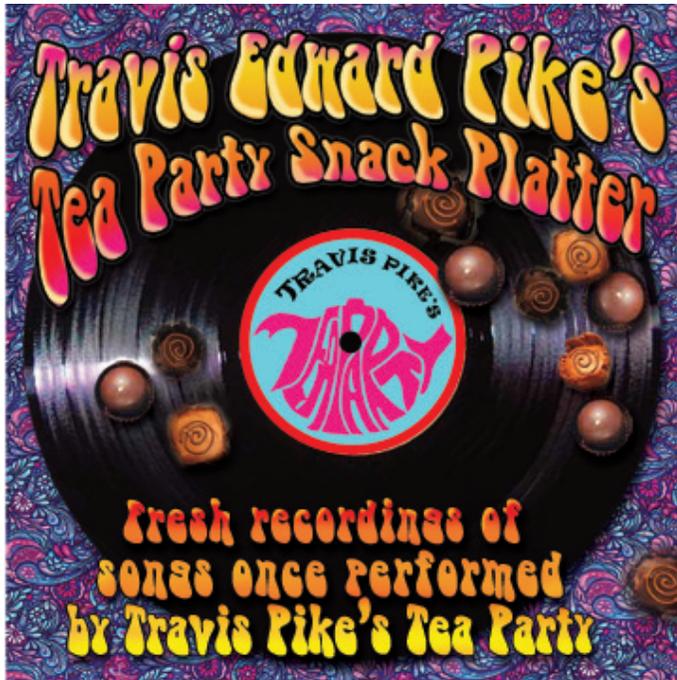


HARVEY KUBERNIK'S "FISHING EXPEDITION" ENCOUNTERS FORMIDABLE CALIFORNIA PIKES



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, too.*

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

A: 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 release my product through *Otherworld Cottage Industries*.

Q: *But that's you, too.*

A: 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 *Otherworld Cottage Industries* and *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.

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

A: Yes.

Q: *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?*

A: *The Tea Party Snack Platter* records one step in my career, outlined in *Travis Edward Pike's Odd Tales and Wonders: 1964-1974 A Decade of Performance*, which, as you know, is memoir of my early days as a singer-songwriter and contains a collection of lyrics to songs and narrative rhymes I composed and performed during that period. Concurrent with that book's release, I released two CD albums, *Odd Tales and Wonders*, *Stories in Rhyme* and *Odd Tales*

and *Wonders, Stories in Song*, co-produced by my brother, Adam, for which we arranged and performed all the songs and rhymes featured in the book. *Odd Tales and Wonders Stories in Song* contains mostly novelty songs that made the transition with me from the coffeehouses into the Travis Pike's Tea Party repertoire, updated and recorded for today's audiences.

In 1966, I starred in *Feelin' Good*, a widescreen, color movie that featured me and eight of my songs. The film 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.

Q: 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.

A: The blurb on the back cover of *Odd Tales and Wonders* imagines "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' Good and Getting' 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. Audio samples will appear on the oddtalesandwonders.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?

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 him 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 cast was complete.

Anticipating your question, 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 Mikey Joe is retired and living in San Diego.

Q: 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?

A: 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 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.



"Laying down the bones," March 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

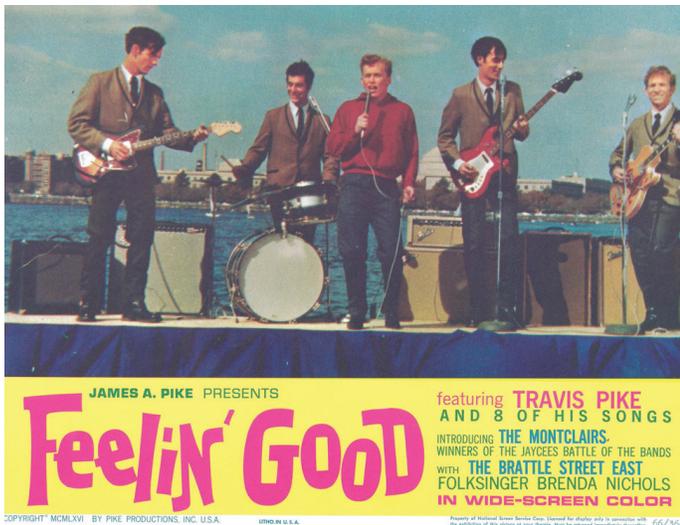
As for selecting the songs, so far, every one I've offered has made it onto our list, but that may be because I've screened out so many. Over the years I cannibalized my early songs and incorporated their melodies or harmonies into new songs. My original plan was to make demo recordings that could be 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.

Q: Who were you as a songwriter/singer then and who are you now?

A: As it says in "I'll Do Anything I Can," one of the songs on this album, "I'm still only me." In the late sixties and early seventies, I was a performer, a storytelling, singer-songwriter. Between then and now, I became a filmmaker, and at the start of this century, I turned my attention to mentoring other writers, serving as vice president of the *Alameda Writers Group* and Chairman of the *New Playwrights Foundation*. Now, nearly 70-years-old, I am, again, a singer-songwriter, content to be a recording artist.

