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Southern New England's

Volume 15
Issue 6
March 2005

CLUB LISTINGS
RESTAURANTS
CONCERT INFO
BAND LISTINGS
REVIEWS
& MORE

An
Interview
With

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15 T-RAY	16 	17 KELLY CO.	18 AQUANETT	19 WICKED PEACH
22 SUGAR FREE	23 BLUE PRINT BLUE	24 GREAT AMERICAN ROCK SHOW	25 WAYS N' MEANS	26 INNUENDO
29 T-RAY	30 FAT BETTY	31 FRANK N' BEANS		

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Rhode Island's
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Cover & Story Photo by
Marina Chavez

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MADD
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

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If your St. Patrick's Day celebrations include alcohol, please be sure to designate a driver before the party begins. Don't depend on the luck of the Irish to get you home safely!

MAILBAG



Dear Readers,

So what happened? Somebody shoot that damn groundhog or what? Enough is enough already! I like the snow, but this cold and snow is starting to be too much. As I write this the weatherman is predicting another storm. And he said the extended forecast shows that Spring will be a long ways off! I don't know, maybe it's just cabin fever. But I do like to sit outside in the sun, be it in my backyard or the beach. And my bike is gathering Cob webs! At least this area has some great things to offer in getting us out of the house.

Okay Rant off. And speaking of which, you might have noticed a couple of missing columns. The "Rant of the Month" and "Perspectives". Don't fret if you were a fan of them, they will be returning soon. Because of space restrictions they have been put off for now. Sound Waves is printed in increments of 4 pages and it hasn't been feasible to add these columns without the supporting advertising. As you know Sound Waves is a free publication and it's the advertisers who make this venture possible. As well as you readers who support this magazine and patronize the advertisers. So as the weather turns warmer and the tourist and our "local groundhogs" get out and start the seasonal cash flow, expect to see more articles and interesting interviews. And thanks again for your support!

Till Next Month
David L. Pottie
Editor/Publisher

Sound Waves

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The Good Doctor on The Proud Highway: A Tribute to Hunter S. Thompson

By Mark T. Gould

Editor's Note: Hunter S. Thompson, the writer, Gonzo journalist and American patriot, died at his own hand on February 20 at the age of 67.

Gonzo.

What the hell is Gonzo?

Damned if I know, but it's a been a hell of a journey, trying to remember, in the wake of the tragic passing of the incomparable Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, just how it was that I first became aware of his writing, and looking back, just how much it influenced me, both as a writer, and, more importantly, as an American.

As best as I can remember from those foggy days on both sides of the page, I think I first became aware of him from reading his insanely long articles, no make that treatises, for that is what they were, in Rolling Stone magazine, back in the early Seventies, when both the magazine, as well as Thompson, actually made a difference. I remember reading them, in my tender, early teenage years, and thinking 'I want to do this.' Maybe not as well, or as Gonzo, whatever that was, as the Good Doctor, but it made me want to learn to write, nonetheless.

The more I think about it, the first articles I remember by him was his amazing, over the top, yet so vital, coverage of the 1972 presidential election. It was a dangerous time. Vietnam and Watergate made us all nearly paranoid. So, what did the Good Doctor do when faced with a one-on-one car ride with incumbent force of nature, President Richard M. Nixon, who was running for re-election that year? He talked pro football with his mortal enemy, that despised Nixon, and Thompson's story about that ride and conversation was one of the classic American political pieces of that time, or, probably, of any time. It did, in its own way, make us empathize, yet still cower, over Nixon's persona.

Pro football in election coverage? That was the Good Doctor. Gonzo. Somehow, somehow, it all made sense. From there, I was hooked. I bought and read everything he wrote, from "Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas," not to mention "Fear & Loathing On the Campaign Trail," (the latter of which was inspired by his lengthy pieces in Rolling Stone) to "The Great Shark Hunt," "Generation of Swine," and a whole host of others, including his hilarious and wistful foray into the heart of American politics, his own unsuccessful run for sheriff in Pitkin County, Colorado. I even followed all of his recent postings on Page Two of the ESPN web site. I was pleased when Rolling Stone, which has kept him in its masthead as "National Affairs Editor" since his Seventies heyday, dusted him off last year to write about the election and the war in Iraq, and he was just as sharp and incisive, and, yes, right, as always.

