Here is a good side to bad traffic and I found it the other day. The 405’s south of Century had slowed to inches per minute – not unusual – but, for a change, I was in the spot I would have chosen, right alongside the L.A. Marathon. I cept past, able to study the runners’ faces as they strode, clear-eyed and confident, through graffiti up to their chins. They were unconcerned and I was happy.

Los Angeles has so many murals that almost any little excursion will net you a view of some, whether you stay on the freeway or bolt desperately for freedom into unfamiliar neighborhoods. You can see a few murals from the freeway – the picture of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in downtown L.A. comes to mind – but you’ll see more (and more safely) if you get off the freeway and browse the surface streets. It is a fine way to cope with traffic that has gone from bad to worse.

One of my better escapes was into Highland Park from the Pasadena Freeway. Figueroa Street was a virtual art gallery. The Arroyo Furniture Store’s long sidewalk was crowded with Aztec, Mayan, Native American, and African American themes, including the feathered serpent, Quetzalcoat and Cesar Chavez. The low walls of two parking lots bore sophisticated graffiti art. Further along was a new construction site, with a chain link fence protecting little more than one wall, the lone remnant of a recently demolished building. On the street side of the wall was an angry mural protesting against politicians who spend money on the military but not on schools and libraries, and depicting them as book-burning Spanish conquistadors and Nazis. The protest must have worked because a new library was being built on the site and the mural was to be preserved. Down the road, however, was a mural full of marchers bearing signs commemorated the anti-immigrant proposition 187.

Not long ago, in her Los Angeles Times column, Mary McNamara wrote about the joys of getting lost in L.A. and, in my opinion, these murals are one of those joys. Most of us are so oriented to our city in terms of freeways that we have forgotten about the roads people used 50 years ago to get across town. Seeking out murals, a pleasure in itself, can also introduce you to alternate routes to take for pleasure or expediency. Amaze your friends by veering off clogged freeway routes to take for pleasure or expediency.

In East L.A., on the other hand, you will find hundreds of murals. This is the mother lode of L.A. wall art. There’s everything from pre-Columbian designs, Virgins, Aztec warriors, tributes to dead brothers, current social commentary, revolutionary soldiers grappling with the powers of corruption. The large Hispanic population there has built on a legacy of the great Mexican revolutionary wall painters and their murals are powerful. Judith Baca, the artistic and organizational force behind many public mural programs, was born there and her energy and vision have flowed out over the rest of the city, inspiring and empowering whole communities.

Baca is responsible for many of the murals you’ll see elsewhere. In 1976, she and two other women (filmmaker Donna Deitch and artist Christina Schlesinger) started the Social and Public Arts Resource Center (SPARC) in Venice, a multi-cultural arts center that produces, exhibits, distributes and preserves public artwork.

Los Angeles, with well over 1500 murals, has been described as the Mural Capital of the World. This is a recent phenomenon, a happy conglomeration of nationalities, ethnicities, social changes, and circumstances. Most of the murals have been produced since 1968. Prior to that time there were about a hundred mosaics that Millard Sheets and others began designing for the Home Savings of America banks in the early 1950’s. Before that were the New Deal murals started during the Depression And even before that was the Mexican Revolution which would eventually have a tremendous effect on public art in the United States, especially in California.
You probably realize that there is an amazing amount of work that goes into the creation of each issue of FolkWorks. It is done by a small but growing group of volunteers. After completing the September/October issue, we realized that if we did not get more help in doing all the things that needed to be done, we would not be able to continue publishing. We put out an appeal and have received very positive responses from a group of new people. We are in the process of reorganizing the way we work: we are forming working committees and divvying up the work. We look forward to making this succeed so that we can continue to improve both the publication and the organization and grow strong into the future. If you are interested in participating, please see page 4 for a current list of the ways you can help and do not hesitate to contact us. We will get you in touch with the appropriate group leader. If you have suggestions for ways to improve that paper or for articles that you would like to see in the future, please write or email us.

Thanks to all the FolkWorks volunteers, writers, editors, and distributors. We would especially like to thank two people: Alan Stone who has spent an untold number of hours in the layout of the publication, and Stan Smith who has picked up the 11,000 papers in his pickup truck for two summers, sometimes at a moments notice. On a final note, we apologize for the poor print quality of the September/October issue. The printer we were using had difficulties with their press and, unfortunately, this was reflected in the quality of the type. We were unsuccessful in our attempts at having them reprint. However, as of this issue, we have changed printers! Happy holidays to all and we look forward to the next year.

W ELCOME to the conclusion of another successful year of FolkWorks. We hope that you have been enjoying the newspaper and have been finding it useful. The end of the year is a time to reflect, a time to spend with friends and family. It is a time to give thanks and exchange gifts.

There is a renaissance happening in the world of folk music. The seeds that have been sown over the last thirty years are now blooming. There is more wonderful folk and traditional music available to us than in any time in history. It is the confluence of people who are interested in this “sub-culture” and technology, the ability to easily record music and distribute it through the Internet as well as the conventional means. On the other hand, the fact that there is so much to choose from sometimes makes it difficult to sort out the best from the rest. We are fortunate that some friends of FolkWorks are obsessive about seeking out the latest and most interesting new releases and, as a result, can help us out in this regard.

So, dear friends, as you are thinking about gifts during this holiday season, please consider browsing through the CD reviews and our writers “Top 10” or “Favorites” in this issue and use their as a guide.

We would especially like to thank two people: Alan Stone who has spent an untold number of hours in the layout of the publication, and Stan Smith who has picked up the 11,000 papers in his pickup truck for two summers, sometimes at a moments notice. On a final note, we apologize for the poor print quality of the September/October issue. The printer we were using had difficulties with their press and, unfortunately, this was reflected in the quality of the type. We were unsuccessful in our attempts at having them reprint. However, as of this issue, we have changed printers! Happy holidays to all and we look forward to the next year.

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BY LEDA & STEVE SHAPIRO

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MOVING BEYOND THE FIDDLE GHETTO

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB CARLIN, PRODUCER OF JOHN HARTFORD'S LAST ALBUM, HAMILTON IRONWORKS

BY GUS GARLOCK

The following interview was broadcast on my radio program, The Fiddling Zone, on KRCB, Santa Rosa, California, in February of this year. Carlin spoke to me by telephone from his home in North Carolina. The Grammy Awards were just a few weeks away and Hamilton Ironworks had been nominated for an award in the category of Traditional Folk Music. Carlin had played banjo in the Hartford String Band for many years and appeared on all of John Hartford's fiddle albums, including Wild Hog in the Red Brush, Speed of the Old Longbow, Good Ole Boys, Fun of Open Discussion, and others. He began the interview discussing the special technique Hartford had developed in presenting traditional fiddle music. Later on, he discusses why Hamilton Ironworks was such an important album.

Bob: Hamilton Ironworks was done completely live. No overdubs. It was done very quickly. Some tunes, you’re hearing the first take.

Gus: The technique reminds me a lot of Speed of the Old Longbow, John Hartford’s tribute to Ed Haley.

Bob: Right. Starting with Fun of Open Discussion and Wild Hog in the Red Brush, where John plays tunes Ed Haley might have played, but didn’t record, to Speed of the Old Longbow, where John does some talking and plays tunes that Haley actually did record—all these albums were done in pretty much the same way: live, lots of experimentation. There’s a lot of planning in advance, but John liked to let spontaneity take its own course. For a while, he had a technique he called “windows” – not to be confused with Microsoft—but it was a way of developing an arrangement spontaneously: pointing at people, telling them what to do as we were going along. No one knew in advance where the solos were going to be, when to do backup, when to not play.

Gus: So nobody except John knew how the tune would develop.

Bob: Well, on Hamilton Ironworks, his instructions were that he really wanted us to be background; the foreground was the fiddling and his stories about growing up in Missouri and all the folks he knew and learned from. We had to be receptive, that was his only instruction. So, I knew the tunes pretty well in advance, and Mike Compton knew most of the tunes. He had been playing with us before he joined the Nashville Bluegrass Band. Right now, he’s on tour with the “Oh Brother- Down from the Mountain” show. But Chris Sharp on guitar and Larry Perkins on bass—they didn’t know the tunes at all. All we had were chord charts and the instruction to just watch John.

Gus: Did John write out the chord charts?

Bob: No. Actually, Chris and all of us wrote them out. We started playing some tunes a day before the recording, and Chris said, “I don’t know any of these. Let’s at least play the same chords at the same time.” But John didn’t care. He really liked the whole idea of spontaneity. The Aero-plane band, which started a lot of people knowing about John Hartford after Gentle on my Mind—that was John’s first attempt at doing spontaneous music. His motto was: it didn’t matter if you play it or not; you didn’t play what you feel when you feel it.

Gus: So, to prevent chaos from happening, did he just point to people to play at certain times?

Bob: It started out that way. But it turned into just knowing. You had to really pay attention. Sometimes, we had big train wrecks. Other times, it was pretty spectacular music.

Gus: How long did you spend recording Hamilton Ironworks?

Bob: Day and a half. It was cut pretty quickly. But by that time, John was starting the final phase of his cancer. Although he appeared to be in pretty good shape, he was tired very easily. The sessions were pretty hard on him. His playing got tired. I’d see him when he could hardly walk very well, but then he’d sit down and fiddle for hours. But this time, it was much different. He was just unable to play. So that’s one reason why the album was cut so quickly. We were spontaneous, and that’s what he wanted.

Gus: The thing I liked best about the album was the stories, the fiddle folklore. Besides the great tunes, all the stories behind the tunes were wonderful. Was this spontaneous, too?

Bob: No, not at all. Actually, he had a lot of that scripted out. John liked spontaneity, but he had strong ideas about the shape of things. You have to remember, this album was real important to him. It wasn’t coincidental that this was his last studio recording. It was his way of paying back all the people who started him off, a coming full circle for him; it was a culmination of the first phase of his reinvestigation of traditional fiddle music. He was revisiting those pieces, listening to his early tapes of fiddling done in the 1950’s, notating the stories and the tunes. Not that each story was identical each time, but the structure was there. For a recent example, you might have heard the album called Tribute to John Hartford, recorded at Mountain Stage in West Virginia. That’s where he says—“Well, I know why you’re all here tonight. You think I’m gonna die.” Well, that wasn’t spontaneous. In fact, all week long before that concert, he was calling up folks, like Sam Bush, and saying “Hey, Sam, listen to this! What do you think of that, isn’t that funny?” Then he’d say to me—“Now I’m going to get up and say this thing, and don’t interrupt me. I’ve got it planned out.” So it wasn’t spontaneous, but it had a structure for spontaneity to work.

Gus: So, it appears spontaneous, even if it wasn’t. Do you think this is because John had been such a good performer all his life?

