

Sound Waves

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November 2015

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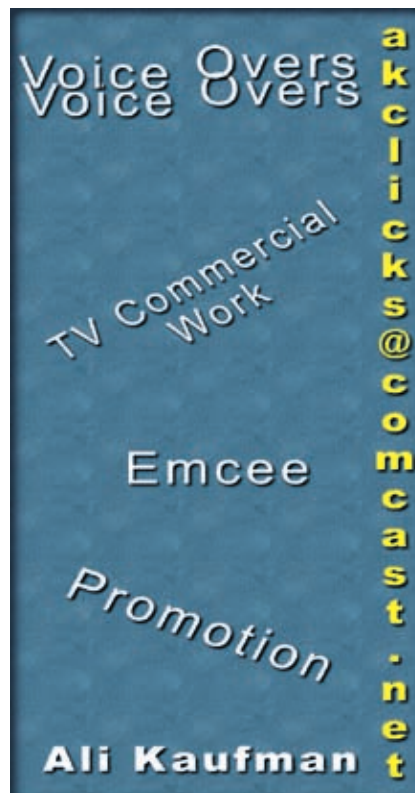
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de Grassi



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Sound Waves

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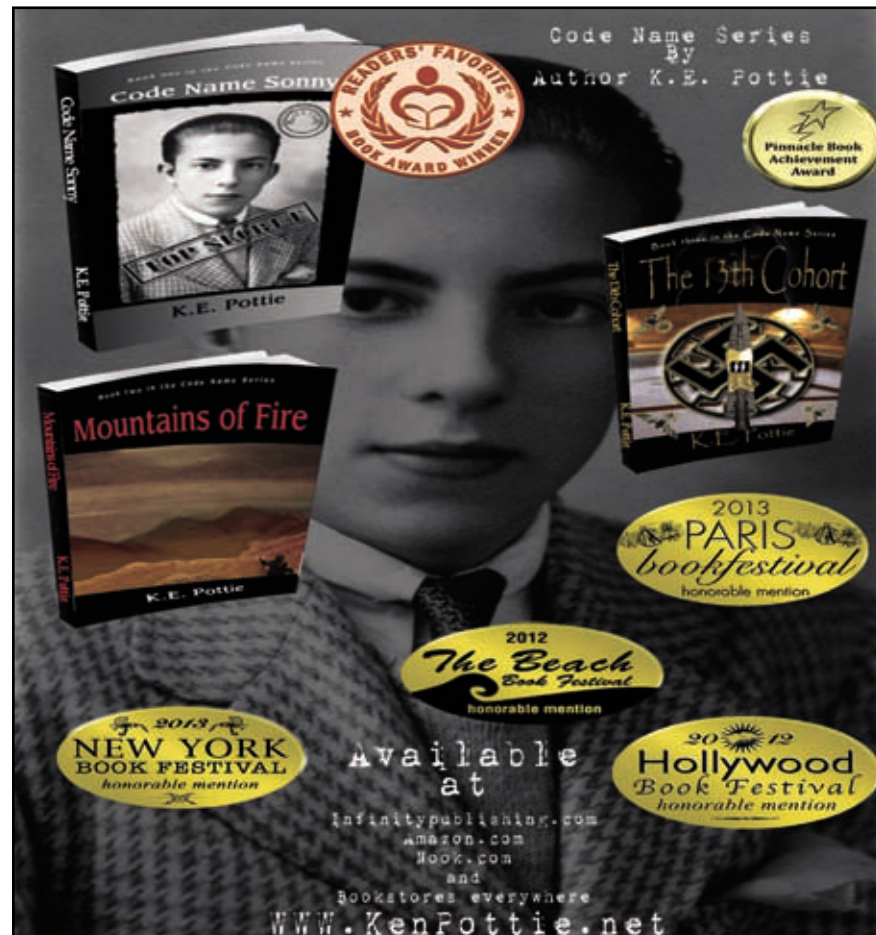
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MUSIC NOTES

“Talkin’ Dylan Albums Newport Blues”

By Mark T. Gould

He can’t sing and he never could sing. He has a voice reminiscent of the Guthrie-like troubadours he so admired in his youth. His “Never Ending Tour” should have ended a very long time ago. His live shows are sublime, with one of the best backup bands in

the world. He steals the lyrics and/or melody for most, if not all, of his songs. He is the great songwriter of our generation, and maybe of any generation.

Has there ever been a more polarizing, infuriating, frustrating, yet inspirational, artist than Bob Dylan?

The conversation, and the argument, about Dylan has gone on since just about the time he arrived in New York City back in 1961, a folkie ragmuffin with only the clothes on his back, an old acoustic guitar, and some great song ideas. Later, he became the born-again rocker who allegedly turned the Beatles onto a, er, let’s say higher plane of musical consciousness. Then, he was the born-action Christian who came out after his Vegas years. Soon, he was the bard who lost his muse somewhere in the 80s, but who roared back with some of the most incredible music of his career in the past decade or so, all the while, in his late 60s and into his 70s, still performing upward of 100 concerts a year.

And, when you’ve had a career as long, detailed, influential, and mercurial as this self-professed “song and dance man,” you’re bound to be the recipient of a significant amount of scrutiny along the way. As such, there have been literally hundreds of books written about Bob Dylan, but two recent ones stand out to offer some of the best critical, analytical, analysis of the career, the music, and the impact of arguably one of the major voices in American popular music history, if not American society itself.

The first, “Dylan Disc by Disc,” the brain child of author Jon Bream, makes a Dylan fan slap his or her forehead, and exclaim “why the hell didn’t anyone think of this before?”

What Bream did was assemble teams of two to discuss, analyze, pontificate and argue over the merits of Dylan’s 36 studio albums, winding the interviews and discussion into one of the, if not the, most coherent, and essential, additions to the Dylan oeuvre.

Crucial to the book’s success, everyone he picked to discuss and debate Dylan has the chops to back up their opinions. There’s not a wallflower (sorry, Jakob Dylan!) in the group. Among them are performers like Eric Anderson, Paul Metsa, Rodney Crowell, Marshall Chapman, Garland Jeffreys, Jason Isbell, Tony Glover and Ric Ocasek, along with Dylan authors and teachers Kevin Barents and William McKeen of Boston University, Jim Beviglia of American Songwriter, Kevin J.H. Dettmar of Pomona College, and Colleen Sheehy of the Plains Art Museum, and noted music critics like Robert Christgau, Gary Graff, Joe Levy, David Hinckley, Charles R. Cross and David Browne.

Sure, it would be easy for anyone to heap praise on the Dylan classics like “Bringing It All Back Home,” “Blonde on Blonde,” “Blood on the Tracks,” and “Time Out of Mind,” but what is remarkable about the book is the commentary, deftly brought out by Bream’s gentle prodding and questioning, on the comparatively lesser projects in Dylan’s recorded history.

For example, “Self Portrait” has been a Dylan punching bag over the years, but Kim Ruehl, editor of the seminal “No Depression” magazine, finds it “another instance of Bob Dylan being ahead of everybody else, whether he was conscious of that or not.”

The tepid set of outtakes, called “Dylan,” released by Columbia as a perverse reaction to his short-lived move to Asylum Records, is described by Daniel Durcholz, a St. Louis critic, as “hav(ing) a certain margin of success, probably right until people got home and put it on their turntables.”

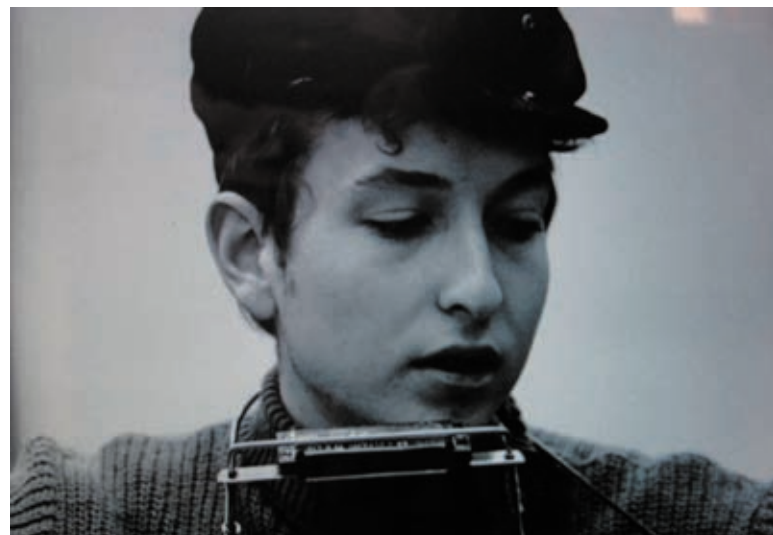
Graff describes “Knocked Out Loaded” as “I was expecting something really good, (and) what we got felt like an odds and sods.” Stephen Thomas Erlewine, editor of allmusic.com, says that “Down In the Groove” is “kind of a mess, (but) also seems to begin some of the themes that he would explore later on.”

