

# Gavin's Woodpile – The Bruce Cockburn Newsletter

Edited by Daniel Keebler

## Issue Number 43

### February 2001

**Bruce Cockburn will be inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame** at the 30th Anniversary Juno Awards in Hamilton, Ontario. The show will air on CBC Television on March 4, 2001. Regarding the event, Bernie Finkelstein told me, "It's a great honor for Bruce. It's one that he deserves. I think the timing is good. There are some people that have said to me, 'Why did it take him so long to win?' We don't really see it that way. We think of Bruce as being quite young still, and so active. We're looking forward to it and I think it's going to be an interesting evening. Bruce hasn't been to the Juno's for twenty years. Last time he went was 1981, but he **will go** to receive this [laughter]."

For all the reasons Bruce is being honored, these are the best... -DK

Going To The Country, Thoughts On A Rainy Afternoon, Together Alone, The Bicycle Trip, The Thirteenth Mountain, Musical Friends, Change Your Mind, Man Of A Thousand Faces, Spring Song, Keep It Open, Happy Good Morning Blues, Let Us Go Laughing, Love Song, One Day I Walk, Golden Serpent Blues, High Winds White Sky, You Point To The Sky, Life's Mistress, Ting The Cauldron, Shining Mountain, My Lady And My Lord, Feet Fall On The Road, Fall, Sunwheel Dance, Up On The Hillside, Life Will Open, It's Going Down Slow, When The Sun Falls, He Came From The Mountain, Dialogue With The Devil (or "Why Don't We Celebrate?"), For The Birds, Foxglove, You Don't Have To Play The Horses, The Blues Got The World..., Mama Just Wants To Barrelhouse All Night Long, Islands In A Black Sky, Clocks Don't Bring Tomorrow – Knives Don't Bring Good News, When The Sun Goes Nova, Déjà Vu, God Bless The Children, All The Diamonds In The World, Salt, Sun And Time, Don't Have To Tell You Why, Stained Glass, Rouler Sa Bosse, Never So Free, Seeds On The Wind, It Won't Be Long, Christmas Song, Hand-Dancing, January In The Halifax Airport Lounge, Starwheel, Lament For The Last Days, Joy Will Find A Way (A Song About Dying), Burn, Skylarking, A Long-Time Love Story, A Life Story, Arrows Of Light, Lord Of The Starfields, Vagabondage, In The Falling Dark, Little Seahorse, Water Into Wine, Silver Wheels, Giftbearer, Gavin's Woodpile, I'm Gonna Fly Some Day, Festival Of Friends, The Pipes The Pipes, Deer Dancing Round A Broken Mirror, Homme Brûlant, Free To Be, Cader Idris, Red Brother Red Sister, Rainfall, A Montréal Song, Outside A Broken Phone Booth With Money In My Hand, Prenons La Mer, Red Ships Take Off In The Distance, Laughter, Bright Sky, Feast Of Fools, Can I Go With You, Nanzen Ji, Creation Dream, Hills Of Morning, Badlands Flashback, Northern Lights, After The Rain, Wondering Where The Lions Are, Incandescent Blue, No Footprints, Grim Travellers, Rumours Of Glory, More Not More, You Get Bigger As You Go, What About The Bond, How I Spent My Fall Vacation, Guerilla Betrayed, Tokyo, Fascist Architecture, The Rose

Above The Sky, The Coldest Night Of The Year, You Pay Your Money And You Take Chance, The Strong One, All's Quiet On The Inner City Front, Radio Shoes, Wanna Go Walking, And We Dance, Justice, Broken Wheel, Loner, The Trouble With Normal, Candy Man's Gone, Hoop Dancer, Cala Luna, Waiting For The Moon, Tropic Moon, Going Up Against Chaos, Put Our Hearts Together, Civilization And It's Discontents, Planet Of The Clowns, Lovers In A Dangerous Time, Maybe The Poet, Sahara Gold, Making Contact, Peggy's Kitchen Wall, To Raise The Morning Star, Nicaragua, If I Had A Rocket Launcher, Dust And Diesel, Call It Democracy, Lily Of The Midnight Sky, World Of Wonders, Berlin Tonight, People See Through You, See How I Miss You, Santiago Dawn, Dancing In Paradise, Down Here Tonight, Stolen Land, Waiting For A Miracle, If A Tree Falls, Shipwrecked At The Stable Door, Gospel Of Bondage, Don't Feel Your Touch, Tibetan Side Of Town, Understanding Nothing, Where The Death Squad Lives, Radium Rain, Pangs Of Love, The Gift, Anything Can Happen, Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life, A Dream Like Mine, Kit Carson, Mighty Trucks Of Midnight, Soul Of A Man, Great Big Love, One Of The Best Ones, Somebody Touched Me, Cry Of A Tiny Babe, Actions Speak Louder, Indian Wars, When It's Gone It's Gone, Child Of The Wind, Adeste Fidelis, Early On One Christmas Morn, O Little Town Of Bethlehem, Riu Riu Chiu, I Saw Three Ships, Down In Yon Forest, Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes, Go Tell It On The Mountain, Shepherds, Silent Night, Jesus Ahatonnia (The Huron Carol), God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman, It Came Upon The Midnight Clear, Mary Had A Baby, Joy To The World, Listen For The Laugh, All The Ways I Want You, Bone In My Ear, Burden Of The Angel/ Beast, Scanning These Crowds, Southland Of The Heart, Train In The Rain, Someone I Used To Love, Love Loves You Too, Sunrise On The Mississippi, Closer To The Light, Tie Me At The Crossroads, Night Train, Get Up Jonah, Pacing The Cage, Mistress Of Storms, The Whole Night Sky, The Coming Rains, Birmingham Shadows, The Mines Of Mozambique, Live On My Mind, The Charity Of Night, Strange Waters, When You Give It Away, Mango, Last Night Of The World, Isn't That What Friends Are For?, Down To The Delta, The Embers Of Eden, Blueberry Hill, Let The Bad Air Out, Look How Far, Deep Lake, Use Me While You Can, Rise And Fall, Morning Hymn, Music For A Lunar Eclipse, Yanqui Go Home, The Light Goes On Forever, Wake Up Willie, Wise Users.

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In the Spring of 1970 Bruce Cockburn released his first album. In the Fall of 1999 he released his 25th. To truly appreciate the strength of his work to date it is important to take the trip the same way Bruce did. There is value in listening to his work in the order in which it was created. Let the following discography map the way...

## **Official Discography**

Bruce Cockburn  
High Winds White Sky  
Sunwheel Dance  
Night Vision  
Salt, Sun & Time  
Joy Will Find A Way  
In The Falling Dark  
Circles In The Stream  
Further Adventures Of  
Dancing In The Dragon's Jaws  
Humans  
Mummy Dust  
Inner City Front  
The Trouble With Normal  
Stealing Fire  
World Of Wonders  
Waiting For A Miracle  
Big Circumstance  
Bruce Cockburn Live  
Nothing But A Burning Light  
Christmas  
Dart To The Heart  
The Charity Of Night  
You Pay Your Money & You Take Your Chance  
Breakfast In New Orleans Dinner In Timbuktu

A few other official releases include:

Resume  
Rumours Of Glory  
If A Tree Falls

All three are compilations– *Rumours Of Glory* contains the song “Yanqui Go Home,” which is not found anywhere else.

## **The Road to Tombouctou and Beyond (Part II)**

In the last issue of Gavin's Woodpile USC Director of Canadian Programs, Friederike Knabe, shared the first installment of her “River of Sand” video diary with us. The trip took armchair travellers from Bamako all the way to legendary Tombouctou. But that was only half the story. Join Friederike on the second leg of her journey with Bruce Cockburn, director/producer Robert Lang and the other members of the film crew, as they spend time in Dogon country.

## **February 16**

### **USC guesthouse, Douentza**

We get a slow start given we are quite tired from our desert travels. At a first planning session, we review where we want to go, which villages to see, which local staff members should accompany us. We need to get our bearings. Some of the team have not been here before and need to see the villages and develop the concepts of the film.

The first village we visit is Béguima, where the team filmed in November. We are greeted like old friends - Diane has photos from the first visit and that attracts attention. Paying our respects to the chief is obligatory; it is a friendly gesture and at the same time smoothens the arrangement for possible filming later on. After some negotiation, they agree that we can come back and film the women in the market garden later that week. Bob is looking for angles for the film's story line. Bruce observes everything, smiling and greeting people, shaking hands. Nobody has ever heard of him here, of course.

In the afternoon, we explore Ibissa. None of us has been here before. We turn off the road and drive several km into a rift valley. We approach the village, nestled between steep rocky hills. By the school, the children are busy watering the small plots of a new market garden. We provide some distraction and many come running to look at the strange foreigners. The children, lots of them, become our regular welcoming committee. The whole setting is an oasis in an otherwise bleak area. The contrasting gardens, with the surrounding ochre and red hillside and the village built against a hill are visually stunning. Good for a film about desertification? Bob's eye is at ease - this feels like a village we should film. At the first visit to the chief, he encourages us to make ourselves at home. Chief Bambië Kounkoulba is in his eighties and does not leave the house much these days. One of his council members, Sulemane Kounkoulba, will be our host and interpreter where necessary. The cameras, so far unused, can go into action.

## **February 17**

We continue our pre-filming visit to selected villages at Badiari in the morning. Meeting the chief brings memories and questions about the first shoot in the fall. Photos are presented and result in laughs and chatter. Bob is not convinced that filming here will add to the story. In the car we discuss desertification and its impact on the people... Oualo is next on our list. We have to climb the rocks for 20 minutes to reach the village, high up between steep table top mountains. Part of the village is abandoned. Life must be extremely harsh here. Looking down into the valley, we are told that usually you see water at this time of year - but there is very little now. The view from up here into the plain around Douentza is stunning.

In the evening, we hold another planning meeting: The film's focus will be Ibissa. The atmosphere is more relaxed, the director has found his angle. Bruce gives us a taste of his music, as he 'practices' his guitar.

## February 18

Planning will be an important factor from now on. We can only film early in the morning and later in the afternoon. Otherwise the sun light is too intense. Filming village people in their normal routines, also takes a lot of planning. It is not too much of a challenge for Martin, but making them look relaxed and natural is a completely different story. The women are very self-conscious in front of the camera but within minutes the chatter and laughing begins.

At the second visit to the chief, Bob can share his vision of the film: we will not only focus on Ibissa but feature Sulemane and his family thus helping Canadians to get more involved with a personal story. We also ask about musicians and introduce Bruce. As soon as his music cassette appears, they believe that he is famous. His picture is on the cassette! Bruce generously hands them out. By the time we leave, everybody knows who he is and the music greets us in the car, at the square and in the streets of Ibissa. We are ready to roll!

Before we can interview Sulemane's second wife, Sah, it is appropriate that we pay our respects to the president of the women's group - she expects to be consulted on all issues involving the members of the group. Hawa Kounkoulba is very pleased to meet with us and decides that she and I should be friends. On a second round of filming in the afternoon, we visit the main market garden area. The contrast between the lush green of the market gardens and the surrounding bare rocky hills is dramatic. Not only Bob is fascinated - we all are.

We had asked the chief about local musicians - one to jam with Bruce.? Bruce goes to his first drumming lesson while we film the children in the market garden. Drumming has a way of travelling... everybody in the village hears it. Bruce has innocently started a village fête! More and more people come. Three men are now drumming, Mamoudou, a young farmer, and Sulemane among them. The villagers form a big circle and slowly dance and move along to the rhythm. We are invited to join. Martin, the heavy Betacam camera in his arm, joins in. So does Diane, with her recording pack over her shoulder. Bob? He is filming the whole event from some interesting angle. His small digital camera is just the right equipment for that. Bruce and I are more reserved and stand among the crowd clapping in the rhythm. Suddenly the circle widens and the chief steps in. The Chief? We thought that he was hardly ever leaving the house; to us he looked rather frail. But here he was, full of energy, smiling, dancing with the enthusiasm of the young! The party continues into the evening. Our intention to leave is met with disappointment - the party was supposed to last all night!

The evening phone call to Toronto from the guest house demands cooperation from everybody. It becomes the daily routine. Because we switch off the generator, we need the car batteries for light and for the phone. Toronto is just a phone call away but also another world away.

## February 19

Back to Ibisssa for more interesting encounters. First we learn about the history of Ibisssa, its social structure and land resources. Sulemane arrives with the displays under his arm: all the information has been painted with the traditional mud print technique on sheets of cotton cloth! We have questions and realize that the chief has a lot more to tell us, so we make another date with him.

As we spend time in the village we try to create something of a relaxed atmosphere. We are still very much the focus of attention. We notice a lack of young men in the streets - the exodus is still going on. Still, something is missing; the director is hesitant. We need to create some action, he says, or we won't have enough of a story. What better solution to this problem than making music! Bruce needs a bit of convincing that playing his guitar at the back of the open cruiser will do the trick. But it works! Kids come and build a circle around him, adults arrive, benches are brought and the concert is in full swing. Some skeptical faces watch from a bit of a distance. What is this man doing playing a silver instrument AND singing? The rhythm of the songs wins more friends. This is the man in the picture, Mamoudou proudly shows bystanders the tape that Bruce had given him. He is famous in Canada and now here too. Wait, there is competition at the other side of the square. What's happening? Martin has opened the back of the other cruiser and plays back some of the film tapes on the small travel monitor. Movie night as well as concert. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. The women recognize themselves in the footage. Giggles and smiles. We have won the day and made more friends.

## **February 20**

We had promised to go back to Béguima to film the women in the market garden... so we go. We find close up garden scenes to film. After the lunch siesta we get back to Ibisssa. Plans are to be changed. Sulemane is busy and we cannot film what we had scheduled. We need to reassess. We need Bruce walking and talking with people in the village. We need to see more of the village! What about a bicycle? That would be fun. Sulemane has an old one although the air in the tire won't last for very long. Still, we try. Bruce makes it down the village street, people passing by, wondering. The music man, now on a bicycle. The tires last for two tries.

In the evening after dinner, we review the rushes of the day. Did we get the scene right? What about the light? Did the music and the sounds come across alright? Martin wanders off to town while Diane is tired and withdraws early. We need to make a required shot list for the rest of the stay, Bob reminds us.

## **February 21**

Plans are there to be changed for sure. A strange light greets us in the morning. Above us the sky is blue, but all around us is a yellow haze. The air is oppressive - not quite as hot as the days before but stifling. We are surrounded by sand storms. The wind picks up and we cover our faces. Now you understand the Tuaregs! The sand gets

everywhere. We are worried about the cameras. Mine has given up early on, I am using Bob's for shots of the crew as well as for USC needs. The film cameras need an extra layer of protection.

