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The Newsletter of the *Naturist Action Committee* and the *Naturist Education Foundation*

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Chase Away the Winter Blues with some Music

The NEF Research Library has the Largest Collection of Nudist Music, but Few are Listening

By Doug Hickok

Last year, in February 2022, the first batch of video was made available for Digital Lending. This has been far more popular than the audio collection made available in 2020.

Many are surprised that "nudist music" even exists. The NEF Research Library has about 150 items, including numerous CD's, cassette tapes, vinyl records, and even an Edison record. There are several that are directly nudist themes. Quite a few sing about skinny dipping and going nude, but not specifically as a nudist. And there's at least 40 items on the topic of streaking. All of these items, except for one pesky foreign Pathe record that I cannot find a player for, have been digitized.

Back in 2020, I wrote about the Edison record and many of the interesting CD's. I've decided to consolidate these into this article, below. If there's anyone out there who is interested in writing short reviews for the vinyl collection, let me know!

The list of audio items is at:
<https://naturisteducation.org/programs/nefrl/catalogs/audio/>

The Edison

Our first digitized item also happens to be our oldest audio recording. Billy Jones and Ernst Hare's "Down at the Old Swimming Hole" is a charming Edison record from the Spring of 1921. While the duet is singing about how relaxing the Old Swimming Hole is, they make it clear that "bathing suits are out of style", and you'll be wearing a tan and a "great big smile".

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*Roses are red,
 Violets are blue,
 We couldn't achieve our goals
 if it wasn't for you...*



*The Naturist Action Committee
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Edison records require Edison players, and normal record players will damage them. Luckily, I have a friend with several Edison players and plenty of recording equipment who was willing to digitize it for us. Thanks to his efforts, we can all enjoy this wonderful tune from nearly a century ago.

If you're a library member, you can listen to this Edison record by requesting item "audio167", or since it's old enough to be Public Domain, you can listen to it right now in our "digital loan demo" at: <https://naturisteducation.org/programs/nefrl/> (Last "quick link" on the side.)

Skinny Dipping CDs

Perhaps one of the most common naturist themes for artists to sing about is skinny dipping. Although we have several, three albums stand out.

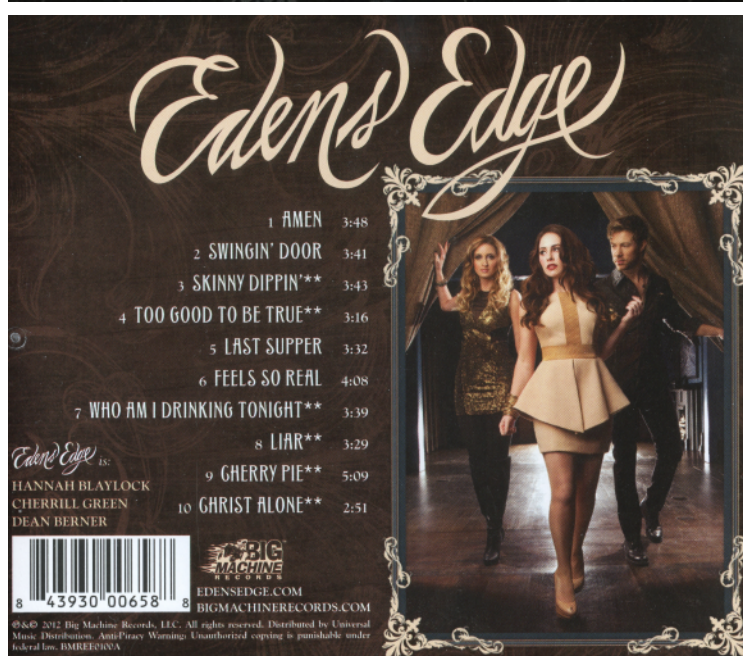
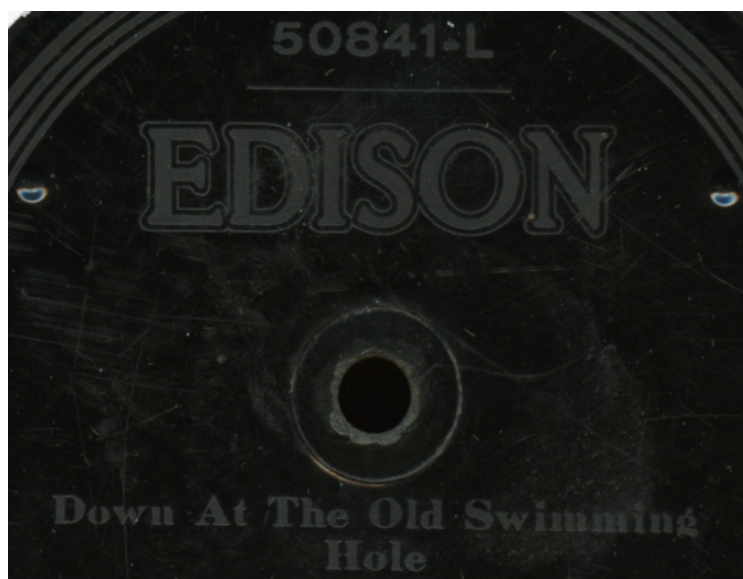
The most interesting, in my opinion, is a CD by Edens Edge (audio135). They are a religious country band who normally have song titles like "Amen", "Last Supper", and "Christ Alone". They are all natives of Arkansas and were performing from 2006-2013. Their self-titled album peaked at #51 on the *Billboard* Top 200, and at #9 in the *Billboard* Top Country Albums. Edens Edge have been on four tours with numerous big-name country music stars, and even did the National Anthem at a Monday Night Football game. Believe it or not, the album contains a cute Skinny Dipping song where they positively say they're "pretty sure it ain't no sin" and "let's just hope nobody sees, but if they do so what." This song, despite being from a religious artist, would fit in perfectly at a nudist dance.

