RHODEWAYS

Spring '95 | The International Happy Rhodes Medium | Issue 4

The Happy Medium . . .

Well, just when you least expect it, you fall victim to Sam Goody politics and wind up trekking across the country, playing your harmonica through the Kansas cornfields all the way to New York. It could happen. Besides being ready at all times emit a technicolor yawn over a major life change, I at least have settled for the idea that I can make this fanzine cook whilst being closer to the Rhodes Thing. Although my previous postal pals (who know me on sight and run) will forward any misdirected mail, please make sure to note the new address and send your letters and subscriptions accordingly. I will no longer tolerate any more Utah nonsense. Provo is now defunct, Brigham bless us.

Speaking of subscriptions, this issue marks the terminus for most of you. On your mailing label next to your name is a number indicating which issue is your last. If the number is four, you have two options. You can A) re-subscribe or B) be screwed. Don't choose Option B! Option A will continue to provide you with all the Happy zaniness your mind can bear, while plan B will leave you feeling bereft and scarred. Please save yourself the pain and send bucks now! Happy will remember you in her prayers.

Ms. Rhodes has once again catapulted herself into the whirling nebula of what we call stage performance. The Colossal Tour is waxing most excellent across the continent and continues to wax at this writing. We will try to keep you posted on any new dates.

In this issue, we are conducting our very first *Rhodeways* survey, and it is essential to your continued existence that you **take part in the survey** or be subject to eternal hell fire. Please answer the questions on page 5 and send along your good will to *Rhodeways* no later than May 25. Mark your calendar. This is really important. The creation of the universe, the invention of the wheel, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the OJ Simpson trial, and now ***this***. Be a part of Happy Rhodes history for only 32¢. This is your chance to let Happy know something about ***you*** for a change. Besides, one of you will win a cool goodie just for participating!

I would love to hear from more of you wonderful folks in terms of submitting to the fanzine. If you have any pictures or artwork you would like to share, or if you have seen Happy perform and would like to write an article, please send it to *Rhodeways* so we can share it with everyone. Otherwise, I'll keep having to crawl up Happy's butt for stuff (my favorite place).

Thanks again. You guys are great.

Sharon Nichols
Editor

For this issue, squooshy love to: Happy, Kevin, Susanne, the ectophiles, all our contributors and readers, Mr. Tater Chip, Lunchmeat, Kelly, Martha, Barney, Cookie, Xena, Shorty, Jazz, and the spooks. Congratulations Rusty and Mike!

Contributors

Photos on front and back cover: Happy Rhodes
Photos p. 8-12: Jeff Wasilko
Photo p. 5: Rusty Bara and Mike Brewer
Artwork p. 4: Happy Rhodes
Artwork p. 14: Poppy Idyllwild
Article p. 11: Robert Woiccak

HAPPY-NINGS

The Colossal Tour

Happy performed two shows at the Middle East Theatre in Philadelphia on January 5th and 6th. Prism TV made an appearance at the second show with a five camera shoot. The performance will be aired on Prism (a Philly station) some time in March. If you live in the area, make sure to check your local listings or contact Prism TV.

Happy also performed at the Bottom Line in New York City on February 24th in a four-act show featuring Kyle Davis, Barbara Kessler, and Pete and Maura Kennedy. The performances were part of a Required Listening No-Risk Evening of Discovery sponsored by WFUV in NYC.

The only other tour date we have as we go to press is scheduled for April 21, another show at the Middle East Theatre in Philadelphia. This show is a benefit for WXPN and will also feature Willie Porter and Steve Forbert as opening acts. If you missed the last show, don't miss this one.

Radio Single

Happy's radio-only single was sent to 93 AAA stations across the country. The single features *Hold Me*, *Glory* (edit), *Collective Heart* (acoustic), and *Look For The Child* (acoustic). The last two tracks feature Kelly Bird on backup vocals.

Radio Appearances

Happy appeared on the World Cafe in Philly on Monday, February 20th. She recorded a live acoustic set. To find out the air date, please contact WXPN.

Happy will also appear on *Sessions*, a national radio show sponsored by WDST in Woodstock. This event will take place some time in May or June.

