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Seth Biskind

Yort releasing a new album, "We Make it Here." You heard it here.

BY SETH CASALE

Seth Biskind. Photo by Kiki Vassilakis

They call him Seth, an interview with Seth Biskind. By Seth Casale

It is not every day that I can sit down with a fellow Seth, but I was able to catch up with this talented multi-instrumentalist, and songwriter to talk about some of his influences, and his new album with Yort set to drop on October 27th. The album was recorded/engineered by Tim Lynch at the recording Company, and mastered by Sam Torres at Polymouth, It's called "We Make it Here!"

RRX: Ok Let's jump right in. What are some of your early musical influences, and how have they shaped your songwriting and style today?

SB: I grew up in a very musical family, my dad is a great guitar player, and my siblings all play, my mom plays piano. For a long time, I didn't really play, I enjoyed music, and I liked singing along to things. I didn't really feel I had the skill to write or record. One of

the artists that really got me going into songwriting and stuff was The Mountain Goats, I was listening to some of his earlier material just recorded on a boombox and it was just a sense of "I can just write words, I can find things to say". Hearing more from him later and knowing he would just write the song and record it, and when he had enough material recorded that was an album. So the immediacy of that, just write, record and it's done was a big influence on me.

RRX: What are some other influences you have had as far as songwriting?

SB: I'd say some guys like Tom Waits and Nick Cave are a couple of my favorites. Lyrically a lot of stuff I pull from comes from stuff I'm reading. I definitely like songs that have a real narrative to them.

RRX: I think I read that you really got into music only about 3 years ago, what was the impetus?

SB: I had been recording for about

a decade, but outside of very few open mics hadn't really played out and was just kind of on my own doing my own thing. It wasn't till I moved back to NY from North Carolina right before the pandemic hit the US that I was like "I really want to get into music" so as those things began to open back up went out into shows. I went to Superdark Collective shows at Desperate Annie's in Saratoga, connecting with those people meeting people and talking about music. I had my very first gig as Headless Relatives, which is my solo project just at the beginning of 2022, so just last year.

RRX: When was it that you met up with Yort?

SB: I met them when I was going to the Superdark shows in Saratoga, they had a singer at that time they were working with but he was unable to play that show, so they played the songs instrumentally. At that point, it was just a 3 piece, just Steve, Joe, and Jared





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and I really enjoyed them, I had taken some photos and videos, so we sort of connected through that. At that point, they were looking for a singer and asked if I would be interested in doing it. Initially, I hesitated some only because at that point I was living in Glens Falls, and driving to Troy once or twice a week was a lot. Our first show as a 5 piece was the evening before that first Porchfest where we met you and Native Souls.

RRX: For the album, how many songs did you end up with?

SB: We went into the studio with 11 songs we felt really good about and we ended up with 10 on the album, and after mastering the 11th didn't quite fit. Almost all the songs except the first single, all the songs were already written when Connor and I joined. So all of these songs they had pretty well down.

RRX: Never having seen the band without you and Connor, it is hard to imagine, do you feel like your additions kind of "finished" the band?

SB: The 5 of us clicked pretty quickly, I can't say enough about all of them, but hearing everything from the early demos as a 3 piece and hearing what Connor adds is amazing. Connor plays some really amazing parts; he always has great input on how to tweak parts or arrangements. Hearing everything nicely balanced and so clear on this album is just so great.

RRX: How did you determine what to release as the first single?

SB: We had 2 songs we had been particularly happy with live and on the recording, so we knew pretty quickly what we wanted the singles to be and we wanted them to be pretty different because the album covered a lot of ground as our set does. So we wanted the first release to have a harder edge, and the next goes in sort of a different direction.

RRX: As for Headless Relatives,

what is the origin of that band name?

SB: The reason I like it is it sounds very dark and strange, but it's actually a linguistics term. I was an English major with a linguistics minor and I came across the term headless relatives a linguistics term that doesn't even exist in English. It's a relative clause without the head, and in English, the head is how you know it's a relative clause, so it would not work in English but some languages just work differently. So it's this very technical linguistics term but it sounds so macabre and weird

RRX: Headless Relatives started as your solo project, in terms of songwriting are you writing the songs and bringing them to the other members?

SB: So far it's all been my songs, all of the stuff in the set has been stuff I had already recorded as a solo. It's still kind of like I come in with the songs but it's sort of bare bones. I come in with lyrics and a basic structure, and then everyone adds their own parts.

RRX: I want to thank you for sitting down with me tonight, I'll now open it up for you to tell me about how to find your projects and see their life and anything you'd like to plug

SB: Headless Relatives has a website, as does Odd Duck Collective. Yort has an Instagram @enjoyyort and a Facebook page, Steve does a good job with that. I have my stuff on Bandcamp and Instagram. As for upcoming gigs, Headless Relatives has a Superdark Monday show at Desperate Annie's on October 16. A couple of big things for Yort at the end of the month, the day after the album release, October 28th we will be playing at a Halloween show at Whitman Brewing in Saratoga, and on Halloween Yort will be doing a live stream and recording at the Jive hive.





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BY OP CALLAGHAN

Pete Sweeney. Photo Provided.

I've been hearing about Pete Sweeney for years.

I used to see him play with Nick Brignola and love the way he seems to take control of the band; both pushing them when necessary and pulling them back to keep it tight. Pete is a master of his craft, and has shared the stage with Pat Metheny, Ronnie Earl, Dan Toler, Robben Ford, Larry Coryell, Andy Summers, and Duke Robillard. He's been performing and teaching around the area for years and has written a bunch of drum and percussion books for Alfred Publishing. I have been listening to his snare drum solos album "Snare Drum Solos and Etudes" and I am blown away by how tight and clean he plays. He can also be heard on the Michael Benedict "Jazz Vibes" album, which pays tribute to the legacy of Gary McFarland who is an underappreciated composer and vibraphone player. I cannot say enough about Pete, so maybe I should let him take it from here. Ladies and gentle-

men, Mr. Pete Sweeney!

RRX: How did you get started as a drummer?

