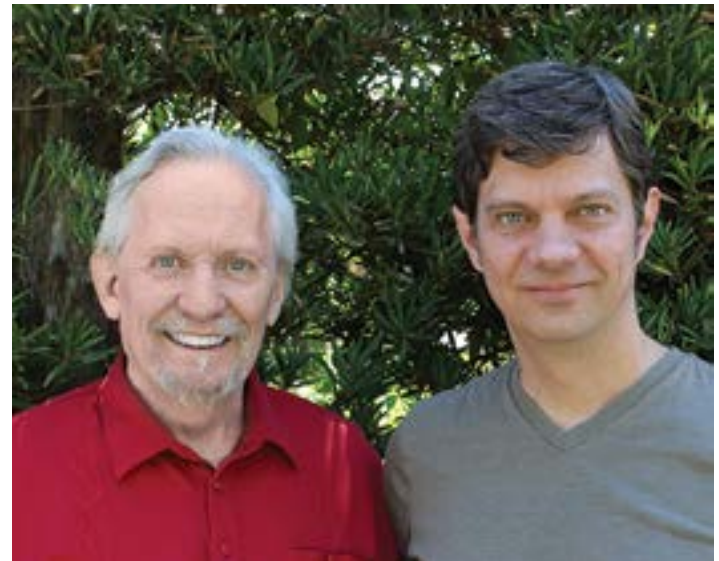


HARVEY KUBERNIK'S TEA PARTY SNACK PLATTER INTERVIEW WITH TRAVIS AND ADAM PIKE



Travis and Adam Pike, May 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

I've known singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Adam Pike for some years and I'd heard of his older brother, Travis, but really didn't know the scope of his backstory until Travis asked me to write the Foreword to his 2013 book, *Odd Tales and Wonders*. Then, while helping to prepare my book on the Beatles relationship to Los Angeles and Hollywood, *It Was 50 Years Ago Today*, Travis introduced me to some of the songs he composed and performed in the mid to late sixties with his former Boston-based band. He and Adam recorded those songs, and now these previously undiscovered treasures are ready to rock this century in their new CD, *Travis Edward Pike's Tea Party Snack Platter*. Even swimming upstream, these guys move fast, but I caught them between albums. As Travis told me about their relationship and on-going projects, I realized I needed to catch Adam's perspective on their collaboration.

HK: This is your third music album in less than a year. You haven't secretly cut a deal with a major, have you?

TP: No. We're still blissfully independent. I would never go into battle unless my guns were loaded. Before I sit down to negotiate with a major distributor, I want to be sure my back catalog is primed and loaded with attractive product. For now, I'm content to publish my products through Otherworld Cottage Industries.

HK: But that's you, too.

TP: Which makes it very convenient and gives us an opportunity to get the word out. We may be swimming against the current, but we're selling online through Amazon, and expect to be adding more retail outlets, soon. We've also got another music CD coming out in July, and that will bring us up to four music albums in less than a year.

HK: That's the one you're calling *Reconstructed Coffeehouse Blues*.

TP: Yes.

HK: I'm sure there's a story in that, but I want to talk about the *Tea Party Snack Platter*. What was the genesis of this album, and how did you come by the title?

TP: In 1966, I starred in *Feelin' Good*, a widescreen, color movie that featured me and ten of my songs. It enjoyed a Hollywood style premiere at the Paramount Theater in downtown Boston and, promoted by local rock jocks, provided me with some serious name recognition across New England. When I decided to return to my rock 'n' roll roots, that helped attract some of Boston's finest young musicians. At that time, the "British Invasion" was in full swing, and we citizens of Boston had an independent musical tradition to uphold, so the group decided that featuring my name and our revolutionary heritage, would attract audiences and bookings, so we called ourselves Travis Pike and the Boston Massacre.

But the Cheetah Lounge in New York City refused to book us with that name for fear of riots. So, in keeping with our regional roots, we changed our name to Travis Pike's Tea Party – a name as controversial then as it is today, but for a different reason. The original Tea Party, orchestrated by the Sons of Liberty in 1773, was decidedly political, but in 1967, "tea" was a popular euphemism for marijuana.

