

## Mp3 Steve Zarate - Silver Linings



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Positive visionary catchy originals centered around acoustic guitar and vocals, with cameos from some of Athens, Ohio's best musicians, recorded in early 2008 at Bernie Nau's Peach Fork Studio in Meigs County, Ohio. 6 MP3 Songs in this album (21:49) ! Related styles: FOLK: Progressive Folk, SPIRITUAL: Inspirational People who are interested in Bruce Cockburn Neil Young Cat Stevens should consider this download. Details: I am a 47-year-old singer-songwriter based in Athens, Ohio. The April 2008 release of "Silver Linings" showcases six of my best original songs through a collaboration with skilled producer Bernie Nau at his Peach Fork Studios in Meigs County, Ohio, with 10 talented local guest musicians helping them come to life. \*\*\*\*\* Here's my Bio: Raised in Columbus, Ohio, Steve Zarate (rhymes with karate) began playing acoustic guitar and harmonica and writing songs at age 15 in 1976, emulating camp counselors who played great '60s and '70s music around summer evening campfires. Self-taught by learning songs he loved (especially Elton John, Neil Young, Beatles and Paul Simon tunes), Steve has since copyrighted 190 originals with the Library of Congress. While earning three Ohio University degrees (B.A. Telecommunications, M.A. Political Science, M.S. Journalism) between 1978 and 1991, he grew to cherish charming Athens and the green Southeast Ohio countryside. In 1992 he released "Athens Solstice," a debut cassette of 18 original songs. Steve has played at many regional events, including weddings, holiday parties and business gatherings, also gaining a reputation among enthusiastic college students as an incredible street performer with a vast repertoire of originals and tons of covers. Having spent much of 1988 as a carpenter and NPR reporter in Petersburg, Alaska, Steve returned after grad school to live in Alaska from 1992 to 1997, discovering more locales he has come to cherish. During an 11-month stay in Homer, he co-produced and contributed his song "Photosynthesis" to a 1992 benefit recording, "Welcome The Spirit Green!"

(collaborating with Jewel's father, Atz Kilcher, among others), before relocating to Juneau in August 1993. Several years of state employment there led to the Fall 1995 recording and 1996 release of Steve's debut CD, "Homecoming," featuring 13 originals and accompaniment by nine Juneau musicians. Positive feedback gave Steve a growing sense of confidence that dedicated musicianship and inspired songwriting are central to his life purpose, and in July 1997 he left Alaska to pursue musical opportunities in the lower 48. Based again in Athens, Ohio, since September 1997, Steve has released three solo acoustic performance collections displaying his visionary gift for creating hopeful original songs blending eloquent positive imagery, catchy melodies and intricate guitar parts: "Invisible Campfires" (2002, 14 songs), "Jewel Of The Hocking" (2005, 4 songs live) and "Blowing On Embers" (2006, 13 songs). In early 2003, nationally-known Southeast Ohio-based singing group The Local Girls included their version of Steve's "Jewel Of The Hocking" on "Four Year Heaven," a CD of songs honoring Athens and Ohio University. Steve was named an Ohio Valley Regional Co-Finalist in the 2007 Mountain Stage NewSong Contest, garnering praise for performances of Invisible Campfires and Cell Phone Song at a contest event in Parkersburg WV on 7/21/07. In 2007-8, Steve has had his fullest performance schedule to date, with close to 150 appearances in Athens, Logan, Nelsonville and Marietta OH and Parkersburg WV.

