A few years ago a Los Angeles couple stayed too long in Central Oregon, leaving only one day to get back home and to work. Vowing to stop for nothing but gas, food, and restrooms, they left Bend at full speed. The man drove the first shift and the woman fell asleep. Turning into the quaint little town of Sisters, he saw a sign heralding “The World’s Largest Outdoor Quilt Show.”

“Thank God she’s asleep,” he muttered. Then he saw the first colorful wave of quilts hanging from the wooden buildings and said “I can’t do it.” He pulled over, shook her awake, handed her a camera, and said “It’s a quilt show; you have half an hour.”

He was a good man and he knew, instinctively, what mattered.

The Sisters’ quilt show – just one of many every year – is a sign of the enormous popularity of quilts and quilting. Even the uninitiated man from Los Angeles saw in a flash that this was something big. If you don’t know what quilting is all about, or if you just want to learn more, go to a quilt show. They are a good place to see lots of quilts in a wide range of styles. You’ll see brilliant displays of American patchwork, rich examples of Amish-style quilts, and gorgeous picture quilts. You’ll rapidly become familiar with well-known patterns like double wedding ring, log cabin, stars and crosses, Sunbonnet Sue, Texas star, tumbling blocks, and more. If you are at a contra or square dancer or a folk musician, some of the names will be like dances and tunes you know.

Quilt shows occur all over the country, all year long. Some are big and some are small but, they are all wonderful. In Southern California you can probably find at least one a month put on by quilting groups, museums, church bazaars, county fairs and art galleries. Work for them in your newspaper’s calendar.

Besides being just plain fun, they’ll give you a feeling for the skill, inventiveness, cultural heritage, color sense, and artistry of the local quilters.

If you can’t wait for a show to see quilts, visit your local quilt shop. Find a quilting guild and see what they’re working on. Go to the library.

Quilting has been around for thousands of years or more, but fabric is fragile. It hasn’t lingered to tell the stories we’ve learned from the more durable tools, pottery, and bones of our ancestors. An “ancient” example of quilting – a Mongolian rug – was found in 1924, well preserved in a tomb. It was a little over 2000 years old, just a baby compared to a million-year old Stone Age axe.

We can speculate, however, that when people began using woven fabrics instead of animal fur, they got pretty cold before they learned to pad their fabrics with fluff. The fluff could have been wool, cotton, cat tail fibers, or dried grass. Whatever it was, it would have inevitably slumped to the hems, leaving the top of a garment thin and cold and the bottom lumpy. Someone finally figured out that additional “hems” all over the garment would separate and stabilize the insulation. Thus basic quilting was invented. These quilted fabrics became shoes, petticoats, jackets, blankets, rugs, and even armor for soldiers.

In fact, it was probably soldiers that inadvertently introduced the western world to decorative quilting. Soldiers wore quilted garments as light, protective armor or as padding against the weight of heavy metal armor. They even sandwiched sheets of iron between the layers of weskins to deflect arrows or spears

When the Crusades to save the holy land began in 11 A.D., the soldiers headed east wearing clothing of wool and linen, the only fabrics that Western Europe produced. When their garments wore out, they patched them with any scraps of fabric they could find. These patches would have grown more exciting as the soldiers trudged farther east and closer to the home of Asia’s elegant silks and cottons. The Crusaders incorporated the new fabrics and ornate embroidery stitches into their clothing and brought home a new art form as well as a hunger for the new materials.

By the 17th century, much European clothing was elegant, made of fine cottons and silks embroidered in gold. Quilted bedcoverings were also made of fine fabrics and lavishly embroidered in patterns adapted from Far Eastern ones. The colonists left this abundance and came to America where there was very little fabric, elegant or otherwise. Women trying to keep their families warm forced to use and re-use all the fabric they had, the pieces growing ever smaller. They redesigned their Old World patterns to accommodate the smaller pieces and, out of scarcity, American patchwork was born.

Americans quilted routinely from colonial days till around the Second World War, then took time out. With central heating, electric blankets, and television, who needed quilts or had time to make them? Mainstream America flowed on, giving little, if any, thought to quilts. For all they knew, quilts were extinct. But the quilters had started traditions that wouldn’t die just because their quilts were no longer needed for survival. Survival wasn’t their product anyway. They’d known that all along. They tucked their babies into bed at night, finished their chores, brought out their sewing baskets and made ART. They stitched beauty and told stories. They paid homage, saved memories, and said hello and goodbye to babies and friends. They captured the patterns and the colors, the joys and irritations of their days. And they kept their families warm.

What a blessing it was that quilts were necessary for so long. It gave women time to socialize, to relax, to be creative. It gave them time to develop patterns and traditions and to pass these on. Without this endless, essential task, women would have sacrificed the creative pleasures of quilting and turned their attention to more pressing and onerous work.

Somewhere around mid-century, people in the mainstream began to realize what a treasure the old quilts were. Art dealers bought them. Galleries displayed them. Ethnographers, photographers, collectors, and folklorists began interviewing quilters and their families and recording their stories. They didn’t just learn about patterns and fabric; they uncovered family and social history. Just as a child learns from the patches on Granny’s old quilt what his family wore to work and play, so have the historians learned about broader patterns and trends.

Meanwhile, the families that had never stopped quilting kept on. Now that it was regarded as an art form, classes formed...
Can you believe it? It’s been a year since we published the first issue of FolkWorks and we’ve been very pleased with the results. We’ve gotten positive feedback from many people, some who have known for years and many others who we’ve never met. We are also pleased at the willingness of people to write articles and columns, and others to help us edit. And we can never give enough thanks to Alan Stone and his family who we’re all but driven crazy every other month this past year.

Over the year, we have also learned a lot. Not just what it takes to publish a newspaper, but what it takes to keep it going. We wake up nearly every day thinking of new ideas, ways to get the word out, ways to get support; ideas for articles; people we could approach to help us distribute or sell advertising, etc.

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I N T E R V I E W

PETER CASE

BY GAILI SCHOEN

Peter Case has been called “the most articulate singer-songwriter working in the American Folk Tradition these days” by writer Peter North. He has recently released Avalon Blues: A Tribute to Mississippi John Hurt, a compilation album of artists performing songs by the old Bluesman John Hurt. And also, Thank You St. Jude, Peter’s latest solo album. Peter lives in Santa Monica, CA.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the two albums you’ve released this year. Let’s start with Thank You St. Jude.

It’s a record we made on tour. I’ve been on the road with violinist David Peralta who I’ve worked with for a few years.

He’s really great. I like his playing a lot. It sounds like fiddling, but it feels a little different.

He’s really good. He’s more of a violinist than a fiddler; he’s got a pretty deep tone with a lot of body to it, and he’s a pretty explosive player; so it’s really different. So we went on tour and I just thought we should document this. We had two afternoons off in San Francisco and we booked a studio, and we just played live. We had a couple of other sessions down in L.A. to record with my drummer, and the whole thing was finished in about 4 sessions. Some of the songs we’ve recorded before, but I think they’re better versions than some of those that were on my old Geffen recordings because it’s really the way I sound. On Geffen, whoever was the producer would come in to try to really dress things up, you know. On my first record, it was suggested that I not even play on some of the songs, just let the musicians play and I just sing.

(Gaili laughing)

They thought that was more like the “big time.” They thought I was maybe a little too primitive, and maybe I was a bit more primitive than I am now, but really what I insist on now is that the record sounds like what I sound like when they come to see me.

Yes, I’m glad that you’re producing your own stuff now because it’s not as slick, but it feels more emotional and more honest.

Yeah, we pretty much just cut it all live now, and I think it’s more exciting that way, and it’s also truer to what I do. It’s not so much of an intellectual exercise.

You know, it feels like listening to a group of great musicians jamming in your living room.

Yeah, they’re all first or second takes.

Wow, amazing. Why do you call the album, Thank You St. Jude?

Because St. Jude is the Patron Saint of lost causes.

(Gaili laughing)

Yeah, sometimes I feel like I’m out there working in that category once in awhile. He’s gotten me through a few times, but I won’t go into that too much! But I thought I’d take the opportunity to thank him publicly. If you’re ever in a really bad place you can pray to a saint. St. Jude or St. Francis. In fact I was just at St. Francis’ grave over in Assisi.

Really? You were in Italy?

Yeah, I took a trio to Italy on tour. We were on our way to Recanati and went out of our way a little bit to Assisi.

Wow, did you get a good response from the Italians? Are they different from American audiences would you say?

Yeah, I find that different countries are more or less attuned to American music. For example when you go to Dublin or anywhere in Ireland, they’re really into the songwriting itself, and the song. They love the song, And in Italy, it’s similar to Ireland, even though there’s a language difference. There’s a huge connection they have to song, that you don’t really get in Germany, for example. If you definitely get it in Ireland, which is kind of like a songwriters’ spiritual home, you know? And for some reason that’s also true in Italy, too. It seems like my music strikes a chord in Italy that works, so that’s nice.

How would you compare them with an audience here in Southern California?

Well, I love L.A., this is my hometown. But when you play here and in other places in California, audiences are a little more reserved. They have a little bit more of a cool attitude. But when you play here and in other places, audiences would you say?