Perhaps the most polarizing of Dylan’s career moves occurred when he “went electric” at the Newport Folk Festival on July 25, 1965, blasting out of the acoustic arena with a heady, albeit out of tune and under rehearsed, mishmash of rock and roll with guitarist Michael Bloomfield, keyboard player Al Kooper and other assorted members of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band.

This amazing performance, which singlehandedly drove folk music into the closet and solidified the passage of rock and roll to center stage, has been written about numerous times, but never in the context and detail of Elijah Wald’s “Dylan Goes Electric! Newport, Seeger, Dylan, and the Night That Split the Sixties.”

What sets this book apart, ironically written by a musician who played a part in the folk music revival, is that almost half of it is spent on the historical context of the folk music boom of the early 60s, Dylan’s part in that, and his conscious crusade to move away from it. Framed in that context, it makes a lot more sense, dramatically and historically, when Wald arrives at his reporting, description and examination of that fateful night. And, just as importantly, Wald doesn’t stop when Dylan walks off the stage that night, instead providing a snapshot of what happened to popular music, and to an extent as a partial result of that fateful night, to American society in the years following Dylan’s performance.

Nobody’s ambivalent about Bob Dylan, that’s for sure. And, these two pivotal and thought-provoking books make the conversation, and the argument, that much more interesting.



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LOCAL BEAT



Rhythmic Acoustic Guitar- ist Awes Hartford Stage With Virtuoso Folk and Jazz Tunes By Andrew Krebs

I had the pleasure of interviewing one of the greatest solo acoustic guitar players of all time this October . . . the virtuoso Alex de Grassi. A few

readers might remember Alex from the Windham Hill Record Company that launched renowned solo classical pianist George Winston years back. Since then, Alex has expanded his style with jazz and world music influences as well as “21st century versions” of classic American folk songs. There was no effects box and not even a microphone that night of the show. . . just the man and his guitar.

How did you get your start?

Alex: I come from a family of musicians which includes my grandfather who played for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. I took trumpet lessons at the age of 8 but dropped the horn after becoming fascinated by playing a guitar that my Mom originally bought for my brother. I started playing by ear and then took lessons at the age of 12 from my friend down the street. My family did not have a lot of money and my Mom was constantly working to support us “in a man’s world” so we could attend college and get good jobs. Unlike my siblings however, I broke the mold and dropped out of school to become a street musician in Europe. Although I wanted to stay out of the Vietnam War, I had no dreams of being a popular musician.

Who are your influences as a musician?

Alex: I grew up listening to Simon and Garfunkle and folk artists Leo Kottke and John Fahey. My friend Jake and I listened to a lot of rock and blues music growing up, like Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters. Bottleneck country guitar was also one of my influences. My tastes later widened into jazz and classical once I was (back) in college and taking more guitar lessons. Pianist Keith Jarrett was also a big influence but I wanted to expand beyond the linear constraint of the piano and play his kind of music on my solo acoustic guitar.

By 1976 my carpenter-cousin William Ackerman started his own record label Windham Hill Records as a side gig for his construction business for which both of us worked after I returned from Europe. He got asked to play out after recording his own guitar album and distributing it to radio stations, so I finally got around to trying to record my own.

What was it like recording your first album?

Alex: I was a 25-year old carpenter at the time who was finishing my college degree and recording an album for Will’s record label. Neither Will nor I had had much recording experience or knowledge of the music business. The process was slow and I was working only a few nights a month on the album Turning Turning Back. We took our time since I had to know what it was like to record and to be ready (to play out). I got a few calls to do interviews and to play shows after that album.

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So it wasn’t a struggle to jump-start the record company?

Alex: It just kind of happened since we were in the right place at the right time. I was fortunate to get a pretty good response on my early albums right after college. My recording ability improved a lot in just a couple years and my second album Slow Circle was recorded much faster than the first. The songs were done in one take and half the cuts on the album were done in 2 sessions in just 7 hours without edits! I got even more invitations to interview and play at venues after that album so I thought “Hey . . . maybe I can do this.”

Was Clockwork your third album? That was a transitional one for you . . . during which time you and Will added new instruments to what were supposed to be solo guitar recordings. Weren’t those backing instruments played by Chuck Greenberg of great world-music band Shadowfax?

Alex: Yes. As much as my cousin William (the label owner) was my boss and friend, I was doing well enough by that time that he took a hands off approach and basically said “Do your own thing” (laughs). I met Chuck Greenberg through a South African friend I knew from playing on the streets in England. Chuck played horns and the “lyricon” instrument on Clockwork.

Was Windham Hill still a small label by the early 80s?

Alex: Oh yeah. It was just Will and me and a couple other guitarists, including Michael Hedges (innovative acoustic guitar star of the 80s and 90s). We were all having some success and were doing well.

Were you still doing carpentry by this time?

Alex: No. I had quit carpentry just before releasing my second record. Building and music don’t mix so well so I chose to do music full time. By the close of the 70s we were already making a living doing solo guitar music. Then Windham Hill Records took off once we could add other musicians and instruments (strings and horns) to the label.

What was it like going from being a fledgling solo guitar label of the 70s . . . to being one of the most popular jazz/folk/classical labels of the 80s and 90s? Describe what was it like being part of that record company just as it was exploding . . . playing larger venues with all kinds of different musicians.

Alex: It was pretty exciting and was the coolest thing that’s ever happened to me! I was responsible for recording the album An Evening with Windham Hill Live. That album featured William, Mike Hedges, violinist Darol Anger, and myself. Classical piano-player George Winston also joined us and turned the label into an even exponentially bigger commercial success. By that time my Mom recognized my talent and regretted that she had not sent me to some more prestigious music school in the East US.

How do you play such fast guitar and write such strident music? Does it take you a long time to learn your songs and do you figure them out in your head first?

Alex: The amount of time to learn my music could take days or months. I don’t usually have songs in my head first. The writing didn’t happen on paper when I started out. Usually there’s a rhythm in my head that I tap on my guitar 1st. The chords and notes grow out of that rhythm like a visual picture. I got this impression from seeing sunlight reflected off a building as I was walking down the street one day. .

(Alex draws pictures of water waves and dots on a chalkboard as if to sketch out impressionist ideas of music notes in his own unique way . . . These dots and waves are like water and show up in the wavy staccato rhythms of Alex de Grassi’s music).

The Windham Hill label was well known for their impressionist style album covers, with paintings or photos of landscapes and light shining through windows. Did those themes run through your music?

Alex: Yeah. The bright staccato sound on my album Water Garden was inspired by a house I lived in the woods where it rained torrentially for weeks on end. The sound of trickling and plopping water inspired the use

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of both the sunlit water lilies on the album cover as well as my guitar playing style for that album.

Cool. *I actually remember thinking that after buying your album **Deep at Night in the 90s**. That staccato plucking on the song “Blue Trout” actually sounds like fish jumping out of water. Is that what you mean when you talk about visual impressions playing a role in the rhythm of your music?*

Alex: Oh yeah sure! (Alex smiles, grabs his guitar and plucks the first few chops from the song Blue Trout. . a live favorite). Alex draws spikes on the chalkboard. . just as heavier impressions might show up in a punk rock song (he laughs). Pictures shape and mold the form and “e-motion” of my music. My friend and neuroscientist Dan Levitin of McGill University in Canada talks about this in his book “This is Your Brain On Music.”

