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# Experience *Monthly*

March 2026  
Vol. 8, Issue 3

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Larry the Cable Guy (Dan Whitney.)  
Photo provided.

# Larry the Cable Guy

## Comedian, actor, normal guy.

By Liam Sweeny

In comedy, there are few who have reached the global popularity of Dan Whitney. But you might know him as Larry the Cable Guy. A solid member of the Blue Collar Comedy Tour, he's made a bunch of hilarious movies and has made millions of people laugh. We welcome Dan (Larry), and we talk about the making of a character.

**RRX:** How much of what's on stage is preparation, and how much is just you being you?

**Dan Whitney:** Well, of course, a

lot of it's preparation, because you gotta get the jokes in order, you gotta find the flow, which is what I do once I get on stage. A couple of shows, it takes a couple to get it beat down in my head. I write a lot on stage. It's fun because I really become the character. It's so fun to do, and my mind just triggers other things while I'm up there. So man, there's a lot of really funny jokes that have happened that I've written just on stage at that certain moment. But it's definitely a lot of preparation, you know.

I'm a one-liner comedian. I'll write one-liners, and this will group with this, and that'll group with that, and I have to find an order to put them in. So yeah, takes a little time, but man, once I got it, once I got it laid out how I want it and I get a couple shows under me, it flows really well.

**RRX:** When you created the character of Larry, there was you, and there was Larry. How is it now? Like, have you and Larry become one in any way?

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Larry the Cable Guy

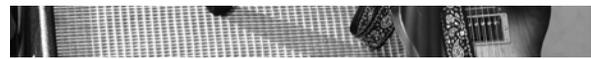


Biohazard



Steel Panther





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**DW:** Hey, you know what, people always ask me that. When it first started, it was a complete character. The reason it's close to me is that I grew up on a pig farm. I grew up going to rodeos. I grew up raising pigs, loading cattle trucks, and everybody I hung around with was older people. They were all farmers and ranchers, and then, of course, I went to college. That's when the southern stuff came about because I moved to Florida, went to college in Georgia, and I just picked up the accent. So when I first started the character, everything was made up.

I started out doing political humor. I'm not political, but it was just for the radio. I was always just doing goofy one-liners. So that's what I did, but I didn't do it unless I thought it was really funny. I didn't do it just to do it. So everything early on was all made up. It was. Completely separated from me.

Then I had a wife, and then I had kids, and then you want to incorporate that. There are so many jokes about being married and having kids. I started incorporating a lot of my real life into the character, and so it became a little more of my life ... but it was still made up. They were still - you know - I would do something that really happened, and I put a fake twist on the end of it. It didn't happen. But as far as the character goes, people think I walk around like that every day. Completely normal. I have such a normal life. I've got a family. And the people call me Larry because they don't know me other than Larry the Cable Guy. So I don't know how to remedy that. The only way I say it is that Larry makes all the money. Dan has fun with it.

Everything is under Larry the Cable Guy. I tell my wife I wish sometimes I had a project that was just my name. Because everything's Larry the Cable Guy. My movies were Larry the

Cable Guy. Larry the Cable Guy was popular, which was me. It's kind of like Cedric the Entertainer. It's like Cedric, like Carrot Top. I mean, is he always Carrot Top, or is he Scott Thompson? Is he? So I don't dig too deep into it because I have a normal life, so I don't really think about it that much. I mean, I do. I think my management told me early on. I mean, everything that happened to me happened so fast, and it was just a whirlwind, so I just let them manage me, and I'd just show up and do what I do. I said one time, "You know, we should do this under Dan Whitney." No, no, no, Larry the Cable Guy is a brand. Larry the Cable Guy sells as a brand. Everything has to be done under Larry. OK, well, there we go. So that's all. I guess that's what we'll do then. As far as now, as far as my real life, I am totally different than the character. The only thing that's it seems like I'm the same is that I incorporate my family life into the character,

but it gives the character way more.

Larry was always a partier and going to titty bars, and I don't drink, I don't smoke cigarettes, I don't do anything like that, you know. Never done anything like that, but all my friends did. Everybody I hung out with did, so I know about it. I mean, shoot, I can talk about it with the best of them. I know all about it. I just haven't done it as much as anybody else.

**RRX:** One thing that's cool about comedy is that we find out we're not alone in our particular weirdnesses. Do you feel that way when you're on stage? Like everybody laughs, and you know it's not just you that's like that, or it's not just you that did that thing?

**DW:** Oh, absolutely. I mean, I got a weird sense of humor. I grew up with "Monty Python's Flying Circus" and "Hee Haw" and "Benny Hill" and Charlie Callas, and I love those guys. I love

Continued on Pg. 45...



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# Book Review

## Raised on Radio, by Paul Rees

by Rob Skane

I loved this book and was completely hooked from the start. Paul Rees offers us an oral history of prime album-oriented rock. “Raised on Radio” has contributions from various members of bands like Boston, Journey, Foreigner, Toto, REO Speedwagon, Styx, Billy Squier, and several others. No punches are pulled, and no f\*cks are given – especially by Steve Lukather - who we love. “Raised on Radio” details the very creative times of FM radio from 1976 until 1986. It’s a page turner without a doubt.

“Raised on Radio” can be looked at as an arena rock version of “Please Kill Me.” There’s very interesting information as to how some of the bands that shaped us were formed and also ultimately dissolved. The constant stream of quotes almost reads, at times, like a clinician’s notepad after a very intense talk therapy session. You laugh, you’ll cry, and you’ll wonder what Dennis DeYoung was thinking with the “Kilroy Was Here” album – I mean, he’ll tell you, but you’ll still wonder.

There was a lot of pressure to keep on making hit records, constant touring, and at times, no money. How can you sell a million records and still be broke? Read this book, and you’ll find out. Here’s a hint - can you say recoupable expenses? I know you can ... The music detailed in “Raised on Radio” is all incredible. When you read this, you might go back and listen to some of the

records from that period. And then you’ll realize that Steve Lukather - who we love - probably played guitar on half the albums that you’ve ever owned. There’s one thing that totally blew me away - the Billy Squier LP “Don’t Say No” is a stupendous record!! It went platinum times three, that’s 3 million, kids - if you’re keeping score and some of us do, so shut up ...

“Raised on Radio” is important because it tells the story of how music and the business of music evolved between 1976 and 1986. Some might even say the biz devolved during that period. This book gives us an insight into how and why MTV became what it became. MTV broke a lot of bands; style over substance, some might say. Bands from this era changed things. Let’s take the invention of the power ballad, for instance. I mean, every band had one back then, and come to find out - every rose really does have its thorn, who knew?! The music is still relevant, the song structures are air-tight, and the performances are often unmatched. While you’re reading “Raised on Radio,” take some time and listen to the albums as they’re being referenced in the book, and you’ll see what I mean. Paul Rees has helped to chronicle the soundtrack of our youth, and we should be grateful for that. “Raised on Radio” is available right now at a book seller near you. And remember kids, don’t stop believing.



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# Arthur Scott Verner

## Capital Region Timekeepers

By OP Callaghan



Arthur Scott Verner. Photo provided.

**H**appy March, all y'all! This month, we are lucky enough to talk with Arthur Scott Verner, a fabulous drummer and studio owner, who got his start playing a real-life game of Grand Theft Auto! He's a super-talented guy who has worked with some of the best that the Capital Region music scene has cultivated. His newest endeavor is Jupiter Queen, a killer band featuring my friend Eric Braymer on guitar. So let's welcome Arthur Scott Verner!

**RRX:** Welcome, my friend! Thanks for being here today. Tell me how you got started as a drummer.

**Arthur Scott Verner:** When I was 13 years old, I got busted for stealing a car. (Ironically, this is also how I learned to drive a car.) I was sent to Camp Nueva Vista, which was a juvenile delinquent "rehabilitation" camp in Perth, New York. There I met Herb Summers, a counselor and, unbeknownst to me, a drummer. One evening, we were talking, and he said come and check out this snare drum. He started playing on a beautiful late '70s Tama snare, and my eyes just lit

up. Herb looked at me and said, "Do you wanna learn how to play the drums?" I said, "Oh yeah!" He gave me a set of sticks, a practice pad, and started teaching me rudiments. That started it all.

Herb Summers is the reason I'm a drummer. Herb currently owns Olde Saratoga Stave Drum Company and is an amazing craftsman. I own one of his custom 13/8 Stave River birch snares. It's amazing. I am truly and forever grateful to have met Herb.

**RRX:** That's great! Did you take any other lessons, or were you self-taught after that? Tell me about your first kit.

**ASV:** Took a few lessons from Peter Boras from Downtime (early '80s band in Albany), and I think Mark Foster was part of that, too. Hard to remember. My first drum kit was a Stewart red sparkle 20" kick, 12" tom, 14" floor tom. Soon to be replaced by a '70s silver sparkle Ludwig kit with (2) 20" kicks, 12" and 13" toms, and a 16" floor tom. I sold that kit to Phil Lanz, who eventually sold at least half of it to Pete Donnelly from The Figgs.

**RRX:** Very cool! Do you come from a musical family?

**ASV:** Neither of my parents played music, but everyone else in my life is musical. My wife, Kim, is a classically trained violist and has a degree in music. My older daughter, Lily, plays guitar and bass and writes songs. My younger daughter, Luca, is a professional stage actress and singer and has performed in over 50 youth and professional musical theater shows in the area. Many people know my brother

Jamie, who is an amazing local drummer. We've been in a few bands together, the most notable of which was Queer For Astroboy. My family has spent many Friday nights out in my studio, playing and jamming together.

In addition to drums, I've been the bass player and sang harmonies for QFAB. I've also been writing and arranging my own music for decades. I've been either the bass player or the guitarist in a few bands that featured my music. Most recently, I sang lead and was the guitar player for a band called Grey Sky Sunday. I love the creative process of writing and recording songs. As an engineer, I find that sometimes it's just easier to write and play all of the parts myself when I'm getting the initial ideas down. And then I'll bring in others to play the finished parts on an album project or when we play out live.

**RRX:** Tell me about some of your earliest musical endeavors.

**ASV:** My first band back in high school was a southern rock cover band, learning all the classics such as "Whiskey Rock-a-Roller" and "That Smell". We were a two-drummer band at the time, which was pretty cool. The mother of our bass player got us our first gig at the Last Chance Saloon on Lower Central Avenue in Albany. She called down to us in the middle of a keg party and screamed, "Get upstairs, you're playing your first gig." We were all pretty drunk already, but packed up our gear and headed out. It was pretty hilarious, but we played and had a blast.

I've played drums in bands that

cover a wide range of musical styles. I've been in southern rock, country, rock, Grateful Dead, and Ramones cover bands. I've been in original bands that ranged from punk, new wave, and early alternative (such as Birds of Prey and Hand Held Moon), power punk/alternative with QFAB, and harder rock/stoner rock with Catching Flyz, Grey Sky Sunday, and now with Jupiter Queen.

**RRX:** Any particular gigs that stand out?

**ASV:** One of my favorite experiences was playing drums with Andy Morse's "Andy the Music Man" Band at the Gathering of the Vibes. It was my first experience playing a larger festival. We were playing Andy's children's music, but then it morphed into a family-friendly Grateful Dead jam. I brought my family and had to tell our kids not to expect to get carted around in golf carts and get to eat in the "artist" tents when they went to music festivals as they got older.

