



The Folk Club

of Reston-Herndon

...Preserving Folk Traditions



Vol 8, No 4; April, 1994

Missed Trains, Drunk Dates & A Kiss On The Knee ...

A New York Singing Career Reviewed

Deirdre Murphy

Ah, the ambiance of the sophisticated New York nightclub. Subdued lights, the muted clink of glass, the appreciative murmur and applause of elegant New Yorkers ...

Where? Where is this place? Twenty-mmmmm years ago, I searched in vain for the perfect club. When I was at college near my home in Yonkers (that's right above the Bronx, for the geographically challenged), diligently going to class in between singing & playing my guitar in the student lounge, someone offered to pay me to sing in the barroom of a suburban club one night a week. Well, I jumped at the chance. No microphone, no lights, drunks staggering up to breathe in my face, what the hay—I was in Show Biz!

After about a month of this glamour, I cleverly surmised that this was my true calling and that further schooling was unnecessary. (I can show you the corresponding gray hairs on my mother's head from this specific decision.) From one of the regulars at this ba-, I mean, club, I found out about a club in New York, where I auditioned and got hired. I was on a roll—nothing could stop me now. The Big Apple was mine.

I was the supporting/second act in this tiny, noisy Manhattan barroom until the night the main singer quit after a drunken fight with management, and I became "The Star." I was enchanted, my parents inconsolable (they kept hoping all of this was just an

aberration). On any night, at any given moment only about one-and-a-half people were listening to me.

But the real problem was the schedule. I had to sing from 9 to 1 am and the last train for Yonkers left Grand Central Station at 1:20. That made for some pretty hair-raising cab rides. One night I got there just as the last train pulled out. The next one was the 6:20 am. I stood there in the lovely, vaulted upper level of New York's greatest terminal, terrified at the thought of explaining this to my parents. Then a few conductors who were killing time until the morning trains asked me if I would "sing a few toons." Yes, folks, I was probably the first (and possibly only) folk singer to play Grand Central. Let me tell you, the acoustics are fantastic. And when two baggage handlers showed up, the audience filled out nicely.

The next place I sang in was called *Himself* after its irreverent, very Irish, often bawdy manager. This club actually had a sort of back room, with a 100-watt bulb partly covered in aluminum foil as a spot—a definite step up.

The manager, however, had a habit, when he was in his cups, of waiting until I had raised the audience to a state of semi-attention with a sad, soul-piercing ballad, then striding up to the microphone and making me accompany him on the guitar while he sang some rather astounding limericks. This usually

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A Kiss On The Knee

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resulted in a clearing out of major sections of the back room. Of course, some patrons were not always so attentive. There was the night when a very petite young lady with the six-foot-four date at the table right in front of me “fell asleep” after ingesting a bit of Heineken. So her date tucked her under his arm like a football and walked out with her. I was mid-note when he picked her up – and I learned to just keep singing. At this same time, I started singing with an Aussie at a joint in the Bronx run by two moonlighting firefighters. I was looking to fill up my calendar and he thought what this place needed was a lady folk singer to class it up.

