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May 2022
Vol. 4, Issue 5

UPSTATE UNDERGROUND

"Hey Greasy" puts out a collection of the best local bands from the 60s and 70s.

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JOE DALEY

One drummer talks to another drummer about Super 400 and 'the life.'

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NEQ

An instrumental supergroup with a new album that tests the limit of genre.

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Upstate Underground

Hey Greasy Brings Local Fuzz Back From The Grave!

BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

Photo by Hey Greasy.

I felt deprived at a young age. Not for what I needed but for what I “really” needed. In the Spring of 1966, it was a mere two years after the “Mop Tops” landed and slightly over a year before the putrid summer of smelly hippies. I’d learned to play a bit of an upright piano we had at my school and started taking trumpet lessons, but my true musical awakening was fast approaching.

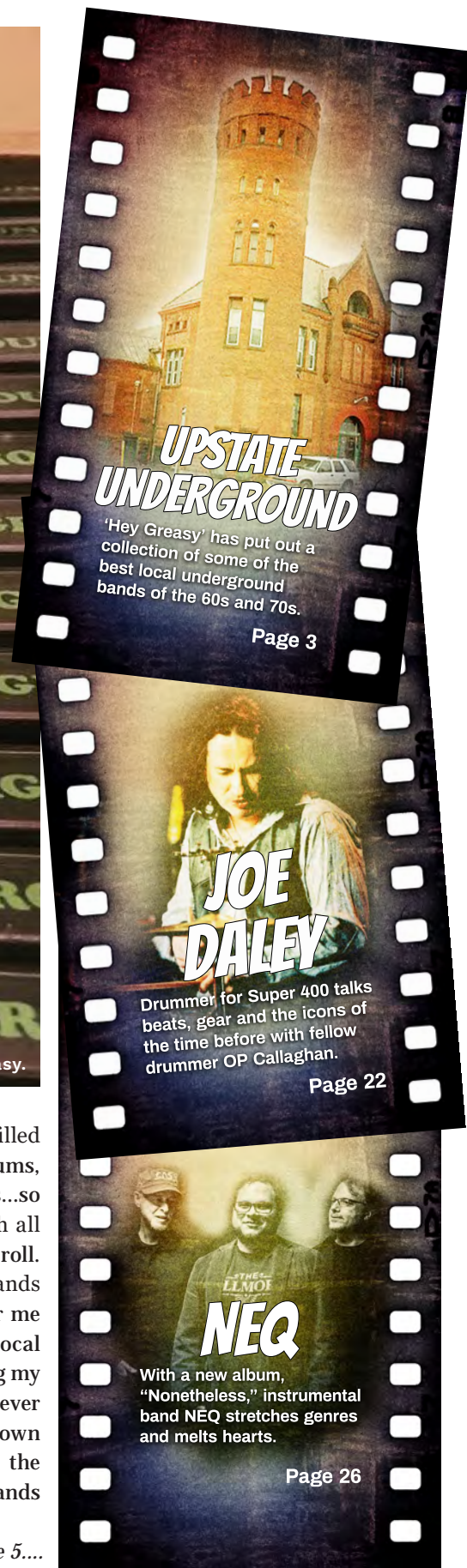
When I looked out my bedroom window, I could see where I wanted to be. The place was The Cohoes Armory, and the event was the twice yearly

“Battle of the Bands.” The keys to the kingdom were not yet in my hands due to my age. My nine-year-old eyes and ears wanted to experience the magical noise that would soon be wafting from those windows.

As fate would have it, our next-door neighbor had some clout to get some friends and myself in this year. I was smart enough to know though, that my idiotic friends would sooner or later pull some stunt that would get us thrown out, so I made the decision to put as much distance between myself and them once we got in. It was a real

adventure. The huge room was filled with a massive number of drums, amps, mics, guitars and organs...so started my lifelong love affair with all the “gear” needed to play rock n roll. There would be 12 different bands playing that night. It was hard for me to believe there was that many local groups who were active and playing my little town. It would turn out however that every city and town had their own little scene. Everywhere across the country thousands and thousands

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UPSTATE UNDERGROUND

'Hey Greasy' has put out a collection of some of the best local underground bands of the 60s and 70s.

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JOE DALEY

Drummer for Super 400 talks beats, gear and the icons of the time before with fellow drummer OP Callaghan.

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NEQ

With a new album, “Nonetheless,” instrumental band NEQ stretches genres and melts hearts.

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were making this music.

Small studios and independent record labels sprung up everywhere, to capture the moment, for better or worse, this movement was going to be documented for future generations of rock n roll mutants and freaks like myself, thank God!!!!

Starting with Lenny Kayes' "Nuggets" compilation in 1972, which featured many of the well-known so called "one hit wonders" of the first garage era, countless other albums have popped up over the years. All these records document the even lesser-known bands and the rare recordings they produced mainly locally during the same era.

Imagine my surprise when I recently stumbled upon a release that explores the local 60's bands of Albany, Troy and other upstate communities. Enter "Upstate Underground Vol. 1" from "Hey Greasy". The Volume 1 issue

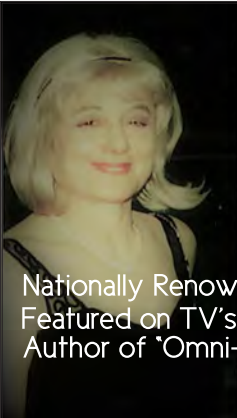
apparently indicating a Volume 2 is in the works. Let's hope so. It's a cassette only release but included in the accompanying "zine", yes zine, is a QR to scan for downloading all 11 tunes included in this super cool package. Songs exploring lost love, teen angst, long hair and praise for chemical amusement from the Sandoz Laboratories.

All these songs were recorded between 1964 and 1968 by groups from Albany, Troy, Schenectady, Kingston, Hudson and elsewhere, with names like, The Kynds, The Mark IV, The Heathens and The Stingrays. All forgotten losers who either got married, got drafted or ended up penniless and insane, never to be heard from again. Get this gem with its green, looks like it was Xeroxed zine, at your fave local indie record store. Dust off your old cassette deck and experience the lo-fi vibes 'cause baby, cassette is the new vinyl!!

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Nicole Night

A Playboy model that makes hearts skip a beat, and a DJ that making beats just skip.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Photo provided.

Allure. A word within it the root *lure*. Some people have allure, and others walk around all day waiting to get hooked. When a woman has allure, she might find herself in a magazine (not us; we're a paper) and be enshrined to catch and release all who

turn the pages. But she isn't made of paper and high gloss; she's real and has to strike out in the world. What does she do?

Nicole Night found her way into Playboy, and beyond that, into a successful national career as a DJ, and

beyond that, to a guest in our very own little corner of the universe.

