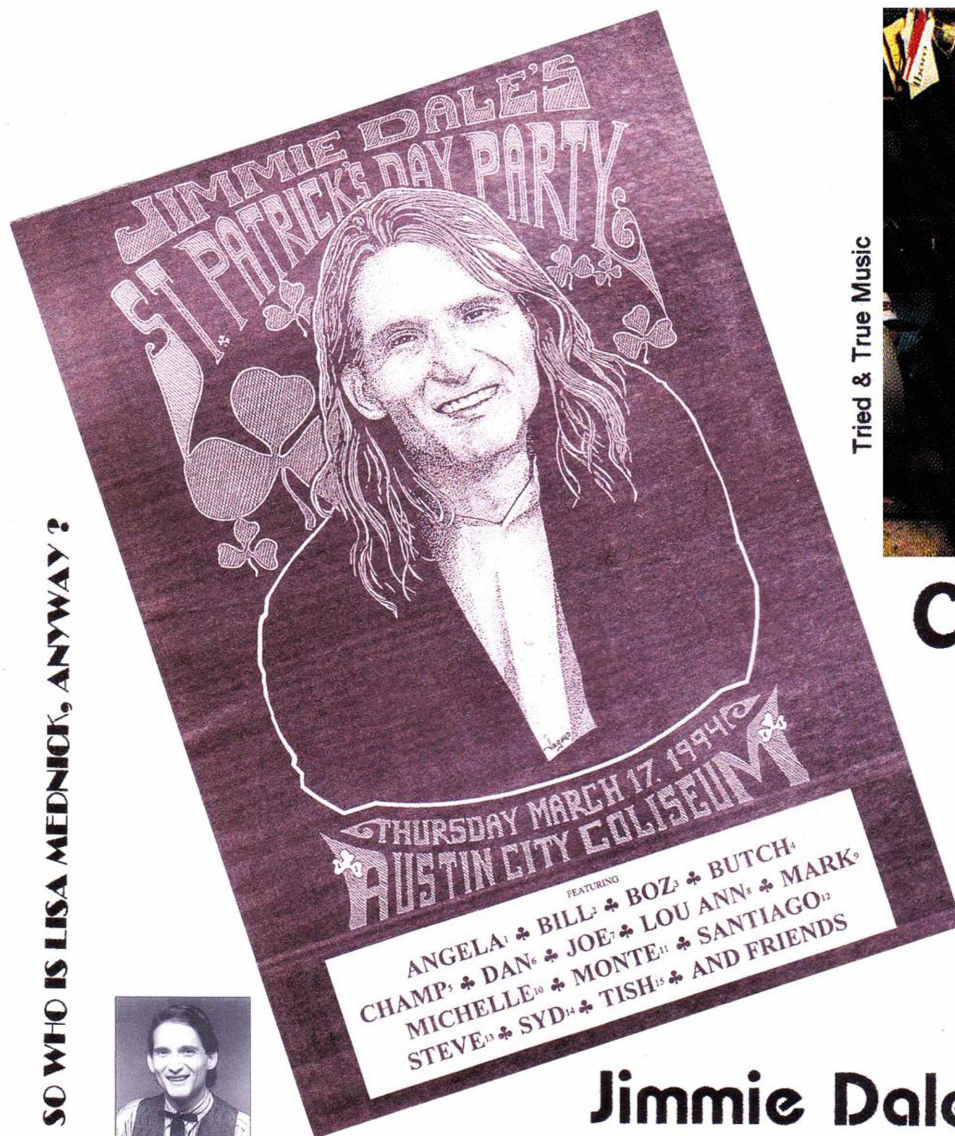


KERRVILLE KRONIKLE

No.17



SO WHO IS LISA MEDNICK, ANYWAY?



Tried & True Music



Chris Wall



Jimmie Dale Gilmore

DEADISC

Kerrville-kompacts,
kassettes & other
koincidences.

SO WHO IS JO CAROL PIERCE, ANYWAY?

They're New -

KWIK KUTS

KWIK KUTS INCL. The Denny's, Dave Bonney, Jan Matthews, Townes Van Zandt, Sarah Goslee Reed, Gordon Lightfoot, Billy Stone, John Flynn, Woodstock Mountain Revue, Meredith Louise Miller, Jerry Allen.

Kompact Reviews incl. ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO, JIMMY LA FAVE, RICHARD DOBSON, BILL MILLER, BILL & BONNIE HEARNE, BUTCH HANCOCK, DAVID HALLEY, JOE ELY, THOMAS ANDERSON, TONI PRICE, CHERYL WHEELER, BILL MORRISSEY, CHRISTINE LAVIN, "AMERICAN IMPRESSIONIST SONGWRITERS," "CIRCLES IN THE STREAM, VOL. 1," "PASTURES OF PLENTY - AN AUSTIN CELEBRATION OF WOODY GUTHRIE," DAVIS ACKLES, PETE NELSON, "ON A WINTERS NIGHT," VANCE GILBERT, VICKY PRATT KEATING, JIMMIE DALE GILMORE/MUDHONEY, 5 CHINESE BROTHERS, PIERCE PETTIS, ANNE HILLS, MICHAEL SMITH, STEVE YOUNG, ELIZA GILKYSON, ROSIE FLORES, PATTY LARKIN, DON MCCALISTER JR., SHAKE RUSSELL/DANA COOPER/JACK SAUNDERS, TAMARACK, JANE SIBERRY, DAVE MALLETT AND BILL STAINES.

6th. Year



While the eleven cuts on "Gravity" were performed by an electric band, Alejandro Escovedo varies the instrumentation throughout "Thirteen Years." For me, 13 is an appropriate number, since I was lucky enough to be born on the 13th day of a particular month. What's relevant here - this is around my 13th attempt to review what became my Album of '93. Alejandro's work, isn't that easy to sum up in words. There is a formidable and indefinable energy which surrounds and pervades it. In his review, a friend of mine noted that the general musical aura of "Thirteen Years" was akin to that created by Arthur Lee's Love. He did not however define precisely which version of that legendary band. I'd say that it has to be the lineup which created that sixties masterpiece "Forever Changes." The four self-titled, quasi-classical orchestral interludes employed by Alejandro on "Thirteen Years," primarily influenced that conclusion. Produced once more by Steve Bruton, the lyrical darkness which pervaded much of the "Gravity" album, has given way to glimpses of daylight on "Thirteen Years." The first, full song "Ballad of the Sun and the Moon" attests to that. Lyrically, the commitment to "Try, Try, Try" becomes a resigned "Way It Goes" and deteriorates into "Losing Your Touch" [the backbeat generated here, could have been taken from a Stones backing track] in the opening of the three, song segments. On the atmospheric and angst ridden title song, Alejandro's vocal is supported by a string quartet. The same effect is later repeated on "Tell Me Why" and "She Towers Above." Tom Canning's piano verges into an almost baroque sounding harpsichord on the latter cut. The whole affair reaches a climax on another Stones sounding effort, "The End." An appropriate place to close. This essential piece of work is available in the UK from Topic Records/Direct Distribution, 50 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3EF.

Now and again, you stumble across a recording where every damned, single piece fits. On "Highway Trance," Jimmy LaFave's latest poetic gemstones are stunning, being a mix of raucous red dirt [blues tinged] rockers and gentle, perceptive ballads. The players definitely lost all their socks by the time these recording sessions were over. Raised in neighbouring Oklahoma, LaFave returned to the state of his birth and settled in Austin, Texas circa 1985. In those days, he merged his nights performing on the stages of Sixth Street clubs, with days spent dragging sixteen wheels down the long and winding road [OK, Interstate]. With the onset of the ninties and the passing of an assortment of pickers and drummers, LaFave's Night Tribe evolved into one of the tightest quintets in a town blessed many times over with classy musicians. On "Highway Trance" the cast of supporting players is drawn from Austin's best, including Gene Elders (fiddle) and Brian Wood (acoustic guitar). Back in 1988 Jimmy cut the damned fine, cassette only "Highway Angels.....Full Moon Rain" at Charlie Hollis' late and much lamented acoustic h[e]aven, Mid Austin Recording Service [aka MARS]. Going on to cut an album for the Tomato label with the legendary Bob Johnston at the control desk, the result seems destined to remain concealed for eternity in a

Stateside vault. 1992 witnessed the appearance of LaFave's live extravaganza and partial tribute to his songwriting hero, Bobby Zimmerman, "Austin Skyline." Following that, there were plans for a Pete Anderson produced disc. In the end, Jimmy favoured the prospect of a personal crusade in search of his own aural Holy Grail. "Highway Trance" confirms that the expedition achieved a triumphant conclusion. The fifteen tunes on this self produced collection were composed by Jimmy, except for the Kevin Welch ballad "Early Summer Rain," and the rowdy "Austin After Midnight" co-written with previous LaFave collaborator, Bob Childers. Here's just a few reasons to be ecstatic - the politically incorrect sexual references on "Shakin' In Your Hips," if you read a good book you never want the words to end, the angst in Elders' fiddle on the outro to "Give Your Sweet Love To Me," the sacred tears raining down, David Webb's cheesy 60's sounding Farfisa on the bluesy "Leslie, Talk To Me," my perception of heaven - aka "Austin After Midnight" - and any other time of every day for that matter, those gypsy patterns in every line of your face, Larry Wilson's chunky blues guitar throughout, and so own and own ad infinitum.....the cover artwork and the picture CD.....most of all, it's the words and melodies of Jimmy LaFave. Jon Landau, Jon Landau the catchphrase to recall.....! [ED. NOTE. Although you might know your Springsteen thoroughly, you would have to have been raised on a childhood diet of UK commercial television to fully grasp the closing sentence]. Available after May '94 from Topic Records/Direct Distribution. Undoubtedly the current frontrunner for my Album of '94.

Once upon the late sixties, Richard Dobson and Townes Van Zandt were residents [and became pals, as in "Amigos"] in that Texas Gulf Coast city, Houston. In those days, quarter of a century back, Townes had just recorded his debut album in Nashville. It's worth noting that the sessions were co-produced by Music City legend, Jack Clement. In the ensuing decade, Townes cut half a dozen more albums containing original compositions. Since then it's been a diet of live recordings, mostly retreading already familiar ground, apart from the "At My Window" set in 1987. The fifteen songs included in Don Ricardo's tribute "Amigos - Richard Dobson sings Townes Van Zandt," includes songs such as "Quicksilver Dreams Of Maria" from Townes' eponymous debut "For The Sake Of The Song" through to the closing cut "Still Looking For You," which turned up on "At My Window." Dobson's typically easy-going rendition of those Van Zandt classics "Poncho & Lefty," "White Freight Liner Blues," and "Snowing On Raton" form the backbone of this set of fourteen cover tunes. Supported by Susie Monick, his musical partner for the last five years, the remaining support players number new boys, Danny Rowland (guitar), Jimmie Gray (bass) and Boots Hill (drums). Available originally on cassette from Richard Dobson, P.O. Box 120042, Nashville, Tennessee 37212, Brambus released a CD version of "Amigos," at the beginning of this year. Meanwhile, news has just arrived of a new "live" Dobson CD titled "Mankind" from the Sundown label in Austin, Texas. Review in the next Kronikle.

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Jimmie Dale Gilmore

The interview with Jimmie Dale Gilmore took place by telephone on Thursday evening [UK time] 26th August 1993. Jimmie was at his home in Austin, Texas, while yours truly was at Kronikle Mission Control. Thanks to Spike Hyde formerly of Warner/Elektra UK and Craig Baguley at Country Music People for making all the arrangements.

Where did you cut your fourth solo album.

We did it in Nashville at the Woodland Studios.

You cut your first and third solo albums in and around Austin, while your second was cut in Nashville. It's almost like you're getting into a Texas n' Tennessee groove.

Of course, remember I also cut The Flatlanders album in Nashville, so this is really my third Nashville album. The main reason for cutting the new album there was economic, because once we settled on Emory [Gordy] as the producer - what it is, Emory has moved his own little team of musicians into Nashville. Even though they are all now Nashville studio guys, they are originally from all over the place. Emory got to know them over the years, from different bluegrass bands and so on that he was in.

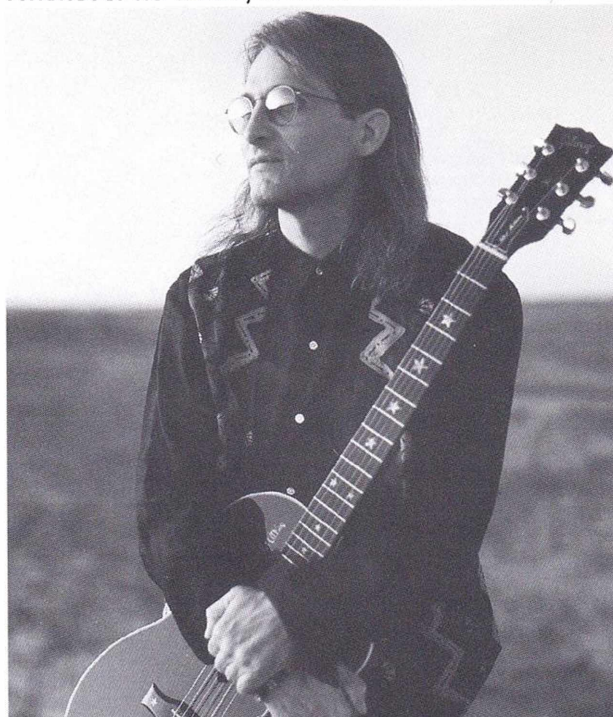
You've used a different producer on each of your studio albums. Has that been a deliberate policy.

I like to experiment. There are in fact, several reasons. The first thing with Emory, was his credentials. He has been associated with so many different things, that I've really liked over the years. All the way from real hardcore bluegrass stuff, to rhythm n' blues and rock n' roll - things that he has either played on or produced. You remember the original Hot Band? Most of that band is on my new album. For example, James Burton and Glen D. Hardin. Getting back to your question. The reason for doing it in Nashville, was because I wanted Emory to produce it. The reason for doing it with Emory, was because that opened up so many doors to new possibilities musically.

How did you meet Emory.

That's an odd story. My lawyer who is based in Los Angeles, is Seth Lichtenstein. I've become real good friends with him, and he is also a musician - I only discovered that recently. Seth is also a close friend of Emory's. A couple of years ago, Seth suggested that I should consider working with Emory sometime. He reasoned that Emory was thoroughly familiar with acoustic music and with working with vocalists. Back then, I really didn't take the suggestion too seriously. In a sense, I sort of thought of Emory as being out of my league. Sort of in another, higher echelon. Anyway Seth, my lawyer friend, kept talking about working with Emory. He told me that he had Emory's phone number and that Emory wouldn't mind if I called. Finally, I made the call. Emory told me that he wasn't doing very much these days, and was not taking on many projects. He asked to hear my demo tapes. Two weeks

later he called me back and said "I want to do this. I really like your music." That was a good start, from the point of view of making me feel like he was taking it very seriously. He and Patty Lovelace, who is his wife, have an apartment in Nashville. He was born and raised in Georgia, and he has a little farm down there, where he spends a lot of his time these days. Whenever he works, he relocates to Nashville.



Warner Elektra Music: Keith Carter

Jimmie Dale Gilmore, 1993

The album contains four of your own compositions. The opening cut and the last three tracks. Was that sequencing of your songs on the album deliberate.

No, not really. We didn't record them in any particular order either. The sequence by which we cut them in the studio, was purely conditioned by Emory's planning around who was going to be at the sessions on particular days - and who he wanted to be on each song. He really planned that out meticulously. The actual sequencing of the songs on the album was done by David Bither [ED. NOTE Head of the Elektra label in the US]. Almost like a third party standing to one side. By that stage, Emory and I were so close to the project and had heard the songs so many times, that we didn't have any perspective. David put the sequence together, then Emory and I listened to it, over a period of a week or so, and both agreed that we liked it. It was a group effort, except that we didn't change anything. There was no meaning attached to the order in which the songs turn up on the album.

You've already mentioned a couple of the musicians who played on the new album. Did I detect Richard Bowden's fiddle on one of the tracks.

