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Sallie Bengtson

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BANK OF N.H. STAGE **Concord, NH** **(603) 225-1111**

5/1- Highway to the RangerZone Open Mic
5/3- Jeffrey Gaines
5/4- Panorama (Cars tribute); Fleetwood Heart
5/5- Run Like Thieves
5/11- Rockstar Karaoke
5/12- Madama Butterfly
5/15- This Is My Brave - The Show
5/18- Mullett
5/19- Granite State Blues Challenge
5/24- Sondheim on Sondheim
5/30- The Free Range Revue
5/31- Bella's Bartok; Bitter Pill

BLUE OCEAN MUSIC HALL **Salisbury Beach, MA.** **(978) 462-5888**

5/3, 4 & 5- Comedian Bob Marley
5/10- The Breakers (Tom Petty tribute)
5/11- Fortune
5/22 & 23- Leonid & Friends
5/25- The Alarm; Gene Loves Jezebel; Belouis Some

BRIGHTON MUSIC HALL **Allston, MA.** **(617) 779-0140**

5/1- Games We Play; House Parties; Zoe Ko
5/2- Giggs
5/3- Dustin Kensrue; The Brevet; Brother Bird
5/4- Layto; Kode
5/5- Juliet Ivy
5/7- Katie Pruitt; Jack Van Cleaf
5/8- Wheel; Aviations
5/9- Cheekface; Yungatita
5/10- Olive Klug; Chrysalis
5/12- Combo Chimbita; Pachyman
5/13- Bad Bad Hats; pronoun
5/14- CEU; Paul Beaubrun
5/15- Julia Holter
5/16- Lords of Acid
5/17- Soen; Trope
5/18- Orgy; Cold
5/19- Deko; Yameii & Friends

5/21- Jeff Bernat
5/22- Lukovi; Calva Louise; Stellar Circuits
5/23- Kid Kapichi
5/29- The Alarm; Gene Loves Jezebel; Belouis Some
5/31- Smash Into Pieces; Versus Me

BULL RUN RESTAURANT **Shirley, MA.** **(978) 425-4311**

5/3- Albert Lee Band
5/4- Anthony Geraci & the Boston Blues Allstars; Swearingen & Kelli (Ballroom)
5/10- Eliza Neals
5/11- Cara Brindisi Concert and Film Premiere; Antje Duvokot
5/17- Sophie B. Hawkins
5/18- Vienna Teng
5/23- Sonny Landreth & The Iguanas
5/30- Rick Estrin & the Nightcats
5/31- Troy Mercy

CHAN'S **Woonsocket, R.I.** **(401) 765-1900**

5/3- Bruce Mattson Band
5/4- Fat City Band
5/10- Winehouse Project with Lisa Kay
5/16- Lil Ed and the Blue Imperials
5/17- Studio Two Beatles Tribute Band
5/18- Greg Abate Super Quartet Gemini
5/24- So Lucky DMB Tribute
5/25- James Montgomery Blues Band
5/31- Through the Doors

CHEVALIER THEATER **Medford, MA.** **(781) 391-7469**

5/4- Leo Skepi
5/8- Buddy Guy
5/11- Caroline Rhea & Melissa Joan Hart
5/26- Kevin James
5/29- Stuff You Should Know

CHUBB THEATER **Concord, NH** **(603) 225-1111**

5/4- Jordan Klepper
5/5- Straight No Chaser
5/10- Kansas
5/11- Matt Fraser
5/17- Tapestry: The Music of Carole King
5/19- Safe Haven Ballet presents Romeo & Juliet
5/21- Erik Larson On Main

CITY WINERY **Boston, MA.** **(617) 933-8047**

5/1- Fuat Güner - Songs from MFO
5/2- Paul F. Tompkins - Varietopia - 6PM
5/3- Sonja Morgan; Natalia Bonfini
5/4- The Berklee Ensemble Brunch Series Presents The Music of Brandy
5/5- Sonja Morgan; Tyler Hilton
5/6- Hawthorne Heights
5/7- Lena Hall
5/8- Jethro Tull's Martin Barre with Dan Crisp
5/9- Michelle Collins
5/10- Juston McKinney
5/11- Rickie Lee Jones; Willy Porter
5/12- Mother's Day Jazz Brunch with The Rubin Brothers; Ariel Posen
5/14- Elizabeth & The Catapult; Monica Giraldo; Autumn Nicholas; The Carole King & James Taylor Story
5/16- Ben Beal; Delivery Boys; Aaron Veal
5/17- Boston Comedy Festival Presents: Comedy and Cabernet; Anders Osborne
5/18- Chris Smither; Peter Mulvey; Kadak Chai
5/19- Compaq Big Band; Anaïs Reno
5/20- MC Lars; Schaffer The Darklord
5/21- The Sonny Landreth Band and The Iguanas; The BoDeans; Chris Trapper
5/23- Kevin James Thornton
5/24- Rufus Wainwright; Comedy and Cabernet
5/25- John Hiatt; Mark Erelli; Bees Deluxe
5/26- Sophie B. Hawkins
5/27- Leonid & Friends
5/30- Kampire After Dark; OkCello
5/31- Taj Farrant; Jazel Farrant; Nathan Bryce and Loaded Dice

CLUB PASSIM **Cambridge, MA.** **(617) 492-7679**

5/2- Hermes Croatto
5/3- Deep River Ramblers
5/4- The Folk Collective
5/5- Kayla Blackburn; Mayfair; Pine Tree Flyers
5/6- Polky
5/7- Pat Byrne & Aleksis Campagne
5/8- Cristina Vane
5/9- Hanneke Cassel Band; Keith Murphy; Jenna Moynihan
5/10- Karim Nagi; Diaspora Folklore
5/11- Jimmy Mazzy and Friends; Rachel Sumner & Traveling Light Album release; Naomi Westwater
5/12- Water Street Wranglers; Porch Party Mamas
5/15- Mark and Maggie O'Connor Life After Life Album release
5/16- Golden Shoals; Micah John & Lillian Chase
5/17- Matt Wertz; Andy Davis
5/18- Doug Lamey & Janine Randall; Kaia Kater
5/19- Charlie Ryan; Chris & Meredith Thompson; Joia Mukherjee
5/21- Dean Johnson
5/22 & 23- Della Mae
5/30- Niall Connolly Band; Gibson Malone
5/31- Peter Bradley Adams

THE FLYING MONKEY **Plymouth, NH** **(603) 536-2551**

5/3- 1964 The Tribute
5/4- Souled Out Show Band
5/5- Carbon Leaf
5/17- The Linda Ronstadt Experience
5/31- Paula Cole

HOUSE OF BLUES **Boston, MA.** **(888) 693-2583**

5/1- BoyWithUke - Lucid Dreams Tour
5/5- Saxon; Uriah Heep
5/6- Architects - Seeing Red Tour
5/8- Black Veil Brides: BLEEDERS Tour 2024

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 5/6- Powermoneycake
 5/8- Running On Jackson (Jackson Browne Tribute)
 5/9- Gaby Moreno
 5/11- Kenny Garrett Quartet
 5/12- Albert Cummings Band
 5/13- YellowHouse Blues Band
 5/17- Shemekia Copeland
 5/18- Larry Carlton: Hits & Steely Dan
 5/19- The Chris O'Leary Band
 5/20- Panorama
 5/22- Greg Piccolo & Heavy Juice
 5/23- BoDeans
 5/24 & 25- David Sanborn Jazz Quintet
 5/26- Beatlemania Again
 5/29- Raul Midon
 5/30 & 31- Trouble No More (Allman Bros tribute)

MAGIC ROOM
Norwood, MA.
(617) 775-4009

5/11- Into The Floyd
 5/25- Mach Bell Experience; David Hull & The Dirty Angels

MENINO ARTS CENTER
Hyde Park, MA.
617-364-2787

5/10- Sal Baglio
 5/31- Lonesome Brothers

MGM MUSIC HALL
Boston, MA.
(617) 960-8333

5/6- Norah Jones; Emily King
 5/7- Bad Religion; Social Distortion
 5/9- Haymakers For Hope: Rock 'N Rumble
 5/10- Freddie Gibbs & Madlib; El Michels Affair; Eyedress
 5/11- Madison Beer; Charlotte Lawrence
 5/12- Say Anything; AJJ; Greet Death
 5/18- The String Cheese Incident
 5/19- Electric Callboy
 5/21- Amos Lee; Julia Pratt
 5/24- Sleep Token; Empire State Bastard
 5/29- Madness
 5/30- The Bryson Tiller Tour

MIDWAY CAFE
Jamaica Plain, MA.
(617) 524-9038

5/1- Fling; Tina and her Pony; Aaron Bear; Korina Zambrano
 5/3- Mystical Misfits; The I Want You; Crow Follow
 5/4- Martin-Morell-Fredette residency
 5/8- Fully Celebrated Orchestra with guests AS3 & Quantum Banditos
 5/10- Uncle Johnny's Band; Lovewhip
 5/11- Johnny Plankton & TSMS; Hands Of Spite;FastTracks; Fly Muscaria; Looms; Jean Paul Jean Paul; Fantastic Trees
 5/13- Bad-ass Burlesque Punk Rock Dance Party
 5/14- Listen Up! Originals Only Open Mic hosted by Forest Romm
 5/15- Twig; Metal Tiger; Garrison Fortress; Neonach
 5/17- Diamond Blues; Kill Tiny Comedy Show
 5/18- DnA's Evolution;Trading Tombstones; The Spackles; The Mighty Suicide Squirrels
 5/20- Luke Concannon release show w/ Wes Fowler, Morgan Johnston, John MacLean
 5/21- Covered up! Themed Open Mic hosted by Derek Johnson
 5/22- Diamond Blues Jam (Jerry Garcia Band Tribute)
 5/24- Uncle Johnny's Band; SmileLines
 5/25- One Hundred Thorns; Cosmic Triumph; Skaleton Crew; Back On The Fence

ORPHEUM THEATER
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5/5-Mon Lafete
 5/17- Tye Tribbett And Friends
 5/30- Tank; Keri Hilson; Carl Thomas

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5/1- Stiff Little Fingers
 5/2- Teezo Touchdown
 5/4- Trey Magnifique; nelward
 5/9- Holly Humberstone
 5/10- Chicano Batman; Lido Pimienta
 5/11- Sanguisugabogg; Jesus Piece; Peeling Flesh; Gag
 5/12- Alpha Wolf; Emmure; UnityTX; Chamber
 5/14- Swans; Kristof Hahn
 5/16- Cooper Alan
 5/17- Wild Child; Oh He Dead
 5/19- Dropouts Podcast
 5/21- Cory Henry
 5/22- Bodysnatcher; Spite; Thrown; Knosis
 5/24- SiM; Fame On Fire; Within Destruction; Crystal Lake
 5/29- Symphony; Heathen
 5/30- Camera Obscura; Photo Ops

