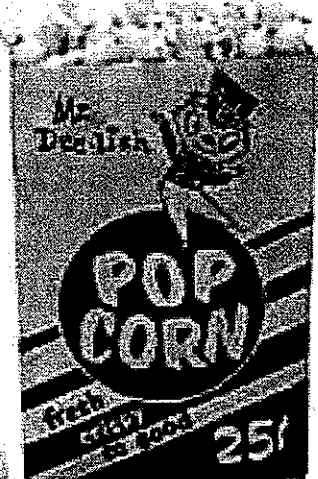
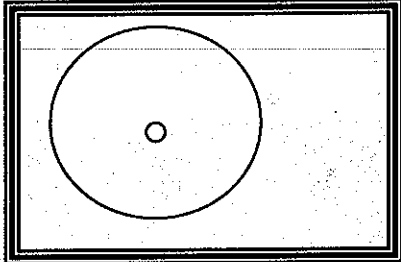
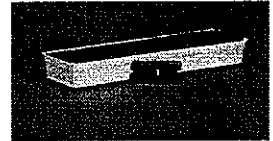
WG: Why do you think Lach was originally so against your performances?

JB'sLN: I've heard rumors that Lach secretly wanted his right nipple to be the first to have anything released on Fortified Records, but now, due to my immense popularity, I've sort of sealed a slot on the next AntiFolk compilation. I think he's somewhat begrudging about it, but Lach has lately become one of my biggest supporters.

WG: Really? What turned the tide?

JB'sLN: I think the big deal-maker with Lach was when he needed to rent out Webster Hall to house my Christmas benefit gig for the Fort. It raised maybe half a million dollars, and sort of got his rep as an appendage supporter up and at arms.

WG: I was wondering if you could clear up a rumor. I heard that you are romantically involved with a



The Interview of the Century!

comment. Really, I don't feel comfortable about my three-way with Michelle Shocked and Cindy Lee Berryhill. It's old news, and nobody interested. And while Marillee and I were seeing each other behind Joie's back for a couple of weeks, it didn't amount to anything. The fact that I've seduced 70% of the waitresses at the Sidewalk is not substantiated by anyone but my Kodak developer, and frankly, I resent the implications of your question. Next question, please.

WG: We're all very aware of your work with Rumanian orphans, but why have you virtually shunned all other recent charity work as of late?

JB'sLN: Well, not to be too crass about it, but charity works a lot better when you can't rake in the big bucks for yourself. When I was doing 200 dollar a plate dinners for Rumanian orphans, or Roman orphans, or rummage sale mighty morphin power rangers, or whatever, it was one thing, but now that I can handle 1,000 dollar a plate events and take all

certain performer on the AF scene. Care to expound on that?

JB'sLN: No

the profits for myself, well...

WG: Thank you for your time sir.

JB'sLN: Think nothing of it. Really.

JB'sLNL: All thoughts presented in this interview are the express opinion of Jonathan Berger's Left Nipple, and cannot be considered the responsibility of any other individual. This interview is over!

And with that my interview with my new hero concluded. Sure, at the end of the day Sven was still a delicious mystery but for just one brief moment, I felt as if I hand shared a tuna melt with greatness.

Continued Report...

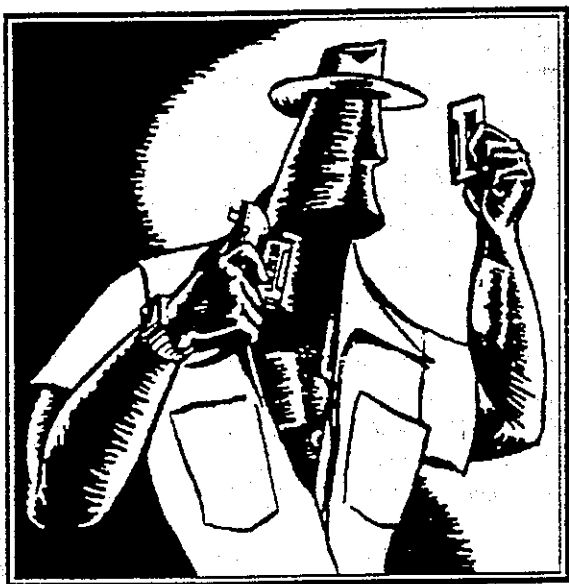
<March 28th, 1999> At the beginning of a superlative AntiFolk Sunday night bill, John Kessel got things going right.

Kessel seems to work a lot on vibe. Some nights, his shows

never seem to click together, and some nights, it all works out.

Playing a certain set of songs regularly can be tiring, but Kessel put some fantastic energy into his show, and changed-up some of his most regular songs. 'Fear of Accidents Mabel,' normally mining some curious alternate reality where the band met Pink Floyd, suddenly got turbocharged, and 'Thank God I'm a Country Singer,' for half the song, sounded like nothing any self-respecting country singer would ever do.

The Variety Show



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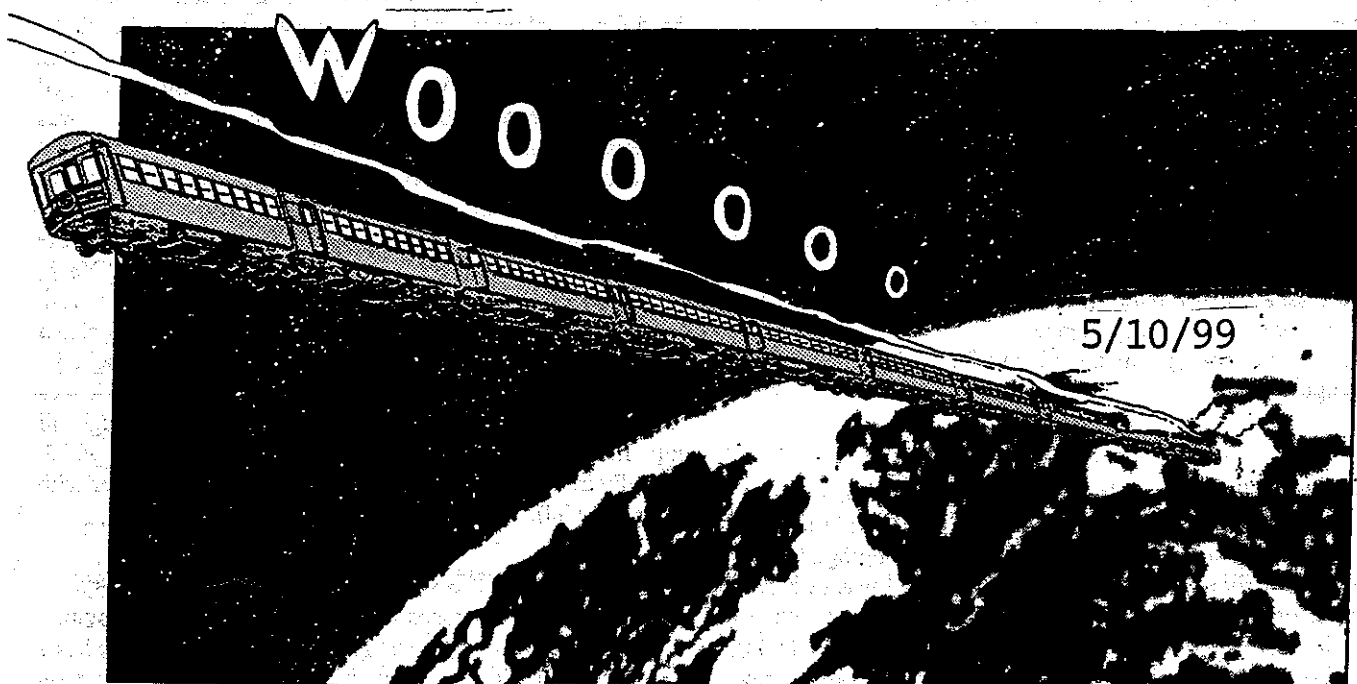


With such energy and variety, and such good vibes, Kessel got this particular AntiFolk All-Stars Night off to an excellent start. (Jonathan Berger)

Damn, that shit was dope!

