



deb talan press kit

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## THE BROWN ALUMNI MONTHLY

### Telling the Truth As it Suits Her

Deb Talan joins the ranks of folk musicians writing and producing their own songs.

Reviewed by JEFFREY PEPPER ROGERS '86



Deb Talan

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2003

[ M U S I C ] **A Bird Flies Out** by Deb Talan '90 (available at [debtalan.com](http://debtalan.com), [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com), and other on-line music stores).

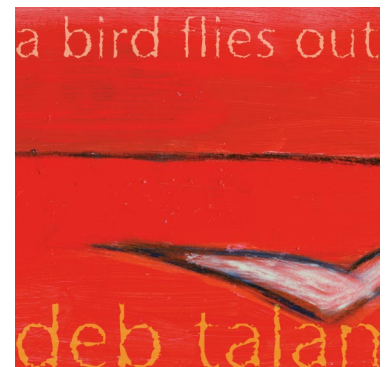
Brown has made a striking contribution to the large and ever-growing sisterhood of singer-songwriters, from Mary Chapin Carpenter '81 through Catie Curtis '87, Lisa Loeb '90 and Liz Mitchell '90, and Erin McKeown '00. Add to this list Deb Talan, who made her mark on the Boston coffeehouse circuit in the late 1990s and now lives in the Northampton, Massachusetts, area.

Talan's third CD, *A Bird Flies Out*, reveals a polished, literate songwriter working the porous border between pop and folk with a distinctive curl in her voice. The CD starts strongly with the

Shawn Colvin-esque "Unraveling," followed by "Tell Your Story Walking," inspired by Jonathan Lethem's novel *Motherless Brooklyn* (the song was chosen for a benefit CD put out by the Songs Inspired by Literature Project—[siblproject.org](http://siblproject.org)). "Tell it to the judge, man," Talan sing over a melancholy descending keyboard line. "Tell it to your motherless reflection. In a sock and one shoe after the great defection, he said, 'Tell a lie sometimes, tell the truth when it suits you, and when you've lost your way tell a story.'"

Further into the CD, Talan blends in more with the pack of guitar strumming troubadours, especially in straightforward folksy expressions like "How Will He Find Me" and "Comfort." A little rock edge, both in the harmonies and in the studio arrangements, brings out the best in her writing and her singing.

*A Bird Flies Out* was largely recorded at home by Talan and her partner, Steve Tannen, with limited overdubs of drums and other supporting instruments in the studio. More and more CDs are being made in this homegrown fashion. It's economical for artists like Talan who release CDs via their own dot-com domains, and the setting lends a relaxed intimacy to the performances. The do-it-yourself working method offers another significant advantage: relieved of the bottom-line pressures of record companies, artists have the space to develop their voices and their audiences from album to album and year to year. *A Bird Flies Out* sounds like a prologue to many more good songs.



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JEFFREY PEPPER ROGERS ([jeffreypepperrogers.com](http://jeffreypepperrogers.com)) is a contributor to *All Things Considered* and author of *The Complete Singer-Songwriter*.

# deb talan press kit

## THE BOSTON HERALD THE EDGE: ENTERTAINMENT • ARTS • LIFE • STYLE

### Deb Talan's do-it-yourself Success

By Daniel Gewertz

MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2003

Deb Talan seems like the rare folk-pop singer who would have record label executives reaching for their check-books:

- Her music is both fresh and familiar. She has been widely compared to Shawn Colvin and, vocally, the tag fits snugly.
- She recently has won a whole slew of songwriter contests, and her songs have been heard on TV and at the movies.
- And, no small matter, the fair haired Talan is as beautiful as anyone plying her musical wares on today's coffeehouse circuit. Even better, her all-American looks aren't intimidating. Boys and girls like her equally.

Yet, so far, Talan is a totally D. I. Y. (Do It Yourself) folk babe. Her new album, "A Bird Flies Out," is not only self-produced and manufactured, it was recorded mostly in the home studio Talan shares with her boyfriend, singer-songwriter Steve Tannen, in Northampton.

Even more audacious, Talan and Tannen are producing her CD-release concert at the Somerville Theatre on Friday without the help of any promoter.

"We rented the theater, hired the crew and did publicity. Our friends are posterizing the city. We wanted to have the control," Talan said. "It's an experiment."

Have record labels been immune to Talan's charms? Not completely. "But it's not where I'm putting my energies now," she said. "In the course of the life of this record, I'd like to find a label. But for now, I want to get it out of the gate and hope more buzz gets generated.

"The framework of this industry is in flux. Steve and I are functioning as our own small label now, so when I look for a label, I'd want a bigger one. Yet a really big label isn't that appealing, because I've gotten a degree of control. And I really like it," she said.

Talan was born in Western Massachusetts, and attended Brown University before heading out to Oregon, where she was part of a Portland band, Hummingfish, for six years.