\*\*\*\*\* April 14, 2008 Press Release: Singer-Songwriter Steve Zarate Releases "Silver Linings" Athens, Ohio-based musician Steve Zarate today releases "Silver Linings," a new CD of six original songs in exciting new arrangements featuring contributions from 10 other talented local musicians. A 47-year-old singer, songwriter, guitarist and harmonica player and a 20-years-plus Athens resident, Zarate (rhymes with "karate") played almost 100 gigs during 2007 at venues in Athens, Nelsonville and Logan OH and Parkersburg WV, where he performed last July as a 2007 Mountain Stage NewSong Festival Regional Co-Finalist. The "Silver Linings" project has received partial funding support through a \$500 Ohio Arts Council Fast Track Grant awarded in January 2008. The OAC approved this grant based on the artist's stated intention to use the money to upgrade his professional status via production of a first-class recording at Bernie Nau's acclaimed Peach Fork Studios near Pomeroy in Meigs County, Ohio. Nau, an excellent pianist known both for playing with The Wingnuts, Aces Eights and Kings of Hollywood and CDs he's made with Celtic favorites Patrick Street bluegrass stalwarts The Rarely Herd, approached Zarate in late 2007 about possible studio collaboration. Recording sessions soon became more feasible with acquisition of the OAC grant. In mid-January, Zarate recorded guitar,

vocal and harmonica parts at Peach Fork Studios, and by late February, he and co-producer Nau (who plays keyboards on three songs) had brought in an all-star array of guest musicians to help create tasteful arrangements of Zarate's tunes: drummer Derrick Nau (Bernie's son) of heavy metal band Skeletonwitch; guitarist and dobro player Tristan Kinsley of The Princes of Hollywood; violinist and O.U. School of Music student Julia Reeves; singer Laura Nadeau, formerly of the band Stella; bassist Dave Borowski of The Billycats The Wingnuts; mandolinist John "Catfish" Juliano of The Paranormals formerly Stella; bassist Eric "Junebug" Leighton of The Paranormals many other groups; banjoist Hilarie Burhans of The Hotpoint String Band; and fiddle player Rusty Smith of The Boys Of The Hock The Appalachian Jazz Quartet. "I call this little EP 'Silver Linings' because my songs tend to accentuate positive sides of things, the glass half full, hidden blessings, our abilities to overcome, persevere, learn and grow," Zarate says. "Living in a highly creative community like Athens County, I feel fortunate to be daily inspired by so many talented, resourceful and expressive people. I wanted my first well-produced release to reflect that 'little engine that could' attitude, that determination to make something better of oneself and use one's gifts as an artist to contribute something beautiful, hopeful and maybe even useful to our local and global communities." Zarate praises his partner and "Silver Linings" co-producer: "Bernie Nau really helped by polishing these songs sonically and capturing great performances from everyone involved. He's got a great ear and amazing audio enhancement abilities. I've never heard my tunes sound so good before, and I'd recommend his engineering talents to any recording artist anywhere." Nau mixed and mastered the music on "Silver Linings" in March 2008, while Zarate worked on cover art and manufacturing. The resulting release showcases visual contributions from three southeastern Ohio businesses: a picture of Zarate at Nelsonville's Fullbrook's Caf taken by photographer Brian Blauser of B B Studios in Athens; layout design by Dave Norris and Ron Mash of Hometown Productions in The Plains; and printing by Minuteman Press in Athens. The CD's front cover features a lovely photo of the Northern Lights above a boathouse next to an Alaskan lake. Zarate hopes this music "helps someone somewhere somehow." "Silver Linings" will be available for \$12 at upcoming Steve Zarate performances at the Athens Public Library, The Sandstone in Logan, Rhapsody in Nelsonville and The Galley in Marietta, plus numerous street music performances near Athens' popular Burrito Buggy, where he is well-known for playing to college students crowds. \*\*\*\*\* Musician Credits: (1) Cell Phone Song: Steve Zarate: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica; Bernie Nau: Keyboards. (2) Fear-Based

Thinking: Steve Zarate: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar; Bernie Nau: Organ; Derrick Nau: Drums; Dave Borowski: Electric Bass; Tristan Kinsley: Electric Guitar. (3) Living In Alaska: Steve Zarate: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar; Tristan Kinsley: Dobro; Julia Reeves: Violin. (4) Jewel Of The Hocking: Steve Zarate: Lead Harmony Vocals, Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica; Laura Nadeau: Harmony Vocals; Eric "Junebug" Leighton: Acoustic Bass; John "Catfish" Juliano: Mandolin; Hilarie Burhans: Banjo. (5) Warren's Song (Oh What A Ride): Steve Zarate: Vocals, Acoustic Guitar; Derrick Nau: Drums; Dave Borowski: Electric Bass; Tristan Kinsley: Electric Guitar; Julia Reeves: Violin. (6) Summer's First Rays: Steve Zarate: Lead Vocals, Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica; Laura Nadeau: Lead Harmony Vocals; John "Catfish" Juliano: Mandolin; Hilarie Burhans: Banjo; Rusty Smith: Fiddle; Dave Borowski: Upright Bass.