RRX: You have two feathers in your cap that you are both a successful DJ and you've been in Playboy Magazine. And of course, there's the whole allure of that, so I'm sure it's frequently

brought up. Were you a DJ when you posed for Playboy, or is that something you started after? And how did you get started on that path, was it kind of kismet, or were you working toward it?

NN: That's a great story. I was a quite young single mother, and

because of that, I was always looking to maximize my time doing whatever I was doing. I had become a stylist and esthetician and worked at a beautiful resort here in San Diego right out the gate.

I was drawn to go out, because I was single, and found myself amidst a group of people who ran the night life locally. While I was on a dance team as a teen in high school, my rough family drama of my youth never allowed me to focus on embracing that opportunity to the max.

I found myself really wanting to go-go dance and the opportunity presented itself. That, along with a multitude of other entertainment events from hosting on the red carpet, and local online podcasts etc., I remember telling my colleagues of our little local go-go team that I would pose for Playboy one day, and they laughed. It wasn't six months later that I got a couple of calls. One call, there was a woman whom I was mistaken for time and again that called to ask if I would pose with her, and then a headhunter for international had called as well. I took both assignments around the time when the markets crashed, as my beauty business endeavors were also suffering and was able to take care of myself and my beautiful daughter because of posing.

I then go-go danced as I toured around the world. I grew tired of that and found myself getting frustrated with listening to music - wanting to time the songs differently, so I set my sights on aspiring to DJ because I didn't want to compete with the newer younger crop of beautiful go-go's on the rise. And that's when the DJ touring began happening.

RRX: You play in Vegas. When you play there, are you playing the casinos, or are you more underground, maybe playing parties or raves? Is there a big market for DJs in Vegas, as in a bigger market for y'all than for, say, a band? And since you play all over the country,

maybe the world, are there any "rules of thumb" for playing Vegas?

NN: What happens in Vegas STAYS in Vegas! I kid! Vegas USED to have this dullness around it all, but now, say in the last five to ten years, playing in Vegas means you've made it. I've had a very touch-and-go relationship in the last few years with touring, but I've played a few times at some high level places, and all of my friends and colleagues have had residencies at the hot clubs. Playing in Vegas, big and small, is notable. And there are many 'underground' and 'backyard mansion pool parties' with the who's-who as well. It's easier to bring a DJ than a whole band, but I've played at all types gigs several times in conjunction with other acts as well.

I think the number one rule of traveling/touring and DJing is you don't party when you're working. So many people think you're partying, and that's not the case. I don't know about you, but I would look like hell if I drank all the time and tried to work while doing it. Plus, they're hiring me to look beautiful and work, and health is wealth. When the gigs are done, it's okay to have a couple, but I learned (the hard way once or twice) when you're there for business, you're not partying - you're there to help the party have fun... and that's usually best done with a sober mind.

RRX: Back to Playboy. When we think of Playboy, we think of the days of Hugh Hefner, and bunnies, and the mansion, and we come to something that is more than the nudity, and the provocative shoots; we have this sanctuary where the cares of the world can't get past the doormen. What is it like for you, on the inside of that sanctuary?

NN: Oh man: I was there for many parties! Attending, booked, modeling, DJing. So much fun - and such debauchery! But I think that whatever you're looking for, you will find it. I tried to stay pretty green in those

environments when the opportunities presented themselves. I looked at what I did as a business much of the time, so I really treaded lightly around certain situations of attendees and their prying questions/insinuations and propositions, if you may (trying to really present properly here because it was opportunistic for sexual fantasies if you wanted those situations, I did not). But it was definitely one of the craziest eras and experiences being there, at the mansion, at the parties - with all the different types of girls from Playboy. Like I said, you get what you're looking for, but my experience was nothing short of honestly glamorous... while I did have friends who had rougher experiences.

RRX: You are a DJ, thinking we established that. But you are also a woman DJ, which is a role that is underrepresented by women. I don't want to ask if you've dealt with harassment by some of the male DJs, because I don't

like asking stupid questions. But I am interested to know how your experience as a pioneer has been.

NN: "Can you actually DJ."

"You only we're booked because your tits are out."

"Can I take you out on a date?"

"She must have slept with him to get the gigs."

Those are ALL real questions and judgements that come from being a woman DJ. I think I came at the forefront of an influx and really experienced a harshness that some women don't experience as much these days. Oh, and I dated a DJ who literally tried to make sure I never got booked after we broke up as well. He helped me only to the point of making sure he shined brighter. That was tough. I learned a lot from that experience - which also set me up to see the man, who would end up being my husband, as a serious angel - which he is!



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The Last Trip

BY VEGAS NACY

Photo provided.

I have been known to do some crazy things in my time, which has led so many people to say “I always thought you did drugs!” The truth is I never got into drugs (I did smoke weed in my teens but gave that up after a few years). Now, between the ages of 16-17 I did use LSD quite frequently and there were weeks that I would do it every day. Knowing now how my body reacts to medicines etc. It’s crazy to me when I look back and think about taking something that I had no idea how it was made and would last for hours and hours but I’m about to tell you the story of the last time I took it!

I had moved from Schuylerville to Saratoga Springs, NY years before this, but I had close friends still in Schuylerville so I would go back every so often and stay the weekend. This particular

weekend was right in between Christmas and New Year’s and there were two parties going on. My two friends Mike and Bob were with me and there was a snowstorm. We had taken a tab each and went to the first party. It was lame and there were no girls there, and as teens that’s pretty much everything! It was snowing hard and we decided to walk to the next party, the quiet of the snow and the angle that it came down was magic to our eyes as each snowflake did its own unique dance onto its surface in which it died on.

Suddenly as we each walked speechless through this voyeuristic paradise, Bob said “Hey I left my jacket at the party.” Mike and I joked that we would meet him at the other party as we kept walking. As Bob stood there and yelled for us to wait up as he was tripping

pretty hard, out of nowhere (which was actually around the next block), came a red Mustang. The sound of that car’s metal and fiberglass as it smashed Bob’s bones and threw him in the air was something I will never forget. He landed on the pavement with a sickening thud as the car fishtailed and sped off and out of sight. Now, for those that don’t know, Schuylerville literally only has two stop lights in the whole town and no town police with volunteer rescue.

Suddenly it was eerily quiet as Mike and I ran to Bob. He wasn’t breathing at first, bones and blood in every direction. We banged on doors for help in the middle of this intense acid trip, snow starting to cover Bob who let out this breath that was garbled and desperate. In probably 15 minutes (which

felt like 15 hours) EMS and police arrived. I sat in the back of a state police cruiser covered in blood, watching my friend get scooped into an ambulance thinking I’m seeing his last day on earth. As I have to tell the police officer exactly what happened, my trip was so hard that I went into an extreme panic attack. I told myself right then and there that there was nothing acid could show me that was more intense than what I had just witnessed.