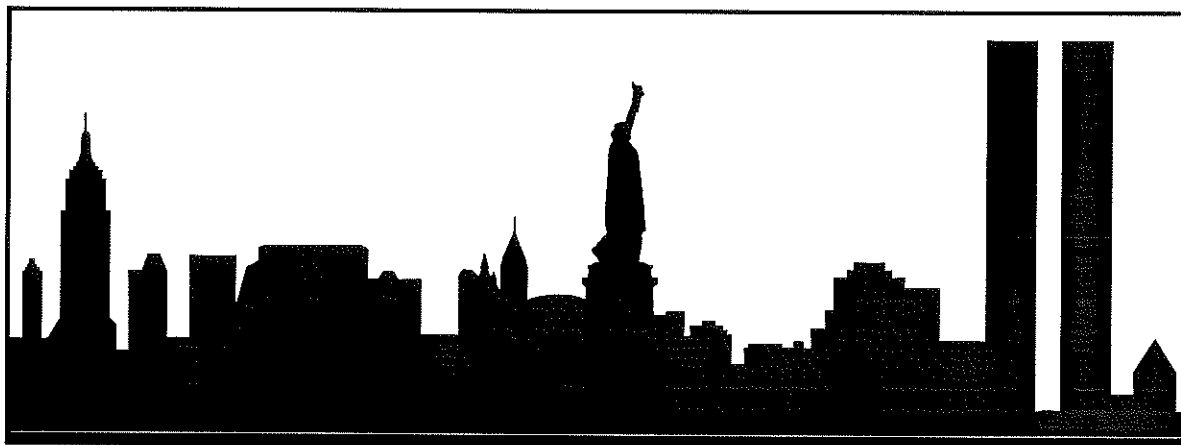
On my first night in the Bronx as I waited in the kitchen/Green Room, the Aussie launched into a long, gallant introduction, forgetting completely that this was, well, the Bronx. A beery voice finally came booming from the bar, “Shaddup, and bring out the tamatah!” With no further intro necessary, I made my appearance. I’d like to say I wowed them, but I think basically they didn’t know what to make of me.

One night that does stand out from my month or so there, I was seated on the stool in my miniskirt, guitar positioned demurely on my lap, microphone stand centered strategically, liting a sad love ballad. Two giant forms detached themselves from the mob at the bar and started walking slowly toward me. I tried to ignore them and kept singing; they kept coming, faces expressionless (I kept singing). As they reached the microphone (I kept singing), they slowly knelt down and planted a kiss on each knee

(I kept singing). Then they rose, turned, and walked back to the bar (I kept singing). The crowd was, shall we say, exuberant, yes, positively exultant. It seems some kind of bet had been placed.

At another spot I sang at in the Bronx, I was part of a duo. I don’t remember the name of this particular “club,” just that it wasn’t in as classy a neighborhood as the one with the knee-kissers. This place never even had a live performer – of the singing variety at least – but it did have a pool table, which became our stage. Someone had built a plywood cover for it, and we would climb up by stepping on a chair pushed against the side. Actually, the more I think of it, safety lay in elevation in this case. The crowd was apparently working through some deep-seated hostilities and there were quite a few animated discussions during most songs. An occasional bracing spray of beer would reach us, but usually the patrons interacted with each other. From time to time, the bartender (an off-duty policeman who wore a tiny silver spoon on a chain around his neck) would have to come from behind the bar and “arbitrate.” We all decided a short run at this club would be best.

But this club I sing in now is really nice and quiet. I don’t have to catch a train and the beer spray is minimal. Mostly it’s a sea of interested-looking faces. But sometimes it makes me a little, well, noivous, you know? Of course at those times I do what anyone who cut her first teeth singing in the Big Apple – I keep singing.



Showcasing Barbara Ann

Our showcase performer April 5th is Barbara Ann Roszko. We reached her at home to talk about music and performing.

Q: *When did you first get interested in music?*

BA: Growing up, my family was very musical. My grandmother and mother were very musical and I started singing very young. In fact, I sang a song on a local TV channel in New York when I was still in first grade. Then in eighth grade, I started learning to play the guitar.

Q: *Which styles of music influenced you most in those years?*

BA: Well, as a child mostly Broadway show tunes and choir music. After I started playing the guitar it was mostly Folk music. Peter Paul & Mary, Judy Collins and then Joan Baez.

Q: *What do you like most about singing in front of people?*

BA: I love to watch the audience respond to something. Like when they sing with me and I know they're enjoying my songs. I like making people like that.

Q: *What do you like best about singing at the Folk Club?*

BA: I like the listening concept. I played at a lot of coffee houses, so the fact that people would sit quietly and listen to what I'm doing is great. It helps me focus what I'm doing.

