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This interview was set up through a conference line, as many interviews are, to protect the privacy of the artist. I call the number, enter the code, and it tells me I am the only one on the line. Then I am placed on hold while I wait for Adam Deitch to join, and this is the music that starts playing: “Never gonna give you up, never gonna let you down, never gonna run around and desert you.” After a minute of this, I’m starting to think that I just got Rickrolled by Lettuce! Thankfully, I hear Deitch chime in with ...

AD: Hey, what’s up? Who’s this?

RRX: It’s Rob Smittix.

AD: Rob, how you doing?

RRX: Good. Hey, nice to meet you. I was a little confused by the conference call hold music. I thought I just got Rickrolled. Rick Astley was the hold music.

AD: Oh, wow! (Sings) Never gonna give you up ...

RRX: I thought you got me there for a second.

AD: (Laughs) Ain’t nothing wrong with a little bit of Rick Astley here and there, you know?

RRX: That’s right. So how are you doing, man?

AD: Good, good.

RRX: We’re very excited to have you and the band coming to Albany on January 28th to Empire Live for the Lettuce Cook World Tour.

AD: Yes, sir.

RRX: You’ve got the brand new album out, “Cook,” and I see the album actually comes along with a cookbook or recipes?

AD: Yeah, the vinyl does, and it’s online. It’s all our family recipes, and we’re just encouraging our music community and our fans to cook and create recipes. We hope that bands and musicians partner with restaurants and create a whole thing around this because music and food go well together.

RRX: They do. And also ... I’ve always thought that the things that really bring people together are music and food, and you’re doing both.

AD: Yeah, that’s the vibe.

RRX: Speaking about food and music, I often wonder what bands like to eat while they’re on the road. I’ve personally witnessed Slayer ... the whole band eating Roy Rogers at 3 a.m. on the New York State Thruway, and I was like, man ... I wouldn’t eat that s*** because I know it’s not fresh.

AD: Oh, we’ve done that, we’ve

been there. It’s food, though. So many musicians just neglect their body because they’re starving, you know? You try to go to bed after the gig, you can’t sleep because now you’re hungry, it’s 2 a.m. So you just wanna order some comfort to get you out, and that starts a lot of bad habits. It’s like ... hopefully restaurants will say ... oh, my favorite band is in Cleveland today or in Albany, let me bring them a plate to sound check. Let me bring them a couple things to eat, you know? That’ll make the show better. That’s what I’m hoping happens from all this. If you’re a chef and your favorite band is playing in your city, maybe reach out and say, hey, get us 5 tickets and we’ll bring you a meal. That kind of stuff, there needs to be more of that.

RRX: There certainly does. My dad was security at Woodstock ‘94, guarding Graham Nash’s bus, and he invites my dad onto the bus and makes him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Then he tells him this is the way of the road, man. This stuff is what we live on.

AD: (Laughs) Yeah, that has zero nutrients, but you know? It is what people live on.

RRX: Yeah, there just needs to be a



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better setup for touring bands so they don't have to rely on PB&J and rest stop food. I'm hoping that your game plan works out and that a chef from every city you visit cooks for you. Especially in Albany, man. We've got a lot of really good places right in the area where you're playing.

AD: Great, yeah, food recs are recommended, you know?

RRX: Absolutely. So how's things with the band right now? I know you got the new album out, but what else is going on?

AD: We just did this thing called House of Lett in Denver, and it was incredible. We set up our instruments in a recording studio that's sort of like a small room that holds about 80 people. 80 people per set, we did six sets. It was a really small, intimate thing with cameras, and we recorded everything. It went really well, and now

we're just on a break 'til January.

RRX: That's rad.

AD: I'm glad we did this because we're in the age of content. A lot of times, people discover music by seeing a cool video, and we just didn't have a lot of those. We had some concert stuff, but nothing like this, so we're pretty excited about that, and it took a lot of work. It was a lot of stress, but we pulled it off, and thanks to all our fans that made it possible. Now we're gonna have a bunch of really cool videos and get ready for 2026!

RRX: That's right. I saw that you did production stuff too. I saw some hip hop stuff that you were involved with, and that's right up my alley.

AD: Yeah, we do a lot with hip hop, and I'm very thankful to be involved in that community. One of the few jam bands that tour with GZA from Wu-Tang Clan and stuff like that.

RRX: That's dope!

AD: It's all under soul music, hip hop, funk, all of it!

RRX: Exactly.

AD: Black American music with African roots, and that's what we're focused on.

RRX: Well, Lettuce is definitely a band that has the funk. I was at the taco place next door earlier getting tacos, and I was telling the owner that I'd be talking to you, and he was like ... I love Lettuce, they're funk. So that's one of the things that really stand out about your band.

AD: Right on. Yeah, a lot of people think because we're on a certain scene that we play a different kind of music, but once people hear us, they realize that it's raw funk with a hip hop edge.

RRX: Yeah, every song is danceable, and it keeps the people moving. So again, really excited to have you come to town. Is there anything that

you would say to people to encourage them to come on out?

AD: We love coming to Albany; come hear these new tunes from the new album. We're fired up, we got all this new stuff to work out. So come feel this new album. We'll, of course, play some of the classics also. It's gonna be a sweaty dance party! Wear comfortable shoes and bring some friends to come dance and eat well before the gig.

RRX: That's right.

AD: And drink water.

RRX: And buy merch.

AD: Yeah, people wanna buy the vinyl that really does help us. We're a completely independent band with no record label or any of that stuff. We put out our own albums, and every time someone buys a record, that goes straight to us. That really keeps us going. I just wanna thank everybody in Albany for supporting Lettuce.

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BY CHRIS BUSONE

Chris Busone. Photo provided.

Auld Lang Zany Throughout my illustrious musical career (so, so much luster), I have played many gigs on many special occasions: birthdays, holidays, one wedding, and the subsequent divorce party, which was a wildly festive affair. They all had their own unique celebratory ups and downs. But by far the most intrepid waters there were to navigate, both musically and in terms of crowd sway, were always New Year's Eve gigs.

Yes, that end-of-year auld lang zany time, when all our past indiscretions and missteps in the last 365 days and nights are forgotten (365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes on a leap year). A magical time when our Gregorian slate is wiped clean, and the sweet smell of fresh starts permeates the midnight air. So, I thought that with the onset of the recent new year, we would take an inebriated journey through the passages of the past four or five decades' worth of New Year's eves, and ring in this new

year with a serving of nostalgic remembrances of the ghosts of New Year's Eve gigs past, topped with a healthy dollop of snark-casm. (Ahhh, Baby New Year, thou art a fickle little tot ...)

Now I've had many, many, great New Year's experiences through the years, but the bad ones are exceedingly more humorous, so let's concentrate on them. I'm sure most of you have heard it referred to as "amateur night" at some point, and that is an aspect of the occasion that can weigh heavy on the head that wears the musical New Year's crown.

I have shown up early to New Year's Eve gigs over the years to set up (set up, mind you, we're talking 7 pm) and, with amp and guitar in hand, had to hula dance around played-out, part-time partiers who had not even made it to the start of the evening before their pickled departure. For them, the midnight ball drop will only appear when they tell the story of their night's

exploits in exaggerated terms to those who did not witness their early hour self-inflicted expulsion from the night's merriment.

My first actual paying gig (at 17) was a New Year's Eve party at a VFW Post, and I'm here to tell you, those veterans of foreign wars knew how to throw a bash. There were drinks all around to be sure, and loads and loads of fun with great people who treated us like family. At my vulnerable age, I was left with the impression that all future New Year's gigs - hell, all gigs in general - would follow this format. Nope.

As the years and New Years flowed by, there were changes in the year-end celebration that mirrored the changes in societal mores and norms. During the years of excess, there was a stretch when bars/clubs would obtain an "all-night license" (I'm not even sure that's legal anymore). So, we would either play all night from 10 pm - 6 am in one club, or play from 10 pm - 2 am in the first club, then tear it down and set it

up at a second location, and play from 3 am - 7 am. Now, any good criminologist will tell you the hazards of being taken to a secondary location, and your plummeting odds of survival should that unfortunate happenstance occur. But we happily submitted ourselves to double jeopardy in those days, partially due to the folly of youth, but also because the promise of huge financial rewards at the end of the evening superseded any potential musical mortal danger we may encounter.

One year in particular, we entered the secondary venue around 2:30 am, where we had signed on to play the late, late, early shift, only to find a sudsy supply of beer on the floorboards, bodies strewn about like the broken dreams of losing tickets at the track, while cocktail-fueled chaos abounded. The stout-hearted survivors splashed and shimmied their way about the soggy, saturated dance floor, in spite of the fact that there was no music playing. It was like the first 20 minutes of "Saving

Private Ryan” in there. (If you haven’t seen it by the way, oh my God, I don’t want to give anything away, but Spielberg does it again.)

At the other end of the New Year’s spectrum, cities and municipalities have their own sanctioned “First Night” celebrations on New Year’s Eve, in which bands are hired to play designated well-lit venues at a low, respectable volume (he says, while wagging a finger of warning). It’s all very upright, uptight, and family-friendly, which has absolutely nothing to do with New Year’s Eve or Rock & Roll. In addition, they are traditionally dry events, which has even less to do with New Year’s Eve and Rock & Roll ... or me, for that matter. But I did play one, one year, and upon learning of the boozeless nature of the event, myself and some members of the other band on the bill (a local rockabilly giant who shall remain nameless) went to a gas station and got a 2-liter bottle of Saratoga water, poured it out in the parking lot, and filled it with vodka. I can’t describe to you how much that enhanced the experience. (This, of course, was prior to everyone’s obsession with staying hydrated.)

And so, year after year, the thrust and parry continued until the money lessened, the clubs got fewer, and the crowds got surlier. At its staggering height, I had an astoundingly inebriated fellow come up on stage one New Year’s evening and tell me if we didn’t play “We Built This City” by Jefferson Starship that none of us would leave the building alive. As I told him where he could go and the most direct route on which to get there, he was abruptly escorted from the premises by two bouncers who may have actually been cement trucks in tee-shirts by the looks of them. Also, I think I’d rather risk death than play that tune.

But ultimately, for me, incidents like that one equated to the career equivalent of the swallows returning to

Capistrano. They signified an end and a new beginning. A renewal and a homecoming of sorts, inasmuch as I decided I would stay home on New Year’s Eve. I’d like to think that it was because I had such good memories of years gone by that I couldn’t reconcile them with the current state of affairs. More likely, it was because I was simply getting older, and playing until 7 am is a young man’s game.

Whatever the reason, I happily threw in the metaphorical towel some years back and passed the torch on to the next generation. It was now up to them to fight off the masses, play through to the wee wee hours of the morning, and somehow decide what song to play right after the ball drops; a true musical conundrum, trying to find just the right tune for ringing-in purposes. Clapton’s “After Midnight” always seemed a little too on-the-nose for me, and I can’t stress this enough - F**K Auld Lang Syne!