When we arrive at Ibissa hardly anybody is out in the street and the market area. Anybody venturing out has his or her face covered leaving just enough room to see and breathe. It is market day and we want to film the buzz and excitement. The older women in their market garden at the edge of the village have been waiting patiently to be filmed. They are ready whatever the weather. Afterwards, we change our plans and suggest an interview with the chief near the lower spring. He agreed. Mariam Oulouguem, it turns out is a great niece of his. She will undertake the interview in Dogon and later on, she will translate it for us. It is fascinating for us to watch them dialoguing: a beautiful site.

By the time we get to the vehicles to have a drink of water we are exhausted. Martin drops off to sleep in the seat and we are not far from it. It has already been a long day. And the weather makes it worse. We are in serious need of a rest when we get back to the guest house. Thank goodness Sunday is coming up - a day of rest. The first day off since we started this trip almost three weeks ago.

## **February 22**

A walk through the Douentza market is a must on a Sunday, and we explore the diversity of produce - Bruce likes the Dogon hats but cannot find the perfect fit. Diane always has space for more fabrics. We find a stall with the traditional indigo dyed wraps that the women wear. We all buy some of those. Then, music time again. Nasrou Hamadou Saré, a famous ngoni player around Douentza came to visit with Bruce earlier in the week and is back today for a jamming session. Diane is not happy with the sound equipment for such a session but has to live with what she has. Nasrou is very interested in his meeting with Bruce. The two relate well through their music. Another treat for us.

## **February 23**

We have been getting up early each morning but today we also have to leave early. We plan to leave at 6:00 am in order to catch the sunrise over Ibissa. The sand is still around, but the air is clearing up. On our film shot list today is Sulemane's first wife in the house; Sulemane and family members clearing the land and repairing the diguettes; some more village shots with Bruce. All ventures turn out well. We are in the last few days of filming, so each night we have to review our list of action shots still needed.

## **February 24**

Today we take a break from Ibissa to visit the Gono school and arboretum.. The children are in class, but we can film Bruce in conversation with Modibo who explains some of the trees' origins. The other important stop we need to make is to the Gono seed bank. Then to Oualo, the last of the villages we visit again. We choose it as the place for the

filming of the USC TV spots that Bob has been producing with Bruce for many years. It is a very good site for this. It takes a while for Bob, Bruce and Martin to find the right spot for the shoot. As the sun sets, the light becomes eerie and surreal. Bruce against the setting sun - what a shot for a poster!! We have to leave before dark, Diarra urges us along, the descend is treacherous in the dark.

### **February 25**

We finally make it to Béni to see the famous dam that is being built by the local people with USC's assistance. It is an impressive sight and will be a major resource for five surrounding villages. This will not be part of the video, but at my requests Bob films the action for USC's own records. The afternoon is the wrap up session with the chief in Ibissa. We also meet the main players of the film again, Sulemane and his first wife, his second wife, some of the other women, and Mamoudou the drummer. Bob insists on snapshots with all of them. When we say our good byes to the chief, he expresses his gratitude for our visit and explains why he danced that afternoon in the village. He wanted to express his gratitude to USC and the film crew for coming all the way to Douentza and to his village. For the last time we walk through the alleyways down to the market place where the cars are. Last goodbyes, hand shakes, greeting exchanges and waving - and we are gone. Nobody will forget these days for a long time to come.

### **February 26, Hotel in Sevaré**

We decided that we should visit the other famous site in Mali in addition to Timbuktu: the falaises (cliffs) of Bandiagara. It is only a couple of hours drive en route to Bamako. Packing starts at 6:00 am. Goodbyes at the USC guesthouse follow. The staff have been looking after us well. "A la prochaine." Til the next time. Bob and Bruce take a guide and climb into the cliffs, the rest of us take a rest in Songho. It is strange to be back in a city, in the traffic as well as all the amenities we did not really miss while in Douentza. In the hotel restaurant, in the beautiful lush court yard, under the stars, we call Toronto.

### **February 27, Hotel Al Mounia**

Back in Bamako. We have a few things still to accomplish. We also need some rest after the travels. Making contact with a few people is important. Preparing for the last couple of days.

### **February 28**

We meet up with Wandé Kouyaté, a griotte who has agreed to sing for us and the video. Gaétan, our music friend has found a spot outside Bamako that looks almost like the cliffs in Dogon country. Wandé has prepared a couple of songs and in good griot fashion, she varies the text as she goes along. The wind blows the reflector screen out of our hands; try again and again. Finally we get enough good takes to choose from.

### **March 1<sup>st</sup>**



What is missing? Some shots from Bamako. How do we film people in the bustling city? Remember the bicycle in Ibis? Somebody on the USC staff lends us the bicycle - same problem with the air in the tires... We deposit Bruce and the bike and film from the back of the cruise. For a while things go OK. At the light, we get separated and after we turn the corner, no Bruce. Then he comes, on foot, the bicycle has locked completely. We hoist it back on the roof and drive off.

## **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Final arrangements, meeting with the USC staff, shopping for souvenirs and we are ready to leave. An exciting trip has ended - we are tired and exhausted but still talk to each other as friends. We made many new friends on the way. Bruce has become famous in Ibis and as long as the tapes last in the hot climate, his songs will play on the car tape player as the USC staff travel the road from Bamako to Douentza and back to Bamako. For Bob, the most important part has only just begun... He has to put the vision on paper and create a one-hour film from 36 hours or more of excellent footage!

## **Things**

*Dante's Local* by Neil Anderson (Unreelmusic, UNR 103). Released in 1999 this eleven track CD contains Neil's version of "Don't Feel Your Touch." As a bagpipe player the CD is heavy with wonderful Celtic Funk music. This is one to add to your collection. For more information on Neil's work or to order the CD, call 610-825-7268 or go to [www.unreelmusic.com](http://www.unreelmusic.com). My thanks to Tom Fagan.

Bruce has been asked to perform at the 500th taping of **Mountain Stage** in Charleston, West Virginia. The show is set for taping on February 18, 2001. Check local public radio stations for air times thereafter.

There is still no firm air date for the **concert recorded in Montreal** in early 2000. What *is* known is that it is scheduled to be on CBC TV, *perhaps* sometime fairly close to the March Juno Award show. Keep your eyes and ears open. You might be on your own with this one, or check the Woodpile's website for updates.

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**More things** in the next issue.

# Issue Number 44

## April 2001

### The man we called Juan Carlos

*The following article first appeared in **New Internationalist** in April 2000. **Heather MacAndrew** tells the story of the making of the documentary video, *The Man We Called Juan Carlos*. The soundtrack was written by Bruce Cockburn. Following this article is an interview I conducted with Heather in February 2001, regarding Bruce's work on the film. –DK*

A few months after the 1976 earthquake in Guatemala my partner David Springbett travelled to one of the hardest-hit villages to shoot a documentary for Canadian television.

In San Martín Jilotepeque, a town in the Guatemalan highlands, David visited a project begun four years earlier by a small development agency called World Neighbors. The initial goal of the project was to improve soil and grow better maize. And on that level it was a resounding success: in just his second year with the program, one farmer, Wenceslao Armira, harvested 16 times more maize from his field than his family had ever grown before. But the ultimate goal was to help eliminate poverty. Classes in nutrition, literacy and maternal and child health followed. Gradually people began to take more control of their lives, to work their way out of poverty and malnutrition. Some of the teachers became community leaders. Wenceslao Armira was one of them.

As word of the program's success spread, development workers from around the world visited. Some even sat in on Wenceslao's classes. Then in 1974 World Neighbors purchased 60 hectares of local land and sold it on credit to landless families in the community. With improved harvests the former landless peasants could now repay their loans. They became independent farmers rather than dependent farm labourers. Life was changing in this mainly Mayan part of rural Guatemala – conflict with existing power structures was growing as was resentment from local élites who benefited from a landless labour force to work their vast plantations.

We came to Guatemala to make a film that would distinguish between emergency relief after the earthquake and long-term development efforts. People respond emotionally to the drama of a televised natural disaster. But the concept of long-term development is not as easy to explain or to sell. We quickly found the San Martín project, and Wenceslao Armira was suggested as a good person to interview.

He was reluctant at first, uncomfortable because of the attention his participation in the film might draw. But, after some explanation of our goal, he eventually agreed. The community asked only that we change his name, along with the names of other key

people. As later events showed, they had good reason to be nervous. In the film Wenceslao was known as 'Juan Carlos.' He had a presence, a quiet confidence and intelligence that made him stand apart. If there is such a thing as a natural leader he was one. His community recognized this and so did the Canadian television audience who saw the film. And, inevitably, so did the Guatemalan authorities.

We eventually sent a print of the film to San Martín. We didn't know until much later that Wenceslao had used it in his work. Showing films, awkward as it was without electricity, was a way to attract audiences to his classes. For local people it was a revelation to see people in a film speaking their language, Kachiquel. But some of the ladinos (wealthy land owners of European descent) resented the fact that a local Indian was in a foreign film. The film raised Wenceslao's profile considerably.

As political oppression grew in Central America in the 1980s we read and heard reports about Honduras and El Salvador, and occasionally about Guatemala. The news was not good. Eventually we began to get detailed news of San Martín and Wenceslao – stories of violence and murder.

In the winter of 1984 friends of Wenceslao called to tell us that he had joined one of the guerrilla groups and was living in exile in Mexico. Despite the risk he wanted his side of the Guatemalan conflict told and he was willing to talk on camera. Unlike the obvious damage of an earthquake, the devastation of Guatemala's civil war was largely invisible to the rest of the world.

When we met him in Mexico he was heavier, greyer and older. Seated in a chair, using straightforward language, he talked to our camera about poverty and power as he and his community felt it. He was a Catholic, a development worker and teacher. But in the face of increased brutality from the Guatemalan army, he felt that taking up arms was the only option. It was a painful decision, one he agonized over and discussed at length with his family. And the personal price was high. It meant separating from his wife and five children, putting them in a 'safe house' in Guatemala City and living from a backpack in the Peten jungle for 15 long, tough years.

Back at our home in Toronto we tried to combine the Mexican interview with our nine-year-old footage into a new film. Despite the obvious drama to us, it was a hard sell. Neither broadcasters nor development agencies were interested and in the end we were unable to raise enough money to finish this film.

Fast-forward ten years to 1994. We made contact again. Wenceslao was alive and in hiding, but two of his children, Juanito 12 and Quirina 15, had been tortured and killed by the Guatemalan military. His wife Guaya, blaming Wenceslao for their deaths, had broken off their relationship.

A year or so passed and we got more news. Wenceslao was now one of the highest-ranking Maya in the guerrillas; he was advising the non-indigenous guerrilla leadership on Indian rights as outlined in the recently negotiated Peace Accords. He had established

a non-governmental organization in Guatemala City and was studying to become a Mayan priest. In addition, he now owned some land near the Mexican border and had a new wife, a Mexican-Mayan woman called Virginia. Now, we thought, Wenceslao's story was finally ready to be told.

So in 1997 two filmmakers working for us on another project in Mexico agreed to travel to Guatemala to spend a week filming Wenceslao. In this footage he talks about the last 15 years of his life and the decisions he made since we last saw him in 1984. In one heartbreaking sequence he is shown watching the original 1976 film, which he had not seen for many years. The segments included shots of his murdered children when they were young, their whole lives ahead of them. It is impossible to imagine what it was like for him at that moment, confronted with his past and reminded once again of the immense personal cost of his decision.

Then in the autumn of 1997 we heard from friends that Wenceslao had been diagnosed with inoperable liver cancer. He died in December 1998 with his second wife Virginia at his side.

The following June we raised enough money to travel to Guatemala to do additional shooting. When we returned to San Martín we saw much had changed for the better. Wenceslao's former community now had electricity, children looked healthier and there were more vehicles on the roads. Maize was tall in fields and people did not meet us with fear. But in other ways San Martín looked the same as it did when we first filmed there 23 years ago. There was no indication of the tragic massacres that had occurred. The townspeople wanted Wenceslao's body back from his adopted village for burial in his hometown. There was talk of a statue commemorating him in San Martín's central plaza. People talked more openly but were still cautious about the prospects for peace. During this trip a friend met us with a copy of a previously secret army document that had just been leaked to the press. The *diario* listed 200 people kidnapped by the army over the course of several months in 1984. Among them were Wenceslao's two children. I looked at the dates of their abductions and a chill ran down my spine. I realized that as we interviewed Wenceslao in 1984, while he told us he was confident that his family was safe, his children were being tortured and killed.

The tale of how our lives became entwined with this man over so many years is still unfolding. Wenceslao influenced us in many ways. But by filming him we altered his life too. As filmmakers we have a responsibility to those we film and to the way we shape their stories. But how do we measure the success of our films? And can we ever know about their unintended consequences? We hope that our work will influence positive change and yet it never occurred to us that sending a copy to San Martín might create a risk to the community. In later years we wondered if being in that first film was a factor in Wenceslao's name appearing on right-wing death lists.

Success in life is another question altogether. For me, there is no measurement other than knowing if you have faced squarely the question of what gives your life meaning and

acted accordingly. Living our values can be our greatest challenge. Wenceslao's life embodies that for me and that is why he remains a forceful presence in my life.

Beyond development, beyond even politics, Wenceslao's life pushes us to look hard at something else. Here was a man who was certain of things that most of us strive for and precious few of us ever attain: he knew who he was. He knew his purpose on earth was to teach and work for the good of his people. And he was guided by his principles and a sense of justice that dominated his life. His desire to better the lives of his people forced him to face decisions that most of us will never have to confront. All our lives are made up of ethical and moral decisions and choices, but the decisions he made in the name of the greater good were at immense personal cost. How can we ever be sure of the consequences of such decisions?

Wenceslao's second wife Virginia told us that as he was dying Wenceslao called in her brother and son and said: 'I want you to pick me up and hold me standing up.'

They both grabbed him by the arms and then he said: 'Now I want you to take good care of yourselves because I'm leaving... we will meet again some day.'

'He was standing up,' Virginia continued, 'and it was like he was sleeping. He died on his feet. He didn't die lying down.'

