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February 2021
Vol. 3, Issue 2

AMY RIGBY

Life isn't easy for musical nomads, but Amy Rigby takes it all in stride.

14

UGLY MUPPETS

Being cooped up can be a timesuck, or an opportunity to branch out. Find out which.

18

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Capturing for the Love

Director DizzyDott has the skills that pay bills... but it's all about the heart.

BY ROB SMITTIX

Director DizzyDott. Photo provided.

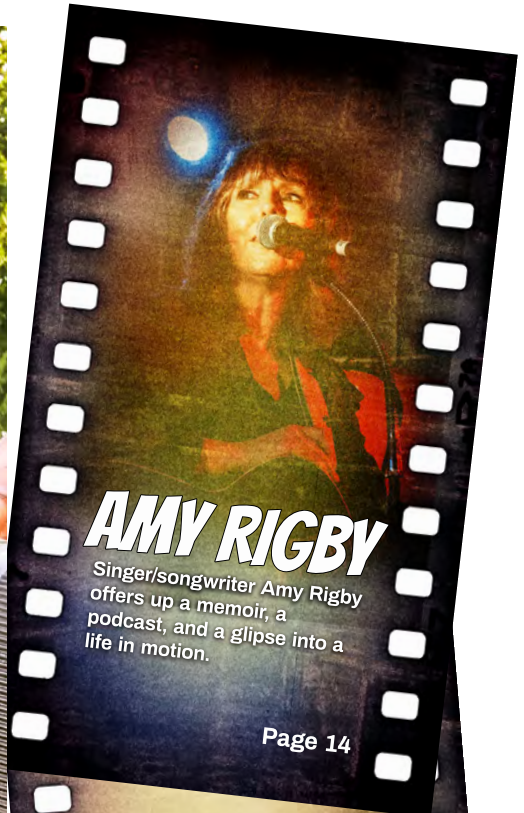
The birthplace of Hip Hop is undeniably the Bronx but all five boroughs have produced legends that could easily be carved into the Mount Rushmore of the genre. With this being the case we have been inundated with music videos set in NYC. No disrespect because it's well deserved. Then as the music evolved we've seen a million videos from the West Coast as well. Other cities undoubtedly followed suit but my point is; when I watch music videos filmed in Albany and the Capital Region from our local artists, it resonates with me. Thanks to Arnold Surgick aka

Director DizzyDott via Good Fellaz Films we've been blessed with a nearly endless list of music videos filmed in our area. One that stands out to me because it was shot in my old neighborhood and the song mentions my old haunts is "Where I Come From" by: Pook featuring: Keylo. My favorite line is "I'm from the South End, grew up on Broad Street." This is where my best friend lived, just blocks away from my house. Glad DizzyDott has taken some time to speak with us about his directing career.

RRX: So let's take it back to the

beginning. How did you get started? Did you go to school for this or were you self-taught? Also, what was the first video you shot?

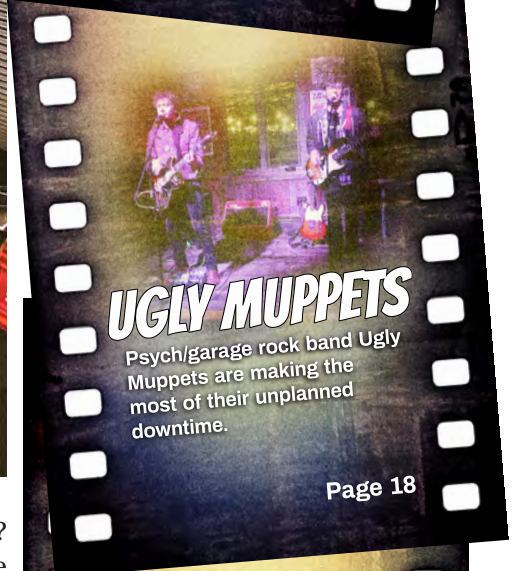
DizzyDott: Let's see... when I was younger attending Mount Olive Baptist Church my grandfather used to always set up the camera and ask me to press record and stop during church services, especially when he sang. That's when I found my love for the camera and really started operating it more. But... I actually taught myself to shoot different angles and shots, especially using my own editing style. My bro



AMY RIGBY

Singer/songwriter Amy Rigby offers up a memoir, a podcast, and a glimpse into a life in motion.

Page 14



UGLY MUPPETS

Psych/garage rock band Ugly Muppets are making the most of their unplanned downtime.

Page 18

FEATURES

Observations and Ramblings.....29



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Contents

- 3** 🎧 **DIRECTOR DIZZYDOT** TELLING ALBANY'S STORY IN FRAMES
- 8** 🎧 **UNCLE CHARLIE & THE MEATBALLS** CENTRAL NEW YORK ROCKERS
- 14** 🎧 **AMY RIGBY** SINGER SONGWRITER, A MEMOIR
- 18** 🎧 **UGLY MUPPETS** PSYCH/GARAGE ROCK UNDETERRED
- 24** 🎧 **BRIAN KANE** LIVE MUSIC IN AN AGE WITH FEW VENUES
- 30** 🎧 **HAZEL DREW** MURDER VICTIM INSPIRES ICONIC TV SERIES

Pnal started calling me 'Steady Hand Dott' because my shots were never shaky and my brother Antoine, aka Beatz, started calling my film name "Goodfellaz Filmz" because I used to like watching gangster documentaries. As far as school goes and getting my filming and editing up to par, I attended the New School of Radio and Television for two years and graduated. Now ten years later I'm still at it and still on top of my game.

RRX: Nice, a fellow New School alumnus! If Uptown and Downtown (Albany) had an anthem it could easily be "My City" by: Tiff Gabana ft Eighty Gee, C.E.O., U S Bay, Ready Rah, Bez-zolay, Todd O. & Pnal. This video has so many things going on and is one of my favorites. Any background story (stories) you could share about how this masterpiece came together?

DizzyDott: Well that is definitely one of my favorite videos that I shot as well. That track is actually Tiff Gabana's. She had the original and then she did the remix. When I heard the remix, I was like 'sis let me shoot that for the love.' Then I hit up my bro Nells and we wrote a script and made a masterpiece. I love when a song touches the soul because that's when I can go all in on the script and editing.

RRX: Another notable video/short film you did with a message was "Broken Mirror" by: Peshy Kruger. Anything you could tell us about the production of this project? Also is that Quady Rouse dancing?

DizzyDott: Yes that's one of my all-time favorite videos. As soon as I heard that track I hit Peshy up and said we're making this a movie bro. This is really the first time I wrote up a script for a video and mapped out everything how I wanted it to be. All of the actors did their thing, even my father supported me in this project and made an appearance in it. And yes, that was my lil bro Quady Rouse dancing, he is a great actor as well. He made the film come to life. Even though I wish more

people would have tuned into this project because it would have went viral. I'm still proud of everything about this video.

RRX: Any career highlights you'd care to share?

DizzyDott: The highlights of my career, let's see... working with the late great Fred Da Godson, building a dope relationship and working with Grafh and shooting a video with Da Baby when Locx had him for a feature on one of his songs. Also, when I was chilling with the late Chinx Drugz in Connecticut at a radio station and then the club afterward. Last but not least working on a documentary for Albany Medical Center. I have a lot more highlights while working with my camera, I'm just glad GOD BLESSED me with this talent.