I won’t lie, not playing on New Year’s Eve was an adjustment. First of all, did you guys know that Dick Clark is dead?? Yea, gone for a while now. Crazy. (But seriously, if you’re bored with the cheesy NYE network celebrations, there’s always “Saving Private Ryan.” It’s on, like, every streaming platform.)

The good news is, now I get to ring in the new year by kissing my beautiful wife, which is better than all the gigs on any night. And, knowing that there are bands out there carrying the musical torch on December 31st and deep into the next day does my heart good. Go get ‘em, you guys. Play your hearts out all night and all morning, and just in case, learn that Starship song, ‘cause that guy may still be out there, and you’re gonna wanna be able to pull that one out of the hat as you count down the seconds to midnight, 4..3..2.. (I did a thing there).

Happy New Year!



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Mental Weather

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Mental Weather

A band is a beloved thing, an expression of that which can find no words but only notes and beats and sonic moxie. Mental Weather is the progeny of members of popular area bands Horse Grave and Ice Queen, and they put out their own groove.

The band is drummer Dylan Baldwin-Delaney, bassist Jay Vandervoort, guitarist Chris Carpentier and vocalist Tyler Cody.

RRX: You just had your first show three months ago, right?

CC: I believe it was three months ago, it was August 22nd. It was a benefit show, a memorial show for our friend Sarah at No Fun.

RRX: That was your first show?

CC: That was our very first show, yes.

Kaiser: I was also pretty close with Sarah. We were trying to decide when we wanted our first show to be, and we were offered a few dates, and that was one of them. It felt really fitting for me because

our band is called Mental Weather, which is another way to phrase mental health. And it felt appropriate for me because a lot of what me and Sarah talked about was our struggles with mental health.

RRX: That was where Mental Weather came from?

TC: Not necessarily. I was reading a book. It was the way that someone was describing mental health. It really resonated because I was having a hard time naming the band.

RRX: There are former members of Horse Grave and Ice Queen in the band. Is that correct?

CC: Current members, but yes. Horse Grave's playing the Tune Low Die Slow Ho Ho! show at Empire Live, and Ice Queen just played a Rock the Pantry benefit at the Hangar for Oakwood Community Center, so both bands are alive and well and doing great. Hopefully, we get a show together, definitely double duty.

RRX: OK, so you're in a new band

while you are in those other bands. Obviously, you want something out of this, something new, or else you would just stay in your other bands, respectively. What are you looking to expand into?

JV: Tyler and I were sitting out in front of one of our favorite local establishments, and Tyler wanted to start a band, kind of in the vein of the Plasmatics or Amyl and the Sniffers, kind of like a little punky kind of rock. And I said, "I can get a hold of people right now. We can see if we can start a band." So my son Devin, who plays drums in Ice Queen, I contacted him and he was in right away. He practiced with us the first time, but it was too much with his schedule. So then we got Dylan. But then I called Carp [Chris Carpentier], and he was in. So within five minutes, we had a band, going more in, like, the punk kind of vibe as opposed to more of the metal stuff that Horse Grave and Ice Queen do.

DBD: In Horse Grave, I play bass,

and I play drums in Mental Weather, so it was nice to hop back on the kit for something really fun and energetic with some friends; take a different turn than the more number-intensive stuff of Horse Grave grooviness.

RRX: It's been three months, and I know that's not a lot of time at all, but have you guys played since then?

CC: We've had four shows so far, and we have two more on the books. We played 8/22, and we played 9/11. We've played back-to-back shows, Il Bordello and Desperate Annie's. We had November 29th at No Fun - a show I put together with some upstate local bands. It was also a food drive for Albany Food Not Bombs, and then we had another show at Desperate Annie's for Super Dark Monday on December 15th with Age of Pain and one other band to be announced.

RRX: Are you guys looking to put something out, to put some songs together? How's that going?

JV: My bandmate, Ice Queen's Steve Hammond, does a lot of recording and producing stuff for other bands, and Ice Queen recorded right at our practice space in the Oakwood Community Center, so we'll talk to Steve when we're ready. We're probably gonna record with Steve over there. Right now we have seven songs; probably like to get a few more down before recording anything.

RRX: Tell me a little bit about your fans. You know, nobody ever asks that question, yet it is all about the fans.

TC: I feel like a lot of our fans are people that we just know, 'cause all of us are pretty regular. We go to a lot of shows, especially at No Fun. Chris is a part-owner. We're all people who spend a lot of time in No Fun. Chris has Wizard Burger. Both Jay and Dylan are in two different bands, so I feel like our fans are people that are our friends, but also people that are around the places we hang out, especially No Fun.

JV: I mean, we're big members of the local music scene, community, and everything. So when word got out that all of us were starting a band, people were excited because "We all know you." A lot of friends and everything. It's been fun. We played at that basement show in Albany, so there were a lot of people who had never heard us before, and we played in front of people and got some new fans. And playing up at Desperate Annie: Saratoga, people that don't always come down to Troy. We played in front of some new fans up there, too. I like spreading out and

playing in front of different crowds and stuff.

TC: I know this is probably really vulnerable for me to say, but I mean, just because people know who we are as, like, people and friends, I didn't really expect people to automatically like what we do. I'm grateful for every time someone gives me a compliment about our playing our set. It's one of those things where I'd like to think people would be, like, into it, but it's always great to hear people's feedback. I'm always grateful when a new person comes up to me at a show and likes what we're doing.

DBD: I think if I had to describe at least the prototypical Mental Weather fan that we're going for: queer. We're a pretty, pretty gay and trans-friendly band. Personally, I'm married to a trans dude, lots of transness and queerness going around over here, and usually in the crowds that we play to. We have a young crowd, early twenties.

CC: I feel like the early twenties seem to be maybe the crowd and the scene that we get booked for, but it's also our crowd. It's a very diverse young crowd. We have fun, but the content has a much more serious message. But we don't take ourselves too seriously. I think everyone's mad in their own rights and respects towards other things, but we're just a punk band playing fun punk music, and it's got an edge to it, and it's got a message.

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CHOICES

BY CHARLA EARNEY

Are we the sum of the choices we make? People talk about choice all the time, but usually not in the way that matters. What is it, why do we have it, and what the hell are we supposed to do with it once it shows up at our door like an uninvited Amazon package? The Hebrews seeded the concept. Today, English uses “choice” both as a noun and an adjective. As a noun: the act of choosing. As an adjective: “of very fine quality.” (Ironically, not all choices are choice choices.) In my experience, the struggle with choice is universal. For years now, I have been careful about what I let into my brain. Curating my media diet. I’m deliberate with my choices. I grew up long before our current dopamine drip of screens and scrolling. I realized “my” overwhelm isn’t a personal flaw — it’s too many damn choices! Sometimes I go home just to recover from the peanut butter aisle. If only choice were reduced to routine, what would “I” choose? That’s exactly what I wanted to learn from Mark. When the time came to choose his routine, what did he choose?

I first met Mark Richardson at the Rustic Barn on a warm New York summer night. He introduced himself out on the lanai — the smoking area out back. The first thing I noticed was his approach: he looked me right in the eye, handshake firm but gentle, the kind a teacher gives when he’s about to tell you to “use your inside voice.” He

seemed quietly amused by me. I was amused by him. My first impression? “This one’s grounded. A good one.” And I love being right. Over the next few months, I heard him play at open mic nights. He held his guitar like it was an extension of himself. His playing was liquid — the clean strums, the chords; the subtle touches guitarists use to coax emotion out of a single string. It all moved through him from him. When he finally sang, it felt like a reveal. Vocals to back up the playing? Yes, please. I was hooked. What I learned from talking with him was simple: he was recently retired and looking to play music with friends. But, like retired people always discover, life gets busier — who knew? He still had to find venues, coordinate schedules, and navigate the time demands of other musicians who work full-time jobs, have families, and juggle responsibilities like flaming swords. (Shout out to all the state workers moonshading as rock stars.) Mark’s aim was true. Music is always the way. And I will support that!

The Birth of NOTA Band: A Brilliant Solution Disguised as a Joke.

Last month, Mark invited me to Ophelia’s because he’d started something called NOTA Band. I saw the flyer and thought, “Is this a joke? A double negative? A philosophical riddle?” It turns out — kind of. Pulling together a consistent band is hard. Musicians

have jobs, families, obligations, and occasionally they’d like to sleep. Mark wanted to play with his friends, but commitment means rehearsals, schedules, and expectations — and nothing kills joy faster than turning it into homework. Mark did what sensible men with physics degrees do:

He solved the problem.

He created NOTA Band, short for “Not A Band.” Philosophy: It is not a band.

Reality: It’s the show you’ve never been to, every time. I am partial to the merry-go-round of various artists who pop by when I go to venues. It’s an open invitation — an “all call” to local musicians and friends:

“Come play!”

If you don’t want to play, come enjoy the people who do. No pressure. No obligation. No “sorry guys, I can’t rehearse Thursday — my kid has soccer.” Just play for the fun of it.

Just joy.

Every night is different. You get firsthand a casual jam session. A new original in real time — which is basically sex for the soul. Pure gems that ended up on my playlist, and I have discovered musicians I would never have found otherwise. The quality of artists who show up is stunning — like band camp, but without the trauma of too many notes crammed into one brain. When a tall, older gentleman walks in with a seasoned sway and lays out a folder of harmonicas that are

well-used and well-tended, I got a little excited. I have heard and seen a range of players, from saxophone and flute, to organ and ivory bones that blew me away, and guitar solos that simply healed my soul. These musicians play because they want to. And you feel it. And Mark? He doesn’t just “know his way around the guitar.” This man knows his tunes. Why does NOTA Band Matter?

NOTA Band isn’t a band. It’s a choice — a deliberate one.

A choice to play instead of pressure.

A choice to gather instead of “grind”.

A choice to create community instead of “brand identity.”

A choice to let music simply be music.

In a world drowning in options — from peanut butter to life paths — Mark carved out something rare: a space where the only choice you need to make is whether you want to listen, play, or laugh at the absurdity of it all. And if you’re lucky? You might get to hear him play. And then you’ll understand exactly why this choice matters. Now? I look for NOTA Band and schedule them in whenever I can. I have a good feeling this is just the beginning for Mark and NOTA. I look forward to seeing how this playground grows and develops. I know I am aiming to be there at any step I can. If we are the sum of our choices, then I will choose to follow NOTA. The prediction is, it’s gonna get really good. Buckle up.

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Three Questions with Emily Wolfe

BY ROB SKANE

Texas-based guitarist Emily Wolfe has been releasing albums since 2012, four of them to be exact. And you would be wise to own them all. Her guitar work is absolutely blazing, and her songs are great. Epiphone guitars has even released an Emily Wolfe signature model Sheraton guitar - the "White Wolfe" Sheraton. Look for Emily at emilywolfemusic.com. Here are three questions with Emily Wolfe:

RRX: What was the moment that

made you pick up a guitar and never put it down?

