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June 2023  
Vol. 5, Issue 6

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# Dogs in a Pile

*Brian Murray on the Love of music and the love of Rye Bread*

BY ROB SMITTIX

Brian Murray. Photo by Nick Codina

**RRX:** You're on the road right now?  
**BM:** Yeah, moving right now actually.

**RRX:** How's tour life been treating you?

**BM:** It's been great! It's been a big year for us. We've got like 130 shows so far, that are booked. Between last year and this year we'll hit about 40 states.

**RRX:** That's it? Jesus!

**BM:** We're flying to Iceland soon, which will be our first time really abroad. We did Jam Cruise which was technically out of the country but...

**RRX:** Iceland, wow that's interesting.

**BM:** Yup with The Disco Biscuits.

**RRX:** That's awesome!

**BM:** Yeah pretty crazy.

**RRX:** It doesn't get much better than that! Obviously it's all about music for the most part but I've been on mini-tours and such myself, not anything big but... what do you find yourself doing when you're not actually on stage in your downtime?

**BM:** Well right now Jeremy (Kaplan), who is our keys player and our photographer are in the back of the bus writing a song, right now. We do that a lot we'll write music. I like to go to different museums in cities and check out landmarks and all of that. Just exploring the country you've heard about your whole life but never actually got to see until now.

**RRX:** It's nice when you actually have that kind of time. I find like when we were on tour that food was one of the main things we'd like to enjoy from different regions. Like finding the cuisine that represents the area.

**BM:** I like going to the coastal places that have seafood, that's my favorite. We're in the South right now in Alabama and we have some killer barbeque last night. Getting BBQ in the South is amazing. Colorado had some great food too. Getting great food on the road is a big part of it.

**RRX:** It is. What's been a highlight of this tour so far?

**BM:** Recently we got to play in Ventura, California at the Skull and Roses

Festival. We got to meet so many great people that we always heard about our whole lives. Like Phil Lesh from The Grateful Dead. We met Bill Walton. I actually went up to Bill Walton and I was going to say something but before I got to say anything he said "you're in that dogs band, right?" I was like yeah! He said "you guys are f\*\*king awesome!"

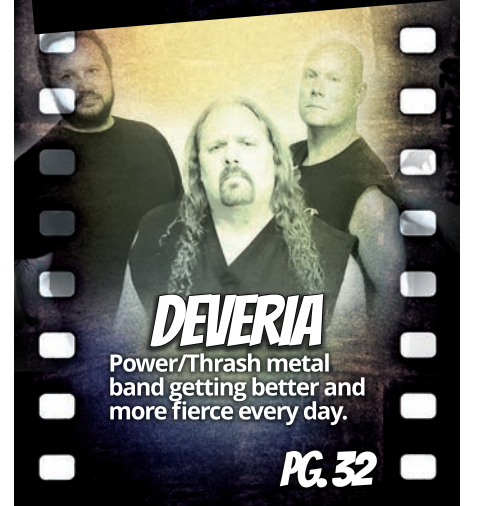
**RRX:** That's incredible!

**BM:** Hell yeah, it was so cool!

**RRX:** And coming from him that dog's band description is good enough.

**BM:** I also got to meet other people from The Grateful Dead world, like Trixie Garcia (Jerry Garcia's daughter), Robert Hunter's daughter and Dennis McNally (Grateful Dead publicist).

**RRX:** That's pretty dam cool. Especially when you're out there doing your thing and they actually pay attention and listen. That's one of the things I've noticed playing with big names, a lot of time they don't even listen to your set. They're off doing their own thing but those few times when their acknowledge you and say that you killed it up there! That's a





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reward that you could never put a price tag on.

**BM:** It's cool!

**RRX:** Any horror stories from this tour?

**BM:** Not from this tour, not yet. It's weird I don't know what to call a tour any more because we just have multiple month runs with a four day break in between. So it's basically like one gigantic year long tour.

**RRX:** It kind of all blurs in together.

**BM:** I don't know, we've had crazy trailer issues, where we are stuck on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere in Ohio or something, in the cold. Having to unload the whole trailer on the road with the risk of getting hit. Or the van will break down or something. We had to cancel our first show ever due to weather. We were in Steamboat Springs, CO going to Crested Butte the next day. There was a massive snow storm, I've never seen anything like it. Everywhere you looked outside of the van was just complete white, you could not see the road. We were following another car and we couldn't even see the car. We had to cancel, it was like that for hours all the way to Crested Butte.

**RRX:** Well, better safe than dead.

**BM:** But no real nightmares.

**RRX:** Well, we're glad your tour is going to lead you to Rye Bread Festival July 27-29. I'm not sure which day you're playing on but... I was told I should specifically talk to you because of your important history with Rye Bread. Can you tell us about that?

**BM:** Yes, Rye Bread was one of the very first shows I played with Dogs in a Pile. The first time I actually ever played a show with them was January of that year and I think Rye Bread was in June. I didn't see them for a couple of months since that January and they just continued as a four piece for a while. We didn't really think that the five piece was something that was going to work. We played a couple of shows in Vermont in May and things were really starting to click. I

was just going along as a friend to hop on with them to experience being on the road. I sat in a couple of times and you could feel something building. When June came along I did a couple of little small shows where I sat in for like two songs. But Rye Bread was the first time that I sat in for a whole set.

**RRX:** Ah, okay!

**BM:** I had just written this song 'Can't Wait For Tonight,' which is a song from our first album. In the real early days it served as a theme of what was happening with the band. I wrote that about The Dogs before I was in The Dogs.

**RRX:** No kidding!

**BM:** I would go to see the band. I was a fan and good friends with them and I would make music with them all of the time. So Rye Bread was really special. I remember meeting Tony Markellis that day, he was playing for The Trey Anastasio Band. It was the first time that I really experienced... I don't know I had this really magical feeling. I walked out into the woods as they were playing their second set and just had this moment of total awe and inspiration. I knew it was something that I needed to keep doing.

**RRX:** What year was that?

**BM:** That was June of 2019. It was Brooklyn Bowl shortly after that in July and every show since then has been full shows for me.

**RRX:** So cool well Rye Bread is in it's 47th year and it's going to be bigger and better than ever!

**BM:** Nice, Rye Bread! I don't think there's been a show in Upstate New York that we haven't had someone scream Rye Bread from the crowd.

**RRX:** It's like saying Aloha in Hawaii. It's a greeting.

**BM:** It's funny I remember walking to a pond at Rye Bread to go fishing and there were a bunch of giant loaves of Rye Bread floating in the water. I don't know if that's a tradition but I hope to see it this year.




  
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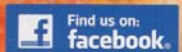
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# Christopher Gaunt & Joe Gietl

*“The Fledgling” - Vampire miniseries in neo-noir*

BY LIAM SWEENEY

**V**ampires. Did you know the first local vampire came out of his grave at Albany Rural Cemetery in June of 1887? No? Prove me wrong, go ahead. But in seriousness, vampires have clung not only to our necks, but our hearts as well.

Christopher Gaunt and Joe Gietl are in the process of raising the undead in our area, for a vampire-inspired new miniseries called “The Fledgling.”

I connect with them, and we talk makeup and empty mirrors.

**RRX:** It’s always cool to find out that filming is happening in the area, but sometimes we, and I mean everyday residents, are the last to know. So while we have you in the hot seat, tell us a little bit about your project, *The Fledgling*. What is it, and what is it about?

**JG:** First off, thank you so much Liam for giving us the opportunity to speak about our project happening right here in Albany! *The Fledgling* is an eight-part episodic miniseries that I began writing back in 2020. It’s about an orphan girl named Charlie, who after discovering her long lost father is alive, sets out on a cross-country road trip to find him. Her guides: two three-hundred-year-old vampires, one of which has recently turned her into a fledgling. Together they travel the roads of a dying America all the while being pursued by a private investigator, hired by a shadowy organization growing closer in the rearview mirror. *The Fledgling* is a coming-of-age story with a vampire twist. A neo-noir thriller with a conspiracy lurking in the background. It’s epic in scale but rooted in

character. And at its core it’s about the importance of keeping a tender heart in an often times cruel world, and the struggle to not become set in our ways. It’s a journey that I believe has a little bit of something for everyone.