Through it all, no matter what he was writing about or what illegal substances he might have been on while he was writing, Hunter S. Thompson had just about the best

CONTINUED PAGE 15

SOUND WAVES 5



Live Bands

Fri	Sat
4 BRAND NL BLUES PROJECT INCOGNITO SOFA LOVE	5 INNUENDO
11 ROCK & SOUL REVIEW	12 FRANK N'BEANS
18 MUNSELL BROTHERS	19 STONE WALL
25 MASS-CONN FUSION	Thursday 24th FAT BETTY

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CONCERT DATES

BLACK 47

11 - The Call, Providence, RI
12 - Toad's Place, New Haven, CT

COCO MONTOYA

22 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI
23 - Hungry Tiger, Manchester, CT

DAVID CASSIDY

26 - Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

THE DEL VIKINGS

11 - Palace Theatre, Waterbury, CT
12 - Perf. Arts Ctr., Providence, RI

THE DUKE ROBILLARD BAND

5 - Community Hall, Portsmouth, RI

EAGLES

19 - Civic Center, Providence, RI

LOU RAWLS

30,31 - Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

JAMES SOLBERG

25 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI

JIMMY THACKERY

11 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI
19 - Black-Eyed Sally's, Hartford, CT

JOHNNY RAWLS

25 - Mapletree Cafe, Simsbury, CT
26,27 - Black-Eyed Sally's, Hartford, CT

MARY BLACK

6 - Edgerton Center, Fairfield, CT

MOTORHEAD

11 - The Palladium, Worcester, MA
15 - Webster Theatre, Hartford, CT

PINETOP PERKINS

4 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI

RUSTED ROOT

31 - Webster Theatre, Hartford, CT

SLIPKNOT

4 - Meadows Music, Hartford, CT

STEVE VAI

25 - Webster Theatre, Hartford, CT

TED NUGENT/TOBY KEITH

4 - Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

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24 - Toad's Place, New Haven, CT

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Apr. 1st

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12th - YOUNG NEAL
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BAND DATES

BAD EDDIE & THE HIGH TOPS

5 - The Oaks, E. Greenwich, RI
19 - C.C. O'Brien's, Pawcatuck, CT

BLUEPRINT BLUE

23 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT

Bootie Abate & the Cool & Easy Band

25 - Yacht Club, Westerly, RI 8-12

DAN STEVENS

2 - Unity College, Unity, ME
3 - Dolphin Striker, Portsmouth, NH
4 - Suds Pub, Bethel, ME
5 - Wildcat Tavern, Jackson, NH
8 - Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, MA
10 - Bidwell Tavern, Coventry, CT 7:30pm
11 - Vivo Bar & Grill, Danbury, CT
12 - Puppet House, Stony Creek, CT 8pm
16 - Sage On The Waterfall, Chester, CT
18 - Ivory Pub, Deep River, CT
19 - G. W. Tavern, Washington Depot, CT
24 - Brewhouse, S. Norwalk, CT
25 - Blues Festival, Bridgeport, CT 7:30pm
31 - Mermaid Inn, Chestnut Hill, PA

EIGHT TO THE BAR

4 - Memories on Main, Torrington, CT
5 - Contrassegno, Hamden, CT
11 - Ultimate Billiards, Berlin, CT
12 - St. James Church, Watertown, MA
13 - Caffè Bottega, New Haven, CT 4:30-8pm
18 - Red Rock, N. Kingstown, RI
19 - Lions Club, New Britain, CT
20 - Irving Plaza, NY, NY
25 - Waverly Tavern, Cheshire, CT 8:30-12pm
26 - Hi-Hat Lounge, Providence, RI
29 - Omni Hotel, New Haven, CT 6-10

10 SOUND WAVES

FACE FIRST

15 - Webster Theater, Hartford, CT

FULL DEMPSEY BAND

25 - Sneekers Cafe, Groton, CT
30 - Newport Blues Cafe, Newport, RI

GOPHERBROKE

3,26 - Finnegan's, Simsbury, CT
4 - School St. Bistro, Westfield, MA 7-11
5 - Billy Wilson's, Norwich, CT
9 - Red Lion, Stockbridge, MA
11 - Penalty Box, Coventry, CT
18 - GW Tavern, Washington, CT
19 - K of C, Taftville, CT
25 - Bidwell Tavern, Coventry, CT