EW: When I first saw a guitar in person, I was five years old. I saw it at a thrift store and begged my mom to get it for me because it was the coolest thing I had ever seen. It was like seeing something I didn't know I needed yet. After my first guitar teacher told me I wasn't very good, I put it down and learned drums instead. A few years later, my family moved to Texas, and that guitar was always waiting

in the corner of my bedroom. I still remember the day I sat on the floor of my bedroom in a brand new city, feeling lonely and out of place. I thought, maybe this will make me feel better. So I picked it back up, and I haven't put it down since.

RRX: If you could go back and tell your younger self one thing about playing guitar, what would you say?

EW: Take piano lessons. That's where music starts. I could have saved myself a lot of time if I had learned more theory

on piano first. But, I'm not sure I'd play the same way if I hadn't just dove right into guitar.

RRX: When you're not onstage or recording, what kind of stuff do you play when no one's listening?

EW: I like to listen to music with saxophone in it, and try to transcribe sax licks on guitar. It's hard, but a really fun challenge.



Emily Wolfe. Photo by Brittany Durdin


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The Problem With Saying “Support Local Music”

BY JASON IRWIN

There’s a sign I’ve seen in a lot of rooms over the years. Sometimes it’s taped crookedly behind the bar, or printed on a flyer near the door. You’ve seen the graphic online. It usually says the same thing: “Support local music.” I got reminded of what that really means recently. I was playing a solo acoustic show at Sammy Cohen’s in Schaghticoke — a great restaurant and bar, and a strong supporter of the music scene. The place was busy, not many people I knew, but the crowd was receptive. Then — in came my “people.” Local musician Alex Riddell rolled in despite his packed schedule. A couple of minutes later, my friend Bryan, aka Kuntry Strong from BoonDock Kingz, showed up; he’s been in the studio recording like a madman lately. These guys are working artists, yet they found time to show some love to a fellow musician — totally unexpected, totally awesome. I regretfully missed my stepdaughter’s winter chorus concert to play that show. And although I want to return the favor and attend Alex’s next performance, it conflicts with my other stepdaughter’s basketball game that night. It’s tough. I hope he understands.

The next night, I was at Falcons Brewhouse in Hudson Falls — another great venue. The show was going pretty well, with attendees coming and going. Then my friends Sandy and Mike came in. They come to a lot of my shows, and seeing them lifted my spirits — a morale boost, like “backup” in a way. They sat by the fireplace, had dinner and drinks, and enjoyed the music. Later, with about 20 minutes left, another favorite couple

— Laura and Jim — showed up after attending another event. They didn’t have to do that. Even a few minutes, a drink, and some nachos make a huge difference. These moments matter. I can’t thank them enough.

I’ve said the phrase “support local music” countless times. I’ve shared it online, printed it on things, and added it to posts. For a long time, I didn’t ask what I actually meant. Going to shows? Spending money? Posting online? Or just being on the right side of the conversation? The problem isn’t the idea. It’s that the phrase has become a slogan instead of an action — a catch-all that lets us feel like we’ve done our part without being specific about what that part is. Liking music is easy. Support is harder. Real support usually costs something: time, money, comfort. Sometimes all three. It means leaving the house when it would be easier not to. Standing in a half-full room and wondering if more people will show up. Paying a cover even if you only catch part of the set. None of that fits neatly on a sign.

The first thing people say is that they’re busy — and they’re right. Jobs, families, second jobs, early mornings — life fills up fast. Not everyone has the energy to stand in a dark room on a Tuesday night. That’s real. Support doesn’t have to mean being everywhere. No one is keeping score. Sometimes it’s picking one night instead of five. Sometimes it’s showing up early and leaving early. Sometimes it’s just being there long enough for a band (or the venue staff) to see someone in the crowd.

Money is another reason people hesitate. Covers add up. Drinks are expensive.

Gas isn’t free. The idea that supporting music means constantly spending money you don’t have is unrealistic — and unfair. But support doesn’t always mean spending more. Paying the cover, enjoying a drink or two to support the venue, and finding small ways to show the band you’re there — buying a shirt, leaving a tip, or just being present — all make a difference. If you’re on a tight budget, be economical. Ten dollars every once in a while can do more than endless encouragement that never leaves the house.

Musicians often have the hardest time showing up. On top of other pressures, they have gigs, rehearsals, studio work, and obligations. On a rare night off, they might need a break, time with family, or have other work to do. The people most invested in the scene are often the least able to participate — ironic, but human. The irony continues here, as some venues tend to book only musicians who frequent their establishment, which isn’t always possible if you’re playing a lot yourself. That should show that you’re in demand, but I get it. Every place and person is different. You do what you can.

A lot of people debate whether to spend time and money on national acts or local ones. Big shows are fun. These are our favorite artists. There’s nothing wrong with that. But every national act was a local act once, playing to small rooms, hoping someone would show up. Scenes don’t magically produce talent — they grow it slowly, with imperfect nights and small crowds. Supporting local music doesn’t mean skipping big shows — it means remembering where artists started. Someday, the guy you yelled “Free

Bird” at while he was playing at a local pizza joint could be performing at the Super Bowl halftime show. That would be a fun story to tell your buddies.

Online support is great. Shares, comments, messages — they all help. But bands can’t load gear into a comment section, and venues can’t keep the lights on with likes. At some point, support has to move from the screen into the room. A show doesn’t have to be packed to matter. Five people or fifty — it all matters.

None of this is about guilt. No one owes the local music scene their time or money. I’ve skipped shows or posted instead of participating. I have a full gig schedule, often a bittersweet situation. This isn’t a lecture — it’s me admitting I’m part of the same mess. Hopefully, writing about the scene in newspapers and playing local music on the radio counts as support, even if I miss some shows. And I know that sometimes people just aren’t in a position to go out — money, transportation, health, or countless other reasons. Even if you can’t be there in person, please continue to show any love you can. It’s always appreciated.

Supporting local music isn’t about perfection or proving devotion. It’s about small, human choices, made when you can. Not every night. Not every show. Just often enough to keep things moving. The phrase “support local music” isn’t a bad phrase at all. It’s an awesome one. Maybe what it stands for just needs a little more follow-through.

Kim13

BY ROB SMITTIX

Kim13. Photo provided.

R **RRX:** First off, I thought it was a great idea to chat because 1313 Mockingbird Lane will be a recipient of a 2026 Listen Up Hero Award!

K13: Yeah, nobody told me. If I didn't see it on Facebook, I wouldn't have known, but a couple of other people told me the same thing.

RRX: Oh, that's a wild way to find out. And you work at Last Vestige, right?

K13: Yes, I'm not hard to find, people.

RRX: I'm surprised that Jim (Furlong) didn't say anything to you. He's also up for a hero award.

K13: Yeah, well, there's two different things, aren't there?

RRX: Yeah, so there's the Hero Award night, which is February 21st, and then the actual award ceremony for the year is the next day on the 22nd. It's a two-day event.

K13: Right, but he was up for some other award too, I thought.

RRX: Oh yeah, that's right. Shortly after we announced our Hero Class,

they also announced he's up for an Eddie Award, too. He's getting double the love this year.

K13: But yeah, I've been at Last Vestige for like 36 years, just so you know.

RRX: That's awesome!

K13: Apparently, it's my career.

RRX: Well, it's great to be still be working in music, you know? It's kind of like how my band's not active at the moment, but I work for Xperience for a living, so I still feel like I'm a part of it.

K13: I remember your band, of course. I saw you guys a bunch of times.

RRX: That's dope! Well, I wish I got to see you with 1313 Mockingbird Lane a bunch of times, but it was kind of before my time. Although I do play your music all the time on the Local Lunch.

K13: After 1313, obviously, I was in a bunch of other bands. But I mean ... I worked at Valentine's and The Low Beat too.

RRX: I miss those venues. You know, it's really hard for a local band

to even have a Wikipedia page, but 1313 Mockingbird Lane has one, which is pretty cool.

K13: I know, and you can't make your own Wikipedia page either.

RRX: Yeah, I know, I gave it a try. It didn't work.

K13: They won't even let you edit ... if you try to edit the Wikipedia page and you're someone that's in the band, they won't let you. It's totally whacked because there were things that were wrong on there before, and they're like ... no, you can't fix that.

RRX: I know you gotta be like some certain designated somebody, I guess.

K13: I was in Susan and the Surf-tones for a long time, too, and it happened with that Wiki page too. You can't edit when it's wrong; it's stupid.

RRX: That's annoying. So you were the organist. Do you still play?

K13: I don't play keyboards all that much, like around the house lately, but I do still have all my keyboards. I mean, sometimes I pick up my acoustic guitar more, but I'm not really a

very great guitar player. I mean, I would play ... people have asked me a couple times to play different things. The last thing I did live in front of people was a reunion tour with The Surf-tones in California. That was fun!

RRX: Heck yeah! Like I said, I play your music all the time on my show, so I've been a fan. But I really feel like I missed out on this great time period of music in the Capital Region because of my age. Everybody's telling me all these great stories, you know? Like the early days of the QE2.

K13: We were like a house band at the QE2 for the longest time. I mean, whenever she'd (Charlene Shortsleeve) have any kind of music that sounded haunted or creepy, they'd call us up. We'd end up on some really weird bills because of that.

RRX: I mean, that place is just legendary to me.

K13: One thing I'd like to say about 1313 and being so ... garage rock-y, was because we didn't really know how to play our instruments very well. There's a lot of bands now that try to do the

garage rock thing, and maybe they're good at it, but they tend to sound too polished, you know what I mean? That happened to bands like the Fuzztones. I always liked them. They were really garage at first, but then the longer they played, the more polished they got. And then people started being like, oh, they're not really garage rock anymore, you know what I mean? If you listen to the 1313 stuff, sure it's cheesy, but I mean, how do you go back to that once you learn how to play?

RRX: Right, I know what you mean, though. But over-polished does seem to take away some of the soul, for sure. So when you heard about the Hero Award honor, what did you think?

K13: I have to say that I'm always surprised that people still care about it, but I mean, it definitely makes me happy. I did talk to one of the other band members about it, Marty Feier. He was like our original drummer. I mean ... we did have one drummer

before him, but he didn't wanna play gigs, he just played on our one recording. Marty forced us to play gigs because we weren't ready yet. I talked to him, and he was really excited about the whole thing, and he said to me ... cool, if I pay you like \$1000 and I pay for Hausmann's plane ticket, we could fly him up here, and we could play at the show and I'm like, oh wow! I'm like, get out of here, he would never do that. Haunted Hausmann, he would never ... I don't care if he paid for his plane ticket. There's no way in hell he's getting up here.

RRX: That would be awesome, though.

K13: I know, but I know that won't happen. But I do also talk to Ethan, who was in the band, one of our guitar players. He was excited about it. So I guess three of us know. Unfortunately, Robin Graves is no longer with us. He recently passed away, and it was very heartbreaking to me. I stayed in touch

with him all this time.

RRX: Yeah, that's tough.

K13: I haven't talked to a bunch of the other people, although Brian Goodman was one of our drummers. He thought it was cool. Because I feel like it's an award for everybody in the band, you know what I mean?

RRX: It sure is.

K13: I'm the only person that anybody is able to get a hold of.

