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August 2023
Vol. 5, Issue 8



ALBERT CUMMINGS

A national performer with a local start and a life on the the road.

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THE HEIGHTS

A feature edition of our regular column about what it takes to make a scene.

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RALPH RENNA

“Capital Underground” host and musician talks about the road beyond.

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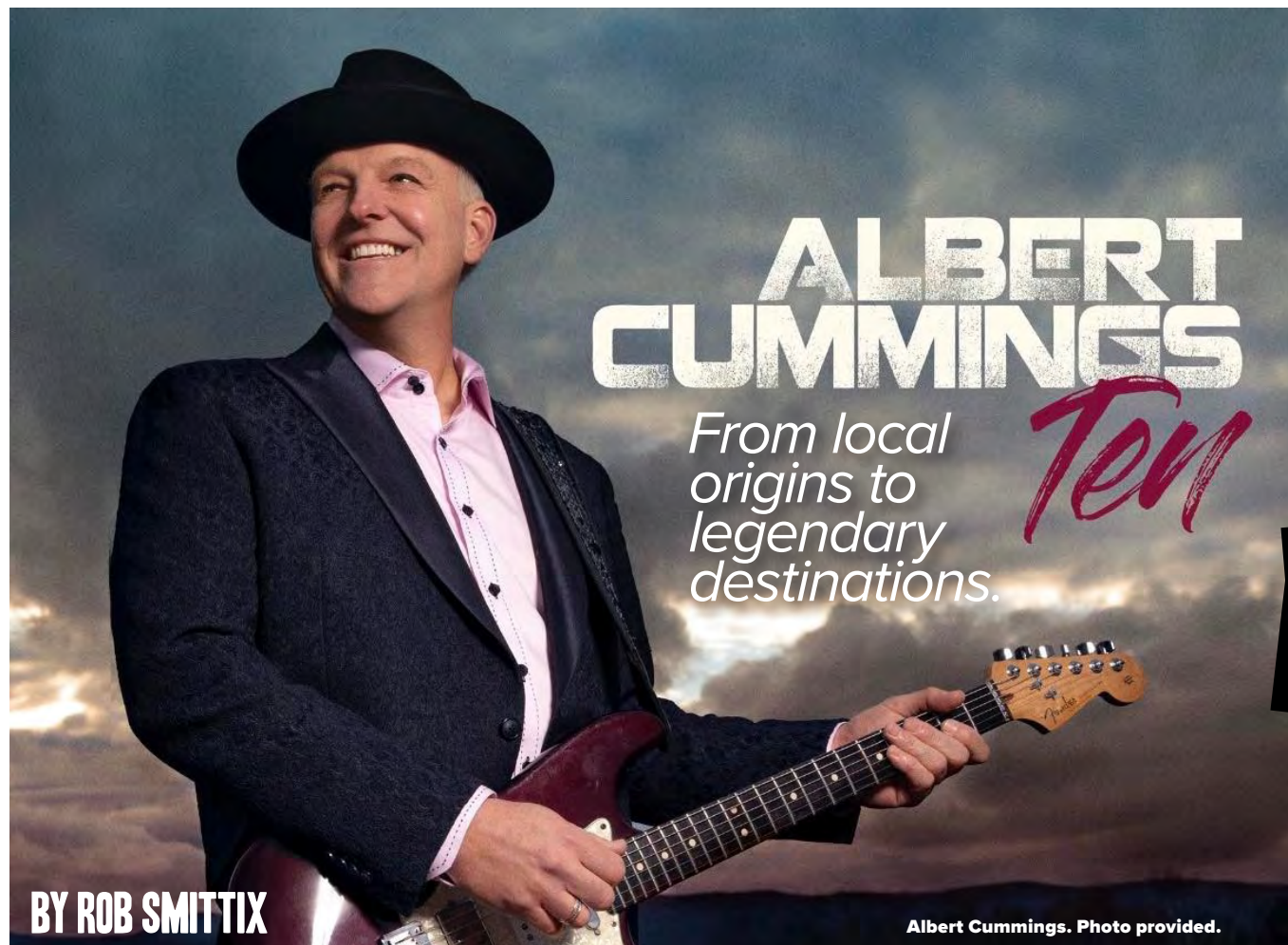
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AC: Hey how you doing Rob?

RRX: Great, so how have you been?

AC: I'm doing good! Looking forward to the Troy gig.

RRX: What I hear from my boss Art Fredette and his mentor in radio Jim Barrett is that it came full circle having you back and playing the Powers Park Concert Series in Troy August 26th (5:30pm). Years back you came with Swamp Yankee for the Uncle Sam Blues Jam. They couldn't even remember what year that was because it was so long ago.

AC: I'm trying to think here, it was probably around '96 or something like that. Troy is literally where I first started playing. It's the beginning of everything and where it all happened for me. When I hooked up with Double Trouble and the whole thing, it all started in Troy.

RRX: Awesome. I heard that you

played acoustic shows at Positively 4th Street in their basement. You've come a long way.

AC: I did, I played electric shows in there too.

RRX: Nice.

AC: That was quite the little place.

RRX: When's the last time you've been to Troy?

AC: I'm usually in Albany, I go through Troy, down Hoosick Street a lot but other than stopping in a restaurant or something you know? I don't go there much other than just passing through.

RRX: It's really come along, there's a lot of happening stuff going on over there. We're certainly happy to be a part of it and having you swinging on through to play. Vito has been putting on this series for 20 years now. He calls it his baby. This is the 20th anniversary of the Powers Park Concert Series. Rumor has it, he

might retire after this one, so this could be the last one, at least under his belt.

AC: Right.

RRX: What's been going on in your life? What have you been up to?

AC: I'm still building, right now I'm building my own house. That's what I'm doing today. The music keeps growing and growing to the point where I can actually pursue it. I'm trying to find a balance and still be able to do it all, but music has really started to take a front seat for me. That's what I've been looking forward to but until my boys were grown, I couldn't do it. My boys are 27 and 22 and now they're finally at an age now where they don't care what I do. Early on when I first started to get some attention, I went out with BB King for six weeks one time and I came home and my youngest had grown half an inch and I noticed it. I was like nope, not missing it, so I kind of





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Published by Imperial Broadcasting
in conjunction with
Radiatorradio.com.



Albert Cummings.
Photo provided.

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put it on hold and now it's finally time for me to do my thing.

RRX: I totally get that. Somebody I know knew Aaron Lewis's kid and this kid didn't take to music at all because it reminded her that her Dad was always on the road and missed a lot of growth, like you were talking about. I mean going on the road with BB King had to be one of the best experiences of your life.

AC: It was incredible, some of the experiences that I've had are just mind-blowing. You grow up hearing all of these guys and guitar players and now I'm good friends with most of them. The only guy I haven't met yet that I want to meet is Clapton. I'm sure I'll get to him, but I haven't risen up enough yet to get to his radar. You know what I mean?

RRX: Maybe we should knock him down a few levels and you can meet in the middle.

(Both Laugh)

AC: Yeah right, yeah! What the hell

buddy?

RRX: It's a wonderful thing to be able to make a living on music, it's a very small percentage of people who can.

AC: It's very small.

RRX: I like to say that I finally make my living on music, but it certainly isn't my band that's been around for almost 20 years, it's this radio station and this magazine that we have that focuses on music that pays my bills. It still feels good to say that I make my living off of music.

AC: Well yeah, you're still in the boat, you're just in one of the different compartments that's all.

RRX: Exactly. I didn't go on the road with BB King or anything, but I've met almost everyone I've ever wanted to. Now I'm talking to you, so I can retire.

(Both Laugh)

AC: There you go. I just got back from Nashville a couple of weeks ago

and I just finished another CD that's even better than the last one "Ten". I did it with a guy named Tom Hambridge, who I think has four or five Grammys under his belt but the recent Grammys; he's kind of got his finger on the pulse of my style of music. He does a lot of stuff with Buddy Guy; he actually plays drums for him.

