Walking on Bilgewater:
Eefing, bilabial fricatation, and the “strum” and “twang” of the Bilgewater Brothers

By Joel Okida

The act of grinning comes naturally when you hear the very tongue-in-cheek tune, Give It to Mary with Love. And when David Barlia resurrects the lost art known as “eefing,” the grin becomes a chuckle.

For those not in the know, eefing is the vocal ability to nasally impersonate a coronet, oddly named by uke old timer, Cliff “Ukulele Ike” Edwards. John chirps in with a melodic whistling solo and you know there’s a spectacle of rare entertainment to be had. Over the course of an evening with the Bilgewater Brothers, you get a very lively variety show without having to change channels. Mostly you get uke strummer, David and plectrum banjo and National guitar wiz, John Reynolds, having a good time for your listening and viewing pleasure. They are often supported by other local musicians
Dear Readers: Do you want the print edition of FolkWorks newspaper? It depends on you.

This May/June copy may be the last print issue due to both rising expenses and inadequate resources (both revenue and volunteer help). We have been working on a new website and will have it up shortly. But we have heard from many readers that you are interested in keeping the hard copy.

We have received a proposal which we think will work. But it depends on you.

It has been suggested that we reduce the number of pages printed to 16 and the number of copies distributed to 5000. This will effectively reduce expenses.

Now here is the part that depends on you. FolkWorks needs someone to take over the co-ordination of distribution. It does not need to be one person taking it all on...it can be three or four people.

So you can see how it works - here are the details for one possibility:

By Steve & Leda Shapiro

1. One or two people pick up FolkWorks from the printer, leave a bunch at a distributor in Glendale and deposit the rest at a storage place in Van Nuys. This is a locked area, freeway close, where distributors can come and pick up their papers.

2. A second person picks up 250 papers from Van Nuys and takes charge of the mailing to members.

3. A third person takes the long Beach copies down to LB drop off.

4. Either a fourth person, or one of those three is responsible for putting up all the required information at Van Nuys for the rest of the distributors to pick up their copies. That person is designated "co-ordinator" responsible for the follow-up to ensure that each of these basic components has been taken care of. So instead of one hero, a three/four person team, with a team captain could do as well.

If you are interested in keeping the hard copy going or call us to ask about what you can do to make it happen. If all of the above happens, we will be able to keep the hard copy going and you’d be a hero to our readers. If you are interested, email Leda@pacbell.net or call 818-785-3839. Please forward this to anyone you know who might be of help.

If people come forward to take on these tasks, we can keep the hard copy. If they do not come forward, we will be able to keep the hard copy going call or email us going and you’d be a hero to our team captain could do as well.

The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of FolkWorks.
MAY 1
LOMA LINDA UKULELE FESTIVAL
Loma Linda Community Center, 25455 Barlow Rd., Loma Linda
www.lomalindaukestrummers.org

MAY 5
ANNUAL CLAREMONT MUSIC FESTIVAL
909-624-2928 www.folkmusiccenter.org

MAY 3-6
7TH ANNUAL OJAI STORYTELLING FESTIVAL
805-646-8907 www.ptgo.org/

MAY 10-13
PARKFIELD BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL
Parkfield, CA 805-937-5995 www.parkfieldbluegrass.com

MAY 18-19
CONEJO COWBOY POETRY & WESTERN MUSIC FESTIVAL
Conejo Players Theatre 351 S. Moorpark Road Thousand Oaks
805-495-3751 www.conejoplayers.org

MAY 19-20
OLD TIME SOCIAL with TRIPLE CHICKEN FOOT, TOM & PAT- RICK SAI, THE IRON MOUNTAIN STRING BAND, MATT KINMAN, THE LITTLE HOBOS, square dancing and more.

MAY 20
TOPANGA BANJO FIDDLE CONTEST and FOLK FESTIVAL
Paramount Ranch, Cornell Rd. Post Rd. Agoura, CA 818-382-4819
www.topangabanjofiddle.org info@topangabanjofiddle.org

MAY 24-27
STRAWBERRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
Camp Mather, Yosemite Cave, CA 209-533-0901
www.strawberrymusic.com

MAY 26-27
CAJUN / CREOLE MUSIC FESTIVAL
Rancho Santa Susana Park (corner of Stearns & Los Angeles Ave.), Simi Valley, CA www.simicajun.org

MAY 27
SPRUNG FLOOR DANCE FESTIVAL (CONTRADANCING)
Carrillo Ballroom: 800 E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA and other locations
805-969-1511 www.sbdcs.org

JUNE 14-17
GRASS VALLEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (CBA Father’s Day Weekend)
Nevada City Fairgrounds, Grass Valley, CA
209-293-1559 www.cbaontheweb.org

JUNE 15-17
HUCK FINN COUNTRY & BLUEGRASS JUBILEE
Mount Nicasio Regional Park, 18000 Yates Road, Victorville, CA 90800-8810 www.huckfin.com

JUNE 16-17
SAN FRANCISCO FREE FOLK FESTIVAL
Roosevelt Middle School, 460 Arquel (at Geary), San Francisco, CA 415-207-9095 www.sffolkfest.org

JUNE 22-24
LONG BEACH BAYOU FESTIVAL
The 21st Annual Long Beach Bayou Festival will take place at the Rain- bow Lagoon Park (next to the Long Beach Arena), June 22, 23 & 24th.

FolkWorks
Keys to the Highway

The Pedal Steel Guitar

Adventures in Music Theory by Roger Goodman

Can usually sit down with an unfamiliar musical instrument and quickly figure out enough about it to play some tunes. An exception to that happened on the one-and-only time I had access to a pedal steel guitar. For me, it was far from obvious how it worked or what nefarious devices were hidden inside. My frustration and fascination with the sound of this instrument since I first heard it in the early days of television in Los Angeles there were two popular country and western band shows featuring the steel guitar: the Spade Cooley Show that ended when he went to prison for killing his wife and the Dow O’Dell show (not to be confused with the Dell O’Dell TV show of the same era, hosted by a popular Los Angeles lady magician). One of those two shows always featured a song played on the “Talking Steel Guitar.”

Why this fascination with the sound of the pedal steel? In part it may be due to the intricate sequential structure that I can only compare to the notes of a knife blade or something similar to a harp. How do I know what chord to play? Until then I hope you will stay tuned.

ON THE WEB
www.steelguitar.com/resource/video/evos/evosstring.html

E9 Tuning Demystified for 6-String Guitar Players
Excellent free 20 minute streaming video of John Favian from Carter Steel Guitars
www.folkworks.org/Archives
How do I know what chord to play next?
My column from Nov-Dec 2002
Folkworks, Page 4, Vol 2, No 6
www.steelradio.com
Excellent pedal steel streaming audio
www.amazon.com/Spadella-Essential-Spade-Cooley/dp/B00000298X
Listen to cuts from Spade Cooley’s Spadella CD

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 sometimes tries to explain how the clock works when asked only for the time. He lives with his wife, Monika White, in Santa Monica.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>String</th>
<th>Left Knee Lever</th>
<th>Pedal-1</th>
<th>Pedal-2</th>
<th>Right Knee Lever</th>
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Figure 1 - Chords That Relate to the Key of E

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N otorious is a good way to de-
scribe Spam which is very well, too. Defamed – that’s the
perfect word for it. You have been spammed. You see it in your e-mail
every single day. It’s not very funny anymore, not in theaters where it’s always good for a laugh. On the Broadway stage, Monty
Python’s Spamalot packs the house.

There’s a lot of Spam out there – a very
sketch in the classic Monty Python’s
Flying Circus BBC series. In the Spam
episode, a waitress recites the menu at
a patron’s request:

Waitress: Well, there’s egg and ba-
con; egg sausage and bacon; egg and spam; egg bacon and spam; egg bacon
and sausage; spam bacon sausage and spam; spam bacon sausage and spam; spam
bacon spam and spam; spam spam spam and spam; spam spam and spam; spam
bacon spam and spam; or LBorther Mon at Crevetta with a mornya
sauced in a Provencal man-
ner with shallots and aubergines gar-
ished with truffle plate, brandy and
with a fried egg on top and spam.

Not appetizing, but funny. I’m sure
some pioneer hackers thought they
were being oh, so funny in the
days of computer bulletin boards and
chat rooms when they would flood a
site with messages like this Spam mail
bag, filling the screens of chat rooms
with SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM.
And thus was born the age of spamming. You’ve got mail!

So there is Spam (electronic) and
Spam (food) as Wikipedia classifies
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM,
SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM, SPAM.

Because what can be in that rectangular blue can to bring about such a nasty
connotation? A rainbow of food col-
orings, perhaps? Preservatives (no,
doubt, right?), not to mention all sorts
of chemicals in the form of preserva-
tives and maybe some genetically
engineered mystery meat? How about
potatoes with shallots and aubergines
as garnish with truffle plate, brandy and
with a fried egg on top and spam.

Although it sounds like generic
sausage and bacon, it’s not.

Spam Lite (50% less fat) is fine if you’re
really good. Think “bacon,” not Spam.

The opportune timing of its introduc-
tion, 1937, made it a staple in many
places where fresh meat was rare
during the WWII. But there’s one principle
reason that can’t be overlooked: it’s
versatile and can be made to taste
reassuringly good. Think “bacon,” not
so much as a flavor comparison but as
something you can add to lots of dif-
ferent dishes to enhance or kick-up the
flavor. Among the recipes you can find
online: Spam Pizza, Spam Stroganoff,
Spamadillas, Spam Fried Rice, Spam
Chili, Spam Quiche, Spam Stuffed Po-
tatoes Florence, Spamburgers, Spam
and Stuffing, Spam Gyros, Spam and
Eggs and the unbeatable Spam Musu-
bi. The Spam Museum in Austin, Minnesota;
Spam Museum in Austin, Texas; and the
Waikiki Spam Jam in Hawaii.