I also got to check off a "bucket list" gig for a musician growing up in the area, and had the opportunity to play LarkFest with QFAB. Moby went on the same stage later that day.

**RRX:** Tell me how you came to start drumming for Jupiter Queen.

**ASV:** I initially started working with Jupiter Queen as the sound engineer and producer of their last album, "Benighted," which was recorded at my recording studio, DMS Studios in Clarksville, New York. I had already known Mike Langone for more than 20 years through the local music scene. We'd previously played together when I

was the drummer, and he was the singer for a Ramones cover band, Loud and Fast. He's just a positive spirit. Last August, after we finished their album, they asked me to jam with them a few times. You just know when things click. I really appreciated how each member brought ideas to the table, and everyone plays off of these new ideas. No ego. Not trying to take over the writing process. This is a band that truly writes collaboratively and listens to each other.

**RRX:** They're a great band, and I'm excited to see you play. What are you using for a kit?

**ASV:** In Jupiter Queen, I'm currently playing a Premier Genista kit 24,13,16,14.

**RRX:** Are you a drum collector?

**ASV:** What drummer isn't a drum collector, to some extent? Currently, I have seven snare drums, including my Olde Saratoga Stave 13x8 river birch, Pearl 14x6.5 Dennis Chambers

signature, Pearl 8x14 maple concert, 14x6.5 Pearl free floater, Ludwig 14x5.5 Premier Genista, Tama 14x6.5 metal snare. I also have a second kit for the studio, which is a Pearl BLX Birch kit 22,16,10,12,13.

**RRX:** Excellent! Tell me about your studio, DMS.

**ASV:** I started DMS Studio in 1990 in my basement at 689 Clinton Ave in Albany. Those who recorded with me in the early days may remember loading in and out of the studio from the street through the basement windows so the bands wouldn't have to drag their gear down my long, narrow steps to the basement. Back then, I was recording on an 8-track analog machine and a 24-channel Mackie board. I made so many cool records and demos in that basement and have great memories from that space. I moved the studio to the loft area of my barn in Clarksville in 1999. Over the years, I've recorded so many great bands and

artists, and made so many friends in the local music scene. Some of the bands and musicians include the Staziaks, Arc, Andy "The Music Man" Morse, Mark Oldendorf, Jeff Gonzales, Blase Debris, Chris Jacobson/Untaymed, Mordwolf, The Tradition, Zac Leftler, Held Under, Kill All Betrayers, Downer, Sugar Eater, Grey Sky Sunday, Subduing Mara, Coal Palace Kings, QFAB, Great Day For Up, The Day Jobs, Monster X, The Disenchanted, Police Line, and Jupiter Queen. I've recorded rock, rap, RnB, country, folk, polka, and spoken word. I've worked on hundreds of singles, album projects, and demos. It's been a wild ride.

**RRX:** Amazing! So many great artists. That's an impressive body of work! Any horror stories?

**ASV:** I can't recall any nightmare situations because of the artists, though there have been a few train wreck gigs over the years. But they were few and far between.

**RRX:** What is your approach with Jupiter Queen?

**ASV:** It's interesting being a drummer and an engineer. I've struggled with how to do both on the same project. In the last six months, I've been practicing/playing every day, and my goal moving forward is to grow to become a better drummer and to evolve with Jupiter Queen writing, recording, and performing songs.

**RRX:** When is the next gig?

**ASV:** Jupiter Queen is playing March 1 at Empire Live and April 9 in Boston at The Middle East. We are working on finalizing some other dates, including a summer Doom/Stoner Festival at Putnam Place.

**RRX:** I can't wait! Thanks for doing the interview, and best of luck.

Check out Jupiter Queen on March 1 at Empire Live, and don't forget the Dustin Mele Benefit on March 7 at Revolution Hall in Troy.



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# NIN Valentine's Day with the Irwins and Trent Reznor in Newark

## By Jason Irwin

**W**hat is more romantic than an evening of industrial rock in Newark, New Jersey? I can't think of a single thing. Our story begins at 7:30 am on Saturday, February 14. I wake up early in general — a habit that comes along with doing a morning radio show. My wife, Lisa, truly enjoys her weekend sleep-in sessions, so I know I have a good two hours before she shows signs of life. But I'm a restless person anyway, so I start prepping for our trip. Lisa does the packing in general, but I try. Snacks. I need emergency snacks, always. And of course, a NIN travel playlist had to be established. I'm good at things like that. Remembering toothpaste — not so much. The better half eventually arose, and we hit the road at about 11:30.

Our hotel was adjacent to the venue — win #1. That isn't always the case, but if it's possible, boy, is that convenient. On-site parking, another plus. We did realize that we left ourselves with about 5 hours of free time before the show, and that can go a couple of ways with us. Time to find out. We had asked Lisa's mother, who is from the Garden State originally, "Karen: We're going to Newark, what do you recommend?" "Don't go," was the answer. I'm assuming she meant it jokingly. We ignored her warnings and set out from our hotel to see what the city had to offer. We didn't make it far, as there were plenty of establishments located around the perimeter of the Prudential Center. Another win. This was appreciated and in stark contrast to another one of our adventures — Green Day at Citi Field



NIN concert. Photo provided.

in NYC in '24. There is absolutely nothing around that place (although I did score some black-market White Claws from a hot dog vendor, but that is another story). Edison Place acts as one of the venue's perimeter streets, and it didn't take us long to hear Nine Inch Nails blasting from at least two different restaurants directly across from one of the Center's main entrances. Our first stop was Redd's Biergarten, a really cool — and large — German-American spot. We only stayed for a warm-up of a couple of beers so we could find some more Irwin-friendly (we're basic) cuisine, which we did just a few doors down at American Whiskey — more of a restaurant than a bar, but we did enjoy a fantastic chicken parm and grabbed a couple more drinks. Lisa impressively (usually it's

me) initiated our first confrontation by arguing with a guy about Phil Collins. She doesn't like him. Don't ask me why. That smoothed over soon enough, and after a stop back at Redd's for a Green Tea shot, we headed back to the hotel to prep. Lisa — a full wardrobe change. Myself — trading my Converse for a pair of Doc Martens. Have to fit in, right? I had a beer (I packed the snacks, remember?), then I shared some time split between watching her try on outfits and looking up Barry Manilow's contact information for a possible Xperience interview. And then, we were off.

There was a pretty long line to enter the venue from our hotel, and I attempted to make friends by leading our fellow standees into several choruses of Nine Inch Nails-themed show tunes. A few actually joined in. Most were not

impressed. Once inside, we hit up the beverage stand and took a stroll around to get the vibe. I can say that I have never seen longer merch lines before in my life. I'm not big on official band wear. Too expensive, and I'm too impatient to stand like that for that long. Besides, a guy was selling the same shirts outside the bar earlier at greatly reduced prices. Licensed? Probably not. We eventually found our seats, and after making friends with the people on either side of us, we discovered that they were not our seats. I've never been "that guy" before. That night, I was "that guy." After relocating a few rows back, we attempted to make friends with the people on either side of us, again. That went reasonably well. At this time, the Grammy-nominated opening act, German-Iraqi electronic artist/DJ Boys Noize, had begun pounding the crowd with beats and sounds. I would have preferred a live band, but I'm sure Trent Reznor doesn't care about my opinion. The crowd was mildly interested, but you could tell they were just waiting for the main act. Can't blame them for that.

Ok, now the show. Finally, right? I've seen Nine Inch Nails before, a ways back. Lollapalooza at SPAC in 1991 was the first. That was something to see. I think a few times in between, somewhere, sometime. This was a new one for Lisa. She's a Swiftie, so I assured her it would be "something like that" when I presented her with the initial idea. Kind of similar, I'd say. Lisa loves Valentine's Day, so I didn't want to let her down with my activity

selection.

Note: Spoilers ahead! The show structure of the Peel It Back Tour is pretty interesting. It was divided into four parts and alternated between two stages — one conventional (as conventional as NIN can be) main stage and a smaller center stage. The show opened up from stage 2 with a whisper. I thought that was a pretty fantastic approach. Just the frontman and his piano, and a slowed-down version of “(You Made It Feel Like) Home,” followed by “Non-Entity,” for which he was joined by most of his band, including long-time collaborator Atticus Ross. “Piggy” came next, which, being more recognizable, amped up the crowd for what was to come next. The main stage was shrouded in translucent scrims that also acted as projector screens for roaming stage cameras, and paired with plenty of white strobe lighting and fog, presented a pretty cool effect. This was the “Unpeeled” portion of the show. “Wish” was the first number here, and here we got a treat. One of my all-time favorite drummers, Josh Freese, exploded from the darkness and (literally) kicked this one off in high contrast to the low-key (literally, again) first act. Freese — recently formerly a member of this band, recently fired from the Foo Fighters, and replaced by former NIN drummer Ilan Rubin, weird swap — seemed happy to be back. I’m pretty sure I treated Lisa to an overextended version of this story around this time. This was followed by the equally hard-hitting “March of the Pigs” and then a few lesser-known (to me) songs before moving back to the center stage. Here, the band was joined by only Ross and opener Boys Noize for a few remixes, including “Closer,” which drove the arena absolutely wild. Mr. Noize was definitely more appreciated here. The stage was completely drenched in fog for most of this set, which I found annoying, but it didn’t seem to affect the energy of the crowd. Bits of the band

were shown on the main stage’s cloth cover ... which was soon to be “Unpeeled.” Get it? Now, we had a concert going. For the final act, we were exposed to the band in full form (and full view) as they pounded out hits like “Head Like a Hole,” “The Hand That Feeds,” and “The Perfect Drug” wedged into a few lesser-known tunes. I expected to hear the 2005 hit “Only” at some point, but that one was left out this evening. I was prepared for variation from show to show. I think that’s understandable — especially from an artist like Reznor, who couldn’t really care less what I — or anyone — thinks. We did get his Bowie cover “I’m Afraid of Americans,” though ... which was more than an acceptable trade. The show closed appropriately with “Hurt,” which has gathered its own cult following. I liked Johnny Cash’s cover, but when you revisit the original ... man, you really feel the emotion that created it. Lisa truly enjoyed the show as well, so my true mission was accomplished.

After the concert, we did what the Irwins do, and hit the scene. Apparently, for longer than we thought, as we discovered the next day from our credit card record. Regardless, I was up pretty early, as usual. I scanned the room and noticed evidence that I had consumed a few more drinks after the show. So ... one of those nights, I guess. At least I remembered the concert. I did some social media, cleaned up a bit, then scored some points by bringing her breakfast to our room while she was still in recovery mode. “This seriously is the best apple juice I’ve ever had,” she claimed. I mean, it was just a 12 oz. Tropicana from the hotel Starbucks. “Thanks,” I said. “It was eighteen dollars.” I should also mention that while I pride myself on not requiring a lot of sleep, my lovely wife offered to drive home so I could rest. Although she did accuse me of snoring, which I most certainly do not.

