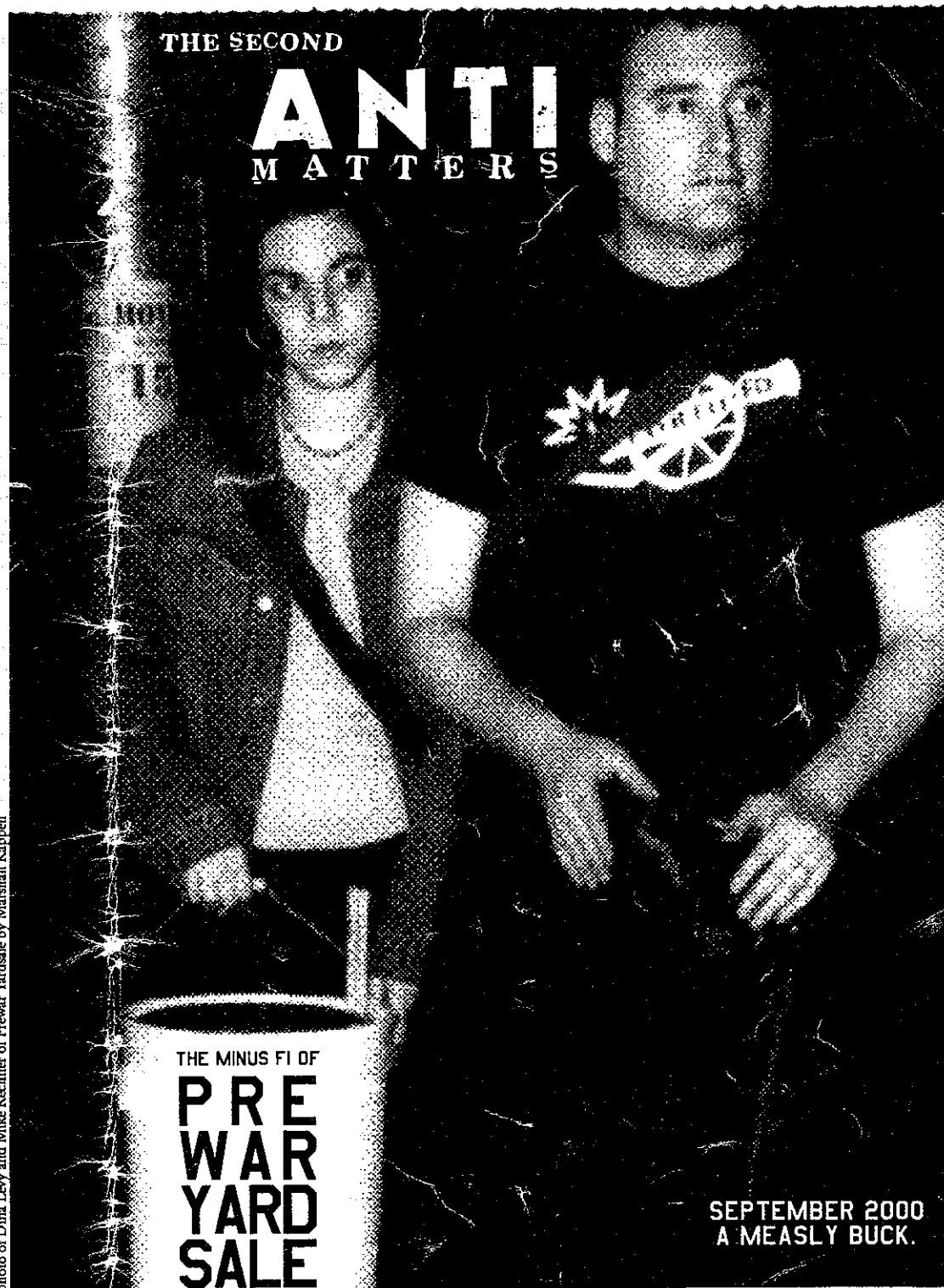


Inside: an interview with Prewar Yardsale's Dina Levy by Nan Turner • Andy Morris Remembered • German Cars vs. American Homes • Ben Folds Gets Sexier • Some Antifolk Festival Boundups • Report From The Fort • CD Reviews: Novellas, Seela, Derek Richmond, PWYS • Evel Knievel gets clumsy • Tom Nishioka's Demo Tips • Ask Major Matt Mason USA • and other stuff of great social and political import.

photo of Dina Levy and Mike Rechner of Prewar Yardsale by Marshall Kappell



THE SECOND

# ANTI MATTERS

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# THE SECOND ANTI MATTERS

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We always need more contributors.  
Reviewers & scenesters, come get  
some free records in exchange for  
seeing your name in print!

Oh, and vote for someone this fall.  
Anyone.

men clearly had  
much more fun.  
I think we played  
darts. Not only  
did we get to  
wear dresses but  
we also got to  
dabble in  
different  
hairstyles, make-  
up, and jewellery  
that we weren't  
accustomed to  
wearing. It was a  
really great way  
to pep up a run-  
of-the-mill dart  
game. But the  
best part was  
when someone  
put on a record.  
Let me tell you,  
brother, you  
haven't danced  
until you've been  
whisked across  
the floor in a  
flowing, pink-  
and-white satin  
evening gown.

- Any more  
questions?

To ask a  
question:

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Music Website @  
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or write:

Ask Major Matt  
C/O Olive Juice  
Music  
P.O. Box 20678  
Tompkins Square  
Station  
NY, NY 10009

# THE FORT IN SEPTEMBER

**Tues. Sept. 5** 7:30- Eric Adams,  
8-Sylvia Mann, 8:30- Shanna Sharp,  
9-Andrew Heller & The Boy Wonder,  
10- Yosip, 11-Charles Aceto

**Wed. Sept. 6** 8-Holly Miranda,

9-Bright Red Boots, 10- Rick Shapiro

**Thurs. Sept. 7** 7:30-Anandi,

8- John Garnevicus, 9-Tristan

10-Major Matt Mason USA,

11-Tony Hightower

**Fri. Sept. 8** 8-Mary Ann Farley,

9-Chris Barron, 10-Lach,

11- Fragile Male Ego

**Sat. Sept. 9** 8-The Molly

Magoonis Band, 9-Dots Will Echo,

10-Roxanne Beck Band, 11-Lunchin',

12- The Voyces

**Sun. Sept. 10** 7-Prewar YardSale

CD Party (with Dina Dean, Major

Matt Mason USA, Prewar Yardsale,

Randi Russo, Schwervon, & Tom

Nishioka), 9:30-Copperman,

10-Barry Bliss, 10:30-976-Dave,

11-James Thorn

**Mon. Sept. 11** *The Antihoot With*  
*Lach. Sign-up at 7:30*

**Tues. Sept. 12** 7:30-David

Francis, 8-Pluto, 8:30-Seela, 9-Jocelyn

Ryder, 9:30-Luis Betancourt, 10-

Andy Hunt, 11- Jason Pachter

**Wed. Sept. 13** 7:30-Julie Loyd,

8-Florence Yoo, 9-Patsy Grace,

10-Rick Shapiro

**Thurs. Sept. 14** 8-Kirk Kelly,

8:30-Jon Berger, 9-Paleface, 10- Grey

Revell, 11- Bare, 12- German Cars vs.