Arriving in Cambridge five years ago, she soon got a weekly Monday evening gig at Starbucks in Harvard Square, performing for casual listeners and lots of caffeine addicts waiting in line.

"I did it for a year and a half. I think of it as my boot camp. I was having trouble getting gigs at the time, and it was a really important thing to do," she said.

Since that time, Talan's career has progressed in remarkably steady fashion. While she graduated from opening act to headlining status at coffeehouses and clubs, Talan's music has been heard on the WB ("Dawson's Creek" "Felicity") and under the closing credits of the popular indie film "Lovely and Amazing." Her song "Tell Your Story Walking," a highlight of the new album, was a winner of the "Songs Inspired by Literature Songwriting Competition," appearing on a benefit album alongside songs by Bruce Springsteen and Suzanne Vega.

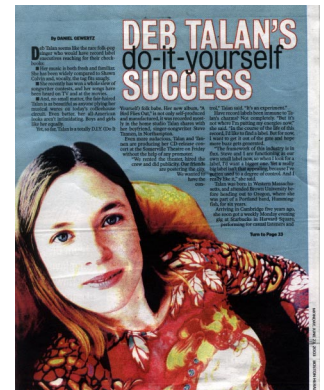
The new CD has unusually bright textures and lively dynamics for such introspective material. They're basically relationship songs, tackling the inner progress and emotional missteps of life. Though the lyrics aren't linear, they aren't frustratingly mysterious either.

Though she appears to be in her 20s, Talan is 35, a fact she mentions with charming hesitation. "The industry wisdom is: Keep your age nebulous. The fear is that young people won't buy your records if they're not your age," she said.

She's both shy about the age question and proud of her years. "It takes time to develop your craft, and I feel I'm getting better with age," she said.

Talan is. "A Bird Flies Out" is a huge step beyond her previous studio album, "Something Burning."

And does she feel she fits that Shawn Colvin mold? "I haven't fit myself into a mold. But I'm not a trailblazer. Others did the work to make room for me," she said.



## THE BOSTON GLOBE SOUND BITES

### The Migrations of a pop songbird

By Jim Sullivan

JUNE 26, 2003

SOUND BITES JIM SULLIVAN

#### The migrations of a pop songbird

Life is complicated. Most pop songs are not. Singer-songwriter Deb Talan does not write songs that are complicated. In the sense that they're difficult or disjointed. The western Massachusetts-based, classically trained Talan is nothing if not multifaceted, easy on the ears. But on "A Bird Flies Out," her third album, she's drawing from a pretty deep well of mixed emotions.

"I get bored with one emotion," Talan says from the home she shares with her partner/manager Steve Tannen. "I do see most of the songs as having some sort of tension. If there's no tension at all, if a song is purely sweet or purely angry, it doesn't hold my interest very long. (The song) 'Sincerely' is about being at the end of your rope and having a really dark outlook, but having certain things that keep you in the world, sticking around." (The song is dedicated to Talan's parents.) "It sounds upbeat, bluegrass and happy, but with dark ruminations going on in it."

Talan, who celebrates the release of her new disc tomorrow night with a show at the Somerville Theater, grew up in Amherst, studied music, composed the music to a high school production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," majored in religious studies at Brown University and spent most of the '90s in Portland, Ore., playing in the jangle-pop band Hummingfish. In 1999, she moved to Boston, and two years after that to Northampton. She and Tannen built a

home studio with "the money we saved from not getting parking tickets in Boston."

Asked to explain her migratory habits, Talan says, "Part of the western movement was wanting to see different parts of the country, and Portland turned up being a great spot for a while. I was interested in teaching and got my master's in elementary education while at the same time I got in this band. Over the course of six years, I became more and more serious about music — it had been a big part of my growing up, too — but I felt I was supposed to do something more serious, and I gravitated back to music as being something more central in my life."

"One very powerful theme" on her new album, she says, "was looking for love and wondering where, and if, it was going to turn up. Searching, seeking feeling — I can tap into that place. A lot of this album has to do with relationships, which is the source for a lot of people, about needing to be heard, understood."

Talan began playing open-mike nights at Club Passim and in coffee shops when she moved back to Boston. Over the past three years, she was nominated for three Boston Music Awards. She says the 12 songs included on "A Bird Flies Out" were weeded out from a larger pack; she chose the ones that tended to hang together in groups of three or four.

For Talan, a song is a way to discover how you really feel about something. "It's almost like mapping things after the fact," she says, "to see more clearly where you are. I keep having this vision and I'm trying to resonate into depths that allow me to live more fully, and I hope I can touch those places in other people too."

Talan's backing band Friday will include guitarist Meghan Toohey, keyboardist/harmonica player Jabe Dobson, mandolin, guitar player Jim Henry, drummer Jeff Berlin, bassist Richard Gates, and backing vocalists Meg Hutchinson and Kris Delmhorst. Tannen will also join the band, and she will join his outfit in guitar and Henry for the opening set.