RRX: Lastly, what's on the horizon? Any short-term goals for 2021? Long-term goals or plans for the future?

DizzyDott: What's on the horizon for DizzyDott? Let's see... I just want to get better as a person and a videographer, I also really want to take young men and teach them the skill that I have because I'm getting too old for this (laughs). But...I definitely want to build a nice team and have a building where I can work out of. I also dream that one day I'll be on set or even film a big artist, that would be all she wrote.

Anyway thanks for taking the time to interview me, I definitely appreciate the recognition. If anyone needs to contact me for photo shoots or videos they can reach me at Email: goodfellazfilmz@gmail.com Instagram: dizzydott_dashooter Facebook: Arnold SURGICK

To keep up with Director DizzyDott check out his YouTube channel at youtube.com/c/DOTT518



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New York Heartland Blue

Uncle Charlie and the Meatballs play at the crossroads of New York east and west.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Being a Capital Region publication, we like to expand our horizons once in a while to show you what's going on beyond our borders. In Central New York, Uncle Charlie and the Meatballs happens to be the haps'. So we sit down with the band and chat about the western front.

RRX: You all are from Central New York, which is the western front for us. But of course, it's home turf for you. So you get to be our ambassadors. Tell us a little bit about yourself as a band, and give us a "tour with words" of the Central New York region music scene. What are the haps, big and small?

UCMB: We're just a good time, five piece band from the Utica, NY area that genuinely enjoys hanging out and making music together. Adam Bishton (harmonica/vocals), Matt Grimaldi (guitar/vocals), Frank Grimaldi (bass/vocals), Collen Roller (guitar), Tony Adamo (drums/vocals). We consider ourselves a blues band and have some original material in the works but for now, we play covers and try to inject our own flavor into them. We can get loud and rock and could be considered kind of "jammy". We come from all different musical backgrounds with diverse influences and have been involved with numerous projects in the

CNY music scene, some of us for almost 20 years.

The CNY music scene is incredible! (pre-COVID of course) There is so much talent and musical diversity we have to stay on top of our game just to keep up. There is no shortage of venues to showcase it. You can find live/local music any night of the week. From bigger venues like our historic Stanley Theater, several casino resorts, beach/lake/vacation areas, bars and restaurants, microbreweries and wineries, several local music festivals and maybe the biggest local music showcase of all, Saranac Thursday. It takes place every Thursday from May-September at the FX Matt Brewery. Bands that get the

opportunity to play at the brewery for Saranac Thursdays, play to crowds of about 5000 people!

RRX: Every band has a story. Some bands tuck in and play it down, like it was just a notion over a beer that held through, but I'm not talking about that story. I'm talking about the real story; the first jam, the first really good practice, maybe even a funny thing that happened that cemented Uncle Charlie and the Meatballs as a thing?

UCMB: Our origin goes back about 15 years to our local Mohawk Valley Blues Society (MVBS) Jams. It's where Adam and Tony met and got to know and play with other local musicians.

Tony and Adam (along with guitarist Larry Giglio) formed a project from those jams, known as Sour Mash. Frank (who is also Tony's younger cousin) used to record practice sessions and live shows for Sour Mash. Frank eventually became a bass player and started filling in with Sour Mash. Guitarist Larry Giglio moved away and Sour Mash was no more. Fast forward about 12 years and Frankie met Collen at work and they started another project together (Work Related).

Uncle Charlie & The Meatballs came about when Adam, Tony and Frank started hosting annual "Christmas Party Jams" at Swifty's (a local bar/



L to R: Adam Bishton (harmonica/vocals), Collen Roller (guitar), Tony Adamo Jr. (drums/vocals), Frank Grimaldi Jr. (Bass), Matt Grimaldi (guitar/vocals). Photo provided.

restaurant - there's one out that way in Latham) when Larry would come home for the holidays. This went on for seven years or so and became a holiday staple. A bunch of us local musician friends (including Collen and Frank's younger brother Matt), would get together and play, unrehearsed, all night long. Every year, we'd change our band name. One year a musician friend (Sean Gaffney) in a conversation about cliché blues band names, came up with the name "Uncle Charlie & The Meatballs" for one of the annual jams (a nod to our locally brewed Utica Club Beer - known as "Uncle Charlie" during Prohibition- and our incredible, Italian, culinary scene). Two years and two name changes later at another Swifty's Christmas Jam, an older, intoxicated woman at the bar went on to tell us (as we were setting up our equipment) how much she enjoyed the band that was here a few years ago... Uncle Charlie & the Meatballs. We figured since she

remembered the name, we should stick with it. In March 2018 we decided to keep the name and play out with it more than just once a year with original guitarist Steve Schoen and his wife Kelsey on vocals.

RRX: I saw one of your t-shirts, and it asked, "Who's Uncle Charlie?" And since nobody in the band is names Charlie, it stands as a good question. Who's Uncle Charlie, and where did the Meatballs come from?

UCMB: As mentioned above, Uncle Charlie' was the code word for Utica Club (UC) beer during prohibition and what it's affectionately called by us locals. Whether we're hanging out, playing live or rehearsing, there's always a few Uncle Charlies close by. We decided to put the phrase on our t-shirts because we get asked that question... ALOT!

RRX: Being in Central New York gives you some choices as a band. Obviously, you play locally, but also you're

in the middle, somewhat, between the Capital District and the bigger cities in Western New York, like Rochester and Buffalo. And we all have NYC. When you're thinking road trip, where do your mind go first, and why?

UCMB: Some of our favorite shows have been road trips to clubs in Oneonta, Cortland and Syracuse. But if we're looking to get away or even play a show in a cool/different place, we think of the Adirondacks and/or in Finger Lakes region.

RRX: In the Capital Region, we have a lot of diversity in genres in what people are playing. It's not rare to see a band with three or four genres. Is it like that in CNY? Or is it more country-based? Do venues seek out more originals or more covers? And what genre (or genres) does Uncle Charlie & the Meatballs groove to?

UCMB: There is so much musical diversity here in CNY it's quite remarkable. Venues obviously want to make

their patrons happy and crowds in the CNY region predominantly want covers. Every working band/artist around here has a large catalog that they can pull from at any time, including rock, country, bluegrass, oldies, 80s, top 40 pop, classic rock, and the list goes on... As an example of the diversity CNY musicians have, check out the Sisti Brothers (Mark, Al and Dan) They have three distinctly different bands that frequently play out. An Irish band (Blarney Rebel), an Allman Brothers Tribute Band (Les Brers) and a blues band (King Kool). Same guys... three different bands.

On a personal level, our musical tastes are as diverse as the area we play in. Blues, classic rock/rock, alternative, pop, country, oldies, and hip hop. We listen to it all.

RRX: A lot of times, we've asked bands who their influences are, and

Continued on Page 31.



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Amy Rigby. Photo by Chris Sikitch

A girl from the suburbs has a dream, and through the trials and errors of hard-fought experience, she finds her dream and claims it. And lives it. Artistic expression can be beautifully described in the tools of a writer's trade, but we can never forget that art, all art, is the telling of the artist's story.

Amy Rigby is an artist's artist; singer, songwriter, book writer, artist... and yet above all, storyteller of her own design. She has a few things in the fire, and she's asking everyone to come get warm.