In addition, Happy (along with Kevin Bartlett and Carl Adami) will be featured on the nationally syndicated radio program *Echoes* which is based in Philly and affiliated with and sent to stations across the country by WXPN. She is recording a live acoustic set for the program at the end of March. You can catch *Echoes* on your favorite NPR or APR radio station, so keep your eyes (and ears) peeled for that.

AG Plans For 1995

Aural Gratification is tentatively planning the release of several new albums this year. Kevin Bartlett has his own album nearly ready for release, and a compilation album of ambient tracks from various artists is in the works. Happy is also hard at work on her ninth album. She is shooting for the summer of 1996 for this one. Okay, so she can't do an album every year. But she will appear on the compilation album, so we'll live. AG also plans on taking on some new artists in the near future. This is not, however, a cue for everyone to start sending in their own recordings to AG, so please hold back on the urge.

Aural Gratification Studio Clearance Sale!

Totally serious here; we are now officially the *Rhodeways* want ads. AG is selling two pieces of its equipment, both of which were actually used (but not abused) by Happy Rhodes. If you are an interested musician, check it out:

AKAI SO1 Sampler
Mint Condition
Full Memory Upgrade (2 megs)
Discs Included
$800°°

also,

Roland GR-1 Guitar Synth
W/GK-2 MIDI pick-up
Mint condition
$1,000°°

If you are in need of these items, please contact the Aural Gratification offices at (914) 679-4728.

Contacting Rhodeways

If you would like to contact *Rhodeways*, feel free to fax or call the *Rhodeways* line at (914) 339-2561. I would be glad to speak to anyone, answer questions, or just say hi. If I am not available, you may leave a message. However, I cannot promise to return phone calls due to extreme poverty.

Ninety-Nine Years in Ninety-Nine Minutes - A Project for the Millennium

Happy has been invited to participate in "Ninety-Nine Years in Ninety-Nine Minutes", a television broadcast which is a look at the 20th century through the eyes of contemporary artists. This program invites various sculptors, painters, performing artists, musicians, animators, composers, filmmakers, poets, and videographers to present their impressions of one year of the past century in one minute of television. Don't get too excited just yet . . . these one minute films, to be shown in sets of one, two or three between regularly scheduled programs, will not be broadcast until the years 1999 and 2000. The films will also be broadcast as three one-hour chunks including the one-minute films and interviews with the artists. In addition, the artwork generated by the project will be used to create a museum exhibition that will tour the United States. Video monitors showing all ninety-nine minutes will be part of the exhibition. The project will also publish a companion book and CD-Rom containing essays by and about the artists, pictures of their work, and sections of each of the ninety-nine minutes produced for broadcast. Personally, I have always dreaded the turn of the century (perhaps because I have always thought about how old I will be, and I will finally be that old). But Happy's participation in this spectacular event will indeed be an exciting addition to all those fine lines and cottage cheese.

LET ME KNOW YOU ALL, JUST LIKE I KNOW MYSELF

Please take a few moments to answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper and return it to *Rhodeways* by May 25th. Feel free to answer briefly or write a novel if you wish. Any additional comments will also be appreciated. We're interested! One subscriber will be chosen at random to receive an autographed 8 x 10 of *Equipoise's* "Tirk", just for participating. The results of the survey will be printed in the next issue.

1. What is your name, age, and sex? (Hope this doesn't offend, but we're curious.)
2. How did you first hear of/become interested in Happy Rhodes? What year?
3. Which song or album did you hear first? What was your reaction?
4. Which is your favorite album and why?
5. Are you an Ectophile?
6. Have you ever met Happy? Where?
7. Have you ever seen Happy perform? Where?
8. Name your top three favorite Rhodes songs. (I know this is an evil question.)
9. Name some of your other favorite artists.
10. Where did you hear about *Rhodeways*?
11. Do you subscribe to any other fanzines?
12. What would you like to see in future issues of *Rhodeways?*

Thanks for participating!

