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Pedro Pereira at Cool Beanz

The gig to promote his debut CD starts at 8 p.m. Oct. 26, and will include other musicians.

Next Workshop

The next ISS workshop is Oct. 1

Folk Music in Huntington A Whole Lotta Talent

BY SUZANNE ERNST

On August 11, I had the privilege and joy of attending the Second Annual Huntington Folk Festival at Heckscher Park in Huntington

I had a great time, and got to see some of our Island Songwriters performing on the Harry Chapin Rainbow stage in front of a group of folks who truly love folk music.

There were three song circles presented for the audience, and I want to tell you about the first one.

The first song cycle which kicked off the five-and-a-half-hour evening, included the duo Ken Korb, and Bruce MacDonald, and individual performers Steve Robinson, Glen Roethel, and Denise Romas.

The performers were seated on stage presenting an informal, living-room style ambience to the audience. Denise Romas introduced each of the performers as they took turns sharing their songs on a day that was sunny, and temperature-perfect.

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CD Review

Last Man on the Planet? Thankfully Not

BY TONY TEDESCHI

If Pedro Pereira were the "Last Man on the Planet," a pleasant exit for the rest of us would be listening to his debut CD of that title before we all departed. Whether he is dealing with issues of international concern ("Lay Down Your Sword," "Cobblestones"), elements of social commentary ("I Need a Hand," "I'm Not Me," "Nobody"), his lovely take on romantic love ("Everything") or the influences of the sea ("The Island," "Saudade"), all tracks never lose touch with the music's role in the message.

"Saudade," a song in his native Portuguese, is a beguiling marriage of lyrics and music so seductive that audiences feel compelled to sing the chorus when Pedro performs it live, even if they have no clue as to what the words mean.

Every track is a tribute to Pedro's songwriting and musicianship and the care that went into the production of the album. The arrangements also demonstrate his grasp of musical ensembles, working in conjunction with Doug Kwartler of Hollow Body Studios in Floral Park. Doug's infusion of instruments is beautifully coordinated to meld with the message and the music of each track. Doug also plays a range of

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CD Review: 'Last Man on the Planet'

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of stringed instruments throughout the album, including banjo, guitar and violin.

The use of violin (Andrew White), trumpet (Mark Morgan) and classical guitar (Bob Krummenacker), particularly, create underlying musical themes or pointed musical accents in all the right places. Percussion (Michael Leuci) and bass (Mike Pappalardo and Jim Leach) provide expert rhythm anchors.

Perhaps the surest test that a song works occurs when a doleful piece like "Raining," nonetheless makes us feel pleased that we were a part of something lovely. Or an anti-war song like "Cobblestones," delivers its message wrapped in an arrangement that reduces politics to the personal level of those who must execute, while avoiding any preachiness.

Within a universe where common conceptions of what popular music should be produce a sense of sameness, even across a range of genres, "Last Man on the Planet" demonstrates what can be achieved when you are true to your art. Listening to music, after all, demands a certain commitment of time and attention, unless your musical experience is just background while you wait for the elevator to reach the ground floor. To warrant that commitment, an artist needs to deliver.

When lyrics stating, "I'm nobody, tell me who are you? I bet you're nobody, too," make us envious of the singer and his objective, we can only conclude the artist has made the connection.

While determining whether the delivery was worth the commitment is completely subjective, all an artist can give is what is best in him- or herself. Thankfully, Pedro is *not* the last man on the planet and all of us are the better for it.

"Last Man on the Planet" is available for purchase at gigs and at <http://cdbaby.com/cd/pedropereira>. Pedro's web site is <http://myspace.com/pedromusic>.

A Whole Lotta Talent in Huntington

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Each of the performers had their own style, and excelled in their presentations.

Ken, Bruce, Steve, Glen and Denise were well suited to one another. So much so that when they sang their last song together, a wonderful rendition of the Doobie Brothers "Listen to the Music", I could have imagined them as being five members of the same band, not five individuals temporarily gathered for a single performance.

Their voices and instruments were so in unison, it sounded like they had been playing together for years.

This writer felt very proud to know them, and lucky to be there for this significant mid-summer musical event.

If you would like to listen to samples of their music, please visit the following web sites:

<http://www.ahealingangel.com/html/music.shtml>

<http://www.glenroethel.com/listen.shtml>

<http://www.stellarob.com/music.html>

Please contact the Folk Music Society of Huntington for more information about Ken Korb and Bruce MacDonald: <http://fmshny.org/index.htm>

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Editor's Corner: Asta Open Mic on Hiatus

BY PEDRO PEREIRA

The open mic at Asta Wine Café and Art Gallery that I have been hosting in recent months with soundman and ISS member Tony Tedeschi is suspended until further notice. Asta's ownership, which has been very supportive of the biweekly gig, has temporarily closed the eatery on Main Street in Huntington.

According to the owners, the business will reopen the first week of September, at which point they will let me know when they would like to resume the open mic.

The Asta biweekly gig has been a great success, with participation from such regulars as Claude Margouloff, Meghan Capaldo, Suzanne Ernst and Walter Sargent. Lately, a fair number of newcomers had been showing up as well.

So long as Asta reopens, I have been assured that the open mic will have a future. For news on Asta open mic developments, be sure to check myspace.com/astawinesopenmic or myspace.com/pedromusic. I will also send out an e-mail when I get some news, and I will notify Walter so he can post new developments at the ISS web site, www.islandsongwriters.org.

