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## 22 The Broken View

A band with a trajectory  
and the music of a  
one-night stand.

## 3 Principality of Sealand

We interview a head of state  
of the smallest country  
in the world.

## 26 Mirk

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# Principality of Sealand

*Welcome to the world's smallest nation.*

**BY LIAM SWEENEY**

Sealand. Photo Provided.

**S**even miles off of the coast of Great Britain, in what was once international waters, pirate radio was broadcast on ships and old military structure to fight the restrictions on early pop music put out by the BBC. From one of these efforts, a World War Two military installation was occupied and declared a sovereign country. Sealand. And while its status as a country has been a grey area in the international community, they frankly don't give a sh\*t, and never

have. We interviewed Prince Liam, one of Sealand's hereditary heads of state.

**RRX:** Sealand started out, o nearly started out as a pirate radio station, playing pop from international waters to counter British censorship. This is how I'd heard of Sealand. Radio rebellion. But what is Sealand really like, and what does it mean to live in Sealand?

**PL:** Sealand as a place is unique, it's certainly unlike anywhere else in the world. In the 1960's the irony was that we

could potentially talk to millions through the radio, but lived in isolation. Time have certainly changed an we now live very connected lives online just like most people, but what sets us apart is our ability to live on our own terms.

**RRX:** You are seven nautical miles off the British coast, which was international waters until 1982, when the British extended their territorial waters to

*Continued on Page 5...*





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Prince Liam. Photo provided.

# CONTENTS

- 3** 🎧 **SEALAND SMALLEST COUNTRY ON EARTH**
- 10** 🎧 **PETER PASHOUKOS GUITARIST - THE MCKRELLS**
- 16** 🎧 **GRANDSTAND JOCKEYS LOCAL ROCK GROUP**
- 20** 🎧 **ALBANY LOU HIP HOP ARTIST**
- 22** 🎧 **THE BROKEN VIEW IN STUDIO - GOING PLACES**
- 26** 🎧 **MIRK STAGE ONE DISPENSARY**
- 40** 🎧 **DOUG KLEIN AREA DRUMMER**

*Continued from Page 3.*

twelve nautical miles, encompassing Sealand. How did Sealand survive as a nation when you were suddenly in British waters?

**PL:** When the UK extended its territorial waters from 3 miles to 12 in 1982, it did not affect or negate Sealand's sovereignty. In such situations, it is customary in international practice to draw a median line between the overlapping territorial claims, which applies to the claims of Sealand and the UK. I would also like to highlight that in anticipation of the UK's extension of territorial waters, my Grandfather, Prince Roy extended Sealand's claim to 12 miles. We recently published an article on our website, which in part addresses this question in further detail: <https://sealandgov.org/en-us/blogs/news/is-sealand-a-real-country>

**RRX:** 99.9 percent of Sealand's energy needs are supplied by renewable

energy. How long has Sealand been on that high a percentage of renewables? Are there other "green" activities happening? What could the world learn from Sealand's green efforts?

**PL:** We've been focusing on renewable energy since the early 2000's, right around the time that the technology made it feasible. Using renewable energy on Sealand serves exactly the same purposes as it does on a larger scale in every other country: It brings down carbon emissions, and at the same time gives us energy independence. Our use of renewable energy is not just about self-sufficiency; it's also a statement about Sealand's commitment to a sustainable future, and to show others what's possible, even if on a small scale.

**RRX:** Sealand may not have a seat at the table in many international and political organizations, councils, etc. But things are changing. Eventually Sealand will have a voice. What would your first words be when you have the first speech

in the UN?

**PL:** That's a good question. Probably something to the effect of: It's about time you invited us here to sort out this mess!

**RRX:** Sealand has to be more than a flag and a passport, it has to be something in the people. Is there a "Sealand" state of mind or attitude? Something that is only found there, and if so, can you tell me about it?

**PL:** Absolutely, the Sealand state of mind is what defines us, even more so than our flag or anything else. It's a blend of fierce independence, unwavering determination, and a natural tendency to approach challenges with unconventional thinking. In Sealand, we embody the spirit of doing what others believe can't be done.

**RRX:** We are a music and arts publication, so I'd be remiss if I didn't ask one more music question. Do you transmit anything by antenna anymore, or by just having a channel somewhere

digitally? Is there some sort of 'Radio Sealand' on SiriusXM or a Spotify playlist?


**PL:** The only transmitting that we do from Sealand these days is via VHF to close-by shipping, or friendly local fishermen - much less sexy than our swashbuckling pirate radio days it must be said! We've often toyed with the idea of a new radio station, but for now the majority of our communication is done via our website or social media channels. Our national anthem is on Spotify, you'll find it by searching its composer: Basil Simonenko.

**RRX:** This is where I leave space for anything you would like to bring up that I've missed.

**PL:** If Sealand resonates with you, I'd love to invite you become a part of our vibrant community either by engaging with us on social media, or becoming a noble of Sealand through our website [www.sealandgov.org](http://www.sealandgov.org)

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*The McKrells, Soul Session and Tequila Mockingbird - A journey*

# Peter Pashoukos

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Peter Pashoukos. Photo provided.

**P**eter Pashoukos is the lead guitarist and a vocalist for the McKrells, formerly an member of Soul Session and a member of the duo Tequila Mockingbird. We connected; we chatted - good times had by all.

**RRX:** There is more than one metric to gauge the life of music. One is what's played and heard, and one of the path that got us the notes in the first place. You've been in the military, had to deal with a rough childhood, addiction. What drove you to music from all of that? And how did some of those things affect the way you built your chops?

**PP:** Very true. I would say the same for life in general. I believe that we are the sum total of all of our experiences but moreover what we allow ourselves to learn from them. I think that, for some, there can be experiences, hurt, traumas that one is able to make peace with and others that will never really find complete resolution. However I also believe that those experiences can be channeled

into a more acute awareness. I started modestly playing at the age of 20 while in the Navy. Until that point I had never really felt that anything "clicked" for me. So it was not just the realization that I had some aptitude for it but the mental relief it provided me. To be able to put in the time and see the results. Life isn't always fair but this was. I get what I put in. It helped quell the endless hamster wheel in my head. I didn't know what I was doing but just kept doing it. I know a bit more now but not much else has changed. I still rehearse at least 4 hours a day. Probably 90% of time just improving fundamentals which (on a good day) allows me to let it all go and tap into all those emotions. Otherwise I just try to maintain the mentality of a long distance runner. Try not to concern myself with the other runners and simply concentrate on shaving a 1/4 second off of yesterday's time. So to speak.

**RRX:** You played The Egg in December, which for a lot of bands who may be

reading, is a big deal, or a destination for their own band. But the McKrells play big places all the time. What is different about bigger venues, aside from just more people? Are there any tips for a band with a big venue in their dreams?

**PP:** Yes. We just wrapped another sold out show at The Egg for which we are always grateful. The work that Kevin and previous/current band mates have been putting in for decades allows us to perform at some amazing and historic venues as well as festivals, and events. I should first preface my statement with the fact that no two performances are alike. Every single performance whether they be amphitheatres, festivals, events, all have a different dynamic. All of which I absolutely love. I feel so comfortable in those moments. The amount of time and the level of preparation I put in on a daily basis allows me to just be present and able to express myself through my instrument. Often I will play completely different solos on the same song from

night to night based on what I'm feeling from the crowd, the band, and my own life. As far as advice for other musicians/groups I think the best I can come up with is to take your job seriously. Don't ever be satisfied. The things that you connect with will always be easier for the audience to connect to as well. Most of all be patient and grounded. Life is not a straight line. Last night The Egg, tomorrow night solo happy hour at the bistro. Just keep putting the hours in.

**RRX:** Before the McKrells, you were one of the original members of Soul Session and one of the members of Tequila Mockingbird, which was award-winning. The McKrells sounds like a departure from that. Was it? Did you have to change up genres, and if so, what made that worth it for you?

**PP:** Haha. I don't think that I've ever been in a band that I didn't have to change genres. I don't really pay much thought to genres though. There's only so many notes and so much of music is

formulaic. It's not like the difference between being a welder and an accountant. Usually for me I just need to put the time in and allow the dots to connect from what I already know to what I'm learning. I believe having to learn and process information in my own way throughout my life helped me to see music very broadly without feeling the need to dissect it so much. As well as having lived a diverse life that exposed me to a wide range of people and music.

To me, soulful is just soulful. No matter who is singing/playing, what category someone decides to put someone else in, or label themselves. I see it so much simpler.

For me the worth is in the learning. The value is that with every new piece of information it allows me to express myself better. I take solace in the fact that there will always be more to learn. An unending well.

**RRX:** Being in a touring band is rough on musicians. Some are away from families, and even those that aren't have to be "on point" for multiple days a week. I'm guessing the McKrells tour pretty heavily. Is there anything you do on tour, on the road, that helps you relax or connect with home life?

**PP:** Actually The McKrells haven't toured since I've been with the band. We have very busy times of year punctuated by summer festivals and events but as I stated earlier about Ireland in this economy it just wouldn't be economically feasible for us in addition to the family personal life aspect. One member of the band is a full time educator. Kids, grand-kids, other musical endeavors. Just getting a rehearsal together for a 6 piece band is nearly impossible let alone a tour. Again, that being said, I don't think anything is off the table. It's just got to be the right thing. I will also say that when we perform at festivals and such for a few days I find that playing my guitar is the best way for me to relax.

**RRX:** Being a lead player, assuming you see yourself as more a lead player,

you're bringing something to a song. But what of songwriting yourself? Were you writing songs for Soul Session, or Tequila Mockingbird? And if so, can you tell us about a song you wrote, "that" song, the one that you may never have recorded but you love it to death?

