

AntiMatters



April 2000

Still One Dollar.

Howard Berger

AntiMatters

Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah...
I'm far too modest to say so, but this is probably the very best issue of AntiMatters, ever.

Why would I dare to make such extreme statements? Simple: I'm interviewed here.

Pretty fascinating, I'm far too modest to ever ask anyone, but Brian Wayne, featured last month in AntiMatters, decided to interview me, yours truly, and all it took was seventy one dollars and an earnest promise to stop calling him at 4AM.

So anyway, what could be better than an interview with Jonathan Berger? Well, nothing. But maybe the rest of the content of this issue could keep up:

We've got our typical features: Report from the Fort, some reviews of recent releases, a self-graded test on the amount of AntiFolk in the bloodstream, an interview with producer and player extraordinaire, Spencer Chakedis, and a new cartoon feature, Anti-Cat.

It's all carried, of course, by the brilliance of that centerpiece interview, with me, your host.

Welcome, then, to AntiMatters.

**COVERBOY
INTERVIEWEE
INTERGALACTIC
OVERLORD OF THE
FIRST ORDER**

Jonathan Berger

CREATORS

Jonathan Berger
Patsy Grace
Tony Hightower
Joie/Dead Blonde Girlfriend
Egils Kaljo
Gustav Plympton
Mike Rechner
Grey Revell
Randi Russo
Brian Wayne

Contact: antimatters@excite.com
150 west 95th street, 9d
new york, ny 10025

Dear AntiMatters:

There is a thin line between a dynamic musicians community and an insulated, isolationist cadre. The former can be a wealth of moral support, information exchange, encouragement and friendly competition the latter can be a gossipy, stagnant, self-pitying and self-congratulatory clique. The former is characterized by outreach to newcomers and an active seeking to expand. The latter is a circle of wagons protecting what they have and wallowing in being big fish in a very small dimly lit pond. I would caution the Antifolk scene to beware of falling into the trap of protectionist scene-making. Seek out the people sitting by themselves at the clubs. Don't always sit with the same people. Put your flyers up in the West Village, NYU, Williamsburg not just Ave. A. Play gigs out of town. I would encourage Antimatters to get distribution beyond Jon Berger's social circle. Hey, being part of a vital scene like the NYC Antifolk scene is very enriching and exciting. It is a special time but there is also a danger of the scene eating itself alive and that would be a shame.

- Tismirg@aol.com
An Antifan

Report



Wednesday, March 8th, 2000 – Nuyorican Café

The five-dollar cover charge gets you in to watch people read a poem. A single poem. There's a three-minute limit, but it's a soft three minutes, like a Rick Shapiro set at the Sidewalk. Keeping things shorter was a good idea, especially since some poetry is harder to swallow than music.

Poetry sucks.

Sign up was at nine and I'd been over at the Raven, watching Joie and the other freaks, so when I arrived at ten of ten, it was a little late to get much information on this reconnaissance mission.

Three tables of non-poets judged the artists on a scale of one to ten. Most people got between seven and nine.

I recognized one guy, Pablo, who used to Hoot, but has stopped lately. He explained that there's a poetry slam on Mondays, so that's where he devotes his time. I shared a gig with him once. He's daringly, excitingly experimental, but English isn't his first language, so some of his work suffers for that. He's no Jon Berger. No one was. Most of the artists were deadly serious; many of them personally involved in injustice and social inequities. At first, I was taken aback by the constant references to 41 and the police and racial issues, and the consistent meaningfulness of most everyone's poems presented.

But one guy, the guy who was tallying everyone's scores, he was witty and white and clever, and his poem referenced science fiction and fig newtons, and I liked it a lot. I also liked how he was shamelessly promoting his chapbook, and that he was, as the scorer, intrinsically involved in his scene. His name was Morris. Morris Stegosaurus. What a cool name. I wanted a cool name.

His one poem was a rant, an epic, a work of genius. And it was longer than seventy seconds. He maintained my attention, and I have no attention span. How'd he do something so long?

I felt like there might be space for me in the scene, but the lack of time and attention at center stage might rub me the wrong way, as well as the constant cover charge.

The poetry world might be for me after all. I'm still not sure. Further research required. (Jonathan Berger)

Thursday, March 9th, 2000 – Orange Bear – I find Elektra Complex pretty damned fascinating. She's so small and polite and nice off-stage, but she's something of an explosion with that guitar in her hand. Dynamic. Mighty. Forceful. Intricate... I've got no idea what she's singing about (except

for what she called her signature song, which sounds pretty much like a funky reappropriation of the blues — I guess it's called "Jezebel"?), but I want to, a lot.

She a diminutive force of nature. I'm mighty impressed with the Elektra Complex. (Jonathan Berger)



Friday, March 17th – Sidewalk Café

Patsy Grace played a show, but not like any show she's played before. With a veritable army on stage with her (counting, usually, eight strong), she performed a series of covers and

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traditional numbers, featuring solo turns by **Brer Brian**, **Grey Revell**, and **Sharon Fogarty**. Few of the tunes were familiar to the assorted AntiFolk audience, but all were spirited, and the enthusiasm on the stage was infectious. Or was that just alcoholic vapors? The packed house was roused by the tunes, by the energy, and by the sheer mass of people on stage. Opening for the Celtic song ensemble was **Kirk Kelly**, playing his originals with a new two piece band, including a mighty drummer who didn't stay in rhythm, but who's forceful beats improved the already excellent "Shenagh Says" to no end. An excellent night, all around. (*Jonathan Berger*)

Wednesday, March 22nd, 2000 – **The Raven** – My second visit to the Raven Open Mike saw a much larger crowd than the first time. Thinking myself smart, I got there around

6:45 to sign up, at which point more than 20 people had signed up. So get there early! It appears that so many people are showing up that some don't even get to play, so it pays to be punctual, if not very early.

Joie did something unique in that he allowed the person who's name was last on the list to play first - so the lucky performer was **Donna Susan**, who sang a song about tired eyes.

The Costellos played their unique style of music, with great interplay between the vocals, guitar and the flute. They sang about "dragonfire in your tongue". They also had a great guitar/flute duet in the beginning of their second song.

Joe Bendik brought along the latest **Heathen** ensemble to perform tonight in a rare full band open mike performance. "How could you do this to me?" They also had the first ever "sofa dive" Think of him what you will, Joe knows how to get the crowd's attention - he makes you watch.

Crazy A, though only limited to one song, managed to make the most of her time with her song "Propaganda Pussy," then proceeded to jump on a table, only to fall off of it a few seconds later, slightly hurting her ribs in the process, but I think she was OK.

The guys in **Testosterone Kills** played a song, but right before they began, **Pablo** sang a bit of a Skid Row song, which I guess was in response to the guy who looked like Sebastian Bach who'd been heckling them. (*Egils Kaljo*)

Saturday, March 25th - Sidewalk Café

They're incredibly tight, and their range of material seems to increase every week, but sound problems plagued **Lach and the Secrets'** show, at the awkward time of being filmed by two cameras. The excellence of the musicianship and the crack songwriting were, as ever, in evidence, though the band seems to be jamming out more. Perhaps some people's cup of tea, but the variety of songs and sounds has always been the hallmark of a Lach set, and expanding each song to its maximum length just limits the number of songs the combo can play. And, anyway, as the speakers blew and the vocals faded, where was



SAT., APRIL 8TH, 9PM

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the Fort

Preparing for his set, following the Overlord of AntiFolk. Celebrating his belated birthday, Joie ran through a fiery set of originals, mostly newer cuts, with a joie de vivre rarely seen in such a miserable git. His energy was catching, and, though the PA put the artist through his paces, too (with soundguy Pablo desperately working to fix the ailing equipment), the audience stayed with him through his entire furious performance. (Jonathan Berger)

Tuesday, March 28th - 2000 - Cheetah Club (or whatever the fuck it's called)

It was like Avenue A piled into a bus and went to the zoo to see how the animals lived. Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend had procured a gig in this disco where he was to play only one song, like they were gonna mix in some real live AntiFolk between the beeps & boops & *mmf-mmfs* they normally play. Who better than Joie to go fuck some shit up in the loudest way possible and then leave, posse in pocket, leaving the disco bunnies with smack-marks on the side of their heads going *what da fuck was that?*

The joint was real skanky, with drunken cubicle people spilling their drinks all over the speakers while they showed terrible 50s movies on beach balls suspended above the dance floor. They still had the New Year's decorations up, fergawdsake. All the AntiFolkheads stood just inside the door

drinking their free drinks, making Studio 54 jokes, and watching the self-styled Adonises rub up against the drunken office sluts (and each other).

