The evocative and dramatic voice of Lila Downs affects people worldwide with her original poignant songs as well as memorable versions of standard Mexican and indigenous folk songs. She sings her repertoire in Spanish, English, and various Mesoamerican languages such as Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, and Nahuatl.

As anthropologists (and others) may tell you, things tend to be the most interesting at the threshold (or “liminal”) regions. Lila Downs is uniquely placed at the cross roads of several musical and cultural traditions, enabling her to have the perspective looking in either direction, coupled with an intimate relationship of each view.

Lila grew up dividing her time between her Mixtec mother’s rural mountains of Oaxaca, Mexico, and her father’s home state of Minnesota. She started singing mariachi songs as an 8-year-old in Oaxaca, then took voice lessons in Los Angeles at age 14. Planning on becoming an opera singer, Lila majored in voice and anthropology at the University of Minnesota. However, she became disenchanted and left school to become a Grateful Deadhead, selling jewelry on the streets. Next, she returned to Mexico and learned to weave cloth. This gave her the source material for her college thesis, on how the weaving patterns of the Triqui women create a historical narrative language.

After earlier tours with traditional Oaxacan folk bands Cadetes de Yodoyaxi and La Trova Serrana, Lila began singing in the clubs of Oaxaca and Philadelphia. After meeting her musical partner (and now husband) Paul Cohen, she branched out into interpretations of jazz standards. They...
The other new technology that expands our listening pleasure is internet streaming radio. You can track down your favorite radio station whether that is a local one (as listed on page 13) or one you found Googling and to listen to the speakers on your computer. You will find it in addition to radio stations that take their live feed and stream over the Internet, there are some stations like Folk Radio (www.folk-ra-

キーのさまざまなリアリティ。あなたが不快な感情をもってこのシーンに含まれることができないことを覚悟してください。

The new technology that expands our listening pleasure is internet streaming radio. You can track down your favorite radio station whether that is a local one (as listed on page 13) or one you found Googling and to listen to the speakers on your computer. You will find it in addition to radio stations that take their live feed and stream over the Internet, there are some stations like Folk Radio (www.folk-ky.com), that are Internet only sta-

Quality speaker systems are available to attach to your computer and the sound is generally pretty good. If you do not have DSL or cable you might be able to get those. Here’s the future.

The problem that we’ve found with traditional radio and Internet radio is that you listen on their time, not on yours. So if you are around on Saturday mornings you can listen to FolkScene and Halfway down the Stairs. But, what if you know that you won’t be available and you really want to catch the show. Until now, the answer has been “tough luck.” Not any more. We found Replay Radio, a $30 computer program that can be pro-

grammed to capture the shows that you want to listen to and play them back at your convenience. With the price of hard disk space steadily dropping and the availability of devices such as Apple’s iPod and Archos’ Gmini, you can record for later computer listening, listen in your car at another time or take it with you when you walk your dog.

Also coming down the pike are MP3 players for your car. With this capability you can store hundreds of hours of music so you can listen while you commute. What’s next? We think that soon you will be able to surf the web listen to Internet streaming in your car.

So with all this technical capability, what is the down side? Our lives are becoming increasingly more complicated, with more things to do and less time to do it. And the choices can become overwhelming. When you have a hundred things to choose from, choosing is relatively easy if you have thousands to choose from, you might just throw up your hands, pick up your instrument of choice (in the car, that would probably be a harmonica -)), and just do it yourself.

Here’s to the future.

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Putting it in context

To put the uniqueness of traditional Québécois music into a clearer context, it might help to know that French Quebec is perhaps the most homogeneous society existing in North America today. While there are francophone communities sprinkled throughout Canada, Quebec, or Montréal, in the Lanaudière region, famous for its musical traditions. For example, over the years, it has been home to countless local festivals and events, showcasing traditional music and dance. The Lanaudière region is home to Festival de la Musique Traditionnelle de Québec, which celebrates traditional music and dance from the region’s rich cultural heritage. Many musicians and dancers come together to share their passion for traditional music and dance, enriching the musical landscape of the Lanaudière region.

Quebec is vibrantly alive and remarkably pre-

Tied to the Tracks

Local Happenings on the Folk Music Scene

Branche de la Vesse du Loup, La Famille Cantin, Hommage aux Aînés, Mythes et Légendes, Dent-de-lion, Belzbeub, Les Frères Brunet, Les Charbonniers de l’Eau, Baqqhus, La Souvenance, musicans André Marchand, Denis Fréchette, Simon Roipl, Denise Levac, Daniel Roy, Bernard Simard, Rémi et Pierre Laporte, Normand Mirion, Richard Arpin, Gaston Lepage, Gilles Plitre, Lisan Hébert, Serge Thériault, Jean-Claude Mirandette, Gilles Cantin, Claude Méthé and many, many, MANY more. The Cégep, or college, of Joliette specializes in music and features the first traditional music curriculum in the province. It’s no wonder that the region is often referred to as the heart of the Quebec traditional tradition.

In Montréal, the Société pour la promotion de la danse traditionnelle québécoise (www.sptdq.qc.ca) presents an annual folk festival in May called La Grande Rencontre, monthly called dances, Danse-

Québecois
Benjamin Franklin and the Glass Armonica

Dinner is over and you are nursing what’s left of your last glass of red wine. You loosen up between sets and you sip your last glass of red wine. To amuse yourself between sips you dip your fingertip into the wine and rub it around the rim of the glass. If you do this just right you are rewarded with an ethereal and amazingly pure musical tone. How did that happen? Can anybody do this?

At the risk of taking the magic out of it, here’s how it works. When an instrument is plucked or removed, it facilitates the sound. This is because the bow hairs, prepped with rosin, grip the string, stretching and displacing it until the string slips back only to be gripped again by the traveling bow. The grip and release action continues as long as the bow is moved.

Playing a wine glass is basically the same as bowing a violin string but, instead of using a bow, you use the tip of a finger. To play, the finger tip should be very clean and free of skin oils then wet with water, wine or other liquid. You may need to experiment to find just the right amount of pressure and speed. Your fingertip will actually grip and displace the rim of the glass up to the point where it will slip free, letting the glass relax only to stick and release again, and again. This regular frequency of motion from the rim is transferred to the entire glass and then to your ear via the displaced air around the glass.

The resulting pitch is due to the shape and material of the wine glass but you can change the pitch by varying the amount of liquid used. The liquid dampens the motion of the glass wherever there is contact. The more liquid in the glass, the shorter the resonating space and the higher the pitch. If you line up several glasses and put gradually more water into each successive one, you can play a scale and then melodies. You can tune a scale by adding or removing water as needed to achieve the appropriate sound.

Written accounts of making musical notes by striking glass can be found as early as 1492; however, references to playing music by rubbing the rim of a glass did not appear until 1677. But the “musical glasses” were not much more than an amusement until the 1740’s when an Irishman named Richard Pockrich elevated the technique to a professional level and began giving concerts and drawing other performers to the instrument. The instrument then moves the ambient air and we “hear” this as music.

In 1757 Benjamin Franklin, then living in London, heard E.H. Delaval perform on the musical glasses. Franklin, like most people who heard the glasses played, was enchanted by the ethereal sound. Unlike others, however, he set to thinking about how the instrument could be improved. This was not an uncommon reaction for the brilliant Franklin who invented the Franklin stove, bifocals, discovered the Gulf Stream, started the first public library and public services for common citizens, experimented with electricity inventing the lightning rod which he gave away for, “the good of mankind,” and helped shape our emerging nation in the New World.

Franklin observed that it was difficult to play more than two notes at a time, which limited the chords that could be managed on the musical glasses. He also noticed that the musician had to rush into position to allow time, which limited the chords that could be managed on the musical glass instrument. Interestingly enough, the source of the problem turned out to be the lead-based paints used on the glass bowls. The performers absorbed the lead into their systems and actually displayed the symptoms of lead poisoning. It was not until 1893 that the manufacture of glass armonicas began again.

If you search the web you will discover the availability of more CD’s for the glass harmonica then you might have imagined. One of these, “Cristal: Glass Music Through the Ages” has music composed specifically for the glass harmonica. This CD was produced by Linda Benedict. You can also find other links and play a Virtual Glass Armonica at www.fi.edu/franklin/musician/virtualarmonica.html. If you are interested in finding out more about glass music you can Google these terms: Harpe de Verre, Glaspief, Seraphim, Glass Harmonien, Grand Harmonicon, Crystallophone, Angelick Organ, Cristal Baschet, Verrillon, Verophone, Glassychord, Glasharmonika, Harmonika and Harmonica de Verre.

So keep on making music but get the lead out first and, of course, stay tuned.

Roger Goodman is a musician, mathematician, punster, reader of esoteric books and sometime writer, none of which pays the mortgage. For that, he is a computer network guy for a law firm. He has been part of the Los Angeles old-time & contra-dance music community for over thirty years. While not a dancer, he does play fiddle, guitar, harmonica, mandolin, banjo & spoons. Roger has a penchant for trivia and obscure and sometimes tries to explain how the clock works when asked only for the time. He lives with his wife, Monica White, in Santa Monica, CA.
M y first column in Folkworks (Nov/Dec 2001) referred to the fictional musician and Songcatcher as she came to value American folksongs as highly as the classical music for which she was trained. A true-life vocal ensemble, acclaimed in their presentations of European art-music, has now duplicated that journey. As national and world crises swirl, their choice to honor the spiritual side of American folkroots could not be more timely.

American Angels, the new and final CD by acclaimed female quartet Anonymous 4, on the Harmonia Mundi label, is subtitled Songs of Hope, Redemption, and Glory, and the glory here is clearly spiritual—and musical—rather than overtly patriotic. Liner notes by the group’s primary researcher for this project, Marsha Genensky, describe a “journey to the roots of Anglo-American spiritual vocal music…eighteenth-century psalm settings and fuging tunes from rural New England, nineteenth-century folk hymns and camp revival songs from the rural south, and gospel…an interweaving of oral and written traditions…imprinted on the memories of generations after generation of singers.” [Full disclosure: Marsha is married to a good friend of mine].

Anonymous 4 has, for more than sixteen years, championed vocal music of medieval and early renaissance Europe. Famed for their pure, straight (non-vibrato) vocal quality, and their exquisite harmonizing with-in the tuning systems that preceded modern equal temperament, the members of Anonymous 4 have inspired numerous other early music ensembles. They also helped to reactualize the music of Hildegard von Bingen, a twelfth-century nun, scientist, healer, and composer, whose “poetic and mystical concept of the cosmos has many New Age devotees to this day,” according to the Los Angeles Times.

Although American Angels’ delicate versions of rural American folk-spirituals are far from the raw power of massed Shape Note gatherings and their emotive exuberance of modern gospel singing, this collection beautifully combines high art and folk traditions and will, it is hoped, bring more serious attention from the former to the latter. Songs and sparsely-harmonized groups are grouped with more richly-developed gospel tunes, including chestnuts such as Sweet By and By, Shall We Gather at the River, and Angel Band. Other familiar folk hymns include Wayfaring Stranger and Wondrous Love, while the lyrics of Amazing Grace are heard first in an unfamiliar setting (Jewett) before returning in their better-known melody (New Britain). My main complaint about the CD is that the songs are pitched to fit the groups’ concert-soprano lead voices, and are therefore too high for comfortable singing-along. This orientation toward performance rather than participation keeps the music in the realm of art-song, even though the songs would have been sung by full congregations of minimal-ly-trained rural folk. Anonymous 4’s home repertoire of courtly and monastic music also colors their phrasing, which sometimes emphasizes melodic lines at the expense of clear diction. Nevertheless, this is a lovely recording, more poignant still as it is the ensemble’s pre-separation swan-song.

