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Drummer for the Mahavishnu Orchestra discusses legendary beginnings.

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Jerry Lee Lewis's sister shows that amazing talent runs in the family.

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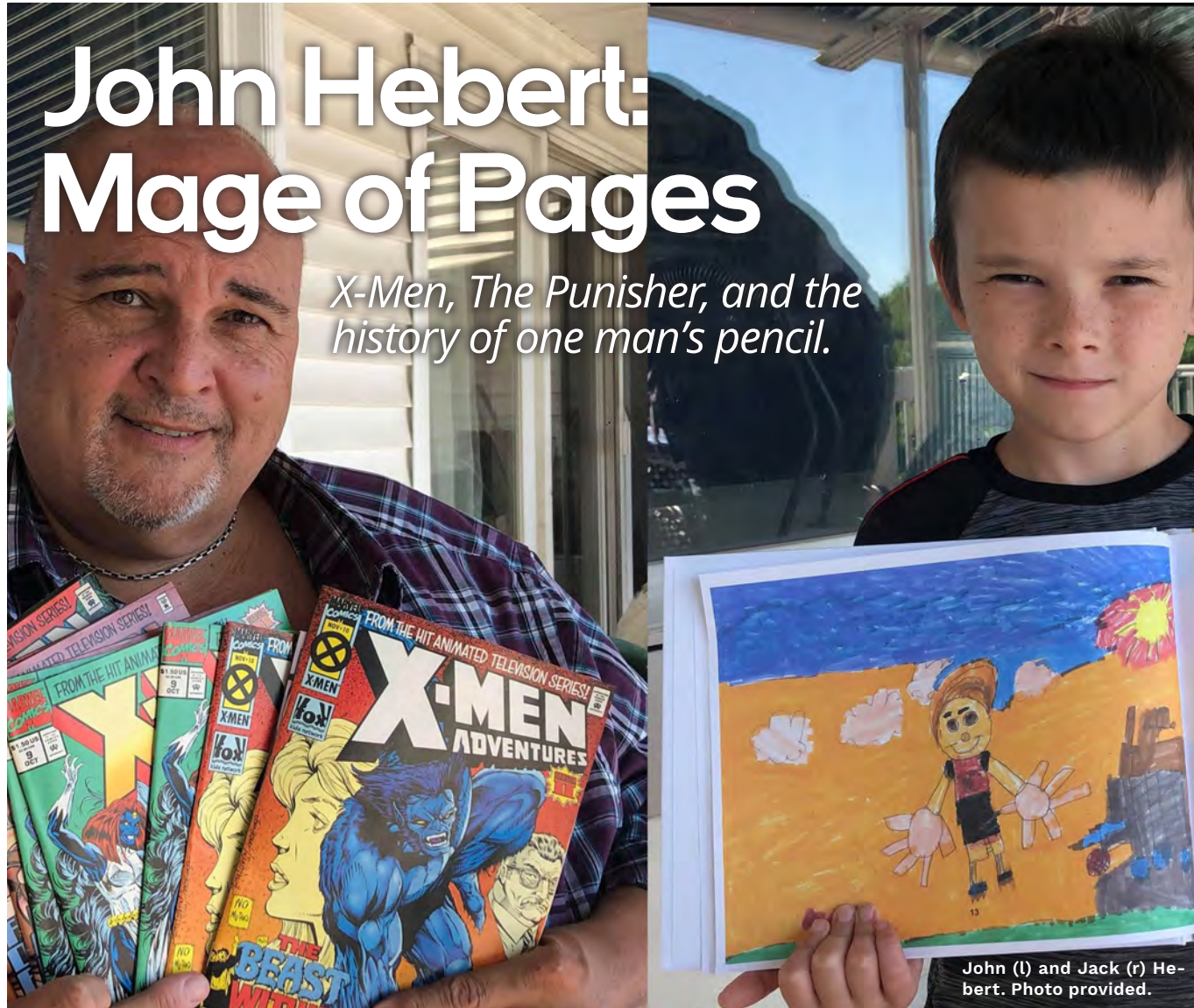
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John Hebert: Mage of Pages

X-Men, The Punisher, and the history of one man's pencil.

John (l) and Jack (r) Hebert. Photo provided.

BY PHIL SAWYER

Superman, Batman, Captain America, The Punisher, X-Men. All names that used to be known only to the comic book and movie geeks, now have become mainstream, even an eighty-year-old woman could tell you who Batman is. I recently sat down with Marvel comic book artist; John Hebert. We discussed his career and early start in the comic book industry during the 1980s.

RRX: So, John, when did you become interested in being a comic book artist, or artist in general?

JH: As a kid I lost my father when I was very young, and was raised by my mother and grandmother, and Channel 6 started broadcasting the strange show, Batman! And I was hooked! My favorite episode was a cliffhanger and I sweated for 24 hours! How would they get out of it?

I actually drew it on my mother's parlor wall...

RRX: So, what was your first exposure to the comic book world?

JH: When I was about 15 I was featured in a newspaper article about some of my artwork in the Troy Record and I always had an interest in drawing, and of course as a young kid, my mother

introduced me to comic books. It was a way of helping me read through high school, and I was involved in plays, painting the scenery signs and I even designed the yearbook cover for my graduating class. I was always kind of the go-to guy for when somebody needed something drawn.

RRX: So, did you have any type of formal training?

JH: Drawing on my mother's wall when I was seven. After high school, I attended Junior College of Albany (JCA) and met this amazing teacher, who saw my artwork and gave me a lot of

Continued on Page 5...



BILLY COBHAM

Arguably the greatest fusion drummer out there, Billy Cobham remains humble and focused.

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LINDA GAIL LEWIS

Sister of Jerry Lee Lewis and sensational piano player comes to the region.

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Published by Imperial Broadcasting
in conjunction with
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Illustration by John Hebert

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instructions! As I progressed, she was able to introduce me to an artist who was active at the time with Marvel. Mike Zeck, who was working on Captain America and The Punisher. I received some great advice from him, and I graduated from JCA. My first professional artwork was introduced to me by a friend at a comic book store called Fantaco. It was one of the first comic book stores in the region, opening in 1979. My friend Rodger Green, who worked there, asked if I was still drawing, and I showed him my portfolio. His intern showed it to Tom Skulan who was publishing black and white comics. This was a time when color was king, so black and white was a daring venture. At the time, I called potted and drew an inch comic, called Sold Out. It ran for two issues and a mini-series, which featured at the time, and predicted the future of the comic book industry. So,

before my 25th birthday, I was already a published author and artist, so it was really kind of a fun adventure! That's how it started!

RRX: So, break down how a comic book is made.

JH: Well, you start with a script. Then you plot out the art as you want it to appear. Then you draw it and send it to an inker who darkens and retraces what you've drawn. Then you find a letterer who fills in the dialogue and a colorist who adds the appropriate colors which help bring the drawing to life. And of course, an editor has to approve the overall look and feel of the book. When it's time to press, presto! You get your comic book. It's generally done in the matter of two months ahead of its release, so, very fast pace.

RRX: Tell me about the comics you drew.

JH: The companies? Well, Comico, Marvel, Fantaco and so, so many others. I also drew a Dungeons and

Dragons style comic for a few years for Steve Sullivan, called Twilight Empire. Which was great at the time! I drew, let's see... The Punisher, X-Men Adventures, Deathlock, Newstraila, Johnny Quest, and I was the first artist to adapt Ann Rice, who authored The Mummy books, but is also famous for the Vampire Lestat, adapted into a film with Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt, Interview with a Vampire, so that was exciting!

RRX: Who are your inspirations in the industry? Writers? Artists?

JH: Well, I worked with Mike Zeck, who at the time, was drawing Captain America and The Punisher. He was a major star in the industry and an amazing artist! And let's see...worked on Stan Lee's last published work as an artist, and of course, the legendary William Shatner on one of his books, so that was a fun project.


RRX: Do you have any advice for budding artists and writers?

JH: School! Draw and draw! If

you're a writer, write! Keep practicing and don't give up!

RRX: By this time, a young, struggling artist named Jack Hebert came up to me and showed me his first published art and story! Jack is one of three of John's children, and he is a seven-year-old twin to Brett. They're younger brothers to their sister Ari. I teased John Hebert about his son being seven and already published! Good job, Jack! I believe he will follow in his dad's long career in the business.

For artwork by original comic items and commission art work, contact John on Facebook at John Hebert. John was born and raised in the Troy, New York area and graduated from Troy High in 1983. He's married to Jody Hebert and they have three great kids! Follow John on Facebook as he posts comic convention appearances!



