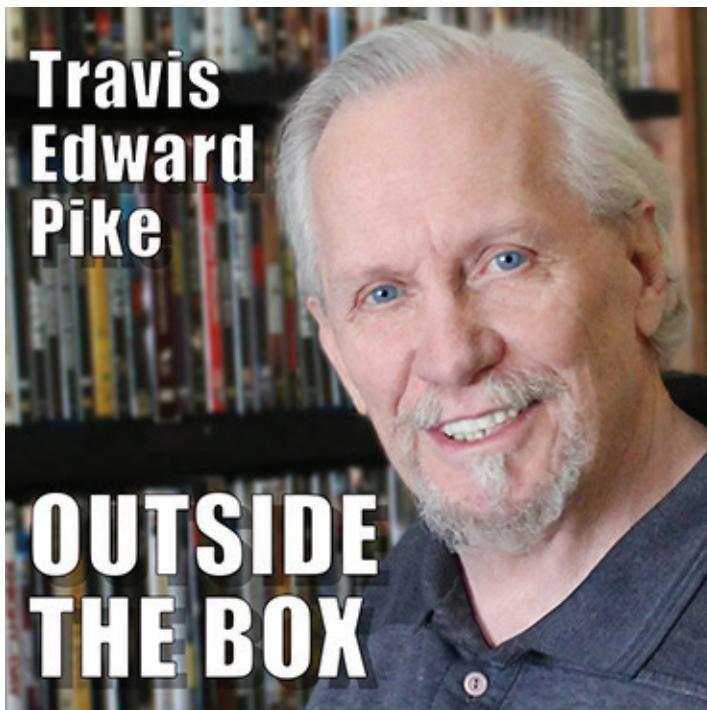


# Travis Edward Pike

## A Contemporary Renaissance

# 50 Years in the Making

by Harvey Kubernik



Singer, songwriter, storyteller, screenwriter and filmmaker Travis Edward Pike is a Los Angeles-based veteran music-maker, performer, and conceptualist who has in just three years released a slew of new and back catalog audio products. I have interviewed him several times during that period, and we have discussed his development, production and publishing company, Otherworld Cottage Industries; his music publishing company, Morningstone Music; and his ongoing series of music and song collaborations with his younger brother, multi-instrumentalist, audio engineer and co-producer, Adam Pike. One of the busiest Hollywood entrepreneurs I know, his newest and most eclectic album, "Outside the Box" was released by Otherworld Cottage Industries on May 2, 2016. Songs include his "Andalusian Bride Suite," "Pukapuka Gagadoody," "Flying Snakes," "Only You and Me," "Otherworld March," "Witch," "Psychedelic Meltdown," "Gotta Be a Better Way," "Friend in Fresno," "Lovely Girl I Married," and "Star Maker." I managed to collar him for this interview about his latest release and the 50th anniversary of the 1966 movie he starred in, "Feelin' Good."

HK: Travis, I know you pretty well, and I'm always surprised when I run into people in the industry who've never heard of you. With your background and credentials, you should be a household name, but you're not. So before we go into "Feelin' Good," let's take a few minutes to introduce you, starting with your book "Travis Edward Pike's Odd Tales and Wonders 1964-1974: A Decade of Performance." I wrote the Foreword and I know why, but tell my readers why you wrote it.



## 2014 Otherworld Cottage Catalog

In only its second year, Travis Pike's Otherworld Cottage Industries released this impressive catalog

TP: I wrote it for all the reasons you just outlined. As you mentioned, "Feelin' Good," premiered in Boston on October 26, 1966. Because of that film, at least in the New England area, I was somewhat of a household name, but that's a long time ago.

Before that, in 1963, home on leave on my way to report for duty with the U.S. Navy in Germany, I wrote a title song for my father's 28 minute action featurette "Demo Derby." I was still overseas in the summer of 1964 when "Demo Derby" opened in Boston with the Frank Sinatra film, "Robin and the Seven Hoods," and in Hartford, New Haven, and Worcester with Elvis in "Viva Las Vegas." Within ten days it had been booked into 61 New England theaters, and later, paired with the Beatles, "Hard Day's Night," played on some 6,000 screens across the country, and continued to be booked into theaters and drive-ins for ten more years. How many people do you think actually watched the credits, and if they did, since I was not a celebrity composer, how many do you suppose would remember I wrote the title song?

Apart from singing with a garage band when I was 14, my real beginning probably dates from 1962, when I graduated from high school and purchased a pristine 1955 Studebaker Commander with a blown engine. Rebuilding that Bearcat

motor was a costly proposition and I didn't know where to begin. Fortunately, I had older friends, speed shop mechanics, who did. I earned the money to buy parts and pay them for their labor by driving a delivery truck during the day, and at night, going to bars with them (since they had an abiding interest in making sure I had enough money to pay for their efforts), where I was allowed to earn tips for singing special requests, played live, by the bar bands.

Arguably, my professional debut came in Germany, when a German mechanic friend, (I was always popular with bikers and mechanics), learned I used to make money singing rock and roll, and began taking me around to clubs, and getting me up on stage to sing American hit songs with the local German rock bands. Those German audiences took to me, and although tips were non-existent (gratuities usually came in the form of drinks, and I wasn't much of a drinker), the club owners began offering to pay me to come in and sing with their house bands. That brought me to the attention of Werner Hingst, a rock promoter who assembled "The Five Beats" for me, began booking me as "The Teddy, die Twistsensation aus USA," and in a matter of weeks, brought me to the attention of the A&R people at Polydor and Phillips Records.

