

RHODEWAYS



The International Happy Rhodes Medium
Spring 1994

Issue 1



A HAPPY MEDIUM...

It was just another lackluster workday at Sam Goody when the audible void enveloped me and told me it was time to put some music on. I thought I'd slap *Rhodesongs* into the CD player and give my fellow workers a treat; after all, none of them had ever heard of Happy Rhodes. Through the course of the next hour, several customers had inquired about the CD. Of course, we didn't have it in stock, nor had we ever. As one of the managers, I took it upon myself to order one for the store.

The second time I played *Rhodesongs*, I sold the one CD within minutes and was bombarded for the duration with, "Where is this CD that is playing?" Once again, I was at a loss. Needless to say, I have ordered the CD in quantity and have sold it, and sold it, and sold it. One girl I encountered had not even eaten in a day because she was so low on money, yet when she heard *Rhodesongs* in my store, she forked out her last few dollars because "it was better than food." In my four years in music retail, I have never encountered anything of this caliber. Psychosis? Perhaps not. I myself had purchased all seven CDs in one week. Hmm... I began to put two and two together, and since that first day, I have discovered that two plus two equals much more than four. There is a huge audience out there for Happy's genius! Yet, the fact that hers is not a household name makes me want to run screaming into the night and hit my head with a rock.

I proceeded to ask the Happy One herself if a fan club was in order. She was delighted at the idea and agreed to give full support. Hence, *Rhodeways*, *The International Happy Rhodes Medium*. The goal of *Rhodeways* is to provide information on Happy, her music, and a meeting place for her supporters. We will be featuring regular interviews with Happy, contests, tour information, groovy art work, and what ever cool things Happy can dig up. And, as always, your letters, artwork, articles and other goodies are welcome! We hope to produce a fanzine we can all enjoy, as well as share the word with music enthusiasts everywhere about Happy's brilliant gifts.

Spread Happy-ness!

Sharon Nichols
Editor

For this issue, laud and honor to: Susanne White, Richard and Melissa Caldwell, Tom Richards, Jered Sedai Monty Juan Valdez Hundley, Rick and Cathy Ambrose, Craig and Trisha Cook, Poppy Idyllwild, Jeremy Grose, everyone on the mailing list, and, of course, Happy Rhodes. Welcome to the Ectophiles!



A decorative border made of intricate floral and vine patterns, featuring leaves, flowers, and a central grape cluster, framing the text.

Hello Everyone!

This is Happy Rhodes. I just want to say how really excited I am about Rhodeways. You'll all have your own reasons for subscribing, but I hope everyone can get something positive from this magazine. I'm so grateful to Sharon Nichols for suggesting this idea and offering to provide this forum to my fans to discuss ideas, share artwork and to help spread the word about my music. Let's have fun with it!

Happy Rhodes



Happy-nings

News . . .

Happy is currently in the studio recording her 8th album, "Building The Colossus" with partner Kevin Bartlett by her side. As for the title, Happy says, "I'm building the 'colossus.' The colossus is my ideal image of myself -- a good human being. Everyone works their entire lives to measure up to the

ideal of who they want to be. It's an inner climb; the trick is to know when not to pressure oneself too much to meet those standards." The album is scheduled for a late August release with a follow-up tour. The cover will

(cont. on page 7)

 I'm HAPPY, hope you're happy, too 

Full Name: Happy Tyler Rhodes. Her given name was Kimberly, but her young brother couldn't pronounce it well and called her "happy baby". The name stuck. When she was 16, she had her name legally changed.

Birthdate: August 9, 1965



Birthplace: Poughkeepsie, NY. She now resides in Bearsville (right outside Woodstock).

Musical Influences: Yes, David Bowie, Kate Bush, Queen

Musical Background: She declares, "The training is a non-issue; there is none!" Happy picked up a guitar at age eleven, and developed her talents on her own. She began recording in 1984 at Cathedral Sound Studios in Rensselaer, NY, working with head engineer Pat Tessitore. Incredibly, she possesses a four-octave range. She can play just about any instrument, but claims that guitar is the only thing she plays well.

