

# Gavin's Woodpile – The Bruce Cockburn Newsletter

Edited by Daniel Keebler

## Issue Number 1 February 1994

### Bruce Cockburn Came On The U.S. Scene in 1974

Based on a Canadian Encyclopedia Of Music

bruce cockburn was born in ottawa on may 27, 1945. he was raised on a farm near pembroke, west of ottawa, and in ottawa itself. he began playing guitar and piano in his teens. after working as a street musician in paris he studied theory, composition, and arranging between 1964 and 1966 at the berklee college of music, in boston. though he was introduced in boston to the urban folk-music movement and also to jazz (which had an influence on his work in the mid-1970's), he played on his return to ottawa in several rock bands, including the esquires and the children. in 1967 he sang alone in coffeehouses and made his first appearance at the mariposa folk festival. his solo career continued, although he was a member of three's a crowd when it was revived in 1968-69 for a cbc tv series.

with the critical and popular success of his music for the feature film *goin' down the road* (1970), and his early lp's, cockburn rose to national prominence in canada and in 1972 made his first cross-country tour. he made his debut in the united states at the philadelphia folk festival in 1974, but did not begin to perform in the states on a consistent basis until the *rumours of glory* tour in 1981.

### Dart To The Heart: First Impressions

D. Keebler

with many thanks to columbia records, i was able to obtain an advanced release of dart to the heart, which at press time, is scheduled to be released on march 1st. i listened to this tape only once before writing this article. i wanted to capture the things that initially stuck out to me about the work on first listening. i'm sure i'll have different or additional feelings as i listen to it more in the weeks to come, but for now the following are words that jumped to mind right after the first listen:

horns  
band oriented  
less bc guitar work  
country music influence

the album is about 54 minutes long and contains the following twelve songs:

listen for the laugh  
all the ways i want you  
bone in my ear  
burden of the angel/beast  
scanning these crowds  
southland of the heart  
train in the rain  
someone i used to love  
love loves you too  
sunrise on the mississippi  
closer to the light  
tie me at the crossroads

two instrumentals, "train in the rain" and sunrise on the mississippi" are classic cockburn solo acoustic guitar pieces. "burden of the angel/beast," "scanning these crowds," and "love loves you too," display a different electric guitar sound effect compared to past work. overall, my feeling was that bruce comes across a bit more as a singer than a musician on this journey.

### **Recent Radio Appearances**

(All air dates listed are Seattle/Vancouver, B.C.)

bruce was interviewed on npr radio's weekend addition which aired december 19th, 1993. the subject was his recent release, christmas. the segment ran 15-20 minutes.

bruce aired his third annual christmas special *live* from new york on december 12th, 1993. his guest was jackson browne. t-bone burnette and sam phillips were to also perform, but never made it to the studio because of a snow storm. as a consequence, jackson browne ended up playing the entire set with cockburn. time: one hour.

bruce performed his canadian christmas show with his band from the glenn gould studio in toronto. it aired on cbc radio on december 19, 1993. his special guest was hugh marsh. time: one hour.

fine print stuff: at present i have no idea if i will have to eventually beg for contributions to help defray the cost of doing this newsletter. it will depend on the total number i potentially may have to produce and mail out. if you know anyone who'd like to receive gavin's woodpile, have them write me. thank you...daniel.

dart to the heart is due out around march 1st.

### **B.C. Talks About Upcoming Album**

(from interview with canadian magazine, centre stage, 11-93)

although when nothing but a burning light was released, he didn't foresee many similarities with whatever his next project would be, cockburn says that dart to the heart, "is like and unlike the last one. t-bone burnette produced it, so it's like it in that respect. it's like it in the sense that it's quite live in the approach, generally performance oriented, but that's about where the similarity ends. it's a different body of songs; they're mostly love songs, which is a little unusual for me. musically the majority of it is kind of quiet-ish; it's not totally acoustic, but leaning that way, although there are several more rocky things on it. but it was done with a different group of people; we did the bed tracks in woodstock, new york, last winter, with the exception of one song we ended up recording in l.a., then it was mixed in england by glyn johns, who was famous for all the early rolling stones records. that was a different experience for me. i'm proud of it; i think it worked out pretty well."

if you saw cockburn's last tour, you'll recognize guitarist colin linden and keyboardist richard bell on dart to the heart. "the other guys" cockburn says, "mickey currie, who plays most of the drums, and gerry scheff, who played the bass on everything, are tremendous musicians who i hadn't worked with before, but who did a great job, and greg lesse played some beautiful pedal steel on it. this is another thing that's different about this album; there are other guitar players on it, which i've never had on a record before. colin for one, and greg- he's an atypical steel player- although he can do all the obvious country stuff, he's capable of a lot more depth, and we get some fun out of him."

## **A Word From Me**

okay, here i am making a more serious attempt at putting out a newsletter for folks who are interested in bruce cockburn's work. regarding frequency; i suspect it will be based on how often i can come up with enough relatively new information to fill a page or two (or more). i reckon i'll keep at it until: i get bored, i get tired, i really don't know why i'm doing it, i divert the energy to other things, or i develop low self-esteem.

let's see what happens...

## **1994 Tour Schedule- First Half**

### **bruce cockburn: dart to the heart**

march 31.....winnipeg, man...the pantages  
april 2.....saskatoon, sask...centennial theatre  
april 4.....fort mcmurray, alberta...keyano theatre  
april 6.....edmonton, alberta...jubilee auditorium  
april 7.....red deer, alberta...memorial theatre  
april 8.....banff, alberta...the eric harvey theatre  
april 9.....calgary, alberta...jubilee auditorium  
april 11.....kelowna, b.c...the arena  
april 13.....victoria, b.c...the royal theatre  
april 14.....vancouver, b.c...the orpheum

april 15.....seattle, wa...the paramount theatre  
april 16.....portland,or...the roseland theatre  
april 17.....portland, or...the roseland theatre  
april 19.....eugene, or...the hult center  
april 20.....sacramento, ca...the crest theatre  
april 21.....santa rosa, ca...luther burbank center  
april 22.....san francisco, ca...the warfield  
april 23.....los angeles, ca...the henry fonda theatre  
april 26..... tucson, az...leo rich theatre  
april 27.....phoenix, az...?  
april 29.....denver, co...the paramount theatre  
april 30.....fort collins, co...the lincoln center  
may 3.....minneapolis, mn...state theatre  
may 5.....madison. wi...barrymore theatre  
may 6.....chicago,il...the riviera  
may 7.....grand rapids, mi...the fieldhouse  
may 11.....hamilton, ont...hamilton place  
may 12.....london, ont...the centennial  
may 13.....toronto, ont...massey hall

**please note:** i am told that this schedule is not completely confirmed. however, i would speculate that it's a good place to start...

## Issue Number 2

### April 1994

#### **Bruce Opens 1994 Tour In Winnipeg, Manitoba**

the following review comes with many thanks to **stephen ostick**, pop music writer, at the **winnipeg free press**. the concert was March 31, 1994.

stephen rated the concert 3 stars out of a possible 5. he reports that the attendance was 986.

#### **No real surprises in Cockburn's 'experiment'**

You'd be hard-pressed to find a happier group of guinea pigs than those who showed up for Bruce Cockburn's show at the Pantages Playhouse Thursday night.

Relax, Cockburn fans, those were his word, not mine, and the metaphor fit quite nicely. It was, after all, the first show of his Dart to the Heart world tour.

But “experiment” implies doubt about the outcome, and with Cockburn, there’s no such thing. The band sets up, he sings his songs, plays some guitar and that’s usually that.

“If you see something up here that looks like confusion, it probably is,” the 48-year-old folk legend said, welcoming the 30s-plus crowd. “But, boy, is it real.”

That it was.

And it goes a long way towards explaining his lofty status in Canadian music. Cockburn in concert still relies on on the same ingredients ~or lack of them~ as Cockburn on record.

### **Leisurely pace**

There were no gimmicks, electronic gizmos or glitz. Backed by a tastefully subdued quartet, things rarely got fancier than the odd vocal harmony, swirling organ solo or extended guitar break. The two hour show rode on the melodies and rhythms of the songs.

Naturally such chestnuts as Wondering Where the Lions Are (apparently performed for the first time in years) generated more excitement than the 12 performed from Dart. But it all was delivered at the same leisurely pace.

Cockburn was his usual affable self and, if a lot of planning was involved, it didn’t show. For instance, he opened the show with a brief solo instrumental, but the players’ lineup stayed static most of the night. Cockburn alone with an acoustic would’ve been a refreshing change of pace later as well.

Opener Jann Arden, recent Juno winner as the country’s most promising new artist, continues to impress. Backed only by a bassist and her own acoustic guitar,

the power and purity of her voice are perfectly suited to the gut-wrenching pleas of her lyrics.

### **Tour Schedule Update**

at press time, the following additional tour dates were available:

may 20...new york city...the beacon theatre  
may 21...boston, ma...berklee performance center  
may 22...portland, me...the civic center  
may 24...glenside, pa...keswick auditorium (philadelphia)  
may 25...washington d.c...lisner auditorium

## Excerpts from the Mark of the Beast... A Notebook on Central America

by Bruce Cockburn

i think that anyone who listens to bruce cockburn's work has at some time wondered about how he may create some of the amazing images he seems to conjure up in his songs. the following entry into a notebook, which he kept while travelling in central america, may provide some insight to at least *one* way. -dk

### Nicaragua

The day we go up to the Honduran border is the day they commemorate Sandino's death. Racing through Managua streets in Sandino-Day dawn. Fireworks at 5a.m. Hope and hard work. Reconstruction. New houses mushroom slowly out of blasted ground. Fonseca's tomb is guarded by a kid in sneakers with Cheka machine-gun. Fields of fresh rice. Girl driving donkey cart. Small boy on horseback driving a cow across the highway. Siren river, onion fields, tobacco co-ops. Flowering leafless fruit trees. We're following the army to the Honduran frontier. Crowded ancient buses. A car with Salvadoran plates. Tobacco fields are raided, therefore constantly guarded. Ironically, Nicaragua reminds me of Israel in a certain sense... being surrounded by enemies. Everything is militarized and everyone is aware of the need for self-defence. We pass an army barracks that looks like a farm. A shot-down Somoza is planted on a hilltop flying the FSLN flag on it's tail. Banner in a rural village says, "As long as Nicaragua has children who love her, she will always be free." Women carry firewood on shoulders up the hill. Palms and pines on denuded hills. Battered buses with fantastic paint jobs, jammed with people. People cling to the roof-racks, hang from the doors and the windows, hoping they don't have to get off and push. Hot roads, diesel clouds... the whole third world perfumed with diesel. A fat man sleeps in the back of a pick-up, feet dangling over the bumper. Rugged bushy hills full of the smell of coffee. Occasional pause for the crossing of beautiful milky-white half-Brahma cattle. Around the bend and there it is, a chain across the road, a custom house and a garrison of half a dozen militia. Thirty metres away a few Honduras watch with suspicion and strut around tensely with a swagger like John Wayne. Their look-outs hiding on the hill top watch us through field-glasses while I watch them with mine.

