



Give me that bluegrass music. Give me the traditional songs like “Down Home” and “Foggy Mountain Breakdown,” new classics like “Dueling Banjos” and “Rocky Top”, and covers like “Paint it Black” and “Hotel California” performed by a group of pickers. For dessert, I’ll take something light and sweet like *Take It Outside*, a new children’s release by The Okee Dokee Brothers.

Now, before you dismiss my lifelong appreciation of bluegrass as a symptom of my Appalachian address, note that I was born and spent most of my life minutes from Manhattan, in northern New Jersey. Blue grass always struck me as clean, simple, honest music, although there is nothing simple about the skills required to produce it.

The Okee Dokee brothers combine bluegrass with country and folk sounds, applying the mix to lyrics that are easily understood and easy to sing. Well, maybe some aren’t that easy...one of their songs is about the longest word in the English language, “Antidisestablishmentarianism,” and another—“Lucy and Tightly”—introduces “exponentially” and “aesthetically” to our kids’ vocabulary. “The Naked Truth” will do one thing, and it will do it well — reduce kids to giggles.

Could you be a superhero from a story? The Okee Dokee brothers bring in references to some pretty formidable characters (Captain Jack Sparrow, Luke Skywalker, Tarzan, 007, Indiana Jones, Frodo) when they sing about what it takes to be a hero, and — yes — you have what it takes! Another song, “Auctioneer,” jauntily captures the flavor of a Smoky Mountain auction. And “Neighbors” will convince most everyone that the people in their neighborhood aren’t all that weird.

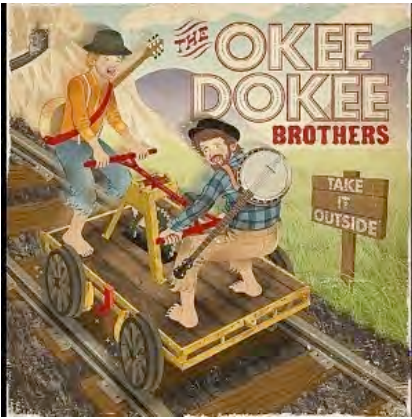
I can’t imagine a kid who wouldn’t enjoy the silliness of “Wash Your Face” or the imagination of “The Extraterrestrials.” “Water Balloon,” the shortest song in the collection, repeats those two words for 38 seconds and inspires us to shuck our shoes and chase someone we love around a meadow with a water balloon, as we sing along. Try it with your kids — it’s fun.

The Okee Dokee Brothers are Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing, hailing from the Twin Cities. Their highly regarded previous release is *Kids with Beards*. If families don’t laugh and sing along with *Take It Outside* they seriously need a fun transplant. It hits the street on August 3.





## The Okee Dokee Brothers take us along for the ride



It's no secret that I'm a huge fan of super-fun kids' musicians The Okee Dokee Brothers: I gave their debut CD [Kids with Beards](#) a gushing review, and it's still one of my kids' most-played CDs two years later.

And now they have a brand new kids' music CD, and they even put me on it!

*[don't miss a giveaway after the jump!]*

[Take It Outside](#) features a baker's dozen of stick-in-your head (in a good way) songs. As with *Kids with Beards*, I hear loads of banjo and fiddle, playful harmonies that blend together perfectly, and plenty of music that makes my kids want to get up and jump around.

When I heard the first track, *Bluegrass for Breakfast*, I thought I had a pretty good idea of the direction of this CD. But as *Take It Outside* rolls along, I'm pleasantly surprised to hear it explore new territory. *Neighbors* has an upbeat rhythm with a chorus that spins Mr. Rogers' famous line around a bit. And *Hero* gets a cool rocking sound with some help from fellow

Minnesotan Adam Levy of [Bunny Clogs](#) and his electric guitar.

This is all unmistakably The Okee Dokee Brothers, whose sense of humor and ability to speak to kids with understanding and fun comes through loud and clear. One of my favorite things about lead singers Joe and Justin is the way they use words to add another level of musicality to their songs: *Tippy Toes* tips along at breakneck speed and things certainly don't slow down for the *Auctioneer*.

Oh, and where do I come in? On the inside front cover's liner notes, with some words of praise for this most-excellent kids' CD. Although if you heard me singing, you'd know why that's as close to being part of an album that I should get. -Christina

[The Okee Dokee Brothers' Take It Outside](#) is available at [CD Baby](#).

***Congratulations to Angela P, lucky winner of a copy of Take It Outside!***



The Okee Dokee Brothers are a new favorite of mine. They have a sort of bluegrass sound with lots of acoustic guitar and banjo, but I say “sort of” because they also have a very modern sound, particularly with their witty lyrics.

Of course a big theme for them is to get outside and get active, but they also encourage you to [Wash Your Face](#), especially after learning the [The Naked Truth](#) (though you may need to wash more than your face after walking about nude). I love their opposites-attract song about Lefty Lucy and Righty Tightly ([Lucy and Tightly](#)) for it’s perfect wordplay. We haven’t had the chance to see them live yet, but their [videos](#) of live performances are hilarious. Hopefully they’ll come to Boston soon!

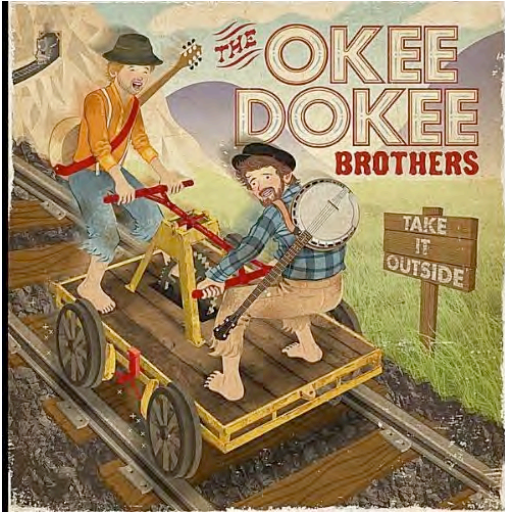
[Take It Outside](#) will be released on August 3rd.





## CD Review: The Okee Dokee Brothers, "Take It Outside"

Posted by [Jeff Giles](#) 23 July, 2010



Following the tradition established by albums like Jerry Garcia and David Grisman's [Not for Kids Only](#), the Okee Dokee Brothers blow the dust off traditional bluegrass and highlight its playful spirit, offering kids a knee-high gateway into the world of American roots music.

Of course, it isn't like trad bluegrass is particularly hard for all-ages audiences to enjoy, but that's no reason to complain about [Take It Outside](#), the Okee Dokes' follow-up to their 2008 debut, *Kids with Beards*. Anything that connects kids with the primordial joy of song is all right in my book, and *Outside* represents an assured next step in the duo's self-proclaimed "mission to remind children (and adults) of their intrinsic ability to discover, imagine, and create through music."

For proof that the Okee Dokee Brothers know what they're doing, you don't have to look much further than the company they keep — *Take It Outside* was produced by [Tor Hyams](#) and features liner note

endorsements by preeminent kindie critics [Bill Childs](#), [Christina Refford](#), and [Stefan Shepherd](#), all of whom know a thing or two about great family entertainment. And it isn't hard to hear why they're Okee Dokes fans: This a 13-track bundle of fun, cleverly written bluegrass, recorded with a minimum of fuss and bother, and soaked in kid-friendly charm.

There are moments that your kids will probably enjoy a lot more than you do (I'm thinking specifically of the colossally annoying "Tippy Toes" and "Water Balloon"), but on the whole, *Take It Outside* is loaded with replay value: Highlights include the lovely, cascading melody and beautiful message of "Neighbors," the hip tongue-twister "Antidisestablishmentarianism," the rubbery, gale-force storm of syllables that is "Auctioneer," the warm-hearted "What We Got," and the funny ode to nudity "The Naked Truth."

According to [their website](#), the Okee Dokee Brothers — a.k.a. Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing — were "childhood best friends," and they sound like it here, wrapping their voices in brotherly harmony and anchoring their songs in the kind of hummable, durable arrangements that beg for back-porch playing. At a time when artifice in music is so commonplace as to be invisible, isn't that kind of simplicity its own reward?



## [The Okee Dokee Brothers: Take It Outside CD Review & Giveaway](#)

By [AndreaM](#) on Jul 28, 2010 in [Finished Giveaways](#)



*Just when the dog days of summer arrive and the family needs a pick-me-up, [The Okee Dokee Brothers](#) will deliver their newest collection of energetic songs called **Take It Outside**. Featuring 13 original songs designed to get families on their feet and out of the house, **Take It Outside** offers enough witty wordplay, musical sophistication and food for thought to engage listeners of any age. Coolmompicks pointed to the “smart, funny lyrics that are equal parts hillbilly, seven-year-old boy and your favorite teacher,” The national Fids and Kamily poll of children’s music critics included *Kids with Beards* in its Best Kids and Family Music of 2008 selections. A School Library Journal reviewer said, “Hopefully they will continue to craft their musical magic and spread their message.” [Tor Hyams](#) (known for creating Kidzapalooza and Austin Kiddie Limits, among other kindie music events). Guest artist [Adam Levy](#) (Honeydogs and Bunynclogs) performs the rocking lead electric guitar on the song “Hero.” Stefan Shepherd of Zoogobble.com contributed liner notes.*

[The Okee Dokee Brothers](#) is the acclaimed Twin Cities duo of **Joe Mailander** and **Justin Lansing**, who won national notice for their first release, *Kids with Beards* (2008).

Take It Outside does continue the magic, capturing one full day of childhood, from waking up for a little “Bluegrass for Breakfast” to hitting the hay at night with “Sweet Dreams.” Mailander and Lansing blend a little bit of country, quite a bit of bluegrass, and add in pop and funk influences for good measure. The crisp new sound for Take It Outside is helped along by Grammy award nominated producer **Take It Outside** provides themes for thought, trending toward both the silly and the serious. Whether it’s the memorable bluegrassy “Wash Your Face” sing-along song, or the bare-naked folksiness of “The Naked Truth,” kids and parents will find a lot to sing and laugh along with. Some songs are educational in the broadest sense, such as the introduction of the longest word in the English language (“Antidisestablishmentarianism”) or the fast-talking challenge of “Auctioneer.” Others offer important messages delivered without preachiness, as in the environmental theme of “What We Got” and the social acceptance of “Neighbors.” Some songs tell a little story (“Lucy and Tightly”) and others simply jump to zany flights of fancy (“The Extraterrestrials”).

*Retails for \$15.00*

My take: This is a very cute CD...our favorites: Tippy Toes, Wash Your Face, Lucy and Tightly and Auctioneer.

[The Okee Dokee Brothers](#) have generously offered 1 lucky MommyPR reader their very own Take It Outside CD!



## [The Okee Dokee Brothers & Bill Harley make road trips doable](#)

September 23rd, 2010

I love it when I find children's CDs that keep my kids entertained in the car and at the same time keep me from wanting to pull my hair out. We mostly need these awesome CDs when driving around town running errand after errand because that seems to make everyone grumpy.

This summer I found my kids becoming repeat listeners (much better than repeat offenders) of *Take It Outside* by the [Okee Dokee Brothers](#) and *The best Candy in the Whole World* by [Bill Harley](#). One is a lot country and bluegrass with some pop mixed in, while the other is an enchanting collection of stories and song.



The [Okee Dokee Brothers](#) (Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing) have done a great job combining some downright catchy bluegrass music with make-you-smile lyrics for a CD that has our entire family singing. We know the words to our faves like "Bluegrass for Breakfast" and "Neighbors" (Lauren's favorite line is about the women who only eats meat because killing vegetables is cruel) and sing along every time they're played. I love the songs that do a little teaching amidst the lyrics like "Antidisestablishmentarianism" and "What We Got."

The only thing *Take It Outside* is lacking is a local live performance by the Okee Dokee Brothers. Looking at pictures and videos on their site and hearing the music in the car makes me really wish we could take a trip to their hometown in Colorado and see them in person. I guarantee we'd be singing right along with them!

# Parents' Choice®

CHILDREN'S MEDIA & TOY REVIEWS

*Since 1978*



## Take It Outside

Fall 2010 Music

Ages: 2 - 9 yrs.

**Producer:** [Okee Dokee Music](#)

**CD Price:** \$15.00



### Review:

Bluegrass and folk vibes shape this loosey-goosey, happy music with down-home appeal, performed by a fine passel of musicians on fiddles, piano, banjo, guitar, horns and percussion-acoustic and electric-led by Okee Dokee Brothers Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing. The duo's original songs cover wide territory, from heroes and neighbors to face-washing and extraterrestrials who "never come to play anymore." Whatever the subject, word-play is paramount. Check out their "Antidisestablishmentarianism" track or the adventures of "Lucy and Tightly": "Lefty Lucy loved to lolly lacksadaisically/But Righty Tightly went by the book alphabetically...."

Lynne Heffley ©2010 Parents' Choice



# Loving Heart Designs

## The Okee Dokee Brothers - Take It Outside

Who are the Okee Dokee Brothers? They come from Denver, Colorado. This folky bluegrass duo is made up of singer-songwriters, Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing. Their songs contain witty, off-the-wall humor, with a folkish style for the whole family but geared specifically for the kids. Maybe you have heard of their first album called "[Kids With Beards](#)"? It was voted Top Twenty Kids Album of 2008 on the [Fids and Kamily Poll](#).



They will be releasing a new album on August 3, 2010 called **Take It Outside**. This beautifully designed CD contains thirteen fun songs like "[Wash Your Face](#)", "The Naked Truth", "Hero" and many others. If you would like to learn more about them, visit [The Okee Dokee Brothers](#) website. You can find [concert locations](#), buy their [albums](#), a t-shirt, and a whole lot more. Look for their albums on [Amazon](#), [CDBaby](#) and [The Pokey Pup](#). They even have a [poetry book](#) called [Out of Tune](#).  
(View Samples)





## Local music: Proud to be an Okee Dokee

Pickin' partners Justin Lansing and Joe Mailander really know how to keep their audience on its toes.

By [CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER](#), Star Tribune

Last update: August 5, 2010 - 4:16 PM

I never guess which Minnesota band has earned a slot performing alongside Phish, the Strokes and M.I.A. at the Austin City Limits Festival in October.

The **Okee Dokee Brothers**, that's who -- and their ACL gig might be less to brag about than the scene they produced at 11 a.m. one day last week at the Rosalie E. Wahl Public Library in Lake Elmo.

"Who's got the tippiest toes?!" singing-and-picking partners **Joe Mailander** and **Justin Lansing** asked their attentive crowd. Fans proceeded to rise in unison to answer their question, as if preschool music had finally found its version of hip-hop's "Throw your hands in the air!"

Two bearded, hippie-ish bluegrass/folk musicians who transplanted to the Twin Cities from Denver, Mailander and Lansing originally set out to be regular old misery-loving singer/songwriters like so many other college dudes with guitars. But they took a sidetrack into the kids' music realm after they formed a 501(c) nonprofit side to their "adult" bluegrass quartet, **Medicinal Strings**, which brought them to day-care centers and family shelters.

"We had to narrow down our act for the kids, starting with taking any and all vulgarity out," Lansing recalled with a smirk. "Somehow, though, working in that narrower niche really opened up a whole other level of creativity."

Modeling their music after children's songs by Jerry Garcia and Woody Guthrie, the two childhood friends (ages 24 and 25) stepped out two years ago as the Okee Dokee Brothers, a harmonizing, yokel-ish, semi-slapstick string-picking duo -- the kind that has a song called "The Naked Truth" and it's *not* about a relationship gone awry. It's actually about a guy who likes to run around nude. You can just imagine the tee-hee-hee value.

It might not be the music career Lansing and Mailander imagined for themselves, but Okee Dokee really has become a career. The duo quickly found out just how full-time a kids' music act can be.

"We can't really have day jobs because we have to be able to perform during the day, seven days of the week," said Mailander, the blue-eyed, sandy-haired Brother (a sharp contrast to Lansing's brown eyes and dark, bushy head).

"The schedule for kids' music, done to the full extent, is like adult music on steroids. Instead of the typical musician who can only get gigs on Friday or Saturday nights in seven or eight clubs around town, we can play on a Thursday morning or a Monday afternoon at any library, kids' store, day care, school."

On Saturday morning, the Okee Dokees will perform at the Electric Fetus record store in Minneapolis to promote "Take It Outside," the more polished follow-up to their scraggly debut, "Kids With Beards." Other gigs include stints at the Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Festival (Aug. 13-14), the State Fair (Sept. 4-5), a West Coast tour, plus many, many more public libraries (including ones in Richfield on Monday, Waconia on Wednesday and Stillwater on Thursday).

A noble ode to kids turning off the TV and video games and heading outdoors, "Take It Outside" was produced by **Tor Hyams**, a veteran songwriter and producer from Los Angeles who has helmed kids' music albums for Disney. Hyams also now books the kids' stages at both the ACL Fest and Lollapalooza, aka Austin Kiddie Limits and Kidzapalooza. In addition to the aforementioned "Tippy Toes" and "Naked Truth," highlights from "Take It Outside" that have been worked into the duo's live set include the Yoda- and Frodo-referencing ditty "Hero" and the counting number "Auctioneer." The latter song also gets played at their "adult" gigs, the couple times a month they still play them. ("Except instead of auctioning off a CD like we do at the kids' shows, we auction off Justin at the adult shows," Mailander cracked.)

Hilariously, the guys have also tried to adapt some of their "adult" songs into the kids' show but failed, including one called "Munchies." Said Mailander, "Parents might get a little too suspicious of how that one came about."

As silly as they can get on and off stage, the Brothers are serious about taking their new act as far as they can.

"With kids' acts, you can explore a lot of other creative outlets beyond just writing and recording songs," Lansing said, pointing to music videos as well as other filmmaking plans and skits/comedy. "We have a lot of fun ideas."

At least it all sounds like a lot more fun than that miserable songwriter idea.



**Saturday, July 31, 2010**

## **REVIEW AND GIVEAWAY : The Okee Dokee Brothers' "Take It Outside"**

While I began as a skeptic of children's/family music, I'm becoming quite the fan... especially with all of the great music I've been hearing! The Okee Dokee Brothers are no exception.



<http://feeds.feedburner.com/tonistreehouse> I admit, the CD cover made me nervous. A cartoon drawing of two "hillbillies" with banjos slung on their backs, bare feet, ragged pants on railroad tracks. I was born and raised in South Carolina, so I'm a little sensitive to the southern stereotypes. **I looked at the cover and thought, "Seriously?"** Thankfully, any doubts I had about The Okee Dokee Brothers vanished when the 13-song CD began to play.

Yes, some of their music such as "Bluegrass for Breakfast" has a decided twang to it, but most is **just plain fun. And smart.** One such smart line is in the song "Neighbors," "... Some file noise complaints / I'd keep it down, but I'm no Mr. Rogers." "Lucy and Tightly" reminds us all of the old phrase -- lefty loosy, righty tighty -- but in a whole new way. Ever thought about it referring to right and left brained people? I never had, and am suitably impressed. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention their song dedicated to the longest word in the English language,

"Antidisestablishmentarianism," "...best of all, it's got 5 I's / That's more than Mississippi."

A lot of the songs had a few lines that made me laugh out loud. "Tippy Toes" was hysterical with lines like, "Toes are toeses are toes / Let 'em grow hair, or dangle in the air." "The Naked Truth" -- a story of a guy who liked to walk around nude -- made for a number of chuckles as well.

The vocals aren't the best I've ever heard, but the voices suit the music just fine. After a couple of songs, I noticed I stopped noticing the voices because **the songs were so catchy! The instrumentation can definitely hold its own** even with the large assortment of instruments -- banjo, acoustic guitar, electric bass guitar, ukulele, percussion, electric guitar, trumpet, saxophone, piano, Wurlitzer, Fender Rhodes, Hammond B3, bull fiddle, fiddle, mandolin and lap steel (that's 16 in all if you count the different electric organs separately).

Jackson and I listened to the CD in the car, so I can't tell you how much he shook his booty this time. BUT. He was shaking his head, clapping and tapping his tippy toes. And me? I still keep humming the "Sweet Dreams" song to myself. **The Okee Dokee Brothers are okee dokee around these parts.**



### It's Okee Dokee To "Take It Outside"



A high-energy, bluegrass/folk album for both kids and parents, *Take It Outside* is the newest CD from The [Okee Dokee Brothers](#) duo Justin Lansing and Joe Mailander. Distributed by Okee Dokee Music, the CD features 13 songs such as the quirky "The Naked Truth," about a boy who only wears clothes in the shower, and "Neighbors," a song about social diversity and acceptance.

While the Brothers say they wrote the songs to get kids and parents outside, the CD—due the beginning of August—can also be enjoyed indoors, with or without children.





I'll go ahead and say straight out that since I [wrote some liner notes](#) for **Take It Outside**, the second family album from Minnesota's [Okee Dokee Brothers](#), I think you can guess that I like the album. I do, indeed.

It's a big step forward for Justin Lansing and Joe Mailander, who are neither brothers nor from Oklahoma, but who do share a big ol' grin behind their band's genial name. Their first album **Kids With Beards** was pretty good, but this one is stronger in every way -- musically, lyrically, and sonically. "Neighbors" sounds like they've packed everybody in their neighborhood into the studio for parts of the chorus. "Hero" features a soaring chorus and guitar work from the Honeydogs'/Bunny Clogs' Adam Levy. And midway through the bouncy "Antidisestablishmentarianism," they decide that "now we're going to spell for you / 'Cause that's what kids musicians do" and proceed to do just that. (Their joy mounts as they continue to sing as they provide a frequency distribution, for example, of

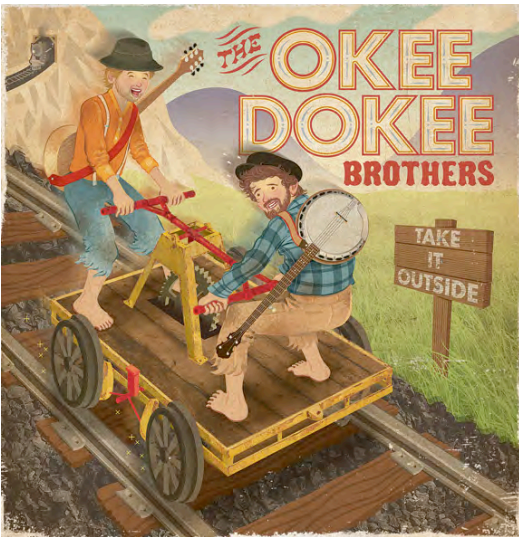
the letters in the word, capped by the definition and a gleeful "what's that supposed to mean?" followed by "Who caaaaares".) They do reflective OK, as on "What We Got" and "Sweet Dreams," but their strength is silly and/or goofy.

Kids ages 5 through 10 will most appreciate the lyrical themes and humor, while their Americana/bluegrass take on pop-rock, polished to a nice sheen by producer Tor Hyams will have a fairly broad appeal. You can listen to samples at the album's [CD Baby page](#). **Take It Outside** has an outdoorsy theme, but even more so it speaks to an engagement with the rest of the world. With good humor and heart, the Okee Dokee Brothers have produced a CD for even the most curmudgeonly recluse and the kids who just want them to play a little bit. Definitely recommended.