Speaking of nudist dance parties, the Vengaboys did a Skinny Dipping song as well (audio233). You may not recognize the name because they were a two-hit wonder in the USA during the late 1990's. "We Like to Party" was their big dance hit, hitting #26 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. "Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom" was the second hit which topped at #84. After these hits, in 2000, they released *The Platinum Album* which has the Skinny Dipping song. Interestingly, they are still active and just re-released this album on digital platforms this year. The song itself describes rounding up a group of friends and having fun skinny dipping "all night long" or at least "until the cops show up, then we gotta run".

Lastly, I can't say it's the worst, but "Robby & Friends" (audio205) stands out as being notably bad. (Not to be confused with "Robbie Krieger & Friends", an album by a former member of The Doors which I'm sure is excellent.) The lyrics are quite positive to skinny dipping, but the phrase "paddling around in my embryo pool" seems a bit much. All-in-all the off-key voices of the vocalists and the simplicity of the music just doesn't make a pleasant recipe.

An album I'd fully expect to have a Skinny Dipping song, but surprisingly doesn't, is "Songs for Naturists: Live from the Naked Front" (audio239), performed by Helene Williams and Leonard Lehrman who were part of the Opera/Musical Theater Special Interest Group (SIG) of TNS. Not only was this a TNS SIG performing at the TNS gatherings, but the CD itself was at least partly funded by NEF about 20 years ago.

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Songs for Naturists: Live from the Naked Front

performed by
Helene Williams & Leonard Lehrman
with Cary Bair

**The Opera/Musical Theatre Special Interest Group
of the Naturist Society (founded 1989)
with the kind assistance of
The Naturist Education Foundation**

"A terrific performance... This talented group is well-loved by Naturists,
and its shows are always a highlight of Gathering weekends." N 17.3

"...humorous, touching, poignant material" N 21.2

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Spoken Word Comedy CDs

Bea Arthur, born in 1922, might be a recognizable name for many of you. After a few years in the US Marine Corps Women's Reserve during WWII, and a quick job as a medical technician, she ended up in theater and then on television. Perhaps her most recognizable role is that of Dorothy in *Golden Girls*. Later in her career, after *Golden Girls*, she went to Broadway with a collection of stories and songs based on her life and career titled "Just Between Friends" (audio103). The NEF library has a live recording of this show, because one of the first tracks is "What can you get a nudist for her birthday?" It's a short track, stating her sister "joined a nudist colony". After a couple ideas won't work, she ends with "I'd send a check but dash-it, how could she go and cash it?"

