

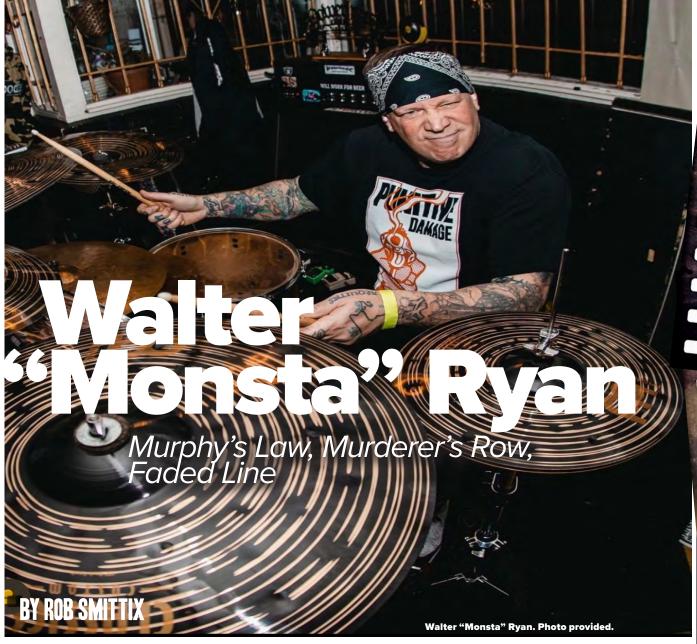
VOSS EVENTS & WORLD OF WONDER PRESENTS

# WERQ THE WORLD' A W A R D S



**AUGUST 16** 

■PROCTORS
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nterview: Walter "Monsta" Ryan Faded Line)

By: Rob Smittix

**RRX:** How's it going on the road?

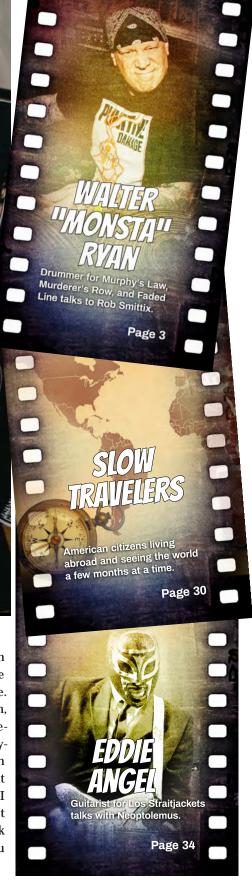
**WR:** Great, I think we're in Maryland somewhere or close to it. Murphy's Law is playing Maryland tomorrow night. We've had a really good tour so far, everything's great ... playing shows, rocking, hanging out and seeing our friends, you know? It's awesome, bro.

**RRX:** It's gotta be, I love Murphy's (Murphy's Law, Murderer's Row, Law. I love how connected Murphy's Law is to the Capital Region.

**WR:** Yeah, I was born in Troy, but I moved around a lot, so I never lived in Troy when I was a kid. We ended up moving around all over the place Upstate, and then I ended up going to California. Ever since the early to mid-nineties, I started going back and forth to New York City, going in and out of different bands or whatever. Just doing that, and then I ended up in

Florida for four years, and then I'm back to New York. But I live Upstate now, and I'm happy that I live Upstate. I actually live in Troy, where I was born, which is cool. I love it there now because I don't have to worry about paying a gazillion dollars downstate in some dinky ass closet for the amount of money that I pay for the house that I live in. I don't have any neighbors next door to me, you know? In New York City, you're up each other's butts, you

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### **AUGUST EVENTS**

8/1: KARAOKE HOSTED BY JC 9:30

8/2: NOYK-FEMININOMENON

δ KEITH MORALES BIRTHDAY BASH 5:30

8/10: COLLAR CITY CANDLE EVENT 4-6PM TIX AT COLLARCITY CANDLE.COM

8/17: BANANA SPLIT SUNDAY BENEFIT FOR ALBANY ROCK PIT & BIG BROTHERS/SISTERS 2PM

8/22: GLEN DAVID ANDREWS 7PM DOORS \$20

8/25: SILVER ARROW BAND SHOWCASE 8PM

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Continued from Page 3.

know what I mean?

**RRX:** You sure are.

**WR:** I'm cool with not being down there anymore. I love it, I go down there, I hang out, I have band practice down there, I see all the fellas, I see my friends. But that's it, I get to go home to a nice place to chill, and it's great!

**RRX:** That's what it's all about. I always thought, if I didn't have my family, I'd probably be living in Manhattan or at least living on Lark Street or something, but it's totally different when you've got other people to look out for.

**WR:** Yeah, for sure. I help my Mom with everything, and it's kind of like ... we take care of each other right now. So it's good.

**RRX:** Good. So, it sounds like you just got off some really fun shows and are about to do some more.

WR: Yeah, we're getting towards the end here. We got two more shows on this tour. We've been out for almost a month, and then we did probably four month-long tours back-to-backto-back-to-back. It was great. It started out with AF (Agnostic Front) and Violent Way out in Europe, and then we did the States together. And then Murphy's Law went out and did a run with Total Chaos; those guys are from LA, they're a great punk band. And then, this tour is with the Take. Everybody knows about the Take, they're like a great rock and roll oi band. You've got Scott (Roberts) on vocals and guitar; he was in the Spudmonsters and also in Biohazard. And then on bass. they've got Craig Ahead from Sick of It All and every other band possible in New York City. Then you got Will Shepler on drums, who's one of my favorite hardcore drummers, period. He used to be in Agnostic Front and also Madball.

RRX: Hell Yeah!

**WR:** They're just ripping! Murphy's Law, we're doing great. We have

Phil Caivano, who's one of the guys that was on a few different albums, back in the day. We got him back on guitar. We have Brendan (Porray) on bass, who has played for everybody. He used to be with Sheer Terror, played with Madball every now and then. You got me drumming and Jimmy (Drescher) singing. We have a great rotation of amazing guitar players from other great bands. We're gonna have a new record out. We wrote 19 new songs, and we have one cover song.

RRX: That's great!

**WR:** We're gonna put out a 7-inch with a couple of songs on it just so everybody knows what's up. And then shortly after, we're gonna do the full-length album and then maybe an EP or so. We'll just keep writing and we'll keep going forward.

RRX: That's it, man. Keep at it.

WR: Yeah, for sure. I'm pretty sure that everyone's gonna love it because we try to encapsulate all the vibes from all the other albums that have been out previously, but also keep it up to date with today's style of hardcore. We've put a little extra heaviness on it than normal, but also kept it rock and punk. It's fun, just like the other albums. I think everybody will love it.

I'm in two other bands as well. I'm in a band from Troy that's called Murderer's Row. It's an oi rock and roll band with Bob Riley and Leo Curley. Those guys are awesome people and awesome players. We, too, recorded a bunch of stuff, but we're gonna go back in and get some more songs written, and then redo everything, so that it's closer to a full album. And then, I'm in another band as well, and it is called Faded Line, and most of the guys are from Springfield, Mass, and uh ...

RRX: And Vegas (Nacy).

**WR:** Yes, exactly. I did all my drum tracks before this tour, and they just did their guitar stuff. We just need Carlo (D'Amato) to do his bass and Vegas

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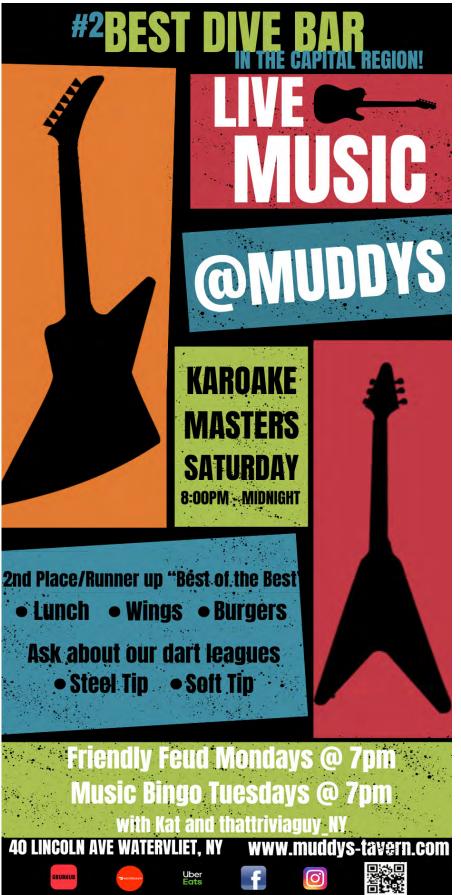
















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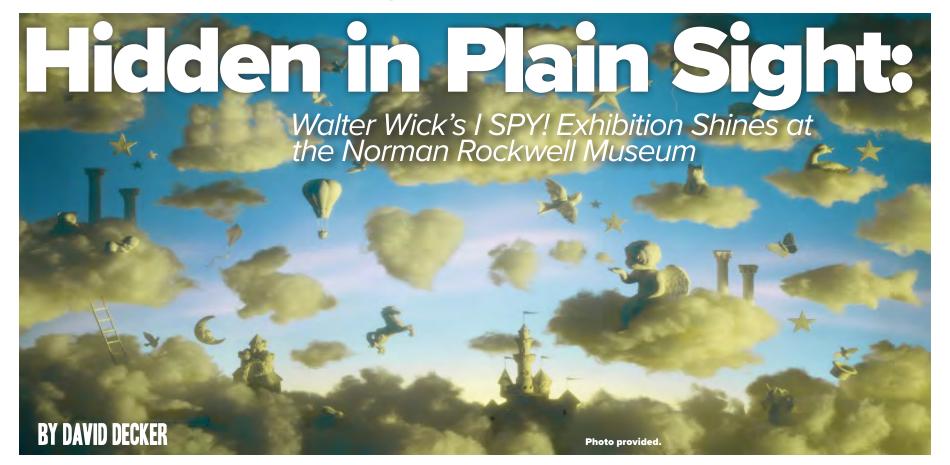
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MA – There's magic at play in the Berkshires this summer. Tucked inside the Norman Rockwell Museum, best known for its tribute to America's beloved illustrator, is a new exhibit that transports visitors into worlds both miniature and massive. I SPY! Walter Wick's Hidden Wonders (on display through October 26) is a dazzling celebration of illusion, imagination, and the art of looking closely.

Best known as the photographic force behind the "I Spy" and "Can You See What I See?" book series, Walter Wick has spent decades staging elaborate visual puzzles that have captivated generations of children—and their parents. But what might surprise even long-time fans is just how much artistry, technical precision, and storytelling goes into every frame. This exhibition is not only a nostalgic journey through Wick's most iconic images—it's a behind-the-scenes exploration of the

David Decker Stockbridge, craftsmanship that brings them to life.

#### **Where Art Meets Illusion**

The exhibition opens with some of Wick's most recognized works-brilliantly colored still life images composed of toys, tools, game pieces - simply everyday objects. These images are printed large, allowing visitors to step in and scan for hidden items. What develops immediately is an instant sense of play. Children whispering guesses to one another, while adults are often just as eager to take up the challenge.

However, as visitors progress, what also emerges is not just visual cleverness, but astonishing artistic discipline. Each image began as a carefully constructed diorama, some of which are on display in their original form. Wick, a trained photo-illustrator, treats each set like a movie scene—lit meticulously, balanced perfectly, and shot with precision. A single one of Wick's compositions may take as many as several weeks to simply set up due to the highly

cess associated with such thorough attention to detail throughout every scene. It's a revelation: the simple delight of an And while they may evoke childlike wonder, make no mistake – they're cre- hours of patient planning. ated with the intensity and sophistication of a master visual artist.

#### **Process and Play**

The central strength of Hidden Wonders lies in its accessibility. It appeals across age groups, thanks to its blend of fun and technical insight. Families will appreciate the scavenger hunt aspect each photo panel invites the viewer to search for cleverly

concealed objects. But even more engaging are the video installations and process notes, which break down Wick's working method.

In one video, Wick demonstrates how he sets up shots in his Hartford, Connecticut studio-a converted firehouse filled with bins of materials and shelves of props. Visitors watch as he arranges dozens of tiny objects under

time-consuming, labor-intensive pro- studio lights, adjusting angles and shadows, tweaking color and contrast. I Spy book page, it turns out, rests on

The museum has also included an interactive zone where visitors can try their hand at building dioramas or composing digital still lifes. This hands-on area, while clearly aimed at younger guests, draws in adults as well-many of whom find renewed appreciation for the delicate dance between construction and photography.

#### A Dialogue Between Artists

One of the most compelling aspects of the exhibition is how it places Wick's work in conversation with Norman Rockwell's. While their choice of media may differ, both artists share a fascination with storytelling through their images. Both also staged scenes using real-world references. Rockwell's famed paintings were often preceded by elaborate photo shoots in his studio, using



models and props to capture just the right expression, posture, or gesture.

One gallery section pairs Rockwell's preparatory photos for his 1957 painting "Closing a Summer Cottage" with Wick's own finished photographs, highlighting how both artists used photographic reference to craft richly detailed visual narratives. The result is a thoughtful exploration of image-making in American culture, past and present.

#### **Highlights and Hidden Gems**

Among the exhibition's highlights are Wick's seasonal scenes and fantastical constructions. In one image, a winter village is formed entirely from sugar cubes and flour. In another, a haunted house bursts with eerie surprises. Each The museum is fully ADA-compliant, piece rewards close looking; even repeat visitors are likely to discover new details on second or third viewings.

Especially captivating is a pirate ship, made from marbles, matchsticks, and mechanical parts, sailing on a sea of blue cellophane. It's whimsical, but online. also a technical triumph of perspective and composition. The exhibit also includes several of Wick's large-format prints-some more than five feet across—where nearly every square inch contains its own micro-story.

#### **Design and Accessibility**

The exhibition design is both family-friendly and respectful of its subject. Galleries are laid out with breathing room between works, allowing visitors to linger. Thoughtful seating areas encourage slow viewing, and the lightingso essential to appreciating Wick's detail-rich imagery—is well-balanced throughout.

