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Joel Rafael



Kate Campbell



Joel Rafael Band [L to R] : Carl Johnson, Jamaica Rafael, Joel Rafael & Jeff Berkley

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

Jeffrey Foucault [26] is a genuinely talented young songwriter – one of the finest I've heard in years. His album "Miles From The Lightning" matches anything by Guy, Townes, Mickey or Eric Taylor.....and that's the truth !

Kerrville-kompacts, kassettes & other koincidences.

Jeffrey Foucault "Miles From The Lightning"
Marrowbone Music

After listening to this album for the first time I was left in a serious quandary – was Jeffrey Foucault the real thing, was he what he appeared to be, or a mere imitation of it? On this collection, as each story unfolds, Foucault's words consistently hang out in the dark, dangerous, edgy corners of life. He definitely ain't no *moon in June*, every one is a love song kind of guy. A few generations back an ancestor of mine who operated a sideline as a whisky bootlegger was visited by dishevelled tramp. Social etiquette in those times demanded that you welcome into your home, and offer sustenance to, any stranger who arrived unannounced at your door. Once fed, the visitor began enquiring about liquid sustenance of a *spiritual* nature. The wily ancestor noticed that his visitor, beneath the filth and grime, possessed silky smooth hands. You see, the tramp wasn't what he purported to be. It transpired, the visitor was an excise-man – the equivalent a tax collector, if you will. I repeat - is Foucault the genuine article? Let's dig deep....and see what we turn up. Born and raised in Wisconsin, Foucault's web site quotes Townes Van Zandt as a musical reference point. One thing is certain, there is a pronounced literate roots feel to the seventy plus minutes of music contained here. As much a legend as Townes is – or in death, has become - I'd maintain that a Georgia boy by the name of Eric Taylor took Van Zandt's vision of writing many stops further down the road, and that's what I hear here. Loud and clear. That's what unsettled me. Barely twenty and headed for California, on a temporary stop over in Houston, Taylor freely admits to learning at the feet of Van Zandt [Sam Lightnin' Hopkins and Guy Clark, as well]. Well Taylor never did make it out of Texas, and in the last twenty-five years has only released a quartet of albums - he even quit the music business for nigh on fifteen years. His albums have been consistently stunning, since Taylor's songs work on many levels. They're movies, they're plays with a moral, and they are a code to live your life by. Foucault appears to be in touch with an equally potent muse. There's a consistent melancholy in Foucault's delivery, a beaten down by life sense of resignation that only comes with the middle years of life. The story of a young logger and his father that evolves in the opening cut, "Ballad of Copper Junction," is a prime example. Stylistically the obtuse reference to Vietnam, "in 1964 I was seventeen years old, i got caught up in the draft, i did what I was told, and spent a pair of too long years, too young to be so old," is pure Taylor, except that these are Foucault's words. In that regard, it's hard to equate Foucault's words with the thoughts of a tender twenty-five year old [Ed. Note. Jeffrey's age when he made this recording]. I guess some of us

take less time to unravel this *mystery* that we live. On the strength of the material here, I have no doubts as to whether Foucault, born in January 1976, has unravelled the *mystery*. Other examples of thoughtful lyrics on this fourteen song collection - "it's a downhill road, it's an uphill fight" ["Buckshoot Moon," complete with atmospheric log fire cracking in the background], "and every fountain of my youth, is just a well gone dry" ["Sunrise In The Rearview"] and "i build walls just to climb them, climb them just so you can help me down" ["The Battle Hymn (Of The College Dropout Farmhand)"] - only further compound my conclusion. It doesn't matter whether it takes Foucault less than three minutes, or more than six, to deliver the complete picture – there's examples of both here - he holds you transfixed. For that lighter touch, a vein of wry humour runs through "Secretariat," while the closing, three minute title cut – not surprisingly - bears the subtitle "A Song For Townes Van Zandt." By the way, if you enjoyed the movie "A River Runs Through It" don't miss the hidden track "Blue On Blue" that follows. There are many songwriters in this world, but there are few true song poets. Foucault hails from the latter college. Having listened to countless writers raised with a southern perspective, he has adopted their approach and, in the process, created material that bears tangible northern exposure. Long may his tall ship sail upon bountiful waters.....This CD is available from Fish Records, P.O. Box 148, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 5WQ and www.fishrecords.co.uk or www.jeffreyfoucault.com

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Joel Rafael Interview

Segment One – Face to Face at Kettville

The interview with Joel Rafael was substantially completed on the late afternoon of Friday 31st August 2001 at the rear of the main stage area at the Quiet Valley Ranch, Kerrville, Texas during the second day of the 10th annual Kerrville Wine & Music Festival. Segment Two was added via the internet during December 2001. Many thanks to Joel and to Cree Clover for all their time and assistance in completing this project.

Where and when were you born.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1949.

How long did your family live there.

Well, my folks are both from Illinois. My mom was from the farm country a little bit south of Chicago, and my dad's family was from Chicago. So my mom's folks were rural people – farmers - and my dad's side of the family were city people. When I was about three years old, we moved to California because there was the great migration west – it was still happening, even in the nineteen-fifties. Things kind of bottomed out for

my dad in a business sense in Chicago, and he decided to go to California and see if he could make a better life out there for us. My dad was a businessman. I think he was a pretty creative person, he liked to write and stuff. When he got back from the war - he had already worked for my uncle before he left for World War II - he went back to work for my uncle who sold air conditioning and heating units - big commercial ones, in the city. My dad was a salesman for him. When he came to California, initially he worked for a company that made screen doors. Then he got into aluminium extruding and made sliding glass doors. He had about four different companies that manufactured things for offices - office partitions, for instance. Then he had a company that made brushes for street sweepers. He was always finding inventors who would come up with an idea and he'd find some guy with some money to invest and they would put together a business. Usually a successful one and then he'd sell it to a big corporation, and end up leaving because he didn't like the way the corporation was handling things.

You did just say that he also wrote.

Yeah. I'm just starting to find out more about that. I knew the whole time that I was growing up, that he wanted to be a writer but I never really saw any evidence of his writing. Just recently I was digging through some things that he left for me and I found boxes of letters that he wrote back from Europe when he was there during the War. I was able to gather from reading those letters that he had hoped some day to make them into a book. He described his experiences in the first wave of the invasion of North Africa and then in French Morocco, and later in Italy and various places that he spent time in.

What's your first musical memory.

Well, my first musical memories are probably after we moved to California. I'm sure I had musical experiences earlier - I remember when I was about five or six, I was given a plastic saxophone. It was a toy saxophone. You could actually blow on it and it would make a noise. I was totally intrigued with that. Really, the first experience I had in appreciating performers was a couple of years later, when we moved to the San Gabriel Valley, east of Los Angeles. It was in Los Angeles County. When we first moved to California we lived in the Los Angeles area with some relatives for a few years. Eventually my dad moved out to the Covina area, which is a suburb, about twenty-three miles east of Los Angeles. That's where I spent my childhood, grew up and went to school and stuff. When I was there, probably about the age of six or seven, I dug through my parent's records and I found things that I liked. My parents were both working people. My mom worked with my dad in his business, and she ran the office. They weren't home a lot, so I was left to my own devices. I would dig through cabinets - it was my house, so I made myself at home and I found a lot of records that they had. My

parents were a little older than most of my friend's folks, so they had some different stuff that I wouldn't hear at my friend's house on the record player. They had a lot of big band music, which was some of the first stuff I listened to. Louis Armstrong, Lena Horne and Bing Crosby. I'm trying to think of the names - Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie - they had some pretty cool stuff, and then they had some classical records. I would put these records on my little record player when I was playing with blocks, or playing with my toys and it would always be background music for the world I was living in as a child. I would sing. I loved to sing. I would sing privately, in my bedroom. At the time I was growing up it was kind of a sissy thing for boys to be able to sing. I mean, it's not, but that's the way it was perceived at that time in the fifties. I finally came out of the closet, when I was about twelve or thirteen years old - [Laughs] out of the closet. Out of the singing closet [Laughs].

If you're saying you were twelve or thirteen, then that's around the time that The Beatles landed in America.

Absolutely. When the early rock stuff - before The Beatles - was happening, I wasn't too caught up with most of it. I mean, I liked Buddy Holly and some of Elvis' stuff I liked. To me, for some reason, it just - I'd been listening to this big band music and singers like Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra and stuff, and there was a sort of maturity to their music, the arrangements, the playing and the orchestrations, and stuff. To me the early rock stuff, especially the pre-English invasion stuff, a lot of it was sort of bubble gum to me. The Don Kirschner kind of stuff. I liked the black girl groups, but a lot of that earlier rock stuff just didn't appeal to me. It was like I had this attitude about it. It wasn't as refined as the stuff that was in my parent's cabinets. When The Beatles along came and I heard their stuff, they just knocked me over.



Joel Rafael & Jamaica Rafael - Kerrville, August 2001.

Basically they we were selling something back to America, that they'd actually stolen.

Absolutely. But they took it and they did something a little different with it. Nobody ever does anything that's

completely original, right. Everybody always does something that's been done before. You can't do something new – but you can do something better, or different. Give it a little twist. That's what they did. For me, when I heard The Beatles the first time, it was the song "I Want To Hold Your Hand." I was listening to it very critically, because I'd heard so much about them, but I hadn't heard their records yet. I was in the car on my way home from school, with a friend, and it came on the radio. I was listening, and I was thinking, "*Well you know, it's OK,*" and then when they got to the chorus and they hit that harmony, "I want to hold you hand," and they went up high – I couldn't believe it. I had never heard anything like that on the radio. People weren't doing harmonies like that. They weren't jumping to that wide spread voicing. It was all very basic stuff. That's really what sucked me into rock and pop music, more than the early stuff did.

If you were given the little saxophone at age six, did either of your parents play musical instruments.

No, neither one of my parents played music. My dad, when he was in the army, what he ended up doing was co-ordinating the USO shows. He was kind of an MC, stage-hand, sort of stage co-ordinator kind of guy in the army, and he really enjoyed that. He told me stories about that. My mother did not play music either, but she loved to dance – as I said, she loved the big bands – they used to go out and dance to this music in Chicago, where a lot of it was played – so that was my first hit of music. Then I got into some of the older singers like Al Jolson – as I said, they were older so they had those records. Then the folk movement hit the States really hard in the early sixties. In the late fifties The Kingston Trio had had their hit with "Tom Dooley." A few years later, Peter, Paul & Mary started playing some of Bob Dylan's songs. We started hearing about him in 1962/63 – somewhere in there. At that time, I had a band. I'd put together a couple of little bands – one was a surfing band, but I played drums in those groups. The other was a pop band called The Envoys. In school, I'd been in the school band programme and I played the drums. The surf band I played in really didn't have a name. It was a garage band, and I can't remember if we actually ever played a gig.

So is that where you had all your music lessons.

No. My first music lessons were actually on the accordion. My brother took the accordion for a couple of years, when he was about nine and I was about seven. They had me take lessons too. It was a little bit too big for me, the accordion – I moved to one that had more chord buttons, but it was too big for me to hold. Then the opportunity to join the school band programme came up, and so I started playing the drums. I played the drums up until I got to High School. There's a transition point in there – during my middle school or junior high school years – you know, twelve, thirteen years old – is when I made the switch to the guitar, because the folk movement was so

strong in the States. I just got caught up in it. A couple of my friends were playing Kingston Trio songs. And then Peter, Paul & Mary songs.

Did pop music fall out of favour with you on a personal level.

Well no, not really – actually, I might have my chronology a little bit off – in that transition period where I started playing the guitar, The Beatles hadn't happened yet. I was twelve, and I first heard The Beatles when I was fourteen. Maybe I had been playing the guitar for a year – mainly folk stuff. The Beatles kind of knocked the folk stuff out of the programme. When did we first hear The Beatles over here?

It was probably around early 1964. [ED. NOTE. The Beatles fourth UK single and the first to be released in the States, circa January 1964, was "I Want To Hold Your Hand."]

Dylan started in 1962, so The Beatles came later in the States and they kind of changed everything, but a lot of us were full off into folk music already. It might have changed me a little bit, and kind of directed me towards pop a little bit more, because I had rejected it in favour of big band music and the vocalists of the forties and fifties. When the folk thing happened, I saw an opportunity to sing. I got myself a guitar – we went down to Mexico and I got my first guitar down there. I learned to play it really fast [Laughs].

Did you take lessons.

I didn't really take lessons, but I told you I had some buddies that were playing guitar. I went over and hung with them. None of us had cars or driver's licences yet – so, on the weekends our parents would take us to one or the others house and we'd learn Kingston Trio songs. Or Chad Mitchell Trio songs. Or Dylan or Joan Baez songs. What I did is, I kind of used them. When I think back on it, I wasn't really, I don't think, being malicious. I think I was just trying to find a way to serve my own need. As I look back on it, I really used them. All I really wanted to do was learn what they were doing. Learn a few chords. I wasn't really interested in doing what they were doing, I kind of wanted to take off and do my own thing with it. Right from the get go. So I learned some chords from them and then I took off with it.

Did you ever play in public with those friends.

Yes, we did. With that whole movement came the hootenannies and the talent shows. The high schools and junior high schools would have these shows, during the school year, because folk music was so popular. It was something that a lot of kids were trying out. Obviously, it was something that the youth had embraced and were totally welcomed into. The energy of it. There were various duos and solo acts and little bands around – bluegrass, kind of olde time bands –

a few people doing their own stuff, but mostly people were playing covers of other people's songs. You know a Woody Guthrie talking blues, or a song by Jack Elliott. Stuff they'd heard on records. I started performing at some of these hootenannies, and I'd work up two or three songs and go try them out. I was pretty lucky with it and won a few of them. That gave me some confidence to kind of continue with the guitar and the singing. I let the drums fall by the wayside. One of my dilemmas was, I had a guitar that was not really very good. Within a short period of time I knew I needed to get a better guitar. It was a big dilemma, because it was more than I could afford. A few of my friends had these nice little Martin guitars and I played on those and I could tell they were a lot better than mine.

Why didn't you ask your parents.

Well, my parents – I hadn't really asked them to buy me a guitar, I guess maybe I thought it was too expensive. I had an event happen to me that really made it all feasible. It's kind of a cool little story. I took a trip, when I was sixteen – by that time I'd been playing on this beat up old guitar for about three years – my parents took a trip to Hawaii. While were on the island of Kauai, a guy who was staying at the same hotel contacted my parents – he noticed from the register that he was from the same town as we were from. He was a publisher of a gun magazine. **Gun World**, was the name of this magazine. He asked my parents to come down for a drink at the bar. My parents weren't really drinking people, but decided just to be polite they would go down and meet the guy. It turned out that this guy was the original Marlboro Man. His name was Jack Lewis. He had done the stunts in the movie "**South Pacific**" – he'd done that stunt where the motorcycle goes off the pier. He was back in Kauai, to shoot some pictures up in the wilds of the mountains. In one of these valleys with the big waterfalls – to take some pictures with this Remington rifle that he had. It was a new rifle that they had released, and they were going to feature it in this magazine. During the course of this visit, he asked me if I'd like to go with him, and a charter pilot and a photographer in a helicopter, and fly into one of these uncharted valleys. My dad didn't want me to go, he thought I was too young, and he thought this guy was kind of an alcoholic – which he was – but the guy assured him that it would be the pilot who would be flying the helicopter. He let me go, and it was an incredible experience to fly into these unmapped areas of the island. And see these beautiful sights. We were gone for a couple of hours, and they took some pictures of this guy with the rifle. He fired a couple of shots off into the brush. They caught different pictures of him shooting this rifle. On the way back in the helicopter, he says to me "*Well kid, how do you like this gun.*" I said "*It's real nice,*" and he said "*Well, it's yours.*" I said "*Really*" and he said "*It's yours kid*" and he handed it to me. When we got off the helicopter, I'm carrying this big rifle. It's like a deer gun or something. I'm walking up to my dad, who hated

guns and he said "*What are you doing carrying that,*" and I tell him with a big smile on my face, "*It's mine.*" My dad says "*No. No way.*" This guy, who was a big guy – my dad was a small man – says in a very intimidating way "*No, I insist. I gave it to the kid and it's his gun. I want him to have it.*" So we flew home with this gun – this was in the sixties – he gave us ammunition and all this stuff. Of course, it went straight in the closet, because there was no place to use it. There was no place to hunt near where I lived. It was like this thing that I had acquired, and it sat in my closet. About six months later, it turns out I see this guitar in the guitar store in the town I lived in. It was a Swedish made, Goya guitar. I hadn't seen one like it and I really wanted it. I had a friend whose dad went hunting all the time that really liked the gun. He bought the gun and I took the money and bought my first good guitar. I've never owned a gun since.

Once you got a better guitar what happened.

It escalated my ability to play songs and to learn songs and write songs. Everything changed, because all of a sudden there wasn't as much effort having to be expended into the fingering of the instrument.

Was your brother also a budding musician.

No. My brother was not really interested in playing music. He always liked music and always was a fan of music. He's a businessman like my dad.

Was he your only sibling.

Yes. Just the two of us. Two brothers.

At what stage did you start playing real gigs as opposed to hootenannies.

Well, my career has been a kind of interesting progression. By the time I was seventeen, eighteen years old, I was getting pretty good at playing the guitar. Relatively speaking, I had been doing it for five or six years. Plus, I'd learned a lot of songs. I'd kind of watched the music progress – through The Beatles and the pop invasion and observed the interest in folk music, kind of, disappear. In the late sixties, I moved up to the North West.

