

# Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

Welcome to the spring installment of Cuz's Corner. This past month we had the good fortune to spend a couple of weeks in Belize soaking up the rainforest, the reefs, and, of course, the amazing culture there. The official language of Belize is English, but only some 30 percent of the population actually speaks it. Typically, culturally diverse areas such as this have equally diverse musical traditions and I was definitely not disappointed in the music I heard in this amazing country. African, reggae, Latin, Mayan, and calypso styles all come together here and create a big wonderful musical gumbo, much like in New Orleans. In fact, on the tiny island of Caye Caulker on the barrier reef, the rhythms and harmonies were everywhere on the island and, after a day there, I noticed that my footsteps were in beat with the constant rhythm of the music. The music I was most taken with comes from the coastal Garifuna culture, descended from the slave trading days of old. Being that much of the coast of Belize consists of rugged mangrove swamps, towns such as Hopkins and Dangriga moved into the 21st century with their culture and musical traditions much intact. The artist I was most taken with passed away at the age of 43 a few months before our trip. We heard his music being played throughout the country much of our stay. His name was Andy Palacio and I discovered he was not only a cultural and musical ambassador, but also a Belizean national hero for spending his years on earth bringing the many diverse cultures together through music. I would highly recommend the music of this icon of Belize. The disc I have is simply called **Andy Palacio and the Gari-**

**funa Collective** and if you are looking for something a bit different in your collection, I can't say enough about this passionate piece of music! Download songs from this CD at [www.myspace.com/andypalacio](http://www.myspace.com/andypalacio); download from three other Andy Palacio discs at <http://andypalacio.calabashmusic.com/>.

At the time of his death in 1996 in a tragic plane crash, Walter Hyatt had forty songs-in-waiting for a follow-up to his critically acclaimed post-**Uncle Walt's Band** solo releases, **King Tears** and **Music Town**. Thankfully, through the efforts of family and friends, the project has been rekindled and released as Walter Hyatt's **Some Unfinished Business, Volume One** ([www.WalterHyatt.com](http://www.WalterHyatt.com))

Adding their inspired instrumental prowess to tracks Walter laid down years ago are Byron House, Jerry Douglas, Warren Hood, Carrie Rodriguez, Chris Carmichael and Dan Dougmore. If, like me, you are a huge Walter Hyatt fan, this one's for you and if you are unfamiliar with this fine artist's music or **Uncle Walt's Band**, this just might be a perfect starting point!

In typical fashion, **The Waybacks'** inspired new disc, **Loaded**, reflects influences as diverse as Cajun, Celtic, blues, swing, bluegrass, and cosmic rock. ([www.waybacks.com](http://www.waybacks.com)) Those of you familiar with this band can attest to the fact that the licks these guys throw down live are truly amazing and there is no telling what will happen in a given set, or song for that matter. Although **Loaded** is a studio

recording, I feel the spirit of the live show is very well captured. By the way, these cats can be heard at this year's MerleFest, in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, April 24th-27th.

Also appearing at MerleFest this year and supporting a new CD is a performer beloved by fans of Celtic, bluegrass, old time, and well-crafted songs alike, Tim O'Brien. His new **Chameleon** disc is a rare solo project, and, like all of his efforts, is highly recommended. ([www.timobrien.net](http://www.timobrien.net)) This is more of a singer-songwriter



**Cuz and Little Bit**

collection which addresses serious world issues such as greed, war, cell phone overload, and global climate change in an intelligent and whimsical manner. Don't get me wrong – the licks are satisfying, too, with Tim backing himself up with about every stringed instrument imaginable. One reason I

love Tim O'Brien is the fact that he leaves me wondering what in the world he is going to do next – a great core artist in roots music!

In addition to MerleFest, April is shaping up to be an interesting month for live shows in the area. In my estimation, there are two shows that are compelling enough to be no misses. Revered songwriter/activist Steve Earl will leave his "wall of sound" behind on April 19th, playing solo acoustic at McGlohan Theatre with his spouse, Allison Moorer. Both are coming off highly acclaimed CDs this year and this show has the potential to be one of the best of the year. Also, speaking of no miss shows, I feel you will kick yourself if you miss the **Carolina Chocolate Drops** show and Excelsior Club

Family Fish Fry this Saturday night (April 5th). Not only do the **Chocolate Drops** always put on an inspired show of black string band music, you just might be a part of Charlotte history! It's not every day an event bridges our wonderfully diverse cultures in the area, and to do it with music makes this evening all the more special – be a part of it! (See the feature article!)