INTHEWOODS

10 - Raindesert, Danielson, CT

KEVIN CRANDALL BAND

3,31 - The Hilton, Mystic, CT 7pm

KICK

4 - Stash's, New London, CT
5 - Geraldine's, W. Springfield, MA
11 - Murphy & Scarletti's, Farmington, CT
19 - Bourbon Street N, Hartford, CT
26 J.R.'s, Cranston, RI

MEGAHERTZ

5 - Cook's Cafe, Naugatuck, CT
11 - Burke's Tavern, Niantic, CT
18 - Corner Pocket, Orange, CT
19 - Jimmie's Seaside, Stamford, CT
25 - Terrace Club, Stamford, CT

MIKE SAVINO / THE SONS

4 - Contressegno's, Hamden, CT
5,19 - Black Seal, Essex, CT
11 - Sullivan's, Naugatuck, CT
12 - Ivoryton Tavern, Ivoryton, CT
18 - The Trap, Groton, CT
26 - Cugino's, Cheshire, CT 8pm

Ms. MARCI & THE LOVESICK HOUNDS

3 - Black Eyed Sally's, Hartford, CT
4 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI
5 - Cafe 9, New Haven, CT
12 - VFW Hall, W. Hartford, CT
18 - Rick's Billiards, Putnam, CT

RON MURRAY & VUELO

3,17 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT
27,28 - Top Of The Hub, Boston, MA

THE SUGAR DADDY BAND

11,12 - Newport Blues Cafe, Newport, RI
17 - Tongue & Groove, Mystic, CT
26 - Burke's Tavern, Niantic, CT

SUGARFREE

2,9,16,23,30 - Tongue & Groove, Mystic, CT
4 - Billy Wilson, Norwich, CT
12 - Newport Blues Cafe, Newport, RI
25 - The Voodoo Grill, Mystic, CT

33Hz

11 - Rick's Billiards, Putnam, CT
19 - Uncle Kranky's, Jewett City, CT

TONECATS

5 - Music Lady, Central Village, CT
18 - Cady's Tavern, Glocester, RI

WORLD'S SMALLEST QUARTET

4,25 - Main Street Tavern, Old Saybrook, CT
5,17,18 - Billy Wilson's, Norwich, CT
11 - Meeting House Pub, Tolland, CT
12 - Oliver's Taverne, Essex, CT
19 - Glock Grill, Higganum, CT
26 - Village Restaurant, Woodstock, CT

Any bands wishing to be listed for the month, **MUST** have their dates into **SOUND WAVES** by the **LAST FRIDAY** of every month. **NO** listings will be taken over the telephone. These listings are **FREE!**

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Sat. 19th - **DURANT & DARULA**

Fri. 25th - **JENNIFER TAYLOR**

Sat. 26th - **DON CASH DUO**

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- March 12th -

**DIRTY
DEEDS**

- March 19th -

VALENTINO

- March 26th -

**HARD
KNO**



- April 2nd -

NO SHAME



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12th - **TBA**

19th - **T-RAY**

26th - **CHRIS SIMONDS**

Apr. 2nd - **CHRIS SIMONDS**

MARCH MADNESS!

All the Men's & Women's Games!

MUSIC NOTES

By Mark T. Gould

Take Those Old Records Off The Shelf

Thinking of getting rid of that old, dusty record turntable? Don't. You just might need it.

You remember turntables, right? Those were those electronic devices that we used, lo so many years ago, to play something called a record album.

33 1/3 rpms. Does that groove ring a bell?

If it does, and if you've held onto that ancient turntable and your albums are still out there someplace, collecting dust, well, then, it's time to play them again, Sam.

According to published reports, and the latest survey from the National Association of Record Merchandisers, sales of new and used vinyl albums reportedly tripled between 1999 and 2002, with sales during that time of a reported \$67 million.

Now, while that may not seem like much in the face of the overwhelming \$12 billion in compact disc sales during the same time period, and while there has actually been a reported downturn in vinyl sales for the calendar year 2004, it is a phenomenon of some proportion, a rise not unlike the Phoenix out of the music industry ashes, by a format that was declared all but dead and buried by the CD several years ago.

There is, therefore, a vinyl comeback of sorts out there in retail-land. Many on-line, as well as brick and mortar outlets, are again stocking, advertising and featuring sales of turntables and styluses, and, moreover, a number of recording artists, albeit a relative few, are making their new releases available on vinyl again.

