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Art Music Culture Reception

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Troy native and renowned drummer talks technique.

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Fleshtones drummer tells of gigging in a changing scene.

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The Delicate Art of Surprise



You can say what you want about Chandler Travis, just spell his name right. And come prepared for amazement.

By Liam Sweeny

Variety is the spice of life. We live in a world bound at every turn by a category; a genre, a look, a clique, a demographic – it would drive us truly nuts if there was a box we could check for our specific strain of insanity. But we can always find relief in the unique people, even as we stand and point and, unbeknownst to anyone, wish we had their moxie.

Chandler Travis is a welcome respite from “variety is the spice of life” and other things we sleep-walk through our minds. He’s an accomplished musician and humorist with a storybook history, and he’d probably illustrate that storybook if he wasn’t so busy.

I sit down with Chandler and we discuss the proper way to remove barnacles.

RRX: Elie Wiesel said that the opposite of love isn’t hate; it’s indifference. Came to mind as I read an article about you by Wade Millward,

for Mapanare.us, since one of the things you said was that you’d rather be booed than ignored. In terms of engaging the audience and finding that love, however it comes, how best do you battle that indifference?

CT: I’m a big fan of the element of surprise, and that combined with a certain creative restlessness and natural selfishness means that usually, I’m most interested in surprising myself; that said, I do try to make sure that whatever we do, it’s a surprise. Real surprises are so rare, can’t think of a better present, really; always hope it’s a pleasant surprise, but an occasional jolt can be fun, too!

RRX: You’ve been described as quirky, which is pretty much a badge of honor in an originality-challenged society. But part of being quirky is what you show the world, and the other part is how you relate to it. If you wear the ‘quirky’ badge, what does it mean to be quirky today? And if you don’t, is there any validity in the word itself?

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GARY BURKE

From Bob Dylan to Joe Jackson, acclaimed drummer and Troy native Gary Burke takes us behind the kit.

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BILL MILHIZER

Fleshtones drummer Bill Milhizer keeps the clock ticking in the city that never sleeps.

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CT: We do get that word a lot, enough to be a little tired of it, but it beats the hell out of “zany”, which I also got for years, and it’s a word that attracts me when I’m trying to find out about someone else, though of course like most things it can go hideously wrong. I think it relates to our desire to surprise, so kinda covered that, I guess.

RRX: Art and music share an artery. Most musicians I’ve interviewed are either also artists, or they hang out with them. It’s a treat to see a musician or a band really ingrain the artistic component. The Chandler Travis Philharmonic is like that; you go all out. Do you set out to go full-spectrum, or does it get picked up piece by piece, show by show?

CT: Not totally sure how to answer that question; I used to love cartooning, printing, painting, all that, and enjoy acting sometimes, too, but always hard to squeeze it in; obsessions are wonderful, though, love being driven (and driving!) And love using theatrical elements in our shows, wish we did more, no doubt would if we had the

staging capabilities more often; gotta say for now, not nearly full spectrum, dammit!

RRX: I very much get a performance vibe from the Travis Chandler Philharmonic. Not just in how I see you onstage in videos, but in the fact that you can hop through Ska to Dixieland to 70s rock, like telling stories to the crowd using genres as sentences. What are your feelings on genre: its opportunities, maybe also its limitations?

CT: It’s the Chandler Travis Philharmonic, dammit! How many times do I have to tell you?! That’s it, I’m out of here.

Never mind... had a glass of milk, I’m much better now... I’m very tightly wound... what was the question again?

Oh, yeah, genres! Nice question I’m sorry I yelled at you. I love how you put that: “like telling stories to the crowd using genres as sentences...” -good goal, true I hope! Don’t think genres are limiting at all, quite the opposite, and meant to be subverted!

RRX: I don’t want to name drop, but I’m lying, so here goes: Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Raitt, NRBQ, The Tonight Show, Dick



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Cavitt, and my favorite, George Carlin. This is your life, as told by a lazy interviewer. Going back from the seventies, you've been bending music and humor to your will. Can we get a funny story?

CT: No. The milk is really backing up on me... I forgot I'm lactose intolerant...

My old band, the Incredible Casuals, used to come home from the road around dawn sometimes, and we'd occasionally throw slices of pizza at morning people bicycling. Does that count?

RRX: No one can miss the humor vibe in your work. Going back to my first question, indifference in a comedy act is death by stage. As you've worked in humor and music together, what do you think that people who

consider themselves musical purists can learn about working a crowd for a few laughs?

CT: Again, you intrigue me; may I borrow that for the autobiography I'll never write, "Death By Stages", very nice!

Don't know much about musical purists, except they seem to be a relatively humorless lot, and they're missing a good time. I've always loved flat-out silly; peculiar, too. But I'm terrible at both getting and delivering flat-out jokes. Go figure!

RRX: This is where you get to answer the question I didn't ask. Is there anybody you love out there right now? Anything on deck this year? Best lobster rolls in Cape Cod? Anything; the floor is yours.

Just saw Caetano Veloso and

his sons do a show in Brooklyn that was absolute perfection; I've always loved him, definitely have a thing for Brazilian music in general my other recent fave is Marisa Monte.) And I saw an episode of "High Maintenance" a couple months ago that had a twenty minute or so segment on a drug-addicted veterinarian trying to get a cat out of a tuba that was the best TV thing I've seen in ages.

And we have a couple new videos out with some interesting choreography by our friend Ruth Levin; one premieres this Sunday (Mother's Day!) on youtube at 9pm, and another on Father's Day... shameless, aren't I?)

I had a mother; she was something. Boy, do I miss her!



■ The Chandler Travis Philharmonic serenading the daylight.

Photo provided.

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James- Come Home

THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE CHORUS ARE BACK BUT NOT FOR LONG

With the release of their brand new EP, "In the Name of Progress," The Slaughterhouse Chorus tosses some sweet cuts on the BBQ.



Photo by Bryan Lasky

■ (l to r) Bob Watson, Jay Bonafide, Mark McKenna and Chris Jordan

By Rob Smittix

For a decade The Slaughterhouse Chorus has been a staple in the local music scene. The band has toured not only the Northeast but has ventured as far south as New Orleans and many places in between. Bandmates: Jay Bonafide (Guitar), Mark McKenna (Drums),

Bob Watson (Bass) and Chris Jordan (Guitar/Lead Vocals) have just put together a brand-new EP entitled "In The Name of Progress" but they say it will be their final release. Wait... What?

RRX: Built4BBQ is the name of the recording and distribution group that your band established

collectively producing at least 15 releases; including not only TSHC but also local artists Henry's Rifle, Kimono Dragons, Charmboy, and The Savage Randys. With that being said, why is "In The Name of Progress" going to be TSHC's last? And do you have plans for Built4BBQ to continue

with other projects?

Chris: Basically, I guess we decided to end the band simply because we had run out of ideas for this band and have several ideas for other musical projects. So... "In the Name of Progress" is just us saying, this is the last record and we can move on to other projects. Originally, we were trying to write another full-length and we couldn't come up with enough ideas, so we just recorded the five songs we had. Unrelated to Built4BBQ as a larger enterprise, we're ending the band because that's what we feel like doing and moving on to other things. As far the continuation of Built4BBQ, I don't see why not. I don't know if we've ever discussed this.

Mark: Can Built4BBQ end?

Jay: No, I think Built4BBQ is forever.

Bob: It passes down to the next generation.

Mark: I could see a renewal of energy toward other people's projects.

Chris: So yeah, why not? "Built for BBQ" is the name of a Slaughterhouse Chorus song, but eventually it became a phrase that we used to describe any band that we thought was sweet. So as long as there's sweet bands, they could potentially be bands that are Built4BBQ.

Jay: You too could be Built4BBQ!

Chris: U2 the band is NOT Built4BBQ. [band laughs]

Jay: U2 the band is the

opposite of Built4BBQ. OK, next question...

RRX: It is truly the end of an era for TSHC, I am sure the memories and stories will live on forever. What would you say have been the band's fondest achievements?

Chris: Oh man... So, it's the first one I can think of - it's not our most significant but a cool one that we did - for Ghosts of Hardcore Past [annual cover show] we decided to play NOFX's "The Decline," which for the uninitiated is an 18 minute and 44 second song - and we did it! And it was pretty good.

Mark: You learned the trombone and everything.

Chris: Yeah, I played the trombone. It was a pretty ambitious thing.

Bob: That was before me, but I was in the audience watching that. It was at upstairs Valentines, and I remember being upset because no one else in the crowd wanted to do a circle pit. But it was a great cover, you guys nailed it!

Chris: Well yeah, I think there's the normal milestones bands should be proud of. We put out the full-length, which I guess still holds up okay. We're about to put out this EP - it's not a moment we've had yet, but a moment I anticipate having as one of our finer points. I don't know, we've played a few shows for some unsuspecting crowds and they turned out to really enjoy it. We went on tours that were not commercially successful, but I think were really character-building experiences.

