

Gavin's Woodpile – The Bruce Cockburn Newsletter

Edited by Daniel Keebler

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Stephen Holden On The Landscape Of Bruce Cockburn

Daniel Keebler

stephen holden has worked for the *new york times* for the last twelve years. he has served as their music reviewer for the last six. i spoke with stephen from his home in new york city on december 7, 1994. ~dk

in a recent conversation you mentioned to me that your favorite cockburn album is 1976's in the falling dark. could you comment a bit on that?

stephen: it has a kind of simplicity and directness. there's a sparseness about the record. the lyrics, especially "lord of the starfields" and "in the falling dark" have the kind of imagery that makes me see through his eyes in a way no other songs have done quite so well. that album has a kind of visionary, spiritual/romantic directness that i think eclipses anything else he's done, although this quality is all through his music.

what are your observations as to why bruce's work is, relatively speaking, not well-known here in the u.s., and what do you think it will take to increase the awareness of his work?

stephen: the kind of moral debates that go on in his songs are, i think, slightly over the head of the mainstream pop audience in the united states. there's something *very* canadian about his music, too, in its sparseness in the pictures of the landscape that maybe americans in the "mall culture" don't really relate to.

he's not a self-promoter, not the way american pop stars are, or the way big canadian pop stars are. he doesn't have that lust for fame, that *obvious* lust for fame, that most stars these days seem to have. i think that pop audiences are accustomed to that and *expect* it, and kind of *want* it in a way. there's a remove or detachment about him that prevents him from reaching a mainstream audience i think.

i think it's probably too late for him to become a mass star because he's now in his late 40's. even the biggest stars who are of his type of music, like joni mitchell, jackson browne, neil young and james taylor, are well past their commercial peak, so i don't think it'll ever happen. but i think he can go on and continue to have a cult following for many more years. he's in excellent shape vocally and his writing hasn't diminished the way some of his peers' writing has. some of them don't write as well or as personally or as poignantly as they used to. bruce seems to be in for the long-haul in *that* way.

where do you see bruce in the arena of contemporary singer/songwriters?

stephen: i think his reputation will go up over time as people discover him. i don't see him becoming a bigger star than he is. i'm sure that he will probably influence a number of people who will come along, simply by dealing with the "high ground" that he deals with, and doing it so well. it's quite compelling. he will have had an influence on people, but we don't know quite what that is yet.

you interviewed bruce back in 1981 for high fidelity magazine. all this time later, are there any impressions that stick out from that interview?

stephen: yes. he is... (long, thoughtful pause) careful. quite shy i think. soft-spoken, almost aloof. honest, but self-protective. unlike most people, when interviewed in pop music, he doesn't seem to have anything of the exhibitionist in him *at all*. he almost struck me as someone who would rather not do publicity, but has to do it. after all, it is show business. i didn't get a feeling he wanted to talk about his personal life, for instance, the way some people do. he really seemed like someone who was an artist stuck in a commercial medium, and felt uncomfortable with that.

do you think that history will wash over cockburn's work, or do you think that the work contributes something of timeless importance?

stephen: the singer/songwriter tradition is certainly one of the most durable traditions in pop music because it's song-oriented. it's not trendy and it's not related to electronic sounds that come and go. i think that all of the significant singer/songwriters from bob dylan on have forged careers that have more resonance than many of the more popular rock stars. bruce has such a large body of work- one of the largest bodies of work of the singer/songwriters. he will definitely always have a place. he may be a cult figure that people keep re-discovering, but he will always have a place. maybe it won't be a place as noted as someone like leonard cohen, who is also an on-going cult figure, but i don't think he will be forgotten.

it will be twenty-five years this coming may since bruce released his first album. what qualities do you think he possesses that enable him to continue at such meaningful and intense levels?

stephen: well, obviously he has a kind of spiritual faith that engages him and that he relies on, and it is constantly bumping up against the ugly realities of the world. he's somebody who has a very clear social conscience so there's a constant tension between his romantic, spiritual side and his perceptive repertorial side, which i think has kept his writing very fresh. he's constantly dealing with the angel and the beast. it's one of those primal struggles that keeps people going artistically.

*in further conversation, **stephen** went on to say:*

my favorite bruce cockburn music has always been, and always will be, a kind of calm, sweet, wistful side of bruce cockburn. the introspective side that contemplates the value of things and sees things from a *very, very* long view, even when he's feeling romantic or passionate in some way. the songs in which he meditates and reflects on life in the long view really have a special quality for me. i think they're connected with his sensitivity to the surroundings; the sky, the canadian landscape, forests and the environment, and a kind of spiritual connection he feels that is also, i suppose, romantic and sexual in some indirect way. that to me is the stuff that really resonates most deeply.

the image in "in the falling dark" of the people in their houses... it takes in the beauty of the moment and sees it all ending at the same time; the shortness of life and the brevity of it all and the triviality of it all, and then finds something mystical and eternal at the same time. that's what *he* does that nobody else does, is grasp that duality song after song and replays it, and it's a really, really great theme. it's an *endless* theme you can just go back to over and over again because it gets to the essence of things in a very deep and profound way. END

Radish Weights In At 300 Pounds

this here is a list of readers who all own possums with which they can't have meaningful conversations about bruce's work. so, in desperation, they have submitted information on how they may be contacted by other possum owners in similar predicaments. please remember if phoning that the place you are calling may be three times zones away (consult your phone book if you're confused about what direction the sun sets). be courteous when considering the time you call. i would suggest making your first phone call before 8pm, until you establish some calling guidelines with the other party. enjoy...

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Radio TV Radio TV

the columbia music hour. this show was performed live on december 11, 1994. it began its air dates on december 18th. bruce's guest was nanci griffith. several *woodpile* readers attended this show and report it was a very special occasion for them.

e-town. bruce performed in boulder, colorado, on november 19, 1994. the program began airing during december on participating npr affiliates. bruce debuted (on *radio*, anyway) the song "wise users," inspired by the go-ahead-and-use-it-it'll-grow-back crowd. it was perhaps the highlight of the set.

mountain stage. bruce performed in charleston, west virginia, on december 4, 1994. this program also aired during the month of december on participating npr affiliates.

bruce appeared on abc tv's **in concert**, on december 19, 1994, performing "joy to the world" from his album, *christmas*. short, but oh so sweet.

bruce appeared on **rita & friends**, an hour of music featuring a wide variety of musicians and musical styles, hosted by rita macneil. the show aired on january 6, 1995, on cbc tv. bruce performed *lovers in a dangerous time*, *mighty trucks of midnight* and *someone i used to love*. however, the best moment had to be the duet he performed with rita of *goin' down the road*, a song bruce wrote as part of the soundtrack to a 1970 canadian movie of the same title. one of the things that makes this moment special (it put a lump in my throat) is bruce's relationship with those songs, which he makes mention of before playing the song with rita. this was, in fact, his first public performance of the song (twenty-five years after it was written).

the following passage from a 1971 issue of *maclean's* magazine sheds a little light on bruce's feelings at that time regarding the songs from the movie:

a polite voice from out of the slight gloom of the war memorial auditorium in guelph, ontario, about tenth row centre, asks for a request. "sing something from your movie," the voice calls, belonging, you can make out, to a boy in his late teens. "from *goin' down the road*. if you would." it's been the same request for the last six months, and cockburn, alone on a stool in the spotlight, looks patient. "i'm sorry," he says into the microphone in a soft and final voice. "i don't sing those songs. when i wrote them, i wrote them to express the point of view of the people in the movie. it isn't my point of view. it isn't me. so, you know, i can't sing them here."

the songs from *goin' down the road* are as wonderful as anything bruce has done. it sure would be nice to have them available in a more publicly accessible medium. say, compact disc, for instance. maybe? let's hope...

the following "my favorite bruce albums" list arrived from graham k:

1. Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws
2. In the Falling Dark
3. Circles in the Stream
4. Humans
5. Salt, Sun & Time
6. Nothing But a Burning Light
7. Further Adventures Of

Damn, this is hopeless- they can't be rated. Just put me down as:

1. Dancing in the Falling Dark, Circling in the Adventurous White Sky, Humans with Night Visions of Burning Lights, with Darts in Our Hearts, a Sunwheel Dance where Joy Finds a Way in the Inner City, Stealing Fire from the World of Wonders, Troubled with Normality, a Circumstance of Sun and Time, Waiting for Christmas, Live- Bruce Cockburn.

yeah, *that's* the one.

Sounds Of A Winner - Bruce Cockburn Is Making Them

by Max Wyman

The album by folk-singer Bruce Cockburn (he prefers you to say it Coburn) landed on my desk the other day- and scribbled on the sleeve, in the unmistakable hand of Leisure editor Alex MacGillivray, were the words: "Is he any good?"

Well, yes, Alex- as a matter of fact, he is. He's very good indeed. And that's all the more of a pleasant surprise to me, since I didn't think he was going to be.

Folk-singers aren't my particular thing; I generally find I can get my musical kicks in other ways.

And when I read Cockburn's publicity stuff- "during his childhood he spent much of his time at a farm, where he learned to love the forest and the rural way of life"-I worried for him.

I needn't have bothered. Cockburn is a sensitive and witty poet with a fresh and intriguing attitude to life- and he sets his poems to some rich, complex and attractive music-writing.

The album- titled *Bruce Cockburn*, and No. 1 on the new True North label from Columbia- sometimes has the flavor of Donovan and sometimes the flavor of Dylan, but most times is very much Cockburn himself.

His songs are direct, often beautiful statements of truths that he has come across- and he can call on a great range of expression and mood with which to present them. The most striking and durable thing of all about this record is the gentleness- calm, settled, reflective- that permeates it.

And it's that, together with Cockburn's very finished musical and poetic thoughts, that make this album the addictive experience that it is.

Cockburn, formerly a member of several Eastern rock groups, is currently working as a solo artist on the Montreal-Toronto-Ottawa club circuit. He's worth listening to.

this review was published in the *vancouver sun*, on june 19, 1970. it was written by max wyman. the album, *bruce cockburn*, recorded in december, 1969, had just been released in may, 1970. all these years later, max was right: bruce's music *is* worth listening to...

DK

Two Bits Of Information

two bruce cockburn songbooks, with guitar tablatures, are obtained as follows: *elderly instruments*, 1100 n. washington, p.o. box 14210, lansing, michigan, 48906. tel: 517-372-7880. ~ **or**: *o.f.c publications*, p.o. box 4061, station e, ottawa, ontario, canada k1s 5b1. there are two volumes. the first is titled all the diamonds (1969-1979), and the second is rumours of glory (1980-1990). both have very nice binding systems; good for lots of use without them falling apart.

a few readers report they have had some difficulty trying to get **waterwalker** from *rei, inc*, near seattle. i made a follow-up call to them and my assessment is that getting the video mail-order from them is not as easily done as they first led me to believe. try them if you want, but here's another source in case: hmv canada, 333 yonge st., toronto, ontario, canada, m5b-1r7. tel: 800-567-8468. thanks to **rob c.** for this information.

