

radio
radio



Experience

Music Art Culture Resilience

April 2020

Digital Edition!

Vol. 2, Issue 4.

20 Dweezil Zappa

A Child of Invention spends a lifetime redefining the experience of musical space. And we talk to him.

24 Candlebox

Success, roller coasters, and the Seattle grunge scene by Candlebox's frontman Kevin Martin.

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A Note to Our Readers

We enjoy bringing you our paper every month. It's a great chance to drive around and check out the bars, restaurants, coffeeshops.. you get it.

So obviously it sucks for us right now too. This is the first wholly digital edition of Xperience Monthly. And it is pretty kickass, we hope you like it.

We know that our advertisers are struggling to keep afloat right now, and we decided to just put our last month's ads in at no charge. This pandemic won't last forever, and our friends should be remembered through this time. Also, many of them are still open in some form.

Please enjoy this digital edition. And go through our ads. Please excuse the outdated information - call them first. We make no guarantee that any business listed in here is going to honor any special from before the pandemic. We do guarantee that if they're open, they deserve your business.

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Uncle Vito and the Flow



Photo provided.

■ Uncle Vito, for so many years, was synonymous with PYX 106.

A fixture on PYX 106 for decades, Uncle Vito has a lesson in how to sneak great music past the goalie and onto the playlist.

By Liam Sweeny

Some of our favorite people are nameless. Okay, so that's not totally true; they have names, but we don't know them. We know their personalities. We know their voices and their turns-of-phrase, and the throw off jokes with which they spice their repertoires.

It's such that when we hear their real names, it's usually when they've ended their quests,

or at least the leg we've joined them on.

I'd never heard of Gary Locatelli until about five years ago, when he retired from radio station PYX 106. Of course I, and pretty much everyone else in the Capital Region, have heard of "Uncle Vito." They are one in the same.

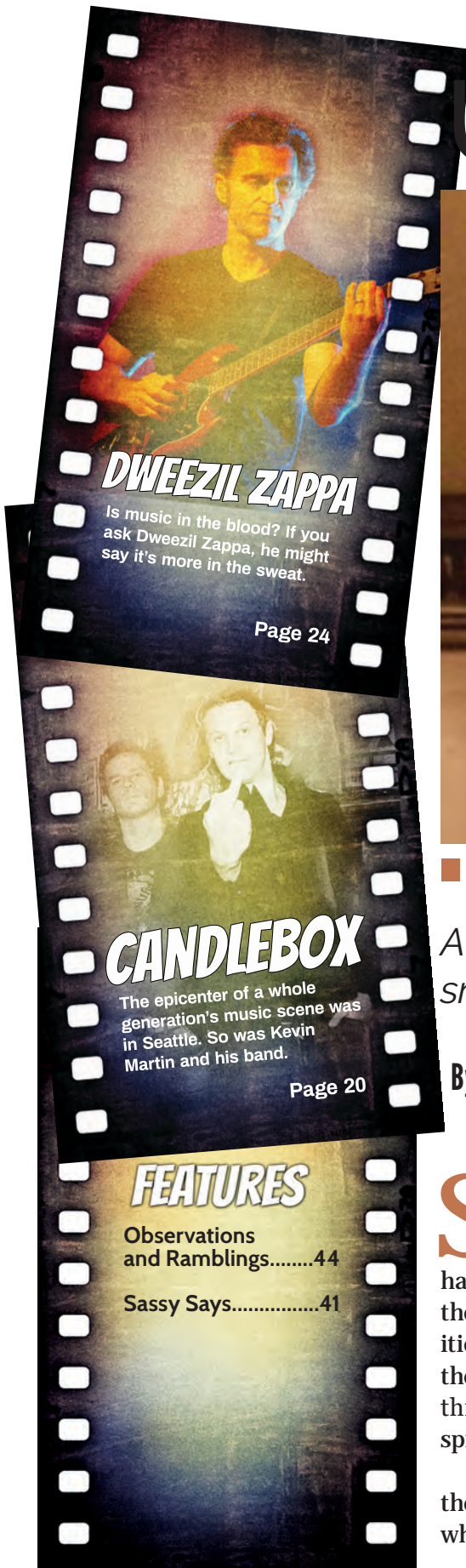
We sit down with Uncle Vito, and we discuss getting a Zorro mask that fits.

RRX: There's a pretty close relationship that develops between radio personalities and

listeners that goes beyond the distance between a congested highway and the booth in the station. In your time on PYX, you became a beloved figure to many. Now you're a listener. How is the grass on the other side of the fence?

UV: I love retirement and have never looked back! Honestly, I have never even turned the station on once since I left. If there is one thing I miss it's sharing good music with others. There is so much good music that a majority

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of people will never hear because it didn't and still doesn't get air-play. Over my career I tried to share as much of that music as I possibly could. One thing I wanted to do in retirement is give back in some way and I've been able to do that through our local Senior Center. I joined a few months after retiring and soon became President there. In that role I have not only be able to do things for the seniors in my community, but also lead our group in various fundraisers and donations for things in our community.

RRX: Being on the radio means having your hands on some great music.

Sometimes, it's something great that most people haven't

heard before. Of course, in classic rock, and in a large station, there are expectations – what people want to hear. How were you able to bring something new to people without veering too much from their comfort zones?

UV: I have always believed there is a flow to music and that comes from the tempo and mood of songs. If you go with the flow you can introduce the listener to something new and unfamiliar as long as it goes with the flow. For an example say I wanted to play a song by the Cure on PYX, something they didn't do. I would play it after a song by Lynyrd Skynyrd, because it would break the flow of the music and seem like a slap in the face. But if I played a song by the Doors and went into the Cure song after that the flow would be

continuous.

RRX: Radio has changed a lot over the years. We have Spotify and iTunes, and not to mention that new cars have the internet. With so many choices in terms of what's out there, what there is to listen to, how does a radio station with a broadcast tower stay relevant? Is it just making yourself available online, or does it take something more?

UV: Being online certainly helps, but I think you need to have that local touch. These days my favorite radio station is my local station that is staffed with live DJs and covers local news and events. I believe people like to be able to pick up the phone and actually talk to the person they are listening to. It's that human connection that I believe is

important.

RRX: I remember your brief stint as 'Ranger Danger' on WXXA in the '90s. He was a loveable example of what not to do in the world, and it looked like a lot of fun. It's illustrative of the interconnection between radio and TV. Do you think, at least locally, collaborations like that are easier, or tougher? Are there more barriers or less?

UV: Not really sure how to answer this one. What I can tell you is my radio personality got me the TV job. And then the TV job ended the radio personality for a while. That was because I was a kiddie host and some of the risqué stuff I did on the radio didn't fit well with that. I think under

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the right circumstances though they could really benefit each other. Not sure if that really answers your question, but that's what I have.

RRX: One thing I'm sure you loved from your time on PYX was making people light up with giveaways. Stickers, t-shirts, and let's not forget concert tickets – I know from what we do how much fun it is to hook people up. And there was a culture behind calling in and winning stuff – do you think that culture still exists in our 'on-demand' world?

UV: I honestly don't. It seems to have disappeared. Even in my final couple of years on air it was diminishing.

RRX: You were on air for thirty years. Your voice has raised

some children from the shelf above the cradle to the all-nighter before they submitted their dissertation. You've been there for people through their happiest and darkest moments, and you could've walked right by them in the store. Anything ever happen that drove this home for you?

UV: Actually, quite a few times. Many times I've been told by someone that they listened to me and that it made their day. I have actually received a couple of emails from people who listened and said their lives were headed in the wrong direction and because of something I said on air they turned things around. I can't tell you how much those emails meant to me!

RRX: This is where you answer the questions I didn't ask.

Anyone you have your eye on musically? Any honors to bestow to anyone? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

UV: I really like the new Pearl Jam song "Dance of the Clairvoyant", looking forward to hearing the new album when it comes out. If I was still on air I would be trying to stress the importance of our upcoming election. I used to try to do that through humor on my show, humor that would stimulate and make people think. It's important that people become informed before they vote. You're not going to get that way from what you see on Facebook, in a meme or a far left or right blog. Search out the facts from solid sources before checking that box on Election Day.

■ Gary Locatelli, a.k.a "Uncle Vito."

Photo provided.



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Music and Mountain Ingenuity

Between the 'cabin in the woods' and the rivers and streams of song that run down the Adirondacks, Northern Borne show that making music means more than just finding notes.



Photo provided.

■ (l - r) John Wensley, Sarah Babushkin, Shows Leary.

By Liam Sweeny

Beneath the deep-woods mosquitoes and the mud from the hike lies the bed-rock of why you might spend

some time in the Adirondacks this spring, summer, or fall – the purity. The air and the water and when you see the ingenuity of what passes for camp chairs, you can add deep honesty to purity and soak it all in.

Northern Borne is a band of honest ingenuity. They are bluegrass and roots music and blues, glued together with some jam band. They are Sarah Babushkin, Shows Leary, and John Wensley, and their sound in incredible.

I sit down with Northern Borne, and we discuss polishing musical spoons.

RRX: Northern Borne hails from Washington County, with its heart in the Adirondacks. We haven't covered a lot of bands from north of the dial. So maybe you can play ambassador. What does the north country have that sparks such a passion in you all. Is it just scenic vistas, or is there something more?

NB: The scenery, history and lore of the Adirondacks makes a compelling backdrop to a good story. The rich history of mining and logging, the early development of the railroad and the hardiness of the people play into a lot of our songs. It's one of those rare undefined places- wild at heart, it appeals to the very nature of who we are and where we came from. There is a certain intangible element there that is difficult to put into words- a particular sense of being at peace with nature yet struggle with the difficulties it also offers.

John was raised in Albany and spent a lot of time in the Adirondacks camping as a kid. He grew to love it there and wanted to be part of the mountains, so he eventually built a cabin in the woods. Ironically, as John was

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working on building his cabin, Sarah was working on a ranch just a stone's throw away- though it wasn't until much later that the duo would meet. It was in that cabin that Northern Borne was created as a duo.

RRX: You describe your music as a mix of bluegrass, storytelling, blues, roots, and jam band. I've always loved the storytelling aspect of music; it taps into the truth, most prevalent in acoustic music, of 'have instrument, will travel' – you can go anywhere with a guitar and banjo and tell a story. Does Northern Borne ever go 'off-grid' and just play?

