November 2026 || Vol. 8, Issue 11

THE XPERIENCE MONTHLY

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YOUR COMPLETE ARTS XPERIENCE

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Gab Small: Making a Life Worth Filming

By Larry Felton

Gab Small couldn't wait to leave upstate New York. After growing up in Saratoga Springs, she headed west and built a career in tech marketing. Then she quit her job to travel the world, only to have COVID bring her back home. Today, she lives in Troy, making YouTube videos about the places and people of upstate New York—and why life here might be better than people think.

RRX: Before you started making videos about upstate New York, you worked in corporate marketing in California. What were you doing?

Gab: I worked for startups and small tech companies. I was basically a marketing generalist, a one-woman show. It was as good a fit in corporate America as I could get. But I was still dragging myself to work every morning. I never really felt passionate about it.

RRX: What was missing that made you decide to leave?

Gab: I've always been passionate about traveling. When I was living in California, I realized I was never going to have enough vacation time to see everything I wanted to. So I saved my money, quit my job, and traveled for a year.

I could have gone longer, but I was in Asia when the COVID pandemic started. It became obvious I needed to go home. But home never really was California. I grew up in Saratoga, so I got a one-way flight from Manila back to JFK.

RRX: You'd been eager to leave upstate New York. What changed while you were traveling?

Gab: There wasn't any one particular moment. It was seeing the different ways people live and figuring out what's really important to me.

Seeing the world gave me the perspective to come back to upstate New York. The place I was so ready to escape as soon as I got to college was actually a really beautiful place, and I could see myself being happy here long term.

RRX: When you came back, you eventually settled in Troy. Why Troy?

Gab: My husband, Tim, suggested we look at Troy. All I knew was that it was nicknamed "Troilet" when I was growing up. People said, "Don't go there, it's not safe."

Then we were driving down Second Street past Washington Park, and we were like, whoa, this is really nice! We found a house near the park.

Troy has this grittiness. I know my neighbors, and they're awesome. People look out for each other. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

RRX: How did you get started making videos?

Gab: When I was traveling internationally, I had a YouTube channel documenting my travels with my boyfriend at the time. Then COVID happened, we broke up, and I was single, living at home, unemployed, with no car. I had to start over.

I didn't know what the new channel would be about, but I knew I wanted to keep making videos.

RRX: So how did you find your subject?

Gab: In June 2025, I put out a video called Nobody Wants to Live in Upstate New York. Right?

People I worked with in Boston and California kept asking, "Why do you live in upstate New York?" The negativity started bothering me. I thought, I'm going to explain why I love living here.

I spent hours on that video because I was having so much fun putting the narrative together. It was such a passion project. I truly didn't think it was going to be anything. And then it took off like wildfire. I thought, huh, maybe there's something here.

RRX: You'd spent years learning marketing and making videos. Now you were telling stories you cared about. What's been the hardest part?

Gab: Finding the right angle. How can I translate what interests me into storytelling? How can I find the right people with interesting stories? I still don't have that perfectly figured out.

RRX: Which video has gotten the most attention?

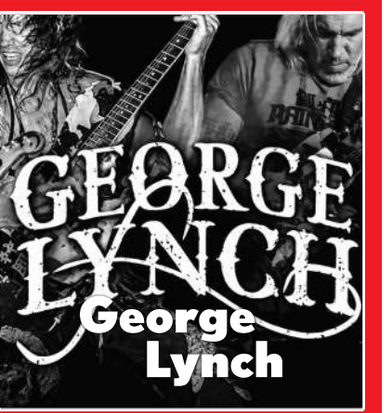
Gab: One about Gilbertsville, a tiny town of about 300 people. A woman who relocated there emailed me. She had an e-commerce business and a house they'd bought for something like $30,000.

She invited me to visit. I think it resonated because who hasn't thought about moving to a tiny town in the middle of nowhere, having a cool online business, and living in a beautiful restored old house you got for pennies? For me, that's the dream.

RRX: Who's watching these videos?

Gab: My number one geographic audience is New York City. I think there's a lot of fantasizing about escaping the city. People are tired of the corporate lifestyle and keeping up with the Joneses. They wish they could move upstate and have a simpler, happier, cheaper way of life.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES



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Photos by: Evan Lauber

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RRX: If I picked up one of these guides and I'm fresh to this whole new lifestyle that I'm trying to get myself out of, what would the guide provide for me? What kind of tips and tricks are in there?

LS: When you open up the guide, one of the first things you'll see is a 72-hour plan for rapid rehousing, and I would say that this plan could be used at any point. It doesn't have to be your first day being homeless to use this. If you've been homeless for a little while and you just want a little bit of direction. There's a section on how to live, health and wellness, mental health, and social connections ... these specific little tips and tricks can help. It talks about how important it is to get a library card and how important it is to get a gym membership, and how you can actually have a parcel sent to a post office that you want, specifically, instead of a mailing address. A lot of little interesting stuff like that.

RRX: That's what it's about, man. You get an idea, you go for it, but this seems like it's gonna be something that's great for the community.

LS: It is, and there's a message as well. It's not just a simple guide; there's an overall message when you read it. I hope it will change people's hearts and minds a little bit.

For more information visit: livinpoor.org

Continued from Page 34...

Our team includes Rutski, who is our fantastic front-of-house manager who really takes pride in his work. His love of music and the search for tone is evident in every interaction he has with customers. He's a touring musician who hones his own craft as a drummer and a guitarist.

Toby has been a big help to our online and shop integration systems. He can do it all, from taking great pics to figuring out why some computer program is acting up. Plus, he's a great addition to the theater scene in the Capital Region.

Bob is our amp technician who has been doing meticulous work. He works with us part-time, but has been really helping us expand our offerings to customers. We love when he comes to the shop to pick up and drop off projects, and we are always looking forward to his next visit.

Carl is our latest addition to the shop. His repair work and setups are second to NONE! He takes great care as if each instrument were his own and really strives to give people a great tool to help make their musical dreams become a reality. He is also an active member of the gigging community and really adds to the music scene in so many ways.

We love being connected to a great community of local musicians, builders, repair people, and other small businesses. That's one of the best things about being in Troy. There are a lot of creative people doing interesting things here. We can't wait to share all of the things we have lined up for the future.

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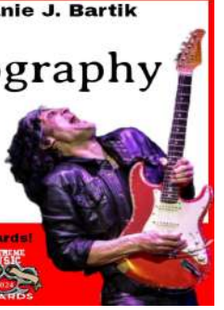

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Last of the Old School Rockers

by "Chad From Albany" Koenig

I want my MTV! That was the tagline you heard throughout the golden era of MTV since Mick Jagger yelled it into a telephone in 1982. That tagline was then said countless times on the network by the likes of Pete Townshend, David Bowie, Michael Jackson, The Clash … and even Sting famously sang the line throughout Dire Straits' #1 hit, "Money for Nothing." And those of us who grew up plopped in front of our televisions in the '80s and '90s had this culture force-fed to us— and it tasted great! The popularization of video matched with audio (with sometimes the video overshadowing the popularity of the song), live performances, and pioneering reality shows trickled in and not shoved down our throats (at least at first), became a part of the complete package of what MTV became, especially the later part of the '80s and throughout the '90s.

As we can find nearly everything these days on at least one of the countless streaming services, I was hoping someday that we would be able to have all of the content since Day One all in one place. I was excited to see Paramount Plus come into fruition in 2021, showing some of Viacom's content from MTV, and it's great, but my goodness, there are so many things I wished were also available.

I get it. It's licensing costs. There were streaming deals in place with some content. Digital conversion may be an issue for older content. But the content of MTV is something that should transcend all of this. Pretty much anybody born between 1970 and the early '90s was somehow influenced by, affected by, or shaped by the content of MTV. Even if you didn't watch it, you probably wore it. Both white and black audiences would watch "Yo! MTV Raps" and be introduced to outfits and colors relevant to hip-hop culture. The vibrant colors that we adorned. Those that listened to alternative music would wear black and white checkered print, bolo ties, sunglasses, and suits, or even oversized and ripped flannels (which ended up being the downfall of the culture that created it). Were you a metalhead? You saw what those bands were wearing, and it made you want to dress in black—much like the goth kids. Were you like me and loved 120 Minutes? To this day, my wardrobe is 90% jeans and T-shirts of bands that you can't find at Spencer's or Target. And if you were amongst the masses who took in pop music, you saw the current trends, hair, and accessories that your favorite pop star was wearing and you tried it yourself. We all knew Madonna, even if you never saw a video, because her influence was everywhere. And this is all before even bringing up Cindy Crawford and "House of Style." How fun would it be to revisit that, and more importantly, why isn't this available as a cultural time capsule? It may even inspire this generation who are obsessed with the '80s and '90s, which, in my concert travels, I know there are a LOT of them.

There are many shows available to stream, mostly the reality shows that made MTV exhausting. You can find the original Real World, which was pivotal, but I can't believe that we can't find Road Rules. Every "Teen Mom" and "16 and Pregnant," but that's not from the golden era of MTV. Plus those shows have the depth of a bottle cap. I was happy to see Daria, but no complete Beavis & Butthead, or the slew of animated series from "MTV Oddities" such as "The Head" or the bizarre Liquid Television shorts and segments. These animated series captured the era wonderfully, depicting the attitudes, independent mentalities, and satirical nature of the times. These were the types of shows that, when you met another fan of, you would often befriend … much like when you would befriend a kid in school simply because he was wearing a, say, Primus T-shirt.

And speaking of Primus, wouldn't it be great if we had the capability to stream full episodes of MTV Spring Break, such as in 1992 when they, or others of your favorite bands, performed in front of your peers on a beach in the middle of a party that you wanted nothing more than to be at? Sure, we can YouTube some of them, but it's not the same as seeing the full episodes of those live shows.

Other time capsule shows that haven't been seen that would be fantastic to have are shows such as the Rock & Jock games. Or shows that brought together stars from across all aspects of culture. How much fun was it seeing Queen Latifah steal the basketball on the court from Shawn Kemp?!? Dean Cain, then TV's Superman, was a part of these, and when I got the chance to ask him about them, he told me even he didn't have copies of them.

What got me thinking about all of this recently was this year's MTV Video Music Awards, where Madonna made the headlines again for her performance and clothes, and being paired with modern pop stars like Sabrina Carpenter. The VMAs of yore were cultural touchstones, which yielded iconic moments, like Madonna's 1984 "Like a Virgin" performance, Fiona Apple's "This World is Bullsh*t" speech, Krist Novoselic getting whacked in the face with his own bass after Nirvana took the stage in 1992, or even Pee Wee Herman making fun of himself after his infamous arrest.

The programming of MTV shaped decades. And the content is there, but due to the aforementioned issues, we can't have it all available. Will the Paramount-Warner merger help make this a reality? I don't know. The Warner Music Group is a separate entity. It would be great if, somehow, all of the pending factors could get together and make this dream a reality. Because we want our music, we want our fashion, we want our culture, and we want our MTV!

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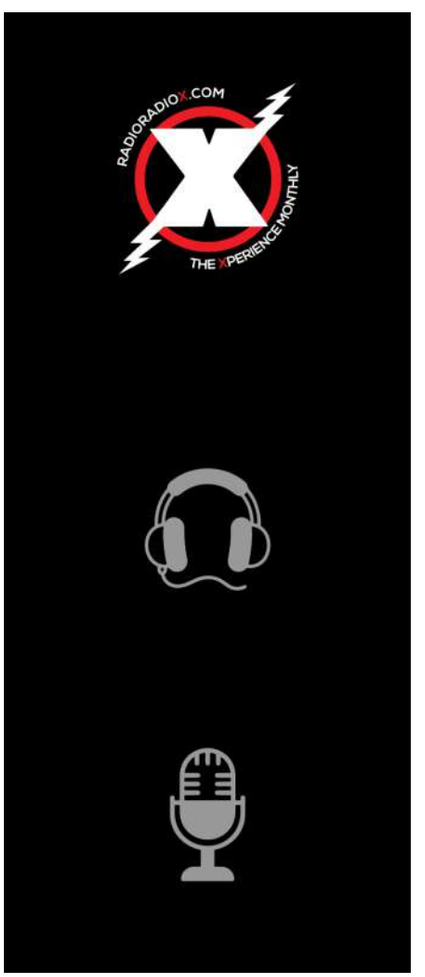

THE RECORD FILE

By Tony Mastrianni

Best new album release may very well be Paul Weller's 'In the Shadow of The Sun, Paul Weller & Band Live & Very Direct'

Yes, you read that correctly: the title of this infectious Parlophone Records just released double vinyl Paul Weller's 'In the Shadow of The Sun, Paul Weller & Band Live & Very Direct', a 31-track live album recorded during his summer 2026 run of outdoor shows, which brought together a phenomenal band and a spectacular setlist spanning the songs that have defined Weller's peerless musical journey.