# The Five Beats international showband

## Besetzung

**Teddy Pike**  
USA

Twist and Show Sensation

**Enriko Lombardi**  
ITALIA

Gesang, Gitarre

**Eddy Christers**

Gesang, Gitarre,  
Klarrinetta, Baß

**Charly Ross**

Saxophon, Baß, Gesang

**Ringo**

Gesang, Schlagzeug

**Chorty West**

Gesang, Gitarre, Saxophon

Die Stationen dieser  
erfolgreichen Band  
waren:

**Star-Palast~Kiel**

**Studio 62**  
Eckernförde

**Schützenhof**  
Rendsburg



Demnächst auch

Stationed in Northern Germany, I soon had Danish fans driving down from Jutland and German fans driving up from Hamburg, but before we ever got around to seriously discussing a recording contract, I was in an auto accident that ended my reign as a "Twistsensation" and, I thought, any hope of a musical career.

Returned to the states, I was admitted to Chelsea Naval Hospital, where a bone graft was scheduled to reconstruct my ankle, which had not knitted properly. The large orthopedic ward was regularly visited by Red Cross volunteers, some of the sweetest elderly women I have ever met, who did what they could to make our ordeals bearable. I requested German language magazines, and the next time they came, they brought *Der Spiegel*, *Bildzeitung*, and *Stern*, (similar to our *Time*, *Look*, and *Life* magazines). I wanted to try to keep my information and language skills current.

One old dear asked why I wanted German magazines, and I told her about my short-lived European stardom, and the next time I saw her, she brought me a guitar. I had been an athletic dancer and rock singer, not a musician, but with nothing better to do, I taught myself to play guitar and even began writing songs. One of the first was "End of Summer," written in English, but with verses in German, too. If I ever did get back to Germany, I wanted something to show I had been thinking of my fans.

With a large repertoire of pop tunes, I was soon playing and singing requests for the patients on my ward, and by the summer of 1965, the Red Cross was wheeling me around to the other wards to entertain the sick and wounded. My audiences were young servicemen, and they liked my parodies of popular songs. For example, Herman's Hermits "Mrs. Brown, You've Got A Lovely Daughter," quickly became "Mrs Brown, About Your Pregnant Daughter." But it wasn't all fun and games. Orthopedic surgery is extraordinarily painful. Performing gave me something else to think about, and without my realizing it, laid the groundwork for my future in Boston's coffeehouse scene.

HK: How long were you in the hospital?

TP: I was admitted in mid-October, 1964, and returned to limited duty in the Flag Administrative Unit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, in August, 1965. When my condition failed to improve, in January, 1966, I was admitted to Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Virginia, and began flying home on weekends to be in my father's film, "Feelin' Good." In all, I spent most of two years in and out of hospitals. Are you still fascinated by anything and everything having to do with the Kennedys?

HK: Of course.

TP: Well, here's a piece of little-known Kennedy-Pike family trivia. On June 19, 1964, the day the Senate passed the Civil Rights Act, Ted Kennedy was in a plane crash. He ended up with three broken vertebrae that kept him hospitalized for five months. During that time, his wife Joan, was his surrogate for his re-election campaign. Pike Productions had been involved in making "A Time For Greatness" for JFK, and ever since, had been hired to work on the Kennedy campaigns. Joan, touring on behalf of her husband, had gotten to know my mother, Elsie, and that's probably how Ted learned I was in the hospital. He then requested daily reports on my condition. The first I heard of it was when a Hospital Corpsman told me he'd been told I had political influence and that he should watch his step around me.



To Elsie,  
Hope we always look so smiling and happy when  
we get together! Joan Kennedy

**The inscription reads, "To Elsie, Hope we always look so smiling and happy when we get together! Joan Kennedy"**

HK: That wasn't in your book! But you did tell about how you met John F. Kennedy in your family home in Newton, Massachusetts, in 1960, when you were still in high school.

TP: I was 15 and had just gotten home from school, when I met then Senator John F. Kennedy. I was surprised to see my father's film crew setting up in his office, so I was standing in the doorway to the back hall, peeking around the corner, when a voice from behind said, "Excuse me." I nearly jumped out of my skin. The stranger asked who I was. I told him I was Teddy Pike and I lived there. He smiled, told me he had a brother named Teddy, introduced himself as Jack Kennedy, and told me he was running for President. We shook hands, I think I wished him luck, and then left hurriedly before I could get into trouble for snooping.

Ironically, my first Hollywood soundtrack was for *"The Second Gun,"* a Golden Globe-nominated feature documentary about an alleged coverup in the investigation of the assassination of Bobby Kennedy. My score was comprised of a few "zingers" and an instrumental version of "End of Summer," which filmmaker Gerard Alcan decided was the musical *Zeitgeist* of the Kennedy era.

HK: So after you got out of the service, you took your hospital repertoire into the Boston coffeehouse scene, and from there, went on to form a new rock band that eventually became widely known in the New England area as Travis Pike's Tea Party.

