

DEC '98

ANTI MATTERS

- ONE DOLLAR -



*NOTE: I was speaking to Jon Berger the other night at the Fort, and he told me his idea for the KwanukKamas cover: "Sammy Davis Jr. as an elf impaling a guy on a Christmas tree." I can almost imagine that I might have misheard him over the Anti-Hoot din; my only other explanation is that Berger is a really sick bastard. I can only offer my apologies for mindlessly following his orders. - Jeffrey Lightning Lewis 98

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Season's Greetings, freaks!

Of course you know the tradition of Kwanakahmass, don't you?

Sometimes, when you're sick of being part of a culture that commodifies religion as it commodifies entertainment as it commodifies sex as it commodifies commodities, you need to take a stand. You need to come up with a way to fight the demons of disenfranchisement, and start your own franchise.

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

That's one way of looking at the creation of AntiFolk's first holiday.

But, really, you do know the tradition of Kwanakahmass, right?

It's about warmth, and it's about love, and it's about warmth in this time of cold and dreary weather (Though, really, this first week of December, with temperatures in the low 70s... what is this? San Diego?). It's about high balls and lowbrows, and it's about giving to those who will receive. Kwanakahmass is all things to all people. And that's what it means to me. And maybe, if you get me a good Kwanakahmass present, I might just tell you more.

JB

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

This is absolutely, unquestionably, no-doubt-about-it last issue of AntiMatters in 1998.

If you don't enjoy it, then who needs you and your stinking purchase, and your dumb clogs, and your absurd smiles... and those ridiculous claims that you understand what I'm going through, but you can't lend me five bucks; and, and, and that need of yours to *chew with your mouth open*, even when it's apple sauce, and that ridiculous smirk you make when you think you've said something that nobody understands what you're saying, when in fact, it's just that nobody understands WHY YOU'RE SAYING IT, and, and, and...

Excuse me. It's been a long day.

(Gustav Plympton)

Lord of Discipline

Jonathan Berger

The Peggy Lipton of AntiFolk

Gustav Plympton

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You Can't Lose!



Report from the Fort

November 10th, 1998
- the Fort at the
Sidewalk Café: Reviewing
the Situation: Poetry Night.

This isn't going to be easy. For one thing, the column this time around deals with my boss, which already puts me in a position tantamount to Caesar's servant, asked to give an honest opinion of his employer with a beefy palace guard with a particularly sharp saber standing by. For another thing, it deals with a subject dear to my heart but difficult to discuss. No, no, no... I mean the *other* subject - writing and trying not to sound bogus while discussing it. Contrary to popular belief, most of the beats, rappers and modern spoken word proponents have not made things better for us. They just got everybody actually *thinking* that anyone was a poet. There's so much free form nonsense fronting itself as creative genius these days that the really observant people are having a harder and harder time justifying the pursuit of a liberal arts education to their parents. Spoken word these days is almost just another once-pure-now deeply-adulterated product produced en mass for a targeted market, with nearly all the attendant pretenses to intellectual depth via formless rambling and vituperative profanity. This gets particularly troubling to me when it involves my community. These days, when some African-American kid announces over the dinner table to his or her parents that they're pursuing a career as a writer/poet/spoken word artist, the folks don't grieve because they believe the kid's being impractical. It's never been easier to make a killing that way than now (rappers, please pardon the expression). What parents these days grieve over is the fact that this kid will more than likely get by thinking Tupac Shakur or Ol' Dirty Bastard (not Jean Toomer, Zora Hurston, Georgia Scott Delaney, KRS-One or the unjustly neglected Claudé Brown) was the best we could do.

Despite the fact that I bring this emotional baggage with me to quite a few readings lately, I do find moments of unexpected pleasure and promise in modern poetry and spoken word, moments when the cynic in me is happily disappointed. I can honestly say that this reviewer experienced that rare feeling this past Tuesday when the editor of Anti-Matters himself, Jon Berger, took the stage for *Revolutionary Whimperings*, a thirty minute performance/reading featuring his works and part of the All Spoken Word Night at the Fort. Jon Berger's voice takes on a musicality and humor that he only hints at in the published prose in this magazine, and I was truly impressed by the wit he demonstrated in his poetry. He took on the subject of love from different angles. Amongst them: the viewpoint of a jilted and unfulfilled lover, a son looking at his father ("The Healing Power of Bacon" was quite a hit with me, as was one extremely poignant one revolving around a litany of things left behind when leaving an ex). Jon's charm is the ability to fumble gracefully on stage (at one point, Berger, the great non-singer/songwriter of the Fort crowd, did an

impromptu, a capella version of Wham's insufferable "Wake Me Up Before You Go-

Go," and made the moment shine with humor). By the end of his set, he truly made me wish he would publish these poems. But then, part of the appeal of a Jon Berger work is that Jon Berger reads it. These are performance pieces, meant to be read and shared with an audience. The performance was part of an entire evening devoted to spoken word performers, crowned by a spoken word set by Lach himself, who left me convinced that he has an unbelievably thoughtful side in his work that needs to come out more often. Special acknowledgements to Shena (of No One Will Marry You) for her equally riveting performance, including the incisively ironic "I Love You" a reflection on just how much black love can resemble warfare between black men and women, woven touchingly (and for successfully greater effect) in between recited verses of the 38th Psalm. Pat Harper was at once hysterically funny and gripping in his segment which ranged from presenting humorous characters to covering the works of British World War I poet Siegfried Sassoon. If the Fort's first Spoken Word Night, courtesy of Annie Husick, is any barometer of the level of talent we've got at our disposal, I say dispose of the guitars for a few more nights in the year and let's kick some real contributions towards reclaiming our rich and eloquent literary heritage in America. One day, a future William Safire will look towards heaven and thank us. And Gil-Scott Heron, who no doubt will still be around, may even start smiling more. (Penner MacBryant)



TOP TEN WORST OPENING REMARKS BEFORE READING A POEM AT THE ANTIHOOT

lach

- 10 - Is there a time limit?
- 9 - And now, my adaptation of 'Naked Lunch.'
- 8 - You've all heard of snuff films, right?
- 7 - I'd like to dedicate this to my muse, James Taylor.
- 6 - I was just going over my old diaries the other day and...
- 5 - This is from my screenplay...
- 4 - Let me just get this incense lit...
- 3 - Can I have an extra mic for the flute?
- 2 - Sisters!
- 1 - Here's one I wrote in rehab...

**November 18, 1998 - The Fort at the Sidewalk Café:
Maybe Sometimes I Should Just Shut Up.**

I'm sure I would have been more amazed by Amanda Thorpe's show, if I was given half a chance to. These people were constantly talking all around me...

"Hey, Jon," Grey said, sitting down at my table, just as Amanda started, "Feet of Clay," just her, her guitar, and a piano.

"Grey," I said, "great set."

"Hey, thanks a lot, man." He shook my hand and handed me a tape.

"Oh, cool," I said, "What's on it?"

Grey wrote on the blank label of the demo, then introduced me to his producer, room-mate, and friend.

"We recorded in mid-town," he told me.

"Cool..."

When she began "Nothing More Special," the rhythm section joined in then. The songs had minimal arrangements that seemed pretty appropriate to the songs.

California, along with a pretty girl, joined us at the table, she sat far off in our table amalgamation from Cal.

"Yo yo!" I said, "Your girl stone cold dissed you, boy!"

"She's not my girl, so it's all right," Cal said.

"Is she taken?"

"I, I might hate you, if you were ever unkind," Amanda sang, "But the way it goes, I know, it's so hard to change my mind."

Somehow, the subject turned to Paul Simon.

"I much prefer his less popular stuff," I said, "The later albums are my least favorite."

"What do you like?" Kenny asked.

"Hearts and Bones," I replied, "Though there are only a couple songs I really love."

"Which are?" Prompted Kenny.

"Maybe I Think Too Much, 'Hearts and Bones,' 'Cars are Cars,' and the Late Great Johnny Ace'."

"I've heard that one," Kenny said.

"Great song. THAT'S AntiFolk."

The band was clearly a backing group, in the best way. They played only what was appropriate for a song. Rather than put heavy drums in a number, just because the drummer wanted to, cymbals were used when it was the right sound -- or nothing at all. Amanda's great at arranging her very pop songs to the best effect for her musicians.

"This one sounds like John Cage," Grey leaned in to say.

"How so?"

"Sounds like something on 'All Tomorrow's Parties,'"

"No," I said, "I don't hear it. You're just wrong."

Grey laughed, and returned to listening, just as Mattithias joined the group.

I leaned into him at the break after "Lamplight."

"What brings you down here?"

"Just trying to check out the scene, man. I don't think I've been down here to listen for a year or two."

"It's true," I nodded, "You used to be so regular."

"I'm thinking of doing some solo shows."