NB: That is the beauty of what we do and we often play unplugged. The band got its start relatively off-the-grid in the cabin that John built. There was no TV in the cabin, and phone service was very limited. It was nice to have a space that encouraged creativity and provided a good backdrop to the stories that unfolded in a lot of the music. The band also started acoustically, with Sarah on the mandolin and John on the banjo. We were camping in Vermont and just picking around our campfire when the camp director came over and asked us to come back and play a gig there! We were very new and that experience made us think about performing live.

RRX: I remember the first time I saw Northern Borne. It was at one of the station shows, and Sarah was handing out your card. I still have it; it's nice. And I don't often see bands hands

handing us their cards. Being that you're bluegrass and that you're from up north, do you have to do extra to book in the Capital Region?

NB: We are still navigating our way through the entire booking process and are just starting to look into playing more in the Albany/Troy/Schenectady areas. We have a few shows coming up this month (April) at Corcoran's Towpath Tavern in Waterford and The Schenectady Distilling Company. We just opened for Beg, Steal or Borrow at one of our favorite haunts, the Rustic Barn in Troy, which is also where we met our bass player Shows Leary. Shows is a welcome addition, and brings in a strong rock influence that has really helped us hone in our sound. Receiving positive feedback from open mics like the Rustic Barn and the Black Bear in Watervliet pushed us to reach out to those areas initially. We honestly weren't sure how well we would be received at first since a lot of the music seemed to be blues/rock and we are so different. But when we had the crowd dancing and having a good time, it gave us a boost of confidence to try and expand past the outlying venues that we are used to, such as the Argyle Brewing Company in our hometown of Cambridge, Unihog in Hoosick Falls and Hicks Orchard to name a few.

Regardless of where you ask to be booked, however, it seems the process is pretty much the same. Places look to see that you are playing other gigs and check your music out online to make sure you would work for their venue. The business cards are a formal

approach to putting our name out there and providing something physical past the online content.

RRX: You won an award from Dorn Space Theater, for the best original local song of the year in 2019. Can you tell us about this song? And also, in speaking of awards in general, is there a recognition landscape in the Adirondacks like there is in the Capital District? How do bands up north, including Northern Borne, get their due?

NB: We are very proud of this song, not just because of the award, but mostly because we were able to capture our dear friend in a song- appropriately named Adirondack Cowboy. The song is a true story based on a dear friend named Chris Boggia that we lost to cancer. Sarah

lived on his ranch The Circle B in Chestertown for a time and after we met, we boarded our horses there. Chris and his family lived and worked on that ranch for over 50 years. Back in the 1950's, Dude ranches were a big part of the Adirondacks and quite prevalent. He was a true Adirondack Cowboy and we are glad that we can help to tell his story and touch on the rich history of the Adirondack Dude Ranches of yesterday.

We aren't certain about awards in the North Country, most of the bands there seem to get their recognition mainly through word of mouth.

RRX: Kicking back on the 'storytelling' question... the Adirondacks is a land of change.

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There's development, and even though it's a park, the areas that aren't government owned are growing, expanding, in some cases going the opposite way. What is the current story of the Adirondacks; not in words, but what would the song sound like?

NB: To us it would need to be haunting. At one time the Adirondacks were vibrant with industry. Mining and logging, railroad development and tourism, the beginning of the great camps and the history of the dude ranches. When the Northway was built, it bypassed a lot of the small towns that had previously thrived. Less tourism coupled with changes in industry led to a more small towns and businesses struggle to keep their doors open. The ghosts of the mountains and the struggle of the local people mixed with the beauty of the natural surroundings incorporates a pretty but ghostly sound.

RRX: One thing that is true of almost every musician or band that we've interviewed, and that is the love everyone has for their instruments. Be it a war-battered harmonica or an armory of electric guitars, there's a connection. Sometimes it's love/hate. I bring this up because I notice a vocal mic that Sarah uses that's really distinct. Any tale to it?

NB: That mic is an Ear Trumpet Labs Microphone named Josephine. We first saw a similar mic used at a bluegrass festival band competition. All of the instruments and vocals came through the one mic with surprising clarity. Plus, it looked

cool! They hand make these mics from recycled materials with an excellent condenser mic at its core. Since we purchased ours, we have realized how many other artists utilize similar versions from the same company. It helps define who we are and the style we play. We recycle a lot of traditional tunes and make them our own just like Josephine has recycled parts. She looks the part and adds to our character. She can be finicky, however, due to the condenser, and it does not work well for every venue. It's been a learning experience for sure.

RRX: Here's where you answer the question we didn't ask. Any love to give o'er the mountains? People/places/things we should check out? Enlighten, educate, emote – the floor is yours.

NB: When we were first starting out we were traveling through Schroon Lake and happened to stop for dinner at Witherbee's Carriage House. They happened to have music that night, the fabulous Tom Brady was playing. There was a large group at a table that night that took us under their wing and we were instantly part of the music scene. Witherbee's became our local haunt and we frequented the open mic run by Mark Piper for many years. A couple others to check out would be Bar Vino in and

Basil and Wicks both in North Creek. There are so many talented musicians that play in the area that are worth checking out TNT", The Willy Playmore Band and George Parrot ,with whoever he plays with, the man is amazing. We moved to Cambridge in Washington County going

on three years ago now. This area has a diverse music scene, and places not to miss would be Argyle Brewing Company and Unihog in Hoosick Falls- both of which host local and national acts. Be sure to check out the East Bound Throwdown in September, put on by a Capital Region Favorite Band, East Bound Jesus, and another local favorite also in

a similar vein as us- The North and South Dakotas. Be certain not to miss our good friends and extremely talented individuals Keanan Stark and Orion Kribbs when they play. Also be sure to check out the re-located band from Troy to Shushan Bleak Little World.



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A New Record Label with No Limits

Coming together with a shared purpose is what makes bands more than just musicians. Record label 'Almost Never Dead' and artist Brian Chiappinelli have brought acts together in the same way.+

By Rob Smittix

The Capital Region has put out so much music over the years and no I don't care much about Tiny Tim. We have so much potential here and when artists and musicians get together and start making noise it inspires the rest of us to step it up. That's why I thought it would be a great idea to speak with Brian Chiappinelli (B. Chaps) of Almost Never Dead (Record Label) and find out what it's all about.

RRX: Brian, thank you so much for taking the time. I'm just curious, what's your title at Almost Never Dead?

Brian: I'm an artist, a producer and the founder of the (collective) record label.

RRX: First off, it is always great to see artists in our area making contributions. But you have decided to take it to the next level. Tell us about Almost Never Dead and what you're all about.

Brian: Almost Never Dead started as a hive mind collective effort between a bunch of us who were a group of friends, each with our own separate musical endeavors.

Overtime, our projects started overlapping more and more, and with that so did our audiences. It was sort of passive at the time but we realized that lots of the people who were coming to our shows appreciated all different styles music. It just took introducing the acts in the right environment. We decided to

take a more active role in cross promoting our art with each other's fans and friends. All with the goal in mind of helping each other grow because we really believed in each other's music. Once this base

started to build up through live shows and we got our bearings, I decided I really wanted to take what I had learned and be able to help other artists who could benefit from what we were building.

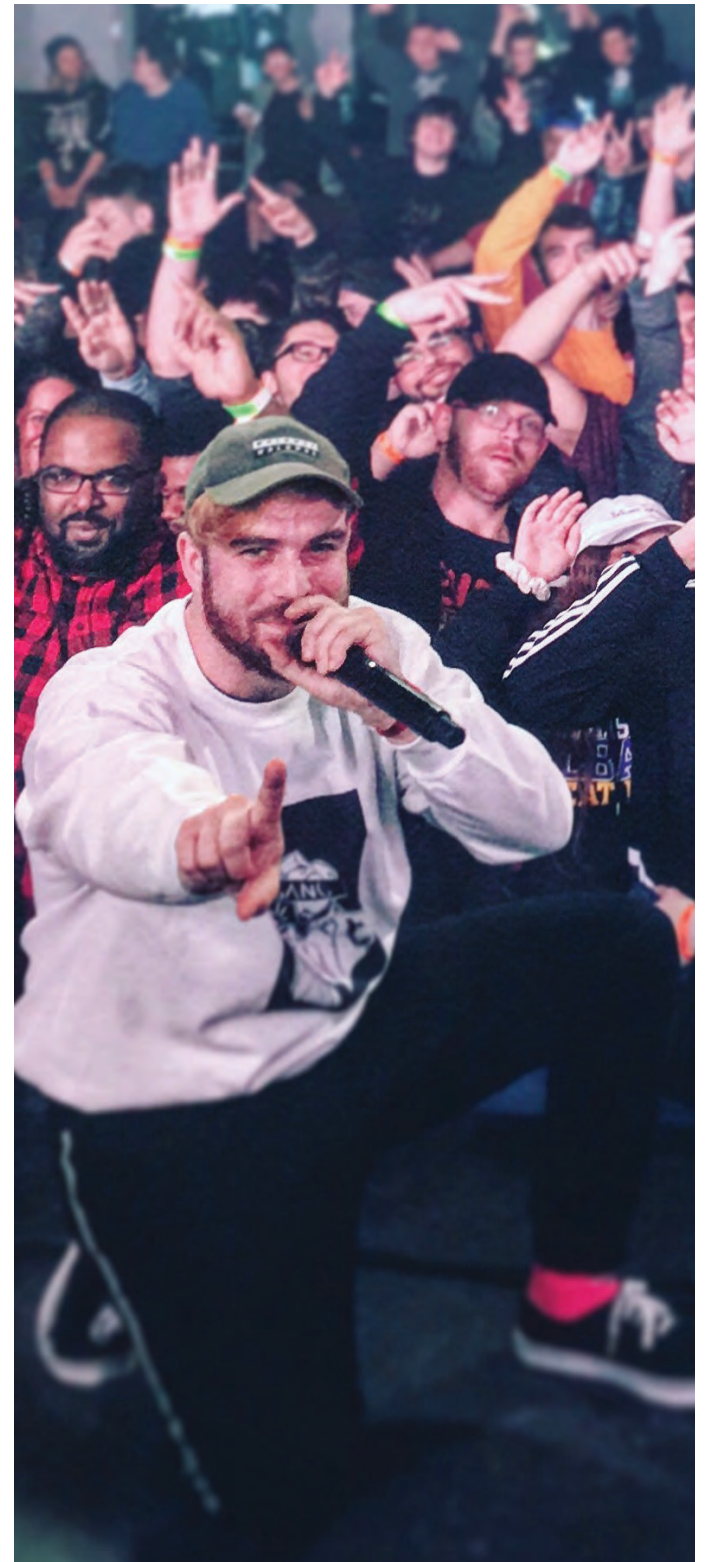
RRX: Nowadays more and more musicians are starting to take a D.I.Y. approach to the music industry, although I've found many smaller independent labels that have a lot to offer music fans. Tell us how Almost Never Dead will stand out from the rest.