RRX: No Kidding.

AC: Buddy was in North Hampton last week or so, they invited me to come play with Buddy and I got to sit backstage with him and hang out. I learned how he met John Lee Hooker and Big Mama Thornton. One on one listening to Buddy Guy tell me stories and getting to go play with him afterwards was just... what a night, it was so much fun.

RRX: I could imagine. I'm sure you have stories but then you meet people like that and the stories they have, it's got to be surreal. But we all had to come up through the ranks, like you played smaller shows in the beginning and

now finally the traction is moving. When did "Ten" come out?

AC: I think it was a year and a half ago, something like that. The new one will come out... I'm looking for probably February or around there. I try to keep it under two years I wish I could do an album every year but I just don't have the time man. You've got to only have one career to do that.

RRX: Exactly. It's not easy. Time is tough to come by.

AC: We're taking off for Europe on the 28th for three and a half weeks so were excited about that.

RRX: That's very exciting.

AC: Italy, Romania, Ireland and UK.

RRX: It doesn't get much better than that.

AC: It's so much fun but I'm also grateful to be playing Troy again because that's where it all began. Troy has a lot of dear memories for me, I'm really looking forward to the whole thing.

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Fuzz Kebabjian

“That Fuzzing Rock Show” brings the world of rock, and everything else, to the 518.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Fuzz Kebabjian. Photo by Stephanie J. Bartik.

When you cover the music scene in the Capital Region, you are the music scene; you become a part of it. You are the megaphone. Your lyrics are the words of every rock hopeful and metal veteran that they couldn't squeeze into their songs. You bring a dimension to the sick shredding and blast beats; you make them human.

“That Fuzzing Rock Show's” Fuzz Kebabjian has been the “fifth Beatle” for a while now, and he's not going to let up. His podcast has listeners from the region and the world in the thousands, and his political campaign, well, it rocks.

I connect with Fuzz and we talk disposable campaign promises.

RRX: So I figured the first thing I'd ask is how you came to be called “Fuzz,” but they only pay half-rate for questions that have obvious answers. Love the beard. Is that actually why they call you fuzz, or did you have a sweet fuzz tone

in a prior band? Assuming it's the beard, can you tell our readers your secret to lustrous beard grooming?

FK: The answer is not so obvious, although it may seem so. I got the nickname “Fuzzy” when I was 17. Sean McFerran (RIP) from China White gave it to me. We were playing a show at Saratoga Winners. Back then I had BIG hair (it was the 80's for f**ks sake, give me a break) He stopped and looked at me and said “your hair is so fuzzy, that's your new name...FUZZYYYYYYY!!!” Thus, Fuzzy was born and has stuck to this day. The secret to lustrous beard grooming is moisturizing with the sweet nectar of women. But that's a whole other story entirely.

RRX: You have a podcast called “That Fuzzing Rock Show.” Since podcasts are all the rave, we're a little behind the game on that, but we march to the beat of our own drum, I guess. So what is That Fuzzing Rock Show about? Really, what makes it stand out from

some Jimmy Dip's rock-themed podcast?

FK: That's the thing about the show. Both “That Fuzzing Rock Show” and “Capital Underground” march to the beat of their own drum as well. We DON'T compete with anyone. We mainly support the genres of music that are often misrepresented or outright forgotten or omitted (although OUR support is for EVERYONE. We support the scene, not try to own it.) It's not about numbers or who you know. Whether we do our shows to 1,000 or 10,000 listeners/viewers, it's always going to be original, great content.

As for what it's about, if we had to put a “shelf tag” on it, it's a show based on interviewing and promoting local and national bands/artists. On a broader spectrum, it's about everyday life. It's what people are thinking but don't want to admit. We have an edge to us. We say what we want (obviously within moral guidelines) and some of our stuff (most

of our stuff not related to music) is dirty. It's what people are posting on social media. It's what everyone thinks and does when nobody's looking. We just have the nutsack to admit it. And just for the record, I will NEVER let Ralph Renna retire. I do have to thank our sponsor, The Helderberg Meadworks. They stick by this show no matter how crazy we are sometimes, and support EVERYTHING local. Peter, Jessica, and the crew are amazing, and I couldn't have a better sponsor in my corner. (Go to the Meadworks and buy EVERYTHING!!!)

RRX: I think one of the reasons podcasts are so much fun is because they can be very DIY. You can sit in some room in your house, relax with a couple of friends and just talk. Record it, and bang, it's a podcast. But it's like “easy to learn, hard to master.” What do you think makes for a podcast that can stand out?

FK: I think what makes a podcast

stand out most is quality. The content you deliver to your audience is key to a good podcast. If you don't have content that people want to see or enjoy, you're f**ked from square one. Production quality is huge too. If it looks like shit, it's perceived as shit. You also need a brand. Something that stands out and puts you separate from the rest. Mine is the Fuzz head (thank you to Myron Lauzon for your masterful artwork over the years) and the color neon green. Everyone associates that with the show now. Sell your brand, you'll sell your show. And finally, you have to have personality. Someone the folks can associate with. Just putting a color on a show doesn't make a show. Don't follow. Always lead or get the f**k outta the game.

RRX: One of the cool things about podcasts are the fans. I heard a cool thing that people who are alone stop feeling that way just a little bit when they see people on television. Probably the same for podcasts, right? So about

fans. Have you met anybody that you only know because they found your show and are a fan? Do you ever connect like that?

FK: First let me start off by saying that the audience is EVERYTHING!!! I couldn't do this without them!! There are a ton of people that I've met due to the show. I'm not a people person by any means, but I love my audience. They are affectionately nicknamed "degenerates". When I first started doing this with Dave (Dave'd & Confused) we had some women in the audience send panties to me. We were shocked when they started actually coming in. Fast forward to me branching off and starting That Fuzzing Rock Show, they still kept sending them, so much so. There's a "thong tree" in the studio that has roughly 30+ pairs and counting. (ladies, if you want to donate to the tree, send me a message and I'll give you the address.) Sorry went off on a tangent, but several of the audience that was with

Dave and I are STILL degenerates listening every week. One chick even has an "alarm system" set so she doesn't miss a show. It's CRAZY... but I love it.

RRX: Saving the best for last, you're running for president. Our very own Rob Smittix is your running mate. And you all are on the Keg Party ticket. So should we just vote for you because you're awesome, or is there a platform? And who's playing on that platform when you're done with it? So you get one executive order, what is it?

FK: That Smittix is a loose cannon. A renegade. Some would say a complete trainwreck (and that's HIM saying all that) and I love everything about my running mate. We have a platform for sure. You will have to wait for the campaign to kick off or for the State of the 518 Address for that. The keg party represents "degenerates" and the common people who dont give a f**k. We want to fix shit, not make it worse. Smittix and I are going to smash the mirrors and

clear the smoke in Washington and show those snooty so and so's just what owning shit is all about. My executive order is: LIKE, SUBSCRIBE, FOLLOW AND SHARE THE SHOW. Honestly, my executive order would be something to fix this f**ked up mess we live in. As your president, I get WAY more than one executive order, so stay tuned for that. Honestly, politics sucks balls. I avoid it on the show at all costs.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Comments? Remarks? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

FK: If you're not already subscribed, go to YouTube and sub to the channel. Follow us on Facebook, TikTok and Insta @thatfuzzingrockshow and @capitaulndergroundradio. We promise to disappoint and possibly offend you daily. Carry on f**kers!!