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5/3- Kevin Harris Project
 5/4- Ann Hampton-Callaway
 5/10- The Cookers
 5/11- Gabrielle Stravelli
 5/16- Unisphere
 5/17- Mke Flanagan, Lauren Scales & Chris Grasso
 5/18- Marion Meadows
 5/24- The Herbie Hancock Institute National Peer to Peer Jazz Sextet feat Don Braden and Lisa Henry
 5/31- Walter Beasley

SINCLAIR
Cambridge, MA.
(617) 547-5200

5/1- Tei Shi
 5/2- Here Come the Mummies

5/3- Sarah Jarosz; Le Ren; The Glitter Boys
 5/4- Of Course You Did; Slothrust; Weakened Friends
 5/5- CSS
 5/6- Fission Tour; Dead Poet Society; Post Profit
 5/7- The Longest Johns; Seán Dagher
 5/8- Chastity Belt; Charlotte Cornfield
 5/9- Jerry's Middle Finger
 5/10- Alice Merton; The Glitter Boys
 5/11- Sawyer Hill
 5/12- Cristal Medium Blue; Lewis OfMan
 5/13 & 14- Mannequin Pussy; Soul Glo
 5/15- Feels like Greek Summer; Evangelia
 5/16- Jukebox the Ghost; Dan Mills
 5/17- Andrew Horowitz; The Glitter Boys
 5/18- Jukebox the Ghost
 5/19- Mk.gee
 5/21- Livingston; Connor Kauffman
 5/22- serpentwithfeet; Miles
 5/23- Abbath; Imperial Triumphant; Black Anvil; Final Gasp
 5/24- Talib Kweli; The Glitter Boys
 5/26- Little Big
 5/28- Shannon and the Clams; Tropa Magica
 5/30- Lobby Boyz; Jim Jones & Maino
 5/31- The Glitter Boys

TD GARDEN
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5/10- Tim McGraw

WILBUR THEATER
Boston, MA.
(617) 248-9700

5/2- Ghosts: Do You Believe?
 5/3 & 4- Seth Meyers
 5/6- Buddy Guy
 5/7- Lyle Lovett and Lisa Loeb
 5/8- Todd Rundgren
 5/9- Cat & Nat's May Soiree
 5/10- Justin Silva
 5/11- Aries Spears
 5/14- Monét X Change
 5/16- Asi Wind
 5/17- Madeleine Peyroux
 5/18- Robyn Schall
 5/19- Big Bad Voodoo Daddy
 5/24- DeRay Davis
 5/25- Buckethead
 5/28- Kathleen Hanna
 5/29, 30 & 31- Jeff Arcuri

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Sallie Bengtson

Combining three decades of business acumen with her passion and love for music, Sallie Bengtson has become a much needed force in the world of the Blues. Forming Nola Blues Records in 2014 with her first release, *Journey* by Benny Turner (brother of Freddie King), Bengtson's path was forever forged. In the ensuing years, Nola Blues' catalog has grown to 15 albums that include releases from Blues legacy artists, Cash McCall and Frank Bey.

Never one to rest on her laurels, in 2020, Sallie founded Blue Heart Records in partnership with Betsie Brown of Blind Raccoon Publicity. The label has released 30+ albums that include such artists as Teresa James & The Rhythm Tramps, Rick Vito, Arlen Roth, Peter Veteska & Blues Train, The Texas Horns, Grainne Duffy, Vaneese Thomas, Chris Beard and Lil' Red & The Rooster among others.

With this kind of quality output, it was time to talk to the lady behind the curtain. Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to introduce you to, Ms. Sallie Bengtson...

METRONOME: How did you develop a love for music?

My whole family is musical. My parents both have Masters degrees in sacred music. They were church organists. My brother has his Doctorate in Musical Arts and he teaches Theater & Dance at the University of Michigan. I come from a family of classical musicians.

METRONOME: Did you ever play an instrument when you were younger?

I did. I took years and years of piano lessons. I also played the flute in the junior high and high school band. I have all the classical training as well.

METRONOME: Did you play concerts as a pianist?

No. I did stuff at school, and with the band. I would sometimes play for the chorus concerts, but nothing performance wise. It was just a part of my life.

METRONOME: Did you go to college for music?

No. My family owned a business and I went to work for the family. That guided my studying in business management in college. I needed as much training and education as I could get because I thought, someday this probably will be mine.

That's how I ultimately discovered the Blues. It was with people that I worked with. Once I turned 21, one of my co-workers said, "Why don't you come out and listen to some Blues." One of our employees played in a

Blues band at night. Being the typical person that doesn't know what that is, I thought, Well, that sounds depressing (laughs).

The first night I heard it, I said, Wow what is this? It started from there.

METRONOME: When you got out of college, did you stay in the family business or move on to something else?

I stayed at my family's business until we sold it.

METRONOME: Were you still discovering blues artists along the way?

Yes, but what actually happened - and this is the ultimate irony - we had a Blues Festival in our town, and I went. That particular show, Kenny Neal and Tinsley Ellis were performing along with some others artists. Those were the two though that really grabbed me that night. I was like, Wow, this is amazing.

I got into their music and then started diving in to what's the history behind that and who wrote the songs? I came to find out that one of Tinsley Ellis's major influences was Freddie King. He was another one. When I found Freddie King, he just blew me away. Then I met Freddie's brother, Benny Turner.

METRONOME: Benny Turner was the first act you signed to Nola Blues Records. How did you meet him?

I met Benny through a friend who actually works for me now. She does graphic design and websites. Her name is Debra Clark. She and I met through music. We would see each other at festivals and shows. We were both big New Orleans people too.

Debra said, "Hey, I've got a CD. You've got to hear this. It's Freddie King's brother and he lives in New Orleans." That CD

she mentioned was Benny's first. It was called *Blue and Not So Blue*. He put it out himself. He had a good market for it with all the tourists that came in and out of New Orleans. It was a good product, but was never officially released.

Benny was the band leader for Marva Wright for 20 years. They called her the "Blues Queen of New Orleans." One night they were in town to play a festival in Philadelphia, so Debra said, "Let's go see them." She had met Benny previously in New Orleans. That started up a friendship. Anytime I would go to New Orleans, I would look Benny up and see where he was playing. I started to hear these amazing stories of what he had lived through and experienced and thought, Wow. We were friends for years before the whole business side of things started.

METRONOME: Were you still working for the family business?

When the family business got sold, I went on to do some other work. My background is in human resources and benefits management. It's important, but it's dry. It's not like what I'm doing now.

METRONOME: How many years did you work for other companies?

It was a good 15 to 16 years of various jobs. Then I got married and had my son. I was a stay at home mom for a bit. I actually started a business from going to "Mommy and Me" classes with my son. It was a franchise called Gymboree. I had an entrepreneurial spirit and I loved kids, so I thought, This is something I can do. It was super cool, but unfortunately it wasn't meant to last due to a bunch of issues and probably one of the most significant ones... my marriage fell apart.

That was the time I thought, I need to take a pause here and regroup. However, through the worst of times can come the best. Rebirth and emergence. I already had a corporation in place from the franchise business and I had some confidence. I thought, I can do this.

I had been telling Benny for years, You need to write a book, you need to write a book, but he didn't know how to go about it. That's how my label started, with a book.

METRONOME: I thought it was with recorded music?

In my personal life, I had some time and space to really dig into something. I asked Benny, What would you think if I tried to work on a book for you? He said, Sure. Nobody else has offered. Go for it.

Once I got involved in that book project, I found out that he had a music project that



Bobby Christina and Sallie Bengtson

was well under way, but had stalled because it ran out of funding. I thought, We need to finish your CD so you can get some gigs and have a place to sell your book. That's how my first album came out. It came out before the book because the book was an enormous task. The CD came out sort of by accident, because the real focus was the book.

METRONOME: So owning and running a record label was never in your plans?

No. It just happened. It was what was meant to be. I found it totally by accident (laughs).

METRONOME: During that period were you still going out and listening to the Blues?

Yes. Absolutely. Although my Blues-ing took a pause when I became a Mom, but for years I was always in New Orleans when I could get down there and would travel a couple of hours to get to a show in Jersey or New York. I was a die hard.

METRONOME: Does your son play music?

He started with piano lessons, but he didn't like to practice. Then, as he got older, he decided he wanted to play the drums. He took lessons, but didn't have a lot of stick-to-it-iveness. Now, I have a good back line. I have a piano, and a good drum set (laughs).

METRONOME: When you published Benny's book, was your company called Nola Blue at the time?

Yes, it was.

METRONOME: You're celebrating a decade in the music business with Nola Blue. How did you meet some of the artists that you ended up signing to the label?

It was a combination of things. Different circumstances for different people. I put out two or three albums for Benny before I thought, I wonder if this is the direction I should go in. My initial intention was to get the book out, get the CD out and then re-release his first album, Blue and Not So Blue, because that album never really went out to radio.

I'm Benny's manager and I've been developing his career, but the reality is, he was 75 years old when we released Journey. He'll be 85 this year. He's the coolest, youngest 85-year old I know, but I got to the point where I thought, I have to branch out here. I thought, who else is out there? I found there are a lot of people out there that would benefit.

From there it was mostly people who were recommended to me. One would lead to another, and people would talk. As I look over everyone that I have worked with, I think there's only one or two I might have approached. The rest happened naturally in conversation or meeting people or people were sent to me.

METRONOME: Cash McCall and Frank Bey were some of your early signings. How did you meet them?

They weren't with me long enough, but

they were so special [*Editor's note- Cash McCall died April 20, 2019 and Frank Bey passed away June 7, 2020*]. Frank came to me through Betsie Brown at Blind Raccoon Publicity. I met and hired Betsie for Benny's second album that I put out, My Brother's Blues. She knew that my passion was for the heritage artists that had been in this their whole life. That's how I met Frank's management and got to know Frank. Plus, Tom Hambridge produced Frank's, Back In Business album. So Tom probably sent them to Betsie and Betsie sent them to me. Betsie was right in the middle of it because she's done a lot of work for Tom.

METRONOME: Was that your first introduction to Betsie?

Yes, through Benny's second album in 2017.

METRONOME: How did you meet Cash McCall?

Cash came through Benny. Benny knew Cash back in the late 1950s in Chicago on the gospel scene. We got word that Cash was sick. He had cancer. Benny had reconnected with Cash and started talking to him. We were working on another album for Benny at the time and he said, "I need to put this on the shelf for right now. I need to do something with Cash. Cash needs this. He needs something positive."

It ended up being the best medicine. Cash would go to chemo and then come into the studio because he was so happy. It

was one of the most beautiful experiences that I've had, watching the two of them in the studio together. They talked about their history in Chicago and went back and did all those songs. That's why it's called Going Back Home.

METRONOME: How did you meet John Nemeth?