PS: I got started in 1970 on the drums. I was given a drum set by my Aunt Joan that was an insanely cool red. It was later destroyed beyond recognition by my cousins. A few years later my brother and I got a junk drum set. My father thought it was a great idea for us to play outside, so we left it out there for the summer one year and it got tortured by the rain and the heat. The funny thing is... it actually sounded better but looked terrible. In the late 70's we got some Gretsch drums that I still have and are amazing. A 24" bass drum that I named the "The Punisher"

RRX: Who were some of your early influences?

PS: My earliest influences were Steve Gadd and Buddy Rich. My parents knew Vinnie Birbiglia who owned part of JB Scott's and they took me to hear him (Buddy Rich) on Central Ave

when I was underage. I'm still in shock. Vinnie introduced me to Buddy and I heard him anytime he was playing nearby. I had some great conversations with him. He told me about the Count Basie tune "Queer Street" with Shadow Wilson drums. He said that was the greatest drum break ever.

RRX: Amazing! Do you come from a musical family?

PS: My family is not musical. My brother always played drums. He's a beast. He's way into Vinnie Colaiuta. They are very supportive of music. They took me to hear all kinds of music live. I got to see the real Count Basie at JB Scott's, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Elvin Jones, Chick Corea with Roy Haynes, Zappa, James Brown, and many others.

RRX: Did you take lessons.

PS: I studied a lot in my teens with Dave Calarco. He's a great musician and teacher. I was very fortunate to hear him perform on a regular basis

with Nick Brignola who became one of my best friends. I also studied with Joe Morello for years in New Jersey. Joe had some of the best technique ever and a real gift for teaching. He could make you play better in five minutes by getting you to relax and make a few small adjustments. I learned how to teach from Joe.

RRX: I love the story of your first kit.

PS: My first drum set was amazing. I have no idea what brand it was. Too bad it did not survive the continuous lashing it received.

RRX: Tell me about your current set-up.

PS: I'm playing mostly Gretsch drums. They are bulletproof. I can do almost nothing to them and they always sound great. It's those shells with the grey paint inside and the die cast rims. I do have a collection of drums. I've got a bunch of Gretsch sets and Radio King snares. I have a Zildjian

cymbal endorsement and some great ride cymbals. I also have some strange things like a few Billotti Trinomes that play three tempos at once and a theremin.

RRX: Tell me about your first gig.

PS: My first gig was with a band at the Elbo Room. We were horrible. The PA we rented from Drome Sound had AM radio coming through the speakers that we couldn't get rid of. It's a miracle we weren't beaten up by the regulars at the bar. It was a ton of fun and they actually had us back, strangely enough.

Currently I perform with the Art D'Echo trio, Michael Benedict's Jazz Vibes. Tim Olsen's Big Band, the Matt Smith band, the Latin band Cubaquinto, Out of the Box, Ray Alexander's trio, and an organ trio with Jon LeRoy and Joe Finn.

RRX: Do you play any other instruments?

PS: I play piano everyday. It's great to play the melody of tunes and learn chord changes. I really enjoy the challenge. My recent favorite is "Lennie's Pennies" by Lennie Tristano. Very difficult melody to play accurately and up to speed.

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

PS: If I didn't play drums or any other musical instruments, I would have been a great attorney. I would have loved knowing the law and how to effectively argue.

RRX: Who influences you now?

PS: Right now I'm influenced a lot by my drumming friends like Bill Stewart and Kenny Washington, both of whom I've known for years. I am a big fan of Dave Weckl, Gary Husband with Allan Holdsworth, Vinnie Colaiuta, Cliff Almond, and Steve Gadd.

RRX: Any gig horror stories?

PS: Too numerous to mention. I'm not afraid of dying because I've died on stage many times. I think real death will be a lot easier.

RRX: Hahahaha! Alright, how

about good gig stories?

PS: One of the best gigs I've ever had was the first time I did a concert with Pat Metheny. He was at the Guitar Workshop in Big Fork Montana and I was assigned to play with him in his class all week. We played a bunch of the tunes from his album "Bright Size Life" with a bassist that's a Jaco freak. I still have his handwritten charts. Pat listens and reacts to music in a way that is very direct and immediate. He's easy to play with and a great guy to hang out with. He gave me some solos in unexpected places. You definitely have to pay attention. John Abercrombie and Mick Goodrick were the same way. They play with you, not at you.

RRX: Awesome. Any advice for the up-and-coming drummers out there?

PS: My advice to someone starting to play the drums would be to clearly define what you want to be able play and to decide if your goal is to be a professional musician or is this mostly for enjoyment? If your goal is to work professionally, you need to practice a ton to be able to provide a lot of different things for all kinds of personalities. You need to know a lot of songs, tempos, styles, and arrangements. Being able to take directions from a band leader and quickly adjust your playing means you have to have a lot of different skills, like chart reading and control over your dynamics. Having the willingness to learn and lock into who you are playing with is crucial. That requires a very attentive state of mind and a lot of energy. Get a lot of experience playing with other people.

Pete Sweeney is not only a tremendous talent, but a terrific guy. Do yourself a favor and check him out on either of the aforementioned releases, or on The Piranha Brothers CD, which also features local Time Keepers Michael Benedict and Brian Melick.

Until next time, keep counting!



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BY LIAM SWEENEY

Film School. Photo by Drew Reynolds

We reached out to Film School to discuss East Berlin snuff films. This is our story.

RRX: Every comic book hero has an origin story. What is the origin story for the band? (points if you tell it like a comic book origin.)

FS: Scrawny kid with mediocre taste in music starts fiddling with guitar pedals in his bedroom and boldly believes he might have something to contribute to the world of music. Hours upon days are spent toiling over tones and recording mediocre songs on a mini recorder. He bands together with

other musicians better than himself to create a massive wall of sound force-field designed to protect them from the evil world outside.

RRX: Every band's first song is a milestone. But so is the latest song. Describe the first song/album you recorded, and also the latest song/album you

recorded; what are the differences?

FS: I'm having trouble remembering the first Film School song written, but the first one Justin, Nyles and I worked on together was Ms Connection. We were at Justin's house hunched around a computer in his bedroom. He had a droney jam that we sculpted into

a song by layering on guitar and bass, and some quickly scribbled lyrics that came from humming a vocal melody. I remember feeling excited and vulnerable, and that we had just found a little pot of gold together.