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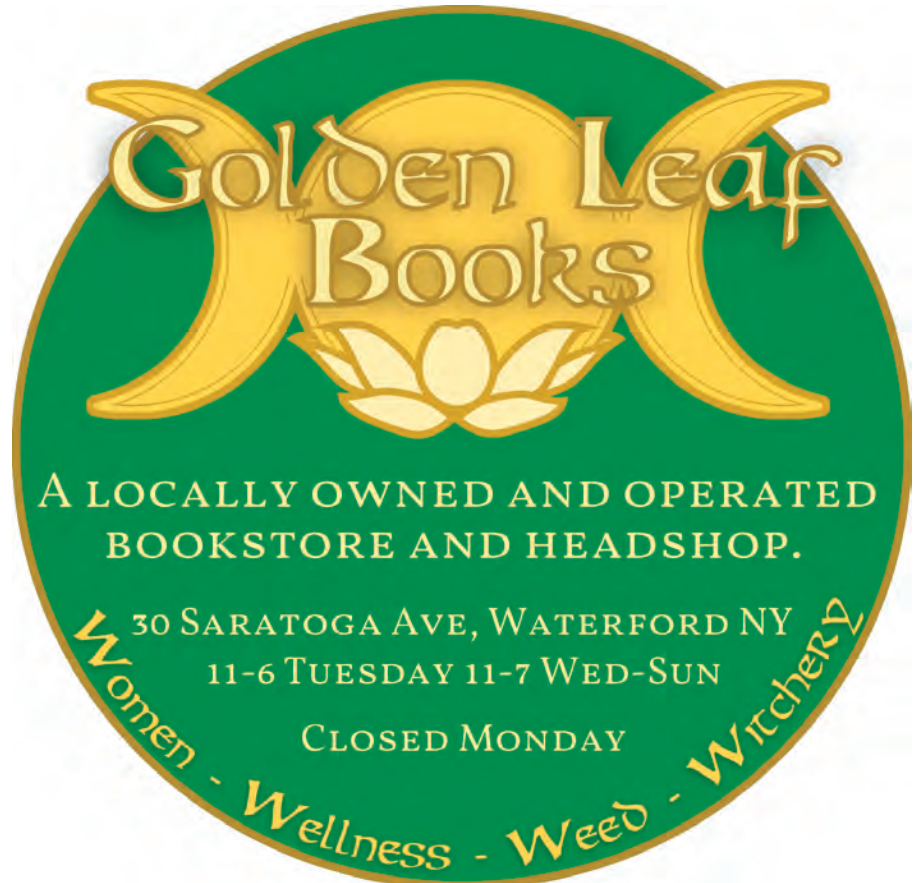


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Beatin' the Odds

Southern Rock rebellion alive and kickin' in the northeast.



BY LIAM SWEENEY

Beatin' the Odds. Photo by Stephanie J. Bartik.

I love southern rock. It's a family thing, growing up getting rocked in my stroller while my dad drank beer and listened to the Allman Brothers coming out of a bar jukebox. C'mon, it was the seventies. Anyhoo, something about southern rock hits me in the heart and makes me want to howl at the moon. We all have a music that does that.

Beating the Odds is a band out of this area that has taken the mantle of southern rock excellence and worn it

from the Adirondacks to the Catskills. From Clifton Park, this group really has what it takes to rock house.

I connect with the band to discuss beer and life on the road.

RRX: Beating the Odds is a local Southern Rock band. You guys have been all over the area, and you've opened up for the Charlie Daniels Band. It's impressive. But I will play the lay observer, the uninitiated, the unwashed mass and ask; how can a northeastern band truly play Southern

Rock?

BTO: It's quite amazing the Southern Rock Fan base that exists in the Northeast. Each of our members, like yourself, was weaned on Southern Rock. When I was a teenager in the late 70's, Allman Brothers, Skynyrd, Outlaws, Tucker all lived on the turntable. We just try our best to do the genre justice each time we plug in. We also play from the heart and feel like we capture the spirit authentically.

RRX: Southern Rock is really a

rebellion. Maybe because the South struggles with rebellion. In some cases, the historical reason of Southern rebellion has been divorced of just the feeling of rebellion. Southern Rock embraces the feeling of rebellion. Does Beating the Odds as a band have a sense of rebellion?

BTO: Great question. The short answer is yes. We are a loud, raunchy, yet polished live Southern Rock show. We like to have fun doing what we do. Being boys from the Northeast, we are

not as connected to the south and it's historical struggles as much as we are with the rebellion of rock and roll. It's a safe bet we won't be arrested throwing a TV out the hotel window.

RRX: I've heard you cover Skynyrd. Do you write original music, or it is covers only? And, assuming from what I hear, that you're all seasoned musicians, have you ever sat down and put your own stuff together? I ask, because southern rock is so distinct, I imagine it would be hard to put it into something new. So, any original stuff?

BTO: No original stuff. Our rehearsals are calculated and focused on doing 2 things: Keeping our current material air tight and adding new material and making the new stuff air tight. We go off on tangents sometimes, but within the structure of a cover tune.

RRX: I grew up on oBeatutlaw country and Southern rock. My dad always had Skynyrd on, or the Highwaymen. I talked before about rebellion, but it's just this "anything goes" atmosphere, this sense of making it in the world with moxie, beer, and friends you call family. Do you put any of that into your music, and if so, how?

BTO: Well, it starts with our fans, and I hesitate to call them fans. Most of them have followed us so long they are part of our family. Every single performance we draw off these friends who come out in droves to see us. We rarely have to worry about playing to a partial full venue. Our fans know we leave it all on stage and we do it for them. We are VERY fortunate to have this, and it takes years to cultivate...We are going on our 12th year.

RRX: You opened up for the Charlie Daniels Band. That's a big brag, and well earned. I always wondered if there was a mismatch when you open for a big act. Charlie's rig, in all its infinite mysteries, probably a little bit higher end than most. Is there ever a fear you're going to blow something on your

guitar or a pedal because you're plugging into a super-pro rig?

BTO: Thank you! We were honored to get the Charlie Daniels gig and on March 17th, 2023, we are opening for Molly Hatchet at the Strand. The truth is to your question, no...That is never a concern. We own our own large system and have taken some bigger stages with bigger systems than ours...MOST nationals play similar rigs to what we do, just mic'd through a bigger FOH system. As far as performing is concerned, we are confident in our show, our live experiences and what we deliver. We just do what we do whether it's our own show or an opener.

RRX: All music brings people together. It may only bring two people out of a thousand together, but still. If you're not playing to bring people together, you're just exercising your hands. So Beatin' the Odds brings people together, and you all with them. I'd like to give you a chance to talk about the family your music has created.

BTO: I alluded briefly to this above in your other question, but there is so much more that makes the bond and union between the people that come see us and Beatin the Odds the band, special. It's sort of cliché for bands to call their fans family sometimes. I will say that in my time playing in bands, this is something very special. It's one of the reasons we know we are going to draw. Our friends, fans and family, which by the way are all the same, deliver to us every single time we play. So, it's on us to make them want to do it again and again. Many of our band members hang out with many of our fans all the time. After a while the line between fans and friends gets so small that they are the same thing. We are so grateful for this friendship that it's never taken for granted. Ever.

Thank you for allowing this interview.



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BY JOE BARNA

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What is a scene, how can it be strengthened and what can you do to help?

But First...

Welcome back to my monthly article for Xperience. I hope you have found the first 3 installments to be informative, provocative and engaging. It's been my esteemed pleasure having the profound opportunity to express my interests, passions and thoughts on a variety of topics with each individual who has taken the time to read these offerings. I'd like to send out a heartfelt thank you for your support and feedback. I promise to always be transparent, honest and forthcoming with my presentations and hope you will offer your comments whenever possible.

Now, enough of the sentimental stuff...Let's get down to business

Have you ever wondered what it takes to build a scene from the ground up? Why is live music so important in cultivating a thriving arts community? Do jam sessions really have that much of an impact on the progress and future of the performing arts in our neighborhoods? Why should I, as a musician, go out to show how much I value the efforts of others when I'm not performing? How does the non musician play an important role in the evolution of a

scene's growth?

Hmmmmmm...Such a vast amount of information to unpack and so little time...I'll do my best to share my thoughts on these topics. Hopefully, after completing this article, you will have a more thorough and comprehensive understanding on the importance of developing a flourishing arts scene in your community. It isn't an easy task to answer these questions in a single article. But, as an advocate for growing a strong and respectable performing arts community I'd like to give it my best effort.

