

## Jerry Jeff Jazz Liner Notes

Jerry Jeff Walker has worn a lot of hats since he rode his thumb out of upstate New York almost half a century ago. He's been a Greenwich Village folkie, a New Orleans street busker, a ground-breaking country-rocker, a near selfparody of rock-star excess, a thoughtful and reflective balladeer, and an articulate chronicler of a life spent mostly hop-scotching from one spotlight to another.

But until now, he has never harkened back to some of his earliest—and, it would seem, his most influential influences. Jerry Jeff Jazz, the Austin, Texas-based singer-songwriter's 32nd album, finds Walker revisiting some of the songs and artists who inhabit the Great American Songbook. The album includes selections from some of the greatest architects of the American song canon: George Gershwin, Sammy Cahn, Rodgers & Hart, Hoagy Carmichael, Jimmy Van Heusen, and more. Some of the songs—"How Long Has This Been Going On," "In the Wee Small Hours," "Time After Time," "There Will Never Be Another You," "I Get Along Without You Very Well," and "My Funny Valentine," have achieved a sort of free-floating, cross-generational enduring popularity. They are part of our shared musical vocabulary.

Some of the songs on *Jerry Jeff Jazz* have been variously recorded by pop singers (Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Nat "King" Cole, Julie London, Linda Ronstadt) and jazz singers (Chet Baker, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Nancy Wilson) alike. Walker finds himself in very good company.

One of Jerry Jeff's recording hallmarks has always been making his records "live," to preserve the interplay and intimacy of the creative process, and Jerry Jeff Jazz is no exception. The album tracks were recorded in the time-honored fashion that found everyone in a circle and performing live. The album was recorded over two days at Two Coves Studio in Walker's adopted hometown of Austin. Accompanying him on the album is an acclaimed quartet featuring guitarists Mitch Watkins and Tommy Nash, bassist Spencer Stames, and drummer Steve Meador. Jerry Jeff remarked, "It's the first

album where I only had to concentrate on singing. No playing, or worrying about the lyrics."

He added that the seeds for *Jerry Jeff Jazz* were planted when he and his wife Susan bought a second home on the northern edge of New Orleans' French Quarter in 1998.

"I bought a bunch of CDs to play while were loading furniture into the house," Walker recalled. "I went out and got some Chet Baker and Nina Simone and Louis Armstrong, Mose Allison... Then I really started buying more stuff, like Ella Fitzgerald, the Mills Brothers—basically, a lot of stuff from the Forties and Fifties."

Those songs and artists—basically the soundtrack of American popular music before the advent of rock 'n' roll—filled the airwaves when Jerry Jeff was growing up on East End Ave. in Oneonta, NY.

"I grew up surrounded by music," he recounted in his 1999 autobiography, *Gypsy Songman*. "Mel and Alma (his parents) had been local dance champs, 1939. Alma and Aunt Norma and a friend had a singing group...the Three Queens of Melody...Grandma Jessie had played the piano as a child. She could not pass a piano without stopping to caress the keys 'to see what they have to say.'...I spent hours listening to my mom's and dad's records..."

Years later he added, "I came from a family that had a hi-fi, the kind where you lift up the lid, stack six or seven albums on a post, and they dropped down, one after another," he remembered. "But I didn't have records of my own, so I would go through my parents' records and pick stuff I'd like to hear."

He recalled times when Big Apple jazz musicians like Jimmy Rushing, Kirby Walker and "Fez" Roundtree would come to "the country" around Oneonta to chill out and shake some big city grit off their shoes. They were guests of a local club owner, Jerry Monzer. "I was a staple at every jam session...I even got to sing a couple of songs," Jerry Jeff recalled.

Musically, Jerry Jeff recalled, it was another place in time. "At that point, Elvis was coming,



but Chet Baker (the West Coast "cool jazz" trumpeter and vocalist) was king in 1954 and '55. If you weren't mainstream, like Perry Como and Eddie Fisher, and you didn't live in the South, where there were rhythm and blues stations, the only alternative was listening to jazz—three or four piece combos that played swing, bebop, and that sort of stuff."

Walker's challenge in recording *Jerry Jeff Jazz* was to find a way to make the music his own.

"The songs I picked are the best of the best, with really pretty melodies and stories," he said. "I didn't want to go with a piano and trumpet when we recorded—if I'd done that I might have wanted to go with a Dixieland style... I had to find the (song) keys first, and then pick a tempo in which I wanted to do them. And then we just kind of went where it was comfortable. I can't think of another album where these songs have been done with just two guitars, bass and drums."

Both the songs and the singer have proven unusually durable. In his seventh decade, Walker still entertains beer-drinking, honky-tonk audiences with standards of his own, like "L.A. Freeway," "Mr. Bojangles" and "Up Against the Wall (Redneck Mother)." But after the hoo-rawing crowds have departed, when the applause has died down and the lights have dimmed, it is the music of Jerry Jeff's Jazz that resounds most strongly with him, as he convincingly sings, "...in the wee small hours of the morning."

#### LETTER FROM SUSAN

This year's birthday was another great success – big thanks to all the fans who attended!