Brian: I believe Almost Never Dead will stand out (and already does) because we are not putting ourselves in a box. We work with any style of music from lofi, to punk, to hip hop, to alt rock. If we see momentum, we will pursue it and have a very able minded team who is anxious and willing to learn about new tools, trends, and tactics to bring visibility and opportunities to the artists we work with.

RRX: So how many artists are you working with at the moment? And Who? **Brian:** Right now we work with

Brian Chiappinelli (B Chiaps)

Photo provided.



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6 artists (officially): Soo Do Koo, B. Chaps, Bad

Mothers, Mic Lanny, Fine Grain and Cool Right?

RRX: You recently had a label launch party at the Low Beat in Albany, any highlights you'd like to share?

Brian: The label launch show was a great time! We had a wonderful turnout and packed up the lowbeat. We also promote a safe space for our shows and fro anyone attending. It's an atmosphere of camaraderie and positivity. There are video recaps the Almost Never Dead fan pages as well as on the artists' personal pages. I'd also like to mention that we are now collaborating with the local streetwear brand, Null Void. This was our first event bringing in outside creatives/businesses and trying to expand past just music and entertainment.

RRX: What does Almost Never Dead have in store for music fans for in the near future?

Brian: People can expect a ton of new content forms constantly. We are fully self-sufficient for all of our content creation and are only going to take it to new levels.

You can expect to see a Never Dead clothing line soon as well as some new artists and collaborative projects.

RRX: Where can people find you online?

Brian: Best place to find all things A.N.D. is on our Facebook or the Instagram page

@almostneverdead

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 Soo Do Koo- Mallard (available everywhere)

Mic Lanny - Lanny Bars prod.
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Mic Lanny - Salt for Sugar
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Bad Mothers -Currently hitting the studio at Headroom in Philly to record a new album (release date TBD) produced by Scoops Dardaris




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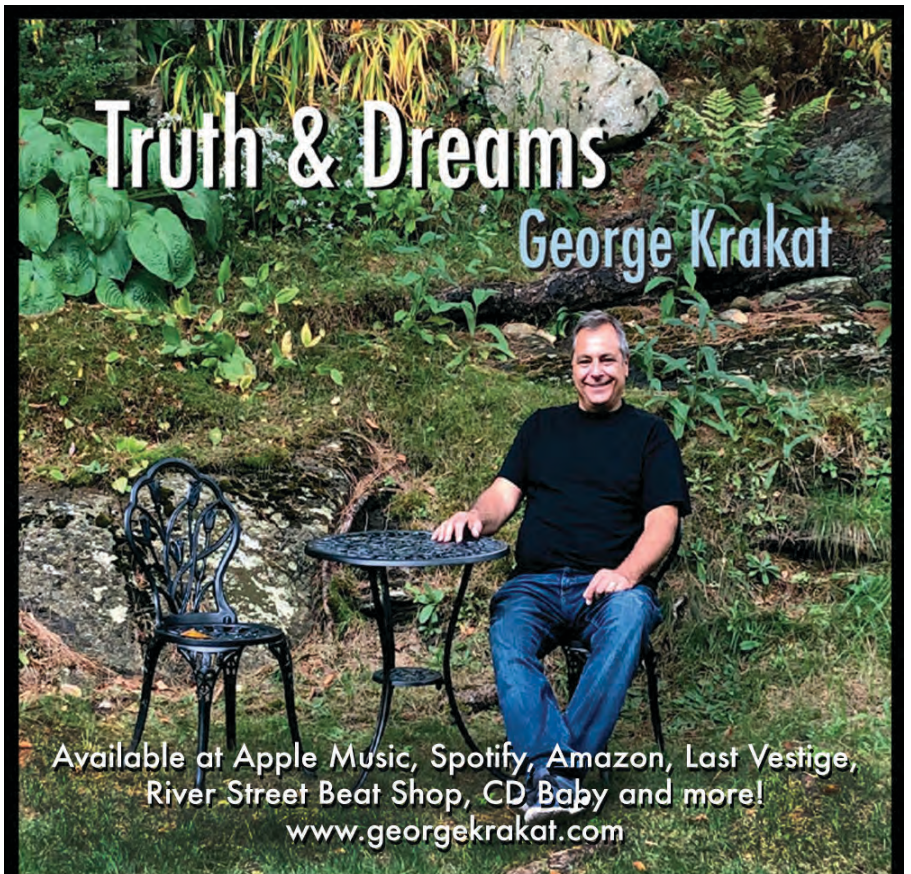
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When the Record is Your Lineage

As music transcends those who perform it, group Off The Record demonstrates that their groove traces through a proud lineup.

By Melody Morris

I was first introduced to Off The Record Trio when my fiancée's family surprised us by having them play our engagement party. They played their classic 60's tunes and blew us all away. Currently the band is made up of Joanna Palladino; lead vocalist, Geo Doody; guitarist, and Bob Resnick; percussionist.

RRX: You formed in 2009, with Lou Sansivero as the guitarist. Eleven years is a long time for a band to be together. What's your secret?

JP: Yes, we've been together longer than the Beatles. One thing that has helped is having someone who doesn't mind being a third wheel while Bob and I get grumpy at rehearsal at each other.

GD: I like being second, third banana. I have always liked playing in bands, I do a lot of solos but there's such a dynamic about playing in a band. In order to do it well you have to have people that can play but you also have to have people you like. You gotta have fun, people you can hang out with.

JP: We have things in common. We're Yankee fans, you



Photo provided.

■ (l-r) Bob Resnick, Geo Doody, Luke McNamee, Joanna Palladino.

have to be a Yankees fan.

JP: You can't leave the band, you have to retire. You have to move out of state to retire from the band. When we first hooked up with Geo we asked him if he was going to retire anytime soon, moving anywhere. Geo said he's born and raised in Albany, I'll die here. We said "Good."

GD: It's like work, work, work.

JP: Die - in Albany.

GD: Yes

JP: So once he said that we said, "You're in. You're next for us because we've gone through two guitarists because they've moved".

BR: We know that if we were a five/six piece band we couldn't

play nearly as often as we do.

RRX: Because of?

JP: Size of the venue.

GD: And the money, venues are like - this is what we pay, I don't care if you bring twenty guys in or three guys in.

JP: There's some jokes that there are some gigs we play where I lose money, but I love the environment. I love the space so I do it. But between my hair, make up, clothes, my hair I'm usually out before the gig even starts.

BR: We've been extremely fortunate that the cultures we've brought into this band continue to be simpatico with ours. Whenever you enter into a new band, it's a different culture. They have their friends, their ways of making decisions, their ways of handling sounds, their way of handling crisis'. We've been unbelievably lucky, we started with Lou, he was one of our best friends, it made it easier, we knew his culture. We were fortunate with Billy and his culture, between his wife and his friends and the way he handles things was simpatico with us. And it has continued with Geo. Being able to not only hang out and have a good time, it's also being able to handle communications.

Whether one of us had a long work day, or the sound doesn't work at a gig. Nobody has lost their shit, which is unf*cking believable. Another reason we've stayed together is because we're

Continued on Page 18

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still vibrant, we're still working on new songs. We have a CD coming out.

JP: We finally did a CD and we did it the right way. It took forever but we wanted to do it the right way, we wanted to pay royalties. We wanted a new recording with Geo, of how the band sounds now, but live. Almost like a demo to give out to promote us. When we were done, it actually sounded really good so we said, "holy crap, it sounds great, let's do some more!"

RRX: I like the veto rule. Tell me more about that.

JP: Yeah, we have a rule. If one of us wants to try a new song and one of us hates it you get to veto. And like Bob says, there's plenty of really good songs out there so why make it torture for someone? There's no reason for that.

RRX: Geo how long have you been in the band?

GD: I'm trying to think how long it's been, has it been two years?

JP: It's been two and half years, you've played in two Christmas shows with us.

BR: No, it hasn't been that long.

GD: I remember our 1st gig was a wedding in April.

JP: So it'll be three years in April.

BR: Yeah, that's what it is, three years in April. Joanna said it best when she describes the band as a fun great band, you're getting a show.

Check their website for their CD release date.

Off The Record wants to make sure to thank & acknowledge the following:

Lou Sansivero - Founding Member, guitarist, harp player
 Billy Harrison, Honorary life-long Member- guitarist
 Luke McNamee - aka Blue Hand Luke - guest saxophonist
 Thom Cammer - Photographer and Creative Director <http://thomcammer.com>.

Be sure to catch one of Off The Records gigs at these fine locations (dependent upon Coronavirus conditions):

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August 15 - Private Party w Kitty Rodeo August 29 - Indian Ladder Farms 2 PM - 5 PM

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The Red-Headed Stepchild of Grunge



Photo provided.

Candlebox frequently owns the world stage. They are currently working on a new record.

You may not have heard of Kevin Martin, but he's the singer for Candlebox, an iconic member of the '90s Seattle grunge scene. There's a lesson in his success, and relative anonymity.

By Liam Sweeny

Rebellion is a word that is often associated with rock and roll. Whether it's the lyrics, or the dancing, or just the general attitude, rock and roll has always had a finger to give. And a scene that typified this finger-giving feel was the Seattle grunge scene of the 1990s.

Kevin Martin's name might not be as well known as Eddie Vedder's or Kurt Cobain's, but as the lead singer of Candlebox, he holds court with them.

Kevin and I "sat down" and talked about my teenage CD collection.

RRX: Everyone has strong feelings for the era they cut their teeth in. So, for me, that was grunge, and while I was in New

York, my ears were in Seattle. Now, every band I know thinks they are at the center of the creative world at some point, but you actually were. Did you feel the scene's "gravity" back then, or was it all just a good time?