**CG:** I couldn’t agree more with Joe, that *The Fledgling* has a little bit of something for everyone. That is one of the major reasons I wanted to work with Joe on this episodic. I really didn’t have an interest in doing a vampire story that had been told before. What Joe has crafted here really is so unique, and well thought out in every possible way.

**RRX:** We’ve, most of us, grown up with vampire stories. Some have mostly known them as supernatural villains; others, as sympathetic anti-heroes. But every film or show portrays vampires differently, with a new take on vampirism. What is new about this vampire story? What sets it apart?

**JG:** What intrigues me about vampires is that even though they are supernatural creatures, their problems can be transposed easily onto human issues. For instance, their need for blood could be akin to something like addiction. Specifically with *The Fledgling*, I knew I wanted vampires to act as a vehicle to tell a very human story. I have to be careful to not talk my way into spoilers, but what I will disclose is that the reason Charlie is being pursued is grounded in science, that gives the story a unique real world component amidst the more fantastical elements. Additionally, the way mirrors interact with our characters is different than anything I’ve seen portrayed. I was intrigued by the idea of a teenage



**The Fledgling. Photo provided.**

girl that already feels unseen by the world, now literally finding herself invisible. What effect would that have on a person with an already tenuous grasp of self? And how may it interact with feelings of dissociation and disconnection?

**RRX:** This miniseries has a pretty impressive cast. And lest I forget somebody, I’ll pass the spotlight for you to shine on the stars. Who are we going to see when this goes to the theater, or Netflix, or it’s played on the sides of mausoleums like drive-throughs?

**JG:** Funny you should say that. We’ve actually spoke with Albany Rural Cemetery about doing a screening so you might not be far off with mausoleums... The film stars the legendary Juliet Landau aka Drusilla of Buffy

The Vampire fame, and a superbly talented young actress named Anastasia Veronica Lee in the lead role of Charlie. The terrific Lynda Suarez plays the role of Nurse Hadley, and our Executive Producer Mr. Chris Gaunt himself takes up the role of Father Donovan. Speaking of, I’d be remiss to not mention the rest of our hard working crew of talented producers. This includes Cameron Mitchell of CSM Productions, as well as Jim Powers, and John Stegemann of Westfield Films. These four gentlemen went above and beyond for this project, wearing multiple hats to help bring it to life.

**RRX:** The miniseries is being filmed entirely in the 518 area code. Local. Much of it was shot in the Albany Academy. How much help did you

get from the area? Are you from the area? And not to compound questions (or maybe to do so) had you considered any other place to film because it would've been easier, cheaper, etc?

**JG:** I am from the Albany area and went to school in Guelderland. We always knew we wanted to shoot the proof of concept film here. For convenience and cost sake it made perfect sense to do it locally. Albany Academy was extremely accommodating to us and truly a stunning location to have access to. I'd also like to mention the incredible contributions of Steven O'Conner, as well as my friend Beth Hinde, who acted as a producer on my previous film A Void. Steven and Beth both came on board as associate producers during postproduction, and have been nothing short of fantastic to work with. Heidi Eklund has done an incredible job as our casting director, encouraging us to dream big. And Cody Cichowski and Mark Baechle

worked absolute magic in the sound department. Finally, Film Albany and the folks at 518 Film Network have just been incredibly supportive of this endeavor since day one. It was truly a team effort on this project. As we expand into making the full episodic series, I'm sure it'll be a more complex discussion if we're to film everything locally, as some of the locations in the later episodes would be tricky to pull off. With that said, this will always be home and we would love the opportunity to bring it here in all it's glory.

**CG:** Yep! It truly has been all hands deck to get this ambitious project off the ground. It is so exciting though, to watch it all come together after dreaming about in a coffeeshop with Joe last winter. I can tell you nothing in this business is easy, but our team has worked hard to put ourselves in the position to succeed, and we look forward to the challenge of bringing the full episodic series to fruition! To answer

your question about where we grew up, I myself moved around a lot as a kid. My family finally landed in Central, NY and then I went to college in Buffalo. In my business career, it was a similar dynamic, before settling into the (518) with my wife and two kids in 2001. We have been here ever since and I have done a number of films in the (518). I truly love making films here. We have an amazing network of actors, crew and locations to choose from, so it really is an amazing filmmaking community to be part of. There are so many wonderful projects emerging from the area, and The Fledgling is a prime example of that.

**RRX:** This is where you answer what I didn't ask. Comments? Remarks? Educate, enlighten, emote – the floor is yours.

**JG:** Thank you so much Liam for the opportunity to articulate our passion for this project! It's been three years of work for me to get to this point,

but I couldn't be more excited for the future of The Fledgling. Regarding the published book, illustrated beautifully by my friend Victoria Jochowitz, be on the lookout for that to hit bookstore shelves in the coming months as we get further down the line with the TV series! Lastly, I just want to say I feel incredibly grateful to be part of a team and a community that uplifts and supports filmmakers the way the Albany film scene does. I don't think it's necessarily commonplace to have that dynamic everywhere, but I think that the mentality that's being fostered here is beautiful. The local film scene is as strong as it's ever been, and Chris and I are excited by the prospect of bringing something truly special to the area.

If you have interest in supporting this project you can connect with us @ fledgling\_series on Instagram and Facebook. Or send us an email at [thefledglingseries@gmail.com](mailto:thefledglingseries@gmail.com)



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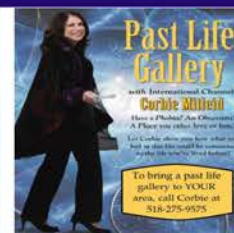


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# Andy Hearn

*Capital Region  
Timekeepers*

BY OP CALLAGHAN

Andy Hearn. Photo provided.

I have a four year old daughter, who is basically my shadow on the weekends. A busy life during the week often robs us of quality time together, so I try to make it up to her on my days off. We usually try to get to the museum or the library, as it's always a good lesson in being quiet and developing self control. She is very energetic, loves music, drums, singing and dancing, but knows that the library is supposed to be a calm, peaceful place. That is, until Andy Hearn shows up. We were just entering our local library, when we heard the faint sounds of The Old Time Dance Band, who were performing a special show that day. My daughter's eyes lit up, and she ran for the entrance, and began to jump and dance in the hallway. The band played great; especially Andy, who used various percussion instruments, rim shots and cymbal chokes to give it that authentic sound. When they finished playing, my daughter crept a little closer, and informed me that the drummer was playing

"sparkly silver". I recognized Andy from seeing him play multiple times with The Tom Healy Band, as well as Charlie Smith. He's a great player, and I really love his playing. Andy manages to sound precise, appear loose, and drives without being overbearing. And, he's the drummer for one of my favorite new bands, The Hawthorns. So let's hear it for Andy Hearn, the only drummer I know who doesn't get "sshhh'd" at the library!

**RRX:** How did you get your start on the drums?

**AH:** I grew up in the small town of Stratford, NY where I joined the school band in 4th grade. There was an older kid named Scott Allen in the percussion section who played tritoms in the marching band. I would watch him play when we marched and thought he was the coolest. Then a few years later our school combined with Dolgeville Central where Glenn Ceglia taught.

Glenn could really play and knew about all the great drummers. He was a

fantastic teacher who took the time to inspire me and help all his students develop strong fundamentals.

