

Brodsky to wow his Lobby fans

Woody Guthrie meets Bob Dylan meets Steve Earle meets Jim Page. That's a fairly apt introduction to Chuck Brodsky, Saturday's Lobby return visitor.

A purveyor of spellbinding story songs and mean guitar work, Brodsky has a sharp eye for detail, a wicked sense of humour, and the ability to capture entire stories in a few resonant images. They say that to tell great stories, you have to have had an adventurous life. It's a tip that Chuck Brodsky took to heart.

In 1981, he took his guitar and hitch-hiked to California. He's worked as a migrant fruit picker, driven an ice cream truck, laboured on an Israeli kibbutz, worked for a book distributor, was a bank courier (until he lost a check for ten million) and spent two years street-singing around Europe.

In the process, Chuck learned what all great writers know - that the best stories are the little things in the lives of everyday people who are trying to muddle through with some grace. He has released three albums for Red House Records, Letters in the Dirt, Radio, and Last of the Old Time. The latter two have become particular favorites of mine. Look out for songs like the Kinky Friedmanesque On Christmas I Got Nothing, the road-rage blues Blow 'em Away, the show-stopping Radio, Boys In The Back Room, and He Came To Our Town, both of which raise a smile of recognition.

Chuck Brodsky's down-to-earth presence, touching storytelling and dry, barb witted social commentary bring tears and laughter to the listener - often during the course of the same song.

Here is a worthy inheritor of the Woody Guthrie, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Tom Paxton mantle. If you have gone to an acoustic singer-songwriter concert on this writer's recommendation in the past and enjoyed it, do check out Chuck Brodsky.