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Photo : Jeff Bizsell

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer **– The Drum Hat Buddha Interview**

**Kerrville-kompacts,
kassettes & other
koincidences.**

Kwik Kommentare

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Keith Greeninger and Water "Back To You" no label

When I reviewed Keith's 1997 solo debut, "**Wind River Crossing**," I mentioned being blown away by his music and band, circa '99, when I saw them play at the main Kerrville Festival. At last the wait is over, and we've got a new tome from Greeninger – and it's another keeper. There's ten chapter's to this work – eleven actually, counting *the amusing hidden cut*, "Tumbleweed." The opening, gentle burning blues "Waiting For The Rain," a prayer for some heaven sent respite, is a collaboration with fellow Californian scribes, Michael McNevin and Rob Laurens. There's a cover of Bobby Fuller's "Rag Dog" and a rendition of "River Bank" by N. Leeman. The rest, as they say, is pure refined Greeninger. As for the support players, Jim Norris' back-beat is the principle carry over from "**Wind River Crossing**." The trio Water, consisting of Dayan Kai, Art Alm and Steve Uccello, performed with Keith on the atmospheric West Texas night I mentioned earlier. Dayan probably wouldn't appreciate me mentioning that he is not sighted. In possession of a stringed or a wind instrument, he is a gifted genius. And there's no forgetting his duet with Greeninger on "They Say Time." There's a soulful intensity to Keith's delivery permeating this collection. And then there's that unwavering element of belief that Greeninger instils into every song he performs, that tug at the listener's heartstrings and bring a lump to the throat. Currently, the tunes being replayed regularly are "Blue Flame" and the album title track. What more needs to be said. Oh yes, you should know how much you *need* this disc in your life.....I'd peg that *need* as, essential. Available on the net via www.keithgreeninger.com

Lucy Kaplansky "**Every Single Day**" Red House

Accept it, after a quartet of discs, as much as Lucy and her hubby, Rick Litvin, have established an enviable track record by repeatedly turning out quality material, we are never going to get a whole album consisting of only their tunes. Kaplansky's incurable addiction is, and remains, the covering of songs by other scribes and poets. As much as she is a writer and performer, Lucy is a fan. She is also a member of that rare breed, who take a song by another composer and [in performance] make it entirely their own. Sic, track two here - the Celt, Paul Brady, is one of Lucy's long established, favourite composers. Supported by the dual electric guitars of Larry Campbell and Duke Levine, Brady's "Crazy Dreams" is a grab you by scruff of the neck *tour de force* that explores the distress and confusion that ensues when a once white hot passionate affair dims with each passing day. "The Angels Rejoiced Last Night," a forty year old number penned by the Louvin Brothers, is a regular feature of Kaplansky concerts, while Steve Earle's "You're Still Standing There" closed his 1996 *comeback* album "**I Feel Alright**." The quartet of covers in this collection is completed by the title track of Julie Miller's 1999 solo album. For me, "Broken Things" was the only decent song on an otherwise lacklustre Miller collection. On her rendition, Kaplansky is joined on backing vocals by the estimable, Jennifer Kimball. The one from Boston.

On her December 2000 UK tour, Kaplansky premiered a number of new, or partly completed, Rick n' Lucy tunes. "Written On The Back Of His Hand," which opens this disc being one of them. From a state of innocence and purity at birth, the dawning of each new day brings the opportunity for each of us to learn something new about our universe. The foregoing hopefully explains the concept of what is one of the finest lyrics this New York based couple has fashioned [to date]. What's more, I pray that the closing "*one true word's gonna beat a pack of lies*" is a principle that mankind never loses sight of. The declining career of a performer who was once "*back lit from inside*" is analysed by the narrator in "Every Single Day." Buddy Miller supplies the backing vocal on the upbeat *let's not pull any punches, because I love you* song "Don't Mind Me," while John Gorka carries out the same duty on the Earle contribution I mentioned earlier, plus the hauntingly honest recollection "Song For Molly." The latter song, featuring the telling line "*It's a dirty trick this growing old*," is a paean to Lucy's maternal grandmother. Just suspended your disbelief for a moment, and picture this - Lucy, age thirteen, and her mother are paying a visit to her grandmother who is hospitalised. Her recollection of the building is so stark, you can almost taste the antiseptic. Alas [for the two visitors] Molly's mind is in some other place. Years later, Lucy's mother shows her a ring and adds the words "*this was Molly's, it was her mother's ring, I'm keeping it for you, As she kept it for me*." The fact that, to this day, Lucy does not recall being a treasured grand-daughter, adds further irony and poignancy to the repeated closing line "*This is what I remember*." I guess the conclusion is – in this life, we should make every moment count. While long time Kaplansky fans would probably chose the sassy "Ten Year Night," as her finest song, there is a thoughtful maturity to "Song For Molly" which, in my opinion, places it in a league of its own. And finally there's the slightly more *down to earth* trio of songs - "Guilty As Sin," "Nowhere" and "No More Lies." Cheating songs are a much explored genre and "Guilty As Sin" is, at least, a neat pop/rock addition, while an undercurrent of bitterness permeates the narrators words in "Nowhere." Finally, the martial beat of "No More Lies" tells of a cheating husband who has received his deserved comeuppance. While I might appear less enthusiastic about the latter tunes, I would contend that Rick and Lucy have more than done their homework with their other [new] songs – but I guess I've made that clear already.

Bill Morrissey "**Something I Saw Or Thought I Saw**" Philo

By way of a tribute to his [career] mentor, **Songs Of Mississippi John Hurt**, which included covers as well as traditional material, was released two years ago. It helped bridge a gap, since you have to backtrack to 1996 and **You'll Never Get To Heaven**, to locate Morrissey's previous disc to feature self-penned material. Although not as vocally wasted as Tom Waits, or the [current and uninspiring] roots based, coterie of *enfant terrible* that numbers Jim White, Johnny Dowd and Tom Ovens, Bill's delivery features a pronounced and appealing croak. Ted Drozdowski's liner notes describe Bill's voice as *stony*, so I guess we agree that it possesses a unique edge. What's more, with Morrissey the end result is always richly melodic. The title **Something I Saw Or Thought I Saw**

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer: The Drum Hat Buddha Interview

The interview with Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer took place on the rear veranda of the Y.O. Ranch Hotel, Kerrville, Texas on the morning of Saturday 1st September 2001. Thanks to Flora Reed at Signature Sounds Recordings for making all the arrangements, and to Michaela O'Brien for setting the ball rolling.

Q. Tell us what happened after **Tanglewood Tree** was released.

Dave. It was, in a way, a real breakthrough album for us I suppose. We got a lot of airplay on folk music shows. It didn't get the kind of airplay that the Dixie Chicks get [Tracy laughs], but for a folk music record.....

Tracy. It did very well. It went to No. 1 for one month, and seemed to stay on the chart for a long time.

Dave. I think it was, for nine consecutive months, the most played folk CD on the radio in the USA.

Q. Did **When I Go**, your first album, only enjoy airplay on local radio stations.

Dave. It got national airplay too. That's a CD we made in Tracy's kitchen, and we really serviced the radio stations with great determination. Well especially Tracy serviced the radio stations for **When I Go**. We had met a lot of people...that year we had entered and won a lot of performing songwriter contests. We had met a lot of DJ's and different people, and they would recommend the CD to their friends. We did **When I Go**, really as our own little project. With **Tanglewood Tree** we had the power of a small record company behind us. Which is not an immense amount of power, but it gave us more movement than we had, and put us in contact with people who were willing to put some time into getting others to play it. They actually hired a radio promoter as well.

Tracy. Actually what happened with **Tanglewood Tree** is that we moved beyond the folk format into something called Triple A Non-Commercial.

Dave. Yeah, that made a big difference.

Tracy. There was a guy who heard the album and.... we understand that Jim Olson had no intention of servicing the Triple A Non-Commercial format, because he thought it was an Americana album and he was expecting it to be featured in **No Depression** and have this real kind of....draw out these real rootsy, sort of, oriented fans, but this Triple A Non-Com promoter heard the album and said "I've got to work with this. I love this." He just went crazy for it, and he convinced Jim to let him try.....

Dave. Jim Olson is the person who co-owns Signature Sounds.

Tracy. So Jim let the guy work it, and **Tanglewood Tree** did very well. It became the darling of the **World Café**.....well, one of many....it was embraced by the **World Café** which is a nationally syndicated programme. Some key radio stations on the East Coast started playing it, and that really opened up just a whole new world of touring and a whole new fan base for us that **When I Go** could not have done, because of the way it was produced and also because of the amount of support that we could afford to put behind it.



Photo : Jeff Bizsell

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer

Q. Was 2000 the first year you began playing major folk festivals. I know you had already played the Sisters Festival in Oregon.

Dave. I think Falcon Ridge was our first major festival. It was a very big breakthrough for us to get asked to play there.

Tracy. We were so happy when they invited us. And amazed too because.....

Dave. We were surprised too, because we didn't think it was going to happen.

Tracy. The way a lot of the festival's work is you have to go through the song contest to ever get on to the main stage. What happened with us is that, the very first year that we started touring.....when we just had **When I Go**.....I started sending out **When I Go** and our press kit to all the festivals I thought I would ever want to play. All the Canadian festivals.....the big

ones. The big ones here in the US, sort of not knowing.....it was sort of ignorance really, of my part....."Oh yeah, we should be playing there this year" [Tracy laughs] when we really had no fan base at all.

Q. But if you throw enough mud at the wall, eventually some of it will stick.

Tracy. Exactly. So we did that and it enabled us to show people that over time things were actually building for us. And things were happening. Everybody got really excited after **Tanglewood Tree** came out, and when we got the invitation to play Falcon Ridge...and they didn't say "Why don't you enter our contest," we were just so happy. After '98, Dave was done with contests. They're just kind of a weird thing that you have to contend with at some of these festivals.

Q. And sometimes the result can be subjective.

Tracy. Well yeah. I've been a judge you know.....

Dave. They're funny things. I was spiritually done with contests. I didn't consider myself too good to be in a contest, or anything like that.....I was just to the point where I didn't feel like I could push myself into anymore contests for a while. I was hoping that we could find other ways to get our name out there, and advance our cause. Fortunately, because **Tanglewood Tree** did...in the critical sense it got a lot of acclaim, and a comparatively large amount of airplay and attracted people to us, we were able to go on and continue making a big fuss of ourselves.....

Tracy. All year long.

Dave. Without entering anymore contests. Our record company Signature Sounds was so pleased with the great noise that we made in the world, that they decided to put...really a lot of emphasis on our new CD...on **Drum Hat Buddha**. They've been working real hard on it, and really pushing it and taking it places. **Drum Hat Buddha** has done, really, in most ways, even better than **Tanglewood Tree**.

Tracy. It has already done better than **Tanglewood Tree**.

Q. Really.

Tracy. It's only been out like two months now and.....

Dave. Especially on these bigger charts and these bigger formats. On Triple A Non-Commercial it has done very well. It has hung out at No. 2 for a long time.

Tracy. Lucinda Williams is sort of the impossible nut to crack at No. 1. Can I backtrack, and say that the other big festival was the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

Dave. Absolutely. Very important to us.

Tracy. We had an unprecedented 4.00pm Saturday afternoon slot.....some prime slot that you just never get as a first time performer. And this was because **Tanglewood Tree** was doing so well, and people were really digging the music. Between Falcon Ridge and Philly is kind of when we really launched on the East Coast, I think.

Q. Have you had any contact with the Newport Festival organisers.

Tracy. You know, he is one of the ones that I write to every year. I say "Hi Bob, It's me, we're back. How about this year ?", and he says, just depending on when I get around to talking to him, "Too late, wait for Fall, or not this year. Or sit tight, we're working on something." But it hasn't panned out yet. This year we had an opportunity to.....we had sort of a "weak maybe" for Newport, and then these three Canadian festivals wanted us, so we decided to take the Canadian ones and go up there.

Dave. Canada has a wonderful folk music scene. They have great festivals up there.

Tracy. That is a great thing.

*Q. Once you had made **Tanglewood Tree** did you both actually feel that you had captured something really special.*

Tracy. I did.

Dave. I didn't. I think Tracy knew it. I thought it was all over. I thought we had just made a CD that nobody was ever going to like. I was completely dejected about it. I felt that there was really, pretty much.....I thought what little careers we'd ever had, were over. I really did.

Q. [Laughing] I really can't cope with all this artistic angst.

Tracy. [Laughs] Well, I just didn't have that feeling at all. When we got the masters...I think they arrived at my place, and I listened to them on my boom box and then I listened to them again. I had this little exercise machine at home, and then I started exercising to our album, and listening to it in all these different contexts I just realised that there was something.....there was some little thing on each song that was different. Then I really felt like the album took you somewhere. I was so happy with it. I was so, so happy. I wasn't sure if anybody else would like it, but I had this sense that "There's some really good stuff on here. We've done some very fine work." That was a great feeling to have, and it was such a bummer to call Dave and say "Don't you think it's great" and have him go [ED. NOTE. Tracy adopts a depressed, mocking tone] "No. I think it's terrible." [Laughs].

Q. So when did Dave change his mind. Three months. Six months. Almost immediately.

Tracy. Well, early on, we got word from an Associated Press writer named Eric Fiddler, who wrote to the publicist and said, "Who are these people? I've never heard of them and I'm just in love with this album." We got that early on and I remember sharing that with Dave and he was like "Whoa." I think, maybe then, he was starting to think, "Yeah, it's pretty good."

Dave. Because **Tanglewood Tree**...I mean, it was really just universally lauded.....I don't think it got anything at any time, less than a stellar review. Therefore, I'm convinced that it's a really good CD.

Q. I thought you were going to say that, you were convinced the album review process was a conspiracy.

[**ED. NOTE.** All having regained their composure following a fit of laughter, we continued].

Tracy. That's right, everybody's in it together to save Dave's ego.

Dave. I was convinced in an objective way, that I know for a fact...as an objective fact...that it must be a good CD. I personally still.....we had to make the whole CD in...[**Tracy.** A couple of weeks]...a couple of weeks, and so still, when I hear it, I hear all the things I would have done better or differently. Fortunately, nobody else hears them.

Q. But that's something every artist wrestles with. If they are getting better and if their music is evolving into something greater, in retrospect they're going to conclude, "Well, I could have done that differently." It's just more angst. Just go with the flow.....

Tracy. [Laughs]

Dave. But I'm not like that with everything. With **Drum Hat Buddha** ...[**Tracy.** He likes **Drum Hat**...] I have always thought it was.....I have listened to **Drum Hat Buddha** many times more than I've listened to **Tanglewood Tree**. I will put **Drum Hat Buddha** on and just listen to it and go, "That's a pretty good movie." With **Tanglewood Tree** I still just.....I listen to it and I think "Oh, I could have sing that note better. Why didn't we bring the violin in earlier." [Laughs]. It's simply a difference in time. We made **Tanglewood Tree** in two weeks.....a little over two weeks, all the recording part of it. ...[**Tracy.** Away from home]. Away from home, and then.....

Q. Didn't someone have a cold during those sessions.

Tracy. I was dreadfully sick.

Dave. We were both kind of sick. I got better and Tracy got worse.

Tracy. I had a sinus infection. It really made it hard to sing actually.

Dave. With **Drum Hat Buddha** we were both healthy. We were recording it near where we.....you know, near Portland which we call home. We had this studio for the entire month of December. Locked it out and got everything as close as humanly possible, I suppose, to the way we wanted them. Given all the time and money in the world to make a CD, we would use all the time and money in the world before the CD is finished. A month is reasonable for us. We're really perfectionists.

Q. But you don't need to do a *Lucinda*, and go in and record five albums and only put the fifth one out, because you decided to scrap the other four.

Dave. And of course we don't have the means. Also, I write a lot and I can't afford time wise in my life to do that. Already we have such a backlog of songs, that I fear will never be recorded, because we just don't have time to do them. [Tracy laughs].

Q. Was that little laugh an indication of pity.

[**ED. NOTE.** All having regained their composure, again, following a fit of laughter, we continued. Well, almost. Buddy Mondlock and Carol Elliott dropped by in the hope of picking up some Dave and Tracy scandal, but then decided to go and have breakfast].

Q. Your gigs are now booked through Fleming Tamulevich, instead of Tracy undertaking that work. When did you sign with them.

Tracy. I think January 19th, this year, was the date. It became easier to get bookings.

Q. Once **Tanglewood Tree** began to shift a significant number of units, did the number of gigs you played suddenly increase. Did this take you into new areas of USA.

Tracy. It became easier to get bookings. Yeah. We tried to do this as aggressively as we could.....as our touring and everything else would allow us to plan. It's hard, actually, to do the booking while you're on the road. You have two different computers. You have half of your notes at home and half of them with you....we're not as organised as you [Laughs]. We saw.....what I've always done is had this huge map of the United States on the wall with dots, where the airplay is really happening, and I keep that up there just to remind me, where do we need to go.....we've got to make sure we get to Philadelphia a couple of times this year, and make sure we get down to Texas, and make sure we get over here to the Bay Area and California. We were working very hard to get around and make tours that would make a little money and make sense.

Q. How many dates did you play last year.

Tracy. I'd think it was about 150.

Q. And relative to when you started in 1999, has that number spiralled this year.

Tracy. Definitely. I think this year we'll come close to 200. I'm not sure where exactly.

Dave. It's a lot of dates and a lot of travelling. It was more exhausting, before we.....we keep getting it down to a finer art, where it is not as exhausting as it was. [Tracy. Yeah.] In the beginning we just didn't know.....during the **When I Go** days, and the beginning of the **Tanglewood Tree** days, we were so committed to touring that we would take on impossible drives. And impossible tours. We would play in places where, sometimes, we wouldn't make any money. A lot of times.....like on our first tour, and I think this is probably true of every folksinger...the first two or three tours you do are loss leaders. At that time....in the beginning we both had jobs, so we would lose money because we weren't working, and then we'd lose money because it was costing us to be on the tour anyway. So there's a whole learning curve there. But you know, as time has gone on we were beginning, a little bit, to get an inkling of the art of making a substantial tour that doesn't completely kill us. Now we're working with Fleming Tamulevich and we're learning how to lay out our parameters and our limits.

Q. Does it feel like a treadmill at times.

Tracy. A little bit. [Dave. It's worse for Tracy]. Only because you're never home and you never seem to land anywhere. You're everywhere at once. It's a little disorienting at first, but after a while you do get used to the rhythm of the road. The rhythm of changing location every day. Also your immune system builds up, and you tend to be able to handle it better [Dave. That's right, yeah], and not get sick everywhere you go. If the climate changes, or you run up against different allergens or something.

Dave. And of course, at some point the subconscious mind.....gradually, the memory and the concept that there is any home at all begins to fade, and then you don't care so much at all [Laughs].

Tracy. You start to just accept it....it's true actually, I can remember early on I would be so sad, because I have a cat at home. I would think, *"I just want to get home. I want to get home to Nick. Why are we gone so long?"* Now he has a cat sitter and I know everything is going to be fine. Now we understand it better, and know how to get in that frame of mind faster.

Q. Tracy, now that you're not doing the booking, has that taken a lot of pressure off of you. Do you have more time to be personally creative.

Tracy. Has it given me more time.....well, I have different kinds of responsibilities now. Now, we have a manager, and a booking agent, we have our record label, and then we have another distributor that we work with, who handles **When I Go**. So now I just see myself as maybe not in the trenches, but I'm standing up on the edge of the trench and I'm making sure that everyone is in line. It requires a different kind of energy. It's not as stressful as booking, because booking you might get a couple of dates on the tour and then you've got this big hole, and it's *"Oh my God, what am I going to do."* It's not exactly like that.

Q. Does the additional time allow you to, for instance, change the arrangement of songs, when you play them at gigs.

Tracy. We don't really spend any more time practising than we've always done. We do conceptualise more. We use the time in the van for tossing ideas back and forth. How are we going to produce the next album. What kind of songs do you want to do on it. Dave's experimenting with new technologies, so we're...we're a little freed up.