This album title has nothing to do with the contemporary Tea Party movement, except that their name and ours both stemmed from the inciting historical event in Boston Harbor in 1773. Travis Pike's Tea Party disbanded in 1969 and the modern Tea Party first came on the scene some 40 years later. I don't know whether, in the sixties, our name graced or damned us, but I can think of no other title that could better describe this recording of audience favorites performed by Travis Pike's Tea Party in the late sixties.

HK: The concept of this 2014 retail release. You openly billboard on the front cover the repertoire for just about all these recordings was initially conceived 45 years ago, and re-worked this year.

TP: "Imagine a time capsule, sealed in 1974, full of exciting storytelling songs and rhymes composed at the height of the American social and musical revolution of that time – not

recordings, but music, lyrics and rhymes never before recorded and released. Then, imagine the 'time capsule' is deteriorating, with most of its treasures still inside, and unless these works are retrieved and recorded quickly, they may soon be lost forever.

"I am that time capsule. My personal expiration date may be unknown, but it is surely approaching. At a recent gathering of friends, my daughter said she expected my back catalog of songs and stories to put her children through college. Someone, it might have been me, said something to the effect that if that was her plan, I'd better get busy recording the songs and getting the stories down on paper or they'd all die with me. When my father announced he was retiring to write his memoirs, I looked forward to reading them one day. But shortly after his announcement, he suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. That's when the notion of committing my works to paper and recordings began to seriously nibble at the edges of my mind.

"I proposed the project to my friend, David Carr, who had arranged and conducted the music for my 1997, Blenheim Palace world premiere performance of *Grumpuss*. He was up for it, so I bought the digital recording equipment I anticipated we'd need. On July 12, 2011, David died of a heart attack. Thanks to the four stents that keep blood flowing through my arteries, I'm getting by, but the idea that all my creative efforts might come to naught became unconscionable and that's when I talked to my brother, Adam, about recording my back catalog.

"The *Tea Party Snack Platter* is one of three I hope to release this year. *Reconstructed Coffeehouse Blues* is due out in July and features songs I composed at two different Naval Hospitals and ended up in my coffeehouse repertoire. The third, *Feelin' Better*, has no set release date, but will consist of songs adapted for today's audiences, that I wrote and performed in that 1966 movie, as well as a few other songs from that time. Albums and singles may be auditioned through otherworldcottageindustries.com as they become available".

Q: Tell me about your Boston-based Tea Party band that played most of your original tunes. Who were they, where did they come from and how did you assemble them?

TP: My first recruit was Karl Garrett, lead guitarist and third vocalist, a senior at Boston's prestigious Berklee School of Music. His guidance counselor didn't mind introducing me, because Karl had been invited to study classical guitar with Andre Segovia in Spain and had already announced he would not be returning to Berklee in the Spring. I played him my songs, told him we'd be rehearsing in a recording studio and intended to play only original material. Karl liked my songs and my concept.

With Karl on board, other musicians, impressed by his background and superb musicianship, were eager to audition. Mikey Joe was next. I didn't recognize his name, but he had played bass in a band with which I had performed a few years earlier. His audition was marginal, but he knew lots of other players and offered to help us get a group together. I thanked him for that, but didn't promise he'd make the cut. In fact, Mikey Joe found "Uncle Phil," an ex-Navy band drummer and George Brox, a folk-singer and rhythm guitar player, both out of work because the club in which they had been playing had been firebombed and the club's insurance refused to replace their equipment. Ex-Navy band was good enough for me and George sang well, played guitar a bit better than me and had a great smile, so when they joined up, the roster was complete.

Not long ago, I tried to look up everybody in the original cast and found George Brox online in the Dead Rock Stars Club list. He died sometime in the previous century of cancer. All it said was that he was a member of Travis Pike's Tea Party who recorded "If I Didn't Love You Girl" and "The Likes of You." Karl Garrett is, to this day, an incredible classical guitarist, now teaching in Pennsylvania. Uncle Phil is now playing drums for the Charlie Jamieson Trio on Cape Cod, Massachusetts and all I can tell you about Mikey Joe is that he's retired and living in San Diego.