Jay: Really great times.



■ St. Patrick's Church in Watervliet during demolition

Mark: I mean, I honestly can't even really think of a single crowning achievement. For me, it's like blocks, you know what I mean? Like when the band first started, the initial excitement of playing at Valentines, meeting new people and making new friends, and kind of building this whole group of friends. I look back on that fondly, but it's not a memory, those are still my friends.

Chris: That's a good point. I think probably the crowning achievement of this band is that it's probably built our entire social circle. Through this band, we've met people we still hang out with and will probably continue to hang out with until everyone has kids.

Jay: That's the end of everything. [Band laughs]

RRX: Sorry to keep dwelling on the fact that THSC is wrapping it up this year but to be honest I didn't know so I am in a bit of shock. Is there anything you would care to share about your experiences together over the years?

Mark: For some reason going to Kansas, like being in Kansas was like the weirdest...

Jay: I think that's really the beauty of being in a band or just being alive. We meet Matt Hendershot from the End Men, I think at the Putnam Den in Saratoga at some weird, off-brand show we probably shouldn't have been on to begin with, it didn't make any sense... and we meet these wonderful people from Brooklyn and the next thing you know we're eating dinner with their family in Kansas and it's the

greatest BBQ that's ever existed. We're sitting around a kitchen table, everything's flat, there's no mountains anywhere, it's like you're on the face of the moon or something. It's pretty cool to have an experience like that.

Chris: To interject a dose of realism - everyone hated that tour while we were on it. [Band laughs] There were some good moments...

Jay: Oh, I didn't hate it, man! I had a great time.

Mark: I did too.

Jay: I do remember I had to buck everyone up at a certain point. I mean it didn't go well, it wasn't a great tour.

Chris: There were never more than 15 people there. The drum kit kept moving around. The morale was kinda low at times... but we never ate better.

Jay: It was a great road trip, but a so-so kinda tour. And there was the one the year before with John [Henry's Rifle].

Mark: The first tour with John was awesome. That was my first tour ever.

Chris: We got pulled over in Macon, Georgia. It was like "Super Troopers" but it wasn't funny, and it sucked. They harassed us for a while and they brought us all out of the car and they made us feel bad but none of us broke. You could tell the one guy definitely just wanted to hit us or arrest us or whatever. We got out of it alive and we paid some fines. And then later we found out that the cop that harassed us got arrested himself for impersonating a lady on the internet to try to

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Shedding a Little Sunlight on CBD

From Joint Pain to Axxiety, Cannabidiol (CBD) is bringing relief and its use is gaining popularity. We talk with Veteran's Hemp Market for the dirt.

By Liam Sweeny

Cannabidiol, or CBD, is a component of cannabis that is growing like a, well, weed, in the homeopathic medicine communities. And slowly but surely, the corporate world of over-the-counter medicine is catching up. The list of ailments that CBD can affect is long, and the market for it is running parallel to the public acceptance of marijuana in general.

Veteran's Hemp Market is a company that specializes in CBD for a wide range of applications. They are in the middle of the commercial evolution of CBD, and they've agreed to shed some light on this world by answering a few of our questions.

RRX: We've come a long way with cannabis in a health context, by which I mean that we're looking at "CBD as OTC." As it's really coming into its own, how can CBD be used, and how does it compare with the pharmacy's storefront shelves?

VHM: I think it's important to remember that when we are



discussing CBD we are talking about an organic natural remedy, granted there is pure CBD isolate out there but it's efficacy is questionable. As such, there is a very personal relationship between the individual and the Hemp-based product they are using. This is the biggest differentiator between the pharmacy's storefront and CBD, you need to figure out what does and what doesn't work for you, there is no one size fits all solution. I use it topically to sooth sore muscles or acute pain, but also as a beauty cream. The benefits of CBD on skin health is well documented. Keep your eyes open for CBD water to CBD shampoo.

RRX: If Governor Cuomo gets

this way, by the time this issue comes out, New York State will be making recreational marijuana legal. Seeing as how we already have medicinal marijuana, CBD is going to have a new ecosystem in marketing; it's going to have to adjust and find a niche. Where do you see that niche?

VHM: CBD won't have to find the niche, Cannabis will. All we have to do is take a look at a place with a mature Cannabis market, like California. The demand for CBD products is through the roof and their legislation missed it, making CBD only sparsely available. I was recently at a Cannabis trade convention and the keynote speaker, Adam Bierman of Medmen called out Hemp as publicly

enemy number one to the cannabis industry. Also, New York state intends to roll additional CBD legislation as well as the processing and growing of CBD Hemp into the recreational Cannabis bill. I'd recommend folks call their state representatives and let them know that is a horrible idea. Also, NYS has no infrastructure for recreational cannabis. Even after the bill is passed, it will be months if not a year or more before you see the first recreational dispensary open in NYS. Who knows, maybe VHM will open one.

RRX: CBD is everywhere now, it seems. I've seen it in a corporate chain that I wouldn't

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have expected to see it. It's all over social media, and it gets a rep everything from a healthier alternative to aspirin to "CBD will raise your dead dog!" What can you speak of to the perception of CBD to the reality?

VHM: Oh Lord, the medical claims. I go after people pretty hard for making over the top claims. It damages the industry substantially. The MLM (pyramid scheme) companies have armies of network marketing sales folks that don't really know anything about Hemp or CBD, they just regurgitate what the last person told them. I can promise your readers if your buying product from a MLM you are buying

junk, I've seen the test results

RRX: PTSD, anxiety and panic disorders – these are hard to treat. Benzodiazepines like Xanax and Valium are addictive, and the underlying conditions aren't totally understood. Ans in this country, the PTSD experienced by our veterans is a deadly epidemic. You've taken a special focus on veterans; what can CBD do for this kind of suffering?

VHM: I started this company because of what CBD did for me. I figured if it worked for me it could work for others, and I was right. I truly believe the suicide epidemic is tied to the antidepressants we continue to pump down the throats of not just Veterans but society at large. It seems that in today's age everyone is

experiencing some sort of anxiety and a good CBD Wholeplant (full-spectrum) tincture or product just makes everything melt away, especially after enjoying a CBD blunt. A friend of mine famously said to me "it feels the same as when I smoke weed, I just am not all disoriented and anxious", but as I said everyone has an individual experience.

It is worth noting that my team tried over 117 different CBD products to potentially sell in a retail location. All but maybe two or three were garbage, no effect. We wanted to create a product that potent and delivered every single time.

RRX: Going back to recreational marijuana and legalization, what arguments would you make to someone that says "why use CBD when marijuana is stronger?" And does legalization mean anything technical or scientific for the CBD market? More freedom to research, anything like that?

VHM: I covered a bit of this but CBD and Cannabis are not competitors. The market segment is different, the product is different, the reason for use is different. I would challenge anyone

that makes that comment to do a blind smoke test, look me up I'll set it up. I would bet that not only are they unable to discern the difference, they will prefer it for it's clean feel (like taking a deep breath), smooth taste and wonderful smell. We got the paradigm wrong with THC concentrations. If you consume an edible made with the distillate you will get intoxicated however it will be a boring sterile high feeling, speedy almost even uncomfortable. Now, if you enjoy some brownies made from someone's backyard bud that utilized a whole plant extraction you may describe the high as giggly or happy, or silly. The terpenes, the additional cannaboids they all play a part in the personality of the experience so just because it is stronger in THC% doesn't mean much of anything in terms of the quality of the experience. We see this one out own products when we make our cartridges. The strains are different because the terpene blend is different and we can pull different effects out of the CBD distillate based on the blend of terpenes we add back in to it.





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Choosing Your Own Destiny

With the recent completion of a musical trilogy, Stellar Young strikes out to seed the musical ground with a fresh coating of ash.



Photo provided.

By Ralph Renna

■ (l to r) John Glenn, Tom Brosnan, Erik Flora and Kyle Hatch

Here today, gone tomorrow, is usually the case when a great band comes along. It's very rare that a thriving local band in Albany, New York really had a plan to begin with or can stand the test of time. In this case we have found a different band and, yes, with major plans. So you start a band; first, you develop a sound that you like and hope will appeal to the masses.

The whole band moves in together and see if you can actually stand to be around each other. If you can, write music and become one, all the time. After all you are going to spend the rest of your lives together. So now everyone is talking about you, and your band is playing stages some only dream of, and it looks like there is a bright future ahead as hitting the road came sooner than you

thought.

