



# RHODEWAYS



Fall 1995

The International Happy Rhodes Medium

Issue 6



# The Happy Medium . . .

Oh, the joy of moving again. It is something that must be done every six months lest I smite myself with a stick. The prospect of living in a cabin-o'-the-woods is more greatly to be desired than that of remaining in terror, living amongst the Kingstonites. I am now afforded the opportunity of being one with nature, traveling great distances on a daily basis, and observing Happy's carpet laying and bug catching skills. Whilst she allows daddy longlegs of gargantuan size to crawl up her arm so she can set them gently outside, I run amok squealing with a Pringles can. She has definitely found her true calling in life (second only to her dang cool vocals). I now reside in a dwelling with more tortures than humankind can tell on this my gripe page. To add to the discombobulation, please note a knee injury (hi crutches), and no job because of it. A knife in the head would be zen.

Happy has also been the pinnacle of busydom: a ninth album, a tenth album, a few ambient albums, artwork, various other projects, and a fanzine to boot. Amazingly, she still finds time for the essentials of daily living (nourishment, rest, hygiene, Seinfeld, sign language lessons). With so much going on in both our lives, we have still managed to piece together a pretty cool issue, prepared with love for your reading pleasure. It is a bit late this time, but we thought it would be better late than quickly thrown together. Many groovy things would have been otherwise left out. Apologies to those of you who submitted all the great stuff that wouldn't fit in this time.

The most fun I had for this issue turned out to be a wonderful excursion with Ms. Rhodes to the homes of her childhood as she sought out her ghosts. We didn't realize until later that it would make for very interesting reading (we hope). I have also included a nano-bio for those of you who requested a little more information about Happy's history. Also in this issue, we have the details of the newest (and exciting) Aural Gratification adventure ... the world of ambient music. A.G. is in the midst of several ambient releases, the first of which is already out and doing well. Also included is some information on the new Rhodes release *The Keep*, an interview for those of you interested in the technical aspects of Happy's songwriting, and some nifty new pieces of artwork. Some of our readers have requested to see a picture of **me** in the fanzine. Yick! Included is something I feel is infinitely better . . . Happy's interpretation of me in a drawing. This is something Happy tends to do on occasion; she draws an individual as a creature with similar spiritual characteristics and qualities. I would have to say that this funky little critter on the back cover is definitely me in every way (she says he's always laughing, is fascinated with the same things over and over, runs around touching everything, inquisitive and silly, etc.). And I must admit that the other half looks exactly like me. Once again, I am at a loss for words in regards to her talents. Shoot me!

We appreciate your patience with this issue and hope it fills you with lotsa fuzzy stuff. Have fun!



Sharon Nichols  
Editor



RHODEWAYS

Bushels of squooshies to: H.R., K.B., Susanne, Randy Stevens, Owen, Bob Brown, Raphael Bart Vinoré, all you Happy-heads, and everyone who has come out of the closet this month. Special thanks to Joe for calling when he was back in town.

See a smiley face? Your subscription has expired. Don't miss the next issue...  
renew today and stay Happy!

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY HAPPY BIRTHDAY HAPPY!!!!  
(August 9)



# HAPPY-NINGS

## New Releases on Aural Gratification

The latter half of 1995 has proven to be a very productive period for Happy and clan. First on the agenda was Aural Gratification Volume One, an ambient compilation of various artists, released on July 27. Happy is responsible for the design and cover photography on this volume, as well as Volume Two, which is tentatively set for release on October 31. Please make every effort to assault your music retailer if you are having trouble finding it.

The most exciting news is the sudden decision to release a new Rhodes CD, *The Keep*. This release is due out October 17 and is "stuff from the vault": acoustic radio performances, remakes of old songs never before heard, and original recordings, also never before heard. It is a real treat for old and new fans alike. Don't miss this one!

Happy still plans on a new 1996 release and is now devoting all her time to its fruition. She has already written five of the songs. New tour plans will coincide with its release.

## Other Rhodes Efforts

There have been several promotional CDs on which Happy has appeared. *Live At The World Cafe Volume One*, a CD prepared by WXPN in Philadelphia, features Happy performing a new version of "Feed The Fire." She is hobnobbing with the likes of Melissa Etheridge, David Byrne, Sheryl Crow, The Indigo Girls, Bruce Hornsby, Tori Amos, Loreena McKennitt, and many others. This CD is a fund-raiser for WXPN and sells for \$25. If interested, call WXPN at (215) 898-6677. Happy also appeared on the Album Network Adult Rock #5 with the cut "Glory" earlier this year. Try your local used CD store for this one (no luck here)!

## CD Plus

Happy is negotiating a deal with a multimedia company on the production of a CD-plus based on the album *Equipoise*.

Negotiations aren't finalized yet, but plans include almost all of the album as well as video clips, live concert footage, and behind the scenes and interview pieces. The CD-plus will have a science fiction slant to it and feature Happy's original artwork and some other fun things. So if you don't have a computer yet, this should be your deciding factor!

Happy is also in negotiations with the artist Bon for a guest appearance on his next album. This project is tentative and plans include two songs, one of which will be a cover version of "Mercy Street." The other song will be an original.