Bob: Yes, he was an extraordinary showman, even as a small child. He was very conscious of that. But I don’t think it diminishes his power in any way.

Gus: So what about all the fiddling stories? Are they true?

Bob: They’re all true. And they’re all real people. They might be codified, smoothed over, after so many years telling them over and over. I used to hear them years ago. John talking about fiddle music. I don’t know if it made it on the album, but Gene Goforth used to say, after hearing another fiddle player, “That used to be a pretty good piece at one time.”

Gus: Yes, I love that story.

Bob: John used that line all the time! And the story about stealing the same watch twice—I heard that a lot. And I knew John’s uncle, Bill—the one who throws the cram of baked beans into the fire and they explode. Hey, if you haven’t heard the album, folks, you probably don’t know what I’m talking about. In some ways—besides paying tribute to people and all that, the real reason for the stories was this: John was trying to bring fiddle music outside of the fiddle ghetto. And I think he was succeeding. We’d go play places for people you would never think would ever listen to fiddle music—and they totally enjoyed what we did. In the last years I played with John, we ended up doing just as many fiddle tunes as songs. Which was very different than when I started, when we did mostly John’s songs and a couple fiddle tunes. But people allowed John to do this, because he really wanted to make the fiddling interesting to people, and one way of making it interesting is telling stories about the tunes and the fiddlers.

Gus: The fiddle ghetto! I don’t believe I’ve ever heard that expression before. But what about all those hard-core fiddlers inside the ghetto? How do they respond to John’s music?

Bob: They have mixed feelings about his “talking all...


STRIKING THE RIGHT CHORD

(OR HOW DO I KNOW WHAT CHORD TO PLAY NEXT?!)  

Past issues focused on how notes relate to other notes in terms of intervals. We saw that intervals can combine with other intervals for triads and chords. We discovered several types of chords and found that their names followed from the intervals involved.

Well, there’s more. Turns out that just as notes seek out other notes to keep them company as intervals and chords, chords seem to seek out other chords to keep them company as chord progressions. A chord progression is—as the name implies—a sequence of chords. When playing a particular song in a particular key, there are specific chords to be played in a specific order. That sequence is the chord progression.

There might be some confusion about the difference between the key of a chord and the key of a chord progression, and there may be a good reason for that. For example, we can play a G chord, which is a major chord that we would say is “in the key of G.” Or, we can accompany a song by playing a G chord, followed by a C chord, then a G chord, a D chord and another G chord, and that would be a chord progression that we would also say “in the key of G.” So, each chord may be viewed as an independent unit that is built on the scale of the key of the same name as the chord itself, e.g. G. When all of the chords involved in a piece of music are put together as a progression, they are related as a group to the key of the song.

Stay with me, here.

When selecting chords to accompany a particular song you can build a chord on each and every note of the scale. Each chord still can be understood as being built on a note that names the key of that chord. For example the notes C-E-G taken together make a major chord “in the key of C.” But you can also play a C chord as part of a chord progression for a song in the key of G. In this instance the C chord is part of the “G chord progression” because it is the major chord built on the fourth degree (or note) of the G scale.

In an earlier issue, you saw that major chords are built using the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the major scale (you may find past articles at www.FolkWorks.org). In other words, every other note was used to form a major triad or chord. Look at Figure 1. Notice that the every-other-note concept can be expanded and applied to each degree of the scale. In Figure 1 pick a 1st note, say the C, look for the 3rd note (E) and the 5th note (G). If you play these three notes together, you have a major C chord.

This type of rule also applies to chord progressions. Most of the songs you will encounter will use a chord progression built on the 1st, 4th and 5th notes of the scale. Musicians usually talk about this as a “one-four-five” progression. In the key of G these would be a G, a C and a D chord. The more generic method of notation for chords uses Roman numerals to indicate the same thing. So this “one-four-five” progression would be written as I-V-V. Once you are used to these numbers instead of note names for chords, you can talk about chord progressions regardless of the key you are in. This terminology is so commonly accepted that you might hear a conversation among musicians like the following. Question: “Is there anything weird about the chords in this tune?” Answer: “No, this is a simple ‘one-four-five’ in G.” But wait, there’s more.

Look at Figure 2. In Figure 2, all of the triads from Figure 1 are lined up to show a comparison of the interval spacing in each one. Notice that all of the I-V-V chords are major. Look again at Figure 2 and direct your attention to the chord built on D, the second degree of the C major scale. This triad contains a flatted 3rd interval, which makes it a minor chord. We see this flatted 3rd interval in the chords built on the 2nd, 3rd and 6th degree of the scale, as shown in Figure 2, so all three are minor chords.

When using the Roman numeral notation it is customary to write major chords using upper case Roman numerals and minor chords using lower case Roman numerals. These chords, then, would be noted as ii, iii, and vi. Since the first through sixth chords are accounted for, this leaves only the 7th degree of the scale to complete our list of chords. The chord built on the 7th degree of the scale has a flatted 5th but it also has a flatted 3rd, which makes this a diminished chord (sound familiar?). Diminished chords are noted as “dim” or with a superscripted “7.” So using the Roman numeral notation, the diminished chord built on the seventh degree of the scale would be written “vii7.”

Turns out that there are seven chords to choose from when accompanying a song or tune and they are the I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi and vii7 chords. In searching for that right chord to use, this knowledge should simplify your options. If it is a major chord that you want it will be a I, IV or V chord. If it is minor it will be a ii, iii or vi chord. Although you are least likely to need it, there is that seventh, diminished chord, the vii7 chord.

So, how do musicians know which chords to play? Basically you have your choice of seven chords once the key is set. Then your choices are limited to three once you know whether the chord is to be major or minor. There are three major, three minor and one diminished chords. And, as usual, there are, exceptions and many variations, but most chord progressions will follow these rules. Once again, we find that applying a little musical knowledge can instantly narrow the search from a seemingly infinite number of chords to the right one. So keep playing, keep chording and, of course, stay tuned.

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Figure 1 - Chords/Triads built on each degree of the diatonic C major scale

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Figure 2 – Resulting chord types from Figure 1

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CLASSIFIEDS

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YEARS AGO I want to give you the guitar back, but I don’t know how to reach you. I never intended to keep it, but you didn’t give me your last name or phone number. Please call me at (323) 340-8010 and I’ll return it to you, Mike Pedlowin.

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(see page 2)
THE VOICES IN MY HEAD
BY JOANNA CAZDEN

H ere is a story of uncertain origin, passed on by a FolkWorks-reading friend: “When a woman in a certain African tribe knows she is pregnant, she goes out into the wilderness with a few friends and together they pray and meditate until they hear the song of the child. They recognize that every soul has its own vibration that expresses its unique flavor and purpose.

“When the women attentue to the song, they sing it out loud. Then they return to the tribe and teach it to everyone else. When the child is born, the community gathers and sings the child’s song to him or her. The song is sung for significant events in the child’s life, such as initiation into adulthood, and marriage. Finally, when the soul is about to pass from this world, the family and friends gather at the person’s bed, and they sing the person to the next life.”

Put aside the possibilities that this tribe is unnamed because it doesn’t exist, and that the story is merely a poetic romance projected onto the Third World. The tale has travelled along tendrils of the email-grapevine because so many of us link the ideas of “song” and “voice” with something profound about personal identity, some essential expression of an individual or group.

The metaphors are everywhere. The “voice of the people” is heard through the ballot box, if not in the streets. A “writer’s voice” resonates between the words. An organization’s leader may be called a “mouthpiece.” Walt Whitman risked ridicule for the pure exaltation of his own “I hear America singing.”

But more often, the act of singing implies a connection between people, a transmission of energy and meaning from one’s core being to a lover, child, family, or community. When my speech therapy clients lose their voices completely, or are advised to rest in silence as much as possible, they are austere, at home at how deeply this changes their relationships and their place in the world.

In Bill Staines All God’s Children Got A Place in the Choir, vocal music represents a larger harmony and belonging. Carol Gilligan’s ground-breaking (and still controversial) book about girls as a group used music to represent a “soul song” which is my heart song.” A nearly identical sentiment closes the signature piece performed by my Yiddish chorus. And a famous composition by James Weldon Johnson, often called the Negro National Anthem, goes “Lift every voice and sing/Till earth and heaven ring/Ring with the harmonies/Of Liberty!”

Beyond the power of individual expression, and of public or tribal identity, sound itself is held sacred in many religions. The Judeo-Christian Bible begins with The WORD; Hinduism & Buddhism honor OM as the sound of the universe. Sacred languages including Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Latin are believed to transmit spiritual vibrations directly through the sound, as well as meaning, of each syllable.

Although religious metaphors about LIGHT generally refer to a “high- er” self, soul, or divinity, references to SOUND remain anchored in human experience. The voice, after all, is created inside the singer’s physical being. It emerges from the throat, itself a bridge between head and body. Audible words and melodies physically vibrate the listener’s eardrum, and carry an intimate, almost tactile, message from one body/mind/soul to another. This integration of many levels of being seems central to the power of Song.

Perhaps the ultimate book on singing-as-metaphor is Brian Chatwin’s classic The Songlines. This gritty yet meditative journey through the out- back of Australia evokes the unity of song, space, and habitat at the center of Aboriginal culture, along with related musings on the origins of lan- guage and the origins of humanity itself. It’s a magnificent work, highly recommended for anyone drawn to the deeper meanings of voice and song.

So in this holiday season: give copies of The Songlines to your vocal- and world-music pals. Savor the carols and brass choirs that muzak can’t totally trivialize. Reach through the darkness of the winter solstice for its reassuring sparks of hope, and listen through midnight silences for the sounds between the stars. Sing your own song, and have a great new year.

Joanna Cazden is a singer-songwriter and licensed speech pathologist. Find her online at www.voiceisyourlife.com
Irish music. Liz Carroll, a native Chicagoan of Irish parents, honed her fiddling skills at the renowned Richard M. Daley’s proclaiming Irish Music Festival, which further emphasizes the depth of talent within this band.

Liz Carroll recently left the Battlefield Band, which flows from Ireland and Scotland not found anywhere else locally.

The purpose of this column is not only to review new releases by popular artists in the ancient Gaelic/Celtic heritage. This renewed spirit has continued into the 21st century, and one of the new bright lights is the group Malinky. Malinky made an immediate impact on the Scottish folk music scene. In 2000, iRoots Magazine described their debut album Last Leaves as “one of the most memorable and refreshing debuts to have passed this way in a long time,” and the program Scotland on Sunday chose it as one of the outstanding folk roots releases of 2000.