Family: Happy has twin brothers, Mark and Chris, age 31. Her mother, Danny Robbins, lives in Virginia; her father

passed away in 1991 in New York. Kevin Bartlett is her roommate and co-producer. "We work and love together," she says. And let's not forget her four cats: Barney Parker, Xena, Mr. Bermuda Shorts (Shorty), and T-Bone Mental (Tony or Boney).

Interests: Happy loves to paint, although it is a time-consuming and expensive hobby. She also loves jigsaw puzzles, art, and good movies. Her favorite movies are Alien, Predator 2, Hunt for Red October, Blade Runner (Director's Cut), and Das Boot. Happy really loves monsters (as you can probably tell from her not-for-the-squeamish CD covers!) and is intrigued by the mechanics and creativity that goes into making the creatures for film. If she couldn't continue her recording career for some reason, this might be something she'd be interested in. As for what she spends the rest of her time doing, she says, "I think alot; that's mostly what I do. I think that's important, don't you?"



AURAL GRATIFICATION

Aural Gratification was founded in 1983 as an outlet for instrumental works by composer Kevin Bartlett when demand for his recordings grew from commissioned works for art galleries, trade shows, museums, commercials, and scores. Consumers so enjoyed these soothing and colorful works, that an extensive mail order catalog was assembled, and by 1986, seven 90-minute cassette titles were available.

Bartlett added three compilation cassettes by a relatively unknown artist, Happy Rhodes. Over the next two years, Bartlett released three more of his own titles and added a new Happy Rhodes recording entitled *Ecto*. The response to *Ecto* was immediate and quickly became the label's best selling title. Receiving critical acclaim, this recording began to get radio airplay and grabbed the attention of a world-wide computer network (Internet) of music fans.

In 1991, to further marketing possibilities a fifth Happy Rhodes album was released on compact disc format. This introduced the artist and her most exciting work to date, *Warpaint*, to major markets. National airplay was promoted, retail outlets notified and secured, and a network of independent record distributors across the country added Aural Gratification to their roster.

College, public, and commercial radio stations began playing *Warpaint* in heavy rotation, featuring the "Feed The Fire" single, culminating in sales of thousands of CDs and the number one requested song for Philadelphia's WXPB for 1991.

Aural Gratification re-released the previous four Happy Rhodes albums on compact disc in the summer of 1992, and released her 6th album *Equipoise* in February of 1993. To support *Equipoise*, Triple A radio was serviced with "unplugged" versions of the new material along with favorites from her catalog and a cover version of David Bowie's "Ashes To Ashes" which quickly charted on the singles and album charts in GAVIN, FMQB, and the Hard Report. Listener response was so great that a compilation of Happy Rhodes material entitled *Rhodesongs* which included "live" versions was released in late summer of 1993.

To date, 40,000 units of Happy Rhodes albums have been sold; Aural Gratification has released *The Muse of Intent* by new artist Mitch Elrod; and plans on a late summer release of an 8th album by Happy Rhodes with a support tour in the fall.

Concentrating on bringing the best of innovative, cross over alternative music to the market place, Aural Gratification, now an established independent record label, continues to make an important statement in the industry. Committed to bringing unique product to the market and establishing the careers of special new artists, Aural Gratification is gaining a notable reputation in the indie record company community.



I Say...



Happy speaks out on performing and the new album

The public doesn't see or hear very much of you. Why is it that you don't perform more?

The reason I don't do very much of it is because I have no financial backing. People expect me to be able to grab my guitar, just run out, and play the local clubs. However, I'm really tired of being labeled a folk artist. I refuse to just pick up my guitar and, you know, hit the subways! I started doing that, and it got out of hand . . . it got really nuts. People do not expect me to have a band. They think that's extravagant for some reason. Yet, I need a band; I must have a band to perform the music that I write. And I need a small hall, not a nightclub. So in order to afford these kinds of things, it takes money. I have to pay all these people . . . I have to pay a crew. And we're not a major label. That's why I don't perform an awful lot. Now, hopefully, this time around that's going to change. Not that we have any more money . . . we don't! We're going to hope for better record sales.

You just started working on the new album . . . so tell us what's going on!