The main spokesman for the Nicaraguan garrison at the border is a short, plump, pleasant guy with a bad leg. I ask him, "What happens when you have to fight?" For he walked with a severe limp and had trouble getting around. He says, "Sandanistas don't run away."

\* \* \*

Warm night blanket floats down. Dim silhouette of trees in friendly dark. Headlights pick out smashed sack of corn strewn over asphalt. A single tarantula stands guard. Rodrigo, the driver, keeps chickens, so we jump out and spend ten minutes filling the trunk with dusty kernels.

Later we have car trouble...limp into military truck depot. Barbed wire gates glint in the moonlight. A hundred tired soldiers stretched out on the grass. Tired from a month on the cotton fields. We sing. They sing. Men and women, all young. Guitars and guns. Ballistic

music blows open every heart. Passion bursts like rockets. Cotton bales busting at the seams. Dignity and poems bursting out of parched poverty-trance...broken forever.

\* \* \*

Brilliant green birds over the lava hole. Volcanoes stand around like gods of old, pumping the incense of the earth into the tropical sky. Down on the beach, horses canter through the surf as warm as bath water.

Emerald birds against the flaming hills. Dry thunder and hot sky. Dust hangs in the air behind the feet of passer-by. Scent of lilac in the dense night. Laughter from a passing jeep. I lean back against the cool wall. Too much heat. This northern body can't sleep.

Returning to Toronto from Nicaragua is like coming from colour to black and white.

### **Love Is The Word From Dart To The Heart**

“i believe love with a capital ‘L’ is the glue that holds the universe together,” says bruce cockburn. “it’s a force like gravity or light. an essential energy. it manifests itself in many different ways in human experience. sometimes it comes out in the erotic, sometimes it’s friendship, sometimes it’s a feeling with the divine, or any number of other things.”

“ i don’t think i’ve ever done an album that has as much to do with love as this one. it wasn’t like i sat down and decided to write a bunch of love songs - it’s just what came out. i was glad it went that way, though, and when that path became apparent i followed it with enthusiasm.”

“it’s very easy to go through the day without thinking much about love” muses cockburn, “and then it comes along and hits you like a sledgehammer. and if you’re not tuned in, you don’t hear it coming. it may not always be a positive experience either. everybody knows it causes as much pain as it does happiness. the two are inextricably tied together, like our understanding of spirituality - it’s in our nature not to get things right.”

commenting on the guitar, bruce says, “i love to play. in the context of what i do the guitar is usually cast in the role of supporter to the lyrics i write, so i’m always pleased when an opportunity comes along for it to step out front. the acoustic pieces are pretty demanding and require intense focus. when i get to crank up the electric guitar and jam, it’s pure fun.”

bruce shared a bit of insight about two of the songs on dart to the heart. the first being the song “closer to the light.” it was written for his friend, the late singer/songwriter mark heard: “death’s no stranger/ no stranger than the life i’ve seen.”

“death is an inescapable part of life. it’s as much a part of life as birth. the things that scare us about death are fear of the unknown or the loss of a loved one, or the fear that our lives will have no meaning. but life and death can’t be opposites. if we believe that

there's any value to life at all, then death must in some way be welcomed. if life does have meaning, death does too."

bruce's comment on the tune "tie me at the crossroads": "it's about the fickle nature of fame. i like the crossroads image, which is kind of voodooish and a jungian archetype at the same time."

"i want these songs to be heard," he readily admits. "the creative process doesn't end until the song lands on someone's eardrums. there are a few significant places left where this stuff hasn't been adequately exposed, but where i think there are people who would appreciate it. we just have to get it to them."

*article based on promotional information for dart to the heart, columbia records.*

*let's help spread the word. do you know anyone who would like to receive gavin's woodpile? please have them drop me a line. thanks ~ dk*

## **Stranded**

in the january/february 1994 issue of **acoustic guitar** magazine, the editors posed the following question to "a group of contributors":

if you were stranded on a desert island and could only have five acoustic guitar recordings from the '90s with you, which would you chose? (this would include recordings reissued in the 90's, and being *primarily* acoustic).

responses were narrowed down to the top 100. one of the relatively few artists who was a multiple winner, was bruce cockburn. the two albums chosen by participants were, in the falling dark and dancing in the dragon's jaws.

what do you think?

## **Stray Information**

check out the march/april, 1994, issue of **acoustic guitar** magazine for a nice interview with bruce cockburn.

consideration is being given to european dates as part of the dart to the heart tour. more information as it becomes available.

just discovered: interviews with b.c. in the magazine **dirty linen**, issues number 28, spring 1990, and number 40, june/july 1992.



**tour schedule changes:** two changes on the spring schedule in gwp, issue number 1 >>> no phoenix date for this tour (sorry, mike s. ~ tucson, perhaps?) and the date for the edmonton, alberta, show is the **5th** of april, not the 6th. this news comes from a confirmed schedule, via columbia records.

bruce is scheduled to appear on the **tonight show** on april 25th.

## **B.C. Discography**

bruce cockburn	1970
high winds white sky	1971
sunwheel dance	1972
night vision	1973
salt, sun and time	1974
joy will find a way	1975
in the falling dark	1976
circles in the stream	1977
further adventures of	1978
dancing in the dragon's jaws	1979
humans	1980
mummy dust	1981
inner city front	1981
the trouble with normal	1983
stealing fire	1984
world of wonders	1986
waiting for a miracle	1987
big circumstance	1989
bruce cockburn live	1990
nothing but a burning light	1991
christmas	1993
dart to the heart	1994

this is the official discography published by columbia records. however, there are several other commercial releases not mentioned above. here are three:

rumours of glory, a "collection" album which contains the otherwise unreleased song, "yanqui go home."

the trouble with normal, with the extra track, "cala luna."

resume, a 1981 u.s. release. basically a "collection" album.

# Issue Number 3

## June 1994

**Vancouver – April 14<sup>th</sup>**  
by Byron Manering

a subdued yet appreciative audience watched on as bruce brought his class act to the elegant orpheum theatre (built in 1923) in vancouver, british columbia.

bruce began the show solo, doing what he does best, playing the guitar. it was an obvious confirmation that the guitar remains the core of his musical offerings.

bruce's voice was strong throughout the two hour long performance of old and new tunes. the line-up of songs was pleasing but at times seemed choppy due to the differences in style and instrumentation between his past and current music.

however, the highlights were numerous. they included an engineered guitar solo, using brains and skill to control the raw power he unleashed (on *rocket launcher* of course); guru bruce's umpteenth zillion version of the poet teaching us new ways to see; a rockin' good *tie me at the crossroads*; and memorable performances of *bone in my ear* and *stolen land*. unfortunately, on several occasions the sound mix seemed muddled.

bruce's few words were spoken as if to relieve his fans of possible fears of 'sell out'; he jokingly referred to his recent success in the genre of 'nude' (new) country. he was also relaxed, confident, handsome, sexy and anything but uptight about his increasing level of 'exposure' in the states.

while i must admit my tentativeness toward the new material and band, i recognize that this feeling will most likely be temporary. bruce's work has a way of getting under my skin and massaging my soul with strength and insight... and i'm a sucker for that.

### **1994 European Tour Dates For Dart To The Heart**

with many thanks to jehanne at true north in toronto, here are the dates for bruce's 1994 european tour. is anyone going to be in europe this summer?

june 21	leeds, u.k.	the irish centre
june 22	cambridge, u.k.	the junction
june 23	london, u.k.	the garage
june 25	essen, germany	zeche carl
june 26	koln, germany	music hall
june 28	potsdam, germany	lindenpark
june 29	hannover, germany	pavillion

june 30	munich, germany	muffathalle
july 1	rudolstadt, germany	rudolstadt festival
july 3	roskilde, denmark	roskilde festival
july 4	kiel, germany	krusenkoppel
july 5	hamburg, germany	fabrik
july 6	nurnberg, germany	lowensall
july 8	lausanne, switzerland	t.b.a.
july 9	brugge, belgium	cactus festival
july 10	amsterdam, holland	melkweg
july 12	edinburgh, u. k.	the venue
july 13	glasgow, u.k.	king tut's
july 15	london, u.k.	the forum

### **Do You Have A Favorite B.C. Album?**

people often ask me “what is your favorite bruce cockburn song?” well, that’s a tough one. but, it got me to wondering about what *other* people choose for their favorites, so...

i’m curious to know what your favorite bruce cockburn album is, and perhaps favorite song. i realize it may be difficult to limit yourself to *one*, so don’t if you can’t. the other factor here is that some of you will likely not have heard *every* cockburn album, which probably only means that you don’t *own* every cockburn album. why not? get to it. well, anyway, that possibility aside, perhaps your favorites from the albums you *have* heard.

now this would all be rather easy if i were to stop here. however, i’m even more interested in *why* you’ve made these choices.

please drop me a line with your input. if i get enough responses i’ll post the results in a future issue.

### **Cockburn Accepts Musical Challenge**

*Interview by Stephen Ostick, from the Winnipeg Free Press. Published March 31, 1994.*

Glance down the list of Juno award winners from the past 23 years, and one name has racked up an impressive total of 10 awards. But it also has been conspicuously absent for more than a decade.