On The Road To Austin

with Jeffery Smith

after driving for twelve hours, the austin city limit sign was a welcomed sight. just as welcome was hearing bruce on the austin airwaves (something that never happens at home in lawrence, kansas), even if they mis-pronounced his name! alas!

i met up with my friend, gretchen, who i met three years earlier at the record store i work in. her first words back then were, "do you have any cockburn in stock?" since that moment we have become, and have remained, close friends. now we are on our way to see bruce together in her new hometown. bruce's show was to be the inaugural concert at the *austin music hall*.

i was surprised by the large turn-out for the show, yet in retrospect i should have expected as much in a city such as austin where good music is respected and nurtured. the crowd was well-mannered and well-versed in bruce's material, as told by many people singing along, and by the many shouted requests.

it is bittersweet for a cockburn fan such as myself to witness such a wonderful evening. bitter in the fact that it shatters the illusion that i alone am the only one aware of his great talent; yet even more joyous because i can share such a night with so many others who can validate my long-standing emotions.

bruce had released four albums since i last saw him live, which left so much material that i had never heard in concert. with the abundance of songs to choose from it would be very easy to be disappointed by not hearing your personal favorites. yet, with the great selection of older and newer songs, acoustic and barn-burners, there were no regrets.

to paraphrase "mighty trucks of midnight"~ it's a shame to try and make things last forever; so after two sets (a couple dozen songs), and three encores, bruce had taken his place with grace and was on his way...to dallas.

jeffery attended bruce's show in austin, texas, on october 14, 1994.

Down From True North

the following titles are expected to be released in canada on cd by mca, perhaps by the end of summer, 1995:

1. *circles in the stream*
2. *bruce cockburn*
3. *further adventures of*

mind you, these are the hopes. time will tell the details. another hope is to release *circles in the stream* in it's entirety on one cd, as it appeared on the double lp. any of you with the *village green* label release (japanese release) know that it was a single cd, minus the song "cader idris." perhaps the long-shot for cd release is *mummy dust*, although it does contain the not-found-elsewhere "dweller by a dark stream," an alternate version of "loner," and a studio version of "red brother red sister."

voters for choice benefit

money raised at this benefit will go directly to recruiting and supporting pro-choice candidates for congress in the 1996 elections.

on the bill, along with bruce cockburn, was bruce hornsby and rickie lee jones. it took place at *constitution hall* in washington, d.c., on january 21, 1995. in the press release for this event, bruce said, "God has given us life, and has permitted death in the world. The 'Sanctity of life' therefore must not refer to whether we live or die, but to the quality of what our lives contain. The State has no more right to say people must be born than it does to say they must be put to death."

Some Stuff You Might Want

native country, by shingoose. this extended-play 7 inch piece of vinyl was released in 1975. it contains four tracks. it was co-produced by bruce cockburn and shingoose. bruce also contributed both acoustic and electric guitar work to this project. drums were provided by richard patterson, who was formerly with *the children*, and later *3's a crowd*. this disk is exquisitely packaged in a very heavy gatefold cover. the cover contains a drawing by bill mason. total time is about fifteen minutes. availability is questionable.

coast to coast fever, by david wiffen. originally released in 1973 on vinyl and now available on cd. david was also once with *the children* and *3's a crowd*. this work contains ten songs, nine of which were produced by bruce cockburn. all contain either acoustic or electric guitar, bass, or celeste work by bruce. there is also a cover of cockburn's "up on the hillside."

mental sound sketch, a 1993 tribute to japanese poet/author, kenji miyazawa. this cd contains one track titled "song for touring around the stars" covered by bruce (in english). he arranged the music for this version, and supplied guitar, vocals and "another instrument."

the above items are available through: sam the record man mail order, 272 church st., toronto, ontario, canada m5b 1z5. tel: 416-977-6490.

strong hand of love, a tribute to mark heard...the radio special, (*world café*) this 1994 cd is available exclusively through *fingerprint records*, p.o. box 197, merrimac, maine 01860. tel: 508-346-4577. it contains, among other artists, bruce cockburn with a special live acoustic performance of "closer to the light." there are two brief interview segments as well. it is a limited edition release.

Stealing Fire; Ten Years In Retrospect

by Terrance Cuneo

When speaking with a fellow Cockburn devotee, it is always of interest to discover when it was that the other person was first exposed to and finally "hooked" by the music of Bruce Cockburn. As for myself, the moment was ten years ago, during the summer of 1984 when "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" and "Rocket Launcher" graced the AOR radio stations and MTV. *Stealing Fire* thus holds the sentimental appeal of serving as my introduction to Cockburn's music (as well as harboring my all-time favorite Cockburn song, "Dust and Diesel"). In addition to possessing this nostalgic appeal, *Stealing Fire*, to my mind, remains one of Cockburn's most accessible (no "Hoop Dancer" on this one) and musically sophisticated efforts.

Start with the musical side of things. Where some of Cockburn's work has suffered, namely production, what *Stealing Fire* offers is quite strong. Rhythmically, one's ears can't help but be grabbed by the intricate interplay between Chapman Stick grooves, the Latin-style percussive influences and the rhythmic guitar vamps. Harmonically, there's the typically pleasing Cockburn melodies punctuated by crisp, haunting chord-voicings on both guitar and Stick (inspect "To Raise the Morning Star" and "Sahara Gold" for instance). The musical chemistry generated by these elements sets *Stealing Fire* apart from just about every other Cockburn disc, and in my opinion, just about anything else present on the musical horizon.

But as we all know, fine musicianship yoked with vapid lyrics does not great music make. *Stealing Fire*, however, does not disappoint in this regard. When one weds the

musical package with the vivid imagery, poeticism and sheer emotional force of Cockburn's lyrics, the result is powerful. As is well-known, much of the lyrical content on *Stealing Fire* represents the upshot of Cockburn's meanderings in Latin America. The lyrics journey from "slice-of-life" tunes such as "Sahara Gold," "Peggy's Kitchen Wall" and "Dust and Diesel" to the hopeful "Making Contact" to the politically charged "Maybe the Poet" to the wrenching "If I had a Rocket Launcher." Sprinkled throughout are the trademark Cockburn themes of romantic longing, tenacious faith, righteous anger, culpable ignorance and the fragility of the human condition. And of course it would be amiss to overlook Cockburn's penchant for pointing to the anomalies that pervade the human condition ("smiling girl directing traffic flow/.45 strapped to her cotton print dress") that at once evoke a sense of the tragic and the comic. In short, both musically and lyrically, *Stealing Fire*, after ten years, loses none of its luster and reaffirms our faith that the poet does indeed have something of lasting significance to say. ~1994

terence is currently studying at fordham university in new york state. he is working toward his doctorate in philosophy.

Loved In Philadelphia

the following exchanges took place between enthused listeners and bruce near the end of his philadelphia show in 1994:

a voice from the crowd yells out "come back to philadelphia!" after a beat, another pleads "***move in*** with me!" there's riotous laughter from all camps, and then, "***please!***" there's yet more laughter, and then the even, calm voice of bruce saying, "some of you are making requests that are hard to fulfill."

further, as testimony to the crowds belief in bruce's amazing songwriting talents, was the following exchange regarding encore requests:

from the crowd was yelled, "gavin's woodpile!"~ "peggy's kitchen wall!"~ "play anything you like!" and on and on. suddenly, out of the crowd someone said "***write*** a song!"

a true believer.

Stuff On The Back Page

add to the set-list (some to re-learn to play?): *you point to the sky*, *christmas song*, *starwheel* and *prenons la mer*. although i must point out i think i'd prefer him to play whatever he wants to play. i come to listen~ **raymond k.**

i'd have to say my favorite song is *water into wine*. my favorite album? too tough to call~ **joe w.**

captain bruce. i recently received a letter from *woodpile* reader, lo baker, and in her letter was this amusing passage. her husband, george, is a merchant seaman and was out to sea at the time i received the letter. the passage went:

“George has made a few of the crew members on his ship Bruce listeners. But they really don’t have a choice. You have to do what the Captain says. So when George is up on the Bridge, so is Bruce.”

bruce performed at *tramps* in new york city, on january 11, 1995, as part of a three-day **tribute to danny gatton** (and benefit for the gatton family). dates: january 10-12.

bruce, please record **stolen land** for a third time! the powerful, sharp-edged, bluesy version you are presently performing is really worth it; very emotional and powered by spirit. i don’t know anyone who has not been wowed by it. it really delivers the message and makes me jump. any chance?

...and, how about a solo album? live, or in the studio, or both. ~dk

the woodpile gets a new area code. effective even as you read this, a new area code has been assigned to this region of washington state. the local number remains the same, but the area code is now **360, making the new number 360-568-9543.** thank ya.

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Global Visions Artist Award

Bruce Cockburn was selected as the first recipient of the Global Visions Artist Award. The Global Visions Festival is celebrating its 15th year by creating this annual award for “The artist who has demonstrated a long term dedication to creating a vision of a more just world.”

The selection committee unanimously agreed that Bruce exemplifies the concept of the artist award. Bruce has been, and continues to be, a strong advocate for many issues facing the world today. Having travelled the world extensively, Bruce has spoken out and sung on issues facing countries such as Tibet, Mozambique and Nicaragua. He has also been very involved with human rights, environment, native and women’s issues and actively supports various organizations.

The principle guiding his involvement in different causes, Bruce said, is love.

“It sounds corny to say that but that’s what it comes down to. It’s love of humankind and love of the planet, and respect for the planet- a sense of the beauty of it and the depth of it and of the way in which we are part of it, and how satisfying it is to feel a part of it; how much more satisfying than it is to feel at war with it. When I see people at war with it, it’s painful and frustrating and sometimes enraging, and I want to do something about it.”

Festival Coordinator Bill Moore-Kilgannon, of the Centre for International Alternatives, said, “For many people, Bruce’s music has been an important part of people’s understanding of the world, and how it is important to speak out on these issues. His music and poetry go deeply into the issues and reach people who are normally not exposed to thinking about them. In essence, this is what we are trying to do with the festival.”

The award presentation was held on January 27, 1995, at the Gameau Theatre in Edmonton, Alberta. Bruce participated in the festival’s opening night gala via satellite link-up from Toronto.

Bruce Featured in AIDS Benefit Book

Penguin Books of Canada is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of *People Who Make A Difference*, a luminous black and white portrait study of exceptional Canadians. The project was launched in March of 1994 by the Canadian chapter of Photographers & Friends Against AIDS who, through sales of the book, expect to raise upwards of a million dollars to continue AIDS research in Canada.

A visually stunning collection of black and white photographs, *People Who Make A Difference* is a “who’s who” of Canadian achievement, offering an enduring portfolio of excellence and a reminder to everyone that dreams are made to be fulfilled. The collection of 100 portraits includes Bruce Cockburn. The book features a forward by Margaret Atwood and is completely bilingual.

Publication is scheduled for the fall of 1995. The subjects, writers, photographers, designers, editors and translators involved in this project have donated their services free of charge in order to fight AIDS. Penguin is donating some of its services to the project as well.

Penguin Books Canada is contacted as follows: 10 Alcorn Ave, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M4V 3B2.

howdy

greetings to readers in british columbia, alberta, manitoba, ontario, quebec, saskatchewan, sweden, finland, united kingdom, belgium, israel, australia, the netherlands, washington, oregon, california, arizona, idaho, montana, colorado, new mexico, texas, kansas,

nebraska, missouri, mississippi, illinois, wisconsin, michigan, indiana, tennessee, alabama, ohio, florida, south carolina, north carolina, kentucky, pennsylvania, virginia, new york, washington, d.c., maryland, maine, connecticut, massachusetts, georgia, hawaii, new jersey and new hampshire.

The Stateside Launching Of Bruce Cockburn

New York: Millennium Records, manufactured and distributed in the U.S. by RCA Records, has recently launched a multi-faceted marketing campaign to support Bruce Cockburn's American debut album on Millennium, *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws*, and the single, "Wondering Where the Lions Are." The album was certified gold, and is almost platinum in Canada; the single is currently in the top 100 in the States. Cockburn, who has been awarded two gold albums and four Juno Awards in Canada, has been called 'Canada's best kept secret' by Rolling Stone magazine. But with Cockburn now well up on the U.S. charts, Millennium hopes to change that.

