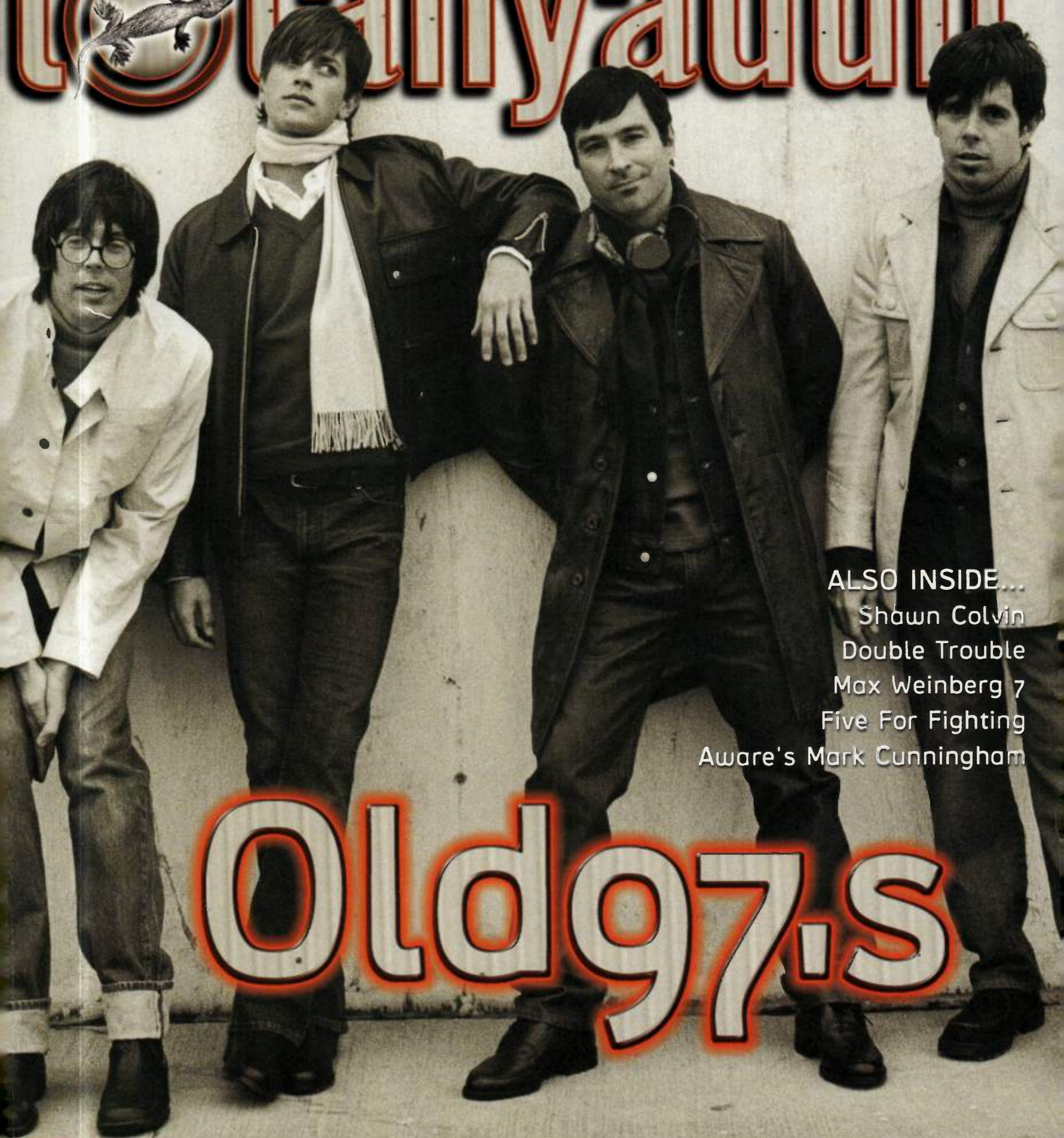


totallyadult™



ALSO INSIDE...

Shawn Colvin

Double Trouble

Max Weinberg 7

Five For Fighting

Aware's Mark Cunningham

Old 97's

OLD 97's



KING OF ALL THE WORLD

The triumphant new single from the forthcoming album

SATELLITE RIDES

**Impacting Adult Rock Radio
and Alternative Radio on
February 12!**

Early Commitments:

KKMR Dallas


WXRT Chicago

KMTT Seattle

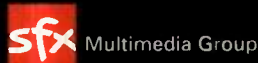
WXPB Philadelphia



www.old97s.com
www.old97smusic.com

PRODUCED BY WALLY GAGEL. ALBUM MIX: TCHAD BLAKE. SINGLE MIX: CHRIS LORD-ALGE. MANAGEMENT: RUSSELL CARTER ARTIST MANAGEMENT, LTD.  ON ELEKTRA COMPACT DISC

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8 THE RETURN OF DOUBLE TROUBLE

After the tragic death of Stevie Ray Vaughan, most of us thought that would also be the end of one of rock's favorite rhythm sections, **Double Trouble**. **Michael Vogel** recently spoke with **Tommy Shannon** and **Chris Layton** about life without SRV and their rockin' new blues-based *Been A Long Time*.

12 A WHOLE NEW SHAWN COLVIN

Over the years, **Shawn Colvin** has repeatedly poured her heart and soul into her music. Upon the release of Colvin's sixth album, *Whole New You*, **Megan K. Hey** checks in with this strong, yet subtle, Grammy winner.

16 THE MIGHTY MAX WEINBERG 7

Even though Max Weinberg is primarily known as the one responsible for laying down the backbeat for Bruce Springsteen And The E Street Band, he still finds time on his own to get around and mix things up a bit. **Matthew Lawton** recently spoke to The Boss's drummer about his seven-year-old band, **The Max Weinberg 7**, who've been playing their swing-based jump/blues tunes to an audience of millions via *Late Night With Conan O'Brien*.

20 OLD 97'S SHOOT FOR THE SATELLITES

Formed in 1993, the Dallas alt/country quartet **Old 97's** have been kickin' up the heels of twang & roll ever since. **Greg Dwinnell** gets the latest lowdown from the boys as they get set to release their latest punch, *Satellite Rides*.

24 AWARE RECORDS' MARK CUNNINGHAM

In the early 1990s, Gregg Latterman had a dream to promote unsigned bands nationwide. While attending Michigan State University, sophomore **Mark Cunningham's** love of music led him into the grassroots world of Latterman's Aware Rep Program—and he's been moving up the label's ladder ever since. Cunningham talks about his unique career with Aware Records.

28 KYLE DAVIS TELLS THE WORLD

Kyle Davis hit the Adult Rock radar in 1998 with his promising debut release, *Raising Heroes*, on the now-defunct N2K Internet label. But **Jim Manion** found that the Hopewell, Virginia, native is bouncing back in 2001 with his fresh new independent release, *Don't Tell The World*.

30 THE TRUTH ABOUT TIM EASTON

Throughout his latest album, *The Truth About Us*, **Tim Easton** delivers his yearning songs with an acoustic jangle, inspiring lyrics and a rough-and-tumble Wilco-based ensemble. **Matthew Lawton** fills us in on Easton's background, his new album and the art of jamming with Wilco.

36 WHO IS THIS GUY THEY CALL FIVE FOR FIGHTING?

What started out as a hockey penalty has turned into a one-man band called **Five For Fighting**. **Jim Nelson** raises the flag on **John Ondrasik** and his *America Town*.

5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

6 CHARTS

34 TOTALLYMUSIC



amy correia *carnival love*

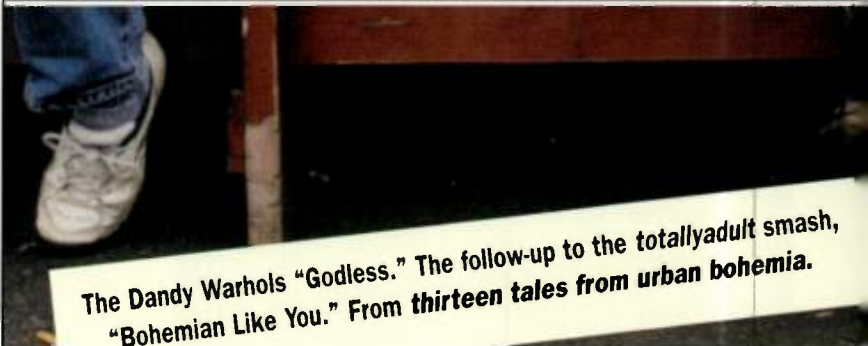
Amy Correia

“Life Is Beautiful”
from the album

Carnival Love

STATIONS SUPPORTING:

WXPB	KXST	WFUV	KRSH
KCRW	WRLT	WDET	WNCS
KGSR	WRNR	WRNX	WMVY
WYEP	WFPK	KTHX	KBAC



The Dandy Warhols “Godless.” The follow-up to the totallyadult smash, “Bohemian Like You.” From thirteen tales from urban bohemia.

totallyadult #2 Most Added!

Now Playing At:

WXPB	KTHX	WMWV
KCRW	KBAC	WAPS
WXRV	WNCS	WEHM
WRNR	WMVY	KLRQ
WYEP	WEBK	WorldClassRock.com



As I was glancing over the last few issues of our *totallyadult* magazine, I realized that those Letters From The Editor were announcements of departure from two separate people and the articles were filled with good-byes and best wishes to the next one in charge. Well, here I am folks, still carrying the baton and wearing a lovely little parade outfit to top it all off! It's me, Shana, the new (or latest, as it were) Senior Director Adult Rock Services for *The Album Network* and damn happy to be here. You'll see me listed as just plain Shana with no last name (most industry people know me by my first name only) and I'd like to take up a little space here to introduce myself and give you some background info.

I've been in LA radio for 25 years (using "Shana" as my air name) having done afternoons, mornings and middays at KROQ, KLOS, KLSX, respectively, and most recently at KPCC Pasadena, where I was also the APD/MD of the evening Adult Rock format. I had a chance to do some freelance writing for *The Album Network* over the past year and was called in to temporarily fill the departing Sam Russell's shoes in October, and in December, the lovely Tommy Nast asked me to stay on full-time.

I gotta tell you, I went through some serious music-biz withdrawals when MPR purchased KPCC and changed its format to all news/talk in March 2000. I loved talking to all the label and indie promoters every week and staying on top of all the great music. Sometimes, I wish I could tack on the title of Music Director here at *totallyadult* so I wouldn't miss any new music or impact dates. In order to be a step ahead of the new releases, I hope that you will give me a heads-up on your artists as to what they are releasing and when. I'm looking forward to establishing new relationships with radio and

record people and re-connecting with all of you that I've had the pleasure of working with over the past five years.



Yee-ha! As you've heard, we are expanding our *totallyadult* section of the weekly *Album Network* to include our sister format, *Americana Roots*. Everything is looking good for the *Americana Roots* debut February 16th and will include music reviews, artist features and an album-based chart compiled from stations' plays-per-week report. We are kicking this off with about 50 stations and will eventually include about 65 to 70 stations. We will need your weekly playlists faxed or E-mailed to us every Friday or Monday by 4pm, California time. *Americana Roots* reporters must include full artist names, full album names and record label names for your adds, spins and drops. For more information, please contact me by phone (818.955.4000) or by E-mail (shana.livigni@sfx.com).

On to this first edition of the *totallyadult* magazine 2001. You'll find some excellent features and interviews with a handful of talented show-biz kids, including Tommy Shannon and Chris Layton of *Double Trouble*, Grammy-winner Shawn Colvin, the Old 97's and the Max Weinberg 7. We also give you the scoop on Aware Records' young promoter-extraordinaire Mark Cunningham, along with interviews with the guy they call Five For Fighting and up-and-coming artists Tim Easton and Kyle Davis. Enjoy!

by Shana

JOHN HIATT

The Drummer's Back.

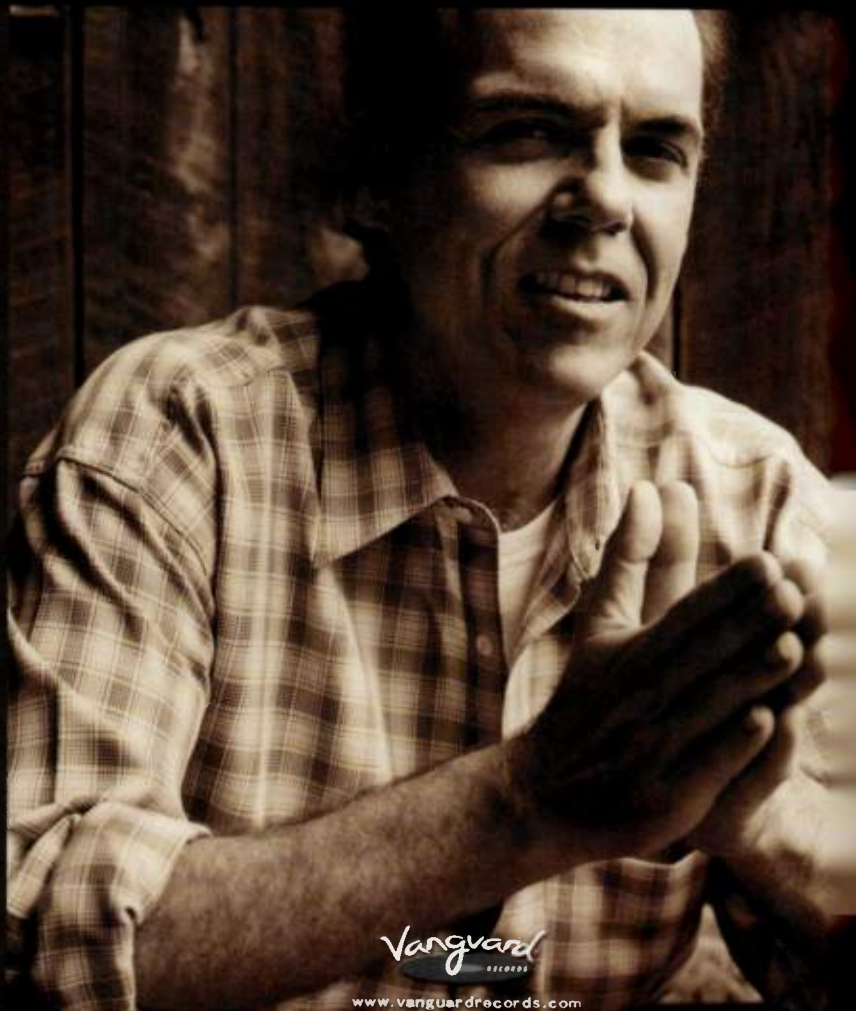
"Lift Up Every Stone"

(Drum Remix)

#1 MOST ADDED!

WXRT	KBCO	KINK	KXST
WXRV	WRLT	KFOG	WFUV
KGSR	WMMM	WRNR	KBAC
WYEP	WMPS	WTTS	WRNX

And many more!



Vanguard
RECORDS

www.vanguardrecords.com

ADULT ROCK

Adult Rock Retail is compiled from the piece counts of Adult Rock albums at 221 reporting stores.

Combined Album Airplay is compiled from the total PPWs the album received from the playlists of 99 Commercial and Non-Commercial Adult Rock reporters.

