

AntiMatters



Joie
Dead
Blonde
Girlfriend

June 2000
One dollar

AntiMatters

**ESPECIALLY APT
EDITORIAL ARTIST**

Jonathan Berger

Interesting evening...

I'm of two minds today. The obvious topic of discussion for this very special Joie issue of AntiMatters would be something related to Death, Blonde Girlfriends, French Joy, Drug Abuse, Redemption, Open Mics, Green Hair, or AntiFolk in it's Most Distilled Form... And there's the rub. In the course of putting this issue together, Hamell had an accident.

You know Ed Hamell, or you don't really exist. Hamell on Trial is not the founder of AntiFolk, nor was he a member of the community in its formative years, but he's perhaps the most effective proponent of the art form, a solo acoustic singer/songwriter who is more powerful than 98.9% of the full-on bands out there, except maybe for a reformed Clash or Tito Puente.

Well, Hamell on Trial, the light, the hope, the beacon as to what is possible in this microcosm we call AntiFolk... Hamell on Trial, the mighty, the invincible, the army of one... Hamell on Trial had an accident.

The crash in Pennsylvania left his car totaled, his vertebrae crashed, and his left arm in far less than perfect shape. The guy who towed the car afterwards just assumed that the bald-headed driver would be DOA.

Hamell's in a cast, Hamell's on serious pain-killers, Hamell's in pain and Hamell's out of commission, but Hamell is alive, and despite early estimates, is expected to be up and around and AntiFolking again in a couple of months.

I find this astonishing. The accident was severe. He should be crippled and crushed, he should be a goner.

But there's something indomitable about Hamell. It's obvious in his music, in the force of will it takes to overcome every room he's ever played, in the strength of conviction it takes to bring his completely unique brand of acoustic ROCK out to the masses, and consistently convincing them that there is nothing better in the world.

Hamell on Trial will recover. He is stronger than the fates, or nature, or the Pennsylvania Road System, or whatever else can be thrown against him.

Uh... I guess that's it. Send cards, cash, or care packages to:

Hamell on Trial ~ PO Box 2452 ~ Middletown ~ NY 10940

CREATORS

Eric Adams
Jonathan Berger
Kimya Dawson
Peter Dizozza
Sharon Fogarty
Tony Hightower
Egils Kaljo
Lach
Randi Russo

IN THIS ISSUE:

Joiejoiejoiejoiejoiejoie...
Maybe something else.

On Joie:

A friend of mine recently adopted two pet rats. We all thought she was crazy. "Didn't you see Ben?" "Didn't you see Willard?" "Didn't you read Charlotte's Web?" But she ignored all our protests, and all the taboos that come with loving such vile creatures. She is now the proud mother of two extremely affectionate, sweet, loving and smart creatures. I

would like to adopt Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend. I promise to love him and hold him and take him for walks. I'll use my veil to wipe the blood from his face and the image will start a church. I'll clean his green feet with my green hair and drink green tea. And while everyone else is being cool, Joie will play badminton with me and sing parodies of John Denver tunes. (Sharon Fogarty)

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

Report from the Fort

Friday, April 14th - Sidewalk Café ~ April 14th : the fort

Blam! The lights went up and Blam! **Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend** was poised in lipstick red shirt, shock-green hair shrouding his face and Shazam! raw guitar crunched through the speakers as Joie DBG (sans band) lit into his opening number. It was then that I knew I was witnessing not your everyday Joie DBG performance, but a bona-fide live DBG concert.

Joie burned through two numbers before he seemed to notice the packed-to-capacity crowd, as it seemed his was playing only for God. Even if he wasn't, I don't see how God couldn't have heard him, what with the unparalleled decibel level Joie achieves at the Fort. Throughout the show, unfortunately, the sound system could not help but voice it's displeasure at the crushing power surge, as it was stubbornly cutting out from time to time. Joie, in trademark fashion, accepted the faltering sound system like a good soldier, and played his heart out anyway.

This is my favorite part: About halfway through the last two thirds of his show, Joie was suddenly struck with the urge to call his mother! And that's exactly what he did. Borrowing a cellular phone from a kindly audience member, Joie gave his mother an early Mother's Day gift of a song in the middle of his show. It was a beautiful gesture that concluded with Joie's song, and a resounding applause from the crowd.

After saying 'goodbye' and 'I love you', it was back to business. Joie closed out the last minutes of his show with the dynamic yet subtle songs his muse seems to have inspired in him. This, I might add, was the first Joie DBG show I had ever attended, and if it is any indication of the quality performance Joie gives in concert (as I should think it is) then I will surely be a fixture at his shows in the future. See you there. *(Eric Adams)*

Monday, May 1st - Sidewalk Café ~ Let's see, **Brian Piltin** did his incredible Nikki, which is a song... it's a song like few others. It's a great song. I mean, it's a song like "Crimson in Clover," as it sort of steals a melody from it, but lyrically, far as I can tell, it's complex. About a small guy getting consistently beaten up for over the affections of the title girl. Really sweet, really creepy. La, la-la la, la-la, la-la lalalala...

Everyone performing the **Lunchin'** CD release party was on site to promote, which showed an impressive solidarity for the Saturday night event. It promised good things for the big night coming up...

And **Ivan Klipstein** returned from his long-ass tour. He seems to be on the road quite a bit, as his promo card suggests. Tony Hightower seemed especially interested in his performance and his goings-on. Others seemed horrified. *(Jonathan Berger)*

Thursday, May 4th - Sidewalk Café ~ **Al Lee Wyer's** set was very good. He told these ridiculous but true stories and poems in between songs and seems to have had a very tumultuous existence. his percussionist, Chris Yohre (whose business card reads "serving the world since 1955") was hysterical and maybe a little dangerous. His guitarist - Mark I think - was amazingly adept, like a really good studio musician. - definitely the virch of the trio. Al Lee was a very good performer, though. Sad he has no following - which I can relate to. *(Sharon Fogarty)*

Wednesday, May 17th - the Raven ~ After another hiatus and voyage through self-discovery and self-doubt, I dragged my sorry persona back to the Raven to check out what's been going on recently in the world of AntiFolk. And, as always, I regretted my absence as I am reminded of all the great music that gets played there each week.

Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend is further developing his emcee persona, as he told a very crude joke about Adam, Eve, and the ocean. Joie was sporting a T-shirt of the original anti-folkie (as well as anti-most everything else), G.G. Allin.

Billy Anne Crews was re-thinking the whole singer-songwriter idea, and had a heart-to-heart with Joie about the relative worth of playing with a band in this day and age.

She also did an a cappella version of her song, "Wait 'til Tuesday". She told us she was going to London to play a few shows, but hopefully we'll see her back soon.

Joie informed us that we were at the 50th open mic night at the Raven and that we were fast approaching the 1-year anniversary of the Raven open stage - the first one was on June 2, 1999. Joie (and someone who I guess was the manager?) then started discussing having an official 1-year anniversary party

to mark this. We've come a long way from the first open stage, where only 8 people showed up.

Kirsten Williams wanted to enlighten the audience about the fact that May was National Masturbation Month. As a tribute to this very special month, she played that Green Day song with the masturbation reference in it - I forgot the name.

Lenny Molotov returned to perform the classic Robert Johnson track "Love in Vain".

Guinevere played a song about Persephone, the maiden of Spring..



Report from the Fort

Preceding the song, she related the story of Persephone for those of us who had long forgotten their Greek mythology. Anyway, Persephone was picking flowers, and I guess she picked the wrong ones cause Hades got all bent of shape and took her to hell or some other unpleasant place (maybe the upper east side?). Persephone was allowed to leave periodically, which is what causes Spring. Or something like that. Somehow, it fit in the song.

More about Joie. His tracks were reviewed at listen.com - "This is angst-ridden punk rock carried out wholly on an aggressively played acoustic guitar. Bristly vocals front these staunchly amelodic songs." They also said Ani DiFranco was a similar artist. Interpret as you will... Joie said he was putting together a book of poems called Headaches.



Thanks to Valium and bong hits, Troy Boonsboro, in his own words, had very "puffy fingers". Puffy fingers notwithstanding, Troy played two great songs, the first being about his lost keys, the second about - who knows? But in it,

he did enough facial gyrations and contortions to make Jim Carrey proud.

Julio made his Raven debut by laying down one instrumental and then reading two pieces of poetry. After that everyone sang Happy Birthday, presumably because it was his birthday. Hope he comes back to perform some more!

After a long period of being MIA, Barry Bills returned to the stage. Unrecognizable (at least to me) without his trademark hat, he took the stage in typical Barry Bliss style - without offering any explanation about where he's been or how great it is to be back, not saying anything, he launched right into one of his melodic, somber songs. Good to see old-timers come back. (*Egils Kaljo*)

Sunday, May 21st - Sidewalk Café ~ You know, sometimes I forget how much I dig Steve Espinola. The songwriter in me would love to spend six months just trying to write songs like his. I get the feeling it's a mindset that he gets in, and the stuff, while maybe not as hooky or pyrotechnic as some people would like, has this really strong fundamental core to it that I really dig. There wasn't a whole lot of people there last night (I didn't start this as a report from the fort, but let's see how far it goes), but he charmed the shit out of all of us.

It was so nice to finally see Gene and Mimi, for the first time in like years (has it been?) I'd never seen them before, but they wore excellent electric shirts and played their neat sweet

Before I start to cry, there are a few things I need to get off my chest. So don't try to stop me, just let me get my head of steam going, before I blow my top.