The song collection brilliantly brings together classic tracks and much-loved favorites from across Weller's remarkable catalogue, spanning The Jam, The Style Council, and his solo work, (alongside a cover of a timeless Curtis Mayfield classic, "Move on Up")

This collection is a new live interpretation of his seamless and timeless work of his glorious Power Pop 70's as leader of The Jam (You may remember their classic and vibrant sound THE JAM's alluring, jazz-tinged; mellifluous sounds of THE STYLE COUNCIL, also his modern infectious live band, and some solo recordings

The song list for these copious and splendid live recordings reads like a list of Royal British Romantic Poetry (with some of the finest melodic power pop from Merry Ole, and some solid and seamless rock guitars). His vocals are often lofty, his lyrics intriguing, and his organ weaving magical sounds—both acoustic and electric (mostly electric) rock ballads. I will list the titles and recording groups featured on this brilliant live album as follows: (if no group affiliation is given after each songs, those tracks are from Weller's ongoing solo career. Here they are:

'In The Shadow of The Sun, Paul Weller & Band Live & Very Direct' Track listing:

Rip The Pages Up, Precious (The Jam), Move On Up (Curtis Mayfield), Come On/Let's Go, The Weaver, Strange Town (The Jam), Man In The Corner Shop (The Jam), Up In Suze's Room, That Pleasure, Hung Up, Village, Broken Stones, My Ever Changing Moods (The Style Council), Have You Ever Had It Blue (The Style Council), Shout To The Top (The Style Council), Stanley Road, You Do Something To Me, Long Hot Summer (The Style Council), Can You Heal Us (Holy Man), Out Of The Sinking, More, That's Entertainment (The Jam), Shadow Of The Sun, Peacock Suit, English Rose (The Jam), All The Pictures

On The Wall, The Changing man, The Eton Rifles (The Jam), Wild Wood, Rockets, Town Called Malice (The Jam), Wild Wood, Rockets, Town Called Malice (The Jam) In a recent phone interview, Weller'was quoted saying that he hoped these live recordings give justice to the experience that we and the live audience felt on these recordings. He indicated all tracks were taken straight off the soundboard. So here we have it past, present, and a glimpse of the future of perhaps the most underpublicized music legends to ever appear from England, showcasing some 40-plus years of ear candy accomplishments in one live package! Paul Weller has always been a star. America has not embraced him to the level of the loyal aficionados' superstar status he enjoys in England and many other parts of Europe. However, this live 2-LP takes you on a sonic tour of tight electric-guitar fretting. His vocals are polished; his guitar is alternately mighty and in stride. He shows no intention of slowing down anytime soon. Thank you, Sir Paul! Keep building into the future.

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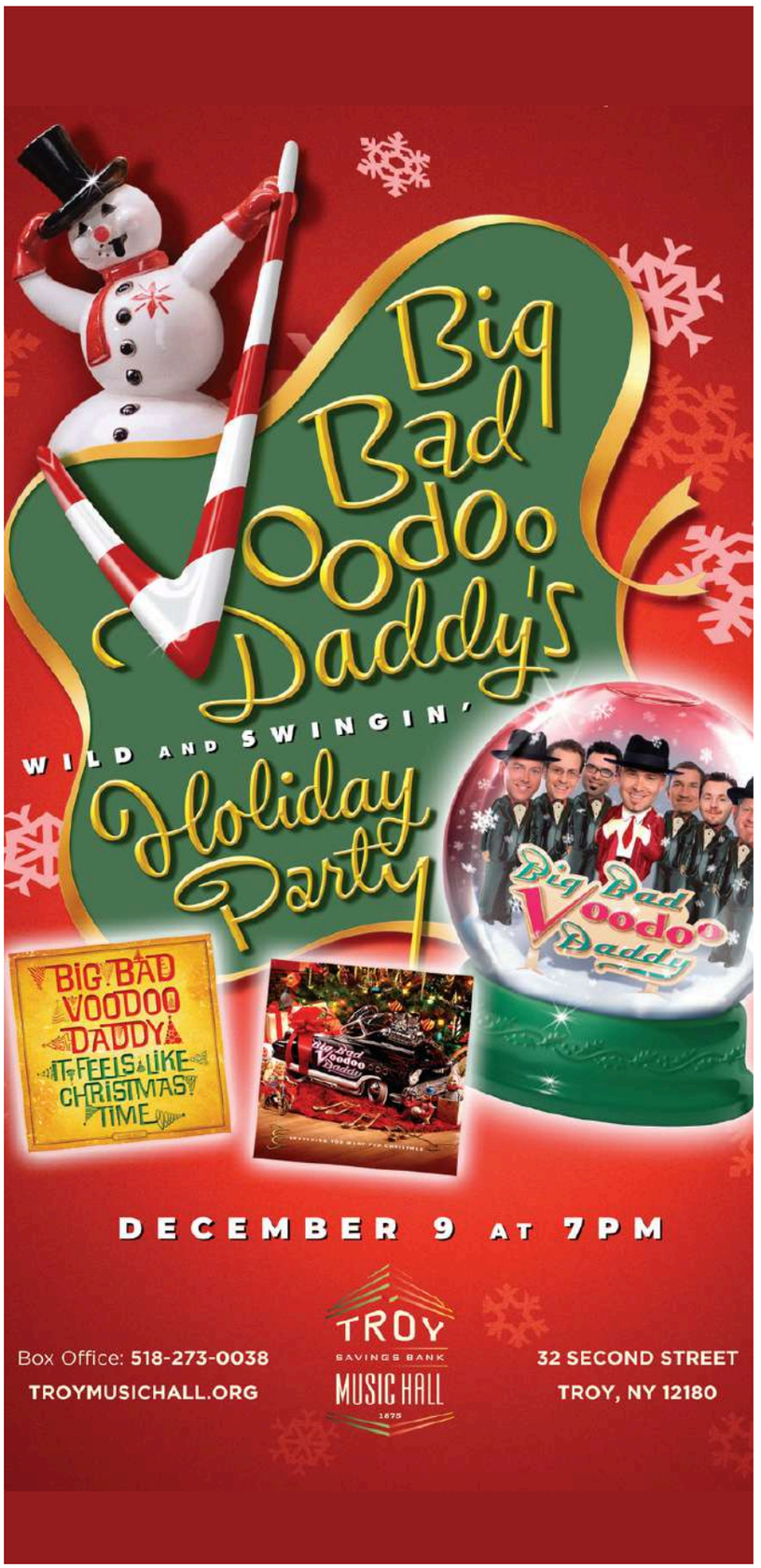

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"There weren't any rules, and there weren't any precedents," he said. "It was just sort of experimentation, and it was hit and miss." Lynch recalled unusual acts such as Sound Barrier, an all-Black hard-rock band that combined heavy music with glam looks, and A La Carte, a three-piece he loved for its guitar tone and theatrical performances, even if the songwriting wasn't always as strong. He remembered bands still developing their identities, too. The appeal was variety: you never knew what kind of performance you were about to see. He felt that changed after Van Halen broke through and other bands began trying to recreate that sound. "Previous to that, it was fascinating," he said. "A lot of variety and a lot of experimentation."

What comes next?

Lynch has collaborated on studio projects including Sweet & Lynch with Michael Sweet, KXM, and The End Machine. For projects that don't tour, his rule of thumb is three albums: one to establish the sound, one to build on it, and a third to wrap things up. He's considering a different kind of project next: an instrumental album that would give him time to experiment and take chances. "I've never really done that magnum opus guitar instrumental record where I've taken a lot of time and experimented," he said. "Maybe I'll take a year off and do something like that." There's no fixed plan yet. Lynch says much of what he records comes together spontaneously, and sometimes the equipment itself points him in a direction. A particular amp, a baritone slide or an old effects unit can spark an idea that becomes a song. "Anything I've ever recorded has always been off the top of my head," he said. He's still drawn to live performance because every night can be different. A full room, good sound, and an engaged audience create a feedback loop between crowd and band. Lynch Mob improvises and lets a show develop naturally. After decades in the business, he hasn't run out of things to explore. He's still chasing the sound in his head, still learning and still having fun with the people beside him onstage.

I couldn't resist

Near the end of our conversation, Lynch admitted he can't stand the "usual" interview questions, especially "Where do you get your ideas?" and "Who are your biggest influences?" Naturally, I waited until the end to ask him, "What are your influences?" He said he would have fallen into dead silence in disbelief if I were serious. At least I got the joke in before we said goodbye. I hope he "got" it. And referring back to how our call started, I should add that it was great to speak with him.

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On the Phone: Dokken and Lynch Mob's George Lynch

By Jason Irwin

"Hi Jason, this is George Lynch."

When George Lynch called me the other day, the conversation was so casual that I had to remind myself that this was the same guy ripping the solos on my '80s cassette copies of "Under Lock and Key" and "Back for the Attack" (which I still have). I could tell right away, though, that he was a no-nonsense guy. He has a firm tone, and when I told him it was great to speak with him, he shot back, "Well, you don't know that yet, do you?" I think he was joking.

New challenges and BFFs

George Lynch recently turned 72, but retirement plans involving a porch, rocking chair, lemonade, and a dog at his feet will have to wait. As to why he can't quit yet: "I still have this crazy music in my head that I'm chasing," Lynch told me. "I've never really attained what I think are my best abilities to create some amazing song or solo or riff." He was kidding (I think—again) about the porch. The guitarist, known for Dokken and Lynch Mob, still loves making music and finding new challenges. "My best friends have always been my band members," he said. "Guys I worked with when I was 14 years old or 72. It's really the same dynamic." A band that keeps him moving is Lynch Mob's current lineup featuring drummer Brian Tichy, bassist Jaron Gulino, and vocalist Andrew Freeman. Lynch says they're talented, funny, and make touring enjoyable. "We don't take ourselves too seriously, but we take our craft seriously," he said. "It's always covered with a patina of just fun and joking." Freeman, who has worked with Lynch on and off for more than 20 years, continues to impress him. Lynch referred to him as "the Jeff Beck of singers," explaining that Freeman has become increasingly consistent and seems to be getting better all the time. "He's just on fire," Lynch said. The band was even tackling 10 shows in a row. Lynch said Freeman was eager to keep playing rather than spend a day off sitting in a hotel room. That enthusiasm is part of what makes the group click. They recently "clicked" at the Strand Theater in Hudson Falls (10/3/26).

Keeping the mistakes

Lynch Mob's live album, "The Final Ride – Live," was recorded over two nights at the Kress Theater in San Francisco. The goal was to capture the energy and improvisation that can happen onstage but often gets lost in the controlled environment of a studio. The band decided to leave in some imperfections rather than polish every moment until it sounded flawless. "There are mistakes on the record," Lynch admitted. "Normally we would be like, 'We can't include that.' We just forced ourselves to grit our teeth and say, 'Listen, this is real. This is what happened.'" "We're not perfect. We're human, but it's beautiful," he said. Lynch doesn't spend much time revisiting his old recordings unless he needs to relearn material for a gig. Sometimes, listening back gives him a new appreciation for music he made decades ago. One exception is the three albums he recorded with KXM, the trio featuring King's X bassist and vocalist Doug Pinnick and drummer Ray Luzier. For those records, the musicians would meet in a studio, write and record original material together, and finish a song each day. The process was exciting, but it didn't leave much time for fine-tuning. "Sometimes we'd get it right, and it was magical," Lynch said. "And sometimes it was maybe a little weirder, which is okay." There are still moments he hears and thinks he might have taken a different direction. But that, too, is part of the experience.

Old riffs, new directions

Lynch doesn't always play his classic parts the same way anymore. At a recent guitar lesson and meet-and-greet, a fan wound up reminding him how to play some older songs. "The whole lesson he turned into the teacher, and I turned into the student," he said. "But I didn't give him a refund." As a longtime fan, I told Lynch I still couldn't quite nail Dokken's "It's Not Love." He offered a few tips, including a reminder

to pluck the two-string part rather than use a pick. I knew that much, but didn't let on. I was just lost in the realization that I was getting a free guitar lesson from George Lynch. Then the conversation took a turn toward the zombie apocalypse. As for his "fame," Lynch joked that, when the world falls apart, people won't be looking for a guitarist. They'll need people who can build things, fight, and grow food. "While we're getting eaten by the zombies, it'd be nice if George could strum a little of those old Dokken songs on his acoustic guitar by the campfire," he joked. Still, he appreciates that people have found something meaningful in the music he helped create. And he doesn't see Dokken and Lynch Mob as separate, competing chapters. "We play together often, and I also play with Don and do guest appearances with them," he said. "We get along fine. I think it's just a story of an evolution."

The sound keeps changing

Lynch has spent years exploring guitar tone and equipment, and he still loves a good tube amp. In fact, he says he's more of an amp guy than a guitar guy, drawn to amplifiers for the way form and function come together, much like a classic car. He's no longer obsessed with tone in quite the same way. He realized he was using too much distortion to get the sounds he admired in his heroes. "The magic and the personality come through your heart and your hands, head and your fingers and the wood on the instrument," he said. "Excessive distortion was masking that." He has gradually dialed back the gain and found that he enjoys playing more this way. His style is changing, too. He's interested in playing more personal music, slowing down in some ways and avoiding the temptation to repeat himself. "I've done a lot of albums in recent decades," he said. "I pretty much said what I'm going to say. I don't want to start repeating myself ad nauseam." Lynch now lives near Taos, New Mexico, where he's surrounded by musicians playing styles far removed from hard rock. He's been drawn toward acoustic music, blues and even country-leaning sounds, enjoying the learning process. "I'm not amazing at it, but I love it," he said. "It keeps me moving forward." His hero, Jeff Beck, he noted, was always evolving, and Lynch wants to keep doing the same.

Before everyone wanted to be Van Halen

One of the most interesting parts of our conversation was Lynch's recollection of the Los Angeles rock scene in the 1970s, before the familiar '80s hair-metal era took shape. He remembers a time when bands were simply making things up as they went along, rather than copying a successful formula.

Continued on Page 11...

REMEMBERING MATT SMITH

See Page 58 for an Interview From April of 2026.

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3 Questions with Dave Graham

By Rob Skane

Dave Graham is an amazing human being in my book. Not only does he write super cool and catchy rocknroll songs, but he often volunteers to play music at various programs in the Capital Region that support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Dave often performs acoustic gigs with his son Luke as Watch Reggie Run. Dave Graham and the Disaster Plan is for the loud electric guitar music. Find Dave on Facebook, Instagram, and pretty much everywhere else. I love the guy and you all should too.

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

DG: When I was in school, I was working a part-time job at a nursing home. One of the other employees, Rick Sacchetti, who was also a local musician, would often bring his acoustic guitar and play it during lunch. He reminded me of a young Bob Dylan. He would play songs by the Beatles and other bands, and I thought that was the coolest thing. It sparked an interest in me, and I soon purchased a cheap, used Kay acoustic guitar that I found in the newspaper classified section (yup … this was way before Craigslist). I learned a few chords, and I even recall visiting Rick's house one time, and he showed me how to play a John Mellencamp song that I was struggling to figure out. I truly appreciated him taking the time to help get me started on a lifelong journey of guitar playing. In addition to being a great musician, Rick is also an award-winning artist and displays his paintings in shows throughout the Capital Region. I would highly recommend checking out both his art and his music!

