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October 2022

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Billy Bragg

On playing in Troy, and the passing of Queen Elizabeth



Billy Bragg. Photo provided.

BY ROB SMITTIX

RRX: It's very nice to be talking with you. How have you been?

BB: Not too bad and you?

RRX: Things have been weird but okay.

BB: Things have been weird here as well.

RRX: So, you're in the UK right now?

BB: I am indeed and you're in Troy?

RRX: Close to Troy, I'm actually right across the bridge.

BB: That'll do for me.

RRX: So, you're coming to the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall on October 11th with Alice Phoebe Lou as the supporting act. We're excited to have you. And this is a US/Canada tour that you're kicking off. Are you excited about that?

BB: I am, I've never been to Troy before it'll be a first time for me. I'm looking forward to having a stroll around between sound check and the gig to see the place.

RRX: It's an interesting historical

theater, going back in time. This is a place where Ella Fitzgerald would've been standing on that stage.

BB: I love those kinds of gigs. We have some in London where Charlie Chaplin and the Marx Brothers performed, you know, old theaters. I always love playing in those places.

RRX: Traveling wasn't so easy back then.

BB: That's true. I think they probably relied on the railroad a lot more than we do.

RRX: Absolutely. You've been described as a singer/songwriter and activist. I've got to address it and it's big news. How does the queen's passing affect someone like you?

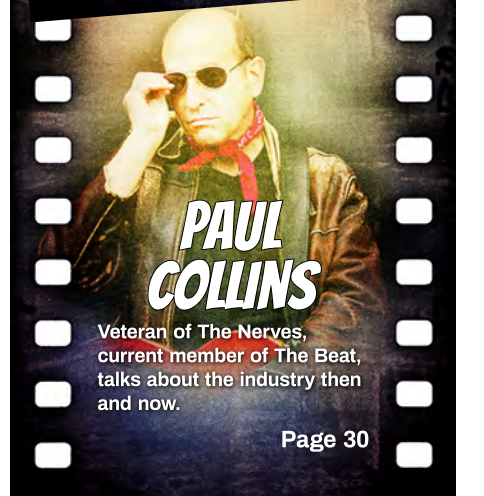
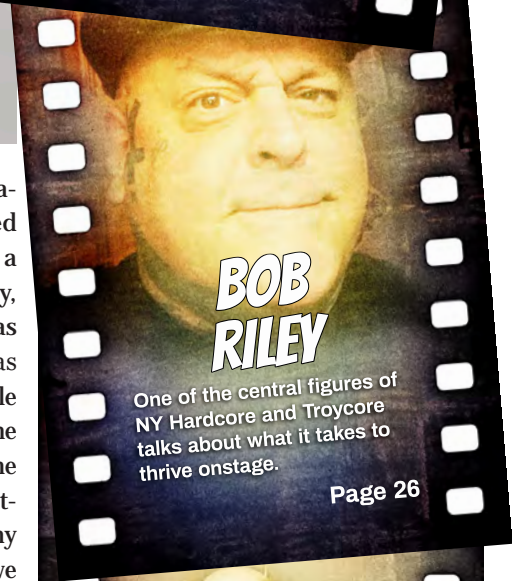
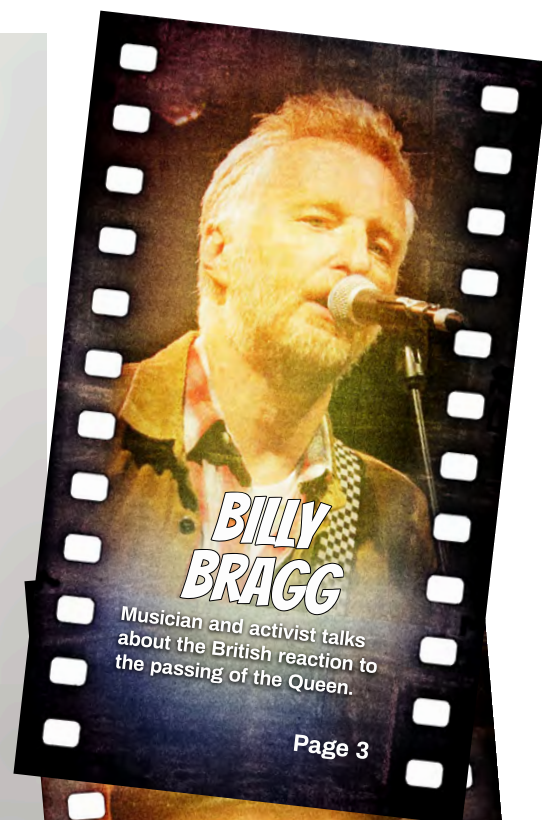
BB: It's very strange. On an emotional level I've found it has affected me quite a bit because my parents, like the queen, were both born in the 1920's. They both passed away now but with the queen dying it's kind of the end of their presence in our lives, that

generation. They're not just any generation, they are the generation that lived through the second world war. It's a generation that rebuilt our country, quite an important generation. She was like the final representative, who was still in our national life and whose role in the war still resonated. So, on one level, I feel it I really feel it and on the other side there's the legacy of the British Empire and the role the monarchy plays in our society, that really we should be able to question. You know? King Charles will be crowned next year with a crown that most of the jewels on it have been stolen from someone.

RRX: Right.

BB: But I can tell you right now that we won't be able to have a discussion about that. It's unfortunate because there's probably not a better time before they're putting the damn thing on his head. So, it's not just a single feeling. I posted something about this on

Continued on Page 5...





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Contact

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

info@radiatorradio.com

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Billy Bragg. Photo provided.

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Facebook and a lot of people are having similar feelings. Feelings of sense of loss but also a need for reform, to talk about the way the modern monarchy is in our lives and to deal with the legacy of the British Empire. That discussion is like the legacy of slavery in the United States of America.

RRX: Sure.

BB: There are people that refuse to recognize what effect it's had on our society. Increasingly there are people who want to discuss that legacy and I'm hoping that the change, the death of the queen will allow us to begin that discussion. It's going to be a painful discussion but equally it's one that we really need to have if we want to be able to live in the diverse society that we are. There are so many people in our country, particularly people of color because their parents were part of the British Empire, they came that way. The other weird thing is that the death of the queen has

ramifications beyond our borders. These are very interesting historical times but at the moment we're all a bit amazed it's come to this because we're so used to her being there. It would be like if Dwight Eisenhower was still president of the United States or still around and turned up on your TV every Christmas and said a few words about the world. It would be very weird if suddenly he wasn't there. So, a mixture of feelings really, Rob.

RRX: Couldn't have said it better. So obviously you've got this tour coming up, anything else on the horizon for you?

BB: Yeah, next year will be the 40th anniversary of my first album. So, I'm currently knee-deep in my archives pulling together tracks for that. 2024 will be the 40th anniversary of my first visit to the United States of America. The changes I've seen in that time are just incredible. When I first came over I opened for Echo and the Bunnymen.

RRX: That's cool.

BB: It was cool. It was amazing. I just sat on the back of their bus, and we drove around East Coast lakes, New Orleans, Texas, it was incredible. There were places we went on that tour that I've never been able to find again. That's why it's going to be interesting coming to Troy because I don't know anything about Troy. When I came for the first time to North America it was all new. A couple of years ago I did a tour with a new pedal steel player (CJ Hillman), all of his life he's been obsessed with America, but he's never been there. It was so great touring with him because everything was new to him. We ended up somewhere in Arizona, I can't remember exactly where it was now, but we had a day off. He and I went walking off to find a record store, of course.

RRX: Of course.

BB: We stood at this traffic light and a guy pulled up on a big motor bike, it might have been a Harley and he had

flip flops and shorts on and that was about it. CJ said to me, "Bill, the thing about America is it's just so American, isn't it?" I'm now working on avoiding the part of America that I hate the most... that of course is the airports.

RRX: (Laughs) Yeah, no kidding, they're terrible.

BB: Buffalo I haven't been there since 1985 with R.E.M., so I'm looking forward to that. I'm just trying to keep it interesting. It's a job like anything else I don't want your readers to imagine I'm living some kind of fabulous rockstar lifestyle. It is a shlep, even in England it's a shlep. Someone once said they pay me for the travel, I do the gigs for free. So, cutting that (airports) out, not just for my benefit but for the environment as well, means that there will be more visits to places like Troy. Places I've never been or haven't been for a long time, keeps it interesting for me.

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Justine Covault



BY ROB SMITTIX

Justine and the Unclean. Photo provided.