TP: And I was able to do all that, in part, because of the local notoriety I had gained from being in the movie, "*Feelin' Good.*"

HK: But before we get into "*Feelin' Good,*" I want to have you tell me about your coffeehouse experiences, your band and your short-lived stint as a TV show house band, because you and your brother have now released six music albums, and a spoken word album of material mostly developed while you were performing in Boston from 1966 to 1968.

TP: The first two albums we did, released as companion pieces to my book, are "*Odd Tales and Wonders, Stories in Rhyme,*" and "*Odd Tales and Wonders, Stories in Song,*" and feature narrative rhymes and novelty songs that date back to my hospital and coffeehouse performances from 1964-1966. "*Reconstructed Coffeehouse Blues*" has less to do with the hospitals, and more to do with returning to civilian life, and the "reconstruction" refers to the operations that it took to get me back on my feet. "*Travis Edward Pike's Tea Party Snack Platter*" features songs we played that became favorites with our live concert audiences, and "*Feelin' Better*" features most of the songs I sang in "*Feelin' Good*" as well as a few new ones. We also released the "*Morningsone Music*" album with all the music from that proposed movie musical from 1987, and I am currently adapting its screenplay into a novel I expect to release this year. My new May 2, 2016 album, "*Outside the Box,*" features the best of what was left in my back catalog of songs, and several new ones, too.

Karl Garret (the band's lead guitar player), and I were the Music Directors for a 1968 WBZ TV show called "*Here and Now,*" that proved too controversial for there and then, and in a review of a performance at the Boston Pop Festival at the Psychedelic Supermarket in 1968, music critic William Phillips reported, "*Travis Pike's Tea Party* performed in about every conceivable pop style from straight rock to psychedelic, to folk, to rinky-dinky ragtime." Incidentally, it was at that concert that we introduced our only recording, the Alma Records 45 rpm single, "*If I Didn't Love You Girl.*"



HK: Fabulous. Anyone who needs more than that should read your book. So, let's get right into "*Feelin' Good.*" What are your most immediate memories about the production and the filming?

TP: For me, the first most memorable thing is how it all came about, and for that, I refer you to a transcription of an article in the Boston Traveler on the day of the premiere.

## **"Pike's Folly:" Hub Producer Glows With Enthusiasm**

By Alta Maloney

"Most Bostonians would expect the equipment trucks from James A. Pike's movie company to be down at the Fish Pier, putting together a spot for a local politician to use on TV.

But a couple of years ago, Mr. Pike branched out due to a command of Travis Pike, whom he refers to as 'Son No. 2.' Said his son, 'Dad, you got to make a picture about demolition derbies.'

### **'DEMO DERBY' REAL SUCCESS**

'Demo Derby' was, and still remains in some areas of the country, a fantastic success for a short subject, a crashing action film about 'drivers who tilt at each other.'

**Now, carried along on the momentum of this triumph, the family has been involved in a feature-length, color film, 'Feelin' Good,' having its New England premiere today at the downtown Paramount.**

**The story of how it happened is the most extraordinary one of a father discovering a son.**

Travis, now 21, was hurt last year while he was in the service in Europe. A German army truck skidded sideways into his sports car and he afterwards spent a year and a half in the hospital . . .

'A father never listens to his kids,' said this father of five, 'so I really didn't know how talented he was. Then, when he was back at Chelsea Naval Hospital, I went to Natick High School to hear him.

'There he was with his leg in a cast, and 1200 or 1400 kids came alive when he sang. I said to myself--is that my kid up there making all this. It was a revelation that he could turn them on like this.'

### **THAT'S WHEN WE DECIDED**

So Mr. Pike took some of the 30 or 40 songs Travis had written down to New York to the 'tunesmiths,' and 'they said they were good. That's when we decided to make 'Feelin' Good.'

Glowing with enthusiasm with the way the color and the Boston views used as background come out in the film, Mr. Pike declared, 'I want to make films here in New England--it's a passion . . .

'When we were mixing the film in New York, there was a studio man there looking at it. He finally said, 'You know, Darryl Zanuck is going to see this picture and he's going to say where does this guy Pike get the money to build sets like this.'

'We want young people to like this film. It's something different--it takes off at right angles to itself.'

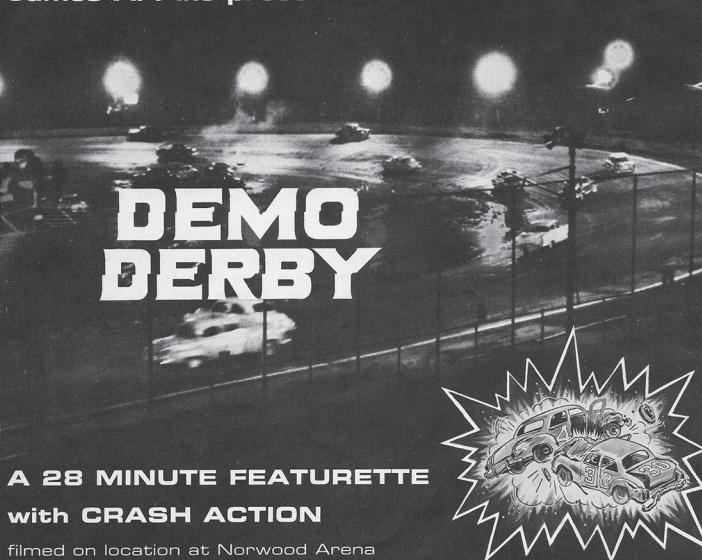
'At home we call it Pike's Folly. If the picture doesn't make the scene, it's the most expensive home movie ever made.' "

**HK:** Your father, James A. Pike, was heavily involved in the movie and media business in Boston. He made "*Demo Derby*," which you have now released through Otherworld Cottage Industries, and which has been hailed by fans and media alike. DJ Rodney Bingenheimer loves "*Demo Derby*." What is it like watching that film, after 50 years?

