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Singer...

Folk singer-songwriter Don Sanders will perform at Texas A&M this weekend at the Basement Coffeehouse. For an insight into how he plays his music and why, turn to page 6.

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## Folk singer back

# Sanders at A&M

By LYLE LOVETT  
Battalion Reporter

Don Sanders is back.

He will appear at the Basement Coffeehouse this Friday and Saturday, his fifth performance at Texas A&M University.

Sanders is a folk singer-songwriter who has been "playing music for money" since a student at the University of Houston in 1963. Though he has played spots throughout the country, most of his exposure has been along the Gulf Coast and in central Texas.

He lives in Houston and is called the grand old man of folk music in the Montrose area.

A few years ago, a Houston Post interviewer called him the "premiere Houston-based folk singer."

Sanders has been busy in the year since his last performance at the Basement. He finished the Texas Commission on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts musician-in-residence program that took him in the spring of '77 to the Gatesville School for Boys and in the fall to Houston area high schools.

*"I was aware that I was becoming a very, very, good writer..."*

He performs every year at the Kerrville Folk Festival as a headline act. In addition, this year he joined Steve Fromholz and Gary Nunn as a judge of the "New Folk" songwriting contest at the festival.

He also performed two or three times a week in Houston parks the past two summers doing children's

shows for the Houston Parks Department.

But his latest undertaking, not to mention regular performing in Houston and Austin folk clubs, is marketing his music nationally. The idea is not a new one to Sanders. He'd thought about it for years, even talked about it in interviews, but he had not done anything.

"When I was about 29," he said thoughtfully, "I suppose I started experiencing that corny passage crisis period. It hit me in two ways simultaneously and kinda dovetailed into my career and personal life.

"I was aware that I was becoming a very, very good writer, technically speaking, but also that I was getting to a point that I didn't have much to write about, except writing and art and music.

"I've done this before and it's really a vain comparison. I'm not saying I'm like or as good as Thomas Mann, but Thomas Mann got into writing mostly about people who were writers. Joni Mitchell during a period of her career wrote mostly about being a singer, musician and poet.

"This is all very good, but it becomes very sterile and in some ways very distant if you're not very careful about makin' it understandable to the public. You become so consumed with your own world of art, and so consumed with the process of invention of technical poetry, that it may communicate on some basic level to the public, but only a very minute percentage of the people who hear you will really be into every nuance that you're into.



Don Sanders

Courtesy photo

"So, also when I was in that 29-year-old crisis, not only was I aware that I was good, I came to a point where I'd done everything in this league at least once and I was feeling a real sense of being blocked. But I was not prepared to go further on my own. I expected somebody to discover me and take care of me and appreciate me for what I was at the time.

"And," he drew a long breath, "I really wasn't emotionally prepared to make that step (into the national market).

*"I'm a person who's an advocate of social change. And I was aware that to advance and expand I was going to have to become a part of the system."*

"I'm a person who's an advocate of social change. All of my peer group all through the 60's and early 70's in the social change area, not necessar-

ily in music, were very down on makin' money and on being a part of the system. And I was aware that to advance and expand I was going to have to become a part of the system. I couldn't resolve that at the time.

"So, essentially what happened was, I kinda stepped back from my career for several years. I continued to play, but I concentrated most of my efforts in personal interaction, human relationships, gettin' into politics on the grass roots level, being in love, and working with children the last couple of years.

"During that period of time I had a chance to come to grips with the fact that I do want more recognition for my work and began to be able to accept the steps that I would have to take for myself in order to achieve that. I've been able to resolve the money issue and the entrance into the system. I'm not afraid of makin' money anymore."

Sanders said that besides providing economic power to attract the attention of people in the money world, extra cash can buy an artist time—time he can use writing and playing music.