From 'Justine and the Unclean' to Red on Red Records, Justine Covault is bringing it.

it that's filled with 151, so you can imagine it's a very powerful drink, it's like a rum punch with a floater in the middle. "Scorpion Bowl to Go" is really about how people were losing their minds during the pandemic, just from isolation, boredom, trepidation, stress, loss and all those terrible things we were experiencing during that time. The bright side was that you could actually order drinks to be delivered to your house.

RRX: Yeah, that's right. I'm glad we're finally starting to get over that. So, you are actually the owner of Red on Red Records?

JC: Yeah, that's right.

RRX: How many different acts do you have under the label?

JC: I think over 20.

RRX: Wow. That's quite a bit.

JC: The label started in November of 2020, so it'll be two years this November. It started during the pandemic. We started out with seven or eight bands and we have just added bands since then. It's pretty amazing. I get multiple submissions from artists every week or inquiries from people who are interested in being on the label. I've been really lucky, I have some amazing artists, incredible talent, energy, creativity and just great music.

RRX: Now obviously you have your own band and everything and I imagine that's how you grooved into the record label but what was it that really made you feel like you should be the

RRX: So, you are Justin Covault from Justine and the Unclean.

JC: That's correct!

RRX: I did have to wonder if that means that you are clean and the rest of the band is unclean? How does that work?

JC: (Laughs) They are all just filthy. Filthy people.

(Both laugh)

JC: I started this band about five years ago. I thought at the time looking

around seeing what a lot of people were going through, that it's so hard to keep a band together and since it's my songs I thought I'd just call it Justine and the Somethings in case I have to swap people out or whatever. So, the band voted on what they wanted to be called and they all unanimously selected Justine and the Unclean. The miracle is that I have the exact same line up that I started with. I'm really happy about that, we're great friends and I love the way

they play my songs. I feel really lucky to have this band.

RRX: You have a song called "Scorpion Bowl to Go." I imagine a Scorpion Bowl is something you can order to go?

JC: Yeah, it's funny in Boston everybody knows what a Scorpion Bowl is. It's a drink that you might get at a Chinese restaurant, and it comes in a bowl that's shaped like a volcano and it's mentally terrifying to people. The center of the volcano has a little well in

person to do this?

JC: My band Justine and the Unclean was on a Boston label called Rum Bar Records, that's run by a guy named Louis Mansdorf, we're really good friends. While I was on the label with them, I started working with a group of women on putting together a music festival called WhistleStop Rock. It all kind of grew organically from us wanting to play shows together, a number of bands that were fronted by women and had strong women players. We worked regionally all-over New England for the winter and spring of 2020. The atmosphere of working with each other and cheering each other on and going to each other's shows was a beautiful and powerful thing. I was really into it. From that we ended creating this sort of super group recording a song that two of the women from these bands had written together called "Queen of the Drive-In" and the artist was Whistlestop Rock named after the festival.

It did really well, and we did a video too all during the pandemic. It was all done 100% remotely, with people doing their parts and sending them in and having it all mixed together. I talked to Lou from Rum Bar and asked do you want to put this out as a single or on a compilation? He said, 'you know Justine have you ever thought about starting your own label? You have this set of really talented bands that you're working with, you've learned a lot about the industry, clearly you have the organizational skills to pull people together and get stuff done.' I was like Lou you're crazy. And then I thought about it, and I ended up doing just that.

RRX: Anything right now that we should let people know about?

JC: I signed a band called The Morning Line out of San Francisco, but they have Boston roots. The lead guy Stephen Smith used to live in the Boston area and played in a couple of bands here including Salem 66 and

God's Eye. We'll be putting their record out this fall. The big news is that Stupidity, which is a band from Stockholm, Sweden are coming over in October to tour. The first half of the tour was booked by my label Red on Red Records and the second half they are doing with Soraia. They are playing in Troy.

RRX: They are, November 2nd I believe.

JC: At The Hangar, yes! They're also going to do an in-store at The River Street Beat Shop. I'm probably going to come out for that and check it out, so we're excited about that. They're also doing shows in Portland, Maine, Boston area, Providence, New Haven, New York and Philadelphia.

RRX: Nice.

JC: They're great and they've got Keith Streng from The Fleshtones playing guitar with them.

RRX: I heard that.

JC: Yeah, so he's on their album

"Waking Up the Band" which came out on Red on Red Records earlier this year. He's doing the tour with them as well.

RRX: Anything else you would like to mention?

JC: The only other thing I'd like to mention that might be of regional interest is that we have all of the Red on Red physical products are at The River Street Beat Shop. They're a retail outlet for us. We have a deal going now where if you buy a CD or vinyl from one of our artists you get a free Red on Red compilation CD which has 17 songs from 17 different artists, so you can get a flavor for who the bands are.

RRX: Our Tuesday Tributes on RadioRadioX.com recently played the compilation in its entirety so we're totally in your corner. You have our support!



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BY WILSON

Another grower friend of mine loves to cook and he is good at it. Once he got his indoor hydroponic system locked in, he had to figure out what to do with all of those buds. To the kitchen he went.

First, obviously, you must dry it. And then you grind it. The day I sat in he had three quarters of an ounce (21 grams) ready to go. My contribution was one pound of premium, unsalted butter. Is that a deal or what?

Onto a sheet tray lined with aluminum foil and into a 240-degree oven it went. This is called decarboxylation. It converts THCA to THC. This is what you are doing when you light a joint or turn on the vape. Here you are just using the oven to toast it until it starts to get brown, about 45 minutes to an hour, but start checking it after 30 minutes. Don't burn your weed.

Before we go any further, my buddy used a cookbook called Bong Appetit - Mastering the Art of Cooking with Weed to teach himself how to do this. This is not to be confused with the cooking magazine of a similar title. No idea how that title got past legal.

While the weed is toasting, melt the butter slowly as you would for any other recipe that requires melted butter. You do not need to clarify it, but you are going to add a cup of water to the now melted butter. Don't let the butter get too warm. Just melt it, don't make brown butter.

After toasting, what started out as 21 grams is now 14 grams. Kitchen scales are wonderful. Buy one if you don't have one.

We are also making oil with unflavored coconut oil. This goes into a 16-ounce Ball jar that goes into a pot full of warm, but not quite simmering, water. Here a sous vide would be the

perfect tool to dial in that perfect temperature. He estimates 130 to 160 degrees.

Now he evenly splits the 14 grams between two pieces of cheesecloth. You don't have to do this, but if you do, you don't have to strain the butter or the oil to remove the weed when you are done. Why not make life easy?

With seven grams in the butter and the other seven in the oil, now the stovetop does most of the remaining work. The butter is going to take two to three hours to finish. The oil will take six to 10; the longer the better. Think of the oil as slow brewed iced tea.

When the butter is done pour it into a bowl, let it cool and then cover it and put it into the refrigerator. Once it gets cold the water and the butter will separate. Dump the water and the butter is ready to use or freeze for later use.

He doesn't use the water, but I am sure you could use it for something. Let me know what you come up with.

What to do with the butter and oil? Anything you would cook or eat with regular butter or oil. Brownies? Yep. Cupcakes? You bet. Another friend makes garlic bread. Yes please.

My buddy just uses box brownie and cupcake mix. Try Trader Joe's brownie truffle baking mix.

Before cooking or baking you will want to do some math just to make sure you don't over do it. One of the best things about buying edibles at the store is you know what you are getting into, and we want to get as close to that as we can here.

This is where Bong Appetit comes in handy again:

"... [to] determine the remaining THC content in milligrams per one gram after decarboxylation assuming a 70 percent conversion rate of THCA to

THC multiply the TCH rate by however many grams of cannabis you are using to make your infusion; subtract 30 percent of the total THC, assuming that is the amount lost during the infusion process; divide the total amount of THC by the tablespoons of butter used to determine the estimated amount of THC in milligrams per one tablespoon of the infusion."

Assuming and estimated are important words here. Go slow at first. Don't over butter. With this math our butter came out to about 66 milligrams per tablespoon. There are three teaspoons in a tablespoon, so about 22 milligrams per teaspoon.

Using whatever recipe you are making, figure out how much THC you want in it and use that amount of

butter. You can mix the butter with non-THC butter if you need more butter for the recipe than the THC butter you want to add.

Mix whatever you are making well to get the butter spread through the mix as well as possible. Divide the amount of THC you have estimated in the recipe between the number of cupcakes or equally cut brownies you made. Now you know roughly how strong each one should be.

My buddy doesn't bake or cook with the oil, but you can. He just puts it into small glass bottles with an eyedropper. Put small drops of it under your tongue. Start with 20 or so.