"Huh. Fellini's Basement doing all right?"

"Oh, yeah, we're still together. I just want to try some other stuff, too."

"So it's not either or."

"No..."

Mattithias left at the end of the number.

"Just stopping by," he said.

I walked him as far as the pool table, and caught up with Dan Kilian.

"What's up, Dan?"

"Hey, Jon," he said, handing me a

pink flyer promoting his band's next show, "We'll be playing a toned down set."

"I'll try and make it," I said, "But it's right before Thanksgiving. That's gonna be a tough night."

"I hear it's the biggest drinking night of the year," Steve, National Anthem's drummer, said.

"Really? Maybe, but won't they be drinking where they go for Thanksgiving? Everyone leaves the City for the Holiday."

"Yeah, what's up with that?"

I got upstairs again in time for Amanda Thorpe's penultimate song, "Falling Down," which she did solo. The band was on-stage, biding their time, waiting out the song.

Grey said, "The band doesn't seem too happy to be there."

"They're really good, too," I said, but I don't think anyone was listening. (Jonathan Berger)

Report from the Fort

DAVID DRAGOV



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November 22, 1998 The Fort at the Sidewalk Café: Dead Kennedy Night.

The night was billed as the 35th Anniversary of Kennedy's assassination. Early on, soundwoman Anne Husick said, "We'll be right back to continue celebrating the death of the president," or something like that. It was a strange evening, ripe with references, however distant, to the sixties. Mr. Scarecrow, opening up the ersatz festival, alternated songs with some psychotic epic poem about Wyatt Earp, Biblical Noah, and the end of American Camelot. Adam Brodsky, following, shoved a voluminous number of references to Mr. Kennedy, comparing his death to last year's November 22nd suicide of INXS' Michael Hutchence: "If I had the choice of being shot in the head during a parade, or choking to death in an auto-erotic accident, well, no contest!"

Lenny Molotov, the evening's organizer, performed his usual historic reminiscences, "Frame 313," which was pretty much the theme song of the night: a one song encapsulation of the 1963 death of American innocence. "Ballad of Richard Nixon (Dick Will Rise)" followed soon-after. Inexplicably, he didn't perform "MK Ultra," about the CIA's experimentation with acid in the fifties, instead choosing to muddle through a Kennedy country tune he cowrote with the boys in the Ghost Rockets. The song probably would have worked better had he practiced. Or prepared. Or something.

The most interesting thing, in an evening of many interesting things, was the return of Sam Camus. The diminutive brit sharing an appalling likeness to a mid-60s Bob Dylan, Mr. Camus was an early shining light at the Fort at Sidewalk, but has disappeared for the last couple of years. For this special event, however, he resurfaced, and performed songs that, surprisingly, seemed no longer to be in the Dylan mode. Except for a passing nod to the man in an introduction ("This song is about... it's about... it's about four minutes."), the songs in Camus' set seemed to follow a new piper. As someone at a nearby table said early on in the set, "He used to sound like Dylan; now he sounds like Oasis." In a way, Camus has grown dramatically, moving away from an icon fixation of a 60s' star, to an icon fixation on those who have an icon fixation of 60s stars. The songs, of course, were vibrant and poppy, and still, with the solo guitar and voice, very very minimal, and very very good. (Stephanie Biederman)

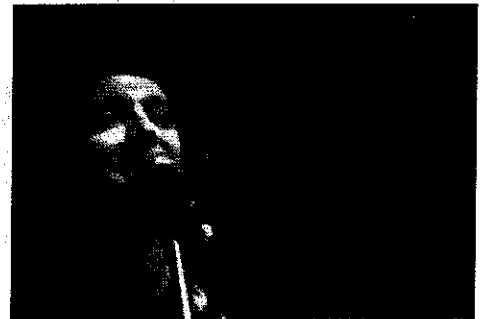
Report from the Fort

Still, starting with Joie's seven o'clock slot, during which he tried to explain why he plays with a band name with not another member in sight, the night

offered many a treasure. In fact, it seemed to offer little but. Say what you will about Mr. Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend, he packs an adoring crowd. There is perhaps no one more responsible for the recent resurgence of community in the hallowed halls of AntiFolk than Joie, who supports numerous other artists in word and deed. In retaliation, numerous artists are there to support him at his frequent early evening shows. The crowd sang along, joked with Joie, made the show feel very homey.

One of those in attendance is Tony Hightower, who was soon to follow. Performing songs from his 1996 debut, as well as those soon to be featured on Single Angry Word, Hightower kept the rhythm rolling.

Almost every song required audience participation, which the various and sundry were more than willing to



provide. Coming down from Canada, Hightower has virtually no draw of his own, but the audience that was there was so friendly, so taken by the night, that they sang, clapped, howled, all as required.

The crowd was never big. When Anne Husick took the stage to perform songs that no one had ever heard before, there was the same general core of people in the audience, as well as sporadic visitors. The audience never grew to astounding proportions, nor ever shrunk to an infinitesimal few. Anne, who has become master of writing hooky love-gone-wrong songs, delved into her past, delivering chestnuts that were

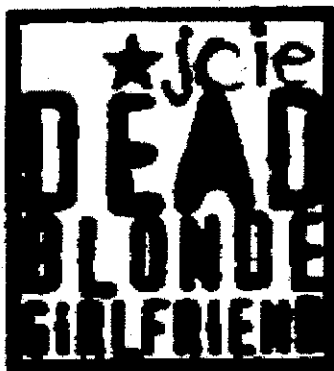
strange while captivating to the crowd.

Following Anne was Nancy Falkow, coming up from Philadelphia with her full band in tow. They played a strong set of Falkow's smoky mid-tempo songs, all of which featured, as a necessity, her incredible voice. While Nancy is not a regular part of the scene, the same crowd stuck around, listening, chatting



amiably, grooving to her tunes, encouraging the artists as they could. Little ego was evident during the evening, and a lot of compassion for other artists. Everybody listened, everybody appreciated. The few and proud in the crowd, at the end, clapped loud.

Tricia Scotti, the third lady with a mighty voice in a row to play, had a slightly tougher time of it, as some loudmouths in the back were totally throwing off her vibe. Constantly distracted by the conversation, she still played pretty



November 24th, 1998 - the Fort at the Sidewalk Café: A Family Affair.

It wasn't an AntiHoot atmosphere, as often pervades the space when Joie plays, and it wasn't a showcase mood. It was definitely a very intimate night, with a very intimate crowd. Unfortunately, no one got terribly intimate, or

or if they did, they didn't let me watch.

damned well, featuring some mighty renditions of beautiful, soulful songs.

Grey Revell then took the stage, playing his intense, image-ridden songs about love and misery. Audience requests seemed to be a big part of the performance, as most everyone who was around knew what they wanted to hear from Grey, and wasn't shy about sharing it. Grey maintained the moody persona his music requires, not grinning or laughing as he so frequently will in conversation. Grey's been playing with increasing intensity, which helps strengthen his SoCal sound and helps defy his vocal resemblance to Jackson Browne.

Everybody loved the show, and nobody much wanted to leave when Ivan Klipstein took the stage, to round up the evening. No regular to the AntiFolk scene, Ivan still captivated the audience with his amalgamation of folk, hip-hop, soul and raga. He was good. The night was good. It was all good. (Gustav Plympton)

Report from the Fort

*November 25th. 1998 – the Fort at the Sidewalk Café:
Miles to Go Before I Sleep.*

After his set, Butch asked me what I thought of his performance. We went out for coffee to chat about it.

"This was your first time with an electric, right?"

"My first time in New York," he nodded. Butch is based in Philadelphia, and is at the forefront of their nascent sister AntiFolk-scene.

"It was interesting," I said, "Some of the material worked pretty well. Pot Calling the Kettle Black' is a pretty Tin Pan Alley kind of song, and the way you played it seemed to really work for it."

"Thanks," he said, sipping at his caffeinated beverage.

"But there were other songs that didn't sound quite so good."

"What did you think of New York?"

"New York" is Butch's ode to being a folk singer in NYC, a subject he admits he has only a passing understanding of. Still, I find it normally a pretty strong song, one of his best. Not so much tonight.

"It was all right," I said, "But you made it so boppy. It lost a lot of its mood."

"Oh," he said.

"Trenton in a Nutshell' was pretty good."

He finished up his coffee, and made sounds about hitting a train. I had some final comments for him, though.

"I realize it's tough to decide what to bring out for a gig," I said, "But if you could bring both an acoustic and an electric, you could do the best sound for the song."

"Yeah," he put on his coat, "You try carrying to guitars on a bus for a couple hours."