From a personal view and opinion is where this success story starts. Over the past eight years, Stellar Young has been riding a huge wave of momentum that has carried them into present day. The future cannot be predicted, but this is one band that has been choosing their own destiny since day one, and have succeeded every time. A big plan was set in place, followed through with, and was built through evolution and dedication. Stellar Young's John Glenn, on vocals & keyboards, assures us some of it is evolution but most is planning.

RRX: The new record *And Turned to Ash* is a stretch musically, vocally, and sonically and we dig it! Tell all from writing to recording?

John: I love hearing that it's a stretch musically and that people enjoy it. We came up with this concept of a trilogy of EP's, each representing part of a life cycle (birth, life and death) and wanted it to be reflected in the tones, instrumentation, genre and loosely in the subject matter as well. We

have been writing these EP's in many sessions over a span of 4 years and it has pushed us to explore and stretch our sound. The first EP, "The Spark Caught," which incorporated many electronic elements, we recorded entirely in Dave Parker's apartment. The second EP, "Became A Flame," which was more of the upbeat rock our fans have come to expect, was recorded using the upstairs of PSP as a

live room and the rest in house by Dave in our old band apartment. The third EP, "And Turned To Ash" was recorded with Dan & Jimi from *Dark Honey*. We were seeking their outside ear to capture the organic tones and instrumentation we wanted for portraying the concept of the final installment. I enjoyed every minute of working with them.

RRX: Bands have to evolve, I get that. has Stellar Young reinvented their formula or just experimented on this release?

John: I love writing, it might be the part I enjoy the most. We spend a lot of time structuring and refining songs together, but it always feels like a natural progression, not formulaic. So I would call it an exploration. Even though it isn't our typical upbeat anthemic rock, I think it still sounds like us. I would describe our taste in music as very eclectic, even if it isn't always reflected in the songs we write. This trilogy concept, allowed us to push to incorporate sounds and styles we haven't used before.

RRX: The new material seems to come from a darker place at least that is a nterpretation from a regular listener and fan of the band? True? False? Inspirations?

John: I think some of the material on this EP does come from a darker place. The loose concept for this installment was death in it's many forms. The first track is about reminiscing and letting the past die. There's a track about struggling to keep the music dream alive while working other jobs and coping with distractions and substances. The most personal track to me is "Struck",

which is inspired by when tragedies seem to happen elsewhere until it hits home. But there are also songs about perseverance and love. "Wait" is a track Erik wrote about discarding his many fears and taking the plunge with his now fiancé, Erin. I would say more than anything, it's an album about maturity and aging, and includes the dark and the light.

RRX: The band is coming up on ten years counting the beginning with The city never sleeps? Thoughts plans for the next few years?

John: It's crazy to think we've spent four of those years working on these EP's! We're treading on some fresh ground at the moment. I know we plan on playing some shows to promote these

EP's. We also intend to press the three EP into a double LP vinyl. The whole concept of releasing it exclusively online was to help fund the cost of pressing this project into one cohesive idea. Each EP was written to transition seamlessly into one another. Even the final song of "And Turned To Ash" is written to transition into the first song of "The Spark Caught".

RRX: While talking to a young musician recently, I asked who he was influenced by and he quickly replied "Stellar Young." That blew my mind and made me proud! Thoughts feelings?

John: We struggle with taking compliments. Who is this musician? We will probably have to track them down and send

them copious amounts of swag and merch. What an honor, man! I don't know what else to say. But I am immediately reminded of all the artists I was inspired by when getting into songwriting. I think about all the early 2000's post-punk bands and other artists, whose album art I had plastered on my walls growing up. These artists will never know how they influenced me but they will always hold a place in my memories.

RRX: What is on the plate for the next year: writing, recording, touring? More reinvention?

John: Currently our plans are up in the air. If you are interested in following our plans and stories, follow us @stellaryoung or visit stellaryoung.com and sign up for our mailing list.

RRX: Its summertime where will the band be performing? Any big shows, tours or fests?

John: We can't disclose our next show yet. Let's just say we'll be playing a big free Albany show this summer.

RRX: Who are Stellar Young's favorite local acts at this time?

John: I was immediately smitten with Girl Blue when we played an acoustic show with her recently. Always got love for Dark Honey songs. *Hasty Page*, *Becoming A Ghost*, *El Modernist*, *Good Fiction*, *The Parlor*, and way too many others to name, those are just the first that pop into my head at the moment.

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Singer Bob Riley talks music, movies, shows and finding the sought-after artifacts of a unique slice of Americana.

By Ralph Renna

Being born in the 70s was a special time, so a minor recap is how we will start. For most of us, it was the art and music that was being created. It left us some history to learn as we aged. A war, with corruption at the White House, so many people protesting, others embracing love and peace. Elvis died and the Beatles broke up. The 70s, where Rock was dead, disco was hot, and punk was born. The key players in music, sports, movies, and television were all becoming the idols of tomorrow. Fire breathing demons spitting blood on their instruments filled the arenas and an unpredicted future of a transgender hero was plastered on our cereal box!

Into the 80's history repeated itself and was a glimpse how foul our society would get in the 90s. One Troy teenager was taking notes, writing songs, and planning his own revolution. He also at a very young age started collecting everything andeverything! Little did he know that someday, somewhere, someone would look up to him. They would hang his bands poster on their wall and look forward to that moment to meet him! Just like he did when wrestling came to his hometown, waiting out back to

get an autograph and picture.

Over the past 35 years, Troy, New York native and lifer Bob Riley has performed and sold records all over the world, influenced thousands of us and led three or more generations of Troy hardcore music with his bands Stigmata and Murderer's Row. But he would never tell you that, he'll ask how much money do you want for that hulk figure or AC/DC record?

RRX: Well we know that you've been around for a long time in the music scene, you've done many interviews. but this one is about Bob Riley, we will get to the band stuff! Tell us about your early years as a child - music influences in your life before joining your first band?

RILEY: I've always had a love of music as far back as I can remember. My mom had one of those one-speaker cassette players like we use to have at school. The only tape she had was the Supremes. I used to have her play it over and over. Then I had one of those kid record players. I had those Peter Pan book and record sets. You'd listen to the record and follow along with the book. I remember my favorite was "There was an old woman who swallowed a fly perhaps she'll die?!" then at the end the lyrics go "She swallowed a horse



Photo provided.

Bob Riley's singing in Stigmata and Murderer's Row has energized the local, and national music scenes.

she died...of course!" LOL. After that my parents bought my brother Nicky and I a real stereo. It had an 8-track player in it also. My mom then gave me her Beatles records out of my gram's attic. The original first 4 where its just

rock and roll before all the trippy stuff. I actually still have an AC/DC powerage 8 track from back then and the headset that came with that stereo. They're huge but sound mint!

RRX: On top of being a

multi-genre music fan, you are a collector, some would say an organized hoarder? Lets talk music preferences? And hoarding or collecting?

RILEY: Man, I love all music. I love walking into a record shop or flea market and looking for vinyl. Being into all kinds of music is a curse and a blessing. The curse being there is always something I'll be interested in buying lol. I once found a Jackie Gleason 7 I've slowed down. Everything is available online today. Kinda takes the fun out of searching and discovering things on your own. It's still way cooler finding stuff at garage sales.

RRX: You've spent over thirty years making music. For our new readers, take us to through your

band history from your first band to your current one?

RILEY: My first real band was Displace Aggression, 1985. We played two shows in Albany. When that ended I was in a band called Final Terror. I only sang one show with them until going back to the guys from DA and forming Cranial Abuse, 1987. That morphed into Stigmata because the music was becoming more heavy and less hardcore. Stigmata rears its ugly head now and again. I don't think it will ever be over as long as there's interest in the band. I then started a band called Murderers Row in 2000. It's a mix of AC/DC meets Ramones meets Motorhead. We played our first show at the famous/infamous CBGB in NYC.

We've put out 7 CDs and we are still playing. I did a side project years ago with my buddy Darian (guitarist from Merauder.) It was called the Blackhand Syndicate. Four songs exist and may see the light of day sooner or later.

RRX: You've sold many records and toured around the world, made a lot of friends. Stories? Memories? Still going, still working and living in Troy?

RILEY: I've been extremely blessed with all I have been able to do and all that I have done. From touring Europe several times to playing with bands I've grown up admiring and actually befriending people from other bands I grew up listening to. I'll play music as long as I have people who want to make music with me. It's more than a hobby. It's been my life now for most of my life.

I am still working and living in Troy. I was born here, I was raised here and they will bury me here. LOL.

RRX: Murderer's Row is back with a new lineup. Can you introduce them to us?

RILEY: Sik Nick on lead guitar, Kris Nowhere on bass, Joe Flaw on guitar, Chris Lynch on drums

and of course I yell.

RRX: What are the plans for the band for 2019?

RILEY: We are always working on new music but we would love to play some bigger shows out of town, and we are definitely looking at trying to get over seas.

