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SIDETRACKS

Kane County Chronicle • Friday, December 19, 2003



Total package
Cathy Richardson Band
plays FitzGerald's

page 18



The Cathy Richardson Band's latest album, "The Road to Bliss," was nominated for a Grammy award in the best recording package category.

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The whole package

Richardson's 'Road' to bring blissful New Year

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

Chicago musician Cathy Richardson grew up in a time that an album's artwork was almost as thrilling as the music itself.

"I grew up listening to record albums, to vinyl," Richardson said. "That's one of the things that's been missing from the whole CD experience — the album art that ties the music into a theme and lets you get to know the artist a little bit. It gets you involved and brings you into it."

Richardson set out on a mission to bring some excitement back into album artwork when she sat down with artist Bill Dolan to design the packaging for her band's latest CD, "The Road to Bliss," released on her own Cash Rich Records label.

The CD folds out to reveal a winding highway, taken by Richardson herself.

Flipping it open unveils the interior of a car, with the CD in

If you go:

What: Cathy Richardson Band

When: 10 p.m. Dec. 31

Where: FitzGerald's, 6615 Roosevelt Road, Berwyn

Cost: \$70 in advance; \$80 day of the show

Information: (708) 788-2118

the place of the steering wheel. The lyric sheet, or road map to "Bliss," is tucked away in the glove box.

"The Road to Bliss" recently was nominated for a Grammy award in the category of best recording package.

Richardson said she is honored the Recording Academy would recognize an

independent artist.

"I think it really speaks volumes for the Recording Academy that if you do create a great piece of work, that you can be recognized for it," Richardson said.

The Cathy Richardson Band will perform at 10 p.m. Dec. 31 at FitzGerald's, 6615 Roosevelt Road, Berwyn. Paul Cebar and the Milwaukeeans also are on the bill. Tickets are \$70 in advance, \$80 the day of the show, available through Ticketmaster or by calling FitzGerald's at (708) 788-2118.

Although Richardson is happy with results, she said it was a time-consuming process.

"The package was almost as much work as recording the album itself," Richardson said. "I never knew I would have to learn so much about how paper folds and weights of paper and textures and ink. It's been a huge education."

See RICHARDSON, page 21

Richardson

Continued from page 18

Richardson said she hopes her approach will help get people interested in buying CDs again instead of just downloading songs from the Internet.

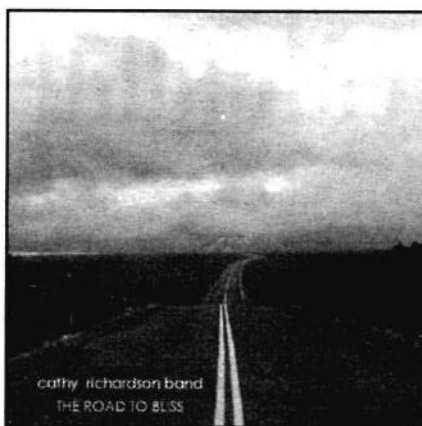
"It's an answer to the downloading issue," Richardson said. "Let's give people something that they have to have in their hands. If they don't buy the album, if they just download it off the Internet, they've missed half of the experience."

The album's Grammy nomination is just the latest stepping stone for Richardson. She received critical acclaim for her lead in "Love, Janis" (a musical about the late Janis Joplin) and appeared in the Seattle production of the play, "The Education of Randy Newman."

As its name implies, "The Road to Bliss" takes listeners on a musical journey.

"I definitely wanted to use the packaging to tie all the songs together," Richardson said. "I tried to sequence the songs in a way that **told a little story and took you on a little journey.**"

One of the album's highlights is



Submitted photo

a duet with Emily Saliers of the Indigo Girls, "Blindsided by Love."

The collaboration was an honor for Richardson.

"I've been an Indigo Girls fan since day one," Richardson said. "So to have my voice and Emily harmonizing on my own record is so incredibly special."

Richardson said she would love if "The Road to Bliss" provided an inspiration to other musicians to do their own elaborate artwork.

"That would be amazing," Richardson said. "I would love for there to be this creative spark and revolution where artists would try to outdo each other, to stimulate people's imagination."