

NEW LONDON COUNTY · WINDHAM · HARTFORD · MYSTIC · RHODE ISLAND

Sound Waves

Volume 15
Issue 5
February 2005

CLUB LISTINGS
RESTAURANTS
CONCERT INFO
BAND LISTINGS
REVIEWS
& MORE

An
Interview
With

Aní
DíFranco

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8 SUGAR FREE	9 IN THE WOODS	10 FRANK N' BEANS	11 DARIK & THE FUNBAGS	12 2U
15 T-RAY	16 BLUE PRINT BLUE	17 SANITY CHEQUE	18 WICKED PEACH	19 WAYS N' MEANS
22 SUGAR FREE	23 GREG PAUL BAND	24 GREAT AMERICAN ROCK SHOW	25 33Hz	26 THE SUGAR DADDY BAND

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Sunday Feb. 6th

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SATURDAY Feb. 19th

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Rhode Island's
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8pm

THURSDAY Feb. 24th

GREAT AMERICAN ROCK SHOW

"A celebration of 70's
Power Rock"
Zeppelin - Aerosmith - Sabbath
Bad Company - Deep Purple
Kansas

INSIDE THE WAVE

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Cover & Story Photo by
Danny Clinch

On **February 25, 2005**, the **Wake Up To Love Foundation** will host a relief concert to benefit the survivors of the **Station Nightclub Fire**. The event will be held at the **Providence Performing Arts Center** in Providence, Rhode Island and includes performances by **Tesla**, **Shinedown**, and **Vanilla Fudge** featuring **Pat Travers** and **Carmine Appice**, along with other bands to be announced.

The concert will mark the second anniversary of the fourth largest nightclub fire in this country's history. The tragedy at the Station Nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island claimed 100 lives, seriously injured 200 survivors and left 65 children without one or both parents. Two years after the tragedy, there are still no adequate funds available for the victim's families or survivors who attempt to live with permanent physical handicaps. Though there will be litigation and lawsuits over this tragedy, it will be 5 to 10 years before any cases make it to court. There are only 15 survivors of the fire who qualified for any social security benefits and many of those do not even come close to meeting their monthly needs.

All proceeds from ticket sales and charity auctions benefit the **Station Family Fund**, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) charitable organization founded by survivors and family members affected by the Station Nightclub fire. The SFF provides immediate short-term relief and services as well as long-term support and will serve the needs of the survivors and victim's families that may arise in the future. The Station Family Fund's goal, through community outreach, is to alleviate any financial hardship that may be incurred so that the survivor's and victims' families may focus on the long physical, emotional and spiritual healing process. A portion of the proceeds will also benefit **The Doc Fund** in memory of Michael "Doc" Gonsalves by WHJY who is a sponsor of the event.

Further information can be found at www.stationfamilyfund.org or www.wakeuptolove.com for more on the acts.

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we will.**



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Sound Waves

February 2005
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 5

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Fri. 18th - **FRANK VALENTE**

Sat. 19th - **THE BOOMERS**

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Wed. - *FREE Pool - \$2 Spag. & Meatballs*

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SOUND WAVES 5



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4th

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11th

DIRTY DEEDS

18th

HARD KNOXX

25th

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10 oz. \$14.50 14 oz. \$19.75

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Smoked & Roasted



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Cup \$2.25 Bowl \$3.25

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**Chicken & Sausage
Gumbo**

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Monday 7th - **RJ the DJ**
prizes - giveaways - drink specials
Tuesday 8th - **Rock & Roll**
with a Special Guest TBA

Fridays - Live Music
4th - **Bozrah Fire Benefit**
Stone the Hostess & Corner Stone
11th - **33Hz**
18th - **DIRTY DEEDS**
25th - **MELAENA**
Mar. 4th - **RABID ABBY**

Saturday Nights
5th, 19th - **Live Dance Party**
with JAMMIN' 107.7
& RJ the DJ
12th - **1st Annual PJ Party**
with RJ the DJ
25th - **DANCE PARTY**

There's Always Something Going On At The Brookside!