They’re a little bit more reserved. They have a little bit more of a Well, I love LA, this is my hometown. But when you play here and in other places, audiences would you say?

Yeah, I find that different countries are more or less attuned to American music. For example when you go to Dublin or anywhere in Ireland, they’re really into the songwriting itself, and the song. They love the song, And in Italy, it’s similar to Ireland, even though there’s a language difference. There’s a huge connection they have to song, that you don’t really get in Germany, for example. If you definitely get it in Ireland, which is kind of like a songwriters’ spiritual home, you know? And for some reason that’s also true in Italy, too. It seems like my music strikes a chord in Italy that works, so that’s nice.

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Well, I love L.A., this is my hometown. But when you play here and in other places in California, audiences are a little more reserved. They have a little bit more of a “hip-guard” on, you know. They’re a bit more “show-business” than you’d think. California may be the true show-business state. You have to work hard to break them down.

That’s funny isn’t it? And we think it’s the east coast that’s uptight! Anyway, I want to talk about some of the songs on your album. I love “Beyond the Blues.” It’s just beautiful.

Thanks. That was one of the old Geffen ones that went out of print so I rerecorded it. It’s one of the most popular songs, so we wanted to put it back on the play list.

I love the lyrics:

The old man on the corner is stinging my leg
He’s playing guitar with a rusty old knife
Each line that he sings rhymes with truth

And the promise of something beyond the blues
I think everyone can relate to that. You know, the hope that our lives will add up to more than just the sum total of our problems. How would you play with a rusty old knife?

It would be playing slide guitar with a rusty knife.

OK, right. Now I noticed that you recorded 3 tunes from 1928.

Yeah, 1928 was the year before the great depression. Some people think that it was the end of true folk music, before it was hugely influenced by the national media. Then by the time they started recording after the Great Depression, a lot of things changed. There’s a Charlie Poole song; Charlie Poole was one of the original really popular country performers in North Carolina. It’s sort of a poppy version of the Frankie and Johnny story. Then there’s a Sleepy John Estes song that a lot of people have recorded, but he wrote it originally, that’s sometimes called “Trouble No More” or other people call it “Some Day Baby.”

I love the percussion on that one.

Yeah, that’s this guy Erik Nielsen who plays with Queen Ida. He’s got a pretty rockin’ singer. Ever since I was a kid I’ve been singing a song by him called “Broke and Hungry, Ragged, and Dirty too”

PETER CASE
SEARCHING FOR THE LOST CHORD I FOUND THE BEST TEACHER – MYSELF.

Suppose you play a chording instrument, perhaps the guitar, and you know a few chords you learned from a friend or from a book. If you could figure out how those chords came to be then you could create your own chords and essentially be your own teacher.

With a chord you already know already, like a C chord, and “de-construct” it. This is similar to the approach used by computer hackers. They take a computer program and “reverse-engineer” it to reveal its inner workings. Once they know this they are in control and that’s where you want to be with music—in control. See Fig. 1 below to see what a C chord looks like on the guitar. Let’s “de-construct” it!

First, find what notes are being played to make this chord. Start with the names of the open (unfretted) strings and work to from there. The open strings on the guitar are (from lowest to highest) E A D G B E. What you want to do is to find all of the C, E and G notes. On the chord chart for C, the 6th or lowest string is already open E but many chord charts suggest not playing this string, and do so by placing an “X” above that string. The open 5th string is an A, so count up 3 frets, A, B, C. To get a C, then, the 5th string is played at the 3rd fret. The 4th string starts out as D, move up two frets through D# to E. So, the 4th string is playing E. The 3rd string remains an open G. The 2nd string starts as B and moves up one fret to C1. The 1st string is another open E. Here are the notes, string-by-string, that made up our C chord on the guitar: E C E G C E. Looking at our major scale we can see that this is every other note or the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of our C scale. This 1-3-5 triad should work with any major key scale.

Now let’s go the other direction to “construct” a G major chord. If you have been following this series of articles (available at www.folkworks.org), you should already know how to write out a G major scale. From there you take every other note to get the 1-3-5 triad of G-B-D. Going back to the guitar we can now turn this triad into a guitar chord. The bottom or 6th string is an E when open. We need it to be a G, a B or a D. So, moving up the guitar neck a fret at a time, we go from E to F to F# to G, leaving us at the 3rd fret on the 6th string. The 5th string starts as an open A and we move up to A#, then B. So the 5th string is played on the 2nd fret. The 4th string is an open D, the 3rd string is an open G and the 2nd string is an open B. All of them can stay open since they are already part of a G chord. The 1st or highest string is another open E and, like the 6th string, winds up on the 3rd fret to make a G. Your guitar chord should now look like the G chord chart (Fig. 2 below).

With what you know about these parts about constructing major scales and now the 1-3-5 major triad from this article, you should be able to generate the major triads or chords in all the keys. You’ll find it useful to do that as an exercise so that you will have a list of the notes for all the major chords. Also you now know enough that you should be able to pick up any chording stringed instrument and, once you know the names of the open strings, figure out your own chords. Another advantage of making up your own chords is that you will be able to see optional ways to play the chords rather than be stuck with the versions offered by standard chord charts. We will continue this discussion in the next article, so please stay tuned.

To download 14-23 page samples of the first three books.

Harlynne Geisler has created a program of All-American Folktales for schools and public libraries. For more information contact her at storybag@jauns.com or 856-569-9399. Her website is www.storybag.for-kids.com.
FATHERS OF FOLKLORE

Where have all the folksongs gone, long time passing?
Where have all the folksongs gone, long time ago?
Where have all the folksongs gone?
Gone to collectors, every one!

When will they ever learn...
Where have the collections gone?
...Gone to archives, every one

Where have all the archives gone?
...Pop stars raid them, every one

Where have all the pop songs gone?
...Gone to records, every one

Where have all the records gone?
...Folks have bought them, every one

Where have all the pop songs gone?
...Folks are singing them, every one

Joe Hickerson, retired head of the Archive of Folklife at the Library of Congress, wrote this parody to illustrate the circular interweavings of raw folklore, scholarship, and popular culture. He sang it at the Library on November 16, 2001, during a two-day conference celebrating the legacy and centenary of Benjamin Botkin, who was head of the Folk Song Archive in the early 1940s, following Alan Lomax.

Botkin may be best known for his Treasury of American Folklife, published in 1944 and still in print. His preferred term “folklife” united “folklore and the life from which it springs,” and he urged historians and sociologists to honor public folklife: common people’s leisure activities and workplace traditions as well as their music, dance, and literature. For more information about this influential visionary, go to www.loc.gov/loc/folklife/botkin.

The conference closed with a panel discussion of a unique summer camp for children in upstate New York—Camp Woodland—whose involvement with local folklore embodied Botkin’s ideas and predated the better-known Foxfire program. My father, Norman Cazden, was music director at the camp from 1945 to 1960, and his decades of immersion in Lomax-style musicology brought me to folk music.

Norman and his colleague, Herbert Haufrecht, collected hundreds of oral traditions songs in the Catskill Mountain region. They brought dozens of city-bred campers to meet aging rural singers and help transcribe song lyrics. The collection was nearly ready for publication when Norman died in 1980, and Haufrecht saw the project to completion. The fully annotated Folk Songs of the Catskills, which includes a description of the camp by its director, Norman Studer, and a Forward by frequent camp visitor Pete Seeger, was published in 1982 by SUNY Press. A few copies are still available: log onto www.sunypress.org.

When Haufrecht died in 1998, his widow decided to honor him with a CD of music from the collection. So, in the spring of 2000, I was thrilled to join Seeger, Ronnie Gilbert, Jay Unger and Molly Mason, Eric Weissberg, Bob and Louise DeCormier, Hickerson and others in the final singalong. Their father, musicologist Charles Hickerson, had mentored both Botkin and my father, so the personal roots and potential visionary, go to www.loc.gov/folklife/botkin.

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The events of September 11, 2001 have already entered American folklife via oral history, photojournalism, concerts, and essays both in print and online—multi-faceted responses that justify Botkin’s faith in the “freshness and nobility” of ordinary people. These days, activities such as those featured in FOLKWORKS feel more precious than ever. The rich variety of folklife projects that nourish our country’s soul are part of Botkin’s enduring gift to democracy.

Look for my Songs of the Catskills workshop at the CTMS Summer Solstice Festival in June 2002. Buy FOLKWORKS subscriptions and support our advertisers to help keep the lore flowing. And if you have questions or topics about singing that you’d like to see in this column, please email me at jcazden@earthlink.net. May all our voices be heard!
which I got off an album when I was about 19, when I used to sing on the street a lot. And he’s just a screaming singer on the record that he made of that in the early 60s when I guess he was about 55 or 60. And made this record that just rocked with a jug band with a harmonica player Hammy Nixon and Yank Rachel who is a really famous mandolin player. Sleepy John is one of my favorites so I wanted to include him.

That’s great. I’ll check him out. Let’s move on to your album “Avalon Blues: a tribute to Mississippi John Hurt.” I love Mississippi John Hurt. What made you decide to do this tribute?