\*\*\*\*\* Making "Silver Linings": We recorded most of my vocal, guitar and harmonica parts for these six original songs in mid-January '08, also adding tracks by Derrick, Tristan, Julia and Bernie. At that point I realized my desire to add more musicians' parts to these six songs would drive studio costs too high if I tried to do a full-length 10- or 12-song CD, and I decided I'd rather release six really great-sounding, well-produced and appropriately-arranged songs than put out incomplete or partially-sketched-out versions of 10 or 12 songs. Fortunately, working with Bernie has helped that happen, as he is very good at crafting recordings that are, as he puts it, "undeniable." I hope this turns out to be one of those. I'm very excited about this project, because I've never heard my tunes sound so good before. I say that with love and reverence for Albert McDonnell, a great Juneau, Alaska, engineer who co-produced my 1st CD, "Homecoming," with me in 1995. But the sounds we've gotten in Bernie's studio amaze me. The other 10 musicians have all contributed wonderful backing tracks "Fear-Based Thinking" "Oh What A Ride" really rock from Dave's and Derrick's great grooving rhythms Catfish, Hilarie Tristan pick sweetly throughout Rusty Julia make gorgeous string sounds Laura, as usual, sings like an angel Junebug plays killer countrified bass on "Jewel Of The Hocking," as does Dave on the lilting waltz "Summer's First Rays" Bernie's keyboards are really cool. Plus whatever I bring to the table. I believe strongly in the positive power of this music and my purpose as a musician. To me, this means blossoming into someone who honors and respects his musical gifts by, through them, giving back to his community and human family a reflection (to quote my song "Blowing On Embers") of "true balance returning, humanity healed, the dream we'll wake up in when the light reveals what's real." And that kind of hope is at the heart of these six songs. \*\*\*\*\* "Silver

"Silver Linings" reviewed in The Athens News 5/1/2008: Singer/songwriter shows increasing polish on new six-song CD

By Jim Phillips, Senior Writer

As a long-time street busker, Steve Zarate has earned a reputation as a carbon-based iPod. You request a tune, he's likely to know it or at least he'll make a passable attempt to fake it. (He also knows all the verses to Phil Ochs' "Crucifixion," which should be mighty impressive to anyone familiar with that epic.) These days, however, Zarate plays a lot more of his music indoors—he gigs frequently around the area and also writes tunes of his own. As evidenced by his latest recording, his songwriting skills are getting steadily sharper, as is his guitar playing. The six-song "Silver Linings" contains a tune or two that Zarate has recorded versions of elsewhere, but this new recording is probably his best-sounding work to date. He filled out his sound with a band made up of top local players, including singer Laura Nadeau, bassists Dave Borowski and Eric "Junebug" Leighton, banjo player Hilarie Burhans, mandolin player John "Catfish" Juliano, guitarist Tristan Kinsley, keyboard player Bernie Nau, drummer Derrick Nau, and violinists Julia Reeves and Rusty Smith. Any Steve Zarate record should probably feature a consumer warning label, to protect those allergic to optimism and happy vibes. He didn't pick the title "Silver Linings" by accident, and it should be acknowledged up front that Zarate writes many songs that are sunny and hopeful. He tends to unabashedly celebrate stuff he likes a whole bunch, like his former home of Alaska ("Living in Alaska") or his current home ("Jewel of the Hocking," with its guileless appreciation of "the College Green at old Ohio U.") His stuff isn't all Kermit the Frog and the Rainbow Connection, though. "The Cell Phone Song," which kicks off the record, is amazingly enough quite funny without ever getting mean. At this late date, writing a song to satirize the people who yammer endlessly .. phones might seem a recipe for instant ough, but Zarate gets away with it. It's a nimble, clever tune, driven by some tricky guitar picking and a chorus in which Zarate yelps, "Oh my god! I couldn't believe it!" in flawless imitation of a chattering buffy. To cover both sides of the issue, however, he makes sure to mention the useful aspects of cell phones, like "if you get in a wreck and need to call emergency personnel." Fair and balanced, just like Fox News. "Warren's Song (Oh What A Ride)" pays thoughtful tribute to the late Warren Zevon, and "Summer's First Rays" is a sweet little tune on which Nadeau adds a good second vocal. "Fear Based Thinking" might be a little pop-psych for some tastes, but it's also musically one of the best-sounding things on the disc, with a little harder-rocking sound than most of Zarate's tunes, and a tasteful, stinging guitar part from the Princes of Hollywood's Kinsley. "Silver Linings" was produced by Bernie Nau and Zarate, and recorded, mixed and mastered by Nau at Peach