**PP:** In the McKrells and in some of the other groups I have performed with I have been the lead guitarist and believe that's what I'm generally thought of. If anybody thinks of me at all. Ha. I do also perform solo about 150x times a year as well so I've worked hard to become a well rounded singer and performer as well. Up until a few years ago my soul focus was always becoming a better instrumentalist. I have composed instrumental pieces that I've performed on guitar and ukulele at various festivals and events. Most notably at the 13th Annual Aloha Ukulele Festival in Seoul, Korea. However I wasn't ready to explore the things that I wanted to write about until I was able to look back into my own life honestly. For me that took sobriety, time and perspective. A good deal of it. So I've been writing consistently since the pandemic and look forward to recording and sharing what I have to offer. I'm very excited about jumping into something new. It's what I do best.

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

**PP:** I believe that it's important for one to define what success is to them. For me despite obstacles, sometimes in spite of myself, I've been able to take care of my family with this guitar and keep moving forward. That's something that I let myself be proud of. I don't anticipate anything ever being easy. Nothing worthwhile should be. I just keep shaving 1/4 second off my time.

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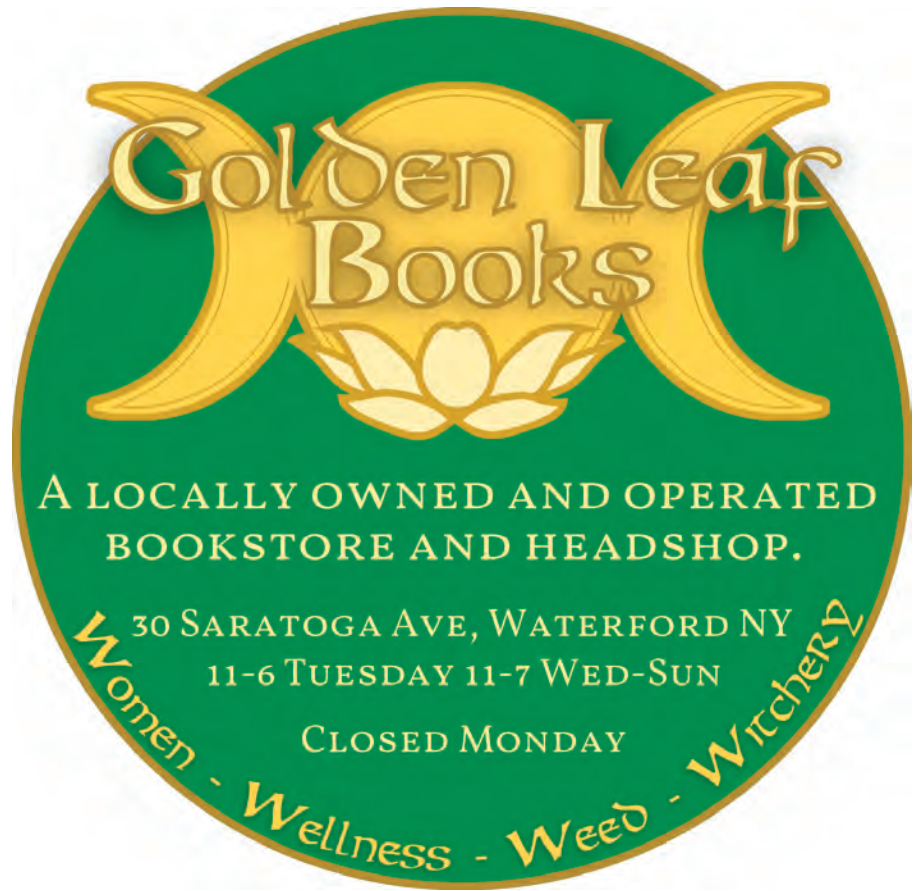
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# Grandstand Jockeys

*Best road music to test the accelerator.*

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Grandstand Jockeys. Photo provided.

I love working at a radio station. I get all kinds of local music. And when I got a Grandstand Jockeys CD and put it in my car, I was blown away. I just had to reach out to them so that they can reach out to you.

**RRX:** I got your CD from Rob Smittix, and I've been jamming it out in my car for weeks. Love the sound, love it. Because it's straight rock, but the melody lines are quirky. The melody lines sound like something Ween might do (sorry, everything cool sounds like Ween to me.) Where is the odd influence that brings out that unique sound?

**RB:** That's a great and kinda complex question. So ok I have been a musician for many years so there are more than one influence that help drive it but for the most part the melodies are just there almost like out of nowhere. More times than not I have the melodies before I have the words. It's

almost like they are out there just waiting to be picked up like radio waves it's hard to explain but I just hear them.

**RRX:** You have new members in the lineup. And people here might not know who's in your 'not new' lineup. So roll call. Who are you? Who plays the guitar and who plays the didgeridoo? And was it easy for the new people to slip into the band, or were there challenges adapting the current setlist?

**RB:** Ok so we are the Grandstand Jockeys and we consist of Ron Burris-vocals and Guitar, Brian Rex - Drums and backing vocals, the new guy Morgan Smith on guitar, and finally Eric Braymer who has been in the band in many different roles but currently is filling in on Bass and backing vocals. So The Jockeys have had a few lineup changes and we have been blessed to have worked with all of them. When new members come in or go out there is always a little challenge in finding

the right person. It is not just one thing, yes being a good musician helps but having a great attitude and willingness to work is important as well. We have truly been blessed to have so many amazing musicians who gave us more than I can articulate. These are all great musicians in their own right who know how and what to do so with each transition it's been pretty smooth

**RRX:** Thank you for doing a Lobby Session at our station. Mighty cool of you. Do you think that live recording sessions like that offer you anything that just playing out doesn't? Do you feel you can be more free? And you guys were acoustic, is that a much different beast for the band?

**RB:** So first we want to say thank you for having us do your lobby session, we had a blast and it was a new experience for us kinda like our own unplugged. I'm going to date myself here but I remember watching Nirvana

doing MTV's unplugged and I always wanted to have that moment for myself/ band. The most exciting part of it is being vulnerable out there, kinda like tight rope walking. Plus it allows the audience to hear a different side of the music.

**RRX:** Grandstand Jockeys is playing in support of A Wilhelm Scream at Empire Underground. A Wilhelm Scream is a national act. What's the show going to be like? Is it you two or are there going to be other acts?

**RB:** So A Wilhelm Scream is from Boston and they're national act. We haven't had the pleasure to play with these guys before I don't think that they've had hard times. Maybe they have not two versed in their history but what I have heard of them is some really good music and we're excited about the opportunity to share a stage with them and locals Girth Control and Senior Living. And you and your



audience are already doing something to help I just letting us spread the word and we really appreciate that.

**RRX:** You have other shows coming, like a show in Philadelphia at Century, then back to Empire with the Noncompliants, the Hauntings, and Black Belt Jones. Are you and the aforementioned bands 'tour-buddies'? Will the Empire show be your first time playing together? If so, how did you all connect?

**RB:** So yes we will be playing a show at the rock club century in Philadelphia this will be our first trip to Philadelphia and we're very excited about the opportunity to expand our fan base and meet the people of Philadelphia, we are also take the show to Stamps in Buffalo on 3/23 another first for us and we are stoked, Plus we have two more shows coming up at Empire Underground on 3/16. We will be playing with my old band NonCompliants which I was the drummer of before

starting the Grandstand Jockeys and switching instruments. Plus we will be sharing the stage with Black Belt Jones - love those guys. Eric Braymer who is filling in on bass for us currently is the guitarist for Black Belt Jones. He is my best friend and we have a long storied musical history. Also we get to rock out with The Hauntings on this bill and they have been a favorite of mine for a while now, we have been trying to get a gig together and it finally is going to happen!! I want to put a very public thank you to Mike Valente & Empire Underground. He has given us tremendous opportunities and support and TGJ has nothing but love and respect for him. Cheers Mike.

**RRX:** Here's where you answer the question I didn't ask. Remarks? Comments? Educate, enlighten, emote - the floor is yours

**RB:** So 2023 has been a super busy year for TGJ. we released 2 Ep's to complete our Ep trilogy that started in

2021 with release of our first Ep "Win". The "Place" Ep was released on 6/27/23 as was the "\$how" Ep on 10/31/23 and we had a host of great musicians who came in the studio with us to lend their talents I'm sure you know a few of them on the "Place" ep we had Brian Mangini add some B3 we had Rob Smittix do a great monologue, we had my very talented niece Kyra Pearl do some vocals, we had the super talented Jared Weed who played with us for a short time drop some amazing leads, and Dave Parker (Coheed and Cambria / like Astronauts/the prize fighter inferno) did synth and guitar work and then on the release "&\$how" we had some more Jared Weed dropping solos, the world famous Alex Torres played congas and more Dave Parker on synth.

All 3 Eps were mastered at Sterling sound in NYC by Grammy Award winner Randy Merrill frankly Everyone involved has been great from

photographers Jim Wertman and Eric Johnson, Overit Multi Media and Dan Dinsmore really everyone involved has been amazing and it has led to a very good 2023 where we got to open up for some of the biggest artists in the country like Crobot, Austin Mead, Dillon Dostal, Rickshaw Billy's burger patrol, 96 Bitter beings, JJ Savage, Kendra Morris and Sgt Scag and we played with home town bands from all over and they were all great and lots of fun to share the stage with.

Speaking of stages in 2023 we played at The Midway cafe - Boston, The Chance theatre - Poughkeepsie (twice) Empire Underground, No Fun, and We even got to play the Troy Pig out and we have Radioradiox Art and Rob to thank for that. They both have been amazingly supportive and we can't thank them enough there are so many new and exciting things coming up in 2024 and we are excited!

