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May 2024
Vol. 6, Issue 5

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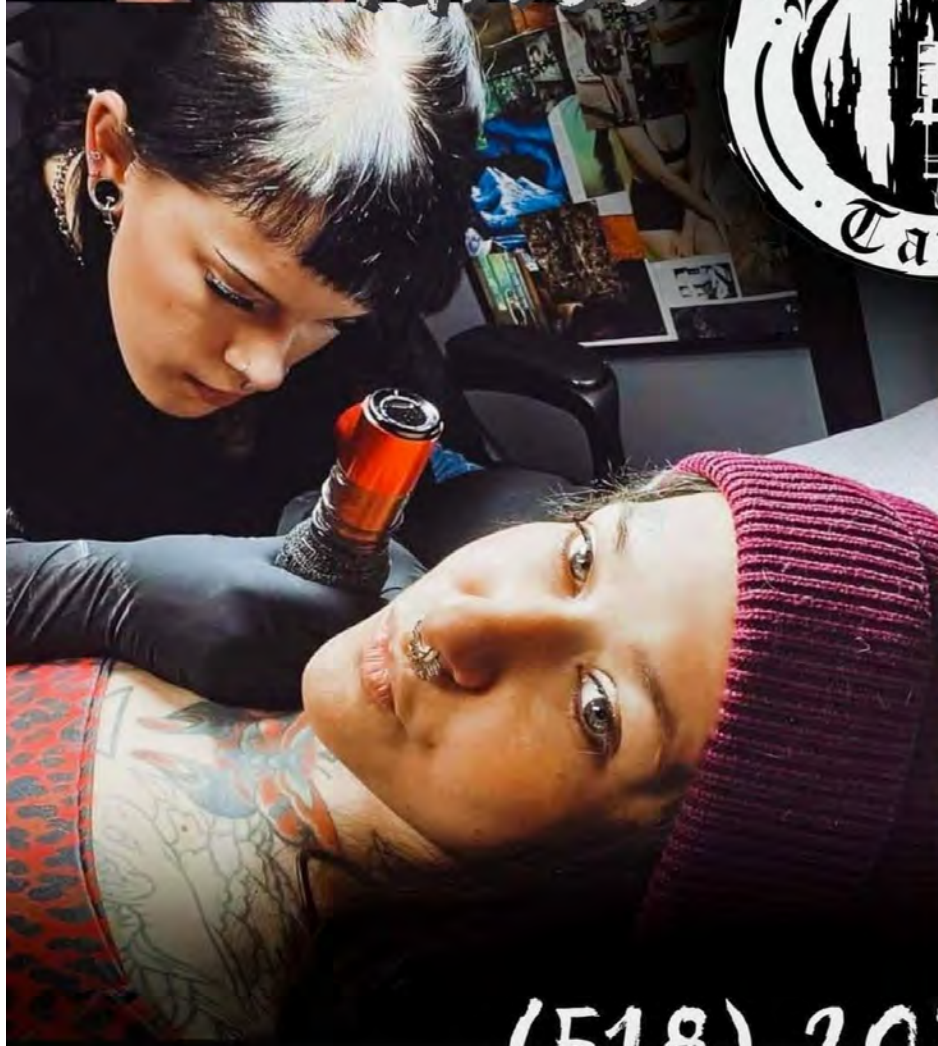


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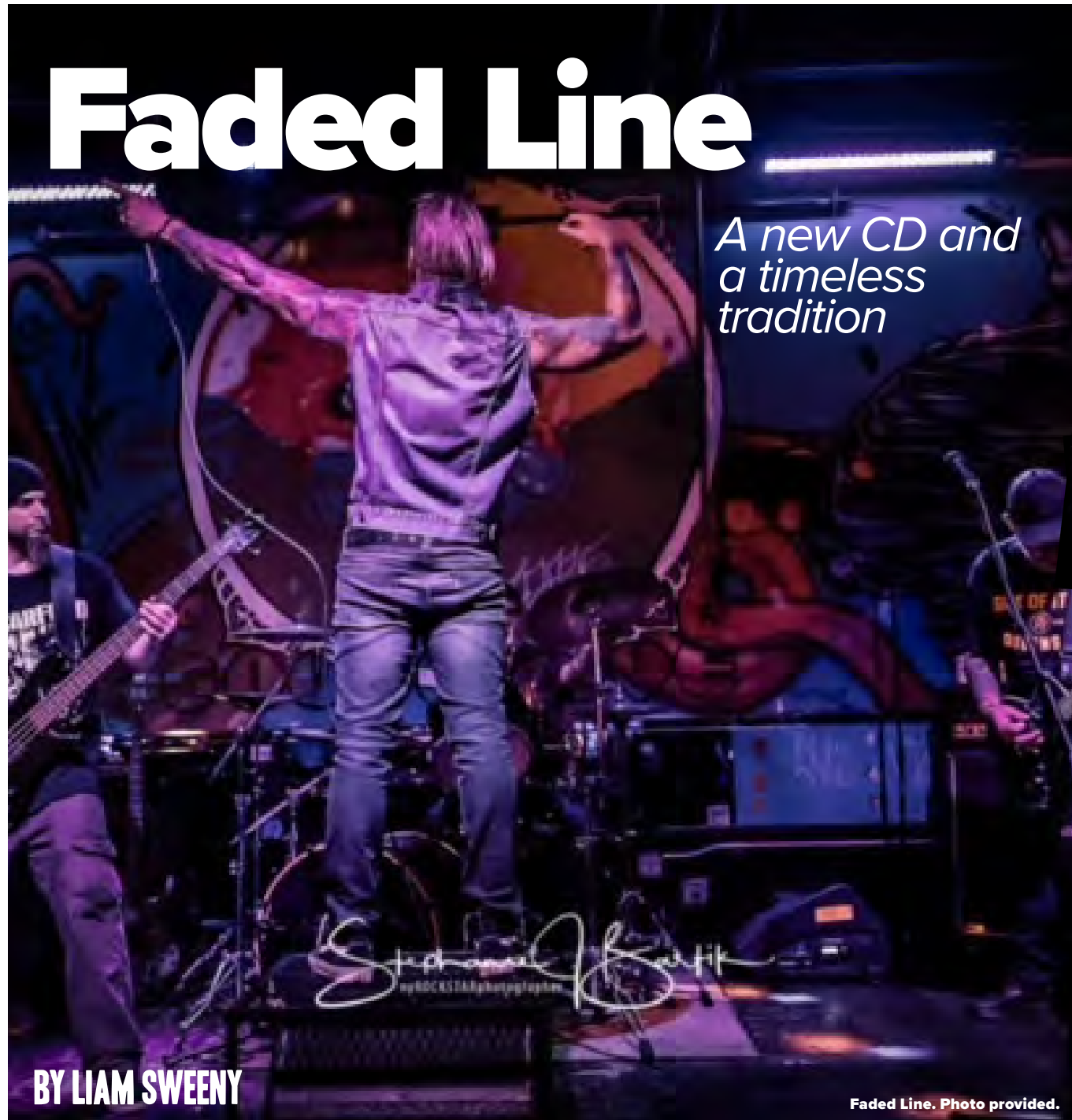
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Faded Line

A new CD and a timeless tradition



BY LIAM SWEENY

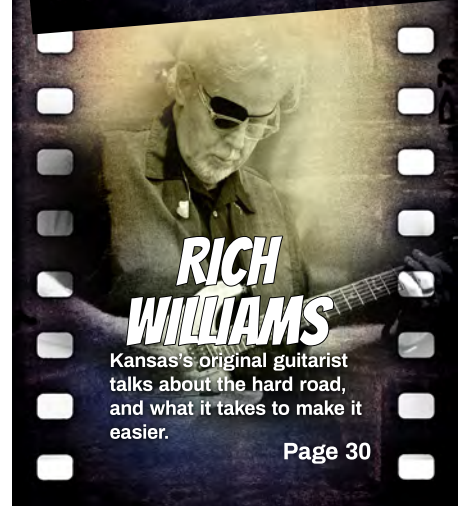
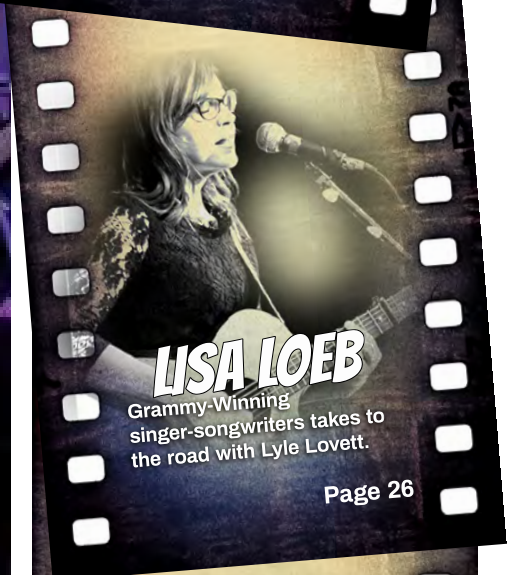
Faded Line. Photo provided.

On the way to Albany and I'm watching the clock on the dash because I got familial commitments and I'll be damned if I don't also commit to the one place in the city of tulips that I haven't been to yet. Empire Underground. Vegas Nacy. Writer and contributor. Also, singer of Faded Line, who's gathering the hordes of the valley to push

their latest release, "Ti Condanno A Morte." I know I can't stay for their set and it's quite possible I'll have to bounce before anyone goes on, but I'll damn sure get a CD and at least something, be it a sticker or a hat or a freakin' can cozy. Before that, I'd caught up with Vegas and we had a chat about that thing about the other thing.