Was folk music still your principle interest.

Yes it was. Where I expressed the folk thing, it was at the hootenannies and there was some really great clubs in LA County where I lived. The Troubadour on a Monday had an open stage night that I played. It was an *all ages* club so I played there when I was still in high school, when I was seventeen years old. The Ice House which is now a comedy club in Pasadena, was another folk club. The Smothers Brothers started out there. Pat Paulsen, as a comic, started out there. The Association and a lot of groups of that time started at the Ice House. It was a small club and on a Sunday, they had an open stage night. Sunday's and

Monday's, I was usually at those places trying out a new song.

Were you writing songs by this stage.

I was writing a little bit, but not a whole lot. I'd write a few songs every once in a while. Usually an opportunity would crop up, related to something I was involved in – a play or something, would need an original song and I'd come up with one. Sometimes, I'd just feel like writing a song and end up composing one. I hadn't really decided that that was what I was going to do. Or that I was a songwriter, or anything. I was basically still, just in the musician mode. Then what happened was, when I moved up to the North West, I guess it was, in 1968 or '69, a group of folks and myself all went up to Oregon initially. We were going to try and all get jobs up there – the counter culture movement was pretty strong at that time, and we were a part of that. We were the *back to the earthers*. You know you had the anti-war protestors and I was certainly that, but you also had the hippies – sort of really plugged into the drug thing – then you had the people that were more the *back to the earthers* movement, and I kind of fell into that group.

Had you been called up to go to Vietnam.

Well, my draft experience was – you know the lottery came about, right about the time that I was draft age. I had a lot of anxiety about it, because right about the time I graduated from high school, I was eighteen and had to register for the draft – was when we first really started hearing about the Vietnam War. It made no sense to us. It still doesn't make a lot of sense, today. At that time, there was little information and then all of a sudden we found out [Joel snaps his fingers] – all of a sudden, there was an awareness of it. We've got people in South East Asia fighting a war. It was a shock to me really. I had always known that when I was eighteen I'd have to register for the draft. That was just the way it worked in America. My dad had served his time in the Army and he had been drafted during World War II. There were no wars on, and I'd known people who had been drafted and some that had not, because the draft wasn't very active – there was no war. There were a lot of enlisted people. It was more or less peacetime. I don't know if we've ever really seen that. We weren't involved in a major war, except that we found out we were – and it was in Vietnam. I had a lot of anxiety about it. I knew instantly, I didn't want to do that. There was no way I wanted to go there and be a soldier. I wasn't into being a soldier. It was the furthest thing away from what I wanted to do. I hooked up with a group of people out in Laguna Beach that I had met as I was finishing high school. I'd met them through some mutual friends. They were all migrating up to Oregon to try and buy some land, and everybody was going to have their own little house on the land. We were going to start our own community. And leave the value system – or change the value system to one that we were more comfortable with. We got up there and I

had my guitar with me, but once we got up there I discovered that there were increasingly – or should I say, decreasingly – there were less and less places to play acoustic music, as time passed. The pop and the band thing was really taking over. This was in '69 and so I kind of let it by the wayside. I said, *"That's it."* I was also experimenting with some psychedelic drugs, and I was going through a lot of personal changes, as a result of that – and I think, just the time I was living in. One of the things that I think I discovered about myself and my music, was that I felt that it wasn't really genuine. It didn't feel genuine to me when I performed. I felt like I was faking it. I felt like I was trying to be somebody I wasn't. I didn't like that.

Did you eventually figure out what was behind those thoughts.

I couldn't really figure it out, because I loved to play music but there was this element about it where I just felt so ingenuous, and that made me very uncomfortable. I think it was in lieu of the times, and the changes that we were all going through. I kind of began focusing more on the community effort and got jobs at various places. I worked in a lumber mill. My girlfriend then, who later became my wife, went up there with me and she worked in a cannery. We had jobs and tried to make it all come together, but it never really did. We could never pull enough money together to buy a piece of land. Eventually that group of people separated, and I ended up going back to California for about six months. I then heard from a friend of mine, from that original group, who had gone up to Washington state and he had opened up a leather shop in Seattle. During this couple of years in Oregon he had taught me some things about making leather, because he had learned how to make leather clothes and shoes and different things – purses – from a saddle-smith. He taught me how to hand stitch leather, so I went up to Seattle and we had this leather shop. You might recall that the shop is mentioned in my song, *"Flash In The Night."* So after the Oregon experience I ended up in Seattle. All this time, the draft was sending me letters. I'd dropped out of school, and now I was 1A, so I immediately qualified for the draft. The lottery numbers had been assigned and I had a number that had a real chance of being picked. It was a lottery number that they were going to draft. They would send me a notice and ask me to come for a physical exam, and I would send them a note and more or less tell them, *"Well, I've moved from California to Oregon."* They would change my draft board to Oregon and that would take them about three or four months. They'd send me another physical notice and then I'd take a trip down to California, write them a letter and tell them I'd moved back to California. I really had their bureaucracy game wired up. They'd write me another letter, move me back to California – we did this about three times and then finally they figured out – *"Hey, this guy does not want to take his physical."* They wrote me and told me I'd been trying to avoid my physical and so they instructed me to show up at any draft board,

anywhere, on a particular date. This was right after the Seattle leather shop fell apart. We did that for about six months. It's 1970 now. I'd been giving the draft board some paperwork to deal with, so I'm back in Seattle – me and my then girlfriend Lauren, and this friend, Dennis. All of a sudden he finds this girlfriend and she moves in with us, and then the dynamic changes. It didn't work out. We ended up splitting up, and I ended up heading with my wife – a little further out of Seattle and into the Cascade Mountains, and found this cabin up in Granite Falls where we spent the next two years – kind of hibernating and finding ourselves. Without a bunch of people, and a bunch of input. At this point.....

So it was pretty basic I guess. No running water.

There was no running water. It was a small cabin made out of cedar logs, shake covered [ED. NOTE From what I could detect from the Oxford Concise Dictionary, in using the term *shake*, Joel was referring to natural splits that had occurred in the timber logs when they were trees], with knotty pine inside and a wood stove and a bed. It was probably one hundred and fifty square feet in total. It was very small. Maybe a little bigger – ten feet by twenty feet.

And you managed to survive in this wilderness.

Well, the person who owned the cabin let us rent it for \$5 a month. Part of the deal was that we had to build an outhouse as well. We built the outhouse.

What about the winters. Weren't they severe.

We just hibernated. What we would do is we would go into Seattle about once a month. We had an old car that I bought for about \$150, when we left Seattle. We called it *The Thundercloud* – it was a '48 Chevy. We would sit up there in the mountains and make stuff out of leather. Bags and purses and shirts and pants and belts and all kinds of stuff – anything that we could think of to make out of leather. Then we'd drive down to the Pike Place public market in Seattle, rent a booth for \$2 per day, and sell our leather stuff. We'd stay at friend's houses in Seattle. We didn't really have to make too much money to pay \$5 a month rent. We lived there for two years.

Were you doing any music during this period.

No, I wasn't doing any music. That was my two year sabbatical [Laughs]. I think what happened during those two years is I really took the time to deal with that element of my music that was bothering me – which was the part that felt like I was faking it. Now, at this point in my career, as I look back over all of it, what I think is that when you decide that this is something you're going to do – you're going to be a songwriter – it's really a "fake it" till you "make it" situation. You have to learn how. I think that applies to anything, not just songwriting. A young person has to kind of "fake it" till they "make it." It's good to be kind

of bold and just get out there and fake it, because eventually you'll make and then you'll find that that transition has taken place and you've actually become this person that you thought you were and were trying to learn more about. When I started playing music again, which was when my first child was born – this is now '71 – we came back down to California. My mother had some property that she and my dad had bought in San Diego County. My dad had passed away in '69 and she had been holding on to it for a couple of years, while we were up north, but she was about to loose it. She needed somebody to come down there and take care of it, because she was still working and couldn't move down there. It was one hundred miles from her house. We decided that that sounded pretty good to us. We could move on to that property and she would put a trailer on there and we would move into it. We were young and about to have a child and so we came back to California and settled in North San Diego County. That's where I've been for the last thirty years. As soon as I got there, is when I really started writing. Started collecting my songs. At first I didn't have too many – I had to supplement them with Woody Guthrie songs and Bob Dylan songs. Other people's songs.

Did you begin playing in local clubs.

There were a few places to play. The Troubadour still had the Monday night thing. It had kind of matured. A bunch of people had come out of there. Jackson Browne. Joni Mitchell. Elton John. [ED. NOTE. Circa 1970, it seems that *our* Reggie made his US debut at The Troubadour in LA, opening for the late great David Ackles. The show marked the 20th anniversary of Doug Weston's night-spot]. A bunch of people had cut their teeth there. I was still going there. There was a place up in West L.A. – I'm trying to think what the name of it was. It's a famous country music club – The Palamino. They had an open stage night. I think there's was on a Tuesday night. The Ice House was all washed up. They didn't have one anymore, but the Ash Grove in L.A. still had an open stage. It hadn't burned down for the second time yet. There was a place called Ledbetter's in Santa Monica, out in Westwood, by UCLA. I would go and play at these various clubs and I was really a hoot night, open stage night act. There really weren't very many gigs. It was during that time that I ran into Rosie Flores. Rosie was playing the San Diego music scene at that time, in some of the same clubs that I was playing these open stage nights in. She had some friends that were mutual friends of mine. One of which was a guy named Jack Tempchin, who wrote "Peaceful Easy Feeling" and "Already Gone" with another writer named Robb Strandlund. He wrote "Slow Dancing" and it's well documented that he's a big hit songwriter, and he lives near me. He has never had any personal performance fame, and so we had an opportunity to get to know each other and through him I met Rosie. She had a group that had been Jack's band at one time, and had been a guy named David Bradley's band, but now had become Rosie and The

Screamers. Sort of a country punk band. I was hanging around at that time and they were doing a couple of my songs. That band lasted for maybe six months and started to fall apart. Rosie and I started to perform together as a duo, with a guitar player from that band whose name was Lee Barnes. In the late '70's we played together for about a year and a half as a duo around the San Diego area, and we worked a lot.

What material did you play in your sets.

We did folk and country covers and original material. Actually, I did almost all original songs at that point, because I had a pretty good collection of originals by then. Rosie did a couple of my songs and then I sang back-up harmony and played rhythm guitar on the covers that she did, and the couple of songs that she had written. She was just really starting to write songs. We'd drive up to The Troubadour together and we had some great times.

At that time, did you have any thoughts of recording your songs.

We all wanted to record, but at that point people didn't have home studios. And there weren't A-DAT's and there wasn't Pro Tools set ups, so if you wanted to record you had to bite the bullet and come up with the money to buy the studio time. We didn't really have the opportunity to get into the studio that often, but Rosie and I recorded some stuff. We got some pretty cool recordings actually, from that time – in 1977 and '78 – playing some of the songs we were doing at the time. It's an audition tape. There are a couple of live tapes that were recorded of us – we didn't record them. They were on cassette decks, like this thing you're recording our interview on. They're still some of my favourite things to pull out and listen to. Eventually, she decided to move up to Los Angeles and pursue her career there. I couldn't really spend any more time in LA than I was, as I had a young family. I had two daughters and a wife - a day job, so I stayed back in San Diego. She went on to do her thing, and I started playing solo in San Diego, from '78 through into the eighties. Mostly what I did, for those years in there, is I managed to find a niche opening up shows as a solo act for national acts that were coming through town. I worked with the various promoters in town and got to know them. I had got enough mentions in reviews of shows I'd played and that kind of thing, to be able to get these gigs. If I knew there wasn't an opening act, I just started pursuing it. I was one of the first local artists in San Diego to open for national acts. Everybody got on to it, and then I had to compete – at first nobody had thought, "*Well, we could do this*" – somebody actually turned me on to it. The first opening I did was at the La Paloma Theatre in Encinitas for the Rick Danko Band, right after The Band broke up. The guy who wrote for the local newspaper and liked me said, "*There's no opening act.*" I went down and took a package to the promoter and this newspaper guy called the promoter, and the

next thing I knew I had the gig for \$50. As soon as I did that, I realised "*This is what I want to do.*" I didn't want to play in a bar anymore [Laughs]. I started pursuing those lines, over a period of almost – probably, ten years. Did two or three or four shows a year. And then I'd pick up little gigs here and there. During that time, I was able to build a home recording studio, because that's when equipment became more available. You started to see different formats that were affordable for consumers. I had a recording studio for a couple of years. This would be in the late eighties.

Was it a conscious decision on your part to record yourself.

I wanted to record myself. When I built the studio, that was really my intention. Interestingly, once the studio was there I didn't record myself, I recorded other people – friends of mine would come in, and I was recording them. I never could get anything done of my own, because I'd always figure I had enough time to work on it. I'd start something of my own and if I couldn't get it done, I'd decide to finish it later. If I didn't like it, then I would change it – somehow, I never got anything finished. I had the freedom to walk out, and never finish anything. Finally, one of these guys that I recorded a lot told me "*Man, you've got to make your own record. Quit foolin' around.*" I went in and started making my own record. His name was Jim Hinton. His wife's name was Theresa Rochelle, and they had a singing group. I brought them in to sing harmony on some of my stuff. We sent that stuff to a guy who I had met over the many years of playing music and doing all of these things. His name was Paul Rothchild.

The guy from Elektra.

He had produced many of the early Elektra recordings, along with Jac Holzman. He signed Phil Ochs and Judy Collins and produced all these people, back in the old days. You know, The Paul Butterfield Blues Band. I had met him when he had produced Jack Tempchin's record with The Funky Kings. Which was Jack Tempchin, Richard Stekol and Jules Shear [ED. NOTE. Plus, Frank Cotinola [drums], Bill Bodine [bass] and on pedal steel/guitars etc. the incredible Greg Leisz, who went on to carve his own little niche in music history as a producer/sideman over the last quarter century]. It was released on Arista Records after Clive Davis started the label, and I went to those sessions and met Paul Rothchild. He liked some of my stuff and he held a song called "Goldmine" – which is a song Lowen & Navarro eventually recorded. He actually held that one and one called "Burned & Fired" for Bonnie Raitt, because he was going to be producing her next album which turned out to be the "**Sweet Forgiveness**" album. This was back in 1976. Anyway, jumping back to the late eighties - I sent the demo tape I had done with Jim and Theresa to Paul, to see if he would listen to the tracks - not to see if he would do anything with them, because I really didn't

even know what he was doing at that time. It was merely to see if he knew anybody to send them to, or had any ideas for me. He immediately got interested in my stuff - for the first time, got totally interested. He and Jac Holzman, who had Discovery Records at that time - which Sara Hickman was on - became interested. Paul recorded us for about six months and we kept making demo after demo after demo - we finally had a showcase, and Jac offered us a recording contract and a publishing contract on sort of a six month "out" basis. The economy didn't change the way Jac thought it was going to, and some thing didn't happen the way he thought it was going to, so about four months into this six month period they retracted their offer. We were able to do one more showcase for them and they decided, no, they weren't going to sign us. Jim and Theresa were devastated and I was devastated, and we all kind of blew apart.

Did that band have a name.

It was called Reluctant Angel, which is the name of my record label. But this was *pre* my record label. Out of that, at the very end - one of the things that Paul had asked us to do was find a different guitar player, and so I had called up this old school chum of mine from the folk days back in the sixties, Carl Johnson. Carl had just got back into playing music. He hadn't been playing for a while, had gone back to school, got a degree and started raising a family - he was having a blast. He kind of was my inspiration, because I was pretty down about this whole record deal falling though. I was in my forties. I'd had a pretty long career and it had been somewhat uneventful, but I'd been in it for the right reasons - I loved playing music. That's why a lot of us do this, because we love it, not because we think we're going to make a lot of money [Laughs]. We might like to make a lot of money, but eventually we love it, so we keep doing it whether make a lot of money or not. Carl and I started playing as a duo, and when we first started we were billed as "Joel Rafael with Carl Johnson on guitar". There was a blossoming folk scene in San Diego at that time and a lot of coffeehouses. This is now 1990/91. We start playing these coffeehouses and we run into this guy Jeff Berkley, who was playing with everybody. He joins up with us and becomes part of what we then decide to call the Joel Rafael Band. My daughter Jamaica, who was back and forth from Flagstaff where she was going to school, at the time, started singing with us. She wasn't playing violin with us yet. She'd fly in, when we had an important gig, from Arizona, and then the three of us would play the little gigs. Eventually she added the violin and that happened at the end of 1992 going into the early part of 1993. That was the formation of the Joel Rafael Band as it stands today. In 1994 we recorded our first record together.

In November 1993 you turned up on a FAST FOLK recording.

