



# SONG CIRCLE

Serving Chicago's Folk Music Community

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## He Does It For the Screaming Groupies CD Review: *Live*, Andrew Kerr

Never let it be said that Andrew Kerr takes himself too seriously. From the very first song on his new live CD, it's evident that he approaches his music and his life with good humor and a healthy dose of self-deprecation.

"Rock Star," the first track on *Live*, details his glamorous life as a folk singer, performing in food courts and bookstores for sparse audiences of restless children and people who'd "rather hear 'Fire and Rain.'" In the tongue-in-cheek chorus, he proclaims, "I do it 'cause you want me, I do it for the screaming groupies" – and right on cue, the audience bursts into teenybopper squeals.

Like "Rock Star," most of Kerr's songs are autobiographical. "Survivor," the song he performed as his audition for the reality television series, is a musical biography, relating his travels all over the world and his former lives as an investment advisor and an aspiring teenage rap star.

"Special K" focuses on his rap music dreams: the days when he "was in touch with his roots" and "young, gifted and black" – or at least the days before he realized that he was "skinny, white, and out of touch." The audience sings along on the refrain, until Kerr leaves them in the dust, quoting the Sugar Hill Gang's "Rappers Delight" and Public Enemy's "Bring The Noise." "I feel like there was a breakdown in communication there," he laughs as the folkies fall silent.

In "Happy Life," he again pokes fun at his musical aspirations, this time singing about the songwriter's block that can accompany

happiness. He tries to "[construct] false memories of suffering and pain," but ultimately he's happier living with his dog, his cat, and his "well-adjusted wife," even if it "don't make much of a song."

Kerr is more than just a funny songwriter. "So Much Love" and "Who Were You?" are poignant character studies, while "Ain't It Strange" is a wistful song about adjusting to a cross-country move and making a home in a new city. He performs on guitar and piano, and (as he demonstrates in "Happy Life") can also execute a mean whistle solo.

But it's Andrew Kerr's humor that most engages the audience. He skewers the seductive music of Barry White with the over-the-top "Rub You Down," and on an unlisted track, he performs Air Supply's power ballad "Making Love Out Of Nothing At All," complete with sarcastic commentary. A highlight of the CD is "Don't Forget Your Fans," a song about accidentally receiving a piece of fan mail meant for Britney Spears. Of course, Kerr makes plenty of jokes about the pop princess, from her relationship with Justin Timberlake to her insipid song lyrics, but he also confesses that he'd like to achieve her fame someday, even if it would mean being stalked by fourth grade girls.

*Live* is an excellent introduction to an artist with such infectious energy, and listeners will find themselves as engaged in the performance as the live audience members seem to be. Andrew Kerr may never be as well-known as Britney Spears, James Taylor, or even Vanilla Ice, but it's clear from this recording that he is well on his way to living out the life of a folk star.

*Andrew Kerr will be at Schubas on May 18 at 8pm, opening for Da Vinci's Notebook*

Welcome to the first issue of **Song Circle**, a new monthly publication serving Chicago's folk music community. In the coming months I hope to bring you interviews, CD and concert reviews, and comprehensive calendars of events. Chicago has a vibrant folk scene, and I'm excited to be a part of it.

I would like to thank Chris Kastle of **Common Times** for all her help and support in this endeavor. **Common Times** has been an integral part of the folk community for years, and I know how much it will be missed during its hiatus. I hope that fans of **Common Times** will find this publication just as helpful.

This newsletter is about the community, and so your contributions and comments are always welcome. Would you like to see your events listed? Would you enjoy a feature on a particular artist or event? Is there an article you'd like to write? Then please send your thoughts to [songcirclechicago@yahoo.com](mailto:songcirclechicago@yahoo.com).