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

DG: I would tell myself to learn more about scales and music theory so that I would be more proficient now! I am more of a three-chord rocker that occasionally plays the pentatonic scale, although I guess sometimes simple can be better when it comes to songs. As the legendary country songwriter Harlard Howard once said, all you need is "three chords and the truth!"

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

DG: I'm usually just trying to write a new original song, but if not, I'm often trying to learn a Taylor Swift or Chappell Roan tune so I can play it at my next gig. These days, unless I'm recording, I mainly play acoustic guitar both live and when I'm sitting around the house. When I'm performing either solo or as a duo with my son in our band WATCH REGGIE RUN, I like to mix in some fun cover songs that people may not expect and put my own stamp on them. It is fun watching the look of surprise and smile on their face when they suddenly recognize the song and are enjoying my rendition of it.

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Continued from page 23...

RRX: He's got a number of kids. Yeah, he's got his hands full with a family, which he's got a beautiful family: Francis (Frankie), Milo and Theo.

MD: Shout out to Thelonious, Milo and Myla, the future!

JJ: We've been lucky to have good people surrounding us and giving support over the years.

RRX: Now, one of the things I know ... frontman Matty D over here sometimes shows a little cleavage; sometimes the shirt comes off, but I know for a fact that people also wanna see the pool boy take his shirt off as well.

JJ: Oh yeah, there's always calls for that.

MD: Shout out to AR pools, yo! A great advertiser with RadioRadioX. As long as he paid his bill last month, he's a good advertiser.

RRX: (Laughs) Yeah, I hope so.

MD: We're all about to get a call tomorrow, huh?

JJ: He's our handsome guerrilla drummer. He hits hard, plays heavy, and he actually is officially a pool boy.

RRX: So true. Anything you want to say to fans and potential fans?

JJ: We'd really appreciate everybody coming and rocking out with us on November 14th at The Rustic Barn. We got this new guy, Gary, working with us who's kind of our manager/marketing guy. We really are gonna try to make a step forward with the future of this band, step out into some new territory, and take this album out there. We're gonna start in the Northeast, we're gonna move south, and we're just gonna hit up cities and take opportunities as they come. It seems like there might be a chance here to take this other places, and we'll see where it goes.

RRX: I love that. Matty D, anything from you?

MD: Yes, yes, the Keys, watch out. Richmond, Virginia, watch out. We're coming for you!

JJ: And thank you for the support from you guys as well.

RRX: Of course, man. Well, have a great night, and we'll be talking soon.

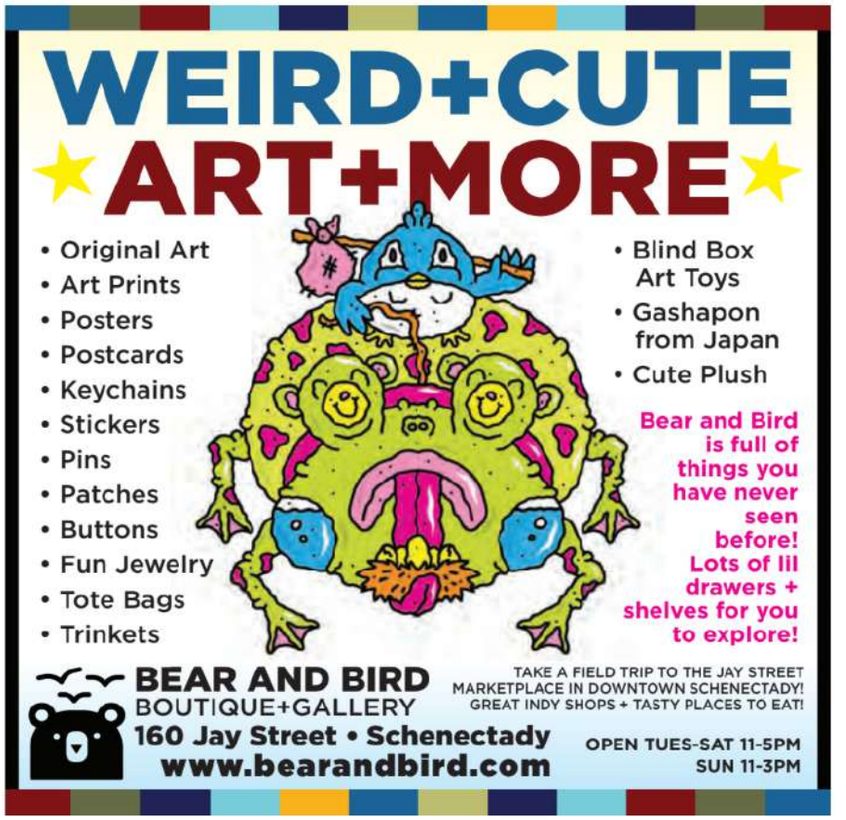
JJ: Thanks a lot, Rob. Alright, Matty D, I'll see you soon.

RRX: I Love You James.

(Silence)

RRX: Say it back!

(Phone Disconnects)



An Interview:

Sawyer Fredericks

by Rob Smittix

Sawyer came to RadioRadioX studios for this radio interview, and he blew my mind when he performed for us.

RRX: We got a great show here for you today and a very special guest in the house. Welcome, welcome, Sawyer Fredericks. How ya doing?

SF: I'm doing good, thank you for having me.

RRX: Absolutely, this is a pleasure. I know you've done a lot of things in your career, but a lot of people became fans from The Voice.

SF: Oh, yeah!

RRX: But I'm trying to remember, how long ago was that?

SF: That was in 2015. So, that's eleven years now. Jesus.

RRX: And you haven't aged a bit.

SF: Thank You.

RRX: But ... what an amazing voice. I'm sure you've moved way past the show, but that's when the world became familiar with you.

SF: Yes.

RRX: And you won the damn thing! Did you ever stop and think like, wow, I have the greatest voice in the world?

SF: No, I never stopped and thought that (Laughs Really Hard).

RRX: I know you don't have the ego or anything like that, but I think about your career, and I respect it. Because at one point in time you could've gone completely commercial.

SF: Yeah, the labels were definitely pushing me to do that, and I did not want to.

RRX: So, you stayed true to yourself.

SF: I did.

RRX: And that's what I respect about you. It's kind of like movies, right? I enjoy a great film; I'm not really into the blockbusters.

SF: That's fair.

RRX: You can equate that same idea to music. If you had taken off and did the commercial thing, you might have been playing stadiums, and you would've been a lot richer than you are today.

SF: But you lose a lot of the creative freedom that you have being independent if you're doing stuff like that. I think that's important for us artists to stay true to what our passion has created.

RRX: Correct. I want to get right into a couple of songs, and then we'll come back and chat more. I'm going to play the song "Bad Luck," and then we're going to play "Lonely Bear." These are from your latest album?

SF: Yes. These are off of my newest album, "No Need To Wonder." "Lonely Bear" is a song that's actually kind of inspired by my Dad. It's a fun one; I enjoy it!

RRX: Okay, we're gonna get right into it now; you're listening to RadioRadioX.

(Songs Play)

RRX: We just heard "Lonely Bear" and "Bad Luck." Sawyer Fredericks in the building right now, and so happy to have him here. Tell us a little about the album that these songs came off of.

SF: "No Need To Wonder"—I'm very proud of this album. I initially wanted it to be strictly a folk rock album. I had the idea that the first half was folk and the second half was folk rock, split into two. I did my first instrumental piece on this album as well, which I haven't done that before. I feel like this album has been a big step for me in a sense ... going more into my folk rock style. I wrote a lot of songs on an acoustic bass that I play slide on. I brought that today, and I'll play a song later.

RRX: Yes!

SF: I wanted to shine a light on things going on in our society, in our world, and get a little more political on some of them, but ...

RRX: It's hard not to.

SF: In these times for sure.

RRX: You've got plenty of inspiration to work with. Honestly, I wish it would just stop, and then you wouldn't know what to write about. That would be so much better. You were here at 11:11 a.m., and I make a point to make a wish or say a prayer or something when I see it every day. I do it because I feel like you're putting good vibes out into the world. I always just wish for world peace, even when I blow out my birthday candles. When you come across 11:11, what do you wish for?

SF: I can't tell you that, then it won't come true.

RRX: Is that how that works? That's why we don't have world peace.

SF: You keep telling people what you're wishing for.

RRX: Dammit! Well, I wanted everybody to get on board. If we all wished for the same thing at the same time.

SF: It's good to send out those energies.

RRX: I'm kind of a spiritual person. Do you have spiritual elements in your life? Do you consider yourself that way?

SF: I would say ... not too much, but I definitely believe that the energy that people put out does affect everyone else. I do think there's a power of observation, as well as what people are believing in. I think we can move towards that if we are truly unified.

RRX: That's what I'm hoping for, and I think we're like 350,000 to 1; we're on the winning team. We just don't have the tools, I guess. Well, we got to pay some bills, and when we come back, Sawyer is going to play some music for us live on the program, so stick around.

(Commercials Play)

RRX: Welcome back to RadioRadioX. Sawyer Fredericks is here, and he's going to tear it up here in the studio. And honestly, everyone in the world right now should be jealous of me because it's like ... you get a concert at home, but I get my very own private performance. What are you going to play here?

SF: I'm going to play another song off of my newest album. This one is called "Funeral Parking Only." I'll tell a little story about how this song came about.

Continued on page 61...

An Interview:

GINGER GEEZUS

by Rob Smittix

RRX: So right now I'm talking to James Juron. Did I say that correctly?

JJ: Yep.

RRX: Does anybody call you JJ?

JJ: Sometimes.

RRX: Do you like it?

JJ: James, Jimmy, JJ, but most of the time Jimmy or James.

RRX: I'm gonna call you JJ.

JJ: You can do that. There's another guy named JJ, but yeah.

RRX: But that would confuse things, if you were JJ in a band that's GG, right?

JJ: Yeah, that might get a little ...

MD: Too much alliteration for my taste.

JJ: I kind of made my blues rock stage name Jimmy James, which is a combination of mine and my father's names; we're both James, but they used to call him Jimmy. It's also a reference to Hendrix's first band called Jimmy James and the Blue Flames.

RRX: No s***. We also have Matty D here, frontman to Ginger Geezus.

MD: That's what some people call me. Matthew Peter Matt Desrochers at your service. What we got?

RRX: Well, first of all, James, you really are the Ginger Geezus, but Matty being the front man is ginger enough, I think.

JJ: Oh yeah.

RRX: Right?

MD: You know what, guys? I gotta be honest with you on this one.

RRX: I mean ... I'm looking at your eyebrows.

MD: I am not what you would call ginger, but I am touched by fire.

JJ: There you go. That's a good way to explain it.

RRX: Is that the ginger, salt and pepper?

MD: Yeah, I'm kind of the pepper to his salt.

RRX: Alright, let's get serious now. We know you got some stuff in the works; why don't you get into it?

JJ: We talked about doing a full-length album for a long time now. The band's been together for a few years, and we put out a demo quickly, which I think was a great idea, but we knew that the ultimate goal was to keep writing songs throughout the next couple of years and put those all on an album, and that's what we've done here. We have 12 songs; it's a good mix that ranges from rock to hard rock to blues rock to straight blues. We even have a psychedelic instrumental jam on there, which is cool too, so we got a good variety.

MD: It's my favorite song on the album, the one without me singing on it because I get to go to the bar and drink and talk.

JJ: You can go and take a break.

RRX: So, the whole song is an instrumental?

JJ: Yep, there's a little Uni-Vibe going on there; there's definitely some reference to Hendrix in there. I won't lie about that. Hendrix's tone, his vibe, his style has always been a big influence for me.

MD: It's got a little "Machine Gun" to it, don't it, Jimmy?

JJ: Yeah, definitely some of that, Band of Gypsys era, Woodstock era. Late Hendrix, when he was using Uni-Vibe a lot. Our song is called "Jupiter's Son"; it's the last track on the album, and that's the song we're talking about.

MD: Gypsy, Sun and Rainbows, man.

RRX: So when are we gonna see this album?

JJ: Its official release date is November 13th, for digital release. There's a pre-order date of October 24th, so you can pre-order the album. When you do that, you get the song "Blow the Roof Off," which was on the demo, but this is the fully recorded, fully tracked version, obviously a little step up from the demo.

MD: Tell 'em about the party, bro!

JJ: And getting to that ... the big release is November 14th. We're playing the album in its entirety plus more. We're gonna have vinyl. There's gonna be VIP ticket packages where you get a poster, you get the album signed, you get a T-shirt, you get to have a drink with the band. We also have another ticket for $27 where you get the album, and you get it signed. You know? Plus your entry. So yeah, we got some cool things like that set up.

PHOTO BY: JIM WERTMAN

MD: It's all going down November 14th at the Rustic Barn Pub in Speigletown, NY! The Rustic Barn is the center of the universe, to quote Brian Kane. Much respect to Brian Kane and the Beginning.

RRX: Oh yeah.

JJ: I think the Rustic Barn might have been the second place we played out live when we started as a band. Jody and Jason have always been big supporters of us and allowed us to play there and really developed there. They've always been very gracious to us. Speaking of that, we filmed a video there, which I'm actually here tonight doing the final edits on. It's coming out soon.

RRX: That sounds amazing. Now, just because they're not here, care to talk a little sh** about your two bandmates that aren't here with us today.

JJ: Oh, those guys, yeah. Jeez, I don't know what we're gonna do with them. No, Alex is somewhere in the Bahamas or something.

MD: Yeah, I think he's at some kind of freaking convention. I think he's at the pride parade in the Bahamas.

RRX: What about Mr. Nicholson?

JJ: Nicholson, he's a top-tier bass player, and he's very highly sought after. He's in a number of projects, a number of bands, and ...

Continued on page 21...

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XPERIENCE HISTORY: Keith Streng

Originally Published March 2020

Keith Streng is the high flying, high energy guitar player for The Fleshtones but he is also a student of Rock-n-Roll. On March 15th, Keith will be stopping by The Hangar on The Hudson with The Split Squad. RadioradioX was lucky enough to catch Keith and ask him a few questions.