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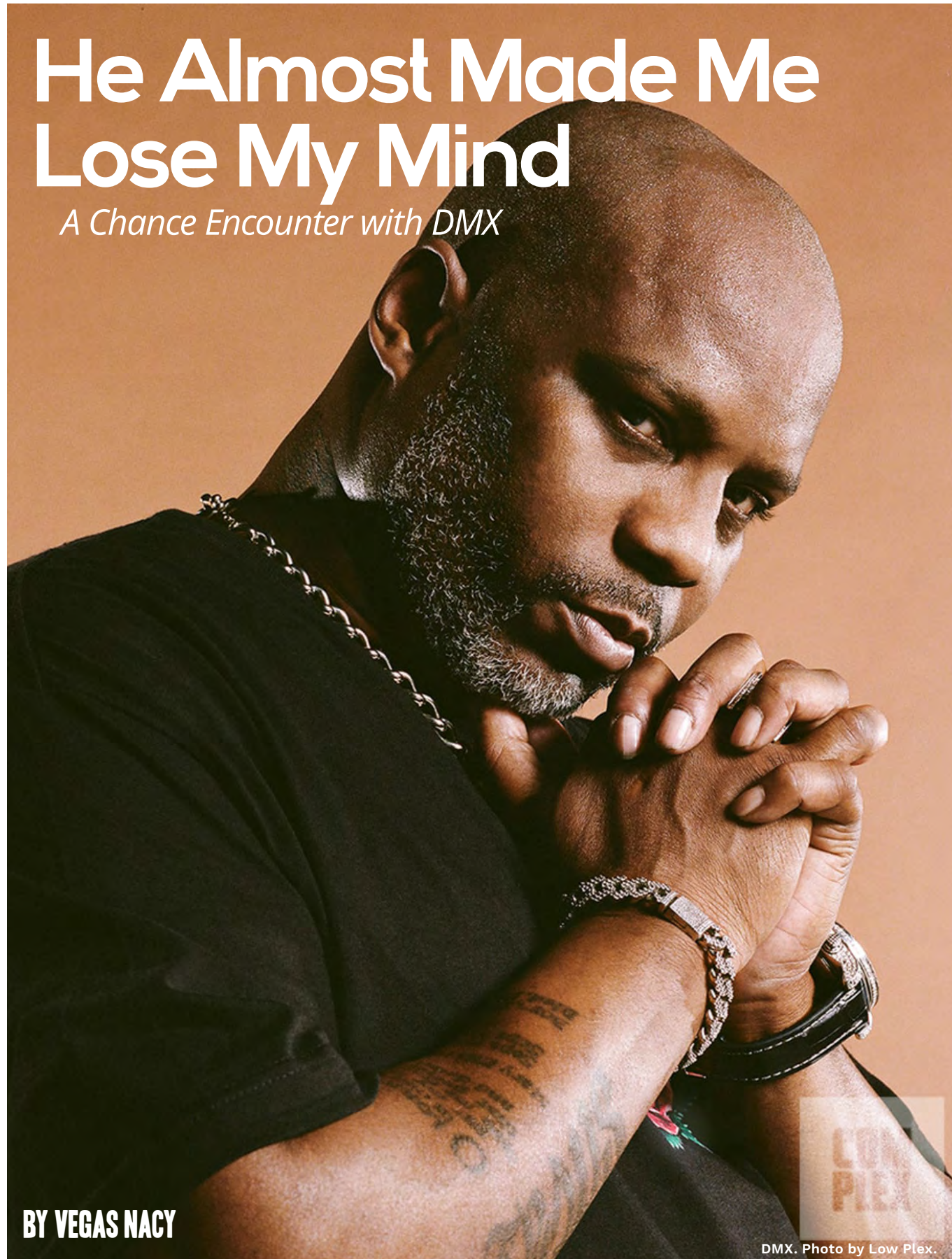
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He Almost Made Me Lose My Mind

A Chance Encounter with DMX



BY VEGAS NACY

DMX. Photo by Low Plex.

I had a great experience with the late great DMX I wanted to share it because unfortunately with all the drugs etc. in his later years he kinda got a bad “rap” See what I did there?

Anyhoo, it was back in the early 2000’s. He was supposed to play the Family Values Tour at the Pepsi Arena. He cancelled. I had worked security for the show. Afterwards I met up with a couple friends and we stopped into DiCarlos.

It was dead in there but we got a drink and sat at a table in the back. “Let’s just have one and get out of here” said one of my friends. We were having some good conversation and all of a sudden, the front doors opened up with a squad of people. We didn’t think much of it until they sat down behind us. I was facing them and I realized it was DMX and his crew. I told my friends and they looked over, taken by surprise. About 15 minutes later I see one of the biggest guys I’ve ever seen.

He came up to the table and said “Hey, DMX is over there and he wants to speak with you.” I said, “Me?” So, I got up and I was thinking to myself “Damn, I hope he isn’t mistaking for someone that’s done him wrong, because I won’t be going home tonight”.

I approached the table (he asked his crew to hang out in the back). “Hey, have a seat” he says. “I’m DMX”. “Oh, I know who you are!” He says, “My friends call me X, so please, call me X. Called you over because I’ve been watching you and I really dig your style, are you a musician by chance?” I immediately pulled out a CD, which I always had on me in those days. He said “That’s what’s up!”

He went on to tell me that he was starting a new label, Bloodline Records, and if I could rap, I was the new Eminem. He asked me if I wanted to get out of there and talk business. I looked at my friends down the way and asked if they could come along. By now some of the crew, his bodyguards, were

back and one of them said “We only have room for you”.

Quite honestly I wanted them to come along because it was me, DMX and six or seven giants whom I’ve never met. Finally, X said “Well make some room for his friends so we can talk business”. It was one of those moments where you actually feel your dreams coming to fruition.

As we left everyone was trying to get a pic or an autograph and he politely said

“This is the guy you should be getting a pic with, he’s the next big thing.”

I knew most everyone in there and they were all like ‘what the hell is going on?’ As soon as we got into their Mercedes van out came the weed. They had massive blunts rolled and X took a huge hit and passed it to me, I said “I don’t smoke but of course I have to smoke with you. A few hits and I was on the moon.

We drove around, talking music and what he was looking for and what I was looking to do. We agreed that we had the same goal in mind, and we should get into the studio ASAP and mix our genres together and see what

worked.

They brought us back to DiCarlos parking lot. He gave me his personal number, his managers number and his cousin’s number who worked for him in the studio. He was the nicest guy; the whole crew was great and I let two or three weeks go by because I didn’t want to seem desperate (don’t do this move it’s a stupid move). Finally, I called his cousin figuring I would start there.

“Oh yeah, Vegas from Albany, what’s up?”

“X told me to call to see if we could work together so I’m just checking in”.

“Oh, ok word, X is out of town right now and has a lot going on so I will relay the message and he will get back to you when he can.”

We hung up and I instantly felt that I made a mistake not calling earlier. Three days later the headline is “DMX is arrested after pretending to be a cop, crashing through some gates” or something to that effect, and from that point on he never really recovered, and I never got to speak to him again. It was a great night though and X almost made me lose my mind I’m sure of it!

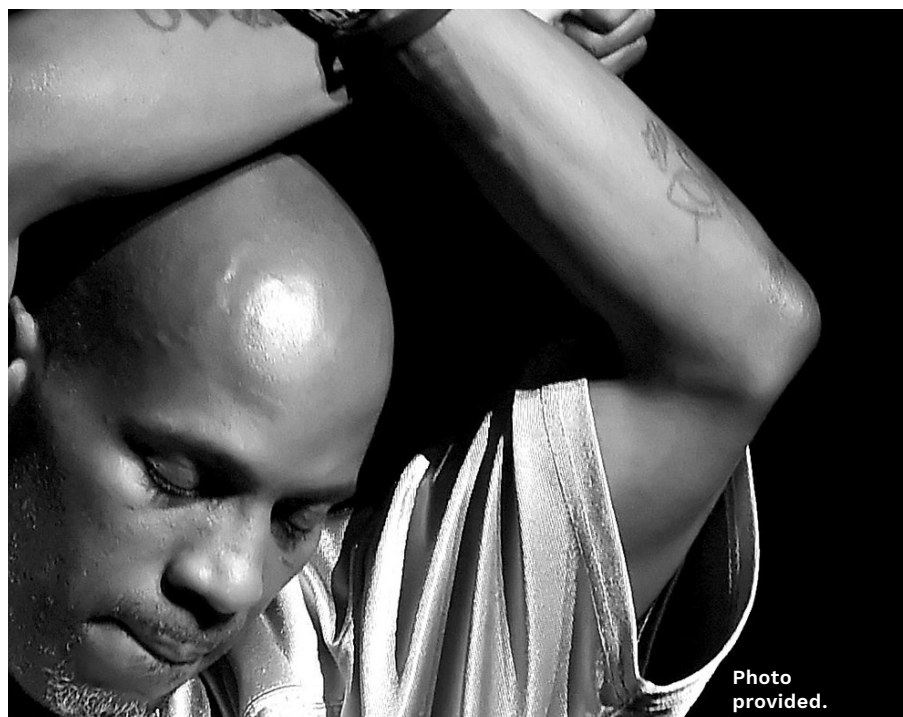


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Reflecting on the Radio Years

Mike the Enforcer chews the fat about life on the FM airwaves.

BY ROB SMITTIX

Mike the Enforcer. Photo provided.

What an honor to speak with a local radio alumni today. Most known for his catch phrase “Ya bastard!” Ladies and gents, I bring you Mike the Enforcer!

RRX: Interviews suck so let’s have a conversation. I don’t really like doing interviews at all.