Peter Cook, sometimes called the "father of modern satire", performed in numerous places on stage and on TV in the 1950's - 1970's, even including co-hosting *Saturday Night Live*. For Cook's first regular TV spot, he played a character "E. L. Wisty" who is described as a "bland monotonal know-it-all". NEF has a 1965 CD recording of Cook's with this theme (audio123). One of the tracks, "Peace Through Nudism", describes his hopeful role of "Shadow Minister of Nudism" to promote peace. This role would put him on television every evening, where he'd start with "Good evening, this is the Minister of Nudism. Take off your clothes, and begin to dance about."

Garrison Keillor led a popular Minnesota Public Radio show called *A Prairie Home Companion*, which ran from 1974 to 2016 (with a break from 1987 to 1993). His show was syndicated on radio stations internationally, performed in venues all around the world, and was popular enough to get a call from Barack Obama congratulating him on the 42 season run of the show. Part of the show was a segment titled "The News from Lake Wobegon", which is a fictional place but is based on the area Keillor lived. On the CD NEF has (audio170), there's a good funny story about hot summer days and a couple going skinny dipping in the middle of the night.

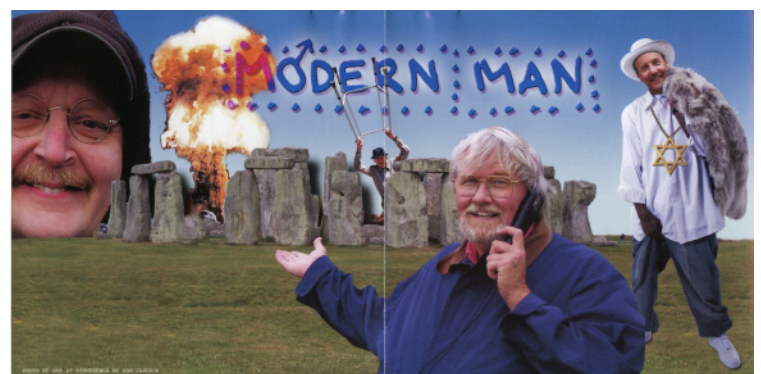
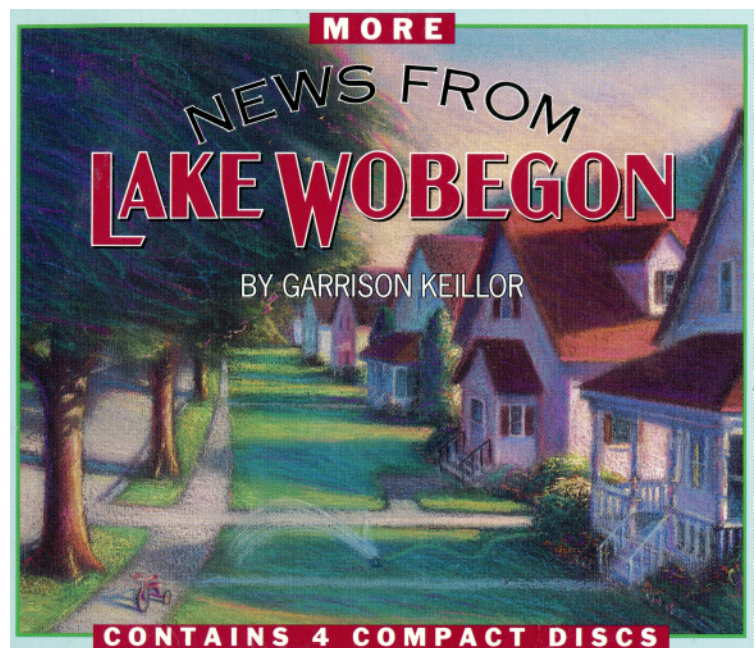
Nudist Music CDs

Perhaps the biggest collection of music we have is the George Formby collection. Two box sets (audio140 and audio141), each containing five CD's of songs from the showbiz legend. During the 1930s and 1940s, he became the UK's highest-paid entertainer with his light and cheeky ukulele songs. Out of the 240 songs we have, at least 7 contains lyrics about nudist camps or going naked. (The set contains some written notes so you're able to find these songs and see the lyrics.)

