

Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

Well folks, it's time for another edition of Cuz's Corner – just in time to kick off the summer season! I must admit this article finds me in transition mode as my wife and I just returned from a magical trip out in New Mexico. I feel everyone has a special place that nourishes the soul and puts one closer to God – this is ours! Not only is New Mexico a drop-dead gorgeous place, but we find the culture and the food extremely exotic and I'm amazed a passport isn't required for entry. Since this article is after all about music, I also very much enjoy all the indigenous genres one is exposed to in the Southwest. Isn't it fantastic how regionalized folk and roots music is throughout the U.S., depending on where one traces the paths of emigration? Even lyrics vary in different parts of the country. Whereas in the East the folksingers may be lamenting about life around the coal mines, the beauty of the Appalachians, or some hideous murder, the themes in the Southwest might involve the openness of the range, the love of "Old Paint," or that drink of "cool, clean water." What these styles of folk music do have in common are the struggles of the everyday man! As I've probably mentioned before, we always like to catch **Bill and Bonnie Hearne** when in Santa Fe. These folks have influenced a "who's who" list of folk and roots artists all over the Southwest. Although Bonnie's health doesn't allow performing on a regular basis, Bill can still be found with his trio, performing in old haunts in northern New Mexico, including the historic La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe.

The festival season is heating up with the weather and although

these two festivals are actually in July, it's about time to plan ahead and get those advance tickets. If you are yearning for an honest-to-goodness authentic bluegrass festival, you might want to trek to Morganton for the **Red, White and Bluegrass Festival**, July 1–4, at Catawba Meadows Park. Artists include **Mountain Heart with Tony Rice**, the **Seldom Scene**, **Lost and Found**, the **Grascals**, **The Snyder Family**, **Cherryholmes**, **Illrd Tyme Out**, **The Del McCoury Band**, **Kenny and Amanda Smith**, **Doyle Lawson** and many others! Tickets and all the information can be found at www.RedWhiteandBluegrass.com.

As you probably know, one of my favorite festivals is **FloydFest**, July 22-25, due to the incredible variety of music, the beauty of the festival site, and the consciousness of the community, volunteers, and organizers. Headlining this year's festivities is the incredible **Levon Helm**, along with a lineup that is way too long to mention. Suffice it to say, the selections cover old-time, bluegrass, world, jam bands, jazz, swing, Americana, blues, environmental workshops, and much, much more. The food is tasty and healthy and one can always find a great selection of local wines, hand-crafted beers, and great music in the always shady and cool wine and beer garden. I have to admit that I'm ready to hop in the ole truck and head to Floyd, as we speak! (www.floydfest.com) Cuz's no-miss concert of the

month is the **Tom Russell** show June 12th at the Evening Muse. Speaking of the Southwest, Tom's music is rich in the sounds and themes of the Texas/Mexican border. Tom Russell is a national treasure, one America's elite songwriters, and is not to be missed. (www.maxxmusic.com)

There are two recordings that I want to mention. The first comes from an artist I was not familiar with and, as you know, I love these surprises! **Nora Jane Struthers'** self-titled disc has a modern bluegrass feel to it and includes ten well-written originals and one traditional song. The musicians on this effort are the cream of the crop and include Stuart Duncan, Tim O'Brien, Rob Ickes, Bryan Sutton, Scott Vestal, Shawn Lane, Dennis Crouch, and many others. This is an extremely good



"Cuz" and Little Bit

sounding CD and I would hope you check out www.norajanestruthers.com to catch a taste of this one.

Ever since I first heard **John Prine's Paradise**, **Sam Stone**, **Spanish Pipedream**, and **Your Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven Anymore** decades ago, I've been a huge fan of his wry, witty, and sometimes hilarious songs. In fact, many road trips through the years included a John Prine sing-along or two! I would highly suggest you check out John's **In Person & On Stage**. Not only do you get classic Prine and the stories behind some of those classics, but some pretty special guest artists like Iris DeMent, Sara Watkins, Emmylou Harris, Kieran Kane, Kevin Welch, and Fats Kaplin. After all the bad news in the Gulf, you'll want to heed

John's advice and, "Blow up your TV, throw away your paper, go to the country, and build you a home... grow a little garden, eat a lot of peaches, try to find Jesus on your own!" This one is from John's Oh Boy Record Company and can be found at www.johnprine.net.

Please don't miss the **Whippersnappers'** final band performance at the Stella on Friday, June 11th, at 7:30 PM as part of our June CFS Gathering. We at the Folk Society have a warm, fuzzy spot in our hearts for this group of youngsters that we watched grow up on stages around town. Please see the article in your newsletter about this no-miss concert!

Here's hoping the summer season is good to you and your gardens, figuratively and literally, and provides you with a bounty. There are many festivals and performances to choose from this early summer, so hit the road and catch some live music! You'll be glad you did!

CUZ

To share with Cuz about your favorite music, contact him at 704-532-8846 or dcmfrost@mindspring.com.