It’s almost criminal that Bruce Cockburn has never been named songwriter of the year. It’s little consolation that he was top male vocalist in 1981 and ‘82, because he hasn’t been heard from at the annual Canadian soiree ever since.

It says one thing about the Junos, but it says something quite different about Cockburn himself. At 48, he is well entrenched in that stage of an artist’s career that is perhaps more difficult than any other: he’s just there.

After 25 years the Canadian public thinks it knows Cockburn inside out. But while that cozy familiarity can be comforting, perhaps even flattering, it might also mean there's not a heck of a lot of excitement anymore.

"There's a challenge there to keep reminding people that you may have put out 20 albums, but it doesn't mean the 21st is anything like any of the others," Cockburn said from Toronto before leaving for tonight's Pantages Playhouse show.

"I'm not interested in sitting back and doing what I've already done. But there are people who've only heard Rocket Launcher or Wondering Where the Lions Are, or one of those very high-profile songs, and think that's what it (his career) is. There's a whole lot of other stuff there, and you need to make sure other people understand that."

Certainly his fans do. They've bought each album faithfully upon release, as they are doing now with Cockburn album No. 22, Dart to the Heart. It entered Canadian retail charts two weeks ago at a vigorous No. 30.

As well, his influence has been slowly spreading since Wondering Where the Lions Are broke him in the U.S. in 1980. His Nothing But a Burning Light tour in 1991, saw him performing 137 shows in 10 countries.

Tonight's show kicks off his umpteenth Canadian tour, before several months' trek across the U.S. and Europe.

"It's not an inconsequential thing to buy a concert ticket anymore," he said. "I've always felt a certain desire to make people go away happy from shows. Whatever it is you do, you want to do it as best you can."

Cockburn's public has grown up with him. The bearded folkie who was originally satisfied if, "Musical friends can make me happy," eventually evolved into the angry agitator who threatened to blast evil doers with a rocket launcher.

Does he cringe at those early records, the way the rest of us do when we flip open old photo albums to find ourselves in bell bottoms and love beads?

"The short answer to that is that I don't listen to it at all," he said. "Once in a while I'm at somebody's place and forced to sit through something. There are lots of things I'm proud of, and other things that maybe missed the mark. But they were always the best we could do, and you can't take it back."

Possibly the one aspect of Cockburn's career that hasn't changed, is his reluctance to write songs with others. It's little wonder, perhaps, coming from the man who rejects team sports for the solitary recreation of pistol shooting and show jumping.

“I’ve never felt it necessary to go to someone with half an idea and say, ‘What do you think of this?’ “ he said. “My policy has always been that if I can’t finish it on the spot, I just leave it in the notebook until I do think of something. And sooner or later, it comes.”  
END

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bruce enjoys riding his bike around whatever town or city he plays in while on tour. “i like to get a sense of where i am.”

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## **The Return Of Hands Solo**

Daniel Keebler

nope. this is not a review of a new *star wars* movie, but rather a brief observation on bruce’s solo instrumentals. do you realize it has been *twenty-one years* since bruce cockburn has released recordings like “sunrise on the mississippi,” and “train in the rain?” not since night vision’s “foxglove” (1973), or the title track to sunwheel dance (1971), have we heard this style of solo acoustic guitar playing. in a way, it’s the cockburn guitar signature. there have, of course, been other solo acoustic guitar pieces:

“islands in a black sky,” from night vision (1973)

“salt, sun and time,” from the album of the same name (1974)

“water into wine,” from in the falling dark (1976)

“cader idris” and “deer dancing ‘round a broken mirror,” from circles in the stream (1977)

however, the bridge has been a long one between the likes of “sunwheel dance” and “sunrise on the mississippi.” there is a common thread of style and happiness about those tunes that tie them together, that is not as evident (if at all present), in the others. here’s hoping we hear more of just bruce and his acoustic guitar...

## **This Is The Part Where I Beg For Money**

Daniel Keebler

good gosh. **already?! well,** (head bowed) *yes.* here’s the straight talk: gavin’s woodpile needs contributions from its readers. as a first-timer to this sort of adventure, i’m learning that the simple costs of paper, copying, postage and other costs required to get information, add up fast, especially as the mailing list gets larger. so, my plan is to first ask for contributions from readers and see how that route goes. if all else fails, i may have to resort to a subscription rate to keep things going, and believe me, i’d rather not. that would mean more to keep track of, and another mailing (thus more money) to remind you that “...your subscription is due.” instead, there will be reminders in gwp that the newsletter is made possible because of your periodic contributions. they may be submitted in the form of u.s. postage stamps, IRC’s, checks, (u.s. banks only) or money

orders. i want to stress that this is **not** a money-making venture. i simply hope to cover, or defray, costs. many thanks for your consideration. ~dk.

### **He Was Planning To Do What?**

a pre-concert party to celebrate bruce's arrival into seattle's paramount theatre on april 15th, was held on april 9th, in a north seattle home. there were eighteen folks gathered together, some talking for long stretches with great excitement about bruce's work. the event lasted nearly seven hours. honorable mention goes to mike s. of phoenix, a reader of gwp, who, not knowing anyone at the get-together, attempted to board a flight from phoenix to seattle on standby, but was left holding his bag and waving farewell to an over-booked flight for which everyone showed up. mike said he was planning to fly up specifically for the party on saturday afternoon, and then return to phoenix the next morning. true story...

### **Pre-concert Interview at the Paramount Theatre**

*the following interview with bruce took place in the paramount theater in seattle on friday, april 15th. it was conducted by brad dolbeer of radio station **kmmt, the mountain**.*

**brad:** *welcome to seattle.*

**bruce:** thanks. it's nice to be back.

**brad:** *it's been a couple of years since you've been here. i think the last time was for the nothing but a burning light tour, and i was fortunate enough to see that show. things have changed a little bit since then as far as the atmosphere in the states, as far as radio stations like "the mountain." what are your feelings going into the beginning stages of this american tour?*

**bruce:** well, i'm very glad to be coming here at this particular time. my own situation is particularly good right now, thanks to this "triple a" business that's newly started up. it remains to be seen i suppose how far that will go and what that means to the big picture, but the album's off to a better start than any of my previous ones in this country certainly, and i'm very happy about that. i'm also just glad to be here working again, 'cause it's always been good to me. you know, i suspect more of the same, i guess (laugh).

**brad:** *this is the beginning of your tour, as i said. people are on their way into the show tonight. you'll have fans from previous tours because you have at least twenty, if not more, albums previous to this, and you'll probably have some new fans that'll be there as well tonight. what can they expect from this tour?*

**bruce:** well, like most of my shows there's a mixture of the new and the old. we'll be doing several things from the new album. i can't tell you exactly which yet. i'm still working that out, (sly pause) but they will be combined with the songs that i think that

people will feel ripped off if they don't get to hear, like "lovers in a dangerous time," "rocket launcher," for example. those are always in the show. there'll be a cross section of older, less obvious things that we put in to round out the show that are things that are particularly well suited to this band playing or things that are different from what we did last time around, so that we offer people something a little more varied than just the same old show.

**brad:** *talk a little more about the band. who do you have on tour with you and where did you get them? you have some people that some of our listeners may be familiar with. i'm thinking specifically of colin linden.*

**bruce:** colin is a very fine guitar player and a songwriter who i'm lucky enough to have in the band at this point. he also plays on the album. the band is otherwise~ well, he was here with me last time, too. i was going to say "otherwise the same as last time," but of course that includes colin. miche pouliot on drums, john dymond on bass, but on keyboards, instead of richard bell, who we had last year, we have a guy named ken pearson. both richard and ken were veterans of janis joplin's *full tilt boogie band*. ken played organ, richard played piano in that band. so, in the absence of one we got the other joplin veteran. richard's now a fulltime member of the band, so he's on to other things.

**brad:** *it seems to me that this album, in specifically "listen to the laugh," seems to be kicked up a little bit. i've seen you before, and some of your long-time fans will know that you can, in your live shows~ you definitely can kick it up as far as electric guitar. you also do acoustic stuff, too. is that a conscious decision on this album or just something that seemed to fit well with the songs that you've written?*

**bruce:** well, i 'm not sure that they're mutually exclusive (laughs), but the way that we treat the songs in the studio is really decided based on the content of the songs and then that determines a general approach. then it's whatever happens in the studio, and that gets directed of course by me, and in this case t-bone burnett, who produced the album as well. it's generally based on whatever the musicians involved bring to it, and in the case the case of songs like "listen for the laugh" or "scanning these crowds," they were rock songs and they got treated in a rockin' manner. we endeavor to do that night after night as well.

**brad:** *well, i know you've got to get ready for the show. i want to thank you for taking the time to talk with us. have a great show, and a great tour. it's really nice to have you back in seattle again.*

**bruce:** thanks a lot. i appreciate it. END

## **reader info**

after only three issues, gavin's woodpile has readers in: british columbia, manitoba, ontario, quebec, connecticut, pennsylvania, ohio, maryland., georgia, alabama, arizona,

california, washington state, nebraska, germany and australia. if you know anyone who'd like to receive gwp, please have them drop me a line.

### **information, please**

bruce performed a song on his 1981 *inner city front* tour in europe, which i've never heard before. it was an instrumental with the whole band. does anyone have any details on this song?