Dave. But there's not really more time to practice.

Tracy. We just drive all the time now, instead of sitting at the computer. And I expect it will always be like that, just because of the way Dave and I are. We're busybodies. We're sort of Type A people, who like to be busy and on top of everything. If we didn't have one thing to do, we'd find something else to fill that gap.

Dave. I personally, am spending more time on music now. The aesthetic side. I'm really focussing.....I can't say that I have as much time for songwriting, because we're always driving.....it's hard to write songs..... but I do, when I'm not driving, and when I'm in the van, I write in my head and come up with ideas and things, and places I want to go. I continue to remember my dreams.....and those are very often musical. I reached a point of personal frustration with it. I don't like devoting a lot of my life and I don't think very many artists do, to the business end of things. I don't think there is anything wrong with the business end.....I don't think there's anything.....I have nothing derogatory really to say about that. It's just that, that's not why I got into this. If I were going to devote my life to the business end of something, I could be doing something that made a lot more money. At one point I realised.....a few months back.....I have a manager, a booking agent, a record label, and a publicist.....all these people that we're paying money to.....I'm not doing this anymore. So I

have made a few psychological adjustments. So I'm really focussing more on aesthetics.

Q. If you say that you're writing songs in your head, don't you at least get them in a notebook soon afterwards. If I don't write everything down, whatever I was thinking is gone in five seconds.

Tracy. That's how I am.

Dave. Again, that is really a psychological, almost spiritual, adjustment that one makes. If you're living in the world of aesthetics, where that's the reality, then it's like you experience something beautiful that you can no more not experience, than you can walk through a brick wall, then you remember those things. Whereas if one is focusing on.....like dates, facts and figures, these sorts of things.....those are real, those are the things people remember. It is a conscious decision to shift. I remember I used to always talk..... when I had more time to think like this, and I've been trying to generate that again.....I used to always talk about songwriting as a quasi-shamanic process. For the shaman it's important to cultivate a state of mind where you walk with one foot in conventional reality, and one foot in the dream world. That's a state of mind that's actually cultivated, so that the dreams seem real, but that only comes at the expense of other things. You really have to give up some of the real world. You really have to give up some of your power in the real world, if you're going to have power in the world of archetypes and dreams. It's a very similar thing with choosing to emphasise aesthetics at all, choosing to emphasise songwriting. That's the psychological shift that I'm really working on. It was a very natural thing for me at one time, but because we've been so active in, what one might think of as the business of folk music in the past year, I've had to really make an effort to think of it more as.....I don't like to use the word art.....but to think of it more as a psychological and spiritual, and even somatic practice.

*Q. In terms of recording **Drum Hat Buddha**, was it your choice to record it on the west-coast.*

Dave. They were surprised that **Tanglewood Tree** did as well as it did. It did very, very well. They said "Wow, you guys...[**Tracy.** You did it]...you actually do have some sense of what you are doing, would you rather record it here, or would you rather record it at home." Because Tracy had had a really hard time recording in their studios.....their studio is wonderful, and the guy out there, Mark Thayer, who runs the studio, is a great guy to work with. Mainly it was because Tracy got sick out there, we felt it would be better if we could stay at home and stay very rested [**Tracy.** And take care of the cat].

*Q. I think I'm right in saying that you were the first non-local act on **Signature Sounds**.*

Dave. I think that's true. What about Peter Mulvey.....

Q. He's an east-coast based musician. What I meant was that everyone else was an east-coast act.

Dave. That's true.

*Q. For "**Drum Hat Buddha**" did you cut all the songs live.*

Tracy. A few songs we did that way. But generally since we are such perfectionists, we would dub. The rhythm section would be done at once and a scratch vocal, and then we'd go back and layer things. Part of it is that we are just a duo, and if I'm playing rhythm guitar and violin, and Dave's playing banjo and something else on a song, we can't do that live. Mainly the rhythm section is recorded all together and then we go back and put in the vocals and everything else. It was really fun, really fun to record with those guys.

Dave. Also, I wanted to mention.....we didn't know very many of the songs on **Drum Hat Buddha** when we went in to record them.

Q. So you had not been playing them in live shows.

Tracy. Not at all. They were hot off the press. [**Dave.** We didn't have the chance.] For the song "Love The Magician" I literally read the lyrics for the first time when I recorded the vocal.....that is, for the most part, the final vocal. Dave was having trouble with the chorus, and so he kept tweaking this word or that word. I didn't know what.....I saw all these pieces of paper and didn't know which one was the final one.....and then he says, "Oh, it's this one" and I stepped up to the microphone and just gave it my best shot. Actually I like that kind of situation, because you get the spontaneity.....you're really trying and you're just hoping that you're getting the essence of the song the first time. We worked for that. That's another thing we wanted, after spending so much time on the road, we wanted more of a live sound, not such as.....**When I Go** is very tame sounding to me, compared to **Drum Hat Buddha**. I feel like there is a whole lot more life in the performances on **Drum Hat Buddha**. I think that is just because we let ourselves go a little more in the studio, and tried to play as if it were a live show, with that kind of energy and enthusiasm. I think it comes through. I think people are responding to it.

Q. The running order of the album is pretty much Dave – Tracy – Dave – Tracy. Did the person singing the vocal, pretty much determine the running order of the tracks.

Dave. It was a mission for me to have Tracy sing at least half the songs on **Drum Hat Buddha** [**Tracy.** That was the important thing.] That was very important to me.

Tracy. I don't think it was so important that we went back and forth with who sang the vocal, track by track. Dave was concerned, and is to this day, in the live show, about singing too many songs without people hearing from me. [Dave. That's right]. Frankly, I don't think it's a concern as much, but as it worked out, I think the songs themselves flow well. We took a hard look at song content, lyric density, who was singing, instrumentation.....all of these things go into sequencing the album. The length of the song.

Q. Who did the sequencing for *Drum Hat Buddha*.

Tracy. We did it.

Dave. That was the hardest thing about making *Drum Hat Buddha*. There were many challenges [Tracy. It took forever], but I tell you, the sequencing of the songs.....we must have come up with a hundred versions of it. Argued about it, argued with each other and with the record company and with our manager. [Tracy. Everyone had input]. We finally came up with something that everybody agreed to.

Tracy. The hard thing is figuring out what your first song is going to be.

Dave. That was hard. It was all hard though. There was not one point of the CD that we didn't really struggle with. It was really.....I hope we never have that much trouble again. Or maybe it's a good thing. Maybe it's because we felt all the songs were strong and everybody had their favourites.....but I do hope it's easier to sequence the next one. And the other hard thing about it was, many of the songs were brand new and nobody knew them but me. I hadn't even played half of the songs all the way through, more than once, in my living room or something. Or when we all got together. We were fleshing the songs out as we made the CD.

Q. Was that almost a deliberate course. To keep things fresh.

Tracy. It was all that the touring allowed us. We had locked out that month.....and that month was for, basically, pre-production and production. Which all sort of happened simultaneously [Laughs]. There really was no pre-production, although we did think about the arrangements.....we did say "OK, we're thinking a dobro on this song, or a violin solo on this song, or Dave's going to sing this one and I'll sing that one." Also, we like to wait for the other musicians to come in, and see what they have to add to the material too. That's why you hire certain people, for their creativity and their energy, and that can change the feeling of a song quite a bit actually.

Dave. And then, of course, there are things that actually needed to be arranged, like the strings on "Disappearing Man." I remember after a sixteen or

seventeen hour day in the studio, I went home and stayed up most of the night working on the strings for "Disappearing Man." Got up in the morning early, and worked on them some more. Got to the studio and then we all worked on them. Tracy and the guy that recorded it, Billy Oskay, a fine musician and a fine recording engineer.....well, Tracy and Billy are both string players and they had a lot of input once I had the basic string parts written out. They had a lot to say about, well....."there is too many pulses, let's remove some of these rhythmic pulses," which didn't change the overall feel. There were a lot of things that really had to be put together. Unlike *Tanglewood Tree*, where we had already played almost all of the songs, a lot, on stage, before we recorded it. With *Drum Hat Buddha*, we were definitely learning it as we went along. The funny thing about that is, when we went into the studio, I probably had about three albums worth of material that we could have gone ahead and made *Drum Hat Buddha* with. I just had this strong feeling that we needed to start with what we had done with *Tanglewood Tree*, and move on artistically and that included the songwriting. All these other songs that we have in the bank.....I just don't know how we.....

Q. Did you record more songs than ended up on the album.

Tracy. One more.

Dave. One more that didn't get on, because there were.....oh, tempo problems and funny things happened.

Q. The studio that you used. How did you find it.

Dave. This guy, Billy Oskay that runs the studio is an audiophile. Every studio person will say that about themselves, but Billy really is. He produces a lot of people for Windham Hill. He had a very successful group in the eighties called, Nightnoise. His standards.....I wanted to work with him, because.....I mean, clearly Tracy and I aren't Windham Hill style artists at all.....there's an integrity to some of those acoustic recordings.....recordings of natural instruments that Windham Hill has, and Billy is the master. When you want the acoustic guitar to sound, for all the world, like there is an acoustic guitar in your living room, Billy Oskay is the person in the world to go to. His studio is built just for recording natural sounding instruments. He does very good work with electric guitars as well, but we wanted that string integrity. [Tracy. The purest sound]. The purest sound on the instruments in the recording phase. We were really excited that Billy had opened this studio in the forest outside of Portland, and I knew Billy from a couple of years back. That's why we decided to work with him.

Tracy. It's just a beautiful space. [Dave. A wonderful studio]. Big picture windows. You look out and you

see these pine trees and this grassy slope. There are places to take hikes, if you want to take a break from the studio. It's kind of nice to drive out there, it's windy along the Sandy River and.....

Q. You mentioned that it was located in a forest, is that why it is called Big Red.

Dave. On his property there was a big red barn. Basically he gutted the barn and built new buildings inside the barn. The frame.....the outside of it, still looks like a barn.

Tracy. The buildings are just inches apart, but they are all distinct so that there is no sound bleed.

Q. An east coast singer, whose name won't come to mind, made an album in Switzerland called Big Red. The title song was about the Fall, so I thought maybe that was the connection. [ED. NOTE. The album on the Brambus label was by Hugh Blumenfeld].

Tracy. Wow.

Q. You used local musicians apart from Lorne Entress [drums/percussion]. Did you know all of them.

Dave. I believe so. Yeah, that's right. Some of them were people we didn't know, and some we did [Laughs].

Tracy. Billy was instrumental, so to speak...[Laughs] oh, that's so bad.....in hiring the cello player who was phenomenal. [Dave. She was great] She ended up being the first chair cellist for the Oregon Symphony, which we didn't know. Then we realised, "Oh my God, she's really good" [Laughs]. And really nice to work with too. The dobro player, I think, was somebody he had on his roster. The other guys.....the bass player and Lorne, we both knew them. Claire who sings with me on "Disappearing Man" is a friend of ours and a much admired songwriter.

Dave. You might know Claire Bard, she's a Kervillian, she comes down here to Kerrville.

Q. Do you want to say a few words about Al Grierson, since you dedicated the album to him.

Dave. Well, when we came to Kerrville in 1998, Al was about the first person we met. We already knew Buddy Mondlock and Carol Elliott. I think we knew Chuck Pyle to, from a couple of months before at Wildflower, but the first person we met, that we didn't know before, was Al Grierson. We were sitting around at Camp Coho. I knew of Al's work already, and I had admired his work and Jack Hardy too. We were sitting at Camp Coho, and there were those two guys. That was the first campfire that we ever played at. We were really nervous, and I was especially nervous because here were these two songwriters, who, to my mind, were famous songwriters. Certainly, excellent

songwriters. They were very encouraging about my work as a songwriter. Al and I got to talking and struck up a friendship during the time that we were here. We began to E-Mail each other. He came up to Portland and we put on a show with us, Al Grierson, Anne Gallup and Andrew Calhoun. It was a really, really great night. [Tracy. A special show]. Al was so enthusiastic about it, and he was going to record his next CD in our basement. We have a good friend who has built this amazing recording studio in our basement. It's all his equipment, but he says, "This is for you guys to use." We were in Carbondale, Illinois about to go on and play at Cousin Andy's Coffeehouse. About five minutes before we were to play, our friend Tom from Carbondale came in and said, "I guess you guys heard the news." That's when he told us about Al's passing. Al Grierson was a great being from a Buddhist perspective and also from an artistic perspective. He was a person.....in my life, I have known no one with more integrity, either personal or artistic, than Al. His integrity was his word. That guy.....you know, he was a Buddhist monk for five years and when he left the monastery, he began to collect Woody Guthrie songs. He was a true folk singer. He knew all these traditional songs from the American continent and from the British Isles. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of these things. When he wrote his own music, it really was part of this tradition. His lyrics.....I think are unsurpassed. People talk about Al like "Oh, he was a character" which indeed he was, but I should also mention that his knowledge of mystical and philosophical literature was really, really deep, and it was very well integrated with his work as a poet and songwriter. I just don't think people realise how great, and how rare a person he was. Even many of his friends. I just had the greatest admiration for that guy and I wish that I had gotten to spend more time with him than I did. When we found out that he had passed away, both Tracy and I, you know.....burst into tears. We had to go out and play, and that night the only thing we could think of to do was dedicate our performance to Al. I don't think we could have played any other way. Then we decided to dedicate the rest of the tour to Al. Then we ended up dedicating all of our tours that year to Al. Then when we made the CD, we needed to.....we thought we could probably cap it off, and stop dedicating everything to Al, if we dedicated the CD to him. We still talk about him. This is another thing I will say about Al, in connection with Kerrville.....and this is something that is very powerful, again, from a Buddhist perspective. Al was one of the greatest artists ever to grace Kerrville, and that's saying a lot. Still, most people don't realise this. I personally, as well as I have ever known anything, I know this to be true. Al's job at Kerrville was to clean the toilets. He wanted to recruit me into doing this, and I wanted to do it.....he never complained about it, and he was proud of this, and this is the true soul of a Buddhist monk, somebody who does this with pride and yet goes on not being appreciated nearly as much as he

should have been. His function...his and value to the festival in the eyes of many people, is the person who looked after the toilets. Last night I was in the bathroom backstage, and I saw written on the stall.....it said "For The Roses," and the tears came again, because you know that was the name of Al's best known recording. He had a relationship with roses, and I'm sure that whoever wrote that on there, had Al in mind.

Q. I believe you wrote a song for Al. Will you ever record it.

Dave. I really want to. You know, we're going to be doing some smaller, side projects. We have too many songs, Tracy and me, to do big releases of CD's, because our CD's will compete with each other and this is not a good thing for us to do [Tracy laughs]. We want to release, every year or so.....there will be a big release like **Drum Hat Buddha** which our record company will put a lot of money and energy behind. In the meantime however, we are going to be releasing with virtually no fanfare, no money, no radio promotion, smaller CD's that people, who already know our work and want to buy our other stuff, can get. We're redoing my first CD that I made before I met Tracy, **Snake Handling Man**. We're going to be recording that in November and that will come out in minimalist packaging, and just be available through the internet. To people that already know us. Probably Al's song, will be on the next recording we make after that.

Tracy. I think one of the ideas is that there will be one that features all the songs I sing, and one that Dave does.....his more introspective, guy oriented material [Laughs], he'll do. With just him singing. Of course we'll playing on each other's things, but there will be just one main singer.

*Q. Whither the title **Drum Hat Buddha**.*

Dave. I know I've been talking a lot.....

Tracy. That's Al's nickname. Well, it almost could be. I think about this all the time, and about how that sort of works out. People always talk about that hat.

Q. Well, I can picture that bashed straw hat. The Buddha and the Hat I understand, but what about the Drum.

Dave. Really that title is not about Al. We had had.....for various reasons, when you're doing this kind of thing, and trying to introduce your music to the world, people want you to give them a tag line.

Tracy. A little concise, one sentence, description that captures everything you do [Laughs].

Dave. It's very hard for an artist to do that, and we never could come up with anything that we were satisfied with. I was thinking one day while driving home from the grocery store. I was thinking "Well,

wouldn't it be nice if we could just give people...".....because a picture is worth a thousand words, they say....."Wouldn't it be nice if we could just give people an image, or three images, that would say what we do."

Q. My figuring was that the images were making specific statements.

Dave. That's exactly how we felt about it. We liked the way it works out. The shaman's drum, is like the heartbeat. It's a hoop drum that you hold at the heart and you beat. There's a somatic, revelatory quality, a mystical and yet physical quality.....it's as though the dream world and the physical world come together at the heart, and there's this beating. Then the cowboy hat.....that corresponds to the intellect, which may strike some people as kind of odd [Dave and Tracy laugh], but it does. The hat is being involved with the head.....with this house [ED. NOTE. Dave points to his head]. And of course with our Texas, kind of cowboy country influence.....

Q. I thought it was maybe a Marlboro man reference [Everyone laughs].

Dave. That's right. Then the Buddha is the transcendent element. We felt that it should come last. So there's the heart, the head and then the ineffable.

Q. I've actually come up with my own title for the album.

Dave. [Laughs] What's that.

Q. Not necessarily in any particular order, it's Merlin Crimson Garden.

Dave. Crimson, I hear. Garden, yes, I can see that. Merlin's the one I'm most interested in.....and why you picked that.

Q. OK, let's talk about the songs on the Drum Hat Buddha album. "Ordinary Town" is about someone who is not being accepted.

Dave. Yeah. [Tracy. Yeah.] It's about small town saints, small town mystics who have trouble making themselves understood.

Tracy. Who would like to be mainstream, but.....

Q. In a way, 2000 years on, nothing has really changed.

Dave. Yeah, that's true to some degree. It's about the frustration of being held down by.....you know, there is a social machine, an invisible machine, that works for social stasis and you really see it in small towns more than in big cities. There's a kind of personality.....a kind of person, who lives in small towns and is always reaching.....they have the capacity to reach.....but they kind of get laughed back into the station that they are expected to fulfil. This may be true of every human being, just about.

Q. I think a lot of historic events took place in "Tillman County." In particular Denison Dam at the mouth of Lake Texoma near Oklahoma City overflowed in 1957.

Dave. Incidentally, Denison was misspelled on the CD liner. It only has one "n." [Tracy. Really]. I don't remember about that particular flood, but Oklahoma is the world capital of horrible weather and down there along the Red River, the weather can be beautiful and then terrible. It really puts the fear of God into you wanting to live there or spend even one Spring there.

Q. The lyric of the song features the term, "chickasa trickster." Who or what is that.

Dave. Actually it looks like Chick-a-saw, but it's pronounced Chick-a-shay. The Chickasa is a Native American tribe. The Chickasa nation is located...well, thanks to the Trail of Tears and the land grab.....The Chickasa nation is located in that area. The line "chickasa trickster calls to the funnel cloud,".....this is a mystic, this is a shaman.....this is an image I have of a chickasa shaman, somewhere out on a hill, who is calling down this weather on to the land.

Q. Is "Disappearing Man" a straight forward song about a couple splitting up.

Dave. No. Actually "Disappearing Man" is a song written from a woman's point of view. A woman who wants to have children, and who is waiting for this man.....who appears as a knight.....and who appears in her imagination as a gardener. He is waiting for her to come and fulfil her promise, or help her to fulfil her promise, to blossom into a kind of orchard. He comes in various guises in her life.....she meets various men, and they never really fulfil this function. They fade away. I think that this is something that is happening more and more, as time goes on, society being what it is. That people are less likely to settle down and create families these days, for whatever reason.

Q. The lyric mentions a "wedding dress in tatters." The song also contains the first mention of crimson, as in "crimson robes." There's also mention of yellow rags, and I felt there were references in the lyric to the ascension, Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" and Camelot.

Dave. That's quite likely. I have to say that wasn't conscious, but those things are really influences on my thinking. I expect that there's a lot of validity in what you are saying.