## CD-4 For Sale

There are some copies left of the promotional CD-4 containing "Hold Me," "Glory," "Collective Heart (acoustic)," and "Look For the Child (acoustic)." Aural Gratification is selling these remaining copies *first come first served*. These are autographed and are going for \$15. If you would like one with a t-shirt, it is \$25. Please call or e-mail Aural Gratification first to secure your copy before sending your check or money order (914-679-4728/AURALG@aol.com).



Tirk's Babes: Martha Waterman and Happy 1994

# fairgrounds and honeybees



**On July 25, 1995 Happy set out on a very memorable trek. Destination? Hometown. Mission? To find the houses she lived in as a child, and to discover the historic origins of "Just Like Tivoli." She had not seen some of these sites in a quarter of a century, and locating them was difficult but exciting. Your Rhodeways editor rode shotgun.**

*Happy was born Kimberley Tyler Rhodes on August 9, 1965, but was known as "Happy" from infancy. She was born in Poughkeepsie, New York to Vernon H. Rhodes, Jr. and Susan Stamper. She has two older identical twin brothers, Mark and Chris.*

First Stop: Home, Wappinger's Falls, NY

We set out around noon for the first site, the house Happy lived in from ages 10 to 11. Quickly we discovered that one must pay attention to where one is going, or one will wind up where one does not want to be. Then again, it just adds an extra hour to the fun. Eventually we meandered down a millionth street and suddenly there were exclamations of "Oh, wait! I walked home from school every day on this street!" And thus, the excitement began, as did a flood of memories. Directly at the end of the street she espied the first house on the tour. As we stepped out of the heat into more heat, we decided to take a stroll down memory rhode. She remembered the boy she had a crush on who lived over there and the horrible bully who lived over there. A short walk brought us to a truck yard where she and her brothers used to play. A block or so down a windy road led to a small playground with swings where she wanted to "tear off some faces." Swinging was fun but raised the temperature to 150°. A few miles down the street, Happy found another house she lived in briefly at age eleven. Strangely enough, it was now a law office. Now panting from the heat, we stopped at Dairy Queen for some foul-tasting tea and directions. (Addendum: Happy says it was the best tea on earth at that moment, a delicious alternative to death by combustion.)

*Happy lived with her parents until the age of three when her parents divorced. She continued to live with her two brothers, her father, and new step-mother for the next eight years. In this time, she feasted on her father's love of art, music (particularly Bach), and learned to paint and draw.*

Second Stop: Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Poughkeepsie, NY

This was the infamous site of Happy's first three years of school and her introduction to the Catholic Church. Nothing had changed there, and the playground where she had played was still covered with asphalt. "See this little scar above my lip?" she asked. "Uh . . . yup," I said. "Now see that shrine of the Virgin Mary? That's where the kid threw the rock at me." After leaving the site, we encountered a near-death experience by turning down a one-way street with huge oncoming trucks. They weren't as amused as we were, and we were sure that their underwear was adequately soiled.

*Happy had learned to play guitar around age eleven, just before leaving her father to live with her mother and brothers in 1976. She then learned to play drums. At the age of 17, her mother arranged for her to meet Pat Tessitore, the head engineer of Cathedral Sound Studios in Rensselaer, NY. Happy had planned to become a musician someday and thought engineering would be a good way to get her foot in the door. She sang. Pat leapt, and her recording career began. Happy left home around this time to live with her brother, Mark.*

Third Stop: Home, Poughkeepsie, NY

We eventually hap-pened upon the house where Happy resided from ages four to nine. She had many fond memories there, especially ones of her father. She pointed out the porch where her father used to drag out the console stereo (yes, that one) and blast Bach on Halloween with ghosts and streamers tossing about in the breeze. She had

mentioned visiting her father's grave sometime, and I asked, "What's wrong with today?" She then knew the excursion wouldn't be complete without it.

*In 1984, Happy met Kevin Bartlett, who was also a musician frequenting Cathedral Sound and was a great fan of Happy's music. They began working together, and as a result began a personal relationship as well. Kevin was the president and founder of Aural Gratification which had sprung from the music he composed for art shows. He added Rhodes cassettes to his catalog, which sold like hotcakes. Happy moved in with Kevin in 1986 and they began performing as a duo, Bartlett-Rhodes.*

Fourth Stop: Cemetary, Tivoli, NY

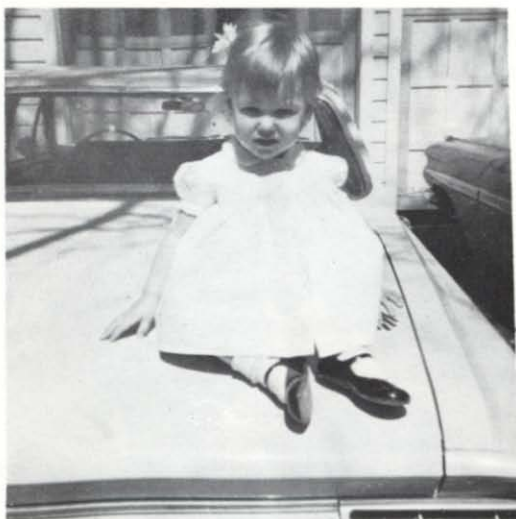
Thankfully, the cemetary was still open when we arrived. We located the resting place of Happy's father who passed away in 1991. It wasn't a sad time, but a joyful one, as we told jokes to the dearly departed and checked out all the tombstones. It was at this time that we decided to press on before dark and try to locate the house of her great grandparents, sung about in "Just Like Tivoli."