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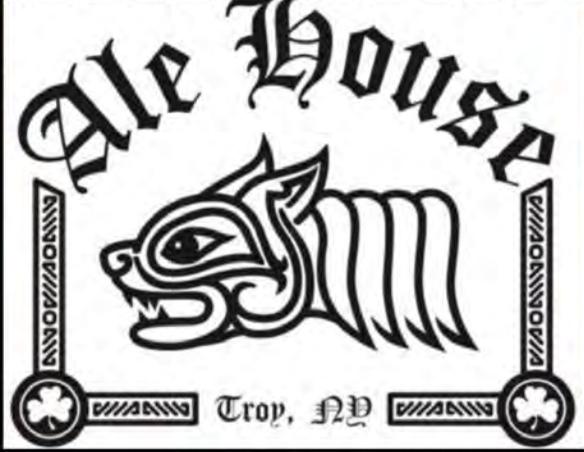
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# Frontman for Faded Line Vegas Nancy

by Rob Smittix

**RRX:** Vegas, you are definitely one of the area's best frontmen. I don't know if you like that title or not, but I'm going with it.

**Vegas Nancy:** I love it. I appreciate that so much. I mean ... I feel blessed, to be honest.

**RRX:** Absolutely, man. Obviously, you got a lot of things spinning in your life, so even to be able to have a band is a blessing.

**VN:** Yes, to have a band and have bandmates that you can get along with, laugh with, and have zero drama with, that's such an extra bonus.

**RRX:** Oh, big time. Well, you've been around the block for many years in many different bands, and I'm sure things weren't always the best, all the time.

**VN:** Yeah, you go through it all, and you learn to appreciate when there are some good guys behind you and alongside of you.

**RRX:** Well, having the right guys, knowing you're all having fun together, is one of the big pluses. And of course, having the talent.

**VN:** Finding that whole package is tough. Faded Line was a band before me, started by the guitar player Jeff Manion in Western Mass ... I wanna say they started in 2013, maybe 2015.

**RRX:** Right. But you being the killer frontman hasn't been that long?

**VN:** Correct, I think I joined in 2022.

**RRX:** Yeah, that sounds about right, and now that you are in the band, that's when all of us here in the 518, we're like, oh s\*\*\*, Faded Line. That's when I became familiar with the band.

**VN:** Yeah, it actually really kind of

took off, like you said. With my experience and my connections and stuff like that, it really helped boost the band to where Jeff envisioned it. Our original drummer parted ways for personal reasons, which I totally understand. That's when we got Walter "Monsta" Ryan in the band.

**RRX:** Well, that doesn't suck!

**VN:** He's in Murphy's Law now. He was in bands like Machine Head, Madball, Possessed, and the list goes on and on.

**RRX:** Oh yeah, dude's got a resume.

**VN:** He's got a resume, plus I've known him personally for 30-plus years. He's just an amazing human and was a perfect addition. It was the smoothest transition; we didn't lose any shows. We didn't have to go off-grid for a while and do all this. It was just perfect.

**RRX:** Absolutely. And you've also been very active. You guys are always out there, constantly dropping stuff. I love the "Bury the Hatchet" song, too, by the way.

**VN:** Oh, thank you so much. That's a fun one.

**RRX:** It just seems like you're doing the thing, man. And to add to that, you're opening up for Biohazard at Empire Live on March 22.

**VN:** That's gonna be great. My first time opening for Biohazard was in '95, and since then had done other shows with them. Faded Line started covering "Punishment" from Biohazard, and then we had Danny Schuler (drummer of Biohazard) get up and do the song with us. Now we're doing the show, and it's just a full circle moment of the



Vegas Nancy. Photo by Stephanie J. Bartik

whole history of kind of being in Biohazard's crosshairs, here and there.

**RRX:** Oh, absolutely, people better get their tickets now, if they ain't got them, that's for sure.

**VN:** So that's March 22. I know we're not gonna be finished with it by then, but we are in the studio currently, finishing up our EP. Carlo, Mike, Jeff, and Walter are all done with their stuff. I go in tomorrow for another round, and I think I have one more after that. I have a couple of special guests I wanna bring in, and then the EP is gonna be titled "The Only Way Out Is Through." I think we should be ready to rock late spring, maybe.

**RRX:** Well, whenever that happens, hit me up!

**VN:** Absolutely.

**RRX:** Also, big congratulations on winning the best hardcore band at the Extreme Music Awards.

**VN:** Thank you so much. Again,

that was another great recognition. To be in a room full of your peers and just great people. What a night that was, it was just amazing.

**RRX:** Is there anything I didn't ask about that you wanna get out there?

**VN:** Let's see ... I think we'll be working on a video soon to go with the EP. Dave Parker is producing. He's a member-slash-tech for Coheed and Cambria.

**RRX:** Oh, nice.

**VN:** Yeah, he's incredible. As you've heard, "Bury the Hatchet." I mean ... he adds his own spice to it.

**RRX:** Oh, the production on that is awesome. Well, keep doing what you're doing, man, and keep on fighting the good fight with Precious Souls.

**VN:** Thank you, my brother. Appreciate it.

**RRX:** You got it.



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# Biohazard

## Drummer Danny Schuler on being yourself.

by Liam Sweeny

**F**our guys in a band. That's what Biohazard's Danny Schular said. But these four guys have toured the world, reached a level of success that most bands don't, and redefined what it means to be metal and hardcore. We welcome Danny and talk about the band's new album, "Divided We Fall."

**RRX:** So your latest album is called "Divided We Fall." I'm listening to it, and it's powerful. It's totally authentic. Biohazard absolutely, but it feels bigger. It feels like there's more power that kind of hits you in the chest, and I can't really figure out what it is. Not taking away from the songs themselves, but the recording quality is great, and that's where some of that power, I think, comes from. Can you tell me

anything about what went into the recording?

**Danny Schuler:** We started recording it last year, and it all came together kind of quick. We didn't really have the songs; we had a bunch of ideas. Our manager at the time suggested we work with Matt Hyde, who ended up producing the album. That turned out to be a really crucial decision in getting this thing done ... because once Matt got involved, we all sent our song ideas to him. He kind of picked through everything and was like, "I think these are your best songs, what do you guys think?" And it was exactly what I was thinking. You know, like he picked through all this stuff, and picked out what he thought was

the best song, and that was what I thought was the best song. So for me, I kind of felt like, "Wow, this guy really gets it." And something Matt said to us early on was, "I know what you guys sound like, and I really think you guys just got to relax and do what you do best," and that was exactly what I was preaching.

The whole time that we were talking about making a record ... everybody always compares everything we do to "Urban Discipline" or the "State of the World Address" albums. Everybody always compares everything we do since then to those moments, and that's great. It's flattering that people love those records; so do I. We were at our best.

I think that bands sometimes resent it, like they try to get away from that. They try to do something smarter or try to do something more ... trendy, or something like that. When it came time to record "Divided We Fall," I was adamant. You know, like, "Guys, we gotta make a record where we're doing what we do best. We do well with what comes natural to us."

So, in the spirit of that, you know, Matt called me up, and he was like, "Where do you guys wanna record this record?" And I said, "Man, I got a studio right here on the East Coast, cause everybody lives all over the place." I wanted to do a record close to home, close to New York, close to where we're from. So my friend has a great studio

here. Joe DeMaio's got a place called Shorefire Studios. Amazing, big room with all kinds of great analog gear and all the new stuff and everything. And for Biohazard, it's always better to have all of us go in a big room together and just play totally live. And that's what we did. That's how we recorded "Divided We Fall," all of us in the room. Most of the takes are one or two takes on the basic track, and that's what I think helps to give it that live feel.

**RRX:** This is interesting. I was watching interviews today, and I saw you guys talking about the 8x8 recording room, this tiny little recording space. Is that something that was a part of "Divided We Fall"?

**DS:** No, for "Divided We Fall," we recorded in a big room all together. But what you're probably alluding to there is about two months before we started recording the album, we met up at a studio in California to work through some of the song ideas. It was literally an 8x8 room, like a tiny little room, all four of us crammed in there playing all our sh\*\* together, pulling together some of the songs for the record, and it was just a cool thing to do. For me, it was a good reminder that we don't need sh\*\*. All we need to do is just play together. We don't need fancy kit. We don't need expensive studio. We don't need nothing. We just gotta have the spirit of the music. We just got to be inspired. That's how it all came together, man: inspiration and the right people coming together at the same time.

**RRX:** I saw a video interview with Billy [Graziadei], and it was Dave Ellison; his show. He said, "The basis of rock and roll is that everything isn't awesome." He was talking about the internal stuff, you know? Billy said that if people have strong enough ideas, they shouldn't compromise just to make people happy. I agree with both of those. Does one lead to the other, do you think?

**DS:** Well, in a band, there's always

compromise. Always. Compromise can really suck because sometimes ... when it's clear to me that one guy in the band is very inspired, like has a really big energy ... I will gladly take a backseat. And help them realize their vision, their way. Because that inspiration comes from somewhere outside of our brains, outside of our bodies, you know what I'm saying? So sometimes you're a participant in the inspiration, sometimes you're an assistant. So there is always compromise in a sense, because when you got four guys in a band, and everybody has a different idea for a song, only one guy's thing is gonna work ... and this is pretty much what I think Billy was actually talking about.

**RRX:** You're right, he was talking about "if I have this idea and I feel that strongly about it, then anybody who comes up to me with another idea, they should feel that strongly about their idea." Whoever's got the strongest idea, whoever's most inspired, I think that's what he was talking about. So I think you and he are on the same page.

**DS:** Yeah, I mean, for me it's all about inspiration. Like, where is the energy? When I walk into a room of musicians, and they all have ideas. It's easy to sense where the best or the strongest energy is. I like to collaborate, and I like being part of a band, so I like to latch on to that energy and try to get inspired by it as well. It's not all about me just pushing my energy. I'm going to make this happen. I'm going to try to help make this happen for all of us. There is kind of a compromise when you create, so I kind of agree with both points of that. But yeah, if that's what the question was, I mean, I get it ... you got four guys in a band, we argue, we fight, but at the end of the day, the true inspiration should be the energy that pushes the idea through.

*This interview has been abridged for space. For the unabridged version, please visit [radioradiox.com](http://radioradiox.com)*



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Steel Panther. Photo provided.

# Steel Panther

## Drummer Stix Zadinia

by Rob Smittix

**RRX:** Stix, man. How's it going?  
**Stix Zadinia:** Rob, if it was any better ... I almost sounded like I said if it was Eddie Vedder. If it was any better, it would be perfection. It's just shy of that. How are you?

**RRX:** Good man. I love the positivity. We need that in this world.

**SZ:** Dude, I agree with you, man. The world feels crazy right now, more crazy than it's ever felt, and to that end, I think that the only therapy for Earth is more Steel Panther.

**RRX:** I couldn't agree with you more on that. Steel Panther is always fun and always seems like it's a party. Does the

party ever end?

**SZ:** It doesn't end. I mean, honestly, when I get home after a tour ... I hate to say it, but it just keeps going.

**RRX:** (Laughs) You do have to do things in moderation. Are you a coffee drinker?

**SZ:** You know what? It's funny you ask that, Rob, because I have never had a sip of coffee, and that's no BS. Never done it. All my friends are like, dude, you gotta try coffee, and I'm like ... bro, I'm so deep in this game of life ... now I'm just doing it to piss everybody off.

**RRX:** That's wild, man. I don't even know where that came from, but that is

definitely information people do need to know about. And yeah, how are you gonna try it now? It's too late in the game.

**SZ:** Dude, I can't! It would be so anticlimactic because all my friends were like ... dude, you gotta try coffee. I'd be like, you know what? OK, I tried coffee. They'll go, alright, cool, and then we would just move on to something else. So I'm just holding on to it because it makes me happy.

