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July 2021  
Vol. 3, Issue 7

## K. SOLO

Reflections on coming up with DMX, Redman, Snoop, and Dr. Dre

18

## WILLIAM KNAAK

Blue October's guitar player talks about the Blue Family and new music with Ernie Durawa.

22

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Mike Valente. Photo provided.

*Brick by Brick's Mike Valente has been instrumental in the local scene, and he's at it again.*

# Scene by Scene

**W**e don't often interview someone more than once. It's not a policy; we just have a lot of people out there doing fun things. We don't have to talk to the same people. So, when we do, there's a reason. And so, there is with our next guest.

Mike Valente is a cornerstone of the local music scene. He plays in a band, of course, but beyond that, he is arms deep in the venues' scene. And without good venues, we are all buskers.

I sit down with Mike and we talk about strange stage lighting.

**RRX:** So, the big word is that there's a brand-new venue in downtown Albany, two, in fact. Empire Live and Empire Underground, where the old Capital Rep was. I heard this is in coordination with the departure of Upstate Concert Hall (formerly Northern Lights) in Clifton Park. How did this come about?

**MV:** Well, a majority of my shows have always been done DIY (without any corporate promo or marketing)

reason being that when Upstate Concert Hall was active, my shows could not fill the 1300 cap room. This would be demoralizing for a band that can draw 200-300 people. Many bands do not want a bigger room. The shows don't seem as interactive as if in an intimate setting. Besides, the overhead to accommodate the room, is a significant strain on smaller bands. I have always had a great relationship with Ted, Dave and Jen (who are the heart and soul of UCH). I even worked there for extra money from time to time. So, now, with the new set up, it was a no-brainer to join forces. Now, the underground promotion alongside of the mainstream promotion will grow this scene and help it flourish for the future.

**RRX:** Empire Live has a capacity of 1,000, and Empire Underground has a capacity of 3-400 people. One's up top, one's below, correct? Now we all expect that it's going to be a diverse mix as far as who plays, but what kind of bands in

the upper and lower floors would you envision on just a kickass night? Who's your dream team for this venue? We will not shy away from any genre.

**MV:** A "dream team" consists of many different moving parts. The band, the promoter, the club, the people, the ticketing agency, the booking agent, the list goes on. My forte is mostly metal and hardcore with a knowledge of hip hop and rock. Dan (my partner) is mostly hardcore. We were turning down many offers from genres outside of that, because of our lack of knowledge. Now with this new structure, we have sources to go to and references to help with making legit offers.

**RRX:** You can take equipment out of a venue, take the staff, take out the plywood to reuse (which you might have to these days,) but you can't take the experiences out in front of Upstate Concert Hall, or in back, the laughter, the tears, the fights, all that. Is there a good

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**K SOLO**  
Hip Hop artist K Solo helped lay the foundation for a generation's music.  
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**WILL KNAAK**  
Guitarist for Blue October talks about his love for the music, and the fans.  
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**Art Fredette**  
Publisher

**Liam Sweeny**  
Editor-In-Chief  
Creative Director

**Kit Haynes**  
Associate Editor

**Dick Beach**  
Staff Geek

### Contributors

*Rob Smittix*

*Josh Reedy*

*Amy Modesti*

*Stephanie Bartik*

*Dawn Grimmick*

*Sassy Auburn*

*Jeff Spauling*

*Melody Morris*

*Vito Ciccarelli*

*Ed Conway*

*Vegas Nacy*

### Contact

29 Saratoga Avenue,  
Waterford, NY 12188  
(518) 326-1673

info@radiatorradiox.com

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“outside” of Empire Live and Empire Underground for people to congregate?

**MV:** This is located on a city street, so, I am assuming that we will be limiting congregations out front. We will have a designated smoking area. Why are we worried about the front of the venue when the fun stuff is inside? We are starting from scratch here and rules will be put in place and will be adhered to immediately. There will be plenty of laughter, we will avoid the tears, and not tolerate the fighting. I will be heavily involved with the security aspect as well. Respect will be given and gotten.

**RRX:** Moving things to downtown Albany represents a shift in the music scene. Clifton Park has always had UCH as an anchor, a midpoint between the Albany and Saratoga scenes. You have a great spot now, surrounded by bars and restaurants. How do you make the case for more northerly people to make the trip?

**MV:** Simple. They have cars. Here’s the issue.... UCH was hard to get to for Albany people that don’t drive. Most live in a city atmosphere. Now, people in Clifton park rely on a vehicle more than Albany, so, it’s only going to be better for the whole. Now Albany can take a walk, bus or short cab ride. All other points, will be just fine.

**RRX:** To not make this all about Empire Live/Empire Underground, your band, Brick By Brick, is still kicking in teeth. How’s the band been holding up? Were you able to put any music together last year in the bunker? What’s on the calendar this year? And bonus points if you played any underground events last year.

**MV:** We have done a LOT in the past year. We wrote a new record and is in the process of being mastered now and set for release early 2022. We dove into different ventures and created our own Jack Daniels, our own mead, our own beer and now working on our own “gummies”

and even a BxB cigar! The new record is legit!!! We have guest vocals from Chuck Billy of Testament on a tune. We will be releasing that song on a split coming out late summer to hold everyone over until we drop the full record. We are playing sporadic shows right now but have two Euro tours lined up for next year so far. Also working on East coast dates.

**RRX:** I think we covered it in a previous interview, but I like whisky. You have some. Some Brick By Brick whisky. I could ask about the process of making it, but lest I give your competition a play by play, I’ll just ask you; what kind of drunk is it? Mellow drunk? Eat-half-the-fridge drunk? And if you have to mix it with anything, any recipes?