RRX: You have been the guitar player for The Fleshtones from the very beginning and your style is unique. How old were you when you started playing and what is your approach to the instrument ?

KS: I started playing drums first for years and only switched to guitar when I was 17. Playing drums unknowingly would become a huge benefit to playing rock and roll guitar. An elementary guitar course was offered as a music class credit in high school. I thought it would be fun!I was never interested in technique, I wanted to play rock and roll! It is all about passion!

RRX: Having traveled the world playing music, what makes for a great show? What cities are your favorite to play?

KS: Fun! Passion! Spontaneity! Paris, Madrid, Stockholm, and Troy N.Y. at the Hangar Sunday afternoons.

RRX: Throughout your musical career you have been a part of numerous projects outside of the Fleshtones, How do these projects differ from The Fleshtones and what are the similarities?

KS: Mainly working with different people. Everybody brings something different! I wanted to improve and expand my playing and writing, Rock and roll is the glue of everything I do!

RRX: The Split Squad can easily be called a garage rock super-group, how does a group like this come together?

KS: In the case of The Split Squad, Mike Giblin came up with this formula and united us, Mike is a think tank consultant and estimated this combination of personnel could not miss the lofty standards set to become a "garage rock super-group! And I always wanted to play with everyone in the group!

RRX: People say guitar driven music is on the wane. I don't agree. What are your feelings about such a statement? What new bands do you find exciting?

KS: At certain points different elements are behind the wheel of rock and roll. Make no mistake! Guitar driven music always wins big! Things come and go, I am a witness to rock and roll history!My fav new band now, Les Grys, Grys, from the south of France. They are hot!

Make sure to stop by The Hangar on March 15th, 3pm and catch Keith in action. Advance tickets available at River Street Beat Shop, The Ale House and brownpapertickets.com. Let's Rock.

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GOOD PEOPLE HIGHER DAYS

Interview: David Arquette (Scream)

By Rob Smittix

RRX: We have WCW wrestling champion, a man you cannot kill, acclaimed actor David Arquette on the line. How's everything, man?

DA: Thank you, thank you for that. Everything's great. I'm having a good time touring the country for the Behind The Scream Tour, which is pretty interesting. It's been great meeting the fans.

RRX: This is the 30th anniversary of "Scream." What I think is really cool about the tour … you know how some actors say they avoid watching their own films for whatever reason? But this is you actually watching the film and enjoying it with people. How does that make you feel when you watch it back, and you get people's responses?

DA: I don't know, I feel like it's a different person I'm watching. So many life experiences since then. It's a really wild thing. I mean … really, what touches me the most is that people have such a love for this film and that it's lasted this long. It's not often that you get to play a character for over 25 years.

RRX: Well, that's the thing. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but from what I've learned, you were originally called to audition for the Billy Loomis character?

DA: Well, one of the high school characters—I think it was probably Stu or Randy. But yeah, they wanted me as one of the high school students. When I met with Wes Craven, I said, "I'd really love the role of Dewey. I think I could bring something different to it." And he's like, "Wow, that's really interesting; let me consider that." And thankfully he did because I had an opportunity to sort of take it in a different direction. It was written more as this sort of meathead kind of big ex-jock kind of character.

RRX: Right.

DA: But I just thought a person of authority that gets no respect, who's constantly trying to prove himself, and gets talked down by his sister, is just such a funny character. I just knew there would be a lot of humor and heart to it.

RRX: Well, you made the right recommendation to Wes Craven, and because you weren't one of the high schoolers … it seemed that you were able to be in more movies because of that.

DA: Yeah, it did work out in my favor. I mean … my character was supposed to die in the first one, and Wes Craven kept me alive, which was really nice of him.

RRX: You got killed in "Scream 5," but then some kind of … I guess soap opera magic happened, and you are in "Scream 7," that just came out this year.

DA: Yeah, there's a little thing I did for the fans. I kinda didn't want to because I was still upset about "Scream 5," but I did want to return for the fans, so I did it for them.

RRX: Yeah, that's what it's all about and what you're doing on this tour, you know? It's definitely for the fans, but I'm sure you get a lot out of it as well.

DA: Yeah, for sure. I mean, just seeing people and their connection to it. You know? Somebody says, like, "I went to my first date with my wife to 'Scream,' and now this is our daughter; she loves the series too." Things like that. It doesn't happen a lot in this business, and for it to last so many generations is really a wonderful thing about horror films in general. They have such a love when they connect that it stands the test of time.

RRX: Now this isn't just your ordinary horror franchise, as you mentioned. Wes Craven. I mean … that's the master right there. How was it to work with him for the first four films?

DA: Man, he was such a gracious director and human. He taught me so much about life. He was a mentor, as far as filmmaking, as far as acting, as far as just living life. He sat me down during "Scream 2," and we had this wonderful conversation where he inspired me to love myself, believe in myself, and make the right choices in my life that will lead me in a direction that would be positive to fulfilling my dreams. To work with someone like that and to have a

relationship and be able to spend so much time on set with him was really an honor.

RRX: Absolutely. Obviously, sadly missed. How do you go forward in the films afterwards, carrying his legacy on?

DA: It was really hard doing "Scream 5" without him directing. That was a really difficult experience. I missed him a lot. I regretted not being in the moment and remembering more of our interactions together. But I did think back about a lot of the experiences I shared with him, and I was really grateful for those times.

RRX: Understandable. Is there anything else that you'd like to say to fans, just in general, or to get them to come on out to Proctors October 30th for the Scream 30th Anniversary Screening with you there?

DA: Yeah, it's a really wonderful night. We have a community of people who love this film. So if they love this film, they should come on out. You'll hear behind-the-scenes stories that you've never heard before. It's just fun; there's a lot of laughter involved. I tell a lot of jokes. I'm very self-deprecating, so you can laugh at me. I enjoy that. You can ask questions, if you've ever thought about something, questions about specific scenes. And we can just share this time together. It really is about bonding over a film that we all love.

RRX: I couldn't have said it better. Just a real quick note: one of my dreams was to get body slammed by a professional wrestler, and then I actually did. I didn't think it was gonna hurt, but it did. And then he did it twice, and the crowd was calling for a third time, and I'm like, no. It hurts, doesn't it?

DA: Yeah, it does. You have to really be prepared. The thing about wrestling is you can get your body ready for it. Like, that's the thing, and if you're not ready for it … I got my back thrown out a few times, and that sticks with you for a month or so.

RRX: Yeah, that's quite some time. We're not spring chickens anymore.

DA: Yeah, exactly.

RRX: Hey David, I appreciate your time. I'm gonna see you on the 30th in Schenectady at Proctors, and thank you so much.

DA: I look forward to it, Rob. Thank you.

2...3...4... - Tom & Karl & Fidel & Alex

By: Chris Busone

Thomas Jefferson, the third president of these United States, famously wrote that "given the choice between government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter."

Now, while Tom was one of history's greatest champions of freedom (he literally created the phrase, "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"), he had his faults like everyone else; chief among them the irony of championing freedom while owning other human beings and impregnating them when they were in no position to consent.

But when we talk about the founding fathers of this nation, for better or worse, Jefferson is not only at the forefront of that class photo; he's the guy kneeling in the front row with the football under his arm.

So, if in this instance, he was that adamant in his belief that we need a free press for this red, white and blue rager of ours to survive and thrive, well sh!t, while I definitely have my differences with the guy, I guess I'm with T-Jeff on this point.

Now obviously this topic cha-cha'd its way into my consciousness this month because of the recent kerfuffle concerning the press's access to the buildings and surrounding grounds that house the capital of our precious, threadbare though it may be, democracy. (I actually heard an anchor on a major news outlet refer to it as a "kerfuffle," so I couldn't resist.)

But I had this glimmer of a thought; a passing fancy, a wild-eyed cornfed half-baked notion, that maybe, just maybe, we could try and discuss this topic without taking one political side or the other and examine it on its own merits … ya know … like actual Americans. (I'll take civil discourse for 500, Alex.)

I struck upon this idea that we could interact intellectually without one group calling the other "commie, socialist, anarchist, low IQ lamebrains, and just for good measure, COMMIES again," while the other spews out flowery epithets such as, "orange, diaper-wearing, felonious pant-load with gas station hotdog energy." (There … I got that out of my system. Now we can move on.)

Now, possibly I'm engaging in a bit of naivete, but I remain hopeful that we can discuss, without offending. There's also the possibility that I'm just p!ssing up a rope here, but what the hell, I've got a few more paragraphs to kill.

Now we've heard the thoughts of the father of independence on the importance of a free press, but in the interest of equal time, let's shift our weight for a moment and give the floor to the grandaddy of the absolute antithesis of democracy; put your hands together for German philosopher and OG-Marxist, Karl Marx. Why do we need to hear from Karl of all people on the subject of freedom? Because even the dude who literally invented the concept of Communism said, "The essence of the free press is the reliable, reasonable, and moral nature of freedom."

And that from a guy who thought independence and democracy were four-letter words … and maybe they are in German, or maybe Karl just wasn't a very good speller, who knows. The point being, leaders with vastly different geopolitical kinks agree that the press must be allowed to operate and report freely to hold those same leaders and citizens alike to task.

You say you want more examples? Try this on for size:

F-cking Fidel Castro himself, a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist-Dictator-Dick if there ever was one, and hater of all things American (except baseball and Hemingway), admitted that, "The first thing dictators do is finish the free press to establish censorship. There is no doubt that a free press is the first enemy of dictatorship." Apparently, he had this revelation between cigars and mass executions because that is exactly what he did. Job one. Day one. New Year's Day 1959. He clocked in and put an end to the free press in Cuba. Then he lit a cigar.
So, are we saying that to be a truly free republic, publications, reporters, and media outlets should have no guardrails and be allowed to say and publish anything they want? Of course not. But it happens.

We've all stood in the checkout line and allowed ourselves the guilty pleasure/furtive glances at the tabloids as their headlines exclaim in definitive absolute terms that, "An Alien Impregnated Michael Jackson And He Gave Birth To Bruno Mars!" But we expect that kind of horsesh!t from those publications, and pay them no neverminds. (Even though that Michael/Bruno thing sounds like it might be true.)

But in the real world of journalism, large, trusted, bonded media outlets need to verify, clarify, certify, and verify again, every and all stories and information they put out to the public. Because that is the task they're held to, morally and legally. And we've seen, when morality failed, one of the country's largest media outlets held legally to task to the tune of almost a billion dollars. We actually saw footage of the owner of that outlet testify, under oath, that not only did he know he was broadcasting falsehoods, he instructed his on-air minions to do it again and again because when they did, viewership numbers went through the roof. And more viewers meant increased ratings, and increased ratings meant more sponsors, and more sponsors meant more money in his pockets.

Not exactly the spirit of the First Amendment, but when you've outgrown your yacht and your fifth wife is complaining, you do what you have to, I guess.

But I do not believe that is the norm for the fourth estate in our country. No, there are real stories being broadcast of those in power saying things and doing things that are in direct conflict with the tone, tenor, and outright written words of the articles that govern this great republic. And that's why a free press is invaluable to a true democracy.

So Mr. Bigshot, if it's causing you angst that the free press is broadcasting your exact words and exact deeds to the public that you swore an oath to serve, while you're trying to keep those words and deeds quiet, well, you need to shut

t up and take it, and not lock yourself in your office bathroom and blame that dicey breakfast burrito you got this morning at the drive-thru.

That's the press doing their job at its most American. Not spreading lies or faking the news or altering the facts or whatever other bullsh!t word salad you want to put on it to get yourself out of a jam. If it's p!ssing off people in power, well then you know that the press is doing it the way the First Amendment intended. It's the free press exercising their freedom to … well … press...freely, I guess. (That sounded better in my head)

So stop throwing a tantrum and get up off the floor of the bank, Junior. No! No complaining, mister. You made your metaphorical bed; now you can sleep in it. And no tweeting all night under the covers either, Buster Brown! You just lay there and think about what you did, young man. Wait until your father hears about this …

Continued on Page 61...

RECAP:

Whose Live Anyway? @ *Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, 10/23/2026*

by "Chad from Albany" Koenig

The entirety of Troy was packed on a beautiful Friday Night for a multitude of reasons. Nice weather, colleges are in session, dinner reservations, etc. And although parking was not in abundance, the laughter was, as the cast of the groundbreaking sketch comedy show "**Whose Line Is It Anyway?**" came barreling into the **Troy Savings Bank Music Hall** to a sold-out crowd of all ages. "Whose Line?", which ran in Britain from 1988-1999, yielded a massively successful American spin-off, which has been airing on and off since 1998. Many of the popular cast members were on stage, including the great character actor **Ryan Stiles** (Drew Carey Show, Two and a Half Men, Leanne), **Greg Proops** (voice of Bob The Builder, Star Wars: Episode 1), **Gary Anthony Williams** (voice of Uncle Ruckus on The Boondocks, MAD, Boston Legal), and veteran sketch comedy greats **Jeff B. Davis** and **Joel Murray**. Long-time musical leader Laura Hall was advertised but was unable to be there, and a skilled pianist named Alex did a wonderful job. I wish I could give credit to his last name, but it was indecipherable to me when they announced it due to the applause.

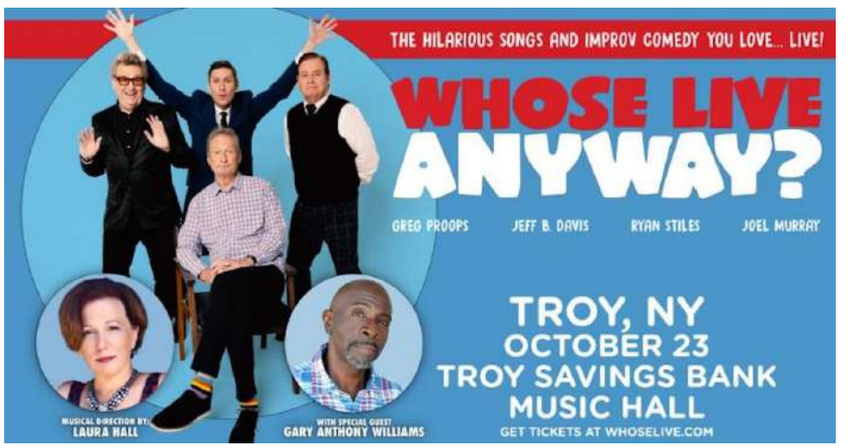
Like the popular series, the live performance draws heavily from crowd participation, starting the night with people in the first few rows throwing written suggestions into a bucket for a game later in the night, the classic Whose Line game "Sentences." Based on the UK version's game, "Scenes From a Hat", a 10-year-old boy named Alex was asked about his name and hobby (playing video games), and a conversation between him and his mother was acted out on stage by Proops (Alex) and Siles (his mother). They kept the makeshift storyline going by using those lines pulled from the bucket, which were quite risque, and both actors noted the misspelling of many of the words. One word being "misspelled" was a joke referencing the context of the word "coming."