The way I got on that FAST FOLK record was that they had this big folk festival - because the folk thing was blossoming again. This was in Los Angeles, and it was called Troubadours Of Folk. They had a contest to see who was going to open the show and it was a star studded folk festival - it had Peter, Paul & Mary on it. Arlo Guthrie. Jack Elliott. Bob Gibson was on it. Hamilton Camp and Janis Ian. Just on and on and on. So we entered a song, and I think we entered "America Come Home." We got picked for the finals and they picked, I think, thirty people. Somewhat like Kerrville, and then they had a big showdown in L.A. at a club called the Highland Grounds. We were lucky enough to win the opening spot, for the first day of the festival. We were up there at - and this is a cool thing - we were up there at ten o'clock, because the show started at eleven, checking out the stage and it was raining. I didn't even know whether we were going to get on or not. Just before we went on, I feel a tap on my shoulder and I look over and it is Paul Rothchild. He's standing on the stage with me and he says, "*I just wanted to let you know, we're here to hear you play. Dan and myself*" - Dan is his son - who was one of the original members of Tonic and produced the first Better Than Ezra record. And produced some stuff with Paul as well. "**The Original Lost Elektra Sessions**" by the Paul Butterfield Band and some of the Doors stuff for the Doors movie. He said, "*I just want you to know that we're here watching and that we came to see you.*" That was just one of the coolest things that ever happened to me. Of course, the next March he died of lung cancer. We played that show and as a result of playing that show, Jeff Gold who was producing the Los Angeles FAST FOLK album for Jack Hardy - and it was one of the last ones they did - asked me to be on the album. Carl and I did the "America Come Home" track - which is the track we won Troubadours with, on the FAST FOLK album. Once we found Jeff and Jamaica was able to join is, in 1993 we made the self-titled album, "**The Joel Rafael Band**," which was released in 1994.

Where did you record the album.

That was recorded at my home on two A-DAT's - using sixteen tracks. As was the next album "**Old Wood Barn**."

There was a guy called Glenn Goodwin who played bass on the first album.

When we first started this band, and were playing gigs around town in these coffee-houses, there was a little bit of a buzz going on, and we didn't have a bass player. Glenn was a guy, who was a really good bass player, that I'd known for years - he plays with a group called, Bordertown - and he jumped in and started playing bass with us, but at the point where we all had to commit to the band, Glenn couldn't. We actually had two bass players. The second was a kid that had gone to school with Jamaica in Flagstaff. He really liked our stuff and decided that he wanted to drop out of school and play with us. I kind of cautioned

him that it might not be a great idea, but he really wanted to, so I said "OK." He came out and lived at my house for a while. He was about 22 or 23 years old, and he joined in and we had a five-piece for a while. His name was Nolan McKelvie. A good Scottish name – a good Scottish kid, and as far as I know he's still in Flagstaff and plays in a bluegrass group there. He decided after about three months that our raggle-taggle tours weren't really for him. We made a couple of our first tours during that time and they were pretty rugged. Going to places and not having really adequate lodging, or transportation – going to states and places where we weren't known and not having very good gigs. Anyway, we had this first record out and we got a little airplay – eventually got distribution via independent companies, so our second record came out a couple of years later in 1996, and it was distributed by indies till they went bankrupt, I guess it was in '98 or '99. Currently those two records are still undistributed in a conventional sense, but they are available on a number of web sites, as well as our web site [ED.NOTE. If you don't own Joel's albums go to www.joelrafael.com immediately].

Can you tell us about the artwork on the front of the liner booklet, on your debut album. It has a Native American feel to it.

I actually collected the feathers from some friends of mine who work with birds – in a place where there are peacocks, and Jamaica put together that arrangement. We then put it on a mirror and reflected the sky. That's actually the sky behind that arrangement of feathers.

Can you tell me what *solo pasando* means. There's a song with that title on your debut album.

Roughly – you know, I had written the song – all the verses to the song. Basically, it's my story of being a latch key kid. I mean, I'd come home and nobody was ever there. I had the house to myself. I found the record player, I found records, I found the garage and I made things – I did all this in my little alone world. After I wrote the verses, the concept of travelling through – like a person, when they are on this planet, they are just here for, in God's time, just a flash in the night. Just a spark. In the time that you are here, you pass through this life, and you – how do I say it – it's not really like you leave your mark, but you do what you do and that affects the people that you know.

Like leaving a footprint behind.

Well, everybody hopes that. Whether you hope it, or believe that you are successful at it or not, it's true. It really is just like that movie, "*It's A Wonderful Life*," when George Bailey gets his wish – "*I wish I'd never been born*," then he finds out how much he affected that whole town, and how much he affected so many people. Had he not been born, things would have been different. Now there's no way to know that, but it's certainly a true concept. Every person affects a lot

of people – more than they realise. This interaction we have with one another – we're all part of the same big soul. I went to a good friend of mine who was a Spanish speaking person, that spoke English also, but her first language was Spanish, and had been born in Mexico. This was at a place I worked at that time, when I wrote the song. I said, "*How would I say, just passing through, in Spanish*" and she struggled with it. She said, "*You know there's not really a way to say that*." Literally. She thought it over and she gave me a couple of options. One of them was *solo pasando*, which really means, passing alone. One person passing. I grabbed that, and I just made that my chorus, because it seemed to fit the theme of my song.

Based on what you've just said, would you describe yourself as an autobiographical writer.

I think so. I don't try to lock myself into that – I think a lot of my stuff comes out that way, because I write from personal experience. That's one of the common ways of writing.

But these are things you have known and felt.

Well, you can write from the experience of others, or you can from things that you've heard – I am the character in a lot of my songs. The central character that has experienced the things I'm talking about in the lyric – it's the strongest mode of writing for me. I also go off on character sketches from time to time, and I'll have somebody in there that I kind of make up out of a few people, or maybe it's me and a few people, or something I've seen someone else go through that I haven't gone through personally. I use anything I can to key off an idea.



L. to R. Jeff Berkley, Carl Johnson, Joel Rafael, Jamaica Rafael – Kerrville, August 2001.

Do you see "*America Come Home*" as a prayer. To me, it's a prayer for simplicity.

I can see it as one. I didn't write it as a prayer necessarily. I had again, a bunch of verses – four initially, that ended up being three, because I

eliminated one. I wrote the verses in 1974 when I was in Colorado, but I never used them.

So the songs on your albums are not necessarily written just before you recorded them.

This is the way I write – if I write something down, I keep it. I have all these notebooks that are partly started. Some of them are more complete than others, and have more pages filled than others. Some of them only have a couple of pages filled. I love notebooks. I love stationery stores. When I was a kid, that is where I spent a lot of time. I loved to go into stationery stores and buy art supplies and paper and pencils. Now, that has sort of evolved into this thing where, if I'm in a store and see a nice pad, I'll buy it. Two bucks and I've got myself a new pad of paper. Right away, I'll start writing a song in it. I've got a lot of pads of paper in a big canvas bag, and that's kind of my writing kit. I just go through the notebooks on a regular basis, I dig through them – I look back at stuff that I wrote a long time ago, because I write a lot of partial things. I'll write one verse and not really push it and beat myself into writing a whole song, if I don't really have something that seems that great to me. For the sake of finishing the song, I don't finish the song. I just leave it in my notebook. Later, I'll come along and find it. That was the case with "America Come Home" – there were some verses that I wrote on a musical road trip I took in '74. One of my first musical road trips. I went with a friend, Steve Lazzaroni, and we took a musical road trip through the Western States of the U.S. The streets of Aspen was one of the most memorable places we played music. The Street was definitely the venue. We played all over Colorado and Utah as well. I met Jack Hardy on that trip. He was a kid and I was a kid. But he still *talked like this even then*. [ED. NOTE. We both laugh, as Joel imitates Jack's hoarse vocal speaking voice]. That was a great trip for me, but you know, I wrote those verses on that trip and I never did anything with it. I couldn't figure out what to do with it. I tried putting it to tunes – ten, fifteen, twenty times over, for the next four or five years and then it went in the book. Then in about 1989 or 1990 - in there somewhere, I came across that one, and I just [ED. NOTE. Joel claps his hands] – said "Talk about a trip across this land we call out own." I'm going "What's this song about" and I said "Well, I'm talking about a trip across this land we call our own." It just came out of me. Out of my mouth, and I wrote it down. Then I couldn't think of what the next line was going to be for the longest time, but then later that afternoon I just went, "America, America come home." That was the song.

Do they often come like that.

Well you know, a lot of times, I'll write one all in a single sitting and it will just happen really fast. I think a lot of writers have that common experience. Sometimes a song will just – it's like Arlo says "It comes along and it's your responsibility to be there prepared to catch it, or else it rolls on down to

somebody else, like Bob Dylan" [Laughs]. I mean that's his joke but, you know, it's so true. You have to be ready. Woody Guthrie said it too. He wrote an essay titled, "So you want to be a songwriter." In that he basically says, "You better have your tools ready. Your nickel or dime pad and your pencil, with you at all times." If you think of one line or you hear somebody say something that sounds cool – or you think of a title – I mean anything like that, you've got to write it down because you are not going to remember it. You're not going to think of it later. That's one of the most important things for a songwriter to remember, is that he needs to be ready to grab something right then. Even if it's a line, because a line is just as good now as it is later – if you find some more lines to go with it [Laughs]. I will write songs where I write the whole song all at once, but then other songs, I'll write a line or I'll write a verse and get stuck for a while. I don't worry about it, and I don't -

Have sleepless nights.

No. When I didn't have very many songs, back in the old days - when I was first starting out and making the transition from the "fake it" to "make it" mode, and starting to feel confident about being able to write and perform – at a certain point I stopped worrying about it, because I had enough songs. When I didn't have enough songs, it was more of a concern. I was always trying to write a new song. I see a lot of young writers like this today – "gotta write a new song. I gotta write a song now." [Joel snaps his fingers]. You know, it really doesn't matter – people write in different ways. Some people have got to write like that, they just have to – it's the Nashville thing, you get in a room and you jam it out. You work on it. You come up with ideas. Everybody that is in the room has a by-line. I've never written much that way. I've tried a couple of times, and I think it's a really good way to write, but it's not the way I generally do it.

Is this because it doesn't work for you.

I won't say it doesn't work for me, but it's not the way I do it. I probably will do it that way again, and I have done it that way, but it's not my usual mode.

Was the song "Reluctant Angel" written at the time you had the band.

Yes, it was written while we were recording those demos with me, Jim and Theresa. The song sort of referred to the kind of music we were doing. How much it meant to me, but that sometimes it falls on deaf ears, because there's not a lot of places to play this kind of music. That's why a place like Kerrville is such a wonderful, wonderful blessing you know.

Where did you first hear about Kerrville.

When I won the Troubadours of Folk contest, Peter, Paul & Mary were one of the groups on the bill. Paul Rothchild who had known Peter since the old days – I

mean when Bob Dylan went electric at the Newport Folk Festival – Paul Rothchild was mixing at the mixing console, and Peter Yarrow introduced Bob Dylan on the stage. Those guys have known each other for a long, long time. Paul introduced me to Peter at the Troubadours of Folk Festival and Peter said to me “Have you ever been to Kerrville.” I said, “No. I’ve heard of it, but I don’t really know about it.” He said, “Well, you’ve got to go to Kerrville. Kerrville is the songwriter contest. You have to go there.” I said, “I will.” A few months later, I wasn’t really thinking about it, but a friend of mine called me up and said “Hey, do you know about the Kerrville New Folk contest,” and I said “Yeah, I do know about that, but it’s too late isn’t it.” This was like in March, and he said, “The deadline is tomorrow at five o’clock.” I had two songs that we had recorded for the first record. I had “America Come Home” and “Solo Pasando.” I had them on a cassette tape. I had a day job at that time, so I took them and put them in a Fed-Ex envelope and I left work, went as fast as I could over to the Fed-Ex office and sent the tape to Kerrville. About a month later, the same guy called me up and said “Congratulations.” I said, “For what,” and he replied “You’re on the Kerrville list.” I said “Really, really. Are you ?,” and he says “No.” [Joel used an irritated, gruff tone when imitating the friend who rang him]. I came out here – the first year, I came with Carl and Jeff. We were finalists, but we didn’t win. That was in 1994. We went home, finished our first album and I wrote a couple of new songs. I sent in a couple of songs the following year and I was fortunate enough to get picked again for the finals. I came out here again, and that year I came with Jamaica for the first weekend. She’d been at school or something, the previous year. The second year it was only Jamaica and I on the first weekend and we won. The following weekend, for the winners show, I brought the whole band back. I think we’ve been here every year since. Maybe there was a year gap after we won, before we played main stage.

No, you definitely played here in '96 as I was here. After you played “America Come Home” my jaw just dropped. That’s one of those musical moments I’ll never forget. You co-produced your first album with Jeff, but production of the second album is credited to the whole band. Any reason.

We recorded the first and second albums in pretty much the same way. The music was done very much live, with some vocal overdubs. The first album - what happened, after we recorded the tracks and we basically had everything done, then the burden of responsibility fell on me to mix those tracks and find out what we were going to use and figure out how it was all going to fit together. Jeff and I had become very good friends in that first year and a half – whatever the time period was that we’d been playing together, at that point. He had a driving curiosity, because he had been in studios since he was a kid because his dad was a musician. He craved being in the studio and the whole musical experience. He was close by. He lived near me. I told him “Look, I’m going

to be doing this at night, and I could use some help. I need somebody to help me log this stuff down and be my assistant more or less. Or my partner.” He said he’d love to do it, so he came out every night and the two of us went through those tracks and we decided how we were going to process things and what we were going to leave in and what we were going to leave out. Really he was like an assistant producer, but I just felt so grateful for his dedication and loyalty through the whole process that I said “Look, I’m going to say we produced this together.” I think it says, produced by Joel Rafael with Jeff Berkley. He really was more of a partner in the production of that record. He’s gone on to produce records on his own now. He’s doing some great production work. The second album, we were really cohesive as a group at that point. We’d been together for a while, and we were getting some airplay and we were travelling around a bit. We played here and in some other states. I just felt that even though I mixed the tracks, and kind of finalised the stuff myself – Jeff at that point was in San Diego, so he wasn’t as close – he had moved further away – I just felt that everybody was very much responsible for their parts and the arrangements, so I felt that it was really produced by the whole band in terms of the sound that we ended up with. I kind of refined it, but I didn’t change anything. Everybody had their sound and it was all blending in, and I just felt that it was a group effort.

Where was the photograph taken that is front cover shot of “Old Wood Barn” liner.

That was a barn in Flagstaff, Arizona that we used to drive past all the time when we travelled out Interstate 40, which is what replaced the old Route 66. The barn isn’t there anymore. They tore it down the day that our record was mastered. We had a friend in Flagstaff, who took a lot of the pictures on that album. He’d take a lot of pictures of us when we’d come through Arizona, and that was one we decided really kind of really fitted the mood of the album, so we used it.

How many gigs were you playing each year as a band initially, and how many are you playing now.

I don’t know if the number of gigs has changed so much as, sort of the level of the gigs. We started to eliminate a lot of the little gigs that weren’t really doing anything for us, that were more of a point of frustration than say, a joy or any kind of progression in terms of our music. We play better gigs now, I think. Our local gigs at home and stuff are some of the same places that we’ve always played. Some of the same coffee-houses and small clubs. Over the last five or six years, we’ve managed to increase our festival visibility. Two weeks ago we played Rocky Mountain Folk Festival. We played PigNic last year [ED. NOTE. The latter is an annual event held in September, in association with the Hog Farm commune, on Wavy Gravy’s Black Oak Ranch near Laytonville, California] and in Texas, we’ve played at the Wildflower and Kerrville festivals.

And of course, the Woody Guthrie Festival.

The Woody Guthrie Festival we've been on for all four years. The last two years we've really been headliners there. [ED. NOTE. As of July 2002 make that all five years].

Who produces that festival. Is it Greg Johnson [ED. NOTE. When he was an Austin resident back in the early nineteen-nineties, Johnson, an Okie, used to promote an annual Woody Guthrie tribute concert. These days Johnson runs the club, the Blue Door in Oklahoma City. It also doubles as his home].

No, it's not Greg Johnson. He's always there and he's always a big part of it, but it's what you'd call a consortium of groups that organise it. The Woody Guthrie Coalition, which includes the Huntington's Disease group and includes the orphanage out of Pryor, Oklahoma that is a private group that puts on concerts. It's a big volunteer effort, organised by a lot of people in Oklahoma.

I believe that it's also a free festival.

Yes, it's a free festival. When they established it, they wanted the sanction of the Guthrie family – Arlo Guthrie and his sisters. The way they got that was, the family said "As long as it is always a free festival and people can come hear music for free." That's what Woody would have wanted. Also, people do not get paid to play on the festival, only their expenses are covered. Based on that they sanctioned it, because they really weren't sure how it was going to go. It has turned in to a wonderful thing, because people are not motivated to be on it for the wrong reasons obviously. They managed to come up with the expenses – what they do, is they stage a number of side events around the festival itself to raise money. Every night of the festival there's a big party at a dance hall called Brick Street where they charge \$25 or \$30 for people to get in. All the artists go there and jam with the house band. Everybody gets up and does a song and people come and they mingle with the artists and get autographs. In Oklahoma, this is something that people really love and they really like to be able to get down and meet the artists and spend some time. Plus, the artists find the setting and environment really conducive to that. It's an enjoyable experience. Some places that sort of thing can really wear you out, but that festival is a lot of fun.

There was only a two year gap between the first and second albums, then there was a four year gap before your third disc appeared. Was there a reason.

Yeah. During those four years we were trying to make ourselves visible in more places. We started attending Folk Alliance on a regular basis. That was a big investment and it still is a big investment for us, every year, to go to that – for four people or five people to attend Folk Alliance. I've always envied so many of my friends that are wonderful songwriters, that play

solo, because when we get to Folk Alliance, they all borrow my players. And get all these gigs and then go out to the gigs and play them solo. And make a living along the way. I've got my band – I play with that same band that they play with [Laughs] – you understand what I'm saying. Then when I go out, I've got to take four or five people. We've always got to find enough money in our shows, to get there. The economics is different than it is for the solo guys and girls [Laughs]. What happened was, we just started making some investments in events like Folk Alliance and trying to get out on the road more – doing some of those shows, that I see so many of my friends in the community doing. They are certainly shows that we are capable of doing, and that we fit right into – where we already have people that know about us. We try to do those, but a lot of times quite frankly, those shows are a break even situation or an investment for us.