RRX: Stereotypes are a bitch. I mean, aside from the really bad ones, you have cultural stereotypes about everything, including music. Would do you think is the stereotype for the music you play, and how far are you away from it?

VN: The stereotypes for the hardcore/metal genre is absolutely that every band member/fan is a grumpy, tough





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Faded Line. Photo provided.

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guy/girl fixated on violence - that is the farthest from the truth!! Some of the absolute biggest sweethearts in the world come from the hardcore scene. People that would be there for you 24/7, check in on you etc. I do the same for them! If you come out to our music release party this Friday, April 19th with Slapshot, From within, Remains of rage and Apocalypse tribe at Empire Underground, you can experience the love for yourself!

RRX: Sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Or so they say. Whether you're off the wagon, on it, or never been, there's something you got a thirst for. What are some of your basically harmless vices?

VN: For years it was booze and woman (typical answer) but now and until I am no longer breathing they will be Family, food, Thai tea, exercise and vacationing.

RRX: Would you rather have one of your songs blow up and make you a one-hit wonder and household name, or would you rather have all your songs be solidly received, but no chart-climbers? (You have to pick one or the other here.)

VN: Oh, I would love to have all our songs solidly received any day! It's hard to write consistently great songs (in the eyes of your fans), so that would be a testament to your writing.

RRX: What would you like fans to know before they come to see you play? (No basic stuff; get specific.)

VN: That the lyrics are coming from a personal place and I want everyone to

understand what I'm saying and why I am saying it. The energy that the crowd gives off is probably the most important part of the show for me. The sound could suck, but if the crowd is giving it, I just give 200% back.

RRX: Sometimes you gotta go on the road. Miles can build up, and it can stretch the comfort level of any traveling act. What do you bring on a road trip, or tour? What will you forget to bring?

VN: I have learned to be prepared for anything on the road lol. I always bring weights and workout bands, plenty of fruit and protein powder, headphones, pen and paper, chargers for every electronic device and my sleeping meds! I usually wind up forgetting at least one charger.

RRX: We let it out differently when we play music. The happy, sad, good and back; it can all be put out musically. Overall, do you feel better when you sing about the better times, or the worse times? Is there a difference you can describe?

VN: I think singing about the sadder times gives me as much joy as singing about the good times.

They remind me of where I am today and might not be if I hadn't experienced them. I always try to write from personal experience so there are some doozies out there!

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BY OP CALLAGHAN

Mark Tritico. Photo provided.

Recent “Listen Up Award” winner, the Donna Tritico Band, has been a fixture on the local scene for several years. Opening for such acts as Robin Trower, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, and Blues Traveler, Donna and her band have a well-earned reputation as a super-tight, high-energy band that is full of surprises. Holding down the rhythm section is drummer Mark Tritico. Mark got into the drums at an early age, when his grandfather turned him on to Gene Krupa. Growing up in the great state of Delaware, Mark moved to

Pennsylvania at 16, has worked as a hairstylist, and is now the man behind the Donna Tritico Band. So how about a warm welcome for Mark Tritico!

RRX: Thanks for agreeing to do the interview. How did you get started playing drums? Did you take lessons, and what was your first kit like?

MT: One day, when I was about 12 years old, MTV started. That sparked my interest in drums. I started out by trying to mimic what I saw. My parents were very supportive. I started taking private lessons. After a year or so, I got my first kit. It was very cheap and very

old. I was very happy.

RRX: Do you come from a musical family?

MT: My maternal grandparents were musically inclined. My grandfather played sax. He had his own jazz combo during the swing era. And my grandmother played piano, albeit for her own amusement. My mother sang around the house a lot if that counts. Music was a total constant throughout my life.

RRX: Do you play any other instruments?

MT: I played violin in grade school

for about two years. Despite my best efforts, my instructor suggested I stop.

RRX: When did drumming really take off for you?

MT: At 17, when I began gigging. My first decent kit was a Tama Imperialstar.

RRX: Tell me about your first gig.

MT: I really couldn't tell you my first gig; that was so long ago. My first professional gig was with Jenny Lynn and the Combinations, a Country band I joined when I was 17. It was run by a woman who sang and played keyboards. I was with them for four years.

We toured extensively, appearing at various VFWs and Moose Lodges in Central Pennsylvania. She really liked me as a drummer, despite the fact she always yelled at me for being too loud. I remember being ribbed by my peers for being in a country band, but for someone that age it was good money. I've never been an elitist when it comes to any musical genre.

RRX: Tell me about some of your other experiences.

MT: In my early twenties, I played up and down the East Coast in a few alternative bands. I was a member of the April Skies, a Hershey, PA-based original band.

We recorded six albums/EPs. One recording, the "Drive-In" EP, was produced by Mitch Easter, known for his work with REM. I also toured with a well-known ska band, Regatta 69.

Since moving to the Capital District, I've worked with several bands,

as a member and a sub. I've done a lot of session work locally. About five years ago, my wife Donna and I put together the Donna Tritico Band. I think it's really important to understand that there are lessons to be learned from every situation. I take note of how I could have handled things differently. So I feel that with DTB, I am applying that knowledge. Keeping a band going requires a lot of patience and compromise. I am always humbled by the fact that we have such amazing people on this journey with us.

RRX: Tell me a gig horror story.

MT: Here's one. The band I was in at the time had just arrived in Pennsylvania after an 8-hour drive from South Carolina. We were traveling in a van that had no heat, during some seriously arctic weather conditions. I was very sick when we got to our show that evening. The next day, I went to the hospital and was diagnosed with pneumonia. There are many more that could

qualify.

RRX: Yikes! That's awful. How about a good gig story?

MT: There were a few great ones. When Donna and I were in Blue Hand Luke, we performed at Troy's "Rockin' on the River." There were a few thousand people there, a beautiful night, and a very positive vibe. Joe Lowry played before us. I never would have thought we'd be in a band together.

As a member of various local bands, I've performed at Albany's "Alive at Five" and the Egg's Hart Theatre as part of the opening act for Robin Trower. We've opened for Blues Traveler, Burton Cummings (The Guess Who), the Commodores, and Kenny Wayne Shepherd.

RRX: Nice! Where can we see you playing?

MT: Donna Tritico Band has enjoyed sharing the bill with some very talented touring tribute bands such as the Ultimate Doors and Philadelphia

Freedom: A Tribute to Elton John. We will be opening for Philadelphia Freedom at Frog Alley on April 12th.

We are looking forward to performing at Ophelia's on Broadway on May 18th. Please check our Facebook page for the current schedule.

RRX: What is your current setup? What do you like to play for drums?

MT: My Mapex Saturns are my favorites. I also use a Natal kit, because it's got a stunning finish. If in a very tight space, I will bring my Gretsch bop kit. My cymbals are all Zildjian K series.

RRX: Excellent. Last question—put together your dream band.

MT: My dream band would be some sort of shoegaze-funk hybrid. Throw in some elements of hip-hop. If anyone's interested, hit me up.

You heard him. Hit him up!



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Prog Digest

BY KLYDE KADIDDLEHUMPER

What a long strange trip it's been. No, this is not another Grateful Dead article. While I like the Dead and have a '72 VW bus with a custom plate, that is not where we are headed this month. We are going to be visiting a much older form of music.

During the past month or so, Constant Companion and I have had a number of family events out of town—Hoboken and Nashua, NH in particular.

Two weekends in a row were consumed by a wedding; the actual ceremony in Hoboken and then the bride and groom being introduced and celebrated at the bride's home synagogue. Both events were lovely, everyone was pleasant, and a fine time was had by all.

At the wedding reception, I'll admit to seeing something I'd not before—a DJ with a drummer. Not certain how common that is currently, as that was not the case in my day.

The luncheon after the second weekend was far more interesting from a musical standpoint, and the real topic here. No DJ. No recorded music. There was dancing and there was a band—and music, I must admit, that I do love.

It was a klezmer band.

Klezmer is a traditional music starting with the Ashkenazi Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. The single word "klezmer" really didn't come about until the beginning of the 20th Century.

Now, I am certain there is a portion of the audience reading this little crazy monthly article saying, "Klyde, klezmer is not prog music." As has been

mentioned, I write whatever pops into my pill-crazed little head, and klezmer is more progressive than you all might think!

Who'da thunk that there have been fusion klezmer bands, incorporating jazz and punk? Bands with such names as Daniel Kahn & The Painted Bird, Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band, Mames Babegenush, Moishe's Bagel, and the ever-popular Klezmatics.

As they approached a short break to grab lunch, the band announced there would be Israeli dancing, and asked if we were all ready for that. Things to know: Klyde does not dance, much to the chagrin of Constant Companion. Only dancing I ever did was a short tap bit I had to learn as the lead in a musical in college. **KLYDE DOES NOT DANCE.**

Well, the fun began. Likely the best-known piece you would here from a klezmer band is the dance "Hava Nagila" (translated, it means "Let Us Rejoice"). And there was dancing, and bride and groom lifted in chairs, and all kinds of things. What fun (to watch).

The second dance was described as a Jewish Virginia reel; I found the description rather interesting. Called "Yesh," the title means "There is a goat" or "We have a goat." A fast-moving dance, the length of which really depends on how many couples happen to be participating.