Prior to that, highlights of the evening involved "Helping Hands," in which two fans, Leah and Rosie, were picked to move Proops and Williams, like life-size action figures, to the backdrop of Albany's Tulip Fest.

Next was Stiles' "The Ghost of Alex Trebek" in an improv game of "Jeopardy!". The actors portrayed four contestants, with a great reference by Joel Murray (whose character was "Dick Sprinkles," who worked for WTEN) which "conveniently could be found on Channel 10", Proops portrayed an illegal Swiss Banker from Amsterdam, Williams was a McDonald's employee, and Davis played "Mary from Duanseville," keeping the local references abundant. The Jeopardy answers were chosen by audience members who yelled out "Samuel Gompers," "Camelot," "the Tinder app," "Wine," and "Kumquat", with the cast making up humorous questions to the given answers.

My highlight of the night was when a couple named Cheryl and Mike were brought up on stage to tell their story of how they met, and to have the cast reenact their version of how they met, with the local couple chiming in on the microphones with "ding ding ding" when they got it right and a "whomp whomp" sound when they were wrong. Cheryl and Mike so humorously made those sounds at the perfect times about their relationship, and the audience was rolling. The abundance of local references within the sketch was fantastic, starting with David trying to pronounce Gansevoort to no avail, so Mike said, "Just say Wilton." The couple met in high school in the early '80s at Shenendehowa, which—trying to get the cast to pronounce correctly—was a sketch all on its own. And the couple split for two years because of, let's just say, some bad habits, but then found each other again a little later in life. The recreation of their story was absolutely tremendous, and from my decades of watching the US and UK versions of this show, I would pair that up to anything that I have seen on TV.

Two more crowd members were picked later in the show for the game "Sound Effects," which saw fans Lindsay and Kevin creating sound effects on the microphone for the cast while they pretended to go duck hunting, with the biggest laughs coming from the gun, which shot ducks out of it to hit the ducks in the sky. The story soon became about them trying to escape the woods on their motorcycle, which wasn't given



enough sound to start, but no worries, they escaped on time.

Another classic "Whose Line?" sketch concluded the evening, called "Greatest Hits," where Stiles, Joel, and Proops portrayed the ghost of Gordon Lightfoot, Dan Akroyd, and Pope Leo, respectively, as pitchmen for a music compilation about unicycling—a topic yelled out by another lucky fan. Williams and Davis sang improvised songs on the subject in random styles of music, the first being "trucker songs," the second being a disco song called "Stuck In My Spokes", with Styles making the joke, "Do you know why disco music isn't around anymore? The Drummer died!", before their final song, "One Seat, Two Hearts", a jazz ballad. This song was a highlight of the night as Williams went into a spot-on impersonation of Louis Armstrong, with the gag being that their song kept going and going long after both actors thought they were supposed to stop.

That brilliant bit was the finale for 90 minutes of uproarious laughs by the packed house. It was incredible seeing all of these great talents that have been gracing our televisions across the globe for decades performing for us and with us. It is always a blast seeing these tours and the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall was the most lovely of backdrops for this show. I hope this becomes an annual affair at the venue.

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An Interview:

Peter G. Fisher – Collar City Guitars Interview

By OP Callaghan

RRX: Tell us how you got into guitars.

PF: I've always been drawn to music and the culture around it. Guitars are one of those things where the deeper you get into them, the more interesting they become. There's the music itself, but then there's the history, the craftsmanship, the electronics, all the different ways people modify them and make them their own. At some point, I realized I was just as interested in how guitars worked as I was in playing them.

RRX: Did you take lessons?

PF: I've picked things up along the way, but a lot of my education has been hands-on. I'm the kind of person who wants to take something apart, figure out how it works, and see if I can make it better. Guitars are great for that because there's always something new to learn, whether it's electronics, setup work, or a weird old instrument that somebody brings through the door. I did take lessons in High School, but learned even more from playing with my friend, Andy, after school. After that, I really just found music I was interested in and found other people who knew how to do it and asked questions. Music people are always willing to give up their secrets. "It's in the doing, not the knowing!" So you just gotta get to doing!

RRX: Does anyone else in your family play?

PF: My dad had a guitar in the house and would play it on occasion, but my mom was always the center of music in the house. She played piano and flute in church and at home. She encouraged/insisted that my sister and I take music lessons, starting with piano, and then I moved on to violin, trombone, and tuba!

RRX: Tell us how you became a luthier, and then a shop owner.

PF: I had a terrible job; I quit, and suddenly had more free time. So I pooled all my money and bought parts to build a "Parts-Strat." As soon as I wired it up and made that first sound, I was hooked and decided to go to school for guitar building. I attended the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery in Phoenix, Arizona, and my obsession with guitars began to develop right away. It was so great to be surrounded by people who were just as interested in all the building details as I was. After I graduated, I worked in the big-box corporate store for a while before opening my own shop in Troy. I really enjoyed everything from the business side of opening a shop to the details of doing repairs and setups.

Opening Collar City Guitars was a way to bring all those interests together. I wanted a place where people could buy and sell interesting instruments, have a place to get quality work done on their instruments, and talk shop with people who genuinely care about this stuff. We're an independent shop in Troy, New York, and we get to do a little bit of everything. Between buying gear, repairing instruments, selling guitars and pedals, and developing some of our own products, no two days are exactly alike.

RRX: What's your favorite aspect of owning a guitar shop?

PF: The people, without a doubt. I love when somebody brings in an old guitar that's been sitting in a closet for 20 years, we get it playing again, and they leave excited about making music with it. I also love discovering unusual instruments and gear that you don't see every day.

And I really enjoy being part of the local music community. A guitar shop can be more than a place to buy something. It can be a place where musicians meet, share ideas, discover new music, and get connected with other people.

RRX: What's the worst thing about owning a guitar shop, lol!

PF: The fact that guitars are also a business! Haha. I could spend all day working on an interesting instrument or talking about some obscure pedal circuit, but at the end of the day, the bills still have to get paid.

There's also the balancing act of trying to do everything. You're buying inventory, answering messages, fixing guitars, taking photos, shipping orders, managing employees, and trying to keep the shop running. It's a lot of hats to wear. But honestly, I'd rather have those problems than be doing something I don't care about.

RRX: Tell us something unique about Collar City Guitars.

PF: We're a little different because we're not just a guitar store. We're a repair shop, a used-gear destination, a place to discover independent pedal builders, and a hub for the local music community.

We love unusual gear, small builders, vintage instruments, and things with a story behind them. We're also developing our own products, including pedals like the Jerry Blaster, so we're not just selling other people's ideas; we're working on our own, too.

We're proud to be an independent business in Troy, and we've built a pretty substantial online presence through Reverb while still maintaining that neighborhood-shop feel. Whether somebody walks through our front door or buys something from us online, wewant them to know they're dealing with real people who care about what they're selling.

RRX: I understand that you also host a Gypsy Jazz Jam; tell us more about that.

PF: Yep! It's the third Tuesday of each month at The Ale House in Troy. Music really creates opportunities for people to get together and play, even if they didn't know each other before. The Gypsy Jazz Jam is part of that idea. It's a chance for musicians to get together, work on tunes,

trade ideas, and enjoy playing with

other people all while eating and drinking in a legendary local pub.

Gypsy jazz has such a distinctive sound and tradition, and it's a style that really rewards listening and interaction between musicians. You don't necessarily need a big stage or a formal concert to have a great musical experience. Sometimes getting a group of people in a room with their instruments is all it takes.

I like the idea of Collar City Guitars being involved in that side of music, too. Not just selling the equipment, but helping create opportunities for people to actually use it.

RRX: Anything else? Who else have you got at Collar City Guitars?

PF: There's a whole team behind the shop, and it takes a lot of different skills to make the place work.

Continued on Page 7...

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11/13: THE BEAR BONES PROJECT 8PM
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11/21: NEON AVENUE 8PM
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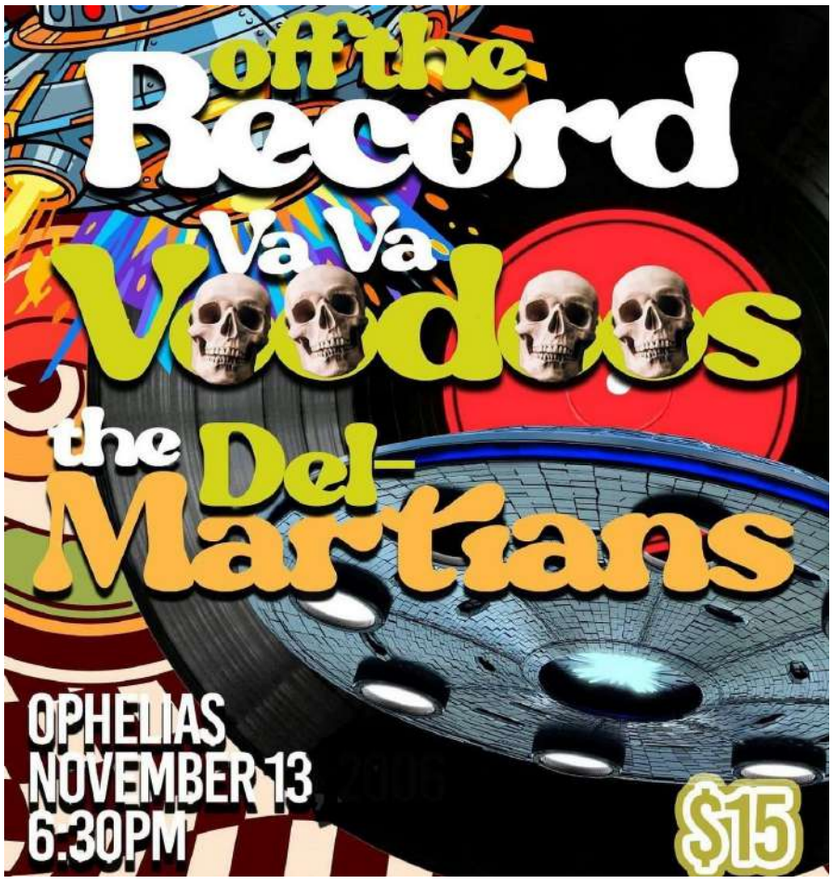
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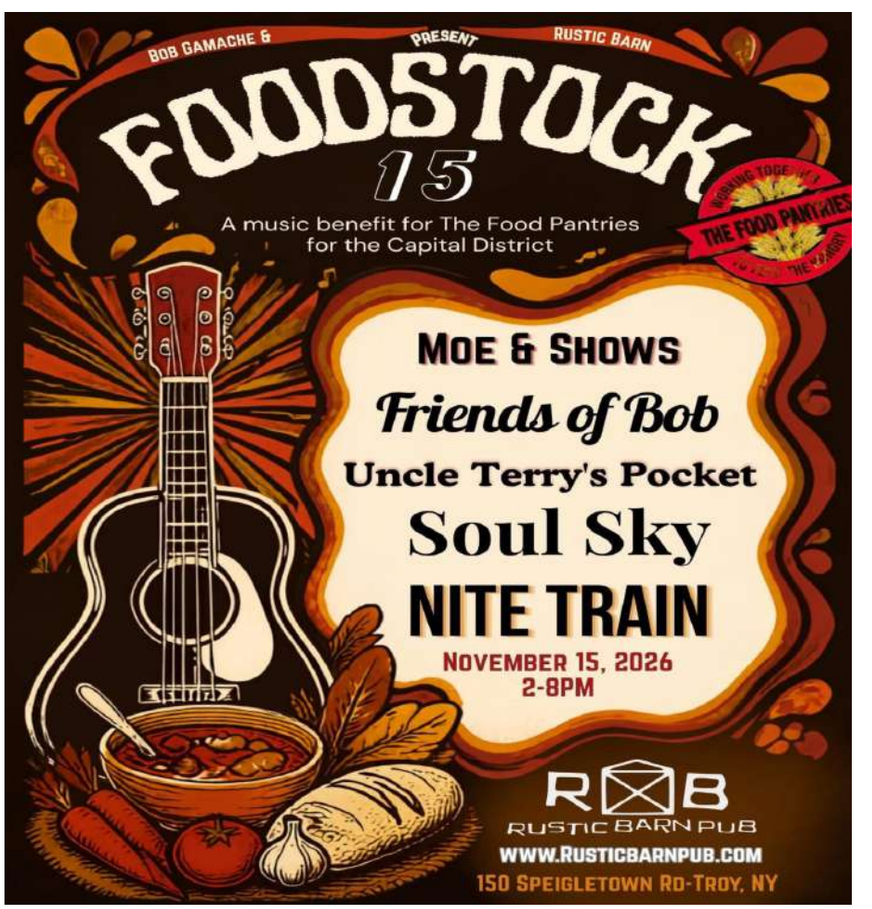
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How do we make a better world?

We live in difficult times. Political divisions, hostility, conflict, and a seemingly endless parade of problems, most of which, if we're honest, are of our own making. We've become remarkably proficient at finding things to fight about. If arguing were an Olympic sport, we'd have enough gold medals to pay off the national debt.

But I have a solution. Not to everything, of course. I'm a musician, not a magician. Although, come to think of it, magic is exactly where we begin. At Peak Music and Dance, when we meet a new student, we ask a simple question: "If you could wave a magic wand, what would you be doing in music?"