So, the first question I think we need to address is "What is a scene?"

After nearly 30 years in the business, having performed over 5000 times, traveled around the world, having been a booking agent, a promoter and having attended over 1000 live shows as a listener, I have the confidence and experience to answer this question with conviction.

My simple answer... A scene is that which transpires off the bandstand, stage or arena. It is those individuals that choose to attend and support public offerings that create a bustling and provocative live arts community. To me the performances or exhibits are the attractions. They are the products or

experiences being offered in an attempt to attract those wishing to have a scene they can both be proud of and look forward to. For example, when I perform I do not consider myself as part of the scene. It's when I go out to listen to others, view their artwork or watch a live performance where I consider myself a part of any given scene. If the attractions have no audience then by default there exists no scene. We as artists and performers create the opportunity for a scene to be constructed, but if there's nobody there to bear witness then no scene is present.

What does it take to build a thriving scene and a live performing arts community? Well, it is a variety of synergistic elements that bind together at precisely the right moment, melting together like the vibrant colors of a Picasso masterpiece or the ingredients contained in a masterfully prepared meal. If any of the portioning is off on either account it changes the complexity and outcome. All things must be measured just right to garner the desired results.

You might be asking yourself "Enough with the fancy descriptive language...How the heck do we build a thriving scene???"

OK OK OK...First, having the infrastructure to accommodate live

performances, art openings, dance recitals and other attractions is necessary. Then, you need venues willing to offer their spaces up to possibility. Next, you need talent that can retain people's attention and excite the community in a way where they wish to see these endeavors succeed. Lastly, and most importantly, money and marketing. Why are these 2 things imperative in developing a scene? Because, no person ever attended an event they didn't have knowledge of or couldn't afford.

What is the importance of having a thriving live arts scene?

I've heard many people over the years say that live music isn't that important or necessary. There are other things to do and music can be a nuisance? Well, you all found out real quick how important music was when during the "lockdowns" it wasn't readily available. We as a species tend to take things for granted and say things like "I'll just go next week." or "I'll catch them next time." Missing your favorite songs, artists, bands, venues and beyond had tremendous negative effects on our mental, emotional and spiritual states over the past few years. I will not be wordy in answering why music is of such importance. I'll simply repeat that which has been exclaimed by 80's hard

rock band Cinderella...

"You don't know what you've got till it's gone."

Now, Let's talk about jam sessions and what they mean to a scene...

When I moved back to upstate NY from Manhattan in August 2015 it killed my soul not to have live jazz in Troy, no jam session and no venues to collectively gather for the jazz musician. Coming from NYC, where the session scene was so electric and thriving, I found it difficult to settle in and felt disillusioned about living back inside the beast known simply as the 518. What is one to do when there is no meeting place to springboard concepts, network with those of like minds and develop one's craft away from the gig environment? It was a serious letdown to say the least. I quickly realized that if a session didn't present itself soon then it was gonna be a long depressing road ahead. Gigs are a way to express oneself and make some money, but the

session environment is where relationships develop, networking takes place, we are met face to face with our shortcomings and the opportunity for personal growth takes shape. There is no place to hide at a strong session. If you have social anxiety you must work on it, if a tune is called you don't currently know you must find a way to play through it, if you are deficient in playing a certain style you're gonna have an up close and personal lesson on how to play it. Aside from the music, sessions offer the chance to be around wonderful people off the job. They connect individuals in a way that simply playing one's own gigs can never truly match. They present options not found by gigging and link personalities together that otherwise would never have the opportunity. They are the glue that holds music communities together and the building blocks that establish a brighter live music scene moving forward.

How can the non-musician participate in the building of a powerful arts community?

This one's the shortest and easiest question to answer...

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I'd be a fool to think it was that easy for everyone. Yes, there is sickness, financial limitations, family problems, job demands and other reasons many do not find the opportunities to be present on the scenes in their communities. I totally relate and sympathize...

However, understand this...Music and the performing arts heal wounds unlike any medication ever could. They open doors to meeting others like ourselves, who might benefit from our presence and friendship. Simply hearing the right song, viewing a beautiful piece of art, taking in a majestic image from the lens of a local photographer, watching the gracefulness of a regional dance performance or even listening to a solo act at a local restaurant while

consuming a favorite food can bring a sense of peace in ways no other experience offers. It allows us to step away from our daily grinds, if even for a moment, to see the value in life's offerings swirling all around us right here in our community.

There are many reasons or excuses we can use to keep ourselves isolated from the scene. It's easier to stay home and watch TV or waste time on the computer. I get it. But, I also get this... The most valuable asset we have in this life is TIME. It is the only commodity we can never once again retrieve when spent. If you wish to build a strong, thriving, respectable, engaging, inclusive and exciting scene, put some time aside to be present. It really doesn't take much. Just a little love, a little energy and some motivation.

Warmest Regards,
Joe



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Ralph Renna

*Thirty-five years of
Capital Underground,
and friendships lasting
lifetimes.*

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Ralph Renna. Photo provided.

T rue friendship isn't a paved road. I think it's a road that you pave with shared experiences, and the curves and dips and bumps are hard wrought, but give it its character. In any area, in any scene, you find people who have carved out roads well-traveled.

Ralph Renna has built roads, inroads,

by which many of the Capital Region's shining stars have found their true north. A figure in the metal scene, the progenitor and earnest caretaker of Capital Underground, Ralph is looking back on the map he's made. Oh, and he was here with us when we turned the lights on. That.)

I connect with Ralph and we dis-

cuss old times.

RRX: Capital Underground has celebrated its 35th Anniversary this year. So if you had birthed it "of your loins" in 1988, it would be a millennial now. At some point, it just becomes an aspect of your life more than something you're doing. So take us back to the beginning. Did anything then tell

you Capital Underground was going to stick around?

RR: The local music scene has always been my baby. But it has nothing to do with my sperm. Haha. In 1988, I started to volunteer on 88.3 WVCR FM. This radio station gave us the freedom and the power to put local bands to the forefront and mix them up with

national acts. So the concept has been there, but the name Capital Underground was born until 2006 when I went to 104.9 The New Edge. And no, I did not think that 35 years later I would still be doing this. Although the name Capital Underground hasn't been around 35 years, the mission is still the same and I think, and from what I've been told, it was what I was most known for, the name "Capital Underground," that is. I've been talking about it for a long time, and retirement is not far away. And somehow, someday, I'll still be involved, but not as much as you have seen me in the past.

RRX: When I first reconnected with you in 2019, when we launched the paper, you had put together The Tradition, and it's still going strong. Can you take our readers into The Tradition a little bit? Why is it called The Tradition? Is it covers, or originals? What's the sizzle and what's the steak on it?

RR: Back in 2017, Zach Leffler and myself, we're writing some new songs for our band 'Let Go Daylight' and we started playing some covers. To tell you the truth, I was looking at it this way; I was booking a lot of bands, making a few bucks, very few dollars while putting a lot of hard work into it. Once I realized that we could do this, it just happened. I never compare the tradition to any of these well-established cover bands in the area. We were something different who worked in our own originals or just very cool, acoustic versions of metal and hip-hop songs. When Zach decided to leave because of work obligations, I did not want to start over again and decided at that moment that The Tradition would be me with hired-on musicians who will become part of the family or the camp as I call it. It was something that I'd never done before and territory that I was very unfamiliar with. I'm talking about being able to get up there with people who I've never jammed with before and improv for

three hours. This was very rewarding. It was a big accomplishment for me to get up there, play guitar and sing songs because people were so used to me screaming in very angry hard-core bands. Truth be told, I was a classic rocker way before I became a hard-core kid. Metal and hardcore music was just what I was good at and Last Call reflected that rock 'n' roll side in our music early on.