Q. I understand what you said a second ago about her waiting to become the orchard. The other concept that forms part of the song is "Beltane," in terms of the coming together of the Lady as Maiden of Springtime and the Stag Lord as the lusty forest King.

Dave. Yes, that's right. Well, there is that furious...well, in the first verse if I can remember, let

me see...[Dave & Tracy recall the lyric]..."who comes in crimson robes and leaves in yellow rags."

Q. Going back to the crimson robes and the yellow rags, I felt those were possible references to Christ.

Dave. You know I really see the validity in what you are saying. I didn't do that consciously.

Q. It's almost as if there are many different layers in terms of interpreting this song.

Dave. That really, I think, has to do with the archetypal...the process of writing songs. And being involved in archetypal work and dream work. Because in spite of oneself, sometimes.....there will be those layers, and the wonderful thing is you don't have to sit back and formulate all the answers.

Q. And different listeners will get different things from a song.

Dave. That's right. But it will.....it intrinsically will have that validity. Later on when a person like yourself comes and says, "Well, I noticed this, and this and this...." Then I can go back and I can remember where I was when I wrote that poem. The dreams and the images.....and I can assess if that really is true. What I had in my mind, consciously, when I wrote that.....I write in images, you know.....so I'm writing "comes in crimson robes" and I'm thinking of royal crimson, but after the act of sex, which is what the first verse is about. So she meets this guy and they have this affair, and she gives herself over to him. In the end he just leaves in "yellow rags," and the beautiful wedding dress that she was wearing in her mind is all in tatters.

Q. The lyrics of "Disappearing Man" also mention garden for the first time in terms of, a gardener...and we'll come back to the garden later. The underlying story line in "The Power & The Glory" appears to refer to your trip to Nashville in 1995. Well, almost. Except that many facts in this song are clearly nothing to do with you.

Dave. It really is true, about the experiences I've had in Nashville. Of course, I did not live that entire story. It's my experience of Nashville, and the experience that people I know, who have gone to Nashville, have had. This isn't true of everyone, because I personally am in love with many fine artists and songwriters that live in Nashville. Buddy Mondlock and Carol Elliott, for example. Gillian Welch. Stacey Earle.

Q. Except that your power and glory, wasn't there was it.

Dave. I think that is how it is for a lot of people.

Q. But maybe that trip unlocked a door for you to go look somewhere else.....like to go back and look in Portland. They say that you have to leave home to come back home and find yourself.

Dave. Oh yeah. Absolutely. That song is about a Campbellian heroes journey, of a songwriter, that goes to Nashville and I have also had such a heroes journey, it's just that mine didn't last as long, and it has not as yet, ended in quite the same way. Although I think it probably will [Dave & Tracy laugh]. Anyway, one thing if I just change the subject here.....one thing I'd like to say about that song is that somehow, through some terrible mishap, the best verse of that song did not get into the liner notes.....the lyrics didn't get written down in the liner notes, and I really was so disappointed.

Tracy. We were doing the graphics long distance by fax so.....

Dave. We had to do it on the road, as we were on a furious tour and we were writing stuff back and forth.....somehow, I think we did fax it, but it got blotted out. Somehow that part didn't get to the people. The very best verse of that didn't get written down.

Dave & Tracy [in unison]. We'll fix that in the second pressing.

Q. *This is where I'll show my true colours. You'll see me for what I am.*

Tracy. Oh. Oh

Q. *I just love "236-6132." It is so much fun.*

Dave. I'm really glad you like that song. I get caught up with that song myself.

Tracy. I love that song too. It was really fun to do that song.

Q. *I presume that "Casey cracks the ball" is a baseball reference.....*

Dave. Yeah. Oh, yeah. I don't know if you know this poem, it's a big, important poem that everybody studies in American public schools, "Casey At The Bat." It's a famous poem here, where mighty Casey is struck out. It's about how this baseball team, in this small town, is down by one point.....or two points. The mighty Casey, their hero, is up to bat. It's the end of the game, but everybody's confident, because the mighty Casey.....the bases are loaded.....and the mighty Casey is at the bat. The name of the town is Mudville. At the end of this hopeful, hopeful poem the last lines are something like, "*somewhere brass bands are playing, it's a beautiful day and everyone is happy, but there is no joy in Mudville because the mighty Casey has struck out.*"

Q. *So this is a fictional character.*

Dave. Right. It's a poem I studied when I was a kid. In this song, it's something I always wanted to do, since I

was a little kid is write a poem where, in fact, as it turns out, Casey did hit that ball. When "*Casey cracks the ball,*" that's what I wanted to have.

Tracy. I wish.....my one regret about recording the song.....because I hear this in my head every time it plays, is when "*Casey cracks the ball,*" I just want to hear this crowd roar in the background.

Dave. It would have been cool if we'd done that. I wish we'd done that. It was Tracy's idea, but too late [Laughs].

Q. *OK, here's the trick question. What do the numbers mean mathematically.*

Tracy. It's a real phone number.

Dave. It's the phone number of our ex-manager, and still good friend Lisa Lepine. That's where it came from. Lisa is a really cool person and I wanted to write.....I am not in love with Lisa, but I wanted to write an ecstatic love song for Lisa, because somebody ought to [Tracy laughs]. That's.....it occurred to me that the motif of the song could have been changed to [Dave sings] 3 - 5 - 6 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 and it would fit with the degrees of the major scale. That could have been it.

Q. *So that's it. I thought the mathematician would show up somewhere.*

Tracy. You thought there was going to be a secret formula in there somewhere.

Dave. There is mathematical content in many of our songs, but it's more conceptual.....the idea of.....this will make sense to nobody - open balls and metric spaces [Laughs]. That's an idea that comes up a lot in our songs, but it's very subtle and it's really hard to read. The mathematical idea of nearness, and the mathematical ideas of uncountability are important in a lot of songs that we do.

Q. *I took it that you had a lot of fun writing this song. Was it easy to write.*

Dave. I did write that one pretty quickly. I had to be ecstatic. It wasn't something I wanted to work on over a period of time. There's a lot of references there, including one to Townes Van Zandt.

Tracy. It's fun to sing it. I love the lyrics to that song.

Q. *"41 Thunderer" - I take it that was a very famous gun in the old west.*

Dave. The song is about Billy the Kid. I won't say it's romanticised quite, but.....it's a mysticised, philosophised sort of version. That was the gun that Billy the Kid used.

Tracy. The song was written sort of as an answer to a challenge. A friend of ours who runs the Sisters Folk Festival is a real big fan of Billy the Kid. [Dave. And a fine songwriter]. He's real knowledgeable about the old west and he says "Oh Dave, I want to play you this song about Billy the Kid." He's strumming along and talks about Billy the Kid, and then he says, "And he shot his," and he picks some substitute gun [Dave. He goes, "my old 44"]....."Billy shot his old 44," and then he just stops and says, "Alright, I know Billy didn't really shoot an old 44, he shot a 41 Thunderer, but you can't put that in a song." Of course, at that very moment the light bulb goes on in Dave's head. He's fairly glowing out of the ears. There was a ding you know, and Dave went home and, I think, that night started his song about the 41 Thunderer.

Dave. It was partly because, when he said "41 Thunderer," I'd never heard of the gun, the 41 Thunderer. [Tracy. It's just a cool sounding thing]. What a powerful name for a gun, I mean that's sheer poetry right there. Good Lord, that is, to me, a far more powerful image than "his old 44." That said, I do want to say that Jim's song about Billy the Kid is really good.

Q. I presume that *Silver City* is a true reference.

Dave. Billy grew up in Silver City. I believe he killed his first man.....Billy was attacked by a blacksmith, who didn't like him.....and he pulled his gun and shot the blacksmith. He really didn't mean to kill him.

Q. The words....."She slid like a viper from her tooled leather dress"I mean to say....

Dave. [Laughs] You know of course, that that's a reference to his holster. [Tracy. You can think about that. You could go there]. You know it's the image of the gun, and the way of life of the gun as temptationthat's what the whole song is about. It's about a person who falls in love with the gun.....and the way of the gun.

Q. The "Gentle Arms Of Eden" is dedicated in the album liner to Tom Noe and Linda Silas. You indicated that they were in the audience last night. Who are these people.

Tracy. We met them.....they are Camp Coho residents. They're people from the Dallas area. Actually they live in Wylie, Texas. They host a house concert series that we've played a few times. They're just really good friends of ours. Normally what happens, the day after you play their house concert series, everybody gets up and has breakfast together. You discuss philosophy. Tom is an atheist, and Dave is, sort of, gullible [Laughs] about religion. He'll just listen to anything, and accept anything that makes any kind of sense. I believe these two were having a little discussion on the topic of religion, and Dave went home and was trying to figure out how he and Tom could be such great friends, and be coming from such

different backgrounds. He went to sleep dreaming about this, and woke up with that song almost entirely written.

Q. It's another song about creation, but it's also about how the dream can turn sour.

Dave. Yeah, but in the end it's centred again. I remember talking to Tom about this philosophy. Really the thing is, I was trying to find some ground.....some point at which.....and Tom is eminently reasonable. As an ex-mathematician I had some understanding of the eminently reasonable approach to understanding the world, but I think that.....a term somebody used last night, I think to really, really understand world the trans-rational experience is really important. This does not mean that someone should believe in something stupid, and just accept any kind of folly that is presented to one.....I was trying during that discussion to find a place where Tom was experiencing the world around him.....not as a logical construct or even a logical observation, if there is such a thing. As I looked around, well, what I saw there was Linda and I realised, for all of our brave words, the basis of everything that Tom and I both do, is Linda and Tracy respectively. I thought, well...maybe that's the direction that it's going to go. I did get the song in a dream, but it was planted by that.....

[ED. NOTE. As Carol Elliott and Buddy Mondlock pass on their way back from breakfast, Carol says "Send us a copy of the book now. We need to read the Dave and Tracy story. I was eavesdropping." While Buddy adds "I was going to wait for the video, starring Spencer Tracy and Audrey Hepburn." "Bye guys, we love you," were Carol's parting words].

Dave. Anyway, that was the seed. I really think that it was the Goddess thing. If you really look at Linda, Linda has this Goddess quality about her. When I look at her, I really see.....I see how Linda Silas might just very well be the centre of the universe.

Q. If you are saying it's like a Goddess quality, could you also compare it to being like a rock, or an anchor.

Dave. Yeah, I think that's really true. I really do. I think that elements of it, were the coming together of Tom's, really, laudably scientific view of the universe, with Linda's Goddess presence. If you look at it that way, you really see how the song developed, because it basically, and simply, tells the story of evolution, but then in the chorus, the conclusion is "rock me goddess in the gentle arms of Eden." The entire scientific tale of evolution of life on the planet is told, and then in the fourth verse though, it comes back to "but look at what has resulted." Look what it is.....look at the rack and ruin and damage that we've done, and for all of our reasons and science, where do we go? Well, "the sea of your embrace" and then it

comes back again to Linda, and through Linda back to the goddess.

Q. *Merlin turns up for the first time waving his magic wand in "I Go Like The Raven," and in the lyric we also get the word "gancy." Although it doesn't appear in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, the closest I could get to a definition was as a "border" or a "collar." What is it.*

Dave. Well I have to tell you.....sorry.....another story. Jack Hardy could talk about this too. In the Celtic bardic tradition.....you know, I study all these philosophies because of my ancestral heritage. I'm drawn to this tradition of always seeking to find some natural understanding for myself, of this universe that we find ourselves in. There is the idea, as there has been in many cultures.....there's this idea that, in a perfect universe.....that there exists a perfect Pre-corporal universe somehow. In this universe there is a perfect speech, where the sound of the words is always perfectly appropriate to the things that they are describing. A lot of times when I'm writing songs I get deep into a state.....there's a certain combination of phonetics, that I know has to go at this point.

Q. *And is this in terms of something rhythmic.*

Dave. It's the sound, the form, the resonance of the particular sounds. I know that this is the sound, and it drives me crazy because I do have a rational mind that objects to this. I got to this point in the song, and I knew that it had to be *"to the garden gancy."* I did not know what *"gancy"* meant, but I just knew that there was nothing else that would fit. Incidentally, Carol Elliott has something to do with me finding *"gandy dancer."* The first time I heard something like that in a song, was a song that Carol wrote and it has the phrase *"gandy dancer."* I didn't know what a *"gandy dancer"* was. But I know that the syllables and the words *"gandy dancer"* are absolutely perfect and I don't even care if it means anything. When I heard Carol's song years ago.....really, several years ago now.....that was my first introduction to the idea that one might actually do that in a song. Just pick some beautiful syllables. I'm sure *"gandy dancer"* does mean something, but I don't know what it means. What's more important to me about Carol's song, in that moment, is just how beautiful those syllables are. That sounds like *"gancy,"* but that's not where I got the word *"gancy"* from. Years later, I'm writing this song *"I Go Like The Raven"* for Tracy to sing and I'm thinking *"to the garden....gancy".....it has to be "gancy."* So I just put it in the song. I do this now with songs, a lot. Once the song was finished I thought, well I'll either go back and change it, or I'll see if *"gancy"* really does mean something. Or maybe I won't change it, if it doesn't mean anything. So I looked it up, and it's an Americanism. It was...in nineteenth century America, it was a word used to describe an elegant garden party that is held for friends. An elegancy. It's short for elegancy. **[Tracy.** So it was perfect]. It was

serendipitous. It was perfect, and I have other examples of things exactly like that.

Tracy. I think *"hickory statle"* is another one.

Dave. *"hickory statle".....I knew it had to be "statle,"* but I didn't know what a *"statle"* was. I found, again, in nineteenth century America a *"statle"* was a word for a cane. A heavy cane, which was exactly the image I wanted. The new song that we have, a song that we don't have a name for yet, that we played last night goes.....*"Open up your gate Mariana,"* I wanted it to be a goddess, particularly a Celtic goddess, but something that would have a universal goddess name. I didn't know what it would be, but I loved the syllables Mar-i-ana. It turns out that Mariana is a Celtic goddess.....a dark goddess.....the goddess of returning to the earth.

Q. *Don't you ever wonder that a third party is sometimes guiding your hand.*

Dave. [Tracy laughs] I think that sometimes that's one way of looking at it, but I really suspect that there is a pre-Babel.....a pre-Tower of Babel language that is accessible to all of us. At least, I like to entertain myself with this idea.

Q. *But then you're probably amazed when you find the chosen word has a meaning. And the meaning you intended.*

Dave. As a reasonable person raised in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, I do find that to be quite amazing. Miraculous. Wonderful. Yeah.

Q. *Are you using the raven in that song as an image for the person who escapes.*

Dave. Yeah, she changes to a raven and escapes.

Q. *By the way, the word garden also turns up in "I Go Like The Raven." "Highway 80" is a kick up your heels, road song.*

Tracy. It's a good one. We've had that one around for a little while.

Q. *For all the heavy lyrical nature of what you do, is humour an essential part of your life.*

Tracy. We spend most of our time on the road laughing at the stupid jokes each of us makes. It would just be silly for us to make an album full of ponderous, morose.....you know, taking ourselves a little too seriously kind of songs. We like to think we're funny with each other [Dave & Tracy laugh]. It's just required, and Dave is so good in capturing that stuff in song. Also, we just have a policy that on every album we do, we include some kind of truck-driving songs. Or some kind of travelling song, and *"Highway 80"* was the one for this album. We've actually tried to record it before, and just didn't have the right

combination of people or something, and it didn't work out. This time it did and we're really happy with that recording. I think it came out really fun.

Q. In "Love, The Magician" what is the Ray Wylie Hubbard reference. Is it to do with his song, "The Messenger."

Dave. He has a song that starts "He came down from Oklahoma," and I realised after I wrote the song that it is possible that I might just have got that line from Ray and forgotten about it.

Q. The whole concept of the song is about something that disappears into thin air. Or can disappear into thin air.

Dave. That part I don't think I got from Ray. [Tracy. It's another shape shifter kind of song]. You know this couple, they just keep changing shape when the.....[Tracy. Old man or the dog, tries to catch up with them. They can see him, because they are a different animal].

Q. In "Merlin's Lament" the magician turns up again. The lyrics in the song could be taken as being pretty explicit, almost erotic, on occasions. Was that a deliberate approach.

Dave. Yeah. I wanted it to be, well.....you're probably aware of most of what I'm about to say.....one of the legends of Merlin is that he was imprisoned by a young woman to whom he gave away all of his power. This is a powerful myth, because this really happens to us in daily life, even if we don't really quite live it out. I think there is always this adoration of youth and fertility that one always can be put into a certain, I suppose, kind of jeopardy by. If jeopardy it is. Maybe the price of that ecstasy is not too high at all. I think Merlin lives everywhere. Again, in my song, I wanted to put it in a little town. An everyday sort of setting. He's locked in his cave downstream, but all the energy of life flew "from the miracle hills of her hips."

Q. Even if someone possesses special powers, when love is lost, all is lost. That's a fairly heavy concept.

Dave. It's just that I, personally, have felt this in my life. I've felt that to loose love.....times that I have contemplated losing Tracy from my life, for all of the philosophical matters that I hold dear, and all of the great gifts from heaven that I hold dear and have cultivated. For all of that, the loss of love.....you know, "tiresome Orion".....is to awesome to contemplate.

Q. The closing track is "Gentle Soldier Of My Soul." In the lyric we have "the crimson trail," and we have "garden" for the third time. My take is that, stylistically, there are elements of The 23rd Psalm in the song.

Dave. That's interesting. I had memorised the 23rd Psalm when I was a kid. That's funny because that didn't occur to me [Laughs], that that would actually turn up in the song.

Q. Do I take it that the "Gentle Soldier Of My Soul" is Jesus, or a being.

Dave. Well, Jesus as archetype, so it could be any kind of being. The image I have in my mind is of Jesus as a lover.

Q. OK, here's an off the wall concept, have you guys ever attempted to write together.

Tracy. Oh yeah. We think about it. It's difficult. We have different writing styles and methods. Actually our poetry is compatible. Early on in our relationship, it was very poetry intensive and we would write these cryptic and very deep things, back and forth in E-Mail. It sounds kind of goofy, because we only lived like a mile apart from each other. For us to write.....like I can write to someone, but it's difficult to write to no one in particular. I don't know, I'm just very guarded about my poetry, I haven't shared it with hardly anyone even though I've been writing it all my life. I have started several songs and Dave has tried to finish a few of them, but he never feels like he's quite inside my head enough to really take them to completion. Of course, I butt in on Dave's entire process, whenever he gives me the opportunity, but I know that this is not always welcome. I'm a born editor. Basically, I'm much better at editing something. You bring me something, and I can fix it for you and make it flawless, but it's harder for me to come up with something from the ground up. Actually it works out pretty well, teamwork-wise. If he has a question about whether a verse is making sense, or if a word is right or something, I can give him some feedback on that. That's about the extent to which we work together on the words, is I'll just say "Yeah, that sounds right" or I may suggest another word that he had thought of earlier, and changed it, and then we realise "Oh, your original impulse was correct."

Dave. It's really helpful to get out of your own head sometimes.

Q. And get a critique.

Dave. What I do want to say about Tracy, is this. I'm sure I said this in the last interview. She's very, very talented songwriter. She's kind of blocked about finishing songs, and I always encourage her. Someday she will start finishing these songs and she will.....

Q. But I took it from what Tracy has just said, is that she hasn't finished any.

Tracy. I have finished zero songs.