*[Disclosure: I was provided a copy of the album for possible review. Though that's pretty obvious, I think, given this particular album]*



Share: "The Naked Truth" - The Okee Dokee Brothers



The release date for the new Okee Dokee Brothers *Take It Outside* -- August 3rd -- is approaching and the public's now starting to hear the album. The band's offering a free download of "The Naked Truth," one of the album's 13 tracks. You may or may not be able to hide your smile at listening to the resolution of the bouncy song's story, but you'll know on which side the Brothers fall regarding that question...

[Staying In](#)

Review

## Time Out to Rock, Take it Outside and Jelly Jukebox

Kid rockers the Not-Its!, the Okee Dokee Brothers and the Jellydots release new albums.

By Jeff Bogle



[The Okee Dokee Brothers](#)

[Take It Outside](#)

Okee Dokee Music, \$15

The charming Minnesota duo makes bluegrass for kids. Songs skip nimbly among the absurd ("The Extraterrestrials"), the romantic ("Lucy and Tightly") and the poetic ("What We Got"). Standout track "Neighbors" sounds like the sunny indie band Dr. Dog jamming on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. The upshot? Grab your banjo, overalls and sense of humor, and get ready for a (bare)foot-stomping good time.



If your child doesn't have any bluegrass in their musical collection, they are missing out. [Take It Outside](#) from the Okey Dokey brothers is so much clever, witty, toe-tapping fun.

The entire album is fast and harmonic, making my recent car trip fly by from "*Bluegrass for Breakfast*" to "*Sweet Dreams*."

I also have to give props for a song about the longest word in the English language ("*Antidisestablishmentarianism*"), which I remember my husband doing a presentation about when we got our Masters in Teaching. High-brow educational, folks.

Every song on [Take It Outside](#) gives you plenty of food for thought, whether you are chewing on new vocabulary or philosophical ideas.

[Take It Outside](#) will be available on CDBaby/Amazon August 3rd.

Okey Dokey Brothers band mates Mailander and Lansing have several live performances in the near future. Check dates and locations at [www.okeedokee.org](http://www.okeedokee.org), and satisfy your Okey Dokey Brothers cravings in the mean time by visiting their [Youtube channel](#).





## **Winners!!! Coralsmom(Take It Outside) Jlschlangen(Kids with Beards)**

So I heard these guys signing at the Taste of Minnesota and I could NOT believe how great they were! They sing children's songs and bluegrass.

I have two CD's from the [Okee Dokee Brothers](#) so we'll have TWO winners in this contest. The cd's I'm giving out today are "Take It Outside" and "Kids with Beards".

But we're going to do things a little differently in this chat. Instead of 'the more you chat, the better your chances of winning'....I've already pre-selected two numbers so the people who chat on those threads will win. If we don't get to those "numbers" then I'll choose another random number. Make sense?

This contest will run through Wednesday nite with the winners announced on Thursday July 8, 2010.



## **The Okee Dokee Brothers – Take It Outside**

Posted by [andrea](#) on July 6, 2010 at 1:41 pm

Expect a spontaneous square dance to break out in your living room when this CD hits the speakers.

The collection kicks off with "Bluegrass for Breakfast", an upbeat tune that sets the stage for the rest

of the tracks. Some are educational ("Antidisestablishmentarianism"), some are tongue-in-cheek challenges ("Auctioneer"), some are parental aids ("Wash Your Face") and all are fun and engaging.

If you're ready for a kiddie hoe-down, *Take It Outside*. All ages. – Andrea Duchon, Pa





**End the Midsummer Doldrums!  
Get on Board with [The Okee Dokee Brothers](#)  
and**

***TAKE IT OUTSIDE***

*New Family Music Release from Twin Cities Duo Aims for Active Fun  
Coming August 3rd!*

Minneapolis - Just when the dog days of summer arrive and the family needs a pick-me-up, [The Okee Dokee Brothers](#) will deliver their newest collection of energetic songs called ***Take It Outside***. Featuring 13 original songs designed to get families on their feet and out of the house, ***Take It Outside*** offers enough witty wordplay, musical sophistication and food for thought to engage listeners of any age.

**The Okee Dokee Brothers** is the acclaimed Twin Cities duo of **Joe Mailander** and **Justin Lansing**, who won national notice for their first release, *Kids with Beards* (2008). [Coolmompicks](#) pointed to the "smart, funny lyrics that are equal parts hillbilly, seven-year-old boy and your favorite teacher," The national [Fids and Kamily poll](#) of children's music critics included *Kids with Beards* in its Best Kids and Family Music of 2008 selections. A [School Library Journal](#) reviewer said, "Hopefully they will continue to craft their musical magic and spread their message."

*Take It Outside* does continue the magic, capturing one full day of childhood, from waking up for a little "Bluegrass for Breakfast" to hitting the hay at night with "Sweet Dreams." Mailander and Lansing blend a little bit of country, quite a bit of bluegrass, and add in pop and funk influences for good measure. The crisp new sound for *Take It Outside* is helped along by Grammy award nominated producer [Tor Hyams](#) (known for creating Kidzpalooza and Austin Kiddie Limits, among other indie music events). Guest artist [Adam Levy](#) (Honeydogs and Bunynclogs) performs the rocking lead electric guitar on the song "Hero." Stefan Shepherd of Zooglobe.com contributed liner notes.

***Take It Outside*** provides themes for thought, trending toward both the silly and the serious. Whether it's the memorable bluegrassy "Wash Your Face" sing-along song, or the bare-naked folksiness of "The Naked Truth," kids and parents will find a lot to sing and laugh along with. Some songs are educational in the broadest sense, such as the introduction of the longest word in the English language ("Antidisestablishmentarianism") or the fast-talking challenge of "Auctioneer." Others offer important messages delivered without preachiness, as in the environmental theme of "What We Got" and the social acceptance of "Neighbors." Some songs tell a little story ("Lucy and Tightly") and others simply jump to zany flights of fancy ("The Extraterrestrials").

"We think kids deserve quality music," says Mailander. "We put a lot of heart and soul into this recording and all of our live performances. From start to finish, we want to encourage kids to get outside and have fun with their families." Lansing adds, "We believe that by going outside and enjoying nature, we are able to gain a greater understanding of the world around us. This can only lead to respect for our neighbors, cultures and earth."

Indeed, lifelong friends Mailander and Lansing are outside and enjoying nature most days of the year, amid [performing](#) at libraries, schools, festivals and theaters. This summer, they returned to their home state of Colorado for several shows. On August 7th, they'll celebrate the CD release with a free concert in Minneapolis. They'll also perform in 35 public libraries throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. In September, The Okee Dokee Brothers full band will perform at the Every Family Rocks Festival in Des Moines and at the Minnesota State Fair. They will be featured performers at Austin Kiddie Limits (a stage of the larger Austin City Limits festival) in October. For a complete list of performances, visit [www.okeedookee.org](http://www.okeedookee.org). To view the duo performing songs from *Take It Outside*, visit their [Youtube channel](#).

###

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**The Okee Dokee Brothers** is the acclaimed Twin Cities duo of Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing, who won national notice for their first release, *Kids with Beards*.



Just when the dog days of summer arrive and the family needs a pick-me-up, The Okee Dokee Brothers will deliver their newest collection of energetic songs called *Take It Outside*.

Featuring 13 original songs designed to get families on their feet and out of the house, *Take It Outside* offers enough witty wordplay, musical sophistication and food for thought to engage listeners of any age.

[Click here for more information on the Okee Dokee Brothers.](#)

Entries are unlimited!



## **Please Release Me: March 2010 Edition**

It's been quite some time since I've done one of these, but I thought it'd be worthwhile to run down what the kids and family music world can look forward to here in the next few months... Lots and lots of stuff...

[Sugar Free Allstars](#): **Funky Fresh & Sugar Free** (April 30)

[Princess Katie & Racer Steve](#): **Tiny Cool** (May 4)

[Randy Kaplan](#): **The Kids Are All Id** (May 14)

[Billy Kelly](#): **Is This Some Kind of Joke?** (mid-May)

[Justin Roberts](#): **Jungle Gym** (June 8)

[StarFish](#): **Enter Sandbox** (June 1): My favorite album title of the year thus far...

[Recess Monkey](#): **The Final Funktier** (June 15)

Putumayo Kids (Various Artists): **Rock 'n' Roll Playground** (June 15): Features Dan Zanes, Peter Himmelman, Uncle Rock, and Charity and the JAMband, among others.

[The Not-Its](#): **Timeout To Rock** (July 6)

[Frances England](#): **Title TBA** (the album has a tentative title, but I'm going to wait a bit...) (Early fall): Says Frances:

"We were lucky to have Tor Hyams produce this CD, and he kept the mood high - we had so much fun recording these songs, and I think that comes through in the sound. It's definitely the most upbeat, swinging thing we've ever done. There are 15 tracks with topics ranging from road trip pleasures, to bicycle love songs, to building log cabins in the woods, to the remarkable Jacques Cousteau."

[Flannery Brothers](#): **Title TBA** (September): Theme is "exploring," apparently

[Jamie Broza](#): **I Wanna Dog** (October)

[Caspar Babypants](#): **This Is Fun!** (Nov. 2) "I think this album will be very upbeat and silly," says Chris Ballew...

[Elizabeth Mitchell](#): **Sunny Day** (TBA 2010)

Others working on albums with potential 2010 releases? Lunch Money and Secret Agent 23 Skidoo at the bare minimum...



## **Great Day**

Spring 2010 Music

Ages: 5 - 10 yrs.

**Producer:** [Milkshake Music](http://www.milkshakemusic.com)

**CD Price:** \$14.99

**Review:**

As Milkshake, fiery-haired Lisa Mathews and Mikel Gehl, a.k.a. alt-rock duo Love Riot, are favorites on the family concert circuit--and no wonder. Their deft harmonies and multilayered pop-rock melodies come with infectious exuberance and lyrics that reflect a knowing, parent's-eye observation of childhood. With their first-rate Milkshake band, they shine brighter than ever here, from the "Shake It Up" anthem ("when you color outside the lines/guaranteed you'll find a new design") to the exceptional Beatle-esque title track. Along the way, stops include a sunshine dance, quality Grandma-time, a new recipe for sharing and a soothing "Happy Place (where everything's okay)."



Lynne Heffley ©2010 Parents' Choice

A long-time Parents' Choice music critic, Lynne was a staff writer for 25 years at the Los Angeles Times where she established and maintained the paper's first weekly children's arts and entertainment beat and was a general arts reporter. Now a freelance writer, Lynne works in the areas of non-profit communications, the arts and family entertainment (specializing in children's theater, music, audio books and book illustration). In her spare time, when she's not reading, Lynne is likely to be found strumming American Songbook standards and Tin Pan Alley novelty songs on one of her seven ukuleles.

Look for this product at:

Major, Specialty & Online Retailers

Milkshake Music

<http://www.milkshakemusic.com>

Amazon.com

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B002F3BPPE/parentschoice-20>



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#### Giveaway!

**Win Dan Zanes and Friends' new CD**



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#### Giveaway!

**Sesame Street: 40 Years of Sunny Days**



► Win a copy of this two-disc retrospective of the iconic kids' show.

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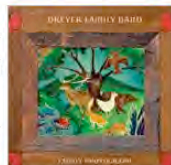
## Staying In

### Top 10 children's CDs of 2009

Here's our list of the year's best music for kids. By Jeff Bogle



**Lunch Money *Dizzy*** Squirrel Mechanic, \$12. With just their second album, the South Carolina trio have mastered clever pop rock for the under-ten set. For evidence, look no further than the observational "It Only Takes One Night to Make a Balloon Your Friend," or "At the River," which draws parallels between hectic city life and a peaceful country stream. [lunchmoneymusic.com](#)  
[Buy Dizzy at Amazon.com](#)



Photograph: Anne Burgess Rowe

**Dreyer Family Band *Family Photograph*** Mighty Toad, \$15. Twin brothers—one in California, the other in NYC—plus their wives and four young children collaborated on this audible heirloom. Adults will appreciate the debut CD's reflections on the joyous absurdities of parenthood, while their kids will groove to the littlest Dreyers' vocals on charming songs like "Boohoo" and "Totem Party." Dipping into R&B, '50s soda-fountain pop, folk and other genres, *Photograph* embraces a diversity of styles yet never feels disjointed—just like a great, sprawling family. [dreyerfamilyband.com](#)  
[Buy Family Photograph on Amazon.com](#)



Photograph: Steve Parke

**Milkshake *Great Day*** Milkshake Music, \$14. The Baltimore band delivers a set of high-energy tunes perfect for bebopping around the apartment. Crisp production adds a layer of sheen to already musically robust songs like standout track "Statue of Me," in which a kid ponders a future full of great accomplishments. [milkshakemusic.com](#)  
[Buy Great Day on Amazon.com](#)

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TAKE CHARGE™

#### On the blog

### What parents are buzzing about

**Free snacks, readings and more at Indie Book Week 2:00pm**

Independent book shops can't get enough attention as far as we're concerned. Show them some love at the city's first Indie Bookstore Week, which begins Sunday, November 15

[More posts](#)

### Most viewed in Staying In

[Articles](#) [Venues](#)

1. Cinderella who?





## Our Favorite Kids' Albums of 2009

by Amber on January 14, 2010  
in [Awards](#)



[Statue of Me](#), wonders what amazing statues in our memory. And I love the actually looks forward to old age rather they?

These CDs *really are* our favorite albums of 2009. We listen to them constantly and I couldn't imagine not having them in our CD player or on our iTunes at all times. I had a hard time picking only a few, but these are the best of the best. If you're looking for some cool new music, look no further!

Once I had gotten this list down to our favorite CDs I struggled to put them in some sort of order, but opted to just list them alphabetically. They're all awesome!

### *Great Day* by Milkshake

[Milkshake](#) is another band that we only just learned about this last year, and we love them! These guys are obviously part of the indie rock scene and they make kids music just so... cool! Their sound is so hip and fun that anyone in the family (even the teenagers!) will enjoy it! And Lisa's voice is just so perfect on each of the songs.



[Great Day](#) was released last summer and it became an instant favorite. I love both the rock and roll fun of the album plus the positive messages. My favorite song on the album, things we will all do in our lives to deserve concept behind [When I'm Old](#), a song that than fears it. Grandparents are wonderful, aren't



Connecting to the heart of fatherhood -- day by day

## Family Man® Blog

### [Family Man Recommends Best Family Albums of 2009](#)

January 10, 2010

Filed under: [Music](#), [Family Music](#), [Family Man Recommends](#) — Family Man @ 10:21 pm

It's difficult to show as much appreciation for the joy family-music entertainers as I feel. It's even more daunting to select just 10 of the best. But I'm confident that parents cannot go wrong with acquiring this list of fantastic recordings, which represents the finest albums I had a chance to sample. Congrats to the winners and a tip of my hat to the numerous other excellent albums released during the time period of November 1, 2008, to October 31, 2009. (Click on the album titles for full reviews where applicable.)

1. **Milkshake** - [Great Day](#) - The hearts, minds, and talents of this group were in the right place. So is their ranking on this list.
2. **Billy Jonas** - [Happy Accidents](#) - Waiting such a long time after *What Kind of Cat Are You?* could have been a disaster. It wasn't.
3. **The Sippy Cups** - [The Time Machine](#) - Clever themes and fine musicianship make for a great time for all.
4. **Peter Himmelman** - [My Trampoline](#) - This guy's the Pixar of music. A hit every time out.
5. **They Might Be Giants** - [Here Comes Science](#) - They're making edu-tainment cool again.
6. **Recess Monkey** - [Field Trip](#) - They may have the deepest well of zany creativity of any trio out there.
7. **Ziggy Marley** - [Family Time](#) - Can I take some credit for this album after sharing a Piano Play classroom with Ziggy and his kid?
8. **Lunch Money** - [Dizzy](#) - One of my favorite surprises of the year.
9. **Captain Bogg & Salty** - [Emphatical Piratical](#) - How do they keep making the pirate theme so fresh and well seasoned?
10. **Buck Howdy** - [Pete Seeger Tribute](#) - It sounds like Buck is singing these timeless tunes just to your kid.

This year's bumper crop of albums includes quite a few others that deserve honorable mention, such as Dog on Fleas ([Beautiful World](#)), Rocknoceros ([Pink!](#)), Robbert Bobbert ([Bubble Machine](#)), Cathy & Marcy ([Banjo to Beatbox](#)), Los Lobos ([Los Lobos Goes Disney](#)), Debbie Derryberry ([Debbie Derryberry's Baby Banana](#)), Dave Kinnoin ([Teaspoon at a Time](#)), Mary Kaye ([Music Box](#)), Eric Herman ([What a Ride](#)), Putumayo's [Picnic Playground](#).

If you're looking to purchase any of these albums, I highly recommend the [PokeyPup.com](#).

<http://www.familymanonline.com/?p=211> - comments

# iVillage

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Toddler to Tween: The Best in Kids' Music



Tunes for Toddlers

**Artist:** Milkshake

**Album:** [\*Great Day\*](#)

**Why we love it:** The music video mavens have matured their music as their fans—originally preschoolers—have grown older. Songs on their newest CD veer from their traditional pop sound into areas like country, Cajun and even rap.

**Take note:** Milkshake's videos have appeared on Noggin, PBS Kids, and Discovery Kids Channel.



## Parents of preschoolers

### [Favorite Family Music CDs of 2009](#)

Posted by: Paul Stark on December 21, 2009 at 2:01PM CST

Lots of great releases this year, it was hard to narrow it down.

KDHX Musical Merry-Go-Round  
2009 Top 10 Favorite Family Releases  
from Grandfather Paul Stark

- 1.They Might Be Giants-Here Comes Science-Disney Sound
- 2.Peter Himmelman-My Trampoline-Minivan Records
- 3.Ziggy Marley- Family Time-Tuff Gong Worldwide
- 4.Los Lobos-Los Lobos Goes Disney-Walt Disney Records
- 5.Recess Monkey-Field Trip-Monkey Mama
- 6.Rocknoceros-Pink-Rockno Records
- 7.Milkshake-Great Day-Milkshake Music
- 8.Dan Zanes & Friends-76 Trombones-Festival Five Rec.
- 9.Various Artists-Putumayo Picnic Playground-Putumayo World Music
- 10.Sippy Cups-Time Machine-Snacker Disc

Next Five 2009 Honorable Mentions-

Billy Jonas-Happy Accidents-Bang-A-Bucket Music

Lunch Money-Dizzy-Squirrel Mechanic Records

Ben Rudnick and Friends-A Frog Named Sam-Bartlett Ave. Records

Eric Herman & The Invisible Band-What A Ride-Butter-Dog Records

Sarah Lee Guthrie & Family-Go Wagaloo-Smithsonian Folkways





**Tuesday, December 8, 2009**

**[Milkshake Gets a Grammy Nod \(plus Tor Hyams\)](#)**

Since I've been going through their entire output quite meticulously over the past couple weeks, I've become quite the fan of Milkshake recently. If you missed my original review of their new album "Great Day" you can [have a look at it](#) now. This week's news, however, is that the album has been nominated for a Grammy for the best children's musical album category, thus simply validating my opinion of it.



To be fair, I suspect that all of the nominees are pretty good, and a lover of children's music would be well served to check them all out, which you can do [here](#). They're listed in category 76, and the spoken word nominees are #77.



Connecting to the heart of fatherhood -- day by day

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## Milkshake - Great Day

Reviewed by Gregory Keer

When my two oldest sons were younger, we traveled all over town to see family concerts by Peter Himmelman, Ralph's World, Charity and JAMband, and more. Once my youngest arrived, time and energy seemed to get so squeezed (see my [column](#) for more on this) that we only scheduled occasional live-music trips. So when the opportunity to see the band Milkshake came up, I jumped at it. By the way my five year old jumped around and sang to the Baltimore-based band's magnetic performance, this all-too-seldom trip to a concert became one of those perfect parenting hours.

It's with much appreciation and admiration that I present Milkshake's newest album as my Family Man Recommends featured review of the month. What shows up on *Great Day* are 12 songs filled with high-level musicianship and kid relevance that can make any living room the site of a jump-happy concert. Considering that the disc, produced by music's Willy Wonka [Tor Hyams](#), has just earned the group a Grammy nomination in a super competitive field, I am obviously not the only listener who sees it as one of the finest family albums of the year.

Lead singer Lisa Matthews (who can sometimes sound like a brighter-hued Debbie Harry of Blondie fame) fronts an ensemble that includes Mike Gehl (guitars), Michael "Shepp" Sheppard (electric guitar), Cord Neal (bass), Tom Moon (drums), and Brian Simms (keyboards and accordion). Together, Milkshake whips up free-wheeling rock tunes, such as "Shake It Up" and "Happy Place" (this one may be the CD's catchiest track). Country flavors infuse "When I'm Old" and '60s beach sounds kick sand into "Dance in the Sun." Then there's the Beatles-esque (think "A Day in the Life") closing number, "Great Day."

All along, Matthews and her co-songwriters (from the band and Hyams, himself) pairs the music with scenarios and thoughts that are so true for children. "Statue of Me" speaks of individuation; "You Did It" talks about the blame game; and "Enemies" explains how good friends can become enemies and then friends again.

It's rare that an album, in the family music genre or any other category, is so fulfilling from top to bottom. While I personally like to make playlists of the best songs for my children, this is a recording worth listening to in its entirety time and again. I raise a soda-fountain style glass to Milkshake on their success in giving my youngest son – and a whole lot of other kids – a tall drink of musical happiness.

# THE BALTIMORE SUN

LIGHT FOR ALL

## Baltimore's Milkshake nominated for a Grammy

[Milkshake](#), the Baltimore-based children's band, has been nominated for a Grammy award for Best Musical Album for Children.

"It's refreshingly unexpected," said lead singer Lisa Mathews. "It just feels good that our peers think we're worth at least a nomination."

Released in August, the album, "Great Day," is Milkshake's fourth, and is in great company, Mathews said. Other nominees in the same category include albums by Ziggy Marley, Jonathan Sprout and Buck Howdy.

"We were up against some heavyweights," Mathews said. With "Great Day," Milkshake aimed to make an album that appealed to tweens and toddlers alike. "I Want It," one of the dozen songs on "Great Day," is about materialism. ...

"I want five scoops of ice cream, piled up so high / whipped cream and a cherry, yeah, that'll keep me satisfied," she sings. "But all I want isn't all I need / I don't need a room full of things / I just need home, good books to read / The wind in my hair, a kiss on my cheek."

Mathews fronts the six-piece, which includes acoustic guitarist Mikel Gehl, bassist Cord Neal, drummer Tom Moon, electric guitarist Michael Sheppard and accordionist and keyboardist Brian Simms.

"It's a dream of theirs to go to the Grammys," she said. "It's going to be good to walk the red carpet. They should be proud, and I know they are. They're gushing about it."



## 2009's Best Music For Kids, And Their Families

### Hear The Music Below

December 2, 2009 from [WXPB](#) - This year has seen a lot of "quirky" kids' music, wherein the sweet-voiced folkies of the past were replaced by growling rocker moms and clear, intimate harmonies. Electronic and tech-heavy sounds were the hallmark of efforts from [They Might Be Giants](#) and Robbert Bobbert, aimed at kids who are comfortable with such audio from birth. Artists such as Lunch Money, King Pajama and Rocknoceros created songs whose kid-centric themes (love of the library, train rides, ice cream) provide a clue to their intended audience, since the songs themselves work for everyone. The quality was high this year, with albums rooted in reggae, electronica, folk and rock aimed at young ears.