One, I was born a hermaphrodite. I was born a hermaphrodite and my parents believed in self-actualization, so they let me pick my own gender. At thirteen. It was an embarrassing and expensive procedure, but there you go.

Two, My grandfather was homosexual. Both of them, actually. Well, all of them. See, there's this private gated community off the coast of Rhode Island... I think you get the point.

Three. I have low sugar tolerance. When I eat ice cream, I begin to bounce off the walls. And windows. And ceilings. That's why I never accept your suggestions of dessert. It's not that you're a bad baker, it's just... I can't.

Four, I never watched MASH. Never much wanted to. I mean, who really cares about the Korean War, or Alan Alda, or Gary Burghoff? Big waste of time, if you ask me.

I have never loved anyone one NINTH as much as I do you.

And five, my hair is naturally silver.

So there you go.

vAll my bullet points have been shot, and I didn't drop one single tear. I feel much better.

Yeah...

You want some cake?

Jonathan Berger

Declaring Independence from hair!

July 4th, year of your
lord, 2000!

8 o'clock sharp!

Sidewalk Cafe (94 Avenue A)

- the center of AntiFolk activity -

...Your absence will be noted in the
book of Fates...

energetic pop songs as best they could. See, Mimi had a real bad cold, and kept throwing tissues all over the place, which if anyone else did it would have been right gross, but with her it was kind of cute. Still, they cut their set short, and so we'll just have to wait for next time to see them in full effect again. I can't wait. It was really cool to see such ... grownups playing pop sings at Sidewalk. It happens so rarely.

Barry Bliss has grown hair (hair!), and now he looks a bit like a young Woody Guthrie. The new look suits his pinprick ballads just fine, as he was at his skittish, goose-stepping best, blasting through his meditations on loneliness and social ills at breakneck speed, barely stopping to talk or anything (Although he did adjust the levels on his guitar when Pablo stepped away for a second).

I've only seen Celia twice, but she's starting to grow on me. I first saw her work on Randy Newman's indictment-of-all-religions "God's Song (That's Why I Love Mankind)" at an AntiHoot, and I thought, who the hell does this chick think she is, covering a virtually uncoverable song like that? But once I got off my horse, I had to admit, she did do it justice, and you know, for a skinny white chick from Massachusetts, she can bend a note or two alright, and she plays that electric piano pretty damn okay too, there.

But the night was building to its climax, with Peter Dizozza and his band of theatrical types invading the back room, and you either knew what was going on or you didn't, and many did. The obscenely talented John Kessel brought a table up on stage with a candle, and he sat down with his sheet music while a constant parade of anti-folk and downtown theater all-stars took whacks at Peter's (de)compositions. Kessel's Vegas-soul version of "Tomorrow Isn't What It Used To Be" brought the house down, and when Peter launched into his anthem, "Hell Hole," the dozen or so people that were left all contributed harmonies, and it was wonderful. Capping the night with songs from his musical, "Prepare To Meet Your Maker," everyone wandered out into the cool spring Sunday night humming "as long as we keep fucking / each other, we'll be well," and so too all was well with the world. (Tony Hightower)

Saturday, May 27th - Sidewalk Café ~ Joie/DBG played one of his finest sets. A packed house witnessed the realization of all the work this artist has put in over the last year. Furious strumming, heartfelt singing and a welcoming smile captured the audience. Here is an artist truly hitting his stride with a wide-open future. It was a pleasure to witness. (Lach)



Wednesday June 14th

STONE SOUP

7:00

Tony Rubin

7:30

Leener

8:00

Jonathan Berger

8:30

Schwervon

9:15

The Leader

10:00

Steve Espinola

10:30

Star Park & Cotton Candy Head

C-Note

(157 Avenue A)

Tuesday, May 30th - Sidewalk Café ~ The Voyces debut as a band was wonderful. They are the new Mommas and The Poppas. Great songs, beautiful vocal arrangements mix with a very dry stage humor that just makes them a delight to see. (Lach)



Friday, June 2nd - Sidewalk Café ~ Sigh...another troubled set for Dots Will Echo. Nick, the lead singer and songwriter, is a true talent. Great scruffy songs and a performance style that is unafraid of the risks inherent in live rock and roll. However, he is like the Pigpen of the scene. Instead of duststorms there always seems to be an air of chaos around him. Cancelled gigs, feedback, mis-tunings combine with a consistently poor crowd turnout to produce shows high on rock glory but low on any sense that this is a band to get involved with as you can never be sure they will arrive. Here's hoping they manage to learn the art of building a crowd, keeping their equipment in working order and streamlining their shows so that they can move to the next level of local stardom they so richly deserve. Fragile Male Ego followed the Dots with a loose, rocking, goofy set. They sound like kids who got together to play a party and suddenly realized they were actually pretty good. I recommend you come down to see them and join in their infectious fun real soon. (Lach)

Report from the Fort

STINKY STUFF

KIMYA DAWSON

I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I HEARD MY VOICE ON TAPE. AKIDA WAS JUST STARTING TO TALK SO I WAS PROBABLY 5 OR 6 YEARS OLD. IT WAS WHEN THE FIVE OF US LIVED UPSTAIRS AND GRANDMA LIVED DOWNSTAIRS AND THERE WERE RAINBOWS PAINTED ON THE WALLS. IT WAS AROUND THE TIME WHEN I HAD AWFUL AWFUL DREAMS ABOUT BIGFOOT AND TORNADOES. I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I HEARD MY VOICE ON TAPE AND IT SAID WHAT I HAD SAID BUT IT DIDN'T SOUND LIKE ME. I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMEONE ELSE IN THE TAPE REPEATING WHAT I HAD SAID. I REMEMBER MY MOM EXPLAINING TO US THAT OUR VOICES SOUND DIFFERENT TO US BECAUSE IT DOESN'T HAVE TO GO VERY FAR TO GET TO OUR OWN EARS. THAT KINDA MADE SENSE TO ME. THEN SHE HAD US HOLD PAPER TOWEL TUBES UP TO OUR EARS AND TALK AND OUR VOICES SOUNDED LIKE ON THE TAPE AND IT WAS WEIRD AND FASCINATING AND MADE SENSE. I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT THAT PART OF THE PROCESS WHEN I DECIDED TO RECORD A SONG WITH SOME OF THE KIDS I KNOW. TIMMY (6), HUNTER (5), GINNY (3), AND DANIELLE (7) CAME IN THE PLAYROOM WHERE I HAD THE 4-TRACK, AND MICS, AND KEYBOARD. THEY SAT IN A CUTE ROW IN FRONT OF ME ON THE FLOOR. ALL I SAID WAS "WHEN I PUT THE MICROPHONE IN FRONT OF YOU SING ABOUT SOMETHING YOU LIKE". THE RESULT WAS UNBELIEVABLE. DANIELLE CHOKED AT THIS PART BUT TIMMY, GINNY, AND HUNTER SHOWED A NATURAL SPONTANEOUS LYRICAL GENIUS THAT MOST SONGWRITERS WOULD ENVY. I PASSED THE HEADPHONES AROUND AND LET THEM LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAD JUST SANG. THEIR FACES OPENED WIDE WITH EXCITEMENT AND CONFUSION. I EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS A LOT FURTHER TO OTHER PEOPLE'S EARS AND TO THE MICROPHONE THAN TO THEIR OWN EARS. "THAT'S WHY YOUR VOICE SOUNDS FUNNY" I SAID. I EXPLAINED THAT NEXT THEY WERE GONNA PLAY PIANO THAT THEY THOUGHT WOULD GO GOOD WITH THE WORDS. AND THEY SQUEEZED IN FRONT OF THE KEYBOARD AND MADE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER. ON TRACK THREE THEY DID BACKUP VOCALS AND PERCUSSION. I HELD OUT THE MIC WHILE THEY DANCED AROUND THE ROOM SINGING AND SHAKING BOXES OF LEGOS AND BANGING PLASTIC FOODS TOGETHER. I REWOUND THE TAPE AND TURNED THE VOLUME UP ALL THE WAY AND THEY HUDDLED AROUND THE HEADPHONES. THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN THEY HEARD THAT THE THINGS THEY DID AT SEPARATE TIMES WERE ALL PUT TOGETHER IN ONE SONG. THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE SUCH AN AMAZING BAND! IT WAS MAGIC! LATER I ADDED MYSELF ON THE FOURTH TRACK. STRUMMING AND SINGING QUIETLY...PROUDLY. I PUT THE SONG ON MY CD. "YOU GUYS ARE ON A CD" I SAY. "YOU GUYS ARE SO COOL". IT'S TRUE. LITTLE KIDS ARE THE COOLEST. THEY ARE UNINHIBITED AND NATURALLY MUSICAL AND RHYTHMIC. IT WAS INTERESTING THAT THE DANIELLE, THE OLDEST, WAS THE ONE THAT GOT NERVOUS. ALL BECAUSE OF BEING RAISED IN A WORLD THAT STIFLES CREATIVITY BY FORCING A NEED FOR ACCEPTANCE IN THAT WAY THAT ACCEPTANCE MEANS- JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. WHEREAS GINNY, ONLY THREE YEARS OLD, DIDN'T EVEN HESITATE ONCE. HER MUSIC FLOWED FROM HER SOUL WITHOUT BOUNDARIES. "YOU GUYS ARE SO COOL" I SAID. "YOU GUYS ARE SO COOL" I SAY OVER AND OVER. SOMETIMES IT IS EASY FOR BIG PEOPLE TO FORGET HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR LITTLE PEOPLE TO HEAR THESE WORDS. IT MEANS EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD TO THEM, TO KNOW THEY ARE COOL NO MATTER WHAT. IT MEANS EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD TO THEM TO HAVE THEIR INDIVIDUALITY AND CREATIVITY VALIDATED AND COMPLIMENTED BY THE BIG PEOPLE THAT ARE THEIR GODS. BIG PEOPLE ARE GODS TO LITTLE PEOPLE UNTIL THE BIG PEOPLE FAIL THE LITTLE PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM REASON TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE. AND LITTLE PEOPLE ARE MAGICAL LITTLE PIXIES AND ANGELS AND FIREFLIES WITH BUTTERFLY WINGS MADE OF FLOWER PETALS AND ALL THE BRILLIANCE IN THE UNIVERSE STILL ALIVE IN THEM. POWERFUL AND DELICATE LITTLE MUSIC MACHINES THAT WE NEED TO PROTECT AND NURTURE AND LEARN FROM.



