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December 2021

Vol. 3, Issue 12

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Full Moon Godfather

Filmmaker Sean Cranston is about to take us on a journey to the world of outlaw bikers in the late 70s. Find out how.

BY VEGAS NACY

Sean Cranston and Crew.
Photo provided

RRX: Sean, it's a pleasure to sit down with you to let everyone know what you're about and what you're up to!

How long have you been in the film biz and what are some of the films you've released?

SC: Started my journey with a video camera in my youth when I got the

Home Alone video camera for Christmas at like seven or eight and it's somehow all evolved and taken me to my early 30's. My first real job was field security at my hometown drive-in theater at 16. Just always wanted to surround myself with that lifestyle so my life had no choice but to become that. I'm far from done learning about the

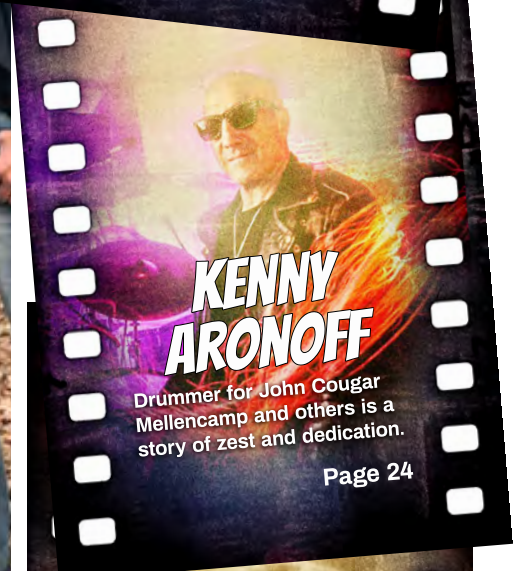
craft.

I have two independent films on Amazon Prime – RedVille (2020) and Highlighters (2018)

RRX: what other projects have you done besides film?

SC: I graduated high school in 2006 and since then I've played in a

Continued on Page 5...





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handful of independent touring and studio bands, worked in radio, television, and a stint in stand-up comedy. I currently teach and play drums for a living with the Albany School of Rock, which I love and keeps my schedule busy. And most importantly keeps me behind the kit.

Over the summer, I was given the opportunity to play a featured character voice in the video game Knockout City. Would love to do more work like that, voice acting is a ton of fun.

RRX: With your newest film Full Moon Fathers, (that I'm happy to be a part of) how were you inspired to come up with the plot and what is it about?

SC: Yes, you were brother Vegas! You were one of my original cast ideas and you made it happen!

I think I can spoil that the original script for Full Moon Fathers was about a werewolf biker gang hunted by a werewolf hunter in 1979 - now it's about a criminal biker gang trying to survive themselves in 1979. They wake up in the woods after a night of partying to find their vice president mysteriously murdered and it's every man for himself as all hell breaks loose.

I read the first script I wrote post COVID lockdown and just thought, "This is a very stupid movie and I wouldn't enjoy making this." I called Mike Hayes, our lead actor, and told him what I didn't like and he lit a fire under my ass by telling me a story of a time he busted an outlaw biker gang during his time as a U.S. Marshall. And away we went!

RRX: You work with Westfield films for the camera work. What is it about the way that they shoot that keeps you partners?

SC: Jim (cinematographer) is one of my oldest friends since childhood and he has an eye for detail that is incomparable to other cinematographers. He also has an enormous heart for this type of work. I told Jim in elementary

school that I hoped he and I will win an Oscar one day. I'm very lucky to have him and the mighty art director, John Stegemann working alongside me. John and I are both long time buds and he's a fellow drummer too - I've learned a lot from collaborating with them over the past few decades. We're a power trio! Like ZZ Top!

RRX: If you were this age in 1978 what kind of movies would you have made?

SC: Probably the same types of films - I love that era of movies and music. Always gritty and genre bending.

RRX: Top five bands that write great soundtrack music?

SC: Queen (Highlander), BeeGees (Saturday Night Fever) RZA (Kill Bill) Curtis Mayfield (Superfly) and I guess Oingo Boingo cause Danny Elfman.

RRX: When will Full Moon Fathers be released and do you have anything planned for the premiere?

SC: No big plans yet, just trying to finish the film up and get the score done - which is almost like a movie in itself. Will probably take up a lot of 2022. Also really depending on where we stand as a society by the release of the film - hopefully in a place where people want to leave their house and see a local film premier.

RRX: Vinyl or digital?

SC: Vinyl any day - it's a real experience - you put it on and can engage with the album art and lyrics. That's kinda become a lost hobby and conversation piece.

RRX: Thank you for taking the time to enlighten us! Be safe out there and I'll see you at the movies!

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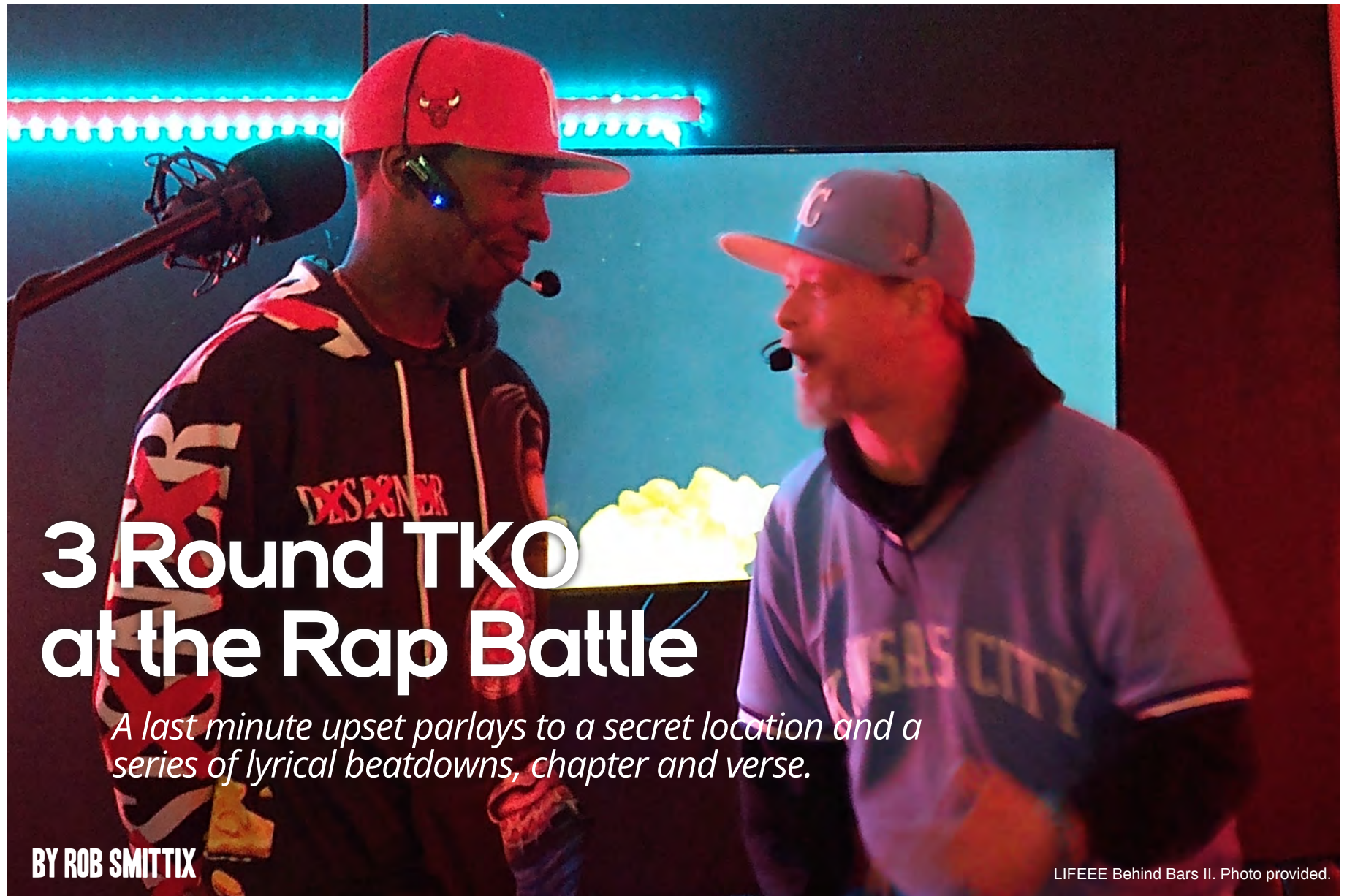
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3 Round TKO at the Rap Battle

A last minute upset parlays to a secret location and a series of lyrical beatdowns, chapter and verse.