In the past decade or more I’ve become more proficient and methodical at actually writing down my notes and transferring the nuances and details my songs to sheet music. Still, the rhythm drives my music more than individual notes or theory. . even today. The songs evolve into something that resembles a waltz although I don’t think of my songs as waltzes ahead of time.

Can you tell me more about what its been like playing with Mike Manring and how you got involved with playing styles of world music?

Alex: Bassist Michael Manring first played with me during the Clockwork tour and in the band Demania during the 2000s. The world music influence was there on Vajra but was prominently felt on later percussive albums like The World Is Getting Loud. I also played with Brazilian guitar player Paulo Bellinati which returned me back to my early folk playing influences.

You and Michael recently recorded a great and unusual version of “Oh Suzanna:” a neat twist on a traditional song. Do you guys look back and think what a long strange trip its been?

Alex: Laugh!

Alex de Grassi played a great show at the Asylum Hill Church in Hartford the night of this interview. Songs included the aforementioned “Blue Trout,” a funky spiritual by James Brown and solo guitar versions of Thelonius Monk’s “Round Midnight” and Gershwin’s “Porgy and Bess.” Alex’s thumb plucked walking bass notes as his palm slapped the body of his guitar and his upper fingers tickled the treble strings. Other highlights included the wild “Single Girl” (with fast vertical solos) and “The Water Garden:” perhaps deGrassi’s “wettest song” (“White Rain” notwithstanding). He even played an acoustic version of great rock song “Angel” by Jimi Hendrix, featuring bar-chord strumming and loud “bong”-y bass notes on his low E-string.

In addition to funky jazz, deGrassi also played great instrumental country music, including a “Cowboy Song” about being lost in Jamaica. That song featured an old country lick in a minor key, and was about a cowboy trying to find his way home without being shot and buried on a lone prairie after having said “Adios” to the Rio Grande. Lots of fans in the audience were also excited to hear the old favorite “Western,” one of Alex’s more challenging songs which swung with a 3-chord waltz riff that would have given less advanced guitarists serious carpal tunnel syndrome. deGrassi’s scrunched his eyes as his hands stretched deftly up and down the neck of his guitar . . weaving in and out of the 3-chord rhythm as deftly as an impressionist artist paints his pointalist brush strokes. The raw live aspect of that performance gave that song even more freshness than the original recording from the Southern Exposure album of years ago.

Alex also had a good sense of humor, using harmonics to tune his guitar in the middle of a song in ways that blended in with the rest of the tune so as to not make it obvious to the audience until he jokingly admitted it. He also returned minutes after the concert to play an encore “because the back door was locked and I couldn’t leave.” That encore was a clever medley of

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Charles Mingus’ “Goodbye Porkpie Hat” (with catchy blues guitar riff) and Leo Kottke’s frenetic folk tune “Last Steam Engine Train.”

Few artists of today still create albums around both a musical and visual theme (water), which makes buying Alex’s albums all the more impressive. Musicians and fans of folk and jazz would appreciate Alex’s crisp fast playing: a perfect listen for either a special occasion or during a chill night together with friends.



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BAR FLY JOURNALS

By Stephanie Shawn

Hello My Sweet Bar Flies.....I hope your Halloween was Super Spooky and had Gore Galore, along with Candy and Cocktails, a truly Eerie Evening. As you may all remember, I was in Key West at FANTASYFEST! The rule of thumb for this deal with MICHELLE and MARK was what happened at FANTASYFEST, stayed at FANTASYFEST! Always a good rule to live by. Luckily for my faithful readers there were a few pix that were perfect exceptions to that rule.

Three solid days of drunken debauchery was enough for my husband, he says he's never going back... and he doesn't drink!!!! Wtf? No, seriously, it



was a blast! The creativity of the American People is truly astounding! Honest to God, who does this stuff? Where do they get these ideas? Just when you think everything you can imagine has got to be on FACEBOOK or PINTEREST, you see something you've never even imagined in your wildest dreams! And boy o boy, there were a lotta dreamers! I'll let the pix speak for themselves!

So enough about that Holiday, ol' wicked Halloween, we move on to giving" Thanks" for the Good Things in Life! Like being able to live a creepy, crazy life. Thank you God! Rompa Stompa Time... Happy Birthday to some special people including my nephew DANN ROCHA, GINA ROCCHETTI, GAYLE BOUDREAU, LARRY WALSH, KRISTEN ROBERTS, STEVE TEFFT, pink lung girl CHERYL COMEAU, MELISSA LATAWIEC, STEPHANIE HALL, T.RAY TAYLOR, VASANA JOHNSON, JIM SPINNATO, PAUL FALCONE, WHIT PETRIE, KAREN JOSEPH WILSON, SEANNY O'BRIEN, JOE CUFF, JJ JOHNSON, MARY ELIZABETH BASILICATO, STEVE WILLIAMS, DONNA SHAWN, step daughter to the Stars NIKKI CURIOSO, ANN MARSH, GUY PALAZZO, BAR RESCUE



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RELEI, FRANTZ, LINDA -BARBER, NANCY MENHART, DOREEN JOHNSON, DAN LUZZI, GAYLE KIMBALL, KATHI MURPHY, KELLY JAMES, JAMES HARRIS, SAMANTHA DUCHESNEAU, PHIL DIORIO, FELICIA STEVENS and JOANNIE DEFANTI! I hope your special day is filled with unicorns and glitter!

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One of us just flew in last night from a crazy week in the KEYS, so i'm going to end this article here! I'm gonna try and snake my ass into the WOLF DEN as a guest judge..what the hell? Can't hurt to try! Until next month, my Sweet Flies, enjoy the Fall and all the Holiday Fun! Love you Long Long Time!



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10 – Ancient Mariner, Mystic, CT 8-11
24 – Rathskeller, Charlestown, RI

ANDY & BETHANY

5 - Breachway Grill, Charlestown, RI 6:30-10:30
6 – Daniel Packer, Mystic CT
13 – Shipyard Tavern, Mystic, CT 7-10

ANDY CHANEY

4,18 – Pizzetta, Mystic, CT 7-10

AZALEA DRIVE

7 - Black Sheep, Niantic, CT
25 - Hot Rods, New London, CT

BEBOBALOUBOB

6 - Stonehouse, Baltic, CT
7 - Burkes, Niantic, CT 8:30
21 - Toyo, Colchester, CT 8:30-11:30

BRANDT TAYLOR

5,12,19,26 - Maury's Pub, Danielson, CT 7pm
6 - Grand Central Cafe, Wallingford, CT
8 - Turnpike Cafe, Uncasville, CT 3pm
9 - Strange Brew, Norwich, CT 7pm
10,17,24 - Brazen Hen, Westerly, RI 8pm
13 - Ocean Mist, Matunuck, RI
21 - Harp & Hound, Mystic, CT
22 - VFW-Preston, CT 3pm

THE CARTELLS

4 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7pm
6 - Community Dance, W. Hartford, CT 8pm
7 - Harbour House, Mystic, CT 8:30pm
8,29 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 2pm
12 - Hilton, Mystic, CT 7:30pm
18 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 7:30pm
20 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 6pm
21 - Yantic River Inn, Yantic, CT
26 - Wolf Den, Uncasville, CT 8pm
27 - Maple Tree, Simsbury, CT 8:30pm
28 - Bill's Seafood, Westbrook, CT 7:30pm

DAN STEVENS

5 - Bullfrog Brewery, Williamsport, PA
6 - Hofbrau, Bellefonte, PA
7 - Locality Gallery, Bedford, PA 3pm
8 - Turkey Hill Brewing Co., Bloomsburg, PA

10 SOUND WAVES

10,17,24 - www.icrvradio.com 3pm
10,17,24 - Nightingale's, Old Lyme, CT
13 - Crown & Hammer, Collinsville, CT
14 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT
19 - Divine Wine, Niantic, CT
20 - Gypsy Joynt, Great Barrington, MA
21 - Perks & Corks, Westerly, RI
28 - Congregational Church, Old Lyme, CT

DARIK & THE FUNBAGS

6 - One Bar, Northampton, MA
7 - Newport Blues, Newport, RI
13 - Shamrock, Waterbury, CT
14 - Drafthouse, Shelton, CT
21 - Brown Derby, Uncasville, CT
25 - Chicago Sams, Cromwell, CT