Over the last several decades, there has been a dramatic rise in interest in Scotland’s folk music heritage. The Scottish Gaelic language has been re-born with the help of popular folk-based bands such as Capercaille and the folk-rock group Malinky. During the last ten years, a flood of new folk artists have emerged, creating new and experimental folk music that combines traditional rock, Middle Eastern, African, and world-beat rhythms with a solid Gaelic/Celtic foundation. Some of these bands are Old Blind Dogs, Wolfstone, and Deaf Sheppard. Singers such as Catherine Anne McPhee and Capercaille’s Karen Matheson have inspired many vocalists to discover and renew their interests in the ancient Gaelic/Celtic heritage. This renewed spirit has continued into the new century, and one of the new bright lights is the group Malinky.

Malinky’s new album, 3 Ravens, displays a new five-piece band. The key members from the first album, Karine Polwart (vocals, guitar, bouzouki) and Steve Byrne (vocals, guitar, bouzouki) are joined by Mark Dunlop (vocals, whistles, bodhrán) and Jon Bews (vocals, fiddle). The newest fifth member from Ireland is the renowned accordionist and whistle player Leo McCann. This new lineup maintains the acoustic atmosphere of Malinky’s debut album, but their power and live presence are greatly enhanced and renewed. In addition to some traditional songs, each band member contributed new songs or tunes to the album, which further emphasizes the depth of talent within this band.

Karine Polwart recently left the Battlefield Band, which flows from Ireland and Scotland not found anywhere else locally.


The breakthrough release Lost in the Loop (2000), won an AFIM Indie Award by the Association for Independent Music, naming the album as best in the Celtic/British Isles category. All of these honors and awards were earned by Liz’s fiery energy and brilliant musicianship.

Deeply rooted in the Irish folk tradition, yet packed with a fresh contemporary approach in arrangements and presentation, Liz’s music can only be described as astonishing. A master at interpreting traditional dance tunes, she is also a master of composition, with many of her works now being included at pub sessions throughout the world. Liz was one of the first to venture into Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Crossover artists with a large folk music element and influence will also be addressed. This column will not be limited to any one folk or world music genres, so you may also see reviews by noteworthy artists that reach beyond the previously mentioned categories.

The purpose of this column is not only to review new releases by popular artists in the aforementioned genre, but to also introduce quality releases by other, harder to find and unknown artists. These are the artists who will not be featured by the renowned Irish music critics, whose reviews would be absent from the local audio music shops due to domestic and international distribution restrictions. I believe that many folk music enthusiasts in the Los Angeles region would embrace these artists, if only they knew of their existence, and how to obtain their music.

The new songs or tunes to the album, which flows from Ireland and Scotland not found anywhere else locally.

The Rating guide has been eliminated since I am only reviewing in this column, recordings that receive my highest recommendation. The key members from the first album, Karine Polwart (vocals, guitar, bouzouki) and Steve Byrne (vocals, guitar, bouzouki) are joined by Mark Dunlop (vocals, whistles, bodhrán) and Jon Bews (vocals, fiddle). The newest fifth member from Ireland is the renowned accordionist and whistle player Leo McCann. This new lineup maintains the acoustic atmosphere of Malinky’s debut album, but their power and live presence are greatly enhanced and renewed. In addition to some traditional songs, each band member contributed new songs or tunes to the album, which further emphasizes the depth of talent within this band.

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CONTRADANCE MUSIC

A NEW MUSICAL GENRE

By Sharon Goldwasser

Picture a community dance in New England in the early 1800’s. Perhaps it is set in a rural farm house kitchen, or in the town meeting or grange hall. Friends and neighbors gather together for an evening of social dancing and conversation. The evening’s program lists contradances, quadrilles, and couple dances such as schottisches and waltzes as well as miscellaneous couple dances. Songs for the dance are sung by the band. At such dances, for example, George Washington is the Chorus Jig, call for a specific tune of the name. Choices for other dances are up to the whim and repertoire of the fiddler and his companions. Some of the tunes are drawn from a developing regional “New England” repertoire (with English roots), and others are borrowed from Irish, Scottish, and French-Canadian traditions. Whatever the tunes, contradance music is characterized by two essential features: clear phrasing and strong, well-defined rhythm.

Imagine if we could transport these musicians and dancers to a modern contradance. Would they feel at home with the music and dancing? Would they find the contemporary music and dances comfortably familiar, or foreign to their own experience? It is virtually impossible to imagine how such a dance would progress from 19th century contradance music simply expanding to fit contemporary culture, or has it progressed into a new genre altogether?

During the years since this hypothetical community dance was held, contradancing has experienced ups and downs in popularity but maintained its existence in pockets throughout rural New England. The most recent folk music revival, around the 1960’s and early 1970’s, dispersed contradancing and music from its New England birthplace and introduced it to scores of urban communities across the United States. Accompanying the geographically expansion, regional and popular musical forms have been incorporated by contradance bands.

When contradancing rose in popularity in the 1970’s, a new cohort of musicians was initiated into playing for dances. In many areas, an “open band” was typical, consisting of an indefinite set of members, usually under the guidance of a small core of more experienced leaders. The traditional fiddle and piano were still central to the band, but guitars, mandolin, banjo, bass, penny whistle, flute, recorder, accordion, concertina and hammered dulcimer were also welcome members of the cast of instruments.

The dance bands that flourished in the 1960’s and 1970’s were drawing on a large body of traditional fiddle tunes, like those collected in the book New England Fiddler’s Repertoire. Recordings of the Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra and Rodney and Randy Miller’s New England Chestnuts are great examples of this kind of sound. The melody instruments generally played tunes in unison, with piano and guitar providing the rhythmic chordal accompaniment. Sometimes a single tune was played for an entire dance and sometimes two or three tunes were organized into a medley. Still, the overall approach to the dance music primarily reflected straightforward repetition of fiddle tunes.

As contradancing increased in popularity, changes in the mindset among dancers, callers and musicians began to influence each other. Some dancers became more serious about their participation in contradancing. No longer just an occasional social event, it evolved into a form of serious recreational activity. In addition to attending local dances once or twice a week, many dancers became “dance-gypsies,” travelling to other events on weekends.

Dances featuring certain figures, particularly those like “balanced and swing your partner,” and moves that required increased participation by the “inactive” couple, became more prominent. The music has co-evolved with all of these changes as well.

Figuring a typical evening of 12 contra, each lasting about 10 minutes, the average contradance caller probably bowls about 60,000 notes (give or take a few). For a musician playing regularly for contra, the repetitive nature of the music sets up a distinct potential for boredom. Creative musicians began to see possibilities in contradance music that would continue to pique their own interest: adding percussion, rhythm variation, dynamics, harmonies and improvisation to the melodies. Others explored the possibilities of combining traditional fiddle tunes with the rhythms and flavors of such diverse musical styles as swing, jazz or reggae.

Among the musicians involved in the departure from tradition, Rodney Miller is renowned as one of the pioneers in expanding the boundaries of traditional contradance music. Assisted by Peter Barnes, John McClaugh and other talented musicians, he recorded two highly influential albums: Airplang and Airplang II, which were released in 1985 and 1987 respectively. Another example of contra music experimentation can be found on a recording by David Kaynor’s band Fourgone Conclusions, which was released even earlier, in 1982.

So what does contradance music sound like now? Some bands, like Bob McQuillen’s group New England Tradition, have retained a straightforward
Dave Suyars is the bass player for L.A. Celtic band Craicmore, an aspiring singer/songwriter, and a print journalist with over fifteen years experience. His column features happenings on the folk music scene both locally and nationally, with commentary on recordings, as well as live shows, and occasionally films and books. Please feel free to e-mail him at toomanyhatz@yahoo.com or write him c/o FolkWorks.

Before I turn to the main subject of this column, singer-songwriters, I’ve got to tell you about a new record deserving of special attention. (Actually it does relate, but it’s the only one this issue in which the main songwriter is not the main performer.) I’d like to highly recommend, of all things, a commercial country record. It’s All Relative by Pam Tillis, [Lucky Dog] (!) may be a slick product of commercial Nashville, but the singing is beautiful and the songs, all at least co-written by her dad, Mel Tillis, are all good and occasionally great. Papa Tillis may be best remembered as a stuttering talk show guest, but he’s a highly underrated songwriter, and his daughter not only sings beautifully on her tribute to him, but she also produced it, a rare occurrence for a woman in the boys club that is country music. It also features great playing, and guest duets by, among others, Dolly Parton and Ray Benson of Asleep at the Wheel. This will be a huge country hit, but don’t let that stop you from buying it. It’s not the kind of record I recommend often, all the more reason why I wanted to tell you about it.

Now on to songwriters. I’ve spent little time on them up ‘til now because features on them that would normally be out of place at your local folk club. The songs on Here Comes the New Folk Underground [Lost Highway] (!) are not the vitriolic ones of Triage (one song’s subject is the CIA’s alleged hand in bringing drugs into inner cities, others include fright-ening vignettes about the corrupted idealism of cops, soldiers and record executives), but they are streetwise and literate meditations on the meaning of life and love. Hellbound Train updates blues imagery while preparing rich and poor alike for a trip down below, other songs stand most love songs clichés on their head.

Finally, here’s a laundry list of other songwriters I like (though none of them have new records out): Vic Chesnutt, Lyle Lovett, Gordon Lightfoot, Rufus Wainwright (usually), Iris DeMent; Bob Dylan; Robb Johnson; Shane McGowan; Joni Mitchell; Leon Rosselson; Ian Telfer, John Jones and Alan Prosser of Oysterband (OK, the Oysters do have a new one but I haven’t heard it); Gillian Welch, Watch for ‘em next year, watch for me next issue. Again, I’d be thrilled to have somebody introduce me to anyone I’ve left off the above list.

RATING SCALE:

[!!!] Great, one of the year’s finest. If you have even a vague interest in the artist, consider this my whole-hearted recommendation that you go out and purchase it immediately.

[!] Very good, with considerable appeal for a fan of the artist(s). If you pur-chase it, you likely won’t be disappointed.

[ ] Good/solid, what you would expect.

[ ] Avoid. Either ill-conceived, or artistically inept in some way.

