



# Recordings In Review

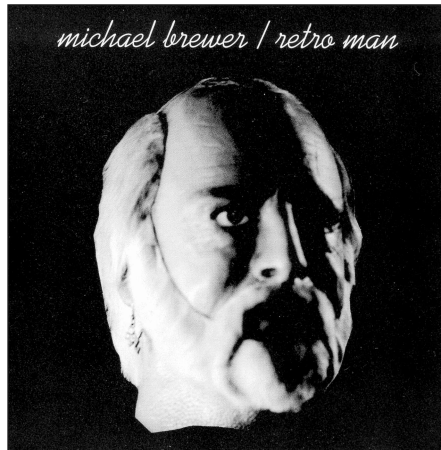
By Mark Bilyeu

## A Brewer Time Trip

**Michael Brewer: *Retro Man*. Available at [www.brewerandshipley.com](http://www.brewerandshipley.com), or send check or money order for \$15.00 plus \$3.00 shipping to Mobile Unit Music: P.O. Box 235, Powersite, Mo. 65731. For two or more CDs, add another \$2.00 shipping.**

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Michael Brewer, indeed of sitting next to him as he played several cuts from *Retro Man* for a rapt audience at the Gillioz Theater in Springfield, Mo. So you'll have to pardon me if I seem predisposed to enjoy this record. Before the show Brewer regaled me with tales of his tenure in Los Angeles during the mid to late sixties, which, if you're familiar with the storied history of the folk-rock scene from this time and place, you know it was one of the epicenters of a sweeping cultural tumult. Young people were searching for societal and cerebral freedom through experimentation of all sorts and music in particular, and the police were intent on keeping them from finding what they were looking for, often with the blunt force of a bully club. Stephen Stills classic "For What it's Worth" famously documents the upheaval of the time, specifically the riots on the Sunset Strip. Like most of us, I heard this song for the first time on the radio. Michael Brewer heard the song for the first time when Stills played it in Brewer's living room, on Brewer's guitar. As someone who has the nagging feeling that I was born too late for my rightful time, I pay attention when I meet someone who can give a first-hand account like this. Talk about being in the right place at the right time.

Brewer, of course, went on to write hits of his own as one half of Brewer and Shipley, most notably with "One Toke Over the Line," which caused Spiro Agnew to single out the duo for being a corrupting influence on the



nation's youth, and which Lawrence Welk, perhaps unwittingly, dubbed a "modern spiritual." (don't take my word for it. Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search "Lawrence Welk toke.") Suffice to say, Brewer knows something about the generation gap.

Now a resident of the Ozarks, neither accumulated years nor a change in geography have done anything to change Brewer's outlook. The introductory track of *Retro Man* gives an early indicator of the degree of Brewer's repentance for his role as participant and encourager of the counter culture, which is to say, zero: it's an acetate recording of Brewer as a four-year-old singing "God Bless America." We'll take that as a bit of irony, albeit delivered with precociously dead-on intonation. Then the album dives right into no less than a political rant for the first three cuts, a catharsis of indignation and frustration from a cultural warrior caught in George W. Bush's America. It's refreshing, should you carry any nostalgia for the revolution that was the sixties, to hear at least one of its foot soldiers undeterred by the intervening decades. There may now be a Gap store at the corner of Haight-Ashbury, but you wouldn't guess it from a listen to this CD. Although Brewer admits to looking over his shoulder in songs like "Retro Man," by no means is he stuck in the past. The epic "Freedom Avenue," in fact, brings us up to date

with a decade-by-decade play-by-play of cultural change. Brewer somehow has been able to maintain the combination of determination, outrage and idealism that fueled some of the best music of the 20th century.

Musically, the album is no stretch in form for this folk-rocker; it's driven mostly by acoustic guitar, backed with drums, bass and the occasional electric guitar, with tasty bits of mandolin, accordion and fiddle to fill out the soundscape, all played by Brewer or engineer and former Ozark Mountain Daredevil Gary Smith.

Not all of the material on *Retro Man* is political. "Must Be an Ocean" is a wistful meditation on a lifetime of past sorrows. "Burn One for Me" asks for a slice of immortality and remembrance with a wink and a smile. But if you're looking for some music to help you escape from the culture wars, this is not the album for you. If you are up for facing issues head-on, as Brewer makes them impossible to ignore, give *Retro Man* a spin. Hopefully you will emerge with the same undimmed optimism heard in "I'm Still Looking"—"I'm still looking/ Eyes wide open/ I'm still wishing/ I'm still hoping." With *Retro Man*, Brewer shows us how to look back and still move forward. ☼ —Mark Bilyeu

**Reviews are a service to *Mountaineer* readers, subscribers and artists. All reviews have contact/ordering information. If you have a CD you'd like to see reviewed, send a copy to Mark Bilyeu, 2020 N. Douglas, Springfield, Mo. 65804**

**For a listing of venues and gigs of various Ozarks musical groups, visit [www.mayapplerecords.com](http://www.mayapplerecords.com). See the list following for traditional Ozarks music parties and gatherings.**

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### *Jam Sessions And Music Parties In The Ozarks*

Old time and traditional Ozark music is alive and well. Whether you want to

play or just listen, you'll find the folks at the following locations willing to give you a warm welcome and information or directions. Call the venue contact, as some are less active during cold weather, others, however, are more active during winter.

We'd appreciate anyone with knowledge of each venue to send additional information: place, dates, contact person and phone number, even directions. If you know of gatherings not on the list, send the information to *The Ozarks Mountaineer* for this free listing.