Three positives came out of this. One) the car was found and the man was charged, two) Bob lived and won a pretty big settlement and three) that was indeed the last time I messed with drugs.

Thanks for listening!

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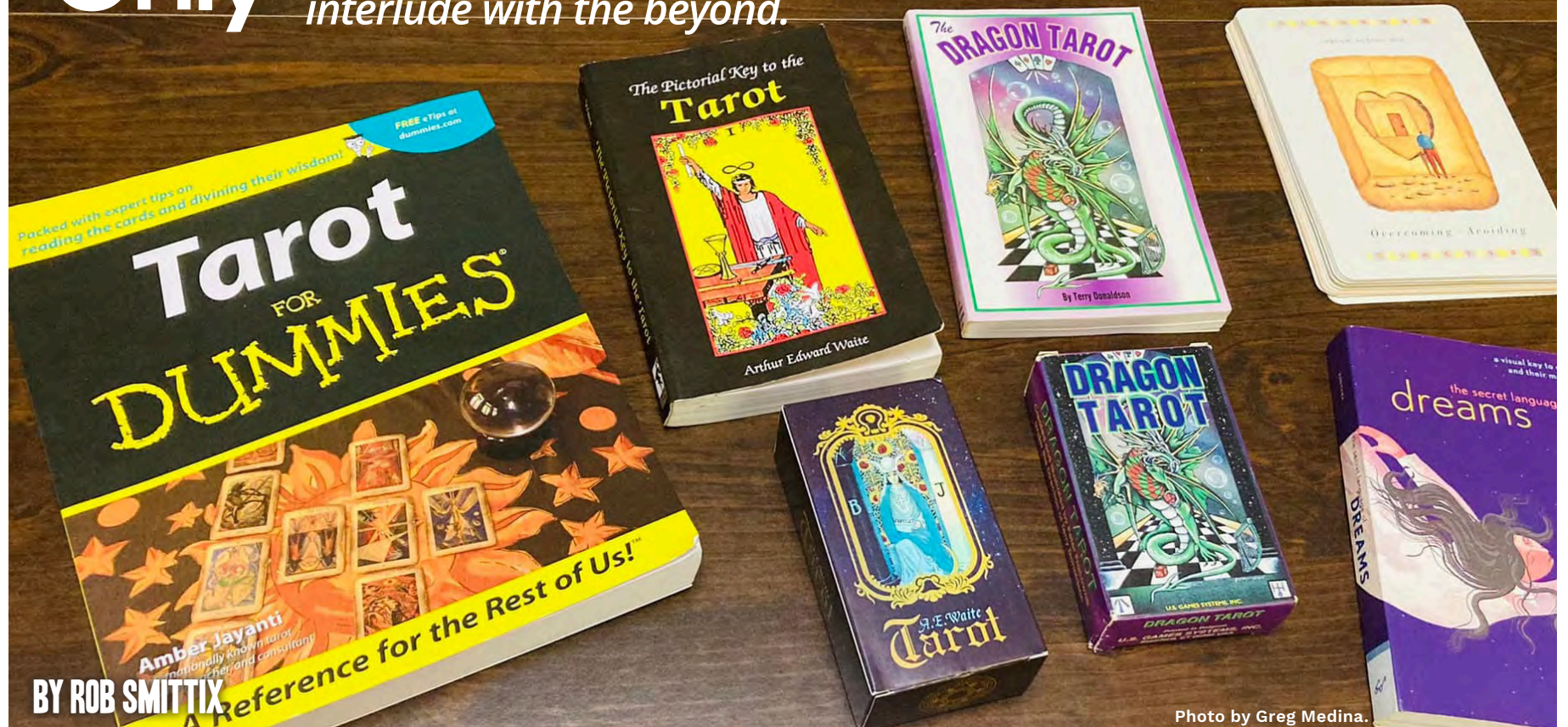


Photo by Greg Medina.

If you've ever had the experience to sit down with a psychic and you've gotten a reading then you may remember that many clairvoyants offer a disclaimer prior to fortune telling stating "for entertainment purposes only." This will tend to ease the minds of the skeptical as well as those who may take the information given to heart.

There is a big "however" because some people do truly possess the gift. I'll explain.

Years ago, my mom would go to see a psychic regularly. Now this particular psychic did not advertise and did not have a store front. I am keeping her identity private because she never intended to make her supernatural gift a

business. Here's what happened.

My younger brother had heart problems ever since his birth and we were well aware of this. My mom was visiting with her psychic friend and she got a reading in which the psychic insisted my little brother had an issue with the circulation of blood in his leg. The doctors have never mentioned this and my mom thought it was most likely not accurate but decided to have the doctors look into this claim anyway. Low and behold the psychic was correct.

Another personal experience was the first time that I ever went to see a psychic for myself. Of course, my mom brought me. I did not see the same psychic that she went to regularly. I went

to a Howard Johnson's hotel for my first reading. The entire time I thought to myself, "how good can a Howard Johnson's psychic be?" Well...

I was 18 years old at the time and I just started my internship at 103.5FM/103.9FM WQBK/WQBJ The Edge, as I was fresh out of broadcast school. The psychic asked to hold something of mine so she could read the energy. I reached into my pocket and I gave her my keys. She held my keys and from there she mentioned names of people that were in my life, I specifically remember that she told me to stay away from wooded areas with my cousin Kevin. I don't know what that meant because I heeded the

warning. The second thing I remember her saying was "I don't know what this means but you will be working with Mason and Sheehan." I thought, wow that was pretty cool that she recognized I was getting into radio but I thought she was off with her prediction because I just started my internship with a different company.

It wasn't until a couple years later when Mason and Sheehan jumped ship to Classic Rock 102.3 WXCR that I realized the Howard Johnson's psychic was accurate. I went on to work with Mason and Sheehan for while afterwards. How did she know this?

The third mind-blowing experience I've had was with renowned psychic

Stephen Robinson who operated a psychic institute in the area at the time. It was 1997 or 1998 and I had a talk show on Talk Radio 1300AM WQBK. My co-host (Matt Sanford) and I invited Stephen to be a guest and do readings with our call-in audience "for entertainment purposes only." Well, I couldn't tell how spot on Stephen's readings were until a certain caller that I personally knew called in. My friend, the caller, lost her son in a terrible motor vehicle accident and Stephen could somehow see this over the phone line. Stephen was very professional and asked my friend if she wanted to continue the reading off air and my friend said no, we can continue forward. Now I know for a fact that my friend didn't know Stephen Robinson and that this wasn't a set up for radio. The Howard Johnson's psychic held my keys but how did Stephen Robinson obtain this information over a phone call during my talk show?