RETAIL CHART

LW	TW	ARTIST/Title	LABEL
1	1	THE BEATLES 1	APPLE/CAPITOL • 29325
2	2	DIDO No Angel	ARISTA • 19025
4	3	VARIOUS ARTISTS O Brother, Where Art Thou? OST	MERCURY/IDJMG • 170069
3	4	SADE Lovers Rock	EPIC • 85158
6	5	LENNY KRAVITZ Greatest Hits	VIRGIN • 80818
5	6	DAVID GRAY White Ladder	ATO/RCA • 88351
7	7	U2 All That You Can't Leave Behind	INTERSCOPE • 83483
8	8	COLDPLAY Parachutes	NETTWERK AMERICA/CAPITOL • 30162
11	9	MOBY Play	V2 • 27049
10	10	ERYKAH BADU Mama's Gun	WOTOWN • 83356
9	11	GEORGE HARRISON All Things Must Pass	GHO/CAPITOL • 30474
13	12	JERRY GARCIA BAND Don't Let Go	GRATEFUL DEAD/ARISTA • 14078
12	13	RADIOHEAD Kid A	CAPITOL • 27753
14	14	ENYA A Day Without Rain	REPRISE • 47428
16	15	PJ HARVEY Stories From The City, Stories From The Sea	ISLAND/IDJMG • 84844
18	16	DOLLY PARTON Little Sparrow	SUGAR HILL • 3927
17	17	matchbox TWENTY mad season by matchbox TWENTY	LAVA/ATLANTIC/AG • 83339
15	18	3 DOORS DOWN The Better Life	REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL • 83825
20	19	ST. GERMAIN Tourist	BLUE NOTE • 25114
D	20	19 WHEELS Sugareen	STANDARD • 8475
19	21	MARK KNOPFLER Sailing To Philadelphia	WARNER BROS. • 47753
21	22	BOB DYLAN The Essential Bob Dylan	LEGACY/COLUMBIA • 85168
D	23	BILL FRISSELL Blue Dreams	NONESUCH/ATLANTIC/AG • 79615
32	24	BEBEL GILBERTO Tanto Tempo	SIX DEGREES • 1026
26	25	BADLY DRAWN BOY The Hour Of Bewilderbeast	TWISTED NERVE/XL/BEGGARS BANQUET • 49133
D	26	FISHER True North	FARMCLUB.COM/INTERSCOPE • 80367
22	27	RADIOHEAD Ok Computer	CAPITOL • 88226
25	28	DELERIUM Poem	NETTWERK AMERICA • 30165
24	29	JOHNNY CASH American III: Solitary Man	AMERICAN/COLUMBIA • 87886
29	30	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS Californication	WARNER BROS. • 47386
34	31	EMMYLOU HARRIS Red Dirt Girl	NONESUCH/ATLANTIC/AG • 79618
D	32	DOVES Lost Souls	HEAVENLY/ASTRALWERKS • 50248
D	33	WILL HOGE Carusel	WILL HOGE • 5069
D	34	STING Brand New Day	A&M/INTERSCOPE • 90443
38	35	FATBOY SLIM Halfway Between The Gutter And The Stars	SKINT/ASTRALWERKS • 50460
D	36	THE GOURDS Bolsa De Agua	SUGAR HILL • 3920
37	37	VARIOUS ARTISTS Finding Forrester OST	LEGACY/COLUMBIA/SONY SOUNDTRAX • 85350
31	38	JOSH JOPLIN GROUP Useful Music	ARTEMIS • 781058
D	39	ETTA JAMES Matriarch Of The Blues	PRIVATE MUSIC/WINDHAM HILL • 82205
30	40	EVERCLEAR Songs From An American Movie Vol. Two: Good Time	CAPITOL • 88673

COMBINED ALBUM AIRPLAY

TW	ARTIST/Title	LABEL	PLAYS	LW	2W
1	U2 All That You Can't Leave Behind	INTERSCOPE	1650	1649	1599
2	DAVE MATTHEWS BAND Everyday	RCA	1068	1081	922
3	JOSH JOPLIN GROUP Useful Music	ARTEMIS	1063	987	894
4	MARK KNOPFLER Sailing To Philadelphia	WARNER BROS.	988	1015	1041
5	THE WALLFLOWERS Breach	INTERSCOPE	930	903	804
6	DAVID GRAY White Ladder	ATO/RCA	876	937	883
7	COLDPLAY Parachutes	NETTWERK AMERICA/CAPITOL	844	780	701
8	JOAN OSBORNE Righteous Love	INTERSCOPE	833	827	789
9	FIVE FOR FIGHTING America Town	AWAKE/COLUMBIA	820	849	899
10	TRACY CHAPMAN Telling Stories	ELEKTRA/EEG	733	745	724
11	BARENAKED LADIES Maroon	REPRISE	727	720	581
12	DIDO No Angel	ARISTA	628	572	539
13	JONATHA BROOKE Steady Pull	BAD DOG	621	560	365
14	DOUBLE TROUBLE Been A Long Time	STONE-COOL	605	535	396
15	matchbox TWENTY mad season by matchbox TWENTY	LAVA/ATLANTIC/AG	598	629	685
16	GREEN DAY Warning:	REPRISE	594	585	548
17	PAT MCGEE BAND Shine	GIANT/WB	560	524	540
18	SHAWN COLVIN Whole New You	COLUMBIA	554	382	58
19	SEMISONIC All About Chemistry	MCA	552	502	438
20	LENNY KRAVITZ Greatest Hits	VIRGIN	547	529	505
21	COLLECTIVE SOUL Blender	ATLANTIC/AG	546	573	629
22	EVERLAST Eat At Whitey's	TOMMY BOY	538	503	523
23	SHAWN MULLINS Beneath The Velvet Sun	COLUMBIA	517	591	738
24	JEB LOY NICHOLS Just What Time It Is	ROUGH TRADE/RYKODISC	514	457	353
25	JIMMY SMITH Dot Com Blues	BLUE THUMB	510	428	408
26	SARAH HARMER You Were Here	ZOE/ROUNDER	501	468	483
27	MARTIN SEXTON Wonder Bar	ATLANTIC/AG	494	520	600
28	KEB' MO' The Door	OKHE/EPIC	489	520	591
29	PAUL SIMON You're The One	WARNER BROS.	479	536	599
30	PJ HARVEY Stories From The City	ISLAND/IDJMG	468	472	474
31	JOHN HIATT Crossing Muddy Waters	VANGUARD	445	471	596
D	TRAIN Drops Of Jupiter	AWAKE/COLUMBIA	382	28	12
33	SONNY LANDRETH Levee Town	SUGAR HILL	380	430	493
34	MOBY Play	V2	378	401	422
35	AMY CORREIA Carnival Love	ANISE/ODEON/CAPITOL	368	319	253
36	ETTA JAMES Matriarch Of The Blues	PRIVATE MUSIC/WINDHAM HILL	364	348	248
37	DAR WILLIAMS The Green World	RAZOR & TIE	362	307	165
D	PAUL PENA New Train	HYBRID/SIRE/SRG	345	272	278
39	EMMYLOU HARRIS Red Dirt Girl	NONESUCH/ATLANTIC/AG	345	376	397
40	VARIOUS ARTISTS Badlands: Tribute To Springsteen's Nebraska	SUB POP	328	352	420

HOT FUTURES

- 1 DAVE MATTHEWS BAND
Everyday
RCA • 67988
- 2 JEFF BECK
You Had It Coming
EPIC • 61625
- 3 DOUBLE TROUBLE
Been A Long Time
STONE-COOL • 471180
- 4 MOE
Dither
FATBOY/RED INK • 6634
- 5 SEMISONIC
All About Chemistry
MCA • 112355

IN-STORE PLAY

- 1 ST. GERMAIN
Tourist
BLUE NOTE • 25114
- 2 COLDPLAY
Parachutes
NETTWERK AMERICA/CAPITOL • 30162
- 3 FATBOY SLIM
Halfway Between The Gutter
SKINT/ASTRALWERKS • 50460
- 4 EVERCLEAR
Songs From An American Movie Vol. Two
CAPITOL • 95873
- 5 VARIOUS ARTISTS
O Brother, Where Art Thou? OST
MERCURY/IDJMG • 170069

BIN BURNERS

- 1 SADE
Lovers Rock
EPIC • 85158
- 2 VARIOUS ARTISTS
O Brother, Where Art Thou? OST
MERCURY/IDJMG • 170069
- 3 DIDO
No Angel
ARISTA • 19025
- 4 LEE ANN WOMACK
I Hope You Dance
MCA NASHVILLE • 170099
- 5 STING
Brand New Day
A&M/INTERSCOPE • 90443

MOST ADDED

- 1 JOHN HIATT
Crossing Muddy Waters
VANGUARD
- 2 THE DANDY WARKOLS
Thirteen Tales From Urban Bohemia
CAPITOL
- 3 TRAIN
Drops Of Jupiter
AWAKE/COLUMBIA
- 4 DUNCAN SHEIK
Phantom Moon
NONESUCH/ATLANTIC/AG
- 5 SHAWN MULLINS
Beneath The Velvet Sun
COLUMBIA

MOST PROGRESS

- 1 TRAIN
Drops Of Jupiter
AWAKE/COLUMBIA
- 2 BOB SCHNEIDER
Lonelyland
UNIVERSAL
- 3 SHAWN COLVIN
Whole New You
COLUMBIA
- 4 JIMMY SMITH
Dot Com Blues
BLUE THUMB
- 5 JIM WHITE
No Such Place
LUAKA BOP/VIRGIN

MOST PROMISING

- 1 RODNEY CROWELL
The Houston Kid
SUGAR HILL
- 2 BADLY DRAWN BOY
The Hour Of Bewilderbeast
XL/BEGGARS BANQUET
- 3 JIM WHITE
No Such Place
LUAKA BOP/VIRGIN
- 4 DELERIUM
Poem
NETTWERK AMERICA
- 5 ERIN MCKEOWN
Distillation
SIGNATURE SOUNDS

TOTALLYADULT ADULT ROCK

Commercial Song Airplay is compiled from the total PPWs each song received from the playlists of 59 Commercial Adult Rock reporters.

COMMERCIAL SONG AIRPLAY

TW	ARTIST / Title	LABEL	PLAYS	LW	2W
1	DAVE MATTHEWS BAND "I Did It"	RCA	955	968	838
2	JOSH JOPLIN GROUP "Camera One"	ARTEMIS	804	763	677
3	U2 "Walk On"	INTERSCOPE	760	629	579
4	FIVE FOR FIGHTING "Easy Tonight"	AWARE/COLUMBIA	683	715	746
5	COLDPLAY "Yellow"	NETTWERK AMERICA/CAPITOL	668	611	536
6	JOAN OSBORNE "Running Out Of Time"	INTERSCOPE	626	601	543
7	TRACY CHAPMAN "It's Ok"	ELEKTRA/EEG	594	595	574
8	DIDO "Thankyou"	ARISTA	582	522	497
9	GREEN DAY "Warning"	REPRISE	568	560	523
10	LENNY KRAVITZ "Again"	VIRGIN	547	529	505
11	MARK KNOPFLER "What It Is"	WARNER BROS.	542	571	626
12	BARENAKED LADIES "Too Little Too Late"	REPRISE	522	500	285
13	PAT MCGEE BAND "Rebecca (Are You Alright)"	GIANT/WB	504	467	483
14	SEMISONIC "Chemistry"	MCA	478	428	377
15	U2 "Beautiful Day"	INTERSCOPE	464	585	568
16	EVERLAST "I Can't Move"	TOMMY BOY	453	422	407
17	SHAWN COLVIN "Whole New You"	COLUMBIA	449	333	55
18	MATCHBOX TWENTY "If You're Gone"	LAVA/ATLANTIC/AG	382	390	421
19	DAVID GRAY "Please Forgive Me"	ATO/RCA	381	384	344
20	THE WALLFLOWERS "Letters From The Wasteland"	INTERSCOPE	379	293	125
21	COLLECTIVE SOUL "Perfect Day"	ATLANTIC/AG	377	395	403
22	MOBY F/GWEN STEFANI "South Side"	V2	345	358	372
23	TRAIN "Drops Of Jupiter (Tell Me)"	AWARE/COLUMBIA	335	25	12
24	DAVID GRAY "Babylon"	ATO/RCA	335	383	373
25	THE WALLFLOWERS "Sleepwalker"	INTERSCOPE	323	367	421
26	SHAWN MULLINS "Everywhere I Go"	COLUMBIA	319	405	556
27	JONATHA BROOKE "Linger"	BAD DOG	279	250	179
28	JEB LOY NICHOLS "Heaven Right Here"	ROUGH TRADE/RYKODISC	237	199	118
29	STEELY DAN "What A Shame About Me"	GIANT/REPRISE	232	224	161
30	INDIGENOUS "Rest Of My Days"	PACHYDERM	230	260	309
31	MARTIN SEXTON "Hallelujah"	ATLANTIC/AG	219	238	274
32	DON HENLEY "Everything Is Different Now"	WARNER BROS.	213	204	218
33	DOUBLE TROUBLE "Rock And Roll"	TONE-COOL	203	194	159
34	STEVE EARLE "Everyone's In Love With You"	E-SQUARED/ARTEMIS	196	195	165
35	DEXTER FREEBISH "Leaving Town"	CAPITOL	195	242	253

Non-Commercial Album Airplay is compiled from the total PPWs each album received from the playlists of 40 Non-Com Adult Rock reporters.

NON-COMMERCIAL ALBUM AIRPLAY

TW	ARTIST / Title	LABEL	PLAYS	LW	2W
1	JONATHA BROOKE <i>Steady Pull</i>	BAD DOG	320	287	175
2	MARK KNOPFLER <i>Sailing To Philadelphia</i>	WARNER BROS.	305	304	290
3	U2 <i>All That You Can't Leave Behind</i>	INTERSCOPE	298	305	303
4	JIMMY SMITH <i>Dot Com Blues</i>	BLUE THUMB	274	246	236
5	MARTIN SEXTON <i>Wonder Bar</i>	ATLANTIC/AG	269	276	278
6	JEB LOY NICHOLS <i>Just What Time It Is</i>	ROUGH TRADE/RYKODISC	266	250	229
7	PAUL SIMON <i>You're The One</i>	WARNER BROS.	262	275	272
8	PJ HARVEY <i>Stories From The City</i>	ISLAND/IDJMG	251	226	228
9	JOSH JOPLIN GROUP <i>Useful Music</i>	ARTEMIS	249	213	217
10	DOUBLE TROUBLE <i>Been A Long Time</i>	TONE-COOL	246	211	140
11	ETTA JAMES <i>Matriarch Of The Blues</i>	PRIVATE MUSIC/WINDHAM HILL	234	234	170
12	SONNY LANDRETH <i>Levee Town</i>	SUGAR HILL	232	240	251
13	SARAH HARMER <i>You Were Here</i>	ZOE/ROUNDER	229	229	245
14	RODNEY CROWELL <i>The Houston Kid</i>	SUGAR HILL	218	199	118
15	VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Badlands: Tribute To Springsteen's Nebraska</i>	SUB POP	214	238	261
16	JOHN HIATT <i>Crossing Muddy Waters</i>	VANGUARD	213	221	239
17	EMMYLOU HARRIS <i>Red Dirt Girl</i>	NONESUCH/ATLANTIC/AG	210	224	232
18	DAR WILLIAMS <i>The Green World</i>	RAZOR & TIE	199	177	128
19	THE WALLFLOWERS <i>Breach</i>	INTERSCOPE	199	202	183
20	KEB' MO' <i>The Door</i>	OKEH/EPIC	193	203	230
21	AMY CORREIA <i>Carnival Love</i>	ANISE/ODEON/CAPITOL	191	155	133
22	BADLY DRAWN BOY <i>The Hour Of Bewilderbeast</i>	TWISTED NERVE/AL/BEGGARS BANQUET	186	182	175
23	JOHNNY CASH <i>American III: Solitary Man</i>	AMERICAN/COLUMBIA	186	203	203
24	ENYA <i>A Day Without Rain</i>	REPRISE	185	210	210
25	COLDPLAY <i>Parachutes</i>	NETTWERK AMERICA/CAPITOL	176	169	165
26	ERIN MCKEOWN <i>Distillation</i>	SIGNATURE SOUNDS	162	151	144
27	R.L. BURNSIDE <i>Wish I Was In Heaven Sitting Down</i>	FAT POSSUM/EPITAPH	162	173	195
28	JIM WHITE <i>No Such Place</i>	LUAKA BOP/VIRGIN	153	111	46
29	DAVID GRAY <i>White Ladder</i>	ATO/RCA	148	156	155
30	TIM EASTON <i>The Truth About Us</i>	NEW WEST	146	93	59
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Been A

Double Trouble's Chris Layton And Tommy Shannon

By Michael Vogel

The journey to find one's self can often be a long and arduous task; the path to acknowledging who you are and what your contribution is can be even harder. Such has been the voyage for drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon, collectively known as Double Trouble. Stevie Ray Vaughan once said he was just a member of a band, a band called Double Trouble...and with his death came a void in the act that had revived blues/rock for a whole new generation.

After SRV's untimely demise, this premier rock and blues rhythm section embarked on a musical odyssey that witnessed them working with legends like Eric Clapton and B.B. King, as well as those destined to claim a future piece of the blues/rock throne: Layton and Shannon formed the Arc Angels with Charlie Sexton and Doyle Bramhall II, as well as the progressive blues/rock sounds of Storyville. In each case, Chris and Tommy took a back seat in the projects, preferring to be seen only as members of the band. But now, with the release of the first album under the Double Trouble moniker, they're out in front—and joined by a slew of friends who've come along to help out on this expedition.

double

Long Time

What was the impetus behind recording a new Double Trouble album?

Tommy Shannon: "There just came a time when we started having this creative urge. We came up with the music and part of the lyrics for five out of the 10 songs on the record. It just started out as a guitar and a little boombox, but I guess we got a little carried away."

Chris Layton: "For years now, we have been doing records with other people. So, we finally decided that it was time to do our own record. By the time of the Arc Angels reunion last summer, we had already cut two of the tracks with Doyle [Bramhall II] in his featured spot. It was after the reunion that we spoke to Charlie [Sexton] about working on this project with us, too."

Was it a matter of process, getting back to writing a Double Trouble album?