Yet, while vinyl, which you certainly cannot lug around with you or play in the car or while you do your shopping or workout, does not fit our "go-go" society these days, its beauty cannot be diminished or marginalized. Some audiophiles, heck, most audiophiles, agree that the analog sounds of vinyl are more pure, warm and natural sounding than those of compact discs, where annoyingly modern recording techniques like no noise and compression literally suck all of the life out of the sounds of the music contained on them.

One of my own pet peeves with the presentation of compact discs, and this may well be showing my age, is that I really miss the compelling artistry of interesting album covers (think Pink Floyd, The Who, or Little Feat, among many others, for example) and liner notes that are actually large enough that I can read them without the benefit of glasses and a magnifying glass.

Another cool factor of the revitalization of vinyl is that, while the major recording companies tend to ignore the format due to its relatively limited sales potential, these bigwigs, nonetheless, are more than willing to enter into

licensing agreements to handle distribution of vinyl releases by smaller, quality companies, like Sundazed, for example, which is a boon to the economic well-being of the smaller, independent, and yes, usually more vital and qualitatively better companies.

Clearly, the durability and comparatively easy storing capabilities of compact discs triumph over albums, but now it seems that we can take those albums back off our shelves, and out of our attics and garages, and play them again, in all their "snap, crackle and pop" glory.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON CONTINUED

bullshit detector in American media.

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Make that Gonzo.

You have to wonder, particularly in these most politically correct of times, just how a alcohol-guzzling, chain-smoking, drug-infested, mad-cap genius/irritant like Dr. Thompson could make such an impact, and, armed with the aforementioned olfactory analyzer, become such an inspiration for those of us in his generation. He was irascible, incoherent, oft putting, and just about the best, and certainly the most honest, American political observer of his time.

Yes, they called it "Gonzo," but I'm not certain that even that was enough.

Yet, it is literally impossible to describe Dr. Thompson's work in any other way. A friend of mine recently wrote to me, after the news of Thompson's passing, that he, Thompson, "probably was the only true rock and roll writer." And, he's right. Not a writer of rock and roll, but a rock and roll writer. Thompson could drink a case of rum, drop some blotter acid, careen down a highway (yes, the "Proud Highway") and write the best damn prose about just about anything in the American experience that pissed him off.

And, I have Hunter S. Thompson to thank for one of my dearest friendships in the world. Back during my freshman days at Uconn, I was taking an English course taught by Anne Beattie (yes, novel fans, that Ann Beattie). At one point in the first class, she asked the roomful of us if anyone had ever heard of Hunter S. Thompson.

Sitting near the front of the room, I proudly raised my hand, and then turned around in my seat to look behind me, searching for any kindred spirits. Near the back, an intent, intelligent looking fellow was the only other person with a hand raised in the class. Grinning sheepishly, he pointed and nodded knowingly at me. After class, I caught up with him in the hallway and we compared Doctors' notes. Over 30 years later, he remains a dear friend. He's a closet novelist and one of the finest writers I've ever met.

Me? I dabble in writing about rock and roll, although no one would ever accuse me of being a rock and roll writer. Or a Gonzo writer, whatever that may be.

Hunter S. Thompson once wrote one of the finest descriptions of American life that I have ever read. He said, "when the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." But, Doc, I gotta ya one better. "When the going got weird, you turned pro," and your readers, and your country, were the better for it.

Gonzo, indeed. Rest in peace.

HEARING AID

BLUE MERLE

"Burning in the Sun"

Island Records

Recently emerging from the Nashville rock scene, Blue Merle is a rock quartet with bluegrass and jazz undertones. With a busy touring schedule and an upcoming major label release, they certainly have the work ethic, backing, and sophistication to attract various audiences from jam band to rock, and pop to country. Their CD debut, "Burning in the Sun," an incisive and meditational set, is scheduled for release within the next month. With a free spirited, Dave Matthews Band instrumental style, Blue Merle should do well with the youngest generation of rock fans. With classic rock sensibility and sundry sounds of their Nashville roots, they bring some uniqueness to the scene.

