

The COCONUT TELEGRAPH

MARGARITAVILLE JAN-FEB 1992

VOLUME 8, NO. 1

Q & A

By Steve Morse
Boston Globe Staff

Q. On your recent live album, you say, "I've never won an award for any music that I've written, but I don't care when I have fans like the Parrot Heads."

A. Yeah, I didn't see my name come out of any envelopes this

year either...But awards are really sort of meaningless to me, especially after Milli Vanilli gets one for not singing. And what are they for? The industry or the artist? Of course, we'd all like adulation, but I get it every night from the Parrot Heads.

Q. Can you pinpoint exactly where the Parrot Head phenomenon started?

A. I know exactly where it started. Timothy Schmidt [Eagles bass player] was in the band, and we were playing a venue outside

They're like Parrot Heads!" He yelled that to me in the middle of a song. So I immediately took the term and threw it out over the microphone. And the people identified themselves with the term from the get-go.

Q. When was that?

A. It was six or seven years ago. That's when it really started to build. I mean, we were doing good business until then, but after that, it took off. And now, on the road this year [Outpost Tour '91], I read articles about how hor-

JIMMY BUFFETT IS A FREE-WHEELING, CARIBBEAN-STOKED HEDONIST ON STAGE, BUT QUITE ELUSIVE OFF IT. HE GRANTS FEW INTERVIEWS, PREFERRING TO SPEND HIS PRIVATE TIME BOATING, FLYFISHING, FLYING HIS TWIN-ENGINE SEAPLANE, AND GENERALLY FURTHERING HIS KEY WEST MYSTIQUE.

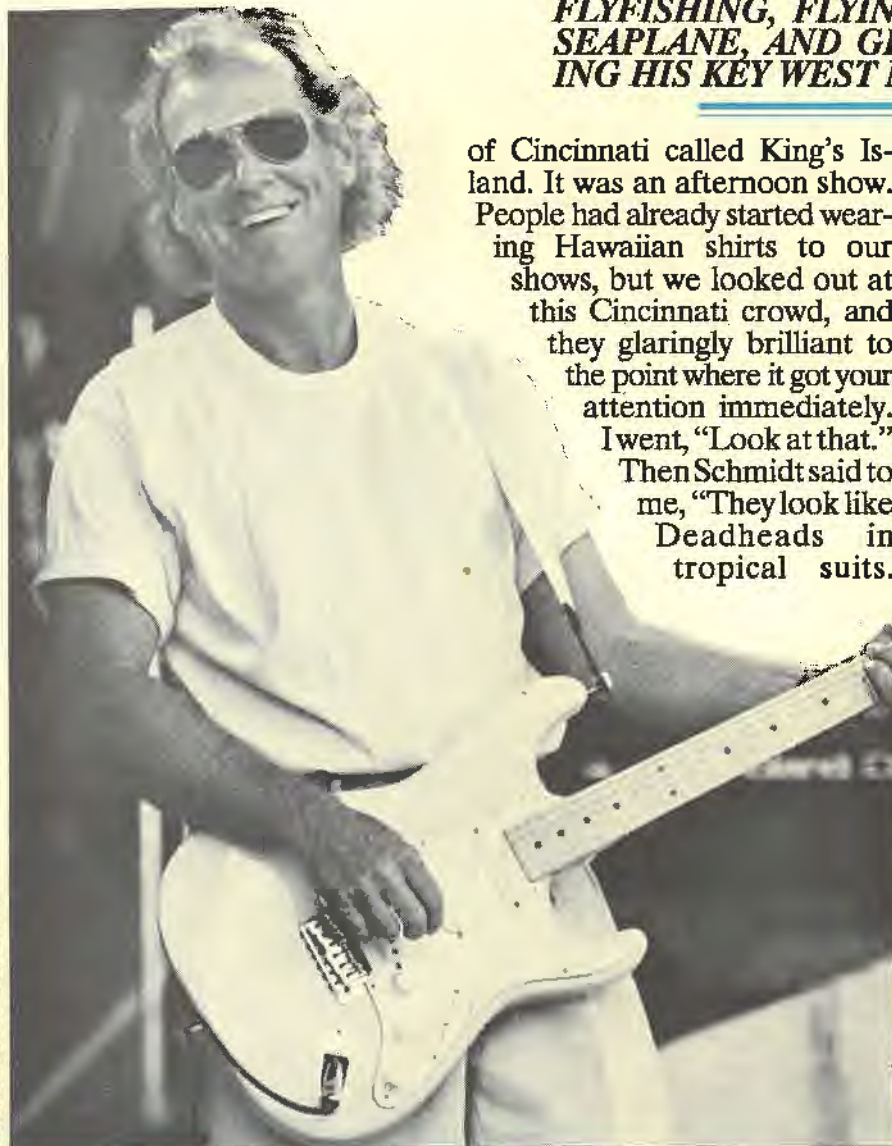


Photo: David DeNoma

of Cincinnati called King's Island. It was an afternoon show. People had already started wearing Hawaiian shirts to our shows, but we looked out at this Cincinnati crowd, and they glaringly brilliant to the point where it got your attention immediately.