According to Bobby Ragona, Director of National Sales and Marketing at Millennium, the release of the Cockburn album and single marked the first time that a major campaign was launched in the U.S. to spread the U.S. popularity of an artist to equal the level achieved in Canada. Cockburn, who records in Canada on True North Records, felt that the reason behind the project was his unwillingness to work in the States. Now that he is a success in Canada he feels that he can make it outside the country as well. Cockburn was a big success during his recent tours of Japan and Italy, in support of the release of his products in those countries. He has also been confirmed to record an album on the prestigious German Jazz label ECM, to be produced this summer in Oslo, Norway, by the labels chief, Manfred Eicher. But the United States was the largest market to be conquered by the music of Bruce Cockburn.

The initial step in the campaign was to increase pre-release awareness of Cockburn. Five thousand teaser post cards were created for distribution to press, radio, colleges and retailers; all featured Cockburn's likeness on the front and a question on the back- Who is Canada's best kept secret? The answer was different on each card, according to where they were sent. Other merchandising and marketing aids included a large poster of Bruce bearing the same phrase as the teaser cards, and a special bio on the artist.

The second stage of the strategy came when both the album and the single were released. Larry Palmacci, Director of Associated Labels Marketing, RCA Records, hired Peter Gordon of Thirsty Ear Productions to produce two half-hour specials in LP form for radio on Bruce Cockburn. They featured music from *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws* and an indepth interview with the artist. Sponsored by Budweiser Beer, they aired during the first two weeks in February on Thirsty Ear's syndicate of over fifty primary college radio stations. They were also made available to key commercial AOR and AC stations across the country. In support of the specials, Budweiser sent two cases of beer to each station involved. The beer was accompanied by a note stating, 'This Bud's for you. A toast to Bruce Cockburn, Canada's best kept secret, from Budweiser, America's best known

beer.' An additional ten thousand posters and flyers were prepared and sent to participating stations in the Cockburn-Budweiser special.

The final stage included listening parties at colleges located in the top 20 American markets, for which Budweiser supplied 20 cases of beer each. These parties were supported by ads in the local college papers and a special poster announcing, 'This Bud's for Bruce and you.' The campaign was a huge success, as demonstrated by the recent charting of *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws*. The album has just come off the U.S. charts but the single, "Wondering Where the Lions Are" is still climbing. In Canada, True North has released a follow-up single, "Tokyo," which is bulleting its way up the RPM chart.

this article appeared in the music trade magazine, melody maker, on april 12, 1980.

Livingston Takes The Helm

*I don't believe in guarded borders
And I don't believe in hate
I don't believe in generals
Or their stinking torture states*

~ If I Had a Rocket Launcher, Bruce Cockburn

Of the many qualities Bruce Cockburn brings to his music, the one that has always appealed to me the most has been his sincere commitment to giving voice to the struggle for social justice. With profound depth and sincere emotion, without fear or favor, he has told the stories of torture and oppression in Guatemala, Pinochet's Chile and Chinese-dominated Tibet. In a long career marked by musical experimentation and change, the one thing that has remained constant has been his commitment to giving hell to every deserving dictatorial son-of-a-bitch he could. It's been a very good example to follow.

While in graduate school, as I was trying to maintain my spirits and sense of commitment through many months of writing a dissertation that was in part devoted to unmasking the Reagan Administration's association with Salvadoran death squads, songs such as "If I had a Rocket Launcher" blasted away in my office to keep the fire in my belly burning. Songs such as "Lord of the Starfields" and "Festival of Friends" kept me in balance. If there is a soundtrack to what is now my book [*The Terrorism Spectacle*], it consists entirely of Cockburn's music.

I recently wrote a column for the *Washington Post* that tried to say, in my far less poetic way, some of the things Cockburn has been saying for years about people such as Jesse Helms. The only way we can confront the torturers and their friends is to expose them, by giving voice to those who are oppressed and powerless. That is what Cockburn has always done.

steve livingston is assistant professor of political communication and international affairs at the george washington university in washington, d.c. he has travelled extensively overseas, visiting countries in the midst of political change and upheaval.

Jesse Helms's Friends

Long before Sen. Jesse Helms made his intemperate remarks on the president's fitness to be commander in chief, there was good reason to be concerned about his assuming a major foreign policy role.

The last time the North Carolina Republican was in a position to chair the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was in 1984. In June of that year, he loudly and unashamedly defended Roberto d' Aubuisson, the cashiered Salvadoran major who organized and directed the death squads responsible for the murder of thousands of Salvadorans in the 1980's. Even an American ambassador was at risk. According to a report in The Post earlier this year, in 1984 special envoy Vernon Walters drew d' Aubuisson aside at a social function in San Salvador to warn him not to murder U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. "Any such attempts against the ambassador," Walters said, "would unquestionably terminate U.S. assistance programs." Walters noted that d' Aubuisson "showed no personal resentment" at being approached as the confidant of murderers. D' Aubuisson was merely the latest in a succession of right-wing foreign military leaders whom the North Carolina Republican befriended.

There is, of course, Helm's open contempt for Haiti's president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and his cozy relationship with the erstwhile military strongman, Gen. Raoul Cedras. But this is only the most recent manifestation of a well-established pattern. One of the earliest episodes involving Helms's relationship with a murderous military man occurred when he and several members of his staff visited Argentina shortly before the military coup in 1976.

"We were all puzzled as to exactly what he was doing here," recalled Wayne Smith, then political counselor at the U.S. Embassy. "The ambassador was concerned because Helms was talking with the ranking military people. We had been bending over backwards to avoid giving rise to any impression that we endorsed what they were doing, and then here came these people. They gave the impression that Sen. Helms was on their side and that with an important United States senator on their side, the military had won the battle of bringing the U.S. government around." Helm's later denied making the trip, a denial that John Carbaugh, a one-time senior policy aide, refused to corroborate.

By December 1980, Bolivia's military government was being condemned for what the State Department called "widespread, even savage violations of human rights." It was also reported that the nominal president of Bolivia and other officials connected to the military were involved in drug trafficking. In response, the United States withdrew its ambassador and cut off foreign aid. According to one State Department official quoted by the New York Times, Bolivia "did not enjoy much support anywhere." Except from Helms.

Helms wrote a letter to Bolivia's president, Gen. Luis Garcia Meza, in December 1980 suggesting that he would work on his behalf from his position as chairman of a Senate subcommittee: "I am impressed with the progress Bolivia has made in recent months in providing security for its citizens, which is among the most fundamental of human rights, despite the misguided policies of our government." Helms continued, "I assure you that, as chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Senate, I will call for re-examination of our policies toward Latin America. The work you have been doing in your country," he said, "will be powerful arguments in that cause."

Helms also found friends in the Chilean military. In September 1973, the military overthrew the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende, who died- some believe he was assassinated- during the coup. Gen. Augusto Pinochet's junta ruled Chile with an iron fist for the next decade and a half. Opponents were either arrested or simply disappeared.

In 1981, when Chile's foreign minister, Rene Rojas Galdames, visited Washington, he met with Sen. Helms. Later, the Chilean Embassy distributed a press release saying Helms had met with Rojas for more than an hour and that Helms stated, "We have an obligation to give Chile equal treatment. The Chilean system is not much different from what we have here."

That is perhaps Helms's problem. He mistakes the United States and the U.S. military, with its long tradition of political neutrality and respect for American democracy, with the sort of thugs and petty military dictatorships he has made a practice of befriending over the years.

Bruce In Concert- Bring Your Life Vest

The Elora Festival, A Celebration in Song, is proud to present Bruce Cockburn as part of the acclaimed Quarry series. Bruce will perform one show on July 27, 1995 at 8:30 pm. He will perform solo on a 24'x24' raft in the middle of the quarry waters to an audience atop 40 foot limestone walls. It is a concert experience like no other. Elora is located approximately 90 minutes northwest of Toronto. Tickets are CND\$25.00 and \$22.00 each and can be ordered by calling the Elora Festival office at 519-846-0331 during regular business hours, or faxing to 519-846-5947.

SEADOGS

This story starts
back in September
destined for a vacation
we would always remember
Canada to Carolina
no place is too far

Bruce is our favorite
we hopped in the car
Over the border
four hundred miles
return trip, memories
and lots of smiles
Burlington, Vermont
a close one in Keene
front row center
pinch me, it's a dream
Connecticut, Toad's Place
a very famous spot
A drunkard being noisy
cool he was not
Blue Ridge Parkway
with peaks in the clouds
we met him in Asheville
we were smiling out loud
Upstate New York
the last show seen
vacation was over
or so it would seem
A few months later
the phone brings good news
He's in Washington, D.C.
for a woman's right to choose
"Bruce will be solo"
thought you'd like to know
New Hampshire to D.C.
close one, we had to go
A touching new song
about a friend who dies
And another called "Wise Users"
you tell us who's wise
The new songs were highlights
of a vacation that was great
What's next, an album? a video?
we'll just have to wait...

-George & Lo Baker

Down From True North

bruce's first album, *bruce cockburn*, is scheduled to be released **on cd** in april. go buy it.
a few places are:

sam the record man mail order

274 church st.
toronto, ontario
canada m5b 1z5
tel: 800-265-7267
416-977-6490

hmv canada

333 yonge street
toronto, ontario
canada m5b 1r7
tel: 800-567-8468

a&b sound mail order

3434 cornett rd
vancouver, bc
canada v5m 2h1
tel: 800-663-0596

1995 tour schedule~ solo

april 29	toronto, on	dumaurier theatre
april 30	toronto, on	dumaurier theatre
may 7	halifax, ns	rebecca cohn theatre*
june 2	washington, dc	wolftrap**
june 4	portsmouth, nh	unitarian church hall**
june 8	boston, mass.	harborlights pavilion**
june 9	wallingford, ct	oakdale theatre**
june 10	latham, ny	starlite theatre**
june 11	buffalo, ny	melody fair**
june 16	telluride, co	telluride festival
june 18	birmingham, al	city stages festival
july 8	chicago, il	ravinia fest pavillion**
july 27	elora, on	elora fest (the quarry)
august 26	northampton, uk	greenbelt festival

look and listen out for more tour dates. this listing is what was available at print time.

* u.s.c benefit

** with shawn colvin

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

Stuff That Seemed To Fit On This Page Better Than Other Pages

- ◆ many belated thanks to **ruth eddy** at radio station **wpkn** in bridgeport, connecticut, for her interest in talking about, and promoting, bruce's work on the air.
- ◆ three additional album releases are: *resume* (u.s. release, 1981), *rumours of glory* (german release, 1985), *if a tree falls- a collection of his greatest songs* (australian release, 1990).
- ◆ in addition to bruce cockburn, bruce hornsby and rickie lee jones, shawn colvin also performed at the **voters for choice benefit** in washington, d.c., on january 21, 1995.
- ◆ please note that the **correct street address** for *sam the record man* in toronto is **274** church street. it was printed incorrectly in issue number seven as 272. apologies.
- ◆ this newsletter exist through annual contributions from readers. thank you for your consideration.
- ◆ the **columbia records radio hour, vol.1** was released in january this year. it contains three of bruce's songs, live: "lord of the starfields", "lovers in a dangerous time" and "cry of a tiny babe." all are from the *columbia music hour*, december 20, 1992. the liner contains the b&w photo you see on page four.very nicely packaged.
- ◆ **gavin's woodpile** is published every two months, so far. questions? call or fax me at 360-568-9543.