AT LAST!

Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend is certainly one of the top people of importance in the AntiFolk Scene. His commitment to creating a community is second only to the Founder of AntiFolk and (perhaps) the founder of AntiMatters. He has been working tirelessly to build up a scene of people, and at times when it seems like the general sense of community has been floundering, he's been just about the only thing keeping it afloat. After two and a half years of changing the face of AntiFolk, Joie gets his say in the zine on the scene...

(Interview conducted by Jonathan Berger)

THE INTERVIEW

JB: Tell me about the cliques. You know, in AntiFolk?

DBG: The cliques are depressing, on one hand, and they're great on another. I don't want to name any names, but if Clique A just sees Clique A, then no one from the outside will have a chance to shine for them. And if Clique A gets too wrapped up in themselves, then they won't realize that there's someone outside who DOES belong with them.

I'll give one instance: Jim Flynn was playing the Raven and everybody talked through his two songs, and I thought he was brilliant. I put him up early, and told him to go to Sidewalk. He checked it out, then came back to the Raven, and now Jim Flynn is one of the most exciting, daring people to watch play, - and he brings everybody onstage.

People have to see further than the six feet in front of them. That's what I try to do.

JB: So you don't see yourself belonging to one of the cliques?

DBG: I belong to all of them.

JB: Ah, you're so popular...

DBG: Or socially inept, that I have to put new people in front of me so I don't get close to anybody. 'Cause if I get close to them, I get attached, and they leave, and I get bummed out.

JB: Do you have examples?

DBG: Um... Let's just say I don't see people coming down to play at the Hoot as much as I used to. And I miss them. And they know who they are. Some are old girlfriends -

JB: Do you think that they left BECAUSE they're old girlfriends... of yours?

DBG: I don't know why they left. Sometimes I blame myself. Sometimes I blame them. I came to play music, and if I accidentally fall in love with somebody, and it doesn't work out, that doesn't mean I'm not gonna stop coming.

JB: Is the scene that important to you?

DBG: Yeah, it saved my life.

JB: How so? Drug stuff?

DBG: Yeah, drugs and alcohol, a sense of creativity -

JB: What do you mean by a sense of creativity?

DBG: Like watching... if you're in a band, you can watch them do four shows in four clubs, then disappear for a month, and come back all polished. I like to watch them do the B-stuff, the unpolished stuff. I like to see that. I find more about someone from their songs than I do in conversation.

JB: Why is that? Do you think that people are more honest in their art, or can you see through them better that way? Is this some special skill you have?

DBG: I listen to all the lyrics. I've heard incest songs at the Monday night, rape songs, and I've heard songs about people committed to the nuthouse.

JB: All from the same person?

DBG: No!

JB: So it's all there, if you listen carefully enough.

He's been green ever since I remember.

Dave of Dave's Place

DBG: Yeah, all their defenses are down, I think, when they're playing, because they don't realize what they're saying - or maybe they do. I listen. I wish people were that honest in conversation.

JB: Are you? How are your social skills? You mentioned them earlier, their lack... How are your conversations?

DBG: I hate surface conversation.

JB: Shallow stuff?

DBG: Shallow stuff just - it just bores me to death. I want to find out where they came from, what they're dream is, and how they want to achieve it.

JB: Is this just with the chicks?

DBG: No. I have a tendency to go dark and deep with everybody.

JB: Origins. How'd you hit the scene at first?

DBG: I came back from San Francisco in another band that failed.

JB: What band number was that?

DBG: A thousand. I've been kicked out or broken up tons of bands.

JB: When did you return from 'Frisco?



DBG: May '97. I washed up at the Fort on September 17th, 1997.

JB: Did you come alone?

DBG: Um... I played in early September, but I played real late, and real drunk, a lone. And then my guitar broke. And I had to save up to get another one, and I showed up with a girlfriend who played her own stuff and a bunch of friends. We sat in

the back and just soaked it all in.

JB: You were also soaking up the alcohol, then, right?

DBG: Oh, yes. And pills and heroin and whatever else I could find.

JB: How could you afford that? I mean, you're not a rich guy, Joie...

DBG: I always had enough money for alcohol.

JB: I remember after a bunch of months of you on the scene, you told me you'd kicked all drugs, but you had like a vodka in your hand, or something else.

DBG: I was a hardcore junkie for three and a half years and I figured if I could kick heroin on my own, then I wouldn't have any other problems.

JB: And if we listen to your material, we get the sense that you did kick it. Do you do anything at this point?

DBG: No. Nothing. I'm too much of an adrenaline junkie.

JB: So you figure you're still sort of addictive, by nature.

DBG: Fuck yeah! I just realized I don't have to get fucked up, and if I don't fucked up, music seems to be a little more successful.

JB: So you feel you're succeeding now - where you weren't before?

DBG: I was just chasing my tail before, like a dog. And I know I can do this. I was just doing it wrong. I was living like a rock star before I was a rock star.

JB: Do you miss those early 'rock star' days?

DBG: No. It got boring. It got boring fast - for twelve years. So I figured I'd try a new way.

JB: You lose anything in the process? Friendships, bandmates?

DBG: I don't have a band.

JB: Family, anything?

DBG: Nothing I really needed. I mean, a girlfriend, an apartment... Those things are more luxuries than necessities. I've got me and I'm happy with me - the real me.

JB: An apartment's a necessity? How you figure that?



The first time I played the Raven open mic, I sucked. (I'm not making this up; Jon Berger tells me all the time.) I broke a string on

the first note, my voice was awful and my presence was comparable to a deer in headlights. Still, when I got off stage, Joie told me to "come back next week." That's what most impresses me with Joie DBG, because I wouldn't have shone my face in there again if he hadn't said those 4 little words. So I returned, and I kept coming. I kept going until I stopped sucking. He creates an atmosphere of acceptance that encourages newcomers to keep coming, always giving a quiet acknowledgement that everyone's efforts are appreciated. With green hair, you have to be pretty open. Oh yeah, his songs rock. You can sing them after the first listening, and you can't stop singing them. I've had "Bulletproof" in my head for 3 damn weeks. Without Joie, Wednesdays would suck.

Andrew Heller

★joie
DEAD
BLONDE
GIRLFRIEND



DBG: I don't have to work a shit job to make a ton of money to be in a place for seven hours

to sleep. I'm out all the time.

JB: But doesn't that stop you from writing - I'm guessing the writing's the most important thing...

DBG: I write at work, I write on the bus, I write on a coffee shop, I write walking down the street. I don't need a special pen, paper, or environment to write. Writing to me is like lightning - you don't know when it will strike.

JB: So what are you working on now?

DBG: A solo acoustic punk record.

JB: Live? Studio?

DBG: Studio.

JB: A studio punk record? Isn't that a contradiction in terms?

DBG: No. To me, Nirvana was punk, Bon Dylan was punk, they all released studio records. Now it's my turn.

JB: How many albums do you already have?

DBG: I've got three. The cassette, and two CDs. White Trash Symphonies Volume I, so I guess you could count it as... (Does the math)... three! Fuck it, I'll count it as three. I sold them all out. The cassette, I sold 120, and made 50 of Volume I. That sold out in a month. I've sold out four pressings of Volume II, and I really don't want to deal with it again, so I have to get the new one out.

JB: So the new one's... what? White Trash Symphonies, Volume IV?

DBG: No, it's called Pretty as A Picture. Pretty much written since Spring of '99 up until February 2000.

JB: There isn't any older material there?

DBG: There is old material. A couple cuts from Volume I and II that I did for my own benefit, that might not even make the record. I have people asking me for "Bulletproof" and "Strung Out," which was written last month, in April. Bulletproof was written in 95. It's a combination of two songs, one called "Bet-

ter than Before." I wrote a lot of drunken material. And now I'm sifting through that stuff, to see if I can salvage anything that applies to where I want to go with this project.

JB: Is the recording just you? Like the others?

DBG: No, it'll be... some guest musicians such as Testosterone Kills and the Voyces singing backup, Paleface might play a little harmonica, Kira from the Costellos playing flute and JC Sone as you've seen, singing "Pretty as a Picture." That's the only song live I'm doing with someone else. I don't like to work with other people on stage. The focus is me. It's my trust issues.