**RRX:** Who were some of your early influences?

**AH:** Through friends, I was listening to bands like AC/DC, KISS, Foreigner, The Cars, Motley Crue, Metallica and Rush. The drums always stood out to me when listening to those bands. At the same time, my parents played a lot of music at home. They had records by the Beatles, Paul Simon, Simon & Garfunkel, Michael Franks, Robert Cray, Carole King, James Taylor and Chuck Mangione so I was definitely influenced by Ringo, Steve Gadd, Russ Kunkel and the other drummers who played on those albums. I also checked out Tommy Lee, Lars Ulrich, Jeff Percaro, Ginger Baker, Bonham, Chris Layton....my influences were sort of all over the place.

**RRX:** Tell me about your first band, first gig.

**AH:** I jammed with some friends in

high school but didn't really form a real band until college. There I met some guys from the Long Island area and we formed a group that played parties and bars. It was a great band to play with.... we did covers from Phish, Kansas, CSNY, Black Crowes, Eagles, some blues, etc. We have messaged each other recently, kidding about a reunion. It would actually be fun to get together with them to catch up and play.

**RRX:** Talk about some of the bands you've been in, and who you're playing with now.

**AH:** I've been fortunate to play with some nice groups over the years. The Tom Healy Band was an absolute blast. I'm a blues fan and Tom chose great songs. I just loved playing the song Five Long Years with him....he killed it! He also was a strong writer and put out two CDs. I played on the first one called Pearl Street. Jason Ladanye, Adam Graham, George Deveny and sometimes Keith Pray were in the group around that time. The gigs were



musical and really fun....Tom and Adam especially knew how to have a good time and get the band smiling and laughing.

Arc was another group I was in for several years. Jack Nemier was the song writer, however, we all made creative contributions with our parts. Jack is a creative songster with an eclectic mix of styles. Arc wrote and recorded 3 CDs, played live on WEQX a few times, had some songs on local radio and opened for some national touring bands. The highlight for me was opening for King's X at Northern Lights. Their drummer Jerry Gaskill liked our band and took some time to chat with us.

Local blues legend Charlie Smith hired me to play drums on and off for the past 25 years. He recently passed.... RIP. It was an education and a pleasure to play with Charlie.

Most recently I have recorded drums on the last 4 CDs for Tas Cru

(SubCat Records based in Syracuse). Each one has been a great experience! Tas lives in the Lake Ontario area and tours internationally. He has some touring drummers that go on the road with him but has been very kind, inviting me to play on his albums. Living so far apart has changed the creative process. Instead of getting together several times to play and write, he records himself singing and playing guitar, adds a description of what he's looking for in each song and sends the recordings to me. In the weeks before the recording sessions, I listen to the songs and imagine different ways that I can play to support his vision. We then do a couple of rehearsals as the sessions draw near to make sure the grooves and arrangements are solid. This last album was especially rewarding because Bruce Katz was the piano/organ player. He has played with many great bands including Delbert McClinton and The Allman Brothers Band. It was

a thrill to work alongside him and hear how he created his parts. Tas' music is played regularly on XM Satellite

Radio (BB King Bluesville station). I love being involved in the making of his CDs.

Aside from those projects, I also love playing jazz. That genre is deep with a rich history. I'm a regular drummer with Katalyst (formerly Jon LeRoy Trio), The Dave Fisk Quartet, and the John Savage Quartet. Between those groups and freelancing I've been getting out to play pretty often.

**RRX:** Any upcoming gigs where we can hear you?

**AH:** Yes! The Hawthornes at Helnderberg Mountain Brewing on June 10, and I'm

at 9 Maple Ave on Jazz Fest weekend in Saratoga June 23 & 24th. The first night is with Katalyst and the following night with the Dave Fisk Quartet. Come on out!

**RRX:** What's your favorite gig sto-

ry? Horror or otherwise.

**AH:** Ok, I'll go with the horror story! Several years ago, I was on the road with a traveling theater company in Europe (my good friend Chad Ploss got me the gig). We were in Lisbon, Portugal for about a week. Everyone wanted to go out and have a good time while we weren't playing a show. One afternoon a bunch of us went to the beach and laid in the sun for hours. I'm a pretty fair skinned guy and the sun was intense that day. I got a bad sunburn and before we returned to do the show I drank a fair amount of tap water. Anyway, later that evening I was feeling nauseous at show time. We didn't have a sub for me and there was a large audience waiting. The pit was not very low at this theater so I could see people and I imagine they could see me too. I needed a bucket next to me in case I got sick and well....yup I did get sick between songs and felt pretty awful. That was a long and embarrassing show!

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# Nocturnne

*Natalie Kurgan talks the inspiring wild, and the value of connection.*



BY ROB SMITTIX

Natalie Kurgan. Photo by Stephanie J. Bartik

**RRX:** Stephane J Bartik turned me on to your music because she did some photos for you. So I said yes let's talk with Natalie.

**NK:** That's awesome she's great!

**RRX:** Absolutely. Stephanie and I have teamed up to do these features together. I'm happy to be chatting with you today. I've been listening to your music for a while but how would you describe your sound? And you go under the name Nocturnne.

**NK:** Yeah, Nocturnne, there's an extra N in there. For the music I'm writing now I describe it as folk. Somebody called it forest folk once, I don't know what that is but that sounds nice.

**RRX:** It does.

**NK:** Yeah, that sounds like what I'm about. I grew up listening to the

great folk of the 60's and 70's and when I sat down to write music for the first time I didn't think I was going to be a folk musician. I just wrote and that's how it came out. I think it's pretty clear where my influences came from. So I just kind of rolled with it. I get a lot of my inspiration from the wilderness. I do a lot of my writing while hiking or camping, you probably get that in some of the songs.

**RRX:** Yes, I could definitely tell. I get the impression that you are fairly young, considering a lot of times when you think of folk music, you think of an older crowd with that. But we've got to keep it alive!

**NK:** I think so. I'm 31 and I'm thinking I'm going to bring folk back.

**RRX:** You got to do it. Right now, I

know that punk-folk music has its own thing going on but I don't want to see true folk music become a thing of the past.

**NK:** I don't know what genre my music will eventually fall into but the feeling and the inspiration of the music is what I feel aligns with true folk music. Same message.

**RRX:** Speaking of messages, is there a message or image that you are trying to convey? Or are you just kind of doing your thing?

**NK:** It's interesting. I don't try to but all of my writing seems to come out with sort of the same message. To get back to what's important in our lives. In our society we get so fixated on making the money and running the rat-race, getting the possessions and all of

the things that really don't matter. I guess it's easy for me to say it doesn't matter because I have enough. So I'd take that with a grain of salt but I feel what matters is our connection to the Earth, to each other and to ourselves; we've let that go. That's generally where my music is coming from.

**RRX:** I agree with you on that take. I'm not really all about the money, I just need what I need to get by. I'm one of those people too, I feel like I pretty much have everything I need except for more expensive recording equipment but besides that. But I don't think the general consensus is the one that we are taking. Unfortunately, I think most people are roped into the ways of the world.

**NK:** For sure. I just actually came

back from abroad for work and I was in Thailand for a week. I was just blown away by the people there who embodied the message of my music. They have very little but they are so grateful for what they have and they don't want more. They're just loving and kind. Everything I think we should try to be.

**RRX:** It's incredible. I seen that you've been traveling, I've seen that you were in Japan as well recently.

**NK:** Yeah, Australia, Thailand and Japan. It was quite a long month but it was really phenomenal.

**RRX:** That's cool. I don't know what you do for work but when you go on trips like that you must be pretty important.

**NK:** I'm an engineer. I have to go train customers how to use our software. It's pretty cool they send me all over the place.

**RRX:** Wow. That is pretty cool. So someone that is so in touch with nature can also be in touch with technology and the new world that we live in.

