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April 2022
Vol. 4, Issue 4

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Watch the Reaction

Youtubers Brad & Lex go crazy for classic rock and other time-tested hits... and you get to share their joy.

BY ROB SMITTIX

Brad & Lex. Photo provided.

RRX: First off, I know you do more than just reaction videos on your YouTube channel but I also know that you have done quite a few and this will be the focus of our conversation today. So, I informed you that I am friends with Buck Dharma from Blue Oyster Cult and that I shared with him your reaction video for “Don’t Fear the Reaper”. He got a kick out of it for sure, especially because I’m sure he hasn’t heard new reactions to the song in decades. How does it feel knowing that the artist saw your video? Have you

heard of any other artists that have come across your reaction videos of their music?

BRAD: I love it. Knowing that the artist actually watched and liked our reaction brings a big smile to my face every time. We’ve heard from a few artists; they’ll tag us on Facebook or comment directly on one of our videos usually. It happens every now and again but not too often. I’d say less than 10 times in the past year.

LEX: It’s cool to bring the artist some kind of positive feeling after

they’ve had such a huge impact on so many people over the years with their music. I would think it might feel like an empty exchange after playing a song so many times, once they’ve got the money and fame or whatever.

RRX: When a song is really popular for decades, how and why do you think that you haven’t been exposed to it before? A lot of reaction video channels focus on new music, but I found that with your channel many of the

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GABE STALLMAN

Ampevene frontman Gabe Stallman has a passion for a wide array of music, and it shows.

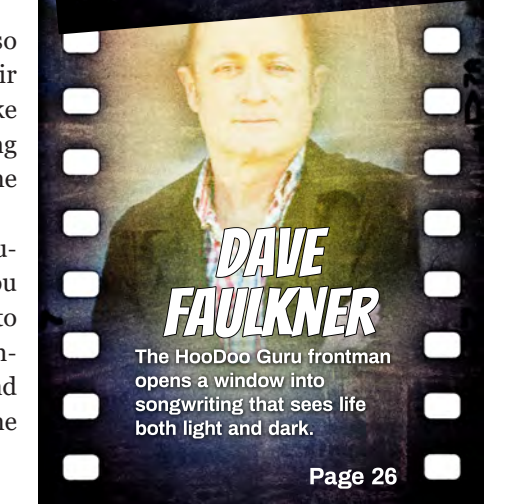
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SARA HILL

Sara Hill is the guiding force behind Gospel Jubilee, a joyous musical experience at Proctor’s in Schenectady.

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DAVE FAULKNER

The HooDoo Guru frontman opens a window into songwriting that sees life both light and dark.

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songs are considered classics. Is it because maybe you were raised listening to other genres?

BRAD: I was raised in a hip hop and rhythm and blues bubble. As a kid, you'd get made fun of by your peers if you listened to music outside of that bubble. In the privacy of my car, I would listen to a radio station that played a wide variety of music, but it was all newer music. My biggest exposure to classic hits was through Guitar Hero. It never occurred to me that these were songs I could listen to outside of the video game. It was all just fun video game music to me.

LEX: Yea, I think so. My parents were also in two different generations so what was culturally relevant to one parent, was slightly different for the other. I think I took an interest in certain things about each of their generations - a mix of Boyz II Men and Sam Cooke vibes (plus we listened to a lot of musical scores and some opera), and then the pop culture I grew up in (Britney Spears, Rihanna, Spice Girls, etc), and that was "music" to me. It's funny because I didn't feel like I was missing out, even though there was a vast amount of music I had never heard of or listened to. I guess you "don't know, what you don't know."

RRX: I make fun of my son because he's a gamer and he spends hours watching others play video games. I never understood that but as a music connoisseur I find myself watching endless hours of reaction videos. So, do you think that's sort of the same thing? Me watching others listening to music.

LEX: Yea probably. I think music reactions are addictive because you can only listen to a song once for the first time, but you can vicariously experience 100 first times via reactions. It's a different way of listening to your favorite artists and reminiscing about times in life the music got you through.

BRAD: I think so! When you love

something it's so fun to share it with others, but you can only share it with so many people. With reactions, it's like introducing your friends to your favorite music and watching them experience it for the first time.

RRX: Any other thoughts about reaction videos you'd like to add? Like what compelled you to do it?

LEX: Originally, we were reacting to social experiments and one of our subscribers suggested we check out an artist in the UK. So, we did, and from there commenters suggested we check out more and more. We never intended for this musical journey to happen but I'm so glad it did.

BRAD: When we got our first music reaction suggestion, we had roughly 100 subscribers. We were hesitant about doing a music reaction because we had never even seen one and didn't know how to do one. Taking that suggestion led us down a life changing path that has been so much fun! Our subscribers have been guiding us through this whole journey. They're the best!

RRX: Lastly, anything you'd like to plug? Anything you'd like to say to our audience to get them to come check out your YouTube channel?

LEX: Thanks for taking the time to interview us. I think it's so cool bonding over music, and I wish I'd heard "Stairway to Heaven", "Simple Man", "Cemetery Gates", and all of Metallica's catalogue and Slash's guitar work (and much much more) earlier in life.

BRAD: Lex is the cutest most bubbly girl in the world who has a good ear for music, and I am musically challenged. It's an odd dynamic but it's been so fun to listen to songs we've never heard together and try to understand the song and each other's perspective.

Check out Brad and Lex for yourself at youtube.com/bradlex

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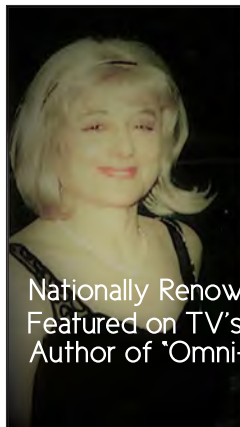


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Blue Öyster Cult

Sometimes a concert means more than a good time. Sometimes it's far more intimate.

BY ROB SMITTIX

Blue Öyster Cult. Photo provided.

I had the opportunity a few years back to meet and interview Buck Dharma at a local show in the Capital Region. Just a quick recap of that conversation, most of what we talked about was about the time Buck shared with my Uncle Skip who sang for Travesty the predecessor to Soft White Underbelly and what eventually became Blue Öyster Cult. I always heard stories from my Dad about those early days. Like the time Buck Dharma and my Uncle Skip painted the word LOVE on the roof of my grandparents' house, so that the planes above could see it. My grandparents were not too pleased to say the least.