When you Google "Blue Merle" on the web, you first get a few hits on the band, then you get hundreds of hits for the collie breed of the same name. It is a dog known for its instinct, agility, strength and stamina. Blue Merle, the band, seems to show these traits, ones that such a band certainly needs to be that "one in a million" success. The new CD shows off the raw spirit of a talented new band - lively, but not overly complex. "Burning in the Sun" is a 12-track set filled with tunes that are consistently timed and packaged for the airwaves. Though more of the feel of a veteran band, you can still tell this is a young group. Led by Lucas Reynolds on guitar and vocals, the band is rounded out by Beau Stapleton on mandolin, Jason Oettel on bass, and William Ellis on drums.

Opening with the set with the title track, we get an immediate sense of the craggy, yet smooth vocals of Reynolds backed by the infectious twang on mandolin and a spirited electric violin, the tune rolls along to a fast moving crescendo. The listener is then let go and dropped into the arms of the tranquil and heartfelt "If I Could." Filled with poetic lyrics about lost love and lost souls, there is an underlying tension to the words that is brightened by the instrumentals. Songs on here such as "Stay," "Every Ship Might Sail Away," and "Part of Your History" have an intensity and fatalism that is both sad yet still hopeful.

The mood of the CD is one that certainly fits in as a backdrop for the angst of our commercially overloaded youth - confused by it all yet still moving ahead toward some unknown inner world order. So, there are

many songs here that could certainly fit in as soundtrack for the current WB-type teen/young adult coming of age television shows. Yet, this CD has more than that because it is filled with the orchestral twists and turns of multiple stringed instruments that brings a more mature texture.

- Dave Geller

THE CLASH "London Calling: Legacy Edition" Epic/Legacy

Twenty years after their demise, and at least 20 box sets and compilations later, why would you want to purchase another Clash box set? Hey, we all want to hear greatest hits and compilations of the bands we love, but after Epic/Legacy's last release of Clash material, "The Essential Clash," it would be difficult, if not impossible, to create a better Clash compilation. So how could they top that? Not only do we all own "London Calling" already, but with CD technology, it's hard to put enough wear on a disc, even

if it is one of your most played volumes, to need another. The reason you want this new Clash CD box set, though, is really very simple. Great new music and insightful video. Well, actually unreleased video and recordings from 1979 courtesy of Mick Jones. Presumed to be dust, the Clash singer/guitarist found these pre- "London Calling" session tapes in March of this year.

These tapes were named "The Vanilla Tapes" since they were recorded in the Vanilla Studios in Pimlico. Self-produced on the fly by the Clash's roadies using a 4-track recording machine, one of the roadies had supposedly lost the tapes en route to another studio, the one finally chosen to record "The Last Testament," i.e. the original name of "London Calling." Coincidence, karma, luck, whatever you want to call it, this was a quintessential find in this 25th anniversary year of the release of the greatest punk rock album of all-time. So, Epic/Legacy was able to swiftly compile a classy 3-disc release that includes the January 2000 re-mastered "London Calling," "The Vanilla Tapes," and a 45-minute DVD with rare interviews and performance footage called "The Last Testament."

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The centerpiece of this release is Disc 2, "The Vanilla Tapes." Twenty-one unpolished, unrefined tunes. Just the raw energy of the band. And though, there is significant overlap with "London Calling," there are four never released recordings of new music, and an unreleased Dylan cover, "The Man in Me." Even at that, few of the tunes sound the same as the "London Calling" versions. It is like listening to an entirely new Clash album. For example, the CD opens with a pulsating all-instrumental version of "Hateful." The lack of final production and engineering on the CD creates a subtle flow that gives you the feel of being inside the recording session. It is better able to capture the emotions of the time. Unlike the final version that is more of a call to arms, this version is a call to introspection. It is the picture negative to the final album. More than that, it provides a resource to gain even more understanding and respect for one of the most impactful bands of their time.

By the time you read this review a new president will be elected (unless of course, the candidates are fighting over votes in Florida). That, along with the unsettled war in Iraq, poor international relations, and economic woes makes it fitting that the most politically charged band of our time uncovers the source of the seminal anti-war (albeit the Cold War) inspired albums of our time.