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She says her religious studies at Brown have helped her in songwriting, not as they pertain to religion — she was raised Jewish and ended up, she says "in no religion" — but in terms of thinking things through. "Those things still are a part of me," she says, "a kind of spiritual, psychological inquisitiveness. Not based in any faith."

Her folk-based, richly layered songs should appeal to fans of Beth Orton, Shawn Colvin, and Suzanne Vega. Talan's song "Tell Your Story Walking" (inspired by Jonathan Lethem's novel "Motherless Brooklyn") was included on the multi-artist "Songs Inspired by Literature: Chapter One" album. She has not held a day job in a couple of years. "Forgiven" was played during the closing credits of the film "Lovely and Amazing." Her other songs were used in the WB series "Felicity" and "Dawson's Creek."

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## DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

### **Songwriters head for Iron Horse**

By JOHN STIFLER, Staff Writer



Deb Talan

Thursday, January 10, 2002 — In the middle of one of the countless shopping strips in the sprawling Green Hills section of Nashville sits the Bluebird Cafe, Music City's premier songwriters' hangout. Practically every night of the week, the Bluebird presents at least two sessions of music.

The later show features writers familiar to audiences across the country. The earlier show, typically free or charging a minimal cover, is a showcase of new talent. Next Wednesday and Thursday at the Iron Horse, the calendar looks a lot like the Bluebird's early evening.

These two nights, the Horse is presenting 18 songwriters, including two sets of four performers in a group each night and, in between, a 30-minute set by two of them, Bob Hillman on

Wednesday and Amherst native Deb Talan on Thursday...

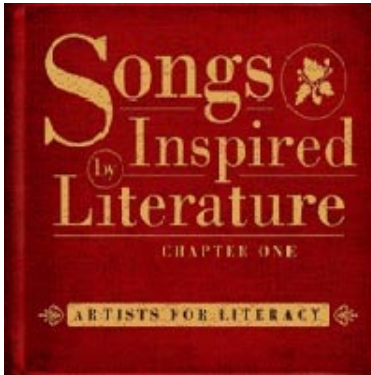
...Deb Talan overlapped a couple of years at Amherst Regional High School with noise rocker J. Mascis, and they probably played together in one of the high school's bands at some point. Talan's first instrument was the clarinet, and at A.R.H.S. she sang in choral groups conducted by former Amherst music teacher John Maggs.

She also started writing songs at 14. "Those traditional, really horrible pop songs I wrote those," she said. Graduating from Amherst Regional in 1986, she went on to Brown University, where she majored in religious studies. "In college I thought I needed to do something more serious. I stopped (working on music) for a few years." Of her liberal arts education she added, "I think that inquisitive way of thinking fits naturally into my lens as a songwriter."

Talan has recorded two CDs so far, a live one in Somerville and a studio disc recorded with fellow Amherst Regional alum Ben Arons. Arons, who plays drums, will be part of Talan's band at the Horse on Thursday, along with keyboardist Jordan Holt. Valley songwriter/instrumentalist Jim Henry may join them on guitar, mandolin or dobro....

Shows start at 7 p.m. each night, with Hillman and Talan taking the stage at 8:30 and the final set beginning at 9. Admission is \$7 per night or \$10 for both. Advance tickets: 586-8686.

# deb talan press kit



## SONGS INSPIRED BY LITERATURE: CHAPTER ONE BENEFIT CD

**Chapter One** features 10 winning songs from our international songwriting competition as well as several songs donated by world-class songwriters: Bruce Springsteen, Suzanne Vega, Ray Manzarek, Grace Slick and Aimee Mann. The true featured stars of Chapter One are the books, plays and poems that inspired those songs. The CD booklet features those literary works, highlighting the unique connection that those works share with the songs they've inspired.

### TRACK LIST

- |   |   |    |   |
|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | <b>Jill Tracy - Evil Night Together</b><br>Inspired by Luc Sante's historical account Low Life        | 10 | <b>Deborah Pades - 7th Step</b><br>Inspired by Frank McCourt's memoir Angela's Ashes                                |
| 2 | <b>Deb Talan - Tell Your Story Walking</b><br>Inspired by Jonathan Lethem's novel Motherless Brooklyn | 11 | <b>Scarth Locke - Bucking Bronco</b><br>Inspired by Shel Silverstein's children's poem "Bucking Bronco"             |
| 3 | <b>Aimee Mann - Ghost World</b><br>Inspired by Dan Clowes' graphic novel Ghost World                  | 12 | <b>Ray Manzarek - He Can't Come Today</b><br>Inspired by Samuel Beckett's play Waiting for Godot                    |
| 4 | <b>Bob Hillman - Tolstoy</b><br>Inspired by Leo Tolstoy's novel War and Peace                         | 13 | <b>Anny Celsi - T'was Her Hunger Brought Me Down</b><br>Inspired by Theodore Dreiser's novel Sister Carrie          |
| 5 | <b>Lynn Harrison - Einstein's Brain</b><br>Inspired by Michael Paterniti's memoir Driving Mr. Albert  | 14 | <b>David LaMotte - Dark and Deep</b><br>Inspired by Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"      |
| 6 | <b>Grace Slick - ReJoyce</b><br>Inspired by James Joyces' novel Ulysses                               | 15 | <b>Diane Zeigler - The Legend of Enoch Arden</b><br>Inspired by Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Legend of Enoch Arden" |
| 7 | <b>Justin Wells - The Last Temptation of Odysseus</b><br>Inspired by Homer's epic poem "The Odyssey"  | 16 | <b>Bruce Springsteen - The Ghost of Tom Joad</b><br>Inspired by John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath          |
| 8 | <b>Essence - Still Crying</b><br>Inspired by Mark Levine's poem "Work Song"                           |    |   |
| 9 | <b>Suzanne Vega - Calypso</b><br>Inspired by Homer's epic poem "The Odyssey"                          |    |   |