Now being able to mix this acoustic with a harder edge was my goal all along and that's where we are at today. The Tradition just released some original music with a full band. The new EP is called "Thunder Mountain" which I honestly I have to say is the rock band that I've always wanted to be in. It can go from a pin drop to a train wreck as far as dynamics go. We are playing very few acoustic duo shows, and now are out there as a four piece band again playing original music at some of the coolest clubs in the area like Empire Live, festivals like GEMfest, Rock & Oddities and others.

RRX: The metal years in the Capital Region, you have been prolific; Politics of Contraband, Last Call, Trailer Park Moonlight, Black John Wayne, naming just a few. You've been in a lot of projects, and as a media person, covered a lot. So what was a project that almost came out, something badass that no one really knew about?

RR: There were four bands. In the late 90s, I got together with my old pal, Dan Ryan, from War-Time Manner and Nick Manupella from Murderer's Row. It was called A Day's Torture. They had already written a bunch of songs that I loved singing to. That was very much like Down or Corrosion of Conformity. We played one show at the Chance in Poughkeepsie, and that was about it. I would've loved to have seen this band do bigger things. The current drummer in The Tradition, Anthony Delano, started jamming in the 2000's.

Continued on Page 28...

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Continued from Page 27.

Anthony and I were in a metal band together called As Above, So Below. Played a couple shows but that was it. I also jumped on bass again for a brief stint with The Fire Fight with some of the dudes from After the Fall, Dead Stuff, the Night Life and Endicott. We played a few shows. I definitely needed to get my chops up on the bass and they needed someone who was a better and I knew it. To tell you the truth, I was very focused on Last Call, and I could not keep up with these boys. Drummer Jason Nowak and I are still good friends. The Tradition and his band Under the Den shared the stage recently at Heldeberg Meadworks and have more planned. In 2009, Cass and I met, we recorded a few songs, very dark acoustic instrumentals under the name, Ghosts of Godparents. We have been together 14 years, and there's still some unfinished business with that music.

RRX: There's always something new on the horizon. New players, new bands, new venues. And with Capital Underground covering things, and with Tradition out there plugging away in the various outlets of the 518, I figure you have a good sense of what's out there that's new. What do you see rising in the east?

RR: To tell you the truth, I'm very out of touch of what's going on. There is a much more organic scene going on out there like venues like No Fun and Empire Live. Sure, I see what's going on through Facebook, but I think I'm out of touch a little bit. This is part of what I call retiring. I'm more concerned with the simpler things in life, as I lost my mother and father in the past few years. I look forward to family, mowing my lawn, gardening, and smelling the flowers. Life is short, and we must embrace it.

RRX: Our scene has faced challenges, some global and beyond our control, some just a product of new generations coming in with new tastes

and sensibilities. I look to people who've been in the scene a while like old-timers that have a knee that hurts before a hard rain. You see any challenges coming up, or sunny skies?

RR: Yes, as I get older, my knees ache when it rains. One thing that does keep me moving is the unity between myself and thatfuzzingrockshow.com. Fuzz and I do what we want and we have no one telling us what to do. That is freedom. It feels right that Fuzz and I are partnering with Radioradiox, Upstate Black and Blue, and 518scene.com on the Extreme music Awards and other events. Unfortunately, we traveled the wrong road in the past few years, but we are done walking that dog. I knew it would be only a matter of time that Artie Fredette and myself would reconnect and strengthen our friendship. It's been too goddamn long, and I don't wanna go to someone's funeral knowing we were at odds. I saw Art's vision and believed in his dream for many years leading up to Radioradiox and Xperience Monthly. Even if we were not speaking or distant. I would still smile and be proud of the accomplishments. The radio station and newspaper have made throughout that time. Although I'm still out on my own. I feel part of the team again that I once helped build 5 years ago. Besides Fuzz, Art is the only person I feel that we creatively shine together when we put our heads together. Plus, we are friends vs. "all about the business fakes" in the 518.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Comments? Remarks? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

RR: I feel like in the past 35 years I've really worn myself out and spread myself too thin. I am now focused on just writing and recording music, not so much playing live www.thetraditionny.com for what is to come.



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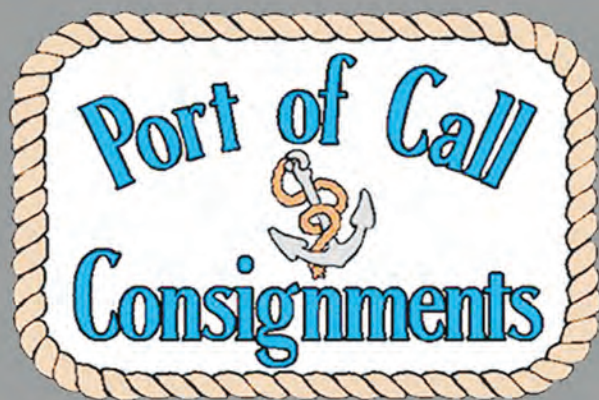
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Prog Digest BY KLYDE KADIDDLEHUMPER

Be vewy, vewy quiet. We're hunting wabbits!

Where in the Sam Hill is this going? What massive rabbit hole am I getting into?

Well, got to thinkin' – more a thought came to mind. Someone once, an adult even, mentioned that they didn't get the whole Easter Bunny thing. Why a bunny? Now, most of us know that it is a symbol of renewal, which is Spring – and then there is that whole holiday part. Those are only kinda the topic.

What is it we know bunnies are famous for? In a phrase that we can actually print (we can print anything we want here, but it would be nice if I had SOME decorum) – they are noted for doing the horizontal bop. Prolifically.

The music world is full of bopping. Not just the swapping of partners in the biblical way, but also for creating new life from folks we all know.

David Crosby (the Byrds), Stephen Stills (Buffalo Springfield, Manassas) and Graham Nash (The Hollies) got together to become CSN. And Crosby Nash and a bunch of other stuff. Of course, Judy Collins and Joni Mitchell were integral parts of the creative process. Not the first time a bunch of musicians have gotten together to create another thing.

Let's go in a completely different direction. James Brown's backing band at one time was known as The Pacemakers. Brothers Phelps and William Collins were both members. Phelps (aka Catfish) played guitar and William bass. William ultimately left due to, ummm, creative differences. Yeah, creative differences... there is, of course, a story that I will, perhaps have a chance to relate in a different piece. One day, he was introduced to George Clinton. Then known as Bootsy, he taught George a lesson from James about 'the one'. It's all about

the beat, baby. Thus, they begat Parliament and Funkadelic and the sound is P-Funk. From Maggot Brain to Dr. Funkenstein – always supporting the Mothership Connection and fighting against the evil Sir Nose Devoidafunk.

Heck of a hole we are down.

How heavy can the blues get? The Yardbirds were a decidedly blues band. Upon splitting up, Jimmy Page came up with the New Yardbirds. Apparently, Jimmy Page tried to put together a group with John Entwistle, Jeff Beck and Keith Moon. Moon suggested in his usual comedic fashion that it was likely to go down like a Led Zeppelin. Coupla different players, and a legend was born.

Now, to the really crazy, confusing bits. As Douglas Adam's Dirk Gently would say – we believe in the interconnectedness of all things. You know – the holistic approach. Anyway, there are a bunch of bands that are simply to webbed together to fit into one brain.

Marillion's bassist Pete Trewavas is also a member of Edison's Children and Transatlantic. Edison's Children features Rick Armstrong (son of Neal) as well as having featured Lisa Wetton (Syracuse's own), wife of the late guitarist John Wetton. Transatlantic's drummer is Mike Portnoy, former Dream Theatre drummer as well as a member of The Winery Dogs. Transatlantic also featured Neal Norse, formerly of the Flower Kings (wait – did I mention that the aforementioned Pete Trewavas is a member of the Flower Kings?).

OK – even when I was a young lad at a small liberal arts college in the North Country of NY – I couldn't do THAT much begetting.

So, are your favorites one trick ponies, or, are they in the rabbit hole?

Until next time.

Klyde




Steve Candlen

*Capital Region
Timekeepers*



BY OP CALLAGHAN

Steve Candlen. Photo provided.