BY ROB SMITTIX

LIFEEEE Behind Bars II. Photo provided.

For months Peshy Kruger's #LIFEEEE BEHIND BARS II battle rap show was anticipated by fans. Who will come out on top? Who will be victorious? And then...for reasons that not even God herself could explain, when it came time to hit the stage everyone was sent packing. What we do know is that it had absolutely nothing to do with Peshy or his team but rather a nonrelated incident that occurred just a week prior at the same establishment. So, what do you do when you have a sold out show and no venue? Well... Peshy made some phone calls

and in less than 24 hours #LIFEEEE BEHIND BARS II was back on.

That Saturday morning, I received a message with a secret address. So, what started out as blinking lights on a marquee became an underground event and honestly it couldn't have been any better. The level of professionalism Peshy and his team maintained throughout the confusion was second to none. I overheard Peshy say, "no one is going to tarnish my good name" and he meant it. So, at last the event was held and it was without a doubt incident free!

A Peshy quote from Nyce Da Beast's (Building Wit Beast) interview "I'm a man of my word. I'm a stand-up guy and there was nothing that I could do, it was out of my control. I gave you a chance to come out. We promoted it in less than 24 hours and we're back here making history."

The night stated off with the battle that by far had the most trash talk build up, Man vs Bletzin. Bletzin came in swinging but Man stole the crowd. At one point Man brought up Bletzin's family dog that passed away and even had a t-shirt with the dog's face made

up that he offered as a gift to his opponent. The dog verse hardly phased Bletzin though probably because as we found out afterward, it was his mom's dog that he wasn't very close to at all. Then Man stole the audience's attention once more by claiming Bletzin's girlfriend's ex, "Mike", was actually at the venue. For real the entire crowd turned around to see for themselves, but Man was just pulling everyone's leg. However, this stunt did rack up points for Man because it had everyone laughing. We also found out in the post-show interview that Bletzin actu-

ally has no beef with “Mike.”

The next battle was between CEO Cents and Dre Skeeno. CEO had come out of a five-year hiatus for this one and it was as if he didn't miss a beat. The majority of the dissing between these two involved the fact that Dre is from Boston. So, there were plenty of New England jokes being thrown out there. CEO went home with the win!

Now the main event was between two fierce competitors Money Mel and Bamm. Bamm went first and it was hard to tell how Mel would respond to the insults until... well let's just say Mel won the crowd over pretty quickly after he got on the mic. I believe it was during the second round when Mel pocket checked Bamm and you could see by the look on Bamm's face this was

not well received. When Bamm gave his response he put his fingers in Mel's chest and for a few moments it looked as though this friendly rap battle was going to turn into the UFC. Fortunately, Peshy got them back on track and the battle resumed without any issues.

Although some feelings were hurt, I can undoubtedly say that everyone had a great time. And for those that didn't take home the win here's some advice: in the words of Diego Coffin “get those bars up!” We look forward to the next event #LIFEEEE BEHIND BARS III and I wonder if the show will be kept underground or if Peshy, Hard To Kill Entertainment and #25toLIFEEEE will take another stab at the mainstream stage.

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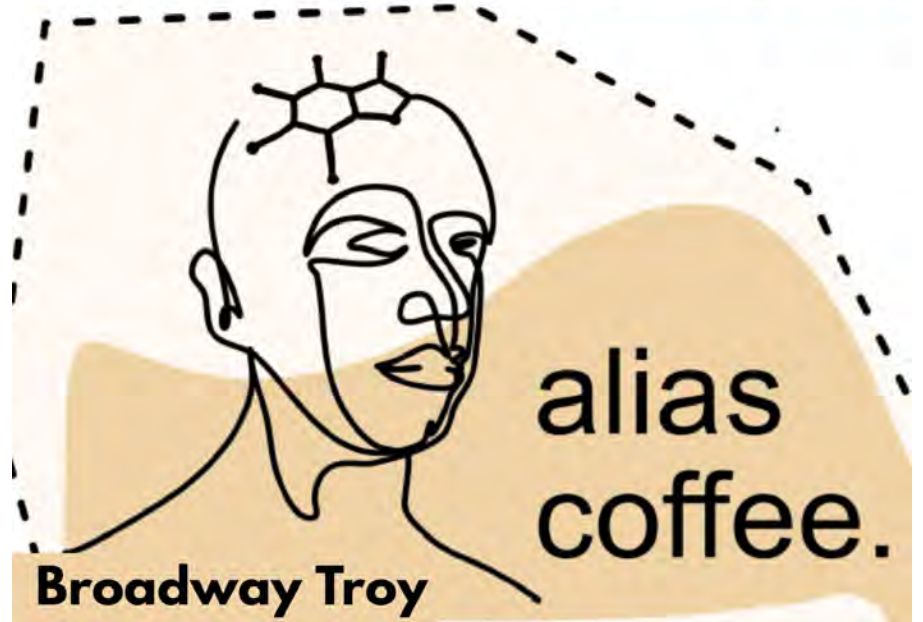
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THE COCKTAIL WORKSHOP

AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CLASSIC DRINKS
AND HOW TO MAKE THEM YOUR OWN

In The Cocktail Workshop, Steve Erase and Adam Grasse start a journey to wipe out cocktail illiteracy in our lifetime. It is a noble cause.

BY DICK BEACH



Cover copyright © 2021 by Hachette Book Group, Inc.

I'm speaking with Steve Erase and Adam Grasse about their new book, called *The Cocktail Workshop*, which has a limited number of cocktails. It does some things that I think people will be interested in.

What was the inspiration?

SG: The inspiration was, I have a store in the Old City neighborhood of Philadelphia. It's called Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, named after the 1934 essay by Walter Benjamin. It's a cocktail bar supply bottle store and full bar. But it's also what we call a cocktail workshop. We do tons of private classes and workshops for people to learn how to make cocktails.

We're trying to wipe out cocktail illiteracy in our lifetime. That was the

inspiration.

I teamed up with Adam because he's such a wonderful writer and very articulate, and was a great collaborator on this book with me. Adam, take it away.

AE: Thanks, Steve. I'll try to live up to that reputation while we're doing this. I think one of our guiding stars for putting *The Cocktail Workshop* together was a cookbook by Mark Bittman called *How to Cook Everything*, I believe is the title of it.

That's how we started in on 20 classic cocktails. Drinks like martini, margarita, the Manhattan, the daiquiri. Really straightforward, essential drinks that you should know how to make.

Once you've mastered how to make these basics, what can you do in terms

of swaps, substitutions, homemade ingredients that just really help change up these essential cocktails.

RRX: Steve, you've been involved in many brands. Adam, you have written about all of this stuff. Have you guys known each other a very long time, so this happened organically?