The sound system was terrible, which I found odd, it being a disco, where the sound is all anyone cares about anyways. Joie went on (45 minutes late) on this fashion runway style stage, wearing his black silk shirt, looking like the first punk to get on *Solid Gold* (which he kind of was, sort of), did "I Don't Wanna Shit Where I Eat" and "Rockstar Junkyard", and that was the only time the AntiFolkers danced. We tripled the population of the place, and we left en masse the second he got off the stage. The whole exercise was a real goof, but everyone I think had a gas, and hey, we freaks clearly have more fun than them freaks. And when Madonna's "Like A Prayer" came on after Joie finished, it sounded pretty uninspired compared to the screaming frothy glamour we had just witnessed. Bar 12 should do this again. (Tony Hightower)

Thursday, March 30th - 2000 - Club 13

The CD release party was days away, but the eminent Doctor David Dragov had a special event for the Inner Circle.

In leather pants and a turtleneck, Dragov lept atop some furniture and thanked the masses at Bar 13, some devotes fans, some, as he called them, 'Peons.'

"Thank you for your support," he read from his script, "I did not right 'Electroedopis,' we all did. I am not 'Chubby Linda,'

THE HEALING POWER OF MATSAH

When I was young, my father told me of the healing power of matsah.

"Son," he said, "Listen to this story, and listen well.

"Matsah is bread of affliction. What too few people know is that it is also the bread of recuperation."

"That's crazy talk!" I said, but he continued.

"It's true. If you suffer a serious wound, place a piece of matsah before you and it shall fix you right up."

"Hogwash," I almost said, but, under my father's watchful ear, I refrained. Instead, I just glared.

"Son," he said, "This unleavened loaf can cure all your ails. Make any wound heal. This bread can do what modern medicine cannot. Do you believe me?"

"No," I said.

"Are you sure?" My father spake, raising his hand as he often did at times like this, "Because, if you don't, I'll have to prove how well it heals. You don't have any injuries just now, do you?"

It was then, suddenly, that I found faith in the healing power of matsah.

(from *Points of Blues...*)



Jonathan Berger
celebrates Pesach
with friends, family, &
freaks. (You're the freaks)

Sidewalk Cafe (94 Avenue A)

Saturday, April 15th - 8:30

A new version of Passover, from the
new Haggadah, *Points of Blues*.

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Report from the Fort

we all are. All right, there's free champagne, let's party!" Dragov jumped off the chair, and DJ Nanci Dangerous spun cuts off Dragov's brand-spanking-new For He's A Jolly Good Fellow, along with traditional classics. We danced to them indiscriminately.

By the end of the night, bathed in sweat and enjoying our mutual pleasure, the difference between the Peons, who came to drink, and the Inner Circle, who came to pay tribute to the doctor, was slight indeed. (Jonathan Berger)

Thursday, March 30th - 2000 - The Fort

In the middle of the middle of the set for the Voices' CD release party, Laurel said that Brian would do a couple of numbers solo.

Laurel sat down in the corner, simple shouting distance from the stage, and watched as Brian sang the title track to their brand spanking new album, The Best Day of My Life, then following with the weeks-old song (that just slipped onto the release), "Call it Home."

For each of the songs, Laurel sat there, lizard-watching her partner on stage, mouthing along every word.

Of course, she wasn't alone. A good quarter of the audience was joining in as much as they could. People I'd never seen at a

Voices' show - and I've been to a few - were singing with the artist. That's one of the strengths of the Voices, I guess: their hummability.

After the performance, and the fans all bought their CDs and the audience petered out, while the Voices and their entourage headed over to their favorite hangout, Odessa, I thanked Brian for the great show, and asked him if today was, in fact, the best day of his life.

"Sure," he said, "Why not?" (Jonathan Berger)



NEXT ISSUE:

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID DRAGOV
Ask MAJOR MATT

RECORD REVIEWS of
THE VOICES
NEVER LOUDER THAN LOVELY
BUTCH ROSS

THE FOLLOW-UP CALL: Booking Gigs With People Who Hate Your Music

(Ooo... it sounds so "how to")

(Randi Russo)

Maybe this isn't noteworthy, but maybe it will encourage you discouraged musicians who get "rejected" for gigs to take heart. Back in December, I sent out two tapes: one to CB's Gallery and another to the Living Room. These tapes, mind you, are home recordings, à la 4-track (sub-par sound/production quality - for those who can't get with the charming allure of lo-fi). So, I made my pretty artsy packaging and sent them off. Well, I didn't hear a thing from either of them, so in about 2-3 weeks, I followed up with CB's Gallery. I called, asked Micheline about getting a gig, she asked for my name, put me on hold, came back and gave me a Sunday. OK... so far, no problems. That was in December, and I realized that I already had three shows booked for January, and one for February, so I didn't call the Living Room right away - I already had my plate full. Fast forward to the beginning of February... I already had some March shows lined-up at my regular favorites (need I mention?... the Sidewalk and the C-Note). I decided to call the Living Room and I mentioned how I sent her a tape back in December. She, like Micheline, asked for my name and put me on hold, then she came back, but the conversation went much differently than the one I had with Micheline. It went a little something like this:

Living Room Chick: Sorry... we're not interested.

Me (with a quiver in my voice): Oh... really? Why not?

L.R.: I don't know why! (getting all surly)... I don't have time to take notes on why I don't like something.

Me: Oh... well... I don't understand... I've played Sidewalk, C-Note, Raven, CB's Gallery, and the Den of Cin... and things have gone over pretty well. I've pulled in a pretty decent amount of people (well, I think I told her that I pull in a *great* draw, but for the sake of protecting my image of modesty you, I'll make some modest adjustments. Plus, it was OK to fib - she'd insulted me!)

L.R.: (extended pause): Well, OK... I'll give you a Tuesday slot at 7PM and we'll see how you do.

Me: OK... well, I was looking mid-March because I have something booked on 3/8 and 3/30.

L.R.: No... I don't like to book people who have don't have at least two weeks in between gigs [which I can understand, but then she asked me the following in a taunting and intimidating fashion]... *unless you think you have a big enough draw?*

Well, I admit... here's where I got intimidated, and instead of pouring on the bravado and saying, "Yes, I can pull in enough people", I caved and said: "uh... ok... so let's do April." And she gave me an April gig. Ok... so I got a little timid in the end... but, the truth is, I got the gig (from someone who hates my music)! April 18th as a matter of fact! - hmmm... shameless plug - but the plug isn't so shameless: If you come, you'll make my story a happy ending! She'll see how wrong she was! She'll regret the day that she ever insulted me! She'll stop turning away other AntiFolkers, as I've heard she has done to others in our little community, so coming to my show is really a community activity. And best of all, I can call her up with confidence for another gig and snidely ask, "So, how'd I do?"

The Spencer Chakedis Interview

by Patsy Grace

~~Spencer Chakedis is that certain type of musician that projects a complete love for the music he plays. My earliest memory of~~ watching Spencer perform was about a year ago when he and a number of other antifolk musicians were playing back up for Grey Revell as the Waitress Rangers. With his guitar, mandolin and harmonica all at arm's length, Spencer was surrounded by footpedals, a keyboard, and wires outstretched in every direction. The cigarette that had been hanging out of the left side of his mouth was quickly discarded in a frantic attempt to hit the right button for the right sound. And just when the expression on his face seemed to say "I blew it," this amazing psychedelic sound streamlined over the room and Spencer's face lit up with a smile that was filled as much with his own surprise at pulling it off, as his amazement at how awesome the effect sounded. Besides being an accomplished musician, songwriter, and sideman, Spencer has been producing a number of musicians that have put out solo albums this year. At his home and studio in Jersey City, I was able to ask him a few questions about this exciting new recording enterprise known as Balloon Heaven. (Patsy Grace)

PG: Spencer, there are obviously a couple ways we can go. Right now, I would like to focus on Spencer the Producer.

SC: That's cool.

PG: Crazy like an Ambush is the first album that I am aware that you produced. Had you produced any before that?