HK: Talk to me about initially re-visiting the material. Your liner notes mention this 2014 release is "an effort to reclaim the best of the songs and music from your catalog." What is your process of review and evaluation?

TP: When I first spoke to Adam about recording my back catalog, I told him that of some 300 original songs, there were only about 50 or so I expected to make the final cut. The number is now closer to 80, partly because some of what I considered to be marginal, Adam really liked. Our procedure is that I play a song – or more frequently hand him a lyric sheet with guitar chords above the lyrics, then I indicate the tempo and style and he plays it while I sing the vocal. Then he records some rhythm tracks, I record a vocal scratch track to lay down the bones and we proceed from there. Sometimes, I hand him notation, but more frequently I sing parts, run them down on keyboard or guitar and let him take it from there. And that doesn't take into account his contributions as the song emerges and melodies, harmonies and instruments appear, as if by magic, as he adds his interpretations to the piece.

As for selecting the songs, so far, every one I've offered has made it onto our list, but that may be because I've screened out so many. Over the years I cannibalized my early songs and incorporated their melodies or harmonies into new songs. My original plan was to make demo recordings that could be submitted to recording artists, A&R people and publishers, but when I realized how talented Adam really is, I decided to go for masters.



With my singing and songwriting and Adam's musicianship and engineering skills, we have everything we need to produce finished product. In the sixties, I was a seat-of-the-pants singer-songwriter with little training, but an ear for what works and a style that seemed to have broad appeal. After that first decade of performance, I attended CalPoly, Pomona, where I learned

notation and enough music theory and orchestration to appreciate and participate in final arrangements of my music. Today, I'm learning a lot from Adam about why some of my songs work the way they do, and he's learning a bit from me about discarding rules that don't always apply in the real world – and less so in Otherworld.

HK: In this 2014 project, music and lyrics are yours but it's produced and performed by yourself and Adam at his studio. What was the nature of your brotherhood with him many years ago and what has it become now, owing to this album?

TP: Our early relationship is captured beautifully in the cover to last year's *Odd Tales and Wonders Stories in Song* CD. Adam is my genuine baby brother, both by blood and by marriage. We have the same mother and father, but he is 22 years younger than me. He is the little tyke sitting on my knee in the chariot. Together we constitute one of the oddest and most wonderful tales in the book.



He was two years old when I moved to California in 1968, and that cover photo was taken when he was brought west to attend my wedding. We were little more than curiosities to each other, but he was a charmer, even then. Ten years later, he and my mother moved to Pasadena, California, and our relationship began in earnest. I knew he had appeared in a number of TV commercials produced by our father, and I was the 1st AD on a new fantasy adventure film, so I put him up for the role of a young gorilla. He hated the hours in makeup and the hot glue it took to prepare for that role and told me, at the wrap party, that he didn't ever want to be in another movie. He wanted to be a musician. At 12-years-old, he had already set his course.

When it became clear that he really was set on becoming a musician, I gave him my old Gibson electric hollow-body guitar. Later, when he wanted to install a recording studio in my mother's guest house, my wife, Judy, co-signed for his loan, and I told him to get into keyboards, too, because that was the way the industry was heading. Recording *Morningstone* with David Pinto in 1987, falls outside my decade of performance, but I took those tracks to Adam's studio and he did the sweetening and final mixes for me.

In 1997, when I was preparing to videotape my performance of *Grumpuss* at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, England, David Carr took my music to Adam's studio to work out and print the arrangements for the British orchestra he'd be conducting for the show and when I finished my first audio theater version of *Grumpuss* in 1998, I brought the spoken word master to Adam and he, David Carr and I added the music and effects tracks and Adam mastered the dual cassette production.