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# Albany Lou

*From the "Hot Minute" Series*



Albany Lou. Photo provided.

**RRX:** We all get into creative pursuits for different reasons. Some people get into music and the arts to escape; for some, it's a natural outlet. Was was music, and creativity in the larger sense, for you

**AL:** Absolutely I actually started writing poetry at a very young age. As I got older, some of the struggles and hardships I went through as a child made me relate to hip-hop music. After I found that love, it became my passion!!

**RRX:** Where was the first place you felt comfortable performing? People talk about places where they cut their teeth musically. Where was that for you? And does that place, or that scene still exist, or was it lost to time?

**AL:** I started performing when I was seven years old in musicals and plays, which gave me somewhat of a leg up as far as not having stage fright. When I started rapping on stage performing, we used to do small local venues like Bogies, Lark Tavern, Red

Square.. most of which aren't in use today.

**RRX:** Music is both word and note, beat and measure, and message. If your music was laid out like a story, what's the main character like? What's the plot? And what's one of the big moments that turned the story around?

**AL:** The main character in my musical story is definitely a rebel even sometimes an antagonist. I never actually pigeonhole myself to any one sound, but looking back in the grand

scheme of things, my character would seem to be an outlaw, who doesn't have a problem shining light on some very controversial topics!

**RRX:** Creative people move culture, especially musical performers. We have to thread the circumstances in our lives in a way to affect others. And this is sometimes a responsibility put on us. How do you, specifically, move culture?

**AL:** I think my personal contributions have been to keep it rugged. Keep

it truthful, but still bring positive energy. The laws of man never meant much to me, but the laws of God is what I abide by and I stay true to my heart and my craft, and I believe it comes across in my music and in person.

**RRX:** Music is a good traveling companion. Play it in a car on that long ride and the miles disappear. But you gotta have something to play. You have something out, maybe more than one thing – can you tell us about some of it?

**AL:** You are absolutely right on long drives if I have the right tunes playing the hours melt away! I have always loved my music from the late 90s that's always my go to! Right now me and my team have three mixtapes out YNOTUS vol 1 -vol 2-vol 3 and we are about to drop volume 4. Besides that we have a bunch of solo projects from myself and my artists coming very soon!

**RRX:** One of the biggest challenges musicians face is getting their name

out there. There's so much competition, and technology makes it possible for everyone to be out there with a well-produced offering. What's your favorite way to promote?

**AL:** Promotion is something you have to do on every level. You have to promote yourself in person you have to go to shows play live send your music to every DJ possible! I even do radio ads for my music that helps as well. With so much competition you just have to work that much harder than the next person! Stick to the grind, and one day you will either have a Core fanbase who is loyal, or the ever elusive Pop hit, which so many artists dream of. Lastly, you have to get your budget right because connections are good to have and they are usually made by showing business sense a lot of the time.

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# The Broken View

Austin Kranick & Tyler Hayes

BY ROB SMITTIX

A Broken View. Photo provided.

**W**e're here in the studio with a couple of the members of The Broken View, if you want to just go ahead and introduce yourselves and tell em what you do in the band.

**TH:** I'm Tyler Hayes, I play drums and I also produce, mix and master.

**AK:** My name is Austin Kranick, I sing, I write for the band, produce, edit and all of that nonsense.

**RRX:** That's right it's all nonsense. (All Laugh)

**RRX:** Who's not here today from the group?

**AK:** We're a little spread out. Right now we got Joe Martino on rhythm guitar, John Lombard (Lead Guitar), he's not here but he's here in spirit. Our new bass player Tom is in Austin today.

**RRX:** Speaking of Austin... He's not IN Austin, just to be clear. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

(All Laugh)

**RRX:** We just premiered your

latest single "Need A Friend" on RadioRadioX.com, tell us about the song.

**AK:** I was thinking about the whole concept of one-night stands. I sat down and came up with this really groovy beat, kina like a reggaeton vibe. I knew I wanted the song to kind be like... sleazy. I had the first verse and the chorus for a really long time and I remember show him (Tyler). He was like I really like this but it just wasn't the time because we had our other album coming out. We wanted to make sure that the song was as good as it possibly could be. It took a lot of time to get it right. We actually had a couple of different bridges. It had a completely different bridge before (the released version). We're super happy with the way that it turned out. It's this really cool, kind of aggressive, angry song about wanting something more and not being appreciated. I don't think it's as angsty as that kind of song could be. I think it's more of a relatable thing.

**RRX:** I can relate, a lot of people

can definitely relate to that. I always like to pick the brains of fellow songwriters. It's so easy to write about heartbreak, it's so hard to write when things are just happy and peachy. So yeah, one-night stands?

**AK:** More of like a booty call. The chorus itself says "call me up, I want to be somewhere close to you but not too close." It's kind of like the idea of keeping somebody like a friends with benefits type of situation. In a sense, you're not confused by this concept. You think it's very understandable, however it's frustrating. You're going to keep doing this thing to yourself, no matter how much you feel for that person you understand that they're probably never going to want anything more from you. You're the one essentially allowing yourself to be taken advantage of. It's like what the hell am I doing?

**TH:** Something funny about when we were making that album; Matt Noveskey (Blue October) produced our record in his studio down in Austin,

TX (Orb Recording Studios). "Need A Friend" was one of the last songs that we worked on and we were thinking about cutting it from the album completely. "Another White Lie" from our previous record was in a similar situation where we almost cut it but then it became a more popular song off of that record.

**AK:** I never once thought it was a good idea to cut "Need A Friend," everybody else was like let's just move on and I remember saying, hey Tyler no! Just throw a drum beat down dude!

**TH:** That was the one take that we got. But it was very close because we were only in Texas for two weeks, so we were on a pretty tight schedule. I find it funny that now it's one of our favorites, now that's it's finished and out. That was the one that almost didn't make it.

**RRX:** It's funny how that works because there's so many examples of this in music. I think this was the right choice for this song because it's fantastic and there's a video for this.

**AK:** We have this tendency to need a cinematic, literal film to go along with our songs.

**TH:** We make our own videos. We film them, we edit them, we color them... everything.

**AK:** Every single aspect of it. We didn't have the idea until about two Wednesdays ago. We came together and made this really scary, hyper-realistic situation. I didn't even realize how real it felt until it was done. When I watched it, I was like... this is kind of intense.

**RRX:** I've got a lot of faith in you guys, your music and end product. I really do. The Broken View watch out for these guys. I didn't card you when you came in and I should've before I offered you that bottle in my desk but... you're young guys and I think you've got a lot ahead of you.

**BOTH:** Thank you so much.

**TH:** We're very eager to get on the road and play shows.

**AK:** That's our main thing, we've got our agent right now booking some shows in March, we're also trying to get on tour with Blue October. We've been doing a lot of things for the past year now to try to make that happen. It's a life long dream, for me especially. You know? The reason I got into making music was from listening to them and to know that our fanbase is so tight. They're always saying we should go on tour with Blue October.

**RRX:** I think it'll happen, keep talking about it, keep putting it out there into the universe, into existence because that kind of stuff really works. Being as young as you are and I don't know about the rest of your bandmates but are any of you married or have kids?

**TH:** Nope, no one is married or has kids

**RRX:** Keep that going as long as you possibly can because that changes the trajectory. That changes everything. Right now you're in a position

where you can say screw the job, you can hop into a van or a small tour bus and hit the road. It doesn't really matter if you come back breaking even or even broke than you were when you left because you got the exposure that you needed.

**AK:** I said the same exact thing the other day. I had a long talk with him and our other bandmates about that. I literally could care less about making money on tour. All I want to do is get in front of the people that have supported us since 2018 and who want to see us and hear the music; to share that moment on stage with them. That's the only thing that I care about.

**RRX:** When my band started gaining traction most of us already had kids and mortgages, we couldn't just drop everything. I have a family of five depending on me, how am I going to say peace out I'm going on tour?

**TH:** Exactly.

**RRX:** The balls in your court, so just think about it an wear protection.

(Both Laugh)

**TH:** We're ready we've got our van we call him Guzzlin' Pete, it's got a bunch of bunks in the back, a little TV in there, we've got Wi-Fi set up and a mini-fridge. We are ready!

**AK:** I want to tour non-stop. Seriously, if I could tour every single day for the rest of this year, I would. That's all I want to do.

**RRX:** You're going to get there, i have faith in you, I have confidence and I appreciate you guys so much. So you know? When you're on whatever the biggest show is in a couple of years and you're on their podcast...

**AK:** Hopefully this one.

**RRX:** I hope it is us but if it's not just remember us and send us a card once in a while.

<https://youtu.be/S1ConrCARGo?si=43QqKO3x-zfJS2mGr>



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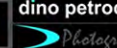
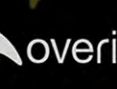
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# Josh “Mirk” Mirsky



Mirk. Photo provided.

**RRX:** I just wanted to talk to you, because first of all... I'm excited that a friend of mine, a fellow person in the music scene is now, running a freaking dispensary. How the hell did that come about?

**JM:** Long story short. My partners and I have gotten into a little bit of trouble with the law regarding cannabis back in 2011. When they decided to open the first round of licensing up through social justice licenses, we decided to apply because we fit the description. We all had a prior conviction without guns or violence associated with it. We already had functioning, successful businesses that we were all currently running independently. We're 50% minority and 50% women owned. So we checked off a lot of boxes that they were looking for in terms of

getting the right people into these licenses. So we got it in the first round and then it was off to the races

**RRX:** That's like the one thing I agree with that the government actually did, was this program for people that had convictions before, obviously with marijuana. That was the coolest thing they've ever done. I don't know anything the government has done that was as cool.

