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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Your experience with the CD reminds me of this podcast:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/reply-all/id941907967?i=1000434669096>

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

A legend comes to town

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

Richard Thompson comes to The Stone Church in

Brattleboro on Nov. 8

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

A LEGEND IS coming to Brattleboro.

I don't write those words lightly. I have been a Richard

Thompson fan since the old Fairport Convention days, in 1967,

when the band kind of invented folk-rock. I was out of the

9 country for the Richard and Linda Thompson days, when he and
10 his now-ex-wife tore out the hearts of each other and their fans.

11 I picked up Thompson again when I came back to this
12 country, seeing him over and over again at the Iron Horse in
13 Northampton, Massachusetts, as well as chasing him around
14 New England from Tanglewood to Keene, New Hampshire.

15 Thompson is a god of both the acoustic and electric
16 guitar, a gifted touring performer, a brilliant (and sometimes dark)
17 songwriter, and a witty raconteur.

18 Now 76 years old, he's going on 60 years of writing,
19 singing, playing, recording, and touring. Last year he released his
20 19th solo album, *Ship to Shore*.

21 He will be playing at the Stone Church in Brattleboro on
22 Saturday, Nov. 8, and, no, you probably can't get a ticket. Seating
23 capacity is 200, and last month, when the tickets went on sale,
24 they sold out within 10 minutes.

25 * * *

26 WHEN PEOPLE TALK of Thompson, they mention him in the
27 same class of singer-songwriters as Paul Simon, Bob Dylan, and
28 Randy Newman, and that was not me saying it, it was Bonnie
29 Raitt. She's right.

30 Thompson was given an Officer of the Order of the
31 British Empire by the Queen of England. He can play electric
32 guitar until the rafters come down, and no enjoys shredding a
33 guitar more than he does. But he can do acoustic until you cry.

34 His "1952 Vincent Black Lightning," a song about a
35 motorcycle, a villain, and a red-headed girl, [was included](#) in
36 *Time* magazine's "All-TIME 100 Songs" list of the best English-
37 language musical compositions released between 1923 and
38 2011. It includes the immortal lines, "Red hair and black leather,
39 my favorite color scheme." The song has been covered by so
40 many artists that Google just throws up its hands.

41 Thompson has also written one of the most beautiful folk
42 ballads of the last two centuries, "Beeswing," which is also the

43 title of his autobiography, *Beeswing: Losing My Way and Finding*
44 *My Voice 1967–1975*.

45 What is it about the poetry in “Beeswing” that always
46 makes me cry? For one thing, it’s the way that Thompson crams
47 an extra syllable into the words of the last line of the second
48 stanza; it gives me chills:

49 *Brown hair zig-zag round her face*

50 *And a look of half-surprise*

51 *Like a fox caught in the headlights*

52 *There was an animal in her eyes.*

53 The song contains great empathy. The woman he’s
54 writing about is a wild child who ends up sleeping rough with
55 only a wolfhound for a companion.

56 *And they say her flower is faded now*

57 *Hard weather and hard booze*

58 *But maybe that’s just the price you pay*

59 *For the chains you refuse.*

60 Thompson knows that the chains you refuse — a straight
61 job, a husband, all the conventions of society — might cost you
62 everything, and yet you willingly choose them because,
63 otherwise, life becomes too dull to bear.

64 His understanding of women is very deep. Another song
65 of his that I love is the beautifully melodic [“From Galway to](#)
66 [Graceland,”](#) about a woman so obsessed with Elvis Presley that
67 she imagines she is married to him and travels from Ireland to
68 Graceland to live out her life at his grave. The amount of empathy
69 in this song breaks your heart open.

70 * * *

71 AMONG THE stranger things that has happened to me
72 recently is the mysterious case of the missing Richard Thompson
73 CD, which turned out not to be lost at all.

74 To understand this experience, you need to know the
75 name [Willi Carlisle](#), an up-and-coming irreverent singer-
76 songwriter whose work I really enjoy.

77 I listen to music in my car. And being something of a
78 technophobe, I depend on my car's CD player. When I bought
79 *Ship to Shore*, I put it on and was bewildered when Willi Carlisle
80 came out. I tried other CDs, but no Willi. I kept trying with "Ship
81 to Shore," but it always came out Willi. Even other Richard
82 Thompson CDs played Richard Thompson. But *Ship to Shore*?
83 Always Willi.

84 I thought I had been sent a bad CD. I bought another CD,
85 this time direct from Thompson's own website, but same deal. I
86 was getting spooked.

87 I got in touch with Thompson's record company and
88 explained the situation. They flipped out.

89 Matt Etgen of New West Records suggested that maybe I
90 had been sent a bootleg copy. I was told to photograph the
91 production number on the back of the CD and send it to him. I
92 did. It was the right production number. Not a bootleg.

93 "We released this album in May 2024, and this is the first
94 complaint I've heard about this," Etgen wrote to me. "And RT has
95 already toured this record extensively. It's a mystery for sure and
96 one I would love to solve."

97 I sent one of my Thompson CDs to Matt, just in case he
98 thought I was making it up, or maybe that I was nuts.

99 "Bad news — we received your CD yesterday, put it right
100 into the car CD player on the way home, and it was Richard
101 Thompson, not only the music but also the digital info that came
102 up on screen," Matt wrote back. "I'm relieved it's not a real issue.
103 And that makes sense because we've not had any other
104 complaints of this sort."

105 Then his "absolutely verified Richard Thompson CD"
106 arrived in the mail. I put it in the car player. Out came Willi.

107 "Your car may need an exorcism hahaha," Matt wrote.

108 The next step — maybe you're ahead of me on this one
109 — was to try a different CD player. Lo and behold, when I tried
110 the one in the house, out came, as promised, Richard Thompson.

111 The new CD is lovely. Among the 12 songs is "Singapore
112 Sadie," a tribute to his newest wife, Zara Phillips, who sings
113 harmony on the record. ("Singapore Sadie is three times the
114 lady....") There's the dark side of fame coming out in "Life's a
115 Bloody Show." And there's an upbeat tribute to being on the road,
116 "We Roll."

117 If you weren't one of the lucky ones to get a ticket to the
118 Stone Church this Saturday, maybe you should buy the CD. Or
119 check Richard Thompson out on YouTube.

120 Or just know that for one night only, a legend will be
121 singing in Brattleboro.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

122 **JOYCE MARCEL** is a reporter and columnist for *The*
123 *Commons*, where she regularly covers politics, homelessness,
124 economic development issues, and the arts.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

###BEGIN LOGLINE###

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