Another unusual and spiritual blend of folk and classical vocal music comes from a corner of the country far from the formerly English colonies of the Northeast and Southeast. SAVAE, the San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble, travels further back in time and ordering info is at www.savae.org. You can be listed here! $30/1x • $75/3x • $125/6x • mail@FolkWorks.org • 818-785-3839
It's summer, and you're not thinking about learning or watching a movie? We're not by any means looking at both, anyway. Even with all the festivals profiled in the previous issue, the exponential greed of gas prices may have you seeking something else worthwhile and affordable. So, we'll profile some great offerings to guide the songwriters among us to excel, then give you a quick word about a movie that's tuneful and fun romp.

On to our treat for songwriters, and those who aspire to be. We have a double-header for you. Every songwriter constantly seeks to express, from a deeply personal place, a perspective that others will embrace with immediacy. Of course, there are countless interfering factors and no simple formula. Hence, plenty is said and written as guidance by those who have attained commercial and artistic success. Much of that happens right here in L.A., where the music business works.

With no snub to other fine guides and teachers, this issue and the next, we have offerings from three of the best. This time, we'll look at two books, and next issue, a unique CD-ROM set. Also next issue, we'll revisit the books and CD-ROMs in detail. The usefulness and longevity of their influence as true tools for one songwriter.

**Harriet Schock's book** _Becoming Remarkable: How to Achieve Emotional Impact and Specific Points of Guidance_ at $14.95 it comes with a copy of her fifth album, _Rosebud_, a CD of music, not instruction. So it's like getting one of the other free, and both are fine.

Schock taught songwriting at USC. She is a multi-platinum songwriter and Grammy nominee for the #1 hit _It's Good Business_. So anything Harriet has to say is bound to be interesting. And a few of her many students attested to that at the recent and innovative CD release party for Schock Futures, a compilation that features 19 of them, with most on hand to perform their one song in the sequence featured on the album, and gush with admiration for their teacher.

Schock's proprietary method, teaching numbered steps to successful songwriting, is not revealed in the book but much of the underlying philosophy is there. Unlike most instructional or motivational books, nothing here is preachy, and her style and the content provide such a good read that it's hard to put down. The book is 48 short chapters that were previously published articles, and they've been sequenced to concept notes that allow you to quickly locate each section of text. Good things come in small packages, because there's more insider information than you could imagine finding in one place.

This is a formidable omnibus of artistic guidance and business practicums. Brahney gives you sheet music and discussions of lyrics. He gives you forms for collaborative partnerships. He gives you structure for different musical genres and guidance about radio formats. He also gives you some embarrassingly bad examples, and if that seems like a bit incongruous, it's useful. His book speaks with a personal voice to making your creative expression meaningful, as when he says, "You, the writer, must realize you set off this same crazy process in the listener's head with every word you write; and it is you who must bring discipline to the listener's imagination." You'll identify yourself among Brahney's types of writers. You'll delve into his song types and themes. And this book shows you how to protect and market your creative product.

**The Craft and Business of Songwriting** by John Brahney, second edition, from F+W Publications, Cincinnati, OH, is available at www.writersdigestbooks.com or through your local bookstore.

The true test of anything instructional is its continuing relevance. We'll revisit both books next time as working tools, and then introduce you to a CD-ROM package...
**FREE FOLK/TRADITIONAL EVENTS**

**BOULEVARD MUSIC SUMMER FESTIVAL**

- **July 25**
  - 10:00am – noon: **Folk Harps**
  - Noon & 8:00pm: **LOST MANNAI**

**CULVER CITY SUMMER SUNSET MUSIC SERIES**

- **City Hall Courtyard 9770 Culver Blvd., Culver City 310-398-2583**
  - **June 10**
    - 8:00pm: **ACOUSTIC ASYLUM WITH CARL VERHEYEN**
  - **July 15**
    - 8:00pm: **PERLA BASTAÑA**
  - **August 5**
    - 8:00pm: **HEROES OF BLACKHAWK**
  - **August 15**
    - 8:00pm: **THE GOLD RING**
  - **August 22**
    - 8:00pm: **JAOJOBY**

**SKIRBALL THURSDAY SUNSET SERIES**

- **2701 N. Sepulveda Boulevard, Los Angeles 310-440-4500**
  - **July 22**
    - 8:00pm: **MARTA SANTAMARIA**
  - **July 29**
    - 8:00pm: **ARAB-ISRAELI ORCHESTRA OF NAZARETH**
  - **August 5**
    - 8:00pm: **LOW TECKMANAI**
  - **August 12**
    - 8:00pm: **LE VENT DU NORD**
  - **August 19**
    - 8:00pm: **MASANGA MARIMBA ENSEMBLE**
  - **August 26**
    - 8:00pm: **ATASH**

**SKIRBALL CAFÉ Z**

- **2701 N. Sepulveda Boulevard, Los Angeles 310-440-4500**
  - **July 17**
    - Noon: **MASANGA MARIMBA ENSEMBLE**
  - **August 20**
    - Noon: **MASANGA MARIMBA ENSEMBLE**

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**GRAND PERFORMANCES**

California Plaza 300-350 S. Grand Avenue, L.A. 213-607-2189 dporter@grandperformances.org

**July 9**
- Noon & 3:00pm: **WOMEN’S WOMEN** featuring MARIJA de BARROS and SOUAD MASSI
  - A fusion of Andalusion flamenco, folk-rock, Arabian lutes and other traditional instruments

**July 16**
- Noon: **JUAN SANCHEZ**
  - Chango, pan pipes, trumpet, piano, viluera, acor- don, cava, and gatumar playing gypsy nambas and Cuban guajiras.

**July 17**
- 8:00pm: **QI MUSIC**
  - Musicologist, teacher and composer LIU QI CHAO is a master musician focusing on percussion instruments. A fusion of Chinese folk music with contemporary classical and jazz.

**July 23**
- 8:00pm: **KHEMERS ACADEMY**
  - Cambodian dance and music originally developed for worship in the temples of Angkor with re neat (xylophone), kong (circular gong) and slalali (quadsuple reed oboe).

**July 24**
- 8:00pm: **BIZWAN-MUASSAN QAWWAL**
  - Songs based on classical Islamic and Sufi texts. A “transcendental experience” according to one critic.

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**FORD AMPHITHEATRE FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

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**July 12**
- 10:00am: **GLASS QUARTET**
  - A musical journey along the Lewis & Clark trail.

**July 10**
- 10:00am: **MASANGA MARIMBA ENSEMBLE**
  - Songs, stories and dances with Masanga.

**July 24**
- 10:00am: **RANGOLI FOUNDATION FOR ARTS & CULTURE**
  - Ten incarnations of Vishnu.

**July 31**
- 10:00am: **INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF MIDDLE EASTERN DANCE**
  - Belly Dance.

**August 7**
- 10:00am: **EUNG HWA KIM**
  - Korean dance academy.

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Dave Sowers is a bass player and guitarist, a 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 dave@sowers.com or write him c/o FolkWorks. 

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or this time (and maybe this time only), I’ll be going back to doing more, and shorter, CD reviews. While I like writing about things in more depth, I find myself unable to do this for a very pleasant reason. So far 2004 is shaping up to be the best year for Irish releases so far in the millennium. Probably every major band has a brand new release (with the notable exception of Altan - anyone know when their new one’s due?), and a lot of them rank with the best work ever by the respective bands.

Even more surprising is that one record label is responsible for most of them, and it’s one that’s fairly new. I’m not quite sure when it happened, but suddenly Compass Records in Nashville has gone from being a small independent bluegrass label to the finest Celtic (and English) traditional music label in the U.S. Their release schedule for the last couple of years has been staggeringly good. It’s not often I review labels, but Compass gets an enthusiastic thumbs up, and I encourage all readers of this column to go immediately to www.compassrecords.com and check out their new releases, some of which I don’t even mention here. Their 2004 release schedule has so many quality releases that I don’t have the space in this column to mention all the good ones, so I’ll only mention the best. (As such, all releases here are on Compass Records unless otherwise stated.)

Probably the most exciting is the new one by Dervish, Spirit (!!) a very diverse release that mixes the usual jigs and reels and some great songs (including Bob Dylan’s Boots of Spanish Leather), and some rather eccentric tune sets, like one jig set that ends on a rather psychodelic jam session. Singer Cathy Jordan is as wonderful as ever, the seven piece band is full and rich, and it’s a tribute to both the great Sligo tunes they’ve always specialized in and their adventurous spirit.

Lúnasa’s bassist Trevor Hutchinson is the producer of the new one by Gráda, The Landing Step (!!). While Lúnasa is exclusively instrumental, Gráda is primarily a song band, though they can play a mean tune as well—standup bass and drums feature prominently, which does occasionally lend a Luna-like sound to the proceedings. They’re probably the first Celtic band to cover a song from English singer/songwriter Linda Thompson’s recent comeback record. Their taste—whether the material is traditional, contemporary, or self-composed—is exquisite.

Former Fairground Attraction singer Eddi Reader also has a new one, Eddi Reader Sings the Songs of Robert Burns (!!!) and it’s a great set of songs by Burns, some set to new music. Texas singer/songwriter Boo Hewerdine has a big role on this, as do such great Scottish musicians as Phil Cunningham and John McCusker. She does a great job staying true to the spirit of Burns by avoiding preciousness in the arrangements—something previous interpreters of Burns have not always succeeded in.

Changed Days, Same Roots by the Poozies is another good one (this one actually on Greentrax Recordings, but licensed by Compass (!)), ten songs and one tune beautifully played and sung by four women, particularly Patrycja Seddon and Mary MacMaster, whose blend of electric and both steel and gut-strung harps is as much a highlight here as it is in their harp duo, Sileas.

Add in the releases I didn’t mention, and their great bluegrass releases as well, and my gratefulness that such a label as Compass exists continues to grow.

That said, there are other labels also putting out great Irish CDs. The new one by Kila, Luna Park, (World Village Music) [2003] (!) is also interesting, loaded with original compositions that are a winning blend between traditional and improvisatory sounds. They’re often compared to Afro Celt, but to my ears they sound more like an Irish version of the Gypsy Kings, with a pronounced Spanish influence to their Irish-language songs.

And finally, even though it’s mentioned elsewhere in this issue, I feel that it’s important to mention that the new one by Téada, Give Us a Penny and Let Us Be Gone [Green Linnet] (!!!) is excellent, even better than their excellent first release. Green Linnet has also re-released their debut (!!!) as well as the solo album by Oisin Mac Diarmada, an bhfhidil (!!), reviewed in these pages before. I look forward to many more from them.

So that’s it for this issue, next time I’ll hopefully cover fewer CDs in more depth, including new ones by English legends Brass Monkey and Waterson/Carthy.

Rating scale: 

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

[ — ]—Good/solid, what you would expect.

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

[!!! ]—Classic, sure to be looked back on as such for generations to come.

[!! ]—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 purchase it, it likely won’t be disappointed.

[ — ]—Good/solid, what you would expect.

[X ]—Avoid. Either ill-conceived, or artistically inept in some way.
WORLD ENCOUNTERS

BY VIOLA GALLOWAY

Artist: ROKIA TRAORE
Title: BOWMBOH
Label: NONESUCH

Rokia Traore's website correctly describes her style as “Malian contemporary music,” and it is truly the future of African music. There are no faux pas, no overwhelming computerized arrangement but rather a guest appearance by the Kronos Quartet. The arrangements are stunning, her voice as always (she has two previous albums to her credit) beautiful, an entirely different atmosphere as to be expected by this singer who grew up in both the western and African world. We have to thank her for showing other artists the way. As of now, there is no confirmed label/date for a domestic release, however, there are a few import copies available, and this release is not to be missed.