These predictions that I have personally experienced proved to me that some psychics are in fact the real deal. How do they do it? How do they know things that should be impossible for them to know? They say we all have these abilities inside ourselves somewhere and we just need to figure out how to turn them on. What do you think?

I have always been interested in the supernatural and the mysterious and I decided to do my own research and studies to see if I too could access the gift. I obtained an entire library of occult books and I started doing my homework. These books were more than second hand, in fact they were all at one time circulating library books that have been in at least as many hands as the stamps on the card suggested.

After reading more than half of the library, I wholeheartedly can say with certainty that a lot of it was pure nonsense. Anyone can write a spell book

suggesting for love that you gather a lock of the desired's hair, bury it beneath a tree for three days and walk backwards around the base of the tree while reciting "just like the roots of the tree, you will grow to love me." To me, I thought that this was not only creepy and stalker-ish but I also figured it was BS.

I wasn't having much luck with any of these books until I stumbled across a dark book that actually had blood splatters on the pages. This book referenced Aleister Crowley often and it had a mirror spell that I just had to try. As instructed, I lit a candle to illuminate my face and I recited the words in the book while staring into my own eyes in the mirror's reflection. After a minute or so my face changed into a much older and uglier face that I didn't recognize. I shook it off and although I was taken back by the experience I went about my day.

Later that same night, I woke up thirsty at exactly 3:00 a.m. and I went into the kitchen to get some water. Suddenly, a female voice screamed in my ear as loud as you could possibly imagine and circled around me like a wind. When I woke up the next morning my father told me that at exactly 3:00 a.m. he woke up choking at the other end of the house. My dad went into the bathroom and gave himself the Heimlich maneuver over the bathtub. To his surprise a bone came flying out of his throat. Let's just say, my dad was not eating chicken wings in bed. We experienced a month's worth of unexplainable and terrifying events afterward and I destroyed all of the books from the library.

I may not have figured out how to tap into my own psychic abilities but in my own exploration of the unknown I did discover that there is much more to life and death than what is on the surface.



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Welcome to the first installment of Capital Region Timekeepers! As a drummer in the 518 (for far longer than I care to remember) I have been so fortunate to see an incredible amount of local percussion flair. Because of all that talent, I decided to showcase some local drumming celebrities, and dig a little deeper.

I first met Joe Daley in the early 90's. I had just graduated from college and returned to the area to work and

play in a band. Joe and I became quick friends, which is easy with Joe, because he is one of the nicest guys I know. His drumming is clean, precise and has been described, by Chris Bussone, as "like a freight train headed right for you". Joe is a drummer's drummer; he plays for the song, just like Ringo, but with more power, like Bonham. He has great chops, near perfect time, stays away from the theatrics, and appears to be at home behind

his kit. So, let's welcome the man behind Super 400, the one and only, Joe Daley!

OC: How old were you when you started drumming, and what inspired you to play?

JD: When I was 11 years old, my brothers were both on their way to becoming great musicians. They talked my folks into buying me a guitar, which is what I asked for. It was a Fender Bronco, all black, pretty cool! I seemed

to be more interested in the drum sticks and practice pad that was laying around. Nothing about a practice pad is exciting. At that point, my brother Frank traded my guitar in for a beat up vintage Yamaha kit. He never asked me what I thought, but he was right on. So, I guess I started playing for real at the age of 12.

OC: Do you play any other instruments?

JD: Somehow, I have been lucky

enough to come up with song ideas messing around on the guitar or piano. I can't really play either, but if you can play the drums, I think that it helps you communicate a song idea.

OC: Do you write lyrics?

JD: I have pitched in over the years.

OC: Tell me about your playing history.

JD: I've been blessed to play with Super 400 for almost 26 years. They are brilliant musicians, and two of my all-time favorite people. I've done a ton of gigs with my brothers Frank and Jack (The Daley Brothers), some separate, some together. I'm really proud of that. They are my original heroes. I've also played for The Chris Busone Band, The Jive Bombers, Blue Machine, Gideon Luke and The People, Dana Fuchs and Soul Serenade. There's a few I'm forgetting, but that's plenty.

OC: Do you have a favorite gig?

JD: Best gig has to be the Azkena Rock Festival in Vitoria Spain. Around

2007. It was a thrilling experience for a band that really needed a thrilling experience at the time. In the years leading up to that gig, we had some challenging times, like every other band. We went there to do a single gig. A year later we toured all of Spain and met rock fans in every town that happened to be at Azkena. Maybe the highlight of it all.

OC: Worst gig?

JD: Probably too many to list, so I think that I'll take the high road on that. Sorry if that's boring, but the older I get, the more I notice how much positivity helps.

OC: You're a Ludwig guy, and we seem to talk about Ludwig a lot. How many kits do you own?

JD: Only five kits. I struggle with thoughts of downsizing, but I have strong emotional ties to all

OC: All Ludwigs?

JD: All.

OC: Tell me about your snare drum.

I've played it, and it's unbeatable.

JD: My prized possession is my 1968 Ludwig Supraphonic 6.5 x 14. A gift from my honey, Patti. It always sounds great, a totally magical drum.

OC: If you could have any other drummer's kit, who's drum set would you want?

JD: We were doing a gig in Cleveland, so we went to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The only thing I cared about was Bonham's green sparkle Ludwig kit. I asked the first employee I could find, to point me in the right direction. His family had just taken it home the week before. I want that kit!

OC: Me too. Favorite drummers, and why?

JD: How many pages do you have? Ringo, because he played the perfect stuff on the best songs ever. Bonham because he is a genius. Bill Bruford, because he played all of that complicated shit, but still swung so hard. Clyde Stubblefield, Ginger Baker, Mick Avory,

Jim Capaldi, Jim Gordon, Steve Jordan, too many to mention.

OC: Know any good drummer jokes?

JD: Two drummers walk past a bar!. It could happen!

OC: Ha! Ok, last question. The Who lost Keith Moon, and have continued with Kenny Jones, and Zach Starkey. Led Zeppelin lost John Bonham and ended the band. So, what do you think Dave Grohl will do now?

JD: I really don't see him hiring a new drummer. My prediction is the band is done, and you will see Dave again in a new project.

OC: Let's hope so. Have you ever owned roto-toms?

JD: I had the trio set. They really sounded shitty.

Catch Joe and Super 400 at Proctor's theater on April 24th for the Eddie Awards, or at any of their upcoming shows. You will not be disappointed.

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NEQ

A new offering shows the world what can happen when musicians don't limit themselves.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Photo provided.

