

Music for Southern Independence

Tim Manning, Jr.

For the Past, the Future, the Truth

by Basic Gray

Panama City, Florida: Larry Smith and Nat Rudolph; 47 min., \$15.00

Confederate Spirit: The Great Songs of a Proud South

Produced by Pat Baughman and Pat Patrick

Nashville, Tennessee: Pearl Trax Studios; 56 min., \$15.00

The Gray Ghosts of Heaven: A Musical Tribute to the War for Southern Independence (Past-Present-Future)

by Robert Lloyd

Fort Myers, Florida: New World Enterprises; 48 min., \$15.00

Every form of original American music in the 20th century began in the South: bluegrass, country, western, jazz, blues, rockabilly, and rock 'n' roll. Even rap, pop, and heavy metal have been successful because they, in some way, use or imitate a Southern musical element. These styles, if they can be called that, started out as small clusters of unknown musicians who managed to create their own subcultures in which they could market their talents.

Most alternative musicians never see success. One style, however, that has risen in popularity over the last 15 years is "neo-Confederate" music. Hundreds of musicians tour the South playing nothing but Confederate War songs—in music shops, country stores, pickin' parlors, barns (for dances), recital halls, civic centers, schools, historical and political ceremonies, living-history events, and war reenactments. Some of them even find themselves on NPR, C-SPAN, or in documentaries.

Some of this success can be credited to the boom of popular history; strictly historical music, however, cannot go on forever. At some point, something new must emerge—something that tells a story that people recognize as reflecting

their own experience in their own time—which, nonetheless includes a response to the popular outcry for a knowledge of our history and its virtues. A few performers, such as the Rebelaires and Stan Clardy, have been writing their own songs about the modern-day experience of Southern patriots. Unabashedly pro-Confederate, they still never move beyond grieving over what Southerners have come to know as "heritage violations"—blatant attacks of the p.c. police on anything with a Southern symbol.

A new genre of Southern music has surfaced that can only be described as music for Southern independence. Not focusing solely on Southern symbols, this genre portrays every aspect of Southern life as positive and stresses the need for letting go of the rest of America—culturally, economically and politically. These are serious themes, but there are few better guides than experience. And music is one of the purest ways to share an experience.

When I was little, my family had regular get-togethers in Greenville, North Carolina. My granddad and his five brothers would bring their guitars, mandolins, harmonicas, Jew's harps, auto-harps, fiddles, and banjos (or "banjers" as they called them). One of them would say, "Hey Joe, what key are we playin' in?" The reply: "whis-key." And without looking up or speaking a word, they would play into the early morning. Well into her 90's, my great-grandmother would hold up her dress and dance a jig that had likely not changed since it came over from the British Isles centuries before.

Such is the world that Larry Smith and Nat Rudolph's music will remind you of—the world of the English ballad. Those familiar with Old Time music know that a good Old Time song is not sung: It is spoken. Pre-bluegrass Southern vocals are nearly monotone. It wasn't until Bill Monroe that Southerners started thinking of singing as being a performance. Singing was simply a way of remembering a good story and enjoying its memory to the lively sound of good pickin'. Understanding the helpful effect that this has on listeners trying to grasp a complex story, Smith and Rudolph choose their stories wisely.

The opening track on their album, titled "Something That Lasts," is a Southern musical adaptation of T.S. Eliot's permanent things. Another track is simply called "Permanent Things." "Our Fathers' Fields" is an anthem for kith and kin, honor and land, based on the book of

the same title by *Chronicles* contributor James Kibler.

I've sung "Cracker's Last Stand" for two different parts of my family; they all immediately wanted to know how they could get the CD. Larry Smith will be the first to tell you that he's a cracker, of the pure, original central Florida variety. He intones: "Then Mickey and the Yankees came, / and that place will never be the same." In the chorus: "We salute Jeff Davis every July 4th, / we don't give a damn how they do it up north." The final verse:

Yes I'm unreconstructed and I ain't
never gonna forget
And if the Yankees don't like it,
well they ain't seen nothin' yet
'Cause Johnny Rebel's gonna rise
again, and this time he's gonna
win
So don't mess with a Southern
Man at Cracker's Last Stand

Nat Rudolph's track "Southern Man" is unadulterated Southern nationalism. Not far behind that is "When the South Has Risen Again," which Larry Smith says was inspired by a speech *Chronicles* contributing editor Clyde Wilson gave entitled "After Independence." Every song focuses on a particular experience or thought that you would expect to hear only from the most ardent of today's Southern conservatives.

The themes covered are impressive: political corruption, September 11, globalism and U.S. foreign policy, institutional failure, moral degeneracy, the sinful nature of man, and the meaning of the Confederate flag. While some have labeled Basic Gray's music as "alternative folk," it hardly embodies the typical whining that dominates the American folk music world. Their only other album, after all, was Larry Smith's *Politically Incorrect*.