"No thanks," I said, as we walked out. There are lots of times I'm glad to live in New York. This was just one of them. (Gustav Plympton)

LITTLE BUMMER BOY

There's a new baby Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Down on Essex Street Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Crying to the cars it sees
Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Pum-pum-pum-pum

Down in the alley Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Tie it up tightly Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Push it in gently
And Pump-pum-pum-pum
Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Pump-pum-pum-pum

The animals talk this night Ba-rum-pa-pa-pa
They're in the streets tonight Ba-rum-pa-pa-pa
Where are your kids tonight?
Ba-rum-pa-pa-pa
Ba-rum-ma-ma-ma
ma-ma-ma-ma
Ma?

Come she told me Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Deep inside of me Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
I played my drum for her
Ba-rum-pum-pum-pum
Pump-pum-pum-pum
Pump-pum-pum-pum
La-la-la-la

lach

Recommendations

David Dragov is one of the most innovative musicians at the Sidewalk scene. Normally, composers with such atonal harmonies aren't well-liked, because an audience can't usually make heads or tails of it. But Dragov combines the atonal harmonies with accessible melodies, sharp, witty lyrics, along with a modern-day beat that gets the crowd going. In particular, "Staten Island" -- a song about life in the cesspool of hell with the same name -- has become a Sidewalk favorite.

~ Jann Wiener

New wonderkid on the antifolk scene Dan Monihan has developed a small cult following here at the fort. His music is not for the faint of heart. His song topics range from copping drugs in Harlem, sex, jilted lovers to womenbeating (Don't take it out of context; hear the song) and a retarded kid named Jimmy. Rapid fire delivered lyrics that sometimes go from a whisper to a howl, cool vocal and chord melodies keep you on edge, waiting for the next tirade. He sounds like a darker Tom Waits meets the Pogues without the Irish accent. Catch his shows if you can. He really is a welcomed addition to the N.Y.A.F. scene.

(A Non-Mouse)

Sometimes when I see Seth Hebert (A.K.A. "Seth", A.K.A. "Crazy Seth") play I can't tell what emotion I feel stronger, love or fear. For the past couple years Seth's music has been impressing and surprising and inspiring me; it's occasionally so good it's scary. I'm certainly of the opinion that Seth's presence in the New York City music scene -- both as a solo songwriter/performer and even more so when he performs with the band Dufus -- is one of our city's best kept musical secrets. Actually there's a handful of great musical secrets at the Monday night Anti-Hoots lately - I just feel like Seth is a little overlooked even within this tiny scene. Although his music is pretty hard to describe (and some have called it irritating), his unique sound is so full of love and honesty and earnestness that anyone who's heard him can't help but respond one way or the other. Picture maybe an acoustic version of Captain Beefheart circa 1970, throw in the Phish songs you like from Junta and Lawn Boy, the musical revisionism of Frank Zappa minus the smug sarcasm, maybe even some of the infectious hippie-revolutionary optimism of the Beatles or David Peel or the Fugs; it sounds like ridiculously high praise, but if you catch Dufus on a good night (like last Saturday, November 29, at the C Note) you may find it hard to disagree - listen to "Second Phone," "Ladders," "Tinkling On the Ivories," "A Little Bit of Reggae," "Another Dimension," and the "Weemamu Wammamu" song, just to name a few that I really love. Of course, with unpredictable and improvised music comes varied results, and not every performance is exceptional. Seth walks a fine line, with overly complex prog-rock pitfalls on one side and over indulgent raw jerk-off expression on the other, but I have to say he makes it work more often than not. Well, for me anyway. I know I'm not just delusional; at the Baggot Inn open mic one night he did a great duet with our friend Michelle and the poor woman who had to play afterward could only gasp "that was the most unique thing I've ever seen!" So if there's one songwriter/performer playing at the Antihoots today that I feel deserves more attention it's Seth (if there's another, it might be Rhonda - but I haven't seen a full gig of hers yet so I'm withholding final judgement). Buy Seth's albums too; if you're a music lover, you'll love them. If you're a songwriter you may fear them. -- Jeff Lightning Lewis.

(I could also rave about the brutal, beautiful wonders of Dan Monihan, but at the moment, he's getting sufficient attention on his own)

"Try as you might, you cannot understand, the heart of a running man," sings Marilee, who sits with her guitar on one knee. "Running Man" is possibly Marilee's signature song, though one could make an argument for the longing ballad "Happily Ever After." Marilee has tremendous pop melody sensibility, with a bit of a country influence, and it all comes together with a powerful voice that delivers a memorable sound.

(JW)

In an age of mutual admiration, there is nothing like a good

Recommendations

If you're looking for dead-on honesty, check out Joie/Dead Blonde Girlfriend. Joie's music is hard-nosed, aggressive, and to the point. If you can't tell, just see the nasty edge in his guitar playing. His tunes about loss, recovery, and just down-right anger with the world have become very popular among the SideWalk crowd. The anthem "Drinking with God" is a great sing-along, and "The Rockstar Junkyard" is a song that probably any musician can relate to. > Jann Wiener

Tony Hightower's got different sort of songs. He's got the ones you can't help but sing along to, and he's got the ones you can't help but wonder what the fuck he's talking about. Half his songs let the melody take you away on a wave of pop-boppines, and the other half half drown you in words words words. This is a man who puts out not one, but two zines, so, as a musician, it's fairly clear that he likes to say something. His images are strong, when you can get them, and are pretty cool on disc, when you can pore over the words and ponder and consider and think and read along. In concert, though, which is most of my experience with Mr. Hightower, the songs that really work best are those that are pumped up energy soaking boppers and jumpers. With songs like "Dina Doesn't Talk to Boys" and "The Waves," "Dead Awhile," and "I in Iconoclast," a guy like Tony can keep your fanny flying, even in its seat. I like him. He's keen! (Arnie Rogers)



FOOT

If you've never seen Rick Shapiro, you really have to, if only once. Like him or not, you have to see him, to witness the maelstrom of his mouth, the rapid fire desperation of his performance, the quick wit or whatever it is. You simply cannot live your life without being able to say to your grandchildren, "Rick Shapiro? Yeah, I saw him..." { Jonathan Berger }

Carraig De Forest

The West Coast scene has sent us some cool songwriters over the years such as Cindy Lee Berryhill and Beck. One of the best from the west is now here at The Fort and his name is Carraig De Forest. Carraig has several great albums to his credit and if you dig Jonathan Richman, Alex Chilton and The Violent Femmes sort of vibe then you should get out to see Carraig now that he's in town. Carraig will play a December residency at The Fort at Sidewalk Café performing every Tuesday at 9 pm. Catch this guy before he's too big for the club!

Out of the Toilet and into the Basement

*Mike Rechner
explores the
recordings of
Mattithias over
the last three
years*

In 1997, when Mattithias released Yo! Ma Ma, he effectively reduced the status of the acoustic guitar and the resurgence buzz of American folk revival to that of an empty Coke bottle. A spare lo-fi recording produced on a rudimentary 4-track in Williamsburg, Yo! Ma Ma, at first listen, contains a limited set of concerns with an even more limited method of conveying those concerns. Songs like "POP!", "Blues," "Sonic Boom" and "Always Coca-Cola" were hardly more than repetitive self-contained word play couched inside musicality lacking any cleverness except to mirror the subject of the song. If anything, the songs favor a slight Velvet Underground tinge, but this is mainly because of certain cliched Pop Art subject matter - and two fully fleshed out Fellini's Basement songs (Mattithias' band with Nioki <formerly of the Boredoms>, P.5, and Danamatic), which tend to resemble standard pop structures in the VU fashion. Mostly the songs just stab and twist with their own slap-happy sense of lunatic urgency reminiscent of some of Billy Syndrome's finer discombobulated efforts. Yo! Ma Ma followed fast on the heels of 1996's release In the Toilet. Mattithias wrote and recorded In the Toilet in and around the AntiFolk scene at the Sidewalk Café. Joe Bendik helped produce some of the tracks. Although parts of In the Toilet are very similar to Yo! Ma Ma, the best parts of Yo! Ma Ma reduce the constructs of In the Toilet (Singer-songwriters, talking blues and folk as anti-establishment as preposterous). Vapid songs describing republicans as dangerous, hippies as Yuppies with brains deadened by drug-use, all suggest the possibility that Woody Guthrie is nothing more than a stopgap measure for performers to fall back onto when their own creativity wears thin. The record might work as a West Village/East Village slice of life for those suffering songwriter burnout, but who wants to visit, and if you wandered in by accident, who would stay? The best moments of In the Toilet are the title track, summarizing the entire situation, "Fade," which is exactly that and foreshadows later pop experiments, and "No Parking Anytime," a song which basks in the graffiti church of NYC subculture and the knowledge that, in the search for ideas, there is no parking anytime, and the search must - and will - continue out to Williamsburg and uptown to 27th Street and the Gershwin Hotel.

Mattithias and his band Fellini's Basement would move on as a house band of sorts at the

pop art, youth-oriented
Gershwin Hotel.