Have you played in ever state in the USA.

Well no, there are states we haven't played in. I think we've played in about twenty states.

What about Canada.

We've played in Canada, in Toronto and Vancouver.

What about Europe.

Of course we've thought about going over there, and again a solo guy or a solo girl can just head on over there and check it out – find a place to stay and find some niches and some gigs. We really can't do that, so we have to find somebody who wants to bring us over there. We think we're on to somebody now. There's a guy in Denmark who has actively been talking with our management about having us go over and do Germany and the Scandinavian countries, and some other places that they bring, mainly, American acts over to. We're hoping that will materialise in the next year, because we really want to go to Europe. We think we would do really well there. Every indication is, is that our music would be received really well in a number of places in Europe. We'd like to go, and we will, but we haven't got there yet. We've mainly been a domestic act. Both of my daughters travelled this summer – one of them went to Italy and the other one went to China. When I told my friends this they said, "Where are you going," and I said "Well, I'm going to Oklahoma" [Laughs]. I mean in the States it was kind of a joke, and it did get a laugh, because it's not quite the romantic place, in a lot of ways, that Italy or China might be. But you know, Woody Guthrie was from the town I went to, so there was certainly an element of culture there that was relevant for me.

How did the deal for "Hopper" come together.

We wanted to make an album two years after "Old Wood Barn," but it just didn't happen. About three years afterwards, we were about to release a live

album – we actually recorded a live album, but interestingly I had a really bad auto accident about two days before we were due to record the gig. For some reason I was in good enough shape to play that gig and we recorded the show, and it was kind of lacklustre. Within a week or two my injuries, which were mostly soft tissue injuries, kind of rendered me useless. I could still play my guitar and stuff, but it did something to me. It really knocked me down, for a good year. Not to say I couldn't do anything, but my level of energy was just not what it had been. It took me a year to come back from that accident, so that put off the album for the fourth year. I managed to save some money and found a couple of places to record that were reasonable. About that same time, Jackson Browne who we'd had an association with for a while – he'd known us and we'd known him – but he hadn't really heard us play. We really weren't pushing an agenda with him at all, although we knew him. We didn't really want to do that. At a certain point, it just sort of naturally evolved that he heard our music and became interested in us. Just as I finished **"Hopper,"** he asked me if I'd like to release it on his independent label, Inside Recordings. Which, at that time, just had John Trudell.

I have that album. It's called "Blue" something.

"Blue Indians" – great record. A very great record. We're really honoured to be on Jackson's label.

But there was an initial pressing of "Hopper" on your own label.

I actually did an initial pressing myself on Reluctant Angel. Jackson had heard some of the stuff while we were recording. When the record was finished, he got a copy of it obviously, and decided he'd like to release it, so then we went for our second pressing. The first pressing ended up being almost all promotional. With stickers on the case that said "Now on Inside Recordings," and that kind of thing. There are still some Reluctant Angel copies of **"Hopper"** out there, from the first run. Actually there's a couple of radio stations, when I see the reports that they have played us, it still says self-produced or Reluctant Angel. They don't even know that we're on Inside Recordings.

Tell us about the closing song "Mi Amigo."

The Mark in the song is not my actual brother. He was more of a spiritual brother. We met in Washington on the Mountain Loop Highway outside of Granite Falls. He was our neighbour (and brother) for two years. We still keep in touch after all these years.

Segment Two - On The Internet

Just as Joel uttered the words "Inside Recordings," Rod Kennedy strode out on to the Kerrville stage and commenced to announce details of that evening's proceedings. Quickly deciding that we would finish the

interview via the internet, what follows is our electronically generated conversation. It mainly concerns the songs that feature on Joel's three albums. We began by talking more about 1994's "Joel Rafael Band."

Your self-titled debut album won the San Diego CCMA award for 1994. What can you tell us about this award.

The California CMA award is a country music award. It is given out on a National, State, and city level. We're not really a country band, so it was kind of a shock when they gave it to us. Jeff and Carl went down to the ceremony and accepted the award, as I recall.

On your first album, the lyric of "Two Wooden Boxes" mentions "two Wooden Boxes and a cedar board for a bench" and that there were "Good times and bad spent looking out from this bench." Tell us about this time.

The song was written after I came back to California. We lived on a rural piece of property in a trailer house in an Avocado grove. I had a place up at the top of the property where I put a cedar plank across two old avocado boxes for a bench. I used to go there in the mornings to play the guitar and write.

The lyric of "My Father's Son" include the quotes "I'm the son who turned his back and ran." and "Headstrong - cold heart - and a highway song. I woke up - I was all used up, nothing left of me. My reckless road had reached its end. Travelling home." This song is obviously based on the parable of the prodigal son, and is also autobiographical.

I think the "Prodigal Son" parable is biographical for a lot of people. The song was definitely inspired by the parable.

In "One Vote One Name" you wrote "Freedom is not a trophy that every man must win. Freedom is a birthright. Bondage is an insult." Is this an older song.

The song was written just before Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

"I Don't Know And I Don't Care" appears to be a pretty negative song title, as titles go. Presumably this deliberate.

It's a personal song written in a lonely moment a long time ago. That's about all I can remember. But the title isn't really negative. When you're all wrapped up in an emotion that is about to overtake you (to a negative affect), I think it can be good to let it all go and just not have an opinion for a while.

My dictionary states that characters who are born in Saturn, will astrologically be cold, gloomy, sluggish. Did you have someone in mind when you wrote "Saturn Return."

I heard that every 27 years or so a person's planets line up in a way that places Saturn in the position it was in at that person's birth, causing great upheaval and change. I don't know if it's true, but I got a song out of it.

In Kerrville, I asked you about the song "Reluctant Angel." I would however like to ask if there is a reluctant angel.

The "Reluctant Angel" is the, ever elusive, muse.

There's a credit on the album liner to Eric Lowen and Dan Navarro. For any reason.

I met Dan Navarro about '76 or '77, standing in line for the Monday night open stage at The Troubadour in Los Angeles. He heard Rosie Flores and I play my song "Goldmine" and wanted to learn it. Twenty years later, Dan calls me out of the blue and told me that he and Eric Lowen had been using it as their acoustic encore for ten years. Then, they recorded it on the re-release of **"Walking On A Wire"** for Mercury Records. Wouldn't you thank them?

Your 1996 album "Old Wood Barn" opens with "Ballad Of Bellingham" and you hear a bird squak. Bellingham is a town in Washington State. The lyric states "Seattle was where we met. Your southern tongue." Who had a southern tongue.

That's sound of a red-tailed hawk, that you hear on "Ballad Of Bellingham." A friend of mine named John Cooper, the guy who painted the covers for **"Hopper"** - the front in 1969 and the back in 1999. He was from the southern part of the States and would often reply to a question with "Yes Ma'am".

When did you write "Meanwhile The Rain"

The words were written in 1993, I think. There was an incredible rainstorm that lasted for days, and I was just thinking about all the people that were outside getting wet while I sat by a warm fire. Then I put the music to it for the **"Old Wood Barn"** recording.

In "String Of Pearls" you mention leaving Seattle. The Cascade Mountains are also mentioned in the lyric.

This is another song about our time in Western Washington. This song is about leaving the Cascades for California and the coastal foothills of North San Diego County where I now reside.

The lyric of "Never Not Enough" states "You've always looked out for me." Is this a song for your wife.

When people relate to my songs, then the songs are about themselves or people in their lives. Some of the ideas for my songs come from my personal experience, but they aren't all autobiographical or specifically about someone I know.

"Coal Mining Town" reveals that "Grandpa was a coal miner. Lived off the land - I still don't know how." Is this a song for the generations, and the Illinois coal mining town that your family is from.

It's a story based on what I know about my grandfather and how I felt about him as a person and about the time he came from etc.

The song "Separate Directions" mentions "the firs and the pines and the silence. Log on my fire, stream at my door. Generals concerned with their war, and people killing each other. Vietnam Veterans not respected on their return home. They went to Vietnam and I headed north."

Actually this song was written in the eighties after visiting the Vietnam Memorial at the State Capital in Sacramento, California. I went up to the Sierra Mountains to the cabin of some friends and wrote the lyrics. Then I re-wrote the tune for the **"Old Wood Barn"** album.

Is the song "Horse Thief Creek" set in the Western Cascades.

No, it was written in 1974 while travelling through the Rocky Mountains in Colorado on the road trip I took with Steve Lazzeroni.

On "I'll Be Travelling" you can hear birds singing in the background. Is this another Western Cascades song. It appears to be a song of returning to the real world - "when I open up my eyes [tomorrow], I will see all of my sorrow fading out into the skies."

The birds were actually on the roof of my barn when we recorded the background harmonies, so I just left them in. The hawk and the frogs are also sounds that your hear on **"Old Wood Barn"** were recorded here on my property. I actually wrote this song in dedication to my friend, Paul Rothchild, an amazing producer and an amazing person.

"Hopper" was produced by you, along with Paul Dieter & Dan Rothchild. Tell us about them and about making the album.

I met Paul Dieter through my management, which is also Jackson Browne's management office. Paul is Jackson's chief engineer and has recorded Jackson's last two albums and is currently working on another record with him. Turns out, about the time I was going to make **"Hopper,"** I found out Paul actually lived about a mile from my house, and was commuting up to L.A. to work with Jackson, or David Crosby, or one of a couple of TV shows he does work for. He had some down time and Groove Masters (Jackson Browne's studio) was empty for a few days, so it just worked out. Big Fish is where we finished up the album, and it's a wonderful private studio about 30 minutes from my home. In terms of style, **"Hopper"** was recorded in much the same way as the other two albums - that is to say, the band recorded the tracks live, and then we

overdubbed vocals and instrumental leads. Except "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key" was a live lead vocal, as was "Learning To Love" and "As I Move Along." Paul Rothchild once told me that I should record everything that has anything to do with 1-2-3-4 all at once. I had talked with Dan about playing bass months before we recorded, and we sort of assumed he would overdub. Then it turned out he was free when we did the basics, so he became an important part of the production process.

The album is distributed through E-squared, Steve Earle's own record label, and RED. How did you manage to hook up with E Squared.

Inside Recordings, Jackson Browne's independent label is distributed through E-Squared and Artemis. I have nothing to do with it. Only "Hopper" is distributed through these channels. My other albums are available at www.joelrafael.com

"Train Yard" which opens the "Hopper" album with a series of sound effects – wind chimes, train and voices speaking. Who are the voices. Was this intended to set the Guthrie theme of a train "Hopper."

The voices are Woody Guthrie, myself, Carl, and I'm not sure who all else. It's just sort of a dream vignette or mood introduction, or whatever you want to call it. Seems like it worked.

Tell is about "As I Move Along"

It was originally just a poem, then I put it to music.

You co-wrote "China Basin Digs" with John Trudell. This is obviously about a real life event and about the homeless. Where are the China Basin Digs. How and when did you meet John Trudell.

China Basin is in San Francisco. It was a run down area where the homeless had been camping for years. It's where they built the new baseball park. When they broke ground there was an article in the **San Francisco Chronicle** about how the homeless had been given the Heave Ho from their China Basin Digs. I just changed the story into lyrics and made some music. I've known about John Trudell for a long time. I finally had the chance to meet him a few years ago in Arizona when we crossed paths in Flagstaff. We became good friends and I asked him if he wanted to jump in on "China Basin Digs" and he said "Yes." We still play gigs together regularly at a place called the Temple Bar in Santa Monica.

"Learning To Love" is set in Granite Falls near Seattle. Tell us about this song.

"Learning To Love" is just a story, straight and simple.

You covered the posthumous Woody Guthrie/Billy Bragg co-write "Minor Key." What do you feel about the recent projects using Guthrie's lyrics.

It's what the Woody Guthrie Archives call the living artist concept. I like it, but I can't be totally objective, because the Woody Guthrie Archive has just given me permission to write music for one of Woody's unpublished lyrics. They don't hand these things out carelessly, so I am highly honoured.

Is "Still Alive" based on something that happened to you. There's seems to be a tremendous sense of loss in the lyric.

It's about a friend of mine who died in a plane crash in Mexico.

Jamaica performs the vocal on "Beside You" and is credited with co-writing the song with you. Is this the first song you've written together.

I originally wrote this song. Jamaica wanted to sing it and improved it by re-writing a verse and changing a bit of the melody to fit her voice.

"One More Smile" is a very positive road song, and they are rare. Did you write it that way deliberately.

That's another one that was originally a short poem. I lengthened it and wrote music for it just before we recorded "Hopper."

"Me And My Child" seems to be a song written for Jamaica. Incidentally, have you ever been to the island of Jamaica.

"Me And My Child" was written when Jamaica was about two years old. I've never been to Jamaica (yet).

Light and thunder bring rain and purification. What inspired "Light And Thunder."

It was inspired by a thunder and lighting storm at Kerrville.

In the lyric of "Crossroads" is there an element of regret expressed here at the road taken.

"Crossroads" – Hmmmm. It's just really about remembering when life was so simple, and everything was easy to remember and keep in order. I actually felt that way as a child. Life becomes more complicated as we grow and get older and things that have happened to us are just more difficult to reconcile or understand.

"So Fast" mentions "Make the most out of every day." Is this your philosophy for life.

Sure.

Is the closing, "Mi Amigo" a song for your brother Mark

Yes, it's for Mark.

You turned up on the 2001 Red House compilation album "Folkscene Vol. 3" performing "Minor Key."

And we were also featured on Pete Seeger celebration **"Volume 2 - If I Had A Song"** on Appleseed Records performing Pete's "Last Train To Nuremberg."

What are you up to currently.

I'm working on an album of Woody Guthrie songs including an original co-write with Woody "Dance A Little Longer."

Segment Three - "Woodeye" - An Album Review

On July 13th when Joel and the band played the 5th annual Woody Guthrie Folk Festival in Okemah, he released his fourth album **"Woodeye."** Here's my review of the recording.

Joel Rafael Band "Woodeye" Inside Recordings

The short, opening track of Rafael's previous album, **"Hopper"** [2000], was titled "Train Yard" and featured the voices of Woody Guthrie, Joel and Carl Johnson, set against the sounds of a [railway station] freight yard. The album also included Rafael's rendition of the Billy Bragg/Woody Guthrie collaboration "Way Over Yonder In The Minor Key." Since the 1998 inception, in Okemah, Oklahoma, of the annual, free Woody Guthrie Folk Festival, Rafael and his band have performed there every year. Totally enamoured by Woody's birthplace, Joel closes this fine collection with "Talking Oklahoma Hills," a wonderful half spoken/half sung lyric he wrote in tribute to Okemah. And when the band comes in to support Joel's vocal, the sound they attain plain rips your heart out.

If the foregoing are just a few of the tangible, *real life* things that connect Rafael and Guthrie, please believe me when I say that, spiritually, they are *brothers*. Having interviewed Rafael at length, anyone with an inkling of Guthrie's life and philosophy would draw the same conclusion. On **"Woodeye,"** Rafael brings together Guthrie tunes that are well known and some that are less familiar, in a celebration of one man's life and art. Within that mix there are a couple of Guthrie/Rafael collaborations. The traditional "Sowing On The Mountain," with additional vocals and vocal arrangements courtesy of Jennifer Warnes, finds words adapted by Guthrie, married to a melody that Rafael has arranged. Having been presented with a Woody lyric [by his daughter, Norah], Rafael has created an upbeat melody to accompany "Dance A Little Longer."

Rafael opens this album with an old-timey sounding rendition of "When The Curfew Blows," the tale of a fugitive on the run from the city sheriff. Jamaica's harmony vocal supports her father's lead on "1913 Massacre," as Joel recalls the events that occurred, that year, during the Copper Miners Children's

Christmas Party in Calumet, Michigan. Thugs hired by the mine owner, the miners were on strike at the time, locked the hall door after shouting "Fire." In the ensuing rush to get out the building seventy-three children were trampled or smothered on the exit staircase. The obscure "Don't Kill My Baby And My Son" recalls the lynching of members of the Nelson family in Okemah, circa 1910. "Pretty Boy Floyd," the tale of Oklahoma's early twentieth-century *Robin Hood* styled outlaw, the Guthrie, Leadbelly and Lomax co-written blues classic "Ramblin' 'Round," and "Plane Wreck At Los Gatos [Deportee]" are among the better known Guthrie songs included on **"Woodeye."** Townes Van Zandt, in his time, was a fine exponent of the [humorous] talking blues. Supported [only] by album producer Dan Rothchild's bass, Joel picks his acoustic guitar and wends his way through Guthrie's amusing "Talking Fishing Blues." A number of the tracks feature relevant background sounds – a river on the aforementioned fishing song, a passing train on "Danville Girl," an aeroplane flies overhead on "Deportee."

The support players on this truly exceptional tribute album include time-served Woody Guthrie Folk Festival participant Ellis Paul, the multi-talented Van Dyke Parks and the [aforementioned] vocally adept Jenny Warnes.