**NK:** Engineering for me is problem solving. I have to keep my brain busy.

**RRX:** That makes sense. So how long have you been doing music?

**NK:** I started off as a classical pianist when I was about 6 years old. I mean I wasn't a classical pianist at 6 but I started learning. That was really my passion for a long time. I picked up the guitar when I was 26 or 27. No 28... I only picked it up a few years ago. At the same time I picked up the bass guitar and I picked up some drumsticks. Anything that I could get my hands on and learn. But yeah... my background is classical piano. I played in orchestras on really grand stages for a number of years.

**RRX:** I'm impressed and jealous because I've been playing guitar probably longer than you've been alive and I'm not that good. I'm stuck!

**NK:** (Laughs) I started writing music not quite a year ago, last May.

**RRX:** So you've just started

writing?

**NK:** Yeah, well a friend of mine is a song writer in an indigenous band, he's phenomenal and he's been telling me for several years that I need to start writing. I was like No, it was just really intimidating. I wanted to start writing for a while, I was just intimidated by it. One day I sat down and I wrote a song. I was like, you know? It doesn't suck. So, I should write another one.

**RRX:** Well, your friend was right. I give your friend a lot of credit there because now you're actually doing it. The sky is the limit from here.

**NK:** Yeah, I think so. As long as I don't intimidate myself out of it.

**RRX:** Now, where are you located? Where are you based out of?

**NK:** Right now I'm in Rome, New York, about an hour east of Syracuse.

**RRX:** I'm familiar with it. They had this concert there once that didn't go very well.

**NK:** Oh no. Okay I'm not from

Rome.

(Both Laugh)

**RRX:** They should never try to do Woodstock again. Just let it be.

**NK:** I think so.

**RRX:** So what do you foresee for yourself and your music in the near future. Do you have any particular plans or are you just rolling with the punches?

**NK:** I don't do anything half way. I decided a year ago to start writing music and I'm all in. This is what I'm doing now. That's why I've got an album out pretty much a year after I started. I'd love to tour around playing shows but I'm just happy getting my music out there and to find anybody that enjoys it. It fulfills me so much. To play great shows and big venues would be really fun and awesome but I'm happy also just where I'm at.



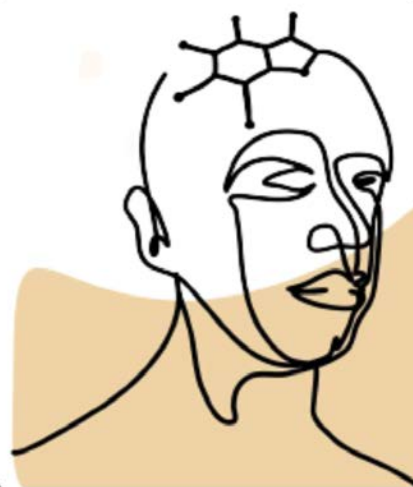
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# Joe Lovano & Ralph Lalama

*A special edition of 'The Heights'*

BY JOE BARNA



Joe Lovano & Ralph Lalama. Photos provided by Joe Lovano.

I'd like to pose a question to you, the reader? If presented the opportunity to see Eric Clapton and Joe Bonamassa or John Coltrane and Dexter Gordon or Jeff Beck and Stevie Ray Vaughan in a one time only performance, on the same stage, at a club in the capital region, for a minimal fee... Would you go? What if food was included? How about you have the chance to meet them before, on the break or after the show...Would you get

your tickets immediately? What if the concert was purposely scheduled on an off night like a Tuesday to minimize the chance of a conflict? Does any of the above entice your senses?

I know, I know, I know... Impossible.

So what is the point in asking such an absurd question?

Well, I have exciting news for you. Coming on Tuesday, June 13th will be 2 of music history's most in demand, respected and iconic personalities.

Combined with over 60 albums as leaders, nearly 10 Grammy Awards and resumes that would make most people's jaws hit the pavement these performers have literally done it all. From world tours to legendary recording careers these esteemed gents have accomplished just about everything one could ever dream and more.

Ladies and gentlemen...Let me introduce to you saxophonists, educators, recording artists, composers and all around wonderful humanitarians, the iconic Joe Lovano (tenor sax) and Ralph Lalama (tenor sax). Now, please buckle up and put your seats in the upright position...You're about to embark on quite a journey.

But first, a little background on what this performance means to me.

Back in 1989 a young man from Lansingburgh, NY decided to take up the drums. Coming from a poor family this kid needed something to distract him from those activities that could eventually destroy any chance of success entering adulthood. So, why not music? Seemed harmless enough. It also encouraged growth on multiple levels...Make new friends, develop a skill, possibly earn a living and maybe have the honor to record some albums along the way. Sounded far more promising than being put in a boys home, getting into drugs and experiencing jail time. This was the future path ahead had it not been for the support of 2 amazing human beings. The first was his mother, who through every trial never wavered in her devotion to her son. The 2nd was a music teacher, who although didn't know the young man, but knew of his troubles gave him an opportunity to reset and begin a new path to-

wards bettering himself.

By now you might have guessed that the troubled individual referenced above is none other than me, Joe Barna. Although this article isn't necessarily about me, I'd like to put into focus how one might perceive the unlikelihood that a kid such as myself would ever have the honor to share a stage with luminaries such as Joe Lovano and Ralph Lalama. I for one could have never imagined the day that I'd be announcing these 2 giants as the front-line for a performance in my hometown. But, when the right influences descend on your life, at precisely the exact moment, anything you dream is possible. Who are these 2 angels that saved my life as a young man and afforded me the promise of a newer, more rewarding future? My mother Pamela Rose Barna and my very first mentor of music, Kevin Champagne. Had it not been for their exhaustive love, patience and compassion I would not be composing this article. Thank You and I love you.

Now, enough about me and onto the reason I'm typing all of these letters, words and spaces...

What can one say about Joe Lovano that hasn't already been written? He's an innovator, master improviser, accomplished composer, bandleader, clinician, recording artist and just about everything else you'd expect from someone who is considered the voice of his generation. Born in Cleveland, Ohio on December 29th, 1952 his dedication and passion for music would eventually lead to performances and recordings with legends the likes of Mel Lewis, Woody Herman, Tony Bennett, John Scofield, McCoy Tyner,

Diana Krall, Herbie Hancock and many others. To say Lovano is a true master of his craft would be the understatement of the century. He's been there, done that and is still carving his way into the vast history of jazz music.

Let's talk about the one and only Ralph Lalama.

If there's one person who has taught me how to play jazz with passion, integrity, fire, control, creativity and a relentless sense of swing it is saxophonist Ralph Lalama. I first heard Ralph during a masters recital while in my first semester in the fall of 1999 at SUNY Purchase. He was the lead voice in a quartet led by pianist Pete Malinverni. It was the very first time I'd heard up close and personal what the tenor sax was really supposed to sound like in a jazz context. His husky tone, infectious swing feel, infinite ideas that seemed to flow like water from a dam and control of the instrument reached deep inside me like nothing I

had previously experienced. Shortly after this performance I introduced myself, asking if he would consider playing on my first recording as a leader. Like waiting for a potential bride's response I was quite nervous inside. All of a sudden I heard the words that would resonate in my soul the rest of eternity..."Sure..I'll do it. Why the hell not."

It's been 24 years now since that day and I can honestly say that Ralph Lalama is my musical father. He has always been honest, transparent and has never told me what I wanted to hear, only what he knew I needed to hear at the time. He's a great friend and someone I look to when in need of answers.

But, who is Ralph Lalama the musician?

Well, for starters he is one of the longest consistent members in the saxophone section for the world famous Village Vanguard Orchestra. He's also been a first call frontline voice for

nearly every major artist of his era and beyond including Kenny Barron, Buddy Rich, Barry Harris, Carmen McRae, Mel Torme, Joe Morello, The Joe Lovano Nonet, Carnegie Hall Jazz Ensemble, Woody Herman, Tom Harrell and too many others to list. A true warrior of the music and an inspiration to over 3 generations of aspiring improvisers, Lalama continues to forge ahead as one of his era's greatest soloists and creative voices.

