



Expatriate American living in Norway – Songwriter/Multi-instrumentalist/Artist

The Formative Years – Folk Music, Woodstock & War

Jeff (Jeffrey) Wasserman grew up in the hamlet of East Norwich, New York approximately 2 km from the village of Oyster Bay on the north shore of Long Island. He 'stole' his older sister's guitar at the age of 11 and never gave it back.

The North Shore of Long Island was also home to 'The Guitar Workshop', where at the age of 15 Jeff began as a guitar student. Two years later he was teaching there. It was here that he first met Jeff Davis and Jeff Warner (and Paul Brady who had a brief teaching stint at the school). Wednesday evenings was tune session night and Wasserman soon developed his driving fiddle tune back-up guitar skills while at the same time brainwashing him with hundreds of fiddle tunes.

Jean Ritchie, known as "The Mother of Folk" and folk music collector Frank Warner (Jeff Warner's father), who discovered songs like "Tom Dooley," "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," "Whiskey in the Jar" and "The Days of 49 " also lived in the vicinity and were sources of inspiration in those early days.

In 1969, 15 years old, Jeff went to The Newport Folk Festival, where he first heard the "New" folk artists like Joni Mitchell and James Taylor. There he also hear talk of the upcoming Woodstock Music Festival in Bethel, N.Y. For Jeff, the Woodstock Festival was a horizon expanding experience on many levels and laid the foundation for his musical philosophy, "there is no box" - good music can not be locked inside the frames of genres.

The Vietnam War was raging and it was a turbulent social and political time with anti-war demonstrations and arrests. Jeff chose to dodge the draft and left the United States just 1 month shy of his 18th birthday. For eighteen months he hitchhiked around Europe earning his living as a street musician. He didn't return to the United States until 1973, when it the draft was finally ended.

After returning, Jeff won a local radio station's songwriting contest and at 19 years old debuted as a songwriter and artist. His first solo concert was to open for Pink Andersen (whom Pink Floyd took 1/2 of its name from - the other being Floyd Council). The success was followed by more concerts opening for among others Ry Cooder, Patrick Sky and Sam Chatman (of The Mississippi Sheiks) and The Balfa Brothers.

Later, he would tour with Jeff Davis and Jeff Warner under the name "The 3 Jeffs". They had a repertoire from a wide variety of American folk traditions performing at folk clubs, universities, coffeehouses, house concerts and contra / square dances throughout the Eastern USA.

The traditional folk music environment was quite conservative at the time and a bit too cramped for Wasserman, who would further develop his music by mixing multiple genres. "Chicken-Am Good" was established by a group of like-minded musicians. They played Old-Timey, Jugband, Bluegrass, Blues, Celtic, Sea Shanties, fiddle tunes, original songs as well as space-opera!

It was in 1974 - 75 with "Chicken-Am Good" that Jeff first came to Norway on tour. They held court at a farm outside Haugesund on Norway's west coast for an entire year, where they had countless "all-night" jam sessions and influenced several (now famous) Haugesund musicians with their eclectic folk music mix.

Jeff and the band returned to the US, where they changed their name to "Easy on the Tuba". In 1978 they won N.Y. Old Timey Music Contest" and played support for Lester Flatt.

It didn't take long before Jeff traveled back to his musician friends in Haugesund and the newgrass band "Gone At Last" was formed. It was not without reason that Tore Olsen, the legendary editor of the Norwegian music magazine "Puls" wrote; "Gone at Last is the spearhead of acoustic country music in Scandinavia". This was long before the Scandinavian press expressed equal enthusiasm for Old Timey & Bluegrass as they do today.



"Gone At Last" kept on for 20 years and had up to 200 travel days a year throughout Scandinavia and the US where they also did two extensive Tours with Cindy Cashdollar as a band member, playing concerts with the likes of Emmy Lou Harris, Bill Monroe, The Seldom

Scene, Ralph Stanley and The New Grass Revival.