I'll remember 2009 as the gold standard in kids' music, making it a challenge to settle on 10 favorites. Worthy efforts bubbling under the Top 10 include a re-imagining of her grandfather [Woody](#)'s songs from Sarah Lee Guthrie (*Go Waggaloo*), a kid-friendly collection of Broadway show tunes from Dan Zanes (*76 Trombones*), and another [Beatles](#)-esque effort from Recess Monkey (*Field Trip*). The common element in my Top 10 list is a commitment to quality and listenability that passes the captive test. These albums can be endured and enjoyed repeatedly while you're held captive on a road trip.



#### **10. Milkshake**

Artist: Milkshake

Album: Great Day

Song: Enemies

Milkshake reaches for the older listeners its first fans have become by releasing this fun yet reflective mix of rock and childlike energy. Milkshake's girl-centric themes, fronted by tutu-wearing Lisa Mathews, hit a sweetly serious note in "Enemies." It's a song about the loneliness of being estranged from a friend. *Great Day!* is the group's most complex album to date, but it's still loads of fun.





## Songstresses for the Shorter Set

With my sincere apologies to all of the lovely and talented people who have sent me their CDs in the past few months, I've let them collect into one massive pile. I've finally decided to have a little kidapalooza in my apartment, and I've burned through the whole stack in the past few days. These four CDs shuffled up to the top as my faves, and they all feature rockin' lady singers. You can't go wrong with any of these albums to entertain the wee ones.



### *Great Day* – [Milkshake](#)

It does feel like a great day when you're listening to this latest release of the Baltimore rockers, Milkshake. This is one of those fabulous albums that while perfect for kids, is something I'd pop in to have a listen to on my own. I had the pleasure of working with some of the members of Milkshake a couple years ago on an album I produced for Hooked on Phonics. The songs were so sweet that I was unprepared for the full on rockin' that they do in *Great Day*. I particularly like the track "I Want It" for perfectly capturing the Veruca Saltish demands becoming more frequent in our house.



## Great Day for Milkshake: part 1 - making music with a shorter perspective



Indie pop, reminiscent of Counting Crows, channeling The Ramones while performing a zydeco gig...

Alright, that's a little confusing but Baltimore based **Milkshake** is an unabashedly hard to define band. Changing genres as much as lead singer Lisa Mathews changes her trademark tutus, **Milkshake** has no problem flitting between the above styles and making it all sound cohesive. The songs are well written, the production on their albums is polished but still retains that "garage" edge, the musicianship is top notch and the performances are full of life.

Why haven't you heard of them, dear reader? Well perhaps you're not really their demographic, unless you're in the 2-10 year old crowd. After all, **Milkshake** does all of the above while making music directed at young children.

If you have children or grandchildren in that age range, as I do, then you may have seen their music videos between shows on cable networks **Nick Jr.** or **Noggin**. They are frequently featured on *Jack's Big Music Show*, a music-focused children's show from **Jim Henson's production company**.

**Milkshake** first came to my attention through a dear friend, who is a photographer for artists such as Prince, Chaka Khan and Stanley Clarke. He has had the opportunity to work next to some of the living legends of the music industry, so when he started touting a kid's indie rock band from his hometown, I was all ears. "They just make really good records that happen to be for kids," he told me.

But on **Milkshake's** latest effort, *Great Day*, it's something more. Lisa Mathews and her band mates have a knack for going a little deeper than some of their contemporaries. While there are plenty of novelty songs and tunes about dancing

and having fun, they also tackle weightier subjects such as keeping your cool and staying positive in the face of bruised knees and bullies in the aptly titled "Happy Place," cleaning up a mess you made before moving onto the next thing

on the punk-adelic "You Did It!" or appreciating age on the rootsy, banjo driven "When I'm Old."

There is a lot of thought in these songs. It's not formula, it's real life. Mathews is a mother herself, who used to live in the same building as The Ramones in Greenwich Village. She recalls, "I was on the sixth floor, but I could hear The Ramones rehearsing in the basement... I was

always writing songs by myself or with a collaborator." Now making her home near Baltimore, Maryland she is equally if not more inspired. "I was given the biggest, wildest, most complex subject there is: childhood and the relationship between parent and child. I get probably five song ideas a day, but being a mom, I don't have time to write them all down."

The band's website [www.milkshakemusic.com](http://www.milkshakemusic.com) features fun and insightful bios that really pull you into the band's world, citing influences as diverse as punk and rockabilly and hobbies from *"eating pop corn while watching re-runs of the Muppet Show"* (a favorite past time of mine as well) to *"enjoying good wine, smelly cheese and putting the mechanic's children through college."* **Milkshake** is making music that they enjoy, with the intention of children and parents having a shared experience. So feel free to pack away any records with big purple dinosaurs or other such unbearable fluff. Music is meant to be shared and when you listen with a child you are always sure to...

Live Well & Listen Closely,  
J. Hayes



# CHATTANOOGA Parent

Servings from the Cereal Bowl  
*by Dave Loftin*



## Milkshake

Great Day  
© 2009 Milkshake Music, LLC

Milkshake has made quite a name for themselves in the world of family music, most notably on “Jack’s Big Music Show” on Nick Jr. But being on TV isn’t the main reason so people know and love their music. Started by Mikel Gehl and Lisa Matthews (originally of the ’90s alt band Love Riot), who, like many kids’ acts, decided to expand into the genre after becoming parents. On their fourth album, *Great Day*, the band once again proves they have the musical chops to stand above most of their peers in kids’ music. The album opens with the tune “Shake It Up,” guaranteed to get the tots hopping. Also, you don’t want to miss the song “You Did It!”—a great tune encouraging kids who’ve accomplished something they’d thought was impossible. (Oh yeah—it rocks, too.) Gehl, Matthews and the rest of Milkshake have a talent not just for writing and making great music, but for knowing how to talk to their listeners, no matter their age.



# *the* TOY BOOK®

## Milkshake "Shakes It Up"



Children's band Milkshake, featured on PBS Kids, Noggin, and Discovery Kids, releases its fourth studio CD, *Great Day*. The six-piece Milkshake Band accompanies the duo on their first album since 2007. *Great Day*,

for kids ages 6 to 10, features a mix of tunes such as the upbeat rock-pop songs "Shake It Up," and "Dance in the Sun," and the ballad "I Love You." Produced by Tor Hyams, who has worked with singers such as Joan Osborne and Lou Rawls, the album includes 12 Milkshake original tracks digging into topics such as friendship, family, self-esteem, and goals.



## Milkshake's "Great Day" CD

October 28, 2009 by [Elizabeth](#)  
Filed under [Gifts for Tweens](#)



They want great music on their MP3 player, you want lyrics that are appropriate. I'm happy to say that Milkshake's [Great Day](#) will make you both happy. Produced by music veteran Tor Hyams (Joan Osborne, Edwin McCain), the disc features a dozen Milkshake originals, plus guest appearances by two-time GRAMMY®-winners Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer and Rodney Henry (former front man of the legendary kings of the Baltimore hard rock-garage-rockabilly scene, The Glenmont Popes). The songs on 'Great Day' touch on issues of friendship, inclusion, family, self-esteem, goals, and material desires, and they ROCK. My favorites are "Shake It Up" and "You Did It".



# Goodie Goodie GUMdrops

dispensing treats for mummies and babies since 2009

## Music Week Replay Giveaway #3: Milkshake's Great Day

The children's music arena is eerily similar to the cliques I once knew back in my schooldays. There are the class clowns, like the Wiggles or Doodlebops - silly and eager to please. The smart kids with their classical lullabies. The sports jocks like Sporticus of LazyTown. And, of course the popular crowd like Laurie Berkner or Rebecca Frezza - cutesy, bubbly crowd-pleasers.

With a name like [Milkshake](#), I was sure I was about to listen to just another run-of-the-mill "kindie" act. But I soon realized they were much more than that. Edgy and authentic, Milkshake is the epitome of cool. If this were the 70's, they'd be the ones sporting the Brando-style leather jackets a la the Ramones.

Milkshake is probably the world's most serious rock band for children. Not "serious" as in sad, but serious as in seriously musical. Made up of veterans of several Baltimore alt-pop, hard rock and progressive rock bands, Milkshake write and performs music that is as musically sophisticated as it is lyrically lighthearted and child centered. Though never condescending, they speak a kind of universally appealing language; a language familiar to young and old, child and parent, music fans of all ages. The band's tuneful, memorable songs, which evoke influences from Rodgers and Hammerstein to Lennon and McCartney to Weezer, make it easier for parents to listen to the same CD five times in a row.

[Milkshake](#) has been featured on PBS Kids, Noggin and Discovery Kids and has won numerous awards including NAPPA and Parent's Choice Awards.

Founded in 2002 by singer Lisa Mathews and guitarist Mikel Gehl of LOVE RiOT fame, Milkshake began as a sort of musical experiment. They vowed to make music that could grow with their own small children. Over the years, the children grew up (as they tend to do!) and the music also changed as the band grew from a duo to a six-piece band. The kids that listened to Milkshake as babies are still fans as they now enter elementary school. Their critically-acclaimed fourth album, *Great Day*, examines subject matter like friendship, family, self-esteem, goals and materialism - things a 6 - 10 year old can relate to - although the whole family can enjoy.

The moment I saw the cover with Mathews' funky style, I knew this was going to be right up my alley. I'm more of a preppy girl but I've always admired the girls who could rock the tutus and leggings.

Perhaps I'm a bit bias since the band hails from my hometown (go B-more!) but I adore every second of this CD. It's a hodgepodge of genres that manage to blend seamlessly into a fresh, unique sound. Mathews' voice is at times raw and at times smooth but always versatile, and the band is equally impressive. I will admit I don't typically notice instrumentals, as my ear tends to focus more on vocals. But this album made me sit up and take notice of what was also going on in the background. Guitar riffs. Drums. Piano. All really stand out in their own right. You can just tell these guys are seasoned professionals.

[Milkshake](#) runs the gamut from punk rock ("You Did It!") to bluegrass ("When I'm Old") to folk ("Travel Far") to pop ("Great Day"). You'll even find a bit of New Orleans creole ("Statue of Me") and a 60's psychedelic beat ("Dance in the Sun"). Each track is stylistically independent but equally fun. Nate's absolute favorite is the opening garage-rock track "Shake It Up". His eyes light up and he jumps up and down with a big goofy grin the moment it comes on. (I tried to capture said dancing on video but he wouldn't cooperate. Toddlers...). My personal favorites are the sentimental lullaby "I Love You", which I now sing to Nate at bedtime, and the dreamy, globe-trotting "Travel Far".

*Great Day* delivers mature sound cleverly disguised with child-friendly lyrics. I love that it's a bit rebellious; you never know what is coming next but you know it's going to be a welcome surprise.

Oh, and did I mention that they include lyrics in the liner notes? Hoorah! I never understood why most children's music is so cryptic. I personally like singing along and being able to learn the words easily. Kudos to Milkshake for recognizing this often overlooked feature.

Bottom line: I would highly, *highly* recommend indulging in [Milkshake](#) as a break from the norm in children's music. There's a flavor for just about anyone, and Nate and I find them quite delicious. We're already planning a trip downtown to see them live!

# Zooglobble

Kids and family music news and reviews - Kids music worth sharing.

## Itty-Bitty Review: Great Day – Milkshake



Although the Baltimore band [Milkshake](#) has always claimed to have a bit of an edge, I've never really heard it in their music. Maybe their music, shiny guitars and all, retained a bit of alternative rock, but their lyrics have been safe, safe, safe. Which is fine for some families, but I know others would find the band too sentimental for their tastes.

With that context, when I say that on their latest album **Great Day** the band roughs things up a bit, I mean that as a compliment. Some of the roughing up comes courtesy of the sound. It's still got a gleaming pop sound, but there's more depth this go-round. From the funky piano on "Statue of Me" to Cathy Fink guesting on banjo on "When I'm Old" (Marcy Marxer pops up on "Travel Far") to the "Day in the Life"-aping title track which ends the disk and everywhere in between, there's a bit of scruffiness to the sound and a little more stylistic diversity. Is that the doing of producer Tor Hyams? Who knows, but the band's got six members, and they're beginning to use that to their advantage.

More significantly, I think, the band's now tackling some more difficult territory. The album's best track, "Enemies," one of my favorite kids songs of the year, captures the weird feeling of occasionally getting really mad at your best friend while sounding a bit like a cover of some lost kids song from the Police. "Happy Place" talks about days that are anything but happy. There are still points where I think Milkshake retreats to safety lyrically ("Happy Place" includes the couplet "Reach out and hit somebody / But I can't cause that would be naughty") and your opinion (and that of your kids) will depend on whether you (and they) find comfort in that safety or dismiss it. But I'm glad that Lisa Mathews (who writes or co-writes every song here) is willing to explore emotions and situations that kids who might actually be in double-digits would find familiar.

The 37-minute album is most appropriate for kids ages 5 through 10. You can hear 5 of the songs (including "Happy Place" and "Enemies") [here](#). **Great Day** has some of the band's strongest songwriting and the band sounds better than ever. While I think some families may still find the band too earnest, I think this album shrinks that population considerably. Recommended.



# Austin American- Statesman

RAISING AUSTIN | KATHY BLACKWELL

## No end to fun at Austin Kiddie Limits

## ACL Fest caters to the parents who like to rock with plenty of stuff to entertain the little ones

Saturday, September 26, 2009



Attention, parents about to rock: If you've considered taking your kiddos to Austin City Limits but were scared off by the heat, logistics and maybe some of the names on the lineup, this might be the year you turn at least part of the fest into a family outing.

The three-day fest, which is free for children 10 and younger who come with a ticket-holder, has always included Austin Kiddie Limits, although the area has evolved during the years into a kid-friendly corner of music, dance lessons, music workshops, food, hair dyeing and other treats (not to mention a lot of shade).

"We've really tried to revamp it the past three years," says Sarah George, Kids Production Manager for ACL Fest and a mother of two young ones. "It's a hipper area for kids and their families."

Returning parents this year still can find Austin Kiddie Limits in the same northern area of the park — between the Xbox 360 Stage and the food court — but they'll find the layout to be a lot different.

"We've opened it up to take advantage of the beautiful grass," says George, referring to this year's multimillion-dollar improvements to Zilker Park. The stage has moved,

although it still will have the large shade roof, and it will be easier to walk around the activity area.

The centerpiece of Kiddie Limits, which is open from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday and until 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, is the music, of course. Bands including the Jimmies, Lunch Money, Ralph's World and Austin's Mr. Leebot play 25-minute sets. The music alternates with 25-minute dance workshops by BBoyCity and BGirlCity (your child will become a break-dancing fool), the Lannaya Dance and Drum Ensemble and Tarrytown Dance (new to Kiddie Limits).

Most parents worth their Wilco T-shirts know that kids' music is a far cry from what they grew up with — in fact, you might want to call it parent-friendly kids' music — and some of the most exciting ones will grace the Kiddie Limits stage. You might not recognize the names, but if your child watches Noggin, the Disney Channel, PBS Kids or other shows, you're likely to have heard them. And even if you haven't, George promises you're in for a treat.

"Secret Agent 23 Skidoo — he's hilarious. He's going to be a really fun act," she says of the rapper, who performs at 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. "And Quinn Sullivan is an incredible guitarist." The child prodigy performs at 1:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Probably one of the best examples of intelligent, parent-friendly kids' music outfits is Baltimore-based Milkshake, who play at 2:30 p.m. Friday and 12:30 p.m. Saturday.

Milkshake was founded by Love Riot's Lisa Mathews and Mikel Gehl soon after she had a daughter and he had a son; their first record, "Happy Songs," came out in 2002. Over the years, Milkshake has grown along with their children. Their latest record, "Great Day," deals with a lot of the issues being tackled by the elementary school/preteen set — self esteem ("Statue of Me"), frenemies ("Enemies") and grandparents ("When I'm Old").

"Milkshake has really evolved into a rock band," says Mathews during a recent phone interview. "We'll be excited to hang with our contemporaries — we'll feel pretty much at home."

"Great Day" was produced by Tor Hyams, creator of Lollapalooza's Kidzapalooza and producer of Kiddie Limits. "He brought a lot of cool ideas," Mathews says.

Also exciting are the "special guests" spots, which could be anyone performing at the fest. At Lollapalooza, that's meant Perry Farrell, Slash (!) and Jeff Tweedy; Kiddie Limits has seen Ziggy Marley and Robert Earl Keen, among others.

Beyond the music, the workshops offer a lot opportunities to burn off some energy. At the Q Brothers booth, they'll teach the kids to scratch, beatbox and rhyme, and they'll record CDs the children can take with them. With CD in hand, they can head over to a photo

booth to have their rockstar picture taken in front of a backdrop of screaming ACL fans. Photo taken, they can go to the Cafe Monet booth and make their own picture frame.

H-E-B will provide healthy snacks, the Paul Green School of Rock returns with workshops and performances and Avant Salon will give the kids punk hair. The H-E-B Zilker Beach — a sandy area in the shade — is back as well.

If you're worried that your child won't last through the headliners, well, that's a valid concern. One solution is to arrange for a relative to pick them up at a specific time or take them home to a baby sitter.

Says George: "I always hear from parents who say, 'I never even knew there was a place for kids. It's such a great area — it's always great to take them back to a sitter and come back to see the headlines.'"

Kathy Blackwell is the executive Features editor and mother of a 3-year-old Kiddie Limits veteran.



**09/10/2009**

**Milkshake's Great Day**



[Milkshake](#), the Baltimore-based band, has been playing music for kids since 2002. They've appeared nationally on PBS KIDS, the NOGGIN Channel and DISCOVERY KIDS, but fortunately, they still call Baltimore home.

I have a huge Milkshake fan that sits directly behind me in my minivan. As we drive around town, I hear this sweet little voice singing along with Lisa Matthews and the band. I think my daughter has every last song memorized from the first two CDs.

Milkshake's newest CD, [Great Day](#), has just been released and we were thrilled to get a copy. I haven't decided on my favorite song yet, but "I Want It" made me laugh, just for the refrain that shouts, "Gimmee, gimmee, gimmee, gimmee." I've been talking a lot with my younger kids about the "gimmee, gimmees," so it seemed like the band was reading my mind. I like that there are a few ideas mixed in, without it getting preachy like so many kids' songs do.

To celebrate the *Great Day* Release, you can join Milkshake at the B&O Railroad Museum for their CD Release Show (part of the [KidsFest](#) weekend). The band will

have copies of their CD available and play a few of their new favorites.

WHAT: Milkshake's Great Day CD Release Show!

WHERE: B & O Railroad Museum, 901 W. Pratt St., Baltimore

WHEN: Saturday, September 12, 12:00 noon.

TICKETS: Free, with Museum admission.

INFO: 410-752-2490



**Saturday, September 5, 2009**

**Milkshake music review and FUN GIVEAWAY**

*I got a big bottle of Sunshine  
Mixed up with a bowl of daydreams  
Poured into a suitcase filled with laughter that I found  
You won't find me sitting around*

These are just some of the whimsical lyrics you'll find in Milkshake's catalog. [Milkshake](#) is a Baltimore, MD based kids rock band that have been seen on Noggin, PBS Kids and Discovery Kids as well as concerts around the US. Using music as a peek into the child's imagination is one way I describe their style. Most of their songs are written from a child's point of view but there are always exceptions to the rule. [You Did It](#) is a song of motivation being sung from a parent to their child. Whatever task is in front of them we as parents know they can accomplish it with a little push and pull.



[Milkshake](#) was formed in 2002 as a way for then new parents [Lisa Mathews](#) and [Mikel Gehl](#) to stay in touch with the music that was going to influence their children's lives. With a background in indie rock they used their enthusiasm and originality to gain a strong following over the next few years with fellow bandmates Tom Moon, Cord Neal, Brian Simms and Michael Sheppard. [Great Day](#) is Milkshake's 4th studio album and was just released in August along. This album like all the others (we have them all) is a celebration of all things KID. With songs about family, feelings, friends and FUN it touches on the topics that are important for kids.



## [New Tunes for Your Toddler! Great Day by Milkshake GIVEAWAY!](#)

Tuesday, September 15, 2009 Posted by Felicia

Milkshake has a brand new fun CD out titled [Great Day!](#) This is fun [rock music for kids](#). You may be familiar with Milkshake as they have appeared on Noggin, PBS Kids, and Discovery Kids with their upbeat songs and funky look!

The new CD is just as upbeat and rocks out like the last! I love how the appeal to the kids senses and try to sing songs from a point of view children can relate to. One of my favorites is "You Did It!". This song talks about responsibility and finally doing what you are supposed to do even when you don't want to. Another favorite is a sweet, lullaby type song called "I Love You". It is a precious song to your child that speaks about loving them no matter what they are doing, "I love you. I love you. I don't know much, but that much is true."



The lessons that are taught and the way it is delivered is what impresses me. You can use fun songs like "I Want It" to help remind your kids that everything they want they don't need or a song like "Enemies" when there might be a bullying issue going on. Then there are the simple songs that uplift and wake the imagination like "Travel Far" and "Great Day".

[Milkshake](#) is a fun collection to add to your kids' musical library. You can purchase the CD for about \$14 at the [MilkshakeMusic.com](#) website!



## It's a Great Day to Buy Milkshake's New CD [Great Day](#)

by Caroline Holt

September 7, 2009

According to their website, "Milkshake is a band on a mission: to create great rock music for kids. Led by singer Lisa Mathews and guitarist Mikel Gehl, whose songs for grown-ups have been featured in movies and prime-time television, and whose indie rock group Love Riot garnered critical praise during its 10-year run, Milkshake has won over preschoolers without compromising songcraft, stagecraft or their authentic rock & roll spirit." According to our family, Baltimore-based Milkshake's nod to 1960s-90s pop music and specifically, their new CD *Great Day*, totally rocks.

Their music is geared at preschool to early elementary school-aged children, but very adult-friendly, since they feature catchy tunes and choruses and positive vibes. Their 10-years together is evident in their music as they just seem comfortable with each other. For me, Lisa's voice is reminiscent of Susannah Hoffs (think: your 1980s Bangles tape collection), late-90s indie rocker Alanis Morissette and fellow kid-rocker, Laurie Berkner. Not bad company in my opinion!



Milkshake fans have been waiting two years for their 12 brand-spanking new songs on their CD *Great Day* (released August 25th). This fourth album joins their music library of critically acclaimed CDs *Happy Songs*, *Bottle of Sunshine* and *PLAY!* as well as their videos, which have been prominently featured on Noggin, PBSKids and Discovery Kids.

From their first song *Shake It Up* to one of their last called *Dance In the Sun*, I dare you to resist the urge to get up and rock out. If you're a booster seat bopper, you may appreciate the mellower beats of *Enemies* or *Travel Far*, but if think that open area in the pod at your elementary school is the perfect locale for cutting a rug, you might prefer the rockin' beats of *You Did It* or *Recipe*.