RRX: What are your top 5 records, movies, beers, and toys of all time? Five each?

RILEY: Top 5 records is impossible but well, I'll try. AC/DC *Highway to Hell*, Rose Tattoo *Rock and Roll Outlaw*, Motorhead: any and all, Temptations: any with David Ruffin, Cro-Mags *The Age of Quarrel*, Bad Brains *ROIR Sessions* album, Agnostic Front, *Victim in Pain*. Movies: *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Warriors*, *Mad Max the Road Warrior*, *Lords of Dogtown*, anything with Lon Chaney, Charlie Chaplin and pre 60's Three Stooges.

Toys: 1979 Alien, Shogun Godzilla, Shogun Rodan, Original Clash of the Titans Kraken, Misfits medicom Japanese figures of the band.

See Bob Riley and his band Murderer's Row live June 22 at Chrome in Waterford for The Erotics CD release show



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The Rhythm Man of a Band in Motion



Photo provided.

Stomping around the New York City rock scene, Fleshtones drummer Bill Milhizer tells a tale of scrappy origins, taxicab touring and gigging in the age of YouTube.

By Liam Sweeny

Rock and roll is hard to describe, fully, that is. Because it's founding principle is that of freedom. So saying that something is or isn't rock and roll is tough. Sure, a seventy-piece orchestra probably isn't playing rock and roll... until they bust out "Johnny B. Goode. Me? I go by the beat. And no one's laying down a sweet rock beat like Troy native Bill Milhizer.

The drummer for the band "The Fleshtones" since 1980, Bill's seen the scenes of probably every major city, and abroad as

far as China, Bill has been laying the groundwork for America's genre for four decades, and has represented the Capital Region in true fashion.

I catch up with bill today to discuss the latest in sound canon technology.

RRX: I think that we all have this "movie" in our minds of the "rock-and-roll story," where a rough cut group of friends hit the big, and limos and decadence and fights and a detox thrown in – do think that story has changed? And if not, do you think it should?

BM: I'm not at all a fan of that scenario, as it's a bit too cookie-cutter and 70's TV episodic for me. I think every band's story is different and fortunately for our band, that horror movie didn't occur. We were more practice a lot and play, play, play, and then get in the van and take it away to see who likes it.

RRX: I've had friends that couldn't find their sound no matter how much equipment they bought, and I'd laugh, cause I'd make the junkiest stuff work. But I was broke as hell. In rock and roll, to what degree is necessity

the mother of invention? And is there a point of diminishing returns for being thrifty?

BM: Funny you should mention the junkiest equipment ever, because that's exactly what gave birth to the Fleshtones. In the mid 70's, the guys moved into a house in Queens, and in the basement were a beat up guitar and a bass, so what else was there to do but learn how to play and start a band? To avoid that diminishing returns of over-minimalism, we are always on the lookout for the very best in vintage gear. Not easy however, since everybody

else is doing the same thing. When we play relatively locally, I use the same 63 Ludwig set that my father bought me at Romeo's music store in downtown Troy.

RRX: The Fleshtones is really woven into the fabric of the music scene in New York City, and you're from Troy yourself. I read the you (the band) were one of the last acts to play Windows of the World atop the World Trade Center before 9/11. What do you see as the most striking difference between the 20th and the 21st century New York scene?

BM: A big change is that the clubs for band to play (in) has shifted to Brooklyn. I fondly remember the countless times I hailed a big Checker cab to throw my entire kit in and go to any one of the many rock clubs that there were at the time. The Checker and the clubs in Manhattan met the same fate. While I wouldn't be into it now, it really was fun going on at 2 in the morning and playing to a handful of like-minded people. And yes, a highlight of the new century was a summer concert series at Windows on the World with real bands from the city that played over the years. We played the last Friday night of the series in the third week of July.

RRX: Something I've always wondered when it comes to bands, especially bands that have been around for as long as the Fleshtones, and just, going every day, hitting the road hard and sweating through city after city, studio after studio; what keeps it fresh? What keeps up those 3 a.m. diner (or bar) inspiration sessions?

BM: A quick but true answer is: why stop now? Everything is in motion, so stopping would be quite a waste. And a big part of keeping it fresh is that we're doing the same thing but in a very different world than what it was when we started. The avenues for TV exposure and satellite radio airplay are open now.

Back then if anyone told you about internet access to everything about your band or YouTube airplay, you'd tell them their spaceship is overparked. Fortunately, the 3AM hour on stage isn't around much anymore, but every show with a fun audience brings on an exciting feeling.

RRX: I think of websites when I think of drums, oddly enough. The size and layout of a website depends on how big the screen you've got. So, something for our (drum) techie readers – what does the home kit look like, versus the practice kit, or the

studio kit, or even the show kits? Do you have any rules of thumb for scaling your drum setup?

BM: At home I have a 73 Rodgers kit that I put Pearl hardware on. To keep the neighbors happy I practice on an old Remo pad kit with those struts coming out all over the place. A bit wobbly now, but it still works. For live, I still like my Ludwigs that I mentioned before. When playing afar on rentals, I scale down to a four- or five-piece, which can be hard if there's only three minutes for the changeover.

RRX: The Fleshtones could easily go to a major label, but you seem to favor the middle, or independent labels. I know from my own work that indie gives you the most freedom, and that lets us get great stuff from great bands. What should the next "Fleshtones" look for when they shop their own unique sound to an independent label?

BM: Thanks. Never met a compliment I didn't like, but I don't think any major label is interested in us. Fortunately, we are on Yep Roc Records which is likely the best label in the country. They have a large and impressive roster and yet are in close touch with all the artists. For a young band this is the quality to look for before that of a big name

RRX: This is where you can answer the question I should have asked. The floor is yours, shout-outs, up-comings, whatever you want.

BM: We are shuffling off to Germany into June, then finishing off a new album in Harrisburg, PA at Mike Giblen's studio. Looking forward to a Troy show with the help of friends at the Ale House and, of course, Jim Barret Art Fredette and cool press Like RRX.

Look for Bill Milhizer and the Fleshtones on Yep Rock Records.

Photo provided.



BRIDGE MANS

Along the Hudson

Once Upon a Back Beat

From Bob Dylan to Joe Jackson, drummer and Troy native Gary Burke shows that in music, greatness finds greatness.

By Liam Sweeney

The thing about the drums is, they take you to a place when you hear them. The guitar solo might be the colorful brochure for paradise, but the drums are printing up your tickets (sorry, Eddie.) Drums hit us in our root, and sometimes, it's a drummer's job to play guardian angel to the wayward (and perhaps imbibed) souls in front of them.

As a guardian angel, Troy native Gary Burke has watched over many charges, including Bob Dylan. And silly metaphors aside, Burke is a phenomenal percussionist with a sheer command of time and the ability to place a pause right where it'll catch your breath.

I sit down with Gary to discuss the phrenology of dented high-hats.

RRX: In an article you did for Nippertown, you mentioned the reactions you had to the back beat growing up. I know that crazy drum fills are what get pulled out when people are laying crowns on drummers' heads, sometimes at the expense of appreciating the back beat. Can you talk about the back beat, and what makes a good one?

GB: The back beat is the centering prayer of most Western popular music from the early 20th century to date. It predates rock and roll going back to the early New Orleans press roll drummers, "jass" drummers, swing drummers, bop drummers (at times), up to our current crop of rockers. As guardian angel the backbeat helps us keep the boys and girls in line so that they don't stray too far. There is no absolute time for drummers and this is because there is another vital ingredient that goes into the back beat and that is "feel." You can be playing in the middle of the beat, behind the beat (my native habitat), on top of the beat or even a combination of these locales depending on where the music needs to be delivered. So what makes a good backbeat? A

good backbeat should make you move, either internally (a jolt to your nervous system) or externally (gives you happy feet). As Mr. Berry always told us, "It's got a backbeat, you can't lose it."

RRX: You have a musical resume that reads more like a music history textbook.. Bob Dylan in "Hard Rain," 1076, Kinky Friedman, Rory Block, Joe Jackson... It's easy for me to list names I recognize, but who have you played with that you feel should have been more recognizable?

GB: I think most of the following are available in some format, so here is a list of people or records that I feel should get some sunlight:

Children of the Earth - Willie Amrod > a madcap collection of people brought together specifically for this record. Features the JB's horn section of Pee Wee Ellis, Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker, the original NRBQ and others. Whose Willie? Think Moondog meets Thunderclap Newman.

"Wind Rose" - Susanna Raya - a superb guitarist from Spain. Susanna has a Cordoban heart housed in the soul of Chet Baker. Steve Swallow, Clifford Carter, Leonardo Amuedo, Ira Coleman and Cyro Baptista join the fray.