Dave. At some point you will hear them. She has however finished a lot of poems and I'm trying to get her to make her poems into a little book of poems that we can sell at festivals. They're very, very good. [Tracy. I'm thinking about that]. And there's another

thing that I haven't even ever told Tracy until now. [Tracy. Oh. Oh]. I now...in the last week, I have seen how it is that Tracy and I will write songs together, possibly for the next CD. I'm starting to work now.....artistically, I'm moving into realms of using more different kinds of sounds and tone colours, and I have been working in my own little room with sounds on the guitar and how this is going to relate and where this is going to go next. I won't really, really know until Tracy and I get together and just improvise. With her on the violin, and me doing my new things with the guitar, that I've been doing.....and the banjo and stuff. I want to see where that goes. I have a strong sense.....a strong sense.....maybe this will turn out to be wrong, or not come to fruition for years, but I have a strong sense that when we get together and just start playing music together, in that context, working with new tone colours and new techniques, which should happen in late 2001.....we should get around to this.....I have a strong sense that songs will grow out of that, that we will, very much, have to consider co-writes. Thus far we haven't co-written, because Tracy's process is really, really introverted. My process is stubbornly independent. I don't want people butting in on my work, unless I ask them [Tracy laughs]. I'm starting to feel like both of us have evolved together as people over the last few years. And that we're going to start being.....

Q. *You say evolved, but you're already joined at the hip. Onstage it's as if you become one person.*

Dave. Up till this point.....and we have observed this about ourselves, Tracy and I have been, very often in spite of ourselves, and in spite of what we really think we would like to do in life, we've been joined at the heart. Sometimes we don't want to be. Sometimes we get tired of riding around in the van together [Tracy laughs]. Sometimes we have serious disagreements, as any two independent minded people would, but it's this dang heart connection, we can't.....it's like cutting an umbilical chord and we're just not ready to cut it, if ever we will be. The result of this is, that we have learned to.....we have matured and started to grow together in other ways, besides the heart. We find ourselves.....our minds now following the heart even more often than they used to. It's all really coming together on all these levels. That's why I'm starting to feel that the time for Tracy and me to co-write a lot of stuff....I think it's.....I have a feeling that it's starting to happen. But, who knows.

Q. *So have you grasped why I call the album Merlin Crimson Garden.*

Dave. It makes sense to me. It really does.

Tracy. Well, now you know why the album liner was red. Obviously this was a consideration.

Q. *The other thing that you said a little while back. You said the drum and the heart, but later you mentioned Celtic in relation to it. The drum could almost be a bodhran.*

Dave. Oh yeah, that's right.

Q. *That brings you to contemplate which civilisation created it first.*

Dave. Absolutely. It's an interesting thing, and I've thought about this for many years. I remember when I was seventeen and I discovered Tolkien. And his elves. Even though Tolkien's mythology, they say, is more [?].....still it was that idea of an undying land and of a fairy and people that came from that land. It struck such a chord with me. Growing up in Oklahoma and being around Native American culture a lot. Having a lot of Native American friends.....and supposedly having Native American people in my family.....although everybody from around here claims that they are part Native American [Tracy. Every American says that. I'm part Cherokee]. I haven't seen the real clear evidence of this, but still one likes to believe it. Growing up around a lot of Native American culture and values it's really amazing how many things are similar about the old Celtic Earth centred religions. I don't mean only, the conceptual things or only the root things.....even the drums. You mention how that drum could almost be a bodhran, and I've noticed that too. You know, the Native American medicine wheel.....the circle and the cross. That's also a Celtic symbol. Spells are cast within such a diagram. It's really, really interesting to me that so many of the symbols are very similar.

Q. *What price you guys getting to Europe soon.*

Dave. We're dying to come. We've been talking about it, since before we were even a duo. At that time we had a fantasy about going to Paris and playing on the streets. Of course, I want to go to Scotland.

Tracy. The fantasy was, we were going to have a bunch of little, hyper children following us around.

Dave. [Laughs] That's right. Tracy has a big – isn't it the shape of the Eiffel Tower ? It's about four feet tall.

Tracy. Oh, yeah. I have a huge jar. It has a square bottom and it's narrow and round at the top. We just call it *Pennies for Paris* and keep throwing change in there and the occasional dollar bill.

Q. *Has anyone approached you about coming over.*

Tracy. A lot of people have asked. Our touring life is sort of a jig-saw puzzle right now. The booking agent has an agenda for our touring. You have to build in certain areas, so you have to go back at regular intervals. The record company has an agenda. Our manager has an agenda. We'd just like to go to Europe at some point, so fitting all that together and

making it work, is a challenge. Maybe later in 2002 it could work, or early 2003. That would be the earliest I would think.

Dave. Essentially all we really need is what we call in the music business, *the anchor gig*. If we had one big festival gig that covers all our travel costs.

Q. Well I guess that's the Cambridge Folk Festival, on the last weekend in July. **[ED. NOTE.** Except for the first time ever, in 2002 – and they hope for one year only – it will be the first weekend in August].

Tracy. Buddy and Carol told us about that festival.

Dave. We could play lots of dates around that anchor gig.

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Kerrville-kompacts, kassettes & other koincidences.

Bill Morrissey "Something I Saw Or Thought I Saw"
[cont.]

hints at the power of illusion. Two ghostly figures are featured on the main liner photograph – one male, one female. Given free reign, the human imagination possesses the power to deceive and confuse. Self produced, a first, the dozen Morrissey originals here are impressionistic portraits that, subjectively, favour scenes from the underside of life. In that regard, Morrissey's songs, once more, feature a rich diversity of characters – barflies and worldly wise barmaids [*Harry's Last Call* and *Travelling By Cab*], hobos [*Judgement Day*] and anguished lovers. As for humour, that has always been an ace in Bill's hand. In *Winter Song* it proudly rears its head with the lines "Drag her underneath the cover and show her where the hound dogs bay." Book ending this powerful collection, [and return to form] are a couple of love songs. The meeting of former lovers in the opening *Twenty Third Street* is heartrending in the extreme, while the element of doubt posed in *Will You Be My Rose ?* is assuaged by the lines "You found a place from me, a place I belong." Available from **Rounder Records Corp., 1 Camp Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140, U.S.A.** or in the UK via **Proper Distribution**.

Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen "A Sense Of Place"
Redwing Music

Spanning the past decade, **A Sense Of Place** is the third, self produced, duo recording by this Vermont based couple. Interspersed between the foregoing releases, has been an ongoing series of solo projects. Mangsen is also a member of the occasional trio, *Voices* – which features Anne Hills and Priscilla Herdman. Mangsen and Hills also work as a duo. While Mangsen's feet have always been firmly bedded in the traditional genre, Gillette has flirted regularly with contemporary folk composition. And, truth to tell, that's pretty much the mix of the dozen cuts featured here. Oh yes – I should add, neither stint when it comes to covering a worthy song from whatever the source – traditional, or by a modern day scribe. *Tide And The River Rising* – a song about the richness of the cycle of life – penned by

traditionalist, Cindy Kallet, and included on her 1989 album **Dreaming Down A Quiet Line** opens the proceedings. By way of crossing that folk/country divide, there are also contributions from Jack Hardy and Jon Ims. Gillette's guitar and Cindy's use of accordion and dulcimer add colour to the traditional, instrumental selections *Reel Beatrice* and *Shenandoah Falls/Cincinnati Rag*. Completing this varied recipe is a couple of self-penned originals from each participant. Cindy's *Sunrise* was inspired by story related by our own Bob Copper in his book, **A Song For Every Season**, while Gillette proves once more that touching love songs are a speciality with, *When The First Leaves Fall*. This recording is available from **P.O. Box 577575, Chicago, Illinois 60657-7575, U.S.A.** and www.compassrosemusic.com

Ramblin' Jack Elliott "Best Of The Vanguard Years"
Vanguard/ZYX Music

Cisco Houston "Best Of The Vanguard Years"

Vanguard/ZYX Music

The Weavers "Best Of The Vanguard Years"

Vanguard/ZYX Music

This Vanguard retrospective series celebrates the imprints 50th anniversary. The opportunity to consider the Vanguard recordings of Ramblin' Jack Elliott, the late Cisco Houston [who died in 1961] and the long disbanded Weavers in a composite review, is somewhat fitting. While there is no question that their efforts during the fifties contributed to the folk music explosion of the early sixties, more importantly, they share a bond with that legend of American folklore – Woodrow Wilson Guthrie of Okemah, Oklahoma. The bond is well represented here in word and melody, on all three recordings. During the 1940's, The Almanac Singers, a loose aggregation of musicians, included future Weaver alumni – Pete Seeger and Lee Hays. From time to time, Guthrie and Houston were also Almanac Singers. Circa 1950, Elliott Charles Adnopoz aka Ramblin' Jack was a studio guest on an Oscar Brand WNYC radio show, when he first saw Guthrie perform. As a result, Adnopoz was to Guthrie during the fifties, what Robert Allen Zimmerman became to Guthrie a decade later. While each of these recordings proclaims **Best of...**, it's worthwhile recalling that, at their commercial peak, The Weavers recorded for the Decca label. A substantial portion of the Vanguard disc is composed of post Decca, live recordings made at Carnegie Hall. Similarly, Houston made recordings for at least half a dozen labels, and Elliott's recording career followed a similar path, including, when he was an UK resident during the fifties, albums for Topic Records. Sadly, a common aspect of these reissues is the lack of detail regarding the writers of the songs. Due to years of familiarity, Guthrie's contributions are obvious, and the same could be said of Seeger's. The latter, however, only amounts to a small proportion of the material featured, since all of the discs last well in excess of sixty minutes, and feature at least two dozen cuts each. For avid collectors of Houston, Elliott and Weavers recordings, all of the discs take the opportunity to include previously unreleased tracks. In Elliott's case, over half of the disc is composed of the latter. Houston was not a songwriter, and his rich baritone voice sounds at times stilted considering the style and type of material he chose to cover. Elliott, meanwhile, has proved that he is a survivor of considerable [and, possibly underrated] talent – a legend in his own lifetime – and a 1995 Grammy winner with his Red House

album **South Coast**. The Weavers disbanded in 1963. They held a 1980 reunion concert at Carnegie Hall, the 25th anniversary of their first appearance there. Lee Hays died shortly afterward. Chicago based performers – and solo artists in their own right – Michael Smith, Barbara Barrow, Tom Dundee and Mark Dvorak formed Weavermania a couple of years ago. In the past year they have begun touring nationally, and have released one recording titled, **Live**. Some legends will never die. These Vanguard recordings are available from **Ace Records Ltd.** in the UK.

Christine Collister "An Equal Love" Topic Records

This album marks Collister's arrival at her second label, as a solo artist. A new beginning. In that regard, there's a seventy-second instrumental [and voiceless] introduction before Collister utters a single note [or word] on this disc. When she does, Christine's voice takes flight on "Waiting For My Prayer," a self-composed paean dedicated to the art of survival. In fact the title of the opening track is almost prophetic, since this collection finds Collister truly fulfilling the promise hinted at on her quartet of previous solo works. The nightmarish images of "Venus Proud," the album title cut and "Give It Up," featuring her multi-tracked voice on the chorus, and amount to Collister's latest works as a composer. The dreamy "Extra Care" co-written with pal, Helen Watson, focuses on an intergalactic love affair. Collister and Watson are members of the female-only super group, Daphne's Flight. My one reservation is that lyrically, at times, Collister's meaning is difficult to interpret. The cover songs on this collection commence with "Can't Cry Hard Enough" from Marvin Etzioni/David Williams. It also appeared on Christine's "**Songbird**," her final Fledgling Records album, and has been covered in recent months by British alt country combo, The Good Sons on their "**Happiness**" set. Sarah McLaughlin's "Full Of Grace" follows, and elsewhere there is James Murphy's "It's Raining Everyday," an acappella rendition of the heartrending traditional air "Motherless Child," plus Angelo Palladino's inspirational "In The Beginning." Closing the disc is the Henry Mancini/Johnny Mercer standard "Moon River," which was prominently featured in the 1961 Audrey Hepburn movie "**Breakfast At Tiffany's**." In Collister's hands, it becomes a power ballad. With consummate ease, this lady fuses pop with blues and jazz with blues. The result, ear candy for the soul. Available in the UK from **Topic Records**.

Alice Peacock "Real Day" Peacock Music Inc.

A Chicago resident these days, Peacock co-produced her debut set of eleven self-composed songs with Rick Barnes. Six tunes are all her work, while the five others were penned in collaboration with some established Nashville songwriters. Tom Littlefield's name appears on three songs, one was composed with Angelo and another with John Greenebaum. Thematically the lyrics all draw inspiration from that well trodden area [of life], relationships. For instance, the narrator of "Get Your Own" tells [presumably] her *best friend*, that she has over stayed her welcome. As someone once pointed out "*It's the little things*." In this instance, the *best friend* has smoked too many cigarettes that were someone else's property. Yes folks, her *best friend* is a *mooch* ! It's funny how a crisis can sort out your true and lifelong friends, from the fair weather ones. Possessed of an appealing voice, the material here is solidly pop/folk in style. Hell, it's even melodic and in this

day and age that can be a rarity. If there's conclusion to draw, it is that Peacock is still at the beginning of her flight path. Given some diversity in the lyrical arena, her sophomore album may just be a killer. Available from www.AlicePeacock.com

Gina Forsyth "You Are Here" Waterbug Records

Following a couple of year's silence, and relocated to the West coast state of Oregon, Andrew Calhoun reactivates his Waterbug imprint with the debut set from Gina Forsyth. Alabama born and a resident of New Orleans for some years, Gina's "**You Are Here**" is a value for money package with the sixteen tracks running out at just over sixty minutes. Once upon a time, this would have been a double album. Apart from a cover of Mike West's amusing and cautionary tale "Don't Move Back" and the melody that Gina composed to underpin the traditional, "J'ai Fait Tot Le Tour De Grand Bois [I Went Walking Through The Big Woods]" the remaining songs are all her own work. There's even a trio, and a solo, version of Gina's "Somewhere Off The Foot Of This Mountain." Rich and deep, Forsyth's voice is the result of many years spent singing in Alabama's Bible Belt church choirs. In the early nineties she was performed in Cajun band, Mamou and currently works with Bruce Daigrepoint. Taken on the basis that this is a debut solo disc, it's a creditable effort. Available from www.waterbug.com

Various Artists "The Songs Of Bob Dylan Vol. 2 – May Your Song Always Be Sung Again" BMG/Ariola Records Various Artists "A Nod To Bob" Red House Records

For nineteen tracks, Volume 2 of **May Your Song Always Be Sung Again** is a curious smorgasbord of musical styles linked, solely, by the authorship of Bob Dylan. The *bonus* twentieth track, a previously unreleased Harry Belafonte rendition of the traditional *Midnight Special*, is deemed exclusive since this early sixties cut features the harmonica playing of a twenty-year old from Hibbing, Minnesota. It is also the oldest recording on a collection that runs the gamut from soul, country and rock through to that curious musical hybrid, *spaghetti funk* [aka hip hop, pasta style], and on to performances by folk artists such as Odetta and Melanie. On a number of alternative musical *outer limits*, you have Elvis Presley's rendition of *Tomorrow Is A Long Time*, Gary Burton's instrumental jazz improvisations on *I Want You*, and the flamenco fired rhythms that Kiko Veneno injects into *Memphis Blue Again*. Compiled by BMG's European imprint, Ariola, as I mentioned at the outset, this is a rather curious concoction. Volume 1 was released three years ago, with Volume 3 promised ere long. Apart from the curiosity value, it does pose the question - why did they bother ? Available in UK record stores now.

While the latter recording uses existing tracks, the concept behind **A Nod to Bob** is that performers on the Red House roster were asked to chose and record their favourite song performed by the bard. Based in Dylan's home state of Minnesota, Red House Records is a fifteen-year old bastion for, mainly, North American born songwriters of a folk/roots music persuasion. The Red House management approached the task with almost religious zeal, all the way from the fourteen *exclusive* recordings to the richly annotated, twenty-page liner booklet. As I write this review, some six weeks after its official release - in late April 2001, it has understandably been met with unanimous approval Stateside. My earlier statement "*record their favourite song*

performed by the bard" includes the option to record a song not penned by Dylan, which is precisely the route Minneapolis based *local boys*, Spider John Koerner and Dave Ray took. Before Dylan relocated to New York and [found] world renown, he worked in a duo with Koerner. Koerner and Ray's choice, the traditional *Delia*, appeared on Dylan's 1993 collection **World Gone Wrong**. Guy Davies is the only performer, on this fourteen-song disc, who chooses a song not written by Dylan during the sixties. His soulful interpretation of *Sweetheart Like You* being drawn from **Infidels**. French Canadian quartet Hart Rouge translate *With God On Our Side* into *Dieu A' Nos Cotes*, while Tom Landa & The Playboys kick off their contribution with some flourishes of flamenco guitar. Before you know it, they have converted *All Along The Watchtower* into a stirring Celtic anthem. By way of further confusing the ethnic issues, Mexican born, Landa is now a Canadian resident. It was almost guaranteed that humour would underpin the selection by Suzzy and Maggie Roche. In truth, they transform *Clothes Line Saga* into a soap opera of epic proportions. Europe, or at least our own little island, is represented by Martin Simpson, who contributes a touching version of the timeless *Boots Of Spanish Leather*. Simpson's finger picked guitar work on this track is a revelation. The profusion of sixties material almost begs the question, "Didn't Bob write great songs in subsequent decades?" Maybe the answer lies in the fact that the majority of Red House performers are [mainly] of mature years, some more so than others. It was probably the music they were most familiar with, in their tender, formative years. Just in case you've been slumbering for the last four decades and you're wondering what the reason is for all this Dylan brouhaha. As of 24th May, Bob became a sixty-year old tunesmith. The Red House compilation is available from **Red House Records, P.O. Box 4044, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104, U.S.A.** and in the UK via **Koch Distribution**.

Terri Hendrix "Live In San Marcos" Wilory Farm [Import]

This is Terri's second helping of "one for the fans." Two years back, she was "Live At The Cibolo Creek Country Club." Of course the San Antonio venue is now very much a memory. The revenue created by the sale of "Live In San Marcos" will assist the funding of Ms Hendrix's next studio effort, but I didn't tell you that since this disc is not intended for review purposes. So what can I tell you about one of the finest kick ass bands – Lloyd Maines/Paul Percy/Glenn Fukunaga – currently working the Texas clubs, and the little lady who chose to grab the wheel and steer her own career. Well, from the get go, if you want to shake the dust off your shoes you can dance to the opening "Goodtime Van." "Don't Pet The Dog" will service your smile muscles and "Love Like This," from the Nashville based trio of Bunch/Kennedy/Rose, amply proves that Terri knows to cover a good song when she stumbles across one. For good measure, there is even some previously unrecorded Hendrix tunes. "Get Up" is a Terri and the band collaboration about adopting a positive attitude – it's also a live set crowd pleaser, while "Crossroads" is a thoughtful *stick to the road you have taken* ballad. As for the hidden cut, Terri relates the reason for cutting/writing each song and the band closes with Steppenwolf's anthemic work out, "Born To Be Wild." So there you have it. Go buy it while it's still available. Let's get this straight however, I didn't tell you that you could purchase it from.....

<http://www.terrihendrix.com> or P.O. Box 2340, San Marcos, Texas 78667, U.S.A.

Rab Noakes with Fraser Speirs "Lights Back On" Neon Productions

This is Noakes' first release on his own label, and arrives half a decade after his "Standing Up." While the years 1970 –84 witnessed the release of more than a handful of solo albums from the Scot, audience indifference saw them fail commercially. In fact, relative to Rab's 1970 recording debut, "Do You See The Lights," the title of this set is a pun. So what *lights* are going *back on* here. Well, this a pretty neat little folk/pop, lo-fi recording, mostly featuring Noakes' voice and guitar aided by Spiers' blues inspired harmonica fills. As for the musical content, there are five Noakes originals, plus a couple of tunes penned with his wife, Stephanie Pordage, including the opener, "Kill Or Cure." Casting a backward glance to his Red Pump Special days, there's the Noakes, Gerry Rafferty, Joe Egan collaboration "Clear Day." Filling out the set are covers from a pretty wide range of styles – from the 60s' there is "Spanish Harlem," Rufus Thomas' "Walking The Dog," plus "A Love Like Yours" from the Motown team of Holland, Dozier, Holland and Sam Cooke's "Bring It On Home." In this Year of His Bobness [2001], Noakes picks Dylan's "Billy" from Peckipah's 1973 movie, "Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid." As for the current crop of young songwriters, you get Beck [Hansen's] "Devil's Haircut" and Victoria "Creekdipper" Williams' "Lights." The highlight of this collection arrives with Rab's [palpably] joy filled tribute to his wife, "Wedding Song." Add to that the melodically and lyrically haunting "All Gone Wrong," and this disc becomes more than worth a trip to your local store. Available in UK record stores now.