FRANKENPHIL

6 - Ridge Vineyard, Preston, CT 5:30pm
11 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7pm
13 - Penny Lane, Old Saybrook, CT 7:30pm
14 - Seehund, New London, CT 6pm
27 - McBrides, Providence, RI 7pm
29 - Midtown, Newport, RI 4pm

GOPHERBROKE

7 - Bidwell Tavern, Coventry, CT
13 - Hearthstone, Plantsville, CT 8-11
14 - La Vita Gustosa, Haddam, CT
21 - Blackthorn, Easton, MA 8-11
28 - McKinnon's, Hartford, CT

HART STRINGS DUO

3 - Angie's, Mystic, CT 5pm-8pm
20 - Latitude 41, Mystic, CT 7:30-10:30

IZZY MALEK

5,19 - Pizzetta, Mystic, CT 7pm
6,27 - Amigos, Westerly, RI 7:30pm
13 - Ocean Mist, Matunuck, RI

JACK NAZZARO

13 - Amigos, Westerly, RI 7:30pm
21 - Bon Appetito, N. Stonington, CT 8pm

KEEP IT ROLLING BAND

7 - Stashes, New London, CT
21 - Jd Coopers, Putnam, CT

KEVIN MANZELLA

14,20 - Ancient Mariner, Mystic, CT

KEVIN MANZELLA & HEATHER LEPAGE

5 - Ancient Mariner, Mystic, CT 8-11
6 - Angie's, Mystic, CT
12 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7-10
19 - Voodoo Grill, Mystic, CT 8-11
21 - Shipyard Tavern, Mystic, CT 7-10
22 - Ancient Mariner, Mystic, CT 5-8

Ms. MARCI & JIM HOOPER

4 - Greendale's, Worcester, MA 8pm

15 - Yantic River Inn, Yantic, CT 4-6pm

SIDETRACKED

6 - Burkes Tavern, Niantic, CT 8:30pm
20 - Richonis, Groton, CT

STYFF KITTY

6 - Sneekers, Groton, CT
14 - Stash's, New London, CT
28 - Harbour House, Mystic, CT

SUGAR

21 - Heart Ball, Hartford, CT 6:30pm
25 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI
28 - Blues Cafe, Newport, RI

TNS

28 - Double Play, Wallingford, CT



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18 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

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14 - Chan's, Woonsocket, RI

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20 - All Souls, New London, CT

Buddy Guy

7 - Garde Arts, New London, CT

Colin Hay

22 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

Jethro Tull

8 - Grand Theater, Mashantucket, CT

Judy Collins

27 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT
28 - Infinity Hall, Norfolk, CT

Lee Ann Womack

19 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

Macy Gray

21 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

Madeleine Peyroux

15 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

Mary J. Blige

15 - Grand Theater, Mashantucket, CT

Mavis Staples

8 - The VETS, Providence, CT

Rhiannon Giddens

10 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

Shinedown

19 - Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

The Tenors

12 - Bushnell Center, Hartford, CT

Toby Keith

20 - Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

Trans-Siberian Orchestra

27 - Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT
29 - XL Center, Hartford, CT

Zach Deputy

12 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT
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SOUND WAVES 11

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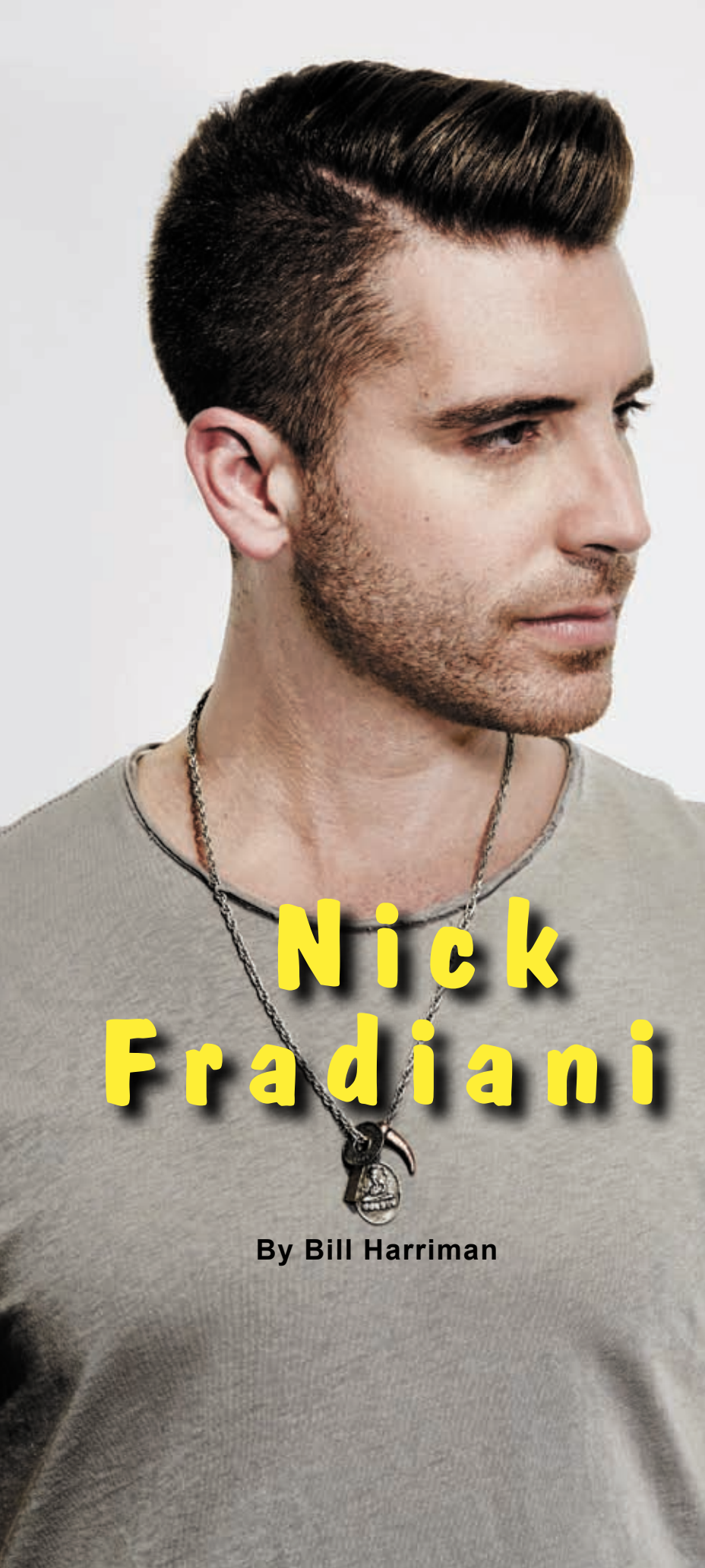
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Nick Fradiani

By Bill Harriman

1-866-436-5706 – do you recognize that number?

1-866-IDOLS06 – how about now? Admit it! You probably dialed it twenty times a week every Wednesday from March to May because that was the number to call if you wanted to vote for Nick Fradiani on this past season's American Idol. Twenty was the maximum calls allowed in this year's competition and it goes without saying that more people around the country dialed his number than any other contestants number. Why? Because Nick won that's why! He won! Can you believe it? Just like Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, Phil Phillips and ten others before him, he won! It is said that over 50,000 people try out for American Idol each year and can you believe that this year's winner is from Guilford, Connecticut?

Who hasn't been to Guilford? Who hasn't taken a nice scenic drive down Route 77 past Lake Quonnipaug on their way to Jacob's Beach with maybe a quick stop at the Shoreline Diner for breakfast or lunch? And who hasn't been to Bishop's Orchards on Boston Post Road where you can pick up some fresh produce or maybe a quart of Fradiani Frenzy ice cream? Yeah, that's right. Nick actually has an ice cream named after him. It's chocolate with a delicious mix of peanut butter and peanut butter cups. It's just one of the perks of being the American Idol winner. That and a million dollar record deal. Not bad!