Accessibility is also well considered. with ramp access, wide gallery passages, and available seating. Exhibit text is clearly written and welcoming, with no assumptions about prior familiarity with Wick's books. Guides for children and educators are available on-site and

#### **More Than Nostalgia**

While the exhibit will undoubtedly appeal to visitors who grew up with I Spy books, Hidden Wonders goes beyond nostalgia. It offers a compelling reminder of how attention to detail, playfulness, and creative ingenuity can come together in work that is joyful, meaningful, and enduring.

In a digital age where so much visual content is disposable, Wick's images reward patience and invite curiosity. They ask us to pause, to observe, to search and ultimately, to see more clearly. This makes the show not just entertaining, but timely.

#### The Takeaway

Once again, the Norman Rockwell Museum has "hit it out of the park" by hosting an experience that is thought-provoking family fun, just in time for summer vacations!

I SPY! Walter Wick's Hidden Wonders is a vibrant, multi-generational

experience that celebrates the joy of discovery. It's smart, immersive, and beautifully executed. Whether you come for the nostalgia, the artistry, or the puzzle-solving fun, you'll leave with a renewed appreciation for the wonder of the small and the power of paying

If you're planning a trip to the Berkshires this summer or fall, don't miss the chance to experience Wick's magical world up close. It's a rare exhibition that can make you feel like a kid againwhile also inspiring the artist within.

#### **Exhibition Details:**

Title: I SPY! Walter Wick's Hidden Wonders

Dates: Through October 26, 2025 **Location:** Norman Rockwell Museum, 9 Glendale Road, Stockbridge, MA

**Admission:** Included with general museum entry (special event fees may apply) Website: www.nrm.org



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8/2: BRISTISH STEEL 8PM

8/3: GLORIA DUO 3PM

8/8: JASON IRWIN 7PM

8/9: MATTY FINN 7PM

8/15: CHUCK KELSEY 7PM

8/20: CIGAR NIGHT 5PM

8/22: CHUCK KELSEY 7PM

8/23: FRANKIE LESSARD 7PM

8/28: BIKE NIGHTWITH BRIAN KANE 6PM





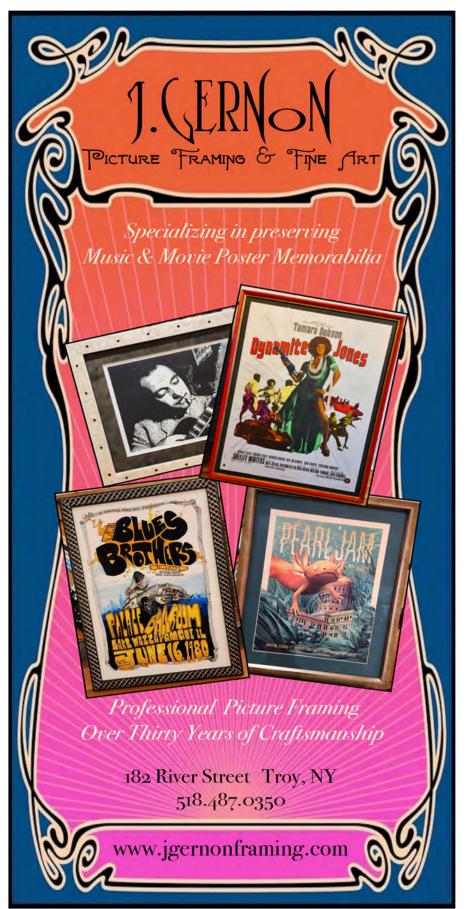














# Kasey Karsen Deadlands Vocalist

#### BY LORI ANNE MCKONE

► SEVEN.", isn't just sound. It's a vi- Alliance — a loose crew of artists who sual fever dream – part religious horror, part psychological reckoning. Kasey Karlsen doesn't just scream these sins. She wears them. Every scene is a wound. Every image, a reckoning. As the frontwoman of Deadlands, her vocals twist through guttural lows and shrill highs, threaded with raw emotion and lived experience. There's a reason her vocals feel like they're clawing through your chest - because it carries the weight of a thousand silences she's had to survive.

In "SEVEN.," an explosive EP channeled through the lens of the seven deadly sins, those silences are transformed into mythic confrontations – with each track embodying a character, a conflict, and ultimately a reflection of the artist herself.

For Kasey, performance is survival. It's the memory she clings to, even on her hardest days, knowing the stage will eventually lift her. "I know how much concerts saved my life. If I hadn't discovered metal ... I don't know if I'd be here." Every perfortruth.

deathcore extremes. Will Ramos of Lorna Shore – a deathcore icon known for his "goblin" screams and throat techniques that mimic jungle cats is a major influence. "Any sound he makes, I'm dying to get it," Karlsen says. She's experimenting with grimy gutturals inspired by Infant Annihilator. "I love the pig squeals, the really disgusting lows," she says.

She's allied with Deathcore

are pushing the genre into warped territory. For Karlsen, it's less imitation and more transformation. She's chasing texture, not trends.

"MORE!" isn't just a song-it's an excavation. Through the lens of eating disorders, body image, and addiction, gluttony becomes a reflection of deeper struggles. Kasey Karlsen knows these battles firsthand, and in the aching lyric, "If you take away the shame, could you face what's underneath?" she reveals the uncomfortable truth about identity and self-worth and compassion. It's introspection turned excavation. "It's the ugly parts of our lives that we hide," she explains, power," Karlsen says.

Even "Villain," her track about pride, stems from real hurt. Hate comments and self-worth collide. "I'm then someone tries to tear me down." Her message? Healing isn't a finish line. "Trying to be better every day - A non-human witness fixed above the that's enough."

Mental illness stigma is personal mance she gives is tethered to that for Kasey, who advocates for empathy. "If they're seeking help, doing every-Kasey's sonic palette pulls from thing right - you stick around," she said, referring to her experience with borderline personality disorder.

> "House of Cards" wasn't crafted—it was torn from lived rage. Wrath reshaped its sound, demanded humility, and forced Kasey Karlsen to share the wheel. "Getting help only makes it better. That was the hardest thing to let go," she confesses. With CJ (NO SHADE), she redefined control-not surrender, but expansion.

collaboration wasn't about losing cononing with the uncomfortable truth that pride, even in art, can limit growth.

The track's poker imagery evolved into an intimate explosion. Wrath here isn't poetic. It detonates.

Her near-death experience on tour - narrowly dodging a semi-truck on a narrow mountain road - haunts her dreams. She's in a van. not driving. and it plunges into water. She always survives. "I didn't die ... now what?" she muses. That question shadows SEVEN's emotional blueprint. It's survival in slow motion.

So, I asked her something strange: "but speaking about them gives you "If you wrote a song from the perspective of an inanimate object, what would it be?" Without pause, she chose a stage light.

"You're a fly on the wall," she said. very prideful. I've worked hard, and "But you get to see all the insane music ... the whole crowd movement."

> It was poetic, simple, and piercing. madness — not controlling the scene, just absorbing it while anchored in place. That lens mirrors Kasey's own creative identity: part of the noise but also somehow outside it, illuminating others while internalizing their energy. It shows how she thinks, revealing a mind that processes chaos and clarity side by side. It's the kind of thinking that makes "SEVEN." feel less like performance and more like lived myth.

The metaphor mirrors Karlsen's own creative lens - absorbing, illuminating, but never fully part of the scene.

When Kasey Karlsen spoke about trol but learning to share it – a reck- her recurring dream – a van plunging into water while she sat powerless in the passenger seat — it wasn't just a memory. It was a metaphor for emotional paralysis. That haunting question, "I didn't die ... now what?" isn't just something she said. It's a line that shadows "SEVEN." itself: quiet echo of survival, fragility, and reckoning. It speaks to that strange in-between state - surviving something that still leaves you breathless and became more than a dream. It became the emotional blueprint for one of the hardest tracks on "SEVEN."

> Sloth and Greed, in "SEVEN.." reveal two vastly different emotional terrains - one deeply familiar, the other alien.

> Sloth becomes depression, not laziness. "Screaming to get up when you physically just can't," she explained. It wasn't about unwillingness. It was about being trapped inside stillness. In "SEVEN.." Sloth doesn't drift. It drowns.

> Greed, on the other hand, felt foreign. "I'm very giving," she shares. The challenge was imaginative, not emotional. Where Sloth required surrender, Greed demanded distance, requiring Kasey to observe and imagine rather than relive. That separation made it a different kind of challenge, one rooted more in empathy than experience.

> If Greed required distance, Lust demanded dissection — stripping seduction of its mask and revealing the scars beneath.

> In "Limbo," lust isn't glamorous-Karlsen it's draining. Kasey



reimagines desire not as seduction, these worlds ... but we loved it," she but as emotional erosion. Vampire iconography and distorted religious imagery don't shock for shock's sake-Autonomy is everything; the danger lies in being consumed by someone else's hunger. "Promiscuity isn't the bad part. The bad part is that you're hurting somebody else," Karlsen says.

Tarot-inspired sin cards, a seven-sided Pandora's Box cover art, and spotlight motifs anchor the story. Each image carries weight. When asked what "SEVEN." would look like with no sound, Karlsen lights up. "A swamp witch fighting all the sins and trying to prevail. But you never know how it ends. I mean, the sins are out and all hell is breaking loose!"

Even without music, the imagery tells a myth — messy, mystical, and burning with tension.

Symbolism is her favorite medium. Every visual tied to "SEVEN." evolved from the music. Snakes, chakras, the ouroboros - all spiraled into existence through the sonic energy Kasey cot," an emblem, a card. Even the EP's cover evokes Pandora's Box: sev-thing similar." en-sided, wickedly open, letting every secret slip out. "I don't like being on the nose. I want people to scratch beneath the surface."

For Kasey, the visuals evolved organically alongside the songs. "Kundalini," with its snakes and chakra left behind. symbols, emerged only after the sound was right. "Villain" captured swers – it hands you a mirror and lets pride through embodied movement. you decide whether to look. And "Limbo" – conceived in a spontahow instinct can shape impact.

One of the most arresting visuals? The Kundalini tarot card: a crosslegged figure with chakras, entwined in an ouroboros. Though Deadlands isn't religious, the spiritual themes added depth to the EP's concept. "At first, we didn't know how to mesh all

says. The visual pushed comfort zones and felt vital.

"Kundalini" is transformation inthey serve rebellion and reclamation. carnate. Karlsen's voice doesn't scream for shock. It pleads to be understood. "I want people to feel introspective ... maybe understand themselves a little more. Or their neighbor."

> "SEVEN." isn't a confession. It's an invocation. A layered, guttural, melodic prayer that refuses forgiveness and demands reflection. "I used to be very close-minded." Kasey admits, "I still don't consider myself religious. But I'm trying to go on a spiritual graduary." Her creative approach is intuitive. "It's an affair with life."

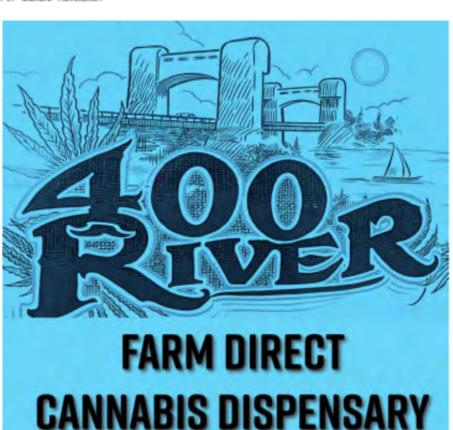
> What scared Kasey most to share? Not being Brave. But vulnerability builds bridges. "It helps other people and it helps me." Fan messages remind her of her own survival: "This saved my life."

Before hearing a note, "SEVEN." demands you feel. Its visuals - jarring, deliberate - warn and mirror. Karlsen seeks awakening through catharsis. released. Each sin was given a "mas- "Absorb the words. Realize you and your neighbor may have lived some-

> "SEVEN." wasn't promoted. It was endured. Confession and confrontation stitched into visuals and sound. Crimson, ash, gold - they aren't aesthetics. They're artifacts. Each track, a document of something lived and

Her music doesn't hand out an-

You can read a longer version of neous flash before rehearsal - shows this piece, featuring exclusive imagery and a deep dive into "SEVEN.", on the RadioRadioX.com website. It's anchored by an intimate interview with Kasey Karlsen-her most candid answers yet.



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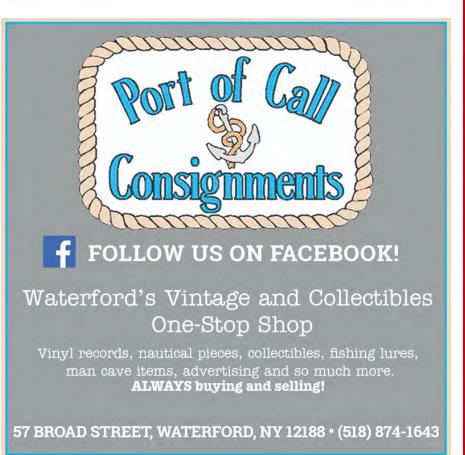
















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# The Future of Social Security and Medicaid

### What you need to know, and how to plan ahead.

n the quiet corners of upstate New York, where creativity thrives and artistic communities flourish, conversations about brushstrokes, melodies, and movement often take center stage. But lately, another topic has been echoing through studios, galleries, and coffee shops: What's happening to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid?

With the recent passage of President Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill," many retirees and future beneficiaries are understandably concerned. Rumors swirl, headlines alarm, and misinformation spreads like wildfire. As a financial professional with 23 years of experience in estate planning, asset management, and retirement forecasting, I want to offer clarity, reassurance, and a path forward. Let's unpack what's really changing—and what isn't.

#### The Big Picture: Your Benefits Are Not **Disappearing**

First and foremost: Social Security and Medicare are not being eliminated. Despite the noise, the core benefits that millions of Americans rely on remain intact. The "One Big Beautiful Bill," signed into law on July 4, 2025, introduces some changes—but they are measured, not catastrophic.

Social Security: Stability with a Few Adjustments

The bill does not cut Social Security benefits. In fact, it introduces a new bonus deduction for seniors: starting this year, individuals aged 65 and older can deduct an additional \$6,000 from their taxable income (\$12,000 for married couples). This means more money stays in your pocket.