*Because of the success of her first four cassettes, Happy decided to release a CD, Warpaint, in 1991, which was quickly and voraciously received by radio stations and new fans. Now a woman with a true mission, she began cranking out CDs almost yearly.*

Final Stop: House, Tivoli, NY

Happy was no more than five when she had last visited the house, so finding it proved to be a challenge, especially since the night sky had taken over. She had barely any memory of the house at all. All that she remembered were the strawberries, the honeybees, and the fairground down the street. But luck was on our side and we eventually found the house and went to the porch. The woman Happy spoke to also remembered the wild strawberries growing in the yard and the honeybees that were raised there. Happy lit up and nearly imploded. The song became infinitely real as we headed back home; she slammed on brakes as she spotted the little fairground. The day had been an utter success.

*Today with nine albums under her belt, Happy Rhodes continues to bombard the music world with her colossal talents. She has performed to audiences of thousands, sold nearly 100,000 albums, and has myriads of fans worldwide. Through still an independent artist, she has had several major record labels nipping at her heels. Eventually, she will run out of breath and one will catch her. The chase is on, the threshold is aflame, and she is bounding through.*



Little Hap, November 1967



Littler Hap, 1965

# THESE GLORIOUS SONGS

happy answers your questions!

Rhodes I, Rhodes II, Rearmament, and Ecto are collections of songs written and recorded over many years -- when were the songs actually written and recorded? -- Phil Clark, Middlesex, England

Here is a synopsis of those albums:

Rhodes I: All the songs were written between the years 1982 and 1986. The oldest songs are "Moonbeam Friends," "The First To Cry," "The Flaming Threshold," and "Suicide Song." These were written in 1982-83. The copyrights refer to the years that the songs were released. They were first released unofficially on cassette in 1984, released officially on cassette in 1986, then released on compact disc in 1992. This same rule applies to the other three albums.

Rhodes II: The oldest songs on this album are "The Revelation," "Under And Over The Brink," "To The Funnyfarm," and "The Chase." These songs were written in 1982-83. The rest were written between the years of 1982-86.

Rearmament: The songs on this album were written between 1984 and 1988. The earliest songs are "I Have A Heart" and "Baby Don't Go." "Be Careful What You Say" was written in 1988.

Ecto: These songs were written between the years 1986 and 1988, with the exception of "Project 499." That was written in 1984. "Look For The Child" and "When The Rain Came Down" were written in 1988.

**Please elaborate on "Ode" and "The Issue Is." Also does Happy want to meet or work with anyone? Does she have a "dream"?** -- Kevin Highnight, Ypsilanti, MI

"Ode" was written one gloomy weekend in 1986. I had Kevin's Hagstrom 12-string electric guitar and his Roland Space Echo. I was feeling alone and intensely sad. After a while of feeling like that I just decided that I was tired of it. I decided to play some music to soothe myself. "Ode" came out of that.



Happy and Helen Leicht of WMMR 1994

"The Issue Is" was inspired by an incident which occurred in a restaurant that I was working in at the time. A young woman was dining with her family when she suddenly collapsed and the paramedics were called. A nurse who happened to be sitting at a nearby table came over and quickly determined that the woman's heart had stopped. She immediately began CPR and the paramedics arrived. They were able to revive her after about ten minutes. The saddest part of this scene was watching the woman's boyfriend panicking and crying. He was powerless to help her and had to face the real possibility of losing her forever. My heart cried for him. That is the plight of the human race and death. The person who dies goes off to whatever other life awaits them (according to whatever faith you do or do not believe in). But the ones who are left behind suffer the loss deeply, sometimes for the rest of their lives. I wish we could avoid that pain but it doesn't seem possible. We connect so strongly with each other, and no one really knows what happens to us when we die.

I would like to have the opportunity to work with a lot of people in different capacities. There are a few biggies who I won't mention. I'm well aware, however, that just because you admire someone's abilities doesn't mean you'll work well together. I basically leave the future open for such possibilities, but I don't actively seek them out.

***I would like to ask about the background behind one of my favorite songs, "Closer." What made Happy write it?*** -- Michelle Monette, Royal Palm Beach, FL

"Closer" was written as a catharsis as were many other songs of mine. I was particularly angry at a person in my past, so I wrote a song. I find it's better than bludgeoning a person to death . . . and it's cleaner. I chose to invite Kelly Bird to participate on the song because she suffered a similarly disturbing childhood and has enough anger about it to take care of both of us.

***What artists would Hap like to jam with? What instruments does she play?*** -- Haviland Hayes, Virginia Beach, VA

I don't care to jam at all. I'm not proficient on any instrument except my voice and folks aren't always interested in jamming with vocals. I wouldn't mind a one on one jam with someone who's trying to work up an idea.