Start slowly. Have fun. You can always add more next time. Don't drive.



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Elissa Halloran

The artistic impulse of Lark Street



BY LIAM SWEENEY

Photo provided.

When we think of the creative world, we think of the artists and the musicians, the writers and the sculptors. We might think of the venues, that cool club or the concert hall that's the talk of the town, but there are other people out there who form the structure upon which the creative word is built.

Elissa Halloran is just such a person. She is a jewelry maker, and she sells her designs on Lark Street, along with the work of innumerable local artists. She's made so many of our creatives feel welcomed in the Capital Region, and she's a creative

RRX: Your shop on Lark has played

host to a lot of local artists' work. And in some cases, being in your store might have been their first break, a sign that they'd reached a point in their art that they wanted to reach, an excitement. It's a very emotional thing. Can you think of a time that you know an artist needed to be in your store beyond sales?

EH: So, during the first year of the pandemic, I spent a lot more time looking at things on Facebook than I did normally. I saw some work by a local artist- Sarah Holub Schrom. It was colorful, fantastical, full of imagery that spoke to me at that difficult time in the world. I became obsessed with her

work. I bought three original pieces and wanted to sell prints of her work at my store. I just wanted to share her work with the world! She got picked up by a local gallery. I was very happy for her but was not able to carry her work until just recently. She is prolific- always making art - it is her calling. My love of her work helped me through a difficult time.

RRX: Being on Lark Street, you have a great view of the Lark scene. I am a passionate connoisseur of local scenes, as much as I can while never actually leaving my house. And I know through my non-exploration that every scene has a unique character. Every

scene has something that sets it apart. What does Lark Street have?

EH: Lark Street has an energy that is almost unexplainable. I was drawn to it in high school. I used to shop all of the cool stores with my best friend. It was the mid 80's, so Lark Street had a very punk rock feel then. It is an ever-changing street. I have had a store here for 21 years and have seen all of the ups and downs. Throughout these changes, it has always been artsy and interesting and fun. I say too often - there is never a dull moment on Lark Street.

RRX: You're not just a store owner. You make your own jewelry. Some

people consider that more a craft than an art; I'm not one of them. I'm also not one who thinks that crafting involves any lesser talent than formal art. It's a full creative pursuit, especially the way you do it. How does someone start, but really advance in jewelry making?

EH: I think to advance in jewelry making, you need to have great teachers and mentors. You need to listen, observe, and ask lots of questions. I had a wonderful teacher who worked at the Arts Center of the Capital Region, Mary Wheeler. She was/is wonderful and supportive. We became great friends. I also worked at Drue Sanders Custom Jewelers for a short stint. Everyone there was great to me and I learned so much before I opened my store. I really relate to other women in business - not just other jewelers. It takes a special person to undertake the opening and nurturing of a business.

Come see me at the store!

RRX: The only person we had in

the paper who was practiced in 3D media was artist Royal Guy Brown. And jewelry making is 3-dimensional media. When you make a piece, are you aware of the shape of the piece as you are the stones you're putting together? Is it just about having a pendant having a flat back?

EH: When I find some beads, or a pendant, and can almost immediately visualize what I want to do with them. I get impatient and want to move onto the next piece while I am in the middle of making the first one. I also make "skeleton guys"- whimsical people that I make with wire-found objects, and skeleton heads. I have been making these for about 15 years, but when I was closed for two and a half months during the pandemic, I made about 100 of these. I would find a weird object and shape each "guy" around that object. Making them kept me sane, they are fun, so it took my mind off of all of the scariness and uncertainty of

the pandemic.

RRX: One of the things we see a lot in artists is the fact that their work is a physical product for sale. With musicians, their stuff is usually for sale digitally, and it's usually dirt cheap. But artists can't be dirt cheap. Paint isn't dirt cheap. semi-precious stone cost something. How hard a time do you think artists have not selling themselves short?

EH: It's hard to figure out pricing when you first start making art. My confidence in my skills and product was very low in the beginning. I always joke that you know you have made it when your first stranger buys your art. (It's usually family, coworkers and friends that buy your art in the beginning.) I think it takes years to learn the value of your trade.

RRX: As was said in the beginning of this interview, you've seen a lot of artists come up, you've helped a lot of them up, and you still do. And I know

you can't give me a favorite artist without possibly hurting some feelings. So, let me dodge that by asking you to tell me a story about any artist that you've had in that touched your heart in a unique way?

EH: Artist who touched my heart in a unique way. I think that would have to be my mom. She is an artist- a collage artist and printmaker now, but in the past she did macrame and soft sculpture. She also taught kids painting classes at the Arts Center of the Capital Region. She exposed me and my siblings to many art forms and was always supportive of what I did. She and my dad came to all of my art and craft shows that I did before I opened my store. I have also featured her art at my store over the years. Her advice and love and support have given me my livelihood and my love for all things art.



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Christine Bile

A guitar to beat the daily grind



BY NIKI KAOS

Christine Bile. Photo provided.

I was taken by the beautiful, rich tone of Christine Bilé’s voice, effortless guitarwork and introspective lyrics. Her recorded work goes even further, highlighting layered vocals, ringing harmonies and rhythms that groove. I need to know more about where her creative inspiration comes from.

RRX: For your latest single, “At Least I know I’m Free” I love the way the song kicks off. The rhythm and then your vocals coming in, in a dual melody. Then synth layers after that. Then the lyrics hit you – I especially appreciate the refrain: “Is it all about the money? Or is it about love? Is it all about the money? Will it ever be enough?” What inspired you to write this song?

CB: I just hear different melodies. If I hear one that is interesting enough, I need to record it immediately. If I don’t, I will not probably ever play it again. With this song, I was just thinking about how we as human beings overwork ourselves. I am one of those people. I work from 9-5, past 5 o’clock. At one point, you just have to love yourself and love the other people around you. That’s what inspired me to write the song.

We need money to survive. I get that piece. But there’s a point where you need a work life balance. That inspired the lyrics.

RRX: What do you do to record the music?

CB: I use Ableton, and I use Focus-write and my old HP laptop. I think with that one, I really tried to think of a nice bassline. Bass really drives music. And drums. Once I had the bass and the drums down, and then I had the lyrics going. Then I started writing the lyrics that I think about and go from there.

Once I do that, I pick out the different sounds that make sense. I was in the mood to write something that resembles a Kizomba song. That’s an African dance that I got into doing because I got into partner dancing. I started with that beat and built the song from there, and then the melody came and I just put it all together.

RRX: You self-produce and

recorded everything at home? It sounds amazing!

CB: I did it all at home. I had to do a couple of mixes of it to get it to sound the way I wanted and make sure all the harmonies were balanced. I was thinking about the song, “I’m Proud to Be an American”. That song came to mind, and that also kind of inspired it. I think about, what is the American Dream, and how does that relate today?

RRX: I really loved the track. Thank you for telling me how you built it. It’s nice to get the behind the scenes.

Pivoting to something I caught on your social media, did you travel to Africa recently?

CB: Yes. I did take a trip to Africa.

I'm a mentor for young African American women. It's called The Rights of Passage and Empowerment program. What we do is mentor and encourage young African American women to chase after college and careers and just overall be global citizens. Part of that is taking an international trip each year to foster that learning process. We visited an orphanage, and we did some service there. As well as explore the different highlights in Accra, Ghana. It was awesome.

RRX: That's amazing. What a great thing to do and a great experience!

Back to the music side of things, what got you started in songwriting and playing guitar?

CB: The thing that really got me started was elementary school. I got my first solo in chorus, because we all had to take chorus class, which I loved because I love to sing. I sang my first solo, and I remember I looked like a spider that day, haha. Because I did braids in

orange and black. But I sang my solo and I got a good reception back from the crowd and I thought, huh, I could do this a lot more.

I went home and I went online and googled "how to play guitar" and "how to write a song". I think how to write a song came before how to play guitar, because I took the lyrics that had been written on this template, this instruction thing on how to write a song, and I just put my own lyrics in it. And then, I was like oh, okay. There's a structure to this. There's intro, there's a verse, there's a chorus and I just kinda followed it.

After that, I was like, alright. I played a little bit of keyboard. Just self-taught. But something about guitar called me and my dad's a musician so we had a classical guitar with nylon strings. So, I taught myself to play on that, and once I got the format down and learned a couple of chords, I was like let's put this to work. And I started writing my own music. And ever since

then I've been writing and performing and playing out.

RRX: That's so cool! I actually started playing on a nylon string guitar myself. Bar chords definitely take you to task!