What I find even more fascinating
is how Spam has found its way into
the local culture of many countries. Great
Britain, China, South Korea and Ha-
Waii are large consumers of Spam.

But as you can tell from the Python
itself in the culture of various places.

What is Spam Musubi? Check the
answer. You have been spammed.

For starters you might want to
have it with eggs for breakfast. Lop off a ¼ inch slice and fry it up nice
brown and on both sides. Before fry-
ing, you can marinate it in soy sauce,
or maybe a molasses or maple-based
marinade. Or, instead of eggs, insert
strips of fried Spam with cheese into
tortilla for Quesadillas. Alternately,
you can dice up the Spam, add some
vegetables and mix it into a fried rice.

For me, the ultimate is Spam Musu-
bi. The ideal tool for making musubi
is an onigiri maker. Any ABC store in
Hawaii will have them for sale. If you
will not be visiting the islands in the
near future, the next best place to look
for an onigiri maker would be in Lit-
tle Tokyo or an Asian grocery store.

The onigiri maker is a hollow mold
shaped in a perfect Spam rectangle with
a press to tamp down the rice. Its
purpose is to shape the ball of rice
for musubi into a perfect pillow for your Spam. Lack of an onigiri maker could
not find one of the rare “70% cans of
Spam, an ideal substitute for the more
professional looking onigiri maker, though you will likely have to
press on the press portion of the kit. If you are
the adventurous type, you may want to
form the rice by hand. This is an
easy task and is not for the faint of heart.

Aside from the onigiri maker, the
only other tools you need are a frying
pan, spatula, rice cooker and a knife.

INGREDIENTS:

Spam (½ inch slices)

Rice (Calrose or other similar

variety)

Furukake (optional)

Nori

Soy Sauce

For starters you might want to
use Japanese-style rice, Uncle
Ben’s will not hold together. The rice
hast to stick together like the kind you
get with sushi. You can make the rice
extra yummy by seasoning it with fu-
rakake, a sesame and seaweed season-
ing. Marinate the Spam in soy sauce before frying it. Dip the onigiri maker in water to keep the rice from sticking to
it. Place a wide strip of nori (shiny
side out) under the onigiri maker.

Spoon some of the cooked rice into the
origiri maker and press it down firmly
so you have a flat surface on top. Lay
a slice of Spam on top of the rice and
slide the onigiri maker over to the
rice and Spam. Wrap the nori over the
top, overlapping both ends to make a
closed circle and wet the outer end
to make it stick and form a seal.

If you are going to wrap these up
for portability, please place the cellulose
below the nori at the beginning of the
process will make it easier to wrap.

Musubi: simple, easy and portable.

INGREDIENTS:

Spam (¼ inch slices)

Rice (Calrose or other similar

variety)

Furukake (optional)

Nori

Soy Sauce

Make a bunch of musubi, wrap them
at home in the South Bay regions near
Los Angeles.

When not dining in exotic locales,
Michael Macheret forages closer to
home in the South Bay regions near
Los Angeles.

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FOLKWORKS’
NEW
PRESENCE
ON THE WEB

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See our
new site
with
MORE
TO
COME

FORKLORE
SPAM: SUBSTANCE
OVER IMAGE
B Y M I C H A E L M A C H E R AT

MAY - JUNE 2007

FOLKWORKS.
MUSIC, coupled with an effect that takes non-thermal energy, can fuel revolution. The implications are as old as radio broadcasting and as new as the FCC/label/big radio payola settlement and RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) demands.

Today, when we are experiencing the most dynamic media environment, today’s pop music does not feed our need to express and explore, to communicate and remain, eloquently protest or identify with and proclaim a joyous “yes!” when we hear a song on the radio. Today’s pop music is insubstantial and irrelevant. Lyrical-ly poor, the rock- driven pop and red-state, trailer-park country are big business—commercial music’s carefully guarded fortresses. Want to give big label executives apoplexy? Open the doors to indie artists who bring thoughtful lyrics, good melody lines, well-crafted harmonies, and instrumentation that’s designed to support the song rather than bury it. Many indie artists would find mainstream acceptance, given mainstream exposure. There’s no shortage of folk-pop, folk-rock, new folk-and all that old-time banjo, fiddle, and electric, together with a harmonper of 6-string-wielding and keyboard-playing singer-songwriters who aspire to the American music myth. We have no dialogue aimed at finding “the next Jackson Browne,” or “the next Nitty Gritty Dirt Band” or even “the next Elvis Presley.”

Instead, the moguls have decided to prevent Internet radio from bringing indie artists to the unwashed masses. The recent FCC/big label/corporate radio payola settlement and the RIAA action to protect artists from Internet radio is driven not by a desire for radio exploitation but by corporate paternalistic claims, really just the latest effort to freeze out the indies. Indies have used the exposure one gets on Internet radio stations. Corporate control and centrally-planned, payola-driven playlists enable corporate radio stations to pay for payola settlement with the FCC does mandate compensatory airtime for indie labels, but when you amortize it across all the stations they own, the actual airtime is insignificant.

Meanwhile, growing numbers of music fans enjoy Internet simulcasts of radio broadcast like Tied to the Tracks and Folkscene, archived pod casts of some public radio shows, and web-only programming, like Folk Alley. (We listed dozens of these in last year’s two-part roundup.) But success can make you a target. The RIAA’s new demands for collecting per-song, per-listener payment will make most Internet radio unsustainable. Who are the RIAA’s big labels protecting? Their own hegemony.

Remember the TV commercial wherein braggadigian financiers are millionaires instead of the baleful small business owners? They try to fry the little guys under Hubble-sized magnifying glasses, or send them scurrying away from colossal golf balls like Indian Jones and the cave boulder. It could be an RIAA ad.

Still, art always finds a way. This year’s first album in the most folk-friendly in memory; perhaps that’s what scared the pop and country big boys. The Dixie Chicks won five, the Kinematics won for their Woody Guthrie album, and Bruce Springsteen was in there with his Pete Seeger tribute.

We’re resigned ourselves to being niche-market folkies, celebrating the best indie with an assortment of other honors like the 2006 Just Plain Folks best album awards won by Su so Glaze & Hilsenrode, Lisa Haley & the Zephyrants, and Bob Malone. Folk Alley has been the internet’s best DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Convention, where Album of the Year honors went to John Craigie, the late James Herzog for his fine CD, The Sun and the Moon. It’s the same honor that L.A.-based keyboard-folkie Amilia K. Spencer won three years ago for her album, Seamless. Amilia has spent the last eight months opening nationwide for Jenk Gorka. Non-mainstream recognition can make you into an indie artist.

But will they matter as much if new media is sabotaged as an exposure and delivery system for music? Marshall McLuhan or Andy Warhol—you vary—observed that the medium is the message. The contrast was harsh. From the Mononoke-Martinet to the Nation, the Lost Generation’s poetry and fiction, the Roaring ’20s, the ascet of jazz, the roots of swing, the speak-clean, Prohibition, and the desire for radio.

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Ask for the California Traditional Music Society’s Festival Rate of $99 plus tax per room per night — reserve by June 1, 2006. Get a 10% discount on Festival Passes with reservation, see our web site for details.
A midst the first few days of 2007, I’m finding myself (as is my wont) thinking about the state of music these days. With Tower Records now defunct, the album sales of young recordings people now overwhelmingly hear new music via downloads and ringtunes. Listening to the radio to hear new music is even more my comfort as it is a matter of affection. But the biggest difference I note between now and say, ten years ago, is that there’s so much more independent music these days. This should be good news for the folk scene, which has always flourished by word of mouth and networking. Now all the things record companies used to do—setting up the entire recording, mixing, mastering and promoting process—almost anyone can do from their basement. But there is one thing record companies used to provide that I miss—a filter. A filter that might help separate the limitless inspired amateurs from the even more limited second-rate, don’t-give-up-your-day-job pretenders. Whether there’s more good music or less, it might well be one has to weed through more and more bad to get to it. I do listen to the radio sometimes. Public radio, though it has its own quotas and compromises, occasionally can give one ideas. And word of mouth—if I figure there’s something great coming up on the horizon, the folk world will eventually introduce me to it. And of course being a reviewer myself, I want to say that reading someone’s writing on what’s worth hearing has found me in agreement often enough to want to keep doing it.

But the method that rarely fails me is turning to releases from record companies that I trust to not bother with marketing fancy marketing releases. One such company is Nashville’s Compass Records, which I never tire of saying good things about. Having already taken the lead in releasing quality Celtic CDs for the US market, they’ve acquired Green Linnet’s catalog, home of most of the great artists that they didn’t already have on their roster! This is a menger that has no down side.

As a result, one of the finest Irish traditions albums on Green Linnet (and that’s saying something!), Téada, has released their wonderful new Inné Amárach (!!!) on Compass in the states. And this is not just a CD, it’s a beautiful package, a two-disc set, one of music (all instrumental this time, though fiddle Oisín Mac Diarmada is also an excellent singer) and one a DVD that traces the history of the music of Sligo and elsewhere (including a wonderful bit about early recordings of Irish music, which largely happened in such US cities as New York, Philadelphia and Chicago), interact with some great traditional music from that band recording the included CD. The CD is possibly their best yet (despite the lack of songs), with great playing from all concerned. They really mix the tune sets nicely, and include plenty of hornpipes, airs and polkas along with the jigs and reels. These young musicians are heavily steeped in the tradition, but bring a lively spirit to it, using strong rhythms on bodhran and guitar or box/whistle. You go along with them with their remarkable fiddle/acordion/flute front line. The CD is a great listen, but this is probably the first DVD release of Irish music I can think of, working an impressive amount of history and great music by others along with interviews with the band. Another method of hearing new music is to actually actively network, which I did at the North American Folk Alliance’s Far West conference in Sacramento in November. There I ran into a most friendly Jeff Berkley of San Diego’s Berkley-Hart, who I was already familiar with through their guest spots with other area musicians. For one, there’s guitarist-wielding ex-major league baseball player Tim Flannery (slated to be the San Francisco Giants third base coach in 2007, fortunately I still like his music) who among the guests on their DVD Our Berkeley, Where Hart Thou? (!) recorded live in early 2005. It’s a combination of very good performances from that movie’s soundtrack along with a few originals and covers. Flannery proclaims the healing powers of Kentucky moonshine before beautifully covering Gillian Welch’s Tear My Stillhouse Down. Calman Hart’s 911 is a Jesus original song—simul- taneously hilarious and sincere, with a classic old-time gospel sound. Flannery also helps on Man of Constant Sorrow, the daughters of all of the above harmonizing through Kermit the Sunny Side, and of course everyone joins in for You Are My Sunshine at the end. The deluxe package includes both a DVD and CD of the show; the DVD also includes some bonus re- hearsal bits. Berkley also handed me a few of their CDs, the most recent of which is Pocket Change, another mar- vel with acoustic instrumentation and lovely local harmonies. All have given me much listening pleasure. Between the two they play guitars, percussion, harmonicas and banjos, all beautifully.