I started playing guitar when I was 11, and drums when I was 14. I never continued with the drums, but it gave me a feel for rhythm and meter. I play keyboards only well enough to record takes. I could not accompany myself on a piano at this time. At least not to my standards.

***Please tell us more about the song "Down, Down." It haunts me. I've listened to it for a solid year, almost completely abandoning all other music in my studio. Is this a reference to submarine and naval warfare? And is the line "innovation is a miracle in its own way" a reference to Joseph Campbell's Power of Myth series where he talks about modern technological miracles? What inspired you to write this song?*** -- Wendy Costa, Berne, NY

"Down, Down" is my pride and joy. Although I'm unhappy about my production of the song, it's still one of my favorites. I'm fascinated by submarines and aircraft carriers. But beyond that, I'm fascinated with man's desire to conquer the world's natural elements. Everything we see, we must explore and/or harness. The ocean used to be a world for creatures who swim. But humans are starving for knowledge. We develop technologies to enable us to investigate every facet of existence. This excites me and also scares me. I think highly of the human race, but we still believe in war and destruction. These things find their way wherever humans tread and that's sad. In the song, I focused on how grand we are to have invented things like submarines to take us where the light never shines, but we have restricted that development to military affairs. It's fascinating and frightening. I'm familiar with Joseph Campbell, but none of this was inspired by his writings.

# THEKEEP THEKEEP THEKEEP THEKEEP THEKEEP THE

The following piece, written by Kevin Bartlett (President of Aural Gratification), is in the liner notes of the forthcoming release *The Keep*. It is a special treat for our *Rhodeways* readers who anxiously await the latest Rhodes masterpiece.

It was the spring of 1991 when Happy Rhodes released *Warpaint*. Technically her fifth recording, it was, however, the first to be mass marketed. This basically meant servicing radio stations and using independent distributors as opposed to selling copies from the trunk of a car. *Warpaint* was also our (her) first release on the ever popular CD format (our 8-track sales were starting to decline).

The appeal and acceptance of a little known artist on an even more little known label was far-reaching. Many radio stations took to Happy like stunt ducks to water, embracing her incredible voice, haunting compositions, and "right between the eyes" lyric. In fact, the album's single "Feed The Fire" was reported by Philadelphia's WXPB as the #1 most requested song of 1991. Indeed!

What was once a small cult following of fans was rapidly becoming a large cult following of fans. All of a sudden, people from all over the world were wanting to know Who was this woman? Where'd she come from? What has she done? What is she doing next? When's the tour? Who's that guy singing with Kate Bush? The proverbial "splash" had been made.

As with any artist being commercially presented, the challenge of eternal exposure becomes paramount. ("Outta sight, outta mind"). A demand is created for new material, new albums, personal appearances at record stores, radio stations, live shows, solo shows, band shows, and lots and lots of interviews. Meeting this challenge becomes the artist's "new" job description. Probably the best effect of all this commotion is that an awful lot of music gets played. Not just in recording studios, clubs and theatres, but music played at radio stations, cold radio stations, hot radio stations, music played in living rooms, music played with crushed fingers, music played for a guy and his dog, music played for 100,000 listeners, music played on no sleep, music played on too much sleep, music played for people who came to hear someone else.

Most of this music gets recorded, but usually it's for a single broadcast or

for the sake of posterity. After about five years of this, however, you begin to notice that there is this pile of tape threatening to move you out of house and home. A wealth of material that was probably heard only once or twice by people who happened to be tuned into a radio or had caught one of Happy's rare live shows. This brings us to the point of this recording. We've been very fortunate to have a dedicated listening audience for the music of Happy Rhodes. We're always asked where people can get a hold of copies of all these unique performances. People who missed a broadcast or are interested in what a 48-track recording sounds like performed with one voice and one guitar. People curious about what Happy sounded like doing a medley of Yes songs at the group's 1994 New York City convention. What's her trio sound like? What was the Christmas carol performed on Helen Leicht's WMMR show? What was her very first recording?

All these inquiries got us wondering if we should go to the "vault" and see if we had enough good material to make an album of interest and merit. What you hold in your hand is the result of that search. We found some pretty rare stuff. We came across recordings once thought to be lost, as well as a few that should have stayed lost (no offense to Ms. Rhodes; they were technical nightmares). We listened to every tape from every radio station, every recording session as far back as 1984, every gig. Finally we picked out what we thought were the most interesting performances and arrangements. Most of this material is "as is", in its original state. Some material was too precious to exclude but didn't make the technical grade. In these cases, we opted to rerecord the songs, keeping their uniqueness intact.

So hopefully what we have here is a collection of some very diverse and possibly historical musical moments that will sate the appetite for the more rare and intriguing aspects of a very special artist's career. At least to date.

This album is a tribute to the thousands of fans and supporters of Happy's music, as much as it is a

tribute to the musical brilliance of Happy herself. This is your record, from the vault, from *The Keep*.

Thank you for listening.