Artist: ANGELIQUE KIDJO
Title: OYAYA!
Label: SUNNYSIDE

Whereas Rokia Traore is introverted, Angelique Kidjo from Benin and based in France, shows us some great party grooves. Thanks to Steve Berlin and Alberto Salas, this album is well produced, and she’s gone Latin – a logical choice for her. This CD sounds very L.A., and if you read the credits you’ll find a host of local popular musicians.

For good measure there’s a beautiful lullaby and a Caribbean track. It all works, it’s a fun album, and she should find plenty of new fans as well.

Artist: YOUSOU N'DOUR
Title: EGYPT
Label: NORTHSIDE

This is a total surprise for most African music listeners and the CD Youssou fans have been waiting for: Here the Senegalese superstar recorded with an Egyptian orchestra, strings and all. Egypt always was the center for Arabic music and culture in general (think movies, soap operas...pop stars). Apparently this recording was a project dear to his heart because it gave him the opportunity to introduce another facet of Senegalese life to a western audience: the importance of the Sufi brotherhoods, or religious life in general in Senegal. Trying to introduce another side of Islam at this time is, in fact, quite a serious project. However, you might just enjoy this entirely different and powerful side of Youssou N'Dour – in a Sudano, Nubian or Zanzibar style – just hear the song about Touba, the holy city in Senegal.

Artist: PAPA WEMA
Title: 1977-1997
Label: STERN'S

This CD is called “the first 20 years,” and those were the best, so if you have not collected all of the most famous Congolese singer’s old releases, this is a must. There are 18 tracks in all, lovingly annotated, with hidden gems, many previously unavailable, also featuring Pepe Kalle, Koffi Olomide and others. These recordings from the early days of soukous still sound absolutely great, and there are popular dance floor killers from the 1980’s, such as Malimba.

Artist: VARIOUS
Title: WOMEN OF AFRICA
Label: PUTUMAYO

This CD is also recommended. It is full of beautiful tracks by Angelique Kidjo from Benin, who has many releases available domestically but there are mostly rather unknown artists – at least on this continent - such as Kaisa from Cameroon, Nawal from the Comoros, or Doet Gnahore from the Ivory Coast. Lots of soulful, mostly acoustic music to enjoy with full liner notes and well sequenced.

Artist: OJOS DE BRUJO
Title: BARI
Label: WORLD VILLAGE

The CD by this new group from Spain was the most anticipated debut in world music circles, and it’s easy to see why. The flamenco genre was immediately energized by this group as it incorporates elements from hip hop, as well as scratching and plenty of shouting and political lyrics, all in all a logical development. Plenty of unusual instruments (sitar, tabla, berimbau, bata drums, cajon etc.) make listening to this group a good experience.

Viola Galloway has been working in world music for many years and is currently the world music buyer for Ameoba Music in Hollywood.

VIOLA’S RESOURCE LIST

Book: World Music, a Very Short Introduction by Philip V. Bohlman
Magazines: The Beat (American)
Songlines (from the UK)
Roots (formerly Folkroots)

Websites: www.sternessmusic.com (mostly African music)
www.mundomix.org (all aspects and types of world music)
www.bbc.co.uk (serious musicology plus world music links)
www.afropop.org (NY-based radio show with links, information on concerts etc.)
www.maquen.com (Arab music)
www.greekmusic.com (Greek music)
www.piranh.de (WOMEX, world music conference)
www.canzone-online.de (labels and releases not available in U.S.)
CERRITOS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Despite a general misconception that performing arts centers are snooty, overpriced and generally the domain of the blue haired set, the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, with its reputation that is anything but sedate. And for the lover of folk music, the Cerritos Center provides world class talent coupled with remarkable surroundings, and excellent sound and lighting. The Cerritos Center’s customer service level is remarkable, providing not only personalized ticketing, but a truly courteous staff dedicated to making your musical experience a perfect one. The Cerritos Center strives to provide a varied menu of fine music, of which folk is but one ingredient.

In the past, folks enjoyed artists such as: The Boys of the Loug; The Clayfoot Strutters; Judy Collins; Guy Clark; Marshall Crenshaw; Rodney Crowell; Greg Brown; John Gorka; Nanci Griffith; Arlo and Sarah Lee Guthrie; Eugene Ivers; the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band; Peter, Paul and Mary; a guitar player; but also as co-writers in the Sky; Sinead O’Connor; Vega; Doc Watson with Vassar Clements and David Holt; Jessie Colin Young and many more have graced the stage at the Cerritos Center. Their upcoming 2004/05 series plans to bring yet again another treasure trove of talent to the venue.

Part of the appeal of the Cerritos Center is how the audience can be altered to best suit the event. Opened in 1993, the 154,000-square-foot the Cerritos Center features a 6,000-square-foot main auditorium, and is a remarkably sophisticated venue that can move seating from one place to another. Corridors, zoom licks and gaining encouragement from the likes of Junior Wells and in that space. And finally, there is a wealth of artistic talent out in the world that should be heard, but that isn’t yet capable of drawing audiences large enough to make showcasing them in our big hall a valuable experience for the artists or for our audiences.

But even with all this innovative ability to tailor the venue to the performer, the Cerritos Center would still falter if the talent chosen were not up to the expectations of the concertgoer. And the Cerritos Center will not let that happen.

The Cerritos Center is based on the audience’s interest in these musical styles and their willingness to come to the Cerritos Center from wherever they live throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties. I think that it adds a unique and wonderful element of musical expression that is, in many ways, the historical and artistic ground on which many of the other styles of music we present are built.

If you haven’t enjoyed the experience of a musical event at the Cerritos Center, this upcoming season provides a variety of folk related acts to enjoy.

Contact info: Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos, CA 90703 Info: 562-916-8501 Ticket Office: 800-300-4345 or 562-916-8500 or e-mail: TicketOffice@CerritosCenter.com. www.cerritoscenter.com

CD REVIEW

BY DENNIS ROGER REED

It’s impossible not to evoke the name of Eric Bibb when writing about Sweden based Brian Kramer & The Couch Lizards new CD No Regrets.

And there are some good reasons for that. Kramer has toured as Bibb’s accompanist, and contributed to Bibb’s Handy nominated Home to Me CD, not only as a guitarist, but also as the co-writer of one of the cuts, New Shoes. Kramer also added slide guitar to Bibb’s collaboration with his folk famed father Leon on A Family Affair.

Kramer talks about his relationship with Bibb: “Eric also lived in Sweden for many years. During the ‘lean years’ he played a regular weekly gig in Stockholm and I was introduced to him through a mutual friend. We quickly hit it off and shared a very strong commitment and philosophy toward using the blues as a positive uplifting focus. We always talked about the possibilities involved if we could create an environment where this was dominant.”

Kramer continues, “We then spent the next two years (1998-2000) at a dizzying pace touring all over the globe! We were very much able to put into action this method of positive focus during this time and was an eye opening experience for us both.”

So how did Brooklynite Kramer end up playing the blues in Sweden and recording on a Brit record label named after a strange animal from the U.S. Southwest? Kramer started out in New York frequenting blues venues, coping licks and gaining encouragement from the likes of Buddy Guy and Johnnie Taylor. Kramer later added vocals to his repertoire and began writing his own. Kramer first recorded. Kramer spent the better part of the 1990’s as a mainstay of the New York club scene, until moving to Sweden. “I was invited to tour around Scandinavia around 15 years ago, at the very same time I met a young Swedish girl in NYC before the tour,” explains Kramer. “After a few years, we married, traveled back and forth regularly until deciding to re-locate there. Best career move I ever made, and I also got two lovely kids out of the deal!”

In 2000, Kramer and his band the Couch Lizards backed up the legendary Larry Johnson on Two Gun Green and then in 2002 they released Everybody’s Story.

“Now comes No Regrets. The Couch Lizards feature Swede/Greek Christer Lysarrides on electric, acoustic and resonator guitars, mandolin and back up vocals; Swedish Mats Qwarfordt on harmonica, kalimba and back up vocals; Swede PA Lander on double bass and back up vocals; and Kramer on lead vocal and resonator guitars. Together they are a tight, swinging unit.

No Regrets features ten originals by Kramer and two by Qwarfordt. Most are bright, upbeat blues, pulling in favorable comparisons with Bibb’s best efforts. Kramer’s lead vocals are a tad rawer that Bibb’s dulcet tones, but he conveys a wealth of emotion with his pipes. The CD starts off with the title cut, and Kramer does an effective job putting a positive spin on his life choices. Old Photograph is a Kramer solo number coupling seductive slide guitar with wistful lyrics inducing memories of a time past, and the present. Another highlight is Qwarfordt’s Come Home To Me, a paean to providing a safe haven for a loved one that has roamed. Little Stone House is a soft number parallelizing the stability of a structure on an island in the Baltic with a strong relationship, reveling in the now.

Why does Kramer’s work lean towards the positive, unlike many of today’s blues artists?“Well, the blues has always gotten a bad rap in this regard. That it should represent a sad life that implies failure… I’ve learned that blues music was mostly a tool of celebration and also a badge of courage through tough times. Artists like Skip James and John Hurt have always headed reflective, pulling verses in their songs and that possibility was always there to be explored.” Kramer elaborates, “Our emotions are complex, so that positive side should be equally reflected in this very adaptable form of music called blues. It’s all a matter of intention. Why box it in? Let it grow and evolve naturally. I have learned to appreciate my life for what it is on every level and because this is my own experience, it should be reflected in the music! I think folks appreciate the break from being reminded of how damn tough life is around the world.”

The Couch Lizards provide a perfect match for Kramer’s solid instrumental chops, effective vocals, thoughtful lyrics and catchy melodies. Lysarrides’ electric guitar is particularly inspiring. No Regrets is a solid piece of relaxed modern acoustic blues, painting positive images.
Fourth Annual Long Beach

Celtic Music Festival by the Sea

“Festival tickets include admission to The Queen Mary! Children 15 & Under Free with an Adult Saturday August 14, 10am-8pm at the Queen Mary Events Park

Ticket Information

Purchase early & Save $$$ Before July 15, 2004
General Admission, $17.00
Seniors (62 and Over), Students (16-22), Military, $12.00

After July 15, 2004 (If Available)
General Admission, $20.00
Seniors (62 and Over), Students (16-22), Military, $15.00
Children 15 & Under Free with Adult

Festival Tickets Include, Admission To “The Queen Mary”

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
City: _____________________________________________
State: _____________________________________________
Zip: _______________________________________________
Phone: ___________________________________________
E-Mail: ___________________________________________

# of General Admission: _____________________________
# of Senior/Student/Military Admission: ____________
Total Amount Enclosed: ____________________________

Mail To:
PJM Productions, P.O. Box 1584, Long Beach, CA 90801
With Self Addressed Stamped Envelope

For more information go to: www.LongBeachCelticFestival.com

CD REVIEW

Reflections of Eastern Europe

Reflections of Eastern Europe marks the third recording by Nevenka, the L.A. based vocal group who have championed Balkan and assorted East European women’s music in L.A. for nearly three decades. For fans of the genre, this latest recording includes multiple examples of full eastern European women’s choirs in the style of the old socialist-era state choirs made famous in the west by the recordings of Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares and various East European choirs marketed under similarly odd names. However, for those of you familiar with the aforementioned recordings who might be thinking to yourselves, “Been there, done that,” this recording is as varied as it is beautifully arranged, sung and recorded. Peppered or more appropriately, “chubritzed” between the Bulgarian (#1, 2, 19 & 20) & Georgian (#8, 13 & 14) choir pieces you will find smaller group settings more typical of the Sedyanke (women’s working bee) vocal tradition (#7 & 10). Additionally, there are solo Greek songs from the Rebetica (urban Greek “blues” from the first half of the 20th century) tradition accompanied by bouzouki, baglama and guitar (#2, 4, & 17). Additionally, there are songs from Albania, Croatia, Armenia, and Russia arranged from simple melody and drone to very complex 3 and 4 part harmony.