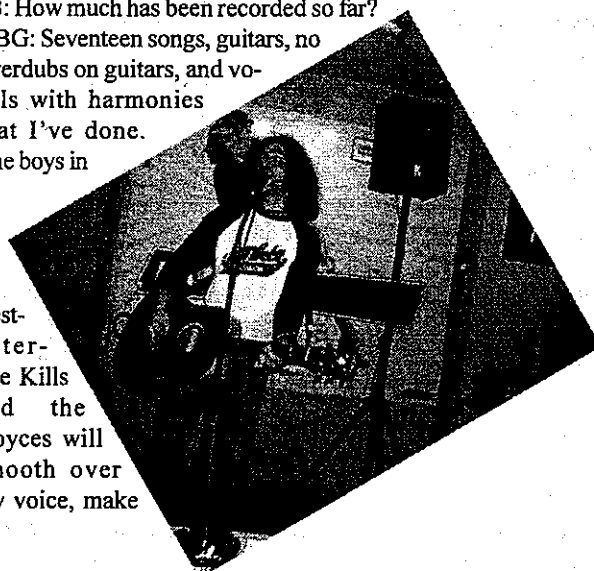
JB: So why JC? Why break the rule?

DBG: Well, JC wasn't the first choice. I was sitting, talking with Lach, saying I wanted a female voice on the song and we both looked at each other and we said, "Who can we pick?" He threw out Jude's name and I said, "Mmm... too pretty a voice for it." I suggested Michal Towber. Michal got the four-track rough, she loved it, but the universe decided to put her on tour, and it couldn't happen. So I felt really lost and... I tried out another person, but she was dragging her feet, so I was friends with JC and she said "I can sing your fucking song," and we haven't rehearsed it yet, and we've just been doing it on stage. We rehearse in front of people. I think she has an amazing voice. I think she brings an innocence and a passion to it that the song requires. I would have loved to do it with Michal, but... oh well. We're work together on something else - that's both our feelings.

JB: How much has been recorded so far?

DBG: Seventeen songs, guitars, no overdubs on guitars, and vocals with harmonies that I've done.

The boys in



Testosterone Kills and the Voyces will smooth over my voice, make

Joie was one of the first guys to speak to me like a human being when I was new in the scene, trying to get help with shows and stuff. He's a great person to have around because he loves music, and the open mic he runs is consistently the most insane, anarchic thing I see all week. You can really get behind his music, he's one of the few proud rockers left on the planet. Our coffee shops and bars are swarming with sensitive girlymen, and its hard to get your ass kicked nowadays.

Brer Brian

★joie
**DEAD
BLONDE
GIRLFRIEND**



it flow more easily.
JB: Good luck.

DBG: I had problems recording it. The studio closed down because the engineer went on tour for a month, and has to finish his record. So I've been asking everybody. I finally found someone in Mt. Vernon. Hopefully, it'll

work out. I'm also gonna record three other songs at the studio where Atoosa is recording write now. I might want to ask Tom Nishioka to record the three, so I have a full choice of twenty.
JB: this sounds like a slicker production than what you've done before. Is that the case?

DBG: Not really. It just sounds like me live in the studio. I just lay the guitars first, and sang over the guitar. I don't have the money to make the album I'd want to make right now. I don't think I'll have it. I wanted John Cougar Mellencamp, the E Street Band, string players, piano players, etc. ... This one's punk and folk. It's AntiFolk. I feel it's the truest AntiFolk record. Adam Brodsky did his best, but I don't think it captured what acoustic punk is about. No offense to Adam Brodsky. I really love his record, but everybody on the scene is much better live than they are on record. I'd rather see Hamell live than listen to the records. But I can listen to the records, and know what he sounds like live again. I love loud and aggressive acoustic music.

His Choochtown record is the closest thing to Hamell live.

JB: Hardly. Big as Life does the solo thing. It might be overdubbed, but it sounds much closer to his live experience than anything he's done since.

DBG: in some respects, yes. But to me, the overdubs clutter his intensity. Roger Manning's stuff is, I think, the best stuff the scene has to offer as solo acoustic punk. Stripped down

band, live cuts on a record, and fucking brilliant lyrics. As well as Paleface.. And Major Matt.

I just want to create something that I can replicate at the clubs.

JB: (reading back) "Dylan was a punk... Now it's my turn." In "Bleecker Street," you identify yourself pretty clearly with Bob Dylan. You figure your writing's like his, your styling - everybody thinks they're the next Bob Dylan. How do you connect?

DBG: Dylan moved people. They didn't know what to think of him. I'm one guy and a guitar, with a band name, green hair, screaming about his life. And hopefully people can identify with me on certain levels. Emotional anarchy.

JB: That doesn't sound specifically Dylanesque. Who else do you identify with?

DBG: I listen to Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen, Kurt Cobain.... Kurt Cobain was the whole reason I started writing my songs. After he died, I knew music was gonna suck. He was the kind of the outsiders, who got in and left too quickly because of problems he couldn't deal with. I figure now I can deal with my problems, get

in, and bust everything open, so more outsiders can get in.

Hence, the AntiFolk scene!

JB: You started writing songs in... '94?

DBG: April 5th, '94. The day he died.

JB: You started writing then. Is the material you worked on any-



When Joie first arrived on the scene he was one fucked-up little puppy. He was floating on a sea of despair in a life-raft made of song. Like so many writers before him the Antifolk scene gave him refuge to find himself. He sobered up and chose a spiritual warrior's path toward self-actualization. The beautiful part for us is he has recorded that struggle in his work so that we are brought through the storm with him. When you ask Joie what is Antifolk he will invariably talk about "community". Building an artist's community in NYC is an extremely difficult task. Many people come here to "make it" which is inherently a transient goal. However, in many ways, the Antifolk scene is to spiritual fitness what the 60's folk scene was to politics. It is a questioning of one's self rather than one's country that occupies the minds of this current crop. Through that questioning many of the artists are realizing that being part of something greater than themselves is very fulfilling. Joie embodies this spirit with his tireless work behind the scenes from hosting the open mikes, to welcoming newcomers, to being a shoulder of honest support. As someone once said "Change the man and you change the world". Joie has changed a lot from when he first washed up on The Fort's doorstep and as a result so has the Antifolk scene. I think they are both the better for it. Oh yeah, he's also a fucking kick-ass performer and a great songwriter.

Lach

★joie
DEAD
BLONDE
GIRLFRIEND

★ Joie DEAD BLONDE GIRLFRIEND

When I first got to New York last summer Joie looked across the room at me at an AntiHoot. "Grab yer shit, c'mon..." he said and led me quickly to a midnight meeting. "I've been where you are now" he sings, "I made it through it somehow". Amazing that Joie and I met when we did. He has saved my life a million times, by believing in me. Joie kept me sober. Joie kept my head on straight. Joie told me to keep singing after the band broke up. Joie tells me again and again "love yourself, silly rabbit," and because Joie said so, and I love Joie, I do. His songs make me cry because they are real to me. I used to be dead every day- then I met Joie. Words can't explain what he means to me. My goodness. He's an angel.

KIMYA DAWSON

thing you still do these days?

DBG: Oh, yeh. Fragment pieces of that period of time seep into the now. Like the spoken word part in "Drinking With God," is part of a song called "Hope You're Happy Now" and there's some live stuff that I play from back then. Like "Remember Me": which I have fully recorded with a band. And really, no one's heard it, and no one ever will because I was not the performer I am today.

JB: You have fronted bands?

DBG: Just in the studio.

JB: You seem to stick pretty strongly to the solo ethic, despite having this band name.

DBG: Well, at the time I came up with the band name, I thought I was gonna have a band - and I might, someday. But not right now. People like Hamell on Trial and Lach, and Roger Manning do it solo, and it totally blows me away. Even though Lach has a band now, I still like him much better solo.



JB: But all those guys do the band thing. Roger had a band, and almost always records that way. Hamell's last album is slicker than what he does live, and Blang!... well, like you said, he works with a band now.

DBG: I've seen Hamell a bunch of times, and he's much better live than he is on records. Roger, I've seen live once, and he totally blew me away. And Lach, I see every week, and it's just really honest performance without the slicked up bullshit that a band can bring. I'm not a big fan of bands. It's already been done numerous times.

JB: Are these guys some of the best that AntiFolk has to offer?

DBG: They are the best. They are the best to me. I've known Lach going on three years and his solo shows show more of him than I think he realizes. Hamell is just Hamell. There are no other words to describe. I've been listening to Roger for about eight months, at Hamell's suggestion. I mean Brenda Kahn and Hamell on Trial were the first people I

heard from the scene back in '92. I'd been in and out of Manhattan for the last thirteen years.

JB: Where are you from?

DBG: The mean streets of Long Island! The place where nothing goes anywhere, if you stay there.

JB: Tell that to Billy Joel.

DBG: Even he came to Manhattan. I dropped out of school for music. To pursue rock-stardom, and that's what I will achieve.

JB: What level of school? Like, you a fourth grade dropout?

DBG: No, 1st semester, I said this sucks, almost bought a plane ticket to California in the Spring of '88, but got a gig playing bass in a glam punk band, called Limousine, funny enough. We used to back up Jayne County at the Limelight. Left that band, joined a band called the Dogboys. Destroyed a recording studio, got kicked out of the band. And joined another band called the Pagan Sex Gods with a guy from the band the Nails. You know, "Eighty eight lines about forty four women"? Great song....