**JM:** Yeah, It's really been a struggle for everyone to get open, right? They gave out 36 and then they gave out another 90 something and then there was a flood and we had 400 card licenses out. Then there was an injunction that held anybody up getting open. I really had to get to open quickly in order to be in the position we're in, that's what it took. We had to dig in and learn about

everything that we had to do to get to open. We gotta do. With no hesitation, we ran full speed ahead and found a building. We got everything we needed to get because there were no promises in the licensing. A lot of people went out and they got buildings and now they're applying. We weren't in a position to do that, you know?

**RRX:** I just think it's the coolest thing and, you know what? Honestly, I didn't pay much attention to the laws and where we were at with everything in New York because I've just been getting weed from the guy that I've always gotten it from. Where are we actually at with the law now? Can I just walk into your place and buy some stuff or do we still need a medical card?

**JM:** No, you don't need a card. It's fully recreational. You just walk right in

and we have a staff of budtenders that are there to make sure we provide you with the right product that you're looking for. That's the difference between us and the weed guy down the block. Don't get me wrong... I was the weed guy down the block. We've shopped like that for decades. In our shop, New York state requires everything to be fully lab tested and then you have all these processors that have fully compliant facilities that get inspected regularly for cleanliness. They have to meet these real rigorous kind of guidelines. So when you're getting your edibles, you know that you're getting the right dosage.

Every piece has to be tested within a certain margin of error, every gummy, every vape. So you're getting a really high quality product and it's all still grown in New York too. You're not

getting stuff shipped here from California, Oklahoma or wherever else weed is getting shipped in from these days. You have, New York farmers who are local and most of them are living in this region. That's one of the things that's really been helpful for us being in the Capital Region... the proximity to the farmers and the processors. We're an hour and a half away from all of them.

They come here, meet with me and we've been developing these relationships with them since we got the license.

**RRX:** That's pretty cool. It's funny because I was just doing some radio with our DJ, Vito, he said he was just at your place yesterday getting some gummies.

**JM:** That's amazing. Surprisingly or not surprisingly, we've had about 17 or 18 thousand local people come into the store already and they're returning.

A lot of people were shopping in Massachusetts before, which again, I

applaud them for getting to legalization before we did. They were getting millions of dollars of business from New Yorkers but it becomes illegal as soon as you traffic it across state lines. Now you don't have to do that. Now you can just come right into the shop, here in New York.

**RRX:** I support that. My guitarist was always going over to Massachusetts all of the time. I'm like what the hell are you doing? This was before you were open though, he's probably going to your shop now. But I was like, you know, the guy down the street sells weed. Save your gas money. I never understood it.

Now, when we were on a tour and going through Massachusetts, we stopped at every dispensary. It really matters what you get because right before we were gonna play in Connecticut, we smoked the wrong batch and we were tired.

**JM:** Yeah. Definitely. There's a bunch of things. Oh man, if I could tell

you everything I learned since we opened the store about weed. I thought there was Indica, sativa and hybrids, right? But there's minor cannabinoids, all the different terpenes and depending on the percentage can have different effects. The entourage effect, they all work together to create it.

Everyone consumes cannabis differently. Sometimes an indica might hype one person up but in general, it'll put you on the couch, right? And sativa gets you focused for the day and working but for some people sativa makes them super anxious and they do not have a very functional day. So you have to make sure you get the customer into the right product, no matter what. That's part of what our budtender education is all about.

We have our vendors come in, do trainings in the back and talk about their products. We're actually gonna start bringing vendors in to the store to talk to customers as well, so that we can

really get the education to the people. It's really important to understand the reason why you shop at a dispensary and the experience that cannabis can give you if you shop properly. You know?

**RRX:** And it's safer. I personally know some people that are not from Albany and they drive to Second Street to get weed. That is extremely dangerous for out-of-towners that do not understand the street politics around here. The deals they get are incredible but why not spend a little bit more to be safe? And to also know what you're getting?

**JM:** Exactly. It's true. You do not know what you're getting. Rest assured that when you come into our store that no matter what, it's safe to consume.

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# New And Recently Discovered Tunes To Kick Off 2024

BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

**H**appy New Year, Rock N Roll believers. We got some new records to kick things off right and my personal recommendations for some tunes you may have missed or perhaps you just forgot about. That's okay, no judgements here. I must however get some negative news out of the way. Albany N.Y. club dwellers are sad to learn that Pauly's Hotel on Central Ave. is closing its doors. This is a venue that did it's best to bring some great shows into town. For whatever reason, it just was not working out. I played many nights there and it was always a great time. With any luck, someone will do something else with that room and make it right again.

What follows is a list of tunes you should be digging on this year. It's not a complete list by any means but it'll get you started.

**Crow Follow - "In Between"** I had the pleasure of sharing the stage with Crow Follow this past weekend in Boston. I don't know where these cats get their inspiration from but I wanna go there. "In Between" has got something mystic about it but at the same time it rocks like mad. How they do this, I don't know. All I know is it sounds pretty freaking fun. It's got horns, it's got gutty guitar work and some weird lyrics. The singer/guitarist looks like a cross between Captain Ahab and a Mennonite. In fact, the whole band has a style all their own. Watch "In Between" and judge for yourself.

**The Len Price 3 - "Chinese Burn"** Okay, this song goes back a few

years but it might as well have been recorded yesterday it rocks so hard. These guys have been a favorite on the indie circuit for a good long time and never lets your ear drums down at a live show. It's not like this song is gonna take up much of your time either. "Chinese Burn" clocks in at one minute and twenty-three seconds of pure power pop bliss! Put it on at breakfast. It'll be over before the toast is done.

**The Woggles - "Mr. Last Chance/Will O The Wisp"** Holy cats, don't these guys ever make a bad record? I say nope and that's all you need to know.... but I'll say a few things anyway. The Woggles have to be one of the best live bands out there today and they've proved it many, many times. This 45 has been burning up the indie airwaves for over two months now. "Mr. Last Chance" is the garage rocker tune we always expect to get from them. Listen to the tone of those guitar fills. "Will O The Wisp" is a bit slower, hypnotic, almost bluesy number. You just can't go wrong with this record or this band. Highly recommended!!!

**The Shang Hi Lows - "Billy"** Billy got a gun and a silver spoon but somehow, it's a tie into an old west slinger. The music sounds like the soundtrack to a showdown. The lone horn sounds like it's blaring from far off in the desert. The undertaker is waiting to cart the loser away. The singer might sound a little too much like Debbie Harry for her own good. Does it bother me? The answer would be no because there's just enough strangeness here to spark my interest.

**Marc Ribler - "Every Picture Tells A Horror Story"** You might have been expecting my take on Marks song "Dick Cavett." That's the song getting the attention these days. Truth is, I was never much of a Cavett fan and don't find him very interesting. "Horror Story" has a better hook, better melody and better lyrics. Not to mention some damn fine guitar lines and a distorted organ driving the whole thing. So many things working together to make it a great tune....

**Lucinda Williams - "Rock N Roll Heart"** I fell in love with this woman's voice the moment I heard her. Talk about a rock n roll heart, this lady has it. With all the things Lucinda has been through lately, she's still out there. She still loves what she does, and the quality of her music has not suffered at all. In fact, it's more real, more passionate, more rock and roll than ever. Get this entire album and blast it in the car. LOUD!!!!

**The Rolling Stones - "You're Driving Me Too Hard"** Hello, it's The Stones, the greatest rock n roll band in the world. Mick is sounding better than ever. Keith plays like nobody else. Ronnie's got the tasty sounding slide. What else do you need? Add to all this a tour starting in the Spring and these guys are hovering around the age of 80! The Rolling Stones are defying the laws of physics. But they always did that anyway. Good for us....

I would be remiss in forgetting to remind you it's The River Street Beat Shop's 20th anniversary this year and they are celebrating with a live band show every month at the shop. Last month was "Off the Record" and it was in a word, great. In January it's going to be my band, who's name I won't mention but many of you already know. It's going to be Sunday January 14th. Please come and celebrate The Beat Shop with us, twenty years and counting!



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# The Heights

BY JOE BARNA

**T**is' the season for many special happenings, self reflection, family gatherings, parties, presents and all that jazz. It's a time of the year where we attempt to suspend that which chains us down emotionally, mentally and physically. A time of joyful exchanges and laughter among friends. A time when children discover the wonders of the holidays, as they wait in anticipation of what lay up ahead. A time to break that healthy lifestyle and indulge in the acts of consuming tasty baked goods, crafted cocktails or even a special home cooked meal you rarely have the pleasure to devour.

But, it doesn't have to end.....Let's talk.

If you're reading this article then Christmas has passed. The new year is upon us and the in-laws are back home. That doesn't mean the laughter, healing and joyfulness we experienced during this time need to fade away. It's important that we strive to keep those warm thoughts with us our entire lives. Not just during designated points throughout the year, but every moment of every day. The mysteries of life are always present, swirling in and around our entire existence. Make each day its own special holiday. Spend time among friends, let your loved ones teach you the importance of the now space and never believe for one moment you are unworthy of the happiness you most desire. Every day is a gift which affords us the chance to learn, grow and share our lives with those we most care for. Don't waste time on that which is undeserving of your attention. For "time" is the greatest and most overlooked currency we have in this life. Spend it wisely.

So.....

I'd like to take a moment and show my gratitude to those who have enriched my life and inspire me to treat each day as its own special holiday. You are the reason I continue to work tirelessly in bringing energy and growth to the upstate NY scene, on and off the bandstand. If not for the love and support of this community I would never have the opportunities I've been afforded. My eternal appreciation goes out to each of you.

