

Sound

Waves

Volume 27
Issue 2
February 2017

An
Interview
with

**BETH
HART**

A Southern New England
Entertainment & Dining Guide Since 1990

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RESTAURANTS
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REVIEWS
& MORE**



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Ali Kaufman
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a k c l i c k s @ c o m c a s t . n e t

Sound Waves

February 2017
VOLUME 27, NUMBER 2
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SOUND WAVES is a
 monthly publication
 Send all inquires,
 editorial submissions &
 subscription request to

SOUND WAVES
MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 710
Old Mystic, CT 06372

Yearly Mailed
Subscription
price ~ \$35/year

www.Swaves.com

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 February 28th
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9 ANDY & JOSI 6-9	10 KRIS RYAN
16 DAN WATSON DUO 6-9	17 GREG SHERROD
23 PHIL ADAMS 6-9	24 TROUBLE MAKERS
2 TBA	3 ETHAN CASH

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MUSIC NOTES



“The Greatest Blues Band in The World”

By Mark T. Gould

*Well, I hope we're not too messianic
Or a trifle too satanic
We love to play the blues.”*

Mick Jagger & Keith Richards, 1969

You could tell where their influence came from by the records he held in his arms.

It was the morning of October 17, 1961, and 17-year-old Keith Richards, guitar in hand, was waiting at the Dartford station for a train into London, where he was attending Sidcup Art School.

Looking up, he noticed an old grade school chum from the neighborhood, who in those days called himself Mike Jagger, who was waiting for the same train to take him to the prestigious London School of Economics, where he was a somewhat-reluctant student who had dreams of becoming a musician and a singer.

What drew Richards' attention was not so much simply seeing his old friend, but what Jagger was carrying in his hands, the record albums “Rock-in' at the Hops,” by Chuck Berry, and “The Best of Muddy Waters.”

Intrigued, Richards struck up a conversation about rock and blues with Jagger on the train. On their way to the city, Richards learned that Jagger had ordered the two albums directly from Chicago's Chess Records, because they were unavailable in England.

Excited by their talk, and wanting to hear the LPs, Richards invited Jagger over for tea that afternoon. Following the listening session, the budding singer invited the amateur guitarist to join his band, Little Boy Blue and the Blue Boys, which played songs by Eddie Cochran, Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Now, a staggering 55 years after the formation of their seminal band, the Rolling Stones, Jagger and Richards, the muse and soul of The Greatest Rock 'n' Band in the World, have come back full circle with a new album of blues covers, “Blue and Lonesome,” in which they delve back into their roots, which started with that fateful meeting at the Dartford train station, with covers of classics by Willie Dixon, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, and Magic Sam, among others.

The record was made, as most of the best ones are, with little preparation and aforethought, recorded over just three days in December 2015 at British Grove Studios in West London. Reportedly the band was there to explore recording new songs, and was simply warming up on some blues riffs, especially the title track, when the idea to make it a blues covers album was brewed. Other than their old friend Eric Clapton sitting in on two tracks, “Blue and Lonesome” is simply the Stones, Jagger, Richards, Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood, augmented by long-time players Chuck Leavell, Matt Clifford and Darryl Jones.

The results are spectacular, not surprising given the band's pedigree, and, as such, are another musical sign post of an astounding a career that has

always been formulated and steeped in the blues.

At the same time, those blues roots are highlighted in a new box set release, “The Rolling Stones in Mono,” a collection of their Sixties albums, which, at least initially, included a smorgasbord of classic blues covers, much like the new “Blue and Lonesome” some four decades later.

The massive, 15-disc set is dominated, at least initially, by their blues progeny. Included in their first album are Willie Dixon's “I Just Want to Make Love to You,” Slim Harpo's “I'm a King Bee,” and Chuck Berry's “Carol.” The second, “12X5,” includes Berry's “Around and Around,” Jay McShann's “Confessin' The Blues,” and Bobby Womack's “It's All Over Now.”

Even as Jagger and Richards were starting to write their own songs, which would dominate their albums as time moved on, they still clung to those roots. Their next album included Muddy Waters' “I Can't Be Satisfied” and Solomon Burke's “Everybody Needs Somebody to Love.” Subsequent albums had Dixon's “Little Red Rooster,” Sam Cooke's “Good Times,” and Arthur Alexander's “You Better Move On.” Not surprisingly, several of the tracks of that era were recorded after the band made a pilgrimage to Chess Records, the Chicago-based home of electric blues.

By the time they reached “Aftermath,” in 1966, virtually every song was a Jagger/Richards composition, but they still did not vary from their legacy. The last two albums in the “Mono” collection, the classics “Beggars Banquet” and “Let It Bleed” were still immersed in the blues, especially on the tracks “No Expectations (a Jagger/Richards original),” “Prodigal Son (a cover of a Rev. Robert Wilkins country blues),” and “Love in Vain (which was a Robert Johnson cover).”

What is so significant about this box set is that, as noted by musicologist David Fricke in the liner notes, the pure mono sound allows the listener to revel in the quality and detail of the recordings, revealing a precise, crisp sound without the separation, reverb and compression that was occurring in that day's march toward purely stereo recordings.

Frankly, there's no better way to hear and experience the Stones' dedication to the blues than in this “Mono” box set. It is equal parts raw and rootsy, just like the original blues recordings to which they were so devoted, and which brought Jagger and Richards together that morning at the Dartford train station.

Taken together, “Blue and Lonesome” and “Mono” proves one thing: The Rolling Stones were, are and always will be the Greatest Rock 'n' Roll (and just maybe Blues) Band in the World.