**MV:** I think of it as a mellow, feel good buzz. It’s delicious and goes down smooth. However, it is sold out and has been for a year. Our beer is a red ale, Called Bloodshed Red. Released June 13th through the Bull and Bee exclusive-ly. Next is our reissue of our mead that

Helderberg Meadery produced with my help. It sips like a whiskey and is mellow with a hint of maple.....DELICIOUS!

**RRX:** This is where you answer the question I did not ask. Any fun generic insults? Any free liquor policies for poor writers? (kidding.) Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

**MV:** If asked to sell tickets, sell them How about band promotion 101.....?

If you’re in a band.....you need to 1) go to shows, 2) make friends, 3) promote your band, 4) if you have a show then FLYER THE FUCKING SHOW!!! 5) be on time 6) don’t be a dick, 7) if asked to sell tickets, sell them, 8) when you are playing a show, STAY TIL THE END. DO NOT pack up and leave while another band is playing. Again... don’t be a dick. Now that shows are thinned out because of no clubs and a lot of bands falling by the wayside, bands need to step up and act accordingly. Nothing will be handed to you. Everyone that gets a show deserves it one way or another.



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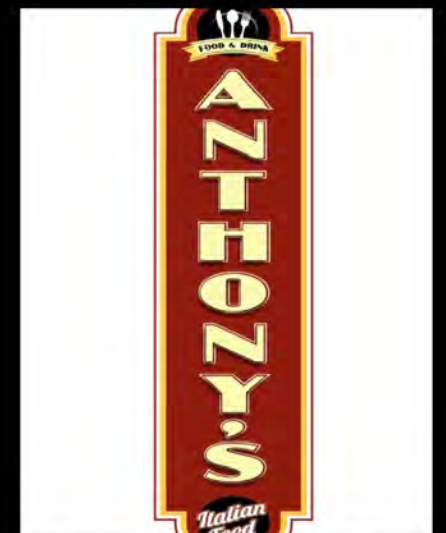
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# The Dionysus Effect

*Garage Rock with a dip into Ska, and a storied journey.*



The Dionysus Effect. Photo Provided.

A new band is a seed. It can grow to create an incredible sound. It can grow to create its own sound, indistinguishable from any other thing out there. And in some cases, it creates that unique sound from the first sprout.

The Dionysus Effect has a unique

sound. It came from the ground pumping out tight, well-formed grooves. All they need to grow is a steady wining.

I sit with singer Christoph Paul and we discuss haunted MP3s.

**RRX:** The band name, The Dionysus Effect. Let's pretend I'm too lazy to

look up the term. It's 4:30am, so we don't have to pretend that much. So, The Dionysus Effect, what does it mean? And take us into the war room when you picked the name. Was it a long deliberation, or did you all just know?

**CP:** Sean, our guitar player came up with the name at his studio. The name just felt right. It's that feeling you get at a good rock show you where you feel high on those Dionysian energies. I love most music genres but rock n roll will always be the music of Dionysus. It just made sense. We want rock fans to feel something when they hear our

songs, we want to bring that Dionysus Effect.

**RRX:** You have a song called "In Defense of Ska," that plays on This is Ska Radio, which plays out to 17 radio stations. It's also the name of a book published by CLASH Books. Is this a one-off, or are you naming other songs after books?

**CP:** It's funny cause none of the band members are big ska fans. I told the author, Aaron Carnes, that my rock band will record a catchy af ska song about his book if he sold a certain number of books from the CLASH Books website. Well shit, he doubled that



number and the band agreed to record the song. We ended up loving the song. Even though we are rock dudes we saw how fun ska can be. Will we record other ska songs? Probably not, but we had fun.

You know, everyone has a day job. Mine just happens to be editing books—for my press and freelancing. As a musician you are influenced by your job and when you read and edit a book over five times, it will influence you. So yeah, I have a few more. I wrote a song about a book called Darryl by Jackie Ess, and Girl Like a Bomb by Autumn Christian. “Darryl” will be on the debut album. Also, if we ever get in a bidding war with an agent, I’d be down to add that The Dionysus Effect will record a song about the book in the contract.

**RRX:** The book the song is named after, “In Defense of Ska,” was quoted in a Rolling Stones article. As far as the song, it may be six degrees of Kevin Bacon, but as far as you being the publisher of that book, it’s gotta be heaven. How did you find out about the quote?

**CP:** I feel like this is a Gene Simmons-esque moment of cross-branding and business maneuvering. I’m really grateful for how well the book is doing. A friend from Twitter took a pic and tagged us. It was just surreal. I’d obviously love to be in Rolling Stone as a musician, but it still feels pretty damn awesome to be in there as a publisher. I’m definitely living in ska heaven right now.

**RRX:** So, you are the publisher of CLASH Books, with your wife, Leza Cantoral. And CLASH has a really interesting collection, some of which we’ve featured here. So, do you think books surrounding the music scene, music genres, etc. have any kind of advantage in getting out there? Do you think there could be a “music fiction” genre someday?

**CP:** My life is pretty much books and rock n roll so I’m all for mixing those two things I love. I think it all

comes down to fans and how passionate they are. I learned right away how passionate ska fans were with the sale of the ska book. As an editor you end up reading a book at least five times and that book will inevitably affect and influence you. Songs come from all types of places, why not books too?

**RRX:** You all recently played your first show as The Dionysus Effect. Let’s hit the five ‘W’s – where, when, and how was it. Okay, two W’s and an H. There’s always so much energy on a first set, between excitement and nerves. Even if it’s back in your mind, you always know you’ll remember it forever (if you’re sharp.) So, what will you all remember?

**CP:** It was just fun to be up there. I love playing live. We’ve been so much about song-writing during Covid but now I feel that fire to share these songs and play them well. I feed on the energy and just seeing people dancing to our songs—there’s nothing better.