"Worlds Fade Away" - Nik Rael > one of my favorite demos of all time. Takes up where Otis left off. Don't know if this ever saw the light of day. I'll send you a copy if you really want to hear it.

"Lonely In America" - Dean Batstone. Canadian songwriter. This has a great acoustic rhythm section with the great Ira Coleman anchoring the upright bass. The Canadians always have a slightly distanced view of the States, which makes for rich lyrics.

"Betrayed By A Kiss - JD Coy. "His shot of



love, ain't from a gun, tinfoil and butane." And then it just gets darker. Contains the whimsical track You're Dead, I'm Alive.

RRX: Everybody understands that the drums are essential to music. People makes dumb, yet funny, jokes about bass players, but people joke about drummers at their own peril. But one think people tend to think is that the drums are pure rhythm, and everything else is melody. But drums have pitches, so, what's your take on the 'melody' of drums?

GB: The great drummer Jo Jones use to place a tympani head on his kick drum instead of a bass drum head so it was more resonant with pitch. If you walk up on stage and look down at my toms you won't see a lick of muffling. They ring and they're loud. So what does all this mean? My mother was a visionary. She said if I wanted to take drum lessons, I would have to study a "musical" instrument first. As hard as this was to swallow, a year of piano lessons ensued before I could study drums. It had the most profound impact on my playing. I now heard everything I played on drums in the context of chord changes and melody as well as rhythm. God bless Mom.

RRX: You were born in Troy, not far from where I lived for a few decades. There's a Troy spirit that anyone who was born there or lives there long enough, picks up. Defiance, maybe... or just a lot of determination and a little DIY. How did growing up in Troy prepare you for where you'd go musically? Were there any ways where

Gary will be performing at the Egg on November 23rd.

it particularly didn't?

GB: Troy is my touchstone. Defiance? Yeah, you get that when your hometown is the butt of jokes. But Troy has always had great bars, juke boxes and hot dogs. And talk about DIY. My first 6 months of drum lessons with George Reilly was on the soles of our shoes because the music store didn't have a snare drum for us. For my first gig, he taught me how to fake - not as in being a phony but about how to be inventive and have an attitude of being bulletproof when you're put on the spot. I'd say that definitely goes in the DIY category. The only drawback was that Troy wasn't close enough to Manhattan to make a 10 a.m. session call. My dream has been to live in Troy while pursuing my career, but that never happened. Some day I'll have to ask Jack Daley how he managed to do that.

RRX: You've been in music for long enough to see synthesizers and sampling go from being very underground to a standard component in every studio. I know a lot of music fans that hate it and see it as turning music into something impersonal. Others see it as a different way to do the drums. What's your perspective on electronica-type stuff?

GB: As long as you're smarter than the machine you're working with, there are no problems. I don't see the difference between a poorly programmed "impersonal" drum track and an inadequate

Continued on Page 24...



Continued from Page 23

“live” drummer. They both should be replaced with something or someone better at once. These kids came up to me once and said, “You’re like a drum machine with a heart!” You can have the best of both worlds. I loved that.

RRX: I’m listening to Youtube drum lessons. I was listening to a video you were drumming in, and I let it keep playing. Even YouTube algorithms dig your sound. On lessons, for our drummers, what would you consider to be a ‘gamechanger” lesson? Some technique someone needs to know, or a trick that saves your stamina, anything like that?

GB: You know I’ve never been asked about stamina before, so let’s go there and I’ll relate a little story that was a gamechanger for me. When I was on my first tour with Joe Jackson we were in the wake of a hot album with *Body and Soul*. The crowds and venues were big. We were playing some outdoor venue in California with an audience size about 15,000. The excitement and anticipation of the audience was high and the adrenaline was flowing. We hit the stage and we were killing it. Song after song was just blowing the roof off.

At about the hour and a half mark I looked down and saw that there were another 7 songs to go including the blistering “One More Time,” which, by the time we reached it, I seriously wondered if I was going to pass out. So what’s the moral? A couple of things. Where are you going and where do you want to end up for

this musical event that’s in front of you? What is the arc of the entire show? As Art Blakey use to say, “A rose doesn’t bloom in three minutes.” Make sure you have enough gas in the tank. I started jumping rope for 15 minutes before each show. It gets the blood flowing, the brain alert and you hit the ground running, plus over time you’re building up your endurance.

But there is one other trick that every drummer can learn. The enemy of stamina is tension. If your hands start locking up or you start getting cramps in your legs, that is tension. Fear can be tension. You want to keep your limbs and fingers relaxed and your cardiovascular system flush with blood. This is where we get a little metaphysical. Take all of the tension from the exterior parts of your body and center that tension in the lower part of your diaphragm around the solar plexus. Physically feel it happen. It won’t hurt to keep it there and will in fact help your posture while playing. The great thing is it keeps your hands, fingers and legs loose and flexible. It really works. Try it when you’re on a gig, and over a period of time it will be a helpful addition to your playing.

RRX: This is where you get to answer the question that I didn’t ask. Who do you love out there? What do you have on your plate coming up? The floor is yours.

GB: I really enjoy remembering moments of music - Stevie Wonder doing “Master Blaster” on some awards show and Gadd in the house band. He let a single kick drum bomb drop and leveled

the place with one note / Speaking of house drummers: finding out Hal Blaine was the Motown man behind the curtain for the T.A.M.I. show / Any Art Blakey shuffle / Listening to Sinatra and the Basie band do the Quincy Jones arrangement of “Fly Me To The Moon” and thinking that is the perfect rhythm track to a perfect arrangement.

Sonny Payne on drums, brushes to sticks. Talk about arc. Doesn’t get any better / And the moment I’ll never forget: pulling into Albany Med parking lot listening to the radio and hearing that drummer with Joe Jackson

play “You Can’t Get What You Want.” It just hit the top ten. My daughter Deana would be born hours later. A great Dad moment.

Coming up that I’m excited about: The Egg, Saturday Nov. 23rd. Professor Louie and the Crowmatix with the iconic Woodstock photographer Elliot Landy. We will be teaming up with Elliot for a night of performance art and interaction with Elliot Landy’s Cinema that’s been a big hit in Europe. Old images, new images and stuff dreamed up on the spot. This is a one-of-a-kind event.



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Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

By Jeff Spaulding

This article is not completed, and that's intentional. It's music oriented, with a lot of history and background.

The inspiration for this piece is the band *Weezer*.

I'm sure you're at least familiar with, or have heard their cover of "Africa."

You either love it or hate it.

Since it's essentially note to note to the original, is it a tribute or a rip off?

In discussing this "in the office," a co-worker (and fellow Cranky Old Guy) says it's horrible and insulting to Toto.

I say (even though I am Cranky and Old, I consider myself to be "Jiggy With It"), the original came out in 1982, 37 years later.

The "Youth of Today" probably never heard the 1982 version before, and it's a stretch to even think they know about Dorothy's dog, let alone a band who stopped having hits long before they were born.

Imagine the wonder of these children when/if they ever DID hear the Toto version.

Might it make them want to look for more Toto songs?

Maybe.

Is that a good thing?

Discovering new music, even if it's old music, is never bad.

And there goes our starting point.

There is an amazing book I discovered in my local library,

titled "Who Did It First? Great Pop Cover Songs & Their Original Artists," by Bob Leszczak.

What we discuss today barely scratches the surface contained in this must read.

Go back to my theory of "Africa," assume there ARE people who never heard of Toto.

Their point of reference in the song is just Weezer.

It's a story we ALL share from our past.

I'll use myself for an example, your results may vary.

As a Cranky Old Guy, I really started paying attention to music right before my teens, in my case, that would be 1967, 1968 and 1969.

Old, remember?

Here's a sampling of Pop Songs during that time I thought were original, and boy am I glad I did some investigating.

No particular order.

1967

"Release Me (And Let Me Love Again)"

Most people know that's the signature song of Engelbert Humperdinck, however, its origin is in Country Music, it was written in 1949, Ray Price was the most well-known version, but there was also a Soul version by Little Esther Philips in 1960.

1968

"I Love You"

The "hit" version by a one hit wonder band called People. But the original version was written by Chris White and previously recorded by The Zombies.

1969

"Baby I Love You"

This was a big hit for Andy Kim (Yes, the "Rock Me Gently" guy,) the original in 1963 by the Ronnettes. Do a Ronnettes Twin Spin, that same year, the Beach Boys covered "I Can Hear Music," which Ronnie and the girls put out in 1966.

Imagine my delight to not only discover Phil Spector music, the Wall of Sound, Ronnie Spector's voice, Ronnie Spector's body...

Sorry, teenage memories... moving on.

1967

"Dedicated to the One I Love"

That was the Mamas and the Papas, before that in 1959 by the Shirelles, before THAT (and by far the superior version) in 1957 by the "5" Royales.