KM: We certainly felt the gravity of it. I mean, you know, I moved when I was fourteen years old, January 20th, 1985. It was just starting then, and there was

a lot of amazing music happening. I had come from a punk rock background in San Antonio to this kind of... dirgy rock scene, which they were giving the name of grunge to. I called it 'acid rock.' And it was interesting, because I was just about to turn fifteen years old, so I had gone from a completely different understanding of music. And shortly

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thereafter, I took a job working in a shoe store with Susan Silver, who was running Soundgarden, and a bunch of bands, so at sixteen, I was immersed in the scene. I think at that point I realized I was going to be singing; I was still playing drums in a punk band; I wasn't singing in a rock band. I didn't look at it in any perspective that I do now. Candlebox is the first job I had as a singer where I was stuck with it. So I'm sort of reluctantly the singer of a rock and roll band. Yeah, so I really think you knew something was happening. And it was still a time when people were still tacking fliers on telephone poles, handing out fliers to shows on First Avenue and Pike Street. It was an exciting period, but the musicians knew, right around 1987 – 1988, that there was something happening with the scene – you know, we were getting A&R guys coming out to see shows, Michael Stone and guys like that who were checking out Mudhoney and stuff like that. So I think everybody knew something was gonna happen, but nobody knew it was going to blow up like it did. And then of course around '89, everything changes, so '89 – '96 really, that city was producing some of the greatest music and having some of the greatest successes in the world. So it was very exciting. But did I think I was going to?

RRX: For a long time in the nineties, Candlebox was

chewing up the Billboard more than it wasn't. And to me, it was cool recognition for a band that kicked ass, but for you, what was the success like? Was it a source of power? Or was it ever a burden? Can you approach what you do in the same way pre- and post-success?

KM: I would say it's a burden. I mean, we were kind of the red-headed step child of the scene. We didn't handle the success very very well. I don't really know. It was hard for us; we kind of fell into one another's hands as a band. I went to school with the bass player, but because he was a foreign exchange student from Ireland, I didn't know him. I knew the drummer kind of. I didn't know Pete at all. He was introduced to Scott and me by Kelly Gray who produced our first and second records. So it was a

very happy accident for us, but it was an enormous insurance policy that got cashed at great damage to each of us individually. Because none of us were prepared for it. When you're making the kind of money we were making from 1994 to 1998, you do stupid shit, and you think it's gonna last forever, and it doesn't, and everybody tells you it doesn't.

Pre- or post success? Post success is so much easier to look back on it and say 'those were huge mistakes, don't ever do them again.' For me, I do it exactly how I want to do it. I don't let anybody dictate to me which direction I should be going, what songs I should be writing, who I should be writing for. I don't let labels dictate to me who I should and should not tour with. It's mine. Pre-success, you're following the rules. As much as you're

trying to say you're not, the battle is that the label has all the money and really, in order to succeed at all, you've got to play their game. Unless you were Nirvana, and of course, that was inevitable. Kurt Cobain pushed back at every chance he could get against Geffen Records. Bands like Candlebox, and Presidents of the United States of America and The Sweetwaters and the what-nots that came after Soundgarden, Mother Love Bone and Pearl Jam, we all cut out to play that, and it was unfortunate

RRX: Candlebox has gone through lineup changes, which is expected for a band that got its start in 1990. And you all had disbanded between 2000 and 2006. I used to think that changing band members and taking

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Photo provided.



Kevin Martin, Candlebox frontman.



Music Will Find a Way

Composition and Sweet Innovation

Dweezil Zappa doesn't live in his father's shadow... He casts his own.

By Dick Beach

RRX: Thanks for joining us. I want to start at the very beginning. Having done some research, it was fascinating that when you were born, the hospital would not let you have your name, which I thought pretty interesting. But then, when I found that on the birth certificate, you were registered as Ian Donald Calvin Euclid Zappa. Those were some of the guys in Frank's band at the time. What do you think about how he came up with that, and what it meant to you over the years?

DZ: Well, first, my first name was always Dweezil, and it was on my birth certificate. Those were my middle names, Ian Donald Calvin Euclid. But those were removed when I found out that those were my middle names when I was about five. I didn't like any of them, so I said I don't want any of those. They were actually taken off of my birth

certificate.

RRX: I found it interesting that, given who they are, that those were the names that popped into your dad's head. I don't know whether you did.

DZ: Well, yeah. It didn't have any meaning to me at the age, other than I didn't like the sound of any of those names. Dweezil sounded better to me at that time. But ultimately, it's one of those weird things where somebody decided yeah, you can't name a child this. You're gonna have to have a regular name or we're not gonna let you have access to your child. So, my dad just gave a host of names. Those were something they couldn't complain about. Then, that was the solution to that thing. But the other thing that was on my birth certificate was under religion, it said musician.

RRX: Before we move on to your first recording, those of us of

am
age
were
watching
the PMRC
and congressional
hearings. Your
dad came up and Tip-
per Gore she thought it'd
be fascinating to see the toys
that you guys played with as children.
Of course, Frank's answer was hey, come on over, see them. They're in the closet.

DZ: That was Senator Hawkins who –

RRX: Was it Hawkins?

DZ: Yeah. But yes, she was a wretched lady.

RRX: Yeah. I would imagine that by and large, for you it

Dweezil Zappa grew up around legendary musicians.

was a normal childhood. It was who you were. It's what you did. You went out and played with the kids in the neighborhood. You

Photo provided.

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played music. Would that be how you would categorize how your childhood?

DZ: I think everybody would view whatever their situation is growing up as normal 'cause that's all they know. But we certainly didn't do anything that was abnormal for traditional standards of what children do when they're growing up, playing with toys or stuff like that. We didn't have weird toys, we didn't do strange things. So yeah, it was nothing of anything to speak of.

RRX: I want to get to the first recording you made, back in '82. You were 12, 13, and you did "My Mother Was a Space Cadet."

DZ: Yeah.

RRX: You wrote it with your sister and Steve Vai. That had to be really interesting. Is there anything in particular about that you recall, whether it was about process, about the writing experience and things of that nature that really stood out for you?

DZ: Well, I had a riff that I had composed that was a pretty heavy duty guitar riff. I had only been playing guitar for a couple of months. I was learning how to play by listening to records and picking out things that I could from just listening. But my dad

had Steve Vai in his band at the time, so he showed me a couple of chords and some ways to relate chords to scales. So, I had a little notebook of lessons that he gave me. It was five or six lessons in a little notebook. During that period of time, I had showed Steve this riff that I wrote and he showed me a Lydian chord

because we were talking about different scales and modes and things, so he showed me this thing. It ended up being something that got attached to the first riff that I wrote. That is how his part of the songwriting thing came together 'cause the chorus part became this Lydian chord thing.

The song has really got only three little sections in it. The lyrics were stuff that were all about my mom because she used to basically tune out and you couldn't get her attention, as a kid. You were like, "Uh, we have to go to school now," and she'd be sitting there reading the newspaper. Like, "Yeah, we're late for school. We have to go." She just wouldn't even take her eyes off the newspaper or whatever magazine.

The point is, the song itself is a bit of a sense of humor song. It's the first song that I remember really writing, and my sister added a couple lyrics into it. But the rest of the story that's interesting is that it was actually produced by Edward Van Halen, and Edward Van Halen played a little bit of guitar on the intro to the song. There's a slide guitar part that he plays the intro on.

So, there's a lot of history to that experience. And being the very first thing that I ever recorded, working in the studio with Edward Van Halen and all this stuff. He was joking around with us, saying, "I don't know what to do with you guys. Do we have to take a milk and cookie break?" We're all like 12 years old.

RRX: Did you keep the notebook?

DZ: Oh yeah.

RRX: Oh. I will make an extrapolation 'cause we all know that your dad kept pretty much everything. Do you document, record and keep your own set of archives? Is that a part of the pattern of what you do on a regular basis?

DZ: No, I don't really care about that stuff for my own purposes, really. I have that notebook, but generally speaking, I'm not a collector of



Photo provided.

things. I don't keep scrapbooks of things. I know some people are interested in having some kind of an archive of all that stuff, but I've already experienced it by living it. I don't need to go back and check it out again.

RRX: I'm gonna fast forward a little bit. Later in the '80s, into the '90s, you had an interesting acting career. You were an MTV VJ for a short time. You were in

Pretty in Pink, Running Man, and the TV show Normal Life. But the best of them, in my estimation I think probably interesting to our readers, is the fact that you indeed were Ajax Duckman, which was, I think, one of the great cult cartoons ever. How

Zappa is utilitarian when it comes to his gear, but he often uses a Gibson SG.

was that process for you? Was that an interesting project? You did it for about three years. What are your memories of it, and then secondarily, were there any takeaways from working on that?

DZ: It was a fun show. It was quirky animation. The company, Klasky Csupo, they were pretty

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popular at the time, during *Rugrats* and a few other shows. They had a style of animation that was popular at the time. Duckman was all angular and weird, and they got to go pretty twisted with a lot of the stuff in there. It operated on a few levels. It wasn't necessarily just a kids' show kind of thing, you know? But it was –

RRX: Well, neither were the Warner Brothers cartoons.

DZ: Yeah. But the people that were in the cast were interesting and fun. I remember Tim Curry being the guy that made me laugh the most. He gave a master lesson in how to deal with artistic integrity. For example, he wanted to read the material the way he thought it was the funniest. When the producers or director would ask him to change something, he would politely say, "Oh yes, of course." They would say, "Here's how we'd like to do it," and they'd give him a line reading. He'd say, "Oh, sure. Sure."

He would listen to them, and then he would do it only the way that he wanted to do it. Each time, they would say, "Okay, that was great. But now, can you try it like this?" and he'd say, "Absolutely." And he would do it only his way. He has a British accent, but when he does an American accent, he does a really obnoxious version of an American, and he would over-enunciate certain things.

In one case, he was mispronouncing the word NASA as NAWSA. So, they kept saying, "Okay, that's great. But can you say NASA instead of NAWSA?"

He said, "Absolutely." So, every time, he said NAWSA. They never got a single take where he said NASA, and that is the art of keeping your artistic integrity. Don't give them the option because they will use it. He kept going, and it was hilarious to watch because he did it so amazingly well.

RRX: That had to be fantastic. It had to be fantastic to watch, it really did.

DZ: Yep.

RRX: Around '96, you began a project called "What the Hell Was I Thinking?" The last reference that I can find to it was when you did really a wonderful post when Malcolm Young passed, which would have been 2017. Is that still an ongoing project? Are we going to see the fruits of it? Because I couldn't find

anything that said it's been released, I am guessing perhaps it's still in production?

