

## Cooper's music derived from original thinking

### Songs offer insight into human heart, soul from true artist's perspective

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South Carolina native Peter Cooper returns to Columbia this weekend on Saturday at the Unitarian Universalist Coffeehouse in support of his new album "Mission Door."

Better known as a writer for such publications as the "The Tennessean" newspaper, "No Depression" magazine, "Esquire" and others, Cooper has always dabbled in music. Frequently opening shows for buddy Todd Snider, Cooper even had a song on the East Nashville compilation "The Other Side: Music from East Nashville."

"Ol' Strom," Cooper's song on that compilation, used his South Carolina roots to deliver a hilarious take on the legendary senator from South Carolina. With such lines as "Meanwhile Strom got old and gray, no not gray, he dyed his hair this strange color of orange/like a Tang instant breakfast drink or a Bayer children aspirin or a Clemson University T-shirt that someone dipped into a chlorinated pool and left to dry in the backseat of your cousin's Camero," the song covers many of Thurmond's more controversial moments, including his record-breaking filibuster against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and his fathering of an illegitimate half-black daughter.

"Mission Door" came about at the prodding of Snider, whom Cooper has worked with extensively, opening shows, playing bass and singing background vocals on Snider's "The Devil You Know" record. In fact, one of the best songs on "The Devil You Know" was a song entitled "Thin Wild Mercury," which Cooper co-wrote with Snider, and it also appears on "Mission Door."

Other key songs on the album include "715 (for Hank Aaron)," which chronicles the legendary Braves baseball player's career, and "Boy Genius", which features harmonica work by legendary roots rock innovator Jason Ringenberg, of Jason and the Scorchers.

Other notable musicians on the record include background singers Nanci Griffith and Fayssoux McClean, the latter of whom is a former back-up singer to Emmylou Harris and will be opening the show at the U.U. Coffeehouse.

Producer Lloyd Green is another living legend, whose steel guitar work has graced albums such as The Byrd's "Sweetheart of The Rodeo" and on albums for such artists as Paul McCartney, Johnny Paycheck, Charlie Pride and others. Green's pedal steel is exemplary throughout the album and gives the album continuity from song to song. Keyboard player Jen Gunderman is a former member of the Jayhawks and a current member of The Last Train Home. Bass player Dave Roe has spent much of his musical career backing up the man in black, Johnny Cash.

If that isn't enough for you, both Tom T. Hall and Kris Kristofferson have given their stamp of approval to Mr. Cooper. Kristofferson said of Cooper that he "looks at the world with an artist's eye and a human heart and soul. His songs are the work of an original, creative imagination, alive with humor and heartbreak and irony and intelligence, with truth and beauty in the details. Deep stuff. And they get better every time you listen to them."

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$7 for students. The show takes place Saturday at the U.U. Coffeehouse, and doors open at 7:30 p.m.