### **My Strange Night**

Daniel Keebler

i attended the pre-concert soundcheck for bruce's seattle show on april 15th. it lasted about two hours. virtually every song that was played during this time, was *not* played in his vancouver show the night before (which i also attended). bruce performed "deer dancing 'round a broken mirror" to the audience of about fifteen people who attended the soundcheck, while a repair was being made to a drum pedal. i had never seen him perform that song before, and it was a special treat to hear it in, relatively speaking, such a personal setting.

i nervously pondered the idea of speaking with bruce, if only briefly, but didn't think it would actually happen. well, it *did*. and it was, of course, too brief. but i would venture to say that a *week* would be too brief. for me, it was as if i had stepped into some kind of zone in which bruce made me feel completely at ease. i appreciated the attention he gave to me and the several other people he spoke with during this exchange. he was very gracious considering that there were scores of management, radio personnel, and record label folks who were also needing his time just twenty feet away.

earlier in the evening, i had the opportunity to ask his manager, bernie finkelstein, if he could share when he recalled first meeting bruce. he told me that he first saw bruce with a band called *the children*. he did not specifically remember bruce in particular, so much as the band as a whole. however, he later saw bruce at a venue called the *purple onion* in toronto, and thought that he was indeed different. well, it seems that bernie knew a great thing when he saw it. he has been bruce's manager since about 1969. thanks to bernie for believing in bruce's work enough to give so many years of support to such a gifted person.

i also spoke with john dymond, bruce's bass player for both this tour and the nothing but a burning light tour. he told me that the band rehearsed for about ten days before setting out on this tour. he also said their bag of songs number about forty. that's the equivalent of about two completely different shows.

well, outside of the concert itself, that is an abbreviated account of my strange night. it was great. i'm still floating....



\*\*\*

thanks to **margarita s.** in santa barbara, for all the new gwp readers you've sent this way.

thank you to all the nice (but questionable) folks at **kmtt, seattle.** you know who you are.

big thanks to my wife, **jerri**, for being such a special person.

\*\*\*

### **Stray Information**

for those of you looking (or still looking) for the somewhat elusive work, the trouble with normal, containing the extra track "**cala luna**," here's where to get a cassette copy on the *true north* label: **dusty strings**, 3406 fremont ave. n., seattle, wa 98103. you can also order by phone at: 206-634-1656. the cost is about \$10.00 u.s. this does not include any postage and handling fees. many thanks to sean s. for this discovery.

bruce appeared on the **tonight show** with jay leno on april 25th. he performed "listen for the laugh" in the last five minutes of the show. unfortunately no interview, but there was enough time for jay to get dart to the heart autographed. if you'd like to see bruce back on the **tonight show**, write them at: *the tonight show*, 3000 w. alameda ave, burbank, ca, 91523.

while in l.a., bruce appeared on **friday night**, on nbc, answering a few questions, and once again performing "listen for the laugh." it aired on april 29th. he also performed "scanning these crowds" on a may 20th episode of the same program.

a good phone number to have is that of **the cd bar**, in toronto. it is a good source of acquiring some of bruce's cd's that you may not readily find elsewhere. they are reached at: 1-800-663-1616. also consider **golden oldies**. if they don't have it, their search services are free. they will contact you when they find the item(s) you have requested. their system contains literally millions of lp's, 45's, cd's and cassettes. they are reached in seattle at 206-547-2260. don't let the name deceive you; they carry all periods and types of music. used, but not abused.

an enthusiastic *happy birthday* to bruce, from margarita.

# Issue Number 4

## August 1994

### Bruce Cockburn Cuts To The Heart

As I pull up to Bruce Cockburn's modest, white, aluminum-sided farm house, an hour's drive outside of Toronto, a Federal Express truck pulls away. The digital master of *Dart to the Heart*, Cockburn's new album, has just been delivered. It comes fast on the heels of '93's *Christmas*.

Making himself a man for all seasons was not Cockburn's intention when he went into the studio last year. Originally *Dart* was to have been completed by September, but when schedules lagged he shifted priorities to meet the Christmas deadline. *Dart* had to wait.

Cockburn, dressed in a hunter green wool shirt, turquoise earring and black jeans, ushers me into the kitchen. It's a cheerful, warm room with gleaming hardwood floors and walls graced with colorful litho prints (including a piece by Robert Davidson, used on the cover of *Waiting for a Miracle*). The aroma of fresh coffee fills the air.

"Predominately, these are songs that have to do with love," explains the country's most sustainable songwriter, explaining the freshly arrived digital tape. "There's only one political song and it was kind of accidentally political. It has more to do with deploring the state of humanity than with making political observations."

He's referring to "Scanning These Crowds," which recalls the Red River rebellion, led by Louis Riel. "It makes reference to Canadian apathy, the Protestant East against the Catholic West and the English against the French. Troops were raised in Toronto with the battle cry of 'Let's go and stomp those Catholics, they're going to ruin our West.' I don't know what the West would have been like if they didn't. In the end it probably would have been absorbed into the U.S. sooner than it will be."

Articulate, informed and extremely focused, Cockburn has spent much of his 48 years scratching beneath the surface of social and political issues. His intimidating intensity, which paired with his forever-boyish face, is somehow defused into a friendly glow of sincerity. Part of the reason for Cockburn's enduring career is his ability to infuse his music with a conscience~ an inherent sense of what he believes to be right and wrong that allows listeners to vicariously change the world.

"The only political point I was intending is in the 'Where is it now that we need it' line," he continues, referring to "Scanning These Crowds." "Where is the spirit of rebellion? It's there a little bit now in Canada, but it isn't there enough or we wouldn't have Jean Chretien in power. Everyone was so angry [with the Conservatives] and didn't know what to do, so they voted for the other dork [Chretien]. It was a very poor selection of colors from which to choose. If they want to get anything done, the Liberals and the Bloc

and the Reform Party are going to have to get together. It's going to be as cute as can be. One of the less horrible outcomes is that we will end up with an Italian system where everything is in constant turmoil, but somehow life goes on."

Life of all forms is in abundance in the Cockburn residence. The house is streaming with cats, kittens and dogs. A German Shepherd named Lady barks determinedly outside, while Spudley, a little ball of canine fluff, wanders over and licks my hand.

"At least more people are talking about politics than they have in years. There's the population out there [in the country] which was never politically inclined until now, they see their neighbors out of work and themselves being run over by the arrogant pricks in Ottawa and they resent it. Because they don't have a history of thinking about politics, it's very emotional and simplistic. Add knowledge to that and you get something really useful. The emotional level was very encouraging. Unfortunately...." Cockburn laughs and shakes his head.

But the conversation is getting off topic. *Dart to the Heart* isn't political. "I've never done an album of love songs before," he muses. "Lots of my albums have love songs on them, but the feel isn't governed by that. In this case it is."

The inspiration for some of his new compositions is Sue Franklin, a top-flight horse trainer and his girlfriend of the past three years. But the love Cockburn tackles is not strictly romantic. It's lost, found, collective, personal, spiritual, dependent, independent, sexual, universal, even divine love. "Listen for the Laugh" is an argument against sentimentality while "Burden of the Angel/Beast" is about a lack of love, what Cockburn calls "the poverty of the human condition" which he sees in most of the population, including himself.

What his fans cherish, and his detractors denigrate, is Cockburn's integrity. His honesty is raw, a little grating to some, yet always balanced by superb craftsmanship. According to Colin Linden, one of Canada's finest blues guitarists and a member of Cockburn's band, the Ottawa-born former folkie is a "staggering" guitar player. "He's the best finger picker I've ever played with," says Linden.

Cockburn calls the shots as he sees them in his songs, rather than couching issues in indecipherable prose. Combing through his lyrics from albums of the early 70's (*High Winds White Sky, Night Vision*) to the 90's (*Nothing But a Burning Light*), there's a sense that he will stand by *all* his words in 20 years time, unlike many purveyors of pop, who claim they can't listen to their songs after six months.

Clocking 24 years in the business, Cockburn has earned his voice as elder statesman. "I will be 50 in '95. I'm not used to being elder, but I've become increasingly elder as the years go by," he ponders. "You pass a few milestones and become very aware that you're older than the people around you, or somebody is looking to you for inspiration, or citing you as an excuse for something."

The tribute album *Kick at the Darkness: The Songs of Bruce Cockburn*, released in 1991, epitomized Cockburn's place in the collective pop consciousness. "The Barenaked Ladies [who covered 'Lovers in a Dangerous Time'] is the most obvious example," he acknowledges. "The rest of what [the Ladies] do is humor that's aimed at a young audience, they still talk about what happens in high school and it's been a long time since I thought about what happens in high school. It's very nice that they're that young and that interested, on the other hand they're miles away from me. That song was a good one for them to have picked. I was thinking about young people when I wrote it. Lovers in a dangerous time, kids in the schoolyard holding hands and facing a future that looks so precarious."

A performer who has publicly shared his stance on social ills throughout his career, whether it's injustice in Central America ("If I had a Rocket Launcher"), nuclear disaster ("Radium Rain"), or native rights ("Indian Wars"), Cockburn is pragmatic about his affect on listeners. "I don't mind taking responsibility for being an influence to some degree. On the one hand, there's a temptation to go 'If you think I'm that cool, make me dictator and I'll take care of this bullshit.' Of course, nobody's going to do that and it's a good thing because I don't think I'm any more qualified to do that than anybody else. On the other hand I think, 'Don't look to me as a source of anything because I'm just another guy bumbling along making mistakes as I go.'"

How have his religious views been perceived by his fans over the years? "When I first became known as a Christian [in the mid-70's], there were certain people who were offended and stopped buying my records. When I started getting quote political unquote, some of the people that were interested in the Christian aspect became offended and threatened and felt it was too far left and I was using too many cuss words. It was becoming too ungodly so they dropped away, but the ones that were able to tolerate the broader picture stayed."

"With the Christian crowd there's a few hard-core ones that would come and castigate me for my behavior after shows. I remember getting quite angry and yelling once. There was this guy calling me to account for the fact that I was smoking at the time, how could I be a Christian and smoke and wreck God's temple [the body]. There's nothing wrong with thinking that, but who was this presumptuous little twerp? I basically told him to fuck right off. I no longer smoke, for the record, but I don't think smoking and drinking has anything to do with salvation except to the extent that it distracts you from the important things in your own soul."

Religious fanatics are not the only people he hears from. "There was a couple that wrote to me during the last tour. They were going crazy, had been dying to see me and kept missing me. Then they said 'we got hold of your new album, *Nothing But a Burning Light*, and are we glad we didn't ever make it to the show. It's the biggest piece of shit you ever made.' They compared it to Lawrence Welk. It was offensive, but I also had to chuckle. Those were people who thought music should be angry and if it wasn't angry, it wasn't interesting. OK fine. I'm not angry all the time."

Whether you love it or hate it, Cockburn's music has clout. "I don't lay my life out on the table," he admits. "I only reveal what I want to, but the content is always true, even if it's a joke or distortion. That truthfulness comes through to people."