RRX: Actually, Brian sent me a message yesterday, but I didn't even realize that he was in the band. Again, because of my age, I didn't know the history.

K13: Oh yeah. Brian, I think he was like the last drummer that we had. I used to joke that we're like Spinal Tap because we were together for 10 years maybe-ish, but we had like seven drummers. There's quite a few people that I don't know where they are these days. There's Dave Heaton, he was a bass player. Dave Pollack, I know

where he is. There's OP (Callaghan) ...

RRX: OP was in the band, too?

K13: Yeah, he was one of our drummers.

RRX: I didn't know that either. I like OP a lot. He writes for us, actually.

K13: I love OP. I still talk to him all the time.

RRX: OP is also a doctor, and people tell me all the time that I should have him as my doctor.

K13: He is a really good doctor.

RRX: I'll think about it, but I know him too well, and I don't want him to see my p****.

(Both Laugh)

RRX: It's just a little weird. Well, Kim, thank you so much for your time today, and congratulations again to you and the entire band. We'll see you February 21st at the Cohoes Music Hall!

K13: Thank you.







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- 8 - Eggy & Real Estate
- 17 - The Extreme Music Awards
- 24 - The Emo Night Tour
- 28 - Lettuce
- 30 - Its A 2000's Party

UNDERGROUND

- 9- Flatwounds
- 16 - EMA Preparty with Leylines
- 18 - Brick By Brick Video Shoot
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Joshua Redman

BY NIKI KAOS

Joshua Redman's Sizzling Jazz Quartet

Joshua Redman's Sizzling Jazz Quartet Speaks Volumes Where "Words Fall Short"

"Words Fall Short" is the newest album from tenor sax cat Joshua Redman. At times upbeat and wildly intricate, and other times atmospheric and moody, it's a must-listen for jazz fans. And lucky for some of us, Joshua has the quartet on tour, playing mostly songs from the album, and adding some fresh tunes each night. Pianist Paul Cornish, bassist Philip Norris, and drummer Nazir Ebo bring their impeccable chops and are ready to PLAY!

I got the chance to catch a few minutes with Joshua Redman to learn more about how this latest tour came about and how he landed so deeply in to the jazz scene.

RRX: I think the quartet you've put together is relatively new. What brought you all together?

JR: Well, I put the band together originally to tour behind the previous record, which I did with the vocalist Gabriel Cabasa, called "Where Are We." We recorded that album with Brian Blade, Joe Sanders, and Aaron Parks, so an all-star band of sorts, and we were able to tour with them for a few weeks when the record came out. But I knew that we had a long year and a half plus tour planned, and I knew that those guys weren't gonna be able to make it. So I put this band together of, as it turns out, much younger musicians. You know, all of them are not quite, but roughly half my age. They're all, they're all under 30. And believe it or not, I'm in my mid-50s.

So, I put that band together initially

just to tour. But the more we played, the more I realized what a special constellation of musical minds and spirits this was. And I felt that, like, this was a band that I would love to keep working with beyond the current touring cycle. I started to bring new music in for them, and original music, and made a decision relatively quickly in the fall of last year - around September - to record with them. We recorded a couple of months later, and the record came out, and now we're playing that music. I keep throwing new music at them. They're incredible musicians. They make all my sad tunes sound amazing. So, I know whatever I throw at them, they make beautiful music out of it.

RRX: One of the things I love about jazz in general, when you see a trio or a quartet that's got this relationship they've built together, there's what's written, there's what you've practiced, and there's this improvising and breathing of the music that really happens in jazz that you don't see in a lot of other styles of music. And something I admire about your discography. I've been a fan since "Freedom in the Groove."

You've grown up in a family with music. Obviously, your father was a saxophonist as well. And then you almost became a lawyer; you received a degree and were accepted to law school. What caused you to dip your toe into the academic world and then say, "Never mind, I'm going back to jazz"?

JR: Just to clarify a couple things. The kind of common misconception is that I actually grew up with my father. I did not. I was raised by my mom. She's a single mom. My father and

mother were never married, so I grew up with his music because, you know, she had all his records, but I didn't grow up with him. She was a music lover and a dancer, and just a lover of all different kinds of art, so it was really she who exposed me to everything.

RRX: That is interesting to learn, because you played music with your father, so you had a relationship. But he was not your primary caregiver and source of getting into whatever you did as a child, I guess, then, right? It was your mom.

JR: Yeah, I mean, I played with my father after I graduated from college as an adult, or, you know, "technically" an adult. (laughs) So yeah, I mean, I got to know him much better, obviously, once I started playing in his band, but he didn't raise me.

But, yeah, I've always loved music, but I never thought that I was gonna be a musician. I didn't think I was good enough, and I also didn't have the discipline and the focus when it came to music. I mean, I had a lot of discipline and focus when it came to academics, but music for me was kind of just a way to blow some steam, to play and have fun. And I never really applied myself with it. So when I went to college, I thought I wanted to be a doctor, but then, because my major was kind of theoretical sociology, that led me to think about going to law school. I applied to law school and was accepted, but I actually never went to law school.

I moved to New York. I took a year deferment from Yale Law School, and I thought I was gonna go, and then I moved to New York, and then things got a little crazy because I started to

play with a bunch of musicians. And you know, just within six months of living there, I realized I had an opportunity to play some of the greatest music with the greatest musicians in the world, and I decided I wanted to check that out for a little while. And that's been my life.

RRX: I can't blame you. You're in the middle of it in NYC. It would be no contest for me. Also, earlier in your career, maybe because of your mom's influence with the world music and the dancing that she did, you connected with Pat Metheny and did an album called "Wish." What was that like?

JR: I think the connection with Pat Metheny probably had more to do, actually, with my father because he played with Pat Metheny and Pat played a lot with Charlie Hayden, and I had been working with Charlie Hayden in a few different contexts. So that was the connection, and the opportunity presented itself to me when I signed the record deal, and they asked what I wanted to do for my first record. I was like, well, I'd like to record some songs with a young band and then also record some songs with a band of masters, you know, great, great, great older musicians. And I decided on, I mean, I always loved this Pat Metheny record, "Rejoicing," with Pat and Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins. It's one of my favorite Pat records. And so, I said I'd love to play with them, and they all said yes. And then Pat took me on the road with his band for a while, and then he played, I mean, it was always his thing, but he technically played in, you know, my project when the record came out. So, um, yeah, he was incredibly kind

and generous to take me under his wing. I've learned so much from him musically.

RRX: That's so amazing!

I'm excited to see you on your current tour for "Words Fall Short." While you're doing the tour now for "Words Fall Short," do you have something next on the horizon that you're just starting to brew up for your next album?

JR: I've been writing a lot of music for this band and also have some songs that I've written over the years that have never found their proper home, so I'm kind of throwing a lot of things at them. And like I said, everything I throw at them, they just have this way of being able to ... first of all, technically there's nothing that they can't play, but also just kind of getting to the heart, the essence of whatever a song is, and really knowing how to tell a story with it. So I'm hoping to record with them very soon.

RRX: So on this tour, we're on the ground floor, as far as you're just starting to evolve your collaborations with this group. That's exciting.

JR: Well, we've been playing together for two years, but, yeah, it's a relatively new group, and I feel like we've just scratched the surface of what we can be.

RRX: Yes, two years may seem like a long time in some cases, but when you see people who've played together for five or ten years, even, the way they

instinctively know each other's playing styles ... for the audience, I can say it can be emotional in a beautiful way. What are your sets like for the Words Fall Short Tour? Is it mostly songs from the album? Or are there gonna be some songs from your past catalogue?

JR: We seem to be playing mostly original music, and it will definitely be some songs from the new album. Probably some new material. There are certainly songs that I've written, you know, uh, there are a lot of songs I've written over the years that I would just as well forget. But there are some that I remember, and that still seem to have some meaning and some resonance. So sometimes we play some of those. I really don't know what we're gonna play, you know, until we walk out there, to be honest.

RRX: Wow! Is that how it works?

JR: It's how it works.

RRX: That's kind of exciting. So if someone were to go to see your shows three nights in a row, they get a different set?

JR: There are certain songs that we tend to play a lot. So I think on this tour, a lot of times we start with the same three songs. We call it the starting three, so you know 9 times out of 10 it'll be those three songs first. But then after that, it's kind of anything goes.

RRX: I love that! Thank you so much for chatting with me!

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1/16: Nick Horrace 6-9pm
1/17: Jenny Dworakowski Benefit 3-7pm
1/17: Dueling Pianos w/Shake Rattle & Roll 8-11pm
1/23: Alex Riddell 7-10pm
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BY LIAM SWEENEY

Reckless Barb

RRX: What was the very first reaction to your music, from the first person to ever hear so much as a practice jam or the demo of your first song?

RB: On this upcoming album, *Now I Am My Life*, it was way back in 2019 when I first made *Splash 1: Out Of The Water* (the opening track). I sent it to some friends with my first mix on it. Tom Messina, the lead guitar player on the track, had absolutely ripping solos flowing around sonically, and people seemed to gravitate to that in a natural and positive way. I knew the mix wasn't super clean or complete, but the general reaction was - Trippy Man!

RRX: "The best laid plans of mice and men..." I don't really know the quote, but I know this one; sh*t happens. When we least expect it, calamity befalls us. Sometimes just comic inconvenience. Please tell us a story about some comic inconvenience that happened to you whilst performing?

RB: This past summer, I was playing a solo set at Indian Ladder Farms. I had almost sliced off the tip of my middle finger 2 weeks before, and was still in a lot of pain. I was filling in time for the day and hadn't expected to be there. After the first couple songs, I paused and flipped everyone off. It just felt so silly to be performing with a giant splint forcing my middle finger up. It was a moment that I could simply laugh at my predicament in disbelief that I had almost cut my finger off and was still singing my heart out.

RRX: My singer punched my drummer out. Memorable moment, though nothing to brag about. But we have these things that, when summing up your endeavor, an incident comes to mind. What do you got?

RB: Oasis Cafe in New Paltz. I traveled to the gig, only to find out there was no PA. I was the front man at the time, so I ended up cutting the bottom out of a plastic cup and belted out my lyrics as hard as possible. It was embarrassing but fit the vibe enough. Oh - last year we were playing outside at 518 Craft in Troy. A lady was at the monument, seemingly not doing well and started barking at dogs as they walked by. Memorable from my angle. I used to lick my drummer's face when I was in college, and then proceed to roll around the floor making gargling noises while the instruments ripped. Band fights though; I'm lucky to not have those in my orbit. With the latest *Reckless Barb* experiences, I was featured at *Alchemy Wellness* in Schenectady. I really sang my heart out that night, just me and the acoustic. It was really special when someone, unexpectedly, resonated so much with the words I was saying. It felt like that was all I ever really wanted with these tunes - to connect on a deeply emotional plane with strangers. Something about being human or something.

RRX: We have to play somewhere, and sometimes those places have more going for them than a stage and a power outlet. What is a memorable place

you played, and bonus points if it's not a well-known place.

