

**Let the Good Times Roll:**  
Musical Notes from Cannon Beach

The Professor chooses this month to indulge in a short musical retrospective, a glance backward at 40-odd years of musical performance by those artists who have shaped our city's unique cultural character. Their voices and accompaniment have vibrated through the Cannon Beach air, lightening hearts and lifting spirits.

Musical entertainment during the late 40's and early 50's was homespun or church oriented. Seaside hosted "Big Bands" at several dance venues. Cannon Beach listened to Paul Swiger playing his sax at the Bronco Room after hayrides, beach boys strumming ukeleles around bonfires, church hymns rising on Sunday morning. More adventurous souls could travel to country grange halls in the area, participating in "Swiss Stomps" or "Swedish Stomps," as they were termed. Live bands performed; alcohol flowed freely outdoors in parked cars; a fist and knuckle melee inevitably climaxed the festivities. The fight was the thing. Music and musicians were an afterthought.

Imagine Cannon Beach in the early 60's. Population 185, predominantly loggers and retirees. A sleepy and conservative village.

Townfolk on Hemlock observed a startling thing one still August afternoon. Young men dressed in the manner of British Redcoats, very long-haired, drove an aged hearse down mainstreet, rapping their exhaust pipes, and evincing a certain brigandish hauteur. Townspeople were uneasy. Painted boldly on the hearse, words shouted "Paul Revere and the Raiders".

Rumors flew. Adults expressed concern. The young men were a band from Idaho, a gyrating "rock and roll" band scheduled to perform at The Waves Roller Skating Rink (now the Coaster Theater) on Friday night. Town fathers gathered at an emergency meeting of the city council to protest.

A conservative element feared dissolution of community morals and a backlash of promiscuity. The Raiders purportedly followed coastal concerts with an "after Hours" beach shivaree. Rumor mongers described drunken bacchanals (the infamous Crisco Parties): naked teenagers and band members slathered their bodies with Crisco, writhed and danced as flames licked the night sky.

In a surprise move, the city council allowed the concert to proceed. Youth funneled in from all points. June Sweeney sold hundreds of "Bitty Burgers" for twenty-five cents at her Peppermint Lounge. Raider vocalist Mark Lindsey scaled a piano and leapt to the rafters of the old roller rink during a raucous rendition of "Midnight Hour." The crowd exploded. Live music had found a home in Cannon Beach. Scores of regional groups trekked to The Waves and the Pupo Club at Seaside in succeeding years: Big George and the Corvettes, The Kingsmen (of "Louie, Louie" fame), Don Gallucci and The Goodtimes, Little Al and his band.

Other establishments served up folk and traditional music. Stewart Dodge, The Lackaff Brothers, and Paul Dueber performed at Swiger's Sea Ranch and the M and M Building. Bill's Tavern had no performances. Music was illegal in public houses until the mid-70's.

During the halcyon summers of 67-69, my Australian cohort Tony Knight and I operated The Barn, a building currently undergoing renovation by the Coaster Properties consortium. We spent our days surf lifeguarding and our evenings shepherding teen-age rock and roll hounds through two "Summers of Love."

"Here comes another gaggle of scruffy muso's, Lindsey," Tony would yell to me from his perch atop the lifeguard tower. Young hopefuls would traipse down the beach, guitars in hand, looking for an audition at our club and a few nights of glory. The Palace Meat Market, The Excellent Berries, The Royal Tans and others rattled the walls with guitar blasts and raging drums. Memorable evenings included a session with The New Tweedy Bros. Vocal and Instrumental Band, recently returned from concerts in the S.F. Bay Area with Moby Grape, Captain Beefheart, and the Grateful Dead. Our house band, the Washington Merry-Go-Round, featured the oldest living rock and roll drummer, 86-year old Emmett Wallace, who appeared on the T.V. program "What's My Line?" Oh, we had our brushes with greatness, rest assured.

Groups worked the Tolovana Inn Restaurant during the 70's and 80's: The Jo-Matics, Phil N' the Blank Spots, Tim Burr.

The Haystack Educational Summer Program brought musicians of international renown: Byron Berline of the Dillards, Hot Rize, Obo Addy, Elie Minette, inventor of the steel drum, Jerry Douglas, dobroist extraordinaire, Sally Van Meter, Peter Rowan, Carmen Dragon, and more.

The Coaster Theater hosted jazz greats Richie Cole and Ramsey Lewis, Mel Brown, Carl Smith and The Natural Gas, Jim Smith and his cornet.

Current residents and sometime residents of musical consequence include Nancy and Ann Wilson of the group Heart and Signe Anderson-Ettlin, early vocalist for the Jefferson Airplane.

The tradition continues today. Visitations from the Holy Modal Rounders, Baby Gramps, The Mather Brothers, Jim Mesi, Lloyd Jones, Jeffrey Fredricks and the Clamtones, the PH Factor Jug Band, Sidesaddle, Altamira, John Doan, Scott Cossu, the frequently re-united Beerman Creek String Band, The Hooserville Rockers, the Reverend Gary Small, the Bond St. Blues Band, the Mighty Eagles, the Barbecue Orchestra, Terry Robb, Turtle Yandemarr, the Siegel Bros., Spud and Kid, and Drs. Hults and Kiesky can drive away the low-dog blues from even the darkest days.

Indulge yourself. Attend a live concert and digest some fresh sounds. Fresh music is much tastier than canned.

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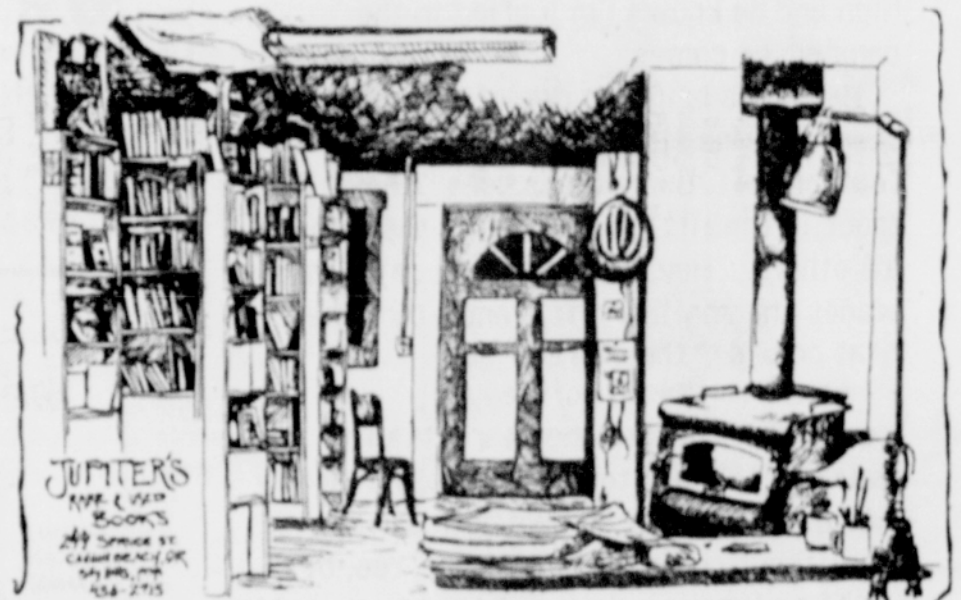
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