<April 7th, 1999> Lori Manley plays

guitar like... like... she plays a really good guitar. Fast. Funky. Rhythmic and powerful. She melts her guitar picks with clockwork precision. Supposedly up before her was some guy from down south, Damion Wolfe, who's another guitarslinger. But he didn't make it. Instead, some guy named Joie/DBG got to the stage. I guess he was all right. (Gustav Plympton)



Straylight follows the rising sun.

Roxanne Beck

Some performers have all the luck.

The Fort has shown deep appreciation for great local country and western exponents like Rob Ryan or Howard Fishman, lavished a baleful of attention upon the likes of Greg Garing; and has even offered temporary asylum to the camp craziness of Anti-Country folk like Tammy Faye Starlight. But the dynamic work of country rocker Roxanne Beck, who visits the Fort with less frequency than her colleagues, has largely gone uncelebrated, even after the release of an impressive debut album last year. Roxanne's album, *Garden of Love*, featuring the talents of some of New York's finest session musicians on a few of the tracks, was another one of those overlooked independent releases that deserved greater notoriety than it has gotten. Together with her husband, guitarist John Pondel, Roxanne has been making some rather ear-catching music in the area of Contemporary Country for quite a while now on the New York performing scene. Given all the above (along with the onset of a new found on-line distribution deal), Penner MacBryant felt it necessary to balance the scales of Anti-Folk justice by interviewing one of the Fort's lesser known but no less deserving singer/songwriters.

Penner MacBryant: Thanks for taking time out. This interview has been a long time coming.

Roxanne Beck: I know! With both our schedules and all...

PM: Let's start with a fairly elemental question. Although it's hinted at in the lyric of the last track of your debut album, Where do you hail from originally?

RB: I was born in Arkansas, in a little town called Searcy. I grew up there, went to college there and then spent a few years in Nashville before I moved to New York. So that's where I got *Wings of Desire* from. It's all pretty much true. You take a lot of artistic license in some tunes, but that one is pretty close to real experience.

PM: It's also one of the most beautiful, with its gospel like arrangement.

ORIGINS

PM: When did you decide to pursue music as a career?

RB: My parents were college teachers in this little town of Searcy, AK, which is a college town. I was singing at talent shows as early as three and four. By the time I was in first or second grade, I was dreaming about being a singer. When I was in high school, I put together a band and started playing at school functions. It was the same in college. I performed at everything I possibly could and did a lot of things for the school. I just really got it in my blood, even though I was an English major. Music I did because I loved it. I never really planned on teaching it or necessarily studying it in an academic way. I just loved doing it.

ALBUM

PM: How did *Garden of Love* come about?

RB: Well, I really started writing {my own songs} in earnest about the time I moved to New York in the early nineties. I had lived for a few years in Nashville, but I was always a singer who was looking for other people's material. Even though I had loved songwriting and had appreciated the craft of it all my life, it took me a little while to kind of gain the confidence even to think that I could be a writer. I was just always very self-critical of any efforts I made towards songwriting. I started out working with a couple of different producers in Nashville who tried to find material for me and took me in the studio at their own expense and tried to basically build a project around me. We just couldn't quite find the A-list material. As I'm sure you

know, Nashville is really a town of songwriters, but it's very hard for an unknown act to get the best material right off the bat unless you have a very heavyweight record producer that you're working with. We had a lot of good songs submitted to us, but somehow the marriage of the tunes and me was not exactly right and it sort of came to me about the time I decided to move here that I was really going to have to try to find my own voice as a writer and find songs that I felt spoke to my own experiences in life. It was just hard for me to find a song written by anyone else that I could go "Yeah, that's me!" over. So, after I moved here, I spent a year acting and going to some acting auditions, which was also a real good experience for me. But then I decided I'd just take a shot at this. I just started writing about life experiences and relationships--everything that I had gone through all my life, primarily the most recent experiences, which actually included breaking up and getting back together with John (Pondel).

PRODUCTION

PM: I was truly impressed by the production on the album.

RB: That really is (engineer) Al Houghton's credit. He has a wonderful studio. He went from The Music Building on Eighth Avenue, which is a real cavernous, kinda scary place. We did a lot of the album there and while we were still in the process of making the album, he moved from there into a beautiful new space in Chelsea. He's a wonderful, wonderful guy. He actually plays in a couple of different bands. One is Life in a Blender.

PM: Yes! I've heard of them.

RB: They are really terrific. They're like nobody else. He plays guitar in that band. But he's also just a really good engineer and just a sweetheart of a person. Very supportive during the entire process. I was lucky to find him.

INDUSTRY

PM: I've mentioned the fact that *Baby I Do* seemed too good a single for contemporary Pop/Country radio, even here in the Northeast, to miss out on, though it seemed as if they did. How do you explain it?

RB: I think I have to take some responsibility for that because, although I have sent it out some, I didn't do the mass mailing that I should've done on it. Maybe at the right time, it will get cut by somebody or I'll get the chance to

Acts of Necessity is a Penner MacBryant production.

Acts of Necessity: interview with

Roxanne Beck

recut it or whatever. I think of people like Lucinda Williams, who has been a real inspiration to me. She had been out there a long time when she got "Passionate Kisses" recorded by Mary Chapin Carpenter, and that really opened the door up for her. She had cut that song herself first.

PM: I'm familiar with Lucinda's version. It's really the definitive one to me, with this breezy, fun sensuality in the delivery.

RB: She's got that voice that says you can just tell she's singing with *real* authority. She's singing about what she knows. But getting back, I'm hoping that when the time is right for [*Baby I Do*] that maybe it'll still get out there. The tune's only a couple of years old. I identify with Lucinda Williams because in Nashville they *didn't* think I was country, and that's a big frustration and part of the reason I moved up here.

PM: So the 'too-this-for-that-too-that-for-this' syndrome in the business that tends to victimize artists factored into the move East?

RB: Yes. And I just sort of did [the album] in a way knowing it was going to have different elements and different styles and hoping that there would be enough of a thread running through it that it would still seem like one cohesive thing. I do think in the mass marketing that we have today that a lot of record industry people would probably say "Well, this is all over the place. Let's pick a direction here." When I set out to do it, I just thought I'm going to write the way I write, and if *Wings of Desire* and *We Can't Decide* are both on there, that's just the way it is. (laughter)

PM: I think it's a credit to your musical range. It's so strange when you consider how much praise we give to the popular music legends of the 1960's who incorporated so much into their writing, recording and producing skills and exhibited so much versatility. The industry always praises the dead or already existing saints and makes life incredibly arduous for potential ones.

RB: Exactly. And I think that musical categories seem to have gotten stricter rather than more relaxed in the last few years. It seems like Nashville, for instance, has really gone in a very specific direction. There are the crossover artists like Shania Twain and Leann Rimes. But there are still an awful lot of cowboy hats, and that's still what sells the most in terms of country radio. They're kind of afraid of anything that smacks too much lyrically of something other than traditional country themes. I actually had one guy in



Nashville tell me that he liked to recommend that songwriters use a lot of furniture in their songs (laughter). I knew what he was really talking about was visual images—cars, rocking chairs and the like. Those are the kinds of things they look for in Nashville songwriting and that's just not the way I think. I think more in a rock direction lyrically, even though some of my music definitely reflects country roots. I just have to keep looking at people like Lucinda, Roseanne Cash or Bruce Henderson, who I co-wrote *Goodbye, Rosa* with, which is not on the record but that I perform live.

PM: It's a great song which I hope will be recorded soon. I had some trepidation about asking this, but has anyone made the comparison between your voice and that of Emmy Lou Harris?

RB: Oh, yeah. I love Emmy Lou Harris, so I wouldn't take that as an insult at all! (laughter) In the past, also to [Linda] Ronstadt. You know, sort of a combination that lies somewhere between her vocal and Emmy Lou Harris. They were both big influences. I think her vocal is a little more delicate. I don't think she has the belting side that I have, but she's the greatest. She's someone who just drips emotion when she sings. I love her.

PLAYING

PM: Is guitar your main instrument? When did you take it up?