Our two favorite songs on this collection are *Happy Place* and *Enemies*, telling of elementary school angst, like being late for school or having a friend with whom you simultaneously want to spend all of your time and who drives you nuts. My son has picked up several of the phrases from both songs, but asks for them because of their infectious melodies. I like them, however, because their lyrics take me back to the very vivid days of growing up, without seeming like mind-numbing kid music. In fact, the best endorsement I can give *Great Day* is that at times I actually forgot that I was listening to kids music!

The CD also boasts two fantastic tracks featuring the toe-tappin' banjo plucks of Cathy Fink and ukelele and mandolin prowess of Marcy Marxer. Fink & Marxer are local, two-time Grammy-award winning children's folk musicians, read the latest [Our Kids Review](#) on *Banjo to Beatbox*.

We give the new Milkshake CD kudos for taking us to a "Happy Place"! If you would like to try before you buy (LOVE that feature!), go to Facebook and you can download an 8-minute cut, or check out several of the mp3s on their web store. If you want to just go for it, you can buy their CD at their website for \$14. Go to <http://www.milkshakemusic.com/store.cfm>. For us, we can't wait to see Lisa in her signature tutu the next time they hit Jammin' Java! To find out more visit: [www.milkshakemusic.com](http://www.milkshakemusic.com). Have you heard *Great Day*? What's your opinion? Just drop us a [note](#) and Our Kids will add your comments to this review.



Originally, Milkshake came with an expiration date.

Soon after singer Lisa Mathews founded the Baltimore-based children's band with guitarist Mikel Gehl, she drew up a 10-year plan. At the time, Mathews and Gehl each had young children, and Mathews wanted to release an album of children's music every two years. That way, their music would grow up as their kids did. If all went according to Mathews' time line, after 10 years, the kids would be too old for children's music, and Milkshake would be no more.

Gehl "doesn't like to put limits on anything, but I thought it would be interesting," Mathews said. "I also thought it wouldn't work. I thought by the fourth record, we wouldn't be able to sing about what our kids were going through and still be cool."

As it turns out, Mathews' predictions were wrong. After nine years and four albums, Milkshake is still thriving. The band has toured the country with other children's groups, selling out venues such as the 9:30 Club along the way, and has performed on children's TV shows. That fourth record Mathews didn't think would happen? It's called "Great Day" and will be released Saturday when the band performs at the B&O Railroad Museum's Kids Fest.

As Milkshake's original fan base has matured, so has the band's music. True to its title, Milkshake's first album, "Happy Songs," had plenty of bright, sunny singalongs. While the songs themselves were strikingly layered and well-thought-out, the lyrics weren't all that deep. Take, for example, the tune "Breakfast Time." On it, Mathews sings: "It's breakfast time / It's breakfast time / It's time for us to eat / So, what do you want for breakfast?"

While perfect for Mathews' daughter Jesse when she was 2 and 3 years old, "Breakfast Time" generally won't fly with Jesse now that she's 9. That's why, on Milkshake's new album, Mathews tackles more adult topics, such as materialism.

One day, Mathews was sitting in one of Jesse's classes when the teacher asked the kids to make lists of things they wanted and things they needed. Mathews was inspired to write the song "I Want It." The song is one of the dozen tracks on "Great Day."

"I want five scoops of ice cream, piled up so high / whipped cream and a cherry, yeah, that'll keep me satisfied," she sings. "But all I want isn't all I need / I don't need a room full of things / I just need home, good books to read / The wind in my hair, a kiss on my cheek."

Though it's aimed at tweens, a song like "I Want It" also goes over well with toddlers, too, Mathews said. The six members of Milkshake just have to be careful to pick the right songs when they play live. After all, they don't want half their audience to think they're - gasp! - uncool.

"The 11- or 12-year-olds think we're cool until they see a 2-year-old thinking we're cool," Mathews said. "If there's a lot of older kids, we won't play a lot of happy songs. We have to make it so the older kids are helping the younger kids. Then it seems to work OK."

Live, Milkshake can be quite a spectacle. Mathews learned long ago that one of the keys to entertaining kids is to get out into the audience and interact with them. With her wild mop of reddish brown hair, lace-up combat boots and trademark fluffy tutu, Mathews certainly stands out from other moms. Props are also important for a live show, she said. That's why Milkshake has puppets and even a confetti cannon. The response from fans is remarkable, said Amy Lynwander, marketing consultant for the Waterfront Partnership.

For the past few years, Lynwander has booked Milkshake for gigs in the Inner Harbor. When Milkshake performs, hundreds of pint-sized fans turn out - some even sporting their own little tutus, she said.

"They have a real appreciation for what kids like and what kids think," Lynwander said. "They seem really tapped into that mind-set. I have my own kids, and they really like Milkshake's music. They just really respond to the songs."

Mathews has always had an uncommon connection with kids, Gehl said. On Mathews' wedding day, she was late to the altar. When the priest opened the front door of the [Fells Point](#) church, looking for her, there was Mathews, on the front steps, surrounded by inquisitive kids.

"Even though it was her wedding, she couldn't tear herself away," Gehl said. "She had to sit there and talk to them and let them touch the dress. ... She always had that interest and that chemistry with kids."

Before Milkshake, Mathews and Gehl played in the Baltimore alt-rock group Love Riot. Then Mathews got pregnant with Jesse, and a couple of years later, Gehl's son, Eric, was born. Both Mathews and Gehl wanted to keep playing music - just not love-torn alt-rock in smoky bars.

Not long after they formed Milkshake, they found a kind of success that had eluded them in their Love Riot days. They were invited to New York to tape two music videos for "Jack's Big Music Show" on the Noggin network. Satellite radio started playing their music. And they went on tour with several other children's bands, selling out clubs and even a 1,400-seat arena in California, and Gehl approximates

that between digital and hard copies, the group has sold about 25,000 albums. These days, it's not uncommon for band members to get noticed in an airport, Gehl said.

"I've been really surprised," Gehl said. "We can go anywhere in the country and find a few hundred kids who know Milkshake songs. That blows me away."

The next step for Milkshake would be landing its own TV show on a major channel such as Disney. But Mathews thinks the possibilities of that happening are slim. Milkshake might just be a bit too wild for prime time, Mathews said.

Mathews is leery of setting end dates, the way she did when the band started. If anything, when Milkshake finally is put to bed, it will be because of age - not the kids', but Mathews' and Gehl's. They're both in their 40s, and Mathews said she probably won't want to be singing children's songs as a senior citizen.

"I can only go so far with my audience," Mathews said. "I don't think I'll be doing it when I'm a grandma. I'll do it as long as I have something to say and the kids enjoy our live shows."

**If you go**

Milkshake performs at the B&O Railroad Museum's Kids Fest at noon Saturday and Sunday. The festival runs 10 a.m.-5 p.m. both days, and admission is \$8-\$14. The museum is at 901 W. Pratt St. Call 410-752-2490 or go to [borail.org](http://borail.org). For more information about Milkshake, go to [milkshakemusic.com](http://milkshakemusic.com).



## **Great Day - Milkshake CD**

[Music CD - Whole Family](#), [Music CD for Children](#) :: 18 September 2009



Great Day - Milkshake CD  
MILKSHAKE MUSIC - August 25, 2009  
Ages: Whole Family  
Cautions: None

### **Kiwi Magazine Review:**

It's a sight to see. Attend a Milkshake concert and watch little girls (and their moms) show up in tutus, ready to dance and rock out with the band. Milkshake still sings plenty of feel-good, up with little people songs, but the sound has evolved to have a slightly cooler, rougher edge to appeal to kids who are past sippy cups but haven't tried Red Bull. The lyrics now address frenemies, epically messy rooms and wants v. needs rather than big bottles of sunshine and bluebirds. If I'm not mistaken, these tunes have the influence of zydeco, jazz and a little country. The part I enjoyed the most about this CD is that each song really has a distinct sound, beat and message.

[Buy this CD on Amazon.com](#)

### **Product Description**

Great Day is Milkshakes fourth CD for kids and kids at heart. In keeping with the bands desire to grow with their own children, the songs on Great Day touch on issues of friendship, age, self-esteem, goals and desires among other things—things that matter to a 6 - 10 year old. In Milkshakes short seven years together, the band has released three award-winning CDs, a Parents Choice Silver Award for their DVD Screen Play, and had music videos on Noggin, PBS KIDS and Discovery Kids Emmy-winning ToddWorld.



# Great Day is here!

## QUICK LINKS

[Website](#)  
[FACEBOOK](#)  
[Dadnabbit Review](#)  
[Red Balloon Review](#)  
[Nugget Island Giveaway](#)

## SiriusXM Radio



We were happy to be back for our fourth concert in the Rumpus Room (AKA cool recording studio) at [SiriusXM](#) Satellite Radio. We love the folks there and it's always great, especially with the live audience of friends. Our concert will air on September 4th-6th:

Friday 9pmEST/6pm PST  
Saturday 9am & 5pm EST  
Sunday 12pm EST

Be sure to call Kenny, Mindy or Robbie and request your favorite Milkshake songs!  
1.866.328.2345

## Milkshake in Spanish and French!



We met good fan Julia Pimeleaur and her son Emmet at our DVD release party in NYC last year, and were honored when she asked us if she could use a few Milkshake tunes for her CD project. Julia is Founder and Creator of Little Pim, a wonderful program of DVDs and CDs that help toddlers learn a new language. We re-wrote three songs, adding words found in the DVD curriculum, and you'll find our English versions along with both Spanish and French. The Spanish versions were sung by our friend Barbara Brousal (fans of Dan Zanes know Barbara well), and the French versions were sung by Violette de Barfilat. Visit the [Little Pim](#) website for info.



Hi, Friends!

Great Day is here! Produced by Tor Hyams and featuring special guests Cathy Fink, Marcy Marxer and Rodney Henry, this collection of 12 new songs reflects the growth of our children, the band and the music itself. Writes Jeff Giles of Dadnabbit: *"Milkshake's stuff has sharper teeth than most children's music, and it's more musically adventurous to boot: Great Day's dozen tracks lead the listener on a madcap dash that boasts punk-kissed pop ("Shake It Up"), hints of zydeco ("Statue of Me"), and a dash of newgrass (the banjo-laced "When I'm Old").* True, we found ourselves adventuring into new musical genres, although it's all Milkshake. This was our first CD recorded with the band gathered in one studio, recording much of the music live to tape. Two-time Grammy winners Cathy Fink played banjo on "When I'm Old" and Marcy Marxer added ukulele on "Travel Far."



Baltimoreans might know Rodney Henry for his "dangerously delicious pies" and his work with alt-twang band Glenmont Popes. We were inspired by how our kids love to concoct new recipes, and by Rodney's amazing pies and music, we put the two together, inviting Rodney to play guitar and do a rap on "Recipe." Tor Hyams was great fun to work with and brought his production expertise to the studio and the tunes. He also joined in the vocal harmony on some songs and even helped pen the chorus of "I Want It." Tor's production credits include Joan Osborne, Edwin McCain and the Disco Biscuits (*For info on our friends, click the pics*).

Our Maryland CD Release party will be 12 noon on Saturday, September 12 at the [B&O Museum's Kidfest](#). Great Day is available at [Shaniganigans](#) and other Baltimore stores, [Borders](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#) nationwide and online at [Amazon](#), [itunes](#) and most other web outlets. Thanks for all your support! For the most current pictures, videos, reviews, contests and new Milkshake happenings, check our Facebook page, or the website.



xo,  
Lisa, Mikel, Tom, Cord, Shepp and Brian

*"Milkshake has erased the line between kids' music and grown-up music: nowadays good music is just good music. And parents can listen too!" Randy Astle, Red Balloon*

(Read more from Randy and other online reviewers via the links above. Feel free to leave comments when you visit these cool sites, some of which offer giveaways when you do.)





August 22 2009

## [We Got to Preview Milkshake's "Great Day" \(You Get To Win It\)](#)

Anyone with any knowledge of the "kindie" music genre knows Milkshake is so much more than a delicious dessert. Since 2002, founding members Lisa Mathews and Mikel Gehl have created a "superstar" kids act that has seen the band grow to six members, release 3 albums and a DVD, tour nationwide and grown quite the loyal fanbase. We first discovered this act on Noggin, and after that realized you can't listen to a kid's music channel or kid's music podcast without being exposed to their pop/rock fun.



August 25 marks the release of their fourth CD, "Great Day" and we had a chance to check it out before release. The album was produced by Tor Hyams, who has not only worked with artists like Joan Osborne, but is also responsible for bringing Kidzapalooza stage to Lollapalooza and the "Kiddie Limits" stage for Austin City Limits. Milkshake also have brought a few guest to the table this time, including GRAMMY-winners Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer.

Mostly eschewing silly subjects Milkshake instead tackles topics like friendship, family, materialism, self-esteem, and exploration. Pop-punk songs like "Shake it Up" and "You Did It!" are energy-burners sure to get the fake guitars out and the legs jumping. "Happy Place," "Statue of Me" and "Sand Castles" were the type of rock-pop the Maia gravitates too, and the type of tunes made for kindie fans. "I Love You" is a simple ballad destined to be repurposed by adult fans as bedtime lullaby.

My personal favorite was "When I'm Old," a twangy, bluegrass ode to grandma that shows off the musicianship brought to this project. I also enjoyed "Dance in the Sun," a jazz-pop ditty celebrating world travel. My wife's favorite was the blues-tinged, food-

themed "Recipe," sure to be a future kindie classic.

This is band that doesn't shy away from one genre, and will keep kids AND parents interested for just that reason. When it was time to go back to Daddy's music, Maia wasn't having it, and that is usually the official seal of approval from this young tot.



## Wednesday, August 26, 2009

### [A Great Day with Milkshake](#)

A two-year break between albums can mean a lifetime when your fans are only three years old. But in this case the wait has been worth it, as [Milkshake](#), one of the best children's bands in the country, released their new album *Great Day* yesterday. I've been listening to it for over a week, with and without Loretta, and am nothing less than impressed. After Loretta's in bed I've been letting the album mix with the likes of U2, the Kinks, Buffalo Springfield, and the Beatles, and at times I find myself forgetting that this is supposed to be children's music at all. In other words, it fits in with all those bands. Thus, in line with what I wrote in my last post, Milkshake has erased the line between kids' music and grown-up music: nowadays good music is just good music. (And parents can listen too!)



That in fact was the entire premise behind Milkshake's formation. The band formed in 2002 when two members of the indie rock band Love Riot, Lisa Mathews and Mikel Gehl, both had children born into their families and started creating music for them. Releasing an album was natural, and *Happy Songs* came out that year, followed by *Bottle of Sunshine* in 2004 and *Play!* in 2007. Now with *Great Day*, if there's a theme apparent in these titles that only speaks to the groups' commitment to creating uplifting, empowering, energetic music. One of the really refreshing things about listening to Milkshake as opposed to, say, the Kinks, is the lack of irony in the former's lyrics: a Great Day can really just be a Great Day, and that's all it is. Kids are unabashed in their guilelessness, and I'm glad Mathews and Gehl have let that come through. I suppose they're rather akin to U2 in that respect.

The group's sidemen deserve mention: Mathews sings, Gehl plays acoustic and electric guitars, Michael Sheppard plays electric guitar, Cord Neal bass guitar, Tom Moon drums, and Brian Simms keyboards and accordion. On this album there's also Marcy Marxer on ukulele and mandolin, Cathy Fink on banjo, and Rodney Henry on guitar and vocals, with basically everybody pitching in on the background singing. *Great Day* was produced by Tor Hyams.

I mention Hyams because one of the things I've noticed musicians lamenting lately in *Rolling Stone* is the passing of the album. Listeners are so accustomed to dealing in tracks now that nobody listens to an album beginning to end anymore. So in this case I want to say that the individual tracks stand out and are fantastic, yet the same thing holds true: the album is crafted from beginning to end, with a definite emotional arc. The opening number, "Shake It Up," launches right into an up-tempo, driving invitation to join in the party: "The band is jamming / Everyone's dancing / Friends are coming by to play. / Guitars ringing / Everybody's singing / It's another beautiful day." This takes eleven seconds. Thus evoking the title of the album--although this isn't the title track--the very first moments are saying in effect, "If you aren't dancing already you've almost missed it."--Shake it up and don't just sit there. Kids are immediately off the couch, bouncing, wiggling, and jamming away. If we fast forward all the way to the end of "Great Day" at the end of the album, we have an extended vamp that will keep the kids moving essentially as long as the parents will let them. This song, in fact, is exceptionally well-crafted: I'm not a music writer so my descriptions are limited, but it starts with a series of staccato piano chords and the twittering of birds, into which Mathews starts singing, legato and brightly, "It's a great day," followed by some faster descriptions and more drawn out "It's a great day" refrains. The pattern is slightly imitative of the very similarly titled U2 song, "Beautiful Day," with the rhythmic keyboard, sustained strings (instead of birds), soft entrance on the vocals, and quick assertion, fairly irony-less, that it really is a beautiful day. Mathews just gets to her assertion quicker than Bono. The body of the song (I'm back to "Great Day" now) holds up, piling on the optimism as the beat slowly builds, and then the closing vamp I just mentioned, with its reverberating guitars, male vocal harmony, and extra-musical sound effects, is the kids' version of "Hey Jude." And it's about time they got one.

The upbeat numbers really rock, and I appreciate having some songs to do that with for Loretta without having to worry about lyrics or overly loud instrumentations. I can't justify singling out certain songs over others, but the first track I heard, "Statue of Me," is extremely memorable (it's got a hook), and I once opened back up my computer after a break and jumped into the middle of the bluesy "Recipe" only to have to check iTunes to see who was playing those electric guitar riffs. "You Did It" takes the empowering sentiment from *Dora the Explorer* and so many other shows and makes it much more palatable and, hence, realistic--and no less encouraging for kids who are mastering new skills.

But the ballads are great as well. "I Love You" is unabashed in its praise of the listener, and since it's sung from a parent to a child it is so much more concrete than the seven googol romantic love songs out there that we all know describe a much more fickle kind of love. The repetition of this single sentiment, over and over, is exactly the right thing for kids to hear. By the end the guitar drops out and Mathews finishes with a few, quiet, almost earthy repetitions of the phrase, almost whispering her child to sleep. (If you want a lullaby from the album, this is it, although it's a little short.) The vacuum her diminishing voice creates will draw children in, attentively listening to the last notes. Pulling back like this in the middle of a rock album is important: it shows the phrasing of the entire album (this is the penultimate track, just before the fairly rocking "Great Day" I just described) and, because of its contrast to the louder surrounding material, will acquire greater attention from the kids.

Milkshake's website has some [sample MP3s](#) available, which is how I first heard some of the music weeks ago. Click through and check them out.



## Kid's Music, Book, Toy & DVD Reviews

email: [outwiththekids\\_at\\_gmail\\_dot\\_com](mailto:outwiththekids_at_gmail_dot_com)

@ [www.owtk.com](http://www.owtk.com)

**25 August 2009**

### [Milkshake - Great Day CD Review](#)



I'm all for efficiency so, off the cuff, I'm trying something new here. I'm moving to a new format for record reviews in an effort to get through my gigantic batch of CDs a bit faster, cover more family music in this space and lessen the terrible guilt I feel in not discussing some of the really good music being made for us and our children.

In short, less prose, more, um, reviews I guess.

Expect this format to change/disappear/get better/suck as I figure it out on the fly.

First victim: **Milkshake "Great Day"**

Here goes...

**The Sound:** Artisanal power pop loaded with positivity and more hooks

than a meat locker.

**In the Cafeteria, They Sit With:** The Jimmies, Lunch Money, The Not-Its!

**Best Moments:** "Statue of Me", the star of the disc, sizzles with a creole favor. Straight from the piano intro, you know it's going to be awesome. "Enemies" dramatizes the fun and frustrations of a pair of best buds, treating friendship in a blunt, insightful way. "When I Get Old" is every bit as gorgeous a rumination on aging and family as Justin Roberts' "From Scratch". "Travel Far" is a dreamy wish for the kind of knowledge accumulated far away from school textbooks.

**Bonus Thoughts:** Holistically, the album is so good I'm even willing to forgive the uncomfortable Spin Doctors riff on "Happy Place."

**Okay, Time to Wrap it Up with a Nice Little Bow:** "Great Day" is akin to a musical-genre costume party, hosted by DJ Tor Hyams. All you need to slip into this happenin' shindig is to buy a CD. Milkshake's "Great Day" is a party your family isn't going to wanna miss.





# Musings from Me

on Kids, Preteens, and Teens



## Milkshake Is Having a Great Day!

Wednesday, August 19, 2009



Tom!

I think we now qualify as Milkshake groupies as we got all band members to sign our CDs and programs. We've followed the band from Damascus library to Frederick to Noggin and now to SiriusXM.

Yes, SiriusXM! Tom the drummer was hilarious at Milkshake's Sirius XM radio show taping. Due to the loudness of the drums during taping, the drummer stands alone like the cheese. Speaking of cheese... Tom the drummer made the kids laugh with his cheesy jokes.

I love being on the inside looking out. It doesn't happen very often, but when it does I feel like I am having a "Great Day."

Speaking of great days, do you know the band Milkshake? I first heard of the band through a free ticket to a library reading program when the teen was 8 and the preteen 5. The concert — held in the library meeting room — was tons of fun.

Fast forward to 2007, my then-4-year-old found the Milkshake [Happy Songs](#) CD. I was happy that he had discovered the talented former duo now 6-piece band.

Milkshake was then Lisa Matthews and Mikel Gehl. Now Milkshake is a 6-piece band. Hi Shep, Tom, Cord, and Brian!

At the beginning of this summer I saw a sign, read a tweet, looked at an ad...who knows! But, I found out that Milkshake was playing at a mall in Frederick. T-ball was winding down and swimming was just getting started — the perfect time to take my son to a Milkshake concert!

The [concert](#) was fantastic! Many other people had the same idea so the area around the stage was packed. The best spot to watch a concert is at the side or back of the stage — the stage was set up in the center court of an outdoor shopping mall. My future drummer loved watching the drummer do his thing! The drummer isn't usually visible at a concert. Hi,



Thursday, 20 August 2009

## **Shaking Up Kids Music: Milkshake Band Review and Giveaway**

Written by PJ Mullen | 17 August 2009

Posted in [The Crossroads](#)



I am still on a quest to find acceptable music to listen to while with my son, so when I was invited to check out the newest release from the children's rock band Milkshake I couldn't pass it up. Their fourth album entitled 'Great Day' is set for release on August 25th and I was fortunate to receive an advance copy to listen to last week.

Baltimore, Maryland based Milkshake is the work of lead singer Lisa Matthews and guitarist Mikel Gehl who wanted an outlet to create awesome children's music. Experienced musicians that spent ten years in the indie rock group Love Riot, they formed in 2002 wanting to bring the same rock spirit and song writing prowess they felt was missing in music geared towards kids. To date they have released three award winning albums, a full length DVD and have had their videos appear on PBS Kids, Noggin and Discovery Kids.

At first listen 'Great Day' felt very familiar to me, as Matthews' vocal stylings are very reminiscent of Kay Hanley of Letters to Cleo who I used to hear all the time on WFNX back during my college days. The

disc starts out strong with the track 'Shake It Up' and continues to be a rocking fun time throughout the album's twelve songs.