***** - Dave Geller

RORY BLOCK

"From The Dust"

Telarc Records

Rory Block is doing more than her share to keep Delta blues music alive. Influenced by such blues legends as Son House, Robert Johnson, Skip James, and Mississippi John Hurt, Block has always done more than admirable job in covering the works of those artists, and combined with her own original recordings, she has offered a complete dose of the Delta that is authentic as Kentucky bourbon. Born in Princeton, New Jersey and growing up in Soho, New York, Block's musical career blossomed as a youngster on a used Galiano guitar. Music quickly became Rory Block's main focus in life, and despite a complete lack of interest in the blues from record companies, country and Delta-style acoustic blues consumed Block's musical career. Her debut recording, a country blues effort titled "High Heeled Blues", received positive feedback from critics who recognized

Rory Block's authenticity from the very first note, and convinced Block to remain true to her musical roots going forward. She hasn't looked back since.

"From The Dust" is Block's latest effort on Telarc Records. Filled with a unique cross blend of spiritual strength ("David Had The Blues", "Remember", "Unprecedented Quiet") and deep, darkened blues ("The Gate", "Stones in My Passway"), "From The Dust" offers 14 original tracks filled with a hearty dose of gently rolling slide guitar work accompanied by heartfelt, soulful singing. Rory Block combines pain, optimism, spirituality, and realisms into one 58 minute emotional effort; the final product delivered as one authentic musical package. After a few listens, one can't help but earn a deeper appreciation of blues music heard in its purest form.

Rory Block is a true interpreter of traditional country blues, leading the pack of modern acoustic blues players and churning out a rich blend of heartfelt music from start to finish. Honest and expressive, "From The Dust" is a fine example of those musical offerings. With four W.C. Handy awards to her credit, Rory Block is committed to preserving Delta blues music, offering flawless slide guitar playing and fingerpicking to accompany songwriting that would have had the Delta blues legends proud.

- Don Sikorski

STEVE EARLE

"Live From Austin Tx"

New West Records

If you're a reasonably recent convert to the spectacular songwriting of Steve Earle, you would be wise to run out and pick up this new release, a live recording from Austin City Limits on September 12, 1986, to hear him in all his early glory.

Whether he's writing from a political or personal point of view, Earle's songs have always made us laugh, cry and think, sometimes all at the same time. His older work, showcased on this performance from almost two decades ago, more than ably supported by the original Dukes band, also had that wondrous touch. From the nose-thumbing of the classic "Guitar Town," the title track from his seminal first album, to the, well, danger, of "The Week of Living Dangerously," to the pathos of "Goodbye's All We Got Left" and "Devil's Right Hand," Earle was then, and remains, now just about the finest contemporary songwriter in America.

- Mark T. Gould

1/2



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By Rex Rutkoski

Green Day, once credited with changing the face of alternative radio, is back – and in a big way.

Having not toured significantly since the release of its last CD, "Warning," in 2000, the rockers return with a major thematic social commentary, the critically praised "American Idiot," that promises to be career defining. It debuted at number one in the nation.

After 15 years, the group remains Mike Dirnt (bass and vocals), Billie Joe Armstrong (vocals, guitar) and Tre Cool (drums).

Their 1994 album "Dookie" sold 14 million copies, helping Green Day broaden the definition of punk, pop and rock.

The Bay Area band continue to challenge listeners with "American Idiot," whose centerpiece, "Jesus of Suburbia," is a mini-rock opera featuring such songs as "I Don't Care," "City of the Damned," "Dearly Beloved" and "Tales of Another Broken Home."

Mike Dirnt sits for this Green Day career update:

Question: Congratulations on "American Idiot." You've certainly found a great way to let people know Green Day is back at it again. What a powerful response you are receiving!

Dirnt: "Thanks. We are really honored. I think we always expect the worse (in terms of reaction). When something great comes about, it's nice. We just feel honored by our fans and kind of revitalized in rock and roll."

Question: Where are you in this interesting journey?

Dirnt: "Atlanta. (He laughs). I think we are at a high point

right now. I feel like it's kind of turning point in our career, where a lot of our fans who were into us for maybe one or two records, and kind of fell out, have joined along side of us again. A lot of fans who have been with us though the years, they get the same sense of pride we get right now. They feel justified in liking this band."

Question: For someone coming new to the party, what would you tell them this entity called Green Day is all about?

Dirnt: "It's just about three people that see eye to eye musically and it's almost a life of its own. It's a weird thing. It's music that changed our lives and if people want to listen too I just hope it has meaning in theirs."

Question: How has the band, changed, evolved through the years, or haven't you changed?