Nick's rise to superstardom has been well documented. A few years back he formed the band Beach Avenue with father Nick Fradiani III on keyboards along with Nick Abraham on guitar, Jonah Ferrigno on bass, and Ryan Zipp on drums. The band played around Connecticut eventually achieving regional success by winning a battle of the bands contest in 2011 at the Mohegan Sun.

Their breakthrough came when they appeared on America's Got Talent in 2014. Nick, along with Abraham and Zipp played their original song "Coming Your Way" in front of judges Howard Stern, Heidi Klum, Howie Mandel, and Mel B., wowing them enough to make it through to the judgment week. Although Beach Avenue did not win that competition, their handsome and charismatic lead singer caught the eye of some people involved with American Idol who liked his style and sound and thought it might be a good idea if he tried out for that show.

The rest, as they say, is history. Nick got his golden ticket and survived Hollywood week where several hundred contestants are cut down to forty and then twenty and finally a top ten. Besides being a great singer, Nick had a presence and maturity about him that the other contestants lacked. He also had an easy rapport with the host, Ryan Seacrest. And if there was one criticism from the three judges, Harry Connick, Keith Urban, and Jennifer Lopez, it was that Nick was more comfortable singing with his guitar than without it. But as each week went by you could see his confidence growing and his momentum building. He covered such songs as Ed Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud," Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror," Tom Petty's "American Girl," and Matchbox Twenty's "Bright Lights." He easily made it into the top five along with Tyanna Jones, Rayvon Owen, Jax, and eventual runner-up Clark Beckham.

An American Idol tradition is that the final three contestants get honored in their home town with a parade and a concert. On Friday May 1st, an absolutely glorious spring day, Nick returned home to a hero's welcome where it seemed like half the Connecticut population was crammed into the town green area for the parade and concert. It was a celebration unlike anything Guilford had ever experienced as they truly rolled out the red carpet for their native son. A short time later, on the penultimate Idol show, Nick sang "Beautiful Life," which was an original song specifically written for him. He completely nailed it and was crowned the 2015 American Idol winner the next day.

Nick spent the summer on the Idol tour with the other top five contestants. Since the tour ended in early September, he's been spending much of his time in the studio working on his new CD. This interview took place

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on Monday October 12th. Nick was somewhere in Arizona just living the dream.

BH – How far along are you with the new record?

NF – “Pretty much almost done with the whole writing process. We got over twenty something songs recorded and demoed and we’re going to do another couple weeks’ worth of writing and then start recording it. The next single is going to come out sooner than the whole album, so we hope to get the single out before the year ends and then we’ll go on from there and get the album out after that. So it’s coming along pretty good. We’re taking our time with it and making sure that we get the best music. We’re not really worrying about rushing it out. Obviously I’d like the music to come out right away but it takes more than four months to really find your sound and find the songs that you really feel are the best representation of you. So that’s been what’s going on in the midst of also touring for two months and doing a bunch of radio shows everywhere and traveling all over the place. It’s a lot of work, but we’re getting close now. I just played a lot of the music for the head of my label a couple of days ago, and he’s digging what’s going on. So it’s all moving in the right direction.”

BH – What are the differences with being in the studio now as the American Idol winner compared to being in the studio with Beach Avenue?

NF – “There was a lot less pressure when I was doing it with my band. It wasn’t like a lot of people were banging on my door waiting for new stuff to come out. When we felt like we had good stuff we were like ‘oh let’s go on in the studio and record this.’ There was really no pressure. Now it’s like as soon as the show ended I was put in with a bunch of different writers and you start writing and trying to find the right songs, but at the same time on me there is a lot more pressure to really come up with the best songs you can possibly get. So it’s definitely a whole different process. But it’s been cool. I’m getting to work with all different writers. I find the writers that I work with the best. I got to work with them a lot over the last couple of months, so it’s been cool. It’s a lot different music than what I did with my band. I did Beach Avenue and that was fun, but now I want to transition into something a little different. I’ve had a lot of growth since then, and this is a new project and a new venture for me. So it’s been really fun to try to find that sound that I’ve been looking for.”

BH – Will you be touring soon or will you wait until after the CD is released?

NF – “Yeah that will definitely be after the CD comes out or at least until after the single comes out. We were approached to maybe open for some people, but we’re just not there yet in terms of where we need to be with the music. I think I need to have the music out and ready and people familiar with it before I start touring out with it. There will be a lot of shows and I’m playing a lot of radio shows. I’m on my way to one right now, and I have another one tomorrow. I’m in Phoenix right now and I go to Dallas tomorrow. I’ll be playing shows but in terms of a tour again, that’s a long ways away.”

BH – When you tour will it be with the Beach Avenue name or perhaps Nick Fradiani and Beach Avenue?

NF – “In terms of the name ‘Beach Avenue,’ that’s all over with now. I’m very close to those guys and they’re actually meeting me down here to play an acoustic show with me. But in terms of the name, it will just be my name. It’s a totally solo venture now. But as far as a touring band goes, I’d like to see those guys continue to play with me again. Some of that is out of my hands, and we’ll see what happens. But as of now they are still playing and I’d like to play with them for as long as I can.”

BH – I’m sure you enjoyed the Idol tour. How was the camaraderie between the five of you?

NF – “It was great. We all got along very well. I was wondering how it
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was going to be after the show ends. Is there going to be type of jealousy or weirdness? But honestly, the five of us, I say this all the time, but we all got along very well and actually became closer on the tour than we were on the show. So it was a great experience. The five of us became really good friends and everybody grew a lot. And to me everybody sounded a lot better on tour than they did on the show. It was cool to watch everybody perform in a normal atmosphere. As great as the show is, it's not really normal to be sitting in a lit up chair and run on stage and sing for ninety seconds in front of judges. So this is kind of more what it's all about and you could tell how much more comfortable everybody was."

BH – Did you learn what it will be like to do your own national tour?

NF – "Everybody has a different opinion on touring. It was my first real tour and I loved it. I loved being on the road. If it was my own music and I was alone and doing my own thing I feel like I could have done months and months of it and been fine with it. I really enjoyed it. And with my voice, I was a little nervous because I had never done anything like thirty-eight cities in two months, something like that, but my voice actually got stronger throughout the process. I just like doing that. I had a lot of fun. I'm hoping to be back on the road soon. Once the album is done I'd love to get back out on the road again. I'm looking forward to that."

BH – When American Idol ends next year there will be a total of fifteen winners. That's a very exclusive club. Do you ever think about it that way?

NF – "Yeah I do. It's funny, in San Francisco I went to the last audition a couple of days ago and I was getting filmed and they brought that up. It's pretty wild but I don't give myself time to sit back and realize that. But it is very cool to know that I'm just one out of fifteen people. So it's very cool and I'm just happy to have been a part of that show."

BH – How does it feel to be famous?

NF – "It's pretty wild but I'm not Kanye West or Bieber but there are definitely times when you get stopped and recognized and it's really fun and cool. It's a little more intense in Connecticut. It's just a new and exciting part of all that has happened and I feel like it's all paying off and people are recognizing you and saying nice things. It's cool for me to see the fans too because, like you said, you spent time and dialed the phone and voted for me and helped change my life. So it's very cool to meet everybody that did that because without that I would be in a whole different situation right now."

BH – Recently I was looking through an issue of Sound Waves from June of 2013. There was an ad for Sunset Ribs in Waterford and playing on July 4th at 3:00 in small print was Nick Fradiani!

NF – "Yeah that's right, that's funny. That was my gig for a long time, playing different bars and restaurants all over Connecticut. And sometimes, believe me, it can be very frustrating and I always felt like I was hoping that there would be more out there for me. But at the same time I always respect anybody that goes out and plays around Connecticut. I know sometimes it can be frustrating. People might not listen to you or you feel like you're not getting paid attention to. But it just goes to show, you never know what could happen. Doing that actually, to me, got me to where I needed to be. I learned a lot from playing out and just knowing that I needed to get better and keep working at it. I give a lot of respect to all the Connecticut musicians trying to give it a shot."

BH – Have you looked ahead to other doors that are now open to you such as acting or fashion?