I see you have a lot of performances going on lately. And your live music is so enjoyable! What is a favorite venue or performance memory you can tell us about?

CB: I think my favorite performance venue right now is the Apple Tree Inn, in Lenox, MA. It's this boutique hotel, right next to Tanglewood, and they have this room. It's really beautiful. Lots of candles, spicy margaritas. The atmosphere is just great.

I actually got to play there because I was in the crowd one day watching Johnny Irion and I just chatted with him during the break. I said, hey, I like that song you played called "Hard Working People" and I told him I was a singer-songwriter. He was like, okay,

you wanna play some tunes?

I was not expecting that! I did not have my guitar, and I was not ready. But I was like, okay, I can do this. Why not? This is a good opportunity to play. And then he said, you know what? I want you to join this residency here for August. This was in July before I went to Africa. So, for the most fun and exciting venue, I definitely give it up to the Apple Tree Inn, because the atmosphere is awesome. The staff is great. And it's been fun to be able to play my songs to a new audience.

RRX: I'll have to check that place out! People should check out your social media links and keep an eye out for your performances. Your original music is refreshing, and I'm drawn in by your sense of musicality. Readers should sign up for Christine's mailing list and follow her on your preferred social media formats! This is a singer-songwriter not to be missed!

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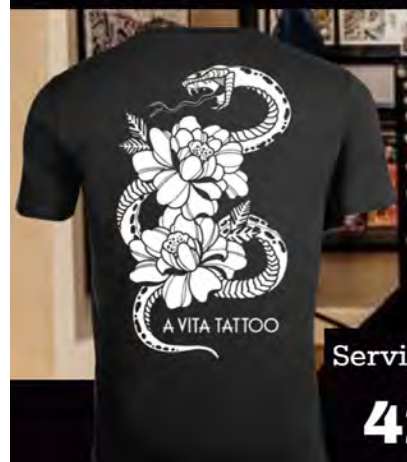
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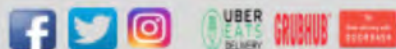
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Bob Riley

Murderer's Row, Stigmata, Cranial Abuse... hardcore energy unchained.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Bob Riley. Photo provided.

One of the enduring mysteries of music, all art really, is that the performer exists and the person exists, and if you didn't know both of them, you might not guess one would inhabit the same flesh and bone of the other. Art gives people a chance to step out of the confines of who they are, who an orderly society needs them to be, and become who they need themselves to be, and in that transformation, a little magic escapes to the crowd.

Bob Riley is a singer extraordinaire, in more than one groundbreaking hardcore band, blazing a smoke strewn trail from Troycore to New York Hardcore. He's fury and force, and a guy

who sits down with his morning coffee and enjoys the peace of Motown with the waking dawn.

RRX: Murderer's Row is the name of your band. It's a historical term, coming from a bad section of the tombs in New York City, and also a fearsome section of the 1927 Yankees lineup with Ruth and Gehrig. Was there a tie or a nod back to the history of the phrase, or is the idea of a Murderer's Row just universal?

BR: No, Murderers Row is definitely a nod at the Ruth, Gehrig Yankees lineup of 1927. The original lineup of Murderers Row would get together every Sunday to rehearse and watch the Yankees game. We would play during

commercials. I suggested the name knowing it had been used here and there in the past but seeing as how we are Yankee fan, n Yorkers and live three hours from the stadium that we would use it. Bring it home back to NY!

RRX: Murderer's Row, by all accounts, would be considered Troycore. There's a lot of sentiment surrounding all things Troy, and Troycore has a deep vein. But what does it mean? Is it a situation of everybody living in Troy, so a geography, or is it a unique sound, like Muscle Shoals or Chicago blues?

BR: There has always, long before me, an us vs them attitude with Troy people. South Troy against the World is an old saying long before my dad and

his friends were using it. It most certainly stems from Troy having so many factories back in the day. The "Collar City", as we are nicknamed, was and still is very working class. Also, the "Home of Uncle Sam" Working people are tough and proud and that's Troy in a nutshell. It's only natural that angry proud music is made by Troy people. We labeled ourselves "Troycore" to say, "Hey, we are the outcasts of the outcasts, and we are proud of it!" There's some old school people who believe that the original five Troy bands Cranial Abuse, Dead End, Final Terror, Direct Attack and Rude Awakening was Troycore and that's it period it's over. I don't agree at all. I love that these

newer kids in bands are flying the Troycore banner keeping it alive!

RRX: You been down the long road with hardcore and punk. Cranial Abuse, Stigmata, Murderer's Row and more that I don't know, more that maybe no one except the people in the room knew about. You're in a good band then you're in a good band; you're in three, then maybe it's you who got something. What's the secret to having something?

BR: I've been involved in music my whole life at this point. I love what I do and it shows. People can sense that, especially a live audience. You can't fake it. I'm so happy and very lucky I have people who want to make music with me. I'm so happy I have people buying our music and coming to see us play. Music has given me so much it has gotten me around the world many times. And I've met so many great people. I love what I do so maybe it's just as simple as that!

RRX: Hardcore gets a bum rap among the pleasant folks in the PTAs and the Homeowners' Associations. Because those people listen to hardcore too. Violence and aggression, but people in the scene, people deep in the scene, including, have a pretty laid-back mindset. Is hardcore cathartic? If so, why do you think that is?

BR: It's easy to see outsiders see hardcore metal or punk as negative because sometimes, well, it is. It's many different things to many different people. Hardcore gives you that platform to complain about your bad day that jerk who cut you off or that crappy 9 to 5 job or worse. For me it was to get my anger and negativity out. Yell it, scream it, pound it out as loud and as angry as possible into people's faces. So yes, aggressive music can be very cathartic.

RRX: You bring a ton of energy to the stage when you're on it. And that; I can't imagine its always easy. Do you have to prepare yourself, punch yourself in the face in front of the mirror

backstage? Punch someone else in the face backstage? (kidding.) How do you go beyond just bringing a melody to the stage to bringing a strong feeling?

BR: Thank you for the compliment but nowadays I do a lot of pointing. I was more energetic was I was younger. Jumping off the stage into the crowd. Fell off the Saratoga Winners stage so many times. And bashing my head off the beam above the drum riser so hard I saw stars. As I've gotten older, I put together Murderers Row because I wasn't so angry anymore and I could use my humor in my lyrics. I also wrote a song for my daughter called "My Little Molly". If there's violence in an Murderer Row's song, and there is, I compare it to Three Stooges violence. Nowadays, I'd rather laugh than fight.


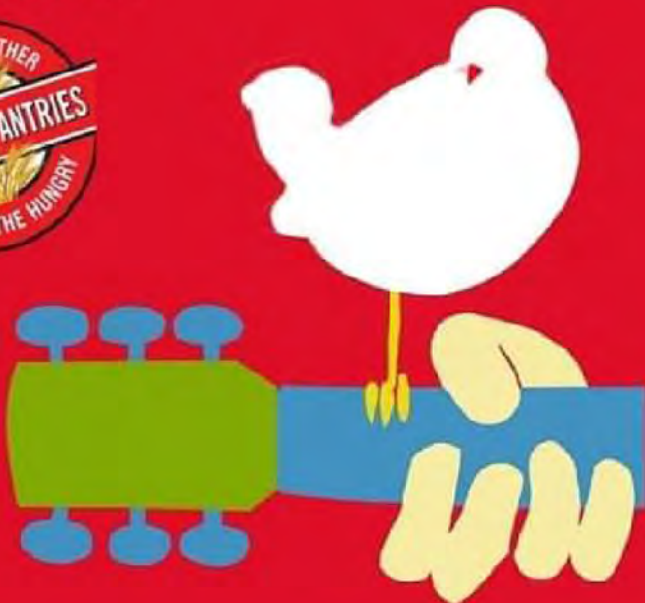
RRX: Everybody thinks of matchups. But let's go a little weird. Instead of wishing you had such and such a person on drums, let's say you could have a nameless drummer that is a master of one kind of fill. Can you give us that? Not people, but specific talents. What specific instrument talents would you want in a dream team?

BR: That's a good question because I've made music with a lot of amazing musicians over the years people who played in big named bands. Machinehead, Possessed, Danzig, Biohazard, Cromags and even Glen Campbell. I'm going to mention some names and only those living. If I was to put together a heavy rock kinda band dream team for myself Phil Rudd: drums, Harley Flanagan: bass, Tom Warrior: rhythm guitar, Michael Schenker: lead guitar.