For modern music that is certainly to the point, a less popular band called "Modern Man" released a CD in 2007 titled "Assisted Living" (audio178). It may not sound exciting at all, but there's one track that's pure gold. "Folk Music in the Nude" is a cute song that would fit right in at any nudist venue. They talk positively about going to a nudist venue in Paw Paw West Virginia (likely Avalon) and playing music with others, with lyrics like "Ain't nothing better than a weekend together singing folk music in the nude." Since Avalon hosts

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1. **Lamb Recipe**
2. **Fun To Be Fooled**
(Harold Arlen-Ira Gershwin-Yip Harburg)
3. **Introduction**
4. **What Can You Get A Nudist For Her Birthday?**
(A. Leclercq)
5. **Auditions**
6. **Isn't He Adorable**
(Cy Coleman-James Lipton)
7. **Fiddler on the Roof**
8. **Let's Face The Music And Dance**
(Irving Berlin)
9. **Bosom Buddies**
(Jerry Herman)
10. **Angela Lansbury**
11. **Threepenny Opera / Pirate Jenny**
(Kurt Weill-Bertolt Brecht-Marc Blitzstein)
12. **It Never Was You**
(Kurt Weill-Maxwell Anderson)
13. **And Then There's Maude**
(Dave Grusin-Marilyn & Alan Bergman)
14. **Some People**
(Jule Styne-Stephen Sondheim)
15. **The Soup Ladle**
16. **Where Do You Start**
(Johnny Mandel-Marilyn & Alan Bergman)
17. **Bernie Schwartz**
18. **If I Can't Sell It, I'll Keep Sittin' On It!**
(Andy Razaf-Alexander Hill)
19. **Personal Hygiene**
20. **Who Cares**
(George & Ira Gershwin)
21. **Fifty Percent**
(Billy Goldenberg-Marilyn & Alan Bergman)
22. **The Nun's Story**
23. **You're Gonna Hear From Me**
(Andre Previn-Dory Previn)
24. **The Chance To Sing**
(Tom Jones-Billy Goldenberg)
25. **The Man in the Moon is a Lady**
(Jerry Herman)




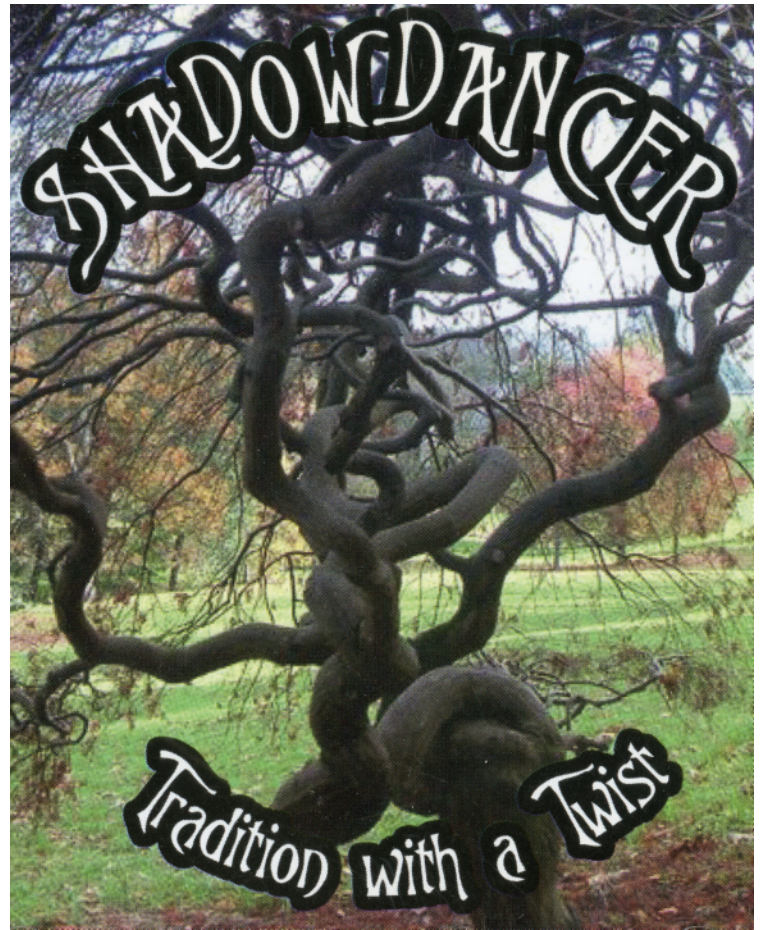
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Avalonfest, a 3-day music festival, it wouldn't surprise me if Modern Man has performed there. Some other lines are "You don't need no pants, to enjoy a country dance. And you don't need no bra, to sing along with kumbaya." The only strange moment of the song is when they bust into French.