Fork Studios near Pomeroy. If you want to buy the CD, you can chase Zarate down at one of his many gigs at The Sandstone in Logan, Rhapsody in Nelsonville and The Galley in Marietta, or catch his street musician act near Athens' Burrito Buggy. \*\*\*\*\* "Silver Linings" reviewed in The Athens Messenger 5/23/2008: New disc offers best of Zarate By Randy Surface, Entertainment Editor Thinking of Steve Zarate simply as "that guy who plays guitar next to the Burrito Buggy" does the singer/songwriter a serious disservice. If you haven't heard him before, he's a lot less gimmicky than you think. Zarate is a true folk bard who can write a hook with the best of them. Aside from playing dozens and dozens of gigs each year - far eclipsing most Athens -based musicians - Zarate has three full-length albums and two EPs - including the brand-new "Silver Linings" - under his belt. On "Silver Linings," Zarate offers up the best in his considerable arsenal. His mix of hook-minded pop and Appalachian folk translates into a collection of tunes that includes gentle eco-friendly ballads ("Living in Alaska"), steady rockers ("Fear-Based Thinking") and pop gems ("Cell Phone Song"). "Cell Phone Song" is a particular treat. Like most of the songs on the EP, it has a distinctly happy-go-lucky streak in it. Zarate isn't prone to dark hipster musings. He says exactly what he means. Lyrics don't get much more straightforward - or hilarious - than "oh my God, you're bitchingly clueless." The funny song nails the cadence of shallow wireless communication without being mean-spirited. And to prove he's not immune to the device's charms, Zarate even mock-answers a phone at the end of the song. Another heart-on-his-sleeve track is "Jewel Of The Hocking." The earnest love letter to Athens manages to avoid cheesiness. It's another testament to Zarate's everyman genuineness. His duet with Laura Nadeau on "Summer's First Rays" creates a beautiful folk melody that further attests to his gifts. Don't be fooled, though; Zarate is no peddler of simple folk-pop. He possesses the troubadour spirit - perhaps fostered by his stint in the wilds of Alaska. He penned several of these tunes while in Alaska. His songs tell stories, just as folk songs should. Though all the songs on "Silver Linings" have been previously recorded by Zarate, they are reinterpreted here with producer Bernie Nau and an all-star collection of local musicians. The aforementioned Nadeau appears on two songs. The Princes of Hollywood's Tristan Kinsley adds electric guitar and dobro. John "Catfish" Juliano and Eric "Junebug" Leighton pop up on a few tracks. In all, 10 Athens musicians throw their weight behind the effort. According to Zarate, the album project received partial funding through a \$500 Ohio Arts Council Fast Track Grant. The grant was given in order to help Zarate move to the next level as a working musician with a professionally produced CD. The

satisfying work on "Silver Linings" should prove to help him on his way.