Chris: "I think so; it took quite a bit of time before we were ready to do this, even though we had been asked about something like this for quite some time. Although our initial reactions were more like, 'We probably won't do that,' with the breakup of Storyville we had talked about another Arc Angels album, but it didn't really seem like it was going to pan out. Since we were already working on this idea, we decided it was time to see if we could realize it."

Was it an issue of catharsis then, where you had to reach a point of being comfortable using the Double Trouble name again?

Chris: "The strange thing is, after Stevie's death, we really didn't consider ourselves

as Double Trouble anymore. But, no matter where we went or who we played with, people kept referring to us as Double Trouble." **Tommy:** "It's like the people gave us that name. So, finally we decided, yeah, we're Double Trouble."

Been A Long Time really showcases your songwriting talents. Did you feel it was necessary to come

out with your guns blazing?

Chris: "Our songwriting really became, not only one of our top priorities, but the actual focus of the record, not just how we play bass and drums."

Tommy: "One thing we didn't want to do was to just bring people in, plugging this person or that person into Double

"A lot of guitar players feel that if they play with us, then they're trying to fill Stevie's shoes and therefore think they'll be perceived as that—and understandably, not many guitar players want to try and do that."

—Tommy Shannon

Trouble. But the thing that means so much to us is that we put our heart and souls into it. And now, by putting our songs out there, our proverbial asses are on the line."

The album title, *Been A Long Time*, came together in an interesting way. How did a stargazer and an engineer help to figure in the naming of the album?

Chris: "We were kicking around all kinds of names, when a friend of ours, Mark Murray, an astrologist here in Austin, suggested the title, *Been A Long Time*. At the same time our engineer, Stuart Sullivan, also suggested the same title. After that, it seemed that the album title was pretty obvious."

Tommy: "And with the first single to be

'Rock And Roll' and the first line of the song being, 'Been a long time since I rock and rolled,' it was meant to be."

From the soulful sounds of 'Cry Sky' to the poppy 'Skyscraper' and the down-and-dirty blues of 'She's Alright,' *Been A Long Time* showcases your extremely diverse sound. What kind of choices did you go through in order to pick 10 tracks for the album?

Tommy: "We envisioned a lot of the artists for the particular songs we wrote. But it wasn't like we told them they had to do a particular song, so if they wanted to do something else they had that option. Fortunately, though, they seemed to like all the songs."

Chris: "We sat around for quite a while, throwing different ideas about. And ultimately, there were quite a lot of other songs that didn't make it on to the record, either. But the most important part is that everybody chose the track that best suited them. In the long run we believe in that, simply because that always makes for the best album."

At times, Double Trouble seems to move through music more like a jazz band than a rock group: spontaneously making music, feeding off each other to make the music flow. With so many guests on the new album, was that possible?

Tommy: "Yes. You see, we did a lot of improvisation with Stevie, especially on his part. He might decide to go to some totally different chord in the middle of a song, without warning, and would expect you to be there. Since we've been playing together for so long, we just knew to pick up on it."

"But that's interesting that you say that, because we listen to a lot of jazz—from Les Buchanan and Eddie Harris to John Coltrane and Miles Davis to some organ stuff from Jimmy Smith. Stevie and I used

DOUBLE

to listen to a lot of jazz as well, especially back in the early days. We thought how cool these players were and especially how masterful and world-class they were. To me, in a weird way, there isn't much difference between jazz and the blues. It's all about emotion and improvisation. That's the kind of spirit we try and emulate, of being free and living in the moment. The music has to be very free-form."

What was it like going into the studio as Double Trouble, without Stevie?

Chris: "To record with him was an amazing experience, but to have done a record as Double Trouble immediately after his death would have been a letdown and, in the end, probably wouldn't have seemed like a Double Trouble record at all. So, the first thing we did after Stevie's death was to team up with Doyle and Charlie, who are immensely talented, for the Arc Angels record. So once again, we were in a really good band. Sadly though, I think we had much more potential than was ever revealed on album or stage."

Tommy: "I remember after Stevie's death, for a while it didn't matter who I played with; it all just seemed like a big letdown. It's something I had to deal with myself and accept the fact that Stevie was one of a kind."

With the release of the SRV box set, which you had a major part in, the two of you had to bring up some old memories. Tommy, I read in the liner notes how you described him as a beautiful spirit. Can you elaborate on that?

Tommy: "I've known Stevie since he was 14 years old, and we started playing together in bands when he was 16. Our first band was called Blackbird and then after that was Krackerjack. But just watching him grow up and the changes he went through—it's like there's one thing that never changed and that was this certain sense of humility and sincerity about him. He just had a beautiful spirit and the music was an expression of that. It was no wonder it sounded so good when he played his guitar."

There are three tracks on the box set that are from the final shows at Alpine Valley, where it's been said the band was performing at a pinnacle level. Looking back, did anything seem special about those shows?

Tommy: "Both nights were exceptionally good for us. At that point in our career, we really felt like we were coming together as a band and really looking forward

to our next record. We were all clean and sober and working together better than ever; it was just like, something was about to happen musically for us. We felt like we were on the verge of breaking through to something much better than we'd ever done before. Unfortunately, now we'll never know."

Chris: "At the time, everyone got clean and sober in Double Trouble and we had been together for so long that it was like one big family. So, it was more like a family crisis that needed to be resolved."

Tommy: "When Stevie and I more or less hit rock bottom, it was like the other guys did, too, even though they were addicted like we were. But they were right there supporting us and helping us all along the way."

Where does Double Trouble go from here?

Tommy: "We really want to put a band together."

Chris: "That is one of our main objectives in the new year. This record is already done and will accomplish things on its own whether we do certain things or not—but we realize that the best thing would be to go out and promote it. So our main objective is to put a band together as soon as reasonably possible. We would then do as much material off the album as we realistically could do. It would be the jumping-off point to start a whole new adventure that could lead to a whole new record with an actual band, as opposed to a Tommy Shannon/Chris Layton project."

Based on the mystique alone, do you think it will be hard to find a guitar player for Double Trouble?

Tommy: "It's one of those things were you'll know when you find them. That will determine so much of what the band will become..."

Chris: "We hope that when we find these people, they can look at us and say that they found something, too."

Tommy: "What it comes down to is a lot of guitar players feel that if they play with us, then they're trying to fill Stevie's shoes and therefore think they'll be perceived as that—and understandably, not many guitar players want to try and do that."

"We just hope, once people listen to our record, they'll see we're not trying to repeat what we had with Stevie. That would be suicide—we know, he's a hard act to follow. So, for *Been A Long Time*, we're hoping to show people we're coming from a totally different direction."

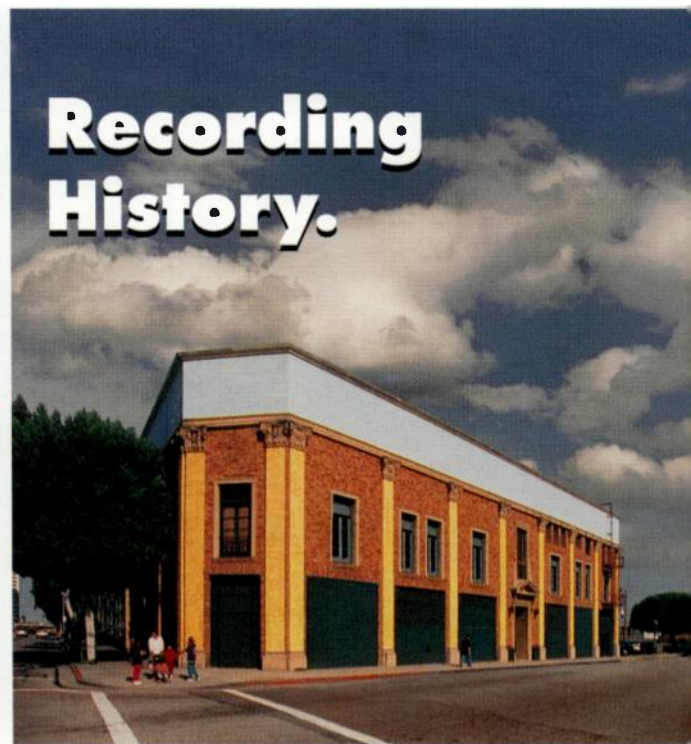
Chris: "Stevie was a member of Double Trouble, so when he died we thought so did the band. So it would be inconceivable or sacrilege to say that we would just get someone else to continue with the name. We wanted to be fresh and creative and think forward, living our lives in the future and not in the past. That's what spawned bands like Arc Angels and Storyville. But as far as Double Trouble now, there is no agenda as to what the band needs to be other than a band that works well together and makes really good music."

Tommy: "That's the magic of the whole thing!" ✈



As one who has been touched by the mojo of Double Trouble, The Album Network's Director of Radio, Michael Vogel views this conversation as the cherry on top of his editorial sundae. If you'd like to swap some stories, Mike can be reached at michael.vogel@sfx.com. For more information about Double Trouble, give Tom Doyle or Greg Reisch a call at 761.263.9224 or zip on over to www.doubletroublemusic.com.

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Shawn Colvin's Whole New Return



W

By Megan K. Hey

hen I spoke with Shawn Colvin about her new album, there was still some debate about its title. Colvin was vacillating between *Whole New You* and *Bonefields*, both of which are songs found on the album. "This is the problem album," she says of the whole tamale.

But when listening to this sixth album, now officially named *Whole New You*, the problems to which she alludes aren't apparent at all. The only thing one hears is Colvin at her strong, subtle best.

"Everything just took time," she says of her challenge to get back in front of a recording mic after some five years away from it. "We were just dissatisfied with everything you could imagine—from keys to tempos; little things—but it was stressful, you know? You just want to go in there and get things done, and when you have to nitpick it, it just becomes belabored."

Colvin fans won't be disappointed by what she ultimately got onto tape, and neither should the Adult Rock radio format. Practically speaking, following something like 1996's Grammy-winning *A Few Small Repairs* would be a challenge for anyone. But come on, y'all, this lady runs triathlons. She's the first one to tell you that she'll be the last one to give up on something—especially when it's her job.

Colvin began work on the project in the fall of 1999 following her first two years as being mom to daughter Caledonia. Part of the problem in getting satisfied with the record was simply putting on the hat of singer and dusting off the pipes. "Vocally, I don't know," she says. "I'd had a baby and I hadn't sung for longer than normal. It was just kind of odd to me to be singing into a mic and on to tape. I guess the way I was singing didn't make me happy. It can be an intimidating thing. This time around it kind of was. So it took me a while to warm up to that. Everything just took time. The ideas came slowly."

The Platinum-selling *A Few Small Repairs* was such an enormous success—at radio, in stores, on the big and small screens—it, like Suzanne Vega originally picking Colvin to open her shows and sing backup for her, played an undeniably large role in Colvin's career. The tune "Sunny Came Home" won a Grammy for Song Of The Year in 1998, the same year in which the record was named Grammy's Record Of The Year. *Repairs* had also received Grammy nominations in 1997 for Best Pop Album and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for "Get Out Of This House." Colvin doesn't deny the inherent pressures involved in making the proverbial "album after." "Absolutely I felt pressure," she says. "From myself. From us," she then replies, including John Leventhal, her producing and writing partner since the New York City days circa 1988. "Yeah, nobody

verbalized it except for us. Nobody was on our backs but us."

Whole New You is easily recognizable as having come from the same team as *A Few Small Repairs*. Colvin calls their "Leventhal/Colvin" sound pretty much 50/50. "I think John has a certain sound to what he produces, but I think what he ends up doing with me is special because he doesn't normally write with other people as intensely as he does with me. I don't know, it's kind of a proven, tried and true partnership. Musically and instrumentally he deserves a ton of credit. But the songs wouldn't be the same without what I wrote and how I sang them. I think he would be the first to say that we bring something out in each other that's unique."

She says through the years, their partnership just gets "more finely tuned." "The process is the same, just much smoother. By and large, he's the producer and writes the music, and I write the melodies and the lyrics. That's the basic division of labor. But we don't check with each other anymore about every tiny thing. There's a lot of trust. Not that there wasn't before, it's just there was a bigger need for control. I like my domain of control, and I like to relinquish to his domain of control. I think he feels the same way." Even though the division of labor might be 50/50, the bottom line is that it's still Colvin's name that's on the cover. Coming back up to bat after a sensational homerun is, regardless of the team around you, a personal event for

everyone involved—most significantly, perhaps, the person swinging the bat.

Repairs was, in Colvin's words, somewhat magical in its materialization. "It was just one of those records that was easy. That's pretty neat when that happens. You know when it's gonna be easy, and you kind of wonder why. That's the way most of them have been for me, actually, but *Repairs* was the easiest of all."

This time around, Colvin was in "a different state of mind" from the days of *Repairs*. She says she knew *Whole New You* would be a different record, but she didn't set out to consciously take a different path or to duplicate *A Few Small Repairs*. "The things that I'd learned on that record I hoped I would use again: the looser attitude about writing; the simpler approach; being a better editor."

"Editing on the lyric and singing side just came more naturally to me on *Repairs*," she says. "So I kind of hoped that would follow through. I was able to write a little bit outside of myself on that album, even fictitiously, which is a breath of fresh air. That followed through a little bit on this one, but not as much."

So...add the tenor of Leventhal's and her own personal pressures to reprise the success of *Repairs* to her time away from the mic to start a family while you're figuring out the explanation for this project's challenges. Do that, and the title they finally agreed on takes on its own special meaning.

continued

"If I understood the marketplace, I don't know what I'd be doing, but it probably wouldn't be this!"

Colvin dealt with the choppy transition by buckling down and not giving up. "It was just kind of show up every day, trust that we knew what we were doing and that it would all work out. It's just that you're not gonna quit," she says. "I think it's whatever keeps anybody going who has a job to do. It's your job. What are you gonna do—quit? You feel like quitting, but so does everybody at some time, and you have too, before. So you just try not to get frustrated, and you get it done."

Colvin's disciplined work ethic shows up in other areas of her life. In the triathlons previously mentioned (she's competed in four to date) Colvin has placed between 2nd and 5th for her age group. She got a Saab sponsorship for competing. She even sang the National Anthem before three of them (Boston, Malibu and Austin). This is no small thing. For those unfamiliar with triathlons, contestants run six miles, bike five and swim 500 yards in as close to under an hour as possible. Ever hear of the Iron Man? Finding a focused personality behind such a voice isn't surprising. Actually, if you review the span of Colvin's chronology, and insert some of her characteristically candid quotes here and there, what appears is an artist, who, like the body of work she creates, blends pragmatism and humanity—external product production and internal personal development—completely. Maybe she inherited this skill from her parents, one of whom studied behavioral psychology (her dad), the other of whom studied law (mom). Without psychoanalyzing her evolution too greatly, one fact that is patently clear is that Colvin *consistently* brings this particular talent to each song and each record she makes. Maybe that's what it is about her voice—that quality of having gone deep enough into herself to pull it together after a battle like addiction, while recognizing that to keep it together, she's gotta be strong, but light-hearted about it. That sounds like the attribute that would compel a dedicated artist to stick it out, even when doing her job isn't as easy as it's been before.

Colvin swears she "doesn't understand the market" forces that bring successes like getting songs onto soundtracks and used in TV shows. Her songs, however, have found homes on no fewer than six film soundtracks and three TV shows. In fact, the producers of *Suddenly Susan* were so enamored of Colvin, not only did they use "Nothing On Me" from

Repairs for the show's theme, but they put Colvin on in a guest slot. She says she doesn't understand it, but by the same token, it doesn't surprise her that such successes come her way—and I can't overstate Shawn Colvin's humility. She's just got a level, logical head about the matter. "It's refreshing," she says. "You put records out with as much self doubt as we all have, but we also all have an ego. You like what you do, and yeah, you could hear this song here or there. You don't think of specific TV shows or anything, but you like to think it's accessible and usable."

The Colvin formula for writing usable, accessible songs is frighteningly simple. "Basically, I have to be moved," she says. "You know, everybody would love to push the musical envelope. There are a lot of lofty ideas as far as how you'd like to grow, but it can all be a bunch of crap if you're not moved by it or if it's too intellectualized."

"Finding yourself. That's what counts," she continues, on a roll. "You hear something, and nothing you might be thinking about, like, 'Could it have been this way?' or, 'Do I want it this way?' matters. There's an essence of the song that works for you. That moves you and makes you say, 'Oh, that's worth working on.'"

"I think I've done what I've done, and I persevered. I haven't had such a huge success that I've been somebody that's needed to get knocked down. You know it's been kind of a slow growth. I just think I'm accessible. If I understood the marketplace, I don't know what I'd be doing, but it probably wouldn't be this!"

When she was 10 years old, Shawn Colvin would design her future record sleeves. Could she possibly wind up doing anything but what she's doing now? "I wasn't that on top of it," she says, alluding to the fact there was no plan B for her career. "It was sing or bust." Like so many other Shawn Colvin fans, I'm glad she didn't bust. *Whole New You* may be a new Shawn Colvin album, but its content and vibe are from the same Shawn Colvin so many musicians and fans admire and respect.