Well, I’ve loved Mississippi John Hurt ever since I was a kid and I found the record when I was about 14, and it just killed me. I’d never heard The Blues before and I just loved it; it just opened up that whole world. But it was more than just the blues, it was all-American music. ‘Cause John Hurt doesn’t just play blues, he’s what you call a “songster;” he actually plays songs, and plays fiddle music, and what was called country music, and he plays Gospel stuff, and pop songs of the day, and he could play dances, and he was just an all-around songster. His music has got an incredible gentle but really insistent swing and drive to it that I just found really compelling as a kid. There’s a song I’ve always loved from his first record called “Payday” that Bill Morrissey sings on this record. It’s about a guy who’s in all this trouble but he’s gonna straighten it all out on payday, you know what I mean?

Yeah, that’s great. Some of those old blues guys were really hard, bitter people. But John Hurt somehow came through that whole period of living in Mississippi and having his career fall apart in ’28 and having to go back to work on the train and on farms and stuff. He came through it with a really strong spirit and he kept his music alive for years, just on his own locally, without a lot of outside support. And he got better as the years went on and when he finally did make it back recording again in the early 60s and he was really really great.

He sure is. You know when I was first dating my husband I asked him to play me his favorite 3 albums, and one of them was a Mississippi John Hurt album, and I thought, “oh, I like this guy!”

Really? That’s cool.

Peter, I was looking on your website (www.petercase.com) and saw that you’re doing some songwriting workshops at McCabe’s.

Tell me about it.

Well it’s a 6-week course and it’s pretty in depth, and we write songs in the class and workshop them in the class.

So do you get mostly experienced songwriters, or is it for beginners, too?

Yeah, it’s pretty much an all level kind of thing. It tends to be more advanced, but some people are beginners coming from other creative fields. Like we’ve had screenwriters and architects that wanted to get into it. We just try to open doors and solve whatever creative problems people are having. I show people how to utilize the ideas they have as opposed to racking their brains in a torturous kind of way, It’s a pretty fun class.

When’s the class?

I think it’s on Saturdays at 3:00 and there might be one on Tuesday night if the Saturday one fills up. People can call McCabe’s or Email me at case_peter@hotmail.com if they have any questions about it.

If people want to buy your albums is that the best place to find them?

Yeah, they can go to my website and buy any of my records there. It’ll be a better price there than they can get from Tower or something. Or they have them at stores or at my gigs, but the website is the best place.

So what’s coming up next for you?

I’m working on a new album. Hopefully it will come out in May, and it seems like these songs will be pretty different from the last bunch. Everything’s changed after September 11th, you know? It almost seems like we need something else after that. It’s so weird, like the whole world tilted on its axis for a moment there. But that’s sort of the function of music, to help us deal with this stuff.

Yeah, whatever’s happening in the world is reflected in the art of the time.

I’ve always thought that music is a way for people of our generation to establish an emotional home you know? An emotional center where you can feel things, and it’s okay.

Gaili Schoen is a musician and film composer living in Santa Monica. Her two latest films, Festival in Cannes and The Chocolate Fairy will appear in theaters this Spring.

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Feb. 14th

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Doez Alvin with guest Jake Logan and Doug MacLeod - Sat., Jan. 12th (NC)
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Peter Case with guest Christopher Alport - Sat., Feb. 16th at Throop Folk & Roots Festival at the Performing Arts Center
Cal State University, Pomona, Sat, March 2nd from 11:00 PM. Some of the finest musicians in the acoustic music world come together for this one-day festival. A Prairie Home Companion’s Robin & Linda Williams and Their Fine Group, Irish traditional singer Karan Casey, acoustic bluesman Geoff Muldaur & Richard Greene, the eclectic sounds of The Waybacks, and virtuoso fiddler Richard Greene and Ryan McKennon will perform during the day and evening. Tickets are $25, $32 and $39 (Reserved Seats)
Neighborhood Church, 301 N Orange Grove Blvd, Pasadena Throop Concert Hall, 309 S. Los Robles Ave, Pasadena
Concerts start at 8:00 P.M. - Tickets $18 adv. / $19 at door unless listed otherwise.

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Ancient Chord Music

Music reviews written for this column mainly concentrate on the folk music realms of Celtic, but will also occasionally venture into Scandinavian, Eastern European and the Middle East. Cross-overs with artists with a large folk music element and influence will also be addressed. This column will not be closed to any folk or world music genres, so you may also see reviews by noteworthy artists that may not reach beyond the previously mentioned traditions.

The purpose of this column is to only review new releases by popular artists in the aforementioned genres, but also to introduce quality releases by other folk artists. These are the artists whose music would be available at local audio music shops due to domestic and/or international fractional distribution restrictions. I believe that many folk music enthusiasts in Los Angeles region would embrace these artists, if only they knew of their existence, and how to obtain their music.

All artists in these music fields, whether established or major labels or independently produced are welcome to send FolkWorks their music for review consideration. Promotional material can be sent to FolkWorks at P.O. Box 55051 Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 or directly to the reviewer, Dennis R. Stone. Ancient Chord Music P.O. Box 5032. Inquiries and/or feedback are welcome by writing to FolkWorks or the reviewer at the previously mentioned mailing addresses or by email at: AncChord@comcast.net.

CD REVIEWS

CD and Concert Reviews by Dennis R. Stone

Stonecircle Celtic Fiddle Festival

It was ten years ago, 1992, when three of the world's most renowned Celtic fiddlers decided to join forces. Each fiddler had shown an interest in learning from, and performing with musicians from Celtic regions other than their own. The three fiddlers agreed to off to do one tour of the U.S., just for the fun of it. Accompanying them was a guitarist who served as the rhythm section. Soon into this tour the fiddles decided that they were really enjoying themselves and before the tour was finished a second tour had been planned. In addition, a European tour was confirmed. Some of the concerts from that first U.S. tour were recorded and a CD was released.

This show highlighting the Celtic fiddle music from Ireland, Scotland and Brittany could prove to be an enjoyable and educational experience for their audiences, as well. The folks at these shows were very lucky to hear this wide variety of instrumental traditional music. This experience alone might have been a great draw. But, of course, the real draw was who these three fiddlers were: Irish fiddler Kevin Burke, Scottish violinist Johnny Cunningham and Breton fiddler Christian LeMaire. They need no introduction. The bands that these fiddlers had been associated with (and, in some cases, still are) include The Bothy Band, Patrick Street, Irish Broadcaster and Journalist John O'Regan also included. The vinyl disc cover and interior liner notes. An extensive article about the band by the famous Irish Broadcaster and Journalist John O'Regan also included.

Each of the guitarists is a renowned musician on his own right: John McGann, Soíg Siberil, Tony McManus, Nicolas Quemener and currently Ged Foley. Following the show's success, the fiddlers decided to join forces. Each fiddler had shown an interest in learning from, and performing with musicians from Celtic regions other than their own. The three fiddlers agreed to off to do one tour of the U.S., just for the fun of it. Accompanying them was a guitarist who served as the rhythm section. Soon into this tour the fiddles decided that they were really enjoying themselves and before the tour was finished a second tour had been planned. In addition, a European tour was confirmed. Some of the concerts from that first U.S. tour were recorded and a CD was released.

The recipe for the live performances is as follows. One of the fiddlers played a short set with the accompanying guitarist. After he ends his set, all three fiddlers perform a set together, then the next fiddler performs his set, etc. Sometimes, to change the pace, the guitarist performs a solo set. The show builds up to the blaz- ing finale with all three fiddlers performing together. Their sound is unique and powerful, the only being change being the guitarists who toured and recorded with them. Each of the guitarists is a renowned musician on his own right: John McGann, Soíg Siberil, Tony McManus, Nicolas Quemener and currently Ged Foley.

After so many successful tours in Europe and America during the nineties, in 1998 the group recorded a second live album aptly named 'Encore', one again to criti- cal acclaim. The new 'CFF CD 'Rendezvous' has all the same successful ingredi- ents as the two previous albums, with one difference. Instead of producing a record- ing of their live concerts, they took their concert formula and brought it to the stu- dio. In January 2001, all three fiddlers agreed to rendezvous (hence the title), with guitarist Ged Foley, at Sound Station 7 in Providence, Rhode Island. Does it work? Obviously! How could you miss with music performed by these masters?

Highlights include a gorgeous rendition of the Scottish song 'The Skye Boat Song', the rousing Irish dance tunes 'Old Alices in Winter / Knocknagow Jig', and two well known Italian airs: 'La Forza' and 'Camarina'. In fact, many of these tunes bring to mind the music of Celtic instruments that were played in medieval times. The fiddles show why they are such an integral part of Celtic music, creating their own unique style that is a joy to listen to. The CD was released in November, 2001.

