

St. Simons Island, GA.

'da Happs

By Matthew J. Permar

Regular readers will recall in my last column, I mentioned I was considering a name change for 'da Happs. No reason, just time for something different, I said, asking for suggestions.

Well, imagine my surprise when on the day after the newspaper hit subscribers' mailboxes, I received a fax with six, count 'em, six suggestions for new names for the column.

They were, verbatim:

1. 'da Mystery Music Reviews;
2. 'da Phantom Artists;
3. 'da Who, What & Why Are These People Making CDs Reviews;
4. 'da Turn Your Stereo Way Down For This One Review;
5. Matt's Musical Madhouse Featuring American Idles;

and my personal favorite ...

6. You've Probably Never Heard of 'Em and Probably Never Will.

Any of you who read our "Goin' to the Show" movie review may have guessed that movie critic Jeff Lane was behind these suggestions. If you did, you would have been correct. From time to time, Jeff reviews a movie that is not showing in a local theater. When he does, he calls it "pulling a Permar". It's one of his ways of ribbing me about reviewing non-mainstream bands he's never heard of.

Now keep in mind that this is a man who probably hasn't bought a new CD since Christmas and who, the last time I asked, told me his favorite bands were Dire Straits and Steely Dan. Dire Straits and Steely Dan, you say? Hmmmm ...? Not exactly bands on the cutting edge, huh? More like oldies tour headliners these days.

Folks, bottom line on why I review what I do is – I review what I like.

There's thousands upon thousands of bands and musicians out there making CDs. Some are great, some are good and some just stink. But I can only get to so many of them – unlike music magazines like Rolling Stone, ice and Spin that have dozens of music writers on staff.

Also, let's remember, fame has absolutely nothing to do with talent.

Caroline Aiken is a perfect example. She's a tremendously gifted, triple threat, singer/songwriter/ guitarist who has self-produced a half dozen of her own CDs.

But, I know plenty of people, right here in the town where she grew up that have never heard of her or listened to her music.

Caroline has always played her own music and my guess is she doesn't care what the big 'Stars' are doing or if she ever becomes one. It's called musical integrity and can be summed up very simply: It means what you play is more important than how famous you become.

So ... you can read on and learn about some folks who are making music worth listening to ... or you could just wait for the next crappy Eric Clapton album.

Kenny Butterill – Just A Songwriter (2003)

I almost feel guilty that I don't have more to say about *Just A Songwriter*, but this is such an unpretentious, laid back, straight forward CD that it doesn't need a lot of description and fact is, too many words would take away from its elegant simplicity.

Kenny is a throw back to pre-Garth country. This is pure Americana- country blues in a J.J. Cale vein. It's wonderful, acoustic music, with a subtle touch of electric that is all perfectly blended with Kenny's down to earth lyrics.

A Canadian by birth, Butterill combines the Americana flavors of Texas country, blues, soft jazz, folk and modern country to serve up a very tasty roots mélange that is attracting him a larger and larger following of music lovers who are disenfranchised by the watered down 80s pop rock that Nashville calls country.

Kenny's songs, sung in his gentle but firm baritone, are about life, love and friends; winning and losing and reminiscing about what used to be. A favorite is a homage to one of Kenny's main influences – the late, great Townes Van Zandt.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Steve Miller Band harpist Norton Buffalo's outstanding contribution to this CD. Buffalo is one of the best and his interplay with the guitars is nothing short of mesmerizing. This is an excellent CD whose title says it all – *Just A Songwriter*. Buy it: www.NoBullSongs.com

(Note: Also reviewed was the excellent new album from Warren Zanes, "Memory Girls" on Dualtone Records).

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