The longer I write this column, the more it really impresses on me that variety is the spice of life. That is not a trite little saying, it is a truth. Not THE truth. A truth.

From this point forward, perhaps

we ought to think of this as a progressive dinner. Each iteration is different food and a different location. Each with a style of its own.

So, check out a klezmer band and

report back. A new dinner will be served on these pages each month.

Until next time.

Klyde



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The Heights

BY JOE BARNA

Well folks, it's now May 2024, and Jazz Appreciation Month has once again come and gone. We were treated to a spectacular collection of live performances across the entire region and beyond. However, the best is yet to come. In my world, jazz appreciation is a 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year phenomenon that never ceases. America's art form has a heartbeat no matter the time of year or calendar day. Let's get into this month's offering.

So ... what shall we talk about today?

Originally, I was going to construct an article discussing the art of improvisation and its importance regarding the evolution of jazz. But after pondering long and hard, I decided to present a piece that would draw attention to one of my favorite genres of the style, vocal jazz. I don't think the importance of vocal jazz gets its proper spotlight in today's modern era. With such an emphasis on instrumental prowess and harmonic gymnastics, sometimes the simple task of performing a timeless melody finds itself in the background. Hopefully, this small article will help to jumpstart the interest in jazz vocalists in those who may not have a relationship with the genre.

Jazz developed from many different situations and circumstances. The rhythms are shaped from the drum themes of African history. Lyrics written about the struggles of field workers, poverty, celebration, and more were added. By the late 1800s when these two worlds collided, a new sound found its home in the southern region of the United States. Moving into the

1900s, we have names rising to prominence the likes of Buddy Bolden, Louis Armstrong, Nick LaRocca, Charles Prince, Fletcher Henderson, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, and too many others to list. These bands were the first to record, have residencies, and provide music at ballrooms for those who wished to dance. But, let us not forget one very important piece of this puzzle—the singers.

When record labels such as Decca, CBS, Columbia, Commodore, Blue Note, and others began documenting the efforts of some of early jazz music's greatest bands, one thing they often included were the young vocal talents of the era. Some of the names you might recall are Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, June Christy, Frank Sinatra, Cab Calloway, Joe Williams, and many others. The art of the jazz vocal has evolved since its early beginnings. Now we hear names such as Kurt Elling, Norah Jones, Bobby McFerrin, Diana Krall, Madeleine Peyroux, Cecile McLorin Salvant, Samara Joy and other greats in their own right. As you can see from the two lists mentioned, the art form has grown and matured. The rhythms, lyrics, time signatures, tones, shapes, and colors are now a fusion of influences from many nations and backgrounds.

We are fortunate to have access to all of these colorful voices. Through tools like the internet and cell phones, we are now able to hear our favorite singers at the touch of a button. This helps to find new talent we wish to support and whose careers we may follow for years to come.

So, why am I spending time writ-



Kristina Koller. Photo provided.

ing about vocal jazz?

Since moving back from Manhattan in 2016 I have rarely come across a venue in the Capital Region that is both ideal for singers and offers a sound that even the lightest of dynamics could be captured within the integrity of a performance. We now have such a venue in Alias Coffee in Troy, NY. The tone, space, setup, controlled environment, intimacy, and allure

stands among the best I've heard in my 30 years as a professional musician. It gives the vocalist a stage to present dramatic concerts facilitating the use of extreme dynamics. It might be a happy accident to have stumbled into this cozy home-away-from-home, but boy am I glad I did.

Personally, I love playing with singers, especially in great venues. It allows me to play more as a traditional

accompanist, bringing out specific colors that sometimes get lost in an all-instrumental, highly improvisational arena. There is an art form all unto itself in backing up a jazz vocalist. You have to be supremely conscious of when they are bringing the energy up or down, when they require more space, when they might need a slight push, or when they choose to loosen up the beat allowing for a more open-flowing vibe. It is the obligation of the rhythm section to afford the vocalist their best chance to sound great.

Because of my love of female vocalists, I have launched a series at Alias Coffee highlighting some of my favorite singers and friends from both the Capital Region and NYC/NJ. We have already presented the engaging voices of Jeanine Ouder Kirk, Jody Shayne Brooks, and Shannon Rafferty. All brought something special to the bandstand and offered the listener a unique experience to cherish.

Coming up in May we will have the privilege of welcoming two more singers to the Alias Stage.

On Thursday, May 2, Troy will be treated to the stylings of Capital Region newcomer Donna Trunzo. Following on Thursday, May 16, will be one of my good friends out of NYC and a young lion on the vocal jazz scene, Kristina Koller. Both shows will be exciting, engaging, and musically satisfying. The rhythm sections for each singer feature some of New York State's top players and soloists.

The art of singing in jazz has been around for as long as anyone can remember. It first rose to notoriety in the late 1800s and by the 1940s it was off and running as one of the most respected genres of jazz. By the 1970s and 1980s, the genre saw a mix of pop, funk, rock, classical, and other styles start to melt into the fabric of the music. Vocalists were experimenting with other sounds, rhythms, and song forms. Now in the year 2024, I see

many singers returning to the roots of the music, singing timeless classics and resurrecting many lyrics not seen or heard from in what seems like forever. It's inspiring to witness this music come full circle.

There exists for all of us a jazz vocalist that reaches deep inside our souls, pulling out many emotions that may be lying dormant. Some prefer the older versions of classic repertoire sung by the likes of Nat King Cole, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Armstrong, Dean Martin, and others. Many find their happy place in listening to newer artists like Michael Buble, Melody Gardot, Josh Groban, Samara Joy, Cyrille Aimee, and more. Whatever your fancy, it's important to remember the history and relevance of singers in jazz. They have forged a path throughout the vast history of music that is deserving of respect and acknowledgment. Without someone to sing the lyrics composed by many of this music's greatest minds, we would not hear these words again. I, for one, am thankful for the vocalist and look forward to presenting many more concerts for the Capital Region to feel a sense of pride to have attended.

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<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>May 2nd, 2024 FELLOW PYNINS <i>Contemporary Folk Duo</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 7:30pm Showtime: 8pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$20.00 \$25.00</i></p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>May 4th, 2024 HARVEST & RUST <i>A Neil Young Experience</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 7pm Showtime: 8pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$20.00 \$25.00</i></p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>May 9th, 2024 ARIEL POSEN <i>Guitarist/Singer-Songwriter</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 7:30pm Showtime: 8pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$25.00 \$30.00</i></p> </div> <div> <p>May 16th, 2024 THE MATT NIEDBALSKI TRIO <i>ft. The GNP Trio</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 7pm Showtime: 7:30pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$10.00</i></p> </div>	<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>May 23rd, 2024 SONGWRITERS' SHOWCASE <i>Host Jimi Woodul, Dustin Lowman, Belle Skinner & Marty Wendell</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 6:30pm Showtime: 7pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$10.00 \$15.00</i></p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>May 29th, 2024 TOM PETTY'S ALBUM <i>"Damn The Torpedoes"</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 6:30pm Showtime: 7pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$12.00</i></p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>May 30th, 2024 LITTLE SAINTS <i>Indie-Folk with Soul!</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 7:30pm Showtime: 8pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$15.00</i></p> </div> <div> <p>May 31st, 2024 MIKE VITA & JOE PONTILLO <i>Acclaimed Comedians</i></p> <p><i>Doors: 7:30pm Showtime: 8pm</i> <i>Tickets: \$22.00 \$25.00</i></p> </div>
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Punk Rock Saves Lives

BY LIAM SWEENEY

We connected with Chrys Salisbury, the Capital District head of Punk Rock Saves Lives at Empire Underground in Albany. And we discussed the state of affairs and the affairs of state.

RRX: Tell us a little bit about this organization, what the goal is.

CS: So we're a music-based non-profit that goes to shows, we swab people for the bone marrow registry. We provide a lot of mental health information and we provide a lot of community reduction of harm supplies, like Narcan, fentanyl and Xylazine test strips, condoms, pregnancy tests and other supplies. Ear plugs, all for free.

RRX: So did you follow the need, or have you been a part of the scene to begin with and you followed the cause and brought it to the scene?

CS: I feel like it's a little bit of both, I've always been somebody who's wanted to take care of people. But then I met the people that run this and I've been volunteering with them and last year they decided they were going to start doing local chapters. So I was like, 'yeah, I want to run a local chapter, absolutely.'

RRX: Is this anywhere else in the Capital Region? Is this the first place in the region it's started?

CS: So there's only one chapter in the Capital Region that I run, but they have chapters all across the country, It's based in Denver.

RRX: Obviously you provide a lot of services. One of the things is that you could get spread out a little bit. Where do you find the biggest need? What do you get called on for the most?

CS: I believe the Narcan. We hand out a lot of Narcan. I want to give out

more Xylazine and Fentanyl test strips though, because I have literally hundreds of them at home. You can get them free through New York State. Anyone can go get Narcan, Xylazine, and Fentanyl test strips sent to them at home, which is awesome. Not a lot of states do that; we're one of the few. And I give out a lot of condoms.

RRX: How has the reception been at the various venues? Tell me a good luck story and a bad luck story.

CS: So I feel like it depends on the type of music. Ska; any time we go into a Ska show we get a huge reception. We did Less Than Jake, Aquabats, and Bowling For Soup here last year, we had forty swabs. Which was amazing. But I want to say usually I get between around two and ten.

RRX: Why would somebody do bone marrow swabs? I heard it's painful, and hard to match.