Speaking of performing music, Shadowdancer is a duo band who normally plays traditional Celtic music. Their 2008 album "Tradition with a Twist" (audio212) includes two songs that aren't traditional. Per their CD insert, "We've also added two original tunes including 'Make it Small' which is our theme song and, at the request of our local fans, an incursion into silliness with 'Outdoor Nudist Wedding' which is based on a true story." Per the lyrics, one tricks the other into playing at this gig for some extra money, and neither are going to partake. "I'm here to play, there ain't no way, no clothes that I'll be shedding. I'll wear my pants and I won't dance at the outdoor nudist wedding." The description of the event is pretty clever too: "Things big and tall, short and small, providing new sensations, things firm and round, things hangin' down, there's area violations!" Sadly, this song does venture into sexual context towards the end, which is when they bolted to the car.

Jason Daniele and Marin Mazzie, from Broadway musical fame, released a duet CD in 2005 titled "Opposite You" (audio176). Most of the CD consists of beautiful love songs. And then there's a song that isn't -- "Nellie the Nudist Queen". I have no idea what to make of this one. You have to hear it for yourself. It describes Nellie as a city gal "more than 9/10 pure", who gets abducted and taken to a nudist camp. She's elected to be their nudist queen, apparently to recruit others while making trips to town undressed. What follows is a rapid string of funny puns that you won't catch in one listen of the song.

Lastly, a smooth blues track by Dr. Duke Tumatoe, "My Baby is a Nudist" (audio131) is a notable mention too. Apparently "she's proud" and when she "cuts the grass in summer, she draws a crowd." He also describes a solution to Jehovah's Witnesses at the door -- "I sent my baby to answer it and they don't come back no more." Play this at your nudist venue and I'm sure the ladies will be dancing. 



"Dressed to Kill" Author Still Going Strong

By Doug Hickok

Sydney Ross Singer, author of the 1995 book "Dressed to Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras", is still actively publishing papers on the topic, with the latest being from February 19th this year. You can find Singer's publications freely available on the academia.edu website.

The paper, "How Bras Cause Breast Cancer by Impairing the Extracellular Matrix," cites two new studies that support the research done by Singer in the early 1990's.

The first study, "The Extracellular Matrix (ECM) and the Immune System: A Mutually Dependent Relationship," examines the tissue spaces that create the matrix which holds cells in place. From the study: "The molecular, physical, and mechanical properties of the ECM regulate immune cell mobility, survival, and function. In turn, the immune system maintains and regulates healthy matrix and restores matrix integrity after injury. A dysregulated ECM-immune system partnership contributes to most diseases." Wearing of bras would cause compression on the ECM.

The ECM also contains the lymphatic system, so compression would impact both. This leads to the second recent study cited by Singer: "Lymph Stasis Promotes Tumor Growth". The title says it all.

Singer's original study, the 1991-93 US Bra and Breast Cancer Study, found that bra-free women had about the same risk as men for breast cancer. Women who wore their bras more often had a higher statistical chance of getting breast cancer, up to a 100 times higher risk for 24/7 wearers.

This observation isn't recent. In 1931, Dr. John Mayo (one of the founders of Mayo Clinic) wrote an article "Susceptibility to Cancer" which stated: "Cancer of the breast occurs largely among civilized women. In those countries where breasts are allowed to be exposed, that is, are not compressed or irritated by clothing, it is rare."

So why isn't a bra-free lifestyle more common? Singer's paper "Bras

and the Breast Cancer Cover-Up" (October 2007) is very enlightening in this regard. Singer writes:

"Before writing our book, we sent details of our research to the National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society, President's Cancer Panel, American Women's Medical Association, National Organization for Women, National Women's Health Network, and National Women's Health Resource Center. There was no response. Not one. Given the lack of interest, we decided to publish our findings in a book, getting the information directly to the women who needed to hear it."


The paper then goes on listing many instances of suppression and censorship:

- ▶ A supportive PR firm in New York withdrew after another client (a large medical center) objected.
- ▶ Another PR firm in Australia withdrew after another client, a breast cancer treatment drug producer, objected.
- ▶ The Intimate Apparel Council (bra industry) threatened a lawsuit to the book publisher (Avery) prior to publication, but it never materialized.
- ▶ After publication, NBC's Dateline was going to run the story, but was

canceled by parent company GE, because they also manufacture mammography machines.