American Homes

**Fri. Sept. 15** 8-David Morreale,

9-The Humans, 10- Lach,

11- David Dragov, 12- Steve Espinola

**Sat. Sept. 16** 7:30- Rhythms of

Aqua, 9-John Kessel, 10-The

Costenos, 11- Joie Dead Blonde

Girlfriend,

12- Joe Bendik and The Heathens

**Sun. Sept. 17** 8-Helen Stratford,

8:30-Linda Draper, 9-Mike Wexler

and The Fourth Rome, 9:30-Joe  
Bidewell, 10-Seth of Dufus, 11-  
Rev. Timmy James

**Mon. Sept. 18** *The Antihoot With*  
*Lach. Sign-up at 7:30*

**Tues. Sept. 19** 7:30-Badger,

8-Pluto, 9-Vesper, 9:30-Anthony

Salerno, 10-Kooky Boyz

**Wed. Sept. 20** 7-Takamagahara

(Jazz from Japan), 10-Rick Shapiro

**Thurs. Sept. 21** 8-The

Painkillers, 9-Joe Mannix, 10- John

Rogers (of *Mighty Purple*).

11- Jonathan Best

**Fri. Sept. 22** 8-Stephanie St.

John, 9-TBA 10-L F Ant,

11-David Dragov, 12- Das Phrogge

**Sat. Sept. 23** 8-The Voyces,

9-Kenny Davidsen, 10-Jude Kastle,

11- Janet Vodka, 12- Leo Bixby

**Sun. Sept. 24** 8-Peter Dizozza,

8:30-Andrew Heller and The Boy

Wonder, 9-Andrew McCann,

9:30-Ahab Seamus, 10-Buncha

Guys Celebrating Women

**Mon. Sept. 25** *The Antihoot With*

*Lach. Sign-up at 7:30*

**Tues. Sept. 26** 7:30-John

Norman, 8-Pluto, 8:30- Jim

Lampas, 9- Kirsten Williams, 10-

Evan Samuels, 11-Michiline

**Wed. Sept. 27** 8-Springwell,

9-Eamon O'Tauma, 10- Rick

Shapiro

**Thurs. Sept. 28** 8-Jim Knable,

9-Kirk Kelly, 10-TBA, 11- Jun,

12-Hawksley Workman

**Fri. Sept. 29** 7-Trancesenders,

8-Matt Sherwin, 9-Ben Eyler,

10- Regina Spektor, 11- David

Dragov, 12- Orange

**Sat. Sept. 30** 7:30- The Sprinkle

Genies, 8:30-Katie Elevitch, 9-Esme

Montgomery Band, 10-Testosterone

Kills, 11- Janet Vodka, 12- Joie

Dead Blonde Girlfriend

The Fort is at the Sidewalk Cafe, 94 Avenue A @ 6th Street  
for more info & updates call 212-473-7373

## Got a question about love, dating, or Kansas? ASK MAJOR MATT! ...! ...!

Dear Major Matt: My girlfriend says I should cut my hair. I'm all for taking suggestions from my woman, but do I really want her telling me what to do about every aspect of what I wear, what I do? Who's wearing the pants in my relationship, anyway?

Signed,  
Whipped in Washington Square Park

I had a girlfriend ask me if she could shave my pubic hair one time. To this day I can't really say if I did it because I really wanted to, or if I did it just so I could say that I did it. Like I wanted to be this wild sexy lover guy. Like it was cool that I was into all of this kinky stuff. But the truth is, it was really kind of uncomfortable. And it made me pretty damn nervous to have any kind of sharp object anywhere near that area. Not to mention that, when it was my turn to shave her, the process was so tedious that the whole experience was about as erotic as having a boil removed. The whole reason it sounded like fun in the first place was because I thought we were doing something really different. But since the incident, I've talked to a bunch of people who have done it. And everyone basically says the same thing: "It itches like crazy when it grows back." I don't even know exactly why we did it. I guess we did it to see what it was like. Damn... Why do I have to keep judging myself like that? We were young and frisky. All right! It wasn't exactly driving a nail through my penis, but it was kind of wild, relatively speaking, wasn't it?

I was talking to a friend the other day about all the weird sexual stuff that we've done. Let me precede by saying that for some reason I had always considered this particular friend - how does one put it - more sexually conservative than me... So, we start comparing notes on things like rug burns and anal penetration (Okay, I know this sounds crude, but we all do it), and I come to find out that, compared to my friend, I'm like Mary Poppins.

But I digress. In reference to your question I am a little less concerned with your fear of getting a bad hair cut than I am with the importance you seem to have placed on wearing pants. It is important to remember that pressures from friends, girlfriends, boyfriends, and parents are always two-sided. First, there is the immediate action from whatever outside force/person that initially instigates the pressure. Then there's the reactive pressure (that little voice in your head) that decides whether you should succumb to this pressure, or hold your ground and "just say no."

The first question you might ask yourself is "Why do I find

it so important that I wear pants?" Everyone has a mark, a border, a line that they know they can never cross or they're lost forever. For some it's that first puff on a marijuana cigarette... For some it's changing the lyrics of their new hit song so that they may perform live on the Ed Sullivan Show... For a few, it's taking the lord's name in vain... Others, it's that 4th gin and tonic, and for others still, it's the 12th gin and tonic... For some it's murder... And for you it appears to be not wearing pants. Let me start by saying that pants are not always the ideal garment for the lower half of the human body, especially during these hot summer months. Might I suggest a loose fitting pair of shorts? Or, and I'm not saying that you have to parade yourself down Avenue A (like it would matter), you might try a nice summer dress or a skirt. You really can't beat the ventilation. And who knows? It might help you relax and clearly assess this hair cutting request.

When I was in college I went to a cross-dressing party one time where all of the men were required to dress up like women and vice versa. The

it could be the most important thing you read all month

## REPORT FROM THE FORT. & ELSEWHERE.

### Wed. July 26 The Raven

What a shitty day! Rain all day long. The only ray of sunshine came when I got to the Raven and **Jon Berger** started telling me about his bowel movements.