Hope you enjoy this first issue of **Song Circle!**

Carey Farrell  
Editor

## Uncommon Ground

**1214 West Grace Street**

**773-929-3680**

**uncommonground.com**

May 1: Katie Todd (8pm), Sam Shaber (9pm)

May 2: Christopher Williams (6:30pm), Example None (9pm), Twang Bang (10pm)

May 3: LUDO (8pm), Lori Wyatt (9pm), Jamie Chura & Ryan Gibson (10pm)

May 4: Mike Plishka (7pm), Kate Schrock (8pm), Leina-ala and Lani (9pm)

May 5: SHURE-sponsored Open Mic (7pm)

May 6: L&J (8pm), Bill Bungeroth (9pm)

May 7: Jeff Libman (8pm)

May 8: Tommi Zender (7pm)

May 9: Kelly Steward (8pm), Tess Wiley (10pm), Jason Harrod

May 10: Kristin Ronne (8pm), Andrew Morgan (9pm)

May 11: Matt Wahl (7pm), Krisin Shout (8pm), Kellie Lin Knott (9pm), Victoria (9pm)

May 12: SHURE-sponsored Open Mic (7pm)

May 13: Open Mic Storytelling hosted by Jim Pfitzer (7pm)

May 14: Jeff Libman (8pm)

May 15: Jennifer Marks (8pm), Teddy Goldstein (8pm)

May 16: FM Smith (8pm), Donna Frost (9pm), Wes Hollywood (9pm)

May 17: Good Intentions (8pm), Sunnyside Up (9pm), Kregg Viesselman (10:30pm)

May 18: Eric Ethann (7pm), Vaillancourt (8pm), Fojimoto (9pm)

May 19: SHURE-sponsored Open Mic

May 20: Jen Grinels (8pm)

May 21: Jeff Libman (8pm)

May 22: Courtney Fairchild (8pm), Jeff Foucalt (9pm)

May 23: Tristen (8pm), Andreas Kapsalis (9pm), Scottish McMillan (9pm)

May 24: Carmin Turco (7pm), Dave Sills (8pm), Andy Germak (9pm), Debe Welch (10pm)

May 25: Josh Kaufman (7pm), Julie Frost (8pm), Bruce Holmes (9pm)

May 27: Open Mic Storytelling hosted by Jim Pfitzer (7pm)

May 28: Adam Marsland (8pm)

May 29: Eric Himan (7pm), Martha's Trouble (8pm)

May 30: Laura Boton (8pm), Adrienne Serna (9pm), Abe Quigley (10pm)

May 31: Milton (8pm), Al Rose (9pm), Dylan Rice (10pm)

## Schubas Tavern

**3159 N. Southport Ave.**

**773-525-2508**

**schubas.com**

May 1: Happy Apple with Kevin O'Donnell & The National Quartet (9pm, \$8)

May 2: Chair Kicker's Music Tour featuring Alan Sparhawk of Low with Haley Bonar and ifthousands (7:30pm, 18+, \$10), Blanche with Puerto Muerto and Sin Ropas (10:30pm, \$8)

May 3: David Garza with Mark Sheehy (7pm, \$10), Oskar Saville with LP (10pm, \$10)  
 May 4: Therapy Brunch (11am, 18+), John Storms-Rohm record release (2:30pm, all ages, \$6 children, \$8 adults), Urban Twang record release with Antje (8pm, \$5)  
 May 5: Jerry Joseph & The Jackmormans with Cooksie (8pm, \$8W/\$10D)  
 May 6: Casey Meehan & Late Night Radio with The Red Thread and The Bamboo Kids (9pm, \$7)  
 May 7: Matt Nathanson with Marc Broussard (9pm, 18+, \$12)  
 May 8: Matt Nathanson with Marc Broussard (9pm, 18+, \$12)  
 May 9: Peter Mulvey (7:30pm, \$12 W/\$14 D), Air This Side of Caution with Dame Tamkin & The PPC and Bamboo Grove (10:30pm, \$8W/\$10D)  
 May 10: Cynthia Dall with Tim Rutili of Califone and guest (10pm, \$8 W/\$10 D)  
 May 11: Therapy Brunch (11am, 18+), Ben Lee with Cory Branan and Snowglobe (9pm, \$12)  
 May 12: Mayday with Saint Chapelle and Guest (8pm, 18+, \$8)  
 May 13: Will Hoge with Guest (9pm, \$8)  
 May 14: Cheryl Wheeler with Kenney White (8pm, \$15 W/\$18 D)  
 May 15: Cheryl Wheeler with Kenney White (8pm, \$15 W/\$18 D)  
 May 16: Calla with Catfish Haven and Grimble Grumble(10pm, \$8 W/\$10 D)  
 May 17: Tim Mahoney with Wendy DeBias (7pm, \$8), Amy Rigby with Laurie & John Stirrat and Nadine (10pm, \$10)  
 May 18: Therapy Brunch (11am, 18+), Da Vinci's Notebook with Andrew Kerr (8pm, 18+, \$10)  
 May 19: DAT Politics with Guest (8pm, \$8W/\$10D)  
 May 20: Tsurubami with Stinking Lizaveta and Plastic Crimewave Sound (9pm, \$8)  
 May 21: Damien Rice with guest (9pm, \$10)  
 May 22: Box-O-Car with Ivory Wire and Carbon Four (9pm, 18+, \$8)  
 May 23: EXO (acoustic) and Julie Korman (7pm, \$8), Phil Rockrohr & The Lifters record release, with Monkey Paw and Regal Standard (10pm, \$8)  
 May 24: Dressy Bessy and The Oranges Band with Guest (10pm, \$8W/\$10D)  
 May 25: Therapy Brunch (11am, 18+), Red Wanting Blue with Ordinary Peoples (7pm, \$10)