**Chapter One** promotes great works of literature through the universal language of song. It also raises money for programs that teach and/or promote reading. Above all, it builds awareness about the growing rate of illiteracy in this country and around the world. The more this problem is discussed, the more opportunities will be created to curtail its growth.

# deb talan press kit



## DEB TALAN SOMETHING BURNING

Posted on Wednesday, December 19 @ 21:42:40 EST

Topic: Reviews

Artist: Deb Talan

CD: Something Burning

Home: Boston

Quote: "Her lyrics should be required reading in college poetry classes".

By Jennifer Layton

Deb Talan strums her guitar and sings like she's lost in thought, choosing her words carefully, reliving moments and memories. It's captivating. Her lyrics should be required reading in college poetry classes. This Boston singer/songwriter writes moments I can feel, especially when she compares her hunger for someone to an animal in "Wild Horse":

*I keep thinking about your eyes and the shape of your lips,  
I keep tasting your kiss, and the touch of your hand is still on my hip...  
It's a wild horse and I can't break it alone.  
Tosses its head like it knows me, been waiting...*

Something Burning, Talan's second solo CD, is a collection of living memories sung to quiet folk music. Reviews in her press kit keep comparing her to Suzanne Vega and Shawn Colvin, and I hear shades of Janis Ian in the music. Talan is another one of those songwriters that you want to be careful around. Anything you say and do

could wind up in one of her songs. She's an earnest and sensual poet, watching peoples' mouths and movements and always thinking.

Every song has a unique character. There's something childlike and simple about writing a whole song about a coat ("My Favorite Coat"). On the other hand, there's something eerie and sad in the opening track "Thinking Amelia." Her voice is recorded in echo through the swaying folk/rock tempo, making it sound like it's coming through a dream. I wrote in my notes that it sounded like a girl falling to her death and later read in the press kit that the song is about Amelia Earhart.

*I think Amelia had it okay,  
She had a one in a million bad day  
With her eyes in the clouds, the clouds in her eyes  
In a big, wide sky, expecting to fly.  
Doesn't sound so bad to me.*

The music gets more uptempo in places, like in "Whetstones." "Gladdest Thing," a quiet prayer of gratitude, features beautiful cello playing by guest artist Rebecca Arons. My favorite music moments are the funkier rock tracks, like the title song. Her rootsy, earthy voice is full of spirit and life. Each song sounds new, like they're emerging from her heart perfect and finished.

Talan is attracting a lot of attention lately. For starters, her CD was sent to me by a singer/songwriter from NYC who added a note to me that said, "I think you will totally dig this." On a national level, this CD won her the Homegrown CD Award from Acoustic Guitar Magazine. She also received two Boston Music Award nominations and won the Songwriters Showcase Competition at the 2001 Rocky Mountain Folks Festival. She has continued to write since the release of this CD and hopes to record a new one before spring of 2002. I hope she'll send it my way.

[www.debtalan.com](http://www.debtalan.com)

# deb talan press kit

## The Oregonian

### Cheap Beats

09/21/01

Deb Talan was a singer-songwriter for the '90s Portland band Hummingfish, which received quite a bit of attention for its infectious, jangly pop tunes. Since moving clear across the country to Boston a couple of years ago for a solo career, Talan has continued to turn heads. This year she was nominated in two categories for The Boston Globe's Boston Music Awards, and she has opened for the likes of Sarah Harmer and David Bromberg.

Talan returns to her hometown to play shows in addition to her Saturday Music Fest NW showcase at Rogue Ales Public House. Don't miss her melodic folk song-craft and personable, distinctive voice — not the easiest artistic aspects to establish in today's mob of sensitivity.

6-8 p.m. Wednesday, Mad Hatter Lounge at the Rabbit Hole Restaurant, 203 S.E. Grand Ave. Also 9 p.m. Thursday, Snake & Weasel, 1720 S.E. 12th Ave. Both shows require no cover charge



**HOT TIX**

Melissa Etheridge, August 16 and 17 at Lowell Memorial Auditorium: on sale Monday at 10 a.m., call (617) 931-2000.