*My thanks to Wayne Ellwood at New Internationalist, Heather MacAndrew and David Springbett. -DK*

### **Interview With Heather MacAndrew**

Daniel Keebler

*DK: Under what circumstances did you first meet Bruce?*

I think it must have been in about 1985. A woman who worked with us, Merrie-Ellen Wilcox, was riding her bike home. Our office at that time was in the Garment District in Toronto at Adelaide and Spadina. Bruce, I think, was living close to that area as well. She was riding her bike by and saw him standing at the corner of College and Spadina. We [Heather and David Springbett] had just talked the previous week about how we were going to make the film. We thought it would just be fabulous if Bruce Cockburn could do the music. It must have been around the time that he released Rocket Launcher and had been to a Guatemalan refugee camp in Mexico, which is where he wrote Rocket Launcher. Anyway, she rode by on her bike and spotted him and stopped and said "Are you Bruce Cockburn?" He said "Yes." She said "We've got a film that we'd like you to see." They had a short conversation and she gave him her card. He called and came in to talk to us. At that point I think all we had to show him were some rushes [raw footage] from the 1984 interview, and the original film made in 1976 [Guatemala: Campo Vivo!]. That, I guess, was the first point of contact. We were a long way at that point from

putting together the film that we wanted to do back in the 80s, which was really just a compilation based on the 1984 interview with Wencesloa and the footage from 1976.

Then what happened is that we went to Nepal in the Spring of 1985 on another project. In the Spring of 1987, Bruce had been asked to go to Nepal [for USC Canada]. The idea was that they were going to do a slide/tape show of his trip looking at USC projects. The person coordinating that was a friend of ours, a producer named Bob Lange. That, in some ways, was the beginning of Bob's relationship with Bruce – doing these things for USC.

We had been to Nepal in '85 and Bob called and said "Bruce is going off on this trip and we thought it might be useful for him to come and look at some of your footage. Maybe you could talk to him about Nepal and your experience there." So he came by, and I think we had lunch. He looked at some of our footage from Nepal and we talked about it and off he went.

Bruce came back from Nepal – he had traveled with a photographer [Tom Kelly – his "bike rumbles down"]. What came out of that was quite a nice slide-tape to video show called Path To Nepal. Bob Lang asked me if I would work with Bruce in writing it – sort of be the story editor. The idea was that the narration was going to be based on Bruce's diary. That was the first time I worked with him. It was actually a wonderful summer project – going through slides and shaping this slide show and working with him on the writing of it. That was the beginning of a very nice creative relationship and a friendship I think as well.

After that, every year Bob Lang would do a pool of public service announcements for USC, both radio and television spots. I often wrote the TV spots. Bob used a bunch of our out-takes from various other shoots that we'd done in various developing countries. So, we'd usually get together with Bruce once a year to work on those.

I guess it was not until 1989 or 1990 - we were *still* trying to get the film off the ground - we had edited a fine cut. We scraped together some money from somewhere and negotiated a deal with him and asked him if he would do the music. I remember it was a Sunday and we were working in the office and we got a call from him. He was out riding and he said "I just had an idea for what to do about the music for Juan Carlos." We chatted about it and it must have been a month after that we actually went into the studio.

Originally it wasn't really a score but it was a theme and a bunch of incidental music and a secondary theme for this film that never got made in the late 80s. That's how all that evolved.

[In 1990] we just could not get any broadcaster interest and we couldn't actually complete that film. We just reached a bunch of dead ends which is chronicled in the film we finally *did* make. We've got a stack of rejection letters [laughter].

All of the original music Bruce wrote – has it all been sitting in the can since 1990, or has he more recently done additional work on the film?

He did additional work just in November/ December [2000]. When things moved along with the new film we were at the point where we had talked with our editor – we needed more music. We had kept Bruce posted on the various ups and downs of the project. We managed to get him in between touring and he was able to go into Colin Linden's studio and work with Colin and Janice [Powers]. One of the delights about working with Bruce is that he is so conscientious, efficient and organized. He's completely reliable. It just makes things so much easier. That's a part of who he is I guess.

*How did you come to work on River Of Sand?*

That was through Bob Lange as well. Bob had proposed doing this film – he had talked with USC – and it looked there was a good chance for CIDA funding. CIDA is the Canadian International Development Agency. The idea was that Bruce and Bob and the crew would go to Mali and look at USC projects, and part of the idea was to see what music they could find along the way. They went off and did that and Bob called and asked if I would work with Bruce on the writing of the narration. So we did it long distance actually, and it worked out fine. Bob has a writing credit as well. He did a lot of the structuring of the film and working with the editor, and I put the actual words together. I bring a different kind of skill in writing for film and also my own background in international development issues. Bruce had to be able to say the words in a way that was comfortable to him, and to add the poetry.

In *The Man We Called Juan Carlos* you use two of Bruce's songs from studio releases – *Cader Idris* and *Seeds On The Wind*. How did they get chosen?

When the editor was first putting together the rough cut of this film we had some CDs of Bruce's around. He was listening to them and felt those pieces worked really well. We were never sure really until we got further along in the fine cutting to see if we could use them. It was always a sort of rough music but we all felt they worked really well. When it came time for Bruce to embellish the music he had done before we mentioned we had used these pieces and then asked Bernie for permission to use them in the film. Also, when you're cutting a film you'll put in whatever is lying around and it just happened we had some CDs of Bruce.

I find the music he did from the very beginning to be moving It adds *so much* to the film. We just couldn't have been more pleased. He's a real trooper for hanging in with us all these years. It was my obsession to get this film done and it started to take on a life of it's own as the story unfolded over the years. It kind of spooks me when I think about it.

You were living in Victoria by the time this project was completed, and Bruce was likely in Toronto. How were you staying connected and sharing ideas? At some point did you send the video to share what you had so far?

We didn't send him any footage until we had a rough-cut of the film.

*Would that have included the previously recorded music from 1990?*

Yes, put in very roughly because that's what he had to work from. There were holes where we wanted music and that's what he had to think about and work on. Prior to that – because we had worked together on various little projects over the years – we were in touch anyway, and when he came to play here we would see him. So, there was this continuity of contact. When we got to the point where the film was *actually* going to happen it was just a matter of fitting it into his schedule. We were just lucky that the timing worked out so well.

*What are your expectations in regard to when it will air?*

We haven't got a date yet, but Vision TV will probably broadcast in the Fall, in September or October. We have some interest from CNN in the States for their international news. They have a program called CNN Presents. They have a tape at the moment. We've entered it into several festivals already as well. I would also actually love to have it shown at the Summit Of The Americas in Quebec City in April. I'm working on that. I don't know yet what will happen. It's a film that speaks to people on many different levels. It asks a lot of questions – as you know, now that you've seen it – about how were all connected and how you effectively work for social justice and social change. It's set very squarely in the Reagan era and it questions a lot about U.S. foreign policy. There are all those things that I think need to be talked about.

### **Purchasing a copy of *The Man We Called Juan Carlos*:**

Living in the U.S., contact:

Bullfrog Films  
1-800-543-3764

In the rest of the world, contact:

Asterisk Productions at  
production@asterisk.bc.ca

Canadian organizations can contact: Magic Lantern Communications at 800-263-1717

### **Hall Of Fame Acceptance Speech**

Bruce was inducted in the Canadian Music Hall of Fame during the 30th Juno Awards, which were held in Hamilton, Ontario, on March 4, 2001. My thanks to Brenda and Frederick. –DK



It's a thrill to be included in the incredible company of artists who make up the Hall of Fame. I want to thank the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences; Ross Reynolds, Randy Lennox and everyone at Universal; the gang at True North for their daily tolerance and support; the many excellent musicians and technicians I've had the good fortune to work with and learn from; my family and friends who fed me in so many ways; and Bernie Finkelstein, whose gifts of heart and mind have, for 31 years, kept me visible and audible to people around the world.

David [Suzuki], Gordon [Lightfoot], Sarah [Harmer], Jann [Arden] Terri [Clark] and the [Barenaked] Ladies, you do me great honour in being part of these proceedings. The world is richer for having all of you in it and I'm proud to be on the stage with you – in the case of the Ladies *almost* with you. [The Barenaked Ladies tribute performance was beamed in via satellite from a concert in Prince George.]

It's been my privilege to be one voice in the human choir during a period which I think will turn out to have been a formative one for English Canadian culture. Over the years there's been a wonderful flowering of creativity and spunk in our music scene, paralleling, often reflecting, other currents flowing around us.

In the 60's, when I was just beginning to play for people and write songs, the world began to recognize it's oneness.

We had McLuhan, Vatican II; we had Swami Vishnu Devananda dropping chrysanthemums from the air over Belfast and Suez. We had a generation of people world-wide who began to appreciate their common burdens and strengths instead of fixating on what separated them.

This spirit has developed into a widespread embracing of each others' music and cultures – at least, important aspects of them. Some people are afraid of this, but to me it's a positive thing.

There is a dark side. That is, promotion of uniformity by those whose interest is power, for profit. Their job is easier if we're all the same – if we all like whatever they tell us to like. So much so that they sometimes act like we're all subscribers to the same shaky pyramid scheme – with them at the top. It's this thinking that has led to the weakening of national sovereignty, of democratic principles. That has, in effect, hijacked the movement toward global community and tried to turn it into commerce under the name "Globalization."

To thrive, society needs a sense that we're looking out for each other; needs to know where it came from and what sacrifices were made to create it; needs to be literate as well as web-wise. We have to stop the hemorrhaging in health care and education, the shrinking of environmental safeguards. We've got to get past the fad of privatization. The

mercantile system sucked when they tried it in the 1700's and it sucks now. It's our community – it's our world!

My job is to try and trap the spirit of things in the scratches of pen on paper, in the pulling of notes out of metal. These become songs, and the songs become fuel. They can be fuel for romance, for protest, for spiritual discovery... or for complacency. That's where you all come in. You decide how a song will be heard and felt. I'm filled with gratitude that so many of you have let my songs touch you.

To all of you who have done me the honour of listening to what I've had to say – thank you. I love my job. I can't wait to see what I'm going to do next! I love you!

Namaste.

### **The Latest Stuff**

**Concerts For A Landmine Free World** (Vanguard Records, 2001). This eleven track CD contains a live version of The Mines Of Mozambique, recorded in December, 1999, in California. It is a solo, acoustic performance. Other artists appearing on the CD are: Emmylou Harris, John Prine, Guy Clark & Verlon Thompson, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Nanci Griffith, Gillian Welch & David Rawlings, Patty Griffin, Kris Kristoffersen, Terry Allen, Steve Earle. The CD is expected to be available April 10, 2001. Portions of the proceeds of this album will benefit the Campaign for a Landmine Free World, a program of Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation.

On the same subject: Bruce may be playing a few more Landmine Free World concert dates in September in the Washington, DC area. More details as they are available.

Vanguard Records will also be releasing a **Mississippi John Hurt tribute CD**, which is currently expected to be available on June 12. It will contain a track from Bruce called Avalon, My Home Town.

Bruce participated in an **online chat** through AOL on February 26, 2001. A transcript of the exchange is posted at AOL site at:  
[www.aol.ca/webcentres/community/chats/archive.adp?guest=Bruce\\_Cockburn](http://www.aol.ca/webcentres/community/chats/archive.adp?guest=Bruce_Cockburn).

**The Experience Music Project** in Seattle has a recent interview with Bruce posted on their site at: [www.emplive.com/create/s\\_showcase/bruce\\_cockburn.asp](http://www.emplive.com/create/s_showcase/bruce_cockburn.asp)

**Correction** from the last issue: Nope, there is no such Bruce-penned song called "Tibetan Side Of Time" – at least not as far as *I* know. It was a typing and spell-check error, although it *does* have a certain ring to it...

On March 23, 2001, CBC Television aired an hour-long Bruce Cockburn concert special called **Moment Of Truth**. The program was recorded at The Spectrum in Montreal on

May 23, 2000. Taken from the **Breakfast In New Orleans Dinner In Timbuktu** tour, the concert also features Steve Lucas on Bass and Ben Riley on drums.

That Is All.

## **Issue Number 45**

### **June 2001**

#### **In Praise Of Bruceness**

*The following article was a special to the Ottawa Citizen, published on March 4, 2001. By Craig MacInnis.*

Today is Bruce Cockburn Day, at least unofficially. Canada's 'bucktooth philosopher,' who is to be inducted into the Juno Hall of Fame tonight, talks to Craig MacInnis about fame, achievement and what comes next...

Tonight's Juno Hall of Fame inductee Bruce Cockburn can scarcely turn sideways these days without someone trying to hand him a gold pocket watch or present him with a scroll testifying to his extraordinary career achievements.

What's next? A platinum walker? If Cockburn were paranoid—and no one's saying he is but no one's saying he isn't, either—he might think the Canadian Establishment was trying to put him out to pasture, gently nudge him into that great palliative care unit for over-the-hill folkies. It's like the old saying: Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean people aren't secretly dusting off their vinyl copies of Sunwheel Dance and plotting your retirement party behind your back.

To wit: Cockburn, a native of Ottawa, goes to the Ottawa Folk Festival in 1997 and is given the key to the city, an honour that always seems faintly ridiculous even when it's entirely well-intentioned, like a scene out of a Frank Capra movie. To come clean, I am the one who brings up the subject of the key, and Cockburn, sensing no way out, acknowledges the gift with a faint, squirming motion and a rueful grin: "The mayor wouldn't confess what it was exactly for—or what lock it fits." The door to the Royal Mint? The macrobiotic cookie cabinet at Le Hibou, his old folk-haunt in the 1960s? Cockburn doesn't know. And like most talismans that serve to remind us of our advancing years or announce our civic importance (as if he had served, say, 20 years as the chair of Vanier's public works committee instead of blowing Bytown for good in the late '70s), he would rather the whole thing were kept quiet. For one thing, talking about it would mean looking back to see why he deserved it, and as the 55-year-old Cockburn says: "I'm not particularly given to looking back."

But tonight he will have to look back, and he knows it. In a live CBC broadcast from Copps Coliseum in Hamilton, Cockburn will find out just how beloved he is to at least two generations of Canadian musicians and music lovers. He will be toasted on stage by Gordon Lightfoot and David Suzuki while a video tribute will include kudos from such politically active rock icons as U2's Bono, Jackson Browne and Midnight Oil's Peter Garrett. (U2, in the early '90s, recorded a cover version of Cockburn's *If I Had A Rocket Launcher*, which was never released.)

"I'm not particularly interested in the kind of measurements that awards represent," Cockburn says, reclining in a chair in the downtown offices of his Canadian record label, True North, where the walls are studded with gold record awards and artwork from past album covers, which might be ironic if it weren't for the fact that every record company office on the planet is similarly festooned.

"I know when I've gotten to somewhere where it feels like I've achieved something, creatively speaking, and in every case that I've felt like that, it was also evident, at the same moment, that it was necessary to keep moving.  
"You can never sit around and say, 'I've done it now,' unless you just want to stop and literally retire, which I guess is a viable option if you feel like that, but I don't."

It's talk like this—complete with subclauses and thoughtful pauses and qualifiers—that earned Cockburn the gently mocking nickname (courtesy of his friend and former labelmate, Murray McLauchlan) "Canada's bucktooth philosopher."