CONCERT DATES

AARON CARTER

20 - Lupo's, Providence, RI

ALBERT CUMMINGS

11 - Black-Eyed Sally's, Hartford, CT

ARTURO SANDOVAL

19 - Stadium Theatre, Woonsocket, RI

BEN FOLDS

17 - Jorgensen Ctr., Storrs, CT

THE BRUCE KATZ BAND

11 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI

25 - Black-Eyed Sally's, Hartford, CT

CHRIS DUARTE GROUP

23 - Hungry Tiger, Manchester, CT

26 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI

DAVID MALLET

12 - United Church, West Hartford, CT

GOV'T MULE

26 - Oakdale Theatre, Wallingford, CT

JOE COCKER

5 - Foxwoods Casino, Mashantucket, CT

MICHAEL GLABICKI

4 - Cafe 9, New Haven, CT

THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND

4 - Toad's Place, New Haven, CT

moe.

11 - The Palladium, Worcester, MA

MOTLEY CRUE

28 - Civic Center, Hartford, CT

OTIS TAYLOR

25 - Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

QUEENSRYCHE

4 - Webster Theatre, Hartford, CT

THE RADIATORS

18 - Webster Theatre, Hartford, CT

STEEL PULSE

11 - Toad's Place, New Haven, CT

14 - Lupo's, Providence, RI

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS

9 - Living Room, Providence, RI

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8:00 pm

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SOUND WAVES 9



BAND DATES

BAD EDDIE & THE HIGH HATS

5 - High School, W. Greenwich, CT

BOOTIE & THE COOL & EASY BAND

6 - Yacht Club, Westerly, RI 1:30-5:30
25 - Yacht Club, Westerly, RI 8pm

THE CAVITIES

11 - Bank Street Cafe, New London, CT

DAN STEVENS

2 - Blues Society, Louisville, KY
3,4,5 - Blues Challenge, Memphis, TN
9 - Red Lion, Stockbridge, MA 8pm
11 - Skunk Hollow, Hartland, VT
16 - Sage On The Waterfall, Chester, CT 8pm
18 - G. W. Tavern, Washington Depot, CT
20 - Eagle Festival, Essex, CT 2pm
25,26,27 - Blue Moon, St. Croix, USVI

THE DEGENERATES

12 - Bourbon St., Hartford, CT
18 - Murphy & Scarletti's, Farmington, CT
24 - Up or on the Rocks, Hartford, CT
26 - Ernies Place, E. Hampton, CT

EIGHT TO THE BAR

18 - Maple Tree Café, Simsbury, CT
19 - K of C Hall, S. Attleboro, MA 8:30-12
25 - Tennis Club, Poughkeepsie, NY 8:30
26 - Bill Miller's, Branford, CT

FACE FIRST

22 - Webster Theater, Hartford, CT 7pm

THE FULL DEMPSEY

4 - Sneekers Cafe, Groton, CT

10 SOUND WAVES

THE GOAT ROPERS

5,18 - Taunton V.F.W., Taunton, MA 8:30
12 - Oak Hill Tavern, Wickford, RI 8:30
25 - Blondie's, Fall River, MA

GOPHERBROKE

4 - School St. Bistro, Westfield, MA 7-11
7 - Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, MA 8-11
11 GW Tavern, Woodstock, CT
18 - Nora's, Southwick, MA
19 - Oliver's Tavern, Essex, CT 7:30-11:30
22 - Poncho's, Wilmington, VT 6-10
25 - Rathskeller, Southbury, CT
26 - Bidwell Tavern, Coventry, CT

HOWELL N' HOPKINS

18,19 - Atrium, Mashentucket, CT

INNUEDO

5 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT
11 - Sneeker's, Groton, CT
18 - Burke's Tavern, Niantic, CT
25 - The Iron Chef, Essex, CT

KICK

5 - Borbon St. N., Hartford, CT
11 - Snookers, Naugatuck, CT
12 - Winter Carnival, Lake George, NY
18 - Rookies, Cromwell, CT
19 - The Big Easy, Boston, MA
25 - Red Door, Watertown, CT
26 - J.R.'s, Cranston, RI

LIVIN' TRUST

3 - The Cutting Room, NYC, NY
12 - Sportsrock USA, Bristol, CT
19 - TD Shenanigans, E Windsor, CT
21 - ultraradio.com, 8pm
23 - Alchemy, New Haven, CT

MEGAHERTZ

12 - The Frog Pond, Stratford, CT
19 - Maximum's, Chicopee, MA
26 - Humphrey's East, New Haven, CT