We're very opinionated when it comes to music. That stands to reason, since music is so much a guiding force in our lives. So, we listen to songs, and when we find one we love, we want to hear every song like it. That's how we ended up with genres. And it is not easy for a band that crosses genres to gain traction, because, essentially, they are creating their own, new genre.

NEQ, a.k.a. Nelson Esposito Quintana, is just such a band, and their new album, "Nevertheless" is a fine example of how to cross musical boundaries. The band is comprised of Todd Nelson, Kyle Esposito, Manuel Quintana, Mike Kelly and Carlos Valdez.

RRX: Okay, so not to bury the lede, you have a new album out, "Nevertheless." It's amazing. Tell us a little bit out it, if you will. How long did it take to put together? And what was your concept for it going in, or was it more a

collection that precipitated from some jam sessions?

TN: All told, it took a couple of years, although we weren't working steady on it. We did a couple of tracks in 2018, and then the band kind of took a hiatus for a little while from live gigs, and we can talk about the reasons for that, but then we reconvened when COVID was getting kind of hard and realized we could keep working on this if we did it in such a way that the recording was done remotely. Rather than having such a large ensemble all playing together, we'd have maybe two or three people in the studio at a time. It was all put together in Manuel's studio, although some of the recordings are done here at my house, and Manuel very expertly integrated all of those things.

KE: I think the concept sort of snowballed as it went along, as far as our approach, I mean, it became

evident to us what it was like, what the strength of it was, which it became almost more of a cinematic approach where we weren't really thinking about can the trio play this live? But more, what does the individual song call for? And we just went with it completely. So, in a way, that's different than our previous recordings, where we kept it closer to kind of a trio format. No holding back there as far as overdubs, adding what it seemed to need.

RRX: NEQ is so-called because of Todd Nelson, guitarist Kyle Esposito, and Manuel Quintana. And the great thing about the band is that, by listening, none of you are clearly 'leading.' It seems very much equal contribution to the music. Now you usually think in a band like this, one person put everyone together. Was that true with NEQ?

MQ: I think it was a team effort, but I think Todd led the way, as far as bringing in both full compositions and

sections that were completed to some extent. But it was a big collaboration, I think we all put our stamp on it and what not.

TN: I have to say that you were the person that was the impetus behind the recording. If you didn't have this great studio and the motivation to work on this stuff, because you did a lot of the work on your own. And as far as the composition of the stuff, it kind of just worked out that I'd wrote all of the composition of this particular album. We'd written together in the past, and I'm sure we will in the future. But usually, the way we would do that is through jam sessions, we would get an idea, and take it home and develop it, decide what needs another section. So, we would work that way. But we couldn't really work that way with the COVID thing going on.

RRX: When I hear NEQ, I think fusion. I think Mahavishnu Orchestra,

Weather Report, with a feel of like a “Friday Night in San Francisco” - McLaughlin, Dimeola, DeLucia. A lot of references, but it’s a feel of musical exploration. But fusion is something more than simple experimentation. How does NEQ transcend ‘noodling around?’

KE: I’m a strong proponent for noodling around, but I think this is the least we’ve ever left to chance as far as putting the songs together. Solos are still solos, but even the sections that are their places are composes, not the solos but sections set aside for someone to improvise on, as opposed to just playing the song over and over again, different people soloing over the same form, that kind of thing, that’s what I’m getting at. There’s a lot more through-composed material, a lot more specific events set out to conquer in this batch of tunes, for the most part. That’s my impression.

TN: That’s basically what I was going to say. I think that people want to hear soloing, I think they want to hear that kind of thing, but I also get tired of it. I think what we’re trying to do is tread the line between that jam-band thing and a totally composed approach, and not fall too heavily to either side. That might keep people’s interest, hopefully.

KE: And I think that the solos are interspersed with other sections which, to go back to my cinematic comment, there are a lot of scene changes going on in the songs that are pretty much designated. We’ll go from a keyboard solo to another section that’s composed for everybody to play their part and move on into another section where there’s space for a guitar solo, that kind of thing. It is kind of Weather Report-ish in that way.

TN: Yeah, they were not head-solo-solo-head. A lot of that arrangement comes from jazz musicians – it’s their language, and that’s how they get together and play together even if they’ve

never met each other, never played together before, makes it easy to gig.

RRX: One thing I would definitely say about NEQ is that it’s a very expansive sound. I had a very worldly signature. I imagine that having such an expansive sound is difficult, not just a matter of skill, but also a matter of vision. I mean, we’re talking about musical sources that evolved and intermingled globally. Are there any guiding principles to this?

MQ: I don’t think we had any guiding principles, no. However the song came to be is what we went with.

KE: It’s a bit of a mystery. I think it comes down to tastes and sounds and grooves that we all like as individuals, what overlaps, and really the essence of what Todd’s idea was to begin with. Things didn’t change that drastically; now that I think of it, wasn’t “Camoplaid” a jam?

MQ: Yeah, that was a rehearsal from a long time ago. Rehearsal jam; Todd may have had it. Recorded piece for a while too. We definitely sat on that, and I do think it came from a jam.

KE: The beginning bassline thing I remember being out of the blue. Maybe I was working on a different song too; maybe it was that song.

TN: Yeah, I remember writing the melody for it, but I don’t remember jamming on it.

KE: Getting back, that’s all to say that it’s stuff we’ve been influenced by that just comes out without too much intention.

TN: One intentional thing for me is to not censor myself so much, you know? And as a band, we refrain from censoring ourselves, saying ‘oh that’s too Latin sounding,’ or too something else. We embraced it all, we didn’t look at something and say ‘that style doesn’t belong.’ We just let it happen.



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Publicly Pierced

BY CORA FREDETTE

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I have facial piercings. I have been denied fantastic job opportunities due to my piercings, even though I was the best candidate for the job. When asking what I could work on in hopes of getting the job next time, the employer said, “We would have hired you but simply can’t because of your piercings.” All over the world, people have piercings for a variety of reasons. Discrimination in the workplace over facial piercings, regardless of qualification or the current world culture, is simple-minded and outdated.

Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against someone for reasons of race, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity) or religion. Under that falls employment choices based on stereotypes or assumptions about abilities, traits or performance of individuals because of are illegal to discriminate upon. In many religions like Hinduism, a nose piercing is a sign of maturity in young girls and

is important to the religious community. Many of the people who see piercings as unprofessional and will not hire those with piercings are also contributing to religious discrimination.