Cockburn has sometimes been accused of being aloof to the press because his finely calibrated observations don't fit the world of sound-bite journalism, which demands that statements from celebrities be rationed out in easily digested, promo-conscious blurbs.

But because today is unofficially Bruce Cockburn Day across Canada, we thought the least we could do is strike the sound-bite edict and let him finish his thoughts on the subject of tonight's Hall Of Fame induction. "I don't really think awards are worth anything, other than PR," he continues. "There's no question they have value that way, but that being said, a lot of people do put great stock in these things and a bunch of those people have decided they want to include me in the Hall of Fame and that's a nice thing. That's a complimentary thing and an honour."

Critics in this country, when they talk about a music career that has sustained itself over four decades and has been defined by its commitment to restless—even reckless—change, are usually talking about Neil Young.

Like Cockburn, Young is 55 years old and started out in folk music before veering off into the far regions of fuzztone rock, country and western and rockabilly. Young, according to *The New Rolling Stone Encyclopedia Of Rock & Roll*, is hailed by a new generation of post-punk musicians as "the granddaddy of grunge." Onstage, he is given to wearing flannel shirts and Greb Kodiaks, the uniform of '60s non-conformity in an age when non-conformity is a museum piece. He is a reminder of the values the Woodstock

generation once claimed to cherish and he is a rebuke to those who drifted from those values. No wonder he remains popular with the young; he makes their parents—his contemporaries—look like shitheads who capitulated to the middle-class nightmare.

Unlike Young, Cockburn never moved to the States, but his musical switches have, if anything, been more adventurous and more technically exerting. Like Young, he is effortlessly cool, mainly because he has embraced change while remaining true to his core values. He might also be the only 55-year-old man in Canada who doesn't look silly—or desperate—wearing a double earring.

“I hate to label him as Mr. Integrity,” says Larry LeBlanc, the Canadian editor of *Billboard* magazine and a longtime Cockburn watcher, “but that’s really how Bruce is viewed.

“What Neil Young has done in the States (by) going his own route, Bruce Cockburn has done here—as well as internationally,” LeBlanc says, pointing out that Cockburn’s worldwide sales now approach 7.5 million records.

He also estimates that Cockburn’s music has been covered by more than 150 acts. “You don’t think of anybody covering Bruce Cockburn tunes, you just don’t, because he’s such a distinctive artist,” says LeBlanc. Nevertheless, his songs have been fodder for the likes of Jimmy Buffett (*Pacing The Cage*), The Barenaked Ladies (*Lovers In A Dangerous Time*), Anne Murray (*One Day I Walk*) and Ottawa’s David Wiffen (*Up On The Hillside*).

Michael Occhipinti, the Toronto jazz guitarist, recently released an entire album of stretched-out Cockburn pieces called *Creation Dream*, which Cockburn allows is “his favourite” of all the various cover ventures. The exotic array of musicians drawn to Cockburn’s work, says LeBlanc, is proof of his almost insanely eclectic appeal. “If he came out next year with an album of jazz I don’t think any of us would blink,” adds LeBlanc. “Or if he did an album of African folk songs or Albanian folk songs, I don’t think any of us would blink.

“He’s his own boss with each of his albums. I think it’s one of the richest catalogues in popular music, not just in Canada but anywhere else as well. It’s an astonishing body of work.”

Over the past 31 years and 25 albums, Cockburn’s music has veered from the pastoral folk and Christian ballads of his early days, to the jazzy propulsion of his mid-’70s phase, to the hard urban pulse of his early ‘80s albums, to the crusading Third World agit-pop that emerged (and emerges still) from his fact-finding tours of strife-torn countries.

Like most great artists, Cockburn is a conundrum, capable of scalding indictments (*People See Through You*), poignant ballads (*The Coldest Night Of The Year*), ethereal jazzscapes (*Lord Of The Starfields*), playful larking (*When The Sun Goes Nova*), urban blues (*Mama Just Wants To Barrelhouse*) and political invective (*The Mines Of*

Mozambique). The only unifying feature of his songs is their unerring musicianship. For all that, some still say he's an insufferable egghead. But how many eggheads would bother to end a set with a version of Monty Python's *Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life*? Or work with such strong women as Ani DiFranco, Lucinda Williams and Jonatha Brooke?

The Who's Pete Townshend, in a surprisingly smart discourse on Canadian music, once raved to me about Cockburn's "lethal intelligence" on the guitar. Bono is another longtime admirer, as is David Crosby of CSN&Y, as was the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia.

"As a finger-picker there's no one on the planet who's better than him," Colin Linden says of Cockburn. Linden has co-produced and played on several Cockburn albums and was Cockburn's tour guitarist in the first half of the 1990s. They still perform together, from time to time, as Bambi & The Deer Hunters, a pick-up band that includes Cockburn, Linden and members of Linden's other musical ventures, including Stephen Fearing and Tom Wilson of Blackie & The Rodeo Kings.

Linden gives Cockburn credit for anticipating "the whole New Age thing," a hugely popular genre that mixes technical virtuosity and Christian-influenced serenity, often to a vapid extreme which Cockburn's own music has never visited.

"In terms of the whole New Age-ian, acoustic finger-style guitar, not only was Bruce playing that kind of music 20 years before anybody else was, he was (the best) at it," says Linden.

Linden recalls a night, in 1992, when he and Cockburn were at a tour stop in Boulder, Colorado. "We were staying at the same hotel as (the late Windham Hill guitar star) Michael Hedges and we had a drink with him after his show. He was just so effusive on how big an influence Bruce was on him." Linden adds: "Bruce is probably the only person in the world that both Michael Hedges and Bono could consider an influence."

### *Airtime Shun*

If there is an off-key note to Bruce Cockburn's induction into the Juno Hall of Fame, it is that it comes at a time when his new music is no longer being played on Canadian radio. Sure, you might hear one of his "golden oldies" like *Wondering Where The Lions Are* or *The Coldest Night Of The Year* on one of the classic-rock stations. But a new song, like, say, his gorgeous 1999 duet with Margo Timmins on the old Fats Domino standard, *Blueberry Hill*, fails to fit into Canada's ever-narrowing radio formats. "Very rarely do you hear a Bruce Cockburn song on the radio in Canada, yet he's probably making the best music of his life," says LeBlanc. "You hear him on CBC, and that's it."

The irony is that Cockburn—a performer who never left Canada, a performer who continues to champion Canadian causes in his music—has been embraced by American radio even as Canada's stations have written him off.

The Triple-A format (Adult Album Alternative) that exists in the large U.S. markets, but not in Canada, provides Cockburn with an important commercial outlet for his music in centres like Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver, Seattle and New York.

“I live in Nashville six months of the year and I hear Bruce on the radio down there all the time,” says Linden.

True North chairman Bernie Finkelstein has been Cockburn’s manager and business ally for more than 30 years. He feels Cockburn’s absence from Canadian radio is part of a larger cultural drift.

By today’s NAFTA-driven standards, Finkelstein is an old-style Canadian nationalist, proud of the career Bruce and he have built together, but wary of the new-style patriotism that has crept into the music business even as our old-style nationalism has taken a powder.

To set the terms of a long conversation Finkelstein and I had on the subject recently, “nationalism” refers to deeper social and cultural protections—commitments to a pre-continental notion of life in Canada. “Patriotism,” by contrast, is the giddy, flag-waving hype of, say, Canada Day on Parliament Hill or the routine chest-thumping seen at the Juno Awards since Shania Twain and Celine Dion (to name two) became maple-flavoured world beaters.

“Year after year now, I see it at the Juno awards or I see it in the newspapers: I notice that the Canadians who ‘love Canada’ the most are always the ones who don’t live here,” says Finkelstein.

“Shania Twain shows up and gets on stage and yells, ‘Go Canada!’ People love it,” he says. “It’s not directed at Shania Twain particularly—I just use her as an example ... they come up here and make their speeches about how great Canada is and then they immediately leave.

“There’s a ‘Canada card’ to be played and it seems to work, but I will tell you now that it’s not one that I’ve seen Bruce play.”

In the modern era, the “patriots” have won the game: Florida resident Celine Dion singing in a Habs jersey to an ailing Rocket Richard at the Molson Centre; Twain kicking up her little Canuck heels in a flag-waving concert special from Dallas.

Meanwhile, the “nationalists”—and that’s a term broad enough to include anyone who lives and works and proudly nurtures their art in this country—have been lucky to be noticed at all. As a friend of mine has quipped, “If it weren’t for The Tragically Hip, it’d be tragic.”

*Nicely Canadian*

If you spend a couple of hours in Bruce Cockburn's company, it's clear his version of the "Canada card" is quietly saying something nice about someone else from up here.

Right now, he's high on Sarah Harmer, a lovely singer-songwriter who is scheduled to be one of the live performers at tonight's televised tribute. Harmer will sing *Waiting For A Miracle*, part of a quick-cut roundelay that includes songs by Jann Arden and (via satellite) *The Barenaked Ladies*. "Quirky, imaginative songwriting that's got all kinds of insights in it," Cockburn says when pressed to evaluate Harmer's music. He laughs at his attempt at this sort of journalistic shorthand—"quirky"—which he normally disdains.

Cockburn thinks it is probably harder for someone coming up in the singer-songwriter world now than when he was a young buck on the coffeehouse circuit in the late '60s, playing at places like Toronto's *Riverboat* and Ottawa's *Le Hibou*.

"There was an audience that didn't drink when I was starting out," he says. "It's a huge factor. Not that there's anything wrong with drinking, but it breeds a different kind of music."

Having turned to yoga to help him kick a lifelong cigarette habit, Cockburn is ruled by few vices these days. He still hasn't bought a computer, which is one area of his life in which he still resembles the reclusive folkie who once said, in an ancient *Toronto Star* interview, that after music he'd like to try a career as "a cobbler."

Not likely. At 55, Cockburn is a modern, city-dwelling Canadian, but talk of the Net brings out his self-protecting, compu-phobic side. "I don't like the notion of being accessible through the computer. I can call my friends on the phone," he says, dismissing the convenience of e-mail.

What gives him the shivers, though, are the painstakingly dedicated fan sites, some of which move beyond musical admiration into obsessive inventories of his clothes and personal effects as well as speculations about his after-hour activities.

"I really don't want to know what they think of my shoes," he says, wincing. "It kind of feels like I have 'followers.' Having an audience is wonderful, but I don't aspire to have followers."

Followers? Like stalkers? No, no, Cockburn corrects. "You always have stalkers, of one kind or another, and most of them are totally benign. But there's something obscene about someone like me having followers."

By this he means congregants in the *House Of Cockburn*, acolytes who worship at the altar of his beginningless and endless Bruceness. It's not surprising these people are out there. Cockburn has never been a shaman, but he has shamanistic qualities—the Christian mysticism of his early music, the polemical urgency of his "rocket launcher" broadsides. With the official political "left" all but disappearing in this country, Cockburn might



seem to some like the best option since Tommy Douglas, but of course he's having none of it.

"Bruce is basically a very private person," says Finkelstein. "He doesn't really see himself through the eyes of the music business or value himself because of any of that very much."

Cockburn smiles at my suggestion that tonight's Juno induction would be a better televisual spectacle if, say, a dozen of his "followers"—in Birkenstocks and cassocks—hoisted him on their shoulders and carried him up to the stage from the back of the Copps arena.

Cockburn is not above seeing the humour in that kind of scenario, of sensing the futile dissonance in trying to lead a life of Christian probity under the klieg lights of commercial fame.

Earlier, and more seriously, he had said: "Everything in life is about growth. Growth is a continuing process that I personally believe doesn't stop when we die. Death is a major graduation point as I see it. That'll be the big one."

"The Juno Hall Of Fame may suggest death in an oblique sort of way," he laughed, "but it just isn't the same thing."

### **Wondering Where The Lions Are**

Roxanne Perrin—May 1998

Cedar Mesa. Ground zero of the Anasazi world. All morning we've stared down into dark, narrow canyons, each one a fracture splitting the mesa's broad, white-rock backbone. The sun casts long shadows across the rock as we slide down the steep embankment to the creek bed below, following the watercourse into the canyon where I'd had my puzzling encounter the previous summer. Dark, mossy potholes, carved into the sandstone by the rush of snowmelt waters, hold the last remnants of late spring rains. Megan-Anne plumbs their depths with hand and stick, fascinated by the transient desert life forms swirling in their midst. I lean on my hiking stick, impatient to be underway, as she skitters between potholes.

Voices and crashing in the brush up canyon announce the approach of a noisy group of German hikers. The bespectacled woman in the lead draws alongside us, peering down intently from the embankment above. "Are you looking at the mountain lion tracks?" she inquires, her expression severe, her steely eyes unfriendly. I smile, tell her no, pretending I know all about the mountain lion tracks, and find them extremely uninteresting. "Mountain lions, cool!" Megan-Anne celebrates the idea. The woman's eyes squint narrower in exasperation as her companions gather around her. She shoots us a look of contempt before thrashing back into the brush. Mountain lion tracks. They are indeed everywhere, pressed into the soft, damp silt at our feet. I glance uneasily up canyon,

squeeze the hiking stick in my hand, punch it down onto the slickrock surface. It bounces up lightly, a stone-age defense against a predatory machine that's evolved, unlike the stick, to its present position at the top of the food chain. "Keep close today, okay?" I tell Megan-Anne. She listens intently, nods gravely, but I know my worries are not her own.

The ruins we'd explored last summer seem none the worse for wear for the four seasons that have passed since we last visited, the eight hundred-year-old handprints of the Anasazi still visible where they'd placed them in the mud when the mortar was soft. Beyond the ruins, the creek bed narrows, and brush claws at our arms and legs, forcing us to hike the dusty singletrack paralleling the creek bed. Crowded uncomfortably close to giant sandstone boulders, we tunnel through scratchy, overhead thickets of chaparral that cluster, thick as dreams, on both sides of the trail. Like last year, I find myself looking back as we walk, sensing the presence of something unseen, and unsettling. A grainy slickrock wall beckons to an elevated shelf, where it's exposed and hot under the glare of an almost-summer sun, but less frightening for lack of cover. We plot a course across the stone, rock cairns occasionally pointing the way to small, unspoiled ruin sites. A dark alcove taunts us from above, its perfect ruin walls impossible to reach from where we stand. Two hikers flail through the overgrown creek bed below, daypacks and tripods snagging at every opportunity. They enter a thicket, and we see only their broad-brimmed hats bobbing above the chaparral, until they too disappear in the brush.