On-going Storytelling Events

GREATER LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY STORYTELLERS
2nd Thursdays 7:30 pm
Temple Beth Torah • 11827 Venice Blvd.
(310) 823-7482

FAMILY STORYTELLING
Saturdays/Sundays
11:00 am, noon, 1:00 pm
Storytelling in Spanish on alternating Saturdays
Roxy Center Family Room
(310) 480-7300

LENIERT FAR
GRIOT WORKSHOP
1st Wednesdays • 7:00 pm
Pasadena Library
(310) 477-8009

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY STORYTELLERS
3rd Thursdays • 7:30 pm
Alhambra Library
1130 N. Mariposa Ave., Alhambra
(626) 792-5122

LONG BEACH STORYTELLERS
1st Wednesdays • 7:00 pm
El Dorado Library
1900 E. Imperial Hwy. • (310) 546-5065

SUNLAND-TIJUANA STORYTELLERS
2nd Saturdays • 6:00 pm
Southland-Tijuana Library Storytelling Group
25222 El Paseo • (949) 496-1960

GRIOT WORKSHOP
3rd Wednesdays • 7:00 pm
El Paseo Library
(714) 480-1520 • www.bowers.org/link3c.htm

MISSION VIEJO STORYTELLERS
Wednesdays • 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Temple Beth Torah
2645 Mesa Verde E. • (949) 496-1960

COSTA MESA SOUTH COAST STORYTELLERS
2nd Sundays • 7:00 pm
South Coast Plaza
(714) 548-5045

MISSION VIEJO STORYTELLERS
Wednesdays • 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Temple Beth Torah
2645 Mesa Verde E. • (949) 496-1960

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FOLK WORKS
November-December 2002

Page 8
Musical Books for Kids

By Hilary Field (Reprinted with permission)

One way to be musical with children is through books. There are illustrated books of songs, books with strong rhythms and lyrical poetry, and for older children, informative books about the history and styles of music. Here are some that my family has enjoyed.

Sandra Boynton has wonderful board books to share with the youngest set. Boynton uses words that are so rhythmic and musical they practically dance off the page. As the author proudly states, “Father to swing and sway in Barnyard Dance,” it is hard not to feel like a square dancer while reading, “Stand with the donkey, slide with the sheep, scamper with the little chicks-cheep, cheep, cheep! With a Neigh and a Moo and a Cockadoodledoo, another little ponytail-two by two!” Dance with the animals as they prepare for bed in Pajama Time “Pajammy to the left, Pajammy to the right. Jamaama jamama jammama P P J! Everybody’s wearmy for dancing tonight. (Jamaama jamama jamama jammama P P J). It is Pajama Time, (Hush. Hush.) It’s Pajama Time! (Shhhhhhhhhhh.)”

The combination of Eric Carle and Bill Martin Jr. has produced classic children’s literature. The very well known Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? has a lovely lilt to the text, accompanied by Carle’s outstanding illustrations. Another Bill Martin Jr. book, this time written with John Archambault and illustrated by James Endicott, is Listen to the Rain. This lyrical book is a poem describing the sounds of the world when it rains, from “the slow soft sprinkle, the drip-drop trickle, the first wet whisper of the rain” to “the lightning-flashing thunder-crashing sounding pounding roaring rain, leaving all outdoors a madly, musky muddy puddle.”

Mother Goose is always a favorite. Many of these very familiar nursery songs and rhymes are heavily illustrated and delightful to read, whether accompanied by the illustrations of P. D. Eastman, a favorite with children, or as an illustrated book by Karen Lee Schmidt. Kids love to go the zoo, and visit the bears, lions, kangaroos, and others, until an exhausted family heads home and decides “Mommy’s taking us to the zoo tomorrow, zoo tomorrow, zoo tomorrow.”

All the Pretty Little Horses, a Traditional Lullaby, stands out for its sheer aesthetic beauty. Linda Sauper illustrates this famous American lullaby with gorgeous scenes of a mother rocking and comforting her child with images of “when you wake, you’ll have cake, and all the pretty little horses.” Another beautiful book is My Favorite Things, illustrated by Renee Graef. Graef does a wonderful job illustrating this Rodgers and Hammerstein song from the beloved musical movie, “The Sound of Music.” Unlike some children’s books, where the illustrations are somewhat like cartoons, these two books have an artistic value that children and adults will find attractive and moving.

Zin, Zin, A Violin, written by Lloyd Moss and illustrated by Marjorie Priceman, begins with the “mournful moan and silken tone of one trombone” and continues to add instruments to the chamber ensemble; “the strings all soar, the reeds implore, the brasses roar with notes galore. It’s music that we all adore. It’s what we go to concerts for.” This colorful book is a playful and musical way to teach the instruments of the orchestra and the names of different musical groups. Another fine book to help children play the orchestra is The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra by Anita Ganeri and Ben Kingsley. This book comes with an accompanying CD of Benjamin Britten’s composition as well as Dukas’ The Sorcerer’s Apprentice.


These are just a sampling of the many musical and rhythmic books for children. Many of these books include the music, and some have accompanying recordings. Books are a wonderful way to engage in musical play with children, regardless of one’s own musical experience. Many adults naturally read to children with a sense of rhythm, accent, dynamics, tempo, and inflection, all of which are important parts of a child’s musical development. Have fun reading while you chant, bounce, sing, and play!”

Hilary Field, classical guitarist and recording artist, heads the guitar program at Seattle Pacific University, and is one of the founders of Mulberry Bush Music and Movement. She may be contacted at (206) 780-2266 or at hilary@mulberrybushmusic.com

Pajama Time, (Hush, Hush) it is Pajama Time, Everybody's wearing them the right. (Jamma jamma jammama jammy jammy mushy mushy muddy puddle.)
Singimg has been a part of my life since the age of eleven when I was formally introduced to the guitar. I had a feeling that Music 307 at Cal State Northridge would be an interesting class, considering my musical background, yet had no idea I would soon stumble upon music that would blow me away. The first time I heard Tuvan xoomei (throat singing) I knew I’d have to learn more...
Folk Happenings at a Glance. Check out details by following the page references.

OGM: On-going Music-page 11 • OGD: On-going Dance-page 14 • SE: Special Events-page 24

FOLK WORKS November-December 2002
**Torrance Elks (OGM)**
Scottish (OGD)
Polish (OGD)
International (OGD)
Belinda Gail (SE)

**Welsh Choir of So. California (OGM)**
Songmakers (OGM)
Highland Grounds (OGM)
Polish (OGD)
International (OGD)
CSULB STEEL DRUM (OGD)

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Songmakers (OGM)
Highland Grounds (OGM)
Polish (OGD)
International (OGD)

**Torrance Elks (OGM)**
Scottish (OGD)
Polish (OGD)
International (OGD)
Belinda Gail (SE)

**Kulak’s Woodshed (OGM)**
Viva Fresh (OGM)
Scandinavian (OGD)
Israeli (OGD)
Irish (OGD)
Balkan (OGD)

**Kulak’s Woodshed (OGM)**
Viva Fresh (OGM)
Celtic Arts Center (OGM)
Scandinavian (OGD)
Morrison (OGD)
International (OGD)

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Celtic Arts Center (OGM)
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Viva Fresh (OGM)
Celtic Arts Center (OGM)
Scandinavian (OGD)
Morris (OGD)
International (OGD)

**FOLK DANCE WEEKEND (SE)**

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**DeCEMBER PICKS**

- "...the Boys are the crème de la crème... unadulterated pure integrity. Their latest album is unbeat-
  able." - CLASSIC CD MAGAZINE

- "...seamlessly blend dazzling instrumental prowess and the gorgeously delicate vocals of Mairreid
  Ni Mhaonaigh..." - CHICAGO WEEKLY

- **SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK (Dec 7)**
  "Sweet Honey’s commitment to the Black music forms of its heritage, ancestral and modern, as a unify-
  ing, communal force against oppression is just the starting point." - Jan Bowman, THE PRESS NETWORK

- **BOYS OF THE LOUGH (Dec 4)**
  Featuring stellar vocal and instrumental harmonies, their entrancing sound is built on the interweav-
  ing, communal force against oppression [is] just the starting point. - Jim Bessman, THE PRESS NETWORK

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**Folk Happenings at a Glance. Check out details by following the page references.**
Welcome to my new column dedicated to information on Folk Arts appropriate for kids of all ages. I’m beginning with an interview with the well-known Los Angeles fiddler Daniel Stokberg (www.cruzatte.com), creator of a new recording called: Pierre Cruzatte: A Musical Journey Along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Daniel: Daniel, who was Pierre Cruzatte?

Daniel: Pierre Cruzatte was the main boatman and fiddler on the Lewis and Clark expedition. He spoke French; his father was French and his mother was an Omaha Indian. He had only one eye and was nearsighted in that one. He was best known for shooting Captain Lewis in the backside while they were hunting on the way home.

Gaili: Ooo! Daniel: But, really, his most important function was that he played fiddle, frequently, not only for the men on the expedition, but also for the Indian nations they encountered. It was often a diplomatic tool. The members of the expedition would sing and play for the Indians, and the Indians would sing and play for them. It was kind of a bonding.

Gaili: So the music on your CD is music that was played on the Lewis and Clark expedition?

Daniel: It’s my best guess. From the journals of the expedition, we know that Cruzatte played a lot, but they don’t tell us exactly what he played. The tunes on the CD are all tunes that were being played and sung at the time. There are a number of other Lewis and Clark CDs out there, but this is the only one that features authentic music that could have been played on the expedition, solely on the instruments that the expedition carried or had access to.

Gaili: The tunes sound just great, and I know that you use the kind of fiddle and even the fiddle case that Cruzatte would have used back then. It has a great sound—a bit different than a modern fiddle.

Daniel: Yes and harder to keep in tune.

Gaili: Why did you make this Pierre Cruzatte CD?

Daniel: Well, I’ve been performing as Pierre Cruzatte for awhile.

Gaili: In schools...

Daniel: ...and libraries, historical sites, museums, theaters, festivals, wherever they’ll have me. My interest in Cruzatte arose out of my interest in music. It amazed me when I found out that music played over 20 verses to the song Where have you Been. Did singing help them pass the time?

Daniel: Yes; they relied on these French or part-French boatmen as guides, as river boatmen, and these guys were well known for singing while they paddled. And these songs such as ‘Vite Bon Vent’ are hundreds of years old and were real common voyageur songs. So I’m 99.9% sure they sang these songs on the expedition along the way.

Gaili: How can people order your CD?

Daniel: The easiest way is to go to www.nativeround.com or call Native Ground Music at 1-800-752-2656 to order the CD or cassette. Or, you can visit my website which is www.cruzatte.com and I’ll have information about it there as well.

Here are some other suggestions for GREAT holiday gifts to make “folk stuff” a part of your children’s lives:

Cds:
How jaduO a great collection of traditional children’s folk tunes by legendary folk musician John McCutcheon (www.folkmusic.com)

Granny Does YoU BiTe! Bite a book and CD of wonderful Oldtime tunes gathered by folklorist Gerald Milnes. (Order it from him at gcm@augustaheritage.com)

A Little Music of the Orient features music from the classic Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder (order it from the Country Dance and Song Society at www.cdso.org/ or call 413-268-7426)

My family’s very favorite story CD (and we listen to them all the time) is by Sharon Kennedy called Irish Folk Tales for Children. You can order it from Sharon Kennedy at sharon kennedy. com/main.html.