SC: When I first got to New York, I did some demo productions for different groups. Ah, lets see, I recorded a couple of people in Orlando, where I moved from. Although, I have been recording for a decade on four tracks, I had one when I was 16 that I would use to make silly tapes of my friends and stuff like that. It's a lot of fun, that's why I do it. I totally love it. With music, even when I went to school, writing music was like, a puzzle to me, you know? There is a right way to go about it. I think engineering is almost the opposite. There is no dogma to it; it's almost better to be prepared to do different things. The thing I like most about producing is that I can learn everyday that I work with different people. Each time I try to do something different. A lot of new records get made where it's like they set up mics; they get a sound and the whole album sounds like that. I really don't like albums like that. Sometimes that can be cool depending on who the group is but I like when the arrangements are a bit spicier than that.

PG: It's funny, you said that there's a "right" way to go about writing music and yet your own music seems to contradict that, or at least it seems to be breaking the rules.

SC: I really don't play the more song- oriented material out that much, maybe at open mics, but my favorite way to play is definitely more make-it-up-as-you-go-along psychedelic rock.

PG: Where'd you go to school?

SC: I studied music at Goucher College. I was working at an engraving place, with a degree in music composition (*laughter*) there's no way you're going to get a real job. That degree doesn't help you in any way other than (adopts a stuffy accent) "Oh yesss... I compose..." But I loved studying it, if only for getting me hip to the fact that music is a language, and if you know the language than it's a tool you can use to communicate with anybody, you know what I mean? I love that.

That's why producing is a challenge. Different people approach music in many different ways. It's a challenge, a fun challenge, to see where an artist is coming from, and then to try to lock into that as best you can, bringing whatever skills you have.

As a producer, Ambush was the first thing that I was completely proud to put my name on. The songs were Grey's, but in a lot of ways, it was collaborative.

I think our sensibilities complement each other. Grey is very adept at a song format, three and a half minutes. I'm more into fifteen-minute exploratory jams. So when you bring anything

like that together, you know, polar opposites, it creates something that a lot of people don't have in music today. I feel the same about our live shows. We have really sick material, with dynamic sounds.

I like people that are really good at what they do. Like Brer Brian, (Baggidy Ba, The Full-On Sonic Beatdown) I totally respect the way he works. He's so quick and he only adds what is absolutely perfect. He knows a lot about music; he's got a great sense of the craft. I also love listening to his music.

PG: That was my next question, since Ambush, who else have you worked with?

SC: Ah, let's see. Well, I'm going to back track, other things I had worked on... I recorded Joie DBG, He's pretty much the first person that I met on the scene. I met him at St. Marks Bar. That was the first place I played here in New York.

PG: What did you do with Joie?

SC: I met Joie back when he was still drinking (*laughter*) ya know? The friends I was with, actually those guys the Bones, I'm sorry I probably shouldn't say that, but ah, they hated him. They thought that he was heckeling us and calling them a Frat Rock band....

PG: (*Laughter*) He probably was.

SC: Yeah, He probably was, ya know (*laughter*).

Even though all my friends didn't seem to like him, he played "Rock and Roll Tragedy" and "Rock Star Junk Yard", I was like, those tunes are mint, especially "Tragedy." I love that song. So, I let him know that I wanted to record him. Sure enough he was playing at the sidewalk a few weeks later, and I came down to record him. That was the Rock Star Junk Yard tape. I think all the songs from that period are really great.

And then, lets see, right around that time I recorded Dan Monahan, a live recording.

Then we did Midnight Eye. I think it was then that we discovered that we could work together in a good way. We got positive results very quickly, it was a marathon session. In two nights we threw all the tracks into my computer, sometime track by track, then we remixed it. The first night we worked for 14 hours straight, it was truly mind bending. You really shouldn't work 14 hours straight. Some of the things we started doing right around the twelfth hour were like "Dude, do we



Spencer!

really need backing vocals that are like louder then God, (*laughter*) you know?

Essentially, mastering is just like a technical thing, working with the sounds and evening out the levels. On "Forever Kids," I had the idea to time displace the ending so that there would be a call and response thing happening with *Call them the forver kids, oh no, call them the forever kids...* and that was really cool, I felt like I gained their confidence at that point. I was able to be creative on that project in a role that seems to be more technical.

Lately, I have become obsessed with placement of stuff in the stereo field, because that has everything to do with why some records really sound good. A lot of records that I don't like have a formula sound, like (slips into a cockney accent) "Let's give stage perspective on the drums..." Although there are certain types of music where that is appropriate...

PG: You said that when you are producing an artist you try figure out where *they* are coming from. Then you try to "lock" in and "gain confidence" which are two things that I would think are key. I would like you to elaborate on that. Then let's get back to who else you have recorded.

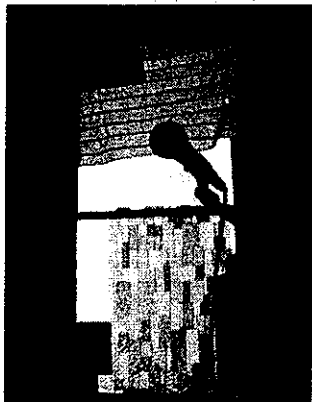
SC: Absolutely key. I totally think this is an intangible aspect of producing. They could never tell me this at the audio school that I went to. Music is played by people. You have to be able to relate to someone on a personal level to see where they are coming from with their art. I try to get a person more confident when they are recording so that they will perform better, which is what they are doing, want performing, right here in my apartment. I don't have a stage so I have to create an environment that is conducive for people to express themselves. I even do some things consciously that might do the total opposite. Like, for one player I might try and piss them off, in order to get a better performance. It's so individual. There is really no way to gauge what is going to work and what's not. That's another thing that I learn doing this. Most importantly, I would like to think that people can come here and be comfortable enough to express themselves. I know that they can., Adam Green wrote that song *My Shadow Tags on Behind*.

PG: Here?

SC: Yeah.

PG: I like that song.

SC: Yeah, it's a really good one. He's another one. I learned so much working with him. He's amazing, and what makes him amazing is the exact opposite of what I thought he was amazing at. I thought he was a randomist. When I listen to the Moldy Peaches record *Forever*, for instance, I thought it was random, or unstructured, but it's the exact opposite. That kid is Stockhausen. We were making these tracks where he was doing something I didn't understand at the time. Looking back on it, it doesn't seem as abstract as it did, but when your dealing with ideas things can get hard to explain. I was totally going on faith. What he wanted was to splice two different songs and then join them together simultaneously, superimposing one on the other at a certain place in the song. That blew me away.



I am also working with Seth, from Dufus. I've been recording the Fun Wearing Underwear shows. I've also recorded the Dufus shows, they are one of my favorite groups here. The ~~Fun Wearing Underwear Show is absolutely amazing. I think~~ if people are fans of his music they should check out this show. I like to see people that are doing things that are original or fresh, and this stuff pushes the envelope.

I also recorded Ish Marquez, who is probably my favorite artist in New York. Him more so than any body, I feel, writes songs of this place and of this time. Let's see, I've recorded Drew Blood, whose music I really enjoy.

PG: Live or here?

SC: Live shows. I think he has a good pop sensibility and I think he's an impassioned performer, which I like. I like people who preform with their heart.

Who else? Jeff Lewis. another artist who I think is totally amazing. I haven't actually recorded him yet, except for live shows. Some of the things he does with words and ideas are truly mindbending. I think his musical sense is really beautiful. Some of the stuff he plays is so classy. He is also an impassioned performer, as is his brother. Jack's songs are infectious; they get in your head bad like that one (singing) *Now I found another girl.... and I'm talking 'bout the man with the Golden Arm...* and of course, I recorded Patsy Grace, which was a really rewarding experience.

PG: That intuition you were talking about before, trying to "lock" into what it is you think an artist is trying to do, I would imagine is tough. There is such a wide range even in the artists you just spoke about.

SC: It's always is up to the artist that I'm working with. Like with Ambush, if Grey wanted guitar and voice I would have done it.

PG: I would think gaining Grey's confidence with Midnight Eye was your window in. It seems that you want to gain that kind of

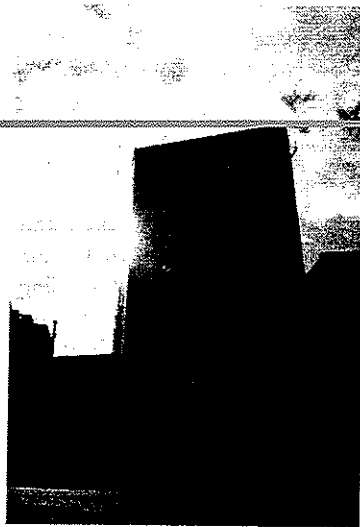
STONE SOUP!