There are no changes to the retirement age or benefit formulas—yet. However, the bill - \$10 billion investment in fraud detection and does establish a bipartisan commission tasked with exploring long-term solvency strategies. This commission may recommend adjustments in the future, such as:

- Raising the full retirement age gradually
- Increasing the payroll tax cap

- Modifying cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs)

But these are recommendations, not enacted changes. For now, your benefits remain secure.

#### **Expert Insight:**

"While the bill doesn't solve Social Security's long-term funding gap, it avoids panic-inducing cuts and instead signals a more measured approach," says Dr. Alicia Munnell, Director of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. "The bonus deduction is a welcome relief for many seniors."

Medicare: Expanded Access, Lower Costs

Medicare also remains largely untouched in terms of core benefits. Here's what's new:

- No cuts to Medicare Part A or B
- Expanded funding for Medicare Advantage (Part C), encouraging more preventive care and telehealth services
- Prescription drug cost cap: Out-of-pocket costs for Medicare Part D are now capped at \$2,000 annually
- Limited drug price negotiation: Medicare can now negotiate prices for a select list of highcost medications

These changes aim to reduce costs and improve access, especially for those managing chronic conditions or living in rural areas like many in our upstate communities.

Medicaid: Targeted Reforms, Not Broad

Medicaid, which supports low-income individuals, children, seniors in nursing homes, and people with disabilities, also sees targeted—not sweeping—changes:

- Work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents
- modernization
- No changes to eligibility for children, seniors, or disabled individuals

#### Expert Insight:

"The Medicaid work requirements are controversial, but the bill's protections for vulnerable populations and its investment in fraud prevention are pragmatic steps," says Paul Van de Water. Senior Fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Why the Confusion?

Much of the anxiety stems from misinformation. Social media posts, partisan commentary, and even some news outlets have misrepresented the bill's contents. It's easy to see why people are worried—especially when headlines scream "Cuts!" without context.

But the truth is more nuanced. The bill is not a dismantling of the safety net. It's a recalibration, with an eye toward sustainability.

#### Planning for the Future: Your Financial **Toolkit**

Even with benefits largely preserved, the landscape is shifting. That's why proactive financial planning is more important than ever Here are three essential steps to take:

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- 3. Revisit Your Plan Annually
- Laws change. Markets shift. Life happens. Make it a habit to review your financial plan every year.

A Message to Our Artistic Community

To my fellow creatives, musicians, writers, and dreamers: I know financial planning can feel like a foreign language. But it's not about spreadsheets—it's about freedom. The freedom to keep creating, to age with dignity, and to protect what you've built.

You don't need to become a financial expert. You just need to ask the right questions and partner with someone who listens.

#### Final Thoughts: Stay Informed, Stay **Empowered**

The "One Big Beautiful Bill" is not the end of Social Security or Medicare. It's a reminder that these programs, while resilient, are not immune to change. But change doesn't have to mean chaos.

With the right tools, the right guidance, and a clear-eyed view of the future, you can navigate whatever comes next.

So take a breath. Your benefits are still here. And with thoughtful planning, your future can be just as vibrant as your art.

#### About the Author

Justin J. Spraker, CFP, CRPC is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER practitioner®, Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor® with 23 years of experience in financial planning, estate settlement, asset management, insurance planning, tax strategy, and employer benefit plans.

Based in upstate New York, Justin and his firm, Legacy Wealth Planning Group, specialize in helping creative professionals and retirees build resilient financial futures.

In addition to being a NY advisor, Justin can assist clients in Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

When not in the office, you will find him on the sidelines of one of his four kids' sporting events or in the Adirondacks boating, camping, or snowboarding.





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# Cannabis Welcome to NY Cannabis BY RI TOKES



elcome to New York Cannabis. Hi friends - and - and to you. welcome. I'm Ri Tokes, and I'll be your guide through the ev- happening behind the scenes. I want er-evolving world of New York you to feel like you're part of this. Becannabis.

I've been in this game a long time. My journey with the plant started nearly 30 years ago, when I was just 13 and living in Troy. What started as curiosity turned into the best night's sleep I'd ever had. From that moment, cannabis wasn't just something I used — it became something I understood.

What began on the streets — serving Hudson Valley students and locals alike — has grown into a lifelong mission: to destigmatize this plant and get it into the hands of every person who needs her, or simply wants her.

These days, I'm an independent contractor running up and down New York, working with brands I believe in and dispensaries that are doing it right. I was on the ground floor when the legal market launched. I had the honor of opening Upstate Canna for the Jaunty restoration. brand, and later became Director of Sales for Highline Brands.

I've watched this industry trans- our communities. form — from no shops to hundreds, from pipe dreams to brick-and-mortar realities. I've seen brands launch, rise, fall, and pivot. I've seen dreams come true ... and I've seen heartbreak. But what I've seen most is community. A Ri real, raw, resilient community, pushing this plant forward with love.

This column is my love letter to that

I want to show you what's really cause you are.

Much of my recent work — both legacy and legal — has centered on health and wellness. Clients ask me: How can I use this plant to feel better? How can I use her to shift my energy, find balance, and make the day a little smoother?

Helping people answer those questions — that's my specialty.

But we're not stopping at wellness.

I'll also be bringing you industry events, legislative updates, and commentary on what's happening behind the curtain at OCM and beyond. There's a lot going on that the public isn't aware of — and I don't just want to lift the veil. I want to rip it off and light

This space is dedicated to the plant. To cultivation. To consumption. To

To understanding how cannabis works in harmony with our bodies and

Thank you for being here. Ask your questions — all of them. Every single one deserves an answer, and I promise I'll do my best to respond.

See you soon,







**RX:** So, Joe, how's life with TopHouse?

**JL:** You know ... it's about as good as I can hope for, honestly. Pretty things we love to do.

RRX: Exactly. For those that don't know, what's your role in the band?

**JL:** I sing, and I also pretend to play the banjo and play guitar.

**RRX:** Well, you're pretending pret- Grand Ole Opry.

**JL:** That's one of the first lessons I've learned from my piano teacher. play there. hectic, but I mean ... we're doing all the Learn how to fake it because nobody will know.

> RRX: Hey, that was great advice right there. Now, some big things are going on for you guys. I see you guys had a chance recently to play at the

JL: Yeah, yeah.

RRX: They won't even let Beyonce

yonce of folk music.

RRX: Really?

that was so wild. That was back in February, I think it was the day after we

released our last EP. It was so cool. We had no idea what to expect; we still get chills thinking about it. It was very fun.

RRX: From a musician's stand-**JL:** They say that we're like the Be-point and with the type of music that you're doing ... I mean ... you've made it! You know? That's definitely a way to JL: No, nobody says that. But yeah, measure success right there. That's amazing. I'm proud and happy for you.

JL: Thank you. It was pretty cool.



**RRX:** What are people to expect when they come out to a TopHouse show?

**JL:** Hopefully, they'll hear some good music. I feel like our shows are always a lot of fun. They're always a little bit different. We do a lot of banter in between. We really don't plan any of it out, so you never know what someone's gonna say. It's so cool just getting to meet people and chat with them before or after. We try to hang out by the merch booth. We try to keep it pretty high energy and give it everything we've got, every night. It's a good time.

**RRX:** Yeah, that's all you can do. I think that one of the best parts of being in a band and being on tour is getting to meet the people, because that goes a long way and it stays with the fan forever. Just a conversation that they had with you, you know?

This is a guy who managed a pretty

ways remember that the fans already know you, or they already have a connection with you from listening to your music. So anything you can do to sort of reciprocate that connection is very meaningful to them. But it's also super meaningful to us. It can be kind of tiring to go chat with fans after the show every night, but it is also probably our favorite part of the night when we're able to do it; we're not always able to, but when we are, it's so much fun.

**RRX:** So what do you think is the most rewarding part of being in a band and doing it for a living? Because there are so many of us ... and some of the most talented people out there still have to keep their day jobs. It's a blessing to be able to do it on this level. How do you feel about that?

**JL:** Blessing is definitely the right **JL:** Oh yeah. This stuck out for me. word. I mean, we haven't even been doing it full-time for super long, so it's successful artist. I was chatting with still kind of new. I feel like we're

him and he said something like ... al- learning every day a little bit more of what it means to be full-time musi- special about a live music experience. I cians. It's kind of hard to pinpoint one thing that'd be the most meaningful. I guess it's just hearing people's responses. To me, the best part, or the thing that completes a song the most, is when people respond to it, you know? It's like the song's not complete until you get to play it or you get to put it out and someone gets to hear it. It's kind of like a beautiful piece of art, just hanging up in an empty room, is kind of sad. ly, we'll get to do this as long as we can. It's just better when you get to share it. I think that getting to share the music is so rewarding. That's on any level of music, whether you're just sharing it in your house with family or in front of a crowd. It's a privilege.

> **RRX:** Oh, it absolutely is. I think when everyone collectively gets together and they're feeling the music and the vibrations are going through their bodies, it's actually great for the mind and the physical body as well.

**JL:** Absolutely. There's something think every single one of those unique experiences can't necessarily be boxed up and resold. If you keep going to shows, each night is unique, and it's such a cool community builder.

**RRX:** Well, that ... it definitely is. I see bright things for TopHouse in your future. I mean ... you've only just begun.

JL: Yeah, it's kind of wild. Hopeful-

**RRX:** Anything else that you would like to tell people out there to encourage them to come on out to your shows, when you're in town?

JL: We might read from "The Hobbit" or something, so that might get you out there. It'll just be a fun time.



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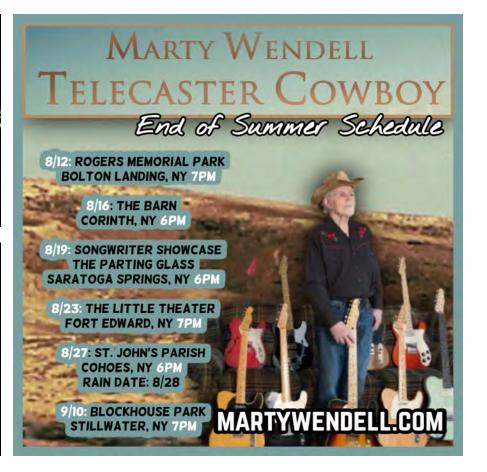
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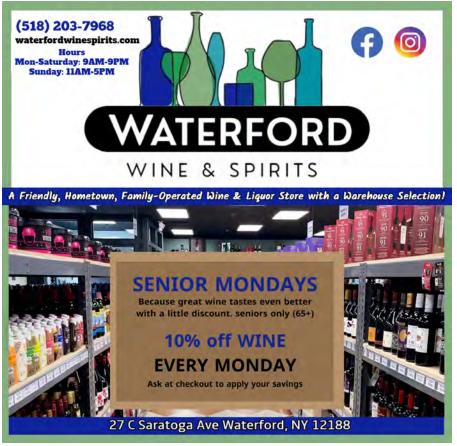
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The worst enemy of creativity is self-doubt."

Sylvia Plath said that.

And although I can name several significantly creative individuals throughout time who were plagued by self-doubt and a troubled mind and still managed to create and achieve great things - Van Gogh, Lincoln, Michelangelo, and Charles Dickens come to mind without even Googling - I agree with the idea behind Sylvia's quote. Of course, she also thought it was a good idea to stick her head in an oven, so I guess you need to pick the fruit that's ripe.

On the subject of creativity, I'd like to talk a little about songwriting.

As a rule, I'm not a fan of the old adage that "some mysteries are better left unsolved." I wanna know who shot JFK, and if OJ really, really, REALLY did it. Did Amelia Earhart's plane plunge into the sea, or did she land safely and live out the rest of her days as Charles Nelson Reilly, and what in the hell ever became of Yahoo Serious by the way? But when it comes to the art of songwriting, I've always thought it was best not to dissect your process too deeply and just let it flow. I landed on this topic originally because I saw some jag-off advertisement for songwriting lessons, "Sign up today and you could be the next Bob Dylan or Matchbox 20!" (It really said that.)

As if someone can sit you down and take you through, point by point, the steps necessary to write a song like What nonsense. I believe that not only is there no one-size-fits-all procedure for songwriting that must be followed for success, but that each and every songwriter has their own individual process that they employ to craft their finished product, which can change song to song. But there are some who adhere to a strict sequence of well-worn footsteps that must be trod in to bear acceptable musical fruit; NO deviation, NO personal alterations, and NO rebroadcast without the express written

(Sorry, ESPN was on in the background when I was writing this bit.)

steps necessary to write a song like you're baking your Nonna's manicotti. What nonsense. I believe that not only is there no one-size-fits-all procedure for songwriting that must be followed for success, but that each and every songwriter has their own individual process that they employ to craft their finished product, which can change

song to song. But there are some who adhere to a strict sequence of well-worn footsteps that must be trod in to bear acceptable musical fruit; NO deviation, NO personal alterations, and NO rebroadcast without the express written consent of the National Football League. What I have never had any luck with is determining a topic beforehand and then trying to express my thoughts on it through song. Those attempts always seem forced, contrived, and all-around crappy. And I think I hear that in others' songs from time to time. I may be

someone sat down and said, "I'm gonna write a song about earwax," and the ode to earwax song sounds so stiff and unnatural, and the lyrics seemed crowded together shoulder to shoulder like they're trying to cram onto the last chopper out of Hanoi. It makes a mockery of the subject matter, and earwax deserves better.

And while I am an advocate of following your own personal creative process in this regard, I am also vehementaudiences while you perform these nuggets of musical gold. You know that thing that performers will sometimes do where they sit in a circle (shudder) and describe what they were thinking, and feeling, and the images they were seeing, and what they had for lunch the day they created this lyrical chestnut?

"... I was sitting on a rock in Big Sur, and as the sun rose, the sky turned the most amazing color of - " Oh My God Shut The Hell Up! Just play the damn be, we'll ask you later what it's about ... but I doubt it. I just feel like the meaning of a song should be determined by the listener. I've had people come to me after a set and tell me what they think (in some cases what they know) one of my songs is about, and it's never what I was thinking when I wrote it because I'm pretty sure I wasn't thinking of anything while I was writing that tune, just letting it flow. But if that song meant something to someone, I'm overjoyed and feel as though I did my job as a songwriter. And when you come to one of my shows and sing along with the lyrics to one of my songs, you just made my the man. whole night ... my whole year!