**RRX:** Understandably so. Yeah, I think I asked that because I'm actually drinking yesterday's coffee. It's good enough.

**SZ:** Nice.

**RRX:** So we're very excited to have you come to Albany again, Empire Live on April 25, and this is the Twenty Twenty Sex Tour. What are we to expect in 2026 with Steel Panther?

**SZ:** Well, you know? If I told you a bunch of stuff that was gonna be different, like ... hey man, this time around, you can expect us to get super deep and super philosophical, we're gonna talk about the world, life, politics, and religion. Dude, NO! Not even close. What you can expect is more debauchery, more escape, more just letting it fly, more boobs, more ass, more all the things that make the

world the greatest place in the solar federation. You can expect Steel Panther in full effect. We're not taming it. We're not going to mellow it out. We're not going to rock your balls. We're gonna play heavy metal, and we're gonna let people let their hair down and just have a great time. We're gonna play a bunch of songs from a bunch of records. And we may even play a new song that has not been heard. We may or may not, Rob.

**RRX:** Well, I'm hoping that you do, so that mystery is in the air. I guess we're just gonna have to find out. People are gonna have to get there.

**SZ:** Yeah, the only way you're really gonna know is if you buy a ticket. We never started this band for any grand reason other than we love heavy metal and we love chicks, right? And we love to party. That was the mantra when we started. We still love all those things, but the world has become this crazy place. It just so happens, it's worked out that our band is a place where you can come forget about the BS that is every day. For a lot of people, it's a job they don't like, a situation, money problems, whatever ... relationship issues. You come to Steel Panther, you'll forget about it all for an hour and a half to two hours, and you'll have a great time. That's kind of what we have turned into, the escape from the everyday BS!

**RRX:** And you mentioned boobs. Everyone loves boobs, everyone on the planet, you love them from day one.

**SZ:** They're the nectar of life.

**RRX:** They are, by the same token, you know? I feel it's very hard for a guy to shoot his shot these days. In the aspect of ... he shoots his shot, he misses, and then she goes on social media and says, "Oh, this creep!"

**SZ:** Dude, it sucks. I hear you, bro. It's terrible because how are you supposed to meet somebody?

Let's face it, this is the reality. Like, how are you supposed to go meet somebody? And if they're not into you, what are you supposed to do? You gotta say hi. You gotta give your shot like you said.

**RRX:** You do. You should only become a creep after you try more than twice. If she says hell no the third time, then you've earned that creep status.

**SZ:** You know what? I agree with you. I totally agree with you, dude. You're right on time.

**RRX:** Hey, I gotta say, man. You actually have one of my favorite quotes. "Let's kick today's ass right in the balls!" I love it. That is the way to live.

**SZ:** (Laughs) Dude, I love that you know that quote! It's a solid one, you know?

**RRX:** Words to live by.

**SZ:** They are words to live by ... It's just like dude, you know what? Let's grab it, beat its ass, and go.

**RRX:** My wife has this little sign next to the mirror, and it says, "You didn't wake up today to be a weak ass b\*\*ch." I look at it often and agree, but I like your quote even better.

**SZ:** Dude, I appreciate that. Her quote is a great quote, and the fact that you like mine better makes me very happy. I'm honored. Appreciate it.

**RRX:** Well, speaking of an honor, I appreciate you talking to me here today. Anything else that you wanna say to the people to encourage them to come out? Anything that you wanna put out there to the world?

**SZ:** I'll just say, "Albany, it's time." Come out of the snow. Well, hopefully it'll be melted by then. But come out, have a great time with Steel Panther. We're gonna make sure that you guys don't leave disappointed and that everybody has a great time. And who knows? Maybe that chick you've been trying to get at will say yes.

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# Music Notes

## The Art and Science of Music

by Peak Music Studios

### The YouTube Trap

There's a quiet trap that catches more musicians than bad posture and cheap strings combined. It isn't a lack of talent or even laziness. It's YouTube.

Before anyone gets defensive, I'm not anti-YouTube. There is some excellent information online. There's also a lot of recycled half-truths presented with confident thumbnails and dramatic titles. The issue isn't the platform itself. The issue is how people use it.

This conversation happens in my studio almost every week. I'll ask how the workout went, and a student will tell me it felt hard, so they looked up a trick online to make it easier. I ask if it worked. There's usually a pause. "A little." And we both know what that means. A little better is still a little.

### The Psychology of the Shortcut

Human beings are wired for efficiency. Psychologists call it cognitive ease: we gravitate toward what feels smooth and rewarding in the short term. A quick insight gives you a dopamine hit, and your brain registers it as progress, even if nothing measurable has changed.

Watching "10 Hacks to Shred Faster" feels productive. Buying "Master Guitar in 8 Weeks" feels decisive. Signing up for the online course, "Professional Voice in Six Months," feels like momentum. But feeling productive and building skill are not the same thing.

Daniel Levitin writes in "This Is Your Brain on Music," "Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good." There is no neurological workaround. Skill develops through repetition that strengthens neural pathways over time. It is slower than people want. It is less glamorous than people hope, but it works.

### The Riff Illusion

Every so often, a guitarist walks in and plays Eddie Van Halen's "Eruption" note for note. It's impressive, and it takes coordination. Then I ask them to sit in a simple groove, improvise something melodic, or shape a phrase with real dynamic control, and things start to unravel.

They've memorized movements, but they haven't built control. Copying shapes is not the same as understanding sound. Executing a sequence is not the same as owning the instrument. Bruce Lee's line about practicing one kick 10,000 times applies directly to scales, intervals, breath coordination, timing, and chord transitions: the unglamorous work builds the freedom that people think the flashy stuff gives them.

### Why Basics Feel So Hard

Fifteen or twenty minutes of focused fundamentals each day isn't physically overwhelming. It's mentally demanding. That's where most resistance shows up.

Research on deliberate practice

consistently shows that high performers spend time working at the edge of their ability with structured feedback. It isn't always fun. It isn't dramatic. It's specific and repetitive. Scrolling for a new trick feels easier, but most real breakthroughs are the result of consistent, accurate repetition.

### The 5-Minute Rule

Here's something practical. Before you open YouTube, practice five real minutes of targeted skill work. Not noodling. Not singing the fun part. Not casually strumming what you already know. Set a timer and do something that actually builds control. If you still want to watch something after that, go ahead.

The following week, make it ten minutes. Then fifteen. Within a month, you'll be practicing long enough to create real neurological change. Around twenty focused minutes a day is where noticeable shifts begin to happen.

But it has to be foundational work: timing, articulation, tone control, breath efficiency, fretboard awareness, harmonic understanding. If you're not sure what that means for your instrument, that's where a good teacher matters. Not someone who just hands you cool riffs, but someone who builds musicians. If all you have are riffs, you have tricks. If you build foundations, you have music. And music gives you options.

Good luck out there.

### This Month in Music History — March

**March 1, 1973** – Pink Floyd releases "The Dark Side of the Moon."

**March 4, 1966** – John Lennon's comment that the Beatles were "more popular than Jesus" is published in the London Evening Standard, setting off controversy across the U.S.

**March 5, 1963** – Patsy Cline dies in a plane crash at age 30.

**March 9, 1987** – U2 releases "The Joshua Tree," blending atmospheric rock with American roots influences and defining a generation.

**March 19, 1982** – Ozzy Osbourne guitarist Randy Rhoads dies in a plane crash.

**March 21, 1685** – Johann Sebastian Bach is born.

**March 23, 1743** – George Frideric Handel premieres "Messiah" in London.

Here's the strange part. There is a story that King George II was so moved during the "Hallelujah" chorus that he stood up. And when the king stands, everyone stands. Historians aren't even sure it happened.

Yet nearly 300 years later, audiences still rise during the "Hallelujah" chorus. Possibly because a king was overwhelmed. Possibly because he was uncomfortable. Possibly because someone simply stood up for whatever reason.

Music does that. One moment, one gesture, and tradition is born.

Any questions? Have a suggestion for a topic? Drop Jeff an email at [jeff@peakmusicstudios.com](mailto:jeff@peakmusicstudios.com)

# Richard Wang

## Master Chinese Calligrapher

by Liam Sweeny

Chinese calligraphy is a beautiful art, and Master Calligrapher Richard Wang has a dedicated mastery and treats us to an inside look at this ancient art form. We welcome Richard as he shares his world with us.

**RRX:** When did you start doing calligraphy? Were you young, or did you pick it up as an adult? Does it serve any other purpose in your life, like relieving stress?

**Richard Wang:** I started learning Chinese calligraphy since 9-years-old, when I was in third grade. I was fascinated by the booth on the street, with the local master calligrapher writing couplets, which is a tradition during Chinese New Year. Almost every family buys a set to put on their door. It happened that I had a neighbor who wrote Chinese calligraphy, and he taught me the first few years. Later, I found an artist to continue teaching me.

**RRX:** Are there any legendary calligraphers? Is the art scene like that? Are there different schools?

**RW:** Chinese Calligraphy has a very long history, over 2000 years. There are many legendary; Wang Xizhi is the most famous one.

**RRX:** Where do you present your work? Has it been anywhere big (say, in New York), or are you aiming to get your work there?

**RW:** I have displayed my artwork at the library, the Chinese Community Center, the Arts Center of the Capital Region, and the Albany Center Gallery. I haven't tried places like New York City yet. However, I am planning to contact galleries

and museums in other cities.

**RRX:** A lot of younger people these days don't know cursive because it isn't used commonly. And they really miss out on the beauty of the hand rendering of the letters. You are even further along that path, emphasizing the beauty of text. What experience have you had with younger people as they see your work?

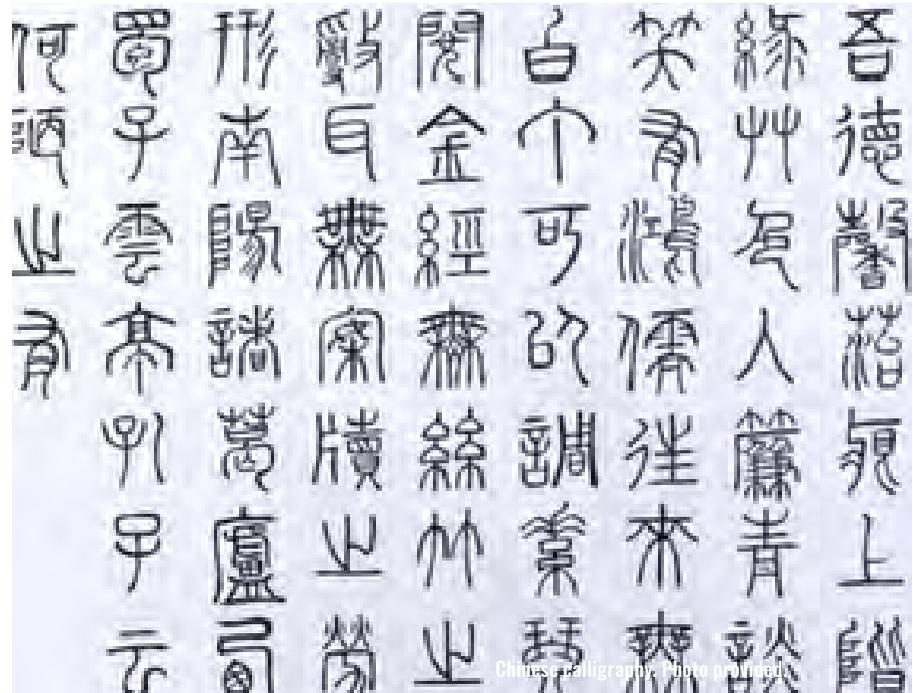
**RW:** I think the youth use phones and computers too much; they don't use hand to write anymore. Once you give them a chance, they enjoy it. I had a workshop named Ink for Healing for youth last year. All the kids who joined the program liked it. Many young people buy a bookmark with their name in Chinese calligraphy as a gift for themselves or friends. Each year at multicultural festivals, there is a long line in front of my table. I am sure they love calligraphy.