"I'm happy with it," Colvin says of *Whole New You*. "It took a long time to make, so it's hard to keep perspective when you work hard on everything over and over and over again. But that's kind of the test." Indeed. Seems like the very sort of test a dedicated athlete and artist might demand from herself.

• Megan K. Hey fiddles with www.musicbiz.com by day, but at night, prowls sandy beaches in search of stolen treasure. Shout-outs go to mkhey@sfxnet.com.

• For more information about Shawn Colvin, give a call to Trina Tombrink at 212.833.8505.

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Max Weinberg Rolls A Lucky Seven

BY MATTHEW LAWTON



WHEN YOU JOINED THE E STREET BAND DID YOU EVER IMAGINE YOU'D STILL BE WITH THOSE GUYS 27 YEARS LATER?

"Well, for me joining the E Street Band in 1974 was a dream come true. Bruce put an ad in the *Village Voice* in the summer of 1974 holding open auditions for a drummer and a keyboard player. I think I was the 56th drummer who auditioned. It was in a small rehearsal studio during the third week of August 1974 in New York City on 54th Street. I was 23 years old and I can tell you that the experience of that first time I played with Bruce and the band was something I've never forgotten. It was truly astounding. I was just swept away."

THAT'S GREAT. SO WHEN YOU FORMALLY BEGAN PLAYING WITH THEM, WERE YOU THINKING YOU'D JUST TRY IT OUT FOR A WHILE OR DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO GO THE DISTANCE WITH THESE GUYS?

"I had been playing the drums since I was six years old and in bands since I was about eight. So by the time I was 23 years old I had sort of done everything you can imagine. And the musical experience of playing with Bruce and the band that night, as I said, swept me away. And who knew what would happen? I just knew that I had really gotten in the band of my dreams, musically speaking. I wasn't really aware of his audience or anything like that—it all happened very suddenly."

NOW, LET'S GO BACK ABOUT 10 YEARS OR SO. WHAT WERE YOUR PLANS AFTER BRUCE CALLED YOU GUYS AND SAID HE WOULDN'T NEED THE E STREET BAND FOR A WHILE?

"Well, in late summer of '88, we had the distinct honor of playing around the world on the Amnesty International Human Rights Now! World Tour. At the time that we got off that tour it was October of '88, and I decided to go back to college to finish my undergraduate degree. So in the middle of my second semester back at school, Bruce called all of us and just said he was gonna be doing some different things and that we could go off and do what we wanted to do."

WEREN'T YOU GOING TO LAW SCHOOL?

"Well, I eventually ended up in law school briefly, but I decided that really wasn't what I wanted to do, so I went into the retail music business for several years. I was a member of a record company in New Jersey—the largest independently owned record club in the world called the Musical Heritage Society—and they deal with jazz and classical music via their Music Masters label. I went in as sort of a talent scout but I ended up doing almost everything—learning marketing, promotion, publicity. I'm certainly aware of *The Album Network*. I had three years in the business, which was a great experience, and then I missed drumming and decided to get back into it."

"Until I got into the E Street Band, I always wore a suit when I played. I mean, that's what the drummers that I admired coming up wore: Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Cozy Cole, Chick Webb and everybody, they all dressed up."

Not long after I made that decision to get back into drumming, I met Conan O'Brien walking down 7th Avenue in New York City."

YOU JUST MET HIM ON THE STREET?
Literally."

WAS HIS SHOW ALREADY ON THEN?

"No, in fact he had gotten the job a couple of weeks before, but they had just announced it on 'The Tonight Show.' When I saw him I was walking with my wife, Becky, who suggested I go up and say hello to him. He was standing on the corner of 54th and 7th, waiting for the light to turn. Before the light turned I went over and said hello and I introduced myself in the context of formerly being in the E Street Band and he knew who I was. And we just started talking on the street corner and one thing led to another and I asked him what he was gonna do for a band. He said he had some ideas and he asked me if I had any ideas. That was in May of '93, and that meeting on the street corner led to a series of meetings that I had over the next two months with various people connected with the show. It hadn't aired yet, and in August they called me and asked to hear the band I was talking about. Although I never told him I had a band, I told him I had a great *idea* for a band. So I quickly put his band together and we auditioned and we got the job."

WHAT WAS THAT AUDITION LIKE?

"Well, it happened very quickly. They literally called me on a Wednesday to hear my band—again, I didn't *have* a band, I told him I had a great *idea* for band. So I got a reprieve to audition for them on Tuesday, the following. So over the next few days, his band came together. My musical partner in the band, Jimmy Vivino, and I wrote five songs, rehearsed them that Sunday afternoon with the band, rehearsed again Monday and then Tuesday rolled into town. I rented a studio in midtown Manhattan that had a real classic TV look. It didn't look like a modern rehearsal studio. I brought in staging and lights and I really tried to make it a show for Conan and Jeff Ross, our producer, and a couple of other people who were coming down to check out the band. And that sort of did the trick, both the performance, the personality of the guys in the band and the fact that because I put the band in a TV sort of context, visually, it all seemed to work."

YOU'VE PLAYED IN SMALL CLUBS, HUGE STADIUMS, PRISTINE, SOUND-PROOF STUDIOS AND NOW YOU'RE

SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES THAT YOU'VE HAD TO GET USED TO, NOW THAT YOU'RE PLAYING ON THE 'LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O'BRIEN' STAGE?

"Well, the energy is a bit different because it is TV. One of the things you learn quickly is that whatever physical approach you might have in a stadium, on TV you've got to tone it down quite a bit because it's a much cooler medium. The energy is a little different. Contrary to what people think, we don't get here a half-hour before the taping. I'm here early in the morning and we write music and rehearse all day. I do a lot of the comedy on the show with Conan so there are comedy rehearsals that I'm involved in, too"

HOW DO YOU COME UP WITH THE SONGS YOU PLAY EVERY NIGHT?

"We have a book of about 400 full-length songs and several thousand sort of 36-bar



walk-ons, and I pick the music that I want to play that night. In the case of walk-ons for guests, I'll read their bio and something might stick out, and I'll pick a song that goes with it. It's sort of like, with Al Roker, the weather man, we might play 'Sunshine Superman' or 'Stormy Weather.'"

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE SHOW WHEN YOU CUT TO COMMERCIALS?

We play right through the commercials. We keep the energy up. Very often you have a script for the show, but a lot of people here came out of improvisations, so you have to think very quick on your feet. Things change around from time to time and we sort of make the transitions go a little easier on everybody."

NOW THAT YOU ARE LEADING YOUR OWN BAND, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SKILLS YOU'VE PICKED UP FROM SITTING BEHIND SPRINGSTEEN ALL THESE YEARS?

"He's known for so many things; his guitar playing, his songwriting, his singing and his unbelievable live performances. Few people think of him in terms of being a great band leader, but he is a great band leader. I played with him actively for 15 years, so after 15 years of working in a great band leaders band, I definitely picked up some tips. Intensity, and just go out and play every show as if it's the last one you're gonna play. That's something that I learned early on from Bruce and I've been able to kind of transmit that to all of my guys, too."

SPEAKING OF PLAYING, YOU HAVE A VERY SIMPLE DRUM KIT, LIKE RINGO, AS OPPOSED TO A LOT OF ROCK DRUMMERS WHO ARE SURROUNDED AND BURIED IN HUGE DRUMS AND CYMBALS. HAVE YOU EVER PLAYED WITH A DIFFERENT-SIZE KIT?

"I've played exactly what you see—four drums. That's it, all my life. It was three drums until I could afford to get the fourth drum. I'm a product of '40s and '50s music and that's what people played then. And until I got into the E Street Band, I always wore a suit when I played. I mean, that's what the drummers that I admired coming up wore: Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Cozy Cole, Chick Webb and everybody, they all dressed up. And even though I was playing rock & roll, to me, that's what it was about—show time and performance. Everything I've ever wanted to do on a drum set I've been able to do on a small drum set."

BUT HOW DO YOU GET SUCH A BOOMING SOUND OUT OF THAT MOTHERFUCKER? I MEAN, 'MURDER INCORPORATED' OR THAT LAST WHACK IN 'THE LAND OF HOPE AND DREAMS'—JESUS CHRIST, IF YOU'RE IN THE BACK OF THE ARENA, YOUR DRUMS CAN BE LIKE A CANNONBALL TO THE GUT.

"[laughs] You know what's funny? Drummers have lots of drums and lots of cymbals, but they're generally playing on the bass drum, the snare drum and the high hat. The other stuff is good for rock drum solos, which I don't do."

"When I was a kid, I couldn't afford more than four drums and I had to carry my own drums around so that was economical. And again, all the drummers I admired, that was pretty much what they used. I mean, with some exceptions, some people had an extra tom tom. For a while I flirted with an extra tom tom, but I don't think I ever used it. Someone once described it as a small set with a big beat. And that's what it is, it's really more of the..."

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PICK UP THE STICKS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

"Well, when I was five years old, Elvis Presley made one of his first TV appearances that I remember on 'The Milton Berle Show' several months before 'The Ed Sullivan Show.' At the time I had two teenage sisters, and we were watching that and I saw DJ Fontana, who was Elvis's original drummer and played on all of his greatest hits. I wasn't playing the drums, but my cousin had given me a drum of his and I kind of fooled around on it, and when I saw DJ Fontana on 'The Milton Berle Show,' I just got swept away with the music and his drumming. Shortly after that I started to take lessons. So it was really Elvis on TV with his band."

ALL RIGHT, WELL LET'S FOCUS ON THE NEW ALBUM HERE. THE MAX WEINBERG 7 HAS NOW BEEN TOGETHER SINCE 1993. DID YOU WANT TO RECORD AN ALBUM WITH THEM RIGHT AWAY, OR DID THAT IDEA JUST RECENTLY COME UP?

"Well, it came up not long before I went on tour with the E Street Band in '99. It was a question of really feeling comfortable in some of the different styles we were playing and I wanted to have a tremendous repertoire to pick from. We started recording it right as I went on tour and we did a little more after I went on tour, and I finished it up while I was on tour with Bruce and the E Street Band. So it was something that I never felt pressure to make. It was just that the timing was right. Also, it kind of worked out because in my way of looking at it, it's a celebration of the seven years that we've played together and there are seven guys in the band and it's called The Max Weinberg 7, and it just kind of worked out that way. It's a celebration of those 1,500 or so shows we've done on TV."

IS THIS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE PRODUCED AN ALBUM?

"No, I produced stuff for the Music Masters label back in the early '90s and I suppose you might say that drummers tend to produce everything they play on just by virtue of their playing. My favorite drummers always seem to. The drummer always has to keep an eye on what everybody's doing. That's why people like Stan Lynch, from Tom Petty's band, went into production. Drummers have to keep a big-picture view of things, which is what a producer does. You can't get so lost in your own part because you've got to be aware of what everybody else is doing. So production came very naturally to me."

AS A PRODUCER, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU'RE REALLY LISTENING FOR?

"To me it's all in the performance. We played essentially live in the studio for this record. A few overdubs here and there, but all the records I've ever made pretty much have been guys playing live in the studio. So to me it's about the performance—they're not modern records I make, you know? The horns are in another room so we can isolate them. But we were all in one room and all playing at the same time."

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BAND—WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WHY YOU LIKE THEM, THAT KIND OF STUFF...

"Well, what I wanted to do when I put the band together was get people who had very distinct musical personalities. People who would enjoy playing anything, but also really had a voice of their own. And one very important component of that, obviously, was to have an arranger for the band. I'm not an arranger. Arranging music is a very, very distinct art and I feel I picked up the best musical arranger in New York City—Jimmy Vivino. The fact that he is an incredible guitar player and a great singer and has an encyclopedic knowledge of music, as I feel I do, we really hooked up right away. So he was the first person I called."

"Jerry is his brother who can play anything woodwind. He's a fantastic musician. And La Bamba, our trombonist, and Mark Pender, our trumpeter, I knew from the Asbury Park Jukes. They toured with us once or twice with the E Street Band and I knew what boisterous players they were. I didn't really want to have a rock band and so the horns are very important. Mike Merritt, our bass player, and Scott Healy, our keyboard player, were friends of Jimmy's and Jerry's."

ON THE NEW ALBUM YOU ALSO HAVE DR. JOHN SINGING ON 'CATCH 'EM IN THE ACT'; HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

"He's been a friend of ours for a long time and we backed him on several shows in the past. We had this instrumental that Jimmy and I wrote. It wasn't called that—it was just called '#37,' or something—but I always heard a vocal on it, a Levon Helm or Dr. John kind of vocal. So I gave Mac, Dr. John, Mac Rebennack, a call and said, 'I've got this track and I'd be delighted if you could put some words to it and sing on it.' And he thought that was a great idea so he came up with a story and the words. I met him in New York

one day when I was on tour and we put his piano and his vocal on the track we had and it just worked."

YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU WROTE A WHOLE BUNCH OF SONGS REAL EARLY ON. HOW COME THERE'S ONLY ONE ORIGINAL MAX WEINBERG 7 TRACK ON THE ALBUM?

"The songs that we write are specifically for TV and are geared towards the TV show. Now television and recording music are two very different things and the bottom line for me was, 'What's the most fun stuff we play?' It wasn't the songs we were writing which was a lot of interlude music. This band was put together to serve a TV show. Jimmy and I are probably one of the most prolific, in the sense of volume of material written, songwriters around. I mean, we've written thousands and thousands of little cues for the show. But you don't put them on a record. So I think I had about 25 songs that I was looking at that I enjoy playing and the guys enjoyed singing and playing and we just whittled it down from there. The criteria was: what's the most fun to play and what would showcase the individual talents of each guy in the band."

WHAT'S ONE OF THE SONGS THAT JIMMY REALLY LIKES TO SING AND BELT THROUGH?

"Jimmy Vivino came to me with the idea of doing 'Baby Workout.' Jimmy's a real blues man, so he wanted to do it and he worked out this great arrangement and presented it to me and I loved it. He wanted to do it more blues-oriented. No one's ever really covered it. You can't cover Jackie Wilson. He played me what he wanted to do and I said, 'Oh, that's fantastic.' It's almost as if B.B. King did 'Baby Workout'—it's B.B. King style."

ONE LAST THING: THE CD IS DEDICATED TO PATRICIA LEE SMITH. I WAS WONDERING WHO THAT WAS?

"That's my sister. She was the one who said 'We're gonna watch Elvis Presley tonight.' She was my oldest sister and she loved Elvis, like any teenager in the '50s. She was the one who I credited with getting me started in music, period. Both of my older sisters were very important in my development as a musician. But my oldest sister Patty, was the person who basically said 'Tonight we're watching Elvis Presley or Milton Berle.' So it all sort of stemmed from her. What was that, 44 years ago?"

"It's a celebration of the seven years that we've played together and there are seven guys in the band and it's called The Max Weinberg 7, and it just kind of worked out that way. It's a celebration of those 1,500 or so shows we've done on TV."

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE MAX WEINBERG 7 GIVE STEPHEN POWERS A CALL AT 310.915.4900 OR ZIP ON OVER TO WWW.MAXWEINBERG7.COM



By Greg Dwinell



In the credits of Old 97's' new album, *Satellite Rides*, there's an entire section entitled "Extra special thanks to our Elektra family" which singles out upward of 50 members of their favorite label's staff, as well as a shout-out to "all at WEA distribution, the WEA branches and sales reps and merchandisers, and of course to all the members of Elektra's local promotion staffs...." Apparently, Old 97's have taken Nick Lowe's tongue-in-cheek music biz anthem, "I Love My Label," to heart.

"I'm not a huge rock star," says Old 97's' chief songwriter, Rhett Miller, "and we haven't sold a million records, but I get to make my third major label record without either one, which is sort of unheard of. I love the company. That may not be the coolest thing to say, but I don't know what I'd be doing without them. I'd probably have to go out and find a real job, so I'm not about to complain."

Miller's words are as genuine as his talent—and luckily for him, it appears as if Elektra recognizes what they have in their family. I asked about Old 97's' actual relationship with their label. "It's kinda like what's happened with major league baseball; there's no stability and players are constantly changing teams. With bands being dropped so quickly by labels, and labels folding into each other, there's not much chance of a label building a stable, or creating any kind of family feeling. Elektra has been nice. We've gotten to be friends with many of the people who work at the label. My A&R guy [Tom DeSavia] is one

of my best friends in the world; how weird is that?"

Sounding like a heavenly mix of Glen Campbell and The Buzzcocks as interpreted by Kurt Cobain fronting The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band playing a selection of covers by Bob Wills and The Replacements, Old 97's still manage to come off as completely original, which is something that only the best borrowers (like The Beatles or The Stones) can do. Their songs are catchy, yet literate, and smart without sacrificing heart and soul. In other words, charming without being disposable.