**TP:** It's terrific fun. With a Norwood Arena crowd in Madras Bermuda shorts, penny loafers, crew cuts and big hair, it holds up well as both history and entertainment. And its role in movie history is impressive, too. It was not only an incredibly successful independent theatrical short, but it broke new ground in film-making. It was shot at night, with only arena lighting, on 100 ASA film stock, years before the advent of fast film. Fortunately, it had rained, and the wet arena bounced enough light so that the negative captured the action and, processed slowly, the lab was able to bring out the latent image. It is really, technically, an extraordinary film and way ahead of its time.

**Click on the image to watch the theatrical trailer introduced by Boston Filmmaker James A. Pike, and hear Travis Pike's original title song, arranged by Arthur Korb and performed by the Rondels**

**James A. Pike presents**



By MARJORY ADAMS  
Globe Critic

"There's no reason why pictures shouldn't be made in New England as well as in New York," declared producer Jim Pike from Newton Centre. And he's doing something about it.

Remember "Demo Derby," made in Norwood? It dealt with that most terrifying of motor sports, the smashing of ancient automobiles by young fry. Pike, the father of four children ranging from 21 years to 5 months, was the man who made the film. He used local kids as his cast.

Naturally, the theaters showing it around here did tremendous business—youngsters wanted to see themselves in the stands, for one thing. But it was also a great success in many other parts of the country. It ran in over 4000 theaters and around Charlotte, N.C., alone it was shown in 250 packed motion picture houses and drive-ins.

Pike was so encouraged he has made another film, also with local youngsters in the cast—ranging from Harvard to high school. It opens Wednesday at the Paramount Theater, the same theater where "Demo Derby" was presented.

The title is "Feelin' Good." Pike himself describes it with teen-age lyricism: "It is the story of kids and their music."

America's second greatest export, according to Pike's informants, is rock 'n' roll music.

A Saigon news report recently told of a theater filled with teen-agers listening to American music while outside a small contingent of young Buddhists tried vainly to lure them to participate in a "hate the United States" demonstration.

Pike does not pretend he made "Feelin' Good" for patriotic reasons, but he thinks that the \$120,000 plus he has spent already on the picture may do a bit of good in future teen-age relations.

If "Feelin' Good" duplicates the success of "Demo Derby," Pike is going on with three other projects.

ALL NEW FACES-10 NEW SONGS  
THE BIG NEW SOUND  
JAMES A. PIKE  
Presents  
**Feelin'  
Good**  
WIDE-SCREEN COLOR



JAMES A. PIKE PRESENTS  
**Feelin' Good**  
featuring TRAVIS PIKE  
AND 8 OF HIS SONGS  
INTRODUCING THE MONTCLAIRS  
WINNERS OF THE JAZZED BATTLE OF THE BANDS  
WITH THE BRATTLE STREET EAST  
FOLKSINGER BRENDA NICHOLS  
IN WIDE-SCREEN COLOR

Standing for any length of time was difficult. I remember the scene on the Charles River Esplanade. I was up on a stage with Oedipus and His Mothers, (called the Brattle Street East in the movie). There were kids dancing in front of the stage and if I remember correctly, I sang three songs, several times over, to get all the angles required for the film. It was a windy day, which presented difficulties for the guys trying to keep the reflectors from blowing over, and the cast, trying not to freeze to death between dance sequences. I was plagued by gusts of wind threatening to blow me off the stage. Normally, I'd have rocked back on my heels or forward on my toes, but with my bad ankle, those movements were painful, and some takes were ruined because of my pained expressions. This was the "happy ending" sequence, a party on the banks of the Charles, reunited with my lovely co-star, and I was supposed to be having FUN!



JAMES A. PIKE PRESENTS  
**Feelin' Good**  
featuring TRAVIS PIKE  
AND 8 OF HIS SONGS  
INTRODUCING THE MONTCLAIRS  
WINNERS OF THE JAZZED BATTLE OF THE BANDS  
WITH THE BRATTLE STREET EAST  
FOLKSINGER BRENDA NICHOLS  
IN WIDE-SCREEN COLOR

HK: You were going to tell me about what you remember most about making the film.

TP: My most immediate memories of the production are of my weekend flights from Norfolk to Boston and back during the shooting. When principal photography began, I was still in the Navy, a patient in Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Virginia. On liberty weekends, my friend, Judy, would drive me to the airport, and I'd fly from Norfolk to Boston Friday night, shoot all day Saturday, have dinner with the family on Sunday and fly back to Virginia Sunday night. I always wore my uniform and flew standby. The airlines were courteous and helpful, and Norfolk is a Navy town, but in Boston, if I had to take public transportation, I sometimes ran into the haters, who reviled anyone in uniform -- more so in the upscale bedroom community of Newton than in Downtown Boston. When I complained about it, my father made sure I was always driven to and from the airport, usually by him, but sometimes by a friend who volunteered.