MIKE SAVINO/THE SONS

4,26 - The Black Seal, Essex, CT
5 - The Ivoryton Pub, Ivoryton, CT
11 - Grumpy's, Plainville, CT
12 - Sullivan's, Naugatuck, CT
18 - Porter's, Westbrook, CT
19 - Donovan's Reef, Branford, CT
20 - Driftwood, Clinton, CT 6pm
25 - Farmington Ave. Rest., Kensington, CT

PETE SERGE

5 - Elements Café, Granby, CT 7:30pm

THE SUGAR DADDY BAND

5 - Rookies, Cromwell, CT
19 - Burke's Tavern, Niantic, CT
26 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT

SUGAR FREE

2,9,16,23 - Tongue & Groove, Mystic, CT
4 - The Voodoo Grill, Mystic, CT
8,22 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT
11 - Billy Willsons, Norwich, CT

33Hz

4 - Uncle Kranky's, Jewett City, CT
11 - The Brookside Cafe, Preston, CT
25 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT

ONECATS

4 - Cady's, Glocester, RI

WICKED PEACH

4 - Rookies, Cromwell, CT
5 - Burke's Tavern, Niantic, CT
12 - Tongue & Groove, Stonington, CT
18 - Stash's Café, New London, CT

WORLD'S SMALLEST QUARTET

4 - Billy Wilson's, Norwich, CT
5 - Tedore's, Wales, MA
11 - Oliver's Taverne, Essex, CT
12 - Glock Grill, Higganum, CT
18 - Penalty Box, Coventry, CT
19 - Billy Wilson's- Norwich, CT
25 - Main Street Tavern, Old Saybrook, CT

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Friday 25th at The Iron Chef, Essex, CT



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Late Night Breakfast 10:30pm to 12:30am

CJ's Events

Feb. 13th - Scotch Dbls 8-Ball Tourney
Double Elimination Cash prizes \$10 entry fee

Feb. 20th - 9-Ball Tourney
Double Elimination Cash prizes \$5 entry fee

Every Thursday - 8-Ball Tourney
Double Elimination Cash prizes 1st, 2nd & 3rd
\$10 entry fee

Sunday 6th - SUPER BOWL PIG ROAST

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or by clicking on Clubs at Sound Waves Magazine's Web Site - www.swaves.com

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EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT!**



- February 12th -

FRANK N' BEANS

- February 19th -

MELAEANA

- February 26th -

STREET SURVIVOR

SOUTHERN ROCK

- March 5th -

**KGB
BAND**

- March 12th -

**DIRTY
DEEDS**
AC/DC TRIBUTE



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Formerly Wilson's Saloon

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Dillans serves its menu late night!

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for
Valentine's Day"*

MUSIC NOTES

By Mark T. Gould

This Is Your Brain on Music

Music surrounds us. It soothes us. It relaxes us. We need it. We crave it. We simply enjoy it. Like that ad says, it's, literally, the soundtrack of our lives. And, now, thanks to some scientists, of all people, we may know why this is so.

Writing in Scientific American, available at sciam.com, Norman M. Weinberger has hypothesized that what he terms music's "strange power" originates from a link in the brain activity of both musicians and listeners.

Weinberger notes, no pun intended, that while the human ear has the fewest sensory cells of any sensory organ in the body, its response to music is very adaptable, even capable of "retuning" how the brain handles the input of music.

Even in brain-injured patients, such as those suffering from strokes or other ailments resulting in speech impediments, the brain's ability to remember and recall music, composition and scales, remains intact, he writes. This finding has led scientists to suggest that music and speech are processed independently, although more recent studies have found that a region in the frontal lobe of the brain enables proper construction of what is termed the "syntax" of music and language, while other parts of the brain handle related aspects of language and music processing. Interestingly, studies have also shown that the same area of the brain that processes music when it is heard is also the same area that allows us to recall a piece of music and actually hear it "playing in our minds."

Feed your head, indeed.

Without getting overly into "science-speak," the processing of sound is quite fascinating, according to his article. Musical tones, when heard, are initially processed in the inner ear, which sorts complex sounds into elementary frequencies. This information is then transmitted along separately tuned fibers of the auditory nerve (just like Taj Mahal said, "tickling your auditory nerve") as neural discharges. Different cells in the auditory system of the brain respond best to certain frequencies (personally, I think I have some that perk up immediately to the Beatles and shut down to rap, but that's a altogether different scientific theory...).

Interestingly, Weinberger has conducted studies which show that rising and falling pitches, like tones within a musical melody, cause different types of reactions in the auditory complex, much different, he writes, then when the system reacts to the sound, for example, of a ringing telephone.