**Joe Bendik** got about 3 seconds into his song when he began to have technical difficulties. After a few minutes of wrestling with the guitar, he tossed it away and bade us a good night. "Weelllllll..."

**Dave of Dave's Place** developed a new fanzine, called *Anti-Doesn't-Matter*, and cost only 95 cents! About a time someone rose up against the monopolistic tyranny of AntiMatters...

**Larry** told a story about a little boy who wanted to contract VD, and this involved a whorehouse and a babysitter. He then sang a song, which oddly enough, was not about VD.

**Lach** made a rare appearance at the Raven, but instead of offering a musical nugget or two, Lach has decided to give up AntiFolk for the lucrative world of stand-up comedy. There was Junkie Tai Chi, and then there was Oscar Wilding. He gave us the scoop on the sequel to the Matrix called "Dominatrix", with **Keanu Reeves** as "The Submissive." (*Egils Kaljo*)

### Sat. July 29<sup>th</sup> Tompkins Square Park

The park. The park, the park... The park.

The park was brilliant. The park was impressive.

Initiating the AntiFolk Festival was a day at the races, a day at the beach. It was a day in the sunlight. It was a day in the park - Tompkins Square Park.

The eight day festival of all things AntiFolk began much the same as it had last year, in the heart of the East Village, smack dab in the heart of the park in the East Village, on a big stage, with big amplifiers and a great deal of enthusiasm.

The usual suspects were out. Musicians and fans who populate clubs like the Fort at Sidewalk, C-Note, Luna Lounge, Arlene Grocery, Lakeside Lounge, Living Room, Raven, and other bars/clubs/coffee houses in the East Village came out to see their own perform on a bigger, brighter, more boisterous stage than usual. Even with the ominous grey skies that constantly threatened rain... or more, the people came out, and the people listened.

Hosted by **Joie/Dead Blonde Girlfriend**, the green-haired boy who guides the Raven's Open Stage, act after act scaled the stage to

perform for a primarily seated crowd, watching picnic style on slabs of concrete. Many regulars of the AntiFolk community hit the audience with the best they had: **Michal the Girl**, **Prewar Yardsale**, **John Kessel**, **Brer Brian**, **Kirk Kelly**, **Testosterone Kills** and **Tony Hightower** all performed with might and verve.

A concessions stand stage left served to offer product from all the acts, programs for the entire schedule (put together by the helpful staff at AntiMatters), stickers, and request donations for the nominal cause of the event, **Hamell on Trial**.

One of the brightest lights in the AntiFolk community, Ed Hamell had an accident in the late Spring, where he lost full-motility and means to tour, his form of livelihood. To help cover costs for the man, the myth, the Mister On Trial, all proceeds from the eight-day festival were to go to that master musician. The sixty-odd artists on the scene familiar with Hamell's work were more than happy to fork over their performing income for the acoustic powerhouse.

But it wasn't just the tried and true AntiFolk fans that hit the pavement to enjoy the park. Despite the fearful weather, a growing crowd entered the park and stayed for the music. Any number

of drunks and bums were there for the course of the day, but easily three hundred thousand people were in the park (well, I didn't actually COUNT them, but it had to be around there, right?) to witness and watch, for at least a little while.

And despite the dark skies and moist air, it never rained. The weather reports were all clear about what was to come, but it didn't. The rains stayed away, and we in the park got to enjoy ourselves unencumbered by wet.

It was a promising start of an excellent festival. Things couldn't possibly go wrong from there...

(Jonathan Berger)

## Thu. Aug. 3 Sidewalk Café

**John S. Hall** is a conundrum.

His performances are rife with paradox and zen-esque contradictions to the immediate impressions. For instance, I would like to describe this John S. Hall Anti-Folk Fest performance as one where he 'pulled out all the stops'.

This admittedly cliché, yet seemingly appropriate phrase COULD describe the performance, what with its immediacy and undertones of urgency, which indeed the performance certainly had. But there is a problem, and that is John S. Hall paused in mid-sentence several times throughout his all-too-short set. Maybe it was to do some inspired editing, perhaps it was to relate some spontaneous, self-reflective thoughts

about his childhood, or to simply ask the audience how it was hangin'.

Alas, John S. Hall DID NOT, 'pull out all the stops.'

I also want to describe John S. Hall as a poet, who reads original poetry to a poem-hungry people. He openly / denies/ all claims/ describing/ or in anyway/ adjoining himself/ or his work/ with trite terms/ such as poems/ or/ poetry.

What is he, then, Jim?!!

Who cares? He rocked without the band, and rolled without the butter...

Performing such hits as 'Get Down With the Funky Shit', 'Your Father Fucked Your Mother', and other more-direct-than-your-mother-might-consider-tasteful-but-keepin'-it-real-so-fuck-it classics, John S. Hall gave the Hall-hungry crowd a soul-full.

(Eric Adams)

## Sat. Aug 5<sup>th</sup> CBGB

To hear **Drew Blood** tell it, he's just about ready to explode. You've heard it, the rock star hype pose: his producer is taking him into the studio to record with some dance people, because this brand new song is going to break... big. His band is the best in the world, and everybody who does not refer to the man as *The Drew Blood* is seriously mistaken, because next year, that's what *Time* and *Newsweek* will be calling him. Make no mistake, The Drew Blood is going to be a star, according to The Drew

Blood.

And maybe it'll happen. His Saturday night showcase at CBGB, after a month-long residency at the Sidewalk Café, was a tight set of the hard pop favorites.

The set started with a typically Drew Blood sentimental lyric: "God, you're so miserable. I hate you, I can't stand to look at you. You remind me so much of me..." before moving into the pulsing, bass-driven body of the song.

All the songs are like that. Self-loathing surrounded by poppy, boppy tunes, always with some element that pulls you in deeper than you'd expect to go. The Drew Blood, backed by a simple rhythm section, is a darkened, grizzled **Ben Folds** - only younger and sexier, so maybe not like him at all. The two piano players do share a driving edge, though. When you hear a The Drew Blood song, you remember it. No matter how hard you try to forget, something of it stays with you.

"Drown," in which Blood, on keyboard, vocals, and occasional dance steps, sings with bassist **John Kessel**'s support, "I don't have to watch you fall down, to know you're gonna drown." They soon move into "Good Day to Die," which recalls some Klingon warchant, and many other songs about hate filled with intense muscular energy.