Kevin Bartlett/Aural Gratification



## Temporary and Eternal (5:33)

Originally written and recorded for *Equipoise* (AGCD0019), this version was arranged and performed exclusively for The Echoes Living Room Concert Series in the spring of 1995. Also known as "The Spacier, The Better" sessions.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, nylon string guitar/Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar loops/Carl Adami--bass devices*

## Life On Mars (3:20)

First recorded back in 1986 around the time of *Ecto* (AGCD0013) as an all synth version. Happy opted to redo this one with the acoustic guitar and some EFX.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar, EFX*

## Collective Heart (4:45)

Best known as the single from *Building The Colossus* (AGCD0029), this song saw many a version played in 1994, from full band, to unplugged, to solo performances. This version comes from Happy's unplugged band, live on the World Cafe program, taped at WXPB in Philly.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar/Carl Adami--bass/Kelly Bird--backing vox, acoustic guitar/Dean Sharp--percussion*

## The Yes Medley (6:05)

In the summer of 1994, Happy was invited to perform at the YesFest in New York City. It was only fitting to pay homage to a band who've provided her with much musical inspiration. The original recording from the Manhattan Center had its share of technical woes, so rerecording for this compilation was

in order. A rare treat that even includes a song from Trevor Rabin's pre-Yes days in Rabbit.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar, keyboards*

#### **Save Our Souls (6:00)**

Originally recorded for *Equipoise* (AGCD0019) in full regalia, an acoustic trio rerecorded it for *Rhodesongs* (AGCD0021) and here even still another version by "The Spacier The Better Band" for the Echoes Living Room Concert Series. Great songs never die, they just keep getting arranged or deranged, as the case may be. This year's model.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar, loops/ Carl Adami--bass, devices*

#### **Flash Me Up (2:14)**

Brand new material written in the summer of '94. Happy actually premiered this one at YesFest.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar*

#### **For We Believe (2:34)**

Originally contained on *Rearmament* (AGCD0011), this song was done in Detroit, live on the air, with Ann Delisi at WDET. This was one of Happy's first live radio performances.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--bass*

#### **Summer (3:28)**

This song was originally written for the *Rhodesongs* collection (AGCD 0021). It seemed a perfect choice for The Echoes Show, with its lush keyboards and chordal ambience. So, of course, it was done with two guitars and a bass.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar, loops/ Carl Adami--bass, devices*

#### **Oh Holy Night (3:27)**

This traditional Christmas song was performed only once before on Helen Leichts WMMR show in 1994. Again rerecorded by neurotic perfectionists. Happy Christmas!

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar, keys/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar, nog*

#### **Look For The Child (4:20)**

From a "radio only" promotional CD-4 compilation. This unplugged version was actually recorded in

Happy's living room. Oddly enough, no one called the cops. This title originally appears on *Ecto* (AGCD 0013).

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar/ Carl Adami--bass/ Kelly Bird--backing vox/ Dean Sharp--dobro*

#### **Hold Me (3:25)**

The second single from *Building The Colossus* (AGCD0029) performed once again in John DiLiberto's living room by the spacey trio. Probably not the dance mix!

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar/ Kevin Bartlett--electric guitar, David Torn-inspired sonics/ Carl Adami--bass, devices*

#### **Bye Moon (2:07)**

This recording was once thought to

be lost in The Keep's sub-flooring. Dusted off and remastered, a truly beautiful piece from the early 80's.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar*

#### **Prey of the Strange (3:36)**

This is the very first known recording of Happy Rhodes from back in 1984. We thought it deserved inclusion in this retrospective of rare recordings salvaged from the vault. "The Keep's" original resident.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar*

#### **Oh Hand of Mine (3:49)**

This song is also from the first Happy Rhodes recording sessions. Played at Happy's first public performance back in 1983 at the famed Cafe Lena's. Wish we had time machines.

*Happy Rhodes--vox, acoustic guitar*





## TELL ME OF YOUR ESCAPADES



A multi-talented artist such as Happy Rhodes is destined to branch out and explore her full musical range. She has done such on **Aural Gratification Volume One**. This compilation is a paragon in the world of ambient recordings. Ambient music has become intensely popular in the past few years and should show itself to be the wave of the remainder of the century. R. Bart Vinoré, a friend and fan, peeks into the Rhodes studio for some insight on the ambient mixes.



◆◆ When I sat down with Ms. Rhodes, I was full of anticipation and fear. The anticipation came from my years of listening to her work as a fan, feeling every note and gliding with her through her soaring vocals. The fear came from the knowledge that I am nothing close to a professional journalist, and here I was about to take dictation on a realm I know very little about . . . the technical side of performance.◆◆



**R.B.V.** We're discussing the work you've been doing recently for the Aural Gratification compilations, Ambient Volume I and Ambient Volume II. Being that this is not your typical genre, what made you interested in being part of these compilations?