A few personal favorites include Rusan na Rucka Dumashve, an achingly beautiful Bulgarian song of heartbreak with progressive layers of crystalline voices beginning with a single voice and ending with the full choir; the wistful Greek Ela pare me and playful Pos tha perasi I vradhia; Deda mgik’vdesa, a Georgian mother’s lament for her dead son; the dreamy Sephardic El Sueno de la Hija del Rey, the Albanian Vete me te dua sung as a duet of melody and drone reminiscent of the local Gajda (bagpipe), a singing style typical of the western Balkans; and the lush Bulgarian Zakusnjala e Lalitsa which finishes off the CD. With Reflections of Eastern Europe Nevenka runs the gamut from melancholic to uplifting and nearly every human emotion in between. For fans of Balkan music, women’s music, choir music or just great music, this is an engaging, soulful, brilliantly executed and very highly recommended recording which has scarcely left my stereo since it’s release last month!

Reflections of Eastern Europe as well as Nevenka’s two prior recordings are available from: info@nevenka.org (or) c/o T. Israel 4207 Matilija Ave., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Pat MacSwény is author of The Complete Gobshite’s Guide to BALKAN FOLK DANCE MUSIC and performs in the Los Angeles based Balkan dance band, The Baksheesh Boys as well as the Irish/Pan-Euro folk band StinkEye. He can be contacted at macswsey@aol.com
Camps & Workshops

IDyllwild Arts Summer Program

Idyllwild Arts is located in the San Jacinto Mountains of Southern California, just 2 hours east of Los Angeles, or one hour from Palm Springs or Riverside. Advance registration is necessary.

Workshops in Traditional and Folk Arts (partial list)

July 5-6 Two day workshop: Printmaking on with Woodblocks, taught by Chetna Mehta (traditional methods of India, using fabric).

July 7-8 Two day workshop: Papel Picado, taught by Margaret Sosa (Mexican paper cutting using).

July 12-17 One week workshop: Oaxacan Woodcarving/Painting taught by Jacobo Angeles Ojeda.

July 16-18 Three day session: A Taste of Folk Music with Sandi Castellberrid Ron Daigh.

July 19-23 One week workshop: Vietnamese Watercolor on Silk taught by Minh Quang Phan.

www.idyllwildarts.org/root/summer/prog/aac/s_prog_aac_cat.html

• 909-659-2171, ext. 365 • summer@idyllwildarts.org.

Ooolation! Outdoor Singing Camp

Ooolation! is where two of the most fun things in the world happen: being outdoors and singing. If you like to move when you sing and enjoy musical traditions from all over the world, come join us in the aspens east of Yosemite or the redwoods down by the coast. Ooolation! is a place where you can live, eat and breathe song and the food is great!

Registration:
1111 E. Wylie St., Bloomington, IN 47401
812-333-0838 maldal@bluemarble.net www.oooliticmusic.com

CAMP STAFF:
Malcolm Dalghish (hammered dulcimer, voice, movement)
Moira Smiley (traditional vocal styles, movement)
Annegrit Baier (West African percussion, voice)
Naomi Dalghish (voice, movement)
Daniel Steinberg (South American choral)
Joshua Kartes (voice, language)

California Sessions:

August 6-15 Eastern Sierras • East of Yosemite overlooking Mono Lake with Malcolm Dalghish, Moira Smiley, Naomi Dalghish, Joshua Kartes - Ages 14 - 20 (with flexibility).

August 19-22 Redwoods Retreat • Near Big Basin State Park with Annegrit Baier, Daniel Steinberg, Malcolm Dalghish, Moira Smiley, Naomi Dalghish, Joshua Kartes - For Adults (17 and older)

1st Annual Far-West Region Conference

So, are you a folk music artist? A folk music presenter? In the record industry? Are you an agent or a manager? In either the print or broadcast media? Arts administrator? Member of a folk music society or a folk club? Folklorist, educator, butcher, baker or candlestick maker?

Well, unless you’re one of the last three, you need to attend the First Annual Far-West Regional Conference held October 29-31, 2004 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA. FAR-West is a regional branch of Folk Alliance, and hopes to bring the various folk shareholders in the west together in order to build a communication network, support regional activities of member organizations, and promote an annual regional conference where all can get together to learn, exchange ideas and music, and most important of all, meet and make valuable connections and friendships. The ultimate goal is to raise the awareness of folk music and dance in the west and make the West a better place for enthusiasts, presenters and performers.

The 1st Annual Conference will feature workshops, panels and seminars; an exhibition hall; private & official talent showcases; and of course, great volunteer opportunities. This is a chance to make invaluable contacts among the movers and shakers of folk music in the West!

The pre-registration cost is super reasonable: $130 for the weekend or $150 at the door. Single day costs, full info on the various showcases and a tentative schedule of events is available at www.far-west.org. The Warner Center Marriott is offering special discount rates for the event.

Plan on attending for a fun and rewarding event!

“All the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill the history books, all the political blunders, all the failures of the great leaders have arisen merely from a lack of skill at dancing.”

-- Moliere

www.artkitchen.com
FOLK HAPPENINGS AT A GLANCE

Friday
1. Afghan (OGD)
2. Belly Dancing (OGD)
3. English (OGD)
4. Irish (OGD)
5. Scottish (OGD)

Saturday
1. Argentine (OGD)
2. International (OGD)
3. Irish (OGD)
4. Scottish (OGD)
5. Group Singing (OGD)

Sunday
1. African (OGD)
2. Belly Dancing (OGD)
3. English (OGD)
4. Irish (OGD)
5. Scottish (OGD)

Monday
1. Afghan (OGD)
2. International (OGD)
3. Irish (OGD)
4. Scottish (OGD)
5. Group Singing (OGD)

Tuesday
1. Afghan (OGD)
2. Belly Dancing (OGD)
3. English (OGD)
4. Irish (OGD)
5. Scottish (OGD)

Wednesday
1. Argentine (OGD)
2. International (OGD)
3. Irish (OGD)
4. Scottish (OGD)
5. Group Singing (OGD)

Check out details by following the page references:
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OGD: on-going Dance - page 16
SE: Special Events - page 28
FOLK HAPPENINGS AT A GLANCE

SUNDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
2. BLUEGRASS (OGM)
3. THE FLATLUGNERS (SE)  
4. Israeli (OGD)
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MONDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
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TUESDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
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WEDNESDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
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THURSDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
2. BLUEGRASS (OGM)
3. THE FLATLUGNERS (SE)  
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FRIDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
2. BLUEGRASS (OGM)
3. THE FLATLUGNERS (SE)  
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SATURDAY

1. COSTUME COLLEGE (SE)  
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FOLK HAPPENINGS AT A GLANCE

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July-August 2004  Page 15

Folk Works
James Coberly Smith and Severin Browne

James Coberly Smith and Severin Browne are superb solo musicians. But when they team up, something magical happens. It’s a combination of their unique voices, harmonies, and musical styles. They are both gifted songwriters, singers, and guitarists, and when they sing their songs together, they create a beautiful sound that is unlike anything else.

When Severin’s stint with Motown ended, he worked as a singing waiter for a spell in L.A. and also played solo around town. He and James met up at a coffee house called the White House on Pico. “I remember seeing Severin for the first time,” James recalled. “And he had such an easy, great groove, that I wanted to play with him right away. It was a pretty jazzy song he was playing.” This was 1978.

Severin eventually drifted back to L.A. He and James first officially teamed up in 1990, informally rehearsed a few times, and developed their style of backing each other up, and switching off songs. The first time they played was an hour-long gig at an outdoor community festival in a Northridge park. They continued to do solo gigs as well, but nothing was ever quite as musically magical as when they teamed up together, to add guitar and vocal harmonies to each other’s songs. They have been playing together, and musically supporting each other, ever since.

These days the best place to hear Severin and James perform great originals is Kulak’s Woodshed on Laurel Canyon in North Hollywood, where they play the first Friday of every month. Kulak’s is an enjoyable, comfortable and amiable listening room. They also play other venues and festivals around the L.A. area, such as Bean Town in Sierra Madre, Backstage at the Goldstone Gallery, and assorted house concerts.

Smith says, “house concerts are great, I love them.”

But Kulak’s remains the favorite. Smith says, “Kulak’s is a special place for us to play. We play a set first, and then we bring in guests to play. We get a good crowd there, and the great thing about Kulak’s is people come there not to talk and socialize, but to listen to the music. And there’s an ongoing webcast there, so people around the world can watch us. They even email us during the shows — we’ve gotten ones from as far afield as Australia.”

Smith-Browne gigs usually include their greatest hits, such as Smith’s hilarious and spirited Flypaper Highway, Browne’s soulful My Love Mo’ Better, the funny and rocking Angelyne, and the poignant ballad Leaving You. But they also throw in old and new songs that no one knows, so that each show they play is a new experience. “People who come to see us a lot want to hear our standards,” said Smith, “but they also like us to mix it up and play some new stuff. And so we do. No show we do is ever the same.”

Smith & Browne are maintaining the tradition of performing duos, such as the Everal Brothers and Simon & Garfunkel. The difference is that Smith and Browne have both done major solo work, so their music is a combination of their two styles. They are both skilled guitarists, and their duets are a joy to hear.

Smith-Browne gigs are a must for fans of folk music. They are a dynamic duo who always put on a great show. Don’t miss their next gig! For more information on their upcoming shows, visit WWW.SeverinBrowne.com.
soon found that they could make a living from performing. Her current manager, Betto Arcos, first heard her in 1996 in a club called El Sol y La Luna in Oaxaca, where she was performing with Azulao, her trio featuring vocals, saxophone and piano. He was struck by her original and intriguing interpretations of Mexican standard repertoire as well as the jazz numbers. At the time, Lila Live with Azulao was recorded, she was not yet performing original material.

In 1998 Lila recorded La Sandunga which included her original songs along with Oaxacan traditional songs, boleros, and rancheros. When she was invited to perform at the Hollywood Bowl during the 1999 summer season, she was the most requested premium offered in the KPFK fund drive that season.

Her key performances brought Lila wider recognition. The first time she was invited to perform at the Hollywood Bowl during the 1999 World Festival of Sacred Music on the strength of her CD Yutu Tata — Tree of Life. This album was inspired by the imagery of the Mixtec Codex Vindobonensis, a type of Aztec art, which tells of the first Mixtec people who were born from trees and used wooden and ceramic instruments played in the pre-Columbian age (and are still played today rural Mexico). Her set was so well received that it was soon signed by the record label Narada. In 2001 she released Border — La Linea, in which she expounds on the plight of migrant workers, racism faced by indigenous peoples and other border-related issues, and performs a medley of Woody Guthrie’s This Land Is Your Land Pastures of Plenty.

The second broad audience came when Lila sang her Academy Award-nominated song Burn It Blue from the movie Frida during the Oscar broadcast. The Frida soundtrack has been selling consistently since the movie was released, and to many audiences around the world, it was their first exposure to her music.