Dirnt: "I think we have changed. People would say, 'You are more mature' or whatever. I think we are just more experienced at everything. We've learned to approach songwriting from a multitude of directions now, not just from just one source. There are no rules to this band. I feel the longer this band goes the more we explore new avenues. We love challenging ourselves. If we are afraid of something, if it scares us, we probably are on to something good."

Question: Billie Joe Armstrong once told me 'Our passion is our strength.' Does that remain valid today?

Dirnt: "I would say so. Musically speaking this band doesn't come across as any sort of tough band. We never really have. There are a lot of different sides to real toughness, whether you are able to dive in and show your vulnerability, or being completely honest with yourself, whatever it is. We very competitive on an individual level, but not against other bands. Just in life. We won't let rock'n'roll knock us down. We want to own it."

Question: What continues to drive you, motivate you?

Dirnt: "Chicks and money (he laughs). No, we love what we do. My dad years ago said, 'If I made as much as you I would have retired already.' I said, 'What would you do?' He kind of looked at me and said, 'You've got a point.' This is what I love to do. I don't care if I didn't make any money, I would always do it. My mom once said, 'Whatever you do, do it to the best of your ability. If you're lucky that will be what you love to do best.' "

Question: A lot of people think you took a long break, or didn't it seem that long to you?

Dirnt: "We took a break from the public eye, but we worked our asses off. Once again, we enjoy what we do. It's really fun. We set ourselves up in a studio environment. It really was a 100 percent creative environment. The only rule was, 'If you've got nothing, record something. Everything we did inspired the next move for this album.'"

Question: Anyone in any line of work for a long time can be challenged on how to keep what they do fresh for themselves. Was taking on a project like the new CD part of the process of how you have kept it fresh?

Dirnt: "It's more a matter of making sure you don't get bored and always keep creative, whether it is Trey going in studio and doing a polka song, or me going in and doing an acoustic thing, or Billie doing something else, it's being creative and not pigeon holing yourself. We kind of feel the art

of the album can get lost in the routine for a lot of musicians: you make a record, put out a single, make a video, go on tour -- this kind of mundane routine. We just like to keep things interesting for ourselves, and dangerous. Rock'n'roll should be dangerous."

Question: Are the reasons why your songs touch people, why people relate to them, different today, or have those reasons not changed?

Dirnt: "I always felt the core reason our stuff relates to other people is Billie Joe has a way of tapping into his own personal politics, his own viewpoint, of his emotions. The way he describes things are very relatable. There is an honesty there."

Question: Regardless of what age you are?

Dirnt: "I think so. I don't think you ever lose emotional capacities. You can be 90 years old and feel every emotion. It doesn't matter."

Question: Early on, Green Day was hailed for celebrating the underdog spirit in us all. Does that still apply?

Dirnt: "I think so. We are from Oakland, what do you expect? (He laughs). We are kind of the Brooklyn of the Bay area, kind of the underdogs to San Francisco. And the Raiders are always underdog to whomever they are playing, but they do it to themselves. The Oakland A's are the training camp for the New York Yankees (he laughs). We come from that area and I think it filters through us, something that seems to have been that way since we were little kids."

Question: How long was the "American Idiot" CD in the planning stages?

Dirnt: "From when we stumbled across the idea to the finish of recording, a year and a half and another half year before that of preparations."

Question: Did you view it as a risk? Or perhaps even a risk that had to be taken?

Dirnt: "Yes, it was scary. For lack of a better analogy, I've been saying it's like we got this mountain we already climbed, only this time we took a different route. And on the way there we saw one higher. Which one do you want to climb? The view at top of the other mountain doesn't suck, but you always want to challenge yourself. And if we are doing that and stirring up controversy it always seems like we get into good things that way."

Question: Why do you think it seems that so few bands attempt -- to use that word -- a "concept" CD these days, an album that is unified in theme?

Dirnt: "I don't know if it is because it is the CD era. Our first record was a seven-inch or a 45. There are things like that out there. We drew a lot of inspiration from a band like Outkast or Eminem and those guys who are so ambitious with rap. They don't let their ambitions stop them in the studio. Granted, they don't pull the stuff off live (he laughs).

"To try to pull it off live is a little bit scary. I do feel there are a lot of younger bands today whose Beatles and Stones collections are getting further and further back in their collection and they need to pull them to the front again."

Question: Do you think some bands are concerned their fans might not be patient enough for this way of presenting an album?