Books:
Check out the “Historic Communities” Series by Bobbie Kalman published by Crabtree Publishing Co. for titles such as Early Family Home, Life on the Trail, and Women of the West.

When I was Young in the Mountains is a picture book by Cynthia Rylant

The Patchwork Quilt is a picture book by Ree Fry

For kids’ books about the Lewis and Clark Expedition check these out:

How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis & Clark, by Rosalyn Schanzer is Daniel’s favorite picture book about the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Across America: The Story of Lewis and Clark by Jacqueline Morley with lots of little picture highlighting some of the most important dates and events of the expedition.

Sacajawea a chapter book by Joseph Bruchac is also recommended by Daniel, and tells about the expedition from the points of view of William Clark and Sacajawea, the expedition’s only woman.

MCKEE’S GUITAR SHOP
November 3rd, Sunday – 11am (tickets on sale October 14th)
Dan Crow – A favorite of the pint-sized crowd, his songs have been sung by Winnie the Pooh, Bambi and Dumbo.

Tickets: $6 Adults, $3 children (free under 2 years old)

November 17th, Sunday – 11am (tickets on sale October 28th)
Paul Wilbur

Tickets: $12 Adults, $5 children (free under 2 years old)

December 8th, Sunday - 11am (tickets on sale November 28th)
Jacki Brager – Talented performer who will get the whole family singing.

Tickets: $6 Adults, $3 Children (free under 2 years old)

ON THE RADIO
Sundays 8:30am
Halfway Down the Stairs, with Uncle Ruthie KFPK-FM (90.7)
Fairstrow Convention: Liege & Lieu [Island Remasters] (England) 2002

The legendary Fairstrow lineup of Richard Thompson, Simon Nicol, Dave Swarbrick, Ashley Hutchings, Dave Mattacks and the late, great Sandy Denny. Perhaps Fairstrow’s finest moment in their 35 year history. A pioneering, pivotal folk-rock album, originally released in 1969 that spread the tradition of English and Celtic folk bands and tunes, plus original compositions. This re-mastered 2002 edition contains two additional tracks, one that was never released, an extensive booklet of liner notes and photos, plus superb sound quality.


One of America’s best Irish fiddler’s gives us another superb release, chock full of blistering dance tunes and beautiful airs. Lake Effect not only showcases Liz, but again she has included a stellar lineup of musicians to accompany her which include John Doyle, Martin O’Connor, Liz Knowles and more.

Cara Dillon: Two Journeys [Sanctuary Records] 2001

One of the purest and sweetest voices in traditional music today, this outstanding debut album features mainly folk-rock arrangements of traditional and original ballads from Ireland and Scotland. Along with a good barcarolle from Galicia Spain’s most famous band, Aral’s usual mix of gorgeous songs and rousing dance tunes and a pure delight. The album also features guest musicians which include Irish vocalist/guitarist Paul Brady and Dolly Parton. Another winner from the veteran Irish group.

Skydance: Live In Spain [Calbarunes Records] 2002

This is the third album and first “live” recording by master Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and his all star band. Recorded on tour at various concerts in Spain during 2001, this album showcases Skydance’s unique combination of traditional and original tunes from Scotland and the Spanish regions in northern Spain that have a folk music kinship to the Celtic nation. An intense and energetic performance with brilliant performances that also features local guest artists.

Cara Dillon: Cara Dillon [Sanctuary Records] 1999

A brilliant and fairly unknown release by Tim O’Brien, who is mainly known for his excellent interpretations of bluegrass music, this album celebrates the shared heritage between the USA and Ireland. Recorded at Nashville and in County Kildare, Ireland, Tim explores his family roots and features an unbelievable list of top Irish musicians to accompany him that include Paul Brady, Kevin Burke, John Williams, Kranza Casey, Paddy Keenan, Michael McGoldrick, Triona Ni Dhomhnaill, Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Kathy Mattea who sings the James Taylor song Millworker. This CD has not yet been released in the States.


Norwegian fiddler master Annbjörg Lien and her all star band which includes Vasen guitarist Roger Tallroth bring us brilliant live performances which span her career. Culled from concerts from her 2001 Norwegian tour, her music can only be described as superb progressive-folk.


You simply cannot go wrong with this CD if you love traditional Irish folk music. This CD contains Altan’s usual mix of gorgeous songs and rousing dance tunes and is a pure delight. The album also features guest musicians which include Irish vocalist/guitarist Paul Brady and Dolly Parton. Another winner from the veteran Irish group.

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You simply cannot go wrong with this CD if you love traditional Irish folk music. This CD contains Altan’s usual mix of gorgeous songs and rousing dance tunes and is a pure delight. The album also features guest musicians which include Irish vocalist/guitarist Paul Brady and Dolly Parton. Another winner from the veteran Irish group.

Cara Dillon: Cara Dillon [Sanctuary Records] 2001

One of the purest and sweetest voices in traditional music today, this outstanding debut album features mainly folk-rock arrangements of traditional and original ballads from Ireland and Scotland. Along with a good barcarolle from Galicia Spain’s most famous band, Aral’s usual mix of gorgeous songs and rousing dance tunes and a pure delight. The album also features guest musicians which include Irish vocalist/guitarist Paul Brady and Dolly Parton. Another winner from the veteran Irish group.

Skydance: Live In Spain [Calbarunes Records] 2002

This is the third album and first “live” recording by master Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and his all star band. Recorded on tour at various concerts in Spain during 2001, this album showcases Skydance’s unique combination of traditional and original tunes from Scotland and the Spanish regions in northern Spain that have a folk music kinship to the Celtic nation. An intense and energetic performance with brilliant performances that also features local guest artists.


A brilliant and fairly unknown release by Tim O’Brien, who is mainly known for his excellent interpretations of bluegrass music, this album celebrates the shared heritage between the USA and Ireland. Recorded at Nashville and in County Kildare, Ireland, Tim explores his family roots and features an unbelievable list of top Irish musicians to accompany him that include Paul Brady, Kevin Burke, John Williams, Kranza Casey, Paddy Keenan, Michael McGoldrick, Triona Ni Dhomhnaill, Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Kathy Mattea who sings the James Taylor song Millworker. This CD has not yet been released in the States.
FEATURED ORGANIZATION

RUSS & JULIE’S HOUSE CONCERTS

Russ & Julie’s House Concerts have you heard about the latest music make over a dream? Imagine going out Saturday night at eight o’clock. You get into your car, grab a friend and drive to a home in your neighborhood. There you are greeted at the door where you drop $15 into a bowl, grab a cup of coffee and some homemade sweets, and get a seat in the living room for a live concert featuring your favorite musician. This is a house concert and it’s coming to a small town or large city near you. Around the time of the founding of this country, parlor parties— with live music performed in private homes— were a popular form of entertainment. Today, these parlor parties, or house concerts as they are now referred to, are making a comeback in a big way. Russ and Julie’s House Concerts in Oak Park, California has hosted these musical parties since 1997. Russ says, “The first of live music performed in a home was a CD Release Party for Severin Browne in a private residence in Glendora. After seeing him perform a short set at the party, a light bulb went on. The concept of a musician performing in such a small and intimate setting had never occurred to us. Prior to this, we thought that you had to drive to some large venue, fight the crowds, and pay lots of money to see quality music.” Singer-songwriter Severin Browne and his sideman James Coberly Smith headlined the first show at Russ and Julie’s in February, 1997. Friends, neighbors and family made up their first audience and when it was over, for weeks after, Russ and Julie were asked, “when is the next one?”

Now, more than 5 years and 50 shows later, Russ and Julie have quite a reputation for maintaining a warm and friendly environment, a non-smoking room, and the opportunity for music fans to meet highly talented musicians. They’ve developed a special notability for their fabulous dessert buffet. Russ and Julie’s House Concerts have featured a variety of musical genres including folk, bluegrass, pop, jazz, rock, country, and even New Age. The series is often booked more than a year in advance and has promoted quality performers from around the world.

What do you get out of this? How can you open your house to complete strangers? Can I perform there? These are the most frequently asked questions Russ and Julie receive. Not performers themselves, Russ and Julie consider themselves serious music fans with a strong desire to bring great original music to people who might not otherwise hear it. Julie explains, “We do it for the love of the music. There is so much great music being written and produced today that is not getting airplay. We open our home to those who, like us, appreciate wonderful music in a warm and intimate environment.”

Julie adds, “Our regulars have learned to trust our choices of talent. And by trusting our ability to choose great music, they have expanded their own horizons and learned to enjoy music they might never have been exposed to. We have met many people with similar interests, and many neighbors we might have never met. We do open our house to strangers, but by the time they leave, they are no longer strangers.” Russ and Julie get no financial rewards from hosting house concerts. All of the proceeds collected from the recommended donation of $15 per person go directly to the performers. For those interested in performing, Russ and Julie tell us that they are booked through 2003 and have a list of more than 100 artists that they are already talking to about future dates. They regularly hear from musicians as far away as Australia and Ireland who want to perform in their living room. Russ and Julie book their shows from a combination of past performers who want to return, recommendations from musicians they know, unsolicited requests from musicians all over the world, and even some of their favorite musicians whom they seek out.

Some of the people who have performed at Russ and Julie’s over the past few years include: John McEuen (of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band), Mary McCaslin, Cache Valley Drifters, Joel Rafael Band, Laurence Juber (of Paul McCartney and Wings), Penny Nichols, Lowen and Navarro, Chuck Pyle, James Lee Stanley, Darryl Purpose, Caroline Aiken, Doug Haywood, Laurel Massé (of The Manhattan Transfers), Billy Payne (of Little Feat), Venice, John Hall (of Orleans) and Freebo.

Like all house concert promoters, Russ and Julie walk a fine line when it comes to advertising their shows. Russ explains, “Technically, we’re hosting a private party in our home. We’re not running a business. There are no tickets, but we do keep an RSVP list so that we know how many people are attending each show and when a show is full. It also helps determine how large the dessert buffet needs to be. We do want to advertise our shows and invite people we’ve never met before, but we aren’t a venue in the traditional sense. Because this is a residential neighborhood, we need to be conscientious of issues like zoning, CC&Rs, noise and particularly the concerns of our neighbors.”

Due to these types of concerns, many house concerts exist below the radar. You generally have to make an effort to find them. Russ and Julie have a house concert resources section on their Web site that lists other house concerts around the country. The Internet is a great resource for house concerts. Russ and Julie maintain an email mailing list with more than 500 people it. Since they do not make money on what amounts to a hobby for them, they rely heavily on email to publicize their calendar. Julie adds, “We’re also very thankful for resources like FolkWorks that help promote good music in our community.”

Russ and Julie’s House Concerts’ November show with the band Bryndle (Kara Bonoff, Kenny Edwards and Wendy Waldman) sold out months in advance. Their December 7th show features the amazing Jonathan McEuen, son of banjo wizard John McEuen of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. Seating is limited; make your reservations soon! For more information call 818-707-2197 or write Russ and Julie at houseconcerts@jrp-graphics.com.