May 27: Vienna Teng with guest (8pm, 18+, \$8)  
 May 28: Paper Airplane Pilots record release with The Changes (9pm, \$7)  
 May 29: Cary Pierce with Gayle Ritt (9pm, \$12W/\$14D)  
 May 30: Verbena with The Brothers Webb (10pm, \$8 W/\$10 D)  
 May 31: Jesse Sykes with Mark Eitzel and Guest (10pm, \$8)

### **House of Blues**

**329 N. Dearborn  
312-923-2000**

**[hob.com/venues/clubvenues/chicago/](http://hob.com/venues/clubvenues/chicago/)**

May 3: Robert Earl Keen (9pm, 18+, \$19)  
 May 10: Suzanne Vega (9pm, 18+, \$25)  
 May 30 Bonnie Raitt (9pm, 21+, \$56.50)

**Two Way Street Coffee House  
1047 Curtiss St (Downers Grove, IL)  
630-969-9720**

**[twowaystreet.org](http://twowaystreet.org)**

May 2: Dave Crossland (8:15pm, \$5)  
 May 4: Guitar Workshop/Up Close with Muriel Anderson (1pm, \$25)  
 May 9: Walter Craft (8:15pm, \$5)  
 May 10: Larry Penn cd release, with Mark Dvorak (8pm, \$12)  
 May 16: Clearwater Connection (8:15pm, \$5)  
 May 23: Tom Dundee (8:15pm, \$5)  
 May 30: Switchback (8:15pm, \$5)

### **Martyrs**

**3855 N. Lincoln Ave  
773-404-9494**

**[martyrslive.com](http://martyrslive.com)**

May 1: Big C Jamboree featuring Dixie Bop (9:30pm, no cover)  
 May 2: Oteil and the Peacemakers, The Dangers (10pm, \$12)  
 May 3: Old No. 8, First Coat, Leon Chance and the Long Shots (10pm, \$7)  
 May 4: Vital Information featuring Bill Evans (8pm, \$15 adv/\$17 door)  
 May 5: Traditional Irish Music featuring Aidan O'Toole (9:30pm, no cover)  
 May 6: Tributosaurus featuring the music of Marvin Gaye (8:30pm, \$4)  
 May 8: Happy Ashtray, Cameron McGill, Welcome to Ashley (9pm, \$6)  
 May 9: Seven Day Run, Sofa King (10pm, \$8)  
 May 10: Randall Bays & Daithi Sproule (7pm, \$12) The Levellers (10pm, \$10 adv/\$12 door)