NF – "That's a good question. Right now because it's so early in the ballgame of the music thing, I'm just like obsessing over needing to get this record as good as possible. But I'm not going to lie. I love the idea of getting into more things. One of my biggest idols I look up to is Justin Timberlake. I love how he does so many other things. I'd love to do a 'Saturday Night Live' or something like that. I love showing off my personality a little bit."

16 SOUND WAVES

So that would be cool to maybe try to do something like that and see what that leads to. You never know, we'll see what happens. But right now I'm just hoping to have that one big hit on this next single. That's where my head is at right now."

BH – I understand that you have a big birthday coming up in November.

NF – "Yeah November 15th. I'll be the big Three – 0. I'm not a big birthday guy but I guess this one you have to celebrate a little bit. I'm hoping I'll be able to be home. I'll be out in California on the 14th and then I'm hoping to sneak back home on the 15th."

BH – I've been saving the toughest question for last Nick. What's better, Fradiani Frenzy or Ben & Jerry's Peanut Butter Cup?

NF – "You got to think that Fradiani Frenzy takes it all the way! (Laughs) I only had Fradiani Frenzy once. I don't know if they're still making it anymore. But it was pretty good. I had it on the show and I think I had it one other time when I was back in Guilford. But that was pretty funny. I had no idea that they (Bishop's Orchards) put it out when it was given to me on the show."

Not only does Bishop's Orchards still sell Fradiani Frenzy ice cream; it's become their biggest selling flavor! Nick does have one show coming up in Connecticut on December 12th at the Oakdale Theater in Wallingford where he'll be opening for Rob Thomas. Someday, many years from now, Nick will look back on the day he won American Idol and realize that it wasn't the culmination of his musical career, only the launching point.

- Bill Harriman



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HEARING AID



Anthony Geraci & The Boston Blues All-Stars

"Fifty Shades of Blue" Delta Groove

I've known Anthony Geraci for several years; primarily from his appearances with Sugar Ray & The Bluetones and Little Anthony and The Locomotives. I knew that he had performed with several other bands, but was astounded by his reply when I asked him how many recordings he has been a part of. During his nearly forty year career, he has recorded with Ronnie Earl, Sugaray Rayford, Kim Wilson, Monster Mike Welch, The Mannish Boys, Tab Benoit, C.J. Chenier, James Cotton, Patty Larkin, Kenny Neal, Odetta, Irma Thomas, John Hyatt, Debbie Davies, Charlie Musselwhite, James Cotton, Billy Branch, Carey Bell, Snooky Pryor, Lazy Lester, Big Jack Johnson, Zora Young, Duke Robillard and Big Walter Horton among others...whew! He has garnered seven Blues Music Award nominations with Sugar Ray and The Bluetones alone! His new release, "Fifty Shades of Blue" features a wide array of talent; Sugar Ray Norcia, Darrell Nulisch, Michelle "Evil Gal" Wilson, Toni Lynn Washington, Monster Mike Welch, Michael "Mudcat" Ward, Marty Richards and Neil Gouvin. All of the tunes on this disc were penned by Geraci.

Featuring Nulisch on vocals, track one; "Everything I Do Is Wrong" is a slow blues ballad lamenting about love lost, even though, "...everything is for you!" The next tune is the title track and features his old band mate, Sugar Ray Norcia and swing/blues singer,

Michelle "Evil Gal" Wilson in a playful, up-tempo swing. Norcia and Wilson blissfully bounce back and forth on the vocal duties in this slightly naughty number! (Blind folds, handcuffs, silk scarves and all!) Welch and Geraci solo sweetly!

The third cut, "Sad But True" is a lazy shuffle featuring Norcia on vocals and harmonica with a distinct Chicago style and once again on track four, "Heard That Tutwiler Whistle Blow." Both are moderate/slow tempo blues, but each with their own individual style. While one is about love; "I'm still in love with you" the other is about labor; "Going to Detroit to build a car for Mr. Ford!" Geraci's intro on the latter tune pays homage to classic blues. Wilson is featured on track five, "If You Want Get to Heaven." Her voice soars through this tune, flowing with the samba beat! Now for something a little different on the sixth cut. Norcia smoothly sails thru, "Don't Keep Me Waiting"...a sweet, torchy ballad. Geraci's piano solo follows the fitting classic route and Norcia sings harmonies with himself expertly!

Track seven, "The Blues Never Sleeps" brings us back around to the blues with an up-tempo, up-town shuffle. Nulisch makes another grand appearance on vocals and harmonica. Track eight takes us to N.O.L.A. in "Too Late For Coffee." Norcia slips easily into this style! The ninth cut features Toni Lynn Washington in the up-tempo shuffle, "Diamonds and Pearls." She does a great job putting the point across that she's done her job, now it's her turn to be pampered! Geraci's and Welch's solos are pure blues! Track ten, "Cry a Million Tears" brings Nulisch to the mic again in a slow blues ballad. Geraci performs a torchy solo on keys. The eleventh cut, "In The Quicksand, Again" and instrumental with a catchy musical hook. We go back to a ballad on track twelve, "Your Turn To Cry." Norcia croons one last time on this disc. His acoustic styling on harmonica is sweetly melancholy and is echoed by Geraci's piano solo!

The final cut was, I feel, a fitting way to close this recording. "Blues For David Maxwell" is an instrumental tribute to the man who Muddy Waters once told me, "That man is another Otis Span!" When I relayed that statement to Maxwell he was humbled. Sadly, he

succumbed to cancer in February 2015 and is a sorely missed. Hats off to Anthony Geraci for this musical tribute to this wonderful human being in this pensive slow blues! This song morphs into a free jazz ending, served on top of a Pharaoh Sanders', "The Creator Has a Master Plan" style with Ward on upright bass. It brought a tear to my eyes!

With a creative and gifted pianist, vocalists who bring their own special magic to the songs and a solid rhythm section, and creative arrangements, what more could you want? I know... seeing them LIVE! You can catch Geraci at Chan's in Woonsocket, RI on November 14. Maybe I'll see you there!

- Ms Marci



Kurt Vile

"b'lieve i'm goin down" Matador Records

Kurt Vile released his sixth studio album, and it is a real gem. "b'lieve i'm goin down" hits all over the place, with catchy hooks, moody moments and an indie-rock sound that comes straight at you. The vocals are spot on and the guitar work is great.

Kurt is originally from the Philadelphia area and was a founding member of the popular indie-rock band "The War on Drugs" before leaving to devote his time to his solo work. He's toured the world extensively and has received much critical acclaim with his last few releases. This one may be his best album to date.

"b'lieve i'm goin down" starts off with a catchy song called "Pretty Pimpin". It revolves around the theme of Kurt being unable to recognize himself in the mirror and goes on to treat himself as a stranger. It has a steady, thumping beat and the guitar riffs really sound great.

His next tune, "I'm an Outlaw" has a great vibe with some interesting banjo work. It could be the theme to an old John Wayne movie, or maybe a more

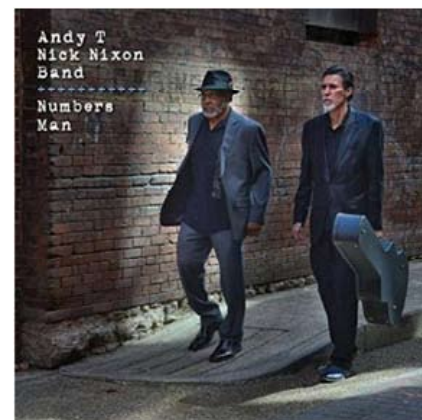
modern version of a story involving a lone man out on the road with no laws to answer to but his own. "I'm an outlaw on the brink of self-implosion, alone in a crowd; On the corner, in my Walkman, in a snowglobe; Going nowhere slow"

"Dust Bunnies" adds another layer to his sound with some keyboard bumping along to his open-chorded electric guitar strumming. Like the other songs, the music exists to support his ethereal vocals, but stands well on its own as well.

The album is pretty cohesive, while at the same time varies in feel from song to song. He has some pensive numbers on here, like the fingerpicking ballad, "That's Life, tho (almost hate to say)". It's a mellow number void of drums, but full of philosophical musings and beautiful guitar work. "I wanna run into the rolling hills along some mid-western highway; But there are scorpions out there..."