1968

"Summertime Blues"

After One Hit Wonder *Blue Cheer* covered it, the Who did it live in 1970, Country star Alan Jackson did it in 1994, BUT the original was Eddie Cochran in 1958.

One more.

1969

"This Magic Moment"

Jay and the Americans did a decent version (little known fact, their signature song "Cara Mia" from 1965 was first recorded by English singer David Whitfield in 1954), but the gold is in the original by the Drifters in 1960 (a last little known fact, Jay and the Americans debut song, "Only in America," was first recorded BY the Drifters, the music you hear on THAT song was the same used for the Drifters version).

As the song says, life is a rock, but the radio rolled me.

But that's a topic for another day.

For music geeks like me, stuff like this is SO much fun.

Find this book (or those similar), if you're not familiar with an original or a cover, find them and listen.

By the way, not every cover is a hit, but it's still worthy.

Buck Owens hit Number One on the Country charts with "Act Naturally" in 1963, that little known group The Beatles could only get their version on the Pop chart to 47 the year later, but they survived that bump in the road.

Happy listening...

Later!

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Tom Lopez Talks Zero Bullshit (ZBS) Media

With a storied history tracing back to the 1960s, ZBS Media wrote the script for a generation and ate it.

Long about 1968 – a group of self-proclaimed Radio Gypsy's and Pranksters congregated in Fort Edward NY. Ultimately calling themselves ZBS (standing for Zero BullShit Media) as part of the back to the land movement at the time. On some 32 acres, it became the home and voice of characters such as Jack Flanders, Mojo Sam the YoDo man, Ruby, a Galactic Gumshoe, Little Freida, Lady Jowls, Rodant (that's pronounced RO-dAnt) Kapoor and many more – all of whom can now call RadioRadioX.com their home.

I recently met up with Tom Lopez (aka Meatball Fulton – well – on has to keep the creditors away somehow) at the ZBS studio to talk all things ZBS, wins and losses and things in between. Here is a short excerpt of the interview which you can hear in its' entirety on Sunday June ___ repeated at Midnight, Wednesday June ___

RRX: Thanks, Tom, for taking the time to speak with radioradiox.com

TL: Hi

RRX: Tell us a bit about the beginnings

TL: It was back in the late 60's as part of the back to the land movement – there were probably quite a few scattered around the country. There were quite a few recording studios outside cities.

RRX: Obviously, it worked out. Including yourself, how many were involved?

TL: It's hard to say (laughs.) We started out with about sixteen – but then they would come and go – some staying a month or so – others longer. There was a stable of about a dozen after a year and a half or so.

RRX: The first major piece that came out that most of us remember was The Fourth Tower of Inverness. It's the story of how there were three, or perhaps four towers in a castle and the adventures of Jack Flanders. There is an interesting story behind how that came to be – can you give a little something to the folks about that?

TL: I worked at a rock radio station in Montreal, CHR, the owner, Jeff Sterling was a character, decided having a summer place outside the city that the DJ's could go to and spend time. And it was a place that someone had designed to look like a small mansion they had in Inverness, Scotland – it was called Inverness – and it was on a lake and we would spend time there. And the place, I swear, was haunted. And that kind of triggered the idea, and when ZBS was founded about 1970, then, about a year or so later I thought it would



be a great idea to write a story.

And I went to an audio conference with Auggie Bloom, who was the promotion man of the year in Billboard Magazine the year before, somehow we connected and he liked us and he was now promotions manager for Grunt Records, which was The Jefferson Airplanes new label – and this predates NPR – and at the time – they were considered college stations. So, he was travelling the country and somehow he ended up staying here - he may have spent the night or something. And we were having dinner – he said what have you guys working on. We said – oh. We'll play you something. So we played him a couple episodes we had mixed that week. He said maybe we can do something together – and that was a couple episodes of The Fourth Tower of Inverness. So he went back to Gracie Slick and Paul Kantner and they liked the idea.....and one thing led to another. And they sponsored it and we got it on, I think, 387 or something stations.

RRX: and one of them, as memory recalls, was WRPI in Troy, and actually, on RadioRadiox.com, one of the folks doing a show on RadioRadiox.com is Jimmy Barrett with Kaleidoscope. He has been doing it neigh on 50 years and he remembers, and he remembers the first time you were broadcast on WRPI – it is a nice little tie back.

TL: A funny thing is that yesterday I was working outside and a guy in a pickup truck came by and stopped and I was on the tractor and he said – is the ZBS Foundation around here? – and I said, yeah – here....and he said how he had listened to the Fourth Tower at RPI. He asked, “did you do one of the voices?” and I said “not really – I just wrote it...” and he said “YOU'RE MEATBALL FULTON” and he got out of the pickup and shook my hand. As he was driving off he said how he had to tell his cousin 'cause he had turned him on to the Fourth Tower. I have to tell my cousin I met Meatball Fulton.

RRX: And how embarrassing it to tell you how long it took me to realize that you.....were Meatball Fulton.

There is more to the story – and the interview with Tom Lopez goes on to tell about The Whurlitzer of Wisdom, the loss of Robert Lorick (Jack Flanders) and much more. Join us at Sunday at _____ and Wednesday for an encore of the week's program. Stay tuned.

The Pulse of a Bonfire Kiss

Whether it's an original work or a rough rockin' cover, Honey Slider is capturing (and releasing) moments.

By Liam Sweeny

The Capital Region is a gem when it comes to local music. The variety in what you hear coming up through the venues, and outlets (radioradiox.com being one) is amazing. I can go from bone-crunching metal to piano-driven masterpieces by walking across the street. I love hearing bands like Honey Slider.

Caity Gallagher and Alec Lewis front this sound that blends crisp acoustic with a big, expansive sound, a real folky poppy fusion that reminds you of a walk down Lark Street in Albany or lost in downtown Troy.

I sit down with Caity to talk over a campfire, somewhere...

RRX: You guys describe Honey Slider as a “folk rock/pop duo-band.” I see you, Caity, and Alec, but also Will (Kidder) and Brandon (Malowski,) which seems like a full line-up. How does the “duo” play in?

Alec: Well, we began as a duo! Caity and I met sophomore year of college in a production of RENT and started jamming together. That quickly led to writing with each other and bouncing songs off each other. We had our first gig December of 2016 as a full band with a very different line up, but after that we did the duo thing for a while. I met Will on the golf course, and Caity knew Brandon from high school and we all played together for the first time last October for our EP release show. And we've been working both the full band and the duo a lot lately.

It's actually kind of great having both



In their spare time Alec Lewis and Caity Gallagher engage in recreational photosynthesis.

Photo provided.

available for venues. Some places don't want, and really can't fit, a full band. And some gigs really require a full band. So, it's perfect. And we've actually been doing both at some gigs lately, too, opening with a duo set and then bringing on the full-band for the second and third set. Which we have been really enjoying. So, yeah. We are a duo, but we also really

love being a band.

RRX: I just bought your latest EP, “Why Not Tonight?” and I have to say, I'm impressed. You all formed in 2016. Was there musical history before then, either individually, or among each of you?

Caity: There was! I started playing piano when I was seven and was taking classical

lessons on and off throughout college. I was also in a few cover bands throughout high school. My hometown, Herkimer NY, as well as most of the Mohawk Valley had a surprisingly active music scene while I was growing up. It was how I met most of my friends back then, and it was a really great group of musicians that loved supporting each other. I think we've found that same rare situation within the Capital Region, which has been phenomenal.

RRX: There's a ton of variety in "Why Not Tonight?" I know that as a band goes into the studio to start a project, there's usually a theme, or some "big idea," especially with originals. What was the concept with this one?

Alec: Some of the songs tell stories within themselves, like the song the album title comes from, "Evan and Zoe" where you have two pretty young kids kind of experiencing their first-love at a high school bonfire, being anxious and reticent to take that step, but also feeling comfortable with someone, and just going for it. Like, you know what, "Why Not Tonight?" And then some of the songs focus more on a feeling or situation present in a relationship, whether it's beginning or ending.

RRX: Going from the last question; about the variety, especially if you're looking at the "duo" aspect, is there anything you were able to accomplish in the studio that you had to change in the live set?

Alec: Yes, most things, unfortunately. I would love to reproduce all aspects of the recordings

live, but a 20-piece band is a little out of our budget at the moment. We had a lot of fun building the arrangements on the record. And translating them to a way that works for a duo or four-piece is also pretty fun, but presents a lot of challenges. There is a song on the EP called "The Rent" that we have had to cycle through multiple different live arrangements of because it was just so difficult to recreate the vibe on the record. Sometimes you have to turn the whole song upside down to make it work. And that's kinda what we had to do with it to find a live arrangement that we liked.

RRX: Honey Slider does covers, if I'm correct, songs from the 70s, stuff like that. Can you give us some of the names you float through when you're doing covers? Who's fun to cover that not many people do?