Three hours into the hike, a ruin site high in a south-facing alcove looks inaccessible to me, but Megan-Anne refuses to be denied a second time today. Less easily discouraged than I, she scrambles the length of a weathered juniper snag, strategically placing hands and feet against the shattered stubs of once-mighty branches. I stand below, steadying the trunk with my hands, waiting for it to twist and pitch her to the rocks. She climbs with confidence, steps up onto the shelf, and turns to whisper soft words of encouragement to a person whom she knows fears heights and hates ladders, and now finds herself at the mercy of both. "I know you can do it, Mom," she says quietly, and I think of the many times I've spoken those same words to her, as I inch shakily up the snag. She offers a quick congratulatory smile, and then I'm chasing her shadow, lithe and untouchable, as it dances across the slickrock.

This site is different. Further up canyon, less easily accessible, higher in elevation, grander in scope - it suggests a less mundane, more spiritual, more secretive existence. We stand amid the rubble of a ceremonial kiva, its walls shattered by time, its floors picked clean by travellers before us. Resting heavily on the rear masonry wall, layers of ceiling timbers pile one on top of the other, their undersides blackened by the smoke of Anasazi fires. A second, well-preserved dwelling leans lazily against the timbers. The joint between its walls has been compromised, and it's the dark gap between that we'd seen from down canyon, looking from a distance like a large, gaping doorway. We sift through dirt beyond the ruin's perimeter, finding potsherds, corn cobs, bone fragments, and strands of carefully-braided yucca fibers, moving furtively in this place heavy with the scent of things old and misunderstood. A warm wind stirs the dust in the alcove, lifts its bone-powder momentarily, and then drops it lightly to the floor of the kiva where it mixes with the charcoal of ancient fires. Memorial Day, our national day of

remembrance, finds us sorting through centuries-old remnants in a canyon that feels far removed from, and yet strangely familiar with, conflict. We pause out of habit to remember the souls of our ancestors cut down in battle, and are reminded in the whisper of the ever-present wind in the delicate beauty of paint-streaked pottery fragments—of this canyon’s once-living as well—some perhaps as fierce and warlike as our own.

Megan-Anne waltzes down the juniper snag with the limber ease of a ten-year-old, while I slide clumsily with my back to the trunk, inching carefully to the shelf below. We keep to the slickrock, only returning to the creek bed when we must, sliding down the steep rock face we’d scrambled up earlier. Our boots touch down in red silt laden with mountain lion tracks. Just below the first ruin we encounter a woman lying on her side in the cool, damp sand of the creek bed. She’s fine, she says, just resting. Red handprints splashed onto a creekside boulder remind us of an earlier human presence, and make us wonder how many other rock art sites we may have overlooked today.

Safely back at the truck, I drop my pack in the dust, searching the ground for prints as we’ve been in the habit of doing all day, finding nothing save tire tracks in the silt. I rest on the rear bumper, watching Megan-Anne trace designs contentedly in the dirt. A redtail circles overhead, and I glance back up the canyon, revisiting the ruins and the trail in my mind, remembering last year’s mysterious encounter, but mostly, today, wondering where the lions are. I think about paw prints in the mud, wondering how many times today they’ve overlapped our own, how many yellow eyes tracked our movements through the brush, how many wild animal impulses were fired and suppressed despite the presence of a lesser opponent. Should we have been here? Sometimes, I think, the deepest pleasure and the most intimate learning derive from the uncertainty of the adventure, from wandering among shapeless apparitions sensed but unseen, from driving down unmarked dirt roads, and hiking uncairned trails, from not knowing the hiker ahead, or the predator behind, from doubting the fastness of the ladder, and the wisdom of the journey. The lions, I realize then, are everywhere we imagine them to be, and nowhere in particular. Should we have been here? “Next time I hope we see a mountain lion,” Megan-Anne says brightly. Yes, I think, we definitely should be here. Not only that, I’m certain we’ll be back.

### **A Bit-O-Information**

**Correction:** my apologies for misspelling Robert Lang’s last name in the last issue. There is no “e” at the end of “Lang.”

Follow-up: In issue number 40 it was reported that plans were in the making for Bruce to do the soundtrack for a documentary called **The End Of Evolution**, directed by Tom Radford. Tom tells me they ran out of money and were not able to have Bruce participate in the project. However, it was completed and aired on Discovery Channel Canada in March, 2001.

**In case you're wondering:** The official word from True North is that Bruce is basically laying low this year in regard to performance dates. There may be a thing here or there, but for the most part it's break time.

The *Moment Of Truth* concert program, which aired on March 23, 2001, contained the following songs:

Wondering Where The Lions Are  
Use Me While You Can  
Pacing The Cage  
If I Had A Rocket Launcher  
Last Night Of The World  
Call It Democracy  
Down To The Delta  
Lovers In A Dangerous Time  
Deer Dancing Round A Broken Mirror

This performance was taped in Montreal by CBC Television on May 23, 2000.

## Issue Number 46

### August 2001

**Kathryn Moses**  
Daniel Keebler

In May, 2001, I spoke with Kathryn by phone from her home in Toronto. Her time working with Bruce included In The Falling Dark, Further Adventures Of, Humans, Inner City Front, and "The Coldest Night Of The Year." Additionally, she appeared in the concert film, Rumours Of Glory. Kathryn plays saxophone, flute and piccolo and is a fine vocalist as well. She recently has been writing music for a Vision TV program called Skylight. -DK

*Kathryn, you were born in Oklahoma. How did you end up in Canada?*

I was married to a man who refused to go to Vietnam, and he knew he was going to say that when the issue came up, so long before that we applied for immigrant status and went through all the legal channels. We just immigrated [To Toronto in 1967]. It was a little bit before the great rush to Canada. It was great. We rented a house, got settled and we were doing whatever we were doing. Then a Mountie came to our house. When he was walking up we were thinking "Oh, no!" The little boy next door came running over and said "Oh, no, they've come to arrest Ted!" As it turned out, he *welcomed* us to Canada. He said the FBI had informed him that Ted had fled the country. He just needed to inform us that if Ted returned across the border he'd go to prison and there would be a ten thousand dollar fine. Life would be horrible. I was joking and I said to him "I've

never been a criminal before.” He was *so* serious and so young and so straight-faced and he said “Ma’am, you are *not* a criminal in Canada.” I was just *so* impressed with Canada. Pierre Trudeau was the prime minister and it just seemed like the most amazing country in the world. I still love Canada, I’m a dual citizen now, Daniel. Ted and I were eventually divorced and he went back. He lives in Tulsa.

*When did you first start getting involved in music?*

Music was just always a part of the house, that’s all. When I was four – one of my sisters was eight and one was twelve – we sang as a trio on a little country radio station. Then when I was ten or so I started playing the flute and I played all through school. I actually went to university on a four year music scholarship. It was great because the scholarship paid for everything and all I had to do was play in a very good woodwind quintet to have that money. My third year of university I stated playing in the Oklahoma City Symphony. I played third flute and piccolo. I quit the orchestra job so we could move here. When I first got here I didn’t play any jazz at all – I just improvised a bit. My first jobs here were playing extra with the ballet orchestra, doing a lot of New Music concerts – that kind of thing. I always *liked* other kinds of music, and eventually I learned to play jazz – got saxophones. I spent probably *ten years* going from studio to studio, playing jingles and film scores and that kind of thing. During that period I think I played on a couple of Bruce’s albums. One night Bruce and I had a drink and he said “What are you doing?” and I said “God, I don’t know. At this point I’m wondering if I can play anything longer than sixty seconds. I’m just doing studio stuff.” He said “Come go on tour with me.” That’s how I ended up on the first tour with Bruce.

*How did you meet Bruce?*

He called me up and asked me to play on an album. I don’t think I’d ever met him, but he said he had been to hear me play a few times. I was just one of those studio players. The first album of his that I remember playing on had Little Seahorse on it [In The Falling Dark]... Jenny had just been born.

*Do you have any recollection about the recording process?*

It was just fun. It was just absolutely fun. It was *very* “Bruce.” “Here’s the song... do what you want.” [Laughter] I remember getting ready to go on one tour... and I just thought it was so ingenious... Bruce had rented this studio for like a week and he would pay us and we would go every day. The tour was Jon Goldsmith, Hugh Marsh, Bob DiSalle and Dennis Pendrith. Bruce would come in and he’d go, “Okay you guys, here’s a song,” and he’d stand there and sing it and play it. We would all start playing along and before you knew it we would have an arrangement. *Everybody* would have ideas. Bruce would go “Why don’t you do this...” then Hugh might say “I want to do this...” and I’d go “Oh, okay, I’ll play in thirds with you on that.” Before we knew it the music would all be rehearsed, we’d have these arrangements, and we’d all have them memorized. We’d be ready to go. It was *so much* fun.

When was Rumours Of Glory Done? I sang on that.

*The video came out in 1981, so I assume you all were touring for Inner City Front in 1981.*

Yeah, it was 1981 that we were doing the Inner City Front tour.

I don't know which album it's on, Coldest Night Of The Year, but Bruce and I spent hours – we had a whole choir overlaid and overlaid of just the two of us singing background vocals. It's like a twenty voice choir and it's *us*. That was really fun.

*In regard to touring for Inner City Front, which is the same tour that Rumours Of Glory was recorded during – what were your memories of touring for that album and doing that video?*

One of the things I remember was Bruce and I standing looking at Hugh, and Bruce saying “Hugh Marsh has a two thousand watt smile... when that guy smiles it just lights up a cloudy day.”

Mainly I remember *laughing*. Laughing, laughing, laughing. Before we did that Music Hall concert there was this film crew going around with us. Everybody would be quipping and laughing themselves silly. They'd be setting up all the lights and equipment, and of course by the time they got everything set up all of that spontaneity would be gone, and everybody's snoozing. I remember somewhere out on the prairies – we were driving across Canada on a bus – we were drinking sake for the first time. We sat in this Japanese restaurant eating and drinking sake. Then we decided to drive on through the night and there was this most beautiful – it was just wondrous – thunderstorm. All the lightning we drove through was just beautiful. I have a lot of memories of us in Italy. We had an interpreter named Emilio, and there was this guy who drove the van. We'd be *speeding* along at God-knows how fast and this guy would have one hand fiddling with the radio and his other hand gesticulating out the window and yelling at other drivers. It just seems like he never had his hands on the wheel. I looked over at Bruce and he had his eyes closed and I said “What are you doing?” He said “Praying.” Finally, in Milan, the guy did have a little fender-bender.

In Milan there was this giant billboard\* with Judy – Bruce's girlfriend at the time – on the billboard when we drove into town. That was amazing. We're going “Wow, look, there's Judy.”

Bob DiSalle and I stayed for two weeks after the rest of the guys flew home. I just wanted to stay in Italy because I *loved* it. Bob looked up his ancestors. We went to this little town that had the remains of this little fortress where Roman soldiers had guarded that part of the Empire. We took the interpreter with us and we went into the church and talked to the priest. Bob asked if there were any DiSalles in town now. The priest said “Always DiSalles, always DiSalles.” He called this little boy out of class and the kid took

us to his house and it turned out these people were of course DiSalles, and a remote family of Bob's. We had dinner with them and hung out. It was great.

One of the things I remember from *all* those tours is I used to practice back stage, pacing. I would just have my tenor on and I would be pacing back and forth and pacing back and forth and playing and playing. Bruce gave me this little toy that I just loved, that I finally lost in one of my many moves. It was a little lion and he had a saxophone that he was playing, and when you wound him up he paced. He would pace around on the table.  
[laughter]

I remember once we were standing in Manta studio and we were recording something or the other. I looked over at Bernie and his eyes were shut and he was just grinning from ear to ear, and he said "Bruce is just such an *amazing* poet." I was thinking more managers ought to feel that way about their clients. He was just *loving* it.

*I would say that one of your shining moments in your time with Bruce was Mama Just Wants To Barrelhouse All Night Long, from the video Rumours Of Glory. The bit of "camp" you do in the beginning of the song is cool.*

That was my idea. I thought I would play this like a hooker. I'll smoke on stage and all of that. That concert was just a *barrel* of fun. It was *so* much fun and everybody played *so* well. Even years later I've met people who said "Do you remember that Music Hall concert" and I go "Boy, no kidding." It was a high point for me.

*You released an album on PM Records in 1979 called Music In My Heart. What's your focus, and what are you doing these days?*

I want to do some more film scores. It allows me my personal, eclectic taste in Music. I've gotten to write and sing country songs, string quartets, reggae tunes... whatever. It lets me really stretch. I decided in 1979 that I just wasn't going to be in the record making business at all. Being in the record making business *means* touring and promoting. I just have no interest in doing that. I had a little ego pat last year when two very small labels in London called. They were releasing some compilation CDs. Both of them took a song off that 1979 album and put it on the compilation CDs. That was a nice little ego boost. I'd like to finish this series of string quartets [currently in progress], and it may be when I sort of retire or something at this point because I'm so busy writing arrangements for my gigs. But once my mortgage is paid off, Daniel [laughter]... when I'm 85 or 90... I'd like to just write music. If one could write music, put it on a CD and then *not* have to go tour and promote, life would just be grand... but I'm not Steely Dan.  
[laughter]

*Is the majority of your time spent in writing songs or recording with different artists?*

A combination. I was thinking about that last week. I performed at a concert with Nancy White. It's really fun to go out there and play someone else's music. It's really fun to walk into a studio and to know that you've contributed to that CD, and I really enjoy

these little gigs that I do. It's a way of making really good music, getting paid for it and *coming home*... and with a clear head. You're not having to think about schedules and touring and all of that. [Sigh] I mean if somebody called and said "Do you want to go on this tour for six weeks?" I might be really tempted. I'm not sure. [Chuckles]

That's what I see myself doing... spending more time composing and going out and doing these gigs. I'm very happy, Daniel. I'm very, very happy.

Kathryn has played with artists such as Chuck Mangione, Sheena Easton, Raffi, Ken Whitely, Tom Paxton, Nancy White, Murray McLauchlan and Haygood Hardy.

*\*I see your face on the wall – in the magazine too  
Next thing you know on the billboard out my window will be you.*

*From Wanna Go Walking.*

My thanks to Diane Bosley- DK

### **WUSB Interview With Bruce Cockburn**

by John Vernile. Written by Mary Anne Devine. 1985

Following the release of *Stealing Fire*, an album that focuses on the issues of Central America, Bruce Cockburn re-surfaced in the United States last year to complete a successful cross-country tour. His plainspoken message caused quite a stir, complemented by a good deal of MTV and AOR exposure for the song "If I Had a Rocket Launcher". This recent effort draws sharp contrast to his 1980 A.M. hit, "Wondering Where the Lions Are," from the album *Dancing in the Dragons Jaws*.