Check www.berkleyhart.com for up- dates. As my fellow columnist Larry Wines said a couple of issues ago, why aren’t they huge?

Look at that. It’s for now. For finding music wherever you can, people. But don’t just sit in front of the computer. Go to concerts and shows, the confer- ences, the radio stations that suit you. Not that the computer doesn’t have a lot to offer. I’ve even found some great music on recordings, as well as live shows, and occasionally films and books. Please feel free to e-mail him at dave@soyars.com or write him c/o FolkWorks.
**THE NAUTICAL TRAIL OF PINT AND DALE**

**BY AUDREY COLEMAN**

Call them folk singers or perhaps sea song gypsies, William Pint and Felicia Dale travel the country, singing seafaring songs from Signs such as the Renaissance Faire here in Southern California and the Mystic Seaport Festival in Connecticut. Their 2003 Dodge Sprinter is outfitted with camping gear for all weather. Their constant travel companion, parrot Ranzo, whose name appears on a Drunken Sailor poster, says out “There’s a good bird!” and imitates the sounds of cell phones to amuse them. Together 21 years now, Pint, 53 and Dale, 49, cross the salt seas regularly to perform in England and throughout Europe in pubs and folk clubs and at sea music festivals. In concert, they definitely seem touched by the maritime folk music muse – Pint with his stubbly beard and robust baritone, Dale cuddling a bouncy-gurdy, her delicate features framed by flowing dark hair threaded with silver strands.

What? You’re not on the sea music circuit? Check out this conversation that I, Audrey Coleman, FolkWorks feature writer, had with Pint and Dale and find out what you’ve been missing.

**AC:** How did you discover the music of the sea, William?

**PINT:** Through the Irish folk music door. One of the bands that I’d been in was a British Isles trio and we did a lot of those kinds of songs. If you do many British Isles songs, eventually you’re going to run into sea songs. I thought they were really interesting and that it was a generally ignored style of music, this body of material. Anybody who was doing it was doing the same five songs a great deal. He thought it was wonderful having that back. William, I just love doing them and it was a British sailor and the guy who was a generally ignored style of music, this body of material. Anybody who was doing it was doing the same five songs a great deal. He thought it was wonderful having that back. William, I just love doing them and it was a British sailor and the guy who...
S ome time ago I did a column about recording a CD proj- ect, and I thought I chat a bit about how to use a studio to the maxi- mum. I realize recently that I have now amassed thousands of hours in the studio. I suppose by virtue of that fact alone, I should’ve learned something about recording. Well, assumptions may not always be true, but I’ll con- tinue anyway. If you’re in the studio sitting on a chair with your guitar in your hands and some guy is aiming microphones at you, then you’ve al- ready accomplished a lot. You’ve de- cided what songs you want to record and you’ve obviously made a decision about where you’ll record. Well, let’s step back a bit. I hope you not only know what songs you want to record, but that you have a pretty good idea of the arrangements you’re going to use, and what instruments and/or mu- sicians you may want to have assist. If you’re a solo performer, this is a lot easier, but most of us like a little company. And you’ve made the deci- sion to hire a producer, or to produce yourself.

We’ll assume that your confidence level is so high (or your bankbook so low) that you’ve decided to produce these sessions yourself. Let’s say you’ve decided to record your great new original song “My Great New Original Song.” You plan to play the rhythm guitar, and do the lead vocal. You’ve decided your two sisters will sing harmony, your dentist is on bass, your plumber is on drums and you’ve saved your money and hired a real professional clarinet player for the solo in the middle of the song. Great. You’ve got what you want, but you’ve now individually, and also as a group. They solo in the middle of the song. Great. You’ve decided your two sisters will work “left on the cutting room floor.” Don’t worry about hurting feelings of professional musicians. You’ve already made sure that at least one of you paid may end up doing a part that just doesn’t fit. Don’t worry about hurting feelings of professional musicians. Your main worry should be that your vocal, and add everything else one piece at a time? These are deci- sions that need to be made well in ad- vance of shelling out your hard earned dough. Even if you have access to a professional performer may not be comfortable re- cording, so you need to be sure that you have not under-recorded your project with a hot shot player who freezes up in the studio. And for that matter, a hot shot player that is demanding, rude or too emotional for the circumstances is a detriment, not an asset to the pro- cess. It’s impossible to leave your ego at the studio door, but why bring in a musician that is difficult to deal with? If possible, do some “pre-production” work in a garage studio, or dig out your old cassette 4 track recorder and at least “play studio” to get an idea of sounds and textures. And al- though I’ve warned about being prepared, remember you can keep a little “unfixed” in the process too. If the dentist - ex- ceuse me – the bass player, comes up with a new idea for a great bass line, don’t shut it down just because it’s not on the spreadsheet.

It’s very subjective how you ap- proach the process. Some folks like to get all their “basic tracks” recorded for all the songs, and then go back and “fill in the blanks.” Others like to take one song at a time, complete it, and then move on.

So once you’ve made all these de- cisions, at some point your recording is “truly not complete until your record- ing mastering program and wants to try it out on your project. Well, let him, but also hire a professional as well and then listen to the results, and let your second cousin hear the dif- ference as well. If your intention is to have a professional sounding product, then it is wise to use professionals. I didn’t have any of my projects mas- tered until the early 90s, and I’ve learned from my mistakes. There is a differ- ence between raw and uncooked.

Recording your own music can be as fulfilling as anything we do here on this planet. It can be very expen- sive, but it can be so much fun that you forget that part. But while you’re having fun, it’s wise to keep track of what your recording goals may be, keep an eye on that budget, and don’t be afraid to cut. We seldom listen in order to get the best result you can ob- tain. Folk on.

Dennis Roger Reed is a singer-song- writer, musician and writer based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He has produced two solo CDs, and appeared on two CDs with the newgrass Andy Rane Band and two CDs with the roots rockers Blue Mama. His prose has appeared in a variety of publications such as the OC Weekly and MOJO magazine. Writing about his music has appeared in an eclectic group of publications such as Bats Player, Acoustic Musi- cian, Dirty Linen, Blue Suede News and Ain’t No Out! His debut memoir resume entry would be the period of several months in 2002 when he danced on stage as part of both Little Richard’s and Paul Simon’s revues. He was actually asked to do the former and condoned by the latter. He apparently knows no shame.
**THE POETRY OF DIANA JONES**

*By Joel Okida*

She is called the “new” Emily Dickinson, but also a re-imagining of her poignant lyrics, often dealing with the similar subjects of love, sorrow, and loss associated with the 19th century poet. However, the common refrain heard about Dickinson’s poems was that you could sing the words to the music of “Amazing Grace,” “The Yellow Rose of Texas,” or the theme song from Gilligan’s Island. Here the distinction might be made, hallowed be those songs in different musical contexts, the poetry of Diana Jones is markedly different. Although it may draw some essence from the first two examples and occasionally follow Dickinson’s common refrain, the added depth of her impassioned vocals, stamping the very personal songs as her own. Add to this the fact that she also is a very adept and tasteful guitarist and maybe the honorable comparison diminishes a little more.

Another likely grouping. There is a distinct hint of Appalachia in the singing voice which probably seeped in from a rediscovered connection with family in the hills of Eastern Tennessee. In addition, she has spent periods of time discovering the style and direction of this country music together. It is filled with dramatic contrasts of nature — the fragrant upland, a mountain rising from the sea, sun-dappled slopes and rolling clouds, and two great peaks covered by mist and floating cloud. Those initiated into the tradition of mountain music, depicts the love making of the ‘iwa birds from the sea, sudden showers sweeping across the hillside, and two great peaks covered by mist and floating cloud. Those initiated into the tradition of mountain music have to be more like here (LA). It just scared me and I woke up and I wrote all those lyrics down immediately and came up with that song.”

Two songs on the album are in quite a different vein. We are richer for their inclusion as they deepen our understanding of Amy Napua Haniali‘i’s artistic and personal path. No Na Hula Kupuna, cut five, has a stately, dignified beat and stirring your coffee. There’s almost no dilution of this purity as the voice and carefully crafted song stays above the discriminating guitar accompaniment. Performing live, she can carry the material with or without embellishment, but her 2006 recording My Remembrance of You (New Song Recordings) features additional musicians Jay Ungar on fiddle, Duke Levine on mandolin, guitars; and others. They weave around her voice, never interfering, leaving the work undiminished and almost as good as seeing her sing it live.

The Chicago Tribune picked My Remembrance of You as their number one “country” record of 2006 over Willie, Vince and all the urban cowboys and country girls. Her music is steeped in the rootsy soul, mournful, tinged and, most of all, more poetically intelligent then the plethora of country schmaltz and jingoist an- other grouping. There is a distinct hint of Appalachian in the singing voice which probably seeped in from a rediscovered connection with family in the hills of Eastern Tennessee. In addition, she has spent periods of time discovering the style and direction of this country music together. It is filled with dramatic contrasts of nature — the fragrant upland, a mountain rising from the sea, sun-dappled slopes and rolling clouds, and two great peaks covered by mist and floating cloud. Those initiated into the tradition of mountain music have to be more like here (LA). It just scared me and I woke up and I wrote all those lyrics down immediately and came up with that song.”