The last song we worked on was Tape Rewind. Also started as a jam that Justin worked on that we sculpted into a song by layering on instruments, arranging and adding vocal tones that eventually turned into lyrics. Funny, I never thought about the similarities between our first and last until now. It's almost an identical process except present day we live in different cities, sharing work with each other over our own computers.

RRX: Like songs, every band has a unique feeling about their first show. What was your first show like? Was it your best show? If not, what was your best show like?

FS: There have been a few iterations of the band. The earliest

performance I remember playing was actually just a two piece in Oakland at the Stork Club - a nylon acoustic guitar and drums. Super stripped down, no pedals. I don't think I opened my eyes the entire show, I was pretty nervous. I also remember I could hear people talking during the set and it was distracting. The earliest performance I remember with the bigger lineup might have been Bottom of the Hill in SF a year or two later. At that point we had a massive wall of sound, there was no talking during that show.

RRX: Music genres are difficult for some bands. Some strictly adhere; others not so much. What is your perspective on the genre you play, or the genres you hover around?

FS: I used to hate them, now I accept them for what they are - map points for navigation, nothing more. If they help people find our music then they're valuable, we'll take it from there. Though if people come expecting us to

be 100% shoegaze or dreampop or indie post-rock they're going to be disappointed. We've never wanted to be a genre exercise, and I think that what people appreciate about us.

RRX: It's a lot of fun living in the present, but we all collect memories and give birth to dreams. We're talking dreams here. Where you see yourself next year? In the next five years?

FS: I would love to tour more, which is funny because we're in the middle of a big EU/UK/US tour. But I would love to be returning to these places next summer for festivals and visiting new locations like the Pacific Rim and South America. I love performing the songs and connecting with fans at the live show, it's where these songs come to life. It's the shared live experience that I'm loving the most these days, maybe because of the fragility of it all as we learned through Covid. And because we have a full catalog of materials now we can mix it up.

RRX: We all get a little support from those around us. And we also can be impressed by our fellow bands. Who do you admire in your community, and why?

FS: Any time a band I follow posts about touring it's inspiring. I know exactly how much work it takes to plan and execute a tour. It's a lot of work to say the least, maybe even more so for us smaller bands. It's the best kind of work for sure, but unless you do it yourself it hard to imagine the levels of effort it takes for the band and their loved ones. We ran into Spirit Award in Berlin. I only know them from socials, but it felt so good to hang out with them for a couple hours thousands of miles from our homes, and despite all the challenges we're both making it happen. We're both out for several more weeks, it's good seeing their posts. Right now Spirit Award are my heroes.

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Delaney Silvernell

She's got The Voice behind her... and the world ahead of her.

BY JAMES MULLEN

Delaney Silvernell. Photo provided.

GLENS FALLS - Delaney Silvernell has been on an incredible trip through music, from humble beginnings as a high school wunderkind to attending one of the nation's top music schools to moving to Hollywood to pursue her dreams. In 2018, she appeared on *The Voice* and managed to stick around for a bit, while her support system cheered her on from back in the North Country. Through it all, there's one thing that's remained consistent: pure, raw vocal power. You'd be hard-pressed to find another vocalist who sings with as much conviction, flush with strength and resonance that will nourish your soul with R&B stylings.

Last month, Delaney came through

the region for a bit of a homecoming on her first ever tour and I was fortunate enough to catch up with her backstage at the Charles R. Wood Theater in Glens Falls; here's our chat about her evolution as an artist, the challenges of life as a working-class musician, and finding the moments in music that inspire us to go on!

RRX: You've been on quite the musical journey over the years, from Queensbury High School to Berklee College of Music to being a contestant on *The Voice* and now even independently releasing music; what has that journey been like for you, and how have you grown and evolved over time?

DS: Oh, man, it really feels like *The Voice*... it was about five years ago that

everything was happening, it really feels like another lifetime, you know? Especially now doing the independent musician thing and really having a more grassroots effort towards things; I think there's a lot more longevity with that too, so there's something to be said there but it's been super dynamic just taking everything as it comes and doing our best year by year really! This is kind of the first time I felt like I had a team with me. I think it's needed.

RRX: I noticed some growth in your sound from your last EP to your new EP; You've got a lot of soul and R&B influences, there's some pop, and on the new stuff there's definitely some indie and folk elements as well... tell us a little more about that.

DS: Totally! I work on music all the time with my friends, and it's never been like "okay, now I'm gonna do this genre"; I just kind of make whatever resonates with me, so my recent EP "Blue Dream", the first couple of tracks are like this indie folk-pop sort of vibe and then the second two are very much R&B and soulful. I have a lot of reservations about that because it's a little hard to market, too. All of the blogs are like "What genre is this?", where it's definitely a mixture.

RRX: They always wanna put you in a box.

DS: Yeah, definitely! And that's great for, you know, commercial stuff I suppose but I also want to be performing and releasing things that sound

like me and all of those things are present in my influences and the way I internalize music.

RRX: It's so important to stay true to yourself and put out music that you really enjoy; it's most important, I think.

DS: Absolutely.

RRX: So, you're a homegrown artist with deep 518 roots but you've also been living in Los Angeles for years now; how does the culture differ, and how did that impact your growth?

DS: Um, it differs quite a lot and honestly adjusting to LA culture is still something I very much struggle with. It's such a grind, hustle culture to the point where people burn out very quickly. I've been there for about five and a half years now; I think coming from a place like this and then going to a place like Berklee, that was a big jump and then it was an even bigger jump from Berklee and being in the bubble of college to, like, being in LA and trying to grow my career but also trying to, like, grocery shop. You know, all the basic things that keep you going as an adult and as a human being. It's a lot to balance, for sure.

I do think that being in LA has connected me to a lot of musicians and people in the industry who've taught me a lot, whether or not that was intentional on their part or if I'm learning from them in another way; I think that exposure has done a lot for me.

RRX: Yeah, it must be really awesome to get out there and chase your dream, and at the end of the day be able to say you did it while also surviving as an adult on your own at the same time. It seems like a very liberating thing.

DS: Yeah, it is... yes and no. Liberating in a lot of ways, but I feel it can also confine you in other ways, too. It's a matter of where you place your commitments as well.