In the current culture and climate piercing is still seen as unprofessional even though it ranges extremely far back. The nose piercing was recorded as far back as 1500 BCE. Piercings of these types have existed almost everywhere, while lip and tongue piercings were historically created in Africa and the Middle East. If an employer is, for example, hiring for the ever-growing IT profession, would piercings matter to the skill of fixing computers? Years ago, piercings were seen frequently as a sign of deviant behavior and something only marginal lower-class people would acquire. But in today’s day and age, body modifications such as piercings have developed into a contemporary fashion statement and are regarded similar to any other product in a consumer-driven market. This can be easily changed

with a change in attitude and perspective.

Our bodies are also the products of culture. That is, all cultures around the world modify and reshape human bodies.

In current times, the popularity of piercing has exploded. In my school I have seen people with piercings that their parents did not permit but they wanted so badly they did it themselves, regardless that in NY piercing of a minor is legal within reason and with parental consent. Self-done piercings can foster infections which possibly can lead to amputations and even an elevated risk of developing cancer. All created and fostered by outdated ideas.

My parents are concerned about the discrimination I may face from piercings when applying for colleges. Yet most colleges are becoming more accepting of body modifications such as piercings. Most colleges and universities are going purely by grades. Shown as many are test-optional, meaning

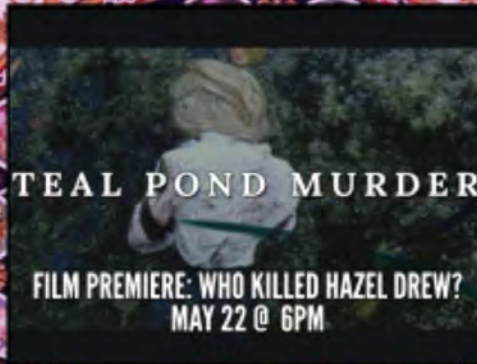
they allow all or some applicants to decide whether to submit SAT or ACT. Colleges were the first section of the modern economy to not care about visible body modifications.

With a simple change of an outdated mindset companies and industries could flourish. They are filled with people from every walk of life. Many industries are already there, but even more are clouding the public’s eyes. The older generations such as Generation X and the Boomer generations mindset is the main factor for piercings still being seen as derogatory to others.

Many don’t experience discrimination due to body modification, due to not having any visible body modification such as tattoos or piercings. But discrimination in the workplace over facial piercings is more favorable than you would think. Qualification should be the leading candidate factor of choice, but it’s not. Instead, piercings are.



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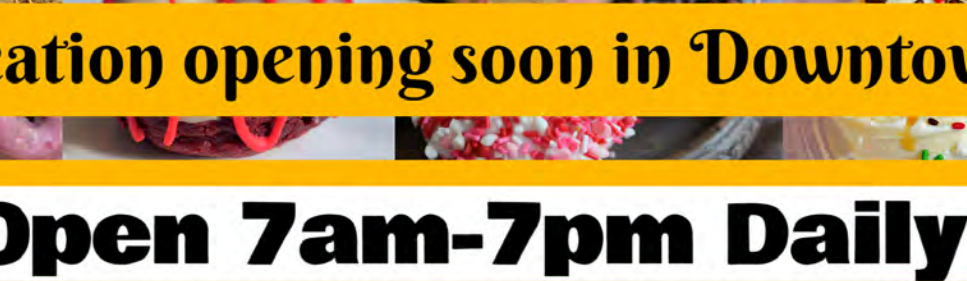


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Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

As I write this on Easter Sunday, I want to share something that has roots going back thousands of years, but for my family, it's something we've participated in for at least 15 years.

Tradition. In my family, rather the family of my wife, this tradition began way before I was involved. The form of this tradition went off the rails, my fault I am proud to say, shortly after I became a grandfather.

Its origin is based in the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches, and called "Egg Cracking." It's quite simple, everyone is given a hard-boiled egg, the idea is to "tap" or crack the egg of your opponent. The last person to hold an uncracked egg at the end is the winner, and receives (in my late father in law's words), "fabulous prizes."

The first time I played, it was cute, but kind of dumb, but a free lottery ticket is a nice incentive. As the years went on, our daughter gave birth to her first child, our first grandchild, Chris. When he was about three, he was fascinated by the game and wanted to play.

Chris, is truly my grandson, he has a very good sense of humor, and can not only give a good joke, but take one too. That's when I thought I would play a little gag on him. I sat next to him, and was set to "crack eggs" with him. What he did not know was my egg was not hard-boiled, it was raw, if I hit it just the right way it would splatter directly in his face.

The two competitors began combat, and I was set to put the yolk on him. That

was my intention. In reality, I was so pumped up to break the egg in his face, I put too much pressure on the raw egg, and I did shatter it, in my hand, on my face, on my glasses, actually over most of me.

Chris laughed so hard I thought he would pee his pants. He thought it was so funny about what happened to Popsie, the next year, with his mother's help, he sat next to me again, somehow, I had another raw egg (I really didn't know that time, going forward is a different story). When the time arrived, something told me something was going to happen. It did, he lunged, mine cracked, and the previous "accident" suddenly was "accidentally" recreated.

A couple of years later, Chris had a new brother in Zach. That's when the wheels came off the bus. Chris, with his mother's help, told Zach of the trick they play on Popsie. Zach, the devil child he is, of course wanted in. This is where things went tragically wrong.

This beloved tradition of cracking eggs for a chance of fabulous prizes, changed to hard-boiling a couple dozen, with some raw eggs included to boot, and "beat the crap out of Popsie," where they enjoyed taking the eggs and smashing them all over me, rubbing them into me, all in good fun, naturally. As they did that, the actor in me (and being a major fan of slap stick) would earn my Oscar with every ooch, ouch and yowl I could muster.

They really didn't hurt, for the most

part, until the boys got older, and stronger. At one point the egg count was five-to-six dozen, and don't complain to me about starving kids in Third World Countries, let them buy their own damn eggs.

A few years later, here comes a new brother for Chris and Zach in the form of Mason. At first, he was a little hesitant in tossing an egg at Popsie, but got into it quickly, throwing his first one, quite strongly, direct in my nuts. Since I wasn't planning any future children, no harm

no fowl.

The tradition still continues, with some changes, after all I am 66 and went through a heart attack and bypass surgery. Now it's a dozen per grandchild, all raw, no more hard-boiled, we do it in the backyard, and I need a chair. Their smiles and laughs are all the proof I need to know that this tradition will continue, until I eggspire.

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BY NIKI KAOS

Liz Conant. Photo provided.

Liz Conant is a force of nature, combining thoughtful musicianship with heartfelt, emotive performances. While owning and managing The Studio in Greenfield Center, her work has provided an environment for musicians to thrive just outside of Saratoga Springs. She is a mom who juggles it all. And she is a writer and performer who is ready to embark on the next chapter of her music life. I was lucky enough to catch up with her for this interview and learn more about what exciting projects are on the radar for 2022.

