

**ALSO
INSIDE**



SWEET HARMONY
Reviews of the Wailin' Jenny's "Firecracker"
and Ollabelle's "Riverside Battle Songs" PAGE 5



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Modern Acoustic⁶ II

The music magazine for really cool people

AUGUST 2006 - Volume II

Got some tunes
you'd like others
to hear? CD clubs are
a great way to share
the music you love

SECOND
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE!

LET'S GO - THE FEELIES
FEELIN' ALRIGHT - JOE COCKER
I'LL TAKE YOU THERE - STAPLE SINGERS
TEN FEET TALL - XTC
I JUST CAN'T HELP IT - JACKIE WILSON
FEVER - SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY
WHEN A WOMAN LOVES A MAN - BILLIE HOLIDAY
WHEN A MAN LOVES A WOMAN - PERCY SLEDGE
I'VE NEVER LOVED A MAN - ARETHA FRANKLIN
EVER FALLEN IN LOVE? - BUZZCOCKS
PERFECT WORLD - TONIO K.
IRENE WILDE - IAN HUNTER
MELT WITH YOU - MODERN ENGLISH
NON-STOP - SKATALITES
GIVE IT UP - FISHBONE
FREE NELSON MANDELA - SPECIAL A.K.A.
SING OUR OWN SONG - UB40
FAITH - VIOLENT FEMMES
SOUND OF SINNERS - THE CLASH
BULLSHIT - GRACE JONES
TRUST YOURSELF - BOB DYLAN
WHEN I TURN OUT THE LIVINGROOM LIGHT - THE KINKS
WHADDYA WANT FROM LIFE? - THE TUBES
PEOPLE - NRBQ
MADNESS IS ALL IN THE MIND - MADNESS

FROM THE EDITOR



PHOTO BY ADAM KASSIRER

The songs listed on the cover of this issue may or may not be familiar to you. And if you are an avid reader of this magazine you realize the songs don't appear to reflect the kind of music that you've come to expect from Modern Acoustic. That is because these songs – mostly from the '80s and earlier – were given to me on a mixtape made in 1988. My friend Leo, who I met at my first newspaper job way back when, made me this tape, titled "Leo Tapes His Faves (Vol. 3 1/2)."

It was my introduction to the idea of putting a bunch of songs together for sharing.

What's great about the list is how diverse it is: Joe Cocker and the Kinks nestled among the Violent Femmes and XTC and Billie Holiday and the Staples Singers.

I was opened up to a whole new part of Leo's personality I had not known about in our five or so years of friendship.

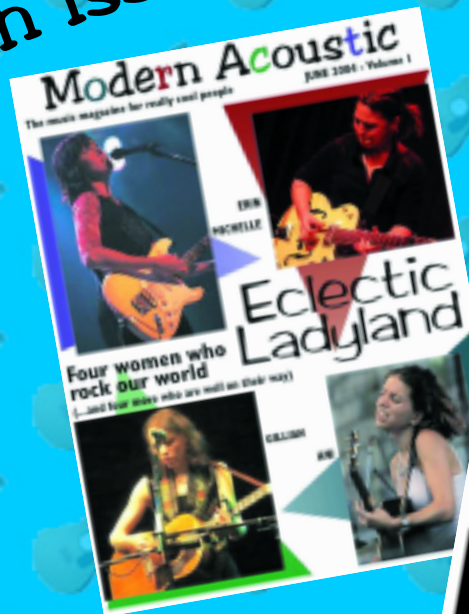
In 2006, while cassette tapes are all but gone, the mix craze lives on CD. As you'll read about in the cover story, there are "clubs" sprouting across the country, allowing people to share their music with others they don't know at all. It is also bringing people together as these club groups decide to meet in person

and share more of themselves.

It seems only appropriate that as we celebrate Modern Acoustic's second anniversary, we do it by sharing music (which is why we're in business). So sit back, and think: "If I were making my own music mix, what would be on it?" Then go ahead and make that CD. Give it to a friend, or mail it to someone you think would want to hear it. You may get something cool back in return.

Rich Kassirer, editor

Missed an issue?