JB: I think I've heard of the Pagan Sex Gods. Have I?

DBG: No, just another failed attempt as a band becoming successful. Then it was back in to the Dogboys - kicked out again, for trying to burn down Limelight with a can of hairspray. And a lighter. All I got was a dressing room. Then it was off to Boston to play in Touch Me Hooker. To Florida, in a band called the Gutter Dolls.



Joie is all things to all people. I first saw him perform with Lach, Hamell on Trial, and someone known as the Chassidic Hendrix. It was a book signing somewhere in late 1997 at the China Club in Midtown. He performed two songs and was treated terribly by the audience and seemed very angry. I later found out why.

From the beginning, his songwriting has always impressed me, but his attitude has changed. He has mellowed out (believe it) and he seems a lot happier. Like most of us, he is most willing to help out anyone when they are in need. But being a senior member of the family has endowed him with certain knowledge that most of us don't have. I remember seeing a film a while ago called The Boy with Green Hair, a film directed by Joseph Losey and starring Dean Stockwell when he was about 10 years old. This film is probably the strongest antiwar statement I have ever seen. Joie is that boy. Joie DBG is my friend. Peace Love and Under-standing.

★joie DEAD BLONDE GIRLFRIEND

Mike Perazzetti

JB: Is that one word or two?

DBG: Oh, I don't care. Then it was back to good old New York in 1992 to play in the Semi Precious Gems.

JB: But you started writing in '94. Were you doing bass all that time?

DBG: Bass all that time.

JB: Were you any good?

DBG: Fuck yeah. Limousine had a spec deal with RCA and I thought I was gonna be signed at the age of eighteen. And working with people from the Joe Perry Project enhanced my playing. You could have seen my bass playing in Lach's Secrets. I'm the fill-in Secret - the less known Secret - which is something I enjoy doing.

JB: Do you ever want to go back to backing people up?

DBG: Never again. The only person I would play bass for right now would be Lach - if he needed someone. But if I do have to record with a band, I would probably play bass or bribe John Kessel to play, because he is by far the most outstanding all-around musician on the scene.

JB: Anyone else you want to give props to?

DBG: No. Only kidding... (pause) I think Jude is amazing. I saw that the first time she played.

JB: Songwriting, singing, performance? Anything in particular?

DBG: She's got the total package. Then there's Grey Revell, who I think is the most experimental musician on the scene.

JB: Before we rolled tape, you were talking about some other people, like Seth, and Jack of Stipplicon. Don't you think they take things a big further?

DBG: They do, musically, but Grey shows up solo or with Spencer or with a twenty piece band behind him. Seth is just a genius. And Jack, I'm just starting to get to know. We think alike in creating a scene.

JB: Anyone else?



DBG: I like Tony Hightower with the guys from Lunchin'. The Lunchin' guys are really great live. I haven't sat down to listen to their record yet. I also like Derrick Richmond from Silver City. I think he's a really good writer. Those are the ones off the top of my head.

JB: What characters do you think you've learned from on the scene?

DBG: I call them the fantastic four. Lach, Hamell, Roger Manning, and, believe it or not, Rick Shapiro. Rick is brilliant, as an artist, as a performer.... I think he's gone further into doing what he wants to do than anyone I've ever seen. You might not like it, but at least he does.

JB: Does he? Like it, I mean. Rick seems to be harder on himself than anyone else...

DBG: Rick puts on a show. There is no script. There are no rules, and nothing is offensive. He's an incredible person to get to know, if you choose to. I hung out with him for five days in Toronto, and it was the most intense emotional brutal understanding of what performing is about. His Canadian shows were one part comedy, one part art, one part professional wrestling. It was beautiful.

JB: So what can you get from that?

DBG: I think getting booed at the China Club and getting hecklers and talkers is fun. Rick showed me it can be fun. It can enhance your performance, not hinder it.

Lach is the same way. Lach embraces a crowd. Hamell embraces a crowd. I'm learning. It's hard to get through with



What Joie Means to Me: He sings as if Satan is standing behind him wielding a blowtorch... lays down a lyric as good as I've ever seen. He and others I've met through AntiFolk give me hope that my generation is not completely fucked, that some of us can still see and feel and make great art.

Erica Smith

★joie DEAD BLONDE GIRLFRIEND

Joie is someone who, when I see him at the anti-hoot, always helps me feel at ease. He's a great performer, a great songwriter and easy to talk to between all the other brilliant talent on the Fort stage.
Jocelyn Ryder

Joie DBG's words and music come out from his heart, no winking or smirking, he has something to say, which is sadly unusual around here.
Fat Harper

I think joie's got purty hair.

AJ Cope

something different, and those four guys do it well. I've only seen Roger once live, and he said he didn't play for a while before, but he can go zero to sixty like, the quickest.

It's been nice having Paleface around., It's another one saying "What the fuck is this? Do I like this? Should I like this?" He makes you think because no one plays like Paleface. And it's so great to have that element around. Shit that doesn't fit in a mold - or shit that doesn't WANT to fit in a mold. It's free form spiritual art.

It's just not about writing songs. It's about creating with the world around you. Jude does that well. And learning from other people's triumphs and tragedies as well as your own. Such as JC's song "Beale Street," about Jeff Buckley, a performer I'm just being exposed to. He was great.

JB: Makes you wonder about how fragile like can be. How a simple twist can alter everything...

DBG: Yeah. It's fucked up. From Cobain blowing off his head to the unfortunate accident with Hamell, it makes me want to take healthy chances 'cause I don't know how long I have (lights cig), and that's not for me to decide. Life is funny because each day is either the first day or the last day of the rest of our lives. And I want to write about it. I want to tell my truth. I guess it's validation for when my parents fucked.

JB: you're pretty intrinsically involved in creating - well, maintaining the AntiFolk scene, what with the Raven Open Stage, the Fort's AntiSocial, the back-up soundboy, and, right now, you're filling in for the hoot. I don't really have a question.

DBG: I realize that we have something special going on down here. Maybe others don't realize it, but I do. I'm a songwriter. I like to hang out with songwriters. If I were a baker, I'd hang

out with bakers. If I were a stripper, I'd hang out with the strippers.

JB: Doesn't that get boring? I mean, how much can you talk to a songwriter about? Moon? Spoon? June...?

DBG: That's why I go dark and deep.

JB: Which brings US back where we started.

DBG: There's a lot of damaged psyches, if you will, and I'm working through mine, through other people's, so that's why I talk with songwriters and people who look at music, not just as music, but as art.

JB: you seem to spend some time bringing other people into the scene, encouraging them to get involved in what goes on. Why? I mean, there's more than enough without you trying to bring new folk in...

DBG: That's why I don't get bored. There's always that uncharted scared person sitting in the back of the club on a Monday night that really wants to be there, but is afraid to talk. So I talk to them. 'Cause I wish somebody would have done that for me, when I first showed up. I just had to be a drunken dick to get noticed.

JB: What happened to the AntiSocial?

DBG: Some people treated it like an AntiHoot, or the Raven's Open Stage. I didn't want to come up with a list of rules and regulations as to how stuff should be done. I wanted to put faith in the artistic ability of the performers. Some people got it without me saying it.

I rehearsed my record. All the works in progress were played with Kimya and Adam and Piltin.

Kimya did the same thing with her great album that she did. Playing on the scene is just not about songwriting. It's about creativity and a sort of extended family, and learning. Doing things different than the established status quo.

So the AntiSocial just got to be the status quo of Monday and Wednesday. I figured that out when April's AntiSocial had a big crowd and the AntiHoot was a little thin, and I went up to play with Brer Brian. He played guitar on Letters Home and I sang, and that should have been done at the AntiSocial. I just decided to leave it for a while - maybe talk about it. And maybe we'll do it like a Spring Summer Winter Fall thing.

I dunno, I just want to get my record out.

I want everybody to get their records out and go to other people's shows besides their friends. It was so great to see Stipplicon stickers all over the City. I listened to Jack's album and I think it's fantastic. Along with Seth's Dufus project



- and Fun Wearing Underwear. To me that's testing the boundaries that confine.

Some people might get what I'm saying, and some might not. But it's all meant in the highest... I believe in everybody that steps up on that stage, whether you think you suck or you don't. You're doing something with your life besides just surviving it.

Rick taught me that. He told me, "Joie, you can live your life, or you can survive it."

Lach said the same thing, and Hamell's song, "Get in the Game," I think sums it up nicely.

I love what I'm doing. Just give me the shot. Just let me in, 'cause I'm not gonna go away.

JB: When you first came to the Fort, how long did it take for you to get noticed?

DBG: Once. Lach asked me if I played in other bands. Then it took me four months to get a gig. So, to all those frustrated people who haven't gotten a gig yet, shut the fuck up and play your songs. In time, you will get a gig. Maybe.

JB: Those first gigs at the Sidewalk were pretty chaotic. You were running through strings - well, pretty much the way you do now. But you seem to deal with it better these days.

DBG: I never saw anybody break strings as much as I did until I hung out on the scene more. Or forget lyrics. Watching other people play enhanced my live performance. Adam Green reminded me why I came here... just to write songs. I remember being that young, not jaded, and just doing what I wanted to do. So pretty much, I'm just not giving a fuck what happened in the past, but using the past as a tool to know what not to do in the future.

JB: What do you see you adding to the AntiFolk community?