Lila Downs’ new CD, One Blood — Una Sangre shows off her breadth and versatility as a singer and instrumentalist, and the ability to sculpt with tone and timbre, is stunning. It takes a special type of creativity, sensitivity, and drama to do what she does so consistently well. When the first track comes dancing out, you immediately notice the cohesive quality of the band, which has an unusual current arrangement for just over a year.

Lila’s husband, Paul Cohen, is the musical director and plays tenor sax, piano and clarinet. Celso Duarte, born in Paraguay and raised in Mexico, plays horn, violin, and jarana (a small 3-coursed guitar from Mexico). He brings his deep knowledge of Latin American harp’s diverse styles, and has worked with Lila since Yutu Tata. Jazz-trained Brazilian Guilherme Monteiro is on guitar. Yayo Serka from Chile plays percussion and cajon. He’s played in traditional Aztec and jazz bands, then went to school in Cuba where he worked with renowned artists from the jazz and Afro-Cuban music scene. Cuban Yunior Terry plays the acoustic bass on the CD, but is not on the current tour.

The album’s concept reminds us there is something that unites us all, and the songs Lila has written and included here reinforce that ideal. The track One Blood covers that ground in a reggae-jazz fusion. Dignificada is about the as-yet-uninvestigated murder of Digna Ochoa, a human rights lawyer in Mexico. Mother Jones is a blues-infused song about the well-known American advocate for women’s rights. In La Malinche, Lila reinterprets the character of the woman known as the mother of post-contact Mexicans — the wife and lover of Cortes. She creates for her a persona as “the new voice.”

Well-known standards of Mexican song are anything but run-of-the-mill here. Harpist Celso Duarte’s deft fingers and guitarist Guilherme Monteiro’s range of styles contribute to the group’s shape-shifting ability. Lila’s rendition of Cielo Rojo conjures up a Spanish Gypsy atmosphere, while she performs the popular La Bamba to a Nigerian high-life guitar sound. She has done new lyrics for La Cucaracha, as well as a rapping break, and has recorded Paloma Negra, which has long been a crowd favorite for her.

Two songs in indigenous languages are included on the CD. One Yanhauharti Nin in the language of the Triqui indigenous people of Oaxaca. This is the Tírungi Títsití in the Purepecha language from Michoacan. The song is in the Pireucua style of female duet. Although she sings with herself, she has taken care to differentiate the two voices to the point that one could believe there are two different women. Lila, having been in over 20 countries on tour.

Lila Downs current tour brings her to The Echo in Echo Park July 14th, 7:30pm. Mexican video artist and photographer Elena Pardo will be projecting her images and video on a screen at the concerts of the tour. For ticket go to the website: attheecho.com. We expect this show to sell out quickly. Don’t miss it!

[Folksongs can be found in the web log, visit Lila Downs to be appearing on October 9th at UCLA. For best updated information, join FolkWorks Yahoo Group]

Valerie Cooley lives in West Los Angeles and loves folk music, dancing, and crafts. She co-chairs the Banner Committee for the CTM Summmer Solstice Festival where she is able to indulge her love of pretty colors, fabrics, and the enthusiasm of the people who put them together.
THE HEART OF THE MUSIC

by CAIT REED © 2004

Artist: MOZAIK
Title: LIVE FROM THE POWERHOUSE - (★★★★½/2)
Label: COMPASS RECORDS - www.andryirvine.com/mozaik-powerhouse.html

Andy Irvine on vocals, mandolin, bouzouki, and harmonica - Dónal Lunny on backing vocals, bouzouki, guitar, and bodhran - Bruce Molsky on vocals, fiddle, and 5-string banjo - Nikola Parov on gudulka, gaida, kaval, clarinet, kalimba, and tin whistle - Reins van der Zalm on backing vocals, fiddle, mandolin, and guitar

This delightful album is brought to you by the best of the best folk musicians from 2 continents (and 5 countries). All of these lads are fantastic musicians, but together they have effortlessly created a fresh sound, one that they are obviously doing much as their enthusiastic audience. It is a live concert album and as such, captures the excitement of the stage and the joy that these guys share as they roll and ramble through music from Ireland, America, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary and beyond. There is a playful weaving of intricate melodies and verse into a counterpointal fabric that doesn’t call attention to the fact that the instruments and the music blended are often from different countries and cultures. This is global culture at its finest because the music is safe in the hands of such master musicians.

It is important to realize that both Dónal Lunny and Andy Irvine are veteran Irish musicians who, along with a handful of other folks such as Seán Ó Riada and The Chieftains, virtually invented the modern Irish band sound. Dónal and Andy’s respective discographies read like a list of all the major tunes that have come out of the generation that was tuning of age by 1970’s in Ireland. They are both innovators who introduced the open-tuned, droney Greek bouzouki, the Mediterranean mandolin to the world of Irish music. Andy Irvine was probably the first, and certainly not the last, trad musician to get the idea of playing Eastern European-inspired dance melodies with their complex rhythms in 7/16, 9/16 and 11/16, etc., but using Irish ensemble instruments instead. This trend has lately been taken to such extremes in such tracks as Riverdance that it has been dubbed the “Balkanization” of Irish music. Here the band demonstrates unusual respect and depth of knowledge of these traditions and offers up some selections of Eastern European tunes on mostly Balkan folk instruments with all of their nuances, inflections, and ornamentation.

Dónal Lunny has not only been playing with the best touring musicians in Ireland since the 1970’s, but has proven to be an innovative and inspired producer and arranger. Andy and Dónal were involved in some way in almost all of the Irish super groups during the last 30 years. Here is a partial list: (Many of these projects are classics, so do a Google search and check them out!) Sweeney’s Men, Planxty, The Bothy Band, Christy Moore and Band, Pat Boys, Andy, Dick Gauntlett, Mícheál Mc Mahon, De Dannan, Clannad, Altan, Paul Brady and Andy Irvine, Sharon Shannon, Kevin Burke and Míchéal Ó Domhnaill, Patrick Street, and Moving Hearts.

Bruce Molsky is an American fiddler, banjo player, and singer, who is steeped in the tradition of the Appalachian Mountains. With many albums to his credit, he learned his music from one of the most wonderful and archaic players of his era: Tommy Jarrell of Mount Airy, North Carolina. What I love about Bruce’s playing is the sweet, open-tuned fiddle and banjo sounds that tear at your heart, making you long for the days when those same tunes echoed through the mountains and valleys of an earlier, perhaps less jaded, America.

These three are joined by Nikola Parov who is a brilliant multi-instrumentalist specializing in Bulgarian folk instruments (and other things). He’s a Bulgarian-Hungarian who met Andy years ago in Eastern Europe. Reins van der Zalm rounds out the band. Yet another multi-instrumentalist, he also met Andy during his travels to Eastern Europe and has been doing gigs with him on and off ever since. Recently, he and Andy got together to do a project called East Wind.

Every cut on this album is a gem. My favorites include the first cut, My Heart’s in Ireland Tonight, a sentimental song about the good old days in County Clare when Willy Clancy, the Clare singer and Minstrel was still alive. (If you want to learn more about Irish trad music, check out the Willy Clancy Summer School that happens every July in Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare.) The song is followed by a sweet American Tune called Robinson County and is followed by an Irish tune called Trip To Durrow, both expertly by Bruce Molsky. Over the years, Andy has also taken much inspiration from the songs of the American minstrel and ballad singer/writer Woody Guthrie that he has introduced to audiences all over the world. Another one of my favorites is a Guthrie political song called Never Tire of the Road (“All You Fascists Bound to Lose…”), which is combined with a crooked open-tuned melody played by Bruce Molsky called Pony. The traditional song, A Blacksmith Courted Me, and the Bulgarian instrument, instrumental polka, recorded by Nikola Parov is a track on the first Planxty album 1972 -CD Shanachie- 79009 -★★★★½. I have many other favorites including the last cut, which is a hot Eastern European clarinet piece called The Last Dance. Enjoy.

Artist: TÉADA
Title: GIVE US A PENNY AND LET US BE GONE - (★★★★½/2)
www.celtproductions.com/cd2/html

Oisin Mac Diarmada on fiddle and vocals - John Blake on flute and guitar - Paul Finn on accordion and concertina - Séan McElwain on banjo and bouzouki - Tristan Rosenstock on Bodhran, backing vocals and recitation - and 5th is Séamus Mac Mathuna on bodhran.

Here is a great Irish Traditional band with an almost ideal line-up of instruments. The vocals sung in Irish contribute to the feeling that this is an album full of “the Pure Drop” that makes no apologies because it is at once both contemporary and authentic. The flute, fiddle, accordion, concertina and banjo play the tunes with mastery of the tradition. The bouzouki, guitar and bodhran provide a driving rhythm section for the tunes and sweet accompaniment to the songs reminiscent at times of the best of Planxy and early De Dannan. These guys can kick ass when they feel like it but can also lay back on slower-paced reels, jigs and set dances when the mood takes them. The arranging, pacing and dynamics of each set don’t feel forced and are interesting and musical without being “clever” or “cute.” They have also taken great pains to provide us with sources for the materi- al in their liner notes. The 4th track, a well-known uilleann pipe set dance called The Ace and Deuce of Piperin, is interpreted on the fiddle by Oisin Mac Diarmada to sound like the pipes. Other instruments join in with counter melodies. My favorite song is Thin I’ll Teach an Tórrainn, with its crooked melody, uplifting vocal harmonies and intricate Mediterranean string accompaniment. Guest artist Séamus Mac Mathuna brings out his nice lilting voice on backing vocals, bouzouki, guitar, and bodhran. Séamus is a group of younger players steeped in the tradition.

Another one of my favorites is a Guthrie-inspired political song entitled Rolling Wave will be released any minute now. The beautiful album by Maurice Mac Diarmada called East Wind will be released any minute now. Càit has been mad about Irish Traditional Music since she had the good fortune to hear and play with Jo Cooley (of Peterowell, County Galway) and Kevin Keegan (of Galway Town) when they and other distinguished guests would come “up the country” to visit her and her friends and cocomposers for weekends at a ranch in Cloverdale called Preston. Those were rare seessions; lasting entire weekends, played by firelight and kerosene lamp in the old wooden church with the old clock beating out the hour and the half-hour. Càit has been playing and teaching since 1970. Her Web site (www.caithreed.com) is under construction and her first solo album, The Rolling Wave will be released any minute now.

About the rating system: The ratings represent my opinion only and since I’m pretty opinionated, I thought I’d come up with a scale. I realize this is a bit ludicrous but the judge music, but the scale may help people who perhaps are new to the acoustic folk music genre and who want to get some really good albums and skip the mediocre ones. My personal taste is for albums that have a dynamic, “live” presence or where the excitement of the music is captured in the studio. Albums with five hearts are classics, which means they will sound better with each playing. These are albums that just stand out as setting the standard for everything that comes after (or before). They are albums of great heart, which is why I use the heart icon. They become old friends and you find yourself humming the tunes and memorizing every note, arrangement, nuance and word. On the other end of the scale, there are albums that are pretty good but with some excellent tracks. Just like the Wine Spectator, I only rate stuff I like.

★★★★½ A classic. Take this with you to a desert island.
★★★★ Exceptional album. Must have.
★★★ Consistently great music.
★★ Some excellent music and production.
★ Some excellent tracks.

Càit has been mad about Irish Traditional Music since she had the good fortune to hear and play with Joe Cooley (of Peterowell, County Galway) and Kevin Keegan (of Galway Town) when they and other distinguished guests would come “up the country” to visit her and her friends and cocomposers for weekends at a ranch in Cloverdale called Preston. Those were rare sessions; lasting entire weekends, played by firelight and kerosene lamp in the old wooden church with the old clock beating out the hour and the half-hour. Càit has been playing and teaching since 1970. Her Web site (www.caithreed.com) is under construction and her first solo album, The Rolling Wave will be released any minute now.