But honestly, when I wrote it, I wasn't thinking of anything, just trusting my non-process, and not doubting my ability.

Which, I guess, brings us back to the incisive Ms. Plath. Self-doubt is a killer, but a little can temper your urges to

mistaken, but I feel like I can tell when pontificate and muck up the works like our friends in the songwriters' sewing circle describing their BMs that morning that led to the amazing musical epiphany they're about to bestow upon us. So, my best advice is: be honest, in your writing and with yourself, and create from your heart, and whatever comes of that, you'll be proud. And also, and most importantly, don't take advice from me or anyone else, and do it the way that feels best to you.

I'd like to end this month, if I may, ly opposed to sharing that process with with a personal note about another heavy loss we sustained recently.

> Steve Aldi was not just one of the finest musicians I've been lucky enough to play with over the years; he was my dear friend. The absolute joy Steve exuded from playing music on a stage was contagious, and lit up the room and pushed all of us playing with him to higher ground. His ability was unmistakable and a gift to all he shared it with, but that was only part of Steve.

He was a true friend and a devoted tune and if we like it, maybe, just may- dad. While most conversations between sets are usually comprised of gear talk, drinking, and other frivolity, with Steve, it was always an opportunity to catch up on the latest with his boys.

> Through the years, I followed along as the boys went from being born, to school, to Little League, and college. And even though through all those years I only met them a handful of times, I had a real sense that I knew them from the stories Steve told and the joy he took in telling them. As much as he lit up on stage, he burned even brighter when talking about his boys. And that to me is the true measure of

> Safe home, my friend, you will be missed by your family and your musical family as well. Think of us sometimes, because we'll be thinking of you and wishing you were here when we're counting it off...2...3...4.









Labor Day Weekend





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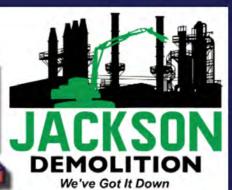














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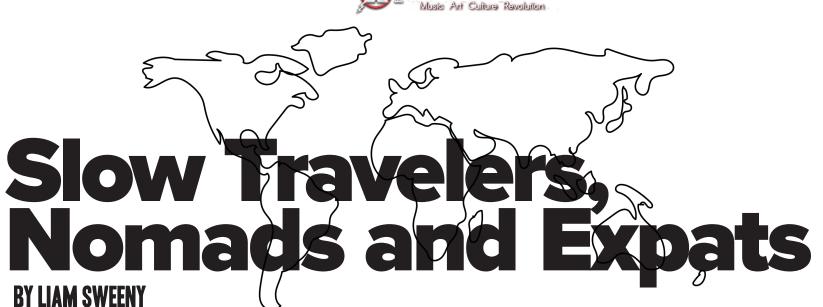












ave you ever taken a trip to a vacation. faraway land? You walked the streets, sampled the local fare, and maybe you stayed for a week, or maybe just a few days. But what if you never went home?

Warren and Julie Knox are slow travelers. Their bags get a workout as they travel the world a few months at a time, never back home in the States, not for long anyway. They are American citizens of the world.

**RRX:** So, I was gonna write some questions, but this is so interesting, I don't think I need to. I think there's enough to talk about. Now you guys are expats, right? Can you tell us what that means?

**WK:** We're more or less slow travelers, but yeah, expats. What that is, is a person that is still tied to their home country, and they're going to eventually go back, and they still have their tax allegiance to their home country. When you look at the difference between an immigrant and an expat ... the difference is one's paying taxes to one country and the one's paying taxes to their own country primarily.

**RRX:** So it's a person who's paying taxes to their old country. It's really like you're on vacation, except you might be on kind of a permanent

WK: Typically, you're keeping your home, and you may eventually go back to your old country, or you intend to eventually, at some point. You still consider yourself primarily an American. If you have French residency but you're not a citizen there, you're not really an immigrant. When you start paying taxes there, then you can consider yourself an immigrant, and when you get right down to it, if you have Mexicans in America that intend to go back to Mexico someday, shop, cook at home, go to restaurants, the language is so off that I would they could be expats also.

RRX: All right. So that's a general term that covers that situation. One of the first books I ever really enjoyed as a kid was Ernest Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises," which is the whole story about expats during World War One. Very romanticized; I wanted to do that after reading that book. I don't know if you've ever read that book, but there is a glamour to it honey? all.

**WK:** We've been doing this for almost five years and it was a dream of ours for a long time. We're slow travelers more than just expats, so we typically go spend one to three months in the country, but our home base is in Montenegro in Europe, so this is where we come back to kind of

So we'll spend three or four months a year in Montenegro while we travel to different places. We're living our dream of what we wanted to do; see what it's like to actually live somewhere instead of coming in as a vacation, spending 48 hours and thinking you've seen the country. Or getting off a cruise ship for eight hours and saying, OK, I've checked that country off my box. I spend a month somewhere and, you know, learn how to and see what life is actually like to live in a place. Every day is an education as we travel, learning something new, learning, going somewhere different. We've done a lot of stuff on our YouTube channel, which also keeps us occupied. Sometimes it feels like a job when it was supposed to be a hobby, but I think it's met a lot of our expectations. What do you think,

JK: Definitely. I mean, we do it with our dogs also, so we drive across Europe currently. We'll be hopping continents for a couple of years to South America here shortly, but it's just been a fantastic experience of living life on our own terms. And you know, we've met so many great people. We actually met so many expats

recharge, change out our wardrobe. or slow travelers and nomads that it feels like the whole world is travelling to us because we blur those lines a bit much. Our bubble is full of travelers, and if we meet people that don't have a passport, it just kind of blows our minds.

> **RRX:** Is there any core thing to understand, because I know the one thing that would stop me from doing what you're doing is that I'd be so afraid of being horribly out-languaged. Like, being in a place where just basically freak out because I couldn't talk to anybody. Is that something that you got into? Did you have to learn new languages before you started, or is this something where you kind of grew to know it?

> WK: It can be challenging, and we do not know another language, but English is well spoken in most of these countries, at least in some of the more tourist spots. I mean, it's tougher if you go too much into the farmland. And it's problematic, but generally Google Translate works for us, and I know a little tiny bit of French. I know a little bit of Spanish, and I've picked up a few keywords for Bosnian Croatian, which helps us over here. We know probably like about 30 or 40 words in a whole lot of



languages, because we've learned Google Translate, you can use a camera app and you aim it at something that's spelled out, and it translates it to your language. And you can have conversations with Google Translate. er, English is the most spoken language in the world. It's got more speakers than, when you count second language speakers, than Chinese, and most of the Chinese speakers are in China, where people all over the world are speaking English. So if you're gonna know one language, English is the best.

nities in a lot of countries, they're very international. You'll have your Germans, your Japanese, your Philippines, your people from the Middle East, you'll have your people from Spain, Italy, and English is used as the bridge language. Almost all the expat groups, English is the language that they all communicate in because it's the most common language. If you only spoke German, you'd be in trouble. If you only spoke Italian, you'd be in trouble. You'd have to use your Google Translate. We have French friends like that. They speak some broken English, but they could not possibly interact as well as we do with so many people in the expat world because their English is much more limited. But English is the language that, if you're gonna travel and you're from any other nation, it's the language you're gonna learn. Because if you go somewhere and you have a multi-language menu, it's oftentimes you're gonna have English and the native language that they have there. I wanna say it's probably about eight or nine times more dominant in the world as far as the amount of speakers than Spanish. Spanish only has Central America, part of South America, and Spain.

**RRX:** I imagine with people that that as we've gone along. But with are slow-travelling expat nomads, there is a world to that, like a network of like-minded people that do it. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

WK: I don't know if you've seen our Facebook group or not, but basi-It's actually a game changer. Howev- cally it's the Expat Slow Travel Nomad Network by Warren and Julie. It's the offshoot from our YouTube channel. But there's a lot of people that are trying to learn how to become nomads or expats, and there's a lot of people there that are expats and nomads. We've developed so many friendships, and a lot of times we're connecting through these dif-So when you go to expat commu-ferent Facebook expat or nomad groups because when you go somewhere new, you find out where the get-togethers are, where the foreigners are. And it's not that we just want to hang out with the foreigners, but ... let's say we go to Serbia. If we go to Serbia, these people have their friends that they've had their whole lives, they have their jobs. And if you go there and you expect, "I'm gonna just learn Serbian and meet Serbians," it's not gonna happen. But if you go to the expat groups, you'll find the Serbians that want to meet the other expats, and you have the expats that can show you around, teach you the ropes, and help you get acclimated to the country. I will tell you, we just had a viewer of ours that was in Albania. He showed up, planned for a couple of years to go to Albania, didn't do any research about where the expats are, the foreigners. He showed up in Albania, planning to be there for one year, was there for three weeks, got lonely, couldn't handle it, and went back to the States. You have to do your homework and know where to find people, and if you're gonna travel alone, you definitely need to know how to find other people to show you around and try to lay the groundwork before you arrive.







# Tugboat Roundup

he 2025 Tug of the Year: Thomas
X. Grasso
Since the completion of the

Since the completion of the Barge Canal in 1918, the State of New York has maintained a fleet of tugboats, dredges, tenders, floating derricks, and other small craft to keep the waterway in good operating condition. Known as the "floating plant" – and sometimes the "Empire State Navy" - this fleet has been infrequently updated over the decades, with the historic vessels skillfully operated, and lovingly cared for, by their crews. Built in 1901, the venerable URGER, the most famous of these vessels and the Canal System's flagship, was the Tugboat Roundup's 2001 Tug of the Year and the iconic 1927 Governor Cleveland took the honors in 2003.

But the ever-increasing demands on the Canal Corporation's aging fleet, as well as new regulations promulgated by the United States Coast Guard, has prompted the entity which oversees the Canal Corporation's, the New York Power Authority, to make new investments in the agency's maintenance fleet.

After several diminutive (less than 26 feet in length) pushboats were acquired in recent years, the Canal Corporation has taken delivery of its first, full-sized tugboat in three-quarters of a century. The vessel, built by Blount Builders Incorporated of Warren, RI, will be named in honor of one of the Canal System's greatest advocates and experts: Professor Thomas X. Grasso.

Professor Grasso was an accomplished Canal scholar and President of the Canal Society of New York State for over 40 years. After founding the Geosciences Department at Monroe County Community College, he led that same department as Chair for nearly 30 years. In his capacity as Chair of the department,

he introduced his students to the geology of the Canal by bring them on excursions via Canal tugboat, the first of which was aboard the Tug Lockport under the command of Capt. Bill Clifford, later floating plant supervisor and section superintendent of the Canal's western-most section. A geologist by training and Canaller at heart, Professor led the effort to save the Erie House and develop the Erie Canal Heritage Park in Port Byron, and to save and renovate the historic M/V Day Peckinpaugh - the last remaining Barge Canal-era motorship and the 2021 Boat of the Year. All who heard him speak about his beloved Canal with passion, humor, and eloquence were mesmerized. Professor Grasso, who also served as President of Inland Waterways International for an extensive period of time and who was a recipient of the TBR's Capt. Bart Brake Canal Lifetime Achievement Award, passed away in 2022 after a lifetime of service to New York's Canals.

In 2025, the Waterford Tugboat Roundup is pleased to honor the NYS Canal Corporation's Thomas X. Grasso as the Tug of the Year, in honor of the State's new investment in its floating plant, and in fond memory of our departed friend.

#### RYAN NAMED 2025 TUGBOAT PARADE GRAND MARSHALL

he Waterford Tugboat Roundup has named Thomas J. Ryan the 2025 Tugboat Parade Grand Marshall.

The Canals of New York State have figured prominently over Mr. Ryan's long and distinguished career over many decades. Mr. Ryan served as an aid to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who

advocated for the New York State Canal System remaining a state-run waterway in the 1980s and whose amendment to the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) made the transfer of the Canal System from the State DOT to the State's Thruway Authority possible. Mr. Ryan also served in several positions in the administration of Governor Mario Cuomo including special assistant to the Governor, where he helped shape New York State policy in a variety of areas. While serving as Deputy Commissioner at NYSDOT, Mr. Ryan authored the 1989 Barge Canal Planning Board Report, which report paved the way for the Canal's transfer to the Thruway Authority, and laid the groundwork for the 1995 Canal Recreationway Plan, which serves as the blueprint for the Canal's operation today. Following this, Mr. Ryan also served as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

A reformed newspaperman, Mr. Ryan also went on to serve in the administration of President Bill Clinton, serving as Regional Administrator for both the Federal Transit Administration and then General Services Administration, consecutively.

As President of the State Council on Waterways, Mr. Ryan was instrumental in planning and executing a series of roundtables on statewide waterway policy, including environmental issues and both tourism-related and commercial uses of the State's Canal System and interconnected waterways. Notably, Mr. Ryan also established and personally helmed a successful tour boat program in Little Falls, NY, designed to get school groups and other interested parties out on the Canal System aboard the Erie Canal Boat. Lastly, Mr. Ryan published Canal Times, a periodical devoted to happenings along

the historic waterway and in and around the communities connected by it.

Mr. Ryan returned to State service. assuming the duties as Chief of Staff at the New York State Thruway in 2010, where he oversaw day-to-day operation of the 524-mile Canal System and 570-mile highway. In this capacity, Mr. Ryan spearheaded efforts to close the gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail, increase levels of customer service, and to construct the Lock E-13 Living History Rest Area from the westbound lanes of the Thruway near Yosts, and the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park from the eastbound lanes of the Thruway in Port Byron. Mr. Ryan's coordination of the response and repairs to several locks and dams long the Erie Canal in the Mohawk Valley that were obliterated during flooding from Hurricane Irene in 2011, with the damage exacerbated by Tropical Storm Lee just a short while later. Despite the need to substantially rebuild these locks and dams, and restore the navigation channel, under Mr. Ryan's direction and in close coordination with Director of Canals Brian U. Stratton, the Canal was rebuilt and reopened in just 84 days, a very noteworthy achievement.

Before retiring, Mr. Ryan concluded his State service as Director of the New York State Fair. A recipient of the Canal Society of New York State's prestigious Spirit of the Canal award, Mr. Ryan has continued to write and lecture about New York's Canal System and advocate for its continued use, preservation, and improvement.