RB: When I was twelve. I think I've become a pretty good rhythm guitar player, but for a long time I used to sing just with no instrument at all. I would just get out there and sing and I felt comfortable with that, especially growing up in high school and college. Then when I started writing I started playing guitar more. I'm kind of now getting back into a thing of enjoying performing some of the songs without playing at all, so I can be more expressive with my body and everything. But guitar is my main instrument, even though I took piano for a while as a kid. But I always have leaned on great guitar players who are great lead players. I just never had the inclination to become a lead player myself.

PM: Seems to me you've got some great lead players here.

RB: Thank you. I think so. I think Jeff Campbell's great too. He did a lot of the lead parts on the tracks. I'd worked with Jeff live in the band for a while. Now John [Pondel] is playing with us.

BAND

PM: I don't think I've ever had the privilege of hearing your complete band. When you play the Fort, you normally give an acoustic performance with John.

Acts of Necessity is a Penner MacBryant production.

Acts of Necessity: interview with

Roxanne Beck

RB: I think I've got a great band. I sometimes use different people but the core of it has remained the same. I try to use Paul Ossola on bass whenever I can. He's wonderful. He played with the Saturday Night Live band for four years; by the way. He's a wonderful guy and he's really got that country rock touch to his playing. There's Rodney Howard on drums. He didn't play on the record, Clint [DeGanon] played on the record, and he's quite good, but Rodney's really good and solid.

SONGWRITING

PM: The songwriting process. It's something that happens differently for so many songwriters. How does it happen for you? How do the songs evolve?

RB: I guess I'm one of those writers that writes primarily from inspiration. I wish that I could write more in the way that people just sit down and say 'Okay, now it's songwriting time'. And I do know people who write that way, and they write great songs. But with my stuff I tend to need to have an impetus. Most of the tunes on *Garden* are like that. Most of the time I either get a melody in my mind or just a lyric idea. A lot of the time, if I get a lyric idea, a melody will come almost at the same time. I'll sit down at the guitar, I'll think of an idea and start strumming chords, and the melody will come just about in the instant that the idea came. I don't sit down with anything in mind, usually. In general, I tend to write more when I've got a real painful thing happening or there's something I really want to write

for a reason. *Channel of Love* was an example of that. I wanted to write a song on that subject. That might be one of the few exceptions. My religious background was a big part of my growing up. I don't really go to church regularly anymore. I'm not against it, but to me the main thing about the message is love and letting it flow through you instead of getting stopped up with all that stuff that prevents us from being instruments of love and being happy. That's where that was coming from. Just as a song like *Hey Mr. Right* is something else that I wanted to write because it's sort of a reaction to what I see in some people who call themselves religious that strikes me as very unloving and really unrepresentative of the person they look to as Lord of their lives.

PM: I have to say that *Channel of Love* has to be the most joyful and spirited track on the album. The background harmonies on that and so many of the other album tracks are really good. Did you do much of the arranging on those?

RB: Pretty much all of them. I had a lot of great help on *Channel* because I had three fantastic backup singers (Steve Abrams, Jenny Burton, Margaret Dorn), and they pretty much came up with their own riffs and parts and everything, but I came up with the backgrounds on *Wings of Desire* and *Garden of Love*. I guess I did most of my own harmonies on everything except two of the cuts. I love singing harmonies. That's the one thing I have to attribute to my singing a lot in church when I was growing up. In the church I attended, which was a big church of about a thousand people, and it was all four part harmonies with no instruments. So it was a really good way to learn how to sing parts.

SONGS

PM: You've alluded to my favorite track on the album, the one that closes it, *Wings of Desire*. Arrangement-wise, it is the most beautiful song on the CD. It seems to me you're using a spiritual motif rather cleverly to discuss the bliss of finding romantic love. Tell me more about it.

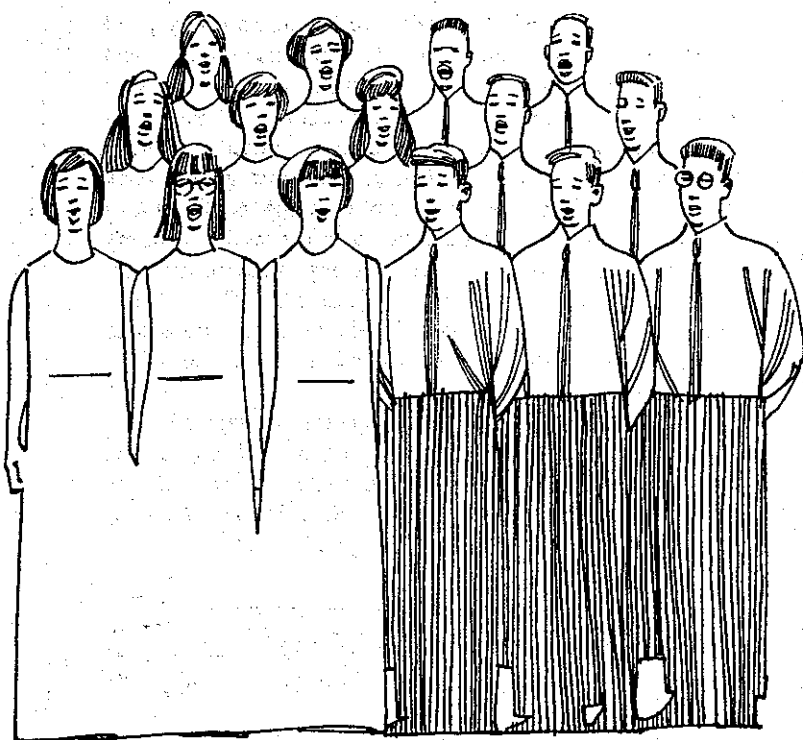
RB: Right. And the electricity of sensuality, really. It's funny, because a lot of people when they first hear the song, they may not be listening to the lyric and just think that it's a real hymn-like, churchy song.

PM: Because that's part of its conceit—and beauty.

RB: I kind of had fun with that because—it's when you listen to it that you go 'Oh, so that's what it's about!'

PM: It's arguable that the most genuine love we ever encounter on this earth does help bring us all a little closer to heaven. What do you derive the greatest amount of pleasure from? The creation or the presentation of a new song?

RB: Wow—that's a good one. I really don't know. I have to think about it a little more. I love the act of



Acts of Necessity is a Penner MacBryant production. Continued on penultimate page.

LACH'S NORTHWEST TOUR

In the moment I walk into Berbat's Pan in downtown Portland, Oregon, I'm startled. I realize I've never actually seen Lach play anywhere but at The Fort.

It's going to be different, that's for sure. No familiar faces. The room's too big to be intimate. Hell, there's even a



stage. I've never actually seen Lach on a stage before, staring down an audience.

This was his fourth stop of a tour through the Northwest.

You can tell it's the Northwest because 1) it's raining, & 2) there's a latte stand at every gas station.

Lach is here to promote his new CD, "Blang!" and to apostle to the Antifolkers in the hinterlands. He had played an Antifolk summit Olympia, WA (just south of Seattle) and plans for making a run for the border to play a couple of shows in Vancouver, BC. He had a guitar, a rental car.

Lach was going places.

And on a Wednesday night, he was on stage at Berbat's Pan, taking up the opening slot. The bar is about seven to eight times as big as The Fort. There's a dance floor. After Lach plays, someone named DJ Gravy will spin discs on his two turntables, accompanied by two percussionists.

Eclectic.

There's maybe 30 to 40 people scattered around the bar. Not bad for a gig that starts around 8:45. I walk in to hear the opening bars of "Teenage Alcoholic." It's like coming home. Been damn near two years since I heard Lach live. His voice is huge. Stronger than ever. His Taylor is looking more beat up than I remember it. That's a good thing.

Lach's playing is as distinct as ever. I continue to be amazed at the subtleties he is able to achieve even though he plays almost exclusively open chords in the first position. His energy is inescapable.

And that's what the audience "gets" from the first note. From "Teenage Alcoholic" he moves on to "Ungrateful." It's a more delicate song for an audience unfamiliar with the territory he is exploring. Still, he pulls it off.

That's not to say each song is embraced with equal enthusiasm. Ask any performer - the loud and raucous songs will win over the bar. Those squishy ballads will get polite applause.