Blink-182, A New Found Glory, and Body Jar, July 28 at Suffolk Downs: call (800) 477-6849.

Billy Idol, August 6 at Avalon: call (617) 423-NEXT.

"Ozzfest 2001" with Black Sabbath, Marilyn Manson, Slipknot, Papa Roach, Linkin Park, Crazy Town, and Disturbed, August 7 and 8 at the Tweeter Center, Mansfield: call (617) 931-2000.

Galactic, August 8 at Avalon: call (617) 423-NEXT.

"MTV's TRL Tour" with Destiny's Child, 3LW, Dream, Eve, and Nelly, August 10 at the Tweeter Center, Mansfield: call (617) 931-2000.

Sugar Ray and Uncle Kracker, August 10 at the FleetBoston Pavilion: call (617) 931-2000.

Radiohead and the Beta Band, August 14 at Suffolk Downs: call (800) 477-6849.

Jill Scott, August 14 at the FleetBoston Pavilion: call (617) 931-2000.

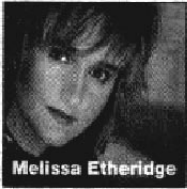
98 Degrees, August 23 at the Tweeter Center, Mansfield: call (617) 931-2000.

Tom Rush, David Bromberg, Deb Talan, and Mark Erelli, August 24 at Sanders Theatre: call (617) 496-2222.

Janet Jackson, August 26 at the FleetCenter: call (617) 931-2000.

Blues Traveler, August 28 at the Cape Cod Melody Tent, Hyannis: call (508) 775-9100.

Stiff Little Fingers, September 6 at the Paradise: call (617) 423-NEXT.



# deb talan press kit

## WILAMMETTE WEEK

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 46    SEPTEMBER 19, 2001  
PORTLAND NEWS AND CULTURE

DEB TALAN  
Rogue

Those mourning Shawn Colvin's post-Grammy descent into irrelevance will rejoice upon hearing Deb Talan's new solo live disc, *Sincerely*. Recorded entirely at tiny cafes and house concerts, it's reminiscent of the legendary "Live Tape" that first scored Colvin a contract, with Talan's winsome voice betraying a personality that tries but fails to mask its vulnerability with wry charm. Talan fronted Portland's Hummingfish for years; though she's migrated east, the fans she left behind are still singing her songs around the campfire, and it sounds like her craft has only improved since the move. (Jeff Rosenberg)

## Union-News.

Monday, February 12, 2001  
Springfield, MA

### Canadian songwriter sells out Iron Horse

By DONNIE MOORHOUSE  
Music Writer

...Opener Deb Talan was equally impressive with her 30-minute, solo acoustic set. Her intimate and introspective songwriting was tailored for a Northampton audience. Songs such as "Two Points" and "Counter Clockwise" went over well with the crowd.



the phoenix .com

### MP3 TOP 40 FOR JUNE

1. PRIZEFIGHTER	21. CAPSELA
2. ERIN MCKEOWN	22. THE BECKY CHACE BAND
3. HEIDI	23. ASCIENTO
4. RUSTIC OVERTONES	24. MELISSA MORRIS
5. JEREMIAH FREED	25. FUZZY
6. ASTROSLUT	26. LINUS
7. DEB TALAN	27. WACK ASS EGYPTIANS
8. SUNSHINE BOY	28. ARUNA
9. JESS KLEIN	29. ABUNAI
10. KELLY WALSH	30. FREAKSHOW
11. M-80	31. ANGRY SALAD
12. THE DOOM BUGGIES	32. SACRED RAISIN CAKES
13. ITCHY FISH	33. THE BUCKNERS
14. LORI MCKENNA	34. THE ALSO-RANS
15. NICK ZAINO	35. MAKE LISA RICH
16. JAZZ BASTARDS	36. JOSH LEDERMAN...
17. KEVIN GRIFFIN	37. DAVID MALLETT
18. AVA SCHLINK	38. STAR GHOST DOG
19. I-TAL FIRE	39. FRIGATE
20. SARA SHANSKY	40. HAYSTAK KALHOON

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# deb talan press kit

## Acoustic

# Live!

IN  
NEW YORK CITY

NOVEMBER  
2001  
VOLUME 3 ISSUE 6

and Beyond

## MONTHLY LISTINGS GUIDE

It's Friday, September 14th. After four days of watching horrific images on television and facing new realities too awful to contemplate, we accept an invitation to gather at the Bitter End to listen to a musical offering, free of charge. In order to lift spirits, to do *something*, musicians Greg and Steve Tannen and friends take the stage. Among them is Deb Talan. Her turn comes and a moment of revelation arrives.