HAPPY PROUDLY ACCEPTS THE ILLUSTRIOUS COUNTRY MUSIC DUCK AWARD

GLORY IN NUMBERS

On February 24, Happy Rhodes was one of four acts to play at the renouned Bottom Line in New York City. The members of the band, Kelly Bird (backing vocals), Martha Waterman (keyboards, vocals), Carl Adami (bass), and Dean Sharp (drums) were gracious enough to impart upon us their tales of how they met Happy and became part of Rhodes history. As a post-interview disclaimer, however, ***Rhodeways*** *is not responsible for the tomfoolery and balderdash contained herein.*

KELLY

K: I met Happy about three and a half years ago, two days after I decided I was going to quit music altogether. My parents were both deceased and I had no idea what I was going to do with my life. Suddenly Happy calls me! I had heard about Kevin through Bob Leonard; we went to college together. So basically, Happy learned all her singing through me.

Hap: That's true, you know.

K: So I met them and was amazed at the way they felt about music. They were the first people who understood. That's why I had wanted to quit . . . because no one understood. We talked for two hours and I felt so much better. I really didn't care if I even got the job or not. I was just glad to get some hope back. The job wasn't the most important thing. So I came to see Kevin and I was really nervous about it. And Happy was sick at the time and the two of them seemed to be arguing or discussing or something and I thought, "Oh, great. They think I suck." Actually, Happy had just decided that she wanted me to be her singer. It's weird, but Happy and Kevin only lived a mile away at the time, in Albany. Sometimes your future is right in front of your nose. Working with Happy has been the most important project to me. Not that it has taken off like a bat out of hell or anything, but working with her is really great.

MARTHA

M: Well, the whole story evolves from the fact that I was being raised by wolves until the age of five. Happy and I met when I was five, you see. She rode out of the forest on a white horse into the clearing and saw this half wolf, half girl and said, "Honey! do you know that you are a girl and are destined to play keyboards?" So she whipped out a small keyboard -- not a brand name or anything, but one of those you strap on like a guitar. Well, I was only five and she said, "Well, play." I started hollering, since I was raised by wolves and all. But eventually I strapped it on and plugged into an electro-weed. Donald Duck taught me this. Your know the Huey, Dewey and Louie thing? It grows about this tall. Two prong, luckily. I was like this idiot savant that

THE ISSUE IS

"I've always been a strange child . . ."

. . . not compared to the rest of my family, mind you, just to the rest of the child population. I'm not sure I ever thought it was a bad thing either.

Even if my parents had been able to afford the usual toys that every little girl wants, I don't think I'd have been interested for more than a couple of hours. Barbie Dolls were cool and all, and I always envied other girls who had them, but the truth was I had all the toys I ever needed. There was a world of knowledge and imagination at my fingertips when I was growing up.

A typical day in the life of the six-year-old me started with coming home after school and playing with my friend. That's not a stretch from the average little girl. But after my friend's time was up and I had to come home, that's when my private world came to life. I had the curiosity of four lifetimes and it was inexhaustible. Luckily, my father believed that imagination is the most important aspect of humanity and he filled his home with relics of that belief.

I'd start with his art books. He had one in particular which was heavier than me. I had to ask him to get it for me and he'd ask me to be careful with it. I was. I'd lay on the floor and flip through the pages, stopping on each one to take in as much detail as I could. To me, these paintings (which ranged from the Middle Ages up to the present) were products of people who were like me. They were harboring entire worlds inside their heads. Worlds which defied the human language, only to be crudely mapped out in color and form. I marveled at their accomplishment. It sounds amazing, but I felt the frustration of being too little to get my own inner worlds

heard. I remember stopping at a painting by Hieronymus Bosch in utter disbelief. I would spend an extra ten minutes looking at that one, and if you've ever seen one of his paintings, you'd understand why.