CS: We get this a lot. So they don't go into your bones anymore. Now it's just like giving blood. Unless it's for a child. And if it's for a child, they're still going to have to drill into your bone, but it's for a child.

RRX: Are there any restrictions, like age? Health?

CS: There is a whole list of restrictions based on health in the FAQ at <https://www.dkms.org/faq>

RRX: But anybody healthy and younger?

CS: Between 18 and 55.

RRX: Do they have to fill everything out? How do they find out they're a match?

CS: So we have them read the sheet first, so that there's nothing to disqualify them. If there is, then they can't.



There is a form you have to fill out; it's just a medical consent form, you just fill it out, name, address, all that. Emergency contact, sign and date it and then we do the cheek swab.

RRX: Great. So now you're doing a lot of things. What do you wish you were doing more of?'

CS: The mental health resources, because the mental health IN this country is a huge issue. I think that's one of the defining issues of our time. Last year, there were over 50,000 suicides in the United States, which is the highest on record ever. And every year it's getting worse. One of the nonprofits that we partner with is called Here Tomorrow, It's a free service that you can call to speak to a peer support specialist. Again, it's free, they'll keep up

with you for a year. And they will help you connect to other groups to get mental health resources.

RRX: What could the music scene do to make your job easier?

CS: If bands would just give us a shoutout on stage, 'hey, Punk Rock Saves Lives is here, swabbing for the bone marrow registry. If they do that, because the people there are fans. They look up to them. They're gonna come check us out. So I'm always asking the bands to give us a shoutout.

So we have a local Facebook page, Punk Rock Saves Lives Albany NY. So people can join that to see where we're going to be, how to volunteer, reach out to me there, all the events we're going to do. And then there's the main chapter, Punk Rock Saves Lives.

Come Back to the Hop

BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

Hypocrisy is prevalent in every generation of every civilization. A cult of personality is built up to the point of gods and goddesses who are appeased with the fatted calf of adulation by the unwashed, the starry-eyed, and the humble. Whether these appointed idols were built up by chance or on purpose, they can be played by some to simply entertain the masses, influence an entire culture, or become a scapegoat. Whoever we choose to build up though, is always disposable.

It continues today and it's not clear if it's for good or bad. Nobody is sure who's behind it. It's the proverbial mystery, wrapped in a riddle, inside an enigma. Who said, "You can't have good without evil"? Dammit, it's true. You don't need to be a conspiracy nut to see what's going on. Trend mongers are now internet influencers. The whole population has become the media. But when the masses truly use their voices, the inmates end up running the asylum. Just look around you. By the time this comes to press, it may be more evident. Somebody somewhere with some power wants to divert your attention or even change the culture coming at you, just to suit their needs. Too bad you're not in the "somebody" club, but don't feel so bad. Most of us aren't and never will be.

There are so many reasons to honor the music that we love. Enter, Alan Freed. Most likely without knowing, he helped unite the cultures, but not

without breaking a few rules. Freed began his career as a DJ on U.S. Armed Forces Radio. After World War II, he took jobs at several Midwest radio stations, eventually ending up at WJW in Cleveland, Ohio. Over the years, he began to see the potential in the R&B music being played on low-signal late-night stations throughout the country. Many of the kids who were not into their parents' music were seeking out R&B and digging it. WJW was a high-powered station in a major market, and Freed somehow convinced the management to play songs like "Rocket 88" and "Sixty Minute Man" right alongside the then-current offerings of adult artists like Perry Como, the Andrews Sisters, and everybody else the teens were not interested in. The result was pretty impressive, as the listenership crept up in WJW's local ratings, which the industry still lives and dies by today. This new format was about to tap into the new teen market's disposable income.

Freed started organizing his own concerts, including the "Moondog Coronation Ball," and brought the artists in live. These shows became wildly popular and the mixed crowds' enthusiasm during the performances were often mistaken for riots. As a result, Alan's show got more popular, and his time on the air was extended. The concerts continued and these shows are considered to be the very first major rock performances.

By the time he got to WINS in New York City, in 1954, the red flags on Alan Freed went up. Post-World War II America was not ready for this as far as the parents were concerned. "Mr. and Mrs. Apple Pie USA" were aghast with the "duck walking" Chuck Berry and the lewd gyrations of artists like Little Richard, ranting and screaming Tutti Fruity. "A-WOMP-BOMP-A-LOU-BOMP-A-WAM-BAM-BOOM" ... what the hell did it mean anyway??? Was it commie code??? Was it a message from Mars??? The old folks lacked the ways and means to figure it out, but they just knew it had to be about sex! It probably was, but that's beside the point. Point being, this rock 'n' roll has gotta stop!

As the late '50s rolled around, Freed was enjoying the trappings of a successful rock 'n' roll impresario. He regularly promoted rock revues called "The Alan Freed Rock N Roll Dance Party" to venues in Brooklyn and elsewhere. He had a national weekly television show on ABC called "The Big Beat" in 1957. It was during one of his shows in Boston that his fortunes started to go downhill. After an overly enthusiastic crowd prompted the theater managers to close the program down, Freed got on the mike and told the crowd that it seemed the Boston Police Department had decided to not let them have a good time. This prompted the audience to riot, and he was arrested. This, in turn, resulted in his termination from WINS.

Soon Freed was charged with receiving payola, which was the practice of taking money for giving airplay to certain records. Companies would slip a few C-notes (as well as some other goodies) in the sleeve of their records and got them played—a lot! This made sense because when Alan played a song enough, it would become a hit. Payola was controversial at the time. Freed at first denied, but eventually admitted to the practice. Payola became illegal by 1960, and Freed was found guilty of receiving one payment of \$300. Other radio and TV personalities such as Dick Clark were questioned but never brought up on charges.

For bringing rock 'n' roll to the masses and helping unite the cultures, Alan Freed was fired from broadcasting and ended up drinking himself to death by 1965 at the age of 43. The moral of this story is not moral at all you see. Even with the best intentions, you should never upset your sponsors. The righteous will always rise to save us from ourselves, even if we don't ask.

So beware, good-doers everywhere. Your deeds will never go unpunished, but you could end up in the Hall of Fame. That seems to make everything all right though. And for crying out loud, don't leave without a souvenir.

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SUNDAY, MAY 12

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WEXT'S 518 STAGE

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Lisa Loeb

*Grammy-winning
Songwriter talks Lyle
Lovett, Ethan Hawke,
and sending kids to
camp*

BY ROB SMITTIX

Lisa Loeb. Photo provided.

RRX: I was very excited to talk to you.

LL: Thank you.

RRX: Cool. My mom's the cutest, right? So, last night I was like, hey mom, I'm gonna be talking to Lisa Loeb tomorrow and my Mom's telling me all this stuff... I don't know if any of it's true or not. But she was telling me that you had a summer camp for underprivileged kids or something?. I don't know if it's still going, but Lisa's got a good heart, she's a great person, that's what Mom said. Is that true or is my mom making stuff up?

LL: It's close. in the 2000's when I started making children's music. Specifically my second children's record which was called 'Camp Lisa.' I wanted to make a TV show about camp to let kids see how great summer camp is.

Then I realized it would be better if I could actually just send kids to camp. All the proceeds of the record Camp Lisa and also whenever I can raise money to send kids to summer camp. I haven't had my own summer camp.

RRX: Pretty cool. Yeah, my Mom is the best. She got the information half-right. Has the tour begun yet?

LL: With Lyle Lovett?

RRX: Yes.

LL: No, it's a little over a two week run with him. I've got lots of shows planned coming up this year. Some with Lyle, some with a band called Straight No Chaser, some solo acoustic, some with my band. Still a lot of touring. But I love flying with Lyle Lovett. We played a concert run with him when he put out his record, 'The Road to Ensenada' back in the nineties, we met

around then. I know my folks were big fans of him and I was a fan of him. I was lucky I got to go on tour with him then. That was almost 30 years ago. And here we are together again. We've kept in touch and we stayed friends all these years and this will be a really cool tour because it's gonna be sort of acoustic and intimate and we're trading songs and telling stories. We'll probably end up singing or playing a little bit together as well.

RRX: Excellent. It's 2024 and it's hard to believe that so much time has gone by to begin with. The big hit "Stay," that was in like 1994 or something like that?

LL: Yes, it was 1994.

RRX: I remember because I was a sophomore in high school and of course like everybody else, I had a crush on

you at the time. Ethan Hawke obviously was involved. My mom seems to think you guys were roommates at some point. I don't know where she gets this stuff.

LL: Yeah. I don't know. No, we are friends and we lived across the street from each other. I worked with the theater company a lot and we were just good friends and fans of each other's work as well. He was shooting the movie Reality Bites and he's very involved in the projects that he does. He thought that one of my songs specifically "Stay," might be a good song for the movie. And so he passed it along to Ben Stiller and all the different people, the team of people who are in charge of getting music into the movie. They decided to use it in the movie in the end credits. It was an amazing opportunity for me at the time.

RRX: I would imagine so and it seems like it's all been uphill from there. So, I, I try not to do too much research. I try to just kind of talk and learn as I go along but I did see something... did you become a mom in your forties? Is that legit?

LL: Yes!

RRX: God bless you. I became a grandfather in my forties.