John was a referral to me through friends here in Pennsylvania. We originally had the Pocono Blues Festival, then it became the Pennsylvania Blues Festival. Michael Cloeren who produced those festivals is still very active and is a huge Blues fan. I was introduced to John by the woman that does Michael's publicity work. She told John, You really should talk to Sallie.

So I brought Benny with me. Benny and John knew each other from New Orleans. Benny talked to John and said, You really should work with Sallie. She's not like everyone else. You should do this. That all came about during Covid believe it or not when we put out John's first album, Stronger Than Strong, in October of 2020. That's how I met him.

METRONOME: You started another record label with Betsie Brown called Blue Heart Records. How did that come about?

Once we started working together on different projects, I realized, she gets the job done. She's hard-working, dedicated, and smart. She really knows her stuff. I talked to her and said, What if we combined our

strengths.

I couldn't keep doing this many label deals with Nola Blue. It was overwhelming. I had to figure out a smarter way to do it. I thought, What if I made Nola Blue just focus on the heritage artists and expand out into contemporary blues with Blue Heart Records?

Anybody these days can be an independent artist and release their own music, but if you're not in it all the time and you're not up on what's available, there's no way to mastermind the music the way you can with a real label. We thought it was a good thing for a bunch of different reasons. That's how that came about.

METRONOME: Have you or Nola Blue won any awards?

I have a Josie Award from Nashville. They named me "Record Label of The Year" in 2020.

METRONOME: Do you have any cool projects in the works now?

Yes. Bobby Christina and I are working together. We're putting out a Matt "Guitar" Murphy album in June. Bobby had done a bunch of shows with him and said to Matt, "Hey, it's been a really long time since you put out an album. What would you think if I took you in the studio and we worked together and put a new album out? Matt was excited. So they got together and had their first session. Everything went well. Then Bobby set up a second session. He was going to go back to Florida and they were going to finish things up, but Matt passed away before the second session. This album will have the last three recordings of Matt.

Then Bobby started reaching out to musicians who were friends of Murphy, played with him, or were otherwise influenced by him. There are 72 musicians represented on the record that we're calling, True Blues Brother: The Legacy of Matt "Guitar" Murphy. It's a 23-song double album that includes Matt's final three studio recordings, a new song written and performed by Tom Hambridge, and the work of Murphy's friends Joe Beard and Billy Boy Arnold in the studio together for the first time. Other artists include Doyle Bramhall II, Fran Christina & The Original Roomful of Blues, Steve Cropper, Bill Kirchen, Chuck Leavell, Bob Margolin, Christine Ohlman, Jerry Portnoy, Duke Robillard, Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, Toni Lynn Washington and more. It's one heck of a project.

METRONOME: What do you do for your artists that have made you so successful?

At the very heart of it, I try to be honest and realistic with everyone about what I can and can't do. I don't make big promises. When I tell an artist, we pay the royalties quarterly, well, guess what, they get their royalties quarterly. There's no excuses, there's no confusion, I do what I say, and I say what I do. I care.

-- Brian M. Owens



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Top 5 for May 2024

(In NO Particular Order)

- **The Grimly Pleased**
- **The Immediate Family**
- **Underdog**
- **Virvon Varvon**
- **Blind Raccoon & Nola Blue**

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- LOVE SUICIDE
- LOOKING AWAY

- LOST IN THE SHUFFLE
- TOO MANY IRONS IN THE FIRE
- HIGH MAINTENANCE GIRLFRIEND

The Immediate Family is a super group of well-known players that features singer-guitarist Danny Kortchmar, singer-guitarist Waddy Wachtel, singer-guitarist Steve Posell, bassist Leland Sklar and drummer Russ Kunkel. This quintet of seasoned masters have more session and live show mileage than most living players today. Known for their immense singular abilities, this outfit has been a major part of best-selling records and influential music recorded over the past 5 decades.

Names like Linda Rondstadt, James Taylor, Carole King, Don Henley, Jackson Browne, Warren Zevon, Jonie Mitchell, Crosby, Still & Nash and Stevie Nicks are just a few of the artists they've been involved with and now the "Family" are releasing *their* sophomore record of new music for all the world to hear.

Well played and penned songs like the album opener "Whole Lotta Rock & Roll," the funky "24/7/365," the prophetic "Catch You On The Otherside," the beatific "Confusion," the Warren Zevon inspired

"Party at The Graveyard," the hypnotic tremolo vibe of "Love Suicide," and the clever "High Maintenance Girlfriend" is entertainingly good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.immediatefamilyband.com

THE GRIMLY PLEASED HERE FOR PLEASURE 10-SONG CD

- YOU ARE
- A, D, AND AN A
- BUBBLE GUM
- SHELTERED
- MERCY F#*K
- BILLY MILLIGAN
- 5-HOUR ENERGY
- IN PIECES
- REQUIEM FOR YOU
- THE GRIMLY PLEASED

Singer-bassist Ed Charbonnier, singer Adam Thorsell, lead guitarist Chris Busch, singer-guitarist Ben Hunter and drummer Anders Geering are the post-punk garage rockers, The Grimly Pleased. With influences that range from XTC and The Clash to The Ramones and Iggy Pop, this raucous quintet are clearly having a good time on their new

album, Here For Pleasure. With clever wordplay and boisterous instrumentation, The Grimly Pleased will put a smile on your face song after song. Favored tracks include the million-mile-an-hour "Bubble Gum," the comical "Mercy F@*k," the quick yet addictive "5-Hour Energy," the clever "In Pieces," and the bombastic album closer "The Grimly Pleased." A high octane mosh pit extravaganza! Cool. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- thegrimlypleased.bandcamp.com

STEVE HOWELL & THE MIGHTY MEN 99 1/2 WON'T DO 10-SONG CD

- I'M A LITTLE MIXED UP
- 99 1/2
- SAN FRANCISCO
- DON'T LET ME BE MISUNDERSTOOD
- TALK TO ME. TALK TO ME
- GOD'S GONNA CUT YOU DOWN
- WHO WILL THE NEXT FOOL BE?
- STONE PONY BLUES
- WALK AWAY RENEE
- APACHE

For Steve Howell and his Mighty Men's newest offering 99-1/2 Won't Do, Howell

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reaches back in to the musical archives to deliver early to mid-20th Century ballads, rock songs and folk tunes that dominated the radiowaves of that era. Howell and his Mighty Men remain mostly true to the original version's cadence and vibe vocally and instrumentally with diligent reverence to the artists that penned them. The "oldies" are alive and well courtesy of Howell and his band of Mighty Men. [D.S.]

Contact-- www.stevehowell.ws/steve-howell--the-mighty-men.html

BLIND RACCOON and NOLA BLUE COLLECTION VOLUME 6 15-SONG CD COMPILATION

- BALLAD OF PAT HARE (Mississippi MacDonald)
- TIDAL WAVE (Anthony Geraci)
- MY BABY LOVES ME LIKE A HURRICANE (Kip London)
- SURVIVAL (Douglas Avery)
- I DO MY DRINKIN' ON THE WEEKEND (Teresa James & The Rhythm Tramps)
- NEVER BUY MY SOUL (The Texas Horns)
- SMOKE MY PEACE PIPE (Benny Turner)
- POOKIE PO PO (Dave Keyes)
- MAN GOS BLIND (Trevor B. Power)
- FOREVER BLUE (Terry Wilson-Slessor)
- STRUCK OUT AGAIN (Big Harp George)
- I'M A LITTLE MIXED UP (Steve Howell & The Mighty Men)

- SHE MIGHT MEET ME (Kenny Parker)
- HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN (Blind Lemon Pledge)
- DON'T MISS NOTHING 'TIL IT'S GONE (Reverend Freakchild)

Sallie Bengtson of Nola Blue Records and Betsie Brown of Blind Raccoon Publicity continue to unearth some of the finest roots and blues artists and their music that regularly perform in roadhouses and barrooms throughout the country and across the pond for inclusion in their well-run publicity house and record label.

For their sixth compilation collection, the music continues to sizzle with performances by Mississippi MacDonald, Anthony Geraci, Kip London, Douglas Avery, Teresa James & The Rhythm Tramps, The Texas Horns, Benny Turner, Dave Keyes, Trevor B. Power, Terry Wilson-Slessor, Big Harp George, Steve Howell & The Mighty Men, Kenny Parker, Blind Lemon Pledge and Reverend Freakchild.

There's no filler here gang, just an impressive collective of seasoned artists and bands strutting their stuff on this well-played and produced collection of American music. Read more about Sallie Bengtson and Nola Blue Records in this issue. You'll like it, I guarantee! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.nola-blue.com and www.blindraccoon.com

UNDERDOG TRANS GLOBAL AMNESIA 12-SONG CD

- YOU TOLD ME
- HELSINKI AIRPORT BLUES
- SUMMER SONG
- NEW WORLD RAGA
- ROCKET BABY
- LOUIE & MARIE
- ECHO OF A DREAM
- MUNCHAUSEN BY PROXY
- K-9
- MALLUS MALEFICARUM
- REGENERATION
- BLOW YOUR FACE OFF

Scott Ferguson and Bryn Carlson return with an uproarious sophomore album titled, Trans Global Amnesia. Seamlessly rolling heavy metal, power-pop, punk and stoner rock in to their musical arsenal, the duo displays no boundaries sonically on Trans Global Amnesia as they wails supreme with overdriven guitars and rowdy vocals while telling tales close to their hearts. If you get too close, nosebleeds and a good boot in the crotch are a guarantee.

Wild tracks abound on this 12 song project with the standouts cuts, the boppin' vigor of "Helsinki Airport Blues," the outstanding instrumental (and our favorite track) "New World Raga," the death metal stature of

"Mallus Maleficarum," and the psychedelic bent of "Blow Your Face Off." Dangerous stuff kids. Be ready! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- <https://underdog.rock>

WALTER TROUT BROKEN 12-SONG CD

- BROKEN
- TURN AND WALK AWAY
- COURAGE IN THE DARK
- BLEED
- TALKIN' TO MYSELF
- NO MAGIC
- I'VE HAD ENOUGH
- LOVE OF MY LIFE
- BREATHE
- HEAVEN OR HELL
- I WANNA STAY
- FALLS APART

Master six-string blues-rocker Walter Trout returns with a well played and recorded album with his latest offering, Broken. Featuring musical guests, blues-belter Beth Hart, singer Dee Snider of Twisted Sister and harp master, Will Wilde, Trout and company remind us from song to song that there is hope in the realm of hopelessness. "I've always tried to write positive songs,

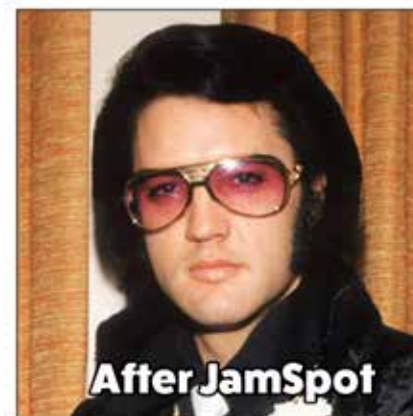
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**NEW from
speedfossil**

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at
<https://speedfossil.com>

ROOM WITH A VU, VOL. 1, the new 5-song EP, featuring the #1 hit, "Sweetheart" (w/Linda Pardee from The Chelsea Curve), as well as the latest single, "irl". Also streaming everywhere, only on Sonic Escort.