Mike: I would always ask the questions I thought the crowd would ask but put a little bit of a twist on it. Like what have you been doing since you got out of radio? Do you miss it? Of course, I miss it. Where else can you actually go to work and enjoy what you do?

RRX: I’m so happy to be working with RadioRadioX, I haven’t done ra-

dio in so long. I missed the perks.

Mike: The perks were great but for me it was always listening to new music that was coming out. New music is so slow these days, you hardly hear about it anymore. When new music came out back then everybody was on top of it. So that was the perk for me getting a chance to hear music come out before anybody else did. You know? Taking trips and stuff like that, yeah, they are memories. I went to Vegas with The Edge, I went to Wreslemania with 104.9. That was a great trip, it was insane. They put us up in Orlando, gave us tickets to the Hall of Fame induction ceremony the year Rick Flair went in.

Tickets to Universal Studios... aw man they hooked us up! They closed the restaurant down the night before the ceremony and the only people in there were WWE superstars and the media, which was us. I sat at a table with Mean Gene Okerlund, Jimmy the Mouth from the South, The Great Khali and Mark Henry. I got to meet them all, so those were perks but again if you do your job right that’s what you should get.

RRX: When I think of perks, it was the food I missed most. I had so many food sponsors, I ate for free every day!

Mike: When I worked at The Edge there was a pizza shop downstairs

Mrozek would always go down and get it. “You got to get the pie, guy.”

RRX: Oh my God I worked with Mrozek at that location before you did. He would eat that pizza so much. I didn’t think their pizza was that good at all but it was convenient. You could throw on 3 songs, go grab a slice and come back before you had to talk.

Mike: (Laughs) Exactly!

RRX: When did you get started with radio?

Mike: I want to say it was ’98 or ’99, it was pre-911 because I was on the air for that. I started with PYX doing traffic for the Wolf and then they sold out to another company. That’s when

Reverend Dave called me, I went and met with him and he said he wanted me to do a feature called the “Cage Match.” He gave me the premise and said here you go. He said take two songs play them back to back and take phone calls, that’s all he said, I built it into Who are you? Where are you? What’s your vote? I said alright I’ll do that but I want to bring back mandatory Metallica. He said “yeah no problem”, 11 o’clock every night we’ll do three Metallica songs. I had free rein over that from the get go.

RRX: I started playing Metallica on the classic rock station I worked at and our interim program director shut it down. He said the station should operate like McDonald’s and we should give them a number two from the menu. His example was to play John Mellencamp’s, “Pink Houses” and “Jack and Diane”. The station folded soon after and now all classic rock stations play Metallica. What a putz.

Mike: Don’t get me started, people around here don’t get it. The biggest thing people want is local. You got a killer boss because Artie gets it. He gets that variety is the spice of life.

RRX: So, it was PYX that you started at?

Mike: Started at PYX, went to the Edge, then I was at Channel 103.1, after that I went to 104.9, then I went and did traffic for Magic the AM station. They had me doing traffic. I’ll never forget it, the morning Randy Macho Man Savage died they had me do the traffic in his voice. Oh my God it was so funny.

RRX: That’s a great resume you’ve got there.

Mike: But like you said earlier, radio today is definitely not the way it was back then. I did the beer nights at first, schlepped all the equipment around, I paid my dues doing the internship. So, to get where I got to at the end, I was humbled, I was surprised

how many people were actually listening. I would hear about it but never paid attention to the Arbitron ratings or anything like that. My pat on the back was when people called me, “oh we’re having a great time, we’re drinking, that was a great song you played.” That to me was my accolade, that’s all I wanted.

RRX: Oh absolutely. Now, real quick, just to switch gears you’re obviously a drummer, most recently known for playing with Murderer’s Row.

Mike: I grew up with Bobby Riley, I’ve known him since pre-kindergarten. I found out their drummer left and Bobby called me up he’s like hey you want to come over? So, I go over he gets me behind the kit, I play an AC/DC song, he goes “You want to jam with us?” I said sure. It was a good time. Murderer’s Row, I love those guys. We’re Burgh boys for life.

RRX: Have you put drumming on the backburner for a bit?

Mike: It’s funny you should say that. A friend of mine just contacted me to put some drum tracks down. What the hell, I’ll get behind the kit for a while. I put all this money into it, I might as well get behind and play it.

RRX: I’m so glad I’m not a drummer it’s so expensive. Have you ever thought about getting a sponsorship?

Mike: I ain’t that good man. My moniker is I’m the area’s most okay-est drummer. There’re guys out there that’ll blow my doors off, I know that and I respect them for that. I just like to do it and have fun, I’ve been doing it since I was a kid, ’85 or ’86 something like that. I can’t get enough of it. I love it! It’s probably the best therapy according to my vascular people, they say it’s very good for my arteries because I’m moving all of my limbs at the same time. It’s going to keep me alive.

RRX: Well I appreciate your time.

Mike: Keep up the good work and keep fighting, ya bastard!



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When we watch the latest blockbuster, we can become hypnotized with special effects, dazzled by A-list names and our minds soaked in rave reviews, but when we break those movies down, what else did they give us beyond a couple of hours of mind candy? *Ourselves* is a movie that asks a deep question, one that will likely never be fully answered in our lifetime; does depravity come from our genes or what the people in our life do with those genes? Tara Rule, artist, actress, and filmmaker, invites us to find out. I sit with Tara and we discuss designer pop filters.

RRX: Every film, hell, every story, has a higher concept. A question that it seeks to answer, or a statement it is making. This has been true since Aesop's fables, or the bible. And I say that because your upcoming film,

Ourselves, asks the question of our behavior being driven by birth, or by upbringing. Why did you all pick this question?

TR: This film is based on true events - events that we don't have a lot of answers as to why, or even who, committed the events portrayed in the film. *Ourselves* is a psychological thriller. Half of the film is based on real life events - and by based, I mean we made sure to show everything that played out in exactly as it did. The other half is fictional, but poses the questions that you mentioned above. One of our writers and producers, Rotisha Geter, grew up across the street from a serial killer who to this day has never been caught. Rotisha witnessed things that no child/teenager should have to witness. Summers were spent home alone while her mother worked. The

only other house on the street belonged to the serial killer who eventually realized Rotisha was on to him. He did everything in his power to torment her, gaslight her and make her look mentally ill. He even gained rapport with local law enforcement. Eventually, the truth came out when the bodies were discovered. There are other elements to the film that incorporate formative events in my life. When we combined our collective traumas into one story, it left us wondering what kind of person we could have become had we been more like the serial killer across the street. The unfortunate reality is, sometimes we become the monster who hurt us in the first place.

RRX: This movie is based on true events, namely, a serial killer that lived across the street from actress Rotisha Geter, who is still on the run. How

much were you able to obfuscate the details in light of him not being behind bars, or was that even a factor? If he saw the movie and was asked his opinion of his character, what do you think he would say?

TR: This story is unique in that we didn't have to change much of anything, because at the end of the day there isn't much information available regarding the serial killer. Once the dozen or so bodies were found inside his residence, it was revealed that he was living under a fake name. He had a stolen identity. The house he lived in was owned by the State of North Carolina as a foreclosure, and he was squatting for a number of years. He did not have a vehicle. He had no family. He never had visitors other than the escorts that entered his home and never left. I would imagine that if he saw the

film, he would feel the way many people who lack empathy do - powerful. I'm sure it would boost his ego a great deal to see that not only did he ruin the lives of many, but that now the world will watch in terror as they see what he has done. That's a notion I've personally struggled with - putting the spotlight on someone so evil. However, the story is an important one to tell. I'm confident that the things that will be brought to light throughout the film (lack of investigation/media coverage of violent crimes against black, LGBTQ, sex workers) will make a difference for the better in a way that will outweigh whatever little high this man would get for being in the spotlight.

RRX: Films are tough. I write a book, it costs me a new keyboard (when I splurge) and about thirty-bucks for paper if I print it out. But dirt-floor rotgut for a movie is twenty-thousand dollars. And that's a few people using their smartphones. Clearly, nobody has that

kind of scratch lying around, do they? How do you all raise it?

TR: It isn't easy. The hardest part is finding the funding. One thing I didn't realize until I got into production myself was that producing is a full-time job. You're responsible for dozens of people, coordinating locations, equipment, hair, makeup, accommodations, food, and that's just scratching the surface. Rotisha and I began our career in the entertainment industry in front of the camera. We have all also worked behind the camera - both are a lot of work. Even auditions are a full-time job. If you're producing, you are making no money, and you're lucky if you stay out of debt once it's all said and done. Because we know how much work goes into every piece of the puzzle, we aren't comfortable paying people the bare minimum. Many productions pay you for your time spent on set, but fail to consider the hours and hours of rehearsals, auditions, travel,

time off from work, etc. That being said, all of us are literally willing to go into the red to ensure that the talented people we have are compensated fully for their hard work and dedication to the project. So, long story short, crowd-funding. Normally we would use grants, but 99% of the grants for independent filmmakers are still on hiatus due to the pandemic. The only way we can raise money is through our Indiegogo. We like to ensure that those who donate are getting something out of it - everything from a signed poster, to IMDb credits, to actually having a star appearance in the film. It's challenging, but with everyone's help we can make this happen.