Overall it is filled with smart lyrics that teach important lessons and send great messages to kids. The fact that the tunes are lively, fun and resemble music that I actually enjoy listening to are all a huge bonus. In the week since I received the disc it has gone from the house to the minivan and back with each trip out of the house. Little man seems to enjoy it and has even been caught stomping his feet to the music. All of the tracks are surprisingly good, but a few of my favorites include: 'Happy Place', 'Statue of Me' and 'Dance in the Sun'.

If you want to learn more about Milkshake, you can do so on their [website](#), become a fan on [Facebook](#) or preview tracks over on iTunes. The CD will also be available for purchase at their website, CDbabycom and Amazon.

# Kids' Home Library by Lee Littlewood

## Hip and Cool Music for Children to Enjoy this Summer Season

"Great Day" by Milkshake; Milkshake Music; \$14.99.

Apparently while I've been watching "Lost" and "Mad Men" episodes on TiVo and reviewing children's books, an "alternative" children's band has been rocking out with the younger generation. Milkshake — made up of two band mates from Baltimore's indie rock group Love Riot, plus other storied professionals — energize on PBS Kids, the Noggin Channel and Discovery Kids, with truly conceptual and magical music videos.

CDs are right up with the videos, with songs that are edgy and meaningful, but also fun for the entire family. "Great Day," aimed at ages 6 to 10, touches on issues of friendship, inclusion, goals and material desires. Plus, it has tons of crackling pop rock that includes rockabilly, B-52s-like craziness and stylistic tunes aplenty.

To find out more about Lee Littlewood and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

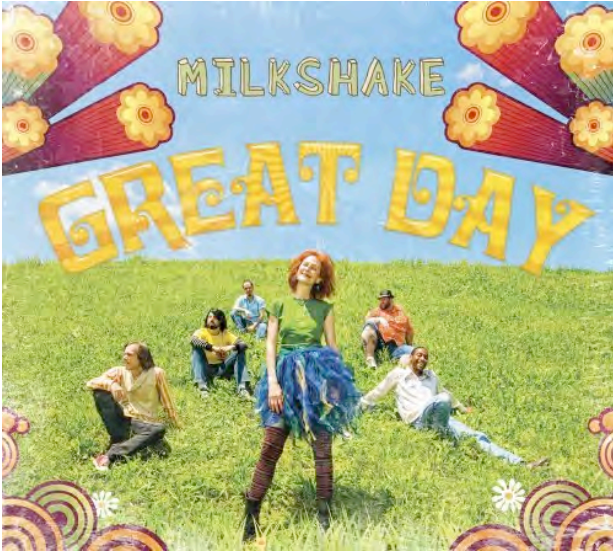


# Dadnabbit

the consumer and entertainment guide for dads

## CD Review: Milkshake, "Great Day"

Milkshake – Great Day (2009, Milkshake Music)



Milkshake isn't just a band, it's a budding media empire. Since rising from the ashes of Baltimore's LOVE RiOT in 2002, they've become fast favorites of the indie kidpop world, releasing three well-received CDs (Happy Songs, Bottle of Sunshine, and PLAY!), a DVD (Screen Play, issued earlier this year), appearing all over the Noggin, Discovery Kids, and PBS Kids networks, and even spinning off a Milkshake comic book (featuring the band as superheroes, natch); with their brand new fourth album, Great Day, they stand poised to rock the diapers off

musically adventurous children of all ages.

I don't mean "rock" ironically, either — Milkshake's stuff has sharper teeth than most children's music, and it's more musically adventurous to boot: Great Day's dozen tracks lead the listener on a madcap dash that boasts punk-kissed pop ("Shake It Up"), hints of zydeco ("Statue of Me"), and a dash of newgrass (the banjo-laced "When I'm Old"). It's also packed to the rafters with stringed instruments, from the aforementioned banjo to the ukulele, mandolin, and hollow-body Gretsch guitar (lended by ex-Glenmont Pope Rodney Henry). It's fun, mostly uptempo stuff, with messages that are both appealing ("I want five scoops of ice cream, piled up so high") and important ("You did it! Yeah! I gotta say I think you're great") for the band's target demographic.

If you're already a fan (or a parent of a fan), Great Day will not disappoint — and if you haven't partaken of Milkshake's tasty sweet goodness until now, this album's a fine place to start, boasting some of the band's best material in addition to solid production work from Tor Hyams and a handful of hip cameos. Sample Milkshake's wares at their official site.



## Milkshake's newest CD release rocks on

In 2002 when singer [Lisa Mathews](#) and guitarist [Mikel Gehl](#) began writing songs that would appeal to the youngest audiences, they looked to their own children for inspiration. Staying true to what they observed, they translated their family lives into universal appeal that not only has garnered them legions of children as fans, but parents as well. Thus was the beginning of the pop/rock children's music group, [Milkshake](#).



Since that time, *Milkshake* has grown from a duo to a six-member band comprising musical veterans from the Baltimore pop/rock/progressive music scene headed by Lisa Mathews (lead vocals) and Mikel Gehl (acoustic and electric guitars) along with [Michael "Shepp" Shepard](#) (electric guitar), [Cord Neal](#) (bass guitar), [Tom Moon](#) (drums) and [Brian Simms](#) (keyboards and accordion). And, not surprisingly, as their ensemble grew, so did their own family life experiences, which has kept many of their early fans engaged with the ever-evolving group enjoying music that reflects real lives. Lisa Mathews says, "In the last year or so we've noticed an amazing thing: the kids who started listening to us as babies are still right there with us today — in effect growing with the band as the band has grown with them!"

*Milkshake's* energized music and slice-of-life lyrics have produced three award-winning CDs along with [music videos](#) that have appeared on [Noggin](#), [PBS KIDS](#), [Discovery Kids](#) and the Emmy-nominated [ToddWorld](#). Their high-profile run makes them in demand as a [national touring group](#).

In their newest and fourth CD release, *Great Day*, there are guest appearances by two-time GRAMMY-winners [Cathy Fink](#) and [Marcy Marxer](#), with Marxer adding tuneful ukulele and mandolin licks in "Travel Far" and Fink's banjo

strumming in "When I'm Old."

Also joining in the fun is [Rodney Henry](#) (former front man of the legendary kings of the Baltimore hard rock-garage-rockabilly scene, The Glenmont Popes as he adds his guitar and vocals in "Recipe.")

Other standouts on *Great Day* are the rockin' n' rollin' "Shake it Up," the positive self-esteem message of "Statue of Me," the tender lullaby "I Love You" as well as the title song, "Great Day," an anthem to the carefree joys of childhood.

*Great Day* was produced by the multi-talented [Tor Hyams](#).

The CD runs 37 minutes in length and is recommended for children ages six through 10 years of age.

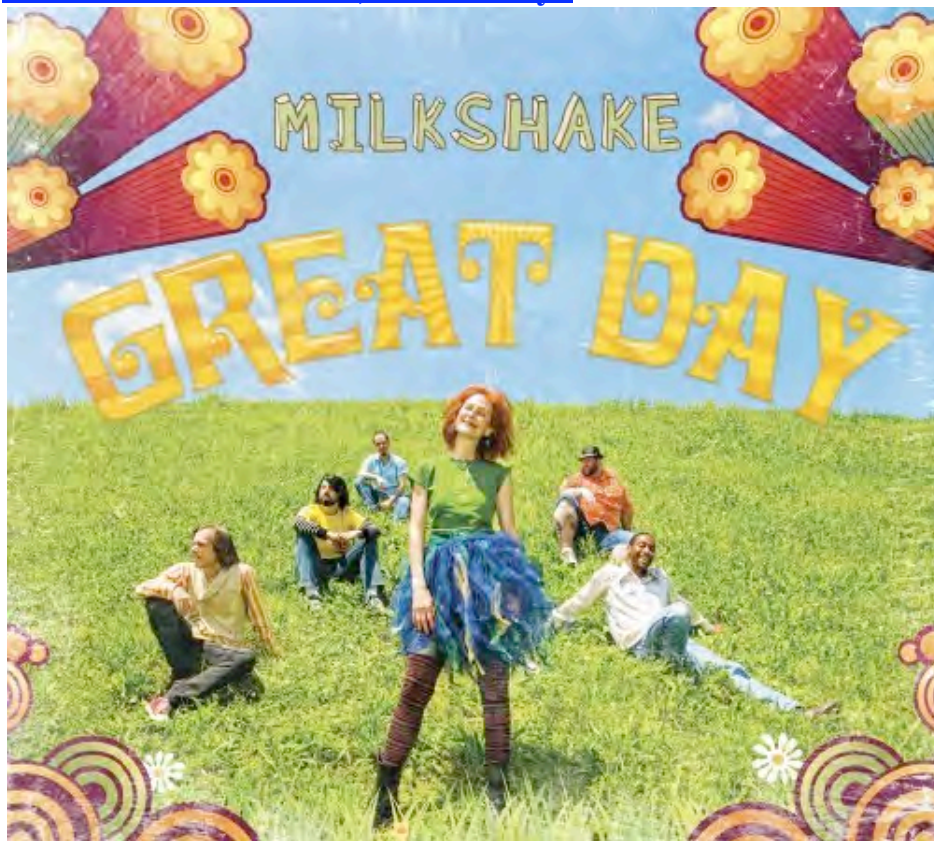
You can listen to sound samples of all 12 tracks, purchase MP3s or the entire CD at [Amazon.com](#) and other online outlets, or through *Milkshake's* own [website](#) where for a limited time, if purchasing any product online from their Google Checkout store you'll get a free Milkshake Beachball Baseball.



# Dadnabbit

the consumer and entertainment guide for dads

## CD Review: Milkshake, “Great Day”



### Milkshake – *Great Day* (2009, Milkshake Music)

[purchase from Amazon](#)

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## Hot New Summer Music!

by Amber on August 16, 2009  
in [CD Reviews](#)

Lots of kids' bands are coming out with new CDs over the summer and we've had the chance to preview

some really good ones. Here are our favorites...

Milkshake's new CD, [Great Day](#), is my current favorite album to pop into the CD player in the car. Ivan loves the songs and sits in the back seat contentedly bopping along to the music, and I just can't get enough of lead singer Lisa Mathews' indie-inspired voice.

My favorite song is *Statue of Me* where the singer imagines what it would be like to have a statue made of herself and wonders why people would honor her. I love the lines,

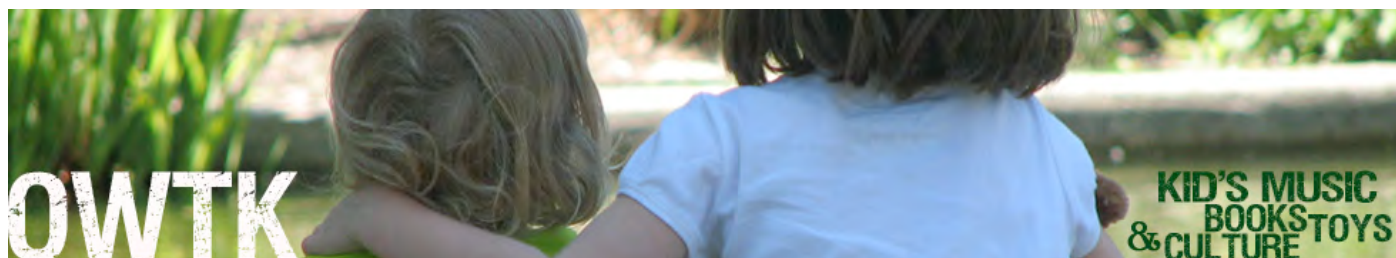
*When they make a statue of me  
Hope it's cause I helped people see  
The magic of the starry skies  
or mysteries of the deep blue sea.*

This song picks up on themes that run throughout the album: Helping others, thinking positively, self-esteem, and setting goals. These are great lessons for any kid!

[Great Day](#) is set for release on August 25th.







## Jim Cosgrove – Swimming in Noodles CD Review

[OWTK Kid's Music Reviews](#) — By [Jeff](#) on October 7, 2010 at 2:14 pm

### JIM COSGROVE “SWIMMING IN NOODLES”

**The Sound:** Lighthearted, laid-back rock & roll under the heavy influence of Hawaiian shirts.

**In the Cafeteria, He Sits With:** Brady Rymer, Joe’s Backyard Band



**Best Moments:** It’s easy to know when a indie musician has a kid in their household. “**Little Miss Floppy Socks**” is the kind of song that could only have been written by a dad (or mom) with a precocious youngster in their care. Undoubtedly, one of Cosgrove’s adorable little ladies was the inspiration for this airy, balloon of a song with it’s sock-drawer imagery and steel-drum goodness. I awoke at 3:00 am this morning singing the Jimmy Buffett-esque chorus. So yeah, it’s pretty contagious. The good majority of Cosgrove’s work, past and present, centers around family, love and happiness – not the worst topics in the world, but often a heaping mound of hot poo in song form. Cosgrove, however, folds in the lovey-dovey with equal amounts of grace and humor (not unlike the musical side of Bill Harley’s portfolio). The results are often poetic and always cheeky and funny to the ears of his intended audience.

The Bear never passes on the chance to sing and laugh along with “**Spaghetti And Goofballs**”, a song that is just about as goofy as it’s title. She stops just

short of requesting smiley sauce and chuckle cheese at the dinner table though. “Spaghetti And Goofballs” features some nifty syncopated piano work – my favorite musical moments on the entire disc, actually.

In high school, I could never keep electrons and protons straight (or much of anything else taught to me in science class). Thankfully, Cosgrove explains that “**We’re Electrons**” and the girls and I cannot help but “wiggle wiggle wiggle wiggle” during the danciest ditty on the CD. Oh crap, I’m still not paying attention to the lessons – too busy dancing!

Finally, how can I not love “**Lucky Me**”? I, like Jim Cosgrove, have two very young daughters and, also like him, I’m fortunate enough to spend a ton of time in their company. When he sings “We read our favorite book / now it’s time to rest our eyes / cuddle up and take a nap as a family / ooh ooh ooh lucky me” I can’t help but smile knowingly and say to myself: yeah, that pretty much sums it up.

**Bonus Thoughts:** “Swimming in Noodles” might not sound like the most modern record ever made, it doesn’t have any beeps or hisses and is completely devoid of new wave fuzz, but it’s unmistakably 21st century in at least one way. Jim “Mr. Stinky Feet” Cosgrove’s latest was crowdsourced, pulling in funding from fans far and wide to cover the costs of recording, production and of Grammy-nominated producer Tor Hyams. Kudos to Cosgrove, and to all who contributed to this effort.

**Okay, Time to Wrap it Up with a Nice Little Bow:** \*\*Full Disclosure: I’ve got a major soft spot for Mr. Stinky Feet and his adorable, kind family\*\*

Cosgrove clearly adores his line of work, and not because of the relative glitz & glamor. His obvious love of his chosen profession is what we love so much about him. In this way, he’s a lot like fellow indie rocker Brady Rymer. They both weave their infectious, sunshine-y personalities into their songs and performances with an outcome miles away from a mess. While his musical style is, for me, more ‘nearby side street’ than ‘right up my alley’, “Swimming in Noodles” is, in many ways, like flipping through an old family photo album. You can count on deep sighs at the cuteness of your children’s forever-gone infancy and wide smiles upon spotting those distant memories too fuzzy to recall without visual help.. But every now and again you’ll see a haircut or a waistline that’ll make you turn the page a little quicker. It’s all a part of our history though, so it’s all good...just like Jim Cosgrove’s “Swimming in Noodles”. Sample several of tracks, including “Spaghetti And Goofballs”, and buy the album directly from Jim Cosgrove [here](#).

*\*Jim Cosgrove’s “Swimming in Noodles” was provided to OWTK for review. The opinions expressed above are unbiased and true – no arm twisting took place in the review process.*



From: Beth Blenz-Clucas  
Subject: Free Range Family Music: Jim Cosgrove's 'Swimming in Noodles' Arrives October 5th  
Date: September 16, 2010 12:28:39 PM PDT  
To: tor hyams



**Jim Cosgrove Goes 'Swimming in Noodles'**  
Bright, Happy Songs Celebrate  
Food, Friendship and Family Life;  
Available from Hiccup Productions on October 5th

Kansas City – **Jim Cosgrove**, known for his "Free Range Family Music," releases his new collection of energetic original songs, *Swimming in Noodles*, on October 5th. With a shake of calypso, a pinch of rockabilly and a whole lot of heart, Cosgrove's music inspires families to pack a picnic full of joy and dance the day away.

The high-powered sound of *Swimming in Noodles* marks Cosgrove's first collaboration with Grammy-nominated producer Tor Hyams, who's also known as the founder of Kidzapalooza and Austin Kiddie Limits. Also, in keeping with a growing trend toward "crowdfunding," Cosgrove appealed to his fans to help finance the recording and shape the look of the album.

"It's probably my most energetic album so far," Cosgrove said. "These new songs reflect what I value most in life and what I enjoy the most."

This eighth release from the award-winning Kansas City-based performer serves up a free-flowing bowlful of happy songs with a sunny sound. Some are odes to food: "Spaghetti and Goofballs" (which was inspired by Jim's "secret" recipe for vegetarian meatballs), "Chips and Salsa" and "Cookie Time." Other songs, like "Cool Daddy" and "Hang on, Mama," honor the joys of parenting. Fans will get a glimpse of Cosgrove's own family life with heartfelt songs like, "Lucky Me," "Shamrock On," and "Little Miss Floppy Socks." There are hints of Jimmy Buffett's influence in the song about a friendly Guatemalan village named "Huehuetenango."

Amid the fun, Cosgrove invites listeners to imagine the world beyond their backyards. He was inspired to write the song "Just Like You" after a chance encounter with two musicians from Uganda at a hotel pool. One of them had never been swimming before and told him, "I have seen pictures of people in swimming in pools, and they always had smiles on their faces. Now I know why." Cosgrove, who also delivers motivational seminars called, "Live Like a Child! Succeed Like a Child," was delighted by the exhilaration of that child-like moment.

**Jim Cosgrove** has delighted audiences throughout North America and Europe for more than a decade, including two performances at The White House and over 200 shows each year. *Chicago Parent* magazine gives Cosgrove "an 'A' for interactive fun that gets kids off the couch," and the *Kansas City Star* calls him "The most intriguing children's entertainer out there." This father of two leads the Midwest family music scene as a busy performer and founding president of the [Kansas City Jiggle Jam](#). His young fans often call him "Mr. Stinky Feet" in honor of the hit song from his 1999 album *Stinky Feet*.

See Jim Cosgrove perform his new song "Cool Daddy" live on [KDHX Radio](#) here:  
<http://www.jimcosgrove.com/videos.htm>

#### DETAILS

#### **Swimming in Noodles**

c. 2010 Jim Cosgrove

Available from Hiccup Productions

Run Time: 39:30 SRP: \$13 Ages: 2 to 9

#### PRESS CONTACT:

Beth Blenz-Clucas, [Sugar Mountain PR](#), (503) 293-9498 [beth@sugarmountainpr.com](mailto:beth@sugarmountainpr.com)





## We're Not Kidding! A Tribute to Barry Louis Polisar

Fall 2010 Music

Ages: 5 - 11 yrs.

**Producer:** [Snail Sounds/Rainbow Morning Music](#)

**CD Price:** \$14.95



### Review:

Barry Louis Polisar is an author and songwriter who has written hundreds of children's songs, as well as twelve children's books. Polisar's music is akin to the left of center writings of Roald Dahl or Shel Silverstein, so parents should be forewarned as much weirdness occurs. Yet this is precisely the kind of oddball, nonsense humor that young kids adore.

This sixty-song, two-disc tribute is an amazing gathering of brilliant talent from around the country (and the world), performing songs in genres as diverse as hip-hop, folk, jazz, grunge, punk, klezmer, and rock. Highlights include the group Rutherford B. Hayes is Dead (from Oak Park, California) garage band inspired cover of "I'm a Slug," The Vespers (from Nashville, Tennessee) sweet mountain harmonies on "Barnyard Stomp," and the wonderfully named Radioactive Chicken Heads equally strange covers of songs such as "I Eat Kids" and "I Wanna Be a Dog". The compilers of this collection have done an excellent job of matching artist with songs.

International contributions include Greek performers Le Page, of Greece, offering a beautiful cover of "I Wanna Be Your Baby". Eric Hartereau of France translates "All I Want is You" and sings it in French, while Los Huevos recorded Barry's song "Bad Guys Broke Into Our Car." Polisar himself joins the Radioactive Chicken Heads for

a decidedly Punk rendition of "I Didn't Mean It," before turning in his own typically quirky, solo version of "All I Want Is You."

Depending on your parenting style, Polisar's music might be too irreverent for you. However, if the idea of a kid's version of Frank Zappa or Captain Beefheart sung by some of the best indie bands around doesn't scare you, then this might become your family's favorite children's album.

Lahri Bond ©2010 Parents' Choice



# Unprecedented recording project pays tribute to Barry Louis Polisar children's music pioneer



By: Paula Slade

[Barry Louis Polisar](#), multi-talented singer/songwriter and [author](#), has been entertaining and inspiring children for more than 30 years, and on Friday, December 4, 2009, many of those same children (all grown up now and musicians) paid tribute to the man and his music with the release of the 2-CD set, [We're Not Kidding! A Tribute to Barry Louis Polisar](#).

An unprecedented musical recording project, *We're Not Kidding!* was organized by Aaron Cohen, lead singer of the [Radioactive Chicken Heads](#), and utilized many of Polisar's best loved songs.

Some of the selections on the album were composed almost three decades ago but are truly evergreen, as Polisar's music and lyrics have a timeless quality that continues to touch the heart and soul of what it's like to be a child today.

Polisar, whose music career was launched during his college days in 1975 while attending the University of Maryland has toured Europe several times, produced more than a dozen albums,

and written almost as many children's books.

He's performed in almost all of the 50 states, from classrooms to libraries, and at such impressive venues as the Kennedy Center and the White House.

A Parent's Choice Award-winner, he is also a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Children's Music Web.

Polisar has hosted an Emmy-winning children's show, *Field Trip* and most recently, his unforgettable song, *All I Want Is You* was featured in the opening credits of the film [JUNO](#), with the soundtrack garnering a Grammy and selling over a million copies worldwide, which ultimately reconnected Polisar with vast numbers of his once younger followers.

The idea of a tribute album that yielded 60 reinterpreted covers of Polisar classics brought together musicians of such diverse genres as pop, rock, folk, Klezmer and Jazz, and from locations coast-to-coast and everywhere in between, as well as France and Greece.

Cohen, and many of the 44 other indie musicians that perform on, *We're Not Kidding! A Tribute to Barry Louis Polisar*, credit Polisar's kid-friendly music as a major influence in their careers.

Highlights on the album include three different versions of, *All I Want is You*, which includes one performed in French by a singer from Brittany; a Klezmer version of Polisar's song, *Don't Put Your Finger Up Your Nose* - sung entirely in Yiddish, which is almost funnier than the English lyrics; an extreme version of *Diaper Rash*; a catchy country rendition of *I Wanna be a Dog* and Polisar's hysterical song, *Potty Training*, performed as an Irish jig.

Polisar's son, Evan, also contributes to the album, and the man himself chimes in on, *I Didn't Mean To*, a duet with Radioactive Chicken Heads plus, *The Tushie Song* and *All I Want Is You* (redux)

You can read biographical backgrounds on each the artists who perform on this amazing album, and hear sound samples of *We're Not Kidding!* by visiting this [link](#).