Modern
Acoustic
Vols. 1-10



Visit

www.modernacoustic.com/issues.htm
and download past issues

LIVE SHOTS



PHOTOS BY RICH KASSIRER

Top: Lori McKenna plays a tune for the crowd; and (above, from left): Jeffrey Foucault, Kris Delmhurst and Peter Mulvey harmonize as Mark Erelli sings at Energy Park in Greenfield, Mass.

Mix & match

If you love turning people on to music you listen to, CD clubs are a great way to give — and receive — new tunes

Remember when your friend gave you that mix-tape of his or her favorite songs? Listening to the wild mix of styles and genres inspired you to hear more from some of those bands.

Cassette tapes may be long gone, but the idea of music mixes lives on and are the inspiration of CD mix clubs that have popped up nationwide.

Generally the clubs are made up of 12 people. Each member is assigned a month in which he or she produces a mix CD and mails it out to the other members. Not only do you get to share the music you love, but you get 11 CDs worth of new tunes a year in return.

"I am in two clubs simultaneously," says Gideon D'Arcangelo, who is an interactive media designer and who did a piece on CD clubs called "Pass the CD" for American Public Media's "Weekend America." His blog, *What Are You Listening To?* (www.whatareyoulisteningto.net), details the CD clubs he is in and the seven others that were created after his show aired. "I thought it would be interesting to see what

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Give It Up Or Let Me Go
Bonnie Raitt
Pocahontas Gillian Welch
Slung-lo Erin McKeown
Don't Wake Juniper Josh Ritter
Fell In Love With a Boy

Joss Stone
Jolene Mindy Smith
Arlington The Wailin' Jennys
Death Came a Knockin'
The Dunks
David Nellie McKay
East of the Mountains

Kris Delmhurst
Highway One The Waifs
James! Erin McKeown
Dixie Chicken Little Feat
Fireflies Lori McKenna
Turnaround Jules Verdone

Low Spark of High Heeled Boys
Rickie Lee Jones
London Still The Waifs
Box of Rain Grateful Dead
Coyote Joni Mitchell
Yellow Coldplay
Annabelle Gillian Welch

When It Don't Come Easy
Patty Griffin
Oh, My Girl Jesse Sykes
and the Sweet Hereafter
Round & Round Bob Schneider
Fever Breaks Michelle Shocked

Pigs, Sheep, and Wolves
Paul Simon
Harvest Moon Neil Young
I Envy the Wind Lucinda Williams
California Joni Mitchell
A Fond Farwell Elliott Smith

people who kind of knew each other, or didn't know each other at all, would think about each other just by knowing their musical taste," says D'Arcangelo.

Each group has a name — the Penguins, the Owls (see list on facing page), the Bobcats, MIXMOO, the Geckos, Gideon's 13, etc. "I got the idea for naming the clubs from Dave Ratzlow, who organized the Bobcats, the CD club that I originally covered in the radio piece," he says. "Ratzlow was in several CD clubs, which had names like the Cobras and the Cougars. I thought it was funny. D'Arcangelo says the names add personality to the groups. "It's a kind of social identity,

If you'd like to hear Gideon D'Arcangelo's segment on the CD club Bobcats, go to: http://weekendamerica.publicradio.org/programs/index_20050827.html (Scroll down to "Pass the CD")

like a sports team, that people can get behind. It means nothing at first, but a lot by the end of the year you've spent together," he says.

Rules for the clubs are decided solely by the members: Try to fill the CD and get it mailed out on time seem to be the only major requirements. And there is a lot of space for the creative and the personal. Mixing genres and styles, new and old, just about anything goes. Want to get creative with packaging? That's fine too.

Other ways to join the mix

● Apple's iTunes has a neat feature called **iMix** which allows you to create a mix of your favorite songs and then post them on iTunes so it can be shared. Others can then buy your mix for 99 cents per song. Be aware though: If any of your songs are unavailable from the Apple Music Store, it won't show up in your iMix. Check out my posted mix, "Modern Acoustic, Vol. 1" (see list, on the facing page).

● Another cool way to post your mixes is at **Art of the Mix** (www.artofthemix.org), a website devoted to individuals' creative tastes in music. They offer a Mix of the Week and allow comments as well as downloads on some. A recent mix offered up Queen Ida & Her Zydeco Band alongside Mary Kay Place, Tiny Volcano, Klaus Wusthoff, and Captain Beefheart. Yeah!

