

JOHN FLYNN BIO

John Flynn opens his new CD, *The End of the Beginning* with the lines “Like river stone, it may be that some edges get worn smooth, or maybe it’s just that these days you don’t have as much to prove”. These words seem to capture not only the mood of the disarmingly acoustic release, but also something of the 54 year-old singer-songwriter himself. *The End of the Beginning* reveals Flynn as an artist and a man, comfortable in own his skin and in full command of his craft. The disc contains eleven songs by Flynn, whom Ramblin’ Jack Elliott once called the undiscovered “John Lennon of the Plasma Generation!” (Flynn admits that Mr. Elliott may have been under the influence of an enthusiasm-generating beverage at the time of this characterization.) The title song is a duet that finds Flynn reflecting on the journey, while sharing the singing chores with his long-time supporter and friend Kris Kristofferson. “A Song from the Subliminal Hymnal” is a whimsical, koan-like invitation to lateral thinking.

“Crazy as Ever” is a song John wrote for Beth, his wife of 27 years. “The Giving Stone” is a parable about innocence and generosity. “My Horizontal Smile” is a high-spirited declaration of bootstrap beatitude. “Democracy (the Weed)” is an anthem for the young people manning the barricades from Cairo to Oakland that Flynn recently performed in Zuccotti Park for the Occupy Wall Street movement. “The Crow” is haunting canticle about guilt and betrayal that John sings with his accomplished daughter, singer-songwriter Sarah Flynn.

“When I Throw Stones” is an island-tinged warning about the toxicity of our country’s political discourse. “Prison Bible”, about one inmate’s journey of redemption, is a song that Mary Armstrong of Philadelphia’s *City Paper*, extols, “could bring a tear to a glass eye”! “The Cup” is a song for the grieving,

especially those returning from war. And the album closes with "The Web and the Feather", a song John wrote for Camp Dreamcatcher, a therapeutic summer camp for children dealing with HIV/AIDS.

The album also contains a strikingly spare reinterpretation of Bruce Springsteen's "She's the One," which Flynn originally recorded for the Boss's 60th birthday at the request of Helen Leicht for Philadelphia AAA radio trailblazer WXPN.

The End of the Beginning was recorded and produced by current handyman, former TV and radio personality, and *always* musician, Harvey (remembered fondly throughout the Philadelphia region as "Harvey in the Morning"). Harvey sings and plays many of the instruments on the album.

Other friends and luminaries featured on the album include Native American flutist Bill Miller, folk vocal group Brother Sun, slide-guitar virtuoso Pat Victor, tuba and bass guitar legend Freebo (Bonnie Rait, Joni Mitchell), Pitz Quattrone on didgeridoo, and Philadelphia treasures Joshua Yudkin on keyboards and Cheryl Prashker on percussion.

"Every song I write always feels like my first," Flynn says of the trade he's practiced for more than three decades. "I guess that's why I love it so much. It's almost like that Buddhist concept of the beginner's mind. Each song challenges you to seek and see new possibilities. Maybe that's where the album title came from. After all these years, I feel like I'm just getting warmed up."

Few people who knew John Flynn as a boy would have predicted the path his life would take. A self-professed "straight arrow", as a senior at Ridley High in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the former altar boy who once strummed a New Year's Day banjo in the world famous Mummers parade was

named president of the National Honor Society and Scholar Athlete of the Year while receiving two congressional nominations to the United States Naval Academy. John was making plans to play lacrosse for Navy when he found out he would not be able to take his guitar with him to Annapolis. Although music had always been an important part of John's life, he was surprised to realize how much he had come to rely on his beloved Guild twelve-string. The thought of leaving it behind, even for a few months, caused him to begin to admit to himself that he had other dreams.

John abruptly changed course and began writing songs in earnest. He put himself through Temple University playing in bar bands. Though his degree was in political science, he abandoned the idea of studying law when he was offered a staff songwriting position at Combine Music in Nashville, following Billy Swan's Top 40 country recording of John's song "Rainbows and Butterflies".

It was Swan who first introduced John to Kris Kristofferson. Since then Kris has written liner notes for John, sung on three of Flynn's CDs and even recited the lyrics to John's song "Without You with Me" at Stephen Bruton's funeral.

Today, John's shows draw from a significant body of work, ranging from his early country offerings to story songs, love songs, songs for kids, funny songs, songs of social justice, and meditations on loss, tolerance, faith and hope. The 54 year-old father of four spurned touring when his children were young, but as the kids grew older superlatives began to welcome their dad's arrival to the national folk stage. In 2005, Arlo Guthrie invited John to join musical legends like Willie Nelson and Ramblin' Jack Elliott on the historic "Train to New Orleans" tour following Hurricane Katrina. And Ticket Magazine wrote that "John Flynn is at the near end of a long line of American poets,

thinkers and folk artists stretching from Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, all the way up to Kris Kristofferson”.

John resides in the Brandywine area of Northern Delaware with his family and his running partner, Chief, the world's most exuberant Frisbee-catching German shepherd.