For a list of past performers as well as upcoming shows, check their Web site at www.jrp-graphics.com/houseconcerts.html.
2 HOUSE BAND (England) – The House Band has always been hard to pigeon-hole—no, it’s a misnomer. I suspect why I think they are one of the more underrated bands of the past decade. Their repertoire is as likely to include Scots, Shugovanian, Breton, and Eastern European tunes as it is the more familiar Irish and English ones. Songs choice ranges from tradi- tional to more folk-oriented such as Mollie Fisher’s ‘The Final Troub’, or my favorite, Elvis Costello’s ‘Lonely Avenue’. The band’s eponymous first album Crasdant, released high marks from a variety of sources. Their latest release Nos Sadurn Bach/Not Yet Saturday promises to be outstanding as well. Website: www.crasdant.com (in Welsh and English) Discography: • Nos Sadurn Bach/Not Yet Saturday (2001) Sain CDSC2200 (CD) • Crasdant (1999) Sain CDSC2200 (CD)

3 CRASDANT (Wales) – Welsh traditional music somehow seems to garner far less attention than its Irish, Scottish or English cousins. Possibly because it lacks the same driving rhythms, possibly because the unique region is a world music audience is more attuned to the Welsh song tradition instead of it’s shyer instrumental one, or possibly because it hasn’t had, as dynamic an ambassador as Crasdant before now. Robin Huw Bowen, on Welsh triple harp, is probably the best known of the band member, but rounding out the quartet are Andy M. Stewart on vocals, fiddle, and vocals by Andy M. Stewart (plus the occasional dazzling turns on 5-string banjo), a song written to the "heroine in a far more active role and feisty attitude than any other version I’ve encountered. The band also displays some fine chaps as composers too. In particu- lar, Powell’s ‘Whew, Doo Da Ye Lue?’ (their first release) is a stand out. The song was written to the women of Srebenica, Bosnia to establish the Troop’s morale. The song has undergone a few changes in the last year, with the change of John Bews for Patterson on fiddle and the addi- tion of button box player extraordinaire Leo McCann. All five band members are in great demand individually for projects, and they’ve just released their second album 3 Ravens. This band is head of my list of ones to watch/listen for in the next few years. I expect many great things from them.

Line-up: Karine Powell (vocals, gui- tar, bouzouki), Steve Byrne (vocals, bouzouki, guitar), Marc Elliott (bodhran, whistles, vocals), John Bews (fiddle, vocals), Leo McCann (button box)


4 LLAN DE CUBEL (Spain) – From the moun- tain regions of Spain’s Asturias, Llan de Cubel, offers audiences’ an eclectic, American one, a whole new perspective on “Celtic,” the family connections are all there: pipes (the gaitas) for lefthanded rhytmic, mournful ballads. But the regional differences are also apparent, espe- cially in the “alboradas”—march tunes for the pipes. Often these were specifically designed to wake up the townspeople after a night of colorful celebrations. Tune for mor- mons, and have an appropriately cheeky attitude. Equally keenly is the band’s logo—a pipe playing bau, based on a medieval wood carving in the cathedral in Uviéu. Songs range from the melancholic L’Otra Llaia de la Mar (title track of the band’s 3rd CD) in which a sailor pines for his love “on the other side of the sea” to the jauntly Cabritilega (Llau de Cubel IV). Founded in 1984, when they were only one of three bands playing Asturian traditional music (the other two bands have since vanished), Llan de Cubel has more than one musician. The band’s experiences have contributed to the formation of the famous Asturian band, Llan de Cubel IV band. The band has undergone a few changes in the last year, with the change of John Bews for Patterson on fiddle and the addi- tion of button box player extraordinaire Leo McCann. All five band members are in great demand individually for projects, and they’ve just released their second album 3 Ravens. This band is head of my list of ones to watch/listen for in the next few years. I expect many great things from them.

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5 MALINKY (Scotland) – This young band garnered a lot of attention in their native Scotland in 1999, when the then quartet won the first ever Danny Award for new talent at Glasgow’s renowned Celtic Connections Festival. Even at this early stage, the band demonstrated a distinctive flare, a load of talent, a surprising amount of polish, and most of all the satisfying impres- sion of having all the elements that make up a band “just right”. American audiences are probably most familiar with singer/guitarist Karine Powell from her 2-year stint with the Battlefield Band. In Malinky, she and Steve Byrne share lead vocals and form much of the heart of the band. It’s worth noting that Byrne was one of 5 finalists for Scotland’s first “Young Traditional Musician of the Year” in 2000. Mark Dunlop on bodhran, whistles, and vocals, provides solid accom-paniment and a laconic stage patter, and original fiddler Kit Patterson rounds out the sound. The band draws mostly from the treasure trove of the Northeast for their tra-ditional material, but often adds a fresh or unusual twist to it. Their version of ‘The Beggar Man’, a song in which the daughter of the house runs off with a beggar who turns out to be a well-to-do lord in disguise, depicts the heroine in a far more active role and feisty attitude than any other version I’ve encountered. The band also displays some fine chaps as composers too. In particu- lar, Powell’s ‘Whew, Doo Da Ye Lue?’ (their first release) is a stand out. The song was written to the women of Srebenica, Bosnia to establish the Troop’s morale. The song has undergone a few changes in the last year, with the change of John Bews for Patterson on fiddle and the addi- tion of button box player extraordinaire Leo McCann. All five band members are in great demand individually for projects, and they’ve just released their second album 3 Ravens. This band is head of my list of ones to watch/listen for in the next few years. I expect many great things from them.

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6 SILLY WIZARD (Scotland) – I’m not sure what can be said that hasn’t already said about this now legendary band. Silly Wizard was at the forefront of the Scottish revival in traditional music in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. Stunning guitarist work by founding members Bob Thomas and Gordon Jones, electrically backed by Martin Hadden, evocative and sensitive vocals by Andy M. Stewart (plus the occasional dazzling turns on 5-string banjo), all came together as a result of Silly Wizard’s musi- cianship of then teen phenomena, Johnny and Phil Cunningham (fiddle and accordion respectively) created a sound that would endure at least until the mid-1980’s. The band was both renowned and criticized for it’s lightening speed in playing on their instruments, and it’s delicate touch with slow airs. Vocalist Andy M. Stewart put his unique stamp on traditional songs (Broom of the Cowden Knowes, Donald McGilvray) and (and is) a gifted songwriter as well. Many his compositions like Valley of Strathmore) that if they’d come out of the pages of some long forgotten 18th century songbook. Siblings Johnny and Phil Cunningham were (and are) extremely talented composers of tunes as well. The band members have all gone on to other projects now. Andy M. Stewart, Phil Cunningham and Johnny Cunningham are now Silly Wizard’s solo projects, each with their own reputations as performers. But echoes of the band’s impact can still be heard some 15 years after the band’s last recordings. The most often quoted influ- ence by young musicians at Celtic Connections for example, is Silly Wizard. Or the playing/tunes of the Cunningham brothers. If you’re already a fan of Celtic music but...
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haven't heard of Silly Wizard, you've been living under a rock. If you're new to Celtic music, then their work forms an essential primer that you should probably peruse. Their best album is probably their first, due to Gordon Jones and Bob Thomas check out www.harbour-townrecords.com

LUNASA (Ireland) - Few bands are as worthy of their "hype" as this one. Lúnasa is probably one of the finest instrumental bands out of Ireland at the moment. Known for their inventive arrangements and engaging live performance they've become great favorites of the international scene. Founding members Trevor Hutchinson (double bass), Donogh Hennessy (guitars), and Sean Smyth on fiddle form an incredibly tight yet dynamic string section. Kevin Crawford adds lyrical flute playing, fiery bodhrán work and is also one of the most hilarious "front men" in the business. The band's fifth member, Cillian Ó Néill on uillean pipes, fills out the wind section. Indeed, the interplay of wind and strings in often surprising and breath taking arrangements makes an evening with Lúnasa something of a "flying by the seat of your pants" experience. All of the "lads" can stand alone as fine solo musicians and have contributed original compositions to the repertoire. The traditional tunes are drawn from all parts of Ireland, with the occasional Galician or Breton tune tossed in. If you're not already a fan, a few turns of one of their critically acclaimed CDs, or better yet, a live performance, will probably convert you.

Website: www.lunasae.ie
Record labels: Green Linnet

Compass Records www.compass-records.com

Discography: Merry Sisters of Fate (2001) GLCD1213
Otherworld (1999) + GLCD1210
Lúnasa (1997) Compass Records 4317

DAF SHEPARD (Scotland) - Daf Shepard is another of my favorite bands who are probably not terribly well known outside of Europe and their native Scotland. With the exception of Rory McCloud (Blind Dogs) and Malcolm Stitt, none of the band members are full time musicians and the pressures of "day jobs" limit their ability to tour. More's the pity, especially for American audiences, because the "Deafies" have one of the most authentic Scottish voices at their helm (lead singer John Morrán) and a dynamic dead-on, full-throttle almost pure "roots" sound that has won them a devoted following. Morrán hails from the area of Ayrshire, which is one of the strongholds of the Lowland Scots language. His sensitive phrasing brings out the poetic quality of every song, and although the Scots is unfamiliar with it, the sheer beauty of them is striking. Band members hail from various Scottish (the Highlands, Glasgow, the Isle of Barra) and bring their own musical traditions to the "mix". Percussionist Mark McGuire (Glaswegian born of Irish parents) brings a dash of Irish influence but for the most part, the band's sound is undeniably Scottish. Founding member Claire McLaughlin and Marianne Campbell (sister to Rory) provide the driving twin-fiddle sound, which has become one of Daf Shepard's signatures. The rest of the instrumentalists are provided by Malcolm Stitt on bouzouki, John Morrán on guitar, McGuire on percussion and Rory Campbell on highland pipes.

Website: www.dafshepherd.com
Record label: Greentrax
Website: www.greentrax.com
Discography:
Even in the Rain (2002) – self release, purchase from the band's Website
Synergy (1997) CDTRAX143

PASSAGES
December 6, 1956 – September 26, 2002

Patrick Jay Collins

December 6, 1956 – September 26, 2002

Patrick Jay "Pat" Collins, 45, tin whistle player and fiddler for L.A. Celtic band Craicmore and a musician at several local sessions for the last 15 years, died September 26, 2002 of apparent natural causes at his home in Pacoima.

Pat was born in Los Angeles and was raised in the house in which he died. He pursued a great variety of interests in his life. He was a surfer, rock climber and an avid reader. Trained at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia and later at Disney Studios in Florida, he was also a talented artist and animator who worked professionally in that field in addition to his musical career.