May 11: Ours, Red West, Adam & The Weight (8pm, \$10 adv/\$12 door)  
 May 12: Traditional Irish Music featuring Gan Bua (9:30pm, no cover)  
 May 14: Hillbilly Winos, Motion to Fix (8:30pm, no cover)  
 May 15: Chris Whitley and band, Johnny Society, Gus Black (9pm, \$15)  
 May 16: Jeff Tweedy, Sons of the Never Wrong, Al Day (SOLD OUT)  
 May 17: Starch Martins, Phistine Verona, Purrbox (10pm, \$7)  
 May 19: Traditional Irish Music featuring Kieran O'Hare (9:30pm, no cover)  
 May 20: Kimotion (8pm, \$10)  
 May 21: Jet (9pm, \$8)  
 May 23: Lightning & Thunder (10pm, \$8 adv/\$10 door)  
 May 24: Chicago Afro-Beat Project (10pm, \$7)  
 May 26: Traditional Irish Music featuring Errigal (no cover)  
 May 27: Johnny Frigo Quartet featuring Diane Delin, Stuart Rosenberg, & Emily Randle (8:30pm, \$10adv/\$12 door)  
 May 30: Brother Brother, Stephanie Rogers record release (10pm, \$10)  
 May 31: Frank Bang & the Gang, Lubriphonic, Dirty Love (10pm, \$7)

### **Fitzgeralds**

**6615 Roosevelt Rd. (Berwyn, IL)**

**708-788-2118**

**fitzgeraldsnightclub.com**

May 1: Derailers record release  
 May 2: Off Broadway/The Spiders/The Elephants  
 May 3: Los Straitjackets, The Bigger Lovers  
 May 8: The Millions, Kevin Lee & The Urban Dogs  
 May 9: Robbie Fulks  
 May 14: Chicago Singer Spotlight  
 May 15: The Acoustic Strawbs  
 May 16: Chuck Prophet, The Juleps  
 May 17: The Blazers CD release

### **Old Town School of Folk Music**

**4544 N. Lincoln/909 W. Armitage**

**773-728-6000**

**oldtownschool.org**

***(unless otherwise noted, all events are at the Lincoln Ave. location)***

May 2: First Friday (6:30pm, \$4)  
 May 3: John Renbourn and Jacquie McShee, with John Williams and Dennis Cahill (4pm

and 7pm, \$22 general/\$20 members/\$18 seniors and kids)

May 3: Two Hour Harmonica Workshop (3pm, \$25)

May 3: Ensemble Graduation (909 W. Armitage, 5pm, free)

May 4: Utah Phillips (7pm, \$24 general/\$22 members/\$20 seniors and kids)

May 9: Patty Larkin and Julia Fordham (7:30pm and 10pm, \$20 general/\$18 members/\$16 seniors and kids)

May 10: Irish Ceili and Set Dancing Workshop (2pm, \$16)

May 10: Rolling Thunder Re-view (7pm, \$10 general/\$9 members/\$8 seniors and kids)

May 11: Four Bitchin' Babes (4pm and 7pm, \$22 general/\$20 members/\$18 seniors and kids)

May 16: Vance Gilbert and Ellis Paul (7:30pm, \$20 general/\$18 members/\$16 seniors and kids)

May 17: Bruce Molsky Fiddle Workshop (1:30pm, \$40)

May 17: Bill Frisell with Victor Krass and Kenny Wolleson, and special guest Bruce Molsky (7pm and 10pm, \$25 general/\$23 members/\$21 seniors and kids)

May 18: Bruce Molsky Banjo Workshop (1:30pm, \$40)

May 24: Miki Greenberg's Songs of Tenderness (7:30pm, \$15 general, \$13 members, \$11 seniors and kids)

May 30: Daniel Lanois (8pm, \$28 general/\$26 members/\$24 seniors and kids)

May 31: OTSM Staff and Faculty present: CHICAGO! A Hometown tribute (\$12 general/\$11 members, general admission)

### **House Concerts**

May 31: Rod Picott (8pm, \$10, call 773-279-9661 to RSVP)



Would you like your folk music events listed in the next issue of ***Song Circle***? Just email your calendar to **[songcirclechicago@yahoo.com](mailto:songcirclechicago@yahoo.com)**. The deadline for June listings is May 20.