I'd also like to send a special message to my daughter Savina Jewel Barna. Thank you for teaching me how to be a real man. One that can finally put himself aside long enough to see the beauty that lay directly in front of me. You have shown me the importance of selflessness, always knowing that there exists others much worse off than myself. Your presence in my life has given true purpose and has allowed me to love another human being unconditionally. I love the young lady you are, the one you're growing into and look forward to watching you blossom into the incredible woman you eventually will be. If it was not for your birth into this realm my life would never have been truly fulfilled.

I Love You

What I'd like to ask those viewing this article.....

Go into 2024 and every year, day, month thereafter knowing you are important. Don't let the holidays be isolated to a few days a year. Make it everyday of every year for the rest of your lives. Celebrate your existence with an open heart and open mind. Know that you are far better off than some and far worse off than others. It's ok...Just keep moving forward. If you can love

others, love yourself, work hard towards goals and never let anyone stand between yourself and that which you dream the world will show you wonders you might have never thought possible. Believe in yourself deeply

enough and witness what unfolds.

Warmest Regards,  
Joe



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# Prog Digest

BY KLYDE KADIDDLEHUMPER

**W**ell – here we are –  
2024

To start – here's hoping that 2024 brings you a little respite from the day to day – filled with music and shows and hangin' with friends and family. The last year or so has, for many and some more than others, a royal pain. Literally.

As a resolution – it is going to be my position that we don't let the idiots get us down, that we revel in the good fortune of others and just have a great time. No weight loss necessary.

That said – this month we are actually going to discuss something prog.

After a long wait, a European tour that I could not get to and the first new music in ages – December 1st was the day.

I/O was officially released and arrived on my doorstep.

This is the latest release of new music from the legend – Peter Gabriel. And it is not simply 'a' release.

Doing the most prog thing ever – I/O is 3 different records. All the same songs, but in 3 separate versions.

Let's address that part first.

Of course, being rather obsessed with sound – Klyde decided that just one was not enough – oh no. There is the Bright Side Mix, the Dark Side Mix (each available on both CD and Vinyl and before you ask – yes) and, in the deluxe set with 3 digital disc's, a blu-ray disc containing Bright Side, Dark Side AND a Dolby ATMOS mix.

And each is monumental and sonically very different. How to describe this.

The master tracks are no different – the levels, ambience and depth have been worked to evoke a very different

set of emotions for each track. It would be wrong of me to try to tell you how they hit me – mostly because each person will have a different reaction. This certainly happened in our household.

As has always been the case with PG, he is topical, political, social and more. If all you know of solo Peter Gabriel is Sledgehammer or Shock the Monkey (again – social stories) you are missing out. Listen to Biko – a tour d'force.

While so many artists have watered down over a 50 plus year career – no such thing here. Genesis was so powerful all those years ago – rich and provocative. I/O is all that and more. In great voice and writing at the top of his game. It is nice to know that the Brit's still appreciate him – this album recently went to number one on the UK charts. I defy a US prog artist to do that here.

Of course, our local bass hero, Tony Levin is featured. Again – if you have never had the opportunity, catch Tony locally with The Stick Men, or as a member of the fabulous Levin Brothers. Or, King Crimson. Or LTE (Liquid Tension Experiment), founded by Mike Portnoy and with Jason Rudess and John Petrucci.

What are you waiting for? Phone up your local record store and see if they have it – if they don't – have them order it for you. Got 12"? Have them get you one each of the mixes on those flat, black spinny things. Got ATMOS – order the full digital setup. We only have all 5 disc's in the house. You should too – it will be soooooo worth it.

Until next time.

Klyde

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# The Crawl

## BY JORDAN LANEGAN

**Y**ou can knock Troy for a lot of reasons – it’s full of its eccentrics and quirks, there’s no doubt about that. But for as many reasons as you could knock it, you could equally find just as many reasons to admire and praise it. We’re a grimy, gritty, character-flawed little city but within its bubble, we have some of the most passionate, creative, genuinely good-hearted people I’ve had the pleasure of meeting – people who are driven by what they love to do and who want to share that with as many others as they can; to bring their specialized niche and piece of the pie to the local and widening robust community. This city is stuffed full of talented chefs, bartenders, small business owners, artists and musicians alike. That is Troy’s charm – a hidden gem nestled in the Capital Region valley that often goes unnoticed, but once discovered, leaves a lasting impression and yearning for more.

The music scene in this town is one that is hard to forget; there’s something very special about it. Several of the small businesses here are a huge part of why local musicians have the platform that they do, as they host ample weekly events promoting shows and offering a venue for solo artists and bands to bring their magic to the stage. The Twisted Fiddler features a rotation of varying live artists each week, The Whiskey Pickle is home to a myriad of DJs who spin in the upstairs loft and newly added blown-out outdoor patio area, The El Dorado hosts many alternative and punk-rock shows in their black and white checkered back room, and No Fun is a staple of the music community for a slew of different genres.

However, the newest and most

exciting addition on the scene comes from well-known member of the community, Scott Wormer, who has innovatively put together what is known as Song City, with splintering supplementing facets, such as The Open Floor, which takes place the fourth Tuesday of each month on the upper level of the Ruck, as well as Song City’s INK first four-day songwriting retreat, funded largely in part to a grant from the Council on the Arts and which took place the first week of November in a cozy cabin at Silver Bay in Lake George. He was inspired by the artistic passion that was evident in Troy upon moving here and wanted to fashion an experience and space that allowed original songwriters an opportunity to connect, create and collaborate amongst other musicians from diverse lyrical and instrumental styles.

Although all 25 of the applicants for the retreat were strong contenders, ultimately Scott ended up selecting the ten that he felt brought forth the most distinctive and unique styles, genres, and personalities that would aid in promoting the right chemistry and team environment necessary for enhancing the song writing process. Throughout the four days, the songwriters focused on taking individual space in corners of the lodge and in nature for their writing, as well as bouncing ideas off one another and playing together in collaborative settings amidst food, drinks and fires, with the objective being able to come out of it with fresh ideas and songs. Moreover, discussion of renowned music producer Rick Rubin’s book, *The Creative Act*, was had in order to encourage the musicians to step out of their comfort zones and look at creating

in a different light, in ways they haven’t tried or thought of prior that might strike a new chord of inspiration. A demo studio was also set up in the living room of the cabin for artists to dabble with recording.

The ten artists selected included Kaylee (Ladybyrd), Ben Hart, Deb Cavanaugh, Natalie Seagriff, J.B. (Dirty Moses), Amanda Case, Sean Jones (The Paper Prince), Ed Schwarschild (Doc-torBaker), Jonathon Hinterberger and Saliyah Itoka. On December 5th, all ten reunited at the AI Center in Downtown Troy, with the exception of Hinterberger and Itoka, to debut the new music they composed at the retreat. As you walked into the showcase and found your way to a seat, you noticed an eclectic collection of vintage chairs, couches, and standing lamps sprawled in an intimate round-style across a large antique area rug, centered in the dimly lit, grand room with a spotlight on the stool in the middle for the performing artist.

“This is unlike anything that we’ve done,” Wormer opens with as MC. “It’s very different than Song City or The Open Floor. The retreat was a magical time. I would talk too long to try and explain to you what an incredible time it was, but what came out of it was not only songs, but more than that, what came out of it was family. A true community. Last time these eight songs were played was in a huge lodge, in a living room looking very similar to this. What we’re doing tonight is to try and bring you as a community into what we experienced together up North.”

His sentiment of a family vibe was echoed resoundingly amongst each artist’s intro, with many of them confessing the nerves they had coming into the

experience and the comfort and closeness they felt upon leaving.

“I tend to be a little reclusive unless I’m in performance mode, so going to something for a couple of overnights can be really difficult, but these guys just made it really easy,” said Cavanaugh before performing her new original song, “Where Do I Go From Here?”.

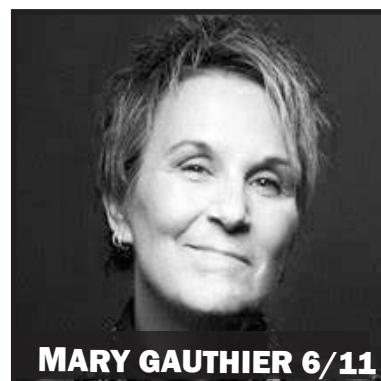
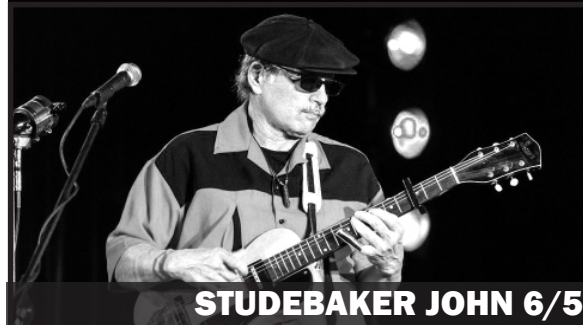
Kaylee (LadyByrd) was the first one to take the stool. She began by sharing that despite her nerves of talking in public and showing how vulnerable she is, she felt relieved and supported being surrounded by her seven other peers, noting how in a way, it feels like they’re all in a band together now. Had she not shared this, you never would have guessed she felt any sort of shakiness being in front of a crowd because of the way her voice floated and filled the room confidently with a beautiful airy and jazzy essence to it as she sang her new original, “Sage Advice”.

Each person that took center stage opened up about their writing process and retreat experience. They shared the tipping point that led them to their a-ha moment in producing their new song, the advice from someone else that made a lightbulb go off, and intimate parts of their personal lives that inspired a lyric or stream of thought.