DZ: It is still in production. The thing about it is, it's always been an idea of mine to make it the equivalent of an audio movie. The whole premise behind this thing is that it's a piece of music that constantly morphs and changes styles, but it also changes the environment that the music is in. Over the years, it's been on different formats. It's been on analog tape, it's been on various versions of digital tape and now, it's in computer form.

But there were a couple of technical problems that came up during the process of recording that at one point halted things. But really, the delay has been that I've been touring the last 15

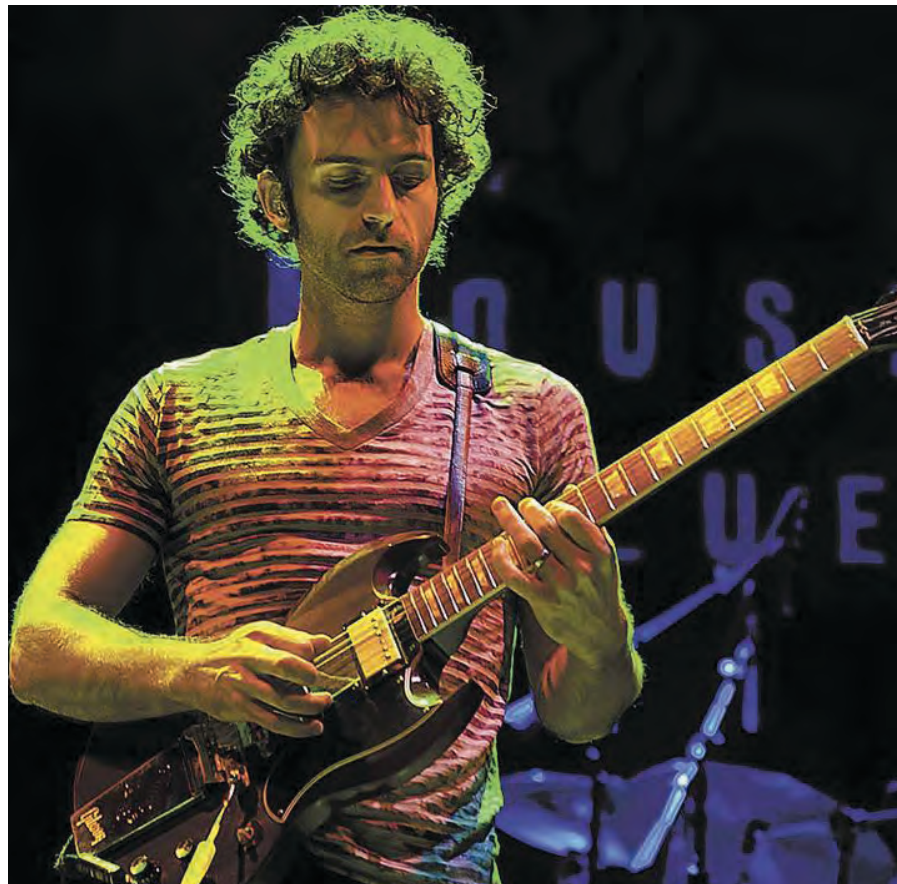
years, and I haven't had any time to finish it. One of the things that has renewed my interest in working on it again is that with the proliferation of the Atmos. There are great opportunities for mixing and delivering music in this format. This particular project will be cool to hear in surround sound, and have things moving around your head, and all that kind of stuff.

My goal is to finish it in the next year or two, but as an Atmos project. It's really an audio movie type of presentation. It'll be a multi-channel experience, a binaural audio movie.

RRX: I find intriguing that you mention binaural sound. Locally, a guy by the name of Todd Lopez, his firm is called ZBS Media, really interesting audio projects for radio. One of the things he has is one of the very few kunststoff recording heads. A head that was built with auditory input to the two ears, and literally you record in 3D around a mimicked head. I don't know if you've ever seen it, but it really is a fantastic thing.

DZ: Yeah, there's a few companies that have made those kinds of things that mimic the human hearing system. But now with Atmos, there's a way to deliver an experience like that in regular headphones. That's the thing that's going to be very interesting for the future is that in the very near future, you'll be able to be sitting on an airplane or sitting on the subject, listening with earbuds and hear full binaural 3D

Photo provided.



Dweezil Zappa doesn't see himself as a 'legacy' person.

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surround sound.

It will alter how people experience music because music has been so devalued, but this is one of the ways that music can have a resurgence and be revalued because any song from any era can be presented in this format, and it will heighten the experience of the music. Old records, new records, creating new recordings in that way. It's exciting and something that I look forward to. But yes, "What the Hell Was I Thinking" will eventually get finished, but I plan for it to be in that kind of format.

RRX: I can't wait for it to come out. I'd like to talk gear. I've got a bunch of guitars that I can't play worth a tinker's damn. My favorite is a Gibson 1980s reproduction of the 1960s Les Paul Junior Double Cut dual Humbuckers in TV yellow. You have a lot of guitars from which to choose. I know you play an SG, you've got a Roxy SG, you've got a Stratocaster. What's your favorite rig to play? What's the one when, whether you're on stage or whether you are rehearsing, that just makes you happy?

DZ: It all depends because I've always been the kind of player that whichever guitar I pick up I'm gonna play a different way because the guitar just feels different.

Sometimes you hit on certain combinations with amps or effects that work best with that particular guitar, and things get inspirational. But the biggest challenge for me is that we cover so much ground in recreating the

music that my dad made that I have to be cataloging all of these sounds that I've recreated as presets in my guitar rig. So, there's a few that become standard that I can use with any guitar.

But I'm always tinkering with stuff, so each guitar... I might play a few different ones on each tour. Sometimes I've done tours where I only play one guitar all night, sometimes I play three or four different guitars in a show. But it just depends on the material. I think I've kind of grown accustomed to playing an SG mostly just for comfort. It's the easiest guitar to play. But sometimes a Stratocaster will make a sound that you just can't get from anything else, and that's just what's needed. My dad would do that for...he would choose that for certain songs.

So, like I said, depending on material, I'll have to have a Stratocaster for certain things. But mostly, I get away with playing an SG most of the time. Except on this tour, the Hot Rats tour, I've been playing a Les Paul Gold Top that has p90 pickups in it, so it's a combination of stuff. But generally speaking, I don't get really too attached to anything 'cause I know that you could be out on tour and something can break or whatever, and you just got to find a way to keep going anyway.

RRX: Speaking of the current tour, Zappa Plays Zappa started, I guess, in 2006. My wife and I, we saw you on that first tour and we've seen a number of them since. There was something that struck us on that first tour:

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The Art of Being Good to Each Other

A brush with death can cause us all to take a second look at our lives. For T.J. Foster, he found a passion and a brand new groove in the looking glass..



Photo provided.

■ E.R.I.E. is a turn in the life of TJ Foster, and a decision everyone benefits from.

By Jetta Intelisano

I had the opportunity to catch up with TJ Foster, lead Singer/songwriter/guitarist for a band called E.R.I.E., to discuss the release of their first full length album, *Don't Wanna Live, Don't Wanna Die*.

If I had to describe the sound and feel of the album, I would say its indie-pop rock meets folk-rock, with a bit of an edge. The grittiness is only surpassed by the honesty of the songs. The album leads off with “Fire Away” the first single of the album. It

gets right into the story of front-man TJ Foster and his brush with death, you really can relate with his struggle and conviction to push on in the lyrics. There were a couple songs that resonated with me in particular, “With the Dogs” and “Life and/or Death”. They seemed reminiscent of the 90’s pop rock and bands of that era; they told great stories in their lyrics, while maintaining solid rock sounds. I would classify this as a must listen to album.

Here is What TJ Foster had to say about it:

RRX: I know this album stems from your own near-death experience and subsequent

hospital stay, can you expand a bit on how this influenced the album?

TJ: It’s a long story! To sum it up, the doctors had been monitoring my heart for a few weeks and one night, an incredibly kind EMS team showed up at my door at 3 AM because I’d passed out and the monitor alerted them my heart had stopped for fifteen seconds. I was scared shitless. I was in the hospital for three days and didn’t feel much like watching TV or reading magazines or whatever the hell it is you do when you’re unexpectedly in the hospital. So, in between visits from y amazing wife, I listened to music

and got lost in my thoughts. And I thought a lot about the cliché bullshit you’d expect, but mostly just my own mental hurdles: Why am I so often unhappy when I have a good life? I kind of kicked myself in the ass as hard as I could from a hospital bed and vowed to find a way to take more control of my own happiness. One of the things that was missing from my life for a long time was being in a rock band. I decided I wasn’t getting any younger and that I should just go write a record like that – I could always find the band later. Lo and behold, I did.

RRX: The feel of this album seems to have many musical styles, what would you say is the biggest influence in the feel of this album?

TJ: My friend/bass player and I have somewhat jokingly coined a genre called nostalgia-punk. Bands like The Menzingers, Spanish Love Songs, etc. - they write songs with a fast-and-loose spirit, but with lyrics and melodies that harken back to adolescence and simpler times. And I guess that’s kind of what I was going for. I’m a nostalgic dude at heart. So, the theme part was easy for me. When it came to the music, I asked myself what I would have done as a teenager, making music in a garage. And the best answer I could give myself was to not think so much about it. Being able to turn the

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voices off and the over-analytical side of my brain really helped me produce a record that focused on the emotion and the excitement instead of the technique.

RRX: How did you feel after the first single of the album, “Fire Away” was released? Was it an emotional experience?

TJ: It was a surprisingly emotional experience, yes. It was the first song I wrote for the record, if you don’t count “Gentleman Callers” – that one is a rehash of an acoustic demo I started back in 2016. “Fire Away” really sums up everything that happened to me and why I believe so much in the power of music. It’s healed me in so many ways. The story I set out to tell with this song convinced me to step outside my comfort zone and let loose a bit. I was thinking back to when Frightened Rabbit, one of my favorite bands, was gearing up to release their record Pedestrian Verse and Scott Hutchinson (RIP) teased that the fourth word on the entire album was “dickhead”. Sure enough, it was. And you know what? It sticks with you! When I sat down to write the lyrics to “Fire Away” I tried to emulate that mentality. What did I want to say? The previous year was a shit storm for me. Normally I’d find a way to pretty that up, but I decided that’s exactly how I needed to start the record and exactly how I wanted to introduce the project. When I finally released that story into the wild, it was like letting go of something I held so close to the chest for so long, which is a pretty emotional thing in general.