LL: Oh, wow. Yeah, I was busy making music and a lot of other things. That's just when it happened for me but I'm lucky it did. I've got two kids, I've got an 11 year old and a 14 year old. It's been sort of an interesting process figuring out how to tour and when to tour. What makes sense for the family. Luckily, I have a lot of different types of things I do within my career as well as being a DJ on Sirius XM, having a podcast where I interview people called "Where They Are Now" through Sirius XM. I do some acting, a lot of voiceover work, a lot of songwriting. So there's always a

lot of different things I can do. Some are at home and I also love touring.

RRX: And at some point in time, your first name becomes Grammy Winning.

LL: It was Grammy Nominated for a very long time. And then I won a Grammy for one of my family friendly records a couple of years ago. That was really exciting.

RRX: Oh, it's gotta be, one of my friends actually won a Grammy last year and I was so happy for him. He helped write a song for Aaron Neville.

LL: Oh, that's great.

RRX: But the coolest thing was he got to bring his 16 year old daughter on the red carpet with him. That's gotta be the coolest, you know? Mom brought her to Disney World, but I think Dad wins!

LL: Yeah, I have to say that the getting a Grammy... I really appreciate it, especially in the field that I got it in. The nominations that we had in the past

were also really great, but winning it in the family friendly music community... these are all people who are really committed to their craft and it just means a lot to be recognized by that group. But it's also just the magic of being able to make the record in the first place.

It really is always exciting to be able to go into a room with some ideas, whether it's by myself or collaboration with others and come out with a song. It's so amazing. It's just as magical as it was when I was a little kid and started writing music.

RRX: Well, like I said, I don't wanna take up too much of your time. Is there anything that you would like to say to the fans out there to get them to come on out to the show on May 2nd in Saratoga?

LL: Uh, It sounds like you're gonna tell them!

(Both Laugh)

RRX: Oh, I'm gonna tell him.

LL: Yeah, I think it's gonna be fun.

Personally, I'll probably be playing as I usually do a combination of songs that people may know from the radio that I've written. As well as newer songs, older songs and songs that aren't even released yet. I really like to mix it up. I'm a big fan of music so I feel like I know what to play to satisfy people who are longtime fans as well as people who may not have heard my music before at all. I think Lyle's really great at that too. I think it's gonna be really a good show.

RRX: Well, I appreciate it. Thank you so much and I can't wait to see you on May 2nd.

LL: Yeah. Thank you and tell your Mom. I said hello!

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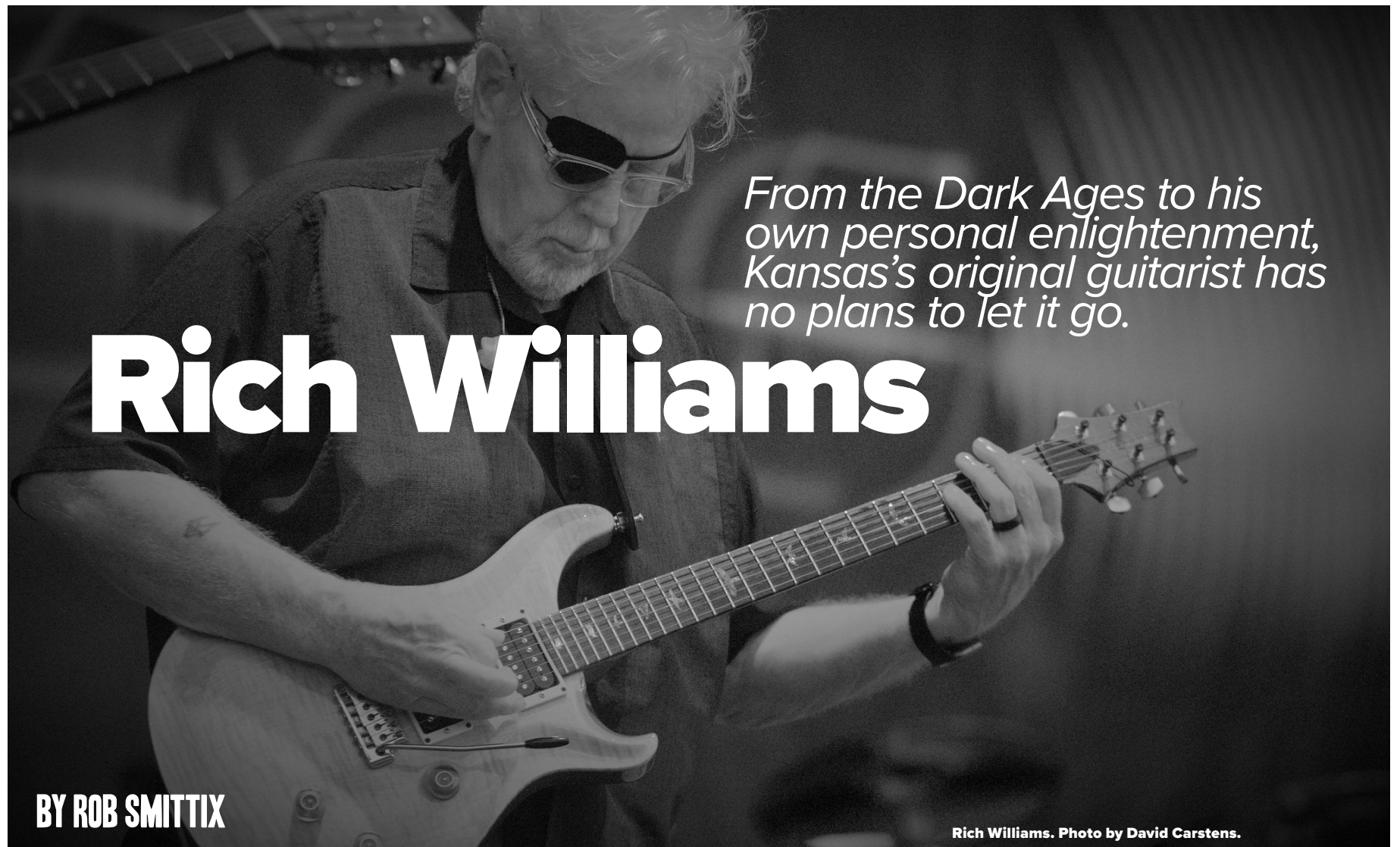
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From the Dark Ages to his own personal enlightenment, Kansas's original guitarist has no plans to let it go.

Rich Williams

BY ROB SMITTIX

Rich Williams. Photo by David Carstens.

RRX: So, how's things?

RW: All is well. On the road. Usually, I will leave on a Thursday, come home on a Sunday and we'll play Friday and Saturday. We do that throughout the year. And so we still wind up getting 80-plus shows in for the year. But we also get to go home; it's a nice balance and we don't get burnt out.

RRX: That's ideal. I know it wasn't like that for the full 50 years.

RW: No. In the '90s, we were in a bus all of the time, and that just wasn't the best for us. Classic rock hadn't really made its rebound yet. So we were just riding from city to city on a bus. The

band and crew on one bus, and playing a lot of rock bars, basically.

RRX: Right.

RW: We'd be gone for a month or two and then come home for a week. Then we'd go back and do that again and it was hard work. We'd walk off the bus into the back door of a club and we'd get back on the bus, ride to the next place, and walk into the back door of that club. I call it the Dark Ages. I don't really remember much of it.

RRX: Did you ever think you would have a 50th Anniversary Tour?

RW: No. We'd make an album, make another album, and tour. It just kept going.

RRX: I'm really happy that you're coming to Albany on May 11th to the beautiful Palace Theatre and I'm certainly gonna be in the audience.

RW: Oh great.

RRX: And I'm hoping maybe to know a guy who could get me backstage or something, to hang out and see what the rock and rollers do these days.

RW: Uh, not much. Yeah, the wild and crazy times of backstage never really took off with us. There were moments but ...

RRX: Probably for the best.

RW: Oh yeah, I tried to drink every town dry until about 15 years ago. The best thing I ever did was to put that away.

RRX: Sure.

RW: Now, we take it very seriously. Rock and roll in your seventies is not the same thing as it was in your twenties. There's a whole different mindset. It's a career and you have a legacy to uphold, etc.

After 50 years, I'm past the age of wondering what I do and looking for a backup "Plan B." This is what I do and fortunately, we've been busier than we've ever been for the last probably nine years. We manage ourselves. So we get to pick and choose what, when, and where we go and do and how much we want to work. We are our own bosses. It's been a very satisfying time in that

sense. We're beholden to nobody except ourselves and our fans.

RRX: That is absolutely the best. I know we were talking about the bands that have been around for a while and the party days are kind of over except for this one band—Molly Hatchet—man, those guys never quit.

RW: Well, they eventually quit because they're all dead. They were a later-day Southern rock band. We did some shows together quite a few times and they seemed really hell-bent on maintaining that Southern rock credo of partying hard and dying young. They kind of took it to an extreme. A lot of your '80s hair-bands did the same and some of them are still out there doing it. I guess it can be fun for a moment but it's not a good thing in the long run. We're playing the long game, you know? We never wanted to be a flash in the pan and check out in our twenties, thirties, or forties. Ideally, I will die on stage in my eighties.

RRX: That would be the best way to go, I would imagine.

RW: Why retire? So I could start playing a lot of golf? Maybe start a garden? No, I'm gonna do this. I'm still very involved in researching equipment and all that kind of stuff. I've got a whole new rig that I'm assembling at home right now. I'm constantly on top of those things, just trying to make it sound better. When you get the right guitar, the right amplifier, and the right system set up, all of a sudden playing just becomes easy.

