

Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

Once again, I welcome you to Cuz's Corner. It has definitely been an eventful month since we last visited in October, with the endless political season and this scary economic crisis we find ourselves in. Hard times always most dramatically affect those in society that live on the edge. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of my gypsy music friends out there on the road, keeping our music alive and well. Even many of those performers who have achieved a name for themselves in roots music basically live from one guarantee to the next and, sadly enough, do not have even minimal healthcare. Musicians have historically struggled in order to share their special art with the public and sometimes fall through the cracks when hard times and health issues arise. Music is the Rx for what ails us in our modern day society, so a big heartfelt thank you to all of you warriors of the road for giving us the gift of music – true American roots music would die if it weren't for you guys! As I say way too often, I guess, please support the live shows as you can afford them. It's important to keep musicians working through these rough times!

Speaking of old seasoned troubadours, what a great show by **John Hiatt** and **Lyle Lovett** at the Belk Theatre last month. Sometimes it astounds me what two artists like this can pull off in a large venue with just two guitars and their amazing talents. This two-hour-plus show flowed with both audience requests and songs that presented themselves during the course of the evening. Between you and me, the bantering between songs was about as enter-

taining as the great songs both artists brought to Charlotte on this special night. By the way, Lyle Lovett could launch another career as a comedian with his deadpan brand of humor as he had the 2000 + crowd in stitches most of the night! Also, compliments to the sound crew for some of the most amazing sound I have ever heard in a larger venue. Between the honest performances by Hiatt and Lovett and the crisp but warm sound of the room, the evening really had a coffeehouse feel to it – not an easy task!

Thankfully there are many great shows coming our way in November and here are some I think you might dig. The Evening Muse heats up on November 13th with the excellent and soulful guitar work and bluesy vocals of **Kelly Joe Phelps**. On November 16th don't miss an evening with the amazing **David Olney** and his sidekick **Sergio Webb**. Olney is held in high esteem in his native Nashville among his peers for his gritty characters, amazing stories, and most of all for his live shows. David Olney is the real deal. He and Sergio burned down the house at the last Tosco Music Party and should do the same at the Evening Muse – a no miss! After three successful discs with the great Chip Taylor, **Carrie Rodriguez** returns to the Muse on November 20th to support her new ***She Ain't Me*** release. Carrie was already a master Texas fiddler with Chip Taylor, but singing was somewhat new to her. I

have probably never seen anyone grow as much as a singer, songwriter, and performer as Carrie has the last couple of years, as evidenced by her recent blistering but warm performance on ***Austin City Limits***. Information for all three of these shows can be found at www.maxxmusic.com. Two shows of note are coming to the Neighborhood Theatre in the month of November.

Dobro great **Jerry Douglas** brings in his full band with the **Steep Canyon Rangers** as openers on November 14th. The **Rangers** blew me away last time through and, like Carrie Rodriguez, get better by the month. **Darrell Scott** will be performing a solo set – always an amazing experience – November 20th at the Neighborhood. Not too many musicians have the whole package in terms of being a soulful

singer, amazing songwriter, and dazzling instrumentalist. Darrell is not only all of these, but an all around nice fellow to boot! Information on this show and the Jerry Douglas show at www.neighborhoodtheatre.com.

Last of all, don't forget the Charlotte Folk Society will be presenting the amazing fiddler/dancer **April Verch** at the Great Aunt Stella Center on November 21st. For all the information, please read the great article in the Folk Calendar. I don't know about you, but I always love being the first on my block to catch a great in the making in a small venue at a reasonable ticket price. This show will blow you away, and that's a Cuz's Corner guarantee! Also, don't forget CFS's monthly gathering this month on the 14th with one of the



Cuz and Little Bit

area's tightest bands and the finest of purveyors of Cajun music, **Carolina Gator Gumbo** – highly recommended and free to the public (donations appreciated).

I guess it's time to get into some recorded music. Sometimes the greatest thrills come from rediscovering great recordings. That was definitely the case for me last week, when cleaning out my office/music room for a long overdue painting. Well, the **New Grass Revival's** disc *Hold to a Dream* fell out on the floor, made it to my truck's CD player, and hasn't come out since. **NGR** is the group that sent me on my way into bluegrass addiction and might be the all-time great bluegrass super group of the last 30 years or so and this renewed listening reminds me of those frantic sets at For What It's Worth (defunct long ago) and at the legendary Green Acres Music Hall. I love groups like this that are actually vehicle for the next generation into a life of acoustic bliss. Needless to say my favorite lineup for this band included Sam Bush, John Cowan, Pat Flynn, and Bela Fleck – nuf said!

A current touring band turning on the next generation to acoustic music is **Old Crow Medicine Show** and their *Tennessee Pusher* disc is, I feel, their tightest effort to date. Produced by Don Was, this CD is not quite old time, not quite bluegrass and not quite folk or blues, but perhaps all of the above. Also recommended this month is the latest from **Taj Mahal** appropriately named *Maestro*. Throughout his career Taj has captivated folks with albums of African music, Delta and Chicago blues, and those amazing island melodies. Well this one not only has all of these influences but a couple of tunes where Taj pulls out the old time banjo. Another

great disc from the incomparable Taj Mahal!

Thankfully releases are slowing down for the holidays, so that will be it for this month. Get out and find some live music this month and have a great Thanksgiving. If you can, please try to support the April Verch show CFS is putting on as we would love to continue keeping our membership ahead of the curve with fine shows such as this one – see you there at the Stella on the 21st!

Cuz

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