I sit down with Amy and we talk about the finer rules of highway bingo.

RRX: You have a great story, growing into being a professional musician from an Elton John fan in the Pittsburgh suburbs. Luckily, it's a story told in your memoir, *Girl to City*. Memoirs are tough, because writing a good one forces you to write what they want to read, as much as what you need to

write. What did you learn from the effort?

AR: Well I love to read memoirs so I just wrote what I'd want to read if I didn't know me. I learned that writing a book really is as hard as people say, but worth the effort. It also made me appreciate the quick payoff of songwriting.

RRX: You spent time in a lot of different places, New York, Nashville, England, just to name a few. And now you're back in New York, a bit north of the city. Based on your travels for the arts, would you consider it easier to move to a new place and have to establish yourself, or move from a place, and have to let go?

AR: I find it easier to move from a place because I never really let them go! I still feel like New York City is my town (though I admit it gets less so), parts of London will always feel weirdly familiar and same with Nashville. The buildings change but the

Making Passage for an Artist in Motion

topography remains the same, and a lot of the people do too. Many of my New York friends still live in the same apartments they've been in since we were just out of college. Starting over in a new place is something I never worry about until I'm actually in the middle of doing it, but I think because I travel so much for gigs (or did until this past year) I don't need to rely on the place where I live to provide as much for me as if I stayed put. It is wonderful to get to know the people and place where you live though, I'm appreciating that even more this past year. Even if I only see very occasional glimpses of friends at the takeout coffee line, I'm appreciating community more and more.

RRX: You have a podcast, Looking

for the Magic, with Elizabeth Nelson of the Paranoid Style. I've only done a blog, and I'm not afraid to admit I suck at it. And I know a lot of writers who did them with good starts, and they run out of gas. How do you and Elizabeth plan on keeping up a schedule and keeping it interesting?

AR: I started a podcast back in March, *Girl to City*, where I read a chapter of my book each week and worked music into each episode, spending hours editing and getting it up at the same time every week for 20 weeks. I could never have done that if I hadn't been stuck at home but I had the content already created. It was good to have something to focus on every week. This new podcast *Looking for the Magic* is a different experience - flying by



the seat of our pants, committing to finding a topic related to music/songwriting every week and meeting up live online on YouTube, then uploading as an audio podcast. I've written a blog for many years now and just make myself do it. It's discipline but is always rewarding - I always feel better when I've created new work or articulated something I couldn't get to without an imagined audience in my head. The hardest thing is the energy needed to find readers, listeners etc. Which reminds me, I need to share about tomorrow's episode on every platform... especially tough to self-promote when there is so much going on in the world, but we can all use a little pleasant distraction.

RRX: Touring is tough, no matter how you do it. But touring while raising a kid, I imagine that's like being a computer hacker with a warm keyboard and a room full of cats. It must have been difficult from a logistical perspective, but it had to balance out, right? Was there any moment that cemented, in your mind, the benefit of doing it?

AR: Looking back I honestly don't know how I did it. I was driven, and maybe one of the beauties of having kids is you feel like whatever you do it's for the team, like you need to make it count and be worthwhile because there's someone else relying on you. Not to say I didn't feel selfish some of the time and I still look back with guilt and regret. I was just remembering taking my daughter out of school, flying to the UK with her, taking a train to Bristol where her dad was playing a gig and putting her on a tour bus with him, carrying on doing my dates by train and then picking her up at the airport in Dublin. Shared parenting insanity. It sounds glamorous but it was scary

Singer and Songwriter Amy Rigby has traveled, but her heart has always found a home in the next big thing.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

and hard and I probably spent any money I made! I do think my daughter had fun though, and she knew she was loved. When she was a bit older she and I worked up some punk covers together so she could play on tour with me and that's a treasured memory. I think whatever you do as a parent, you're never sure you're doing the right thing so I guess I didn't do too bad.

RRX: We like to explore the creative minds of the people out there that use that part for their bread and butter. Seems that people making a life of one craft have their toes (or legs) in the pool of other crafts; art, writing, sculpture... So, you have had your life in music and writing. Are there any other worlds you're trying to conquer?

AR: I really loved turning my book *Girl to City* into a podcast and I love doing the podcast with Elizabeth Nelson. Years back, another artist Marti Jones and I created a live show called *Cynical Girls* where we had a whole little stage set and scripted bits - I guess it's closer to theater or TV. And I admit there have been a few times I've tried to turn a set of songs into a musical, or collaborated with a playwright and I still love the idea. I know that's what every songwriter ends up doing - yep, why should I be any different?!

I also have always made visual art - studied illustration at Parsons - and I keep coming back to graphics, drawings; laying out books, screen-printing. I just designed and printed a *Dancing with Joey Ramone* tea towel and selling those over Christmas basically helped me support myself. I get a giddy thrill out of packing them up and send-

ing them to people all over the world! And then there's my dream to have a combination cafe/hotel/shop/venue - we stayed at one in Holland years ago and I still have fantasies of doing that.

RRX: When I heard your name, I also heard the name of Wreckless Eric, whose also spent a life of notes and measures. You two are not only married in song, but married in life. If you had to pick, would you say you more complement each other musically, or compete to keep each other on your toes?

AR: I think we definitely complement each other musically - from the

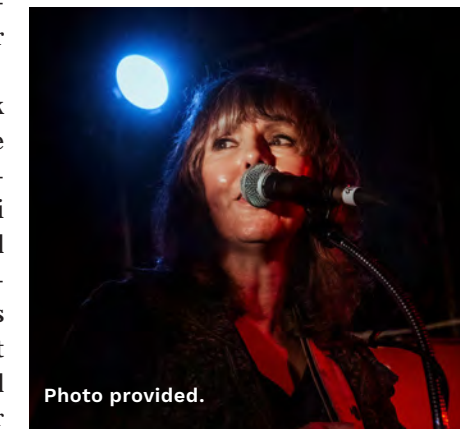


Photo provided.

first time I ever heard Eric back in the seventies, I thought he was a kindred musical spirit. I think we definitely keep each other on our toes but not through competition, just support and encouragement, and also offering another perspective, shared with love and honesty. If we can aim to be insecure at different times over different things, that's the best!