All during that time, Adam pursued his own career, of which you'll learn more from him than you can ever learn from me. I know he recorded his own original songs and recorded dozens of aspiring recording artists, and I know he composed and produced 5.1 surround sound music for Pike Productions theatrical snipes, too. And as one of the Syrups, he composed five songs for their first and only album for Beck Records, produced and engineered by four-time Grammy Award winner and recording legend, Geoff Emerick, (best known for his work on the Beatles albums *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, *The Beatles* and *Abbey Road*).

Adam was, by then, a song-writer, multi-instrumentalist, recording engineer and producer in his own right. After the Syrups, Adam recorded with other groups, immersing himself in his studio work -- which is why, in August, 2012, it seemed only common sense for me to hand him all the state-of-the-art recording gear I had purchased to record my back catalog. With me, the equipment did nothing but age and gather dust, but he was able to immediately put it to good use, including the recording of my back catalog, a work still in progress.

HK: You brought Adam compositions from decades ago and he helped steer them into the current century. What is it like recording with him?

TP: To say this has been – and continues to be -- the most enjoyable and fulfilling experience in my entire musical career is an understatement. We work as a team, bringing all our strengths, skills and insights to the work at hand. This is not to say our approach is monolithic. On the contrary, our different experiences, training, even the difference in our ages results in sometimes widely divergent views of our work, but our shared goal of making each piece the best that we can, keeps us focused. There is a great deal of "we" and very little "me" in either of us when it comes to recording the music. We consider each other's views, styles and reasons for putting forward one idea or another for each piece and then proceed based on what we determine best serves the song.

HK: What are Adam's strengths in the studio?

TP: Adam's knowledge of the hardware and software is paramount, as it would be in any recording studio. With the latest and most sophisticated equipment and programs we use, if he isn't already on top of it, he gets on top of it quickly and expertly. Furthermore, he's an excellent musician. His keyboard work is delightful and generally all I need for my compositions, and when I need an exceptional instrumental performance or additional vocals, we both have friends we can call upon.

Adam's work on electric bass, both fretted and unfretted is superb. Neither of us is a virtuoso guitarist, but his experience playing bass has been adequate enough to get us through most of the lead guitar parts we've needed so far, and as out of practice as I am, (my Taylor acoustic guitar is significantly better tuned

than my finger-pickin' chops), I manage to come through, however many times a "take" may require.

When it comes to orchestration, we both participate in those decisions, but Adam's keyboard skills, including the "touch" required to make many of the sampled instruments "speak" properly, has proven to be up to the task. His musical training is another big plus, providing him insights that allow him to make suggestions I might never have imagined. Did I mention what a joy it is to work with him?

HK: As this album was being compiled what were some of the thoughts and feelings you had since this has been a long gestation from tune birth to delivery?

TP: An interesting question, but flawed in one particular. These pieces were actually delivered back in the sixties, played in concert before live audiences who, by their reactions, gave me the kind of feedback that helped me to decide which pieces to record and which to discard, so the gestation period was actually quite short and the feedback was quite immediate.

However, your question hits the mark when one considers the changes that have occurred in our society in the intervening years, and how they have impacted some of my songs – less so, in this album, which is a Travis Pike's Tea Party retrospective, than in the next album, *Reconstructed Coffeehouse Blues*, which is more topical, and derives from my Vietnam era military hospital experience and coffeehouse-based repertoire, which now has to deal with revisionist history and political correctness issues, not of the period. You should ask me that again, should we ever do an interview about *Reconstructed Coffeehouse Blues*.

HK: What about sequencing the numbers? Any loose theme to the audio journey?

TP: The theme is Travis Pike's Tea Party's audience favorites. I originally sequenced the songs considering when they went into our repertoire so that the evolution of the group and its musical style would be represented, then arranged them the way I would have for a live performance, and was quite happy with it. However, Adam listened to them out of order and discovered that the ballad, "Can't You See," provided an excellent transition to "One Ten Blues," another slow, but arguably powerful number. I

listened to them in that order and agreed. Adam also suggested that my transition from "In Your Eyes" to "You Got What I Need" was too great a leap and that they would both benefit from having "I'll Do Anything I Can" between them. I suppose the answer is, someone (in this case, me) has to come up with a sequence, but until the final master is struck, that sequence is subject to change if the change provides positive impact to the presentation.