Then there was the painting my father never finished. It depicted a dream he'd had a long time ago. I won't describe the details of the painting. It's enough to say that it looked like a place only he *had been to. Because I was able to see him create whenever he wanted to, I only assumed that this was normal for everyone. I too could just draw whenever I wanted and he openly encouraged that.*

Oftentimes there would be music playing in the house. Again, an appreciation of my father's that would prove to be more influential on my life than anyone could foresee. He had a console stereo that was huge to my little eyes. Whenever I could, I would sit in the middle of the two speakers and trance out on the pattern on the front of the console. It was a brown, criss-cross type pattern and it made for good "kid-meditation". All the while, Switched-On-Bach *would be playing, or some other classical album, or even* The Mamas and the Papas. *His musical tastes were pretty eclectic. But there I would sit, sort of rocking back and forth to the music. It must've seemed strange to my parents in retrospect, but I was doing the same thing with the music that I did with the paintings. I was picking the notes apart and trying to understand how they worked together to form the bigger musical picture. Sounds pretty analytical for a six-year-old, I know. But I was a strange kid that way. This was my world of amusement.*

Of course, television was an influence too. I remembered programs by the theme music that started the show. To this day, I'm instantly hurled back to my childhood when I hear the themes from Hogan's Heroes, Nanny and the Professor, Family Affair, and my favorite, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir.

Sometimes my father would have a jigsaw puzzle going on the dining room table. Not the 750 piece intelligence-insulters, but the 3000 piece "you'll have no life"

puzzles. I wanted to do them, not because I was some savant-child, but because my father was there. I was a little girl in love with her Daddy. Amazingly enough, however, I became as fascinated with the jigsaw puzzle as he was. It was stimulating to me to try to formulate a big picture out of the thousands of tiny pieces at my fingertips.

At night, I would sleep with the curtains open, so that I could see the moon and the street lights. I would stare out at the night and have "waking dreams". That is, of course, when I wasn't having those nagging neurotic flashes of demons and hell with which the Catholic Church had been poisoning my brain. But I digress.

I had a pillowcase that had pictures of a princess in a long, flowing, pastel gown. She lived in my head with others who had their own adventures. Sometimes I was her. But these beings flourished mostly at night when I was certain that I was safe. I saw images of myself dancing and singing, and now I don't know if I was creating *my future,* seeing *my future self, or both.*

I'm not a writer. I don't think I need another creative outlet. But what I find so interesting about this peek into my past is that my adult mind realizes that I wasn't a strange child after all. Everyone has entire worlds in their minds and dreams. We all just do different things with the worlds we've created. Imagination is the most important aspect of humanity. We create our individual and collective realities with it. I no longer feel like an outsider. I feel like I'm on the inside with the rest of you.

— Happy Rhodes

Did You Know That . . .

"Glory" is being played on American Airlines' "Soft Favorites" music channel?

The Sights And Sounds Of The Gifted

As one of Happy's ardent listeners, Ectophile and Rhodeways *member Robert Woiccak graciously offers his commentary of Happy's performances at Joyous Lake, The Middle East, and The Bottom Line*

While prolific in the studio, Happy has not aimed her creative energy towards the stage as much as, perhaps, she and certainly her fans would desire. So it is with no small amount of pleasure that I can boast of having seen three Happy Rhodes live performances in the past half-year.

The first of these occurred this past August in Woodstock, NY, more famous for its musical heritage than for its proximity to Happy and Kevin's new hometown of Bearsville. A series of live performances had been scheduled at Joyous Lake, a small bar-cum-nightclub on the Woodstock main drag. These performances were timed to coincide with Woodstock '94, taking advantage of the flocking droves of nostalgic hippies and aspiring mud people to promote *Alternative Woodstock*, a compilation album showcasing the musical talent of the Mid-Hudson River Valley region of New York State. Thus, it was with some trepidation about a lack of parking and closed roads that some friends and myself ventured forth from our homes in New Jersey and New England to Woodstock to hear what musical delights the Hapster had to offer.

We arrived at Joyous Lake fairly early in the evening. Our intention had been to locate the club, set forth a second time in search of dinner, and return closer to showtime. However, upon learning that the Lake served food, we decided to eat there and wait until the evening's entertainment began a couple hours later. Quickly, it became apparent that waiting would become the theme of the night: waiting for a dinner of hamburgers and salads, waiting for the first band to finish a lengthy soundcheck, waiting for the first band to finish a lengthy dinner, waiting for the first band to finish a lengthy set, waiting for the second band to begin, waiting for the second band to finish their not-so-lengthy set, waiting for Happy to take the stage.