Jeff m/ Bill Monroe - Gone At Last USA Tour 1986



Gone At Last - opening for Emmy Lou Harris - Lone Star Cafe, NYC - 1986

In 1985, the band was nominated for a Spellemann (Norwegian Grammy) for their first album "Gone At Last". They recorded their second album in 1987, but due to the bankruptcy of the record company to which they were signed, "Still Out There" wasn't released until 1994. "Gone At Last" supported the release with a tour that same year in Scandinavia with the "The Band".

In addition to being a multi-instrumentalist, he is known primarily for his songwriting. He has now lived in Norway since 1983 and is perhaps best known for having written the lyrics to the mega hit "Everyone Needs A Friend" (Dance With A Stranger), "Tell Me Where You're Going" (Silje Nergaard) and "Moving Time" (Rita Eriksen and Delbert McClinton).

He has written for and with among others; Jan Werner, Jonas Fjeld, Sissel, Knut Reiersrud, Mighty Sam McClain, Aslag Haugen (for Respatexans), Rita Eriksen, Torstein Flakne, Henning Kvitnes, Kristin Berglund, Harpo Svensson (S), Rick Danko (USA), Böhren and Aaserud, Sanne Salomonsen (D), Anne Linnet (D), Tom Pacheco (USA). In addition, he's interpreted lyrics by Norwegian "national treasures" Åge Aleksandersen and Ole Paus into English. Wasserman was signed to Warner-Chappell in 1994 but chose to leave in 1997.

Wasserman has over 300 songs in TONO (the Norwegian performing rights collection society) and has songs cuts on over 75 albums.

In 2009 he was nominated for a Norwegian Grammy, "Lyricist of the Year"

In 2009 Jeff also released his first solo album, Jeffrey & The Free Radicals, which he produced along with Knut Reiersrud. "The Knut Reiersrud Band" was the musical tree trunk for the album with Wasserman's many stringed instruments and guests Garth Hudson, Cindy Cashdollar, Fionnuala Sherry, Claudia Scott, Elg, and many more.

The press was impressed:

Dagbladet - 5 out of 6 stars

Blues News -5 out of 6 stars - *"One of the most fulfilling and lovely albums in Norwegian roots music in a long time"*

Rootstime.be - (Belgium) *".... This man is a true discovery .. a truly impressive album"*

FaroJournal - *"one of the finest Americana albums ever produced in Norway "*.

On his new album, "The Meeting of the Waters" (2016), Wasserman collected all the red threads from his rich musical life. He boiled his songs down to bare fiddle tunes and introduced them to his mentor from his teens at the Guitar Workshop, Jeff Davis - banjo, fiddle man and folklorist. For the most part, only the songs that Davis found to be somewhat consistent with traditional folk tradition were recorded. The "source material", these simple fiddle and guitar tunes, were recorded in Davis' own living room. Wasserman returned to Norway and built upon them with multiple instruments and vocals.

In addition, Wasserman invited his musician friends to add their artistry on the album. Among these fine musicians you'll hear contributions from Paul Brady, Jonas Fjeld, Andy Irvine, Claudia Scott, Knut Reiersrud, Brennen Leigh, Ingunn Bjørgo, Gone At Last, Esbjørn Hazelius.

There are neither drums or any electric instruments to be found on "The Meeting Of The Waters". It was recorded with vintage acoustic instruments and with vintage microphones as well. It's a highly organic recording made to give listener the sense of actually being in the same room as the musicians through 13 timeless songs.

Jeff Wasserman has also designed the entire album cover and this first Limited Edition of 300 copies comes with a CD and a Digital download card so that listener can download lossless FLAC and hi-res Mp3 of the album.

All albums are numbered and signed (like an art print) and can only be ordered directly from his website: www.jeffwasserman.no

The album is not available on any streaming or download platform. There is a vinyl edition planned for release April 2016.

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