Meantime, **"Woodeye"** is available by sending \$15 + \$1.29 Shipping & Handling [US Mainland only] made payable to: **Inside Recordings, 4804 Laurel Canyon Blvd. #822, Valley Village, California 91607, U.S.A.** For orders to destinations outside the US mainland, I'd suggest adding another \$5.00.

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Kate Campbell Interview

The interview with Kate Campbell took place on the evening of Thursday 29th November 2001 in her dressing room at The Musician Public House, Clyde Street, Leicester. Additional segments were added that night at the La Tosca Italian Restaurant, London Road, Leicester and also over the internet during late December 2001. Many thanks to Kate and Ira Campbell, and to Jim Sellick, her UK tour manager, for all their help in completing this project.

Segment 1 - At "The Musician"

Where were you born.

In New Orleans on 31st October 1961. My father was attending a seminary at the time, so that was why I was born there. When I was something like a year and a half old, we moved to Sledge, Mississippi, in the delta. We were there till I was four or five – still quite young – and then we moved to Nashville, Tennessee, which is my father's home. My father was raised in Nashville. I've lived most of my life, except for schooling, in Nashville. I'm very comfortable there, because it is my home. It's kind of weird, even though I wasn't born in Nashville, I would live there whether I

did music or not. That is quite odd, because basically I'm a native of Nashville and there are not very many left anymore.

With regard to your father, was there a history of religion in your family.

No, I don't think there are any other preachers in the family, and no musicians - certainly, no professional musicians. When he started out, and went to College, he studied History and I think, he thought he was going to be a politician. He's a good speaker. After he graduated from College he taught school. Taught sixth grade in primary school for one year in Florida. It was while he was teaching school that he felt like he should become a minister. That's when he went to school in New Orleans and I was born. In the States, what happens is, you choose where you want to go to College - and then I guess, after College, Florida is the place where he thought he could get his first teaching job. Anyway, he ended up in Florida for that one year, on the Gulf Coast. Panama City Beach, which is on the Gulf of Mexico. You also choose where you want to go to seminary and there was a Baptist seminary in New Orleans.

What do you recall of living in Sledge.

It's all images of the early sixties. That's why the very first record is about tying in with those early memories, because it was a very interesting time to be in Sledge. 1963, 1964 and 1965 which were the critical years in -

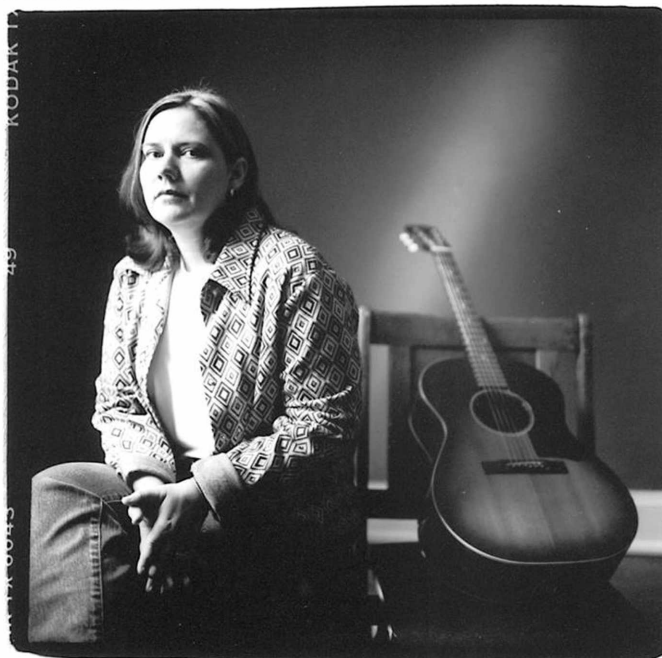
But you would have only been aged two to four.

Right. But it's all memories and images of the cotton fields, at least early on. I've been back there since, but that was really what I was trying to feel and write about on the first record. It was to touch base with those earliest memories and images in my mind of the cotton fields and of being in Mississippi. Sledge is in the cotton fields, and it's in the country, but it's not really very far from Nashville.

Presumably it was a quiet town.

There's hardly anybody there. In fact when my family lived there, it was probably at the height of its population, which was about six hundred residents and now there's about four hundred. There's nothing to do there. It's going downhill. We just heard on the news - apparently they had some tornadoes in Mississippi and Alabama and one of them hit Sledge. Since we've been here. This summer I went and did an interview with National Public Radio, and they wanted to meet me and interview me in Sledge. Sledge is just - what's happening is, small farmers - you can't be a small farmer in America anymore, it's all conglomerates. Nobody can make a living so all the young people have to leave. What was weird about Sledge when I was there in August, was, they were selling the bricks off of the buildings, as second hand bricks. The town itself, looked like a war zone. If you can imagine buildings half standing, and all of the bricks being taken off of the buildings. That's what it looked like. It was horrendous. Even when I visited there five years ago, when I wrote "Visions Of Plenty" - when I wrote the song, it wasn't like that. It's not the only town like that, but especially in farming

communities, in the South that is what is happening. In America in general, it's just not good. One lady who used to baby sit me when I was a child there, she told me that her husband was still farming but he was one of the few, and he had about two thousand acres. Basically, the corporate farmers - most of the farms are ten thousand acres now. If you are a family farmer, you can't compete.



Kate Campbell : Promotional shot for "Wandering Strange"

Have you any siblings.

I have a sister and a brother. I'm the oldest. My sister lives in Orlando, Florida, which is where my father has been a minister now for nearly thirty years. I essentially grew up in Nashville, but he moved to Orlando. My brother lives in Nashville. My grandmother, my dad's mom, is still alive and she lives in Nashville. My mother is originally from Kentucky, so that's where the Kentucky songs come from. Not too far from Nashville, in Kentucky - Nashville is in the centre of the state of Tennessee, and my mother is from Cave City, Kentucky which is near Mammoth Cave - it's only about ninety miles north of Nashville. Where I went to school in Alabama, in Birmingham, that's about one hundred and eighty miles, south of Nashville. Memphis lies about two hundred miles west and of course, Sledge is just south of Memphis, so most of my life has been spent within two hundred miles of Nashville. Within a triangle between Nashville, Memphis and Birmingham, Alabama really. That's what we call, the mid-south, not the deep south - even though I was born in New Orleans. New Orleans is its own city. It's its own thing. It's totally unique. People who have visited the States know that the south really is a region of itself. It's also distinctive musically. You have Louisville, Kentucky - Nashville - Birmingham, Alabama and Memphis, Tennessee - like this [ED.NOTE. Kate forms her fingers into a kind of triangle]. Almost all forms of music can be found there. You have Elvis and R&B in Memphis, blues in Birmingham, bluegrass in Kentucky, and then country in Nashville - all those influences that people hear in my music. It's definitely

a mixture of all those that I heard first hand. That's essentially what influenced me.

If there were three siblings, when did your parents decide that you were all going to have, say, piano lessons.

I get the music from my mother. My mother plays the piano and sings. Her father loved bluegrass music, and he messed around a little bit with the banjo and the fiddle and listened to bluegrass records. My father – I really get the stories and speaking from my father, the preacher, who loves words and loves history. My parents – when I was – well, I don't know how this happened, but when I was like four years old, I got a ukulele and taught myself to play that. My mother – since my mother had had piano lessons – when I was about seven my parents said, “We'll give you piano lessons. If you learn to play the piano, then we'll always buy you any other instruments you want to learn.” That's kind of what happened. I started taking piano lessons, and when I could take clarinet at school, I started playing clarinet. As my hands got bigger – this was the nineteen-sixties – I was around teenagers at my father's church who were all playing guitars, because of The Beatles. Peter, Paul & Mary. Bob Dylan. Everybody played guitar. As my hands got bigger then I just moved from ukulele to guitar, watched the big kids play and taught myself. The only formal lessons I ever had were on the piano and clarinet. I had piano lessons all the way through High School and I can read music. These were private lessons that my parents paid for. I played the clarinet in the band at school. When I went to College I thought I was going to be a Music major and actually started out as that – mostly classical, which I love, but I knew pretty soon that there was no way I was going to be a classical musician. I love to play classical music on the piano, but I knew that vocally I wasn't going to be an opera singer, and I knew that I wasn't good enough to be a classical pianist. The whole time that I'd been taking lessons at school, I'd been writing songs, almost as soon as I could. At seven, I was already writing songs on my ukulele and singing.

Where do you think the urge to write came from.

In my case, it was the blending of a number of things, because my parents spotted I had some ability. It was the natural ability, combined with my parents saying that I should take lessons. What ended up happening was, I was trained but I followed my own path too – I was already interested in music. That's what happened.

What's your first recollection of hearing music.

I don't remember the name of the song, but I remember walking around the house playing the ukulele. I loved to do that.

Did your younger siblings follow you around.

My sister did. I would make her. I mean, I was the eldest. She was only a year and a half younger than me and I always liked to play teacher in school too, and I would always be the teacher and she would always be the student. That's the way it was. I would sing and play and make my sister listen to me. I'd play

folk songs that were in the music books I had. I could look at the pictures of the chords, and figure out where to put my hands. Songs like “Clementine” and “The Old Grey Mare.” Then what happened is, I actually remember the first song I ever wrote. What it was about – I don't remember all the words – I was always, for some reason, very sensitive to what was going on around me. I wrote a song about a poor person, I think. I remember writing about a man eating out of a trash can, so I must have seen that on the street. So then I tried to write the song, and here I'm like seven, and my sister's five and I'm making her listen to it and she thinks it's funny – because we're just little girls. I definitely remember that was the first song where I actually tried to capture something I'd seen. Then what happened is, because I was singing so much in choirs and everything at church where my father was the minister, starting at the age of eight, I began writing more and more. This is around 1969 going on 1970, and everybody is writing. All I seemed to be seeing is teenagers writing. Like everyone else, I learned Bob Dylan's “Blowing In The Wind.” All this was on the radio, so I just thought that's what you did.

When did you first step out on your own.

Well, I didn't. Not until I was an adult. I never thought that I would do music professionally, but I thought writing was something everybody did. When people would ask me to write a song for church, I'd write a song for church. I didn't really consider doing it as a vocation and travelling around. I remember at one point, when I was probably twelve or thirteen years old, and living in Nashville, there was a country singer named Tanya Tucker who was very close to my age and she was making records. My parents were not – they were quite fearful, my father being from Nashville, the country music thing was not something that you wanted your little girl to be doing. You had to be careful, mainly because of the places where country music was played. Not that the music was so bad, so much as, it was associated with bars and honky-tonks. There was never any thought of me doing that. There was a person who was interested in me, because by the time I was in seventh or eighth grade I was definitely writing my own songs. I was writing what any little girl would be write about – boys and some of the thing teenagers were talking about at that time. The environment and stuff, as well. You have to remember what age it was. There was a person who actually approached my parents and said “I think maybe we could maybe get her a record deal in Nashville.” My parents said I was too young and that they weren't going to do that. Other than that, that's all I remember. That's why I never thought music would be something that I would do.

But did you perform your songs in school.

Oh yeah, I always did talent shows at schools. My sister can play the piano and sing, but I always performed them on my own. I'd play guitar or sometimes I'd play the piano, because I also wrote songs on the piano. It would all depend on the song, which instrument I chose to play it on. A real variety, but I never played in clubs or had anything to do with the music business. The thing about that through, that was actually good in the long run, was that I never

sang other people's songs. I'd only sing my own songs.

One of the next questions I was going to ask, was what music were you listening to at that time.

Everything. I listened to the radio a lot, and I had records. The thing about radio back then, is that it wasn't formatted the way it is now in the States. You might hear the Beatles, and then Aretha Franklin and then the Allman Brothers, which is southern rock. You might even hear a country singer like Dolly Parton on the same station. Radio was playing everything. I never thought of genres. If there was a song I liked, that was it. I would teach myself a John Denver song. If it was James Taylor, I would have the record. I'd put it on and I would figure out how to play it. Even though I could read music, if it was something I wanted to sing, I would just hear it and play it. I never had to sing in clubs, where I sang other people's songs. All the way through College, or in concerts, or in church or whatever, always, it was me singing my own songs.

Once you decided to go to College, which one did you pick.

In Birmingham, Alabama. It was a four-year course at Samford University.

American colleges at that time would have had something like a coffeehouse where you could play.

Kind of. They had different things. Again, it was the same thing I had always done, I would sing my own songs.

So this would have been the first time you got close to what you are doing now.

Right. Again, it wasn't a real club. It was other students.

In College, what sort of reception did your music get.

It was received well. I think that's why I kept doing it, because people always encouraged me. They liked what I wrote. All the way through College there would be special themes – they would say "Kate, would you write a song for such and such." They would give me a theme and I'd say "Sure," or put together a musical evening. Some of those occasions would be where I picked the songs for other people to sing. I've really not had a typical route in terms of arriving at what I'm doing now.

Can I just backtrack a little, to your days in High School. Were you a sporting person.

I did everything in school. I played basketball. I loved sports. I still love sports. You don't want to talk to me about sports because I love baseball, I love American Football, I love basketball because I played it and tennis as well. Basketball was my main sport, and softball. Back then girls couldn't play – now girls can play with boys on baseball teams. When I was growing up, we had separate teams.

The reason I asked that question, is because of your song "Bus 109" on "Visions Of Plenty." In the song, you play basketball with a girl called Lavonna Jones.

That wasn't her real name. I changed it. I was bussed to a downtown school. We were on the same basketball team, and made friends. She was a coloured girl. That was definitely a real person. That was a great experience.

OK, let's get back to your years at Samford.

I started out as a Music major at Samford, but about halfway through I changed my major to History and really thought I was going to be a History professor. I didn't know what I was going to do with the music. I never imagined that there was anything like this. I didn't know how to approach this. Even though I grew up in Nashville, this is what's hard for people to understand.

But surely you'd been to concerts.

Oh sure, but how do you become a rock band ? I mean, how do you do that ? There was really no understanding of that. Actually what happened is, I graduated from College and then I got my masters degree in History. I attended Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama next. Really by then - I mean I was always writing songs because I'd done it since I was a little girl, but I never thought that was going to be a vocational path. Ever. Then I got married and we moved to California. This was for my husband, Ira, to attend a seminary.

That's a little like history is repeating itself.

Of course, I never thought that was going to happen either. I never would have imagined that, if I'd sat around and thought about it. We were once again in church, working, so anytime anybody would ask me to sing I just did what I'd always done, I sang. Ira has always loved music and was very interested in what I did. He's really the one – what happened is, I would be singing in different places in California when people would ask me to sing. We lived for a year and a half in San Francisco, and a year and a half in the south in Riverside. It's outside of Los Angeles, so we were in both parts of the state. Through the years, people would go "You know you really should put your songs on tape." When I met Ira he kept thinking about it, and people would keep coming up to him saying, "You know Ira, you should do something. Those songs should be heard."

Where did you meet Ira.

He went to Samford as well, but he was older than me. Through mutual friends – we didn't really talk to each other when we were in College. It was later, through mutual friends that we met. He knew that I had always done music, and he'd heard me sing in College.

Roughly what timescale are we talking about when you moved to California.

In 1984. We got married at the end of '84 and moved to San Francisco.

Did you have a day job in California.

Yes, I worked while Ira went to school.

You mentioned earlier that you thought you were going to become a History professor.

I was still working on my degrees. I was able to do that without having to be on the Auburn campus attending lectures. I was working a day job, so that he could finish school. Then we moved to Southern California where Ira got a church job and I worked at a College. He's an ordained minister. He's the full blown thing [laughs]. Then we finally took our own money and for our friends, we began to try to at least capture my songs on tape.

Was this at home in California.

No, this was with people I had met in Alabama that were in College, who were still in Alabama but were beginning to make records. They worked in studios. We never made any recordings in California. We went back east to do the recordings. At one point, we had a discussion about whether we were going to do music, and where would be a good place to live. For a brief amount of time we thought about Austin, Texas which for singer/songwriters, at that time, was better than Nashville. Then we thought that, for me, Nashville would be the best. Even though I didn't do music growing up, and we weren't connected to the music business in any way, we felt that was the best place for me. Ira tried to get a minister's job in Nashville. We moved back in 1988, when he got a job close to Nashville. That's really when we first tried to start understanding how I could break into music. And how the business worked. That again, took several years to figure out. It was a very long drawn out thing. I was still teaching and doing things, and it was really in 1991 – there was one moment though when I really decided, I was thirty years old, and I said *"I can teach when I'm fifty, but let's see what would happen if I really tired to do the music."* Solely music.

When you moved back to Tennessee where did you teach.

In a College. There came a time when we finally said, *"We're going to do this now, and see what happens, and come back to teaching later."* Essentially I gave myself five years. In that five years – well I'm still doing it, that's the main thing. In that five years I got a record deal, and also wrote for a publishing firm for several years. That's what happened when I said, *"Let's see if we can figure out what's going to be the best place for me."*

I believe that you worked at Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals. Chronologically, when did that happen.

It kind of all happened together – the first thing that happened is, I auditioned for the Bluebird Café in 1991. I made it the first time. You go down there and you stand in line and then you get to play one verse and one chorus. If you make it, then you get to come and sing three songs. Well that's what happened, I made it the first time singing the "Locust Years" from the first record. Then it's like three months before you get to come back and sing. So then I tried to get a

songwriting deal. I was doing writer's nights all over Nashville. Trying to get somebody to listen to my songs. Douglas Corner. Another place called, The Boardwalk. Any place that had a writer's night that's what I was doing. Hoping that I could get a publisher or somebody to come and hear the songs. I was having meetings, and trying to figure out how the system worked. There was ASCAP, SESAC and BMI - trying to get anybody to listen to me. Nobody would sign me. The next thing is, we decided to make a record ourselves. To get what we were talking about on to a recording, so someone could hear it. So that we could say this is Kate Campbell, this is the music that I'm talking about. That's what we did. We found Johnny Pierce and we produced our own record **"Songs From The Levee."** We made 1000 copies and then we took out a compass and a map -

Well that's an unfortunate word to use.