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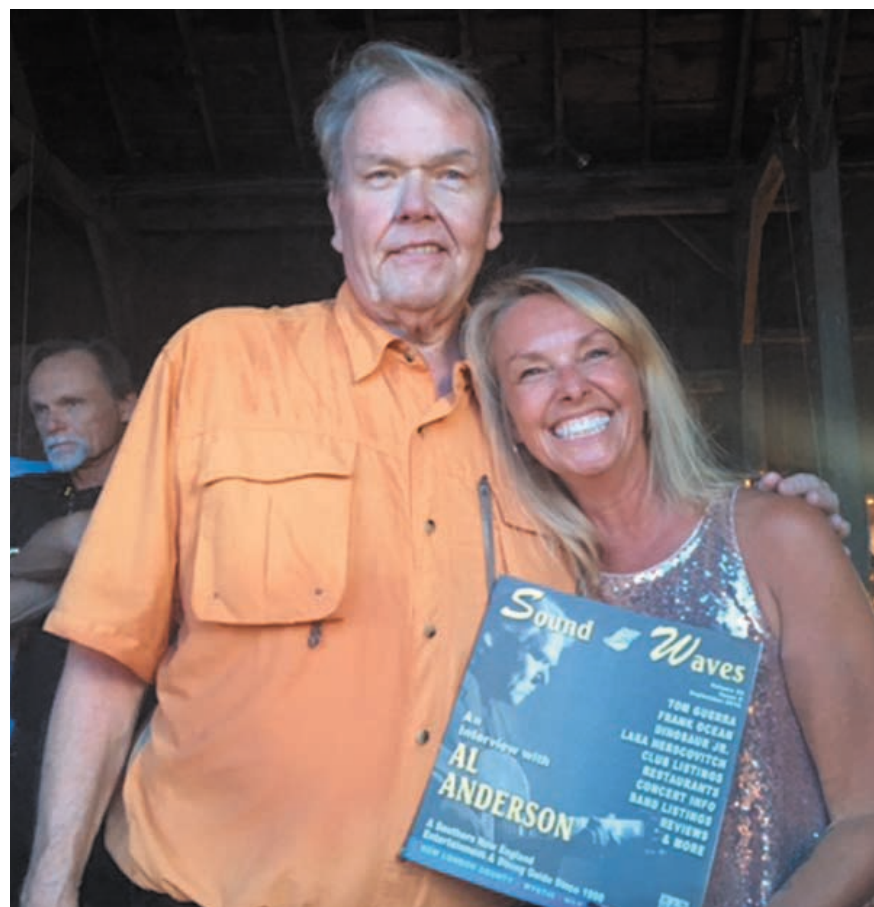
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Al Anderson & Ali Kaufman

SOUND WAVES 5

All The World's a Stage



"Alternative Facts: Music Edition"

By Sue Menhart

Here are a few fun alternative facts about the music industry for you:

The Grammy Awards celebrates the best in music and is not a politically-charged, campaign-style

feverish quest for votes wherein the spoils of war go to those with the most influence and power.

There is no such thing as a big machine behind the music industry and anybody can make it to the top without a major record label, a manager, an agent, a public relations firm, a lawyer and about five hundred thousand dollars.

Licensing even ten seconds of one of your recorded songs for TV or film does not require membership somewhere inside the big machine.

Only really good music is played on mainstream radio.

Club owners only care about the quality of the music, not how many people you bring.

Booking agents only have your best interests at heart.

Horn players always show up two hours before the gig to help set up and carry all the big speakers to the car when the show is over.

Keyboard players never have an opinion on chord progressions and arrangements and don't secretly want to be maestros.

Guitar players always end their solos after the agreed-upon measure allotment.

Bass players on point are not the most important element to a live show.

Lead singers are not narcissists.

Studio engineers would never dream of winning Producer of the Year.

CD and album sales are through the roof no matter who you are.

Obtaining a slot at music festivals is super easy.

If people accept your band's Facebook Event invite that means you will see them at the show.

Anybody can write a memorable and listenable song.

If you can see it, you can be it.

Anybody can record a song and get airplay on Pandora in rotation next to Springsteen, Dylan and Raitt.

Standing in line for six hours to audition for The Voice is a really good use of your time because the producers of the show have not already sought out and privately auditioned every single singer who will appear on the show.

The sound system never dies right before the first four-count.

Dancing around and singing into a microphone at the same time is not really a workout and is not potentially deadly.

Getting bloggers and magazines to review your music is always free with no strings attached.

Bands get free drinks and food and always get paid what was agreed upon.

Local music circles and cliques do not exist.

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Open Mic Nights are not killing the live music scene.

Karaoke Nights are not killing the live music scene.

Bands that pay to play are not killing the live music scene.

DUI laws are not killing the live music scene.

Home decor mounted big screen TVs and endless television series options are not killing the live music scene.

Digital downloads of music do not effect artist's sales because no one ever shares their MP3s with all their friends instead of each person paying for the song.

Bars do not smell weird.

It's perfectly acceptable to play a show in a bar with ten TVs going especially with one over your head.

Playing solo acoustic shows does not hurt your fingers and is not a lonely, dreadful thing at all.

Band members love each other and never fight.

Playing outdoor summer gigs does not cause hyperventilation, chest pains and shortness of breath.

The musicians who scream the loudest at the booking contacts do not get all the gigs.

Female pop stars never have to worry what they look like.

And lastly, regardless of it all, music will not free your soul.

Peruse more cautionary tales, rants and raves over on my blog "Menhart Musings" at www.suemenhart.wordpress.com.



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LOCAL BEAT



FROM GARAGE ROCK SURF to SYNTHESIZER POP in DOWNTOWN NEW LONDON

By Andrew Kerbs

This past winter has seen some swell bands at 33 Golden, including the likes of Lea, Telegram Scam and Duke of Surl. All 3 bands had a stripped down rock sound but with subtle differences in musical influences from doowop surf to keyb hooks.

Lea describes themselves as the “lineup that didn’t quit” since the songs are from another band that James had. The band featured James Fonicello on vocals and guitars, Chris Salvatore on bass and lightning drummer Jacob Doherty. Jacob’s beats were in 4/4 rock n roll time signatures which lumbered on with occasional bouts of frenetic energy (1-2 punches here and fast 8th note beats there). The vocals were slight, the vibe grungy and reminiscent of early 90s “indie” rock bands with a heavy Chris Noveselic-esque bass throb sound. Interestingly there were even a couple waltzes: “Don’t let the daylight forget you . . .” sang the band during their choppy bass/guitar duel. The visuals were 90s as well, with simple cashmere sweaters and shortish-hair in the face look.

Lea’s influences include Pavement, Archers of Loaf, Zeppelin, and Nirvana . . . influences who in 6/8 time feature slow building songs 1 riff at a time (like Jacob’s lumbering compositions or Pretenders-esque songs with odd time signatures). Songs include “Duckhouse,” “Unoriginal” and “In Knife Boots and a Carbon Suite” (with irrelevant lyrics). “I feel like were racing time” says James. “We’re working class and don’t have enough money (yet) to do a professional recording. There’s no expiration date but in 5 years we won’t make something like it. It will have sat there for too long and we will have slowed down into country.” Nevertheless, this talented band “can’t picture doing anything but the music as their full time job.”

TELEGRAM SCAM was the second band to go on stage, with musicians hailing from New Haven and places as far away as Portland and Nashville. Musicians include “DC” on keyboards, songwriter Tim Gospel on guitar, “Jules” on vocals and Brett Harris on drums. Tim and Jules worked on music for 2 years bringing keys and drum machines into the mix. Then the “sun came out after we met Brett” and they called themselves Telegram Scam after the T-Rex and Bauhaus song of band “Telegram Sam,” said the band.