Jamie Barth's April CD

Happiness The Weepies
As a Child Blythe Hollow
Bluejays Laura Cortese

Hush Child
Sometimes Why

Golbarck and Crick
Rushad Eggleston

Forever Sweet Marie
The Resophonics

Daniel Lee Sarah Borges
King of Spain

Moxy Fruvous

Orion Anaïs Mitchell
Potter's Wheel Josh Ritter

Flora Crooked Still
Moment of the Year
The Doubtful Guest

Brand New '64 Dodge
(live) Greg Brown
The Only Way Mark Erelli

Wild Irish Rose
The Push Stars

Thin Blue Flame
Josh Ritter

How to Be Righteous
Lori McKenna

Over the Rainbow
Israel Kamakawiwo'ole

WANT TO START A CD CLUB?

Contact me at
rich@modernacoustic.com.
If we can get 12 people
interested, we'll start
our own group!

The Owls – June 2006 By Mary and Paul Mena

Down to This
Soul Coughing
Infested! (Goodman
Darwin Mix)

Course of Empire
Do the Devil
The Amazing Royal Crowns

Roy's Bluz Roy Buchanan
Death Letter
The White Stripes

Thrickfreakness
The Black Keys
I'm Straight
The Modern Lovers

Madonna of the Wasps
Robyn Hitchcock
I'm a King Bee Slim Harpo

Just Like Honey
The Jesus and Mary Chain
Honey White Morphine

Miracle Drug
A.C. Newman
Liquor Store Dash Rip Rock

Big Whisky
Royal Fingerbowl
King of Beers

Treat Her Right
I am a Scientist
Guided By Voices

Jamie Barth, a friend of mine, was inspired by D'Arcangelo's piece and immediately joined one of the clubs. Her CD, which came out in April, is a wonderful mix of eclectic singer-songwriter types (see list above). But what makes her CD even more intriguing is she sent along a four-page insert complete with liner-note-like information she composed which makes the package that much more personal.

How much do the music mixes reflect the personality of the creator is hard to tell exactly. D'Arcangelo agrees that it is possible that some gussy up their mix to try to impress the rest of the group.

"That's an open question, for sure. I'd be curious to hear what other club members think about this," he says. "I think music tells us a lot about what makes people click, so it's a doorway to developing tolerance. That's why I try to listen as diversely as I can. That's me, but I think the connection between what you listen to and who you are is strong, and the mix you make sheds light on that connection."

THE WAILIN' JENNY'S "FIRECRACKER" CRACKLES WITH ENERGY

I have to say I've been waiting for a long time for the Jenny's follow up album to "40 Day," one of my favorite albums. "Firecracker" no doubt satisfies my need for gorgeous three-part harmony.

Since the last album alto Annabelle Chvostek has replaced Cara Luft, joining mezzo-soprano Nicky Mehta and soprano Ruth Moody, but it seems little has been lost in the transition. The Jennys still produce some of the most beautiful sounds in all of North America, their voices surrounded by acoustic guitars, accordion, banjo and mandolin. Their sound is rounded out by a bevy of other musicians and instruments, including Dobro and National Steel guitars.

The opening track, "The Devil's Paintbrush," written by Annabelle, begins with a strumming banjo and then kicks in with the three women combining on the chorus, building energy and color. "This Heart of Mine" shows off Ruth's wonderfully angelic high voice; and "Things That You Know" comes the closest to a rocker on the



Nicky Mehta, Annabelle Chvostek and Ruth Moody

www.wailinjennys.com

album, where most of the songs straddle the folk/country line.

The Jenny's might be compared to the

Dixie Chicks if the Chicks dropped the schtick, but since they don't, we'll take our chicks wailin' any day.

HARMONY CENTRAL



Glenn Patscha, Amy Helm, Tony Leone, Fiona McBain and Byron Isaacs

www.ollabelle.com

OLLABELLE DIGS INTO THEIR ROOTS WITH "RIVERSIDE BATTLE SONGS"

On "Riverside Battle Songs," Ollabelle moves away from the gospel-tinged sound of their debut and toward a more rootsy sound

reminiscent of The Band. It's a sound that suits them nicely and is not that unexpected. Anyone who follows this five-member group

knows that one of its leaders, Amy Helm, is the daughter of The Band drummer Levon Helm. On the new album's "Reach for Love" sounds like it could have come right out of The Band's "Cahoots" sessions.