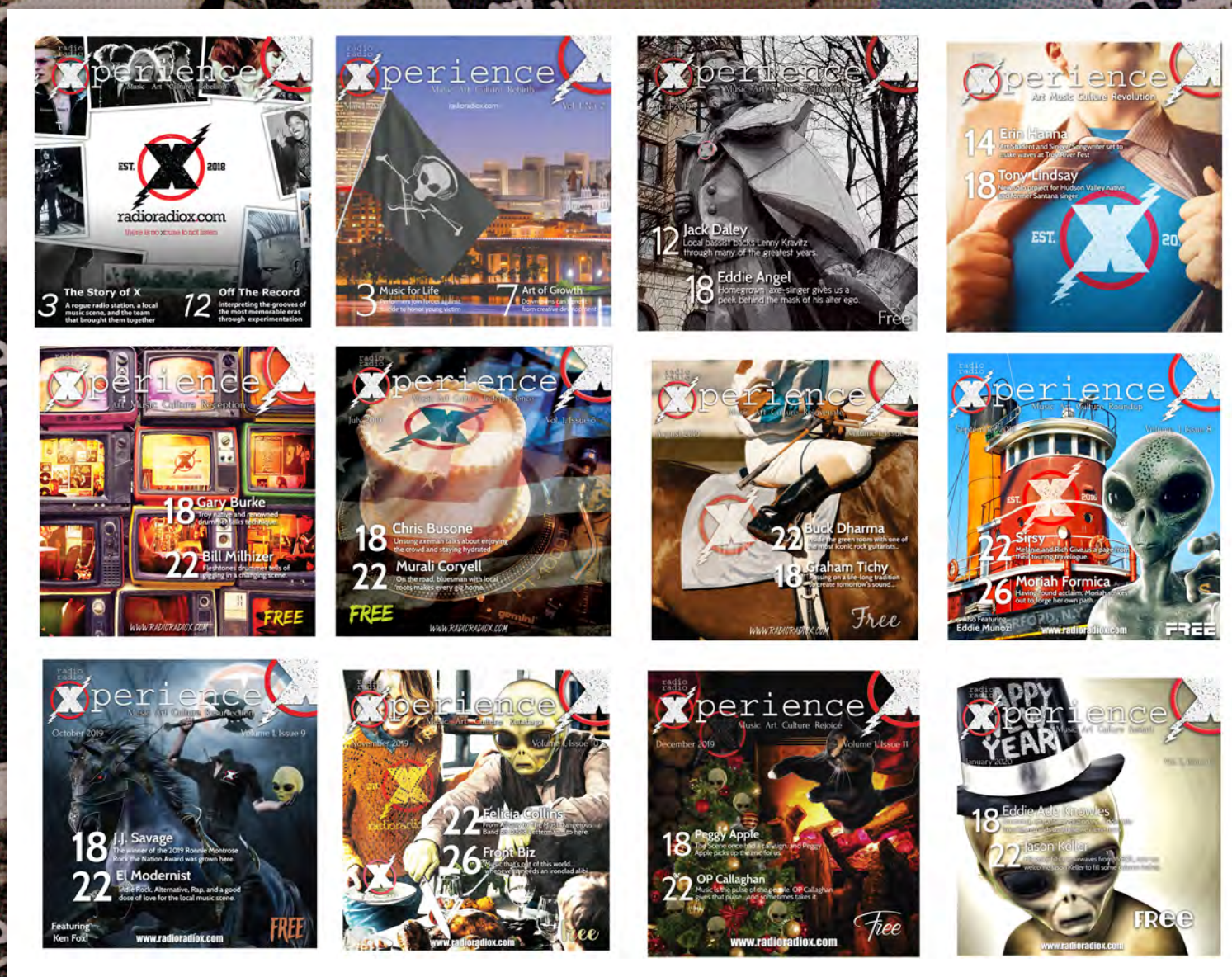
I know I said we don't compete, but I will say I'm inspired by Eric's work

ethic. He keeps moving forward making new work and doesn't get bogged down and I've learned a lot from being around him.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Do your instruments have their own luggage tickets? Who's hiding out in the upstate? Educate, enlighten, emote - the floor is yours.

AR: I hope we'll all take something away from this pandemic era that is positive - I've been unemployed for almost a year but have had freedom to create stuff without constantly coming and going on tour and self-promoting; I've lost heroes and friends and my stepmother to COVID and almost lost Eric due to COVID but those experiences have highlighted how it's people that matter. I've hardly seen a soul but feel connected to everyone in a deeper way as it's put us all in a humbler, more elemental place. Even when I walk around our local Walmart and see everyone doing their best, wearing masks - I feel like we're all a lot closer to each other than divisive forces would have us believe, if only we could see it.





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...ing on a life-long



(L-R: Dan Burt, Josh Clark, Jeremy Katz). Photo provided.

The Ugly Muppets are a Saratoga based trio creating thoughtful and hard-hitting psych/garage-rock. Their recently released album titled Committee of Public Safety is a skillfully crafted blend of old school psych-rock influences and modern indie stylings, and the band is far from finished. In a recent interview, the Muppets (Dan Burt, Josh Clark and Jeremy Katz) discuss their work on the latest album as well as an upcoming song.

RRX: So, at risk of seeming crazy I wanted to show you guys this Ugly Muppets shirt I bought way back when I saw you for the first time.

JC: Wait a second, I ran into you at SPAC and you were one of the first people to wear our shirts! It was the Beck show.

RRX: I do remember that actually (laughs). But anyway, I've kind of been calling these interviews my "local COVID catch up" because as much as I've tried to avoid the topic, it seems to be a dominating force on local bands. So, the theme of these interviews has sort of shifted to reaching out to my favorite local bands to see how they've been holding up. I know it's been a bit since you released your album, but tell me how you've been doing since then.

JK: We've been doing a whole lot of nothing recently.

DB: We did drop a rap album recently.

JK: That's true, we've been doing work on side projects but overall just kind of hit the brakes when COVID hit initially.

DB: I personally got laid off two jobs on the same day, giving me a ton of time, so I decided to make a hip-hop project with a friend of mine, Bukket. The album is called Scootch and the artist is Ooschmoo, it's on Bandcamp.

JK: Ooschmoo is the name of his cat. He really didn't want people to find it (laughs).

DB: It came out pretty decent but no one is ever gonna know it exists.

JC: But we've also been recording some new stuff of our own. Considering this is an Ugly Muppets interview we probably should mention our own stuff.

RRX: I don't mind hearing about Ooschmoo (laughs). Anyway, I enjoyed your album a lot when it was released, do you guys wanna talk about working on that at all?

Being hunkered down hasn't stopped Ugly Muppets from sonic excellence.

Counting Minutes in a Rebuilding Year

BY JOSHUA REEDY

JK: Basically, we did it all in-house like the previous one. We got some new stuff and it ended up sounding less rough around the edges, almost accidentally. I like to keep things a little on the grimier side, and I think we're going that way with the newer stuff.

JC: We were all living together in this house on Lake Luzerne and that's where we started the record, then halfway through we moved to this place in Greenfield and set up the studio in the living room there. We recorded probably half of the rhythm tracks in one day during a blizzard, which was pretty cool.

JC: There would be months in-between us getting a lot of stuff done.

RRX: Does the band name have anything to do with Britain? I feel like 'muppet' is such a British insult.

JC: No actually, the band name comes from my college roommate; he would always say, "Josh you're not getting laid tonight, you look like an Ugly Muppet." This guy was a comedian

from Syracuse.

RRX: Tell me about this space we're in right now, you guys seem to have all your stuff set up right here in the living room.

DB: Two bands share this space, that's why there's two drum setups and two of everything.

RRX: I dig this pedalboard you have too, what's this toy car pedal you have on here?

JK: It's a cool little fuzz pedal, I met the guy who made it when I got it actually. We played a show at some brewhouse, all three of us in a different band actually. There was a raffle at the show and I ended up winning that as a package of random guitar stuff.

RRX: I also wanted to talk about your older album because I have a funny story about it; when I saw you a while ago, I had a friend who isn't super into music with me and he ended up buying your CD just because he saw the song: "Holden Caulfield Thinks You're a Phony," and he thought it was great.

JK: That book was definitely an influence on me, I grew up being angsty like that (laughs). It is what it is, but basically the message of that song was supposed to be: be yourself and fuck everything else. It's kind of cliché, but that's what I was going for.