RENOUVE

I have just finished a complete album of Celtic music by the group Stonecircle. Their new CD 'Stonecircle' is just what the named implies. It is the chemical blend from the heart and souls of its musicians that produces an essence of life unique to this band. The resulting sound can be ethereal and ancient, as well danceable, lively and modern. The band consists of George Schoemaker-12-string guitar, harmonica, vocals; Lauren Buffington-Jones-vocals; Nina Cooley-flute, whistles, percussion, vocals; Krista Baker-fiddle; and Irminsul-celtic harp, keyboards. Over the years there have been several personnel changes, with original members George Schoemaker, fiddler and vocalist Lauren Buffington-Jones being the guiding forces of the band. Many of the so-called 'New Celtic' bands fail in the attempt to merge the old traditional forms with the new. Stonecircle merges these styles effortlessly, producing an eclectic blend of quality New Age and Celtic music. All of the musicians add their touch. George Schoemaker's 12-string guitar is mesmerizing, as is Lauren Buffington-Jones's magical vocals, which have been compared to the voice of Loreena McKennit. Nina Cooley's flutes and whistles are pure and transparent, transporting you to the land of the fairies at no time at all. Krista Baker's fiddle can be elegant on the ears and quiet pieces, but pagan and wild on the dance tunes. The beautiful Celtic harp and droming keyboards sounds from Irminsul will transport you to other lands, all at once.

I can only describe 'Alchemy' as a magical listening experience from beginning to end. All of the tracks are excellent. Highlights to note include the set called 'Bachalav' which successfully merges a classical Bach piece with several Irish dance tunes. Also excellent is the original inimus air called 'My Tapestry'. The George Schoemaker original, 'The Homecoming', is turned to magic by the stunning voice of Lauren Buffington-Jones. Mr. Schoemaker takes his turn with lead vocals in French on 'Pierre de Grenoble', the source of this song coming from the legendary French folk-rock group 'Malicome'. The song closes with a traditional Breton-Celtic dance tune 'Sclariuztula/ Marrazzula'. The CD lists eleven tracks in total, but there are actually twelve. The surprise track is a beautiful rendition of the Peter Jung air 'Fat Away', performed in recent years by many Celtic bands, but sel- dom as good as this version.

Along with the surprise quality of this musical effort is the beautifully artistic cover and interior liner notes. An extensive article about the band by the famous Irish Broadcaster and Journalist John O'Regan also included.

Stonecircle's 'Alchemy' is the resulting gem from this outstanding group. They are obviously an important, and as yet fairly unknown group in the American Celtic music scene, and an energy force that should be recognized and reckoned with.

Overall a well produced and balanced effort.

RATING: EXCELLENT

MUSIC RATINGS GUIDE

★★ POOR Unbearable to listen to.
★★★ Fair or two tracks acceptable, the rest garbage.
★★★★ Good Same as Fair, with more favorable tracks, but still uneven.
★★★★★ Overall a well produced and balanced effort.
★★★★★★ The Gods were watching over this creation. Basically flawless joy from beginning to end, with an apparent effort to make it that way. A work of art that will last a lifetime. Highly recommended.

The hurdy gurdy, known in France as the vielle or vielle a roue, is an ancient instrument which is undergoing a modern renaissance in Europe and America. First, to dispel a popular misconception: the hurdy gurdy was not played by the organ grinder or by monkey. They used a large music box operated by a crank. Today's hurdy gurdy is roughly the same as those built in the middle ages. It has three strings which are caused to vibrate by a resined wheel turned by a crank. The mechanism is built into the sound board. The instrument is held in the lap with a strap to hold it steady. The case can be square, lute back, or flat back with a guitar or fiddle shape. Forms of the vielle a roue existed not only in France, but in Germany, Italy, Britain, Russia, Spain and Hungary. An important variant instrument is the Swedish nyckelharpa which was developed around the sixteenth century. It has keys and is played with a short bow. It is enjoying a revival of interest and new custom made instruments are now available.

The origins of the hurdy gurdy are unknown but one theory says that when the Moors invaded Spain they brought with them many stringed and bowed instruments. There is no proof however, that the vielle a roue was one of them, but the possibility exists that something similar arrived in Spain at that time and dispersed throughout Europe along the pilgrim's roads.

THE HURDY GURDY'S ANCIENT ROOTS

The earliest known form of the vielle a roue was called an organistrum and bore little resemblance to the modern one. It was so large that one person turned the crank and another played the keys. The wooden keys were arranged in various ways depending on whether secular or religious music was to be played. The organistrum was only capable of playing slow melodies and simple harmony because of the hard key action. It's main use was in the medieval church. The first mention of the organistrum was in a construction manual by Odo of Cluny which was discovered in the twelfth century and possibly written in the tenth century. There are also other depictions dating from the twelfth century. During the thirteenth century, the organistrum was redesigned to hold a smaller crank, which encouraged use by blind and itinerant musicians. The improved key action with drone accompaniment made it ideal for dance music which was adopted for popular and folk music of the day, and use in the church diminished. Even the name organistrum had died out by the fourteenth century. In France, it was known as a symphonia until it was abandoned for popular music in the late fifteenth century. One can surmise, that at this time, the name changed to vielle a roue, which is still used today. The vielle was used only for folk music by peasants and street musicians. It was known all over Europe by about 1650 but remained a peasant instrument for the next one hundred years. By this time the design had standardized to the size and format familiar today.

THE VIELLE A ROUE'S REBIRTH

Although the vielle a roue was mentioned frequently as a beggars instrument in the early seventeenth century, it appeared occasionally at the royal court along with other organs. Organists were providing music for company the new pastoral plays. Gradually, courtiers discovered the Arcadian idea of rural bliss gained favor at court. Shepherds and milkmaids were portrayed passing the time at court. She remained a peasant instrument for the next one hundred years. It was adopted for popular and folk music of the thirteenth century, the organistrum was redesigned to a construction manual by Odo of Cluny. The organistrum was only capable of playing slow melodies and simple harmony. Many fine instruments were manufactured during this period.

This renaissance of the hurdy gurdy continued until the reign of Louis XV was over in 1778. The next king, Louis XVI, was rather puritanical and did not participate in the diversions of the court. The amusements continued under Marie Antoinne but her tastes changed to the more poetic. His ideas gained favor at court but became twisted. The aristocrats became accomplished performers on these instruments.

During the mid-seventeenth century, writers like Jean Jacque Rousseau castigated the corruption and lax morals at court. He advocated a return to the simple rural life where virtue and integrity came from hard work. He also encouraged the display of sentiment and emotion to further enhance the delicacy of one's character. His ideas gained favor at court but became twisted.

THE HURDY GURDY'S REBIRTH

During the vielle a roué's favor at court, Paris instrument makers started to make elegant instruments with fancy inlay and carving. The mechanism was built into guitar and lute bodies, giving the instrument a better tone. Many fine instruments were manufactured during this period.

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XENÖZ

January-February 2002

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PICKS OF THE MONTH

ARLO GUTHRIE (February 2)
Son of Woody Guthrie, author of “Alice’s Restaurant.” Arlo’s stories get better every year.

MICHAEL DOUCET – BEAUSOLEIL (February 14)
America’s most popular Cajun group. Beausoleil has preserved the rich Cajun musical traditions of Louisiana, while adding elements of zydeco, New Orleans jazz, Tex-Mex, country, blues and more. A Prairie Home Companion’s Garrison Keillor has dubbed them “the best Cajun band in the world.”

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN (February 17)
Music from the motion picture “O Brother Where Art Thou.”

ALLISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION, EMMYLOU HARRIS, RALPH STANLEY (February 2)
Music from the motion picture “O Brother Where Art Thou.”

SON OF WOODY GUTHRIE, ARLO GUTHRIE (February 2)
Son of Woody Guthrie, author of “Alice’s Restaurant.” Arlo’s stories get better every year.

ANNA POULOS & NIKOS SAVvas (SE)
A Greek-American duo presenting an exciting and eclectic mix of Greek music and dance.

CONTRA (ODG)
International (ODG)
Mediterranean (ODG)
International (ODG)
Balkan (ODG)

LISA HALEY & ZYDECATS (SE)
A New Orleans wheeling and dealing trad music band featuring Lisa Haley on vocals and clarinet.

CHRIS SMITHER (SE)
Music from the motion picture “O Brother Where Art Thou.”

RAFAELI LAMA, CAZON CALAF 2002 (SE)
International (ODG)
Italian (ODG)
Spanish (ODG)

LUNASA (February 23)
“The hottest Irish acoustic group on the planet.” - The Irish Voice.
Randal Bays: An Authenticity of Spirit

by Larry Hill

Randal Bays comes at you like a summer squall: a little anticipation and suddenly you’re drenched. He leads you through a complex musical experience: frolicsome, introspective, laments, and plain break-neck fun, and he leaves you with a sense of stimulated well-being. Widely known as the superb guitar accompanist on Martin Hayes’ 1993 debut album, Randal first embraced the Irish fiddle more than twenty years ago, devoting both personal and professional focus to the intricacies and subtle nuances of this tradition.

With the winter 1997/98 release of his own album, Out of the Woods (reviewed in Fiddler Magazine, Spring 1998), he placed himself clearly among the best Irish fiddlers of his generation. He teaches and performs full-time, both here and abroad. He produces recordings for his own label, Foxglove. Witty and engaging, he seeks the smaller stage and the more intimate setting, where performer, music, and audience merge. The following is condensed from a two hour conversation last spring.