RRX: Definitely; You've had your fair share of great moments in your

young career already, working alongside Adam Levine and Kelly Clarkson and recently headlining a show at The Troubadour in LA. Is there a moment that stands out as particularly resonant for you?

DS: Yeah, actually. In the past couple of years I've gotten to work with a man named Paul Williams. He was extremely famous and award-winning back in the 80s and prior. Now he's 83, and he's just getting back into doing shows after COVID and he's asked me to come in and sing; he wrote a lot of songs for The Carpenters, you know Karen Carpenter, and he also wrote the soundtrack to "A Star is Born" with Barbara Streisand. For those female-focused songs he's asked me to come on and sing with him, and so I'm getting to represent these incredible vocalists in this way with Paul and his original band. They're all, like, 70-plus year old men and they've welcomed me as a part of their band which has been really, really cool. Performing with them stands out to me a lot, because they are some of the only extremely accomplished and older men in the music industry that I've felt respected by. Finding a group like that and knowing that it exists has been really important for me, to stick with being in LA and to stick with that whole culture.

Just having the honor of being able to sing those songs; it's the first time I've ever experienced stepping on stage and the audience starts clapping as soon as the song starts because once they recognize the song and it's something they feel so deeply that they start to clap before I even sing...that's a beautiful feeling that I never even considered. These are songs from their childhood, you know, and I wasn't alive when these were put out but still being able to step into that role has been a real honor for me too.



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Pat Metheny

He only has one album, but he's been making it for decades

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Pat Metheny. Photo provided

Pat Metheny is a musician that musicians want to have on speed dial. Acclaimed, versatile, and with a career spanning five decades, Metheny redefines genres like it's his job. It kind of is.

I reached out to Pat, and below is the ol' razzle dazzle.

RRX: As of this writing, you're launching into a U.S. Fall Tour, a solo tour. You're going to be stopping at or have stopped at (depending on when this hits) at The Troy Savings Bank music hall, which is reputed to be one of the most acoustically perfect concert halls in the country. When you play, how do you take the concert space acoustics into consideration?

PM: It has been pretty normal for me across the years to play in places that hold 100 or 200 people one night, and a stadium of 10 or 15 thousand people the next night. I am used to adjusting to pretty extreme circumstances from day to day - it kind of comes

with the territory to the point where any adjustments are almost subconscious. It is less about the acoustics for me than the proximity of the audience - if there are people listening who are half a football field away, there is a sense of projection that needs to be there that is different than playing in small club for instance.

RRX: You are doing this tour to promote your latest album, "Dream Box." This album is unique because it's a bringing up of inspired bits from a stash folder that found the light. When you were picking out bits, did you go by purely what inspired you most, or did you have an eye to overall composition?

PM: It really began when after a while I found myself wanting to listen to the things that wound up on the record over and over again. That is usually a sign of something for me. But certainly for all the different ways that I have released music over the years,

this one stands apart for the process involved. I am really gratified that folks seem to be liking it so much.

RRX: Jazz is tough. It's something of a learning curve. You were on it from basically year one. By fifteen you were tearing up Kansas City. Asking this by your experience with other musicians, does it matter when you start learning? Do you think you have a different hold on the music because it's been a constant in your life?

PM: Music in general feels infinite to me. There are no set ways that I think about it and I think it has been that way right from the start. It contains possibilities that extend outward in a kind of 360 degree spread. I try remain open to whatever direction seems interesting and viable, and that can change both by the year, but also by the millisecond. But the impulse to understand music in a deep way has been a great way to go through life.

RRX: Jazz fusion. Love it. Big

Mahavishnu Orchestra fan. I interviewed Billy Cobham a while back. But I think a band like Mahavishnu would almost be considered classic rock if, say, McLaughlin sang (big stretch). How does a Beatles or Rolling Stones fan get to a place where they can appreciate a Mahavishnu or a Pat Metheny fusion? Are there intermediaries?

PM: The "f" word only came along after I had been at it for 5 years or so. I don't really know any musicians who use that word. I am not a huge fan of the whole idea of "genre" or styles of music. To me, music is one big thing. The musicians who I have admired the most are the ones who have a deep reservoir of knowledge and insight not just about music, but about life in general and are able to illuminate the things that they love in sound. When it is a musician who can do that on the spot, as an improviser, that is usually my favorite kind of player.

Regarding fans, I think there are as

many “fan bases” as there are individuals. As far as my thing goes, I notice is that there is no consensus - literally every record I have made seems to be someone’s favorite and might be someone else’s least favorite. And this is equally distributed among virtually all the recordings and projects I have ever done. The main thing I notice is that people tend to be most attached to whatever record or period that was happening on their radar when they first got interested. But my thing is that they are all one really long single record. It is the way it all goes together that probably defines whatever it is that makes my thing what it is.

RRX: I mention jazz, but in terms of genre, you’re everywhere at once. Rock, jazz, classical, and more. I like talking about jazz here because of the improvisation, which is more of a thing in jazz. I imagine it’s a must-have for you. I’ll ask this; name a show where you were never more “in the zone” for improv your unicorn show.

PM: When I first started making records and going around playing with Gary Burton on kind of an international level, I had only been playing for a bit over 5 years, Now it is something like 50+. What is really rewarding is that what might have even been a “unicorn” show for me in the early going is way below the level I know I can consistently get to and beyond every single night now. And if I live to 100, I think that kind of growth would keep on being the case. Maybe music is unique in that way.

RRX: You’ve won 20 Grammys in everything, 12 different categories. Awards are important, especially when a musician is trying to get out there. But after 20, at some point, it seems like it would lose a little bit of its luster. But is there any part of winning a Grammy that is just as exciting at Grammy number 20 as it was at Grammy number 1?

PM: If you come to my house you’re

not going to see any awards or anything like that on the wall or anywhere else. I don’t really feel comfortable having things like awards of photos or anything like that around me. I am always looking to what comes next or what is happening right now. I really try to appreciate it when an award or some kind of honor comes along, and I do. There are certain honors that are unbelievable to me, that I never would have anticipated or expected in a million years.