Mattithias and then bandmate Dan Emery (known for the purposes of the band as Danamatic) set up a fairly regular program of booking nights of entertainment at the hotel. AntiFolk acts like Billy Syndrome, Box of Crayons, Mary Ann Farley, and Paleface would gig alongside punk and rock bands like the Dan Emery Mystery Band, Butz, the artists-in-residence, Fellini's Basement. The Gershwin Hotel shows are always open-ended, and above all, full of fun and abandon.

Mattithias' most recent recordings, also produced on his Williamsburg 4-Track, are some of his best yet. Complete with some of his "Poparazzi" artwork, produced at the 14th Street Bradlees, these recordings show Mattithias turning another corner in the Pop Art End Game. Songs like "Mello Riff," "Pepsi," "Instant Coffee" and "Hamburger Delux" read as extended compositions borrowing solely on the inference of the subject matter for their compositions and sound. This time, though, it is obvious that Mattithias is getting a real grip on the lo-fi technology he embraces to produce his work. Grooves are produced in manual fashion or placed from existing sounds and pushed seamlessly into the constant ebb of a beat-happy record, which is amazing because it sounds like tracks as juiced as "Jack it Up!" are produced with two horrible microphones, a piece of shit compressor, and a pencil hitting a coffee can. Mattithias insists that this is to prove that art and music is all bullshit and should be accessible to all. I agree but I also insist that when the skill of manipulation with regard to subject and production method is this developed it is also the result of hard work.

A bonus on this tape is Fellini's Basement's EP, recording and produced by Mr. Right of Pere Ubu. It features their old lineup, before Danamatic left the band, and is a slid recording in the American indie/VU tradition. Recently, as a three-piece, Fellini's Basement has nothced up the volume and are playing some really noisy, bombastic shows where bass, drums and loud guitar play lead all at once.

At the same time, Mattithias continues to record his solo material. Mattithias has a new tape coming out soon, and if you get a chance, I recommend you check out the work of this talented and prolific performer.

Kittens Amok

(formerly Philosophy Corner, Part III)

November 22nd, 10:00pm

Earlier this evening I was talking to my cats in the kitchen.

DW: I have never been so heartbroken in my life.

Pup: If you wouldn't mind leaving your plate out when you're done, I believe I can help clean it.

DW: Is it really over? It feels over.

Carmelita-Bunny: The confidence man traveled by riverboat.

Pup: Don't put that in the sink just yet.

DW: I'll never love again.

That's when something odd happened. And when I say something odd happened, I mean just that. It was not a miracle. I realize that in the last chapter I had promised three miracles but it seems the last miracle has left me hanging. It's imminent appearance in my life has been snatched away and I am left without a satisfying conclusion.

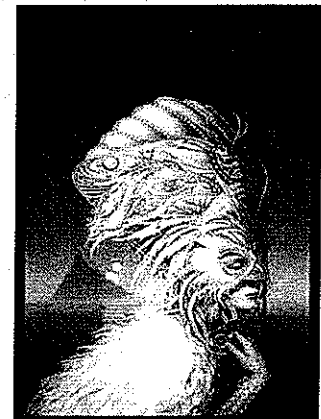
And what is this conclusion you see before you? What brought me, your usually happy-go-lucky narrator, to this emotional wasteland without hope or happiness? Well, love, of course.

Of course, when you start with the conclusion, you must then delve back into the past before regaining the thread of the story. In the recent past, we had two miracles. One was the disappearance of my allergies following the forced living conditions of sharing my apartment with two kittens. The second miracle was the fact that our cats became chatty and fluently versed in English. There has been another small miracle recently. It certainly doesn't have the grandiosity of a Red Sea parting and it certainly doesn't count in the three miracles, but by a small miracle, we have finally agreed on one of the cat's names. The cat I called "Bunny" and which my roommate called "Carmelita", has now become "Carmelita-Bunny", which strikes us all as not only a delightful compromise, but a more fitting name than either one separately. Carmelita-Bunny is the cat who talks only in obscure phrases that never make any sense. Her brother, "Puppy", which I have recently shortened to "Pup", is more tied to the world through his stomach and talks of nothing else except food.

Now that we are caught up with the previous chapters of this story, we must go farther back to examine the roots of this current chapter. The cats came into my life several months after I had broken up with a woman I had been seeing for four years. My last miracle of this story was going to be the fact that I fell in love again, which, in these

traumatic fin-de-siecle days, seems tantamount to a miracle. But I have had suffered a romantic disaster and the last miracle, although the falling in love part certainly happened on my end, failed to come through. "What," you may ask, "does this have to do with the cats?" Well, that's a good question and I shall pretend for a moment that I can think of other things besides my current source of heartbreak and relate to you an oddly compelling theory I have. At least, it's oddly compelling to me. I said in the first chapter that the cats related to me a surprising and original theology. Well, that was a lie. They did nothing of the sort. But they have taught me something about myself. Let me explain. When I mentioned that the kittens were born several months after my girlfriend left me for that most auspicious of boyfriends, medical school, I should have been more specific. It seems to me that there is no getting around the fact that they were born exactly nine months to the day after she left me. "Surely this can't be significant!" I would like to think. The gestation time for a cat fetus and that of a human are totally different. In fact, at the time we broke up, I had yet to even meet the mother of the kittens. Surely, my breaking up with this woman was in no way a catalyst or an impregnation of any kind, but the clues keep piling up and I have reason to believe that my romantic and emotional life is linked inexorably with the cats. In certain ways I hope that this is not true, because I have an appointment to get them neutered this Friday, but my link with them is not based on their sexual development, but rather their mental development. And more importantly, I have no wish to have another litter of kittens scampering about the apartment.

I suppose a few words are in order about my past girlfriend. For the sake of this article, let's call her "Cher". Cher and I had an odd relationship from day one. When we first got together, we assumed our relationship was doomed. For one thing, she was already dating someone else. On top of that was layered various spatial difficulties. A week after we started dating, she left town for a month. (This was in Chicago.) Then she came back and left her other boyfriend to be with me,



CHER

which seemed an odd move because a week later, I left

town to go finish college. When I was done with college I moved back to Chicago only to have her be accepted to pre-med in Vermont. So she moved there and I moved to Brooklyn. After her year of pre-med she moved down to NYC while she applied to medical schools. Luckily for us, it took her two years to get accepted and then she moved off to western Pennsylvania. Being fairly sick of the whole long-distance thing at this point, we ended it. In other words, our initial assumption that our relationship was doomed was correct, it's just that it took about 1460 days to fall apart, which beats my next longest relationship duration by about 1422 days. I suppose the next question is, "What does this have to do with your cats?" Well, patience my friends, all will be made clear in time. There's no need to repeat yourselves. Instead, let's ask the question, "Why did I stay in a doomed relationship for that long?" Well, the answer comes from a lot of different places. One is that I've never been one for sloppy sentimentality or really any emotional life whatsoever. While things often affect me, I tend to take it all in on an intellectual level. I have been described as a "stony-faced robot" by more than one. Even friends who have known me a long time would most likely pinpoint my main attributes as "acerbic, sarcastic, and calculating", and my relationships with most people can be characterized as "businesslike." In other words, not the kind of fellow who sits at his kitchen table weeping and uttering ludicrous, pansy-ass phrases like, "I'll never love again." And I have certainly never been the type who would deign

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Kittens Amok

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time, let alone advice. And yet, here I am.

Back to the story. I remained fairly unaffected by Cher's disappearance from my life and we kept in touch and talked fairly often. Then she said she was dating someone else. Now, I'm not a jealous person, but the thought of that knocked me down. Since I'm not a drinker by nature, I was taken to heading down to Freddy's and ordering glass after glass of tonic water until I had to urinate as often as if I was a drinker. The cracks began to appear and I realized how much I loved Cher. I wrote a series of forlorn, apocalyptic love songs. I had tried writing love songs before, but I never could do it. The closest I ever came to writing a love song to Cher while we were dating turned into a polka called, "Piranha-boy Loves You."

Then Cher came back to town for a weekend. She was coming in for a wedding and then to go out to Long Island to visit her then boyfriend, who lived there when he wasn't at medical school with her. For the few days she was in town for the wedding and before she went to Long Island, we had an affair. At the same time, the stray cat that my

roomates had taken in, Consuela, became pregnant. (See part I for details)

With the birth of the kittens came a strange comfort and solace which I hadn't felt for a long time. After being in a relationship for a while, your emotional center leaves you proper and becomes situated somewhere between you and the person you love. When that person is no longer there, all the sudden your

Formerly Philosophy

balance is gone and you have nothing holding you up. The natural reaction is to find someone else immediately to have that illusion of being propped up, but as we all know, this never really works out and the more important thing to do is to slowly, painfully, move your center back into yourself. It was after the kittens were born that I finally began to feel centered and comfortable with myself again, but something inside was different. Meanwhile, the kittens learned their first words.