**RRX:** Every artist has their toolkit, and I imagine you do too. Is there a history behind the tools you use?

**RW:** Yes, all tools - brush, rice paper, ink holder, and ink - have stories. The Chinese brush is from the Qin dynasty, over 2000 years old. Paper is from the Han dynasty, which is nearly 2000 years old. Ink and ink holders, too.

There are many different kinds of brushes, rice paper, inks, and ink holders, but for beginners, keep it simple: a middle-sized mixed brush, fully cooked rice paper, a bottle of prepared ink, and a cheap ink holder or a small dish would do the job.

**RRX:** I imagine there are aspects



of the Chinese alphabet that would baffle a Western mind. To an American, there may not be a perceptible difference between Chinese standard lettering and Chinese calligraphy. How might an American tell the difference?

**RW:** There is no alphabet in Chinese; you have to memorize all the words. Students learn the simple ones; just a few strokes first, then go harder and harder. There are 3,000 basic words, 7,500 for advanced levels. Experts need to remember around 10,000 words

Calligraphy is a more artistic way to write a word. There are five different scripts: seal script, which is from oracle, the oldest standard script from the Qin dynasty. The clerical script started in Han Dynasty, which is more flat and

simple. The regular script (standing style) is in modern-day use and taught in Chinese schools today. It is clear, balanced, and readable — this is the foundation of all calligraphy training.

Running script is semi-cursive. The brush begins to move freely, connecting strokes naturally. It feels like handwriting — elegant but still readable. Cursive script is the most expressive form. The characters are no longer drawn. They are performed. The brush records movement, rhythm, and emotion, almost like music. This is purely for artwork now. Not many people can recognize it.

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# The Heights

by Joe Barna

**O**ver the past two years, I've stepped away from many commitments. Most exist in the arena of live musical performance, but also within my personal life. Like many, I felt overwhelmed, confused, uninspired, exhausted, and without purpose. I've heard from others who are experiencing a similar circumstance. In this month's edition of The Heights I will concentrate on presenting the philosophies that guided me through my storm and helped me to find myself among the chaos.

The first concept that one must come to terms with is that no transformation into greatness arises without traveling through the darkness. We must also know that not all darkness is negative. As one man put it, "Just like a seed buried beneath the soil, we will inevitably break open and enter the light as a growing tree." That seed needed to remain in darkness until it was prepared to be revealed in all of its greatness. People are no different than nature. We need time, water, sun, a caring hand, and at first the dark if we are to become who we are truly meant to be. Embrace your situation, know it isn't forever, and always be preparing yourself for what you believe you are deserving of.

The second hurdle we must overcome is repeating the phrase "Why is this happening to me?" What I have learned to say is "Thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to see what it is I have yet to resolve in my life." Like many, I thought my pain and lack of progress were bestowed upon me

because some force deemed me unworthy of greatness. I believed my future was doomed to be riddled with a collection of failures and shattered aspirations of what I could have been. I realize now that my life was a consequence of my poor decisions. That what I believed I could become was not being backed by the preparation necessary to arrive at my desired destination. There was no outside force holding me back. It was I who was allowing the chatter from others, low self-esteem, a violent childhood, and bad habits to rule over my suspended potential. I let the external dictate my outcomes. I now know that the external can never award our souls the ultimate reward of peace. Peace does not manifest itself from money, the approval of others, or external successes. Peace is rewarded to those with the willingness to look inward, let go, and let God into our hearts. Maybe not for everybody, but it has sure worked for me.

The third barrier standing in many people's way is the resonating emotional pain that has built up over many years of loss, heartache, and rejection. Pain that seems like it will never divorce itself from our hearts and minds. But nothing could be further from the truth. What is pain? It is pretending that everything is fine when it is not. It is holding onto the rejection of a loved one or former partner. Pain is a mirror that reminds us of what we no longer have or what we never became. Yes, maybe these statements are true, but pain is also something much more profound.

Pain is the very thing that attempts to destroy you, only to rebuild you back as the person you were always meant to be. Pain doesn't shatter us because we are weak. It does this so we may finally meet the truest version of ourselves. Is it an easy path to look inward, acknowledge our hurt, and begin the journey to become a fully realized person? No ... and that's exactly how it must be for some. One must endure if wishing to become pure. The beauty is that a beautiful life awaits everyone willing to prepare themselves for its arrival.

Every great story has a comeback. Each molded in its own unique image. Each at the exact time as it was created to unveil itself. The road to becoming who you know you are meant to be isn't like the movies. It doesn't happen in 90 minutes or because you wish it to be. It happens when you have prepared your mind, body, and spirit to receive it. It happens when you let go of the pain, accept that not everybody is going to like you, and stop searching outward for validation from those undeserving of your spiritual wealth. When you finally awaken to the reality that happiness isn't the goal, wholeness is, then you can truly start to love yourself, respect yourself, and accept yourself.

I'll end with this ...

Our outer world is a mirror into our inner world. It's a reflection of those things which we have yet to resolve. Most of what we experience or are denied comes as a result of the choices we make. Poor choices garner poor results. I spent nearly all of my

life incarcerated in an emotional prison that I allowed others to build for me. I accepted that I wasn't good enough to be successful. That I wasn't kind enough to be loved. Not because I believed this in my heart, but because of my experiences as a child, as a young student being judged by those who were entrusted to educate me, and as a denier of a higher power. When I look back now, I do not recognize that person. I've been fortunate to have great people enter my life as a man. Some of which are gone now, but many are still here guiding me through the darkness. People like Lee Shaw, Hal Galper, and Nat Phipps have passed onto heaven. They left impressions on many who, to this day, still share their lessons. Those who remain, such as Chris Garabedian, Ralph Lalama, Stacy Dillard, Keith Pray, Kevin Champagne, and others, continue to inspire me today.

If you're struggling, I encourage you to stop, reflect, and make the difficult decisions. Understand that life is worth more than simply existing inside of it. You are deserving of greatness, success, and peace. Understand that our universe does not award perfection; it awards alignment. And, the greatest gift you will ever receive is to truly know yourself.

God Bless You.

Warmest Regards,  
Joe

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# Three Minutes to Better Days

by Charla Earney      An Interview with Chris Sanders



Chris Sanders.

I have lived most of my life in three-minute increments.

Three minutes is the time you're given at a town meeting to present what you believe matters most. Three minutes is about the average length of a TikTok video. It can take three minutes to condense frustration into coherence. Three minutes to stand at a podium and explain why something should be but isn't. The expectation is that you arrive prepared, regulated, concise. The clock does not bend for emotion. Three minutes is also the average length of a song. In three minutes, you can walk streets that have no name. Climb mountains. Lose someone, forgive someone, fall in love. A beat drops, and suddenly your body remembers something your mind hasn't processed yet. Three minutes can alter a mood. Redirect a day. Shift a life.

I worked ten years in State Administration. I know what can be built,

approved, ordered, and signed in under three minutes when your brain slips into hyperfocus. Permissions granted. Deadlines recalibrated. Entire workflows rerouted. Time in that world was transactional. Measured. Logged. Accounted for. Music, though ... music is the place where time bends. That's why the working-class musicians scattered across the Tri-State area feel like hidden treasure to me. My professional world was structured and predictable. But every so often, something pierced through the routine. One summer afternoon, I looked up and saw a bagpiper on the roof of an Albany facility. Fifteen minutes of wind and sound and complete presence. I missed a meeting. It was with HR. I already knew what they were going to say. Music won. That was a good lesson: when time opens, step into it.

I first met Chris Sanders at an open mic at the Rustic Barn Pub. Metallica

T-shirt. A lion's mane that refused to be ignored. I didn't know he was about to perform. I didn't know he was a veteran. I didn't know I was watching a man who understands time differently than most. Military service does that. It teaches regulation. Initiation. When to move and when to hold. That hesitation can cost you, and discipline can save you. Whether in peace or conflict, service etches into a person's relationship with time. Chris carries that.

I walked into RadioRadioX to interview Chris Sanders and The Better Days-Brian Clayton (guitar/vocals), Eric Roberts (bass), and Blake Dewey (drums), and their photographer, Austin Sanders, Chris Sanders' son. I wasn't expecting magic concerning space/room. The station felt young and simple. Mismatched chairs. A couch that looked like it had survived both a dorm room and a hospital waiting area. Clean. Sparse. A blank slate. I left a cup there, empty, thinking maybe I'd fill it later. I like waiting for the "how" to arrive. It never goes as expected. They all arrived on time. When Chris tells the story of how The Better Days formed, his entire body participates. He describes driving down the road and spotting Eric loading what looked like music gear into his car. He didn't hesitate. He whipped his Jeep around. As he reenacted it, his arms stretched wide like an American eagle mid-flight. His eyes lit up. That moment, turning the car around, is initiation.

Some people think bands form through slow networking, careful planning, or casual jam sessions that accidentally bloom. Chris formed this band through decision. Through recognition.

Through acting inside the moment instead of watching it pass. He pulled the team together himself.

Not by accident. Not by drift.

Alignment gets overused these days, but here it fits. It wasn't mystical. It was intentional. A veteran's instinct to identify the target, assess the terrain, and move. He arranged rehearsals. Scheduled around day jobs. Coordinated communication. Facilitated songwriting. Booked gigs. Held structure so creativity could live inside it. Regulation creates freedom. That's something musicians don't always admit.

The Working-Class Band.

One of the first things I asked them was what they do for day jobs. Time matters differently when you punch a clock. These aren't full-time touring rock stars insulated from reality. They have families. Responsibilities. Schedules that don't bend easily. The long-term goal for The Better Days isn't delusion — it's evolution. Growth without losing foundation. Building something sustainable. Choosing bandmates at this stage of life isn't casual. It's closer to choosing a partner. Maybe even choosing a marriage. If success arrives, if the secular jobs fade away, these are the men you'll be tied to. That requires trust. Watching them interact, what struck me wasn't just respect. It was admiration. Genuine fascination with each other's abilities. The way they finish bad jokes. Give space. Laugh at inside references without excluding the room. If the band were a family, you could feel the roles without anyone declaring them. The steady hand. The spark. The glue. The wildcard. The emotional anchor. Chemistry doesn't just happen.

It's maintained. I asked if they intentionally built it with retreats, writing camps, rituals. Their answer? They show up. And just hang and jam. Showing up is the most underrated team-building exercise on earth. Is creativity something you tap into? Or something you discipline yourself into? Chris bridges both worlds. There's the romantic myth of waiting for inspiration. Then there's the military understanding that you initiate action and let momentum build. He used to bring his guitar to work and hide in stairwells to practice. Concrete echo wrapping around fifteen carved-out minutes between responsibilities.