C-Note (Avenue C between 9th and 10th Streets)

7:30	The Break Ups
8:00	John S. Hall
8:30	Turner Cody
9:00	Jessica Kane
9:30	Tom Nishioka
10:00	Schwervon
10:30	Star Park Cotton Candy Head

With sporadic interruptions by
MC Jonathan 'Crem E Whyte' Berger

Wednesday April 5th



confidence in order to do the things you want. I mean, is there a "sound" coming out of Balloon Heaven?

SC: Not at all. I work on all different types of music in different ways.

PG: There seems to be something in the few things that I have heard that you have worked on where you introduce sounds in such a way that seems to be unique to you.

SC: I don't know but I can tell you how I think I got there. My dad had an incredible record collection and music was a big part of our

household. Actually, in the house I grew up in Brooklyn, they built a studio in the basement and they were doing the same thing. Those of you who want to can check it out on MP3.com Dada 1977.

PG: Really? That's great.

SC: Yeah, it's cool. I'm second generation psychedelic rock. Actually, I would rather say Art Rock.

My dad had a lot, a lot of records. I remember hearing Elvis Costello, Tom Waits, and The Beatles. They had me when they were young and there was always musicians hanging out in our house, it was nice.

I really got to love listening to music. It's always really nice for me to sit back and think about why it's working, why it's affecting me. Like, I love world music because you can do it in an infinite number of ways and people do it in different ways all over the world. The more you listen to, the more you open your mind. One producer I really love is Ry Cooder. In fact, musically, on every level I'd say he's the best.

He is exactly what I would aspire to. He is an amazing slide guitar player, he also plays mandolin and now he goes all over the world, and makes those wicked albums.

PG: I could see you doing that.

SC: I like music for music's sake. When I was in school, we played a lot of Jazz. I got turned onto contemporary classical music, which really is to me, Art music. I really like Debussy. Debussy kicks the vibe. He's sound painting. I don't know if you've heard any of his solo piano pieces, like *Footprints in the Snow*? But it's footprints in the snow! I also love Gershwin. I love his harmonies. I think people should hear this. I mean, it may seem that I'm playing some wack shit but people have been doing wack shit for a long time.

PG: You said you would have produced Grey anyway he wanted. You definitely collaborated, which is not the case with everyone you work with. What made Grey so receptive to what you were doing?

SC: Well, maybe it was the fact that he was staying here (*laughter*). When someone is sleeping on your couch, ya know, maybe they'll let you mix their record (*laughter*).

PG: That's hilarious.

SC: I love the way Grey makes records. In my opinion, the hidden influence in Grey's music is totally Ennio Morricone. It might be hard to pick that stuff out, but I totally hear that spaghetti western thing. Even the word *Ambush* has those connotations. Grey had a concept for the album, he knew some of

the songs that were going to be on it like

Spencer Chakedis!

"Crazy like an Ambush," "Violent Jack," "Bad Faces," and "Live Elisa." On the more collaborative tracks, like "Getaway Car," Grey wrote lyrics for a track that we sampled from a Deep Sound Diver show (Spencer's band). Just the fact that we were sampling ourselves was cool. In fact, we had the music for a while and Grey was working on lyrics but hadn't come up with anything in a couple of weeks. When I first listened to the lyrics what hit me most was that they were just as much about the process of trying to write this song, as they were a viable expression of his thoughts and feelings. That's what I love most about his lyrics: they are evocative of ambiguous settings. That's artistic. You have to pick up on shit like that if you are going to produce someone. And it wasn't without the aid of special focusing agents (*laughter*) that I use sometimes. PG: You spoke before about how it seemed that some records get made according to some formula. It seems that you almost look for ways to make it more experimental, more artistic. SC: Because that's Rock and Roll!

TESTIMONIAL

I never read the complete *Satanic Verses* but I remember the beginning when the two guys get blown out of the plane and start plummeting toward the earth. One guy makes his way to the other and tells him that if they flap their arms fast enough and hard enough and if they sing a song of flying and falling, loud enough, they will not perish. I think making *Crazy Like an Ambush* was like that.

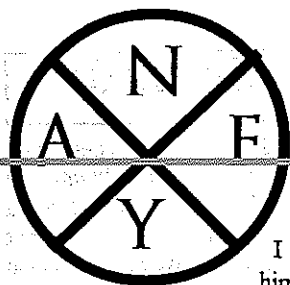
When I moved into Balloon Heaven for the sessions for that album, all we had recorded was three tracks left over from two informal sessions in June and July. I wanted to make as eclectic a pop record as possible. Spencer was right there with it. I'll never forget the night he woke me up to show me what he'd done to the vocals on "Man called No One." More than anyone, Spencer gets you excited about your own shit.

Working with that cat has been the best experience of my musical life to date. Living and working with Spencer was a vindication. Finally, an artist who believed in my music, and had the scope, the know how, and the tools to do something about it. *Ambush* is the fruit. Forty minutes of lights and colors and words and feelings jumbled up like a static sparked wheel. "Getaway Car" and "wouldn't have existed at all if not for Spence. Spencer was willing to give me access to one of Deep Sound Diver's jams and we had the time of our lives cutting it up and turning it into what I've been told is one of the albums strongest tracks. I think people are gonna listen to that for years, and be thrown right back into this place and time every time they do.

Our next project, is gonna be even more of a showcase for my bro's talents. Since Cinema Fantastic started playing gigs, Spence has been recording shows, and, utilizing a theory my man calls *time-dubbing*, you're going to hear damn near every one of those shows in forty minutes. It's probably the most ambitious live recording project anyone's heard yet: A sonic four-dimension tone poem, on record, using Cinema's material. That's all Spence, man. That's his turf.

I can't wait to see the looks on all your faces when you hear what he's doing with Patsy. I've heard the tracks he did with Brer Brian, and I hope you all get to hear them soon, especially "Man with the Artichoke Heart." And when you hear his debut release, *Fueling the Fire of Delusion*, you're gonna shit. I almost did - and I sing on the damn thing. Maybe it's cuz he was employing that low frequency megahertz bowel stimulation stuff he was telling me about. I don't know.

Thanks man. From the bottom of my heart. I'll see you in 'Heaven. (*Grey Revell*)



RU AF?

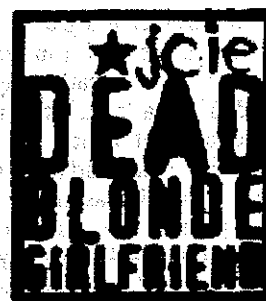
Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend informs us how to assess our AntiFolkitude.

I have been called AntiFolk. Lach has called me anti-AntiFolk. Hamell labeled me, Lach and himself noir AntiFolk. So now people ask me, "Joie, am I AntiFolk?" I can't answer that so I came up with a list of requirements to see if you are AntiFolk. I don't want to judge you. I am too busy judging myself, recording my studio album (release date summer 2000), running the *Raven Open Stage* (corner of 12th and A Wednesdays signup around 7), Keeping the *AntiSocial* fresh and exciting (last Sunday of the month at 10:00 at the Sidewalk), helping Lach at the *AntiHoot*, shamelessly promoting all my projects, doing gigs, writing, working my day job (yes you can have one and still do art), plotting to take over the world, and staying out of my own way. So here is the list of requirements.

See if you identify with any of these...



- Do you wait 5 hours to play 8 minutes of music?
- Do you have any friends that are not musicians?
- Do you use the word fuck as a noun, verb, adjective, or all three in your songs?
- Do you break strings when you play?
- Do your songs have the word cunt, penis, and other body parts in it (exclude heart)?
- Did you ever have a drug problem, Want a drug problem or know someone with a drug problem and put it in a song?
- Does your guitar case have a Joie/Dead Blonde Girlfriend sticker on it (or know someone that does)?
- Do you know every waitress's name at Sidewalk?
- Have you slept with any of the waitresses at Sidewalk?
- Do you know that Brian and Laurel (of the Voices) are not a couple and Tim and Pablo (of Testosterone Kills) are? Did you leave your home town/ significant other - or have they left you to pursue your dream?
- Do you know Drew Blood or know someone that does?
- Have you worked with Spencer Chakedis on a studio project?
- Have you crashed or let someone crash at your apartment from the scene?
- Have you been to Patsy Grace's house?