No. But I know what you mean though, because there is a similarity in style. The fiddles you hear, feature Glen Duncan and Stuart Duncan. There were so many players on the album. The drummer on most of the album was Harry Stinson. Wes Starr from Austin did however play on, "I Was The One" and "Mobile Line."

Emory played bass on the entire set. Now get this line up on guitar, it's amazing. Richard Bennett, Gary Nicholson, Steve Gibson and Chris Leuzinger. They played in different configurations throughout the sessions.

So you had the "A Team" play on the album.

Exactly. It's interesting how much of this "A Team" are friends of Emory's. He has sort of infiltrated Nashville with them.

Looking at the album as a whole, you've cut a Hank Williams tune, included the B side of Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel," featured an old blues number ["Mobile Line"] and five songs by writers who were raised in Lubbock. Of course, there's your four songs which I mentioned earlier. Was this album meant as a tribute to your past influences.

Exactly. That was the entire reason. On this album, I made a decision not to try to go with only my own material. I figured this was my first major label album. Really. The last one kind of was, but it didn't really have a great amount of promotion, because Nonesuch is still in a sense a minor label. This one - I decided that since this was my first opportunity to really get broad distribution and exposure, what I wanted to do was make a kind of a documentary of my influences and my taste. The best way to do that was to pick out some of those old things - representative of things that influenced me from childhood, and then add songs by friends who influenced me the most. Which would obviously be, Butch [Hancock] and Al [Strehli]. Jo Carol's song was just too wonderful to leave out.

Can we talk about the title of the album. As a phrase, "Spinning Around The Sun" is an eternal truth.

It's a phrase taken from the song "Another Colorado." My wife Janet was the one who came up with the title. When we were trying to think of a title, I decided that I didn't want to name it after any of the songs on the album. It would have sounded - I don't know how to put this - too pretentious or something. At one stage, we thought about calling it "Where You Going." It all sounded kind of wrong. One night Janet said "Why don't you call it **"Spinning Around The Sun."** Which I hadn't thought of, because in my mind I only perceived that as a phrase in the song. In other words, that was almost like taking a sentence out of context. It just didn't occur to me. As soon as she said it, I thought "That's wonderful. That's a great title." Everybody I mentioned it to, who was involved in the process, such as Mike [Crowley - Jimmie's manager] and Emory Gordy, as soon as they heard it went "Yea, that's a good album title." It's catchy and it still actually relates to at least one of the songs on the album. Really in a sense, it's got a kind of a light hearted touch to it. In a way, maybe that counterbalances some of the darkness that's in the album.

Kind of like, "Where we been, where are we, where we going - Spinning Around The Sun."

Right. Exactly.

On the opening cut "Where Are You Going," there's what I'd describe as a Johnny Cash bass line. Was that deliberate.

No. Not really. That was something which came about during the development of the song in the studio. Of course, Richard Bennett's guitar and that sound of the guitar - to me, it's a combination of Luther Perkins and Duane Eddy. It therefore had that sense of electric guitar that was really a sound from the early rock n' roll days. That's something that I have always particularly loved. When we started on that song - incidentally it was the first song we recorded - from the very start of it, when Richard Bennett strummed a chord - that real vibrato electric sound, I love it. I just loved it. Nobody said "Well, let's do it like a Johnny Cash thing. We just started playing it. The musicians had heard the demo tapes which Emory and I made in his little basement studio. Just me and him with acoustic guitars. Those demos didn't have that arrangement. The arrangement you hear on the album, came from playing in the studio. It didn't even occur to me that it was like a Johnny cash sound, until weeks later. The first time somebody mentioned it, I thought "That's why that sounds so familiar."

There's a great deal of imagery in the lyrics of that song. Did you write the song around things which have happened to you.

I co-wrote that song with David Hammond. I don't know if you know of him. He's based in Austin. On "After Awhile" the song "Don't Be A Stranger To Your Heart," he and Rick Smith and I wrote together. There's almost a similarity of feeling in the two songs. "Don't Be A Stranger To Your Heart" also had that big echoing, vibrato guitar sound. What happened was - the idea for the song was basically his - we just sat down and put the song together. In discussing a lot of what I'd guess you would say, were our spiritual attitudes - we used it as an exercise not only in songwriting, but as an excuse to talk over a lot of personal issues. Kind of, what our outlook is on life. That mixture of having a positive outlook, but still being aware of the negative aspects of life. Being realistic, but at the same time, in the end having a positive interpretation of what it's all about.

In reviewing your new album, a number of American publications have picked up on lines from "Where You Going" such as "crimson roses growing through a chain link fence," while the lines "working in the basement, trying not to make a sound" and "that wheel just keeps turning 'round" struck me as a reference to the period when you arrived back in Austin in the early eighties.

Yea, David and I both talked about having gone through periods of I'd guess being private in our searching.

There are also the lines "garden where no rain falls" and "the mountains still call" which appeared to be about the period you lived in Colorado.

We really tried our best - because it was a

collaboration - both of us would think of things from the past and then we'd try to come up with images that could apply to anybody who has gone through that sort of thing. It wasn't meant to be personal and specific. Yet, it was definitely alluding to those things that you are talking about. Our intention was that the song should have a universal interpretation. That was our goal in putting it together.

On the album, reunion is the theme of Jo Carol Pierce's song of the same name and your "Where You Going." They share the assertion that, spiritually people will be reunited on another plane at some other time. I wondered whether including songs with that commonality of theme was deliberate.

Yes. And in a sense I would take it even further, to say that my attitude is that eventually everybody in the whole universe gets back together. It's all really one thing. That's the philosophical basis of my beliefs.

Al Strehli's "Santa Fe Thief" struck me as a song that you'd already cut. I couldn't find it on anything that you or Butch or Joe [Ely] had done.

I don't believe we have recorded it before. I've played it a whole lot over the years in concerts. I'm sure that's where you've heard it. The title of the song is a take-off on "Santa Fe Chief" which is a train. That comes from Al's sense of humour. I wouldn't even begin to be able to analyse it, as Al has a very complex mind. That has been one of my favourite songs for so many years, along with a lot other tunes he has written. I plan to record a lot more of his stuff.

Going back to the Flatlanders record, two of Al's songs were included there. Was he part of your group, when you were all living together in the house in Lubbock.

At that time, Al was travelling around a lot. He lived in Colorado for a long period. Way before I ever did, and he stayed there for a considerable time after I left Colorado. He lived up in Aspen, where he was a ski instructor and also a ski patrol guy. He's a very athletic person, which was kind of strange, because he is also so cerebral. He's back in Lubbock now and he's begun writing songs again. I think he went through a long, long period of being disillusioned by the music business. I wouldn't want to speak for him - I don't know if that's exactly how he felt, but he was certainly out of touch with us for a long time. I went and spent the day with him about three months ago and he showed me a bunch of new songs. He has been writing some stuff for me and he's very much back into the creative mode.

Why did you cut "I Was The One." It's the only pop song as such on the album.

For one thing it was always one of my favourite songs which Elvis did. Particularly after his Sun Records days, when he moved to RCA. It was never a big hit or anything, which I could never understand. I loved it so much. Somebody pointed out that for Elvis it is a pretty dark song. It's got a lot more hurt in it than most of his songs ever did. I chose it once again, as I said, as a

tribute to that style of music and to the impact it had on me as a child.

On the liner of your second album "Jimmie Dale Gilmore," there's a credit to Col. Tom Parker.

Col. Tom has retired and he's no longer in the business. He has been a big supporter of mine since the beginning. Mike Crowley used to work for him and from the beginning, Mike has sent Col. Tom copies of my recordings and demos. Over this period, Col. Tom has recommended me to different people and stuff. He's always been unofficially helping my career. I spoke to him last week in fact. Just before I did a couple of Nashville television shows. I did the Ralph Emery Show, except Ralph got sick that night and had to leave. Col. Tom lives in Las Vegas and I have only ever spoken with him on the telephone. I haven't met him. He has just listened to my music and everytime that I've done something like the "Tonight Show," Col. Tom has called me and wished me luck. He always tells me to say "Hello" to the people there. It's really funny, because that's been an indirect but very wonderful thing going on in the background.

You recut Butch's "Just A Wave, Not The Water" which already appeared on "Fair & Square." What was the reason for that.

Basically, if I could pick out any single song of Butch's which is my favourite, it's that one. There are a lot of Butch's songs - it's almost kind of ridiculous to say that one is better than the other - but that song, I've always had a giant affinity for. When Emory heard this song, I said right afterwards "Maybe we should do one of the other ones, instead of that one, because I've already done it." He said "I really want to produce this song." And he added, "Because the earlier album had such a small circulation in terms of the broad world of popular music, I think that we should treat this song as if it were a new song. Let's presume that most of the people who hear this record, won't have heard this song before." I think he was right. I love the song so much, that I just felt it was worth doing it again.

Another song which you've recut, is "Reunion." The first version appeared late last year on the Jo Carol Pierce song compilation "Across The Great Divide" which Dejadisc released. You're obviously fond of the song.

Once again, there was an element there that this album is likely to have a much broader circulation than "Across The Great Divide." It was also such a good vehicle, once the idea came up for Lucinda [Williams] and I to do a duet on it. Kind of a natural idea. Once we tried it and it worked so well, it became - I can't remember if I told you the process of how I submitted about thirty songs to David Bither. When we were beginning to put this new album together, I sent him a tape of thirty songs which I entitled "Some Songs That Jimmie Likes." They were all songs that I would someday like to record. David went through the tape and picked out twenty of those that he would like to see on the new album. In other words I chose all of them, but then it was edited down. Then Emory took

those twenty and edited it down to the twelve that we actually recorded - it wasn't as if I had submitted a list of twelve songs and said "These are the absolute ones I must do." I submitted a bigger list and said "I'd like to do any of these." There was input really from three different directions on the ones that actually ended up on there, although they were all selected out from my original list.

How did you meet Lucinda.

She was an old friend from the early days here in Austin. She had actually moved back to Austin from Los Angeles, and been around here awhile. We'd also done a few gigs together. Hung out some. Strangely enough, it happened that she was moving to Nashville and actually arrived there - moved into her apartment - the same week that we started recording this album. I had wanted to record with Lucinda for a long, long time. I love her singing so much and her songs and everything. I recorded one of her songs on the "live" Australian album that I did with Butch [ED. NOTE. The song which Jimmie was referring to was "Howlin' At Midnight"].

What do you feel about the recent success of her song "Passionate Kisses."

I'm very happy with it, because I've such been a fan of hers for so long. I thought she was wonderful back in the early eighties. It's real fun for me to watch somebody that I like, start to become accepted by the general public too. I'm also very proud that Lucinda was somebody that I promoted back in the early days in Austin - she used to do a lot of shows with me. I just think that she is one of the best.

As far as the lyric of "Reunion" is concerned, who do you think Jo Carol had in mind when she wrote the song.

It's hard to tell with her, because even in her plays and stuff, I can always see hints of things being directed towards me. In our early life together. It's always veiled and she sort of swirls in lots of different things, so that you never can say specifically "This was this, or that event." In this song I feel the same way about it - it might be that this song was dedicated to me, I don't know. She never said so specifically. She just played the song for me.

When you originally cut it for "Across The Great Divide," did you have the option to cut other songs of hers.

I had known that song for four or five years and had always loved it. I had always planned on recording it someday. For that project it was the song I most wanted to do, and it's the one which suits my style the best. She writes in a lot of different styles. Some of them, I wouldn't be able to do justice to. I love that album so much and I particularly like David Halley's cut and Darden Smith's cut. Joe Ely's as well. I think it contains some of the best stuff that any of them has done in a long, long time. It was so simply produced as well.

Is "I'm Gonna Love You" an old song.

Yes. I wrote that song quite a long time ago. That song was deliberately a spiritual song that could be read as a love song. That was my intention. To express something about my spiritual attachment, but at the same time you have to read between the lines, even though love is in the title of the song.

Did you write "Another Colorado" after you had been on one of Butch's River Tours.

No, the Colorado River flows through Austin. What we call the Town Lake here, is actually part of the Colorado River. There are actually two Colorado Rivers. The one which flows through the states of Colorado and Arizona and the one here. The song alludes to the City of Austin in the line "Up from the banks of the Colorado," and it actually refers to the early days of Janet and I being together. It's almost like a little allegorical story of my time in Austin. The lines "Wise men have told me, wise women too" and "That I may find my sweet El Dorado" are once again spiritual, because that's a theme which runs through all of my stuff. I want it to be there, but I don't want it to be the dominating feature. I don't want it to ever be preachy. At the same time, to truly express my feelings and what's important to me, that stuff has to play a big part.

"Thinking About You" is lyrically located on the coast, with mentions of harbours and sails on ships. Where were you when you wrote this song.

It actually goes all the way from our back yard, which I'm looking at right now - because mockingbirds hang out here - to San Francisco. The whole notion of the song, and what inspired it was this recognition that you can be in so many different places and yet have the same thing, or person, or feeling on your mind. The strange irony being that you can be anywhere in the world physically, yet inside yourself, still in a sense be in the same place. That's what originally triggered the inspiration of the song, but what that led to - the chain reaction thing - was the particular concept of thinking about a certain person - like you're in love with somebody and that person fills your mind - all the way from Austin, Texas to the desert, or to the harbour in San Francisco, yet this same thought, or feeling, or person is on your mind. That constant factor is what the song is about.

The "Threadgill's Supper Session" is finally available on CD. What do you feel about that.

I love it. That's another thing where, along with - the main thing I like about the Australian record of me and Butch, is just the fact that it documents us playing together. We have played together so much and it that has been an important part of both our musical careers and yet there's only one recording of us doing that. For that reason I'm glad that it exists. I feel the same way about the "Threadgill Supper Session." That was a big part of my life for three years. I hosted that thing every Wednesday night. This is the only recorded documentation, that gets the sense of what went on

there. In that way, it's almost like a favourite snapshot. I don't think it's a great recording, or a great record or anything, just on it's own - I like it a lot - but mainly I like it for, I guess, sentimental reasons. I still play there now and again. I've been gone a lot lately, doing pre-promotional stuff for the record. Meeting record company people and having listening parties, where we have dinner together and then I'll sing two or three song with just my acoustic guitar. I've been out of town so much, that I haven't been over there lately.

How was Philadelphia and "Chippy."

It was a lot of fun. Personally a whole lot of fun for me, just simply because of being with all my old friends. We've had a plan for many years to do something like this. In fact, I think I was instrumental in instigating the idea years ago, that we did a collaboration of some sort. This thing came up, but I didn't get to participate much in the writing of it, because it coincided with the period I was cutting the album. I wasn't able to take off enough time from doing the album to go participate fully in the project. I played more of a minor part in it. That little group of us had, for a long time, been talking about trying to do something together. I suspect that we'll do more in the future.

I thought that Terry and Jo Harvey Allen had written most of the play.

They did. Butch and Joe contributed quite a bit. I didn't write any of it at all. I just performed the part that they had laid out for me. I don't think I'm very much of an actor. That's not my long suit at all. Actually in the play, in effect, I just played myself. I didn't do any real acting. I mainly sang. The same thing - I was just in this movie, that we saw last night for the first time. Once again, I played a very small part in it. Really it was just me playing myself, as a bandleader, sort of in the background. The movie is "The Thing Called Love." A bunch of people had little cameo appearances in it. Kevin Welch. Katy Moffatt. Rosie Flores. K.T. Oslin actually plays a big part in the movie. I had a whole lot of fun being in the movie, but I don't think that stage acting is something that I would really much want to get into. Filming musical things, videos, is something I think I'd like to do a lot. I don't think I would ever make an actor, because it's not natural to me. It's so foreign, that I don't think it would be much fun trying develop those kind of skills.

Are there any plans to record "Chippy."

I don't know about recording it. I do know that there are some plans to try to make it into a bigger production. If so, I don't know which part I'm going to be able to play, because I don't know where I'm going to find the time. My recording career has suddenly become a much bigger thing than it used to be.

What about touring in support of the new album.