I know those stairwells. I walked through those halls for years. When he described playing there, I pictured climbing between floors, hearing music where there shouldn't be music, freezing mid-step, following the sound. How do I know I would have done that?

Because I did. With bagpipes on a rooftop.

Creativity doesn't always announce itself loudly. Sometimes it hides in stairwells and waits for someone to recognize it. When I asked what a writing session looks like, the answer returned to space. Lyrics might start with it. Or melody. Or chaos. Sometimes tension leads. Sometimes emotion. Creative disagreement? It happens.

But there's an unspoken rule: The song wins. Not ego. Not volume. Not seniority. The song. That's trust.

If someone secretly filmed rehearsal, fans might be surprised by how ordinary it looks. Jokes. Debates. Minor arguments. Chaos. Probably a group chat name that makes sense only to them. But underneath it all is timing. Who comes in on the downbeat. Who holds back. Who knows when a song is done and who never thinks it is. Time in a band is layered. Musical time. Relational time. Career time. The Better Days are not rushing theirs. They're building Presence.

We're told constantly to live in the moment. Be mindful. Be present. It

sounds simple. It isn't. We're wired for survival. We scan terrain. We anticipate threats. Presence requires intention. Chris learned regulation through service. You don't dissolve into chaos when others depend on you. That training shows up in how he leads. He initiates. He prioritizes. He creates structure so others can create freely. That's rare. What struck me most after hours of conversation wasn't a single quote. It was a feeling. They've got this. No scrambling to prove legitimacy. No insecurity masquerading as bravado. Just quiet, grounded confidence. The best days aren't nostalgia. They're ahead.

When I asked about long-term goals, the answers were steady. Growth. More shows. Stronger catalog. Wider reach. Bigger rooms, maybe. But not at the cost of each other. Do listeners hear that chemistry? I do. It's in the restraint. In knowing not every moment needs to be filled. Silence is on time too. Three minutes can change everything. But it's the thousands of three-minute blocks — rehearsals, drives, stairwell practices, open mic nights — that build a band. Chris turned his Jeep around because he saw possibility loading gear into a trunk. That decision didn't take long.

Three minutes.

That's all it takes to decide to initiate something. The rest is discipline. Alignment. Showing up. Better days aren't accidental. They're built. Chris Sanders and The Better Days are the sum of a thousand small initiations — a veteran's regulation, a musician's instinct, a group of men choosing alignment over ego.

Three minutes.

That's all it takes to turn the Jeep around.

The rest?

That's the work.

# 3 Questions with Johnny Cattini

by Rob Skane



**J**ohnny Cattini is a working guitar player based in Nashville, Tennessee. He's toured regularly, on his own and also as a sideman. You should hire him to play on your next recording project. He can even track it for you, just saying ... Find him at [johnnycattinimusic.com](http://johnnycattinimusic.com)

**RRX:** What was the moment that made you pick up a guitar and never put it down?

**Johnny Cattini:** My dad played guitar, and he used to rehearse at a futon store after hours. I used to attend their rehearsals and fell in love with classic rock music. I learned "Purple Haze" by Jimi Hendrix and hopped in and played with them, and knew it was what I wanted to do from that moment on.

**RRX:** If you could go back and tell

your younger self one thing about playing guitar, what would you say?

**JC:** There are a million different ways you can express yourself through the guitar. Find the style you love, trust it, and make it your own.

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

**JC:** When I pick up the guitar outside of a work context, it's typically to write a song or try to come up with something that could spark an original song. Otherwise, I like to learn something new and interesting, whether that's a lick or a chord progression, and try to find ways to incorporate it into my own playing and writing. I've been spending some time with the new John Mayer digital plug-in as well to try to chase some tones!



# 2...3...4 Memoirs of the Broke and Fameless

## by Chris Busone



### “Blowin Snow”

As I write this latest missive, it is January, and the Northeast is about to receive a full-frontal assault by the biggest storm system since Bing Crosby invented the snowflake. And as we prepare for our impending inclement demise, I am reminded of winters gone by when the nimbostratus clouds had their wintery way with our region, and club bookings dropped off the calendar like iguanas in a 50-degree cold snap.

Canceling a gig is an absolute anathema to musicians. Coughs, colds, bleeding eyelids, typhoid, dead uncles, a “what is that?” on your what-cha-ma-call-it, frogs raining from the sky ... we play. The story goes that the last group to voluntarily cancel a gig was the family trapeze act booked to open for Lincoln at Gettysburg, and they would have absolutely been there if their van hadn't broken down. (Now that I hear that out loud, I'm not sure that it's true.) At any rate, the Flying Rebels missed out on a great opportunity for exposure eight score and some odd years ago. (P.S. When you're told that a gig is gonna be “great exposure,” that means you're not getting paid.)

But the point I'm belaboring is, we will do anything to not cancel a date. Drive an unreasonable distance with way more bodies in a vehicle than it was designed to carry. Set up a five-piece band with a B-3 and a Leslie in a space that would be

a tight fit for an accordion player with splash cymbals on his knees. And well, physical ailments simply don't appear on the Doppler in this climate.

I once played a show with Chaser when I had a staggering case of food poisoning. We never even discussed canceling. Instead, the road crew placed a large plastic garbage pail behind our oversized PA system (we all had them in the '80s). Periodically, in the middle of a tune, I would give Rod Choppy the high-sign and he would break into a guitar solo while I hopped off the side of the stage and hurled behind the speakers, unbeknownst to our adoring fans. If that ain't rock & roll, I don't know what is.

But a true act of God, like the 18-24 inches we are about to receive, well, ya can't chuck that up into a garbage can. No, that much muck and mire sets off a chain of events that would make Rube Goldberg green with envy. Usually, it begins with a panicked club owner calling the band leader. “Whatta ya think? Should we cancel?”

Now, band leaders will almost always take a “Let's wait and see” stance. The thinking here is that if we get there and set up, he has to pay us ... right? Well ...

Most of the time, it will come down to “Let's Make a Deal.” You play a short first set to no one, and the negotiating round-robin begins.

Club Guy: “We booked you for three sets, and you played one, so I'll pay you a third.”

Band Guy: “We want at least half because we drove here in the storm and set up and have to tear down ...”

Club Guy: “A third and I'll tear up your tab.”

Band Guy: “What about ... wait, you were gonna charge us for drinks?”

And so it goes. Now mind you, this only applies to regular, garden variety, run-in-the-mill, you've-seen-one-you've-seen-'em-all, snowstorms. Not this bombastic, colossal, Orson Wellesian, Lizzo-before-the-surgery, monstrosity we're about to have rammed up our collective keisters. No, this is a true act of G-O-D, and you can't mess with that. Schools, churches, yoga classes, AA meetings, and yes, even gigs (admittedly, sometimes there's some cross-over with those last two) are all canceled. It's time to stay home, hunker down as it were, and plot your strategy for digging out of this mess so you can get to the next gig. And once you've finished ruminating on all the exciting things you could have done, the exotic places you could have seen, the famous and interesting people you could have met if only you had made that \$75 from that canceled snow gig, you can move on to the next engagement.

As I said in my preamble ramble, I am writing this in January. Sunday the 25th, mid-afternoon, 2026 to be exact. So, when you read it in the March addition of the Xperience Monthly, this storm will be but a snow-blown memory. A wince-inducing thought when brought up at your next gathering of

weather-obsessed friends. But right now, it's all anyone can talk about, so I figured I'd immortalize it on the pages of this publication so we can all relive the crap-a-palooza that it was and commiserate again 'cause goddammit we earned it.

Because with the new season upon us now, bands can once again fill the airwaves and club-waves with song and spirit and all that other jazz we do. Free from the worry of Jack Frost taking a dump on our good time and earning potential. Free from snowy roads, whiteout conditions, your parents' constant weather updates, because sure, you have a TV and internet in your house, but they have the weather Doppler Radar app on their phone, which you taught them how to download and use in the first place. Free from zero-degree temperatures, windchill factors (wait ... your mom is calling again with another update), and runny-nose, red-cheeked shoveling sessions.

Yes, in spite of all these things, we've all survived yet another Northeast winter. Unless by the time this comes out, I've succumbed to the elements, or worse, moved to Florida. But wherever I land after this flaky fete, I will be there hopping on the nearest stage and counting in the band in all kinds of stormy weather with a count that's a jam for all seasons, 2...3...4...

# Florence Parmelee

by Joshua Scarselli

## Multi-Instrumentalist



Florence Parmelee. Photo provided.

**W**e have the pleasure of speaking with the amazingly multi-talented Florence Parmelee. Florence is a gifted musician who sings, plays multiple instruments, and even composes her own music. Florence is super busy, but we were lucky enough to capture some of her time!

**RRX:** Tell us a little about your background and what got you into music?

**Florence Parmelee:** Music runs in my family. Both of my parents have sung in church choirs and taken piano lessons. Three of my four grandparents also sang in choirs, and both of my grandfathers played instruments. One of my grandfathers and I used to perform together for my great-grandfather's retirement home. When I was quite little, I got to play piano duets with my great-grandmother, who was a concert pianist.

**RRX:** Music really does run in your family. How did that develop throughout your life?

**FP:** When I was little, I joined the

children's choir at our little neighborhood church. My grandmother had a piano, and I would sit and play the keys a bit. We had a neighbor who was in high school and wanted to try teaching piano lessons. My grandmother paid for a month to "see how it would go." It went very well, and we moved shortly after. We found another piano teacher, and I took lessons with her for many years.

When we were getting ready to try instruments in public school, I wanted to play percussion, but was TERRIBLE at keeping rhythm (I got so much better when I started teaching piano lessons!) and wound up with my 2nd choice: flute.

I started accompanying the school choruses in middle school at the gentle encouragement of my middle school choral teacher and LOVED doing that and continued through my senior year of high school. In high school, I tried trombone for a year and harp for four months. I played percussion for two high school musicals. Keyboard percussion (bells, xylophone, etc.) is very similar to piano, and I was able to pick that up pretty easily.

I went to college for piano, but found the pressure was too much, and I changed majors. While in college, I also tried trumpet lessons. I found brass instruments very challenging, and I do not have the breath for it. In the 2010s, I was helping with the Hudson Valley Community College chorus and band clubs. At one point, the band decided they wanted to become a ukulele band. While I like to listen to string instruments, I had decided I am NOT a

string player. The advisor for the club smiled and said, "Challenge accepted!" Now I play and write "supportive folk" music - mostly to be sung and played on the ukulele.

**RRX:** You really do play a wide range of instruments.

**FP:** A couple of years ago I started volunteering for the Altamont Fair on the pump organ. This historic instrument was popular from the mid 1800s to the early 1900s. Played similarly to the piano (similar keyboard), but has two pedals to pump while playing to blow air through pipes. It has a sound somewhat similar to an accordion. Think of it like patting your head and rubbing your stomach. It is so much fun to play! Also, as a musician, I have never been so glad to also be a runner! A typical full day at the fair, I get 20,000+ steps in.

This is great for me because I can combine my love for music with my love of education. While I'm volunteering, I can give a mini-lecture and demonstration to people who wander in. I took pipe organ lessons for one-and-a-half years at one point. I prefer the piano to the pipe organ, but these lessons taught me how to be a church musician, which has some of its own unique characteristics. I continue to be a church musician now, and really enjoy that, too!

