

Piano Woman Steps Forward

By Pedro Pereira

A lot of kids get pushed by their parents into playing the piano. Not **Sarah Haddock**. She *wanted* to learn, all because she went to a Billy Joel concert when she was 10 and decided she had to learn how to play "Piano Man."

The Billy Joel performance, the ISS member recalls, "was the coolest thing I'd ever seen." So she set about learning "Piano Man," including the harmonica parts. "I learned what I could by ear and about a year later started piano lessons to learn to read music. But the teacher made me play those annoying little plinkity songs about seesaws or whatever, so I quit."

Sarah quit the lessons, but not the piano. She kept at it. Eventually she started writing, though those early songwriting attempts are hazy. "I don't remember the first song I ever wrote but I suppose it was in my early teens and it was likely something silly I thought was very deep."

But over the years, she built up a repertoire, writing enough songs to record a CD, which she released this past summer.

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The nine-song disk, "Girl Here Falling," available for sale at www.cdbaby.com, showcases Sarah's powerful vocals and piano stylings. The CD "presents an astoundingly mature and brutally honest look at relationships," said ISS member **Gerry Dantone**.

Relationships are at the center of the writing experience for Sarah, who says she draws from her own life and from what she has observed in the relationships of others. First comes the experience or observation, which begets the lyrics, which in turn begets the music. Why are relationships such a rich source of inspiration? Because, Sarah says, they are ultimately about people. And where there are people, "relationships are never far off."

Of course, songs don't always come out sounding, lyrically or musically, the way the writer originally intended. That was the case with one of the tracks on "Girl Here Falling," called "Draw You A Map," which Sarah says turned out more sardonic than she planned. "As I wrote it I found that there

Save up the bucks and who knows . . .

By Tony Tedeschi

I saved up for my first guitar. It was a Gretsch hollow body electric, circa 1958, the precursor of those wild-looking things Brian Setzer plays these days. It didn't sound like too much without an amp, so a couple of dollars per week went into my sock drawer until I had enough for a Fender amp. Prices in those days were a lot less than today. My second guitar was a Fender Musicmaster. Bought it in 1960. Paid \$70. Couldn't afford the \$165 for a Strat. Too bad. A '58 Strat goes for no less than \$12,000 according to the Vintage Guitar Price Guide. The Musicmaster only commands \$800 max. It's all moot. Pawned it all years ago. Then faded into the ranks of former teenage ex-guitar players who needed to get on with the realities of life.

A pox on that. A quarter century later, the demon seed stirred from its latency and . . . well, once you've hoisted one of those incredible axes, you feel like a lightweight unless you have one of them strapped across your shoulder. Not good enough for prime time? Who cares. To quote a lady friend of mine: "I love a man with a guitar in his hands."

Thing is, although we mature. And, over the course of time, instant gratification has taken over from saving a few bucks a week, facilitated by credit card debt escalation, mega-musical instrument stores and/or mail order companies. Hell, a guitar can arrive at your front door with the alacrity of a box of books or CDs. The problem with running up that kind of debt is, there is invariably a spouse/significant other/kids asking that grating question: "What do you need six guitars for?"

The answer is: "I'm saving my dollars. It's MY money."

In my case \$25 per week. Trouble was, after a year-and-a-half, I was unwilling to part with the hundreds of dollars I'd amassed. It got to be so easy putting away that \$25 I kept looking at the escalating funds and thinking a couple of more months and I could afford . . . well, something really neat.

Damn that Scott MacDonald! The Huntington-based luthier shows up one Monday night at the Starbucks open mic in town and plays a few tunes on this solid body resonator electric and I am freakin' hooked. The one, he says, he made especially for Lucinda Williams. I've got all

Surreally Superheated Sunshine

This Month's Winner: Bill Goldsmith for "Superheated Sunshine"

Is this a song about global warming or is it just a lark? Are the images realistic or surrealistic? Does it matter? In this case, it does not matter since in any event Bill Goldsmith has won this month's Writer's Choice Award for being as undeterminable as enjoyable. "Superheated Sunshine" had this mysterious yet droll quality as sung with a typically circular melody about the summer being here to stay (as if it ever arrived this year!) and that we all had better stock up on sunscreen. Although the causes of this extended vacation time is never touched upon nor whether there are any negative consequences to it, we get an odd Beach Boys feel for this off-kilter scenario. "The beach is getting bigger there's room for everyone/And now the whole world can come down and join in on the fun" sings Bill. Maybe we SHOULD pollute a little more! Or maybe not...

Close behind is an intense Sonny Meadows with "Revenge." The lyrics speak for themselves: "Revenge - Is never satisfied/Revenge - Is our battle cry/Revenge - Excuses all the lies/Revenge." With the world at war and in constant conflict, one would think that more persons would view things as Mr. Meadows does in Revenge. One would be wrong, unfortunately.

Finally, Mr. Steve Lieberman must be mentioned for his riotous "Madman with a Flute" or as he puts it, "27 inches of hardened steel." As usual, it had clever rhymes and wild music that bulldozed. What would you expect from a madman with a flute?

Gerry Dantone wonders what goes on in their minds.