I play my homecoming gig here in Austin, next week, at The Backyard. It's a very nice venue. We went to see Leonard Cohen there a few months back, and it was very wonderful. A comfortable place and it's

outdoors, with a real good sound system. Then on the 19th of September we hit the road for a tour of the East Coast, with stops all along the way. I'll be headlining the show. I don't know as yet who will be the support act. They're talking about several different people, but they haven't made a decision. After the East Coast, we go to Chicago and then head for the West Coast. We're going to do the entire country.

What television shows have you done so far, in support of the new album.

I did "Nashville Now" and "Crook and Chase." It's a very popular show on the Nashville Network. I'll also be doing a video of one of the songs from the album, probably here in Austin, in the next couple of weeks. Almost every song on the album has been mentioned as a candidate. At this minute, it's still up in the air. There has been some talk of maybe doing "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry." I just don't know. There hasn't been a decision made, and they'll consult me before they make a final decision. I get to be involved in those decisions.

Kerrville-kompacts,
kassettes & other
koineidences.



For this major label debut recording, Bill Miller has merged the essential ingredients of lyric and melody, with the Native American arts of drumming, storytelling and chanting. The CD liner to "The Red Road" even includes a couple of Bill's paintings. This spiritually uplifting celebration of tradition, focuses on the influence that the elemental forces of wind, running water and thunder have had upon his life and that of his *brothers*. The atmospheric, acoustic guitar instrumental "Dreams Of Wounded Knee" opens the set and is followed by Native American drums and chanting of "Praises." On his 1991 instrumental album "Loon, Mountain And Moon," Bill displayed his prowess with the Native American flute; here, "Two Hawks" reprises that recording. "Reservoir Road" which appeared on a couple of Bill's earlier, independent recordings, takes on the mantle of an anthem on "The Red Road," as he focuses on his memories of being raised on a reservation. "Tumbleweed" which follows, was co-written with Peter Rowan. Delving further into Native Americana, the tracks "Many Trails," "Trail Of Freedom," "Inter-Tribal Pow Wow Song," "Kokopelli's Journey" and "My People" furnish further proof that Miller is a consummate songwriter in his chosen subjective field. *This album takes no prisoners.* There has been no dilution of the *spirit* from which it draws inspiration. It is in fact, an unswerving act of faith by Miller. An exploration of the rich heritage of his people, which every KK reader desperately needs to experience. Available in the UK from CDX, The Olde Coach House, Windsor Crescent, Radyr, South Glamorgan CF4 8AE.

For two reasons, this seventeen track compilation titled "Most Requested (plus)" from Poor David's Recordings is a must for every self respecting Kerrvert. And even for those innocents among the KK readership who have yet to indulge in the aural riches which the Quiet Valley Ranch has to offer. First, there's Bill and Bonnie

Hearne - the eternal and legendary, *Ma and Pa Kerrville*. It's an undisputable fact - Kerrville would not be the magical place that it is, without Bill and Bonnie. Secondly, the compositions draw heavily upon the artful side of songwriting. Most of the authors being established Kerrville regulars or New Folk discoveries. There's a trio of tunes each by Chuck Pyle and Ian Tyson, plus gems penned by Nanci Griffith, Jon Ims, Melissa Javors, Bill Staines and Eliza Gilkyson. And of course, let's not forget Bonnie's skill with word and melody. Apart from two new cuts, Chuck Pyle's "Spirit Of The Endless Sky" and Bonnie's "Sweet Mountain Breeze," the remaining tracks on **"Most Requested (plus)"** are drawn from the duo's earlier recordings, **"New Mexico Rain," "Down The Road," "Navajo Rug"** and their most recent release **"Live At Poor David's."** It's the first time that much of this material has been available in a format other than cassette. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Bill and Bonnie Hearne, purveyors of that pure, clear sound from the American South West. Available from **Canadian River Music, 4206, Tyler Street, Amarillo, Texas 79110.**

"Own The Way Over Here" is the second Sugar Hill release to draw upon material from the back catalogue of Lubbock born, Austin based Texan, Butch Hancock. Nine of the eleven tracks are *previously heard* tunes, while "Talkin' About That Panama Canal" sources from the KLB radio station Christmas Party, circa 1989, and "Away From The Mountain" is a new studio cut featuring Butch [alone] on guitar, harmonica and vocal. The liner booklet contains a poem titled "Advice To A Young Poet In The Wings (HA!)" which I recall Hancock delivered during John Stewart's *Songwriters Integrity Workshop* at the 1989 Kerrville Folk Festival [on Saturday 10th June, to be exact]. The latter piece of work, penned in Butch's usual ramblin', tangential stream of thought style, attempts to define "It." "It" being *the source* from which a songwriter creates and gains the inspiration to perform his work. Truth to tell, I reckon that Hancock's poem pretty well distils all of *It*. Meanwhile on the disc, there's cuts from Hancock's albums **"The Wind's Dominion," "Diamond Hill," "Firewater Seeks Its Own Level,"** as well as his duet sets with Marce Lacouture, **"Yella Rose"** and **"Cause Of The Cactus."** From the latter "live" recording comes one of Hancock's finest ever tunes "Already Gone," which he composed in the back of his truck during one particularly torrential rainstorm, circa the 1986 Kerrville Folk Festival. And that's another thing, for those who ceaselessly seek - the Quiet Valley Ranch is certainly one place to listen out for oceans of "It." Available in the UK via **Topic Records/Direct Distribution.** [ED. NOTE. The latest news regarding more recent Butch Hancock compositions, is that he is currently esconced in an Austin studio with producer [and Lucinda Williams' guitarist] Gurf Morlix, cutting tracks. No details are to hand regarding the label on which the recording will appear. Following his 1990 **"No Two Alike"** extravaganza and last year's month long (?), **"30 Daze of February Songmural Campaign,"** George's latest plan is a mammoth **"World Tour of Texas."** As in Paris (France), Dallas (Scotland), Moscow (Russia), Elgin (Scotland), Wellington (New Zealand), Boston (England & USA).....and so on. Get the idea ? Send your potential itinerary to **Lubbock or Leave It, 406**

Brazos, Austin].

Apart from Rob Patterson's review in the **AUSTIN CHRONICLE**, reviews of David Halley's second solo album **"Broken Spell"** have generally been negative. Conversations with friends who already own this set of songs, have taken a similar turn. I stand on the ground that's marked out, *"damned fine piece of work."* Coming from the new Antone's subsidiary label *dos*, the album kicks in with a reference to it's precursor **"Stray Dog Talk,"** or to be more specific, the closing cut "Dream Life" co-written with Syd Straw. The line "I woke up and the spell was broken, I want my dream life" segues into the opening track "Sky." What you need to understand about this album as an entity, is that the material was penned during a seriously traumatic period in David's life. Many of the songs on **"Broken Spell,"** deal with the final phase of a relationship. Although it might appear to be a work thoroughly steeped in lyrical bitterness, in truth, it encapsulates Halley's *coming to terms* with his situation. "Losing Your Grip," "It's Just As Well," and the weird, other worldly "Slowing Down," are prime examples of the latter realisation. Elsewhere, Halley focuses on the plight of the homeless and dispossessed [of Chicago] in "Hometown," and the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson, in "Bill W." Although "Man of Steel" is another relationship track, David's lyrics could easily be projected on a universal canvas - definitely one of his best songs ever, so there's my opinion. Also included is Jo Carol Pierce's paen to corporate America "King of Things." And if you're asking - on the inner rear cover of the liner, the guy standing next to David is none other than J.D. Foster. If you already own this album and didn't enjoy [or even get it] first time around, and god knows this review is running late, then re-evaluate now. If you don't own **"Broken Spell"** yet, just ask yourself one question - why not ? Available in the UK from **Topic Records/Direct Distribution.**

Now that **"Live Shots"** the souvenir of Joe Ely's 1980 UK visit is finally available on CD, **"Hi Res"** remains the only album from his original flirtation with MCA Records, currently unavailable in the little circular, silver technological format. Hint. Hint. Then there's the cause for applause. Included on this version of **"Live Shots"** are the four tracks from the free **"Texas Special EP,"** which formed part of the US version of the original vinyl release. One minor quibble. How come Lloyd Maines' name is missing from the band line-up in the accompanying booklet, when he quite clearly appears on the liner photographs. A little more care with the packaging was all that was needed. On the other hand, aurally, *welcome back old friend - you always were a gritty chunk of unadorned, hard rockin' country music.* Available from **Waterloo Records** [address later in this section].

I first read a review of Thomas Anderson's **"Blues For The Flying Dutchman"** in **ROLLING STONE** way back in late 1992. At the end of the piece there was a US address, New York way if I remember correctly. After a while....quite a long while, I finally got my hands on a copy [from Waterloo Records, Austin] only to find out that the record label, Blue Million Miles, was based in

Germany. [ED. NOTE. The costly, custard pie of life strikes again]. The recording sessions took place in Norman, Oklahoma. Anderson's song publishing company is aptly titled Angry Young Grad Student Music. There in the front liner photo is a plainly dressed Anderson, with a [we presume, freshly laundered] handkerchief drawn over his hair. In the background, there's a neon sign which reads SPIRIT SHOP. Now what's the title of this album again? In fact this set definitely falls into the electric rather than the acoustic arena, but don't let that discourage you, because *the cherry on the cake* here is Anderson's lyrics. When he's not tackling subjects such as "those lanterns in the sky" in "Astronomy" or the planet wide greed for "Petroleum," his songs sketch characters as diverse [real and fictional] as Bill Haley, Barbara Allen, Joni Mitchell, Nash The Slash and Anne Frank. Anderson is definitely an angry young man whose path you need to cross. [ED. NOTE. The Addendum - Dutch East India Trading, P.O. Box 800, Rockville Centre, New York 11571-0800 recently reissued Tom Anderson's self titled 1989 debut, as well as the 1992 set which you've just read about. Meanwhile in Austin, Texas there's a new Tom Anderson single which teams "Uranium Road" with "CX-9" from Unclean Records, P.O. Box 49737, Austin, Texas 78765].

Price's association with blues music goes way back. On "*Swim Away*" however, Toni skilfully charts what to her, are some less familiar musical waters. From California based Discovery Records, by way of Austin's Antone's label, the choice of material verges on the inspirational. Let's face it, the easy option would have been to cut just another straight blues album, but Price's superb chords are purpose built to cover numerous other stylistic bases. Eight songs of the songs here, were composed by Gwil Owen [ED. NOTE. Anyone out there got any Gwil Owen & The Thieves albums on the Capitol label from the eighties, as there's this guy in Illinois who I know and.....], then there's the Austin Chronicle's "Song of 1993," "Just to Hear Your Voice" from the pen of Monte Warden. "Twelve Bar Blues," "Richest One" and "In Care of the Blues" form the *down home* backbone of what was voted the Chronicle's "Album of 1993." What can I add, except in true Barry Normanese "And rightly so." Just find me a person who wouldn't go weak at the knees following Toni's aching rendition of "Just to Hear Your Voice" or the mermaid's plaintive tale in the acappella, closing, album title cut. Supported to the hilt by Austin's more strident electric axemen, as well as more refined pickers, this set lacks even one clunker. Available from **Waterloo Records** in Austin [address later in this section].

I'd sum up the dozen songs featured on "*Driving Home*" as, "The album which Cheryl Wheeler has been threatening to make, since her self titled debut appeared back in 1986. Definitely, her finest set to date." In the production stakes, Cheryl has teamed up once more with her old boss, Jonathan Edwards. Their chosen recording venue being, Bias Recording Studios in Alexandria, Virginia [Again!]. What's more, this is her fourth record label in as many albums. This time around, it's that Kronikle favourite, Philo. Among the cast of supporting performers, Mary Chapin Carpenter,

Chapin's producer John Jennings, Patty Larkin and Alison Krauss add their own particular skills to the end result. Eleven of the tunes were composed by Cheryl, the odd one out "Orbiting Jupiter," being the result of a collaboration with Janis Ian. "When Fall Comes To New England" sources from Nashville sessions which Cheryl undertook with Kyle Lehning, post her 1990 Capitol release "*Circles & Arrows*." "Music In My Room" is a eulogy to her childhood love of radio and pop music. Cheryl performed an early version of "Don't Forget The Guns" during her only UK public appearance to date, at the 1991 Cambridge Folk Festival. The American attitude to guns and their unrestricted availability, being her chosen target in the latter lyric. "Spring," is a song of optimism prompted by the arrival of new life, while the narrator in "75 Septembers" muses on the passing of *small town America*. What's more, there's more. The foregoing being only a soupcon of the great tunes and lyrics on this essential purchase titled, "*Driving Home*." Available in the UK via **Topic Records/Direct Distribution**.

Following the duet recording *diversion* of covers with his "*Friend Of Mine*," Greg Brown, Bill Morrissey serves up his fifth solo set of self composed material, "*Night Train*." The opening, title track revolves around little more than the observation of a woman waiting for the final train of the day - including neat electric guitar work from Duke Levine on the refrain. "Birches" finds an old married couple sitting by the fire on a winter's night. The dying embers which they observe, being an allusion to their rapidly fading love. The woman however, dreams of being a young girl on her honeymoon again. Once her husband has gone to bed, those fading embers grow into healthy, strong flames once again, when she places some "Birches" on the fire. "Letter From Heaven" finds an unlikely cast of characters such as Elvis, Hendrix and even Robert Johnson on that elevated plane. Even Abe Lincoln finally gets to see the end of the play! David Johansen (the former New York Doll, and currently, a movie star) shares the lead vocal on the bluesy "Love Arrives" and "Time To Go Home," and also pens the liner notes. Overall, "*Night Train*" is another opportunity to meander through those inevitably simple songs about the human condition, as finely observed by Bill Morrissey. This Philo recording is available in the UK via **Topic Records/Direct Distribution**.

The Cactus Cafe referred to in the title of this live Christine Lavin disc, can be found on the campus of the University of Austin in Texas. *My adopted hometown*. The KUT radio broadcast of Lavin's January 16, 1993 show was predetermined. The sixty minute "*Live At The Cactus Cafe*" album spawned by it, hails from the *realm of the unintentional*. Personally, I'd put the latter result down to two factors. Lavin's full tilt, wacky performance of mostly humour laden material - *her poignant songs stayed home that night*. Secondly, Walter L. Morgan's skill as a recording engineer and producer - the unlauded hero of the control desk. Selecting material from all the stages of her Philo career, Christine opens rather appropriately with her sardonic 1981 paean to the one and [thankfully] only, "Prince Charles." Over a decade on,

maybe it's time for "Charles II - The Hair to the Throne." Pursuing that theme, towards the close of "Bald Headed Men" - wherein she cruises through her acceptable and unacceptable list of *male chrome domes* - Christine spots a guy with a *solar panel* sitting on the front row. At that point, the audience and Lavin descend into an uncontrolled fit of the giggles, while the adjacent girlfriend resorts to a barbed, "He's mine." This fifteen track set features a live and a studio version of the new song "What Was I Thinking," the latter cut being, The Dance Mix - on a folk artists album ! Impulse buying, laced with an almost terminal case of subsequent regret, being the lyrical focus of Lavin's latest anthem. Although John Lennon was gunned down outside "The Dakota," Lavin extends her panorama to the many other *good men* who have innocently lost their lives to a speeding bullet. "Regretting What I Said...." doesn't really require further explanation, while the fifteen minute epic "Shopping Cart of Love: The Play" kicks off at the point where the narrator has just lost her roommate, boyfriend, TV and Stereo and her car. For consolation, she goes for a binge at the local supermarket - and surprise, surprise [yuk] the narrator finds true love right there, in Aisle 7. Of course, so do all the other protagonists in this seemingly endless tale of shopping trolley lust. Closing out the live set, is the tune which won Christine her Brownie Badge for Babysitting - "Katy Says This Is The Best Day Of Her Whole Entire Life." Shame that they couldn't squeeze on Lavin's not to be missed, baton twirling interlude [get the picture ! on an interactive CD]. That however is only a minor grumble, as we get the silent "Intermission" track. Available in the UK via **Topic Records/Direct Distribution**.