So much of a Drew Blood set has its familiar pleasures. Not because you think you've heard these songs before, but you suspect you've heard

The latest in a soon-to-be-award-winning series

# DEMO TIPS:

## Making your music sound great by Tom Nishioka

### This month's topic: Alternate Mixes

Last month I talked about mastering (as in you have to master, at least on some level). Here's another way to make your CD sound great: when mixing, print 2 or 3 alternate mixes.

As mentioned last month, your ears will hear things differently on different days. Many things make this so: humidity, carpeted or bare walls, location of speakers, type of speakers, type of stereo, even how loud and how long you've been listening. At the end of a mix session, after anywhere from 15 minutes to 8 hours of listening to a song over and over again, you are perhaps not at your most objective.

Phil Ramone does at least 3 alternate mixes: vocals too loud, vocals just right, and vocals too soft. In fact, he prints splits of the mix to another multitrack format to keep vocals, instruments, and effects all separate. If he needs more or less of any of those things later, he'll do a "remix" using these premixed splits. I'm not suggesting you go that far, although it has some use - in my experience with my clients, I've found 3 alts to be enough.

You might want something else to be the variable element - guitar, solo, organ up or down, different arrangement, etc. - but we're all songwriters, aren't we? Vocals are often the focal point. If you can't hear the lyrics, the song doesn't work as well.

What alternate mixes offer you is cheap options later on. Rather than having to go back and set up the mix, and remix, you just skip to the next start id and you have more vocal. This also helps in mastering, because as compression is applied, the vocal that sticks out just enough gets pushed down into the rising tide of the instruments of the band. Or the vocal might be unnaturally prominent. Well, then get the other mix where the vocal is down.

I should mention that on most hard disk mixing systems, remixing is not such a huge deal - you just have to reload the files and double click on the session file to get back all the work you did in hours of preparing the mix. Even so, alternate mixes will save you having to go back to the studio to do that.

Why is it hard to be objective in the first place? How can you be more objective?

**1. Bring references to the studio.** Bring CDs that have mixes you really like everything about - the sound, the loudness of the vocal, the vibe. If you constantly A/B and the engineer is deft (not daft), you will end up close to the goal.

**2. Don't listen loud.** Your ears get fatigued, and you lose sensitivity to volume relationships, effects details, and timbres of instruments.

**3. Take silent breaks.** Let your ears recover for 5-10 minutes with silence, then listen to the track next to your reference. Don't go to sleep, though. I once worked with Public Enemy's beat maker/producer Eric Sadler, and he just smiled and said, "If you sleep and then try to come back to a mix, you're going to do garbage... You've got to start all over."

**4. Rough mixes all along the way.** Again, with hard disk mixing, you can save all of your mixes in progress through your tracking sessions. Schedule your sessions with time in between, and put your music away, and then listen with fresh ears and a couple of days' perspective. By the time you get to the mix, know which parts of which instruments work, where the lyrics are fighting the drums, and how the mutes and rides should work to highlight the song.

**5. Experience.** Record a lot. Mix a lot. Teach yourself. Listen to things you did months, years ago. Work with good engineers, they can tell when to focus and when to step back. Produce well, know when to get wound up about a detail and when to let it ride and enjoy the overall vibe.

All of this is really what producers can help you do, but since we're mostly at a level where we can't afford producers, we do it ourselves. Phil Ramone insures against different ears/different day with alternate mixes, why shouldn't you? Make your music sound great!

2AM

CD was really fun. Do you have a favorite song on the CD?

DL: Oh yeah. It was so much fun. Besides the fact that this was my first recording experience (so that in itself was very exciting for me), it was great working with Matt. He's really laid back, which made it really comfortable for me, and for Mike too. And I think the whole recording process is something Matt enjoys, and that is definitely reflected in how he works. I guess my favorite songs on the recording would be "Disney in Times Square," because we added on some very funny talking at the end, which was hysterical to do. I think we were all cracking up while we were doing it. (of course you'll have to wait to hear it to find out what it is). I mean, in retrospect, it might not even be funny, but it was funny to do, that's for sure!

And "Lowdown Girl," for the reason that I just really love that song. The lyrics are great, and have a lot of different layers and meanings to them. I did my tracks after Mike did his, and he did it in super fast version, which we actually like, and now we play it faster than we used to because we like the recording so much. But it was really funny when I went in and did the track, because I wasn't prepared to play it fast, and it ended up sounding great that way.

NT: Before we close out this interview, I know all your fans and would-be percussionists are dying to know: Is there one



motto or philosophy that has helped you while being in Prewar? And do you have a ritual before you go up on stage?

DL: I don't know if there's only one motto, I think there are a few that have helped me, and they would be: I definitely believe you need to go with your gut and do (and play) what you feel is right, regardless of what other people think. Of course, I am always interested in constructive criticism and feedback from other people, but then I think you need to take that and make it work for you. And I definitely believe in not worrying about or holding myself to any type of standard notion of what drumming is supposed to be. I mean, of course I know, that as a performer, I need to practice, and learn, and I have a long way to go in my development as a drummer, but I know I can take what I have learned (from lessons, and practice) and make it whatever I want it to be. Which includes not feeling

like I need to eventually move into (or grow into) playing traditional drums, or a full drum kit. I don't know yet if that is ever going to happen. It might at some point, if I think that will work with our music, but I don't feel like that is a means to an end for me. So I guess the general philosophy behind those ideas would be to just to believe in what you are doing, while always striving to learn and push your own creativity.

Oh yeah, rituals before performing... that would be being really nervous, not being able to sit still, possibly smoking a cigarette, having some Diet Coke, and some general freaking out. As well as usually a good long practice earlier that day. Mike and I actually like to have a 2-hour practice right before a gig. It kind of fuels us and keeps us from panicking and forgetting everything. And then I just take a really deep breath, and make myself get on the stage. **2AM**

parts of them. "Automatic Self-Destruction" features some *Dark Side of the Moon* vocal stylings, "Chemicals" starts out just like the **Chili Peppers'** "Under the Bridge," and "Sugar Mama," the new song – you know, the one that's gonna break big? – that lifts directly from **Styx's** "Babe." To hear the keyboardist and songwriter tell it, they're probably all *homages*.

And, when The Drew Blood talks about songs, talks about his future, talks about his art, you can almost believe the hype. His material's good, his eyes are soulful and beautiful – and tastefully mascara'd. His small band rocks hard, and he's slick enough to have a future.

(Jonathan Berger)

## Tue. Aug. 8 Sidewalk Café

**J.C. Sone** mesmerizes with her dark and moody musical musings. Accompanying her poetic vocal lines with intricately picked electric guitar arrangements, she is a most magnetic presence on stage.