The band’s influences include 60s “rockabilly” surf rock plus electronic music. “Dirty Town” is one fine catchy garage rock tune about the band’s mixed feelings regarding Portland while “Beyond Belief” echoes the electronic influence of Ravonettes and Depeche Mode. Brett’s Beatlesque drum beat started off their set and weaved well with Jules high pitched vocals and DC’s sleek synthesizers. The keyboard hooks were low and bassy, combining with the Tim’s guitar sounds in ethereal ways . . . with their shimmering reverb-drenched sound reminiscent of the band “Siouxsie and the Banshees.” Plus, how such a high pitched vocal could come from

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a tough looking guitarist was nearly as notable.

The Duke of Surl went on last with a refreshing and original blast of 50s-style rock n roll and garage doo-wop. Audience members danced in their seats to the melodic “Ba ba bows” and echoey guitar sounds (like Telegram but more akin to traditional rock n roll song structures). Look these guys up or better yet buy their music from your local Southeastern CT music shop.



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BAR FLY JOURNALS



By Stephanie Shawn

Hello! My Sweet Bar Flies! So, I'm about to be very helpful to all the boys out there who are lucky enough to have a girl in their lives. It's Valentine's Day this month! So be on your game! There's plenty of other men out there willing to step up and take your lady!

That being said, I have some romantic suggestions..jewelry always comes to mind, but sometimes men are not the best judge of a pretty piece of being, so I'm all about the romantic dinner idea with some beautiful music in the background. So here's some of what's happening in our area: MARC DOUGLAS BERARDO at the RATHSKELLAR

in Charlestown perhaps? On Valentine's Evening? Or A Cajun, Créole or Southwestern Barbecue Extravaganza to get you all heated up at VOO-DOO GRILL in beautiful Mystic including a romantic walk along along the Mystic River under a starry sky? How about an Early Valentine's Day Date at The CHOCOLATE MARCH through downtown Westerly, benefiting the JONNYCAKE CENTER and hosted by AMIGO'S TAQUERIA AND TEQUILA'S Miss WENDY CARR on Feb 9, the MARCH will be doing the obvious. Pairing a different chocolate-inspired food item with a chocolate-inspired cocktail while strolling through Westerly and visiting their many Diverse Eateries! Chocolate? Cocktails? I'm in!

Speaking of a diverse eatery, DADDY JACK'S in Downtown New London is continuing a Restaurant Week favorite, with a three course meal for just \$20.17! Among their offerings? Cod franchise w Crab Meat, shepherd's Pie, Blackened Chicken over Pasta Alfredo or a 12 inch Wood Fired Pizza.....yummy!!! And Saturday Night's are a hotbed of local musical talent at DADDY JACK'S! Visit them on FaceBook or read your SOUND WAVES Magazine to see what's happening!

We also have MARCIA BALL AND THE SUBDUDES headlining the BOOGIE ON THE BAYOU.. MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION on Thursday Feb 23. At the GARDE ARTS! Wow, what an amazing show that will be!! I've seen MS. BALL several times between RHYTHM AND ROOTS, MYSTIC BLUES FESTIVAL and the KNICKERBOCKER CAFE and her bluesy voice never fails to get you up and dancing! Beautiful! And as it is MARDI GRAS Month, get out your beads and wear an untucked top, cuz you know you'll be wanting to celebrate FAT TUESDAY in typical New Orleans fashion with a Hurricane in your hand and some beads around your neck!!

8 SOUND WAVES



Chatted with JEFF WADE recently on FaceBook, apparently a Haiku fan, and he had some fun news. JEFF hosts the OPEN MIC COMEDY SHOWS held on the first and third Tuesday at PISTOL PETE'S in Norwich every month. He will also be hosting the COMEDY SHOWCASE on February 25 at PISTOL PETE'S and promises some Very Funny Comics! This time of year, a good laugh is what we all need! Stop by and tell 'em Bar Fly sent you. Orrrrr.. maybe I'll stop by with Miss VICKI WALBRIDGE?? I heard through my Secret Spy Network that she gave the Open Mic Comedy Night a try last month and did very well! We'll see!



Romper Stomper Time, baby! Happy Birthday to DAVE TRANCHIDA, JOE GENCARELLI, CHARLIE PENDOLA, JERRY PREJEAN, BRIAN ALBANO, MEGHAN LUZZI, TONY LOWE, TOM REGAN, WENDY AINSWORTH, PAUL PIETRZAK, SALLY TREFES SORESEN, AMY AZZINARO, WAYNE PESCATELLO, KATHLEEN KEARNS BRENNAN, STEVE BEAUDOIN, BILL BENTLEY, DENISE WALSTRA, ERIN TODISCO, CARRIE BUCK, NOAH FELDMAN, SHERBURNE STID-FOLE, WADE QUATTROMANI, WAYNE BYZDLO, JANINE LEVINE PARISI, ALICIA SMITH, JOHN SPEZIALE, GARNET BLANCHARD, SHELLY HOLLIDAY, SUSAN CARDINAL, JEANETTE MORRONE VERTENTES, WILLIE BARBER, FLAV MARTIN, RON WEBSTER, DAN HOLLOWAY, CHRIS DUNCKLEE, CHRISTOPHER STAMM, MICK MARRA, BEN PARENT, JUDY COLUCCI, MIKE ROGOFF, SEAN BANKS, NANCY BURNS-FUSARO, KAREN CAULFIELD, RANDY JASON, MEGHAN THOMAS, ANNE, VICKI CHAPMAN, and Sweet JESS GOMES! Happy Birthday to you all!!

Kudos to RAMBLIN' DAN STEVENS! Not only is he a multi-talented musician but he's a kind and generous man. He visited the CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER recently to spread some smiles and sing to the children. DAN is a volunteer with RAISING THE BLUES, "a non-profit dedicated to raising the spirits, abilities, and aspirations of children through musical enrichment and interactive musical opportunities". And the kids loved him! What a wonderful man!



Riding the cowboy will have to wait..We New Englanders were hit with 12 inches of snow the day we were supposed to visit MADISON SQUARE GARDEN to see the PROFESSIONAL BULL RIDERS! I guess we will have to see them if they come to the MOHEGAN SUN ARENA again. Or perhaps, I'll just jump on the bull at the BROKEN SPOKE in Daytona for BIKE WEEK! Speaking of BIKE WEEK? Oh yes, we were! HUB is trying to blow my

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ass off. Not happening, my peeps!