RRX: Tell me about your new music projects - you have a few different things you're working on, including joining Wesley Stace as part of his band on the keyboards. How did you get connected to that opportunity?

LC: First, I need to mention that Wesley Stace was previously known as John Wesley Harding. He's had a long and successful career and is a super-prolific songwriter, as well as a writer (with several novels and an opera to his credit). His bassist, Eddie Carlson and I were both in the

Chicago-based indie pop band The Aluminum Group for over a decade, so that was my 'in'. I'm fortunate that Eddie's recommendation was all I needed to get the gig. David Nagler is the music director and composer of the music portion of Wesley's newest release "Late Style", and after I spent a few weeks with the music, he and I met in Lenox, Mass - which was halfway between our homes - to run through the book and get to know each other. A few weeks later the whole band met in Brooklyn to rehearse the set. It feels

like it all happened overnight. The musicians in the band are all top-tier players and I'm really honored that Wesley had faith in me before he even heard me play one note.

RRX: You're also preparing to do a cool improv gig in Chicago. What's that about?

LC: It's about always saying "yes" when people ask me to perform! Stephanie Rogers is the producer of Story Jam, a long-running storyteller's showcase in Chicago, and when she heard that I was going to be in town

performing, she asked if I would play for Story Serenade, which has more of a workshop vibe. A storyteller will read, and then right after I will improvise a through-composed song on the spot which relates to the story. No safety net here! And I'd be lying if I said I wasn't kinda freaked out about doing it. But I've done singing telegrams, hosted radio programs, emceed events and fronted bands. I've got to trust that the material is in me somewhere. At this point in my life, I'm feeling the mortality clock ticking, so I have to jump into all good opportunities feet first.

RRX: You grew up in a musical family. How did that influence your art and your growth as a musician?

LC: My father was a Baroque harpsichordist, and I studied classical piano from an old-school Viennese concert pianist; those things gave me a good degree of skill and musical knowledge. I still find Baroque music the most deeply beautiful music on the planet. When I was 12, my father took me to SPAC to hear McCoy Tyner and Oscar Peterson, and I can say that it opened my eyes to a whole new world of music. My dad also used to play the Beatles' "Sergeant Pepper's" and "Magical Mystery Tour" albums for me as a young girl, so I can thank him for a lot of musical education.

RRX: I love your work with the music community through The Studio in Greenfield Center, a treasured family music space. What were your favorite moments, and/or what were your most memorable challenges or funny stories in managing that space?

LC: Where on earth to start? My father built the venue in 1974 to present his Baroque music festival, and after he died in 2013, I inherited it. I've had to do everything myself – from admin tasks to mopping floors and everything in between. The payoff is when the place is filled with happy people and the music is so good... There's a glow in

the room, the feeling in the air is amazing. This is precious stuff, and it's what makes it all worth it. Also, I love the idea that the Studio has been host to such a huge variety of performances: Baroque ensembles, classical groups, twentieth century music, jazz bands, folk music, blues and rock, spoken word, rap, even dance and theater productions – not to mention the yoga classes. The space is a hidden treasure in the woods, and so many wonderful memories have been made there. COVID changed the nature of the room however, and now I'm not producing shows but rather offering the venue as a rental space and as an artists' Airbnb.

RRX: You've had a dynamic music career. Is there anything that sticks out in your memory you can share with us about your evolution as an artist?

LC: My career has been multi-faceted; I find that if you want to work as a musician, it helps to play a wide range of styles. Of course, that's not true for all musicians, but it enabled me to work and collaborate with a whole lot of people I might not have otherwise if I'd just stuck to one genre. And I highly value that diversity. But the other side of that coin is that it can be a bit confusing to folks; am I Liz Conant, pop rock keyboardist, or Elizabeth Conant, sultry vocalist and frontwoman of a swinging jazz trio? My marketing strategy has to change with the gig. But at the end of the day, I really just want to play good, engaging music. Doesn't matter what it is. Performing a wide range of material also expands your musicality and intelligence as a player.

RRX: One of the things I admire about you is that you did a lot on your own. You are definitely a DIY support system for the music community. Do you have any advice for artists who are starting out? Can you tell us what about music helps you keep at it despite the challenges of being an artist in today's world?

LC: Ah, the "advice for artists starting out" question... There's never an easy answer to that! I think folks all know the value of networking. Making relationships is key – but the second and equally important part of the equation is follow-through. If you don't have your thing figured out – then book a gig. Put a show on the calendar, a firm commitment, and I guarantee the material will come together. And as for what keeps me going – I just love the feeling of playing music, the sound, the camaraderie, the joy. We all know that making money from music is really not an attainable goal for most of us, but there is a real value in the process and experience of simply making music with other humans. That being said, I think we musicians should always endeavor to earn money from our recordings and seek out gigs that pay. It is a service, after all. Imagine a world without music! And whenever someone suggests that you play for free at an

event – tell them it's your job, and that you need to be paid. Simple as that, really.

RRX: Thank you so much for sharing with us. Is there anything else we should keep an eye out for to catch your next project?

LC: Thank you for the interview! It's been a pleasure. I have a new post as keyboardist for the Cabinet of Wonders, house band at the City Winery in Manhattan, with Wesley Stace as front man. We'll be backing up some pretty well-known artists, so I'm really looking forward to it. When I'm home in the Saratoga region I hope to find a few piano bar gigs to keep me busy. I'm going to spend my down time writing for my memoir blog "The Hillhouse in Greenfield" and enjoying the long-awaited summer weather.

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David Hinchen

Architectural artist peels apart the layers of history and beauty in construction.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

David Hinchen. Photo provided.

We are surrounded in architecture. We live, we work, we eat, we play in buildings, and those buildings aren't necessarily concrete blocks, though they would perfectly function as such. But they're not. The buildings around us have style and character, even the ones we call our own.

David Hinchen is an architectural artist. He captures the heart of some of the most magnificent structures in the Northeast and brings them to life on

paper and canvas. David is also a go-to for anything related to the historic architecture of the Capital Region.

RRX: You create artwork from architecture. It's interesting, because architecture could be considered "functional art" in and of itself, so what you are doing is, in a sense, an abstract of an abstract. Looking at your work, the attention to detail you employ is striking, but how does your work go beyond replication? Is it meant to?