RRX: I really love the gritty feel to “With the Dogs” and the passion and emotion of “Life and/Or Death” - do you have a favorite song on the album?

TJ: Thank you, picking a favorite song is kind of like picking your favorite kid. Each one has a unique place in my heart, but, gun to my head, I’d probably have to pick “Life and/or Death”. It’s a song I would have written in my late teens/early twenties, but I’m so happy I didn’t because I didn’t have the life experience I needed to put the words together. I’ve written a lot of songs over the years about struggling with mental health and I’m recalling a review of one of my records that said, in so many words, I was asking a lot of questions without providing any answers. It wasn’t necessarily a negative analysis, but it did open my eyes a bit. It was something I wasn’t totally aware I was doing, but I took it to heart. I’d always wanted to close this record with a message of hope – something that people could listen to and find comfort in. I just didn’t know how. So, I asked myself what twentysomething me would want to hear from someone wiser and it just flowed out. You’re going to go through a lot in this life, but you’re also going to get through it. That’s what writing this song taught me.

RRX: If there is one thing for the fans take away from this album, what would it be?

TJ: Lately, I’ve been signing off all our sets with a simple request: Be good to each other. I think that’s probably what I hope people take away from this. Life is

fragile. We are all human beings, beautiful and flawed, somehow existing at the same time in the same space. Yet, we’re all unique. You don’t know what I’m going through, I don’t know what you’re going through, and so on. I want anyone who hears this record to be reminded of that fact, be good to one another and just as importantly, be good to yourself.

RRX: So, where does E.R.I.E. go from here? Are there any plans to take this experience on the road?

TJ: The goal from the beginning was always to take this thing to the stage. It’s where my mind is the freest and I’m of the mindset that if you find something that lifts the weight, grasp at it as much as you can. Also, the songs are begging for it. At this point

in our lives, I don’t think the four of us are sitting here plotting our first extensive tour that, unfortunately, would most likely leave us losing money and eating like we’re in college again. Ha-ha. We’re all in our 30s, all have kids, and so that’s obviously what we’re tied to first and foremost. If the right opportunity arose, I know we would jump on it. But for now, we’re just looking to play however we can regionally – festivals, basements, whatever – and have fun doing it. If we’re not leaving the stage each night feeling rejuvenated and smiling, then we’re missing the point. Beyond that, my band doesn’t know this, but I’ve got enough tunes demoed for LP2 already so eventually we’ll get around to those too I’m sure!

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The Spark that Ignites Us

The formation of dream-pop band Laveda proves to all who listen that evolution is more than just a theory.

By Joshua Reedy

Laveda are up and coming Albany stars who have crafted an addicting wave of dream-pop for those of you craving something noisier. Laveda is Ali Genevich (guitar/vocals) and Jake Brooks (guitar/vocals), but the duo has recruited Lemon of Choice leaders Joseph Taurone (drums) and Daniel Carr (bass) for their live performances. Laveda sat down to talk about their favorite shoegaze albums, their new album and their tour leading up to SXSW.

RRX: I always start with origins, so tell me: how did you guys decide to form Laveda?

JB: We met in high school. We both played in the school orchestra.

AG: We started to get to know each other because Jake asked me to sing backup vocals in his band at the time. So I was like “sure I’ll do it,” and we started playing in a band together.

RRX: Jake, can you tell me



■ Laveda is (l to r) Jake Brooks and Ali Genevich.

Photo provided.

about Lucy and some of your other past bands? Someone mentioned to me that you had many previous band names.

JB: Yeah, that was my band with Johnny.

AG: It was Better By Morning first by the way, and that’s when I joined, and then we all changed the band name to Lucy; that was my band name idea.

JB: We rebranded and went on tour and did all that stuff. It worked-ish, it was ok but that wasn’t really where Ali and I were in terms of writing. And then we started writing the Laveda stuff and decided we needed to do our own project. And that started to gain some traction because a guy from Pitchfork really like “Dream. Sleep.” and he premiered it at the Chicago music fest ran by Pitchfork which made us decide

to put all our energy into this.

RRX: That’s awesome, which studio was that?

JB: That was at Hook and Fade, down in Bushwick.

RRX: So where does Laveda come from, I heard it was one of your grandparents?

JB: Yeah, it was my grandma’s name. Everyone called her Suzy, but Laveda was her first name. She was from Kentucky and the way they pronounce it over there is (La-vee- dah) but we think (La-vey-dah) is kinda the right way.

RRX: It sounds cool, I didn’t realize it was a name until someone told me a little while ago.

RRX: Has Laveda heard any of your music?

JB: No, she passed away long before we started. She was very supportive of my cover band when I was 12. She would always

text me like, “You’re so talented, you’re gonna do great” and I was like, “You’ve never seen me perform before Grandma, thanks.”

RRX: So, you guys are signed to a label now, correct?

JB: Yes. It’s a very small team, basically us and the guy who owns the label; he does a lot of management stuff with us, very quick to respond to emails and calls.

AG: It’s really good, I like having a small team because you don’t have to worry about... I mean we haven’t really had a big team before...

JB: We had a big team with Lucy, or more band members.

AG: Not really, because we have like, three people working with us on social media and we have people working with us on

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radio promotion, which is cool. Everything is outsourced, so the label just kinda tells everyone who we are and we get to meet everybody either over conference calls or ya know... it's good though because everyone is more invested, everybody is excited about our music, or that's what they say (laughs). So it doesn't have a corporate feeling like, "Oh this is my job." People are doing it because they actually want to support us and get our music out there. It's honestly just been such a good experience.

RRX: One thing I wanted to talk about was the first time I saw you perform; it was at the WCDB in-studio performance.

JB: Wow, that was one of our first shows.

RRX: And back then it was just the two of you, so I wanted to talk about the difference between then and now, having a band of four.

JB: Very different. It's a totally different approach. We definitely like playing as a full band, especially at venues like this (the Byrdhouse) when it's high energy. When we play as a duo it's very chill. But when we play as a full band there's a lot more; we have a drum machine, we have playbacks, two guitars - it's loud, reverb, the whole thing. It's a lot, and sometimes it's a little difficult to pull off but our sound is all of that stuff.

AG: It's very representative of the recordings now. I'm excited for you to hear it, because you'll have heard both. A lot of people

haven't heard the duo set.

RRX: I thought you were great as a duo, but I'm excited to see what having two more band members adds to it.

AG: Working with Dan and Joe is great.

RRX: I was gonna ask what it's like working with them.

AG: They're very sweet and both so talented.

JB: Ali and I are both very serious people, and they're so funny. It definitely is really good for our mental health working with them.

RRX: So do you guys have any favorite venues or places to play in Albany?

AG: This spot (the Byrdhouse) is honestly really cool. I feel like so many venues are dying right now unfortunately.

JB: I feel like Albany is in a state right now with the bigger venues that are defaulting to booking the easiest things to book. I think that's a big disservice to the scene in general.

RRX: Next, I want to talk about what you guys have scheduled for the future. I know your new single is out tomorrow (2/28 "Ghost" is out now!) and what is the schedule for future singles?

AG: Our next single is "L" and that will be out March 20th (Check out "L"). And then another single that will be out two weeks after "L" called "Rager" and then the full album out April 24th.



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Candlebox (Cntd. from Page 21)

breaks was tough, but I've seen a lot of bands get stronger because of it. What're the pros and cons of change over the long term?

KM: The great thing about Candlebox is that we were never the sum of our parts. People always look at us and think of us as the whole. People love Candlebox; it's not 'I love Kevin Martin, I love Peter Klett, I love Marty, I love Scott Mercado.' I don't think anybody knew who we were as individuals. I don't think people knew, "Kevin Martin's the singer for Candlebox" or "Peter is the guitar player for Candlebox." There's maybe one percent of our audience; of the 7 million people worldwide that purchased a Candlebox record, I'd say one percent of those people knew who we were individually.

I think the nice thing about what has happened over the years is, you know, we got back together in '06, ... early on, touring from 1993-1999, you learn a lot about yourself, you know what you do and don't like about those people, which can make it difficult to be around them. In 2006, we had a go at it, Bardi (Martin) wanted to be an attorney, and he passed the bar, and he was like 'I want to make records, but I don't want to tour.' And it's not going to happen, that's not how it is. And that's what comes with those types of relationships.

The beauty's in changing up. And a lot of changes is you find those people who want to play and are willing to cut their teeth with you in every way, shape or

form. In rebuilding a band, the guys I have now, Dave Krusen's back now, he was there in '97 to 200, came back in 2010 or 2012. This is the slickest form of Candlebox I ever had, really a fine-tuned machine. We don't see each other for six months, go play a show and not miss a beat. And I don't think I could ever do that with Pete, Bardi, and Scott; there just too much history. And it's not all bad; I mean, there were some amazing times. But there was a point where we hated one another. And these guys I play with now; it's nothing but love. We absolutely fucking love each other.

RRX: You've toured extensively, and you tour with very diverse bands and performers, running the gamut from Metallica to Henry Rollins to Our Lady Peace. This is great for people who dig diverse music, maybe less so for purists. From your perspective, how does the crowd response differ when the bands are closer in genre versus farther apart?

KM: It's fifty-fifty. You know, I remember when we took the Flaming Lips up, Wayne, the singer, came up to me when we were in Rochester, NY and said, "Can you please go out and say something to the audience?" Because every night, in 1994, our fans were such assholes to them. And we had this band Mother Tongue open up on tour, fucking funky rock, and our audience kinda didn't know what to do with them. And then the Flaming Lips came out - now I love, and this was shortly after the

Jelly song was successful, in '92 or '93, and a lot of people didn't know that they were around since 1985. Marty and I were huge fans of their early stuff. We respected them and really like them. Our fans didn't. So I went out and said, "You know, we bring these bands that we enjoy and we want you to experience something different. If you came here to see the same thing over and over, you came for the wrong reason. If you came here to hear the record that you paid for, you came for the wrong reason. This is a live concert, and we're bringing things to you that we want you to experience. This is why we do this, it's what we love." So it's hard for bands to play for us, because we have those purists. But again, it's a fifty-fifty.