She's strong... Her voice has a ribbon of steel running through it. It moves through the aural passages like quicksilver. Its fine sandpaper edge hones the song's emotional content. In response to September 11th, she sings:

Are you somewhere, safe as houses  
Close your eyes, count one, two, three  
Run and hide, now are you ready  
Ollie, ollie, in come free  
Itsy bitsy spider crawls...up the clear blue glass  
Down the broken walls  
And all the games we played as children  
To fight against the dark...  
Red, red rover... four leaf clover...  
Ashes ashes, all fall down...  
All fall down... All fall down...

The song we're listening to, "Safe as Houses," co-written with Steve Tannen, is riveting and appropriately child-like, full of horror and wonder. A sample of the song can be downloaded from her web site, [www.debtalan.com](http://www.debtalan.com). Click on "Sounds," and scroll down.

Upon listening to her second CD, *Something Burning*, we find that her songs are full-blown, mature works of art, belying her youthful appearance. There's no doubt that we're seeing the emergence of a major talent.



### Meet Deb Talan

After we learn about her background from her web site, we're not surprised at how good she is.

Deb, classically trained in clarinet and piano, began writing music when she was only ten years old. By the time she graduated from high school, she had written numerous pop songs and composed a score for a local production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. She began playing guitar in her senior year in college.

She wrote and fronted for an upbeat, pop band in Portland, Oregon, called Hummingfish for five years. While still in Hummingfish she moved toward a solo career and put out her own CD, *Songs for a Misfit Heart*. Performing two songs

from this CD, Deb won second place in the Rocky Mountain Folks Festival Troubadour Contest in 1996. In 1998, she organized a series of successful, in-the-round shows featuring women songwriters from local bands (including herself).

Having begun her solo career, Deb decided, in February of 1999, to head for Boston, Massachusetts. Deb took a year off from performing while finishing her second solo recording, *Something Burning*. When it was finished, she began performing in noted area venues such as Johnny D's, Club Passim and others. Her fan base in the Northeast grew.

Recently, Deb received Acoustic Guitar Magazine's "Homegrown CD Award" for *Something Burning* along with two Boston Music Award nominations and won the Songwriters Showcase Competition at the 2001 Rocky Mountain Folks Festival. Although she now has a loyal Boston following and sells out shows easily at Club Passim, she's relocated to New York, seeking to expand her fan base. We're lucky to have her here.

#### Schedule:

- Nov 1 8:00pm The Living Room, New York, NY
- Nov 2 9:30pm Iron Horse Music Hall, Northampton, MA \$8/\$10
- Nov 3 7:00pm w/Livingston Taylor, Tin Angel Philadelphia, PA
- Nov 17 7:30pm Festival of Rising Stars w/Meghan Toohey, Josh Ritter, Erin McKeown Somerville Theatre, Somerville, MA \$18/\$17/\$16
- Feb 9 8:00pm Watchung Arts Center Watchung, NJ \$12

Management: Liz Shulman, No Ordinary Artists, 617-666-0773, [liz@noordinary.org](mailto:liz@noordinary.org)

## [www.acousticlive.com](http://www.acousticlive.com)

# deb talan press kit



## THE WORCESTER PHOENIX

Feb. 15 - 22, 2001

**Wasting no time**  
**No Crime Done, Deb Talan, and the Phoenix Band Guide**  
by Brian Goslow

### worth crowing about

Worcester music fans have a change to catch a rising star this Saturday when Deb Talan appears at the Green Rooster Coffeehouse. Last week, Talan received two nominations for NEMO's 14th Annual Boston Music Awards in the New Singer/Songwriter and Debut Singer/Songwriter Album (for *Something Burning*) categories. The winners will be announced on April 19 at the Orpheum Theater in Boston.

"I was just hoping to get one just mostly to feel part of the music scene now and that's an acknowledgment of it," says an obviously proud Talan over breakfast at Lucky's Cafe. She had woken up at six a.m. to perform selections from *Something Burning* on WCUW's CrossTracks.

Her debut solo album holds the kind of promise that excites music lovers looking for a long time fix (think of the first time you heard Ani DiFranco or Suzanne Vega's "Luka"). It suggests that Talan will be making us happy with her music for a long time.

She moved to Boston after spending most of the 1990s in Oregon, where she was a member of Humming[fish], who played throughout the Pacific Northwest. "We were the same group together for six years — that was one of



the defining facts about us. It was a pop rock band and it was a folk band. I wrote all the lyrics. In our early years we were a dance band with a lot of energy."

Having grown up in the Amherst area, Talan always thought she would eventually move back east. When a long relationship with a band member ended, so did the band and she returned to her home state to finish work on her solo CD and introduce herself to the Boston open mic scene.

The 12-track *Something Burning* (Happyhead) is one of the better debut acoustic-based albums in a long time; it's not a reach to compare her to her musical influences: Jonatha Brooke, Shawn Colvin, Joni Mitchell, and

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# deb talan press kit

Suzanne Vega. Her words, which read like poetry, sit suspended in animation when she explores the aforementioned break-up in “The Darkest Season.” However, it’s not so personal you can’t recognize your own experiences in her songs.