To be fair, the first two bands' sets were not torture devices that you'd've thought were banned by the Geneva Convention. Conehead Buddha played an energetic combo of ska and funk, and Countless Others sated anyone's appetite for jangly guitar pop. However, we weren't there for them -- we were there for Happy, and that made us impatient.

After what seemed like, and perhaps was, an eternity, Happy, Kevin, and the rest of the band finally took the stage to localized but vociferous fanfare at two in the morning. With little ado, they proceeded to blaze into a forty-five minute set that showcased new tracks from the as-yet-unreleased *Building The Colossus*, old standards in new arrangements, and one surprise. The set consisted of "Hold Me," "If I Ever See The Girl Again," "I Say," "Ashes to Ashes," "Poetic Justice," "You Never Told Me," "Don't Want To Hear It," "Building The Colossus," and "Murder."

Of course, hearing the new songs was a particular treat. Besides the selfish satisfaction of hearing them before anyone else, it was extremely nice to have a rendition by a full live band be my first exposure to Happy's latest

material, as her live renditions often more closely approach her concept of a song than the studio recording. I can't speak for anyone else, but I do believe that hearing these songs live first made a favorable impact on my initial impression of *Building The Colossus*. Not to be outdone by their newest siblings, "Poetic Justice" and "Don't Want To Hear It" found themselves in fresh arrangements which exploited their power hooks. Amazingly, these versions were even better than those from the 1991 shows in Albany and Philadelphia. Most surprising was the full-band version of David Bowie's "Ashes To Ashes." Happy had performed this song acoustically on various radio programs previously, but it was even better with the band backing her up. The only disappointment was that "Possessed" was cut from the set due to the lateness of the hour. (We could have stayed up five more minutes, Happy! Honest!)

The second time I saw Happy was in Philadelphia at a club called the Middle East. The management of the Middle East, a comedy club and dining establishment known for its belly dancers, had decided that they wanted to start staging live music performances. So in conjunction with WXPN, the radio station that broke *Warpaint* in 1991, and PRISM, a local premium cable channel, the Middle East hosted on January 5th and 6th Happy's first two Philadelphia-area performances since the show at the University of Pennsylvania theatre in 1991.

Two particularly notable arrangements had been made which made the Middle East special. First, the concert was being videotaped for broadcast on the aforementioned PRISM in March. Second, through the involvement of New Access, a Philadelphia-based Internet provider, there was a direct link to the Internet. While the link was text only, it allowed fans on the net from all over the world to "be there" virtually. Happy also participated in the Internet link, occasionally crouching down to type at a keyboard on stage between songs.

Unlike the Joyous Lake show, there

were no bands going on early. However, in the time-honored tradition of rock music, the performance started somewhat late. Twenty minutes after 10:00 P.M., members of the band began to take their places on stage, slowly building up to an atmospheric musical introduction which culminated, with Happy's entrance from backstage, in the beginning notes of "Hold Me." Happy then proceeded to lead her band through almost two hours of exquisitely performed music. The songs they played included "Hold Me," "Waking Up," "Collective Heart," "Cohabitants," "If I Ever See The Girl Again," "You Never Told Me," "Warpaint," "Dying," "Feed The Fire," "Don't Want To Hear It," "Omar," "All Things," "Building The Colossus," "Poetic Justice," "Save Our Souls," and finally ending with "Murder." For an encore, Happy sang "Ashes To Ashes" accompanied only by her acoustic guitar and then was joined by the rest of the band for "Closer."

The biggest surprise was "Cohabitants," which was performed very well live for a song that I would never have expected to leave the studio. "Warpaint" would be a strong contender for a closing song except that "Murder" has been transformed into a show-stopping, breathtaking musical climax. "Omar" was concluded by a long instrumental interlude, during which Happy typed a few words to her Internet audience, that lead right into "All Things." The only disappointment was the sound; Happy's mic seemed to have intermittant problems throughout most of the evening and the mix was tilted in the favor of the low frequencies.

The final chance I had to see Happy was at New York City's historic Bottom Line club. WFUV is a public radio station located at Fordham University which focuses their musical attention on folk, world music, and undefinable adult alternative. With the Bottom Line, WFUV is sponsoring a series of live concerts called "Required Listening - An Evening of No-Risk Discovery," designed to give lesser-known artists an opportunity to gain some exposure and to give music aficionados a chance to see some excellent music. WFUV had been playing a number of songs from *Building The Colossus*, but it still came as a surprise to learn that Happy would be playing at the second Required Listening show at the end of February.