Well, right now we're laying down basic Midi tracks, which means my computer is working more than I am. I've already recorded the music into the computer, and Kevin and I have both gone over it and fine tuned it. Now the computer is at the studio. Our four ADAT machines are what we're recording onto, digital recording stuff . . . that's the technical term, STUFF! Now, we're just pretty much setting up all of our instruments, and then we hit go on the computer. So, that's what we're working at right now. We have some technical bugs that we're trying to work out, and it's going to take us about a week to lay down the basic tracks. Then after that I'm going to start singing, God help us all! We're going to bring in the musicians, and have them do all the live tracks, and I'll be doing lots of live guitar this time.

Is the style going to change at all?

Susanne [White] seems to think that I'm going in a different direction, and I think Kevin thinks the same thing. I don't know how much I'm digressing from what I've done in the past three years. I think it's kinda more of the same. It's going to fit in the same genre, basically.

Are you planning on touring for the new album?

Yes. I have no idea what to expect in terms of cities, but I'm thinking a high number of dates for me would be twenty. But we'll see. That's all so up in the air; it's hard for me to know.

When you tour this fall, or whenever . . .

When hell freezes over? (laughs)

. . . what are you going to be playing? Keyboards, guitar, or just singing?

I'm going to play as little as possible; that's why I have a band. I don't want to have to worry about playing the music; I want to worry about singing. But, I will be playing a lot of acoustic guitar, because there's going to be a call for it on this new album.

News . . . (cont.)

feature a black and white photo of Happy which is also in the works.

"Alternative Woodstock", an album of local New York artists, is scheduled for release May 18 and features Happy singing "I Say." The album was compiled by Nic Harcourt of WDST and is available for purchase. Please write Slice/Woodstock Records, P.O. Box 515, Woodstock, NY 12498 or call (914) 247-0113.

Happy will be performing at YESFEST to be held September 9th and 10th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom, 311 W. 34th Street in New York City. This is a special two day convention sponsored by Wonderous Stories Magazine Productions. Happy is scheduled to appear on one of the two days (most likely the 9th) and will be performing a short set including a Yes medley and two acoustic cuts from the new album. Past members of Yes will also be performing on the 9th. Since Yes is Happy's favorite band, and Trevor Rabin will most likely be there, (♥) Happy won't mind it one bit! "His songwriting blows me away!" she exclaims. Ticket prices are \$20 for one day and \$30 for both days. For registration, leave a message on the Wonderous Stories Information line at (212) 861-5590 or write to Wonderous Stories, 320 E. 85th Street, #5C, New York, NY 10028.

Happy will also be performing August 11 at Joyous Lake, Woodstock, NY, sponsored by WDST. For more

information, call (914) 679-1234.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Woodstock, and a celebration will take place August 12th and 13th. The festivity may be extended through the 14th with Happy as a potential artist. This is only a possibility, but could prove very helpful in Happy's exposure if it happens. Let's all cross our fingers . . .

Rumor has it (read: Susanne says) that Happy will be submitting some of her paintings for a fantasy artwork catalog some time in the near future. She will be doing two pieces, one of which will be a gargoyle. More on this exciting project will follow. Isn't our gal just multi-talented?!

RHODEWAYS is featuring its first contest, with the help of Happy herself! The winner will receive an autographed copy of the new album and a t-shirt (designed by Happy). All you need to do is drop us a note addressed to "RHODEWAYS Contest" with your name and address . . . but there's a catch (natch)! You must send the info on an "interesting" postcard. The more interesting the postcard, the better your chances of winning! The winner will be chosen by a panel of experts with a vast expertise of postcard-choosing technique. Good luck! And by the way, don't fling your body off a cliff if you don't win . . . t-shirts are still available for purchase. Just send \$14 plus \$2 shipping and handling to Aural Gratification, P.O. Box 380, Bearsville, NY 12409.

The Issue Is: Play The Game? Or Forever In Hiding?

Upon first hearing the passionate symphony of Happy Rhodes, one would never guess that this artist began her career ten years ago as a shy teenager who didn't like to be watched while she sang.

"Here's the thing," she says. "The reason I do what I do, the reason I do music, is because it's really easy for me to say all of this stuff this way. Beyond that, people want to talk to me personally. And I'm very opinionated. I have no problem telling people what I think. But it's just easier for me to be closer to people through music than it is face to face. I don't know why that is. I'm just shy."