The next time I spoke to Buck Dharma was to inform him that my Uncle Skip had passed away. We had a nice phone chat that day and I was very

appreciative that he took the time to speak with me about my uncle.

This is not your ordinary concert review because I now consider Buck Dharma a friend and the history he has with my uncle makes it more of a personal experience for me. I also don't like to write the same ol' write ups that you can read anywhere else. Of course, the band was phenomenal, they're Blue Öyster Cult. The Show took place at The Egg on March 4th.

The guitar that Buck Dharma was using for this show was brand new and it was the first time he ever played it, but it sounded as though he and the guitar had a long-lasting relationship. Eric Bloom is forever entertaining, especially when he came out dressed in the hooded garb for "The Alchemist" encore; the crowd went crazy. Richie

Castellano (guitar/keys) is the real deal for sure, what a talented musician and I'd say he's been a tremendous asset to the band for the last two decades. Danny Miranda on bass always puts a smile on my face, he's been a part of the band on and off since the mid-nineties but I'm glad he has returned, he really adds to the stage presence of the group. Jules Radino has been playing drums with BÖC since 2004 and it's quite obvious why he got the part, he's an amazing percussionist. It was a stellar night of music and if you missed out, do yourself a favor and make sure you don't make that mistake again.

Now that the formal review is out of the way I'll return to my personal experience once again. After the show I texted Buck Dharma "Great Show!" He replied, "Meet me at The Hilton." I

arrived first and then the band showed up. I sat next to Buck Dharma who was seated next to none other than Reeves Gabrels (David Bowie/The Cure) and we all just chatted for a few hours. It was beyond one of the coolest experiences of my life. They were talking shop and I'm a musician and all, but it was probably equivalent to a tee ball player sitting at the bar with The Yankees. But they treated me as an equal and I really felt blessed to have been invited to hang out. I didn't want to ruin the night by doing an interview or snapping photos, I just took in the experience for what it was, and I'll never forget it. I wore my Uncle Skip's leather jacket that night so that he'd be there with me in spirit and I'm sure he was.

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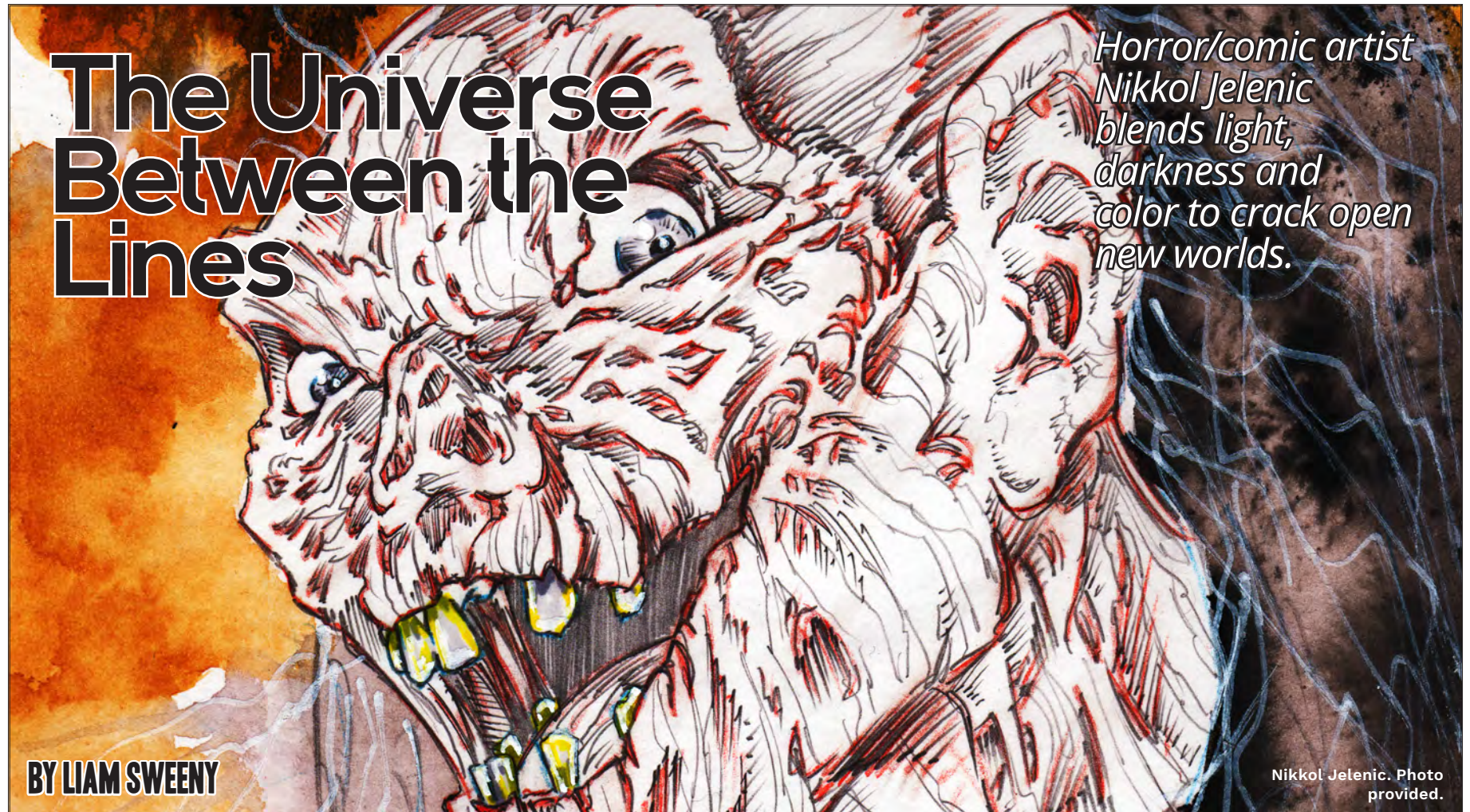
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The Universe Between the Lines

Horror/comic artist Nikkol Jelenic blends light, darkness and color to crack open new worlds.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Nikkol Jelenic. Photo provided.

We once had gods, and they were fierce, and they were mighty, and they were like us, and then we organized, and the old gods gave way, but never the need in our lives for something that could represent the potential of our imaginations. And so, one day an artist drew lines and a writer wrote words and it was like peanut butter and chocolate – comics, and superheroes, were born.

Nikkol Jelenic creates heroes. To be more accurate, she also creates villains. Heroes and villains, and once in a while, through sleepless eyes, she creates nightmares.

I sit with Nikkol as she draws my portrait, and we talk.