Caity: When we decide on covers, we try to land on songs that people love but that aren't covered often. Songs that will not only be memorable because we hopefully do it well, but will also just be like "Wow I've never heard that song live before." Some examples of our favorites are Meatloaf's "Two Out of Three Ain't Bad," "The Way" by Fastball, "Somebody to Love" by Queen, "Skinny Love" by Bon Iver. And then we be sure to add our own flavor to it, which usually means harmonies everywhere.

RRX: Being a local band, you probably have your favorite venues, maybe your least favorite ones. No shade here; are there any local venues you want to play, but haven't yet? And why do you want to?

Caity: We have a few venues that we've been playing pretty regularly since we first became a band (Nine Pin, Savoy Taproom, McGeary's Pub), and we're so grateful to them for always having us back. We've actually been in the works to play a lot of new venues this summer and fall, which we're really looking forward to! We love Lost and Found in Albany, and have a show set up there on June 6th. We'll also be playing for the first time at places like Round Lake Auditorium, Parish Public House, Unified Beerworks, Chrome, and The Beer Diviner. I recently went to the Hangar on the Hudson for the first time to see Sean Rowe perform and would love to get Honey Slider there soon.

RRX: Here's where you get to answer the question that we didn't ask. Anyone interesting out there? What do you guys have coming up? The mike is yours.

Alec: We are just about finished tracking a new song that we hope to release as a single by the end of the summer. We're really excited about how that is coming together. It'll be our first record as a band, with all the band members playing on it, because Caity and I had played all the instruments on our first album. So this is excitingly collaborative. We're also in the works with Chromoscope Pictures on a music video for the single, which will be our first. Super exciting stuff!

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Standing Alone



By George Glass

One of the most difficult, frustrating, and dangerous gigs a bouncer can do is work solo. Don't get me wrong, if you're at a small pub or music venue, one strong and observant person can handle a crowd of 50 to 90 people. However, once you get into the triple digits, things become problematic and can quickly get out of control. Most folks are well-behaved and just want to enjoy themselves. It's the handful of angry and disillusioned characters that need to be spotted before a spark is fanned into an inferno.

Business owners sometimes hesitate before springing for an extra guy or two, because it will cut into their nightly take. But in the long run, this will make them more money. If people feel safe, they will hang out longer and return often. While you see this insight in most single owner venues, the places owned by large concerns or corporations seem to ignore it and roll the dice whenever possible. I understand their profit margins and overhead concerns are different, but the same basic rules apply. If people see chaos and aggression, their stay

will be brief and a return visit is questionable.

Allow me to paint a picture; the venue is massive. There's a restaurant, large bar, and during the warm months, a large patio with another bar and dining area. Now, you add a full band on the weekends. That alone will put the body count to around 150-200. Now, add outside events nearby that (when over) increase numbers to 300+. Would you say this is a daunting task for one person to tackle? Having done this myself, I can tell you it's like trying to empty a raging river with a teaspoon. The ability to spot issues and keep a sense of order is quickly lost. For the rest of the evening, you're a step behind every situation and all a cat can do is hope luck is along for the ride. I'll tell a few of those adventures in future columns.

So, for those owners that are wise and understand these words, thank you. We appreciate your support and will always be happy to be there for you. For those that don't...I hope you have a great lawyer and massive insurance policy. Because, eventually, you will need it.

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Superheroes & Six-Strings - Xperience Fiction

By Liam Sweeny

She had a guitar case in her hand with dollar bills sticking out from the seal like tufts of wayward hair. Cory was nursing a papercut he got from a corner of an LP he was thumbing through. Jimmy was inspecting a picture of Jon Miller and Andrea Bessing, an acoustic duo as crazy in love as they were onstage. With a camera slung over her shoulder, the photog let her finger roam along the image.

The girl set her guitar case down by the register, as stealing from the Beat Shop would be tantamount to robbing an altar just before Sunday mass, and this was a fact that no picker, strummer or audiophile would ever need be told. The walls were plastered in the Saints of blues, jazz and rock and roll, a Sistine Chapel painted with a spray-can..

"Jimmy, you got change for a hundred?" She said. "I don't want it in the case when I get to my spot."

Jimmy popped the register. "Ah, kiddo, I don't think so," he said. "I mean, I could turn it into a twenty for you, but probably not the way you want."

"Yeah, I can't eat vinyl."

Jimmy smiled. "Don't knock it till you try it." He turned to the photographer and pointed to the back of the store, kitty corner to his perch by the door.

"If you can find a space back there, it's yours," he said. "Love the work."

Cory walked up with a copy of



John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton, incidentally the LP that he cut himself on.

"I have change for a hundred," he said. "But Jimmy, can I grab this till the show? You're gonna be at the Hangar Saturday, right?"

"Oh, of course," Jimmy said. "Tell you what, you give her change, I'll give you that one. Instant karma."

Cory tucked the album under his arm and pulled out his wallet. He started thumbing bills out individually before pulling up the twisted, folded clump of what remained of his paycheck.

"Here you go," he said. She took it and gave him a crisp bill.

"Thank you," she said. "I just don't want to float a hundred in the case. No one's gonna believe it was a tip."

Cory watched her playing under the canopy out front. The Farmer's Market drew all sorts of people, from hungry folks there to make lunch out of free samples to well-heeled explorers in search of their favorite scents in goat milk soap. But few people would drop a hundred in any guitar case. She'd definitely get accused of seeding the pot.

"So how'd you even get a hundred?" He said. "Did you see who dropped it?"

"What, you don't think I'm even good enough to get a

hundred?"

"Oh, no, I didn't mean-,"

She chuckled and reached out, rapped on his LP with the back of her hand.

"I'm messing with you," she said. "No way I'm good enough."

"Cory," Jimmy said, "have you met Lauren?"

"No, hi, I'm Cory." He went for a handshake, setting his vinyl on one of the stacks in the Jazz collection. Her hand was soft but grip was strong, the grip of someone who worked for a living.

"Lauren Mills," she said. "So you play?"

"Cory plays in Red Renewal," Jimmy said as a group of teenagers came in to marvel at the posters.

"Yeah," Cory said. "And you're definitely good enough for a hundred. I was checking you out before I came in."

"It's okay, I really was kidding," she said. "Shocked me too."

Lauren clapped her hands and Cory nearly jumped.

"Hey, I need to sit down," she said. "Got a big set today. Let's grab a coffee from next door, what do you say?"

They bought coffee and sat down on the curb as a traditional drummer was picking up his own paper from under the canopy.

"So what's your alter ego?" She said.

"What do you mean?"

"When you're not using your superpowers to please the crowd, what are you doing?"

"You mean my job?"

"I mean your alter ego," she said. "Your 'Clark Kent'."

Cory untucked his shirt and brushed it smooth. "I work customer service in an auto dealership," he said. "What's your alter ego?"

"Waitress, five star spot, too."

He scratched the nervous twitch on the side of his face. "I never thought of it like alter egos before."

"Well, think about it now." Lauren opened her coffee lid and stirred it with a pencil she pulled out of her pocket. "We're the superheroes, the magicians, witches and warlocks. I cast spells every Friday and Saturday night."

"I like that," Cory said. They finished their coffees listening to the drummer lay down an arrangement with his palms and fingers that took them somewhere the number 22 bus couldn't.

"Big Yellow Taxi."

"Say again?"

"That was the hundred," Lauren said. "Big Yellow Taxi. It was a request. Older guy, maybe seventy? His wife's favorite song."

"She pass away?"

"Nope. She was right there, but she kind of wasn't, like Alzheimer's or something."

"So he gave you a hundred to play it?"

Lauren sipped her coffee. The crowd was starting to pick up. She'd likely get an even better take once she set up.

"He gave me a hundred when she smiled"

Capturing the Moment - A Journey of Style

By Sassy

Spring is here in all its glory. Days are getting longer, sun is getting warmer, and flowers of all kinds are beautifully in bloom. With the convenience of cell phones having better cameras on them, it is almost too easy to pull them out when we see something beautiful in nature and capture that moment on “film”. We know that most of us don’t know a lot of details about taking a photo other than the ‘point and shoot’ mentality. But many people see art differently than others. That’s what makes photography so unique. No two artists in any industry see something the exact same way. And that is why art is beautiful.

About a year ago, I asked a professional photographer to take some pictures of me. At the time? I HATED getting my picture taken. I was very critical of myself—I thought my posture was terrible, I never wanted anyone to see my smile, and I felt very awkward. But the photographer informed me that I didn’t see what was in his view. It wasn’t just me he saw, it was the picture. Everything... as a whole.