Q: You garnered lots of media coverage in the Boston area.



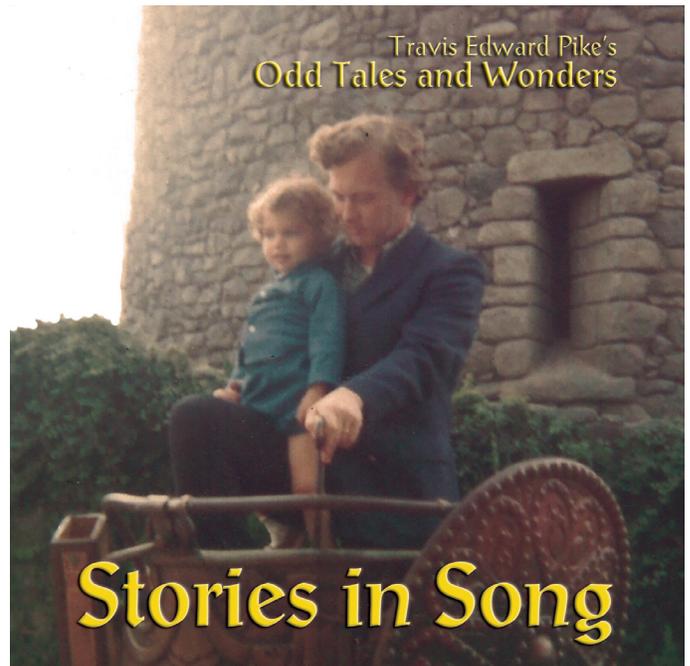
A: I've mentioned the movie, *Feelin' Good*, and its premiere promotions by notable local disc jockeys. Travis Pike's Tea Party drew interest from colleges, private clubs, commercial and festival concert venues, many of whom advertised their events, which, of course, brought still more attention from newspaper and magazine reviewers, and radio and TV producers and publicists.

Mixers were big in Boston, a huge college town, and in the New England area, there were more than enough festivals and concerts in venues like the *Psychedelic Supermarket*, to keep us busy and constantly featured in their attendant publicity. We even became the house band for a short-lived comedy-variety show on *WBZ-TV*. From about 1966 to 1968, I would say that if you were at all into pop music in the Greater Boston area, perhaps even in the entire New England area, you would certainly have heard of us, even if you never made it to one of our concerts.

Q: Is there a relationship or correlation to the "Demo Derby" recording and the movie you did the soundtrack for? I know "Demo Derby," now out on DVD, was a movie that shared North American theatrical showings with the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" in the summer of 1964.

A: The principal correlation between *Demo Derby* and *Feelin' Good*, is that my father, James A. Pike, produced both. I was in Germany in the summer of 1964 and never saw the double feature with *A Hard Day's Night* in theaters, but the short, action film was based on one of my ideas and I wrote the title song, arranged by Arthur Korb and performed by the Rondels. Another direct correlation is that the success of *Demo Derby's* pairing with *Hard Day's Night* essentially financed the *Feelin' Good* production.

Q: Your brother Adam was very involved in this 2014 project. The lyrics and music are yours and 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 owing to this album?



A: 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 as I was 1st AD on a new fantasy adventure film, 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 sweetening and final mixes for me. In 1997, when I was preparing to videotape my live 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 me 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 *Revolver*, *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.

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

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 that 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.

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



By plugging directly into the board, Adam can perform and engineer at the same time, May 2014- Photo by Judy Pike

A: His knowledge of the hardware and software is paramount, as it would be in any recording studio. Even with the newest and most sophisticated equipment and programs we use, he is on top of it – or gets on top of it quickly and expertly. Furthermore, he is 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 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 the lead guitar parts we’ve needed so far and as out of practice as I am, (my Taylor acoustic ax is significantly better than my finger-pickin’ chops), I manage to come through, however many times a “take” may take. As for orchestration, we both participate in those decisions, but Adam’s keyboard skills, including touch for many of the emulated instruments, has also proven 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?

Q: 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?

A: An interesting question, but flawed in one particular. These pieces were actually delivered back in the sixties, played in concert before live audiences that 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 Teas 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 has to now deal with revisionist history and political correctness issues not of the period. You should ask that question again should we do an interview about *Reconstructed Coffeehouse Blues*.

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



“Plugged in” Adam recording (and engineering) a bass part, April 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

A: 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 an original sequence for the tunes, based on whatever construct may apply, but until the final master is struck, that sequence is subject to change if the change provides positive impact to the presentation.

Q: 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?

A: I was between 22 and 25 years old when I wrote most of these songs, dealing with themes and issues that resonate with young people in their teens and twenties – wanting to be accepted, looking for someone to love and/or someone to love them, the

heartache of broken relationships, rejection and 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 their reactions were excellent, so every performance was a blast! We tried to make sure the *Tea Party Snack Platter*, although the recordings are new, essentially maintained the sounds and spirit of those times, and I think we succeeded. As for their acceptance by current audiences, young people in their teens and twenties today are still dealing with these same issues, 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, authenticity and nostalgia are inherent in the arrangements and themes, even if they never heard the earlier incantations.