Pup's first words were "food" and "tired" while Carmelita-Bunny's first words were more on the dadaist plane. The phrase "phlegmatic lepton" was an early favorite of hers for about a week. "Phlegmatic lepton this and phlegmatic lepton that," she would say. Finally, I looked it up, but the definitions offered no comprehension.

My first response to really being over Cher was to get myself not interested in dating at all. Whereas before I was desperate to start seeing someone else to get my balance, at the beginning of summer I felt a strange satisfied lethargy come over me at the prospect of getting involved with anyone. Plus, I sweat too much in the summer to be attractive to anyone. I figured I would wait until fall.

In the meantime, through-out the summer the kittens vocabulary grew. Pup, instead of simply, "Hungry.", would say, "I'm very very hungry could you please give me some of what you're having." Carmelita-bunny, whose vocabulary had always been prodigiously beyond the capability of most cats, would say stuff like, "The purest Rabelasian insight into the finest Dulcinean efforts of the post-romantic hyberbole figure most kindly into the anachronistic diablo," whereas when she was younger that would have come out as a simple, "I got the diablo." I hung out with the cats that summer and tried to keep cool, spending entire days lying on our lawn under the sprinkler.



RIO

Then fall came, and fall I did. Hopelessly in love. For the sake of this article let's call her

"Rio". With our first kiss I felt my well-earned center punted out of me like a goddamn football. Happiness blindsided me. With Cher it was a gradual falling in love process that was so subtle that I didn't even realize that it had happened, but Rio hit me all at once. It was one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life. I have never, ever felt so drawn to and immediately comfortable with someone. But it was doomed to be short-lived.

After a delightful dinner, where I first made my amorous intentions known, we walked down to the lower east side to go see a band and somewhere along the way kissed for the first time. Punt. But then as we were watching the band play and the evening wore on, she seemed to get more and more distant (which, although I didn't know it then, set a pattern for our dates to follow... i.e. the wonderful beginning with the gradual descent to the weird uncomfortable ending.) On the cab ride home I found out why. "I need to tell you, I'm seeing someone else," she said. I believe that it was at

this point that my brain shut down. I was not to hear a peep out of it for the next month. I guess the main problem that I had was that I had heard the same phrase come out of Cher's mouth on our first date, so I had hope that this might work out as well.

At home that night in a panic, I consulted the cats.

DW: Guys, what can I do. I must have this woman. She is everything I've been looking for.

C-B: In other words, seek the pony and decide upon your zeppelin, for there in Macondo you ride.

Pup: Are you hungry? I am.

DW: Really. I don't know if I should pursue this or not. On the one hand, it seems like a total and utter disaster. On the other, being with someone has never felt so right.

Pup: Can you open the refrigerator for me. I want to see something.

C-B: Hep-a-hole! Here I come! Beware!

This conversation lasted for over an hour in much the same vein. And many more conversations exactly like it were to follow. The pattern was easy to discern. I am in love. Pup is hungry. Carmelita-Bunny is somewhere else.

Kittens Amok

From October fifteenth on, I had no peace of mind or solace unless I was with her, talking to her, or emailing her. Email was in fact, the largest part of our correspondence, her having a boyfriend and all. I won't get into the sordid details, because, quite frankly, they are a little pathetic. All I shall mention is that with every small, unintentional and unavoidable cruelty that was inflicted on me, I dragged myself back into the melee willingly and with renewed hope that "it'll all work out."

The kittens became my confidants. I discussed the minute, mostly supposed, fluctuations of the precarious situation with them daily.

Pup: I think my food bowl is empty. Perhaps I can have what's in your bowl.

DW: (disconsolately eating some cereal)

Formerly Philosophy Corner

Pup, do you think there's a chance for this to work out? Her email today

seemed a little distant.

Pup: (Jumping on the table.) That looks interesting. Perhaps I can try some? Yes?

DW: (absentmindedly taking Pup off table) I can't believe that this might not work out. I have never fallen for anyone so completely. But it seems like it might not.

C-B: (Appearing as if from no where and jumping upon the table.) Fortuna and young Nicholas have been seen by

poolside, furiously navigating.

DW: (absentmindedly taking Carmelita-Bunny off table) Why can't I get over this?



In other words, we weren't communicating. I became somewhat obsessive and sunk deeper and deeper into my own little world. True, it's natural to sink into your own little world when you fall in love, but usually the person you've fallen in love with is there with you. When you find that they aren't there, well, let's just say it's not

healthy. Finally my brain turned on again. "This is stupid," it said. It got into a shouting match with my heart and in an effort to break it up and find a compromise I agreed to not see the woman again, but to be totally heartbroken about the whole thing and to regard her as the great-lost-love-of-my-life. That seemed to satisfy the demands from both brain and heart, with the small side-effect that it would make me totally miserable, so I put that plan into effect. I met Rio this afternoon and had an awkward time with her while I

grappled with myself as to whether or not I was going to say what I had planned to say. (She was equally awkward and I think the same thing was on her mind.) I finally forced it out and after a sad and unsatisfying goodbye earlier this evening, I came home.

When some are depressed, they eat. I cook. The more depressed I am, the more elaborate the meal. I was in the process of kneading the dough for the pasta and reconstituting the dried porcini mushrooms (Luckily, I knew earlier in the day that I was going to end up horribly depressed and went out and got all the ingredients I needed. Nothing's worse than unplanned depression when all the grocery stores are closed). And as I kneaded the dough, unable to stop my brain from obsessively thinking about her, I talked with the cats, who were hanging out in the kitchen. Which brings us back to the beginning of our story:

Kittens Amok

Formerly Philosophy Corner

DW: I have never been so heartbroken in my life.

Pup: If you wouldn't mind leaving your plate out when you're done, I believe I can help clean it.

DW: Is it really over? It feels over.

C-B: The confidence man traveled by riverboat.

Pup: Don't put that in the sink just yet.

DW: I'll never love again.

And then that most unexpected thing happened, perhaps as unexpected as falling in love in the first place. What happened was this:

Carmelita-Bunny, after months of speaking in riddles and nonsequiters, actually talked to me. "Dave", Carmelita-Bunny said. She had never said my name before and I whipped around to look at her, but she was staring out the window. "There be other fish in the sea."

"Mmmm...", said Pup, "Fish."

Composed by Dave Wechsler

AntiFolkal Religious Chorales

Two CDs coming across the desk of AntiMatters Central HeadQuarters were the full-length CD debuts of a couple of guys. Adam Brodsky's *DORK* and Gilligan Stump!'s *Just Sit Right Back...* reach into each of the artists' deep respective catalogs, and somehow, inexplicably, draw out the same song. Well, not exactly the same song, but close enough.

Adam Brodsky's album, rife with yammering chatter from the mouth of the self-proclaimed dork, features the biblical anthem "Jesus Owes Me Fifty Bucks." The song, about as verbal as you'd expect from Philadelphia's premier wordsmith (so he says), tells the story, in five minutes and twelve verses, the tale of the savior asking for a loan: "Jesus owes me fifty bucks," Brodsky sings, "I lent it to him in good faith. And wouldn't it be my luck, he got crucified before I got repaid." Naturally, ala Forrest Gump, Brodsky places himself in many of the important scenes, inadvertently causing the tsuris at the temple ("Christ, you've got a temper," Brodsky tells the lord.), and begging for his vig while Jesus lies dying on the cross. Finally, the Brodsky tells us that the man who took him for 50 smackers better be related to the Big Guy, "Cause if I get up there, and

Adam Brodsky: *DORK* - Permanent Records - 505 South Street, Suite 3 - Philadelphia, PA 19147 * 215-230-PUNK - ahmynose@aol.com

he ain't at God's right hand, I'll know that I was cheated by an ordinary man."

Meanwhile, a city away, and some two thousand years later in fictional time, Texas bred bald man Gilligan Stump!! presents on his new disc a little number called "Drug Dealer to the Gods." It starts with this line: "Have you seen Jesus? He was here yesterday. He owes me fifty dollars."

Evidently, in this thematic variation, Jesus was not loaned the money, but owes it for a certain transaction. Mr. Stump! tells it best: "I floated Jesus a fifty dollar bag. I made such a good deal... because he is Jesus!"

Apparently, Jesus is not the only debtor on Mr. Stump!'s books. "Have you seen Buddha?" He asks, then queries as to the manifest status of the Ayatollah, Nixon, and the Grinch. It becomes clear that the songwriter is not denouncing the profligate tendencies of messiahs, as his Pennsylvanian brethren does, but rather, condemning the absurdly poor financial judgements made by narcotics merchants in this day and age.