**RRX:** Now that you’ve got the first show under your belt, do you have other shows on the docket? Any festivals or goings on you have your eyes on? Your first album drops in September – do you plan on doing a show for it, or at least a barbeque?

**CP:** We definitely want to be gigging this Fall. We’d love to play all over the Capital Region and NYC/NYC adjacent shows. Not sure about barbeques but would love to play some college parties.

**RRX:** This is where you answer the question I didn’t ask. What’s the proper wine for the Effect? What exactly is the defense of Ska? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

**CP:** Man, I love wine and Dionysus but right now for the effect to happen is to see people drinking a cold beer with us playing live at a venue. That’s how the true effect happens. With defending ska, you either gotta read the book or listen to the song.

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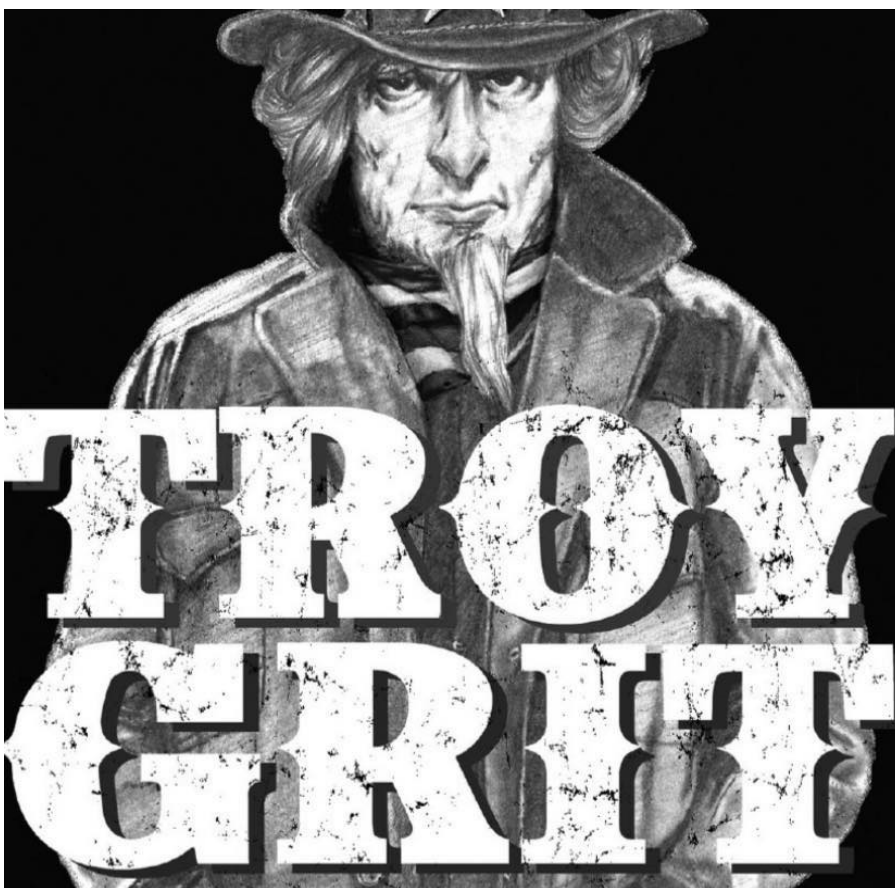
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# Senior Living

*Back with news of a summer release, Senior Living is bringing people together under their groove.*

So much has changed since our first interview with Senior Living. Zac Geddis and Jeremy Lopez are the main creative minds behind Senior Living, an explosive punk/alternative rock project best known for their wall-shakingly powerful sound. The band has since signed up with Paintbox Records, and reached out to share news exclusively with RadioradioX about their brand-new debut LP Anniversaries. Zac Geddis wrote in to explain a bit about the band's new art collective entitled Season 3 as well as Senior Living's fierce new sound and direction. The band has since taken in a new bassist, produced local art zines

and worked on a new music video; if they've proven anything, it's that their style isn't getting old.

**RRX:** So, it's obviously been a while since our first interview. A lot has changed in the world of music, from a global pandemic to new creative endeavors. I'd like you guys to start off by telling me about Season 3 Collective (goals, ideals, members).

**ZG:** Season 3 is something I started because I had a lot of run-ins with talented artists across various music scenes through touring, playing shows

etc. It was just eye opening in a way to see how much art was out there in the underground, so Season 3 was all about giving artists a platform to share. It's also been a great place for a lot of the creative ideas Nadia Boyea and I have, like the art zine. The zine is really fun to put together and I'm excited for the next issue coming out later this summer. Sometimes it can be challenging to work together with the other artists due to COVID but, hopefully

that will all soon come to an end.

**RRX:** Tell me about how Senior Living itself has been doing, how have you guys stayed creative and motivated in the last few months?

**ZG:** The band has been doing well, we've been doing a lot of work with the team at Paintbox Records to gear up for the summer release, a lot of brainstorming that went into content ideas. We also brought a new bassist on, Brendo Snell, also a Paintbox records CEO.

L-R: Jeremy Lopez, Zac Geddis. Photo provided.

**RRX:** Tell me about the new album! When this interview comes out, Anniversaries will have already been released (and I know I'm excited to listen to it!).

**ZG:** We're excited for the album! A lot of hard work went into it, Anniversaries was recorded by the three of us in a semi-professional studio run by Paintbox Records called "the spleen." The nine songs were recorded in a room full of us, our friends, other musicians, audio engineers, some and some other members from the Paintbox team. That day of recording was one of the first chances we got to play all of the new songs live together, it was one of the first times we even got a chance to play through and write some of the songs. At the end of the recording session, nine hours later, we had a pretty concentrated album that addressed topics ranging from my own upbringing and struggles with anxiety/PTSD, interracial relationships,

seeking truth and looking for closure.