RRX: Tell me a bit more about the origin of the band, and what other side projects you guys are in.

JK: Well, Dan and I have a couple of albums under the name Mountain Kids; it's kind of more lo-fi and psychedelic folk based. Dan takes the lead on that more.

DB: It's pretty chill. That stuff came out nice. We were all in a band called Paradox Saints, but that ended up falling apart.

JC: This band (Ugly Muppets) kind of started because you (Jeremy) and I worked together at Uncommon Grounds, and then we realized that we lived down the street from each other. I

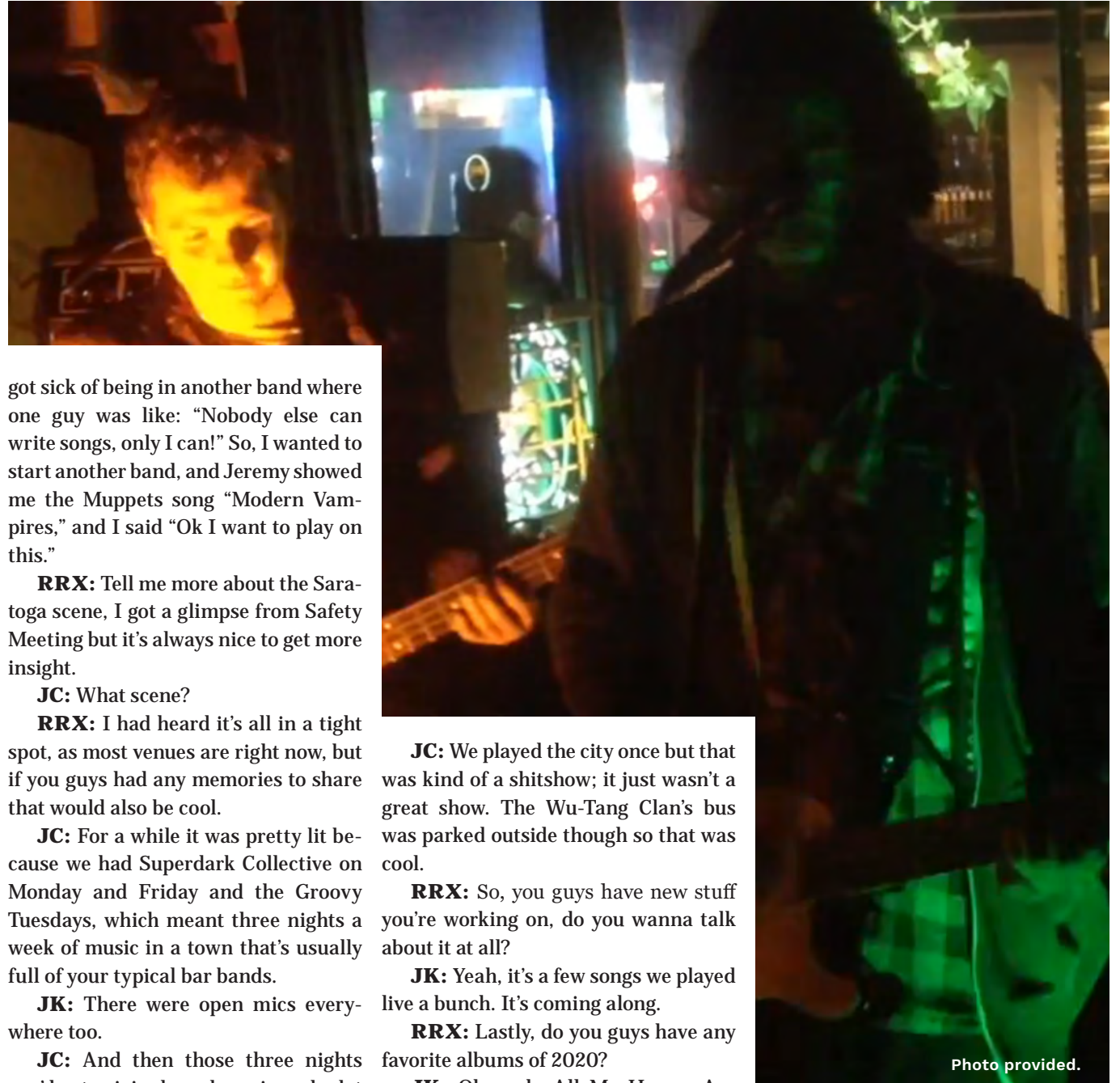


Photo provided.

got sick of being in another band where one guy was like: "Nobody else can write songs, only I can!" So, I wanted to start another band, and Jeremy showed me the Muppets song "Modern Vampires," and I said "Ok I want to play on this."

RRX: Tell me more about the Saratoga scene, I got a glimpse from Safety Meeting but it's always nice to get more insight.

JC: What scene?

RRX: I had heard it's all in a tight spot, as most venues are right now, but if you guys had any memories to share that would also be cool.

JC: For a while it was pretty lit because we had Superdark Collective on Monday and Friday and the Groovy Tuesdays, which meant three nights a week of music in a town that's usually full of your typical bar bands.

JK: There were open mics everywhere too.

JC: And then those three nights you'd get original, cool music and a lot of it was touring acts. It was kind of flourishing for a town of its size, but those were the before times.

RRX: I wanted to also ask if you guys had any memorable moments touring around here.

DB: We haven't really had a chance to really tour, we've spent a lot of time in the studio making sure everything was ready. We were actually gearing up for a decent tour and then all this happened and now we can't really do that.

JC: We played the city once but that was kind of a shitshow; it just wasn't a great show. The Wu-Tang Clan's bus was parked outside though so that was cool.

RRX: So, you guys have new stuff you're working on, do you wanna talk about it at all?

JK: Yeah, it's a few songs we played live a bunch. It's coming along.

RRX: Lastly, do you guys have any favorite albums of 2020?

JK: Oh yeah, All My Heroes Are Cornballs by JPEGMAFIA.

JC: The Nude Party, I saw them open for Dr. Dog at Upstate Concert Hall. Their new album is great.

DB: I can't stop listening to older stuff, Television, that sort of stuff.

Ugly Muppets dropped two new songs on January 8th, 2021, and you can find them on Spotify as well as other streaming services.

