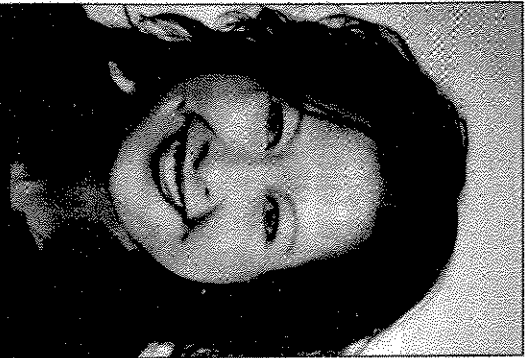


## Blues to the bone



by Chiemi

Look out! Toast is about to be lit up by something new and bluesy when Jason Fickel takes the stage at the Music/Poetry Series Sunday, March 12 at 3 p.m. Natasha Schneider will read as the featured poet for the afternoon event of Poesie and Leider.

Having recently released *Kerosene Cologne* on Lost Canyon Records, Fickel's songs relate wry and witty lyrics. His music also includes what some call "bottleneck guitars, and gumbo trombones" and feature stellar guest performances as well as masterful production.

The recordings contain an echo with far and near type effects on Fickel's voice for a sort of "give/take" feel that really work. "I Want All My Money Back" digs in with the chorus right up front. "I Got Style" slides over next with some apt and amusing fashion detail. "Bells of Avignon" hits a soft note, followed by "I Know the Saints," "Come Find Me Sleeping" and "Can't Live No Place," which take the listener somewhere else, maybe a land alive with swamp and creatures and spirits yet unnamed.

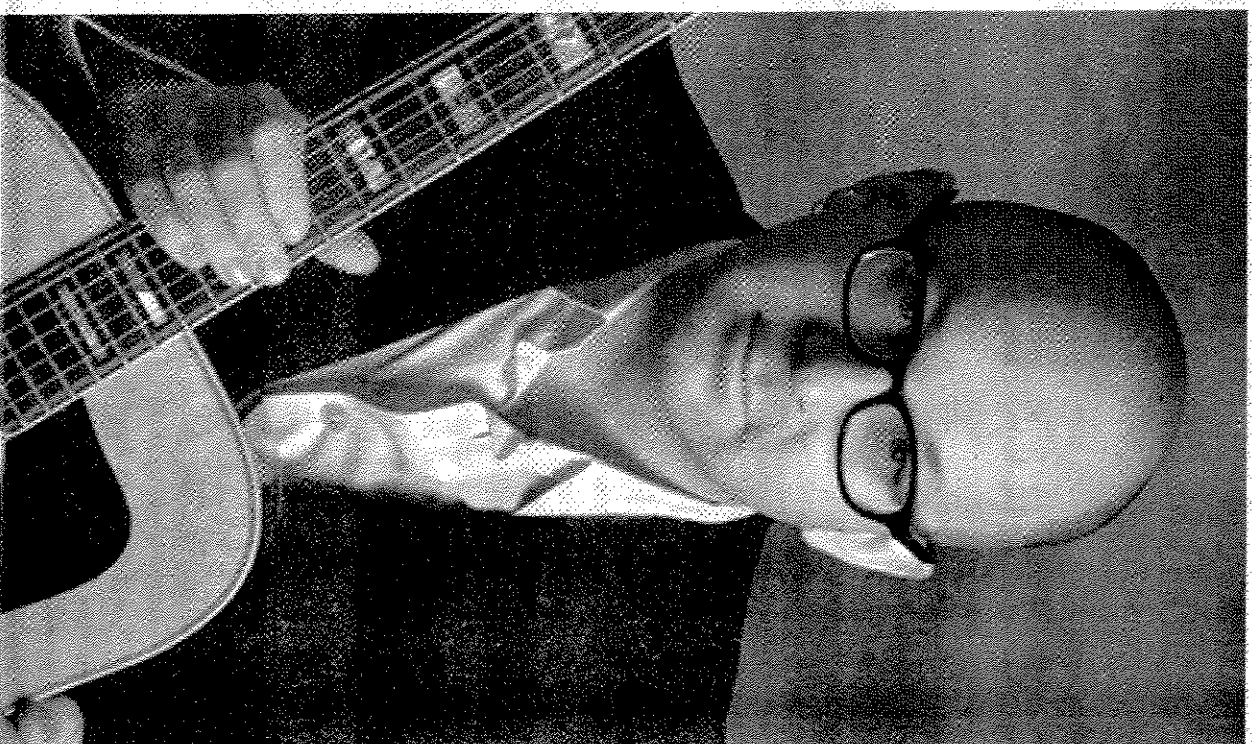
"All Your Bad Habits

(Rubbed Off On Me)" and "Some Kind of Love" are highly polished pieces but Fickel's gentle and finite touch mutes the harsh tonic edges. "Most of All" is a personal favorite, as it delicately portrays the universal subject of journeys. It's difficult to avoid a personal connection to his music.