Musical rhythms (the length and spacing of notes) and timbre (the difference in sound between two instruments

playing the same tone) also create different brain reactions. Studies have shown, he writes, that one hemisphere of the brain is more involved in processing rhythm, although scientists disagree on which one (this is probably the best explanation for why I can't dance very well and why certain politicians, like Bill Clinton and Al Gore, consistently clap off beat). Scientists have concluded that the right temporal lobe is more greatly activated when the brain focus is on harmony and timbre.

Studies have also shown that musicians, who practice many hours a day and thus have prolonged learning procedures for their music, have a differing response to music than non-musicians. This learning process creates marked responses and actual physical changes in the brain, called hyper development. Further, it has been found that the auditory cortex of musicians, as well as their motor control in the processing of their playing of instruments, is greater than those of non-musicians.

So, that's your brain on music. Any questions?



INDIAN LEAP CAFE

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2005

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specials in March!



Pool
Tables

ATM Machine

Friday
February 25th
SUBSTANDARD
No Cover

- 50" HD TV -

Tasty

Sandwiches

"The Busiest Little Bar In Town"

HEARING AID

LOVERS

"The Gutter and the Garden"

Orange Twin Records

Returning with their second release, Lovers once again graces the airwaves with their soft, mellow, and often melancholy style of music. From the opening chords of "Seven Years" to the last vocal harmony of "Season's Greetings," the band has created a record nothing short of spectacular.

Much of what makes Lovers such an amazing band is lead singer, Carolyn Hart Berk's unique and deeply personal approach to singing and songwriting. The lyric sheet reads like a love poem meant for someone held very dear to her heart. These songs present the somewhat clichéd subjects of love and longing through Berk's eyes, while also exploring other elements of romance as well. Instead of focusing on grandiose and unrealistic acts of love, these lyrics hang in the mundane and often overlooked aspects of romantic love. With lines like "I drew your name above me in the air," and "With glitter eyes you'd laugh each time you would've cried" she describes love not as an emotion, but as an experience. Being given a piece of that experience in every song, the listener forms a small bond with her and sympathizes with both her joys and sorrows. These deep and powerful lyrics are well matched by their vocal delivery. Carolyn's voice has a very sweet, calm, and breathy tone that adds a haunting quality to her songs, and an airy and distinctive element to the band. The fact that her delivery is so soft creates a bare effect in which the listener immediately senses her desperation. Carolyn Berk put a chunk of her heart into this record, and it's something that can be felt on every song.

Although Carolyn Hart Berk's lyrics describe love as an experience more than an emotion, it would be wrong to give the impression that this album is emotionless. Softly strummed guitars, slow bass lines, lightly played drums, piano, banjo, and a small string ensemble make up the emotional backdrop behind Berk's potent lyrics. On "Seven Years," a banjo is subtly blended with the guitar part in a way that allows the two to mingle, creating one harmony. Whenever there is a banjo part, it is nearly unidentifiable due to the style in which Daniel Rickard plays it. I listened to the whole CD before reading the insert, and when I saw banjo listed in the instrumentation I was perplexed. However, at second listen I could

distinguish where the parts were in the songs. If there were such a thing as classical banjo, this would definitely be the style played on this record, especially in the intro to "The Garden." It's in this way that some of the instruments that Lovers uses become something more than, or different from themselves. Another notable thing about the instrumentation on this record is its tendency not to go for the obvious movement in songs. For instance, during build-ups in songs, instead of climaxing into distorted guitar parts and loud drums, there are intense orchestral parts that reach into your chest and tug at your heart. The strings aren't used sparingly either, instead they're almost omnipresent on the record, even if it's just a solo cello part. This is an intrinsic part of what gives Lovers their melancholy sound.

The title "The Gutter and the Garden" describes the anguish and elation of life and love, and with this album Lovers has "built a garden" ripe with the fruits of seven talented and creative musicians. This is an album for fans of diverse, unique, mellow, and emotional music free from the attachment to genre. This is by far one of the most original and unique albums I've heard in a long time,

and a terrific follow-up to their debut, "Starlit Sunken Ship." If good music possesses the power to move you, then "The Gutter and the Garden" is good music indeed.