His interest in Irish music started with a Chieftains album given to him as a teenager. Soon thereafter, Pat was classically trained on piano and played harmonica, took up the tin whistle and fiddle. It is on tin whistle that he was most skilled, appreciated by fellow musicians for his broad knowledge of instrumental tunes, as well as his sensitive touch, particularly when playing slow airs. Audiences loved his sense of humor, his unruly dreadlocks and his spirited enjoyment of playing music. Offstage he was much loved for his welcoming demeanor. Pat was one of the few regular session players in the L.A. area to not only accept but encourage and nurture beginners, and for a short time he led both regular and beginner's sessions at L.A.'s Celtic Arts Center.

The Celtic Arts Center was the site of a tribute to him at its regular session on Monday following his death, at which an empty chair was placed with a single rose and a photo of Pat. Regulars told stories of his generosity and warmth between playing tune sets. As someone who once knew him for fifteen years, I can say that this was no idle sentiment. Pat was a truly generous person, always ready to hand his last dollar to someone who needed it, a great lover of animals who was always taking care of stray cats and dogs.

The Celtic Arts Center will pay tribute to him by naming a chair in his honor, and they hope to someday name a Music Room at the Center for him as well.

He is survived by his sister Linda. In lieu of flowers, his family has asked that donations be made in his name to Cat Connection, PO Box 18456, Encino, CA 91416.
PAINTING THE TOWN continued from page 1

— were involved in their own revolution. They had rejected European Impressionism in favor of the strong colors and explicit forms of Mexican Indian traditions, and began appealing to the government for public murals and other public buildings so that the new art would be available to the masses. When the country finally stabilized, the artists got what they wanted and mural art became very popular. The tendency was to paint what they wanted as long as they used Mexican themes. Mexico became famous as a place where one could buy exciting new art. In many of the early works, during the 1960's and 1970's, were done by artists on private projects, their own or someone else's, with or without permission. Many of the hippie-era murals just sort of appeared overnight on a wall somewhere and many of them stayed because they were beautiful, quirky, captivating colors, fantastic, cynical, or surrealistic. In 1968, the well-known "Groupie" painting — the first "hip" mural in Venice — was painted openly in broad daylight on a wall the artist took a liking to. Sometimes this hit-and-run work is called "guerilla art."

The Pink Lady of Malibu was such a work. It is rumored that she was painted by a nervous woman who hung all night over the tunnel on Malibu Canyon Road to create a real pick-me-up for the morning commuters. Bright pink and voluptuously naked, she upstaged every celebrity in Malibu. Fans visited the tunnel for several days, or weeks, how many I don't know, but not many and not enough. However, community outrage got her abolished in recorded time. — would that potholes suffered so many vocal citizens. She might be forgotten now except that her name lingers on as a cocktail served in coastal bars.

Venice has always had a large share of interesting murals, up and down the boardwalk (Ocean Front Walk) and all over town. On Venice Boulevard you can see two blue whales at Beethoven on the NW corner, a hip-hop/rock art/abstract hybrid at Venice High School, Jesus Roller-Skating with Friends at Venice Beach at the Lutheran Church, and an alleyway about Los Angeles at the SPARC office in the old Venice police station.

Many old Venice favorites have been lost. The beloved snow scene with local characters wearing mitten and warm jackets because the boardwalk is covered with snow disappeared when a building went up next to it and obscured the whole wall. Other old favorites, faded or damaged, have been replaced, usually with changes and updates. Botticelli's Venus still rolls skaters along the boardwalk after "reconstruction" by the artist in 1989. Chagall Comes to Venice Beach returned after the 1994 earthquake with new Muses and a black God, and Jesus still skates on conventionally skates but some of his friends have upgraded to roller blades.

Other areas have lost murals too. Two that Siqueiros painted in the 1930's were deemed so offensive that they were dispatched as quickly as the Pink Lady of Malibu was 40 years later. One contained an inter-racial theme. The other, América Tropical, at Olvera Street, made a blatant comment about American imperialism. This painting has been in the news recently because it is being partially restored.

Commuters on the Hollywood Freeway grieved so when the famous Freeway Lady was painted over that the building’s owner was sued. The court ruled that the mural be restored. Many others have been lost to damage from weather, pollution, graffiti, earthquakes, and vandalism.

The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles was formed to document and preserve our city’s murals and to work on the building’s owner is sued. The report issued in 1996 was entitled, "Too late, the buildings are bad, damaged, the city just slops gray paint over them and then they are gone forever."

Some consider graffiti art an oxygen mask, however, in and around the cities' x-taposition of concepts, Gaijin Fujita from Boyle Heights blends graffiti with classical Japanese painting and is currently showing his paintings at the L.A. Louver in Venice.

Originally associated with marking gang territories and promoting individ-
ual egos, the angular, distorted lettering of graffiti taggers has long infuriated people who find their property or friends have been desecrated.

Organizations like SPARC hire many "at risk" kids to work on the murals they sponsor. They do this primarily so each mural will be a community effort but also because they believe that people who learn artistic skills and how to work cooperatively will be less interested in tagging. They are probably right. The taggers’ work has changed, become more artistic, complex, and colorful. Their backgrounds design have depth and real beauty and their lettering has style, if not legibility.

My neighbor, Eric, is a 14 year old Mexican American who takes his artwork seriously. He gets good grades in school so he will be eligible to work on murals through SPARC and use of informal groups or “crews” that do murals, or “pieces” (short for masterpieces). They share techniques, teach skills to younger members, and critique each other’s work.

HOW TO SEE MURALS

One way is to pick an area from the Dunit book and map of your own tour, or one that you think you might enjoy. If you have a patient companion who can navigate well, take him or her along. Resign yourself to inevitable detours, one-way streets, unexpected changes of street names, and the occasional mural that has disappeared. Likewise, watch for brand new works of art.

The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles has offered many tours in the past. They are currently updating their tour schedule as well as their handy map and guide booklet. Their number is 323-512-5697. It's a volunteer organization, so be patient if you don’t get them immediately. Their web site is www.lamurals.org.

If you have a large group, you can arrange a tour through SPARC (the Social and Public Art Resource Center). Check prices and availability at 310-822-9560. You can also drop by their office (the old police station at 685 Venice Blvd. in Venice) and get Street Gallery and many other books on murals. Check out their web site at www.sparcmural.org.

Also, watch the calendar in the L.A. Times for other art and culture groups that occasionally tour the murals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Here are a few of the books listed by Robin Dunit in Street Gallery, in which you might find at the SPARC office:


Mexico – Inca словам “The Wall That Talks,” 1966 – private – Arroyo Furniture – 6037 N. Coldwater Canyon Avenue. just north of the concrete walls of the Tujunga Wash that parallels the highway to Los Angeles. Famous for its Hispanic themes, Mexico became famous for its Hispanic art, and made them into surrealistic paintings. Some of the early murals, during the 1960’s and 1970’s, were done by artists on private projects, their own or someone else’s, with or without permission. Many of the hippie-era murals just sort of appeared overnight on a wall somewhere and many of them stayed because they were beautiful, quirky, captivating colors, fantastic, cynical, or surrealistic. In 1968, the well-known “Groupie” painting — the first “hip” mural in Venice — was painted openly in broad daylight on a wall the artist took a liking to. Sometimes this hit-and-run work is called “guerilla art.”

The Pink Lady of Malibu was such a work. It is rumored that she was painted by a nervous woman who hung all night over the tunnel on Malibu Canyon Road to create a real pick-me-up for the morning commuters. Bright pink and voluptuously naked, she upstaged every celebrity in Malibu. Fans visited the tunnel for several days, or weeks, how many I don’t know, but not many and not enough. However, community outrage got her abolished in recorded time. — would that potholes suffered so many vocal citizens. She might be forgotten now except that her name lingers on as a cocktail served in coastal bars.

Venice has always had a large share of interesting murals, up and down the boardwalk (Ocean Front Walk) and all over town. On Venice Boulevard you can see two blue whales at Beethoven on the NW corner, a hip-hop/rock art/abstract hybrid at Venice High School, Jesus Roller-Skating with Friends at Venice Beach at the Lutheran Church, and an alleyway about Los Angeles at the SPARC office in the old Venice police station.

Many old Venice favorites have been lost. The beloved snow scene with local characters wearing mitten and warm jackets because the boardwalk is covered with snow disappeared when a building went up next to it and obscured the whole wall. Other old favorites, faded or damaged, have been replaced, usually with changes and updates. Botticelli's Venus still rolls skaters along the boardwalk after “reconstruction” by the artist in 1989. Chagall Comes to Venice Beach returned after the 1994 earthquake with new Muses and a black God, and Jesus still skates on conventionally skates but some of his friends have upgraded to roller blades.

Other areas have lost murals too. Two that Siqueiros painted in the 1930's were deemed so offensive that they were dispatched as quickly as the Pink Lady of Malibu was 40 years later. One contained an inter-racial theme. The other, América Tropical, at Olvera Street, made a blatant comment about American imperialism. This painting has been in the news recently because it is being partially restored.

Commuters on the Hollywood Freeway grieved so when the famous Freeway Lady was painted over that the building’s owner was sued. The court ruled that the mural be restored. Many others have been lost to damage from weather, pollution, graffiti, earthquakes, and vandalism. The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles was formed to document and preserve our city’s murals and to work on the building’s owner is sued. The report issued in 1996 was entitled, "Too late, the buildings are bad, damaged, the city just slops gray paint over them and then they are gone forever."

Some consider graffiti art an oxygen mask, however, in and around the cities' x-taposition of concepts, Gaijin Fujita from Boyle Heights blends graffiti with classical Japanese painting and is currently showing his paintings at the L.A. Louver in Venice.

Originally associated with marking gang territories and promoting individ-
ual egos, the angular, distorted lettering of graffiti taggers has long infuriated people who find their property or friends have been desecrated.

Organizations like SPARC hire many “at risk” kids to work on the murals they sponsor. They do this primarily so each mural will be a community effort but also because they believe that people who learn artistic skills and how to work cooperatively will be less interested in tagging. They are probably right. The taggers’ work has changed, become more artistic, complex, and colorful. Their backgrounds design have depth and real beauty and their lettering has style, if not legibility.

My neighbor, Eric, is a 14 year old Mexican American who takes his artwork seriously. He gets good grades in school so he will be eligible to work on murals through SPARC and tell of informal groups or “crews” that do murals, or “pieces” (short for masterpieces). They share techniques, teach skills to younger members, and critique each other’s work.

HOW TO SEE MURALS

One way is to pick an area from the Dunit book and map of your own tour, or one that you think you might enjoy. If you have a patient companion who can navigate well, take him or her along. Resign yourself to inevitable detours, one-way streets, unexpected changes of street names, and the occasional mural that has disappeared. Likewise, watch for brand new works of art.