RRX: Comic art is different than abstract art or still life; it tells and advances a story, and it does this in a very

physical way. It's a capture of the kinetic energy of a moment of an event. When you're capturing this event for that story, do you step back to think of things in terms of abstracts and concepts, or is it like seeing lines in your head?

NJ: I agree that those art forms are very different in the aspect of comic art being more about visualizing the action of a story. Comics can be compared to a detailed version of a storyboard for a movie. When designing the layouts, I like to imagine what the coolest camera angle would be to depict those moments in the panels.

RRX: Comics are an arranged marriage of artwork and writing. When you're creating a scene, you need to make room for the thought bubbles or the dialogue bubbles, and this must

affect how you draw it out. Have there ever been any personal heartbreaks where you had to block some really great artwork because of the needs of dialogue?

NJ: It certainly does! I learned that the hard way, having an editor inform me how difficult it was for the letterer to find placement sans much negative space. I'm quite mindful of that now. As far as heartbreak, I do feel it when I've chosen to lay areas for dialogue, I thought obvious and the letterer thought to go elsewhere.

RRX: You're an amazing artist, and you're versatile. It must make comic book writers want to write to your style. But that brings up a (hopefully) interesting inquiry: how does a writer write to your style? It's like asking how you pair a Robert Frost with a Picasso,

I guess, but how does a writer present work that your art would be best for?

NJ: Appreciate your kind words! I have had most writers that I've worked with create the works for us to cater to my style, but more so to the content I enjoy drawing. I feel it's all about inspiration. What the storyteller creates has a vision initially and that can come from being inspired by imagery seen beforehand. A writer may see something I've drawn and that could plant the seed of a really cool concept for a tale that we can grow together.

RRX: You're really into horror comics. And what I've noticed about your work in that genre is that there might be a color convention, maybe a 'horror palette,' very black and white and red, muted earth tone colors, very indicative of human blood and gore

and the night. But you add a lot of color 'splash' to it. What started you with that?

NJ: It is rare that I do interiors for anything other than horror, as it is my favorite subject matter, but I do enjoy drawing and reading other genres. I love to paint, and the allowance of color variety is quite fun. The color portion of any art form is just as important as every other working part of the project. I love color and especially vibrant tones. Darker tones, shadows and tints are great, too. Color can really have the viewer feel the moments they're taking in as well as explain scenes visually, so the writer doesn't need the letterer to explain scenes excessively. Like, the time of day, locations, character emotions, etc. I do enjoy a good 'horror palette', but vibrant colors that are used successfully can be such eye candy. The colorist loaded up the coloration to a recent book I did that has heavy floral and botanical imagery. I think this

brought more life to the story and art than using a more traditional color scheme found in horror. It just depends on the content of the story for which direction the coloring should go.

RRX: You're involved in a lot of independent stuff, independent comics. Some of your work is in Aftershock Comics. As a writer, I'm acutely aware of the difference between indie publishing and a more corporate publishing. But I don't know jack about the indie comic world. What would you say are the pros and cons vs. say Marvel or DC?

NJ: I personally have yet to have an experience to present a con for either. I do love that indie stuff allows creators to feel limitless with their works. I'm just happy to be illustrating fun stories for whoever will have me along. Collaborating with writers is most enjoyable because I like the communicating and building with other creative types. I also make my own comics, which gives

me full free range. And that's a very proud feeling to hold your own little baby, printed in hand, that you poured your soul into.

RRX: One thing that everybody knows, and has an opinion about, is the human form as portrayed in comics. I'm talking the generally svelte basic form of a superhero. I think we're starting to see more everyday kind of heroes, but with a more diverse range of body styles being represented, is it harder to capture that kind of motion in pen and ink?

NJ: That's what I enjoy about indie comics the most. Great to see regular people existing in the world. I love me some super jacked up supes and bodies in armor of the gods, but people you pass in the streets have the potential to do big things and be part of intriguing stories also. I like to draw all body types, but I'll take monsters over any of them. I don't think one body type is more difficult than the other, rather

equally as difficult to master without practice. I learn new techniques and find new angles, when drawing bodies, every day that I am working on something.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Favorite place to catch an ink stain? Pen erasers that actually work? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

NJ: Ink stains suck! Hahaha! Actually, I rarely ink as I'm usually hired as a penciler. My sketch paintings are where you'll find most of my inks and there is where I catch 'stains'. So, for a fav, I like when the ink stays on the paper instead of staining my fingers. I don't usually use ink erasers because I like wherever it decides to land. I keep the sketches pretty chaotic and throw the ink around on them with a paintbrush. We live in a super digital world so any cleanup can be addressed in photoshop. Electric erasers are pretty cool to try out. My advice is to try it all!







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Gabe Stallman and Ampevene



From Led Zeppelin to Ethiopian Jazz, Gabe Stallman is putting out something unique.

BY ROB SMITTIX

Gabe Stallman. Photo provided.

RRX: So, I became familiar with your band Ampevene because of your bassist Mack Hogan. I knew Mack when he was still a long-haired, high school metal guitarist sharing a jam space with my band Smittix. Now it seems as though he has matured and gotten himself a haircut. I always saw the talent that he possessed as a young man, and I was very happy to see that he has joined a group of musicians with extreme talent and skill. So, I'm familiar with Mack and you Gabe, tell us about the rest of the band and feel free to tell us more about yourself as well.

GS: I remember Mack talking about Smittix in high school! Mack is such a technician, and an incredible metal guitarist. He can learn songs fast no matter how complicated they are,

and I think his improvisational skill really helps our sound when we're jamming reach a higher level. The current lineup, as a four piece, includes Brian Mckinney-Fahey and Ava Smith as well. Ava has been with us pretty much since the beginning, I think she played our third ever show with us. Ava is one of the best musicians I've ever played with, I write most of the music for the band and have the other musicians flesh out their parts for the most part. But the ideas that Ava has after I give her the skeleton of what I'm going for blow my mind because in one way they're exactly what I want her to do, and in another way, she plays those ideas in a way I would never think of. It's really cool to watch the gears turn and have her come up with the perfect

counter melody or something. Brian is an incredible drummer and has been with us since 2017, I originally found him because of a post about math rock on Facebook, I think he was only 21 at the time and I reached out to him saying we were looking to audition a new drummer because our previous one moved to California and he showed up and just killed it. He's really passionate about a lot of music I love, so he understands where the motivation of the music comes from and he's also got a different frame of reference for some sounds than I do, so like Ava it's pretty fun to watch the things that he comes up with to fit a part as we're jamming on it. Over the years he's been in the band he's become a great friend to all of us too, which is a beautiful thing to

come out of playing music with together. Live, lately, we have been using a percussionist, Bob Morris who actually used to drum for us back in 2015/2016, I love getting him out when possible, to add a Latin style flair to our rhythm section. We also have been using saxophone more frequently when we can. Most recently Adam Siegel who is incredible as well, and who I recently recorded for a single we're dropping soon.