- Have you exposed your other musician friends to the AntiFolk scene?
- Do you hang out late after the hoot on Mondays for Lach's "Waitresses, Walls and Weirdos" set? (This is a must!)
- Have you bought a CD from any of the players on the scene?
- Have you heard Lach's *Contender* album, seen Hamell on Trial and know who Roger Manning is?
- Does MTV and the radio bore you to death?
- Does all your money go making flyers, recording and going to The Raven and Sidewalk?
- Do you avoid buying *AntiMatters* from Jon Berger and read the ones you find on tables?
- Do you scan the pages only looking for your name?
- Have you gone to other performers' gigs that you have seen at the AntiHoot?
- Have you slept or have wanted to sleep with any of the performers?
- Do you work a job that doesn't pay to well so you can perform your music?
- Have you ever wanted to run and open mic because the ones you go to don't seem fair? (Try it and see how easy it is!)
- Has playing on the scene brought friends, fun and excitement to your life?
- Do you come to see other players play at open mics and don't worry what time you go on - that's what it's all about, not just you?
- Have you ever asked Lach or Joie "Am I AntiFolk?" or "What is AntiFolk?"

Scoring

- 1-5 Try going to Bleecker Street; you ain't got the guts, kid.
- 6-10 You have just kicked off the one song wonder round. Hang out more.
- 11-15 Congrats! You have just found out that the list really doesn't matter.
- 16-20 Lach may book you, but you've got to promote and bring at least 25 people.
- 21-25 Someday soon, you may be asked, "Hey, Am I AntiFolk?"
- 26-30 Yes, You are AntiFolk. Now shut the fuck up and play your guitar.



Reviews

The Costellos: Prelude

(P. O. Box 20614~ Columbus Circle Station~ NYC, NY 10023)

In a scene of occasionally sloppy musicianship & song construction (not to point any fingers), The Costellos' tight melodic construction and acoustic-prog-rock setup showed a care (and, yeah, a novelty) that really leapt off the open mike stages. Watching Kira Bernstein & Anthony Costello's flute-guitar attack while Lisa Costello snarled & threw down, all three of them swinging their impressive hair about, with their rawk posing and intricate weedy-weedy bits between the verses, they stood out immediately. There's lots of would-be Alanises and Woody Guthries in the East Village, but the next Jethro Tull? We don't get many of them in these parts.

So after less than a year of playing in public, they've now got a CD, and as ambitious as their learning curve has been in the last year or so, they still have to work on some things.

Firstly, they now need to write some more songs. As catchy as, say, "Laying Off Of Hands" or "Reap What You Have Sown" are, they don't use the hooks in the songs properly. And all the songs change tempos and styles so quickly (often every 8 bars or so) that they've got plenty of musical material for another album's worth of songs without composing another note.

And Lisa Costello has this – this thing in her voice. It's the way she bends a note for emphasis, and at the end of the bend, she gives a little squeal. It's distinctive, it's cool, it certainly comes from a grand tradition of Rock vocal emphasises. But she uses it on every other line, and even on a short record like this one, it starts to grate. Her voice is beautiful; all she needs is a little more time to find out what else it can do.

And as excellent as Anthony & Kira are as musicians, to do music as intricate as this you need a strong rhythm to keep the songs from sliding all over the place, which they sometimes do. Of course, the problem with adding a rhythm section is that it would actually make them *into* Jethro Tull.

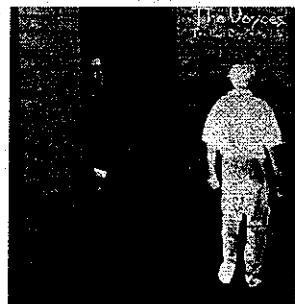
Look, this is a group with a lot of promise, and *Prelude* is a kick-ass demo, but until they're able to catch on tape the inspiration that often invades their live shows, they're going to have trouble fulfilling their considerable ambitions. (Tony Hightower)

The Voyces: The Best Day of My Life

(thevoyces@hotmail.com)

Obviously, the most important thing to consider about this album is not the music, not the personnel (we in the scene know this group as a two piece vocal group, with occasional additional backing vox added into the live mix), not the low-fi recording strategies, not the songs, and not the package design" these all speak for themselves (or will, when the world becomes more viably anthropomorphic in nature). No, the most important thing to consider about The Best Day of My Life is the name of the group recording it. The Voyces.

Yes, you read right. The Voyces. Inexplicably, the group that AntiFolk knows and loves, the



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Reception for Patricia Grace art exhibition
Sidewalk Café – back room.

Sunday, April 23rd, 2000 – 9PM
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AntiFolk artists offer props to living genius Mike Rechner (Prewar Yardsale)

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- Jason Hefer • Tony Hightower
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- Lach • Tim Lagasse
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- The Voices

"Exceptional talent... More than a few surprises." Applause! Applause!
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— Stand-up, poetry, music, dance, puppetry, improvisation, bottle-opener impressions —

Reviews

band with the best name in the universe, the band that threatened to return to their olden-days, California-bred moniker, Majority Dog, then, due to popular demand, backed down, that very same Voices is now the Voyces.

Why?

There's no clear answer for this betrayal of one of the most resonant names even given to a band, but consensus among the fans is some issue of copyright infringement is the cause: some other group lays prior claim to the name.

If that's the case, Brian and Laurel, just say the world, and an angry AntiFolk posse will go off to invade the lands of the heretics, and reclaim the name the Voices for the Voyces. That's who you are, who you'll always be. Anyway, the album's good. You should buy it. (*Gustav Plympton*)

David Dragov: For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

(Box 80461 ~ Staten Island, NY 10308 ~ www.DavidDragov.com)

From the introductory cut of the Dr. Dragov's cut (beginning with a frighteningly voiced Dave saying "It won't hurt," through the culmination of the definitively evil "Electroedopis," For He's a Jolly Good Fellow is one creepy album.

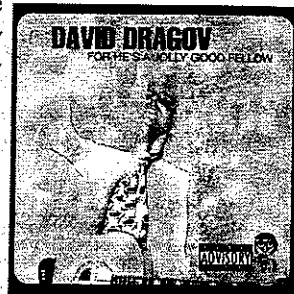
Dragov, who plays gigs with his pocket-band, a DAT that sounds like an orchestra, was always meant to be a recording artist. That's been obvious since we in AntiFolk got to experience his massive, Wagnerian visions of pop and dance music. Now, after some years on the scene, the perfectionist artist has finally released a CD, so we can all take home some of that music that's so awe-inspiring in the clubs.

A question comes to mind, though. Over the years, Dragov has fine-tuned his backing recordings. Much like a band, his Drunken Artistt Tribune tapes change for every performance. But now that the recordings have been made and there

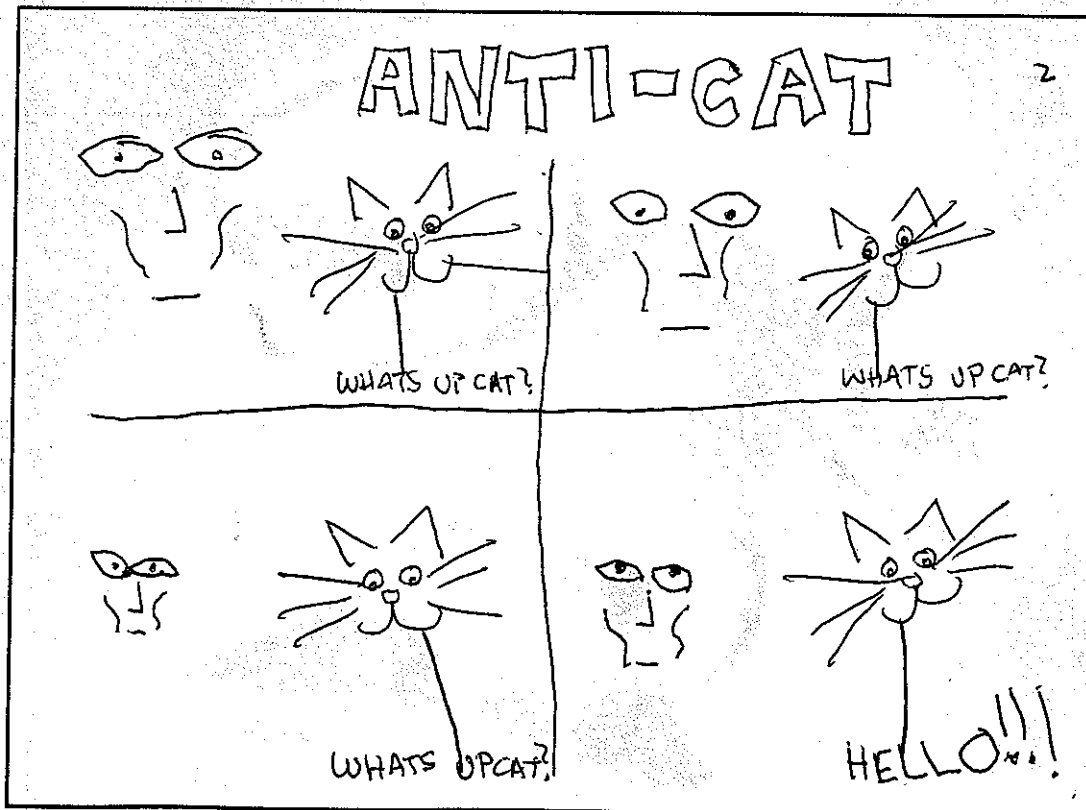
is a permanent testament of the songs, will he maintain these latest arrangements as permanent testament? If so, does Dr. Dragov actually have to come out to his own shows anymore? Maybe if he just slips the sound guy his CD, he can go home and call it a night.