**RRX:** Listening to the two most recent songs you have on Spotify, I see you haven't compromised the heaviness that I loved hearing when I saw you guys a while ago. These songs also sound more aggressive than the 35mm EP; was this a natural evolution or a more intentional choice?

**ZG:** As for the sound, most of the tracks went in a heavier direction, trading in the soft laid-back vibes of 35mm for some more outspoken, catchy punk tracks. There's definitely more of a groove to this album, and the songs weave together nicely. Expect a balance between hype tracks and slower ones.

**RRX:** I dig the artwork for Anniversaries a lot; is that you two as children? (if so, that's very cute).

**ZG:** The album cover is actually me (Zac) and my younger brother: Luke. I just wanted to put some brown kids on the cover to let other black and brown

kids know they can be into punk music, and that there's a community out there. No doubt the punk scene is a white dominated scene, just wanted to add a splash of identity to the cover.

**RRX:** I see Zac has written a piece on Pencildive, who you guys mentioned playing with before, do you still keep up with a lot of your old tour mates?

**ZG:** We definitely want to play with Pencildive! it'd be sick to get a gig with Prince Daddy too. We're constantly looking for bands to play with whether they're from the area or on tour passing by, but definitely Pencildive and some of the other bands from the label.

**RRX:** I see you guys also have a music video in the works. Who did you work with on it/tell me a bit about the video itself.

**ZG:** Nadia and I (Zac) shot the music video for "Carousel" back in April, the video for "Pretty New New" was also directed by Nadia and filmed the

day after our nine hour studio grind.

**RRX:** Which song on your new album are you most excited to share with people?

**ZG:** I'm excited for there to finally be a version of "Sourir" out, people seem to connect with that one, "Bigot" is also fun

**RRX:** This one might be out there, but did you guys have any specific rituals while recording the album? When working on music with my buds a while back, we ate Halal food almost every night and it sort of burns a memory into your mind; did you guys have any similar routines?

**ZG:** Lol the only routine Brendan and I have is smoking up a couple blunts throughout the studio session like a real heavy hazey sesh.



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# Leaving Em' Spellbound Once Again

*K-Solo seeks a return to the honor of the artform as he works it.*



If a Mount Rushmore of Hip-Hop icons was constructed, I'd vote to have K-Solo carved out of granite. Today we are honored to be able to speak with original Hit Squad recording artist and the only East Coast rapper shown enough "California Love" to be taken in by Death Row Records. His resume speaks for itself but let's find out what K-Solo is up to these days.

**RRX:** I'm sure you've been bombarded with this already, so real quick... I know people are going to

want to hear your feelings about DMX.

**KSOLO:** Oh yeah, well... Me and DMX had a love/hate growing up. In his passing, I forgive DMX and all of that, I don't hold that dark stuff in my heart. We're in a very competitive sport, so you can tell how it got there but... I don't have dark feelings for X, I wish him a safe return to glory or where ever he's going. I wish him safe travels. I pray that peace be on his family and his children. I have no hard feelings against him. But I am the

creator and originator of Spellbound and I won that battle.

**RRX:** Amen to that. In a side note it would've been more believable if DMX claimed he wrote Tales from the Crackside.

**KSOLO:** Yeah, I mean that would fit more... DMX's artform is dark. He was dealing with neglect and negativity. He made the best out of it in the on-

ly way he knew how to deal with it.

Brother T (left) K-Solo (right). Photo provided.

Like I said when I met him in jail we were friends, I don't think he trusted me to be his friend. When I had made it first, I think he was already accepting I would reject him and that wasn't the case at all. He never gave our friendship

a shot. I had to defend as best as I could, it didn't actually go my way in that aspect. He winded up going to the people that put me on, then they got put off the label and then he became the head guy that sold more records than them. I never was in a situation that could challenge him. I just had to eat it and you know? That's life, things happen and just had to accept it for what it was.

But the same people he saved with his artform didn't even want to give him part of the label. So, it's kind of hard being mad at somebody like that.

I'm blessed to be in all of these guys lives before we made it. DMX is one of em', Flo Rida is another, Snoop Dogg was another and Redman was another. I was in their life before they became big. I knew these people before the record deals. We worked on Snoop's album; probably the one that was on the platform who could actually be that, was Snoop. He had "Deep Cover" out that was it. We were there putting it together with Dr. Dre, grooming him you know? And I want to say this in DMX's case he was the only one that went against me, everybody else was on my team. DMX was my friend first, we were friends man... And then... it just went crazy...

I don't have no hard feelings against him because the world we live in doesn't govern itself. As a grown man looking at him, it's sad. It's very sad that we can't coexist. Can't be a wolf and a pit-bull, it's crazy bro. So, I send him off with great admiration. I cherish the good times we had, the little bit of good times we had on the same side. That's all I can do.

**RRX:** That's a good way to look at it. Now, recently there was a reunion, we had Hit Squad, Def Squad, the Method Man, Redman Versus and you showed up for that.

**KSOLO:** Yeah that was a good time. Redman is special in my life, to my children, he's just very special to all of us. I thank his mother for bringing

him into the world and father. I would tell him before he even knew, that he was going to outsell everybody. I just knew it. He just had it, I knew he had it.

**RRX:** Yeah, he did. Sometimes you just see the light in people.

**KSOLO:** Yeah, I was paying attention. He was always like my little brother. We were born on the same day, we just had that energy. So, he brought me up, I flew up April 16th, the 17th we went to eat and then we went and did Versus, me, him and my son Vaughn; we hung out.