At the same time, because I do live my life playing so much, I could say it like this... In Bakersfield, I played a gig and I think I might have played the best I’ve ever played so far. I finally got to that solo on that fourth tune that I’d been hoping I’d get to all tour long, I got it. I finally did it. Then the next night we’re playing in Phoenix and it doesn’t matter what I played in Bakersfield the night before. The people in Phoenix don’t care what I played in Bakersfield because tonight, I’m in Phoenix and I’ve got to play that fourth tune again and I hope I don’t mess it up.

My whole life is geared to enjoying stuff while it’s happening and then moving on. I feel honored and humbled by it all, but my thing is, “Okay, tomorrow is the next thing,” and that’s the only thing for me, what’s happening next.

RRX: We are a digital radio station as well as a publication and site. We have about 13,000 songs in our library, all curated, no bulk additions. We have you in our library, I’m positive about that. But we are all about those delicious deep cuts. What Pat Metheny song is the deep cut we need to have on rotation?

PM: As I mentioned, it is all one long record - it is all one long song. I would be flattered if you guys played any of it!



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The Hauntings

Punk rock: no excuses, no apologies, all friends and family.



BY ROB SMITTIX

The Hauntings. Photo by Frankie Cavone.

RRX: We are here with The Hauntings, if you could pass the mic around and tell everyone who you are and what you do in the band.

BR: Thanks for having us Rob. I'm Ben, I sing for the Hauntings.

MB: My name is Matt Bastard, I play the drums.

DW: I'm Dan Wade, I play the guitar and push pedals.

MB: John's not here but he plays bass. He's here in spirit.

RRX: He is. I appreciate you guys coming in on short notice. It just came across my radar today that The Hauntings are playing Wild in the Trees Music and Skate Festival (10/7-10/8) in Lake George. And... you're welcome, it's actually my fault that you're playing the fest.

MB: Oh, right on thank you bro!

RRX: I didn't know if you knew that.

BR: Yup, we did know that. We really appreciate it.

RRX: So basically what happened was my band Smittix was supposed to play the event but due to unforeseen circumstances we had to pull out. I thought Frankie Cavone (Mirth Films) was going to be upset but he wanted you guys more than us anyway! He really wanted you to play!

(Group Laughs)

BR: He asked us a couple of months ago but we were in a transitioning period.

MB: We were in a state of limbo, we weren't even sure if we were able to accept gigs or what our schedules were going to be. Then we figured things out pretty quick and now were having fun!

DW: I said hey they want us to open up for DRI and BOOM the band is back together!

MB: That's actually what happened.

RRX: You can't turn that down. So how did it feel playing with DRI?

BR: It was incredible. That was definitely the best show we've ever played I think as a band.

DW: I looked out and all I saw was our own festival T-Shirts all over the place.

MB: It was really cool for us because when we got up on stage... this was probably the biggest show we've ever played. We literally looked out and saw all of our friends. All of our friends and all of our shirts in the crowd. Everyone was going nuts, so any nerves that we had before going on stage were gone. We just kind of

pile-driven the energy and it was sweet.

RRX: To play with DRI, that's a real resume builder.

BR: It was awesome too because punk shows in Albany usually don't do very well. At this one the crowd was really into it. The people were dancing and not just standing there. People were really into us.

RRX: The first time that I seen you live was at Wild in the Trees last year and I thought to myself: what a breath of fresh air. I don't know how old you guys are but you're definitely younger than me. I feel like kids these days (people in their 20's and early 30's) believe that Blink 182 is the biggest punk rock band that ever existed. Pop-punk is real punk to them, it kind of hurts my soul. So to see The Hauntings come out and do real

punk rock music, I was reassured that punk is still alive.

BR: You don't see it very often.

MB: We just play what we like man. We don't try to be like anybody, we don't try to do anything specific. We come up with a riff, we're just jamming, drinking beers, come up with stupid lyrics and all of a sudden we have a song.

RRX: That's how the magic happens.

DW: It's all experiences. I tell them about it and they write about it.

MB: A lot of our songs come from Dan's stories after band practice. ADD takes over and he does not want to pack up his gear, so he will tell the tales of his life. And... he's got some tales. A lot of the most recent songs that we've written are literally stories that Dan told us.

RRX: Dan you've got a nick name right?

DW: Danimal.

RRX: So you didn't have that much of a break in the action with the band.

BR: About 8 months, Matt had a baby that's what happened.

MB: About 8 months yeah my daughter was born November 8th, so we took a break right after Wild in the Trees. Once I got my schedule figured out it was time to play again because I can't not play drums. I was going stir crazy not hitting things.

RRX: Congratulations on being a man that had a baby. Did you cut the cord?

MB: I did. We went o'natural, I cut the cord with my teeth, it was a hell of an experience.

BR: Ate the placenta. Yeah.

MB: Of course, with garlic and olive oil.

RRX: So what do you have in the works?

BR: We're hoping to record with Don Fury on September 30th and it'll be really quick after that. We're trying to release it in October. We've got a couple of shows in October that hopefully we can

tack on an EP release to these shows. There's a song about Dan, there's a couple of songs about Halloween, there's a song about getting drunk at your job and a couple other miscellaneous songs.

RRX: (Looking at Danimal) Getting drunk on the job, you did that?

(All Laugh)

BR: No I wrote that song. They're not all about Dan. We've got a song called "Always Check Your Candy," that's about people finding razor blades in their chocolate bars on Halloween.

RRX: I never understood why people did that.

BR: I don't really know if people act did that or if it was just an urban myth. I'm sure it has happened.

RRX: Have you ever had to call into a job and you're nervous to talk to the boss? That's how it was for me having to call Frankie and tell him that my band couldn't play Wild in the Trees. I was hoping he wasn't pissed but he was like no sweat. I knew right away in the back

of his mind he was going to ask you. I asked if he needed help replacing us and he said nope, I'm on it. I imagine he called you right away.

DW: I got the message and I was like, I'll ask the guys. Boom we're on it.

RRX: Wild in the Trees in 2022 was the highlight of my year.

BR: It was a ton of fun.

RRX: I'm not even blowing smoke, The Hauntings were my favorite group there and that's because I'm really into punk rock and I saw some real punk rock that day. Not that I didn't enjoy the jambands because I did and the vibe is fun but... if every genre fanbase supported their scene like the jamband fans do... imagine if the punk scene was like that? We need a Greg Bell for the punk scene.