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but this album is not quite that,” states the 73-year-old of his all-original tracklist. “But I always hold on to hope. I think that’s why I wrote this album.”

Trout delivers a dozen original tracks (alongside three co-writes with wife, Marie) that are culled from standing close to the edge of life himself. With blistering guitar work and sullen gallows humor, the album opens with the revealing title track “Broken,” and winds down with the inevitable “Falls Apart.” The music rocks while the lyrics maintain a stark reality of life’s offerings whether self-induced or by happenstance.

Songs of note include the uptempo blues-rock “Bleed” featuring harmonica player Will Wilde, the full tilt jam of “Talkin’ To Myself,” the rowdy “I’ve Had Enough” featuring the dual lead vocals with Dee Snider, the emotive instrumental beauty of “Love of My Life,” and the country blues lilt of “Breathe.” This is rockin’ blues at its best. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.waltertrout.com

THE CHESS PROJECT NEW MOVES 11-SONG CD

- BOOM BOOM OUT GO THE LIGHTS
- MOANIN’ AT MIDNIGHT
- NINE BELOW ZERO
- SO GLAD I’M LIVING
- TELL ME
- BOOTED
- MOTHER EARTH
- GOIN’ DOWN SLOW
- HIGH TEMPERATURE
- SMOKESTACK LIGHTNING
- HELP ME

On this all new recording New Moves, Marshall Chess (Father) and Jamar Chess (Son) team up with producer Keith LeBlanc to dive into their family’s Chess Records vault and serve up hip renditions of Chess’ blues legends. Featuring The Chess Project, a band hand selected by LeBlanc with Marshall and Jamar, the album highlights tp shelf players who’ve backed the greats like James Brown, Aretha Franklin and Tina Turner as they reimagine Chess gems first recorded by Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters, Memphis Slim, Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson and others.

Featuring first-call players, Keith LeBlanc on percussion, Skip “Little Axe” McDonald on guitar, Eric Gales on guitar, Paul Nowinski and MonoNeon on bass, Reggie Griffin on keys, Alan Glen on harmonica and up-and-coming bass player from India, Mohini Dey, this skillful outfit brings the ghosts of the Chess studio roaring back to life, track after track. Time to get down brothers and

sisters! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- czyzrecords@gmail.com

VIRVON VARVON FOUR BARS OF HATE 8-SONG CASSETTE

- CORNER SEAT
- USELESS
- HOLDING PATTERN
- FOUNTAINS
- GOOGLE IT
- VOICES
- FOUR BARS OF HATE
- TROUBLE (Demo)

UK’s Virvon Varvon take over where Huggy Bear left off 30 years ago with even more venom and spite. Nevertheless there’s an epic quality to the massive riffology and megaphone shouting from Finnish Hanne Highway on “Corner Seat” with some neat little adornment that show how much they can deliver when they want to. It’s shambolic while driving forward at full throttle. One of the boys takes over vocals for “Useless,” a garagy post punk manifesto. “Holding Pattern” develops different sections into arty yet thrashy phases of this duet. The London foursome maintain the dual vocals for “Fountains” for this comparatively melodic and mid paced piece with potty mouth language. “Google It” is quite dynamic and makes a point, but has less hooks than the rest. “Voices” again exemplifies how the solid pop qualities have full on punk credentials without affectations. The title track is full on Lo-Fi relentless intimidation. The demo version of “Trouble” gives me goosebumps and was recycled from their first record, but is well worth issuing as what defines this high density uncompromising yet talented band. [Gecko]

Contact-- <https://girlsville.bandcamp.com/album/virvon-varvon-four-bars-of-hate-2>

HOTWAX INVITE ME - KINDLY 5-SONG EP/CASSETTE

- HIGH TEA
- PHONE MACHINE
- DROP
- E FLAT
- SHE DON’T LIKE IT

Hastings UK offers us this female fronted trio venting their well-placed high energy punk rock discharge for that quaint old British tradition of “High Tea.” It hits the nail right on the head and then spins you around a couple of times. They experiment with a funkier rhythm on the synthy “Phone

Machine” which shows they can also deliver diverse and poppier, albeit with an edge.

They really rock out on the mega grungy “Drop” which will pull the rug out from under you as if it was the 1990s again. “E Flat” is a bit more syncopated and jazzier to remind you of a more feminine Rage Against The Machine.

They start off “She Don’t Like It” nice and soft, but there’s an underlying skepticism that leaves you expecting a huge sonic burst, while giving it a few well controlled nuances to make it their own. [Gecko]

Contact-- www.hotwaxofficial.com

CINDY LAWSON DON’T COME CRYING TO ME 6-SONG CD

- DON’T COME CRYING TO ME
- SCREAMIN’ WHITE JEZUS
- GO FIND ANOTHER HEART TO BREAK
- I’LL BE AROUND
- WHAT IF SHE FOLLOWED HIM TO NASHVILLE
- I DON’T WANT YOU ANYMORE

Cindy Lawson impressed with her last LP and gives us a hard rockin’ quick and dirty follow up with this new EP. The guitar onslaught and her vibrant sultry persona builds a cool bar room in your own living space from the first notes of “Don’t Come Crying To Me.” The relentless rhythm will keep it echoing in your head. It gets even better with the harp boosted 3 chord wonder, “Screamin’ White Jezus” with great lyrics which carries on where Janis Joplin and Grace Slick left off.

Cindy’s band gives us a mellow interlude for the more soulful “Go Find Another Heart to Break.” Then they move on to the Pretenders infused, “I’ll Be Around” which is middle of the road with a melodic and catchy chorus. Lawson can also insinuate country with the well-paced ballad, “What if She Followed Him to Nashville.”

To close out the disc, they revert to the early 1960s girl group era for “I Don’t Want You Anymore” which wouldn’t be out of place on the Grease soundtrack. [Gecko]

Contact-- www.cindysongs.com

GIRL WITH A HAWK KEEP ‘ER LIT 5-SONG CD EP

- THE ROMANTIC
- FEEL ME
- THE ONES
- SAME STARS
- GOOD ENOUGH

Boston’s own Linda Viens put together this tasteful platter right at the end of 2023 and ably channels the Pretenders on the

easy going yet hook laden “The Romantic.” For “Feel Me” she switches to an edgier yet sultry synth pop with an air of mystery. “The Ones” is a solid, romantic barroom pop-rock with its feet firmly grounded in good taste.

She slows down for the wistful “Same Stars,” which again reminds us of Chrissie Hynde. Ending the disc on an upbeat note, Viens kicks out the jams for the in-your-face “Good Enough” with a touch of early 1960s girl groups. Looking forward to a full length. [Gecko]

Contact-- girlwithahawk.bandcamp.com

THE INCURABLES INSIDE OUT & BACKWARDS 10-SONG CD

- WHEN I GROW UP
- FAR AWAY
- SOMEDAY
- SODA POP
- MAN OF FEW WORDS
- BACK INTO ELOISE
- WHEN YOU
- FUNHOUSE
- GO AWAY
- I TOLD MYSELF (Absolutely Nothing)

Detroit’s Incurables have filled a sizable niche between rock and pop since 1990s high school and now want to showcase their goods again. Edging up on middle age, they ponder “When I Grow Up,” but are still able to deliver crunchy guitar riffs and well controlled melodies while delivering tasty solos.

For “Far Away,” the singer turns up the pathos while the gang chirps in for the chorus all while maintaining a driving beat. It’s a classic you need to hear if you want something between Cheap Trick and the Romantics. Then the lead guitarist goes on a wild tangent with “Someday.” They accent the rhythm on “Soda Pop” which gives it a new-wave flavor that brings us back the 80s. “Man Of Few Words” manages to mix a touch of psychedelia and a 1990s Manchester beat which works rather well.

A different vocalist delivers “Back Into Eloise” with shuffle beat underpinnings, though the middle eight throws you for a loop. There’s a playful aspect to “When You,” all while the instigator questions a relationship and throws in some Beatles references. “Funhouse” is a moodier, and slower tune which bears no resemblance to the Stooges classic. On “Go Away” they get more self-assertive and even remind you of the Bevis Frond.

The lads re-inject “I Told Myself” with a lot of humor as well as self-reflection in order to suitably close up the disc. [Gecko]

Contact-- theincurables.net

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Speedfossil

Photos by Ohan Heghinian & Nicole Tamarro

Boston based Pop rockers, speedfossil continuously turn out music that's engaging, meticulously penned and well played. Led by visionary singer-songwriter-multi-instrumentalist Garret Vandermolen, his vast musical sensibilities appear to have no bounds.

Collaborating with his bandmates, Dan Jordan on bass, Michael Scotti on bass and Chris Walsh on drums, this talented foursome has just unleashed a new record full of pop masterpieces entitled Room With A Vu, Vol 1. I spoke with Garret one Friday morning in March and we talked about the new record as well as his new gig with American rock band, The Plimsouls. Interested? Read on...

METRONOME: You've been really busy with music. What's going on?

Garret Vandermolen: It's crazy. I became unemployed again in November, and all of a sudden all of these things started happening.

METRONOME: Tell me about the concept behind your new speedfossil album, Room With A Vu, Vol. 1.

I've been making my own records in my home studio for a long time. I really wanted to work with some other engineers and producers. The idea was to come up with a batch of songs, get the songs worked up fairly quickly and then go in and record and mix them. I wanted to see what it was like to take a group of tracks to someone and work with them.

Fortunately, David Minehan agreed to do it. I'm hoping this will become a series where there are a few folks in town that I can do this with. That's the whole idea behind it. It was great to be able to jump in and do that. I think the record came out awesome.

METRONOME: Who played on the session with you?

It's the guys I usually gig with. Michael Scotti on bass, Chris Walsh on drums, and Dan Jordan on guitar.

METRONOME: Have you started recording Volume 2?

No, but it's going to happen. The songs are there, but now that I've joined The Plimsouls, that's taking priority. We have a tour this summer, and we're making a new Plimsouls record as well.

METRONOME: How did you get inducted into The Plimsouls?

It's funny because it all came out of the fact that I wanted to start playing bass more. Before I did speedfossil, I was a bass player. I played bass in a band called The Vouts for many, many years. Recently, I started a side project called Guided By Voices. We basically play all Guided By Voices songs. It was an

major influence. It was the perfect match. Now, we're close friends.