\*\*\*\*\* "Silver Linings" Lyrics: 1. CELL PHONE SONG A whole new technology arrived with no corresponding etiquette. Urged to write a song about it, I came up with these few observations. Written 10/2005, Athens OH. Why do I gotta hear you talking when I'm walking down the street With your cell phone up to your head Saying, "I'll be there in about five minutes," When you might as well not call and walk a little faster? And why do we gotta hear your one way chatter When it isn't really any of our business? It makes me wanna echo back every single solitary Silly word that you say, just like, "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, I was like 'Duh,' and she was like 'Duh,'" you know what I mean? "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, Did you see what she wore? She got it at the store, oh what a bore!" "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, Half-price pitchers! I wish that I was richer, but then again," "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, And why's this guy repeating every word that I say?" Sure, a cell phone's good to have around in case you get into a wreck And you need to call emergency personnel And sometimes they can be good for your business Like when you need to check on messages that really are important But even though you're standing right there in front of me Still it seems as though your mind's about a million miles away And I don't know why you won't pay closer attention to the beauty Of the moment while you're yakking away oblivious, still you're saying, "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, She was like 'Whoa,' and I was like 'Whoa,'" there you go, "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, I think that he was drunk, no doubt he's such a hunk, but kind of a punk." "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, I'll be there any second, another call just beckoned, totally!" "Oh my God, I couldn't believe it, And why's this guy repeating every, -peating every word that I say?" "Hang on, I've got call waiting; Okay I'm back, it was just my mom... She's wondering about my prospects, But I'm just wondering if spring break is gonna be the bomb!" I'd just as soon we confiscate 'em all And blow a huge pile of cell phones into smithereens And the only way that we would ever talk to one another Would be on private lines and face to face without machines Especially the ones used by the people yakkity-yakking while they're driving, It's a wonder that they're even still alive They're such a menace, in Venice they might throw them overboard But not me, I know the pen's still mightier than the sword, so I'm like, Oh my God, you're totally clueless, Erecting such a barrier, depending on a carrier, you know what I mean? Oh my God, you're awesomely clueless, She's talking in the stall like she thinks she's in the mall, I'm truly appalled. Oh my God, you're bitchingly clueless, Strange looks all the time from strangers in the line, but still you whine, "Oh my God, I'm totally

clueless, And why's this guy repeating every, -peating every, -peating every word that I say?"..."Oh my God!" 2. FEAR-BASED THINKING Pondering root causes, a response to 9/11/01 violence, equally applicable to whatever else. Written 5/29/2002, Athens OH; completed 6/20/2002, Cincinnati OH.

Fear-based thinking's got me in a fix Froze me in a pattern, lost me in the mix Fear-based thinking put me in a bind Stuck me in a straitjacket and strangled up my mind Fear-based thinking said, "Don't write this song! Nobody wants to know; it'll just come out wrong, Besides, what makes you think that you're worthy of a voice?" But it's a question of choice Along the rocky road to recovery, regeneration, rejuvenation, There's a shadow that's keeping me on my toes, That old fear-based thinking, same thing everybody knows Fear-based thinking thinks it's got me licked, Paralyzed, bewildered, terrified and tricked, Fear-based thoughts have a thing or two to learn About the human capacity to finally turn Toward the rocky road to recovery, regeneration, rejuvenation, There's a shadow that's keeping me on my toes, That old fear-based thinking, same thing everybody knows It feels like being boxed inside a cage of my own choosing That's never been locked, it can't be that hard to just break loose What if we learn to stop them in their tracks? Catch 'em in the process? Send 'em right back? Maybe those fear-based thoughts could melt away Hearts could soar and angels come to play Along the rocky road to recovery, regeneration, rejuvenation, There's a shadow that's keeping me on my toes, That old fear-based thinking, same thing everybody knows, Same thing everybody knows, same place everybody goes, I think everybody knows What if I fail? What if it doesn't work out? What if I can't find the trail? How do I deal with the doubt? What if I'm poor? What if the bottom falls out? What did I come here for? What is this heartbeat talking about? I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.... 3. LIVING IN ALASKA After living half of the 1990s in Homer and Juneau, I wanted to share the majesty and importance of the Great Land with Lower 48ers. Alaska's wondrous way beyond words I hope you get to see for yourself. Written 5/27/1998, Athens OH. Living in Alaska you can find yourself in landscapes That you never knew existed but you always hoped were true Where the eagle lifts off from the pines and calls your heart to follow Over tails of whales kersplashing into waves of shining blue And I went to Alaska 'cause I had to see the planet on Her own terms without concrete, neon, advertising, constant chaos And if you hear this through the overkill, the daily blah, Perhaps you'll dare imagine love is real and all's not lost The fishing boats, the cannery, the midnight sunsets by the sea, The garbage bears, the urban moose showed me Alaskan freedom One night a friend said "go outside," the Northern Lights were flying high, They truly took my breath away, I