Saw some of the Ol' STONINGTON GANG while lunching with Miss DEB MCGUGAN recently. Apparently, FRANKIE SERRANO was up from Florida to celebrate his birthday with his sis ELAINE, as well as DENISE D'AMICO GENDERELLA, COLIN DONAHUE, ANDY MCGUGAN, KEITH MCGUGAN and of course handsome bartender, STEVE at the BRIDGE! So nice to see everyone! We've skated a bit this winter, I think and I hate to jinx us... but is that Spring I'm smelling in the air? I hope so! I love you, my sweet Flies...loooooong time!



Keiko Matsui

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BAND DATES

AC/JD

9 - Voodoo Grill, Mystic, CT

ANDY & BETHANY

10,25 - Shipyard Tavern, Mystic, CT 7-10
21 - Rathskellar, Charlestown, RI 8-11
24 - Daniel Packer, Mystic CT

ANDY CHANEY

3 - The Irons, Mystic, CT 8-11
4 - Pizzetta, Mystic, CT
13 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT
22 - Mystic Pizza II, N. Stonington, CT 7:30-10:30

ANDY CHANEY

AND MARCY KELLEY
17 - The Irons, Mystic, CT 8-11

THE ATTIKS

4 - Stash's Cafe, New London, CT

AZALEA DRIVE

11 - On The Waterfront, New London, CT 7-10
24 - Polish Club, Montville, CT 7-10

BEBOBALOUBOB

4 - Dan's Place, W. Greenwich, RI
11 - Harbour House, Mystic, CT 8:30-11:30
17 - Keagan's, Middletown, CT 8:30
18 - Toyo Hibachi, Colchester, CT 8:30-11:30
25 - Burkes Tavern, Niantic, CT

THE CARTELLS

2,9,14,16,23 - Filomena's, Waterford, CT 5:30pm
2,9,16,23 - The Spa, Norwich, CT 6:30pm
4 - Port & Starboard, New London, CT
8 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 7:30pm
10,24 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 6pm
11 - Bridge Market, Groton, CT 7pm
12 - Maugle Sierra, Ledyard, CT 3pm
14 - Harbour House, Mystic, CT 6pm
17 - Parrot Delaney, New Hartford, CT 8pm
18 - Bill's Seafood, Westbrook, CT 7:30pm
25 - Harbour House, Mystic, CT 8:30pm

DAN STEVENS

1 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT

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3 - Chamard Vineyards, Clinton, CT
7,14,21,28 - www.icrvradio.com 4pm
7,14,21,28 - Nightingale's, Old Lyme, CT
9 - Strange Brew Pub, Norwich, CT
10 - Old Goat, Richmond, ME
11 - Shovel Handle, Jackson, NH
15 - Red Lion, Stockbridge, MA
18 - Packing House, Willington, CT
19 - Bee & Thistle, Old Lyme, CT
23 - Public House, Old Lyme, CT
25 - Berwick Brewing, Berwick, PA
26 - Elk Creek Cafe, Millheim, PA
27 - Bullfrog Brewery, Williamsport, PA

DAN WATSON

1,22,26 - Ancient Mariner, Mystic, CT
3 - Harp n Hound, Mystic, CT
4 - Harbor House, Mystic, CT
7 - Angie's/Pier 27, Mystic, CT
8 - Mystic Pizza II, N. Stonington, CT
11,14,28 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT
15 - Tipping Chair, Southington, CT
16 - Voodoo Grill, Mystic, CT
17 - Breachway Grill, Charlestown, RI
18 - Dog Watch, Stonington, CT
19 - Tara's Pub, Matunuck, RI
12,23 - Pizzetta, Mystic, CT
24 - Lansdowne Pub, Uncasville, CT
25 - Mariner Grill, Narragansett, RI

DARIK & THE FUNBAGS

3 - Anthonys Oceanview, New Haven, CT
4 - Chicago Sams, Cromwell, CT
17 - Shamrock, Waterbury, CT

EIGHT TO THE BAR

4 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 8:30

THE FAKE EXPERIENCE

18 - Supreme Pizza, Westerly, RI

FRANKENPHIL

3 - Paradise Hills, Wallingford, CT 5pm
5 - O'Rourke's, Warwick, RI 3pm
6 - Rathskellar, Charlestown, RI 7:30pm
8 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7pm
17 - McBrides, Providence, RI 7pm
18 - On The Waterfront, New London, CT 7pm
24 - Harbour House, Mystic, CT 7pm
25 - Penny Lane, Old Saybrook, CT 7:30pm
26 - Midtown, Newport, RI 4pm

GREEN TEA

18 - Wood River Inn, Richmond, RI

GREEN TEA LIGHT

3 - Wood River Inn, Richmond, RI
9,23 - The Irons, Mystic, CT 5:30-8:30
16 - Tap Room, Westerly, RI 8-11
28 - Strange Brew, Norwich, CT

HOPE ROAD

4 - Ocean Mist, Matunuck, RI

IZZY MALEK

2 - Pizzetta, Mystic, CT 7pm
7 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT
9 - Pizzetta, Mystic 7pm
10 - Amigos, Westerly, RI 7:30pm

JAMES HARRIS

1,4,8,15,18,22 - DanielPacker, Mystic, CT
3 - Latitude41, Mystic, CT 7pm
7,14,21,28 - Harp & Hound, Mystic, CT 8pm
10,17 - Pizzetta, Mystic CT
24 - Iron's Hilton, Mystic, CT 8pm
25 - Venice, Westerly, RI 7pm
26 - MaugleSierra, Ledyard, CT 3pm

JMK BAND

3 - Knickerbocker, Westerly, RI 8-10

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3 - Sully's Pub, Hartford, CT

KEN SERIO JAZZ TRIO

26 - Harbor House, Mystic, CT

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10 - Adams Mill, Manchester, CT
11 - Powder Ridge, Middlefield, CT
18 - Lavita Gustosa, E. Haddam, CT
25 - Toyos Lounge, Colchester, CT

MATT n DEAN

9 - Hardrock, Foxwoods, CT

RAMBLEWOOD

11 - Malted Barley, Westerly, RI

SUNDAY GRAVY

10 - Dan's Place, W. Greenwich, RI
17 - Steak Loft, Mystic, CT 7-10
19 - Ocean Mist, Matunuck, RI 3:30-6:30