Especially when it comes from the heart.

Many thanks to **Maureen Littlejohn**, Managing Editor of *Network Magazine* in Toronto, for the use of this interview. ~ 1994

#### LITTLE KNOWN BRUCE FACTS

- 1 He collect comics, especially those by the Fernandez Brothers (Love & Rockets).
- 2 He collects knives.
- 3 He shoots competitively.
- 4 He is followed by a strong contingent of Grateful Dead fans~ known as Burn Heads.
- 5 He has a cat named T-Bone (in honor of the producer of his last two albums.)

#### BRUCE MYTHS EXPLODED

- 1 He DOES NOT OWN a rocket launcher
- 2 He DOES NOT own a huge gun collecton (he does own a few.)
- 3 He ISN'T a raging religious fanatic. He did become a Christian in 1974.
- 4 He DOES have a sense of humor. (Check out "Tie Me at the Crossroads" on *Dart to the Heart*.)
- 5 He DOES swear on occasion. (Did you read this article?)

#### MORE BRUCE FACTS

- 1 Born in Ottawa, 1945.
- 2 Worked as a street musician in Paris in the early '60s.
- 3 Studied at the Berklee College of Music, Boston, 1964-1966.
- 4 Early bands include the Esquires and the Children.
- 5 First appeared at the Mariposa Folk Festival in 1967.
- 6 Was a member of CBC-TV series "Three's a Crowd" in 1968-69.
- 7 Songs have been covered by many artists including Chet Atkins, Jerry Garcia, George Hamilton IV and Barenaked Ladies.
- 8 He has shared the stage with the likes of Salman Rushdie (1992 Literary Penn benefit in Toronto), Lou Reed (Christmas with Cockburn radio show, 1992) Paul McCartney (Earth Day Show, Hollywood Bowl, L.A., 1993) and Bill Clinton (52nd Presidential Inauguration, Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 1993).

#### WHAT PEOPLE CALL HIM

- 1 Buckskin Bruce
- 2 Boring old Bruce

### 3 Canada's Bruce

~ Maureen Littlejohn, *Network Magazine*

#### **Some Other Stuff Of Interest**

the following is from liner notes on the george hamilton IV album, canadian pacific, which contains his 1969 recording of the bruce cockburn song, *together alone*:

“i was in ottawa for about a week at a club awhile back and i didn't get to meet mr. Trudeau, but i did go to a party at harvey glatt's house and met katherine mc kinnon, leah and a great canadian pop group, “3's a crowd.” one of the members of the group is a young singer-songwriter named bruce cockburn who impressed me very much. he sang me this song in harvey's kitchen and i liked it very much- the kitchen and the song.”

from an interview with howard druckman regarding the album nothing but a burning light:

...cockburn says that once he relocated his writing skills, writing was no problem. in fact, he recorded and mixed three tracks (lyrics and all) that didn't make the album: the nastily humorous “let the bad air out,” the love song “coyote blue,” and a scotty moore-style guitar song called “wake up willie.”

“the three songs that didn't make it to the album were more raucous,” says cockburn. “but the main group of songs just pointed in this direction- it really wanted to go that way. to have included those songs would have interfered with the spirit of the album.”

in the last issue of gwp, i reported that bruce played a venue called the *purple onion* in toronto in the late '60's. after reading a passage on bruce in the book *axes, chops & hot licks* (1971), could the venue have simply been called the *onion*? were these two different places? can any of my canadian readers help out here?

the thing on the back of the album cover for inner city front; what is it?

in maureen littlejohn's preceding interview (and in other interviews i've read) it is stated that there was a cbc **tv series** called *three's a crowd*, of which bruce was a part of. in what capacity?

\*\*\*

*gavin's woodpile* is made possible through contributions from its readers. i would like to thank those who contributed during the last two months. it really makes a difference...

~daniel

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## **Bruce Cockburn In Concert**

sunday, august 28, 2:30PM

vanier park

**vancouver, B.C.**

tickets: 1-800-665-5454

wednesday, august 31, 8pm

the mt. baker theatre

**bellingham, washington**

tickets: 206-734-6080

thursday, september 1, 6pm

rose garden amphitheatre

**portland, oregon**

tickets: 206-628-0888

saturday, september 3, 12:30

bumbershoot festival seattle center opera house

**seattle, washington**

## **Yikes! I Have A Bird Without Wings**

Daniel Keebler

“i had just been to this place about two weeks ago,” i was thinking. “why bother to stop in again so soon. there is most likely nothing new since then.” but, i was passing by and thought “why not?”

i parked, got out of my car, and walked into *golden oldies*, a used record store that i visit on occasion. i asked the clerk if he saw very much bruce cockburn on cd. he said no. actually, that’s good news, because i can’t imagine anyone getting rid of cockburn’s work. however, he did have big circumstance, but, i already have three copies of that. about then, the clerk stepped out from behind the counter and said, as he moved toward the wall, “here’s something that i’ll bet even cockburn collectors don’t know about.” he reached up and pulled an unsleeved 45 down off an old nail in the wall. he stuck it in my face. when i saw the words “bird without wings,” i didn’t miss a beat. “i’ll take it!” i blurted, trying to maintain my calm. i knew what this was alright. he said, “it has a crack in it.” again, i said, “i’ll take it.” “it’s scratchy,” he said. like a zombie i repeated, “i’ll take it.” i paused and then asked, “*is it for sale?*” guess i should have asked that first. anyway, he said, “you can have it. i found it a few days ago when i was rummaging about in an old junk shop.” wow. he gave it to me. i really never thought i would ever see this record. he told me he had only ever seen one other.

now, i have no clue how unusual it would be to find this particular item, but i'm pleased to have it. it comes from a pre-bruce-cockburn-as-we-know-him-today era, so to speak. this was during bruce's association with the group *3's a crowd* (around 1968), and comes from the album, christopher's movie matinee, co-produced by mama cass eliott. the *flip* side of this single? "coat of colors," written by a long-time friend of bruce's, murray mclauchlan.

the clerk even sleeved my scratchy little 45. i thanked him profusely and went on my way, grinning for the next two hours. i got home and gave it a spin, with the tape player on record in the event that it was the *last* spin (given the condition of the record). to my good luck it played fine. scratchy, but all the way through without a skip.

to think, i almost didn't stop in there...

addendum: i've recently learned that ian m. of epping, australia, also owns this 45 *and* the album it comes from. well, there are *at least two* 45's.

## **Other Works**

bruce has appeared on the works of numerous other musicians. here are a few:

david wiffen, coast to coast fever (1973); guitars, bass, celeste, vocals. bruce also produced nine of the ten songs on this album, and his song "up on the hillside" was included in the line-up.

murray mclauchlan, sweeping the spotlight away (1974); guitar on the title track.

paul stoddart, day coach rider (1974); bruce produced and wrote the music.

rough trade, shaking the foundations (1982); vocal on "crimes of passion."

hugh marsh, shaking the pumpkin (1987); voice on "how the violin was born." the bear walks (1984); guitar on "la carezza."

barney bentall, ain't life strange (1992); guitar solo on "doin' fine."

rosanne cash, the wheel (1993); vocal on "from the ashes."

colin linden, south at eight north at nine (1993); guitar on "singing this song," guitar and vocal on "gonna get on my feet after awhile" and dobro on "dry land."

please feel free to contribute other works you know of.



## **The Mark Heard Project**

mark heard was a singer/songwriter that bruce cockburn respected a great deal. the song "closer to the light," from dart to the heart, is in memory of mark, who died in 1992.

released in 1994 is the 17 song cd entitled, strong hand of love, a tribute to mark heard. among many other supporters of mark's music, bruce recorded a track ("strong hand of love") for this project. also released was the hour-long video of the same title which includes an interview with bruce regarding mark and his work. this entire project is very moving and the delivery of the songs emotional. mark's poetry is certainly worth adding to any collection.

"...a man known by so few and yet missed deeply by so many."

## **Stray Information Stray Information**

bruce will be playing at **vanier park** in vancouver, british columbia, on august 28, 1994. the concert is part of the *sunflower sunday series*. tickets are available through *community box office* in vancouver, at 1-800-665-5454 or 604-280-2801. spend the day (or weekend!) in vancouver and have a great sunday afternoon listening to bruce in a great outdoor setting.

bruce will also be playing the **mt. baker theatre** in bellingham, washington, on wednesday, august 31st. inquire about tickets at the mt. baker ticket office at 206-734-6080. maximum capacity is about 1500.

yet another chance: the **rose garden amphitheater** at washington park in portland, oregon, will be the venue for bruce on september 1. tickets available at ticket master at 206-628-0888.

okay. one more: bruce plays **the opera house** at the seattle center, site of the 1962 world's fair. all part of the annual *bumbershoot festival*. the concert starts at 12:30pm, september 3.

at the time this issue went to copy, bruce's **fall tour schedule** was incomplete, but expected by mid-august. he will however, be traversing the u.s. & parts of canada throughout september and october, covering areas he didn't play on the first leg of the north american tour. beware! bruce may show up in your town. keep your ears tuned: check with your local b.c. radio station and/or local ticket agencies...

*thanks* to **raymond k.** of highland park, illinois.

## **address change?**

please drop me a line if you have a new address. thank you.

# Issue Number 5

## October 1994

### **Bruce Cockburn's Work: Music That Makes A Difference**

Daniel Keebler

Since discovering Bruce Cockburn's music my life has changed. No, really. For all the times we hear people use that phrase, it really holds true here. This is a man who, whether he likes it or not, has a deep, spiritual impact on the lives of those willing to listen, think, and consider what he is saying in his words and his music. This is a man who is making a difference in the world. Okay, Bruce has often said in interviews that he doesn't think that he's any better or any more important than anyone else on this planet. I agree. However, he is better at *some* things than *most* people on this planet. It doesn't take a wizard to figure out what some of those exceptional gifts are. A reviewer once said that Bruce's music is not so much about politics and religion, as it is about *justice and the spirit*. Well said.