RRX: Here's where you answer the question I didn't ask. Comments or remarks? Hype and promo? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

BR: Keep making music, live hard, love hard, work smart, make mistakes but learn from them! Have fun always all ways! Thank you, Liam, and Xperience!

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Paul Collins

Of Paul Collins Beat, and formerly The Nerves, currently survivor of the industry.

BY ROB SMITTIX

Paul Collins. Photo provided.

R **RX:** Well, you've obviously had an extensive music career, if you could briefly give us the abridged version on how you got to where you are today. That would be cool.

PC: Sure well...it all started for me back in San Francisco. I came out to San Francisco from New York, where I am now at the behest of my drum teacher Sam Ulano. He told me, 'Listen man... if you want to make it in rock n roll you've got to go out to the West Coast.' So, I did and on my third day in San Francisco (because I had no idea what was going to happen out there and I didn't really

have any contacts), back in those days the best way to find a band was to go to the music stores and look at the bulletin board and see if anyone needed anybody. Low and behold there was this little index card for a wanted drummer for an all-original band, 'call Jack' it read, and I did. That kind of changed my life. I met Jack Lee and then Peter Case, we started The Nerves. Back then it was all do it yourself and in some respects, it was more difficult than today. You couldn't record at home or do anything like that. DIY movement had not really been developed as much as it is now, which is great for some artist, you can

just bypass the industry all together if you want to. And they do and it's great. The industry is tough.

RRX: No kidding. That's why I always say I'm a musician, can't say I'm a successful one but you know I still have fun.

PC: So those were really great times for me. Obviously, I learned almost everything I know about music. The Nerves were like my bootcamp. Not much happened to me after that, that didn't happen in that band. That was kind of like everything I ever experienced went down with those guys and I also learned so much about the craft of

songwriting and range of songs with Jack and Peter. It was a fabulous experience.

RRX: I could only imagine.

PC: Obviously in hindsight it was a little bit different. At the time we couldn't believe how difficult it was just trying just to get a leg up and it was the opposite with my next band The Beat, that just went a million miles an hour, compared to how difficult it was in The Nerves. The Beat got together and almost instantaneously got the major record label deal, we have Bill Graham and Bruce Botnick producing us. It was kind of like a silver platter. Then again,

we got slaughtered by the industry, in those days the mechanics of breaking an act in radio and just all of the stuff that was going down. It was very difficult for new bands to get established, unless you had a hit out of the box and you were really seriously moving units.

RRX: You're right the industry is completely different now, in some ways it's good, in some ways it's not. But the DIY aspect that you talked about that has gotten easier. But you still do things somewhat DIY, from what I've been gathering.

PC: Thankfully, I have nothing to do with the industry. The type of music I play is totally niche market. What I do is totally fan driven. The fans keep it alive. The fans support it by buying the music and going to the shows. Really if you're able to survive doing this kind of music, which I am very lucky to be able to do. A lot of musicians that play this sort of music unfortunately many of them have to do it is a hobby. There's just not enough money in it to support yourself. I was very lucky. Luck and work really. I did tons and tons of gigs, it's like revenue streams. You do a couple hundred gigs for four or five hundred bucks, and you can make a living.

RRX: That's true.

PC: But it's hard. I'm 66 now and I'm not gonna do that anymore just because it's just too hard. I don't think people realize. On one hand touring is glamorous. That is that part of it but the other part of it is, it takes a toll on your body. As time goes on and the years go by, you start to really feel it. I wish people would appreciate that. This hit me when I was crisscrossing the country, and Europe and Canada and everywhere. Play a show with four to six bands and everybody has driven hours. The amount of energy that these people have expended to get to this place to perform for people that are like, well I don't know if I want to pay a dollar a band. You know what I mean?

RRX: I do.

PC: But then of course it all flips when the Rolling Stones go and do a surprise secret show at a small club, everyone says, 'oh my god I got to see the Stones at a small club!' I was talking to a friend about this today. The small clubs are where rock n roll, blues and jazz were born. It's an essential part of the tradition. There's no guarantees with anything and people don't have to do anything but I've been at house concerts where some guy is holding a forty dollar bottle of booze and he doesn't want to put two dollars in the hat. The appreciated value of music and musicians for what they do, only kicks in when they're playing stadiums.

RRX: It's a damn shame but I feel it's the mass appeal audience, which unfortunately is almost everyone. It's the people that listen to modern day FM radio.

PC: When I discovered FM, I was brought up on AM, it was like a whole new cool world that AM didn't even touch. The album cuts and stuff like that you never heard on AM radio. It almost felt like the insiders track to rock n roll.

RRX: I had the privilege to be on FM radio in the late 90's when it was still cool for a little while.

PC: There's a lot of these internet radio guys who do whatever they want. I think that's one of the upsides to the internet, there's a lot of niche market stuff that can be very eclectic. There are these enthusiasts out there that keep it alive for a small group of people that are tuned into them but it's a real viable way to hear stuff.

RRX: Is there anything else they'd you'd want to put out into the universe before we got to get going?

PC: Just that I'm very happy that I'm still able to get on stage and play music. I'm very happy that I still have fans out there that listen to what I do and dig it. I feel fortunate that I've been able to stay in the game this long.

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BY JORDAN LANEGAN

Vulnerability.

It's a thing none of us are good at or want to be. It's uncomfortable. It doesn't feel natural. It's a sign of weakness. We're taught to bottle up our emotions and put on a strong face; suck it up, princess – somebody has it worse.

But just because somebody has it worse, doesn't mean that what you're going through doesn't matter. Somebody will always have it worse, and somebody will always have it better. That doesn't invalidate your bad days, your fears, or your sadness, nor does it invalidate your good days, your success, or your happiness – at least it shouldn't.

So, let me be a little uncomfortably vulnerable with you all.

A little over a week ago, I had a full-fledged breakdown on the floor of the El Dorado after I closed out my shift. It was the smallest thing that sent me over the edge, but you guys know how these things go, it's a build-up of shit that you stuff down and compartmentalize, telling yourself that if you can just make it through the day, if you can just shove it somewhere in the vast corners of your mind, if you can just make it to bed, if you can just – it'll eventually disappear.

And sometimes that works. But not always.

This was one of those cases.

It had been a rough couple of weeks, one thing after another, couldn't seem to catch a break,

when-it-rains-it-fucking-pours couple of weeks. That smile you continue to beam and that mantra you continue to repeat to get yourself through the shit-storm stops working, and then you're just left feeling pissed off and burnt out. Pissed at yourself for not being able to shake it, pissed at all the little things you're letting get under your skin that you typically brush off no problem – pissed that you're pissed.

This breakdown was not pretty. It was downright ugly. Uncontrollably crying, shoulders shaking, snot running, why do I even try, what's the fucking point sort of ugly.

The trivial thing that served as the catalyst for my mega-meltdown was only a front for the bigger culprit of my tipping point, something that had been said to me and was weighing on me heavy:

"Yeah, people were reading your article at the bar – a lot of them liked it – others were laughing."

It wasn't really the annoying new POS system that I was pissed at, and it wasn't even Trish being extra-Trish (IYKYK) that day that I was really pissed at; it was hearing one of my biggest fears spoken out loud to me that took the cake. It validated my fear of failure and of not being good enough.

Putting yourself out there is hard. Many of us don't think of ourselves as creatives, but I think that's a cop-out. We're all creative in some capacity, most of us are just too scared to even try. If we put ourselves in a box first, if we label ourselves before anybody else can, well then, what can they laugh at?

How can they judge us? We beat them to the punch. Ha.

I read something recently that said the things we enjoy the most, we keep the closest to our hearts. We keep them in privacy and guard them fiercely. We're terrified of sharing them with the world for fear of what others will say. We may dabble in creative outlets and surprise ourselves by how much joy we receive from doing so, but we don't dare make a post about it. We won't think twice about posting our avocado toast, lattes and new Target throw pillows on social media, but God forbid, we post the drawing or song we've secretly been working on that we're actually quite pleased with and proud of. If it's not perfect, then why bother?

What I'm about to say is likely going to make a lot of you cringe, but I'm going to say it anyway. For those of you into astrology, I'm a triple Virgo. Triple. Fucking. Virgo. For those of you who don't know the significance of that or simply don't give a shit, it means I've battled the illusion of perfection my entire goddamn life, and with that illusion comes the exhausting struggle of people pleasing, which is why hearing that sliver of criticism cracked me wide open. It's funny how you can hear a thousand praises but it's the negative comments that stick out and seem to define your worth.

