

The majority of the article below was written by Michael Guthrie. I've added excerpts, where I thought appropriate annotated from *An Interview with Michael Guthrie* By Good News! K.L.O.D Net radio and other material I found on the internet including reviews about his great album "Conscious Collective"

doc_Babad

PS

If there's an artist you like and would like more about send me a letter send it by eMail and I'll do what I can.

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Michael Guthrie – Thoughts about Me [www.moorafa.com]

By Michael Guthrie and Harry {doc} Babad

Why Moorafa - [See the article's end]

Although I'm not related to Woody as far as I know, I was drawn to his music in High School when I started playing the guitar in the 10th grade. Before high school I attended Woodrow Wilson Jr. High in Pasadena, California. After high school, I attended Pasadena City College where I studied Sign Art for two years (1966-1968) under the master sign-writer Francis Baker. So Woody and I do have a few things in common. My dad was also born in Oklahoma.



Like many musicians, I was introduced to music by a friend. Tom Holt and I grew up together and he showed me my first melody on the guitar, "Ghost Riders In The Sky". I have been playing and learning songs from other people ever since. I have even taken lessons on bass and guitar.

In 12th grade I took Flamenco Guitar lessons and was really drawn to the Spanish Arabic roots mode. Something about the interval, maybe the age of the music, with so much expression

and feeling. Later I talked myself into believing I shouldn't play the music of the Guitano's of Southern Spain because I was a LA area white boy. I did learn a lot of technique though which helps me play other forms of music, and I draw from the influence of Flamenco.

In 1968 I got my second draft notice and a job offer in Aspen at the same time. I thought the job sounded better and so I moved to Colorado to paint signs for "The Abominable Sign Man" (Dick Anderson). I worked there 3 months and then told him I had been dodging the draft for 2 years. When I went to work the next day he fired me. However, not before I learned a few tunes from the musicians living in "The Dorm", a haven for ski bums.

I moved back to Pasadena and met Darelyn Farnham, who I later married. We decided I was probably going to get caught after my 3rd notice came so we made plans to immigrate to Canada through the underground railroad the Quakers had set up. A lot of my family disowned me at the time and many of my friends were either in Nam or had come back messed up (including my brother). I don't kill people for rich politicians or greedy French capitalists. I was, and still am, firm in my commitment.

In 1971, Darelyn and I got married in Seattle and immigrated to Canada to start a new life in a country which, back then, supported draft resistors from all countries. We had \$1,000.00 and a '59 Ford pick-up with a camper shell I had built for the trip. British Columbia was like Heaven to us. We were free to find our new home somewhere in the vast mountain terrain of God's country. We traveled with a friend of mine and camped out, singing and playing guitars till all hours of the night. After camping around BC for 4 months, Darelyn and I settled in Kaslo, BC, 200 miles north of Spokane, WA.

Darelyn was pregnant by then and we met a miner who let us squat on his mining claim and build a cabin. When the Mounted Police found out they kicked us off so we moved into an unfinished house I had helped a guy build that summer. It was a rough winter but we met other refugees from the city who helped us get by. Our daughter Joli was born in the middle of winter. I wrote my song "Oil Lamp and an Old Wood Stove" about her birth which was at home, the good old fashioned way.

In the spring, we were offered a sweet deal on 1 acre of land. We set up a camp and I started building a cabin out of recycled lumber I got from a house a man paid me to tear down. I split my own shakes and dug a well. We felt like real pioneers, loving

every minute of it. At the time I didn't think I would ever come back to the USA.

The next year some folks we knew had a small Cafe in town they didn't want to run any more so they offered us a deal where they carried the paper with no down payment so we bought the building and business for \$11,000.00. We called our new venture "The Village Green Cafe". We soon became the hub of the counter culture and started having folk musicians from across Canada play there. Rika Rubsatt, Chris Rawlings, Kenn Hamm, Bruce Cockburn even stopped by one day and played a lunch for some lucky folks.

K.L.O.D Radio -Do you miss the "magic" of the seventies I sure do? I mean all this exploration in art, music and life

I can't say enough about that magic and how much growth I went through in Kaslo with my source of strength, Dare Guthrie, we started the Village Green Cafe / Coffee House and everything seemed to come our way! It was a small organic setting of rough wood and good food, named because it was a community meeting place and eventually the birth place of the Langham project. I miss those days and my song Green Tree is about The Green. I also miss that type of atmosphere and I try, *when I can*, to do a cyber version of it. We had local and touring acts, Kenn Hamm, Danny Greenspoon, Chris Rollings, Bruce Cockburn even played for his lunch one day.