The first time I met Steve Candlen, I was a relative newbie on the scene. I had just started drumming for 1313 Mockingbird Lane and was writing for The Source. I was on assignment writing a story on Jimmy Velvet, Steve's band at the time. In between sets, Steve learned that I was a drummer, and didn't miss a beat, thrusting his sticks at me and saying, "Go play Man!" Seconds later I was behind his kit, jamming with Mark Gamsjager and Pete Toigo, while Steve sat behind me hollering directions and helping me navigate my way through an unfamiliar tune. It was quite an experience for this new guy, and one that I'll never forget. It's that type of musical camaraderie and humility that makes Steve a local favorite both behind the drums and out in front.

Not long after sitting in with the

future Lustre Kings, I was meeting a friend of mine, who was an Albany police detective for lunch. He was introducing me to some of his coworkers, including Detective Jimmy Candlen. I asked if he was related to Steve, when he quickly responded, "He's my son! You're not one of those hippy musicians, are you?" All those present immediately broke into knowing laughter, as Jimmy proceeded to pridefully recite his son's accomplishments. Steve is an exceptional drummer, a talented songwriter, and an all-around great guy. Check him out with Family Tree, or one of his solo gigs, and be sure to check out his latest release Shine On, available at SteveCandlen.com.

RRX: Hey man! Tell me how you got your start with drums.

SC: I was four when I started playing the household pots and pans on the

kitchen floor with the wooden spoons my mom would use for stirring homemade spaghetti sauce. She didn't seem to mind and was actually very encouraging.

RRX: Tell me about your first drum set.

SC: I had several toy sets with paper heads that I went through quickly. A single snare drum followed, had that for a few years, then I bought my first full kit at 12 with money I earned from delivering the Times Union newspaper. It was a snazzy Red Sparkle Torodor kit, 20" bass drum 12" tom with a cymbal on the bass drum. The hi hat came later.

RRX: Who influenced you early on?

SC: influences were Ringo on The Ed Sullivan show and Buddy Rich on The Tonight Show. My first record was

The Chipmunks sing The Beatles, I wore that record out.

RRX: When did you start playing out?

SC: My first gig was playing drums in our neighborhood band. We were called Crystal Jam. We played our grade school and rocked the house. We played at the local firehouse and school dances and a local bar that had teen night rock shows. I think we even got paid for those gigs.

High school bar bands followed, around 16 I joined The Morons playing many gigs at JB Scott's opening for national groups like the Motels, Hot Tuna, The Stranglers and Blotto.

I then went on to play with my childhood buddies in a group called EYZ area bars and concert halls opening for regional groups like Talas (w/Billy Sheehan), The Lazars, Triffid, and even

opened for a young Metallica at the Skyway in Scotia.

I went on to play with local groups Fat and Bad, The Jimmy Velvet Trio (The Lustre Kings,) The Joe Mele/Gary Brooks Band, Mother Judge, Tom Healey, Chris Busone, Erin Harkes Band, Mike Iwanos Band.

I had my own jazz groups as well, Steve Candlen's Jazz Explorers and Steve Candlen's Big Bang Theory as well the first iteration of Family Tree with local faves George Muscatello, Keith Pray, Rob Cohen, Pat Perkinson to name a few.

I went on to play in a touring hotel group out west called Alon and the Movies that featured two great musicians Aalon Butler and Larry Hicks from King Curtis's group.

After that I went south to Florida to tour with a group called the Key.

I returned around age 25 to start an amazing eight-year touring run with Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Famer, Felix Cavaliere (The Young Rascals,) followed by playing 20 years with Columbia recording artist Franklin Miccare.

I've literally been playing full time since the age of 12, for a living.

RRX: When did you start writing and singing?

SC: I've always had a passion for writing songs, I was the primary writer in our early rock bands and wrote quite a few songs in my early teens. In my 30's I started playing guitar and singing as a solo performer. I've been doing that for the past 15 years or so as my primary income.

RRX: If you weren't a drummer, what would you be doing?

SC: If I wasn't a drummer, I may have gotten into the professional golf world. I was bitten by that bug at 25.

RRX: Tell me about some of your current kits.

SC: As far as collecting drums go, I enjoy the rabbit hole that is vintage drums. I have many sets and single drums that I rotate and play in my

studio as well as live. I play and own many types of instruments and use them regularly on my original recordings. I'm a bit of a jack of all trades on them. I'm self-taught and play at a utilitarian level on most.

RRX: Great! Who are some of your current influences?

SC: My current influences are many,

Wayne Shorter is a philosophical and musical hero, as well as Herbie Hancock, and Miles Davis. Love the modern playing of Marcus Gilmore, Kenny Wollesen and veterans like Jim Keltner.

RRX: Any advice for the up-and-coming drummer?

SC: Advice for up-and-coming drummers, get the best musical education you can. Follow your strengths and be passionate. Seek advice from those whose playing you admire and strive to have an individual voice on your instrument.

RRX: What are you currently working on?

SC: I continue to record and perform as a solo singer/songwriter and can be contacted through Facebook Messenger.

RRX: How did the Family Tree evolve?

SC: The current version of Family Tree evolved from my friendship with drummer Chad Ploss. We were practicing drums one afternoon when I asked if he would be interested in starting a double drummer type group based on improvisation. I asked Lori Friday and Kenny Hohman if they'd be interested and blossomed from there, bringing in Chris Carey after a few years to round out the group. The band has been evolving since. Our Monday night residency at Putnam Place in Saratoga has been going strong for 2 years this July!

RRX: Congratulations to you Steve, and thanks for being a Capital Region Timekeeper!

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Mike Trash The Erotics

From the heights of rock and roll to the depths of high-glamour sleaze, here's your one-stop shop.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Mike Trash. Photo provided.

Some sounds are iconic. I don't use that word lightly, because the word is played out, and there aren't enough words that give you the same feel. Iconic. Like hair metal. Like Motley Crue, WASP, Poison. The clothes, the over-the-top performances,

and most importantly, the whole-hearted embrace of sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll.

The Erotics have been tearing up the town and leaving empty bottles on every bar, table, and beat-up PA speaker within reach. We had a chance to

pass the bottle with Mike Trash of the band in question.

RRX: The last time we spoke, our publication was a baby, spitting up stale beer from it's bottle. It was a fun interview back then, and here we are, five years later. What have you been up

to? How have the Erotics fared half a decade on the mean streets? What did we miss, and what are you glad we missed?

MT: We'll since 2018, we've toured as usual US and UK, played some great festivals in the UK in 2018 -19, put our

a 3 full lengths albums, some ep's and singles over past 5 years as well, we stay busy. I'm always writing, so w like to put something out every year, be it single or eps. etc

RRX: Rot in the Shade; I'm thinking that's your latest album, pretty sure. I'm listening to it now. Pretty groovy. I definitely get like a Motley Crue-type hair band feel. Very tight, catchy too. What inspired this album? Was it something specific, or was it just time to put something new out?

MT: Rot In The Shade, is a play on words from the 1989 Kiss album "Hot In The Shade" we like to do silly things like that. We started writing a lot of cool tunes, yes it has 80s sleaze, but a lot of 70's Alice Cooper, Aerosmith, and ACDC in there as well, yes it was definitely time to put something out.

RRX: Sleaze is big. Well, it's sleaze. Big or not, it is ever present. The Erotics deal in sleave like a cornerstore porno rack. What is it about that vibe? Did you ever just want to sit down with an acoustic and write sea shanties? Sex, Drugs, and Rock and Roll, putting some of that loosely, has a perpetual draw. Why do you think?

MT: Well, not all the songs are like that. In fact one, tune "Diamonds" on the new album, is a ballad-ish tune.

RRX: I noticed you have a lot of merch on your Bandcamp site, which is probably the most well-set-up Bandcamp I've seen. I always stress to what few people listen to me that merch is really where it's at. How much money, let's say a percentage, do you make off merch compare to playing shows? Is it comparable?