One of the things that makes the CD different from a Dragov show is that inclusion of an interview with Dragov, conducted by an old-school computer generated voice that sounds most eerie when it interrupts the interview to tell Dragov that he's "a crazy motherfucker."

The too-few songs included in the album are the brilliant "Electroedopis," with the chorus of "All I wanna do is kill my mother and fuck my father," "The Rite of Spring," which, when you read the lyrics, make even less sense than you thought, the fairly ironic "Chubby Linda," and "Live the Glitter Life." There are other songs, of course (seven total), and they're all worth listening to, but those are the best. Go ahead, check it out. (*Jonathan Berger*)



Want to review albums? Shows? Just rant on about your pathetic little life?
AntiMatters offers you that opportunity!



THE JON BERGER

Conducted by Brian Wayne

I'll admit it. Up until about two months ago, publisher of Anti-matters, JON BERGER was an enigma to me, and I liked it that way. People have been telling me since I moved here, that he was a good guy to know, that behind his foppish exterior there was a man with a huge heart. I had decided he was odd in a not odd enough way for my taste. Last month, he came over to my apartment to ask me questions about my band. It was during this visit that I discovered somebody should be interviewing him! It was when he casually told me he had taped "Mary And Rhoda", and that I could borrow it, that I felt I had to pick up my pen.

Q: Tell me how you became involved in the Anti-folk scene.

Uh... I've talked about how I first came to the Fort following Brenda Kahn around before. I'd seen her up in my college town, and it was, in several ways, life-changing. Her performance made me start writing fiction again, after a couple years of hiding away from any such thing, and it gave me focus. But it also got me into the Sidewalk in '95, and, when I stopped teaching, and had lots of time on my hands, I started going out to AntiShows more and more often. After a while of sitting in corners creepily, I started talking to people, and got pretty well ensconced in the environment.

It wasn't until a couple years into my experience that Tom Nishioka and JT Lewis created AntiMatters, and it took me a year or so to get off my ass and steal it out from under them. And now, I stay on the run, so no one can take my AntiMatters away from me. Aha!

Q: What does "Anti-folk" mean to you?

About two and a half minutes. No, wait. That makes no sense... I've been thinking about that little bit more, because of some articles I've been reading in AntiMatters. Of course, AntiFolk is different things to different people, but I've been thinking what's the vital part of it to me.

Hold up, hold up... Let me answer one way, and then another. You ready for me? You sure? OK:

AntiFolk is community. While there was an original common link, an ideology between the different acts, really, now, it's people who congregate to focus on songwriting. The styles of writing and performing are too disparate to work any other way.

I kind of have to believe that, else how can a poet hang with you musicians, other than bribing them with blow jobs and rhymes for *orange*?

But then there's the actual music. Which is something I've been thinking about. The music that is AntiFolk - the music that's important to me - that's barebones minimalist kinda shit. The mixing of punk's primitivism with... even more primitive instruments. It's pretty primal, I guess. And that's AntiFolk to me!



INTERVIEW

Q: What do you personally get out of being at the center of this scene?

I have some kind of issues with attention. I like it. I'd say most performers like it. But it's a little bit better to wrest attention from others, to distract and dissuade people from what their doing to look at me. I've gotten increasingly good at it, or bad at it, depending on your POV.

And, you know, it's probably pretty egotistical, but I consider myself as damned central. With one or two obvious exceptions, there's no one who's been more involved in building community, in staying visible, in making AntiFolk the viable musical alternative it is today.

I've started doing something that started out accidentally, but I've taken it on. If I go into the Fort, or any of the clubs I frequently frequent, and I don't get my name mentioned from the stage, then it's not really a night at all. If I haven't been mentioned, then the evening the didn't exist.

Is that wrong?

Q: How is the scene different from a year ago? Five years ago?

I see a lot greater sense of community now than five years, but maybe it's because I was outside looking in before. Again, I'm not too sure if my assessments are valid.

One year ago, I see people who used to be best friends turned into arch enemies, and vice versa. The important difference, of course, is my prominence in the scene. Then, I was one of the top five most notable people in AntiFolk. Now I'm one of the Top Three!

Q: About how many people read this?

God only knows how many copies I make. I usually hold onto about five per issue, for posterity, and make as many copies as the market will bear. As soon as they begin to slough off on sales, I stop generating new copies.

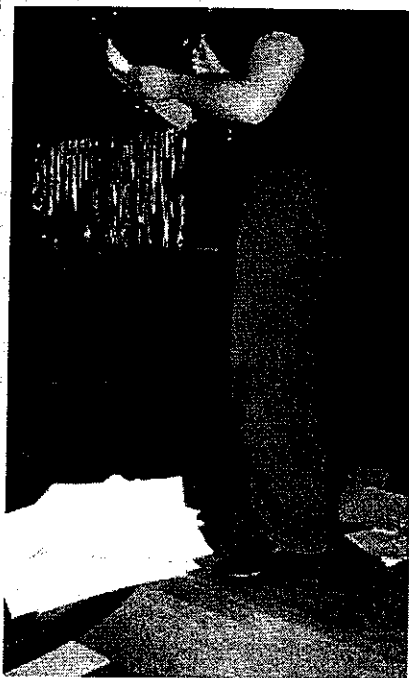


Q: Was there a 'rag' about the scene before you started AntiMatters?

Let's see... about five years before I hit the scene, during the first wave of AntiFolk, there was a fanzine called Exposure, published by Kris Johnson, who's now in the Cogs. It was good, and informative – she lent me a bunch of issues, which I held onto for like two years – but I think I prefer AntiMatters.

Of course, I didn't start AntiMatters. I'm like the fifth editor. It was Tom Nishioka and JT Lewis who started it out, and then Mr. Scarecrow took it over, and Poppy Loney – or something like that... But I don't think any of them lasted for more than three issues, and I've past three years now.

Clearly, this was my manifest destiny, to head the literary wing of AntiFolk. I mean, really, who else could do it? WHO?



Q: How do you feel about poetry? Your own poetry?

Oh, god, most poetry bores the shit out of me. I don't have the concentration, the attention span for that kind of thing. I mean, if something isn't entirely linear, almost completely prosaic, I can't follow what's going on.

Of course, I've just gone now, once or twice, to some poetry slams, and there are some people who totally kick ass. I competed in one, and I got my ass kicked from here to maternity, and back. Is that poetry, though, or spoken word? And what do I do? I dunno.

Poetry gets a bad rap, certainly from me. I guess it's all right. But I can't imagine more than five people I'd want to go see read: Mark Leyner, John S. Hall, Pat Harper when he's got new stuff, and a couple guys I saw at the Slam, but whose names I don't know.

Q: Do you feel obligated to see groups you don't care for?

Yes. I'd say I see maybe four acts a week who's music I need to experience. A lot of times, I'm supporting friends, a lot of times, I'm putting in time to be connect with people, and a lot

JON BERGER INTERVIEWED

of times, I'm just being polite. If I know someone, and they see me at a club, and they're going on-stage, I feel really awkward in leaving.