As 2025 Grand Marshall, Mr. Ryan succeeds the inaugural Grand Marshall Russ VanDervoort in 2022, Capt. Thomas M. Doin in 2023, and GMC William Curry, USN, (Ret) in 2024.





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# Eddie Angel

Los Straitjackets: Masked, Jacked, and Ready to Play

#### BY NEOPTOLEMUS

hey wear Mexican wrestling masks, a tradition which began with their first gig. Their songs are guitar instrumentals, in the tradition of the Shadows and the Ventures. Their name comes from their fondness for the word for a device used to restrain crazy people. They are all road warriors, with grinding touring schedules for the band.

Who are those masked men? They are Los Straitjackets, a band that has been together for 37 years. And they're HERE, at various venues, including Tarrytown, NY (July 31st, Tarrytown Music Hall), Norwalk, CT (August 1st, District Music Hall), Woodstock, NY (August 8th and 9th, Levon Helm Studios), various places in October, and in November, Troy, NY (November 2, The Hangar on the Hudson; doors at 8:00 PM).

The Xperience Monthly chatted with co-founder Eddie Angel about life (on the road), the universe (of music), and everything (guitar).

**RRX:** What was your first instrument? First guitar (and do you still have it)? Are you self-taught, or did you take lessons?

**EA:** My first instrument was clarinet. I was in fifth grade. The music teacher at Fort Crailo School in Rensselaer gave a music aptitude test to weed out the kids with no musical talent -- and I failed! But I wanted to be in the band so badly, I had my mother buy me a clarinet, and I took lessons. So I got into band. I got my first guitar when I was 12. It was marketed as a "Beatles" guitar. It came with an amp

and a 45 of the Beatles' record of "My Bonnie" on MGM Records. It was an Airline from Montgomery Ward. I still have it hanging on my wall.

I'm self-taught. I took a few lessons when I started. My teacher was a teenager; he taught me "Walk Don't Run," but then he moved to California, so from then on I learned by listening to records. I'm a primitive musician — I can't read music, and I could never be a studio musician. I had to find my own way and come up with my own style. I think my strong point was being able to write songs. I don't consider myself a super picker. I persevered and I got lucky at the 11th hour!

**RRX:** Your roots are in rockabilly, and one of your bands is the Neanderthals, whose members include local music legend, Johnny Rabb. Was Johnny an influence on you while you were a youth in the area? Do you have any Johnny Rabb stories you can relate (remember: this is a family publication)?

EA: I met Rabb in 1974. He was in college at Brockport and was in a band with a friend of mine. I was at loose ends and decided to visit my friend. It was January and freezing cold. I took a bus to Brockport and then hitchhiked to the band house they all lived in, in Holley, NY. It looked like the tundra. I got to the band house and we all started jamming. I probably did "Blue Suede Shoes," because I remember Rabb taking me into his room to show me his collection of Elvis records. He had all of them, even the crappy mov-



#### ie soundtracks!

Remember, it wasn't cool to be an Elvis fan when you were a college student, even in 1974, so it was like we had this secret society. I didn't play in a band with Rabb until 1981, when we formed the Rockin' Dakotas. We just did all the '50s and '60s songs we knew, and people loved it! We were, overnight, the most popular band in town. The Neanderthals came much later, in 1995, when I wrote a bunch of songs. Rabb, Cheese Blotto, and I went to London to record them at the

legendary Toe Rag Studios. I'm very proud of that record. I think it's one of the best things I've been a part of.

**RRX:** It may amuse you to learn that Graham Tichy, while playing a gig at Ganser-Smith Park in Menands, dubbed that town's residents as "Menanderthals."

**EA:** I'm from Rensselaer ... I can't throw stones.

**RRX:** The most recent Straitjacket album is "Indoor Safari" (LP/CD) with Nick Lowe, which dropped last September. Your new album, "Somos Los



Straitjackets" (LP only; pre-order avail- fan of rock music. Is it because of the able from Yep Roc Records) drops this September 19th. It was recently announced that "Polaris" from that album, a song you wrote, has just been released as a single. What inspired "Polaris"?

EA: "Polaris" started as a song I was noodling on guitar for a while. I didn't know if it would be right for Los Straitjackets. But then I thought, maybe give it a treatment like "Telstar," one of my alltime favorite instrumentals. Greg Townson, the other LSJ guitarist, came up with a really cool approach to playing it and tweaked the melody. It came out really good, I think.

**RRX:** Are there any plans for new Neanderthals or Planet Rockers music?

**EA:** The Neanderthals and the Planet Rockers both have a cult following, especially in Europe, so I think we will continue playing festivals there and in the U.S. We play rockabilly, garage, and tiki festivals, and lately started playing cruises like the Underground Garage Cruise. No immediate plans to record, but it's always on my mind.

RRX: Los Straitjackets also have a surf-guitar side. Did you ever get to meet or play with surf guitar founder Dick Dale?

**EA:** Yes, I met Dick Dale, I was friends with his bass player, Sam Bolle. When they played Nashville, Sam asked me if I wanted to come by soundcheck and play Dick Dale's rig, which of course, I did. It was loud! The next day, my wife Melanie and I went to say goodbye to Sam at their hotel, and Dick and his wife were waiting out front in their RV. We spent about an hour talking with them. They loved Melanie because she has some Native American heritage. They were way into that!

Dick Dale was a fascinating character, and Sam told me some amazing stories that I can't repeat, but I hope someone writes a book about him!

**RRX:** You played with Link Wray, the godfather of the power chord, which became the basis for a lot of later rock music. You've said elsewhere that you are not a

power chord, or are there other reasons?

EA: Let's be clear: I love rock 'n' roll, but I make a distinction between rock 'n' roll and rock music. To me, rock music is humorless and doesn't swing. Having said that, I like the Ramones because they have a sense of humor. I love Link Wray — I mean, he's in my pantheon of guitar greats, and I probably relate more to him than any other guitarist.

**RRX:** Do you have any Link Wray stories you'd like to share?

**EA:** When I was 19, I moved to LA to be a songwriter with a piano player named Dave Bloom. We were both sharing an apartment in Venice Beach and working at restaurants. One day, he said he had gotten a gig with Link Wray. I had never heard of Link Wray, but I thought, what a cool name, sounds like a futuristic guy with a ray gun in a Lincoln spaceship. I said, "Get me in the band. I'll play rhythm!" Next thing, I was meeting Link Wray at his apartment and talking about Elvis and music. We got together once and jammed in a garage in North Hollywood. I just remember he was playing a cheap Japanese guitar, and what we played was a noisy racket, maybe you could call it proto-punk. He was putting together a band to promote his new record "Be What You Want To." I moved back home before a tour materialized, but my friend Dave played a few gigs with him. Fast forward to 1980, and I'm playing with Tex Rubinowitz and the Bad Boys in Washington, DC. Tex's favorite guitarists were Link Wray and Ivy Rorschach. He used to play a tape of Link Wray for our pre-show, and one day he said, "Eddie, I think we should do some instrumentals in the set." I thought it was a terrible idea! But I took to it like a duck to water and started writing instrumentals. I wrote "Rampage" and "Lynxtail," both tributes to Link, and they were on my first 45 record in 1981. I still play them.

**EA:** In 1997, I was touring with Los Straitjackets, and we did a bunch of dates

Continued on Page 62...



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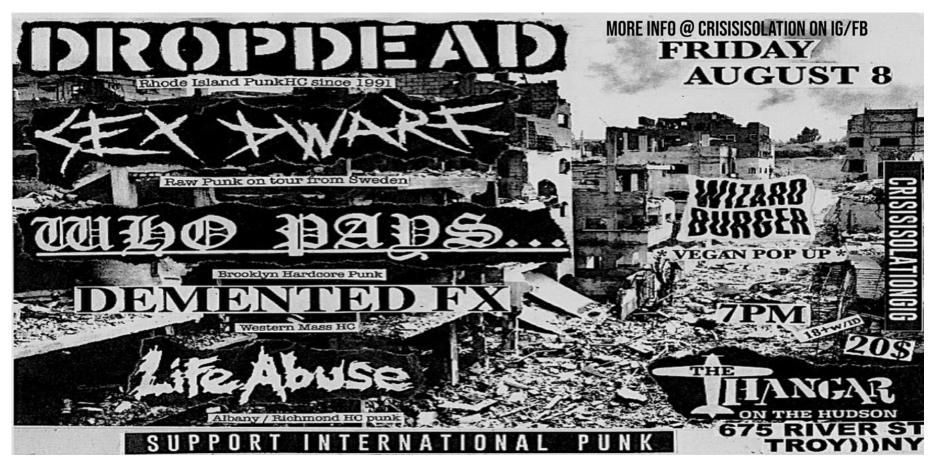
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# What I Want

## BY JASON IRWIN

**Beyond** 

The Who, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, why? Queen, Black Sabbath, Pink Floyd (and even a couple of American bands). 10 rock greats of 2000+ into the red Right? OK ... fine. For the patriotic: Van Halen, the Eagles, Boston, Skynyrd, and Fleetwood Mac. Throw in AC/DC, U2, and Rush to cover a few of the other homelands. Of course ... I'm summarizing. There are lists out there of "the 100 Greatest Classic Rock Bands of All Time," and they typically boast basically the same groups and the best of the '60s, '70s, '80s ... and sometimes '90s. I think most of us have accepted the '80s hair bands and '90s grunge and alt-rock acts into the club. If not, that's ok. Neither Jon Bon Jovi nor Eddie Vedder are super bothered. That's not the real point of this effort. The point isn't even to define "classic rock." It's impossible. Is it an era ... or a genre? Typically, the generation of the person reflects greatly on this. Understandable. That topic has been beaten to death – and you know what they say about shaking something more than necessary - we aren't here for that. There are tons of opinions about it. and none of them matter here. What matters to me is this: what are the new classics ... the songs of 2000 and beyond that will stand the test of time? "Smooth," by Santana & Rob Thomas, was the biggest rock (term used loosely) song of the year 2000. That was 25 years ago. Here is the question: Will people be singing it 25 years from now? I host a morning FM

and struggle with this one on a daily basis, especially knowing that I have "Classic rock." When you hear that la- "younger" listeners. I almost feel guilty bel, you think of the Rolling Stones, pulling from the post-2000 pool. But

> That's why I want to induct these room of rock. These are some of the songs from that era that I think fit the feel and will stand the test of time. Is there a new "Stairway to Heaven" somewhere in here? Maybe ... maybe not (of course, I have a theory on

### "Seven Nation Army" by the White Stripes (2003)

Jack White has accomplished something pretty amazing. He came along in 1999, and over the next few years, he inserted himself amongst the ranks of the greats. We accepted it, and he deserves it. The riff on this one is enough to carry it for many years. It's catchy as heck and a little dangerous sounding. I've had this requested at solo acoustic shows based on the opening lick alone. "Can you play the song that goes ...'dun, dun dun dun dun dun, dun ...'?" And they usually come from 20-30 somethings. That's a sign.

"In the End" by Linkin Park (2000) "Hybrid Theory" is the best-selling debut album of the 21st century. Period. Chester's tragic passing further increased their popularity, as happens. as she has become immortal. But they didn't need that at all.

## "Mr. Brightside" by The Kill- Foo Fighters (2003) ers (2004)

Here's another one I base solely on personal observation. I DJ in clubs. The average age is maybe 25. And it never fails ... from the crowd, I see

he "New Classics" of 2000 and radio show on a "classic rock" station, the phone held up - an annoying way to request music, by the way, people. But the text is either the latest rap hit that I haven't heard of, or this one. And pretty much the only song with guitars I'll play that night. And man, do they love it. Sing-alongs that shake the building are going to last.

### "Teenage Dirtbag" by Wheatus (2000)

Everybody loves this song. Like, everybody. Did I say everybody?

### "Miss You" by Blink-182 (2004)

'90s hits like "All the Small Things" and at least three more are already in the club. This one gets added to the list for one pop-culture phenomenon alone ... the meme-tastic (fake) word, "yead." Emo karaoke night wouldn't exist without this song. And emo karaoke night isn't going anywhere.

### "Kryptonite" by 3 Doors Down (2000)

Every bar rock cover band in the world plays it. Why? Because every hot mom in the audience sings it when they do. And anything Superman is gold. Our favorite Kryptonian is going to be rehashed a hundred more times, at least. We love that guy and anything that references him.

## "Stacy's Mom" by Fountains of Wayne (2003)

She really did have it going on. And she won't ever need cosmetic surgery,

# "Times Like These" by The

Nirvana was active from 1987-1994 (and really only known in the mainstream from '91.) Three measly years ... compared to Dave Grohl's grief project - now celebrating 30 years. Hard

to believe, but it's true. This is a band that has done nothing short of stand up and proclaim, "No. Rock and Roll is not dead." A few '90s hits have already solidified their position in the brotherhood. This anthem tops them

#### "Uprising" by Muse (2009)

I could have picked from about 5 of their songs. This band is unique. I'm naming them the new Queen.

### "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" by Green Day (2004)

My list isn't in order of importance, but if it were, this would be my heavy hitter.

This may surprise, confuse, or even anger you. But this is my pick for the song that lasts forever. Here's why. Sure, it's got all the elements that make up a great tune. It even boasts an epic song title. But aside from that, it invokes a feeling. And that's what makes a song last. They did it with 1997's "Good Riddance," and they did it again here. The album was pretty politically charged, but standing (or walking, I should say) alone from the rest of the opera, it doesn't register as such. When I hear it ... I don't hear politics. I hear a story about a guy walking by himself on a road that has an unclear destination. It's relatable. And you know - politics in music isn't new. Some of the greatest rock songs of all time have had their motivations. But they're just songs. It's your choice how you hear them.

#### Runners-up:

The Strokes' "Last Nite", 30 Seconds to Mars' "The Kill", Cage the Elephant's "Ain't No Rest For the Wicked", Metallica's



### "Whiskey in the Jar," and Johnny Cash's "Hurt."

Honorable Mention Bands:

Audioslave: Supergroups are fun, and legends lost tend to live on.

Velvet Revolver: See above.

Fall Out Boy: Emo isn't defined by an era. It's a culture. Jam bands aren't for everyone.

Stained/Aaron Lewis: Crossing over from nu metal to country doesn't work for just anyone.