The eighteen tracks featured on the "**American Impressionist Songwriters**" [Waterbug] compilation draws upon the work of contemporary acoustic songwriters, who have yet to become established nationally. Lovingly compiled by Andrew Calhoun for his fledgling Waterbug label, the writers featured are mostly Illinois based unless indicated otherwise James McCandless, Kat Eggleston, Doyle Carver [Tx.], Michael McNevin [Ca.], Jano Brindisi [Ca.], Chuck Brodsky [Ca.], Andrew Calhoun, Diane Ziegler [Me.], Steve Fisher [Tx.], Tom Payne [Ca.] and Al Day. Available on CD and cassette from **Waterbug Records, P.O. Box 6605, Evanston, Illinois 60204**. Just remember in a few years time, that you first saw those names here.

For the past decade the Public Radio station WUMB 91.9FM based in Boston, Massachusetts has broadcast a weekly, folk music programme titled "**Circles in the Stream**." This compilation which is [promisingly] subtitled "**Vol.1**," contains sixteen performances drawn from the years 1989-92 and features what can only be described as the pick of crop from the North American folk songwriting field. Among the artists included are Eric Andersen, Bill Morrissey, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Christine Lavin, Bill Staines, Peter Rowan and Rod MacDonald. As an added bonus the studio recording of the AIDS Memorial Quilt song, "The Thread of Life" by Patty Larkin and Livingston Taylor, completes the set.

Available on CD from **WUMB-FM Radio, University of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA. 02125-3393**.

You already know all these songs, but that's not the point. The celebration of this man's life and music, is what it is all about. Recorded at La Zona Rosa, Austin, Texas on July 18th last year, "**Pastures Of Plenty - An Austin Celebration of Woody Guthrie**" [Dejadisc] represents the aural documentation of the third annual celebration of this folk legend's musical legacy. Originally inspired by a chance conversation between two Austin based expatriates from Oklahoma, this seventeen song collection features the best that Austin can offer in terms of acoustic players. The cast includes Jimmy LaFave, Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, Ray Wylie Hubbard [OK, so he lives in Dallas], Lisa Mednick, Michael Fracasso, David Halley, Christine Albert, Steve Young [who is now based in California], plus Butch Hancock. Another superb compilation from the *House of Dejadisc, 537 Lindsey Street, San Marcos, Texas 78666*. Hopefully, for UK and European readers at least, **Topic Records/Direct Distribution** will be stocking this label in the near future.

David Ackles recorded four albums between 1968 and 1973. "**Five & Dime**" released by CBS, completed the quartet. His trio of Elektra releases "**David Ackles**," "**Subway To The Country**" and "**American Gothic**" are the subject of the following few words, since they're now available on CD. Even back in those days when Dylan had *ascended the throne*, I never held with *cowtowing to the godhead and hype*. Hell, life was far more interesting if you pulled back the undergrowth in those nether regions. Apart from "**Joe Ely**" in 1977, the writer who made the single, biggest impact in terms of the music I've consistently listened to for the last quarter century, was David Ackles. Over the time between, I've longed for him to resurface. I guess, some things are just not meant to be. Thorough addiction to early Ackles, presupposes that you are already in a fit of near terminal depression. *The vein being a hairs breadth away from the blade*. Having set the scenario, Ackles is the definitive cure. The guy obviously drew great inspiration and sustenance from being buried somewhere below the bottom of the heap. From Ackles' Elektra debut, who dares forget the classic duo of "The Road To Cairo" (the song was covered way back when by Julie Driscoll/Brian Auger, after they charted with Dylan's "This Wheel's On Fire") and "Down River." Conversely, there was the ecstatic excess of "What A Happy Day." Furnishing your aural passages with top flight misery, was like water off a duck's back to Ackles. "**Subway To The Country**" continued in much the same vein, with "Candyman" and "Inmates Of The Institution" being particular sources of inspiration drawn from desperation and in the case of the former, degradation. "That's No Reason To Cry" was his tilt at true love, while the title tune could almost be a late twentieth century antidote to the generation who sought the city in Ackles' subsequent masterwork "Montana Song." Completing the trio, is the Melody Maker Album of the Year for 1972, "**American Gothic**." Produced by Elton's lyricist, Bernie Taupin, Ackles wrote much of the material while resident in the UK. A perspective of *his birthplace*

undoubtedly became clearer from this side of *the pond*. The album title cut deals with infidelity and opens the eleven track set. "Ballad Of The Ship Of State" is a barbed observation of the way government's treat their armed forces, both the survivors and the dead, once the fighting has ceased. Before they were fashionable causes, small town America and the treatment of Native Americans came under Ackles' lyrical microscope, as "Family Band" and "Ballad For Billy Whitecloud" respectively attest. None of the foregoing prepares you for the symphonic, ten minute long climax which is "Montana Song." Back before videos were *de rigueur*, I have repeatedly played out in my mind's eye, the panoramic storyline which gradually unfolds through turn of the [twentieth] century America. Having established the family's identity in a new country through ownership of some land, the next generation deserts the farm in search of the greater financial benefits gained through factory work. As well as the illicit pleasures offered by the city. Heartfelt and timeless, sums up **"American Gothic."** The term *classic*, undersells it.

As you probably guessed from Issue 16, "Summer Of Love" was up there among my **Songs Of '93**. I've always been a sucker for story songs; that apart, a friend tried to point out that the song was rather sentimental. If boring old fartdom is what my future holds, then the truth is, I don't care. Self indulgent, naval gazing is my kind of sport and a **VOX** on those who would have us believe otherwise ! Although Lavin's liner booklet for **"Big Times..."** made no mention of any recordings to date by Pete Nelson, during his Fall '93 visit, Rod MacDonald reckoned that there was now a tape available. So into the valley of potential aural ecstasy, I pitched a missive to Peter Nelson's contact address. The eight songs featured on the tape which arrived a few weeks later, titled **"Three Mean Fish And A Yellow Dog,"** source from the September 1992 performance Nelson gave at the Wintertide Coffeehouse in Martha's Vineyard. The one which resulted in "Summer Of Love" being included on the **"Big Times In A Small Town"** compilation. The burning question - "Was "Summer Of Love" his best tune, or were there other gems secreted in Pete's songbag ?" The simple answer. Buy this tape. There are times, vocally, when you'd swear that you were listening to Randy Newman. Lyrically, Nelson's songs encompass a humorous and twisted view of humankind, and the things we do. In that regard, he's my man. Apart from which, if *"The Gorkman"* has been known to perform your tunes in concert, you've obviously *cut the mustard*, as far as the *songwriting seal of approval* is concerned. So, even if you are feeling a little "Old," wearing "Women's Shoes" is just your way of showing that you "Love Her Just Because" that "Summer Of Love" forever made you a "Prisoner Of Desire." Given time to reflect fully on the immensity of this passionate affair, how could you forget that journey on "The Love Boat" and the hunting trip when "I'm Not A Deer" became a password for "The Home Team." Available on cassette only meantime from **160 Main Street, Northampton, MA. 01060.**

"First of all, I was a passing thought in the mind of the Mother Teresa of Folk. Before I knew it, I was a 21

cut, various artists, compilation cassette sold by my creator at her solo gigs, through November and December 1989. The following year, those delightful folk at North Star in Providence, Rhode Island released me as an edited 15 song long, cassette and CD. At the turn of each ensuing year, a quartet drawn from the cream of US folk performers has hit the highways and byways, bringing the intimate and acoustic magic of **"On A Winters Night"** to the listening rooms of North America. What's more, history has proved that I was the first in a number of series of inspired singer/poet anthologies drawn together by the tender hand of the inimitable Christine Lavin. Now Philo have taken up Lavin's baton !" [When your resistance is low, you always go for the crass line - Lavin, being America's best known folk singing exponent of baton twirling]. From New Yorker Willie Nininger's self composed and atmospheric opening title track, through to the terminal stop and the heavenly choir of Anne Hills, Priscilla Herdman, Cindy Mangsen and Steve Gillette on the late Jan Harmon's "Stars," this (reissue) release is dripping with literary excellence. Among the remaining players in this *hefty and talented fifteen* are Wilcox, Larkin, Gold, Morrissey, Gorka, Wheeler, Mallett, Fingerett and McDonough. So shake those pom poms, kick up those heels and let's have an enthusiastic chorus of rah, rah, rahs once more for the MTF - Christine Lavin. Available in the UK via **Topic Records/Direct Distribution.**

Once upon a time, Vance Gilbert was a cabaret performer in Boston's niteries. We're talkin' about a Tony Bennett and Johnny Mathis angle here. Hardly the bona fide scufflin', dues paid roots [or was that routes ?] and hard times of a new found folk hero. Now he's a Philo recording star, with a debut set titled **"Edgewise."** Truth to tell, African American Gilbert's musical leanings are more acoustic soul/jazz than acoustic folk. Of the dozen tunes featured, "Country Western Rap" probably works best in a live situation. The stereotypes explored in the latter lyric, only further support my long held contention that the rap genre is overloaded with vitamin C ! Think about it. Elsewhere, there's an interesting arrangement of the Henley/Frey composed Eagles classic "Lyn' Eyes." The voice of Vance is undoubtedly an impressive and hypnotic weapon, particularly on the acappella "King Of Rome." Unfortunately, Gilbert's compositions are mostly underwhelming in lyrical content, the latter opinion being somewhat at odds with Scott Alarik's liner notes. Jonatha Brooke from The Story, provides backing vocals on "I'm Watching My Heart" - a curious medical exploration, if ever I heard one. This debut is specially tailored for late night listening. Next. Available in the UK via **Topic Records/Direct Distribution.**

All the signs are in the firmament. It's time to observe a *new sun* rise. On this more tangible Earthbound level, beware of female songstesses with triple barrelled names who reside in the Washington D.C. area. Back in 1986, MC2 was picking up Wammies (Washington Area Music Awards) before she graduated to Grammys at the dawn of the ninties. Circa 1993, Vicky Pratt Keating entered the same *college* with her first Wammie. Although she hails from

the same acoustic contemporary folk baseline which spawned Chapin Carpenter, Keating employs a planetwide palette of instruments with which to paint the backdrop to her songs. **"Blue Apples"** is the first recording by Vicky to enjoy a CD release, and constitutes an opportunity to enter *her world of verse* for around forty five minutes. A self titled, self produced cassette preceded it, circa 1990. Her latest effort is ethereal, fey, obtuse, intelligent, devine, occasionally self doubting and at turns self confident and assertive. Truth to tell, Keating strides across the rainbow of life's emotions with the ease of a veteran. Guitar whizz Pete Kennedy, last seen on these shores with Ms Griffith, indulges in a fair amount of stylish picking throughout this set, while the production axis of Keating/Bob Read (a member of Trapezoid) more than hints of another Carpenter/Jennings at work. For example, "Boy With A Kite" features Sergeant Pepperish strings. "Buffalo" charts the physical downfall of this proud beast as well as his spiritual influence over the native nations, as the white man spread *the hand of progress* across the plains of North America. "NY 10/11/91" focuses on the closing moves in an affair of the heart. **"Blue Apples"** is a self released recording, and some major labels are currently courting her. Meantime, **"Blue Apples"** is available from P.O. Box 51, Sperryville, Virginia 22740.

The five cuts on the **Jimmie Dale Gilmore/Mudhoney** Sub Pop EP, hardly constitutes an album - it's more a quintessential fusing of Lubbock and Lollapalooza licks. It includes three new recordings and two previous releases. The latter, closing duo being, "Tonight I'm Going To Go Downtown" from Jimmie's 1991 Elektra American Explorer set **"After Awhile,"** and Mudhoney's "Blinding Sun" from their 1992 Reprise release **"Piece of Cake."** "Tonight..." also opens this quartet of tunes with Mudhoney giving the classic Gilmore/Reed composed country anthem, some serious Seattle sonic surgery. Returning the favour, Jimmie reprises "Blinding Sun" [picked out as a bummer cut in the **ROLLING STONES** review of **"Piece of Cake"**] and then the inheritor of Hank's vocal chords joins forces with Mark Arm and the boys, for a rendition of Townes' "Buckskin Stallion Blues." Available from **Waterloo Records, 600-A North Lamar, Austin, Texas 78703.** The new mail order person at Waterloo is Damon; Greta Poulson having passed on to pastures new.

From the top, the 5 Chinese Brothers ain't. What's more, none of 'em can claim Oriental ancestry. Truth to tell, the band's name sources from a children's story, which of course these big boys all adore. Slotting them into a musical category, I'd say the Brothers sound falls somewhere between those tuneful Austin, Texas residents from Ohio, Loose Diamonds and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. Separately, the band's singer/songwriter axis of Tom Meltzer and Paul Foglino draw inspiration from country, folk, old-time, rock n' roll and soul music. Previously, the band sold a gig tape titled **"Singer, Songwriter, Beggarman, Thief."** Now, they've converted it into a fifteen tune CD, aided by some re-recording and remixing. As far as that album title is concerned, a) It hardly seemed worthwhile changing it; b) It didn't make sense to dispense with a

great one. Delete as necessary. Subjectively, there's a swathe of toe tappin' boy-girl-boy songs from both writers, while the teenage Meltzer in "Baltimore" can't wait to grow up and leave the place of his birth. He returns to the subject of age in "My Dad's Face," while "Paul Cezanne" is a tongue in cheek tribute to cubism. A fun band with great melodies [hey, now isn't that something novel these days] and boundless energy. Available from the **5 Chinese Brothers World Headquarters, P.O. Box 023507, Brooklyn, New York 11202-0035.**

Pierce Pettis' **"Chase The Buffalo,"** is jointly dedicated to the late Gamble Rogers and Mark Heard [producer of Pierce's 1991 High Street set, **"Tinseltown"**]. Former Alpha band alumni, David Miner, takes over the production chores, while the supporting cast of players includes Booker T. Jones, David Hidalgo [Los Lobos], John Jorgensen [ex, the late Desert Rose Band], Jim Keltner [just about everyone]. Returning to my opening sentence, **"Chase The Buffalo"** kicks off with Heard's "Nod Over Coffee" and towards the close of the album comes Pettis' instrumental tribute "Remembering Gamble." As you would expect, there's a sacred theme underscoring most of the material on this disc. Pierce never strays far from #1. The Native American reference on the title cut, mask the real theme of this set - where do songs come from? "Lions of the Colosseum" points the finger at those *lions* who *made a Babel of the faith*, while "Natchez Trace" is dedicated to Southern novelist, Eudora Welty. In those moments when you seek respite from the vicissitudes of this world and summon up the inspiration to carry on, you can't go wrong by tuning into Pierce and **"Chase the Buffalo."** Available in the UK from CDX.

In the ongoing absence of a new Micheal Smith album [ED. NOTE. Heaven knows what happened to the **"Live at Fitzgerald's"** set, which was due for release two years back], you can more than make up for that omission by investing in Anne Hills' **"October Child."** Anne is a time served supporter of Michael's music [she produced his two 80's Flying Fish discs], and she more than proves that point with her new disc. Wall to wall and floor to ceiling on every level, there ain't nothing but Michael Smith tunes. A decade of them in fact. You should already be familiar with "Three Monkeys," the poignant humour of "Sister Clarissa," "The Dutchman" [the finest song ever given to mankind], plus possibly "Starfisher" if you possess the rare 1970 recording by Juarez [aka Michael Smith, Barabara Barrow and Ron Kickasola]. I don't think I need to repeat my opinion of Smith's writing, so you wouldn't expect me to comment on any *clunkers* - thing is, there aren't any. My personal favourites among this half dozen new discoveries are, "Rose of Sharon" [John Steinbeck shares a writing credit] and "Stranded in the Moonlight," closely followed by "Patterson Summer." Anne possesses one those crystal clear, folk voices - like Collins and Koloc - with which I have retained a lifelong love affair. By the way, the **"October Child"** turns up in the lyric of "Rondi's Birthday." Anne's young daughter, Tamlyn Moss is featured on liner - another October child? Eventually the penny drops. Way back in 1991, Flying Fish paired Michael Smith's two albums **"Michael Smith"**

and **"Love Songs"** on a single CD. You already know my opinion of the man, so I'll just finish describing this piece of perfection right here. Available from CDX.