Let's go over the individual tracks, okay?

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



Travis Edward Pike, Interview, May 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

Well then, let's start with t"If I Didn't Love You Girl."

A: 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.

Moving right along, Track 2. "Okay."

A: I think "Okay" wa's the first rock song I introduced to Travis Pike and the Boston Massacre. I sang the lead (on all the songs, so I won't be saying that again), and created the three part vocal arrangement. This song was a solid performer at all our gigs and stayed in our repertoire from start to finish. The song deals with a young man who has, possibly falsely, accused or in some other way, offended his girlfriend and put her on the defensive, but would rather make up than break up -- while at the same time trying to protect his id and so, short of apologizing and begging forgiveness, suggests that anyone, in the given circumstances might have reacted the same way he did, offering excuses for his boorish behavior and suggesting that it's her unusual code of behavior that sent him a wrong message, thus shifting 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 shouldn't work. She should dump him. But young love being what it is, who is to say what the outcome will be?

Track 3. "Worried Sick."

A: "Worried Sick" may seem odd to today's listeners who have never known a world without cellphones, email, and text messaging, because the singer is complaining that he's been away and hasn't heard from his girl in three days! In those days, to write, post a letter, and have it delivered, would frequently take that long, or longer in rural areas. Our audiences, imagining those rural settings, laughed when they realized that "so long" was only three days. Today's audiences may not get it, but it still sounds like fun and was an audience favorite.

Track 4. “Can’t You See.”

A: This is one of those melancholy breaking up songs. The situation allows for no other solution, but the fellow giving up on the relationship does so sadly and without vindictiveness, hoping for better luck next time and hoping his former love eventually finds happiness, as well. It’s a more mature outlook than most such songs, but one that pleased audiences then and should now.

Track 5. “One Ten Blues.”

A: Adam pointed out that it’s not really blues in the classic sense, but it certainly deals with heartbreak, loss and terrible suffering. The love that lived in the singer’s soul is gone. I suspect she has 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 give it the performance I always thought it deserved.

Track 6. “Stay By Me.”

A: This was originally “Come Back To Me,” which suggested that the lady in question had already taken off with the other man. Revisited, a better interpretation emerged. The singer’s relationship is under assault, through no particular fault of his own and no particular misconduct of his beloved. She is being courted by a well-heeled heel, an interloper who may only be courting her for his own selfish interests and may even, if he prevails, having satisfied his ends, cast her aside. The song is now a powerful plea to continue with a stable relationship based on love and history. A positive 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. “What’s the Matter with Your Mind.”

A: This one is, on the other hand, a rocking, disillusioned lover’s primal scream – as likely a projection of his own disturbed state of mind, as of hers. There is no promise of hope or forgiveness, which some argue would make a woman more likely to try to call back – unless the reason he thinks her brain is badly wrinkled is because she sees 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 tormentor! 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.

Track 8. “In Your Eyes.”

A: Beautifully supported with Latin rhythms, (played by me on my new LP 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.

Track 9. “I’ll Do Anything I Can.”

A: 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 Track 8 and Track 10.

Track 10. “You Got What I Need.”

A: This rocking celebration of primal, post-adolescent hormonal activity run amuck, inspired all the questions about whether a guy pushing 70-years-old should be allowed to sing it or should be arrested for trying. It’s my song. I wrote it. I was only 23 or 24 years old at the time, but I’m willing to bet there are young people out there today, dancing up a storm, who will definitely identify with it. I asked one of the ostensibly concerned what the difference was between me singing this song and Mick Jagger singing “Satisfaction” at his age. The answer was, “That was one of his biggest hit songs.” Well, “You Got What I Need” was one of my biggest hit songs –

never before recorded and released, but a huge hit with my live audiences. Besides, my wife loves it, and so does my daughter, who both definitely wanted me to record it. And Adam digs it, too.

Track 11. "Oh Mama."

A: We actually finally recorded and released this song last year, in the *Odd Tales and Wonders Stories in Song* album, but that arrangement is quite different. At the time, I put the lead on flute and I still like it that way, but this is the *Tea Party Snack Platter*, so we went back into the mix and put in a more spiritually typical Tea Party arrangement. We never had an onstage synth and 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). The vocals also really sound like original Travis Pike's Tea Party vocals. Finally, this is the song I wrote about in *Odd Tales and Wonders* that blew "Land of a Thousand Dances" off the dance floor at *The Posh* in Pomona, California in 1968 - 1969.

SIDEBAR:

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



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

Multi-instrumentalist and Pasadena-based recording studio owner Adam Pike was a member of the Syrups, whose eponymous debut album on Beck Records was produced and engineered by Geoff Emerick, whose previous credits include the Beatles' *Revolver* and *Abbey Road*. In fact, the Syrups recorded one of the Travis Pike's Tea Party songs, "If I Didn't Love You Girl" on that album.

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

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

A: 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.

Q: You heard a few rehearsal tapes of Travis's material, but mostly worked from lyric sheets and original notation Travis provided.

A: 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.

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



Travis, finger-picking, April, 2014 - Photo by Judy Pike

A: 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.



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

In Travis's 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.

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.

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

A: 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.