Flash forward and he was asked to join The Plimsouls as their vocalist- guitarist. They did some gigs together, but they weren't thrilled with the bass player they had, so he asked me if I could do it. At the time I was still fully employed. Then I lost my job of 11 years. I said, If you guys are still looking, I would love to do that tour in December with you. He said, "Okay, let me get back to you." He called me back and said, "You're in." I went and rehearsed with the band and on the second day of rehearsals Eddie Munoz



idea that I had been kicking around for years.

METRONOME: How recent is the project?

I've been doing it for about a year or two now. I finally got offered a show to do it, so I got backed in to a corner and said, I have to put a band together now.

I caught Anthony Kaczynski playing with Fireking and I was watching him. I said, This guy is channeling Bob Pollard. Maybe he would be into this. I went up to him after the show and asked, Would you like to be a part of this? Before the words even left my mouth he said, "Yes, I'm in." It turns out, when he started Fireking, Guided By Voices was his

said, "We love the way you play bass. Would you like to do this tour with us this summer and join the band?" I said, Yes, I'd love to do it. It's like anything, it was all timing.

METRONOME: Who are the principals now in The Plimsouls?

Eddie Munoz is the last original member. Then you have Anthony doing vocals and guitar, myself on bass and a guy named Rick West on drums.

It's amazing, people really love this band and the songs. It's gonna be a great opportunity for us to do the tour with The Romantics, Bow Wow Wow. Thomas Dolby

and a bunch of other great bands.

METRONOME: How do you guys rehearse?

When we did the last rehearsals, we actually did them in Leominster. Rick is based up here and he has a space. We spent about three days getting the band together and then we did a tour. Now we're off to the races. We're supposed to do some other rehearsing in May or June because this tour is on big stages.

METRONOME: Let's talk about the passing of Red on Red records owner, Justine Covault. Nobody saw that coming did they?

Nobody saw that coming. I had lunch with her the day that she died. It's one of life's saddest things, because The record that I sent you Room With a Vu, was her record. We basically planned everything out that day and then woke up the next morning, and she was gone.

Obviously, the least important thing was my record, but the heartbreak is that my friend is gone. She was my colleague, my friend and my mentor. She kept me going, and embraced the music that I was doing. We had such a great relationship. I was so blessed to have her in my life. There's a big hole now that she's gone.

METRONOME: How long did it take to record the songs on Room With a Vu?

It needed to be fast. It took a little longer than I wanted it to, but that was

because of me doing solo work all myself before. I had to re-acclimate myself to be in a professional studio and work with someone. It was a fantastic experience. When it was all said and done, it took us five days to do it. I'm super gassed at the way it came out.

METRONOME: The album opener, "Sweetheart" was a great power, pop rocker. Linda Bean Pardee shared lead vocals with you. How did you get her involved with the project?

I knew that I wanted it to be a male female vocal thing. It's a love song, sort of. It's about two people that really want to be with each

other, but have trouble communicating and aren't sure. They're estranged, but they decide they're going to get back together again.

I really wanted that female voice and I've known Linda for a long time. Way back when I started doing rock music with What About George, I did a gig with Permafrost. They were some of the first people I met. She's such a fantastic person and a label mate as well with her band the Chelsea Curve.

I sent the song over to her and asked, Would you like to sing on it? She said, "Yes. I'd love to be part of it." I was elated that she wanted to do it. She came over to my home studio and put in a great performance. She really makes the song.

METRONOME: "Magic Trick" was a jangly rocker with great vocal harmonies. How did that come together?

I wrote that one after my friend "Trick" Wallace passed away. That song is really about him. Lyrically, it's a play on words using his name.

METRONOME: "Frozen Drops of Fire" reminded us of The Smithereens. Were they an influence of yours?

Anybody that knows me knows that The Smithereens was a huge influence on me. Particularly Pat. I live in the same vocal range as he does. I actually gravitate towards that type of sound.

For that song though, I had a Roy Orbison thing in my mind. When I first sent it to

the band, it was a longer piece of work. It really evolved. It's a very dramatic song and probably the biggest production piece on the record. There's a lot of cool and tasteful musical things going on. When we finally got them together, we were all super pleased the way it came out.

METRONOME: "IRL" was a very clever tune. Did you cull the idea for the song from the way people communicate over the internet?

Yeah. Chris Walsh was the guy that came up with all the cool ideas for the sound effects. The song kicks off with that fax tone to connect to the internet so you can start browsing and surfing and finding your fantasy life versus your real life. It was really fun to be able to put that song together with the guys.

METRONOME: "She's Doing Fine" had a very hypnotic riff. It's one of the best singles I've heard in a long time. How did that come about?

I was very happy with how it came out. It has some tasty piano parts in it and tremolo guitars. I think it all melded well together.

METRONOME: Did you have an idea of how every song would sound before you went in and started recording?

I had everything demoed out and put together. David was able to analyze things and give me subtle sonic enhancements that really accentuated the songs and brought them to life. He has a great skill set for that. Working with a producer-engineer, you have

to be open to that. You have to be open to change and be willing to explore where that can go.

METRONOME: You're on the Sonic Escort label now. Who is Sonic Escort?

It's me (laughs). I had a relationship with Justine at Red On Red. When she passed away, I had to go in a different direction. I had the record done and actually got a few offers from other labels, but I was looking at them and thought, I don't need to go with another label. There's nobody that's going to be like Justine and I'm not gonna have that relationship that I had with her creatively as a partner to do stuff.

So I actually started something else called the Sound Cove, which is a digital singles label. I've been putting out singles by Fireking and Eric Farlow. A whole bunch of other people are signing up to do it too. I didn't have any way to release full length stuff though, so I thought, What can I do for this new speedfossil record? I came up with the idea for Sonic Escort. Basically, it's going to be a collective. I just happen to be the first person releasing on the collective. I'm hoping that it will be beneficial for people that I work with.

METRONOME: Do you have any live shows planned for speedfossil?

speedfossil is actually going to England to play. We're going to play in Liverpool for the International Pop Overthrow Festival at the end of May. We have two dates in

Liverpool on May 28th and 29th, and then I booked a recording session at Abbey Road the day before.

2024 is the 10th year of speedfossil. I'm working on an album that is going to be a 10th Year Anniversary compilation record. I thought it would be cool to have two tracks that were newly recorded songs from this Abbey Road sessions and put them on that record. That's my plan.

METRONOME: Are you bringing everyone from the band?

Yes. They're all on board. They've all agreed to do it. I'm the luckiest guy in the world that these guys have agreed to participate in my crazy schemes.

METRONOME: Do you have other shows planned?

Yes. When we come back, we're going to play at Faces in Malden on June 14. Then I'm on the road playing bass with The Plimsouls for The Totally Tubular Festival with Thomas Dolby, Men Without Hats, The Romantics, Bow Wow Wow, Modern English, Tommy Tutone and Tom Bailey of The Thompson Twins.

We start the tour on June 25th in Washington state and go across the United States and into Canada. We'll be playing in Boston on July 17 at The MGM Music Hall, then the tour ends on July 28th in Cleveland. Right now it's 22 shows on big stages. It's going to be a great experience.

-- Brian M. Owens

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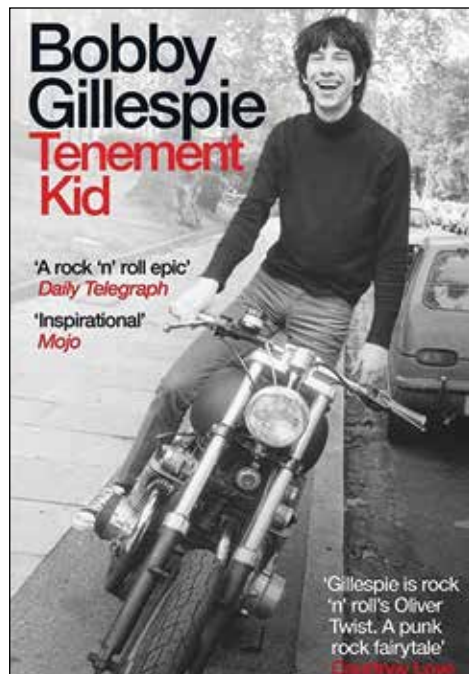
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• Book reviews by Alex Gecko •

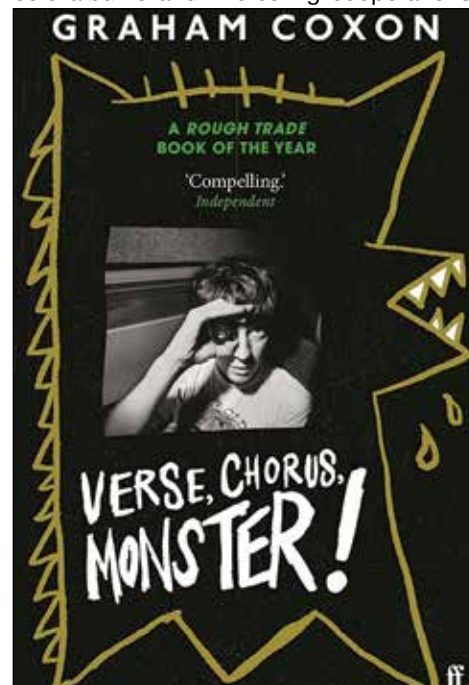
Bobby Gillespie, frontman of **Primal Scream**, published **Tenement Kid** in 2021. This charismatic Scottish musician grew up in the slums of Glasgow to a working class



family of a trade unionists/labor politician and got an early start in music as an escape for his bleak environment. The education system left him behind, though he was also tempted by football, as the prospects of the printing industry didn't seem lucrative. He had a go at a number of instruments and made his mark playing drums on the landmark first album of The Jesus and Mary Chain, while also trying to grow Primal Scream on the side. There's a minimum of dialogue and he keeps the sentence structure fairly basic, with a Scottish accent seeping in. He certainly paid his dues on the way to finding the perfect formula when British Indie became stale. He builds this myth of having created the ultimate mix of Rock & Roll, Soul and dance music while under the influence of huge quantities of ecstasy and cocaine. Luckily the album Screamadelica became a huge hit in 1991, at which point he ends the story without having to face the inevitable hangover or record company troubles. It makes a riveting suspense laden story, but does come with a health warning for the impressionable. As the Jesus and Mary Chain Reed Brothers have not yet put pen to paper, this is also an excellent proxy for the fans of the early era of this pivotal band.