- ◆ as a **birthday gift to bruce**, readers are encouraged to contribute either time or money to a chosen organization, i.e. a human services or environmental organization. *woodpile* reader, audrey pearson, is the creator and manager of this project. if you have a contribution to report, or if you would like more information or specific ideas on where to contribute your time and efforts, contact audrey at 907 n.e. 72nd st., seattle, wa, 98115. tel: (h) 206-523-5327 (w) 206-543-4512. her internet address is afp@lternet.edu. if all goes well a report reflecting our efforts will be sent to bruce c/o his management in toronto. we figured that chocolates would melt in the mail, so this idea seemed like a worthy alternative. thank you, audrey. happy birthday to bruce, from *woodpile* reader's all over the place (may 27th). yippee!
- ◆ thanks to **mark, josh, amy and jerri** for making up the work party that glued and stapled this thing together...
- ◆ *gavin's woodpile* welcomes **doug flavelle** to true north.

Issue Number 9

June 1995

Pre-History, The B.C. Story by Alexander Taylor

By understanding an artist's past, we come to better appreciate their work and craftsmanship. As is customary in showbiz, information surrounding one's humble, early beginnings is often carefully deleted from their biography. The complete story is rarely ever told. Only Bruce Cockburn can tell his tale, and hopefully one day in the near future, he will. Until that time however, I'll try to shed some light on those formative years.

BRUCE COCKBURN was born on May 27th, 1945, in Canada's capitol, Ottawa, Ontario. The son of a physician and of a lab technician, young Bruce grew up in a quiet middle-class neighbourhood. Even at an early age he loved music. At twelve years old he began playing his uncle's clarinet, switching over to the more boisterous trumpet soon after. By fourteen he was pounding out his energy on a set of skins and even enrolled for drum lessons. He discovered his instrument of choice, the guitar, while attending Nepean High in 1961. The rudimentary theory was learned with lessons, but he quickly tamed the six-string with hours of practicing Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley favorites. An interview with J.C. Alspector in 1981 (published in issue #6 of *Gavin's Woodpile*) revealed that Bruce began singing in 1962. One of his first vocal performances being "Kansas City," possibly with a band called THE JADES.

Immersed in the beatnik literature of Jack Kerouac and the whole Beat Generation scene, Bruce began to gravitate toward hip jazz. His musicianship had progressed to the point where intricate jazz licks flowed with great ease from his fingertips. The earliest known recording existing from this period dates back to the spring of 1963. His prowess is captured in a four minute untitled instrumental jam with The Jades.

Nepean High had several key musicians among its student body. Bruce Cockburn met Peter Hodgson in his senior year in 1964. Hodgson was a guitarist and came from a background in folk music. He played in a duo with another guitarist, Neville Wells, aptly called NEV & PETE. They performed during the early days of the famed Le Hibou coffee house on Rideau Street and even opened up for Ian & Sylvia at the Capitol Theater. Bruce and Peter often dashed to the Cockburn house to jam during their lunch break. Hodgson grew up with jazz in his house, but was quite impressed to see someone actually play it before his eyes. Likewise, Cockburn was also taken with Hodgson's sound and style of playing, having had limited exposure to folk music.

Upon graduation, Bruce lived out the Beat Generation dream and spent a portion of the summer of 1964 in Paris, playing as a street performer. In September he would commence two years of studies at The Berklee School of Music in Boston. This instruction would greatly serve him in the future. His classes included: Composition and Music Structure. It's not known, but may be assumed that Bruce must have played locally and soaked up some of the city's finest, ranging from the unknown Tom Rush to rockin' scene makers, The Remains.

Back in Ottawa, the garage band scene was just on the edge of exploding when he'd left for Boston. The Jades split up when singer Don Norman and guitarist Doug Orr both joined THE ESQUIRES, then one of the city's top acts signed to Capitol Records. Peter Hodgson (bass), Neville Wells (guitar), Chris Anderson (drums) and farmboy Sandy Crawley (guitar) formed THE CHILDREN. They initially planned on being a jugband, but after only a few practices were tearing through tunes by The Beatles and The Who. A brief while later they were playing in church halls and community centres. The group caught the attention of Harvey Glatt, concert promoter, record store owner and one of Ottawa's most important figures in the music industry at the time. Glatt signed The Children on with his management company, Treble-Clef and appointed Bill Hawkins as their personal manager. At the time Hawkins was working at the the Bass-Clef Record shop. The group was playing on turf that was rife with fiercely competitive combos. Even with Hawkins behind them, their success was rather limited. Then came the summer of 1966...

Bruce Cockburn returned to Ottawa and within weeks joined The Children, playing six and twelve-string guitar and organ. Around this time, and through Treble-Clef, the band started opening up for, and backing, THE WILLOWS, a Supremes-like trio previously known as The Girlfriends. Doing this necessitated the band learning a ton of Soul and R'n'B material, which they didn't mind since it was a complete change of pace, not to mention steady work. The two acts toured like this and played between Montreal and London, Ontario, making a few TV appearances along the way. Another interesting event was a Big 12 battle-of-the-bands at The Coliseum, pitting The Children against some of the city's top garage bands. The pace was frenetic and the audience was a little out of hand. At one point the group was even pelted with hard objects! No, they didn't win, but did live to tell the tale. Bruce Cockburn's professionalism as a musician and a songwriter led The Children into writing and performing more original material. An article in the

July 4th issue of RPM (Canada's first music trade magazine) even reported that Bruce and Hawkins were working on a rock opera. It stated, "...operating on the premise that to write you need only 'something to say.'" "The steady stream of songs that Bruce penned even led to the creation of the Bytown Music publishing company by Harvey Glatt.

Hawkins had achieved many great accomplishments in his own right. In 1965 he had two books of poetry published (*Shoot Low Sheriff, They're Riding Shetland Ponies* and *Louis Riel*) and was also featured in two additional anthologies (*Commonwealth Poets 65* and *New Wave Canada*). While he was writing material with Cockburn, a third book (Hawkins' book) was going to print. Since no copies can be found today, it's not known whether any of that material might have been used in song by The Children. He did write one song which the band performed live- "It's a Dirty Shame." It was subsequently recorded by The Esquires for their first outing on Columbia records.

The Children were very active during the final months of 1966. They played on a near fulltime basis, polishing off the rough edges of their stage performance. Their popularity and fan-base grew very rapidly, firmly establishing them as a hot up 'n coming band in the region. In November however, drummer Chris Anderson was given the axe. He was replaced by none other than Rickie Patterson, who up until then, had been the glue holding The Esquires together. Yet another shake-up occurred early in the new year when bassist Peter Hodgson decided to leave the band and hit the road for Mexico with his girlfriend. David Wiffen, a guitarist/vocalist and long-time folkie from out West joined The Children shortly after. Bill Hawkins even sat in on guitar for a brief stint.

While it may sound like the band was just barely holding together, they were in fact at their creative peak during much of this period. They seemed to thrive on uncertainty and the clouded vision that management had. If it wasn't for the sheer talent the band possessed as a collective, Cockburn would have split a long time ago. The fact The Children had three songwriters- Wiffen, Hawkins and Cockburn, also created some friendly rivalry within the band, not to mention some highly imaginative songs. While they played a good amount of covers in their shows, they certainly had enough of their own material to give them an edge over most of the local competition.

It wouldn't be easy to pigeon-hole The Children's sound, especially since they went through many phases and left no records behind. Often enough though, the local press compared them to a cross between The Byrds and The Rolling Stones. Perhaps we will know more when their early 1967 demo recordings come to light.

~look for part two in a coming issue~

the woodpile commissioned alex to put together this story on the early days of bruce's musical involvement. "commissioned" actually meaning he took the project on out of the goodness of his heart. as it happens he was in the midst of researching many of the overlooked canadian bands of the 1960's, and bruce was a part of that scene. alex drew information for this piece from his love of the period as it relates to music and the bands that made that music. he did a lot research for this project, and found peter hodgson

(formerly of the children) to be very helpful in providing information for the time period covered here . ~dk

Images of Country Comfort

the following article appeared in canadian newspapers in april, 1972, written by michael bennett

There's a classy little custom record label in Canada that's turning a lot of headphones around throughout North America.

It's True North Records and it features such exquisite talent as Bruce Cockburn, Murray McLauchlan and a group of electronic wizards known as Syrinx.

Cockburn's music reflects his philosophy and affection for the rural life he grew to love as a child on his grandfather's farm near Ottawa.

His soft acoustic guitar and delicate voice roll in on gentle, poetic waves, evoking images of country comfort.

Bruce Cockburn, his first album, was released in May, 1970, to wide critical acclaim and is still being discovered nearly two years later. The title of the opening cut, "Going To The Country," signalled the direction this fine young songwriter was taking.

RPM magazine named him the country's top folksinger in 1970 and he was presented with a special award for composing the soundtrack for Don Shebib's movie, *Goin' Down the Road*.

Cockburn's second album, *High Winds White Sky*, reinforces his growing reputation. His playing and singing have taken on a richer, more confident texture as he delves into new musical experiments.

More Covers

artist	album	date	songs	company	country
bengt johansson	clowneras planet	1987	6 songs (see cantio page five for list)		sweden
holly near	sky dances	1989	to raise the morning star	redwood star records	usa
dan fogelberg	the wild places	1990	lovers in a dangerous time	cbs	usa

jerry garcia	jerry garcia band live	1991	waiting for a arista miracle		usa
clan dyken	shundahai	1992	stolen land	forward productions	usa
clan dyken	live, new years eve 92-93	1993	to raise the morning star	forward productions	usa
chris bottomly	brainfudge	1994	stolen land	partly bent	canada
fjk	ballader	1994	mighty trucksof midnight & indian wars	vinyl records	sweden
peter gullerud	uzima	1994	free to be	(promo)	usa

Tour Schedule Update- Summer 1995

(Remember, *things change*)

april 29	toronto, ontario	dumaurier theatre+
april 30	toronto, ontario	dumaurier theatre+
may 07	halifax, nova scotia	rebecca cohn auditorium*
june 02	washington, d.c.	wolftrap**
june 03	amagansett, n.y.	stephen's talkhouse
june 04	portsmouth, n.h.	unitarian church hall
june 06	northampton, mass.	performing arts centre
june 08	boston, mass.	harborlights pavillion**
june 09	wallingford, conn.	oakdale theatre**
june 10	latham, n.y.	starlite theatre**
june 11	buffalo, n.y.	melody fair
june 12	detroit, michigan	royal oak theatre
june 16	telluride, colorado	telluride festival
june 18	birmingham, al	city stages festival
june 21	cincinnati, ohio	bogarts
june 22	lexington, kentucky	kentucky theatre
june 24	philadelphia, pa	tla (2 shows)
june 27	new york, n.y.	the bottom line***
june 28	ithaca, n.y.	the state theatre
july 06	chicago, illinois	ravinia festival pavillion**
july 27	elora, ontario	the elora festival
aug 26	northampton, u.k.	greenbelt festival

* u.s.c. benefit ** with shawn colvin + filmed for tv

****in their own words series* with billy bragg, greg brown & patty larkin

True North Records- 25 Years Young And Expanding

in april, 1995, **true north records**, canada's longest running independent record label, began a year-long celebration of its 25th anniversary. through the years, true north has produced over 75 recordings by artists including bruce cockburn, stephen fearing, murray mclauchlan, carole pope and rough trade. these efforts have earned the company 35 juno awards, 34 gold and platinum records and numerous other industry awards. of this longevity and success, bernie finkelstein, true north's founder and president, comments "how about those jays anyway."

true north is busy working with its new distributor, mca records canada, to reissue its extensive canadian catalogue. in total, 33 releases, five of which have never been released on cd, were scheduled for an april (1995) shipment to retailers. the first-time on cd releases included bruce cockburn's, and true north's, first recording, *bruce cockburn*, rough trade's *avoid freud* and *for those who think young*, and two of murray mclauchlan's early works *sweeping the spotlight away* and *boulevard*.

further, true north announced its agreement to license and release a number of recordings from the prestigious u.k. based cooking vinyl catalogue. having been scheduled for mid-april release (1995), licensed from u.s. based burnside records, true north brings bluesman kelly joe phelps' recording *lead me on* to the canadian market. phelps' original acoustic lap-top delta slide guitar style has already garnered significant attention in u.s. music circles.