But what's nice is that Ollabelle wonderfully makes the sound their own: The dueling women's voices – of Helm and Fiona McBain – is something The Band never had; and Ollabelle eschews a Robbie Robertson-lead guitar for a fuller group sound featuring multiple layers of harmony and instruments, including mandolin, dobro, accordion as well as electric and acoustic guitars.

"Riverside," a stellar take on the traditional song "Down By the Riverside," really shows off Ollabelle's vocal prowess. The harmonies soar and the message – a protest song of sorts – is loud and clear. Other standouts on the album are "Fall Back" and "Troubles of the World."

For those wishing The Band were still performing, Ollabelle is keeping the flame burning brightly without sounding derivative.

Streamin' my life away

Lately, we've spent (too?) much time watching the Internet. Yes, watching. Maybe the coolest thing we've seen is a Josh Ritter concert broadcast as it was happening live in Amsterdam. There are a bunch of great sites where you can watch clips of bands (such as YouTube.com), but even better is watching and listening to full sets from your favorite musicians. If this is the future of the Internet, count me in!

Fabchannel

(www.fabchannel.com) Fabchannel delivers live concerts from the Paradiso and Melkweg in Amsterdam. The Josh Ritter show (top) aired here in Boston around 3:30 p.m., so there I was at work, headset on, watching the band perform. The concert was very professionally shot, the picture was spectacular with no dropouts or lagging in the connection. There is an extensive archive as well where you can watch previous concerts, including Ani DiFranco, Bright Eyes and others from a wide array of genres.

Amazon Fishbowl With Bill Maher

(www.amazon.com, click on Fishbowl logo) Bill Maher's weekly "talk show" on ama-

zon.com is a pioneering move from one of the country's best political satirists. Fishbowl consists of Maher on a typical "Tonight Show"-type set where he interviews a variety of entertainment folks. As you'd expect,

Maher's goofy personality melds well with his guests in the loose format. There is also always a musical component to the show. The Dixie Chicks (bottom), T-Bone Burnett and Ritter are among those that have performed.

The show is easy to navigate, allowing you to skip over the interviews if you want to watch just the performances.

Blue Room

(www.blueroom.att.com)

The fact that the Blue Room is run by a corporation doesn't completely deter us from checking them out because they have something we like – streams from concerts including the Bonnaroo festival, Austin City Limits and others. Among the performances recently posted were Elvis Costello with Allen Toussaint, Andrew Bird and Buddy Guy. One downside is the size of the viewing screen, which is not expandable. The site also offers a load of interview segments that you can



Local time

Two more local albums that didn't make the last issue because of space:

"Hope & Other Casualties"

by Mark Erelli
(www.markerelli.com)
Mark has put together a wonderful collection of very topical tunes – singing out about homelessness ("Here & Now"), the loss of trees and natural spaces ("Imaginary Wars") and the tragedy of Sept. 11 ("The Only Way"), among others. While any comparison to Dylan is exhausting and overdone, Mark's guitar/harmonica combination and his social and political stances at least hint at Dylan's early recordings.

"Deeper Waters"

by Laura Vecchione
(www.lauravecchione.com)
Laura's first album is a nice mix of country, countrified rock and soul. "Jane" is a powerful album opener dealing with the strength of self. And her covers are inspired: She turns the Beatles' "Lady Madonna" into a fun, horn-splashed soul song and Dr. John's "Qualified" dazzles. She is backed throughout by a crack band assembled in Nashville where the album was recorded. Can't wait to hear more.

MA5 – Albums



Albums that helped us survive this issue.

1. "Live at Shubas" Kris Delmhurst. I love this live show, recorded in 2004. She's funny, her songs are great and she's backed by Mark Erelli on guitar and vocals. The story before the song "East of the Mountains" is priceless.
2. "Blue," Joni Mitchell. "Carey" and "California" are amazing. What a vocal range she had.
3. "Bittertown," Lori McKenna. Can't get enough of "Pour" and "Mr. Sunshine."
4. "Soul Journey," Gillian Welch. Still waiting on the next album; still enjoying the last one.
5. "Shaken by a Low Sound," Crooked Still. This album has really grown on me. It comes out on Aug. 22. Check it out.