In 1974, we started "The Langham Cultural Society" which is still going today. The Langham Theatre is a popular venue for touring musicians. I will play my 2nd concert there on April 29th, 2006.

K.L.O.D - saved an historical building and turned it into an art center - tell us about that?

The Langham Is a three story building built in 1896 and I conceived of forming a society to purchase and restore it. It was a monumental task and a lot of people gave their time and money to make it happen. See my web site Langham page for more of my history on it. I'm a commercial artist and my music is an art outlet for relieving strong feelings.

Through the Village Green Cafe and The Langham, I met a lot of musicians and was inspired by their songwriting. I started to write songs as a result of their influence.

Darelyn and I always played folk music for the love of it and we both played in bands and we even did some paid gigs while we were there. I also learned to play fiddle, mandolin and electric bass while living in Kaslo. To this day there are a lot of musicians living up there in the mountains. Some of the folks we played with still live there and when I visit there we get together and play music.

I lived in Kaslo until 1981 when I moved back to the LA area and went to work with a sign painter I'd worked with prior to moving to Canada. I ended up buying a sign shop in Burbank and had a very good business there until 1989 when I moved to Seattle, WA. I had to get back to the NW.

As the hand lettering skills were replaced with computers I started learning to do other forms of commercial art, like decorative painting and 3 dimensional work building props as design elements. I now work at Dillon Works in the paint shop painting all kinds of finishes from pictorial to high tech automotive type paint jobs on 3 dimensional props they make for commercial installations. Check out dillonworks.com.

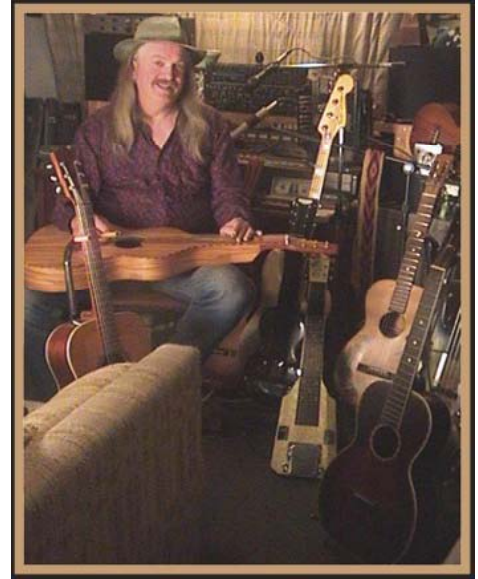
I have mostly made my living as a commercial artist and have never tried to make a living as a musician. When you have as many years into a craft as I do it's hard to let it go and besides this way I get to play the kind of music I want to play and play it when I want to. I started playing music before I started painting.

I remember someone asking me once if I ever wanted to be a real musician. I wasn't quite sure what to say, thinking about all the starving musicians who have tried to make their living at it. Does this mean if you try to make a living playing music and you starve or live off your friends you're not a real musician? Was the first musician on the planet a real musician? Do you suppose the ladies paid Pan to play his flute? Are mothers who raise kids real mothers if they don't get a paycheck?

Our society has bowed down to the almighty dollar to the point where people will walk on their brothers back to get it. The music industry is one of the best examples of how much people are willing to use each other and abuse each other to make a buck. You only need to read "This Business Of Music" to find out how insane the music industry is. However as many of you know this sort of abuse runs rampant in all fields of work. All the

more reason to applaud those who do their work with integrity and help others along the way by giving back to the whole from which they taken what they need.

About 5 years ago I started getting out and playing the songs I wrote because I wanted to see if they had meaning to other people. The more I did the more I realized how much better I felt. I had something to say and this was a good way to express myself. For me music is art. I think the goal of an artist is to provoke thought in other people, whether you make them angry or sooth their soul in peaceful bliss. There is no formula for art. Even the art historians have a hard time defining what art is. I know that playing music has been very healing for me and I have had many people thank me and tell me that my songs made them think.



K.L.O.D - Let's get back to your music, you have varied influences, but personally I prefer your blues music. Do you also have a favorite?

Blues is my favorite and mostly what I'm into now, I like playing bass in blues bands and I like to think my acoustic stuff I'm doing is blues based, I'm writing lyrics bitching about my govt.

