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Corner**

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Nathan Thompson— On Solid Ground

Local artist Nathan Thompson will be playing at the Skybar Sept. 26. Also, look out for his Nashville re-corded debut CD, "Solid Ground," slated to be coming out this fall.

Thompson, who performed in July at The Somerville News Poetry and Music Series, has been playing guitar for about 33 years, starting when he was a kid. He had been playing piano and clarinet. He said his music teacher mother started him on piano first and then he played clarinet in the school band. Thompson said, "Those other instruments were ok but I was being forced to play music other people wanted me to play. When I started to play guitar I could play anything I wanted."

Music brought Thompson (originally from Minnesota) to the East Coast. He came to study at Berklee College of Music, where he concentrated on jazz guitar. After graduating, however, Thompson said, "I realized that what I really loved to do was sing and play songs that I had written. I had been writing songs prior to going to Berklee and had continued writing while

there." So Thompson started going to open mics and playing shows around the Boston area.

He said, "I have been waiting a long time to do a recording. Ever since I started performing in public (which was in 1993) I've wanted to put out a re-cord. Things never really fell into place until this past spring."

Once Thompson had the material and the financing in place, he had to find a producer. He said, "I needed a producer who could take advantage of my natural country music influence but still have the flexibility to record songs that fell outside of straight ahead country."

Thompson said, "I talked to a number of producers in this area and was getting ready to go with someone when a friend of mine, songwriter Esther Friedman, played some demos that she'd had recorded in Nashville with a producer by the name of Matt McClure." Thompson then knew he had to work with McClure.

McClure only works with A-list studio musicians in Nashville. Thompson said, "These

are guys that are in the studios playing sessions five or six days a week. Many times they are playing 'master' sessions with nationally known recording artists whose material will be on the country charts." They recorded all the instrumental tracks (13 songs) for "Solid Ground" in one day, Thompson said, "The guys would come in-

to the control room listen to the song maybe once, look at the charts, talk to me and Matt about how they were going to approach the song and then they would go into the studio and nail the song in one take." "Writing songs is a creative outlook that comes naturally to me. This doesn't mean that I find it easy to write songs but I

am naturally inclined to try," said Thompson. He said, "I find that I usually get an idea by coming up with a riff on my guitar that sparks a lyrical and melodic idea. Then I struggle to develop this basic small piece of inspiration. I keep experimenting until I find something that makes me feel excited."

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Courtesy Photo