Save up the bucks and who knows . . .

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her albums, including "Essence," whereon she plays a resonator on "Get Right With God," which won the 2002 Grammy for best female rock entry.

Why beat around the bush? He's making me one. A real dazzler. He has let me watch its progress from time to time. Damn that thing has a solid feel. And, on Scott's website, performed by Long Island wunderkinds like Toby Walker and Bob Westcott . . . If I could only play just a bit like that. Hey, who knows where any of this can take you?

So the kid surfaces again, saving a few bucks a week and the bankroll has begun to grow again. How loud are those amps AC/DC uses?

Go with the flow, again

Reality butted up against surrealism, fact counterpointed fiction at the September workshop, all selections cleverly wrought, but when the votes were in it was Bill Goldsmith's "Superheated Sunshine" that caused the buzz (Or was that



the sound of air ionizing under a dome of global warming?) As was the case last month, this column votes with the majority on this month's winner. What did it do for us was the ironic marriage of the lyrics and music. Who among us, having heard those blithe Beach Boys tunes about fun on the sand in the sun, haven't pictured ourselves

basking with a beau or a babe under those tanning rays . . . except of course when they are . . . drying up the ocean. Goldsmith's use of the Beach Boys' milieu to make his point was what carried the day for us. Had it just been one more angry, I-told-you-so harangue it would not have been near as effective.

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this month, is . . . well, unanimous**

This column's agreement with the voters, this month, is . . . well, unanimous. Sonny Meadow's starkly worded "Revenge" demands we examine ourselves as a human community. Where does an eye-for-an-eye lead to, ultimately? Somebody has to ask. Thank you, Sonny, for doing so, so eloquently. Finally, don't challenge that madman with a flute (and just about anything else that makes music) Steve Lieberman. Musically, revenge always tilts toward the man with the venue and the audience.

The other songs performed during the September workshop were as follows:

- "Makin Love in the Boondocks," Frank Buddine
- "Nail by Nail and Board by Board," Estelle Henrich
- "Paul," Vincent Crici
- "All About the Girl," Frank Gambino
- "Living on Purpose," Bob Campbell
- "Eat It Up," Kevin D'Amato
- "Night Journey," Rick Crawford
- "Purple Water," Pedro Pereira
- "Isabel's Angel," Tony Tedeschi

ISS RETURNS TO THE SPOT

ISS has returned to its monthly gig at The Spot in SUNY/Stony Brook this time including an open mic. Next gig is Oct. 16.

Online Music News: Kids in Court?

By Walter Sargent

Since making good on their threat to sue the public at large, the record industry has been getting so much bad press, it's hard to keep up. The big story has been little 12 year-old Brianna who was apprehended with 1,000 illegal MP3s. Facing potential fines of \$150,000 per song, this little girl was in big trouble.



In an otherwise unrelated story, the FAA routinely levies civil penalties in the range of \$70,000 to \$110,000 against airline companies for HazMat violations. HazMat violations involve shipping unmarked, undocumented hazardous materials (usually combustibles) by airplane. If that sounds a might dangerous, it is -- but apparently not nearly as dangerous as a single music file that could be used for unauthorized entertainment purposes.

The lawsuit against Brianna was settled for \$2,000 with numerous groups rushing in to pay the tab, cementing the RIAA's public image as a cross between Hannibal Lecter and Snidely Whiplash.

It's not like the industry doesn't have other options. They're just lacking integrity and imagination.

In "Beyond File-Sharing, a Nation of Copiers" John Leland (*The New York Times*) relayed an extraordinary exchange between Josh Bernoff, the principal media and entertainment analyst at Forrester, and an executive at a media organization that has been very aggressive about trying to discourage file-sharing. While discussing Forrester's propriety research (which they sell for \$895), Mr. Bernoff asked the executive how he had gotten the report. The executive hesitated. "They got a copy from one of the studios," Mr. Bernoff said. "Here is an organization that's saying that stealing hurts the little people, and they took our intellectual property and they shuttled it around like a text file."

Using RIAA math, that's a \$7.5 million offense*.

But what about the artists? "It would be nice if record companies would include artists on these decisions," said Deborah Harry of Blondie. For all their professed concern over musicians losing royalties, even the Backstreet Boys, one of the best-selling acts of the 1990s, did not appear to have received a penny in CD royalties.

On the imagination score, "No one can hold a candle to the music industry when it comes to squandering an

opportunity," writes Fred Von Lohmann for the *Los Angeles Times*. Mr. Lohmann, a senior intellectual-property attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, has a great idea. "Rather than trying to sue Americans into submission...What if the labels legitimized music swapping by offering a real amnesty for all file-sharing, past, present and future, for say, \$5 a month?" Pointing out that file-sharing is the most reliable popularity indicator the record business has ever seen, he adds, "five bucks would be pure profit for the labels. No CDs to ship, no online retailers to cut in on the deal, no payola to radio."

Taken one step further: why not sell file-sharing licenses that let people's computers become little radio stations? The industry obviously has the ability to monitor traffic. In "Big Champagne is Watching You," Jeff Howe of *Wired Magazine* writes Big Champagne is tracking every download and selling the data to the music industry, turning file-sharing networks into the world's biggest focus group. If the local coffee shop can license the entire ASCAP/BMI catalogs, and they're already monitoring Brianna's home computer, the only problem would seem to be their attitude.