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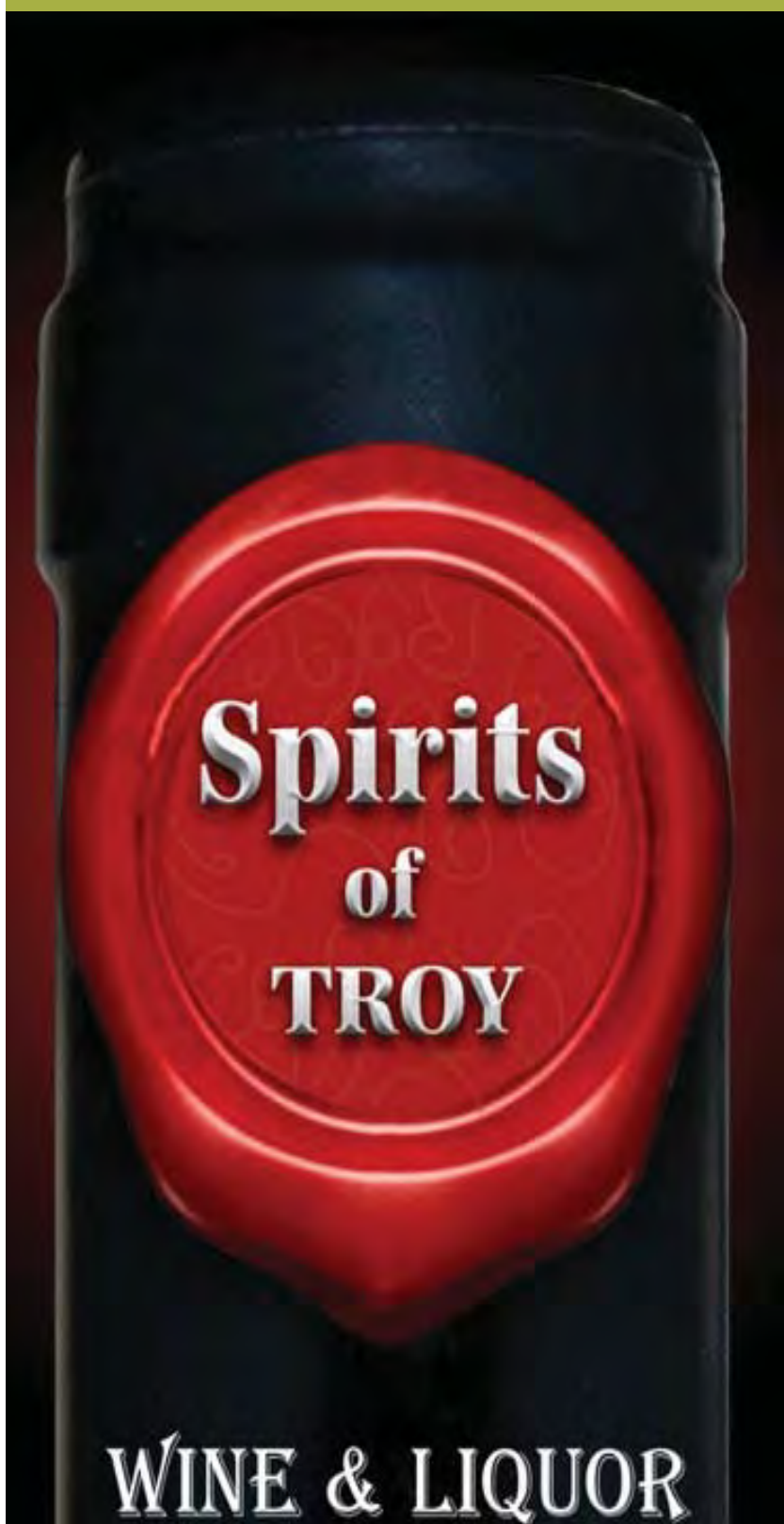
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A Man Looking seeking a Crowd

Brian Kane. Photo by Stephanie Bartik.



Brian Kane is a player for all seasons and the Ringmaster of a type of show best left unmentioned here.

BY STEPHANIE BARTIK

This month, we sit down to find out more about our Local Ringmaster of the Shitshow, Brian Kane. Proudly born and raised, in Lansingburgh, NY.

It seems over the summer, while everyone was lamenting the lack of shows, Brian was popping up more often than new COVID restrictions!

RRX: Who inspired you to make music?

BK: Music has always been a part of my life. While growing up and now, there must be music playing. My parents had music on all the time. Unless dad had the football games on. I would have to say that my parents were my biggest inspiration.

RRX: How would you describe the music that you typically play?

BK: I would describe my song selection as bluesy dirty love songs.

RRX: If you could go open a show for any artist, local or national, who would it be?

BK: Locally it would have to be Emerald City. I grew watching these guys blow the windows out of rooms. Boy, I miss their sound. Nationally, no question Chris Stapleton. His lyrics and vocals are amazing.

RRX: What is your favorite song to perform?

BK: They come and go because there's always something different coming along. Right now, I enjoy playing Soulshine with Tony Pellegrino. And, playing Thunder Road by Springsteen.

RRX: Which famous musicians do you admire?

BK: Tom Petty, Neil Young, Greg Allman, Elvis Presley, Chris Stapleton, Bruce Springsteen, Johnny Cash.

RRX: What did five-year-old Brian, want to be as an adult?

BK: My mother said I was always looking for an audience. I can remember always trying to be a comedian. If I wasn't playing music, I'd still be in entertainment.

RRX: If we were to look at the artists you are listening to, who would be on your playlist?

BK: Grateful Dead, Stapleton, Dirty Heads, Johnny Cash, Allman Bros, John Fogerty, and Mofro.

RRX: What can we expect from you within the next six months?

BK: Hopefully same ole same ole. Love playing for people in the bars. I do have a little project in the works. Brian Kane and The Beginning should be here by summertime.

RRX: Again, you were all over the place at 'secret locations' during the summer—are you able to disclose any of those locations right now? I know the one I attended was stellar!

BK: They were everywhere. It started when my St. Patrick's Day gig was cancelled. My good friend Mike Drinkwine, called and said, "Play at my house and go live". So, I did. And people loved it. Next thing you know people were calling booking up my Saturday nights at their house for a show. Great response from everyone. I better not tell all my secret locations. just in case I need to use them spots again. Haha.

RRX: Do you often plan a gig, and have it turn into basically an open mic for other local musicians? Seems quite a few pop in. Were they planned? Or did they just appear? If so, who was your biggest surprise?

BK: Depends on which way the wind is blowing that night. Nothing I do on stage is planned. That's why they call me the Ringmaster of the shit show. Tony Pellegrino and I have become a pretty solid duo. Love his groove and the way he plays. That's been planned. Others just pop in for the show and I ask them up to play. Johnny Clifford stopped in one night and played the full show with is. That was a great surprise. I'm a huge fan of his. Love his energy and I love Tom Petty. So much fun that night. Luke McNamee has surprised me a few

times as well. Something about him just fires me up. He makes it more fun than it's supposed to be. I've also had the pleasure of having Tommy Love sit and play drums for me recently. Love that man.

RRX: Do you have anything you want to say to your fans?

BK: I have fans? If I do, I just want to tell them thank you for supporting this fat, Irish guy from Lansingburgh, NY. Really if I didn't have you, I wouldn't be playing. Peace and love.



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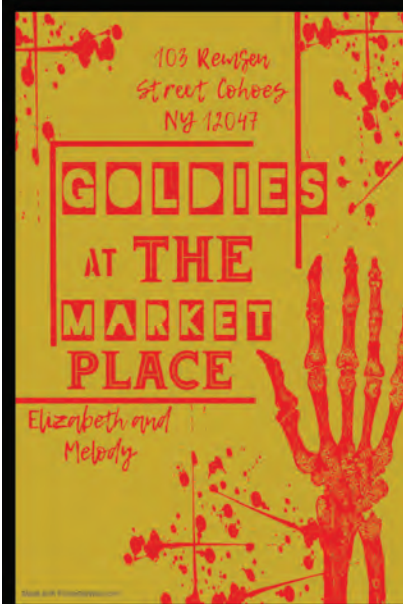


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Observations and Ramblings From a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

Howdy, hope 2021 will be better than 2020, but it's a long way to go to get back to normal.

I promise no politics, no this party/that party, no this president/that president, no liberal/conservative.