Q: Are you able to look at the "art" and "music" that springs from the Anti-folk scene objectively? Does that matter to you? I can't. The thing is, I can look at the fact I can't look at much of it objectively, and then respin my assessments based on that.

There are so many acts that I thought were mediocre when I first saw them, but I befriended them, and, because I consider it my responsibility to be supportive to any number of acts, I go out to see them again and again. Now, as their songs insinuate my brain, I begin to appreciate them more. Because I'm giving the artist a chance because I like them? Because I'm opened to new experiences? No. I'm being brainwashed. I can hear an act I thought was lame up front and end up humming their songs because they mentally raped me in all the time I was around them. Luckily, I'm objective enough to recognize that there are some acts I liked in the beginning, and some acts I just got forced into enjoying.

Q: Where are you when you're not at a club?

Uh... I don't think I understand the question.

Once, maybe three times a month, I find there's nothing going on downtown, and I bike back home, and I get to watch TV, or maybe write a little something. In the olden days, when I did that most of the time, I felt really lame, but because it's so rare for me to have a night off from my fun, I can allow it. Just about any other time, though, there's some music to catch downtown.

Q: Is it clubs or acts that dictate whether its part of the scene? Is this a bullshit question?

Yes, it is a bullshit question. Absolutely. I think most of the acts that are part of AF have some common characteristics,



more in outlook than anything else, but the ways that people present their cynically hopeful visions are so disparate. Take an act like Billy Kelly... a great performer, but none of his songs sound anything like AntiFolk. I guess AntiFolk, in this case, means punky, acoustic, bitter. Billy Kelly sounds some-

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Jonathan Berger - 7:00
The Voices - 8:00
Plastic Beef - 9:00

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He's dead, Jim.
 It's inexplicable how it happened,
 but it happened just the same.

He's dead, Jim.
 His life, so entwined with ours,
 has been snuffed
 now and forevermore.

He's dead Jim.
 There's nothing in your considerable power to do.
 It's over. He's gone.

He's dead, Jim
 and no amount of prayer or hope
 or arguing or debate can rectify the situation.

He's dead
 and you're not getting your fifty dollars back.



times like a gaelic troubadour, and sometimes like a smartass cowboy. But there's not one punk chord in his collection.

Then, there's the Voices, which sound sweet and Cali, and nothing like anyone else around. Do they sound AntiFolk? Hell no. Are they AntiFolk? Absolutely. They're intrinsically involved in the community. It's about community, and I guess that means it's about clubs... Again, I sort of have to believe that, else I wouldn't have any purpose as a performer hereabouts.

Q: The weirdest thing you've seen at an open mic?

I remember this girl doing some idiotic spoken word and stripping as she went along. She had a really good body...



The Costellos



Prelude

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Q: Did you get 'on-base' with the girl?

I think, if I think back hard enough, I might remember that I slept with her. But I'd have to work really hard at... remembering.

You know, as I think about it, Greg Weiss did something a month or two ago, at the first AntiSocial – Joie's new thang? Greg basically had a bunch of people come to the stag and manhandle some butter for a mock commerical. He got everyone involved in this ridiculous absurdist vision, and everyone got all greasy and buttery. Well, not buttery, but... you know.

Q: The most fun occasion? Does one stand out?

Can't really think of any open mics that were fun, but...

Q: Besides the Voices, who are your favorite acts?

Well, after the Voices, really, what is there?

Hm. My favorites: Hamell on Trial, Brenda Kahn, Casey Scott, Tony Hightower, Jeff Lewis on a good day – his shows are always so scattershot – and Tom Nishioka. Give me another minute and I'll give you a bunch of other names. I really like Gene and Mimi, and Tom Clark – though I can't really sit through a whole set. It's exhausting...

Q: Scale of 1 to 10, the importance, in your life, of: Television.

9.8. Without life, there is no television. Or vice versa.

Q: Coffee.

0. I don't drink coffee. I really don't think I need the artificial stimulants to get jumpy.



Q: Crack Cocaine

5. Personally, I don't like to partake in any illicit substance, but, pretty much, all the sex I get is from crack ho's, I must say, it's impacted on my life somewhat...

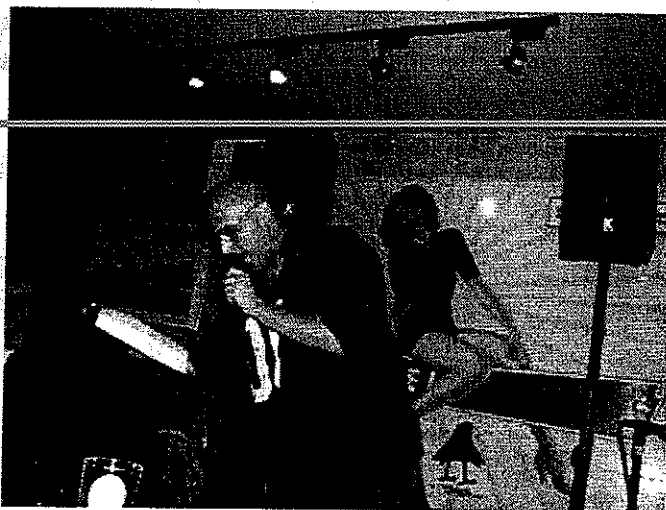
Q: Girls

17.8. I write about girls. I write to impress girls. I produce AntiMatters so girls will say, "Who's that cool guy putting out the fanzine?" I sell AntiMatters to talk to girls on line. I go to work, a ridiculous corporate job, because there are more beautiful girls here than at any other job I've had – outside of teaching elementary school.

Q: Money

9. I am a jew.

No, that's not true. I like money, and would be willing to do lots of things to make money. But I wouldn't go to law school, wouldn't become a stock broker, wouldn't go to medical



school. Money's pretty damned important, but laziness is probably more so.

Q: Lach

10. Lach is the be all, the end all.

Without Lach, there would be no AntiFolk. Without Lach, there would be no Fort. Without Lach, there would be no AntiMatters, and without Lach I wouldn't be spouting off spoken word stuff every couple of weeks to an audience of seven. I've made my home in AntiFolk. My existence, as it stands, is inextricably linked to Lach's. I can't say I'm proud of this fact, but I am certainly aware of it.

Q: Lexicology

6. Much as I like the study of all things Luthorian, I have to say, I always considered Brainiac a much more suitable villain for Superman. He is an alien, just like Supes, and his name has become part of the lexicon. Oh, but maybe Lex, being so smart and knowing so many words, was the source of the word lexicon? I dunno.

What does lexicology mean?

Q: Peter Dizozza

5. Peter's nuts. He's done a huge amount to bring people into the AntiFolk community, and created lots of projects that would shock and dismay lesser men. I just saw his high school movie: "Angels' Tour of Vultures?" It's a horrifying mishmash of senseless silent images that work together about as well as... I dunno... peanut butter and tofu? No, cuz that might work. Peanut butter and nails. And the thing is, the vision he expresses in this movie he made like, almost thirty years ago, it seems about as strong and consistent as what he does today. The man's a fruitcake, a nutbar, a multi-personalities asylum, and a close personal friend. This is off the record, of course...

Q: Cleanliness

This cleanliness thing of which you speak. What is it?

THE JON BERGER INTERVIEW

THE JON BERGER INTERVIEW

Despite rumors floated by my enemies? I do bathe occasionally. I just find it the wimp's way of dealing with odors and filth. I prefer to try to scare dirt off my body. So, well, maybe 3.

Q: Two things about Jon Berger that have never been written down.

It's sort of tough. What with my literary leanings, I've explored just about every aspect of my favorite topic of all time: me. So, probably, the only kinds of things I haven't discussed are intentional, like my PIN number, or why I never make jokes about wetting my bed. So, uh... let's leave it at that.

Q: Do you watch the news?

Baby, I AM the news.

No, I don't. I like to think of myself as informed, but I also like to think of myself as super-strong, and so I'll never arm-wrestle anyone — you know, for fear of hurting them? Same thing with the news. The best way to maintain my own illusion of being well-informed is to avoid information at every instance.

Why do you ask? Are we at war?

Q: Are you willing to disclose your spiritual leanings?

Uh... you sure? I'll go there...