“I’m conscientious with my writing. I want what I say to come from a place that’s true but I want it where people can attach it to their own experiences. I hope it’s bigger than that because it’s intended to be.

“Most of the time, the subject matter knows who they are,” says Talan, adding she’s inspired no negative responses from her soul-cleansing. “So far, so good.”

Every time Talan sits down to compose a new song, the circumstances are a little bit different. One thing stays the same — she’s a happy homebody. “I sit down with a yellow legal pad — it used to be little pieces of papers because it was less intimidating. I like to be home when I write. It’s a quiet safe feeling of space and ends up good. I put a lot of attention to my personal surroundings and I make my nest.”

For the melancholy “Gladdest Thing,” Talan utilized part of Edna St. Vincent Millay’s poem, “Afternoon on a Hill,”

which had been a present from her mom. “It was a lot of fun. Her poems were so musical already. The song came together quickly. That poem really spoke to me and I tapped into the energy of the poem.”

Every Monday and Tuesday night from 5 to 7 p.m., she performs at Starbucks in Harvard Square. “It’s a training ground and I’ve actually gotten people who’ve seen me there to come to my shows. It’s challenging to play for people who just come for coffee.” Where some performers will go to any extreme to attract an audience’s attention, Talan sticks to her music and leaves the comic routines to others. “It’s hard to do my own thing and be engaging. I write for people who are already interested in listening to the music.”

Hopefully, we’ll be hearing plenty more from Talan in the years to come.

Brian Goslow can be reached at [bgoslow@phx.com](mailto:bgoslow@phx.com).

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# deb talan press kit



FROM ACOUSTIC  
GUITAR MAGAZINE,  
JANUARY 2001

**Winner No. 8 Deb Talan,  
Something Burning**  
Deb Talan's pop sound is wholly  
her own.

For an audio sample, go to:  
[www.debtalan.com/sound.html](http://www.debtalan.com/sound.html)

STAGE AND STUDIO  
**HOMEgrown CD AWARDS**



Sharp songwriting, a great mix of acoustic and electric guitar work, and subtle and well-executed effects processing are the elements that earned Deb Talan's smoldering collection of original acoustic pop, *Something Burning*, a Homegrown CD Award. Talan's songs bring to mind such artists as Beth Orton and the Cranberries, but the sound is wholly her own. In addition to Talan's acoustic and electric guitars, clarinet, and harmony vocals, the CD features coproducer Ben Arons on drums, Dave Palan on bass, Nancy Hess on slide and electric guitar parts, and Rebecca Arons (Ben's sister) on cello. The bulk of the recording was done in Ben Arons' attic studio

using a variety of microphones and mixed on what Arons refers to as "a full-blown Pro Tools setup." Talan wrote these songs over the course of the past two years or so and finished the last few just before the CD was completed. Most of them are extremely personal, but Talan chose "Thinking Amelia," a daydream about lost aviator Amelia Earhart, as the opening track. "I was interested in having a lead-off song that wasn't just me singing about my experience," she says. "That song's about being hopeful, and I like that as a beginning song for a CD." The song "Gladdest Thing" was inspired by the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay, and the lyrics to the chorus were taken directly from Millay's poem "Afternoon on a Hill." "It was in a poetry collection my mom gave me called *An Awakening Spirit*," Talan recalls. "That poem really grabbed me. Her writing is very musical, and it was fun to write off of something."

The recording began over a year ago in Portland, Oregon, where Talan put about eight of these songs onto ADAT with the help of her friend Nancy Hess. The project migrated to the Boston area when Arons invited Talan to check out his new computer recording setup and test his new microphones. The first song they attempted was the spare, melancholy "The Darkest Season," which features Talan's angelic vocals and Hofner guitar.

Talan fell in love with the Hofner about four years ago. "I wanted something gritty with a different kind of character," she says. The first time she played the instrument, at a used guitar store in Portland, she knew she had found it. The challenge was capturing the Hofner's mellow, resonant tone on tape, which required a lot of arranging and rearranging of the mics. "Everything else was built around the acoustic guitar and the main vocal track," Talan explains.

"I recorded her vocals and acoustic guitar at the same time on most of the tracks," says Arons. "I used a Neumann TLM103 (it's the same as the U-87) on her voice, with a pop screen and a shock-mount to isolate it from low-frequency noises. Most of what you hear on

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# deb talan press kit

the acoustic guitar are a matched pair of Earthworks QTC1 omnidirectional mics. A couple of tunes—'The Darkest Season,' for example—have a direct pickup signal [from a Fishman under-saddle transducer] mixed in with that. There's no proximity effect with the Earthworks mics to make it sound boomy, so I could put them pretty close to the guitar (about six inches away and spaced about eight inches apart from each other) and isolate her voice. Some leakage made the sound more natural. One mic was near the soundhole and pointed up toward the neck, and the other was near the neck and pointed toward the soundhole."