hope you get to see 'em And I went northwest where the roads all end and the glaciers crawl And people learn the rhythms of the seasons and the tides And I came to face my fears alone all through the darkest longest winter Till March burst me through the other side alive Living in Alaska you can feel the mighty salmon Leaping high into your bloodstream in a river turquoise clear And if you feel this all's not lost, the daily blah can't get you now, You're on your own inside the last frontier

#### 4. JEWEL OF THE HOCKING

Written in Athens OH, 9/2003, for a contest held by vocal trio The Local Girls seeking new songs for a CD about Athens and Ohio University. Their version appears on the lovely "Four Year Heaven-The Songs Of Ohio University" (2003). Anyone who's been to Athens OH can relate. I was raised in the city where the traffic's something fierce And the only green you see is between concrete Then I came to the country, that's where I fell in love With a little college town where life is swee She's the jewel of the Hocking by the bend in the river Any moment of the year she's shining still And there's something about Athens and Southeast Ohio That keeps the laughter ringing through these hills I found a family of friendships down in Athens With a wealth of rolling hillsides and a sky so blue However far I roam I'll always feel at home On the college green at old Ohio U. Friendly people there from everywhere with smiles full of light And that good acoustic music after hours In the fall the trees are rainbows, in winter fields turn white And in the spring the spirits rise up with the flowers I found a family of friendships down in Athens With a wealth of rolling hillsides and a sky so blue However far I roam I'll always feel at home On the college green at old Ohio U. One time I was far away and I dreamed about old Court Street I marveled at the brickwork and the old courthouse Then I strolled down to the campus, saw the monument in sunshine And I promised I'd get back to there somehow In the cafes, bars and restaurants, at parties and at potlucks Athenians always make you feel welcome Ask any Bobcat, they'll tell you how it sparkles, That little patch of green that we call home I found a family of friendships down in Athens, Ohio With a wealth of rolling hillsides and a sky so blue However far I roam I'll always feel at home On the college green at old Ohio U. On the college green at old Ohio U. On the college green at old Ohio U.

#### 5. WARREN'S TUNE (Oh What A Ride)

Written in Glouster OH, 9/9/2003, a few days after Warren Zevon passed. I found his departure deeply moving and somehow life-affirming, much like his rich body of work. In the end Warren asked us to keep him in our hearts for a while. No problem. Your songs were like an open sore We wondered what for, where were you coming from? And you played us like a penny arcade, No naive masquerade betrayed your chosen path You were the person who cut through the fog, Defrosted the windshield and took us

along On a dangerous ride from deep under the smog To a home in the heart of humanity You danced a crooked waltz with death As if every breath was a showdown, And in doing so you helped us laugh At our shadow half in the mirror You were the artist who cut through the fog, Defrosted the windshield and took us along On a difficult ride from deep under the smog To a home in the heart of humanity And when the wrestling match was won And the setting sun came to beckon, You found a way to heal the wounds With some timeless tunes and compassion Now you're the spirit who cuts through the fog, Defrosting the windshield to take us along Oh what a ride from deep under the smog To a room in a home in the heart of humanity Oh what a ride from deep under the smog To a room in a home in the heart of humanity 6.