Happy has a difficult time being in the public eye. "It's just hard for me. But it's getting easier. The first major in-store appearance I did, where I had to sit there and sign autographs for two hours -- afterward, my skin hurt; it was so stressful. I had to take my skin off. I spent most of my life being rejected by society. I'm not really used to being embraced."

Although society usually
requires live appearances

and public showing in correlation with fame, Happy claims that it is "bullshit" and has only performed a few times.

"I resent the fact that my recording career is paid less attention to and is sort of discounted purely based on the fact that I'm not at Bogie's every Thursday night. I don't mean to knock people who do that. It's just that playing out live is not something I needed to do to facilitate a recording career." Happy is also very definite about the music industry capitalizing on female artists because of their looks.

"If you look really good, then you'll go places, whether you have talent or not. And what's amazing is that women who have talent -- women who are immensely talented -- still feel the need to show their breasts. I'm obtaining respect first. And you don't that by taking your clothes off and saying, 'this is where my worth lies, in my body'. You do that by showing the world what you have musically -- and offering only that much."

Happy voices her feelings
best in "Play The Game"...

*I have to know where I stand as a person,
not a woman or man,
and do believe me when I say what I need is respect.*

*If I have to be pretty to be liked,
then I think I'm dead in the water.*

*I've been influenced by society
to paint my face and hate my body.*

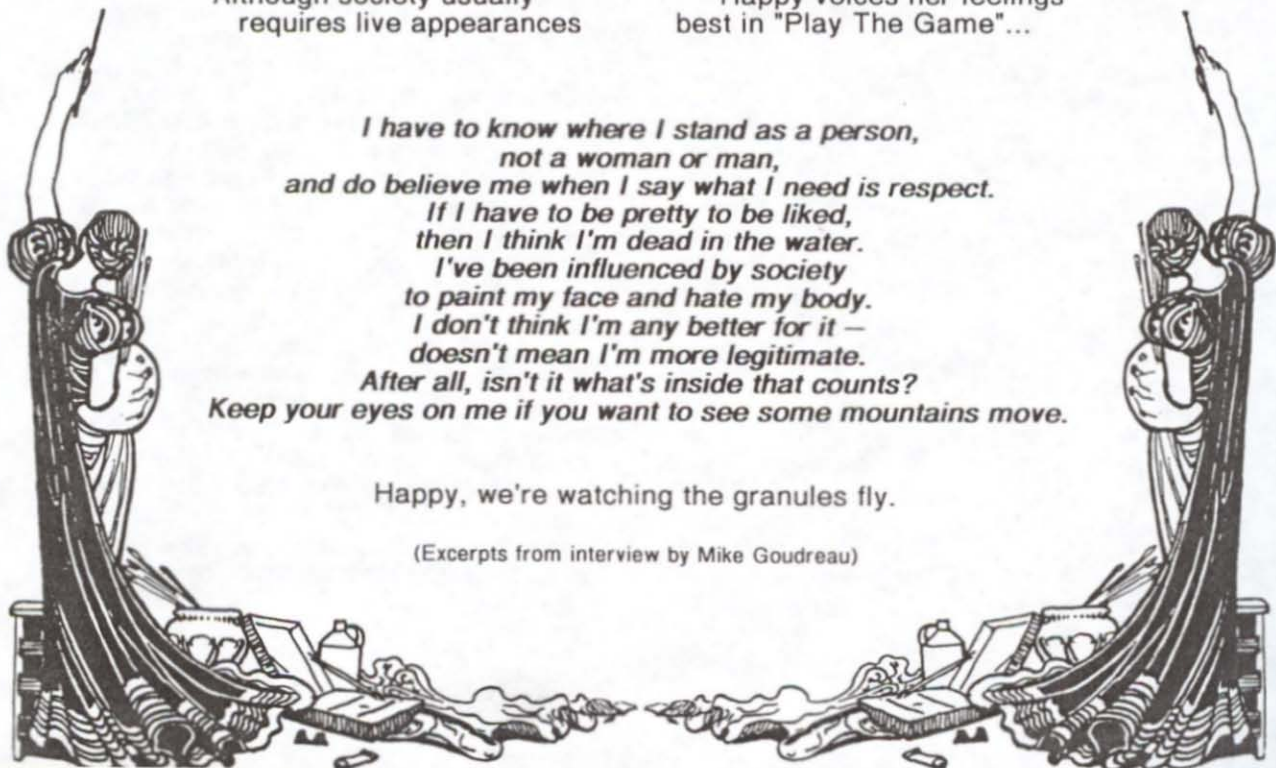
*I don't think I'm any better for it --
doesn't mean I'm more legitimate.*

After all, isn't it what's inside that counts?