MT: Yes, some gigs give us a good guarantee, but merch sales at the shows always make a difference.

We love having cool things besides, CD's and Shirts, we have all kinds of stuff, we even have our own alcohol/mead, called 'Blood Of The Wasted' which obviously not available on Bandcamp haha, but is available through

Helderberg Meadworks

RRX: I assume you all have some shows upcoming. The world needs sleaze, and you damn well aren't gonna bring it door to door. Not until Christmas and caroling. Where are you playing? Shoot as far ahead as you can. Anything in the fall would be good to report on too. Any seasonal events you always play?

MT: For the past 3 years, we've just been playing upsate NY, we're finally looking to get back out there beyond that in 2024, upcoming gigs offhand are July 21st, at Empire Underground, Sept, 9th. at Kings Inn for their outdoor 10-year anniversary party, and Fuze-box on Oct. 27th. for Halloween Party.

RRX: Albums in the works. We know 'em, we love 'em. Anything to top Rot in the Shade? And are you ever trying to "compete against yourselves" when it comes to albums, or do the songs just kind of write themselves over the course of practices? You want a chance to mention an album that you wish had done better – an "unsung hero" album?

MT: As a matter a fact we have 13 tunes ready for the next album, that we hope to have out in February 2024. Working with Don Fury again, we can mention the title yet, but we have one and it's a good one, new tunes are just as good as 'Rot n The Shade' some maybe a tad better. some catty anthems, one of them my dog Rosie inspired., one is a weird theatrical Alice Cooper Welcome to My Nightmare-sounding thing. another has a classic Thin Lizzy thing, and then it's all mixed in with the 80's sleaze.

Albums I wished did better other than my own are bands from the late 80's early 90's like Smashed Gladys, The Throbs, etc.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Comments? Remarks? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

MT: Rock N Roll Baby.



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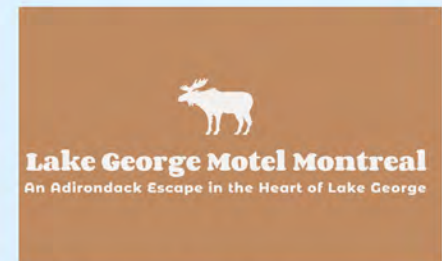
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Blase Debris Duane Beer

A band that has come into their own, and the long road to get there.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Duane Beer. Photo provided.

RRX: We interviewed Blasé Debris in... actually, it was one of our first interviews, in 2018, maybe, early 2019. Blasé Debris was kickin' then, and the foot is not sore yet. How have the half-decade between then and now treated the band, and let's skip over a certain would-famous 'ick' period, shall we?

DB: It's easy to lose track of time, so, let's see.... our album "The Gauze" came out in the summer of 2018. We also played the NYS Fair that year in near 100-degree weather. That I certainly remember. 3/5ths of that line up is still intact to this day. Myself, Charlie Monroe on bass, and Justin Birk on saxophone. At some point, we lost ex-Plaid bandmate, Bill Ketzer, on drums and got ex-Miserables bandmate, Tim Wozniuk to take over behind the kit. Patrick Ginnelly stepped aside, and Joe Dufresne filled the void. The current lineup has been together now for quite a few years.

We just recently finished tracking twenty new songs with Brandon Kapoor at Skyfall Studios in Argyle NY. The tracks are now left in his more than capable hands to do the mixing. And for the

first time that I can remember, recording was a breeze. We kept all my scratch vocals and guitar tracks. Pretty much played everything live altogether and kept the majority of it. Good rooms, good mics, good players, good songs = damn good results. I am really looking forward to hearing the finished product. "The Expiration of Expectations" is what the new album will be titled, and it is without a doubt our most Blasé album yet. Meaning, "its us", branching out, getting grounded, and playing off each others' strengths. I like it, and maybe, just maybe, a few others will as well.

RRX: Your band bridges two very popular genres, punk and classic metal. So I tend to look at genre as a spectrum, and your band is peaking in between that concentration of metal vibe and punk vibe. But at the end of the day, the proof is in the playing, the listening. Any interesting descriptions of the band you've heard from listeners?

DB: Back in the "Creep Cool" and "Morfiend" (past albums) days we used to get a lot of "you sound a lot like the Misfits but with double kick and guitar solos."

Nowadays I get a lot of "I liked you guys way more than I thought I would". I prefer that. I think we are at a point where we honestly don't sound like anyone else.

RRX: You all formed up in 2002, and that's twenty-one years now of being an entity. Lineups have changed. In fact you have more people that were in the band than you have people that are in the band now. That's a lot of influence that has gone into your songs. Can you think of any interesting, long-lasting contributions from past members?

DB: Tony Sewers was a monster behind the kit. He was fast and faster, loud and louder, nuts and bolts and thunder. Karl could play the guitar like he was born with it, and still put on a hell of a show at the same time. Patrick Ginnelly taught me more about guitar and tone than anyone. And really shaped and pushed Blasé into willing and new directions whether he realized it or not. It was Patrick who taught me that a guitar player's sound comes more from their hands than the guitar or amp. Hearing him say that totally changed my approach to playing. I rolled off the preamp significantly

and get all my dynamics via my right hand. It's a pretty awesome feeling to plug directly into a single channel amp, and with no help from any pedals go from clean to killer. That being said, having the right tools for the job sure does come in handy.

RRX: As a band that plays between the spaces of different forms of music, I imagine you swing closer to one than others as you record albums. One might be more 'punk,' one might be more metal, one might be like a box of Cap'n Crunch. Can you name some albums that were closer to metal, or closer to punk, or, well, Cap'n Crunch?

DB: Cap'n Crunch...I think Tony Sewers used to be in a band called Captain Crunch. All of our albums have had elements of rock, punk, and what I consider classic metal. The last thing I ever wanted to create was a one-dimensional album. I like an album to have a flow to it. What normally will take place is, I get to the point where, let's say, we have 9 new songs written. I start to look at the big picture to fill in the gaps. Tempo wise, lyrically, and literally. Certainly not filler

tunes, but different flavors.

RRX: A lot has happened since 2002, and not talking about buzzkills, but hell, 2002 was in the aftermath of a buzzkill, 9/11. A whole generation can now drink that were borne when you laid out your first jam. Your band, as a child; how did it grow up? And since it is 21 and able to drink, where would you take it for its first drink? What kind of drink?

DB: We started out as a band that envisioned itself visually as a cross between Oliver and the Rocky Horror Picture Show. Musically, somewhere between the Ramones and Wrathchild America with a bit of Bad Brains and the Misfits thrown in the mix. What we have now is, the visual aspect has been thrown out completely (anything goes). Musically, I see us as a decent cross stylistically between The Rezillos and Wrathchild, with a bit of Pop. Iggy that is. And sax, sax, and more sax... and DeBris. Now lets take this 21 year old boy called DeBris out for a drink. We are most certainly going to the Fuze Box (QE2) and ordering two red drinks (aka Alabama Slammers), a couple of Pumpkin Pie shots, and a couple of Rolling Rocks for old times sake.

RRX: You're still playing, recently (maybe recently) at Farming Man 2023 at Indian Ladder Farms. It's one of many festivals happening as of this writing, and Blasé Debris has been to a lot of big festivals, like the Warped Tour, SXSW and others. What could you tell us is the best thing about festivals, no matter the size, no matter where?

DB: Festivals, such as Warped and SXSW, are like "fuck yeah", "can you believe it?", "here we are". These are shows that at one point may have seemed unobtainable, but you persist, and persist, and make connections along the way and there you are. Well done and congrats. That, and I like to perform for folks that may be seeing us for the first time. Festivals can offer a nice bit of diversity.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Comments? Remarks? Educate, enlighten, emote – the

floor is yours.

DB: And finally, I reached out to my bandmates and wanted to get them involved in this here interview... this is what they had to offer.

Tim Wozniuk:

Q: What other instruments do you play?