Shooting could be an ordeal, too, especially in scenes like the one above, in which I help my co-star, Patricia Ewing, carry her mattress (a real one, not a light-weight prop), through Boston's Back Bay. Patricia not only held up her end, but dragged me along behind her, clinging to mine.

HK: The reviews in the Boston daily newspapers really touted the movie and music.

TP: They did. I especially like the interviews with my father, Jim Pike. From them, I understand "Feelin' Good" better now, than I did when it was released. To me, the movie lacked dramatic structure, but my father was a fan of British director, Richard Lester, who had, by then, directed both the Beatles "Hard Day's Night" and "Help!". So, when my father

talks about "Feelin' Good" taking off at right angles to itself, I think he's describing that chaotic approach in which a series of incidents leads to a conclusion that has less to do with the machinations of the characters, than a sort of random process of natural selection. I may be reading too much into it, but I knew my father well enough to know he had some plan, even if he never articulated it to me.

Fortunately, Judy kept a scrapbook, so I am able to show some of the original interviews from before the film's release, some of the positive (if locally biased) Boston reviews--and one, source unknown, that panned it convincingly. I think the last review was accurate and insightful. My father's chaotic approach may have been deliberate, but that doesn't mean it was good, and if you have to explain it, it doesn't work.

## A clipping service submitted this review from the Oct 27, 1966 Boston Traveler, Evening Edition - Boston, Mass, Circulation 146,293

### 'Feelin' Good' Fascinating And Fresh Story Of Kids

"Feelin' Good" is a good idea—a sort of non-picture picture which entertains in its freshness even while one can see the obvious defects.

The film, now playing at the Paramount Theater, is the work of producer-director Jim Pike of Newton Centre whose camera work shows he has a love affair with Boston and that he has a very sensitive eye.

The picture is about young people and their music. It stars Travis Pike as a returning serviceman, Pat Ewing of Arlington as his girlfriend, Leslie Burnham, Ron Stafford and a button-nosed bunch of bangs and grins named Judi Reeve.

It also features a singing group called the Montclairs who won last year's Battle of the Bands, sponsored by the Jaycees, and a group of Harvard students called Brattle Street East. There are 10 songs in the film written by Travis.

The story line of young love in its ways of confusion are almost incidental and the fact that the action jumps around almost can be overlooked.

HK: "Feelin' Good" was never released on VHS or DVD, but has a cult following from references and viewings dating back decades. It's a shame there are no existing prints.

TP: That's no longer entirely true. My brother Gregory located 3 faded reels of a 35mm color print of "Feelin' Good," and shipped them to me. I took them to Deluxe Media and had telecine "dailes" made. The feature film may be lost, but I'm color correcting digital clips from the movie for possible inclusion in music videos or a 50th anniversary documentary.



Travis on the Charles

**A clipping service submitted this review from the Oct 27, 1966 Boston Globe, Evening Edition - Boston, Mass, Circulation 145,838**

## Hub, Young Both Shine

Sleek, shiny-haired, eager-eyed girls who can watusi or frug better than any you ever saw in a New York discotheque, and long-limbed, clean-faced young men with nary a Beatle haircut among them are the cavorting stars of "Feelin' Good" at the Paramount Theater.

What is more, all these young people are from Greater Boston — from the Harvard University campus to the counter of a pizzeria. Many of them were picked up at the Battle of the Bands sponsored by the Jaycees in the Weymouth Fairgrounds. The hero is the producer's son. Young Travis Pike wrote several of the songs in the film and sings them as well.

I don't remember any picture I've ever seen in which Boston and its environs have been so magnificently photographed. I can take or leave the gyrations of the modern teen-age dancer, but when you watch a group of these attractive youngsters walk down the Esplanade, it is impossible not to feel outright admiration — both for the loveliness of youth and the beauties of Boston.

"Feelin' Good" takes the audience on a tour with the kids to a coffee shop on Charles street, to Concord, to the Weymouth Fair Grounds, to all kinds of delightful spots where young people abound. They never stand still for a second, and they burst into song for any reason whatever.

The songs include "Feelin' Good," "I Beg Your Pardon" and "Don't Hurt Me Again," all by Trav Pike.

The very talented Brenda Nichols sings her own number, "Ride the Rainbow," with the assurance of a Broadway star.

The kids in the cast are charmers even if they aren't actors, but there is one outstanding player, young Judi Reeve, who looks as if she might end up in Hollywood some day. She has personality.

Dawn Kramer starts matters with a main title dance

which is a bit long but most effective.

The audience for "Feelin' Good" is obviously not much older than members of the cast. If you have ever suffered a twinge of arthritis or puffed when you walked up a flight of M.B.T.A. stairs, then "Feelin' Good" will just make you feel bad that that old devil, age, is taking the vivacity out of life.

MARJORY ADAMS

"FEELIN' GOOD," written by Mildred Maffei, Jim Pike and The Boys in the Band. Produced and directed by James A. Pike. In color. Released by Pike Productions.