Today, Polisar maintains an active touring schedule with his [concert and author programs](#) for children and families, [visiting schools and libraries all over the US](#).

On his website, there are lots of great [clips from his Field Trip television show](#) and recent school visits, as well as terrific Prime Time Radio [podcast with Mike Cuthbert](#), who has interviewed Polisar many times over the years for National Public Radio (NPR)

*We're Not Kidding! A Tribute to Barry Louis Polisar* is a delightful compilation of songs that is not only historical, but at times hysterical and even touching. It is an album that not only traverses the years, but all age groups as well.

Polisar summed it up perfectly when he said in an earlier correspondence, "The best part for me, is that most of these artists had my albums as kids and many claim me as an early influence." He added, "I can't begin to tell you what that means to me... and how deeply that touches my soul."

The 2-CD set is available from [iTunes](#), [CDBaby](#), [Amazon.com](#) and directly through Polisar's [website](#).



## [A Barry Louis Polisar Tribute Album - Part 2](#)



Now some of those kids, all grown up, are returning the favor. In September I wrote about the announcement of a tribute album called "We're Not Kidding"; [that post](#) includes a press release with some really good information. The album was finally released on December 4, and it's been well worth the wait. Under the guidance of Radioactive Chicken Heads singer Aaron Cohen, a reported forty-five musicians (including some appearances from Polisar himself) have gotten together to rework and record sixty tracks of Polisar's music. The musicians include a few I've heard of before, like Tor Hyams who I wrote about a couple weeks ago, but for the most part since music isn't my main professional focus it's introducing me to a whole bunch of people who warrant further investigation: the Vespers, J-La, Deleon, Kid Kazooey, Elizabeth Street, Alyssa Robbins, Rutherford B. Hayes Is Dead, Purple Mums, Rebecca Loebe, the Boogers, Tom Vincent, Le Page, Ham & Burger, Jeff Forrest, Haunted Cologne, the Brothers Vilozy, Bonnie Phipps, League of Space Pirates, Your Little Pony, and of course the Barry Louis Polisar Self-Aggrandizement Choir (who sing "The Tushie Song"), plus dozens of others.

The stylistic breadth of the album, which consists of two discs of thirty songs each, is just as broad. The first thing I did was compare the different versions of "All I Want Is You," the song from *Juno* above (and, yes, Polisar's use of the title predates U2 by quite a while). [The Vespers](#) start out the entire album with an amazing rendition, possibly if I dare say it better than Polisar's own: the

twangyness and harmonica which give the original much of its flavor is gone in favor of discrete harmonies between the female singers, lending it an air of Alison Krauss singing "Down to the River to Pray" on that other Grammy-winning soundtrack from *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (I was intrigued enough by this number to quickly go to the second disc to hear them sing the more up-tempo "Barnyard Stomp," and they carried that off equally well. According to their My Space page, linked above, their first album will be out in March, so that's something to keep an eye out for.) Closing the entire album is an "All I Want Is You" cover by Noga Vilozy that takes it in the other direction, a rollicking, swinging rock number that puts some boogie into it. The version by Eric Hartereau is pretty traditional except that it's in French, which is quite a kick ("C'est Toi Que J'veux"; all I got out of it was a "femme" and a "toi" or two). And then there's a parody/redux by Polisar himself at the end of the first disc featuring dazzling new lyrics like "...if you were a cow, I'd be the utter." Takes your mind in whole new directions...

Of course, that's not unfamiliar territory for his lyrics. There are plenty of songs like "'Doo-Doo' Is a Bad Word," "I'm a Slug," "Don't Put Your Finger Up Your Nose," and so on that delve into the comic and the disgusting. He's not shy about investigating the darker sides of childhood--mean teachers, not sharing, and so on--but there's plenty on here that's sweet and tranquil as well. Because of some of the more mature lyrics and hard rocking arrangements (heavy on the electric instruments and drum kits), this might be a little much for some of the littler children, but it's on a song by song basis--it's essentially a compilation album, after all. It's probably all good listening for kids in the older crowd, especially if they've been exposed to rock at all before, and some songs are great for the littlest tikes: my Isabelle, who's all of three months, was grooving to the Vespers and Elizabeth Street's "That's What Makes the World Go Round."

One other factor leaning this toward older kids, though, is the vocabulary, which can be pretty challenging. Much of it might go right over kids' heads, but on the other hand it can help them learn and stretch in ways that they might not otherwise; I can still remember a good old Elvis Presley song sending me to the dictionary when I was about ten to look up what a "ghetto" was. They Might Be Giants



and other good lyricists do this (that's where I learned about echidnas, for instance), and Polisar seems right at home in that crowd. Besides that the rhymes are catchy and often funny, something making this good listening for parents as well as for kids. The fact that *Juno* was in no way a kids' movie speaks to the cross-over appeal Polisar's work has.

Here's another [review](#) of the album, by Paula Slade, and there's a lot more information, including blurbs from a lot of other reviews, [here](#). I'd like to thank Polisar for letting me know about all of this and all of his personal interest in my work as well; his interest and warmth in the few emails we've exchanged has gone way beyond that of a musician trying to promote his new album. As I've listened to the music I think that kind of attitude has carried over into his own work as well.

At the end of the day it's a compilation album and is therefore a mixed bag, but overall the album's quite excellent and well worth checking out. If you're interested more information is available on his [website](#), and for those of us involved in children's television it's really interesting to check out the clips from his [old TV show \*Field Trip\*](#), which won two Emmys in its evidently too-brief run. With all the renewed interest in Polisar's work, perhaps it's time to resurrect this concept as well...



February 20 2010

## [We're So Not Kidding: 60 Songs Pay Tribute to Classic Kid's Musician](#)

While the attention given to children's music typically focuses on the newer artists, I think it is important to remember some of the pioneers of this genre. And no one represents a "founding father" of the genre better than [Barry Louis Polisar](#).



Polisar started writing and recording for children in 1975, and has since gone on to an accomplished career creating books, poems and music for kids. He has toured elementary schools and libraries for 3 decades, written songs for Sesame Street, won 4 Parents' Choice Awards, scored reoccurring gigs on The Learning Channel and even performed at The White House. Most recently, Polisar found a career resurgence after his 30-year-old song "All I Want is You" was used in the opening credits of indie film breakout hit "Juno."

The success of this song led to many of his old fans being reunited with a musician they remembered fondly from their youth. Aaron Cohen, lead singer of indie group [The Radioactive Chicken Heads](#), was so influenced by Polisar as a kid he decided to pitch the idea of a tribute album to other artists. What resulted was the 60 song, 2-disc set, [We're Not Kidding! A Tribute to Barry Louis Polisar](#).

Artists attached to the project interpret his songs using their own styles. Hip-hop, electronica, folk, jazz, Klezmer, and bluegrass are just a few of the genres touched upon by the international group of participating musicians. Any listener approaching this album, each with his own distinct musical pallet and preference, is sure to find handfuls of gems to add to his iPod.

An instant favorite in our house was Nashville trio [Vesper's](#) version of "All I Want Is You," the aforementioned song that brought Polisar back into the spotlight. We also enjoyed [DeLeon's](#) take on "My Brother

Thinks He's a Banana" with goofy-good lyrics on top of a sophisticated indie-rock sound that mixes in Sephardic music. NYC-based [Ham and Burger's](#) delightfully nonsensical "Don't Put Your Finger Up Your Nose" had the type of funky electronica beat that is always a hit with Maia. There was even a rockabilly-style version of "Never Cook Your Sister in a Frying Pan" from [Robbins In A Tree-O](#) that had us appreciating a genre we usually don't give much thought to. And, of course, what would a tribute album to a kid's musician be without some family music talent on board to honor the artist? Grammy-nominee and Kidzapalooza /Austin Kiddie Limits creator [Tor Hyams](#) contributes to the album as does punk rock kindie act [The Boogers](#) and acoustic-rock duo Key Wilde and Mr. Clarke.

This album is truly a delight for older indie-rock lovers and their music-loving offspring. My wife and I get to explore and discover new bands and their different sounds while my daughter enjoys the genre-jumping, comical lyrics and non-stop fun. Best of all, a long overdue tribute is paid to an artist who inspired many of the modern-day musicians we love – both in and out of the family music genre.

*We're Not Kidding! A Tribute to Barry Louis Polisar* is for sale on [iTunes](#), [Amazon.com](#) and [CDBaby.com](#). Check out some free samples now on Barry Louis Polisar's [website](#).

## The Barry Louis Polisar Tribute Album: Potentially Awesome

No, that's not the name -- it's my verdict.

I've known for awhile of the tribute album consisting of Barry Louis Polisar covers, produced by Polisar's son Evan Aaron Cohen of the Radioactive Chicken Heads. But now it's got a name -- We're Not Kidding -- and, more importantly for the purposes of this website, songs for your listening pleasure.

I use that phrase "listening pleasure" advisedly, because the songs I've spun thus far have been uniformly winning. I started out with the familiar names -- Key Wilde & Mr. Clarke, Elizabeth Street, Tor Hyams, Ham & Burger, The Boogers -- and all of those tunes worth the time. (Check out the electric guitar on Key Wilde and Mr. Clarke track.) And then I moved to the unfamiliar, the top of the page. After 4 songs, some fabulous, none less than interesting, that's when I realized that this could be, well, potentially awesome.

A 2-CD set could be too much Barry Lou, but the combination of Polisar's songwriting with the varied musical approaches and high quality production (never Polisar's strength) make me very eager to hear the final product, set to be released this year.

# The State

ROAD TRIP: Lunch Money, the indie-pop kids band, will be packing lunches and hitting the road this summer. Recently the band announced it will play Kidzapalooza, the Lollapalooza kids stage. Lollapalooza will be held Aug. 7-9 in Chicago.

It gets better: Tor Hyams, the kids stage organizer and a producer who has worked with Joan Osborne and Lou Rawls, wants to work with Lunch Money.

"He wants to produce our next CD," said Molly Ledford, the band's singer and guitarist. "He's going to come to Columbia and record us."

Lunch Money, which will perform on the Austin City Limits kids stage in October, has been on a roll since being featured on NPR's "All Things Considered" in March.



## Interview: Molly Ledford (Lunch Money)



### What's next for the band?

Well, thanks to this crazy thing where this guy reviewed us on NPR, we got some good momentum that we are trying to maintain. Luckily we were already lined up for Kidzapalooza and The Austin City Limits Festival, so that helped the look of the ol' Lunch Money timeline, and our new friend Tor Hyams is coming to visit in November to produce our next album. I have booked the studio time. The gauntlet has been thrown down.

## Family picks

BY SARAH LINDENFELD HALL - Staff Writer

Plenty has happened since Lunch Money, the South Carolina-based indie-pop kids music group, was in the Triangle in winter 2008.

The trio released its second CD, "Dizzy," in January. Stefan Shepherd, a UNC-Chapel Hill graduate and dad who runs the popular kids' music Web site [zooglobber.com](http://zooglobber.com), plugged "Dizzy" on NPR in March, launching it to the No. 1 children's CD on iTunes and No. 37 on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for a time.

A third CD is scheduled to come out next year. L.A.-based producer Tor Hyams, who is behind Kidzapalooza and Austin Kiddie Limits, has signed on to produce it.

And the group is scheduled to play across the country at some major festivals, including Kidzapalooza, part of Lollapalooza in Chicago, in August and the Austin City Limits Festival in October.

# Zooglobble

Kids and family music news and reviews - Kids music worth sharing.

As Mix Tapes Go, Kidzapalooza Volume One's a Pretty Good 'Un



I previously mentioned that Tor Hyams was putting together a new label, Happiness Records, and that his first order of business was putting together a compilation album featuring folks who've played the Kidzapalooza stage. Now, that cover's not the prettiest I've ever seen and, more importantly, I'm not sure what the fate of a compilation album is in the era of the iPod. Having said that, the tracklisting makes for a pretty darn good mix tape...

1. Cool To Be Uncool - The Jimmies
2. Gotta Be Me - Secret Agent 23 Skidoo
3. Cookie As Big As My Head - Lunch Money
4. The Patience Bossa - Deborah Harry/Perry Farrell
5. Nicky Nicky Knock Knock - The Dream Jam Band
6. You Make Me Feel Good - Q Brothers
7. In the Details - Lisa Loeb
8. Back In the Day - Zach Gill
9. Spring Has Sprung - Frances England
10. Skip To My Lou - Candy Band
11. Lucy's Parade - Jambo
12. Fools Will Try - Ralph Covert

I suppose there might be a few people out there who have most of these previously-released songs (and they're all probably reading this website). But as an introduction to where kids music is right now (with the exception of the old Ralph Covert track, which is excellent), it's hard to argue with the selection. Kidzapalooza Vol. 1 is out next week on Happiness Records.

New Milkshake Album Will Arrive. Once They Start Working On It.

It's been awhile since the 2007 release of *Play!* the last full-length from Baltimore band Milkshake. Which isn't to say they haven't been keeping busy doing various things (I, for one, was amused by the Milkshake comic book they put out), but, y'know, living on the other side of the country as I do, I tend to be less interested in the live shows.

But in their latest newsletter the band says they've been "hard at work writing and rehearsing as we prepare to record our fourth CD next month." They say that the CD will focus on and by "inspired by all kinds of things 6 - 9 year-old kids might find themselves thinking about." Most intriguingly is the news that the CD will be produced by music veteran Tor Hyams. The selection of Hyams, who we recently noted was working on producing the Paul Green School of Rock album promises to give the release a little bit of an edge. Although the band has many charms, few would accuse them of being particularly far along the "edgy" spectrum. For those of you interested in one of their songs for the under-6 crowd, here's what might be my favorite video off their *Screen Play* DVD:



# Happy Spring

From Milkshake!



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Hi, Friends!

Milkshake has spring fever, and we're feverishly busy with lots of new and exciting projects. We're also very excited about a new award from Parents' Choice, an upcoming radio interview on WYPR and one of our biggest hometown shows ever. Read on to find out more, and enjoy the blossoming new season :)

xo,  
Lisa, Mikel, Cord, Tom, Brian & Shepp...  
The Milkshake Band

## A New CDI

We've been hard at work writing and rehearsing as we prepare to record our fourth CD next month. In keeping with our Milkshake philosophy of growing with our children, many of the songs on CD#4 will skew a little older, inspired by all kinds of things 6 - 9 year-old kids might find themselves thinking about. The CD will be produced by music veteran Tor Hyams (Joan Osbourne, Disco Biscuits, Edwin McCain), and recorded in our beloved Baltimore. Stay tuned :)

# *Cynopsis: Kids!*

04/27/09

**Happiness Records/E1 Music** will release **Kidzapalooza, Vol. 1**, on June 16, 2009. The compilation, a first for Kidzapalooza, features some family-friendly songs sung by family acts and indie groups including Lunch Money, Secret Agent 23 Skidoo, The Jimmies, Ralph Cover (Ralph's World), Perry Farrell, and Lisa Loeb among many others. Launched in 2005, Kidzapalooza is the family-centric stage of the annual Lollapalooza festival.

## Interview: Tor Hyams

I've been sitting on a bunch of interviews from my trips to Austin last September. With the music world once again congregating in Austin for SXSW, it's high time I transcribed and shared them with you.

Given the South By Southwest connection, I thought it appropriate to kick things off with [Tor Hyams](#), who will be speaking at a [kids music panel](#) at SXSW Friday.

Among the many roles that California-based Hyams has is producing the [Kidzapalooza](#) stage at Lollapalooza and the [Austin Kiddie Limits](#) stage at the Austin City Limits Festival, not to mention the Little State stage at the Big State Festival. It was backstage at ACL 2007 that I caught up with Hyams and talked about producing those events and his thoughts about the future of kids music festivals.

**Zooglobble:** What's been the best part about the Austin Kiddie Limits stage?

**Tor Hyams:** The best part about the Austin Kiddie Limits is, I have to say, Austin. People are really different. There's no airs about anybody, they're very open and honest and willing to have a good time, and that makes what we do a lot easier.

You produce Kidzapalooza, Austin Kiddie Limits, and the kids stage at the Big State Festival. Big State is more country, while the other two are more rock. How did you decide who you would try to get for Kidzapalooza as opposed to Austin Kiddie Limits?

In Kidzapalooza, we go a little harder-edged. It's just a different energy to that place than here. This is more of a roots-rock kind of energy, where Kidzapalooza is more of a hard-rock kind of energy. Some bands fit into both, like the Sippy Cups. Some bands don't work in both. For example, we had the Blisters, Jeff Tweedy's son's band, at Kidzapalooza, but they're from Chicago, and they're kids. It would've been hard to get them out here. I think they would've done well here, but it's just a different thing. So it's really who fits more the roots-rock mold or even country crossover acts do well, but Austin's such a dynamic city that I think you could any kind of act on stage here and it would work.

I saw a quote from Charles Attal, the head of C3 Productions who sort of described the festival circuit as a land grab -- there are a lot of opportunities in a lot of other places to establish these festivals. Do you think a kids stage is something C3 or other entities would be looking towards doing?

Yeah, it's something I'm looking towards doing right away, especially with the Kidzapalooza brand, if not both. Obviously, Kidzapalooza would be a little easier to transport because it doesn't have a city's name in it, but Austin Kiddie Limits is a great brand and it could easily travel. In fact, in a way the kids idea could move even faster than the grown-up idea. There's less at stake, the ticket prices aren't as high -- parents just like going out and seeing great music.



## Interview: Tor Hyams

The difference in what we do here and at Chicago is that we have legitimate recording acts on stage. Whether they're signed or not, it doesn't matter, but are they playing real music for the whole family as opposed to dumbing it down. So if you're dumbing it down, you're talking to the wrong people. We believe children are much more in tune and intelligent than grown-ups are because as grown-ups we forget a lot of this stuff, the purity of why we're here and what we're supposed to be doing.

James Murphy from LCD Soundsystem at his set on Friday said Austin Kiddie Limits was great because nobody in the audience is reading the blogs saying, 'That guy is over.' They're either crying and asking mommy to go home or they love it. Yeah, that's right, there's no hip factor to contend with. "Oh, they didn't play all their songs from their first album that we loved." It's really a pure place where it's really just about the music. The other thing about kids watching as opposed to teenagers or grown-ups watching is that you really have to be good. Kids don't care about who you are, what you're wearing, what the image is. They feel that stuff, the energy of the performer, and if you're not good, they'll walk away, they don't care. They get nothing out of it besides the purity of the music. Some of the main stage performers who come over here get a little nervous because they know that, just because they are whoever they are does not guarantee them an audience.

**Do you go out to solicit the special guests, or do they come to you?**

Both, really. This year, I went out to Big Sam's Funky Nation from New Orleans. I love them, and they agreed to play. But then you have Ziggy Marley, who asked us. It's really just got to be like that, because they're not getting extra money, we don't pay them. It's really got to be a labor of love. We're not as well funded as the other stages, obviously, and so if they want to do it, we let them do it, and we're happy to have them. It's wonderful for the kids and obviously it gives the parents something extra, too.

**Any future plans, anything you're looking forward to doing?**

I want to take Kidzapalooza on the road to several different cities, not the whole country, but several different major cities. This year is the biggest year we've done for Austin Kiddie Limits yet and I want next year to be better. Every year I think there's no way we can top that, but there's always a way. Whether it's just making parents more comfortable or whatever. Which is why I like working these things so much because it's always a challenge and that's what gets me going.



## Jam On It: The Disco Biscuits



FOR JULY'S CAMP BISCO — an annual music and camping festival run by The Disco Biscuits — the band will draw its biggest support act yet: the original D-o-double-g, Snoop Dogg.

And if guitarist Jon Gutwillig has his way, he'll be able to add: "Jammed with Snoop Dogg" to his resume after the Biscuits close Camp Bisco 7.

"We'll definitely try to set that up," Gutwillig said of a potential Snoop sit-in. "It might be something that is worth it. For me personally, it can help me get excited for the show. People would be like, 'You're in a jam band, man; you guys are in a lame jam band,' and I can be like, 'Hey, I jammed with Snoop.'"

As for what song the band would play with the Doggfather?

"I think Snoop would rip on [Biscuits' song] 'Trucker's Choice,'" Gutwillig said.

Asking Snoop Dogg to freestyle on a hip-hop inspired Biscuits song, rather than the Biscuits covering a Snoop original — like Phish did when Jay-Z sat in with the band on "99 Problems" and "Big Pimpin'" in 2004 — is a bold request, but for the Biscuits it's no surprise. After all, the Philly quartet did get the Boston Symphony Orchestra Choir to sit in for two Biscuits originals — "Svenghali" and "Digital Buddha" — during the

group's 2006 Halloween show. And the band's love for hip-hop runs deep: Slick Rick played with the Biscuits in 2004 and a series of shows in 2002 featured the group teasing bits of Jay-Z's "Izzo (H.O.V.A.)."

"We're the bad boys of the jam-band scene, you might say," Gutwillig said.

Maybe that's because The Disco Biscuits aren't afraid to tinker with new styles. Self-described as an "electronica-jam-fusion" rock band, The Disco Biscuits merge elements of those genres with bits of reggae, metal, hip-hop and anything else they feel like adding.

The group's forthcoming album, the long-awaited follow-up to 2002's "Senor Boombox," may feature the Biscuits' most diverse mix of sounds yet. The band worked with three different producers for its as-yet-untitled sixth studio CD, which still has no release date, Gutwillig said. Tor Hyams, (who previously worked with Perry Farrell and Joan Osborne), Simon Posford and Benji Vaughn (of Younger Brother) and Tom Hamilton (of American Babies and Brothers) all produced tracks on the album, which has taken more than two years to finish.

"And we need their help," Gutwillig said, "because being the studio without a producer is [bad] because we kind of need a general."

Gutwillig said he especially enjoyed working with Hyams because he shares the same ideology as the band.

"Most producers are trying to turn music into something that is mass producible and we need someone who understands that we're just making music for the sake of making music," he said. "A lot of producers don't feel that way. Tor was excited because he works with a lot of different people, and he was like, 'Hey, you want to do that? OK, let's do it,' so he was great."

For the Biscuits, working with Posford and Vaughn in the studio was a dream, too.

"That was unbelievable because they're just artists," he said. "They'll slow the song down and most people don't think about that but it becomes a whole different song. ... I've got to give props it was way better, way cooler. It was essentially the same song but it was just way cooler ... They changed absolutely everything by only doing two or three things."



A big focus of this album was to work on specific songs — a change of pace for the Biscuits — rather than long songs with multiple parts, such as a "Jigsaw Earth" or a "Basis for a Day."

"[The songs] are written, like they were ideas, and then we'd take the best ones and then stretch them out," he added "Because we were doing stuff over a long period of time it was hard to keep the idea somewhat consistent. One month you're really into reggae, so everything you write is reggae, then four months later you're into death metal, but you can't put metal into every song — but maybe some need it."

So instead, the Biscuits arrived at a diverse, distinctive collection of songs, one Gutwillig likens to the work of a couple of non-jam bands.

"You know when you listen to a Thievery Corporation or Gorillaz album and each track sounds like a different band?" he said. "This album isn't that extreme but it will have a little bit of that. It's going to be a very cool combination of stuff."

But don't expect to recognize anything on the new album.