The final cut, In Hilo Town, shows another side of Amy’s musical heritage — jazz. Her lyrics paint a steamy picture of the town on the east side of Big Island. Combined with the languorous pace, the bluesy mood of the music and Amy’s surprising flair for the jazz idiom, the composition is enthralling. But after all the tradition-based songs on Generation Hawaii, you may wonder, “Where did that come from?”

Amy explained, “My grandmother was married five times and they were all musicians. When my grandmother was at the Lexington Hotel in New York, she met my grandfather who played the first trumpet with Sammy Kaye, so I’ve always had that jazz-big-band thing with me. And that’s really a tribute to my grandfather who played that style of music. In fact, this October I’m releasing an album with an orchestra of that type of music.” I’m eager to hear it. Grammy-nominated Generation Hawaii, which deserved to win the Grammy award, is a tough act to follow.
I was convinced against my better judgement to begin to learn how to play the banjo. I don’t think I’m coordinated in quite the right ways to do that although I’ve been told I look like a banjo player. I guess that’s half the battle right there. I’ve been thinking that if that’s the case, I’d like to learn how to look like a wealthy man—or at least one that’s solvent! Already Casey, my dog, is set to attack the banjo because he’s quite dissatisfied with my constant “Thumb-index-thumb-middle” chants that go on for 20 minutes at a throw. He’s wandering off to snooze in the garden, away from the pикет-плюк of my tenderfoot twangings and the swear that is surely moments away.

Smart dog.

The garden is well planted for summer now and he can lounge in the shade of a tomato plant (he’s not a big dog). And as the finishing touch, I’ve put down a layer of mulch all over the place which is as soft as any doggie bed a fellow can buy. I went to the local not-so-friendly big box hardware store and bought bags of whatever they had on sale—sometimes it’s called ‘mulch,’ sometimes it’s called ‘planters mix’ or ‘planting mix’ but it’s all the same thing: Some kind of organic matter that has been shredded or chopped. It is sold as a ‘mulch’ or as ‘amendment,’ but they are the same thing. ‘Mulch’ is spread on top of the ground and left there; ‘amendment’ is mixed with the top layer of soil, what we call it is based on how we use it, there is no difference in substance.) Mulch is very much like the leaves we all paid to rake up and haul away—in fact, it might actually be those leaves! But at least it’s chopped up and in a much more easily handled form.

Why mulch?

This will be easier for a busy garden to answer than learning the banjo! Mulch, especially in the Los Angeles climate is really the most important additive you can make to your garden. Even more than fertilizer! It helps you save on water by preventing evaporation of the water you put down; mulch keeps the plant roots cool on even the hottest days; but the most important thing it does is to shelter and feed the microbes that live in the soil. If you take care of the critters, they will happily take care of your plants and you.

Well-fed soil critters do marvelous things in a garden. The worms come to the surface in the dark of night and tirelessly bring organic material down into the soil of the garden, eating it as they go. The millions of holes they bore in the soil, create spaces for water to be held between waterings and allow vital air to the plants’ roots. In the moist and protected soil under the mulch, fungi, bacteria and other busy microbes, interact with plant roots bringing more water and nutrients to the plant in exchange for some of the products of photosynthesis. This interaction between the plant and these unseen soil dwellers basically can eliminate the need for any fertilizer at all but the worst soils—one of which I believe exist in the Los Angeles Basin.

The problem with fertilizers is that every little green droplet is designed to work in the populations of these invisible life forms. Chemical fertilizers, especially the ones that promise the most ‘bang for your buck’ will add life to the soil only if you have a colony of the soil dwellers insure that you’ll have to continue to use more fertilizers in order to maintain any fertility in your soil. The best skip all but the mildest fertilizers. I suggest alfalfa meal for early in the growing season because as the ground warms up, alfalfa meal will provide a nice addition of a little nitrogen. It does so very mildly and, unlike other forms of nitrogen, stimulates instead of kills soil flora and fauna. Later on in the season, I like to use cottonseed meal as a good slow release of nitrogen—it’s just hard to find organic cottonseed meal locally (online it’s available from Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, www.groworganic.com).

But let’s do a reality check first. My vegetable garden is in its third year at its current location. I have not fertilized a single portion of it in all that time and yet I’m getting top notch yields. One of the main reasons lies in the addition of organic matter and a healthy soil ecosystem that helps the plants get what they need from the soil. One year I grew lots of corn, and corn is one of the hardiest plants on the soil because of its nutrient demands. Still, my garden is doing just fine.

Another factor mitigating the depletion of my soil’s fertility is the interplanting I do—I don’t just fill one area up with one plant and another area with something of one else. I mix it all up—just like planting a flower garden in a way that’s pleasing to the eye. The same is true with my vegetable garden where tomatoes, basil, beans, onions, lentils and peppers all live happily together. Garlic and corn are the only ones planted in blocks (corn because it needs other corn flowers close at hand for the best pollination and garlic because at the end of its season, garlic isn’t watered for the last month and that could be hard on nearby plants). I think I hear Casey snoring from out there. Somewhere around here, I’ve got a hammock that ought to be pulled out just about now so I can go join him. That garden has got to be good for more than just vegetable growing, hot sweaty exercise and a banjo rehearsal And I’ll catch up with Earl Scruggs some other day.

Grandson of a Great Plains farmer, David King is the Garden Master at the Learning Garden, on the campus of Venice High School. He shares his love of the land and music through teaching, writing and playing in a folk/country band.

MUSIC INSTRUCTION

DAVID BRAGGER

David Bragger teaches traditional fiddle and banjo to students of all ages and levels. He teaches music by ear, so no musical background is necessary! His students have won awards at festivals from Topanga Fiddle Festival to Galax, Virginia. More importantly, he shows you how to have a foot-stomping ruckus of a good time! You’ll be learning technique, bowings, and styles of traditional Appalachian musicians so you can play at local jam sessions, bang away on your front porch, or saw like mad at local festivals and contests. For lessons, call David at 818-324-6123 or email him at davidbragger@yahoo.com.

JOELLEN LAPIUS

Joelten Lapidus is one of the pioneers of contemporary fretted dulcimer paying and construction. She is the author of the dulcimer instruction book Lapidus on Dulcimer: Her playing style is a blend of traditional Appalachian, Indian, Arabic, jazz, classical and pop music that gives the dulcimer a new range of rhythmic, melodic and tuning possibilities. Returning to her first musical loves, the accordion and clarinet, Joelten also teaches a high energy Klezmer Band Workshop at McCabes. For dulcimer lessons or a Klezmer Band Workshop, call her at 310-474-1123.

continued on page 10

Maria De Santiago, which Spencer had brought into the project as an instrumental. Encouraged to add lyrics, this song has a blues undercurrent, but Spano’s guitar music is well with blues slide work, and the song has a wistful, haunting quality. Much of the appeal of this project lies in the way Spencer approaches his work. The instrumental work and vocals are exemplary. His lyrics are not his strongest talent, but for the most part they convey simple truths and comfort. And the project includes the remarkable work of a group of extremely talented Norwegians who can play the blues with the best. This is a pleasing return from a long lost talent.
In the summer of 1927, Babe Ruth was on his way to hitting 60 home runs, Charles Lindbergh’s solo trans-Atlantic flight was making the headlines, and Woody’s shack, which had his hand-painted sign, was still standing in Asheville, North Carolina. The Asheville City Council decided to have a rhododendron festival to celebrate the city’s unique local attraction. Only it didn’t turn out to be the flowers. They asked Asheville’s old-time banjo player and folk song collector Bascom Lamar Lunsford - the Minstrel of the Appalachians - to invite a few of his musician friends toiven up the festival, and suddenly a new tradition was born: The Great American Folk Festival.

If the name Bascom Lamar Lunsford doesn’t ring a bell, you have probably sung his songs. He wrote Good Old Mountain Dew and I Wish I Was a Mole in the Ground.

So when you make plans for May 5, the day of the 27th annual Claremont Folk Festival, and May 20, the 47th annual Topanga Banjo and Fiddle Contest and Folk Festival, and June 22-24, the 25th annual CTMS Summer Solstice Festival of Traditional Music, Dance and Storytelling, remember that you are doing more than supporting your local folk festival, you are participating in an American ritual that is now 80 years old.

And remember in whose footsteps you are walking. For it was Pete Seeger who first fell in love with the five-string banjo at a folk festival, when his father Charles, one of our great folklorists, brought his then 16-year-old son to that same Asheville Festival in 1935. That was where Pete first heard the instrument and decided to master it and eventually to teach others through his legendary recordings and from the master. Thank you, Jeanie,” he said, “I did just what that old time banjo player did.”

I Gave My Love a Twelve String Banjo - As a kid I used to go to the Topanga Banjo and Fiddle Contest when it was still in Topanga at what is now the Theatricum Botanicum - which was the late Grandpa Walton’s - I mean actor Will Geer’s - front yard. For many years it was held there and you could sit in a tree and listen to Ramblin’ Jack Elliott sing the songs of his mentor. That would be Woody Guthrie - whose song called Tom Joad was written on Will’s property in the early 1950’s, before he was hospitalized back in New York where he died in 1950 in New York, and in his generation Cherokee. In those days you could still visit Woody’s shack, which had his hand-painted sign on the front door, and I have many memories of Topanga’s early days the time my friend Lenny Carlson’s mother, who was and still is a classically trained violinist, entered the fiddle contest at the advanced level. She spent weeks practicing, or in a sense un-practicing, because - she was trying to rough up the smooth edges of her classical tone, so she could pass for a fiddler, as opposed to a violinist. Looking back on it I suspect she was trying to impress her son, because he was caught up in the folk revival of the 60’s. We have all figured that a blue ribbon from Topanga would give her the street credibility her highly regarded classical technique somehow lacked.