Limp Bizkit: They're back - and they're BFFs with Corey Feldman. Fred and Wes will be "rollin'" for a while.

Disturbed: That darn Simon and Garfunkel cover hits, and covers are a great way to jump ahead.

Deftones: Even if the only song they ever released was "Change (In the House of Flies".)

Avril Lavigne: If you argue this one, she'll pretty much kick your butt.

Paramore: See above.

The Darkness: I believe in a thing called an earworm.

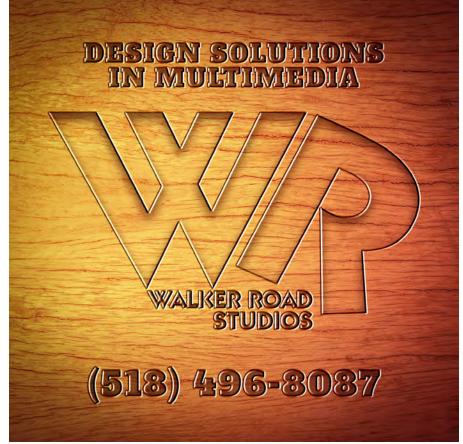
The Black Keys: I like this duo the way I like Jack and Meg ... just a shiver less.

Kings of Leon: How many hits were on that record?

Good Charlotte: Nicole Richie and Cameron Diaz can't both be wrong. Can they?

Tenacious D: Jack Black is an icon. Sure, the other guy messed up, but time heals. It did for Dave Grohl.

So, there it is. The only way to find out for sure is to tune in a few decades from now. Hopefully, we're still living in a world where rock and roll exists. The trends in music aren't promising. But maybe, just maybe ... the obnoxious guy at the bar in 2050 will be yelling "Greeeeen Daaaaay" instead of "Freeeeee Biiiird" at the musician or band performing. Probably not, but only time will tell.





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# Music Notes The Art, Science, and Technique of Music

BY PEAK MUSIC STUDIOS

ello music fans, This month, we're tackling one of the most asked (and least understood) questions from aspiring singers, crooners, and carpool karaoke kings and queens alike: how do I sing high notes? Or its cousin: why does it feel so hard to sing this song?

At the heart of these questions is something most people overlook: strength. Yes-strength. Not just emotional fortitude or your ability to survive a bad first date—actual muscular strength. Singing high, singing well, singing consistently-it all comes down to whether the muscles that operate your voice are trained and coordinated.

Let's get a little technical (but stay with me). You've got two primary muscle groups working under the hood: the CT (cricothyroid) muscles responsible for stretching your vocal folds and producing head voice, and the TA (thyroarytenoid) muscles, which thicken the folds and produce chest voice. Most people are weak or unbalanced in one or both. Then comes the tricky part coordination, known as "mix" or "blended voice." That's using chest-dom- your weak spots. The break area is not Born inant muscle coordination in the higher part of your range—aka belting with control, not strain. If that sounds like magic, it's not-it's biomechanics.

Here's the kicker: most singers never work on this consciously. I'll ask a student, "What exercises are you doing to stretch your voice?" They say, "Oh, I just sing songs." That's like saying you train for a marathon by walking around the mall. Or I'll ask, "How loud can you sing a note without it going sharp?" Blank stare. It's like "Fast Times at Ridgemont High": "Can you sing high notes, Mr. with "Video Killed the Radio Star" Spicoli?" "I don't know." Exactly. Be-

cause there's no workout.

Science backs this up. Research from the Journal of Voice (Titze et al., 2006) shows that semi-occluded vocal Bigot tract exercises—lip trills, straw phonation, etc.-improve efficiency and reduce strain. Another study (Echternach et al., 2010) demonstrates that singers with better coordination between CT and TA muscles show smoother transitions and fewer pitch breaks. Transla- Festival tion: voice training works. Not random practice. Not hope. Real, structured training.

Want to belt like Adele or soar like Freddie Mercury? Then you need a serious plan. Imagine a weightlifter saying, "I can't lift 200 pounds." You ask, "What's your training like?" They say, "Well, I hang out at the gym and scroll TikTok." That's not training—it's loiter- fans ing. Same for singing.

So here's your August checklist:

Know your range and where your voice "breaks." This is the passaggiothe bridge between chest and head voice. Track it. Test it monthly.

Do exercises designed to challenge the enemy—it's your training zone.

Learn to sing in chest voice, head voice, and mixed voice-on command. No more guessing.

And if you don't know how to do this? That's okay—but get help from someone who does. A qualified vocal coach doesn't just give you scales. They assess, guide, and tailor the plan. The best singers in the world have vocal coaches—why shouldn't you?

#### This Month in Music History

August 1, 1981 - MTV Launches

Rock music would never be the same.

This event reshaped pop culture, pro- transition into motion, and the rise of visual rock acts.

August 4, 1755 - Birth of Marie

Virtuoso pianist admired by both Bat... And It Wasn't Fake Beethoven and Haydn, she was a rare female star in early classical circles.

The Beatles' "Abbey Road"

August 15–18, 1969 – Woodstock

The definitive music festival, featuring Hendrix, Joplin, The Who, and more. A defining moment in rock and counterculture history.

debuts

The inaugural festival at Donington Park, headlined by Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, drew over 40,000 hard-rock

*August 21, 1987* – "Appetite for De-stay curious, and remember: struction" by Guns N' Roses hits #1

Though released in July, it reached just have to get started. the top spot in August-marking a breakthrough moment in metal-infused hard rock.

August 22, 1862 - Claude Debussy

Composer of "Clair de Lune" and "La Mer," Debussy's work marked the

French modern impressionism.

#### **Weird but True:**

Ozzy Osbourne Bit the Head Off a

During a concert in Des Moines, Iowa, on January 20, 1982, a fan threw August 8, 1969 - Photo Shoot for what Ozzy thought was a rubber bat onto the stage. Always one for theatrics, Ozzy picked it up and bit its head off only to discover it was a very real (and very dead) bat.

> He later claimed the bat was "stonecold and crunchy."

After the show, Ozzy was rushed to August 16, 1980 - Monsters of Rock the hospital for rabies shots. He later said it was one of the worst decisions of his life ... And that's saying a lot for someone as "interesting" as Ozzy Osbourne.

Until next month, keep practicing,

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# Oasis. Roll with it ...or else

## BY ROB SKANE

ging if it's true, lads. The Pistols meet the Fab Four? Kinda. Sorta. Definitely maybe. They literally slugged it out in the clubs and then swaggered their way into every stadium that was big enough to hold them. They had attitude, they were mega, and it was glorious. 20,000 people feeling supersonic, singing every syllable of every word of every song on the set list at the top of their lungs for years. I have witnessed it live and in person – the arena was shaking. I am not kidding. People were going absolutely bat sh\*t crazy for the music. I've never seen anything like it.

Liam Gallagher's voice is perfect for so many of the tunes that his big brother Noel wrote. In the most rocknroll way, Liam slides into the notes that he sings. It's real, raspy, and you can almost hear the cigarettes and alcohol every now and again. Noel's voice is a bit clearer, I suppose. McCartney to Liam's Lennon/Lydon? I don't know – I'm just giving points of reference over here, simmer down. The LAST thing I want is to be a vexation to anyone's spirit.

Growing up in public can be humbling, especially when you and your brother can't seem to agree on much of anything. Maybe it was the independent extracurricular chemical research? Maybe it was ego? Maybe it was too much, too soon? No one knows, but things happen and brothers will often act like, well, you know... Cricket bat fights aside, the first two Oasis LPs were stellar. Give them a listen and see what

ome might say Oasis is an im- you think. And if the line (pardon the portant band and that Noel Gal- pun), "All your dreams are made, when lagher has written some fantas- you're chained to the mirror and the ratic songs. They sang about being rockn- zor blade," from the song "Morning Gloroll stars - and they were. It ain't brag- ry" doesn't make you recall a litany of poorly influenced life choices, then, sadly, you're not one of us. Has there ever been a cooler rocknroll song written about brotherly love than "Acquiesce," you ask? The answer is no, by the way. Maybe it's just words - and a lot of songs are – but the words can take you wherever you want to go, can't they?

Oasis was on hiatus (i.e. "I hate us") for about 16 years. Noel had his High Flying Birds and Liam had Beady Eye. They each knew – we ALL knew - that there could be no Oasis without both Liam and Noel. To carry on otherwise would just be a self-important display of maximum ego, unconscionable selfishness, and stupidity. Don't look back in anger, kids - but why drive a Dodge Dart when you can tool around in a Champagne Supernova? Apparently, the Brits understand things like class, honor, and respect. It must have to do with their ability to excel at things like fine dining, fashion, proper enunciation, and appropriate usage of the dominant seventh chord.

The lads in the combo are back and are currently on tour. Their first gig since 2009 took place in Cardiff, Wales, on the 4th of July, 2025. They were on top of their game, too. The concert was a joyous occasion on many, many levels. It was absolutely heartwarming to witness the power of their music. Once again, people were feeling supersonic while singing every syllable of every word of every song on the set list at the top of their lungs.









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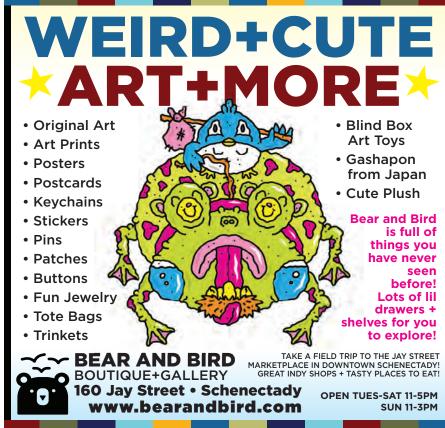
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## BY TONY MASTRIANNI

## "Stand By Me (Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get)"

You have heard Bernard "Pretty" Purdie drum on more albums than you would have guessed. In addition, he released more than 25 albums as a bandleader and acted as Aretha Franklin's musical director. Purdie has appeared on albums by countless legendary artists, like Jazz Hall of Famers Miles Davis, Herbie Mann, King Curtis, and others. He has also recorded with folk legend Tom Rush, as well as R&B/soul icons James Brown, Wilson Pickett, Roberta Flack, and Al Green. And if that is not enough, he has also kicked skins for pop/rock luminaries Cat Stevens, Todd Rundgren, and Steely Dan, among many others!!!

Here we have a debut vinyl reissue of his 1971 album he recorded as bandleader. No surprise, he is surrounded by a stellar cast of musicians including guitarist Cornell Dupree, bassist Chuck Rainey, keyboardist Harold Wheeler, trumpeter Snooky Young, and reedman Seldon Powell. It is a downright funky, eclectic affair, highlighted by the proto-rap tune "Artificialness," featuring Gil Scott-Heron! Comes in the original gatefold jacket art, too. For purists, there is black vinyl. REAL GONE also issues a limited 75 copies on colored wax and a website bundle with both black and quasar editions. The vinyl has been out of print

and unavailable. This deluxe package includes an OBI side strip, gatefold album jacket with one pocket, original album artwork, printed inner sleeve, original record labels, and Black vinyl.

On a sidenote (speaking of Gil Scott-Heron), his legendary "Winter In America" with Brian Jackson is being reissued this summer by Culture Factory Records! This is the fifth studio album by American jazz vocalist Gil Scott-Heron and keyboardist Brian Jackson, released in 1974. The album is produced in a stripped-down fashion, relying on traditional African and R&B sounds. The subject matter deals with the African-American community and inner city in the 1970s. Gil Scott-Heron's most "righteous and provocative."

#### Fear Factory: "Concrete"

For all you metal aficionados and collectors, this 2002 album was the last of L.A. band Fear Factory's amazing run of albums for Roadrunner Records, but it was actually the first. (??) You can read the two sets of liner notes that accompany the package. Briefly, prior to signing with Roadrunner, Fear Factory recorded an entire 1990 album with producer Ross Robinson. The band and Robinson had a falling out, but ironically, it was a cassette recording of that album that got them signed to Roadrunner. Once Fear Factory blew up with the release of 1995's "Demanufacture," Roadrunner acquired

the rights to the album from Robinson. while rockers like Keith Emerson (of They waited to release it until 2002, when the band went on hiatus and left the label. But more interesting than the story behind the music is the music itself. For Fear Factory fans, "Concrete" is an absolute treasure trove. Half of the songs are new, while the other half showed up in rerecorded form on their debut album, "Soul of a New Machine" (and especially sharp-eared Fear Factory fans will notice bits and pieces of the new songs that showed up on subsequent albums). Above all, though, "Concrete" sets it in stone that very early on, Fear Factory had perfected the heavy verse-melodic chorus formula imitated by so many nu-metal bands to come. For its first-ever LP release, RE-AL GONE has remastered this magnif- hit with this album, 1968's "Music to icent album for its pressing in gun metal grey vinyl. An essential piece of the Fear Factory legacy!

### **Gershon Kingsley: "Music To** Moog By"

And people mistakenly thought Lothar And The Hand People invented the Moog! It was Bob Moog's invention of the analog Moog synthesizer that ignited an explosion of creativity across the music spectrum. On the classical side, there was Isao Tomita and Wendy Carlos. On the more avant-garde side, such artists as Mort Garson and Craig Leon used the new technology to explore the limits of sound production, ed to 900 copies.

The Nice and ELP fame) incorporated the technology into their music. And, of course, there was also a silly pop side to the synth mania, or "moogsploitation" as some wags put it; albums by The Moog Machine, The Happy Moog, and other similarly-titled acts provide good examples of that. But the one man straddling all these camps was Gershon Kingsley. Kingsley studied with John Cage before making a pair of groundbreaking albums with fellow electronic music pioneer Jean-Jacques Perry (their "Baroque Hoedown" was the theme for the Main Street Electrical Parade attractions in Walt Disney theme parks). Kingsley then embarked on a solo career and scored an instant Moog By," and its signature track, "Pop Corn." "Popcorn" (one word) became an international smash for Hot Butter four years later, but "Music to Moog By" also caught consumer ears with its blend of originals, classical, and versions of Beatles tunes (though you will have to excuse the egregious misspelling of "Paperback Writer" as "Paperback Rider")! Ever in pursuit of pop music's most eccentric manifestations, Real Gone has the exclusive rights to reissue "Music to Moog By" for the first time in the U.S., complete with the eight-page "The Book of Moog" that was inside some original copies. Strawberry with black swirl, pressing limit-



## **Unreleased Recordings 1968-69"**

Saving the best for last, this may be the most exciting release of all. We all know that the '60s San Francisco psychedelic bands were underground because the music they made was so far removed from the pop and rock sounds that came before them. But of all the bands in the scene, Lamb was perhaps the most underground of them all. It wasn't just that their blend of rock, folk, classical, country, blues, and gospel was as hard to classify as any of the era. It was also their vibe. Along with classically trained guitarist and songwriting partner Bob Swanson, Barbara Mauritz's versatile vocals paced material often imbued with a haunting, mystical aura. Yet they could also be earthy and rootsy, occasionally drifting into spacey psychedelia with hints of raga-rock.