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Keep up with current folk / trad happenings. Get reminders of what is happening this weekend, what is new on the internet and much more. Share information. Are you looking for a music teacher-post it here. Is your band playing-post it here. Do you want to know where you can purchase a digereedoo? Yup-post it here. Surf over to groups.yahoo.com. If you are a new Yahoo user, click in order to sign up. You are asked to submit your email address, first and last name and zip code along with your preferences. After you sign in, search for FolkWorks. Click on the FolkWorks hyperlink. That’s all there is to it.
There were about seven of us sitting in a spacious studio with a rather large woman named Gertrude Wheeler Beckman, and a very ordinary wooden chair. Burt Lasky was sitting in the chair and Gertrude Wheeler Beckman had instructed him to rise from the chair to a standing position while remaining in a state of total relaxation. Burt’s attempts caused him to resemble a flaccid zombie suffering a grand mal seizure. When Burt had somehow attained a standing position Mrs. Beckman informed him that he was now ready to sing.

The year was 1947 and we were students at the Richard Dyer-Bennett School of Minstrelsy in Aspen Colorado (population, 2,000).

Richard Dyer-Bennett never referred to himself as a “folksinger,” nor indeed was that a fitting description of this talented artist. He was a gifted classical guitarist, and a thrilling Irish Tenor. He sang all sorts of songs in all sorts of styles and in many languages.

This summer marked the first year of his dream, a school of minstrelsy. We were the first group of students and a motley crew we were indeed. There was Burt from New York whose heart I broke for a whole week; there was Lanie, who both comforted him and eventually married him; there was Sabrina from somewhere whose soprano caused eagles to abandon their eyries; and there was Rich Dehr, who went on to run a famous restaurant in Los Angeles; there was Jeppy from the Bronx who spent her free time reading the People’s World to her cowboy lovers, in a dedicated but futile effort to convert them to Communism. And there were Willy Holt and myself, the only two who went on to careers in music and theater. Will, as he is now called went on to write many songs, including the lovely Lemon Tree. I saw Will about ten years ago and have, sadly, lost touch with him. (Can anyone help?) I think that at last lunch together we sang Mrs. Beckman’s truly horrible song, which she insisted we learn, and because she had been Dick Dyer-Bennett’s beloved voice teacher. We learned, performed, and (except for Uncle Ruthie who cannot forget any song or poem, good or bad), promptly forgot.

From the East, to the West, to a focal point, in the heart of the Rockies, To Aspen they come; the young men and the maidens, Potential poets all, potential singers….COMPOSERS! Mrs. Beckman notwithstanding, we all learned a lot at the Dyer Bennett School.

In addition to our classical guitar classes with Dick, we studied composition with Miriam Gideon, a well known modern composer who taught us Bach harmonies, and dance, with Melvene Dyer-Bennett, (Dick’s wife, a former dancer) who showed us new ways of moving in space. (To this day I am much of what I learned from Mel. Somewhere in North Carolina there are Native American Cherokee former students of mine who can show you at least ten unusual ways of moving across a floor!)

The focus of that first summer was The Aspen Summer Festival, and each week we Dyer-Bennett students were able to study with guest artists who also gave public concerts as a part of the visit. There was Sam Eskin, a very earthy folk song collector whose collected recordings were so amazing that my friend Jeppy and I sneaked into the studio one night with my Webster Wire Recorder and stole many of Sam’s very naughty folk songs: The Tailor’s Boy, The Friar Song, The Gathering of the Clan and more, all of which I still remember and sing, when properly inspired! (Now, being a shy and a nimble lad, he quickly climbed the stairs, And there he found the chandler’s boy between his mistress’ thighs!)

It was in Aspen that I first met Marais and Miranda. Their concert was a highlight of the summer, and it was from Miranda that I learned the true meaning of “primavera.” (Years later, she was a guest many times on my radio show and swore she had no memory of having ever met me in Aspen.)

Of course, both Dick and Melvene gave concerts, as part of the festival. Melvene included the Dyer-Bennett students in her recital. Shunning traditional accompaniment, she used drums and our voices, and I only remember continually dashing across the stage in a crescendo of cacophony, at least eight times during the performance.

A Dyer-Bennett friend, the great composer Virgil Thompson, was a guest one week and attended Dick’s concert. While Dick was singing The Garden Where The Pratries Grow:

She was just the kind of creature, lads, that Nature did intend
To walk right through the world, me boys, without the Grecian Bend the person next to Thompson asked him what a Grecian Bend was. And just as Thompson began his answer, there occurred one of those rare total silences in the audience, as his answer rang out;

...a kind of corset worn between the nipples and the crotch.

The Dyer-Bennets had two little daughters, Bonnie, age five, and Brooke, age 2. Melvene was very insistently that they be taught the correct word for every part and function of the body, and one day when Mel, in an effort to better blend into the conservative Aspen community, had invited Mrs. Shaw, the Judge’s wife to a proper and tasty English tea, Bonnie came down the steps and into the parlor declaring.

“Mother, Brooke has defecated, and there is defeate all over the stairs!”

Horses were a big part of life in Aspen. I had one and Dick and Mel gave in to Bonnie’s begging and purchased Bessie, a very old, very slow horse, which Bonnie rode all over town, entreating as she rode, “Don’t die, Bessie. Please don’t die.”

Horses, however, were not for Dick. He loved old cars and came back from Denver one day with a very old Rolls Royce, the same model used by the Queen Mother in 1947. The salesman told him, “This car will outlive you, sir.” We all loved the Rolls. It had vases for flowers in the windows and pull-down seats on the side. There was no garbage service in Aspen at that time, so people had to take their garbage to the town dump in their own vehicles. Sometimes, there was an 8 millimeter film for all of us, dressed in wild costumes, dragging our garbage from the Rolls Royce and tossing it into the town dump.

I spent almost two years living with the Dyer-Bennets, winter and summer. I traveled with them to New York City, and lived with them all through a wonderful long winter where I never learned to ski, but learned to bake bread on a wood-burning stove. It was Mel Dyer-Bennett who decided I should go to Bennington College and learn to be an organic and creative whole human being.

At Bennington, on scholarship, I learned to wait on tables. But it was Dick and Mel Dyer-Bennett who really helped me to become real. One of those days I’ll write more about those years, those crazy, creative times with the Dyer- Bennets. Perhaps in a future column. I can tell more about the school’s second summer, when the Goethe Festival took place and I rescued Artur Rubenstein from a stalled chairlift in a rainstorm, and Dimitri Metropolis stole my boyfriend, Douglas the Drip Painter.

Uncle Ruthie is a singer, songwriter, storyteller, recording artist, Special Education music teacher for blind children and a poet. Her radio show can be heard every Saturday morning at 10:00 am on KPFK 90.7 FM. In her spare time she will be writing this column and sharing her thoughts on music and life with our readers.
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Below is a form to print & mail with your check OR you may join conveniently online at www.FolkWorks.org.
Quebec is home to a variety of traditional musical influences. The earliest of these influenced Québécois music were dance and song. This situation is not unique to Québec, though — it is typical of the folklorique (read: unso-

plasticated). This situation is not unique to Québec, though — it is typical of the fight all over North America for preservation of anything artisanal, and the ongoing battle to recognise that “patrimoine” or heritage is important as a cultural identity. Their take on the music of their forefathers (and mothers) was full of youthful spirit, urgently played fiddle tunes, rough-hewn vocal arrangements, and forty word in-the-mouth phrasings. They played without accompaniment to get people up and dancing in — where else — the kitchen. Today, you’ll find mandolin, flute, banjo and many other instruments being incorporated as musicians experience new, multicultural influences.

The range of interpretative styles on the traditional music scene is vast. In the 1970’s, groups like Le Rêve du Diable, Jean-Paul Loyer’s La Volée d’Castors and the folkloric band Entourloupe, Le Rêve du Diable, Les Batinses and Les Chauffeurs à Pied, and musicians like Yvon Mimeault, Édouard Richard and Martin Bordelon, whose music lives on with a whole new generation thanks to a posthumous recording released by his family. The Gaspé region east of Québec has melded into a one-of-a-kind sound that excites all sorts of audiences, and accordion-maker/accordionist Raynard Ouellette can be found in Montmagny, where he also organises Le Carrefour Mondial de l’Accordéon (http://accordeon.montmagny.com), Québec’s largest and most popular annual accordion festival on the first weekend of September.

La Sonorité Traditionnelle d’Aujour’hui (Traditional Sounds of Today)

Instrumentally, Québec traditional music usually includes some or all of the following: fiddle, accordion, guitar, piano and feet. While accordion was introduced after the fiddle, its popularity was quickly established and has

made it symbolic of Québec music. As a backup instrument, the piano was added in the 1800s when the accordion (traditionally played with one hand) and accordion music began to be played without accompaniment to get people up and dancing in — where else — the kitchen. Today, you’ll find mandolin, flute, banjo and many other instruments being incorporated as musicians experience new, multicultural influences.

A good way to begin discovering traditional music from Québec is to attend the Annual Festival International des Arts Traditionnels de Québec (FIAT) early each October and also hosts concerts, called dances and other events throughout the year. Online catalogue Thirty Below Zero, operated by trad guitar/fiddler Guy Bouchard, specialises in traditional Québécois music, offering what is probably the largest mail order selection on the web at http://www.qbc clic.net/~thirtyb/. Quebecesto
I f you have never been to the Bowers Museum of Cultural Arts in Santa Ana before, now is a good time to familiarize yourself with what it has to offer. There are two shows at the Bowers that could not be more different, but both are worth a visit during this fall: Bridge to Understanding and Tibet: Treasures From the Roof of the World, and they are well worth the trek down the five to attend. Aside from those, there are also a variety of permanent installations that are quite intriguing. Particularly I enjoyed the room dedicated to baskets from Mission and Yokut people. Hupa woven hats, delicate feathered Pomo gift baskets, Gabrieleno “cog-stones” (whose function is unknown), stone carvings and flutes from the Channel Islands culture group, among other items on display. They also have a series of galleries containing objects from pre-contact Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America linked thematically to shamanism, a video showing how the Mesoamerican ballgame (wherein a large, solid rubber ball is hit with the hips to move it and score a point) is played, and a full-sized replica of the Maya sarcophagus lid of Pacal’s Tomb (the original of which lies within the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque in Chiapas, Mexico).

The major exhibit currently running is Tibet: Treasures From the Roof of the World. It’s the first stop on a national tour for some 200 objects never before seen in the Western world that come from the Potala palace (the Dalai Lama’s residence) and the Tibet Museum of Lhasa. Docents are available to lead you through the show, which is divided into four sections (History and Culture, Ritual Objects, Paintings, Sculptures and Textiles, and Daily life of the Tibetan Nobility), but the accompanying text is sufficiently informative.

The first gallery contains ritual objects—prayer wheels, ritual three-edged daggers with figure-decorated hilts known as “purbas” (with which to dismember one’s greed, hatred and ignorance), portable shrines, a “kapala”—a cup made from a human skull (used in Tantric rituals), and sutras painted on a national tour for some 200 objects never before seen in the Western world that come from the Potala palace (the Dalai Lama’s residence) and the Tibet Museum of Lhasa. Docents are available to lead you through the show, which is divided into four sections (History and Culture, Ritual Objects, Paintings, Sculptures and Textiles, and Daily life of the Tibetan Nobility), but the accompanying text is sufficiently informative.