"b'lieve i'm goin down" really showcases Kurt Vile's mastery. Not only does his musical talent and originality shine throughout, but his lyrics evoke deep thoughts and emotions, and his voice has a character of its own that will keep you coming back to this album again and again. It's catchy, well-done, and worthy of a few listens for sure.

- Tom Matthew
Two Ton Music



Andy T-Nick Nixon Band

"Numbers Man" Blind Pig Records

I was struck by the quality of the recording on this one - the mixing, sound, arrangements, production - all due to Texas guitar man and the CD's producer, Anson Funderburgh. It's just a delight to listen to. These traditional blues songs are mixed and produced to

perfection, and it's just what our picky ears of the new millennium have been missing.

The front men of this production, Andy T and Nick Nixon, met by chance in 2011, coming together from opposite coasts. Some musical collaborations are one-offs, and some are built to last. This is the third release from guitarist Andy T and blues vocalist Nick Nixon and it perfectly melds each musician's strengths. "Numbers Man" fuses gritty vocals, super smooth guitar, tasty B3, a Big Band sound powered by the Texas Horns, and everything in between.

Andy T's influences include T. Bone Walker, B.B. King, Magic Sam and Albert Collins. Born and raised in Southern California, he worked for twenty-three years as a manufacturing engineer in the aerospace industry, while honing his chops in local bands. He's toured internationally and performed with blues artists around the country.

Nixon was born and raised in Nashville. He sang opera in high school and was the lead singer for King James and the Sceptres in the early 60s. He has released three gospel recordings. His vocals are smooth and pleasant, yet dirty and raw, sometimes in the same song.

The CD kicks off with the lively "Shut the Front Door" cementing how prevalent The Texas Horns will be throughout the recording. They are punchy, purposeful, and a ton of fun. They are: Kaz Kazanov on tenor sax, Al Gomez on trumpet, and John Mills on bari sax. There's a super sax solo on "Devil's Wife," and more great horns on "Pretty Girls" and "Be Somebody Some Day."

The title track is a B.B. King-style, radio-ready, modern, punchy tune accentuated by Larry Van Loon's Hammond B3. Again, the sound is just perfect.

Andy T accompanies perfectly Nixon's vocal growls on the Sunday jazz brunch style "Blue Monday." Andy T's guitar actually sings on the lone instrumental "Hightailin'."

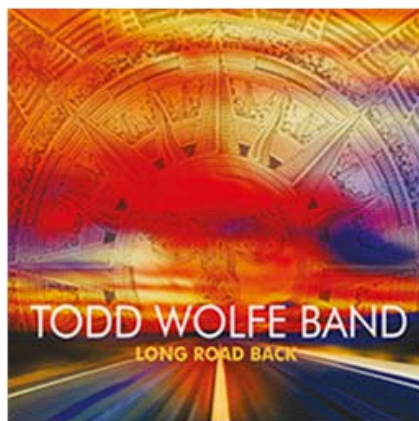
Legendary harmonica player Kim Wilson effectively takes over "Sundown Blues" with his wah-wah barroom blues style playing. "Tell Me What's the Reason" is a swing dancer's dream, while "What Went Wrong" is a zydeco lover's dream with accordion from Christian Dozzler.

My favorite track is the social commentary, "This World We Live In," which could easily fit into a movie soundtrack. Lyrics include "People learn to hate, then they learn to fight. Love is the answer." It has a unique, modern beat from drummer Denise

Fraser who steps in only on this song, and some great B3 from Kevin McKendree.

The tour schedule for the duo includes a long stint in Arizona, but nothing in the Northeast, for now. Choosy listeners will LOVE to listen to this one!

- Sue Menhart



Todd Wolfe Band "Long Road Back"

American Showcase Music

Todd Wolfe was born in Queens, NY and at the age of 13, he purchased his first guitar. He was first influenced by British invasion guitarists from The Animals, The Dave Clark Five, The Yardbirds and The Rolling Stones. Later, it was Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Peter Green, Mick Taylor and Jeff Beck. Later still, it was Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf bands. He's always been determined to cultivate his own style, while learning from the greats. He has worked with Sheryl Crow, Carla Olson from the Textones, and Leslie West of Mountain. His songs have been covered by Faith Hill, Stevie Nicks and others. The material for "Long Road Back" was written while spending 200 nights on the road. Wolfe and his band's 2015 tour included shows in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Japan, and dates all over the U.S.

"Long Road Back" features psychedelic jams, acoustic hip-hop, roots rock and blues. Wolfe's vocals are eerily similar to Eric Clapton, while his songwriting is 70s nostalgic. The band wastes no time getting into it on the first track, "Poison." It's filled with funky, rockin' guitar riffs, reminiscent of 70s rock, with sweet vocal harmonies.

"Mercy," a Sheryl Crow cover which Wolfe actually co-wrote while he was her lead guitar player in the 90s, is an energetic number featuring throwback electric piano from John Ginty. (The kind you don't hear anymore.) "Out-

side Woman Blues," popularized by the band Cream from the 1960s (with Eric Clapton) gets a modern rejuvenation on the disc and you wonder if it really is Eric Clapton singing. The CD takes a surprising turn with the acoustic aria "Peace Unto You" – a pleasant, radio-ready, catchy song – that really shows off Wolfe's expert songwriting.

My favorite tune is the title track, "Long Road Back." It's a major chord, feel good roots rock, Allman-Brothers-style anthem I can picture the band performing on stage in front of 100,000 people.

Female bassist and band member Justine Gardner gets to really shine on "Gone." Syncing up with driving toms from drummer Roger Voss, she's all over the neck and actually creates her own melody line underneath it all. These are the lines bass players dream of. "Annalee" features more punctuating bass and some nice slide guitar work from Wolfe.

The classic song about a card game, "Black Queen," written by Stephen Stills and popularized by Crosby, Stills and Nash, gets a Van Halen-esque heavier rendition here, a polar opposite of its country-blues origins. It's pure bliss.

The haunting, driving, jam-band instrumental "Hoodoo River" featuring quintessential B3 and more tom work from Voss closes out the disc. Todd Wolfe and his bandmates, with all their influences, talents and memorable songs, could very well become one of your favorite bands.

- Sue Menhart



Houndmouth "Little Neon Limelight"

Rough Trade Records

Of all the bands that go under the radar, Houndmouth is one that you can see a future with. Sounding like a mixture of The Lumineers and The Shout-

ing Matches with a bit of that old Rock 'n' Roll sound that makes your heart sing, Houndmouth carries this album through with electricity and soul. This sophomore album is contagious and diverse with gospel influences and plenty of old country and folk.

The lead single, "Sedona," is a rapturous crescendo of youth and exuberance that becomes infectious with its simple beats. The echoic melodies in the song led by main vocalists Matt Meyers and Kate Toupin capture the listener and make it hard not to move with the beats. The ambitious band explodes over the words "hey there Sedona, let me cut you a deal; I'm a little hungover, and I may have to steal your soul." This line serves as a climax for the entire song as Matt Meyers' voice poignantly crashes and breaks over the lyrics.

The following track serves as homage to the great Otis Redding, making references to him all through the song. This vintage country rock song showcases the excellence and power of Kate Toupin's voice as she soulfully bellows across the track. The personal connection is felt strongly as she sings "shook my soul and you saved my life." A little later comes "For No One," an emotional semi-ballad that feels revealing coming from the truthful voice of Meyers. The singer aches over the words "I'd do it all for you, but I do it for no one" as the song comes to an end and leaves you patiently wondering and expecting more.

Next come "Black Gold" and "Honey Slider," two incredibly well crafted songs, both lyrically and musically. These songs make singing along come naturally. "Black Gold" is an old-fashioned country rock jam that is just pure youthful excitement. "Honey Slider" is a melancholy song full of country-blues guitar rifts about a lover walking out and the person left behind to think about the empty promises. "You swore you'd stick around and have a drink with me – you never drink on me," sings the lead as the heartbreak shines through.

To say "Gasoline" is a sad song would be to do it a great injustice. It starts out as an honest song about a relationship and changes quickly into a personal and revealing song about loneliness as a twenty-something youth. The chorus "gasoline – it doesn't burn as fast as me" comes smoothly out of the mouth of Toupin as the personal fear is felt in the timbre of her voice.