Case in point: Lach receives just a few claps after a ballad. He says - "I've got another love song for you." The audience is restless.

Then he opens with the dissonant chords of "Kiss Loves You."

By song's end, the place is rocked. It's his loudest approval rating of the night, despite having to stop during the second verse to fix a broken string.

Not willing to play it safe, moments later, Lach steps down from the stage, asking for a spotlight on the dance floor. At this point, no one knows what to expect.

Lach lights a cigarette.

There are audible gasps in the audience.

You've got to understand - in the Northwest, smoking is about as cool as lighting your own farts on fire. I've played entire nights in a bar, to have my clothes smell only of sweat, not smoke. There are no laws against it. It's just a regional thing.

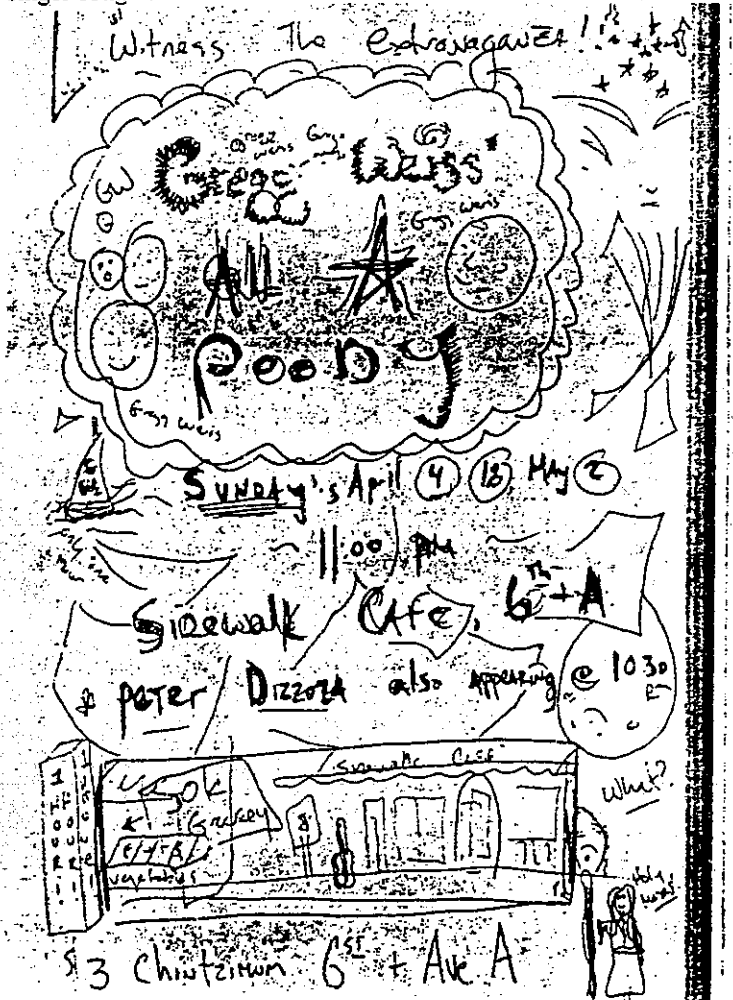
So anyway, there's Lach, on the dance floor, cigarette in his right hand, microphone in his left.

A yellow spotlight shining in his face.

The audience is a bit bewildered. His guitar is prone, on the stage.

Lach launches into a poem called "The Day I Went Insane."

I look across at the bartender and waitresses. It's obvious they don't see this too often in the middle of a singer/songwriter set. There are smiles.



LACH'S NORTHWEST TOUR

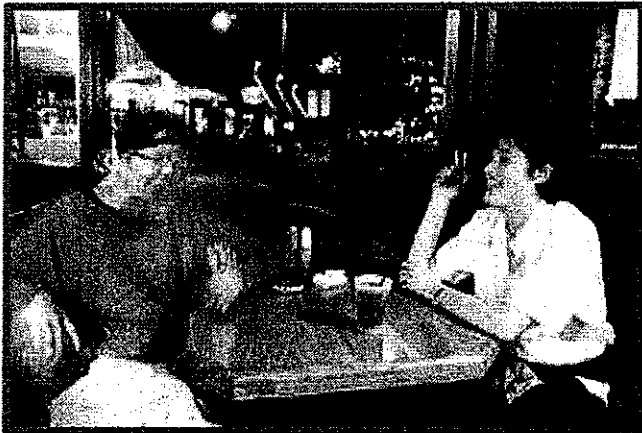
It works.

With the recitation done, Lach returns to the stage and picks up his guitar to close off the set. Final song, of course, is "Drinking Beers With Mom." I'm disappointed he has dropped the soliloquy in the middle. Once again, though, raucous songs capture the energy and the interest of the audience.

Afterward, I shake his hands, offer to buy him a beer. He takes some time to clear off the stage and we talk about what's new in the East Village.

The tour's been cool, he says. Flew into Seattle, rented a car and is now driving up and down I-5. It's a great way to go. Talked about radio play, and being added to rotation on college stations around the nation.

"Blang!" has sprang. It's going to be a good spring for Lach and his muse.



Once things settle down, we head out with a DJ from KPSU and the guy who organized the Antifolk summit in Olympia, Andras Jones, for a more intimate Anti-hoot in the DJ's living room. Lach played "Ballad of the Thinning Man." In this setting, the song works.

I add my own tune, "East Village Girl," substituting the phrase "Trailer Park" after explaining that audiences outside of Manhattan had no idea what the hell I was singing about.

Two o'clock in the morning rolls around. I've got to be back at work in five hours. Time to end my participation in Lach's Northwest tour.

He's rolling on.
"Blang!"



Poster Etiquette

Here's one thing that just bugs the hell out of me: putting up fliers.

Yeah, we all have to promote, and after all, the whole 'name recognition' thing is as important as playing the gig itself, but some of you (you know who you are) just go overboard. I mean, if your gig is a month away, PLEASE DON'T put up a damned flier yet. These people who do this are (maybe unintentionally, but nonetheless) being extremely selfish (not to mention self-centered). Nothing irritates me quite so much as seeing some prime poster spot taken up by a gig that's a month away. Come on man, give others a chance. Now, I usually put up fliers a week before, but I could still understand doing it 2 weeks prior -tops. I mean who do you think you are, freakin' Mumia?

Speaking of whom, now this goddamned convicted cop killer who (on the sworn statements of at least 10 doctors and nurses) kept shouting "I killed the motherfucker" repeatedly for like, 4 hours after he was arrested & brought into the emergency ward (due to police battling gunshot wounds) is the new poster boy. These cretins cover up hard working musicians' hard earned efforts just for their own boy. Fuck them. I tear down every freakin' Mumia flier that I see. I'm actually thinking of printing up "Kill Mumia" fliers to plaster over theirs.

The main poster etiquette rule: never put a flier over an upcoming gig (unless it's over a month away). Everyone can co-exist with each other if we can just get that straight. Sure, I want to be huge, I want to be famous & rich and everything. So do you (whether or not you'd admit it); that's why you put up the damned things in the first place, so please BE CONSIDERATE.

Thank you.

Buy my CD at CDBABY.com (just type "Joe Bendik" in their search engine & it'll put you right on the page).
<http://members.aol.com/joebendik>

Bendikjoe@aol.com

See JB & The Heathens live at

Arlene Grocery (95 Stanton)

Friday April 16th -

1AM sharp!

Peace.

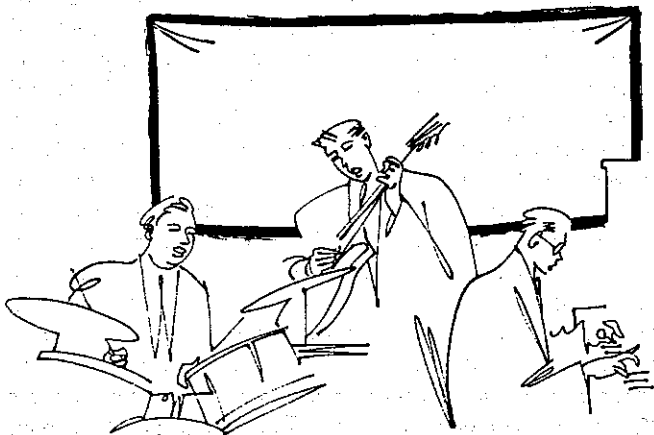
Joe.