SG: Philly's a small town. It's a big city; it is actually this small town. Anyone doing anything creative or interesting tends to eventually meet and know each other. We actually met through our literary agent. But I think we all moved in the same circles. Adam, I didn't know you, but you knew everyone that we knew. It was destiny. Am I right?

AE: Yeah, I think that's totally correct. Philly has such a small town

mentality and everybody really does know everyone. Or it's like one degree out, particularly in the restaurant and food and drink space. Steve and I were connected by our agent – we share an agent. Yeah, it was a great setup.

SG: And he still chose to work with me. That's the amazing part.

RRX: Even after all the stuff you heard about him.

SG: Exactly.

AE: Exactly. It was just a really good opportunity and a relationship that I think has real long legs and lots of stuff to come in the future.

RRX: Getting back specifically to the book, there is a credit here for recipes by Lee Noble. Is Lee someone you both know?

SG: Lee is my head liquid and

mixology specialist who works here at Quaker City. He is a genius with recipes.

RRX: You show us how to make a cocktail, then, you've got one, two, three additional gimlets, and then a workshop on making stuff for the gimlet. That's seriously breaking it down.

SG: That was the whole approach was to have each chapter a suite of four cocktails. The classic and then the three levels of increasing complexity. In some of the chapters, we even have a fifth cocktail 'cause some of the workshops contain their own ingredient recipe

RRX: What would your pitch to a bar owner be to say here's a way for you not only to be better at what you do, but also here's a way because, let's face it, at the end of the day, a bar has to make money. How can this assist someone in the business as opposed to the homeowner?

SG: I will let Adam answer that.

AE: Yeah, that's a really interesting question. When you think about who this book is for, it's really for people across the spectrum of skill levels. There's a saying in the beginning of this book, if you know nothing about cocktails at all, and you're just starting out, this book is gonna show you how to create a base foundation.

Conversely, if you are a fairly capable bartender, whether that's at home or out at a bar in the industry, this is gonna show you some really cool and interesting tricks and skills and techniques.

SG: But I also think it would then, as a bar owner, if you can do your own riff on the gimlet, you can charge more for it. Kinda feels like it's customized or it feels like it's curated. We walk you through in a very step-by-step way. We worked really hard on that.

A mixologist is where you can up your game and people will be willing to pay for the fancy \$17 cocktail.

RRX: Outside the recipes and the

confidence to do the cocktails, do you have advice, or at least what I would call history, on how to actually curate yourself a really great cocktail party?

SG: Ooh, I sense Cocktail Workshop II.

RRX: Love it.

SG: I'll let Adam answer that. I feel like that's the next step, isn't it, is once you've mastered the cocktails, now you got to throw the party. That's not in this book, but it should be.

RRX: What are the ingredients to the cocktail party outside the cocktails?

AE: I would say food, certainly. Especially like picky things that can be out at room temperature. Things that you can assemble in advance. Things that really lend themselves well to cocktails, whether we're talking about marinated olives and big marinated beans, and seafood.

Music is also really important. I go to a playlist, which I think I shouted out in the book as part of the book, I love this playlist on Spotify called Kitchen Swagger. It's like '90s R&B, disco funk-type stuff. It's really easy and chill, and a little lively. It's the perfect background for a cocktail party.

RRX: We've been gifted a lot of things that are related to alcohol. It seems to be an endless well of fantastic content. Where are you guys headed next with this? Do you have a plan for another book?

SG: Me and Adam actually have another book with Running Press coming out that we're working on together. It's about my distillery in New Hampshire. The working title is White Mountain Cocktails, but it's about the kind of stuff you drink when you go camping. You can talk about it more, Adam.

AE: Yeah, for sure. Steve had the inspiration on that. It's wild drinks for wild places. Whether that's the White Mountains, which is where Tamworth is based and is our spiritual home for

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From Cobras to Christmas

Luke McNamee and his saxophone have gone from Austin to Albany, bringing good cheer and joy to all.

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Luke McNamee and Josh Greenberg. Photo provided.

Music is performance. It's feeling and meaning. All true. Some people get up on stage determined to put on a show. Others get on stage to tap into that thing that's greater than us all and wrestle its voice. They play because they love playing and would play in a dark room if there was a good groove to be found in there.

Luke McNamee's saxophone is well-traveled, yet it catches the gleam of the stage lights in just the right way every time. Luke plays to play. And we thank him for it.

I sit with Luke and talk about apartment soundproofing.

RRX: I could probably start at the top of a sheet of lined paper, write

every band or project you've been in on a different line, and fill both sides. Blue Hand Luke, House of Blues, Neanderthals... it is a huge list. Of all the bands you've been in that are no longer going, which one do you most wish had kept going?

LM: When you sent me this question, I said to myself, well, I started to write down bands that I played with, I don't know how many there were, but yes, it would easily fill the front and back of a sheet of paper. But there's been so many great experiences. The first band that was really significant was Roomful of Blues, which I joined in 1979. I did an eight month stint with them while the baritone sax player was

on sabbatical. That led to the second band, which is the answer to your question. Because I played Roomful of Blues, we did some gigs with a band called the Cobras, who were out of Austin, Texas. I sat in with them a few times, and when my time with Roomful was over, they gave me a call and they wanted me to join them, and I moved down to Austin in 1980 and I lived there for two years, and I played for the Cobras. And if I could go back to any band that I played with and relive time, it would definitely be those days down in Austin in the early 80's with the Cobras. Personally, that could never happen because three of the six members of the band are no longer

with us. As a matter of fact, 2021 has claimed two of the members of that band, Denny Freeman on guitar, and Leland Parks, our bass player. Shameless plug, if anybody is interested, there was a re-release of an album the Cobras did 40 years ago, it was actually a live album, and that's available in the Beat Shop, right in Troy.

RRX: The first time I ever met you, you were wearing the good old red velvet and white fur trim. You were Sax O' Claus, and you and your elf were walking around town bringing gifts of sweet sax. I honestly didn't know at the time if you were doing a thing or if you were out of the looney bin on shore leave, but the music was great. How did it

start?

LM: Right now in my present life, Sax O' Claus is the number one thing that I do. It's definitely grown a life of its own, that's for sure. The best thing about Sax O' Claus is that I get to bless a lot of people by getting dressed up in that suit and playing my saxophone during the Christmas season. I play in nursing homes, I play for kids, I do the Victorian street walks in Troy, Glens Falls and Saratoga, Hudson, all over. I get to play people's parties – just really having a lot of fun and putting smiles on people's faces. It really makes Sax O' Clause my true love musically right now. I couldn't imagine a day when I couldn't do it. And of course, Josh, my elf, has joined me. I started Sax O' Clause in 1979, so we're coming up on my 25th season of Sax O' Claus. Josh Greenberg is my elf, and he joined me ten years ago, in 2012. His joining forces with me has really put the whole Sax O' Claus thing in another dimension.

He's a very skilled arranger, and he also plays tenor sax like I do, and he takes all of the songs, and makes a really sweet two-part arrangement. He brings a lot of life into the Sax O' Claus thing that I started 25 years ago.

RRX: In the depths of the pandemic, you donned a purple cap and gown, went up on the steps of RPI I believe, and played for the graduating class, even though they were receiving their degrees remotely. And it was a big thing too, because about that time, everything was fully locked down and it was a statement. How did that get started?