Now, onto the show...

If you are still on the fence about whether or not to attend this show you might want to seek immediate medical attention, as your brain might not be operating to its full capacity. It is rare to hear iconic figures the likes of Joe Lovano and Ralph Lalama together in an intimate setting such as this. I began working on getting this concert booked in 2010 and could never get the details worked out to everyone's satisfaction. But, now here we are and it's

popping off like a cork from a champagne bottle. Plus, there will be the opportunity to meet the artists, hear 2 sets of music for the price of 1 set in NYC and dinner is included for those who purchase tickets ahead of the show. That's the deal of the year for live jazz in Troy, NY.

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# Deveria

*Power/thrash with an ever-evolving keener edge talks the scene*

BY LIAM SWEENEY

Deveria. Photo provided.

**W**e lean over the opened hoods of muscle cars, tossing numbers in the air like 426 and 3.0 liter, and we marvel at how that combination of numbers and constants and forces can combine and take a quarter mile in fourteen seconds. Heavy metal is no different, except the numbers are 4/4 and 134 beats per minutes, and the result takes you into a mosh pit in as little as three seconds.

Deveria is well versed in the numbers of music, and what they do to one's willingness to get in and let it all go. This upstate power/thrash band is

on a long road.

I sit with John Suski, Deveria and we talk pit stops.

**RRX:** In 2010, you took an eight year hiatus as a band, and came back in 2010 with substantial lineup changes. This sounds like you're describing just starting a new band. Are some or all of the same songs in play? Is there a thread that runs through the old stuff and the new stuff where I would listen and go 'yup, that's Deveria?'

**JS:** A lot of the original songs are still played as they are on our first album, along with some new material from when the band formed in it's

current and best lineup to date. Listening to that album now, for me, it's easy to pick out which songs are the newer ones. They have a sharper edge to their sound and tend to be more dynamic and grow as the song progresses. We have definitely grown into this style more as we go. But we are not adverse to a straight up, in your face monster, that is fast and heavy throughout. Overall, between the guitars and vocals, that "sound" carries over all our songs, no matter the style. But as far as trying to pinpoint any particular theme? That is almost impossible for us.

**RRX:** You guys are influenced by a lot of the same bands that I was influenced by, not in music, but in life: Queensryche, Metallica, Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath, to name a few. When you're heavily influenced by more than one major band, does one of those bands tend to lead you, or do they collectively create a sound greater than themselves?

**JS:** I like to think of all our influences as different paints on a pallet. We all can try and paint a specific landscape scene, but everyone's will have subtle differences, depending on how much of each paint you use. As a band



we all seem to enjoy a lot of the same “core” metal bands, (Iron Maiden, Metallica, Exodus, Fates Warning, etc). But I think it is more the bands that we don’t share together, (some of which would shock most people), that we bring to the table, is what really makes us different from other bands.

**RRX:** One of the bitches of getting older is that you can lose touch with a scene if it caters to the young; or rather, those with young backs. The local metal scene was everything when I was growing up – Saratoga Winners was still around. Now it’s a new scene, and we got Empire Live and Empire Underground... is this driving a new metal scene?

**JS:** Absolutely! And I would like to point out, that it is not just the venues, but there are some awesome people, (Mike Valente for one), personally responsible for keeping this going. I missed out on a lot of it back in the day. I joined the Navy right out of high

school, and was pretty much absent from the scene up here for about 20 years. I hear stories all the time about the way it was, some good, some horrible. And from what I can gather, it seems that it is a much tighter community now.

**RRX:** Deveria is an American melodic power/thrash band. And power in a band comes from the emerging of flesh and steel, will and wire. Equipment and gear makes a big contribution to any band’s sound, but in a power/thrash band, the right equipment can take the place of an army. Can you tell us something interesting about your gear?

**JS:** I play the drums, and I have gone through many styles of how I set them up over the years. From tiny little 4 piece kits, to massive 12 piece prog beasts. As I have gotten older, I tend to stick with a 7 piece, that more than gets the job done, but isn’t too crazy. I absolutely have to have two separate

kick drums. I own a double pedal, but I don’t like the way it feels compared to two individual pedals. Lots of younger bands nowadays use smaller kits, which is cool, it works for them, but it is not for me. The big kit just screams metal when looking at it from the crowd. But as far as sound, I always stick with Evans G2 heads, which make my Pearl kit punchy, and for cymbals, I recently switched over to Meinl Custom Darks (I love these, they cut through the mix without overtaking the guitars), along with some personal custom made cymbals from Soultone.

**RRX:** Deveria was nominated for a 2022 Listen Up award, which is the first award show of its kind, from Radioradiox. It was homegrown strictly, meaning the station didn’t have anything to do with who was nominated or voted on. Do you have anything you can say to the people who nominated you? Care to nominate a band for next

time?

**JS:** I was super honored to even be thought of. It was a shock for sure. Typically, when you see these type of local voting polls, metal bands are not even a thought. They are not mainstream enough to get the crowds like the other styles you will typically see at all the outdoor stages in the warmer months. So it was surprising to see Deveria, along with some other local metal bands be nominated. That being said. I would love to see the poll maybe split off into separate genres. Let’s be honest, I have no delusions on how awesome we are (I’m kidding of course), but no original metal band is ever gonna beat out a pop cover band when it comes to popularity contests. But the metal fans are die-hard for sure, and it would be interesting to see.



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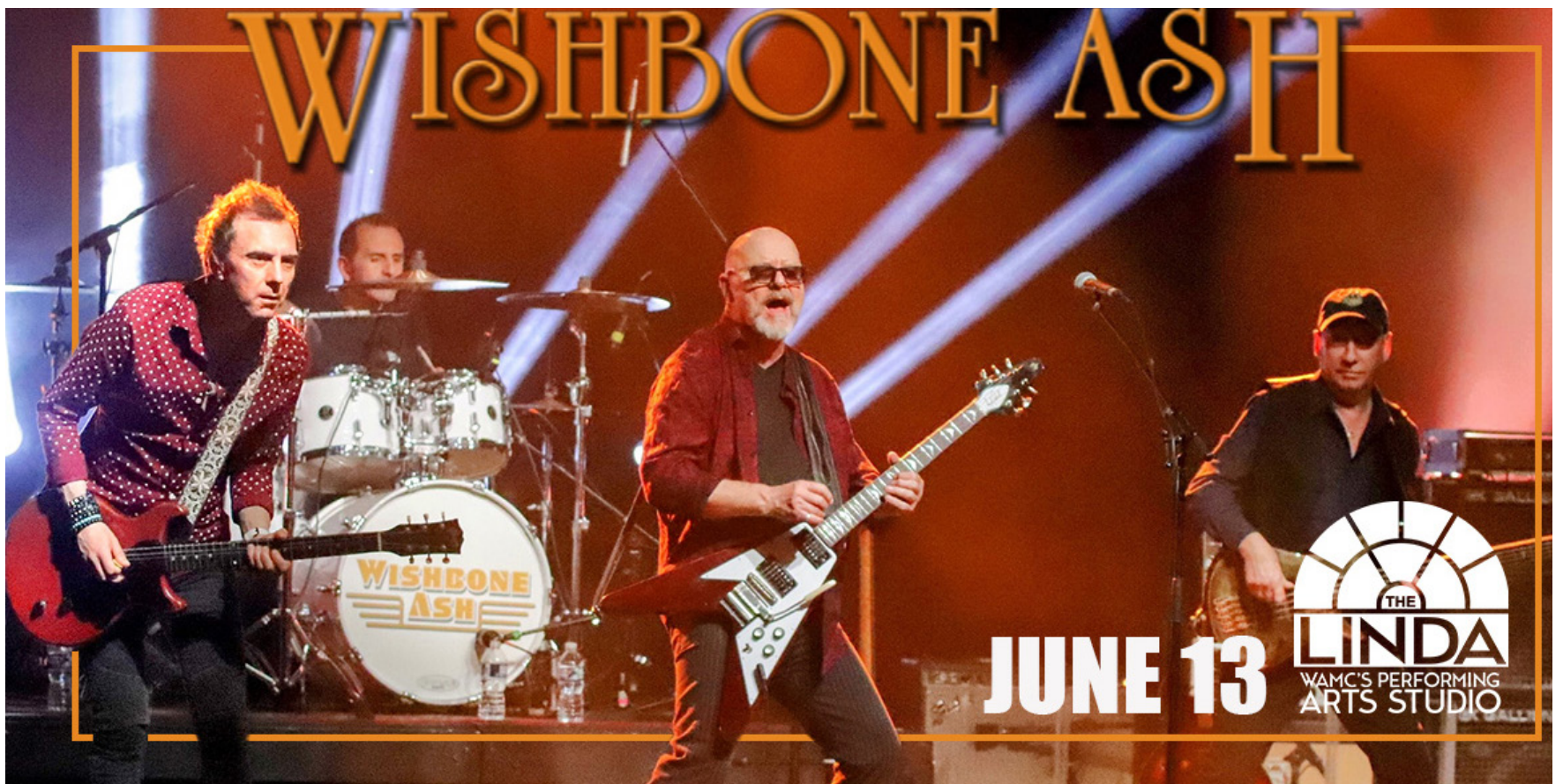
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# The Spot

