

DISCOVERIES

EDITOR'S CORNER

When I posted my "gone fishin'" sign in the last issue, I promised to return in September with "a summer's worth of new releases"... Well, I had forgotten just how many CDs can accumulate in that period. In this issue, between the print magazine and the online version - be sure to check the website for additional reviews not printed here - we cover 50 discs and have hardly made a dent in the pile.

The musical highlight of my summer was hosting a party for the iconic Six String Nation guitar, constructed from more than sixty artifacts of Canadian history (www.sixstringnation.com). It was an opportunity to renew old musical friendships and to make new ones. The guitar's caretaker (perhaps proud father would be more accurate) Jowi Taylor had extended an invitation to Derek Olive, a Montreal-based singer-songwriter and excellent guitarist who is currently gigging his way across the country on a bicycle! Having left Powell River B.C. on May 11 with a schedule that will see him arrive in Halifax September 8, Derek had pedaled more than 4,500 kilometres with his guitar in tow by the time he arrived at my house on August 2. With the stories he had to tell it looked like he might upstage the Six String Nation guitar, until Jowi got started telling the origins, trials and tribulations of the 10 year quest to bring his vision of this fabulous piece of Canadian history to life. But back to **Derek Olive**... He had to leave our party early because he was expected on stage at Mitzi's Sister that night, but did get to share one of his wonderful songs with us and on the way out the door gave me a copy



of his CD "**Our Passing Nows**" (www.derekolive.com). With its mixture of playful and good natured lyrics - "I won't should on you if you don't should on me" - combined with virtuosic acoustic guitar and sophisticated arrangements somewhat reminiscent of early Bruce Cockburn, although not in any derivative way, the disc has been a welcome addition to my folk collection.

Hosting that party led to a return invitation from one of my musical old friends to a garden party at her house at Musselman's Lake. Held on the last day before the grey "Exhibition weather" set in it was a fabulous day full of pickin' and grinnin' in the sunshine, with several generations of participants and more guitars, fiddles and mandolins than you could shake a stick at. While the next CD has no direct



relation to this I think it must have been that day in the country that put me in the receptive mood I was in when I put "**Sweet Dreams - The Songs of Patsy Cline**" sung by **Leisa Way** (www.leisaway.com) in my CD player a day or two later. Leisa has been working in musical theatre for the past 25 years including a six year stint as Anne of Green Gables at the Charlottetown Festival. Her current endeavour is a

one-woman show she has written around the life of Patsy Cline. She says that in the show she recreates the voice and manner of the country legend as closely as possible, but on the CD has brought her own interpretation to these familiar staples of the country repertory. I can only say that she has done a fabulous job of it with *She's Got*

You, Crazy and *I Fall to Pieces* particular highlights for me. **Concert note:** Leisa Way performs "Sweet Dreams - The Songs of Patsy Cline" in Brampton at the Lester B. Pearson Theatre on September 22 and 23, at Markham Theatre on October 12 and at two shows at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga on November 4. Coincidentally another show featuring songs made famous by Patsy Cline (and Hank Williams), "Memories of Hank and Patsy", will be performed by Marie Bottrell and Aaron Solomon at the Red Barn Theatre at Jackson's Point September 6, 7 & 8.

Browsing this month's concert listings I noted that there will be three opportunities to hear local pianist **Frank Horvat** here in Toronto, and one more "Beyond the GTA". Frank recently released his CD "**I'll Be Good**" (www.frankhorvat.com) and I've been enjoying it over the summer. The compositions are diverse enough that it's hard to describe what exactly the



disc is about. Sometimes bordering on the improvisations of Keith Jarrett (but with no audible humming), at moments reminiscent of boogie-woogie, at others dark ballad-like musings and occasional fugal passages, this is a truly eclectic mix showcasing Horvat's wealth of technique and energy. Most intriguing is *Great House of Riffs* which begins with a quirky motif that could have been borrowed from John Weinzwieg which gradually morphs into what might be variations on *Louie Louie*. I'm left shaking my head in wonder. You can hear Frank Horvat live at the Concord Café on September 10, at a benefit in support of Sketch on September 16 at the Trane Studio, in a free lunch hour performance at the Princess Margaret Hospital on September 26 and at the Freeway Coffee House in Hamilton on September 27.

The final track on Frank Horvat's disc, *The Resolve*, begins almost gently with a repeated pattern that gradually builds and builds in a relentless fashion over a seven minute period but then suddenly changes gears and dissolves into silence. In contrast, the music of Toronto-based composer **MC McGuire** on his disc "**Meta-Conspiracy**" (www.harostreetmusic.com) starts with



full throttle and almost never lets up. There are brief moments of respite, but the overall impression is one of manic activity. After a cryptic warning in the computer voice of a Mac error message about an overload of MIDI information we are off and running full speed ahead. *A Short History of Lounge* is a 25 minute quasi-concerto in which local piano wizard David Swan is pitted against a computer which provides a virtual orchestra of synthetic sounds and samples, Rumba rhythms, pop and classical quotations layered upon layer, which ritard and accelerate until a final tempo of a quarter note = 900 (!) is achieved. *Got That Crazy Latin/Metal Feeling* provides electric guitarist John Gzowski with a similar backdrop, a "wall of sound" such as Phil Spector could only have imagined in his wildest dreams. With John Zorn as executive producer the disc was released as part of the Composer Series on the Tzadic label. The notes describe the music as "confrontational, extreme and packed with drama and excitement." I couldn't say it any better.

We welcome your feedback and invite submissions. Catalogues, review copies of CDs and comments should be sent to: The WholeNote, 503 - 720 Bathurst St. Toronto ON M5S 2R4. We also welcome your input via our website, www.thewholenote.com.

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