Yes it is, but that's what happened. We figured that, I was still working part time. Ira was also working. We figured we could drive four hours from Nashville in any direction. We got a Folk Club Directory out, and one of the first places we played was in Huntsville, Alabama.

Was that your first ever paying gig.

Well it was one of my first – definitely, one of the early paying gigs in May of 1994 - the name of the venue was the Kaffee Klatsch, a small coffeehouse in Huntsville, Alabama. A guy named Chuck Rutenberg came up to me and asked for a tape to give to his friend Rodney Hall - who is Rick Hall's son - at Fame Studio [ED. NOTE. Rick Hall established Fame Studio in 1959]. Much to my surprise a few weeks later Walt Aldridge called from Fame. Walt was running the Fame Publishing Company at the time. Walt is also a songwriter and we wrote together. About a week or so later, Rick Hall called and invited us down to Muscle Shoals to see the studios and to talk about signing a publishing deal. Then he kept calling me all summer and encouraged me to sign with Fame, which I eventually did about the same time that I signed with Compass Records. That was in September 1994. Fame had offices in Muscle Shoals and Nashville, so I didn't really have to leave Nashville. At the same time almost, a guy that was playing guitar with me said, *"Have you thought about Compass Records."* We had sent **"Songs To The Levee"** to Sugar Hill. They turned it down four times. Rounder turned it down. Everybody turned it down. We said, *"OK, fine."* It only takes one person. That's what happened with Fame, it only took one publisher. Anyway, when we discovered that Compass Records was actually in Nashville, and that they actually had an office, we walked in there the next day. Alison [Brown] was sitting at the desk, and Ira said *"I'm Ira Campbell, Steven Sheehan said that we should maybe call and speak with you."* Alison and Garry West had been in Tower Records the day before and had seen a copy of **"Songs From The Levee."** They were about ready to begin releasing recordings and they needed to have product. Product, that was already made. The rest was history. We leased the album to them, and also signed a record deal.

The deal was for what.

Three albums. Actually the lease of **"Songs From The Levee"** comes back to me this year. They obviously own the other three albums. That's what happened. I also worked with Fame for several years – signed a contract with them and wrote songs.

Did you go down to Muscle Shoals to work.

Oh yes, I would go down to Muscle Shoals – I mean it's only about one hundred and fifty miles away, so I'd go down and would write with people down there. We did all of our demos down there. It was a great experience for me and I learned all about working in the recording studio. It was just incredible. That's when I met Spooner Oldham and Dan Penn. If you had asked me if that would ever happen in my life, I would have said "No way." If we'd even tried to make it alone – I would never have thought these would be the people I would have ended up with, but it really was a perfect match for my musical roots and heritage and how it all ended up. I think it was the best place.

Considering that you principally write about subjects concerning the south, an area that is very particular and unique, were you surprised that the rest of America got your songs. For that matter, that the rest of the world got them.

I was totally surprised. I had no idea – you know, it's amazing how we get things in our head. I just didn't know. I was told, amazingly enough, when I was trying to get a country songwriting deal in Nashville – I was actually told by people in Nashville that I wasn't country enough. That I wasn't writing about things that country music people wanted to hear. I was actually told that. It didn't surprise me that when I actually got a writing deal, it was with Fame which had a much broader, southern roots music outlook. That's what created rock'n'roll, the mixture of all those things. Not just what was coming from Nashville. It took Elvis and rhythm and blues and country music – it took everything. Muscle Shoals is much more attuned to that eclectic musical heritage. It's interesting that that's how it all ended up, but I have to say what surprised me the most was, **"Songs From The Levee."**

Because...

What happened is, there were actually more places for me to play outside the south. In New England. Boston. Philadelphia. All those places have a folk history, which the south doesn't have. What happened is – when Compass signed **"Songs From The Levee"** the radio play, the venues and the concerts – outside the south is where my largest market ended up being. Since then, what has happened is that when southerners actually hear my music – which is not the music that they are hearing on commercial radio – they love it. They actually come up to me, and say to me, *"You are singing my life."* So they totally relate to it. What they cannot understand is why they are not hearing me on the radio. That is how far removed country music radio has become, I think, for its actual roots. I know I've been speaking in relation to America – the other interesting thing that happened is that Demon Records issued **"Songs From The Levee"** in the UK and Europe. Then I started getting letters from England, Ireland, Scotland saying *"I have never been*

to America – much less Mississippi or Tennessee or Alabama, the places you write about – but I understand. I feel it. I know those people." That was the thing that went all the way back for me. I suddenly realised after I turned thirty and had said, *"I'm going to write about this and I'm going to make that connection"* – then I realised in my own life, that we are all connected no matter where we're from and that when you write about what you know best, it's going to connect with what other people know. They are going to understand it too. It's irrelevant in the end – if you are making that musical connection – where you are in the world. Where you come from, whether you have ever been there, and that was such a huge realisation for me. You have to trust that. You have to say, *"I'm going to write what I best know how to write."* It's going to make that connection, because that's what music does. Music and art do that, if they are really working. It was such a huge thing for me. I didn't realise even when I was making **"Songs From The Levee"** that that's what would happen. I had no idea.

How did the deal with Demon come about. Did you arrange it, or was it a sub-lease arranged by Compass.

I had already signed with Compass at that point, so I didn't deal with Demon. Compass did that.

On "Songs From The Levee" there are songs co-written by you, Ira and Johnny Pierce. How did that happen.

We created a business and artistic partnership. It's all very important. It's artistic, but it was also business too. We realised when we started out, that our goal was to do whatever we could to get the music, and what I was trying to say, out there. We realised after two and three years of not getting anybody to work with me, that when we found the people that could help me do that, that's what we needed to do. That also became our philosophy of music, we wanted to work with people who wanted to work with us, and do whatever was necessary to keep that vision together. Compass was very much a part of that when they came in on it. And Fame was a part of that. Those things change over the years, and we've continued to try to grow within the music business.

How was the first album received.

It was amazing. It was totally amazing, and it took it a while to build, but all of a sudden once people realised what it was, then everything fell into place and it clicked.

Tell us about the Farm Journal Award that the album received.

That was just one part of the picture that evolved. There are a group of people – we've discovered with my music that there are a lot of people who don't normally listen to music. Or come to hear music. Or buy music. When they hear about my records, they connect. That may be one of only five CD's they buy in a whole year – will be a Kate Campbell CD. Again, people who don't normally buy a lot of music – a farmer in Mississippi. In Kansas. Someone in England who likes literature. It's very eclectic and it's a very broad demographic. We could probably consider that

my listening audience is from thirty to sixty years old. That's very broad.

On the strength of the first album did that get you on to syndicated national shows like Mountain Stage and E-Town.

No, it took even Compass – the real breakthrough in America came about five months into the Compass release. On National Public Radio in America, a woman reviewed **"Songs From The Levee."** This is amazing and really critical – National Public Radio is not commercial country radio, it's not folk radio, it's not anything – it was a programme that normally comes on in the morning and afternoon that mainly features classical music. Anyway, this lady did a review on a programme called **"All Things Considered"** and it hit my demographic. That broad range of people who are interested in cultural things, literary things, news, politics, religion and are not necessarily a normal music audience or a rock audience or whatever. It hit that demographic, that likes and understands my music. That was the first big hit - that began to reach out and touch people. Also **"Songs For The Levee"** came out about the same time in America, that there began to be other music retail stores, other than record stores. Places like Barnes & Noble and Borders Books & Music, where there were books stores tied in with music, which again they were just beginning to hit – that was my demographic. It was very odd.

Before that, for your type of music, there had been the mail order Hear Catalogue.

Exactly. That's exactly right. Again, it was fortuitous and it was just good timing to reach what ended up being my demographic. So we got the National Public Radio audience, and then Compass discovered that Borders and Barnes & Noble were where people were mainly buying my music. It all grew from that.

When you came to record the second album, was it logical to continue working with Johnny Pierce.

Yes. We felt like – well, there was one point where I wasn't going to use Johnny and I was going to work with Jim Rooney. Compass began to shift its philosophy and there was a little bit of a contractual problem, and I frankly woke up one day and said **"I'm going to do the second record with Johnny Pierce, and this is how we are going to do it."** I decided that I needed to learn a lot more about working in the studio. Creatively everything was working, and I felt comfortable working with Johnny, in that studio environment, at that time. So I decided to keep that partnership intact for **"Moonpie Dreams"** and **"Visions Of Plenty."**

How had you met Rooney.

I'd met him through Compass. We had actually moved to a building where Jim lived, but it was really through Compass and Alison that discussions began to take place. Then we decided that wasn't the best thing, and decided to go with Johnny.

With "Song From The Levee" you had created a template for Kate Campbell's music.

Exactly. That's kind of how it all came down in the end. We decided to stick with Johnny for a while.

When did you come over to the UK for the first time.

It was '96 and I only had the first record out. **"Moonpie Dreams"** wasn't out at that point.

One the cover of "Moonpie Dreams" there's a man and a woman.

Those are my grandparents. The picture was taken in July of 1969.

The second time that you cover over to the UK, was that for the Cambridge Folk Festival.

Yes, it was for the Cambridge Folk Festival and the Galway Arts Festival and that was in the summer of 1997.

What did you think of Cambridge.

It was a Festival. It was fun. I mean it was great. I got to hear Richard Thompson and it was just great meeting the people. I was very honoured that I got to do that, and I don't know how I did. I was glad it worked out.

As I understand it, you played the Philadelphia Folk Festival that year. Have you played any other Festivals.

Philadelphia was the largest one I've played. Kerrville wasn't having me at that stage. I'd applied for Kerrville on several occasions. I eventually played the Fall Festival at Kerrville in 1999. I've played some street festivals in the States. City Festivals in places like Mobile and Birmingham. Birmingham is one of the largest and it is called City Stages. I've played that several times.

"Visions Of Plenty" is the first of your albums that I heard. It gained a Folk Album of the Year nomination from the Nashville Music Awards. Did you feel the nomination meant you'd finally got some recognition in Nashville.

No. They don't mean anything. I was surprised when I received the nomination. The record companies make those nominations. I'm sure Compass nominated me. I do think that in Nashville people do know who I am, though. The writing was consistently not mainstream but people took notice of **"Moonpie Dreams."** People took notice of **"Songs From The Levee."** The writing was definitely there. They knew it wasn't commercial country, but I feel like people have respect for me. They know I have a specific vision of writing. People recognise that in Nashville. I think those nominations were the beginning of that recognition.

You said earlier that it became logical to do the first three albums with Johnny Pierce.

The way it turned out, yes. I personally see the first three albums as kind of a – not necessarily a trilogy, but I am kind of working through some themes. Growing through some themes on those first three records and we were – the other thing about my career is, even working with Johnny Pierce, the

technology changed with every record that I made. New technology kept coming in, and we were trying to consistently grow, but retain a certain musical vision and sound.

Is Johnny a digital guy, or does he love to keep his old valve amps.

It's not that he didn't want the new technology but we were very much hands on – all of my records have been made – the basic tracks we started with analog recordings. All of them. There was a certain sound and vision that we wanted to build on, and we worked one on one and laid them out a certain way. By the time I got to **"Rosaryville"** and **"Wandering Strange"** there were some things I kept, but essentially I recorded both those records live in the studio.

With "Rosaryville" you took over the producer's chair.

You notice though that I still worked with Johnny on some of the writing. He wrote four songs on **"Rosaryville."** Johnny's wife died, as we were about to start making the album. We felt that that was a good time to go out on our own. I had a vision for the record, but we didn't do it with Johnny's studio. I felt that I had enough ability in the studio, to do, at least for **"Rosaryville,"** what I need to do. Producing is not something that I necessarily enjoy, because I can't really think about the vocals and do the things I want to do. I really want a producer there when I'm singing, hearing when I can't hear. Looking back, it is what it is but I'm not sure that it's all it could have been – the same even with **"Wandering Strange,"** though **"Wandering Strange"** was definitely done as a live record in the studio. We wanted that feel for **"Wandering Strange."** I'm sure that there are some things I would have done differently with **"Rosaryville,"** probably if I'd had another year. If I'd had the time and a producer that I felt could do it with me.

You said earlier that the first three albums were tantamount to a trilogy. What's clear about "Rosaryville" is that the lyrical content of your songs changed.

I did make **"Rosaryville"** – instead of being a part of the first three, it was very much as an album for people to sit down and listen to the whole record, from start to finish. Much more conscientiously built around one concept, as opposed to the first three albums that were based on several different things. Some of those things are carried on in **"Rosaryville,"** but I definitely saw it separately as one thing. I think in terms of sound, it is most similar to **"Songs From The Levee."** I feel that the overall feeling – I hope and feel that some of my best writing is on **"Rosaryville."** I think that album was the culmination of something I started with **"Songs From The Levee."** It definitely stands alone, and I saw it as something I needed to make for itself, to make sense of why I was doing music.

Surely it was almost inevitable that you would make "Rosaryville" because of your background.

I think so. Yes, I think so. **"Rosaryville"** was very important to me, personally and artistically. People are

always asking me this and I'll just tell you – fans come up, or people go **"What album should I buy tonight. What is your favourite."** It's not that one thing is favourite, it was very important to me spiritually, artistically, creatively and for my own maturity on a personal level that I do **"Rosaryville."** **"Rosaryville"** is very intrinsic. **"Wandering Strange"** I did for a totally different reason.

It's my opinion that you would never have recorded "Wandering Strange," if you had not first made "Rosaryville."

Exactly. I would never have.

Well eye to eye, I would say that you were a damned brave girl to record "Wandering Strange." Foolhardy even.

[Laughs]. It's part of my musical roots. It is very much a roots record for me. I know some people think this, but it's not about religion for me. It's part of who I am musically and culturally, in this life. But I would never have done one without the other. I never set out to do – if you had asked me when I first started making records, I certainly never set out to do a gospel record. I never thought that that was something I would do.

Having now done it however, you don't have to go back there again.

I probably won't. I will never make a record like – **"Wandering Strange,"** is a one of a kind special record. I did it for my own personal satisfaction. At the time, I knew why I wanted to do it. There's no reason for me to ever make that record again. It won't ever happen the same again, because of particular mix of people who played on it. Wanting to record it in Muscle Shoals. Wanting to capture a certain part of my musical heritage. For those reasons, I could never do it again that way.

Did you find "Wandering Strange" a hard album to produce.

No. I did it for the pure joy of it. I did it just to sing those songs. I called up Spooner and the other musicians and I said, **"We're going to go down there and play these songs how we feel them and that's going to be it. I'm not going to labour over it. I'm not going to do one thing to it."** I never even thought that a record company would put it out. I did it for me. I did limited edition copies for people who came to my concerts. It was there if they wanted to buy it. There was never any intention to release it formally. I didn't care whether Eminent put it out. I told them that.

How did you get in touch with the Eminent label. Was it through Steve Wilkison.

Steve worked briefly for Compass, for about nine months, at the time of **"Visions Of Plenty."** In fact, he was the graphic designer for the **"Visions Of Plenty"** CD. What he did is go from Dejadisc [ED. NOTE. Steve's own label based out of San Marcos, Texas circa 1992 to 1996] to Compass to Koch. After he went to Koch, when I would go to New York to play, we stayed in touch. When he came to Eminent I

spoke with him – he came to Eminent about the time I turned in “**Rosaryville**.” We had lunch one day. He said, “*Are you going to re-sign with Compass*.” I said, “*I don’t know*.” Then I didn’t hear from him for about six months. I didn’t know if Eminent was still going to be around and what was happening. Then Steve called me back up and said, “*Let me tell you what has happened. I’ve now become president of Eminent. Monty [Hitchcock] has moved on. Have you signed with anybody yet,*” and I said “*No*.” He said “*Well, I want to sign you*.” He just said it. I said “*Ok, let’s talk some more*.” We worked out a deal and I still had not told him about “**Wandering Strange**” which I’d made off the bat and paid for. About a week before I was going to sign the contract I said, “*By the way, I do have this, do you want to hear it. If you like it it’s Ok. If you don’t, it’s Ok with me. It has nothing to do with whether I’m going to sign with Eminent*.” He goes “*Sure*.” I gave the recording to him and he called me and said, “*I want to put this out. We’re not going to treat it like your other records. We’re just going to say here’s a Kate Campbell record. I love it*.” As of now, it has done better than we ever expected.

Is there a fixed number of albums to be recorded for Eminent.

Two more for them, by contract. It has been a very good relationship so far. I’m personally thrilled.



Kate Campbell at The Musician, Leicester 29/11/01

Back in the early nineties, were you aware of the Dejadisc labels output.

Yes. Ira and I knew of them, because in all of our attempts to get started – to get a record deal and figure out what was going on and figure out where I fitted in. Was I country, was I folk, what was going on

– we read about all the labels that were out there floating around.

If you’d actually decided to move to Austin after leaving Southern California, instead of choosing Nashville, you might have ended up on Watermelon or Dejadisc.

Yeah. You never know. That’s right, it’s so amazing how it all works out.