“The best songs happen pretty fast. That’s kind of a truism for writers. The ones that you need to work really hard at, for me at least, tend to be pretty contrived. For lyrics, if it happens right, it ends up being like meditation – you just let whatever is in your head happen. For me, writing happens like that, and then what it starts to do is reveal what’s

*Continued on Page 45...*

# JUNE 2022 SEE YOU AT THE LINDA



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# Paradigm Change

BY ART FREDETTE

*Taylor's Version*

It is easy to hate on Taylor Swift. She is everywhere and she sucks the oxygen out of every room when she shows up. That being said, and I am naturally a contrary type, I have to defend Ms. Swift and tip my hat to her.

While Ms. Swift's music is not really my cup of mead I am intrigued. Taking a look at her career from the angle of a sociological point of view has opened my eyes to the fact that she may very well be bigger than The Beatles.

Taylor started out as a typical country artist with some potential but she almost immediately began to venture into the world of pop. Her songs are well crafted and catchy. She understands and interacts with her audience in ways no other artist ever has. She is a phenomenon we have never experienced before.

Swifties (a name Taylor's fans have coined for themselves) are largely female, mostly Millennial and Gen Z, and they are LEGION. And for the first time in the history of pop music these female fans have another woman as an idol. Gone are the days of screaming teenage girls crying over Elvis or The Beatles. Gone are the days of teen idols on the cover of pulp magazines being hailed as the latest heart throb. Swift has turned that upside down. Gone is the worship of some cute faced nominally talented male. These young people are being empowered by a woman who speaks to them in and on a level they not only relate to but understand. So sorry boy

bands- you're out. Swift has completely decimated the age old practice of reaching female fans through their genitals and replaced it with relatability and, on some level, sisterhood. No other female artist has achieved this. I dare you to prove me wrong.

Recently, in conversation, with a friend who is of the boomer generation things got heated. He was put out by my defense of Swift and my admiration of her success. I, of course, poked the bear by skewering his childhood by saying she was bigger than John, Paul, George and Richard. His face turned a lovely crimson and he began to shake. I had committed blasphemy and this true believer was not going to stand for it. "None of her songs will be around in 30 years, there is nothing there!" "The Beatles wrote for an entire generation!" GOTCHA!, I thought before responding. Then he went on to say, "She just writes pop. Pop never holds up long term." Quietly smiling, I replied, I agree just like "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" will never last?". "It isn't the same" was the response. It isn't the same and that is what makes it so interesting. Swift writes her own songs, produces her own albums and manages her brand with a deftness that has never been seen before. I realize, I was picking a fight but I was trying to make a point that us old folks have had our run and our heroes are being replaced. We can sit back and complain, just like our parent's did about our music, or you can look at what Swift has accomplished and be

impressed. She is the voice of a new generation and for her fans she is it.

Aretha, Janice, Joan Jett, Joni Mitchell are all giants in the musical lexicon but I challenge you to prove to me that their impact is/was as big. They were women playing in a man's game and they broke barriers, but they have never reached this pinnacle. They had large mixed audiences but still it was the male audience that drive their careers. Swift is obviously standing on their shoulders but with that boost she has created a whole new paradigm for female performers and fans. She has made the next 20 years hers by giving young women a voice! Some say she is vapid and immature. Maybe, on the surface, but her lyrics prove otherwise. "Shake It Off" and "Bad Blood" are no lyrical genius but not every song an artist writes need to be. Check out the Red album or Folklore by Ms. Swift read the lyrics and then let's talk. These records are not "Blonde on Blonde" but honestly, they are good. See for yourself.

Let's address the personal attacks about various lovers etc. People have messy relationships and people have sex and people who are musicians sing about it. The slut shaming is hilarious and hypocritical. Taylor does write a lot of songs about her love life and at times, it seems, that is all she writes about, but she is hardly alone. Ahem, Stevie Nicks? "Go Your Own way"? Let's face it Stevie slept her way through most of her band and management team. Nobody seems to

care about that. George Harrison and Eric Clapton practically share a wife. "Layla" a great song but... Joni Mitchell and the Go Go's devoured men during their careers. Let's get real people, nobody is a saint and some of heroes are straight out libertines. And by the way, she hasn't destroyed football with her latest flame. The NFL should thank her for boosting their sagging ratings. Swifties vote with their wallets check out Travis' merch sales and get back to me.

The economics of Taylor's last and current tour are undeniable. Not only for her but for the cities her tour stops in. Think about all the local businesses that have benefitted from her coming to town. After the last few years this has to be a godsend.

People are all upset over Time magazine naming Swift "Person of The Year" a dubious honor at best. Checkout some of the past winners. Jaw dropping to say the least. I once again ask you, who else could they have picked. Really, who?

Taylor Swift is only 34, her fans are mostly young. She reaches them through social media and operates on a level they find intimate. She is going to be around for a LOOOONG time and we old farts better get used to it. The game has changed. It is exciting and intriguing. Old gods die and new ones arise, Paradigms change and this one is Taylor's Version.

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# Doug Klein

Capital  
Region  
Timekeepers

BY OP CALLAGHAN

Doug Klein. Photo provided.

I feel like I've been seeing Doug Klein forever.

As a 17 year old touring Plattsburgh state, I met up with a girl from my hometown, who offered to take me "downtown" for some beers. I was straightedge, but gladly went along to see the sights. One of those sights happened to be a band called "Scratch Your Head and Wonder". I was into heavier music, but these guys caught my attention with their abilities to keep a groove without falling apart. Just a few years later after I graduated from Plattsburgh, I saw Doug again with Slipknot at Aiko's in Saratoga. I caught a few of his performances with Strange Arrangement, and most recently with Neon Avenue. Doug's distinctive "open hand" playing certainly sets him apart from the herd, and his technical abilities further elevate him as a player. He's talented, inspiring, and a pretty nice guy, so please welcome Doug Klein!

**RRX:** How did you get your start playing drums

**DK:** I like to blame my late brother Greg for getting me hooked on drums. When I was in 3rd grade I followed Greg into the marching band rehearsal room at school and that was that. (I still own that Ludwig marching snare). When I was in 6th grade, Greg would invite his 9th grade friends over to jam with me in our basement. He thought I was good enough to hang. They would smuggle in some beers in guitar cases, past my parents, and we would proceed to play, over and over again, some really tortured versions of "Apostrophe" by Frank Zappa, "Freeway Jam", by Jeff Beck, and if someone was brave enough, they would attempt to scream some "randomly pitched mouth noises" which were supposed to be the lyrics to "25 or 6 to 4" by Chicago.

**RRX:** Hah! That's a supportive family! Tell me about your first kit?

**DK:** I still own my first kit. In 5th

grade My parents bought me a used 4 piece set of maple Gretsch from Manny's in NYC. I guess I hold onto things. I still use them now and then for certain shows. I refinished them myself during quarantine as they were showing the scars of so many gigs over so many years.

**RRX:** That's so cool! You have an interesting set up now. Tell me how that evolved.

**DK:** My set up may look a bit strange. I play "open handed", meaning though I am right handed in regular human life, I ride with my left hand, like Billy Cobham, Simon Phillips, AJ Hall, to name a few. My primary ride cymbal is over my hi-hat on the left, and I sometimes have one in the "correct" spot on the right as well. This year I finally purchased my very first new kit ever, a Tama Starclassic Performer with 2 rack toms, 2 floor toms, I keep one of the floor toms under the

hi-hat, and I have way too many

cymbals.

**RRX:** Tell me about some of your projects over the years.

**DK:** My first paying gig ever was in 7th grade. A jazz bar near my house gave us a few bucks to play there. I know it looked and sounded like a bunch of toddlers mutilating jazz standards like Maiden Voyage by Herbie Hancock, and All Blues by Miles Davis. I think the owners got a few laughs out of it. Out of high school I played a few "fusion" gigs on Long Island in clubs like US Blues, and My Fathers Place, in Roslyn. The comedian Bill Maher opened for us at one of them. Nobody liked him. Later in college at Plattsburgh State I started my long career in a style of music that we now refer to as "Jam Band". My now lifelong friends and I started a band called, Scratch Your Head And Wonder, SYHAW. We played almost monthly at PB Finnan's, which was the music venue above a bar called The Monopole in Plattsburgh,



NY. The venue went on to become a very popular room for live music and still is. After college I toured Long Island for 2 years with a blues band called Steppin' Out, which was quite lucrative. Next was an early Dead tribute band called Slipknot out of the Albany area. (Not the Metal Band). There were only a few Dead tributes in the Northeast in the mid to late 80's and we were one of them and were quite successful (with a lowercase "s"). During this time I was fortunate to play on percussion, a full set with Steve Kimmock and the band ZERO, on two separate occasions, once at Bogies in Albany, (Video on my YouTube @dougklein574) and once in Schenectady. I also had the opportunity to perform a set with Jorma Kaukonen with the guys in Slipknot at the legendary Aiko's in Saratoga Springs, just around the time that Phish played there, thanks to club manager and long time friend Larry St. Pierre. Next I had quite a bit of radio play with an original project called Strange Arrangement. We Opened up for The Band twice and shared dressing rooms with Levon, Garth, Rick, and the rest. That band went on to play Woodstock 94, on a separate stage site created by and for Todd Rundgren known as the Todd Pod. Then there's a legit reggae band I was with on and off for 20ish years, "Robanic" with my dear friend and band leader Aston "Robot" Ellis. I also did many gigs and recordings with Rick Rourke, Matt Smith, and The Stomplistics. I know I'm forgetting a lot.

