

Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

As I sit here anticipating the March edition of Cuz's Corner, there is absolutely no doubt that this fickle month is coming in like a lion. The howling wind and horizontal rain and sleet is, I think, a harbinger of the 4-6 inches of snow predicted this evening. Weather like this always calls to mind the songs of Scotsman **Archie Fisher** and his tales of the hardworking fishermen, farmers, and shepherds that have historically settled the largely uninhabited reaches of the Celtic lands, specifically Scotland's western islands. The combination of great story telling, historical perspective, and his Gaelic-tinged accent all combine to transport the listener back to another place and time. You can check out the music of the traditional icon at www.folk-legacy.com.

I've always been fascinated with not only the origins of traditional music, but also the journey it makes with various ethnic groups seeking a better way of life in far and distant lands. I think one of the all-time masterpiece discs telling this fascinating story is **Tim O'Brien's *The Crossing***. Combining his original material and timeless traditionals, Tim literally takes you on that long journey with our Scots-Irish ancestors from the Celtic lands Archie Fisher sings about, to their new life in the Appalachian Mountains. My guess is that many of you own this classic, but if you don't, you can check it out at www.timobrien.net.

These migrations are as old as humanity itself, and sometimes result in unusual and wonderful musical fusions. Such is the case with the relatively modern-day human and musical migrations that have originated on the African continent and

ended up all over Europe. One such fusion that has caught my ear the last few years is a genre referred to as Afro-Celt. Perhaps it's because both African and Celtic music share a rhythmic bond, but the results are for the most part extremely fulfilling. There are two CDs I own that I would love to have you check out; **Capercaillie's *Beautiful Wasteland*** (www.capercaillie.co.uk) and **Eileen Iver's *Immigrant Soul***, featuring guitar great John Doyle (www.eileenivers.com). I find it's useful to have a few discs like these to pull out when you find yourself in a musical rut or just want to impress your friends with how cool you are! Every year the world gets smaller and smaller, so there's no telling where this musical voyage we are on shall lead. All I can say is hang on and enjoy the ride.

Well, all this traveling is wearing me out, so I guess we should talk about some new and exciting releases. It's always an event when **J.J. Cale** releases a new disc or actually goes on tour and, even more so, when both happen in the same year. I just can't think of anyone that exemplifies groove and tasteful guitar licks like Mr. Cale does and his new ***Roll On*** is no exception. J.J. begins a solo tour in support of the album at the end of March on the west coast – let's hope he makes it all the way to the Carolinas! (www.jjcale.com) I've been hooked on the music of

J.J. Cale since he released the highly recommended ***Naturally*** at the age of 32 with timeless classics like ***They Call Me the Breeze*** and ***Magnolia***. Hey, if you don't own any Cale, you might consider picking up both of the two CDs that bookend his career!

I can't think of a more anticipated release than the new one from **Buddy and Julie Miller**, considered by some the first couple of alt-country. When you consider that Buddy is one of the most

sought after guitarists in this country and Julie's songs are revered and covered by the likes of Emmylou Harris, Patty Griffin, and many others, you can understand all the buzz about this release, and ***Written in Chalk*** does not disappoint. The special guests are not so shabby on this one either and include

the likes of Emmylou Harris, Patty Griffin, Robert Plant, and Regina McCrary of the legendary **McCrary Sisters**. When I think of honest, organic music, it just doesn't get much better than their catalog of discs, recorded right there in their living room – it's not so unusual to hear a screen door shut or dogs barking in the background! In a footnote, while on tour with Emmylou Harris, Patty Griffin, and Shawn Colvin ("Three Girls and Their Buddy") in Baltimore, Buddy suffered chest pains and wound up having triple bypass surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. At this time, it appears the operation was successful and Buddy should, thankfully, recover. Nonetheless, our thoughts and prayers go out to Buddy and Julie. (www.buddyandjulie.com)



Cuz and Little Bit

Finally, I would like to recommend the sophomore effort from Steve Earle's son, **Justin Townes Earle**. I think that when a person comes from the Earle family and is also named for the great Townes Van Zandt, songwriting greatness is probably in the cards. Justin's new **Midnight at the Movies** not only contains some stellar songwriting, but that Depression-era sound he gets on some of the tunes is just plain intoxicating! As always, please let me know about releases you are digging and I will pass these on to the readership!

Quickly, there are three stellar shows I would like to remind you of coming in March. British folk legend **Richard Thompson** makes an appearance at McGlohan Theater on March 7th. Not only considered one of the guitar greats of all times by his peers, Mr. Thompson is perhaps the Godfather of British folk rock, and has consistently put out great material and performances from his **Fairport Convention** days until the present. This is Cuz's gig of the month! Two other recommendations are the **Infamous Stringdusters** show at the Visulite on March 21st and the **Eliza Gilkyson/Kevin Welch** show at the Evening Muse on March 26th. (All information on these shows is at www.maxxmusic.com) Don't forget the CFS Gathering on March 13th, either. Featured this month is **Sara Grey**, touring from Scotland and one of the amazing voices in Celtic music today. Another great show in what I think has been an amazing season of CFS concerts in an amazing venue!

If it's a road trip you are craving these days with the "cheap" gas, I would recommend a trip down to the banks of the Suwannee River for **Springfest** taking place March 26-29 in Live Oak, Florida, featuring **Richie Havens, Darrell Scott,**

Guy Clark and Verlon Thompson, Mike Marshall and Darol Anger, Peter Rowan, Jim Lauderdale and many more. If you get tired of all the good music, there's hiking, horseback riding, and canoeing at your tent's doorstep! (www.magmusic.com)

That's it for another month. As usual, please support the floundering economy by supporting live music. Be well and come again next time!

Cuz

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