With *Stealing Fire*, Cockburn epitomizes the "folk" singer of the 80's. Urgency and human sensitivity lace the piece backed by forceful rhythms. Through vivid characterization, Cockburn brings the effects of international politics to a personal, cathartic experience; he maintains a captivating, positive energy despite the negativity of the subject.

People familiar with Cockburn's past work may wonder what became of his soft, eclectic mix of love, imagery, and quest for knowledge. The following interview touches upon this and gives some insights into Cockburn's propelling forces.

We spoke last June [1985] in the home of his road manager, Stuart Raven-Hill. Cockburn arrived paddling an old black bike, dressed in a long, green trench coat and black beret.

John Vernile: What sort of response did you receive during your recent U.S. tour?



Bruce Cockburn: Actually, the response we got was pretty interesting because I didn't really know what to expect. A lot of the songs have what could be considered an anti-American stream running through them. It is "anti" certain policies of the American government and "anti" the absence of attitude on the part of the American public--those who allow these conditions to continue. But the intention is not to be anti-American.

When we arrived in the states, we found that there was a very intense and emotional quality to a lot of the shows. The first part of the tour was around election time and many people felt that their best intentions had been over-ridden by the Reagan machine. They felt powerless, depressed, and very frustrated. They would bring these feelings to the shows. Hearing songs that expressed their feelings really hit home with them. At the same time it was very nice for us because it made for a kind of sharing with the audience.

But in terms of what that means - it's difficult to judge how many of those people will leave the shows and actually act on things. Certainly a lot of people said they were going to become more involved. I've gotten many letters from people indicating that they were moved to become more interested and more involved in the Central American issue.

JV: What's your view of the American press and radio?

BC: Generally it's insular in its point of view. With some notable exceptions, few American newspapers carry much foreign news. There's a great deal of things happening in the world that people in "middle America" never have access to. And I'm not speaking geographically, I'm thinking more of the cultural phenomenon. I think that's really a shame because the decisions made in the U.S. have such a far reaching effect in the world. The people in the states especially should know more about what's taking place in other nations. But that's a problem with the print media.

Radio, with the exception of public radio or the various things that might be loosely called public radio, tends to really say nothing. Basically it's just rock & roll, easy listening, or whatever it is. There's no political content except what's there by default. There's a soporific drugging that comes when you hear nothing but a certain type of music all the time. music and commercials. It puts people asleep politically and I think that is something one should resist although there's not much you can do about it. It's pretty heavily institutionalized.

JV: Many people I've spoken to that are familiar with your earlier acoustic work wonder why you have been producing more electric material?

BC: Well most of the reason is that I got tired of doing what I was doing. When I first started playing music in public, I was playing mostly in bands. I spent three or four years playing in rock bands before I went solo. I got quite frustrated with the band scene and rock & roll in general. The things I was interested in slaying at the time, during the late 60's, early 70's, were of a more spiritual nature than a lot of what I'm addressing now. The medium of rock music didn't lend itself to that kind of lyrical content for me. Plus the fact that the bands weren't very good and the money was never there. It became a

constant struggle to survive and get along with one another. So everything was easier if I went out and did it myself and sounded better as well.

But after a few years of that I got bored with my own company and started adding people to the shows. At first it was pretty acoustic and a little jazzy with a percussion player, then came the drummer and once you had drums the acoustic guitar could never be quite loud enough to be audible. So that, coupled with the whole New Wave phenomenon which revitalized rock for me as way of saying things, brought about the move to the electric guitar. Also having said much about the workings of the spirit and the internal aspects of that, I became interested in exploring more of what that meant in an outward direction--what you do about that in the world. So everything came together to work better using more rhythm. I've become very enamored of rhythm at this point. It's fun to have the body going as well as the mind and the heart.

JV: How do you go about writing your songs?

BC: I keep a notebook and write down word-ideas as I get them. The idea might come as nothing more than a visual image of one line and it sits there in the notebook until I find something else to go with it. Or if I get very lucky, a song might spring out fully grown, but usually it's a long process putting words together. Once the words are more or less together, we or I, depending on who's around, will try to put music to it. Fergus Marsh, the stick player in the band, had a lot to do with some of the songs on the last album. He would come up with grooves and I would find words that fit. But most of the time there's nobody else to do that with, so usually I just look for music myself with my guitar.

JV: Why have you recently taken to writing songs with social themes?

BC: I wasn't always very interested in social themes although they've appeared here and there throughout the older work. For instance, an old song called "Burn" is a forerunner to the current Latin-American material. Other songs touched on social issues in passing, but wasn't writing about those things as such.

Having a child was a turning point, the beginning of it I think. All of a sudden there is this infant who's going to inherit a world that, if not of my making, is at least one that I can exercise some influence. Therefore, it's important for me to do so because I don't want anymore of the garbage than I can help being handed on to her. I think everyone who has a kid must experience those kinds of feelings. That was one thing.

The other was that becoming a Christian and having explored internally what that meant, found myself trying to understand what it meant to love my neighbor and to care about what happens to the people around me. The concern started to reflect itself more in the songs and resulted in a tendency to take social and political issues much more seriously than I did before.

JV: Do you think music can effect social change?

BC: I don't think music can bring about social change by itself. I think it can be a crystallizing agent for waves of feeling that move through all of us. A case in point being the response to our songs in the states. There was an obvious sense that we were offering a focused view of something many people had very strong feelings about, mainly frustrated feelings. They felt that they couldn't really act or that their actions wouldn't have any lasting effect.

There's a funny curve to the ability of songs to influence events. In the 60's the whole trend of protest music started off being the cherished property of a few underground people. It then became much more popular and provided a rallying point for a whole lot of people. Finally, it reached a point where people were just cashing in and the way to make a buck was to write a protest song. This immediately caused the demise of protest music as a valid form of art, which it should be first and foremost. It became more like propaganda. There's no question that propaganda influences people, but that's another topic altogether.

JV: Sounds like an interesting topic. What are your feelings about it?

BC: Well, it's important to me because I've had to look at this question for myself. It's very important to make a distinction between art and propaganda. What makes a difference between the two and has value to me is that if one considers oneself an artist, one has to present something like truth. That's a bit weird, but I think it's necessary to try and approach something like truth as closely as possible in one's work. Obviously, the truth is going to be somewhat subjective, everyone's truth is. Each of us has individual experiences, but we also are the product of the circumstances in which we live. Therefore, there's a connection that exists between any one person and every other person. In that way the experiences of anyone parallel that of everyone else. The trick is to articulate those things in such a way so they become accessible or so other people can relate to them.

When you start sloganizing things, you start removing the element of reality from them. There's no question that sloganizing is probably more effective in rallying people than trying to present more sides of an issue, but what we're left with after everyone gets rallied is a very dangerous situation. In the end it just leads to more repetition of the same old thing.

That was one of the things wrong with the 60's. People got swept away on the image of peace and love and so on without looking at the reality of what that might mean or how they might bring that into being in the world. It then became very disillusioning because it didn't work of course, the world doesn't run on peace and love.

## **Da Bok Payja**

**Avalon Blues – A Tribute To The Music Of Mississippi John Hurt** (Vanguard Records, 2001). This fifteen track CD contains Bruce's version of Avalon, My Home

Town. Bruce plays twelve-string guitar and harmonica on this acoustic track. Other artists appearing on the CD are: Chris Smither, Lucinda Williams, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Steve & Justin Earle, Peter Case & Dave Alvin, Ben Harper, Geoff Muldaur, Mark Selby, Beck, Victoria Williams, Bill Morrissey, Taj Mahal, Gillian Welch, John Hiatt. The project was produced by Peter Case. Proceeds from this album will benefit the Delta Blues Museum's Arts And Education Fund.

**The Farm School** Benefit CD, released in 2001 (TFS2001). This CD contains twelve songs by Jonatha Brook, Bruce Cockburn, Patty Larkin, Chris Smither, Rob Wasserman and Bob Weir. It was recorded live at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University on April 16, 2000. Bruce's contributions are When You Give It Away, Pacing The Cage and ensemble work on The Weight and Peace In The Valley. More information on the Farm School and how to order this limited edition CD can be found at [www.farmschool.org](http://www.farmschool.org)

I'm Rangering at **Mt. Rainier** National Park until October. If you're in the park this summer stop in at the Longmire Ranger Station and say hello. I'm home in Snohomish just two busy days a week— Daniel K.

## **Issue Number 47**

### **October 2001**

#### **True North Records Signs Distribution Contract With Rounder Records For The U.S.**

True North Press Release  
August 14, 2001

Toronto-based True North Records, Canada's oldest independent record company, is pleased to announce that it has entered into a distribution contract with Boston-based Rounder Records.

With the signing of this deal True North's Canadian artists will now have their music available in the U.S. on the True North label through Rounder Records. In Canada, True North continues to be distributed by Universal Music.

This new contract will commence with Rounder's release of the critically lauded jazz CD "Creation Dream" by Michael Occhipinti in October 2001.

True North and Rounder will start off 2002 by releasing a Bruce Cockburn career-spanning "Greatest Hits" collection, featuring songs from Cockburn's extensive repertoire and two brand new tracks recorded this year.

Also scheduled for release in the U.S. on True North/Rounder is contemporary singer/songwriter and guitarist Stephen Fearing's follow up recording to "So Many

Miles.” This album is currently in production and is slated to hit shelves in the U.S. and Canada during the first quarter of 2002.

True North/Rounder will also embark on an extensive North American reissue campaign of Bruce Cockburn’s material. During 2002 the first of 18 deluxe remastered and repackaged reissues will be released. These collections will be released over an extended period, featuring bonus tracks and will include such classic Cockburn albums as “Stealing Fire,” “Dancing in the Dragon’s Jaws,” “In the Falling Dark” and “Humans.”

More True North/Rounder releases will follow in 2002, including a full length studio album by Bruce Cockburn in the fall.

**Rounder Records group signs singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn to multi-album contract and announces distribution agreement with True North Records.**

Cambridge, MA – The Rounder Records Group is pleased to announce the signing of multi-talented and internationally renowned singer-songwriter Bruce Cockburn to a multi-album contract. Immensely popular throughout the world, especially in his native Canada, Cockburn’s career spans over 30 years and 25 albums, not to mention numerous Juno awards [U.S. Grammy-equivalent], with his first self-titled release debuting on the Toronto-based True North Records in 1970. Best known for such classic albums as *Stealing Fire* and *Dancing in the Dragon’s Jaws*, and inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame at this year’s Juno awards, Cockburn is widely recognized for his compelling songwriting, innovative guitar playing and the social content of his songs.

Beginning early next year, True North/Rounder will issue a number of releases by Bruce Cockburn including a brand new album, a career-spanning “Best Of” collection, and a series of reissues, which Cockburn originally released on Columbia, Gold Castle, Millennium and True North Records from 1970-1990. The new “Best Of” collection will be the first to be released, scheduled for early 2002, featuring songs from his extensive repertoire of albums, plus two entirely new tracks. In particular, this exciting new collection will mark the first comprehensive Cockburn single-CD “Best Of” ever to be released in the U.S. Rounder will also embark on an extensive reissue campaign next year, re-releasing 18 Bruce Cockburn albums over an extended period of time, including critically-acclaimed albums such as *Stealing Fire*, *Dancing in the Dragons Jaw’s*, *In the Falling Dark* and *Humans*. These reissues will include deluxe remastering for superior sound quality as well as bonus tracks. Finally, Cockburn is currently busy working on a new studio album, which Rounder plans to release in the fall of 2002.

Rounder is also proud to announce that it has entered into a distribution pact with True North Records, Bruce Cockburn’s Canadian label home. Run by Bernie Finkelstein, Cockburn’s longtime manager, True North is home to an array of talented artists, including Stephen Fearing and Michael Occhipinti. Occhipinti, an innovative jazz guitarist, will release his first True North album in the U.S. this October. Entitled *Creation Dream*, the album features contemporary jazz instrumental interpretations of

classic Bruce Cockburn songs. More True North releases will follow in 2002, including a new album by contemporary singer-songwriter Stephen Fearing.

Founded in 1970, the Rounder Records Group is currently celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as America's premiere independent label, with over 3,000 albums in its catalog to date and including five imprints representing a wide variety of folk, roots, rock, blues and reggae music.

My thanks to Troy Hansbrough and Ryan McMaken at Rounder Records, and to Ron Decker at Rykodisc. -Daniel

## **Page Two**

TORONTO -- A group of high-profile musical artists and activists will release a CD to benefit the legal defense of protesters arrested this spring at the Quebec City Summit of the Americas.

Musicians Chris Brown and Sarah Harmer as well as author Naomi Klein are part of GasCD, a company formed to produce the compilation album and handle the distribution of its proceeds. The CD features by Canadian and American artists such as Ani DiFranco, the Tragically Hip, Harmer, Brown and Fenner, Barenaked Ladies, Bruce Cockburn and spoken word pieces from David Suzuki and Maude Barlow. The GasCD will be shipped to retailers at a wholesale price of \$15.67 and will go on sale Sept. 11 for somewhere between \$19.99 and \$24.99. Because licenses to reproduce the songs were obtained for free -- a rarity in the music industry -- the GasCD company will make a profit of about \$6 or \$7 per CD after reaching the break-even point at around 4,000 to 5,000 sales.

It will also be offered for sale at Maple Music ([www.maplemusic.com](http://www.maplemusic.com)) an independent Internet music distribution company.

Bruce contributes Call It Democracy to this project.

**Life & Times**, Canada's premier biography series, will present a biography of Bruce Cockburn on November 27, 2001. The program airs on CBC TV, and was directed by Robert Lang. Robert also directed the film, *River Of Sand*, which documented Bruce's visit to drought-ridden Mali in 1998, and *Path to Nepal*, documenting Bruce's visit to Nepal in 1987 on behalf of USC Canada.

## **From The Canadian Department Of Foreign Affairs And International Trade...**

Bernie Finkelstein founded True North Records early in 1970. Stoic, he undertook this project alone, hoping "to start a unique Canadian recording company and to succeed at doing it." Today, not content simply to market internationally renowned artists like Bruce

Cockburn, True North Records is also involved in managing artists and publishing, which shows that small beginnings often lead to big things.