A: I play a little bass, I mean it's small, not full sized. Charlie should try it some time. Maybe he could hit all the notes then.

Charles Monroe:

Q: Who are the top four worst members of Blasé DeBris?

- A:** 1. Tim. Obviously. Tim sucks.
2. Me
3. Whoever replaces Tim. Come back Tim! We miss you!
4. Duane

Q: So collectively as a five piece you are over 250 years old. Why are you still at it?

A: Because history may say our best days are behind us, but I believe our best day is yet to come. I love these guys. Even Tim.

Joe Dufresne:

Q: Why do you play music at your age?

A: Because music is everything to me. Because I still can, and will probably continue to try even when I can't. Because I'm the kind of person who will bang on his steering wheel while stopped at a light or in traffic even though I'm not a drummer. Because music can be sad, soulful, beautiful, uplifting, comforting, loud rocking noise, or an orchestrated symphony. Because, if I had a choice, I would literally do nothing else.

Justin Birk:

Q: When was the last time you were trolled online?

A: My profile pic is of me playing sax with Blasé. Some trolls assumed I play jazz because I play sax. They said something like "Jazz: play the wrong the notes and think it sounds good." The ironic part is that it was on a metal page, and I was playing some metal saxophone in the picture.



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The 5678's & Dancing with Freddy "Boom Boom" Cannon



BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

The 5678s. Photo provided.

The 5678's are coming to Troy on August 26th but here's some not so great news, it's a sellout. Unless you got tix, you'll be outside lookin' in and that's a shame. If you think you don't know who they are think again. If you've seen the movie Kill Bill, then you've seen them. Remember the Japanese girls playing in the club? That's The 5678's! A real band!! Barefoot, satin cocktail dresses and enough Teisco guitars to make a Garage Rock fan cry, these ladies are the real deal.

This all-girl band was formed in Tokyo around 1986 by two sisters. Sachiko and Yoshiko Fujiyama put together the group as a four piece originally. They became a trio around the time of their first tour of Australia in 1992. Yoshiko, who has a tattoo "Teenage Delinquent Queen" on her upper right arm was originally the lead singer but as the group has evolved, each of the girls have taken turns on vocals and often times, they are all singing at once. They perform like the ultimate girl group, playing covers of American

rock and roll from the 1950s to the 1980s. Fact is American rock and roll has always been very popular in Japan. Ask The Ventures, Cheap Trick and The Runaways for starters.

Slow to be known over here, the 5678's biggest fanbase is in Japan of course. Look at their website and you'll see there's not a lot of English up there. Enter Quentin Tarantino! The story as he tells it: "I was in Tokyo, waiting for a flight back to L.A. and killing some time in a clothing shop, when I heard their music playing in the store. I asked the clerk who it was and then asked if I could buy the CD from him. The clerk refused even when I explained I didn't have time to go to a music store and I would pay him double what it was worth. The clerk called his manager, and I got the disc." Of course, their fortunes changed once they appeared in "Kill Bill." The 5678's proved themselves to be unique and off the wall, with "I Walk Like Jane Mansfield" and the very excellent Ikettes cover "I'm Blue." Check out their manic version of "Woo

Hoo."

Their records are worth seeking out but be aware, most if not all are imports and not cheap. Recommended: "Golden Hits of the 5678's on the Hana label from 2003, The 5678's on the Timebomb label 1994, Teenage Workout Timebomb label 2002. If by some miracle you do get to see them at No Fun on River Street, you'll be in for a real treat. Also appearing with them will be NYC band "Sit and Spin" and local group "The Abyssmals."

Elsewhere, I've read about two young ladies getting in trouble for dancing at a Freddy "Boom Boom" Cannon show. This, I do not get. Since when are we not supposed to get excited and happy at a concert? Let's face it, Freddy is getting up in years and probably not grooving like he use to and I'm sure he might have even encouraged it. I don't have all the facts that went down but apparently the management of this theater requested that security turn them over to the police. If I get any more details, I'll pass them along but, in the meantime, if anybody

wants to get up and celebrate when Freddy Cannon belts out "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans" I say go for it baby!!!

Last but not least, I need to retract a statement from last month's story about Bobby Fuller. I reported that Bobby's brother Randy Fuller claimed Bobby might have gone to an LSD party the night he was last seen before his death. According to other informed sources, Randy never said this, thus making things even more mysterious....

One more thing, I and everybody else at this publication are looking forward to meeting and entertaining you at the 5th Anniversary party for RadioradioX on August 6th at The Hanger. This is going to be a great party you won't want to miss it. Come on up and hang out. I'm sure we're going to see some old friends and brand-new faces. Can't wait! In the meantime, get out there and hit the bins and stay away from those LSD parties....

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Observations and Ramblings From a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

I'm a little different than most cranky old guys. Overall, I embrace technology. As a broadcaster, former broadcaster, check that; once a broadcaster always a broadcaster. That's like once an asshole, well you get the point. As a broadcaster I absolutely HAD to keep up with tech in order to survive. The days of vinyl records, analog tape and payola, wait that's still around, okay the first two, were relics of the past. I had to adapt to survive, or time to be a Wal Mart Greeter.

When I was hired at my last radio job, one of my co-workers was technically challenged. No names, but we call him The Gold Standard of Broadcast News. He couldn't figure out how to right click or left click. Sure, you laugh, and we giggled but that was very tough on him. This man TODAY still has a FLIP PHONE! To be fair, he's older than me, not sure how much since he keeps it a secret. That radio station is now 101 years old, and it's not out of the ordinary to think he was on air on Day One.

Technology in 2023. Say what you will, but it is supposed to make our lives easier. But, what if one day, technology takes over? What if this turns out to be a digital version of "Planet of the Apes"? Experts say that can never happen, but to quote a James Bond movie, "Never Say Never Again".

Two initials should scare the crap out of you potentially. A.I., Artificial Intelligence. The use of technology to, in essence, think for itself, create for itself, to be...human...for itself. I've seen

and heard examples of AI that, while somewhat impressive, potentially makes things a little "2001: A Space Odyssey" like, and I can hear my microwave one day say to me, "I'm sorry Jeff, I'm afraid I can't do that."

Recently it was announced there was going to be a "final" new Beatles song released, using old tapes of John Lennon, similar to what happened with "Free as A Bird" and "Real Love" when the Anthology series came out. What freaked out fans was someone, okay blame McCartney, using the words "AI" in the press release. There was a lot of walk back after the fans revolted. Leave it to Ringo to set the record straight.

Speaking of The Fabs, some time back AI was used to have "Paul McCartney" sing the Beach Boy classic, "God Only Knows." I admit it was a younger sounding Paul, but if I wasn't paying attention, I could have thought this was the find of the ages.

There's the fact that being an old fart I know better. There's also the fact that my nearly 20-year-old grandson could hear that song and not know the difference.

Now let's get down to brass tacks as far as my profession. In 2023, most voices on the radio (say outside of Morning Shows) potentially come from different markets around the country. This is no big secret. It's quite possible that a radio station in the 518 has a "live and local" morning show, after that, you might hear people "pretending" to be from the 518, but who may

all be based in, say, San Antonio, Texas. I do not "heart" that idea at all, but it's not going to change at this point. Why? Because America doesn't give a rat's ass, what America wants now is "shut up and play the damn music."

With that in mind, it was recently announced a radio station somewhere in West Bumhole has a new Mid-Day "Air Personality", who is ENTIRELY based on AI. Now, not just no more local talent, but soon no more HUMAN talent.

Finally, I saw a story that there is a

company who can, using AI, not only write, but voice and produce commercials. So that's three jobs taken away by HAL. Well on the good side that will really end payola.

Don't get me wrong, technology is a good thing, and it can be very helpful. But as a parting shot, do a search for the 1969 hit song "In the Year 2525" by Zager and Evans. You can't hear it now without a shudder.

On the good side, keep in mind Tuesday is Soylent Green Day.

Be hearing you.



AI. Photo provided.



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