RRX: We're just coming off the pandemic, and things are looking up. I know that one of my favorite shows (Supernatural) had to pause its final season, which was nearly finished, but couldn't go into post. How did you work around the pandemic to get it

together? Were people quarantining and being tested?

TR: Initially, we were going to begin filming sometime in 2022, but with the vaccine and numbers decreasing, we felt safe to start in September. Since the pandemic, almost all auditions happen online via self-taped auditions and Zoom/Skype calls, so we were able to cast with ease. We are, however, being extraordinarily cautious (testing, vaccines for those who are willing and able). I'm grateful that our cast and crew are so understanding of my medical condition. Unfortunately, I cannot get the vaccine as it causes severe and usually fatal complications for someone like me. On the flip side, due to the chemotherapy, I am very immunocompromised. I've been so touched at how understanding everyone has been in order to ensure not only my safety, but the safety of others as well.

Continued on Page 46...



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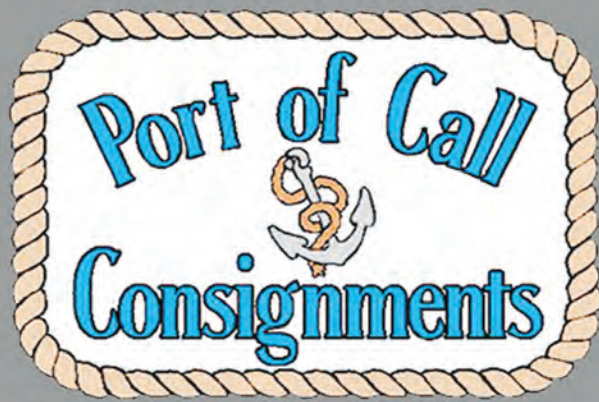
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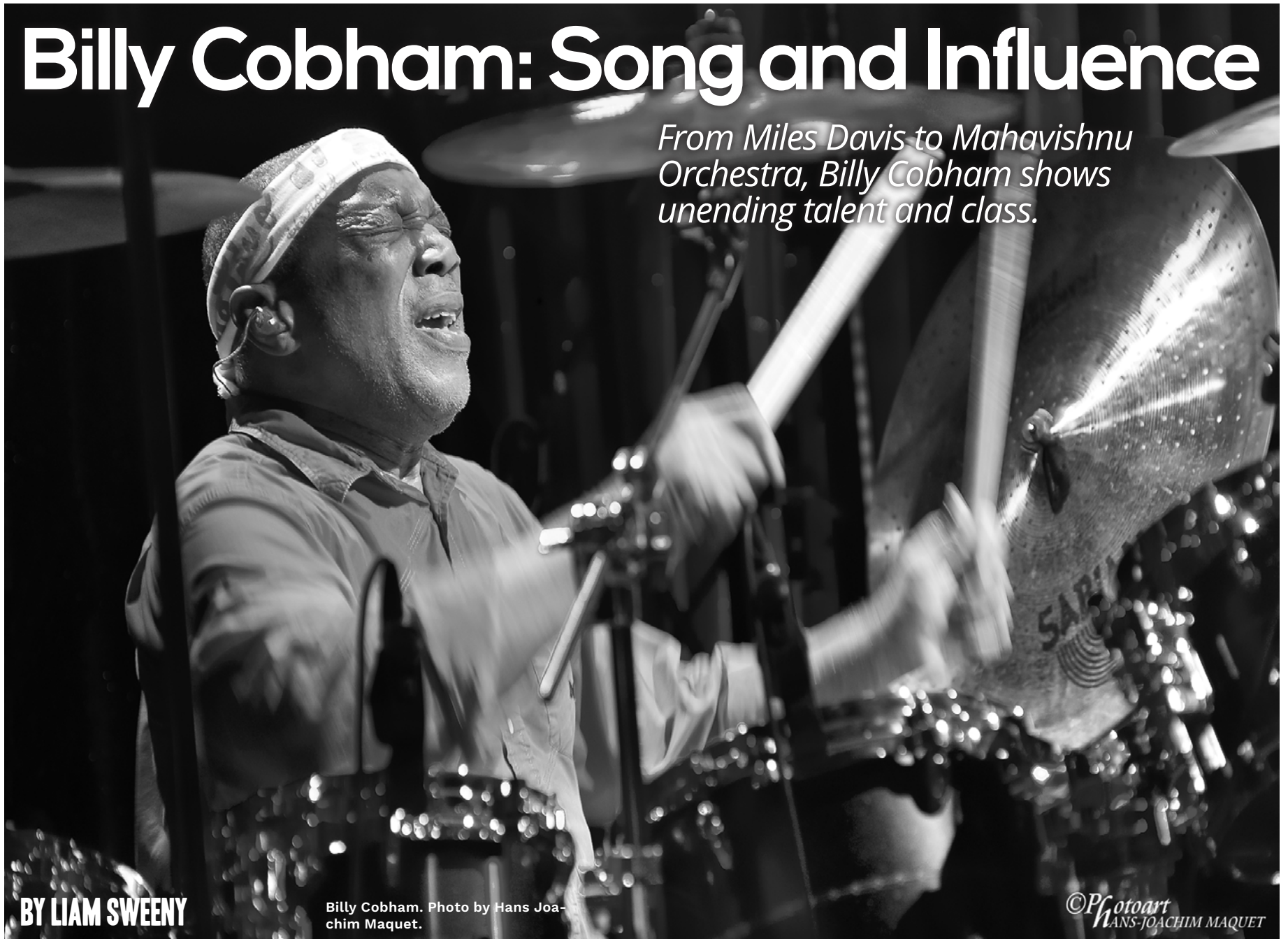
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Billy Cobham: Song and Influence

From Miles Davis to Mahavishnu Orchestra, Billy Cobham shows unending talent and class.



BY LIAM SWEENEY

Billy Cobham. Photo by Hans Joachim Maquet.

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 HANS-JOACHIM MAQUET

Everybody has a favorite band. Well, if you like music enough, you have a favorite band. You may have worn their record or tape or CD to death, if you're of an age to have had those things. My band was Mahavishnu Orchestra (MO), a jazz fusion band of amazing talent that lasted just a handful of years. They were addictive if you were into their sound, a true supergroup.

Bill Cobham was the drummer for

Mahavishnu Orchestra. He'd also worked with Miles Davis, and spearheaded his own band, Spectrum. He's taught drums online, and continues to tour the world.

I sit down with Bill and we discuss sonic decoupage.

RRX: I was so influenced by Mahavishnu Orchestra, when I discovered you all, I didn't listen to anything else for a whole year. How did Mahavishnu start? Was it formal, in the sense of

everyone was recruited, or were you all musical friends that got together one night and saw that you had something?

BC: The MO was conceived by John McLaughlin. He invited me to help him play a few themes that he was working on. Since I was not working much I had the time to commit to assisting him. A few days after we were getting comfortable working on these tunes, John brought in Jerry Goldman to join us.

This collaboration led the three of us to Electric Lady Land studios for the recording of *My Goals Beyond*. We recorded with bassist Charlie Hayden. A few days later Jan Hammer and Rick Laird joined us. All in all, I think it took the band about two weeks to finally be "road worthy".

RRX: You were one of the founding members of a truly groundbreaking jazz fusion group. You all were first among equals. I could ask you what it

was like to work with John McLaughlin, or just as easily ask John McLaughlin what it was like to work with Bill Cobham. You also worked with Miles Davis. Were you ever able to just take that all in?

BC: Working with other artists is a learning process. So, one of the main elements that I found to be important is that I make those in my immediate social sphere of influence feel comfortable being around me. The way that I did that was to be punctual, prepared to play, be quiet yet secure in my actions. It worked for me.

RRX: Three years and done. I had read that Mahavishnu imploded due to just getting so big, so fast. I bet you have a better explanation. Do you all, or any part of you, still talk? Do you think supergroups can really last a long time when they're continuing to get better with every album, like Mahavishnu (yes, my opinion.)

BC: I think there might still be a Moody Blues. I might speak with John on a rare occasion.... The rest even less.

RRX: I asked Mahavishnu questions because the band changed my life, but you were playing with Miles

Davis before that, and you went on to found Spectrum after that. Did it ever dawn on you that what you were doing meant more than just the sounds you were coming out with? Did you feel the history you were creating?

BC: No, I was just focused upon the task at hand. I believe that the ego takes a back seat to everything else that goes into playing the music.

RRX: In 2001, you were in the 25 Most Influential Drummers by Drummer magazine. And so, I guess this goes to the previous question. But in particular, you've influenced

drummers by the way you set up your kit, and the use of Chinese cymbals. Are there any things you do, kit-wise, that most people, most drummers, don't really know about?

BC: I will add an additional snare or more in certain performance situations. I might use a field snare drum for certain effects. I will incorporate a Cajun with a special bass drum pedal. As well. There's more, of course..... but, I leave them.



Photo provided.



DOG DAYS

of SUMMER

Linda Gail Lewis

A natural talent comes to the region from a talented family.

BY ED CONWAY

Linda Gail Lewis. Photo by Ed Conway.