Getting There Was Half the Fun

Part II

More reminiscence about the earlier days of antifolk, from MARK HUMBLE

I started mixing sound for open mike nights at Chameleon during spring of '89. I had just quit a band that wasn't into trying my songs. I felt encouraged to keep writing and singing new songs at the open mikes; that was and still is the best part of what Lach has done with Anti-Folk. There was a bit of a buzz about the place, but it was nothing compared to what would follow that fall. The main attraction seemed to be Bob, the emcee. No one knew what he would do week to week, and he was usually very funny. The schedule started to expand, and Lach started to play. His regular slot was Saturday nights at 10 and he booked someone else at 9. He started booking open mike



performers for Friday nights. This brought a lot of people back more often... If someone showed enough promise at open mike, they would get a Friday night. I started mixing sound on all three nights and introducing the acts on Fridays.

Mixing sound at Chameleon wasn't rocket science, it was just having a couple of mikes and mike stands that actually worked, and taping down the wires so people wouldn't trip over them on the way to the bathroom. I saw a lot of poets, stand-up comedians and singer/songwriters. Some are still around now, some moved, some died, one is Beck. In September 1989 New York Press published their annual Best of New York issue. Lo and behold, there was a category created for Best Open Mike Night, and Chameleon got the nod, as well as a great write up. Spin Magazine followed with a small mention. This out of the way place turned into the place to be. More people came. John Outlaw



was one guy who read the

NY Press article. He started coming down with his singing partner Pat Tortorici. John told his friend Danny Fields about the club and about Paleface. Danny came down and checked the place out, and eventually became Paleface's manager. Around this same time, Lach was closing a deal with Gold Castle records. The tone of the place intensified, and there was a sense that something special was going on. The quality of the songwriting was higher.

Beck was among the many new faces showing up in late 1989. He and Paleface became fast friends and for months they were nearly inseparable. I remember he first hit the stage backing Paleface up for a song or two. Or they would cover a Daniel Johnston or Woody Guthrie song. That's the way it was for a while. When Beck first got up at open mike, he wasn't performing his own songs at all. He finally was cajoled into writing an original song, and he played it during one of Paleface's sets. He sounded a lot like Bob Dylan at the time and the song is in that style. Beck was treated to the usual Anti-Folk encouragement for writing new material. He didn't stop writing! I had been doing some four track stuff at home, and I thought it was a shame that all this music was being played week in and week out but none of it was being documented. So I started offering to record people on my four track. Only a few people took me up on my offer; two of them were Paleface and Beck.



It was a lot of fun. I just hooked microphones up to the four track and let them play. I recorded a few hours worth of music. They recorded a lot of cover tunes, some originals by Paleface and that one from Beck. They were also starting to combine rap and folk. Paleface had a song called "Rapping This Folk For You." It also turns out this was the first time either guy had done any kind of recording, and they both got a big kick out of hearing themselves through headphones.



Reviews

Grey Revell — *Midnight Eye*

I lucked into a dub of one of a few tapes that have the feel of a long out-of-print 60s garage record, or some bootleg treasure. It's source? A contemporary underdog, often spitting distance from me.

Covina, CA expatriate Grey Revell has amassed 20 4-track demos crudely but creatively recorded (mostly) by Nathan Weaver. Evidence of Sidewalk Alumnus Cal Littlefield also appears on the tape.

The first side of this 90-minute cassette is posed to be the official album. Ironically, it omits the Oasis-inspired 'Year 2000' (delegated to Side B). This is reportedly the song Grey brought to New York last year to capitalize on.

Revell knows how to use space and simplicity with regards to lyrical images and chord patterns, producing a cinematic sound. You'll picture yourself in windy deserts, vacant dark discos and cars overlooking city lights. Songs intentionally avoid answering every question, causing your imagination to run wild. Plus, he names names.

A cool effect Grey often uses is a constant 4 chord vamp (okay, maybe with a bridge) with various alternating vocal melodies, such as in 'Me and Eric' and the title track. By the way, most of the songs, sport some sick-ass echoes on the vocals, for you gourmets of *shtoonk*.

A standout production is the LA-produced 'Crows.' You'll swear Grey was a 4AD band from Manchester. No bass or drums, but the acoustic guit rumbles and the electric does chime, and the tambourine backing could put Sly & Robbie on a bread line. Grey's awesome tenor is double-tracked and alternating choruses ping-pong from right to left, an aural Picasso.

The Roky Erikson-inspired 'Night Dogs' is a rhythmic mindfuck. Oddly proclamatic verses jerk into the staccato minor chords just a beat too early. Dude, 'Forever Kids' is stark and sad snapshot of Generation Ecstasy. But the most heartbreakingly beautiful piece on the tape is an out-take, a

dissonantly
finger-
picked
cover of
Big Star's
'Thirteen.'

I rue the
day Revell
plays this
live. If he
does and I
don't have
my loved

one's hand in mine, I'm a dead man. Notably original is the cover of Jonathan Richman's 'Roadrunner,' using found sound from the street that works in key with the music.

I know it took me awhile to get into the Grey oeuvre (I get sleepy by 12.30AM during the AntiHoot), but if I had this tape as a primer, I would have been on the front lines from the getgo. I possible headphone classic.

John Kessel

Roxanne Beck — *Garden of Love*

It is the most rudimentary of truths. Love — the hunger for it, the misrepresentation of it, the belief in it, the loss and achievement of it — is the richest and most fertile place any artist may be privileged to explore. It is simply the Grand Canyon of human emotions — one of those places you have to visit at least once in your life (if nothing more) to be a well-rounded traveler in this universe. To fully comprehend it in all its beauty, both wondrous and sad, every artist must put on the creative equivalent of a pith helmet and become a miner of the human heart, to really know what makes us do the things we do. Roxanne Beck goes forth into the deep recesses of that emotional place armed with a promising writing talent and a powerful singing voice to bring out some impressive musical nuggets about the subject on her debut disc, *Garden of Love*. This independent release, which Ms. Beck co-produced with



They Might Be Giants producer Al Houghton, is a little over forty five minutes of solid musicianship and tries hard to look at love from a great many different angles — most times succeeding without sounding mawkish. Beck draws well on different musical influences — Contemporary Country/Rock for the potential hit singles, "Baby I Do" "Rain Man" and "Talk To Me" (featuring some burning guitar solos by New York session man Jeff Campbell) but by far is most impressive when calling upon other traditions. Relying upon her Southern gospel roots for the most spirited cut on the album "(I Want To Be A) Channel of Love"; its hard-hitting warning against spiritual condemnation: "Hey Mr. Right"; and its sweetest and most beautifully harmonized track, "Wings of Desire", which should remind every listener just how beautiful gospel choral harmonies can be, all serve the artist well. Beck has Emmy Lou Harris' tenderness and sensibilities, though she brings a slightly greater vocal strength to her recorded performances. It's always exciting to be there when nearly all the elements are there for a promising future for a singer/songwriter. Ms Beck has crafted an album that proves she is worth watching

for in the future—and worth listening to now (available on line through www.theorchard.com. ~ *No Rites Music*, 6 Oak Ave., Tuckahoe, NY 10707.

Penner MacBryant

Evan Samuel – *No Mechanic*

I found a bunch of Freedy Johnston in this release. Maybe it's the voice. Maybe it's the turns of phrase. Maybe it's the surprising hooks. Probably it's the voice.

Evan Samuel recorded an excellent sounding solo full-length on boom-box. It sounds high quality, and shows what artistry can be accomplished through necessity.

Highlight cuts are: the opener, "Calamity Jane:" "Aint it just like you, to try to steal the show? Ain't it just like you to try to keep my vanity up?"

"Mona Lisa's Blues:" "I'm your Shakespeare. You're my Mona Lisa. Mona Lisa wasn't that pretty."