This concentrates on COVID, going forward, it's up to US to bring back normalcy, for YOU to get off your ass and help.

If you're already in the fight, I salute you, but it must be a COMBINED effort by all.

First, the mask, what's SO hard with wearing it? I love it, can't tell you how many people I stick my tongue out at and they never know. If I don't want to talk, and mumble on purpose, they have no idea I'm making stuff up.

I love the vanity mask, like license plates, they tell people who you are, my collection includes Groucho Marx, the Three Stooges, a broadcasting VU meter, and my beloved Cleveland Browns (woof bitches!).

The simple point is not just protecting yourself from COVID, but you to protect others.

Most of us have been wearing these since March, so we're used to them.

Don't wear the mask? You show me you don't care and won't help your friends and family.

It's simple, keep wearing it, or finally START wearing it, for us to get where it was pre pandemic.

DO THIS NOW AND WE'LL GO BACK TO NORMAL!

Love your brothers and sisters, or find an island and leave us alone.

Social distancing, same concept, but a little different since this, more than the mask, has a direct effect on businesses, schools and public events.

I occasionally forget (or don't have a

tape measure on me) the six feet separation line. Some co-workers (rightfully so) frequently raise their hands to stop me from getting too close like the Supremes singing "Stop, In the Name of Love."

It's tough for me, I like to get close to share workplace gossip, and my frequent use of George Carlin's "Seven Words Plus" make it less embarrassing when I don't say them louder.

We keep distance to make sure we don't give you potential germs, or you to us. With the mask, it's like Double Secret Probation (thanks Bluto in an "Animal House" reference).

If you don't, before you go hit that island check for a GrubHub available.

DO THIS NOW AND WE'LL GO BACK TO NORMAL!

The vaccine. I have reservations, was it made too soon, was it checked, double checked and triple checked to be safe? Does it have the potential to kill me?

Understand, I plan on getting both shots, but there's a personal waiting

period where I want to see results after the second shot, and verify how long they last for. I have way too many health concerns going on that I don't want to screw up progress I made after last years "experiment" with a heart attack and bypass, plus complications with diabetes.

Some disagree, but I strongly believe ANY vaccinations WON'T turn you into Raymond Babbitt (thanks Dustin Hoffman in a "Rain Man" reference).

From personal experience from working in Human Services, autism (defined or not) has been around a lot longer than vaccinations.

To sum it up, wear the mask/start wearing the mask, practice social distancing/start practicing social distancing, and take the vaccine (after well researched investigating).

To nail the point home as directly as possible, I hope the next line will echo your thoughts.

I'M SICK OF THIS CRAP! I'M SICK OF BEING STUCK HOME! I'M SICK

OF NO SPORTS! I'M SICK OF NO CONCERTS! I'M SICK OF NO RESTAURANTS! I'M SICK OF BEING A PRISONER!

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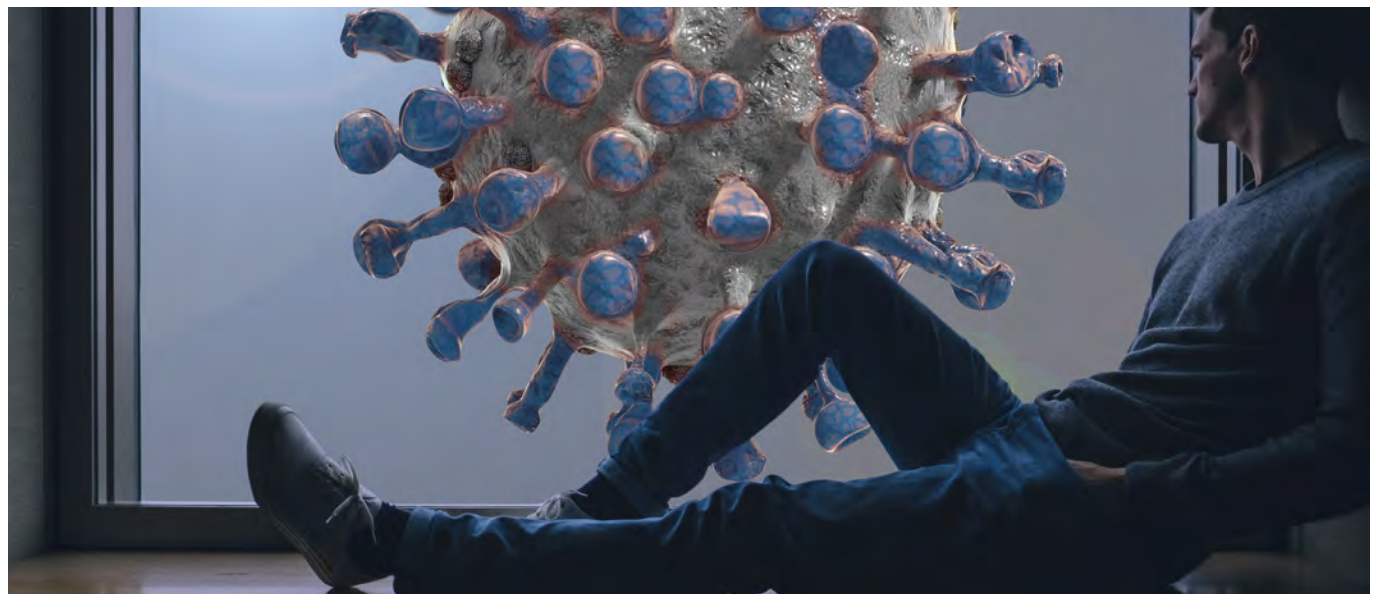
When was the last time you helped your kids with remote learning, or did you leave them to do it on their own?

If you're still sitting on your ass waiting for everyone else to fix, I pity you my friend.

You're a part of society, and society is going down the tubes unless YOU do your part.

WE are ALL counting on YOU, and WE can do it TOGETHER!

Be hearing you



The Strange Case of Hazel Drew



(l - r) Hazel Drew,
Twin Peaks's Laura Palmer

BY LEZA CANTORAL

Hazel Drew's lifeless body was found floating in Teal's Pond in Sand Lake, NY on July 11th in 1908. She was young, attractive, and mysteriously dead. Over a century later her murder is still unsolved. All that remains of her is her gravestone at the Brookside Cemetery in Barberville, NY, not far from the pond where her body was found. The autopsy reveals cause of death to be repeated blunt trauma to the back of the head.

Hazel Drew had, up until that time, been working as a governess in Troy, NY for a man named Edward Cary, a respected engineering professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic. She looked after his children and lived in his home along with his wife, dining with the family and by all accounts quite beloved by the community of Troy, NY.

What would cause a young woman

at her prime, who seemed to be living such an innocuous life to be so brutally murdered? Clearly, there is more to this case than meets the eye. There is currently a documentary in progress shooting in Troy, set to release this fall. The story continues to baffle history and true crime buffs. One writer in particular, immortalized her on the television screen in a cult phenomenon called Twin Peaks.

Twin Peaks was the creation of Mark Frost and David Lynch, airing in 1990 on ABC. It turns out that Mark Frost's grandmother, Betty Calhoun, who was alive during the time of the murder, would tell her grandson ghost stories about Hazel Drew's ghost haunting the woods near the site of her murder, which just so happened to be where he would spend his summer vacations in upstate New York. The story stayed with him and when he and David Lynch were brainstorming a TV

series he decided it was a fascinating enough premise, brimming with enough loose ends and unanswered questions, to launch the perfect eerie show.