I went, "Look at that."

Then Schmidt said to me, "They look like Deadheads in tropical suits.

rible the economy is, and I go, "Really? You couldn't tell that from here." But honestly, it gives me a great deal of satisfaction, because we work really hard at this.

Q. A lot of acts today don't translate well in a concert setting. Why is it that your shows are so popular?

A. The basic thing is that I'm an entertainer. I always have been. I started as a saloon singer, and I'm not out there trying to save the world through my music. I'm just there to give people a couple hours of relief from world problems, which historically takes you back to the minstrels. It's a really simple thing for me to be in that category. I'm not trying to do anything else. As for my politics, or my passions for the environment, I do them own my own. I don't try to take my audience with me. I don't use my music as a vehicle.

Q. Why aren't there more true entertainers around?

A. The way the music business is structured today, they want you

to have a hit record or a hit video. They don't really encourage live talent. My theory is that you don't have a lot of good live performers. So who do people fall back on? The James Taylors, the Jimmy Buffetts, the Bonnie Raitts, the people who give them a show. And the Grateful Dead. People go where they can get it. We happen to be, fortunately, one place where they know they can.

Q. Aren't there still a few people giving you trouble because of songs like 'Why Don't We Get Drunk'?

A. Sure. But heck, I think I'm the bastion of sanity these days. God almighty, we got people chopping up bodies and Pee Wee Herman getting arrested, so the line, "Why don't we get drunk and screw" is nothing these days. I think we're a bastion of sanity. Family entertainment at its best. Yeah, I go back to the days when that song was very risqué, but it's lightweight now.

Q. Another of your songs, 'Margaritaville', is all over classic-hits radio. That genre has certainly been good to you. Looking back on that song, have your feelings changed toward it at all?

A. The first thing that comes to mind is that I feel really lucky about it. For some reason, I was lucky enough to get my thumb on the pulse beat of what was happening to people. You know, I was selling escapism back in 1977, and that hasn't changed much. The thing I'm selling is something I believe in—that it's essential for people to get away. I wrote that song in about five minutes and had no idea it would be a lasting hit.

Q. Tell me about the record label you're planning to start.

A. It's Margaritaville Records, and I'm hoping to get it going later this year. I want to run it like the old labels; Stax, Volt and Specialty. I want bands that are lyrically oriented, and I won't sign a band that's not a live performer. Those may be the two kisses of death in this day and age of Top 40 radio, but I'm going to give it a shot. God help the world. Jimmy's in the music business.



WHY CINCINNATI?

As the ball slowly descends the flagpole in Times Square welcoming the New Year, Parrot Heads across the country begin making plans for the annual Jimmy Buffett summer tour. Despite threats to the contrary, it appears that Jimmy will once again be living out of his suitcase this summer. Already Margaritaville is being inundated with concert date requests [on the toll-free line too, c'mon guys, give us a break].

One sure stop on the tour will be the home of Skyline Chili; Cincinnati, OH. In fact, Cincinnati was good for three stops on 1991's OUTPOST tour. Why Cincinnati?

Patricia Smith, of the *Boston Globe* wondered the same thing:

"People in Key West have grown used to the sun...they squint a lot, slather on the sunblock, sip their frosty drinks and suffer on.

And then there's Ohio. The folks here squint a lot too, usually while trying to figure out why they are in Ohio.

'Cincinnati is a very conservative city,' says Bill Wills, program director of WLW, the city's top adult contemporary radio station. 'It's a haven for young Republicans. These folks have to let their hair down somehow and get loose. Buffett's hits in the 70's came along just about the time they were realizing that real rebellion just wasn't in the cards.'

As huge crowds discover, if you could wrap it in rolling paper, light it up and take a drag or two, Jimmy Buffett's music would be the ideal high--quick, consuming and utterly temporary. It makes no attempt to reflect life as we know it. He sings of tequila-drenched drifters, lounge lizards, whiskey-wizened sailors, middle-aged pirates and other societal rebels. Buffett is the part of us who wants to turn around in traffic and head for the beach...and tell the boss what to do with this job.

'Listening to Jimmy is like being pulled into the middle of a *Twilight Zone* episode where you take another exit on the expressway and wind up in a place with leggy

blondes, thatched huts and bottomless daiquiris,' says Mark Danfers, an avowed Parrot Head. Those of us who grew up with *Easy Rider* knew we could never just hop on a motorcycle in search of America. But we dreamed about it. With Jimmy, we know we can still be easy riders. *Real easy.*'

Why risk everything when you can just close your eyes, push the play button and be whisked off to the temporary nirvana of Margaritaville? It's not dropping out completely - it's more like waiting until the world has turned its back, then treating it to a quiet, but sufficiently juicy raspberry.