It's a deceptively important question. If someone can answer it honestly, we can usually get them on their way. Very few people are truly incapable of developing musical ability. Most simply haven't had the right instruction, encouragement, or opportunity.

One student told me, "I want to be a rock star." My response? "Great! Let's get you the skill set that will support that." No laughter. No lecture about unrealistic expectations. Let's find out what you want and what you're willing to do to get there.

More often, though, the answer is, "I just want to have fun." Sometimes it means exactly what it says. But sometimes, with a little exploration, we discover the unspoken truth: "I'd really love to become an excellent musician. Maybe even perform professionally. But I'm afraid I'm not good enough." And there it is. Fear, disguised as modesty.

Of course, sometimes having fun really is the entire objective, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. I once had a student whose entire ambition was to sing a Whitney Houston song at karaoke night. That's it. No recording contract, no world tour. We worked toward that goal.

He accomplished it. And then he stopped taking lessons. Success! He knew where he wanted to go, did the work, and got there.

For those who want to become truly exceptional, another decision awaits. Are you willing to pursue excellence for its own sake? Are you willing to do the work because becoming the best you can be is a worthy endeavor?

I believe it is. But whether your ambition is Carnegie Hall, a heavy metal stage, your local karaoke night, or singing while making dinner, there's something more important at work here. Music brings joy into the world. And we desperately need more joy.

Now, let's clarify something. Joy does not require a happy song. There is tremendous joy in sharing a sad song, the kind that brings tears to your eyes because someone has managed to express something you've carried inside for years. There's joy in sharing an angry song, too, in turning rage, frustration, and anguish into something powerful and creative.

And yes, that includes heavy metal. Have you ever looked at an audience at a heavy metal concert? Tattoos, black clothing, intimidating expressions, and enough skulls to make a medieval cemetery look underdecorated. Terrifying!

And yet, I've often suspected that some of those scary-looking metal fans may be better emotionally adjusted than the perfectly respectable people sitting quietly at a symphony. At least the metalheads are getting their feelings out!

I love classical music, too, but there's something wonderfully honest about a room full of people enthusiastically shouting along to a song about rage, loss, or despair, and then leaving with enormous smiles on their faces.

Music doesn't have to deny our darker emotions to bring us joy. It can give those emotions a voice and turn loneliness into a shared human experience. The joy isn't necessarily in the emotion being expressed. It's in the expression itself, and in sharing it with someone else.

In a world divided by politics, ideology, religion, and competing versions of the truth, music can bring people together without asking them to agree on anything. Two people who might disagree about virtually everything can sing the same song, dance to the same rhythm, or be moved by the same melody. For those few moments, they share an experience rather than an argument.

In many cultures, singing and dancing are simply part of being human. Everyone participates. You don't need a degree, a record deal, or a standing ovation to justify opening your mouth. Here in America, we've developed the peculiar notion that unless we're approaching professional competence, we shouldn't subject anyone else to our musical efforts. Nonsense!

Apparently, we've decided music is best left to professionals, while expressing poorly informed opinions to thousands of strangers requires absolutely no qualifications whatsoever. What a fascinating set of priorities.

I'd like to propose something different. Be brave enough to sing, even if you're not certain you'll sound wonderful. Play an instrument before you've mastered it. Dance without worrying about what everyone else might think. And if you encounter the occasional idiot who mocks your efforts, continue anyway. Anyone who finds pleasure in taking joy away from another human being has already demonstrated that their opinion is of remarkably little value.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I believe passionately in musical excellence. I believe in discipline, serious study, and the relentless pursuit of mastery. Those who want to become exceptional should be encouraged and challenged to do exactly that. But excellence is something we can aspire to. It should never be the price of admission to participating in music.

A beginner singing with genuine passion has something valuable to offer the world. So does the virtuoso who has spent decades mastering an instrument. They spring from the same human need to create, communicate, and connect.

And that brings me back to our original question. How do we make a better world? We live in an age when contention has become a spectator sport. Social media rewards outrage, hostility masquerades as conviction, and we've reached a point where people can debate the merits of public executions as though they're discussing the weather. I find that profoundly disturbing. We have become so consumed with telling the world what we believe that we sometimes forget to share who we are.

So I have a challenge for you. Don't make your political affiliation, religious beliefs, or personal grievances the only things you offer the people around you. Share something of yourself instead. Share a song that makes you laugh, one that makes you cry, or one that reminds you of someone you've lost. Sing badly if you must. Sing beautifully if you can. Learn to do it better if you want. Play an instrument. Dance with someone. Make music with your children, your friends, or someone you've only just met.

Music and movement are not luxuries reserved for the talented few. They are part of our shared human inheritance, a birthright that we've somehow convinced ourselves must be earned.

No, I don't believe a song will solve all the world's problems. But I do believe that a world in which more people experience and share joy will be a better world than one in which we spend our lives competing to see who can be the angriest. And if we can create even one moment when someone feels less alone, more alive, or simply happy to be here, then we've accomplished something worthwhile.

Let's make a better world, one human experience at a time.

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An Interview

Liam Sweeny (Livin' Poor)

by Rob Smittix

RRX: We've got Liam Sweeny on the line. He's known for a lot of different things. He's an author. He's a certified genius. He has also done many years of work with us here at RadioRadioX and The Xperience. But now he's got a brand new thing, a brand new project, something that I know is near and dear to his heart, and that is "Livin' Poor." Tell us about that.

LS: I guess, to start, by saying that I've done guides before in the past. Livin' Poor is a survival guide for being homeless; that's what it is. But the first guide I had done was in 2005 in Baton Rouge for Katrina relief. I did a caseworker's guide, and I love doing them. Just about a year and a half ago, I had this idea that I should figure out, if I was gonna become homeless, what kind of a guide would I want? I just wanted to create a guide for homelessness; I think mostly it's because I know that inflation is gonna continue to rise and rents are gonna continue to outpace wages, and more people are gonna become homeless. So it got into my head: people will need a guide. They need some kind of guidance because there's plenty of guidance for not becoming homeless. But once you actually become homeless, there's no guidance. And so it kind of cooked itself out of that, and just the experience I had with working with the paper, you know?

RRX: I know a lot of the language has changed over the years, and that homeless is now unhoused. I think both are still acceptable, but as someone who's been homeless before, I am still okay with that term.

LS: Yeah, I kind of play it by ear because sometimes I feel like unhoused is the right word to use and sometimes I feel like homeless is the right word to use. Honestly, that's the writer in me that's trying to find the right word pattern. But yeah, the language is definitely changing. I hope that with the change in language comes a change in understanding.

RRX: We should talk about some of the different types of homelessness because I don't think everyone realizes that there are different levels to this.

PHOTO BY: STEPHANIE BARTIK

LS: I think this is an understanding that people don't always have. When they see homelessness, and they think about homelessness, they think of the person on the street asking for your change. They think about the person who's creating a problem, or who's intoxicated, or who's mentally ill. But the largest majority of people who are homeless are not public. They may be living in their car, or they may be sleeping on a friend's couch or at a family member's house. And to the point where, if a family member is taking care of you and they're not trying to get rent, they're not trying to make money, then you are homeless. That's the type of homelessness that we don't talk about. But that's the thing ... we see the worst cases, the most untreated cases of homelessness we see publicly. But then it's all the people just getting by; you would have no idea that they were homeless, and yet they're homeless.

RRX: Well, that was kinda my situation. I mentioned that for a short period of time, I was homeless. It wasn't like I wasn't working full time; it wasn't like I didn't have a job. It's a situation; it's an incident that happened: my ex-wife and I broke up. She got to keep the place and all the furniture and everything in it, and now I'm out on my own. I'm all for child support, but I'm just saying, the amount that I was paying was ridiculous, so I didn't have enough money to get my own place. Yes, I did have friends and family that would let me couch surf, but you never wanna overstay your welcome, so I would rotate that. I did have a car, and on the nicer days, I would sleep in the car, you know? That's a different type of homelessness. I felt more blessed in a sense, because I did have people that cared enough for me and I had a support unit around me, where some people don't have that.

LS: I'll tell you honestly, the thing that I noticed when I was putting this guide together, when I was talking to people and going down every rabbit hole online that I could, was ... when you get past the homelessness, and you get to know who they are and what they've done in their lives, you find out that it's everybody. It's us, it's your next-door neighbor, it's your best friend, it could be anybody. There's not a "homeless type of person." There isn't anything like that when you actually get to know people.

RRX: And everybody's got their own story. What was it that got them to that point? Like I mentioned what happened to me - some people had way more tragedy involved. Especially the people on the streets that you do see. We can't really ignore that drug and alcohol abuse can be a factor for many of them as well.

LS: It was an epiphany-type moment for me when I was putting the guide together. I've been with the Red Cross for 17 years as a volunteer on and off, and I realized just from being there for so long that the Red Cross is the largest homeless organization in the world, if you think about it. Because people lose their homes to fires, they lose their homes to floods and tornadoes, and the way people are treated who lose their homes in such a way is miles different than the way a person loses their home to soaring rent or loss of wages; they couldn't keep up. And in both cases, you're talking about forces beyond the person's control. But the public reaction to both of them is night and day. So a part of the guide is like a draft type of legislation just for people to think about to declare homelessness an economic disaster, either in New York or in some other jurisdiction.

RRX: So, if I was someone who was down on their luck and I needed a guide like this, where would these be found?

LS: We're gonna put them in some interesting places. We're gonna try to get them into some libraries. We have a first batch we're gonna get out to some elected officials, but then half of that batch is gonna go out to libraries. We're gonna try to get them out to barber shops, soup kitchens, food pantries, and hopefully get them into a couple of shelters. We would like to get them into the places where people who are at risk for homelessness might show up rather than people who've been homeless for a while, because this guide isn't gonna be 100% effective for somebody who's been on the street for five years, because they know more than anything this guide could tell them. But for people who are just looking at the uncertainty of it, this is what the guide is for.

Continued on Page 7...

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RECAP:

"Burnout Paradise" @ *The Egg, 10/17/2026*

By: Faith Schlesinger

I'm greeted by an elevator attendant who asks if I'm going to the "treadmill show." The sentiment is mirrored in the lobby, where ticket holders and staff members muse about what they think the show might be. There's a sense of anticipation, and perhaps a little intentional confusion.

"**Burnout Paradise**," presented by **Pony Cam Collective**, an Australia-based experimental theater company, is an exercise in pushing limits — physical, creative, and communal. The five-member collective creates work without a conventional hierarchy of authorship. Rather than relying on a fixed writer, director, and cast, Pony Cam develops its performances collaboratively, negotiating ideas and responsibilities as an ensemble. The result is theater that feels unpredictable by design: playful and chaotic. "Burnout Paradise" encapsulates their process beautifully. The show doesn't just break the mold of conventional creative development; it shatters the fourth wall and challenges the audience to participate in creating the narrative of the fifth.

With the theater doors open, the audience is ushered into a fully lit room. Five artists mill about the stage, stretching, chatting, and hydrating. Four adjacent treadmills are labeled with handwritten signs: SURVIVAL, ADMIN, PERFORMANCE, and LEISURE. A whiteboard sits just offstage, displaying a to-do list, while a nearby table holds an assortment of odds and ends. Above the performers, a projector screen reads "Warm Up."

As we find our seats, we watch knee bends and stationary stretches. It takes a moment to realize that the stage directions have quietly extended beyond the performers. We, too, are warming up for what's to come.

The artists mount their respective treadmills, and the fifth member of the collective assumes the role of timekeeper, host, and something of a maître d' at a particularly unhinged restaurant, with a table for two at the head of the theater. The audience is welcomed into the experience, and the objectives are laid out.

The challenge is deceptively simple: complete an escalating list of tasks while keeping the treadmills moving. Each machine represents a different category of life's demands. Survival involves the practical necessities of living, including preparing food. Admin involves the bureaucratic labor required to keep a creative enterprise afloat. Performance demands that the audience be entertained, while Leisure is devoted to the everyday rituals and personal tasks that supposedly make life enjoyable.

Like real life, the clock is ticking. There are only so many hours in a day, and only so many minutes in the show. The performers must complete their tasks within the allotted time while beating their previous distance record. If they fail, the audience is entitled to a full refund. The host tells us that the company has failed 134 times. Suddenly, there are stakes, and the audience is part of the game.

What follows is a wonderfully absurd demonstration of the arithmetic of modern life. A grant application takes shape on the projection screen. Shakespearean monologues compete with a live back-shaving for the audience's attention. A performer's accidental breaking of a glass pot lid becomes the basis for a request for photographic evidence to be emailed live and added to the grant application. There are shakes, beeps, music, and an ever-increasing sense that the entire enterprise might tip into chaos at any moment.

"Burnout Paradise" reminds us that movement is mandatory, but progress is never guaranteed. Yet the show never settles into a lecture. It makes the experience funny, physical, and immediate. We laugh at the ridiculousness of the situation, even as its familiarity begins to sink in and we,

PHOTO BY: FAITH SCHLESINGER

too, engage in the community of the show.

My favorite moment, however, is one of the quietest.

At a certain point, "a moment of zen" becomes the task at the forefront. The lights are brought down, and the audience, alongside all four treadmills, which have now slowed to a calm walk, is invited to pause for a moment of mindfulness and deep breathing. For a brief instant, the atmosphere shifts. The noise recedes. The room settles. There is space to breathe, to be still, to exist without immediately needing to accomplish something.

Then the house lights return. The treadmills continue their relentless hum. The beeps resume, the pace accelerates, and the demands come rushing back.

The contrast feels painfully familiar. We are told to practice mindfulness, to take care of ourselves, to find balance — but how often are those moments squeezed into the margins of an already overburdened day?

By the time the performance reaches its conclusion, the room has changed. The audience that entered wondering what a "treadmill show" could possibly entail has become part of the spectacle. Some of us have helped with tasks; others have cheered, laughed, or simply watched the madness unfold. Participation has taken different forms, but everyone has shared the experience.