The Good Sons "Happiness" Floating World

The Good Sons return from a three-year hiatus, and open with the Marvin Etzioni/David Williams tune "I Can't Cry Hard Enough," from Etzioni's 1992 solo debut "The Mandolin Man." On that recording, there was no "I" in the title. As for The Good Sons, there is really only one "I" – the band is basically a vehicle for the songwriting of, Mike Weston King. Thematically, the angst filled material that appeared on King's 1999 solo disc, "God Shaped Hole," relied heavily for inspiration upon the, then, recent break-up of a relationship and the launch of a new one. In spite of the passage of time, you can discard the album title "Happiness," since two years further along, *the song* lyrically very much remains the same. Some respite appears to arrive with tunes such as "Tim Hardin '65," but not quite. A wish list of *musical experiences* quickly reverts to relational ones. Old Daddy was never this low down, when he waved his tickling stick, and sang about.....happiness !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Available in UK Stores now.

Various "Avalon Blues - A Tribute to the Music of Mississippi John Hurt" Vanguard [Import]

Canuck folkie, Bruce Cockburn, performs the title cut on this collection. Of the fourteen other songs included here, only Taj Mahal's take on Hurt's "My Creole Babe" is a previously released tune. Apart from Beck, the remaining performers all possess bona fide, folk/blues/country credentials. Here, Bill Morrissey picks on "Pay Day," and went as far as to record his own tribute "Songs Of Mississippi John Hurt" for Rounder/Philo, during the

closing year of last century. Chris Smither and Peter Case contribute to the sleeve notes, as well as musically. Smither in particular, recalls a visit to New York's Greenwich Village in late 1964, where he saw Hurt perform at The Gaslight. Considering that Hurt's performing career, on a national level, was a mere three years in duration [1963-66], Smither's youthful *run in* with Hurt is all the more poignant. Steve and Justin Earle perform the double entendre that is "Candy Man," while Lucinda mumbles her way through "Angels Laid Him Away." Other contributors, include Geoff Muldaur, Dave Alvin [who duets with Case on "Monday Morning Blues"], Gillian Welch [with David Rawlings] and John Hiatt. As tribute albums go, this one is a keeper. Available in UK record stores now.

Tom Paxton & Anne Hills "Under American Skies" Appleseed Recordings [Import]

Once upon a time - almost twenty years ago, to be precise - and only for a short period, there was a trio who performed as, The Best Of Friends. Sadly, one of those Friends - Bob Gibson - is no longer with us, while, thankfully, Tom and Anne very much are. The Best Of Friends never got around to issuing any recordings. The trio are, however, featured on the closing cut of this collection performing "And Lovin' You," co-written by Bob and Tom. The track appears c/o of a WFMT, Chicago radio broadcast, circa 1984. The concept for this collection came out of a conversation between Anne and the Appleseed label owner, Jim Messelman, wherein they discussed the *fall from grace* of many noteworthy folk songs written during the height of the 1960's folk revival. Not surprisingly, the covers on this collection come from Richard Farina, Gil Turner, Malvina Reynolds and the late, Kate Wolf. From more recent times there's, Tom Russell's atmospheric piece, "Manzanar" - which tells of the incarceration during World War II of a Japanese citizen who had settled in America in 1927. And let's not forget Mr Paxton or Miss Hills, who, in their time, have been known to produce a thoughtful tune or two. In this age where *spin* has become the vital ingredient in almost every facet of life, they came up with the idea of "*I'll sing yours, you sing mine, and sometimes we'll sing them together.*" In that regard, Anne performs with Tom on his prayer for environmental restraint, "There Goes The Mountain," while Tom warbles on one of Anne's finest, "Follow That Road." The album title track, a Paxton/Hills collaboration, focuses on the execution, for murder, of a woman who, from the outset of her life was an abused child. The conclusion being, that she never really had the opportunity to enjoy a productive and fruitful life. As for beautiful simplicity, it's right there with Anne's rendition of Paxton's, "Getting' Up Early." A mighty fine collection. Mighty fine. Available in the UK via **Koch Distribution**.

Hunter Moore "Conversations" Brambus Records [Europe]/Tangible Music [USA] [Import]

According to the liner, the ten Hunter Moore originals on this recording were "*inspired by the conversations in Robert Frost's 'North of Boston.'*" Frost, of course, is the man responsible for the classic "*The Road Not Taken.*" The opening, title track, features two characters, Susan and Richard. Both are married, but not to each other. They have known each other since childhood. In her younger day Susan held a torch for Richard - in fact, it transpires that, she still does. "Trucker," the closing selection, is another song that involves two narrators, at a somewhat obvious

location. Elsewhere on this intriguing collection there's a Viet Nam War veteran who recalls the horrors on "The Road to Quang Tri," and "Teresa Of Carlston" who was always just that little bit different and [almost] seemed destined to finish her life in a mental home. "Wall" analyses the relationship of a *down to earth* couple, and the children who "*keep us busy, keeping up with them.*" Although it isn't said directly in the lyric, the children are probably the sole reason they stay together. The melodically appealing, penultimate cut "When You Fall," takes its inspiration from one of life's great mysteries, love. This *lyrically different* acoustic/electric folk inclined collection was recorded in Moore's adopted hometown of Nashville. Available from www.brambus.com

Suzanne Buirgy "The View From Here" Attune Records [Import]

Buirgy grabs you from the get go with the insistent and stirring tempo of "Except For Me" - a song that I'm almost certain formed part of her set when she won the Kerrville New Folk songwriters contest a couple of years back. Lyrically the song recalls one of life's truly bitter lessons - that is, "everyone else knows the truth *except for me.*" Relationships that bring personal struggles also form the basis of "Undertow," and "Marie." Lyrically, "Map Of The World" is a template for life, the trick being to follow it without stumbling. In "Lullaby" Suzanne addresses the emotive issue of abortion, as the narrator recalls how a decade ago, in a different place, she was "*wild as a weed, drunk on love, high on speed,*" when she took that the decision to terminate a life. A decision she still believes was correct. The infectious energy possessed by the opening cut, also permeates Suzanne's *nature girl* song - "Simple Things" - "*I love the birds, I love the way they just hang out on the telephone wires, I love listening to them talk, back and forth, like those old town criers.....*" "Experience" finds Suzanne vocalising in Janis Joplin mode, while the gentle reflective, piano driven "Song In My Head" analyses yet another relationship. The closing, album title track, a bittersweet love song, is moulded around Buirgy's memorable acoustic guitar melody. My summation, "**The View From Here**" finds Buirgy emerging with yet further songwriting riches. Then again, I didn't expect anything less..... Available from www.suzannebuirgy.com

Bruce Henderson "Beyond The Pale" Southbound Records [Import]

I think we've always known that there were cowboys in Brooklyn. Before their relocation to all year round, warmer climes, Greg Trooper and Tom Russell were known to hang out there. Now we've got a new kid in the corral, by the name of Bruce Henderson. Thankfully, he also possesses the same masterful skill with word and melody as Messrs. Trooper and Russell, as this eleven song set attests. This recording was produced by Kerry Tolhurst, who, if my memory serves me well, was guitarist in an Aussie country rock band called The Dingoes. The band eventually relocated to America and subsequently expired, circa 1977/80. In fact to add further meat to the bones of those Brooklyn connections, Tom Russell's long time sidekick, Andy Hardin, was a latter day Dingo. Enough of history, let's talk Bruce Henderson. Henderson writes edgy songs about life's losers. There is the lonely, single guy and the married woman who play out a late night vignette in the

opener "August." Later you meet the narrator of "Bone Tired," who is a world-weary soul. Then there's the shopkeeper, who, while defending his property is forced to kill a teenage thug in "Look At You Now." As if that weren't enough to deal with, the narrator not only loses his home, but his wife and young child in the water borne torrent of "Wash It All Away." Tolhurst collaborates with Henderson on one song – "Running Out Of Light," as does Curtis Stigers who also provides the backing vocal on their "Mexico." Stirring stuff. Available in UK record stores now.

Richard Dobson **"Hum Of the Wheels"** Brambus Records [Import]

Don Ricardo returns to the Brambus fold, following his 1999 self released set, **"Global Village Garage."** Cut in Germany, as was the foregoing disc, and supported by pretty much the same set by local musicians, the twelve tracks here close with Pinto Bennett's optimistic "Next Year Better." On the remaining songs Dobson covers subjects as diverse as a little known World War II massacre by the Waffen-SS in "Santa Anna," "Magic And Danger" the uneasy story of Robert Caderas, and the self explanatory, "The Fairest Outlaw." By my reckoning this is Dobson's fourteenth release and ploughs the already established honky-tonk pattern of its predecessors. Available via Kerrville Kronikle.

Lucinda Williams **"Essence"** Lost Highway

To me Lucinda is the female equivalent of Steve Earle as far as the Americana, alt. Country, *whatever we're calling it this week* genre of roots music is concerned. Let me say at this juncture, that both are worthy musicians, but the hype has always far outweighed the substance. Way too far. On my first run through of **"Essence"** I thought she sounded so bored, she would have been better to have telephoned the vocals in. I really haven't wavered far from that view. Of course **"Car Wheels On A Gravel Road"** picked up a Grammy and that's precisely when they get to fill your head full of *hype*. And numerous other *four* letter words. I thought that Lucinda was sassy enough a gal to see past the record industry backslapping nonentity that a Grammy represents. Anyway, here's the *essence* of my take. Justify an opening track with five verses, four refrains and a total of twenty one words - yup, only twenty one words - that ain't a song, it's a damned repetitious dirge. If she sings this non-song too often, she'll soon be joining all the other "Lonely Girls." Misery and self loathing is not an art form, yet "Blue" seems to attest that it is. What's more, the letters lu of this song title are picked out in blue ink on the rear of the liner - the b and e are in black lettering. Art form ! As for "Bus To Baton Rouge," if you want to hear a great bus song try Gretchen Peters' "Bus To St. Cloud" then tell me the difference. With tunes bearing titles such as "Are You Down," "Reason To Cry" and "Broken Butterflies" what more needs to be said. Overall the pace of this disc matches the mood of the lyrics - down, down, and even further down. I guess some blame can be placed at the respective doors of Charlie Sexton and Bo Ramsey [Greg Brown's guitar man], since they produced the contents from origination to fruition. Maybe next time, not this time...Available in UK record stores now.

Tom Russell **"Borderland"** Hightone

Reflecting in words and music upon his Irish/Scandinavian ancestors, respectively paternal and maternal, Russell's final collection of the second millennium AD, **The Man**

From God Knows Where, was firmly founded upon his, long established, literate brand of folk/country music. Born in California, Tom was a New York resident for over two decades. In 1997, he relocated to West Texas town of El Paso. With the Mexican border the matter of a few miles away, the music employed on **Borderline** draws much of its inspiration from that region. As for the story lines and the emotions Russell touches upon, whether delivered in the first person or by a narrator, they are, at times, extremely personal. Two *borderlines* feature prominently in the eleven songs. The physical entity that divides two countries and cultures, and the metaphorical one that [often] separates men and women. Pursuing the Mexican theme, a Jay Marvin painting, based on the *day of the dead* style, graces the cover of the three-piece cardboard fold-out liner. It's a departure, but Russell's lyrics are not included in the liner. That said, a numbered, limited edition, postcard booklet featuring photographs taken by Jessica Russell, one of Tom's two daughters, accompanied by the lyrics to a dozen songs is available currently on the web from www.villagerecords.com. Considering the title of the collection, it's hardly surprising that Tex/Mex inspired rhythms provide the foundation. Produced by long time Lucinda Williams sideman, Gurf Morlix, the latter furnishes guitar and vocals on a number of cuts. Andy Hardin, Tom's ever present, right hand man once again works his unique brand of acoustic magic with six strings and a hole big and round. Jimmy LaFave and Eliza Gilkyson provide [occasional] supporting vocals, while Joel Guzman's accordion adds that genuine, south of the border, down Juarez way feel to the proceedings. Of the eleven songs, two were co-written with one of Tom's established collaborators, Dave Alvin, a 2001 Folk Grammy winner. Elsewhere, Andy Hardin and Katy Moffatt assist on one song apiece. Returning to my earlier comment about the *extremely personal* nature of Russell's lyrics, whether delivered in the first person or some other guise, you gain the impression that this forty [going on fifty] something is reflecting upon his own life. And the many borderlines he has chosen to cross. The opening *Touch Of Evil* with the oft repeated chorus line, "Why don't you touch me anymore ?" attests to a love affair in crisis. The narrator in *Where The Dream Begins* recalls a kid whose proudest possession was an autographed picture of Muhammad Ali – Russell is a major boxing fan. Twenty years on, the narrator begins writing songs. Already married with two daughters, he subsequently deserts them for a life on the road. Years later they confide to their father that "you could have seen the dream by lookin' in our eyes." To what extent *Where The Dream Begins* is *autobiographical*, I'll leave you to decide. Bill Haley, pugilist Jack Johnson and the novelist William Faulkner *traversed* the lines of earlier Russell works. This time, with an upbeat rhythm, Tom recalls the night when *When Sinatra Played Juarez*. Russell rarely fails to deliver literate collections of songs, and **Borderline** proves once again that this craftsman remains in tune with the term *work of art*. If you've been paying attention, you'll have spotted the *deliberate* arithmetic error I made earlier. The twelfth song in the postcard lyric booklet, *Small Engine Repair*, is currently available on the web as a mp3 download. Available in UK record stores now.

Casey Neill Trio **"Portland West"** Appleseed Recordings

As the title indicates so succinctly, the Portland in question is the one located in the North-Western state of Oregon.

Recorded at St. John's Pub, half a dozen Casey originals stand shoulder-to-shoulder with material that traces a *timeline* from traditional, through The Carter Family and on to *I'm On Fire*, a 1984 contribution from the pen of Bruce Springsteen. And here's the rub, the main musical influence at play here hails from the Emerald Isle, performed with an energetic passion and style that clearly confirms Neill's commitment to the traditions of the genre. A native of America's eastern seaboard, when your name is Casey Neill, the Celtic spirit undoubtedly lies deeply embedded in your genes and coursing through every vein in your body. While studying ethnomusicology at Evergreen University in Washington State, Neill researched the traditions of Irish music, although he subsequently found employment as an environmental activist. In time, his lyrics became a *channel* through which he could *protest* current day injustices and the self-inflicted ills of mankind. *Angola* is an atypical example of Neill's approach, and recalls the three decade long incarceration [1967-1997] of an innocent man, the late Hayes Williams, in the *corruption* riddled Louisiana prison system. As if to reinforce Neill's credentials as a musician, Ochs, Seeger and our own Bragg and Gaughan are mentioned in the accompanying press release. Casey, on the other hand, quotes the Pogues and Uncle Tupelo as influences during his formative years. A punk band at the outset [circa 1990], albeit with roots music leanings, members of Uncle Tupelo went on to form Wilco. The rest of that particular history lesson you [should] already know. I suggest you give Neill a listen, because you'll soon discover that, with his third disc for the Appleseed imprint, he's making his own history, through a writing and performing style that uniquely merges his own visions with the Irish tradition. Available in the UK from **Koch Distribution**.

Roger McGuinn **Treasures From The Folk Den** Appleseed Recordings

From a historic viewpoint, the term *full circle* and *déjà vu* definitely come to mind when listening to this collection. Prior to his rock'n'roll star chart topping days on America's West Coast, McGuinn served an apprenticeship in the folk clubs of his native Chicago and many points beyond, accompanying artists such as Judy Collins, Chad Mitchell and The Limelighters. The eighteen songs [plus hidden track !] on this disc, are mainly drawn from traditional sources. The initial phase of McGuinn's apprenticeship preceded the early sixties folk *explosion* which witnessed the emergence of Bob Dylan, and in his wake, a *virtual legion* of contemporary folk songwriters. While embracing Internet technology partway through the final decade of last century, McGuinn observed that, these days, traditional folk songs were rarely featured on any of the broadcasting mediums. McGuinn began posting his own – mainly, voice and guitar recordings of traditional songs – on a web site called, The Folk Den. While firmly embracing the concept of *déjà vu*, this recording takes the latter concept one step further – into the commercially distributed domain, and features McGuinn performing with a number of *folk legends*. In the 1930's, Alan and John Lomax purchased a cumbersome Ediphone recording machine and made their way through the back roads of the American South collecting traditional songs. Seven decades later, using a laptop computer, a software package and a single microphone, McGuinn traversed the Eastern seaboard of the States visiting Tommy Makem, Pete Seeger, Jean Ritchie, Odetta, Judy Collins and Josh White Jr. and

digitally recording renditions of traditional songs. While on tour, Joan Baez and Eliza Carthy added their contributions in Roger's adopted hometown of Orlando, Florida. Roger's guitar teacher at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, Frank Hamilton, performs *The Brazos River* with his wife Mary. It is the only original Folk Den recording on this collection. Other featured songs include *Whiskey In The Jar*, *Nottamun Town*, *Finnegan's Wake* and *John Riley*. Engagingly lo-fi, this *computer generated field-recording* captures a number of folk music legends performing in the relaxed setting of their home. Available in the UK from **Koch Distribution**.

Brooks Williams **"Skiffle-Bop"** Signature Sounds

Following in the wake of last year's, instrumental only, Signature Sounds collection **Little Lion**, comes **Skiffle-Bop** a self-produced, vocal and instrumental cocktail replete with substantial chunks of country-blues, swing and [bebop] jazz, from one of the most fluid acoustic/electric guitarists on the planet. Seven Williams' originals are featured alongside four covers from writers as diverse as Paul Buchanan [The Blue Nile], Pat Metheny [with Lyle Mays], and T Bone Burnett [with Leslie Phillips aka Sam Phillips]. Available from **Fish Records, PO Box 148, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 5WQ** and on the net at www.signature-sounds.com

Pat Humphries **"Hands"** Appleseed Recordings

Humphries, Ohio born, was, in her late teens, a Kent State student. It seems inevitable therefore that, as a musician and writer, she was fated to espouse activism. From start to finish, on *Hands*, there's little doubt regarding her commitment to the cause. To many of them, in fact. A quarter of a century since his demise, and thanks in the main to the efforts of his sister Sonny, the music of Phil Ochs remains a potent force. Opening with *Hands*, and dedicated to her late mother, this Ochs rarity is a thoughtful tribute to the legion of manual workers who built America. *Indian Prayer (Inadee)* co-written by Roland Mousaa and Tom Pacheco, which follows, is a prayer for the survival of the Native American, and is of a similar vintage to *Hands*. Apart from *Bread & Roses* which marries Mimi Farina's tune to James Oppenheim's words (circa 1915), the remaining material was written during the last decade of the second millennium [AD, that is], some by friend and collaborator Bev Grant. Subjectively, the songs focus on subjects as diverse as sweatshops in [desperately] poor countries, the turning of the year, and in *People Love* – an appeal for tolerance of love that occurs "*in many different ways*." In the touching *Cold Cup Of Water*, the United Farm Workers, led by the late Cesar Chavez, struggle to establish rights for migrant workers in America. If you have concluded *Hands* is a heavy-handed diatribe, you will miss an acoustic, insightful delight in the tradition of Seeger and Guthrie. With thoughtful lyrics and employing discernible melodies, Humphries seductively draws the listener into her *world of causes*. Available in the UK from **Koch Distribution**.