Keep your eyes on me if you want to see some mountains move.

Happy, we're watching the granules fly.

(Excerpts from interview by Mike Goudreau)



Happy Rhodes Discography

Rhodes I

CD Aural Gratification 0007 (1986)

Rainkeeper ♦ Oh The Dreares ♦ Given In ♦ He's Alive ♦ Possessed ♦ I'll Let You Go ♦ Number One ♦ Case of Glass ♦ Moonbeam Friends ♦ I'm Not Awake, I'm Not Asleep ♦ The First To Cry ♦ Step Inside ♦ The Wretches Gone Awry ♦ The Flaming Threshold ♦ Suicide Song

Rhodes II

CD Aural Gratification 0008 (1986)

Come Here ♦ The Revelation ♦ Many Nights ♦ Under And Over The Brink ♦ Let Me Know, Love ♦ Where Do I Go ♦ Not For Me ♦ One Alien ♦ Noone Here ♦ To The Funny Farm ♦ Asylum Master ♦ Beat It Out ♦ The Chase ♦ Take Me With You ♦ Under And Over The Brink

Rearmament

CD Aural Gratification 0011 (1986)

Perfect Irony ♦ For We Believe ♦ I Am A Legend ♦ 'Til The Dawn Breaks ♦ The Issue Is ♦ Friend You'll Be ♦ Dreams Are ♦ Box H.A.P. ♦ I Have A Heart ♦ Crystal Orbs ♦ Because I Learn ♦ Baby Don't Go ♦ Rhodes Waltz ♦ Ally Ally Oxenfree ♦ Be Careful What You Say

Ecto

CD Aural Gratification 0013 (1987)

I'm Going Back ♦ If Love Is A Game, I Win ♦ Would That I Could ♦ Off From Out From Under Me ♦ Project 499 ♦ I Won't Break Down ♦ If So ♦ Ecto ♦ I Cannot Go On ♦ Ode ♦ Don't Want To Hear It ♦ Poetic Justice ♦ To Be E. Mortal ♦ Look For The Child ♦ When The Rain Came Down

Warpaint

CD Aural Gratification 0017 (1991)

Waking Up ♦ Feed The Fire ♦ Murder ♦ To Live In Your World ♦ Phobos ♦ Wrong Century ♦ Lay Me Down ♦ Terra Incognita ♦ All Things (Mia ia io) ♦ Words Weren't Made For Cowards ♦ Warpaint ♦ In Hiding

"... I want to go back to the trees ..."

Equipoise

CD Aural Gratification 0019 (1993)

Runners ♦ He Will Come ♦ The Flight ♦ Out Like A Lamb ♦ Save Our Souls ♦ Closer ♦ Temporary And Eternal ♦ Cohabitants ♦ Play The Game ♦ Mother Sea ♦ I Say

Rhodesongs

CD Aural Gratification 0021 (1993)

Feed The Fire ♦ The Wretches Gone Awry ♦ Ode ♦ I Say ♦ Save Our Souls ♦ The Revelation ♦ Because I Learn ♦ If So ♦ Given In ♦ In Hiding ♦ I Have A Heart ♦ Ashes To Ashes ♦ Let Me Know, Love ♦ Temporary And Eternal ♦ Summer ♦ Feed The Fire (Acoustic)

HR-5

Promotional CD-5 Aural Gratification

Feed The Fire ♦ Ashes To Ashes ♦ Save Our Souls ♦ I Say ♦ Feed The Fire (Acoustic)

****Note:** Rhodes I, Rhodes II, Rearmament, and Ecto were available only on cassette until 1992.



Is It Kate Tori Happy?