We are still actively pursuing the realization of the vocational school for popular music, hopefully here in Austin, TX. We are receiving continuous support and encouragement from the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, our sister school in England, and its executive director, Mark Featherstone-Witty, who has joined our board of directors.

We did briefly hire a development director last year, but soon learned we had moved too quickly. We have more organizational work to do before that post is cost-effective. We are back to building our board and fundraising, while targeting foundations geared towards education/arts in the first phase of a capital campaign.

Most of our money continues to come from contributions guided to us from our fans! We received

a call last fall from Steve Sellery of the Golf Channel, who wanted to make the school the beneficiary of a Pro-Am tournament the channel was bringing to Austin, in exchange for putting together a Pickin' Party for the final night. With the help of our talented friends in Austin: Steve Fromholz, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Ray Benson, Turk Pipkin, Harry Anderson, Pat Green, and of course Jerry Jeff and Django – we knocked them out with great music and lots of laughs. All this fun while raising \$50,000 for the school – not to mention all the great exposure on the Golf Channel. Hopefully, this relationship will continue and we can look forward to more great times and exposure for the school.

I would also like to acknowledge Vinson & Elkins law firm, who has taken our Foundation as pro bono work, and continues to steer us on the straight and narrow. Also, many thanks to Danny

Powell at Powell, Ebert & Smolik for donating time to the school, keeping us on the up and up with the IRS and our 501(c) 3 status.

We raised another \$13,000 for the Tried & True Foundation at this year's silent auction, and we thank those who contributed to our event. With those funds, we have \$163,000 in the Tried & True Foundation – all earmarked for the school.

Thank you all so much for your ongoing support, and please keep us in mind when you hear of fundraising possibilities. As I mentioned, our fans have been the driving force for donations, even sending us matching grant information from their companies, and realizing the great cause and need we have. Times are tough out there now and it is certainly going to take more time than I originally thought to make this school a reality, but we remain dedicated.

IERRY IEFF JAZZ: It's finally finished! Jerry Jeff went into the studio in February and recorded 14 standards from the '20s, '30s and '40s – songs like "Look for the Silver Lining," "My Funny Valentine," and "Time After Time," to name a few. Joined by Tommy Nash and Mitch Watkins on guitar, this album is smooth Jerry Jeff! It will hit the stores on May 27, but Fan Club members can order it now on-line at jerryjeff.com, or by mail order. We've got new T-shirts with Jerry Jeff Jazz logos, too!

JERRY JEFF'S SOLO DATES: Jerry Jeff is taking his solo show on the road this summer, so check out the tour listing! East coast, West coast, it's all there, from the Bottom Line in NYC on July 10, two nights at the Talkhouse on Long Island and at the Ironhorse in Mass., then out to Colorado and San Francisco. A "Portrait in Song" from the Gypsy Songman not to be missed! Troubador Keith Sykes will be appearing with Jerry Jeff on some of these dates - look to jerryjeff.com for more information...

SUMMER SHOWS: Jerry Jeff will head up to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to play Summerfest on July 2, making up for our cancellation last year when JJ's back went nuts. Then he'll head home for a July 4 show in Baytown, TX for the holiday.

CAMP BELIZE 2004: Tickets went on sale April 7 for CAMP BELIZE 2004, and we are offering two weeks to choose from. Week ONE is January 4-11, 2004. Week TWO is February 1-8, 2004. You can buy your laminates from Tried & True for \$150 per person, and make your travel plans through Tradewinds Travel: (800) 451-7776. Check out www.jerryjeff.com for more

BIRTHDAY 2004: The dates are set for Birthday Bash 2004! Mark your calendars for Friday, March 26, 2004 through Sunday, March 28, 2004. Tickets will go on sale in January of 2004, and we'll announce the exact date in the Fall newsletter.

GRUENE HALL DATES: Jerry Jeff will be at Gruene Hall on Friday and Saturday, September 5 & 6, 2003. For the Christmas holidays, he will be playing on December 19 and 20, 2003. Tickets will be on sale through Gruene Hall: (830) 629-5077, or visit www.gruenehall.com.

NEW CD FROM BOB: Longtime Gonzo Compadre Bob Livingston has a new CD out called "Mahatma Gandhi & Sitting Bull." It's an eclectic blend of folk and country from both East and West! Produced by Bob and Lloyd Maines and recorded with Austin's finest musicians, Bob says, "Ummmm ... very cosmic." Buy it from Tried & True!

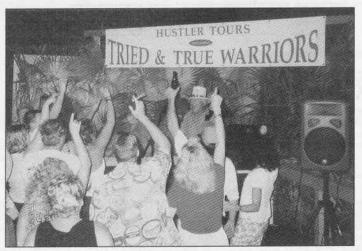
# Letter from Jerry Jeff

Let's see ... we started off the new year the same as always ... Galveston Opera House, then on to Belize. We had two groups this year. We had so many people on the waiting list, we decided to take a second group.

The first group was all the "old pros" but the second group was first-timers, and they had a great time and Belize worked its magic. I played solo during both outings and the fans and I had a great time. (Gin & Fran, our favorite twins, joined me.)