After her performance the audience, including her three biggest fans (Lenny, me and Jim Alexander - the “Three Music Guitars”), cheered wildly. They loved it. When it came time for the awards, though, she was shut out. Third place went by - and they didn’t call her name; second place went to another contestant. And for a moment—we were all holding our breath—we thought we were going to take first prize! But first prize came and went, and they still hadn’t called her name.

We couldn’t believe it — she was far away and the best musician there, and not to even take third place. She was crushed. We were about to leave, when suddenly a low groundswell of cheer started to rumble forth from the crowd—her name had been called over the放声朗诵—first prize in the country to do so. Who was the first recipient of that honor? None other than Jean Ritchie, who hopped down from the mountain to mosey across the country could be inspired by the family songs she had learned at her grandmother’s knee growing up in Kentucky. The festival in the country. If you have been meaning to learn a folk instrument, or to advance to the next level of performing, or to treat the one you already play, that is the place to be this June.

And to get in the mood for a summer of festival fun, you can do no better than to hitchhail it out to Claremont for the first Folk Festival of the season on May 5—Cinco de Mayo. This festival literally began under a tree, when Claremont’s own damsel with a dulcimer, the late Dorothy Chase—who with her husband Charles founded the Claremont Folk Music Center—was playing Shady Grove. Like Newton being struck by the apple, she was hit by the idea of starting the Claremont Folk Festival.

Dorothy and her friends Doug and Cheryl Thompson began producing the festival together and 27 years later it remains an annual celebration of folk music and folk life. When Charles was alive he would always end the festival by leading a dance around the May Pole. When Dorothy was alive the traveling performers—some from as far away as Australia—all stayed at their home on Harvard Street, camped out on the floor, and the soup pot was always full with the best homemade soup I have ever tasted.

Dorothy and Charles’ daughter Ellen Harper now carries on the festival her mother started. If her last name rings a bell, don’t be surprised. Ellen is world class roots music performer extraordinaire Ben Harper’s proud daughter. When Charles traded his grandparents’ folk music store and now travels all over the world. If folk music is about the connection of one generation with another through its shared musical traditions then Ben is the living legacy of how that music—born in a distant past—can endure to reshape the future.

How blessed we are in Southern California to have not one, not two, but three folk festivals that bear witness to this history and continue to shine a light on where we are going. In supporting them we are supporting ourselves.

L.A. may not have a professional football team, but we still have three major folk festivals to celebrate old time music, and as the song says, that’s good enough for me.

Author’s note: All three of these festivals—on their own sites with all of the information you need to know to purchase tickets, see who will be performing and giving workshops, and plan your itinerary—be sure to check them out: www.claremontfolkfestival.org; www.topangabanjofiddle.org; and www.cmfjournal.org (click on Summer Solstice on the menu at their web site). Hope to see you there!
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### F O L K  H A P P E N I N G S  A T  A  G L A N C E  J U N E  2 0 0 7

**Sunday, June 3**
- **If you like it (SE)**
- **London Calling (SE)**
- **BOYSENBERRY MUSIC FESTIVAL (SE)**

**Monday, June 4**
- **SGT. PEPPER'S FOLK REVIVAL (SE)**
- **American Songwriters (SE)**
- **STAGECOACH FESTIVAL (SE)**

**Tuesday, June 5**
- **THE FOLK COLLECTION (SE)**
- **WINNIE ROYAL BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **RODERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE (SE)**

**Wednesday, June 6**
- **Israel (OGD)**
- **Tough Times for the Tough and the Talented (SE)**
- **SMARTFOLK WEEKEND (SE)**

**Thursday, June 7**
- **IRISH FAIR & MUSIC FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **Augusta Bluegrass Jam (OGM)**
- **Bluegrass Jam (OGM)**

**Friday, June 8**
- **CALL TO THE HORN (SE)**
- **GREAT AMERICAN HOMESTYLE FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL (SE)**

**Saturday, June 9**
- **BERNIE PEARL (SE)**
- **COURTSHIP FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **AN Accident in a Barn (SE)**

**Sunday, June 10**
- **ROGER CARSON (SE)**
- **ANTHONY HOPKINS (SE)**
- **MORRIS (OGD)**

**Monday, June 11**
- **GREAT AMERICAN BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JAC K SMITH (SE)**
- **JENNY WAUKER (SE)**

**Tuesday, June 12**
- **WILLY MUNDO (SE)**
- **SHILOH (SE)**
- **KIMBERLY ALEXANDER (SE)**

**Wednesday, June 13**
- **BROOKLYN BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **BIG BROTHER (SE)**
- **SUSIE GLAYZE (SE)**

**Thursday, June 14**
- **BIG BROTHER (SE)**
- **RODERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE (SE)**
- **FATHER'S DAY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (SE)**

**Friday, June 15**
- **FRANKIE FISHER (SE)**
- **ZOE BARNES (SE)**
- **JASON MILLER (SE)**

**Saturday, June 16**
- **FATHER'S DAY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JACK SMITH (SE)**
- **SHILOH (SE)**

**Sunday, June 17**
- **BROOKLYN BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **DOUG IRELAND (SE)**
- **CRAIG RUSSELL (SE)**

**Monday, June 18**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**
- **CELTIC WOMAN (SE)**
- **ANNIE EARL (SE)**

**Tuesday, June 19**
- **BROOKLYN BLUEGRASS (SE)**
- **JERRY DOUGLAS (SE)**
- **SCOTTISH (OGD)**

**Wednesday, June 20**
- **BROOKLYN BLUEGRASS (SE)**
- **JERRY DOUGLAS (SE)**
- **SCOTTISH (OGD)**

**Thursday, June 21**
- **BROOKLYN BLUEGRASS (SE)**
- **JERRY DOUGLAS (SE)**
- **SCOTTISH (OGD)**

**Friday, June 22**
- **SAM HINTON FOLK CELEBRATION (SE)**
- **A LABYRINTH IN THE GARDEN (SE)**
- **HOMETOWN JAMBOREE (SE)**

**Saturday, June 23**
- **SAM HINTON FOLK CELEBRATION (SE)**
- **A LABYRINTH IN THE GARDEN (SE)**
- **HOMETOWN JAMBOREE (SE)**

**Sunday, June 24**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**

**Monday, June 25**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**

**Tuesday, June 26**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**

**Wednesday, June 27**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**

**Thursday, June 28**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**

**Friday, June 29**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**

**Saturday, June 30**
- **FARMER'S MARKET FOLK MUSIC & STORYTELLING (SE)**
- **LONG BEACH MUSICAL FESTIVAL (SE)**
- **JIMMY LEE (SE)**
OLD-TIME ORACLE

THE BANJO TATTOO, DAN GELLERT’S Mojo Alchemy OR AN INTRODUCTION TO MUSICAL HOMOGENY AND MEDIOCRITY IN OLD-TIME MUSIC

By David Bragger

One may recall the story from last issue about my meeting with traditional tattoo master-banjoist Scott Harrison. Since that article, I’ve revisited him in Portland, OR to complete the tattoo he started in December 2006. It was the most pain-ful banjo experience of my life. He gave me a vintage style rose with a fretless minstrel banjo cradled within its petals. In fact, banjos were quite the theme of the day. I randomly met three clawhammer banjo players just hours before arriving at Atlas Tattoo. Portland certainly lives up to its repu-tation as an old-time music hub!

As Scott machined the ink into my inner arm, we discussed banjos and tattoo classifications among other things. He noted that the categories used to classify tattoos are very limiting these days. It’s true. Most tattoo converts feel compelled to get some “meaningful” tattoo which then must

fall into one of a small handful of genres (Japanese, black and gray, neo-traditional, bio-mechanical, etc.). In a moment of glorious insight he men-tioned that clients never get a design simply because it’s cool or has “soul.” What a brilliant observation. I started to think about old-time music.

The Skillet Lickers had soul. Wade Ward and Louie Blue sure did. Why do so little of today’s traditional artists achieve some of that mountain soul and old-time plantation funk that we hear grooved into those old 78s and field recordings? It’s not an easy question to ponder. Many mod-ern string band recordings seem to recreate festival jam sessions that the musicians may find trance-like and/or nostalgic. Some try to replicate their favorite Kentucky or West Virginia chestnuts on CDs dedicated to only one sub-genre of old-time music (ex. instrumental fiddle tunes). Many of these old-time recordings just sound like friends jamming in a kitchen (one of my fa-vorite activities, I might add). Possibly, old-time soul or “Mojo” is a gene-tic gift given to very few people and found on even fewer recordings. In 2004, however, I was lucky to find some.

Three summers ago during an epic road trip of fiddle tune collecting, visits with old masters, and long nights of old-time festival revelry, I left the Clifftop Appalachian String Band Festival with a stack of CDs. About half of them were old recordings of deceased traditional music-makers and the others were newer items by contemporary string bands and traditional artists. I always support the new but I usually end up listening to the old. Each year I find myself confronted with more and more of these indepen-dently produced old-time CDs. Although I’d listen to many of them before modern radio, they usually fall flat and wind up collecting dust behind my ceramic tiki mug collection. There are too many available recordings of the same trendy fiddle tunes with that homogenized festival sound that I men-tioned before. If there is noteworthy musicianship, it’s usually masked by hokey, poorly recorded, and unneces-sary bass playing. It seems that modern bands pander to a modern pop radio palette by adding the superfluous bass to their wall of sound. If one of these groups thought of leaving it out or included bowed bass or cello like the East Texas Serenaders, they might be on to something. I hope they’re tak-ing notes. But let’s move on to the heart of the matter...

