

## Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

Welcome to another installment of Cuz's Corner. Just a few short months ago we were all wondering if it would ever warm up and has it ever! I guess this blistering summer reminds us that one should be careful of what one asks for. Fortunately, there are some cool alternatives in the offing for the upcoming holiday and beyond up in the mountains of Virginia. For the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, the good folks that have put together FloydFest for nine years will be hosting the **Floyd Fandango Wine and Beer Festival** on both Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and on Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup>. In addition to all the wine and beer tastings, the music should also be stellar with **Sam Bush, Missy Raines** and others holding down the preverbal musical fort. If you enjoy good wines, you should know that in the last few years Virginia has become a leader in both quality and production, so the tastings should be as impressive as the musical offerings. As I mentioned in last month's column, **FloydFest 9** follows a couple of weeks later, July 22-25, with four days of musical Nirvana and environmental stewardship. I'll never forget the first year a hurricane remnant nearly blew FloydFest all the way to West Virginia and how impressed I was that the festival not only survived that year, but also blossomed into one of the best in the country during the following eight years. Never discount the power of community! ([www.across-the-way.com](http://www.across-the-way.com)) A few miles away and on the same weekend, don't forget the annual **Phlegar Farm Old-Time Music Jam** for a weekend of fun, friends, food, and jams. Hats off to Tom and Barbara for all the love and hard work they

have put into this event through the years. So, there you have three cool alternatives to the heat and humidity of piedmont North Carolina for the month of July. If you wind up sweltering in the heat this month, don't blame Cuz!

Although I'm not really in the business of movie reviews, last night I rented **Crazy Heart**, starring **Jeff Bridges**, and would highly recommend you see this one. Not only is the storyline great, but also the acting is superb. If you don't already know, the movie is about a washed up alcoholic country singer who has been passed by through the years as Music Row moved ever closer to the mainstream pop format it is today. Fortunately, today true country artists can find refuge in the Americana genre. Although not as lucrative as mainstream arena country music is today, it sure beats the bowling alleys and dives our leading character was subjected to in this movie. Some stars of the '70s, '80s, and early '90s such as Marty Stuart, Rodney Crowell, Willie Nelson, and others have made an almost seamless shift to the refuge of the Americana format. These guys aren't getting rich these days, (well, perhaps Willie is doing alright!) but the transition seems, in most cases, to be balanced with a renewed creative energy. I must admit I was absolutely blown away by the musical soundtrack masterminded by the wonderful **T-Bone Burnett**. I feel certain that Americans know much more about their musical

heritage because of this talented artist. We as a nation know more about old-time, Delta blues, bluegrass, and old school country music thanks to T-Bone's musical scores in movies such as **O Brother, Where Art Thou, I Walk the Line, Cold Mountain, The Lady Killers**, and, now, **Crazy Heart**. His work as a producer is legendary and mentioning all his great works would take up the rest of this article. Hats off to T-Bone Burnett!

Have you guys ever been on a trip where, in the end, a discovery en route was the highlight of the trip, rather than the destination? Such was the case for me while exploring the status of **Tim O'Brien's** soon-to-be-available **Chicken and Egg** disc. Well, the release date is July 13<sup>th</sup>, so we'll talk about this one next month, being as I don't have the ad-



"Cuz" and Little Bit

vance yet. However, while on Tim's home page, I discovered an absolute jewel! I learned that Tim has been touring from time to time with **Gerry Paul** of Irish quintet **Grada** and **Trevor Hutchinson** of Irish super group **Lunasa** and, while in Nashville, the three artists laid down some studio tracks. Until now the disc was only available at the merch table during a tour of New Zealand last year, but now this limited edition project can be procured from [www.timobrien.net](http://www.timobrien.net). This project, appropriately named **Two Oceans Trio**, encompasses all the genres that have been a part of his repertoire since the old **Hot Rise** days. You find Tim O'Brien's material deftly mixed with ragtime, old-time, Celtic, **Hot Rise** remakes, and more. Tim describes this as a homemade affair, as the tracks were obviously mostly laid down

live and the experience is much like the boys are playing for you in your living room. Whether you are a Tim O'Brien fan or not, this is one any folk music fan should have and gets Cuz's highest of ratings!

I remember years ago wearing out the grooves on **Jackson Browne's For Everyone** record. (Remember records?) During the early years, Jackson's sidekick and musical partner was the incomparable David Lindley and in 2006 they have reunited and have been touring both the States and Europe from time to time, since. If you don't know, David Lindley is a master of stringed instruments of the world, an ambassador of its musical traditions, a virtuoso player, and certified crazy man. Recorded in the grand concert halls of Spain, **Love is Strange** is a beautiful acoustic outing. The two are joined by percussionist extraordinaire Tino di Geraldo and a host of guest musicians from around the world. This is a stellar piece of music and not what you would expect from a Jackson Browne CD. Yes, there are some of those classic Jackson Browne tunes, but they are totally reinterpreted. All the musicians on the stage, as well as virtuoso David Lindley, are allowed to shine in a variety of musical genres and that gives this two-disc set an amazing World Music feel. This one needs to be heard to be believed, so I would invite you to check out [www.jacksonbrowne.com](http://www.jacksonbrowne.com)!

One of the rising stars of the alt-country scene is the unique **Elizabeth Cook**, who has a new Don Was produced project entitled **Welder**. The best thing I can say to describe Elizabeth is that she is the real thing and conveys a level of honesty in her songs and their presentation that remind me of Loretta Lynn. Her songs on **Welder** range from funny and bawdy to

beautiful and sentimental, as is the case with **Mama's Funeral**, which is a simple snapshot of that day. (For those of you who have lost a parent, the imagery in this song is just outstanding!) Look for Elizabeth the next time she comes through the area, but in the meantime, check her music out at [www.elizabethcook.com](http://www.elizabethcook.com)!

Well, that's about it for this month. Remember to join CFS on July 11<sup>th</sup> at Historic Rosedale for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Old-Time Music Jam & Ice Cream Social. Please do us a favor and visualize a sunny, eighty-five degree day with no humidity! Stay cool and we'll do this again next month. Support live music!

CUZ

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