Terence Martin **"Waterproof"** Good Dog Records

Somewhere approaching baritone in the vocal stakes and utilising a folk-rock backdrop, Martin opens this sophomore, self-penned and collaborative set of ten originals, and one cover, with the title cut. That cover – *The Great Impostor*, penned by Sharon Sheeley and Jackie DeShannon, was a

1961 hit for The Fleetwoods. Elsewhere, song by song, as the sum of Martin's words become lines and verses he conjures cinematic landscapes, while the story lines that unfold therein are on occasions somewhat offbeat. The male protagonist in *Cracks In The Sidewalk* "went down to the store one day" never to return, and leaves behind a female companion who "kept the door as open as she kept her mind." Without revealing the precise circumstance, it transpires by verse three that the grim reaper took him. Then there's the former drifter who speculates how the *Orphanage Trees* he sees from his front porch, came to place their roots in the garden of the children's refuge. In the process, he draws comparisons between their fixed and predicable seasonal existence and his own restless past. In reference to the *Orphanage Trees*, the lines "they don't like hanging judges, don't hold people swings or grudges" attest to Martin's skill at turning neat phrases, employing basic language. The foregoing examples are a mere soupcon of the flavours Martin has created for his concoction, *Waterproof*. Now and again you stumble across a shiny gem. This is definitely one. Available from www.martinsongs.com

Shawn Colvin **Whole New You** Sony/Columbia

Apart from children's album of covers, "**Holiday Songs And Lullabies**" which Shawn cut three years ago while heavily pregnant with her daughter, Caledonia Jean-Marie, this album marks Shawn's return as a *serious contender* in the singer/songwriter stakes, following a half-decade career hiatus. The 1996 collection "**A Few Small Repairs**" brought Shawn two more Grammys and, finally, significant chart recognition for the opening cut of that set, "Sunny Come Home." Not bad going for a twenty-year apprenticeship in music. Lyrically, the material on the latter disc was dark and slanted toward her, then recent, divorce, while "**Whole New You**" is aptly tilted, since it finds Shawn generally celebrating life. The past five years having brought her a new husband and motherhood, and I guess, the *whole new you*. In magazine features, promoting this creation, it's somewhat ironic that Shawn has stated that *the conception and birth* of her latest disc was fraught with difficulties. Produced by long time musically collaborator John Leventhal, she says they both experienced trauma in the studio, yet you'd be hard pressed to discern that from the contents. For instance, the title cut is a hook laden, sixties pop inspired, joy. The line "Shake your head in wonder when it's all too good to be true" perfectly encapsulates Colvin's state of mind, circa 2001. In "Nothing Like You" she reflects on her own childhood, and *the new found wonder* that is growing up before her eyes every day. There's also a sneaky tribute to Austin hero, and double Tour De France winner, Lance Armstrong, in the line "I have seen the top of Mt. Ventoux." Though non-specific lyrically – to husband or child, "Bound To You" also explores the family situation. With *one shoe* firmly planted in the folk arena, and the other in the field of pop, Colvin's lyrics have consistently explored relationships – often the bleak, dark side of those affairs. The darker songs here relate, for instance, to the human need to be a voyeur. The narrator in "Another Plane Down," a tv news junkie, is intent in knowing every minor detail as the truth behind a plane crash "in the Atlantic nine miles off shore" unfolds on the cathode tube. The erotic images and the four-letter word that closes the second verse may bring blushes to cheeks of your straight-laced maiden aunt. Teamed with the third,

as well as the closing verse, they actually take the song, subjectively, into the realm of dreams and how dreams play tricks on the human mind. "Roger Wilco," a military term used five decades ago by fighter and bomber aircrew, deals with the act of desertion in the face of impossible odds. In a wider context, apart from comrades in arms, the situation relating to dereliction of duty could equally be applied to events in family life. It's worth noting that while she enjoyed her five-year recording break, one aspect of "**Whole New You**" marks a departure for Colvin; all of the songs were co-written with Leventhal, while that *long silent* chanteuse, Edie Brickell, [also] added her name to "Roger Wilco." Whatever, this is a sterling set of folk/pop songs, irrespective of the tales Colvin has circulated regarding the circumstances surrounding its birth. Available in UK record stores now.

Mary Chapin Carpenter **Time * Sex * Love** Sony/Columbia

Unlike many reviewers, I found the contents of this disc disappointing. That's not to say that this isn't a good, well made album. In truth, it beats most *country music* releases into a cocked hat. It's just that, in my eyes, it's not a great album. Chapin is well capable of doing better. Much, much better. History proves irrevocably that Chapin's writing has been peppered, from the outset, with classic thought provoking songs. Songs, that relate spellbinding stories. "This Shirt," "Halley Came To Jackson," "Stones In the Road," and "John Doe No. 24" – the list is legion. Track # 9 on this collection – "Someone Else's Prayer," was the first occasion I found myself thinking, "*now that's a keeper.*" Tellingly, the track features Chapin's voice and John Jennings guitar/bass. "The Dreaming Road" and the closer, "Late For Your Life," possesses the same mark of distinction. What's more, they are solely Carpenter composed efforts. Five of the tracks here are collaborative efforts. The set title "**Time * Sex * Love**" is definitely a case of *what you see is what you get*. And even though she occasionally injects a story line into some of these love songs, a surfeit of love songs can be, and is, just plain boring. Instead of running with vitality, this album limps due to the lack of variation. For example - although "Me Leaving You" rocks, with rhythm and verbal attitude, it is, subjectively, the antithesis of "He Thinks He'll Keep Him." In other words, the "*been there already*" syndrome. As for the "Simple Life," the telling line, [of self doubt], in this drum beat driven cut, must be "*You're afraid you might have peaked.*" Hell, I said the same thing last year about Greg Brown's "**Covenant**" – in terms of way too many love songs - and darn if it didn't go and win the AFIM Best Contemporary Folk Album a couple of months back. So what do I know.....or, more pertinently, what did those AFIM judges think they knew ? Both discs, incidentally, featured *hidden* closing tracks. One of life's great pointless exercises !!!!! Back in 1996, Chapin's "**A Place In The World**" left me with similar thoughts. You may have [already] noted in the list above, that I didn't include any *classic* songs from that disc. In the time between, we got the, much delayed, *greatest hits* compilation "**Party Doll [And Other Favourites]**." And that was all fine and dandy, but that's also where the subterfuge occurred. "**Party Doll...**" was *the firewall*, the reissue album, the break in the routine. Five years on, we get something new and the fans are ready and waiting with \$ in hand. Except, it isn't new. At her best, in terms of her skill with word and melody, I class Carpenter as the equal of,

say – Bruce Springsteen. And the Boss ain't no fool, because with the arrival of **"Nebraska"** he knowingly grabbed the mould and smashed it to tiny pieces. He dumped the band, went back to basics, and found another way. The result was one of history's greatest musical recordings. In a single stroke he reinvented himself. History has a habit of repeating itself, so what would be so wrong if Chapin chose *this road [so far] not taken* ? Other have done it, why shouldn't she ? The concept isn't rocket science. My conviction is that the results would be stunning. Available in UK record stores now.

Dale Watson "Every Song I Write Is For You" Audium Records

At the end of his liner note Watson states *"This album is dedicated to Teresa Lynn Herbert."* In fact all the songs – there are fourteen of them – were written by Watson in memory of Herbert, who died in an automobile accident on September 15, 2000 while driving to Houston. The only song where Watson's rich baritone comes close to expressing anger is in "I'd Deal With The Devil" – *"I talk to the man above but he ain't listenin' up"* and *"He can throw my soul into a fiery hole, To burn for all eternity."* As for an indication that Watson will recover from this loss, "I See My Future" provides the answer. I guess this collection of melodic love songs could be viewed from a number of viewpoints. Cloying and over-sentimental being one, while the other could be termed, *a memorial for someone who is gone*. You decide. Available in the UK from **Koch Distribution**.

Trish Murphy "Captured" Southbound Records

Of the sixteen tracks featured, fifteen were recorded live during June/July this year at a pair of Austin, Texas venues – Saxon Pub and Flipnotics Coffeehouse. The exception is the closing track, a *new* studio version of "Relentless" which appeared on Trish's 1997 self-titled, solo debut. Seven live tracks come from the aforementioned disc and five from the 1999 follow-up **"Rubies On The Lawn."** Mathematically, that leaves five previously unrecorded songs. Compared with her studio work to date, Murphy's voice appears strained on this collection, while cast adrift from studio technology the songs appear simplistic. P.S. The above review is based on the UK version of **"Captured"** which features three additional tracks relative to the U.S. release. Available in UK record stores now.

Kris Delmhorst "Five Stories" Catalyst Discs

As far as I can tell the five stories relate, not to Delmhorst's lyrics but, to the fact that the recording sessions took place in, Hi-n-Dry, the attic studio of the late Mark Sandman, singer of Boston based band Morphine. Co-produced with Billy Conway, Delmhorst's sophomore effort opens with the traditional "Cluck Old Hen," the tale of a hen that loses its voice and the will to lay eggs. The eleven tracks that constitute the remainder of this collection were written by Kris. In the gentle "Damn Love Song" the narrator queries whether she can fully commit *"with her heart"* to the person she is currently with. The endless horizon of road and sky provides the backdrop of "Broken White Line" as the narrator recalls how, in the last four years, she has built herself *"a little world of rhythm and of rhyme"* since she had her heart broken. Relationships appear to be a big thing for Delmhorst, as the couple in "Words Fail You" struggle to express in words, their true feelings for one another.

"Garden Rose" explores the proposition that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, and that beauty comes in many guises. In this case, a rose is enamoured by the little wildflower that survives among the weeds on that other side. The rose reveals all with the words, *"I always thought that my life was enough, until I saw your face so brilliant and so rough."* The closing "Lullaby 101" is a gentle prayer that attests, using numerous examples, how a change of approach can revitalise your life. And following that – the 26 second, *hidden* instrumental track, that reprises the melody of the opening cut. Available from **Fish Records** and on the net at www.signature-sounds.com

Lee Roy Parnell "Tell The Truth" Vanguard

Recorded at Muscle Shoals Sound in Memphis, Parnell's purveys blue-eyed soul songs and slow burning blues tunes on, this, his seventh solo outing. Bonnie Bramlett guests on the slow and soulful "Breaking Down Slow," while fellow Texan Delbert McLinton joins him on *the boys must boogie* anthem "South By Southwest." As well as sharing the vocal on "I Declare," Keb Mo' plays National Steel guitar, harmonica and mandobanjo. The full-tilt gospel beat of "Brand New Feeling" is further consummated by the voices of The Mississippi Mass Choir. Of the ten songs, nine are self penned, a number with long-time collaborators Dan Penn and Gary Nicholson. Tony Arata, Tia Sillers, Mark Selby and Jack Pearson help out on others. The closing cut, "Love's Been Rough On Me" comes from the pen of Gretchen Peters and was originally cut by Etta James a couple of years ago. Parnell delivers it as a soul ballad, underpinned by Kevin McKendree's B-3 Hammond and piano. Available in UK record stores now.

Vigilantes Of Love "Summershine" Compass Records

While they've fluctuated in size from a sextet to a duo during their decade of existence – currently they are a trio – the Vigilantes Of Love, have always been masterminded by Bill Mallonee. His songs being the lifeblood that has kept this band alive. Their sophomore release for Nashville based imprint Compass, is based on sessions that took place at 3rd Ear Studios in their native Athens, Georgia. The jangle rhythm of the lyrically upbeat "You Know That [Is Nothing New]" kicks off the set, while the instrumental break partway through "I Could Be Wrong" comes straight from the Lennon/McCartney songbook. Sixties Brit-pop is what has sparked Mallonee's muse for years, so that should give you an idea what to expect.....Available in UK record stores now.

Robert Earl Keen "Gravitational Forces" Lost Highway

Gurf Morlix seems to be the producer of choice in Texas this year. Tom Russell, Ray Wylie Hubbard and now Keen. Of course this is an established team, who understand exactly how Texas music should sound, as Keen co-produced his 1998 **"Walking Distance"** album with Gurf. The opening cut, "My Home Ain't In The Hall Of Fame" is a thirty-year old song penned by Joe Dolce – yes, the person responsible for the excruciating "Shaddap You Face" two decades back. This tale of a rebel picker, who prefers to do it *his way*, is slated to be the first single taken from this album. In fact Keen could be the male alter ego of Nanci G, since he has consistently featured a *quotient of covers* on his albums. There's two from writers *raised* in the Lone Star state. From the late Townes Van Zandt's, comes the classic "Snowin' On Raton," while Kansas born, Lubbock raised,

Terry Allen tells of the couple – he's a married man and she's a honky-tonk queen – who make *"jukebox memories"* at the "High Plains Jamboree." Completing the *cover quotient* is Johnny Cash's "I Still Miss Someone," the B-Side of his 1959 #1 hit, "Don't Take Your Guns To Town," and a song that has [deservedly] been revived many times in the last few years. Speaking of revisiting old material, the closing cut here is a seven-minute rendition of Robert's, early nineties, audience pleaser "The Road Goes On Forever." By the way, the latter track was produced by Ray *twangtrust* Kennedy. Although Robert had begun to attract a younger [and wilder] audience by the middle of the last decade, thankfully, his writing continued to plough a literate furrow, while also retaining a generous helping of humour. The spoken title cut reflects on our passage through space and time and more than fulfils the latter facet of his [writing] style. "Goin' Nowhere Blues," is a paean to stubborn tenacity. As they await reincarnation, the once famous adopt new roles. Well, almost. The poet Langston Hughes is portrayed as an observant barfly, while onstage Woody Guthrie sings about the latest news. Martin Luther King is a shoeshine boy who preaches *"justice and equality"* and union organiser Cesar Chavez terrorises a pool hall while *"swillin' wine and smashin' cues."* Elsewhere on this quality collection you'll find "Fallin' Out" – a losin' love song with a twist [subjectively "Not A Drop Of Rain" is drawn from the same wellspring] ; while Goodtime Charlie, Wanderin' Bill and Too Tall Annie are just some of the small-town characters who feature in the "Wild Wind." Available in UK record stores now.

Dar Williams **"Out There Live"** East Central One

Including three spoken intro's there's nineteen cuts on this *live* disc. Recorded over three nights of November 2000, in Massachusetts and NYC, Dar is supported throughout by her four-piece band. Suffice to say, in my opinion, Stuart Smith is a guitar god [plus he's played with practically every intelligent singer/songwriter of the last two decades], while Gail Ann Dorsey has toted her *big bad* bass for David Bowie and the Indigo Girls. Drummer Steve Holley [Elton John/Wings/Joe Cocker] and keyboard player Jeff Kazee [Southside Johnny] complete the line-up. Forget the million \$ quartet, this one has been stamped with a twenty-four carat hallmark. As for Dar's tunes, there is five apiece from her [so far] mid-career discs **"Mortal City"** and **"End Of The Summer,"** two from her Razor & Tie debut **"The Honesty Room"** and another handful from last year's **"The Green World."** For me, the material on **"Summer"** and **"Green"** was less effective than her first two collections, as Dar's lyrical storytelling slant gave way to more abstract themes. And the folk element gave way to pop smarts. So there you have it, there's no new works in progress here, just seventy-one minutes of marking time. One thing is certain and true – "The Babysitter's Here" is a classic song for all, and the timing of Dar's roll playing as a breathless, excited, anxious, innocent pre-teen is simply beautiful ear candy. Available in UK record stores now.

Various **"Timeless – The Songs Of Hank Williams"** Lost Highway

Elevated to the kingdom of myth [and legend] at the age of 29, on the opening day of January 1953, history has observed Mark II and Mark III follow in his wake. Here, twelve performers, including Mark III, interpret songs penned by the original – Hank I. Well almost, since

wunderkind, Ryan Adams, chose Hank's arrangement of the Cliff Friend/Irving Mill composition, "Lovesick Blues." The latter track gave Hank Williams Sr. his first Country # 1 back in 1949. A legend in his own lifetime, Johnny Cash, closes the disc with the Fred Rose's "I Dreamed Of Mama Last Night," a song that Hank cut for MGM in the early fifties using the name of his alter ego, Luke The Drifter. Overall the song selections are a fitting mix of the obvious and the obscure. Following Ryan Adams' lead, Hank III, Lucinda [Williams – of course], Keith Richard, Tom Petty, Sheryl Crow and Beck adopt the former path, with songs that were at least Top 10 hits – eg. "I'm A Long Gone Daddy" [# 6] and "Cold, Cold Heart" [# 1]. Strange to relate "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," Keb Mo's pick only made # 46 on the Country chart in 1966, in the wake of the Hank Williams bio-pic **"Your Cheatin' Heart."** The queen of *various artist compilations*, Emmylou Harris [with Mark Knopfler] warbles "Alone And Forsaken" ; while at the outset of the disc this year's most famous musical sexagenarian mumbles his way through "I Can't Get You Off Of My Mind." His Bobness even succeeds in making the cut sound like it was [originally] cut half a decade ago. Mark Knopfler and his band [with Emmylou Harris] complete this *dejected and disheartened* dozen with "Lost On The River." If there's an obvious omission, I guess it would be "Hey, Good Lookin'" – then again, it was probably too lyrically upbeat for this project. After all, picking yourself up out of the gutter [on the morning after], there's so much more reason to sing a *timeless* song of sorrow.....Available in UK record stores now.

Earl Scruggs & Friends **"Earl Scruggs & Friends"** MCA Nashville

Alphabetically, those *friends* amount to Johnny Cash, Roseanne Cash, Jerry Douglas, Melissa Etheridge, John Fogerty, Vince Gill, Don Henley, Elton John, Albert Lee, Steve Martin [yup, the *red hot* banjo totin' alter-ego of the movie star], Leon Russell, Randy and Gary Scruggs, Paul [Letterman] Shaffer, Sting, Marty Stuart, Billy Bob Thornton, Travis Tritt and Dwight Yoakam. Completing the recipe is a legion of legendary Nashville session musicians, production by Randy Scruggs and a dozen songs, many penned by the participating solo acts. Those include Elton John's [and Bernie Taupin's] thirty year old song "Country Comfort," the soulful Melissa Etheridge rocker "The Angels" and of course, Earl's signature tune "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." Now 77 years of age, this collection is a tribute to a pioneer who is still at the peak of his trade. By the way, the liner notes by Earl's wife, Louise, provide a fitting and historic perspective to this collection. Available in UK record stores now.

Lynn Miles **"Unravel"** CRS

I believe that honesty is a well-tested and beneficial policy. What I'd like to clear up right now, is that **Unravel** is one of my albums of the year for 2001. Possessed of one of the finest voices currently ploughing a folk/pop/country furrow, *melancholy* is a shade that has rarely changed, across five albums, as far as Miles lyrics are concerned. Lodged in a bottomless rut of *"I've lost my man"* misery, most performers bore me to tears. I can't precisely pin my irresistible attraction down to the timing of Lynn's delivery, or her ache filled voice that rises and falls with ease, or even the understated arrangements and the production of this set. Whatever – the truth is, the melody starts, Lynn

Miles opens her mouth, emits a sound and all my bells start ringing. Very loudly. This eleven-song collection of Miles originals has been produced by her long time road sideman, Ian LeFeuvre. It's their first studio collaboration and a partnership, Miles would do well to cultivate further, gauging by what they have achieved here. LeFeuvre played guitar on Lynn's 1996 Rounder/Philo debut **Slightly Haunted**, but was missing from her 1998 over produced skirmish with the L.A. music scene, **Night In A Strange Town**. Here, small inspired percussive fills and Ian's [sometimes] minimalist guitar licks add something special to many of the songs. In the liner LeFeuvre even credits, a *god damned marimba*. As for the songs, where to start? How about the closing track? Take a [quiet] moment, and you might just figure out from the title that *Surrender Dorothy...* draws its inspiration from **The Wizard Of Oz**. It does. What's more, it is one of those memorable songs that you stumble across rarely. Very rarely. It's already consigned to my 10 All Time Favourite Songs. Along with [the aforementioned] melancholy, Miles injects perfectly pitched humour into the song – and if you recall those red slippers and Toto, then [if you'll excuse the pun] the words *"these shoes are too tight, the damn dogs got fleas"* fit perfectly. The narrator of the upbeat, album title cut appears to be coming apart at the seams, as she reflects on her life – *"It took me four long years to crawl down to this place, It'll take four to get back and it ain't no race."* Although the location is not named, I'd guess that it is the *city of the angels*. There isn't a single clunker in this pack, and with titles such as *Undertow*, *Black Flowers* and *Over You*, I think you will get my drift about Lynn Miles, the magnificent melancholy. And let not forget Lynn Miles creator of *memorable melodies*. It rarely gets any better than this....he hits the repeat button [yet again]. Available in the UK via **Proper Distribution**.