In my opinion, the finest modern old-time recording is Waitin’ on the Break of Day: Old Time Music on Fretless Banjo and Fiddle by Dan Gellert. For most old-time aficionados, I’m just preaching to the choir. They can stop reading now. But for those of you that are new to the old-time genre, I will tell you what I tell my fiddle and banjo students: This CD delivers old school Mojo. Very few artists and rec-ordings today can pull this off. Like the shamanic witch doc-tor, Gellert weaves together a spell using the ingredients and incantations passed down to him from old. Unlike the tribal charlatan however, Gellert harnesses a real dimension of time and space and produces wonderful results with his fretless musical wands. He also adds quite a few flourishes of his own in the form of booty shaking syn-copation with his horsehair stick and beatskin thumb. I will not give you a play by play review. Listen to the CD. If track 1 Eph Got a Coon doesn’t seduce you with its very cool funk, then exchange the CD for a Bela Fleck or Dick Van Patten spoken word album. I’m sure you’d love them.

Gellert sounds like a resurrected musician who would have been re-cording in the 1920s and 1930s. He doesn’t sound like a modern interpret-er of a great master, but like one of the gods from the old-time pantheon of mountain string players that never

was. His style is entirely rooted in the tradition yet transcendent. Like the legendary fiddlers and banjoists of old, he takes things to a level beyond his contemporaries. He effortlessly embodies the vintage stylings of old-time source material while translating them with a type of musical invention that should remain wordless. In short, he is doing what Dock Boggs, Edden Hammons, Howard Armstrong, and Rufus Kasey were doing. He’s play-ing with serious Mojo, groove, and soul.

David Bragger is a Los Angeles-based instructor and player of old time fid-dle and banjo music. He also photo-graphs, films, and collects the lore of traditional artists, from puppeteers in Myanmar to fiddlers of Appalachia. www.myspace.com/davidbragger
wo-he-lo breathes of work, health and love

The promise of our deep desire
Calling from a million campfires gleaming
The pledges form a single cry.

IN A PERSIAN MARKET
— Camp Nawakwa lyrics

There were also honors to be earned for arts and crafts, but while other eight year olds were making lanyards, my friend Pepper and I would sneak off to the brook in back of the Chinas, that flowed to the lake. We wore our big rubber boots and pretended we were explorers. We were not very good at making connections, so we never connected the Chinas with the stuff that sometimes flowed out of several big pipes, into the brook. One day a counselor caught us wading in Lake Urine, and put an end to the only fun we ever had during activity period.

We sang songs at the Sunday campfire...Nawakwa songs to semi-religious tunes and symphonies. To this day I cannot hear the Largo from the New World Symphony without being transported to the shores of Lake Michigan. Na-Wa-Kwa, Na-Wa-Kwa. You're the camp I love.

I just went through some of my songbooks, Popular Songs from the Twenties and Thirties and Sound 43 Camp Nawakwa Songs. I am planning a house concert in the very near future, to which all are invited: Concentration Camp Classics with Uncle Ruthie. No admission will be charged. In fact, I will probably pay you to attend.

Lonesome, and sorry, because I came to camp Lonesome, and sorry, I've cried my hankie damp, Mama, I miss you—your baby wants to kiss you.

I'm so lonesome, and sorry, Please take me right home!

Uncle Ruthie is the producer and host of HALFWAY DOWN THE STAIRS, heard every Saturday morning at 8:00am on KFFP Radio, 90.7FM. She also teaches music at The Blind Children's Center in Los Angeles. Ruthie does concerts for children, families and adults, as well as teacher workshops. She teaches beginning piano, and especially welcomes students with special needs. She can be reached at 310-838-8153, or at uncleruthie@aol.com.
O

e one night in January, when
the houses were still deco-
rated for Christmas and rain-
drops made little halos around the col-
ored lights, I went to Tom McGrath’s house for a Celtic Folk Fest committee
meeting. It was a nice little house, one
you could be on a Christmas card: a peaked, shingled roof, a huge, well-lit
tree beaming through diamond-painted windows, and a sumptuous wreath on
the door. The owner, the emcee from last year’s Celtic fest, met us at the
door like the lord of the manor, an im-
posing man whose presence somehow
made the charming little house seem
much grander than it had a moment before.

We were seated graciously through the living room, past a stone
fireplace laid with an amble fire, to a
table in the dining room. It was a large room with a desk in the corner topped
by a bookshelf. I missed the introduc-
tions as I scanned book titles. There
were dictionaries, phone books, and
a thesaurus. But mostly there were sections
— history, place names, family names,
genealogy, music, and costumes.

What really caught my interest, though, was a row of bird books — field guides, life
histories, and several on falconry. I
wondered if he had ever hunted with a
hawk or seen the birds? And if he’d seen my favorite new book on how to identify hawks too far away to see.

The chairperson gently guided
me back to the group purpose, which
was to finalize the concert program.
I wasn’t sure why I was there but I lis-
tened with mild interest. I peeked up
when they started discussing how the
bagpipe should make his entrance:
“From the wings of the stage! From the
tickets, not the details of the group
order and timing only lulled my aware-
ness of the real world. My mind
was on fine battles and triumphs
and disasters. Finally the meeting was of-
fered officially.

“Do you play the pipes?” I asked Tom.

“No,” he said regretfully (I think),
“but I play the bodhran. Would you like
to see mine? I just finished it last
week.” I did, of course, so he brought
it out and proudly showed me how
the shadows in the grain of the deerskin
looked like mountain peaks backlit
by the sun. Everything about the man
spoke of craftsmanship, elegance, and
love of beauty. I turned the drum over,
loving to see the craftsmanship on the
carved of the finest Oregon myrtle-
wood, possibly even incised with the
Celtic knots here and there. This was the
man to do it that way, I thought
admiringly.

But what met my softly expectant
eyes was as terrifying in its way as the
skirl of the bagpipe. From the back-
side, it looked as though the deerskin
didn’t stop at the edge of the drum as
they usually do, but continued around
to the back, where it was shreded
into a few gory-looking strings lashed
together to form a handle. It looked as
though it were still wet. My mind had
been on fierce, brutal, ancient battles
and what it saw, whether it was like
that or not, was a fresh skin torn, bare-
handed, off an adversary, wrapped
around the precious drum, and tied
with bits of sinew and viscera.

All I’d had to drink was a glass of
water. I often doze during meetings
and, dozing, I often dream. Could I have still been dreaming when I
looked at it? I wondered. I called him
a couple of days later and asked how
many crosstreeves he had on the back,
tree beaming through diamond-paned
windows, and a sumptuous wreath on
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water. I often doze during meetings
and, dozing, I often dream. Could I have still been dreaming when I
looked at it? I wondered. I called him
a couple of days later and asked how
many crosstreeves he had on the back,
and surrounded by makeshift props which give a wink and an elbow of embellishment to whatever theme they are imbedded in. No matter how ragged or crude the performance, the music stays up front and engaging.

It’s an excuse to have a good time for what is really a madcap romp through vaudeville, burlesque, and the ultimate in surreal speakeasy, a squat in the parlor room and always a Keystone-Kop-run down time.

Occasionally seen with another local perpetrator of retro romance, Janet Klein, both David and John change hats and props and play up a plethora of other plucky performing posses. David is involved with the Barleycorns, duets with Parlor Boy, Brad Kay, and the local stringed instrument guru, David Lindley?

Before interviewing David Barlia I got the lowdown on John Reynolds and the rich musical history he carries with him. As the grandson of sif film star, ZaSu Pitts, there is old fashioned show biz blood that runs through his veins. There’s some soul in the music he plays, “old pop music” or early “Betsy Boop.” John admits, “I inherited my grandmother’s taste for old songs.”

Add to this the family musical heritage (a father and grandmother who both played the “bones” and the time spent in his grandfather’s historic 1920s Paul Williams designed house, and what else would a young kid do back in 1964 but pick up the 5-string banjo and get lessons from local stringed instrument guru, David Lindley?

In the following years, he switched over to the 4-string version, eventually playing banjo at Disneyland during his college years. Picking up the guitar, he took lessons from the great G. M. Smith, guitarist for the Paramount Studio Orchestra. Later, he wound up playing with the local Mood Indigo trio, which was another group he opened for the Smothers Brothers, learning the ropes of the music and show biz world. Other gigs have been with Dean Keplat at the Ritz dance band and with the Coen Brothers, whose work I also find so interesting. John swears that Hell is full of band leaders. I think this was such an “Age of Innocence” but it was certainly a simpler time—and I do believe everybody wants life to be simpler, really.

Do you look at the interest in old time music as an aspect of nostalgia for more innocent times, or is it just a “cool music” that needs to be played and preserved?

David: Uh, yes. Both. A lot of it is timeless and very warm. I think there’s a joyful warmth in it. You’re walking in a lot of today’s music.

JOEL: As a relatively recent player in this kind of music, does it bother you that there’s an endless supply of old songs waiting to be discovered and arranged?

DAVID: You know, I don’t listen to much of anything outside of this period anymore. When I was younger, I was much more self-taught. Now I think about everything as a failed experiment. I sometimes wish I had that. But you can’t really edit your work.

JOEL: What started your interest in music?

David: I remember as a kid, I would pick up the cigar box ukulele. What was the response to the slide ukulele?

David: Actually, I play one instrument: Ukulele. I have several ukeles, naturally, including a banjo-ukulele and a cigar-box uke, which I made myself with a kit (available from www.papaboxes.com). I love that I can trade off ukuleles, play with the exact same fingerings and produce similar results. My main instrument is a Resonator Ukulele made by Johnson—an excellent instrument.

As a bit of a joke, really, I tried out playing that guitar instrument—which actually worked amazingly well, though I made it sound more like a banjo—while you get that cigar box uke? What’s been the response to the slide ukulele?

JOEL: What is it about the early decades of the 20th century that you find interesting?

David: I’ve always found the music of the 1910s to the 1930s to be some of the most fun and inspiring. As a kid, I remember immediately being rapt with excitement over the playful complexities of ragtime. But I’ve always been attracted to it for some reason—the clothing styles, the movies.