Still, each song chooses to take the Lord's name in vain, which, in this particularly religious time of year, warrants special consideration, and even special merit.

Gilligan Stump!: *Just Sit Right Back...* - Broken Arm Productions - 212-592-4751 - <http://www.home.earthlink.net/~brokearm>

SONGS ABOUT GOD'S DEBT TO MAN FROM ADAM BRODSKY AND GILLIGAN STUMP!
by Professor G Lesse II

Kwanakahmass

The short version of the Legend of Kwanakahmass as told to Lach

Once, long ago in the middle of a desert there was a magic city called Las Vegas.

One night the 'baby Sammy Davis Jr was left outside The Desert Inn where they said there was no room for little Sammy. But soon three wise-guys named Dino, Frankie and Peter Lawford found the baby Sammy and took him in. Thus a brotherhood of tolerance and highballs was begun. It is this event we celebrate every year at this time by combining Christmas, Hannukah

and Kwanzaa into one giant holiday known as Kwanakahmass!

Legend has it that as each member of the brotherhood passes on, their spirit returns to us at this

time of the year as a two foot tall Kwanikin. If you've been hip all year then maybe the CandyMan himself (Sammy who embodies all three faiths and at least two races), will visit you with mixers, songs and high times.

But If you've been uncool during the year you may find yourself waking in the middle of the night to find a morose,drunken, Dino perched

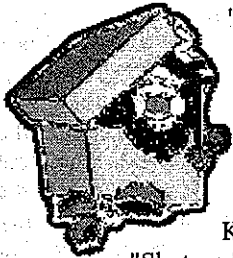
at the foot of your bed bitterly complaining about his career.

This is a very special Kwanakahmass this year as the faithful believe we will see the first appearance of the



Frankie Kwanikin! So, you'd better be cool all year long baybee because Sammy Kwanikin will be keeping an eye out for you!

Have a Swinging Kwanakahmass and a Heavy New Year!



"So?" Steve asked, "Did you get what you wanted?"

"I don't want to talk about it," I replied, which just made him titter, and ask me to explain.

"Come on," Steve said, "Did Sammy Kwanikin come to you this Kwanakahmass?"

"Shut up," I said, "Shut up and just keep shutting up. It's a stupid holiday, and it doesn't mean a thing."



"I'll take that as a no,"

Steve said, ordering us each a round.

I didn't understand. I'd been cool all year. I'd been too cool for school, too cool to be a fool, to cool for the ghouls at Halloween... you get the idea.

And still, I had to spend all night listening to Dino regale me about how

he got shafted by Jerry Lewis, how Frankie wouldn't let him open up for him at the Pearly Gates, how he *wasn't* an addict... and he wouldn't even give me anything from that silver martini glass.

"I'd been drinking martini's all year for this," I whined, "And this is the thanks I get."

"You know," Steve said, "Maybe being cool isn't something you work at."

"Yeah yeah yeah," I cut him off, "It's a state of mind. Sure. Why not."

"But I deserve it!" I said, after a silence of a

good seven seconds. "I am so cool, and I deserve to meet Sammy Kwanikin. When you cut me, do I not say 'Ow?' When you heckle me on stage, do I not become sullen? It's not right, it's a travesty. It's not fair. I wanted Sammy, or Frankie, or even Joey Bishop."

"Is Joey Bishop dead?"

"Who cares? I want to be in with the artists of the fifties and sixties. I want to be slick and sleek and cool and hip and wow and all those things."

"Sammy thought you'd take it hard."

"Yeah well - what?"

Sammy. I was hanging out with him at the Sands. He said he thought it was a shame you couldn't be with us, but that it was only for A-

List people, babe."

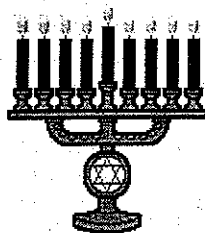
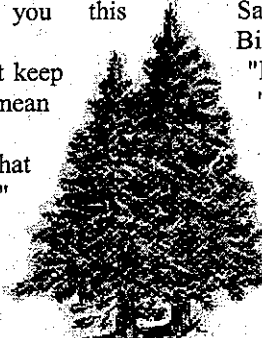
"You're cute," I said.

"I try."

That night, I had an awesome dream. I dreamt that Frankie Kwanikin came to me, explaining it was all a horrid mistake, that of course I could join him and the rest of the Pack as they went whoring and drinking and partying all year long. He introduced me to Sammy, and Sam Giocomin, and Marilyn, and Lana Turner, and lots of others, and it was great.

It was a wonderful dream.

Of course, when I woke up, Dino was there, telling me about how Lewis took all the good lines in My Friend Irma. Sometimes, you just can't win.



Jeff Lang: Real Scars

Jeff Lang, Australian resident and occasional AntiFolk itinerant, has recently put out a full-length album, and how better to celebrate that fact than to put out a live EP to glut the market with product? Maybe that's how they do things in Antarctica, or Newfoundland, or wherever country Australia can be found in.

No matter. The EP, an eight-song live document entitled Real Scars, features two full bands and songs recorded right before the making of the studio album, Cedar Grove. The band concept is something we Americans don't get to see, since he leaves them in his foreign land when he comes touring. It's a shame, since his players, are so good. Of course, playing is one of the larger pleasures of a Jeff Lang performance. His acoustic guitar is featured in most of the recording, as are some of the songs from the Grove. "Too Easy To Kill," a surprisingly even-handed rant on the desire for gun control, offers the opposing viewpoint (early training in firearm safety, to maintain defense and responsibility in ballistic use), and "Throw it All," a typical "We broke up, I regret it" song, but with the nice touch that the narrator knows it's all for the best: "There's good reasons some things should end, tell myself to keep believing that -- that it's better for us both, but I don't feel the benefit." It's a mature sentiment, and makes lines like "I still need, I still grieve, I still bleed those who come near the life I lead," potential maudlin and mawkish resonate strongly.

Still, for a mighty songwriter, there are a lot of covers. Phil Manning's "If You See My Baby," the only solo number, plays right after Tom Waits' searing "Goin' West," a song Lang's been interpreting for years. The final cut is a raging, fast "Ballad of Hollis Brown," which, like so many Bob Dylan numbers, sounds little like the original, and yet maintains the spirit of the mighty murder ballad.

All the songs are good. The band plays powerfully throughout, and perform solos impressively and often. If that's your thing, this is a great collection. If you're not into wank musicianship, you'll still like it. The players aren't just technical adept, not *only* flashy, *solely* proficient; they play soulfully, and suit the music.

And then there's "Mr. God," a dialog between a hiring firm and the Creator of the World, who's looking for a new, less stressful position. It's strange and iconoclastic, and, naturally, flies right in the eye of the holiday season. More power to it. (Gustav Plympton) *Contact: John Sinclair - PO Box 97 - Bittern Vic 3918. Call: (61) 03 5983 6600*

REVIEWS.

Clay Mitchell : Open Cage

The album is credited to the Clay Mitchell Group, but that's not entirely fair. The inner notes read: All songs written by Clay Mitchell. Produced by Clay Mitchell. Tracks 1, 3, 5, Stephen Feasley: Bass, Robert Flamiatos: Drums.

Maybe the band approach is the way Mitchell wants to sell himself -- after all, these songs aren't recording live. There are more than three included cuts that sound like a band -- but it sort of sells Mitchell's solo style short. Many of songs on the full-length CD, Open Cage, along with his performances in New York City, are just him and a guitar, and a whole lot of energy. And, of course, it works. It works real well. Sure, the full band attack of "Rise Above It" is a strong start to the record, the following track, "Open Cage," a minimal effort, shows the strength of a solo showing.

The formats, the solo the band, keep alternating in the release, evidence that while this is a group sound, it is, first and foremost, Clay Mitchell's group. Sometimes, in the band variation, it goes a little overboard. The mighty soloing in "Burning," is, admittedly, not something that could have occurred with a single guitar. Still, it seems somewhat out of place, immediately following the beautiful, soft playing on "Not Lonely." While the guitar solo ably suggests the fire implicit in the song, "Burning" lights a flame, lets it burn, smolder, and finally die, in all of its eight and a half minute length. The band sounds fine but would have sounded just as good in two minutes less.

Beyond the warring paradigms of style, there's another very interesting factor about Open Cage. It's subtly apparent in the very first line of the first song: "Lord, let me rise above it." Though it's oft-used, that first word has an importance for this release that isn't frequently found in AntiFolk releases: an overt pride in his belief in a higher power. Whether God-fearing, God-loving, or just God-considering, Mitchell shows us right away he's got a God, and he's not afraid to use Him. Her. It. Them. Whatever.