"The Man That Time Forgot," somehow makes me think of Elvis, and "Whatcha Got There, My Friend."

It's a good release, very true to a primitive spirit. All solo, but very rarely small, this album gives you a golden opportunity to hear a nofrills songwriter, just like in concert.

Stephanie Biederman

Mo Goldner -

With this 4-song EP, Mo shows he's got something, maybe not completely original, but certainly notable. He's John Mellancamp with a better sense of humor. He's hardcore Americana. His sound rocks and his songs are funny.

He starts with "Dirty Car," which has a narrator tell us about having "a nineteen eighty seven in my head." It sounds like he's got a fairly silly agenda, until, he slowly shares in the bridge, "Clean up the mess that I possess, then we'll both end up getting depressed..."

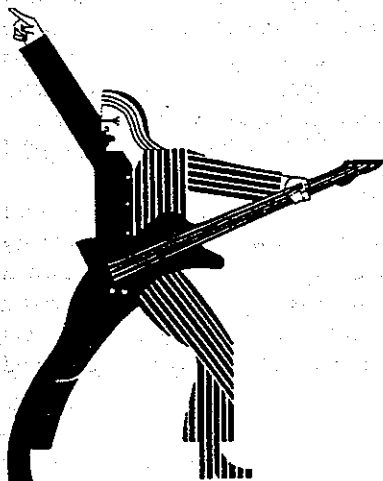
Suddenly, there's the chance that Mo is reaching for something deeper than just the trials and travails of a lazy motor-owner. Is there a metaphor wrapped up in here?

"Should have taken care, put on the spare, combed my hair, I've never been good at these things... I've got a dirty, dirty car." Still not sure, but Mo may be deeper than he seems.

"Talkin' Bein' in a Band Blues" starts sounding nothing like a talking blues. The entire first verse sounds like it's a low-energy rocker, which explodes in the chorus, "Expectations

can kill the day, don't think, don't worry, just play." Loud guitars, full rhythm section, great force, are all over this whole release.

"Bacon" is brilliant, with its final refrain, "Every good Jewish boy deserves bacon." But, as a fellow Jew with a jones for traif, I'm probably exactly his target audience with



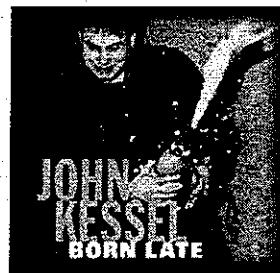
that cut. Still, the percolating guitar that introduces the first and third verses, representing the frying of the meat, is wonderful, especially as the energy level rises, like a frying pan reaching critical.

It's a killer cut. "When I was a young boy, the rabbi said to me, 'don't go eating bacon, it ain't kosher meat.' How can you go wrong?"

Contact: 718-241-3384. Jonathan Berger

John Kessel – *Born Late*

Kessel's got a kickass EP in his debut album. Hell, in the fifteen cuts included, culled from ten years in the life of a recording artists, he may have a great full album. But there's this part of side one that is just amazing. The fourth cut, "Waiting for My Muse," a song all about the important crises facing a sensitive artist, goes straight into the insane little exploration into experimentalism, "Junkie." A lyricless work, a musicless work, a series of tonal variations on the word 'Junkie,' it's well, it's certainly there. And while it's entertainment value might wear on you after the first twelve seconds, it segues seamlessly into the megaphoned music of "Homing Beacon."



"Like a homing beacon, a homing beacon, I'm gonna follow you around until you come back to where you come from," Kessel sings, on the way to explaining how he'll stalk an ex. Almost romantic, finally creepy, the song rocks. Like every cut on the album, it's really well produced. The entire package, the second from Clavicle Recordings, is very slick.

"I'm gonna follow until you come back to me...!" The song ends, moving into "Pearl Onions."

I got no idea what the song's about, alcoholism, I guess, but with the overblown guitar, the Lennonesque backing vocals, the drum-break in the insane psychedelic bridge, the histrionic ending, it just sounds so good!

And, of course, then comes the side closer, the initial late eighties single, "Existentialism."

"A tree is a living thing, and yet... we use paper. A tree is a growing, dying thing, and yet... we play guitar. Yeah, we play guitars... I'm an existentialist!"

Is he saying "We're Damned therefore we're doomed, therefore we dance!" I hope so, but it doesn't really matter, does it? This song kicks ass, it kicks you over to the other side, and, while the rest of the album may be just as good, this little segment is really all I can hear. It just kicks

(Clavicle Recordings: <http://www.illuminatrix.com/clavicle/> Call/Fax: 718-858-6845)

Arnie Rogers

Reviews.

It's an old story. Boy comes to Big City, wants to make it big, be a big star, gets sucked up in the tumultuous world of AntiFolk and falls horribly to his death. Will Grey Revell be the latest victim of the cruel harlot known as New York City?

Grey Revell

(interviewed by Jeff Lightning Lewis)

JL- At this point we're getting right up to the one year

anniversary of your coming to New York and playing at Sidewalk, at the Antihoots, and becoming part of the whole scene and pretty much playing every single Monday night since then. What were the first 2 songs that you played?

GR- I remember the first Antihoot I was ever at I was the last performer of the night, and the first song I ever performed at an Antihoot was "Year 2000." I didn't think it had gone over that well, but I remember Joie [Dead Blonde Girlfriend] was in the audience, it was him and maybe two other people, Marilee was there, I think, and he told me that it was good, and I should come back and give it a try again, so I stuck around and I went back the next week. By that time I had written a song called "Shadow Man" and I did that song and that got me my first gig.

JL- When did it first dawn on you that you were a star of the scene?

GR- (laughs [a lot])

JL- From coming in there and playing one song at the end of the night with not a lot of response to being one of the small handful of true antifolk all-stars...

GR- I think things really started to kick right after I wrote Shadow Man, that was my first sort of tiny hit, and people were really digging that, and right after that I ran out of money and I got taken in, as a lot of people know, by a couple chicks, and they were taking care of me for about a month, and while I was living with them on the Upper West Side I wrote a song called "88 Jane," which was about when I was living on Jane Street; Well, it was about a lot of things...

JL- (interrupting) Was that actually your address on Jane Street?

GR- It was the building I could see from my window while I was living there.

JL- Wow, I didn't know that.

GR- It's still there, the sign is still there, and that song got mad props, and then after that it pretty much just snowballed from there, and I just kind of took it in, and people started really talking to me and I was talking to people. And then I wrote "Ballad of the Understudy" and then people really knew what it was about, and from that point forward it's been like this ever since.

JL- I remember when I first saw you, and for a while, you were just going by "Grey" and at first I thought it was a pseudonym, because it sort of matched the stuff that you were doing, this shadowy sort of pop, and then you started going by Grey Revell. Was that a conscious choice?

GR- No, that just sort of happened. It

was just a matter of getting to be known a little bit better. I had hippie parents so the name came from that.

JL- It's kind of funny 'cause you would expect to have a colorful name rather than a color-less name.

GR- Yeah, they never really explained it. It was just a matter of getting better known, and then people started going "do you have a last name?" and I said "well, yeah," and that was it.

JL- You've still been writing songs at a pretty consistent rate. Do you feel like your songwriting has changed since those first couple weeks and those first few songs?

GR- Yeah, totally. I recorded a bunch of stuff over the last year, about 20-25 songs, mostly on 4-track in bedrooms and studios and shit and for the most part I noticed that a lot of the songs were basically looking back kind of songs. I'd be playing and I'd be here, and I'd see something here, but I'd be tying it back to something in California, and now it seems like the songs are gradually becoming more and more New York based; it's a pretty interesting change. I was trying to go for that the entire time, 'cause I wanted to throw myself into the whole scene feet first and become a New York guy, but that took some time, so pretty naturally it was like, I'm rambling, but for a while they were mostly songs of looking back, pretty much everything on "Midnite Eye," the first set of recordings I did, it's all looking-back kind of songs, songs about California, remembering what it was like over there, chicks, raves and shit.

JL- So do you think that just being in New York has influenced these songs more than other songwriters on the scene, and being around them? How has that figured in?