Pierce Pettis **"State Of Grace"** Compass Records

When Mark Heard succumbed to a heart attack in 1992, Pierce resolved to include one of Heard's compositions on each of his subsequent albums. The opening cut here, *"Rise From The Ruins"* – a gospel styled paean to mastering the act and art of survival, taken from Mark's 1990 Fingerprint album **"Dry Bone Dance"** makes four opening tracks in a row, as far as that promise is concerned. The only other cover is the penultimate cut, Dylan's *"Down In The Flood."* Originally released on the 1971 **"Greatest Hits Volume II"** collection, I guess it's Pierce's way of celebrating the Bobster's sixtieth year [2001]. The remaining material, eleven songs, add up to one of the strongest Pettis sets, to date, all of it self-penned, some with other scribes. A son of Alabama by birth, and a deeply religious man, the title track is a thematic wordplay – regarding simple acts of faith, as well as the geography of the heart of Dixie. Memories of youthful summers in the South are recalled with humour and pathos in *"Little River Canyon."* Days when *"girls would lie on terry cloth and bake,"* as the male gender looked on *"with heads more full of hormones than brains";* and when the genders got together – well, it all become a *"tangle of tongues and teeth and hair."* Moontown, co-penned with Claire Lynch, is the tale of a *"dry"* – *"no Budweiser, No Black Label,"* quiet and peaceful backwater. As the opening verse relates *"heaven is a place that everybody here believes in, We have every reason – in Moontown."* Elsewhere the tender *"Georgia Moon"* recalls the innocence

of teenage love, while *"Long Way Back Home"* an unconventional road song was co-written with Gordon Kennedy, who produced Pierce's previous Compass Records album. Produced by bassist Garry West, his wife, Alison Brown picks her banjo, while our own Clive Gregson plays guitar and Hammond B3 and adding their voices are Claire Lynch, Tim O'Brien and Jonell Mosser. By the way, Messrs. West and Brown own the Compass imprint. Chock full of insightful and thoughtful lyrics, **"State Of Grace"** gives witness to a man at the peak of his power. Available in UK record stores now.

Severin Browne **"This Twisted Road"** Subdude

Back in the early [nineteen] seventies, Severin was a staff songwriter for Motown Records and he went on to cut two albums for the, then, Detroit based label [ED. NOTE. The first was self-titled, and the second bore the title **"New Improved"**]. Following a twenty-year silence, Browne reappeared five years ago with **"From The Edge Of The World"** on the Moo Record label. The ten songs featured here are all self-penned. Well almost, as the lyrics of the hard rocking *"Angelyne"* were written by the Editor of **Performing Songwriter** magazine, Paul Zollo. In a gentler vein, the melodic and lyrically reflective CD title track, is a song about loss – with the oft repeated chorus line, *"To think there is no purpose here is such a heavy load, along this twisted road."* The song, it seems, was inspired by the April 1995, Oklahoma City bombing. *"Don't Mistake The Singer For The Song,"* the opening cut, relates how youthful innocence and eagerness to make personal discoveries about life and the world we live in, can lead to hard lessons learned. Just imagine your parents standing at their front door, calling after you *"OK, leave home while you think you still know it all"* and you've got the picture. You eventually draw the conclusion that, on this collection, Browne is questioning reasons for our presence on this earthly plane. *"Do You Think I'll Go To Heaven"* and *"Water"* being classic examples. That's not to say that all is doom and gloom on **"This Twisted Road,"** since there's a humorous undercurrent present in *"Strange Life"* and *"My Midlife Crisis."* Some of the stellar support players on this disc include Skip Edwards – piano [Dwight Yoakam], JayDee Maness – steel guitar [ex Byrds/Desert Rose Band], Freebo [ex-Bonnie Raitt]. Neat. Available on the internet from Severin's web site <http://home.flash.net/~sevman/store.html> or from **CD Baby.com**

Tim Harrison **"Sara And The Sea"** Second Avenue

Phil Ochs' prophetic *"When I'm Gone"* is the only cover on this nine song set by one of Canada's acoustic folk music giants. In fact the melancholic quality of Ochs' thirty-year old words are mirrored in much of the material featured here. Early in the opening, title cut *"A love was lost on a starry night,"* but the song ends with a positive, forward looking perspective – *"A new day comes with the morning sun, New paths she's never known."* The subject of departing this earthly plane, underpins the *"This Song's For You [Hugh's Song],"* and the CD liner bears the dedication *For Dad and Hughie*. Lyrically reflective, the listener is allowed to deduce that Hugh was a high-spirited character, and the narrator speculates he took that trait with him to the next plane – *"I bet you rocked Charon's boat"* [ED. NOTE. Charon is the boatman on the River Styx]. Prince Edward Island is the setting for *"Ghosts On PEI,"* a water locked location where the sighting of ghosts is somewhat

legendary. While the opening lines of "One Woman" acknowledges that all women are different, the narrator yearns for the spirited *one woman* who was once the love of his life, until that is - she succumbed to an *urge for going*. It's obvious from the title that "Gonna Ride That Train" is another song about moving on, in this instance in search of gainful employment. The lyric of the closing "Prayer Watching" could be interpreted, in these troubled times, as a *hymn of hope* for better times in all our lives. Available from [Folk Web](#), [Amazon.Com](#), [CDStreet](#), and [CDBaby](#).

Various "If I Had A Song....The Songs Of Pete Seeger, Vol. 2" Appleseed Records

Almost three years on from the appearance of the 2CD Volume 1, and with another year to go till the final episode of this excellent tribute series arrives, Volume 2, a single CD release, amounts to a splendid blend of some things similar and some things new. Let me explain.....
Anglophiles Anonymous aka Billy Bragg and Eliza Carthy return to *accentuate* their way through *If I Had A Hammer*, while, Jackson Browne teams up with Joan Baez for a six minute interpretation of *Gauntanamera*. Last time, Bonnie Raitt was Jackson's singing partner [on *Kisses Than Sweeter Than Wine*], while Nanci Griffith covered *Hammer*. The only Seeger tune to reappear on this collection is *Oh Had I A Golden Thread*. On this occasion, Judy Collins gives way to a *pair of youngsters*, Dar Williams and Toshi Reagon. Their low-key version is, quite frankly, stunning. Toshi's mum Bernice turned up on Volume 1 with her band, Sweet Honey In The Rock. This project may seem incestuous, but when the music is this good who cares. Considering that Steve Earle has adopted an increasingly vocal stance on the subject of the death penalty over the last few years, it's hardly surprising that he growls his way through *Walking Down Death Row*. While Seeger explains in the liner booklet that *Snow, Snow*, performed by Eric Anderson, was inspired by generations of young people deserting small town America, the lyrics could, chillingly, be applied to the purging of Jewish communities all over Europe, sixty years ago. John McCutcheon's thirty-year plus career as a musician has been, in the main, that of a folk traditionalist, yet accompanied by Corey Harris, *Talking Union* is presented as a rap song. Proving that he sees no boundaries in music, Pete interjects the word "talk" on numerous occasions throughout the latter cut, injecting an amusing edge into his otherwise serious lyric. In fact Seeger's voice can be heard on a number of cuts. Arlo Guthrie and Pete deliver the amusing road saga *This Old Car*, plus the previously unrecorded Woody Guthrie/Seeger co-write, *66 Highway Blues*. Past brushes with the work of Kim & Reggie Harris and Magpie have failed to move me, but their rendition of *Old Devil Time*, has somewhat altered that opinion. The wonderful sung/spoken closing cut, *Long May The World Go*, featuring Seeger and Larry Long, originally appeared on the latter's year 2000 Smithsonian Folkways recording of the same name. The contribution by Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer, *The Emperor Is Naked Today-O*, may be one of the shortest cuts here, but their gentle and intuitive instrumental and vocal reading makes for one of the standout tracks. Running a close second are John Wesley Harding's Rickenbacker led reading of *Words, Words, Words* and the Joel Rafael Band's *Last Train To Nuremberg*. The latter lyric implies that over the first three post WWII decades, certain *free world* governments were guilty of serious war crimes; a *truth* that has coming

glaringly to light in recent years. Available in the UK from **Koch Distribution**.

Katy Moffatt *Cowboy Girl* Shanachie

Cowboy songs have been around for as long as ranchers have raised cattle in that mystical region, the west. A sub-genre of *the music* that they generally *churn out* in those Nashville, Tennessee studios, cowboy songs have enjoyed something of a revival in the past three decades. Ian Tyson's *classic* 1986 collection *Cowboyography* probably represents the epitome of this genre. That collection included the Tyson and Tom Russell co-write *Navajo Rug*, which went on to win a Juno Award [the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy]. In due course, Russell cut a couple of cowboy song albums of his own - *Cowboy Real* [1992] and *Song Of The West - The Cowboy Collection* [1997]. Russell and Katy Moffatt met at the Kerrville Folk Festival in 1986 when they were New Folk Songwriting Contest judges. Following that meeting a song writing and recording partnership was forged which remains active to this day. Katy's fifteen-song collection, *Cowboy Girl*, was produced by David Wilkie and Scott O'Malley. O'Malley is the owner of the Western Jubilee Recording Company from whom Shanachie have leased the recording. During the [nineteen] eighties, Wilkie, a Canadian, was a support musician on many of Ian Tyson's albums, although, strangely, not the aforementioned Tyson classic. Moffatt and Wilkie have performed onstage on an occasional basis since the late [nineteen] eighties. Based on the foregoing, it's somewhat natural that *the trail* would lead to Katy Moffatt making a cowboy song album, sooner or later. It's significant, that Moffatt has avoided the pitfall of settling for the obvious, by including Ian Tyson songs. In fact, there's only one Tom Russell cover featured - *Hallie Lonigan* - the sad tale of a hard working rancher's widow who reluctantly remarries, when left to raise two young children. Proof that the genre has enjoyed universal appeal for many decades, lies in the Moffatt/Wilkie arrangement of a couple of Leadbelly songs, *When I Was A Cowboy* and *John Hardy*. Elsewhere this well-balanced collection includes Joe Ely's *Indian Cowboy*, *Me And My Uncle* by the late John Phillips, plus her brother Hugh's tale of the supernatural *The Ghost Lights Of Marfa*. Moffatt's a cappella rendition of the traditional *Texas Rangers* is a tour de force, and David Halley's tale of a horse called *Further* reflects intensely intelligent writing. As for contributions from Katy's pen, *Magdalena And The Jack of Spades* is a tale of the heroine's passion for a ruthless bandit, while the *Black-Eyed Caballero* who "*brings the starlight when he comes*" is a song inspired by a hopeless love affair. Available from **Amazon.com**.

John McCutcheon "Supper's On The Table....Everybody Come In !" Rounder Records

Released by Rounder Records in celebration of their thirtieth birthday, *Supper's On The Table....Everybody Come In !* is a compilation of recordings that McCutcheon made, during the closing decade of last century. Two of the seventeen tracks, the opening *Immigrant* and *Room At The Top Of The Stair* are previously unreleased selections which we'll return to later. In a solo career that has also spanned thirty years, and witnessed practically an equivalent number of album releases, John has applied his multitude of talents in numerous areas of acoustic music. He is acknowledged as one of the hammered dulcimer's

foremost exponents, while the, generally, self-penned material on his recordings appeals to old-time as well as contemporary fans of folk music. His much-lauded children's recordings [which work equally well for adults] have received Grammy nominations on five occasions. All of the parts that make up McCutcheon's musical canon are represented here. *Leviathan* is an instrumental, featuring dulcimer, clarinet and synthesiser, that resulted from a whale watch John attended off the Oregon coast. *Soup* – a song for cold winter days, *The Principle* – children at school discover the power of peaceful united protest, and *Calling All The Children Home* – a charming family oriented song, hail from his children's oeuvre. When it comes to presenting politically slanted material, McCutcheon rarely resorts to *in your face* tactics. McCutcheon's words simply allow the story to evolve, and in the process [if you've been listening] he subliminally implant his intended message in your subconscious. Without resorting to preaching, his 1993 song *Dead Man Walking* [for which he credits Sr. Helen Prejean] questions the principle of capital punishment, while *Jericho* recalls Mrs. Rosa Parks' Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott of December 1955. At the outset I mentioned that two previously unreleased tracks were included here. *Immigrant* bears a message that quietly asserts that all men should be brothers, with the telling summation "*I am a long, long line, One you have forgotten that is true, I am everything you knew, I am your glory.*" The small person who came to live in the *Room At The Top Of The Stairs* is an honest testament to the arrival of, and the raising of children. Available in the UK from **Proper Distribution**.

Cathryn Craig **Pigg River Symphony** Goldrush Records

The question I would pose is, are we subliminally enjoying another, albeit minor, traditional folk music revival? The soundtrack to the Coen Brothers movie **Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?** has stirred a long dormant part of America's cultural psyche. The recording had spent 24 weeks at #1 on the Country Chart. The first three volumes, and subsequent fourth volume of **Harry Smith's Anthology Of American Folk Music** were significant sellers when reissued a few years back. Nanci Griffith recorded a pair of folk music tribute discs, **Other Voices, Other Rooms** and **Other Voices, Too**, at the end of last century, and was still performing material from those collections on her 2001 UK tour. While Griffith's **Other Rooms** picked up the Best Contemporary Folk album in 1993, this year's winner in the Traditional Folk category was Dave Alvin's appropriately titled **Public Domain**. Ms Graig's contribution to the tradition, constitutes some two dozen cuts, a number of which are spoken recollections by relatives. Her ancestors hailed from Appalachia, specifically, the area where the Pigg River flows through Franklin County, Virginia. Cathryn's father, John Grady Sowder, is heard recalling being raised in Franklin County during the nineteen thirties and playing music with his father and siblings. Cathryn's uncle, ninety year old Dr. Wilson T. (Wit) Sowder, remembers [in the opening cut] that he was one of thirteen children, twelve of whom survived to become adults. A couple of the cuts – are most certainly lo-fi - dating from twenty years ago and featuring, respectively, Cathryn reprising *Cornbread & Beans* with her father, and Cathryn and her sister Susan performing *Frankie & Johnny*. The sixteen traditional songs that underpin this project, include *Carry Me Back To Old*

Virginny, Will The Circle Be Unbroken, Red River Valley and, naturally, *Amazing Grace*. Cathryn is supported in this project by a few Nashville based, UK bred ex-pats - Clive Gregson, Pat McInerney and Brian Willoughby, as well as some home-grown talent – Kathy Chiavola, Adie Gray and LeAnn Etheridge [aka Mrs. McInerney]. Recorded over three evenings, using a mini disc recorder, one microphone and a mass of acoustic instruments, in words and music, **Pigg River Symphony** is a well thought out and charmingly executed recollection of Craig's family history. Proof positive that less can be far, far more. Available in UK record stores now.

Mickey Newbury "**A Long Road Home**" Long Hall/Mountain Retreat Productions

Closing out at a tad under sixty minutes duration and opening with "In '59," an eleven minute long autobiographical *tour de force*, history may well record that "**A Long Road Home**" is the best album Newbury has constructed. In a life that is already significantly studded with musical gems, it is pleasing to hear that time has dulled none of his skills. If anything, here, his talents are more focused than ever. At the age of twenty-nine, in 1969, on his Mercury album "**Looks Like Rain**," Newbury linked the eight songs, using the sounds of *rain [and passing thunder]* – hardly unexpected considering the title of the collection, *wind chimes* and the *sounds of a passing train* [including its *lonesome whistle*]. This collection additionally features *water lapping on the seashore* and the sound of *seabirds*. Those sound effects have remained Newbury's trademark for four decades, and they even leak into the opening bars of some of the songs here – to consistently, stunning effect. OK, Jimmy Webb used sound effects to link the tracks on the Fifth Dimension's **The Magic Garden** [1968], but Newbury's interpretation witnessed the concept become almost symphonic in execution. On "**Looks Like Rain**" he even employed a sitar, a somewhat adventurous move, at that time, for an acknowledged Nashville hit songwriter. Although Nashville thought Newbury had slipped into *their mould*, he was always a rebel – and consistently light years ahead of his time. One other consistent element to be aware of is that, lyrically, Newbury possesses a penchant for things plaintive. The two minute long, second cut "I Don't Love You" exemplifies that approach. I berated Lucinda earlier this year for the paltry twenty-one words she employed on the *well under par* "Lonely Girls." Employing the same minimalist approach – here, in repeating a mere seven words Newbury conjures a piece of rare magic, a masterpiece of melancholy - *I don't love you, anymore, she said* - accompanied by the marriage of thunder, rain, an acoustic guitar and a fiddle. "Here Comes The Rain, Baby" hails from his 1968 RCA debut "**Harlequin Melodies**," and further confirms Newbury's affection for damp conditions. A thirty-second long string ensemble piece, "A Moment With Heather," leads into the bluegrass tinged "Where Are You Darlin' Tonight?", while "Maybe" which follows, bears the line "*Maybe.....I never did love you,*" and could be construed as a reply to the seven-word epic mentioned earlier. If it is classic creations that you seek, the loss of love [and the loss of, once great lives] expressed in "So Sad" is heartrending. The lines "*Elvis died in Memphis, boys, they nailed him in one hand, Haley died in Corpus Christi, died without a dime. I am dead in Tennessee, they buried me alive,*" are delivered like metal fist in a velvet glove, the final

line alluding to Newbury's rift with Nashville. Newbury has been a resident of Oregon for many years. In the title cut, the opening "*How I long to feel the salty wind off Galveston Bay in my face once again, A warm southern wind on my weather-worn skin, Perhaps I would not feel so old,*" are the words of a Houston born Texan, his days almost done, who longs for the familiarity of home. The closing, "116 Westfield Street," is a touching and fond recollection of a now dilapidated house, which in better days, had been the narrator's childhood home. For many memorable tears [and years], thanks Mickey.....you said it all again. You always have.....Available from **Village Records**.