Cockburn knows that, as a public figure, he will be "held up under the magnifying glass" at times, so to speak. He knows he has a responsible position, like it or not. Responsible to who? Well, for simplicity I'll name only *one* possibility: people who share the passion in his work. Some (including Bruce) might contest that, but I'll let it stand for the moment.

The music business tends to put the employee out on a limb, and over a crowd. It's a known risk. Different artists deal with this situation and responsibility in different ways. Bruce Cockburn, in my opinion, deals with it *very* well. This is a person who is thinking about things that matter (whatever that means) on a regular basis. He's more often prepared than not. I'm not talking about Central America or Chernobyl. I'm talking about the spirit, humanity, fairness, love, justice. You know, the *big stuff*. Now, don't misunderstand me, Central America and Chernobyl *are* important matters, but not the point I'm getting at here. Rather more what his eyes see of the *humans* in these matters that is at the root of it all, and Bruce Cockburn has *some* sharp eyes. He also has the poetic ability to put down in words and music what he sees. It starts with his interaction with whatever sparks him and is then transformed by/through him into the very powerful thing we call music. It really reaches the soul. No kidding. It makes me cry and it makes me laugh. It's clever and it's sarcastic. It's absolutely beautiful. It makes me wonder.

Now I suppose that Bruce, if I were to tell him all this, might think something like, "Gibberish. Sop. It's not that big of a deal. Stop wallowing." However, he would then proceed to say something like *this*: "But thank you for saying that." What a guy. Another example of humbling the importance of his work and the effect it has on many people, yet still acknowledging your feelings about the matter, and recognizing it has value.

Cockburn's work is a part of my life now. It will help shape, in some aspects, the way I live and who I am. Bruce, your work *does* make a difference. I promise...

## What I Saw

Daniel Keebler

**the mt. baker theatre:** over-coming sound equipment problems, bruce cockburn put on quite a show at the mt. baker theatre in bellingham, washington, on august 31st. the lights went down, and out he walked- no opening act, no announcement. the crowd was as enthusiastic as any i've seen. it has been quite a long time since bruce performed in bellingham, and the audience was apparently very hungry for his return. he came back for two encores, the second being after the house lights had come up. the genuine and enthusiastic reception of the packed house gave bruce a case of "flushed cheeks" as he returned for his second encore. he delighted and surprised folks by playing "one day i walk," from his 1971 album high winds white sky.

created here (especially toward the end) was something beautiful: a bonding of musician and appreciative listeners. bruce, don't stay away from b'ham *too* long...

**vanier park (sunflower sunday series):** weather was threatening most of the day of this outdoor concert in vancouver, british columbia on august 28th. it was held as a benefit for the vancouver museum. the vanier park setting was enhanced by the back-drop of the waters of vancouver and the skyline of buildings and mountains intermingled. the rain held off until around song number 12 of 17. it then began to rain, which, combined with an inspired rendition of "stolen land," sent the audience into overdrive. by the end of the show everyone was up on their feet and dancing with the giant sunflowers that stood their vigil in front of the stage for most of the show. all who attended got wet, but also got to see the opening date of the second leg of the north american tour. good show.

## whateverwhateverwhateverwhateverwhatever

okay, so you've been looking for a way to introduce the kids of the family (if you have any) to the music of bruce cockburn, but you don't think they'd go for "call it democracy." well, then you'll want to grab baby beluga by the tail, a 1980 release by famed children's musician/performer, **raffi**. you'll find bruce lending some guitar work to the songs "thanks a lot" and "water dance." both very nice songs. baby beluga was recorded in hamilton, ontario, by "dan lanois," and co-mixed by him as well. certainly this must be *daniel* lanois. who else? producer of such works as u2's joshua tree, and peter gabriel's so. bruce's then-bassist, dennis pendrith, also lends his hand on this project.

check out baby beluga. kids or no. it's worth having. besides, haven't you always wanted "day o" and "biscuit in the oven" in your music collection?

from **raymond k.** of illinois regarding "the thing on the back of *inner city front*" from issue number 3, comes this account:

“when i was up in toronto in the mid- eighties, i stopped in at the finkelstein office and chatting with jehanne [bruce’s publicist at the time], i asked the same question. she pulled out a drawer in a desk, rummaged around and came out with it: it is a burner from a gas range.”

okay. now i know?

thanks to **mike s.** of arizona for providing fairly substantial confirmation regarding my burning *onion* dilemma:

“the club in toronto was called the *purple onion*, according to the well-researched neil young book, *don’t be denied.*”

editors note: a few days after receiving this information from mike, i happened to see ian tyson on cbc tv mentioning the same *purple onion*. strange.

*the wish list*

is there a cockburn song that you would dearly love to hear played the next time you see him in concert? perhaps there is a *set* of songs? i’m not talking about “if i had a rocket launcher” or “wondering where the lions are.” perhaps something more obscure or something he just doesn’t play in concert any longer. drop me line.

another mailorder source for obtaining cockburn’s music: **a & b sound** in vancouver, canada. toll free at 1-800-663-0596. thanks to **audrey p.** for this resource idea.

...and now that you *have* that number, you might consider adding kumbaya 94 to your collection. this new various artists release contains the previously unreleased cockburn song, “wake up willie.” as you may recall from the last issue this song was recorded during the nothing but a burning light sessions, but was never released, until now. it is available from a & b sound (including airmail postage) for about u.s.\$14.00.

*gavin’s woodpile* is a not-for-profit newsletter designed to increase the awareness of the work of bruce cockburn, and to share information regarding: interviews, concert dates, tv and radio appearances, lesser-known works, etc. readers are welcome to submit, for consideration, information which might contribute toward this goal.

“and i toss another log on gavin’s woodpile, and wonder at the lamp-warm window’s welcome smile.” ~b.c.

## **Ian’s Top-Favorites Cockburn List**

### album

- 1 sunwheel dance
- 2 further adventures of
- 3 nothing but a burning light

- 4 dancing in the dragon's jaws
  - 5 humans
  - 6 dart to the heart
- + i adore *mummy dust*. it works well as a compilation

song

- 1 dweller by a dark stream (strange choice?)
  - 2 all the diamonds in the world
  - 3 coldest night of the year
  - 4 peggy's kitchen wall (done solo, acoustic, live)
  - 5 don't feel your touch
  - 6 one day i walk
- (this is difficult. i have at least another 20 favorites.)

**Dart To The Heart Tour Scheule, Fall 1994**

- 08-28-94: vanier park...vancouver, b.c.  
08-31-94: mt. baker theatre...bellingham, washington  
09-01-94: washington park...portland, oregon  
09-03-94: bumbershoot festival...seattle, washington  
09-19-94: the grand theatre... kingston, ontario  
09-20-94: the spectrum...montreal, quebec  
09-22-94: the centrepoint theatre...ottawa, ontario  
09-24-94: the colonial theatre...keene, new hampshire  
09-25-94: flynn theatre...burlington, vermont  
09-27-94: toad's place...new haven, connecticut  
09-29-94: the bottom line...new york city  
09-30-94: the bottom line...new york city  
10-01-94: inter-media arts center...huntington, new york  
10-02-94: the strand...providence, rhode island  
10-04-94: the boathouse...norfolk, virginia  
10-05-94: the floodzone...richmond, virginia  
10-06-94: cat's cradle...chapel hill, north carolina  
10-07-94: be here now...asheville, north carolina  
10-08-94: variety playhouse...atlanta, georgia  
10-10-94: 328 performance hall...nashville, tennessee  
10-12-94: the house of blues...new orleans, louisiana  
10-14-94: austin music hall...austin, texas  
10-15-94: deep ellum...dallas, texas  
10-18-94: la luna...santa fe, new mexico  
10-22-94: verde valley festival...sedona, arizona  
10-25-94: mississippi nights...st. louis, missouri  
10-26-94: the vogue...indianapolis, indiana  
10-27-94: graffiti...pittsburgh, pennsylvania

10-29-94: proctor's theatre...schenectady, new york  
10-30-94: university of buffalo...buffalo, new york

**note:** this schedule is the most current available at print time.

## **New Stuff**

**Kumbaya 1994:** "The Kumbaya Foundation is the Canadian entertainment industry's response to national health and social issues. Each year we are committed to raising awareness on one key charitable area and to making donations to community groups working in that area.

Born out of the mind and heart of singer Molly Johnson and named by comedienne Sandra Shamas, our best-known event is the Kumbaya Festival. Uniting artists across the country, the Kumbaya Festivals for '93 and '94 will raise awareness in the fight against aids." ~ liner notes

Bruce contributes to *Kumbaya 1994*, the song "Wake Up Willie," which was recorded during the *Nothing But a Burning Light* sessions.

**Columbia Records Radio Hour Vol. 1:** A collection of performances from the Columbia Music Hour radio programs. It contains three songs by Bruce Cockburn. It is currently scheduled to be released in January, 1995.

~many thanks to Renee Pfefer

## **More Whatever**

bruce appeared on **late night with conan o'brien** on august 2nd. he performed "scanning these crowds."

bruce on radio: a live broadcast from new york of the **columbia records music hour**, with guest, yussou n'dour; august 7th. it ran about one hour.

cover story interview with bruce in the july/august issue of *the performing songwriter*.

i would like to express my personal thanks and to all of you who have contributed kind words regarding this newsletter. it's easy to sit here in snohomish, far from much of the action, and sometimes wonder if anyone is benefiting from the work that is done. however, there always seems to be a letter, a card, or a phone call that reassures me that the idea is worthwhile. at this point i consider there to be a warm circle of readers sharing a common thread in cockburn's music. i like to think that is a nice thing...

special thanks to **rick olson** for his wonderful gift to gwp. in fact, these words are printed on it. many thanks to *all* who have contributed in some way over the past few months.

## Issue Number 6

### December 1994

#### Location Location Location...

by David F. Smith

NEW ORLEANS~ Street lamps began to hum as darkness enfolded the Vieux Carre, and an unexpected cool wind blew in from somewhere foreign.

This was Wednesday in New Orleans. Not just any old Wednesday, either, but the 12th of October, and something was up at the vogue club The House of Blues. Yes, it was about time to go on in and get ready for the show: Bruce Cockburn and a Night of Irony.