LM: That just came about out of thin air. The pandemic had hit, everybody was locked down, and I just felt really bad for the graduating class, whether it be college, or high school or middle school. They worked so hard, and they were looking forward to having that big ceremony. And when it came to 2020 and the pandemic, I felt

so bad for these kids, so I said, "What can I do?" So, I wrote out the guidelines for what we called 'pomp and quarantine,' and again, I enlisted the services of Josh Greenberg, and we put just that one song together, 'pomp and quarantine,' for a video, and Art Frette was very gracious to do the live filming of it, and he did a wonderful job filming. We put it together and we put it out on YouTube, and set it out there, and it got a good amount of views. We figured there were probably a lot of kids sitting at home with their cap and gown on, maybe mom and dad or their grandma was there. We figured they could at least put this on their phone or whatever, on their computer and listen to it, and have their graduation. Everybody in the year 2020 had to compromise a little bit, do things differently. That was just our way of helping kids out, because that's what we do.

RRX: You've not only been in so many bands I can't round them all up,

you've jumped in on sessions and added sax to amp up the set. During my dad's memorial show, you jumped up with Off the Record Trio and took it into high gear. Does being a sax player get you into more sessions, you think?

LM: I'm going to be open to really anything. I love sitting in with bands; certainly, Off the Record is at the top of my list, as far as bands who will have me come out and I love playing with, and sitting in sometimes for a whole night, sometimes for part of a night. Whatever amount of time we have together is good. Also, I love playing with Johnny Rabb's Big Band, that's a kick, and I get to do some things with Mike McMann, who has a CD coming out. Blue Hand Luke will be playing out next at a gazebo near you, so look out for that.



Luke McNamee and Jimmy Barrett. Photo provided.



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The Passion of Unbridled Energy

Drummer for John Cougar Mellencamp, Iggy Pop (and everyone else), Kenny Aronoff talks about showing love and justifying time.

BY DICK BEACH

Kenny Aronoff. Photo provided.

By his own admission, Kenny Aronoff is a workaholic. School, sports, homework then rock band. Rinse and repeat. This classically trained percussionist is now the go to drummer for everyone who is anyone. This is the edit to fit version – the entire piece will be available at RadioRadioX.com.

RRX: First, thank you. Kenny KA is my victim today for an interview

KA: Yeah. I am a busy man, that's for sure. The list is so long and in so many different realms, I can't even begin to...

RRX: One of the impetuses for this is, we're a small, monthly, free arts

magazine up here in beautiful upstate New York. I'm looking for people and I go, wait a minute. Kenny KA was born in Albany, grew up in Stockbridge? How long were you in this area before you decided that you were going to be a musician, and travel, and get all the education, and everything else?

KA: Well, I was born in Albany. I think I was there for maybe a year. Then, we moved to Pittsfield and then eventually Lee, Mass, where my dad worked in a mill. Then, my parents, thank god, moved two miles or three miles from Lee to one of the most iconic little New England towns in America, called Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

Which, if you read my autobiography, I just take a walk out of my house. The first house to my left is Norman Mailer, one of the greatest authors. Eventually, Patty Hearst moved into this big, huge, old country house, with a field and stone walls.

RRX: You took the circuitous route I'm reading this and you're going to schools that have affiliation with Juilliard. You're doing all of these programs, and you're at Tanglewood.

There are two pieces of this that I find fascinating and I'd like to ask you about. First, when you were doing the programs at Tanglewood... you mention two iconic figures: Bernstein and

Copeland. How did that affect where you ended up with your passion for drumming, whatever it might be?

KA: I spent four consecutive years trying to get into Tanglewood, which is the number one big student orchestra in the country, if not the world. That orchestra could be a professional orchestra. It's loud, powerful, precise, exact. These are the best orchestral students in the country.

I fail the first year. Come back the next year and I'm auditioning for Vic Firth, who was one of my dear friends, but he passed away. He created the biggest stick company in the world.

RRX: Okay. I am a lousy trap

player. I'm a really lousy trap player, but even I know to use Vic Firth sticks.

KA: There's other people that make great sticks, but he reinvented the wheel completely. Anyway, I go back a third year and I don't get in. I'm like, damn. Most people would probably go eh, I don't belong. I went back a fourth year and got in.

Anyway, all this type of training was so beneficial. I get into Tanglewood and this brings me back to your question. It was there, the first day, the first day of rehearsal, I'm nervous as shit. It's Seiji Ozawa, the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

RRX: Oh, I love him. I saw him conduct the BSO.

KA: It's insane how he conducts. It's like ballet. It's like nothing you've ever seen. He walks in. He's a control freak and he's got an impeccable memory. He's wearing white, these cloth pants, they're flowing. He looks at you and he doesn't even say anything.

The end of the rehearsal, everyone scatters. Bam, bam, bam. But I've got all this percussion to pick up and I'm in the back. All of a sudden, I hear two people talking. I pick my head up, peer over. It's Leonard Bernstein talking to Ozawa. Here's the point. Ozawa's already proven to us he's a genius. I've never worked with somebody that can hear fly shit hit the floor.

Bernstein comes up to him and Ozawa's going, "I don't understand. This orchestra is supposed to be the best orchestra in the world and they're not performing for me. They're not performing. They're not that good." Bernstein smiles and he puts his hand on Ozawa's back and goes, "Seiji, they are the best orchestra in the world. Show some love and show some compassion. They will play for you."

I thought about that. I thought, wow. In my book, I talk about two different methods of getting people to perform for you. The first week, I'm working with Ozawa.

All the guys that were there besides me were from New England Conservatory, Vic Firth's students because he was the head of the department here. The first week, three guys get the timpani part. The second week, three guys get the timpani part. The third week, I'm the last guy. I get Sibelius' Fifth Symphony, which features timpani, and Leonard Bernstein is the conductor. So, I get to work with Leonard Bernstein.

RRX: First, your goal was not to be a classical player and be a timpanist in an orchestra. You had other goals. You worked hard for those goals because at the time, there was nothing else for you to do.

KA: Right.

RRX: You finally decide that you're gonna go into rock and roll full-time. I read and I see that you've this, that, and the other thing. Then, of course, in '85, you get the audition for John Cougar Mellencamp.

KA: Actually, it was '77. Wait a minute. Hold on. Wait a minute. 1980.

RRX: You do, I guess, a 16-year stint with Mellencamp. You've played on all the records everybody knows, and this and that and the other thing. But it was a rough road. At one point, you finally had to say I'm done here. I have to do something else.

You're the drummer on the first hit from Belinda Carlisle.

KA: Number one hit single.

RRX: I look around, I see things, and say, you played with Iggy.

KA: Yep.

RRX: Elton John. Come on. You're on Bat out of Hell II. I will not ask about Meat Loaf because that's the obvious question. We lost Steinman this past year, which was a very sad thing. What was it like working with him?

KA: Steinman was a genius and he treated me with so much respect. He really appreciated because all that classical training, I always was wondering, how is this gonna help me in rock and

roll? I didn't understand it. For years, I couldn't figure out why did I do all that? But the bottom line is where it really helped me was my ability to read, massive discipline, focus, never giving up, being able to work 20 hours straight.

What Jim loved about me was that I could read music and that I was so intent on doing a great job for his incredible compositions. I wasn't some casual rocker. I had lots of passion and excitement, which Meat Loaf loved.

I'm always saying, I'm not bragging, I'm just saying. I hadn't seen him in 15 years. He said, "Dude, I can't believe that your career, people hire you because you make their shit better. You elevate the room. You motivate." The only person I can thank for that is my mom and dad or God. Whoever created me gave me that gift because I can't say I fucking consciously did that. I'm wired this way. I just walk into a room and I can ignite what's going on in that room because I get excited and motivated.

Jim loved that I was there because he saw me trying to make his compositions better than what he wrote.

RRX: That leads directly into a question I wanted to ask you. It's a funny thing with, in particular, percussion for me. Back in the day, James Brown, in his band, were the two Collins brothers. James Brown taught Bootsy Collins the concept of what he called "the one." Then, Bootsy taught George Clinton "the one." "The one" is not about precision of striking on one. It's about understanding when the piece needs you to be just a little ahead or just a little behind. To me, Charlie Watts, the man had "the one" stuck in his back pocket the entire time. It was in pocket, period.