**H.R.** Well, Susanne White originally came up with the notion. She's always been more plugged into the streets than me, and one day she suggested to Mr. Bartlett and myself that this might be a fun, easy way of perpetuating music product in the 1995 pipeline. She added that we are already adept at electronics and this could be right up our alley. Now, Kevin and I hadn't even really heard any recent ambient or techno, so we decided to brush up on it to see if it might be something we were interested in. For me, it was instantaneous. I knew that this was going to be a great outlet for my creativity. I used to dream as a child that one day I'd sit behind a great Moog synthesizer with patch cords everywhere and perform great works of art. Well, the picture is slightly altered, and I wouldn't call these great works of art necessarily, but the dream is the same.

**R.B.V.** Well, it seems Ms. White was right about it being right up your alley. People are really loving this album and I'm sure the next one will prove the same. You've talked before about the creative process of recording your albums; can you tell us a little bit about the creative process for this kind of music?

**H.R.** It's certainly not the same. It's much faster and easier to go into the studio to do an ambient piece. I usually get the whole piece done (meaning written, recorded and mixed), in one to two days. I don't need any preparation or vocal ideas. I just go in, shut the door, turn the gear on and begin. Sometimes I have an idea of the basic tempo I want it at, or whether it will be a spacey, dreamy thing as opposed to a rhythmic drone.

**R.B.V.** I've noticed that even though you don't sing on these songs, they definitely sound like Happy Rhodes pieces.

**H.R.** Yes, I have this bad habit of still putting everything in song form. I don't care **what** you call the music, it still has to move me. There's a lot of ambient/techno out there that truly fits the definition. It's little more than atmosphere and cadence. Some of them are so mundane, I could scream.

**R.B.V.** O.K., here's where I get nervous. I know a lot of people want to know how you do it, technically speaking, so can you describe that process?

**H.R.** Sure. I'll try. If I've decided that the piece is going to be spacey, then I start with a

lush pad sound. If it's to be a rhythmic thing, then obviously I begin rooting out some interesting drum sounds. I try to stay away from recognizable sounds such as snares and straight high-hats. I will use typical kick-drums. Once I've found some beginning sounds to use, I spend the next three hours sending them through different processors to get an unusual texture. On "Ra Is A Busy God," my foundation was the high-hats. To make them less standard, I E.Q.ed them in a way that one should never do for high-hats. Then I ran them through a phase-shifter/flanger. Next, I came up with some basic pulses to run through the whole song, when the high-hats dropped out. I have to confess, it's difficult to remember everything I did.

**R.B.V.** How do you know what sounds to use when?

**H.R.** Well, that's just a matter of trial and error. You need patience and an ear. I sit at the keyboards and I go through hundreds of sound options until something strikes me. It's a purely subjective process. It's the same with the effects processors. The processing you use is probably a lot more important than the actual sound. You can take a standard piano sample and contort it until it sounds like an electric guitar going through a fuzz box. The "when" part is a little more difficult. It helps to have a sense of form and composition when doing anything like this. I use a computerized sequencer and so my options are pretty limitless. I write all of the musical lines as I hear them on one page (track mode). We call them "the elements" of the song. Then, as the elements start increasing, I begin to group them together in different formations and bump them over to another page (song mode). It's rarely right on the first try, so again you're talking about a lot of trial and error.

**R.B.V.** Yet the final product sounds very intricate. I'm surprised it only takes a couple of days to do all that. Don't you ever eat or take a break?

**H.R.** As a matter of fact, I forget to eat when I'm in the middle of it. But I think that's a sign that you're onto something decent. If you're working and it occurs to you that the plants need watering, then you should probably scrap it and start again.

**R.B.V.** Is there any part of this process that you don't like? It sounds almost like more technical work than creative.

**H.R.** It truly is a technical undertaking. But I love that aspect of it. To do this kind of music you really have to have patience and a love for electronics. I have always had a fascination with electronics, so this is play for me. There are, however, times when I have to splash cold water on my face to shake off the brain-drain one can get from being in editing mode for too long. Often I have to go into a track or sequence and work on individual note commands. If I have an eight measure phrase where the percussion has to stop on the seventh, but it goes for a full eight everywhere else in the song, I have to go into editing and physically pull the notes out. I prefer doing it this way as opposed to just muting the channels on the mixing console. I like to keep as much movement in the computer as possible. Every nuance you can imagine can basically be accomplished in editing. So I spend a lot of time there and sometimes you forget you were actually working on a piece of music at one point.

**R.B.V.** You mentioned the desire to keep as much in the computer as possible. How much of a role does the mixing console play in your final mixes?

**H.R.** Well, I don't mean to imply that the mixer is obsolete in this process. It's another instrument that you play. It determines what the E.Q. is for any given sound, how loud or soft it is in the mix, whether you hear it in the right ear, left ear, or both, how much of the effects you hear and when and so on. The mixer enables me to send a signal to an effects processor, then return the processed signal to a couple of independent faders, where I can then re-E.Q. it or re-process it if I desire. Again, there are almost too many options.

**R.B.V.** If all that weren't enough, you also had a hand in designing the artwork for the albums, didn't you?

**H.R.** Yes, I created the photos for the covers of the two albums. I came up with a basic design idea for them and then handed it over to a very talented graphics designer named Melissa McGill. She took the basic elements and came up with an overall look that I really love. She does to art what I do to music. Her job is also very technical.