* normalizing an \$895 product by \$18 retail price for a CD multiplied by \$150,000 (150000 x 895/18).

links:

Many artists singing mixed tune when it comes to file-sharing fight
By Neil Strauss (*Seattle Times*)
http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/business/technology/2001728101_download14.html

Lawsuit-happy music industry is missing the big picture
By Fred Von Lohmann (*Kansas City Star*)
<http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascitystar/news/opinion/6765234.htm>

Beyond File-Sharing, a Nation of Copiers
By John Leland (*The New York Times*)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/14/fashion/14COPY.html>

File-Sharing Battle Leaves Musicians Caught in Middle
By Neil Strauss (*The New York Times*)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/14/technology/14MUSI.html?ex=1064116800&en=5c9a7eb79932d782&ei=5062&>

Sour notes from the music biz
By Kate Taylor *GlobalTechnology.com*
<http://www.globetechnology.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20030913/KATE13/TPTechnology/>

Music Downloads Won't Disappear
by Beverley Lumpkin
<http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/news/newsbyid.asp?id=12467>

FAA HazMat Fines
<http://www.saftpak.com/FAAFINES.htm>

Sarah Haddock debuts new CD

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was humor in taking certain sentiments to the extreme, so I just went with it.”

The song’s chorus: “Why don’t you go away?/I think you know the way/To be sure that you don’t wander back/Let me draw you a map.”

Sarah, who has a BA in music from the University of North Texas, recorded “Girl Here Falling” at ISS Director **Sonny Speed’s** Son Spot Studios in Commack. “I joined the ISS in the summer of ’99 after hearing about it at a music/craft festival in St. James,” Sarah recalls. “During those early meetings, Sonny Speed asked if I wanted to record at his studio. The thought scared the hell out of me, and having maybe two presentable songs, I dodged his offer for almost a year. But eventually I realized that Sonny’s a busy guy, people fight for his time, and if I waited too long, he was going to stop asking. So with four songs completed, I started recording.”

Sarah made the rounds performing at local venues

While recording the CD, Sarah made the rounds performing in local venues, honing her songs and struggling to overcome her stage fright. The unease with getting in front of a crowd, which is no easy feat for most people who have a pulse, probably has roots in her first performance at a high school talent show.

“I played a Billy Joel song. Billy and I went unappreciated and I vowed never to do it again.” But she did, and four years ago she made it to an ISS songwriting workshop, where she performed her own material for an audience for the first time. “Does that count as a performance? It should. I was nauseated and shaking. After that, I tried a few bookstore open mics, and my first gig was the Hard Luck Cafe in Huntington. More nausea, more shaking.”

But it’s not all nerves and nausea. Sarah admits she enjoys the post-performance buzz. “I enjoy playing through a new song at home right after it’s finished. The writing process can be enjoyable, but not always. As for being on stage, I’m working on learning to enjoy that.”

Meanwhile, Sarah continues to work on her main goal: “With Billy Joel as my point of reference, I always tried to write something that would come out sounding like him. I have yet to accomplish this.”

WHAT’S DOING

This Month

ISS members are always out and about. Check your local listings for appearances live, on the radio or even on TV. Also check www.islandsongwriters.com for gigs and links to member sites with information about CD releases, shows and MP3s. Here’s what’s happening in the coming weeks (*Remember to check with the venue first because dates and times may change*):

ISS Workshop

Here’s your chance to test out your songs in front of an audience of fellow musicians, who provide constructive feedback on how to make improvements. The workshop is at **Five Towns College, Burrs Lane** Dix Hills, run by ISS Director **Sonny Speed**, first Monday of the month. Starts at 7:30. Bring a guitar to perform your song live, or play a CD or tape. A piano is available for keyboardists. Bring 25 copies of your lyrics so other workshops attendees can follow along and critique your work. Upcoming workshops: **Oct. 6, Nov. 3., Dec. 1**

Borders Showcase

Borders, Old Country Road, Westbury, hosted by **Rich Stein**, third Friday of the month. Starts at 8p.m.:
Friday, Oct. 17: Sarah Haddock, Princess Peapod
Friday, Nov. 21: Martha Trachtenberg with Tom Griffith, Dave Isaacs
Friday, Dec. 19: Rich Stein and Jim Dexter solo and together, holiday show

Open Mics

Borders, Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, hosted by ISS Webmaster **Bill “Scoop” Ryan**, first Thursday of the month. Sign-up starts at 7 p.m. Try to get there early to guarantee your spot. **Nov. 6, Dec. 4**
Starbucks, Main Street, Huntington, 7:30 p.m. Mondays.
City Deli, New York Ave., Huntington, 8 p.m. Thursdays.
Ruby’s, Oakdale Ave, Port Jefferson, 8 p.m. Wednesdays.
Starbucks, Long Beach, 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

If you would like to have a newsletter e-mailed to you, please send your request to Pedro Pereira at peddi@optonline.net.

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