

The Gateway



The House band are now ending their North American tour.

Foley: man about The House

interview by Rod Campbell

The members of The House Band are currently drawing to an end of their six week tour of North America, and are apparently having the time of their lives. "North American audiences are the best in the world. They come out to enjoy themselves and they let you know it," says band leader Jed Foley from Charlottesville North Carolina, Wed-

nesday.

Foley ought to know; he's been around the folk scene long enough. He is perhaps, best known for his four year stint with the Battlefield Band whom he left in late 1983. Foley frankly admits that he was tired of being a back-up guitarist to the other members of the Battlefield Band. "After four years you need a change; I wanted to play a

broader base of music."

Living in Edinburgh at the time, he scouted about for musicians who shared his musical ideas. In the end he settled for Ian MacLeod, Jimmy Young, and long time pal Chris Parkinson, who became collectively known as The House Band. Five gigs later, they went into the studio and cut their first album. Several critics suggested the album was premature and that the band needed to establish their ideas. Maybe so! But there were some impressive arrangements, including the most tasteful synthesiser ever heard on a folk record. But as Foley admits: "That line-up was doomed from the start because of personal differences. We felt that to be fair to Topic [their record label] we should carry on for a year."

Twelve months later, MacLeod and Young were replaced by Brian Brooks on guitar, bouzouki, synthesiser, electric piano, and oboe, and John Skelton on flutes, whistles, bombarde, bodhran and Appalachian dulcimer. Earlier this year they released their second album, *Pacific*. This time the critics were unanimous in their praise.

Pacific, as Foley notes, is a much more mature record, and includes a stunning version of the Paul Robeson classic "Old Man River." "We tried to show it was a good song," says Foley. "The only time it was sang was when people did terrible caricatures of it. We were trying to put the emphasis back on the style of singing."

The House Band will be appearing at The South Side Folk Club on Saturday.

Beat Farmers rock in Pursuit of Happiness

Beat Farmers
The Pursuit of Happiness
MCA

review by Mike Spindloe

The Beat Farmers' name and their image on the back cover of their latest LP, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, suggests that they belong to the Jason & the Scorchers school of country/punk/rockabilly; listening confirms this.

The medium is the message here. Like others of their genre, these Farmers recycle the same riffs and lyrical themes we've all come to know and love, and prove that there's life in them yet. The biggest surprises are the two cover versions: a tender reading

of Tom Waits' "Rosie" and Johnny Cash's "Big River", rocked up and out.


Sample drama from "Hollywood Hills", which opens the album in fine crunching style: "Picked up guitars and we changed our names/With experience of a tortured youth/You turn up the music and go in search of the truth." And why not? The truth will surely always be elusive but just as surely we can crank up the music and the search becomes that much easier.

The Beat Farmers are basically a very good bar band armed with a major label record contract. On *The Pursuit of Happiness* they come across as no more and no less. You can catch them in their natural element in Dinwoodie on Friday, November 13.




The Beat Farmers are coming to Dinwoodie on Friday.

Photo Amy Ebra



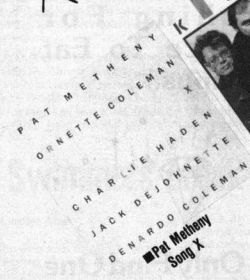
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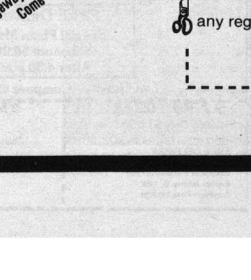
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