The Hauntings will be playing October 8th at Wild in the Trees in Lake George Noon-1pm Tickets can be found through eventbrite.com

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Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

In your life, have you ever felt alone, ever been picked on, ever been laughed at. Did you ever want to give a “two finger salute” to the world and shout “Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother?”

It could be for various reasons. You like Nickelback. You keep adding to your pet rock collection. You think Rob Smit-tix would make a great babysitter.

Is THAT what’s flaring up your piles now that you’ve used the last of the Preparation H, eh Bunkie?

Lemme use a song as a reference, it’s a One Hit Wonder from 1967 by Beach Boys knock off group “The Trade Winds” called “New York’s a Lonely Town (When You’re the Only Surfer Boy Around)”

The subject is simple, a “fish out of water” angle where the California kid can’t run his board down Broadway in the Big Apple.

(There’s a similar but lesser-known song from the 70’s by the Euclid Beach Band called “There’s No Surf in Cleveland”—a personal favorite).

I am convinced EVERYONE has ONE thing that makes people think you’re nuts.

In my case, that thing is football (Hey the season is upon us).

While I was born in Florida, early on my parents came to the Capital District, and while I traveled around the country, you would think as a gridiron fan my passion would be with the Giants, Jets, Bills, or a combination of all three.

Not this cranky old guy. Since 1974, my passion, my love, my soul, has been for the residents of “The Dawg Pound”, the Cleveland Browns.

See, I hear the snickering already, but I don’t care. They never won a championship title before. Not true, they took home four NFL championships (pre–Super Bowl), 1950, 1954, 1955, 1964. (On a related note, and sport, when I get ragging from Red Sox Fans, I say “Eat Me” 86 times (if you know you know.)

Then I get the pile ons about the actual City of Cleveland. The Mistake on The Lake. Where the Cuyahoga River CAUGHT ON FIRE!

Ok, that was the past, but I tell you today, Cleveland is a Rocking Town! There’s a reason the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is there. Lots of famous people are from Cleveland, Bob Hope, LeBron James, Margaret Hamilton, Paul Newman, Luke Perry...ok forget that one...and a lot more.

And to totally add to the legend of the town, from a Geek Boy perspective, THE TWO GUYS WHO CREATED SUPER-MAN ARE FROM THERE!

Now, back to my love of the Browns, lemme use this analogy. There’s a good chance if you are reading this dreck, you, or someone you know moved from here to another part of the country, where they didn’t care about your hometown sports teams, or your great hometown radio stations (pay me later Fredette), or the joy of a meal from Hattie’s Chicken Shack (Finger lick this Colonel Sanders).

So, you defend your love and fandom to the greatest degree, and say “screw everyone else, it’s my (fill in the blank) and I’m with them to the end”!

Maybe in time you will meet people in that town with similar interests. They ARE rare, but they will be there, you just

need to track them down.

Here’s the funny thing. As a rule, I’m not a huge follower of sports. Most times, I might watch a great television show or movie in place of The World Series or Stanley Cup. But football is my crack, and the Browns are my pusher.

I’m such a fan of the Dawgs, I wish nothing but bad luck to those who ruined my team. What if Terry Bradshaw invents a cure for cancer? Yay. John Elway makes it to Mars. Whoopie. That’s not to not acknowledge the accomplishments of the Steelers or Broncos, but if I had to, in

public, I would do it while going over Niagara Falls without a barrel.

My last hope, I’m hitting 68 soon, and like any fans, I want just one Browns Super Bowl win before I pack it in. If it doesn’t happen, I die with the hope of being able to shake the hand of Jim Brown in that big stadium in the sky.

And knowing quite well the Devil wears Black and Gold.

Be hearing you.



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The Heights

BY JOE BARNA

When I began the jazz series at Alias Coffee Roasters in Troy, NY, my vision was to offer an environment where people from all walks of life could feel welcomed and comfortable to have an evening out in their community cultivating memories and growing a scene together. Never in my wildest dreams did I think it would have taken off the way it has. From the first night in November 2022, I knew there was something magical about to transpire in the back room of this hidden gem of a venue. The vibe, sound, energy, environment, and appreciation I experienced from the very first note informed my soul that Alias was to be a special gathering spot for anyone wishing to be a part of its history and future.

But alas, It's now a sad time for jazz in the capital region...Summer has passed, outdoor concerts have gone and music festivals are done for the season. What is a person to do under these conditions?

HOLD ON A MINUTE...What's that you say?

I've just received some incredible news. Alias Coffee Roasters will be hosting the last jazz festival for the 2023 season on Sunday, October 15th. Scheduled to perform are some of the most respected artists from the capital region and beyond. Included among the list of performers will be Jody Shayne Brooks, John Esposito, Russ Brooks, Jeff Siegel, Stacy Dillard, Ian MacDonald, Evan Jagels, Joe Barna, Keith Pray, Mike Wooten, Chad Ploss, and some very special guests. This is shaping up to become quite an exciting,

engaging and memorable evening for those in attendance.

WOW...In addition to the three sets of music, food and dessert will be complimentary with the price of admission. This is truly a wonderful surprise for any live music fan. Those of you who value time with friends, listening to great music and sharing a meal or even a cocktail, this event is tailor made for you. Let this be your official invitation.

Now, speaking of building a history...

The list of world class artists that have already graced the stage at Alias is legendary. Among them are Ray Vega, Gary Smulyan, Jon Gordon, Stacy Dillard, Charlie Sigler, George Garzone, Ralph Lalama, Mike Lee, Caroline Davis, Jon Elbaz, Davis Whitfield, Keith Pray, Will Gorman, Bobby Previte and so many more. They have each brought their own unique talents to Troy's new home for live jazz concerts and we couldn't be happier with the reception. I and everyone involved are humbled and encouraged by the support from our community. We promise to keep working hard to continue presenting these concerts for all to enjoy.

Now, onto the show...