You read music, but you learn by ear?

I pick up things pretty immediately by ear. I think in Irish traditional music that it’s important to learn the music that way and not rely on written sources. I use written sources but mainly as reminders. Joel Bernstein and I both keep these little books that we note down tunes in. They’re like little reminders, lest you forget what you used to play.

You take musical dictation?

Yeah. I used to go to sessions, and I’d sit in the background with a little notebook and write down tunes as they went by. It’s better than tapping because you actually get it into your head while you are writing it down. It is not anything like an inborn skill. It’s just a matter of ear training and practice, hearing intervals and relationships. I’m confident that anybody who is a pretty good musician can train his ear to do that.

I think ear training is really important. I’ve had some students who were trained musicians, classical musicians, who wanted to learn everything from printed sources. I used to write tunes out for them, but I got out of doing that because I’d find myself sitting there, and they wouldn’t actually remember the music. They’d go to sessions, and they couldn’t play. Whereas, if I’d teach them the tune by note — get that phrase, get that phrase — they’d have it in their mind, and build up a session repertoire, and they could actually let it into the present. I mean we’re seeing the end of it now, unfortunately. So it has some element of that.

The Irish tradition is a living tradition, unlike some of those that died out and got forgotten. When you play music, regardless of your technical level, the music that comes out is who you are. So, as you go into this stuff, years go by, you’re refining your musical expression, but it’s becoming more and more who you are. It is kind of like your character, your personality, gets into it and becomes part of the process. It’s important to keep that in mind from the beginning. No matter how much of a beginner you are, what you are playing is expressing who you are to the world. You can’t hope it’s going to be anything other than that. It’s just the way it is. Anyway, it’s fun.

Tell me about Foxglove Records.

It’s a very low key thing. I made an album. It wasn’t accepted by either of the two big East coast labels, so I decided I’d just make up a label. Then Dale Russ made an album, and we put it on the label. Same with the Suffering Gaels. Then Joel Bernstein and I as the Rashers. Then Joby’s Heaven. It never was intended to turn into anything like a big business. I don’t have the time or energy. I’m too busy making music and I don’t want that to change. I don’t want to be a business man sitting around selling albums. So, it’s possible other people will get involved and turn it into a business, or it could stay a very minor thing.

This has done for those of us in the Northwest — we’ve all been playing for a long time, and the quality of what we do is right up there with anybody else — this has given us a chance to have a little credibility, visibility. Maybe it will mean that some of the people on the label will be able to move on to a higher level of recognition. But I don’t expect Foxglove to ever become any kind of corporate entity.

By way of closure, can you reflect a bit?

When I got into this I had no attraction on an ethnic interest level. The music itself is what attracted me. I see so many people who are so passionate about it, so I ask myself, why is it? I find over the years, the dynamics of how this music works — the music itself, the performance settings, the scene — it has a lot in common with blues or jazz. It is a social music, an intense music, and it’s a music that respects and honors wildness. That’s really important. It’s not necessarily always a nice music. In fact, that’s another place where us Yanks get into trouble with it. We want everything to be democratic and nice. This music isn’t that way. Sometimes it’s wild and intense and fiery.

I’d like to say here: we need to take this music seriously. Somewhere else put: we really shouldn’t take this music too seriously. Both are true. I go into these sessions and see people staring intensely at the floor, I want to say, “Lighten up. Joke with the person next to you. Have some fun.” On the other hand — take it seriously because it’s a precious heritage, whether you’re Irish or not.

When you play music, regardless of your technical level, the music that comes out is who you are. So, as you go into this stuff, years go by, you’re refining your musical expression, but it’s becoming more and more who you are. It is kind of like your character, your personality, gets into it and becomes part of the process. It’s important to keep that in mind from the beginning. No matter how much of a beginner you are, what you are playing is expressing who you are to the world. You can’t hope it’s going to be anything other than that. It’s just the way it is. Anyway, it’s fun.

Reprinted with permission from Fiddler magazine. [For the rest of this article, plus the tunes “The Homer Spit” (from Randal’s Out of the Woods album) and “Tim Moloney’s Reel” (from the Pigtown Fling album by Randal Bays and Joel Bernstein), see the Winter 1998/99 issue of Fiddler Magazine. Back issues available!]

— Larry Hill

Randal Bays
Sunday, March 3, 2001 – 7:30 pm
Celtic Arts Center
4843 Laurel Canyon Blvd • Studio City
Limited seating - Advance tickets recommended
Admission $15 – FolkWorks Members $12
818-785-3839 or email: mail@FolkWorks.org
Boulevard Music, located at the crossroads of Sepulveda and Culver in Culver City, is one of the best-kept secrets in the Los Angeles music community. Gary Mandell, owner, teacher, erstwhile remodeler, and sometime-housekeeper, has turned this former liquor store into an inviting music store, music school and weekend concert venue.

Gary has been playing guitar since his early teens, and has been teaching for 37 years, from his first class at the Westchester YMCA to UCLA extension, to four local guitar shops. He has had some experience in the non-musical world: he once worked for Chuck Blore's Creative Services as a copywriter, which was interesting, since Gary earned only a "D" in creative writing in college. Apparently Chuck liked Gary's novelty songs.

Gary's work has included arrangements and orchestrations from the L.A. Philharmonic and the Rochester Symphony to the Tonight Show band. He is the president/producer of Major Label recordings, which feature harmonica virtuoso David McKeivy, singer/songwriter Joel Harrison, and country artist Rick Shea. His music production has recently included work for Fox as well as CBS television. For 25 years he has been producing a one-day concert in the park (currently Veterans' Park) during the summer. And, in his spare time, he coordinates Culver City's Sunset Series, a free weekly concert in the courtyard of the Culver City Hall.

Gary opened Boulevard Music because he was looking for a place where he could have 24-hour access to a studio. He thought it would be nice to have a window in his teaching room. He wanted to present concerts to people of all ages. He wanted to get back to music arranging and producing (films, commercials, etc.) And most important, he coveted a parking space of his own!

Boulevard Music's concerts feature "great players, great songwriters, great singers, great performers, and combinations of the above. The guitars that are not hanging on the walls are pushed aside on concert nights, and the shop becomes an intimate setting in which to hear the music; there is no bad seat in the house. If you call 310-398-2583, you can have a flyer mailed to you. Or check out the website at www.boulevardmusic.com (Gary says many musicians cannot access this site because they cannot spell "boulevard").

The concerts are an eclectic mix, to say the least. Over the last few months, for example, the lineup included The Rhythm Brothers (traditional swinging jazz to bluegrass), Guy Van Dusen (Chet Atkins meets Fats Waller meets John Phillip Sousa); Stinkeye and the Fretotics (combination of traditional Irish, Klezmer and French folk); Ian Whitcomb and Fred Sokolow (ukulele virtuoso and superb guitar backup, playing music of Tin Pan Alley and the ragtime era); Chuck Pyle, the Zen Cowboy; Wylie and the Wild West (western singing and yodeling); and singer-songwriter Ray Doyle and the Pay to Playboys.

Music lessons are available in group classes or individually. Instructors include:

- Guitar: Gary Mandell, Christopher Sellars, Collin Mulvany, Stuart Ziff, Brian Wondt (they cover folk, rock, acoustic and electric blues, jazz, country, pop, classical, flamenco & ragtime)
- Violin/Viola: Sara Bohar, Laura Kaas, Fred Van Tassel
- Banjo: John Schlocker
- Bass Guitar: Valda Hammick
- Mandolin: Tom Corbett
- Harmonica: David McKeivy
- Flute/Clarinet/Oboe: Deborah Avery
- Vocal Styles: Melinda Driscoll, Elinor Graham
- Singers: L-Vocal, Yodeling
- Guitar: Larry Whitcomb and Fred Sokolow (ukulele virtuoso and superb guitar backup, playing music of Tin Pan Alley and the ragtime era)

For beginners, there are many instruments for rent, as well as for sale (not to mention some vintage instruments, listed on the website). And one of the even better-kept secrets about Boulevard Music is that Larry Brown, one of the finest instrument repairmen on the West Coast, makes his daytime home on the premises.

Though Boulevard Music is Gary's "baby," the official (unofficial?) Operations Manager is his wife, Kathy, who wears this hat in addition to working at a full-time job of her own. Son Zack, a middle school violinist and baseball player, has the title of Vice President (did you know that, Zack?). This little gem is definitely worth checking out. As the flyer states, "Come Down to the Crossroads.

Barbara Gary is a folk music lover who lives in West L.A. with 1 husband, 2 mandolins, 2 guitars, 2 button accordions and 2 parrots.
FEATURED ORGANIZATION

THE ARROYO HERITAGE THEATER
AND THE GUITARRA DEL MAR PROGRAM

BY FELIX BULLOCK

The Arroyo Heritage Theater (AHT) is an organization dedicated to the preservation and performance of older, lesser-known American plays and music. AHT serves the greater Pasadena community through performances, concerts, and community outreach programs and by providing a hospitable environment for local artists and performers. A major component of AHT’s activities is The Guitarra del Mar, a program which consists of free monthly concerts, a bi-monthly chamber series, a three-concert master guitar series, and an educational program.