Over the past seven years, the Dallas-based quartet (Miller on guitar & vocals, along with Murry Hammond, who plays bass and also sings, lead guitarist Ken Bethea, and drummer Philip Peeples) has built a faithful following, first through the release of a handful of indie records and two albums for Elektra (1997's *Too Far To Care* and '99's *Fight Songs*), aided and abetted by near-constant touring in the U.S. "I'm very proud of *Fight Songs*, but it was a hard record

"About a year ago I became single and my reason for staying in L.A. was no longer so concrete. And Largo was the big reason that I stayed. There's a musical community the likes of which I haven't seen anywhere else in the country."

to make," explains Miller. "*Fight Songs* was a geographical nightmare, because we were living apart—the band in Texas and me in L.A. We rehearsed [the new songs] only a couple of weeks before we made that album."

Old 97s' new CD, *Satellite Rides*, finds the fellas looking to expand their fan base and jump up to that proverbial *next* level, but without sacrificing any of the magic or altering the spirit of who Old 97s are and what they do. Miller certainly seems happy about the way the music came about. "Elektra let us take our time with this one," he says, describing the process. "I came home to Texas to work on *Satellite Rides*. We spent three months working on playing these songs before we actually started recording, and I think it shows. I'd already lived these songs while writing them, and I needed the guys to love them and believe in them also. Our spring was spent in a fugue state; mantra-like repetition of these songs until we lived inside of them."

Recording of *Satellite Rides* took place in the idyllic setting of Willie Nelson's own Pedernales Studios in Austin, with the band's old pal Wally Gagel producing. "Willie is a

big hero of ours, but he was out of town, which was probably good, 'cause we avoided the dreaded 'Oh-my-god-Willie-is-in-the-next-room' syndrome. Wally is an L.A. guy [via Boston, where he worked on records for Tanya Donelly, Sebadoh and Folk Implosion; Gagel most recently produced Eels' *Daisies Of The Galaxy*], and we had worked with him on *Too Far To Care*. Wally is a musician, and his ideas come into play sometime in the studio, but mostly he knows mic placement like nobody's business, all the techie stuff that I don't get. We *wanted* that, as opposed to somebody who wanted to come in with a million musical ideas. We had done so much pre-production that we really wanted somebody whose emphasis was on recording. We already knew we liked him a lot, because Wally loves The Clash as much as we do! Really, the sessions were great. The best sessions we've ever had."

Veteran studio ace Tchad Blake (Elvis Costello, Los Lobos, Crowded House, Sheryl Crow, Tom Waits) mixed the album back in Los Angeles at

The Sound Factory, much to the pleasure and amazement of Miller. "I'm a huge Elvis Costello fan, so it was really cool to have Tchad work on the record. We told him he didn't have to do a *King Of America* on us, so he was pretty experimental, as is his wont. He's awesome!"

"Experimental" may indeed be Mr. Blake's wont, but the new album is by no means a vast departure from the elegantly down-home sounds of Old 97s records of the past. Far more cow-pop than cow-punk, *Satellite Rides* should push Old 97s to the head of the class, right up in front with bands like Wilco, The Jayhawks, and the other brave souls who dare to have a hint of twang without fear of being lumped under the No Depression umbrella, or as the British call it, "The New West." The songs with a country bend don't seem forced—Old 97s definitely don't sound like some young bucks trying to squeeze into their blue denim twang for the first time; the lap steel melancholy of "Buick City Complex," the bittersweet honky-tonk of "Bird In A Cage" and the dusty-trail yodels of "Up The Devil's Pay" (one of two songs on the album that bassist Hammond wrote and sings) all seem to be properly placed in the natural settings they deserve.

But on *Satellite Rides*, nurture dominates nature, as these professed Anglophiles dazzle us with hook-filled fare, from the jangly "King Of All The World" (the first single) and the wall-of-guitar throttle of "Book Of Poems" to the blatant British Invasion love fest that is "Can't Get A Line" (Hammond's other song here, and a real gem). With joy, insight and true attention to craft, Old 97s set themselves apart from most of their contemporaries

I spoke with Miller as he took a stroll up Broadway on a "beautiful, sunny morning" in Manhattan (cell phone hell; we only disconnected half-a-dozen times in 25 minutes). He recently became bicoastal when he and his girlfriend took an apartment there, even though he's lived in Los Angeles for the last four years and swears that "I'll live there forever...it's so strangely addictive." The remainder of the band still resides in Texas. I asked Rhett if he felt any sense of musical community with the Americana scene. "We've played with a lot of bands. All of 'em! And I guess I've become friends with some of them. Like Wilco, who are really nice guys. I respect Jeff Tweedy. He pushes himself as a songwriter and doesn't pander to anybody. But as far as a





sense of community, I feel way more of a community at Largo than anywhere else. Everything else just only really exists in the fifth estate."

For those who've never heard of it, Largo is a unique nightclub in L.A.'s Fairfax district, across the street from Canter's Delicatessen. It's a veritable musician's haven that caters largely to comics and singer/songwriters. Miller was introduced to Largo a little over a year ago and has since become a fixture, sharing the stage with Rickie Lee Jones, Fiona Apple, Beck, Elliott Smith, Grant Lee Phillips, Robyn Hitchcock and Largo's regular Friday night resident, pop wunderkind Jon Brion. "About a year ago I became single and my reason for staying in L.A. was no longer so concrete. And Largo was the big reason that I stayed. There's a musical community the likes of which I haven't seen anywhere else in the country. Getting to go somewhere where you respect your peers so much that you want to impress them everytime you get onstage there, and challenge yourself. It's cool. It makes me think of the stories of the late '60s, where bands were pushing and challenging each other. I just love it. There's no place I'm more comfortable."

Miller and Brion (who, in addition to being a fine musician has also produced albums

for Aimee Mann and Fiona Apple and wrote the score for *Magnolia*) have collaborated on a few as-yet-unrecorded compositions, and it sounds like a mutual project is inevitable. In fact, Rhett says, "'King Of All The World' is actually a response to a Jon Brion song called 'Hook, Line And Sinker,' the middle break where he says, 'I'm feeling for all the world like I'm feeling for all the world'-well, 'King Of All The World' is kind of a response to that."

Miller's admiration for Jon Brion's music was apparent, and we both agreed it was just a matter of time before Brion was finally going to find a larger audience. "Did his album finally come out?" Rhett asked. "He is such a genius. He can do everything and anything. I was just listening to a demo of a song that Jon helped me write and helped me fool around with, right before we went in to do *Satellite Rides*. I just realized I've gotta get this on a soundtrack. It's great-sounding. It's called 'Things That Disappear.'" Something to look forward to.

The week before our conversation Old 97's had been at the Sundance Film Festival, where they spent two days performing and two days skiing. The group's sound, achingly reminiscent of distant prairies and smalltown bars, is a music supervisor's wet dream, hence their inclusion in a number of film and television projects, including the soundtrack to Fox's *King Of The Hill* and the honor of having their signature anthem, "Timebomb," handpicked by Janeane Garafalo for her feature *Clay Pigeons*. Garafalo, still a friend, also invited them to perform on CBS' *The Late Show* when she was guest host for a night during David Letterman's heart surgery sabbatical; Old 97's obliged by ripping through a raucous version of "Murder (Or A Heart Attack)," the painfully ironic single from *Fight Songs*.

I inquired if any deal-making had gone on at Sundance, but Rhett assured me that they were not players. "We were there to play some songs and do a little skiing. I think we do

have a couple of songs in some [upcoming] television shows, and I'm sure we'll be in some more movies. But we didn't see any movies; it's impossible to get tickets. The shows [we played] were good, but it was a tease. I want to get out and play the hell out of these songs." The band will be going on a brief tour of some of their stronger markets, playing smaller, intimate venues, before setting out on a full-scale tour. "I'm not sure what's going to go over well, because we really haven't played these songs live for anybody. I know I love 'Buick City Complex.' It's the most subtle thing we've ever done. I don't think we could have pulled that off before. The middle break on 'Up The Devil's Pay' is a really cool musical moment; sorta the hybrid between the psychedelic and the yodel that is very Murry."

Collaborators Rhett and Murry have been making really cool musical sounds together for almost a decade. In the early 1990s, Miller and Hammond formed The Sleepy Heroes, an acoustic-based alternative outfit that garnered much attention in the Dallas area. They also have an Old 97's side project known as The Ranchero Brothers, which Miller explains is an outlet for Murry's songs and some of Rhett's that just don't fit with the 97's. "Because Murry only gets a couple of songs per record, 'cause I hog 'em all, he's

got sort of a backlog. His songs are so beautiful. This album title actually came from a Ranchero Brothers song that Murry wrote called 'In The Satellite Rides A Star'; a really wonderful, sort of psychedelic, little quiet thing. A beautiful song. And he gave up the title for us. But that song will be on The Ranchero Brothers' record, which should come out sometime later, on either Elektra, or maybe we'll put it out. It's just our cool alter-ego."

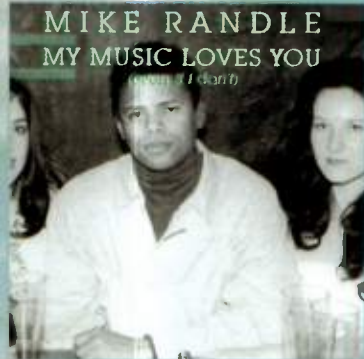
Before we said our good-byes I remarked to Rhett that I was intrigued by the fact that the liner notes for *Satellite Rides* also mention my favorite current American novelist, David Foster Wallace (*Infinite Jest*, *Girl With Curious Hair*), in their thank-yous, and Rhett says, "Oh, so you love him too?" When I inform him that *Infinite Jest* is my favorite book, he concurs—"Ooh, I knew like 200 pages in that it was going to be my favorite book of all time, so I made myself read it really slowly and deliberately. It's weird, what he does with sentiment. He's doing that thing where it's clever and it's smart and it's post-modern or whatever, but there's so much heart in it. Which I actually thought about a lot when we were making *Satellite Rides*. I wanted it to be precise and cool and clever, but I wanted the record to have sentiment at its foundation." ✨

"I wanted *Satellite Rides* to be precise and cool and clever, but I wanted the record to have sentiment at its foundation."

• Greg Dwinell runs eggBERT Records, and his next release is the forthcoming Jonny Polonsky EP, *There Is Something Wrong With You*. He has interviewed Elliott Smith, XTC, Robyn Hitchcock, Eels, Aimee Mann and Michael Penn to name some of the people that he spoke to at one time or another and they spoke back to him and then someone printed a facsimile of the transcript of those conversations so that other people might be able to read what they were saying while they'd been talking to each other...boop!

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ARE YOU AWARE? MARK CUNNINGHAM AND AWARE RECORDS

BY SHANA

ABOUT A DECADE AGO, BOSTON ACCOUNTANT GREGG LATTERMANN CAME UP WITH A UNIQUE IDEA. HIS DREAM WAS TO FIND THE BEST UNSIGNED BANDS IN THE COUNTRY AND PUT THEM ON A COMPILATION CD TO HELP THEM RECEIVE NATIONAL EXPOSURE. THAT DREAM CAME TRUE IN 1993 WHEN *AWARE 1* WAS RELEASED. EIGHT YEARS AND EIGHT COMPILATIONS LATER, AWARE RECORDS HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCES FOR NEW MUSIC BY FEATURING BANDS SUCH AS FIVE FOR FIGHTING, VERTICAL HORIZON, HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH, TRAIN, EDWIN MCCAIN AND THE VERVE PIPE. ALONG WITH THEIR COMPILATIONS, AWARE HAS ALSO SIGNED A FEW TO THEIR LABEL, INCLUDING TRAIN, FIVE FOR FIGHTING AND JOHN MAYER. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES THIS LITTLE LABEL SO UNIQUE IS IT'S A MIDDLE-MAN POSITION—SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE AWARE REP PROGRAM (AN EXTENSIVE NATIONAL GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO FIND AND EXPOSE NEW ARTISTS) AND COLUMBIA RECORDS, WHICH HELPS PROMOTE SOME SELECT AWARE ARTISTS INTO SUPERSTAR STATUS.



AWARE
records

One of the first additions to the Aware staff was 26-year-old Director Promotions, Mark Cunningham. Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Cunningham discovered his love of music when his older sister, Kelly Rae, shared her Erasure and Depeche Mode tapes with him. "I went through the hip-hop phase for three or four years and one of my good friends made me listen to U2's *Joshua Tree* and converted me to the rock & roll side of things," recalls Cunningham.

While attending Michigan State University, Cunningham started a local band called Mama Pajama and performed at a few of the same East Lansing clubs as Rusted Root and Better Than Ezra. But Sunday nights in the basements of small clubs wasn't exactly where Cunningham wanted to be, so he decided to work on the other side of the business. I recently hooked up with Mark to find out the rest of the story.

THE AWARE REP PROGRAM BEGAN AROUND 1994 AND YOU WERE ONE OF THE FIRST TO JOIN. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?

"I met this guy Jason Rio at MSU and he was selling CDs, putting up posters and just trying to spread the word about these two great compilation CDs that he had randomly found in a store. Jason would make presentations to sorority houses and try to sell the *Aware I* and *Aware II* CDs. He sold a ton of CDs and this launched the Aware Rep Program. The Aware booklet mentioned that if you wanted to help put posters up and be part of the Rep Program, call this number. So I thought, 'Great, I love music and I'm in a band.' I called and they were very happy that I was willing to offer my services for free. So I put up posters and sold CDs for Aware around East Lansing for about two years. We now have about 450 college reps and it's progressed from the telephone and snail mail to E-mail, Instant Messenger and the Internet. Our reps work for free with no college credit. These are the kids at school who love music and would do anything to drop out of school and work in the music business. They work for college radio, review records for the newspapers and are on the Internet all the time finding new music and talking about new music. Some manage bands and others book clubs. People can sign up for the Rep Program on our Web site, which is www.awarerecords.com."

IT'S LIKE STARTING OUT AT THE BEGINNING AND MOVING UP WITH THAT FRESHNESS AND LOVE OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING THAT JUST NATURALLY TRANSCENDS INTO BEING PART OF A COMPANY. DO YOU THINK THIS IS A BIG PART OF AWARE'S SUCCESS AND IS THAT WHY YOU KEEP THE REP PROGRAM GOING?

"Yeah, definitely! When our bands tour we send posters out to our reps. We'll send 40 posters to Houston for our reps to put up on the University of Houston campus, get in the record stores and bring to the clubs. We'll send them sampler CDs so people can hear the music and we'll sticker it with a tour date that's coming. It's a great grassroots network. Kids are just so fired up. Their motivation isn't money; their motivation is just being a part of it. And that's what I was like in college, too. Being on the



(L-R) GLEN PHILLIPS (EX-TOAD THE WET SPROCKET), MARK, AWARE RECORDING ARTIST JOHN MAYER AND WKOC NORFOLK PD PAUL SHUCRUE.

inside is the ultimate and that's what these kids love. A lot of them refer to it as 'us' or 'we' when they talk about Aware. They say, 'It's our band,' and that's great because they take ownership. That attitude was invaluable when we launched the Train record and we worked that for nearly a year before it really took off. These reps are never going to forget the time they hung out with Train at this small club before they got on MTV and VH1. And now we have Five For Fighting and we get E-mails all the time from reps who go to the shows and sell

CDs for the band and they're like, 'Oh my God; I got my picture taken with John Ondrasik, the lead singer. He's the coolest.' Now they're not only fans for life, but they're going to tell so many more people about the band. There's another great side of it. They all have their favorite local and regional bands and they recommend those bands to send us their CDs. If we can make a new relationship with a great, young band because of our reps it's such a bonus because most labels don't have that."

"I get up every morning and I'm working for other people. And when it's for somebody you really care about, it makes it that much easier."

YOUR ANNUAL COMPILATION CD KICKED OFF THE LABEL IN 1993. HOW DID THAT IDEA START?

"Gregg Latterman started the company. This is a great story. He was an accountant in Boston and just graduated from college and was miserable, like most postgraduates are. One of Gregg's friends' fathers was the attorney for the New Kids On The Block. This was in the early '90s when they were still huge. He hung out with these friends and picked their father's brain for some information and started doing research. Gregg always wanted to start his own business so he decided he wanted to make a compilation

CD of all of these great regional bands that he had been listening to, and that would be his business. So he made *Aware 1* and the day the CDs arrived from the manufacturer after his first pressing, he quit his job, hopped in an RV and went on tour with Jackopierce, who were unsigned at the time but had two songs on *Aware I*. He sold the CDs on the road and that was the launch of the company. Now we've released eight compilations, total."