Segment 2 - Scenes From An Italian Restaurant.....

Having located a place to eat I checked my script, and the following words were exchanged....

This question is kind of obtuse. On “Moonpie Dreams” you have a song titled “When Panthers Roamed In Arkansas.” Where did you get the idea for the song.

It actually came from – the cover painting of “**Songs From The Levee**” with the two girls on the levee. The actual name of that painting is “*Fire On The Levee*.” When I found that painting, I’d recorded half the record. Actually, I’d recorded all the songs, but didn’t know what the cover was going to look like. I went to Memphis, Tennessee to spend the night at the Peabody, because I always wanted to spend the night at the Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis. Checked into the hotel, and looked on the table in the room and there was a Memphis magazine. It fell open to the centre of the magazine, and there was the picture of the two little girls looking at the levee. I knew that that was the cover that I wanted for “**Songs From The Levee**.” As soon as I saw it, I knew the songs went with picture. That it was me and my little sister – two little girls, looking at a fire on the levee. I had to find out about the artist and get permission to use that for the cover. What happened is I discovered that the artist had died but that his wife was still living in Memphis. I called her on the phone. His name was Carroll Cloar – he’s the painter of “*Fire On The Levee*”. So I called up his wife and said, “*I’m Kate Campbell, I would very much like to use the picture on the front of my record*.” She said “*Well, come to Memphis I would love to meet you*.” That’s what I did. I returned to Memphis and went to their house, and started looking at a lot of his pictures. She had some of them in the house, some of them were at museums, some of them were on slides. I noticed that about a third of the pictures had panthers painted in them. In fact one of the pictures was called “*When Panthers Roamed In Arkansas*.” I thought that was a very interesting phrase and wrote it in my notebook. I ended up writing a song with that title. I found out that the reason he had painted all the panthers was that when he was a little boy, his grandmother would tell him all these stories about panthers that would get into the fields and kill farm animals. I was kind of intrigued by that phrase. The actual song, “*When Panthers Roamed In Arkansas*” doesn’t really have a deep meaning. It’s really a conglomeration of other stories and things that mean something, I think, to me internally. There’s not a real meaning that I can pinpoint. That’s how that song came about.

You’ve actually answered my next question, which related to the artwork on “Songs From The Levee.” The reason I asked about “When Panthers Roamed In

Michigan" was that Michael Smith wrote a song titled "Panther In Michigan." Have you heard it.

Yes, I've heard of the song. I don't actually have a copy of the song. That's a most intriguing song. The New York dj Vin Scelsa, heard "When Panthers Roamed In Arkansas" and immediately thought of the Michael Smith song. He did a radio programme and played those two together and that's how I found out about it. You're not the only one who has made that connection.

Although it's hard to believe, the story goes that Michael actually wrote his song word for word from a newspaper article. It seems he simply took the text and opened it out into lines and created the verses.

I think some songs write themselves that way. My song "Signs Following," about the snake healing preachers, on "Moonpie Dreams" - I read a book called "Salvation On Sand Mountain" and wrote the song the next day. Basically taken from a story. Actually "Bud's Cement Boat" is true - almost to form, about Ira's grandfather. We had a video of him building the boat and that's exactly what happened with that song. Every line of that song is real. I'm greatly affected by images. The same thing happened with "Wandering Strange" - that cover is also a painting.

Your songwriting has been compared to the work of literary giants from the south such as Faulkner, O'Connor and Eudora Welty. Had you read the works of those writers, before you became a performing musician.

Oh yes. Now Faulkner, I can only read a little bit at a time because I think he is very depressing. Eudora Welty is my favourite. She's the first person I ever read, where I knew that she actually wrote the way I talked in my own head. I think that she does almost the best southern accent - in actual words, without hearing someone speak it. I think she captures southern language so beautifully. She was the first one - I like Flannery O'Connor too, obviously from the reference on "Rosaryville" [ED. NOTE. There's a Flannery O'Connor quotation on the liner of "Rosaryville"] Flannery, I like for different reasons. Eudora captures the lyricism, and the humour and the darkness of the south. Flannery is very dark.

It's intriguing how you picked up on Flannery O'Connor, since Pierce Pettis also references her as an influence.

Pierce and I have a lot of similar influences. We've actually written some songs together, but neither one of us has ever recorded the songs we wrote. We were having a writing session - I think you'll find this interesting - and Pierce has ideas, non-stop. He carries around backpacks of notebooks. We were writing one day, and he brought up this idea about Jim Brown. I said, "You need to write that song." He ended up writing it and that is one of my favourite Pierce Pettis songs - "Just Like Jim Brown [She Is History]." We have a lot in common.

[ED. NOTE. Ira Campbell was with us, and since he has an ongoing involvement as a co-writer with Kate, it seemed churlish not to ask him about his input].

What stage do you get involved in the process.

Ira. More than anything, as an after the event input.

You mean in terms of providing a critique.

Kate. Editor.

Ira. Editing, or where Kate has done as much as she can do. She may ask me about a song.

Kate. He knows me better than anyone else. Also we have similar backgrounds, and we've been together almost twenty years. He's been with me for as long as I've been in the music business. He definitely is my sounding board, and is able to clarify things for me. Especially when we start putting everything together. Then we brought in Johnny [Pirece], who was another processing element to be sure, and that's when the songs really achieved what we were trying to say. What I'm trying to say, which ensured that I am understood.

Ira. He was there from a production standpoint too.

Kate. To ensure that we were at least moving in the direction we want to move in.

Segment 3 - Words on the World Wide Web.....

Time is always my greatest enemy, when conducting a face to face interview. Particularly so, when covering the whole career of an artist, just prior to a public performance by that artist. You will note in Segments 1 & 2 that I deliberately didn't ask Kate too many detailed questions about her songs. Rather than try to integrate the following Q & A session with Segments 1 & 2 and, in the process, destroy the flow of the face to face Segments, I decided to let this final Segment stand on it's own. Kate kindly completed the following Q & A, mainly concerning her songs, over the internet.

ED. NOTE. One of the questions I omitted to ask Kate was regarding Johnny Pierce, producer of her early albums. Raised in Oklahoma City, Pierce spent most of the seventies on the road with Jimmie Spheeris, and also produced a couple of his albums. In the early eighties he was a member of the Palomino Riders at Hollywood's Palomino Club. During this time he wrote songs for a number of artists including Juice Newton. In 1991 he created Cedar House, a production facility thirty miles outside Nashville.

The album "Songs From The Levee" was produced Johnny Pierce/Jim Emrich. Tell us about Jim Emrich and his input to the process [on this album and the two albums that followed].

Jim worked with Johnny in Los Angeles before they decided to move to Tennessee and opened a studio. Jim is the engineer and therefore he records and mixes the music. On "Songs From The Levee" he is credited as associate producer as well.

The liner doesn't say where the album was recorded. Was this at Cedar House.

Yes.

The pickers on the album include Al Perkins and Dan Dugmore. Who recruited them.

Johnny Pierce called and asked them to play on the album.

Next, I'd like to ask about some of the tracks on "Songs From The Levee." In "Mississippi And Me" are/were Cissy and Mr Thomas Lee real people, or have the names been changed. Is this song autobiographical.

Cissy is real and the song is somewhat autobiographical. Mr. Thomas Lee is a composite character.

Are you the sole lyricist of "Lanterns On The Levee." Is this a song for Ira, particularly the lyric of the first verse.

I wrote this song with Johnny and Ira. And it was written after Johnny's wife was diagnosed with a brain tumour — and the thoughts were about her during the writing of the song. The song also reflects the landscape of the Mississippi Delta.

In her younger days "Wild Iris" was very spirited. Now 80 years old, she remains young at heart and recalls the love of her life. Is this a fictional story or inspired by a real life character.

This is a song inspired by a picture I saw of my grandmother, as a very young woman.

Tell us about writing the song "Like a Buffalo."

Just before writing the songs for "Songs From The Levee," Ira and I took a trip out west and saw lots of buffalo (American Bison). The trip helped to inspire the song.

"Locust Years" is a song about survival. Is the song based on a true event.

Yes, the song was written out of a personal struggle, and for me this song is the reason I made "Songs From The Levee."

In the lyric of "A Cotton Field Away" there's much reference to prejudice and injustice. You mention the George Wallace school election of 1968 in the album liner. How vivid are your memories of this period.

My memories of this period are also included on songs that appeared on subsequent albums. I'm thinking of songs like "Bus 109," "Crazy In Alabama" and "Galaxie 500," etc. Some are based on vivid memories and some are based on media presentations I saw growing up in the south.

The third verse of "Jerusalem Inn" closes with the line, "Showed her the way to the bus." Is this something you saw happen in real life. Is the song title metaphorically another name for a church.

The title comes from the name of a pub in Nottingham, England. It is also the name of a mystery novel by Martha Grimes. Growing up, my father always preached that the church should be a place for everyone, so the undercurrents of that sentiment are reflected in the song.

The lyric of "Train's Don't Run From Nashville" mentions Union Station — a Nashville restaurant. The lyric mentions "Daddy went off to war in '64." Was this Viet Nam, and was your father actually sent there as a pastor.

This song is mostly true. Passenger trains don't run from Nashville anymore. When I researched the song I discovered that millions of soldiers passed through Union Station on their way to various wars. Train services ended in Nashville in the early seventies. My father was not in Viet Nam. However, I started writing the song when Ira was up in New Jersey for the summer at Army Reserves training.

Was the lyric of "South of Everything" written after a visit to the North.

No, it was actually written thinking about Nashville after being told by people on Music Row that my songs were not "country" enough.

On the album liner it states "Bury Me In Bluegrass" - For Colonel Samuel Louis Sturgeon. Was he an ancestor. Is the moral of this song — you should never sell your birth right.

Colonel Samuel Louis Sturgeon was my grandfather who held the honorary title of "Kentucky Colonel." The song reflects the changing landscape of the south.

The pickers on the album "Moonpie Dreams" include Spooner Oldham, Guy Clark, Al Perkins, Buddy Miller, Bill Miller and Tricia Walker. Tricia was a Kerrville New Folk winner in 1992. Were these people that you'd got to know since the release of "Songs From The Levee."

Yes. Tricia Walker is a good friend of mine.

The lyric of the song "Moonpie Dream" refers to a wife, a dog and you. What is a Moonpie Dream.

This song is dedicated to my grandparents. Growing up, I spent Saturdays with my grandfather and he would take me to the store where I would get a moonpie. You can see one at www.moonpie.com

"See Rock City" appears to be a song about escaping and living life fully before it's too late. Is this something you just made up, or a story you read somewhere.

"See Rock City" is simply about the wanderlust in all of us.

Who was Bascom in "Bascom's Blues." It's obviously a song about the darker side of the music business.

Bascom is a family name.

"Tupelo's Too Far" is a song about and for Elvis. Were you a big fan of his.

Yes, "Tupelo's Too Far" is a song about Elvis. I've always been an Elvis fan.

What inspired the song "Older Angel." It seems to be about hard times.

"Older Angel" is actually one of my more philosophical songs, which questions/explores fate, choices and the search for help beyond ourselves in hard times.

Was Delmus in "Delmus Jackson" someone you knew or is he fictitious.

Delmus Jackson was a real person. He was the custodian at my father's church when I was a little girl.

Tell us the story behind this song "Signs Following" – the lyric mentions a case of abuse [the crime], twelve good apostles [the jury], ninety-nine to life [the sentence]. Is there a real Sand Mountain.

This is a true story as told in a book titled **"Salvation On Sand Mountain"** by Dennis Covington. Sand Mountain is in Alabama.

"Galaxie 500" is about your love affair with your parents car, a Ford Galaxie. Panama City, Florida and Pikes Peak, Colorado are mentioned in the lyric. What's your connection with those locations.

These places were family vacation destinations.

"Waiting For The Weather To Break" seems to be about a marriage. Can you explain.

It's a relationship song and the changes / struggles that relationships can experience.

"Wrought Iron Fences" appears to be about decay and the loss of identity. Where did you get the image from.

Practically all the small towns in the south have a cemetery that is surrounded by a wrought iron fence.

Who is the person standing in the field on the front liner picture of "Visions Of Plenty."

That's me. Ira took the photo.

The pickers on your album "Visions Of Plenty" included Emmylou Harris and Bo Ramsey. How did they become involved in the project.

I asked them to be on the record.

You co-wrote "Visions Of Plenty" with Tricia Walker. How did you meet Tricia her, and have you written many songs together. In the lyric, is the ownership of land equivalent to establishing a sense of belonging to a particular place.

I met Tricia in Nashville. Tricia is also from Mississippi. The song lyric reflects the changing landscape of the south.

Is "Bowl-A-Rama" a true story, or one that someone told you.

Yes. It's about Ira's childhood friend's father.

The lyric of "Jesus And Tomatoes" mentions Tennessee Bradleys. Are they a real brand of tomato.

Yes, Tennessee is a real brand of Tomato.

"Crazy In Alabama" mentions the Freedom Train and the coming of desegregation. How much of this came from your memory. You co-wrote the song with Kenya Slaughter Walker. Who is she.

This song comes from my memories and media images I saw while growing up in the south. Kenya is a Nashville songwriter.

Is the song "This Side Of Heaven" about waiting for death, and almost welcoming it.

No. It's a commentary on the poor.

The sentiment of "Suit Yourself" seems to be "if it doesn't feel right, don't hang around." Where did you get the idea for the song.

It's about being true to yourself.

"Bus 109" is another song about desegregation. Tell us the story of your experiences on Bus 109.

Bus 109 was the number of my bus that I rode to school during school desegregation in the south when I was bussed across town to an inner city black school.

What meaning does "Tang" have in the song "Deep Tang." Is it meant to indicate a flavour or smell.

Tang is a colour used as a metaphor. In the sixties there was a powdered orange drink that was called Tang and supposedly consumed by astronauts.

"Funeral Food" was obviously a song written from [fond] remembrance. Was funeral food specifically of a better quality than other food.

Funeral food is a part of most cultures but especially the American south.

"A Perfect World" is a song about refuge and love. Who is Mark Narmore.

Marc is a songwriter for Fame Music Publishing in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

In "Sing Me Out" a parent [father] still grieves the loss of a child [daughter] three decades earlier, and waits to see her again in paradise. Where did the idea for the lyric come from.

This song is based on a true story from the Mississippi Delta.

In 1998 you were featured in the book, "Solo: Women Singer-Songwriters In Their Own Words," edited by Marc Woodworth. How did you become involved in this book project. Have you read the book.

Marc asked to interview me and we met for the interview on a cold Boston morning. Marc and Emma sent me a copy of the book and I have read it.

The liner dedication of "Rosaryville" states "For all the Mary's in my Life." Can you explain this.

I have lots of people who have been important in my life named Mary.

Is the title song in praise of a secluded religious life. Is this something you have ever thought of undertaking.

No. It's a song about artistic journeys and following your artistic instincts even when it goes against the grain. However, there is a real place called Rosaryville in Ponchatoula, Louisiana that is a spiritual retreat centre.

The lyric of "Porcelain Blue" mentions Mary, "Staring at this vase searching for my muse."

I was thinking about John Keats poem "Ode To A Grecian Urn."

Where did you get the idea for "Rosa's Coronas."

I wrote this song after seeing a tv documentary about women who roll cigars in Cuba.

Is the lyrical idea of "In My Mother's House" that you wish that nothing would change.

The song is about perceptions.

In "Heart of Hearts" where does the reference to a "turtle falling from the clouds in Louisiana come from." Is it a local myth. As for the image of using bowling balls to form the shape of a rosary, is this something you actually saw in someone's garden [as it's a great image].

Turtles (and fish) have fallen from the sky and is a weather phenomenon with various theories as to how it happens. I read in the newspaper about a man who made a rosary in his yard out of bowling balls.

The lyric of "Fade To Blue" does not specifically say she died, yet the main character cannot relinquish the memory of the wife he has lost.

It's a song about loss and grief – whether or not the person died is up to one's own personal interpretation.

Is there a sense in "Who Will Pay For Junior" that Junior, a late child, is damaged in some way. Is the narrator praying to God to take him back, before her.

This song is based on a true story.

How true to your life is the song "Rosemary." In the lyric you recall that your mother used to sing like Rosemary Clooney.

I wrote this song for my mother's 60th birthday.

I love the images in "Look Away" but can you explain them. It seems to be a historic song [ie. not set in modern times].

This song is built upon the images of an antebellum mansion that burned to the ground leaving only the columns behind.

Where did the idea for "Ave Maria Grotto" come from. The lyric states "Joseph was a simple man."

It is based on a true story about a monk in an abbey in Cullman, Alabama who built a garden and replicas of architectural buildings from around the world.

Why did you decide to record "Wandering Strange" at Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals. Did you think that making an album of gospel songs was a major risk careerwise, or did you feel that "Rosaryville" had prepared the way.

Having been a songwriter at Fame, I knew the musicians, the people there, and I liked the ambience of the historic studio. The album was not recorded with the idea that it would ever be released – only to be available at my concerts and on my web site to fans who requested that I do a Gospel album, since it was a part of my musical and cultural heritage. However, when I signed to Eminent Records, when Steve Wilkison heard it, he liked it and wanted to release it.

Were Oldham, Aldridge, David Hood, Danny Parks, Daryl Burgess and the backing vocalists Cindy Walker and Ava Aldridge (who sang on numerous Aretha recordings, part of the "bonus" of recording at Fame.

Yes. They are all great musicians and wonderful to work with.