Did anyone ever speak to you about "the one" or is that just something that you've picked up

KA: I get what you're saying about "the one." You can be going all over the

place. When it gets to one, especially a drummer doing a fill, you better hit the one so that everybody knows when one is. You got to hit the one, but when you get to two, man, that tells everybody where, boom, bam!

You got to hit the one exact, but when you hit two, you are justifying time. The measurement between beat one and beat two is a certain length of time. The idea is to reproduce that over and over and over and over and over again. Now, you have established time. Then, you make it feel good and now, you've got something in time that feels good.

RRX: One of the programs that I watch on a regular basis is Sammy's show.

KA: Oh yeah!

RRX: I know you've filled in and played with Chickenfoot because I love me some Chickenfoot. That's a cool band.

KA: It is.

RRX: But when I saw the episode where it was Sammy and Michael, and three drummers, no waiting. You had three drummers, no waiting, doing "Wipeout." You're there, playing with Jason Bonham and Sheila E. I got to tell you, I love me some Sheila E. That had to be a piss.

KA: It was great. Sammy called me up and said, "Dude, you got to come in, we're gonna need someone to fucking control the situation." Because of my classical training, I'm not counting wrong, I'm gonna have the right tempo, I'm gonna remember the form, blah, blah, blah. That was so much fun. That was killer. Jason Bonham is a riot. Sheila E, she's a badass player, percussionist, drummer. No matter what she does, it's... And she's gorgeous to look at. So, there you go.

RRX: Well, that doesn't hurt. I saw a YouTube thing that was in an article.

You're playing with John Fogerty, Keith Urban, there's yourself. I'm

Continued of Page 45...



The Facets of Steve Conte

Lead guitarist for the New York Dolls and voice of anime's Cowboy Bebop Steve Conte talks about a varied career and being a good dude.

BY DICK BEACH

Steve Conte. Photo by Photolies.com

Steve Conte is known for different things to different audiences. Cowboy Bebop to some, a player with Blood, Sweat and Tears to others, and as a member of the iconic New York Dolls. One hard hitting question and a bunch of other, interesting, conversation.

RRX: We're speaking with Steve Conte today, who has played with just about everybody on the planet and has a new record called "Bronx Cheer". Thank you very much for joining us.

SC: My pleasure. Hi Richard, hi everybody out there. What's happening? Where are we located right now? I know we're on the web, but where's home for you guys?

RRX: The home base for our organization is in Waterford, which is a little suburb on the river. And I just want to start, because this is a very important question, and our readers just want to know. You grew up in Utica. You were born in Utica; I imagine you spent a few years there. You now live in The Bronx. Pizza or tomato pie?

SC: You're asking a really tough question, man.

RRX: I thought I'd hit you with a hard-hitting journalistic question to start.

SC: You know I love my pizza, especially Sicilian, but tomato pie I grew up with, and every time I come Upstate I go to a place where I can get some.

But it just doesn't happen down here, they don't have it. So, I love both, how's that for an answer?

RRX: Hedging your bets.

SC: Yeah, I was born in New Hartford. I don't know if I ever lived in Utica proper, I spent most of my early schooling years, kindergarten through fourth grade, just outside of Buffalo, so, we even moved further upstate, and yeah, we had some brutal winters up there. Then we moved to New Jersey, and down this way ever since.

RRX: I was surprised to see that your first touring gig was with Blood, Sweat, and Tears? Tell me a little about that. Because I think people will go, 'wait a minute, that dude did what?'

SC: There are different segments of the population that know me for different things. There's one segment of the population that only knows me through my work with Japanese anime. But those people had no idea that I was a singer and a songwriter on my own, that I ever recorded with my own bands, or other bands – they just know me as the voice of Cowboy Bebop, whatever, the anime. And there's those people who know me from my time in New York City, playing with all these different people: Paul Simon, Peter Wolf, Billy Squier, you know, the Dolls and Monroe. Then there's the Dolls and Monroe people, like the sort of glam-punk, sort of garage people who

would have no idea that I did anything, like, ultra-musical before that, like study jazz guitar, and play with Blood, Sweat, and Tears.

RRX: Bronx Cheer has some straight ahead rock n roll, there's some other stuff that has a very... I won't call it swing but I'll call it a mellow jazz feel with respect to chord changes and where the lyrics go. Did that just happen because of what you write or was that purposeful?

SC: Well without knowing the specific songs and parts you're talking about I thought you were going to say with regard to the rhythm, the swing that would be coming from Charley Drayton, (the drummer). Charley Drayton who plays with Keith Richards, X Pensive Winos, B52's and The Divinyls, he's played on so many hit records and I got him! We did a lot of live things together with Bernard Fowler who sings with The Stones. I knew I wanted to make this straight ahead rock n roll record but I wanted swing and a little bit of a different quirkiness to it and Charley always brings that to anything that he plays on, so I knew Charley was the guy for it.

RRX: Everyone's going to know the rock n roll stuff, tell me how did Cowboy Bebop start up?

SC: Well, it's a huge phenomena, when I got the call. I call it when you hang around this crazy town long enough and shit happens, you know? I got to New York in 84 or 85. I moved in, in 86 and started hanging out a little earlier and building my reputation. This woman Yoko Kanno came to New York from Japan and she was asking for a male rock singer and her translator (for lack of a better word) reached out to some New York heavy musicians and asked can you give me the name of male rock singer? My name got tossed in the hat, so I sent a demo tape, she loved it. A couple of months I'm coming back to start a soundtrack for this new Japanese animation series called

Cowboy Bebop, it's 1998. So I did it and she kept calling me for more of those and before I know it, it's like... time goes on we're doing more and different animes Ghost in The Shell, Wolf's Reign, Brain Powerd and I eventually did some for Sonic, you know the video game not with Yoko but someone else. But you know everything sort of builds and they start associating my name with that, which is completely different from the rock n roll world.

RRX: You were in The Dolls and as I understand it there's supposed to be a new recording being done with Michael Monroe from Hanoi Rocks, you played with Peter Wolf. How much of that is very different but very the same?

SC: Whelp, some of that stuff is ages ago now, like the Squier, the Wolf, the Paul Simon, the Maceo Parker. These things happened in the late 90's to early to mid 2000's. I joined The Dolls in 2004 and that was really the first time I played punk rock or garage rock or whatever you want to call it. Proto-punk or glam, I don't know. Once I got into The Dolls, I really dug into the music to get to its essence. You can't stand up there on the stage and not believe what you're doing and not love it.

RRX: In an interview I saw, you actually start with two inch tape, which is not the cheap way to go anymore. How do you think that affects what you do? Because this record sounds awesome.

SC: I agree the early digital stuff would sound cold and brash and on the high end brittle. On one of my albums, I started recording on digital and it was irking me so much with the brash high end, when we mixed it, we actually mixed it to tape. This time we started out with two inch analog tape, it's just got that warm tape saturation. We use one reel of tape and we get a take of a song and then we just record over it. We dump it into the computer and we say okay there's that one's done. Okay

let's roll over the tape now and each reel of tape lasts like fifteen minutes so you can get like three songs on it. Then you just wipe it and do the next track. We did that for all ten songs.

RRX: When you were touring and you were on a bill with Bo Diddley, did you ever meet one of his guitar players, Frank Daley?

SC: Oh. I know Frank from Albany.

RRX: You know Frank?

SC: I know the whole family. I know Joe, I know Jack. I played with all of them.

RRX: Frank used to be my two doors down neighbor.