SUMMER'S FIRST RAYS Written in Haines AK, 8/15/1993, after awakening in a tent from excellent fever-breaking sleep, thinking of music carrying Alaskans through the long darkness and wanting to tell a story. With thanks to Nanci Griffith for the stories she tells. Tired and aching from six days of hitching, He stood by the side of the road A beat-up guitar case his traveling companion, His feelings were worn and it showed As the first rays of summer shed light on the highway, He thought that his heart might explode An elder one offered a lift to the diner, The songwriter's gratitude flowed Up at 4:30 and working by six, She was tired of her daily routine Serving up hash browns way out in the sticks And keeping those countertops clean But her regulars lived for the smiles she poured them Along with their cup of caffeine And they'd leave as much as they could for they knew She deserved to be tipped like a queen And deep in the heart of a midwinter's night, A full moon's reflecting the dawn's early light And singers surrounding the fires so bright Feel blessed by the summer's first rays Now smiles are for sharing and songs are for singing, And these are the fruits of their days And maybe they'll meet and find something in common, Maybe these hard times are only a phase And there he is turning the doorknob and stepping Inside where she's meeting his gaze With a smile that can help him to sing through the sorrow, The gift of the summer's first rays And down deep in the heart of a midwinter's night, A full moon's reflecting such heavenly light And singers surrounding the fires so bright Feel blessed by the One whom they praise, Caressed by the summer's first rays \*\*\*\*\* From The Athens

Messenger, 10/17/2008: "Athens Musician An Original" by Rick O'Keefe Two words I never would have thought belonged in the same sentence are "guitar" and "hero." Tuba hero, maybe. A tuba player has to do all that heavy lifting. Likewise with the trombone player, whose instrument is really hard to play. Accordion hero? Try playing one in front of ultra-chic types and you will know, at least in part, the kind of

scorn Gandhi knew. But the video game "Guitar Hero" has now become part of our cultural landscape. I once wrote a column for a lesser paper on the nobility of the trombone player, especially the jazz trombone player. I believed that the jazz trombone player's motivations were pure, that they came out of obsession and love for an obscure art form, so unlike the motivations of finger-to-the-wind guitar players only out to posture, preen and pick up chicks with their five-pound E-Z-2-Play instruments. That view began to change after I came to Athens and met Steve Zarate, who sometimes plays and sings by the Union Street buggies when he's not playing somewhere like Rhapsody in Nelsonville, Sandstone in Logan or Parkersburg's Blennerhasset Hotel. To hear that he specializes in 60's and 70's hit songs you might assume he's playing it safe too, in it only for the status. This stuff is still very popular, even with college students. Stations are devoted to such "classics" in every town. It's pretty easy to get a guitar, grab a few of these songs and do the "look-at-me" thing. You have to hang around Steve a while to realize that he's not doing that at all. Steve goes way beyond the typical celebration of self. This is art. Here is a man whose love for his subject matter, his craft, rivals that of the most dedicated jazz trombone players. Soon you realize that there's almost no good pop song from that era he does not know, and all the way through. He goes way beyond the top 20 requests, into the realm of obscure stuff nobody is likely to ask for, stuff most nostalgia stations don't even play. Try to come up with a song he doesn't know. It's possible, but not easy. "Midnight Confessions" by the Grass Roots? A piece of cake. And he will throw in others like "Sooner Or Later" and "Let's Live For Today," and tell you their chronology besides. Chances are you've walked by while Steve's playing one of those frequent requests: "Brown-Eyed Girl," "Piano Man," etc. That top 20 doesn't include songs like "Red Rubber Ball" by The Cyrkle, to Steve another piece of melodic cake...or the Small Faces' "Itchycoo Park"...Tommy James' "Draggin' The Line"...and so on. Steve approaches his songs in the manner of a scholar or, indeed, a jazz trombone player. Picture a trombonist on the Brooklyn Bridge, thousands of people passing him without pause while he keeps playing the best music he knows how to conjure up deep into the night. Steve is that guy, only with a guitar and a harmonica. One Sunday last winter I was flipping through local cable channels, and there was Steve on local access, singing his own songs. He couldn't do any covers (non-originals), which would technically violate copyrights, so he sang songs from his own CDs, which chronicle his dreams and visions and trips to places like Alaska. It was the time of night when the infomercials start to take over regular programming. But there were still a few reruns to be seen, a couple of made-for-TV movies. Steve

was the best thing on.

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