The first gallery contains ritual objects—prayer wheels, ritual three-edged daggers with figure-decorated hilts known as “purbas” (with which to dismember one’s greed, hatred and ignorance), portable shrines, a “kapala”—a cup made from a human skull (used in Tantric rituals), and sutras painted on a palm leaves. I found the assortment of ritual musical instruments particularly intriguing. The long horns are said to be heard in this world as well as the next, with the sounds emulating the voice of a supernaturally 6-tusked white elephant. The “Gyaling Horns” are only played ritually in the presence of the king and Lama. Also known as the “royal oboe,” they are played in duet, with the second musician watching the first and copying his playing so that there is a slight delay or echo-effect. The sculptures and textiles include “Thangkas,” devotional paintings and educational tools (the creation of which is a religious act), dating from the 13th century, and an array of gilded sculptures of various deities. A film in that gallery takes the viewer through the interrior of temples in the Potala palace. In the section on the “Daily Life of the Dalai Lama’s saddles, ceramic and metalwork vessels, costumes (including one made to transform the wearer into one of the Dakini, female deities of Enlightenment), though, is the images. They are huge (some larger than life, and some panoramic), glowing, subtly tinted, and accompanied by text explaining who they are, where they’re from, and what issues had bearing for them at the time of the portrait.

The Kidseum is two blocks down, and features storytelling, art projects, mini-exhibitions and face-painting. There are family cultural festivals weekly, and during the summer they offer thematic art camps. The Bead Society of Orange County holds their meetings at the Bowers once a month (for information go to their site at www.beadsociey.org, although not in July or December. They are holding a meeting (August 28 from 10:00am to noon at the Conference Center, and a workshop following that at 1:00pm at the Kidseum featuring Tom and Cathy Wegman, who encrust found objects (such as waffle irons and roller skates) with beads.

EVENTS AT THE BOWERS JULY AND AUGUST:

Sunday July 11, 2:00-3:00pm - Tibet’s Wild West: Mount Kailash and the Magic Guge Kingdom (Slide show and lecture of photographer Craig Lovell’s and Himalayan expert Christine Kolice’s visit to a place some call the Cosmic Center of the Universe.)

Saturday July 17, 2:00-3:30pm - Living Goddesses of India (Tim Ward discusses his book, “Arousing the Goddess: Sex and Love in the Buddhist Ruins of India” with slide show depicting ancient goddess rituals and sacred sites.)

Saturday July 24, 1:30-3:00pm - Recent acquisitions of African art

Sunday July 25, 2:00-4:00pm - An Afternoon of Native American Flute Music with Scott August

Saturday August 7, 2:00-3:00pm - Mexican Silversmithing Techniques of Taxco (repoussage, flat-chasing, metatecasados, enameling) Christie Romero

Saturday August 21, 1:30-3:00pm - New acquisitions of Oceanic art

FAMILY CULTURAL FESTIVALS AT THE KIDSEUM:

Wednesday afternoons 2:00pm Music and Dance: July 7th - Dance and Music of the Middle East July 14th - Aloha! Music and Dance of the Pacific Islands July 21st - Come Celebrate American Musical Tradition July 28th - A Presentation of Native American Music August 4th - Beat Out the Rhythms of Many Cultures in Our Drumming Circle August 11th - Musical Traditions of the Aztec and Maya August 18th - African Musical Safari

Sunday August 8, 11am-4pm Family Arts Festival

BOWERS MUSEUM

2002 No. Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706 714-567-3600 www.bowers.org Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00am-5:00pm

KIDSEUM

1802 No. Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706 714-480-1520 Saturday and Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm, Thursday 3:00-5:00pm

Brooke Alberts is a songwriter and has a Masters degree in Medieval Studies.
FolkWorks

Back in 1993 when Great Big Sea first got together, they had a clear vision of what they wanted to accomplish. “We started with a simple idea — Newfoundland music was evolving and unique, and if we combined it with pop music, we could make something special,” explains lead singer Alan Doyle in an interview on the band’s web site. “We’ve added instruments, and voices, and rhythms, and many, many different sounds, but our idea has never changed.”

Over the years, Great Big Sea has held true to that original idea, and long time fans have seen them progress from a traditional band with a pop “feel” to a pop band with unmistakable traditional roots. With Something Beautiful, their seventh album, that transition is almost complete, and in fact when I stopped off to take a look at something on my computer after my first listen, I noticed that the genre on the screen now appears as “adult alternative” instead of “folk.”

There are a few tracks that are still reminiscent of GBS’s folk roots, notably John Barbour, a Newfoundland version of the Child ballad Willie O’ Windbury, and Chafe’s Ceilidh, an “I-dare-you-to-sit-still” instrumental tune. But by and large this is a pop album that is already appearing on the Canadian charts in the company of such pop icons as Norah Jones.

Plenty of bands have tried to blend tradition with pop or rock, usually with mediocre results. What is offered up as “Celtic rock” is often nothing more than “Irish loud” in the end. But Great Big Sea is the rare exception, and it is apparent in Something Beautiful that these guys have succeeded where so many others have failed. Listen to the instrumentals and the cadences in the title song, or in McCann and Doyle’s ode to the season, Summer, and you’ll find your way to a great pop song but with roots firmly planted in the Newfoundland folk tradition. Or try Lucky Me, with both tune and lyrics as traditional as any folk song that could easily show up on the pop charts.

The bottom line here is that GBS is definitely a pop band, although traditionally grounded, and Something Beautiful is definitely a pop album. It won’t appeal to those who object to the blending of the two genres, or to those who don’t care for pop music. But if your musical spectrum is enlarged this is a pop album that is already appearing on the Canadian charts in the company of such pop icons as Norah Jones.

So much for the factual data. This CD, part of Rounder’s Deep River of Song series, is a treasure. These are the sounds that gave birth to much of what we play and listen to today, from Zydeco to gospel, to “pop” folk or RnR, and now fitly enjoy listening to while I’m doing something else.

This is a CD that invites active listening and thoughtful reflection on the music. Leadbelly’s Goodnight Irene reminds us of our legacy behind all the others who learned from the Weavers and their musical progeny. Wilson “Stavin’ Chain” Jones’ version of Liza Jane makes me ponder the ethnicity-free version I learned in elementary school from a teacher who never felt the need to explain its origin.

But there’s also just plain great entertainment here, something I really wasn’t expecting. Je Veux Me Marier (Chere Ami), performed by Jimmy Peters and ring dance singers, sent me, and my two left feet, spinning around the house in an exuberant dance, as did both of the tracks by Roll Morton. No need to study or interpret—just get on your feet and clap your hands and enjoy!

I had very high expectations for the liner notes on this CD, and I was not disappointed. The booklet opens with a seven-page introduction that gives an overview of the music, performers and instruments heard on the recordings, including some fascinating quotes from the Lomaxes regarding the circumstances under which they were recorded. This is followed by performance notes on each individual track, along with lyrics and transcripts of the spoken word interviews that are heard.

**ARTIST: PETER LANG**

**Title: GUITAR**

**Label: HORUS RECORDS**

Peter Lang was a protege and friend of the legendary guitar genius John Fahey, who “discovered” him in 1972. For the decade of the 1970’s, finger-style guitar playing was defined by players such as Fahey and the innovative Leo Kottke, and in 1974 Fahey, Kottke and Lang recorded an album together. Then in 1978, Lang decided it was time for a career change and left the music business to become a film animator. Now he’s back after 20 years, and Guitar is his second album since his return.

When his “comeback” album, Dharma Blues was released in 2002, Dirty Linen commented “Lang is still firmly rooted in the 60’s / 70’s John Fahey / Leo Kottke / blues / folk / Americana styling that he helped pioneer, and it’s certainly refreshing to hear it being played this well by one of the old masters.” That was two years ago, and the same could be said for Guitar.

This is a pleasant album. I could easily picture myself playing it during a long drive, or as I work at my computer. But there’s nothing here that makes me say “Wow.” Maybe it’s because it is so rooted in the 1970’s that there’s a sort of “been there, done that” feel to the whole thing. You almost get the feeling that Lang didn’t pick up a guitar at all during those 20 years, then emerged from his retirement and simply picked up where he left off.

Taken in that context, though, the album is a good one. Lang is one of the masters of 1960’s and 1970’s style 12-string finger picking, and if you loved it then, you’re still going to enjoy it now. He seems to be comfortably aware of where his musical feet are planted, even choosing an opening tune that can best be described as retro Kottke-esque in its 12-string slide style.

The past couple of years have seen quite a few albums released by virtuoso guitar players who seem bent on displaying their technique at all cost, often losing track of the music’s “feel.” I was pleased to find that Lang didn’t avoid this temptation; there’s a degree of emotional depth here, as in the tune Witness to a Messenger which he wrote as a memorial to John Fahey.

There’s a section of my shelves at home where I keep the CD’s that I really enjoy listening to while I’m doing something else. Guitar is just the sort of entertaining pleasant to listen to, but not distracting enough to disturb my concentration.

Linda Dewar is a singer and a player of various instruments with strings and keys. She can be heard playing mostly Celtic music at small gatherings and large festivals here and there in California. Her first solo CD is currently in development, which means she’s thinking about it a lot and will start doing something about it real soon.

**BULLETIN BOARD**

Send us your community news, musical instruments for sale, non profit organization announcements, weddings, births, etc. May be edited for space available.

**TEACHER WANTED** - Are you a fully credentialed teacher who has passed the CBEST and the CSET and is also a folk-type musician? Are you interested in a mostly half-time position teaching music in an LAUSD school for blind kids? Your partner would be Uncle Ruthie and you would have the time of your life! For information, call 310-835-1173.

**MANDOLIN PLAYER WANTED** - Need a traditional Bluegrass mandolin picker that can play every weekend in the Los Angeles area, plus occasionally during the week. Lead vocals and harmonies a plus. Call 760-835-5423

**MADSEN’S DEEP RIVER OF SONG**

Send us your community news, musical instruments for sale, non profit organization announcements, weddings, births, etc. May be edited for space available.

**ROOM WANTED** - 2 folk musicians seek a room in the Valley (between Sherman Oaks and the West Valley) to lighten the commute. We would need a place where we could stay over 2 or 3 nights a week, but will pay monthly. Please contact Cair Reed at 310-543-1219

**TEACHER WANTED** - Are you a fully credentialed teacher who has passed the CBEST and the CSET and is also a folk-type musician? Are you interested in a mostly half-time position teaching music in an LAUSD school for blind kids? Your partner would be Uncle Ruthie and you would have the time of your life! For information, call 310-835-1173.

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**IT’S AN AFRICAN MARKETPLACE TIME - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** Volunteers are needed for the 2004 19th Annual Los Angeles African Marketplace & Cultrual Faire (AMP) to assist in celebrating African’s Global Legacy, August 21, 22, 28 & 29 and September 4, 5 & 6, from 9am – 6pm in Exposition Park. For volunteer information, please email inquiries to volunteers@africanmarketplace.org or call Karen Brabham (323) 734-1164 or (213) 847-1540. You may also download a printable Volunteer Application from www.africanmarketplace.org.
Woody Guthrie... Was He or Wasn’t He?

H is hometown thought he was—they refused to honor him even after he died; the FBI thought he was—they pursued him for ten years, until he was admitted to the Brooklyn State Hospital with Huntington’s Chorea; his audience thought he was—they read his columns in the Daily Worker and the People’s World; Marxist Minstrels, a handbook for entertainment blacklisting, thought he was—he was their star example of duped folk singers. And Woody Guthrie thought he was, though he clearly preferred his own word, “commonist.”