Bruce Cockburn: A Christian Appreciation

by Mark Bishop

My first introduction to Bruce's music was catching a video clip in 1979, which was a live performance of "Wondering Where the Lions Are." After watching this it didn't take me long to purchase the album and also anything else of his I could find (which is no mean feat in my part of the world). From that time onwards I have been a devotee of his music, and in particular have a great appreciation of his lyrics. I have been intrigued to discover the Christian references in his words and admire his imagery as he explores his Christian beliefs and speaks honestly of his journeying. At times his songs have had a justifiably angry tone- his disgust of the "might makes right" mentality, our disregard of this planet and the destructive way we treat it, and the evils of the IMF. These are some of the issues he has brought to our attention so we can be informed and moved to action. Despite his anger at the injustices he writes about he still has hope, and this hope comes through strongly, particularly in his most recent albums. Because of this, to me, his Christianity is real and not antiseptic.

Of course I don't expect to have the same viewpoint as Bruce on every issue. To paraphrase an old joke; when you get two Christians together you'll get three opinions. I was somewhat disappointed to read in the February 1995 issue of *Gavin's Woodpile* that Bruce was actively involved in pro-choice concerts. For me, to terminate the life of an unborn child is wrong. I think that it is sometimes easier for Christians to be politically correct but biblically incorrect. I interpreted Bruce's line in "Little Seahorse" about his

unborn child which goes "I already love you and I don't even know who you are," as a celebration of the sanctity of life of the unborn and how precious this little one was to him, and also an insight into how precious these little ones are to God. I agree with the statement that Bruce made in the press release for the Voters for Choice benefit that "The State has no more right to say people must be born than it does to say they must be put to death," because I believe that only God has this right. But even with this disagreement, he is a Christian Brother and Bruce and I will always have at least two things in common- a love of good music and a love of God.

I'll let Bruce have the last words from "No Footprints"- "So love the Lord and in Him love me too, and in Him go your way and I'll be right there with you, leaving no footprints when we go..." AMEN.

Mark Bishop lives in Perth, Western Australia. He is currently trying to survive being "Mr. Mom" to a two year old. Both are busy contributing to the Greenhouse Effect.

Yip, Yip, Yip

the electrocution of the word: and now, to add a bit of tease to the unraveling semi-mystery; *yes*, bruce was in the film, and *yes* he was electrocuted. that's all i know.

circles in the stream: no release date has been determined at the time this issue went to print.

bruce performed two shows at **the demaurier theatre** in toronto on april 29th and 30th. they will air on television in some capacity sometime in 1996, as plans have it now. more details as the time draws near.

from the "more covers" listing on page four, the six songs that appear on the bengt johansson lp, ***clownernas planet***, are:

lord of the starfields/ laughter/ planet of the clowns/ lovers in a dangerous time/ all the diamonds in the world/can i go with you.

i have spoken with hundreds of people over the last year, and *everyone* of them is bruce's biggest fan. i've come to expect to hear that at some point in most conversations or letters i receive. i prefer to shy away from the term "fan," as it is short for "fanatic." while i insist that i am not a fan, or a fanatic, it may be hard for me to sell that statement simply by virtue of the fact that i publish this newsletter. what's a boy to do.

actually i prefer to think of myself as a *follower* of the *work* of bruce cockburn. whether it really matters what you call it is an issue of opinion i suppose. the bottom line being that i hear from people time and time again how important bruce's work is to them in their daily lives, as well as in the period of their *lifetime*. what a wonderful legacy being

created; enriching the lives of thousands of people with beauty, spirit and elegance. what one person can do...

Back Page

- ◆ **change of address?** an error in your address? please let me know. tel/fax: 360-568-9543.
- ◆ while the number of readers of this newsletter have increased nicely over the last months, the number of contributions that make it possible have not done as well. in order to continue this project i will have to consider a subscription rate if annual contributions continue to lag behind readership numbers. that is something i'd rather not do, but if it needs to be done in order to continue to produce the newsletter, i'll cringe and do it. if subscription rates do go into affect, they will be as follows (all prices in u.s. funds): u.s.> \$10, canada> \$12, the rest of the world> \$15. there's nothing quite like holding information for ransom to turn my original idea into a whole new ballgame. darn.
- ◆ congratulations to **andy and jody fritz** on the arrival of their son, jared, on april 21st. nine pounds!
- ◆ **ernest brown: pioneer photographer** (1973). this 54 minute video telling the tale of ernest brown, who photographed canada's west in the early 1900's, is accompanied by the music of bruce cockburn. some of the music you will find on *high winds white sky* and *sunwheel dance*, with variations on some. there is also music found only on this soundtrack, all being instrumental. it is available as follows:

filmwest associates
2399 hayman road
kelowna, b.c. v1z 1z7
canada

tel: 604-769-3399 fax: 604-769-5599

- ◆ **tanz & folkfest**~ rudolstadt, germany: bruce's live performance of "if a tree falls" is found on this july 1994 festival cd. it is available as follows for 38 DM:

tanz & folkfest
stadt rudolstadt
markt 7
d-07407 rudolstadt

tel: 03672-8 64 01
fax: 03672-2 20 70

- ◆ going to the show in **telluride, colorado** on june 16th? krysta kellie, a reader in cannon beach, oregon (not too far from portland) is looking for others who may be going that way to carpool with. she is reached at 503-436-0433.

Issue Number 10

August 1995

How Long Can A Man Dodge \$100,000 A Year?

by Alan Walker

the following interview came from the province, a canadian news publication, dated december 19, 1970.

That's the kind of money that's chasing a young singer-composer named Bruce Cockburn. But how do you catch up with a guy whose address is licence number 970-21B?

It was just past four in the afternoon and the singer and his manager were sitting in Toronto's Meat and Potatoes restaurant. The singer, Bruce Cockburn (pronounced Coburn), was finishing his lunch- or dinner- of brown rice and vegetables. And his manager, Bernie Finkelstein, had already consumed a platter of wiener schnitzel, peas, carrots, boiled potatoes, and was just thrusting home the last clump of bagel, cream cheese and strawberry jam before he polished off his coffee and a glass of milk (he left some radishes).

The manager, as always, was being gentle with his singer. The talk turned gently to money, and to how much Cockburn might earn in the next year. Cockburn was only a little interested, and he mentioned that he had made out quite well on the \$10 a week that was his share of the take when he played lead guitar in an obscure Ottawa group called The Children three years ago. But the news that his manager was trying to break to him now was that, at 25, Cockburn is a successful solo artist; that his first album has sold more than 15,000 copies in six months, and that the sales curve is not slackening; that a growing number of other singers are recording Cockburn's songs, and paying him royalties; that the film for which he wrote and sang the sound track, Goin' Down the Road, is a hit in New York; and that he, Bernie Finkelstein is turning down an appearance for Cockburn in January at \$1,700 a night "because the place is a pub." What it all adds up to, Finkelstein said gently, was that Bruce Cockburn could gross about \$100,000 in the next year, if he *wanted* to.

Cockburn, a reflective and dignified young man who plays a hushed guitar and who sings about waves of shadow blue, about a God who buttered the land with sunlight, and sometimes about parrots who wear boxing gloves, thought about the \$100,000. What had

\$100,000 to do with him? It was not what he wanted at all. "Money is a hard thing to deal with," he said finally. "It's easier for me *not* to have it."

What Bruce Cockburn does want, and insists he needs, is to write the songs he feels he ought to write, and to sing them when, where and how he feels he ought to. Not long after last summer's release of his first album- an event that would see any other singer spending time ingratiating himself with disc jockeys so they would plug the record- Cockburn took his wife, Kitty, and his dog, Aroo, on a *non-working* tour of Western Canada in a camper truck. They made their leisurely way across the Prairies, over the Rockies to the B.C. Coast, then back again, enjoying the delights of the Canadian countryside which loom so large in Cockburn's songs.

The Cockburn's still live in their camper truck- their most permanent address is Ontario licence number 970-21B. Bernie Finkelstein is only bewildered.

"Success is happening for Bruce now," Finkelstein said. But then he added with a touch of professionalism: "It might have happened *earlier*, if only Bruce hadn't gone out west...but, he did, right?" So it doesn't matter, it'll happen anyway, right?" Sadly now, but resigned: "He's taking December off, too...."

Cockburn's songs are popular with teenagers but are sophisticated enough to wear well with older listeners, too. His lyrics are free of references to sex, drugs, or Vietnam- Cockburn's style of protest and commitment takes the form of gentle reminders that God's earth and human love are worth preserving. Thoughtful words, in a low tenor and with intricate accompaniment on his unamplified guitar. Not readily absorbed on a first hearing. Not a surefire selling formula, nor designed to be.

"The people who listen to me must be prepared to get into the music," Cockburn says. "I have to play the music the way I hear it. I can't make concessions and still make the music honest." (Bernie's eyes glaze over.) "I write a song to express something I have learned, and I sing it to audiences in the hope that it may be of some use to them. If an audience comes along, fine. But I'm not out to become a god and have people bow down to me. That disgusts me."

Anne Murray has recorded Cockburn's "Musical Friends," and she says he "communicates with his guts. His songs have the right contemporary coolness, but they cook, too, because they are so honest, just like he is."

There was music in Cockburn's home from the beginning, since both parents play piano. There was also, from the beginning, an intimate relationship between young Bruce and his rural surroundings in the Ottawa Valley.

There were lessons on clarinet, trumpet and piano, until Cockburn discovered Elvis Presley, and also an old Hawaiian-style guitar in an aunt's closet. He was 14 and his parents agreed to pay for guitar lessons on two conditions: no sideburns and no leather

jacket. "I always liked music," Cockburn says, "but it wasn't until I took up the guitar that I felt like I was part of the music I was playing."

An undistinguished student of non-musical disciplines, Cockburn dropped out of high school with half his grade 13 credits, and with \$150, hopped a freighter to Norway, then hitch-hiked to Paris where he joined a French trumpet player and an American clarinetist in an itinerant street trio, playing Dixieland Jazz. He was earning about \$10 a day when the trio was arrested. "You have to have a licence to beg in Paris," Cockburn explains, "and you have to be French to get a licence. They want to support the bums who are already there; they don't want new bums coming in." Police took the musicians to Montmartre's lockup. "We were nervous, because the clarinet player had a lot of marijuana in his case, and I had a switchblade knife that I was proud of- worth a month in jail if they found it."

They did not find it, but the fright was enough to make Cockburn leave Paris and take up his parents' offer to send him to the Berklee School of Music, where he studied music composition for two years before returning to Ottawa and playing with The Children. He played with other groups, too, but was frustrated because his fellow players rarely knew as much about music as he did. "Then, too, I had started writing my own songs in Boston, and I gradually decided I liked the sound of those songs better when I did them myself, all alone." When he went solo in the spring of 1969, things began to happen.

His wife Kitty was raised in the rural Ottawa Valley, too, and she shares Cockburn's love for the countryside and his increasing uneasiness at having to spend too much time in the city. The illustration on his *Bruce Cockburn* album says it all. It depicts a giant book set against a gloomy, corrupt cityscape. The book is open and reveals an idyllic array of fairyland sky, trees and flowers. One of Cockburn's best songs includes the urgent line: "O Jesus, don't let Toronto take my song away."

Cockburn doesn't like to work in the United States. But on the other hand, he says, "There are a lot of people there I would like to sing to, who might benefit from what I have learned, so I want my albums to come out in the States. Because of that, I have to be prepared to sing down there sometimes, but I want it to be as little as possible. The attitudes and the emotional climate down there scares me."