RRX: Ampevene has been described as progressive rock and has even been referred to as experimental and psychedelic. How would you describe what you do?

GS: I think that's the best way to classify it, I'm a huge fan of so much music, I love everything from

experimental grind core like The Locust, to pop music like Lady Gaga. There's so many cool melodies and rhythms in any music you listen to, and I love to combine everything I hear into a functioning song. Lately I've been listening to a lot of Ethiopian jazz, but I also love music like Red Hot Chili Peppers and Led Zeppelin. I think some people consider our music experimental, and to a degree it is, because it's exciting to experiment with sounds in the studio and connect riffs until something works, but I think that's how everyone does it. I don't think there's anything too out there of what we're doing, I just love music and want to put all the sounds I love in the same song, if that comes out too much for some people I can understand it, but I think for music fans it's just getting cool exciting sounds together. I also love the 70's Miles Davis albums, "Bitches Brew", "Live Evil", "Jack Johnson", etc. I like to throw that type of improvisation into the shows as well.

RRX: I know it's been quite a few years now. How long has the band been together? Any interesting back story on how the band came to be?

GS: We just hit our eight year anniversary a week ago. The big story of how it came to be is that in high school I was playing in a band that broke up the same weekend I was in a really bad snowboard accident. I was left in bed after surgery for a few weeks with an iPod and an acoustic guitar and I decided I wanted to reinvent myself musically, and spend that time listening to music figuring out what sounds I wanted to combine in a new band, I think most of what we've done over the last decade has been working towards that goal. I think the new music we're working on, some of which we've been playing live, is the first time I've really felt like we're reaching what I had envisioned back then. But it's possible five years from now I'll be saying the same thing and thinking what we have now

was never quite it. I like to always push things and see how I can challenge myself in ways to surprise my own ears and I've always trying to figure out new ways to do that either live or in the studio.

RRX: How many albums or EPs have you released? What is your latest?

GS: We put out EPs in 2013, 2015, and 2016, and an album in 2018. 2013 I put out a self-titled EP of three songs I had written the year before in my attempt to find a sound to start pursuing. I used a drummer and bassist I was friends with at the time and played guitar and keys myself. The next one was a song I wrote the following year that I wanted to make sound a little more jammy, but looking back it was a sound that I was a fan of listening to but not what I wanted to continue pursuing. In 2016 we put out "Rometheu" which was the first song that I think captured what I wanted Ampevene to really sound like. Our album, "Ephemerogoria" was an album we recorded live with no over dubs. I listened to it for the first time in a while recently and I think it has a really classic sound to it. We got one review when we put it out that compared it to "Piper and the Gates of Dawn", the first Pink Floyd album and I totally see it. I've always been really into production, and I've been buckling down in the studio working on some new things lately that I think are getting closer to the ultimate vision I'm really proud of the new stuff. Oh, we also released a live EP on Bandcamp of David Bowie covers we did at The Linda in 2019. We were asked to make our own arrangements of Bowie songs and we had fun coming up with our own interpretations of them.

RRX: Any shows that you'd like promote?

GS: April 8th at Super Dark's No Fun in Troy!



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BY ROB SMITTX

Gospel Jubilee. Photo provided.

Today I am speaking with Sara Hill (executive producer) regarding the 10th Annual Gospel Jubilee event coming to Proctors in Schenectady Saturday April 23rd at 6pm.

RRX: Sara, please tell us a little bit about your involvement and what you do for the Gospel Jubilee. What does it mean to be an executive producer of a show like this?

SH: Rob, thank you, for having me. I am so grateful to be able to share this concert series with the people. This is our 10th installment of Gospel Jubilee at Proctors. I am truly blessed to return to the main stage of this historic beautiful theater after a two-year absence due to the pandemic. This challenging time of COVID-19 has affected all of us. The world events today are so

heartbreaking to see. Folks want to be uplifted and we need to feed our spirits with something positive, and the best way to do this is through the arts and gospel music. I know that music and the arts are healing.

I grew up in the Capital District. My career background is in producing and presenting live shows and working with independent artists during my career in NYC. I returned to the Capital Region in 2006 and landed a job at Proctors. Special thanks to Philip Morris, Proctors CEO, and the creative team who gave me the opportunity to create and produce Gospel Jubilee. I have been given a platform that shares an uplifting program for all walks of life, all cultural backgrounds. I was baptized Catholic and went to Catholic

school as a child; however, I was also raised in the Black church here in the Capital Region. I was always drawn to the spirit of gospel music, the voices of choirs and 'real' singers and musicians from all across the Capital Region. I am rooted in gospel music. Not as a singer (in my own home I sing), but I was always a great observer of talent in the church! Wilborn Temple Church First God in Christ in Albany and Refreshing Springs Church in Schenectady music programs stirred my soul from a young person growing up in Schenectady, NY.

RRX: I did receive the information that you sent me but rather myself talking about the performers, it's probably best to hear it directly from you. Can you give us some insight on the

performers and what we (the audience) can expect?

SH: The Jubilee Choir and Jubilee Band under the music direction of Reverend Dr. Elgin Joseph Taylor, Sr. (pastor of Sweet Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, Albany) is comprised of singers and musicians from various churches in the Capital Region. Many of these singers have been singing in local church choirs since they were children. The Jubilee Choir is such a powerful soulful presentation. I am so grateful for their gifts; God has blessed them all with.

On Saturday, April 23, we have a special voice and an even more special anointing; Elder Lorraine Stancil-Lawson of New Jersey will perform. She has been a favorite invited guest for

thousands of ministries, conventions and conferences for more than four decades. She began singing at an early age and has sung and worked with some legendary gospel artists in the industry, such as Kurt Carr and the Kurt Carr singers, Donnie McClurkin, the late Walter Hawkins and Karen Clark-Sheard to name a few.

RRX: I did notice that you are saluting two beloved Capital District women who were a part of the Gospel Jubilee Mass Choir, Regina "Gina" Parsons and Antonia "Toni" Brown. Please tell us more about these extraordinary women and what they mean to you and Gospel Jubilee.