DBG: Nothing. I'm here for me. I just want to play songs. If I make friends, great. If I fall in love with someone on the scene, great. My primary purpose is to do my art, and be heard. If I accidentally inspire somebody, or their life changes because of me, that's just icing on the cake.

JB: Have you fallen in love on the scene?

DBG: Too many times.

JB: Does it help the art?

DBG: No, it enhances it. It makes it uncomfortable. But it's fun. It's fun to date a female writer. We meet on common ground - not the let's go to the movies, and hang out. It's more like let's go to the hoot and hang out. And they're all wonderful women, they just have a tendency to want to leave, which is OK.

JB: Do you think about getting out of the scene?

DBG: Yes. Every day. One day, I hope to leave and come back and help the scene that helped me achieve what I wanted to achieve. And that's a promise. So many people have left the scene and never come back to help it out. Just to help themselves out. Look how many people came out of the scene - you've been on the scene longer than me, right?

JB: Hell YEAH!

DBG: Anybody come back to help out the scene, or did they come back to just put in an appearance?

JB: Depends. Cindy Lee Berryhill plays gigs when she's in town, but she's really not part of it anymore. So I guess not.

DBG: I remember in a matter of two weeks, there was Bree Sharp, Brenda Kahn, and Michal Towber at the Monday nights.

JB: They all had agendas?

DBG: I don't know. They only one I really talked to was Michal and she has the same feeling about the scene that I do. I think Brenda was doing research and Bree... god only knows... I like Bree, don't get me wrong. She came in two months after I did and she's got a deal. But she seems stressed out because she has to sell records to keep it. I sell records to enjoy it. I make flyers to enjoy it. I enjoy everything about it.

JB: But that pretty much means you're doing it as an avocation. Wouldn't you want to be paid the big bucks to make your music? Or even the small bucks?

DBG: Not at the price of my sanity.

JB: So you'd be willing to live in a crawl space at fifty so long as you got the chance to play clubs like C-Note and Den of Cin?

DBG: Well, I hope to never play those clubs. I live each day like it's the first day or the last day of the rest of my life. And I'm a free spirit and I can create and maybe inspire and bring something to this world instead of another folk singer - like I need a hole in the head. You know that song? By Cracker...

JB: Take the skinheads bowling. Well, that wasn't Cracker. Whatever...

DBG: I just feel that Lach started something really incredible and whatever you put into this scene, you will get out.

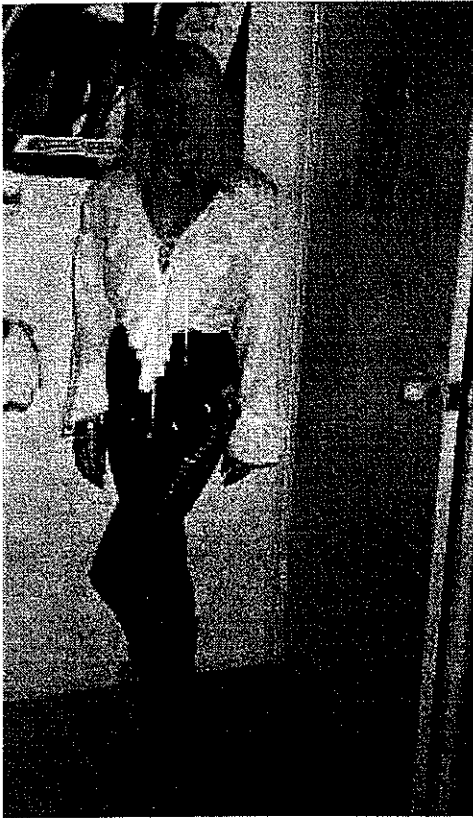
JB: So what have you put into the scene?

DBG: I don't know. What do you think I put in? I'm not aware of what I do sometimes, but I'm aware that I'm not aware.

JB: Well, that sounds like a good epitaph for you. Hopefully, some testimonial crap will be in the introduction, something like: I totally see your role as vital to the continued breathing presence of the AntiFolk community, second only to my own. Oh, and maybe Lach's.

★ Joie
DEAD
BLONDE
GIRLFRIEND





DBG: Well, I'm gonna leave one day, and I hope someone picks up where I left off, or wants to surpass what I do. Step up to the plate. This is your scene as much as it is a n y b o d y else's. You know what you didn't ask? Who is the Dead Blonde Girlfriend?

JB: Screw who. I want pictures!

DBG: I have pictures. Only a couple of people have

seen her. She walked into the Raven about a month ago. I was totally blown away.

JB: Did YOU leave the place shaking? No, that was a redhead. Never mind... What's her name? The Blonde Girlfriend. She's not really Dead, is she?

DBG: No. Very much alive. Very much as beautiful as ever. But now she knows that this project exists and life for me hasn't been the same since knowing that she knows. It makes me want to take it deeper, farther than ever. 'Cause she's proud. And the funny thing is, she lives only twenty eight blocks away from the Fort. And she has the CD but she hasn't seen me live yet. I'm not stressed about that yet. She will someday. Hopefully, with me accepting a Grammy. And that could happen.

JB: I've heard the story, basically. This is a woman who believed in you when you didn't -

DBG: When I didn't believe in myself.

JB: So now that she's out of the picture, you had to take up the slack? You believe in your now, right?

DBG: Oh, yeah! Full on, flat out, straight up. I believe in myself all the time. Probably more than Drew Blood! 'Cause, you know, my life would be nothing, if I didn't know who Drew Blood was.

JB: As would all of ours...

DBG: People don't realize - or maybe they do, I dunno - that they make an impact on me. Like Jude Kastle and Patsy and Brian and Laurel from the Voyces... Grey, Kimya... the list goes on and on and on... And I know there's more out there. I just can't sit idly by around the same people each week. More has to brought in. More beauty is out there. And I will keep

seeking it until I can't find anymore. That's why I am asking the people who make up this scene to not be so cliquey.

Did we talk about how the indie music scene destroyed it self?

JB: Don't think so...

DBG: Well, the indie music scene was created by people who didn't fit in with the mainstream. So they started the independent scene, and the misfits got the power, and it became cliquey. Instead of strengthening the scene, it ate itself and got engulfed by the major labels. And they lost everything they tried to achieve.

JB: But aren't all scenes like that? Aren't all scenes cliquey?

DBG: That's the whole point. They don't have to be. We're just people who have a gift of creating music, so why don't we let everybody in and not get caught up in just the small stuff. Someone told me this scene is a velvet chasm. Which really blew me away. There's a comfortability of playing to your friends. I'm not comfortable playing to my friends. I like strangers. So if we open up the scene and not get caught up in tightening it, we'll have more strangers which means endless possibilities to create something honest. There is safety in numbers, and there's strength in numbers. I like the strength in numbers. The more the merrier. The bigger the better. You know, all those cool clichés?

JB: What's the future of AntiFolk?

DBG: Good question. You're a genius... It's like you read my mind.

I think it can go as far as we all want it to. There's strength in numbers. There's a great sense of love among songwriters. There's good healthy competition in songwriting. It's not about who gets the coolest gig or who's got the bigger draw. It's about who writes the songs that grab your ear.

Kind of like the whole San Francisco sixties scene, the seventies scene at CBGB, the nineties scene in Seattle, and now maybe, the 2000s scene, down on Avenue A. It's just up to us. So if you want to make your life music, you're in the right place, 'cause this scene lets you be you.

Without you there, you're fucked. So just show up, play your songs, meet your people, embrace things that you wouldn't normally embrace with an open mind, and just let go.

Monday nights are important. In the last almost three years, I've missed ten hoots, because I was sick, or hung over.

So the more we show up, I feel, the more we'll find.

Lach pretty much says that in the opening monologue of the Monday nights. I think that's why he created the scene.

While he was in Italy, and I did those two Mondays, it made me realize how hard and special his job is. I put a lot into my music, and I put a lot into the scene and I get a lot out of it.

It's pretty much changed my thoughts on music.

★joie
DEAD
BLONDE
GIRLFRIEND

Thems Good Latin'

June 29, 9:00 pm

at the

Continental

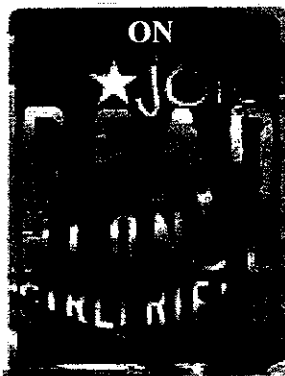
25 Third Ave. (At St. Mark's)

100% Free and Pure Orgiastic Insanity, Guaranteed
Stipplicon to blow minds at 10:00, this should not be forgotten