**RRX:** Do you have any upcoming projects?

**FP:** Right now, I'm preparing for two concerts. One is an interactive folk-type. This will be mostly on ukulele. It will be mostly well-known folk music with some of my music that is

group-singable. There is a lot happening right now, and I think a lot of people are feeling very stressed. I hope people come away from this concert with some energized peace. The other concert will be "popular classical piano music." I hope people can get some rest with this concert. The end is very energetic, and I hope people have some fun, too!

**RRX:** You have a very interesting condition called synesthesia. Can you tell us what that is?

**FP:** Synesthesia is very interesting! People describe it in different ways ... sort of a "crossing of wires?" I do see colors with music some, but often ignore it (I think of it like alarm fatigue in a hospital - I'm usually semi-aware of it, but not always conscious of it). I had an idea of sometime playing a concert that is more inclusive for people with hearing loss, and I think displaying the corresponding colors would be a great way to interpret the music. I also experience it sometimes where I hear music in things I see, especially in patterns. That second way has helped in writing music. The first time I was really aware of this, I was at a museum with my family and there were some patterns on the walls. I realized my brain was making music in my head. It was really beautiful and unexpected!

**RRX:** Where can people keep track of your work?

**FP:** You can follow me on Facebook (Florence Parmelee). Also, I have a YouTube channel (Florencep7850). There is only one video right now, but the plan is to upload many more soon!



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# The Record File

## Bren Holmes, Morrissey, and more ...

by Tony Mastrianni

### BREN HOLMES: Ex "YOUNG DUBLINER" CONTINUES STRONG SOLO CAREER

For 30-plus years, Bren Holmes has been plying his craft as a musician, songwriter, and bandmate. As an original member of the Irish rock band, The Young Dubliners, he has gigged all over the world—and lived to talk about it. In the fall of 2019, Bren decided to part ways with the band in pursuit of a solo career. After several months, he put together a list of songs he had written and got together with co-producer Bryan Dobbs to record his very first solo album, "Everything You Never Wanted."

His debut album was very well received throughout the record industry, and not too long after its release, Bren got right back to work to start on his sophomore album entitled, "A Rush to the Starting Line." With 10 new songs under his belt, he again enlisted his co-producer Bryan Dobbs to complement his previous endeavor. It comprises a mixture of themes and emotions, with no two songs sounding alike yet somehow strung together gracefully. It deals with several themes, from a runaway child ("Gloria"), to the topsy-turvy life of Sinéad O' Connor ("Ordinary World"), to Mother Earth speaking to humanity as a whole ("Need Some Time"), to a couple of breakup songs, which Bren never seems to shy away from ("Satisfied", "Don't Say You Will"). Bren and Bryan played most of the instruments but brought in some great talent, including bassist Paul Bushnell (Tim

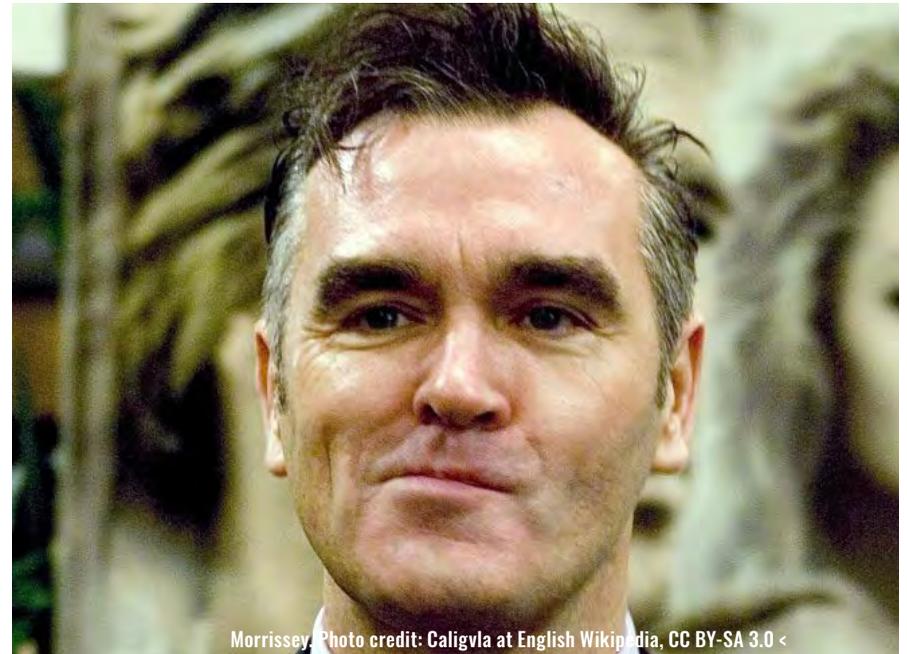
McGraw) and Ben Thomas (Dweezil Zappa), to name a couple. Bren is hoping to take his new album around the country throughout 2026 and beyond. Hopefully, it will bring you some enjoyment and solace while listening to it.

### MORRISSEY UNLEASHING FIRST NEW ALBUM IN SIX YEARS

Morrissey returns to Sire/Warner Records with "Make-Up Is a Lie," his first new studio album since 2020. With poetic and provocative lyrics, sonically dynamic production by Joe Chiccarelli (The Strokes, My Morning Jacket, Alanis Morissette), and a renewed commitment and connection with his loyal global fanbase, the album was recorded last year in France. The new album will be in stores on March 6. The album promises evocatively unpredictable instrumentation and has a title that can be read as an explicit call for unvarnished truth and expression. The 12-song set is poised to further solidify his status as one of the most acclaimed and potent voices of the last four decades.

The album's first single (out now in digital format) is an intoxicating introduction. Co-written by Morrissey keyboardist Camila Grey, "Make-Up Is a Lie" surges forth on a trip-hop-like groove — echoing drums, propulsive bass riff, mysterious atmosphere — that bursts into swirling dream-pop for the chorus. Morrissey vocally floats across the track, weaving a curious tale of a woman who keeps desperately trying to deliver him a message, even in death.

He is joined on the new album by a



Morrissey. Photo credit: Caligvla at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0 <

familiar cast of characters and bandmates, including Jesse Tobias, Camila Grey, Carmen Vandenberg, Juan Galeano, Alain Whyte, Gustavo Manzur, and Brendan Buckley. The track list includes some song titles previously referenced by Morrissey and others that have never been revealed, as well as a faithful cover of Roxy Music's 1973 deep cut "Amazona." It will also feature a song called "Lester Bangs," a tribute to the late, famous rock critic. May I humbly add that I had the honor of writing for him while he was Editor of CREEM.

"Make-Up Is a Lie" will be available on vinyl, CD, and digitally. Vinyl album variants include Blue vinyl and a unique Zoetrope picture disc. A Red vinyl pressing will be available exclusively through all Indie retail stores. You may want to place an order in

advance

On a side note, Mr. Morrissey played the Palace Theatre in Albany in 2012. It was different seeing him without his former guitarist, Johnny Marr; however, the show went on, and it all sounded splendid. Long live the Smiths - that great primal band that featured Morrissey and Johnny upon their inception in England in early 1982.

### FANNY: "MOTHERS PRIDE" RESURFACES ON VINYL!

After releasing all four of Fanny's 1970s Reprise albums on CD, REAL GONE MUSIC is now doing the same on LP! The band's 1973 album "Mothers Pride" is the first of the vinyl reissues. All four Reprise albums rank up there with the Runaways (Joan Jett's fabulous band before going solo) and those of Suzi Quatro (whose sister,

Patti, ironically joined Fanny, replacing June on guitar, briefly before they disbanded in 1975). They had a couple of reformations in later years, but did not quite sustain momentum. The original Reprise albums were testimonies that they were indeed precursors for all women's rock bands from that post-60s era. "Mothers Pride" is probably the best offering from the band. It may well have also been its most controversial, as Todd Rundgren agreed to produce the album on the condition that he and he alone would oversee the album mix. The result was a record that cemented Fanny's popularity in the U.K. but failed to make an impact in the charts here in the States despite their European charted hit classic "Summer Song." The two-page insert that comes with the reissue includes not just the lyric sheet, but the rare promo flyer that accompanied some copies, and the album was remastered for its baby pink vinyl! Look for the other three LPs to be

available in the not-too-distant future. Though the band had some personnel changes along the way, the mainstay players of this giddy-up hard rock ensemble consisted of Philippines-born sisters Jean Millington and June Millington, along with Alice de Buhr and Nickey Barclay. The group attracted critical acclaim for rejecting typical girl group formats and expectations of women in the rock music industry. They were very proficient in emphasizing their musical skills. Later groups, such as the Go-Go's, the Bangles, and the aforementioned Runaways, all stated that Fanny was a major influence. The Reprise Fanny LPs truly reflect that they were the precursors to women's rock and roll stardom.

**ALSO RECOMMENDED: LIGHTNING STILLS, KULA SHAKER!**

"Lightning Stills" (Max Trax Records). There is something special about this group. Cannot help but like

them! The band is a venerated cast of Omaha musicians - a who's who collection of local artists of varying genres, all unified in a love for pure and unadulterated Outlaw Country. Originating in 2020, Craig Fort (a hardcore, metal, and garage mainstay), who leads the post-rock outfit, first formulated the band with Omaha music icon and multi-instrumentalist Mike Friedman (who had been playing country for decades). Pulling into their magnetic orbit a good-timing odd bunch that features guitarist Tom May, bassist Dan Maxwell, and drummer Javid Thunders, the band Lightning Stills was born. Synergistically speaking, they mesh well as a unit. Deciding it was time to record a full record after releasing a handful of tracks in 2020 and 2021, the self-titled debut started taking shape, and a caboodle of punk-infused Outlaw Country was born. One thing is sure: Lightning Stills are still making good old music; they just are

not playing it loud anymore!.

Have you not heard of Kula Shaker? If so, you have been missing some great psych-rock magic from a band that has already taken Europe by storm. Call it hallucinatory hard-driving glam rock. Their new record, "Wormslayer," is a merit-worthy, enigmatic bit of swirling sonic magic. Worth it alone for the single "Lucky Number," it is filled to the brim and ventures into gothic crooning and expansive mantra-metal. Their best effort since their initial release, "K," in 1996. Absolutely exhilarating stuff, chock full of UK hit singles; Rick Rubin is the co-producer. Magnificent! You may want to order this great import album from your local independent record store now. The band is touring Europe now to rave reviews. Just a matter of time before they conquer U.S. soil! Highly recommended!

Till next time ...



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# New American Cuisine

by Liam Sweeny

**R****RX:** Every artist's first song is a milestone. But so is the latest song. Describe the first song/album you recorded, and also the latest song/album you recorded; what are the differences?

Bryce North: Unlike our latest songs, our first recording experience was filled with uncertainty. We even changed the name of the song during the process. "This is True" from NAC – I is a John Mayer inspired indie pop love song that started with the name "18" (we were all 18 at the time, embarrassing, yes, we know). Although our lead guitarist and singer, Ben, made a demo with lyrics and solos, we were riding at maybe 50% confidence when we went into the studio. Our attitude was that we would figure it out as we go, which has changed quite a bit as our writing confidence has grown. Overall with "This is True", we didn't have much control over the process because everything was new to us. I think you can hear that in the recording. We are playing relatively quietly and carefully, but it's a nice tune. There are trumpets and harmonized guitar solos, classic NAC.