So, I cried. A lot. Had my pity party of one and then realized – I don't care. A very badass woman whom I consider one of my many mentors in the field

told me to stop apologizing. Don't say sorry, don't write for anyone else but yourself, find your voice and hone your craft, everything else is just irrelevant background noise. Perhaps to some, my writing style is too optimistic and overly flowery. Perhaps it isn't as pragmatic and hard-hitting as you'd like. I could do hard-hitting – I have done hard-hitting, and I've won awards for some of those pieces.

But what I've come to find is that my favorite pieces to write are the ones where I draw from my own experience, and those of others, and wrap it into one collective think-piece that will hopefully lend a new lens or resonate with someone in whatever way they needed. Not everyone is going to like or relate to what you put out into the world, but that's kind of the point. Not everything is for everyone, and that's okay.

So, whatever shit you're going through this month, I encourage you to let it out. Express it in some way and let yourself be vulnerable. Allow yourself to feel all the feelings and then share that with someone, even if it's a total stranger (or in my case, a whole slew of strangers). Afterall, it is now officially soup season – the season for slowing down and checking in. The world is a much better place when we all stop pretending to be such hard asses.

Till next time...



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George Lipscomb

Capital Region Timekeepers



BY OP CALLAGHAN

George Lipscomb. Photo provided.

After a four-year hiatus to pursue higher education, I returned to the Capital District, anxious to re-immense myself in what was a thriving local music scene. I grabbed a copy of a local music magazine, and like a starving man opening a menu, began to metaphorically salivate

at the possibilities.

My anticipation led to disappointment as many of the venues and bands from four years earlier were no longer around. New clubs, and new bands had taken their place. In an attempt to salvage the night, I ventured over to the QE2, where I had spent more than a

few nights sneaking past security in an attempt to experience the raw, loud, debauchery of underground music. I was now an adult, of legal age, with a valid ID and a new determination to hear something new and inspiring. There was no cover charge (what?!), and I quickly got myself up to the stage

to get my fix.

I learned from eavesdropping on a nearby discussion, that the band on-stage was a new group, called The Staziaks. Their infectious power pop and well-crafted songs immediately caught my ear, as did their drummer, whom I recognized from playing in a band

called The AD's. I had seen the AD's play a bunch of times at 288 Lark, Duck Soup, and at least one Lark Fest performance. I liked the AD's; especially their drummer, who hit hard, had great timing, and played like a f*ck&#g gladiator. He smashed, kicked, pounded and slapped his way through an all-too-short set. After their set, I caught up with the drummer, and kicked off a more than 30-year friendship with Mr. George Lipscomb. So, ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it for George!

RRX: Alright brother, let's kick it off. When did you start drumming, and why?

GL: I started playing when I was 11 years old. I saw The Beatles and The Rolling Stones on Ed Sullivan and was hooked. Music was always being played around my home and my grandmother's home, so rhythm was instilled in me at a very early age.

RRX: Who were your influences then? And now?

GL: As I mentioned The Beatles and The Stones, so Ringo Starr and Charlie Watts, definitely. All of the Motown drummers. Now, my influences are John Bonham, Joey Kramer (Aerosmith) and Max Weinberg (Bruce Springsteen, Conan O'Brien).

RRX: Are there any local drummers who inspire or influence you?

GL: Joe Daly and Al Kash.

RRX: Who? Just kidding, and I couldn't agree more. Do you play any other instruments?

GL: No, just drums. They're my babies. Next to my daughter.

RRX: Tell me about some of the bands that you've played with, and those experiences.

GL: I have played with many over the years, starting in the early 80's. The Extras, The AD's, The Tea Bones, The Side Winders, Coal Palace Kings, and my favorite, The Staziaks. I currently play with Black Belt Jones.

RRX: Cool name! How did you come

to play with The Staziaks?

GL: I was looking for a new band, and I was approached by Jim Powhida, who was a guitar player. He told me that his brother John was starting a band, and I went to check them out. The rest is history.

RRX: One of my favorites. John is a great song writer and player. I enjoyed sharing the stage with you guys over the years. We always had fun, and got into just the right amount of trouble. Tell me about your drum set-up.

GL: I play a five-piece Ludwig kit, with Sabian cymbals.

RRX: What was your first kit?

GL: A blue sparkle Kent kit!

RRX: Do you write music?

GL: I contribute to my current band, Black Belt Jones.

RRX: Best gig ever?

GL: Larkfest 1997 with the Staziaks, Washington Avenue Stage.

RRX: I was on that same stage with The Decadent Royals that year. A great crowd, great bands, and a great day. I just listened to a song by Black Belt Jones called "Save You". It's a great tune, with great drumming. What is your biggest personal criticism of you as a drummer?

GL: Overplaying! You've got to keep it simple and rhythmic!

RRX: Is there a band out there that you'd like to join as the drummer?

GL: Rival Sons!

RRX: When is the next time we can see you play?

GL: October 26th, at The Hangar On The Hudson, for a Staziaks reunion, "Rock Out for Scott", in memory of Scott Dorrance and to benefit Juvenile Diabetes. There will be a bunch of other bands, including my new band, Black Belt Jones, The Chris Busone Band, and the incredible The Lawn Sausages. The show kicks off at 3 PM sharp. Scott Dorrance played guitar in The Staziaks and a bunch of other fortunate bands. We miss you, Scott.

See you all there.



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Alliteration

Poughkeepsie hardcore band talks pizza shop venues and the collective fun of Paintbox.



(L-R: Xavier Anderson, Michael Rodriguez, Ryan Kealty)

BY JOSHUA REEDY

Xavier Anderson, Michael Rodriguez, and Ryan Kealty are Alliteration, a heavy alternative band from Poughkeepsie who are known for their blistering live performances. The trio released their full-length “Reject” near the end of 2021. I sat down with Alliteration to discuss upcoming splits, pizza-shop shows and their recent signing to Paintbox Records.

RRX: You guys have been around for what, seven years at this point? And

your latest release was last year?

MR: Yeah it was October 2021.

XA: There were so many things that happened in those two months, we played our album release show in November, I remember.

MR: I remember because I did Inktober for my art. I’m trying to learn how to do tattoos; I’ve been tattooing oranges so far. I’m getting there (laughs).

RRX: And what number LP is that for you guys?

XA: Technically two but we like to think of it as the first one. We put out a

seven-track thing before that.

KR: It’s like, too long for an EP and too short for an album. But Spotify tells us this recent album is our second album.

MR: I think that stuff depends on who or what you are. If you’re in a progressive metal band and you write five songs, they’re not going to be under 20 minutes.

KR: And a grindcore band could make a 40 track EP in under 10 minutes.

XA: Anyway, I wish it was our first album.

RRX: No love for the first release?

KR: It’s just that it’s old and we were 19. I think it was 2016.

RRX: Are you already working on new stuff as well?

XA: Since everyone else has already talked about it, I’ll mention it; we’re working on a split right now but I won’t mention all the bands just yet.

KR: We were gearing up to do a split with three other bands, two tracks each so it’d be about eight tracks. We have two tracks recorded right?

XA: We have one track recorded. My computer messed up and I lost an entire song. There’s no bass, no guitar but we still have the drums at least. I was 80% done.

RRX: That is heartbreaking. Outside of the split, anything else?

KR: The split got pushed back so we’re gonna record another song. We think we’re just gonna put out some singles and maybe arrange another split in the meantime.

RRX: The single game is definitely very viable these days, a lot to do with attention spans, I think. But you guys

have a special sound that draws attention quickly. You guys have a great blend of heavy and alternative, what’s sound going forward.

XA: I write a lot of the stuff, and we’re kind of sticking with a lot of what we’ve done so far - outside of that early seven track release.

KR: What we refer to as “the Alliteration canon” is the 2018 EP and forward. That’s where we really found our sound.

RRX: Would you guys say that your songwriting process is more focused on the live aspect?

In unison: Yes.

RRX: I think the vocals are unique as well, where do the lyrics and style come from?

XA: The lyrics? Depression (laughs). Vocals, I grew up listening to a little Rage Against the Machine. We all listen to a lot of Microwave and PUP’s first two albums.

RRX: Are you all from the Poughkeepsie area?

XA Yeah, it’s time to tell the story.

KR: Xavier is from Poughkeepsie proper. Mike and I are both from a suburb about 20 minutes outside of Poughkeepsie. I met Mike at BJs and met X at community college. X found out I play bass and scream sometimes.

XA: I found out he had done screaming vocals and was like, “What? You’re so nice though, stop it!”

KR: At the first practice, Mike was like, “I really don’t want to be in another band.” but at the very end he was in-

to it.

MR: Because it was cool! I didn't think you guys would be that cool! But look where we are now.