The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles has offered many tours in the past. They are currently updating their tour schedule as well as their handy map and guide booklet. Their number is 323-512-5697. It’s a volunteer organization, so be patient if you don’t get them immediately. Their web site is www.lamurals.org.

If you have a large group, you can arrange a tour through SPARC (the Social and Public Art Resource Center). Check prices and availability at 310-822-9560. You can also drop by their office (the old police station at 685 Venice Blvd. in Venice) and get Street Gallery and many other books on murals. Check out their web site at www.sparcmural.org.

Also, watch the calendar in the L.A. Times for other art and culture groups that occasionally tour the murals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Here are a few of the books listed by Robin Dunit in Street Gallery, in which you might find at the SPARC office:


PAINTING THE TOWN page 22
their own life experiences to their music to, as Professor Levin said, “build a rapport with their audiences, as any tradition must do to remain alive.”

At age 11, singing in a Barbershop chorus was rare. However this did not deter my enthusiasm for the craft. I appreciated the way singing in harmony with others made me feel, and I enjoyed, and still enjoy, entertaining people. It’s nice to be able to make people smile through music. I had always been a little different than my friends. Sure, I rode my bike all over town and played video games, yet before I reached puberty, I was out there in the community, entertaining audiences of all types. My friends have always respected my love of singing. This acceptance gave me added confidence to push forward with my one true love — music. Around age 13, I began noticing more and more youngsters participating in Barbershop harmony.

Similarly, after being introduced to the Western music culture, Tuvan xoomeesi received that same kind of acceptance and recognition I felt as a boy. It seemed to inspire confidence and also reinforced Tuva’s pride in the great value of their music culture. All too often, Westerners lose sight of cultural relativism. We forget that image, money, and “making it big” are usually short lived, and have no lasting impact on a music culture. In a day and age where technology and greed are practically running the show in much of popular Western music, I suppose it is easier to lean more towards ethnocentrism than to identify with other music cultures. Although Western music is a big influence in many countries, we need to remember that there is an abundance to learn from the music of others around the world.

Time waits for no one and music will continue to progress and change over time. Xoomeesi and Tuvan music are no exceptions. However, it seems time has stood still as Tuvan musicians continue to preserve their heritage and tradition through both their music and culture. Tuva’s wonderfully unique musical culture is a perfect example that, regardless of geographical location, religion, individual beliefs, history, tradition, and age, the common thread around the world is the power of music.

Jason Howe is a recent graduate from California State University Northridge and has been singing since he was 11 years old, particularly barbershop four-part harmony numbers. Interested in music and culture, he is also a drummer and has written and directed a number of music and theater performances, as any tradition must do to “build a rapport with their audience.”

Painting the Town continued from page 21

ON THEIR MARRIAGE

Leda & Steve Shapiro

CONGRATULATIONS TO
BARBARA WEISMANN & DON GREEN
ON THEIR MARRIAGE

WISHING YOU MANY MORE YEARS
OF JOYOUS DANCING!

Trudy & Peter Israel
Cathy Miller
Dabria & Kip Miller
Leda & Steve Shapiro

CARROLL continued from page 6
composed by Liz. The traditional tunes showcase the highly original way that Liz can arrange and breathe new life into them. The entire album is simply brilliant, but some highlights to note include the opening set of reels, The Rock through The Morning Dew/Reeling on the Box, the air and jigs set The Ghost/The Hatchlings/The Long Bow, and the final track of scorching reels called The Potato on the Door/Mary and the Tea Bag/Perpetual Check. A unique track features Liz accompanied by the Turtle Island String Quartet, which includes the slip jig, Catherine Kelly’s, followed by her composition and title track, Lake Effect.

Lake Effect is a work of the highest quality and renews and extends Liz Carroll’s position as one of the world’s best Celtic fiddlers. From its masterful and elegant airs to its wild ride of gut-wrenching, amazingly performed dance tunes, Lake Effect, stands as one of the best Irish fiddle and general Celtic releases for the year 2002. This outstanding album is an overwhelming winner and a do-not-miss for lovers of the Irish folk tradition.

Availability: Released domestically and easily obtainable.

CD REVIEWS

By Tom “Tezanna” Schulte

Ralph White

Trash Fish

Terminus Records

www.terminusrecords.com

Many know of Ralph White through his long career in Bad Livers. Fans of that group’s output will easily appreciate Trash Fish, which also has the same free and fun approach to bluegrass styles. Ralph includes on this album a version of “I’m a Stranger Here.” In 1999, White traversed Africa on a bicycle with his banjo and played the song with many local musicians who probably discovered the song after it arrived in Africa in the 1970s. The album is a big influence in many countries, we need to remember that there is an abundance to learn from the music of others around the world. As any tradition must do to “build a rapport with their audience.”

In producing this record, Cady (pronounced “Caddy”) seeks to document the American-Irish sound of fiddle music. Her warm and upfront presentation of instrumental reels, work songs, jigs and more, is direct—ed toward appealing to all ages of a contemporary audience. Cady is deeply rooted in these traditions though and even a Celtic purist will appreciate her take on “For Ireland” and Turlough O’Carolan’s “Plaxty Irish.” Only a hard-hearted folk traditionalist could not smile and enjoy the world percussion fused onto the world. The last tune comes from the Irish Traditional Music Archive. Since their 1999 success as Danny Award winners for new talent at Glasgow’s prestigious Celtic Connections Festival, Malinky has played at venues across the U.K. and Europe. Hopefully their continued success will next bring them to the shores of the States. In the meantime, lovers of Scottish folk music must not miss this outstanding album.

Availability: Released in Scotland and only available as an import.

Ordering Information:
Most major audio retailers
Tayberry Music — www.tayberry.com
Greentrax Records in Scotland — www.greentrax.com

November-December 2002

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FolkWorks

MALINKY continued from page 6

Gone to the Bower. Mark Dunlop wrote the first two tunes in this set, while the last three come from the Irish Traditional Music Archive. Since their 1999 success as Danny Award winners for new talent at Glasgow’s prestigious Celtic Connections Festival, Malinky has played at venues across the U.K. and Europe. Hopefully their continued success will next bring them to the shores of the States. In the meantime, lovers of Scottish folk music must not miss this outstanding album.

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continued from page 6

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approach to fiddle tunes — solid, rhythmic and uncluttered by extraneous diversions into other genres. The instrumentation is simple, for example a combination of fiddle, piano and flute. Many of the bands perform long-time favorites and probably familiar to our hypothetical 19th century dancers.

In contrast, Wild Asparagus and Yankee Ingenuity are examples of popular New England contradance bands that began stretching the boundaries of contradance music early on in their careers. Wild Asparagus employs a variety of wind instruments such as flute, saxophone and even oboe at times, as well as fiddle, concertina, piano, bodhran and bass. Venturing from a base of typical New England and Irish, the shapes of the melodies ebb and flow under jazzy improvisation. Many contemporary contradance bands use a “layering” effect with instruments, sometimes the entire band is going full strength, while at other times, some instruments switch from the melody to rhythm or drop completely out of the mix for effect. But beneath these excursions away from the tunes, the all-important rhythm is always present for the dancers.

The west-coast-based Hillbillies From Mars is just one of many bands that has expanded the identity of contradance music by incorporating fusion and crossover between musical genres. Like many other bands, the Hillbillies exploit tunes from outside of the essential New England repertoire, such as Quebecois, Irish and Appalachian tunes, and then add their own unique twist. It’s not too surprising to discover that they’ve added a Middle Eastern drum (drum) to accent rhythm or applied an African pop beat behind a French-Canadian tune.

Most bands that borrow tunes from other traditions have to adapt them at least a little to make the music work for contras. For example, my band Round the House plays Irish tunes with less ornamentation than we would for a ceilí dance or for folk dancing. But the majority of popular or successful bands tend to be dispersed toward the more experimental / improvisational end of the spectrum. Modern contradance music is still evolving; it hasn’t abandoned its origins, but hasn’t settled incontrovertibly into a new identity. It is being reshaped by interplay between the personal choices and experiences of the musicians and the responses of dancers. As a result, contradance music seems to be shifting along the continuum, anchored in the historical tradition while expanding into new territory.

And now, perhaps it might be the moment to imagine how our early New England dancers might feel about modern contradance music, and to examine a question was posed at the beginning of this article: Has contradance music transitioned into a new musical genre? I believe that contradance music is in the process of evolving. Those 19th century dancers would recognize many of the figures in the dances, the patterns and phrasing in the music and some of the tunes. They would encounter many familiar instruments, but others might seem quite exotic. I think that the most puzzling and unfamiliar aspects would prove to be the contemporary arrangements of the tunes and the fusion of jazz, blues, swing etc. with traditional fiddle tunes.

I see contemporary contra dance bands spread out along a continuum, from the very traditional to the very innovative. At one end, groups like New England Tradition are closer to the roots of contradance music, but the majority of popular or successful bands tend to be dispersed toward the more experimental / improvisational end of the spectrum. Modern contradance music is still evolving; it hasn’t abandoned its origins, but hasn’t settled incontrovertibly into a new identity. It is being reshaped by interplay between the personal choices and experiences of the musicians and the responses of dancers. As a result, contradance music seems to be shifting along the continuum, anchored in the historical tradition while expanding into new territory.

I would like to express my appreciation to Peter Barnes, Rodney Miller, Ted Whittemore, Claire Zucker, Becky Nunkweli and Chuck Williamson for insightful comments and conversations about contradancing and the music we play for it. I would also like to thank Tucson Friends of Traditional Music and Round the House for opportunities to do hands-on research in playing for dances.

Sharon Goldwasser loves playing fiddle for dancers – especially contra and Irish. She got started playing traditional music nearly 20 years ago with the Tucson Friends of Traditional Music open contra dance band, and currently plays with the band Round the House. You can find them on the web at www.geocities.com/rthfiddler

Discography

Many contradance recordings can be purchased from Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS) www.cdss.org (413) 268-7426
• Airplang and Airplang II (Green Meadow Music www.GreenMeadowMusic.com)
• Fourgone Conclusions (no longer in print)
• New England Tradition (Green Meadow Music www.GreenMeadowMusic.com)
• Wild Asparagus (www.wildasparagus.com)
• Yankee Ingenuity - Heatin’ Up the Hall (Varrick 038 - harp.rounder.com/rounder/catalog/hylabel/varr038/038.html)
• Hillbillies From Mars (www.instantharmony.com/HM/)
• Round the House (www.geocities.com/rthfiddler)
• For Old Time’s Sake (www.swingcatenterprises.com/catalog_oldtime.asp)
• Privy Tippers (jwohl@mindspring.com)