Cockburn, the low-key poet/guitarist from north of the border who can't, or doesn't, shuck his rep as "Canada's best-kept secret," had reached the southernmost latitude he would touch on this leg of his tour and was about to come out, plug in, and turn on this musical old town.

That he did, too. No shocker there. And a blow-by-blow of his performance for readers of this news organ (*sure* Cockburn aficionados) would be as senseless as informing you of some unconscious routine of your own, like how you fold you shorts, or whether you wet the paste before brushing.

So mention of his songs will come later. Meantime, please abide this minor digression. (It really does deserve some exploration, these subtle incongruities that caused said title to this evening, that is.)

First there are the places that he played, both of them: 1) New Orleans, and 2) The House of Blues.

Number one: New Orleans is known as the birthplace of jazz, but it too is surely a taproot of funk. On one hand you have the talented Marsalis clan; on the other, the brothers Neville. For every Satchmo or Kid Sheik, there's a Professor Longhair, a Dr. John, Snooks and Wolfman.

Now, Cockburn can fire out some fine electric jams, and few are able to lace their acoustic tunes with such impeccable filigree. But funky he's not.

So just how would he be received, this "folk rocker" from the land of two-story snow drifts, in the city that sweats nine months of the year?

Oh yeah, and he'd never played here to date. The plot thickens.

Number two: The House of Blues is a club steeped in irony itself. The name suggests one thing; the essence is something else. The club's decor is fashioned as a combination of semi-seedy juke-joints and shrine to political correctness.

Primitive art imitations either hang from or are painted directly on the walls. But the work is not that of simple people expressing themselves as best they can: It comes off looking like the forced effort of trained artists parodying the real thing, thus in a way insulting it. (Just one example: a painting of a crudely shaped beast framed with rootbeer bottle caps and entitled "Jurassic Barq.")

There is acknowledgment of the PC movement. Above the stage are the symbols of the world's major religions, with the creed "Unity in Diversity." The message here is: There's room for all types, and everyone is welcome. Laudable, except that these doors are open to people with enough money to pay the cover. Diversity in this club (occupying a wonderfully renovated building in the southwest corner of the French Quarter) means locals ready for some good music, and conventioners and tourists, for the most part.

And the irony of ironies: The House of Blues is less than a four minute walk west after you pass owner Isaac Tigrett's more famous musical enterprise, The Hard Rock Cafe, which he founded in London and watched grow around the globe before selling his interest for a handsome sum.

At any rate, the time for Cockburn to take the stage was near. An employee at Tower Records down the road had suggested a nice crowd because there was something of a Cockburn following here, and that New Orleans' educated music listeners are well-acquainted with the Canadian. As proof she offered that Cockburn CD's sell well there. (There were no fewer than 10 titles available on the day of the show.)

Yet there was some doubt still, as only hours before, a young DJ on a local radio station alerted listeners that Bruce Cockburn (pronounced *phonetically*) would play tonight. Perhaps that meant little, though. She was on the shift playing only hits from the college charts.

So Cockburn came forth to this new place. While the tourists and curious hung back, the ones the Tower employee referred to crowded the floor in front of the stage.

"Thank you everybody. Nice to see you. Thanks for coming," Cockburn said to applause and shouts.

And away he went. Cockburn and his band taking everyone along for a brisk ride down musical trails uncommon here, yet well appreciated.

Beginning with his second tune "Lovers in a Dangerous Time," people clapped their approval at the first notes of what was coming. Someone wondered aloud where the lions are, and found out later.



Cockburn offered “a little revisionist history,” with “Kit Carson,” saying “We need it, need it to apply to the past and the present as well.”

A smiling Cockburn proceeded with “Wondering Where the Lions Are” with an invitation to “dance, sing or otherwise participate, as long as it’s to the same song.”

Sideman Colin Linden won friends quickly, not only with skilled guitar work, but also with his enthusiasm, this musical bear on a pogo.

And Cockburn proved no funk doesn’t mean no passion. He sings “If I Had a Rocket Launcher,” and you believe it. Further, his post-intermission acoustic solos of “Sunrise on the Mississippi” and “Train in the Rain” wowed folks.

With time running out, Cockburn suggested people join hands and sway to one final tune. Then he let loose with “Tie me at the Crossroads.”

Two encores followed, ending with “Peggy’s Kitchen Wall.” Cockburn seemed clearly to enjoy his first gig in New Orleans. Everyone else did, too. And there was nothing ironic at all about that.

*David Smith works for a newspaper in nearby Gulfport, Mississippi. He spent a full day in New Orleans, and took the time to check out Bruce’s show, too. His observation of this adventure was written exclusively for readers of gwp.*

editor’s note: Mick Jagger and Ron Wood of the Rolling Stones were reportedly spotted at the back of the club during Bruce’s show. Now *that’s* voodoo.

## **Atlanta, Georgia**

by John Ryan

ATLANTA~ The multi-retroculturalism of the Little Five Points area of Atlanta, with its tie-dye shops, piercing parlors, and bongo-buskers, seemed the perfect backdrop to the decidedly untrendy timelessness of much of the Cockburn repertoire. Bruce greeted the packed house with a delightful rendition of “Tokyo,” followed by “Lovers in a Dangerous Time.” Remarking that “Sometimes history needs to be re-examined, both recent and modern,” impassioned versions of “Kit Carson” and “Call it Democracy” followed. The mood lightened with “Listen for the Laugh” and “Wondering Where the Lions Are,” (guitarist Colin Linden may have overplayed that one), only to switch to a different sort of passion in “All the Ways I Want You,” (written in Atlanta on the last tour) and the poignant and powerful “Closer to the Light.” Bruce told the audience how strange it was to wake up in Atlanta and look out his window at the CNN headquarters “where they make it all up.” The first set ended with a raucous rendition of “Great Big Love” with a terrific extended solo on the Hammond organ.

The second set opened with the instrumental "Train in the Rain." This was followed by "Soul of a Man," "Bone in my Ear" and an interesting but not yet fully developed new song that may have been called "The Whole Night Sky." There was another great organ solo on "Mighty Trucks of Midnight" and electric guitar fireworks on "Rocket Launcher." This was followed by "Incandescent Blue." The second set ended with "Stolen Land," "If A Tree Falls," and "Tie me at the Crossroads." Three Encores followed: "Burden of the Angel/Beast," a delicate "All the Diamonds," and a sing-along "Peggy's Kitchen Wall."

Bruce was at the top of his game throughout, exuding poise and confidence. Instrumental virtuosity, vocal expressiveness, thematic range, lyrical beauty and wisdom- still no one can do it better.

john is a professor of sociology at clemson university in south carolina. he saw bruce at the *variety playhouse* in atlanta, on october 8th. he contributes this account especially for woodpile readers.

### **Various Bits Of Information, Etc.**

as the first year of gavin's woodpile comes to an end, i would like to recognize a few folks: many thanks to bernie and julie at the finkelstein management company in toronto, mike at columbia in santa monica, renee at columbia in new york city, larry at columbia in seattle, maureen littlejohn at *network* magazine in toronto, archer d. in seattle, elana rabinovitch at sony in toronto, stephen ostick at the *winnipeg free press* and all who have contributed their time, interest and work in helping to make this project possible. i have to say that a lot has happened in a short time and i'd be remiss in not saying it's *darned exciting*. i sincerely appreciate the cooperation of everyone who has contributed in some way. my main interest is being able to provide accurate and timely information, and i thank all who have helped in that goal. i hope to continue the same in the coming year.

for those of you who would like to take a canoe trip in canada, *and* listen to the music of bruce cockburn, check out waterwalker. this is a "canoe odyssey" on lake superior and adjacent rivers. the soundtrack contains the title song [with lyrics] and then a music-only score throughout. the video is produced by, and features, canoeist/artist bill mason. it is most likely found in camping/hiking stores that carry videos on outdoor activities. a few are:

recreational equipment, inc. (rei)

mail order dept.

p.o. box 1938

sumner, wa 98390-0800

1-800-426-4840 (u.s. or canada)

1-206-891-2500 (the rest of the world. call collect and they will call you back. so they say!) the inventory # is 586-004.

sam the record man mail order  
274 church street  
toronto, canada m5b 1z5  
tel: 416-977-6490  
(they also carry other b.c. items)

radio-radio: bruce will perform on **mountain stage** from charleston, west virginia, on december 4th. check your local npr affiliates. at print time there was no confirmation regarding the *columbia music records hour* (the christmas show). check with local stations in december in the event the show occurs.

for those of you with the computer capacity and interest, here's how to sign on to a few cockburn-related things on the inter-net. to join the *humans* mailing list, write to "majordomo@fish.com" and in the body of the message write "subscribe humans" and your e-mail address. you can also try the worldwide web at "[http://www.fish.com/fish.com/music/bruce\\_cockburn.html](http://www.fish.com/fish.com/music/bruce_cockburn.html)". thanks to **andy f.** for this info.

...and andy reports that he has a store-bought *baby beluga* (see last issue of gwp) copyrighted 1977. my store-bought one is copyrighted "1980 troubadour records ltd." on mca. (mcac-10036). hmmm...

### **Dart To The Heart Tour Continues**

bruce hits the road again, this time **solo**. the following dates were available at print time..

11-16-94: bozeman, montana...emerson cultural center  
11-17-94: bozeman, montana...emerson cultural center  
11-19-94: boulder, colorado...e-town, boulder theatre\*  
11-20-94: denver, colorado...paramount theatre  
11-23-94: san juan capistrano, california...the coach house  
11-25-94: ventura, california...ventura concert theatre  
11-26-94: los angeles, california...mc cabs (2 shows)  
11-27-94: los angeles, california...mc cabs  
12-02-94: austin, texas...kgsr anniversary show  
12-04-94: charleston, west virginia...mountain stage

\**e-town* radio will be taping this show, along with interview segments, and then making it available to participating npr affiliates. it should air during the month of december. check with your local npr affiliates to see if they carry *e-town*.