This cast:

Ted	Travis Pike
Karen	Patricia Ewing
Judi	Judi Reeve
Elaine	Leslie Burnham
Danny	Ron Stafford
Johnny	Johnny Ferro
Counterboy	Marco Smigajski
Neighbor	Frances Gay
M.C.	Bruce Bradley

**The clipping below, from Judy Pike's scrapbook doesn't name the source, but the story dates to Oct 27, 1966 and suggests it is from a local newspaper in Newton, Massachusetts**

## Local Youths Premiere In Color Picture

Gifted young Newtonites appear in "Feelin' Good," a widescreen color feature film, which had its premiere last night (Wednesday) at Boston's Paramount Theater.

Produced and directed by James Pike of Newton, it provides an impressive showcase for budding local teenage talent. Travis Pike, 21, of Newton plays the male lead, and he wrote eight of the songs in the picture.

Others from the Newton area are Arthur Korb, composer and conductor of the music; Stephen Cooper, Walter Cooper and Brian Houston, who sing as "The Montclairs;" and the following dancers and extras: Dorry Silver, Neal Ochs, Debbie Ritzaupt, Harriet Katz, Elliott Feldman, Jeanne Brodney, Gregory Pike, Joanne Levine and Sarah Stitt.

# Hub-Bred 'Feelin' Good' Bright Teen Musical

"*Feelin' Good*" at the downtown Paramount Theater may lack Hollywood expertise and "names" but its undisputable

appeal is that it's Boston to the core, being the first full-length color musical ever produced by a Boston-based motion picture

company, has a cast of bright-faced, shining-haired young natives and was filmed against Old and New Boston backgrounds.

The Massachusetts Jaycees' Battle of the Bands and the "musical explosion" in his own Newton household of teenagers gave James A. Pike the idea for "*Feelin' Good*," which he describes as "a pop musical, a new look at today's young people and their music."

Pike wrote, directed and produced the musical for which his 21-year-old son, Travis, wrote eight of the 10 original songs in the film. Travis Pike and Patricia Ewing, a graduate of Boston University's School of Fine and Applied Arts who appeared in the senior Pike's successful short about racers, "*Demo Derby*," play the romantic leads.

Others in the cast are the Brattle Street East, a rock group from Harvard University; the Montclairs, rhythm and blues group who were first winners of the Battle of the Bands, and an inexhaustible 12-year-

old blonde named Judi Reeve who dances her way through the entire footage.

The theater management reports that there was much old school tie spirit evident opening-day as the newly fledged actors and actresses were recognized by assorted young members of the audience.

There were general murmurs of appreciation throughout the unreeling as such familiar sights loomed on screen as Harvard University campus, the Public Gardens, Boston Common, downtown Tremont street, the Esplanade, the Beacon Hill area, Prudential Center and other landmarks.

PEGGY DOYLE

ALL NEW FACES-10 NEW SONGS  
THE BIG NEW SOUND

JAMES A. PIKE  
Presents

**Feelin'  
Good**

WIDE-SCREEN COLOR



Click the photo to see the newsreel of the Boston premiere

But the worst blow of all, and perhaps one of my father's finest hours, came when the Southern distributor who had done so well with "*Demo Derby*," refused to book "*Feelin' Good*," unless the pizza parlor scene was cut from the movie. None of what follows makes any sense unless you place it in its historical perspective.

The Montclairs were a mixed group--three white musicians and three black singers. They sang the title song, but I don't think they were on-screen during the title sequence, which featured a giant girl, towering over the City of Boston, dancing up a storm. They sang their prize-winning rendition of "Summertime" outdoors in Concord and Lexington, along the route of the confrontation between the Massachusetts

**The review below, from an unknown source in Judy's scrapbook, panned the movie, but liked my songs.**

**FEELIN' GOOD. Starring Travis Pike, Patricia Ewing and Leslie Burnham. Written and directed by James A. Pike. In color. At the Paramount Theatre, Boston.**

## Musical Melange

Luckily a lot of music intervenes between dreary dialogue (is it camp-spoofy or just bad?) and silly situation. Travis Pike wrote eight of the film's songs — most of them imitative of current rock trends but unoffensively, even pleasantly, tuneful — and sings them in a strong melodic voice. The Brattle Street East, a group of four Harvard students, backed Pike up with an equally sure sound.

The Montclairs, another local group and winner of the 1965 Jaycees Battle of the Bands, figured in a subplot and offered a few more moments of the big sound, quiet-style. And folksinger Brenda Nichols, in an irrelevant but more than usually interesting moment, sang her own song, "Ride the Rainbow," in a husky folk-rock contralto.

But when the music stops "*Feelin' Good*" turns into a pretentious effort, a jumble of teenagers trying to fast-talk their way into the cool world with constantly-repeated words like "groovy" and at the same time trying to maintain smiles of Doris-Day wholesomeness. That's a trick that can't be done, and this film's the unfortunate result.

HK: How did this movie do outside Boston? Was it widely distributed?

TP: It didn't have anywhere near the success of "*Demo Derby*." Richard Lester's 1965 movie "*The Knack*" played well in Art Houses, but was not widely released in this country, even though he had made a name for himself with "*A Hard Day's Night*," and "*Help!*" My father went for a wide release with a film that probably belonged in Art Houses.

militia, known more widely as Minute Men, where the "shot heard round the world" was fired, and frankly, I don't know where they sang "Come Back Home." The point is, they'd earned their place in the movie when they won the 1965 Massachusetts Jaycees Battle of the Bands.