Originally released late last year by Watermelon, Round Tower subsequently licensed Steve Young's latest **"Switchblades Of Love."** Recorded in California [ED. NOTE. Young resides there one more, following a couple of years when he was based in Austin], with production assistance from J. Steven [Alpha Band] Soles and Bob Neuwirth, apart from the David Olney heartbreaker "If My Eyes Were Blind," and Young's own "My Love" and "Have A Laugh" from **"Long Time Rider,"** the remaining material is new. A couple of years back, RCA/BMG issued a damned fine album titled **"Beneath the Texas Moon"** by J.C. Crowley. He promptly vanished, but reappears on these sessions. I understand that J.C.C. has been *on the road* of late with Young. I know that many of you revere Young - heaven knows, we all have our icons - I just feel that it's great to see the guy back in the saddle once more [with his pen], after years spent in retro.

The recording silence which followed Eliza Gilkyson's 1989 Gold Castle album **"Legends of Rainmaker,"** was partly caused by prolonged illness. Bringing that hiatus to a close, Eliza made her return to the concert stage at the 1992 Kerrville Festival. It seems relevant to report that during her set, the night sky was full of electric flashes. Just as it ended, the heavens opened and that is no legend. Co-produced with her brother Tony [ex Lone Justice, X etc], on **"Through The Looking Glass"** from Private Music, Eliza undertakes a mythological ["Dionysian Love" and "Odyssey"] and astrological journey ["I Become the Moon"]. Those songs rub shoulders with the earthly "Take Off Your Old Coat." The latter song was co-written by her father Terry, way back in the fifties. Welcome back Eliza. Available in the UK from CDX.

Following the appearance in 1987 of her Pete Anderson produced, self titled, debut solo album, Rosie Flores moved to Austin and her recording career appeared to slip a gear. Now back on the West Coast, this is her second album in as many years for the Hightone label. Titled **"Once More With Feeling"** and co-produced by Greg Leisz [ex Funky King and West Coast sideman extraordinaire] and Dusty Wakeman [the hot new kid on the block], the boisterous and swinging opener "Someday" sets the seal on another great album. Rosie's collaborators on the dozen tracks, include Chip Taylor, Wendy Waldman and Jason Ringenberg and Katy Moffatt. Completing the endless [cycle] chain of [musical] coincidences, the tune titled "Love and Danger" features a duet vocal from Joe Ely. Go figure that one ! Even though I've driven the "Bandera Highway," Rosie's autobiographical lyric on this gentle ballad marks it out as my personal favourite, and one song which I know for sure, I'll still be playing regularly in years to come. Available in the UK from CDX.

For her fifth outing and second for Windham Hill/High Street, Patty Larkin observes **"Angels Running"** in her song "Good Thing." Proof that she can still wield a mean acoustic axe comes with the instrumental

"Banish Misfortune/Open Hand." On occasions, Patty can get a little too lyrically obtuse for my liking, although I must admit that "I Told Him That My Dog Wouldn't Run" and "Pundits and Poets" are pretty mean examples of the art of words and music. Available in the UK from CDX.

Credited to Don McCalister Jr. and His Cowboy Jazz Revue, you know which musical realm you're entering before you've even heard a note. Including liner notes from Jimmie Dale Gilmore, the sessions took place in Pflugerville and Austin, Texas with assistance from some of the finest players in the state. **"Brand New Ways"** from Dejadisc, contains a mixture of McCalister's own western swingers and country ballads, topped off by for instance, "Tonight, I Think I'm Gonna Go Downtown" by *the man*, the Louvin's "Cash On The Barrelhead," Jon Ims' hook laden "Two Of A Kind" and my favourite cuts here, Steve Wilson's "Fool's Gold" and Henry Gross' "Laura." The photograph on the inner back cover of the liner booklet intrigues me. McCalister is sat with a petrol pump behind him, the latter featuring the legend ETHYL. Maryann Price [ex Dan Hicks and his Hot Licks, Asleep At The Wheel etc] provides backing vocals on the opening, title track ! One thing is certain, on the strength of all aspects of this album, Ray Benson better look to his laurels in future. Available from **Dejadisc, 537 Lindsey Street, San Marcos, Texas 78666.**

Shake Russell, Dana Cooper and Jack Saunders got together last summer out at No Mountain studio in Midland, Texas just for **"The Thrill Of Love"** [Jalapeno]. The ten songs feature a mix of individual, duo and trio compositions, recorded by the threesome in mostly an acoustic setting. Like CSN Texas style, I suppose. I've never been disappointed by the end result of any of Shake's projects in the past and this album doesn't even come close to breaking that rule. Available on CD and tape from **M.C. Agency, P.O. Box 36152, Houston, Texas 77236-6152.**

Tamarack's follow up to **"Fields of Rock and Snow"** is titled **"Frobisher Bay."** This Canadian trio consists of Gwen Swick [who arrived in time for **"Fields.."**], Alex Sinclair and James Gordon; the latter duo being the principal songwriters and only surviving members of what was originally an all male quartet. The acappella rendition of the title song, by this threesome leans somewhere toward the stunning. Amazing, even. Much of the material has a traditional feel, with the lyrics tending to focus on Canuck history and life. Available from **Folk Era Productions, 6 South 230 Cohasset Road, Naperville, Illinois 60540.**

From the title alone - **"When I Was A Boy"** [Reprise] - you should be able to deduce that Jane Siberry has plunged even further into *the wacky* with her latest collection. Of course, you always have the freedom put your own interpretation on her lyrics. All I'd say, is that Jane doesn't merely stop at the *sex* change claimed in the title album. Her words are also heavily laden with religious references. Akin to full tilt aural ecstasy, is how I'd rate this album. I wouldn't even pretend to be able to divine what Siberry is talking

about on every occasion, I just know what my hearing organs crave for - REGULARLY. One of the treasures of 1993. Available in the UK from CDX.

I first discovered Dave Mallett as he set out on his three album career with Flying Fish, back in the early eighties. Later, I traced his earlier trio of Newworld Media albums. After all, a guy who composes a tune titled "Arthur," can't be all bad ! I recall major disappointment with the final Flying Fish album, **"For A Lifetime."** Dave seemed to have been deserted by the muse - clean out of fresh ideas. The latter disc was cut at Jack's Tracks in Nashville with production by Jim Rooney, as was last year's **"this town."** Now signed to the revamped Vanguard label, the five years which lapsed since **"For A Lifetime"** has given Mallett more than enough time to come up with new material - and believe me, it shows. The video of "this town" has already enjoyed heavy rotation on CMT Europe. Elsewhere on the album, "Take Time" and "Old Soldiers" were co-written with Hal Ketchum. Welcome back Dave. Available in the UK from CDX.

It's apposite that one of his biggest supporters, Nanci Griffith, has penned the liner notes for his latest recording, **"Going to the West"** [Red House Records]. It's appropriate that it was recorded at Loma Ranch Studio, Fredericksburg, Texas where a decade back Nanci cut **"Poet In My Window."** One of the Associate Producers on the latter occasion, Brian Wood, steps into the producers chair this time around. The artist - why, the one and inimitable Bill Staines. The skillful vocal gymnastics performed by the quartet of Bill Staines, Bill & Bonnie Hearne and Mickie Merkens on the opening, album title cut, appears to merge and separate in what I can only describe as, akin to one of those old traditional dances where the numerous participants formed intricate patterns as they traversed the floor. The latter can only be summed up as a superb interpretation of this traditional song. Seven of Bill's own songs are featured, together with the John Stewart [and John Phillips] composed "Chilly Winds," "Black Sheep Boy" from the late Tim Hardin and Douglas Clegg's "Fill My Thirst" on which Mickie Merkens duets with Bill [ED. NOTE. Ed Becker and I certainly agree on one thing. It's about time this planet was treated to a Mickie Merkens solo album full of Mickie Merkens songs]. There's a gentle grace to Bill Staines' songs both in composition and in their interpretation. In the latter sphere, Wood [guitar], Gene Elders [violin], Randy Glines [bass], David Webb [piano], Paul Percy [percussion], Ron Erwin [drums], and Paul Sweeney [mandolin] are among the Austin based players who applied their instrumental skills to the sessions. And finally, we cannot omit a credit for the Loma's - John & Laurie. Available from **Red House Records Inc, P.O. Box 4044, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104 and Canadian River Music.**

KWIK KUTS



The Denny's **"One Good Car"** - self composed western swing and country ballad cassette from the Texas Hill Country, with a female vocalist who occasionally, sounds uncannily like Nanci G. From **Rt.5, Box779B, Wimberley, Texas 78767.**

Dave Bonney **"That's The Way It Is"** - Brooklyn born singer/songwriter cuts an album of his tunes in Germany. Opening cut "Change of Heart" is a killer. From **Brambus, P.O. Box 44, CH-7004, Chur, Switzerland.**

Ian Matthews **"Orphans & Outcasts Vol. 2 [1981-89]"** - More fine examples of his unreleased back catalogue from this latter day Texan. From **Topic Records/Direct Distribution.**

Townes Van Zandt **"Rear View Mirror," "Road Songs"** and **"The Nashville Sessions"** - This great man does himself no favours by releasing live/studio versions of his songs for the Nth time. A set of new songs cut in Ireland with production by Phillip Donnelly is due on Sundown soon. Amen.

Sarah Goslee Reed **"Like The Light Of The Moon"** - Cut at the Columbus, Ohio studio used by Sally Fingerett, this CD is a folksie concoction of self penned, traditional and tunes by other writers. From **944 East High St, Mt. Vernon, Ohio 43050.**

Gordon Lightfoot **"Gordon Lightfoot/Sunday Concert"** and **"Did She Mention My Name/Back Here On Earth"** - Bear Family come up trumps with this pair of two-fer early releases [1967-69] by this Canadian writer. The liner booklets alone are a work of art, while Gordy's own folk classics are too numerous to list here. **P.O. Box 1154, D-27727 Hambergen, Germany.**

Billy Stone **"West Texas Sky"** - Dallas, Texas born and a Nashville resident since the late 70's, this 25 track Bear Family compilation features Stone's own honky tonk songs, apart from the Prine/Sykes collaboration "Love, Love, Love."

John Flynn **"From This Hard Box Of Time"** and **"Haunted By The Ghost Of A Chance"** - Contributor to the **FAST FOLK** compilation FF706 Philadelphia Phast Folks, July 1993. These superb albums date respectively from 1992 [live] and 1993 [studio]. "Beneath Tall Trees" on the former album, is a killer song. Two truly fine investments. From **P.O. Box 71, Prospect Park, PA 19076.**

Woodstock Mountain Revue feat. **"Live at The Bearsville Theatre Vol. 2"** - From the Village Green label in Japan, the title is a dead giveaway. Vol. 1 is out there somewhere. Featuring all the usual suspects, Keith, Traum [*2], Alger, Herald, Rooney, Weissberg etc. For Mud Acres fans everywhere - the price is an import I'm afraid.

Meredith Louise Miller **"Bob"** - She may be Austin's next Nanci, if her pen maintains forward momentum. Meantime, she's precious, fey, with a nasal delivery. From **P.O. Box 4700, Austin, Texas 78751.**

Terry Allen & The Panhandle Mystery Band **"Pedal Steel/Rollback"** - Two dance company, theatre/film soundtrack projects from the quirky Allen, circa 1985 and 1988. Features numerous Lubbock raised musicians, including Sharon Ray Ely, Butch Hancock. From **Topic Records/Direct Distribution.**

Chris Wall



The interview with Chris Wall took place at La Zona Rosa, 612 W. 4th St., Austin, Texas, on Wednesday, 27th May, 1992. Thanks to John T. Davis at Tried & True Music for making all the arrangements.

Where were you born.

I was born in California, South of Los Angeles in the summer of 1952. Actually in Hollywood, but my folks were from Montana. My Dad got a job in California after the war. Every summer I would go back to Montana. With my Mum, when I was young. When both my folks passed away, I just headed back to Montana full time. That was in late '79.

Where did you do your schooling.

I did all my schooling in Orange County, Southern California. It was a real nice rural place back then. It has changed a good deal since. I went to Whittier College where Richard Nixon went. When I was real young I sneaked into a Buffalo Springfield concert there. I always liked music.

Had your family any musical heritage.

There were no musicians in my family. My big claim to fame is that we lived down the street from Johnny Mercer. I went to school with his kid. Dad also knew Bob Nolan, the Sons of the Pioneers guy, real well. They had done some work together when Dad first came to California. They would have all those great, live television shows in Los Angeles. The Spade Cooley Show, Doyle O'Dell Show, Town Hall Party and all those different things that you could go to. Dad liked country music a lot. It was called country and western or western music in those days. We used to go out a lot. I was between 5 to 10 years of age when I was going to those shows. The only records that were ever played in our house were big band or country records. Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman or artists such as Ray Price. Hank Williams sometimes. That was all happening when I was growing up as a kid. I had an older sister and she started buying rock n' roll records when Elvis Presley came out. I would sneak into her room and listen to them. In those days, when I was in High School and College there were great places to go to hear country music. The Palamino. Merle Haggard had a place for a while in Reseda called "Merle Haggard's Country Club." There was Tex Williams' "Riverside Rancho" out in Riverside, which folded up right around the time I got out of College. There was all kinds of places. Pretty big dance halls. They weren't internationally famous venues, but well known artists would come and play in them. I got all kinds of flak from my friends in California, because country music was not cool. I've never been hip a day in my life, so it didn't bother me. I even managed to convert a few people to country music.

When did you cross the border from just being a listener to actually writing and singing in public.

I was living in Montana and working on our place there. I'm partners with a guy up on a ranch in Montana. My day to day working and running buddies had a little band called Lakota. They were a country/rock band. They were Irish/American, like myself. All cowboys. They wanted to write and record their own material. We'd work everyday together and I would hang out with them a lot of the time. I was at their place and they had some recording equipment. They were also writing their own songs. I think it was really a case of *if they can do this, I can do it*. I would hear their songs and maybe go, "Why don't you try this" or whatever. I would write one and play it for them and they wouldn't like it. So I stopped. Then I moved down to Jackson Hole to do some bartending. This was in the winter time when there was nothing to do on the ranch. I met Pinto Bennett and another guy called Bruce Howser from the Sawmill Creek Band there. I would go down to Jackson Hole and work for 6 or 8 weeks during the tourist season and then come back to the ranch. This was between '84 and '86. I was down there one Memorial Day weekend just for the fun of it. It was 1987 and Pinto Bennett had laryngitis and needed somebody to help him sing. I'd sung with him at parties after work and stuff like that. That night, he asked me to go out on the road with his band. So I went on the road and never really went back to the ranch. Well, not on a full time basis at least. That group of guys were great musicians. A lot of fun, and craziness. I really like that Rocky Mountain music that Bruce Howser and Pinto write, which is all stuff about their own experiences. It wasn't like a lot of stuff that you would hear on Nashville radio. They were writing about an America that doesn't exist anymore. If it ever did. You know, that *Mammy's playing the harp on the porch* bullshit. What they were writing about, was a real live thing. That's probably why I've always gravitated towards and have always been a fan of, the Guy Clark's, Jerry Jeff's and the Robert Earl Keen's. I bought my first guitar in '85. The guys in Lakota showed me the first few chords. Then I bought a John Stewart chord book with a few songs in it that I knew, and I learned them. I've learned a few more chords since then, but not many. I am a very mediocre guitar player, but know enough to get by with the melody. Now when I play live, I've tried to become a better rhythm player, so that I don't have to hire a rhythm guitarist. In a way, I was just drifting. I just wanted to be up there and didn't want to be in California anymore. My Dad had been real sick, which is the only reason I'd stayed in California that long.

What did you study at College.

History and Philosophy. I was going to teach. Then I ended up going to Law School. My parents wanted me to go and I got a little scholarship money. My wife also wanted me to go. I got married kind of young. I went to Law School for three years and then Dad got sick and my Mum passed away. I got divorced and quit Law School. If Mum hadn't died and Dad hadn't got sick, I would probably have went to Montana straight after I got divorced. I loved those summers when I was young. I used to go stay at my uncle's place. It was beautiful. I got the chance to play cowboys for

three months each year. I'd come back and my friends in California would make fun of me. I always thought they were kind of envious. I will never live in California again, there's nothing there to go back to.