**abc!65ko4w1mfgnx(\*)8?z**

**read this**

one of the things i have heard a lot from readers is “i’ve been so lonely in my part of the world without someone to ‘talk cockburn’ with. my pet possum doesn’t get it. do you know of anyone in my neighborhood i can call, or meet up with at the next concert?” okay, so it’s not exactly like that, but the “talk cockburn” part is. well, here’s your chance to connect with fellow listeners. it’ll go like this: send your name and address **only** (typed or **clearly** written). send your telephone number *only if you want it published* along with your address. this project will appear in the next issue of the newsletter. if i can’t read any part of it, or if i have to guess at the information you provide, it *won’t* get included. **the deadline for receiving submissions is december 31st.**

## **New Hampshire** by Darrel Waugh

KEENE~ This was the first show of what organizers hoped would mark a renewal for this stately theatre located in the quaint hills of southern New Hampshire (why no Boston gig?). An announcer walked out to the front of the stage and made some remarks about how if the walls could talk, they would relate tales of shows from artists such as Odetta, B.B. King and K.D. Lang. “Tonight we are adding to this great tradition,” she said, and without further ado, Cockburn and the band emerged to a burst of applause and broke into a strong, if unremarkable version of “Tokyo.”

The stage set was minimal but tasteful: drum kit off to the left rear area of the stage; keyboards on the right front; bassist standing on a riser behind the keyboardist, and guitarist Colin Linden at the front left. Cockburn, of course, was front and center, framed by several small but powerful amps. Throughout the show the lighting alternated between a sort-of northern lights motif and basic washes of primary colors: tasteful and effective, particularly on tunes like “Incandescent Blue” and “Stolen Land.”

The set list drew heavily from Bruce’s post *Stealing Fire* material; alas, nothing prior to *Dancing in the Dragon’s Jaws* (the latter represented by the ubiquitous “Wondering Where the Lions Are,” and “Incandescent Blue”) was played, save for the show closer, a full band performance of “All the Diamonds in the World.” The thing that impressed me most about the show was the quality of Bruce’s voice (which was much stronger than when I saw him perform three years ago on the *Burning Light* tour) and the tightness of the band, which was particularly noticeable on the joyous “Great Big Love” and the searing “Stolen Land.”

Other memorable tunes included a sparse, ambient “Kit Carson,” a shimmering “Mighty Trucks of Midnight,” a yearning “Candy Man’s Gone,” a tremendous rearrangement of “Incandescent Blue” (unrecognizable for the first few minutes because of its heavy, drum-forward sound), and a beautiful solo acoustic version of “How I spent My Fall Vacation” (the opening song for the second half of the show.) The new material came off quite well live, particularly “Burden of the Angel/Beast” and “Bone in My Ear.” I waited

in vain to hear “Closer to the Light,” “Someone I Used to Love,” and “All the Ways I Want You.” Maybe next time.

The band seemed to be really enjoying themselves, feeding off the obvious enthusiasm of the crowd and responding with a stellar performance. Bruce didn't talk a lot, save for a humorous anecdote about playing at the Clinton inauguration (“The first time I've been introduced by a President”) which he shared as he went into “Scanning These Crowds.” He also spoke briefly about a new song he has on an AIDS benefit album, the crass “Wake Up Willie.”

With twenty-odd albums under his belt, it's only natural that countless favorites will not be played. But I would liked to have heard material from *Further Adventures Of, Joy Will Find a Way*, and *In the Falling Dark*. Nonetheless, the show was tremendous overall, and filled with elements of everything that is best about Cockburn's music: moments of exquisite joy, realization, and (to borrow from Mr. Van Morrison) a sense of wonder. All of this on a beautiful early fall evening. You should have been there...

*darrel attended this concert at the colonial theatre in keene, new hampshire, on september 24, 1994. many thanks for sharing his account with readers.*

\*\*\*

back in the stores by popular demand (and whatever else) is the 1993 release, **christmas**, by bruce cockburn. “i think i first got the notion to make this record in the early ‘70’s. i’ve loved christmas, at least the spiritually inspired kind, for as long as i can remember. when i was very young, my father gave me a little book of carols held together by loose-leaf rings (one of which got lost at some point and was replaced with a piece of leather thong), which i believe he had put together by himself. that book, which i still possess, was the source of much of the music on this recording.” ~ liner notes

### **First Person**

by Bruce Cockburn

I was very much a loner as a kid, an introvert and a day-dreamer. Quite early in my life I developed two levels of consciousness- one that dealt with the real world, and another that was all my own. They became so sharply divided that a lot of the time the one that dealt with the real world didn't know what the other was doing. My fantasy world seemed much more interesting to me. It was peopled by characters such as Tarzan, and by astronauts who traveled through the cosmos. I had an enormous collection of Tarzan comics and collected bubble gum space cards that depicted an never-ending serial of the adventures of a spaceship crew. These stories fueled my imagination.

I was a curious kid and can remember pestering my father with all sorts of questions. In fact, we developed a sort of game when I was about 5. He would come home from work and sit down at the table, and I'd say, “What have you got to tell me today Dad?”And

he'd have to tell me about something. After awhile I think he was quite hard put to keep coming up with new information. One day he'd tell me about volcanoes, the next day he'd tell me about astronomy. He also read Greek myths to me, and as soon as I could read, I started reading them myself. That interest has stayed with me and was my first introduction to what you could call the spiritual side of life.

I was the first child, and because of that I think my parents were very concerned about exposing me to all kinds of influences. They read to me all the time, and my father was always bringing home classical records for me to play. One of my earliest memories is sitting around listening to a recording of de Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*. I don't think I could have been more than three years old, but I loved that piece. It conjured up all kinds of exciting images in my mind.

I was born in Ottawa in 1945 and spent the first year of my life with my mother; my father was sent overseas with the army medical corps after the war. My mother worked as a lab technician before she married my father. He was a physician and later studied radiology at Queen's University in Kingston. When I was 5 my brother Donald was born, and a year after that my brother, John. I think I resented my brothers at first because I'd had my parents all to myself for so long. I got along with them, but I got my own way because they were smaller than me.

As a kid I was obedient on the surface. If I was going to be disobedient, I was secretive about it. I remember when I first started to smoke. I was 11 and couldn't do it at home, of course. My parents didn't smoke, so I had to be careful about how soon I went home after having a cigarette.

I started going to summer camp in Algonquin Park when I was 10. There were horses to ride and lots of canoe trips. I liked canoeing best. The longest trip I ever went on was more than a hundred miles and took 10 days. The time I spent in the country had a tremendous effect on my sensibilities and influenced my earlier songs.

I became interested in art at an early age. My teachers said I showed artistic talent, which my parents encouraged. I was lazy, though. Lazy about everything that wasn't day-dreaming. I was poor in gym and bored by sports, even though my father tried to interest me in hockey and football. He used to drag me to football games when I was too young to resist.

When I was about ten, my parents suggested I take music lessons. My uncle had a clarinet he wasn't using so I took clarinet lessons. After a year I switched to trumpet; it seemed like a much more dramatic instrument to play. I took drumming lessons in grades seven and eight and discovered the guitar in grade nine. I was crazy about rock 'n' roll and idolized singers like Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Fats Domino. I decided I wanted to become a guitar-playing punk, which made my parents very nervous. They said I could play the guitar as long as I didn't get a black leather jacket or grow sideburns. So I took guitar lessons, which quickly became the most important thing in my life. Music was a refuge from the tensions of adolescence and all the crap you go through in high school. I

didn't start singing until I was 15. My mother said if you can play the guitar, you should sing too, but I was always shy about singing. Eventually I decided to try it. I remember singing "Kansas City" with one of the first bands I ever joined.

In high school I also started writing avant-garde jazz pieces. It was pretty laughable stuff when I look back on it now. I became interested in the beat generation and started to write poetry. I don't remember when I first heard about beatniks, but in grade nine we had a beatnik day. I got sent home because I showed up wearing a V-neck sweater and a tie without a shirt. That was scandalous attire to wear to school in those days. You couldn't even wear jeans to school then. They had rules for everything, and I think that's why I was so disinterested in school. I was stubborn and had an unwillingness to be molded.

I got into a tough class at high school and I loved it. It was full of guys who used to cut tattoos into their arms with razor blades. I wasn't tough myself, but for some reason the tough guys thought I was okay and let me hang out with them. We had a little shoplifting ring, which involved stealing silly things like lighters and magazines.

When I finished high school I didn't want to do anything except play the guitar. I never had any intention of making money as a musician. I never thought of it in those terms consciously, but subconsciously I must have. Somehow I made all the right moves at the right time.

*bruce was taped by j.c. alspector in toronto, 1981. this interview appeared in several canadian newspapers.*

### **New Cockburn Publication**

i recently received issue number 1 of a new publication entitled COCKBURN NEWS (CBN). the following is a statement included in that issue regarding its purpose:

This zine is about the written words of Bruce Cockburn. It's a fanzine of sorts, but focusing not on the messenger but on the message. This is not a dictatorial zine, it is a participatory enterprise. That means I need to hear from you, and here's how it will work (hopefully).

It's a theme zine. Each issue will feature a particular Bruce Cockburn song and the contents of the issue will (obviously or not so obviously) relate to our impressions of the song. Contents may include further inquiry into issues raised by the song, critical analysis of the lyrics, or emotional reaction to the song. Anything related to the piece will be considered.

The song for the next issue will be printed on the last page of the current issue. So look at the back page, study the song, listen to the song, and write something and send it in. In order for this zine to work you must submit.

For more information regarding CBN, write:

Russell Henderson  
27 Pendelton Lane  
Londonberry, NH  
03053

russell informs me that there is no subscription rate, but contributions are accepted to help cover costs. sound familiar? on first inquiry, i would suggest sending at least a stamp for a reply, or perhaps a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

### **the blah blah blah report**

greetings. a year-end report on how things have gone in the way of reader participation in financing this newsletter: at print time 25% of readers had made contributions. for those of you who contributed throughout the year, i again send my warmest thanks. for those who have not contributed, i also send thanks (almost as warm, but not quite) for your interest in bruce's work. that alone is important. for those who did contribute, i hope the newsletter is worthy enough for consideration this coming year as well. if you're wondering when you last contributed, and exactly what that contribution was, call me or write me and i'm happy to check the records. tel/fax: 206-568-9543. ~ daniel