She played a great show on Tuesday night with threatening showers. In a half-hour set J.C. performed a diverse set of original songs, proving beyond a doubt that she is a seriously heavy creative force on the scene. With eyes squeezed shut, she transports herself to the deepest recesses of her soul in such a way that you just cannot help but go with her.

And the proverbial rains did come.

J.C. quietly announced that she would be departing the scene for a while to work on a new project in the studio, and that her absence is indefinite. She was oblique in response to questions regarding her future in NYC, and that leaves one to assume that she may not return to the scene as promptly as one might think.

She closed her show to the applause and support of friends and fans, whom I am certain she will have wherever she goes. Good Luck, J.C.

(Eric Adams)

## Thu. Aug. 17 Sidewalk Café

**Jon Berger** began with forty poems. He had three left after he read for approximately 28 minutes and 47 seconds. How many poems did Jon Berger read?

Answer: **35.3.**

How did I get this figure? Read on, friends.

First of all, as we all know, nothing adds up with Jon Berger. For instance, his body is only 63% water, well below the suggested human average for bodily liquid levels. The reason for this is simple, though. Jon Berger needs the extra room in his body or the inordinate amount of brain matter, save a few percentile points for ego and its fold-out futon-sized genius.

These Berger trademarks were in effect on Thursday night, as he unleashed a torrent of poetry and in its literary wake, the caustic yet humorous wit to a room

strangely void of people. Now, you're probably saying to yourself, "What? An empty Jon Berger show? Was it the Ides of March? Were the entrails of various bovine flaming in the streets? An eclipse of the sun? Why, it just doesn't make sense!"

Exactly.

Where were you guys?

Great show. Great guy. And y'all missed it.

So you don't deserve the answer to the answer.

(Eric Adams)



## Thu. Aug. 17 Sidewalk Café

I offered **John Kessel** a **Mickey Mouse** ornament for his guitar. He declined.

Said, "Disney doesn't pay me for that."

But they will. OH, YES. They WILL!



## Thu. Aug 23 Sidewalk Café

There is something seriously wrong with **German Cars vs. American Homes**.

The group, five strong at the Sidewalk debut, played some fairly tight creepy rock, as led by the **Real James**, a recent Fort émigré who sounds a little pompous, a little precious, all on his own. With the group behind him (featuring the typical drum, bass and guitar), the sound is more fluid, more rock and rolly. But with the supplementary creepy organ keyboard, and the Real James' own strap on keyboard, the sound is huge, and strange, and, fun, and, well wrong.

It's hard, but it's not rock. It's too quirky to be rock. It's quirk rock.

Though, maybe that's what these freaks are aiming for. From the magazine they put out to support the show, German Cars vs. American Homes have a vision, a twisted, sense of what they are about. And maybe it's not about rock. Maybe it's about NotRock. Maybe it's about QuirkRock. Maybe it's not wrong at all.

Maybe German Cars vs. American Homes is right.

(Jonathan Berger) **3AM**

"Laugh, or else." New York Press

"A fast paced cabaret show... Genuinely hilarious." Borge Haine, Anti/Matters

"Serious as in very good." Rose Martelli, newyork.citysearch.com

Kessel never ceases to amaze. I think he's on a first name basis with God's music publishing agent.

His songs are like the bastard children of Dylan and Lennon, struggling and fighting to find a place in this world. Does anyone else think he looks like a younger, cleaner, consummately New York John Belushi?

What Kessel does may not be for everyone, but only because not everyone is privy to what Kessel does. Every John Kessel show is different, spontaneous. His perform-

ance teeters on the tightrope - one wrong step will land him death and disaster. But, every time, he naturally avoids the train wrecks of a clumsy **Evel Knievel**, with all the stealth and grace of an **Anne Rice** character.

If you haven't seen a John Kessel show yet, you owe it to yourself - and the Artist. Sometimes, I think Artists like John Kessel are responsible for making the world more beautiful.

(Eric Adams)

## FUNNY... SHEESH presents ALTERNATIVE VARIETY SHOW 17

at - CHICAGO CITY LIMITS - 1105 First Ave at 61st St

(212) 888-5233

Mon Sept 11th at 8:00 pm - 510

Comic Jason Grossman hosts the talents of Jonathan Berger - Kelly Sue DeConnick - Karen Christie Ward - John Hartmann - Jim and David - Jason O'Connell - Al Quagliata - Timothy Joseph Ryan - Renée Torrière and the music of Sharon Fogarty and Tony Hightower.

"I urge you to attend... You will certainly see some exceptional talent and more than a few surprises." Dr. Thomas Robert Stevens, Applause Applause!

"A vaudevillian smorgasbord." Amelia David, Back Stage

and the AntiFolk scene what I want it to be, if that's possible. The stuff you and I have been talking about and doing (*some spoken word! banging on a chair/singing stuff under the name "Nan and Dina"*) has been so great for me, and I think we both are feeling the need to be more experimental and do more woman-oriented stuff

has inspired you creatively inside and outside of the scene? To be hokey, who are your influences?

DL: Oh, wow, The Music That Has Inspired Me question... I am so particular about what I like, yet at the same time I like so many musicians and bands I don't know where to start, but I'll



within the AntiFolk atmosphere. I think it contributes to the atmosphere that you and I - and a lot of other woman performers - are looking for. And we don't need to leave and go somewhere else to do what we want. Sidewalk is welcoming and open enough that I think we can make it what we want, and we just need to do what you said - support the women there, encourage new women to participate, and create change! I mean, your band Bionic Finger should be an inspiration to everyone, to both women and men. Four talented women, speaking their minds, rocking out, and doing what they want.

NT: I have to admit I like being a Finger. Who else

My biggest inspirations as far as admiration, would be: Kathleen Hanna (Bikini Kill), Kim Deal (the Pixies and the Breeders), Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth), Patti Smith, and Sinead O'Connor. These are all women that I think kick ass, and have so much umph, I aspire to be like them!

NT: Now I know you and Mike have a CD coming out soon. What is it called and when can we expect to have it in our hands?

DL: Our CD, called *Lowdown*, is being duplicated as we speak. So it will be ready very soon. We don't have an exact date yet, but we are really hoping it will be done by the end of the month for our gig at the Summer Antifolk Festival. That would be a great time for us to release it, so we're hoping... This CD was engineered and produced by Major Matt Mason USA, and is being released on Olive Juice Music. Mike and I are really excited about it. It's the first Prewar Yardsale CD, and I think it should be a real true representation of what we are about. It really captures our live sound.