On Sunday, October 15th the stage at Alias will once again offer the capital region a chance to be transcended into a place of sonic blissfulness, as we present the first ever "FALL INTO JAZZ FESTIVAL". This concert is intended to showcase the vast spectrum

of talent and variety of sounds that exists right here in our own community. From the elegant vocal stylings of Jody Shayne Brooks to the 60's Harp Bop inspired Stacy Dillard w/ SKETCHES OF INFLUENCE to the soulful tones of Keith Pray and 3 BASS HIT there is literally something for everyone. Whether a casual listener or a true connoisseur of the artform we believe all those in attendance will be uplifted and grateful in making the choice to be present for this musical journey through jazz history.

I'd like to thank Hernan Lopez, proprietor of Alias Coffee Roasters, for affording the community of Troy, NY this grand occasion to hear all of these wonderful talents under one roof. We the performers appreciate when venues take a genuine interest in helping to push the performing arts forward.

If you are interested in this concert

or intend on being a part of the celebration...

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*6pm-10pm

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Thank you for taking the time to read this article and for supporting Xperience Monthly.

Warmest Regards,
Joe



Prog Digest

BY KLYDE KADIDDLEHUMPER

And then there was the one

And it was good.

Time has come up here from time to time. In the case of music, it is about the most important thing you can have. If you are a science fiction fan, there are as many theories about time as there are authors.

Some claim time is linear. Some that it is variable and can be bent. Others that time is purely relative.

Regardless of those theories, time in music is a wild ride. The vast majority of music produced follows a rather simple structure. Three quarter time is 3 beats to a measure (123,123,123 etc.). 4 – 4 time is 4 beats per measure. There is 6 -8, a variant of 3 -4... you get the idea.

However, that is just the surface. Time signatures can change, they can be fast or slow, even or odd. There is even music (well, perhaps more performance) that is based on time but not a signature. A prime example is from a modern composer, Philip Glass. One of his most famous pieces is called 4'33" and it is 4 minutes and 33 seconds long written for piano. No notes are played. The pianist opens, then recloses the lid, sits for 2 minutes 40 second then restarts the stopwatch and sits another 1 minute 20 seconds and then politely bows to the remaining audience... It is all about the time. Absolute brilliance.

Time is also essential to The Grateful Dead. Many years ago, someone put a very interesting bit in front of me. Taking the easiest example (there are many more) is to listen to Iko. Feel the beat. Don't count

it. Don't think about it. Feel it. You will notice something interesting. It, and much of the rest of the catalog, follows your heartbeat. Soothing and more like putting your head on your lovers' chest, it's easily recognizable as among the most soothing things on the planet.

That is known, mostly from African rhythms, as the clave. Most of us know what the instrument the clave is, usually two sticks that when held properly, make a lovely and louder sound than one would expect. That is not what clave really is. It is the rhythm that holds African, Latin and Cuban music together. You can play it on most anything, but it is essential.

The musician responsible for the clave carries a singular rhythm throughout a piece. Sticks, bells, heck, I've even been responsible for clave on a hoe (yup, when asked, constant companion would tell people calling for me that I was out banging my hoe). Around the clave there could be anything happening. All kinds of other rhythms and time signatures and stuff happening. In the end, the whole thing would come back around to the clave and – you got it – the one.

It is certain we will revisit this topic. No mention here of the Mike Portnoy's of the world, or the crazy things Rush would do. Or Take 5. Or Stravinsky. And the list goes on.

Or, maybe more appropriately, The Beat Goes On.

Until next time.

Klyde



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Left of the Dial *A View From the Aisle*

BY MIKE STAMPALIA

“Tickets, please.”

The (most likely) elderly person wearing the (most likely) white shirt is one of the first people you encounter when arriving at a seated show. What’s your reaction? Gratitude? Annoyance? Indifference? I’ve been an usher at a couple of our local venues, and I’d like to share some of the things I’ve learned from “working the aisle.”

First off, in most cases, ushers are a requirement. Most venues have safety codes that require a certain number of ushers in order to legally host a show. No ushers means no show. Generally speaking, venues can’t afford to pay all those people, so they rely on volunteers. That person in the white shirt gets exactly zero dollars for being there, so maybe cut them a little break.

Ushers are not Security; those are two different things. So if you’re one of those guys hellbent on picking a fight with Security (and there are way too many of you), ushers are not your target. We can actually be very helpful, beyond just helping you find your seat. Some of the things I might know about any given show:

- Venue hints, if you’re unfamiliar with it. (Quickest women’s bathroom facilities, how to get in and out quickly, etc.)
- When each act (including openers) will take the stage, and when they will finish
- If there’s an intermission, when it will happen, so you can get a jump on the crowd
- If an artist is going to come out in the crowd, or if there is a

particularly big pyro effect (good for pictures), I generally know what song that’s going to be.

- If an artist is going to come out to sign merchandise after the show
- Etc.

“Yeah, but why don’t you make that asshole in front of me sit down?”

Here’s the most misunderstood thing by concertgoers, in my opinion. Most of the policies for any given show come from the artist. Not the venue, certainly not the usher, but the act you paid good money to see. And first amongst them is this: artists generally prefer people to stand. Yes, even in the front row. Yes, even though you “paid good money for this seat, and now can’t see a damn thing.” To most artists, the standers are the good guys, and they want more of it.

If I’m all up on your skirt because you’re taking a video, it’s because the artist specifically asked us to do that. If you’re late for a quiet show, and I’m holding you at the door so I can seat you in between songs without disturbing everyone else, it’s because the artist has asked us to do that. If you’re using your flash, well, you’re just an idiot because I don’t need the artist to tell me how annoying that is (but they do). If you want to get mad at someone, get mad at the artist.

“Do you have to check my ticket every time? Don’t you remember me?”

Okay, at a big venue like SPAC, the answers to those questions are “yes”

and “no,” respectively. And I think you probably know that. It doesn’t matter that you “know where you’re going,” part of what I’m doing is ensuring that only properly ticketed people are getting to the right sections. So yes, even though you’re just coming back from your ninth beer run, I still need to make sure you’re holding your ticket and haven’t given it to someone else. And, no, I don’t remember you because I’m trying to look at thousands of tickets as quickly as I can by flashlight, I’m not really looking at your face. Make everyone’s life easier, just have your ticket in hand when you walk up. This too is the way the artists want it to be. Yes, even Phish. Even the Dead.

“If the seat’s empty, what difference does it make if I move up?”