THREE2TANGO

10 - 99 Restaurant, Norwich, CT 8pm

VAN HALEY

11 - Sneekers Cafe, Groton, CT

18 - CC O'Brien's, Pawcatuck, CT
24 - Burke's, Niantic, CT

WOOLY MAMMOTH

20 - Daniel Packer, Mystic, CT

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

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19 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

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18 - College St., New Haven, CT

Marcia Ball

23 - Garde Arts, New London, CT

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28 - Garde Arts, New London, CT

Miranda Lambert

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Rascal Flatts

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24 - Infinity Hall, Hartford, CT

River City Slim

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

We Banjo 3

10 - Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT



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VIOLENT REIGN

HARD ROCK ROCKED HARD



Valentine's Month Is Full of Hart My conversation with Beth Hart on becoming the "Ultimate Female Rock Star"

By Ali Kaufman

I have often thought it interesting how some people have a moniker that suits their lives, talents or work so well. This is exactly the case with Beth Hart. She has a giant HEART that is full to the brim with passion, love, spirit and sass. Perhaps she gets some of it from her descendants, who include one of Connecticut's most famous residents, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, aka, Mark Twain! Beth also has fans, a great big legion of hungry fans that consider her their goddess and have a voracious appetite for everything she gives them...and she give them a lot. I refer to them as fans but Beth considers them friends, just as special as she and with the same foibles and challenges that she deals with and openly shares.

We had our conversation on the day after the Presidential election, Beth was touring in Germany and I couldn't help but ask about her take on the new world we were waking up to. Hart's thoughts on the election were much like her thoughts on life, which at times has been just as dark, brutal, conflicted, anxiety ridden and wildly entertaining, but in true Beth Hart form, she finds a way to look at things from a positive perspective, "I watched the night before and saw where this was headed, F it, he's the guy, so I made a conscious choice for myself to visualize him doing some really good stuff because the alternative is just too much of a bummer. Dude, put the ego aside and please rise to the occasion!" Now, dear readers, this was on November 9th, you would have to ask anyone day to day how they feel but I thought her take on it was very indicative of how Ms. Hart chooses to take the high road.

The high road can also have lots of bumps and pot holes in it and I wanted to know about the path that brought Beth here to selling out shows, playing all over the world and releasing her latest album, out February 3rd with Mascot Label Group, on Provogue, Fire on the Floor. Her answers were raw, honest and unabashedly candid. I am going to let you fill in the expletives that decorate her narrative, use them often for maximum effect, she does!

Beth's following here in the states is catching up to the huge following she has overseas. Back in 1999, Hart, had the big label record deal, with all the trappings and tribulations that go along with that. The career was going well, second album, Screamin For My Supper, was doing great things but she was going unmedicated for Bipolar Disorder yet taking drugs that had her full blown out of her mind. At it's height, her label, Atlantic dropped her and for that she says, "Thank you, Thank God they dropped me, I would have died had they not, NO doubt about it at all". It took about a year of sheer hell which included battling debilitating agoraphobia to get well and sober. Scotty Guetzkow, her boyfriend at the time, (now husband), took care of her, literally, hand and foot, doing absolutely everything with her day to day...sometimes minute to minute. Scotty's patience and her doctors care were the antidote for her poison and at the end of of that year Beth reached out to David Wolf, who had been with her since she was 22 to see if it was cool to take another try at making music...it most certainly was. Instead of getting a world deal at out of the gate, they secured a deal with Warner for New Zealand and Holland...that was it. They made a record, Leave The Light On 2003 on Warner Bros. Label, which, "one of the heads of Atlantic paid for, expecting nothing in return from it, just a brilliant, amazing man, Jason Flom, gave us 100K and we made this beautiful album and I got to try again, but this time I had some sobriety under me, I was not yet medicated for the Bipolar because I did not believe I had it....but I

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BETH HART

was sober". At this point she and her band are slowly making inroads all over Holland and New Zealand, with steps breaking ground into Denmark and Norway. The band was working, paying bills and steadily growing a following but the idea of a world tour seemed like an idea that had been given up on. That is not to say it was a bad thing, Beth puts it this way, "It felt like God was looking out for me and saying, Hey! You can't handle that much yet, here is what you can handle....and I will be here to help you""

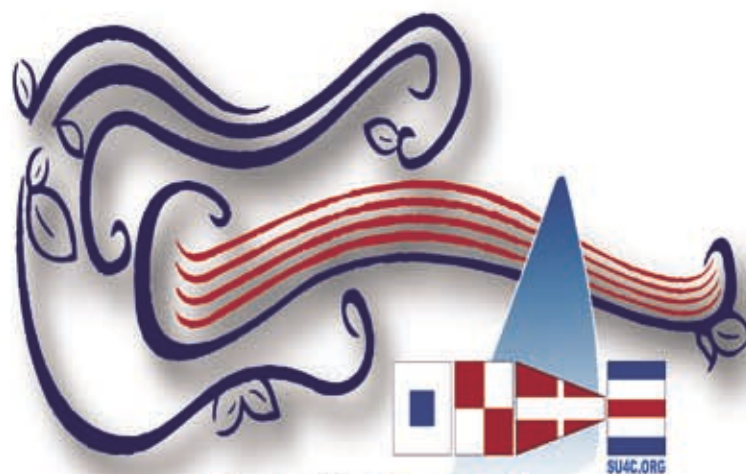
Beth's 5th studio album, *My California*, came out in 2010 and she signed a new record deal for ALL of Europe, went on to record with Joe Bonamassa and then France broke for her. That brought her to about 10 years of no USA tours as she slowly spreading though Europe, taking more baby steps....well baby steps for a Rock Star! They were filling 500-600 capacity venues, and began dipping her toe into the US waters and Canada, parts of Africa and the Middle East, slowly letting her journey unfold as the houses they played grew in size and her draw grew out of the hundreds and into the thousands. As wonderful as this bubbling success was, Beth reiterates that the most important thing of all was and is, "I want to be healthy". That plan took a detour when at 35 she had a major nervous breakdown that landed her back into the psych ward for over a month where the universe got the message through to her that it's not enough to be sober, "I HAVE to take meds to deal with the Bipolar too".

Fast forward to 2017 and Beth's 45th birthday on January 24th, where she can look back with huge gratitude for the beautiful, humbling, loving, slow motion trajectory she has been on. Beth put it like this, "I am so lucky to have survived drug addiction and been able to integrate back into the business in a slow controlled way that allowed me to deal with issues better this time, I can't express it enough, how incredibly grateful I am." She went on to say, "There is always, always hope. Nobody has an easy ride, pray, pray, pray for healing, always forgive and have compassion". You can literally feel the conviction she has as she speaks her truth, the same feeling you get when she pours it all out on the stage. There is nothing halfway about Beth Hart, she is all in or not at all.