RRX: Okay. You have a new record coming out in May. I'm

going to shut right up and let you talk about it. What's the good word?

KM: It's a dark record for us. It's different. We really kind of pushed the envelope with this record, just in our approach to songwriting - there's a song on here that three- and-a-half minutes is an instrumental, bust it's like a big, epic instrumental. We really used a lot of our influence and inspirations on this record. All five of us were inspired by great artists and great songs and great bands. We wanted to create that influence and that inspiration in the songs. Every song has a hint of or a nod to someone musically that inspired me. It's not just, you know, homages to the rock artists you know. There's a lot of history on the record, from bands we all love and artists and musicians we all respect. We

■ Candlebox has always been recognized as the band, not the players.

Photo provided.



wanted to call the record Chaos Men, inspired by a series of drawings by an artist that I love, but that was a little too obvious. He's a silhouette artist that inspired the shit out of me. I wrote a song around it; I didn't think I could do that, but I did, and I used some of the Piles Tempest pieces as lyrics in the song. And I had never really done that before. So it's a record full of inspiration. There's also some great dark music called 'Dimlit Blues' which is basically about how I want to just destroy everything, I don't like in that I'm being forced into right now.

I really feel; you know, it's crazy to me to feel this way, but I have no control over my life. People making decisions for millions of people that, I don't know,

I feel like we're spiraling out of control. I should say that that's part of why I didn't want to make this record. It was a real battle for me. We finished the record in August, but I didn't do the vocals until January because I was just so conflicted, like "I don't want to sing this, to write these words." I didn't want to say what I was feeling. Just feels too final for me. You know it might be the last record I ever make. I mean, I'm really coming to a crossroads in my life where I just want to stop. So maybe this record is the way it is. And I hope people like it as much as we do. I think we all love this record a lot because it's so different.

RRX: This is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Any bands/labels you're

interested in, any Albany area stuff you like. Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

KM: I've got some great friends in the Hudson Valley. Albany's one of the fond memories we had at the end of the Rush tour. The 'end of tour' party was there, which used to be called the Omni Hotel (now the Crowne Plaza.) It has a kind of interesting driveway. I remember the corner of it used to be the bar, I sat there with Alex Lifeson and we drank till one in the morning. Such great memories of that city, just historically touring through there. It's been going on twenty-seven years now. Touring that area of New York, we've done very, very well there. I've got a friend who's a writer, Chris Miller, been friends going on fifteen

years, and every time we go to Poughkeepsie we go to a French restaurant there. It holds a warm spot in my heart, that area of New York. I love going there, and the Egg is one of those places that you play, you never forget it. I've played the small room acoustically, and I've played the large room electrically. I'm excited to come back, like, parking the bus in that Death Star looking area, the buildings are very Star Wars-esque, with the reflecting pools; it's interesting. And I always walk down (State) street to that old liquor store at the bottom and get a bottle of something. Its things that you take with you, and you never forget.



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The People That Shine Our Paths

Maybe he was the guy who passed you by on your way to work without a word, but Dino De Cherro was a character worth knowing.



Photo provided.

■ Those who knew Dino De Cherro had an opinion, and at least one story.

By Alan Gold

It was the summer of 1994. As I glance down the long city block in the West Hill section of Albany, a familiar figure can be

seen making his way up, cradling a large television set in his arms. “Why didn’t you park closer to the house?” I asked, but got no reply. My mother directed him to a spot in the back bedroom where he could finally rest the

heavy appliance. In addition to a try-before-you-buy arrangement, Dino offered free delivery. After realizing that the set had a blown speaker, we arranged to meet at a busy corner in Colonie so it could be returned. Looking out toward

Central Avenue, I turn back around and see Dino approaching from a distance. With hardly a word spoken, he awkwardly jostled the broken set and walked away. No car to be seen as he continues on and on, eventually behind a building somewhere and out of sight... gone.

My earliest remembrances of the guy who called himself Dino De Cherro harken back to the late 80’s. His column in Buzz Magazine entitled, *It’s Only Me -Dino*, was his literary outlet for a number of years. In addition to his immense admiration of Elvis, he also offered his peculiar views on topics such as self defense to survive, paranoia (mainly his own), and justifiable suicide. Dino’s taste in music seemed to be in stark contrast to the magazine’s - which catered primarily to the alternative scene. Calling songs lacking the proper melody “mu-SICK”, he didn’t seem shy about letting his views about it be known, even if they were quite possibly not very popular with some of the readership. A Schenectady PO Box address was included, and usually with an invitation to write. “This guy’s got one helluva thick skin, if he even exists” was the thought that crossed my mind on occasion.

It wasn’t until the early 90’s that I had my first encounter with Dino. Through a one-off column in the Singles Outreach Service newsletter, it was advertised

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that he'd be performing his song It's Only Me, at their upcoming dance, with Grand Central Station as the backing band. The evening did not go well, and due to apparent technical problems, Dino left the stage without finishing the song - not returning to the Friday night dances for quite some time. He was a fixture there, and seemed to be well-liked and known to most of the folks. Standing out in the crowd with his trademark pompadour, flashy jackets, and interesting rings, his presence became known. Unlike the rings that Elvis wore, which were 24 karat gold and diamond encrusted, Dino crafted his own. Some had large faux jewels, elephants standing on platforms, giant

spiders, or skulls. We would chat occasionally, and I mentioned how I remembered him in Buzz from years past. Somewhat to my surprise, he was very much like the person who wrote the column, but with thinner skin. His views, fears, and unorthodox positions on certain subjects were no sham. A very private person almost to the point of being secretive, it would be several years until I actually learned his age, or where he lived, though I did get to see what his car looked like in relatively short order.

We agreed to meet for coffee, and did so a number of times, usually at our favorite spot, Barnes & Noble. Our wide ranging discussions would dart from religion (he was an avowed atheist) to microorganisms. Getting

on each other's nerves was becoming more and more commonplace, so we gradually parted ways. We remained cordial, though sometimes years would pass before I saw him again. Here and there, Alive at 5, Larkfest, Hooters, or Blessings Tavern were a few of the spots where we would cross paths. Once, while working at a pizzeria in downtown Albany, Dino walked in with his female companion. After consuming a slice, he drew a customary picture on his paper plate, along with a note, telling me how much he liked the yummy pizza. I still have it. When he gave me a copy of his 45 single, a friendly note and picture were drawn on the sleeve. A few of the similarities between Dino and I - we both had an artistic bent, drank

lots of coffee, and put dates on everything.

Born Charles Edward Puglise Jr., I suspected almost from the start that Dino De Cherro was not his real name. He vehemently insisted that it was, even when it became obvious that I knew otherwise. My feeling, was that he took a title from an Elvis film called Charro, which morphed into Cherro, and then De Cherro. The first name may have been taken from Dean Martin, another act whom he admired, and who's actual name was Dino. That was my unproven theory anyway.

Eventually, and much to my surprise, Dino gave me his phone number. We would just chat about diverse topics, much as we did back in the coffeehouse days. This went on sporadically for a number of years. In 2017, I was invited to come and visit. Now this came as another shock, and I started to think that the shell he had built around himself was finally cracking. Instead of visiting a small, rent-subsidized studio apartment in the bowels of Schenectady, I learned that his abode was in a very residential neighborhood in North Colonie - a house where he lived almost his entire life, but now shared with his sister whom he referred to as Gi. A well-worn recliner sat in the corner of the living room, which also served as Dino's makeshift bed. Bingo, his father of 99 years, was remanded to a nursing home, an act that Dino felt had fractured the family. He died there about two years later, despite his son's futile efforts to return him home.

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Dweezil Zappa (Cntd. from Pg. 27)

you were very quiet,. You almost seemed reticent to say an awful lot. In the years that have passed you've opened up quite a bit. Can you provide us with a little insight into how that has progressed as you've gone from doing this when you were 36 to now at, dare I say, 50?

DZ: The whole point in the beginning was that I shouldn't have to say anything; the music should speak for itself. I presented the show in the way that my dad does, where everything segues. He didn't have much on-stage banter that was what you would call typical, where it's like hey, how's everybody doing kind of thing. There wasn't really any of that. There was maybe some interaction that was created for band interjection type of things. Or sometimes my dad would have a particular story that he would share. But it was all part of the musical arrangement and everything.

He wasn't really ever presenting a show that was a standard kind of thing that relied on 'the hey, thank you so much for being here'. He would say, "Thanks.

Hope you enjoyed the concert," and that's about all you'd get. So, in the early days, I really wasn't saying anything because, like I said, I wanted the music to just speak for itself.

RRX: There is a project from Alex Winter called Who the F*% is Frank Zappa? It's a documentary that is restoring much of Frank's vault. Is that anything that you have had any contact with? Is it anything you're interested in? Or is that part of the legacy that you're just leaving to itself?

DZ: I'm not involved in that project in any way.

RRX: You're here in Albany March 11th and you're doing Hot Rats Live plus more from '69. That album was dedicated to you back in 1969. First, is this a little more special perhaps than some of the other 50th anniversaries, like the Apostrophe tour, et cetera? Secondly, you have, I guess, what I would call a band of young Turks that are with you, some amazing players. Can you speak a little bit to the Hot Rats piece itself, and then about the band that you're touring with?

DZ: The point is that you need excellent musicians, and that was proven in my dad's bands over the years. It's rare that my dad would be able to keep a band together, a consistent line-up, for more than three or four years. At times, I've had versions of my band together for more than four or five years. But I've mixed it up over the years.

It was hard to keep a band together for longer than three years for my dad because often, people would try to use his band as a stepping stone. They thought, if I can be in this for a little while, then I can move on to my bigger career. It didn't always work out that way for people. Most of the time, in fact, it didn't.

RRX: There are a few notable exceptions.

DZ: Yeah, you have George Duke, Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, and Steve Vai and Adrian Belew as examples. There were at least 70 or 80 other musicians or more throughout the years in versions of my dad's bands.

In any case, the point is that the music is challenging and you need people that can play it. But it's tough to find the people that have the right professional attitude and are easy to work with. At the moment, the version of the band that I have is the one I enjoy working with the most and we can cover the most ground. The material on Hot Rats, is largely instrumental, which makes it an oddball choice for it being a superfan favorite 'cause typically,

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Tips for Surviving Cabin Fever

By Sassy Auburn

Sassy Says

As of today, I have been sequestered to my humble abode for over three months. No, I don't have COVID-19. I had double foot surgery in December which kept me off my feet completely for eight weeks. After that, I went back to work for ten days. But because my body was low on energy, I managed to pick up the flu. That has left me home to recuperate till my symptoms are gone. Okay. I'm fine with that. But because I have other health concerns ("pre-existing conditions"), my doctors have advised me to stay in until the world chaos calms down. I had been house bound for two months already... what's two plus more?