Coming up on August 14th, Linda Gail Lewis will be stopping by to the Hangar on the Hudson in Troy, NY as part of her northeast tour, backed by The Lustre Kings. If you aren't familiar with Linda, she is the sister of Jerry Lee Lewis. While her brother is considered to be rock n roll royalty, Linda, is a darned good piano player in her own right. With her ever present smile, and boogie woogie style piano, she commands the stage and

let's everyone else in on her party. I've had the pleasure to see her a couple of times, once, warming up for her brother, and another time, backed by Los Straitjackets, and was blown away both times to see how much talent runs in that family.

While many in NY's Capital District may view The Lustre Kings as a local band, Mark Gamsjager and company are highly respected throughout the world. They have played many of the

major music festivals and have toured extensively, throughout the US and Europe. They have backed such acts as Marti Brom and the Queen of Rockabilly herself, Wanda Jackson.

For those that don't know, Jerry Lee suffered a stroke back in February 2019. Therefore, my first question, when Linda and I sat down and had a chat over Facebook, of course had to do with her brother, despite the fact that it was an interview regarding her

upcoming tour and visit, so please forgive me.

RRX: First is more of a personal question, how's your brother doing?

LGL: He's doing really well and almost completely recovered from the major hemorrhagic stroke he had.

RRX: Great to hear!! So, was piano your first instrument and do you play any others

LGL: I have always played chords to accompany myself on piano. I played



Photo by Ed Conway.

when writing songs. In 1988 I started my solo career and had problems getting a piano player who could play Lewis style. I decided to do it myself. I'd never played rock n roll and boogie woogie before so I had to practice a lot. I was blessed to be able to remember what my brother showed me back in the 60's and 70's. It took a few weeks of playing a lot at home and also on gigs, but I figured it out. I only play one instrument.

RRX: You sound like you've played your whole life. What was your first performance?

LGL: Bridgeport Connecticut. I flew up from Memphis to play with the Barrelhouse Boys. I assumed they had a piano player. They only had a piano and expected me to play so I did. It wasn't my best but we got through the night.

That was 1988

RRX: That's great! What have you been doing during the pandemic to

keep busy?

LGL: I've played some gigs here in Texas and I was in Memphis last year a few times. Played a gig on my birthday July 18 2020, played in Meridian, Mississippi when they inducted Jerry into the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Hall of Fame, then I played at Jerry's birthday celebration at the Lewis Ranch September 29. I wrote and recorded a song "Oh Pandemic". Did duets with Lawson Vallery from Norway, Ezra Lee from Australia, Paul - Romney Angel from the UK, and Dale Watson

RRX: Sounds busy, but I'm sure you're looking forward to your north-east tour, besides Troy, where are you playing?

August 13 – The Sportsman Tavern, Buffalo, NY

August 15 – Sennebec Farm, Union, ME (Private Event)

August 17 – Lenny's, Westbrook, ME

August 18 – Askew, Providence, RI

August 19 – Café Nine, New Haven, CT

August 20 – The Saint, Asbury Park, NJ

August 21 – Buckley's, Valley Stream, NY

RRX: One last question, the last time I saw you was at Viva (actually I've seen you there twice, once warming up for your brother), but the last time was with Eddie Angel and Los Straitjackets along with your daughter and son in law, will Annie and Danny be joining you on this tour as well?

LGL: I love my kids and we play together a lot. I would have loved having them with me, but It would've been a long way for them to travel and they have a lot of gigs here in Texas. but hopefully they can join us next time.

I'm so excited about the tour. I've always wanted to play with The Lustre Kings. They backed my mentor Wanda Jackson.

RRX: The Lustre Kings are local favorites and The Hangar on the Hudson, in Troy, is one of our favorite venues, Brian Gilchrist takes good care of everyone. Eddie Angel is also from the area, and he loves the Hangar as well.

Thank you very much for your time, and I can't wait to see you perform again.

LGL: Thank you so much Ed. I'm looking forward to seeing you

RRX: Is there anything else you would like to add?

LGL: I'd like to say that I'm very excited about my tour with The Lustre Kings. I'm happy to have new places to play. I'm happy to do more shows in my own country.

It's wonderful that we can enjoy music and gigs again. The pandemic was really hard for all of us.

RRX: Very nice, thanks again!

LGL: I would like to thank Fernando Pinto for booking the tour.

Local Rocker Gives Back

BY LIAM SWEENEY

RRX: You're putting on a Low Dough Show at the Cohoes Music Hall on September 11th, with Mike and the Monsters, Johnny Rabb's Big Band, and the Tichy Boys. That's quite a lineup. What can a concert goer expect when they get there?

JM: Well, it is the twenty-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. It's been a very crazy year for us all. I am just glad to see the world opening up again and live music coming back. I wanted to put together a show with some great local musician friends and commemorate Americans staying strong through it all. I put together a great low dough show for my hometown. I am stoked to

play this historic venue and I hope people will come support it. We are donating part of the proceeds to The Cohoes Firemen's Donation fund, which goes to help those in need. I think it's the least we can do to share music, have people come out and enjoy it in a beautiful theater for a good cause. There is something for everyone at this show, from the great Johnny Rabb and the Tichy Boys, to my old friend Mike and The Monsters crushing some 80's rock and metal to whatever it is I do. It is sure to be a Rocking Low Dough Rock and Roll show and I would really love to see all my friends come support this one as it means a lot to me.

RRX: 9/11 is a date etched in our memory as a day when we learned tragedy. Is this show in remembrance?

If so, is there anything besides the lineup that people should know about it?

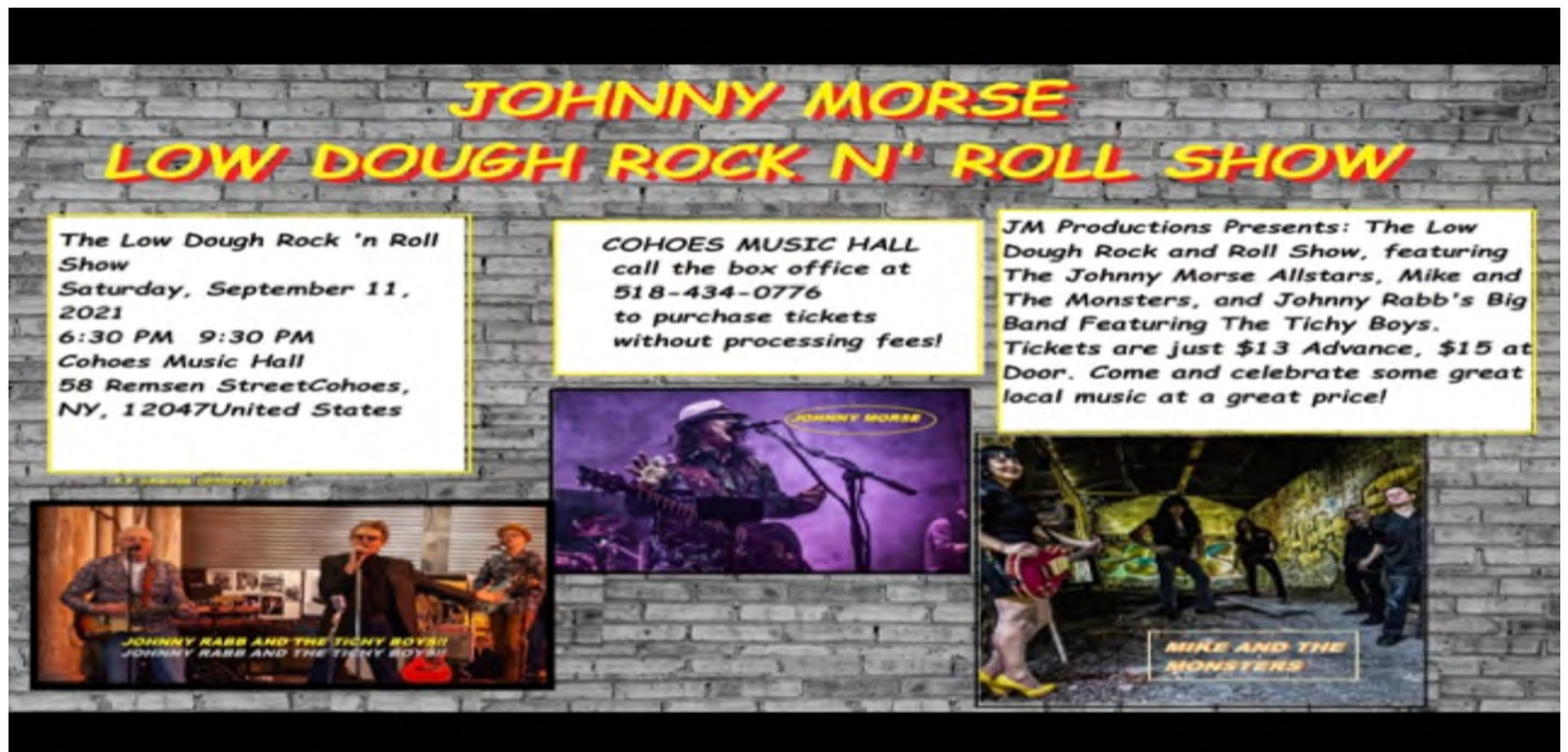
JM: I guess I would say the thing people should know is how powerful music can be and how if we come together we really can make a difference through music. I also have my mate Johnny Clifford coming to do some Tom Petty songs with me. If that's not American, what is? Who doesn't like Tom Petty? Another great loss. It is a reminder to never forget.