AND YOU'VE GOT QUITE A LIST OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE REALLY GONE ON TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES, LIKE TRAIN, MATCHBOX TWENTY, THE VESPE PIPE, HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH, BETTER THAN EZRA, EDWIN McCRAIN, JACKOPIERCE, VERTICAL HORIZON AND SHAWN MULLINS. THEY ALL SEEM TO FIT IN A CERTAIN TYPE OF FORMAT. DOES AWARE LOOK FOR A CERTAIN ADULT ROCK SOUND?

"First and foremost, we look for good music. We discovered that Triple-A is the most receptive format for new music. Stations will play it, they'll take more chances than most sta-



BACKSTAGE WITH CARY PIERCE OF JACKPIERCE (LEFT) BACK IN THE 'FAN' DAYS OF 1994

tions and I think they can afford that. You know rotations aren't as high but you'll hear so much more music on a Triple-A station and that has always been the natural starting point for most of the records that we've worked. We've had some go right to Alternative, AOR and Active Rock, but it seems like Triple-A has been great for us in the past so it seems like a good place for us to really start."

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH COLUMBIA RECORDS AND HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

"The association with Columbia Records involves distribution and artist development. We signed with them in 1997 and just renewed the deal this past July. Initially, Sony distributed our catalog of compilations. There's also an artist development side of the deal where we sign a band and the record comes out on Aware. We work it until it's at a point where it becomes a priority at Columbia. Because major labels have so many releases, we can nurture a record and spend more time with it. A perfect example is what happened with Train, who was on Aware in February '98 and then, a year later, Columbia came on board and it was re-released on Aware/Columbia with the support of their promotion people and everything else. We worked with Columbia on the project and they guided us through the process.

"Now, Columbia's on board with Five For Fighting and what Gregg and I do here is make sure a lot of the smaller stations are being talked to. We talk to the stations we have great relationships with and then coordinate things with Columbia and let them run with the project because that's what they're best at, and Five For Fighting is a perfect example. Over the last couple of years my job has kind of evolved. Now that we have Columbia's promotion helping us with projects, I don't talk to nearly as many stations as I used to. Now I'm becoming a sort of internal product manager in our office. I have a few different bands/projects I oversee and that takes a great deal of time. We're still relatively small. We have six full-time employees, a few part-timers, seven interns, and the 450 reps who are not internal. We're in 47 states and something like 280 different cities. It's pretty crazy."

WELL THAT'S A FULL-BLOWN, THREE-TIERED SYSTEM, WHERE YOU'RE GOING FROM THE GRASSROOTS WITH THE INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS ON THE STREET LEVEL, TO YOUR MIDDLE LEVEL TALKING WITH THE SMALLER STATIONS AND THEN COLUMBIA, WHO'S THERE AT THE TOP WITH THE BIG SUPPORT.

"Yeah, and it's great for us because when something needs to get done at a station, Columbia's there and they are great at running things. Trina Tombrink has been unbelievable at taking care of

stations and making sure everything gets done. It's kind of hard to describe, but we work really well with Columbia's promotion staff in making sure everything gets done. We're a sounding board for one another and they can take care of so many different things."

IT SEEMS LIKE A NEW ARTIST WOULD HAVE A GREAT ADVANTAGE OF BEING RECOGNIZED BY AWARE BECAUSE OF THAT EXPANDED AVENUE YOU OFFER.

"Yeah, and major labels are so busy with so many projects, that it's easy for artists to get lost. We're here and we don't have that many records signed. We're a label that can spend time with bands and work with them in the areas they need to develop. There are so many records and competition is as fierce as ever. It's easy for a band to get lost at a label. It happens every day on so many different labels. So, we're all about patience."

BEING THAT YOU'RE A SMALLER LABEL, DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN RELATE BETTER WITH THE SMALLER STATIONS?

"Absolutely. I get a lot of E-mails from smaller stations that aren't on a panel. There is a Triple-A station in Minnesota and they

complain to me about their troubles getting service on this record or that record from X and Y label. I really love those E-mails because they're reaching out to us. It doesn't happen very often that radio reaches out to a label with a new record. It's not like I have the new Shawn Mullins single everybody's waiting for. 'We have a baby band and you're asking me if I can send it to you so you can play it? Absolutely!' I take advantage of people like that who write me. Eventually they're going to get on the panels and then those spins will be seen by everyone."

YOUR ENTIRE CAREER HAS BEEN WITH AWARE RECORDS AS A COLLEGE REP AND NOW AS DIRECTOR OF PROMOTIONS. ARE YOU STILL ENJOYING YOURSELF?

"Yeah I am. I can feel the light at the end of the tunnel. Our company has been through so many changes and we've done so much growing with the success we've had and with our association with Columbia. I feel like it's all starting to come together for us as a company. We're working with some incredible artists like Five For Fighting, Train, former Jackpierce lead singer Cary Pierce and

John Mayer. John's CD will be released in April and he can best be described as a combination of Sting and Dave Matthews. We're working with tremendous artists who are also great people and that goes a long way when you need something from an artist. That's one of the great things about being a small label. We can be selective in who we sign. It sounds corny, but it really makes it a treat to work for these artists. I get up every morning and I'm working for other people. And when it's for somebody you really care about, it makes it that much easier."



For more information regarding Aware records and their artists, contact mark cunningham at 773.248.4210.

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Sittin' in With Kyle Davis

By Jim Manion



Kyle Davis hit the Adult Rock radar in 1998 with his promising release, *Raising Heroes*, on the N2K Internet label. An album full of earnest hook-filled songs from the heart, *Raising Heroes* also put the spotlight on Davis' stirring, expressive vocals. But the project was caught in the crossfire between dot.com uncertainty and major label consolidation. By the end of the year, Davis was another deserving musical talent broke down by the side of the road.

But the Hopewell, Virginia, native is bouncing back in 2001 with his fresh new independent release, *Don't Tell The World*. And, despite the bad experience with *Raising Heroes*, Davis is excited about taking new steps to get his music out. Produced by his steady musical collaborator Don Dixon (R.E.M., The Smithereens) and sporting an adventurous eclectic sound that presents everything from glossy pop to late-night rumination, *Don't Tell The World* is a jolt of creative confidence from someone who could easily have thrown in the towel.

On the phone from the Chicago airport in mid-January, Kyle Davis is full of excitement as he talks about where he's from, and where he's going.

Your music sounds like it just springs out of you. Where did you first get the chance to perform for an audience?

"I never sang in high school chorus or played in the school band. I messed around with music and writing since I was 13, but it wasn't until I went away to college in 1982, at 17, that I got my first real gig. I played at a place called Crystal's Pizza in Abilene, Texas, and it was strange: it was the only place I've ever heard of this deal—I clocked in. I got paid \$5 an hour plus free pizza. I actually got a time card like I was working at the plant. But, when I switched schools and moved back to Virginia I ended up gigging so much that I never finished school."

What was your motivation to get into music, what sounds inspired you and how did you conceive of your own sound?

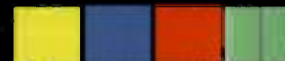
"Those people I heard early on—like when I was six or seven or eight, I would sit and listen to Beatles records on my parents' big old console stereo. Even though I was a little kid, I had two older brothers. That was tremendously helpful and I got to hear all sorts of great records. When I was in middle school I really got into Jackson Browne. He's probably my biggest influence even though I don't sound like him and I've never consciously tried to write like him. But I've listened to him a lot and I realize he says things in a different way. I was also really into U2 and still am. I think they've done a really great long-term body of work. I really like their new album, how it gets back to their basics. As far as my own sound, I've always been driven, first of all, by the groove. I really love those kind of groove acoustic players I'd seen growing up. Lyrically, I'm a writer who's not necessarily always autobiographical. I usually mix things that have happened to me with things I see happening to people around me. A lot of times my stories are a combination of many things. That's kind of attractive to me, because maybe I don't have the courage to just put everything on the line for everybody to see, like Shawn Colvin does. That's so revealing, too revealing for me. Sometimes I'll start off writing about an incident, or something I've seen, or something that's happened to me, but as a writer I don't mind interjecting a new twist. It's not like it has to be literally autobiographical, tried and true, to make a point."

What comes first in your songwriting process, the groove and melody, or the story and lyrics?

"For me, the stories are always forming in my head, but 90 percent of the time the groove or a little guitar hook will kick things off, then draw the story out. On 'Buried Alive,' from *Raising Heroes*, the writing definitely started with the guitar lick that opens the song. On 'Don't Tell The World' from the new album I definitely had something I wanted to write about, but it was only later I connected that with the guitar lines that open the song. So, it's usually groove first for me."

Being such a focused songwriter, does it help to work with a creative producer like Don Dixon? Someone whose sound is well-grounded but playful enough in terms of new ideas, different sounds and interesting instruments?

"Definitely, and I think there's more of that on *Don't Tell The World*. We did a lot of the record ourselves, me and Don and a few other people in a number of different studios. Whereas before, on *Raising Heroes*, it was six of us all together as a band for three weeks in the same studio in the Bahamas, and that record carries a lot of the personality of that band and that experience. This time we created stuff differently and in six different studios. Trying different things, like the loop on 'Bottom Of The Ocean,' being more experimental. 'Angels Fall' was done in Charlotte and has a special feel to it, but then 'Don't Tell The World' is a little bit slicker and done with Shawn Pelton and Zev Katz up in New York City. And then we've got 'Only Human,'



which is just Don and I and Mike Durham; it's a real haunting kind of thing. It shows that we produced it in different places, and when I get the chance to do another record I'd like to do it that way, so there's not all the same guitar and drum sounds. I think it's a good thing. It kept things fresh. I used my live band on a few tunes and explored other options, too. I had a lot of fun making it because there was really no pressure. It wasn't like we had a label breathing down our neck or anything; we were paying for it ourselves. I could sing the way I wanted, we could do arrangements in a little more odd way than normal. I've had people tell me that on the new record I sound different on a lot of the songs. I feel like this time I got to go into different characters for each song."

I definitely hear a more eclectic sounds from you this time around. It seems like you are naturally branching out into different song flavors, with more dynamic range. It sounds like you had a fun time sequencing the song order.

"We did! At the end we were listening to it all the way through and Don said, 'This is a good record, man. There are lots of different things on here.' I'm lucky to have a long-term working relationship with Don. We're good friends. He just buzzed me yesterday to check in and ask me to play a show with him in Raleigh. He's been a real good and encouraging friend to me; he's the one who convinced me to record again. He said, 'Hey, you have a bunch of good songs here. Let's make another record and see if you can get another deal out of this.' That helped a lot after a bit of misfortune I had with my deal with N2K."

How are you looking back on 1998 and the whole experience with *Raising Heroes*? At that point it seemed you had already taken all the right steps—developing a regional fan base, catching the ears of Phil Ramone and Don Dixon, being named *Billboard*'s best unsigned artist in 1995. You were ready to take it to the next level.

"It was a great opportunity at first. I was still working with Don but I had a production deal with Phil Ramone. He was trying to find myself and some other acts a deal back in 1996. Then this thing came up with the Internet label, N2K. They had gotten some new financing and they were going to go through Sony to become a regular label. They made Phil the President and hired one of my best friends, Kevin Law, to A&R it, to help me develop my record. After we finished recording, it went to Adult Rock radio in April of 1998 and it was in the stores by early May. But by July, after it was really only out two or three months, they basically decided to pull the plug on the label and merge with CDNOW and try to become this huge Internet entity. Of course, we now know what happened to a lot of that. We had a fine opportunity, we hired a good staff, the company was saying things like, 'We're going to work the record a year and a half,' which was ideal for a record like *Raising Heroes*. It's not a quick thing. We started off with great reviews, a good amount of airplay, which was starting to cross over into Modern Rock stations, but the record was really only out a few months before they pulled the plug. We kind of coasted for another month or two but really, it was over. The label went down but I still went out to Boulder in August of '98 to play the *Gavin* conference on the momentum we'd built earlier in the year. I got a lot of good response out there from many of the stations. They really wanted to help me, but it was already over for that record."

You never really got a chance. How did that impact you?

"It was a crushing kind of defeat, and Don Dixon and Kevin Law were pretty devastated, too. We'd all put a lot of hard work into the project. This same thing has happened to a lot of people I've known. They'll make a record, maybe I'll hear it when it's in the can, and I think it's something that should do great out there. Then a year later, it's still not out—the A&R guy got fired or the company merged or got bought out. By then you feel like a step-act or something."

How did you regroup and set a new strategy?

"I played around Virginia a little bit and took some time off to figure out what I wanted to do. You get emotionally attached to your records; they're kind of like kids. You hate to see it go down the tubes

without getting a chance. But, with Don Dixon's encouragement and help, we've done the new album, *Don't Tell The World*, ourselves and we're getting it out through Redeye Distribution. They're a good little company in our region and we wanted to create a little noise and start working this record. We've sold a bunch around Virginia already and we've done some television and promotional events. We filmed a show in Virginia Beach and we're going to edit it and run it on local public access cable channels, which is an inexpensive new way to get people interested. I'm hoping that it's all going to lead to someone else picking the record up. But for now, we're selling records at stores and shows, spreading the word and getting back to the grassroots. I've learned a ton of things doing this myself over the last eight months—mastering, manufacturing and distribution. I've never taken care of that stuff in the past and I'm going to remember to keep doing things for myself. It was an eye-opening experience."

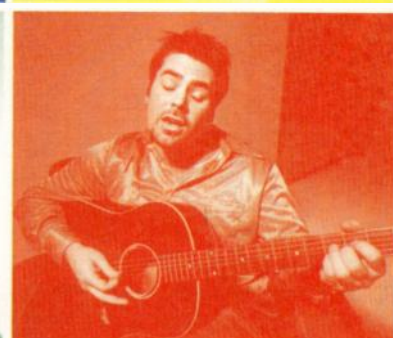
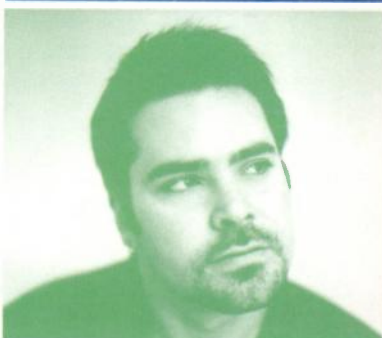
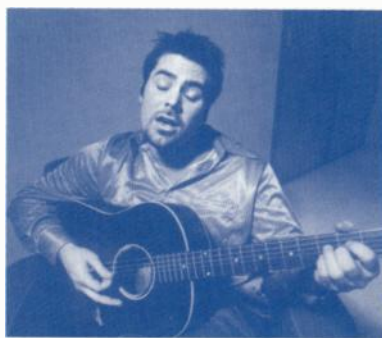
You've said the stories underlining your songs are part autobiographical, part observations. Was there an incident behind one of your new album's songs that was particularly striking?

"Well, on 'Lazarus Touch,' there's part of the song that refers to when your star is dimming, when you are losing your passion for things. I once spent about three hours on a train with a guy named Will; he was a real dapper-looking man, like a white-bearded Mr. French from that *Family Affair* TV show. It was on the train from D.C. to New York. Will was a widower who said he'd sunk to the bottom when he found himself alone. He was 83 or so and his kids had taken his driver's license because they didn't want him to drive. But, he had met a woman who was about 78 who lived near New York City and he was so enthused he was jumping on the train every weekend to go see her. He was immaculately dressed, had a cane and a little bag—he was back! He said, 'I thought it was all over for me, but you forget how rejuvenating love is.'"

Experiences like that are a real gift.

"I always feel like some of the experiences I draw on to write songs are just accidents and when they happen I feel like, 'Wow, I'll never get this lucky again.' A lot of it really is luck. I could have sat somewhere else, you know?"

For more information regarding Kyle Davis, give Sound Advisors a call at 212.978.6979.



Just as the Joad family were laying to rest their grandfather in *The Grapes Of Wrath*, John Steinbeck wrote:

If you who own the things people must have could understand this, you might preserve yourself. If you could separate causes from results, if you could know that Paine, Marx, Jefferson, Lenin, were results, not causes, you might survive. But that you cannot know. For the quality of owning freezes you forever into "I," and cuts you off forever from the "we."

Tim Easton has surely read that line, for all throughout his latest release, Easton delivers his yearning songs with an acoustic jangle, inspiring lyrics and a rough and tumble Wilco-based backbeat. Kick yer feet up for a few and read on as Easton fills us in on his background, jamming with Wilco and *The Truth About Us*.

By Matthew Lawton



I've heard you traveled a bit as a kid. What was your childhood like?

"Well, my father works for Goodyear and really I grew up in Ohio, but they did transfer him to Japan for a while. So that changed my life considerably in grade school. I lived there for three years in the '70s. It was the first place I heard The Beatles; they were already done but that was the first place I heard them. Kiss was coming up then."

As a kid, what inspired you to play music?

"My two older brothers play guitar and they're the ones that got me started on more of a roots-music thing."

What were some of your favorite records, as a kid?