But Ed Cray, his latest biographer, is at great pains to call into question whether Woody was, as McCarthy used to say, “a card-carrying member of the Communist Party.” The answer to that question seems ambiguous at best, with some persuasive evidence on both sides. Cray seems to prefer the evidence against it, and especially in his post-publication interviews, has made much of the fact that Woody was a patriot, albeit, as the L.A. Times described him in their very positive review of Rambler’s Man, “a restless” one. [I reviewed the book in the May/June issue of Folk Works.]

A patriot he certainly was, as evidenced both by his classic songs, This Land Is Your Land, Pastures of Plenty, Grand Coulee Dam, Roll On, Columbus, and by his volunteer service as a Merchant Marine during World War II. But that doesn’t mean he wasn’t also a communist. Woody himself was sometimes coy about it, saying most memorably, “Well, I ain’t necessarily a communist, but I have been in the red my whole life.”

Ed Cray quotes Woody as saying (this is from memory, so I can’t cite a page reference), “The most intelligent thing I ever did in 1936 was to join the Communist Party.” That would seem pretty convincing to me, but Cray under-mines the quote by noting that Woody was in a different part of the country than he said he was at the time and place he was supposed to have joined, and thus could not have joined. He also quotes a number of Woody’s friends who claimed that he was never “invited to join” because he was too independent and would or could not have followed party discipline. (I didn’t know one had to be invited to join—I thought it was like the church, welcoming all comers. I also wonder if all the FBI agents who infiltrated it over the years had been “invited” to join. If so, one must stand in awe of the Communist Party leaders who had an unerring eye for undercover agents.)

Be that as it may, I am prepared to take Woody at his word. The problem here is that Woody was inconsistent even in his own claims. For he also said at one time that he was “a member of no earthly organization.” So who to believe—one of his voices against the other? (Or perhaps, like Whitman, he would have said, “I contradict myself, very well I contradict myself—I am large—I contain multitudes.” He might have also concurred with Emerson: “Foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.”)

If, then, the evidence is inconclusive, and Woody’s own statements contradict myself, very well I contradict myself—I am large—I contain multitudes. One important California communist leader, Dorothy Healey, is quoted by Cray as saying, “If Woody wasn’t a Communist, he was the closest thing to it.”

That would put him in the well-known category that the FBI called “fellow travelers.” So be a Communist or a fellow traveler?

As John Wayne replied to his pal (played by Dean Martin) who asked him whether he or the new kid in town (played by Ricky Nelson) was faster on the Cray as saying, “If Woody wasn’t a Communist, he was the closest thing to it.”

But by 1945, things had changed. The Almanac Singers (including Woody) were writing and recording their album Songs for John Doe, attacking Roosevelt and satirizing every gesture he made of support for Churchill in the battle to save his country. Only when Germany invaded Russia did the left change its tune, and Woody’s remark to Pete Seeger, “I guess we won’t be singing those peace songs anymore.” Suddenly, when Communism was attacked, America’s war became their war. So was Woody a Communist or a fellow traveler?

I’d hate to have to live on the difference.

Now it’s time for full disclosure: I have no problem, as apparently Ed Cray does, with Woody having been a Communist. I grew up in the Old Left, my father was a Communist, an unfriendly witness before HUAC in 1952, the same year Woody was named by its California cousin, the subcommittee on Un-American Activities in California. If Woody was a Communist in 1936, more power to him. If he got thrown out of the Party for lack of discipline—hurrah! He certainly was no slave to the “party line,” even writing a song poking fun at the smoke-screen of the non-aggression pact with Stalin. Until then, the Almanac Singers (including Woody) were writing and recording their album Songs for John Doe, attacking Roosevelt and satirizing every gesture he made of support for Churchill in the battle to save his country.

So was Woody a Communist or a fellow traveler?

One important California communist leader, Dorothy Healey, is quoted by Cray as saying, “If Woody wasn’t a Communist, he was the closest thing to it.” That would put him in the well-known category that the FBI called “fellow travelers.” So be a Communist or a fellow traveler?

As John Wayne replied to his pal (played by Dean Martin) who asked him whether he or the new kid in town (played by Ricky Nelson) was faster on the Cray, “I’d hate to have to live on the difference.”

Let’s be at least as forthright as the Duke: Woody wrote for The People’s World, the West Coast newspaper described by red baiters as “Joe Stalin’s California mouthpiece.” Woody also wrote for The Daily Worker, which he dubbed “The Sabbath Employee.” His columns for these two official party organs have been collected into a delightful collection called Woody’s Sex, the title of his column.

Even more significantly, prior to Pearl Harbor, Woody, along with most of the American left, only supported the U.S. involvement in World War II after Hitler broke his non-aggression pact with Stalin. Until then, the Almanac Singers (Woody’s performing group at the time) were staunchly pacifist. To the left’s everlasting shame it wasn’t enough that Germany was bombing England to justify America’s entrance in the war. While Ed Murrow was filing his famous reports from London, pleading with Americans to rally to the mother country’s defense, risking his life day in and day out to warn us of Nazism’s threat to Western civilization, the Almanac Singers (including Woody) were writing and recording their album Songs for John Doe, attacking Roosevelt and satirizing every gesture he made of support for Churchill in the battle to save his country.

Folk Works wishes to correct an oversight in last issue’s Part 4 of our Conversation With Bess Lomax Hawes. We did not mention that it was Ross Altman who was still carrying on the conversation in our name. Part 4 was the last part of the Conversation With Bess Lomax Hawes, an interview from July 10, 2003. —Editor

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Ross Altman has a Ph.D. in English. Before becoming a full-time folk singer he taught college English and Speech. He now sings around California for libraries, unions, schools, political groups and folk festivals.

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Elizabeth Partridge

Early Friday morning, June 11, 2004, Elizabeth Partridge passed away in Providence, Rhode Island after a long battle with cancer. A nurse, psychologist, weaver, and contradancer extraordinaire she had a great love for all things folk. Elizabeth lived in Los Angeles for many years becoming part of the contradance world in 1995. She returned to the East Coast to be closer to her family where she introduced her siblings to the dance community. Elizabeth will be missed by all who knew her for her compassion, intellect and integrity.

Elizabeth Partridge

Note: This is a personal essay on Charles Chase, co-founder, with his wife Dorothy, of the Claremont Folk Music Center. He died last May 21, at the age of 89. I encourage you to read more about him in the excellent obituary that appeared in the L.A. Times on Saturday, May 29.

In August, 1914, two signal events occurred. One produced death and destruction on an unprecedented scale, changed the world for the worse, and despite its claims, made the world extremely unsafe for democracy at home and abroad. The other created a life devoted to peace and justice, as expressed through a love of world folk music that built a safe haven for artists, poets and musicians of all stripes and colors. World War I began and Charles Chase was born.

Charles passed away this past May 21, as gently as he lived, in a home for Alzheimer’s patients near his home in Claremont, California, where he and his beautiful wife Dorothy established the Claremont Folk Music Center in 1958, just a year and a half before here. For those who never had the privilege of visiting this unique cultural institution let me take you for a brief visit, the way that I will always remember it.

Charles gave me a guided tour one day about ten years ago—in the back of the store to the true collection of instruments that justified it being designated a local museum by the City of Claremont. In the front of the store hung all the guitars and banjos and fiddles, not to mention African drums, Latin American marimbas, German made harmonicas, Hawaiian lap steel guitars, songbooks from around the world and the atmosphere, not of a store but of a cultural gathering place—to refresh one’s inspiration with like-minded seekers after beauty in musical instruments. But those instruments had for sale signs on them—they had price tags.

The real stuff was in back, where I first encountered the abbreviation “NFS.” Dear reader, those three little letters may seem innocuous, but they can break your heart, as they did mine that day. They stand for “Not for sale.” These were the instruments that were beyond value, that were museum quality, that were in short, priceless. I couldn’t buy them, but Charles graciously let me play them to my heart’s content. That’s why Charles was a great man—he knew what he had and passed up the opportunity to make money from it. Any one of these instruments could have been sold on the vintage guitar market for a small fortune. To Charles they never represented money—they were not an investment—they were his reason for living. He wanted them in one place for those who could appreciate them. That was my particular Holy Grail—but others of vastly different musical tastes and educations would have found theirs as well, for he had wonderfully eclectic tastes and a genuine feel for “World Music” long before it ever acquired that name.

There were other things I treasured about Charles Chase. His brother Homer was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War, a member of the Spanish Abraham Lincoln Brigade who went to Spain in 1937 to help defend the Spanish Republic against the fascists—the first war against fascism. Luckily, Homer came home. Of the roughly 3,000 Americans who volunteered for service, 1,500 died in Spain. Many of those who survived turned right around a few years later and went off to fight Hitler and Mussolini again, in World War II. Every time I performed at the Claremont Spring Folk Festival, which was sponsored by the Claremont Folk Music Center, I sang one song for Charles and Dorothy—“Fiva La Quince Brigada, (“Long Live the 15th Brigade”). That was the International Brigade, which included the Abraham Lincoln battalion from America. It was their favorite song because it expressed so much about their lives and their family values.

I sang it again for Dorothy last month at the memorial for Charles. She too is in precarious, fragile health. She has a neurological disease that makes it impossible to move the muscles in her face, thus severely limiting her expressive- ness. But nothing stopped the twinkle in her eyes at hearing the old anti-fascist anthem. She and Charles created a wonderful family together, four children, ten grandchildren and one great grandchild.

But their family extends far beyond their own warm house in Claremont. Every lover of folk music found a home there. That is Charles Chase’s legacy, and thanks to his grandson, his daughter Ellen’s son, the musician Ben Harper, who now owns the Claremont Folk Music Center, his legacy and his gift to the community will survive for another generation. If you haven’t been out there, owe it to yourself to see it. It is a monument to the spirit of this wonderful man.

Ross Altman has a Ph.D. in English. Before becoming a full-time folk singer he taught college English and Speech. He now sings around California for libraries, unions, schools, political groups and folk festivals.

PASSINGS

Charles Chase’s Magic Kingdom

BY ROSS ALTMAN

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**SPECIAL EVENTS continued from page 28**

**MONDAY AUGUST 9**

6:00pm  **ANGEL FAMILY**
Restaurant, Central Ave & Highland Ave
Free! - Free admission!

**MODERN LITERATURE & ART**
Lecture, 2nd Floor, Main Library

**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 11**

7:30pm  **FRIEDA MULLER & FRIENDS**
Grand Performances, South Coast Plaza
Free admission!

**BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSTORE**
Book reading, 2nd Floor, Main Library
Free admission!

**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 11**

7:00pm  **RICK MARAZZI & FRIENDS**
Grand Performances, South Coast Plaza
Free admission!

**FRIEDA MULLER & FRIENDS**
Book reading, 2nd Floor, Main Library
Free admission!

**FRIDAY AUGUST 13**

11:00am  **MIXED-Duo**
400 S. Wilson, Pasadena
Free admission!

**SATURDAY AUGUST 14**

11:00am  **MIXED-Duo**
400 S. Wilson, Pasadena
Free admission!

**FRIDAY AUGUST 13**

11:00am  **MIXED-Duo**
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400 S. Wilson, Pasadena
Free admission!
## SPECIAL EVENTS

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<td><strong>FRIDAY JULY 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SATURDAY JULY 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TUESDAY JULY 7</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WEDNESDAY JULY 8</strong></td>
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<td><strong>THURSDAY JULY 9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FRIDAY JULY 10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SUNDAY JULY 12</strong></td>
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**NOTE:** Includes special events and performances. For more information, visit [FolkWorks](http://www.folkworks.org).