Was Pinto your main influence in terms of starting to write songs again.

I think the factors are all kind of equal. I can point to Pinto - almost everyone is a phoney compared to him. What I love about Pinto's writing and I don't do it as much as he does - I don't think anybody does - Pinto will just bare his soul. He has got this new song called "Pinto Bennett Wrote." He has changed a few of the words, but it is based on a letter this woman wrote to him. It was a bitter kind of diatribe, about things that Pinto had done to her. Pinto was thoroughly convinced that he had done all these things and was totally responsible for the situation, so he can honestly speak about it. Pinto enriches everyone's life that meets him. It is certainly true for me. The honesty that he puts into his writing, he doesn't gloss anything over and so you really get to know him. He's a real worthwhile person to know. Pinto doesn't care about writing a hit song. He couldn't care less. He was in Nashville in the '70's with Guy Clark and Richard Dobson, and it nearly killed him. Everybody knows and Pinto knows that you've got to write a hit song. There are some songs on the radio that I can't even listen to and they are hit songs. They are just awful. It doesn't matter, because they are hits and that's one school of songwriting. I would never even mention names or anything, because the people who do that - even though they are writing what I think are shitty songs - they probably think my songs are shitty. It's all subjective, it's all taste and it doesn't matter. Guy Clark does it too, but he's more subtle about giving up bits and pieces of himself, than say Pinto is. Guy is more intrinsically poetic than Pinto. I'd always liked those guys - the storyteller songwriters. John Prine. John Stewart.

Were the songs that you put on the first album real early ones.

When I first played my songs to Pinto and those guys, I know that I did "Honky Tonk Heart." There was another verse in there at one stage. Kip [Attaway], Pinto and I were playing some shows and we wanted to have a song that we could all sing together. I wrote a verse from the point of view of the singer, the customer and the bartender. We all sang a verse, and it was something we enjoyed. I just wrote it one night and they liked it. I left the verse about the customer out when we recorded it. "He Lives My Dream" was an early song and Pinto said that it was probably a hit song. He liked that one. It wasn't a real Motel Cowboy type of song. There's a lot of artistic licence in that song. I was projecting a lot. When I wrote that song I was on the road with those guys. It was the first time I think that I had ever been broken down and literally stranded with no money. We were the brokest, sorriest ass band you ever saw in your life. Everybody was just wound up. It was like a gonzo kind of thing. The guys had gotten some response and were kind of tasting success. It wasn't coming very fast. They had been in

bands all their lives and really wanted it to happen and so everybody was real wound up. The music was real good, the life style was real crazy. Everyone was into living crazy. I remember being out in Swan Valley, Idaho, and we were broke down, with no money. We had leased Kip's bus and it had fallen apart, so we couldn't go anywhere. The band broke up at the end of that summer. I was just thinking about where I was going to go, what was going to happen and if I ever would do anything in the music business. I liked the honky tonks, I liked the people and I liked the music. I guess I was kind of fantasising, "What if were to do this for a living." I think that song came out of that kind of projection. You know sometimes when things are going bad or good, you tend to project light years in a few seconds. I was also thinking about Pinto a lot. At that time we were all worried if he was going to be alive next week. On any given night he was so - he has really mellowed out a lot. He's got a good gal now and they are in Nashville and he's working real hard, but boy he was just geared up at that time. I was scared that he was going to die. I think there is a lot of Pinto in that song too.

Had you done any recording work before "Honky Tonk Heart."

Not a thing. Not a demo. Nothing. That first album is really a demo. We went over there to Robbie Matson's Studio in Idaho and recorded "Honky Tonk Heart" "Rodeo Wind" and "Trashy Women." Kip Attaway had recorded "Entourage" and "Trashy Women" for his little album that he sold. We used his rhythm tracks and recorded one other song as a demo, that we were going to take to Nashville. I sent a copy to Jerry Jeff, because I'd met him in Jackson Hole. He saw me get drunk with these guys and heard me sing one night, before I'd even started with Pinto's band. I was bar tending and I came out later in the evening, real drunk, and they said "You got to get up here and sing your song, Jerry Jeff is here." I sang "I Feel Like Hank Williams Tonight" and "Trashy Women." This girl brought Jerry Jeff down and said, "Sit here and shut up and listen to this guy." We all got together and talked later on. When we made that demo at Robbie's, I sent it off to Jerry. He ended up recording some of my songs. He'd said that if I ever got anything on tape I should send it. I felt like an idiot doing it. I really did. I remember standing in the Post Office in Wilsall, Montana putting this thing in the box. I had my hand halfway in the slot - I didn't know what to do. He gets a thousand tapes from assholes just like me every day, but I finally went "Screw it" and posted it. I put in my address and phone number and all that. One night we were sitting at dinner and I picked up the phone and it was Jerry Jeff. He told me they were going to do an album and did I want to come down there for a while. I had no money, so I called my stepmother in California. She said she would help me, on the condition that I went and saw her. I drove from Montana to L.A. in one shot as I didn't have enough money for a hotel room. Then I drove from L.A. to Austin. Jerry Jeff recorded those songs and I opened a couple of shows for him. Pinto's band broke up the week after Labour Day '87 and I had gone back to the ranch. Jerry Jeff called about a year later. In the

interim I had gone over to Robbie's and recorded this thing. That's where I spent all my money and that's why I had no money to go to Texas. Of the songs on "Honky Tonk Heart," five are the demo cuts and they're untouched. I went back to record five more songs and I had my album. It was really a demo though. In September of '88 I drove down here, opened a few shows and it went well and people started handing me \$300 and \$500 for singing. I thought "I could hang out here for a while." I really didn't feel like going back and doing another winter on the ranch.

"Rodeo Wind Song" - Do you have an affinity with the rodeo.

I love rodeos. I have been going to them since I was a kid. Twice in my life, I've been stupid enough to climb on a bull. Once when I was nineteen and two years ago in Jackson Hole, on a dare, from a rodeo announcer. It has become a standing joke. He said, "I want you to ride in the old timers rodeo." I said, "Well you find me a thirty six year old bull and I'll ride in the rodeo, but not before that." He said that he would find me a real calm bull. It was three and a half of the most exciting seconds of my life. I came out, the bull threw me off and all my friends yelled and cheered and I tipped my hat and walked away.

I think "Empty Seat Beside Me" is a terrific song.

That was one we recorded, thinking that if anything on that record was ever going to get played, that was it. We even produced that one to try to get airplay on the radio. We put a lot of time and energy into it. I really like that song. I wrote that on the road from Jackson Hole to Red Lodge, Montana. The most beautiful drive you have ever seen in your life. I don't know exactly where the whole illusion of the future and the past in the lyric, came from. That's about a six hour drive and I was thinking about that song most of the way. I almost always write when I'm driving and very rarely sit down to write. I just keep going over the lyric in my mind and remember it that way. I don't have a notebook. That's too professional and would take the edge off things. We don't want to polish up these songs too brightly.

Are you a fan of western swing, as "Faithfully" is well into that groove.

That was Teddy Ray. He was in Pinto's first band, Tarwater. He was the fiddle player. After cutting that song, we came up with the rule that if it's the pickers favourite it doesn't go on the album, because nobody else in the world is going to like it. We just thought we would try it, just for the fun of it, because all the pickers really liked it. K.W. Turnbow our old drummer, who works with Chris Ledoux now, caught this real cool groove. Teddy said "I can play my jazz fiddle. I've been working on this all my life and never got to do it." He started playing it and it just came out as so much fun. Nobody ever pays any attention to that song whatsoever. They just go "Oh, that kind of Lyle Lovett rip off." I wrote that song long before I ever heard of Lyle Lovett. That's OK, it doesn't matter. I really like that song. The one on the new album, "No Sweat," is

"Once Before I Go." That was the picker's absolute favourite, everybody loved the song.

Jerry Jeff cut "Trashy Women" and it was even put out as a single and charted. Do you get much flak over the lyrics.

It got to No. 60. A couple of drunk gals, bar room feminists - if they don't like your face, they become feminist - but there was very little flak from that source. As a matter of fact, women adore that song. They can see the humour of it. It's a parody, just like "Something To Shoot." I've had people accost me about that song and I just go "Lighten up, get a sense of humour. It's only a joke." There are a lot of people who think it's not funny and don't realise that you're poking fun. That's also the danger of doing something like that. I went to a show, the guy will remain nameless - he's a country and western singing star guy, and that song is just not far off at all from what was going on. People fawning all over him. A huge group of people, and I thought he was enjoying it. I said, "This looks great. These people falling over themselves to do things for you." Nobody ever did things for me - it's hard enough for me to get my girlfriend to get a beer out of the refrigerator when she's up. You know it's usually, "Get your own." The whole idea of having these people do this for you was so preposterous, that I thought I'd write a song about it. I also make fun of the males who hang around in that song. Both sexes, equally I think. It's a very sensitive issue in America. That's why programme directors were scared of that song when Jerry Jeff cut it, because they thought they would have this feminist reaction, which never really happened in the markets where they released it. In New Orleans, Florida and Arizona it did really well. Jerry Jeff was asked to come to New Orleans to judge a trashy woman contest at this bar, Tipitinas. He couldn't go and I said "Send me." They just saw the song as a joke and that's all it is.

You just mentioned "Something to Shoot." Considering the nature of American gun laws, weren't you worried that the song would also be misconstrued.

It has been and I knew it would be. I don't agree with the NRA, they are just there to keep on selling weapons and they don't care who uses them or who they use them on. They always quote the Constitution, but they conveniently leave out the first half of that Amendment, which says "A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of the free state." They just go "the right to bear arms," and cut the first half of it out. I don't think that Thomas Jefferson and George Washington intended for every yahoo to be walking around with an AK47 on the streets. I can almost guarantee that's not what they had in mind. That's another sacred cow.

In terms of what guns are used for, what about the conservation lobby.

It doesn't bother me. I mean to say, some people get that song and some didn't. The real rednecks go nuts when I sing it. I sang that song out in College Station

in front of about three thousand Aggies, opening for Jerry Jeff one night. I said "Yankees to shoot" and the whole place went wild. I went to this bar afterwards with Jerry Jeff, because he was going to sign some autographs, and I had just come down here so they didn't know me from Adam. I had 900 beers sitting in front of me at this table. These guys were coming up and saying "I love that song boy, I'm going to buy you a beer." It was a joke and I wrote that song, basically because we were in a traffic jam in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. I didn't move West to be in traffic jams. We were just talking about tourists and it just came to me. All my friends up there, love to hunt and shoot. I don't do these things to be controversial, I do them because they strike me as funny at the time. I think I'm a fairly rational, reasonable person. I know a joke when I hear one. Everybody in this country now, is wound up so tight about every little issue, that they have no sense of humour about anything. Kip sings these songs. Kip is just a little, adorable Johnny Carson kind of guy, and he can say anything to anybody and will get away with it. He's the first guy to ever sing anything of mine onstage. He's a good friend. I'm a big, dark ugly son of a bitch and I can say "Hello" to some guys girlfriend and he's going to want to kick my ass. That's just the way it is, while Kip is "sweet little Kip" and they're going to love him no matter what he does. Kip sings Pinto's "Seven Spanish Omlettes" which is the single most offensive song ever written, and all these grandmothers are out there laughing. I can't worry about what these people think, that's Nashville's job.

"Entourage" is also on there.

To be honest with you, I didn't want to do that song because I thought it would make the record too much of a novelty thing. That was mentioned, and I knew it would happen. When we came out with **"No Sweat,"** people were asking "Where's the funny stuff?" I kind of wanted to get that over with, and that's why I didn't put anything overtly funny on **"No Sweat."** I didn't want people to keep wanting that.

In terms of "No Sweat" being a move away from "the funny stuff," then it was deliberate.

You bet. Jerry Jeff wanted me to do this album, **"No Sweat"** in Austin, and I really wanted to produce it myself. I know Jerry Jeff well enough and I love him dearly, but I know how he is. He would be down there everyday basically telling me how he likes to make records, which is absolutely perfect when Jerry Jeff is making a record. I just wanted to record it with Robbie, and I knew we could do a good job. We didn't spend any money on it. I thought if I got away to Idaho, I could get the guys I wanted, pick the songs I wanted and do it the way I wanted. I wanted to make a western honky tonk record, where the songs kind of made sense. In Nashville they would have gone, "Well, here's ten nifty songs. They don't have anything to do with each other or your life. You sing these songs and everybody will love you." That's not what I'm about and so I thought if we got away - we just drank a lot of beer, made a record and really had a good time doing it.

Can I go back to the first album and "I Wish John Stetson Made A Heart." That song contains a number of historic and poetic references. Where did that come from.

That was written after having breakfast with a broken hearted cowboy friend of mine in Livingston, Montana. He was going on and on about this gal. He just couldn't get over her, and this was about the ninety fifth time I'd heard this story. I told him "John, you got to let it go and bounce back." He had sat on his hat the night before. I punched his hat out and kind of got it back in shape and said "Wouldn't this be great if hearts were made like this." Of course all the song lyrics came tumbling out and I changed it to Stetson, because it fitted better. I just started thinking about the metaphor - that's the danger in a song like that, is overworking the metaphor. In Nashville they do that a lot. That's why that last verse - I tried to kind of get away with it, because I'd always had that line in my head about checking the mirror to make sure I was still there. I wanted to get something in there. I guess people see the hat and they think that you're just not very bright or you don't think these things through. My friends and I get the biggest kick out of reading reviews and personality sketches about me. This is all very new to me, and I'm only three and half years into this business and I'm still not used to seeing my name in the paper and people writing about me. I get the biggest kick out of reading "This simple man" like I'm some kind of simpleton. Like "He's not complex" and my friends go "Yea" and I reply "Hey, if they want to think that I'm all squared away and I know exactly what I'm doing, then that's great." I don't care and it doesn't bother me as long as they think I'm a fairly decent guy. You just have to try to live your life and have fun.

"Sure is Smokey in Here." Was that written after you started playing in honky tonks.

I love that number. That's another of my favourite songs. Sometimes when I play that song, people will come up to me and say "God that's a great old song. I've always loved it, for years." That's great, because if they think that, it's like a stamp of approval. There's a lot of real true stuff in there about, you know, just wanting to sip my drink in peace in some bar. I wish somebody would cover that song a little better than I did.

What makes a place great for hanging out for you.

It's like a pub, I guess, even though I have never been to England or Ireland. It's also the people you find there. Some places just lend themselves to hanging out. [ED. NOTE. Chris had brought along some great photographs]. This is the Bank Bar in my little town in Montana, and believe me, it's a great place to hang out. There are only about eight or ten bar stools, a pool table and a couple of tables. It's a lot of fun, and the people are real nice. The Cowboy Bar in Jackson Hole is also a great place to hang out. Everyone who has lived in the West and loves it up there, kind of wants to turn people on to it. People come from all over the world to see that place. Pinto is the greatest

hanger out that ever was. I learned how to do it from him and we used to have these rules for hanging out. One of the primary rules is that you can't have any real reason for being there. Like if you are waiting for somebody, you are not officially hanging out, because you are doing something. Even if you are waiting for somebody, that is doing something. You've got to be doing absolutely nothing. Just hanging out. At one point, we were going to write the pro-hang out guide, but we could never muster enough discipline to start it, because we were too busy hanging out.

Moving back to your second album, where did "Fine Line" come from.