Pat Baughman's and Pat Patrick's album breaks new ground as well. The first half consists of the best Confederate war songs: "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag," "The Dissolution Wagon." Between Tennessee Ernie Ford and, more recently, the success of Bobby Horton, many Southerners recognize these songs immediately. What is new, however, is the gusto with which Baughman's and Patrick's crew performs them. These vocals are exactly what you would expect to hear from the most warlike and virile group of Southernized Scots. (The album ends,

by the way, with a "Confederate Piper Medley," by the New York Southern patriot George Forsythe.)

Then comes the original material. The professional Nashville production and Patrick's experience working with Disney unfold into the most stirring musical appeal ever made by Southern nationalists to their millions of fellow Southerners who sit idly by watching Faith Hill on Country Music Television.

"Mama's Tears" is a perfect example of a great, modern country-music song that will never be seen on CMT because of its politically incorrect content. It's sung by a very attractive young Southern girl who has true vocal talent, but its main message is that "The North will never know the pain their soldiers caused."

Continuing on that theme, another song states:

Reconstruction is a Yankee word
for war on families.
With sword in hand I'd rather die if
my children could be free.
Scalwags and carpetbaggers are
takin' land that's ours,
But they won't keep it long before
we skin those worthless cowards.

To me, the most memorable verse on the album is from "Southern Anthem":

We are a nation by God's own hand.
We are the people of the Southland.
Freedom forever! A new South will
rise.
We'll live together under free
Southern skies!

Though shut out of the mainstream media, the "Anthem" has quickly become a popular rallying song at meetings of many Southern heritage organizations.

Robert Lloyd's album is another well-made record that has been ignored officially because it portrays the South as a positive and separate alternative to the hegemonic United States. Performed in a popular country-pop style (Lloyd's voice slightly resembles Elvis Presley's) his album contains all original songs that mostly tell the Southern side of Confederate war stories.

One of Lloyd's songs is a startling rap attack on General Sherman. Lloyd prays that God will forgive him for hoping all those pretty blue soldiers will die. He tells schoolchildren to "spit 'em the eye" and to tell them to "go back to Mr. Lincoln" and "back up North . . . where they all oughtta stay."

Five of Lloyd's songs are set in contemporary America. The most controversial is written by Jim Kibler:

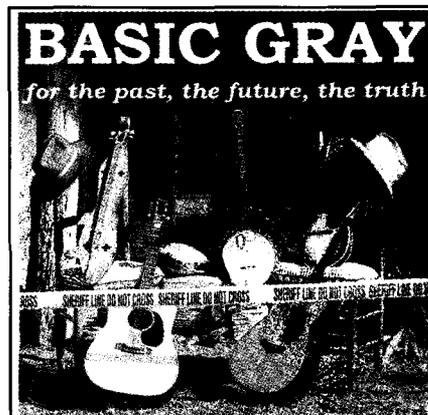
With hands, minds and spirits
we've banded in time,
With talent and treasure our
fortunes entwined.
We honor our friendships, our
word is our bond,
The cause is our future, a nation, a
land.

Another song, written by Jack Kershaw of Tennessee, is about the spirit of Bedford Forrest returning to win the ultimate Southern victory.

Last April, I went to the Newberry Opera House, an upscale facility in South Carolina, to see Battlefield Band, perhaps the most significant band in the Scottish independence movement. I mentioned to Alan Reid, its lead member, that there were many in the South who hoped for their states' independence. (Newspapers tell us that 17 percent of South Carolinians and 18 percent of Georgians answer "yes" in polls on secession.) Reid's response was, "Sounds contentious." I noted that, not long ago, the same was said of the Scottish independence movement, and he immediately saw the Southern connection.

No independence movement can be successful unless it has a strong cultural base. Architecture, language, food, dress, and dance are all part of this. The South has all of these, especially music. These CDs will not enjoy distribution by major

record labels and will not receive Grammy nominations or accolades from the Academy of Country Music; they are, however, a critical benchmark in the rise of a movement larger than just a few marginalized organizations. Dozens of rural Southern radio stations play these songs,



BASIC GRAY
for the past, the future, the truth

CD of fourteen original songs by Larry Smith and Nat Rudolph. One reviewer stated: "Infectious melodies . . . songs to live with, to have fun with . . . dismisses villains in a humorous way. An eclectic mix of high-lonesome bluegrass and country blues, with a wee borrowing from Scottish/Irish melody, and maybe even a touch of Van Morrison." Only \$16.85 check or money order (includes shipping) to **BASIC GRAY, P O BOX 1875 PANAMA CITY, FL 32402**

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As Ward Allen notes, the Greeks, when referring to place, used an adverb that means “backward.” When referring to time, the same word designates “hereafter, since the future is unseen or *behind* us, whereas *the past* is known and *before* our eyes.” We Southerners, more than any other Americans, know our past. Perhaps, then, our future may be the most unpredictable of all.