It only made sense to introduce their sub-plot in a familiar location, where they regularly met to discuss their gigs, aspirations and what they hoped might come as a result of their sudden notoriety. One of the guys worked in the pizza parlor, so my father opted to film part of their story in that environment.



### This black and white production still is from the controversial pizza parlor scene.

I wasn't around when the sequence was shot, and if I had been, would have thought nothing of it. I don't think my father gave it any thought, either, but when the black boys sat at the same table with the white boys, sharing a pizza, the racism in our Southern states suddenly got between "Feelin' Good" and the boxoffice.

The South had been a most profitable market for "*Demo Derby*," and remained so for another six years. My father had every reason to believe that "Feelin' Good," with its American-style rock 'n' roll music, would play well there, too. I wasn't around when my father got the news or made his decision, either, but I know what he decided. He refused to cut the scene, and therefore forfeited the potentially lucrative Southern theater circuits.

It's easy to shout racist. Nowadays, you hear it all the time. But I did some research and discovered that the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the subsequent Voting Rights Act of 1965, had created a climate of fear throughout the South. There were several highly publicized acts of violence, and on the West Coast, the militant Black Panthers were formed, vowing to protect their rights and punish those who attempted to violate them. Southern theater owners didn't want to risk screening such "controversial content" for fear it might incite violence and property damage for which they may have been held liable.

It's still a racist argument, but given the news of the day, their fears may have been well-founded. And well-founded or not, their fears may have been genuine.

HK: Interesting. I'd never thought of it that way.

TP: Neither had I, until you raised the issue in this interview.

HK: Tell me about the ten songs you wrote for the movie, incorporated in the "Feelin' Good" soundtrack that you produced and coordinated.



TP: I didn't produce or coordinate the soundtrack. Arthur Korb did that, and he arranged the recording session with Oedipus and His Mothers at AAA Recording Studios. All I did was sing the songs. When my father decided to make "Feelin' Good," he introduced me to Arthur Korb, who had arranged and recorded the title song to "*Demo Derby*." He had Arthur and I sit in the screening room on Lake Avenue, and Arthur took notes while I played a number of my original songs into a tape recorder. Between songs, we talked about them, and my German-Italian band, the Five Beats. When we were through, he took the tape and left. I never saw him again until the recording sessions. Even the lead sheets were all created by Arthur Korb from that demo recording.

Not being included in the production of the music was one of my biggest disappointments in making of "Feelin' Good." I didn't know, until I read the article in the paper, that my demos had been to New York City and run by the "tunesmiths," but the recorded arrangements I heard in the studio were not as I had imagined they would be. I would have liked to redo some of them, but the additional cost made that out of the question, so I sang them as presented. I don't blame Arthur or the band. I wasn't there to offer my suggestions during development--and I wasn't paying for the sessions.

It was the same way on the shoot. I had no clear character arc. I never saw a complete script, and not knowing what came before or after on the day we were shooting, it was too late to offer suggestions. It was my father's money, and my father's movie. He was the writer, producer and director. All I could do was trust that he knew what he was doing, and do as I was told.

HK: But your father used ten of your original songs in the movie, so he must have liked them. Tell me about the songs.

TP: I wrote the “*Feelin’ Good*” title song and the R&B tune “Come Back Home” for the Montclairs, and they sang Gershwin’s “Summertime,” too. Brenda Nichols, a visiting English folksinger, performed her own original song, “Ride the Rainbow,” in the Boston coffeehouse scene, shot in the Loft, which was later the scene of my own coffeehouse debut.

In addition to the two songs I wrote especially for the Montclairs, the eight songs I performed in the movie were written in Chelsea Naval Hospital, in anticipation of one day going back to Germany, to take up where I left off with The Five Beats.



**Click on the album cover to listen to any of the songs on this album on youtube.**

In my 2014 album, “*Feelin’ Better*,” I incorporated my most recent versions of seven of those eight songs. “Things Aren’t Always What They Seem,” was “Watch Out Woman” in “*Feelin’ Good*,” and apart from a title change, some new lyrics and an arrangement, complete with sax, that delivers a “Five Beats” sound, the song is little changed from its original concept in the movie – a warning to a young lady, that her uninhibited dancing might be attracting unwanted attention.

“Don’t Hurt Me Again” is also little changed. I didn’t sing it on screen. It plays behind a sequence of me walking, sighing mightily and gazing morosely at the heavens, because my girl has broken up with me. I was told to look up, because that would convey to the audience that I was miserable. My misery was genuine enough, trying to walk on that still painful ankle.

“Trophy Woman” was originally “Wicked Woman,” but the sense is still the same. I don’t think “trophy women” were in our vernacular back in 1965, but I updated the song, changed its title, and some lyrics. Apart from Adam’s keyboard work and the growling sax (a regular staple of Five

Beats performances), this is still very much about that earlier “Wicked Woman.”

“*Foolin’ Around*” is still “*Foolin’ Around*,” and the singer refuses to put up with it, anymore, and in the album, his determination is underscored by the addition of keyboard and sax parts.

A new arrangement, featuring a saxophone choir and lead, is all that’s changed in “The Way That I Need You.” I would have loved to hear Elvis sing this song. “The Way That I Need You” is the promise included in most marriage vows, right down to the present day.