Dealing with an illness of the mind is an ongoing process of medications, vitamin therapy, good doctors, spiritual connections and a supportive family. She also reminded me that, "Miracles happen constantly," why shouldn't she, or you or I be deserving of them? Beth is very in tune with what is going on inside herself, and can tell if she is cycling towards a high or low and most encouragingly she realizes, she IS worthy and deserving of the life she is living. Which bodes well for more incredible music from her ahead.

You might think with all she has been through and on, medicinally speaking, she would have issues with retention and memory but that is absolutely not the case. Beth has hundreds of songs on piano that she can instantly recall and writes prolifically, turning in 3 or 4 albums worth of songs for her selected producer to cull down to one release. She has the process down to a science at this point. Hire the best and let them do their job of assembling the best players for the material she presents them with. "I trust the producer, sometimes I might push for a song I really want included, but this is usually just me on the piano without a lot of production." Beth explained. On *Fire on the Floor*, she works again with long time friend Oliver Leiber who she has written with in addition to having him produce. This came to pass as her very dear friend and producer Michael Stevens was doing pre-production in NY for 2015's, *Better Than Home* on Provogue Records, while in the fight of his life for his life. "Michael was going through hell battling cancer with operations, chemo and just hellish treatment, while producing and then mixing the album", she continued, "The mixing pro-

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cess to me is just as important as the song writing because the mixing can literally make or break a song. I had to trust him, (Michael Stevens), to do it without me but it was making me nuts and I felt disrespected, so I called Oliver Leiber and said, I need to make a record right now...it was like I had to get back on the horse. The making of Better than Home was so tragic, I was worried I would never make another record again....it was that hard core for me." Very sadly, Michael Stevens lost his battle with Cancer in October 2015.

Hart sent Oliver a ton of songs, his reply was, "Let's GO!" and he sprung into action, pulling together, in Beth's words, "a Bad Ass group of musicians. We recorded the 16 songs on Fire on the Floor in 3 days". Nothing had been finalized for Better than Home at that point and they had Fire on the Floor done, 2 records back to back. Don't let the speed of one's completion or the lengthy process of the other cloud your thoughts on the quality, they are both incredible. I have been playing Better than Home on WCNI 90.9FM since it first hit our new music racks and it includes songs that truly stay with you. "The Mood I'm In" for one and the hauntingly plaintive "Tell Her You Belong To Me" will strike a chord if you've gotten a chance to experience love's bliss and beatings in your own life. I was lucky enough to get the advance of Fire on the Floor and listened to it straight through the moment it arrived. Classic Beth Hart, whether she is singing a torch song or torching a rock song, you can not help but be riveted by what you are hearing. She oozes sexuality but can also be sweet enough to give you a cavity. She can beat you into submission with a turn of a phrase, or the vibrato of her voice, which you will thank her for while simultaneously asking for more. Beth wrapped up our lengthy conversation with praise for her touring band that she simply adores, "They are such great musicians. We are a small outfit of beautiful players that can take a larger production and scale it down while making it a full and wonderful experience for our audiences. It is so easy peasy, my relationship with Oliver and this band that I just love so much!!!!"

Beth's show at the Fox Theater at Foxwoods Casino on February 25th has been sold out for weeks but there are other chances to catch her here in the Northeast and beyond. You can find all the information about live shows, including her guesting dates with the Hendrix Experience tour, and discography by going to <http://www.bethhart.com/>. To hitch yourself to my wagon and listen in to Morning Mojo on WCNI 90.9 FM please visit me on Facebook by following this link. <https://m.facebook.com/morning-mojowcni/>



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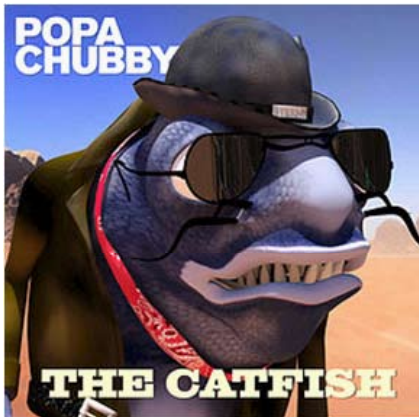
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HEARING AID



Popa Chubby "The Catfish"

Popa Chubby Productions

American rock/electric blues singer, songwriter and guitarist Popa Chubby is a native New Yorker who started his career playing in punk bands. Now he's "older, wiser, louder, stronger," he says. His 18th CD release, "The Catfish," proves it. Not that he's got anything to prove mind you. For twenty five years Popa has been playing all over the world, breaking the rules, and getting it done, on his own terms. His latest album has something for everyone - blues, rock, funk, jazz and even hip-hop. He wrote and produced all the songs and includes two covers. He is supported by Dave Keyes on piano and organ, Dave Moore on drums, Matt Lapham on bass, Tipitina Horowitz on trumpet, and Rich Monica on drums. The wall of sound in the expert recording of these well-crafted songs gives the illusion there are so many more players however.

The funky opening number "Going Downtown See My Old Gal Sue" exudes his seasoned, confident, all-business approach to playing music for the masses. He gets it. He takes over on bass for this one and slaps out a prevalent driving bass line and rounds it out with some angry and dangerous guitar. His mastery of the strat shines through on the next funky tune "Good Thing" which has a complex beat and cool dissonant harmonies. His cover of "Bye Bye Love" is a fun instrumental with some snazzy guitar licks. "Cry Till It's a Dull Ache" has tinges of Stevie Ray Vaughan while "Wes is More" surprises

the bajesus outa ya as he throws down a slow swinging jazz instrumental. And then he completely rocks out in tribute to his hard rock former life in "Motorhead Saved My Life."

"Blues for Charlie" is a slow haunting instrumental blues tune like "Thrill is Gone" with a modern flare. His screaming and crying guitar is mesmerizing while the recording uses cool panning effects from right to left. "Dirty Diesel" features a sick keyboard solo and more Vaughan-like licks. "Slow Down Sugar" is jazz-infused with some crazy good trumpet and some hip-hoppin' rappin' from Popa. The feel-good and bouncy "Put a Grown Man to Shame" will get your head boppin' as well.

The title track "The Catfish" is driving, bad-ass, dirty and simply oozes cool. Popa closes the CD with a cover of Robert Johnson's "C'mon In My Kitchen." The song's perfect two-part harmony between Popa and Keyes and sweet dobro capture the essence of the original in an eerie yet respectable way.

This guy can play anything. He can't be human. I think he's a catfish.