The four founding members of AHT; Randy Hale, Emily Corey, Dawn Bodnar-Sutton, and Phoebe Suton. Corey and Hale, began their collaboration by researching old stories and songs from America’s homestead period, 1865 to 1920. Their CD, Songs From The Tall Grass, came out of this project. Hale, Corey along with the Sutons, then wrote a stage version that had its world premiere in March 2001 at Ford’s Theater in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Bodnar-Sutton began to search for a space in which to house Arroyo Heritage Theater and perform Songs and other pieces they were developing. Pasadena, she discovered, is womanly short of space suitable for the scope of production they envisioned. Bodnar-Sutton became aware of the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD)-owned McKinley Auditorium. Located on the site of the former McKinley Junior High School. McKinley was established in 1922 and is one of the city’s few standing buildings designed in the Gothic Revival Style.

Sensing the congruence between the mission of the group and the restoration of a historic civic building, in mid-2000 the group formed the non-profit Arroyo Heritage Theater organization and signed a lease with PUSD. They began to raise private capital and operating funds and commenced a year of renovation.

The McKinley Auditorium, which officially opened in May 2001, is wonderfully conducive to musical performance, with or without amplification.

Arroyo Heritage Theater is actively involved in the process of community outreach and audience building. The organization has already had a dramatic impact on the artistic diversity of the Pasadena area. The inaugural season began in July 2001 with a concert by singer-songwriter Randy Hale. Later in the summer, the Tableaux Theater, the young people’s arm of Arroyo Heritage Theater presented its first production, and this fall saw the start of the first season of Guitar Nights free concerts. Arroyo Heritage Theater productions have received both critical acclaim and the appreciation of audience members.

Office: 408 South Pasadena Avenue, Suite 5
Pasadena, CA 91105
626-792-6043 FAX: 626-792-4911
arroyoheritage@hotmail.com

(Ed. Note: while Arroyo Heritage Theater is not strictly a “folk” organization, we believe that this group presents concerts of interest to the folk community and encourages the kind of community involvement that is of interest to the folk community.)

The Programs of Arroyo Heritage Theater

GUITARRA DEL MAR

Guitar Nights: Monthly guitar concerts featuring local artists in a wide range of guitar styles such as classical, flamenco, gypsy, steel, and contemporary. All concerts are free to the public. This series provides an opportunity for burgeoning talent to perform in a concert-hall atmosphere.

The Guitarra Nights Concert Series: World-renowned groups and soloists are featured. Several of these performers also conduct master classes for local area professional musicians.

The Guitarra del Mar Chamber Players: Modeled after the famed Lincoln Center Players, the Guitarra del Mar Chamber Players is a guitar based performance group which is comprised of twelve musicians who perform bi-monthly in mixed ensembles.

Guitar for All: As the educational arm of Guitarra del Mar, this program consists of two programs, one for ensemble performance; the other for youth.

Ensemble Performance: Classes composed of both adults and children who meet weekly to experience ensemble playing. Each semester culminates in a performance on the McKinley Auditorium stage.

The Youth Program: In its infancy, this program provides for individual lessons using the Suzuki method. Their long-range goal is to expand this program through funding and in-kind donations to provide free classes to all interested students within the greater Pasadena area. Tuition is based on ability to pay and Guitarra del Mar provide instruments to students who cannot afford their own.

The Reading Series: The reading series is dedicated to informal readings of early and new American plays, musicals, and melodrama.

The Tableaux Theater: The Tableaux Theater is designed to help students ages 12 to 18 conceive, direct, and perform their own productions. The AHT makes its staff and facilities available to these young artists.

The Developing Artist Series: AHT provides contemporary playwrights with a forum in which their work can be presented in an ongoing program of public readings of both finished new scripts and works-in-progress.
FIDDLE CONTEST
End of an Era at Topanga

DORIAN KEYSER RESIGNS FROM THE FIDDLE CONTEST
BY DAVID K. LYNCH

A
fter 36 years of service to the Topanga Banjo Fiddle contest, Dorian Keyser retired from the Board of Directors on December, 2001. Dorian and his wife, Dulai, have been the backbone of the organization for decades. Since the mid 1960’s, Dorian has been active in many musical and environmental organizations and is widely recognized in Southern California for his support of the folk music and dance communities.

Dorian was born in 1925. As a young man he took both piano and violin lessons and became interested in Doc Watson’s songs. His chosen profession was as an engineer but he continued supporting musical organizations from the 1950’s and 1960’s. In 1965. He took folk guitar lessons, becoming a part of the Topanga Banjo Fiddle Contest in 1967 when he helped with the event’s sound. Since that time, he has worked tirelessly to promote the organization and has become known as one of Southern California’s treasured folk historians.

Nonetheless, Dorian and Dulai enjoy folk, bluegrass and classical music, and they work actively with environmental groups including the Sierra Club and the Tree People. Dorian is a familiar face at community and legislative meetings that involve the environment.

“Dorian’s departure leaves a deep hole in the organization,” said president Pitt Kinsolving. “Without Dorian, the event would have died years ago. But now it is stronger and healthier than ever. Still, we will be looking for new people to help fill the void left by his resignation. And in the long term, we have to think about gradually handing over the reins of the organization to the next generation. Joining TBFC would be a great opportunity for anyone interested in being part of a national musical tradition.”

“To the very last year, Topanga changed my life.” Today the festival is still Southern California’s premier showcase for both seasoned performers and up-and-coming musicians. Contestants have ranged in age from four to 92 years old.

“TBFC is planning to expand its range of activities and may add new staff and board members,” said Kinsolving. “Anyone interested in working with TBFC should contact me or one of the officers or send email to info@topanganabanjofiddle.org.”

The 2002 TBFC board of directors are Gary Floyd, Bruce Franzen, Jackie Franzen, Carl Gage, Warren Garfield, Shelly Herman, Pitt Kinsolving, and Dave Lynch.

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END OF AN ERA AT TOPANGA

DORIAN KEYSER RESIGNS FROM THE FIDDLE CONTEST

BY DAVID K. LYNCH

IN
the late 1800’s, the new arrival to the United States from Southern Italy, the Neapolitan Mandolin, was appearing in ever-growing numbers. Mandolin Orchestras were being organized and even the design of the mandolin was being altered.

The mandolin had metal strings, 4 courses tuned in 5ths, like a violin, and was played with a plectrum in the strummed manner. The most common design at first, before the 1900’s innovations in body style, was the mandolin developed in Naples in the 1700’s. It had 12 frets on the neck clear of the body, and a bend in the top air vent holes near the rim under the head and tension ring and scaling matched the violin, it was considered most useful in Country and Bluegrass music! That today the mandolin is most used in Country and many out- standing musicians got their start at Topanga and names like Mike Seeger, John Hartford, Byron Berline, Taj Mahal, John McEuen, Pat Cloud, and Gabe Witcher decorate the event’s history. As Tom Sauber put it, “In a very real way, Topanga changed my life.”

Today the festival is still Southern California’s premier showcase for both seasoned performers and up-and-coming musicians. Contestants have ranged in age from four to 92 years old. “TBFC is planning to expand its range of activities and may add new staff and board members,” said Kinsolving. “Anyone interested in working with TBFC should contact me or one of the officers or send email to info@topanganabanjofiddle.org.”

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HURDY GURDY
continued from page 8

There are many new records of both traditional and modern music which feature the hurdy gurdy. Classes in vie a roul e, cabaret, bagpipe, dancing and accordion are very popular. Fifteen years ago, one had to go to Switzerland to get a hurdy gurdy. Now there are more than 50 makers in France. The instrument is now being investigated by the latest research methods. You can get an electronic hurdy gurdy in bright green or candy apple red. By the addition of electronic pickups and other gadgets, the hurdy gurdy is joining rock and roll, jazz and other music. It has been chromatic for years but the hurdy gurdy can change the key of the drones, making the instru- ment much more versatile. There are many groups writ- ing new material for the hurdy gurdy. The current fad is to syncopate the buzzing bridge in a jazz rhythm. Ireland, England, Italy, Spain and Hungary are a few of the countries where musicians are adapting the vielle to their newly composed music.

Meanwhile, the hurdy gurdy has come to the United States, no doubt in the hands of traveling Frenchmen. It is said that around 1850, there were a few hurdy gurdys being played in New Orleans. There is mention of one in New York about around 1940. There is an early California dance tune discovered in Watsonville, California, which is actually a French tune called La Valso-vienne. No one knows how it originally arrived from France. A friend of mine remembers a man com- ing to town with his hurdy gurdy back in the Oklahoma oil days. Any information on the use of the hurdy gurdy in the United States which anyone would like to share with us is welcomed.

Many fine hurdy gurdys, both antique and modern, are to be found at Lark In The Morning in Mendocino, California. www.larkinam.com, email larkinam@larkin- nam.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY
D’ALBERT, ARNOUD, Mendocino, California.

