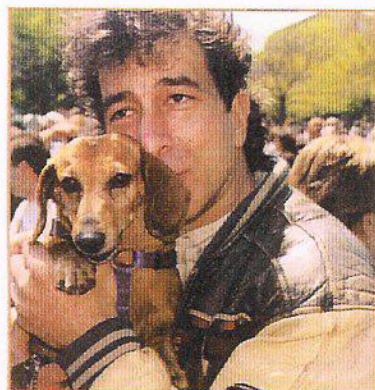


## Songs Of The Ruff City

First there was **Armistead Maupin's** miniseries-generating "Tales of the City" novels. Now comes "Tails of the City—Dog Tunes by Murray Weinstock."

Inspired by **Murray Weinstock's** late dachshund **Sparky**, the album (via his **Lovenotes Records** label) offers 12 songs from a dog's point of view. It features such estimable associates as **Dr. John**, **Phoebe Snow**, **Soozie Tyrell**, **NRBQ's Joey Spampinato**, **Barbara Harris** of '60s girl group **the Toys**, **Rainbow's Joe Lynn Turner** and **John Sebastian**, for whom Weinstock sang and played keyboard on the music for the "Welcome Back, Kotter" TV series.



WEINSTOCK TOOK DOG'S POINT OF VIEW

"It came out of just hanging out with my dog, trying to express what he might be thinking or sniffing," says keyboardist Weinstock, a member of **Kenny Vance & the Planotones**, who has also worked with **Manhattan Transfer**, **Esther Phillips**, **Richie Havens**, **Don Covay** and **Buddy Miles**. For 15 years, Weinstock walked the streets of New York with the dearly departed **Sparky**, who passed away in 2002.

He adds, "The idea was to capture in words and music the unconditional love we get from dogs by using all my different influences and styles."

Weinstock has also written and produced commercials for clients including **Toyota**, **KFC** and **Wendy's** through his **Lovenotes Music** jingle company. (Havens sang his Clio-nominated **CBS Network** theme "We've Got the Touch.")

"I thought of all the people I've worked with over the years, and what a coup it would be to have them singing the part of a dog," he continues. Among the renowned instrumentalists appearing on the album is **Johnny Farina** of **Santo & Johnny**, the 1950s instrumental duo of "Sleep Walk" fame, who had done shows with the **Planotones** and whose steel guitar solo graces "Big Kahuna," a depiction of a laid-back Hawaiian dog's life.

Also meriting special mention is **Turner**, who sings on doggie dance

tune "Dog About Town"—and brought his yorkie **Lola** to the session. "All of a sudden you hear **Sparky** in the background serenading **Lola**," Weinstock says.

Both dogs are listed in the song's credits.

Weinstock likens "Tails" to the zany 1933 movie "International House" starring **W.C. Fields**, **Cab Calloway**, **Bela Lugosi** and **Baby Rose Marie**. "It's a melting pot of different people," he adds, acknowledging, too, its affinity with **Maupin's** San Francisco stories.

In fact, Weinstock sent **Maupin** an advance CD, and received this testimonial in return: "Your humane, free-wheeling, feel-good sound—along with the life-enhancing honesty of dogs themselves—has

helped me survive the Republican Convention. I've been playing 'Tails of the City' every morning, bouncing around the house with **Sophie**, my Australian shepherd mix, who identifies with your work completely. And thanks for paying tribute to my own work this way."

"Tails of the City" was also used at the New Lease on Life Animal Rescue "Who's Your Doggie" benefit last month in Los Angeles, which starred **Lily Tomlin** and **Martin Lewis**.

"I'm getting to meet people [through the album] the same as when I was walking **Sparky**," says the **Furry Murray Music (ASCAP)** writer, who is now considering a comparable feline CD project, so "cat owners won't feel left out."

**HARNICK—A TRUE FRIEND:** "Fiddler on the Roof" lyricist **Sheldon Harnick** will receive the Town Hall Friend of the Arts Award Oct. 24 at the Princeton Club in New York as part of the 83rd annual Town Hall Benefit Gala.

The award is presented in recognition and appreciation of abiding interest in the development, enrichment and support of the arts. Past winners have included **Tony Bennett**, **Dizzy Gillespie**, **Jane Alexander**, **Beverly Sills** and **Joseph Papp**.

"We're honoring **Sheldon Harnick** as a friend of the arts, because of his outstanding contributions to the theater, the opera, the film and television industries—and for the great person he is," Town Hall president **Marvin Leffler** says.

**Harnick**, of course, collaborated with composer **Jerry Bock** in creating the scores for such hit musicals

as "Fiorello!" and "She Loves Me," in addition to "Fiddler." He has also written libretti for operas and translated the texts of others, including "Carmen" and "The Merry Widow."

**CAMPAIGN THEME:** One of the many delights of **DK Publishing's** customarily lavish coffee-table book "Sinatra," for those of us old enough to remember, is revisiting **Frank Sinatra's** marvelously upbeat **Jimmy Van Heusen/Sammy Cahn** hit "High Hopes." The song

## Words & Music™

By **Jim Bessman**  
jbessman@billboard.com



became **John F. Kennedy's** presidential campaign theme.

The original version of "High Hopes" was an Academy Award winner after bowing in **Sinatra's Frank Capra**-directed 1959 comedy drama "A Hole in the Head." But author **Richard Havers** notes that the song was a bigger hit in England than America—though **Sinatra** did sing it to **Eleanor Roosevelt** on his 1960 TV special "Here's to the Ladies," also featuring **Lena Horne** and **Juliet Prowse**.

**Havers** recounts how later that year **Sinatra** recorded a revised version of "High Hopes" featured new pro-Kennedy lyrics by **Cahn** ("Everyone is voting for Jack/Because he has what all the rest lack").

But it must be noted—and **Havers** does—that **Sinatra**, whose friendship with **JFK** was ill-fated, would later sing another revised song for a president. A major supporter of **Ronald Reagan's** candidacy, he performed several songs at a 1980 inaugural gala, including "Nancy (With the Reagan Face)," a slight rewrite of "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)." The song was written by **Van Heusen** and **Phil Silvers** for **Nancy Sinatra's** fourth birthday.

Eight years earlier—as **Havers** also notes—**Sinatra** sang a **Cahn** parody of his **Rodgers & Hart** classic "The Lady Is a Tramp" on behalf of **Richard Nixon's** re-election campaign: At a Chicago rally, he performed "The Gentleman Is a Champ" for VP **Spiro Agnew**.

**BRILLIANT!** Thanks, **John**, for naming your fab two-CD set "Words & Music: John Mellencamp's Greatest Hits" after this column!