Arons and Talan finished recording "The Darkest Season" in about a day and a half and moved on from there. "We've been friends for a long time," says Talan, "and our working relationship grew very naturally. We have a similar aesthetic. We'd do one song, find out what worked, and [apply] that to what we did on another song." Later they rented an ADAT so that they could dump the Portland tracks onto Arons' system and rework them.

Arons' studio is situated in a triangular space in the attic of his house, just under the eaves. "It was just big enough for me to stand up in," says Talan. "It was all wood, so it was a nice sound, and we didn't have any weird feedback. It was cold, though, and there were these nails sticking out of the wall, so I had to be careful not to lean into them. We picked up a little bit of street noise—recycling trucks going by, the next-door neighbor working on his house."

Arons used a stereo preamp on the Earthworks mics and a mono preamp on the Neumann. He ran the line-level output directly into the Pro Tools Digi001 interface, where he mixed the volume levels and added a little compression to Talan's vocals. He did the final mixing at a professional studio where he had access to the Pro Tools TDM system and some high-quality plug-ins, such as a Focusrite compressor and a TC Works Megareverb.

To record the electric guitar parts, Arons took a line out of Talan's Fender Princeton Chorus stereo amp and used a Shure SM57 and a Neumann TLM103 on the amp itself. For his sister's cello parts (recorded in Minnesota), he used an old Neumann mic from the '40s ("the kind of mic Hitler used to use") and the two Earthworks mics. To record the drum and bass tracks, Arons and Palan played along with the existing guitar-and-vocals track, and Talan's harmony vocals and clarinet part (on "A Good Day's Work") were the last bits to go on.

Talan and Arons agree that they might approach their next sessions differently—starting with the rhythm section and a scratch vocal and building from there. "I also would have recorded all the drums in the Theater Cooperative in Somerville, Massachusetts, where I did the drum parts for 'Amelia,' 'Good Day's Work,' and 'My Favorite Coat,'" says Arons. "It's an old church, and they have an incredible-sounding room that's great for drums."

Something Burning is available at Talan's Web site, <http://www.debtalan.com/>. Talan and Arons hope to collaborate again in the future, and the \$1,000 worth of gear from Sweetwater Sound (their prize for nabbing the latest Homegrown CD Award) should help them make the minor improvements they aspire to on their next recording project.

— Simone Solondz

Acoustic Guitar's Homegrown CD Awards is a year-long spotlight on CDs recorded and released by acoustic musicians. Winners are profiled in the Stage and Studio department and receive a \$1,000 gift certificate from Sweetwater Sound's music technology catalog. The deadline for application was September 1, 2000.

Excerpted from Acoustic Guitar magazine, January 2001, No.97.

# deb talan press kit



## FEATURED MP3 ARTIST

**Deb Talan: "Something Burning" and "Forgiven"**

Deb Talan grew up in Western Massachusetts. She was raised on classical music and jazz, began composing on piano at age 9, flipped for the Beatles at age 14 and started writing her own (cute, BAD) pop songs at this time. She picked up a guitar senior year in college and headed west.



### DOWNLOAD

Something Burning  
Forgiven

In 1999, after six years of fronting and writing for Portland, Oregon-based band, Hummingfish, Deb returned east to pursue her solo career. One year later she released her CD, *Something Burning* and began playing Boston clubs. This January, 2001, *Something Burning* received *Acoustic Guitar Magazine's* Homegrown CD Award. Deb's music, while akin to that of Shawn Colvin, Jonatha Brooke and Suzanne Vega, is unique and memorable due to her distinctive voice and evocative, well-crafted songs.

### PREVIOUS FEATURED ARTISTS

The Red Telephone  
The Operators  
Star Ghost Dog

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# deb talan press kit

## The Boston Globe

### 2001 BOSTON MUSIC AWARD NOMINEES:

#### **New singer/songwriter:**

Nate Borofsky\*

Howie Day

Laura Higgins

Stephen Kellogg

**Deb Talan**

#### **Debut singer/songwriter album:**

“Australia” (Howie Day)\*

“Against the Grey” (Meg Hutchinson)

“Distillation” (Erin McKeown)

“The Golden Age of Radio” (Josh Ritter)

**“Something Burning” (Deb Talan)**

\*2001 winners

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## The Boston Globe

### A LONG, STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN

Published on 01/26/2001.

By Steve Morse, Globe Staff

...An open-mike success story, Talan has matured into a striking presence on the local folk scene. It's no wonder that one of her idols is Shawn Colvin: Talan has a similar rapier-sharp wit and smooth, make-it-seem-so-effortless style. Talan's relationship songs are profound, but she also has a vital sense of humor. Talan performs at the Festival of Women Songwriters at the Somerville Theater on Feb. [10]. The event also includes Meghan Toohey, Jenny Reynolds, Faith Soloway, Chapter In Verse, and others...