***** - Wyatt Shibley

JOE BONAMASSA

"Had To Cry Today"

Premier Artists

If you're a music fan and don't know the name Joe Bonamassa by now, you will soon. Although the term "prodigy" is often over-used in the music business, that's exactly what Joe Bonamassa is, now having developed his skills from that of a young guitar slinger into a more mature and much diversified musician. Consider that a young Bonamassa first touched a guitar at the early age of 4, was playing complete Stevie Ray Vaughan songs by the age of 8, and by 12, Bonamassa was opening for the legendary B.B. King. Having played with the likes of Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, and Buddy Guy, it's fair to say that Joe Bonamassa, now a mature 27, has always had the chops to impress some of the best

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in the business.

After a brief stint as guitarist in the band Bloodline, Bonamassa ventured out on his own and hasn't looked back since. His 2000 debut release, "A New Day Yesterday", was filled with well-constructed blues-based rock songs and a ton of guitar playing, featuring special guest appearances from Leslie West, Gregg Allman, and Rick Derringer. "So It's Like That" followed, this time further developing Bonamassa's vocals and song writing talents. His third effort, 2003's "Blues Deluxe", was a return to Bonamassa's blues roots and musical inspirations. In contrast, the focus on "Had To Cry Today" is that of a musical resume which highlights all of Bonamassa's diverse talents, yet staying true to his blues roots.

From the fast paced opening track, "Never Make Your Move Too Soon" to the very finish of the instrumental "Faux Mantini, Bonamassa and the boys deliver in every aspect. Bandmates Eric Czar (bass) and Kenny Kramme (drums) do a terrific job creating the feel of each track's intent, moving from hard rock to slow blues to rockabilly country and back again without missing a note. Highlights include Lowell Fulson's "Reconsider Baby", masterfully re-created with a ton of feel, and "The River", a Zeppelin-esque take on the Mississippi blues (along the lines of a "When The Levee Breaks" type of groove). Bonamassa also pays tribute to his late friend and guitar mentor Danny Gatton on "Revenge of the 10 Gallon Hat", displaying his talents in multiple music aspects.

Joe Bonamassa's guitar playing easily stands up to any of the other youthful blues guitar slingers out there on the circuit today. Incorporating a diverse mix of Chicago, Delta, and English Blues, "Had To Cry Today" is an enjoyable listen from start to finish. With a guitar in hand, Joe Bonamassa can do it all, and with his latest effort, he certainly proves that to be true.

***** - Don Sikorski
1/2

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TRYING TO PUT SOMETHING GOOD INTO THE WORLD: ANI DIFRANCO SOLDIERS ON

By Rex Rutkoski

She may be small in stature, but Ani DiFranco's laughter this evening rings charmingly large.

The self-proclaimed "little folksinger," astute political and societal observer in her own right (or "left," as she probably would prefer), is offering something akin to her personal state of the union.

"I think I'm at a pretty good place right now," she says, talking from Buffalo, home to the offices of her Righteous Babe organization in Buffalo. "It seems I've been out here long enough doing my thing that I've outlived most of my stereotypes, which is nice. And I have a really supportive audience that has also sort of chilled out and matured with me, and I can count on them to keep me in work."

Work is no stranger to the ever prolific singer-songwriter-musician who saw the company (Righteous Babe) she founded grow to serve as an umbrella for her own record label, touring, management and publishing company, retail store and the Righteous Babe Foundation. The foundation's goal is to support grassroots solutions to real-world problems.

VH1 included her in its 1999 list of the "100 Greatest Women of Rock," calling her one of the most influential musicians of the decade. Doing it her way, without mega-corporation support, she logged strong sales in the millions, earned Grammy nominations and made herself at home on the national charts.

She continues to challenge herself in exploring genres, interesting collaborations, and ways of presenting her art in solo, duo and band configurations.

Her new concert DVD, "Trust," was released Nov. 9, and a new studio album, "Knuckledown," is to be released Jan. 25.

DiFranco, 34, says the challenges of keeping it fresh for herself are different every day.

"I definitely have to strive to do that, especially the kind of inherent challenge of this job, like (she smiles), 'Go sing that song again and make it new.' It's always a challenge to keep yourself interested. For me recently, they are challenges like, 'How about make a record all by yourself, home alone?' (She laughs). And 'How about go to LA and make a record with a bunch of guys you don't know?'"

She describes "Knuckledown" as a full band record, with about a half dozen guest musicians, as opposed to the previous solo album, "Educated Guess," where she played all the instruments, recorded the tracks in her home and even engineered it herself.