Tim Manning, Jr., a graduate student in history at the University of South Carolina, is vice president of www.ncheritage.net.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Dr. Pangloss on Taxation

by David Hartman

The IRS and the federal tax code have enabled the blessings of government on a scale never envisioned by the Founding Fathers. Consider the vital contributions to the current status of the federal government and its future prospects for growth made possible by the tax code, generally, and progressive taxation, in particular.

First, the incredible growth of the federal government over the course of the 20th century would not have been possible without the bountiful confiscations of all-encompassing, progressive income taxation.

Before the 16th Amendment was ratified in 1913, social activists and internationalists had the “yen, but not the ken.” Income taxation was the necessary breakthrough. Expenditures of the federal government grew from 3.6 to 25.6 percent of national income over the course of the 20th century. By the end of the century, income taxes provided 80 percent of federal revenues. Those who love government should reverse our all-encompassing system of income taxation.

Second, the federal tax code was designed to promote “social justice” by redistributing income through progressive taxation of incomes and inheritances of the wealthy to reduce the burden of the poor.

In practice, the redistribution of in-

comes from progressive taxation over the past 40 years has failed to materialize; as the share of income taxes on the top ten percent of incomes has risen 15 percent, the after-tax income share of the remaining 90 percent has *declined* 13 percent, leaving those less wealthy relatively worse off. However, “social justice” has been achieved to the extent that its advocates in the media, government, and academia now enjoy the power and privilege they have wrested from the wealthy.

Third, the transition from a simplistic family-based and locally controlled America to a modern individualistic and centralized welfare state was principally enabled by the revenues of income taxation and was assisted by incentives and disincentives written into the tax code.

As the New Deal and, later, the Great Society unfolded, Americans were told that they were fighting a “War on Poverty.” In reality, the social engineers were transforming America into a modern social democracy, liberating women from the “bondage of marriage,” confirming government as the “true parent of the child,” and relieving families of responsibility for the aged. Taxation and the redistribution of its proceeds provided incentives for unwed motherhood, penalized marriage, and made the aged wards of the state. Marriage rates and births within marriage plummeted, while divorce rates and unwed motherhood soared, as did the cost of institutional care for the aged. The “modernization” of American society was boldly advanced by these innovations and by the income taxation that supported them.

Fourth, the IRS has proved to be a far more philanthropic supporter of foreign economic development than the Marshall Plan, in the form of relative tax subsidies to imports.

The border-adjustable value-added taxes employed by America’s principal trade competitors function as *de facto* tariffs on imports from the United States and provide subsidies for our competitors’ exports to us. Territorial taxation favors the relocation of corporate headquarters abroad. This has resulted in an alarming decline in U.S.-based manufacturing, the rising acquisition of U.S. enterprises by overseas competitors, and a trade deficit that has transformed the United States from the world’s largest creditor to the world’s largest debtor. But global citizens can take comfort in the prosperity that the American brood sow is transferring to the foreign piglets it suckles. And those who govern, live off government, or direct the service sector can enjoy low-cost im-

ports and cheap services provided by displaced workers—until the credit runs out.

Fifth, Americans have been liberated from their Protestant ethic of frugal saving to enjoy profligate consumption by the disincentives of multilayered, progressive taxation of savings and investment.

High marginal tax rates discourage savings and investment and encourage Americans to “eat, drink, and be merry,” in contrast to the relative frugality of earlier generations. However, foreigners are eager to save and invest in the facilities necessary to export to the United States, and to reinvest their trade surpluses in our assets and the debt instruments by which we buy now to pay later. History has been reversed; we now sell Manhattan Island in order to buy trinkets, and we hope that there will be no consequences.

Sixth, the IRS has made important “beachheads” for government in superceding the rule of law, by evading due process; by inequality before tax laws; by invasion of privacy; and by making laws and regulations sufficiently complex so that compliance is rendered arbitrary and enforcement, selective.

Legal tactics employed by the IRS—such as the assumption that taxpayers are guilty until proven innocent, requiring the accused to testify against themselves, and *ex post facto* levies—open new horizons to the enhancement of the powers of government. Arbitrary enforcement and selective levies and abatements further augment government’s powers over submissive taxpayers. The sheer bulk of IRS laws and regulations make compliance nearly impossible.

Finally, would-be “tax reformers” should properly be seen as dangerous reactionaries, who would uproot the arbors that have yielded the fruits of social democracy and the promise of a New World Order. Instead, they seek the return of America to the primitivision of limited government, individual rights and responsibility, and locally controlled, family-based society, where free markets allocate the rewards of productivity to the detriment of social justice.

These radicals should be shunned as the enemies of the tax code, which provide the shackles that condition us to be cooperative subjects rather than unruly citizens and bind us together as a progressive, postmodern society, prepared for the New World Order.

David Hartman, a recently retired banker, is the chairman of the board of directors of The Rockford Institute.