RRX: We've seen a resurgence of the music scene this year. This is one of a number of bigger shows that's on the calendar. With money always in tight supply, what's unique about the Low Dough Show?

JM: Well what's unique is that I put this show together, and I know times

are tight for everyone and the floodgates are open now, but you will never see three local bands of this caliber for thirteen bucks in advance, especially at a venue like the Cohoes Music Hall, hence the Low Dough Rock and Roll Show. I just wanna give back a bit through music and give the people a good show for their buck. So, I ask everyone to come support and let's rock the Cohoes Music Hall.

For those looking for tickets, call the box office now and reserve this one, may sell out. Don't sleep on this. I wanna thank all my friends for all the support over the years and to Liam and Artie for all they do for local music.



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Bailey Bennett

The New Paltz scene, an intimate basement venue, and power of noise and underrepresented genres.



Bailey Bennett. Photo provided.

BY JOSHUA REEDY

Bailey Bennett is the exceedingly kind, humble and eloquent mastermind behind several mostly unnamed solo experimental noise projects. On top of using twisted tape loops to create churning, stunning walls of texture with which to accompany himself; Bennett also lives in and operates an intimate basement venue in New Paltz alongside several similarly talented roommates. After attending my very first post-COVID basement show, Bailey and I sat down for my first in-person interview since the lockdown to discuss his style of performance, the New Paltz scene and why noise music is deserving of a higher level of recognition.

RRX: I want to start things by just asking you, because this is a totally new scene for me, to tell me a bit about the New Paltz scene having spent time here in college. I know that's a big question.

BB: I feel like if I were to give one comparison band, that people would know, to the New Paltz scene it would be King Gizzard (and the Lizard Wizard). A lot of bands here have that sort of jazz influence, a lot of people here get it just from being music students who study with the jazz professors. You get a lot of kids who love the heavy-metal and/or psych-rock scene. I think a band like Kablamo! who played last tonight is a really solid example of the quintessential New Paltz band. The noise scene, which is what I am a part of, is sort of non-representative; my whole goal is to promote that and the weird and not shown artists.

RRX: So, like, outsider music that

normally isn't accepted.

BB: Yeah, and I live with six other people but my goal with the venue is to uplift bands that don't really get to play here. And we can really push the boundaries on what is unrepresented in New Paltz. I think it's important to the health of the scene, to have a well-rounded lineup of bands. Yes, it's important to have those psych-rock bands but it's also important to have that fucking weirdo, prurient-type noise artist included.

RRX: Right. And before I get into what you do as an artist, I want to touch on the venue here itself. I want you to describe what living in a house with a bunch of other musicians and running a venue out of the basement means to you.

BB: It's really liberating. We've just utilized this power. And I threw together this bill, without much of a democratic process (laughs), because On Pink was looking for any shows they could play on July 12th and I just said "You guys wanna play my house on the 14th?" and they were like, "Yeah!" I threw together most of the acts, but it really became a collaborative effort and to me it's really intoxicating to be able to have, not only really talented musicians in our space giving their all sweating their ass off in this basement, but also having people want to be there and experience it all is amazing. I love music and performers, so being able to act as the intersection of where music becomes performance and visual art that people can engage with is great.

RRX: And it's no doubt we were all sweating our asses off tonight (laughs).

But I'd say having this kind of performance go on in a basement definitely brings a new layer of intimacy and I'm sure the bands would agree.

BB: Yeah! And I think that that intimacy that's strived for is owed to a lot of the pre-existing house venues here in New Paltz; Nacho House is one that comes to mind. Nacho House had a great festival my freshman year here, but they've had a really great four to five years of band performance and audience attendance that was really impressive for a small intimate basement. Seeing that, I really strive for that level of community which I don't think can really exist without the proprietors of the scene despite the differences in taste and music.

RRX: And that's a good segue because I was going to ask you about other venues around here and what kind of community there is here. In Albany, it can be very limiting at times with different sides of the scene feeling opposed to each other and trying to bridge that gap can be tough. I feel there may be a tighter sense of community here just due to the sheer amount of art being pumped out by the college scene.

BB: Yeah that's a really good topic. Post-COVID has created a new canvas that all of these artists now have to fill; that may be a pretentious way to frame it (laughs) but I think there was an emotion that was felt tonight. Very few of us have had this opportunity to sweat together in a basement; I think that's what makes the cornerstone of the community. I remember being here as a freshman and having venues like Crazy Dan or Nacho House which I mentioned, or the Groove Grove who got a ton of great bands. Laveda has played Groove Grove, which blew me away. There are so many venues that I couldn't name them all.

RRX: And this is the first live show I've been to since COVID and first in person interview I've done since

COVID as well. We can have a little bit of a collective sigh of relief for this very recent return to normalcy.

BB: It really is like a blessing. I feel so lucky that this could happen at my house with my friends and people that I know and care about. With all of us being vaccinated and some of the fears of COVID being sort of subdued, we were able to have this really excellent experience, and to be the epicenter of that is phenomenal.

RRX: So now I'd like to get into what you do with art personally. To start things broad, I'd like you to try and summarize what your goal with music.

BB: First of all, I can't exist without Swans (laughs).

RRX: They are a great reference point!

BB: A lot of people will pick up on that. Public Castration Is a Good Idea is one of my favorite records.

RRX: He's not just saying that folks, it's the name of an album!

BB: Right (laughs). That record; it was incredible for me to hear as a long-time Swans fan. The first time I heard it I just felt that they had perfected this industrial style that had already been minimized to a point where it's almost solely percussion. And they use rock instruments to create that sound. What I do couldn't exist without Swans and their live performance. I've never been in a band, it's always been my dream to but I can only sort of do my solo stuff right now. I have a tascam 464, which is a great piece of machinery that I'm so lucky to have; to me, that is my bandmate. I will play something, and I'll stop the recording and I'll just be like "What is this?"

RRX: You must be like, "Nice work tascam! I love what you did with that last part!"

BB: (laughs) Yeah, it really just either cuts a high end or boosts a low end



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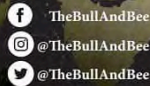
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King Sized Bishop

A prolific band from L.A. that you don't want to let pass you by.



BY JW KONDOR

King Sized Bishop. Photo provided.

RRX: Who are the members of King Sized Bishop and what role do each of you play in the band?

Jacob Shneiderman - Guitar + Vox

Bram Silbert - Drums

Ezra Hecht - Bass + Vox

RRX: How did King Sized Bishop (KSB) and it's sound come about?

KSB: The founding members of

King Sized Bishop, Jacob Shneiderman and Bram Silbert, met while attending a local rock music camp in their hometown of Los Angeles. After bonding over classic rock bands like Led Zeppelin, The Who and Pink Floyd, they became friends and started King Sized Bishop.

Jacob Shneiderman and Bram

Silbert recorded their first album, Jamu (2015), when they were fifteen years old. They shared guitar and bass playing responsibilities, while Bram played drums and recorded and mixed all of the songs. Jamu features jams in the likes of The Allman Brothers and The Grateful Dead, while also drawing inspiration from 70s progressive rock

bands like Yes, ELP, and King Crimson.

After recording Jamu, King Sized Bishop played live with a variety of bass players, but none of them stayed in the group. Bram's sister, Stella Silbert, introduced the group to their current bass player, Ezra Hecht. Ezra's ear for more unusual styles and

passion for music transformed the band's sound greatly. During the band's rehearsals with him, they would spend hours showing each other new music that they discovered on the internet, spawning a culture centered around curiosity and creativity.

Since 2016, King Sized Bishop has recorded three singles - "Mondo" (2016), "The North Face" (2017), and "Plastic Tongue" (2017) - and three albums - Why Be You, When You Could Be New? (2019), MAJA (2019), and Lifetime Supply (2021).

The three mentioned singles are all longer than seven minutes. They have a heavier sound that is heavily inspired by Black Sabbath's earlier albums, which remain a huge inspiration for KSB. While still paying homage to their original inspirations, they started to incorporate more distorted guitar sounds, thicker instrumentations, and jazz inspired chord progressions to create a modern, yet eclectic

progressive rock/ fusion sound.

Why Be You, When You Could Be New? features two longer tracks by Shneiderman that are similar to the three singles ("Overcast" and "Lathe of Heaven") as well as two shorter tracks by Silbert. MAJA (released in tandem with Why Be You, When You Could Be New?) is an album of completely improvised jams, similar to King Crimson's improvisations on their live albums.

King Sized Bishop's most recent release, Lifetime Supply, was written and recorded during the COVID pandemic. Half of the recording was done in person, while the other half was done remotely. Lifetime Supply features less jamming than KSB's previous releases, but boasts a richer and more "radio friendly" production style. Shneiderman and Silbert were inspired by the clean, yet sophisticated styles of post/math rock and Midwest emo bands such as Tortoise, Slint,

Sunny Day Real Estate, and Sleepy Dog.