SH: This program is bittersweet and joyful at the same. Regina Parsons and Antonia Brown I simply love and adore these two women of God. They were my sister-friends. Both trailblazers, phenomenal women who loved people and gave love through their ministry and gifted singing voices. They both were the real deal when it came to singing in the church and loved music and the arts. Regina Parsons was known for her voice and her famous sweet potato pie. She was born in Washington, D.C. to the late Pastor Elder Eugene W. Dix and Georgetta Dix, her parents founded Refreshing Springs Church of God in Christ in Schenectady. Regina was the voice. Singing was not only her passion but also her ministry. Since the inception of Gospel Jubilee, Regina has been a part of the Gospel Jubilee Choir.

Antonia Brown was unquestionably a worshiper and gifted singer and actress. She taught music, voice training and dance. In her early youth, Toni began singing and directing at Wilborn Temple First Church of God in Christ (Albany). She shared God's gift on television, radio, concert halls, in the park and abroad, the Bahamas and Japan. She helped facilitate gospel music workshops for Rucker Gospel Ministries in Japan, teaching and directing

choirs, performing solos, and leading praise and worship dance. She was a faithful member of the Gospel Jubilee Choir, and also an active member of the theater community, with show stopping performances all around the Capital Region. The Troy Record newspaper once wrote of Toni's performance at Park Playhouse, "The entire cast is good but the show's special moment comes when Antonia Brown as Motor Mouth Mabel rocks the amphitheater with a gospel version of "I Know Where I've Been" It's a number to remember."

Gospel Jubilee is honored to celebrate these two women and give them the applause they so well deserved.

RRX: It's hard not to be a fan of gospel music, it's just so beautiful. Despite people's backgrounds or views, gospel music can bring joy to the hearts of people from many various cultures. Are there any times in the past that you've witnessed the music bringing people of different faiths or denominations together?

SH: The centerpiece of the celebration is the audience and the spirit-raising presence of all walks of life in that theater. Oh yes; I have witnessed people from all faiths and cultures at our Gospel Jubilee concerts. Seeing people come together is beautiful.

RRX: Anything else that you would like to add to the conversation to entice folks to come out on Saturday April 23rd?

SH: I want people to not miss this gospel musical event; Gospel Jubilee has been recognized as a leading concert for all. In honoring Regina Parsons and Antonia Brown of the Capital Region, we also give thanks for not only their legacy; we give thanks for God's love. Both these women were born to love, and they left us here; to love each other. They did the work, now what are we going to do to move that love forward?

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Frontman for the Hoodoo Gurus Dave Faulkner talks about the darker side of content and his new offering.

Chariot of the Gods

BY DICK BEACH

Dave Faulkner. Photo provided.

Dave Faulkner is the leader of the Hoodoo Gurus. A fascinating character, a storyteller – sometimes of difficult topics – and just a great guy.

RRX: First, obviously, thank you for taking the time out. Cary (Dave's publicist) is a complete mensch. He's great. We love him. So, thank you for that.

DF: My pleasure.

RRX: We try to bring these things to where we are. The first question is that – I'm gonna test your memory.

DF: Ooh. Now we're in trouble.

RRX: Around about the mid '90s, you were in the United States, and you

played a place called Positively Fourth Street in Troy, New York, with the Fleshtones. Do you recall that?

DF: Oh, yes. Yes. Well, the Fleshtones are all friends of mine. Troy is actually the hometown of Bill Milhizer, their drummer.

RRX: Yeah, which is why we know them so well.

DF: Right.

RRX: I guess I want to start with where you've talked about your dad having been on the Canberra in World War II.

DF: Yeah, the Canberra. Yes, it was terrible a thing for him. You're 23 years old and the ship was lost and lost about

a fifth of its company and the crew, including his best friend. So yeah, that profoundly affected him all his life. We didn't really know much about it as far as the effect it had on him 'cause he never spoke of it. But it became very obvious towards the end of his life. He got a disability pension because of the different injuries that were caused by that. We started to hear a little bit more about specific things.

Yeah, very important event, obviously. He was very grateful 'cause we actually ended up playing on the next Canberra. They had a new vessel called the Canberra in the Australian Navy. That came to the end of its service life

and they were going to scrap it.

They used one of our songs, "A Thousand Miles Away," as their ship's anthem, in a sense. Whenever they'd leave port, the families would be waving them goodbye for several months or whatever, they'd play that song over the loudspeakers on the ship.

When the ship was being decommissioned, there was just us. There were no other dignitaries there, no mayors or ministers of defense or anything else like that. It was just the ship's crew, the Hoodoo Gurus and my dad. It was quite unique.

RRX: Am I correct that, originally, you were considered a punk band?

DF: No, I was in a punk group before the Hoodoo Gurus, back in 1977-78. But we were inspired by punk, and I still feel that was important, a very important moment for me in my development, the punk era. It basically gave me the crucible that melted everything together and made it into a new alloy for me. All the different elements in music, which I hadn't quite put together in my mind. It made me see it all in a very super sharp perspective.

Obviously, after that, I realized it was a bit of a narrow view and I wanted to expand my tastes and my horizons, and not just see it through this rigid punk viewpoint.

RRX: My wife, who grew up on Long Island and lived in Queens for 20 years, saw the Ramones more than anyone I know.

DF: Wow. They're still one of my favorite bands of all time.

RRX: They were just ridiculously great.

DF: Yeah. But the Dictators are from Queens as well.

RRX: Oh yes, they are.

DF: Ramones, the Dictators. People don't talk about that enough.

RRX: If you were to make a comment about the Dictators, what would be the nature of what you would say?

DF: Well firstly, they were masters of the juvenile, smart-aleck kind of songwriting. Andy Shernoff is one of the great songwriters. He's still doing great work. They've got a new album out not that long ago. Andy's still top of his game.

Unfortunately to say, they're not one of the bands that gets all the kudos 'cause they were a bit before punk. They were never really part of that scene. But yeah, they were pivotal really. The Cramps, another band –

RRX: Oh, the Cramps. Lord.

DF: Two famous Ramones covers were done firstly by the Dictators, "California Sun" and "Surfin' Bird" by the

Cramps. These are bands that people don't realize how much they influenced bands that... The Ramones are one of my favorite bands of all time.

They brought it to the forefront of what matters in music. No one can underestimate how good the Ramones were or how important they were. I certainly don't. But they got it from somewhere and some of those places were the Dictators and the Cramps.

RRX: The Ramones did more with three chords than anybody on the planet.