**RRX:** Do you have a favorite performance, live or recorded? Where can we hear it?

**DK:** My current project, one that has really challenged me and brings me great pride with a huge dose of fun, is a Grateful Dead tribute known as Neon Avenue. We started with this name and lineup by doing live streams during quarantine and have been growing quite a loyal fan base (friend base) ever since. We don't play frequently, by

design and desire, and in that short time, have been invited in the past 2 years to perform at such festivals as "Wild In The Trees, '22" Lake George, "Rock The Dock '23" Lake George, "Rye Bread Music and Arts Fest '23", Schaghticoke Fairgrounds, and we headlined at "Rockin' on the River

'23" in Troy, NY. You can check out our multi-tracked audio, multi-camera videos at YouTube@NeonAvenue

**RRX:** Tell me a favorite (or least favorite) gig story.

**DK:** Ugh, I forgot all my hardware for a gig at the infamous Rhinecliff Hotel, and all my cousins finally came to see me play, only to find me sitting on a lawn chair with just a bass drum and snare.

**RRX:** Oh man, that's awful. Do you write music? Do you play any other instruments?


**DK:** I do compose digitally on a music workstation. None of these compositions have been performed with living breathing musicians yet. Some are on my personal channel, YouTube@dougklein574 and some are on my Soundcloud with other music from my past. [soundcloud.com/doug-klein-2](https://soundcloud.com/doug-klein-2)

**RRX:** Where can we see you play?

**DK:** Neon Avenue plays a few times a year at Putnam Place in Saratoga Springs, The Hollow, in Albany, Unihog in Hoosick Falls, You can follow Neon Avenue on Facebook and YouTube I also play every Monday year round for a few tunes at Family Tree at Putnam Place in Saratoga Springs with a bunch of the best players and singers in the region. It's a free concert every Monday, 7 to 9 There are also some great things happening at 518 Craft and Twisted Fiddler in Troy that I attend on occasion that you don't want to miss. There is also a blues jam every Thursday at Lawrence Street Tavern in Glens Falls that is quite fun.

**RRX:** What do you do when you're not drumming?





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Continued on Page 45...

# The Year in Jazz 2023

BY J HUNTER

**W**ell, here we are again – same deal, different platform. Kinda nice to be independent, you know what I mean?

Anyway, for anyone who didn't read my stuff at my old journalistic home, "Jazz2K" is shorthand for the multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-influence musical diaspora that has left "your Grandfather's jazz" far, far behind. And if "independent artists" are your thing, this music and these artists (among many others) embody the spirit of independence that drives jazz in the 21st century.

We'll count down the best in a bit, but let's hand out some bowling trophies first:

## BEST PARTY DATE

**DAVE McMURRAY – Grateful Deadication 2 (Blue Note)**

This is the first time an award's gone to the sequel of a past winner: Multi-instrumentalist Dave McMurray's 2021 release Grateful Deadication took this award two years ago. Now, McMurray's back with more "Detroit style" takes on San Francisco's legendary rock group. Jenny Scheinmann, Oteil Burbridge, and Larry Campbell join McMurray's usual band to kick life into "China Cat Sunflower", "Scarlet Begonias", "Playing in The Band" and a lot of other tunes I danced to at Dead shows long, long ago.

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**JOE CHAMBERS – Dance Koina (Blue Note)**

Joe Chambers may not have the same cachet as past winners Charles Lloyd and Dr. Lonnie Smith, but the octogenarian drummer's third Blue Note release is a powerful, Motherland-laced document on how some things get

meaner as they get older – jazz drummers, especially. (See Haynes, Roy.) Chambers gives his rhythm section (bassist Mark Lewandowski and keyboardist Rick Germanson) permission to set creative fires throughout the date, be it on Chambers' own compositions or on mystical morphing of music by Kurt Weill and Joe Henderson.

## BEST VOCAL RELEASE

**CHRISTIE DASHIELL – Journey to Black (Self-released)**

2023 was the best year for vocal dates, with crackerjack releases from Cecile McLorin Salvant, Veronica Swift, Nicole Zuraitis and the Kurt Elling/Charlie Hunter collaboration SuperBlue. But as good as those were, the trophy goes to the self-released sophomore effort from Dashiell, a Washington D.C. native who credits her family's musical legacy with inspiring her every day: Her father Carroll "C.V." Dashiell III plays drums on the date. While Christie does take on music by Burt Bacharach and Branislav Kaper, it's Dashiell's own soulful compositions that literally bring this one home.

## BEST SOLO OR DUO RELEASE

**FRED HERSCH & ESPERANZA SPALDING – Alive at the Village Vanguard (Palmetto)**

Hersch and Spalding have made their way through the jazz world by doing things their way and no other way, so it was really surprising to see these strong individuals teaming up on a live recording at the Village Vanguard, the iconic NYC club where Hersch recorded five previous live dates. With a duo date like this, it's less about the music as it is about the communication, and the interaction pianist & vocalist builds is a thrilling musical ju-jitsu, with one

player using the other's momentum to create sounds that are beautiful, lively, and frequently hilarious. Add this one to the long list of great Vanguard live dates.

## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR (Best First Release as a Leader)

**ARMAN SANGALANG – Quartet (Calligram Records)**

Who says record labels don't mean anything? The brand-spanking-new marque Calligram focuses on a Chicago jazz scene that has had to broadcast its own unique sound through out-of-state channels. Although Calligram put out electrifying initial releases from Chitown mainstays Chad McCullough, Geof Bradfield and Russ Johnson, it's the debut from up-and-coming tenorman Sangalang that got my attention. His deep playing and complex compositions should be far beyond Sangalang's youthful experience. Thankfully, they're not, and hopes are high for what comes next from him.

## LOCAL HERO AWARD (Best regional release)

**PATRICIA JULIEN PROJECT – Sky Pointing (Planet Arts)**

Julien's soaring flute was the X Factor that lifted last year's Local Hero winner (Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes' 1-2-3-Go) above the usual slate of hard-charging local artists. This time, Julien combines her dynamic sound with searing original tunes by herself, guitarist Alec Julian, and keyboardist David Gleason to make a riveting date that only touches jazz' past when it reboots Frank Foster's classic "Simone." RadioRadioXLand was favored this year with hot local releases from Keith Pray, the Piranha Brothers, and Matt Stecker & Pretzel Stex, but Julien flew above them all once again.

Okay, it's time to hit 'em where they ain't. IT'S "FOR THE WIN!"

## NUMBER TEN...

**JOEY ALEXANDER – Continuance (Mack Avenue)**

This date makes me very happy, because it proves I was right: When pre-teen pianist Joey Alexander was Wynnton Marsalis' (and everyone else's) favorite musical prodigy, I said, "Come back to me when you've lived a few years!" Those years have forged Joey into a soulful, free-ranging artist & composer, and his sophomore Mack Avenue date shows his growth curve is in no danger of topping out. Theo Croker's haunting trumpet expands a color palate already made rich by Alexander's whip-smart originals.

## NUMBER NINE...

**ERIC KRASNO & STANTON MOORE – Krasno Moore Project: Book of Queens (Concord Jazz)**

Founders of two of my favorite groups (Lettuce and Galactic), guitarist Eric Krasno and drummer Stanton Moore turn it up on a rocking love letter to some of the best female vocalists & composers on the menu. Whether it's Amy Winehouse's blues-soaked "You Know I'm No Good", Kacey Musgrave's easygoing "Slow Burn", or Peggy Lee's popping chestnut "Fever" (with help from Branford Marsalis), Krasno & Moore give all the women truly powerful respect.

## NUMBER EIGHT...

**JD ALLEN – This (Savant)**

It never fails: As soon as I think I've come up with my Top Ten, sonorous tenorman JD Allen always drops a date right before the deadline that makes me update spreadsheets for the umpteenth time. Both 2019's Barracoon and last year's Americana, Vol. 2 (a nasty

collaboration with the aforementioned Charlie Hunter) made the Jazz2K Top Ten. This year (See what I did there?), Allen puts himself in a world of rubato, as Alex Bonny's dizzying electronics give JD a weightless, gravity-free place to create without pesky Earth-bound hindrances like time signatures and frameworks.

#### NUMBER SEVEN...

#### JAKOB BRO / JOE LOVANO – Once Around The Room: A Tribute to Paul Motian (ECM)

An educator at Jazz at Lincoln Center allegedly declared that Paul Motian wasn't really a jazz drummer because "He didn't swing." As we see from this heartfelt tribute, that was the whole point! Motian's elegant, inspiring brushwork took countless collaborators into deep space before he passed in 2011. One of those collaborators was reed wizard Joe Lovano, who doesn't need time signatures to create musical majesty. His partnership with Jakob Bro (whose ethereal guitar work recalls ECM OG John Abercrombie) shows a new generation how to think outside the box.

#### NUMBER SIX...

#### JACQUES SCHWARZ-BART – The Harlem Suite (Ropeadope)

Jacques Schwarz-Bart has been in my personal mix for over 15 years, primarily for the way this sax master & educator delivers multicolored solo lines lifted by a badass groove that's usually influenced by JSB's upbringing in Guadalupe (though you know his time with Erika Badu and Roy Hargrove's RH Factor has a say in there somewhere). Schwarz-Bart fills Harlem Suite with his 20 years in NYC as a musical immigrant and takes us through every step of that technicolor journey, receiving stellar backup from (among many others) Terri Lyne Carrington, Matt Penman, Sullivan Fortner and Marcus Gilmore.

#### NUMBER FIVE...

#### ORRIN EVANS – The Red Door

#### (Smoke Sessions)

Smoke, the renowned Harlem jazz club/BBQ mecca, was one of many spaces that were shuttered during Lockdown; they finally re-opened in late 2022. But while the restaurant may have been up on blocks, the record label they started in 2014 remained one of the genre's major centers of powerful, expressive jazz. One reason is Philadelphia native Orrin Evans, who can (and does) accomplish whatever wild musical images his mind manifests. Smoke Sessions has been Evans' primary play zone for a while now, and The Red Door is one more entry in a long line of thoughtful, powerful sets by a genuine musical genius.