What you're hearing in your head is translating through your body and into the guitar. I think every guitar player that takes it seriously, that's their constant goal. But it's elusive, it's always moving around, it's hiding behind trees, you capture it and then it's gone. So it's the search for the Holy Grail constantly and that's what I do. Again, we leave on a Thursday, come home on a Sunday, and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, I'm working on gear.

RRX: That's right.

RW: So, it's not something that we casually do. I'm doing this all the time.

RRX: It's a dream for so many of us rockers. We all wish that we've made it to where people know our songs and we can tour on that for years. But as you know, the reality is, for 90% of us, it never happens.

RW: I don't take that for granted. There are 100,000 people on YouTube that are far better players than me, that would gladly take my place. I don't forget that. My gratitude level ... I wake every day going, "Oh thank God I've got this job."

RRX: For real. Well, for people who are gonna come out and see Kansas in 2024 on the 50th Anniversary Tour, what should they expect?

RW: We released the album, "Another Fork in the Road – 50 Years of Kansas," and that's what this tour is called. What we're doing with the tour is covering as much of the Kansas history over the decades as we can. There will be some fun stuff that we haven't played in a long time that fans have been wanting to hear.

We'll be playing a bit of new stuff too. From the first song that got us our record deal to the latest album, we're covering a bit of it all.

So that's what the show is. We've got a really great band. It's fun to walk out on stage confident that it's going to be good.

RRX: You definitely have many years of practice for that. So, May 11th, I'm gonna see you there.

RW: Okay, I'll be there too, I promise.

RRX: Well, it's been a pleasure, Rich. I really appreciate your time.

RW: Well, thank you. I appreciate you.

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BY LIAM SWEENEY

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RRX: You are a well-loved comic and writer, and openly and proudly transgender. I write under the pressure of the fact that our publication avoids politics like the plague. And the moment the word “transgender” comes out, the political armaments come out. How do we take transgenderism out of the political battleground?

JM: Thank you, especially for the “well-loved” part, because as a comic I

just assume I’m always hated. As for politics, that’s a loaded question, because for me it isn’t politics, it’s literally who I am. I don’t talk politics on stage. I perform at regular comedy clubs, including The Cellar, and make sure my humor has something for everyone. If it were up to me, I’d tell people to take their politics out of my being trans.

RRX: As a comic, you have to push the boundaries. There’s only so much you can riff on a conspicuously light box

of cornflakes. And you have material in your life that naturally pushes boundaries. But it’s all about delivery, right? How do you take a part of you that would get laughs plainly spoken, and make it kick people through their seats?

JM: I sound like I’m disagreeing with you again and, yes, I’m the worst interviewee in history. But I don’t know that comics have to push boundaries. Seinfeld, Ray Romano, and a lot of others are doing just fine coloring within the lines.

I also love comics like Gary Gulman or Nate Bargatze and think what they do is so much harder than what I do. I like dark humor and I always have, so when I write a joke, I love a twist where I take the audience for a ride with me, gain their confidence, then swerve into a metaphorical tree.

RRX: You wrote for “Inside Amy Schumer,” which really pushed a lot of boundaries itself. What was it like writing for another comedian? How much is

it getting that good bit out, and how much is it knowing who you're writing for and styling the bits for them? When did you influence Amy and when did Amy influence you?

JM: I loved writing for that show so much. Some of my idols were in the writers' room, like Tim Meadows and Jon Glaser, so it was absolutely a dream job. It's tough to write for another comic, especially someone as successful and well-known as Amy, but I'm fortunate that our sense of humor is very similar. I'm proud that I got a lot of jokes and a couple of skits in the show, but it was also a group effort. There wasn't one sketch that was written solely by one comic and not influenced by the rest of the writers; everyone pitched in and the sketches were better because of it. (But I definitely tell my family that I did most of the work myself.)

I hope I influenced Amy with my writing but she definitely influenced me more. Her work ethic, her sharp humor, and

just the way she could add a line or a gag to every sketch and really punch it up in a great way.

RRX: I have to ask a normie question. What was it like when you first got up on stage? Had you transitioned at that point? Did you kick ass or did you bomb? And were you first up, or did you have to follow another comedian? Set the scene and dim the lights – take us there.

JM: The very first time I went on stage was at a high school talent show and it was so much fun. I actually got laughs. I had a very pragmatic attitude though and thought, "That was fun but you can't make a career out of comedy," so I didn't think about it again for years.

But when I started comedy as an adult, it was after I transitioned, in Albany back in 2009. I didn't know anyone, didn't tell anyone I was trans, and got up sometime in the middle. I talked about generic things—dating, bars, TV—and did really well. Getting a laugh after that first joke was amazing; there's no feeling

like it in the world. The host said afterward, "Come back anytime," so I did. I have bombed since, but thank God I did well that first time, or who knows if I would've ever done it again. If you want bomb stories, believe me, I have plenty but that's part of comedy.

RRX: It's a lot easier to reach an audience these days with social media. But in a weird way, it may actually be harder to find an audience to reach. As a writer, I've been told it's just white noise out there now. How do you stand out these days, both with content and with strategy?

JM: I absolutely hate social media. I used to like Twitter then it became a cesspool, so I was stuck with Facebook, Insta, and TikTok. They're the absolute worst. I can't stand posting videos because I'm so neurotic about my looks that I'm almost never happy. Then of course there are the trolls that go out of their way to comment, "You're a man," or something equally Oscar Wilde-esque,

which is annoying. But on the plus side, those comments actually help my engagement, so keep 'em coming boys!

I'm lucky enough that many writers' rooms actually look for comics, but I couldn't imagine being a novelist or journalist trying to break into the field. I really don't want to imagine what it will be like in five years, especially since we'll be competing with AI. Makes me want to start an emu farm and learn about composting.

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

JM: I got nothing. Literally nothing. I guess if I had to say something, it's that even though I sometimes rail against the way comedy is today, I still love it and will keep coming back.

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Breathing new life into an iconic old movie theater.

Joe Masher stopped by the Radioradiox station for a chat. Joe owns Scene One Entertainment, formerly known as Bowtie Movie Theaters. He recently bought Spectrum Theater on Delaware Avenue in Albany, and Huck Finn's Playland in Albany's warehouse district.

RRX: Okay, so first question, I want to make sure I have everything right. I read the Chris Churchill article in the Times Union. Have you bought Spectrum and Huck Finn's Playland, or are you in the process?

JM: I own both businesses, and I'm in the process of acquiring both properties.

RRX: So speaking of Spectrum, it's been iconic; it isn't just a standard movie theater. Trendy movies, artistic movies, all of these different kind of movies used to play, and the kind of people that go in there were people who were looking for a little adventure, something they couldn't get in a major theater. When Spectrum comes online, you're going to have those people that are going to want a specific kind of experience, and you're also going to be wanting to get new people. What will you focus on when you bring in new people, and how do you balance keeping the older people happy while still being able to draw new people?

JM: So that's actually an easy one. I was one of the "new people" back in 1981, I think? I went to the Third Street Theater, which was Spectrum's predecessor. And I saw a movie that changed my whole moviegoing habits and experience and my love for film. It was John Waters' Polyester, with scratch-and-sniff cards. I've never seen anything like it before. I liked it so much I went

back the next two days, because they were only playing it Friday through Sunday. And then they opened Spectrum.

I've always been interested in old theaters. I went the very first week they were open. That was before they twinned the theater into Spectrum 1 and 2. That was really exciting. So I think that it's about bringing back that sort of moviegoing that creates people who want to experience that kind of moviegoing. It's creating the next generation of film lovers who want to see those independent, foreign movies that don't play in the multiplexes or in my other theaters, frankly. So we are going to keep doing all those independent movies. We're bringing back more than what the last operator was doing. And I'm not disparaging anything about the last operator. They had a lot of overhead to cover. And they are good operators, but Spectrum was a unique baby. So I want to bring back Spectrum to what it was.

On day one, we'll have the baked goods, the famous mint brownies coming back. I'm actually ready to pick up the secret recipe. That's going to happen at 2 pm today. We'll have the calendars, the calendars they used to publish that told people what the movies were, what was coming up and what they were about. Because these are movies that you don't see advertised on TV or hear about them anywhere else. Maybe online if you are in tune with groups or whatever, but you know, you have to cultivate your audience. You cultivate people's love for those movies and get them to come back.

That's the problem; they've played things like Wonka, and any of the



Marvel movies. It's a tough balance because I wouldn't play Captain Marvel there because it won't do any business, but I'd play Wonder Woman and Black Panther because they would do business there. It's a game; it's a shell game you play. We're also going to do a lot of fun stuff that never happened there before. We applied for a liquor permit, so we'll have a beer, wine, and cider license. So we'll feature a lot of New York things, including Nine Pin Cider, and Saturday and Sunday mornings, we'll show a classic film with "Movies and Mimosas" and have a classic movies on the screen. So it's like brunch at the movies or a cinema church, if you will, on Sunday mornings. We're also going to do things like "secret cinema club." Starting on Monday nights, it'll be, I

think, a five dollar admission for this one particular event. And you'll see a new movie coming out that you don't know what you're going to see. And because it's five dollars, if you don't like it, you can walk out. You might love it and talk about it. And we're not going to show any schlocky things. They're normal movies that are going to be coming out.