GR- It's been a mixture of everything, I've been getting ideas from everything, conversations, titles of books that I see lying on the street, things I remember, dreams, but I gotta say that the city itself has probably been the biggest thing, 'cause everything I've gathered has been from that. I'm a hundred times the writer that I was when I got here.

JL- So what happened with the Midnite Eye recordings? I mean that was gonna be the Grey debut album...

GR- I'm still gonna release that, it's just a money problem. I just ain't got the money to release it. Really I have no excuse. I'd just rather take my chick out than release a record in mass. I just don't have the patience to fucking duplicate it myself. As soon as I get the money together I'll just press like three or four hundred copies of the thing and just release it.

JL- On CD?

GR- If I can, yeah, that'd be great. Totally. So right now it's like the few who have it are very very lucky... it's definitely gonna get released very very soon.

JL- Who are your biggest songwriting influences?

GR- Okay, uh... Alex [Box Tops, Big Star] Chilton, Stephen [Buffalo Springfield, Crosby, Stills and Nash] Stills, Tom [Television] Verlaine, Dylan, um, oh man, Grant Lee [Grant Lee Buffalo] Phillips, John [Mamas and the Papas] Phillips, um, all those cats, John [Lovin' Spoonful] Sebastian, Beatles of course, um, shit, Otis Redding... I'm trying to get into a lot of the older blues guys, like Mississippi Fred McDowell I've been listening to, I like his stuff.

JL- What have you been listening to in the last couple weeks?

GR- Stephen Stills; I got the first solo record he did about 30 years ago, I've been listening to that. Listening a lot to Buffalo Springfield, which is Stephen Stills also but more with Neil Young kinda going on in there. There's a lot of newer people, there's a guy named Ben Lee, from Australia, he's really really good. Some of the girls that are out I'm really really liking. I always liked Liz Phair, 'cause I liked her images, I liked the way she paints her songs with fiber-optic light shit, even though she's singing about suburban shit, that's pretty cool. Beth Orton's another one that's pretty cool. I thought "Urban Hymns" by The Verve was a really incredible record. I was really influenced by that. I wouldn't have come to New York probably if I hadn't

Grey Revell

listened to that. That's pretty much covering it [now speaking through lighting a cigarette]... I like to mix, when I'm listening to shit, an

older classic guy with a newer kind of guy, that way I'm not just listening to old stuff or just new stuff, I try to listen to both sides and tie it in somehow so that it all comes out.

JL- How do you think you would describe your music, if at all possible, to someone who's never heard it?

GR - Umm... [pause] That's really hard. [Looong pause, false starts]... I try to think of the songs as little movies. So in that way I like to be kind of like a filmmaker, even though I don't know nothing about making films. I remember before I left California I saw a film by Akira Kurosawa, that Japanese director, and he did a film called Dreams where all the little skits were really surreal, full of mad color and weird images, and taken one at a time you could take each skit in it's own, but it was all part of it, and if you saw the whole film it all made sense somehow. I try to sketch out things with lights and colors and shit and try to fuckin' throw it out at you like that, you know, all in like three minutes if I can. Without coming off as a fucking flake. [Laughs] That shit ain't gonna make no sense! [Laughs, falling apart] I defy you to print that one!

JL- If you had your choice of opening up for any band playing today, who would you most want to open up for?

GR- [pause]

JL- Or say, maybe three bands, to make it an easier question.



GR- I'd like to open up for Gus Gus. They're an Icelandic electronic group. I'd like to open up for them, I think it could kick. Grant Lee Buffalo I'd like to open up for. I was in a rock band when I was 19 years old and we played with them; we didn't really know who they were, and we weren't anybody, so I think that would be kind of cool. I'd like to open up for some of the chicks I mentioned before, like Liz Phair, Beth Orton, I think I could kick with them. I'd like to do Gus Gus 'cause it would be a cool mix of earthiness with spaced-out shit; I'd like to do Grant Lee Phillips 'cause I think that would be pretty solid, and I'd love to do something with one of the good female songwriters like them, 'cause it would be good to show that a dude could kick just as good, 'cause I don't think you're seeing a lot of that. I think a lot of the

Grey Revell

guy songwriters are stuck in some kind of a rut, they're not really painting the pictures that they used to paint, and a lot of that's fallen on the females. But I think guys could do just as good and it should be shown.

JL- One of the reasons I think your music is really interesting is that part of what you're coming from, there's different rave references and some of the imagery and topics are from a very surreal and psychedelic and electronica influenced scene, which usually doesn't find its way into a

solo acoustic act, what most people would think of as "acoustic songwriting," and there's an interesting mix of references going on in that sense. Given the equipment could you see yourself recording electronica type music?

GR- I think if I had the means. I don't think it would be electronica in a drum-and-bass sort of way but I definitely ain't afraid of using synthesizers and shit like that, 'cause I've always loved that shit, I always grew up listening to that.

JL- Like what?

GR- The first band I remember really noticing, when I was seven years old, was the Police, and they always had that wild use of space, right, and if you close your eyes you see all these weird colors, like when the guitar kicks you just see everything come at you like in blue and green, and you're just like "what?" you know, and you just see like little fucking stars falling all over the place and shit. So I mean that's really what it's like, that's really how I would like it to sound, definitely there'd be an acoustic thing going on there, 'cause that's the tool I'm using, but a lot of the sounds that I'm hearing in my head and a lot of the things I'm saying, it's really about standing out in a field with a bunch of people and seeing a bunch of fucking lasers and shit flying out at you, 'cause that's what's happening, that's what everyone's seeing, it's on your fucking computer screens, it's everywhere, you're hearing it, and



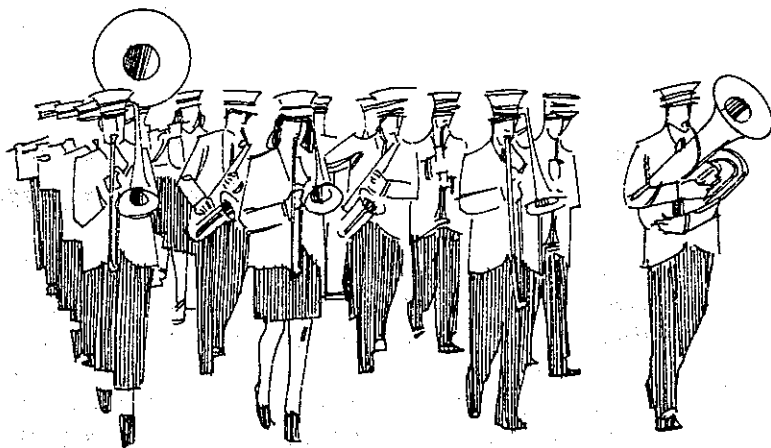
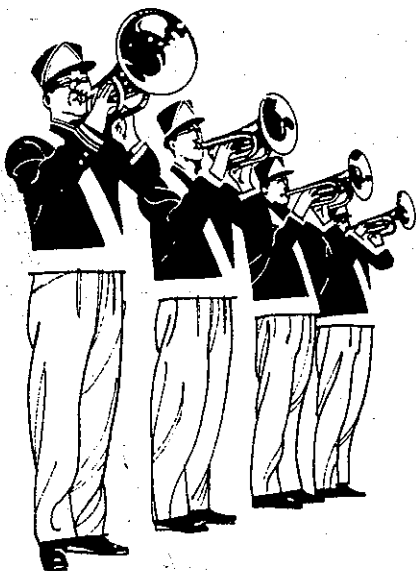
Grey Revell

you can't escape that. 30 years ago everyone was into going back to the fields and running around and having sheep and shit, and kicking it in the forest and playing like Baroque and you know, old kinda music, and now you can't escape it, everything's just ultramodern, all you're hearing now is little radar blips and shit flying all at you, so now that's gotta come in some way. I want the sound to reflect what I'm saying, so there'd definitely be some electronic stuff in there but it'd be different. I'd like to mix it up with acoustic percussion but with like synthesizers and shit; when I get around to doing it I'm sure it'll make more sense.

JL - Is there anything else that you'd want to talk about?