I'll be honest, I have more than enough to keep me busy. This gives me the perfect opportunity to build on my writing projects, start a YouTube and Facebook Live channel, and even build my base with my communities on social media. I can definitely use this down time to build on my future. Even if I only end up with 100 homemade Christmas tree stars, I'm still ahead of the game.

Being stuck inside is no big whoop to me, I've been in recovery mode many times before. But to many individuals it can cause them to go stir crazy. I got that way after my foot surgery. But

once I was able to start walking again, things balanced out. With all the virus talk going around, I'm sure there are some people who are choosing to stay inside. And that's perfectly fine. Thumbs up on that. But once you are inside... then what?

Your main objective, of course, is to keep yourself safe and well.

That's not my department—that's for you to figure out based on accurate news reports and your physician's orders. But what else can you do to keep yourself from losing your mind? How can you stay busy instead of counting flowers on the wall with the Statler Brothers? Here are a few things that I plan on doing while I hunker down:

Start out the day like it is any other day. Get up, get dressed, brush your teeth, take a shower, put your makeup on, do your hair. It will automatically give you the feeling of normalcy. It is still a regular day—you just

aren't going outside.

Crack a window or two or three. Get the stagnant air out of your humble abode and let the fresh air in. It doesn't matter what the weather is outside either. Not only will it lift your spirits, but it is just plain healthy.

Take a small walk outside. Cover your face if you want but get outside and take a leisurely stroll. If you can get out and into nature a bit, more power to you. Don't stay out too long, but long enough to get you a dose of sunshine and infuse some natural

Continued on Page 42



Continued from Page 41

Vitamin D from the rays.

Stay in contact with friends and family on social media, but don't LIVE on the internet. Check in with loved ones. Get your news so you know what is going on but don't be glued to your TV all day, 24/7. Be up to date on what is happening but don't get obsessive. Just stay informed.

Get cooking! No matter what is going on outside your doors, you are still going to need to eat. Search for recipes you can create with things you already have. Make a big pot of something that you can enjoy now as well as freeze for the future. It's also a good time to go through your cupboards and cabinets. Straighten things up and make a list of

things you might be low on for the future.

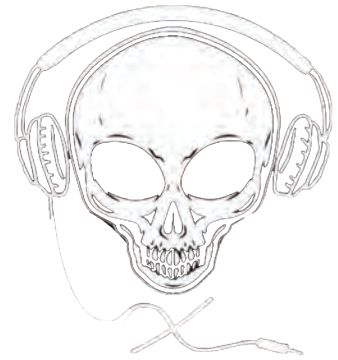
Find your inner crafter.

Have some old yarn, glue sticks, glitter or silk flowers laying around? Get creative. I will admit, I am a huge fan of making loop potholders when I'm sick, but I also enjoy making holiday ornaments, jewelry pieces and repurposed fashion items. Don't forget to get other bored family members involved too.

Release the artist in you.

Everyone—no matter what age—should have crayons, colored pencils or markers around for when they are sick or just stuck inside. Coloring has been known to reduce stress and help you feel calmer and mentally clearer. Turn on your favorite music and just create art.

Hopefully we all get through this without too much mental and physical exhaustion. Kevin Bacon's statement in *Animal House* keeps ringing in my head: "Remain calm, all is well. ALL. IS. WELL!" Take it day by day, everyone. Keep yourself safe, but also keep busy. It won't be long before the chaotic abnormal returns to the normal abnormal we've all come to know and love.



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Dweezil Zappa (Cntd. from Page 40)

people like songs that have lyrics more.

But, this one just has always stood out to people. We do our best to recreate every element of the record, from the production to obviously the notes and rhythms and stuff. But it's a challenge to recreate the landscape of it with the instrumentation that we have, so I'm using my guitar to make sounds that are from other instruments, like sometimes I'll have a kind of woodwind sound or a violin sound or something like that I will be incorporating into my guitar sound. That's just part of the process that we go through. We figure out who's gonna play what and how we are going to make the sounds work.

At the end of the day, it comes together, but it's a lot of work. But we enjoy it. The fans seem to really get into this Hot Rats full album presentation. Perhaps a bit more than other live albums. We've done Apostrophe, we've done Roxy & Elsewhere, we've done One Size Fits All. But I think there's just something about the Hot Rats album that gives a feeling, maybe more so than some of the other records. I'm not sure what it is, but there's definitely something that's so evocative of that particular era and for a lot of people, this is the first record they ever heard, sometimes the first record they ever bought in their whole life. So, this one just seems to mean

a little bit more than some of the other records.

RRX: Finally, as is my habit, I leave my last question as a bit of a free-for-all. I always ask this, so don't let your head explode too much. What is it you'd like to say to the world? When I say that, it could be about music, it could be about life, it could be about philosophy. It could be pretty much anything that you would like to tell the world that you hope they will think about.

DZ: I'm not much of a philosopher. I spend most of my time living in the moment. I'm not a legacy type of person. But as far as I can see, it's tough out there in the world. There's a lot of stuff going on. But I feel like it's harder

and harder to see the good in people when so many bad things are happening. Everybody's got to hang in there and be nicer to each other.

RRX: Thank you very much for taking time out. We're looking very much forward to seeing you on the 11th out here.

DZ: Sounds good. Appreciate it. Thanks.



Dino De Cerro (Cntd. from Page 39)

Dino's attitude had taken a bitter turn, and I knew that it was time to step away once again. It was my hope that over time, the issues concerning his father would blow over and then maybe things would go back to the way they were. Gi stayed in touch with me on a regular basis, and as I lived nearby, would sometimes drive her to the grocery store. She informed me that Dino was having various health issues, but refused to see a doctor. More months went by, but still he declined to do anything. One late afternoon, I dropped Gi off at the house; illuminating through the front picture window was the Patriots-Dolphins game. A close friend of theirs

was inside visiting; trying to convince Dino to get help. Two days later, on New Year's Eve, Gi called to inform me that she found her brother dead in his favorite chair.

It never came to mind that death was on the horizon. I always assumed that eventually, common sense would override his obstinance. It is so true, that sometimes we only realize someone's worth after we've lost them forever. While at times Dino did irritate me greatly, there were other times when we had some marvelous conversations - something that would never happen again.

As I was reminiscing recently, it struck me that there was something that he had given to

me several years ago and buried somewhere in my desk. I dug it out. It was a note written on a neatly folded up napkin. It was handed to me while sitting at the bar in Hooters, and after a long bout with bronchitis. Dated March 9, 2012, it read:

"Al, Good to see you. Glad

you're feeling better! Dino" Along with it, a neatly folded up five dollar bill.

Why he decided to lay me a five spot, who knows? But it's something that I'll always hang on to.



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Observations and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

By Jeff Spaulding

Welcome back, and for the basics of your reading pleasure, I have not only washed my hands, but my entire body, in Lava soap, the strongest there is according to Cranky Old Guys globally, and I wrapped myself completely in moist towelettes.

Notice I said nothing about wearing clothes under the towelettes. And for THAT, I apologize for the mental picture...

And that's the topic for this month.

Again, I had planned on having a lighter topic this time.

But the News Geek and Pop Culture Icon in me knew we had to do SOMETHING about coronavirus.

I sit here on the afternoon of Sunday, March 15th, putting words to paper (so to speak).

My phone continues to go off non-stop with alerts, warnings, and an unlimited supply of WTF rants.

And even though this article is for the April issue, we have to assume:

(A) The World is safe and this is a "Flashback" look at what happened.

(B) The "crisis" continues to grow.

(C) The Zombie Apocalypse has occurred and it's just The Walkers reading my words...

Whatever happens, the events of (at least) the last month or

so, and the response around the globe, is something truly unforgettable.

As a Cranky Old Guy, I have lived through a lot of truly horrible events, where the world stopped, for at least a moment.

The killing of JFK. The killing of RFK. The killing of MLK.

The killing of John Lennon. The Shuttle.

September 11, 2001

This, however, seems to have created more of a panic mode than even that one day. As I write this, I hear the State of Ohio is shutting down bars and restaurants.

Has anyone asked what they will do with the massage parlors? The other day I was shopping in Walmart (don't judge me). A guy walked in and washed his hands for twenty seconds (and yes, I counted), went to the urinal, whipped it out, then went BACK to wash his hands...again for twenty seconds.

Did he think it was going to fall off?

Clearly, he won't be at a massage parlor for the foreseeable future... Anyone remember the AIDS epidemic?

In THAT case, at THAT time, after we found out it wasn't just "Gay Cancer," we had a similar fear.

But absolutely NOTHING compares to the stocking up, or some would call it hoarding, of food and materials.

Okay, I get the cleaning

supplies, that makes sense. But toilet paper?

Do people think they will get coronavirus by an invasion of the anus if we don't have enough Charmin?

Then there's water.

The other day while shopping, I can't tell you how many people were walking around with carts filled with 4 or more containers of water, at least 24 to a container.

People, coronavirus is not like a gator from the swamps coming into your house next time you want a cool refreshing drink.

Thank God there was SOME relief in a local grocery store down the street from me. There was an ample supply of cuts of steak of all sizes.

Yes, America if not the world could come crumbling down in an instant...but some lonely horny fool can still exercise the freedom of what may be the very last "Steak & BJ Day."

Before the angry letters come in, yes, I take coronavirus VERY seriously.

Experts say the most

vulnerable are the elderly, which most people say starts at age 65.

I'm age 64... Do the math.

Of course, I don't want to get it.

Of course, I don't want family, friends or (most) co-workers to get it.

To paraphrase Curly Howard of the Three Stooges, 'I'm too young, and too beautiful, (looks in the mirror) well I'm too young.

Again, it may take a miracle, but MAYBE by the time this "goes to press," the nightmare will be over.

I am not that optimistic.

Please take care of not just yourself, but all others within your circle.

And finally, no matter what, if there is ever a time to NOT talk politics and point fingers, this is it.

Coronavirus cares not if you are an R, a D or an I. Thanks for listening.

Be hearing you...hopefully!



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