SC: Wow. Frank Daley man, yeah.

RRX: That whole Daley family, I'd look and go, how did that much talent get into three brothers? They're extraordinary.

SC: Yup, Joe was great too. A great drummer. Yeah, they're like me and my brothers, me and my family. I have

another brother Jeff who's a great drummer and my brother John of course is a phenomenal bass player. He played with everybody from Ian Hunter to Roseanne Cash, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes for the past decade. But yeah, we have a similar thing going on, it's that brotherly Upstate thing man.

RRX: I always ask people. The thing that I do when I end an interview. If there is a single statement you would like to make to the world, to everyone, anything you'd like... what would you say and why would you want to be remembered for it?

SC: That's a heavy responsibility.

RRX: I believe everyone has a message that can resonate. That's a personal thing with me. I never wanted to have an interview go on where we go through all of this other stuff and not give you the opportunity to express

Continued on Page 45...

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Continued from Page 17.

the book, and the stand-in for any wild place you might go to anywhere in the country, when you want to be outside camping, or boating around on a lake, or you're renting a cute cozy cabin.

One example is a version of the dark and stormy we have, which is the bark and stormy. That's made with birch syrup. Birch trees can be tapped.

RRX: Oh yeah, absolutely.

I end these interviews in an odd way. This isn't necessarily related to the book, so I will ask this question and ask each of you to respond. In my world, people have things to say.

So, if each of you has a comment about something that you would like to say about your philosophy on something, whether it's cocktail related or not is irrelevant, I'd like to hear what you would like to say to the rest of the world about how you see things.

SG: I'm gonna let Adam go first on

that one.

AE: Wow. I will keep it in the scope of the industry. When I was first starting out writing – this is early 2000s – I was tending bar. I tended bar for, I would say, probably the first five, seven years of when I was starting as a freelancer.

What I would like to say is bartending is a great job. But it's also a really difficult job. I just want to say, treat the bartenders really well and tip them heavily, if you can. Don't be a dick because bartenders and servers in general, especially now – and I hate that phrase now more than ever – people who are working the front of the house, whether it's bartenders or servers, really need your kindness and respect. And your money.

SG: That's great. Hear, hear. Cheers!

My turn. Well, I would say in this age of division and everyone hating each other, the one thing that we can

all agree on is cocktails. What I mean by that is what I love about this category, and what attracts me to it, and why I think I'm good at it is I like to story-tell

I keep harping on about cocktail literacy. What I mean by that is it's just such a fun thing to learn and be well-read and adept at. If you master these things, it makes you a more interesting person and it gets you off the hook. When you're at a cocktail party or at a

family dinner, or whatever, you don't have to talk about politics or anything except good stories and good spirits. There you go.

RRX: Gentlemen, thank you. As I put it, thus endeth the interview.



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Better With a Few Good Friends

Joe Restivo and Matt Louis of The Classical bring us exciting new label Paintbox Records.



BY JOSHUA REEDY

The Classical. Photo provided.

The Classical is Joe Restivo and Matt Louis, who have teamed up to create their beautifully psychedelic debut album titled Graffiti Chorus. On top of working on their music, the duo also co-operate Paintbox records, an independent label they founded alongside Brendon Snell of Senior Living. Joe and Matt wrote in to describe their new album, their fellow artists and what Paintbox Records means to them.

RRX: So, from what I understand The Classical is primarily the collaboration between Joe and Matt. Can you guys give me some insight into how the project started?

ML: The Classical essentially started

out of necessity. Joe and I have been playing music together since high school, but once we started Paintbox Records we needed a name to release our music under. Our previous group was slightly horrible, with some sparse bursts of real interesting sounds that served as stepping stones to the music we make currently.

JR: Yeah, there was some flailing around when it came to what our sound was going to be over the past couple of years but ever since we started The Classical I think it's been much easier to narrow down what our true influences are when you listen to the music, I feel.

RRX: Obviously, you guys are fans of the Fall (at least I assume so). Do you

find that the Fall influenced some of your sound/what other styles guided you toward the sound you have now?

ML: The Fall are a great group. There is definitely a bit of their influence in our music. And I just think The Classical is a really good band name. It's wonderfully pretentious and I think it fits our music.

JR: The Fall are one of my favorite bands ever, Mark E. Smith was a genius; he ran his band like a punk version of James Brown. The name The Classical comes from the Fall song of the same name, it came to me spur of the moment and we sort of never looked back? I guess?

RRX: What was the songwriting

process for the album like? Did you have these songs for a while, or were some of them written specifically for the album?

ML: Even though The Classical is both Joe and I, obviously, we still have our own processes for writing songs. I very rarely sit down with the intention to create a song because that mostly just leads to frustration. I think the best songs are the ones that insist that they be written, they come to you, rather than you are fishing for them.

JR: I think it's safe to say almost all of the album was written over the course of the past six months, Matt will usually send me over a song that's fully written, and I do my bit by sampling

drum breaks that we record and manipulating some of the arrangements if need be. We record everything on my computer which makes it more efficient, songs like “The Idiot” and “Tee-vee” we tracked in like one day.

RRX: We talked briefly about your friend Ethan, who as I understand is also a part of Neon Novo. Can you tell me about that project and Ethan’s role in Graffiti Chorus?

ML: Ethan Bedeau is a true musician; I’m honored to be able to work with him. He mastered our songs, gave them the “production-edge” that we were trying to achieve, and provided some wonderful synthesizer overdubs throughout the album. Neon Novo is his outfit with our friend and label-mate Lucas Bruce, they played on our song “D.O.S.” the first song I’ve ever released without touching a guitar. Two fantastic musicians I want to continue making music with.

JR: Ethan did so much when it

came to troubleshooting stuff for our album, we learned so much from him when it comes to finding loops and breaks. His synth work on the album is amazing especially in the song “Margaux”, he composed this part for the outro which completely blew my mind when I first heard it.

RRX: Graffiti Chorus, your debut album, has been out for a bit now and it’s phenomenally put together. What was the recording situation like?

ML: The recording situation was about as dull as watching paint dry, but that’s exactly the way I prefer it. I save the “fun” for creating and performing. Most of, if not all takes, I do on any instrument, whether it be guitar, drums, bass, keys, etc., I’ll do over and over until it sounds as close to perfect as I can. It’s boring as hell, but the satisfaction of completing a song is more than worth it. Simple yet dynamic music, no gimmicks. Just keep a case of beer in the fridge and sit down till six a.m.

JR: I’d have to agree with Matt here the recording process was at times very drunk and very boring, but with moments of excitement when we did actually come across something cool sounding.

RRX: What are your plans for the future? Obviously, Joe currently plays with Senior Living as well but does The Classical have plans to play some shows again soon?

ML: We do plan on playing soon, we’re in the process of auditioning rhythm sections to play with us. The goal is to find a drummer and bassist who, like us, are losers who care about making music more than anything else, and we’re finally getting close to achieving that.

JR: Yeah, we’re trying to get a band going for 2022, we wanna get the live band just right for what we wanna do, so we wanna rehearse a lot before we play our first show.

RRX: Tell me a bit about Paintbox

Records and what it means to you guys as I know you both have involvement in the organization of the label.

ML: Paintbox Records was started by me, Joe, and our friend Brendan (Senior Living) about a year ago. Since then, we’ve accumulated four solid groups (five if you include Neon Novo), and I’m very pleased with how it’s been going. I think of the label as a big motivating machine, it gives artists incentive to deliver great products and potential to reach a wider audience. Also, not for nothing, it never hurts to say “I’m a co-owner of a record label” when talking to someone.

JR: Starting a label was always something I wanted to do eventually, and we are more than lucky to have the network of incredibly talented people that we have. This thing would be nothing if it weren’t for people like Gavin Brown who designed our logo

Continued on Page 45...