Graham Coxon, Blur Guitarist, published **Verse, Chorus, Monster** with ghost writer Rob Young in 2022. The Blur co-founder grew up in a stable middle class North London

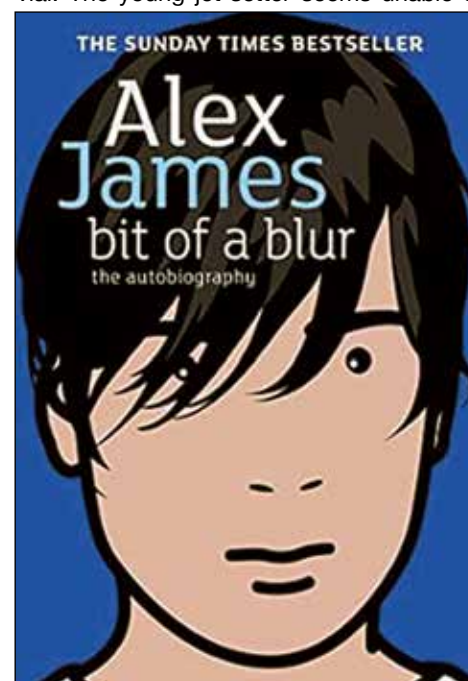
family of an army/community band leader but also had a strong interest in visual arts. He moves to London's Goldsmith College together with the magnetic frontman Damon Albarn and quickly finds a foothold in the music industry forcing him to ditch art. He was a sensitive and anxious teen who needed a lot of Dutch courage to face up to the audience and normal band upheavals. He recounts the chaotic alcohol fueled tours and gigs until Blur got serious and pulled a page out of the Kinks English pop manual leading them to the top of the charts in the mid-1990s. For Coxon, this involved alternate stints in rehab, band touring and recording business as well as many failed relationships. Some of his monsters are shown as artwork in the photo section, but they were real to him. Nevertheless, he was still able to compose a solid number of solo albums and interesting cooperations,



which are well documented here. He uses no meaningful dialogue and has a neat unadorned writing style that proceeds in Chronological order, albeit with a down beat undertone. There could have been more input on song writing and recording as the book is more self-therapy.

Alex James, Blur Bassist, published **Bit Of A Blur: The Autobiography** in 2007. This Bournemouth UK kid came from a completely stable middle-class family and got interested in playing in rock bands in his teens. Without formal training, he was a natural at the bass and was recruited to Blur by Graham Coxon immediately after starting French at London's Goldsmith College. With the band taking off rapidly, he never graduated

either and swiftly got enticed by the sex and alcohol lifestyle. With his male model good looks and foppish fringe, he is typecast as the prototypical groupie magnet and as a vacuum cleaner for anything in a bottle or vial. The young jet-setter seems unable to



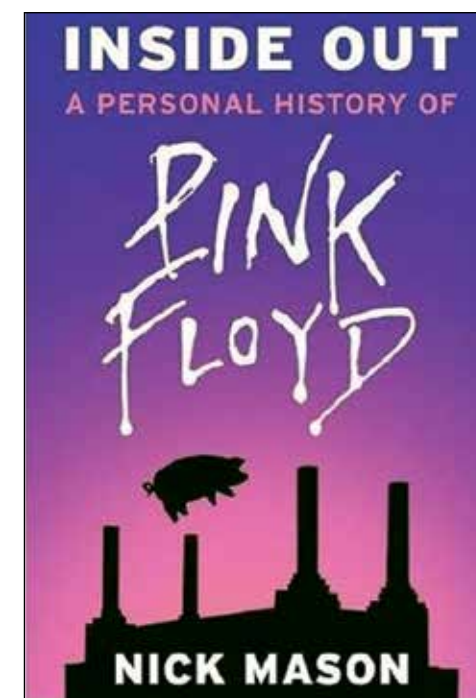
explain where his talent or inspiration comes from, but it never left him, and even enabled a good number of side projects. James was not a two-dimensional bar hoping caricature and eventually developed a taste for scientific space exploration and private piloting, which is described in detail. As Albarn and Coxon wrote most of the tune, he can't contribute much here. After a long stint of promiscuity, he finally settles down with his large family in a big old Cotswold farmhouse during a time when Blur wasn't active at the time of writing and quit drinking. The strictly chronological book is a very enjoyable fairy tale of the English 1990s music scene.

Drummer **Nick Mason** of **Pink Floyd** published **Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd** - New Edition in 2017. He kicks in with a brief intro about his childhood and how Pink Floyd co-founder and bassist Roger Waters approaches him to borrow his ancient jalopy in the early 1960s while at Architecture College. Mason then slowly builds the mystique of how a bunch of self-declared musical dilettantes built one of the most innovative musical franchises of the late 20th century with his trademark self-deprecating British humor. Think Monty Python, just much more subtle.

The tenure of singer Syd Barrett was a major creative asset, but Nick lets you view the ensuing train wreck in slow motion.

The band was able to recruit singer and guitarist David Gilmour in time, but Mason leaves him rather 2 dimensional in the narrative, spending more time and effort on Waters and keyboardist Richard Wright. The management changes were also quite entertaining.

The percussionist goes into a wealth of detail on the songwriting and production of many of the band's epochal songs as well as the elaborate live set-up of lighting, flying pigs and film projections. You can witness practically firsthand how Dark Side Of The Moon was assembled from rather ephemeral soundbytes over a longer time period. The Wall, in turn, was more of a solo Roger Waters creation and Mason is apologetic about not having played at the epochal Berlin concert after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Here the band splits into Gilmour, Wright and Mason on one side and Waters on the other, as the lawyers cash in on the monumental legal conflict. The remaining trio, with external help, continued to record, tour and mine the master tapes. Gilmour appears to be quite reclusive, Wright sadly passed away in 2008, while Roger Waters is busy generating controversies with his extremist stage show in Europe, so this book may remain the only viable firsthand account of Pink Floyd.



Nick is also passionate about fast expensive cars as well as racing them. I was able to meet him once at an Audi Corporate event where he drove one of the pre-war record cars. Other than tragic Barrett, you get no drug scandals and only a few dalliances, but the reader comes out of this experience supremely well informed and entertained.

The Time Machine



The Vouts

Photo circa: 1990

Band Members: Tor Hansen (Guitar & Vocals), Michael Dunford (Drums), Garret Vandermolen (Bass & Drums) & Glenn Dicker (Guitar & Vocals).

Musical Achievements: Popular Boston band The Vouts played with everyone during their time in Beantown. Sharing stages with The Lyres, Voodoo Dolls, Evil Twin, Gigolo Aunts, The Fleshtones, Swinging Neckbreakers, Bare Naked Ladies and Mojo Nixon (among others), The Vouts played the famed Rock & Roll Rumble at The Paradise Rock Club losing out to that year's Rumble winners Big Catholic Guilt. They released a 6-song CD EP *Out With A V* in 1991, a white vinyl 45 single (and video) for *CHF/I'll Make You Happy* in 1992, and a full length CD, *The Face of Rock* in 1993. They performed often at CMJ and did frequent East Coast tours as well as a tour to Kansas City in 1991.

Where Are They Now: Tor Hansen and Glenn Dicker run Redeye Distribution and Yep Roc Records based in Hillsborough, North Carolina. They have released albums by the artists, Fountains of Wayne, Nick Lowe, Paul Weller, Steep Canyon Rangers, Jim Lauderdale, Dave Alvin, Robyn Hitchcock, Alejandro Escovedo, Los Straitjackets, Amy Helm, Ian McLagan and others. In 2016, Glenn Dicker was elected to the "American Association of Independent Music" Board of Directors. Singer-Songwriter-Bassist Garret Vandermolen went on to form the Boston band speedfossil and continues to perform live and release albums. He is also a new member of The Plimsouls. Read his story in this issue. Michael Dunford resides on Cape Cod, and regularly performs in New England clubs, theaters and concert halls. He owns Michael Dunford Drum Studio and teaches drums.

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Michele Romeo Quartet

Italian born, New York based guitarist-producer-composer-engineer Michele (mee-keh-lai) Romeo is an enduring figure. Blinded by a genetic eye disease at the age of eighteen, Michele didn't let his handicap hinder his love for music and especially the guitar. In fact, he left his home in Italy to study music at Berklee College and upon graduation, moved to New York City to pursue his musical dreams. Eight years later, Romeo continues to nurture his passion for music in America.

I spoke with Michele at length one morning in March, and with a distinct masculine Italian accent, he outlined a life that he has learned to accept with no regrets. This is his story (so far)...

METRONOME: Where are you from?

Michele Romeo: I was born in Italy, in Sicily.

METRONOME: Were you born in to a musical family?

No. Only my uncle plays. He plays keys, but he lives about 40 miles away from my hometown. We really couldn't see each other often enough to play music together.

METRONOME: How did you get interested in music?

I don't really remember why but I always had a strong attraction to the guitar. When I was three years old, I was asking for a guitar from my parents. When I was four, they got me my first guitar. I was trying to learn it as a kid, but it was challenging. I started taking guitar lessons to try and see how I felt about it, and I never stopped. I took it very seriously. I wanted to make it my profession since I was 12.

METRONOME: Why and when did you come to America?

I came to the United States in 2017. There were many reasons I came here. One of my guitar teachers mentioned Berklee College of Music in Boston. I thought to myself, one day I want to go there. All of my guitar heroes were from the U.S. like Joe Satriani, Eric Johnson and Steve Vai.

My life started changing though when I was around 13 or 14 years old. I had a disease that affected my eyesight. I started losing my vision. I had low vision when I was 13 or 14 years old and lost it completely at age 18. It was a genetically-based disease.

I went to John Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore and even there they had problems understanding the cause of the disease, but I basically found my new way. Sometimes things happen in life and we just have to accept it and move on if we want to keep living.

I just wanted to keep on living and enjoying my life. When I was 18, I started all over again. I moved to Milan and learned how to use a cane. I learned how to rearrange my life again. In Milan, I studied languages at IULM University. I wanted to become an interpreter for English and Spanish. I graduated in 2015.

When I felt that my life had a good balance, I didn't forget about my first dream. In 2016, I applied to go to Berklee College and they accepted me. I also won a scholarship from the Umbria Jazz Festival. In 2017, I came to America. I'm happy that some of the dreams I had in mind have come true. I made them come true because I worked hard.

METRONOME: What did you do at Berklee?

I studied Guitar Performance, Arranging, Music Production & Engineering. For me, it was very surprising that I could do this. When I was a teenager, I was always fascinated with recording music. When I became blind, I didn't know that I could still access all these things. At Berklee, they actually made it possible again because there is a class called Assistive Music Technology. The professor is Chi Kim who is also blind. In this class, they help blind people become independent in the music industry.

METRONOME: Did you graduate from Berklee?



Yes, I graduated in 2020. I finished during the pandemic.

METRONOME: Where are you living now?

I am in New York City. After college, many of my friends moved between Los Angeles and New York. I wanted to try that experience as well. I decided to go to New York because it is the most blind-friendly city in the country. New York is pretty nice and doable for a blind person. You don't need a car in New York.

METRONOME: How do you get around the city?

I use the subway, the bus, and I walk a lot. In New York there is a service for people with disabilities called Access-A-Ride, where you can schedule one or two days before and they come to pick you up for \$3. I use it mainly in the winter when it's very cold. I'd rather prefer to walk or go on the train though.