- ▶ Many women's magazines pulled the stories or brought in "experts" to counter them after pressure from lingerie advertisers.
- ▶ The British Fashion Council published a Breast Health Handbook in 1996 to directly oppose Singer's efforts.
- ▶ Avery was purchased by Penguin Putnam in 1998, and the new book publisher didn't list the book for 3 years and initially refused to revert publication rights to the authors. It finally happened in 2001 so it could be published elsewhere.
- ▶ Channel 4 in the UK, in 2000, had a show "Bras- The Bare Facts" which basically demonstrated that Singer was right. There was no mention of the show in the US, and immediately after the show UK headlines were suppressing fears of the bra/cancer link. The results of the study were never published as originally intended.

Singer's frustration is evident as he states: "After decades of breast cancer research, the bra is still completely ignored as even being a potential factor for consideration. It's like studying foot disease and ignoring shoes"

For the benefit of public health, I, for one, am helping to get the information out there. 



Lee Baxandall, The Happenings, and Action Theater

By Shannon Lewis

While most nude living proponents including Heinrich Pudor, Adolf Koch, Kurt Barthel, and even Ilsley Boone advocated for a naturism or nudism that primarily offered health and wellness benefits, American naturist pioneer Lee Baxandall suggested that naturism had much greater potential, offering advantages to society as well as encouraging personal intellectual growth. His naturist philosophies are presented in great detail in the pages of *Free Beaches*, *Clothed With The Sun* and *Nude & Natural*, but one of his most succinct descriptions of the benefits of naturism can be found in the 1983 introduction to his *World Guide to Nude Beaches and Resorts*:

Social nudity permits us to heighten our awareness of how much we are like one another and how equally vulnerable we are. In turn we may learn to lessen our fear of the gaze of another. Arbitrary and fragmenting barriers of sex, class, and social position are lowered, as individuals grow in sensitivity and dispense with the trappings of difference, privilege, and fear. The individual can thereby be strengthened, the alienated recovered and revitalized.

What's striking about Baxandall's naturist writings is that they are remarkably similar to his political writings, which were published in a variety of journals throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many years before he became a naturist organizer and writer. These ideas aren't merely the pseudointellectual mumbo jumbo and psychobabble that served as filler in between photos of buxom young women in the pages of the old sunbather magazines, largely superfluous content necessary to ensure they possessed the necessary "scientific, literary and cultural" value to keep them from being dismissed as "girly mags." Baxandall's ideas about naturism were quite clearly rooted in his political ideals, documented in great detail twenty years earlier.

An interesting example of this can be found in the January-February 1966 issue of *Studies on the Left*, a Madison, Wisconsin political journal Baxandall edited, along with Stanley Aronowitz, Norm Fruchter, and others. In an essay titled "Beyond Brecht: The Happenings," Baxandall goes into some depth in discussing the implications of Brecht's concept of "verfremdungseffekt," or V-effect," or "alienation effect," a technique used in theater to discourage the audience from simply following along with the plot or empathizing with a character, and instead encourage an intellectual level of understanding about the character's dilemma by removing the audience members from their traditional roles as passive observers. Unlike the more bourgeois varieties of theater, Happenings were designed to blur the lines between the theatrical performance and daily life. These were antinarrative pieces that often compelled audience participation, and forced theater-goers to contemplate a situation or idea in a new light. Nudity was sometimes used to disrupt or recontextualize a scene.

In considering the notion of Happenings, Baxandall suggests that an era of television addiction and intense

consumer marketing require us to move beyond Brecht's more optimistic push for intelligent interpretation, and instead produce Happenings that "confront its audiences with bewilderingly provocative experiences not mediated by explanation," something he calls Action Theater. In doing so, Baxandall makes some interesting observations, which may mirror some of the ideas found in his later naturist writings.

Action Theater assumes that the highest priority must be given to the re-education of its audiences' perceptions. It seems no longer a problem merely of disrupting empathy to let the spectators' reason function normally. Rather, Action Theater assumes that the mass means of persuasion have so badly distorted the normative function of reason, that the need is to go beyond barriers to reason to create experiences which will force and entice reasoning into touch with specific daily reality - thus revitalizing and reorienting both perceptions and reason.