That balancing act is difficult because what happened pre-pandemic even to independent film is that those independent filmmakers realized they can make more money selling their movie to a streamer right away, than releasing it theatrically, spending money on advertising and marketing and everything else. It's just a way for them to recoup their budget and make a little bit

of money and go on to the next project. That's been easy for them, so we at the National Association of Theater Owners (I'm the president of the New York branch of that, and the Treasurer of the national body,) we are constantly meeting with filmmakers and distributors and everything and telling them how important and profitable a theatrical release can be for them. It's a final part of the process of moviemaking.

RRX: We interviewed Laurent Rejto of the Hudson Valley Film Commission. We talked about local, independent filmmakers, and what they have to navigate through. And I'm talking about really low-budget stuff that may not even make it to streaming. Does a theater like Spectrum have something to offer them?

JM: A thousand percent yes. Since the articles came out about my acquisition of Spectrum, I've been approached. I can't tell you how many times by people who have made films locally or even

nationally, I've had Zeitgeist Releasing reach out to me and say "hey, this movie is perfect for Spectrum. Can we date it there, and all that stuff and I'm sending it all through my film buyer right now, but yes, we do have a local premier booked right now. That's in June.

RRX: One thing I was curious about Spectrum, being that it's an old theater, being that it's that really iconic theater, you just got the keys. You just saw it in a way you never did before. Now you're in the backrooms, now you're all over the place. Can you tell us something about Spectrum that nobody would know except you at this point?

JM: The original auditorium of Spectrum, it was a single theater called The Delaware, built in the 40s, and was run by the Warner Brothers, it was a Warner Brothers theater, they owned it and operated it for many years. When the group that owned Third Street bought Spectrum, the current

owners of the building, they started with a single, then they twinned it, so theaters 3 and 4 are the original Delaware Theater. So if you look up, you'll see the Art Deco ceiling, cool little trims and stuff like that in there that is still visible. To the left of the original theater, they added on two more screens back in the late eighties and throughout the nineties added four more on the other side of the building.

Something really cool about it is that it has a solar farm on the roof and it produces more energy than it uses. I don't know what the exact name for that is. So the theater sells power back to National Grid. That's very good because utility bills can kill you, I know from my other theaters. I want to put solar panels on the roofs of those as well.

That's one really cool thing about it. Another really cool thing is that, I always find it interesting that a big old theater with that many seats, the

bathroom is so woefully inadequate. The original ladies room has two stalls. That's still in use, but there are actually six bathrooms now. But the original ladies' room had only two stalls and the men's room only had two stalls and two urinals. So I can't imagine a crowd at the end of a show all having to use the bathroom.

Let's see, other little secrets, the original candy case from The Delaware is still in use. That's pretty cool. The theater also has two auditoriums that are capable of showing 35mm film. So they're digital and 35mm side by side. When Christopher Nolan comes out with his next movie and he wants to shoot it in 35mm, we'll be the only theater in the area, I believe, that can play it on a regular run.

there will be plenty of shade, plenty of cooling down. And I just ask that you support the businesses, that's all.

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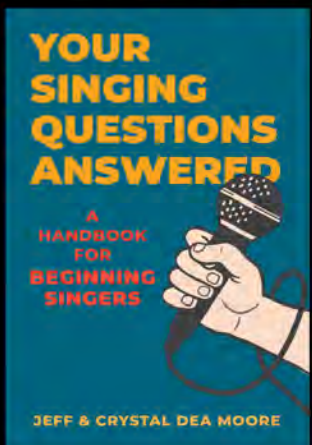


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Singin' Guru

Dear Singin' Guru,
 I know this sounds weird, but it feels like I've got a hair caught in my throat and it's affecting my singing. It's very annoying and starting to freak me out. I'm losing sleep over this!

*Yours truly,
 Hairball*

Dear Hairball,

This may be a bit unusual but is totally real; singers can get their hair caught in their throat! Sounds crazy, right? But when you're belting out those high notes and giving it your all, sometimes a stray hair decides it wants a front-row seat to the action and ends up causing a bit of an unwanted inflammation party in your throat.

Here's the deal: when you're singing, your mouth and throat are wide open, working overtime to hit every note just right. This makes it surprisingly easy for things like hair to slip past your defenses and get tangled up where they don't belong. For younger singers, their throats are like cozy nooks for debris like hair. Why? Because their vocal cords and the folds around them are still developing and can be a tad more susceptible to catching and holding onto unwanted guests. This may be related to younger singers being more likely to get a respiratory virus, which can cause irritation. And if the throat is irritated, it is possible (but unlikely) to have something get caught in one of the nooks and crannies down there.

So if you are in this hairy situation, what do you do? Rush to the doctor, or wait it out? Generally, the body is pretty good at handling these minor invaders on its own, either by coughing them up or moving them along the digestive tract to be, well, naturally disposed of. But if the irritation, coughing, or any discomfort persists, it's worth checking in with a medical professional.

Lots of wild things have found their way into human throats (OK, no off-color jokes here). From fish bones (a classic) to engagement rings (talk about a proposal gone wrong), the human throat has seen it all. It's a reminder of how resilient our bodies are, but also how cautious we need to be with what goes in our mouths—even when hitting those high notes!

So, to all the singers out there: keep an eye (or a mouth?) out for those rogue hairs, and remember, your body's got your back most of the time. But don't hesitate to seek help if things feel off. After all, your voice is your instrument, and you've got to keep that in top shape!

Dear Singin' Guru,

I'm a singer and my 7-year-old daughter loves to sing, too. I think she's got some talent that could be developed. Is she too young for singing lessons?

*Signed,
 Curious Parent*

Dear Curious Parent,

Getting your daughter singing lessons could be one of the best decisions you could make for her growth, beyond just hitting the right notes.

First off, picture this: your child, standing tall, belting out tunes with a confidence that makes you proud. That's not just a dream. Singing lessons can truly boost self-esteem. It's all about giving them a platform to express themselves, to be heard, and to shine. Imagine the boost in confidence they get when they master a new song or perform in front of an audience.

Now, think about the focus and dedication it takes to learn an instrument or to sing. It's not just about the music; it's a workout for their brain. They learn to concentrate, dive deep into a task, and stick with it. This isn't just the Guru talking; studies back it up. Engaging in music demands attention to detail and a kind of discipline that's going to pay off in spades, not just in music but in their studies and whatever they set their mind to.

And here's where it gets even cooler—leadership skills. Whether they're part of a choir or taking the lead in a performance, they're learning about teamwork, how to listen, and how to stand out when it's their time to shine. It's about taking responsibility, sometimes steering the ship, and working harmoniously with others. Skills that are golden, wouldn't you agree?

But wait, there's more—problem-solving. Music is a puzzle, a beautiful,

complex puzzle. Figuring out a tricky melody, interpreting the emotions behind a piece, making split-second decisions during a performance—it's all about thinking on their feet and coming up with creative solutions. This kind of quick, innovative thinking is something they'll use everywhere, from tackling math problems to navigating life's curveballs.

So, to all you parents wondering whether your first or second-grader is ready for singing lessons, the answer is a big "hell yeah," especially if they're showing an interest. The world of music education is so much more than learning to sing or play an instrument. It's about confidence, focus, leadership, problem-solving, and so much more. It's a journey that shapes them into well-rounded, confident individuals ready to take on the world. And isn't that exactly what we all want for our kids?

And guess what? Peak Music has a vibrant kids' singing program. Check it out at <http://peakmusicstudios.com/kids-singing>.

Contact the Singin' Guru at jeff@peakmusicstudios.com with your singing questions!



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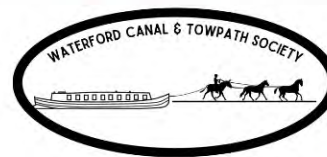
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RRX: Art, you are a musician, trying to help another musician, Keri Alonzo, in her struggle with colon cancer. Let me start by asking you about Keri. Who is she? Is she a solo artist or does she have a band? What does she play? And maybe more importantly, what's something about her from beyond music people should know to best appreciate her?

Art: Keri Alonzo has been the powerhouse the lead singer of the band Jukebox Rebellion since 2018. She has an incredible vocal tone and range and her energy level is infectious! She is a very upbeat and inspirational person. She always has a smile and makes it her mission to uplift others. Even before her illness, she would post daily messages of

inspiration and encouragement. The fact that she continues to do this while battling cancer is mind blowing. She's just an all around great human being!

RRX: As I said before, Keri is battling colon cancer. I don't know a lot about colon cancer other than getting screened now that I'm over a certain age. What have you learned about colon cancer from knowing Keri's struggle with it?

Art: As someone myself over a certain age, I also know that I should be screened. (I have been twice and honestly am due again). What Keri has done by sharing her experience is to raise awareness about early detection and advising people to know what signs to look for as it relates to colorectal cancer. She has become a very strong advocate of

getting checked. Additionally, by posting about her treatment, and continuing to have a positive outlook, she inspires others to fight through whatever their own personal struggles are, be it health, emotional, or whatever.

RRX: You are helping Keri raise money for the fight ahead. A lot of times, people raise money for an illness and people donate because they care about people, but the money raised does go somewhere. What kinds of costs go into fighting cancer?

Art: Well, honestly, I can't speak specifically to cancer, but I can speak to having a prolonged chronic illness and what that was like for me and my previous wife when she was ill and was in need of an organ transplant. There are

of course the co-pays and deductibles, but there are also the costs that aren't covered by insurance for whatever reason. Procedures, medications etc. that the insurance company won't pay for. Not to mention just the everyday costs involved. Often there is travel is required for treatment, which means gas, hotel stays, meals. All of these things add up! So every little bit helps.