On film, we have some of the greatest examples of comedy in all of Western history. John, in addition to his expert banjo and accordion, is a film maker leading me in that direction. That film did for bluegrass—David: I would like very much to see our Moon Show to the west side, somewhere in the Santa Monica area. I’m just mad about the idea of taking our Moon Show to the east side, somewhere in the Santa Monica area. We really need to get a CD put together—which will certainly help sell us to places further from home. We have got lots of friends on MySpace all over the world! Heh-heh, well, who doesn’t?

JOEL: What is it about the early 20th century that you investigated the interest level of the music in other parts of the country?

David: I would like very much to see our Moon Show travel further, to places closer to the west coast. I think you have investigated the interest level of the music in other parts of the country?

JOEL: I think you have. Well, I’m just mad about the idea of taking our Moon Show to the east side, somewhere in the Santa Monica area. We really need to get a CD put together—which will certainly help sell us to places further from home. We have got lots of friends on MySpace all over the world! Heh-heh, well, who doesn’t?

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On film, we have some of the greatest examples of comedy in all of Western history.
I love to get things in the mail that are actually For Me— not just sent to me because I live at my address. What’s even better is when the mail does not consist solely of bills and notices from school. I am a Person of Many Hobbies, and currently I’m engaged in swapping things through the mail. This means that not entirely random but certainly intriguingly unknown items arrive at intervals in my mailbox. Currently I am involved in the free exchange of teabags, magazine articles, homemade envelopes, “cute socks,” items from India, creative writing prompts (in the form of a fortune-cookie fortune and an evocative photo image), a small soft handmade toy, and a few others. Since it is contained in the swapping ethos to amuse and entertain the swapper at the other end, it’s a good workout for creativity and generosity muscles.

One swap consisted of one item to each of five partners. The categories were: a. Orange b. Sweet c. Cosmic d. Whimsical e. Odd. I challenged myself to send out items that contained at least 2 of these qualities at once. Most recently I joined a swap where the participants create a brochure, postcard and souvenir to promote a vacation is some other avenue to exchange ideas with the participants, and then send the cards to their swap-mates.

Many of these exchanges are open to swappers from around the world, so patience is required when an envelope is wending its way from Europe or New Zealand. I generally make it a practice to send any flat items in envelopes that I create out of old calendars or magazine pages, just because it’s fun and gratifying for those at both ends. As an inveterate Connector (I was a pen-pal enthusiast as a young thing, and an Internet communicator since Back in the Day, when I had to go use the UCSB Physics Dept. computers in the dead of night to send communiques to my honey at the South Pole), this offers me yet another avenue to exchange ideas with other like-minded folks. Swap-Bot has a rating method that allows those who are just in it to receive and not to exchange to be identified and dis-included after too many unexplained unratings ( Swap-Bot now requires a minimum of 3 ratings before one is to go off and be “inspired by Yogi Tea”...

“Success is when you make your personality infinite. From ‘I am happy,’ ‘I make everyone happy;’ ‘I am satisfied,’ ‘make everyone satisfied;’ ‘I am healthy,’ ‘make everyone healthy;

‘I am spiritual,’ ‘make everyone spiritual.’

CAFAM is hosting an exhibition called “Dreaming in Color: Aboriginal Art from Balgo” (Balgo is located in Western Australia between the Tanami and the Great Sandy Deserts.) It is on loan from the Kluge-Rohe Aboriginal Art Collection, University of Virginia, (augmented by objects from the Felton Foundation of Santa Monica) from April 29th to Aug. 12th. It will be the first time that an exhibition of Australian Aboriginal art has been mounted in a Southern Californian museum. There will be a lecture Sunday May 6th at 3:00pm at the CAFAM on Aboriginal Australian Art by historians Kerry Smallwood and Richard Kelton.

There will be roughly thirty-five of the colorful, rich in surface pattern, visually active and also meaningful contemporary acrylic paintings by members of the Kutajta, Ngarti and Walmajarri peoples from Balgo on display. The Dreaming referred to in the show’s title is a complex and all-encompassing Australian Aboriginal worldview concept which I will briefly put forth here: As I understand it, Dreamings are eternally present ancestral beings (and their actions) that move and shape Everything. The Dreaming is also at the foundations of laws and ritual, the totemic entities, the living lands themselves. As one lives on through those who have inherited the right and responsibility to preserving their memory and perpetuation. Western Desert acrylic paintings characteristically contain forms and content of iconography and designs traditionally used in rock and body and ground paintings, but only the ones that are OK for outsider viewing. This show will be organized around the categories of Women’s Law (women’s rituals and images inspired by women’s body paint designs), Men’s Law (stories of Tingari and Watiwitjara ancestors), My Country (their place of conception or birth) and Formalites of Landscape (tales of how ancestral beings created the earth’s forms). A selection of anthropological items from the people of the region will be displayed along with the contemporary paintings.

There will be a lecture on Aborigi- nal Art by historians Kerry Smallwood and Richard Kelton at the Craft and Folk Art Museum on Sunday, May 6 at 3pm.

CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM
5814 Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90036
323-937-4230 www.cafam.org

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 11am – 5pm, Thursday 11am – 7pm and Saturday and Sunday 12 – 6pm
Admission: General $5.00; Students and Seniors: $3.00; CAFAM Members and children under 12 Free; 1st Wednesday of month Free.

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

BOOK REVIEWS

FAKING IT: THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY IN POPULAR MUSIC
BY HUGH BARKER AND YUVAL TAYLOR

The NY Times Book Review two weeks ago wrote about a new book called Faking It: The Quest For Authenticity in Popular Music (Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor).

I am about halfway through, and want to suggest it as a must read because it has a fascinating focus on the roots of folk music in the South (using John Hurt as an example) and the difficulty in defining folk music, etc. It is a fairly easy read and I think you will be very happy that you purchased or borrowed this book.

Newman, DeCoster & Co.

Dancing in the Streets
BY BARBARA EHRENREICH

I have to tell you about this book I am just finishing called Dancing in the Streets by Barbara Ehrenreich. It is brand new but you can order it from the library. From a fascinating anthropological standpoint she explains how, starting in the neolithic, people have had circle and line dancing and how important it is to humans—something we have evolved with.

And what happens when people are not allowed to have such gatherings, over our history up to the present day. I know none of US have to be convinced of any of this, but this book gives a whole slant that is new, and things to say to people who don’t understand what’s so good about participating in gatherings such as ours.

Amazingly, she doesn’t seem to even know about modern Balkan dance or modern Balkan dance. What a shame...
What’s the definition of an optimist? A folk musician with a mortgage.  

What’s the difference between a musician and a savvie bond?  

Once again the Grammy Awards have come and gone, and if you blinked at the wrong moment you may have missed hearing about the awards in categories like Folk, World, and other genres that are of interest to FolkWorks readers. So, here is a summary.

Traditional Folk Album: We Shall Overcome – The Seeger Sessions, Bruce Springsteen  

Contemporary Folk / Americana Album: Modern Times, Bob Dylan

Contemporary World Music Album: Wonder Wheel, The Klezmatics  

And, rather than to list all of the categories separately, it is easier to say that the Dixie Chicks won in just about every category they were nominated in, including Best Country Album, Record of the Year, Album of the Year, and Song of the Year. If I may be permitted to don my activist hat for a moment, may I just say “Hooray for female calling in America!”

An anthropologist decides to investigate the natives of a far-flung tropical island. He flew there, found a guide with a canoe to take him up the river to the remote site where he would make his collections.

About noon on the second day of travel up the river they began to hear drums. Being a city boy by nature, the anthropologist was disturbed by this. He asked the guide, “What are those drums?”

The guide turned to him and said “Drums OK, but VERY BAD when they stop.”

Then, after hours, the drums suddenly stopped! This hit the anthropologist like a ton of bricks, and he yelled at the guide: “The Drums have stopped! This hit the anthropologist like a ton of bricks, and he yelled at the guide: “The Drums have stopped! I won’t play a country-western song backward!”

A: Your wife comes back, your dog comes back to life, and you get out of prison.

Want to hear a great live performance of classical, symphonic music without spending a dime for admission? Here’s a wonderful idea: “The Power of Music” Musical Instrument Donation Project is a collaboration between The Pasadena Symphony, Charter Communications, Fidelity Bank and the Pasadena Educational Foundation to raise awareness for the need of musical instruments in Pasadena Schools.

If you have a new or used musical instrument gathering dust in a closet, why not donate it to our school, so they use it or renovate it for our young, future musicians? Bring any instrument to one of the upcoming concerts of The Pasadena Symphony and you will get two free tickets to that concert!

For information, visit the orchestra’s web site at www.pasadenasymphony.org/main.htm

(Ed note: Perhaps donate old banjos, harmonicas, wash tub basses, etc. Maybe they’d get the point, do ya think?)

“Music is a friend of labor for it lightens the task by refreshing the nerves and spirit of the worker.”

—William Green
The greatest American song-writer of the 1960s met the greatest American songwriter of the 1930s when he was a tousle-haired 20-year-old kid from Hibbing, Minnesota who still, in Joan Baez’s words, had his baby fat. Woody Guthrie, in Dylan’s words, was a Woody Guthrie jukebox,” as Dylan would later describe himself at that age, would have been seen as a Woody Guthrie jukebox. The two original songs on his first, eponymous album, reflect the master’s words and music. But remove those lyrics, and the tune cannot stand by itself as a strictly instrumental piece. Did Woody tell Bob how important it was to come up with a good hook for a song—both melodic and lyrical? Did he pass on the wisdom he had adapted from the French Impressionists: All you can write is what you see? Did he tell that to a young Pete Seeger? None of the above. Did he tell Bob that there is a moment to remember. There is more to a harmonica than to a harmonica to a harmonica to a harmonica. The piano played a slow funeral tune. And the town was lit up by a cold Christmas moon. The parents, they cried and the miners they moaned, “What you’re greed for money has don.”