DF: Oh, yeah. Dee Dee Ramone, what a brilliant songwriter. Joey, yeah. I mean, we could go on and on. There's no end to my love of Ramones.

Yeah, we still value our Ramones connections and still is working out well for us, as well. We take a lot from them.

RRX: So, the new album, "Chariot of the Gods". You have done this during the pandemic. Is it about this two-and-

a-half-year mess?

DF: No.

RRX: Or is it just man, we're gonna do a record?

DF: Well, we were planning to do it anyway, so that's the thing. We've been sitting on our hands for too long. There's a whole lot of reasons for that, which I can't be bothered going into now.

But we didn't expect, A, to not play at all in 2020, so that was a bit of a shock. Then, on top of that, for that to drag on through 2021 as well. It's been an incredibly difficult time as you don't need me to tell you. Everyone's been going through the same thing.

So, I can't tell if there's any influence of the pandemic. But certainly, as a songwriter, I didn't think of it when I was writing.

RRX: Well, from my perspective, because the record coming out on the

Continued on Page 28...



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Continued from Page 27.

11th, that means I can buy it on the 11th.

I listen to your music and there is stuff there that hits me hard. It really does. I am fascinated about how you can write things that hit someone in the face that hard.

DF: The song I mentioned, “Answered Prayers” was one that hit me in the face pretty hard. It’s written about an abusive relationship, emotionally abusive. It’s not physically abusive – at least it could be, but it doesn’t specify that. There certainly is emotional abuse on display in the lyrics.

I wrote in the perspective of the actual abuser, which was a very dark place to be as a writer. Those words just poured out of me one morning.

I was kind of shocked by the lyrics because they were very simple, but they lay out quite an insidious mind game that this person is playing. It’s really ugly and stark. It’s got a whole lot of content in there that’s got a lot of weight. It isn’t kid stuff, you know?

RRX: How do you, as a writer, get beyond the popular stuff that is gonna make people happy and that which is going to make you as a writer happy?

DF: Well, you don’t have to think like... I mean, I deliberately don’t think at all about these sort of questions when I’m writing a song.

RRX: I’m sorry. “I don’t think at all.” Brilliant.

DF: No, no. You don’t because you try to switch off the critic because you’re an artist. You’re literally playing with elements. A bit like a painter, doing shapes and colors or whatever. They may not be painting a particular specific scene, but they’re just experimenting with textures and patterns that excite them. Then, lo and behold, it reveals something to them that triggers something else that they develop, and it becomes something.

But as far as generally building the song in the first place and creating the

actual thing, it’s really you almost discover the song. You don’t manufacture it.

RRX: This is how I end interviews because we all have what I would say is a comment to the world. We have a statement, something that we would like people to think about.

DF: Okay. I’m not sure I could wrap it up in 30 seconds, but...

RB: No, no. My point being that I like to end an interview with the person I’m talking with gets to say whatever they would like about the world, about themselves, about how we ought think about each other.

DF: Well, I’ve got a very small one. It’s not gonna be a grand solution to all that ails us or the planet. But I am an older person. We’ve been going at it a long time and I’ve been on the planet for a while. There’s one thing that I did experience. We worked very hard for a very long time, the Hoodoo Gurus early on. I started the band when I was 23 years old and I’m 64 now.

From the age of 50, suddenly you start to need reading glasses and things like that.

So, all I want to say is, don’t be afraid of old age. Obviously, try to look after your health as much as possible so that physical vehicle you’re in doesn’t let you down and break down too often. But as far as how you feel as a person, it gets better and better and better. That’s the part I’m most excited by because it’s been great being 40, being 50, and now 60.

Unfortunately, I do have more creaks and a little bit more arthritis in my feet, or something else going on, as you say. But emotionally and mentally – well luckily, I’ve still got my wits about me. So relatively speaking, I can’t tell. But you feel better. So, don’t be afraid of old age. Welcome it because it’s great.

RRX: Excellent – thank you. Thus, endeth the interview.



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Here's a fun fact in February of 2018 Dropkick Murphys christened The Albany Capital Center, being the first act to perform at the newly built facility. Ever since the place has opened I have never stepped foot inside, until March 14th 2022.

It was a pleasant surprise that we got to hear the acoustic stylings of Jesse Ahern, for whom at least I didn't realize he would be opening the show. Jesse is a Boston based solo musician who was definitely the perfect guy to get the crowd ready for what was next to come.

The Rumjacks took the stage next

and I have been playing these guys quite a bit on my radio show, so I was familiar with quite a few songs and I helped sing along, they just didn't know it. My bass player Will turned me onto The Rumjacks as it has quickly become one of his favorite bands. Will lives in Montana now but actually bought tickets for this Albany show, he just couldn't fly out because flights were too costly, so he was hating on me the whole night as I forwarded him photos of the great time I was having. I didn't meet the guys but I made sure to tell my bandmate that I did and that we hung out for hours after the show, I

guess he'll find out the truth after reading this.

Up next were The Bombpops in which I have been familiar with for years because I follow Fat Wreck Chords in a big way. The band was tight and they were a great diversion between the Irish punk sounds that we all expected from this show. It helped break it up and keep the show interesting.

Oh, then came The Dropkick Murphys. For personal reasons Al Barr couldn't make this show but Ken Casey held it down for sure. Ken was front and center the entire night as you can

clearly see from the photos. Last time I saw the Murphys Kenny was wielding his bass and Al was in the spotlight. All in all, this was a great show but that's what you would expect from these professionals. It's always great to see these guys play around St. Paddy's Day because it really gets you in the festive spirit.

Thank you for coming to town and please come back again soon!

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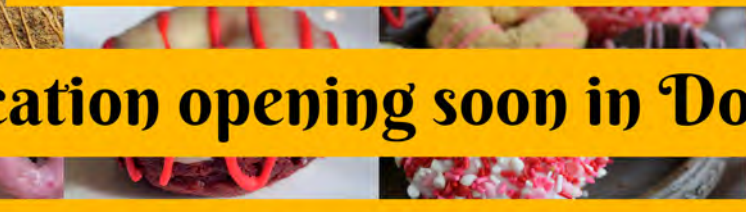
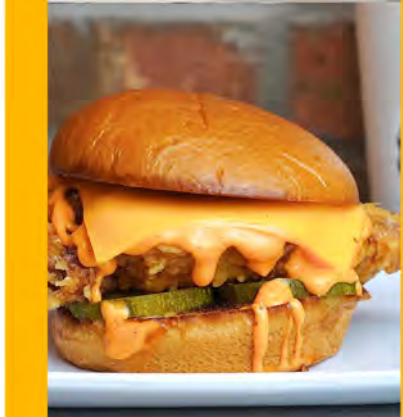
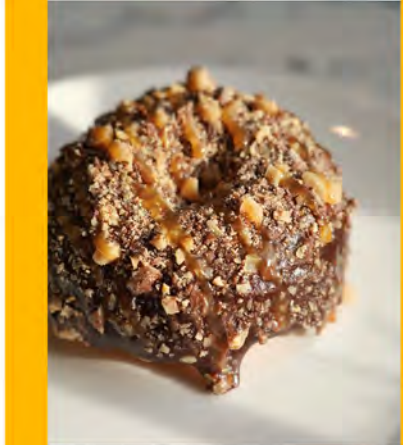
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Out of the Sarcophagus - It's the Mummies!

BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

The Mummies.
Photo Provided.

You just blew your last five bucks on a Filet-O-Fish sandwich and a box of Screaming Yellow Zonkers but you're a "vinyl junkie geek" and you have to have that 45 which just hit the secondary market. So, what are you gonna do? You find the nearest ATM because it's another dateless Friday night and you have time on your hands as usual. What luck! You've got enough cash now to run back to the all-night record shop and get that limited press copy of "Only Sold at The Shows" single by The Mummies. Better hurry though, their other local fan is sure to be scrambling for that rare slab of wax.

This is your life now. You are under the spell of a group whose work ethic, flies in the face of what the "music biz" deems a clear cut, tried and true formula. The Mummies record with the crudest methods available. They insult and tease their audience relentlessly. They engage each other on stage. They use obscene language to describe modern formats. Their records are pressed

up in such small quantities, that if you don't catch them on release date, you're going to blow the grocery money on one when you find it.

Take this as a warning, if you're lucky enough to get one of their records, you'll think there's something wrong with your turntable or perhaps your speakers. What you hear is the way it's supposed to sound. The Mummies are just so freaking great, you don't need that sterling production value. It would in fact be something of a hindrance.

One of their true charms is they don't take the world, themselves, or the music industry very seriously. How refreshing it is to find a bunch of guys with great talent who make fun of what people consider art now. Rock n roll was meant to entertain the working masses by sucking you into the beat! And they've been going at it off and on over 30 years.

I myself became one of their victims. My fault was coming late to the

party. By chance I heard "(You Must Fight to Live) On the Planet of the Apes" on a national radio program, which shall remain nameless at this time. It was already over 10 years old by the time I discovered them, but that one song got me hooked.

The Mummies are primarily a West Coast group, so whenever I find one of their recordings, it's usually being sold by someone out in California, Oregon or Washington. You probably don't want to spend the time or the money, running down their recordings, even though it's worth it, at least in my opinion.

They're all over YouTube of course. Check out the stage antics, people. You'll fall on the floor! The keyboard player flings and spins his Farfisa combo organ like a kindergarten Keith Emerson. They all dress like mummies and they get extra points for being able to perform so well with all those loose bandages flying around.

The Mummies play down and dirty

original "budget rock" as they call it, as well as surf and cover tunes. Check out their version of The Beatles "I'm Down." Another one I suggest is "My Love Is Stronger Than Dirt." That tune being loosely based on an Ajax commercial from the sixties. The hilarious "Planet of the Apes" is brilliant, in my opinion.

Apparently, there is a jazz incarnation of The Mummies with extra members. I don't know enough about that version of the band yet. Perhaps we'll talk about them in the future. I'm having too much fun listening to them this way. They are loud, obnoxious and low-fi and that's just the way I like it. It really is hard to find an honest group of rockers who stick to unpopular principals these days, but The Mummies fit the bill and they don't care what you think.

Now get out and hit the bins...



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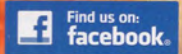
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BY PEGGY LEGEE

Peggy Legee. Photo provided.

Comedy and Music with Peggy

The sound of laughter, singing and instruments is more than music to my ears. Music and comedy are much alike. They are both auditory and visual mediums. They require timing, rhythm, intros and can be improvisational. They can be like quick jab or be a story that is told.

Many songs have comedic lyrics, the novelty songs and many Frank Zappa songs come to mind like “Broken Hearts Are For A**h***s” and “Don’t Eat the Yellow Snow”. Weird Al Yankovic took parody to a new level with insanely lyrical versions of famous songs. My love of music goes back to my childhood 45 records, they were purchased everywhere and were

inexpensive. My favorite bands were Alice Cooper, T-Rex and Led Zeppelin. In a Catholic elementary school, I was disciplined for bringing a Led Zeppelin 45 record and having it played in a music class. Yes, the song “Black Dog” was blasted in front of my third grade class. Sister Ellen did not know who Led Zeppelin was before that, but boy did she learn fast! I had to write “I will not bring the DEVIL’S MUSIC to MUSIC CLASS” on the blackboard over and over until my hand almost fell off! I couldn’t help myself I did anything for a laugh in school. The punishment usually left a lasting imprint in my mind as well as my face!

Other comedic influences were the

newspaper funnies, comic books and cartoons with great voiceover characters. “Rocky and Bullwinkle”, “Tennessee Tuxedo” and “Underdog” were amongst my favorites. TV sitcoms and variety shows, “Carol Burnet”, “Dean Martin and Laugh In”, in the early 70’s, “Saturday Night Live” with John Belushi, Bill Murray, Chevy Chase, Gilda Radner and “SCTV” (John Candy) later in that era. Movies with Cheech and Chong (“Up In Smoke”), movies with comedians from variety shows and standup, “Caddyshack”, “The Blues Brothers,” “Easy Money” and “Back To School” come to mind. The comedians of that era were the best, Don Rickles, Phyllis Diller, George Carlin, Richard Pryor, Rodney Dangerfield, Robin Williams, Lily Tomlin and Joan Rivers were all just amazing performers.

When cable tv became the craze, the classics from Buster Keaton’s silent films, The screwball Marx Brothers, “The Three Stooges”, “Our Gang”, “Abbott And Costello,” “I Love Lucy” and Red Skeleton reruns. BBC sent over “Monty Python ‘s Flying Circus” and “The Benny Hill Show.” These were a big part of the comedic side of my creative personality disorder!

When I transitioned from Paul to Peggy in 2012, I felt free to express myself. I started writing poetry and went to open mics and spoken word events everywhere in the Capital District. I wrote two comic books, “Dumpster Kat” and “Shopping Kart Man” illustrated by local comic icon Raymond Lowell. Front parlor storytelling soon followed with me reading my comics and other stories on stage.