I'll tell you exactly. It started with that first verse, the one "I'm no phoney, and I'm no fake." That was the first thing I wrote. It is an absolutely true story and I won't tell you who it was, because she is kind of well known in the music business now. I had just come to Austin and I was broke. I had this little apartment, had a TV that was about this big and no money to really go out on. I was drinking beer that was \$1.98 a case. The cheapest beer in town. Songwriter beer. I get this phone call from this gal in Nashville and she said "This is so and so from Warner Bros. Records. So and so gave me your tape." My heart was just, "Whoa man!" I'd only been here a couple of months and Nashville was already calling me. I thought it was great. She said "I really enjoyed it and I passed it on to so and so, and I just wanted to call and tell you that we are going to pass on you at this time." I kind of went from here to here in ten seconds. I said, "Thank you very much, but I kind of feel like I am sitting at home and the prettiest girl in High School just called and said "I know you've never asked me out and just in case you're thinking about asking me, don't even think about it, because I won't go."" She laughed and we hung up and then I got to thinking about that and how strange it was. I've never lived and died waiting for that phone call from Nashville. That's one thing that I've refused to do. I'm a fatalist anyway. I'm never going to be that kind of performer. I don't sing like that. I don't put on that kind of stage clothes and my songs are not like that. Some guys in this town say "I don't give a shit about Nashville," and then they go home and check the answering machine to see if Nashville has called. I know a lot of them and they live for that moment. I'm just not like that. In fact, I'm taking most of the summer off to go to Montana.

Do you stay in places other than Austin.

We travel around, when we go out with Jerry Jeff, every once in a while. I do my own thing with the Honky Tonks and I try to spend at least a month and a half on the ranch at a stretch, when I can. We play Jackson Hole on the way back, for two weeks. I have actually done fairly well in Texas. Texas is a whole different world musically. The size of crowd I can draw on my own, isn't the same as Jerry Jeff can draw. We had great success in the Mid West and on the East Coast. Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois - for some reason, we've done real well there.

Are the guys in your band the same as was in Pinto's

band.

Not in Texas. No. Robbie Matson has moved on. A lot of Pinto's guys are with Chris Ledoux now. Some of the guys have moved to Nashville and I'm just using Texas musicians now. There are a lot of great players here in Austin, so it's not hard to put a band together. It's hard to keep one together. When Jerry Jeff goes out, I use all the old Gonzo Guys. Bob Livingston. John Inmon. Freddy Krc. Lloyd Maines. Whoever is out with Jerry Jeff. They're all nice people and they're friends. We just do about a forty five minute, pretty intense opener. Sell a lot of tapes, get to make a lot of friends and hang out.

On your second album, "Once Before I Go" intrigues me. Particularly the line about "throwing firewater on old burning bridges."

This guy's whole life is going up in flames. The specific thing that brought that line to mind was when I was tending bar. All these guys would come in and you know how drinking people are sometimes, or even people - they would burn a bridge and make enemies, then later on, they would get a drink and forgive each other. That was my idea of throwing firewater on old burnt bridges. You'd made these enemies in the past and then you're sitting down and trying to make friends again.

What about "Boots."

I love "Boots." It's a biographical song. I have been going out with the same girl for two years, which is just unheard of. I still have friends call and go "Really. You're still going out with her." I moved around so much there for a while. "Boots" is an old premise, the old Lee Hazelwood song and all that. I tried to put a different twist to it. Make it more like a Waylon thing. K.W. Turnbow the great drummer has been living with the same girl for two years. There is a certain point where the road swallows you up or you can get off it. The road will eat you alive.

"No Sweat" was co-written with Pinto and Mark [Sergio] Webb. It has a real Everly Brothers feel to it.

Pinto, Mark Webb and I were in McCall, Idaho, and Pinto had bought this biggest thing of cheap red wine. Like a 55 gallon drum. I don't know where he found the son of a bitch. We'd sent him out for beer or wine. He came back with more red wine than I had ever seen in my life. We started drinking and talking about who we like and who we didn't like, and everybody loves the Everly Brothers. So we were going to write an Everly Brothers song and Webb had an idea for this hook in the melody. We were doing a round robin and everybody was strumming along. In the end, we only had two verses and we couldn't come up with a final verse. I wrote it driving around the block the next day, because we needed a third verse. Nobody has covered it yet. I wish somebody would talk to me about it. I don't have an active publisher in Nashville to sell these things. Pinto is there now, but he is not America's leading business brain. I should probably take a greater interest in that, but I haven't been able

to muster the enthusiasm to go over there and pitch my songs. The line in the lyric about the jug of wine is probably just a marginal untruth. I don't know where Pinto got the enormous container of wine. It had one of those really cool hook things, so we were drinking it like this [ED. NOTE. Chris indicated that the bottle was supported on his arm, with one finger on the hook]. It was one of those phoney old jugs - those Mason Jar things that they used to put drinks in - it truly was a monster jug. In the lyric, East Jesus, Idaho [ED. NOTE. The liner booklet refers to East Yahoo, Idaho] is a fictional town in American slang, and is synonymous with a place which is as far away as you can get from civilisation. Way out in the middle of nowhere.

What about "Faded Blue."

I wrote that song after I had a birthday go by, where I didn't get drunk and call all my old girl friends on the phone and tell them that I still loved them. That was once a major change for me. Those calls used to be a tradition of mine, when another year had gone by and I felt like I hadn't done anything. My dad was a working man who eventually elevated himself and got a business of his own, worked real hard, because that's what you did. The idea of going off and doing anything different was just out of the question. I've had to re-evaluate all the time. All of a sudden you find yourself. Even though I loved it on the ranch in Montana, I really had no money. Although you try to tell yourself that you don't care, you have all that training which pounds on you. I was fairly wild when I was younger and had my moments. It's an autobiographical song without much embellishment. The furthest that I've ever had to invent on the two albums was "He Lives My Dream," because I projected myself into being this country and western singing star, which of course I wasn't. I think that the loneliness that some people feel - I know at that moment in time I felt, because I was as far away from family and so much of my family was gone. I know I was feeling that at that time, where there was no way on earth I could get together with my family for a Sunday dinner, because they just weren't there anymore. I felt as lonely as some big old, famous guy. I don't know that there's any difference. That's probably the biggest fantasy thing. "Once Before I Go," I definitely know that feeling, where you are stuck in the same town with somebody, and it's a small town and you don't want to see them. I love Fort Worth. I think it's a great town and I was struck - we played a couple of times in Dallas and several times in Fort Worth - by the difference between the attitude of the people in Dallas who go to honky tonks, or what they call a honky tonk in Dallas, and what is a honky tonk in Fort Worth. There is so much difference. Fort Worth is the real deal, with the exception of Billy Bob's, which is a tourist trap. What I mean, is the real dance halls. In Dallas, they have disco balls in the ceiling. It was the difference between those two towns which got me started on that song.

What about "Rodeo Cowboy."

I have always admired those guys, because they are nuts. They love being rodeo cowboys, and they love

having people know they are rodeo cowboys. They strut and carry on, and they talk way too loud. They are however, an amazing group of people. I have always been fascinated by them. It really is an interesting life, and it's very similar to the band life, where you're almost running the same highways. Living out of suitcases, with no settled place of abode. The Famous Motel Cowboy name comes from that "Junior Bonner" movie with Steve McQueen and Robert Preston. Robert Preston plays his dad. Steve McQueen comes back to town to try to borrow some money and finds the family affairs in disarray. There's a lot of sub text going on, but basically this guy looks at him and says "You ain't nothing but a famous motel cowboy." The rodeo cowboys just go down the road, sleep in their trucks, sleep in a motel, and they haven't done any cowboy work. They only work the rodeo. There are a lot of guys on the rodeo circuit who have never seen a ranch in their lives. They just learned to ride. They're like athletes.

"I'll Take the Whiskey (You Take the Wheel)" - now that's a road song.

Yea. That was so funny, because when I first started writing songs - Pinto has a song "I'll Hold the Bottle," and one of the first ideas I ever had was that. I came down to Jackson Hole and Pinto was working on his song, so I told him about my idea, and he said "Well, you write your song and I'll write my song and we'll see what happens." He wrote his and he was never really happy with it. They put it on a record, but he didn't like it very much. I finished mine and sent it to him. A lot of that song is about driving around with Pinto, but he didn't want any credit for it.

In "Better Things To Do" there's a neat line which goes "They said no man was an island, I didn't buy that jazz, Hell, I was a rock, boys, I was Alcatraz."

"In a cell of my own making" I remember, because one of my things is that I don't know who is free and who isn't in this world, but you do have the opportunity to pick your own prison. They call Alcatraz, The Rock. I always loved that Simon & Garfunkel song, "I Am A Rock." I don't remember the exact moment when that light went on, but I thought it was pretty cool and I really didn't believe that anybody had ever rhymed "jazz" and "Alcatraz" before. I figured that I was fairly safe. Then I got a letter from a guy in Seattle who had seen "The Texas Connection" on television, and he went into great detail about how he didn't really like me too much, until I got to that line in the song. He had been taping it. He thought they were pretty cool lines, so he listened to the tape over again and decided that he loved me. It's also a love song. My girlfriend just got all over my case, because I got the biggest kick when somebody reviewed this record - I don't usually read them, because there's always a chance that they're going to be bad - the guy said that the only problem he had with it, because he gave it a real nice rating and everything, was that I had cut too many love songs. The idea of anybody criticising me for doing too many love songs just struck me as so funny. I thought, well everybody sees things differently.

"I'm not drinking anymore, I'm not drinking any less." is also a great pair of lines. You've got this neat way of giving the listener something with one hand and whipping it back with the other. Do lines like that come easily.

When I get an idea, it probably is fast. The thing is, I'm so undisciplined. Discipline has never been a big factor in my life. I've tried not to let it get in the way of having a good time. I know these guys from Nashville sit down every day and write. I don't. When I get an idea - I've got one that we've done at the club a few times. One is called, "Sings the Blues, and Walk the Floor." I was playing the guitar one day and caught this riff. I was thinking about Waylon, because I've always loved Waylon Jennings. Merle Haggard as well - I've always adored him. Waylon has that soulful kind of quality to his voice, and I caught this lick and wrote this song in really no time at all. Everybody really likes it. There's another one called "Two Step Recovery" which is a kind of a parody about all these co-dependency things. It's a real cheap, stupid song and I'll never record it, but in the club people really, really like it. In the song, the guy is in a two step recovery and basically he is going out drinking and dancing every night, and that's his way of getting over his problems. I don't think it would translate well to a record. I wrote that song real quick, then again, I don't sit down and do it everyday like I guess you are supposed to. I really don't and I really need to. Now, I've got plenty of stuff for another album or two. Songs that I have written over the last four or five years. At some point if I want to keep recording, I am going to have to get more disciplined, because I've got to turn out more stuff.

Will you carry on with 'Tried and True Music.'

I have no idea. The idea of being a performer and a recording guy - I really thought that if anything was going to happen for me in the music business, it would be as a songwriter. That I might spend sometime in Nashville each year, and the rest of the time live in Montana. Until Jerry Jeff called me, I had never given any thought to coming to Texas. I had never been near Texas. This has really been a "by the seat of the pants, play it by ear" kind of deal. The only problem with smaller labels, and I love 'Tried and True' and I love what Jerry Jeff, Susan Walker and those guys have done for me, is that without a major label deal you can't get heard on the radio. Then again, I have made some money the last couple of years playing the bars, and enjoyed doing it.

Rykodisc help distribute your recordings.

Ryko is great. If 'Tried and True' didn't have Ryko it would be just another selling them at shows deal. Jerry Jeff could do that, because he draws so many people. His fans are so devoted. I was real lucky to get plugged into that groove. We get some air time with Ryko. The thing with Ryko is that I was the first person they had ever signed any kind of deal with, that had never cut albums before. All of their acts were established people, or some kind of roots or ethnic music. Unusual music where there was a specific

market for it, whereas with me, they didn't know country. Jerry Jeff is country, but is not country, He's a real unique act. His following is so devout, and has been around for a long time, while I didn't have that. With me, it's like trying to get somebody started. This is all stuff that I have in the last three or four years begun paying attention to. I know how it works now and it's just up to me to decide what I want to do with it. It's fun too. I really enjoy it. We have gotten some great response. A group called Confederate Railroad recorded "Trashy Women" recently. They're on the Atlantic label and I heard their version of it, which is very funky and very slow. It threw me when I first heard it.

You've mentioned that Guy Clark, is a big influence on your writing. There seems to be a connection between Guy and yourself.

Before I met Jerry Jeff, I had gone with Kip Attaway to the Northern Rockies Folk Festival in Haley, Idaho. Kip knew I was writing songs. It was one of those times I'd come down to tend bar and Kip was playing a little single at the Cowboy Bar. He said "I'm going to go over to this Northern Rockies Folk Festival for the weekend. Going to take my bus. Do you want to go?" I said, "Sure. You bet." Kip had a house in Ketchum at the time, and we ran over there and Kip invited Rosalie Sorrells, Guy Clark, Bendy Bowler, and a bunch of people back to his house after the Festival. They were all sitting around playing these songs. I've always been a big Guy Clark fan, and he is just sitting there. He's got a little champagne and he's smoking cigarettes, listening to these songs. A real gent. Kip asked me to play a song, so I played "Trashy Women" and Guy laughed and asked if I had any others. He told me that I really ought to think about putting something down. He said my stuff was quiet charming. I thought it was a lovely compliment and it certainly meant a lot. I remember waking up the next morning pretty hung over and wondering, did that really happen. Sitting in this kitchen in Idaho with all these famous people. Well to me, they were famous. It turns out that Guy ran into Jerry Jeff right after that, but I didn't find out about it till later on. He said "Man, I heard this guy and I think he's a bartender in Jackson Hole. He has written some cool songs, you should check him out." After I played those songs in Jackson Hole for Jerry Jeff that night, drunk with the band, the light went on in Jerry Jeff's head and he went, "You're the guy that Guy Clark told me about." And that's the first inkling I had that Guy Clark had mentioned me to Jerry Jeff. He went, "Now it all makes sense because of that "Trashy Women" song."

Harlon Howard is mentioned in the liner notes of your first album.

Susan sent him my tape and wanted some feedback. I think Susan wanted to know if I could really write songs, so she sent it to the best friend she had who was a judge of these things. He was coming to Austin and she goes "We're going to go have a drink with Harlon Howard." She had tapes by two other artists that she'd sent and he hadn't liked them. She was real nervous and when I walked in, they were sat in

the lobby bar of the Driskell Hotel. I was going to go meet Harlon Howard and I was nervous. Susan was sitting there talking to him, and it turns out that up to this stage he hasn't said a word yet about my songs. After the introductions are over, he says "Is this the guy whose tape you sent?" He said "This son of a bitch can sure write a song." Harlon is wonderful and great. What I love about Harlon and Guy, when I go to Nashville, is that they love being songwriters. They love that whole hanging out thing. God they are great. You can get an honest answer from them, because if you're bad they will tell you. I've had Guy go "You can do a lot better than that. That's not up to standard. Go work on that some more."

Where exactly is Bozeman.

In South Western Montana. It's the closest major town - with a population of 23,000 - to our ranch. It is really a neat town. I love Texas. Montana is also a wonderful state, but there is no market for live music there. People are pretty impoverished by farm factors and prices, timber and all this stuff. They're real working class people and they just don't have a lot of money to spend on bands or music. Jackson Hole brings in the tourist trade, people bring their money from all over the world to that town.

Where did the idea for the name of your song publishing company, Rhythm Wrangler come from.

Because of my background in ranching. There is very little deep thought that goes on in anything I do. I'm glad I did that though. That's been a great learning experience. Just by hanging on to the publishing on those songs. I know Jerry Jeff sang "I Feel Like Hank Williams Tonight" on the Tonight Show, one time when Jay Leno was the host. Just by owning the publishing, there was a significant little pay cheque. Not Paul McCartney kind of money obviously, but somebody said the publishing was really good on the "Tonight Show" and I was expecting \$300 or \$400 for writing it. I got a cheque for \$4400, and I went "I like this business." I've got a friend from Bozeman, Montana named Kostas, who wrote "I'm Falling in Love" and several songs for Pattie Loveless, plus a song he wrote that Dwight Yoakam cut called "Turn It Up, Turn It On." Kostas has done really, really well and goes to Nashville four or five times a year, but lives in Bozeman. He loves to fly fish and is a terrific guy. He has been at it forever and worked very, very hard but he's making a wonderful living.

The cover shot of "No Sweat" is neat.