METRONOME: Is it challenging to be on the streets of New York in the winter time?

Honestly, if there's too much snow, it's definitely challenging, but this winter was very, very warm. I also went back to Italy from January 15 to February 15, so I skipped the coldest weather.

METRONOME: Does your family still live in Italy?

I have a complicated situation because my mom passed away five years ago. She never smoked in her life, but she died from lung cancer. That was another challenge for me because my mom was one of the most important supporters in my life. She always encouraged me.

Now in Italy, I have my sister that lives in Milan and my Dad, who lives between Sicily and Tunisia for work reasons. I often go to Milan, because it's more accessible for a blind person.

METRONOME: What style of guitar do you play? Is it like Steve Vai or is it more bluesy?

My playing is a combination of various elements. When I started to go to Berklee, I got some Jazz influences. However, I do not consider myself a Jazz musician. The things I like to play are more of a combination between Jazz and Rock. Some people have told me that I remind them of Allan Holdsworth. For me, that is an honor because in my opinion, Allan Holdsworth was one of the greatest guitar players in the world. He is definitely one of my favorite guitar players. I feel like I have to study more to get to that level.

METRONOME: Did you used to listen to him as a teenager?

One of the albums that I really loved the most from Alan Holdsworth is called

Secrets. It's one of my favorite records. In the beginning, he was very complicated for me to understand. He had a unique vocabulary when he played. When I hear something that I can't understand, that's when I'm most fascinated.

METRONOME: Did you ever see him live?

Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to hear him live. He died in 2017. He was only 70 years old.

METRONOME: Do you have a band together in New York City?

Right now, yes, I have a quartet. We are drums, bass, keyboards and myself on guitar.

METRONOME: What kind of guitar do you play?

Right now I have a Framus which is a German made guitar. It's a custom guitar that I got in 2010. Then I have a Paul Reed Smith guitar with a Floyd Rose. I have fun using the Floyd Rose.

METRONOME: What's the name of your group?

The name of my group is simply The Michele Romeo Quartet.

METRONOME: How long has the band been together?

I started it here in New York in 2022. I have had some different members. My previous bass player plays with Mike Stern now and a drummer that I played with works with him now too. Now I have a new bass player and a new drummer. They are both from Italy. The keyboard player has been the same. We met

at Berklee. He is from Oregon.

METRONOME: Who are your bandmates?

On keyboards we have Justin Salisbury, on bass guitar we have Carlo De Biaggio and on drums we have Andrea Niccolai.

METRONOME: Have you released any CDs?

I released my very first album 10 years ago. I feel it is very far away from my music now. Then I recorded an EP album right before I went to Berklee. Since 2021 I have been releasing singles on my own. I opened my own publishing company on ASCAP. I mix and record all of the songs myself. You can find my music online. Anything since 2021, I produced myself.

METRONOME: Are these solo guitar compositions or full band pieces?

Full band pieces. Some are recordings of a live show I did in Boston, and other ones are recordings I did with friends.

METRONOME: Who are some of the artists you have produced?

I did something for a friend of mine, Valeriia Vovk. She is a singer-songwriter from Ukraine. I produced her first EP album

of Ukrainian folk music. I played guitar, did production and we arranged it together. We are still collaborating with each other.

METRONOME: How did you meet Valerie Giglio?



I met her the first time I went to Jazz camp at Berklee. I mixed her Christmas album and then I mixed some singles for her. I have worked on eight or nine singles for Valerie. She is also my sponsor for my Visa. In the future I'm going to continue to work with her on some of her new material.

METRONOME: What are you currently doing musically in New York?

At this moment, I'm performing in venues and working as a mixing engineer. I'm also teaching and I'm joining a new band as the lead guitarist. The singer is from Spain, the bass player is from Russia, and the drummer is from Italy. They have a manager that leads the band. I'm going to play some shows with them as well. I really hope to push much more with my own music in my own project. I also play solo in restaurants. I do everything.

METRONOME: What's coming up musically for you this Spring and Summer?

I'm looking for more opportunities for my band, and with the new band that I will be playing with. The manager of that band is taking care of all the bookings. Right now I do not have a manager. I do everything myself, but I'm going to be keeping myself busy.

METRONOME: What is the name of the new band that you will be playing with?

It's called La Pucelle. It means "The Virgin." It's all original music. I will mainly take care of the composition of the songs and the arranging. The singer is the lyricist. We played in the Red Room at a venue in New York called the KGB Bar. I get to play my music and do what I like, and someone else handles all the business. I'm happy that I'm joining the band. It's a very good thing.

METRONOME: Where can people go on the Internet to learn more about you and your music?

To my Instagram channel: www.instagram.com/micheleromeomusic; my web site: www.micheleromeomusic.com and YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/c/MicheleRomeo.

METRONOME: Is there anything you would like to add before we close out?

Yes. I'd like to mention two more people who are very special to me. A bass player from Italy. His name is Gianluca Magalotti. The other person is a keyboard player named Riccardo Gresino. They are both good friends that helped me a lot.

-- Brian M. Owens

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Metronome Madness

Hello friends of **Metronome** and welcome to the **May 2024** installment of **Metronome Madness**. There's always lots of music news to tell you about, so let's tune it up! **Kier Byrnes & The Kettle Burners** have just released a great new video for their song **"Gypsy Moon."** With a Celtic vibe and a decidedly straight-ahead rockin' edge, this song and video are as cool as it gets. Shot live at Harpoon Brewery and the Plough and Stars, this well-produced short captures **Kier & The Kettle Burners** at the top of their roaring best. But don't take our word for it... check it out at: www.youtube.com. **Gulf Coast Records** signed Nashville-based blues/rock singer **Chris "BadNews" Barnes** for an April 26th release date for his label debut, **BadNews Travels Fast**. **BadNews Travels Fast** was produced by multi-Grammy winner **Tom Hambridge**, who also played drums on the sessions and co-wrote all of the songs on the new disc with **Barnes**. Joining in the recording fun was an "A-List" of Nashville musicians, along with such special guests as singers **Jimmy Hall** and **Sugaray Rayford** and **Walter Trout** on guitar. "I have been a fan of **Chris Barnes** for years," said Gulf Coast label head **Mike Zito** in announcing the signing. "I took real



Kier Byrnes *and* The Kettle Burners

notice of Chris a few years back when we played together at **The Big Blues Bender**. Gulf Coast Records is proud to have him join our family." "This is my fifth album and the second produced by Grammy Award-Winner **Tom Hambridge**," added Barnes.

The Boston RUMBLE 2024 finals are here! Boston Emissions' **Anngelle Wood** is holding the Finals shows on May 4 @ Sonia in Cambridge. Congratulations to all the bands and good luck to all the finalists. **Speedfossil** founder **Garret Vandermolen** has joined

legendary power pop garage rockers, **The Plimsouls** as bassist and backing vocalist. He will join them for a U.S. and Canadian tour this summer as part of the **Totally Tubular Festival**. The tour starts on June 25 in Seattle, WA, targeting 20 markets, and features not only **The Plimsouls** but also **Thomas Dolby**, **The Thompson Twins**, **Modern English**, **The Romantics**, **Bow Wow Wow**, **Tommy Tutone** and **Men Without Hats**. Singer-guitarist, **Quinn Sullivan** explores depths of love and liberation on his new album **Salvation** out June 7th on the Provogue/Mascot Label. Catch him locally... May 30 & 31- Jimmy's, Portsmouth NH June 7- City Winery, Boston MA. **Black Country Communion**, the iconic rock supergroup featuring the talents of **Joe Bonamassa**, **Glenn Hughes**, **Jason Bonham**, and **Derek Sherinian**, have announced the upcoming release of their highly anticipated fifth studio album, **V**, available worldwide on June 14. Since their debut in 2010, **Black Country Communion** has delivered a series of critically acclaimed albums, each showcasing the group's ability to fuse British blues-rock with American soul in a way that captivates audiences worldwide.

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PASSING NOTES: Steve Lawrence one half of the hugely popular '60s & '70s vocal duo, **Steve & Eydie**, died from complications due to Alzheimer's disease in Los Angeles, on March 7, 2024, at the age of 88. The pair won a Las Vegas Entertainment Award for "Musical Variety Act of the Year" four times, three of them consecutively. They were honored with a lifetime achievement award from the Songwriters Hall of Fame, and in 1995 were the recipients of an Ella Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Singers; Drummer **Jerry Conway** died on March 29, 2024, at the age of 7. He was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2022. He performed with the backing band for **Cat Stevens** in the 1970s, with **Jethro Tull** during the 1980s, and was a member of **Fairport Convention** from 1998 to 2022. Conway also worked as a session musician. He was married to vocalist **Jacqui McShee**, the singer of the band **Pentangle**, of which he was also a member; Singer **Eric Carmen** died March 11, 2024 at home in his sleep. He was 74 years old. Carmen was the lead vocalist of the **Raspberries**, and had the hit "Go All the Way" along with four albums with the band. He embarked on a solo career in 1975 and had global success with the songs, "All by Myself," "Never Gonna Fall in Love Again," "She Did It," "Hungry Eyes," and "Make Me Lose Control." In later years, he toured with **Ringo Starr & His All-Starr Band** before reforming the **Raspberries** in 2004; Singer-guitarist **John "Jay" Murphy, Jr.** passed away unexpectedly on March 25,



**R.I.P.
John "Jay" Murphy
of Boston Duo,
The McMurphys**

2024, at Nashoba Valley Medical Center. He was 76. Jay was an accomplished musician and attended the University of Miami where he received a Master's degree in Music Education. He joined the Miami Hurricane's Chorale ensemble which ignited his love for music, teaching, and performing. Jay sang at Tanglewood, The Boston Pops, Boston Symphony Orchestra, The Jackie Gleason Show, and Carnegie Hall with the

Miami Hurricanes. He later became the soulful voice, and driving force behind **The McMurphys** alongside his friend, drummer, and band brother, Wally Welch.

VIDEO PICKS OF THE MONTH: **Ricky Stanicky**- When three childhood friends got in trouble when they were kids, they invented an imaginary friend named Ricky Stanicky to get them out of trouble. Twenty years later as adults, they still use the nonexistent Ricky as a handy alibi for their immature behavior. A funny film; **Damsel**- A young Elodie's parents makes an arrangement with a powerful family for her to wed their prince son. At their wedding ceremony, the prince's mother tries to sacrifice Elodie to a dragon that has been terrorizing the kingdom; **Noah**- **Noah** (Russell Crowe) is chosen by God to save all the innocent animals of the world before an apocalyptic flood cleanses the earth. A well produced film; **Botched**- Plastic Surgeons, **Dr. Paul Nassif** and **Dr. Terry Dubrow** (brother of **Quiet Riot** lead singer **Kevin DuBrow**), undertake some of the most difficult reconstructive surgeries on this real-life medical series. You won't believe many of the before and afters. Wow! Well, that's all for now friends and fellow musicians. We'll be back next month with more stories from the music world, but until then, stay safe, be happy *and* keep making, listening and supporting beautiful music. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TAURUS, YOU BULL YOU.** Happy Mother's Day to all you beautiful moms out there! Thanks for reading.