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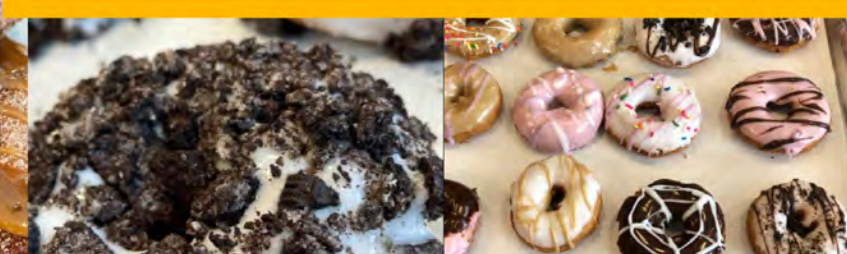
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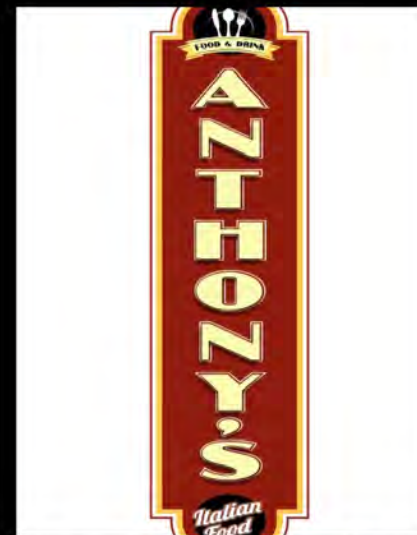
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After a year of delays, cancellations and virtual rearrangements following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York Comic Con finally returned in person this October for the first time since 2019.

While many comic conventions have been held throughout the country, allowing fans to meet famous guests, go to major panels and dress up as their favorite characters, NYCC has ranked as historically ranked the biggest in the nation, rivaled only by San Diego Comic Con, which cancelled its in-person convention earlier this year due to COVID.

The pandemic, as well as the conversion of convention's site, the Jacob Javits Center into a health facility, forced the con to go virtual last year, NYCC finally returned this year, albeit with reduced crowds.

While COVID-19 concerns forced fans to continue wearing masks

indoors, and show proof of vaccination upon entry, it also appears to have convinced some fans to stay home, as noticed by the lack of crowds at key events. Attendance rates were so low, that the convention didn't sell out of Sunday tickets until two days into the con.

Additionally, some of the bigger vendors opted not to make an appearance. Marvel and DC, both powerhouses in the superhero industry were noticeably absent from the event, as both companies instead chose to hold their own virtual conventions around the same time.

Regardless, longtime fans of the convention still returned in costume for the much awaited event. Multiple cosplayers dressed up as some of their favorite characters.

John Lopez dressed up as Spider-Man at the event. Lopez told The Xperience he felt a deep passion for the

character. "I've been into Spider-Man for as long as I can remember. Like a lot of the people, I feel these characters inspire people for different reasons," Lopez said.

This year was Lopez's first time at the convention. He said he was blown away by the size compared to other conventions. "It's overwhelming. It's definitely one of the bigger cons I've been to. Definitely a nice, spacious area, everything's where it's not too close together because a lot of the cons I've been to make you claustrophobic. So, it's definitely a lot bigger, a lot more fun," Lopez said.

Additionally, multiple vendors throughout the convention floor also showed up to the convention. Graham Hoppe represents Jack Kirby Museum, which commemorates the works of artist Jack Kirby, who co-created characters like the Avengers, Captain America, the X-Men and others. Posters and

t-shirts were sold by them as apart of Kirby's legacy. Hoppe said he hopes people learn about Kirby's legacy.

"We hope they learn about what a powerful creative person he was. That he didn't spend his career drawing other people ideas," Hoppe said. Hoppe, who had been to NYCC before said this year marked a welcomed return.

"It's great to be back, and we've changed our location here on the floor in the Javits Center. I can definitely see that the booths are more spread out and the aisles are wider. There's occasionally clumps of too many people," Hoppe said.

Some comic creators hoped to get more people interested in their works. Benny Powell was introducing his new comic, White Widow, a part of his Absolute Universe line of books, which was previously unveiled for the first time at a previous NYCC event. Powell said he was most looking forward to

seeing fan reactions to the event.

"I used to live here, so it's a nice comeback," Powell said. Powell did say he wished however that more fans were vaccinated so that masks would no longer be required by the Javits Center.

"I think they've taken as many precautions as they can. We have a vaccine and obviously if everyone took the vaccine we'd be much further along, and obviously we wouldn't have to wear masks," Powell said.

Some major panels did appear at the convention this year. An exclusive panel for the Wheel of Time, the upcoming Amazon Prime series was held. The series, based on the best-selling series of books by Robert Jordan about a world where only women are able to wield magic. Golden Globe winner and Oscar nominated actress Rosamond Pike stars in the lead role.

The panel itself was a pre-recorded Q&A, with Pike and other members of the cast taking questions. At the panel,

an exclusive clip from the series was shown. "Historically I'm not a big fan of fantasy, but this, changed my mind and traditionally any main character in a fantasy story is a man, so the fact that the mysterious person comes to town, and she's a woman," Pike said.

Additionally, the cast of The Boys, the hit show on Amazon Prime now on its second season, and soon to come out with its third season, made an appearance. Antony Starr, Erin Moriarty, Jack Quaid, Karen Fukuhara and Chace Crawford appeared on stage respectively.

"The first time we came to New York Comic Con, no one knew what this show was," Quaid said to a crowded group of enthusiastic fans at the panel.

Other guests at the convention included William Shatner, just one week before he became the oldest man to go into outer space. WWE superstar John Cena appeared for autographs, as did Hayden Christianson, who appeared as

a young Darth Vader in the Star Wars prequels.

George Takei appeared at a spotlight panel, and Stranger Things star David Harbor showed up to do autographs and photo opportunities. Other major movies made an appearance at the convention.

On Friday night, during a panel for the upcoming film, Ghostbusters: Afterlife, director Jason Reitman surprised an enthusiastic group of fans with a screening of the entire cut of the movie. The film is set to debut to the general public November 19.

Another highly anticipated film, Dune was also screened at the convention. The upcoming sci-fi epic takes place in a distant future, where a young boy who is fit to take his father's throne must fight armies of other worlds for the land he inhabits. The film is slated for wide release October 22.

One key addition was the Empire stage, now the biggest stage at Comic

Con, and meant to store hundreds of people. The addition opened early this year to the Javits Center, and became the go to area for major panels at 2021's New York Comic Con.

Some prominent artists were also featured at the convention like Marvel Comics artist Juan E. Ferreyra. Ferreyra talked to The Xperience exclusively. Ferreyra, who has been going to NYCC for seven years, said the con's in person return is completely welcomed.

"It's amazing. I just couldn't wait for it. Especially because artists are lonely all the time, they work alone, and seeing their faces, seeing their reactions is amazing," Ferreyra said.

Ferreyra said he hoped the convention served as an escape for fans from the pandemic. "Try to be out. Try to forget about COVID," Ferreyra said. "Face to face is the best thing."

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Observations and Ramblings From a Cranky Old Guy

BY JEFF SPAULDING

There's a good chance the individual I'm writing about may not be familiar to you. Especially if you are younger than me. And let's face it, EVERYONE is younger than me. But you need to read this to see what a class act, and professional, this individual was.

Let's set the scene first.

When it comes to news reporting and the media today, most of it is crap, compared to the 'Golden Days'. And while that's something an old fart like me would say, I believe it's true. And I say this as someone in the news media business.