GR - I think it's a great scene that we're doing. I wouldn't have stayed if it hadn't been. I think all the prominent people that are there are just making some great fucking noise. Everyone's got their own dope little style, everyone's got their own approach. Just last night when Joie was playing I was telling him that he's taken it past [Johnny] Thunders and the Heartbreakers and the Ramones and stuff like that because he's coming at it from such a focused, hungry point of view, and without all the mad distortion and noise behind him the words come out and all you get is like the raw kinda punk dissatisfaction with the way everything is. That's amazing, and that's just one guy. Everyone's got their own approach, you've got all kinds of magical shit going on there every time I fucking go in there, so it's pretty amazing. Just the wealth of talent is just mind-blowing to me, you know, it's just an amazing place right now, and it's great to be a part of it. I hope it goes on for a little while longer cause it's just a great thing. For the people that want it, it's like a rock and roll school, you can learn how to kick your way and kick it as good as you can and deal with the other peripheral things that come with that. So it's an amazing thing.

Interview and Illustrations by Jeff Lightning Lewis



Acts of Necessity: interview with Roxanne Beck

writing the song and some of them are extremely personal for me, and I'm very proud of the fact that they're my little children or whatever. But there's something about getting the chance to perform them live, because they're always a little different every time you perform them. I have heard people say that there's something about the way you do things live—that's hard to capture on the album or tape, and I think that's true of a lot of artists. I'm not putting down my abilities as a songwriter. I just think that maybe because I was a performer first, and that it goes back such a long way with me, to when I was a kid, long before I became a writer, maybe that's helped to color my perception of myself.

FUTURE

PM: Is there another CD in the works?

RB: Well, this past year was a very busy one for [John and myself] because we got married and we moved to Westchester at the same time. John's got a house out here that we're actually trying to fix up and sell so that we can move back closer into the city because we miss it a lot. But since coming out here and living in domestic bliss (laughter) I haven't been doing a lot of writing. I do have a few new tunes, but that's one reason we want to get back to the city or at least to Brooklyn is so we can feel like New Yorkers again (laughter). John is doing a recording project out in L.A. for Verve Records through most of March. He himself is really a great jazz guitar player as well and that's really where he's at. So the next recording will be just a bit of a while, but I'm looking forward to the process again.

END

PM: Meanwhile, we have a great debut to listen to and pick up on. Thanks for taking time out to speak with *Anti-Matters*, Roxanne. Congratulations on the debut, your marriage and continued best wishes.

RB: Thanks.

Roxanne Beck's Garden of Love is a No Rites Music product and is available now through theorchard.com and CDNow.

Calendar of the Fort at the Sidewalk Café at 94 Avenue A in the very heart of the East Village

Mon. Apr. 12- The Antihoot w/ Lach. Sign-up at 7:30
 Tues. Apr. 13- 8-Rick Quinones, 8:30-Lorna Hunt, 9-Tony Hightower, 9:30-Chad Parsons,
 10-The McCarthy's, 10:30-Andrew John, 11:30-Joey John
 Wed. Apr. 14- 8-Voya, 8:30-Jack Pedler, 9-Troy Boonsboro, 9:30-Jack Grace, 10-Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Apr. 15- 8-Jesse Murphy, 8:30-Dykritz, 9-John Kessel, 9:30-Grey Revell, 10-Ben Wagner,
 10:30-Brian Thomas, 11-Brian Halloran, 12-Hamell on Trial
 Fri. Apr. 16- 8-Copper Dalton, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Shameless, 11-Lach
 Sat. Apr. 17- 7:30 Rhinegold, 8:30-Butch, 9-Curtis Eller's American Circus, 10-The Cucumbers,
 11-Dan Emery's Mystery Band, 12-Dots Will Echo
 Sun. Apr. 18- 7:30-Fourth House, 8:30-Softspot, 9-Badger, 9:30-Jesse White, 10:30-Peter Dizozza,
 11-Gregg Weiss
 Mon. Apr. 19- The Antihoot w/ Lach. Sign-up at 7:30
 Tues. Apr. 20- 8-Kathy Leonardo, 8:30-Maria and the Urban Amigos, 9-Huff, 9:30-Enid and the Boys,
 10:30-Deaf Aides, 11:30-Tanisha
 Wed. Apr. 21- 8-Halfmanwonder, 9-Mia Johnson, 9:30-O' Smith, 10-Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Apr. 22- 8-Lounge-O-Leers, 9-Wayne's Remains, 10-S.A.M.'s Roamin' Cadillac Church
 Fri. Apr. 23- 8-Chris Grogan, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Debbie Schwartz, 11-The Gripweeds, 12-Slink Moss
 Sat. Apr. 24- 8-Day with Don, 9-David Dragov, 10-The Trouble Dolls, 11-Ben Eyler Trio, 12-Larry Goggin
 Sun. Apr. 25- Piano Night - 7:30-The Count, 8-Stephanie Wright, 8:30-Cynthia Hilts, 9-Bill Popp,
 9:30-Robert "Bob" Roberts, 10-Sarah Lentz, 10:30-Kenny Davidsen Birthday Bash
 Mon. Apr. 26- The Antihoot w/ Anne. Sign-up at 7:30
 Tues. Apr. 27- 7:30-Kevin Drain (The Bitter Poet), 8-Ariana, 8:30-The Bobby Syvarth Combo,
 9-Springwell, 9:30-Kevin and Ebby, 10-Hungry Ghost, 11-Eric Neher
 Wed. Apr. 28- 7:30-Bernadette, 8:30-DB Leonard, 9-Patsy, 9:30-Joie/DBG, 10-Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Apr. 29- 7:30-Christine, 8:30-Libby Kirkpatrick, 9-Tom Nishioka, 10-*The Best Of San Francisco*
Showcase Featuring Eric McFadden, The Naked Barbies, Tiny, The 4 Stars, Bart Davenport (The Loved
 Ones) and Ian Brennan
 Fri. Apr. 30- 8-Psych-a-billy, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Uncle Carl, 11-Magges
 Sat. May 1- 9-Gene & Mimi, 10-Homer Erotic, 11-Neal with an A Record Release Party, 12-Smelt
 Sun. May 2- 7:30-Meg Flather, 8-Allan Orski, 8:30-Sam Carlson, 9-Goh, 9:30-John Kessel,
 10:30-Peter Dizozza, 11 -Gregg Weiss
 Mon. May 3- 7:30-The Antihoot w/ Lach. Sign-up at 7:30
 Tues. May 4- 7:30-Wayne Gladstone, 8-Zinq, 8:30-Esme Montgomery, 9-Julie Grower,
 9:30-Ben Blankenship, 10-Joe Bidewell, 10:30-Jim Knable
 Wed. May 5- 8-Betsy Thomson, 9-Brian Fitzpatrick, 9:30-Troy Boonsboro, 10-Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. May 6- 8-Lounge-o-Leers, 9-Deri Bonet, 10-Mike Kilmer, Sanjay, Karen Kuhl (of Sexpod)
 Fri. May 7- 8-Yukka Flats, 9-Franco-American Spectacle Fantastique
 Sat. May 8- 8-The Blasco Ballroom, 9-Three Normal Humans, 10-Gilligan Stump, 11-Janet Vodka
 Sun. May 9- 8-Devorah Silverstien, 8:30-Ten Spiders, 9-Lenny Molotov and Friends
 Mon. May 10- 7:30-The Antihoot w/ Lach. Sign-up at 7:30
 Tues. May 11- 8-Mooney, 8:30-Jeff Nimah, 9-Citizen One, 10-Andrew McCann
 Wed. May 12- 8-Sharon Fogerty, 9-Zipthunk, 10-Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. May 13- 8-Maria Montieil
 Fri. May 14- 8-Rachel Sage, 9-Ruth Gerson, 10-Vida Loca, 11-Curtis Eller's American Circus
 Sat. May 15- 9-Grey Revell's Record Release Party, 10-Dufus, 11-Whip
 Sun. May 16- 8-AJ, 8:30-Drew Rakowski, 9-Ebon's Jam, 10-Joey John
 Mon. May 17- The Antihoot w/ Lach. Sign-up at 7:30

Thurs May 18-

11:00 P.D.