**H.R.V.** The second volume in this series will be released on October 31st. How many cuts did you do for that one and who else will be appearing on it?

**H.R.** I did three songs for Volume Two, as I did for Volume One. I actually feel better about the three for Volume Two because I've gotten the hang of it a little more now. I think they're mixed better. The other artists are Kevin Bartlett of course, being as prolific as ever, Bokeno from New York City, an artist out of Boston named Jamie Edwards, and a Woodstock crew named Quiet City.

**R.B.V.** No David Torn this time?

**H.R.** (laughs) No, I'm afraid Mr. Torn had to put priority on his new solo album. He began recording for that around the same time we started putting volume two together.

**R.B.V.** Well, Happy, thanks for taking time to talk to us about this unusual and fascinating project of yours. What does the immediate future hold for you?


**H.R.** I'm taking a little rest here. I've been going non-stop for quite a while. Before I started with the ambient stuff, I'd written about five new songs for my next album. So starting tomorrow, I think I'll get back in the studio and pick up where I left off with that. I'm really looking forward to recording again.

**R.B.V.** Well, we're all looking forward to that too, I'm sure. Thanks Happy.



Happy and Lynn Signore in *BTC* days, 1994





# BOX H.A.P.



Dear Sharon,

I managed to discover Happy's music via the internet. Last year I had to start using the internet for work-related reasons and when wandering through newsgroups to join, I came across this strange group "alt.music.ecto". I had no idea what on earth this could be so I subscribed out of curiosity and thus I discovered the name Happy Rhodes. It took me ages to get a hold of her records, not until March of this year when I was able to track down five of her eight CDs in London. Then a couple of weeks ago, the three other Happy CDs arrived via mail order, so I have been busy working my way through Happy's changes over a period of about a decade in just the space of three months or so! Anyway, I am captivated by her music and I would like to subscribe to *Rhodeways*. Many thanks and best wishes.

Phil Clark  
Middlesex, England

Dear Sharon,

I'm an Ectophile and have leafed through a few copies of your fanzine belonging to a friend of mine. I was very impressed with what I saw, so I have decided to get a subscription for myself. I was first introduced to Happy's music by Vickie Mapes' posts to rec.music.gaffa. I wanted to hear her for myself but didn't have the opportunity until a friend of mine, Philip Sainy, gave me a sample tape containing songs from *Rearmament*, *Warpaint*, and *Equipoise*. Immediately I was hooked. I joined Ecto soon after.

Peace, love and small furry animals,

Urs Stafford  
Wellington, New Zealand

Dear Sharon and Rhodeways,

I just received *Rhodeways* #5 and was very excited about all of our answers to the survey. Also that Happy discussed some of her songs (something I also

suggested with a lot of others). And for one of those songs discussed "I'm Not Awake, I'm Not Asleep" to be one of my favorites was a BIG surprise! Have you thought about ever having anything like *Really Deep Thoughts* "OkTorifest"? It would be great! Maybe have it surround a concert. You could charge for admission, have refreshments, a concert, and then everyone could meet Happy. Would she go for this?!?

Loyally,

Kevin D. Highnight  
Ypsilanti, MI

(This idea certainly would not be overlooked when the right time presented itself. Of course, Happy would need a huge fan base, which is something only time can bring. This is not an announcement of any sort, so let's not get our knickers in a twist just yet. But yes, she wouldn't mind such a gathering, and yes, I would host the Rhode-party -- Ed.)

Dear Sharon,

I've been meaning to write to you for a while now. I recently had the great good fortune to meet and interview Happy Rhodes when she came to WPKN-FM in Bridgeport, CT. I've been playing Happy Rhodes' music for probably a year and a half now on my weekly Saturday night show. Another ardent fan, Meredith Tarr, had called me up one night and suggested that by the content of my show, I might enjoy Happy's music. She was totally right. I was an immediate devotee! I get many calls of inquiry, and always direct people to more of her CDs, etc.

Recently, when Ray Terlaga (who DJs on Friday nights at WPKN) and I hosted Happy's performance, I spent around 20 minutes with her in the production studio, pre-taping an interview which we later edited and interspersed with the live songs she performed that night. I aired the program, which was 38 minutes in length, in early June. I let the Ectophiles know about it via e-mail, and again many interested inquires resulted.

So I'm finally getting around to

subscribing to the fanzine. I'm already impressed by your devotion and work without having even seen an issue! Thank you in advance and best wishes.

Binnie Klein  
New Haven, CT

Dear Rhodeways,

I want to make sure Happy reads this letter because this letter is to her and to all of her fans. I am 14 years old and hopelessly in love with Happy's music. I have always loved music and I love to sing. Nothing brings me more joy than to turn Happy's music on loud and sing along with her alone in my room. I have every one of her CDs, as far as I know. I think her voice is phenomenal. I have never in my life heard a voice as rich, renowned, and eloquent as hers. I think she is a tarnished pearl in the bottom of a sea-weed covered ocean. Those who have stumbled upon her know how fantastic she is, but there are few who have discovered her. It is not only her extraordinary voice which makes her music so incomparable to any other; it's also her deep lyrics which propel you to listen to the song over and over again.