But what does someone need to know who would like to take their casual photography to the next level? Get a REAL camera! I reached out to some of my friends in the industry to see what they had to say. Their tips may be just what you need to kick your photography hobby up a notch:

Sassy Says

Don’t spend a ton of money. To start, you have to remember it IS just a hobby. Just about any entry level DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) camera can do what you need it to do. Each brand of camera has one that is for the casual photographer just starting out. Then just grab it, set it to “auto” and click anything that catches your eye.

Get to know your camera. A picture has a lot of components & settings, and some are directly related to how the picture will come out. Things to learn about are the aperture, shutter speed and ISO of each shot. Learn about each one then take photos with those different settings out of auto mode. When you go to look at the photos on your computer, you should be able to see what camera settings were used. (Look under ‘properties’ of the picture.) Compare them and see what the differences are. Then you will know in the future what you can set your camera to when you want a specific look or details out of auto.

Pay attention to the light. Probably, the single most important thing about any photo is light. If you have taken a photo with the right light, you have already taken the biggest step towards getting a good picture. But

remember... it’s not all about a pretty sunset. Learn how to work with natural lighting and balance the light between the subject and the background. Pay attention to the direction of the light (look at the way shadows fall) and how intense the light is. Most cameras on auto mode will let you know if you need a flash or not but honestly, you should know it first.

Learn to see the shot. Remember when someone’s head

got cut off in the picture at your birthday, the dark photo at your sister’s candle-lit wedding, or the blurred dog chasing a ball? Things like that happen when the photographer doesn’t take the time to ensure the photo is framed correctly. You can’t always move the people or objects in the photo, but a photographer can move themselves or the camera to get a better view. Don’t just

Continued on Page 34...



Continued from Page 33

focus on the subject but look at the “bigger picture”. Which leads us to...

Move! Many camera beginners will find a spot or subject they like, then just move the camera from side to side or up and down. Be imaginative! Climb a hill, look down from something higher, get closer, move back, tilt your camera, zoom in or zoom out. Think outside of the box but be safe.

Take your time. I’m sure you have seen many photos where the subject is a clear image but things around it are blurry or streaked. That can happen when you want to get that picture fast... FOMO! If you can relax, frame and adjust yourself, you are more likely to get a good photo. And it is okay to review the photo you just took. Glancing quick at your review screen can tell you if you need to do something simple like change your angle or light. Also, don’t be afraid of taking too many photos. Unlike days of old, where you paid per print, you can easily delete ones you don’t like and still have several good ones.

Take care of your

equipment. Sounds basic but you’d be surprised that many take this for granted. Keep your lenses protected—front and back—with the right sized lens covers. Buy an inexpensive lens cleaning kit with the proper spray and wipes to remove dust and lint. Once a week should be fine. Put everything for your camera in one place. An old, secure backpack works great for beginners. Also take care of your photos. Store them on a flash drive AND a desktop/laptop computer so you have a place where they are safe and a place where you can edit them if you want to.

It is really important that you discover what you really enjoy taking pictures of—find your niche. Then click away! Watch your improvement after you’ve taken thousands of photos. If they all look the same? It’s time to adjust. As you feel more comfortable, start stepping out of your comfort zone. Take photos that you think may be too challenging and see where it leads. Before you know it, you will be eager to see what kind of art you can create when you capture a memory that will last forever.

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The Long Note Goodbye

For Fans of Blue Hand Luke, a final show can be lovely and bittersweet.

By Amy Modesti

“Things always come in threes.” It has been a saying that my mother would tell me whenever any event, both good and bad, would occur. Although some may deem it a superstition, others might believe that saying to be true.

Within a month apart, our music community experienced three giant losses that left a huge hole in our hearts; the passing of bluegrass artist, Caroline “MotherJudge” Isachsen (March 9), the sudden passing of Nippertown co-founder, Greg Haymes (April 10), and the ending of local rock and roll cover band, Blue Hand Luke, on Saturday, March 16 at the Rustic Barn Pub.

For over twenty-three years, Blue Hand Luke set the bar for being one of Capital Region’s rock and roll cover groups. No matter who was set to perform in the band’s lineup on any given evening, they always put on a stellar show. You could usually see Blue Hand Luke perform at events and venues as “Rockin’ On the River” (held at Ryan’s Wake Parking Lot), the Cooperstown Blues Express, “Power’s Park Summer Concert Series”, Nanola, Dango’s, and Rustic Barn Pub. Even composing an original song that one can hear sometimes during “On 6 With Vito” every Friday night, the group stuck to playing

good ol’ rock and roll, blues, and country from bands as “The Rolling Stones”, “Led Zeppelin”, “Z.Z. Top”, “The Doors”, “J. Giles Band”, and many more that had you dancing all night.

Nine years ago, my friend, Charlie Morris, introduced my parents and I to Blue Hand Luke when he was a co-worker at Parkway Music. Charlie would encourage us to watch him perform in this band that he was involved with. My first time seeing Blue Hand Luke was at the 2010 “Rockin’ On the River” concert series, held inside Ryan Wake’s parking lot, and at the British Invasion Uncle Sam Jam held at Knickerbocker Park when they opened for Billy J. Kramer, Jerry Molland (Badfinger), and Terry Sylvester (The Hollies). Even though I wasn’t familiar with the songs that they performed back then (now I am familiar with their songs), they were a great band. They were a group I knew I wanted to see any chance I got.

From the days of bringing my parents to Rockin’ On the River to attend their shows, over time, I grew to enjoy this band and its evolving lineup. Every year, their band lineup changed. The first lineup I saw featured veteran musicians, Joe Mele (guitar), Tony Perrino (piano/vocals), Pete Vumbaco (drums), James “Jimmy” Cappello (bass), Luke McNamée (saxophone), Charlie Morris



■ (l to r) Charlie Morris and Tommy Love

Photo by Amy Modesti

(guitar/vocals), and Tommy Love (vocals/harmonica). With old members leaving, new members would emerge into place. 2011’s lineup featured blues guitarist, Ike Izadian, in place of Mele. From 2012-2014, the band was a hybrid of both “Blue Hand Luke” and the old lineup of “Sly Fox and The Hustlers” (featuring both Donna and Mark Tritico and current bassist, Dylan Storm), Their final lineup from 2015-2019 featured Matt Mirabile on guitar, along with Morris, Love, Cappello, Vumbaco, and McNamée (with occasional fill ins from Jason Maloney, Frank Daley, Josh Bloomfield, Gary “Sly” Fox, Jeremy Walz, Johnny Rabb, and Randy Staats). Each lineup brought in their own unique spin into their songs that they performed for their true fans.

In 2014 and 2015, I followed Blue Hand Luke more heavily. I met the other band members gradually at each gig that I attended with my friends and peers after their shows. Over time, I got to know these members who became my new friends. Eventually, they became my close friends.

They treated me like I was in their “family”. Through attending their shows when I could, I also met other music fans and local musicians that became my close friends that I continue to spend time with periodically at various music shows and community events.

Listening to Blue Hand Luke expanded my musical knowledge greatly and I enjoyed hearing their songs that they had brought into their performance sets. Their songs had me dancing on my feet within the growing dance crowd at some of the most memorable gigs that I had attended within the 9 years. Their most memorable gigs, for me, was both the 2018 & this year’s St. Patrick’s Day concert, the “Farewell to Tommy Love” Halloween show at the Rustic Barn Pub (2015), the Italian Community Center gig featuring Johnny Rabb and Randy Staats in 2016, and their Rockin’ On The River shows in their varying lineups.

You can find the full article on the Xperience Blog on Radioradiox.com.

Slaughterhouse Chorus (Cntd)

Continued from Page 7...

ruin his ex-girlfriend's new relationship. So that's a really fond memory for me - being harassed by Officer Willis of the Macon Police Department and then later finding out that the same individual is now in prison for 10 years.

Mark: He literally asked me if I fart weed. He was a real special guy. It's funny how the hard times really turn into the best memories.

Chris: Any experience good or bad can turn into a great story, so embrace the bad times. Deal with Officer Willis.

Jay: I think that's a good segue back to the record too. "Ham-bone" is just the recounting of one of these alternately good and bad experiences, where we were on our way to the Muddy Roots Festival in Tennessee to play, but at the Open Mic Tent, I think, with John from Henry's Rifle.

Chris: I mean, we went down to see the show too.

Jay: Yeah, it was amazing, amazing music. It started



beautifully. It's a very long drive but we got down there and the beer was flowing and the food was cooking and the bands were playing and it was wonderful, but then the skies opened up and everything fell apart.

Mark: But we made it home!

Jay: I don't think you get that, just working your 9 to 5 and not leaving town. We're lucky to have that opportunity to get in the car and drive and make music as part of a grand adventure somewhere. So it's cool that we've been able to do that over the years.

Read the full article on the *Xperience Blog* on www.radioradio.com!



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