Our most recently recorded song is "Talking 'Bout the Weather" from NAC – III. It's a self-recorded, politically charged, LOUD tune. We've certainly grown from the timid studio musicians that we used to be. I think that's come from our transition to home-recording, which started with "Lily of the Aztecs" in 2019. It's allowed us to be more expressive and even risky. On NAC - III as a

whole, we were committing to very different genres for each song, but it still seems to flow. The lyrics describe deep political frustrations, something that we wouldn't have even thought of when we first started as a band. Overall, we are much less timid now.

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

**BN:** Although our first show was technically playing covers at the high school pep rally, our first show with the name "New American Cuisine" was busking outside in the cold at the 2017 Victorian Street Walk in Saratoga Springs, NY. We played at the local Ben and Jerry's with jackets and a space heater, some of us wearing fingerless gloves to keep our hands warm while still feeling the strings. At a certain point our bassist couldn't feel their fingers, and mind you, this is in early winter in upstate NY. Attendance was low for our little corner of downtown. We had an additional guitarist at the time, Harry, who graduated high school a year ahead of us. Luckily, his tube amp survived the cold, though our name did not. We changed it to "Summer Tour" at some point thereafter, which lasted all of maybe two months before we reverted to NAC.

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

**BN:** We strictly do not adhere. If anyone asks, we just say we play indie. In large part, the variety is because all members write songs and our interests are very dynamic. We take inspiration anywhere from Gregorian chants to punk to church organ, folk, pop, and alternative. It's what keeps things interesting for us. We think as you listen, there is continuity from hearing familiar voices – Ben and Bryce switch lead vocals – but we rarely stick to just one style. Overall, we hover around folk, rock, indie, blues, and pop.

**RRX:** A band is a business. A business of love, but you got to work for it. Let's pretend, instead of a band, you all owned a business. What would it be, and why would it be good?

**BN:** We'd own a bookstore café call "New American Caffeine." Our songs are quite varied like the contents of a bookstore. It would have great vibes inside, but it wouldn't be well known, just niche. That's what's special about it.

**RRX:** Cover art is cool. It shows listeners what the artist thinks the album is all about. Because music can be felt visually. If you had to give the public a visual image that you think they would see and just "get" your groove right away, what would it be?

**BN:** The cover of our latest album, NAC – III, sums us up well. At our core, we are all goofy. This photo is special to us in that it was our last show at Caffe Lena. We are all peaking out of the green room into the

hallway that leads to the stage. By using the couch and the door frame, we could layer ourselves up horizontally. Henry's partner Miya took the photo with this retro digital camera of Ben's. The brown and earthy colors capture our production style: acoustic, natural. Love this photo.

**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.

**BN:** Caffe Lena. The people make the experience: Joe who runs the sound and Joel, who is no longer with us. He mixed for the livestream and was wildly overqualified to work with us. But because we are local, we felt so supported. Our first show here was in December 2022. It gave us a new sense of professionalism and pride in what we were doing. The onstage sound is hands down the best we've ever experienced. Any artist will tell you how important that is for a great performance. We've been lucky enough to play at Caffe Lena four times, and we owe that success to Sarah Craig, who gave us a chance in the first place, and everyone who came out to listen and support us. We still remember playing the open mics here, and to be on that stage where Bob Dylan and so many great artists have played is an incredible honor. The answer is always no until you ask!

# Larry the Cable Guy (cont.)

Continued from Page 5.

the “Dean Martin Roasts,” so it’s nice to see that people still love goofy one-liners. There’s not a lot of one-liner comedians. You know, there’s not a lot of us out there, and it’s a hard craft. The one-liner comedy is not easy. It’s about timing and how you tell the joke, and you know, it’s kind of like Seinfeld ... those guys would do those jokes, and you would laugh. If anybody else did, it wouldn’t be as funny. It’s just that they found a way to say it and the timing of it. And it’s kind of like me. Jeff Foxworthy used to say to me all the time, “I have no idea why that joke is funny, but people howl at it, and it makes me laugh because they’re howling at it, and I still don’t know why it’s funny.”

**RRX:** Your family and your faith are really important to you. You started the Git-R-Done Foundation with your wife, Cara, in 2009. Can you tell us what that’s all about?

**DW:** My kid had hip dysplasia when he was first born, had a little bit of a harness for his first year. They thought that he was gonna probably have to have surgery in his twenties because it’s such a bad hip. And then we met this doctor who said he wouldn’t need one. He thought he could eliminate hip dysplasia kids. So we donated to him to go down to Mexico and some of these other places and work with people who need the help, and it worked. Our first donation was to the Arnold Palmer Children’s Hospital to start the International Hip Dysplasia Center, which is a place for parents. When it first started, there were all kinds of different ways to work with hip replacement. Nobody really knew a common way to do it. So this was just a way that people could go online. It would take you to one place with doctors from around the world with one way to cure it. So that was the first one, man, it was really nice. Then

we got involved with the Child Advocacy Center here in Lincoln, Nebraska, and really fell in love with Madonna, the rehabilitation center that took care of kids and veterans. I’ve always had a strong feeling for veterans, and I’ve always wanted to do stuff for veterans. So we just got a big canvas. Anything that involves kids, vets - anything like that - that’s what my foundation does [gitrdonefoundation.org](http://gitrdonefoundation.org).

**RRX:** What is the coolest thing you can tell us about REO Speedwagon?

**DW:** The cool thing about them is they’re down to earth. I’ve been friends with them for a long time. Bruce Hall was a really good friend of mine, the bass player. They’ve come and played at my golf tournament. The coolest thing they ever did? My dad (he passed away) had a rock and roll rhythm and blues band in the ‘70s. And he left me his vintage guitar. And when they saw it, I told them. Kevin Cronin actually took my dad’s guitar to a concert in Omaha. And told the story about it being my dad’s guitar and played “Ridin’ the Storm Out.” Like that. Wow, that thing had been played right.

He loved it, and it was just cool. He came over to the side of the stage so we could get pictures. I mean, I just thought that was the coolest thing ever. But aside from that, you know, they’re one of those bands that should be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. They’re one of the legacy bands. They were together for so many years and still selling out arenas. People love them, and they were party songs. They’re just good. There’s a lot of memories with REO Speedwagon. Every song with REO Speedwagon you hear takes you to a certain time and place in your life.



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# Prog Digest

by Klyde Kadiddlehumper

**H**ow can there be any sin in sincere?

Where is the good in goodbye?

If you're a fan of musicals, you know this line. If not, it's in "The Music Man" performed by the Buffalo Bills. Not the guys who didn't make it to the Super Bowl, the Barbershop Quartet. Klyde's actually been in a few of those and performed to some acclaim (mostly for the schtick, not the music) and

does love them dearly.

But that's not why I bring it up – there's a whole other thing going on here.

This little ditty popped to the fore of the Kadiddlehumper mind while musing about interesting and odd, even groundbreaking, musical instruments. A topic seldom thought about, I imagine, but an interesting one nonetheless

In 1986, the final Frank Zappa studio album, "Jazz from Hell," was released.

It is still a treasured part of Klyde's collection and a masterpiece.

Always ahead of some game or another, it was completely composed and produced (well, almost – the exception was "St. Etienne") on the Synclavier Digital Music System. Certainly not the first synth – Bob Moog had introduced some around about 1964. The Synclavier was the high-end real deal with its own 16-bit computer. At up to half a million dollars – well, it took commitment.

Add to it some MIDI interfaces and programming for the complex rhythms, and – there you have it – "Jazz from Hell."

That's not where it stops, not by any means. There are some unique and custom instruments you will see from time to time.

Take the Chapman Stick. A 10 or 12-string polyphonic tapping instrument – it's most famously played by Tony Levin. You hear it on King Crimson music. You hear it on Peter Gabriel music (hey, have I mentioned yet that there is new Peter Gabriel music coming – individual songs being released with the new "o/i" album by end of

year?). When he first got one, Levin had to ask inventor Emmett Chapman how to play and string the damned thing. Amazing stuff.

Pat Metheny has a 42-string Linda Manzer four-neck Pikasso. To hear that is wonderful. (Hey, did I mention he's coming to the area again in September? Although CC and I may head to the Beacon, 'cause we like NYC.)

All this kinda makes that 2-neck bass/guitar look normal – Fender or Gibson for you?

Kazoos – funny sounding, but not that funny. Unless you mean The Great Gazoo – one of cartoons' great characters.

Then, in a category all his own – P. D. Q. Bach. Professor Pete found some amazing and seriously overlooked music and musical instruments.

There was the "Toot Suite for Calliope Four Hands (S. 212<sup>o</sup>)".

The "Concerto for Horn and Hardart S. 27" – I think that was the luncheon special ...

"The Short-Tempered Clavier, Preludes and Fugues in All the Major and Minor Keys Except for the Really Hard Ones, S. easy as 3.14159265"

"Royal Firewater Musick, for bottles

and orchestra, S. □"

"The Only Piece Ever Written for Violin and Tuba, S. 9, 10, Big Fat Hen"

"Eine Kleine Kiddiemusik for Three Toyists and Orchestra, S. One-Potato-Two-Potato-Three-Potato-Four"

"Gross Concerto No. 1 for divers flutes, two trumpets, and strings, S. -2" – featuring the ever-popular left-handed sewer flute.

You are now saying to yourself, "Oh, come on, Klyde, these cannot be real."

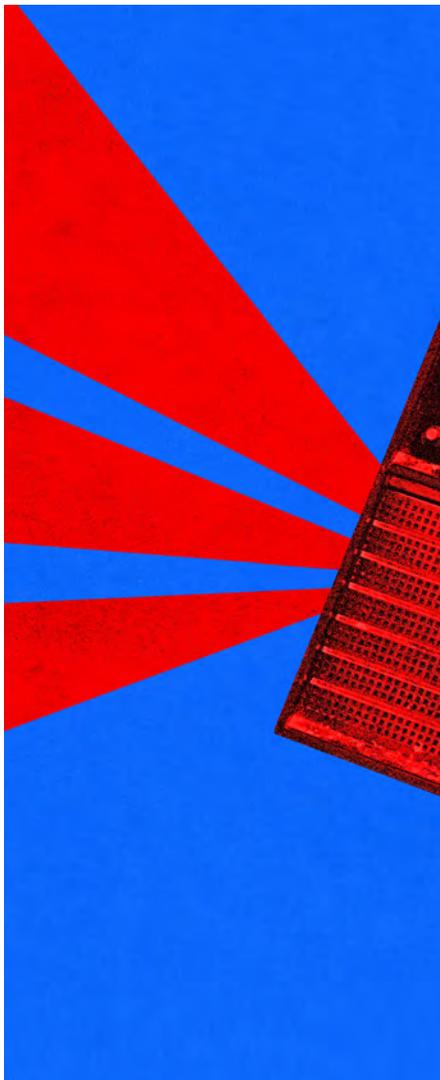
How wrong you are. These and other wonderful finds are part of the Schickele catalog of lost works of the least known Bach son, P.D.Q. Hence, those catalog references S. whatever it might be.

Professor Pete always had a closing statement on his long-running radio program. A statement so monumentally simple and straightforward that it fit its author brilliantly.

Duke Ellington is quoted as coining the phrase "If it sounds good, it is good." To which Leonard Bernstein simply said, "Amen."

Until next time.

Klyde



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