"Probably *Revolver* and *Kiss Alive*, also The Rolling Stones' *High Tide And Green Grass* and some of the stuff my brothers and sisters were playing. My one brother played a lot of Todd Rundgren so that kind of sunk in. I started going down to the library a lot in Akron and they had a good vinyl selection down there, and I just started hearing stuff like Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, stuff like that."

Is that when you started playing guitar?

"Yeah, my brothers showed me basic blues and country formations, then I just kind of started picking out what I liked."

At what point did you decide, "I'm gonna be a musician?"

"Sometime just after high school when I went over to Europe for a little while; Paris and London for about a year each and Prague, too. You couldn't really hitchhike around America at the time and some of my heroes were hitchhiking troubadour types, so I just went over there where it was more possible. I had heard about the street music over there being a little easier to do because some of the cities were built with pedestrians in mind. They had pedestrian centers where there are no cars. So I went over there and made my way around by thumb and by train."

Did you go with friends or by yourself?

"I went by myself the first time. I went seven or eight times, altogether."

Were you just doing music or did you get a job like in a café?

"At first I got a job as a busboy. Once I was a night watchman. You know, basic manual-labor jobs. Then I kind of learned the street-music thing and how to do it and make the most out of it, so I just did that for a while."

How do you make the most out of being a street musician?

"Well, you get your certain areas, certain times, certain songs, and you learn to conserve your energy and not just sing all

damn day. In the case of London, we used to get on the trains and sing three train songs over a span of, like, three train stops. You know, like 'This Train Is Bound For Glory,' or 'Southbound' by Doc Watson, or something like that. And then bottle up the money—it also helps when you have partners like a beautiful girl who collects the money."

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When you finally got back to Ohio did you get a couple of bands going?

"Yeah, I got a band called The Haynes Boys. We thought we were special. As it turns out, there are quite a few bands doing that kind of roots-rock thing, combining pop and punk with country music. We put one record out—we still hear people talk about it occasionally. It's got warts on it, but it's still got its good parts, too. It was recorded mostly live, so the band had really worked hard and had been playing a lot. The songs we put on there we knew real well and I think we played them in a cool way."

"But The Haynes Boys were kind of breaking up and we were all doing other projects. And since I couldn't have a band together that was unified in one direction, I made a solo album called *Special 20* and then I got a publishing deal in L.A., so I decided to move there."

"I had the deal and I had a couple of places I knew I could get

gigs, with Largo being one of them. I didn't tell anyone in Ohio I was moving out there, even my parents. I just went out there and hung out for a while and while I was out there, I got an apartment and the record deal. So I was working hard."

So you came out to LA, scored the record deal and have just released your new album, *The Truth About Us*. Were these new songs written prior to moving to LA, or after you had settled in?

"I'd say half and half. I wrote a couple of them before I came out and then right when I came out to LA I wrote a bunch of songs and it was a really cool thing. I knew inside that I was making a big change in my life and leaving friends behind; it affected me somehow. It puts a little emotion into you, but I hope I don't have to move again to write the next record."

Whose idea was it to record the album in Chicago with some of the guys from Wilco as your band?

"That was Joe Chiccarelli's idea, the producer I had actually met them a couple of times and opened up for them, but I didn't know them personally. So Joe set that all up."

That kicks ass. What was it like when you first walked into the studio and John Stirratt was playing bass, Ken Coomer was on the drums and Jay Bennett was playing guitar? Were you intimidated?

"No, no—occasionally I'd be sitting inside my control booth and we'd be playing, and I'd be like, 'Oh this is fantastic. These guys are in one of the greatest rock bands going right now.' And they're just really nice guys and they work hard and they're very innovative. They didn't go the straight route with the songs. They made some changes and we did some arrangements on the spot—they put something new into the songs, definitely. There's no other band around that has changed their vision so drastically from album to album and still makes beautiful records."

"So we recorded, I think, 10 out of the 11 basic tracks in Chicago with the guys from Wilco. Jeff Tweedy came by and visited but he's not on the record. Then we brought the tapes to Los Angeles to add other things, little flavor things and vocals, and stuff like Petra Haden's violin solo at the end of the album on 'Don't Walk Alone.'"

And then, I assume, Mark Olson and Victoria Williams came out from Joshua Tree to add their parts?

"Yes they did."

How did you hook up with them?

"Well, interestingly, I was literally crossing the country in a U-Haul truck with our bass player, Chris Burny, who is on the record, too. He and I were crossing the country and I just said, 'Hey let's stop at Joshua Tree on the way and let's meet Mark Olson and Victoria Williams—let's find them,' and we did."

Had you met them before or did you know where they lived?

"No, I just knew that they were there. I'd been to Joshua Tree before and played some music there and talked to people who knew them, but that's all we had to go on. Joshua Tree is a big area, but the town is small and sure enough the next thing you know we were hanging out with them and Chris went on tour with Victoria, like, a month later."

I noticed there are some backwards guitars and tricks like that on the album. Who came up with those ideas?

"That backwards guitar on 'Carry Me' was done in LA by Jay Bennett. Wilco came out on the West Coast and played a couple of shows and while they were there they came down to LA and we did some more work. So they were at both places."

Another cool track on the album is "Happy Now." It's very Byrdish and Beatlesque. What inspired that one?

"Yeah, there is more jangle in it. I mean, it's an interesting kind of pieced-together thing. There's a tattoo parlor underneath my apartment and the husband and wife were just having a huge fight and she was screaming at him for a long time. I was listening to it for a while and then it just made its way into a song. The building I live in is kind of like *The Shining* or something. One of the guys that lived there before me was one of the people who committed suicide when Kurt Cobain committed suicide. So that was pretty intense."

"And then the line about, 'And the band came out and played a game of cards,' that came from a story I heard out in Joshua Tree about the band Giant Sand coming out on stage somewhere in Europe. And instead of playing music they just sat down at a card table and played a game of cards and that kind of made it in there, too. It's a poppier song with a not-so-happy story content."

The album opens with the melancholy, upbeat "Half A Day"; any thoughts on that one?

"I felt really good about that one right off the bat and I wanted that to open up the record, and I'm glad that it eventually did. It's the first song of mine where there's a nice acoustic guitar and piano combo going on in it, plus a pedal steel. So what's it about? Just a frustration kind of thing about meeting somebody or not being able to hook up with somebody because your schedules are all off."

How about "Get Some Lonesome"—that's a great one. It's a real late-night-drive-through-the-desert kind of track.

"'Get Some Lonesome' is one of the songs that was written right before I left for California and that's a song that's kind of about regret, I guess. It's just a song about a character that regrets some things and made some mistakes and pushed someone away."

Being a half a day away?

"Yeah, you know you just push someone away and there's nothing they can do about it."

And doesn't it have a line from "This Life," by David Whyte?

"Yeah, there's like one or two lyrics in there I think the first two lines of that song come from that poem: 'There's a man I want to know again'...that line."

Who are some of your favorite authors?

"I'm a big John Steinbeck fan. Lately though, I just read whatever I can get my hands on, from David Sedaris to David Mamet. They're kind of like essays and short stories and stuff like that."

When you're writing your songs, do you find yourself sitting down with an idea and writing it or do you find yourself filling the pages of journals for months and then putting a song together?

"Yeah, I do keep a notebook with me and I write things down that maybe don't have a specific home right away or an apparent home in a song right away. Then later I might cut and paste a little bit. Then sometimes a song just comes out in one go, as is."

Did any of the tracks on this album just come out like that?

"I think 'Get Some Lonesome' would be one of them because I borrowed. What else? Oh yeah, 'I Would Have Married You.' Definitely that came out like that because I wrote that in my head before I even had the guitar."

Throughout this record I feel like there is someone that you left behind.

"Really?"

Yeah, is that true or did you take her with you or is it all made up?

"It's all made up."

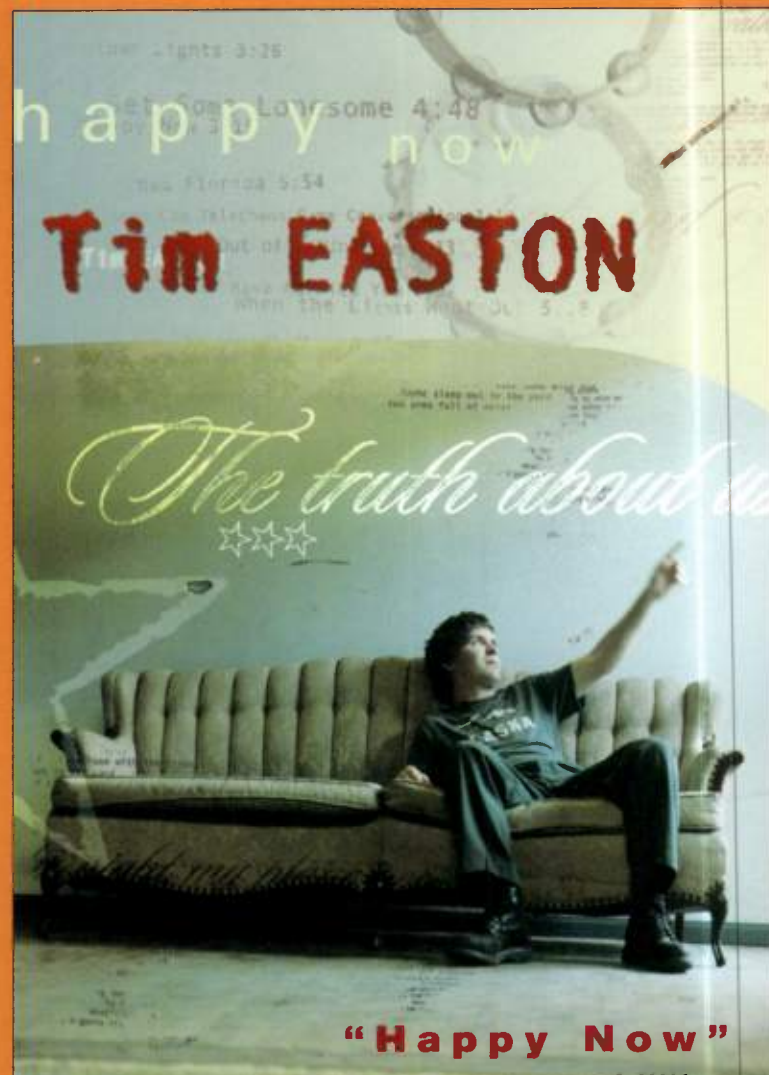
Should I believe that?

"Well, I mean, talking about the songs is probably not one of my favorite things to do. I don't think any songwriter really likes to talk about what a song is about until way after the fact. I mean, these are all brand-new still. I like to have people put them into their own lives and let them take and mean different things."

That's what songs do. When I first put your record on and I heard "Half A Day," I started thinking about someone and it's like you lifted the story from my notebook.

"Then my job is done!"

It sure is. Thanks for your time. ✈



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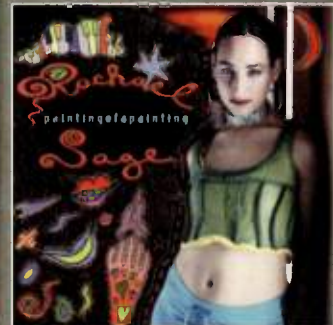
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OLD 97'S "King Of All The World"

FROM THE RELEASE: *Satellite Rides*

LABEL: Elektra/EEG

MEMBERS: Rhett Miller (vocals, guitar); Murry Hammond (bass); Ken Bethea (guitar); Philip Peeples (drums).

ORIGIN: Dallas

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Even back when Rhett and Murry were two-thirds of Dallas band Sleepy Heroes, they totally "got" the whole pop/alt/country thing. In 1993, they formed the Old 97's with Ken and Philip, made three albums before *Satellite Rides* (and scored top 10 Adult Rock songs with "Murder [Or A Heart Attack]" and "Nineteen"). "King Of All The World" is so easy to listen to it has no choice but to be a hit. Learn more about the Old 97's on page 20.

CONTACT: Lisa Michelson 212.275.4260

THE MAX WEINBERG 7 THE MAX WEINBERG 7

LABEL: M&K Sound/Hip-O

MEMBERS: Max Weinberg (drums); Scott Healy (piano, keys); Michael Merritt (bass); Mark Pender (trumpet, vocals).

GUEST ARTIST: Dr. John (vocals).

PRODUCED BY: Max Weinberg

ORIGIN: New Jersey



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Max Weinberg is not simply the muscle behind Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, nor is he just the Musical Director of Late Night With Conan O'Brien; Max Weinberg is also a huge fan of the characters who sat behind the drum kit in early rock & roll, big band and jazz. The Max Weinberg 7 is a fast-paced, good-time, boogie woogie-filled disc that features The Mighty Max singing with his sticks, with vocals being handled by the rest of the 7. Like The

Brian Setzer Orchestra, The Max Weinberg 7 revitalizes this classic rockin' music with power, passion and a bucketload of fun and sweat!

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Rock This Joint"; "Jumped"; "Sincerely."

CONTACT: Robert Silverstone 310.815.4900

DOUBLE TROUBLE Been A Long Time

LABEL: Tone-Cool

ARTIST: Chris Layton (drums); Tommy Shannon (bass).

GUEST ARTISTS: Susan Tedeschi (vocals, guitar); Dr. John (vocals, piano); Jonny Lang (vocals); Jimmy Vaughan (vocals, guitar); Willie Nelson (guitar); Reese Wynans (keys).

PRODUCED BY: Chris Layton and Tommy Shannon

ORIGIN: Austin

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Everybody knows that former Stevie Ray Vaughan's rhythm section, Double Trouble, is comprised of Chris Layton (drums) and Tommy Shannon (bass), and their long-awaited debut album features many of their friends, including Jimmy Vaughan, Willie Nelson, Jonny Lang, Reese Wynans and more. Double Trouble took their album title from the opening line of the first single, a cover of Led Zeppelin's "Rock And Roll", which features the wicked guitar work of Kenny Wayne Shepherd and the sweat-soaked vocals of Susan Tedeschi.

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Rock And Roll"; "In The Garden"; "In The Middle Of The Night."

CONTACT: Greg Reisch 781.263.9224



TIM EASTON *The Truth About Us*

LABEL: New West

ARTIST: Tim Easton (vocals, harmonica, guitar).

GUEST ARTISTS: John Stirratt (bass); Jay Bebbett (keyboards); Victoria Williams, Mark Olson (backing vocals); and other musicians.

PRODUCED BY: Joe Chiccarelli

ORIGIN: New York

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: In 1998, singer/songwriter Tim Easton released his first solo album, *Special 20*, on his own Heathen Records label, then decided to head for Los Angeles to pursue his musical dreams. After several years of writing and performing in night clubs, Easton landed a deal with New West. Now he's released *The Truth About Us*—a modern rock take on folk music of the past. With the

help of Wilco band members and some wonderful backing vocals, Easton offers a beautiful collection of intricately crafted songs, including "Happy Now"—written in his Los Angeles apartment after overhearing an argument from the tattoo parlor below!

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Happy Now"; "Out Of Your Life/Title"; "Half A Day."

CONTACT: Cameron Strang 310.246.5766



SHAWN COLVIN *Whole New You*

LABEL: Columbia

ARTIST: Shawn Colvin

ORIGIN: Vermillion, SD

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Shawn Colvin's eagerly awaited new album finds her again working with longtime collaborator and producer John Leventhal, and together they've created a sonic landscape that was well worth the wait. Ten of the 11 tracks were cowritten with Leventhal, while they invited the pen of another musical bohemian, Edie (Mrs. Paul Simon) Brickell, on "Roger Wilco." All thru *Whole New You*, Colvin sings with the confidence and grace of someone who's learned the lessons of life's experiences. From beginning to end, Colvin takes us on a personal journey that we've all dealt with on our own. When "Whole New You" impacted radio a few weeks ago, it topped the Most Added list!

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Whole New You"; "Bonefields"; "Roger Wilco."

CONTACT: Trina Tombrink 212.833.8505

KYLE DAVIS *Don't Tell The World*

LABEL: KIK/Redeye

ARTIST: Kyle Davis (vocals, keys, guitar) and other musicians.

PRODUCED BY: Don Dixon

ORIGIN: Hopewell, VA

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The title track to Davis' third CD, *Don't Tell The World*, was written about a local political debate he was watching that made him yell, "These guys are both full of crap!" Davis took his idea to the studio and created the song from the infectious, rhythmic groove laid down by Saturday Night Live drummer Shawn Pelton and his other band mates. The ongoing friendship between Davis and producer Don Dixon (R.E.M., Smitherens) shines throughout *Don't Tell The World*.

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Don't Tell The World"; "Only Human"; "Bottom Of The Ocean."

CONTACT: Louise Coogan 212.978.6979



JONATHA BROOKE *Steady Pull*

LABEL: Bad Dog

ARTIST: Jonatha Brooke (vocals, guitar, piano, ukelele).

GUEST ARTISTS: Bob Clearmountain (bass); Mitchell Froom (B-3); and other musicians.