Initially, they meant to set it in upstate New York in the very town she vanished from, but the studio preferred a town with a larger population, so they relocated to Oregon, to the iconic setting we are so familiar with today.

The show begins post death. Laura Palmer is found at the water's edge, her lips and skin already blue. The entire town is in mourning and reeling from the shock of such a 'good girl' ending up naked and dead with no explanation. Her parents, friends, confidants, and lovers are grief stricken beyond comfort. The part of Laura Palmer is played by Sheryl Lee, who's resemblance to Hazel Drew is beyond striking— almost as if Hazel had cast

herself. I can almost see her, hovering over David Lynch, whispering in his ear, "This is the girl."

Twin Peaks chronicles the process of gradual unearthing of the character and life of Laura Palmer. The show hinges on two jarring images that do not seem to fit— the prom picture on her parent's mantle— a perfect daughter. The other image is the one we see at the opening, which is of her naked corpse. The audience is forced to reconcile these two images of virginity and something corruptible by sin and decay.

Twin Peaks draws in the audience, and like many David Lynch projects, the way the story is told, makes the viewer an accomplice in the murder and invested in unearthing it. Just as in *Blue Velvet*, where there is a tension within the protagonist played by Kyle MacLachlan (who also plays Agent Dale Cooper, the man called in to solve the mystery of the death of Laura Palmer) between desiring the 'good girl' played by Laura Dern, and the 'bad or fallen woman' played by Isabella Rossellini – so are the characters in Twin Peaks torn between their image of Laura as a sweet girl who volunteered for 'meals on wheels' and the troubled teen who was doing coke and possibly turning tricks at an open secret brothel catering to the tastes of the rich and powerful men who ran the town.

The characters, settings and situations in Hazel Drew's life inspired the universe of Twin Peaks. Many records were burned. If you try to find out anything about her or the people in her life, you will run up against a strangely absent body of evidence, almost as if it was purposely destroyed to protect powerful people in the town.

The story is not over. The mystery is

still in need of solving. The time is ripe for female voices beyond the grave rising above the din to set the record straight. Hazel Drew was young, beautiful and smart. These are qualities that you would think would give her a leg up in life, and for a time, they certainly did. She knew how to work her angles. It worked for her – until it did not.

What happened by that pond? Was she meeting a man? Why was she so well dressed? Why did she suddenly quit her job working at the Cary place a few days before heading out to Sand Lake? Why did she give multiple cover stories to everyone she talked to?

It could be that she was entangled with forces more powerful than she could handle. In the years leading up to her death she had started living large. Travelling by train to Albany, Boston, NYC, and Providence, RI on a regular basis, wearing tailor made clothes which were beyond her modest

governess financial means. Much speculation abounds as to who was her wealthy benefactor. Love letters were found in her abandoned suitcase along with not one but two kimonos. One of the senders of said love letters is one of the main suspects for the current documentary in production, but something tells me she is not at rest.

These loose ends remain unnervingly loose. I recently moved to Troy, NY. I look around these old streets and I see her walking around the town she loved so dear. I see her walking and I hear her talking and I feel her watching. She has a story to tell and I just hope that now people are finally ready to hear what she has to say.

Leza Cantoral is the Editor in Chief of CLASH Books, a local Troy indie press.

Article first appeared in Litreator.

Uncle Charlie (Cntd.)

Continued from Page 9

that's interesting. But I'm going to twist it. We need to extend the love in CNY, so, can you name three national acts that you all can agree influence you, and three local bands that you can agree influence you?

UCMB: We all have our own individual influences of course (Dave Matthews Band, The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, The Grateful Dead, Huey Lewis & The News, Chris Stapleton, Kenny Wayne Sheppard) but we think that our overall sound can relate back to The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Muddy Waters, and The Paul Butterfield Blues Band to name a few more in a general sense. Locally, we already mentioned the Sisti Brothers but our good friends, Bluestreak, Blueprints, The Crazy Fools, and Last Left (specifically Spencer Morgan) have had a bigger influence on us musically than

we're sure they even realize.

RRX: Here is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Good meatball recipe? Not who, but where is Uncle Charlie? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

UCMB: Well Tony makes some damn good meatballs (his nonnie's family recipe) and Frankie and Matt have some top-notch culinary talent on that side of the family (Boulevard Diner). Swifty's Bar & Restaurant gave us our start and holds a special place in our hearts. It's a frequent hang-out of ours because of the service and selection. We consider it our home away from home, but we have to give a shout out to "Old School Bar & Grill" here in Utica, NY. They hosted live music on Wednesday nights and have an absolutely incredible menu.



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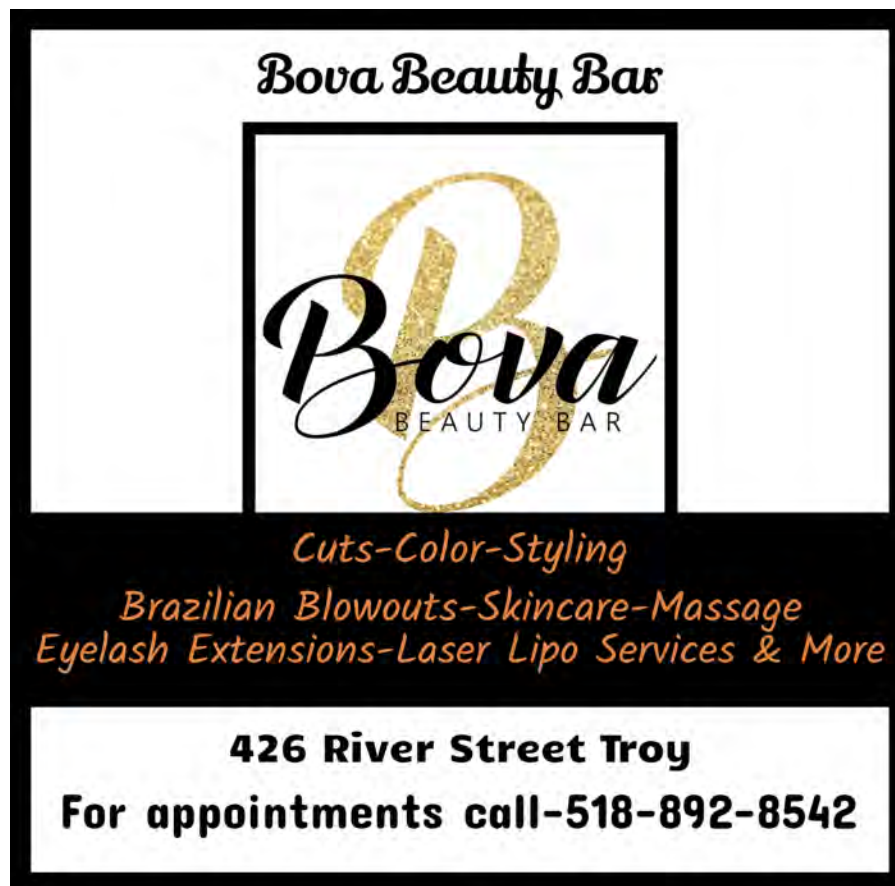


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