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer "Drum Hat Buddha"
Signature Sounds Recordings

Dave Carter is, without doubt, a deeply spiritual being, a philosopher, a mathematician, and darned fine musician and song poet. Proof of the latter skill, can be heard in the twelve selections that constitute the duo's third outing. There is a laser-guided accuracy about Dave's word selection, in the images they conjure and the pictures that they paint, as the stories contained in the lines and verses of his songs evolve. Taken as entities, certain songs appear subjectively as impenetrable as the Gordian Knot, while others possess a feel good, down to earth simplicity. Given your wrapped attention, all [twelve] will fire your imagination one way or another. As for mathematics, the vocals on **Drum Hat Buddha** are shared equally, between Dave and Tracy, in a perfectly alternating series. If you take the initial six and the following half dozen cuts, as separate units, that is. When this duo appears in concert, it is as if the two become one person right before your eyes, such is the awesome empathy they share. For a performing partnership that is a mere three years young, instinctive communication at such a level is nothing less than miraculous. Tracy's playing – violin, fiddle and mandolin – and singing – has leapt another couple of notches relative to **Tanglewood Tree**. In fact, the pair appear to have approached some of these cuts, instrumentally, with almost reckless abandon....an abandon that works beautifully. **Drum Hat Buddha** was recorded at Billy Oskay's studio, Big Red, just outside of Dave 'n' Tracy's adopted home of Portland, Oregon. They were assisted in the enterprise by a number of local pickers, plus Lorne Entress [drums/percus] from Mark Erelli's band, and on vocals, Portland singer songwriter, Claire Bard. Former member and co-founder of Nightnoise, Oskay has engineered a recording that warms to the, mostly, acoustic instruments used. So what of Dave's latest epics....in the opening track, "Ordinary Town," the small town *saint* who encounters resistance among the city fathers, becomes living proof that – two millennia since Christ, little has changed, in the way of acceptance, for a person who acts/thinks differently. Denison Dam stands at the mouth of Lake Texoma, near Oklahoma City. It was the scene of a disastrous flood in 1957, and is the setting for "Tillman County." The physical union of a man and a woman occurs in the opening verse of "Disappearing Man." Sadly, by the end of this tale, the heroine's wishes for a child remain unfulfilled, as she lives out her remaining days, alone. In 1995, ala Kerouac, Dave Carter drove from Oregon to Tennessee, and spent a week in Nashville. He performed on Writer's Night at the songwriter's club, Douglas Corner. While the foregoing journey may have been the underlying inspiration for "The Power And Glory," it is not a biographical song. It closes with the resigned, but

telling, conclusion "*the power and the glory ain't all that they tell you.*" "236-6132" and "Highway 80 [She's A Mighty Good Road]," constitute Dave's contribution to light hearted, easier listening – aka *let's kick up our heels and have some fun* – on to this collection. The former is an infectious, happy go lucky love song, while the latter is a toe tappin' trucking tune. In a set that is riddled with poetic [and for that matter, cinematic] images, "41 Thunderer" is a classic. The thunderer, it appears, was Billy the Kid's handgun of choice. "*She slid like a viper from her tooled leather dress,*" refers, of course [and what were you thinking?], to the holster where that gun lay slumbering, awaiting its next call to *dispense death*. You detect from the title that, "Gentle Arms Of Eden" is a song about the creation of life on this sphere. It goes on to focus upon how, as mankind has multiplied, our species has affected [adversely] the ecological balance of this planet. Merlin first appears in the lyric of "I Go Like The Raven," and the melody skips along at a breakneck speed. That enigmatic character from Arthurian legend resurfaces in "Merlin's Lament," a tale of potent love and the resulting loss of power. In "Love, The Magician" a "*fair-haired desdemona and her ramblin' guitar boy*" are being pursued by her father. Using the Native American concept of *shape shifting*, on those occasions when her father comes close to finding them, all he sees are two otters, and in a later sighting, two lovebirds. The rhythm and words of the closing "Gentle Soldier Of My Soul" is reminiscent, at times, of the 23rd Psalm, while subjectively it is a tender love song. So there you have it.....by the way, Dudley Moore was wrong, 10 is totally possible, and **Drum Hat Buddha** is one of hell of a poetic 10. Available from **Fish Records** or www.signature-sounds.com

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Kwik Komments

I've found myself in the invidious position recently of having way too many albums to comment on, and little or no space in which to do it. The purpose of this section is to overcome that problem, and give at least an outline comment on each title. Albums reviewed in this section could easily have been featured as a major review. It was merely a case of those old imponderables – time and space.....

Clive Gregson "Comfort And Joy" Fellside Records

Nash-Brit Clive, king of the pop hook does it again. Compass have yet to release this disc Stateside.

Fred Eaglesmith "Ralph's Last Show" Signature Sounds

2CD, 25 cut *live* recording. Long-time bass man, Ralph Schipper, plays his last show with the Flying Squirrels.

Various "Poet – A Tribute To Townes Van Zandt" Pedernales/Free Falls

Fifteen songs that define one man and his genius. Feat. Nanci, Willie, Emmylou, Guy Clark n' much more.

Jon Ims "Esoterica" no label

Disappointing isn't the word. What went wrong?

Rani Arbo & Daisy Mayhem "Cocktail Swing" Signature Sounds

Acoustic jazz, come swing, come – well, pretty much everything. Arbo formerly of Salamander Crossing. Neat.

Gene Clark **"Gypsy Angel – Demos 1983/1990"** Evangeline

6 of 12 songs not heard previously. They are demos, and the sound quality is variable !!! aka *not quite up to scratch*.

Various **"The River 92.5 FM"** Rounder

Live in the studio – Cry 3, Ani, Zevon, Patty Larkin n' more.

Don Schlitz **"Live At The Bluebird Café"** American Originals

With guitar and voice, Nashville country *hit maker* performs some of his best.

Don Henry **"Live At The Bluebird Café"** American Originals

Sixteen reasons why he's one of Nashville's finest and most humorous songwriters. This album is fun, fun, fun.....I've always loved "Harley."

Various **"Concerts For A Landmine Free World"** Vanguard

Emmylou, Nanci, Kristofferson, Earle and seven other roots artists perform on charity album. You must support this one.

Steven Fromholz **"A Guest In Your Heart"** Felicity
Steven Fromholz **"Come On Down To Texas For A While – The Anthology 1969/1991"** Raven Records

The newie – good-time, waltzes n' humour from Fromholz. The retrospective – 22 kinds of heaven, though it never got better than "Texas Trilogy."

Laura Nyro **"Angel In The Dark"** Rounder

New studio recordings – 16 of them – from 1994/95. This soulful Angel left us in April 1997.

Tony Price **"Midnight Pumpkin"** Antone's Records

Great new album, that rings many changes. Sadly, one of the late Champ Hood's last appearances on disc.

Christine Lavin **"The Subway Series"** christinelavin.com records
Christine Lavin **"Final Exam In Eco*Bi*Astro*So*Phystor *Fi*osophy 101"** christinelavin.com records

Both *live* albums, featuring songs old and new. **Subway** was recorded at Fordham University, while **Final Exam** was recorded onboard ship somewhere near Nassau.

Various **"Texas Songwriters"** Silverwolf
Various **"End Of The Century"** Silverwolf

Latest [and last ?] Kerrville discs from Silverwolf imprint, featuring recordings from 1997-1999. Snap these up, while they are still available.

Rex Foster **"Buffalo Zen"** Agarita

Wonderful comfort from Comfort's greatest adopted son. An eight track disc produced by Peter Rowan.

Jennifer Warnes **"The Well"** The Music Force

After ten years silence, a stunning return from *the voice*. One of her finest, featuring eleven tracks, with five new Warnes tunes including the stunning title cut co-written with Texan, Doyle Bramhall II. Da girl sure bin to da *well*.....

Bruce Robinson **"Country Sunshine"** Boars Nest Records

"What Would Willie Do" is a misjudgement in a set that is otherwise down to earth and wholesome.

Various **"Songcatcher"** Vanguard

An inspired by movie traditional soundtrack, ala **"Oh Brother"** feat. Rosanne, Iris [she's in the movie], Emmylou and more. Sadly Tom Russell's movie song is missing !!!

Charlie Robison **"Step Right Up"** Columbia/Lucky Dog

Some great ones, a few clunkers. Just about a winner.

The Highwaymen **"Live Texas Radio"** 3rd Coast Music

1990 ten cut *live* cassette now on CD, plus six extra tracks.

Kimberly M'Carver **"Cross The Danger Line"** Kocker Records

Seven years silence and then wham bam, a cracker.

Greg Trooper **"Straight Down Rain"** Eminent Records

Another sterling set of songs from the much underrated Trooper.

Catie Curtis **"My Shirt Looks Good On You"** Rykodisc

Pleasant and unchallenging album. Fourteen tracks in all.

Radney Foster **"Are You Ready For The Big Show"** Dualtone

Live at Continental Club, Austin. Look out for special interactive version with extra tracks. Darned fine.

Various **"Tavelin' Texas"** Institute For The History Of Texas Music

Eighteen cuts by Texas musicians including an unreleased Jimmy LaFave track, "Walking Away."

Chuck Pyle **"A Few Miles Back – Volume 1"** Bee 'N' Flower Music

A collection of unreleased early career songs. You can tell.

Rosie Flores **"Speed Of Sound"** Eminent Records

Rockabilly *and more*. Best cuts are the *and more* tracks.

The Mamas & The Papas **"All The Leaves Are Brown – The Golden Era Collection"** MCA America

The first four albums – *the classics* – all on 2CD's. In their time they defined, *perfection*.

Various **"Forever Young – A British Folk Tribute To Bob Dylan"** Delta

An hour for Bob's 60th. The known – Fairports, Albions and Magna Carta. The unknown – Moses Wiggins and 2 Dogs ? For Dylan completists only.

Various **"Are You Ready For The Country"** Warner Bros.

Curious 2CD mix, with *country* being translated liberally. Accompanies Pete Doggett's book of same name. Featuring Byrds to Lampchop and many alternate country stops between.

Casey Neill Trio **"Skree"** Appleseed Recordings

Stirring Celtic sounds out of Portland, Oregon.

A Kerrverts Festival 50.



There is a reason, There is a rhyme,
There is a season, There is a time,
and then, there's the latest KERRVERTS FESTIVAL 50.

1. The Dutchman **JUAREZ** feat. **MICHAEL SMITH & BARBARA BARROW** "Juarez" Decca DL75189 [1970]. #
2. The Way To Calvary **ROD MacDONALD** "Highway To Nowhere" Shanachie 8001 [1992]. #
3. Years **BETH NIELSEN CHAPMAN** "Beth Nielsen Chapman" Reprise 9 26172-2 [1990]. #
4. So Sad **MICKEY NEWBURY** "A Long Road Home" Long Hall/Mountain Retreat MR 1017-2 [2001]. #
5. In '59 **MICKEY NEWBURY** "A Long Road Home" Long Hall/Mountain Retreat MR 1017-2 [2001]. #
6. Yarrington Town **MICKIE MERKENS** "Texas Summer Nights, Vol. 1" Potato Satellite PS2-1000 [1983]. #
7. Waiting For The Rain **KEITH GREEINGER & WATER** "Back To You" Wind River Music WRM002 [2001]. #
8. A Summer Wind, A Cotton Dress **RICHARD SHINDELL** "Courier" Signature Sounds SIG 1270 [2002]. #
9. Sligo Honeymoon 1946 **TERRY CLARKE** "The Shelly River" Catfish KATCD208FP [1991/2001].
10. 236-6132 **DAVE CARTER & TRACY GRAMMER** "Drum Hat Buddha" Signature Sounds SIG 1266 [2001]. #
11. Hills Of Old Juarez **TOM RUSSELL** "Borderland" Hightone HCD 8132 [2001]. #
12. I'm On Fire **TOM RUSSELL BAND** "All Around These Northern Towns" Norsk Gram 530515 2 [2000]. §
13. Surrender Dorothy..... **LYNN MILES** "Unravel" CRS CSCD 1022 [2001]. §
14. The Great Imposter **TERENCE MARTIN** "Waterproof" Good Dog Records no index no. [2000]. #
15. Georgia Moon **PIERCE PETTIS** "State Of Grace" Compass Records 7 4315 2 [2001]. #
16. Storms Are On The Ocean **CASEY NEILL TRIO** "Portland West" Appleseed APR CD 1044 [2001]. #
17. My Father's House **CATHRYN CRAIG** "Pigg River Symphony" Goldrush GOLDCD007 [2001]. §
18. Manzanar **TOM PAXTON & ANNE HILLS** "Under American Skies" Appleseed APR Cd 1052 [2001]. #
19. Blue Wind Blew **VARIOUS / THE FLATLANDERS** "Poet - A Tribute To Townes Van Zandt" Free Falls FFE-7019-2 [2001]. #
20. Once And For All **GREG TROOPER** "Straight Down Rain" Eminent EM-25060-2 [2001]. #
21. Return To Me **KIMBERLY M'CARVER** "Cross The Danger Line" Kocker Records KR 1068 [2001]. #
22. Look AT You Now **BRUCE HENDERSON** "Beyond The Pale" Southbound Records SBDCD19 [2000]. §
23. It's Raining **JENNIFER WARNES** "The Well" The Music Force SD8960 [2001]. #
24. Not A Drop Of Rain **ROBERT EARL KEEN** "Gravitational Forces" Lost Highway 170 198-2 [2001]. #
25. If We Had No Moon **CHRISTINE LAVIN** "The Subway Series" Christine Lavin Records CL006 [2001]. #
26. Travelling Through This Part Of You **NANCI GRIFFITH** "Clock Without Hands" Elektra 7559-62660-2 [2001]. #
27. Don't Know If I'm Comin' Or Goin' **ROSIE FLORES** "Speed of Sound" Eminent EM-25090-2 [2001]. #
28. Hush **CATIE CURTIS** "My Shirt Looks Good on You" Rykodisc RCD 10613 [2001]. #
29. John Riley **ROGER McGUINN c/w JUDY COLLINS** "Treasures From the Folk Den" Appleseed APR CD 1046 [2001]. #
30. Fall On Me **CRY CRY CRY** "The River 92.5FM - Version 2.0" Rounder/Philo 11671-8048-2 [2000]. #
31. Song For Molly **LUCY KAPLANSKY** "Every Single Day" Red House RHR CD 156 [2001]. #
32. Frances O'Connor **CLIVE GREGSON** "Comfort & Joy" Fellside Records FE164 [2001]. §
33. Let It Be Me **LAURA NYRO** "Angel In The Dark" Rounder 11661-3176-2 [2001]. #
34. Sixteen **BRUCE ROBISON** "Country Sunshine" Boars Nest EBN25 [2001]. #
35. Who Needs Tears **TONI PRICE** "Midnight Pumpkin" Antone's Records TMG-ANT 0052 [2001]. #
36. Texas Rangers **KATY MOFFATT** "Cowboy Girl" Shanachie 6054 [2001]. #
37. John Deere **FRED EAGLESMITH** "Ralph's Last Show" Signature Sounds SIG 1265 [2001]. #
38. John O'Reilly **CHARLIE ROBISON** "Step Right Up" Sony Columbia/Lucky Dog CK 61404 [2001]. #
39. Tower Song **VARIOUS / NANCI GRIFFITH** "Poet - A Tribute To Townes Van Zandt" Free Falls FFE-7019-2 [2001]. #
40. Un Canadien Errant **IAN & SYLVIA** "The Complete Vanguard Studio Recordings" Vanguard 196/99 - 2 [2001]. #
41. Last Train To Nuremberg **VAR. / JOEL RAFAEL BAND** "The Songs Of Pete Seeger : Vol. 2" Appleseed APR CD [2001]. #
42. Love Like This **TERRI HENDRIX** "Live In San Marcos" Wilory Records WR 30004 [2001]. #
43. Blue Moon Over Texas **REX FOSTER** "Buffalo Zen" Agrita Records 6-70040-2 [2001]. #
44. Nobody Wins **RADNEY FOSTER** "Are You Ready For The Big Show" Dualtone 803020-1102-2 [2001]. #
45. Texas Trilogy **STEVE FROMHOLZ** "Come On Down To Texas For Awhile" Raven RVCD-116 [2001].
46. Harley **DON HENRY** "Live At The Bluebird Café" American Originals AMO-4007-2 [2001]. #
47. Buttons Of Your Skin **THE HIGHWAYMEN** "Live Texas Radio" 3rd Coast Music no index no. [1990/2001]. #
48. Do You Think I'll Go To Heaven **SEVERIN BROWNE** "This Twisted Road" Subdude 49093-2 [2001]. #
49. I Am **RICHARD SHINDELL** Internet Only Dowload - go to News Section of www.richardshindell.com #
50. Heal In The Wisdom **BOBBY BRIDGER** "Live At The Kerrville Folk Festival 1986" (cassette only, no index no.) [1987]. #



All albums released in the UK, unless marked. US releases marked #. European releases marked §. Introductory rhyme taken from the Bobby Bridger song, "Heal In The Wisdom" - The Kerrville Folk Festival Anthem.

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Editorial.

With the New Year upon us, there are a number of things to look forward to. In March, Mark Errelli releases his third Signature Sounds album **"The Memorial Hall Recordings."** Rumours are that we have something special to look forward to. There's been much muttering lately, about a Wisconsin lad named Jeffrey Foucault. Sadly he didn't make this issue, but I'll be investigating his debut album, **"Miles from the Lightning,"** in a couple of weeks time. You'll notice reviews in this issue of new albums by Lori McKenna and Kris Delmhurst. It seems that there are a number of up and coming young writers working in the Boston area at the moment. I haven't yet heard an album by any of this group that truly has knocked me on my ass, but it seems the future is ripe with possibilities. Watch this space.

By way of a reissue, but not quite, May brings a new version of Dave Carter's 1995 debut solo album **"Snake Handlin' Man."** This time the disc is a collaboration with his soul mate, Tracy Grammer, and a couple of the original tracks have given way to new material. This album, a self-release, is part one of their plan to eliminate Dave's back catalogue of unrecorded material.

Americans set the date out slightly differently to us [ie. month, day, year]. On that basis, it's hardly surprising that there have been a rash of what songwriters are now calling 9/11 Songs. One of the first that I was privileged to hear, performed live in late October, was Richard Shindell's "I Am." Currently that song is available as a download from the News Section of his web site www.richardshindell.com at a cost of \$5.00/download with all monies going to rebuilding the transmitter mast for National Public Radio Station WNYC. The original mast was located on the North Tower of the WTC, the first building to be hit. Richard intimated to me in interview last October that he feels he will write more 9/11 songs. A resident of Buenos Aires these days, no doubt Richard has had to deal with problems closer to home of late.

I heard the second and third song in the 9/11 cycle, in Woodstock, a few days after Richard's. In truth Tom Pacheco began work on the song titled "Heroes" in the Spring of 2000, but never thought that it was complete until

he added the final verse concerning Flight 93. Tom hopes that his other 9/11 song "In A World Without America" will be issued as a charity single in the near future. Tom's postponed Fall 2001 UK Tour is being rescheduled for March/April this year. It seems that a new solo album may be available for that tour; certainly soon after the tour. When Lucy Kaplansky was here for what is becoming her annual December tour, she said that she was in the process of writing a 9/11 song. Her album **"Every Single Day"** was a 9/11 release and she was at home in New York on the fateful day. Thankfully neither Lucy, her husband Rick, or any of their immediate family were affected by the disaster.

Searching farther afield on the internet, there has been a swathe of 9/11 songs made available as downloads [mostly for free]. The aforementioned Mark Errelli's 9/11 song is titled "The Only Way." "I hear An Owl" is Carrie Newcomer contribution. The Suzzy and Maggie Roche collaboration **"Zero Church"** will be with us in a matter of weeks. It features Suzzy's poignant "New York City." I don't think that it's timely to make on any comment on the relevance/value etc. [or not] of these songs, as the events that caused them to be written are too fresh in our minds. Suffice to know, for the moment [if we need them], that they are out there.

Jeff Hardy [1955 – 2001]

Jeff Hardy, brother of Jack Hardy was lost in the 11th September attack on the World Trade Center. Jeff worked for Cantor Fitzgerald, a broker-dealer, as an executive chef on the 101st floor of the North Tower. Jeff and his upright bass was a regular feature of New York stages through the eighties. He played on many of Jack's albums and toured with his older brother for eleven years. Jeff appeared on many Fast Folk Musical Magazine recordings [1982 – 1997]. Subsequently, he cut back on performing to concentrate on his culinary career. He leaves a wife, who he married in 1987, and two young sons.

Regarding the contents of this issue, and in no particular order, thanks are due to **Rod Kennedy, Dave Carter, Tracy Grammer and Alpha Ray.** This issue is dedicated to the memory of those who passed on 11th September 2001 and also the late, great DesChamp Hood.

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You can also find us at :

Web Page [sadly not yet posted] :

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Eden's first rain 12 July 1983

fell quietly I'm sure,
not like these fury - filled menaces
that thrash and flash
and tear into the limbs
of a Central Texas night,
but the slow - falling
gentle dripping hum
of a new morning rain - -
the kind to make the hills
still themselves in misty green
and know that they are



Alpha Ray