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BANJO MANDOLINS
THE PERFECT TRAVEL INSTRUMENT, STURDY, SMALL, LIGHT AND LOUD
BY DAVID BROWN

In the late 1800’s, the new arrival to the United States from Southern Italy, the Neapolitan Mandolin, was appearing in ever-growing numbers. Mandolin Orchestras were being organized and even the design of the mandolin was being altered.

The mandolin had metal strings, 4 courses tuned in 5ths, like a violin, and was played with a plectrum in the strummed manner. The most common design at first, before the 1900’s innovations in body style, was the mandolin developed in Naples in the 1700’s. It had 12 frets on the neck clear of the body, and a bend in the top air vent holes near the rim under the head and tension ring, but the overall effect is to add a wonderful reso- nance, almost as if a little reverb was added from some- where. Depending on your playing style this could be just a little extra tone, or a much more driving almost electric timbre.

This special tonal color also helps these mandolins stand out in a big session. Besides being louder than a regular mandolin, the sharper tone cuts through and is thus perfect for those that like to hear themselves when they play. Of course to bring out this full sound you have to be able to pick fairly strongly; even a light picker would still be heard more easily on one of these banjo mandolins. Of course, with different gauge strings you could tune it like a Carcainhino (DGBD or DGBE, single- string) and many of the Brazilians use a banjo-type body now. It would also make a great banjo uke with nylon (single) strings, or if nylon double-string, a two patch banjo uke.

Another feature is their durability. They are very hard to break, and are thus a perfect travel instrument- sturdy, small, lighter and louder than anything else.

By David Lindley and Ry Cooder.
Dear FolkWorks Readers,

You've told us you like the paper
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We cut snowflakes out of paper. It's then appliquéd onto a single piece of fabric folded into eighths or fourths, much as just two contrasting colors. The design is cut from a sheet of paper, that quilts aren't always easy to classify. You will agree, half way through your first quilt though, as well as embroidery, buttons, and photo transfers. One-piece tops. You can find appliqués on pieced quilts around a pattern that’s been printed or appliquéd onto a one-piece top. You can find appliqués on pieced quilts around a pattern that’s been printed or appliquéd onto a one-piece top. This is not hard to see why. Quilting is a folk art. Like folk music, it emerges from our everyday lives, is transformed by the artist, and returned to the people to see their lives in a new light, often in what we already have and are.

Someday, somewhere, a quilt will take your heart. Like music, its patterns and colors intertwine and harmonize. They set each other off. A tiny, jarring shred of chromosome yellow may be the quilter's equivalent of a sharpened musical note. Themes, repeated over and over, beg for variation. Busy quilts and quiet ones do for the eyes what jigs and waltzes do for the feet. Quilts, like songs, tell stories to amuse you and to make you weep. Some mark major historical events and others speak softly of private joys and sorrows.

Quilting, like music, invites sociability. You can quilt alone just as you can fiddle alone but the pleasure grows when it is shared, whether in quilting bees or music jams.

The Los Angeles Museum of Natural History recently had an exhibit "A Communion of the Spirits," that featured African American quilts and their makers. The quilts ranged from traditional styles through story and picture quilts, much as you’d find at any quilt show, but Roland Freeman, the organizer, did not want to show a common style. He wanted to give a sense of the spirit linking generations of African American families and to show how history and cultural traditions are transmitted by quilts and quilters. He'd learned as a child that the women who sewed and quilted in his grandmother's kitchen were related to patterns or adding a central, unifying patch to each square. A close, women began to bring more order to the crazy quilts, combining them with traditional patterns. As the century drew to a close, women began to bring more order to the crazy quilts, combining them with traditional patterns or adding a central, unifying patch to each square.

The sense of community, heritage, continuity, and sociability drives many a quilter and is captured in several songs about quilting. Seeing Nellie home from "Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party" was both a community service and a courting ritual. Eric Peltoniemi's song Tree of Life names many quilt patterns in the chorus and sings in one verse: "We've only known as someone's mother. Someone's daughter or someone's wife. But with our hands and with our vision, We make the patterns on the Tree of Life."

John McCutcheon's charming Water From Another Time weaves together the priming of Grandma's pump with ancient waters and the history he learns from a tattooed quilt:

Now wrapped at night in its patchwork scenes, I walk with Grandma in my dreams, My arms, my heart, my life entwined, With water from another time.

Pete Sutherland's Endless Chain uses the same themes:

This sociability suggests one way to categorize quilts. If you scan the categories at a quilt show or in a quilting book, you will see quilts called "African American," "Hawaiian," "crazy," "American patchwork," "watercolor," "double wedding ring," "protof," "pieced," "historical," "friendship," "anti," "AMF," "African American," and so on. These names describe, variously, the patterns used, the people who made them, and the purposes for which they were made.

It's easiest to describe quilts in terms of their construction and patterns. A quilt is either pieced or it's not and a log cabin is a log cabin no matter how wildly different it is from the last one. Styles aren't so easy except for a few so distinctive that they are inextricably associated with the people who made them, like Amish and Hawaiian. You would have to be Amish to make a true Amish quilt, although anyone could make one in the Amish style. You don't have to be crazy to make a crazy quilt nor American to make American patchwork, but you do have to be African American to make an African American quilt.

Traditional American patchwork is known and used all over the world but with so many variations that it isn't always easy to recognize. Its unifying characteristic is the block pattern, the device that allowed Colonial women to make use of small scraps of fabric. Patchwork is "pieced," that is, small pieces are sewn together to form the top layer of the quilt. It differs from styles that quilt around a pattern that's been printed or appliquéd onto a one-piece top. You can find appliques on pieced quilts though, such as embroidery, buttons, and photo transfers. You will agree, half way through your first quilt show, that quilts aren't always easy to classify.

The striking Hawaiian quilts are typically made with two contrasting colors. The design is cut from the single piece of fabric folded into eightths or fourths, much as we cut snowflakes out of paper. It’s then appliquéd onto a solid background and quilted, the rows of stitches often paralleling or “echoing” the appliqué. Many of the designs are taken from nature and stylized. Some belong to particular families and others are shared.

The Amish people of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana have long made beautiful traditional American quilts. Collectors prize their vivid colors, bold designs, and intricate patterns of tiny stitches. They are always pieced, never appliquéd, and their designs are always geometric shapes. In the strictest religious orders of Pennsylvania, only straight-edged shapes are used but the Midwest Amish may use curved designs, including the popular Drunkard’s Path. Amish women seem to have always had an instinct for combining their richly dyed woolens into pleasing combinations. Collectors prefer quilts made before 1940 when modern fabrics, dyes, and battings came in.

Crazy Quilts were inspired, it seems, by Japanese exhibits at the Philadelphia centennial world’s fair. The Japanese displayed fabrics and graphics that used the patterns made by ceramic glazes that had “crazed.” Quiltmakers were enchanted by these random, somewhat grotesque patterns and incorporated them into their patchwork, emblazoning the edges of the odd-shaped pieces with ornate stitches. As the century drew to a close, women began to bring more order to the crazy quilts, combining them with traditional patterns or adding a central, unifying patch to each square. Quilters often ask why people buy good fabric, cut it up, and sew it together again. They wonder why people use up their time and eyesight making more bed coverings than they need.

They quilt because of family tradition. They quilt because they are in love with something. It may be the colors, it may be new variations seen in an old pattern, or it may be just the process of cutting, sewing, and quilting. It may be the fun and comfort.

QUILTS...
of being with other quilters, sharing stories and ideas. It’s also the fun of giving their quilts away, protesting something, and saving a momentous event for posterity.

Many quilts express political opinions. One variation was the Ribbon Project that Many depend on their husbands to cut the patterns and do the machine quilting. Some quilts are made for sale. Obviously these can be any type. The Amish make quilts for sale and general pattern of each square. Local contra dancers have made baby quilts for new potential donors and friendship quilts for sick friends. These can be wonderfully varied. A wedding quilt made by family members might contain photo transfers of great grandparents, bits of Aunt Hedwig’s old lace hankies, and an embroidered poem written by Grandpa to Grandma. Similarly, a quilt given to a departing friend might be a collection of squares depicting shared memories or simply the signatures of the friends on otherwise identical traditional squares. Some quilts express national pride or commemorate historical events. The Reagan Library showed a collection of historical quilts a few years ago, mostly very serious ones. One, however, was “The Demise of Sunbonnet Sue”, made by a group of women who’d grown sick and tired of the faceless little girl. The quilt depicted her demise in events taken from the year’s news, thus qualifying it for the historical exhibit. She tumbled about in tornadoes, mudslides, and train wrecks. She met disaster in epidemics, car-jackings, and every other weird happening of the year. She was even cut in two by a rotary cutter run amuck. Very funny, at least to some viewers. Others objected loudly and Unlucky Sue was withdrawn.