"We did play some songs [at shows] that we thought were going to make the album and then we just decided that we liked other songs more," Gutwillig said. "So a lot of the songs we played and told people were going to be on the album aren't actually going on the album."

But Gutwillig promises fans won't be disappointed.

"We know its going to be great; it's the best thing we've ever put on wax," he said. "We're really psyched about it. It's the coolest f---ing thing ever."

Gutwillig also warns fans that they should catch the band now, before Camp Bisco, because he's not sure of the band's touring plans past that.

"We are definitely going to plan for us to do some shows out there," he said. "We're going to mix it up. It also might be a bit of a light summer for the band because after we do Camp Bisco we'll take a little break just from being crazy with the album and festivals and going to Europe. ... Unfortunately, that may occur in August and September, so people are going to want to come out and see the band until Camp Bisco."

And while Gutwillig said the band is playing at its best right now, he warned that you might not even recognize them when they resume touring later this fall.

"Right now the band is playing really raw stuff," he said. "We're feeling good and were playing new stuff even if it's not on the album. We may reemerge after the artistic break as another band completely after that."

» The State Theatre, 220 N. Washington St., Falls Church; Tue., 7 p.m. (doors), 9 p.m. (show), \$35; 703-237-0300. (East Falls Church)

Written by Express contributor Rudi Greenberg





## The Disco Biscuits Change the Anthem

By: [Brian Bavosa](#)

It's only hours before the lineup announcement for [Camp Bisco 9](#) as I speak with bassist [Marc Brownstein](#). A world-renowned festival hosted by [The Disco Biscuits](#) which originated in 1999, the annual event has seen its share of evolution over the years. Built slowly upon the roots of a regional party, big name artists like Snoop Dog, Nas and Damien Marley have made recent appearances. Maybe that's the reason Brownstein is bubbling with energy and excitement during the duration of our hour-plus phone chat. As he gushes in his notoriously raspy, smoky drawl over this year's Camp headliners - [Ween](#) and [LCD Soundsystem](#), along with the Biscuits - he explains, "[We] had been trying to get [these bands] for years." For a festival steeped heavily in the jam/live-electro scene, the inclusion of artists like these speaks to the Biscuits' commitment to change and evolution.

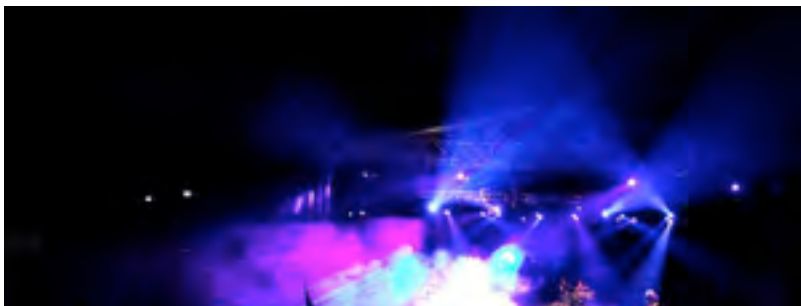
"If you don't change, you get left behind," says Brownstein.



*The Disco Biscuits*

Nothing represents this notion more than The Disco Biscuits' latest studio effort, ***Planet Anthem*** (released March 16 through Diamond Riggs Records) ([JamBase review](#)). In many ways, *Planet Anthem* is an extension of the mentality of Camp Bisco and its lineage over the past decade. Brownstein, with bandmates [Aron Magner](#) (keys), [Allen Aucoin](#) (drums) and [Jon "Barber" Gutwillig](#) (guitar), started Camp Bisco over a decade ago. Once a small affair held on the farmlands of Pennsylvania's countryside, Camp Bisco has developed into arguably the preeminent electronic-related music festival in the country. The first fest to allow - and encourage - both "jam bands" and DJs on the same stage, Camp Bisco has seemingly found a home in Upstate New York at the [Indian Lookout Country Club](#), where it's been held since 2007. In fact, Camp was where [Simon Posford](#), a producer on the new album, made his first appearance into the jam scene, winning over a legion of fans with his **Hallucinogen in Dub** set and returning the next year with his [Younger Brother](#) live band.

This year's festival will be held from July 15-17 and will again feature multiple stages. Brownstein feels it is by far the best lineup yet. When talking about LCD Soundsystem and Ween, he says, "We didn't expect to get both of them, but then we got both of them. So, when that happens you take them both!" He's also quick to point out similarities between the Biscuits approach to *Planet Anthem* and LCD Soundsystem. Both acts have been searching for ways to incorporate a wide mix of styles without losing their electro edge.



Brownstein explains how *Planet Anthem*, a labor of love that also began in 2007, shaped up the way it did. "We made four albums while we were making this album! We very carefully chose the songs while we were making this album. Out of 50 songs [these 13] were all chosen for a reason. They were chosen because as time went on it was a two-and-a-half-year-process, and when we got to the end of the two-and-a-half-years these were the songs that stood the test of time," he says, "songs that are still relevant in 2010. Shit is changing fast in the music world, and being relevant in 2010, the only way to do that is be aware of what kind of music is out there and be influenced by it. That's the key!"

*Planet Anthem* draws on a multitude of genres, from rock to hip-hop to electronica to everything in between, and that's one of the reasons it's so daring - or may seem confusing to casual or even experienced Bisco listeners. It's all things Bisco delivered in a very un-Bisco-like package, featuring guest singers, new arrangements and heavy production. Another difference on this album was the decision to not road test the material and instead record new songs largely unheard by fans. Brownie promises "Big Wrecking Ball," a true rock song at heart, will make heads roll when the fans hear it live.

Brownstein even contends that *Planet Anthem* seems to fit in with the band and their overall timeline.

"If you know The Disco Biscuits, you know that we started out as a jam band with no electronic music. And if you really followed us, you watched us start to incorporate trance, then dub, hip-hop and all different styles of music over the years, you know, classical, the whole nine [yards]," explains Brownstein. "You've seen us go from a band that would play jazz standards to a band that never plays jazz standards. You've seen us go from a band that has electronic music in our jams to playing songs electronic the whole way through. And all [the way] back again to writing songs like 'Big Wrecking Ball' that are just rock songs."

What makes this studio effort unique is how it mixes and matches so many elements together, while holding true to the band's trademark top-flight musicianship. "It would have been very easy for us to go in and attempt to make an all electronic album," he says. "That's what everyone is doing now. They've dropped the music."

In line with their mantra of anything goes, the band also employed the help of many local and, in a few cases, world renown names to help contribute, tweak or produce. These names include Simon Posford, **Harry Zelnick**, **Tor Hyams** and longtime friend and side project cohort [Tom Hamilton](#) (Brothers Past, American Babies).

"The thing that I love about The Disco Biscuits is that you get in the studio and there are no barriers, no walls, there is nothing stopping us from doing anything in any direction," says Brownstein. "[We're] four guys who all write music regularly, plus a team of our producers - Harry, Tommy, Alex, Simon, Tor - a team of the top musical people in our city AND some of the top in the world coming together to kind of guide the sound, and the sound goes in fucking twenty directions at once yet it works together!"



*The Disco Biscuits at Camp Bisco 2009 by Vann*

One of the major and immediate results of this approach was the band's initial music video for "[You and I](#)", which has been in steady rotation on MTV2. "I don't know if in ten years I'm going to look back and say this was a good thing or a bad thing, or even a thing, but if we had made that other album [referring to typical Bisco releases] then we wouldn't be talking about MTV!"

As we rub up on the topic of fans, evolution and that video on MTV, Brownstein is eager to discuss more upcoming videos. The next clip is for "On Time" (catch a preview of the video [here](#)), perhaps the catchiest tune on the album, a club-banger that could bring a whole new type of fan to the party.

"There's four more videos on the way. We're even making a trilogy of videos," says Brownstein. "It's 'Fish Out of Water,' 'On Time' and 'Widgets.' The three songs are all tied together in video, and it's the story of a robot who picks up this really, really bangin' girl in a club. It's a really, really crazy looking video and it's done in animation, and it's really, really hot. In addition to the 'You and I' remix video that we're going to do, we're going to have four more videos coming out. So, we're looking at five or six videos for this album." Regardless of your opinion of The Disco Biscuits or *Planet Anthem*, which many fans will likely hate due to the unexpected, almost unrecognizable nature of the material, it's hard not to be impressed by the band's willingness to try new things. The Biscuits have been doing this for well over a decade and the last thing they needed was another album that tried to capture what they already do onstage every night. "We're not even swinging for the fences," says Brownstein. "We're just making different music. Our goal was not to make a massive album. Our goal was to make a good album. Our goal was to make good songs."



**BARNES & NOBLE**  
BOOKSELLERS

November 21, 2005 10:47 AM US Eastern Timezone

## **Barnes & Noble Releases Exclusive Joan Osborne Holiday CD;**

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 21, 2005--Barnes & Noble, Inc. (NYSE:BKS), the world's largest bookseller, announced that it is releasing the holiday album, Christmas Means Love, by blues and soul singer Joan Osborne. The former eight-time Grammy nominee for Relish, which included the worldwide hit "One of Us," has recorded a collection of holiday songs exclusively for Barnes & Noble. This album can be found only in Barnes & Noble stores and online at Barnes & Noble.com ([www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)).

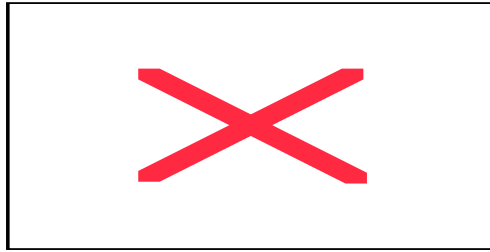
In her newest CD, Christmas Means Love, Joan Osborne adds a bluesy beauty to seasonal tunes like "Great Day in December" and "Santa Claus Baby." Her characteristic soulful style is brought to such classics as "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger." The collection also includes the sassy new song she wrote especially for this Barnes & Noble album, "What Do Bad Girls Get?"

About Barnes & Noble, Inc.

Barnes & Noble, Inc. (NYSE: BKS), the world's largest bookseller and a Fortune 500 company, operates 824 bookstores in 50 states. For the fourth year in a row, the company is the nation's top retail brand for quality, according to the EquiTrend(R) Brand Study by Harris Interactive(R).



Barnes & Noble conducts its online business through Barnes & Noble.com ([www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)), one of the Web's largest e-commerce sites and the number one online bookseller for quality among e-commerce companies, according to the latest EquiTrend survey.



It's hard to get excited about generic bar-band renditions of Christmas oldies. Fortunately, Joan Osborne's Christmas Means Love (Time Love) uses rock and soul rudiments in a more memorable way, particularly on "Christmas Must Be Tonight" and a saucy Osborne composition dubbed "What Do Bad Girls Get?" Be careful when sitting on Santa's lap —

# THE ASPEN TIMES

In search of a Christmas album worth remembering  
CD Reviews



Stewart Oksenhorn  
Aspen, CO Colorado  
December 14, 2007

Joan Osborne, "Christmas Means Love" produced by Tor Hyams (Time/Life)

Joan Osborne's got some experience mixing the religious and the secular — remember her hit "One of Us," which pondered God as a regular guy? On "Christmas Means Love," she does an even better job of it, blending the spiritually inclined — "Away in a Manger," "Children Go Where I Send Thee" — with more earthbound tunes like "Santa Claus Baby," which gets a wonderful retro-girl-rock spin here. Osborne's soulful but sassy voice goes naturally with both kinds of

material, and she also seems to have given plenty of thought to this project: There's her original song, the slow blues "What Do Bad Girls Get?" and takes on such little-covered songs as Robbie Robertson's "Christmas Must Be Tonight" and "Great Day in December."

This joins my list of personal favorites: The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's "The Christmas Album"; "A Winter's Night: The Best of Nettwerk Christmas Albums," featuring tracks by Jack Johnson, Barenaked Ladies and Sarah McLachlan; and Aimee Mann's "One More Drifter in the Snow."



## UV Entertainment

Thursday, December 13, 2007

'Tis the season for holiday-themed Cds

Joan Osborne: "Christmas Means Love" (Time/Life Records) -- The sassy and soulful Osborne breathes considerable life into this CD, as she puts a little bluesy swing into "Santa Claus Baby" and some smoky soul into "Away in a Manger" (it works better than one might expect). The theme of this CD may be all about Christmas, but the earthy joys of this album will sound good any time of year.



New City Chicago

Music to Knowell

A listen to this year's holiday music

Dennis Polkow

Joan Osborne, "Christmas Means Love" (Time Life): Singer-songwriter Joan Osborne offers a soulful and heartfelt holiday album that includes plenty of upbeat originals, including the title track and the Dixieland-inspired "Christmas in New Orleans" and the bluesy "What Do Bad Girls Get?" along with gospel-infused takes on sacred songs not usually found on holiday albums, such as the "Cherry Tree Carol."



## REVIEWS

### Barnes & Noble

For Joan Osborne, Christmas is a bluesy, soulful affair, uplifting but tinged with melancholy. And it makes for stirring music. *Christmas Means Love* follows in the tradition of [How Sweet It Is](#), Osborne's album of soul covers: Backed by a rootsy blues band and, on some songs, a female chorus, she sings her heart out. Or maybe she's just singing *with* her heart out, with direct emotion. Osborne's no show-off: She avoids superfluous pyrotechnics in favor of deep-pocket soul grooves that let these songs and carols simmer and smolder. On the airy "Christmas in New Orleans," Osborne is lighthearted and intimate, backed by acoustic guitars and a jazzy harmonica. On "Cherry Tree Carol" and "Children Go Where I Send Thee," she slips into gospel mode, the former song accented with slide guitar and organ, the latter with a slinky, swampy electric groove that nods to the Staple Singers. One minute, she's playing it straight and somber on the beautifully spare "Angels We Have Heard On High"; the next, she's sassy and sexy on the country blues of "What Do Bad Girls Get?" A mix of the secular ("Santa Claus Baby") and the sacred ("Away in a Manger"), Osborne's *Christmas Means Love* takes a wonderfully earthy approach to heavenly music. *Steve Klinge*



## THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

### Joan Osborne Conjures a Soulful Mood on *Christmas Means Love*

Joan Osborne's roots come from soul and R&B music -- as evident on *How Sweet It Is*, her 2002 album of soul covers -- but she's also scored pop hits with "One of Us" and toured with the Grateful Dead's Phil Lesh. Now, on *Christmas Means Love*, she digs deeply into seasonal songs, from gospel classics such as "Children Go Where I Send Thee" to traditional carols like "Away in a Manger" to secular tunes like the Band's "Christmas Must Be Tonight." From her Brooklyn home, with her ten-month-old daughter playing in the background, Osborne spoke to Barnes & Noble.com's Steve Klinge about what motivated her to make a Christmas record, her penchant for songs about God, and her fear of "audio whiplash."

**Barnes & Noble.com:** How did you decide to do a Christmas album?

**Joan Osborne:** The producer, Tor Hyams, approached me about doing one. I'd always thought in the back of my mind that they were a little bit corny, and when he approached me at first I was like, Oh, I don't know if I want to do that. But then I started really thinking about it and thinking, there must be a way to do this where it is really satisfying artistically. You could probably find some really great Christmas music, and I just started to look at it as a challenge and ended up doing a bunch of research and digging to find some really cool songs, and I ended up getting really excited about it.

**B&N.com:** You chose some songs that are very traditional and others songs that fit the gospel tradition and some songs that aren't in a sacred vein at all.

**JO:** Yeah, the "Christmas in New Orleans" and the "Santa Claus Baby" kind of stuff. I wanted to dig into that blues/jump blues era and get some things that were a little bit lighter, but then also pick a few things that were more traditional -- "Silent Night" and things like that -- which have been done a million times, so you have license to do it any way you want to, because everyone knows the song, and you can try something totally new. Or what we did is strip it down completely and be very bare about it, barebones.

**B&N.com:** I have weakness for Christmas music. It has a built-in appeal because it can be lighthearted, silly, or serious while still seasonal and fun.

**JO:** I was definitely not trying to take it so seriously and make some grand artistic statement, but I did want to make it interesting, and I really wanted to bring something to the musicians that they would get excited about. We did this very, very quickly; it was kind of like an old-school production schedule where we made the entire record in like three days. So the musicians -- I

wanted them to be excited by the material and be able to come up with a lot of ideas.... It was really, really fun.

**B&N.com:** Did you have a different approach in mind than you did on the last album of soul covers, *How Sweet It Is*?

**JO:** Well, I guess I wasn't trying to stay specifically within a soul vein, although I did draw a lot from that. In particular, the title track, "Christmas Means Love," comes from that background, but some of the stuff has more of a folk feel to it. But I think there are certain similarities. We chose the less-is-more approach on a lot of occasions and tried to just let the meaning of the song come through. That's one thing with these Christmas songs: You hear them a zillion times and they tend to lose their meaning unless you can come up with a unique way to put them across.

**B&N.com:** What are some of your favorite Christmas records?

**JO:** I don't know if I can even say a title for it, but there was a compilation Christmas record that my parents had when I was growing up, and it had [Peggy Lee](#) singing "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," and that's where I first heard "Children Go Where I Send Thee." It had [Dean Martin](#) singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" -- it was just this very '50s, cool pop-singer Christmas record, with a couple of more traditional and gospel things thrown in. So that was always a favorite. I was fascinated by Peggy Lee at that point; I just loved her. And then my mom had this [Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians](#) chorale Christmas album that she would play to death. [Emmylou Harris's] [Light in the Stable](#) is a fantastic record, and of course the [Elvis](#) Christmas records are great. I used to sing English madrigal music when I was in junior high school, and I still have some recordings of that, like the [Anonymous 4](#): It's not necessarily Christmas music, but a lot of their music you could put on at Christmastime, and it has that sense of being old English, beautiful, what nuns would be singing in the nunnery up on the mountain in the Middle Ages, and it's very Christmas-y in that way.

**B&N.com:** You've sung songs about saints and God before. Does this album fit a pattern now?

**JO:** *[laughs heartily]*

**B&N.com:** Why do you laugh?

**JO:** Oh, I don't know. I guess it does seem like I was trying to do that, but I don't really have much of an overarching design of what I'm doing with my work. I just sort of gravitate to whatever's interesting me at the moment. I think music has a very spiritual power; that's what it brings out in me. So, maybe that's why I keep going back to those images and those kind of songs, but I don't have that sort of idea about my career...it's much more random.

**B&N.com:** You combine a lot of different styles on the album, but it's still coherent. You can go from "Angels We Have Heard On High" to "What Do Bad Girls Get?" and it's not a jarring transition.

**JO:** Oh, that's good. That's the one thing I was worried about: giving people sort of audio whiplash or something, so I'm glad you feel that way.... It was really fun to do. I really like what it



turned out to be. I know I'm going to be listening to it at Christmas, and I never listen to my own records. *[laughs]*

*November 2005*

# PREVIEW

YOUR DAILY GUIDE TO ENTERTAINMENT

## MUSIC

Which artists have been naughty and which have been nice?

Devin Grant

Special to The Post and Courier

Thursday, December 13, 2007

'Christmas Means Love'

Joan Osborne

(TimeLife)

Miss 'What if God was One of Us?' has managed to keep her career going even after that one-hit wonder. Osborne's soulful vocals go well with the mostly R&B-sounding selections here, including 'Angels We Have Heard on High' and 'Silent Night.' Also great is 'What Do Bad Girls Get?' Pick out a tree, Joan.



## Sanity Claus

Separating holiday-music gifts from seasonal disorders.

By Michael Roberts

The new Sister Hazel entry, *Santa's Playlist* (Rock Ridge Music), proves easier to swallow if only because the recording's swaddled in guitar riffs and assorted rock packaging. Nevertheless, it's hard to get excited about generic bar-band renditions of Christmas oldies. Fortunately, Joan Osborne's *Christmas Means Love* (Time Love) uses rock and soul rudiments in a more memorable way, particularly on "Christmas Must Be Tonight" and a saucy Osborne composition dubbed "What Do Bad Girls Get?" Be careful when sitting on Santa's lap — or on Keith Sweat's. The veteran seducer's *A Christmas of Love* (Rhino) flips the script on naughty and nice via "Point of Christmas," which seems pretty anatomical despite ostensibly being about Jesus, and a "Party Christmas" that ain't about bobbing for apples.

# DESERET Morning News

New CDs spark holiday spirit

Deseret Morning News

Friday, Dec. 14, 2007

C.W. JOAN OSBORNE; "Christmas Means Love" (Womanly Hips/Time Life) This is Osborne's first Christmas album, and while it was expected she'd take the songs down the ol' blues highway, this collection winds up a tad lackluster and sterile. "Christmas Means Love" is a gospel-blues work but is on the cheesy side with the spoken-narration cliches. "Santa Claus Baby" has some nice harmonies but, surprisingly, loses its soul. Attempts to get soulful with "Away in a Manger" and "Silent Night" fizzle. The stand-out tracks are the reverent acoustic solo on "Angels We Have Heard on High" and the back-alley blues of "What Do Bad Girls Get?" — S.I.



Thursday, December 13, 2007

**MUSICAL SPIN ON THE HOLIDAYS**

New seasonal discs are plentiful, diverse

By DAVID YONKE

BLADE STAFF WRITER

“CHRISTMAS MEANS LOVE,” Joan Osborne (Time/Life). Osborne’s bluesy roots provide the earthy foundation for this set of 11 songs that veer from the typical holiday fare. Backed by a nimble band and an occasional choir, Osborne (best known for her multiplatinum 1995 single, “One of Us”) alternates between being naughty and nice as she tears it up on “What Do Bad Girls Get?,” then assumes a pious posture on “Away in a Manger” and “Silent Night.” This wonderfully original holiday collection is proof that Osborne has not lost her soulful touch even though she has not been on the charts in a long while.

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### More and Different

**Joan Osborne's New Christmas CD**

Joan Osborne's new CD, "Christmas Means Love," is available exclusively at all Barnes & Noble music locations and on its website.

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**Do You Have Hurry Sickness?** Take this quiz to find out if your "hurry worries" are in check.



## All Music Guide

This was the last album recorded by Lou Rawls, who had just received word that he had cancer when these 2004 sessions were held, and that knowledge lends a bit of extra poignancy to some of these tracks, particularly the powerful version of "Silent Night" Rawls turns in here. No stranger to holiday albums (he released *Merry Christmas Ho! Ho! Ho!* in 1965 and *Christmas Is the Time* in 1993 and compilations combining the two show up nearly every year), Rawls stuck closer to jazz this time out, and it's nice to hear some of these holiday classics done up in a 21st century swing style, and Rawls' smooth, elegant baritone is always a welcome listen. The opener, "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" swings powerfully, and the aforementioned "Silent Night" is a show stopper, but the most intriguing track is a lightly funky and bluesy version of "Jingle Bells," which features an inspired piano arrangement from Mark Adam Watkins. Rawls loved singing holiday music, and it shows here. If he knew that this would be his last album (and he probably did), that knowledge still couldn't take the joy and hope out of his voice. [The album was reissued in 2006 by Time/Life with a different cover and a spoken word bonus track added.] Steve Leggett



## Music reviews

BY STEWART OKSENHORN

Pitkin County correspondent

December 14, 2006

Lou Rawls, "Christmas," produced by Tor Hyams (Time/Life)

This is the farewell from Lou Rawls, the last recording he made before dying last January. Fortunately, the singer who easily handled everything from gospel to jazz to disco to cartoon voices was in fine form. He covers all the usual bases – there are no rarities unearthed here – but he gives a muscular, playful swing to every last one. The album concludes with "Lou Rawls' Christmas Story," a short, sweet, spoken recollection of his grandmother's preparations for Christmas dinner – a nice way to remember a great singer.