In a satisfying conclusion, the artists and audience complete all the tasks, and no refunds are issued. As the bows conclude, the normal rush to get to the parking garage begins. Before the audience settles back into keeping pace on our own treadmills, though, one last moment of community unfolds — one that even the artists didn't expect. Every member of the audience gathers patiently, each taking a moment to engage with the artists, congratulate them, and applaud an amazing experience and performance. Almost everyone leaves not only without a refund but also having purchased some merch, while taking a sip of the glacier-blue Gatorade kindly offered on a literal silver platter.

I left feeling that the show had taken burnout down a few notches — not because it offered a solution, but because it made the struggle visible, ridiculous, and unexpectedly joyful. "Burnout Paradise" transforms the familiar exhaustion of trying to do everything into an experience that belongs to everyone in the room. For a little while, we are not running our separate races. We are in it together.

Find more information about the Pony Cam Collective and future tour dates on their website https://ponycam.co

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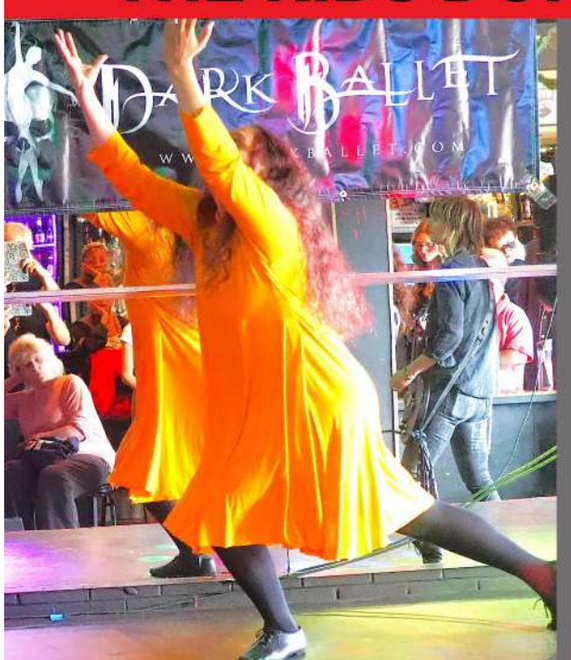

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Canna Talk

By MBF & 400 River

Now that the cultivation and sale of recreational cannabis is legalized here in New York, we have access to tested final products. Every cannabis product that is sold here has been tested by a state-licensed lab. On the production side, testing ensures that we are distributing a safe and effective product. Also, we want to be as accurate as possible when reporting information about the product to a consumer. For consumers, testing allows you to see exactly what is in what you are consuming. Since there can be limited space on a lot of cannabis labels, reading a product's test results can really fill you in. In this article, I'd like to discuss how a typical lab pickup goes for a cultivator and how to read a Certificate of Analysis (COA) for a cannabis product.

Compliant Lab Pickups

We just had a lab pickup today, which is why I thought it would be interesting to talk a little bit about what a lab pickup entails. First and foremost, everything goes through our seed-to-sale tracking system, called Metrc. While it took a while to get used to, it is actually a lot easier and more accurate to submit items for lab testing now that Metrc is used, in my opinion. There's less of a chance of someone accidentally writing the wrong information, and it really helps with record-keeping.

The first step to a lab pickup is to know what product you are going to be sending to the lab and prepare the lot. Lot sizes for a run of cannabis products can look really different depending on the scale of the operation. We can go from less than 500 units for a very small production batch, or you can have up to 150,000 units in a batch. (Our latest flower drop is only about 100 units!) Depending on the type of product you're sending to the lab, in some cases the entire batch needs to be prepared before anything is sent to the lab. This is the case for pre-rolls and gummies. We package some of the products so the lab representative can randomly choose which units they take for testing.

While the lab rep is at the facility, they have a bit of paperwork to fill out for the items going to be tested. They need to make sure that they have the lot numbers for the products and how many final units should be produced. They also ensure that the product is going in for the correct tests. Cultivator and processors can send out their products for Research and Development testing. A full panel R&D will include all pertinent information that a final full compliance test will include. You can also choose specific tests if you want to drill down to some individual metrics. Once the R&D test is completed, you cannot sell the tested item. For sellable items, the cultivator then sends in more products for a Full Compliance test.

When the lab representative chooses products for testing, they then place them in a plastic bag marked with the lot information. This is kept in a temperature-controlled environment that is also tamper-evident. They leave with a transportation manifest citing the route they take back to the testing facility, the products they have, and the vehicle information. To further ensure no funny business is taking place, all of the lab pickups are video recorded and held onto by the cultivator.

Depending on the product you are sending out for testing and how quick the lab turnaround is, we generally expect results back within 2 weeks. For certain products, it has been a lot faster, but we do not expect that. Once a product passes Full Compliance testing, you are issued a Certificate of Analysis.

How to read a COA

Having a COA is like having a key to understanding a lot more about the cannabis product you are about to ingest.

First, you need to find the COA! Now that we have fully transitioned to Metrc, if you scan the Retail ID QR code on a product, you will have a link to a full COA. Some processors have COA landing pages on their website, but most have migrated directly to using the Metrc Retail ID. The first page gives you information that has to be reported on the cannabis product itself. You've got information about both the testing facility and the cultivator or processor. There's the lot number, serving sizes, and cannabinoid analysis. I always love to read the detailed cannabinoid breakdown of the plant I am consuming. Naturally, there is THC, but that is really just the beginning. Our lab lists CBD, CBG, CBC, THCV, and other minor cannabinoids that help contribute to the experience you have when consuming.

Next comes another great indicator about the experience your cannabis product will have—the terpenes! There is a list of over 30 cannabinoids that the product may contain and their concentrations. Looking at one of our most recent flower COAs, I'm seeing results listed for six different cannabinoids. The larger the percentage of total terpenes, the more flavorful your experience will be. Since terps also have a huge impact on how cannabis makes you feel, knowing what terpenes do what can help guide you towards the correct product. Some cultivators make the decision to advertise terpene results on their packaging since savvy consumers will want to know.

The next page of our COA is all about pesticides. There are strict regulations and limits on what pesticides can be used in the production of cannabis here in NY. The COA continues on to list mycotoxins, which are produced by mold and fungi. There is testing for heavy metals like lead, arsenic, and mercury. Sources of heavy metal contamination can be from water, soil, or inputs. A Full Compliance test will also test for different microbiological contaminants. Aspergillus is a common cause of lab failures. This is a mold that is incredibly common, but can cause illness when ingested. You can also see the total aerobic bacteria, yeast, and mold counts in the product. Products are tested for moisture content and water activity. And to conclude the COA, we have filth and foreign material, none of which we want to find in our cannabis products.

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No Filter: An Interview with Rob Forman

By: Lisa Irwin

Rob Forman brings his own energy and personality to every show. I've had the pleasure of working with Rob for the past few years and have gotten to know him as someone who clearly loves what he does. I recently had the chance to interview him about his music, his approach to performing, his talented wife, and what keeps him excited about the next gig.

RRX: Thanks for taking the time to do this interview, Rob! We have worked together for a few years now. Let's have our readers get to know you a bit more. If you had to create a musical recipe for the Rob Forman sound, what ingredients would you put in it?

RF: Hi Lisa! Although I sing, I still view myself as a guitarist above all else, so the first item in the mix is a good acoustic guitar. If it feels good in my hands and sounds good to my ear, the show is going to be a good one. An audience and an environment complete the recipe. Folks who are ready for a good time, in a place where we're all having fun: a lively pub on a Saturday night, a winery on a sunny afternoon, a brewery crowded with families on football Sunday. It's what keeps me coming back for more, and hopefully folks who see me feel the same way.

RRX: While preparing for this interview, I discovered that your wife is a trained singer. Have you ever performed as a duo together?

RF: You're going to get me in trouble here! This comes up from time to time, and my answer to her about performing together has been "no." I've always been hesitant to collaborate; it's scary to me! But it's true, she is an amazing singer, and I will have to overcome those fears sooner rather than later. Plus, now that it's in print, I'll have to hold myself to it.

RRX: Yay! I look forward to that!! Now, let's talk about covers. Do you ever take a song that people know and completely make it your own? Is there a particular cover where you feel like you've really put your stamp on it?

RF: Sometimes, but not too often. I've always liked to play songs and make it sound as close to the original recordings or the version that I first discovered. Some exceptions that can be found in my catalog of covers include "All Star", "Dancing in the Dark" and "Piano Man."

RRX: You have been playing for a while. After all the years of playing live, what still makes you look forward to the next gig?

RF: The unknown about the next gig always keeps the excitement up. I might be walking into a place to play for the first time, and it may turn into a regular stop for years to come. I'm fortunate to have family and friends who like to surprise me at shows, so that also keeps things fun!

RRX: I like to end my interviews with this question because it gives you a chance to share anything you'd like with me and our readers. Do you have any upcoming projects or exciting things in the works that you'd like to share?

RF: No stadium tours to announce yet! I'm happy to just keep playing and enjoying the journey. If there's music being played anywhere in the Capital Region, that's where I want to be. I can't miss the opportunity to say thank you to everyone who supports live music and makes it possible for me to have this really fun job.

With plenty of music still ahead, I'm sure we'll be seeing and hearing a lot more from Rob. To learn more about Rob, you can follow him on Facebook at RobFormanMusic.

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TO STAND OR NOT TO STAND

By Art Fredette

I am 5 foot 8-ish; I was a bit taller once and am probably a bit shorter now. Age and gravity are a bitch. That being said, when I go to a concert or show, I can pretty much always see the band. Long ago it dawned on me that people stand at shows and, believe it or not, may even dance. The horror! This just seemed to be part of the experience. A musical "It is what it is," and that was cool. Recently, it seems to me that this mindset has changed drastically. People act as if a concert is a coffee house listening room and serious decorum is to be followed.

Over the summer I made a foray to SPAC for a show. This show was a tribute show. I know, I know, but when one of the performers invites you, you go. The bands were both covering classic rock giants, bands that have been around since the beginning of time almost, and as I found my seat, it looked like most of the crowd had been around about as long. The amphitheater was a sea of tie-dye and Cialis, white hair and hippie skirts. My first thought was … COOL. I am no kid myself and felt pretty good to see people older than me still into live shows. To be fair there were a fair amount of younger people mixed in, but overall the show was us oldsters. And then things turned. The opening act, which was a tribute to a quite famous British band that has something to do with a blimp made of base metal, hit the stage and the younger people stood up!!!! The horror, the humanity! And worse, they were dancing and singing along!!! Some even had the audacity to raise their arms!!!! A very serious offender dared to do the basic festival dance off the right side of the orchestra pit. She MUST be stopped. I watched the oldsters near me go apoplectic. Security was summoned, complaints were made, middle fingers were extended with hurled verbal insults added for flavor, and my question was … why?

So, let me get this straight: the generation that spent three days in the mud spreading bargain STD's from one end of the Mid Hudson Valley to the other and was all about freedom is going to lose their collective minds because somebody younger than us AARP mfer's was having a good time? The hypocrisy is glaring. I get it, you paid for a "seat", but did you? Is it really about sitting or your entitlement?

I have often wondered: at concerts, are you really paying for a seat or are you paying for proximity? People stand at music events. Recently, the octogenarian Ringo Starr came to town, and the crowd was on its feet from song one. So, this begs the question: when may we stand, dear elders? Back to the proximity question, isn't your row, aisle, and seat number just a private parking space for your ass for the next 2 hours? Isn't it? Do I "have" to sit, or may I stand in the space for which I paid? Enlighten me. My money, my allocated space … your point? I can see being upset if someone was standing and dancing at the ballet, the symphony, or a Broadway show. Although the audience has been known to do the Time Warp at Rocky Horror revivals, I digress. This is rock and roll, the music of rebellion, freedom, and youth. It is not the dancers' fault that you and I got old. It happens. I personally get a charge from watching the crowd have a great time, and it makes me smile. Why are you so salty?

Perhaps it had something to do with the venue, although I doubt that this behaviour is isolated to only SPAC. But SPAC isn't helping. In the way-back times, you could buy an affordable ticket and visit a magical place called "The LAWN". You and your friends would bring in a blanket and whatever other contraband you got past security and sit on the grass. It was amazing; if you wanted to dance … dance. Sing along? At the top of your lungs!!! We were a tribe, and all was good! Now the blankets are gone, replaced by rented lawn chairs; you can't bring your own, and the once wild lawn is just an extension of the amphitheater. Rent a lawn chair, watch the giant TVs, and behave. NO THANKS!

Here is an idea: let's make all shows general admission. You get there early or are aggressive enough, you get up close; if not, you end up where you end up. This, of course, is an absurdist statement, but you get the point. People go to rock, pop, jazz, or any other genre of music to have fun, so see you out at the shows and, to quote Men Without Hats, "You can dance if you want to," and I will enjoy seeing you do so.

Remembering Matt Smith

An Interview by: Rob Smittix - Originally Published on 04/12/2026

Matt Smith: First of all, I want to thank you for doing this. Obviously, I grew up there (Capital Region), and that's my home. That's where I came up, and it's beautiful to get some love.

RRX: I heard that you're originally from the area. Where did you actually grow up?

MS: I grew up in Clifton Park, and I went to Shenendehowa High School. I came up playing my own stuff, and then I was one of the founders of Interstate. Then I played with E.B. Jeb for a while. I guess it was 1988, I started playing my own music (the Matt Smith Band), and I lived there 'til like '94. Then I went to New York City and lived there, but still came back all the time to play. I lived there until 2009, then I moved to Austin, and I've been here ever since.

RRX: Well, Austin's quite the music town these days.

MS: I have a place here called 6 String Ranch. It's kind of like a mentorship place for artists coming up and a recording studio. We have video channels and stuff like that. But that's what I've been up to for a long time now.

RRX: Awesome, and I see you put out your 20th album on the 1st of the year?

MS: Yeah, that's right.

RRX: So that means you've definitely been around for a while.