Link:

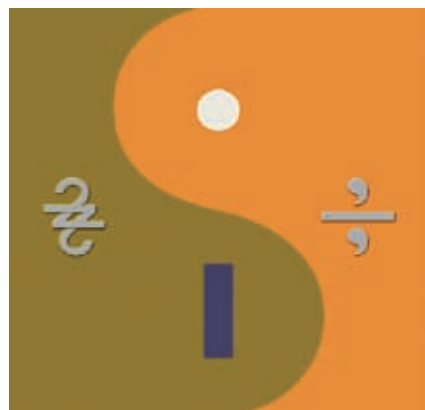
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Feb. 19 – Iron Horse Music Hall, North Hampton, MA

- Sue Menhart



Bon Iver "22, A Million" Jagjaguwar

The indie powerhouse stretches the reach of Bon Iver and goes alternative while maintaining his style and voice.

After having done well with The Shouting Matches, Justin Vernon is back and better than ever. He's raw and experimental without losing his uniqueness and Bon Iver style.

The album is a catalogue of emotions, both empty and hopeful at the same time. The first song, stylized as "22 (OVER S000N)," does this in the Bon Iver style: simple yet powerful. Vernon's voice carries harmoniously throughout the song alongside a sampled live version of "How I Got Over." Vernon's voice carry his words beautifully as "it might be over soon" stretches across the opening of the song in a lachrymose, yet hopeful tone with a pulsing, repetitive note played in the introduction. The song is a heartbreaking catalogue of loneliness when Vernon utters "then I drew an ear on you, so I can speak into the silence." But with this song also comes a feeling of rejoice, a feeling that Vernon is at peace now. This is the stage for the album, a personal cataloguing of struggle and resolution.

"715 - CRΣΣKS" shows Vernon's way with words and his ability to pull you closer while putting himself away. Vernon talks in the song about the final days with someone loved before leaving each other. He does this with precision and delicacy, all the while being raw. "Toiling with your blood, I remember something: in B, un-rationed kissing on a night second to last. Finding both your hands as second sun came past the glass. And oh, I know it felt right, and I had you in my grasp." Vernon is masterful in this, he is as delicate and beautiful with his words as he was when he crafted "Skinny Love" or "Blood Bank." Although his voice is heavily synthesized, Vernon comes across as personal and even somehow remains folksy in his way.

The final track on the album, "00000 Million," returns to the Bon Iver roots of Bon Iver, Bon Iver and sound like a soulful reconciliation. It's gentle and comforting song that provides a satisfying conclusion for the album. The song represents the final stage of a journey: acceptance. "If it's harmed, it's harmed me, it'll harm, I let it in," is said throughout the track as if to signify the ending of a tough personal experience and making peace with one's own demons. These demons are weaved into his lyrics as he criticizes Gnosis, and addresses his "wild courses." The song is strong, by all means. Vernon's voice is confident and stands its ground while talking about something very personal.

He does this in a revealing manner without fear of criticism. This is honest. Sprinkled with religious imagery and personal tales, the lyrics in the song are esoteric but widely received. "I hurry bout shame, and I worry bout a worn path, and I wander off, just to come back home." This finishes the album brilliantly.

After five years, Bon Iver's new album is well worth the wait. It holds strong and shows a deeper, personal side to the artist. Justin Vernon took the time off to find himself and he came back with a beautiful album.

- Nic Hall



Tom "The Suit" Forst "On Fire"

Factory Underground Records

Blues-rock guitarist and singer-songwriter Tom Forst, nicknamed "The Suit," gave up his corporate gig for a full-time music career a few years ago and has plunged full steam ahead to live the dream. He has performed and recorded with The Johnny Winter Band, on Saturday Night Live, with the Allman Brothers Band, the Stephen Colbert Show Band, and Popa Chubby. He has opened for Hoobastank, the Marshall Tucker Band, the Atlanta Rhythm Section, Three Dog Night, and Grand Funk among others. His solo debut, "On Fire," includes eight impassioned originals and three covers. Lending support on the CD are Paul Nelson on slide guitar (who also serves as producer,) Grace Kelly on sax (a Massachusetts native who has been dubbed 'a notable millennial in the jazz world,') Hollis Long and Tiffany T'zelle on background vocals, Mike DiMeo on keys, Chris Reddan on percussion, Jeff Ganz on bass, and Jessica Klee on ad-

Continued Page 20

SOUND WAVES 17

COOKING WITH THE BLUES



By Jack Chaplin

With sadness I sit here writing this article for February's issue of Soundwaves. We all have people that come into our lives and not necessarily by our own choice but decided by daily life itself. I had heard early last week about a hit and run fatality over by the Chrystal Mall. There is so much bad news around us daily that I filed it into the recesses of my thoughts.

Yesterday I had taken my afternoon siesta and had forgotten my phone at the restaurant. An hour later when I got back My Daughter Rachel came right out and said she had tried to reach me, Kenny had died, he was the person that had gotten hit a few days earlier. It took a moment to

register because it was such a sudden shock. I walked into the restaurant and everyone was very upset.

Kenny, who's real name was Kim Weeks was a guy that was in your daily life in New London. I thought of Kenny as kind of a guardian angel. One time I had a flat tire out in the back parking lot late one night, the spare was flat and Kenny showed up out of now where, rolled the tire down to the Ravi Mart and aired it up for me. Another time I was cranking my car and it wouldn't start because it was low on gas, he found a gas can and again went down and got me a couple gallons. He'd pop in while I'd be prepping by myself and ask if I needed anything, maybe sit down and snooze out for a bit, summers we may find him on the front porch zonked out. One time a lady even came into the restaurant to tell me a homeless person was passed out, on inspecting it was my boy Kenny, we had good laugh on that one! At night when we'd be super busy he'd walk in and say, "How's the Great Jack?". Nightly he'd stroll in, take out the empty wine and beer bottles from behind the bar, the dirty linen bags, empty the garbage cans that were filled, and maybe order up a coke and a pizza if he had overslept and missed the dinner at the soup kitchen. He would always tell me when he had an extra special dinner, maybe an extra serving of lasagna or Shepherd's Pie, he'd brag about how great it was! Many times he would bring me in a bag of chips, he was very thoughtful in that way, he just knew I like them. Winter time was when he shined!