#### NUMBER FOUR...

#### CHRISTIAN McBRIDE'S NEW JAWN – Prime (Brother Mister / Mack Avenue)

Uber-bassist Christian McBride has become an institution of Marsalis proportions, with a weekly syndicated radio show and multiple projects of varying size and splendor. That's cool for him, but for those who remember the electric chaos he used to create with the Christian McBride Band, it's a little dull. Happily, McBride decided to create chaos in the acoustic world he now lives in with the strapping quartet New Jawn. Prime is their second recording, and it definitely puts the lie to Sophomore Slump.

#### NUMBER THREE...

#### LAKECIA BENJAMIN – Phoenix (Whirlwind Recordings)

It's been a rocket ride for Benjamin, who returns to the Jazz2K Top 10 after a three-year absence. Not that the Washington Heights-born reed wizard has been busy or anything: She's only been artist-in-residence at the Monterey Jazz Festival, artistic director of the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival, and was the 2023 Jazz Scholar of the Library of Congress! Oh, and Benjamin

*Continued on Page 45...*

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## The Crawl (cntd.)

*Continued from Page 36.*

heavy on your heart and foremost where your head is at," Hart expressed before debuting his new single, "Going Out of My Way".

What I loved most about this showcase was how the goosebumps and prickled skin from rising hair never once left my arms, even with how very different each artist was. Their age, gender, background, range, instrument, disposition, and style were complemented perfectly by the obvious shared love of what they do and how that was the binding factor of their budding and blossoming relationships with one

another. No matter if it was folk, indie, jazz, rap, electric or acoustic, these eight artists had a visible dedicated passion to their work that was quite awe-inducing.

Closing out the night was Ed Schwarzschild (DoctorBaker) with his new song, "Appointment", which he prefaced by praising Scott. "There's a special kind of magic and talent and beauty in being able to make something like this happen, but the fact that he has created this whole scene, it begets description – it's pretty phenomenal."

And indeed, it is pretty phenomenal.

As I watched each performer go up and lay their heart on the floor, I thought of how everyone has to start somewhere, of how every creative person has had that one moment or experience that lit (or reignited) the fire underneath them, and of how important having a community where you feel safe, inspired, and heard truly is in order to flourish in your art. There is far more to come from Song City, so be sure to keep your ears perked, and in the meantime, support the retreat artists by heading to songcitytroy.com and checking out each of their new original songs (and prepare yourself to be blown away.)



## Doug Klein (cntd.)

*Continued from Page 40.*

DK: I spend time with my wonderful family. I also see a ton of local and regional acts and artists. I support them and the venues by paying a cover, buying their shirt or CD, and by buying food and beverages. I recently shut the doors of Doug Klein Pottery where I made stuff to sell, (Doug Klein Pottery on Facebook) and taught classes for the past 22 years. I am in the process of turning that space into a personal music space for rehearsal and recording.

RRX: Wow! Good for you! Any advice for the young drummer?

DK: I don't give advice unless asked but... Play a smaller instrument! And be a kind and generous person, It's a lot about relationships, and Have fun!

RRX: Any New Year's Resolutions?

DK: No. ;) and Thank you for this opportunity to share my story.

RRX: Thank you, Doug!

## The Year in Jazz 2023 (cntd.)

*Continued from Page 43.*

also came up with Phoenix, which takes the fire inside her monumental 2020 release Pursuance: The Coltranes and cranks that sucker up! Do not sleep on Lakecia Benjamin, because you'll probably miss something incredible.

### NUMBER TWO...

#### ALLISON MILLER – Rivers in Our Veins (Royal Potato Family)

It seems like a lifetime ago that drummer Allison Miller was backing up Ani DiFranco and Brandy Carlisle. Maybe that's because she's made the equivalent of a lifetime of memorable music with her next-level "band of leaders" group Boom Tic Boom. Miller mixes BTB alums with friends from other projects to create Rivers in Our Veins, prefaced by the righteous two-part suite "Of Two Rivers", which marks the first time tap dancers have been featured in the Jazz2K Top 10. The date literally sets sail from there, taking us on a riverboat journey you'll want to take again and again.

**AND THE #1 JAZZ2K RE-**

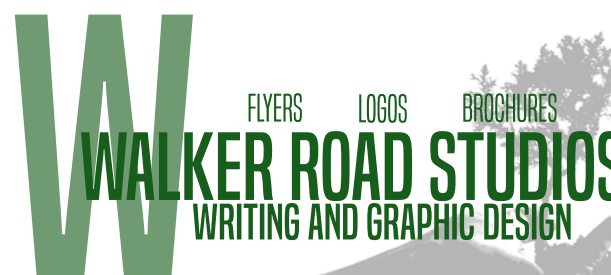
### LEASE OF 2023 IS...

#### ARTEMIS – In Real Time (Blue Note)

This is one of those "other projects" Miller has been working on. Like Boom Tic Boom, Artemis is a "band of leaders", staffed by some of the greatest players in jazz today – and it's an all-female group in a genre that isn't scarce on misogyny. There's been a couple of personnel changes from Artemis' towering 2020 debut: Nicole Glover and Alexa Tarantino take over the reeds

duties, and there are no vocal tracks on this date. (Sorry, Cecile McLorin Salvant.) Apart from great takes on Lyle Mays' "Slink" and Wayne Shorter's "Penelope", it's all-original music from women who will lead this genre into the heart of the 21st century.

And that's that. Your experiences may vary, and that's cool, because at least you had them. Have a great 2024, and never stop supporting modern music. Peace!



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# Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

**J**anuary 2024 marks a significant event in my life. It was January 27th of 2023 that I made the decision to retire after a 46-year run in Broadcasting. I had been giving it a lot of thought beforehand, and in truth I was very torn since (as I have mentioned numerous times) I loved what I did. It was never really a job to me, rather, it was a paid hobby. Granted a low paid hobby but I digress, and besides, “they” don’t like it when I use the term payola.

Am I completely out of the field? Absolutely not, and I don’t think I can ever give it up. The business is my addiction, my mistress, my bitch. Today I do some volunteer work for a national non-profit that has been quite rewarding. Additionally, my participation in this organization is kind of a pay back for me, I had a pretty successful career thanks to people, so it’s time for me to pay that forward. I also work on voicing audiobooks, making sure my golden pipes don’t get too rusty. I am open to everything, fiction, non-fiction, romance novels, science fiction, and if the price is right, gay porn. Then of course there is my monthly contribution to this, the 518 version of Pravda, I mean the award-winning invention of that social butterfly Art Fredette (just joking Art, as they say in West Side Story, womb to tomb, sperm to worm). And who knows, maybe the golden voice will return to local airwaves? As a guy on the radio used to say, only The Shadow knows.

That all being said, I want to

provide you with what my wife and I have discovered in retirement. Consider this a guide, or a warning, for what to expect when it’s your time to be put out to pasture. A reminder these are our reflections, your results may vary.

Probably the biggest plus and minus is no schedule to really adhere to. You do what you want when you want with who you want. It’s extremely rare that either of us needs to set an alarm clock, we get up when we get up. That’s still something I have a hard time with. I have many “Rain Man” like qualities, and on occasion I can’t function until I lay out what I am going to do for the day.

While you care about how you look, and in some cases smell, you find if you don’t go out, there’s no need to dress up, as it were. Bathing is important, yes, but if it’s just you (or a spouse) you don’t have to impress yourself, or the other person. There’s also a word to be said about being at home and not wearing pants, sort of like I’m doing while writing this piece (sorry for the visual).

You do tend to lose contact with people, as well as your need for social activity. People assume now that you’re retired you don’t want to be bothered, you don’t have the desire to socialize, or the early onset Alzheimer’s has kicked in and you forget who they are. On the plus side, my wife and I in general hate people, and we are at the stage where we tell friends (A) we’re too sick (B) we’re too tired or (C) someone just died.

On the subject of “the last roundup,”

it now comes front and center. Any little ailment you have, no matter how small, it’s (A) “Golden years my ass” or (B) “Is this the one that’s going to take me?” And if you’re fortunate, you have “pre-arranged” your going away party. You don’t want to worry about the kids and grandkids taking your remains to the Town Dump like Arlo Guthrie did in Alice’s Restaurant.

Finally, and I am very blessed for this, if you are left with a significant other, you at minimum must like each other, if not love, because that may be

the only person who will still be around to put up with your crap.

This is all just scratching the surface, but after a year of not having to work, retirement has been tremendous. And one last thing, all my life I have been proud to call myself an asshole. I still am, but retirement means I care even less what people think. It’s like having Willy Wonka’s Golden Ticket.

Be hearing you.



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SUNDAY 1/7	WRONG MOVE - SLIGHTED HARD FEELINGS - STRUTTER		18+/\$10/5pm
FRIDAY 1/12	<b>PANIC AT THE FUZEBOX!</b> Moody's BIRTHDAY Emo Night with DJ HOPE	18+=\$20 21+=\$10	8pm
SATURDAY 1/13	<b>EXTREME METAL AWARDS AFTERPARTY</b> No Cover with ticket stub from the event!		21+/\$5/11pm
SUNDAY 1/14	HALOBITE - COLD KISS SPIRITKILLER - BAD IMPRESSIONS		FREE SHOW 18+/3pm
FRIDAY 1/19	<b>RESIST</b> Industrial Dark Dance Night		21+/\$10/8pm
SATURDAY 1/20	<b>BACK TO SCHOOL JAMBOREE</b> DG3DG		No Cover until 10pm 21+/\$10/8pm
FRIDAY 1/26	<b>CARNIVORE AD</b> Faded Line Violent By Design Ice Queen		18+/\$20/8pm
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