PRODUCED BY: Jonatha Brooke and Bob Clearmountain

ORIGIN: Boston

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Although she's been writing and performing for the past 12 years, Jonatha Brooke is unfortunately still one of the best-kept secrets in the music biz. *Steady Pull* is Brooke's first independently produced and marketed studio album, and the first single, "Linger," is infectious and melodic and has already gone to #2 Most Added in its first week out! "Linger" will also be featured in the upcoming film *Julie Johnson*, starring Courtney Love and Spalding Gray, which just might pull Brooke further into the spotlight.

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Linger"; "How Deep Is Your Love?"; "Digging."

CONTACT: Patrick Rains 310.457.8665



DOWNTOWN MYSTIC *Downtown Mystic*

LABEL: Sha-La

ARTIST: D.M. and Jessie Thomas (vocals, guitar); Steve Brown, Bruce Engler and Ozzie Caccavelli (guitar); P.J. Farley and Eric Hoagland (bass); Tom Mastro (drums, percussion).

GUEST ARTISTS: Max Weinberg (drums); Garry Tallent (bass).

PRODUCED BY: Robert Allen and Ben Elliot

ORIGIN: UK

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Downtown Mystic's music is inspired by '60s pop icons and '70s rockers, yet it's planted firmly in the here and now. With vocal harmonies reminiscent of Poco and early Eagles, it's hard not to sing along with Downtown Mystic's music. Like albums from the past, Downtown Mystic is split into three segments that cover all of life's basics: doubt, faith and rock & roll karma. Their track, "Brian Jones," was released to honor the 30th anniversary of the death of the man who actually started The Rolling Stones, and guesting as the rhythm section are none other than Springsteen's E-Street cronies Mighty Max Weinberg on drums and Garry W. Tallent on bass.

SUGGESTED SONGS: "Think A Little Louder"; "Brian Jones"; "Dead End Space."

CONTACT: Robert Allen 201.664.1955



STEPHANIE ARĂMBURO *"Haz Lo Real"*

FROM THE RELEASE: Stephanie Arămburo

LABEL: Old Pants

ARTIST: Stephanie Arămburo (vocals); and various musicians.

ORIGIN: Denver

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: "Haz Lo Real" is a soft and beautiful acoustic guitar number from Stephanie Arămburo, Denver's latest export. Lifted from her eponymous debut CD, "Haz Lo Real" showcases Stephanie's silky smooth voice (and her skills at singing in Spanish). Though this is her first album, Stephanie Arămburo spent several years singing on the Las Vegas Strip and touring the Western U.S. in bands before she chose to do her own music.

CONTACT: Robert A. Case 719.632.0227

JAMES BECKER *"Fair Warning"*

FROM THE RELEASE: James Becker

LABEL: New Pants

ARTIST: James Becker (vocals, guitar).

ORIGIN: Denver

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: In his 17 years as a musician, James Becker has played in plenty of bands—some country, some pop, some rock. That fact bears out in "Fair Warning," a bluesy/country stomp that lives and breathes on Becker's six-string prowess and voice that sounds like it was FedExed straight outta Nashville. Wanna hear "Fair Warning" for yourself? It's on our companion sampler, TA TuneUp #50.

CONTACT: Robert A. Case 719.632.0227

THE BEN ROGERS BAND *"Souless"*

FROM THE RELEASE: Another Day Gone

LABEL: Feckless

MEMBERS: Ben Rogers (vocals, guitar); Rob Overbey (guitar); Don Di Paolo (drums); Nick D'Amato (bass).

ORIGIN: New York City

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Born in London, Ben Rogers got his chops together on the L.A. club scene, at Berklee College of Music in Boston and as a roadie for Genesis and Phil Collins, among others. Another Day Gone is the first CD for Ben Rogers and his band, and "Souless" is a very strong introduction to it. Spilling over with energy and hooks, "Souless" is worthy of lots of airplay in the same slot you'd reserve for a Collective Soul tune. This is good stuff.

CONTACT: Lisa Barbaris 212.877.9631

STONE *"Cool Running"*

FROM THE RELEASE: Here Before

LABEL: SX3/Rattlesnake Venom

MEMBERS: Brad Wilson (vocals, guitar); J.J. Garcia (drums); Brian James (bass).

ORIGIN: Los Angeles

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Blues rockers Stone have had no trouble packing in audiences during their 10 times back and forth across the U.S., opening for, among others, Paula Cole, Tonic, Coco Montoya and Lynwood Slim. Their song "Teaser" was featured in *Vampires* and won a Saturn award for Best Music In A Horror Movie. "Cool Running" has a cool flow and hot guitar work (Brad Wilson has been compared to some guy named Eric Clapton) that will keep listeners glued to your station.

CONTACT: J.J. Garcia 818.754.1434

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SO WHO IS THIS G THEY CALL FIVE FOR FIGHT

by Jim Nelson

And then again, sometimes you do get a second chance to make a first impression. That's what "Easy Tonight" and *America Town* are for John Ondrasik. Before "Easy Tonight" hit #1 at Adult Rock Radio, before "Superman" graced the famous final scene of a recent *Dawson's Creek* episode, before *America Town* presaged the election mess, John Ondrasik was just diving into his debut outing, *Message For Albert*. Then the plug got pulled. It was late spring, 1997, *Message For Albert* was in the stores, Ondrasik was on the road to spread the word and the first single was just getting sent to radio when his label, EMI, quit. And there it was. Blood, sweat and years down the drain. Out of nowhere, Ondrasik had no label, no album, no chance to make a first impression.

"It was definitely a time when my future in the music business was in doubt," Ondrasik said last spring as he was finishing up *America Town* for Aware/Columbia. "It was a time of feeling numb to the world, whether it was visits with my shrink or having a hard time feeling about anything, you know? It was somewhat a time of depression. It was also a time when I was sitting down at my piano every night, writing songs and enjoying that."

Ondrasik was writing throughout this confusing time, but the first tune he wrote after deciding to make another go of it was a happy song—an oddity for him—called "Something About You."

"It was a long time coming to make this second record and I felt good about the song; it was a good day." He's had many good days since, as his demos grabbed the ear of Gregg Latterman over at Aware Records, who in turn got Columbia excited about John's songs. Thus, together with producer/guitarist Gregg Wattenberg and a few choice musicians, Ondrasik went into preproduction for *America Town* on the Fourth of July, 1999. This would give the Aware and Columbia teams plenty of time to set it up with the Triple-A intelligentsia. "Easy Tonight" got dropped right around the time of John's performance at last summer's Gavin A3 Summit, and the album landed as Ondrasik toured with David Gray last September. By the end of the year, "Easy Tonight" had spread to Rock, Alternative and Hot AC radio.

A week before Christmas, Ondrasik sat in his den and, in discussing *America Town*, brought our story full circle. "One of the very special things about this record having whatever success it may have is the awareness [it brings] for the first record. It's very rare that you get a second chance, but now people will be able to hear *Message For Albert*."

Perhaps now would be a good time to rewind. John Ondrasik records under the name of Five For Fighting because, as he puts it, it works as a metaphor for "battling through this giant beast that is the music business, and working to get your songs heard, while still remaining nontrivial and honest." He was born and raised in LA's expansive San Fernando Valley by a onetime-astrophysicist father and piano-teacher mother. Naturally, he studied piano diligently from the time he was two until he was 13. "My parents finally let me quit, whereupon I wrote my first song." Naturally. Without skipping a beat, he stole his little sister's new guitar and taught himself to play, and when he could finally afford his own electric rig, John played along to *Frampton Comes Alive* for a couple of years. "I never became a great guitar player," he'll tell you, "but I became proficient enough to write songs. It's a lot easier to write on guitar."

In his late teens, as he studied and wrote, John Ondrasik began making it a priority to train a third instrument: his voice. For two years he sang opera, which ultimately led him to a crossroads. "I had an opportunity to go overseas and really pursue opera. The problem was I'd be singing opera at home, but listening to The Beatles or Elton John all the time, so I had to decide: 'Am I going to try to be a songwriter or sing opera?' Because I enjoyed writing songs, I decided to do that."

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SO I HAD TO DECIDE: 'AM I GOING TO TRY TO BE A
SINGING FOTTER OR SING OPERA?'"

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Determined to avoid being held hostage by the music industry, Ondrasik got accepted at UCLA, where he found his initial major, computer science, too all-consuming to allow him any time with his music. Switching to math solved that dilemma and he wound up with a Bachelor's degree in applied mathematics, with a minor in economics.

"I got my degree and then decided to see what I could do, and spent many years writing bad song after bad song, playing in different bands, trying to get my career going."

After graduation, Ondrasik moved to Malibu, where he hooked up with some guys and formed a band called John Scott. It was the early '90s, the last hurrah of hair bands and arena rock. John Scott fit right in.

"We were doing very poppy, schloppy stuff," Ondrasik admits now, "and if I'd had success I would have had no career afterward because it was trivial music. So, fortunately, that dissolved and I decided to go back and write songs close to my heart."

"It was a great growth period, writing tons of songs, bringing them to people and getting critiqued, getting some horrible advice, getting some good advice; it got me angry enough that I decided to not take any advice and just try to write good songs. For a couple of years after that I just stayed in my studio and wrote stuff that ended up being the demos that got me my first record deal with EMI." Ondrasik's first publishing contract was serendipitous. Seems he was seeing one of the assistants at Motown, and one day, as his girlfriend played his demo at her desk, a visiting A&R exec from EMI Publishing heard "Love Song." That person from EMI not only signed him to a publishing deal, one day she became his wife, also. True story.

It's one of those things, really—where life just seems to connect on all levels—the way *America Town* was begun on Independence Day. And especially fitting since Ondrasik knew he was going to comment on life in these United States as he entered Mad Dog Studios in Burbank.

"I knew I wanted to write something about lying in politics. That [theme] found its way into three or four songs on my record."

"People don't get upset anymore about whether you're telling the truth or not; it's become an art form. You cannot be elected in this country if you tell the truth, you just can't."

If you wanted to sum up *America Town*'s thematic intersections, you'd start with a line in "America Town" that repeats several times: "There's got to be a hero somewhere." Wending its way through various tales, like the one about divorce through the eyes of a child ("Love Song"), the comment on apathy ("Bloody Mary"), or the one where Ondrasik celebrates ("Something About You"), is a view of

heroes, dissected and inspected from several angles. Heroism. Hero worship. Where have all the heroes gone? In "The Last Great American," in "Michael Jordan" and "America Town"—this is *America Town*. And according to John Ondrasik, it ain't what it used to be.

"People want to look up to somebody that they can trust, but you don't have many heroes around anymore, someone that you can look up to and say, 'I want my kid to grow up like that guy.' Like Michael Jordan. I think Michael Jordan's a great guy, someone worthy of looking up to, but the way we worship athletes and actors, and people like that, it's sick."

"[We] don't look up to political leaders because not many of them deserve being looked up to," Ondrasik is on a roll now, "so I think there's a lot of people just looking for someone with integrity [to help them] feel good about themselves. I don't think many people would say we necessarily look up to our leaders in the White House and Congress and the Senate; we're not inspired by them, we don't necessarily want our kids to grow up to be like them. I think part of what an artist should do is comment on the times he's living in, and I see that, but I also see a big apathy, too."

"I'm disappointed with the lack of leadership and a lot of my songs come from there, because I think it's important; it may not be important to everyone, but it's important to me."

continued

By the time this piece is published, "Easy Tonight" will have been out for a little more than five months, all the while steadily climbing up to #1 at this format and getting over-simplified by most. The obvious and generally noticed thread is the suicide, but the overriding theme comes in the guise of one line.

"I swore I'd never write a suicide song, but I did," Ondrasik reveals. "It's about a guy whose love ends up taking her life; it wasn't necessarily inspired [by anyone], but the one thing that is crucial to 'Easy Tonight' is the line, 'I don't know where I'm going yet/But I sure am getting there.'"

"This song is the complete anti-suicide song," he points out. "Things are going to be bad, but I want the kids who listen to the song to get there."

Ondrasik admits that even he's a bit uncomfortable with having a song that deals with suicide, but he couldn't really stop "Easy Tonight" from going where it wanted to go. "It was during the time of the Columbine stuff, and as the song came to fruition [I figured] it would be nice if there was a song out there for kids [that said], 'I'm having these tough times but I'm gonna choose to get through it.'"

"I wouldn't mind if 99% of the people never even realized it's a suicide song. I don't want to wave that flag."

As of mid-January there was no rush to name a follow-up to "Easy Tonight," as it continues to make strong inroads at Rock, Alternative, Top 40 and Hot AC—much the way the song spent last fall making an ascent up the Adult Rock charts. One of the odds-on favorites to follow it up is "Superman," a piano-driven pop anthem of epic proportions, a bona-fide hit just aching for the green light.

"To me, 'Superman' is about the humanity in ourselves, and that even a guy like Superman wants to be human once in a while. We all try to be Superman in our jobs, in our lives—everybody's aspiring to be Superman, but sometimes that's very hard and very disappointing, and we lose the humanity in ourselves. 'Superman' is really looking down inside yourself and trying to touch the humanity you have."

When Ondrasik started working on *America Town*, he also started thinking about some of the songs on *Message For Albert*, contemplating the idea of redoing them for the new record. Confronted with this notion, John realized two of his earlier works needed to be included. So he recut "Love Song," making it slightly (and noticeably) faster, and "The Last Great American," which he took from being a Billy Joel sort of piano ballad and turned into an acoustic, Appalachian-like arrangement.

"I thought 'Love Song' was important to put on this record because the first time around I'd seen that it meant a lot to couples who are either divorced or going through a divorce, with kids. I think it's probably still the best song I've ever written. That or 'Superman,' I'm not sure. But when we were gonna do it again, I didn't want to just recreate the first version so we played it with the whole band. I sped it up...I think it probably is not as good as on the first record, but I think 'Last Great,' on the other hand, is probably better on this record."

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PEOPLE DON'T GET UPSET ANYMORE
ABOUT WHETHER YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH
OR NOT; IT'S BECOME AN ART FORM. YOU
CANNOT BE ELECTED IN THIS COUNTRY
IF YOU TELL THE TRUTH."

"'Last Great American' is about a hero, Mr. Merry, who is so disgusted by what he sees that he ends up burying himself alive because he doesn't want to hang around it anymore."

"This song, about lack of statesmanship, lack of ethic, lack of integrity, was never more represented than by what we saw in Florida. Even though I wrote it four years ago, it definitely spoke to me of what was going on."

America Town, ultimately, is the juxtaposition of John Ondrasik's impossibly easy melodies and simple-with-a-flair-for-the-dramatic arrangements with his masterful words that often require some reflection before their true selves become known. "If you really want to get into it and think about it, you can," Ondrasik says of *America Town*, "but if you want to just sing along to some fun songs, you can do that, too. Hopefully we've made a record that people will want to put on 10 years from now, like I pull out *Madman Across The Water* or *Tommy*."

Four years ago, when John Ondrasik first used the name Five For Fighting—in hockey, the phrase references the number of minutes you get in the penalty box for fighting—it was a five-piece band. Following the demise of EMI, Ondrasik seriously wondered about his choice to make music, going into a self-inflicted semi-retirement. A funk, if you will. He continued to write, while he worked with his father at the family business—which he says he'll always do, no matter how many records he sells—but Ondrasik also almost gave up. The band drifted away.

Once *America Town* was done, John set out to put a new one together. For the moment, producer Wattenberg is on lead guitar and backing vocals, Curt Schneider is on bass, and Jason Smith is the Five For Fighting drummer. But John Ondrasik is Five For Fighting.

And he'd like to change that.

"I want to find my Elton John band that's with me for 15 years. A lot of that has to do with how much success we have, what I can pay them, and personalities, stuff like that, so we're doing the best we can. It is a pain having to go through different guys and not be a unit, but at the same time," he says wryly, "Five For Fighting's not gonna break up."

It's been an up and down four years for John Ondrasik. He made a stunning debut that very few people ever got to hear, he's been a top priority at a label that folded and he's known the despair that comes when that all crumbles.

But he's also gotten married, had a son, become a top priority at a new label and seen what it looks like from the top of the charts with "Easy Tonight."

"I count myself very lucky that I've finally gotten that chance. And whatever happens, great, but it looks like people are gonna have a chance to hear this record and decide whether they find it interesting or not, and that's all you can ask for."

Ondrasik has indeed made the most of his second first impression. A year ago, he was finishing up the mixing of *America Town*. Today, he's making new friends and winning over more fans every day. To all this, John says, "This could be all over next time we talk, but you know what? That's okay. I feel good about this record and I enjoy playing it every night. And it'll be interesting where we are a year from now." ★

• Find out more about John Ondrasik and Five For Fighting at www.sonymusic.com/artists/FiveForFighting/m/artists/FiveForFighting/.

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