There's a lot to digest in Baxandall's passage, but if read carefully, the potential of Action Theater he describes is similar to the benefits of naturism he discusses in the *World Guide*. Through naturism, he suggests, "Individuals grow in sensitivity and dispense with the trappings of difference, privilege, and fear. The individual can thereby be strengthened, the alienated recovered and revitalized." In Baxandall's view, both Action Theater and naturism can serve a similar function, to force a reclamation of reason, a revitalization of perception.

For a culture that has "strayed too far" from nature, naturism "makes it possible for us to more completely humanize our culture." Action Theater seeks to "rip the perceptual and moral blinders from our eyes." Both have the potential to jolt us from the comfort of our familiar narratives and nudge us to more openly embrace reason.

Is it a stretch to imagine that Baxandall's conceptualization of the theatrical Happening informed his beliefs regarding what a gathering at a nude beach or other clothing-optional space might represent? "Happenings," he writes in his *Studies on the Left* piece, "remove people from the illusory world which, swathed with abstractions, is their everyday life, and puts people into the actual world through devices which freshen perception." Baxandall uses similar language of replacing consumerism-driven abstractions with authentic perceptions in his intro to the *World Guide to Nude Beaches and Recreation*:

Psychological repression of the awareness of our natural being was a necessary step in building civilization. Only people motivated by abstractions rather than spontaneous perception and need, could build the cities and staff the factories, serve in the armies, and otherwise discipline themselves into taking part in vast and self-abdicating social projects.

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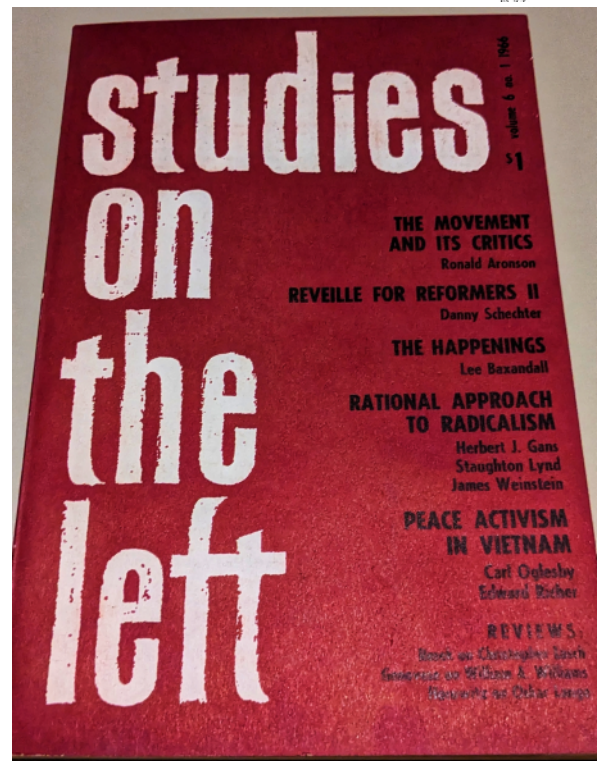
Is naturism a “device to freshen perception,” to “remove people from the illusory world?” Did Baxandall imagine that a group of naturists socializing might represent a Happening, a psychological reorienting, a means of restoring our sense of reason distorted by all manner of societal influences?

Could a naturist gathering, where familiar activities and routines are carried out in the nude represent a form of Action Theater, where the seeming absurdity of nude bodies in everyday life forces us to ponder and subsequently reject the societal absolutes surrounding clothing, and potentially other absolutes as well? Consider how this passage about Action Theater might well be applied to the experience one has at a nude gathering:

The aestheticizing elements of Action Theater serve to presage the overcoming of now dominant human conduct by a new lifestyle which will be ethical and aesthetic. Action Theater in some instances projects the outlines of everyday life for the post-compulsive, post-manipulated man.

Naturist events were called gatherings and festivals, rather than the more business-like conventions of the other organizations, but there were at least a couple of small, experimental naturist events in the 1990s that were called happenings. I have no idea if Lee Baxandall had a voice in naming these events, but I can't help but imagine that these and other naturist events, intentionally or unintentionally, may have

served the same purpose as the theatrical Happenings he wrote about decades earlier, which, in his words, could “enable those transformed to see beneath habit and mass persuasive stratagems and to achieve a life of reason.”



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