NT: I know from talking with you and Matt that the process of making this



# RECORD REVIEWS

different ways. For the most part, Mike writes most of the songs, although I have been trying to get more involved in that. So, Mike writes a song, plays it for me, sometimes we work together on tweaking some of the lyrics, and then we just play it and work out the arrangement. And I just go from there, adding vocals where I feel like it - on the chorus usually - and we both decide what sounds best. Then, sometimes, we have an idea for a song together, and we work on writing it - the lyrics and the structure - together. For example, we have a song called "Shabby Chic," that we wrote together, actually on the phone while I was at work. That night we went to the AntiHoot and played it and then we adjusted it several times from there, and that's a song we sing together, all the way through. I have to say, a lot of times Mike is the one that prompts me to sing, he'll have an idea or song he's written that he wants me to sing on. I was really nervous to sing, and he really prompted me to do it. I feel much more confident when I get up and sing than I did 10 months.

NT: Recently you wrote a "rant" in Anti/Matters about the lack of women performing at Sidewalk. How do you feel now about what you wrote and what kind of a response have you gotten from people in the scene?

DL: Hmmmm... well, I feel like what I wrote was an expression of how I feel sometimes, and what I have had discussions about with a

lot of people I know. The idea as to whether or not Sidewalk is a conducive place for women to play is a question that I have a lot of mixed feelings about, and that's why I brought it up. I don't have all the answers, nor do I claim to, which is interesting, because one of the reactions I have gotten to the article is, "You asked a lot of questions, but didn't answer them." I think that is OK, though. Because I think that asking the questions makes everyone think about the questions, and to me, that can only be a good thing.

I also talked about how inspiring and welcoming Sidewalk is. It's the place that I chose to start performing at, and performing has been a really big breakthrough for me. So, obviously Sidewalk is conducive to me on some level. I do feel that the overall performance ratio there is male-dominated, though, and I don't know for sure why. There are issues that I didn't bring up in the article, such as what it feels like to be a woman there, surrounded by tons of men with guitars hanging out. And there are issues I did bring up, like how the history of rock/folk is steeped in male tradition, and is dominantly a male-run industry. It can be intimidating on a certain level, and scary. But I also think that there are more women than ever performing and hanging out, and that feels really good.

I have gotten so many reactions, suggestions, criticisms, and praises about

the article, I don't know where to start. I mean, everyone obviously has their own opinions and ideas about this subject. I might write a follow-up based on just that - everyone's reactions, or I might not write anything about it, because I'm not sure if there is a point. I mean, people are thinking about it, and discussing it, so maybe there's nothing else to say.

NT: I felt your article was a call to the community of musicians, writers, and artists who all hang out to consider what we could do to make our community more inclusive. You inspired me to want to create change. To contribute more - to give what I want to get back. I know I want more women to play at Sidewalk and especially more bands with women, and I feel like if that is something I want, then I have a responsibility to say or do something about it. There is a need to support those women playing in the scene as well as to encourage new women to play. You took a brave step by writing your article, to acknowledge that an imbalance existed in a community in which you love and feel comfortable in.

DL: I think it was a callout to the community also, although I'm not sure how much I thought that at the time. And actually writing it was very inspiring to me as well. The more I write, perform, and experiment, the more I feel fuelled to do more, and make Sidewalk

## Prewar Yardsale Lowdown

(Olive Juice Music)  
(www.olivejuice.com)

*Go on, git, you don't have to think anymore, it's okay, what's the big rush, nothing here to see, just go on, you don't have to worry about anything, we've got it all taken care of, you just relax, put on your Nelly and your Kenny G records and go see the latest zany Jim Carrey flick and relax, just take a load off your mind, let us do the thinking for you, no really, I'm making some nice creamy lentil stew and a pot of Ovaltine and you can just chill, here, lay down and close them eyes, really, chill, really, relax, relaxxxxx, there you go. Forget about the new stuff, 99% of it is crap and maybe more than that even, so just chill. El Dorado never existed, there are no frontiers left, we know everything there is to know, and they've Disneyfied Times Square, so there's nothing left to worry about. Try the Harry Potter and then go back to bed - that'll be a nice long day in and of itself. There you go. That's right. It's okay, I won't leave you vulnerable or anything. Just ... therre you go... that's right... sleep... sleeeeeeep.....*

Are they out? Good. Now we can begin.

Even for the rest of you hard thinkin' avant guard types, this might be a hard record to truly dig (well, at least without chemicals). But the payoff is plenty big, as those of you who know this ultra lo-fi (like, no-fi, like, minus-fi) duo shall surely know. Sounding like they recorded much of this glorious little train wreck of a record in two takes, tops, the rawness they always strive for is there in spades.

They do their damndest to scare off the uninitiated and the unwary (Exhibit A: the 15-minute opening cut "Elevated Platform Stand" - Exhibit B: nearly a full minute of Dina Levy-in-tape-loop singing "weirdweirdweirdweirdweirdweirdweird" like she's rubberstamping everything in the world with the word), and I can't see too

many Backstreeters & 'N Styncers turning on to this stuff.

But as always, that's not the point. Mike & Dina are not grinding their squawk just for the people-who-know-what's-what, but for the people-who-know-that-what's-what-ain't-where-it's-at-anymore. *Lowdown* will file down your nerve endings until you see the dull pink calmness way deep inside yourself. Using numerous construction metaphors and semi-nonsensical single entendres, they rail against commercialization, commodification and apathy with a focus that doesn't require any fury. It's enough for them to be what they are: a wife-&-husband team who make dense, meaningful, often funny music with a guitar and a pail. The sonic revolution, when it comes, will come to them.

Sure, sometimes the multi-tracking effects don't work (more than once a vocal track will wander away from the actual music and meander off to nothing), and Dina's vegetable-crisper-&-pail beats shift speed and herky-jerk about like she recorded her tracks on a roller coaster somewhere, but that doesn't take away from *Lowdown*'s monotonous realness. It's post-techno, it's post-punk, it's post-machine, it's post-soul, it's post-everything. And get this: Dina's almost-atonal vocal on the title track is as soulful and arresting as any local performance I've heard this year.

So I should mention somewhere in here that *Lowdown* is nothing (and I mean nothing) like Mike Rechner's two previous primo power-pop releases, *Wrecked Car* and *Adjective*. Compared to those fully-banded slickly produced pieces of product, *Lowdown* ain't just stripped down, it's picked clean.

So if you're up for an excellent challenge, here's one for you. If not, well, go back to bed. No one's gonna laugh at you if you walk away now.