This God thing comes into play over and over again. The title track, in the coveted second position on the disc, is sort of a damnation track: "I'm gonna get that key, and open up the cage. Saint Augustine, you better get out of my way..." It's a great song, that, because of its simple invocation of freedom, is entirely clear, yet entirely open to deeper interpretation. It's just Mitchell's voice and guitar, and it shows all the power that just those two instruments can summon. It's perhaps the strongest example of the minimalist variant of Mitchell's performance, as well as perhaps the strongest track on the release.

"Give It" deals with those seeking salvation. "Failure" approaches the lack of brotherhood among men, the dearth of community among humans, and invokes Rodney King's name, while implicitly recalling his most famous words: "Why can't we all just get along?" Apt sentiments, particularly at this time of year.

(Stephanie Biederman) *Contact: (732) 224-1072*

Gilligan Stump!: Just Sit Right Back...

"Gilligan Stump!" appeared mysteriously one night in the heart of Texas when a poor college student unpacked his word processor, poked a little smot and typed the words: "The Imaginary Life of Gilligan Stump!"

Yeah, well, whatever.

Actually, the story that Gilligan tells is interesting, how the character willed itself into existence, that "'Gilligan' has only one purpose in life; to prove that he exists. And he will stop at nothing." It's entertaining, to a point. The thing is, the name, the mythological description, the stage show (including the hilarious mute, tha Perfesser), it all indicates that music is part of some grander purpose, that the music is not self-sufficient.

The music is self-sufficient. Some of the songs included on Just Sit Right Back... are excellent. Performed mostly solo with some small backing (vocal overdubs, some extra guitar, and occasionally, an additional instrument), is very often perfect in its production. "American 3.14" (what the hell does that mean?) is a moody, piece about the American Dream, and waking up from it. "Gee ain't it great to be an American?" Gilligan ends the song, "But I'm knee-deep in pie!" Right on its heels, "Everybody," is about conformism, non-conformism, responsibility and capriciousness; it's also beautiful. "Drug Dealer to the Gods" rocks, is funny, and yet, instrumentally pretty low-key. How can such muted delivery be so forceful?

I could go on. Almost every song is great. While I'm not too fond of the number of songs relating to drug legalization and gun control (totaling four out of the ten of the songs), "Russian Lady" and "La Cockroach" (with an insane spoken word introduction that shows the value of a performance art perspective to the material), and "Oh My God," and maybe, maybe I'm liking "The Fucking Van" more, ending with an uncredited rippoff of the "Get Smart" theme.

Whatever. Lotta strong material here. Really good. Sometimes, thought, I wish the Stump! one would just stick to the songs. All the other entertainment related things are cool, but dammit, the music is great! (Jonathan Berger)
Broken Arm Productions - 212-592-4751 - brokearm@earthlink.net

Julia Douglass: Fetish for the Underdog

It's a tough call. Julia Douglass is incredible. Her songs are beautiful, haunting, funny, memorable, so on and so forth. She's great. That someone is willing to put money into her, (It appears that Stylus Records is not a Vanity label, that Douglass actually has support), is a great and incredible thing. There are few songwriters so consistent. However...

Well, here's the thing: I was afraid that the CD was going to just be a representation of Douglass' demo from a year or so back. Five songs, with one cover, it was all great, but I didn't want that on CD. I wanted something new. I got it. Though many of the songs on the cassette make it on the CD, they're different version. They're fully versions, with full band and lots of well-recording sounds making their way into the mix.

Now I'm desperately wondering where I put the demo.

This album is good. It's well produced, the sound and lyrics are much clearer than the older release, but... I don't like what's happened to the songs. The arrangements leave little room for the humor that was inherent in most of her lyrics. The poignancy of "Thank You" seems now virtually lost. It was all so sweet and simple before. Now, I'm thinking, to aim at the highest desired objective, the dollar, the songs have been made more radio friendly.

The album's good, the songs are fine, but none of it is as beautiful, as haunting, as funny or memorable as it once was. It's not as unique. (Jonathan Berger) *Contact: Stylus Records - 50 Avenue A, Suite 6C, NY NY 10009 - www.stylusrecords.com*

REVIEWS



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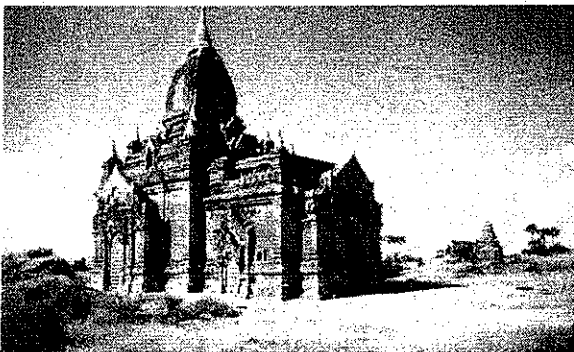
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Buddha Christmas

I didn't get to celebrate any kind of Christmas-type holiday until I was 5 years old. My father was raised Jewish, and as soon as he left his parents, he left his religion too. We were to have no religion in the house. Sure, my Jewish grandmother sent me those chocolate lollipops, but I didn't get any presents for any winter holiday until Daddy moved out.

I remember stringing popcorn and cranberries with my mother, decorating our first "Christmas" tree. We didn't celebrate the usual way because I *knew* there wasn't a Santa Claus (he hadn't bothered visiting me before), and we didn't base our holiday on anything religious. Instead, my 2 sisters, my mom and I would dig through our stockings, open our presents, have a big breakfast and prepare a fancy dinner - all without baby Jesus. It was just good family time and a practice in generosity.

Sounds pretty familiar in this time and space, right? Growing up in the Bible Belt (Columbia, SC), however, I'm afraid we stuck out like a sore thumb. One of my sisters came home one day and told Mom that they had to pray every morning at school. My mom went straight to the principal's office the next day and threatened to sue if they didn't terminate the pushing of their religious beliefs on children. It was a bit of a battle, but soon enough they stopped. I remember asking a teacher what she was talking about when she made a Bible reference in one of my classes. She completely ignored me after that. Oh well, who needs History anyway?



Possible Buddhist Interpretation of Columbia, SC

Strange as it was to live without religion in the south, it got even stranger when my father chucked his love beads for a Buddhist mala (string of beads you count mantras on). My father went on a religious quest right after the divorce. After experiencing many kooky religions and many hippies in the living room, he landed on Buddhism and stuck with it. My father's Buddhist teacher (or "root guru" as we say in

Buddha-land) was Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who was somewhat well-known at Allen Ginsberg's Buddhist teacher. Trungpa Rinpoche was one of the lamas who safely escaped out of Tibet when the Chinese Commies took over in 1959. He set up

shop in Boulder,

by **Michal the Girl**

CO in the early 1970s, and people just seemed to flock to him. My father used to pack us in a car and head out to

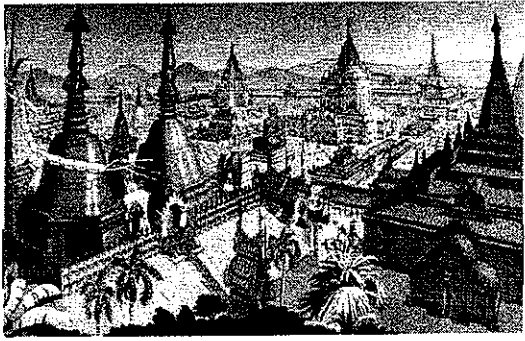
Boulder in the summer. My sisters and I spent our days walking around barefoot and saw our first panhandlers. Eventually, my father moved to Boulder full-time. I stayed in South Carolina with my mom, spending summers and holidays with my dad. As each of my sisters and I graduated high school, we moved out to Boulder.

I asked my father to teach me how to meditate when I was 9 years old and, of course, he obliged. At around 11 or 12, I started attending programs for young adults and started feeling a deep connection to meditation practice, the very core of Buddhist teachings. Some of my friends in high school tried to convert me to Christianity by taking me to church barbeques and other social events. The barbeque was delicious, but I still preferred meditation to bibles.



Before Trungpa Rinpoche died back in 1987, he wanted to set up a "home base" in of all places Halifax, NS, Canada. He said that the atmosphere there was conducive to practicing Buddhism, manifesting a kind of "ordinary magic" and humbleness so seldom found these days. A whole bunch of people moved up there, one of whom was my father. I moved up as well in the early 1990's because... well, most of my immediate family was there by then and I missed them. I grew to love Halifax and understand why our teacher thought we should be there. Once you relax into the slower, spacious (and cold) atmosphere up there, you really begin to enjoy the little pleasures in your life. Like when its sunny... (it rains an awful lot up there).