Always searching for that rare gem among writers, composers and performers, the founder of the record company explains his role in a nutshell: “to find recording artists, make records, and sell them around the world.” This is Mr. Finkelstein - he puts on no airs and is confident of his abilities. And when Mr. Finkelstein says around the world, he is not exaggerating. Companies in the United States, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Sweden, Japan, Australia, and elsewhere all do business with True North Records. The company’s international operations consist of two parts: on the one hand, it sells licenses to foreign firms responsible for the manufacturing, distribution and marketing of licensed products; on the other hand, it distributes finished products, particularly in Scandinavia and Italy as an example. Even though licensing is less risky, of the two operations, Mr. Finkelstein enjoys the latter the most because record sales are still much more profitable. Despite everything, with sales around \$2 million plus retail sales, and more than \$1 million of these from international operations (approximately 70% of total revenues), Mr. Finkelstein and his company are on solid ground. This is especially noteworthy in that the position of independent record companies in Canada is a precarious one: they represent 10 to 20% of the industry, with the remaining 80 to 90% in the hands of four multinational firms. But, the President and owner of True North Records does not take his success for granted. When asked about the obstacles he must face, he acknowledges that “money is always the biggest challenge.” However, Mr. Finkelstein resolutely faces the challenges equipped with his company’s talented human “product.”

The most famous artist sponsored by True North Records is unquestionably Bruce Cockburn, who is known for his highly committed form of music born of a deep social conscience. Cockburn, who is currently on tour in the United States, has been with True North Records since 1970, the year his first album appeared. Thirty years and no less than 25 albums later, the ever-popular Cockburn continues to push the envelope, recording *Breakfast in New Orleans*, *Dinner in Timbuktu* in 1999. In November, the popular American series *ER* used one of his compositions as a lead. Also, such artists as Jimmy Buffet and the legendary Jerry Garcia have made covers of his songs. Cockburn’s popularity is without doubt due in part to his great sense of moral responsibility. Throughout his career he has focused on the human side of things, speaking out against landmines and travelling to Kosovo with a message of peace and solidarity with the help of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Only when True North Records is doing business overseas does it seek government aid. Mr. Finkelstein uses such aid for his trips to MIDEM fairs (e.g. FACTOR program). Otherwise, he manages and does not count on outside help to finance his company. “I have never received government assistance to finance my company, but, come to think of it, I have never really asked for it,” he says.

When Mr. Finkelstein looks to the future, he has some concerns about the alternatives now available on the Internet. He refers especially to the capability to download songs and even entire records. He also talks about the future of the Canadian industry, with

tempered enthusiasm. According to Mr. Finkelstein, Canada has made significant inroads, but the management of Canadian artists by Canadian record companies is continuing to decline." Mr. Finkelstein is aware of the pitfalls of the market in which he operates, but continues to forge ahead.

In conclusion, despite an unpredictable future, Mr. Finkelstein looks back on his past accomplishments with satisfaction, describing his work as having been materially and spiritually fulfilling. "It's not the worst way to pass your day," he says with a laugh.

*This interview was from February 24, 2000.*

### **Cockburn Cuts New Tunes For Best-Of**

By Paul Cantin

JAM! (August 2001)

Add Bruce Cockburn to the list of established Canadian musicians finding a U.S. home on Rounder Records.

True North Records, Cockburn's longstanding Canadian label, announced Tuesday it has inked a distribution deal with Rounder to carry not only Cockburn's releases, but also True North artists Michael Occhipinti and Stephen Fearing.

Canadian artists such as The Cowboy Junkies, The Cash Brothers, Sarah Harmer, and The Tragically Hip's Gordon Downie have all found a U.S. label base with Rounder, which has over the years focused on roots music, but has more recently been aggressive about signing mid-level acts. Cockburn's first release under the pact will be a career-spanning greatest hits, which will draw on songs that received significant airplay in the U.S. The set is tentatively titled "My Beat: Singles 1978-2002". It will include two new tracks recorded this year, "My Beat" and "Anything, Anytime, Anywhere."

Cockburn's longtime manager (and president of True North Records) Bernie Finkelstein told JAM! Music that the latter song has been performed in shows and was attempted by Cockburn during sessions for 1994's "Dart To The Heart" LP, but was subsequently recorded by Colin Linden for his own 1998 disc, "Raised By Wolves."

Linden served as producer on the new songs, which are being recorded this week in Toronto and will be polished in Nashville next week. The legendary gospel vocal group The Fairfield Four have been asked to contribute vocals to "Anything, Anytime, Anywhere," while Patty Griffin has been asked to do the same for "My Beat."

Cockburn is in the midst of a year-long sabbatical, but has been writing songs for a new album expected in September 2002. Also due in the new year is the re-release of 18 remastered and repackaged versions of Cockburn's back-catalogue albums. The new



versions of albums, including “Stealing Fire,” “Dancing In The Dragon’s Jaws,” “In The Falling Dark”, and “Humans,” will be expanded with bonus tracks.

Meanwhile, on September 19 and 20, Cockburn will play a pair of Landmine benefit shows in Washington, D.C., with Emmylou Harris and Steve Earle. The September 20 date is being taped for broadcast by PBS.

The first official release under the new deal between Rounder and True North will be Occhipinti’s “Creation Dream,” which will be released Stateside October 9.

Fearing’s follow-up to his last album, “So Many Miles,” is being recorded and will be released in 2002, as will a new studio album from Cockburn.

Cockburn has also committed to another series of landmine benefit shows in December, with Harris, Earle and other artists who participated in previous shows, such as Mary Chapin Carpenter and John Prine.

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#### TRACK LISTING FOR UPCOMING CD

Wondering Where The Lions Are, Tokyo, The Coldest Night Of The Year (remixed), The Trouble With Normal, Lovers In A Dangerous Time, If I Had A Rocket Launcher, They Call It Democracy, Waiting For A Miracle (remixed), If A Tree Falls, A Dream Like Mine, Listen For The Laugh, Night Train, Pacing The Cage, Last Night Of The World, My Beat (new), Anything, Anytime, Anywhere (new).

#### UPCOMING LANDMINE BENEFIT CONCERT DATES

Dec. 2	Chicago, IL	Chicago Theater
Dec. 3	Detroit, MI	State Theater
Dec. 4	Pittsburgh, PA	Soldier & Sailors Hall
Dec. 5	Cleveland, OH	Allen Theater
Dec. 6	Philadelphia, PA	Keswick Theater
Dec. 7	New York City, NY	Beacon Theater
Dec. 8	New York City, NY	private show

UPDATE: The new CD is now titled **Anything, Anytime, Anywhere**. Additionally, two benefit dates scheduled for September 19 and 20 were cancelled secondary to the events of September 11. -D. Keebler

#### **Pilgrim Soul**

The following article appeared in Maclean’s magazine in October 1999. Written by Nicholas Jennings.

While many of his contemporaries revisit familiar territory, Bruce Cockburn keeps taking his muse to new places.

Toronto's Masonic Temple boasts a storied past, having once hosted performers ranging from Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra to the Platters to Led Zeppelin. The midtown auditorium also served as a rehearsal space for the Rolling Stones when the group prepared for its 1997 world tour. Now, the hall is home to CTV's Open Mike with Mike Bullard. And it was there, on a recent October night, that Bruce Cockburn launched his 25th album. Down in the bowels of the building, the celebrated singer-song writer, resplendent in a charcoal suit and tangerine shirt, waited for his call to the set. "Television isn't one of Bruce's favourite things," whispered his longtime manager, Bernie Finkelstein, somewhat nervously. But Cockburn, picking a flurry of arpeggios on his guitar, appeared completely at ease as he watched Bullard on a giant monitor introducing the evening's guests.

Even when the talk-show host described him as a "folk icon" and "the social conscience of Canada," the ever-modest musician winced only slightly. After the show, Cockburn acknowledged that, at 54, and having sold more than eight million copies worldwide, he's grown accustomed to such labels. "I've been around long enough that those sorts of things come my way, said Cockburn. The trouble, he added, "comes with this sense that you're part of the landscape and people feel there's nothing new to check out." Cockburn needn't worry. People have also come to expect innovation from the Ottawa-born artist, and he's rarely let them down. Over the course of his 30-year career, Cockburn has evolved musically from folkie and jazz-dabbler to new waver and roots rocker. And during that time, his willingness to change has been duly rewarded. His albums have sold more than eight million copies worldwide, and he's won 10 Juno Awards as well as being honoured with the Order of Canada, a Governor General's Performing Arts Award and an honorary doctor of music degree from Boston's Berklee College of Music, where he once studied jazz composition.

Now, at a point when most of his contemporaries are resting on their laurels, Cockburn continues to push himself. His last album, 1996's *The Charity of Night*, was widely hailed as one of his strongest in years. His latest *Breakfast in New Orleans Dinner in Timbuktu*, is at least as accomplished. "Bruce Cockburn gets better with every album," concluded London's Independent newspaper recently - a view shared by *Billboard* magazine, which called *Breakfast* one of Cockburn's "most successful experiments yet." Already, the album has spawned a hit south of the border: *Last Night of the World* is Cockburn's best-charting single in the United States since 1985's controversial *If I Had a Rocket Launcher*. Now performing solo in Europe, Cockburn returns to Canada for a full-band tour that opens in Nanaimo, B.C., on February 7 and closes in Toronto on March 25. Sitting in a Thai restaurant up the road from the Masonic Temple after his Bullard appearance, the silver-haired singer reflects on his artistic staying power. "I get bored really easily, he chuckles over a dinner of mango chicken and rice."

Turning more serious, Cockburn adds: “It’s normally true when you get older that there’s less creative energy to draw from and you’re less inclined to be on the cutting edge of anything. But you can be on the cutting edge of your own process. If you don’t keep moving forward, you stagnate and decay. It’s like a form of artistic Darwinism.”

Cockburn’s evolutionary process is certainly in evidence on *Breakfast* (True North/Universal). While the album contains one political number, *Let the Bad Air Out*, which takes a humorous swipe at government corruption, Cockburn’s focus has shifted to songs of a more personal nature. Backed by U.S. country singer Lucinda Williams and Margo Timmins of Canada’s *Cowboy Junkies*, he sings out sex, love, friendship and destiny on tracks such as the jazzy *Mango*, the folk-flavoured *Look How Far* and the African-tinged *Use Me While You Can*.

Yet Cockburn remains politically active. Last month, he flew to Kosovo to perform at a benefit concert organized by actress Vanessa Redgrave. And in December, he joins Emmylou Harris, Steve Earle, John Prine, Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson in a series of U.S. benefit concerts to support the campaign to end land mines, a cause with which he has long been associated.

Although Cockburn’s Christian beliefs remain intact, there is nothing on the new album as explicitly spiritual as 1976’s *Lord of the Starfields*. These days, he says, my relationship with God involves “me doing most of the talking. God tends to communicate in little pokes and whispers and occasionally, when I’m not listening, with what my girlfriend calls “sledgehammer guidance.” The girlfriend is Sally Sweetland, a Vermont-based painter he met three years ago. At the time, Cockburn had moved from southern Ontario farm back to Toronto, where he settled in a renovated west-end loft. “I found that I’m an urban person, he says of the move, which brought an end to his competitive equestrian and target-shooting activities. “I like the buzz and the hubbub.” Is he comfortable or satisfied at this point in his career and life? “These are words that don’t compute for me,” says Cockburn. “But I’m having a good time and I feel like I’m going somewhere.” *Breakfast in New Orleans Dinner in Timbuktu* proves that his muse has been travelling with him.

## **Tweeter**

Bruce was to have performed for the tenth anniversary taping of **World Café** on September 13. However, in light of the September 11 events, the taping was cancelled. Secondary to the live taping, Bruce did a phone-in interview and performance. It aired on October 8.

## **Music Without Borders: Live In Toronto**

The biggest names in Canadian music, including Alanis Morissette, The Tragically Hip, Our Lady Peace and Bruce Cockburn, are joining forces in Toronto to raise money for

those affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. All proceeds from the ticket sales will go to the United Nations Donor Appeal, which covers the needs of all UN agencies, including UNICEF and the World Food Program. The concert, called "Music Without Borders" takes place Sunday, October 21st at Toronto's Air Canada Centre. Canada's MuchMusic will broadcast the event live. All aspects of the show will be donated, including performers, rental on the Air Canada Centre, IATSE union workers, Ticketmaster fees, security, catering, and concert production from House Of Blues Canada and Clear Channel Entertainment.

**Bill Usher** (see Gavin's Woodpile # 22) is in the process of putting together a new album. Bill played percussion for Bruce during the 1970s. More information on the project can be found at [www.billusher.com](http://www.billusher.com).

## Issue Number 48

### December 2001

#### **Anything, Anytime, Anywhere (Singles 1979-2002)**

Bruce Cockburn

True North/Rounder

Rounder 11661-3180-2A

Single CD 71.49 mins

Released: 15th January 2002

Review by Richard Hoare

This is the first Bruce Cockburn release following the new deal that True North signed with Rounder. Here is a collection of Cockburn's best-known songs, all digitally remastered using 24 bit technology.

#### 1. **My Beat** (4.34 )

New Track

Written: Montreal—18/7/01

To bookend this collection Bruce went into Reaction Studios in Toronto in August 2001 to record this and the last track on the CD. He used his recent touring duo, drummer Ben Riley and Steve Lucas on bass, fleshing out the sound with the violin of Hugh Marsh and assistance from Colin Linden. Beautiful light drumming and bass give way to Cockburn's rippling acoustic picking and the wonderful eerie wail of distorted violin. Vocals are shared with Patty Griffin. My beat is the twin themes of Bruce observing his neighbourhood in his new home town of Montreal and his heart pumping.

This track sounds new while capturing the essence of Cockburn stretching back two decades. It was recorded by John Whynot who did a great job on *The Charity Of Night* in 1996. A triumph.

## 2. **Wondering Where The Lions Are** (3.42)

Song first released on *Dancing In The Dragon's Jaws* September 1979 (3.42)

Written: Ottawa—12/1/79

This was the first Bruce Cockburn single to receive airplay on an international scale. How did he get there? Well, this song was on his 10th album. Signed to True North in Canada, he was represented by separate labels in markets such as Japan, Australia, Italy and previously on release in the US through Island. “I heard about eight bars of *Lions* and I said, I’ll take it,” recalled Jimmy Jenner, president of New York’s Millennium Records, the company that licensed this record in the US and the UK.(a) With the advent of punk and new wave Bruce had checked out a number of contemporary sounds including reggae. For this track only he employed the rhythm section from the Ishan Band, a new wave reggae act. Ben Bow on drums and Larry “Sticky Fingers” Silvera on bass provide the backbone to Cockburn’s hypnotic acoustic guitar and Pat Godfrey’s marimba. Cockburn’s long time producer Eugene Martynec captured the sound with engineer Gary Gray. The unusual lyrics require some explanation from Bruce: “ There was nearly a war on the Sino-Russian frontier. I had dinner with someone who worked in defense research at one of those jobs about which he could say nothing. He and his colleagues were really scared because at the time, while the Soviets and Americans had an “understanding” by which they would avoid surprising each other, China was the wild card in the deck. That night I experienced a rerun of a dream I’d had some years before in which lions roamed the streets in terrifying fashion, only this time they weren’t threatening at all. When I woke up in the morning some things had connected and I wrote the beginning of this song while driving out of town along the Queensway.”(b) This single was top ten in Canada and top thirty in the US. Bernie Finkelstein, Cockburn’s manager: “Although Cockburn’s escalating success came late the very fact that he succeeded in emerging with a hit was something quite astonishing!”(c)

## 3. **Tokyo** (3.29)

Song first released on *Humans* October 1980 (3.25)

Written: Tokyo—September 15/79

Bruce Cockburn: “I wrote these words on the plane home from the second tour of Japan.”(d) The first time Bruce used his new Fender Stratocaster was when he borrowed it for this track.(e) A pumping riff conveys bouncing around in the car as Bruce travels between gigs in this action packed chaotic modern city. The musicians are old cohorts Dennis Pendrith on bass and Bob DiSalle on drums with Jon Goldsmith making his first outing for Cockburn on keyboards.