Q: *What are your five favorite Folk songs?*

Oh, let's see. *500 Miles ... The Cruel War ... Where Have All The Flowers Gone? ... Leaving On A Jet Plane.* And I know *House of the Rising Sun* isn't a Folk song, but I do a Folk version of it. Is that five? I'll add *Puff the Magic Dragon*.

Wanted:
Second hand guitar – better than a Silvertone
but not as expensive as a Martin.
John Lucas 437-4202

Dear Folk Club,

For several months I have been meaning to write this thank you letter, but as you know, creative people tend to procrastinate. We do so many things at once that we end up forgetting what we really want to do.

The other day I got the Folk Club Newsletter in the mail and it reminded me again of all the ways that the Folk Club has changed my life in the 14 months I have been a member.

In January of 1993 I was going through some major changes in my life. I knew I needed to do something for me. (We all know what that is about, right?) I realized that it had been 17 years since I had played the guitar and sang for people. I heard about the Folk Club and attended for the first time one cold Tuesday night not long after. Getting up in front of all of you gave me such a high. It was then I realized that music would be back in my life again. I really enjoy it when all of you sing along with my songs. When people sing along it tells any musician that they enjoy her music. It makes me very happy to please people.

All of you have given me a lot of inspiration and strength during a very difficult year for me. I want to thank a few people in particular: To T.M. for giving me the inspiration to begin song writing again. To Bill for being able to have the experience of performing together (it's so difficult to find a compatible singing partner). And a big thank you to Ellen for her fantastic job as MC. Whenever she is the MC, she makes everyone feel more comfortable.

We are all creative people and we all need lots of support from each other. This group has given me both strength and support and I am thankful for being able to be a part.

Barbara Ann



Folk Club of Reston-Herndon



April 3 - May 14, 1994

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Apr 3	Apr 4	Apr 5 Showcase Performance 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 6	Apr 7 w/Sanford Markley 8:00pm Frederick Folk Club - Deli Creations	Apr 8	Apr 9
Apr 10 1:00pm Sweet Harmony @ Colvin Run Mill	Apr 11	Apr 12 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 13	Apr 14	Apr 15	Apr 16 Folk Club Performers @ World Gate Shopping Ctr @ Potomac Overlook Park 7:30pm Red Leaf
Apr 17	Apr 18	Apr 19 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 20	Apr 21 8:00pm Frederick Folk Club - Deli Creations	Apr 22	Apr 23
Apr 24	Apr 25	Apr 26 Showcase Lottery Draw David Massengill (\$7/6) 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 27	Apr 28	Apr 29	Apr 30 2:00pm Iona at Southern Md Celtic Fest - St Leonard Md
May 1	May 2	May 3 Showcase Performance 7:30pm Folk Club	May 4	May 5 8:00pm Frederick Folk Club - Deli Creations	May 6	May 7 8:00pm Iona & Sweet Harmony-Open Door Coffeeshouse
May 8	May 9	May 10 7:30pm Folk Club	May 11	May 12	May 13	May 14

Coming Folk Club Events

- April 26 - David Massengill
\$7/6
- May 17 - Tommy Sands
\$10/9
- June 14 - Bill Staines
\$8/7
- July 26 - The Mollies
\$6/5
- August 23 - Pete Kennedy &
Maura Boudreau
\$7/6
- Sept 20 - Richard Shindell
\$7/6
- October 25 - Scott Ainslie
\$8/7

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Check your Label - Are you expiring? "19940401" is expiring with this issue. Don't miss an issue - Don't miss the benefits of the Folk Club. Please send in your membership check (\$12.00) to keep your membership active!

Showcase Performances

April 5, the featured performer will be Barbara Ann Roszko.

On the first Tuesday of every month we feature a Folk Club member in a showcase two-set (25 minute) performance. To become one of these "showcase" specials all you have to do is 1) be a member of the Folk Club, 2) fill out a lottery slip by the last Tuesday of the month, 3) win the drawing and 4) practice, practice practice!

The Folk Club

President, Larry Mediate

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