On radio (and I am speaking in generalities), it's a limited amount of time to report a story, adding to the fact you need to get several stories in a particular newscast. You also have to keep in mind your core listeners and not piss them off with news, for example, they say is fake, or liberal/conservative leaning.

In television, it's pretty anchors with pretty smiles and not so pretty pictures.

There's an old phrase, "if it bleeds it leads." It is still true today.

That's just on the local scene.

I could mention any national news network or newscast, and chances are you have a good idea what their political leanings are. They have the right to present the news that way, and you have the right to watch that news if you believe in their beliefs.

But what happened to just present-

ing the news as just news?

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With no agenda.

You may not remember that time. I do. That brings us to the subject of this article

Long time television broadcaster Dick Wood recently passed away at 91. For years, Dick was the news anchor for WTEN, Channel 10 in Albany. I call him the last of the Old School Anchors, and not just locally. I equate Dick Wood with the late Ernie Tetrault of WRGB, Channel 6. And to a certain degree, the late Ed Dague of WNYT, Channel 13. They all fall into the class of national reporters like Walter Cronkite or Huntley and Brinkley.

When these guys read the news, there was no need to not believe every word they told you. There was no agenda. There was just the story. And no bullshit.

I first met Dick in the late 80's at a local telethon. He and I spent a few hours at the "fishbowl" accepting donations from little boys and girls. In between, we shared the most amazing dirty jokes.

Dick won every time. And when you have a ten-pound nut voice like he had they were even funnier.

A couple of years ago I got involved in a regular lunch session with retired (and like me still in the business) broadcasters. It was a joy to chat when Dick was there. Let me change that, it was a joy to let Dick tell his stories,

over and over again. They were just as funny (and yes some were dirty) as the first time. And with that huge booming voice, some of the old ladies looked on in shock, then smiled because "it was Dick Wood."

I went to Dick's wake, while waiting in line there were albums after albums after albums of photographs and articles about Dick's career. And in a tribute to the man that he was, it was a crowded house in the church that day.

I say this to ALL the young anchors and reading this.

Put down the makeup and tell me the story. It worked for many others in your field, maybe that should tell you something. I don't want happy talk, and I don't want smiles, I want News.

Oh, read your copy before you read it on the air, you won't sound as stupid.

Hey, who do I care who I offend?
 Be hearing you.





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Kenny Aronoff (Ctnd.)

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looking and going, who's playing bass? Don Was.

KA: Yep. He's the one that hired me.

RRX: Okay. Was (Not Was) was a big favorite of mine back in the day. Is he as just plugged into what works as I think he is?

KA: Absolutely. He's brilliant. He's the type of guy that, like a great movie director. They surround themselves with great talent and all they do is direct them to do their thing. Don is always, he said it in my autobiography, Sex, Drums, Rock 'n' Roll! He said, "Yeah, I hire Kenny. What am I gonna tell Kenny? He's gonna do whatever I'm thinking, and better." That's what Don said. "I hired Kenny 'cause I know he's gonna do the right thing."

I worked with him, oh my god, since 1989 now. That's a long time.

RRX: That's a long time.

KA: That's 30 years. When I worked with Don the first time, yeah, he was in Was (Not Was). He produced a Bonnie Raitt record called Nick of Time.

RRX: This household loves some Bonnie Raitt.

KA: Oh man, she's a riot. Man, I've had so much funny stories with her. But Don, when we were doing the Iggy Pop record, I was like Grammys Shammys. Who gives a shit? I just want to do this Iggy Pop record and get it right. I'm focusing.

Don had to leave one day to go to the Grammys. Then, all of a sudden, the engineer comes in – I pretty much had been doing overdubs or something – Ed Cherney, says, "Come in here! Don just won a Grammy!" We were like, oh my god! He's barefoot, got glasses on, hair all puffed out, Afro-ed out. He's being super cool. Then, he wins another Grammy.

Well, from that day forward,

everybody was calling him to produce their records and he was calling me, I'd say, 75% of the time. I was his guy.

RRX: A couple more things here. First, outside the travel, and the touring, and the things, and the stuff, you have been doing recording in your own studio.

KA: Oh yeah.

RRX: Do you have your own project coming out, or is this for other folks?

KA: I was recording yesterday for nine hours, some of the most intense stuff for movie and TV. I couldn't even finish doing four songs for another artist. This year, during COVID, I did three books. I did the audio version of my Sex, Drums, Rock 'n' Roll!, which you can get on Amazon or wherever.

RRX: I'll end the formal part of the interview because we all have something to say. When I say that, I mean something that you would like to be a statement about yourself, the world. Something really that's important to you that may not have to do with this particular business. If you had to leave a three-liner or a four-liner for the world to chew on, what would it be?

KA: Well, I have a statement that is a humbling statement I came up with. I tell people this. Look, life is full of challenges. The journey is not always fun. But we're here to learn and get the most value out of every experience. I don't believe in mistakes; I don't believe in failures. These are just experiences that get us to the next place. Sometimes, you have to repeat the same experience 100 times till you finally get it; that's fine. That's just the way life is.

The statement is, I will never be as great as I want to be, but I am willing to spend my entire life trying to be as great as I can be. That is everything I do.

Steve Conte (Ctnd.)

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something that you'd like people to know.

SC: Well, there's probably a couple of different ones. In life my motto is just be a righteous dude, you know? Be a good guy. There's so many people in this world where people just use other people for as much as they can and just kick them to the curb when they're done. I'm not one of those kind of people, and I really detest people who are. I've met them throughout my life and career. I just write those people off, they don't figure into my list of true friends

anyway. So, I'd say, you know? Do the right thing. You know when you're doing something sleazy and not cool. I try to lay everything out even if I'm asking for a favor of somebody. I'm not going to hide behind some fake thing and spring it out at the last minute, hey, how about this favor? I'll come right out and say hey, look you know, this is what I'm thinking. How do you feel about this? Honest communication. Be a good dude and please buy music again!

RRX: Thus endeth the interview.

The Classical (Ctnd.)

Continued from Page 33.

and merchandising, and Ethan Bedeau who mixed and mastered 3 of the 4 records that we put out this year.

RRX: Talk to me about some of your peers at Paintbox. Pencildive has a lot of traction but there are other great projects featured in the lineup as well.

ML: I adore all of our bands, but I'll leave the Senior Living portion to Joe since he has a bunch of firsthand experience with them. I play lead guitar for Pencildive's shows and having already been a fan of their music before playing with them, I think they have great music, very emotional. And then there's Mellophobic, in all of their psychedelic might. They're incredibly fun, and they write songs that allow every musician to show off a bit, which I always love.

JR: I've been a member of Senior Living for the past four months or so and it's been such a rush playing with Zac, Brendo, and Jordan almost every weekend, we have a fast hard hitting live show that doesn't let up and it's a blast playing guitar and performing with those lovely gents every weekend.

I fell in love with Pencildive right when I first heard them. Gina's songwriting is so beautifully layered, textured and just straight up catchy and it was a no brainer to ask them to join the collective. Ryan and Zach are also extremely tasteful as a rhythm section and Matt's added a great layer of guitar to their live performances recently too. And Mellophobic are not mortal, their riffs leave audiences gob-smacked and horrified (in a very very good way). They're on a bit of a hiatus right now but I can't wait for them to be doing shows again.

RRX: What are some of your favorite local bands outside of the Paintbox lineup?

ML: Great Pacific Garbage Patch and Proximity Crush are my two local unsigned favorites. I would love to hear more from both.

JR: GPGP and P-Crush are two big favorites of mine as well, I've been listening to The Droogz a lot lately, also Jake Nitti's project "Plano Stano" has two new tracks out that are just brilliant. Lemon of Choice is awesome too!

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