

# Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

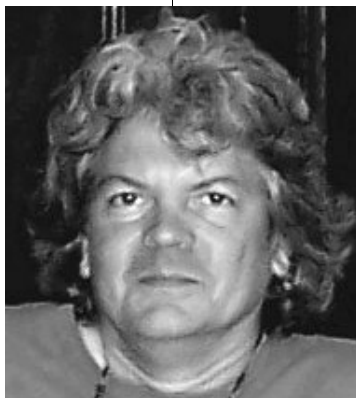
This cold January day finds me with one foot stuck in winter, but also looking ahead to February and the springtime shortly thereafter with its bounty of flowers and festivals. Thinking back through last month, it was definitely not difficult to come up with the

month's magical musical moment. That moment happened, as those of you that were there will testify, at Ovens Auditorium last week with the "Songwriters Tour" featuring icons Joe Ely, John Hiatt, Lyle Lovett and Guy Clark. It was truly amazing having songsmiths of this caliber all on the stage together -

swapping not only songs, but also stories, and doing it all without a set list or band. Each song inspired the theme and song for the next performer and, by the end of the two hour and forty minute show, I think the human experience had been pretty much covered. The show was beautifully tied together on the last song by Lyle Lovett, who performed **Step Inside This House**, which was amazingly the first song Guy Clark ever wrote and kept. What an evening - what art!

Looking ahead to February and March, things definitely begin to warm up in terms of live music. I could go on and on, but there are two events that are standouts and are worth noting. First, don't forget that on February 15, Gillian Welch will be making an overdue appearance at the Neighborhood Theatre. Gillian has that knack of writing a song that honestly

sounds a hundred years old and is one of those gifted individuals that has taken folk music to a wider audience over the years. Her performances with her partner-in-crime, David Rawlings, are mesmerizing - you get a feeling that something from the distant past is being channeled through her to the audience! ([www.neighborhoodtheatre.com](http://www.neighborhoodtheatre.com))



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neighborhoodtheatre.com)

Imagine spring breezes sifting through ancient live oak trees, the beautiful Suwannee River lapping at your toes, hiking, biking and canoeing right outside your tent! Oh, I failed to mention that I'm referring to one of

my favorite roots music festivals, Suwannee Springfest, taking place March 22-25 in Live Oak, Florida. A few of the performers this year include Jorma Kaukomen, Darrell Scott, **Crooked Still**, **The Peter Rowan Quartet**, **Ollabelle**, **Dan Hicks & the Hot Licks**, Verlon Thompson, etc., etc. Don't let the idea of driving to Florida scare you away, as the festival is in the northern part of the state between Jacksonville and Tallahassee, about seven miles off I -10. A fairly large group of folks from the Charlotte area will be there this year - come join us "Way down Upon the Suwannee River"! ([www.magmusic.com](http://www.magmusic.com))

Well, I guess you guys need something to listen to in warmth of your homes in the meantime, so here we go with Cuz's CD picks for the month. First, I love hearing young acoustic groups that have obviously built their instrumental

styling on the backs of those that came before. If you like groups like **Blue Highway** that combine a love and respect of the traditions with sharp, modern playing styles, **The Infamous Stringdusters' Fork in the Road** may be for you. What a debut CD this one is! My second pick comes from a group of guys that have, shall we say, a few years on the baby-faced **Stringdusters - The Holmes Brothers**. The new one from these veterans is called **State of Grace** and features a musical smorgasbord of songs that range from Lyle Lovett to Hank Williams and from Bill Monroe to Gillian Welch, as well as their own compositions. Special guests include Van Morrison, Levon Helm, Odetta, Willie Nelson and Joan Osborne. I must admit that this CD took a while to grow on me, but aren't those the best ones? Lastly, check out the new one from Peter Rowan called **Quartet**. I was skeptical when I saw the number of older songs on the CD, but the lush, new arrangements more than make up for it. The new songs are great and the addition of Sharon Gilcrest (**Uncle Earl**) has made for an incredibly tight ensemble. This is just plain and simply a good sounding album and you "Rowanheads" will absolutely love the new version of **Moonlight Midnight!**

Well, that's about it for this month's Cuz's Corner. There is a new tribute to **The Band** called **Endless Highway**, a new **Green-cards'** CD, and many more I'll share with you next time - guess I'd better start listening. Until then, be well, be happy, and get out and hear some live music!

Cuz

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