*Hot new band that got its start in the forge of a tight jam session*



BY JAMES MULLEN

The Spot. Photo provided.

**G**LENS FALLS - If you haven't heard of The Spot, you're missing out on one of the most unique and entertaining new bands in the 518 music scene. Comprised of Greg Auffredou on percussion, Aaron Cook on bass guitar, Tim Daley on lead guitar, Tommy Socolof on keys, and Jay Mullen on guitar and vocals, they bring an infectious brand of energy to every performance that will make you feel like you're having a jam session with friends, just blowing off steam; that's because the group was born in that exact situation, forming organically from wholesome good vibes and evolving through the COVID pandemic. I caught up with Jay and Greg to talk about how the band got started, what they're all about and their upcoming performance

at GEM Fest 2023 at The Shirt Factory in Glens Falls.

**RRX:** First of all, thank you guys for taking the time to sit down with me today.

**JM:** Of course!

**GA:** Happy to be here.

**RRX:** So, you guys are relatively new kids on the block in the local jam band scene; tell us about how you got started.

**JM:** My college roommate Brendo, Brendan Crowley, got me into Twiddle when we moved in together at Castleton, and we started kind of messing around and writing songs here and there. We had this idea to start writing more seriously and start a jammy kind of band. I reached out to Greg because we'd talked about having him play

drums if I ever started something up, we stumbled upon our original lead guitarist Mike Basford, and that was our humble beginnings jamming in room North 109 at Castleton University.

That was literally right before the pandemic hit, we practiced a handful of times and then everything shut down. Then with COVID, things changed and you have to adapt; we've had different members come in and out, Greg and I have been the constant two.

**GA:** Cook's also been around a while. Before we really started playing out, Cook was here.

**RRX:** How did you guys come up with your name?

**JM:** Me and Brendo, we used to go on walks and go to this spot; it was on

this trail and there was a mile marker 9.5. That was kind of where we would go and hang out just off campus. The first time we walked over there it was me, him and our friend Caton who actually does photography for us when they're available. We had never gone to this spot yet and Brendo said "wherever we end up, we're gonna call it the spot and it's gonna be iconic". Ever since then we would hang out at that spot, at the mile 9.5 marker, and when we started the band there was no other name. We'd bring people to that spot and it was always an experience. Honestly it was how we wanted the music to sound: like a good time.

Castleton was a very formative time in my life because of the people that I met, including Brendo; meeting him is

the reason this band started. Unfortunately he was living in Connecticut when COVID hit, and it just wasn't something he could continue to do.

**RRX:** Good old COVID, making everything easy for all of us.

**JM:** Yup, absolutely.

**RRX:** How would you guys describe your sound, what are some of your biggest influences?

**GA:** I guess we kinda started as a jam band but as the lineup has shifted, we've incorporated this, like, sort of indie rock; I mean I guess I'll just speak for what I try to do for the band. When Jay was first talking about starting the band, he had also been talking about this Fleet Foxes song he liked where there's this little piano part and was like "steel drums would sound pretty cool on this", so that kind of morphed into me being the drummer/steel drum player in the band, so we're like a jam band with steel drums...an indie jam band with steel drums. It's the

instrument I play the most, but I also think it makes us stand out. You don't see lots of jam bands with steel drums in upstate New York.

**JM:** If we were to put a label on it, I would say indie-jam but we definitely jam less now although I would still consider us jammy. To add to the steel drum answer, I agree and I'd like Greg to do it as much as possible because like he said it's definitely unique.

**RRX:** Yeah, it's actually one of my favorite parts of your arrangement.

**JM:** I know Greg said it started with that Fleet Foxes song, and it may have but I believe it would have become a part of our sound eventually anyway because I want Greg to use all of his percussion stuff so anything he wants to use I'm always all for it.

**GA:** Also, although we've had as many as three guitarists at one point there wasn't always a clear melodic instrument and the steel drum operates to fill that space. There's less of a need

now that we have a keyboard player, but it still serves that purpose as something you can have a melody over or have a short solo.

**JM:** Another thing we've done at almost every multi-set gig, is bring in another drummer to sit in and let Greg focus a full song on that and that's always super cool.

**RRX:** Yeah, one of my favorite things I've seen you do live is have Greg pass off the drums mid-song like a baton! That's a pretty awesome thing to see live, especially without skipping a beat in the rhythm section.

**GA:** That's right! So, there's only so much you can do when you're trying to play steel drums and drum set at the same time so it's always nice when there's someone readily available who's like "I play drums, cool".

**RRX:** That's where the multi-instrumentalist bandmates come in.

**GA:** That's just something we like to do anyways, feature random friends.

Why not? If someone's there and they can play, let's do it. We're pretty flexible and I think that has served us well.

**JM:** I definitely think it's a more enjoyable experience for the audience as well. It keeps every set fresh.

**RRX:** You've been announced for GEM Fest in Glens Falls coming up this July 21st and 22nd. How does it feel to have that opportunity come your way?

**JM:** Getting to do this festival as a band that's Glens Falls-based, getting to have that home-field feel of this thing, that's really cool. I was really honored, I really wanted to be able to apply last year but it just didn't work out for us. I was really happy we were able to make it happen this year.

**GA:** It's really cool to be a part of a pretty significant local event like that. Hopefully we continue each year to do it. I can probably cart my drums over in about five minutes. We're very excited!



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# The Crawl

BY JORDAN LANEGAN

I am surrounded by mothers. They come in many forms, personalities and ages – older, younger, adoptive, step, single, married, military. I know churchgoing, cake-baking, field-trip volunteering, dinner on the table by six, ‘my children are my everything’ type moms. I know pot-smoking, mushroom-loving, concert-going, let your child run naked and free, ‘go outside, explore the world and get down and dirty’ type moms. I know all natural, no preservatives, no television or technology until after the age of five, ‘I sew my baby’s own clothes’ type moms. I know full-time working, gym-juggling, cheering in the stands at every game, Hello Fresh meal-prepped dinners, ‘I love my children, but being their mother is not enough’ type moms.

As different as they and their parenting styles may be, these women all have one thing in common: they are fierce, they are strong, they take no shit – and these very qualities are amplified and emboldened ten-fold in their little ones.