That's it for this month and I hope to see you this weekend, or at Merle-Fest, or at a live show in town. Don't make your favorite performers get real jobs – support live music!

Cuz

**To share your favorite music with Cuz, contact him at 704-532-8846 or [dcmfrost@mindspring.com](mailto:dcmfrost@mindspring.com).**

## Welcome, New And Renewing Members!

**We extend a warm welcome to our new members:**

Ray Blackwood  
Mark Cousar  
Mary McNeal  
Cara Schuman  
Linda Shuler Family  
Mark Stultz Family

**Thanks to our renewing members for their ongoing support:**

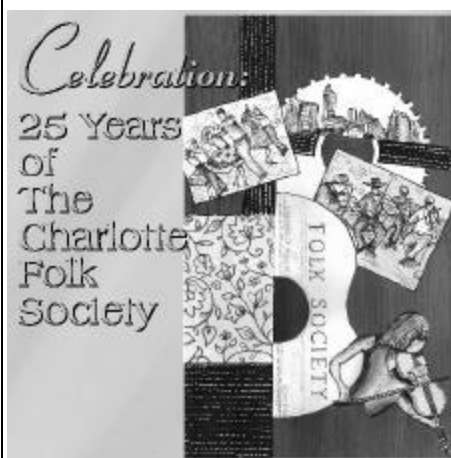
Linda Barnett  
Pamela, Roger, Steven and Will Baumgardner  
Gideon Besson  
Rick Bolen  
Tom Covington  
Roberta Dees  
Berkeley and Russell Hamby  
Mike Hancock  
Mike Hartgrove  
Carson Hedberg  
Marshall Hunter

Jack and Valerie Jones  
Hunter Marshall  
Ginny Moreland and David Groce  
Joy Moser and Scott Dixon  
Fintan and Diane Muldoon  
Bruce and Barbara Osgood Cox  
Dr. Ernest S. Phipps  
Dave Porter  
Ken and Judy Sanford  
J. Bruce Skinner  
Catherine Sullivan  
Quince Thompson  
Cindy Thomson  
Richard Wilson Toms  
John Trexler  
Campbell Wall  
Jim Wilkins

### **\$50 Sustaining Members**

Shirley and Tom Kohl  
Scott and Carol Smitherman  
Liz Wahls and David Weinrib

Many thanks to those of you who donate above the basic membership level. You enable us to provide continuing community outreach, as well as supporting the Marilyn Meacham Price Youth Scholarship to the Swannanoa Gathering. The Charlotte Folk Society is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donations are deductible as charitable contributions under applicable tax law.



**\$15 CD. Available at CFS events and online at [www.folksociety.org](http://www.folksociety.org)**

## Fiddler's Grove 2008 May 23-25

The oldest fiddlers' contest in the country takes place in Union Grove, North Carolina, just an hour north of Charlotte. The Ole Time Fiddler's and Bluegrass Festival, held every spring since 1924, celebrates traditional American music. Known simply as "Fiddler's Grove," the festival enjoys a well deserved reputation as one of the most prestigious and authentic fiddling competitions in the country.

As well as individual and band contests, the Fiddler's Grove experience includes performances, workshops, and jam sessions. True to the name, camping on the grounds and many of the weekend's events take place under a canopy of trees.

As well as the many musicians competing for coveted titles, festival goers will enjoy **The Kruger Brothers, The Cockman Family, Spirit Fiddle** (Robin Warren and Brian Clancey), Laura Boosinger, Josh Goforth, **The Trantham Family**, Sally Spring, Mel Jones, and others.

Order tickets before May 10th to enjoy savings. An advance adult full festival pass is \$35. Advance full festival passes for youth, ten to fifteen years old, are \$15. Children under ten are admitted without charge. There are additional fees for camping. Visit [www.fiddlersgrove.com](http://www.fiddlersgrove.com) to download a ticket order and camping reservation form. Or you can request a mailed festival brochure by calling Jessie Cockman at 828-478-3735. Don't miss it!