'His concerts here in Cincinnati are like a zoo,' said Wills. 'If he's here for three nights, some people will go all three nights, climbing out of their BMW's in their goofy outfits, with their parrot heads, huge inflatable palm trees or shark fins attached to their heads. Then the next morning they put on suits and go to their offices at Proctor & Gamble.

Buffett is what they'd all like to be - a middle-aged, perpetually bronzed rebel who's managed to buck the system while making it work for him."

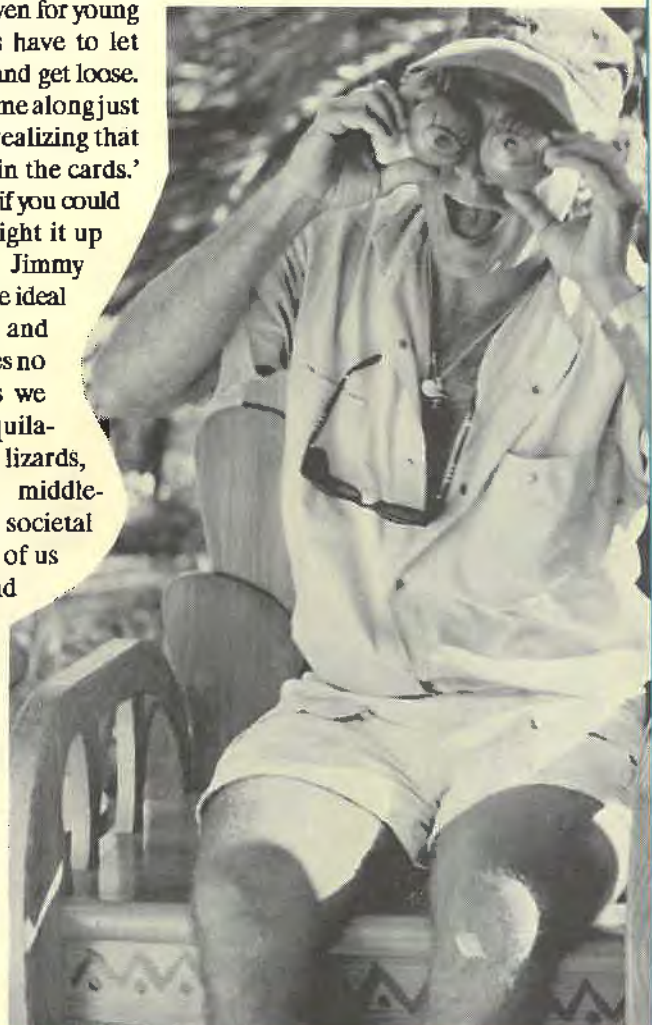


Photo: Jean Pagliuso

ONE WORLD

TWO KEY WEST MUSIC VETERANS ARE NOW ONE WORLD. KEITH RICKS AND BOB BOYD HAVE MERGED TALENTS AND MUSICAL GENRES IN CREATING THE TIGHT KNIT TROUPE THAT SUPPLIES SOME OF THE BEST SOUNDS IN THE KEYS.

THE GLOBAL GOALS OF ONE WORLD

By Gerry Wood

Although they formed One World in 1990 and also performed with other popular reggae groups, Ricks and Boyd have launched plans to make 1992 the breakout year for One World. The strategy includes focusing on the act's evolving style, expanding its audience and venues, and releasing an album of brilliant new songs. One World's global game plan is to take island music to the continents.

One World's music is a conch gumbo with flavors of soca, calypso, and reggae. No strangers to African music, rock'n'roll, jazz, and rhythm and blues, Ricks and Boyd are two of the most eclectic performers in the talent cauldron of Key West. The varied styles come together convincingly whether they perform the hits of other acts or their own powerful compositions.

Ricks is a fluid and potent vocalist who adds a powerful and melodic electric bass background to the band. Boyd, a stylish keyboard player, is a master of the synthesizer, effectively contributing instrumental sounds ranging from marimba to strings, trumpets, and a variety of drums. Although the bright and bouncy sounds suggest such influences as Bob Marley, Harry Belafonte, Arrow, and UB40, One World has forged a distinctive and unique style of its own.

Ricks came to Key West seven years ago from Boston where he worked in computer control inventory, played clubs at night, and attended the nationally respected music institution Berklee College. Born in Bermuda, he lived in several U.S. cities as his Marine Corps father moved from base to base. The Motown Sound, the Beatles, James Brown, and the jazz greats were among his early influences. The uninhibited gospel singing in Southern Baptist churches also inspired him. "I learned from them to sing with the whole body and how to use movement," Ricks recalls.