Dylan’s answer was utterly self-effacing and brutally self-revealing at the same time—simply reflects the opening of this song: Darkness at the break of noon/shadows even the silver spoon/the handmade blade, the child’s balloon/egret beads both rare and moon/to understand you know too soon/there’s no sense in trying. Then there’s the opening of this song: Darkness at the break of noon/shadows even the silver spoon/the handmade blade, the child’s balloon/egret beads both rare and moon/to understand you know too soon/there’s no sense in trying.

All you can write is what you see? Did he say anything about point of view? No, no, no. Did he offer Dylan a Chakovsky’s advice that if you see a rifle on the wall in the first act of a play, it better go off by the last act—either get rid of it or have someone shoot it? Then he added that he was able to do other things to compensate for the loss of his lyrical ability, like write music. For an artist who could be notoriously off-putting and even insulting to inquisitive journalists, he had always looked at Bradley man to man, as he said, “You try to write something like that—it was pure magic—I don’t know how I did it once and I can’t do it anymore. If I could, I would.”

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Since the first Topanga Fiddle Contest in 1961, numerous bluegrass, folk and old-time musicians have graced its stages, including Jackson Browne, Dave Lindley, Tal Malmgren, John Hartford, Byron Berline, Dan Craney, Frank Hamilton, Eric Darling, John Hickman, Stuart Duncan, Pat Salazar, Pat Cloud, Larry McNeely, Bill Knopf, Howard Yearwood, Tom Sauber and many more. Others who got their start as contestants became musical heavyweights. This year on Sunday, May 20th, the Topanga Festival will again present some of the finest bluegrass, old-time and folk musicians ever as Topanga BANJO, FIDDLE & MANDOLIN against a backdrop of the West's most creative and heartfelt sing and instrumental performers. Peter Feldmann has been a prominent bluegrass artist of the Santa Barbara area for decades. Tom Carlton has a great sense of finesse, blending several bluegrass, old-time and Western contest fiddle styles. David West is known as one of the founding members of the Cache Valley Drifters, and currently resides in Ireland between Ireland and Appalachia. A classically trained violinist, John Weed has brought his mastery of other instruments to tour professionally with his bluegrass band Cache and card. The Appalachian Fiddle Contest and Festival in Southern California. Playing the Main Stage, it's all-out, unadulterated bluegrass with PETER FEY, ANDREW JACQUES & THE LONE SOME BOYS, which always includes high energy, creative arrangements and heartfelt singing. Peter Feldmann has been an influential fiddle player in the Nanticoke Native American Crossover Fiddles. In the words of a fellow fiddler, Richard Greene, “one of the most innovative fiddlers of all time.” Growing up in Los Angeles, Richard was the winner of the first Topanga Contest back in 1961. A few years later, he turned professional, joining Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys. Several of his releases in the folk and bluegrass genre have been honored with Grammy and IBMA awards and his solo CD Songs of Tom Paxton, was released in 2006. A few years later, he dabbled in classical music until he dabbled in classical music until he received rave reviews, a #1 spot on the F.A.R. Alternative Country Chart, and KCSN 88.5FM and around the world.
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220 Yale Ave, Claremont, (909) 624.2928 or www.claremontfolkfestival.org
continued from page 22
plays ukulele—and can nearly the same sound as Benny Nawahi, since
like Nawahi, he’s still got those finger picks on as he plays the uke. In Japan, there
are The Sweet Hollywaiians, with whom I had the pleasure of meeting and
playing a guest appearance with when they visited a few months ago. Superb
group, again with a great slide guitar player. I think at some point, acoustic
slide guitar is going to have to be my next instrument… Or maybe I should
work up that slide uke! Heh-heh.

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quently at the Steve Allen Theatre
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DAVID BARLIA - Resonator Uku-
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The Bilgewater Brothers influences are:
- Eddie Peabody, Cliff Edwards
(a.k.a. “Ukelele Ike”), Nick Lucas,
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Dixie Jug Blowers, Philips’
Louisville Jug Band, Django Reinhardt,
Eddie Lang, Whispering Jack Smith
See where the Bilgewater Bro-
thers are playing at www.bilertuise.com
which has links to their Myspace
home and other related sites.

Joel Okida is a struggling artist, strag-
gling writer, and struggling musician.
It occurs to him that life is all about the
struggle. Fortunately, he did not take
up acting. However, he’s not half-bad as
a zydeco dancer and the ability to
make a mean gumbo and lovely walnut
tarts has gotten him by.

continued from page 25

Ross has no thanks for his note, Ross.

For clarity, my statement re Mr. Manilow was mainly an expression of my
wholehearted agreement. I didn’t think you would actually send it to him nor
did I believe you would be encouraged to do so in response to my suggestion.
However, I doubt that it would hurt his feelings, as you suggest. Anyone at his
level would have had to endure a lot of “boos” along the way; indeed, that’s
what helped him rise to the top. And he probably has a few feelings of his own
about his promoters’ overzealous efforts to sell records.

Paul Anka once told a story about how the Las Vegas Hotel/Casino where he
was appearing had said to him “you’ve made the words “Las Vegas Super Star”
off the marquee and he made them take it down. He said simply, “Paul Anka is
equipped,” “I’ve always admired him for that. I would like to think that Manilow
is that kind of guy.

Rest, Jill

Afterthought by Ross Altman

Tom Fair will get no argument from me on his choice of songs. However,
I did my best to make clear in my original column that I was not making a
case for a one particular set of 12 songs as the “Great Songs of the Sixties.”
I gave my list as a personal selection knowing full well that each reader could
make up their own list of favorites. What I was making a case for was the
principle of selection—the kinds of songs being chosen. I am happy to see
that Tom’s list indicates a complete accord with the larger point I was
making—each of his songs reflects the same sense of historical connection
to events that inspired them and defined the decade, and are thus a part of the
documentary nature of the time.

As to Tom’s larger point—that it is foolish to compile such lists of “the
greatest,” and we should settle for “great,” I couldn’t agree more and it
reminds me to recommend a book I forgot to mention at the time—Milt Okun’s

With regard to Mike Perlowin’s argument about my tendency to slight
the purely musical value of the songs I chose in favor of the lyrical content,
again, I couldn’t agree more. If Manilow’s album had been called The Great-
est Vocalist (or for that matter—Musical) of the Sixties I would not have picked up my pen.
But it wasn’t, and a song is both words and music. I am sympathetic to Mike’s
point, however, for there are any number of songs whose sentiments and ideas
I agree with yet cannot sing because I am not moved by the music or the way
the ideas are expressed. Underlying that, I suppose, is the ultimate mystery of
what makes a great song—not only must they meet Coleridge’s definition of
poetry—“the best words in the best order”—they must also meet the standard
of the best notes in the best order. So I want to thank Mike for calling that issue
to my attention, and our readers’ as well.

My exchange of emails with Jill Fenimore speaks for itself. I want to thank
er for her very kind and appreciative anecdote about Paul Anka, and for the deft
manner that even in sin city, we may find moments of grace.

In closing, I wish Barry Manilow all the Best. Who knows, maybe one day
he’ll record a Bob Dylan song, and I’ll eat my column.

Author’s postscript: Tom Fair is a musician with a web site at www.
myspace.com/tomfair; Mike Perlowin is a professional steel guitar player
with a web site at www.mikeperlowin.com; Jill Fenimore is a fellow member of
The Santa Monica Traditional Folk Music Club. My thanks to all of them
for permission to use their provocative letters in this column. You may reach
Ross Altman at greygoosemusic@aol.com.

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Cunis, Up at the Crack of Noon
John Doyle, Wayward Son
Extreme Klezmer Makeover, Under Construction
Kris Delmhorst, Peter Mulvey, Jeff Forcalt, Redbud
Lila Downs, One Blood
John Gorka, Flying in the Margine
Ashley Mahler, Flying Over Bridges
Pat McSwney, A Pint of Stout
Pat McSwney, The Hop Blossom
Bruce Molsky, Soon Be Time
Old Mother Logo, Branching Out
Kristina Olsen, The Truth of a Woman
Masanga Marimba Ensemble, Masanga Marimba Ensemble

VERETKO PASS, Traditional East European Yiddish Music
Dennis Roger Reed, Cowboy Blues
Dennis Roger Reed, Little King of Dreams
Round the House, ’til the wee hours
Round the House, Keep This Coupon
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Classic Radio Songs
Moiha Smiley & VOOC, blink
James Lee Stanley
Ripe for Distraction
Christ Stuart & Backcountry, Mojave River
Syncopaths, Rough Around the Edges
Teada, Give Us a Penny and Let Us Be Gone
Abigail Washburn, Song of the Traveling Daughter
Wicked Tinkers, Banger for Breakfast
Wicked Tinkers, Whiskey Supper
Yavul Ron Ensemble, Tree of Life
Yavul Ron Ensemble, Under the Olive Tree

A MEMORIAL
For Bob Westbrook, a member of the Santa Monica Traditional Folk Music Club, will be held on Sunday, May 6th at 3:00 PM at the Friend Meeting Hall, 1440 Harwood Street, Santa Monica.
Host: Ross Altman
A full tribute will appear in FolkWorks July/Aug issue.

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SPECIAL EVENTS
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Boulevard Music
Featuring JERRY DOUGLAS plus TONY RICE
Presented by the Music Circle
Skirball Café Z
Coffee Gallery Backstage

SUNDAY JUNE 17
8:00pm HIGH HILLS BLUEGRASS BAND $15
7:00pm SLIGO RAGS [www.sligorags.com] $18
369-361-2855
6:30pm BERNIE PEARL [www.berniepearl.com]
* KATE WOLF MEMORIAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
Alta Coffee

SATURDAY JUNE 23
8:00pm SARA PETITE [sarapetite.com] $10
9:00pm GREGORY PAGE [www.gregorypage.com]
8:00pm JOHN CRUZ [www.johncruz.com] $10/$12 DOS

SATURDAY JUNE 30
6:30pm & 8:30pm PRINCE DIABATE [www.princediabate.com]
MAY - JUNE 2007

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