**RRX:** It was really cool is that you brought your son with you man.

**KSOLO:** Victorious Vaughn Wolf,

when he's in trouble it's Vaughn, when he's not it's Kevin. DJ Scratch has been doing stuff with him, Redman produced one of his singles. A student in the game, he's coming out again. He's on Road Warrior Records. You can check him out on roadwarriorrecords.net. His record will be coming out real soon. I've got another album coming out with Spartan Academy myself. We're just going to do what we do, have fun, we're not trying to compete with anybody. We're shooting the videos now, getting everything ready to launch the whole brand. What else? We're working on a couple of reality shows. We're just making our voice

known again, we're going to pick up where we left off.

Waste Management Incorporated is where I'm going to be dropping. Vaughn Wolf will be dropping on Road Warrior. We'll present both projects and see what happens.

**RRX:** And today we see less timelessness but I see what you're doing and it's about the music.

**KSOLO:** We come from the era where the message is in the music and the parents always mattered. The cheerleaders mattered in my era. You come home you couldn't say the stuff now they're saying on record. Even Redman, he's younger than me but he didn't shame his cheerleaders. He always made a record that his mother could listen to and be proud to tell the people in the room that's her son. I think that's important, I think Hip Hop needs to do that. We have to dial back to where we get our gifts from and honor that.

Honor the music don't mess it up with that kind of rhetoric that kills off the generation after it's coming.

**RRX:** I totally agree with that.

**KSOLO:** It's like when I make my music I think about the nuns that raised me at the Salvation Army. Spellbound was written for people like that, so when I did it, I could be in the company of these people and not be ostracized because of my language. So, when I made it they knew that signature sound, there was no profanity and none of that stuff that was going to taint my performance. Back then in those days, I thank God that I had so many people pulling for me. Uncle Frank, Mr. Walter, Uncle Walter Lee, Aunt Ernestine (to name a few).

**RRX:** Any last words for the fans and people who have dreams like yours.

**KSOLO:** Keep God first and everything else will fall into place.



Photo provided.

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# Will Knaak

*Blue October, Ernie Durawa, and guitar as a way of life.*



Will Knaak. Photo provided.

**B**lue October is one of the country's biggest cult bands and is known for its distinctive guitar sound. I recently had the honor of posing a few questions to Will Knaak their guitar player and he was generous enough to answer. Will is more than just the guitarist for Blue, he is also an in demand session player with a rock-n-roll pedigree and stylistic versatility. Many great guitarists have hailed from Texas and here is your chance to meet one of the newest.

**RRX:** Every musician has a journey, yours started at 12. What first inspired you to pick up a guitar?

**Will:** Kurt Cobain, Jimi Hendrix, & very possibly Johnny B. Goode. But, these were just seeds. I didn't really pick up a guitar until after my mother passed away in a house fire. My father had a small apartment off Oltorf and he had a Martin. I was separated from all my school friends that summer so I started playing guitar while my Dad

was away at work and I was alone at the apartment.

**RRX:** Music runs in your family, your father having been a member of the legendary 13th Floor Elevators. Was this the career you always thought you would pursue or did you have other ideas as a kid?

**Will:** QB for Houston Oilers, Guitarist or Fighter Pilot. So yes? QB might've paid more. (Chuckle) Crazy my Dad played the last 13th Floor Elevator shows. He also played some with Roky's mom.

**RRX:** You have been involved in a lot of projects and have an extensive resume of session work, in many different styles. How do you approach different styles of music when you record? Is there a different mindset for different styles or do you have more of a "feel" approach. And who are some of the different acts with whom you have recorded?

**Will:** Austin always influenced me

to play many styles. Ernie is a big influence in that way too. We literally play everything. As for different styles, you have to speak the flavor of the language. If it's Latin, you won't use blues type guitar lines but Harmonic Minor flavored runs. Or country, make it snappy and twang. Rock, go heavy with a fuzz, or go with some gorgeous ambience. However, these are just generalizations. Most importantly, you play THE SONG, how much or little it requires from me to make it say what it needs to say. So I believe that goes more with the 'feel' approach, however mindsets can help to get you into a ballpark quickly if a producer asks for a specific flavor or vibe, then you can feel it out from there.

I've recorded with quite a few, too

many to list, but some of the more notable commercial recordings would be Blue October who I am the guitarist for, as well as Randy Rogers & Wade Bowen. These projects all went to the Top of Billboard charts in their respective genres.

**RRX:** Recently you worked on a new single with Ernie Durawa of the Texas Tornados. We here at RadioRadioX have received an advance copy and are blown away. How did this come about?

**Will:** We have played together when we weren't touring for almost 10 years now! We just wanted to record an album. Chris the bass player sings half, I sing the other half. They were all cut live at The Ice Cream Factory and are currently being mixed I believe. On

this single I feel like it's a nice Soul Rock Vibe that meets an aggressive Psychedelic Finish.

**RRX:** How did you come to be the guitarist for Blue October? Is it a Texas thing (LOL)? And how does it feel to be a member of a band with such a devoted fan base?

**Will:** Matt Noveskey our bass player reached out to me. I had recorded at his studio Orb several many times and we had developed a connection. He's the BEST person you'll ever meet in your life and a phenomenal bassist and producer as well. He told me they were making a change in the guitar department and asked if I would like the job. I went and hung with the guys at Justin's studio, jammed and even recorded a part on the song King from 'I Hope You're Happy'. I later went back and did a formal audition. I remember seeing another candidate leaving as I was pulling up, we exchanged curious glances. I went in, jammed with the guys and Justin had me improvise a solo at the end of 'Home' he said 'take a solo that's not shreddy but melodic. Also, I like repeating melodies'. I played a very ambient, droning solo, featuring themes that started lower and developed higher and higher until a nice musical climax was reached. I was offered the job officially 2 days later, accepted it and we went straight to Europe for a tour.