RRX: There's a song up on Bandcamp from now until the middle of June. Proceeds go to help Keri. Can you tell us a little bit about that? And how can people help in additional ways if they want to? And how can fellow musicians support Keri?

Art: Yes it is a song that I wrote inspired by Keri. It's titled "So Am I" after

a post she made on Facebook. “Cancer is tough. Chemo is tough...but so am I!” Seeing that really struck a chord with me and I felt compelled to do something. So I wrote the song initially with the intent to perform it as a surprise for Keri with her band Jukebox Rebellion on April 14. The event unfortunately got cancelled, and so I instead decided to record the song and release it to help raise money for Keri. I enlisted the help of David Tyo of TyoMixes in Saratoga to record and produce the song. He’s an old friend and he and I have worked together on numerous projects over the years. Then I got some help from a literal who’s who on the local music scene to play on the record. My wife Shawna Dawn (who inspired me to write this as an upbeat tune for Keri and also convinced me to contact Dave to record and produce the song) of Art-N-Shawna acoustic duo, and Grit-N-Whiskey sings lead vocals, Jeff Dudwoire of Skeeter Creek plays drums, John Harmon of Simple Machine plays bass, Chris Dollard formerly of the Refrigerators and Jukebox Rebellion plays keys, and acoustic performer and lead singer of Electric Rodeo Jenna Sue and former Janis Joplin Tribute singer Donna Lee Reisinger both sing backing vocals.

For now the song is available exclusively through Bandcamp at <https://art-lafleur.bandcamp.com/track/so-am-i-feat-shawna-dawn>. People can download the song for \$5.00 (or more if they feel inclined) and all proceeds during this period will go to Keri. Additionally there is a benefit concert for Keri on Sunday June 2 from 2-6 pm at Vapor Night Club. It’s called Get Screened and Rock On. The line up will be Jukebox Rebellion, Grit-N-Whiskey, E.B. Jeb, and Skeeter Creek. Tickets are on sale now for just \$20 and can be purchased at SARATOGACASINO.COM or in person at the casino. I would encourage all of our friends in the music community to support either or both of these two fund-raising efforts.

RRX: As I said before, you’re a musician. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself? Also, how did you meet Keri? If you have a cool story about you and her, we’d love to hear it.

Art: I’ve been on the local music scene for about 25 years. I’ve been in numerous cover bands over the years, but also have a history of writing and releasing original material. I released an album a number of years ago with my band Byrds of Prey, and currently have a few singles available on all streaming platforms. In fact my song “I’ve Come to Realize” (which I also worked on with and was co-produced by Dave Tyo) has been nominated this year for an Eddie for Record of the Year. Keri and I met on the music scene while Shawna and I were seeing Jukebox Rebellion. We are friends with band founder Jay Yager, and while there we were introduced to Keri. Overtime we got to know her and have become friends. I think the highlight was last summer when Jukebox Rebellion played at Shawna’s birthday party at Carson’s Woodside Tavern. It was a miserable rainy day but that didn’t stop the party! Keri brought the house down and the highlight for me honestly was both Shawna and myself getting on stage and performing with her. It was quite a moment!!

RRX: I’m sure I didn’t cover everything about this, so it would be a good idea to give you the floor so that you could mention anything I either forgot or didn’t know. So the floor is yours.

Art: I just want to say thank you for giving me this platform to talk about Keri’s situation and what we’re trying to do for her. I truly feel that the local music community is as strong as ever, loaded with talent, but more importantly loaded with compassion. When one of us is down, the rest of us really do rally to the cause. Thank you for helping to support the community. Also, register to be an organ donor!

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Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

Over the next two issues, I'll be reflecting on my parents, in honor of Mother's Day and Father's Day. I'm going to share what I call "unusual memories" of who they were and how they made me the idiot I am today. I'll start with my mother.

Marie, who departed in 2005, was born in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, one of three children, along with her sister Helen and her brother Charlie. They and my grandfather Patrick were 100 percent Irish and from them, I got my ... unusual ... unique ... occasionally inappropriate, and slightly ribald sense of humor. Grandpa was an actual coal miner till the day he died. I was told that the day his wife (my grandmother) died, his hair went white overnight. One day he laid down in the mine and just passed away.

Marie was close to Patrick, and on many a Saturday night (especially after my grandmother passed) the two of them were at the local pub knocking down a pint or twenty and holding each other up walking home. Like me, they couldn't hold their liquor either.

After Patrick passed, Marie moved East. During those days as a young bobby-soxer, she spent many a night at the Paramount Theater, swooning to 'Blue Eyes. Decades later, she had a chance to see Sinatra on opening night of the (then) Knickerbocker Arena in downtown Albany. I asked her how excited she was to see him after all these years. She told me if she got close enough to the stage, she would bang him right then and there. Knowing my

mother, it was quite possible she would in fact attempt that.

I'll tell you a couple of things about Marie so that, if you know me, you will understand why I am like I am. Like when I was 12, and it was Mother's Day. Mom loved animals of all kinds, so my sister gave her a nice ceramic cat, which she displayed on top of the television. As I went to look at it and attempt to pet it, she screamed my name and said, "Get your hands off of my p—sy!" I knew what she meant, she knew I knew what she meant, but I didn't want her to know I knew what she meant. I excused myself and ran to my bedroom to laugh my head off and piss my pants.

My favorite Marie story took place around the same time at our suburban Loudonville paradise. The back of the house was on the North Colonie/South Colonie border, so one block over and I would have been a Colonie Red Raider instead of a Shaker Blue Bison (shout-out to the Class of '74). Anyway, Sam and Marie bought their first barbecue and wanted to christen it by cooking a duck. We did not know it was impossible to barbecue a duck but went at it they did. While it cooked, Sam downed his Seagram's and Marie, a bottle of Wild Turkey. It was a warm summer afternoon and the drinks were going down smoothly, if not faster than normal. Finally, the time had come and the duck, at least on the outside, appeared done if not close to being burnt. We brought it in, and when Marie cut it open, it was still quite raw and bloody. Pissed off, she put it back in the

barbeque to cook more, while she herself was getting more cooked on the Wild Turkey. After a bit, my sister and her husband came over, and it was time for another duck check. Off the barbecue, back to the kitchen, and still raw and bloody. Now Marie was really pissed. She turned the heat up and increased the Wild Turkey. After the third unsuccessful check, she gave up and had my brother-in-law take her—and the duck—to Shop Rite on Wolf Road, where my cousin Jeanette was working

the Customer Service Desk. In comes Marie, raw and bloody duck in hand, takes said duck and throws it on the counter—blood and loose duck parts flying everywhere—and screams at the top of her lungs repeatedly, "This f*cking duck sucks!" Jeanette quickly gave her her money back (even without a receipt), and we had hot dogs for dinner.

Next month, my dad Sam will be in the spotlight.

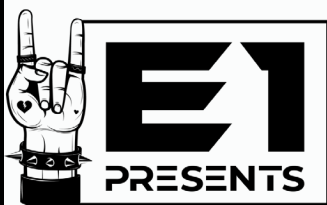
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Anthony Corder
Voice Of
TORA TORA

THE BROKEN HEARTED

FRIDAY

TBA
 TBA
 Monsters Of Rock - Arena Rock
 KISS STORY - The #1 Kiss Tribute
 Run Rabbit Run - Tribute to Pink Floyd

SATURDAY

Desperado's - Eagles Tribute
 Ted Poley voice of DANGER DANGER
 Broken Hearted - Tom Petty Tribute
 Bad Marriage w/ Tommy Skeoch from TESLA
 TRIXTER
 Back In Black - The True AC/DC Experience

- **VIP TENT ONLY: Anthony Corder from TORA TORA will be performing @ 2:30-3:30pm & 5:30-6pm**

SUNDAY

Southbound Renegade - Southern Rock
 Across The Pond - Music of the Beatles & some Rolling Stones
 Harmony Rocks - Country Rock

May 9th, 2024

DONNIE VIE
 KNUFF ZNUFF

Orphilia's - 338 Broadway, Albany

June 10th, 2024

STRYKER

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 The Unplugged tour

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Strand Theatre - 210 Main St. Hudson Falls

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EVENTS

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HEX GOTH/DANCE 21+/\$10/8:30pm

SUNDAY 5/12 TulipFest Afterparty with:
ANGELO MOORE of FISHBONE
Butterbrain-Grief Group \$20/EVENTBRITE/\$25 Doors 4pm

SATURDAY 5/4
MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU
Star Wars Dance Night \$10/7pm

FRIDAY 5/17 **Dark Dance**
RESIST \$10/9pm

SUNDAY 5/5 **GEOFF GORDAN**
Greens-Wealthy Jane-Dan Carr and The Cure For Asthma
\$10/6pm

SATURDAY 5/18 **TBA**

WEDNESDAY 5/8 **FESTER DECAY**
Bowel Erosion-Balor-Morticide
\$15/7pm

FRIDAY 5/24 **TBA**

FRIDAY 5/10 **NO COVER!!**
Pop/Dance Night FREE/8pm

SATURDAY 5/25 **RAVE ROBBERS**
Electronic Dance Night 21+/\$10/8pm

SATURDAY 5/11 **DARKNESS**
Twilight Market After Party
21+/8pm Doors/FREE before 9pm/\$10 after 9pm

FRIDAY 5/31 Underground Hip Hop Event
MIC LANNY-RHAKIM ALI & MORE!
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