BT & Thom Russo



Bryan Carlstrom & Tor Hyams

## LIQUID MIX – AN INDUSTRY STANDARD.

The world's musical luminaries are adopting Liquid technology in their droves. Focusrite took time out to talk to a selection and get their initial thoughts regarding this revolutionary technology

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## BT – Producer/Composer/Performer

Hear what BT had to say about liquid Mix at the AES show 2006, by clicking [here](#)

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## Thom Russo – Engineer/Mixer

**Arists include: Audioslave, Jay-Z, Prince, System of a Down, Macey Gray, Johnny Cash, Sum 41 and more**

*"This is so hip! I have racks of outboard gear, but the Liquid Mix brings all of the vintage sounds I need right to my fingertips in Pro Tools - right when I need them. And, the sounds are right on."*

## Bryan Carlstrom – Engineer/Mixer

**Alice in Chains, The Offspring, Social Distortion, Anthrax, Rob Zombie, and more.**

*"I couldn't be more excited about the Liquid Mix. The compressors and EQs sound just as good as the vintage gear they emulate, but it is just so much easier to work with. What a great mixing solution - over 60 pieces of gear all rolled up into one."*

## Tor Hyams – Producer/Composer

**Joan Oxborne, Vivian Cambell, Rachel York. Movie Credits incl.Club Dread and more.**

*"I absolutely love the Liquid Mix! The sound is fabulous. It's transparent and offers unparalleled flexibility. I can build my own custom EQs from some of the best sounding hardware emulations available. Great design. How come no one thought of this sooner?"*

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## backstage blog

Broadway and REPRISE! veteran Rachel York (*Victor/Victoria*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and REPRISE!'s *Anything Goes*) has the kind of voice that a song standard would gladly thank, if it could. With her soaring, pure tones, perfect diction, and boundless energy, York brings class, elegance, and, above all, spirit to a lovingly expressed program of first-class tunes including “My Funny Valentine,” “All The Things You Are,” and “My One and Only Love.” York also knows how to spice things up with a few unexpected choices, such as the Rosemary Clooney hit “My House,” Stephen Sondheim's “Sooner or Later” (from the film *Dick Tracy*), and the Paris Sisters' early-’60s pop hit “I Love how You Love Me,” as well as producer Tor Hyams's “Too Good to Be True.” It's obvious that York's as comfortable swinging an up-tempo performance as she is bathing a ballad in honeyed warmth. In short, a welcome debut from a gifted vocalist who's here to



stay.

TALKING  
BROADWAY

## Sound Advice

Also focusing on romance was one of 2005's earliest releases. This is her debut solo album, but Rachel York is no stranger to cast albums and theater singing. Titled *Let's Fall in Love* and available exclusively at Barnes and Noble on a label called Hylo, it's a romantic Rachel all the way. The album does not make use of her skill for drama and expression of complex emotions, as the song selections are basically about being content and comfortable in love. No struggle or torch here, it's all perky and plucky pronouncements or warm and cozy time with material like "My Funny Valentine," "Let's Do It (Let's Fall In Love)," "All The Things You Are," and "Someone To Watch Over Me" (all from Broadway shows). Her voice is strong with a great energetic belt on a few cuts, but it's more often lustrous and luscious. The arrangements on the ballads give her room to stretch out and cuddle up to the lyrics and relish the melodic lines. The upbeat numbers kick into pretty high gear and lend variety to contrast to the make-out sessions. In good voice and sounding comfortable, she presents an attitude that love can be relaxed and quietly satisfying (the gratitude of "I Love How You Love Me") or playful (revisiting Sondheim's "Sooner or Later" which she sang in the first New York version of the revue *Putting It Together*). No angst here. Her love songs are all happy ones and happily ever after is fine by me with this pro with a gorgeous sound.







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## Featured Artist: Rachel York

CD Title: Let's Fall in Love

Year: 2005

Record Label: HyLo Productions

Style: Jazz Vocals

**Musicians:** Eli Brueggemann (piano), Jeff Novack (bass), Tim Davies (drums), Bob McChesney (trombones), Ron King (trumpets), Michael Nelson and Michael Acosta (saxophones), Charlie Adelphia (oboe, English horn, clarinet and flute), Cameron Stone (cellos), Ozzie Stern (violins)

**Review:** If you think you've heard these songs before, think again!

"Let's Fall in Love" is a brilliant entrée into the solo recording world for Rachel York. This beautiful and jazzy retro CD is a real breakout for the gifted Broadway, film and television actress/singer. Known for her stage roles Norma Cassidy in "Victor/Victoria" and Lili Vanessi in "Kiss Me, Kate," as well as playing Lucille Ball in the CBS biopic "Lucy," Rachel sets herself free on this CD, singing from her own heart, without character restraints.

A score of wonderful standard tunes shows off her magnificent, pure, silky-smooth and richly textured voice that has hints of Ella Fitzgerald, Rosemary Clooney, Peggy Lee, and Barbara Streisand in it. Yet Rachel interprets a song like no other performer I've ever heard. Every time you listen to her sing, it's like hearing a song for the first time. She adds unexpected twists of emotion to her vocals that bring new meaning to old standards. She has a distinct, deliciously sultry, honest and uninhibited quality that is absolutely penetrating.

On this CD Rachel York has brought back the Big Band sound with her own special contemporary flair. There's humor in "My House," sass in "Let's Do It," longing in "My Funny Valentine," seduction in "Sooner or Later," and love in every single note. If you don't melt when you hear this incredibly talented woman sing, you need serious medical attention. She's amazing. The orchestra backing her really swings, too! "Let's Fall in Love" will leave you breathless.

"Let's Fall in Love" is currently available exclusively through Barnes & Noble, in stores and on the Web. Sample clips may be heard at [music.barnesandnoble.com/search/product.asp?userId=U04kWDoAtk&cds2Pid=5533&ean=603777800325](http://music.barnesandnoble.com/search/product.asp?userId=U04kWDoAtk&cds2Pid=5533&ean=603777800325)



## RACHEL YORK, LET'S FALL IN LOVE REVIEW



### Average Ratings from 1 review

Value for money	10/10
Overall value	10/10
Recommended	100%

[Write Review](#)

Courtesy of  
jnnpub.jnargi

### Good Points:

Great song list of romantic standards, wonderful vocals by actress/singer Rachel York, dynamite arrangements and swinging band.

### Bad Points:

None

### General Comments:

CD Review: "Let's Fall in Love" by Rachel York  
Available exclusively through Barnes and Noble

[Overview](#) [Reviews](#) [Resources](#)

Review of Rachel York, Let's Fall in Love by jnnpub.jnargi

On 20th Jan 2005

### User Ratings

Other Artists Listed To: Not Listed

Value for money	10/10
Overall rating	10/10
Recommended	100%

### Track List:

My House	Sooner or Later
Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love)	The Best Is Yet to Come
My Funny Valentine	Someone to Watch Over Me
All the Things You Are	Time after Time
Fly Me to the Moon	Too Good to Be True
My One and Only Love	I Love How You Love Me

If you think you've heard these songs before, think again!

"Let's Fall in Love" is a brilliant entrée into the solo recording world for Rachel York. This beautiful and jazzy retro CD is a real breakout for the gifted Broadway, film and television actress/singer. Known for her stage roles Norma Cassidy in "Victor/Victoria" and Lili Vanessi in "Kiss Me, Kate," as well as playing Lucille Ball in the CBS biopic "Lucy," Rachel sets herself free on this CD, singing from her own heart, without character restraints. A score of wonderful standard tunes shows off her magnificent, pure, silky-smooth and richly textured voice that has hints of Ella Fitzgerald, Rosemary Clooney, Peggy Lee, and Barbra Streisand in it. Yet Rachel interprets a song like no other performer I've ever heard. Every time you listen to her sing, it's like hearing a song for the first time. She adds unexpected twists of emotion to her vocals that bring new meaning to old standards. She has a distinct, deliciously sultry, honest and uninhibited quality that is absolutely penetrating. On this CD Rachel York has brought back the Big Band sound with her own special contemporary flair. There's humor in "My House," sass in "Let's Do It," longing in "My Funny Valentine," seduction in "Sooner or Later," and love in every single note. If you don't melt when you hear this incredibly talented woman sing, you need serious medical attention. She's amazing. The orchestra backing her really swings, too! "Let's Fall in Love" will leave you breathless.





## CD Review: Rachel York - Let's Fall in Love

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March 11, 2005 - by [Jose' M. Valdez](#)

### Rachel York **Let's Fall In Love**

Rachel York, Vocals

Arrangements by: Tim Davies

Executive Producers: Tor Hyams and  
Steven Scott

Hylo HP214-80032

[www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)



"Come on-a  
My house,  
My house  
I'm-a gonn-a give you candy."



So swings Rachel York at the opening of her new recording, **Let's Fall In Love**. And once she opens the door to her house, I dare any listener not to do just that.

Supported by a group of musicians that include trumpets, trombones, violins, drums, cellos along with piano, bass, oboe, English horn, clarinet, flutes and saxophone, Ms. York makes it very clear why she is gift to the musical theatre. Ms York debuted on Broadway as a replacement in LES MIZ; she then went on to CITY OF ANGELES, VICTOR/VICTORIA, THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL, SLY FOX and is soon to open in Aherns and Flaherty's DESSA ROSE at Lincoln Center. She also starred in London as Kate/Lilli Vanessi in KISS ME, KATE, which was filmed and is available on DVD.

Ms. York is somewhat reminiscent of Rosemary Clooney on her version of Clooney's recording hit from 1951, "Come On-A My House." Written on a lark by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright William Saroyan, and his cousin, Ross Bagdasarian, this silly song was interpolated into Saroyan's off-Broadway play, SON. At the urging of Mitch Miller, Clooney recorded it against her instincts, and had her first hit recording. Ms. York makes this song her own and makes it sound fresh and fun all over again.

On "Let's Do It" she shares solo lines with trumpeter Ron King, and each is a knock-out. Rodgers' and Hart's "My Funny Valentine" is smoothly and sincerely performed. Ms. York's voice is like a glass of warm red wine; a bouquet of sounds that range from high notes to low vibrato that envelops the listener. "All The Things You Are" is given a full jazz arrangement, and starts with Ms. York singing the first refrain accompanied by Eli Brueggemann on the piano, then she moves to the verse and the bass and drums join in. Beginning with the second chorus of the refrain, the group expands and a mellow swing takes over but gradually builds to a swinging big band sound on this Kern and Hammerstein classic.

Sondheim is surprisingly represented by "Sooner or Later" from the film DICK TRACY, which avoids the ubiquitous songs vocalists often include to represent the musical theatre's living legend. Ms. York and her producers were intelligent enough to load the recording with songs from the Great American Songbook. One song, "Too Good To Be True," written by producer Tor Hyams is so well written and performed that it fits smoothly among the songs of the Gershwins, Cahn and Styne, Coleman and Leigh and the aforementioned.

Rachel York's **Let's Fall In Love** is in limited distribution and only available from Barnes and Noble. Waste no time seeking it out. It is a fine recording of great songs by a superb performer. Believe me, you're gonna want that candy.



**BARNES & NOBLE**   
HAPPY HOLIDAYS



## Reviews

### Barnes & Noble

Julie Silver, a Boston-born folk singer, has a laid-back voice that's equally at home in Hebrew and English, delivering both in an easy groove that at times recalls Carly Simon. On the title track to this holiday collection especially, Silver finds an earthy, mellow way to liven up a festival that's not exactly known for stirring songs. Delivering the holiday's one chestnut, "Ma'Oz Tsur / Rock of Ages," Silver turns to some '60s-style folk revival, with passionate new lyrics of her own that charge listeners to make a difference in the world around them with "a peaceful revolution." "Tired of battles fierce and long, we yearn for resolution." It's a message that's in keeping with Chanukah's revolutionary roots -- and one that's welcome in any season. If there's any doubt as to where Silver's sympathies lie, she ends this uplifting set with a standard from another tradition, "This Little Light of Mine." Delivered in a folksy reggae lilt, it's an engaging sing-along for the whole family, the kind that could start a few traditions on its own. *Mark Schwartz*



## Julie Silver Shines with New Holiday CD

PACIFIC PALISADES Calif. — Nationally beloved contemporary Jewish composer, Julie Silver, will perform a Chanukah concert for the entire family on December 3rd at 5PM at Temple Ahavat Shalom in Northridge, California.

Julie Silver is a shining star in contemporary Jewish music and beyond, with an eclectic recorded catalog that also embraces secular folk-rock, children's music, and her newest CD, the Barnes & Noble exclusive *It's Chanukah Time*, hit stores nationwide Oct. 31.

*It's Chanukah Time*, Julie's Barnes & Noble CD is the first Jewish CD produced exclusively for the bookstore chain, which has offered its own Christmas CDs for several years by artists such as Joan Osborne and Lou Rawls. *It's Chanukah Time* is now available in Barnes & Noble bookstores nationwide, and Julie will be performing a ten-city tour throughout the holiday season. Her only Los Angeles area Barnes and Noble performance will be at The Grove on December 2 at 2PM.

Julie's children's CD, *For Love to Grow*, was released in spring 2006 and quickly honored as a Parents' Choice Blue Ribbon Recommended work. The honor is especially sweet for Julie, who



Julie Silver

recorded the CD of songs written by her beloved childhood music teacher, the well-known and prolific writer Aline Shader.

Previously Julie released her secular CD, *Notes from Montana*, featuring a duet with the Academy Award-winning actress Helen Hunt—who also figures in an interesting career development for Julie. Hunt wrote, directed and stars in the upcoming film, *Then She Found Me*, which also stars Bette Midler. Julie appears in a pivotal scene in the film with Midler, slated for a

2007 release.

Julie has just received her first celebrity artist endorsement from Taylor Guitars, which she has played for ten years. She believes that the simultaneous milestones of turning 40 and welcoming her daughter Sarah have recharged her life, generating much of the positive energy and creativity that have made her one of the brightest stars in today's Jewish music—and placed her on the edge of even broader stardom.

To learn more about Julie

Silver, including a schedule of her upcoming appearances please visit her website at [www.juliesilver.com](http://www.juliesilver.com)

or contact her booking representative, Golden Land Concerts, at 212-683-7816.

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## Reviews

### Barnes & Noble

This truly wide-ranging selection of Chanukah-inspired songs draws from some of the best Jewish music of recent vintage. There's indeed something for everyone: alternative rock (the Leevees and Barenaked Ladies), big band swing (Kenny Ellis), Sephardic folk songs (Judy Frankel and Alisa Fineman), choral melodies (Sue Fink's Angel City Chorale), and even a nugget from everyone's favorite philo-Semite, Woody Guthrie. And anyone interested in the somewhat drippy Judaic folksongs familiar from summer camp will find that, too. The mood runs the gamut, from the joy of gift giving (and receiving) amid cozy firelight and food to reverent retellings of the martial story of Judah Maccabee -- Peter Himmelman and David Broza are especially true to the Torah's imperative to "light up the world" with righteous actions, a poignant reminder during a season of rampant consumerism. Thoughtfully complete with contact information for many of the artists, this *Chanukah Celebration* promises to be just the beginning of an engagement with Jewish song for the whole family. *Mark Schwartz*





**BARNES & NOBLE**  
BOOKSELLERS

### **Reviews**

#### **Barnes & Noble**

Classic Chanukah songs are given rock 'n' roll makeovers by an excited group of studio musicians on a set that's liable to get kids dancing for eight nights straight. Guitars, Hammond organs, and drums are set to songs in Hebrew and English, the perfect vehicle for capturing children's attention through the Festival of Lights. While this gang's version of the Woody Guthrie song "Happy Joyous Chanukah" has nothing on the Klezmatics' recording, their spirited "Dreidel Song," set to a galloping Johnny Cash beat, is a keeper. *Mark Schwartz*

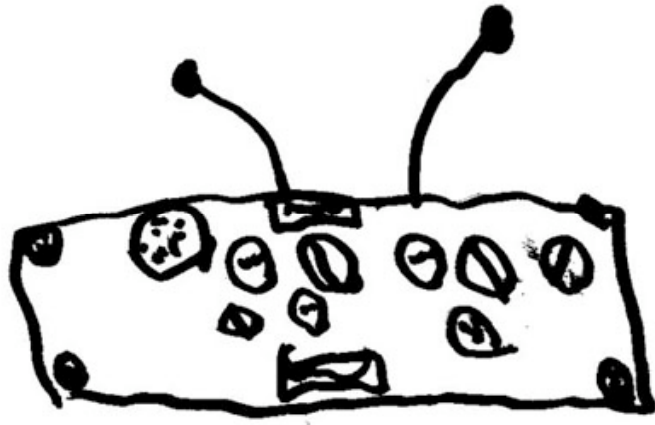


In this day of hyphenates, Tor Hyams might just win the prize. Get this: He's a singer/ songwriter/jazz musician/web guru entrepreneur/author/film and television composer/television personality. Whew! Hyam's excellent multimedia adventure began in the early 90s when he supported his music career as an Internet consultant for several top online companies. He then created his own website, [www.fierce.com](http://www.fierce.com), with his cousin, David Scharff. The site, which irreverently reviewed other websites, was a smash success in the online community, and Hyams and Scharff wrote a book about it (*Fierce.com*, published by Four Walls Eight Windows).

While Hyams continued to write, play and record his original music on the New York scene, one of his songs was selected to be used in an episode of the hit television show "Homicide," and a new line of work opened up for him -- film and television composing. Transplanting himself to Los Angeles, Hyams began to compose for such independent films as *The Substitute 3*, *The Minus Man*, *Niagara Niagara* and others. He also got a gig as a television commentator for CBS's "The Wild Web" and for "The Rosie O'Donnell Show."

But wait, there's more. As Hyam's first love was writing and performing his own songs, he made sure that everything that he had accomplished so far would lead back to that main goal. As an artist who had always embraced the Internet, Hyams turned to it for help. Earlier this year, Hyams became the first musical artist to fully fund the recording of an album online. Through [www.idealive.com](http://www.idealive.com), Hyams was able to find investors willing to back him. With the money he raised, he recorded an album, *Eye to Eye*, produced by Jeffrey Wood at Fantasy Studios in Berkeley, California, featuring eleven of Hyam's well-crafted, punchy pop/rock songs. He hopes to continue to use the Internet to market and distribute the album, first with his own website, [www.tor.net](http://www.tor.net), and then, hopefully, with the support of "the right label."

Hyams has complete faith in the Internet and what it can do for an independent artist. "For a lot of people just getting into the Internet, it might feel funny. But for me, it is home," he says. "When I go online, I finally feel like I know what is going on. I know who to talk to. I know where to put stuff to get some kind of buzz going. Without the Internet, I don't think I would have achieved everything that I have so far. It's been everything to me." His advice for other independent artists is "to saturate every single venue that you don't have to pay for, where someone has opened the door for artists, whether it's IUMA, icast, riffage, UBL, whatever. Put your name up there, upload your photo and some audio. Use the Internet as your playground and kick butt."



Spare the Rock, Spoil the Child



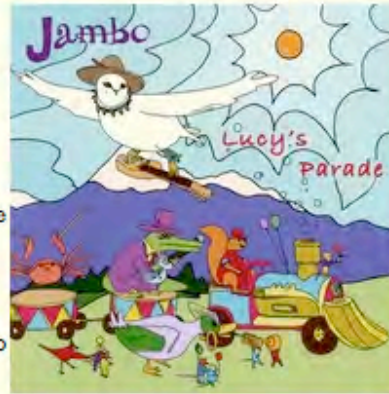
I didn't know anything from Jambo before, but enjoyed the set a lot – fun straight-up poppy stuff.

(Incidentally, yes, the same guy is playing keyboard for both Jambo and the Bummkins, and he's in neither band. It's Tor Hyams, who produced AKL and Kidzapalooza, as well as Jambo's new album.)

# HILLTOWN FAMILIES

## JAMBO

We then saw Jambo. I hadn't heard anything by this band – led by Steve Pierson and inspired by his adorable daughter, who is the subject of their best song, "Lucy's Parade" – but his rootsy rock (with a hint of blues) is catchy and instantly accessible. Maybe more than most, this is a band – they bounce stuff off of each other and are tight without being robotic. Their new record is produced by Tor Hyams, who also booked the festival (and Kidzapalooza) and sat in on keyboards with several bands; he knows a good band when he hears it. Jambo is one.





# synthesis



*Independent, uncompromising, optimistic. Tor Hyams, the first artist to be funded exclusively by online investors, has had his share of near misses whilst flirting with success. Although an accomplished film and TV composer, online marketing consultant, and published writer, his true passion lies in music. Hyams made some waves upon releasing Eye to Eye, his third and most recent album, and has done so without the aid of a major label, but the seas of the music industry are choppy to say the least*



salon.com

...One such project comes from Tor Hyams, a veteran jazz-funk musician with a handful of self-produced albums under his belt. He's trying to raise a modest sum to produce his next album. On the Idealive site, you can read about his background, listen to his previous work and peruse his prospectus. Then, if you are an accredited investor -- the Securities and Exchange Commission mandates that to participate in high-risk investments you must be worth more than \$1 million, or boast a yearly income of \$200,000 or more -- who has registered with the site, you can buy shares in the project. If the album is successful, you'll reap some of the rewards.

Why did Hyams choose this route rather than go to a record label for funding? The record industry, he says, isn't interested in anything with a real artistic sensibility: "They just say, 'We need another Hootie.' It's antithetical to creating art." After years of frustration and disillusionment, he was thrilled to come across Idealive.



Tor • Eye To Eye • self-released • Tor is a singer-songwriter who divides his time between NYC and LA. His music is radio-friendly pop rock with an emphasis on catchy hooks and kick-ass vocals. Tor plays all the keys on this album and handles all the vocal duties. The rest is played by other musicians (which includes Counting Crows drummer Steve Bowman). Comparisons could be made to such artists as Billy Joel, Elvis Costello (pre Burt Bacharach material), Too Much Joy and numerous others. But Tor's songs come together in a unique way that sets him apart. The 11-track album features mostly mid-tempo, super melodic songs with a couple slower tunes that will warm your heart. (Visit [tor.net](http://tor.net) to buy it)



When not contributing music to film soundtracks and television programs, Tor Hyams creates his own brand of energetic folk rock that is both lyrically inspired and deserving of his own spot on VH1's Storytellers.

-Jon P.



Idealive has secured financing for its first musician, Tor Hyams, a musician/composer who plans to use the money raised from five private investors to record, manufacture and promote a CD.

In a way, that's a ton of money. PC technology and competition among pressing plants means that a perfectly professional CD release may be produced and distributed for well under \$10,000.



Tor is a songwriter/performer from New York who plays a gentle blend of folk lounge rock, occasionally tinged with elements of jazz. Musically the songs had the feel of early Billy Joel meeting Ben Folds Five...Strong in structure and cool in delivery, the material was easy on the ears..." --Bernard Baur, Music Connection