The album opens with Gordon Lightfoot's "The House You Live In." Are you/were you a big GL fan. Why did you choose this particular song, from his vast catalogue. Apart from the "milk of human kindness" theme of the lyric, does the song mean something special to you.

Yes, I am a Gordon Lightfoot fan. When I first started touring and only had released one CD, I incorporated more covers in my concerts and this song was one of those cover songs. When I got around to recording "Wandering Strange" I remembered the Gordon Lightfoot song and thought that it fitted in well with the "wandering" and "stranger" theme of the record.

You covered three old hymns that date from the late eighteenth century, including "Come Thou Fount" and "There Is A Fountain." Is there a particular personal memory attached to each of them.

These were hymns I sang from the Baptist Hymnal when I was growing up. I picked these three because I loved their melodies and always envisioned them as southern rock songs. The lyrics are typical of that time period when they were written.

Your song "In My Mother's House" contains the words, "I am a prodigal daughter....." Is there a subconscious/deliberate lyrical connection between that song and "The Prodigal" on this album. Is this hymn another childhood favourite.

Yes and yes. I found these older lyrics to this song about a year before I recorded "Wandering Strange" The melody is very old and has been used for other hymns as well.

Is "Now Is The Day Of Salvation" a song about forgiveness and faith. A decade ago, did you ever dream that one day you would write songs with Spooner Oldham.

"Now Is The Day of Slavation" is a Biblical theme. Spooner sometimes plays the organ at a church in Rogersville, Alabama with his cousin Mark Narmore on the piano. Spooner and I wrote the song in his living room in Rogersville, Alabama with a picture of Spooner and Aretha Franklin on the fireplace mantle. I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with someone like Spooner Oldham.

I take it that "Bear It Away" is a song about the Birmingham, Alabama church bombing in 1963, where four children - Addie Mae Collins / Denise McNair / Cynthia Wesley / Carol Roberston - were killed.

Yes.

"Jordan's Stormy Banks" is another late eighteenth century hymn. Is there a personal memory attached to the hymn.

Like "'Come Thou Fount" and "There Is A Fountain," I sang it while I was growing up in the church.

Relatively speaking, "The King's Business" and "Dear Little Stranger" date from the early twentieth century and are therefore relatively modern hymns. Why did you choose them.

These songs fit into the developing "stranger" theme of the album and were songs that I had sung in the church.

Is the interpretation of your composition "The Last Song" deliberately soulful. Going by the song title, presumably it was deliberate to make it the closing track.

Yes, we wanted it to be soulful. It seems to work best as the last track.

There's a hidden track on the album. I can't tell if it is called "Hail Mary" or "The Rosary." Why did you include a hidden track.

I included this as a salute to Elvis (who only won Grammys for his Gospel recordings) and the song is only on the Eminent Records release. It was not included on the Large River Music release, which I originally sold at concerts and over the website. The title of the song is "Miracle Of The Rosary."

Eminent single that coupled, "Dear Little Stranger [Christmas Lullaby]" with Guy Clark's "Madonna W/ Child Ca. 1969." Why did you decide to cut Guy's song.

It's my favourite Guy Clark songs. Guy is one of my favourite songwriters.

Is film soundtrack work an area that you've thought of exploring.

It's something that I'm working on now.

Your song publishing company is called Large River Music. Is this a Mississippi reference.

Yes. The word "Mississippi" is a Native American term that means "Large River."

Have you got enough songs for a new album ready and waiting, and is there a particular direction/slant to the song lyrics.

I'm currently recording my next album. There is always a "slant" to my albums.

Segment 4 - "Monuments" - An Album Review

Kate Campbell **"Monuments"** Evangeline

An eerie ghostly sound introduces the listener to "Yellow Guitar," the opening cut, as Kate relates a shades of Robert Johnson tale of meeting a delta ghost standing by the side of the road with his axe, "Halfway to Memphis, Halfway to Tupelo." The upbeat "Corn In A Box" lists some of the major achievements of mankind - seven wonders come and gone only one still hanging on, landing on the moon in '69, cloning sheep and so on. The punch line being, "Evolution's almost thorough there ain't much left that we can't do" except for the paradox "We still can't grow corn in a box." Gravity, this planet and forms of mass communication all feature in the "Strangeness Of The Day." Through an aged mahogany coffee table that Kate owns - "Joe Louis' Furniture" - Kate tells the story of the greatest world heavyweight champion of them all, Joe Louis. The New Orleans jazz tinged "New South" and the laid back "Petrified House", that follows, are a well-matched pair, subjectively. Campbell's tongue is firmly placed in her cheek on "New South" with mention of "Starbucks, latte, Mercedes, Wall Street Journal, valet parking, Italian loafers n' more," added to which, in the "New South" "It's getting hard to find grits and gravy," on a restaurant menu. A reclusive old lady "the world hasn't seen since '78" lives in one room of a big old mansion downtown. Now it's surrounded by "strip bars and strip malls." In grander times, "the front gates were three miles from the mansion." "How Much Can One Heart Hold" is a reflection upon loss associated with civil rights/Vietnam etc. Piano led, "The Way Home" is the first of two obviously Christians lyrics in this collection. By way of serving his "heavenly daddy," William carves monuments from stone in "William's Vision."

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Andrew Calhoun **"Tiger Tattoo"** Waterbug

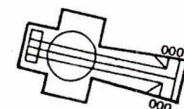
Putting this issue to bed, a copy of Andrew's new album arrived in the mail. Despite my report, in error, many issues ago, the Waterbug label is **very much alive**, healthy and now based in Portland, Oregon. Andrew's seventh solo album features twelve original compositions, "I'm A Rover" [trad.] and "Everyone Sang" a Siegfried Sasson poem Andrew set to music. The closing cut, it is a tribute to the late Dave Carter, as is Andrew's stunningly simple, yet utterly poignant preceding cut, "I Shall Not Look Away." Grammer [vocals/violin] and Carter [vocals] contribute to the recording. This is a work of pure honesty. The harmonies on "Joy," the opener, are divine. More next issue. To buy it now, go to : <http://www.waterbug.com/>

A Kerrverts Festival 50.



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

1. The Dutchman **JUAREZ** feat. **MICHAEL SMITH & BARBARA BARROW** "Juarez" Decca DL75189 [1970]. #
2. The Way To Calvary **ROD MacDONALD** "Highway To Nowhere" Shanachie 8001 [1992]. #
3. Years **BETH NIELSEN CHAPMAN** "Beth Nielsen Chapman" Reprise 9 26172-2 [1990]. #
4. Secretariat **JEFFREY FOUCAULT** "Miles From The Lightning" Marrowbone Music no index no. [2001]. #
5. Summer Night **MARK ERELLI** "The Memorial Hall Recordings" Signature Sounds Recordings SIG 1271 [2002]. #
6. Thistledown Tears **JEFFREY FOUCAULT** "Miles From The Lightning" Marrowbone Music no index no. [2001]. #
7. Call You Home **MARK ERELLI** "The Memorial Hall Recordings" Signature Sounds Recordings SIG 1271 [2002]. #
8. Buckshot Moon **JEFFREY FOUCAULT** "Miles From The Lightning" Marrowbone Music no index no. [2001]. #
9. Yarrington Town **MICKIE MERKENS** "Texas Summer Nights, Vol. 1" Potato Satellite PS2-1000 [1983]. #
10. Blue-Eyed Boston Boy **MARK ERELLI** "The Memorial Hall Recordings" Signature Sounds Recordings SIG 1271 [2002]. #
11. American Jerusalem **ROD MacDONALD/V. A.** "Fast Folk : A Community Of Singers & Songwriters" Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40135 [2002]. #
12. Sligo Honeymoon 1946 **TERRY CLARKE** "The Shelly River" Catfish KATCD208FP [1991/2001].
13. Every December Sky **BETH NIELSEN CHAPMAN** "Deeper Still" Artemis Records ARTCD-119 [2002]. #
14. Charlotte **DOUGIE MacLEAN** "Who Am I" Dunkeld Records DUNCD026 [2001]. §
15. Changing Sky **L. J. BOOTH** "The Ox That Pulls The Cart" Firefly Jar Music fjm-003 [2002]. #
16. Return To Me **KIMBERLY M'CARVER** "Cross The Danger Line" Kocker Records KR1068 [2001]. #
17. So Lonesome I Could Fly **MARTI JONES** "My Tidy Doily Dream" D.A.R. DAR 010 [2002]. #
18. Betsy From Pike **BOB GIBSON** "Where I'm Bound" Collector's Choice Music CCM-228-2 [1964/2001]. #
19. Hummingbird **EDDI READER** "Live" no label ERCD001 [2001]. §
20. Epilogue : May I Suggest **SUSAN WERNER** "New Non-Fiction" 6566134372 [2001]. #
21. Chickamauga **LISA MEDNICK** "Semaphore" advance copy [2002]. #
22. Deeper Well **DAVID OLNEY** "Women Across The River" Strictly Country SM-403 [2002]. §
23. Sarasota **EDDI READER** "Driftwood" no label ERCD002 [2001]. §
24. Workin' In Corners **NINA GERBER c/w LUCY KAPLANSKY** "Not Before Noon" Goatscape Music GS 101 [2001]. #
25. New York City **SUZZY & MAGGIE ROCHE** "Zero Church" Red House RHR CD 157 [2002]. #
26. 3,000 Miles [Remix] **ELLIS PAUL** "Sweet Mistakes" Co-op Pop Records no index no. [2001]. #
27. Wayfaring Stranger **BOB GIBSON & HAMILTON CAMP** "At The Gate Of Horn" Collector's Choice Music CCM-227-2 [1961/2001]. #
28. World Of Tears **TROY YOUNG CAMPBELL** "American Breakdown" advance copy [2002]. #
29. Lawrence, Ks. **JOSH RITTER** "Golden Age Of Radio" Signature Sounds Recordings SIG 1269 [2002]. #
30. Every Stone **BRYNDLE** "House Of Silence" no label or index no. [2002]. #
31. Monsoon **LUKA BLOOM** "Between The Mountain & The Moon" LukaBloom.com no index no. [2001]. §
32. Little Snowbird **LUKA BLOOM** "The Barry Moore Years" LukaBloom.com no index no. [2002]. §
33. John Riley **JUDY COLLINS** "A Maid Of Constant Sorrow"/"Golden Apples Of The Sun" Wildflower WFL 1299-2 [2001]. #
34. Route 66 **IAIN MATTHEWS & ELLIOTT MURPHY** "Solingen, Steinenhaus - The Cornish Pub 01.06.2001" Blue Rose BLUBS 002 [2001]. #
35. Fifty Years Ago **IAN TYSON** "Live At Longview" Vanguard 79714-2 [2002]. #
36. Blue Guitar **SUSAN WERNER** "New Non-Fiction" 6566134372 [2001]. #
37. The Reason **CAROLE KING** "Love Makes The World" Rockingale Records RKGL-CD-8350 [2001]. #
38. Dance With Jesus **CHIP TAYLOR** "Black And Blue America" Trainwreck TW011 [2001]. #
39. Fading Lady **CIRCUS MAXIMUS** "Circus Maximus"/"Neverland Revisited" Vanguard VCD 79260/74 [1967/1968/2001]. §
40. Sea Of Love **PAUL BRADY** "Oh What A World" Rykodisc RCD 10490 [2000]. §
41. Hello Sun **ERIC ANDERSEN** "More Hits From The Tin Can Alley" Vanguard VMW 79271 [1968/2001]. §
42. Old Tijes Again **RAISINS IN THE SUN** "Same" Evangeline GEL 4018 [2001]. #
43. Easy In Love **ELEANOR McEVOY** "Yola" Market Square Records MSMSACD113 [2002]. #
44. Even The Guiding Light **PLAINSONG** "In Search Of Amelia Earhart" Perfect Pitch PP009 [1972/2001]. #
45. Chickamauga **NORMAN BLAKE/PETER OSTROUSHKO** "Meeting On Southern Soil" Red House RHR CD 153 [2002]. #
46. Morning Glory **TIM BUCKLEY** "Tim Buckley"/"Goodbye And Hello" Elektra 8122 73569-2 [1966/1967/2001]. #
47. Rainy Day Blues **FRED J. EAGLESMITH** "Fred J. Eaglesmith" no label or index no. [198]. #
48. Ramblin' Round **WOODY GUTHRIE** "There Is No Eye : Music For Photographs" Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40091 [2001]. #
49. Blackfoot **KEVIN RUSSELL'S JUNKER** "Buttermilk & Rifles" Munich MUSA 510 [2002]. #
50. Heal In The Wisdom **BOBBY BRIDGER** "Live At The Kerrville Folk Festival 1986" (cassette only, no index no.) [1987]. #



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

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Contents.

Kerrville - kompacts, kassettes & other coincidences	p.2
Joel Rafael Interview 31 st August 2001	p.2
Kate Campbell Interview 29 th November 2001	p.17
The latest Kerrville Festival Top 50	p.31

Editorial.

This is actually the second Editorial that I have written for Issue 30, since, apart from the reviews of the new albums by Joel and Kate, I finished the remaining contents a number of months ago. Then I got lost somewhere between here and heaven knows where. You retire and the *time monster* then sneaks up and finds something else to fill your idle hours.

Regarding the contents of this issue, and in no particular order, thanks are due to **Rod Kennedy** [enjoy a long and fulfilling retirement sir], **Joel Rafael**, **Kate & Ira Campbell** and **Alpha Ray**. This issue is dedicated to Beth Nielsen Chapman who survived a recent battle with breast cancer, and to the passing *far to soon* of the irreplaceable Dave Carter. A few weeks ago we lost another giant, Mickey Newbury. So sad...

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You can also find us at :

Web Page [sadly not yet posted] :
<http://www.kerrkron.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>

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Essential Albums.....

Jeffrey Foucault's "**Miles From The Lightning**" is also available on the web at www.cdbaby.com At Jeffrey's web site there are some interesting *live* musical downloads - www.jeffreyfoucault.com Need I say more. Miss this wonderful album at your peril. In the year's to come, it will be viewed as the equal of "**Old No. 1**," "**The Late Great Townes Van Zandt**" and "**Shameless Love**." Believe me.

Mark Erelli's third Signature Sounds album "**The Memorial Hall Recordings**" is another fine album. In the UK try Fish, and elsewhere www.signature-sounds.com The album was recorded in a 120 year old hall in Monson, Mass., which was built to commemorate local men who fought in the Civil War. Of the fourteen cuts, there are only four new Erelli songs, the remaining material being trad. or penned by local writers - eg. Jim Armenti, Bill Morrissey and others. This is a truly atmospheric recording and there's also a video segment embedded on the disc. Meanwhile.....on a monthly basis for the last year, Mark's web site www.markerelli.com has featured a download of a non-album track or live recording, not available elsewhere.

With each Beth Nielsen Chapman release since her self-titled

1990 sophomore album, I've been waiting for the lady to match or better it. Now signed to Artemis Records, "**Deeper Still**" goes a long way toward remedying that omission. Try Village Records at www.villagerecords.com or P.O. Box 3216, Shawnee, Kansas 66203, U.S.A.

Mickey Newbury's "**Winter Winds**" takes some of the cuts from the 1994, 14 track, *live set* "**Nights When I Am Sane**" and, using electronic wizardry, transfers them to a studio environment. The 16 tracks on the new set include 10 songs from its predecessor. From Village Records.

Some of the best *new* songs I heard at the 2001 Kerrville Wine & Music Festival came from L. J. Booth. His latest offering is "**The Ox Pulls The Cart**." It's only his third album in some fifteen years and comes almost a decade after "**Big Hourglass**." Available from CD Baby.

Marti Jones has produced one of her best ever in "**My Tidy Doily Dream**." Musically, she treads similar ground to Lynn Miles. Available from Village Records.

I waited for Susan Werner's newie "**New Non-Fiction**" with some anticipation having listened to her Kerrville performance over the net last summer. I was not disappointed. A classic. Try Bulletproof Management at www.bulletproofstore.com

If you have access to the internet, two sites to regularly check out are Collector's Choice Music www.ccmusic.com and Akarma Records www.akarmarecords.com. The former is American - and has tons of MOR material, plus the occasional gem, while the latter is Italian - with tons of interesting stuff on all its house labels. Akarma release Vanguard Records and have issued some interesting 60's albums of late.

Also worth locating are the latest discs from Eliza Gilkyson, Fred Eaglesmith, Alejandro Escovedo [& 2CD reissues of "**Thirteen Years**" and "**Gravity**"], Luka Bloom, Terry Clarke, Troy Young Campbell, James Keelaghan, Lisa Mednick, Christy McWilson, Chip Taylor/Carrie Rodriguez, Ellis Paul, Rod MacDonald, Kimmie Rhodes, John McCutcheon and Tom Pacheco. The 2CD compilation of the Fast Folk years from Smithsonian Folkways is also worth checking out.

My Album Of The Year, so far [and by a clear mile], is Patty Griffin's "**1000 Kisses**." After numerous false career starts, and much in the vein of her astounding debut "**Living With Ghosts**," she has totally delivered the goods on this new work. Should be available in high street stores everywhere. Equally worthwhile, and much in the same vein lyrically, is the Rosie Thomas album on Sub Pop "**When We Were Small**."

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21 April 1983 - dream poem

*(when you heard the news)
you danced
like a madman
in the rain --
the mud you splashed up
spattered your white skin wild
and painted you
an appaloosa beautiful*

Alpha Ray