--Compiled by **Brian O.**

Estate Planning for Creatives (Trust Me)

by **Richard K. Berger**

Those who write and record music are among those called "Creatives." In my experience, few Creatives think of protecting their works through estate planning. Bob Marley, Michael Jackson, Jimi Hendrix, Pablo Picasso, Prince and Amy Winehouse all died without a will. Even if you have a will, it may be unclear how your musical works or sound recordings will be administered during the remainder of the life or the Creative's copyright rights.

Remember, the length of copyrights in musical works or sound recordings is the life of the author +70 years. Oh, and for clarity, "musical works" means the composition (the song), and "sound recordings" means the record. Musical works can exist outside of sound recordings, but sound recordings of music always contain musical works. For this article, I refer to musical works and sound recordings collectively as your "Musical Assets."

Regardless of whether your Musical Assets have yielded substantial profits or remained

financially dormant throughout your lifetime, and regardless of whether they are registered with the copyright office or not (as registration is not a prerequisite for copyright protection under United States law), there remains inherent value in designating ownership and administration for your Musical Assets in the years following your passing. Even if your Musical Assets do not find a widespread audience posthumously, the ability to stipulate who will oversee and manage them in the future may hold significant personal importance and ensure the preservation of your artistic legacy for generations to come.

In estate planning, this can be accomplished by drafting a testamentary trust inside your will. I name these as the "[Name of Client] Music Trust." The term "testamentary trust" simply means a trust set up inside a will. In broad strokes, here are a few highlights handled within a testamentary music trust:

- What works will the trust cover
- Who will be the trustee or trustees
- What will be the purpose of the trust and how will that purpose be effectuated
- Who will be the beneficiaries of the trust

- How will monies earned through the commercial exploitation of the Musical Assets be distributed
- How long will the trust last
- Upon termination of the trust, or sooner, how may all or part of the Musical Assets be distributed, or possibly sold to 3rd parties

These are just a few points that might find their way into a testamentary music trust. The key takeaway is that if you're a creative individual it may make sense to give this some thought. I find it provides peace of mind. We are here, but for a short time. Our works live forever.

Richard Kent Berger a.k.a. Ricky Berger has practiced and written about entertainment and business law, and estate planning. He has practiced law since 1986 and is an award-winning professor teaching in the areas of publishing and copyright, and music business entrepreneurship, at UMASS Lowell. Attorney Berger may be contacted at rkentberger@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions for future articles. Disclaimer: This article is not to be relied upon as legal advice or tax advice. Consult your professional advisors before making decisions about these issues.

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05-04 - **Anthony Geraci**
(Sawtelle) & the Boston Blues Allstars

05-04 - **Swearingen & Kelli**
(Ballroom)

05-10 - **Eliza Neals**

05-11 - **Cara Brindisi**
(Sawtelle) Concert & Film Premier

05-11 - **Antje Duvekot**
(Ballroom)

05-17 - **Sophie B. Hawkins**

05-18 - **Vienna Teng**
(Sawtelle)

05-18 - **The Jazz Depot**
(Tap Room)

05-23 - **Louisiana Calling**
featuring
**Sonny Landreth
& The Iguanas**

05-30 - **Rick Estrin &
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05-31 - **Troy Mercy**

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The Displayers

Led by Damian Israel Shiner, The Displayers are a versatile musical collective that can perform in solo form or as a full blown quintet for any given show. Hitting the Boston music scene in the 1990s, Damian spent eight years writing and performing regionally with the popular folk rock act Shiner Jones, a group that Emerson College's broad-reaching radio station, WERS (88.9FM) would keep in constant rotation on their airwaves.

In 2007, Shiner and drummer Chris Harris splintered off to form The Displayers, a band that would host a collective of fine musicians that continues to this day. I spoke with Damian on the 1st day of March and we covered his musical tracks for the last 2+ decades. This is his story...

METRONOME: Where are you from originally?

Damian Israel Shiner: Originally, I'm from Pennsylvania.

METRONOME: What brought you to Boston?

I moved to the Boston area in 1995. My partner at the time was going to be a grad student at BC. She's what brought me to the area.

METRONOME: What made you get into music?

I came out of the womb singing. I've always had a natural affinity for music. I had been a front man in bands in college. For my 25th birthday, my girlfriend gave me a guitar. I immediately started writing with it. Every time I saw one of my friends who played, I would say, Show me something. I picked it up as quickly as possible. I've been writing ever since.

METRONOME: Before forming The Displayers, you were in a popular Boston band called Shiner Jones. When did you form that band?

That was pure happenstance. Charlie Jones and I met at an open mic. Charlie and I were sharing a bill one night and we decided we would play a short set together. Alan Winter of Winterboy wrote on the board at The Kendall Cafe, Shiner Jones and said, That would be a good band name. Right after that, Charlie and

I started playing together full-time. That's how Shiner Jones was formed.

METRONOME: Was Shiner Jones always a duo?

We started as a duo, but almost immediately, became a trio with a friend of his from college named, Steve Breman, who played bass. We played as a trio for a while, and eventually got

concept.

METRONOME: Why did Shiner Jones break up?

We all had different things going on in our lives outside of the music that took priority. We all decided to take a break. I wasn't done making music though. I kept going and tried to do a solo thing. I brought Chris Harris with me from Shiner



Chris Harris on drums, who was in a band called Goh. The four of us played together for the next six years.

METRONOME: How many albums did you guys put out?

We did a couple of CDs and then a full album.

METRONOME: What's Charlie doing now? Does he still play?

I don't think he's doing anything regularly. We keep in touch, but we don't see each other very often. I don't know that he has a regular gig.

METRONOME: What was the time frame for Shiner Jones?

We formed in 1999 and stopped playing in 2007. That's when I formed The Displayers, which is a whole other

the pandemic, but it became a regular thing during the pandemic. Initially, we would play live shows in clubs and tell everybody to bring canned goods for donation to a food pantry, or bring new white socks, so we could donate them to a homeless shelter. We would ask people to bring something as a donation for some cause.

METRONOME: How did that ramp up during the pandemic?

I had a gig in March 2020, but of course it got postponed and then canceled. I was bummed out for many reasons. My wife said, Why don't you play anyway? Play online? I thought, I don't even know how to do that. Within two weeks, I figured out how to set up a live stream situation through Facebook and promoted it. Several thousand people showed up. It was amazing.

I played a half an hour of originals and would urge people during the set to give to their local food pantry. I kept doing it every week. After the third one, I had an actual button included on the live stream that would say, You can donate directly to this cause.

Within the first or second week, Chris Harris said, "I want to get involved with this." He and I would remotely do these teaser videos. I would send him a clip of me playing a song and say play to this. I would mash them together and post them as a video playing together but remote from one another. We called them the Saturday Short Sets. We had a pocket following that dutifully tuned in every week to almost all the shows. There was always this core crew. That was a cool thing.

METRONOME: Did the videos evolve over time?

Eventually I would do them for songs during the sets. I would send a clip of me playing a song to Daigo and Chris, with time before and after for banter. They would play their parts and then send them back to me and I would align them and splice them together. In the middle of the live sets I would say, Hey, let me bring the boys out. I would flip over to the TV, the two of them would appear, and we would all start playing together.

Jones. He kept playing with me.

METRONOME: Is he still with you now?

He is. He's an amazing player. As we started cycling through other players, a bass player from Berklee named Wes Switzer joined us. We finally settled with a guy named Daigo Fujiwara.

METRONOME: I know you're in to video production. Is that you're day gig?

No, it's something I always dabbled in, but I didn't hone until the pandemic. **METRONOME: When you do shows with The Displayers, you donate a lot of the monies to different charities. How did that come about?**

We were actually doing that before

For a long time, people actually thought they were playing with me live. It became so much fun. That's where I really honed my video chops.

METRONOME: Did you buy a nice video camera or did you just use a phone?

I'm using my phone primarily. The Apple iPhone 15 is pretty ridiculous when it comes to broadcast quality. It's amazing how technology is trying to adapt to people doing that kind of quality work. It's becoming less and less expensive.

METRONOME: How did you come up with The Displayers name?

The Displayers is a concept. My initials are D.I.S. Anyone who sits in with me is considered a player. That's how I rationalize having different people sit in with me. Anyone can be a Displayer.

METRONOME: Have you released any music under The Displayers name?

In 2007, I did release a new album, but it was under my name. The Displayers were still just a concept. Chris and Daigo both played on it.

METRONOME: Have you put out a Displayers album since?

(Laughs) It's been in the works, but

it's been in the works for 10 years. I have a lot of material that we've been playing out for years. We're only now intentionally recording, mixing and producing. There's one song in particular that I've been pushing the most in our live shows.

It's called "Change." Chris and I just did a video for it as an audition to NPR's Tiny Desk contest. I've been trying to record the song for about 10 years. The song has actually evolved and changed over that time. Were finally getting close to recording it. That's the big push now.

METRONOME: Where do you guys record?

In house. Chris is an engineer, so he has a really nice little set up at his home. That's where we recorded the other album. I'm actually taking songs from that record that I did in 2007 and finally

doing videos for them.

METRONOME: How often do you play live?

Since the pandemic, not very often. Before the pandemic, we played pretty regularly. I would do regional stuff



and head out to the West Coast. Here's the beauty of the West Coast... I have Wes Switzer out there, so I can travel out to California and play a few shows and not have to bring the whole band with

me. That helped.

Then the pandemic hit and no one was playing out. We developed this weekly thing and played 150 shows over three years. We did it almost every Saturday for about three years. Over 150 shows we raised more than \$12,000 for direct donations. It was a humbling honor to be a part of something like that. We are going to continue to do that.

METRONOME: Are you guys considered an acoustic rock band?

Again, it comes back to the concept of the Displayers being not only flexible in our assembly, but flexible in our musical style and vibe. We can play any style that's appropriate to the venue. There have been lots of times when I pull out the electric and there are times where it's more appropriate to use the acoustic.

METRONOME: Do you have any shows lined up for late Spring or Summer?

We're lined up for a few Porchfests, and we're having a single release party for "Change" on Saturday, June 8 at Medford Brewing at 7:30pm. I'm working on other shows as we speak.

METRONOME: Where can people go to learn more about you guys on the internet?

Every show we did was recorded and lives on Facebook Live. Our Facebook page certainly has all those videos. I'm also growing our YouTube page with videos and not so much of the live stuff. The videos that I'm producing now. Our web site is also a good place to start at www.displaymusic.com.

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