“It Isn’t Right” is now “It Can’t Be Right.” A song about unrequited love, much enhanced by its new arrangement, but honoring its mid-sixties origin.

“I Beg Your Pardon” is the lovely ballad I sang on the swan boats in Boston’s famous Public Gardens. It won the girl then, and modern audience reactions suggest it still will. No approach to meeting a new lady is foolproof, but this song suggests being polite and behaving like a gentleman doesn’t hurt.



JAMES A. PIKE PRESENTS  
featuring TRAVIS PIKE  
AND 8 OF HIS SONGS  
**Feelin' Good**  
INTRODUCING THE MONTCLAIRS  
WINNERS OF THE JAZZIES BATTLE OF THE BANDS  
WITH THE BRATTLE STREET EAST  
FOLKSINGER BRENDA NICHOLS  
IN WIDE-SCREEN COLOR

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me to write an American-style rock'n'roll song in German for the movie. I wrote "Ute, Ute," and I think I performed it in my opening sequence at Logan Airport, but it was otherwise so unremarkable that I never performed it outside the movie.

HK: When you look at the movie lobby card and color photos of you singing in front of a band 50 years ago, what flashes in your mind?

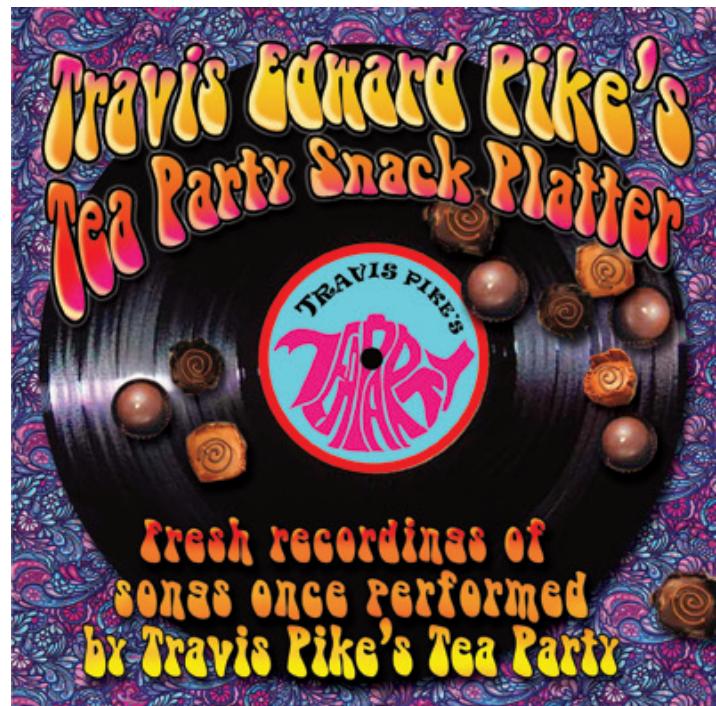


TP: More than anything, it takes me back to how painful it was for me just to get around. I didn't know the guys in the bands, and never performed with them, outside the movie. I knew my father's film crew, better. My younger brother, Gregory, the one who secured the five reels of "Feelin' Good," and some of his friends appeared in the dance sequences, but in fairness, he's more than four years younger than me, I'd been away from home for more than three years, and I didn't know his friends, either. The only actor I knew was Ron Stafford, a friend from high school, who played an important supporting role in the movie. He was the guy in real life who dragged me out of my doldrums and to the hootenanny at The Loft coffeehouse, in downtown Boston, that inspired me to get back into music, which ultimately led to Travis Pike's Tea Party. That's Ron in the roadster in the lobby card below. And the gal behind me is Leslie Burnham, who plays his girlfriend and the trouble-making femme fatale in the tale.



HK: Speaking of Travis Pike's Tea Party, your 1967 [Alma Records single, "If I Didn't Love You Girl,"](#) 50 years after its initial release, is posted twice on Youtube, "licensed," if not bootlegged, for a [1995 London Fog LP](#). Ten years ago, your brother Adam recorded your song with The Syrups, which was engineered and produced by multiple Grammy winner Geoff Emerick, best known for his work with the Beatles on their albums "Revolver" and "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

TP: Yes. Adam told me how that came about. He played my recording for The Syrups and they liked it, and two of the Syrups being brothers, they thought since Adam and I were brothers, it would be cool to record it, and when they asked Geoff Emerick what he thought, he said they should do it.



Click on the album cover to listen to any of the songs on this album on youtube.

HK: And you and Adam recorded it again, for your 2014 release "Travis Edward Pike's Tea Party Snack Platter." So your original 1967 recording is now competing with your new 2014 version. And speaking of 1967, in my next book we discuss your Boston-based Summer of Love journey. I should say that when you arrived in Los Angeles in 1968, you were not a Flower Child. You didn't promote drug use or free love, but you weren't some arch-conservative, either.

TP: I was a showman, storyteller, singer, and songwriter who showed up on time for engagements and performed without resorting to profanity and lewd conduct. Astonishingly, in California, that put me outside the pop music mainstream. Coming from the East Coast, sometimes I felt like Travis Pike's Tea Party had stepped Through the Looking Glass.

Now, I'm recording my music, adapting the best of my screenplays into novels, and generally doing what I love to do. Nowadays, some see me as a self-made man. If so, I've been 50 years in the making.