Of course the Asta open mic is not the only game in town. I encourage ISS members to participate in other gigs as much as possible, and those include the monthly ISS open mic at Borders in Syosset, which takes place the first Friday or every month, and another gig that has been picking up steam in Smithtown. The latter starts at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays at Katie's, 145 W. Main St.

On the same night there is also an open mic at Cool Beanz, 556 N. Country Rd., St. James, starting at 8 p.m., and the ever-popular Acoustic Long Island at the Deepwells Mansion, also on N. Country Road in St. James. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings, Jessie's Lip Smackin' Roadhouse, 1810 Merrick Road, Merrick, hosts open mics.

ISS Newsletter Editor Releases Debut CD

After about a year and a half of holing up in the studio with producer Doug Kwartler, I have released my debut CD, "Last Man on the Planet," a review of which starts on the front page of this issue.

The CD contains 12 tracks written between 2001 and 2006; the oldest of which, "The Island," is a song I brought to an ISS workshop in the first few months after I joined the organization. The most recently written song is "Cobblestones," which I brought to an ISS workshop early this year.

Doug and I started working on the songs at the end of March 2006, first laying rhythm guitar and lead vocal tracks, then recording other instruments on top. Five songs, including the title track, were recorded live with a drummer and bass player. Doug dressed those tracks up with lead guitar and other instruments.

Recording this CD gave me a lot of insight into what goes into producing and arranging pop music. Being a solo artist, I had to pull other musicians into the project, which at times proved challenging as we tried to accommodate everybody's schedules. Overall it was a great experience and I am gratified to finally have something to show for all the work I have put into writing my songs, and that Doug and I put into recording, arranging and mixing them.

Doug runs Hollow Body Studios in Floral Park. He can be contacted through his web site, www.dougmusic.com or myspace.com/dougmusic.

I have been selling copies of my CD at gigs, but it is also available for purchase at www.cdbaby.com and Apple's iTunes.

I will be playing a gig on Oct. 26 at Cool Beanz in St. James to promote the CD, and I expect that several of the musicians who helped me record will be there. See you there.

Who Played What

Here's a list of songwriters and songs from last month's ISS workshop:

Mike Svezia

Dance Land

Phil Kennelty

A Song for Susan

Guy Pezzullo

What Are You Waiting For?

Tim Dillon

Love Will Find You There

Pedro Pereira

Too Far

Susan Davis

He's the One

Maria Elaina DiFalco

A Little More Than I Should

Mike Capraro and

Dennis Westbay

Bitter Frost

Frank Gambino

Stone's Throw Away

ISS

Director

Sonny Speed

Webmaster

Walter Sargent

Writing Coach

Mel Glazer

Newsletter

Editor

Pedro Pereira

Contributors

Walter Sargent

Tony Tedeschi

Suzanne Ernst

Dave Cook

Gerry Dantone

Sonny Meadows

Mike Svezia

Steve Robinson

Frank Gambino

We're on the Web!

See us at

www.islandsongwriters.org

Writer's Choice: Tim Dillon's 'Love Will Find You There'

BY WALTER SARGENT

By a nose, "Love Will Find You There" took August like a fine summer wine with notes of Kenny Rankin and a hint of Al Green. With a steady, gentle rhythm and chords like colors you can't name, "Love" hangs with the best of 'em.

Coming in a very second by a fraction of a vote was "Too Far," from "Bad Boy" Pedro Pereira. From the boot-on-your-neck school of sentimentality, "Too Far" reminded us of "Exile"-era Stones. Nice change-ups on the verse, slammin' hook and plenty of drive.

And this month's the ISS Spontaneous Award Winners are:

First-time Salutory Award: He's the One (Susan Davis-Stemp)

Write-on-Demand Special Achievement Award: Song For Susan (Phil Kennelty)

Poet's Choice Award: Bitter Frost (Westbay and Capraro)

Best Overall Musical Achievement: A Stone's Throw (Frank Gambino)

Stadium Pop Anthem of the Month: What Are You Looking For? (Guy Pezzullo)

Hook of the Month Award: A Little More than I Should (Maria Elaina DiFalco)

Best Dystopian Exercise Video Theme: Dance Land (Mike Svezia)

Thanks to all the songwriters who presented and to all the voters who voted.

ISS Open Mics

Don't forget: The next open mic at **Borders Cafe**, Route 25, Syosset, is Oct 5. This gig is monthly, on the first Friday of the month. Signup is at 7:30 p.m and the music starts at 8 p.m.

The **Asta Wine Cafe and Art Gallery**, 334 Main Street, Huntington, open mic is on hiatus.

Monthly Workshop

Test out your songs in front of a crowd by playing them for fellow musicians who will provide constructive feedback with the goal of helping you improve as a songwriter.

The ISS workshop takes place the first Monday of every month, except if it falls on a holiday, at Five Towns College, off Burrs Lane in Dix Hills. Run by ISS Director Sonny Speed, the workshop starts at 7:30 p.m.

Bring a guitar if you wish to perform your song live, or you may bring a

recording on CD or tape. A piano is available for those who write their songs at the keys.

Be sure to bring 25 copies of your lyric sheets so the other workshop attendees can follow along while listening to your song. It is much easier to provide constructive criticism when people can read the lyrics.

The ISS workshop is at the center of the organization's mission to help songwriters perfect their craft. Many performers on Long Island got their start at ISS.

General Information

For general information about ISS or how to join the organization, contact ISS Director Sonny Speed at mcspeed@optonline.net or 631- 462-3300.

To submit items for publication in the newsletter, contact Pedro Pereira at pedropereira@verizon.net.

Visit our web site at www.islandsongwriters.org.