"Gamelan Boyfriend" picks up the pace once more, while the last bead strung on this strand of Fickel's tunes, "If I Still Had a Buick," glows. The intro is spooky-tranquil and then the chords sound a little like a horn.

Indeed, when performing live, Fickel's sense of timing and effectiveness enhances (or also diminish, when necessary) the drama of the tales. Most recently, Fickel has performed at The Lizard Lounge in Cambridge, The Burren in Somerville, The Creek & the Cave in Long Island, N.Y. and as a featured guest on Boston Neighborhood Network's "It's All About Arts" Show.

All in all, the album shows cases to superb effect Fickel's slide and electric guitar playing, acoustic finger-picking and soft, heartfelt vocals. The subtle background vocals with just the right percussive decoration



Jason Fickel

by producer Lauren Robert, horns

by Jonathan Elmer, and keyboard contributions from Slats Klug and Dan Lodge-Rigal all combine to project the emotional (and compelling) resonance that renders Fickel's

music unique.

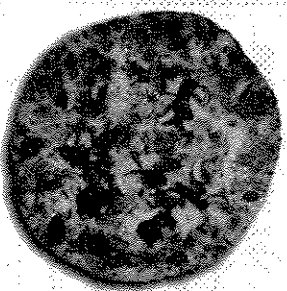
Born in Kansas and raised in western Colorado, Fickel was a blues man from the start. He traveled to Mississippi where he learned to play in that internally diverse style from masters such as James "Son" Thomas and Othar Turner. Fickel then came north to Rhode Island, where he played in coffeehouses and biker bars. He moved on to

Chicago, where he polished his songwriting craft before finding his way to Somerville.

Fickel will also be playing at *Zeitgeist Gallery, Inman Square*, on Sunday, Apr. 9, 7 p.m. For upcoming shows and album information, check out [www.jasonfickel.com](http://www.jasonfickel.com).

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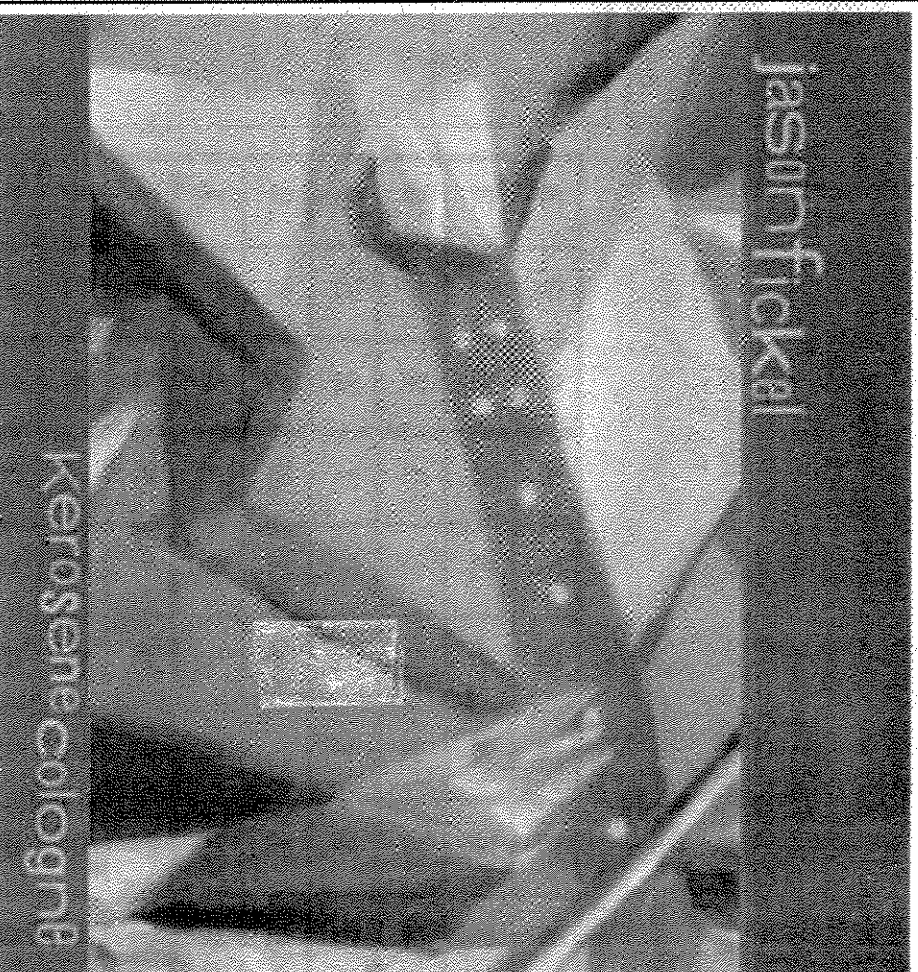
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With its dry wit and masterful production, Fickel's latest album, *Kerosene Cologne*, won't let you down.