First of all, it’s not at the discretion of the usher. We have supervisors watching us. We let you through, and we get in trouble. But more importantly, this is (again) driven by the artists. No matter how big of a superfan you think you are, they don’t want you up front unless you’ve purchased one of their (very expensive) “VIP packages.” Again, don’t get mad at me, get mad at the artist. (There are exceptions of course, and when they say they’re okay with people coming down, we let you come down.)

Some other bits of unsolicited advice I might offer:

- The biggest mistake concertgoers make is missing the opening act(s). The second biggest mistake they make is not paying attention to the

opening acts. Do. Not. Miss. Openers.

- For the love of Clapton, put your phone down. Nobody is ever going to want to sit through your shaky, shitty video. All you’re doing is annoying everybody. Put the phone down and enjoy the show. You paid good money for it.
- If you’re wondering when it’s okay to use flash, the answer is “when you’re alone and it’s pointed at your own face.” Turn that shit off.
- Are you one of those “witty people” who feel the need to talk to the artist in between songs? You should know that the whole theater is cringing around you, and the artist is hoping his Security guy is going to punch you in the face. (Yes, even if he laughed). Shut. Up.
- Jazz and Blues crowds are the best behaved. Hip Hop can be bad, but Country are the worst behaved by a (Country) mile. Metal shows are much more well-behaved than non-metalheads think they are.
- When it comes to concerts, smaller is almost always better
- Be nice to people. The people around you, the staff, security, and yes – even the ushers. You paid good money for this experience – don’t forget to enjoy it.

And if you need anything, ask an usher. They’re there to help.



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Dishing the Cult Band Clique

BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

They pretty much started out as cult, then for an unexplained reason, most of them became enormous, money-making machines.

I'm not the biggest metal fan. I'm certainly not a huge fan of The Misfits. Glen Danzig just looks weird. Scary, like if you asked him for the correct time, he'd smack you out. I do enjoy the premise of their act though. Oh really, you think they walk around with those hairdos in their haunted castles when nobody is looking? Somehow a copy of "Wolf's Blood" found its way into my collection. I think I liked the cover. It was textured and glowed in the dark, plus it had a werewolf on it. The copy I got my hands on was also pressed on yellow vinyl, which I later found out was rare, very rare. That's always a plus in my world. I never made it past the first song though, in fact I pulled up the tonearm halfway through. It just never pushed my buttons as it was neither punk or pop or anything I thought was very interesting. The Misfits however are like the pied pipers of the Horror Rock/Metal crowd, so much so that their early recordings command primo cash in the secondary market. I know first-hand because when I sold my copy of "Wolf's Blood" I used the money I got for it to finance about half of a recording project!

Some say you fall in love with a band or a song because it has a significant connection to a special time in your life. Losing your virginity to a certain song might be the catalyst

to your unexplained obsession. *BUZZER*. On the occasion of my loss of innocence, "Nektar" was blasting on my girlfriends' stereo and that's the end of that.... I'm not a huge prog fan either but that's another subject.

Now we come to The Grateful Dead. What drove so many people to their concerts, besides an old micro bus, packed with a cooler full of cheese sandwiches? Why did so many people need to own every live recording of "Truckin" going back to 1972? Why did they release multi-record set albums with eight versions of one song on it? What could possibly be so interesting about listening to "Dark Star" for an hour and a half? You know, I really should not be harping on bands that do marathon cuts. I wore out several copies of the first Grand Funk Railroad Live album and that record contained a 12-minute cover of "Inside Lookin' Out" and the live version of their own song, "Into The Sun," takes up all of side four. Oh right, I had to learn those songs because if you had a band in the 70's, you had to know a lot of GFR!

I've known my share of dead heads over the years and almost all of them bring up "the beautiful vibes of Woodstock." They almost all describe Woodstock just like that. First off most of them were too young or not even born when it happened. Tell me please if you agree, if all the people who claim to have been there, actually went, The New York State

Thruway would still be jammed up. Also, they should read a little bit about what "The Dead" had said about their experience. According to several of them, they thought the sound was terrible, the floor was built with cheap plywood and was wet from all the rain. They kept getting shocked. Bob Weir was heard to say, "It was one of the worst shows they ever did." So much romanticizing going on about the 60's. Okay, I will admit finding the first Dead album, mildly interesting. I also own the single of "A Touch Of Grey." Their video for that song is funny as they are not really in it but have skeletons with guitars singing and dancing around. Other than that, I'm at a loss...

Swinging London in the Summer of 67' took to Pink Floyd like a hot fudge sundae at an ice cream social. There was no bigger cult band that was poised to make a splash in the states. Their strange fairy tale songs and drug infused lyrics became the rage in England. They recorded "Piper At The Gates of Dawn" right next door to where you know who was recording Sgt. Pepper. Off to the USA for the big tour and then nothing. Pink Floyd was like nothing anyone had ever heard before and that's the kiss of death to an up-and-coming group. Syd just threw it all away, a victim of his trendy chemical amusements. He just stopped caring and stopped trying. Floyd took off in new directions and became one of the biggest groups on Earth without Syd.

Syd became the cult but somehow, he got the last laugh. For all the success Roger Waters brought to the band afterward, to this day, he gets the same Syd Barrett questions at every interview. He never lives it down...have you got it yet? The Mad-cap Laughs.

Last but not least, we come to The Velvet Underground. Even their name evokes underground music... the ultimate cult band. Music rife with off time playing, slightly out of tune 12-stringers and smokey vocals from Nico, a model turned singer. Their other singer/ writer, a sun-glasses wearing early hipster named Lou Reed whose effortless cool was undeniable. Song titles with subjects only spoken about in hushed tones, in the seediest of dark back rooms. All financed and nourished at Andy Warhol's factory who provided dancers, hype and multi-media effects. The Exploding Plastic Inevitable!! Nobody knew what to do with this and it didn't last long. The Velvet Underground is the only band to remain a cult and have so much praise heaped on them; they were inducted into The Hall of Fame. They probably cared even less than Johnny Lydon but never let on. The legend goes that only a few thousand people bought their first album but every one of them started a band. Here's to hoping somebody else makes another record like that and quick. Real quick.

Now go get some records.



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