Mp3 Various - Cornelia Street Songwriters Exchange



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Finally back in print, the Cornelia Street Songwriters Exchange CD. This CD is snapshot of the Greenwich Village singer songwriter community of the early 80's and contains early recordings of some of todays folk singer-songwriters. 19 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: CORNELIA STREET: THE SONGWRITERS EXCHANGE It is twenty-nine years since three of us stumbled across a tiny storefront on Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village and thought it the perfect place to open a caf. Its a tiny one-block street but it has a long and interesting history. It was laid out in 1794 on the farm of Robert Herring, who named it for his granddaughter, Cornelia. In the nineteenth century it housed the stables of the rich. During Prohibition it sheltered one of New Yorks most famous speakeasies. In the early forties W.H. Auden moved in at Number 7; in the late forties Anatole Broyard opened a bookstore at Number 20; for eleven years into the early fifties James Agee had a writing studio at Number 33; in the late fifties Joe Cino opened a caf at Number 31 which became one of the fountainheads of Off Off Broadway. Perhaps it was the street, perhaps it was the fact that all three of us were involved in the arts, but from the very beginning, in one tiny room, we had poetry readings and music performances, and then a little play written for the caf, and pretty soon all sorts of things: fiction writers and journalists; and programs of bawdy and Inuit poetry; and puppeteers and flute players and classical guitarists; and a living portrait of James Joyce; and mime shows and dances on the street outside the caf; and recorder, oud, and concertina music; and comedians; and shows of paper and air; and fairy tales and storytellers and Punch and Judy shows. And on Monday nights beginning in December of our first year and every Monday night for seven years thereafter, the Songwriters Exchange. Twenty-nine years later, we have grown. The toaster-oven which was the engine of our little enterprise has been replaced by a real kitchenin fact there are two kitchens now, and a beautiful oak bar rescued

from the Bowery, and three dining rooms upstairs and a performance space downstairs. If you consult our website (yes, dear reader, we have a website, corneliastreetcafe.com) you will see that we now do some seven hundred shows a year. The range is just as eclectic as those very first performances and some of that early spirit still percolates down into the basement. Some very distinguished people appear down thereNobel laureates, Pulitzer prize-winning authors, Presidential candidates, members of Monty Python and the Royal Shakespeare Companybut, for me, nothing guite captures that early, innocent, and improvisatory spirit like the songs of those Monday nights, nineteen of which are collected on this CD. The rules were simple. You were allowed to sing only what you had written that week. In that way something on the order of five thousand new songs were born in that little room on Monday nights. In 1980 an LP with twelve of those songs came out on Stash Records. It caused a little stir, it won awards, it even became a collectors item in places far afield like Europe and Japan. But more importantly, it planted a flag, it announced a new generation of musicians, and it prepared the way for a small wave of albums produced by the musicians themselves, including the more than one hundred Fast Folk albums which are now archived at the Smithsonian. This CD contains ten of those original songs plus nine which were issued on a 10th anniversary CD, also on Stash. They were all recorded on one day, one crazy but remarkably efficient day in 1979 when from nine in the morning till midnight Bernie Brightman (who owned Stash) and sixteen musicians gathered with me in Mike Lobels studio in New Jersey and recorded songs which had first seen the breath of life on a Monday night in a little caf in the heart of Greenwich Village, New York City. If you listen closely, you can almost hear the clatter of espresso cups as the next songwriter unfurls a manuscript, tapes it to a barstool, and sings what until this moment has not yet been sung. Robin Hirsch Cornelia Street, July 2006

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