



Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen **"Being There"** Compass Rose Music

Gillette and Mangsen's fourth duo recording **"Being There"** was, pretty much, recorded at home in their Bennington, Vermont studio – with additions made nationwide at four other studios. This collection opens with Steve's "Hurricane," a recollection of the 1935 Labour Day storm that struck Southern Florida and Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway, a structure that once crossed over 150 miles of open-ocean [+]. The railroad was completed in 1913 but when the 1935 'storm of the century' struck it was almost totally washed away, resulting in the loss of *"four hundreds souls on Mr Flagler's train."* Rudyard Kipling's poem "The Way Through The Woods" appeared in his work **"Rewards And Fairies"** [1910]. Cindy's "The Road Through The Woods" is based on Kipling's original, and was also inspired by the 1972 version recorded by the late English folk singer Peter Bellamy [\*]. The trad. arr. instrumental "Concertina Garden Medley" – consisting of "Behind The Bush In The Garden"/ "Galway Hornpipe" / "The Flowers Of Edinburgh" - is performed on concertina by Cindy, supported by Steve's acoustic guitar.

"The Kid With The Comic Book" penned by Canadian musician/record producer Trevor Mills appeared on his 2004, four-song CD EP of the same name. While it unfolds as a humorous tale – with the aim of scoring an A in a school science project, 'the kid' purchases *"a planet with a species on the brink of developing intelligence"* - it is actually a deadly serious comment on mankind's evolution on Earth and 'his' misuse of the planet and its resources. The project aim is *"To populate a planet with intelligent beings, Who can live in a self-sustaining way."* I won't reveal how 'the kid' gets on. "Odd Man Out" is the first of two songs credited to the Wisconsin based duo Lou & Peter Berryman, the other being "Homelessness." You might guess from the title of the former that it references some quirky old guy but, in truth, it's a word game song. For instance, one of the more accessible examples is *"SE NW NE north by northwest due north due east Drew Barrymore due south."* As for the other Berryman tune it throws the spotlight on the thin line between having a roof over your head, and not – one of mankind's ever present diseases.

Steve, Cindy and Jack Williams are Kerrville Folk Festival regulars, so there's one connection. In July 2004 the threesome organised and led a cruise 'with music' from Vancouver to Fairbanks, Alaska. I guess Messrs. Gillette and Mangsen heard William's "High Cotton" on a number of occasions. The song title is a term much used in the Southern states [of America], and references 'the best of times.' Focusing initially on rural daybreak, Jack's lyric does precisely that. While it's acknowledged that on July 20, 1969, at 10:56 p.m. EDT, quarter of a million miles from Earth, astronaut Neil Armstrong may have said *"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind,"* Steve's light-hearted "Mr. O'Reilly" highlights what else Armstrong may have said – and the reason why - prior to becoming the first human to walk on another planet. "Nola" the second instrumental here – it's a fun little tune that you'll recognize instantly - was penned by Felix Arndt [1889-1918]. Despite his name, Felix Arndt was a United States bred pianist and composer, although he could claim descendancy from Napoleon III, via his mother Countess Fevrier.

As a segue, the duo perform the French Canadian folksong "J'Entends Le Moulin" [#] with the late Canadian fiddler Graham Townsend's spirited arrangement of the instrumental "Two-Step D'Armand," and it's followed by Steve's third original in this set. "The Vermont Waltz" is a love song to the ground below and the sky above, in the state Gillette now calls home. Credited to Brian Cutean, a Kerrville

Festival regular, the closing track “Darkness Comes” features additional lyrics by Steve Gillette. In truth it’s an interpretation of the Cutean [aka QTN] composition that first appeared on “**Heartheearth**” [2004], and what Gillette has created could be interpreted as a spiritually centred love song.

**Note.**

[+] – Steve got the idea for the song from Les Standiford’s book “**The Last Train To Paradise**” [Crown Publishing , 2002, ISBN 0609607480].

[\*] – Bellamy’s interpretation of Kipling’s “The Way Through the Woods” appeared on his 1972 Argo Records album “**Merlin’s Island Of Gramarye.**”

[#] – The title translates as “I Hear The Mill.”

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

**Arthur Wood.**

Kerrville Kronikles 07/06.