Each of the four acts of the evening were limited to thirty-minute sets since there were performances at 7:30 and 10:00 P.M. Still, Happy used that limited amount of time effectively, starting her set with two tracks from *Building The Colossus*: "Hold Me" and the title track. "Save Our Souls" provided a softer piece before diving back into the fray with the fast-paced "Don't Want To Hear It" and concluding with (guess!) "Murder." The audience at the Bottom Line appeared to enjoy her performance, and Barbara Kessler, one of the other performers that evening, asked Happy for vocal lessons afterwards. Since the small but vocal table of Happy fans in the back was ecstatic in their applause, all of the Required Listening objectives were met.

Hopefully, the plans for a tour supporting *Building The Colossus* will come true so that more of Happy's fans can have the opportunities that I have had. She has gathered a top-notch group of musicians who deserve to be heard, and I am sure that there is an audience out there willing to listen.

Did You Know That... *Building The Colossus* is featured in listening stations at Tower Records as well as Blockbuster Music across the country?

REVIEW

Happy Rhodes

Building The Colossus (Aural Gratification)

(Review taken from B-Side Magazine, February/March 1995 issue)

Technically, this is Happy Rhodes' third CD. She really has nine releases out, comprised of material she had recorded before her first CD, Warpaint, *came out in 1991. If you become addicted to this artist you may need to haunt a few stores before you're totally satisfied.*

Somewhere along the way Happy decided she wasn't going to merely be a vocalist. She wasn't going to be a normal singer songwriter, because she has the voice of a goddess and songs most musicians would barter their souls away for. Happy questions, confronts and demands all from her songs, curving her conquering voice around her captivating music with a range that flies from a husky baritone to clear soprano. Her music moves from playful jazz phrasings to all out rock and roll swing in perfect compliment to her fascinating voice.

Building The Colossus *follows in the path of* Warpaint *and* Equipoise *and then improves on it: graced by sharper recording, the album sparks with wit and breathtaking talent, making it a must for those who adore the complexity of the female voice.*

She's coming for you whether you want her to or not. But once you experience Happy's magic, you'll be far more than just happy!

-- ***Sandra Garcia***

BOX H. A. P.

Dear Friends,

I currently belong to a couple of Tori Amos fanzines and have found them to be a great way to connect with other fans with similar tastes in music. I was recently made aware of what a great talent Happy Rhodes is thanks to WXPN radio which prompted me to pick up Rhodesongs *and* Building The Colossus *for starters. Please send me details on how to receive* Rhodeways.

Sincerely yours,

Ariane Jackson
Ardsley, PA

Dear Rhodeways,

I have just seen Happy at the Middle East in Philadelphia. Other than the sound system being a little off, this was truly an amazing experience. To be standing not more than twelve feet in front of her and have her look into your eyes as she sings is something that I will never forget. I had never even heard of Happy until the YesFEST in New York City. After seeing her perform there, I purchased all her CDs and have been totally immersed in her music ever since. I just hope she tours more often as I don't know how long I can go without a Happy fix. Kevin Bartlett is truly the luckiest man in the world!!

Sincerely,

Lou Pratico
Coatesville, PA
(Happy-ness always)

This Collective Heart

Ariane Jackson
798 N. Hills Ave.
Ardsley, PA 19038

Mike Strother
7203 Chestnut Tree Lane
Louisville, KY 40291

If you would like to add your name to our pen pal list, please drop us a note.

Subscriptions

Rhodeways is © 1995.

Rhodeways is a non-profit organization which exists solely to promote Happy Rhodes and has the full support of Ms. Rhodes, her manager, and Aural Gratification.

Subscriptions are $15 annually in the U.S. and $18 overseas. *Rhodeways* is published quarterly and welcomes correspondence, stories, photos, and artwork. Back issues of #2 and #3 are currently available for $4 each or can be applied to subscriptions.

Please send subscriptions and submissions to:

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