RB: I most recently played drums at Ghost Hit Recording Studio - an old church in West Springfield, Massachusetts. That was with a Psychedelic trio I play with called *Daydream Fountain*. Very epic and beautiful. I really enjoy the intimacy of poetry/acoustic music at *Paper Moon* in Troy and regularly participate there. *Mojos Cafe* in Troy is an absolute highlight. We did the first full band *Reckless Barb* show there. The sound was amazing, and there was fantastic lights as well! Impressive on all fronts, and we packed the house that night. Shoutout *Mojos*. And shout-out the *Reckless Barb* band! Next show is 11/28 at *Indian Ladder Farms*.

You never know how it will go with my loose music, but man the guys I'm playing with are so good and bring the songs to life. My album, *Now I Am My Life*, comes out on 11/02 on all platforms of listening - I'd love for you to hear it! A psychedelic pop odyssey about existence, told through the lens of a fish jumping out of water. What could that mean?! A conscious moment, I look forward to you hearing it with fresh ears.

RRX: Playing out is tricky because you never know what's going to happen when you get there. Sometimes everything goes wrong. What was your worst show like?

RB: I was setting up for my first show as *Reckless Barb*. It was to be short, just me and the electric guitar. I

thought I could use backing tracks, but hadn't adequately prepared. It's ok, I learned quickly what not to do. The guitar amp was behind the PA and the feedback was crazy and the backing tracks weren't loud enough. I ended up just playing electric guitar too quietly and singing but the PA was too low. It was the break out I needed though. Let everything go wrong on the first *Reckless Barb* show and improve next time.

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

RB: My debut album, *Now I Am My Life*, is made to be enjoyed best front to back. The whole album viewed as a singular body of work. Songs do stand on their own, but I think it would feel better to know that the album was really resonating with people. As long as both options allowed me to keep making music freely and to the highest degree that I can, then I'd choose the all songs solidly received route. However, if becoming a household name with a hit was the gateway to greater creative freedom, then that's it. But not fame for the sake of fame. I used to think that was cool. Now I feel like you might have to sacrifice too much authenticity for that. And I'm not willing to make that compromise.

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Music Notes



BY PEAK MUSIC STUDIOS

Let me say something that might sound uncomfortable at first.

Most people don't fail at music because they lack passion. They fail because they spend an incredible amount of energy avoiding the very thing they want to get better at. We call it preserving our dignity. But if we're honest, what we're really preserving is fear:

Fear of failing.

Fear of looking bad.

Fear of being the person in the room who doesn't quite have it yet. And sometimes fear of success, because success means we have to change how we see ourselves.

So we do this dance.

We say, "I'll start January first." We buy a book or an online course because it feels productive, but it doesn't ask us to risk anything emotionally. We set aside time. We skip the first week because, well ... New Year's Eve. The next week we make progress, we learn a chord, we sing a song, we feel good. Then work explodes. Life happens. Two or three weeks go by. We give it one more big push.

Then something else happens. Family, stress, summer plans. And somewhere along the way, a quiet

thought creeps in: this was probably never going to work anyway. So, we say, "Maybe next year."

Here's the truth: that isn't a passion problem. That's a structure problem. The science is actually very clear on this. Skill isn't built through motivation. It's built through consistency. Your brain doesn't care about big promises. It responds to repetition.

Neuroscience shows us that short, focused, daily practice creates stronger neural pathways than long, sporadic sessions ever will. Fifteen minutes a day, done consistently, with the proper guidance, will move you forward faster than hours of practice done once in a while. You don't need to feel inspired every day. You need a system that still works on the days you don't.

And one of the most powerful systems we have is learning with other people. Most of us are afraid of being the worst player in the room. But that room, the one where there are people better than you, is precisely where growth happens. The best musician in the room usually isn't improving that much. It's the people reaching for that level who are moving forward.

And here's something important to

know: real musicians, the ones who are actually good, are almost always kind. They remember what it was like to struggle. The people who put others down are usually protecting their ego, not pursuing mastery.

So as this new year begins, I want to offer a simple invitation: Stop listening to the fear that says you can't do it.

You're not too old.

You're not too young.

It's not too late, and it's not too early.

Find a qualified teacher. Find a real musical community. Commit to doing something every day, even if it's just a few minutes. Life is always ready for the bold. Especially those willing to risk a little embarrassment today for a lifetime of music.

Happy New Year!

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This Month in Music History

January 1, 1967 - The Beatles release "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

January 3, 1969 - Led Zeppelin releases "Led Zeppelin I."

January 10, 1970 - Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" hits No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

January 13, 1968 - Johnny Cash records "At Folsom Prison," changing the idea of what a live performance could be.

January 16, 1957 - Elvis Presley records "All Shook Up," later becoming one of the best-selling singles of all time.

January 26, 1980 - The final episode of "The Muppet Show" airs, having introduced millions of children to live musicians and orchestras.

January 30, 1969 - The Beatles perform their iconic rooftop concert in London, their last public live performance.

Weird Music Fact: January

On January 30, 1969, during The Beatles' rooftop concert in London, the band had no official plan for how long the show would last. They simply kept playing until the police shut them down for noise complaints. One of the most iconic moments in music history ended not with a grand finale, but with London authorities asking the greatest band in the world to please turn it down, a fitting end to a journey down rock and roll lane. John Lennon later joked that he wanted to respond, "We're just trying to get an audition."

Melissa Stone

Uranium glass

BY JOSHUA SCARSELLI

Have you ever looked at your food and thought, “I would really like a side of radiation with this?” Well then, you have come to the right place. Uranium glass aficionado Dr. Melissa B. Stone tells us everything we need to know about the beautiful world of uranium glass.

RRX: What is uranium glass?

MS: Uranium glass has been produced since the 1830s and involves the addition of uranium oxides to glass, which results in a color change. Because of the addition of uranium, all uranium glass is radioactive to some extent and glows under UV light. Most uranium glass is vintage or antique, but some is still produced to this day, mostly by smaller, individual glass workers, though. Uranium glass can be any color (typically not clear, colorless glass, though), but green and yellow glass are the most common colors of uranium glass by far. Regardless of glass color, though, all uranium glass glows green under UV light. However, when uranium glass was first produced, UV lights didn't exist, so why did they bother adding uranium to the glass? The main reason is that the addition of uranium typically changes the overall color of the glass. Secondly, though, many owners of uranium glass over the years would put their glass pieces in windowsills to view the glow. During dawn and dusk, when the UV radiation from the sun is at just the right angle, uranium glass has a faint, green glow to it. So although UV lights didn't exist back when uranium glass was first produced, many still enjoyed the faint glow their pieces had during low light hours. Uranium glass

remained fairly common in the US until the 1940s, during WW2, when the US began the Manhattan Project. Most uranium was funneled towards making weapons rather than glassware during that time, and commercial use of uranium in glass almost stopped. After WW2 ended, however, some companies continued using uranium in their glass, and many collectors have their pieces in their collections today, oftentimes not even knowing their pieces glow. To the best of my knowledge, though, the major companies producing uranium glass over the years have all shuttered their doors, so most uranium glass is now vintage or antique.

RRX: Are there other types of glass that glow, or is it only uranium glass?

MS: Yes! There are other additives to glass that can cause it to glow under UV light. Manganese glass, which is often confused with uranium glass, has a yellow-green glow to it, and is typically found in clear, colorless glass but can also be found in glass of other colors. Aside from uranium, cadmium and selenium are the most well-known additives collectors like to collect in glass. Cadmium causes glass to glow a yellow to orange color, while the addition of selenium in glass results in a beautiful pink to red color when glowing under UV light. Cerium glass also causes glass to glow (it glows a very pretty blue) but is very common, even in today's modern glassware and is not highly sought after. Boron nitride also causes glass to glow a yellow color. Boron nitride was used as a mold-releasing agent while glass was blown in mold, and some of it would mix with the glass, leaving be-

hind a mixture that glows under UV.

RRX: What got you interested in uranium glass?

MS: I'm a big fan of social media, and one day while scrolling through Facebook, I saw a post by someone displaying their gorgeous green glowing glassware, or uranium glass, and I had to learn more about it. So I joined a few uranium glass groups and started looking up everything I could about it. After a few months of this, I finally mustered the courage to go hunting for it myself. I still remember the first pieces I ever found. The very first uranium glass “pieces” I found were two glowing uranium glass marbles, and shortly after, I found my very first uranium glass plate and juice cup. It was so exciting finding the marbles and then the glassware that I was automatically hooked! Every time I find a new piece, I feel the exact same amount of excitement. It's such a fun hobby!

RRX: What interests you the most about uranium glass?

MS: I love the green glow! I think it's so exciting to find it too! I also love finding pieces with a history. Looking up the makers and years of production sometimes sends you down a rabbit hole of information. I get such a kick out of each piece's history, and the radioactivity of each piece is an added bonus. I also like finding deals and just shopping in general. So when I find a piece for \$10 at an estate sale that's actually worth \$450 on eBay, I get a rush of adrenaline like no other! Then, when that piece GLOWS on top of it, I feel almost euphoric while buying it. It's such a fun hobby, I highly recommend trying!

Finally, uranium glass is perfectly safe to own and wear (I have a small jewelry collection, too). But it's fun to know the pieces I'm admiring for the day have an almost sinister secret - they're made with the same element as the atomic bombs in WW2. But conversely, each piece has an almost magical beauty to it, unlike the destruction that was caused by the bombs.

RRX: Where can I find uranium glass now?

MS: Uranium glass is typically found at antique stores, thrift stores, flea markets, antique fairs, and estate sales. Some people like using Facebook marketplace and online vintage/antique shopping, like on eBay, Goodwill online, or whatnot. If hunting in person, though, shine your UV light on all the glass you see (just don't shine in anyone's eyes!), and you'll be amazed at what a different world of glow you'll find yourself in. And yes, people will ask you what you're doing!

RRX: What's the process like when you go uranium glass hunting?

MS: The first tool you'll need in order to hunt for glowy glass is a UV flashlight. These can be found anywhere from Walmart to Amazon for dirt cheap, but for uranium glass, you'll want at least a UV 395 nm flashlight. This is the wavelength that in general, if you shine it on glass and it glows green, you've found uranium glass. Another wavelength, UV 365 nm, also causes uranium glass to glow green, but that wavelength can also pick up the sickly green manganese glow that's found in quite a bit of glass. Now, there's nothing wrong with manganese glass, but it's not

radioactive like uranium glass; it's far more common, and it's generally less sought after. I use a dual UV 365/395 nm light that I carry with me everywhere I go. I think I have five or six of them, actually! But when hunting, you'll want to shine your light on all the glass you see. Even some ceramic glazes have uranium in them (think of Fiestaware and Drip-o-lator), but they will only react to UV 365 flashlights, and they tend to be very spicy! "Spicy" is slang for radioactive if you've never heard the term used like that before. The higher the radioactivity, the spicier the piece!