King Sized Bishop plans to record another album in the near future, with a more modern sound than their previous releases. Jacob Shneiderman, Bram Silbert, and Ezra Hecht wish to keep expanding their sound through discovering and sharing new music.

RRX: I've been telling others that King Sized Bishop is a cross between early Genesis and the Doors. Am I on the right track?

KSB: I could see how you could make that connection. We have that mix of prog rock and pop styles that Genesis has, and the more classic rock/ jam sound of the Doors. We have always thought of ourselves as more of a cross between Black Sabbath and the Allman Brothers. We have been drawing more and more inspiration from modern rock bands like Tortoise and Slint.

RRX: King Sized Bishop is

currently on rotation at RadioRadio X, but how else can the readers find King Sized Bishop?

KSB: To purchase and listen to our most recent album, Lifetime Supply:

<https://kingsizedbishop.bandcamp.com/album/lifetime-supply-deluxe-edition>

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New Apps for Musicians

Local business has created apps to help musicians hone their skills.

BY ART FREDETTE

Jeff Moore is co-owner of Peak Music Studios in Latham where he has been teaching guitar, voice and songwriting since 2017. Currently, he is knee-deep in developing two new mobile singing applications, My Singing Coach and Singers Checkup. RadioRadioX got the back story on this local business' foray into the intersection between music and technology.

RRX: So, what are these apps all about?

JM: The bottom line is that they help make people better singers! Both apps focus on fundamental singing skills and put them together into building blocks that allow singers to make rapid progress—My Singing Coach is for individual singers who don't have a coach. Singers Checkup is for choir directors, music teachers, and bands.

The core for both apps is technology applied to the voice. We've got some high-level software we use in our studio, but the average student doesn't

want to spend \$500 on a license for pitch matching. So, you've got expensive voice software programs for professionals on one hand or vanity apps that are inaccurate in pitch detection with few features on the other. The choice was either a lot of expensive complexity or a worthless app. We thought we could do better. And we aren't really competing with most of these apps. A lot of them are vanity apps that have some pitch matching, but are mostly karaoke and other frills that are fun, but really don't help improve your singing on the whole.

RRX: Why the Capital District, are you natives?

JM: No, both myself and my business and life partner, Crystal, came here over two decades ago and decided to stay. We really like the local music and art scene. I've heard people comment the Capital District really doesn't have much going on in terms of music, and that's total crap. I've been to LA,

Nashville, New York, and I prefer it here. We've got a lot of talented musicians and vocalists in our area and we think it's time for a music renaissance—that's how we got into business here in the first place. We were approached by the late Mike Jacobsen who was the former Economic Development head in the City of Cohoes to open a music school there. He had a vision of a real rocking musical scene locally, and we were well on the way. But then

COVID interrupted everyone's plans. When we were locked in the house last year, we decided to use our resources to take our studio experience to people through technology to make it more affordable and accessible. On the whole, it turned us in the right direction.

RRX: You're a musician and music teacher. Developing mobile apps seem like something that would be outside of your comfort zone.

JM: Ordinarily that would be true, but in addition to my studies at Berklee College of Music, I've got a Master's degree in software engineering, so this was a great fit. I've been a student of the voice since I was five years old. Speech problems as a kid really kept me focused on my voice and eventually on other people's voices.

I'm passionate about helping people sing better. After participating in just about every music program out there, I got a solid understanding of what works and what doesn't. I've learned that most people can sing better than they think. It's a learned physical skill-set coupled with practical application. I wanted to develop a program that allowed people the artistic license to sing, and we've got one that really works. I love telling people, "Yes, you can sing!" From there it's a personal choice to put in the work.

RRX: You're right. Capitaland does have a kick ass music scene. So how

exactly do these apps help people sing better?

JM: Over the years, I developed a singing assessment that we give our prospective vocalists in person in our studio, and the response has been really positive. Using specialized software and my own expertise, I can accurately check their ability to match pitch, and give them their current singing range, expected range, and other metrics that we track. We also test them on their aural skills and rhythm, and this helps us determine a course of study. So, we thought, wouldn't it be cool to make an app that could do this?

At this point, software is mature enough and the average device like a phone, tablet, or desktop has enough computing power that we can provide an easy-to-use app that does a full voice analysis. Based on their results and using artificial intelligence, it's easy to assign level-appropriate workouts so they can advance to the next

singing level. That's the secret, identify the singer's skillset and goals, match those skills and goals to appropriate training that hits those areas completely. When they level up, it's time to change training. It's that simple. However, it means that a lot of programs don't meet the needs of the average singer because the approach is often one size fits all.

RRX: That's cool, but aren't there other apps out there that do the same thing?

JM: Not really, I've used almost all of these—we were looking for one to refer our students to and some of them are OK, but most of them don't detect pitch well. If pitch matching is inaccurate, all bets are off. Our pitch matching engine is brand new, highly accurate, and takes full advantage of computing advances that have been made over the past two decades. We are also the only studio I know of that uses time to match pitch, or what I call speed of

resolution, or SOR for short, in determining a singer's level—this is a real game changer. Most studios call this 'flexibility' or 'vocal agility' but they don't have a metric to describe it.

To top off the functionality, My Singing Coach, has a real-life coaching function where users can submit a 60-second singing sample to a master voice coach for assessment and review right through the app. The coach then gives them specific feedback and recommendations. No other app does that.

RRX: What goes into developing an app?

JM: Money and a lot of work! We really believe in what we're doing so we took a chunk of our savings to finance the development. Luckily, we were referred to a developer who had done a great job for a local company. When we found out he was also a former sound engineer, we knew it was meant to be. We've also worked with a couple of

local graphic artists who are working on the app's esthetics, and we've got feedback from students and other pros nationwide.

RRX: When does the app come out?

JM: We've got a pre-release coming out in mid-August, and have a great group of VIP singers who are going to try the app out for the first month. The public release will be in mid-September. We'd love for people to visit our websites: www.peakmusicstudios.com and www.mysingingcoach.com. We'll be at RiverExpo, too, so stop by our table to get the great discount we're offering to Capital District singers. RadioRadioX does great work for the Capital District thanks for your interest in us and your support, Art!



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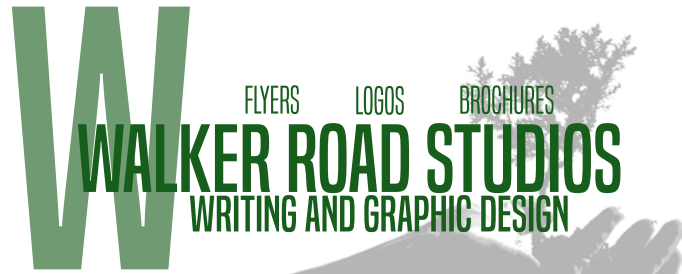


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Mood Music

BY STEPHANIE BARTIK

Photo by Stefan Keller

I often find myself turning to music to help navigate the sea of emotions ebbing to-and-fro within me at any given time. One day as I was switching from Let's go Crazy (Prince) to Everybody Hurts (REM), it struck me.

The past year has been a musical downer, no doubt about it. The mixed emotions of disappointment, uncertainty, hope, frustration, anger, sadness, feeling helpless, then hopefulness, comradery and loneliness has been draining.

I was wondering about the power of music. Was I using it to smooth this rocky world? Perhaps to heal myself? Someone suggested I should only listen to happy songs, but I argued "sometimes I need the sad, to process". He thought I was wrong, so, me, being a science nerd, I had to research.

Ends up, music and mood are closely interrelated – Music can change your mood; however, it can also change your perception. For example, people will

recognize happy faces if they are feeling happy themselves.

A study at the University of Groningen, shows that music has an even more dramatic effect on perception: even if there is nothing to see, people sometimes still see happy faces when they are listening to happy music and sad faces when they are listening to sad music. Test subjects performed a task in which they had to identify happy and sad smileys while listening to happy or sad music.

Music turned out to have a great influence on what the subjects saw: smileys that matched the music were identified much more accurately. And even when no smiley at all was shown, the subjects often thought they recognized a happy smiley when listening to happy music and a sad one when listening to sad music.

This aligns that your brain continuously compares the information that comes in through your eyes with what it

expects, based on what you know about the world. The result of this comparison process is what we eventually experience as reality. Research suggests that the brain builds up expectations not just based on experience but on your mood as well.

But, why do I 'need' to hear those sad songs? How do they help me process?

A common thought is when depressed people preferred sad music over happy music it suggested this might be keeping them down. This seems unlikely to me, that depressed people want to feel sad. They are often paralyzed from it. The depressed go to therapy saying they want to get rid of the funk, snap out of it.

A study on people who were diagnosed with clinical depression (depression lasting 2 years or more) had the subjects choose between different music clips, and found it is true that depressed people preferred sad songs. Then the researchers had the subjects do

a different task which involved listening to the sad music and describe how they felt afterward. This, is where the surprise came in. They were actually feeling better- the sad music made them less sad. The sad music seemed to have a calming effect on the subjects. Perhaps misery loves company comes into play here?