HK: Why do your song topics work in 2014? When you did some of this material, what did it feel like then? Can you explain some of the reasons for the durability of the songs and why they translate, even re-vamped or finished, today?

TP: I was 22 to 25 years old when I wrote most of these songs dealing with themes and issues that resonated with my peers – the desire to be accepted, looking for someone to love who would love you back, the heartache of rejection and the joy of acceptance, what one had to do to be popular, what price happiness, all the coming of age issues. Our audiences then were mostly teenagers and young adults, and these are some of our most popular songs, so you might say each one was audience tested back in the day.

I wanted to make sure that our recordings for the Tea Party Snack Platter were as faithful to the sounds and spirit of those times as we could make it, and generally speaking, I think we succeeded. As for their acceptance by current audiences, today's teens and twenty-somethings are still dealing with the same issues we were, so it should come as no surprise that these songs resonate with them, too. And for those grandmas and grandpas who lived through the sixties with me, I hope my sound will summon fond memories of those extraordinary times, even if they've never heard me or these particular songs before.



HK: Let's go over the individual tracks, okay?

TP: "Okay" is Track 2. Track 1 is "If I Didn't Love You Girl."

HK: Then, start with "If I Didn't Love You Girl."

TP: Ah, yes. Psychedelic schizophrenia -- or maybe the other way around. A youth, attracted to a young lady, wants to profess his love, but is fearful of rejection. Protecting his fragile id, he is of two minds. Thus, when he sings "I wouldn't cry all night, If I Didn't Love You Girl," the contrary backup vocalists sing "I----- Didn't



Love you girl.” Likewise, when he sings “You wouldn’t do what you do, if you really loved me girl,” they sing “You----- really loved me girl,” providing his id with an escape, should she turn him down. (I never really liked her. I was just saying that.) That’s how I intended it to be and the original Travis Pike’s Tea Party recording was subsequently released on offshore psychedelic compilation albums, including the vinyl LP, Compilation, UK, 1995, London Fog LF1 *Tougher Than Stains* and the CD Compilation, Germany, 1994, Way Back Records –MMCD 66012, *Sixties Rebellion Vol.7 The Backyard Patio*. And in 2002, thanks to Adam, Geoff Emerick recorded the Syrups version of it for their album released in 2003.



Track 2 is “Okay,” which may have been the first rock song I introduced to Travis Pike and the Boston Massacre. I sang lead on all the songs, so I won’t be saying that again, and I re-created the three part vocal arrangement. This song was always solid performer and stayed in our repertoire from start to finish. The song is about a guy who has in some way, offended his girlfriend. Instead of apologizing, he tries to put her on the defensive. He suggests that anyone, in his circumstances might have reacted the same way, offering excuses for his boorish behavior at the same time he suggests her strange conduct sent him a wrong message, in order to shift the blame for their misunderstanding to her! Unless she’s guilty, more messed up or more in love with him than he is with her, it probably won’t work. She should dump him. But young love being what it is, who can really say what the outcome will, or ought to be?

“Worried Sick,” track 3, may seem odd to today’s listeners, who have never known a world without email, cellphones, and text messaging, because the singer’s dismay is caused by the fact that he hasn’t heard from his girl in three whole days! It’s meant to be funny, and old-timers will remember that in those days, to write, post a letter, and have it delivered, would frequently take that long, or longer in rural areas. Our audiences laughed when they heard he’d only been away for three days. Today’s audiences may not get it at all, but for me it’s still fun. What’s next?

HK: Track 4. “Can’t You See.”

TP: This melancholy breaking up song describes a situation that allows for no other solution, but the fellow giving up on the relationship does so sadly and without vindictiveness, hoping that both he and his former love will eventually find happiness. It’s a more mature outlook than most, and one that pleased audiences then and should now.