It's really very easy to find uranium glass once you've got the light, though. Antique shops tend to have it, and thrift stores, estate sales, and flea markets are great places to hunt. Just set the wavelength on your flashlight to 395 nm and start shining it on glass! A general rule of thumb is that clear/colorless glass that glows green is usually manganese glass and not uranium, so make sure to focus more on colorful glass. Green tends to be the most common uranium glass color (all uranium glass glows green regardless of the glass color, though), but blues, yellows (vaseline glass will always glow!), custard glass, jadeite, and even the oddball carnival glass have the potential of glowing from uranium content. So just shine your light on every piece you see, and if it glows a bright green color, chances are you just found uranium glass! The only way to be certain, though, is to test the glass with a Geiger counter, and yes I do own one of those!

RRX: How did you start making videos about uranium glass?

MS: I have a few hyper fixations, and uranium glass is very much one of them, but I first started making videos on social media to connect with people and make them laugh. I'm chronically ill and disabled, and social media is somewhat of a lifeline to the outside world for me. I don't leave my house very often, except to go hunting for glass or to go to a

doctor's appointment. Once I started collecting uranium glass, though, I began to meet people through our shared love for glowy glass, and I realized we all have shared experiences of going hunting for glass, finding amazing bargains on vintage glass, and even being judged for collecting radioactive antiques. Yup, people judge us! So, for the hell of it and just to get some laughs, I started making short comedy skits highlighting the struggles of the uranium glass hunter! I've even spun off onto another account that discusses the struggles of chronically ill and disabled people. Social media is such a great way to connect with people, whether to discuss the best price for our next glass haul or to commiserate over the costs of medication.

RRX: Is there anything you'd like to add and where can people follow you?

MS: Uranium glass hunting can be a really fun hobby if you've got the extra time to go thrifting! Prices of each piece range from a dollar, anywhere up to thousands of dollars so there is something for almost everyone! And if you go hunt enough, you may even score a free piece or two (I've gotten a couple free pieces in my day)! Once you've gotten past looking weird with a uv light (I recommend keeping what you're doing to yourself - some people like to increase prices once they know you're looking for glowy glass, although that is very bad business in my opinion), you'll have the best time seeing the world through the eyes of UV light, and it can be mesmerizing! Then, when you find that very first piece, you'll feel a rush like no other! Every time you find a piece after that, you'll feel that exact same rush, and omg does it feel good!! So good luck and happy hunting!! I hope you find some good deals, and feel free to show them to me - I love a good glow pic!

If you'd like to follow me, I can be found on Instagram and TikTok under the username, @gregarious.glass, by Mel Stone.



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2026

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JAN 30, 2026
THE BROKENHEARTED W/S/G SISTER CHRISTIAN
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 7PM

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BACK IN BLACK W/S/G LIVEWIRE 518
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For those of you who appreciate classic Motown soul music, the label, in affiliation with Elemental Music, released some 29 great all-time classic Motown albums on special 140-gram virgin vinyl LPs. The release campaign began in 2024 and concluded toward the end of calendar year 2025. The LPs were issued incrementally, released in installments every few months throughout the campaign, which was driven by Reybee Inc. (one of the most prestigious music public relations firms on the East Coast).

These essential soul albums of the '60s and '70s were among Motown's and affiliated label Tamla's greatest early treasured releases. The project has dazzled collectors with some of the greatest soul music of all time. Many were issued in stereo, though some were in unadulterated monaural; some were color vinyl variants. The ability to acquire original pressings of these very reissues was not an easy come-by. If you are a discerning collector seeking

these original pressings in near-perfect condition, you will likely pay a hefty price to obtain them. However, Elemental Music has made it easy and possible for you to acquire a fresh vinyl LP of these original pressings with each release in the series. It is important to understand that Elemental has not reproduced these vinyl records with an audiophile mentality in mind. What they have done is to make it possible for collectors to obtain the absolute best reimagined copies of these original pressings. First and foremost, the label has not reproduced these vinyl records with heavy weight audiophile variants as part of their mission. As opposed to modern 180-gram weight modern pressings, they have resolved to not stray away from the original 140-gram standard weight pressings on which these classic releases were originally manufactured. As well, the label was not looking to change or reimagine the visual aspects beyond what the originals were presented with.

These are straight ahead, virtually carbon copy reissues by way of mimicry, both visually and physically, all from the original master tapes with original cover and back cover artwork, and (most of the time) the original side-label layouts. Imagine going back to the classic era of Soul and acquiring one of these original pressings.

This series of albums saw the launching of many of the classic Motown releases into the retail music market until it had fulfilled its 29-title commitment.

Let us take a closer look at a few that were reissued during this campaign:

The Supremes: "More Hits by the Supremes"

An original Motown release which contains the Number One hits in a row, "Stop! In The Name Of Love," and "Back In My Arms Again," respectively. It has "Nothing But Heartaches" as well, which is a tune that charted at number

eleven on Billboard. Interesting to note that this 1965 album demonstrates the famous three-woman singers' showcase of sound. They competed head-to-head with the Beatles for the Number One slot with two different songs. All the songs on the LP were written by Holland-Dozier-Holland.

Also available in this series are the Supremes' "We Remember Sam Cooke" and "A Bit of Liverpool" (mono edition), as well as "Hear a Symphony" (green vinyl) and "Love Child."

Smokey Robinson & the Miracles: "Make It Happen (mono)"

This album found international success in 1967. It had two different lives! First issued as "Make It Happen," and then issued as "Tears Of A Clown." This was just one of several hits; however, the track "Tears..." hit number one in England as well as the U.S. The version on this second release features an alternate lead vocal track by Smokey. The track was co-written by Robinson

and Stevie Wonder. Here it is in blue vinyl and a gatefold cover sleeve!

The Temptations: “Psychedelic Shack”

Motown decided to cash in on the psychedelic trend. While it does not challenge the psych-movement in late '60s music, it does touch upon social awareness and politics. This song and a few others did well on the charts—going to No.7 on Billboard - and Motown had joined the contemporary era! Also featured is a strong take on the Edwin Starr hit, “War.” Starr received acclaim for doing a remake of this hit a couple of years later. This LP also features the original front and back cover artwork. It was the last album Eddie Kendricks did with this classic soul group before embarking on a solo career. Also check out the other remastered albums by the Temptations: “Meet the Temptations,” “Cloud Nine,” “Solid Rock,” and “Sky’s the Limit.”

“Four Tops” (self-titled - mono)

You cannot say Motown without mentioning the Four Tops. This was their debut 1965 LP, spawning the new Motor City Soul Sound. It includes the smash hits “Ask The Lonely” and “Baby I Need Your Loving.” A solid first step in perhaps the most formidable Motown four-singer band of all time. The original mono sound is captured flawlessly and spawned the career of this quartet. Who can forget the sublime baritone vocals of Levi Stubbs and company? Also, check out the group’s other reissued album in this series, “Still Waters Run Deep.”

While all albums in this reissue campaign merit mention, let us present a few more that were reissued as 140-gram LPs. These include:

Marvin Gaye: “In the Groove” and “When I’m Alone I Cry” (mono)

The Jackson Five: “Get It Together” (red vinyl & die-cut cover) and “Third Album” (red vinyl)

Eddie Kendricks: “People...Hold

On”

Gladys Knight & the Pips: “Neither One of Us (Wants to Be the First to Say Goodbye)”

“The Undisputed Truth” (self-titled)

While some might consider these releases to be novel, let me emphasize that this limited-edition series is selling out fast, and some titles are already fetching handsome prices on the secondary collectors’ market.

On a personal note: a short time ago, I was in Orlando, Florida, and stopped in the Motown Cafe for lunch. The DJ was spinning Motown classics. Then they had a contest. He asked, “Can anyone identify the following song?” and then played the psychedelic sounds of a whammy-bar-gritty guitar, supplemented by bass and drums. The audience was silent. I then offered: “That’s Rare Earth.” It was side B of Rare Earth’s “Get Ready” album on Motown, which is comprised solely of a lengthy psychedelic-infused version of their 1970 debut major radio single “Get Ready.” The DJ then asked if I had any special requests, to which I quipped, “Play some Rick James.” He did. I listened to early Motown tunes, got some psychedelia, a soulful meal, and still managed to hear some Ricky J. ! What else can one ask for?

** ADDITIONAL NOTE: As far as post-funk Rick James goes, in 1997, a couple of years before his untimely death, he issued a terrific album for Mercury Records, “Urban Rhapsody.” This superb artifact integrated classic funk with sweet soul and contemporary “urban” sounds, and had cameos from Rappin’ 4-Tay and Snoop Dogg (still at the top of their game). This one is in my personal collection, and is a must-hear if you can find a copy!

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Richard Baratta

*Jazz performer
and film
producer*

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Richard Baratta.

In the creative arts, talent often doesn't care where your energy gets applied. Great musicians can be great film producers or location managers. And in the case of Richard Baratta, his music and his film projects have become a part of the American cultural canon, with accomplishments in films from "Desperately Seeking Susan" to "The Wolf of Wall Street" and the Spiderman movies.

He's playing at Caffe Lena on January 2nd.

RRX: You were playing jazz in New York City in the '70s, and the fiction writer in me is just enthralled with the whole vibe of that era. How would you explain that time and place to someone who knows the place, but not the time?

RB: Firstly, I'd like to thank you in advance for this interview prior to my performance with my Gotham City Sextet at Caffe Lena on Friday night, January 2nd. A nice way to kick off the new year.

Great question. Well, it certainly was a different time and place. Mid-'70s NYC was near bankruptcy, there was a lot of crime, it was dirty, and generally on the downswing. Having said that, it was great! It wasn't so expensive. The loft scene was thriving, apartments could be found, and at a reasonable rent, and artists were arriving in droves. Manhattan was affordable, so was the Lower East Side, Soho, West Village, Washington Heights. Basically, most every neighborhood was a bastion of art in all its forms. Don't get me wrong, it was gritty; you had to be alert, but it was hopping with creativity and enthusiasm. The music took on that cultural vibe. There was still rebellion in the air and an edge from the '60s and the Vietnam War, etc., but things were looser, people were taking chances, there was no formula that had to be followed. There was also an anger, an aggressiveness, and a message to be delivered. You saw like-minded people

on the streets, in the parks, in the clubs; it was a great camaraderie of artists. And, there were less people. You could move. Cinema-wise, it was a gritty explosion. John Cassavetes, Scorsese, Woody Allen, William Friedkin, Coppola, Mario Van Peebles, etc. I could go on forever.

Suffice to say, NYC was a tale of two cities, yin and yang. Bring it back!

RRX: You've worked on the set of movies that are by every measure bastions of the American cultural landscape, starting with "Desperately Seeking Susan" in 1984 and including "Joker," "The Wolf of Wall Street," all the Spiderman movies, "The Taking of Pelham 123," and too many to list. What makes an iconic movie when you're seeing it behind the scenes?

RB: The million-dollar question, or should I say, the million-dollar answer. If I knew that answer, I'd be a very, very wealthy person. I've worked on movies where I thought the scripts were

average at best, and they've been critically acclaimed. And I've read some great scripts, and the movie turned out lousy. Here's the thing: we must define what iconic is. Is it about making boatloads of money, or a movie that is universally and critically acclaimed, let's say the top 100 or 200 movies of all time? If I'm on a set that has a great story, a great director, and great actors, I'd say there's a good chance the movie will be worthy. But, ya truly never know.