My take is that the music was more aligned with their feelings. Like sailing a boat on a river, they were going with the stream, not against it.

So, yes, there is a place for both happy and sad music. Just listen to your heart, feel the music run through your veins. Let the music help you process.

Point is, we all need music- Just do not let anyone tell you which type is right for you.

Turn up that radio and let those feelings flow.



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Tara Rule (Cntd.)

Continued from Page 19.

RRX: There's another film that may be out by the time this runs, called Cato. It's a story of your own life, and your struggle with a brain tumor that nearly took you from us. It's told sort of from the perspective of your cat, Cato. I heard you say that you might have tossed the towel one day if not for Cato. Can you talk about Cato, the film or the cat?

TR: I had a cat growing up named Gizmo who was a Snowshoe Siamese. She was definitely my favorite cat. When I was really sick, I was home 24/7 unless I was at the doctors or in the hospital. I couldn't walk, and was learning how to do everything all over again - write, use the bathroom myself, etc. I saw a cat on Craigslist who looked just like Gizmo. I don't know what it was, but I really wanted him. I reached out to the owner who was really picky about who he was willing to let Cato go home to. I met Cato in person and it was love at first sight.

Cato is a really funny cat. He's extraordinarily needy and needs constant attention or he gets depressed. Things got really bad with my health. I went into multi-organ failure and the only treatment that had worked up until that point was going to kill me faster than the illness itself would. No doctor nor specialist could figure out what was wrong with me, and none of them were willing or able to try any sort of experimental treatment. They basically all told me there was nothing else they could do. I was facing hospice, and every day was somehow significantly worse than the last.

I didn't want to die, but there's a point where the pain overrides anything else. It's all encompassing. It takes over your thoughts, feelings, heart, and eventually your soul. There's nothing left but the pain. Thinking of leaving everyone I loved was

horrifically painful, but somehow, the physical pain was worse. I thought of how sad it would be for everyone to watch me die hooked up to a bunch of machines. I didn't want them to have to go through that. I didn't want to go through that. I was considering options for myself that made me feel like I had some dignity and some control over the illness. I was lying there feeling sorry for myself and Cato jumped on my chest. I don't know what it was, but seeing him looking at me with so much love - I couldn't bring myself to tell him that I was planning on leaving. It made me realize I couldn't bring myself to tell anyone. I wasn't ready to say goodbye. Instead, I said, "Okay, Cato, here's what we're gonna do. I'm going to give myself six months. Six months to find someone, something to help me. If at the end of that six months I haven't found an answer, maybe I'll at least have found some strength along the way to keep fighting, but I'm telling you right now, I can't keep fighting forever. I'm going to try. 6 months is a long time when you feel like this.

Two days later, I posted everything I had about my medical condition on Reddit. Someone commented that they had a similar condition - long story short, it wasn't the same condition, but that conversation led me to an organization which led me to the name of a hospital which led me to the doctor who saved my life. I am so blessed that my mother had the wherewithal to keep everything documented, labeled, highlighted, and accounted for in boxes and folders. I called and said, "I have no referrals, my doctors have given up. I have every test, report, scan - anything you would need. I am dying, and I'm desperate."

A week later, I was on a treatment that I still take to this day. It saved my life. The film itself was a way to cope. I was feeling really held back from the

trauma of going through what I went through. I think I detached myself from what I went through to an extent. I was really numb. However, when I thought of experiencing the whole thing through Cato's eyes, I was able to feel. It wasn't pleasant, but it was necessary for me to try and move on with my life. I didn't have the intention to show it to anyone, but once it was completed and began circulating film festivals and picking up awards, people

Bailey Bennett (Cntd.)

Continued from Page 31.

that sort of makes it this team effort. Listening to an album like that Swans record, it shows you how to take a piece and simplify it down to those very angry, primal roots. And the world itself is angry, despite whether or not you want it, the world is angry and violent.

RRX: So now that we've talked a bit about your goals, let's get more into what exactly it is that you do. You mentioned the tascam already but tell me more about the tape manipulation setup.

BB: So, tape is inherently organic; It's a vessel that contains a sound that otherwise cannot be captured. If you have a tape, and you play it ten years later it will sound different. With the tascam it has built-in pitch modulation, it has a switch that activates a high and normal speed, which a lot of tape machines don't have access to. Access to these features creates a very organic relationship with guitar, which I already feel is a very dynamic instrument. Taking a visceral style of guitar playing and filtering it through an analog system creates a very intriguing setup. There was actually a time tonight where I played a melody, and I stopped recording, listened back and I was like, "did I just fucking play this?" It's a humbling situation where I don't

wanted to see it. Though I'm still sick, I'm a lot better than I was. I wanted to let go of the identity I created for myself to cope with living with a disability. I didn't want to be "the sick girl" anymore. I knew I couldn't fully let go until those close to me got a glimpse into the world we were both living in for so long.

Look for the 'Ourselves' campaign on [Indiegogo.com](https://www.indiegogo.com)

feel like that master.

RRX: You're being guided by the sound instead.

BB: It feels very spiritual and cathartic.

RRX: I want to talk about some of the unconventional ways that you play the guitar. Tonight we saw you using a bow and rusty nails to get some crazy sounds.

BB: Listening to an artist who decides to take an object and uses it to play guitar and create these textures is always cool. I was working with my dad one summer in my hometown of Saratoga and I found all these really big, old rusty nails. To me, they were gorgeous.

RRX: So, you didn't pick those up at Guitar Center?

BB: (laughs) No, but I really enjoy the Fluxus movement because they did not care about the outcome; to them it was the tools and the process that made up the art. When I use those old nails, using the rust and the dirt, it creates a different feeling.

Follow Bailey on social media:

<https://soundcloud.com/bbennett2000>

https://www.instagram.com/bee_person1800/

Observation and Ramblings from a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

From where I sit, many, but not all people feel the COVID crisis appears to be over (depends on who you talk to, me, I got both my shots so I feel fine), and here's hoping your ongoing summer plans don't take a "variant" turn and get all screwed up again.

Let's focus on the positive.

For me, that's my oldest grandson, Chris, who graduated from Schalmont High School in June.

Come September, Chris becomes a Freshman at Herkimer Community College, where he wants to study Criminal Justice.

Chris and I bond for many reasons, least of which is I myself, also went to college.

That said, the fact that Chris is going to college in 2021 as a Freshman, and I went to Ashland College (now University) in 1974 as a freshman, might be the only thing in common with education in our post high school years.

Don't get me wrong, I am extremely proud of Chris and wish him nothing but the best, and I for one am glad where he's choosing a career to be a possible CSI, whereas I chose a career that has made me a college educated POS.

Point Number One, Chris has a silly idea he wants to learn something at college.

While I wanted to learn how many three-hour periods from 6:00 pm Friday night to 8:00 am Monday morning would be needed to do a group bong in order to break the Guinness World Record (while still making the first class

on Monday morning).

Chris tentatively plans on rooming with a fellow Schalmont grad, but it could be up to four or five students at once.

This time they have apartment living, and not dorm life. That takes away an advantage one would have on seeing your roommate in the community shower on a Saturday morning puking it up after a hard Friday night.

That takes away from running into the community shower and finding someone's girlfriend hosing off after a night of passion.

I'm told they have "quiet time" in the apartments, so the students would be able to study and learn their course of choice.

When I went to Ashland, out "quiet time" was limited to the Library, as dorm parties, with all the required sights and smells, ran 24/7.

In 2018, I visited Ashland on the occasion of my 40th Homecoming.

I was shocked, SHOCKED I tell you, at the number of students studying on a SATURDAY MORNING, not to

mention there seemed to be NO residual trace of the night before.

They were all smiling, happy, fully functioning.

It was like a college sequel to "The Stepford Wives."

Back to Herkimer, there is an area where students can get their meals, and delivery service from town exists.

Didn't see a Student Union.

One needs that to grab a hot coffee and a bagel to suck down before the first boring lecture at 8:00 am.

I also didn't see a game room, like one at Ashland, where students polished their skills on pool, pinball and Space Invaders, before heading to the local watering hole to take on the Townies.

You may be unfamiliar with the word Townie, they're the locals who hate the college kids but not enough to take their money on games of skill and alcoholic drinks.

They are also known as "Hill People," or Circus Carnies.

You could go as far as use the word "Gypsy" as well.

I can't complain though, at one time, I was married to a Townie Woman.

But, by using the word "was," my point is made.

Finally, since Herkimer is a Two-Year School, no Greeks.

Note, I am NOT knocking Greeks, just not my thing.

I actually belonged to two fraternities.

The first was Tau Kappa Epsilon, or TKE, billed as the "anti-frat" frat, gave it a show and passed.

I am, however, a proud member of Alpha Psi Omega, the National Theater Honor Society.

My point of all this is to not insult Herkimer, or the current college system, or the students going to not just Herkimer but to fine facilities everywhere.

My point is, truthfully, I'm not sure I could be a student, a REAL student, under these current conditions.

My hat (and love) goes to Chris and all others starting their college career.

And I have made a promise to Chris, who again will be studying Criminal Justice.

With all the alcohol in my system after 65 years, I'm preparing to be his first easy autopsy.

Be hearing you/

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