With Mother’s Day having just passed, I figured a re-cap on my youth and an ode to my own mama was only fitting for May’s issue. I’ll be the first to admit (and she’ll be the first to agree)

that our relationship has certainly changed over the years, and not always in the bright light of how either one of us would have predicted it. There have been trying times. There have been tears and lashing out in anger and sadness on both ends. There have been months without talking because we’re both too stubborn (some may say to a fault) to step around our strong opinions and beliefs to give into the other. Hell hath no fury for the woman firmly planted in her ground – Godspeed to those who try to sway her.

Despite these growing pains, my mother is still my rock and source of inspiration at the core. She has been through some of her very worst nightmares, jumped through high, burning hoops and has come out the other side even more badass and resilient, battle wounds to prove it and all. She is selfless, determined, and capable of so much more than she has ever given herself credit for.

At nineteen, my mom married my dad, took on three step-kids and became pregnant with me. (Come to think of it, maybe it’s not such a surprise I myself eloped and got married at twenty... hey; like mother, like daughter). She was four when her

parent’s marriage went off the deep end and her mother ended up leaving. Subsequently, she endured a wicked stepmom and even worse stepsiblings, a strenuous environment where the divide between ‘her kids’ versus ‘his kids’ was made clear as day, with her kids coming out victorious every time.

Little by little, my mother and her siblings all trickled out. First her brother, then her eldest sister, and finally at age nine, she followed suit and moved to be with her mom, where she would grow up in the backroad flats of Harrison, Idaho – a town of 250 people, max. The doe-eyed, rose-tinted, picturesque idea of a happy home was stripped from her and left behind in the shambles of her parent’s divorce, shattered, only to be pieced back together when she had a family of her own and a chance to do it right.

“What I wanted was to be a wife and mother and have my own family. I wanted to do it right... to raise my children in a home with both parents who demonstrated what a committed marriage looked like, a family life without divorce. Well, we know how that ended; but that was my goal and desire when I was a young woman.

I knew without a doubt that being a

mother (a parent) was the most important job in the world. Society tried to make us feel, and still does, like being at home with our children made us less valuable to society, but that is so wrong. Being at home day in and day out, nurturing and developing our children is the most valuable way to impact our future.”

I was eleven years old, going on twelve, when my parents split after thirteen years of marriage. My mom knew divorce was nasty because of her experience, but I had no idea just how brutal it could get. You grow up in a home where, to your knowledge, your parents love one another, there are family cookouts, rad birthday parties, road trips and vacations, and they keep their marital troubles tucked safely far, far away from you, until one day, the secrets and troubles amass to such a heavy load that it implodes and there isn’t any distance far enough away to guard you safely from the hellish fallout.

I won’t bore you all with the details of the divorce, as most all of us have our own version to compare it to, but I will say that it marked a transformative turning point in all of our lives: B.D. (Before Divorce) versus A.D. (Af-

ter Divorce).

B.D. looked a little like this: Dad was in the military, we moved around a bunch, he had a couple deployments and a lot of TDY trips. Mom had some jobs here and there but mostly held down the home front. I was reserved and shy and despised being the new girl. I had a speech impediment and fucked up teeth and my parent's, for reasons unknown to me, let me have my way when I begged for a perm. It was not good. I wrote a lot and read a lot and I lived in my mother's shadow.

A.D. looked a lot like this: Mom joined the military in order to support herself and me. My siblings and I endured a wicked stepmom and stepsiblings of our own, with time often spent daydreaming of the day we would tie them all to a raft and shoot them on their merry way down the river we lived nearby. Dad became someone I didn't recognize, and mom became someone I didn't see because she was training and then very quickly deployed. I had to move out from the shadows of my mother and into the light myself.

This is where my mother's relationship and mine began to take its first strikes; the person she came back to after training and deployment was not the same little girl she had left.

"Post-divorce, we started losing that closeness and I saw less of me in you. You were changing and growing and becoming your own individual person, which is what we want and expect of our children, but as time went on and communication became less frequent, you changed to an extent that I started to feel like I no longer knew who you were."

To her point, this is all true. I threw caution to the wind. I was more outgoing. I dabbled in partying. I didn't call or visit as much. I got married. I put school on the back burner and traveled Europe alone. I got divorced. I dated a girl. I decided I may never want kids.

My belief and value system began to differ in varying, important degrees to her own.

"It's been a challenge learning to let go of my expectations of what I imagined our relationship would be like and instead just accept what we have. Relationships change with time and seasons, so I know ours will continue to grow and develop as we grow and change in response to life."

And what more could you want from a mother than that? If my mom didn't voice her opinion as loud and boldly as I voice mine, then she would not be the woman who raised me, and I would not be the woman she raised me to be. Our spells of disagreement and disdain pale in comparison to the realization that these quarrels only come from a place of love and compassion. And as more people in my life suffer from the loss of their mother (or father or any of their loved ones), one thing has become crystal clear to me: the bullshit family drama is just not worth it. At all.

What is worth it, however, is accepting that we are who we are, and they are who they are, and that's that. Different generations, different life experiences, and different perspectives make for interesting banter. What's worth it is checking in every week with a quick call or Facetime. What's worth it is telling them you love them and squeezing them hard when you can. What's worth it is knowing our days with our mothers are limited, so we sure as shit better get to cherishing them.

Mama: I love you. I miss you. I cherish you. And most of all, I thank you for all you have done for me and our family. I'll be visiting you real soon.

Xx

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# Tales from the Land of Zider Zee



BY JOHNNY MYSTERY

**M**any of us remember or at least read about, the British Invasion. Hell, every time we log onto any social media site there's a bombardment of pictures of The Beatles and The Stones. They and a slew of other bands from Jolly Ole England were responsible for putting The Brill Building and a host of American artists outta business for a good portion of the 60s. Some never came back. Lotsa jobs out there parking cars and pumping gas. Good thing, eh? But while all this was happening a movement was building in The Netherlands and nobody was looking. In fact, it qualifies more as a sneak attack, but the wizards of show biz called it; "The

Dutch Invasion." No help whatsoever from Ed Sullivan or even The Smothers Brothers, the lazy creeps! Who could believe that the country who gave us wooden shoes, tulips and windmills would make such a contribution to rock n roll, but they did, and influences continue today.

What follows is a summary of bands who became well known during The Dutch Invasion, but it is by no means a complete representation. The Netherlands produced some great talent, and you may be shocked at who hailed from Holland.

Let's start with The Shocking Blue who formed in Hague around 1967. Out of all these groups, The Shocking

Blue seems to have made the most lasting impression both in their heyday and all the way to present time. Their massive hit "Venus" was number one all over the world. Their lead singer Mariska Veres was considered the Dutch Grace Slick. Her powerful vocals put her way out front but in reality, she was quite shy, wore a dark wig and was uncomfortable giving interviews. She was still living at home with her parents when the band broke big in 1970.

Most of their other hits were contained to Europe and Japan but because their first album in the U.S was eventually available for 99 cents, tons of American kids learned and listened

to some tunes that would be performed and covered by a variety of other artists over the next 40 years. Before Nirvana recorded their breakthrough album "Nevermind" they recorded their cover of "Love Buzz" on a single for SubPop records. If you have a copy, you've got a down payment on a Tesla. Congratulations....

Bananarama struck gold with their own rendition of "Venus" in 1986. It went to number one here in the USA. I was at a Fourth of July party In New Paltz NY about a year ago where I saw a group of teenagers cover "Send Me A Postcard." All these songs were from the first US album, and they continue to be heard today.