## 4. **The Coldest Night Of The Year** (4.24) (re-mix)

Song first released on *Mummy Dust* April 1981 (3.58)

Written: Toronto—January 1981

A full band provide an optimistic backing to Cockburn’s story of keeping depression at bay. The musicians that played *Tokyo* are supplemented with John Davis on organ, Hugh Marsh with violin fills and Kathryn Moses on wonderful sax. The remix has tightened up

the rhythm and blues feel. Bruce wrote this in January 1981 so by the time it was out Spring had arrived! Maybe the January release for this compilation will result in some airplay for this timeless track. It should have taken Bruce to the next level 20 years ago.

#### **5. The Trouble With Normal (3.35)**

Song first released on *The Trouble With Normal* August 1983 (3.35)

Written: Toronto—30/6/81

This is original album cut (not the 1985 re-recording) and the remastering accentuates the real bite of the song. Powerful drumming from Bob Disalle and Jon Goldsmith's keyboards drives it along. The lyrics ring as true today as they did nearly 20 years ago. This song is overtly laced with clear socio/political statements. The politics had always been there, i.e. **Gavin's Woodpile** eight years earlier, but the songs started to have more social weight and were becoming more specific.

#### **6. Lovers In A Dangerous Time (4.06)**

Song first released on *Stealing Fire* September 1984 (4.06)

Written: Toronto—September 1983

Cockburn put together a new band for *Stealing Fire* to create a looser sound and one that gave the guitar more room. He got together with Hugh Marsh's brother, Fergus who was the only person around playing the Chapman stick that used the whole instrument. Miche Pouliot from a couple of local Ottawa bands came in on drums and Chi Sharpe provided an array of percussion. The production on this album by Jon Goldsmith and Kerry Crawford was a new level for Cockburn's work. BC: "I wanted to say that there's room; no matter how bad things look, if you don't have love you've got nothing."(k) It is one of Bruce's great songs of the tensions of passion and emotion. This track opens the album with terrific throbbing stick combined with chiming guitar and percussion. Bono was obviously sufficiently impressed as he sings "I heard a singer on the radio late last night says he's gonna kick at the darkness till it bleeds daylight" in the song *God Part II* released on U2's album *Rattle and Hum*.

#### **7. If I Had A Rocket Launcher (4.57)**

Song first released on *Stealing Fire* September 1984 (4.59)

Written: Chiapas, Mexico and Toronto—February and April 1983

Intertwining guitar and percussion set the scene. The stick and the drums kicks in while Goldsmith's keyboards expand the sound as Cockburn's guitar builds. Bruce creates controlled venom. The lyrics caused a storm of controversy which Cockburn rode out despite media interrogation. I defy any of you not to be affected by this track. BC: "I visited two of the Guatemalan refugee camps in southern Mexico. The refugees were the survivors of terrible atrocities perpetrated by a vicious military government in their homeland. In the fragile shelter of the camps, they were starved, denied medical care, and were subjected to attacks by the Guatemalan army. The notes for this song were written over tears and a bottle of Bell's in a tiny room in San Cristobel de las Casa, the nearest town to these camps."(f)

### 8. **Call It Democracy** (3.51)

Song first released on *World Of Wonders* February 1986 (3.50)

Written: Toronto—11/85

A shot rings out. A heavier sound churns out with new drummer, Michael Sloski and Cockburn's vicious guitar solo matches the sentiment of the lyrics. BC: "The way in which our financial institutions, which we the public like to think are in place for altruistic reasons, are really agents of domination. The IMF is not the only guilty party. I use it in the song as representative, a proxy, of everything of its kind of the whole system that gave rise to institutions like that."(l) BC: "Through a growing familiarity with Nicaraguan revolution, a recognition of North-South relations began to take shape. Nicaragua, The Philippines, Chile, virtually all of Latin America really, Indonesia, emerging African countries...Wherever you look you find the same financial interests at work. Working to get rich without controls, at the expense of the poor. When the poor complain, out come the troops, and then the arms companies get rich too."(g)

### 9. **Waiting For A Miracle** (4.50) (re-mix)

Song first released on *Waiting For A Miracle* March 1987 (4.48)

Written: Managua—January 86

BC: "The second trip to Nicaragua produced this song. Three years of low intensity conflict since my first visit - the revolution was getting tired, not over all, not hopeless, but tired."(h) A year after the album *World of Wonders* was recorded the same musicians went in the studio to produce this track for the compilation of the same name. Cockburn pulls off lyrics and melody which conveys that waiting feeling without the music dragging. The remastering heightens the instruments, producing a bright optimism.

### 10. **If A Tree Falls** (5.43)

Song first released on *Big Circumstance* January 1989 (5.43)

Written: Toronto—April 7, 1988

Cockburn returns with a leaner band; the rhythm section of Fergus Marsh on stick and Michael Sloski on drums with Jon Goldsmith both playing keyboards and in the producer's chair. Cockburn emulates a chainsaw on guitar and delivers the story of deforestation. BC: "Give a guy an echo machine and a whammy bar -- he's likely to use them!(i) Goldsmith works up tumbling notes of cascading timber while Bruce duels on guitar." BC: "I also drew from an e. e. cummings poem, the one that starts "pity this busy monster, manunkind, not" which describes the encroachment of industrial society on the human soul." (j)

### 11. **A Dream Like Mine** (4.55)

Song first released on *Nothing But A Burning Light* October 1991 (3.53)

Written: Dawson (Yukon Territories)—August 17, 1990

Outside of Canada Bruce was now signed to Columbia/Sony. T Bone Burnett and Joe Henry produced this album with a distinctly different sound. There were some changes afoot - US musicians instead of the familiar Canadians, a studio in Los Angeles instead of Toronto and a Columbia budget. This track includes big name musicians such as Booker T Jones on organ, Larry Klein on bass and Michael Blair on percussion. This is also a re-mixed masterpiece. The twangy rock and roll roots guitar has a dirtier sound and the whole ambience is slightly slower. BC: "The song grew from the book of the title by M. T. Kelly and what attracted me most was the central image of the dream of the warrior coming back in the context of justice for Indian people. At the same time I became aware of that, the confrontation between the Mohawks and the Canadian army at Oka (in Quebec, concerning land disputed since 1717), was going on in the summer of '90. I was imagining myself over a period of time in that situation trying to picture what I would feel like were I at the treatment centre facing that military might with the determination to right what to me was an obvious wrong."(m)

#### 12. **Listen For The Laugh** (4.05)

Song first released on *Dart To The Heart* February 1994 (4.06)

Written: Charlottesville, Virginia—October 27, 1992

The lead track from the above album, the second to be produced by T Bone Burnett. A full tilt rocker with three piece brass section and Colin Linden on slide guitar. BC: "I believe Love with a capital L is the glue that holds the universe together. It's a force like gravity or light, an essential element."(n) On the Burning Light tour prior to this album Neil Young's album *Ragged Glory* would be played over the sound system before Cockburn and his band appeared on stage. This track has overtones of the free, cut loose spirit of that album down to the extended coda.

#### 13. **Night Train** (6.11)

Song first released on *The Charity Of Night* February 1997 (6.14)

Written: Halton Hills—6/2/96

Cockburn was now signed to Rykodisc outside Canada. The first thing that hits you as this track starts up is the live unprocessed drum sound played by Gary Craig and the elastic, talking, warping bass of Rob Wasserman. The trio including Cockburn on guitar play an iron horse cavorting down the rails. As the locomotive hurtles into the blackness where "the rhythm of the night train becomes a mantra" Bruce lets rip with a searing guitar solo. In 1997 Cockburn revealed that he conjured up the whole song in one fell swoop with a large quantity of absinthe!

#### 14. **Pacing The Cage** (4.37)

Song first released on *The Charity Of Night* February 1997 (4.38)

Written: Philadelphia—24/6/95

Bruce picks an acoustic guitar, Rob Wasserman solos on bass and Janice Powers provides subtle keyboards. Cockburn catches himself on the treadmill of life creating a universal



lyric. Played at many a radio station by Bruce during the promotion of the album and also covered by Jimmy Buffett.

### 15. **Last Night Of The World** (4.50)

Song first released on *Breakfast In New Orleans Dinner In Timbuktu* September 1999 (4.51)

Acoustic guitar driven song with Janice Powers' deft keyboards. BC: "For years I carried a knapsack and in answer to a query from Sam Phillips about the contents, I said 'What I might need for the apocalypse.' Sam's response was, 'You'd only need champagne and glasses!' "(o) Cockburn also reflects on the biggest heartbreak of all - the flame of hope among the hopeless - the refugee camp victims.

### 16. **Anything Anytime Anywhere** (3.34)

New Track

Written: Halton Hills—1/3/92

I first heard Bruce play this song in London, England in May 1992. More recently Colin Linden recorded it on his 2000 CD *Raised By Wolves* on Compass Records. Bruce finally commits it to disc with a slow smouldering shuffle and the gravelly bass vocals of The Fairfield Four. Cockburn's shimmering electric guitar lays down the groove assisted by Hugh on treated violin. Bruce wraps up this collection of songs with a lyric about the strength of love: "...the power to burn like a torch through the darkest hour..."

Long term listeners will want the remastering, remixes and new tracks. It would be great if Rounder's well-known artistic integrity and distribution skills could turn newcomers on to the amazing diverse musical and lyrical qualities of Bruce Cockburn's work.

by **Richard Hoare** ©cala luna 2001 where not already credited.

Footnotes.

(a), (c) Quote from *Dancing In The Jaws of Change* by Ian Pearson, Macleans, 7 September 1981.

(b) Quote from songbook: *All The Diamonds, Vol One, 1969-1979*, OFC Publications, Ottawa, Canada.

(d), (f), (g), (h), (i) Quote from songbook: *Rumours Of Glory, 1980-1990*, OFC Publications, Ottawa, Canada.

(e) Quote from *Canadian Musician* August 1981.

(j) Quote from *Womad Festival* press conference Cornwall, England 26 August 1989.

(k), (l) Quote from *The World of Bruce Cockburn, His Words And Music 1985* True North/Columbia.

(m) Quote from *The Nothing But A Burning Light Radio Special* interview disc True North Records/Sony Music Canada 1991.

(n) From an interview with Roy Trakin - *Impact* magazine, Canada March 1994.

(o) From *The Basement* stage Sydney Australia April 1998.

My thanks go out to Richard Hoare for writing this review for Gavin's Woodpile and to Bernie Finkelstein and Jim Horan for the advance information. The photo on page one was taken by Kevin Kelly. It is from the cover of Anything , Anytime , Anywhere. My thanks to Michelle Murphy.

!!! Rounder Records has made a special arrangement with Borders Books: buy the CD at Borders and get a bonus CD of Bruce's performance on The World Café from 2001. It will contain six songs plus interview segments. One of the songs is previously unrecorded and may appear on the next studio album later in 2002. -DK

### **My Beat: The Life and Times of Bruce Cockburn**

*Press Release Sent Down From True North*

Toronto, Canada, November 15, 2001— Kensington Communications and CBC announce the broadcast of *My Beat: The Life and Times of Bruce Cockburn*, on Tuesday, November 27, 2001, at 7 pm on CBC.

*My Beat: The Life and Times of Bruce Cockburn* is the first intimate one-hour documentary exploring the life, music, passion, and inspiration of this Canadian music icon. From his early days as an aspiring musician to his recent induction into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, Bruce Cockburn's 30-year career has touched the hearts and challenged the minds of listeners around the world.

While other popular musicians won commercial success outside of Canada, Cockburn resisted the lure of the mainstream. Instead of going the conventional route, he chose to follow his own path on a long and sometimes difficult road of self-discovery and spiritual growth. And now, soon to release his 26th album, the result is a critically acclaimed body of work and a committed international audience.

Candid interviews with Bruce's first band-mates, his long-time manager Bernie Finkelstein, and fellow musicians Jackson Browne and Colin Linden are combined with a thoughtful narration by Sarah Polley and rare archival material of his earliest days on stage and at home. *My Beat* shows how this kid from Ottawa has made an indelible mark on the face of music, here in Canada and around the world.

*My Beat* was produced by Robert Lang (*The Nature of Things* with David Suzuki, *Earth Journal*, *Odyssey*, *Living Proof*, *The Sacred Balance*, *Exhibit A: Secrets of Forensic Science*), directed by Nadine Pequenez (Argentina's Dirty War, *A Coup: Made in America*, *Massacre at Sharpeville.*, *Tall Ship Chronicles*), and written by Nadine Pequenez and Robert Lang. Toronto-based Kensington Communications was founded in 1980 by veteran producer/director, Robert Lang and has completed over 100 productions for broadcast in Canada, the U.S., Britain and around the world.

*CBC and True North tell me they are not certain at this time if My Beat will be available for purchase on video tape or DVD. However, I will publish more information on this matter as it is available. -DK*

## **A Wee Bit O News**

**The Barenaked Ladies** released a Best-of CD titled Disc One: All Their Greatest Hits, in late 2001. The 19 track disc contains their version of Bruce's **Lovers In A Dangerous Time**.

The **December 8th concert date** in NYC billed as a "Private Show" was cancelled.

Performance dates added since the last issue:

October 21	Toronto, Ontario	Air Canada Centre	Music Without Borders Benefit
November 9	Boulder, Colorado	Mackay Auditorium	E-Town Taping
December 9	Washington, D.C.	The Birchmere	Landmines Benefit

Bruce is presently expected to start a **solo tour in March 2002**. No details are available at this time. Watch for more information in the February issue of Gavin's Woodpile and/or at the Woodpile's website at [www.seanet.com/~danjer](http://www.seanet.com/~danjer).