Continued Page 20



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GREEN DAY CONTINUED

Dirnt: "I can't really speak for other bands, I guess. It is easy to get stuck in a routine. We want to shift gears ourselves. Bands are coming around to doing it every 7 to 10 years, creating a severe musical change.

"Most music fans are smarter than people give them credit for, whether it's just the options they have or whatever. Then every once and a while there is a reissued CD with one new song on it. It's pretty lame for an artist to do that, and it takes a really dedicated fan to buy it or they just didn't see it.

"Everything comes back to the fans. We are fortunate to live in this lifestyle. We are doing what we love and sharing it with friends and fans."

Question: What were the artistic goals for the "American Idiot" CD?

Dirnt: "Whenever we started heading in this direction, we wanted to step outside of what it is that Green Day is known for. When we think of our heroes, all are known for certain records, like, for me it is The Stones' 'Beggar's Banquet.' I want to see my band synonymous with good music, not with just one song. We wanted to explore maximum song structure and Green Day.

Question: What subject matter and themes were you most interested in exploring?

Dirnt: "There is an obvious political overtone, which sets the political climate for the main character. We really made it a point in the writing of this record to maintain the relationships between characters and leave it open-ended enough for people to jump in anywhere and not feel lost in some story, and be able to claim it as their own."

Question: If people take nothing else thematically from this CD what do you want it to be?

Dirnt: "Enjoyment, even when we play a live show. We don't really have an agenda with this record. We wanted to put out something musically that takes you to a different place, takes you on a journey."

Question: Could "American Idiot" be an evergreen, a touchstone CD for future generations?

Dirnt: "I like to think of it that way. Really good careers have peaks and valleys. We are on a peak right now. For us, this record stands alone. It is not a progression like our other records. You can see the progression in those other records. That alone makes this record somewhat monumental to this point."

Question: "American Idiot" suggests these are not the best of times for creative people to say what is really on their minds. How have things gotten so out of whack that artists seem afraid?

Dirnt: "The average person finds themselves afraid. We are living in an information age right now, but all this information is like a tornado of bullshit. There's falsified news, reality TV and throw in this war in Iraq on top that nobody knows why we are in it, with product placement in-between. It's time to say 'Enough!'

"Everything turns into debate immediately. With a song like 'American Idiot,' or this CD's political overtones, there's no agenda so much as, 'I feel disenfranchised and misrepresented, and I'm tired of it. Maybe it will open a discus-

sion again and get back to what politics starts as, and that is open discussion."

Question: Was the creative process different this time for Green Day?

Dirnt: "I think so. We started off having band practice and said, 'This sucks. We know how to have and practice. Why are we doing this?' Then it became, 'I don't care what you want to record. If you want to do a rap song, do it; or creative Christmas carols, do that; or a polka, do that. Just be creative and record. There are no boundaries.' A lot of things got wrapped into it. Some of it turned out absolute crap; some of it turned out brilliant. It was almost like we set up our own work shop at college."

Question: Switching to live performance, what would you tell people to expect this time around from Green Day in concert?

Dirnt: "Expect a real fun rock'n'roll show and expect a unity in the crowd. The louder people in the crowd sing, the better the entire show is. That's how a lot of the new record is played, with everybody on stage singing. We have some extra musicians (keyboard, trumpet and second guitar). We all are singing. It's very unified."

Question: What do you enjoy about the live experience?

Dirnt: "You throw energy out there and the crowd throws it back. The crowd and the band keep trying to top off each other's energy all night long. It's such a good ride."

Question: Looking back over these 15 years, what accomplishment of Green Day's are you proudest of?

Dirnt: "I'm really proud of what three kids were able to accomplish coming from nothing. It just goes to show, it doesn't matter where or what you come from, if you believe in something it can happen."

Question: What haven't you done but still want to accomplish? Are there more "American Idiots" out there?

Dirnt: "We are always looking around the corner. We definitely have a couple ideas right now. This record wasn't so pretentious as to be a concept before we started writing it. It was almost serendipitous the way we fell into it. If you want to know about our lives, listen to our records. It's all right there. That's our education, everything we are and probably ever will be."

Question: How would you assess the current music scene? Is it healthy? Is it ailing? Does it need to go in new directions?

Dirnt: "If music is in a bad place on a popular level, then on an underground level it will get really good really soon. Right now there is some kid in his garage writing the best song you ever heard. I'm a firm believer in that. I always believe there is always something out there."



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