Boyd came to Key West six years ago after studying music at Ithaca College and touring with rock'n'roll bands in his hometown, Rochester, NY. "I decided it was just too bloody cold where I was living so I put a band together with the goal of making it to Florida. After 15 months we made it all the way to Key West." A multi-talented musician, he was influenced by a variety of music and musicians, including his father, who played in and conducted several big bands. On arriving in Key West, a musician gave him two reggae cassettes and changed his world: "I started doing island music and it really caught hold of me. When Keith and I started playing soca music, it really felt at home."

Both Boyd and Ricks love the feel of their form of musical fusion. "It makes me feel real good and it's a real positive influence for me. I enjoy expressing and writing in that medium." Boyd's Double O Seven company has produced radio and TV commercials, jingles, and

audio-visual programs. One of the company's projects was a song for the James Bond movie *Licence To Kill*. Like Ricks, Boyd is a masterful songwriter as well as a versatile instrumentalist. Among the Key West venues One World has played are *Margaritaville*, *Sloppy Joe's*, the *Green Parrot*, and *Havana Docks* at the *Pier House*.

Ricks describes the music in One World's self-titled new album as "World Pop. It's a variation on World Beat music—third world influenced, reggae, soca, African music, and a blend of popular music as well. It's taking a lot of the forms we play live that generate excitement, and putting it to tape with original songs and an original approach."

Soaring up from Key West comes a fresh new music, with Caribbean rhythm in its heart and island verse in its soul. Together Ricks and Boyd are exploring new musical frontiers as One World takes its music from the islands to...one world.

Gerry Wood spent many years with *BILLBOARD* magazine in New York and Nashville. He now lives in Key West. Bob and Keith brought *ONE WORLD* by the store and blew us away. I highly recommend this one. Compact Disc \$16.50, Cassette Tape \$11.50



Keith Ricks Bob Boyd

Photo: Doyle Bush

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Michael Cornelison, Jr



Photo: Mike & Carloyn Cornelison

COCONUT COMEBACKS

From time to time we here at The Coconut Telegraph feel the need to respond in some way or another to the letters we receive. Good or bad, positive or negative, we appreciate the fact that these folks take time out of their busy day to forward their comments; for instance Michael Cornelison, Jr. from Palm Harhor, FL. Michael, shown here digesting an earlier newsletter, writes that he, "loves the Coconut Telegraph and the great products offered within."

Thanks Mike.

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DEAR COCONUT TELEGRAPH

I have been a Buffett fan for over 15 years. I have all kinds of t-shirts, sweatshirts, and other paraphernalia. I also have every album he has made. The point here is while I have been a loyal fan, you all at the other end seem to be letting things slide downhill. The Coconut Telegraph has become a catalogue for merchandising. The articles are of poor entertainment quality and boring. The crossword puzzle in the Christmas issue is the only evidence I've found in the last year that someone on the telegraph staff might be alive and not braindead. *I'm willing to subscribe for one more year just to see if you can pull yourself out of the weeds, but next year I just don't know. I suggest you wake up and smell the Key West Coffee or someday you might come out of your coma and find nobody waited around for you.*"

P.S. What is the problem about Buffett playing in Seattle or Portland? Where has he been?

Douglas Prior, Bellevue, WA

Douglas,

You spelled Buffett wrong...*twice!*

P.S. The Key West Coffee you mentioned is a secret blend of flavorful, fresh roasted beans and is available in a 6oz. bag for only \$5.00, with Margaritaville coffee mug, \$10.00.

Just wanted to let you know I recently received an order from your company and I absolutely Love everything! The quality is excellent and the designs & colors are great. I also received the order in under three weeks. Thanks for the good work.

Deborah Dawson, Waterford, MI

Deborah,

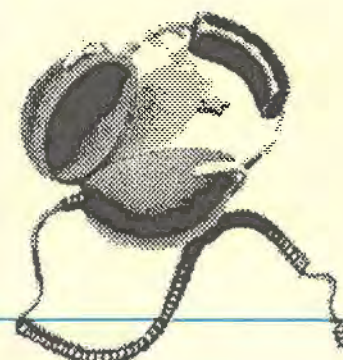
Thanks for the letter. Have you tried the Key West Coffee Douglas suggested? Only \$5.00 for a 6oz. bag of fresh roasted beans.

I am curious as to what a Nautical Wheeler is, or means. I'm stumped. Can you help me?

Suzanne Marchesi, Forked River, NJ

Suzanne,

The Nautical Wheelers were [are] a group of Square Dancers located in Key West, FL. The song, from the album Living & Dying in 3/4 Time, portrays a day in the life of Jimmy & Co. in the early 70's Key West.



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