(Tony Hightower)

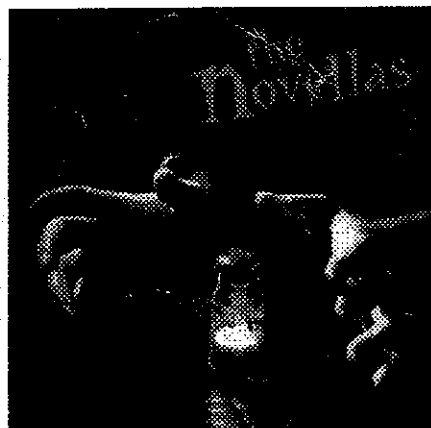
## The Novellas Magnets in Intimate Places

(Ripe & Ready)  
(www.thenovellas.com)

What took them so long?

Since 1996, the Novellas have been threatening, promising, offering an album of their quirky, complete, literary songs to an adoring public. They've been suggesting for what seems like forever now that the album is just around the corner. Early live cassettes and preliminary demo tracks from the mid-90s would speak of the imminent release of *Magnets in Intimate Places*, and both Peter Chance and Laura Ogar, the biggest Novellas, would say they just needed a little more time in the studio to finish up.

So what took them so long?



From the sounds of the full-length Novellas album, finally released to an appreciative audience, they took all that time to get it right.

The Novellas, based on Peter Chance's short-stories that rhyme and Laura Ogar's minimal keyboards, theremin and soundbytes – as well as a stylishness that could only be beat by a *really* big stick – have sent us twelve of their songs from their incredible repertoire. Most of the songs are pretty familiar to us, the loyal Novellas following: "Marietta's Coming," a ghost story, "Nina," a telekinetic's story, "Carole Lombard," a starlet's story.

and "There Goes Betty Again," an alien abduction story, "Laura's Gone to London," a flaky world traveller tale, and many other songs that aren't about women. They're all good.

All the songs are good, but anyone who's been to a live show would know that. The question with this release, and really, with any studio recording, is whether it lives up to the live show. With the subtle keyboard stylings behind the full-on Novellas band, and Chance's visually psychotic performance, they'd be a tough show to improve upon. Does the album do it? *Could* the album do it?

It tries. *Magnets in Intimate Places* comes close. In some places, it succeeds. Nothing could compare to seeing Chance's angular movements and his seemingly coked-up face as he jumps into the audience and dances, not among us, but somehow *above* us. That event, occurring in most every show, is priceless, and non-transferable to sound. But the clear beauty of the songs, the excellent package, the lyric sheet, and the appearance of lesser-heard numbers like "Caterpillar Man" and "Graduation Day" makes up for it. Hell, simply having the opportunity to own the incredible "Self-Immolation Row," and "The Drunken Toreador," each pulling from different Latin musical traditions, are worth the price of admission. But so many of the songs feature more than the usual five-person band, with an additional cast of ten to flesh out parts that you never even thought were missing. Oh...

The album is good. This album might be the most seamless transferral of what a local band can do live to the album. There is little loss, and the pleasures heard on this vital album definitely make up for it.

The album, unbelievable as it may sound, was absolutely worth the wait.

(Jonathan Berger)

## Seela Something Happened

(newimprovedmusic)  
(www.newimprovedmusic.com/seela.htm)

The album starts with "Angel II" and ends

## INTERVIEW: DINA LEVY of Prewar Yardsale by Nan Turner

*It was only a year ago that I met Dina Levy. At that time she wasn't playing music. I remember talking to her at various Sidewalk shows, and asking her when she was going to get up on stage and play. 12 months later, as one half of Prewar Yardsale, she is. Playing a variety of percussive instruments, such as the bucket and a home-made drum she fashioned from her refrigerator's vegetable drawer, she performs with her husband, Mike Rechner. Dina recently started singing more with Mike and is beginning to write some of her own material. I wanted to find out more about Dina's experience playing music and what she thought about her "coming out" as a performer.*

NT: So Dina, how did you first start playing with Mike? Did you always have a desire to do something musical?

DL: Well, I started playing drums with Mike a little less than a year ago - I think last August or September of '99. It is something we had talked about in the past - maybe about two or three years ago - and toyed with, but it never seemed to happen. We - well, actually Mike - bought some drum sticks, and we went into a studio once or twice and jammed, but I wasn't into it at the time. But last year, at the prompting of Mike - and you - I decided to try again, and it felt so amazing - I couldn't believe how happy it made me to get up, sit on the floor, and hit

that vegetable crisper! And that was it - now I'm singing, too, and having so much fun it's unbelievable.

I've always been really into music, and it has always been a huge part of my life in one way or another, and I suppose I always fantasized about being in a band, but I don't think I had the courage or the understanding of what I was capable of doing. But now that I've done it, I definitely feel like I'm involved in music in a way that I've always wanted to be, but never knew how.

I love playing in Prewar Yardsale with Mike so much, and love playing my drums, and singing too - sometimes I cannot believe that I waited so long to do this. But I guess my head just wasn't into it then. I was much more involved in my "career", and also a lot of feminist/pro-choice political stuff that took up a lot of my energy. Now, it just seems like the right time, and I think Mike was ready to add something to what he was doing also, and was ready for a change. So far it's working out really great, I think.

NT: I've noticed that the longer you've been playing with Mike, the more you are singing. What is your process in terms of working out a song with him?

DL: It kind of works in a few





# ANDY MORRIS REMEMBERED

Last month, drummer **Andy Morris** died suddenly. He was extremely popular, both because he played in so many great local bands and because he was such a genuine and nice guy. These are two remembrances of his time with us.

My apologies if you're hearing about this for the first time. I just found out that Andy Morris died last Friday, and I'm a mess. I'm so sad. I want to write out a few thoughts while they're fresh.

He was the best fucking drummer I ever played with. He was a big part of what made the early Mystery Band shows such a joy for me. His playing was really subtle. He and I would send little rhythmic jokes back and forth to each other during the songs. Maybe I'd slur a phrase and he'd slur right back; or he'd change the swing a little bit, to say something, and we'd look at each other and laugh. We didn't talk that much with words, but all that musical talking made me feel like he was a good good friend. And that's maybe why I've been bawling for the last hour.

It was incredibly easy to play with him, because he was rock steady, yet somehow loose, and always seductively forward-propelling. He played beats in a way that opened up spaces, that made me feel like there was a world of possibilities as to what I might play next. He had a strong jazz background, yet he was incredibly versatile, equally at home playing latin music, thrash, blues, ska, folk, and 10 flavors of antifolk. Through it all, he had his own voice. And man, he rocked. And man, everything swung.