MS: Well, I'm 66 now, and I've been doing it since I was 10, and I've never done anything else. I have to say, a lot of the stuff that really inspired me was the music scene in Upstate New York. When I was coming up, we had places like the Skyway and Allen's and places like that. Back then, you could still go out at 18. So places like that would have these amazing bands that were from all the upstate corridors; bands like Talas (Billy Sheehan's old band), the New York Flyers, 805, and Heartbeat. Bands like that set the bar for us. Like wow, you could either suck your thumb in a fetal position or get with it.

RRX: I've heard so many stories, and I mean ... I'm 47. The nineties were really when I started to be able to enjoy anything, but the scene was still pretty good, and we've still got one. Still loads of bands around here, but the stories I heard from the generation before about all these places like JB Scott's and others that used to exist. It makes me wish I were born just a little bit earlier.

MS: I come up at least a couple times a year, still to this day, every year, because I still have the band up in Saratoga, the guys who I grew up with. I actually have an album coming out this summer, of 35 years of playing live, and there's a ton of performances from clubs in the Capital District. Different bands that I played with over the years, while playing my own music. That's the next one that's on the plate. It's pretty much already done, but I wanted to honor those guys who are all truly amazing musicians. They're all still very active and playing in different bands up there. Like Pete Sweeney, Chris Peck, Tony Perrino, Brian Melick, and Charlie Tokarz, all those guys who I've been playing with since probably 1993.

RRX: Wow!

MS: My roots are still very deep there, even though Austin is my home now, and that's where I live. But that's where I come from, and I've always honored that.

RRX: No, Austin's definitely the move as far as music goes. I know they got South by Southwest, but I have mixed emotions about that because they make you pay to apply to play.

MS: Oh no, it really is probably the biggest scam I've ever seen. Really. Let me qualify that for you because people come in ... not just guys from New York, but people come in from like Turkey, you know? If they give them like 200 bucks, they don't guarantee any kind of crowd is gonna watch it. The important thing to understand is there's like 12,000 musicians living in Austin, and at least 2500 bands that live here. Then you bring in another 1500 bands on top of that. So there's 4000 bands in town that week, all doing multiple shows. If you're a consumer of music, there's a band in a vacant lot over here, there's a band in the grocery store, there's a band in the airport (of course, there always is in Austin). I love this town, but it's also hard for musicians now coming up. It was always hard in our business, but as far as South by Southwest now, I think a lot of what's happening is the bands that get attention during South by Southwest are already getting attention.

RRX: Correct! My friends are going down there, playing a bar with three people in it, because everybody's at the other shows.

MS: It's a little overwhelming and oversaturated, but this is what I've been blessed to have been able to do my whole life and somehow get away with it. You know what I mean? I love everything about it, same thing as you. You obviously have a deep passion for this, or you wouldn't do what you're doing.

RRX: Oh yeah, and being in the radio business since '94, I had to take a long break because I couldn't even make a living doing it for a while. I can finally do it for a living again.

MS: We have a saying in the music industry, especially on our side of it ... you too can make hundreds or even tens of dollars in the music industry over a few short decades.

RRX: That's correct.

MS: That was a quote from my friend Jimmy Kelly. My newest record has a lot of Capital District guys on it. Steve Candlen, who I co-wrote the song "Orphans" with, also played on that. And also Jimmy Kelly co-wrote "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" with me. I had him play the drums and sing on that with me, too. I recorded a lot of those tracks at Tony's studio up there. The last record I did up there was my "Into the Light" record, which I recorded half with my New York State band in Tony's studio and half in my studio in Austin with my band that I play with down here. Like I said, that connection is never broken. It's never broken my entire career.

RRX: Honestly, I listened to the album, but I had no idea just how much of a connection you had to this area besides the fact that you lived here previously. You know ... people are gonna read this and say, oh man, we gotta check out his new album.

MS: Well, the new album ... I just want to say a few words about it. I'm a centrist Democrat. All of my music for many years has contained social consciousness issues within it. I'm deeply concerned about where we are now in the division within our society and in our country. So I had to address that on this new record. I rewrote "America the Beautiful" on July 4th. There's a song on there called "Cry for America," and on July 4th, I sat behind my studio, and I rewrote it because I was horrified by the things I was seeing. Then I brought in all these great Austin singers. I sang the whole song, and then I brought in Black, Hispanic, Jewish, Arab, and all these different singers to come in. I had them all sing the whole song, and then I edited each line for each singer, so that it had this weight to it. I started in June, and the album was done and mixed by November. I wrote all the songs one after another. It was a tremendously deep thing for me. Not only that, but I was also dealing with the death of my parents. That's the song I co-wrote with Steve called "Orphans," and it's about a certain point in life, where we all become orphans. But that's part of the circle of life, and it's beautiful, you know? So there's a lot of very philosophical and very deep emotional connection with

that, and a lot of that part of my life comes from my connection there. That's why I was really excited to talk to you about this and to talk to the people who I grew up with.

RRX: I appreciate our conversation; it was great connecting with you. Was there anything I didn't cover or ask about that you would like to say?

MS: What I would love people to do is to understand that my album is an album of trying to help heal rifts in society while still maintaining integrity in my own thoughts.

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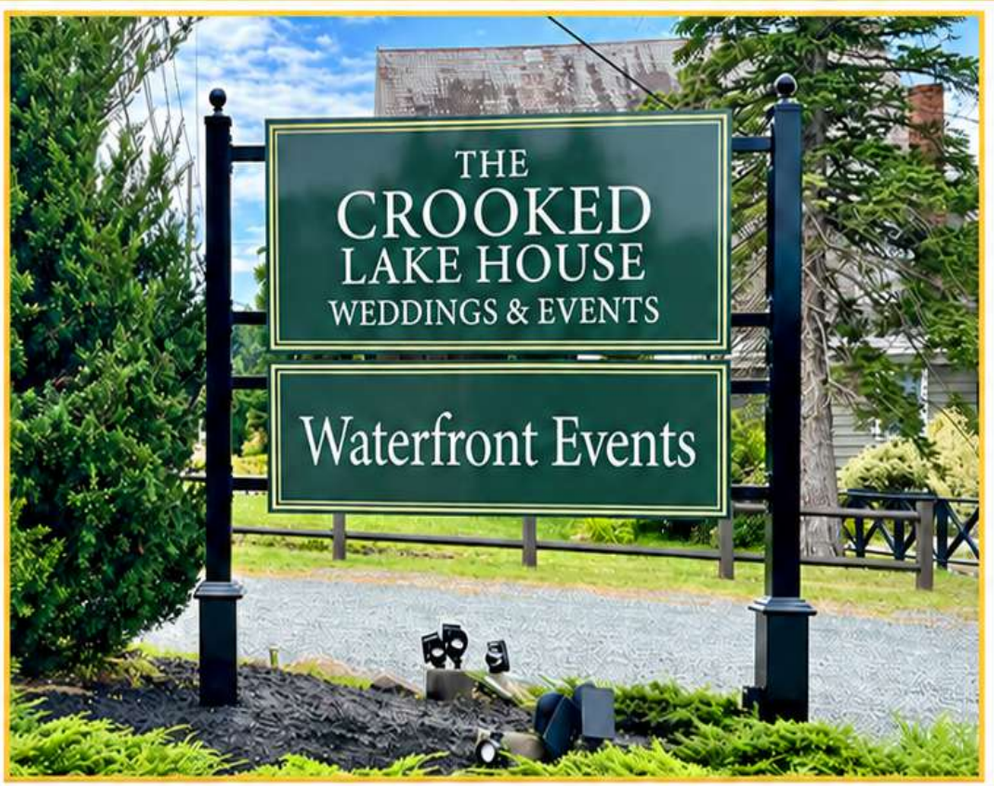

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This song started off from an open mic I was doing that had a songwriter's challenge. They post a phrase at the beginning of the month, and you had until the end of the month to write a song that had that phrase. And the phrase was "funeral parking only." At first, I had no idea what I was gonna do with this. But where I took it is about something I think a lot of my generation is struggling with, which is being able to afford buying a home. To get out of renting, so our money can start to accumulate, where we can own something. How I see people receiving homes in my generation is mainly through inheriting them. So, in that sense, the housing market is "Funeral Parking Only."

RRX: I love it.

(Sawyer begins beating on his acoustic bass and sings, "You say you want a home to call your own ..." After sending chills throughout my body, the song ends.)

RRX: Wow. I don't know what to say; that really hit home, man.

SF: Thank you.

RRX: You're 27, right?

SF: I'm 27, yup.

RRX: It seems like you live a good lifestyle, so you're not going to join the club or anything.

SF: Hopefully not.

RRX: Anything else you'd like to say?

SF: I'd just like to say thank you for listening, and I hope I can keep making music that people enjoy.

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But what's it really all about, this jousting of pens and swords? To my mind, the fruit-filled center in this slice of Americana pie is freedom. Freedom of the people, freedom of the press, and freedom to think, say, write, and broadcast truthful, honest reporting on events and the individuals who populate them.

And that freedom does not just apply to journalists. It belongs to all Americans. Artists and non-artists alike. But those mighty pens become even mightier in the hands of skilled journalists and artists, songwriters and playwrights, authors, essayists and poets.

Artists such as E.E. Cummings, who freely discarded the traditional rules of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spacing to transfer his poems of love and nature, of satire and society, into not just gorgeous sonnets, but beautiful pieces of visual art as well. And who also took a moment between his masterful works to remind us that, "The theory of a free press is not that the truth will be presented completely and perfectly in any one instance, but that the truth will emerge from free discussion."

Free discussion. It's what this whole megillah we call democracy was built upon. And the more we discuss, freely, without name-calling or finger-pointing or trying to silence those who don't agree with us, the more the truth will emerge. We live in a time where we all need to be our own investigative journalists. A time where we need not accept the words of any one faction, any one outlet, any one leader or party, but search for and confirm our truths and hold accountable those who mean to subvert the truth and jeopardize our freedom.

Holy crap, I'm just a guitar player, but I think we may be on to something here!

Whatta ya say, just for the hell of it, we all forget which side we're on for a couple of minutes and just talk to one another about the things that matter most to us. Something tells me we may not be that far apart after all.

Here, I'll start us off … ready? 2...3...4... Discuss!

The Prog Digest

By Klyde Kadiddlehumper

"Maybe the boss will entertain the idea of a Canadian band RadioRadioX special"

Sometimes a topic shows up and refuses to let go. Then, of course, Klyde gets a bee in his bonnet, his brain does whatever it is it does and – voila – the birth of a column.

We had to put a surcharge on this month's Xperience as the contents come from across the border – in the Great White North.

So, put on your toque, grab a 2-fer (24) and a box of crullers … .here we go. Oh, that's a knit cap, a case of beer and a dozen donuts for those who are not bilingual.

In the late '70s, radio was many things … and in Canada, as today, there is this rule about Canadian content. There are strict rules and criteria which are designed to promote and encourage that radio, television, and now digital provide access to and performance of Canadian writers and performers.

From its inception in 1971, being subsumed by another country's media was not something Canada was going to allow. Face it, the Brits and the Americans were juggernauts even then. Applied to Francophiles as well – Quebecers are staunch. Heck, for other reasons, Quebec and British Columbia want to secede from Canada …

But I digress, and we move on. Oh, I would be remiss to not mention that IMHO the greatest thing to come out of Quebec is Montreal smoked meat. Just sayin'.

It all really started for Klyde in the mid '70s when my favorite radio station became CHEZ 106 – Ottawa.

On the prog side, there were the stalwarts – Rush, Triumph, Saga, Max Webster. Lesser-known were Jackal, Goddo, Moxy and Pollen (from the Quebecois prog scene).

CHEZ 106 is still around, but you can't listen to it streaming as it is not licensed to stream outside Canada. If you are a geek, like me, a geo-boundary smashing VPN will let you get there, but that would be breaking the rules and none of us here … hang on, WTF am I saying? Breaking the rules is what we do …

It had been a VERY long time, so Klyde went off and listened to Jackal's one and only album, "Awake." Sometimes we forget just how amazing some of this stuff is and, since it was all pre-internet, most of us probably never heard of them. For those of you interested, think a keyboard-heavy prog band. The band, with keyboardist Chris Kellesis and his brother James, could easily have been on par worldwide with ELP or early Yes. The adventurous ought to try it out – heck, it's the soundtrack while this is being written. Just do a search on the YouTubes and take a listen.

At the time, many wonderful things were imported by college students crossing an obscure little bridge in the North Country. Brador. Molson Export. Tim Hortons (not really that big yet in '77-8). A Canadian pressing of Styx' "Cornerstone" as a gatefold – which is now autographed by a stunned Dennis DeYoung while on a solo tour. It is in pristine condition, and I even cleaned the fold of remnants of college ID sorted, umm, seeds.

A place and a time. Progressive as hell. Want a feel for the time? Search for Dick Beach's interview with Carole Pope of Rough Trade from Xperience magazine.

Remember, these are the same people who gave us SCTV and Trailer Park Boys. Funny and sarcastic as all get out. And if your curiosity is piqued and you are taking a short break from RadioRadioX (and you have SiriusXM), take a listen to Iceberg – all Canadian content, all the time.

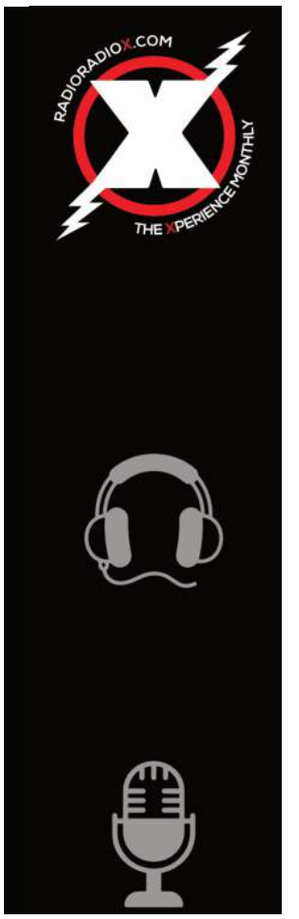
OK – now, don't be a hoser, search for all the Great White North has to offer. Skate the Rideau. Find a Canadian band and suggest we play it.

Hmmmm … maybe the boss will entertain the idea of a Canadian band RadioRadioX special.

Who knows.

Until next time.

Klyde



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