Released in the early '70s, Lamb's

Lamb: "An Extension of Now: first two albums, "A Sign of Change" their transition from a more standard and "Cross Between," did indeed offer some of the most intriguing and eclectic music of any San Francisco rock band on the psychedelic scene. However, Lamb's history predated the release of those records by a few years. Unlike many bands of the time who had a bounty of surplus quality tunes, Lamb often taped these in studios and studio-like rehearsal conditions (as well as making some professional tapes of their live performances). Fortunately, many of those tapes survive, including a good number of songs that did not find a place on their LPs, as well as substantially different versions of some that did. The best of these from the late 1960s find release for the first time on "An Extension of Now: Unreleased Recordings 1968-1969." This collection not only rounds out one of San Francisco rock's finest underappreciated acts but also serves as a firstclass document of Lamb as they made

rock outfit to one unlike any other in the region, or indeed anywhere. Available in black vinyl and CD (with extra erage soon. Buy these now before they tracks, limited to 500) releases, it features great, detailed liner notes by Richie Unterberger, drawn from an in- visit your local independent record terview with Bob Swanson (who has also contributed photos and memorabilia from his private archive). Produced by noted Bay Area archivist Alec Palao ... if you are a fan of late-'60s West Coast

psychedelic music. this must-listen!

Look for more "REAL GONE" covare REAL(LY) GONE!

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... till next time



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# Prog Digest Under pressure.

## BY KLYDE KADIDDLEHUMPER

David Bowie song that, to the best of my knowledge, he only performed once live. Why? Because Freddie Mercury and Queen OWNED it. Not as in they had the publishing rights – but like most things Freddie – why would you when he was alive?

The only performance I've ever seen Bowie do of this song was at a Freddie Mercury tribute following his passing. With Annie Freakin' Lenox. Good Lord were it not for Iman, the best looking couple EVER ... but I digress.

This is really about "Grace Under Pressure."

This being Prog Digest – we, of course, have to make mention of, and discuss a bit, the 1984 Rush album. Still prog enough, but leaning a bit new wave, "Grace Under Pressure" was a real fit for ter was heading to Montserrat - George 1984. From "Distant Early Warning" -"There's no swimming in the heavy water – no dancing in the acid rain..." to "Who can face the knowledge that the truth is not the truth?"

As with the vast majority of Rush's lyrics, they were penned by the Professor, Neil Peart. Drummer extraordinaire, voracious reader, and wonderful writer. He you to the real point of the matter. of the dystopian lyrics. He of the beats that kept Rush, well, Rush. Changing time signatures never seemed to bother him or the rest of the band.

Changing with the times, yet somehow always familiar.

A pre-synth work – but still a bridge work – this record does what Rush perhaps does best. Gives you pause to reflect grace? a bit. To maybe think – gods forgive.

Of course, there are biblical references to "Grace Under Pressure." That's not a for discussion here, but interesting to note.

One of the cool things about Rush, and you can seriously hear it in the recordings, is about where they were recorded. Early on – when it was still a pretty rough sound - recordings were done at Toronto Studios, through the seminal "2112." Then to Rockfield Studios, Wales for "A Farewell to Kings" and "Hemispheres." Things got seriously slick and what many of us think of as the quintessential Rush sound for "Permanent Waves," "Moving Pictures," and "Grace Under Pressure" to Le Studio, Quebec. What a place. What a sound. What record-making... so many artists beyond Rush - the Police, David Bowie, the Bee Gees, Cat Stevens, April Wine, Nazareth, Queensryche, and Celine Dion.

Those were the days. Only thing bet-Martin's place – AIR studios.

Locally, way back when, it was Cathedral Sound Studios in Rensselaer. Klyde did some work there over the years in another life. It was a real art to make voiceovers and narrations sound as lush as any band

All this, of course, was simply to get

As time passed and the years caught up, Ernest Hemingway would always define courage as simply "grace under pressure." Calm and controlled demeanor in the face of adversity and stress.

This has become a topic of discussion amongst Klyde and many of his friends.

Whatever happened to style and

Whatever happened to polite public discourse?

Whatever happened to Saturday night?

to Fay Wray?

As Constant Companion would point out, grace under pressure is the line to the ladies' room at most shows. That's why, while many times she is not so fond of the show itself, she really likes prog shows. The line to the ladies' room is so much shorter.

Let old Klyde leave you with this thought as you ponder all things grace under pressure. A dear old, departed friend of mine had a couple of phrases that have stuck with me over the years. First, when asked how she was, her reply was often, "Able to spit blood. <pause>

For that matter, whatever happened Not MINE, of course." Beyond that, this is the most important:

> "The best of us will, ultimately, be judged by how we treat the least of us."

> Certainly, this little column is not going to change you – or your life for that

Perhaps I can make you feel, but I can't make you think.

Until next time. Klyde





# Paul Rapp Capital Region Timekeepers

gion in the '80s and watched MTV, you knew Blotto. Not only were they one of the first bands to be played on MTV, but they were also the first local band to "make it" as real-life rock stars. For those of us aspiring rock stars, Blotto made it seem possible. As we watched their trajectory into stardom and rock 'n roll history, they inspired us and helped pave the way for countless future rock stars from the Capital region. As an aspiring "wannabe" musician, I had started out by learning "Wipe Out" by the Surfaris. Ron Wilson, drummer for the Surfaris, had taken a simple high school marching band cadence, sped it up, and made history. But hearing Lee Harvey Blotto's intro and performance on "Lifeguard," and subsequent performances on "Metal Head" on PYX-106, completely spun me around, because according to Bob Mason, these guys lived right down the road! Blotto made the you come from a musical family? dream seem attainable and real. As an underage punk, I snuck into clubs to see them, eventually growing up enough to actually pay at the door. Suffice it to say, F. Lee Harvey Blotto, aka Paul Rapp, has been an inspiration and influence of mine since I started playing and dreaming. I was happy to run into Paul at a recent Martin Benjamin exhibit at J. Gernon Gallery in Troy, where we were able to catch up, enjoy some photography, and reminisce about Blotto. So please welcome, F. Lee Harvey Blotto, Paul Rapp!

RRX: Welcome, Paul, and thanks for doing this. How did you get your start drumming?

**PR:** I was one of those people who

f you were around the Capital Re- was born into it. One of my earliest recollections is crawling into the kitchen and dragging pots and pans into the living room where I'd hit them with Lincoln Logs and Tinker Toys. In fourth grade, I started taking lessons at school. After a year, the music teacher called my parents and said he'd taught me everything he knew and recommended private lessons. There was a guy in Batavia, an all-around percussionist, whom I took lessons from for a bunch of years. He got me into the Genesee Symphony Orchestra at the age of 12, where I played all kinds of classical percussion. He also sent me to have lessons at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, which was a big time trip. In high school, I was in All-County Band and Area All-State Band for several years. The fact that I was classically trained is obvious from my work with Blotto, right?

**RRX:** Hah, yes! Very obvious. Do

PR: Not really. My Dad played trumpet, and my Mom played bassoon when they were kids. They both were really supportive, though. In 1969, when I was 14, Mom took my brother and me to see Led Zeppelin at Kleining act was an unknown group from Kent, Ohio, called the James Gang! Mom thought they were "interesting young men." It was a little uncomfortable sitting next to Mom while Zep played a 10-minute version of "The Lemon Song."

**RRX:** Wow! Amazing double bill! But "The Lemon Song"? Yeah, now I'm uncomfortable. Do you play any other instruments?

ager, but it didn't stick, mainly I think because I had a cheap and unplayable Kay acoustic guitar. If I'd had an electric, things might have turned out differently.

**RRX:** Maybe if Jimmy Page had played an acoustic Kay! Tell me about with all my cymbals. your first drum set?

vinced my Dad to take me to the Darien Center Fire Department's monthly bingo night. Dad was a volunteer fireman and helped run the games. Incredibly, I won the big jackpot. \$100! This really pissed off the old ladies who played religiously every month and never won. I found a used dark oyster Pearl Ludwig set for \$110 in the Buffalo Evening News want ads and bought it. When I was a senior in high school, I foolishly decided that it wasn't "blingy" enough and traded it in for a Rogers fiberglass kit wrapped with butcher block vinyl. Fugly-ass drums! These were the drums I eventually recorded "Lifeguard" with. But I wish I still had the old Ludwig kit.

have the fiberglass Rogers?

hans Music Hall in Buffalo. The open- After the 1979 sessions at Arabellum, where we recorded our first EP, he told me he loved recording them and if I ever wanted to ditch them, to let him know. In 1980, I went to Drome on Central and got a big Pearl fiberglass set with single-headed toms and this shitty mirror vinyl finish that showed fingerprints terribly, and sold the Rogers to Art. Then I had this weird set with a homemade rack holding electronic pads and roto-toms for a year or Baker and Keith Moon. I really liked

PR: I took guitar lessons as a teen- two, then I got oversized Yamaha Recording Customs, piano black, which I had well into the 2010s. Now I have Gretsch Renown '57s, robin's egg blue and ivory and chrome, utterly beautiful drums (that's them in the photo). Gonna be selling them soon, along

**RRX:** Man, I'm sorry to hear that. PR: When I was 10 or 11, I con-Your Gretsch kit is gorgeous. OK, tell me about your first real gig.

PR: I was friends with some musician guys from Batavia High School, which had a really good music program. They were frustrated with their teacher, who had the jazz ensemble playing standard big band tunes, like Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman stuff. So they started their own big band and invited me to join. They raised money by having a fake raffle (\$1 for a chance to win a color TV. There was no TV.) and bought a bunch of freaky recent big band charts by folks like Don Ellis, Stan Kenton, and Woody Herman. We played a bunch of gigs, including a battle of the bands that we won because there were like 20 RRX: Ugh! Me too! Do you still of us, and we and our friends all voted for us. The power trios didn't stand a **PR:** Art Snay bought the Rogers kit. chance. It was insane. If you haven't heard the "Don Ellis Orchestra Live at the Fillmore," check it out. Crazy music, ridiculous time signatures, analog electronics, psychedelic jazz. Zappa raided the band regularly for players who could play his more difficult stuff.

> RRX: I only know Electric Bath. I will look for the "Live at the Fillmore." Who were some of your first influences?

**PR:** Ringo (of course), then Ginger



busy players, and didn't appreciate simple groove playing 'til I was older.

**RRX:** Who influences your playing now?

**PR:** I don't play anymore, mainly because my hearing is shot. In the early '80s, nobody told us to wear protection, and we're all paying for it now. But I will say the fusion jazz guys like Lenny White and Alphonse Mouzon spun my head around in the '70s. And Clem Burke was a huge influence during my Blotto days. I stole from him shamelessly.

**RRX:** Did you ever play with Clem Burke?

**PR:** Never shared a stage with Clem, never met him. Saw Blondie a couple of times (including Central Park with Rockpile!) and he was mesmerizing.

Swingin' Tiger? Club 86? **PR:** Oh gosh, no idea Saranac. I was reminded cently when the guitarist who's now a writer/edite

**RRX:** That would be an amazing double bill! Blondie and Blotto! Tell me about a favorite performance or recording of yours.

PR: Probably "Goodbye Mister
Bond" from "Combo Akimbo." It's a
fairly complex tune, at least for us, dramatic and almost orchestral. Robbie
Sabino from Chic plays keys. Bowtie
(as Dr. Bow) nails the villainous vocal
delivery. And it was a blast to play live.
Also, the BBC Rock Hour live recording
from the Chance in Poughkeepsie. At
that point (1983), my playing had settled down, and Cheese and I were
deadly together. This reminds me that
I need to get that show up on Spotify!

PR: The nigl
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PR: The nigl

**RRX:** Please do! Best gig?

**PR:** Any of the JB Scott's gigs. Any of the Chance gigs, of which there were over 50! And the first Harvest of Music Festival in 1980. We played after Helen Reddy, and there was an estimated 80,000 people at the Empire State Plaza. It was scary but fun. And then there were a bunch of bar gigs with Johnny Rabb, Eddie Angel, and Cheese back when we all used to drink. The third sets were always outrageous, to the extent I remember them. And of course,

Bambi Manor, a band in which we played songs we weren't allowed to play in other bands. Jeff Strange, Chevy Blotto, and Paul Matolsy. We were kind of like pirates. Very drunk and stupid pirates.

RRX: Worst gig?

**PR:** Probably a gig with my college band, Third Hand. Somehow, we got a gig at a bar in Saranac Lake, and some guys were harassing us, and it very nearly turned into a brawl. After the first set, the bar owner told us to get lost, and he didn't pay us. It made for a long ride home.

**RRX:** What bar was it? The Swingin' Tiger? Club 86?

**PR:** Oh gosh, no idea of the club in Saranac. I was reminded of the gig recently when the guitarist, Frank Doris, who's now a writer/editor for Copper Magazine, wrote about it as his worst gig ever. Mine too! I was particularly bummed because I love the 'Daks.

**RRX:** Do you have any regrets?

**PR:** The night after Lennon was shot, we played the Bottom Line with the Busboys. It was hard for all of us, but we did it. After the gig, the Busboys lead singer grabbed me and said, "I got us backstage for my man Prince at the Ritz. C'mon!" I turned him down. What an idiot!