When I first met Joie, he was the life of some other party. He somehow wound up in the lint trap of the AntiFolk scene with one habit he was trying to kick, another one he was carefully cultivating, and an unfocused but monstrous desire to somehow change the world around him into something that maybe made a little more sense. It was during the golden age of the Montana Freeman, the Unabomber was still something of a folk hero, and Joie was trying to start an AntiFolk Militia with a scattershot posse of itinerant punks and losers and lovers and other addicts, flouncing from this dive to that shitbox to that hole in the wall all over the East Village, shouting down anyone too boring to matter, which let's face it was (and is) pretty much everyone anyways. This wasn't even two years ago, but between then & now it feels like medieval times or something. His stamina was formidable, but really, why wouldn't it be? What other thing was there in the whole goddamned universe that could matter nearly enough to devote one's time and energy to, besides giving apathy and complacency no chance to grow, stamping it out with true and righteous anger? Is there any cause more noble than fucking shit up, especially if the shit is really truly shit? I think this was Joie's line of reasoning. And as far as I can tell, it was sound. Since that messy and scary (but, okay I'll admit it, fun) first night when I first followed him around on a drunken tour of the bottom of the East Village gene pool, he has systematically taken that desire to cut shit out and turned it on himself, with a ruthlessness that would kill damn near anyone I know. He woke up in hell, and knew that going deeper was the only way out. He's paid an insane price to get to where he is. Sometimes you can see it, in his posture, in things he doesn't talk about, in the ongoing brutal self-analysis that is his music. But look at where he is now. He really is an AntiFolk Atlas, carrying this scene on his rounded shoulders with an amazing consistency and sense of goodwill. He actually walks his walk. You know how fucking rare that is? I mean, look around you. Joie is what he is: a sick green-headed motherfucker with a self-prescribed mission, who uses his music as much to keep the upper hand on his numerous personal demons as to entertain all of us. He maybe suffers fools a little more than he used to, but never, ever the fool in himself. Here's the paradox: he gets away with shit a less charismatic person would get crucified for, but it's not anything you or I couldn't be doing if we had the guts. Joie has the guts because he has nothing to fear anymore. He has had to conquer himself, and he knows he'll have to conquer himself again tomorrow (and tomorrow and tomorrow), and as long as he does, he'll be an incredible performer and a true role model (if that's what you need). But more than that, this ongoing self-mastery is what's keeping him alive, and Joie doing his loud furious joyous thang in this little corner of our universe is the greatest cure for apathy I could possibly imagine.

(Tony Hightower)



I owe Joie DBG a lot — he is the reason why I've come onto this scene. I've flirted with it before I ever knew anybody (actually it was Tammy Faye Starlight who told me of the AntiHoot years ago) by going to Lach's shows and seeing people like Agnelli & Rave play, but I didn't become a "player" until I met Joie. It all began with an evening in late July 1999 at one of the Sidewalk's AntiHoots. I was sitting in the crowded back room, absolutely terrified (I had horrible stage fright, and I hadn't performed in nearly 5 years, with the exception of one other AntiHoot that I went to nearly two years before that night). Suddenly, a green-haired lad comes to my table and starts talking to me. Now, you have to understand that beneath all that smiling I do, I'm a nervous wreck.

And when I'm nervous, the last thing I want is a stranger talking to me sponging up all my energy. But, there was something in me, or perhaps in Joie, that made me want to talk to him. He told me how he notices how some people come to these things and they sit alone and don't talk to anyone (as I was doing), but that that is not the point of these open mics; that if I just sat back and relaxed and met people, I'd be less nervous about when I was getting up there and the performance itself. Now that I'm somewhat of a 'veteran' (maybe more like an end-of-the-season rookie), I see that what he was saying is true.

That night, he quickly introduced me to the Voices (back in the days when their name was spelled with an "i") and Kenny Davidsen. I played that night, legs shaking, voice quivering, and feeling altogether bad about my performance afterwards. So, I didn't go back to the Sidewalk right away. Then I went to a Voyces show in August at the Bitter End and saw Joie there. He was persistent with me, telling me how I just have to get my stuff out there, and I just coyly said, "I know" but then continued to talk about how terrified I was of performing. He told me to come down to the open mic at the Raven, back when the Raven's Open Stage was just only two months old. So I went, and found the Raven to be a less intimidating place to play. I made sure I went there every week, because I finally made a commitment to myself to overcome this stage fright thing. When September rolled around, I decided to try Sidewalk again — ah, this time, much better! I was less nervous, and also I knew more people in this community at that point so I felt more at home. I decided then that for every Monday and Wednesday night, I was going to be committed to playing these open mics.

And so that's where it all began. I don't think I missed an open mic for the first 4 or 5 months. Over that time, Joie and I became friends: staying until 2:00 AM to watch Lach close the night for the "walls, waitresses, and weirdoes", chatting over cigarettes and tea, talking about music and philosophy, and helping play matchmaker for each other. But besides the friendship, Joie has been a great mentor to me without him even realizing that he had a watchful disciple. I saw how he promoted shows, I saw him pass out flyers, I got his e-mails, and I quickly learned what to do to create a name and space for yourself in this scene. He is always looking out for people, encouraging them, and nurturing them and their talents. Joie makes you understand that there is a time and a place for everything, and what is meant to happen will happen, and that the right people (or sometimes even the seemingly 'wrong' people) end up in your life at the right moment. Joie is one of those people (the "right" kind!) that showed up in my life and I appreciate all that he's done for me.

(Randi Russo)

May 6th, 2000

Where were you when the parties went down?

Three CD release parties, three clubs, three phenomenal evenings, all on May 6th. Peter Dizozza tells you about them all!

Saturday night, May 6th was filled with activity. Three AntiFolk CD-release parties occurred concurrently in three separate venues.

Riding solo, I biked to my first destination, CB's Gallery, where events arranged by Troubadour **Dan Emery** and his Merry Band of Mystery Men were running according to schedule. I arrived at 8:30 to see **Jeff Lewis** and see him I did, outside. His half-hour set had just ended, the stage then being occupied by the amazing **Steve Espinola** who coaxed his beautiful songs out of the amplified vibrating little bars on his electric Wurlitzer piano. What a thrill to hear the notes distorted through a fuzz box during "Famous Famous" and at other unexpected moments, with a well-placed footstomp.

After I exchanged pleasantries, including a visit with Matathias of Fellini's Basement and Underground Filmmaker **Nick Zedd** ("Do come by. We'll roll some flicks!"), I left for the Sidewalk Bar and Restaurant to catch roommate **Tony Hightower** perform as part of **Lunchin's** CD release party. My first observation there was, "Beautiful Decor!" **Lunchin'**, in celebration of the birth of their new recording, had transformed the Fort into Mayfair with the help of ribbons, banners, and any number of friends.



Tony, the minstrel, continues to viscerally move audiences everywhere with his high energy brand of folk rock off his latest CD, **A Single Angry Word**. Dressed in an industrial oil-based leather imitation button-down dress purchased earlier that day, he increased his general defiance level by about three notches, well into the red. With a performance that was a force of nature, Tony took the **Lunchin'** boys with him, **Sanjay** harmonizing while pounding the djembe and **Alan** insistently amazing listeners with his wailing amplified acoustic guitar solos. I missed last-minute highlights when **Pablo** jumped on the stage and **Sanjay** cut his hand while continuing to play, but I heard about them. I took my leave of **Sharon Fogarty**, **Jason Grossman**, **Kenny Davidsen**, and **MC Berger**, and headed over to **Luna Lounge**, where **Michael Perazzetti** assured himself that I would be well positioned to videotape **Bionic Finger** while he took notes on how to create their media blitz. There among the crowd I saw **Drew Blood**, **Mike Rechner** and even **Steve Espinola**, fresh from his **CB's** performance.



The **Luna Lounge** art exhibit consisted of pretty-lady tattoos pinned on the walls. These were scraps from a Polynesian collection of skins cut from drowned sailor's and cured for posterity. **Robin** assured me that

such a contention was the artist's conceit, but just then, **Bionic Finger** unleashed their **Inner Bimbo**. How appropriate, because tattooed sailors, prior to drowning and being skinned by Polynesians, would patronize seaside bars to meet local bimbos, and using breath exhaled from their lungs, they would inflate the bimbos until bionic. **Bionic Finger's** concert accomplished the same effect! Up went the bimbo. (cf. **Marlon Brando's** bimbo definition in "Last Tango.").

After **Bionic Finger's** declaration of the "Big Dick" brought down the house with applause, I shifted off the recording video eye and returned to **CB's Gallery**, where **Dan** was mesmerizing a Standing Room Only crowd, headlining at one of the coolest moments in recent memory. A **Miss Diamond**, I believe her name was, joined the **Mystery Band** to perform the outrageous "Mustard!"

After we got the hang of the three note motif, she began riffing on it. She whistled through her teeth while performing standing on a box to elevate her to the same height as **Dan**. Young though she was (reports



put her at ten, or thirteen, or something like that), she is the greatest whistler in town. **Pierre Jelenc** and **Linus Gelber** of **Home Office Records** (which released **Dan Emery's** new **Natural Selection**) presided over the crowd like proud fathers.

In another song, **Dan** offered wisdom, paraphrased as follows: "You don't need God to tell you what's good. And there is no should. There is good and evil and I choose good."

Later, **Dan** added that the act of choosing, itself, is good!

Wow. What an exhausting evening! I remember reading that the **Beatles** and the **Rolling Stones** communicated about staggering the timing of their records release. Of course, our local acts, in scheduling three related events on the same night, each filling their respective room to maximum capacity, establishes the growing popularity of the AntiFolk scene. Congratulations to all!

Dan Emery Mystery Band

The manager at CB's said that it was one of the top 5 all-time money nights at the bar for the club (from which we can infer that Mystery Band fans drink quite a bit). I was pleased with the night... Home Office is great, the crowd was great, our set was smokin'. I was born to rock, and I saved myself up all day just to play my heart out.