"This has got a different sound than my other records," DiFranco says. "I had somebody else recording and mixing it, which was a first for me, and I was pursuing string accompaniment in the way maybe I used horns in the past."

A number of the songs are in standard tuning, which is not something in which she usually writes. "That may amount

to the big difference about this album," she says.

While some of her friends joke that this is her classic rock record, DiFranco says, "That may be the perception only of a friend." "I put out some pretty rocking albums over the years and have got everything from jazz and intimate notes to rocking out on my records."

She will acknowledge that she considers "Knuckledown" one of her better albums. "As an artist it is always my new one that I consider the better one whether it's true or not," she explains, laughing again.

She says the creative process and subject matter is constantly evolving as her perceptions and experiences change. "These songs actually were written as very much of a piece. I wrote them mostly within the space of a few months. It's a unique situation I set up for myself where I decide to make a record and where and when I would make it, and just about with whom, and wrote to a deadline." It was recorded in Los Angeles.

Collaboration was one goal.

"I asked my friend (musician) Joe Henry to sort of co-produce (a first for her) the project and he brought a couple people, an engineer and mixer, and the drummer and keyboardist. And I brought my bass player (Todd Sickafoose, whom she praises enthusiastically) that I have been touring with in duo situations. And there were these special guests, like Andrew Bird (violin, glockenspiel, whistling) who is on Righteous Babe."

As to what she hopes people take from her CDs or live performances, she says inherently that is something very individual to each listener.

"It would just be inspiration. I'm not a 'do as I do' kind of person. That's not my nature though that is one of the stereotypes (about her). Certainly a person with strong political convictions gets that hoisted upon her. I'm more a 'figure it out for yourself how you must do something and do that, why don't you.' She encourages individual activism.

Most of her conversations these days are political in nature, the artist says. "I guess I'm seen as some sort of leftist spokesperson, which is a refreshing change from 'speaking for womankind' (she laughs)."

She completed the 17-city "Vote Dammit!" tour of the swing states in early October. The goal was to promote voting awareness in states where historically it mattered the most. One reviewer noted, "She expressed ideas in songs rather than sermons."

DiFranco ran a slide show during intermission of historical photographs and a timeline of America's voting history. Planned Parenthood, Amnesty International and Turn Out Florida were among not-for-profit groups forging a coalition with the Feminist Majority at each show. They worked together to encourage active voters, register new ones and to share information about their issues.

DiFranco says she continues to be motivated and driven by the basic will to put something good back into the planet. "I want to try to make a positive change in this world, even if it's just in the room I'm in with the people I'm in it with," she says. "One problem with activism and, dare I say, democracy in this country is that we have such a desire for immediate gratification in our culture now. We expect to

make changes easily. But I think change by its very nature is not like this, so my goal every day is similar, whatever it is I'm doing, just trying to put something good into the world."

In the kind of work she is in, says DiFranco, people all the time are trying to sum her up, to say what it is that she is all about. "None of it is true, if for the mere fact that any one human being can't be summed up like that," she says.

"Certainly I suppose I have an inherent aversion to doing it myself (trying to sum herself up). I just can't. From my very own unobjective perspective, I'm about something each day that is different."

She agrees that is not such a bad place to be.

When she turned 30, the musician reflected, "I used to dance, I was in art school, I have so many interests and loves and those have been pretty subordinated by the pace of my musical endeavors."

She says she has been noticing a very gratifying change in her life since then. "I do have all these things. I am re-incorporating all of these various identities into myself. I think maybe it's a factor of maturing into my work." Now she employs all of her interests in her job.

DiFranco: "Designing records and doing art work on my records, which I make so frequently, is a way I exercise my visual side now. And my body is much freer on stage. I dance around and leap about in ways I didn't before. All my years of dance training is kind of being put to work in other ways now.

"Also my political, my social, consciousness is factoring heavily into my work. The big voter registration that we just did was tremendously successful. A lot of people just got inspired and informed. The slide show was all about voting history in our country. Audiences learned about how hard people struggled for the right to vote and to think differently about casting that right away."

DiFranco often is asked what social and political issues are her priorities. "I don't think we have to narrow them down. I think we have to expand them out," she says. "One of the things this 2004 election wrongness proves once again is we need to be unified and need to be working together. We need to be strategic. People have asked me my whole public career about my issues, my pet issues. I never thought that way. For me it is about truth and that is just overarching.