Marg is great. Marg is wonderful. We took a bunch of pictures and I just wanted to do it there, and it was fun. It was taken during that June 22nd date when Jerry Jeff recorded that album that no one will ever hear. That cover picture was taken in Luckenbach, Texas, in the Old Post Office.

What happened to your tour to Europe this year.

We played in Switzerland and Germany in 1990 and had a great time. Especially in Switzerland. I've never

been treated as nice anywhere. Interesting people, beautiful area. Pinto has always been telling me to go to the UK. We played at this festival in Grindewald in Switzerland and all these people came out in these really wild cowboy outfits. Nothing like I've ever actually seen in the west. It's a combination of reality and some old John Wayne movie. They were shooting off blanks while we were playing. When we got into the airport in Paris, we got off the plane with our hats on, and carrying our guitar cases. There were these guys walking around the airport with Ouzzies over their shoulders, security guards. All they said was "Texas." That's all they said. We were due to go back to Europe recently, but it got shelved. The recession I guess. I would really like to get back over there.

Pinto has toured the UK on a number of occasions, although less regularly recently because our economy is pretty wrecked.

Pinto wanted to more over there and everybody persuaded him that the minute you do, you are not going to be a novelty. You're not going to be authentic. They say the music business has been bad here, but I don't know. Americans are pretty spoiled and what we call a recession or depression, is only relative. This last year in particular, I've had an excellent time, given what I thought was I was going to accomplish at all. I got on a few "Nashville Now" things, "The Texas Connection." I cut some stuff on some television shows. All of a sudden you get a little cheque from here and there. What we have tried to do is really build the live performance thing and in Texas you can work for your share of the door. And if you go into a town a few times and make friends, and we always manage to make a lot of friends, they begin to come out and see you regularly.

You haven't appeared on "Austin City Limits" yet.

They are pretty selective about who they feature or don't feature. It's more a folk show now, than it is a country show. They have an extremely high level of quality bands. "Austin City Limits" is such a great show. I don't know what is going to happen with "The Texas Connection." It's a half hour show, with the whole half hour devoted to a single artist. Fringe, marginal or speciality artists can do a lot better in the US, because there is just so many dollars out there that people will spend. The big hits are still the pop and trendy acts. There's this guy now called Billy Ray Cyrus who has this big hit called "Achy Breaky Heart." I wouldn't even write a song with a title like that, but he's 30, he looks like a country George Michael with the stubble beard. Great looking guy who shakes his butt and the chicks go crazy. It doesn't really matter what he's singing. He could be singing the phone book and they're going to buy his records. I'm not putting him down. I wish I looked that good and I'd shake it too. Whatever, it doesn't matter. The country phenomenon is real interesting, because it has changed so much and a lot of it isn't really country music. It's hard to label things because there are no boundaries any more. I'm glad that Garth Brooks is making a lot of money, because he is paying pickers to play for him. It just expands the market.

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 **MICHAEL SMITH/V. ARTISTS** "Tribute To Steve Goodman" Red Pyjamas RPJ 004CD [1985, 1989]. #
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. Montana Song **DAVID ACKLES** "American Gothic" Elektra 7559-61597-2 [1972, 1993].
5. Stranded In The Moonlight **ANNE HILLS** "October Child" Flying Fish FF 70621 [1993]. #
6. Yarrington Town **MICKIE MERKENS** "Texas Summer Nights, Vol. 1" Potato Satellite PS2-1000 [1983]. #
7. The Home Team **PETE NELSON** "Three Mean Fish And A Yellow Dog" (cassette only, no index no.) [1993]. #
8. Helpless (+ rest of this stunning album!) **ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO** "Thirteen Years" Watermelon CD 1017 [1993]. #
9. Fusion **JOHN FORSTER** "Entering Marion" Philo CD PH 1164 [1993]. #
10. Music In My Room **CHERYL WHEELER** "Driving Home" Philo CD PH 1152 [1993]. #
11. Bandera Highway **ROSIE FLORES** "Once More With Feeling" Hightone HCD 8047 [1993]. #
12. Dark Dancing Eyes (+ the 15 other songs) **JIMMY LA FAVE** "Highway Trance" Bohemia Beat 0022 [1994]. #
13. What Was I Thinking? [Live Version] **CHRISTINE LAVIN** "Live At The Cactus Cafe" Philo CD PH 1159 [1993]. #
14. Fill My Thirst **BILL STAINES** "Going To The West" Red House RHR CD 56 [1993]. #
15. Just to Hear Your Voice/Swim Away **TONI PRICE** "Discovery/Warner Music 77003 [1993]. #
16. That's No Reason To Cry **DAVID ACKLES** "Subway To The Country" Elektra 7559-61596-2 [1969, 1993].
17. Pundits & Poets **PATTY LARKIN** "angel running" High Street/Windham Hill 72902 10318-2 [1993]. #
18. Home Before Dark **BARRENCE WHITFIELD with TOM RUSSELL** "Cowboy Mambo" Round Tower RTM CD 64 [1994].
19. What Kind Of A Friend **MARK HEARD** "High Noon" Fingerprint/Myrrh 7016978613 [1993]. #
20. Moanin' Of The Midnight Train **BUTCH HANCOCK/V. ARTISTS** "broadcasts" KGSR 107.1 Austin (limited edition CD only, no index no.) [1993]. #
21. Partners On The Road **REX FOSTER** "Believin'" Agarita 6-70020-2 [1993]. #
22. American Lipstick **TERRY CLARKE** "The Shelly River" Minidoka MICD005 [1991].
23. Oklahoma Hills **JIMMY LA FAVE/V. ARTISTS** "Pastures of Plenty: An Austin Celebration Of Woody Guthrie" Dejadisc DJD 3207 [1993]. #
24. Ever Since I Lost Your Love **CLIFF EBERHARDT** "Now You Are My Home" Shanachie/Cachet 8008 [1993]. #
25. Rose Of Sharon **ANNE HILLS** "October Child" Flying Fish FF 70621 [1993]. #
26. No Place To Fall **RICHARD DOBSON** "Amigos: Richard Dobson Sings Townes Van Zandt" Brambus 19950-2 [1994]. ^
27. Maid Of The Mist **JOHN & MARY** "The Weedkillers Daughter" Rykodisc RCD 10259 [1993]. #
28. Nobody Wins **RADNEY FOSTER** "Del Rio, Texas 1959" Arista 1873-2 [1992]. #
29. A Child Lies Sleeping **KIERAN HALPIN** "The Rite Hand" Round Tower RTM CD 56 [1993].
30. Calling All Angels (+ rest of this incredible set!) **JANE SIBERRY** "When I Was A Boy" Reprise 7599-26824-2 [1993]. #
31. Is This All There Is **WEBB WILDER & THE BEATNECKS** "It Came From Nashville" Watermelon CD 1018 [1993]. #
32. Letter From Heaven **BILL MORRISSEY** "Night Train" Philo CD PH 1154 [1993]. #
33. One Hundred Years From Now "Conmemorativo: A Tribute To Gram Parsons" **STEPHEN MCCARTHY/V. ARTISTS** Rhino R2 71269 [1993]. #
34. Sleep With One Eye Open **JIM ROONEY/WOODSTOCK MOUNTAIN REVUE** "Live At The Bearsville Theatre Vol. 2" Village Green PCCY-00074 [1990]. *
35. Thanks For Asking **MICHAEL McNEVIN** "Secondhand Story" Mudpuddle Music MM 1001 CD [1993]. #
36. Change Of Heart **DAVE BONNEY** "That's The Way It Is" Brambus 199347-2 [1993]. ^
37. Texas River Song **TOWNES VAN ZANDT** "Road Songs" Chlodwig/BMG 74321 13007 2 [1993]. ^
38. A Wild Rose **JOHN FLYNN** "haunted by the ghost of a chance" Flying Stone Music JF003 [1993]. #
39. The Way I Am **TANYA SAVORY** "Better Shade Of Green" Wilder Productions (CD, no index no.) [1993]. #
40. I'm Watching My Heart **VANCE GILBERT** "Edgewise" Philo CD PH 1156 [1994]. #
41. Have A Laugh **STEVE YOUNG** "Switchblades Of Love" Watermelon CD 1016 [1993]. #
42. The You Never Danced With Me Waltz **SPARE PARTS** "Fine Line" Music Folk Recordings (CD, no index no.) [1993]. #
43. We Ran **KATY MOFFATT/V. ARTISTS** "Love Gets Strange: The Songs Of John Hiatt" Rhino R2 71267 1993]. #
44. Laughing At Birds the subdudes "Lucky" East West America 7 91671-2 [1991]. #
45. Rains Of '62 **IAIN MATTHEWS** "Orphans & Outcasts Vol. 2 - A Collection Of Demos" Dirty Linen CDL 104 [1993]. #
46. Orphan Train **THE DENNS** "One Good Car" Wolf Denn (cassette only, no index no.) [1993]. #
47. At The Still Point **THE STORY** "the Angel in the House" Elektra/Green Linnet 7559-61471-2 [1993].
48. Hoochie Coochie Man **LOST WEEKEND** "KLB Local Licks Live 1993" (CD only, no label or index no.) [1993]. #
49. New Mexico **KIRT KEMPTER** "Wrinkle In Time" Red Dog Productions RDP-93 [1993]. #
50. Heal In The Wisdom **BOBBY BRIDGER** "Kerrville Folk Festival - Live 1986" (cassette only, no index no.) [1987]. #



Waitin' their turn - Be My Friend **DAVID ACKLES** "David Ackles" Elektra 7559-61595-2 [1968, 1993]; When You Say Strong **LISA MEDNICK** "Artifacts Of Love" Dejadisc DJD 3209 [1994]. #; Susan Across the Ocean **THE SILOS** "Susan Across The Ocean" Watermelon CD 1021 [1994]. #; Just Out Of Reach **SARAH ELIZABETH CAMPBELL** "Running With You" Dejadisc DJD 3210 [1994]. #; River Of Love **THE SETTERS** "The Setters" Watermelon CD 1020 [1994]. #; Palida Rosa **SANTIAGO JIMINEZ, JR.** "Canciones De Mi Padre" Watermelon CD 1019 [1994]. #; She's Got **TRUE BELIEVERS** "Hard Road" Rykodisc RCD 40287 [1994]. #

NOTE. All albums released in the UK, unless marked otherwise. US releases marked #. European releases ^. Japanese releases *.

*. Introductory rhyme taken from the Bobby Bridger song, "Heal In The Wisdom" - The Kerrville Folk Festival Anthem.

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Editorial.

What can I say in mitigation - yet another intended print date came and went - and then some ! My son's medical condition was originally thought to be epilepsy. An EEG and Cat Scan proved negative. Summing up his final report, the Specialist said that he was referring my son back to our doctor. That night [two days ago, on 30th April], my son suffered a severe fit. I guess we're back to square one again. Many thanks to those who enquired about his health. I'm afraid the Kronikle had to take a back seat while this piece of family business was being dealt with. Who can predict what the future holds for us ?

In order to accomplish the long promised **John Stewart** article, at one stage, I was going to pillage the pages of **OLD BEN'S NEWSLETTER**. That would have filled a whole issue or two. In the end, and via the good offices of **Ben Blake**, the **John Stewart** article should appear in Issue 18, penned by **Jack Scott**. Jack & Joe Biscontini arranged the first John Stewart Write from the Heart Workshop at Penn State College campus in the Spring of 1992 and again this year. In the meantime, there are two new Stewart cassettes to stock up on. They're respectively titled "**Escape to Arizona**" and "**Rocket Roy in the Real World.**" They can be obtained by mail from **Homecoming Records, P.O. Box 2050, Malibu, California 90265-7050.**

While I've been attempting to put this issue together, the avalanche of great releases which we enjoyed last year, has spilled over into 1994. In that regard, although they failed to make the pages of **Kerrville - kompacts, kassettes** etc in this issue, you are advised to check out on Dejadisc - Lisa Mednick's stunning [no other word for it. The girl done good, just like *I always knowed* she would] **"Artifacts of Love"** and Sarah Elizabeth Campbell's **"Running With You."** There's also a couple new releases on Watermelon, including the return of The Silos and the album by The Setters [Michael Hall, Walter Salas-Humara (or is that Silos-Humara ?) and Alejandro Escovedo]. While we're talking Escovedo, Rykodisc are to be congratulated on issuing the True Believers twofer **"Hard Road,"** including the previously unissued second album. Will Alejandro finally become the star that he is, in 1994 ? Then there's **"Viva Luckenbach"** from Jerry Jeff Walker. The latest efforts from David Wilcox and Kennedy Rose, a newbie from Tish Hinojosa, and on Rhino, Kate Wolf's **"Looking Back At You"** finally surfaces, nearly three years on from it's originally scheduled release date by the now defunct, Kaleidoscope.

Congratulations to all involved with the Austin based, Watermelon label on it's fifth birthday. It just seems like yesterday that the first release, "Highway Cafe of the Damned" by the Austin Lounge Lizards appeared. It's doubly fitting that that [worldwide] introduction took place at the 1989 Kerrville Folk Festival. In terms of expanding their

horizons, they now have a house newsletter appropriately titled "SLICES," the debut issue of which appeared in February. They also managed to notch up a Grammy nomination this year, for Santiago Jimenez Jr.'s "**Corazon De Piedra.**" Well done and *lang may your lum reek.*

Regarding the contents of this issue and in no particular order, thanks are due to **Rod Kennedy, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Janet, Chris Wall, Ed and Shelley Becker** [makes my heart glad to hear that Chris Vallillo is cutting some tracks in Nashville], **Masaki Iwasaki, Alpha Ray and Brian, plus Edward Dalton and Family** for further transcription services. This issue is dedicated to my friends, **Lendell Braud & Blair Powell**. Talking of which.....

During one fateful Saturday night last November, the 6th to be precise, Blait & Lendell's home in Contoe, Texas was wiped out by fire. All their possessions were consumed, including Lendell's irreplaceable computer records. She is a child psychiatrist. A couple of their beloved dogs also perished in the holocaust. In May 1987, during the Kettville Folk Festival, Blait & Lendell were married on Chapel Hill. I was privileged to attend their 5th Anniversary blessing on the Hill, during the 1992 Festival. Jerry Earwood, my friend from Denton, Texas introduced me to this wonderful duo at 5pm on the opening night of the 1989 Festival. It was to be my first Kamping Kettville. My Kettvirginity having faded into history during the 15th Anniversary, 1986 Kettville Festival. Anyway, back to three years later! I'd just raced from Austin, having landed there a few hours earlier. Come to think of it, if those blustery winds in Tornado Alley had not held me up in Minneapolis, Minnesota the previous evening, I probably wouldn't be writing this piece now. Then again, I firmly believe the Kettville Serendipity controls everything. I'd already missed the opening, mid-afternoon Ballad Tree, and the first main stage performer was due to start within the hour. Blait & Lendell took command of the situation and my tent was pitched in minutes flat. In fact from second one, this stranger from the island at the other end of the great pond, was welcomed like one of the family. It's their nature, that Blait & Lendell welcome everyone with open arms. When I made it to Kettville 1992, there was obviously only one place to pitch my tent. Every Spring & Fall, over one weekend, Blait & Lendell throw open their land in Contoe to musicians, poets and listeners and hold an event which they call a Fling. I recall that Blait told me off one time about a comparison I made within these pages. So let's just call each Fling, a musical event. Which brings me to the punchline, because I'm talking about two very special people who epitomise the caring spirit of Kettville. If you feel that there is anything that you can send them. Good wishes, music tapes, unwanted CD's, neat T Shirts L or XL, \$, or even an IBM compatible computer !.....whatever you think is appropriate. Direct your mail to c/o 99 Rolling Hills Drive, Contoe, Texas 77304. Thank You.

4 OCTOBER 1962

YOU SPEAK LOUD IN A CROWD
TO ME OR TO ANYONE
YOU TAP OUT YOUR INNER RHYTHM
WITH A SLIVER SPOON ON GLASS

SLURRED VOICE SPEECH
AND DEER BLURRED EYES
YOUR STUMPLED OUT WORDS FALL
LIKE DANK BAR RAIN



ALPHA RAY