Cockburn copes with these fears when he has to, but is still innocent enough to be apprehensive when he considers his growing popularity. "It's new to me, and if I do become 'successful,' it may be that it will be unbearable, and I'll have to get away from it somehow."

He's in the enviable position of a man who has no more a sophisticated future in view than to retire to a small town, and perhaps become a shoemaker.

No Title Here

march 31, 1994, winnipeg~ bruce cockburn started a string of tour dates that will end up 17 months and about 110 concert dates later, at the greenbelt festival in the united kingdom. things break down a bit as follows:

- march 31-may 13, 1994: canadian & u.s. tour with band (part 1)
- june 21-july 15, 1994: european tour with band
- august 28-october 30, 1994: canadian & u.s. tour with band (part 2)
- november 16-december 4, 1994: u.s. solo tour
- january 6, 1995: solo benefit concert in washington, d.c.
- april 29-august 26, 1995: solo tour~ canada, u.s. & the u.k.

mind you, this does not include several t.v.appearances, radio presentations, print interviews, and finding time to just plain do other things. goodness, any glamour attached to being a working musician has been injected with a good dose of reality, even if only *vicariously*, through being in touch with bruce's schedule over the last 18 months. of course, the real test is that he's been at this 25 years plus. *yow-ee!* sure, others have been at it that long, or longer, but i'd challenge a soul to find a more *consistently* wonderful, productive and personally affective songwriter/performer/guitarist. (sure, i left out a ton of other adjectives and descriptives, but you all know what they are). once again (and for those of you just signing on) here's the main body of work, in order:

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

Canadian folk-singer writes film score

by Jon Faulds

the following article appeared in the edmonton journal, june 23, 1972.

Bruce Cockburn doesn't want to have to write anymore music than is absolutely necessary for the soundtrack to Ernest Brown.

But laziness has nothing to do with it.

"Tom Radford favors using a lot more music than I do. He keeps saying 'Let's put music here,' and I keep saying 'Let's not,'" says Bruce.

"So many films suffer from their music."

The scenario of the film written by Tom contains suggestion for music he visualizes to accompany certain scenes. Some name specific Cockburn songs from the Ottawa folk-singer's records. They were the first to be rejected by Cockburn.

"I've done songs for three albums and I don't feel that close to those songs anymore.

"I think it will be more positive to start from nothing."

All last week, Tom and Bruce huddled over the kitchen table at Tom's home- Tom explaining his intentions and the effects he desired to make and helping Bruce learn about Brown as well.

"I have to get him to write in his own context and to do that he's got to learn about Ernest Brown."

Typically, Bruce is doing that seriously. He takes his own music seriously and thinks about its implications.

He has done one soundtrack before- the music for Don Shebib's masterpiece *Goin' Down The Road*, and was not happy with it.

"When I did that, the film was already made and I just had to write music to accompany it. The music was subservient to the film's purpose," says Bruce.

"With this I have some effect on where the film is going which I prefer.

"That has the added effect of giving me more responsibility to do good stuff."

The majority of the music will be strictly instrumental says Bruce and in a variety of styles- some of them, such as a brass band march, a little alien to Bruce's usual territory of gracefully elusive folk-song melodies.

"The imagery is already on the screen," he says.

"We don't need anymore words. I'm getting annoyed with words anyway. They tie things down and make them too specific."

One of the film's foremost features will be the reminder of the history here, how western Canada was a frontier only 60 years ago. Bruce has had no difficulty coping with that concept.

"I remember when I went to school I was taught how lucky we are in Canada that there was no violence in our past. Books would say smugly how fortunate we are to have no history of trouble which isn't true.

"People don't want to know what's been lost, what our past was really like and what we used to have and don't have anymore- good and bad."

By their second day together, Tom's scenario was already showing signs of disputations between himself and Bruce over the soundtrack. Judging by the number of pen additions and crossed out typewriter notations, Bruce was winning most of them.

Tom didn't seem to mind in the least. He asked Bruce to do the music to this film almost a year ago when Bruce last played in Edmonton and knew what he was getting into then.

"We're really only mapping out what we're going to do right now," said Bruce.

"I'm going to Yellowknife for a couple of weeks at the end of this week- to see what it's like. I'll be back in Edmonton for a day to do a TV show and then I'll go back to Toronto to work up the themes and do the recording.

"I've got some rough ideas now but nothing definite."

The ideas will develop well no doubt. Bruce Cockburn is one of Canada's most accomplished and articulate folk-singers because he respects the music he composes and performs and therefore tries to make it better.

More and more people are starting to catch on.

True North- Still Strong And Free

by Maureen Littlejohn

Ornery, honest, blustering and possessing a heart of pure Canadian gold, Bernie Finkelstein is a man of legendary status within the Canadian music industry by listening to his instincts. Opting for creative credibility over commerciality, his label/management/publishing company True North has been a home for such artists as Bruce Cockburn, Murray McLauchlan, Dan Hill, Ian Tamblyn, Syrinx, Rough Trade, Barney Bentall and Gregory Hoskins. West Coast troubadour Stephen Fearing is his most recent roster addition.

“When I started True North back in 1969, there were only two options if you lived in Canada,” says a cheerful Finkelstein, in full 25th-anniversary promotional mode (the April release date of Cockburn's first, self-titled album marks the label's birthday). “One was to move to the U.S., the other was to do it entirely yourself. There was no Canadian music business here at the time- no magazines, no record companies that did anything with Canadian recordings.”

But there was opportunity for an obstinate young music lover. Having spent time in the U.S. managing The Paupers (led by Lighthouse's Skip Prokop), and guiding Kensington Market's career in 1967-68 (the group made two albums for Warner Brothers U.S.), Finkelstein, then in his early 20's, decided he'd had enough of outside meddling.

“I was always being asked to compromise,” he recalls. “For instance, there was a huge argument with Warner Brothers about the title of the first Kensington market album, *Avenue Road*. Warners felt it was a name nobody would understand. I said ‘It's just the name of a street (in Toronto).’ But they said, ‘You can't have an avenue and a road.’ That's a small thing but you get a little tired of arguing after awhile.”

Finkelstein moved to a farm north of Peterborough, Ontario, to clear his head and started drafting plans for True North. In 1969 he moved back to Toronto and took the plunge. And he's been at the helm of the staunchly independent operation ever since. From 1972 to 1982 he was partners with concert promoter/Riverboat club founder Bernie Fiedler.

After 75 releases, 35 Junos Awards and 34 gold and platinum records, Finkelstein's guiding principles remain the same. “What attracts me is songs,” he says, “the ability to perform the songs and the unique vision of the artist. My function is as editor, purveyor and producer (of the unfinished product). I'm totally uninterested in my idea of what's

cool. I don't think I know. But I am interested in what Bruce Cockburn or Barney Bentall have to say."

This year's celebrations include releasing early True North classics such as Cockburn's first effort, McLauchlan's first two albums (*Sweeping the Spotlight Away*, *Boulevard*) and Rough Trade's first two LP's (*Avoid Feud*, *For Those Who Think Young*).

And along with the old, comes a plethora of the new. True North recently picked up the rights to the World Domination (Low Pop Suicide, Sky Cries Mary) and Cooking Vinyl (Oyster Band, Jackie Leven) labels, as well as an album by Kelly Joe Phelps of Portland, Oregon.

"I'm doing something different," says Finkelstein. "True North is a different company right now. I don't like to predict my own future but the expansion is exciting."

*many thanks to socan's words & music and maureen littlejohn, for the use of this article.
~1995*

Giving

earlier this year *woodpile* reader, audrey pearson, organized an effort to give a birthday present to bruce by "giving away to others." the following is a report on how those efforts went.

A total of \$850 (CDN) was given to:

Friends of the Earth/ Habitat for Humanity/ a homeless shelter in Salem, MA/ Oxfam/ the Red Cross for the Ebola outbreak in Zaire/ Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance/ USC Canada/ Voters for Choice/ WMNF, a community radio station in Tampa, FL.

In addition, 90 hours of volunteer work was given to:

community work projects, such as cleaning up neighbourhoods, parks and streets and planting trees/ collecting books for a school library/ environmental letter writing (over the internet)/ a homeless shelter/ monitoring the population of the Lyrebird, a rare bird in Australia/ Oxfam.

thank you to audrey for organizing and initiating this good idea, and presenting the result of this project to bruce via *true north*.

And Now A Word From Your Local Ohop...

from the *encyclopedia of canadian rock, pop and folk music*, comes: "When Bruce Cockburn left to pursue a solo career, *Three's a Crowd* broke up. Although this version of the group never made a record, they did make a video of Cockburn's song, **Electrocution of the Word**, which was showcased at the Youth Pavilion of Ottawa's Central Canadian Exhibition."

a note from me: i'm overseas until august 7th for anyone who may try to contact me before then~ dk

subscription rates for the newsletter are coming. watch for all the financially debilitating (to you) details in the next issue.

for those of you in need, **back-issues** of *gavin's woodpile* are available by contacting lo baker at: 171 ridge road, new durham, nh, 03855, usa.

this from a reader who had the chance to talk with bruce after a show in ohio, in part, about chordings for certain songs:

"...overcome with sudden speechlessness, I tried to tell him what his music meant in my life and all that was there was 'Your writing is just...something. Your music and playing is just something, and I thank you.' He looked so steadily and directly in my eyes, laughed softly and said, 'Well, everything is something! Thanks for coming.'

And I walked away with bemusement on my face..."

strong hand of love, the radio special [9106 fcd]: thanks to word record & music group in nashville, i have five sealed copies of this tribute to mark heard cd. it contains two brief interview segments with bruce, a solo acoustic performance of "closer to the light," and the studio version of "strong hand of love." if you don't have this disc but would like a copy, send a postcard with your name, address and a note referencing this particular cd. five postcards will be drawn to receive a free cd. postcards must be received by august 12, 1995.

ernest brown: pioneer photographer

filmwest associates
2399 hayman road
kelowna, b.c.
canada v1z 1z7

so far *gavin's woodpile* comes out about every two months. using math, that's about six a year. if you have a change of address please let me know. write/fax or call me at 360-568-9543. this is my home. calls *before 10pm west coast time* are smiled upon...

Issue Number 11

October 1995

Back To Mozambique

VANCOUVER, BC~ Bruce Cockburn had returned from Mozambique less than one week ago, and here he was at the Vancouver Public Library preparing to speak to an audience of 250 (a packed house) about what he had seen while he was there. The focus of the talk was to be the legacy of war in Mozambique: land mines.

Bruce first visited Mozambique in 1988 as the result of a chance encounter with a few folks after a concert in Canada who were members of a Canadian foreign-aid organization (CUSO). They asked if Bruce would like to visit Mozambique. He replied, “I’m a whore. Give me a ticket and I’ll go to Mozambique.’ I was joking.”

A short time later, Bruce received a phone call from a then-new Ottawa-based agency called Cooperation Canada-Mozambique. They offered him a ticket. He accepted.

Following is a brief account of Bruce’s talk in Vancouver on September 25, 1995 -
Daniel Keebler

“The road to Nampula winds prettily between lines of mango and cashew trees planted by the old colonial masters. Planted to draw people in to where their activities could be monitored. It takes a long time to do the drive. The road rolls and heaves like a rough sea. A lot of rainy seasons have come and gone without anyone working on its repair. During the long war much of the countryside was empty of people. Those that remained in RENAMO-controlled zones were put to work, not maintaining the road, but cutting shallow trenches in rows across the paved portions in order to slow vehicular traffic to where it would be vulnerable to ambush.

“Even though the peace accord was signed in October, 1992, the scrap metal dealers have been busy. You could still see the twisted remains of convoy trucks here and there along the roadside. While scavengers sort out the physical detritus of the war, Mozambicans in general are trying to sort out its psychic debris.”