RRX: In music, you've played with pretty much everybody, and you've worked on so many films, I think of Forrest Gump, a man running through history. Do you often get caught up with things you see or hear that you were a part of all that time ago?

RB: Well, first of all, I've played music with a lot of great musicians, but certainly not everybody, and that's for damn sure. I've also worked on a lot of great movies, and worked with many,

many great directors and actors, and two things I have in common with Forrest Gump are that “life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get” and “stupid is as stupid does.” I don’t get that caught up with the past, although it’s sometimes fun to reminisce. But I am proud of and appreciative of some of the things I have accomplished. Trust me, they didn’t come easy, and they required a lot of hard work, but a good producer friend of mine used to say, “If it was easy, anybody could do it.” Now, if we subscribe to that axiom, then life has more value.

RRX: I think that jazz is many things, but if you hit a bad note, you can be redeemed with the next note. Are the mistakes a bug or a feature?

RB: Interesting. I was just having this conversation with pianist Bill O’Connell. Firstly, more a bug than a feature. Ya know, musically, we all make mistakes, but I think Herbie Hancock said, it’s how you respond to those mistakes. Playing a wrong note or wrong chord, or turning the time around, might stand out to an audience, but if the other musicians respond to that mistake with a creative solution, then the mistakes can become a beautiful thing. You certainly don’t want to make a habit of making errors, I mean, get your sh** together or get out, but the occasional mistake is tolerable, and sometimes fun to see where it takes you. Of course, whoever commits that transgression usually feels bad.

RRX: What do you see in a film pitch that makes you open your wallet, so to speak? How much does the pitch-person’s presentation impact the reception of their idea?

RB: It’s so hard to get a movie made. There are so many great stories and great ideas being shopped around, and sometimes I wonder why the studios or backers choose some of the mediocre stories they do. Presentation is

huge! You have to get your message across very quickly. People have such short attention spans that if you don’t grab them right away, they move on. It’s really sad. Movies over two hours, sorry. Songs over four minutes, sorry. What happened to patience and development? Sorry for the short rant. Truth is, it’s good to know someone high up in the food chain, but even then, there are no assurances. I guess we’re back to, “if it was easy, anybody could do it.”

RRX: If you could take any role in the credits and make it bigger in the beginning, what role would it be? What’s most unsung?

RB: Well, as Mel Brooks said, “It’s good to be the King!” I would love to be first up, but that could come with pitfalls. No matter what role or function you have in a movie, from director, to editor, producer, costume designer, designer, key grip, DP, caterer, craft service, actor, parking PAs or just PAs, and on and on, in almost all cases, you’re working really hard and busting your ass. Making a movie is an arduous task with long hours, and everyone wants and deserves to be recognized. You just built this house, this structure, this story, and you want the recognition of your labor. Getting a credit on the big screen is exciting, and it lives on in perpetuity, but keep it in perspective. It’s not brain surgery or curing cancer. It’s nice to see your name on the big screen, but at the end of the day, you still have to come home and take out your garbage and change your kid’s diaper.

Oh, the question. I’d be happy with Producer or Executive Producer, and no title is unsung. Everyone makes their contribution.

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EAT IN/TAKE OUT

Colin Jacobson

Violinist and Composer

BY NEOPTOLEMUS



Colin Jacobson. Photo provided.

“Pictures at an Exhibition” (a 1971 live album from Emerson, Lake, and Palmer). “A Fifth of Beethoven” (a 1976 disco instrumental). “Sabre Dance” (a 1968 Dave Edmunds/Love Sculpture electric guitar arrangement)

These are all 1960s-1970s popular song titles based on classical works.

But there’s more. Modern rock bands have sampled various pieces of classical works in their songs. Probably most notable is the guitar arpeggio in the middle of Deep Purple’s “Highway Star.” That’s directly quoted from Mozart’s “Piano Sonata No. 16 in C Major.” And there’s Metallica’s “Damage, Inc.,” with an intro based on Bach’s “Komm, Susser Tod” (“Come, Sweet Death”).

And there’s lots more.

The genre of heavy metal is founded on a movement from Gustav Mahler’s “The Planets” suite. Geezer Butler reports in his memoir, “Into the Void,” that he became fascinated with Mahler’s “Mars, the Bringer of War.” During band practice, he played the tritone from that movement on his bass. Guitarist Tony Iommi picked up on it and started playing it. That was the basis of “Black Sabbath,” the song that launched heavy metal. Ironically, no one in the band then knew that the tritone was nicknamed “The Devil’s

Interval.”

So all of you out there who think you don’t like classical music, think again. You just didn’t KNOW you liked it.

Classical music is a fertile source of inspiration and mining for some of today’s biggest bands and musicians. And that is why everyone — young people, especially — should support classical music.

This is precisely the reason you should experience the Knights, who will be performing at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall on Saturday, February 7; doors at 7:30 PM. True, the program is classical, but to quote an old Alka Seltzer commercial, “Try it; you’ll like it.”

Colin Jacobsen, one of the founders of the Knights, agreed to sit down for an interview with Xperience Monthly.

RRX: Thank you for your willingness to be interviewed. First, can you describe the Knights? What was the origin of The Knights, and how many members are there currently? How does one become a Knight?

CJ: To extend your rock/pop metaphors here, the Knights is perhaps a classical equivalent of a garage band, in that it sprang up organically out of chamber music reading parties (classical jam sessions where you play music

extemporaneously, sight-reading it for fun) in our living room in the early aughts. It started out as a string orchestra of about 17 musicians and expanded to include winds, brass, and percussion a few years later. There are around 40 member musicians now, forming a chamber orchestra-sized group that can expand or shrink, accordion-like, according to the repertory on a particular project. Musicians can be eligible for membership after playing at least five projects with us (for which they are recommended by current personnel or our personnel manager). Usually, it’s after several years of playing with us that one can potentially become a member. Our goal is to keep that feeling of intimacy and immediacy we experienced in the living room in small group formations and bring that energy to the concert hall.

RRX: The Knights aren’t your typical chamber orchestra. The group’s performances are highly eclectic; you have even performed a 2009 Kyle Sanna orchestral arrangement of Jimi Hendrix’s song, “Machine Gun” (featuring Jan Vogler on cello). It seems the Knights’ mission is to traverse/amalgamate musical genres in order to connect modern audiences to classical repertoire.

CJ: The Knights’ repertory is

reflective of my brother Eric, myself, and other member musicians’ curiosity for and expertise in a number of musical genres. While the majority of us come from classical conservatory backgrounds (Juilliard, Curtis, etc.), some of us specialize in period instrument/early music on one end and in contemporary classical on the other. There are also singer-songwriters in an indie-pop/folk vein, arrangers and composers, jazz musicians, and members who engage in cross-cultural music making. And yes, when we do something like make Paul Simon’s “American Tune” the second movement of Bach’s “Brandenburg Concerto No. 3,” with Knights member Christina Courtin playing violin and singing, it’s based both on a desire to connect to a larger musical world and reflect the back and forth that has always existed between popular or folk music and longer form composition through the centuries. (Simon’s tune is based on a choral from Bach’s “St Matthew’s Passion,” which is itself based on an older hymnal tune ...)

RRX: What is the process for the selection of compositions to be performed by the Knights?

CJ: My brother Eric and I are always bandying about ideas. Sometimes they are based around a particular

collaboration or guest artist, and that can lead our thoughts in a certain direction. Member musicians often come with ideas which we try to incorporate, and now we have a member musician programming point person (the aforementioned Christina Courtin) who funnels membership ideas as well as coming up with her own. We have a long-term project going around the idea of “Rhapsody,” born out of a desire to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the premiere of Gershwin’s iconic “Rhapsody in Blue.” We commissioned around nine new works that all brought together two or more musical worlds, as Gershwin did.

RRX: You have mentioned elsewhere that you (and the Knights) would be interested in a collaboration with Jon Batiste, who recently released a “Beethoven Blues” album (Verve Records, 2024). Are there any plans for a Knights/Batiste future collaboration?

CJ: Not yet, but sometimes by putting an idea out into the universe, it comes to fruition years later ...

RRX: Improvisation, also known as free-soloing, is a mainstay of most rock music, the solos typically performed by a guitarist or keyboardist. Probably the most iconic rock solo is the “Stairway to Heaven” intro by Led Zeppelin’s Jimmy Page. Classical music also had its era of improvisation, when composers like Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart performed their music. But then, for an extended period, classical music became fixed, with only one way to perform a piece. Indeed, during that era, it was blasphemous for soloists to improvise. That seems to be changing, with modern composers like DBR (Daniel Bernard Roumain) not only soloing, but even including improvisational sections in their written music. What are your thoughts about improvisation, and what do you think the future holds regarding its use in modern classical compositions?

CJ: A few thoughts here. I think

music that truly touches us is based on a mixture of structure and freedom. I think the parallel for long-form, composed/written-down music is in the theater world. Actors work with scripts, whether for the stage or the screen, and when it’s good, it has a freedom, an organic quality, and something that rings “true” in its delivery. Classical musicians mostly work in a similar way, where timing and a sense of narrative delivery can make a performance feel either alive or stunted. Improvisation or highly structured music both have value, and in the end it’s about whether it’s done well.

I will say that classical music, mirroring much of Western society (medicine, law, etc.), became increasingly specialized over the past few centuries, such that composers and performers were increasingly separate people. But when they are the same, there’s an ecosystem of creativity and experimentation that is good, and I feel like the classical world is returning to a more holistic place where there are more performer/composer people who are likely to have improvisation as some part of their creative practice.

RRX: Do you have any guilty pleasures, such as listening to pop/rock/blues/jazz music? Do you have any favorite modern artists or songs?

CJ: There’s no guilt in listening to great music across any genre. Some favorite recent artists: I’m With Her, Kayhan Kalhor, Chris Thile, Martin Hayes, Cecile McLorin Salvant, Toumani Diabate, Magos Herrera.

RRX: Is there any message you would like to leave our readers with?

CJ: In a time when we are distracted by so much in the world, great live music can give us a focused experience in community, unlike anything else. Give the Knights a try on February 7th in the beautiful acoustics of Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.



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Peter Prescott

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Peter Prescott. Photo provided.

RRX: What was the very first reaction to your music, from the first person to ever hear so much as a practice jam or the demo of your first song?

PP: Each band that I have been in, played out when we were still “forming” so, each had awkward, imperfect beginnings. Minibeast began about 13 years ago with skeletal, sorta childish, rhythmic pieces on a digital recorder. Volcano suns [mach 2] had a shambolic start with the bass amp breaking down halfway through. Embarrassment and humiliation was usually met with politeness!

RRX: “The best laid plans of mice and men...” I don’t really know the quote, but I know this one; sh*t happens. When we least expect it, calamity befalls us. Sometimes just comic inconvenience. Please tell us a story about some comic inconvenience that happened to you whilst performing?