I live in PA, an hour and a half from Philly, and my father and I (he submitted a letter in issue #3 and is also Happy-obsessed) were going to drive to one of her concerts, but there was a sudden change of plans and I was so disappointed. *Rhodeways* is a great thing. I wondered to myself how many other people knew about and adored Happy. *Rhodeways* connects all of Happy's fans and now I know I am not the only one who is crazy about Happy!

I am writing today because I have some ideas for everyone to consider, including Happy. I have thought them over and I don't really know if any of them are possible, but I want Happy to be discovered by more people! Once she becomes well-known, so many people will be hopelessly sucked into the uphoria of Happy's music, but this can't happen without more publicity! I have introduced her to all my friends who love her but it is hard to find her CDs in most stores and

not enough people know about her. I think Happy should choose one song from one of her albums to be her main song. It is so hard with her music because unlike many singers who have one hit song on their album, all of Happy's songs are fabulous! But the overall public needs to be able to familiarize with one of her songs. Then she needs to make a music video for that song! Also, she needs to put on more concerts and if her hit song does really well (which I have no doubt it will) more radio stations will start to play her. Also, a great idea would be to start a "Happy Line" on an online service like Prodigy or America Online, where people can chat live about Happy, and her music will be spread internationally. *Rhodeways* is a great way to publicize Happy, but there has to be more that we can do! I'm right behind you Happy, and next time you perform in Philly, I am coming to see you!

Kelly Lambo  
New Hope, PA

I ♥ Happy!!

(Kelly, thanks for your concerns. Since Happy is still on a small independent label, it is much more difficult for her to promote herself. Most of the artists that are popular today are on major record labels with lots of money behind them. This isn't the case yet for Happy, but it will happen soon. And she does have sites on the internet. They are as follows:

Ecto Mailing List:  
<ecto-request@nsmx.rutgers.edu>  
<"subscribe" in message>  
Happy's Web Site:  
<<http://www.helix.net/ecto/>>  
The Happy Rhodes Encyclopedia Site:  
<<http://www-ns.rutgers.edu/ecto/>>  
Aural Gratification:  
<AURALG@aol.com>

Thanks for supporting Happy and doing your part! --  
Ed.)

Dear Sharon,

Thank you sooo much! Winning things is not something I do often, and I couldn't believe it when *Rhodeways* arrived complete with the photo! I went out and bought a nice frame for it and its now hanging up on proud display! Thank you for *Rhodeways* too -- it's wonderful!

Philip Sainty  
Wellington, New Zealand

We have had some requests for poetry (as well as some screams of "Please! No poetry!") To appease those interested, I have chosen to print several submissions. This will NOT be a regular feature, but if you enjoy this page, please let me know. If you hate it, remember that suicide is never an option. — Ms. N.

**All The Above ♦ Michael Shelley**

*In all my life of this world to me it is given  
Forgiven all within with and about you  
With 'still nest' the life in this world,  
Adieu, this shackle of an existence to live  
And understand so much of the choice,  
Being given, I know so very little,  
Yet to be without learning,  
I see you there I fly 'a way' that is one,  
Only for all for none,  
Forever, forever, forever, . . .*

*In my loneliness I learn of all the love  
That within is burning for all the above.*

Michael Shelley, a good friend of both Kevin and Happy, is an accomplished musician, artist, and writer. Happy felt that his work might be of interest to her readers. If interested in his 1995 publication, *Passages*, write A.G., P.O. Box 380, Bearsville, NY 12409.

**Sleeping With Lambs ♦ Neile Graham**  
*Previously published in Descant*

*The woman is not mad  
but she dreams about snow  
piercing the windows of her house,  
snow tunneling through the earth  
to her cellar, moist flakes  
already forming on the sheets  
of her bed. Wind surrounds  
the house like wolves,  
sinewy as tree branches  
etched into sleep. Not quite  
the dream she expected: four  
white heads tucked beside her  
as she turns to see them there, nearly  
beside her, the blankets folded just  
under their chins, the air warm  
with the wool of their breathing.*

**Music ♦ Urs Stafford**

*Musical life isn't  
too bad here  
in Wellington.  
We have our shindigs,  
raves, parties,  
our Happyvangelising  
down in the mall  
on Friday nights.*

*But concerts?  
Quite a different matter entirely.  
What can we do?*

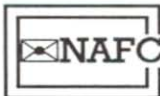
*When God hasn't toured since 1979,  
Jesus only played Auckland  
and the Holy Ghost  
has only toured New York and Philly.*

*Ah well,  
at least I have my walkman.*



*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 (U.S. funds only). *Rhodeways* is published quarterly and welcomes correspondence, stories, photos, and artwork. Issues #2-#6 are available for \$4 each; autographed issues are \$10 each. *Rhodeways* is copyrighted 1995. Member of:

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Kingston, NY 12401  
Phone/Fax: (914) 688-7793



"Yikes! I need menthol!" she howls after a 900-seat sell out performance at Harrison Auditorium (Philly).



**RHODENWALS**