DH: What sets my artwork apart from a replication of reality is emphasis. In reality, as you view a particular building or street scene, any one thing is as undeniably real as any other thing. All buildings on a city block share the same level of existence, the same completeness. In my paintings, I decide the degree to which various pictorial elements are revealed. Emphasis helps the audience put the story of a painting together in their own minds. I utilize

color, texture, value, contrast, placement and juxtaposition to dramatically direct where your eye is attracted. When the building is darker, lighter, in the foreground or significantly larger than the other structures in the painting, it becomes the focal point because the perspective or depth draws us in. Creating a mood where the viewer experiences a heightened sense of observation and emotion is my ultimate goal. Many of my paintings are set in

the past, featuring cityscapes and architectural elements that no longer exist. Each scene is carefully researched to be essentially architecturally accurate, but many of the details and colors are drawn from my imagination. In my painting, Albany Riverfront, 1930, I used old black and white photos to recreate the long-gone Hudson River boat basin and adjacent Albany Yacht Club as they would appear in brilliant contemporary colors. The vintage boats were referenced directly from the old photos, but I decided to add an appropriate 1930s New York Central Railroad train coming into Union Station. The top of the Delaware and Hudson Building was cut off in the photo, so I added the complete tower and a dramatic cloud filled sunrise sky. In the 1960s, the entire boat basin and waterfront was filled in for the construction of the riverfront arterial highway - I - 787.

RRX: The houses you recreate are spectacular. They're all over the Northeast, some in the Capital Region. Easily, these homes are in the millions, and just meticulously well kept. So, this may seem an odd question; have you ever recreated a building that wasn't so kept? Maybe something falling apart? Would that be a different challenge?

Depicting buildings in a state of decay is a worthy challenge for other artists. I prefer to create art that celebrates historic buildings as idealized icons. Before the rise of realism and naturalism in the 19th century, all art was idealized. Greek, Roman and Renaissance artists were masters at romanticizing their subjects with harmonious compositions and saturated colors. Although often mistaken for straight up realism, my idealized artwork depicts historic buildings in an aesthetically flawless way so that the audience may envision a world where things are perfect. By paying tribute to beauty in the sublime form, I hope to encourage the viewer to imagine what

possibly once was and what could potentially be in the future.

Growing up in the post WWII suburbs of Connecticut in the 1970s, I keenly remember being both fascinated and horrified by the spectacle of urban decay in Harford, Albany, Providence, Boston and New York City. Regardless, I still marveled at the architecture and living history all around me. As a young adult who was naturally attracted to only living in a city, my imagination would often drift towards a more appealing past or future. My coming-of-age experiences have most likely influenced my artwork.

RRX: Albany is a bastion of historic architecture. Just going down State Street, you can easily put yourself through all 400 years of the city vicariously through the architectural styles. But clearly, the architecture of Albany isn't 400 years old. How do you think Albany's architecture reclaims its past in the modern day?

DH: Old buildings are witnesses to the aesthetic and cultural history of a city, helping to give people a sense of place and connection to the past. With such a rich variety of architectural styles and intact neighborhoods, Albany is incredibly monumental for such a small city. Its neighborhoods embody the intentions and lives of those who built, lived and worked in them. They have fascinating stories to tell about how the community became what it is and that helps us understand who we are. Preserving these stories can be an important part of building a healthy community. Past generations of architects such as Albert Fuller, H.H. Richardson and Marcus T. Reynolds have used their knowledge, method, skill and principles of civic design to adeptly define space and create places of unique character, places that are worth caring about.

RRX: Aligned with the question on historic registers; mother nature and father time aren't the only adversaries

to historic preservation. Cities are growing beasts and change spares no one. There's a current that might say, "we need a computer center... who cares about that old building?" How can that be argued successfully?

DH: Historic preservation conserves resources, reduces waste and saves money by reusing and retrofitting existing buildings rather than tearing them down and building new ones. Newer buildings tend to have a life expectancy of only 30-40 years, whereas most older buildings were made to last indefinitely. Repairing and reusing existing structures uses energy and material resources more efficiently and reduces waste. Newer materials don't need to be created, nor older materials thrown away. Older buildings are made of higher quality materials, replacing with similar rare hardwoods would be impractical and unaffordable.

As suburban sprawl and highway

strip development makes more and more places look the same, it becomes increasingly important for communities to keep their identities intact. Current migration trends and new commercial/residential development is leading to the rebirth of some older, walkable neighborhoods in the Capital Region. What happened 30 years ago in Brooklyn and Boston's South End is possibly starting to gain steam in Albany and Troy. If that's the case, hopefully we can do a better job at finding that sweet spot between gentrification, protecting the homes of current residents, creating new jobs and preserving our architectural treasures. As technology increasingly makes everything virtual, will human beings seek out more anchor points, reminding them of their real-world roots? I believe many will choose to live in places rich with aesthetic and cultural history, places that are truly worth caring about.



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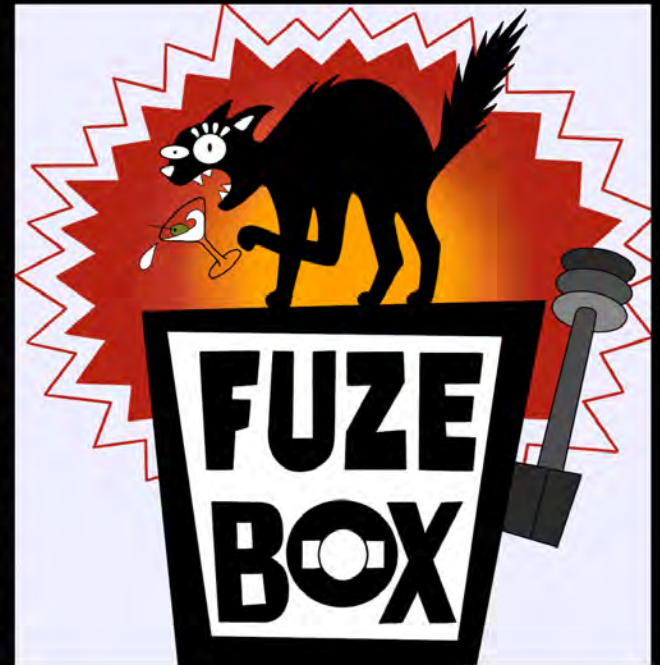
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5/14: Scottie Stratton (Goth/Industrial DJ)-10pm

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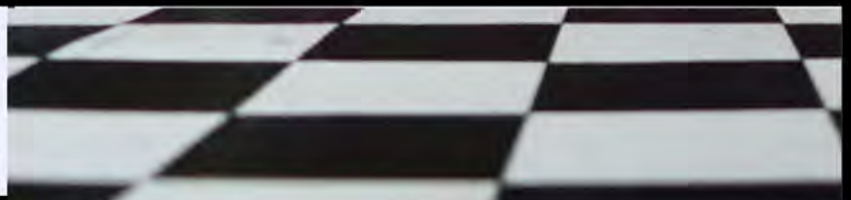
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