PP: Volcano Suns played a college

[Princeton?], ingested psychedelics, fought with the audience, each other.....post show doused each other with soda. Ugly at the time, sorta funny in retrospect. In a far more jolly version of that band, we opened for Overkill, drunkenly murdered a watermelon on stage. First appearance of Bob Weston with David Kleiler.

RRX: My singer punched my drummer out. Memorable moment, though nothing to brag about. But we have these things that, when summing up your endeavor, an incident comes to mind. What do you got?

PP: Early version of Minibeast where the drummer relentlessly corrected and verbally beat up the bass player after every song. That had a short shelf life. Mission of Burma played our last show [back in the day] opening for PIL. The PA suspiciously shut off mid way through our set. Hmmm.

RRX: We have to play somewhere,

and sometimes those places have more going for them than a stage and a power outlet. What is a memorable place you played, and bonus points if it’s not a well-known place.

PP: Mission of Burma [second round] played Detroit in a dilapidated building leaking water from the ceiling with scary looking extension cords everywhere and lived. And at a college outside [I believe the rapper Common was the headliner] where it was so dark we literally could not see each other. Minibeast played at an enormous used clothing store in New Bedford this past summer [called Circa] filled with youngsters and oldsters. Amazing!

RRX: Playing out is tricky because you never know what’s going to happen when you get there. Sometimes everything goes wrong. What was your worst show like?

PP: As noted, each band I have been in has had “worst shows”, because you are forged like steel in fire by

playing live. That said, the worst show I can remember was a V Suns show opening for Government Issue [one of my fave bands, by the way]. It got worse, when Jon and Jeff informed me on the way home that they were breaking up the band. I responded by finding Bob Weston and Chuck Hahn, recording “Bumper Crop” and going on tour for 6 weeks.

RRX: Would you rather have one of your songs blow up and make you a one-hit wonder and household name, or would you rather have all your songs be solidly received, but no chart-climbers?

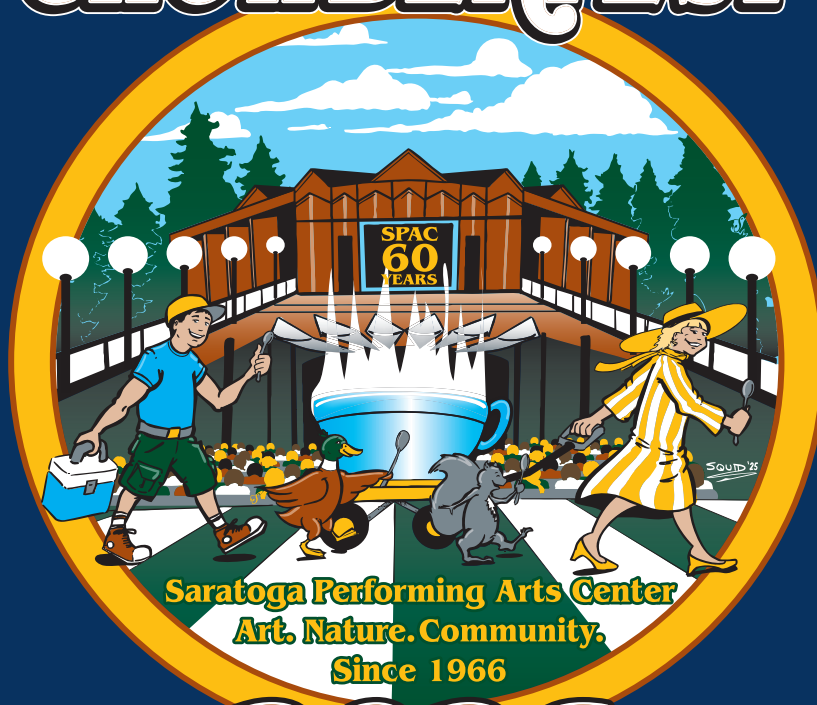
PP: This is easy. Though a few Burma songs are kinda considered punk rock staples, I am with the solidly received, but no chart topper thing, 100%

savor. indulge. enjoy.

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American Stars n' Bar Bands

BY ROB SKANE

Bar bands. Cover bands. Copy bands. Call them whatever you'd like to. Back in the day, bands like that would often bring us countless hours of hazy, crazy, half-in-the-bag joy. And as young, wannabe musicians, we were in AWE of those bands and those performers. Don't lie – you know you were. They may have played all cover tunes, or maybe they sprinkled in some of their own tunes, too. We didn't care, and it didn't matter. The people in those bands knew how to play, sing, and perform. Probably because they were able to do it five nights a week. And if your band stunk, you didn't get any work. Instead of blaming the "scene" – whatever that means – you worked hard to get better.

Back then, you either read music and learned the tunes that way, or you learned them by ear. Typically, it was a little bit of both. Even if you didn't read music, you understood music. There was no tab or any of that stupidity; it was the real deal. You didn't tell the dudes in your combo that this guitar chord "looks like a bear about to sneeze" or something painfully senseless like that. You had to commit to having some sort of a knowledge base and/or really good ears. Learning the songs of bands that are already on the radio is a great way to develop your ears, facility on your instrument, and songwriting skills. You kinda can see what works when you backwards engineer the arrangement of a great song. You can get a feel for

harmonic structure and for melody, for example. Of course, you have to have a passion for it. That's what those great bar bands had: a passion for the music and also a respect for the music, too. They listened to as much music as they played. We all should be listening to music – all kinds, all the time.

Almost every town had a great bar band or two who built their followings because they just flat out kicked ass every time they played. Every damn time. Three or four sets of blazing rocknroll performed with a passion for the tunes that were being played - all night long. People used to dance back then, too. People used to dance back then, too. Like for almost every song. It was a whole thing. I'll break it down for you, grab a seat. Dudes and dudettes in the same room. Great band playing great songs. You see a girl you might fancy, but it's too loud to tell her that you're a Scorpio with a passion for crossword puzzles, so instead you ask her to dance. Anyway, when you dance, you get flirty, maybe even a little hot n' bothered, who knows? But, you get thirsty, and when you're already in a bar, and you're thirsty ... you know the rest, I hope. These joints would be jammed with people who loved hanging out with one another and having a good time, all the time. Cigarette machines, yes. Food, no. You were there to get hammered, chase girls, and have your favorite bar band provide the soundtrack to your greatest conquests and most spectacular failures – sometimes in the same night.

Some fabled and incendiary bar bands you need to know about would include, but not be limited to:

The Scratch Band. This was G.E. Smith's band before he joined Hall and Oates. Rumor had it they could go an entire week without repeating a song. There were the Skeletons, with Lou Whitney on bass; they were the pride of Springfield, Missouri. Obviously, the mighty NRBQ needs to be mentioned; I mean, they were only stupendous. I'm pretty sure they could have sold out a gig at the Black Hole of Calcutta on a Tuesday afternoon, if they were so inclined. And let's not forget our own Johnny Rabb, who, along with Eddie Angel, tore the roof off of more places than the law should allow. Rabb has always had incredible bands and is not only a gentleman but a true legend.

This is how it was, kids. A bar on almost every corner, typically opposite a church – convenient, don't you think? Bands were in it for real. They believed

in the music, and it showed. 250 gigs a year, or more, for a lot of them. People loved it! I believe it was Saint Ray of Davies who once asked that musical question, "Where have all the good times gone?" These days, a lot of us are thinking that we're making art and we're not – the songs kinda stink. Forget the fact that a lot of us can't sing or play, but that's the least of it. The biggest crime is that we have ignored the groundwork laid out for us by great musicians who fell by the wayside of obscurity – and they shouldn't have. Not to be cynical over here, but when I apply myself, I can be pretty damn good at it. So, stop fiddling about, Uncle Ernie, don't tell me that you "know music" when you think secondary dominants involves a safe word and you don't know a flat five from a flat tire. As they say in the biz, and by the biz – I mean the industry, "the truth hurts." Go see a good bar band and get inspired because it ain't no sin to be glad you're alive.



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Prog Digest

BY KLYDE KADIDDLEHUMPER



Well, folks – here we go.
 A New Year.
 2026.

Before we get to the heart of the matter – a confession.

Klyde had planned a memorial of sorts for the musicians who had passed in the Prog world this past 2025. Not gonna happen.

We'll look at happier things, as we all could probably use that right about now. You all get it.

So – here we go.

Ya might not think it possible, but in “real” life, Klyde has a day job. One that pays the bills and all that jazz. Or Prog in my case. Actually being able to listen to all the great stuff that has come out.

Thankfully, for a change, I have at least one of the albums considered among the best of the year. For a guy so buried in his own stupidity – a minor miracle.

Jethro Tull's “Curious Ruminant” made the cut. Of course, still trying to figure out how it also ended up as one of the top “rock and metal” albums of the

year. Rock, perhaps, but metal? Wait. Wait. There was that whole Tull-winning-the first-ever-Heavy-Metal-Grammy ... still scratching my head over that one.

A solid effort – best in years. Although one could argue it's really an Ian Anderson record, as the entirety of the original band is gone. Worth a listen.

Renowned prog bassist Jonas Reinhold (The Flower Kings, The Tangent, Steve Hackett) brings us Karmakanic's “Transmutation.” There's something spellbinding and impossible to put one's finger on. Familiar, yet new. Eminently listenable in a really engaging way. It gives you more, but it continually grows on Klyde. Not in a moss on the tree kinda way – a really warm and cozy listen.

Perennial favorite Steve Wilson brought us “The Overview.” A sweeping epic of mind-bending brilliance that acoustically gives us his take on the overview effect. The further you travel from Earth, the more likely you are to have a fundamental change in how you perceive the world and its place in the

universe. You really must get this one.

Now, when ol' Klyde sees the following description of a band, his ears perk up. And I quote: “Edensong are essentially what would happen if Jethro Tull, Dream Theater, Pain of Salvation, and Echolyn were mixed into a musical stew.” “Our Road to Dust” is a wild ride full of unexpected twists and turns, alternating between soothing melodies and rip-roaring prog metal. Hot damn, what a good time. Another in heavy rotation.

From the “out of the ashes” bin is Cardiacs' release, “LSD.” Begun in 2007 and 25 years following their previous record in 1999, this was begun by Tim Smith. Health problems and his passing in 2020 moved the project at a glacial pace. This one is a great listen and serious in so many ways.

Finally, my nomination for best album title: “Magic 8 Ball” from Gazpacho. Perhaps it's the link to one of my faves, Marillion, that draws me here. The band takes its name from the song of the same name on Marillion's “Afraid of

Sunlight” record (really great in and of itself – how can you go wrong with one song being “Cannibal Surf Babe” ... she was born in nineteen sixty weird ...). Yeah.

So, for now, let's put this particular puppy to bed (Constant Companion keeps asking for a puppy) and get to it, shall we?

Each new year brings a certain anticipation. We all hope for the best and prepare for the worst. Such is the nature of the beast.

Embrace who you are. Ask yourself the hard questions and, perhaps, give yourself and others a break from time to time.

And, as it is that time of year as I write, remember the immortal words of Constant Companion:

“Nothing says Christmas like Godzilla.”

Until next time.

Klyde

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