Dan Emery, Dan Emery Mystery Band

Lots of people from the start. By the time The Caulfield Sisters hit the stage, CB's Gallery was full; they did both new songs and several Pee Shy ones (which I did not know). Dan's set went without problems, his collapsed lung well up to the task. He did a full set, the high point of which was for me a version of "Mustard" with a 10-year-old (or so) girl doing live the whistling sound effects. She was amazing. Finally, Saint Low brought the adrenaline down (though some of their songs, the last one in particular, let loose into rave-ups that would have done the Yardbirds proud Beer-bottle slide guitar and all!) and there were still over 50 people by the time things came to an end at 1:30.

Pierre Jelenc, Home Office Records

Good. Dan's set was great. He had a thirteen year old girl, "Champion Whistler" named Eliza (I think) whistle through "Mustard". The band is sounding tighter, and Orion is becoming a rock god - he's getting the moves. Our friend Alia, backed up by her cousin Blake, did various freak show acts while we were setting up. Bed of nails, fire eating; nail in the nose, etc. I got lots of positive feedback for what I did during my set. I played Wurlitzer and made it do all these strange things I'd never really tried before: feedback, distortion, and playing between the tremolo pulses, all on the whims of the moment.

The Madder Rose woman, Mary Lorson, did a good set, too, with her band Saint Low. Orion got tattooed by mad Dog Ed, with an original design by Tony Millionaire. Jeff Lewis had a cool band with John Kessel on Theremin and Brer Brian playing bass patterns on his acoustic. Caulfield Sisters was one half of Pee Shy, who I really liked. This was less weird than Pee Shy; pretty, folksy. Dino S. and Quinn H were the MCs (Dino's an Emmy winning comedy writer). He managed to offend just about everyone with some of his "Mr. Show" era material.

Steve Espinola, Dan Emery Mystery Band

May 6th, 2000

Where were you when the parties went down?

The acts and the audience relate their adventures that evening to YOU!

BionicFinger

Surprises...well, it was kind of an unusual crowd. Some regulars, but a lot of new

people or old people who haven't heard us in a long time. We sold a lot of CDs... that was exciting. Other than that, it was just a really good gig. I don't think we've ever had a better onstage energy, a better audience energy... it's the best we've ever played live. I mean there were a few weird mistakes, but nothing big. I know it's the best I've ever played live, anyway. It was so much fun. The Recording Angels brought us flowers and a card. The women from Moxie were there, too.. Fa wore Christine's blond wig for most of the evening after we'd finished playing.

Our outfits were lots of fun. Nan wore a hideous 80s-style prom dress. I was Florida trailer-park white trash. Alina was the most creative, I think, with these sort of make-shift pink pantaloons... really weird. Christine wore her blond wig and sunglasses. Nan thinks we should dress up like that for every gig, but it's so bloody high maintenance. I do like the idea of making every gig "special."

Anyway, it was a good show.

Pam Weis, Bionic Finger

Dude,

BiFi totally fucking rocked!!!!!!! Woooo! Fuck yeah!

Word.

There was a big crowd, and they really, really enjoyed the show. I was happy to be there; it was history in the making. All right, perhaps I hyperbolize, but really, it was a whole lot of fun...

John S. Hall, General Raconteur

Well I just have to say that I loved my green-Molly Ringwald prom dress and it made me so excited! I jumped all over the stage and actually fell on top of Christine who started hitting me with her bass (in time to the music, of course). Alina stepped in and played mediator by telling all about her high school prom. Soon we were all weeping in one another's arms and the audience was visibly moved and began swaying with their arms around each other holding their lighters up. Could I ask for a better show!!!!

Nan Turner, Bionic Finger

I pity the fools who opted away from the Lunchin' CD release party. Fucking pansies at other clubs might have thought that they had a good time, but they don't know a goddamned thing about it. At the Fort, the origin place of all the bands performing on May 6th, Lunchin' hosted an evening of community. Creating a little store in the corner, providing goods from all the acts performing that evening, Lunchin' attempted to do well by doing good. Full crowds and an enthusiastic (and, probably, brilliant) MC kept the night hyped-up and fun. Several of the bands performing featured aspects of community and cross-pollination, with Lunchin' backing up first Atoosa, then Tony Hightower, then Tony backing up the aforementioned brilliant MC Jonathan Berger, on a faux Costellos song, and finally, Anthony Costello lending Alan of Lunchin' his guitar after the Costellos finished and Lunchin' had begun. It was all about sharing good karma, good energy, and, of course, selling a shitload of merchandise. Certainly, there can be doubt, in terms of good karma, Team Lunchin' wiped the floor with the competition. The other events at the other venues couldn't possibly compete in terms of well-wishes and good spirits. So IN YOUR FACE, Bionic Finger! UP YOURS, Dan Emery Mystery Band. Yeah...

Jonathan Berger, modest motherfucker

The Fort @ the Sidewalk Cafe

All shows are free. For further info, call: 212 - 473 - 7373.

Monday June 5 - The AntiHoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tuesday June 6 - 7:30 - Jeff Nimeh, 8 - Basque, 8:30 - Andrew John, 9 - Ben Blankenship, 10 - Anthony Salerno, 10:30 - Eletfa and Uszturu (Traditional Hungarian)

Wednesday June 7 - 8 - Boshra, 9 - Jackie Martino Band, 10 - Tristan, 10:30 - James Minehart, 11:30 - Janet Vodka

Thursday June 8 - 8 - Eamon O'Tuama, 9 - The McCarthys, 10 - Ish, 11 - Pamela Means, 12 - Brian Piltin

Friday June 9 - 8 - Dan Neustadt, 9 - Ben Arnold, 10 - Dan Emery and The Mystery Band, 11 - The Linemen, 12 - C.W. & The 007's

Saturday June 10 - 7:30 - Betsy Thomson, 8:30 - Karen Pisanelli, 9 - Quankmeyer Faergoalzia Holiday Band, 10 - The Swimmies, 11 - Animal Head

Sunday June 11 - 7:30 - Peter Dizozza, 8 - Steve Espinola, 9 - Jim Flynn, 9:30 - Grant Langston, 10 - Linda Draper, 10:30 - Deborah Smith, 11:30 - Hannah Lindroth

Monday June 12 - The AntiHoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tuesday June 13 - 8 - Sylvia Mann, 8:30 - Aye, 9 - J.C.Sone, 9:30 - Damion Wolfe, 10 - Florence Yoo, 11 - Kimya

Wednesday June 14 - 8 - Parker, 8:30 - Micheline and Chris Glenn, 10 - Tristan, 10:30 - Asi, 11 - Waaw

Thursday June 15 - 8 - John Kelly, 9 - Tony Hightower, 9:30 - Kenny Davidsen, 10 - Grey Revell, 11 - Adam Green, 12 - Prepare To Meet Your Maker

Friday June 16 - 7:30 - Matt Richards, 8 - Stephanie StJohn, 9 - FordFalconBlue, 10 - Matthew Puckett, 11 - The Bones, 12 - Bill Popp and The tapes

Saturday June 17 - 8 - Gene and Mimi, 9 - Testosterone Kills, 10 - The Costellos, 11 - Joe Bendik and The Heathens, 12 - Lunchin'

Sunday June 18 - 7 - Scott Wakefield, 8 - Dave Deporis, 8:30 - Gene Bryan Johnson, 9 - Paul Christian, 9:30 - John Kessel, 10 - Helen Stratford

Monday June 19 - The AntiHoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tuesday June 20 - 7:30 - Seth Horton, 8 - Lisa Alice, 8:30 - Laura Burhenn, 9 - Jack Stipplicon, 9:30 - Stella and Eye, 10 - Holly Miranda, 11 - Kristen and Ethan

Wednesday June 21 - 8 - Kirk Kelly, 9 - Springwell, 10 - Tristan, 10:30 - Diane Cluck

Thursday June 22 - 8 - Ekayani and The Healing Band, 9 - Mari Lowery, 10 - Jude Kastle, 11 - Paula Orchestra

Friday June 23 - 8 - Three Normal Humans, 9 - TBA, 10 - Sweetgrass, 11 - Jonas Grumby, 12 - The Erics

Saturday June 24 - 7 - Matt Sherwin CD Release, 9 - Curtis Eller's American Circus, 10 - Sugar Twins, 11 - Drew Blood, 12 - Joie/DBG

Sunday June 25 - 8 - Craig Chessler, 8:30 - Brian Fitzpatrick, 9 - Randi Russo, 9:30 - Celia, 10 - Prewar Yardsale, 10:30 - Artmice, 11 - Colin Mutchler

Monday June 26 - The AntiHoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tuesday June 27 - 8 - Barry Bliss, 8:30 - Paul Corban, 9 - Andrew Heller and The Boy Wonder, 9:30 - Rick Yost

Wednesday June 28 - 7:30 - Little Oscar, 8 - Steve Espinola and Jenni Alpert, 9 - LP Funk, 10 - The Stasshoppers

Thursday June 29 - 8 - Kenny Young and The Eggplants, 9 - TBA

Friday June 30 - 7:30 - Paul Mahoux, 8 - Ekayani and The Healing Band, 10 - Dots Will Echo, 11 - The Meanwhiles, 12 - Fragile Male Ego

Saturday July 1 - John Kessel

Sunday July 2 - TBA

Coming Attractions:

July 4 - Jon Berger, Seth of Dufus,

July 29 - Kick - Off of The Fortified Records Antifolk Fest 2000 in Tompkins Sq Park and at night: The Voyces, The Costellos, Joe Bendik and The Heathens, Drew Blood, David Dragov... MORE!