Track number 5, “One-Ten Blues,” is next. Adam pointed out that it’s not really blues in the classic sense, but it does deal with heartbreak, loss and terrible suffering. The love that lived in the singer’s soul is gone. Perhaps she’s passed away and nothing but his own death can ever end his misery. Recording “One Ten Blues” for this album was a must. Travis Pike’s Tea Party had recorded an early rehearsal and my scratch track vocal, only ever intended to be a place-holder, found its way onto the internet. In this new master, I finally sing it the way I always intended.

“Stay By Me,” is track 6. Originally called “Come Back To Me,” the song was about a woman who had already gone with another man. I revisited the lyrics for this recording, and I think the song is better for it. The relationship is under assault, through no fault of the singer and no misconduct on the part of his beloved. She is being courted by a well-heeled heel, an interloper whose courtship may be little more than a mean-spirited flirtation. Worse still, if he succeeds in destroying the current relationship, there is no guarantee that the lady will not be cast aside. The song is a plea to continue in the stable relationship, based on love and history. The outcome is not guaranteed, but anyone, of any age, who has ever lost a mate to another, or fears it may happen to them or may be happening to them, will recognize the pain and hope this song conveys.

Track 7, is almost a polar opposite. “What’s the Matter with Your Mind” is a rocking, disillusioned lover’s primal scream – as likely a projection of his own disturbed state of mind, as of hers, offering no promise of hope or forgiveness, which some argue would make a woman more likely to try to call back. Of course, it’s possible that the reason the guy thinks her brain is badly wrinkled, is because she’s seen through him, and it’s his brain that fails to comprehend that she is deliberately avoiding him, in which case, this incomplete call could signal her long-awaited freedom from her “stalker!” Young love is complex. Come to think of it, all love is complex. It’s just more passionately wonderful or horrific when you’re young. Where am I now?

HK: Track 8. “In Your Eyes.”

TP: Beautifully supported with Latin rhythms, (played by me on my new Latin Percussion congas), the song addresses the rush of emotions – hurt, anger and potential relief – inherent in the breakup of an ill-fated romance. This song was always a bit outside what one considers a normal rock band repertoire, but Travis Pike’s Tea Party was never a regular rock band. I wrote it, we could do it, so we did. Remember, we’re the same guys who did “A Red-backed, Scaly, Black-bellied, Tusked, Bat-winged Dragon.”

We didn’t play it everywhere, but everywhere we did play it, it went over well and frankly, if I’d had my way, we’d have played it more often, so I was thrilled when Adam said we should go for it and even more thrilled by this arrangement and recording of it. HK: Track 9. “I’ll Do Anything I Can.”

TP: Ah! This is a promise made out of desperate, adolescent infatuation, but at my age, I have to wonder if “anything” would ever be enough to win this particular gal – or any other, for that matter. Experience suggests a vague “anything” hasn’t much of a chance against a steady job. But lots of folks like this one and as Adam suggested, it works well between Tracks 8 and 10.

“You Got What I Need,” track 10, is a rocking celebration of primal, post-adolescent hormones running amuck. One wag suggested it was probably a song a guy pushing 70-years old should be arrested for singing, but hey, it’s my song and I was only 23 or 24 years old when I wrote it, and I’ll bet there are young and old people out there, who will definitely identify with it, today. The only difference between me singing this and Mick Jagger singing “Satisfaction” at his age, is that “Satisfaction” was a first super hit record. Well, “You Got What I Need” was one of my biggest hits — never before recorded and released, but huge with my live audiences, especially where dancing was allowed. Besides, my wife loves it, and so does my daughter, who both definitely wanted me to record it. And Adam digs it, too, so there.