#### **Reeds Spring, Mo. (Stone County)**

Rock House Concerts: #41 High Street  
Downtown Reeds Spring.  
Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Music begins at 8:00. Bring your own drinks & snacks.  
\$10.00 donation goes to the artists  
Contact: **417-272-8386**; check calendar at [www.myspace.com/rockhouse41highest](http://www.myspace.com/rockhouse41highest)  
**Aug. 30:** Distant Relative  
**Sept. 13:** Walkenhorst & Porter

#### **Rogersville, Mo (Webster County)**

Webster County Opry  
First Friday of each month, 6:30 p.m.  
Rogersville Senior Center, 101 N. Mill St.  
(no charge, donations accepted)  
Contact: **417-753-7800**

#### **Long Lane, Mo. (Dallas County)**

Lion's Club  
Every Thursday night 7:00  
Contact: Chancy Reth: **417-345-2696** or [cbreth@positck.net](mailto:cbreth@positck.net)

#### **Yellville, Ark. (Marion County)**

Music On The Square  
Every Saturday at 7 p.m., May 10-Sept. 13  
Contact: Ron Shire, **870-404-6347** or [carnes@mtnhome.com](mailto:carnes@mtnhome.com)

#### **Billings, Mo. (Christian County)**

Billings Country Music Jamboree  
second Friday of the month, 7:00 p.m.  
Billings Senior Center (no charge, donations accepted)  
Contact: **417-744-4427**

#### **Ava, Mo. (Douglas County)**

Every Thursday, 7:00 p.m.  
Ava Family Theater, 106 S. Jefferson St.  
Contact: Mary Ann Goodwater:  
**417-683-1353**

#### **Oldfield, Mo. (Christian County)**

The Oldfield Opry (Oldfield is 3 miles south of Sparta on Hwy. 125; Sparta is 8 miles east of Ozark on Hwy. 14.)

Saturday nights, 7-10:00 p.m.  
Contact: **417-634-3450** or [EddieGoins@wmconnect.com](mailto:EddieGoins@wmconnect.com)

#### **Clio, Mo. (Barry County)**

16 miles S. on Hwy 39 of Aurora, Mo., or 1 mile S. of Jenkins  
alternate Fridays, 6:30 p.m. concessions  
Contact: Gene Heath, **417-574-6410**

#### **Calico Rock, Ark. (Izard County)**

Calico Rock Music Hall  
Junction of state Hwys. 5 & 56 (in historic Methodist Church Bldg.)  
7:30 p.m., Fridays (bluegrass, country, blues) and Sundays (gospel)  
Contact: **870-297-3100** or [www.calicorock-musichall.com](http://www.calicorock-musichall.com)

#### **Hollister, Mo. (Taney County)**

Jester's Pub, English Inn, Downing Street  
Mondays, 6:30 p.m.  
Contact: **417-336-6557**

#### **Gainesville, Mo. (Ozark County)**

Vaught's Café, Hwy. 160 & 5 junction  
Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m. (come earlier if you want supper)  
Contact: **417-679-2376**

#### **West Plains, Mo. (Howell County)**

West Plains Senior Center  
Every Tuesday night.  
Contact: George Spence, **417-256-3357**

#### **Mammoth Springs, Ark. (Fulton County)**

Country Music Theatre, 702 Main St.  
Every Friday night, 7:00 p.m., donation  
Contact: Marion (Pat) Patterson:  
**417-270-7422**

#### **Winona, Mo. (Shannon County) (See article March-April '07)**

Flossie's Apple Barrel, Hwy. 19 north  
Thursday nights 6-8:00 p.m.  
Contact: **573-325-8273** or **573-325-8150**

#### **Hollister, Mo. (Taney County)**

Turkey Creek Dulcimer Players, Hollister Presbyterian Church  
Third Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.  
Contact: Rod Westerfield,  
**417-230-1861**

#### **Springfield, Mo. (Greene County)**

Salvation Army headquarters,  
4th Saturday of the month 1:00 p.m.-

4:00 p.m.

Contact: Dallas Hicks, **417-861-2038**

#### **Ozark, Mo. (Christian County)**

On the square, Thursday evenings (bring a lawn chair)  
Contact: **417-582-6246**

#### **Salem, Mo. (Dent County)**

Salem City Hall, 202 N. Washington  
Every Friday night 7-10:00 p.m.  
Contact: Jim Boulware, **573-729-6685**

#### **Strafford, Mo. (Greene County)**

Strafford Senior Center, **417-736-9898**  
Every Monday night 6-9:00 p.m.  
Contact: Otis Scott, **417-866-7085**

#### **Near Rockbridge, Mo., Friday Night Jamboree—Athel Jackson's Barn (Ozark County)**

Fridays, 6:00 p.m., potluck dinner, \$2 donation  
From Ava, go south on Hwy. 5; turn left on Hwy. N and go 11 miles  
Contact: Altel Jackson, **417-683-5184**

#### **Bruner, Mo. (Christian County)**

Bruner Schoolhouse (See "An Old Schoolhouse Recycled: Bruner Community Center," July, 2005 issue of *The Ozarks Mountaineer*) E. of Ozark on Hwy. 14  
Monday evenings  
Contact: Jim Goins, **417-634-5591**

#### **Anutt, Mo. (Dent County)**

D & D Little Branson Music Hall  
Saturday nights  
Contact: Don Hood

#### **Halltown, Mo. (Greene County)**

Hoods Restraunt Saturday and Sunday nights: 6-10:00 p.m.  
Contact: **417-732-2686**

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