Many quilts express political opinions. One variation was the Ribbon Project that Sally Rogers and friends organized to mark the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. They collected little 2” x 3” quilts decorated with peace-oriented designs to tie together in a ribbon to encircle the Pentagon. They needed five miles of little quilts and collected enough for twenty! The AIDS quilt is undoubtedly the best known of any quilt. It’s the ultimate friendship quilt, made up of thousands of highly idiosyncratic squares designed to convey grief and to capture the memories of lost loved ones. Most are non-traditional squares made by non-quilters but they show true imagination and instinctive sense of design and color. The spirit of the quilt surges and you feel love, loss, compassion, understanding, and forgiveness. It’s hard to walk more than fifty feet along it without tears. Cathy Fink’s song I’m Sewing a Name has some of the same spirit: I’m sewing a name like a gift from the past. It has tattered edges and a spirit that will last. I’m sewing this name for the world to see That the life you lived is now part of the story or picture. Quilts are another type of quilt. They combine traditional elements with any modern technique or material that helps the quilter tell a story or describe a vision. Many of the banners at the Solstice Festival of the California Traditional Music Society are quilts illustrating songs, stories, dances, and musical instruments.

Another category is quilts that are made for sale. Obviously these can be any type. The Amish make quilts for sale as do many church groups. What would a church bazaar be without a quilt raffle? One last comment is about the people who do all this quilting. Most people and stories assume that quilters are always women even though a lot of men quilt. In oral histories about quilting, many women speak fondly of precious evenings quilting with their husbands. Many depend on their husbands to cut the patterns and do the machine quilting. We suspect that men enjoy, first, the precision of the patterns and second, the machinery involved. Some men specialize in quilting the layers together with special long arm sewing machines. Some do the whole thing, relishing the colors and the design process as much as women do.

In conclusion, the easiest way to start quilting is to walk into a store that specializes in quilting. Ten minutes of browsing through the seductive books and fabrics and you will find yourself signing up for a class in rainbow hearts or log cabin trees. If you want to be seduced at your own pace, peruse the books on color, design, and technique in the 746.46 section of the library. Or go to a savvy bookstore that knows how knowledgeable we are to beauty and self-expression and stocks luscious books to guide us.

Another source of inspiration and guidance are the quilting guilds. There’s probably more than one close to you, wherever you live. To find out their names, try your local quilting store. See if they have a little guidebook called The Quilters Path, ed. Lea Veronica, 9626 Lureline Ave., Unit A, Chatsworth CA 91311. It lists guilds, teachers, classes, tours, upcoming shows, and stores. You can probably call 818-993-4648 and get a copy.

The Internet is an overwhelming source of information about quilting. Narrow your search to something like “quilting shows, November, La Mirada CA” or you will get five thousand responses in seconds.

There is, incidentally, a show of 19th Century Mennonite quilts called “Sunshine and Shadow” going on now at the Craft and Folk Art Museum at 5814 Wilsbee Blvd, L.A., 323-937-4230, Wed-Sun 11-5. The Mennonites are the group from which the Amish split off in the late 1700’s.

SOME STORES IN THE AREA

• Crazy Ladies and Friends 2451 Santa Monica Blvd, Santa Monica 310-828-3122
• Tread Heart 25834 Narbonne, Lomita 310-534-5122
• Once Upon a Quilt 312 Manhattan Beach Blvd, Manhattan Beach. 310-379-1264
• Q is for Quilts 820 S. Glenoaks Blvd, Burbank 818-567-0267
• Wildflower 1453-e 14th St, Santa Monica 310-458-2748
• Joann’s Fabric Stores
• Luella’s Quilt Basket 1840 Sepulveda, Manhattan Beach 310-545-3436

UPCOMING QUILT SHOWS

• Jan 17-20 Road to California, Ontario Convention Center, (Vineyard Exit off 110)
• Jan 25-26 Cotton Patch Quilters, Kern County Fairgrounds, Bakersfield
• Feb 1-2 Valley Quilters, Valley-Wide Recreation, 901 W. Esplanade Ave., San Jacinto 92582
• Feb 23-24 South Bay Quilters, Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd Torrance
• Mar 8-9 Desert Quilt Guilds, Palm Springs Pavilion, 401 S. Pavilion Way Palm Springs
• Mar 15-17 Glendale Quilt Guild, Burbank Airport Hilton Convention Center, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank

ASSORTED FRAGMENTS OF SONG/QUILT RELATIONSHIPS

• I’m Sewing a Name© Cathy Fink and sung by Sally Rogers and Claudia Schmidt on While We Live© 1991 Real House Records
• Endless Chain® Pete Sutherland with Malcolm Dalglish and Grey Larsen, on Metamora, 1985, Sugar Hill Records, Inc.
• Water From Another Time© John McCutcheon, 1985 Rounder Records Corp.
• Tree of Life© Eric Polhomeni, sung by Gordon Bok, Ann Mayo Muri, and Ed Trickett on Fashioned in the Clay© Folk-Legacy Records, Inc.

Valerie Cooley lives in West Los Angeles and loves folk music, dancing, and crafts. She co-chairs the Banner Committee for the CTMS Summer Solstice Festival where she is able to indulge her love of pretty colors, fabrics, and the enthusiasm of the people who put them together.
### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### JAN 5
- **CELIDONIA**
  - **FUNDRAISER**
  - **$12 (children)**
  - **Chad Church**

#### JAN 10
- **HARRIET STICKS & THE HUNIANS**
  - **$19**
  - **The Little Dublin Café**

#### JAN 11
- **CELIDONIA**
  - **$16**
  - **Celidonia**

#### JAN 12
- **3 & 25, KENNETH BROWN**
  - **Guitar Clinic**

#### JAN 13
- **DAW ALLEN EDWARDS**
  - **$15**
  - **The Music Box**

#### JAN 14
- **BRAHMSIANA STUDIO SOAP**
  - **The Acoustic Music Series (TC)**

#### JAN 16
- **RASHINGA MUZIGAL**
  - **Sedge Mountain**

#### JAN 19
- **PETE HULTHENDER**
  - **Joshua Tree National Park**

#### JAN 23
- **MARIL ANDERSON**
  - **$12**
  - **Rahab's Tent**

#### JAN 27
- **WORKSHOP IN THE WEDDING**
  - **Introduction to Israeli dance in the world, elegant and lyrical Feldstein style of Classical classical and the spiritual and rhythmic style of Tel Aviv**

#### FEB 3
- **GUARDIAN SPIRIT**
  - **$35**
  - **LA 500, 510 Wilshire**

#### FEB 5
- **THE SQUIRTS**
  - **$3**
  - **Men's Closet**

#### FEB 6
- **WORKSHOP IN THE WEDDING**
  - **Introduction to Israeli dance in the world, elegant and lyrical Feldstein style of Classical classical and the spiritual and rhythmic style of Tel Aviv**

#### FEB 10
- **DOBBY LORCH AND THE LOBSTER**
  - **$25**
  - **Sunset Roadhouse**

#### FEB 13
- **DANNY LEE**
  - **$30**
  - **Congress Theater**

#### FEB 16
- **THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUSE**
  - **$35**
  - **Cellophane Church**

#### FEB 18
- **TOM WAITS**
  - **$32 and $39**
  - **Warner Grand Theatre**

#### FEB 24
- **MARTIN LUTHER KING CELEBRATION**
  - **$27**
  - **Center for the Performing Arts**

### VENUE LOCATIONS

**ACOUSTIC MUSIC SERIES**
- (818) 986-7332
  - **Skirball Magnin Auditorium**
  - **www.arlo.net**

**CALTECH MUSIC SOCIETY**
- www.caltech-music-society.com
  - **www.mccabesguitar.com**

**CALTECH PERFORMING ARTS**
- www.caltech.musicatthelibrary.com
  - **www.mccabesguitar.com**

**COFFEE GALLERY BACKSTAGE**
- www.performingarts.ucla.edu
  - **www.mccabesguitar.com**

**CUTTHROAT BOOKS**
- (818) 677-2488 or (818) 677-3943

**CUTTHROAT BOOKS**
- 325 S. Oak Knoll Ave. Pasadena (626) 792-6043

**ELCO PARADISE**
- 301 N. Orange Grove Blvd., Pasadena (626) 792-6043

**KESHE KESHE**
- 16751 Miss Wood St., Los Angeles (818) 986-7332

**LAURENT BELLINI AND BRIAN GORE**
- 15600 Mulholland Dr., Bel-Air  • (818) 986-7332

**RUSS AND JULIE'S HOUSE CONCERTS**
- www.musicatthelibrary.com/Calendar.htm
  - **(818) 707-2179**

**SUN FEB 3**
- **INTERNATIONAL GUITAR NIGHT**
  - **Pierro Bensusan, Gregoire Richter**
  - **sold out**

**THUR FEB 7**
- **BAABA MAAL**
  - **$25**
  - **www.BrazilianNites.com**

### FOLKWORKS

**FOCUS ON**
- www.mccabesguitar.com

**THE MUSIC BOX**
- (818) 780-5979
  - **www.mccabesguitar.com**

**THE ARTS CENTER**
- www.ctmsmusiccenter.com
  - **(818) 741-3872**

**THE LIVING TRADITION**
- www.alohaworld.com/halauolilinoe

**THE MARKETPLACE**
- www.ravishin.com

**THE SHARED ROOTS**
- www.sharedroots.com

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