And you don’t have to remind me what track 11 is. I finally recorded and released “Oh Mama” for the first time last year, in the *Odd Tales and Wonders, Stories in Song* album, with a new lead line for flute, and I still like it that way, but for the *Tea Party Snack Platter* album, we went back into the mix and put in a more typical Tea Party arrangement. Travis Pike’s Tea Party never played this lead, composed especially for last year’s release (which featured, by the way, the first time I ever managed to get the exact drum parts I first heard played by the Fire Control Technicians as they marched to classes at the Naval Training Center in Bainbridge, Maryland). I sang all the parts, doing my best to make it really sound like the original Travis Pike’s Tea Party vocals and voices. And it makes an entirely fitting finale, since this is the song I wrote about in my book, that blew “Land of a Thousand Dances” off the dance floor at The Posh in Pomona, California in 1968 - 1969.

Adam Pike on recording with Travis on the Tea Party Snack Platter CD

Multi-instrumentalist, Pasadena-based recording studio owner Adam Pike was a member of the Syrups, whose debut album on Beck Records on which Travis’ “If I Didn’t Love You Girl” was produced and engineered by Geoff Emerick, whose previous credits include the Beatles’ *Sgt Pepper* and *Abbey Road*.

Adam had also been a member of the Moonlight Wranglers and produced their first three albums. Their music has been licensed to syndicated television shows like *MTV’s Jersey Shore*. Adam’s credits include work on background music and instrumental cues like “Love Muscle” utilized in Universal Pictures *American Pie*.

HK: Travis approached you with a different sort of musical collaboration—songs he penned 40 years ago —and sought your musical and production skills to bring them to fruition.

AP: The launching of this new collection wasn’t very formal. It was not like we sat down and ironed out a game plan. For me it was more like, “I know he has tons of music from those days. It’s something to do. And, he’s my brother.” Besides, I get a certain carte blanche in revitalizing these tunes. We share a lot of the same musical influences from the sixties.



Harvey Kubernik interviews Adam Pike about recording with older brother Travis, May 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

AP: In the beginning, the process was more about documentation. “Here’s a song. Let’s record it so we have something in a tangible form other than a lyric sheet.” So it began from that. Travis has had 30 or more years off from live shows, so his voice is basically the same, and that’s why it still sounds good. Working with regular clients, one of my normal engineering or producing concerns is “Does this vocal match the artist’s self-image?” Not so with Travis. He’s not going out on the road.



Travis in the sound booth, April 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

HK: Tell me about the process of working with your older brother on his latest endeavor and the equipment you used on this album.

AP: It was recorded on a Mackie 1640i firewire mixer into Sonar X3 Producer, which is computer software. Naturally, we’re using a variety of outboard mic preamps and compressors as well. The electric guitar you hear is a ‘66 Gibson ES125 masquerading as a 225, since it’s had a second pickup added in the bridge position.

For most of the bass I played on this recording, I used my Fender Precision bass, but for a couple of tracks, I played my fretless Music Man. All of the keyboard sounds are artificially generated by virtual synthesizers in the computer. For the vocals, I used a reasonably priced Rode condenser microphone. But just recently, I inherited from our father, some vintage RCA ribbon microphones and we use both, depending on the vocal characteristics called for by the song, for Travis' vocals.

In Travis' Tea Party band days he couldn't really do everything he wanted. He had a really good band, but for some arrangements – and even the choice of songs they'd play – he'd had to negotiate. So one of my biggest concerns was that Travis get to do everything he wanted to do -- and he did. I participate in all the decisions, but essentially, it's a democratic dictatorship. Everybody has a say, but there's always the one person to spearhead it.



Travis recorded finger-picking on his Taylor Guitar.

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I was concerned about things like range. Could he still make the high notes? In our pre-production discussions, we'd go over various keys. Sometimes we'd take it up or down a step or two to maneuver the melody into his vocal comfort zone and allow him to sing it the way he wanted. There are a couple of songs where we sing together. We have that family thing blend. But he, Travis, is him, so he blends with himself even better, and now we mostly have him do all the parts. I think it's an interesting sound.

HK: After finishing the album collaboration, what was the first playback like for you?

AP: This thing became an album. Initially it felt like a whole collection of singles. Each song on its own was a snapshot. That's good, but how would it sound compiled together? I wanted it to sound like new recordings and it does. The *Tea Party Snack Platter* is definitely a strong and truly representative album.



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