K.L.O.D - You just returned from performing, how was the gig?

Very good, I played Burn Baby Burn for Canada and 2 of my political songs, had a good time!

K.L.O.D - sounds like it! Is there a good network for independent artists in the Seattle area?

Yes a friend, I used to play with Holley Figueroa, who started *Indie Girl* and there are lots of small clubs for folks to do their thing. I just joined Victory music and

they have a great web site and database for acoustic musicians *They also share where the gigs and open mikes are to be found.* That is so rare too find good venues in far too many areas.

I regularly perform at Seattle area Coffee Houses like: El Diablo, Pegasus, Hotwire, Third Place Books, P and G Speakeasy Cafe etc. I have recently performed at: Northwest Folklife Festival, The Langham Theatre, KBCS 91.3 FM Radio, KMUN FM, KPSU AM, The Troll Radio Review (a live KMUN radio broadcast from The River Theater in Astoria , Oregon), The Tumbleweed Music Festival, The Yakima Folklife Festival, Puget Sound Songwriters Concert Series, The Lakewood International Festival, The Pike Market Buskers Festival, The Cranberrian Fair and the Hopvine Songwriters Showcase.



Michael with Deb Seymour and Michael Carlos

K.L.O.D - Let's talk about your current CD [Conscious Collective - <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/guthrie>, It's a tribute to your talent and determination that you laid all the tracks and played all the instruments yourself. How long did it take you?

I'm almost embarrassed to say it took me about 8 years in my spare time, so some of the tunes I don't even know how to play anymore 8-) ... The CD is about protest, a little love and my personal experiences

Conscious Collective Reviews

doc_Babad says *these reviews are great, even if I didn't write them*. But having played the album a number of times or more, I do agree!

"Michael Guthrie's CD *Conscious Collective* has everything a music aficionado would want. The tunes carry you from blues to rock to jazz. You heard "The parts are greater than the whole" it applies in this case! The thoughtful lyrics demonstrate Michael's social involvement and sharp intellect... For an example listen to "Military Coup" on the jukebox! Esthetically pleasing packaging as well. What more could I say about it? A 21st century version of the 60's? Yes! At the risk of sounding clichéd, I dare say the tracks just keeps you listening 'til the end. The varied sound texturing coupled with that firm unwavering voice just nails every track right on! Like a master carpenter driving a nail with one blow! I give this CD a strong 4 1/2 microphones" Claude Gagne of K.L.O.D. Music eZine

..... This is Michael's debut release and the songs were written over a span of 23 years. He has a relaxed, folksy style that incorporates jazz and blues into the mix and his lyrics run from playful to social to deeply personal. Most of the lyrics are clever and interesting with unique thoughts and phrasings. "Green Tree" is mildly vacuous but it is the exception. Michael is a very talented musician playing acoustic and electric guitars, fretless and fretted electric bass, lap steels, synthesizers. ..."

.... Anita LaFranchi, Editor of Victory Music also noted: "This Cd is an exciting compilation of original music. One of my favorites, because it is named for me, is "Anita's Waltz". When I imagine the song, I see a cliff in England, or Scotland (much like Monet's "Cliff" painting) with a castle on the top of the cliff, and in the castle is a ballroom, with dancers waltzing. Another of my personal favorite tunes is "Song to Dare", Dare was Mikes Ex-Wife, who died of cancer in 1993. This song literally brings me to tears. "Military Coup", is an expression of Mike's frustration with our government's handling of foreign affairs. One more song that I want to make a comment on is "Green Tree". This is a whimsical tune about a tree that was cut down for no good reason. I was very sad when I first heard this song, but I want you to know that the tree grew back."

James Rodgers and Anita LaFranchi - Victory Music - "The Victory Review Acoustic Music Magazine"

In conclusion Michael notes: I sometimes think, what if my friend Tom hadn't showed me "Ghost Riders in the Sky". Yes, maybe I would have learned from someone else, but you can't under estimate the power of a single act.

PS

Why Moorafa: The word moorafa comes from a tune on my CD titled Moorafa. I started writing the tune on a drum module and had to name the composition so I made up the name "Moor" (from the word Moorish) and "afa" from the word Africa. Moorafa is a 6/8 time instrumental, syncopated. I wrote it, back in the early 90's, in response to the war in former Yugoslavia.