As for the fans, The Blue Family is a true blessing to play for. They are incredible and some follow us all over the country, even the world. It's all about the music, it's not a scene but a community of people who are all witnessing to Justin's amazing lyrics and the bands heartfelt music. I'm grateful for them.

**RRX:** I am personally a big Blue October fan and have had the honor of seeing you with the band. Blue October is known for having an extensive touring schedule. How does this work for you with family and session work?

**Will:** I didn't have a family until COVID, so we will see, but I'm excited. My baby girl Nova is coming to her first show this week as we play our first live shows since the pandemic. As for session work, most of mine comes through Orb Studios and Matt, so it's always ready when we get home.

**RRX:** I saw that you did some guitar work on the Icarus Bell project. Can you tell us if there is any possibility of a full album?

**Will:** Yes, and Yes. :)

**RRX:** I ask this question of every one I interview. What is your musical guilty pleasure and what currently is on your music radar?

**Will :** Guilty pleasure would absolutely be either 80s glam rock like Warrant or Firehouse, or very possibly emo power punk like Blink 182 or Good Charlotte.

What is currently on my radar would be artists like Jack White, Josh Homme & Gary Clark Jr. It's the distressed modern meets retro blues rock sound. I have 6 songs so far on a solo album in that vein I am working on currently. More to be revealed.



Blue October's Justin Furstenfeld (l) and Will Knaak (r). Photo provided.

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**7/6- FREE Movie Tuesday - Aladdin, 7pm**  
**7/7- Open Mic Wednesday 7pm Sign Up, \$3**  
**7/8- Unplugged Thursday - John & Amy, 7pm FREE**  
**7/9- The Saratoga Strings Band, 8pm \$10**  
**7/10- Gratefully Yours - Grateful Dead Tribute, 8pm \$15**  
**7/11- Taconic Music - An Afternoon of Chamber Music, 3pm \$15/10/\$**  
**7/13- FREE Movie Tuesday - Rocket Man, 7pm**  
**7/14- Open Mic Wednesday 7pm Sign Up, \$3**  
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# Ryder Cooley and the DBF

*Dust Bowl Faeries singer and artist Ryder Cooley is bringing life to the lost.*



Dust Bowl Faeries, Ryder Cooley (second from left). Photo provided.

**A**rt is subjective. Music too. And we're passionate in our opinions. Music and art can be pleasant, designed to take us to our bliss. Other music and art can challenge us, make us question what we know, even broaden our conception of what art and music are.

Ryder Cooley is an artist and musician. Her band, Dust Bowl Fairies, is an eclectic fusion, and Ryder's work is esoteric and packed with meaning. She will challenge you, and reveal an art that is more expansive than you'd imagined.

I sit with Ryder and we discussed Jurassic Park. All of them.

**RRX:** When I first became hip to you, admittedly recently, I saw Hazel, your disembodied goat's head. Though maybe I shouldn't say "yours" because it seems Hazel might belong to the world. Giving a soul, if you will, to Hazel, was it always there, or did it come about through a creative act?

**RC:** Oh yes, Hazel has a soul, we all do, don't we? I'm going to go out on a limb and say that I think the crux of this question is about death. Being pre-disposed to morbidities, I have given death quite a bit of thought (and observation) and I have come to the conclusion that energy leaves the body in death, and is released into the world. Though I cannot take any credit for the existence of Hazel's soul, I do think that our collaboration has helped preserve her energy and wisdom by providing her spirit with the opportunity to act as a guide, a spirit guide.

I'm not a big fan of ownership or the "P word" (property/language of capitalism), so I would say that Hazel first and foremost belongs to herself, and then she belongs to the spirit world. It's an honor to be the steward of the mortal remains of Hazel, which is infused with her residual energy. I try to invoke Hazel's spirit at performances, and after a decade of performing together, I

think of Hazel as an extension of myself. I refer to Hazel as "she" since I'm the mortal body for Hazel in her after-life. Hazel is an integral part of my identity and I'm one of those confusing changeling creatures who can't quite fit into any conventional identity. I'm plural (non-binary if you will) and a faerie, yet drawn to the feminine, which is why I use the pronoun 'she' for myself, and for Hazel.

**RRX:** You have a band called Dust Bowl Fairies, which is described as, "dark carnival music." I'm imagining that, with your work with animals and taxidermy, it's quite an atmosphere, engrossing, probably. Does the band set a mood as part of a larger performance, or is the music in the lead and backed up by the performance?

**RC:** Dust Bowl Faeries can be quite expansive and theatrical when given the opportunity. We like to perform with projections and costumes and aeri-als and extra sensory elements that

will transport our beloved guests to other realms. However, woe is us, here we are in a compartmentalized culture where independent music is squeezed into venues that can't support anything beyond the music itself, and let's be real, these days venues can make a heck of a lot more money hosting weddings than music shows! Weddings are putting musicians out of business here in the NY Hudson Valley, with the exception of wedding bands, of course. Perhaps someday Dust Bowl Faeries will hit the jackpot and be able to present music in true faerie-tale form, but until then, I would say that the music leads. I do create solo performances which are a departure from standard music shows, so I would say my solo work is more conceptual and performance driven.

**RRX:** It looks like there's a lot on the Dust Bowl Fairies plate. All the way through the summer throughout the Capital Region and the Hudson Valley.

With an air of extinction and the show and set you put on, is it cathartic in anyway to be getting back out there right now to perform for people?