The album comes to an end with "Darlin'," another hard-hitting blues-rock track. Houndmouth beseechingly asks

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in the refrain “Darlin’, why don’t you sleep at night?” in a beautiful way of uniting each verse. This song is the perfect send off to an exquisite album as it utilizes the best parts of the entire album: melodic keyboarding, meaningful lyrics, and bluesy rhythms.

Houndmouth’s Little Neon Limelight feels like a broken-down, countrified and bluesy Alabama Shakes album. Houndmouth is one of the most underrated bands and it is hard to see why. With one of the best albums of the year, Houndmouth holds one of the most familiar yet unique sounds around.

- Nik Hall



Zac Harmon

“Right Man, Right Now”
Blind Pig Records

Zac Harmon was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, so it’s no surprise that what you hear on his new CD, “Right Man Right Now” is steeped in the blues! Harmon is an award-winning guitarist, organist, singer, and songwriter who has breathed new life into the blues, throwing in a dash of classic R&B and soul! Throughout this recording, Harmon’s vocals have uniqueness. He doesn’t sound tonally like Curtis Mayfield, but his voice possesses the same scrumptious inflections! Though Harmon penned nine of the songs on this recording, two additional songs were written by blues legends John Lee Hooker and Milton Campbell, aka, Little Milton. Joining Harmon on his new disc is a rather impressive cast of characters; from Anson Funderburgh on guitar, Lucky Peterson on organ, Bobby Rush on vocals and harmonica and Mike Finnigan on organ.

Harmon kicks this disc off with an up-tempo shuffle, “Raising Hell” that was co-written by Cory Burns. With its “Hey Bartender” styling, you’ll be singing along on the chorus in no time flat! Lucky Peterson and Anson Funderburgh lend their talents to this tune. The next tune, “Ball and Chain” is not the one well known by Janis Joplin. It was penned by Harmon and Rodney Milton and is a moderate tempo tune with Harmon’s vocal styling and a slinky slide solo performed by co-author, Milton. Topping off the standard blues format, Harmon slips in a surprising shift in the ending of this tune with some unexpected chord changes and layered vocals. On the third track, Harmon is joined by Bobby Rush. “Hump In Your Back” has been nominated for a Grammy as “Best American Roots Performance.” Harmon’s lyrics, raw and seductive, are emphasized by his sensual vocals! This is one funky tune, with wah-wah, searing lead guitar and powerful horn arrangements. Bobby Rush adds his gritty pipes and blues harp and, BAM... you’ve got one spicy number! This tune is followed by a slow “bump and grind” groove and another Grammy Award nomination! “Stand Your Ground” co-written by John Hahn, gets deep into the social issue of senseless shootings. It’s easy to understand why this song was nominated when one listens closely to the lyrics!

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The fifth cut, co-written by John Hahn and Ray Bailey, is the title track. Harmon declares that, “I’m not Mr. Right; I’m the right man right now!” The Mayfield inflections are employed well in this number. Track six, “Feet Back On The Ground” is a slow, minor blues, praising his woman for “grounding” him. The tempo gets up funky in track seven, “Long Live The Blues.” Horn driven and powerful, Harmon testifies in the chorus that, “...it’s in my blood, the Mississippi mud.” The next tune, “Back Of The Yards” is a collection of memories from the hood.

A description of the ninth cut would best be described by John Lee Hooker’s daughter. Zakiya Hooker commented that, “No one but my daddy does “Bad Like Jesse James” better than you. Congratulations Zac. Thank you for putting your heart and soul in that song.” Cut ten is the other cover tune on this disc. Harmon puts his own spin on Little Milton’s, “Ain’t No Big Deal On You” with a funkier feel and a unique turnaround not present in the original recording. Mike Finnigan spices the solo up on organ. This CD ends with a tune co-written by producer Christopher Troy. “Good Thing Found” is a tale of wrong love lost, but self respect found; “When a bad thing is lost and it’s good, that’s a good thing found!”

This recording marks the end of an era. Blind Pig Records as we’ve known it has been acquired by The Orchard back in March. After “serving up the best in American blues and roots music for over 35 years” they have passed the torch. . Zac Harmon and Andy T/Nick Nixon will be the last releases for the label. For my ears, releasing these stellar artists for their “swan song” was a grand way to retire the Blind Pig label!

Additional musicians: Christopher Troy-keyboards, B R Milton-rhythm and bass guitar, Greg Wright-guitar, James “Hot Dog: Lewis-keyboards, Chef Deni-harp, Jimmy Z-harp and sax, Lavell Jones-drums, Dan Malouin-bass, Les Kepics-trumpet, Chuck Phillips- tenor and baritone sax

- Ms Marci



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COOKING WITH THE BLUES

By Luci & Jack Chaplin

It is hard to believe that this time last year we were just opening our doors at Daddy Jack's. We took a leap of faith as we temporarily closed Chaplin's and moved next door to pursue an entirely new venture. We were unsure of what to expect but I can tell you with confidence that, one year later, it was the best decision that we ever made. We are so thankful for our amazing customers, most of whom have all become like family to us. Our staff is loyal, hardworking, and trustworthy—attributes that any restaurateur knows to be rare. Thank you all for being a part of our next chapter! I also have to give a huge shout out to Bob Jacko for his camera work and



videography prowess on Daddy Jack's Cooking with the Blues. At the moment, we have over 10,000 YouTube followers and more than two million views on our cooking videos. To say that I am humbled is an understatement; thank you all!

Now on to the real meat and potatoes—literally!

I am a glass-half-full kind of guy and very rarely speak negatively about other restaurants but I have to share a recent experience that I had in West-erly. In our first Sound Waves article, Luci and I talked about the psychology of the restaurant business in that there is a psychological effect where customers are almost embarrassed to come back to a restaurant if they had an awkward experience with the staff. My friend Bruno was in town from London and, as a native Brit, has a natural affinity for tearooms. I took him to Olympia Tea Room in Watch Hill, and while I had heard positive things, will never be back.

I don't know if it was my Carhartt t-shirt and Chefwear pants or if it was Bruno's man-purse, but as we walked in, the hostess immediately stiffened and then directed us to a table out of sight. We had hoped to sit at a table with a view of the water but we were not even offered that option, despite the restaurant being empty. As we reviewed the specials menu, we were astounded by the prices. First was a lamb stew in an acorn squash bowl, which was \$34-- \$34 for a bowl of soup? You have got to be kidding me. The veal was \$30; the chicken was \$28; the burger was \$16. To put food cost into perspective, I took a trip to Restaurant Depot last week and top-of-the-line chicken breast cost \$1.09/pound. It is natural for restaurants to mark up their prices but these prices were outrageous. Coupled with a less-than-welcoming staff, Olympia Team Room was not a fit for us.

If I had one positive thing to say about Olympia Tea Room, I would say that the décor truly was beautiful. They had a lovely view of the water and

20 SOUND WAVES

I would imagine that during peak season, they are booming, but ultimately we decided not subject ourselves to the disrespect. They did not want us there and it was very clear that our business was not appreciated. As we always maintain at Daddy Jack's, it is a blessing when a customer chooses you. We strive to show our customers how much we appreciate them being in our restaurant because the restaurant business is unpredictable. As the old saying goes, "If a customer likes a restaurant, they will tell ten of their friends; if they hate it, they will tell 100." While I strive to always see the silver lining, I cannot in good conscience recommend Olympia Tea Room.

I will close with a quick story to reiterate my point. Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart, was notorious for keeping a very low profile. One night, he went into an Italian restaurant, valeted his old beat-up pick-up truck, and, wearing cowboy boots, jeans, and a western shirt, went into the restaurant. They refused him service. He then went around the corner to a neighboring Italian restaurant, was valeted without question, was welcomed by the staff, and thoroughly enjoyed his meal. He proceeded to tip both the bartender and the valet both \$100. After that, Mr. Walton came back to the same restaurant every week. This story goes to show the importance of treating every single customer with respect. You never know who is walking through the door, but that should never matter. Rather, what matters is that they are choosing you and it is your responsibility to ensure that they have a memorable experience in your establishment. Life is too short to be anything but happy!

Until next month,
Jack & Luci



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