I'm sort of an empiricist — if that's a word. I don't have a huge amount of faith of what I can't prove, or don't see societal acceptance of. The world being round? I've got no evidence, so I'm skeptical.

Kind of equates to God, as well. I don't doubt that there are cosmic forces that we don't understand, but I don't have much faith in them being quantifiable, or, really, terribly anthropomorphic, you know? No God, though maybe, really, there is a something that binds the universe together. Like the Force.

Also, I believe in Star Trek.

Actually, I sort of have a credo. I mean, not fully defined, but my father always talked about the Economy of Time, Space, and Motion, about doing things efficiently, so no effort is wasted. I try to do everything I can as effectively as possible, so I take direct paths, and think about the process of my actions. Well, usually, more, the process of YOUR actions, and I then figure out how to do it better.

Q: Are you on the Internet?

Well, I spend a lot of time on my email account, desperately waiting pretty girls to write me (they have to tell me they're pretty, of course), and I do have the LAMEST WEB SITE IN THE WORLD. There's a lot of good content, but I don't think I've updated it since Nixon left office, and the web's changed a lot since then. There are lots of links to AntiFolk bands, though, maybe more than anyone else has compiled, or would want to.

Q: Do you agree with me that the Internet is just a passing fad? "The Flavor of the Month", if you will?

Nope. Probably, like fads, interest in the internet will wane — the internet-crazy stocks that are going nuts now will see worse days. But the web offers great forms of communication, and excellent ways to even up economic and power discrepancies

formed since, what? 1492? Virtual existence can balance lots of things. Like access to markets, or access to an audience, or access to friends... it offers up lots of opportunities. God, I hope it's not a fad.

Q: Actually, I was joking about that.

Oh. Well, then, my joke was funny too, then, right?

Q: Where do you see yourself in a year? Five years?

My plan, by the time I hit thirty, was to own San Francisco, and at least one city block in New York. I wanted a series of interconnected buildings all connected underground. I figured I would have created an entertainment cartel featuring me writing comic books, movies, and producing albums. Also novels, but since that was how I got my start, I figured by the time I was thirty, I'd be tired of it.

Well, I just hit thirty a couple of months ago, and I've got my own apartment, so I guess the sky's the limit, right?

Five years, I think I'll still have my own apartment.

Q: The scene. Same question.

In five years, the scene will probably be wondering who that grey haired bald guy is, trying desperately to get you to buy his magazine, when the world had gone paperless a whole ten months ago.

A year from now, though, the scene will be my bitch.



The Fort at the Sidewalk Café

212 - 473 - 7373.

- Tues. Apr. 4 - **Piano Night:** 7:30 - Christopher North, 8 - Huff, 8:30 - Bill Popp, 9 - Jamie Stellini, 10 - Mikkel Engel, 11 - Russ Turk
- Wed. Apr. 5 - 8 - Thin Crawl, 9 - Patty Nurray, 10 - Jessie White, 11 - TBA, 12 - Low City
- Thr. Apr. 6 - 7:30 - Stephanie St. John, 8 - John Kelly, 9 - Michael Packer Band, 10 - FordFalconBlue, 11 - Drew Blood
- Fri. Apr. 7 - 7 - Trancesenders, 8 - Paul Sachs, 9 - No Artificial Colors, 10 - Animal Head, 11 - Janet Vodka, 12 - The Linemen
- Sat. Apr. 8 - 7:30 - Betsy Thomson, 8:30 - Patsy Grace, 9 - Sprinkle Genies, 10 - Matthew Puckett, 11 - Jonas Grumby, 12 - Crash Positions (featuring Tristan as Wiggy Zendust)
- Sun. Apr. 9 - 8 - Lucas, 8:30 - Patty Guilero, 9 - Andy Germak, 9:30 - Bibi Farber, 10 - Bill Popp and the Tapes, 11 - Jamie Lilly
- Mon. Apr. 10 - *The Antihoot w/ Lach.* Songwriters, Antifolkers, Speechifiers, Comics... Sign - up at 7:30.
- Tues. Apr. 11 - 7:30 - Elektra Compex, 8 - Jocelyn Ryder, 8:30 - Holly Miranda, 9 - PinataLand, 10 - Steve Espinola, 11 - Tony Brown
- Wed. Apr. 12 - 7:30 - Steve Lavner, 8:30 - Peter Spink Trio, 9 - Eric Nicolas, 9:30 - Shana Young, 10 - Mia Johnson, 11 - Paleface
- Thr. Apr. 13 - 7:30 - Luca Mundaca, 8 - Diane Cluck, 8:30 - Deborah Bartley, 10 - NYU Music Festival
- Fri. Apr. 14 - 8 - Three Normal Humans, 9 - Lunchin', 10 - Grey Revell, 11 - Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend, 12 - Chris Barron (of the Spin Doctors)
- Sat. Apr. 15 - **AntiFolk Night** - 8 - Jeff Lightning Lewis, 9 - Jonathan Berger, 9:30 - Prewar Yardsale, 10 - The Humans, 11 - The Costellos, 12 - Dots Will Echo
- Sun. Apr. 16 - Antifolk Night - 8 - Kimya, 8:30 - Turner Cody, 9 - Jun, 9:30 - Adam Green, 10 - Andrew Heller and the Boy Wonder, 10:30 - Joe Bendik, 11 - Jack of Stipplecon
- Mon. Apr. 17 - *The Antihoot w/ Lach.* Songwriters, Antifolkers, Speechifiers, Comics... Sign - up at 7:30.
- Tues. Apr. 18 - 7:30 - Julie Loyd, 8 - James Mineheart, 8:30 - Sean Lee, 9 - Mike Wexler and the Fourth Rome, 10 - Father Paul Murphy
- Wed. Apr. 19 - 8 - Springwell, 9 - Atoosa, 10 - Ekayani and the Healing Band, 11 - Mike Pohjola Band
- Thr. Apr. 20 - 8 - Tony Hightower, 9 - Haale, 9:30 - Arianna, 10 - Jude Kastle, 11 - TBA, 12 - John Kessel
- Fri. Apr. 21 - 8 - Sorcha Dorcha, 9 - Ruth Gerson, 10 - The Cucumbers, 11 - Lach and the Secrets
- Sat. Apr. 22 - 8 - Billy Kelly, 9 - Epstein and Hassan: the Black and the Jew, 10 - Yukka Flats, 12 - Drew Blood
- Sun. Apr. 23 - 8 - Esme Montgomery, 8:30 - Bicycle Pilot, 9 - Chaz, 9:30 - Celia, 10 - A Tribute to Mike Rechner
- Mon. Apr. 24 - *The Antihoot w/ Lach.* Songwriters, Antifolkers, Speechifiers, Comics... Sign - up at 7:30.
- Tues. Apr. 25 - 7:30 - J.C. Sone, 8 - Scott Herman, 8:30 - Lara Ewen, 9 - Speed Dial, 9:30 - Andy Hunt, 11 - Compromise Blue (from Estonia)
- Wed. Apr. 26 - 7:30 - Rythms of Aqua, 8 - Lyric Fury Ensemble, 9 - The Red, 10 - Ekayani and the Healing Band
- Thurs. Apr. 27 - 8 - Kenny young and the Eggplants, 9 - **The Best of San Francisco with:** Eric McFadden (1998 BAMMIE winner, two - time WAMMIE winner), Carlos Forster from the FOR STARS (1999 BAMMIE nominee), Bart Davenport, Tiny (featuring Paula O' Rourke), Ian Brennan (charted in the Top 35 of over 200 stations nationwide), Dr. Frank from the Mr. T Experience, Noe Venable, Waycross, Carmaig de Forest...
- Fri. Apr. 28 - 8 - The McCarthys, 9 - Ruth Gerson, 10 - Hamell On Trial, 11 - Testosterone Kills
- Sat. Apr. 29 - 8 - Shameless, 9 - Joe Bendik and the Heathens, 10 - The Humans, 11 - The Shade, 12 - Ben Eyler
- Sun. Apr. 30 - **Strange Folk Sunday with:** 7 - Kenny Davidsen Birthday Bash, 8 - Peter Dizozza, 8:30 - Leroy Montana, 9 - Barry Bliss, 10 - **Joie/DBG's Mega - AntiSocial (Open Stage)**
- Mon. May 1 - *The Antihoot w/ Lach.* Songwriters, Antifolkers, Speechifiers, Comics... Sign - up at 7:30.