During the course of the evening Bruce presented three different types of land mines (all inactive) designed to kill or maim the unlucky person who steps on them. When the subject turned to who pays for these deadly things, a member of the audience asked, “You mean as a taxpayer you don’t know how many *mines* you own?” To which Bruce pointed and replied, “I own three.”

“Because of the relatively small numbers (two million may not sound like a relatively small number, but it is), in many cases they [the mines] can be worked around, even though the things can remain lethal for as long as fifty years in the ground. Given the money, and the will to keep on clearing and to build alternative roads to those that are

heavily mined, we can eventually expect to ease the situation to the point that life can be something like normal.”

In regards to ending this problem, which exists in a host of countries, Bruce said that there is no short-term solution. “There is, however, a long-term solution. One, and *only one*: anti-personnel mines must be placed in the same special category under international law as chemical weapons; *they need to be banned*.”

“I asked an activist for the disabled, himself crippled by a mine, what message he would like carried to the outside world. His response: ‘Tell them to stop blowing us up.’ “

For as good as Bruce’s talk was, he really shines the brightest when he gets down to adding music to his poetry. He ended his talk by doing just that. This sample of the lyrics speaks volumes on the subject:

*There’s a wealth of amputation
Waiting in the ground
But no one can remember
Where they put it down
If you’re the child that finds it there
You’ll rise upon the sound
Of the mines of Mozambique*

*The all night stragglers stagger home
Cocks begin to crow
Singing birds are starting up
Telling what they know
And after awhile the sun will come
And we’ll see what it will show
Of the mines of Mozambique*

Also present at this event was Mozambican, Chude Mondlane, who spoke passionately about her country and the aftermath of the long war, and Michael O’Connor, Executive Director of Cooperation Canada-Mozambique, who is a frequent visitor to that country and also an advocate for the post-war rehabilitation efforts. The Vancouver event was facilitated by Roxanne Cave with the Vancouver office of OXFAM Canada.

For more information or to find out how you can contribute, contact:

**Cooperation Canada-Mozambique
1 Rue Nicholas St., Suite 510
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1N-7B7
Tel: 613-562-3930**

-DK

Canadian Speaking Tour

FROM TRUE NORTH PRESS RELEASE~ Bruce Cockburn arrives in Mozambique on September 5, 1995, to see first-hand the development challenges facing Mozambicans after 15 years of violent conflict. Since his first visit in 1988 at the height of the war between the Mozambican government and RENAMO rebels (the Mozambican National Resistance), Cockburn has wanted to return to witness the many changes that have taken place.

A peace agreement was signed between the government of Mozambique and RENAMO in October, 1992. Two years later a multi-party election was held. The peace agreement paved the way for over 1.6 million refugees and internally displaced Mozambicans to begin their journey home.

Post-war reconstruction is hampered by an estimated 2 million land mines in the country. Land mines have claimed over 10,000 lives and maimed at least as many. Over 500 civilians have been killed since the end of the war.

Cockburn will visit several regions in Mozambique with Chude Mondlane, a well known Mozambican musician. Ms Mondlane's career has included collaborations with Abdullah Ibrahim, Jason Miles, Roberta Flack and Spike Lee.

On September 25th, Cockburn and Mondlane begin a speaking tour across Canada that will take them to Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Saint John's, Toronto and ending up in Ottawa on October 4th. They will highlight the development challenges facing Mozambicans, giving special attention to the brutal legacy of land mines.

The visit to Mozambique and the Canadian tour are sponsored by Cooperation Canada-Mozambique (COCAMO), a coalition of 20 Canadian NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations), church groups, labour unions, Humanity funds and solidarity groups which have been working collectively since 1988 to support community groups and popular organizations in Nampula, Mozambique. With funding from its members and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), COCAMO has supported emergency and development programmes in Nampula Province, northern Mozambique, since 1988.

gavin's woodpile is published six times a year so far: february, april, june, august, october and december. the reason i started this newsletter was to keep people informed of bruce's tour schedule, radio and tv appearances and new-release information. i'm also interested in giving readers some insight into the person who creates the music that has changed or deeply affected the lives of many people of all ages, races and spiritual beliefs. i respect bruce cockburn and his work, therefore i strive to be as accurate as possible (short of *bruce* putting out his own newsletter about himself. yeah, *right*). to reach the *woodpile*: tel/fax: 360-568-9543, no later than 10pm west coast, usa.

All Change For Cockburn

by Christopher Cobb

the following article appeared in a canadian newspaper in march, 1977.

There are marked changes in Bruce Cockburn's attitude to things these days.

"I feel impatient," he says. "There's an urgency in me that wants to get things done. I want to get involved in things that for years I've just sat back and looked at."

Cockburn was talking in an Ottawa airport lounge before leaving his home city to embark on a cross-country tour that will take him to about 30 cities including Montreal, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria, London, Kitchner and Toronto.

If the singer's emotional changes manifest themselves gradually and subtly, then the opposite could be said of the music. For the first time in seven years, Cockburn is touring with a band - Bill Usher, percussion; Robert Boucher, bass, and Pat Godfrey on piano. The trio are all Toronto-based and have worked with him in the studio.

The departure from a one-man-and-his guitar presentation is all part of the shift in attitude. Cockburn's in the mood to start shouting out his messages rather than whispering them in the gentle, laid-back manner that for years has been his trademark.

He smiles at, but doesn't reject, the suggestion that we may be witnessing a metamorphosis: Bruce Cockburn developing into an aggressive, hard-hitting protest singer.

Out of fashion, maybe?

"Yes it is out of fashion, but that makes it all the more important right now," he reasons. "People seem complacent about all the things they should be concerned with. It's nothing new, I realize. I've been the same way myself for a long time."

He says his latest album, *In the Falling Dark*, is the start of a new direction, but doesn't know where it will lead. It's obvious, though, that "Gavin's Woodpile," a song on that album, is a pretty good indication.

The song, inspired by a woodcutting session at his father-in-law's home in the Gatineau Hills, talks of corporate wrong-doings in the north and their effect on native people. In the strictest sense, it is a song of protest but on another level, it's expressing the frustration that the writer now feels.

Two important influences have been felt in Cockburn's personal life in the last 18 months. One was the birth of his now seven-month-old daughter Jenny; the other an

increasing involvement in the teachings of Jesus. Both figure occasionally on the latest album, and often in his conversation.

He talks of the baby just like any other new father, yet with a fascinating degree of perception that is simply the result of one individual's observation of another.

He talks of Jesus with less articulate terms and admits that he is now searching through the maze of implications that a defined religious belief holds for him.

Lyrically, Cockburn has rarely been able to separate his personal philosophies from his writing. His concert appearances have often upset critics who object "to being lectured."

"I'm aware of that," says Cockburn. "Some people say I lecture too much and others say I don't do enough of it. So I guess I must be doing something right."

Subscription Rates

here's the info needed to understand when your subscription to *gavin's woodpile* has run out. after your name you will see an abbreviation for the month and year that will indicate the last issue you will receive without renewing. example:

imma hogg [jun96]
123 bacon lane
new pork, rhode island 12345

imma's last issue will be june, 1996. another way of stating this: if your name has [oct95] after it, this october will be the last issue you will receive without subscribing. annual rates are set as follows:

u.s.\$10.00
canada\$12.00
all other countries.....\$15.00

although postal rates to everywhere outside the united states went up in july, i'm hoping that there will be no need to tamper with these subscription rates for a long time to come. for those of you who decide to bow out, thanks for tagging along this far. best wishes and keep supporting bruce's work...

bits of stuff

- thanks to all who sent postcards for the *strong hand of love radio special* drawing.
- bruce contributes backing vocals to two songs on patty larkin's new release, *strangers world*. listen for him on "open arms (don't explain)" and "me and that train."

- bruce gets co-writing credits on the song “atikokan annie,” to be found on barney bentall’s latest effort, *gin palace*. to order, try *sam the record man* in toronto at 1-800-265-7267.

Benefit Concert In Arizona

SEDONA, AZ~ Verde Valley School is proud to announce their Sixth Annual Music Festival in support of the school’s Native American Scholarship Fund. The concert is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 1995, and begins at noon.

This year’s talent includes Jackson Browne, who founded the festival in 1990. Bruce Cockburn, Shawn Colvin, and Lyle Lovett have also been confirmed. Performances will be acoustic. All artists are donating their services in support of the scholarship fund.

Verde Valley School seeks out Native American students who show outstanding leadership qualities and helps to prepare them for college by providing the knowledge and skills they will need to further their education and return that knowledge to their communities. The benefit concert provides funding for these students who otherwise could not afford to attend Verde Valley School, a nationally recognized private school. Since it’s inception in 1990, the benefit concert series has raised over three hundred thousand dollars, providing financial assistance to these outstanding students.

The music festival is held at the Hamilton Warren Amphitheater on the Verde Valley School campus.

Early Works

Games/Plastic Street

This particular 45 was the first (*mistake pressing*) by the band MRQ (Modern Rock Quartet) as MQR. Another noteworthy aspect is that it was recorded on the Canada International series. RCA Victor phased that series out, but in a rush at the plant, a small run of these were made before the new 45 on the common red RCA label was ready (the label on *this* 45 is blue-green). The song, “Games,” was co-written by Bruce Cockburn. The flip side is “Plastic Street,” by Peter Jermyn. It was released in 1968.

europaean summer tour 1995

bruce was in europe this summer for a brief solo tour. details as follows:

aug 26	greenbelt festival	northampton, u.k.
aug 27	greenbelt festival	northampton, u.k.
aug 29	whelans	dublin, ireland
aug 30	rosin dubh	galway, ireland

aug 31
sept 02

the rotterdam
folk & rock fest.

belfast, n. ireland
schwalenberg, germany

This letter was included in the USC's 1995 annual report. Bruce serves as an honorary board member of this agency. For more information on the USC or to send a contribution: USC Canada/ 56 Sparks Street/ Ottawa, Ontario/ K1P 5B1 Canada. Tel: 613-234-6827.

Dear Friends of USC Canada,

When I was a child, maybe ten years old, in the era when air raid drills were a regular part of the school curriculum, and we were invited to take shelter from the feared nuclear conflagration by huddling under our desks, I first met Lotta Hitschmanova. She came to my classroom and told us about refugee children. She wore an odd uniform, like an army nurse, and she radiated love and concern.

When I was twenty-five, I received the first significant amount of money I'd earned in my life- royalties from radio play of my first album. It felt like such a godsend that it seemed appropriate to share it with those less lucky. My wife said that her mother had a good friend who spent her time helping those in need- who ran an organization called the Unitarian Service Committee. This was an agency devoted to helping victims of war and natural disasters in many parts of the world.....one which was committed to ensuring that people's donations were spent on the work at hand and not to support a swollen bureaucracy or large ad campaigns. This sounded good to me so I became a donor. Before long I met my then mother-in law's friend- a short woman, in a uniform reminiscent of an army nurse's, who radiated love and concern. It was Lotta. The USC was twenty-five.

Now we're fifty. The world has learned that hiding under desks is not an effective response to the nuclear threat. We have begun to learn that our physical security depends, not so much on weapons or the defence against them, as on the eradication of hunger and ignorance- or the fear which privilege carries with it- of the rage and desperation that comes with poverty.

It became evident to the USC that it is vital not just to offer aid to famine victims or those displaced by war, because the same misfortunes keep recurring. We have to address the systemic causes of the problem. So began programmes of literacy and other kinds of training designed to offer the poor of the world the means to become self-sufficient.....that is, development at the community level.