Let's talk about Focus. They started kicking around about 1969 without much luck until the keyboard player discovered he could yodel. He almost wishes he kept it to himself because the result was, they spent the rest of their career opening and closing the rest of their shows playing an instrumental they wrote called "Hocus Pocus." They played it so fast the yodeling sounded like Slim Whitman on helium. They played it so fast because they couldn't wait for it to be over. See, in reality, Focus was a really serious prog band and despised the little novelty hit they spawned into a top ten record. In fact, the keyboardist also played flute like Ian Anderson. Go figure. But as the record company says, "the bills must be paid." They spent the rest of their years recording albums with names like "Hamburger Concerto" to not much fanfare, never quite reaching the prog fame of groups like Yes, King Crimson or even Tangerine Dream for

that matter. One could say, they lost their focus....

And then there is Golden Earring. They started out as a "Freak Beat" band about 1965 and had a respectable amount of hits throughout Holland. By 1973, they had a massive hit called "Radar Love," then nothing until MTV hit the airwaves when they hit again in 1983 with "Twilight Zone." The video got massive rotation on MTV, which turned into healthy play on the "album-oriented rock" stations. Good for them because they were a pretty interesting group. I suggest looking up some of their early freak beat records.

Around 1970, The George Baker Section hit big with "Little Green Bag." I'll leave it up to you to figure out the subject matter but it's practically legal now soooooo... Anyway, it is a great one hit wonder, loaded with sophisticated 12-string riffs and some interesting hooks and melody. It's bigger claim to fame these days is its inclusion in

the soundtrack for "Reservoir Dogs" in 1992. Regardless of what you think of Quentin Tarantino, the cat knows how to place songs in films.

From Delft, Netherlands enters The Tee Set with another one hit wonder called, "Ma Belle Amie," which in English should be "My Girl Amy."

At least, if I remember my French correctly, that's what it means. In fact, I hear a good amount of French in this song, but it's mostly sung in English. Is French even a common language in Holland? What do I know, except it's a pretty cool, almost bubble gummy tune. Never heard from them again after this.

Last but not least, is The Outsiders, one of the freakiest, freak beaters of them all. They never had a hit in the USA but they should have. For me, their best song is "Daddy Died On Saturday." In a nutshell, this song is about a guy who poisons the father of a girl he's in love with because dear old

daddy-o refuses to let him marry his daughter. "He bought a poison sugar lump, from a cafe in the slums-placed it in the old man's tea and waited patiently." Not top 40 material but who even cares!!!! Covered brilliantly by Troy, NY band, Thee Ummmmm about 15 years ago.

This just in: The all-girl garage band trio from Japan, The 5678's will be performing at NO FUN on River Street in Troy this Summer. Word around the campfire is, the date will be August 24th. Run, don't walk to the club and get your tix. Can't wait for this one. Opening band will be, Sit And Spin from New Jersey. This will be one of the shows of the Summer and any more news about it will be reported right here.

That's it for this ish, now go hit the bins!

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# The Rock and Roll (Hall of Fame) Circus

BY MIKE STAMPALIA

I have a confession to make. I love the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In particular, I love it twice a year: early February when that year's nominees are announced. And three months later, when the "winners" (and, by extension, also the "losers") are announced.

Not because I put a lot of stock in its meaning – I don't, and you shouldn't either. Nor because I think it's a respectful celebration of the artists and their work – it isn't that either. An objective way to look back with clear eyes and figure out who was better than whom? Puh-leeze.

No, I love it for its obliviousness. For its tone-deafness. And for its futility. Each year the RRHOF emerges, like a dopey hibernating bear from its Cleveland den, and proceeds to anger the entire population it purports to celebrate. And then, for good measure, they come out again three months later and do it again. It's exquisite in its stupidity.

Think about it. This is, at its core, an organization that presumes to examine the hard-fought and legendary careers of artists who gave their very lives (literally, in some cases) for their craft, and discern who is worthy of making the club and who isn't. And who decides this? A bunch of industry insiders and hangers-on. Sorry, Johnny Marr, Baba Booye from the Howard Stern Show (a real-life voter) is insufficiently moved by your work, not this year. Maybe next year, Iron Maiden

- you don't have enough umm... err... something for Jann's insider's circle. By the way, have you ever tried to find out just who makes up the voting members, and how they vote? Good luck.

It doesn't matter who they pick and who they reject, it will always be a black eye. "Getting it right," 25+ years on, (at best) earns you a "what took you so long" or a "no shit, Sherlock" reaction. "I'd heard about the Stooges, but it wasn't until they got into the RRHOF that I realized how great they were" is a phrase uttered by no one, ever. And that it took Stranger Things to "validate" Kate Bush enough for the RRHOF hipsters speaks volumes as to how pandering the organization is.

But every artist they fail to nominate, every nominee they fail to induct, is a slap to millions of fans whose lives they touched. How many years did you hold out – in vain – that Rush (still, after all these years) wasn't cool enough for the club, before finally succumbing to the fear of irrelevance? And you clearly know better than, say, Kurt Cobain about the merits of the Pixies. Keep it up, it's a good look.

The primary sin here is not that the RRHOF isn't good enough at "picking winners." The sin here is the binary "in or out" structure of the Hall of Fame itself. Why not just focus on the museum itself? Like any other museum, it should be a mix of permanent and temporary exhibits, guided by a skilled (and when needed, changing) curator. In the museum, you don't need to choose between Willie and Warren, between Rage and Soundgarden. There's room for all, as it should be.



And, hey, if evolving tastes or public outcry or just self-reflection makes you realize you've missed someone, you can fix it the next day. It's supportive. It's respectful.

I get that someone is always going to be unhappy, even within the museum, but it offers magnitudes more flexibility than an arbitrary "seven a year, no more, no less" stance. It also gives you the ability to address other Hall of Fame shortcomings, like the inability to recognize journeyman artists properly. Ronnie James Dio didn't get in the RRHOF with Sabbath, and he's unlikely to for his solo work or for Rainbow. But all together, that's quite a career. Similarly, I love Reeves Gabrels, and he deserves to be honored for his guitar innovation. But shoehorning him in as a member of the Cure is a slight in my book. And there would have been a lot less handwringing over Todd Rundgren if we could just honor him as both the performer and producer that he is.

Then there's the genre purism problem. Every time the RRHOF nominates a Dolly Parton, a Missy Elliott, or a George Michael, the "how is XXX considered rock and roll?" backlash immediately follows. Now, count me

squarely on the open-door side of this debate. I'm not sure that there's been anything more "rock and roll" than hip-hop since the advent of punk. And if you don't think Willie Nelson, a man who authored a book called "Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die," is rock and roll enough for you, we're going to have to agree to disagree. But the main problem the purists have is one of space. They're not begrudging Kraftwerk or A Tribe Called Quest, per se. They're upset that there are only seven golden tickets, and Willy Wenner is giving them away too freely. Get rid of the binary thumbs-up/thumbs-down paradigm, and this goes away, too.

Stop gatekeeping. I don't need a bunch of anonymous insiders telling me who "belongs" and who doesn't, and neither does anybody else. Rock and Roll Hall of Famer member Chrisie Hynde said it best, looking back at the "honor" and the experience of receiving it: "I don't even wanna be associated with it. It's just more establishment backslapping. I got in a band so I didn't have to be part of all that," she said. "It's absolutely nothing to do with rock 'n' roll and anyone who thinks it is, is a fool."

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**06/09** 80s Prom w/ DJ Queen Beatz  
Retro Dance Night 8pm \$10

**06/10** GoGo Gone Dark Dark Dance &  
Vamp Vixens Burlesque 9pm \$10

**06/11** Resit and COL Pride After Party and  
Inclusivity class.

**06/16** Resist The Club, 9pm, \$10  
untz Goth industrial dance Night

**06/17** No Such Thing As Ghosts live show 6 pm \$10

**06/23** Platinum Moon Live Show 6pm \$10

**06/24** EDM Dance Night \$10 9:30 pm

**06/25** COL Kinky Sketch N Sip \$25 4:30pm

**06/27** Disclaimer & Deadland Live Show 6pm

**06/30** KPOP Dance Night DJ Yuka K 9pm \$10

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2023**



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