At every turn, we hear comparisons between Kate Bush, Tori Amos, and Happy Rhodes. What's up with the analogies? Has the media robbed these women of their individuality? Happy gives **RHODEWAYS** her thoughts...



Kate Bush has been a huge influence on me just because she's a woman, basically, and by doing the kind of music she did when she was doing it. But the thing is I have read so many articles about Kate Bush, people interviewing her and everything, and she absolutely refuses to acknowledge that she's been an influence or an inspiration to anyone. And it makes me so sad. I read an article just recently about Tori Amos and Kate Bush, and there were two big pictures in this story: one of Kate and one of Tori. It was in the *New York Times*. And I thought, what could this article be about? And the whole damned article was about how Tori is nothing but a Kate Bush clone, and that Tori is like Kate in this way and that way; but Tori's not as good as Kate because she doesn't do this and she doesn't do that. And people do that to me all the time, too. They say, "Oh, Happy Rhodes? She just sounds like Kate Bush." You know, like I'm trying to clone Kate Bush. But then in the same breath they'll say, "Well, she's not as good as Kate because she doesn't do all the things that Kate does." So I'm damned if I do, and damned if I don't. Unfortunately, Kate Bush seems to be the only reference out there.

And that's a comment on our society . . . that women are not doing what Kate Bush is doing. Women are doing more what Madonna and Whitney Houston are doing. They're being sexy, front singing women and not necessarily really creative, production people, songwriters. Women come out and write their own music, produce their own songs, and play their own instruments, God forbid, and people don't know what to do with that. I think that's a real sad state of affairs.

I love Kate Bush; I have no complaints about her. In an article in *Pulse* magazine that Tower Records puts out, they interviewed Kate Bush and said, "Tori Amos has said that you've been a big influence on her . . . what do you have to say about that?" Kate said, "Oh, I don't know. I guess I'm supposed to be flattered, but I don't know why; I don't see myself as an influence." And they said, "Well, have you heard Tori Amos and her music?" and she said, "Well, I think I've heard something by her," and then didn't comment further. And the guy said, "Do you like it?" and she said, "Oh, well, it was, uh, nice." And that's what they printed! Now, I'm sure Kate is very, very sensitive, but the journalist portrayed her as not caring, not giving a

shit that she's had that impact on other women. And that's really sad. It just takes the world a little bit of time to realize that there is an actual individualized style to a singer; you just have to hear them long enough to really grasp that. People have said to me, "At first you sound a lot like Kate Bush, then you sing much lower than she does," and of course they realize that because they've listened more. People have asked me how I got Kevin to sing on certain parts of my songs . . . (ha) . . . I like that though; I like variety in vocals.



FAN CLUBS

If you love Happy, you could soon be worshipping these people as well...

tori amos: really deep thoughts, p.o. box 328606, columbus oh 43232
upside down, p.o. box 8456, clearwater, fl 34618
take to the sky, 25 rydall drive, besleyheath, kent da7 5ef, england

moon 7 times: p.o. box 205, champaign, il 61824

black tape for a blue girl: p.o. box 1591, garden grove, ca 92642

kate bush: homeground, p.o. box 176, orpington, kent, br5 3na, england
watching storms, 167 central avenue, e. providence, ri 02914

love spirals downwards: 2537 bolar, industry, ca 91745

sarah mclachlan p.o. box 1755, robson street, vancouver, b.c., canada, v6g 3b7

his name is alive: p.o. box 114, fraser, mi 48026

julee cruise: 428 east 58th street, 3r, new york, ny 10022

loreena mckennitt: quinlan road, p.o. box 933, stratford, ontario, canada n5a 7m3

frente!: p.o. box 1720, collingwood, victoria 3066, australia



What is an Ectophile?



Ecto is an electronic mailing list on the Internet, a worldwide combination of networks linked together to provide information for those with access to a computer and modem. Created in 1991 by Jessica Dembski, Ecto provides a forum for discussion about Happy and other artists as well. To join the Ecto mailing list, just send a message to ecto-request@ns1.rutgers.edu, or to contribute, write ecto@ns1.rutgers.edu.

RHODEWAYS



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