

warren jay meanwell: the complete and annotated discography

1. *Runt with an Accordion*. Recorded in uncle's basement "studio" at age fourteen. His prodigious talents are already evident in songs like "Swirly," "Stuffed in My Locker Again," and "Please Don't (My Grandma Gave Me That)." The last track, "Someday They'll Go Too Far," became a hit on local pirate radio stations after being discovered by school authorities and played on the evening news.

2. *No Normal Boy Would Write That Song*. Recorded during weekend furloughs from private psychiatric facility for troubled youth. Occasional performances at facility were halted after the riot following "I Saw What They Put in Our Chili."

3. *We Paid You For Happy*. Artistic breakthrough composed during the year he supported himself with gigs at family reunions and retirement centers. The snappy "My Lonesome Pain Is Not a Polka" became an anthem for the entire punkcordion movement.

4. *Drumsticks*. Recording of live performance at fried chicken restaurant. Best known for its stunning and entirely improvised final track, "You with the Notepad," which he performed without once breaking eye contact with a woman later identified as Francine Kinkle, music editor for a college newspaper.

5. *Francine*. Comprised of thirty-seven songs, all titled "Francine." Songs purportedly commissioned by her as preconditions for her performance of certain activities. Fans often refer to the songs by their apparent setting ("Parking Garage," "Changing Room"). The album's critical acclaim led to a series of tour dates opening for ironic-death-metal guitar icon Jimmy Catkicker.

6. *Francine*. Notable for its eighty-three minute opening track, “Why?,” during which he stops playing once to cry and twice to leave wailing appeals on Francine’s voicemail. The album includes only two other songs: “I Know it’s Him” and “It’s Because He Plays Guitar, Isn’t It?”

7. *Listen*. Certainly not the first record to combine guitars and accordions, but perhaps the first by a solo artist. He sent a copy to Francine every day for more than a year. One critic praised “Can Jimmy Do This?” for having “maybe the most ambitious guitar solo of the last twenty years, and definitely the best by someone who had only been playing for a month.”

8. *Not Exactly Fair to Them*. Composed and recorded during the extended tour that followed *Listen*. Best tracks are “An Inch Too Tall,” “Maybe If She Dyed Her Hair,” and “Can I Call You ‘Francine’?”

9. *This Is What You Drove Me To, Mrs. Kinkle-Catkicker*. Extremely creative and energetic at the start, the album deteriorates somewhat in quality over its first five tracks—“Saw,” “Blender,” “Bagel Slicer,” “Hedge Clippers,” and “Garbage Disposal.” The remaining songs are ingenious but increasingly austere, until the tenth and final “Teeth,” in which obviously substandard musicianship accompanies his complaints about the difficulty playing with only one finger.

10. *Untitled*. Opens with “So I Lied” and “Pathetic, I Know,” two apologies to concerned fans. The other six tracks were mailed at erratic intervals to his manager from different locations in the rural West. The best is “Your Cult Sounds Pretty Cool.” Released as an album after a postcard said no more songs would be forthcoming.