After returning home I felt ready to start recording, and Susan said, "Do the jazz album this time." So I did.

With Mitch and Tommy swapping guitar stuff and Spencer Starnes (bass) and Steve Meador (drums) we cut every-



Thanks to Chris Sullivan for this photo of Jerry Jeff under the stars at Camp Belize 2003.

thing in about two days. We had a ball, and it was a lot of fun to have great lyrics to sing - without having to concentrate on playing. At the Birthday Bash '03, we premiered all the songs with the guys who recorded them in the first half of the show. The second half was the regular band (with Bob Livingston and Steve Samuel) with both Mitch & Tommy bringing down the house. We had some birthday guests join us (Ray Wylie and Keith Sykes) and just generally had a great night of music.

Thanks to Conrad Olson for hosting the after hours party at the Driskill. Heads up! It looks like Keith Sykes and I will play some acoustic solo dates this summer up north, and out west. (Trying to escape the heat). We may be looking for some golf on the off Jy of wall

Till I knock on your door,

days, so keep us in mind.

SAM HOUSTON SAM HOUSTON

Friday, June 27, 2003 Jerry Jeff Walker Concert and Live American Quarter Horse Racing

Call 281-807-8760 for more information!

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Gonzo Stew \$15 (2001 Jerry Jeff CD includes "It Don't Matter," "Texas On My Mind," "The Cape," 10 more)	JJW T-shirt with JJW logo imposed in Texas flag \$20 (short-sleeved white 100% cotton T-shirt with blue, red and tan flag on front) Adult L, XL, XXL
Gypsy Songman: A Life In Song CD	JJW T-shirt with Blue JJW logo \$20
(JJW's classic 1990 live recording with "Women In Texas," "Trashy Women," 8 others)	OTHER JJW ITEMS:
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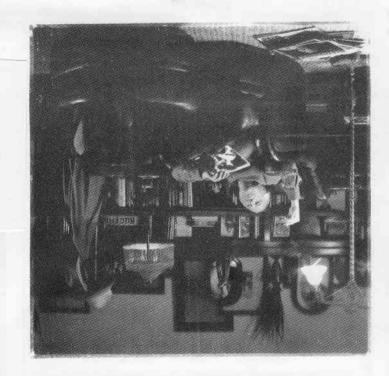
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### JERRY JEFF WALKER ON THE ROAD

All dates with the Gonzo Compadres unless otherwise noted.
All dates subject to change. Check with local venue for confirmation.
For schedule updates, check our website: <a href="https://www.jerryjeff.com">www.jerryjeff.com</a>, or call our office at 512-477-0036.

	TOT DETICATION OF THE		
AP	RIL		JULY
25	The Bowery Ballroom	New York, NY	2 Summerfest Milwaukee, WI
26	Private Party	New York, NY	4 Bicentennial Park Baytown, TX
28	Private Party	Austin, TX	6 Possum Hollow Graham, TX
		,	10 Solo @ The Bottom Line New York, NY
MA		7	14 Solo @ The Talkhouse Amagansett, NY
1	Dixie Dance Hall	Beaumont, TX	15 Solo @ The Talkhouse Amagansett, NY
3	Walter Hall Park	League City, TX	17 Solo @ The Ironhorse Northampton, MA
9	Castine Center	Mandeville, LA	18 Solo @ The Ironhorse Northampton, MA
13	Private Party	Austin, TX	30 Solo @ The Belly Up Solana Beach, CA
17	Centennial Park	Midland, TX	
22	Palace Theater	Corsicana, TX	AUGUST 2 Solo @ Coach House San Juan Capistrano, C.
23	Terminix Stage – Riverfest	Little Rock, AR	
24	Tom Lee Park	Memphis, TN	0 0010 0 010111 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
28	Variety Playhouse	Atlanta, GA	7 Solo @ Great American MH San Francisco, CA
30	Neighborhood Theater	Charlotte, NC	8 Solo @ State Theater Modesto, CA
31	Rock Bottom	Richmond, VA	10 Solo TBA (tentative) Chico, CA
JU:	NE		13 Solo @ The Alladin Theater Portland, OR
10.	The Birchmere	Alexandria, VA	15 Memorial Field Sandpoint, ID
2	The Birchmere	Alexandria, VA	22 Private Party Dallas, TX
3	The Ram's Head	Annapolis, MD	23 Billy Bob's Fort Worth, TX
5	Saratoga Music Hall	Saratoga, NY	28 Solo @ Sedona Cultural Park Sedona, AZ
7		Waterville, ME	29 Solo @ Marquee Theater Phoenix, AZ
14	Private Party Private Party	Tyler, TX	*After August 29, watch the website for Colorado Plays
	Riverfest (w/ Doobie Bros.)	Little Rock, AR	SEPTEMBER
22 27	Sam Houston Race Park	Houston, TX	5 Gruene Hall New Braunfels, TX
28	River Road Ice House	New Braunfels, TX	6 Gruene Hall New Braunfels, TX
20	Miver Moad ICE Flouse	THEW DIMINICIO, IN	V



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