

Mountaintide – Coffee & Fried Steak

Jim Newsom – vocals, guitars, flute, bass, piano, percussion

Holly Kirsten – vocals, guitar, violin, viola, bass, piano, harmonica, percussion

1. Open Spaces (*Jim Newsom*)
2. Virginia (*Jim Newsom & Holly Kirsten*)
3. Last Anti-War Song (*Jim Newsom*)
4. Street Singer (*Jim Newsom & Holly Kirsten*)
5. Evanston (*Jim Newsom & Holly Kirsten*)
6. A Thousand Monday Mornings (*Jim Newsom*)
7. Colors of the Rainbow (*Jim Newsom & Holly Kirsten*)
8. Solstice (*Holly Kirsten*)
9. Growing Guns on Trees (*Jim Newsom*)
10. Baby Jean (*Jim Newsom & Holly Kirsten*)
11. Flood (*Holly Kirsten*)
12. The Right Place (*Jim Newsom*)
13. Desperate Days (*Jim Newsom & Holly Kirsten*)
14. A Mighty Cry (*Jim Newsom*)

Mountaintide's second album, *Coffee & Fried Steak*, was released worldwide on Friday, June 16, 2017. Continuing with the grownup lyrics, diverse musical settings and distinctive vocal and instrumental interplay of their first CD, *Dancing in the Sun*, the duo expands their palette by tapping more fully into their multi-instrumental skills. And having played together for three years, their musical interaction and shared songwriting prowess has grown considerably since that first release.

Jim Newsom and Holly Kirsten met at a singer-songwriter open mike night in May, 2014. Within a year of that first meeting, the duo had recorded its first album, *Dancing in the Sun*, releasing it in June, 2015. Five months later, they released an album of original children's music, *Away We Go*.

Dancing in the Sun was premised on showing off the twosome's live sound. While Jim and Holly play all of the instruments and sing all of the vocals, *Coffee & Fried Steak* is more fully realized as an album unto itself. The music is rich, the vocal harmonies sharp and crisp, and the songs themselves are intelligent and thoughtful:

"Open Spaces" is Jim's environmental anthem, recalling the days when there was a strong national and worldwide consensus to "save the earth;" when even Richard Nixon would establish the Environmental Protection Agency.

“Virginia” is a song about longing for home when far away, with Jim’s lyric set to one of Holly’s most beautiful melodies.

Long a topical songwriter, Jim wrote “Last Anti-War Song” as an unlikely farewell to protest songs, with the political yielding to the personal and the caveat to “maximize our days.”

“Street Singer” is Jim’s story of playing on the sidewalks of New York, creatively set to a bluesy tune by Holly, featuring her chromatic harmonica.

“Evanston” tells the tale of 16-year old Holly and a friend borrowing the family car and heading from her Salt Lake City home, up the interstate and over the Wyoming border to a small town truck stop.

In “A Thousand Monday Mornings,” the duo looks at “life incorporated.”

Jim and Holly call “Colors of the Rainbow” their “campfire song.” If only Pete Seeger were still around to sing and popularize it! They close their shows with audiences singing along.

Because Jim is a highly regarded jazz flutist, Holly wrote the instrumental “Solstice” as a feature for his flauting. But instead of copping a jazz feel, her song touches on folk, Celtic and new age influences.

Jim originally wrote a song called “Growing Guns on Trees” in 1977, when cheap handguns were a major concern, but never recorded it. After the mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub last year, he took the opening lines of his song, updated and rewrote it for modern times. This is one of the most powerful songs in the Mountaintide repertoire.

Holly conceived of the idea for “Baby Jean” while looking at a picture of her favorite aunt as an infant.

She wrote “Flood” remembering the topography and sudden weather changes of her native wild west.

Jim shows off his wit and wordplay on the rocking “The Right Place.”

He wrote the “Desperate Days” lyric on January 10, 2017, on a snowy morning ten days before the Trump inauguration. Holly put the words to a beautiful melody that perfectly captures the angst and foreboding of the time, a foreboding that was inadequate for the days that have followed since.

The album closes with “A Mighty Cry,” Jim’s look back at the summer of Woodstock, the Apollo moon landing, magical music, campus activism and a future “as unbounded as the sky.” The final line sums up Mountaintide’s world view: “Still I have the strangest dream that builds to this climactic scene: The light of love banishing the dark.”

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Mountaintide draws its musical strength from the varied backgrounds of its two members:

Born in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Holly Kirsten grew up in Salt Lake City where she developed her multi-instrumental talents on violin, guitar and

piano. She graduated from Belmont University in Nashville with a Music Business degree, and remained in Music City writing and performing until relocating to Norfolk in 2005. Well established as a teacher running a music and movement program called Little Rockstars for preschoolers, she reignited her passion for songwriting when she teamed up with Jim to form Mountaintide. She was a finalist in the 2015 Sea Level Singer-Songwriter Festival Emerging Artist Contest.

Jim Newsom is well known throughout southeastern Virginia. He spent most of his young life in the area, graduating from Suffolk High School and Virginia Tech. He's been a popular musician regionally since the mid-1970s; he is a highly regarded music writer and critic whose work has been published in the All Music Guide, PortFolio Weekly and VEER Magazine among many print and online publications. He has hosted programs on the local PBS and NPR affiliates for thirty five years.

He first played music as a youngster after picking up the basics from his sister's piano lesson books. He subsequently drove his parents crazy banging out rock and roll on the family's living room piano. In high school, he bought a flute for \$25.00 from a girlfriend in the marching band, and taught himself to play by listening to the recordings of Herbie Mann and Jethro Tull. He learned guitar from a Bob Dylan songbook. He's led rock, jazz and acoustic bands, and is an award winning songwriter.

In their three years together, Jim & Holly have performed at major regional festivals including Norfolk's Harborfest, Chesapeake Jubilee, Stockley Gardens Arts Festival, Seawall Art Show, Chelsea Summer Solstice Festival, the ETC Festival and the Norfolk Folk Festival. They've headlined special events like the Norfolk Harbor Party, Cultural Alliance Brew at the Zoo, D'Art Affair and Taste of Chesapeake; played concerts at the Naro Theatre, the American Theatre, Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, the Pretlow and Slover Libraries in Norfolk, the Hampton History Museum and the Virginia Beach Central Library. They've played their music in restaurants and coffeehouses, craft breweries and art centers, and at corporate conventions and private functions throughout southeastern Virginia from Suffolk to the Eastern Shore. They've been featured on regional television and radio programs such as Out of the Box, Hunter at Sunrise, Acoustic Highway, the Hampton Roads Show, Coast Live and Norfolk Perspectives.

Touching on a myriad of influences from the folk era and singer-songwriter genre, with dollops of bluegrass, rock and classic soul music thrown in for seasoning, Mountaintide's harmonic stew is tasty and invigorating.