At the same time, I started going to every live music event in Troy. The Hangar on the Hudson and Rockin’ on the River were the places to see Peggy with her flashy and sexy attire, in a fashion statement that was once described as Cindy Lauper Meets Peggy Bundy, she would dance herself into a frenzy to all of the great local bands

and got to know most of the people involved in the Troy music scene. My fanciful footwork and sexy gams got me the nickname Peggy Leggy or Peggy Le Gee which sticks to this day.

Singing karaoke became my next fun activity and the Capital District had many venues to do this as its popularity exploded. Community center events were the place to experiment as my spoken word and poetry seemed to take on a comedic tone, rather than the serious subdued style I was known for. My poems and comics were published in magazines with articles and photo shoots, as well as in a poetry chapbook. I went to music open mic events and began to sing live with musicians and even wrote my first song “Shopping Kart Man” with my talented friend Nikki Kaos, which became a staple of any open mic we were at.

In June 2021 it all came into fruition when I asked Art Fredette to be on RadioRadioX. The Peggy of Troy Show soon followed every Thursday from six to seven p.m. The show features a diverse playlist and is full of a somewhat dramatic yet always comedic quick-witted dialogue that can be verbose without being wordy. I have been under the tutelage of local legend and radio journeyman, Rob Smittix since the beginning of this odyssey.

I also have hosted “Honky Tonk Bingo with DJ Molly Parton” in downtown Troy at the Bradley Tavern and No Fun. It has been a great time with a karaoke contest at the end of each show for the bingo game winners. I am pursuing more comedic writing, possibly standup and a show. I love voiceover acting possibly cartoon and character accented speech. Is this a nonstop flow of thermoplastic creativity instead of lava? Maybe “Pegasus Vesuvius” suits me as a moniker better than Peggy of Troy? It’s not too late you know you can always go to “The Peggy Leggy Show!”

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Observations and Ramblings From a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

This is definitely an observation, I hope it's not rambling, but for sure I am cranky, also angry and very sad. When I first started writing this article, Art Fredette told me, "No politics." I plan to stand firm to that, and as much as I can I will not be finger pointing or flag waiving. I will speak with pride, however, in discussing Ukraine.

As I am writing this (March 12th), the invasion of Russia into Ukraine continues. By the time this is published, it may be ongoing, or a resolution, in one form or another, will be achieved. For the purpose of this article, whatever happens when it's published doesn't matter in what I want to express.

For those who have been following me, I am known as Jeff Spaulding. Some of you get that that is a "pen name," my tribute to the great theater and film character Captain Jeffrey T. Spaulding, played by my idol Groucho Marx in "Animal Crackers." In partial reality, I am publicly known as Mike Patrick, a broadcaster of 45 years and growing. In true reality, I was born Michael P. Marchinuke, the son of an Irish mother, and to be specific for this issue, the son of a Ukrainian father.

The Irish part of me got Marie's sense of humor, boundless energy, a very strong work ethic, and a love of beer (insert stereotype joke here). The Ukrainian part of me, which is less than the Irish side, got Sam's hair trigger temper and anger issues. It's those traits that has led to my frustration to what has been happening to the land my paternal grandparents came from.

I don't know about you, but as I get older, I get very reflective of my past and my family history. I am at the age where I want to know as much of how I came to be and what made me who I am, based on my ancestors. I also have three grandsons, and while for the moment they could care less about Popsie's family, one day they will realize the need to know.

As far as learning about my past, I have always wanted to visit Ireland, to see where my maternal grandparents came from. With the money I make, however, I will just have to settle for a pint or ten of Guinness Stout. As for Ukraine (or "THE Ukraine" as they used to call it), I also wished to visit to see how my old man was influenced. Those dreams initially were stopped by a little thing called Chernobyl in 1986. Whatever freaks in the line of Marchinukes there still were then probably mutated and freaked out even more. Now, with all that is going on in the land of my paternal grandparent's birth, the odds are next to none I ever will have a chance to go.

Let me pull back the curtain a little more about me. I'm betting you have never met anyone with the last name of Marchinuke. I will go further in saying the only Marchinuke you have ever heard of is me. Well, I am quite comfortable in saying within the next say 30 years, that will be true.

To my knowledge, I am the very last male Marchinuke in the family. The last female Marchinuke was my stepsister Judy, who died in 2006. So that is yet

another reason the situation in Ukraine bothers me so much. Assuming none of "us" are living over there anymore, and since my searches in the United States have not found a long lost relative, after I am gone, the entire family is wiped out. Not to make light of it, but I call that "Marchicide."

It's funny, for years I have always favored my mother's side of the family. As it happened a couple of years back, I was contacted by Judy's son Scott, who was, by

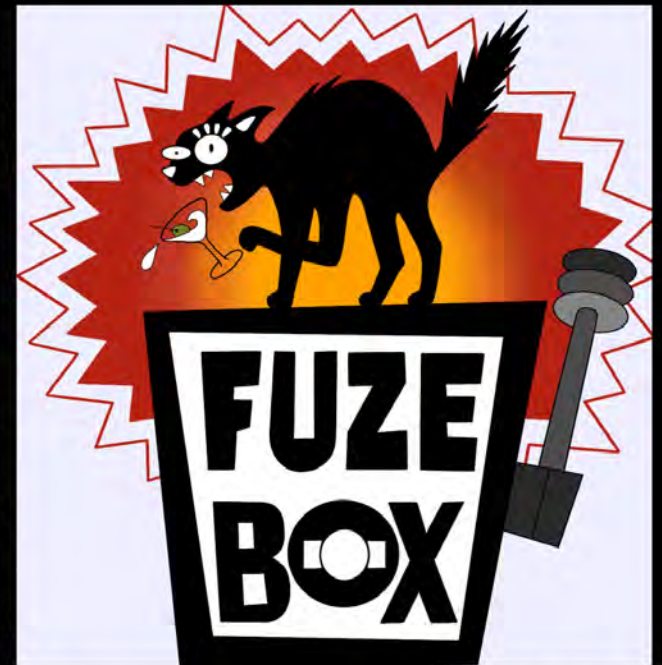
coincidence, researching in part the Marchinuke family. He came upon me, reached out and we reconnected, as I was there the day he was born. Now, and nothing against my wife, my kids or my grandkids, I finally, yes finally, have a real family, my family. The Marchinuke family. And that's why the situation in Ukraine angers me, saddens me, enrages me. It's like none of us ever existed.

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