We've made a lot of friends over the years. Friends at home and in some places on the earth where life is very hard. It's been my privilege to play a small part in that process. We have to keep it growing. As we feel the pinch of collapsing economies in the developed world, think how it must be for those whose options are already so limited. Please be generous in your support. The need is ever more urgent.

Bruce Cockburn
June 8, 1995

Issue Number 12 December 1995

Taking The Plunge
by Paul McGrath

the following article appeared in the toronto globe and mail on april 7, 1977.

It takes a certain informational kick in the pants before the disparity between the American and Canadian music scenes becomes fully evident. Here's one: Bruce Cockburn, after years of official recognition as one of Canada's finest artists (and I use the word to mean someone who produces art), last week went to the United States for his first major appearance.

Don't get me wrong- he wasn't the main attraction. That would be too much for the New Yorkers In Alice Tully Hall to handle. Instead, he opened the show for somebody whose name escapes me at the moment. Maybe he'll cause a stir. Perhaps Island Records, newly charged with distributing his records in the United States, will get down to the business that Columbia Records so badly botched. Perhaps also Cockburn may gain continental recognition, and it's even more possible he won't care. At least it won't make much difference to his status here. When he steps on stage tonight at Convocation Hall for the first of two dates, he'll be the same old Cockburn.

The thing that so maddens and frustrates Canadian musicians is not that Joe Guitar off the street hasn't a hope in Helvetia of having some record company funnel thousands of dollars into his schtick the way it happens south of the border, but that even the best in Canada have to sit on their thumbs and wait. It's supposed to be easier, not harder, what with all these American-owned companies in Canada. A direct line to the big men and all that.

Cockburn isn't as maddened or frustrated about the whole mess as you might expect, but then he's not the type to bang his fist on the table about such things, saving his bile for more important things, like mercury poisoning in Northern Ontario. For one thing, the idea of crossing the border hasn't really fit into his scheme of things until now.

"I don't think I was ever tempted," he said, as I talked to him a few hours before he was to leave for New York. "Murray (his fellow True North musician Murray McLauchlan) has gone, but for me, I just never wanted to go and spend any length of time. Now it's a little different, I can go on my own terms. I'm established here, people know that I expended the effort here first, and now I can go with a clear mind."

His ability to make his own terms stems from the fact that the single lifted from his latest album is breaking through the haze in a few major American cities. For the moment, he's not just another Canadian.

Cockburn's story is one that should have attracted attention sooner than it did. From the release of his first album, also the first for Finkelstein and Fiedler's True North Records, it became apparent that there was finally another voice to go along side Gordon Lightfoot's as representative of the best Canada has to offer. But there was more to it than that- this one could also play the guitar as if it were an instrument that required something more than strumming. And now, he's becoming a composer of music that takes him far outside the boundaries normally envisaged by a singer-songwriter.

"It's just what I like to do with everything," he said, trying to explain some of the influences that have shaped his ideas of sound. "When I hear something I like, I steal it and try to put it together and then make it as homogenous with my style as possible. If you're going to steal something, you've got to beat the first at his own game."

Admitting to the possibility that some of what he does has African origins, he smiles: "Yes, it's been opening up for a few years and will continue to do so. The possibilities for cross-pollination are just about endless. The only thing to watch out for is actually ripping off another culture. They've been ripped off enough without losing their music, too."

His lyrical roots are even more international than his musical ones. He's known as an image-hungry writer, and his search has taken him to countless writers for ingredients. His latest album pays homage to, among others, French poet Blaise Cendrars and the culture of Lappland.

"A lot of it is technique. I go about it in the same bumbling way I did with my guitar work. I guess like a lot of people I'm a product of the psychedelic era. I've seen a lot of strange things, and they translate in strange ways."

As a product of the era it's somewhat surprising he didn't end up a rock and roll star, considering he'd belonged to a few different types of bands before he'd started to write songs.

"When I actually began to feel I could play things, I wanted to be a jazz guitarist. I felt superior to those dirty rock and rollers. When I was growing up there was almost no connection between Toronto and Ottawa (his home town). I didn't know what rhythm and blues was until I got to Boston (where he went to school) even though Toronto was a rhythm and blues town. That lack had an effect on my feelings about music."

That's how we got Bruce Cockburn the soft, jazz-influenced guitarist and singer and not Bruce Cockburn the screaming soul-strutter. If there was ever a better reason for keeping rhythm and blues out of Bytown, I can't think of one.

Waiting For a A Miracle

*Pretty young mother by the temple gate
covers her baby's face against diesel fumes.
That look of concern- you can see it still-
not yet masked by the hard lines of a woman's struggle to survive.*

Hard bargains going down...

st. petersburg, russia- not exactly katmandu, but these words from cockburn's song "tibetan side of town" often ran through my head as i walked the streets of this city of five million people this past july. i saw this very scene played out many times. although russia is not officially considered a developing nation in some circles, you couldn't prove it by me. my visit was an emotional one, and a bit overwhelming on the first day as i walked from finland station, where my train arrived, to the youth hostel where i stayed. most things in the city did not work, or if they did, they did not work well. everything is in a state of decay. sanitation and proper refrigeration of meats and dairy products were suspect- the water undrinkable. most russian people i talked with spoke of the economic hard times that have come to their country in recent years. i spent an afternoon in the flat of a well-known rock musician in the city of st. petersburg, talking about music, politics and hopes for the future (mostly *his*). he talked of the difficulties that most russian people have been experiencing, especially the older generation whose way of life has been pulled out from under them. still, most people i spoke with expressed that, even given all the hard times, they had hope that the right train was coming, and they'd be on it. well, actually maybe their great, great grandchildren. things move very slowly in russia (except for the exhaust-spewing automobiles that try to run you down in the crosswalks. always look to the left...). ~dk

gavin's woodpile is published six times a year. you can contact the staff at 360-568-9543. ask for daniel, ohop, otis or woods. if you want to actually have a conversation, ask for daniel.

Down From True North

bruce's fifth december performance on the **columbia music hour** is scheduled for sunday, december 17th. air dates will certainly vary around north america (and any other places it may air), so check your local station to find out if and when it will air within the reaches of your anxiously awaiting radio.

bruce is most likely to be in the studio sometime during the first half of 1996 working on his next album.

further adventure of and *mummy dust* are currently expected to be released in early 1996, possibly by the end of february. they will only be released in canada. you will be able to obtain them through the addresses on the back page of this issue. *circles in the stream* and the *waterwalker* soundtrack are presently on the back burner.

bruce's 1993 release, *christmas*, is available again this holiday season. go buy it.

you'll find bruce's 1970 song, "going down the road," on the latest release by the barra mac neils entitled *the question*. you'll also find bruce providing vocals and electric guitar on the same track.

Down From Other Places

fingerprint records of massachusetts reports that bruce, along with jim keltner, will be in the studio in december contributing to the next album by **michael been**. it is expected to be available by the middle of 1996. more later.

columbia records announced that bruce's special guests for the columbia music hour will be patty larkin and peter stuart. at print time it was unknown if there would be a third guest.

columbia records has also allotted *gavin's woodpile* a limited number of seats for this performance. if you live in the area and **know** you can make it to new york city on december 17th, give me a call (360-568-9543). there is no fee for attending the show. sorry, i can't return calls. i haven't won the lottery yet...

Consider The USC

usc canada (unitarian service committee) is an agency that bruce has been associated with for the last twenty-five years. in fact, he visited nepal on their behalf in 1987.

Pile-o-Stuff

dart to the heart

looking for a good gift to introduce someone to bruce's music? *gavin's woodpile* has 35 copies of *dart to the heart* on cassette for sale. all are new and still sealed in cellophane. the liner contains all the lyrics and credits. all proceeds go into the *woodpile* fund to help support future issues.

the cover differs from that of the compact disc in that it is a black and white photo of the small image of bruce seen on the back of the cd. this detail may matter only to those who collect bruce's work more seriously.

the cost is five dollars, which includes the cassette, padded packaging and postage. as i only have 35 of these i'm hoping to run out soon. feel free to call if you would like to reserve a copy, or take a chance and send five dollars. as usual, i'm at 360-568-9543 (tel/fax). calls before 10pm, please.

mozambique

if you would like a copy of bruce's speech on the matter of *the mines of mozambique*, send one dollar to cover costs. the speech is six pages in length, which prohibits publishing it here in the newsletter.

back issues

back-issues of *gavin's woodpile* (\$1.00 per issue) may be obtained by contacting:

lo baker
171 ridge road
new durham, nh 03855
usa

Where Were You In 1974?

this question was posed to bruce in 1994. read ya'll about it:

“The most significant thing I can recall doing that year was doing an album called *Night Vision*. I hadn't planned on doing an album then but I was producing an album for a Canadian artist who had one album out and was at odds with his record company- they were stuck with the need to make a record and nobody to produce it so they got me.

“The album got put on the shelf because the artist had a drinking problem, but I had put a band together- it was the first time I'd worked with an actual band since the '60s, when I was playing in garage bands- to do that album. When that artist became incapacitated for a period, we decided to learn a bunch of my songs and go into the studio to do *Night Vision*. It was a complete accident.

“It was the beginning of a whole bunch of things. Prior to that, for three albums, we had gone into the studio and built it around me and added people as needed for each song. With this one it was an actual band and part of it became the first band I toured with. That album was more urban in nature than ones I'd done before, and more humorous.

“I actually stopped listening to pop music during this period. I'd played in a bunch of bands in the '60s- everything from questionable R&B to questionable psychedelia- and I really got sick of the whole thing after awhile. There was a great hunger on my part, and I felt it would probably be shared by other people, for something kind of quiet and to the point, instead of long, meandering solos. That feeling did seem to be shared by a lot of people.”

presently

bruce contributes vocals and guitar to jonatha brooke's 1995 release, *plumb*. listen for him on the song "war."

not presently

chet atkins covered bruce's song "together alone." you'll find it on chet's 1971 release, *for the good times (and other country moods)*.

people who make a difference

this book, released this fall, contains a 9x12 inch portrait of bruce cockburn, along with photographs of other musicians, writers, athletes, performers, humanitarians and others. proceeds are set to raise money for AIDS research. the book, a collection of black and white tri-tone photographs, is a "who's who" of canadian achievement. it is beautifully bound in a black hardback cover and is 216 pages in length. check your local bookstore or call *duthie's mail order books* in canada at 1-800-663-1174. for those of you outside north america, please feel free to contact me if you need assistance obtaining this book. [personal thanks to **karen cossar** at *penguin books canada*, in toronto~ dk].

world of wonders

bruce was interviewed in 1986 for a public radio program in san francisco called *new dimensions*. the focus was *world of wonders*. the 50 minute tape is available for US\$9.95 plus \$4.00 shipping, from:

new dimensions
p.o.box 410510
san francisco, ca 94141-0510
tel: 415-563-8899

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The CD Bar
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Toronto, ON M5B 1R7
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800-663-1616

Songbooks

All the Diamonds 1969-1979
Rumours of Glory 1980-1990

Ottawa Folklore Centre
744 Bronson
Ottawa, ON
Canada K1S 4G3
Tel: 613-238-7222

need help finding something?

daniel
gavin's woodpile
tel/fax: 360-568-9543

Year's End

this issue represents the finish of two years of this newsletter. it's hard to for me to believe. it's great hearing from all of you folks out there and i appreciate your shared enthusiasm for this project.

i'd like to thank bernie, julie, doug, elizabeth, kathy and daniel at *true north* for their increased support of my efforts over the last year. for a group of folks i've never met you've all been mighty nice, and i *thank you*.

thanks, bruce, for all the good things you've done this year; from your concerts that inspire thousands to your humanitarian efforts both home and abroad. you make our lives happier ones.

love to jerri for being so supportive of my efforts, even though since i started this project, i've had more long distance calls turn up on the phonebill than a person deserves. but that's okay with you.