RRX: And Xavier, I've heard your solo stuff but what else do you guys have going on?

XA: Mike and I have Huddle. which is kind of a hardcore thing? A lot of it is slower.

MR: I am the vocalist in that project. I've been writing lyrics based on Bojack Horseman.

RRX: Ah, so more depression.

MR: Yes! Depression is basically the fourth band member.

RRX: So, what's the Poughkeepsie scene like? What's the main place for your type of music?

MR: Mainstay has always been hardcore.

KR: It's pretty dead here but they still book tons of hardcore bands.

XA: New Paltz is pretty relevant for our genre, but COVID shut a lot of stuff down.

KR: There was a lot of pop-punk and easycore leading up to 2016 as well.

MR: My Place Pizza was the venue.

XA: My Place was always big but it really blew up a bit later.

RRX: Is this a functioning pizzeria that people threw shows in?

XA: It is now just a pizza place but before it was a pizza place owned by this guy called Six Seven who would just throw these free shows and people would buy pizza.

KR: And he and his employees were very into music so sometimes they'd come in and play right after doors before most people showed up.

RRX: Let's talk about Paintbox, you guys were recently added to their lineup?

XA: Yeah, they reached out, and we had other labels reach out. We had to talk about it because some of the other labels reached out and asked us to do stuff that we didn't really want to do.

But they (Paintbox) were all really cool.

KR: Years ago this local label reached out and it seemed cool at first, but you had to go to a specific studio with a specific guy which would have cost us about 3000 dollars for an EP.

XA: It was mostly the money, It would probably have come out good, they were just asking for a lot. But Paintbox is just a group of people, like a collective that works together.

MR: And that was the appeal to us, they were like "You do your thing and if you need help, we got you." It feels like bands that are actively helping each other.

KR: They've all been really supportive.

RRX: So, what are your impressions of the Albany area?

KR: We played a show at Pauly's with Hubris Djinn and I remember a bunch of stuff went wrong. My amp started smoking halfway through the show and I sent it to a place, and they kept it for eight months and didn't fix it.

XA: But no, to get back on topic, the Albany scene is pretty wild. We had only had that one pre-pandemic show with Hubris Djinn but now it's been great.

KR: I'm glad we got up there now, when we're more experienced and people already know the words to our songs.

RRX: Before I close out, anything you guys want to say?

KR: Shout out to the people at Paintbox, Noelle from Doors at Seven and the Faucet crew. Shout out to Casey and Kevin specifically. And Peter Herrick

MR: I want to add that we are working on screen printing and doing patches as well.

The band: @alliteration_ny



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Astrology

BY T BRANDON RUSS

Welcome to the Monthly Astrology Feature. I'm Conscious Medium Brandon Russ and I combine all the tools of the trade for your journey. Connect with me at <http://linktr.ee/brandonruss> for events, classes and private readings.

Before you sit down and watch Halloween 1 through 16 again or think holiday retro with a Hocus Pocus is a safe bet, you might want to get past the Full Moon in Aries this month. It's aggressive and ready to fight through the emotions. The sun in Libra give balance to aggression, so hang on the upset apple cart and don't let it topple.

Aries – Creative change and even relocation is a possibility. More than a little love is on tap as your full moon makes an appearance and Mercury makes you question what makes you happier.

Taurus – Time to get REAL Taurus. You might not have to be all in with work, but you do need to catch up with friends, family and what works best for YOU. Don't let the opportunity slip by.

Gemini - October is a plan-tastic time for you. Need a little patience as things unfold. So grab that pumpkin spice latte and let us plan out next steps. Dump that brain into a plan. Mars in your sign makes it super easy to see it come to life

Cancer - You are your own best

audience, aren't you. Time to make an impression that you are more than emotion, you are a smart (and valuable) cookie too. This Aries moon is a bit tough, but it makes you spill the beans.

Leo - If you aren't getting lucky, it's Not Barry White's fault. The mood is so ripe for romance, you might not want to wear clothes as you forest bathe yourself. Love everything you do right now.

Virgo - So remember when you felt like going out and being the life of the party? We don't either. Time out chair is here. Learn about what you need Hermit, Mercury in your sign is telling you self talk over externalizing.

Libra - You goal setting, son of a gun. Where you are outgoing most of the time, the combo of Sun and Venus in Libra makes you look at what makes you happy and what project you want next.

Scorpio - Stay ahead of health concerns but you'll be shining at work and being there for everyone. So make sure you pay attention to the little signs. Remember your smooth communication through all this. React or not, its still communications.

Sagittarius – You really love the start of the holidays, including Halloween. You Love love LOVE, the decorating, and the vibe you can create. It's a

great way to distract you too, because relationships are a little bit on the back burner

Capricorn - If you go missing, you're in the woods or some other grounded setting. You feel the shift... you look around and realize that it YOU. Big changes coming and this energy in October is about resting up for the launch

Aquarius – You love fall but not for what you might think. You love it because it's back to work time. Only

this time around, you are questioning, why am I here, other than what can I accomplish. Funks will be normal so grab that cider donut and get back on track.

Pisces – Time to pull yourself up by your boot straps. Shed the nonsense and focus on what is really important. Expect people and situations to change drastically. If you keep your focus, sky is the limit. Think negatively and it's like a bad number one draft pick that hurts you for years.



T Brandon Russ
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Bobby Morris Picket is Still Dead

BY JOHNNY
MYSTERY

What else would I write about in the October-issue? Figured I'd get "Monster Mash" outta the way, right outta the casket. It's the only Halloween record most people know or even care about and that's a shame. There's a lot of good ones. Aside from Christmas music, there are more Halloween tunes than all the other holidays combined. How many songs do you know about Thanksgiving? No, not The Turkey Trot, that's a dance. Perhaps a few Fourth of July songs and they're all written by John Phillip Sousa. Halloween is perfect for rock n roll. It is after all, the Devil's music....

The Fleshtones-"I Was a Teenage Zombie": If you can resist a song like this from one of the coolest bands on earth, I don't know what else I can say. It's the title track from a cheesy B grade 80's flick. That's my kind of movie. And The Fleshtones are my kind of band.

One reviewer at the time claimed it was song of the year. I have no doubt he was right.

John Zacherley- "Dinner With Drac": This list just keeps getting cooler. John Z was a horror movie/teen dance show host in the 60's. He had legions of fans in the New York, New Jersey area. This song was a national hit that brought him a bigger status. Check it out and while you're at it, look for his interview with The Box Tops on his Disco-Teen show from 1967. He interviews a 16-year-old Alex Chilton as mayhem ensues. Just hilarious!

The One Way Streets-"Jack the Ripper": Without a doubt this is the greatest lo-fi, Halloween garage record of all time. The singer can barely carry a tune, the band can hardly play, although the drummer is surprisingly competent, and this record contains the worst one take guitar solo (if you

can call it that) I've ever heard. And it all builds up on the Peter Gunn riff. I was beside myself the day I found a copy of it! Just amazing, even though you may have a different opinion when you hear it. At least I hope so.

Richard Delvecchio- "The Green Slime": The title track from a badly dubbed B-grade horror sci-fi film. The monster is a green, one eyed lumpy bumpy octopus-like creature that terrorizes a group of astronauts aboard the Gamma 3 space station. My friends and I saw this on a double bill with "2001 A Space Odyssey" and believe me our 12-year-old brains dug "Green Slime" more than the artsy-fartsy Stanley Kubrick epic. Hot girls in tight silver space suits didn't hurt either. Fuzzy guitars and synthesizers throughout this creepy classic which has a decent cult following.

Bauhaus-"Bela Lugosi's Dead": You

think I'd forget about this? Not only does it set the mood with its creepy guitars, space percussion and Peter Murphy's short echo vocal delivery, it sounds like it was recorded on a 4-track cassette deck. Yeah, a low-fi gruesome masterpiece and the "Stairway to Heaven" of the gothic lifestyle. Still sounds and smells as fresh as a day-old corpse.

Real quick, be sure to check out the Bacchanalia Music Fest to be held at over a dozen venues in downtown Troy during the weekend of Sept.30 thru Oct. 2. Over 100 bands, local and from around the world. Not only music but also other arts and food. See you there!

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Lost and Found Review

BY MATT MASTERSON

If you are mostly dead, your friends take you to see Miracle Max. If you are hungry, your friends should take you to see Max Clement at Lost & Found in Albany.

I first met Max in the winter of 2021 when he was working at Rosanna's in Albany - an outstanding Italian restaurant you should also eat at - so I was excited to hear that he was taking over the kitchen at Lost & Found.