Our Buddhist population in Halifax was somewhere around 500 or so. That's in a population of a few hundred thousand. It's funny though. We seem to make a big impact on the community wherever we gather. Most people in Boulder or Halifax know a Buddhist or two if they are among the living. These Buddhist residents are professionals with businesses, law practices, software companies, restaurants, cafes and such. We particularly made an impact on Halifax bringing all our American ideas of good food to the city (Thank goodness!). They didn't quite know what to make of us at first, 'cause many of us raucus Americans would go to a restaurant and complain about the shitty Canadian food. I've never seen so much



gravy! However, our demands have produced many good restaurants and now it ain't so bad to go out to dinner there.

Buddha Christmas

by Michael the Girl

Buddhists don't celebrate Christmas obviously, but we do celebrate what we call Children's Day. I always say that we made the holiday up to give our kids a holiday at Christmas time. I think it actually started as a Japanese holiday celebrated on the Winter Solstice for, you guessed it, kids. There are a King and Queen you put on the top of your shrine along with toy animals, candy, or any other offerings that your kid wants to make (my niece really piles the stuff on). On Children's Day morning, you open up presents from the King and Queen and your family. Then you head down to your local Buddhist center for a children's blessing and some kind of entertainment - singing, poetry readings, kids' talent show (always good for a laugh), or whatever. The whole day is usually pretty mellow and nice family time. Then the kids get cranky and their parents take them home for a nap.

Some people in the community have combined the Christmas and Children's Day traditions together. They have a tree and a shrine (some even have a menorah), and receive gifts from Santa, the King and the Queen. This is how my oldest sister decided to celebrate it with her daughter. I have to admit that I wish I had the chance to



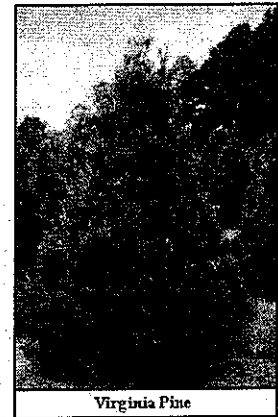
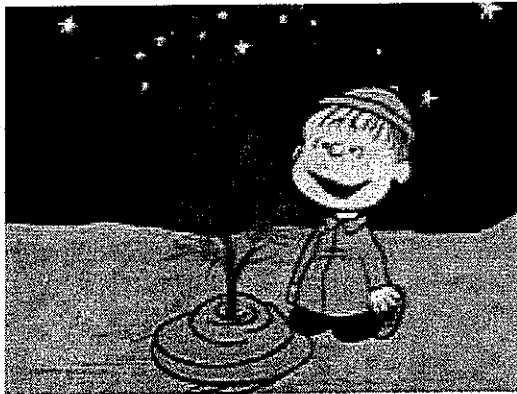
believe in that many mystical gift givers as a child. Although, I'm glad I didn't have to go through the "Santa is really your parents" thing. Now-a-days, my family all gets together to celebrate what I call Christmas. That's what it says on the calendar and that's why we all have off from work. We pile all of our presents

on the floor and go one at a time around the room opening gifts and thanking the givers. Last year we actually had a tree. I can't believe my father allowed it!



Possible Children's Day Gift

I actually love Christmas. I think it's a beautiful season. I really like that the holiday is centered around giving to others. That reminds me of a line in a Buddhist chant that says "Generosity is the virtue that produces peace." It seems that many people these days celebrate their own form of the "Christmas" holidays, mixing different traditions from around the globe. My family is just one of them.



Virginia Pine

When I get back from Halifax this holiday season, I'm going to be greeted by some of my oldest and dearest friends - fellow second generation Buddhists, or "Dharma Brats" as we've been tagged. I have a closeness with these friends that is like no other. I find it comforting to know that we've all individually decided to move to New York around the same time - that I've made the right decision to move here. In Buddhism, we'd call this Dharma Brat convergence an "Auspicious Coincidence". I call that the best Christmas/Children's Day gift I could get. Merry Merry Everyone!



THE LAST OF 1998!

The Sidewalk Café (94 Avenue.A) presents the following schedule.

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

Tues.Dec.8- 7:30- James Low, 8-Charles Aceto, 8:30-Liz Skillman, 9-Carmaig Deforest, 9:30-The Queen Vee, 10-Steve Mosto, 11-Chris Decker

Wed.Dec.9-8-Heather Larkin, 8:30- Lorna Hunt, 9-Bernadette, 9:30- Sean Lee, 10- Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Dec.10- Honky-Tonk Thursday! 8-Cecil's Bait & Tackle, 9-Rob Ryan, 10-Howard Fishman, 11-The Country Jam

Fri.Dec.11-7-**Gilligan Stump CD Release Party**, 9-Lunchin', 10- DA Jones, 11-Ruth Gerson, 12-Porkchop

Sat.Dec.12- 8-Sasha Dobson Trio, 9-Amy Alison and The Maudlins, 10- Shameless, 11- David Dragov, 12- Jeremy Wallace

Sun.Dec.13-8-The Barflys, 8:30- Bruce Balmer, 9-Kevin Kadish, 9:30- Jessie Murphy, 10- Stellan Wahlstrom, 10:30- Eric Sarmiento

Mon.Dec.14- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tues.Dec.15- 8-Shamsi, 9-Carmaig Deforest, 9:30- Ben Willman, 10-Lightening Grey California, (The Antifolk Super Group of Grey Revell, California and Jeff Lightning Lewis) 11- Adam Symons

Wed.Dec.16- 7:30- Mich, 8:30- Amy Carr, 9-Jessica Kane, 9:30- 3-7000-9, 10-Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Dec.17- Honky-Tonk Thursday: 8-The Big Galoots, 9-Rob Ryan, 10- Bill Carny's Jug Addicts, 11- The Country Jam

Fri.Dec.18- 8-Matt Sherwin, 9-Ruth Gerson. 10- Blues To Venus, 11- Joe Bendik and The Heathens, 12- Kenny Young and The Eggplants

Sat.Dec.19- 8-L.E.G. Slurp, 9-Verb, 10- Industrial Teepee 11- David Dragov, 12- The Humans

Sun.Dec.20- 8-Dina Dean, 8:30-Glenn Pettit, 9-Harry Nagle, 9:30-Evan Samuels, 10- Ford Falcon Blue

Mon.Dec.21- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tues.Dec.22-Scott Forman, 8:30-Jesse White, 9-Carmaig Deforest, 9:30-Lezlee, 10-Nancy Falkow

Wed.Dec.23- 7:30- Jack Grace, 8:30- Brian Thomas, 9-Sheela-Na-Gig, 10-Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Dec.24- Closed. Go home to your family, you damned chump!

Fri.Dec.25- **Super Shagadelic Christmas Party!** 9- Anne Husick, 10-The Meanwhiles

Sat.Dec.26- **The Annual Kwanakuhmass Party!** 7:30- Lorijo Manley, 8-Uncle Carl,

9-Gene & Mimi, 10- The Lounge-A-Leers, 11- David Dragov

Sun.Dec.27- 8-TBA, 8:30- Peter Dizozza, 9-Thom Macfarlane, 9:30-Andrew McCann, 10-Bill Popp

Mon.Dec.28 -The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tues.Dec.29- 7:30- Pat Gorman, 8-Gregg Swann,9-Carmaig De Forest, 9:30-Jamie Stellini, 10- Ben Eyler, 11- Malcolm Holcomb

Wed.Dec.30- 8-Jen Alexander, 8:30-Bouva, 9-Jeff Lightening Lewis, 9:30- Joie/DBG, 10- Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Dec31- The Honky-Tonk New Year's Eve Party! 8-The Big Galoots, 9-Rob Ryan,10-TBA

Friday, 1/1- 10-The Swimmies, 11- Sinde Kise, 12- The Bones

Saturday 1/2-8-TBA, 9-Curtis Eller's American Circus, 10-Amiel, 11- Dots Will Echo

Sunday 1/3-8-Gary Heidt, 9-Connor Tribble, 9:30- No One Will Marry You, 10- Janet Vodka, 11- Seth

Monday 1/4- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.

Tuesday 1/5-8-Day With Don, 8:30- Christine, 9-Dina Dean, 9:30- The McCarthys, 10- Gregg Weiss, 10:30-The Unheard Sounds

Wednesday 1/6- 8-Troy Boonsboro, 9-Butch, 9:30- Jack Grace, 10- Rick Shapiro

Thursday 1/7-Honky-Tonk Thursday: 8-TBA, 8:30-Rick Wallace, 9-Rob Ryan

Fri.1/8- 9-Paul McMahon, 9-Jug Addicts, 10- Steve De La Steve & Goatpants, 11- La Sans Culottes

Saturday 1/9- 9- Chris Hamilton, 10-Tom Clark, 11- Fishermen's Stew, 12- Jarrod Gorbel

Sunday 1/10- 7:30-Brian Fitzpatrick, 8:30- Arianna, 9-Thom MacFarlane, 10-Al Rose

All shows are free with a one drink minimum. Call club for information and updates: 212-473-7373

THE FIRST OF 2000!