"We need to unite on the left under an umbrella of truth and justice because the right is nothing if not united and strategic."

DiFranco is aware that some, if not many, creative people consider this a repressive time.

The artist takes the view that the only real censorship in this country is self-censorship. "We actually have a law in place guaranteeing us the right to say what think. It's just that simple to me. Anyone can say anything in public. If you get a little less radio airplay, then so be it. Any journalist can be an investigative reporter and have their own perspective on events, rather than regurgitating White House press releases. We individually choose not to (say what we think). We are forfeiting our power as citizens of this country at an alarming rate."

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DiFranco: "Yes. I don't like to say selfish. I don't think we understand how empowering ourselves and building community does help us, and that George Bush truly does not have any of our interests in mind unless of course you happen to be a multi-millionaire and you will have one of the big defense or power contracts. It's a fallacy that he is protecting any of our interests."

Closer to her personal and corporate home, DiFranco says that in many ways the projects under her Righteous Babe umbrella have gone the way she had hoped.

"Yes, myself and partner Scot Fisher, we are self-realized people. We are on our path, which is not to say easy or getting any easier, for that matter. The music industry quote on quote is really changing and sort of imploding with album sales down across the board, and even everyone panicking and downscaling and huge majors gobbling each other up.

"For independents (like her label), there is the death of all the indy record stores, consumed by multi-nationals, and indy radio has become more and more consolidated into a corporate playlist scenario. And there's the overthrow of independent promoters in all sorts of markets. This has not helped us. We are struggling, honestly, but we continue and keep optimistic. There are always ways to do the good work. If we believe they are there we can find them."

DiFranco once remarked that her success has never really mattered to her.

"It's about performing and sharing music with people," she explained.

That's truer that it has ever been, she says.

"I've recently been to Burma, of all places to go. It's a country struggling with a violent, repressive military dictatorship. I met impoverished people faced with violence every day. Everywhere I went, to refuge camps and clinics and orphanages, the first thing that happened is children would stand up and sing with us. Somebody would pull out a guitar. There was always an old beater guitar around, and we would sing. It really made it so clear to me every day there what music was for: when we sing to each other it changed everything. We no longer were so different. We were family."

It is a family of two on stage of late as DiFranco performs with her bassist, Todd Sickafoose.

She really enjoys the duo format.

"It has all the energy of playing music with people and all the liberty of playing music alone," DiFranco says. "I haven't been in a duo situation in many, many years when I toured with just myself and a drummer, an acoustic guitar and a drum kit. I decided coming back to this instrumentation is my favorite for performance. Because, if you are playing with the right person, it is as intimate as being onstage alone, just to have two people naked there. But you get all of that thrill of what it is to play music with someone."

DiFranco says the folksinger in her appreciates that playing live, regardless of the configuration, is the natural state of music. "Before we had recording equipment, music was an activity and it is a social activity that is the most beautiful and natural context for music."

The little folksinger is determined to play on.

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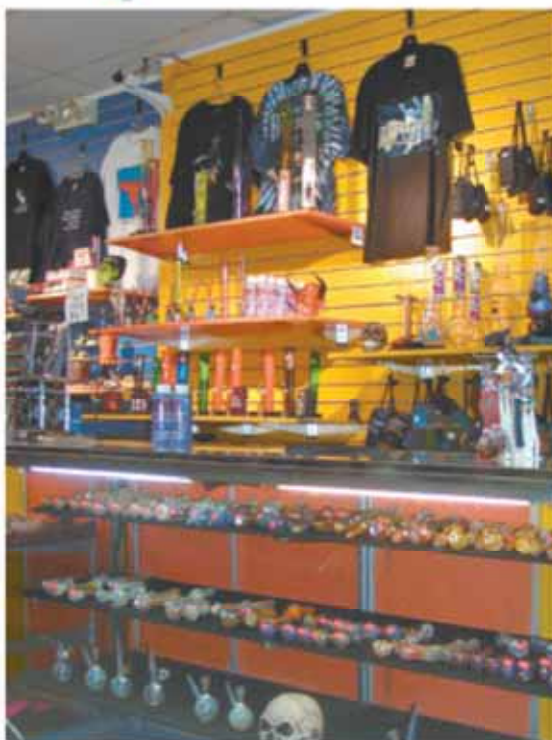


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