**RC:** It is cathartic to be performing live again, that's the perfect adjective, thanks for the handout Liam! I'm not much of a cyborg, nor are the other members of the band. Embodied, energetic exchanges with live audiences really drives our music. I worked pretty hard to keep Dust Bowl Faeries active during the pandemic with virtual shows, videos and a new album called The Plague Garden. Lisa M. Thomas made an incredible video with us last summer called Candy Store, which really brought the band together again after months of social distancing. But all of this is to say that yes, we are thrilled to be playing live again and we hope that anyone who is ready to brave the world of social engagement will join us for a live performance!

**RRX:** I mentioned extinction, because I read that it's a favored concept for you. And I say concept, because your art attempts to symbolically and metaphysically resuscitate extinct animals. And with DNA samples and cloning advances, do you think we need metaphoric resuscitation only until science and conservation catch up?

**RC:** Extinction is not exactly a favorite subject for me since I am an animal advocate and I deeply care about species diversity, so ultimately, I don't want animals to go extinct, especially not as a direct result of human destructiveness. I do have many songs and performances about extinction and endangered species, which I've created in an effort to shed light upon the tragedy of these losses, and as a reminder/wake-up call for all of us to live more sustainably. I don't think that we can bring back that which we have destroyed, be it via science, DNA cloning, whatever. My song "Ibex" on The Plague Garden album addresses this. We may be able to re-create a facsimile,

but the process of doing so is in itself destructive since it involves animal experimentation. Playing god is dangerous, it opens up the floodgates for ongoing destructiveness by suggesting that everything is reversible and that conservation is futile.

**RRX:** Taxidermy has always been on the edge of what is taboo in society. You can have a collection of figurines, but a collection of squirrels and people give you a side-eye. But what you do with taxidermy I think transcends collecting. Where did you first start with taxidermy? Do you find the animals, or have you done it yourself?

**RC:** I like to collect things like bones and feathers, and sometimes I find dead things and take them home to study or draw. If you open my freezer you will find a bunch of frozen bird wings and such, which I save for rituals and sometimes for art projects, but when it comes to taxidermy I consider my "collection" to be more like a rescue. Killing animals and stuffing them is not anything I would do. Cutting their heads off and hanging them on the wall like trophies is horrid, and bad luck. That's why I rescue the animals and give them a comfortable home after they are discarded. I don't display animals on the wall. The taxidermy creatures in my home are part of the family, I try to make them comfortable, resting them on cushions and chairs, I honor their spirits. I don't buy taxidermy, they come to me. I don't support killing animals for any reason, animals are my friends. I don't eat my friends or stuff their mortal remains, or decapitate them and hang their heads on the wall. I cherish my friends, all of them, the taxidermy friends and the living friends, the animal friends and the human friends.

**RRX:** I share your passion for animals. I volunteered at a farm sanctuary when I was fourteen. And it's so hard to get people to understand that animals can feel the same pain humans do.

Makes it harder to eat a steak. But you don't preach to people. How is your art a message, and how is it a statement?

**RC:** It's always a relief to meet other animal advocates and empaths! The only way I was able to dive in and start making music was to come to it myself, without anyone telling me what to do, how to play an instrument, how to read notes on a page, how to write a song, etc. I guess that's the way I think people might understand animal consciousness, through stories and songs, pictures and colors, melodies and lyrics, anything that communicates on a more subconscious and visceral level. I like to make work that lures people in, like a really good mystery novel that's full of intrigue. I want to hypnotize people with my work and speak to the senses, not just the intellect. Just think, what a terrible world we would live in if there were no animals left, just people. What if we ate them all, destroyed them all, and there were only

simulations of animals? That's not a world I want to live in. The suffering of animals due to experimentation and exploitation is such a nightmare, which is why a lot of my work has a haunting feeling. Thank you for asking this very poignant question.

**RRX:** This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Best color to dye your teeth? Glitter bombs or silly string? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

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# Observations and Ramblings From a Cranky Old Guy

**H**i once again, hope you, like me, are enjoying the (slow but sure) return of freedom and normalcy.

That's not the topic, just wanted to say it for a "Yay Us" moment.

In reality, it's celebration time!

Three years of RadioradioX, and well over two years of this publication.

Not to mention RadioSoulX in that time as well, plus some great community events, which unfortunately got held up last year due to the pandemic.

Guess what bitches...we're back and bigger than ever!

Thank YOU for listening, thank YOU for reading, thank YOU for sticking with us, there's MUCH more to come!

If you're new to the station(s) or the paper, I'd like to give you a reintroduction to who I am and why I act the way that I do.

Number One, I am a LOCAL guy, while born in Florida, I started the young life in Hudson, then Albany, then a move to Loudonville where I became a proud graduate of the Class of 1974 of Shaker High School (GO Blue Bison!).

After time in the Buckeye State my professional broadcasting career (and by that, I mean the fools payed me) began in 1977. I have physically worked in radio stations in Ohio, Indiana, Vermont, Massachusetts as well as the home base of New York.

My Capital Region broadcast career began in 1986, thanks in part from stealing, I mean borrowing the words "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men..." (if you fill in the blank you'll get it).

I have worked at a number of

different formatted radio stations, Top 40, Country, Jazz, Easy Listening, hell I've played polkas on the radio before and LIKED it!

It was at one of these stations, a News Talk station (my current home), where I first met Art Fredette.

It took me a while for us to talk, I would see him skulking around the station with his little beanie, an unlit cigarette in his mouth and an F-Bomb on his breath.

I knew right then we would be the best of friends.

It was when Art and I first started talking, naturally it was about music, this is not meant to be a suck up line, but I truly was impressed with his musical knowledge.

Even back then he spoke of his vision of a kick ass radio station, a variation of what we old farts used to call "Progressive" or "Old School," a station that plays music because it's good and not because it sells a lot of copies.

A station the people want, not the consultants.

A station with a format not the same as a number of other stations around the country.

