

# Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

The music world is now shaking off the holiday doldrums. Not only are many new CD projects out; artists are again back out on the road, gracing our local venues and clubs. One sure fire way to get my year underway in style is a **David Bromberg** concert and his Neighborhood Theatre performance did not disappoint. Playing with his trio and area native Jack Lawrence, Mr. Bromberg blistered through a set of tunes that touched on bluegrass, old time, Celtic and Mississippi delta blues. My favorite part of the show was a set of about five songs played solo from his last project, which deftly covers some of his favorite tunes from the likes of Mississippi John Hurt, Robert Johnson, Reverend Gary Davis and, yes, Bob Dylan. My friends are all tiring of hearing this, but David Bromberg's first few records more or less led me down the deviant path of folk and American roots music. I can't say how important these "ambassadors" of the folk process are in keeping our music and history alive, well, and ever changing. The great ones manage to accomplish this by rendering the music fresh and new while never compromising the music that came before – what an art form!

Speaking of David Bromberg's last project, why don't we talk about some new releases beginning his Grammy nominated (Best Folk Album) **Try Me One More Time**. This disc proves that sometimes simplicity works. This is Bromberg's first project since he left the scene seventeen years ago to study the art of violin making and open his own shop, and is composed of tunes recorded live and self-accompanied on acoustic guitar. Not many recordings capture an artist live as

well as this one – highly recommended, especially for acoustic blues fans.

Speaking of acoustic blues, I have found new releases from **Guy Davis** and **Jorma Kaukonen** to both be satisfying efforts. Guy Davis's **Sweetheart Like You** deftly bounces back and forth between a classic Piedmont style and Keb Mo groove. If you like a disc that embraces both the old and the new, this might just be your cup of tea. **River of Time** is similar in the fact that Jorma Kaukonen, while on his constant exploration into the stylings of Reverend Gary Davis, still leaves room for a number of great, thoughtful originals. Accompanied by the incomparable **Levon Helm** and instrumentalist extraordinaire **Larry Campbell**, this is the strongest effort since his fantastic country blues recording, **Blue Country Heart**, with Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas and Bela Fleck. (Highly Recommended!)

Sometimes one can tell the quality of a recording by the quality of the musicians on it and other times one can be totally fooled. I was not familiar with **Donna Ulissee** when I first picked up **Walk This Mountain Down**. If you are a fan of the Emmylou Harris traditional country/ bluegrass style, you will very much enjoy this disc. Oh, by the way, the quality musicians on this one are Keith Sewell, Andy Leftwich, Rob Ickes, Scott Vestal and the incomparable Byron House.

Donna has written a slew of great songs, has a strong voice, and promises to be a force down the road. It sure is a thrill to discover a new voice from time to time.

Although far from being considered new voices, both **Asleep at the Wheel** and **Willie Nelson** have defined Texas swing music for many decades. Why, you wonder, have they not put a project out together in all these years? Well, guess what, they have! Their self-titled **Willie and the Wheel** is defi-



**Cuz and Little Bit**

nately a toddy for the body. This disc is unabashed Texas big band swing and will make your toes tap until they are sore. If anyone knows this music better than Willie Nelson and **Asleep at the Wheel** front man **Ray Benson**, who brilliantly produced the disc, I haven't a clue as to who that might be.

This one begins with **Hesitation Blues** and ends with **Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon** – fasten those seatbelts!

If you are a fan of Cajun music, one of the finest purveyors of the genre has a killer release for your listening pleasure. **BeauSoleil** has been turning the country on to Louisiana roots music for decades and they have done it creatively by mixing in other influences and a vast and eclectic array of guest artists through the years and **Alligator Purse** is no exception. Any band that does a Cajun cover of J. J. Cale's **The Problem** with John Sebastian singing lead is a favorite of mine. **BeauSoleil** is another classic case of the folk process in action. This one is great start to finish and also a toe tapper with a few Cajun waltzes for all you two-steppers out there!