**RRX:** I'm so sorry. Anything else you'd like to add?

**PR:** I'm often told by local musicians (like, for example, you!) that Blotto inspired them to carry on back in the day. People saw us on MTV and realized that you could actually make it from Albany. That's profoundly humbling and gratifying, and it reminds me of how very lucky I was to hook up with those guys. We had a very special thing, and that continues to this day.

**RRX:** I couldn't agree more. Thanks again, Paul.







now Delivers More Than the

I met Dave working on custom merch orders for my WAMM group, then quickly figured out he's holding down the low end for Albany-based rock band Hard Luck Souls. These guys really deliver the goods when it comes to hard-hitting beats and guitars with just the right amount of grunge and squeal. As luck would have it, I was able to score a preview listen of their latest single, "Going Out," and this interview.

**RRX:** What got you started in the merch-making business?

**DS:** Actually, it was the Hard Luck Souls. I wanted a way to sell merch online for my band. We were at shows and would sell out of a certain size. It's hard to capture that sale after someone is gone. And you can't make a sale if you don't have the right sizes. So I said, what if we had an online store? We could at least send them to that, and then they can buy

ard Luck Souls' Dave Smassa- a shirt in whatever size or style they wanted.

> I realized that I had some friends' bands that would benefit. And since the infrastructure's built, it seemed like a no-brainer to start an online merch store. new single, "Going Out." I got a chance to That's where Missed Merch came from.

**RRX:** You made it so easy for me as a customer to set up my merch store. I was really impressed with how you integrated all of those components to make it a seamless system.

**DS:** I appreciate that. Our mission is to provide a service where artists can sell their merch online easily. They don't have to carry any inventory. They don't have to do any of the legwork. They can concentrate on making music. The other part is, I wanted to make it so the artists definitely get the lion's share of the profits. Because nowadays, as you know, it doesn't matter what service you use, it feels like everyone's just ready to take, take, take. So I want to make it so the profit benefits the artist.

**RRX:** I thought the percentage of profits you offered me was very fair. What a great service you are providing to fun. local musicians!

Now, I'd like to ask you about your hear a sneak preview before it's released, and it's fire! It made me want to jump up and down and sing along!

**DS:** It's a little bit of a departure. I feel like the song's a little more punkbased, but it definitely has the elements of our guitar player, Brian Gentile, who always brings it with the Slash-style blues-based hard rock solos.

It's out on July 18th, and we're really excited about it. It was recorded with Tim Lynch at the Recording Company and mastered by Peter Doell.

RRX: The quality shines through on the production side. This is a radio-ready rock anthem in my book. You start with that really tight build where the dynamics are low and the voice is really present. And then by the time you get to the cho-

rus, the audience is ready to join in.

DS: I hope so, cause that would be

RRX: When I heard it, that's the first thing I thought about. I wanted to sing along with you and chant.

**DS:** Yeah! The guitar player in the band, he's always been in kind of punk bands and hard rock bands. So he has a lot of that punk influence, but also, that Slash bluesy style of guitar playing. And the drummer and myself, we both played in a million hardcore bands, you know, back in the day, playing at the QE2, playing at Saratoga Winners, all those kinds of places.

The singer's been in a ton of hard rock bands as well as blues and all that kind of stuff, so he can get real bluesy with his voice, too. That's the spice that makes the sauce, right?

RRX: That's exactly what I was talking about. How'd you guys start playing together?

DS: I had moved away to Boston with



my wife. And we ended up moving back. bands and food trucks, all to raise money It wasn't a day after I moved back and Mark came up, and he's like, hey, you've got to join my new band. So we've been playing together ever since.

**RRX:** It was meant to be! I'm really glad that you're rocking it out in the Capital Region because we need this kind of energy in our scene.

Personally, you do a lot to give back. You've got a festival raising money for two great causes. What's that about?

**DS:** This stemmed out of necessity last year. My son's band needed a place to play. There was a show they were booked for, they were practicing, and the show just wasn't gonna work out. So to support them, we threw a show out on our front yard. We had a great response, it was a fun time, and we raised money for Heart Support.

And so, everybody was like, hey, you're doing that again. Let's make it bigger and better. So that's what we're doing this year. We've got a great lineup of

for Heart Support and Precious Souls.

Precious Souls is a nonprofit that does work to stop child abuse. And Heart Support is a nonprofit that broaches the topic of mental health through music. MissedMerch.com sells apparel for both of those nonprofits. And when we do a non-profit at Miss Merch, the nonprofit gets 100% of the profits.

**RRX:** That's a nice way to bookend this interview. I'm grateful to learn about your work on behalf of your community. You work as a volunteer fireman as well, and I think that's amazing. What can you say to let other people know that this opportunity exists, especially in communities that rely on volunteer support? How do people get involved if they're curious about being a volunteer fire person or first responder?

**DS:** It's just as easy as going down to your local station, knocking on the door, and asking. For example, if you live

they're always looking for volunteers, coming in. We show them the fire trucks, and you can sign up right on their website.

**RRX:** So, you don't have to be able to carry a person out of a burning building? You can use all kinds of volunteers, right?

**DS:** Yeah, we've got a support level volunteer who does work around the firehouse and helps with community events.

Round Lake does a lot of community outreach, and one of my favourite things to do is to go to the Chango Elementary School. We go once a year, and we do fire prevention day. We'll get dressed up in all our gear and go hang out with the kindergarteners so they can see what to expect when they see the firemen all dressed up. We teach them about what to do with different kinds of fires, you know, don't throw water on a grease fire. It's important for your family to have a plan so you know where to meet. How to call 911. All that kind of stuff.

And Round Lake does open house around the Round Lake Fire District, days as well. And the little kids love

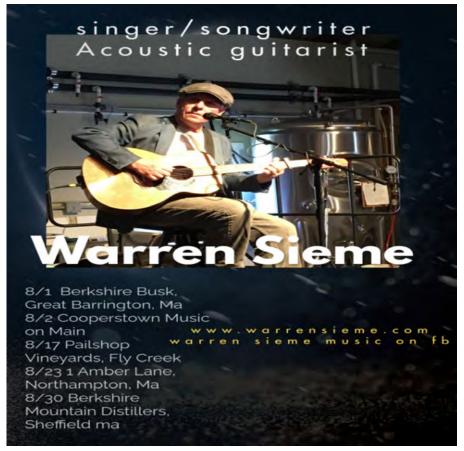
they get to sit up in the seats and take pictures.

I joined because I needed more of a sense of community, and I wanted to get more involved and give back more. So that's why I went down and signed up. A friend of my kid actually was telling me about it. I was like, you know, that's a great idea. So that's what I did. And there's indoor firefighting, there's outdoor, you can be a driver, there's all sorts of different positions.

**RRX:** That's the best part. If you want to get involved, they can find a role that matches your skills, and I think it's amazing and I really thank you for your service. It's been great getting to know

Readers - check out SMAZ FEST -August 30th in Ballston Lake, NY, and visit thehardlucksouls.com for more information on their upcoming events and latest music!









elcome back to your monthly dose of "What is running through Barna's head?" A place where no topic is off the table, as it relates to a life in the performing arts. In the past, I have talked about upcoming shows, personal experiences, artists I respect, and much more. It has been quite a journey to behold. I've deeply enjoyed talking with each of you, and I thank you for your time, feedback, and support.

Before we begin our adventure, I'd like to send out a heartfelt thank you to everyone who took the time to consume last month's article in regards to moving away from pursuing a full-time career as a live performer. This month's contribution is a follow-up to that piece. Your support, encouragement, and kindness

mean the world to me. It's nice to know these musings are having a positive effect on those in our Capital Region community and beyond. I'd also like to thank Art Fredette and his entire team for embracing what I have to offer and allowing me to be a part of the Xperience family. It's been a privilege to work with Xperience and have the platform to present these articles. I look forward to many more years of sharing.

Now ... let's talk about something many of us fear ... Turning 50.

Coming up in August, the 23rd to be specific, this old dog right here will reach a milestone. I never believed I had a shot at bearing witness to this, but I'm going to be the big 5-0 ... WOW ... Yes, folks, I'm going to be 50 years old this summer.

But, does that mean I'm old? That I'm done trying new things? Done exploring? Done questioning everything? That I'm no longer relevant to the performing arts scene? On the contrary, the journey is just beginning. There is no more powerful resource than experience. This comes from living a life consistently engaged in trying new things and collecting the lessons present within each unique situation. For me, 50 is a rite of passage earned through constant self evaluation, embracing outside criticism, dissecting our failures, celebrating successes, gaining new friends, terminating old relationships, watching those we love pass on to the next realm, witnessing new lives being born, teaching the lessons we have learned to those in need, being open to

learning new lessons ourselves, and overall just having the motivation to keep moving forward. In a sense, turning 50 is a badge of honor that many will never make it far enough to receive. Through the grace of God, I have been able to make it this far, and I have no plans on wasting this opportunity.

#### So ... What now?

Well, after a year off from full-time live performing, being a learning coach this past year at a local educational institution, spending more time with my incredible daughter, getting back on the basketball court, returning to a life of wellness, repairing some relationships, taking a step back from the hamster wheel to process the previous 26 years of a life on the road and looking at what I've



been able to accomplish to this point, I with others. have come to some meaningful conclusions.

Would you care to know what they are?

Fantastic ... I thought you might ... Let's go.

My life is not an accident. It was designed for me and me alone. The opportunities and talents bestowed upon me come from a higher power, and I will not squander them. However, from this point forward, I will honor them on my terms, not relinquishing my gifts and goals into the hands of anyone other than he who gave them to me.

Age is not a number. It is merely a barometer to measure the amount of space we have occupied while on our journey in this life. Some will use that space to simply exist, while others will embrace the moment to exhaust themselves in pursuit of complete self-actualization. Which one are you?

No one thing is more important than another. All that we do and all that we experience hold equal value in shaping the individual we inevitably shall become. Enjoy each day and do not take everything so seriously. It's not.

Family are those who demonstrate genuine love and compassion towards you. They are those who share an authentic desire to see you obtain success in all facets of life. Not everyone deserves you, and you do not deserve everyone. Some relationships grow, some whither away like a plant without sunlight, some people are meant to be in your life as a business venture, some are meant to be there to pick you up when life pushes you down, some enter in because a higher power believes you possess the nurturing qualities to bring those individuals hope in times of despair, and many just come and go like passing strangers in the grocery store. And you know what? Every one of these scenarios is perfectly fine. We need a variety of personalities in and out of our lives. It helps us to learn about relationships and the value of time spent

You're only as valuable as your mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, and professional health. If you are unwilling to care for yourself, nurture your gifts, explore your potential, or weed out the negative habits that shackle your ability to ascend upwards, then the opportunities you seek will not present themselves. Why? Because you are undeserving of that which you have not earned. The world doesn't owe you ANYTHING. However, you owe this chance at life EVERYTHING.

Well ... I could go on about the conclusions I've reached over the past year, but I'm afraid my article will be too long for

So, I will leave you with this ...

Do not get fixated on age. Rather, embrace the experiences you have collected, put them to good use, and strive to become the person you know in your heart you were always meant to be. Break free of the emotional prison life attempts to incarcerate you within, and go after your goals. Stop sitting around idolizing those who had the courage to pursue what you did not. They are no better than you. Opportunity favors those prepared to receive it. If you have not done the work, then do not expect results.

I'm excited to turn 50 and feel better now than the day I turned 25. My heart is more open to possibility, I'm spiritually healthier, the relationships I keep are genuine, my child inspires me to be a better man with every breath taken, and creatively my professional life is at an alltime high. All this because I had the strength and support in place to take a giant step back and see life through a wider lens.

Was it worth it? YES Warmest Regards,



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## Walter "Monsta" Ryan (cont.)

Continued from Page 7.

to do his vocals, and then we'll put it into production. So far, it's sounding really good. It's gonna be heavy, it's got some new stuff, and we did a couple of the old joints to make them a little fresh or whatever. I'm super stoked on all my bands. I think everybody will like all this stuff that's coming out.

**RRX:** Well, I'm a fan of all of your bands already. How does it feel to have your hands in so many cool projects at the same time?

WR: It's actually really cool because it's been a long time for me (that I've been in multiple bands). I mean, there was a while there where I was just in DRI or I was just in Powerhouse, you know? Then - bang - all of a sudden I moved back to New York and it's like ... hey, do you wanna play drums? Hey, can you play drums? I was like ... alright, let's go!

**RRX:** Let's hit sh\*\*!

WR: Yeah, I'm getting old, but I still feel like I can play. I've had a couple of things that happened to me physically that really messed up my body, from a work accident and also a car accident, but I'm not letting that determe. Because there's something about drumming that just makes me feel good, and I know that it makes other people happy with what I'm doing. So it makes me happy too, man.

To get to go out and see your friends, play shows with everybody, travel, meet new people, and see new killer bands, it's a win-win. I'm enjoying it while I physically still can do it. I don't know how long I got, but I'm trying to get to 20 albums. If these 3 come out, that'll make 17, so that means I need to do one more album with each band before I hang it up. But I wanna keep going until I can't.

**RRX:** That's the way to do it.

**WR:** Every day I wake up is an amazing day; I definitely am blessed, and I thank my man upstairs. I'm super grateful, I have great friends, I have great family, and I have great bandmates.

**RRX:** Any positive messages to leave with the fans?

**WR:** Keep listening to music ... music and food are the two things that really bring people together. Everybody needs to put positivity out there in the world because there's so much BS and negativity already, just keep that sh\*\* away from me!

**RRX:** I agree with you there, man.

# Eddie Angel (cont.)

Continued from Page 35.

with Link Wray. It was a real thrill, and I got to know him. He played in Albany and invited my mother on stage with him and dedicated a song to her!

**RRX:** You're a true road warrior, having played continuously for three years on the road at one point in your career. You have previously said it was a blast, but was it also a blur? When you finally got off the road that time, was adjusting to domestic life hard?

**EA:** I've been touring with Los Straitjackets since 1995 and spent the first three years in the van. I would be gone three to six weeks at a time. It was a blast, and it is a blur. I used to say if I won the lottery, I would still continue touring. I felt like I was on a mission; I would've done it for free, I think. Now it feels like work. The playing is still fun, but the travel can be grueling. As I write this, I'm on an eight-hour flight from Brussels to NYC. Not fun. I was lucky I married someone who wanted me to be a musician and was totally supportive.















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