I remember playing with him at the C-note after having not seen him for a year. Everyone got up, ignored the "no dancing by law" signs, and shook their butts like crazy. He could really make you want to dance. Maybe that verse in Dan Emery's new "Radio Song" is about that night, and by extension, about him.

As a musician, he was a great listener. I can't think of a better compliment than that.

I had hoped he would play on a big chunk of my album. Not only did I love his playing,

but I was intrigued by his descriptions of the music he was making in his home studio. As I understood it, he was layering beats using echoes and loops, making songs out of his drum patterns. I never got to hear this music, but it sounded right up my alley. I had recently decided that it might be fun to try to write with him, but I never got a chance to tell him.

He was so good that it was hard to hold onto him. He played with Nancy Falkow when he was in Philly, then moved to NYC and played with the Dan Emery Mystery Band. He left us to play with Chubby Checker, then played for a long time with Joe Bendik's Heathens, and the Humans. Just last Thursday I'd been listening to tracks he cut with Dina Dean. I had his drum riff from Dina's "Where There's Fire" in my head all weekend. I didn't know he was already dead.

He was a funny guy. Strange. He was sort of shy. Humble to a fault. Didn't always seem so sure of himself or his talents. When he talked, the conviction that was almost always in his playing could seem painfully far away. He drank, and I sensed that it was definitely a problem. I didn't know that he used heroin. I hear that, at least that last time, he didn't use much.

I was always always happy to see him. Never seemed to see him enough. I loved his smile, happy and sad and maybe a little zonked all at the same time. He could tell a sad story about his life and see the humor in it, and make you laugh loudly, with him.

I'm going to go listen to him play now. The first things I want to hear are "The Girl in the Laundromat" and "Salt Mine". He did especially wonderful, personal work on those songs.

Bye Andy. I'm really going to miss you.

(Steve Espinola)



with "Angel." That's pretty cool. Even cooler is how amazing a song "Angel II" is. Like all of the material on *Something Happened*, I don't have any idea what the songs are about, and, unfortunately, there's no conveniently-placed lyric sheet just waiting for my perusal. I don't care. I'm fine with that; I just want to hear the incredible guitar wash and big drum sound flow all through me. Most of the album's equally atmospheric, though in different ways. Different styles, different powers, different things all going on, all artfully produced by Brian Beattie, head honcho of newimprovedmusic. It's a good album - it sounds wonderful. I really love the especially poppy "Peace of Mind," which... oh, it's just great! Someday, I'll tell you if the lyrics are worth a damn. From what I've already appreciated, though, I'm optimistic.

(Jonathan Berger)

## Derek Richmond 3 New Songs

([www.iuna.com/IUMA/Bands/Derek\\_Richmond/](http://www.iuna.com/IUMA/Bands/Derek_Richmond/))

Derek's got a band on these three songs on *3 New Songs*, and, on the last cut, "Good Girl Smile," the Kalamazoo combine sounds so much like the Violent Femmes, it's eerie. Also, a good thing. "When I said goodbye," Derek sings in the chorus, "I meant it to you." Such an excellent kiss-off to such a stupid girl...

In "High Enough," the hump song in this triptych, Derek features the memorable concept, "Now I'm at the bottom and feeling very high, 'cuz when I'm at the bottom I know just where I'm at: I'm at the bottom, oh yeah..." He's one positive mother's son, isn't he? Still, incredibly catchy.

"In the shade, I made, baby," Derek says, introducing the chorus of "Bath in the Shade." "All I wanted from you was to leave the light on, so I come home; I could see my way in the door." In this cut, he sounds like some kind of folksy early Lou Reed. I like Lou Reed, too, but it would be a shame for Mr. Richmond to be so mired in influences that he couldn't find his own voice. Luckily, amid all of these V-bands, Derek Richmond is doing something viable and valuable and all his own.

(Jonathan Berger) **2AM**

## JONATHAN BERGER

reading things  
**Sidewalk Cafe**

(94 Avenue A)

**September 14th  
8:20 pm**

between  
Kirk Kelly (8:00)  
and  
Paleface (9:00)

An Antifolk sandwich!

My mother said I was genius,  
so it must be true.  
I am a sensitive genius  
a twisted genius  
whose art is evident in my every breath.  
You may try to understand me,  
but you cannot, so great is my vision,  
so vast is my scope.  
I am a sensitive artist,  
an incomprehensible negre of inimitable imagination.  
I am the lord almighty in carnate form  
the center of creativity  
a source of brilliance heretofore unseen,  
inconceivable,  
outlandish and incomprehensible beyond compare.  
I am a prodigy of intellect unparalleled.  
I am like unto another race.  
I am the twisted genius  
- so my mother told me  
and so it must be true.



## Andy Morris

(1966-2000)

I used to call him 'the Max Roach of Punk'. He always felt uncomfortable about that though. He didn't think he was in the same league. That's how Andy was. Quick to apologize, uncomfortable with praise. The first time I ever played with him, around the end of '96, after the first song we played ("Stayin' Alive"), I turned to him and said, "you're not a drummer, you're an artist". We played together ever since.

Andy did everything in his life beyond all limits. He had an insatiable appetite for everything life offered him. He was always driving at 100 miles per hour in a 30-mile speed limit zone. Since he was in The Heathens and The Humans, I probably played with him more than the other 15 bands he was in. We got to the point where each one of us knew what the other was going to do in a song. Andy's listening skills were unparalleled. So was his ability to 'answer' another instrument. Beneath seemingly simple beats were subtleties that could keep musical scholars busy for decades.

Being in the same room with him, there was always this chaotic energy, always the feeling that something is about to break (and often did). Beneath all of this, was a fine human who never had a bad word to say about anyone. He was a total musician, my dear friend, my musical compariot & my partner in crime. They found him on Friday the 18th of August in his 'drum room'. Knowing Andy, he probably had a set list there too. That night was to be a Heathens show. I ended up playing a solo set as a memorial. I must thank Sanjay for being there at the front table with his drum. That made it much easier. The funny thing is, there were certain times at that gig when I forgot and would just turn around to groove with the drummer, but there was (of course) no one there.

Andy, wherever you might be (if anywhere at all), I hope you found some peace at last my brother. You were the best musician I ever worked with. The tragedy within this tragedy is that the world will never hear you perform. If he was here right now I'm sure he'd say 'sorry man'. I'm sorry too Andy. Rest in peace.

-Joe Bendik

Andy played with:  
Joe Bendik & The Heathens, The Humans, Dan Emery, Dina Dean, Plastic Eaters, Chubby Checker & many, many others too numerous to mention or recall