To paraphrase "My Fair Lady," I think he's got it, by George he's got it.

That was three years ago, and the same philosophy was used in creating RadioSoulX as well.

While I have a minute, I want to mention a moment in the past when I met another member of the

RadioradioX staff, the Living Legend Jim Barrett.

To show you how old I am (and by coincidence how old Jim is), the first meeting was sometime between 1972 and 1974, another Shaker classmate, Ken Haverly (unfortunately I can't remember his "on air name") was working at the little college radio station in Troy, where I first heard the show "Kaleidoscope."

In fact, the first time I ever heard FM radio was Christmas 1968 and I was 12 when my parents got me an AM/FM radio, the first time I heard the little college radio station in Troy I heard The Mothers of Invention do "Help I'm a Rock," It might have been ON "Kaleidoscope." I was all alone and became frightened and hid under my sheets.

But that was the moment I discovered Rock and Roll, and I needed much, much more.

And "Kaleidoscope" still lives on

RadioradioX.

For that reason and that reason alone, you need to listen.

So, if we're celebrating three years, imagine what the next three will bring.

I for one am glad there is a choice.

If you haven't listened for a while, do so, you'll be glad too.

Finally, thanks to "The Powers That Be" for allowing this old fool the opportunity to get my thoughts out.

It's sparked my creativity, it's given me a voice, and it's cheaper than paying a shrink to prove I am truly bat sh\*t crazy.

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# SASSY Says

## Fresh Ink at Work



**A** big thing happened to me a couple of months ago. You know what I did? I went back to work. Okay so there's not a lot of pomp and circumstance involved but trust... for me it was a **BIG DEAL!** I hadn't been back to my job as a tattoo shop manager since December of 2019. I had foot surgery that December, needed two months to recover, then got sick with some crazy "virus" thing that kept me in bed for over a month beginning at the end of February of 2020. A virus. Huh! Isn't that ironic. Dontcha think?

The tattoo shop shut down, just like everything else, in March 2020. I wasn't a front-line worker, that's for sure. Tattoos are considered a luxury and every shop had to close during shutdown. So there was no place for me

to go even if I could. Not to mention, I have health issues that kept me inside until either my doctors said it was safe for me to go out or a vaccination became available. Until that time came? I was on lockdown. I stayed in doing makeover videos and reviewing glamour items. Then I started cooking more and did some baking. I also made

potholders. A LOT of potholders. So Many. **FUCKING.** Potholders. Then evening came, and morning followed. Another COVID day.

Finally, vaccines came out and the rush was on. In March of 2021, I was next in line to get my shots. I didn't hesitate. Plus my doctors told me to definitely get mine. After I received my

last shot, I waited my two weeks then—with mask in hand—I went back to the tattoo shop to see what was going on. Business was open, but I can honestly say it was maddening. Artists were booking out anywhere from three weeks to three months. The phones were crazy with inquiring customers since very few (including us) were

uninformed as to the ever-changing regulations the body artists' had to adhere to. Regular customers were going through tattoo withdrawal. People had stimmy money they wanted to spend on new art. It honestly was insane.

I went back to manage the shop part-time, and I was happy as hell. I got to wake up, dress up, and feel human again. I got back into my routine very quickly. Even with all of new rules that had been put in place, I fell into a new routine relatively quickly. As a front end assistant, I had to enforce the mask rule with anyone who walked in. Hand sanitizers were all over the shop. Clean gloves were worn and changed frequently. Temperatures were taken, paperwork completed and pens disinfected after every customer. And that was only my daily tasks.

The artists had it a lot harder. A LOT! There had to be extra disinfection and sterilization for everything, before and after each customer. Masks were worn by everyone. Chairs, tables, arm rests, bottles, etc. had to be wiped down often. Extra time had to be allotted in between customers to get everything prepared for the next. It was stressful. The hustle was real. I tried to help where I could. I kept things running pretty smooth with general shop stuff so they could focus on just the customers and their art. It was certainly different. Their frustration was palpable.

I quickly noticed that things that used to be so easy for me to handle had now suddenly become a struggle. The artists were using way more gloves and supplies than usual—and they were almost impossible for anyone to buy. When you did locate some? They were twice as much money as they had been pre-COVID. This was the same story across the board for anything sanitary, disinfecting or medical related. It was super frustrating and it didn't take long before my post-quarantine lack of patience began to kick in. I told my boss

before I came back that somehow during the shutdown, I had genuinely become a bitchy wench and might not be as nice as I was a year ago. My tension was high and tolerance was low. He just smiled and said I definitely wasn't alone. Phew.

At this point, things keep improving with lessening restrictions in not just the the body art industry but across the board. Tattoo shops are still VERY busy which is great. People now have an immediate desire for new ink. But people need to remember that it is summer and EVERYONE has an immediate desire for new ink. It happens every June and goes right into fall. That part will never change. But the "new normal" has a price. Those drastically increased supply costs have to be recouped somehow. Tattoo prices and shop minimums have most likely gone up. Artists need to recoup this somehow. It's common business practice 101. Customers need to keep that in mind.

For now, I can happily say that I'm back doing what I love with a schedule that works for everyone. It was a long year and a half but I am finding balance and feel a bit more like my old self. But it will never be like it was, pre-COVID. People have changed, whether they will admit it or not. In a time of crisis, I think it is safe to say that while some people become more giving and compassionate? Others have become bitter to the core. And the tattoo industry is slowly getting back up to speed. But the ways of the shops and artists have taken on a new regimen. Remember... be patient. We are all doing our very best. But if you still feel the need to dish out some rude shit to the sassy girl on the phone about an appointment? Don't be surprised if she tells you to you where to shove your attitude. Trust me... she's not too fond of this change either.

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