Lost & Found has always punched above its weight class with better than you might expect food coming out of that little kitchen tucked into the back corner. It still does.

The kitchen is open for dinner on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and for brunch on Sunday. The bar is also open on Wednesdays. Go online to verify this as we all know that so many bars and restaurants still have changing hours and staffing issues. Thanks Covid.

I was focused on brunch. If brunch isn't your thing you can get a lot of the dinner menu at brunch, so there should be something for everyone. Or just go there for dinner.

The brunch menu is eclectic, which, if you know Max, makes sense.

With charcuterie being one of my great weaknesses I had to start with the country pork terrine, served with beer mustard and grilled bread. Did I go to a French bistro by mistake? Yeah, it was that good. I should have ordered a glass of red wine with it, but I was already half-way through my Bloody Mary (also very good) and that probably would have been too much of a change up.

Next, I had to have the blackened shrimp and grits, served with cheesy grit cake, spicy sauce and poached eggs. Was I back in New Orleans? Here Max

channels his inner Paul Prudhomme. This is blackened. This is spicy. This is done so well it maybe would have brought a tear to the late Chef Paul's eye (and not just because of the heat). I can offer no higher compliment.

With this I had a buttermilk biscuit with jam and butter, which I absolutely did not need to eat. As good as any biscuit I've had (similar to Zoe's, but she moved to L.A. and doesn't make me biscuits anymore). I suspect Max is hiding someone's southern grandma somewhere in that tiny kitchen.

While I was eating too much and reading the menu to begin planning my next visit I noticed how many vegetarian and vegan options were available. As a dedicated carnivore, I knew I was not the best person to judge such dishes. This problem was quickly solved with a phone call to my mostly vegan, always vegetarian friend Kate who immediately agreed to meet me for brunch the following Sunday. Everyone should have a friend like Kate. She is mine. Find your own.

After ordering a drink from the excellent bartenders - have I mentioned that Lost & Found has an entire roster of excellent bartenders (and servers, hello Sarah Jane) - we settled on a shared appetizer, the tomato salad, a vegan dish even I love. I was eating bowls of August tomatoes with salt and pepper long before I ever heard the word vegan, but today it is vegan. C'est la vie.

One of the cruelties of living in the Northeast is how short the tomato season is, but it was the perfect time of year for it and it was wonderful. Likely gone from the menu by the time you read this, you'll have to wait until next year for the next iteration. It will be worth the wait.

Now we diverged. Kate ordered the seitan wrap. I tried seitan wings once

(she made me) and I thought they tasted like a fried kitchen sponge soaked in hot wing sauce, so we will take her word on this one. She said it was the best-cooked seitan she had ever had. "They always over cook it and this is not over-cooked," she specifically said.

Our mutual vegan friend Pretty Michael requested that we bring him something to eat and Kate ordered one for him as well. He also declared it to be exceptional. So there you are.

I ordered the chilaquiles - tortilla chips, salsa verde, pickled jalapeños, radishes, cilantro, and sunny eggs with crispy chicken. This is a dish that in my mind only goes one of two ways - great or glop. No glop here. Another solid hit.

Want something more traditional?

The breakfast sandwiches I saw looked fantastic. The breakfast burrito of the week looked like it weighted five pounds. Just want a burger or a chicken sandwich? Can't go wrong.

So, if you find yourself in North Albany on Sunday at brunch time by yourself or with friends, you can go to one place and have food from France, Mexico, the Big Easy, from the south, and the northeast. Other places too. I haven't eaten the whole menu yet. The corned beef hash is next on my list.

My advice? Go see Max at Lost & Found for dinner or brunch. Have a few drinks while you're there. And then have fun storming the castle.



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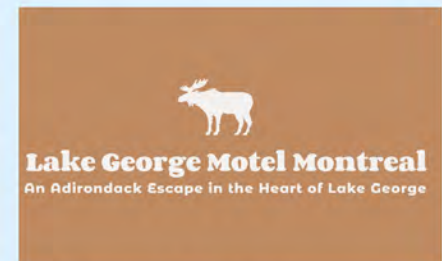
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Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

If you are reading this and you are under 65, God bless you and all you stand for. If you are 65 plus, you will appreciate this, and perhaps you have experienced something similar. You know how they call the times of being a senior citizen “The Golden Years”? I’m going to add two words, “The golden years my ass.”

Consider this a word of caution to anyone still in the workforce and not even seriously considering retirement. Believe me, when you hear my story, you’ll be on the phone to your elder-care lawyer by the end of the day.

As of this writing I am 66 and hoping to hit 67 if my vital organs hold out. The story begins when I hit 65 and was required to sign up for Medicare. It seemed initially easy; my wife was still employed, and I was on her health insurance plan. When I spoke to my Medicare rep, I was instructed to just take Part A, and don’t worry about Part B, C, D or any other letters we’re informed about from Joe Namath, Jimmy “JJ” Walker and William “I’m Kirk dammit” Shatner.

That all worked until this past June, right after my wife retired from the State of New York. Suddenly, I couldn’t get any more meds, for someone who has had a heart attack, has high blood pressure, diabetes, sleep apnea, kidney issues and has a “member” that looks like a bent carrot, you can see there was a problem.

In essence, all of my medications, 99% them vital, would have to come

out of pocket. If it weren’t for GoodRX, I would be writing this piece without an arm and a leg. That also meant no medical appointments, no blood tests, no pee tests, no drug tests (well maybe that one was ok), for nearly three months. Fortunately, I stock up ahead of time on my regular meds, plus the samples provided by my medical providers, helped somewhat.

Why did all this happen? An easy explanation, my wife retired before 65, and could stay on her health plan. The problem was I was not signed up for Part B, so my health care plan dropped me like a hot rock. Wait, you say, why didn’t the Medicare people tell you about this? Why didn’t your wife’s employer tell her about this? Why didn’t the health care plan people tell me about this before her actual retirement date? If I had a word that rhythmied with douchebag that would be my one-word answer.

Let me pause for a moment to send praise to my wife. I’m having major panic attacks (and without happy pills that ain’t easy), minute by minute I thought I would play Fred Sanford and have “the big one”, and not one person I call can give me the proper answer, and passes me off to someone else, or gives me the “You should have read the fine print” story. My wife was a true rock, she calmed me down as best as she could and told me it was gonna be ok, we’ll either fix the problem and all will be well, or I will drop dead and she won’t have to listen to my bitching and

moaning anymore. I’m a lucky, lucky man.

So, cut to the chase, it took a while, but I finally got signed up for Part B. That was the easy part, now I have to get Medicare to get that information to my wife’s employer STAT. Once they got it, I then had to have her employer get that information to my health care plan, also STAT. You would think STAT means immediately. You would be wrong. As of September 1st, my health insurance is now back, I have drugs

again, I’m damn near an official Medicare member, and I’m seeing doctors again.

Let this be a lesson, no matter what your age is right now, plan, plan and plan. You are never too young to be ready to get old, it creeps up in no time. As for my wife and me, we’re all good from now through the next three years, when she has to go on Medicare herself, and the merry-go-round starts up again...bartender...

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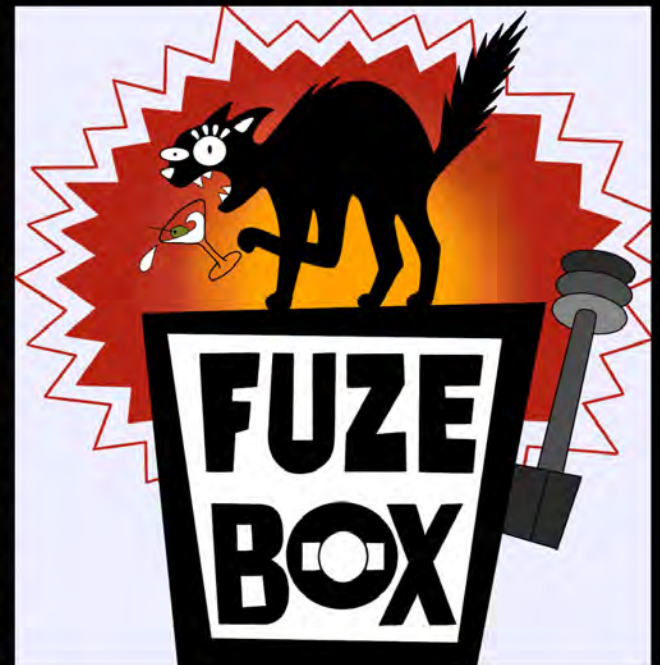
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