

Artist biographies for How To Raise Your Own Voice, First Night 2005

Scott Alarik is the principal folk writer for the Boston Globe, and folk commentator for the public radio programs Here and Now and the World. Black Wolf Press recently published his first book, Deep Community: Adventures in the Modern Folk Underground. He is also a folk singer and songwriter who performs regularly at coffeehouses near his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Sam Bayer grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, a child of musical parents, of Joplin, Chopin and good old Midwest rock'n'roll. A composer, songwriter and performer for more than 25 years, he's graced stages all over eastern Massachusetts as a solo artist. In 2004, his ska-tinged ode to childhood, "Putting Sophy to Bed", appeared on Boston's Best Singer-Songwriter Showcase V, alongside such Boston notables as Deb Pasternak, Julie Dougherty and Thea Hopkins.

Singer-songwriter **Sandi Hammond** first started songwriting at age 11. Now a gifted classically trained singer-songwriter, and a fine musician on keyboards and guitar, she touches audiences throughout the Northeast with her prolific and impressive repertoire of unique melodic songs ranging from folk to pop to country. In December 1998, Sandi teamed up with 26 other talented Boston-area female singer-songwriters to produce RESPOND, a compilation CD created to raise funds for RESPOND, Inc., a local non-profit that assists battered women and their children. More recently, she released her debut CD Rubbergirl to a sold-out crowd at Club Passim in Cambridge.

Oen Kennedy was weaned on West African and South Indian music, having spent his early years overseas. He has been writing songs since childhood, covering his many long-standing chronic source of joy. Oen released his debut CD Aluminum Green in June of 2001 at Club Passim to a packed house, and immediately began receiving regular airplay from local radio stations. Oen is also featured on the 2003 Best of Boston CD, with Jake Armerding, Alistair Moock, Rachael McCartney, and many other talented songwriters.

Susan Levine is a favorite on the Boston acoustic music scene. She was a semi-finalist in the International Songwriting Competition, a finalist in the

Rose Garden Songwriter Competition, and a finalist in the Rocky Mountain Folks Festival. Her songs are unique, memorable blends of folk, pop and country, sung with a distinctive voice and suffused with poetic vision. Marilyn Rea Beyer, of WUMB Folk Radio, calls Susan "a smart writer with a warm voice that can send chills down your spine."

Susan Irene Master is the gracious host of the Folkal Point coffeehouse at Springstep in Medford, and a talented singer-songwriter who also performs traditional songs and blues, all a cappella. Her repertoire includes feminist, anti-war, and blues songs that express both a woman's sadness and determination.

Nobody wishes on their death bed they had spent more time at the office. Or, in **Steve Rapson's** case, any time at the office. After life in corporate America he is now a recording artist, songwriter, and performing musician. Steve's debut CD, Christmas Guitar, is sold around the world. He has followed up with five more CDs, each with a companion book of transcriptions. As a producer and performance coach, Steve works with songwriters and performers and public speakers of all kinds. His approach to stage work is documented in his book The Art of the Solo Performer, and has helped further the careers of many new artists, including Kevin So and Mary Gauthier.

Many years ago **Deborah Rocha** traveled to Brazil and fell in love with the country, the people, and their music. A classically trained pianist, Deborah Rocha set about learning to play the guitar so that she could sing the songs that so intrigued her. She now performs these songs along with her own samba-influenced compositions in the greater Boston area.

John Schindler originally hails from St. Louis, Missouri, just a few blocks up from the Mississippi, and grew up on that town's rhythm and blues and his Oklahoma mama's singing. John's songs are a gumbo stewed with many ingredients and always served up with his slightly skewed vision of life. His first CD, Stardust Ballroom, was released in January, 1999. He was the winner of the 2003 Boston Folk Festival Songwriting Contest. His next CD, Memory Train, is due out in the fall of 2004.