He'd bring his shovel and do all the sidewalks if they needed shoveling, a few times he even tried to take credit when I knew the landlord had already handled it but that was ok, Kenny never really tried to get over on You, He was always willing to work for a few dollars, he did that all over town!! You'd see him at The Exchange, Club 33, The Bistro, up and down Bank St., State St., and all over New London. You would see Kenny always on an errand, grabbing a pack of smokes, an energy drink or whatever else someone needed. He was very resourceful, if the sidewalks were icy, he

18 SOUND WAVES

came back with a big bag of icemelt, I'd asked him where the hell he got that? He'd smile his smile and that was enough of an answer. I know that he did car detailing at Rich's Body Shop on Truman St. but other than that God only knows how many business's he was in and out of on a daily basis. We'd always throw him a 5er or an extra 10 spot when he'd do the windows or when he'd sweep the sidewalks. Sometimes when there wasn't any work he ask "Can A Brother Get An Advance?" Sometimes it was a minor annoyance but we would always fork it over, couldn't say no to our Brother! Kenny always had some nice bikes, sometimes he'd roll up on a brand new one, proud as a peacock, I'd say, "damn where'd you get that one?", he'd grin ear to ear. It'd only be a matter of time and he'd be walking, bike got stolen. I think he had bad feet the way he walked but it didn't stop him, you'd see him all over town, not asking for rides, just handling his business.

He had two phones, Obama phones he'd call them! I'd razz him and say that when "The Donald" get's in them phones is gone! We'd have a good laugh! He didn't share much personal stuff but he did say his Dad was Chief of Security at the Apollo Theater in New York where he was from. He would go back every so often. That's where he got his boots, ball caps and clothes, always looking pretty sharp! Kenny never complained, rainy weather, he'd make a poncho out of a garbage bag, cold and snowing, he layer up and have his shovel. You know you see people that have so much and still whine and complain about things. Here is a guy that has taken what life has dealt him regardless of his own decisions or whatever but never made excuses or had regrets, that is refreshing!! We that knew him are going to really miss Home School, that was my name for Kenny or sometimes I'd just call him School. Not sure why I started calling him that but it was a term of endearment. I'm going to miss Kenny's smile, his laughter, his company, and most of all his coolness. We'll get by and handle

Continued Page 20

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our own business but it's just not going to be the same or as fun. Rest In Peace Home School!! I bet you'll soon be running errands for the Angels in Heaven!

We just finished up the 1st Restaurant Week in New London with many downtown restaurants participating. Josh Feldman who owns Lazy Leopard organized this great event that brought many customers to our doors in a historically slow time of the year. We all charged \$20.17 for a three course dinner, we offered four entrees and a 12 inch pizza as options with a choice of soup or salad and a dessert. It was such a hit that we're going to continue on with the 3 course Price fix menu with weekly changing offerings indefinitely.

Speaking of Lazy Leopard and their newly opened sushi spot across the hallway, it is our favorite go to spot for Thai and Sushi. For lunch they have great specials, and the best won ton soup for one or the chicken coconut soup. I love the bistro salad with the peanut dressing, a work of art created by Tony in the kitchen. There is not one thing on the menu that I wouldn't recommend, the Tamarind Duck, Drunken Noodles, Curries, Pad Thai, Chicken Satay, Sushi Rolls and Sashimi, trust me I've tasted my way through. Save room for the Mango Sorbet, Fried Banana, Green Tea Ice Cream, or the Coconut Ice Cream. Josh ran Rice Spice, and Noodles in Mystic for years and New London is fortunate that he came across the bridge to open Lazy Leopard with his Fiancee Kendra! Josh and Kendra are yet another Mom and Pop small business people that have rolled the dice and fight the good fight to survive and thrive, up against the fast food and chain operators, who's lives depend on your support. Show some love, reach out to those that matter in your life, don't let long lapses of time go by because our time is finite!

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ditional guitar.

Forst's vocals are a mix of Steve Winwood and Eric Clapton, while his guitar playing blends the traditions and simple flair of BB King with tinges of heavier blues-rockers. The opening track, "The Wolf's at the Door," is classic blues-rock written by Forst and his good friend Gary Youell. "Play Like The King" transforms Forst's playing style into words as he sings – "Blazin' fast ain't everything, if you can't play with soul just like the King." In other words, on guitar, he modifies his tones, bends his notes, and treats each note with care. It's what we in the biz refer to as "smooth." Forst is smooth.

"Going Home" is reminiscent of Blind Faith's "Can't Find My Way Home" with melodic and pleasing instrumentation and an anthem-like chorus. The radio-ready "She Was Right" features some catchy keyboard licks and a full-harmony chorus, while "Still on the Run" is a well-crafted bluesy number. If you've been missing the wah-wah talk-box days of Peter Frampton then "Unfaithfully Yours" is all you need. It's just a joy to hear this trickery once again. Joe Walsh's "Walk Away" gets an up-to-date makeover from Forst and crew as he continues to vary his guitar tonality which is so rare these days.

With a tip of his hat to the female gender, "Women of the World," penned by Youell, features unique, modern effects, female guest guitarist Jessica Klee, and a pretty cool culmination of female vocalists in the mix. With courageous and steadfast lyrics, this could be the only women's marching song we could ever need. Give it a listen. Forst's cover of the Howlin' Wolf classic "Killing Floor" is a more energetic modern rendition that completely rocks while "Consolation Man" throws out a funky groove in the minor key (yes!) and really shows off Forst's chops.

The final track, a cover of "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," features sax prodigy Grace Kelly and she doesn't disappoint. Her talent and fearlessness blend nicely with the full production sound on this closer. This tune definitely leaves 'em wantin' more! Check out Tom "The Suit" Forst at this link: <http://www.tomthesuitforst.com>

- Sue Menhart



Sixx:AM

*"Prayers For The
Blessed, Vol 2"*

The concept of the double album is nothing new to music, however it is much rarer to find a double album where each disk is released separately. Such is the case with Sixx:AM's "Prayers For The Blessed, Vol 2", which follows up their April album "Prayers For The Damned, Vol 1". The album picks up right where volume 1 left off, with the unified chants of the band's loyal followers. From there the band delivers an experience that expands the sound of the first album while still being a strong stand alone piece.

Like many heavy rock bands before them Sixx:AM revolves around captivating vocals coupled with a mixture of immersive guitars, synths, and drums. At any given time the band can be heard stacking layers on layers of varying melodies and rhythmic elements, providing the listener with a thick atmosphere of sound that still manages to stay clean and distinct.

As a new listener to the band one of the most surprising things that I took away from the album was how diverse it managed to be, while still remaining primarily heavy. Even the softer songs had a rough edge that clearly encapsulated the raw emotion that the band felt during the writing and recording process. Their emotion and inspiration become even more apparent through the small intricacies that they used to keep each song lively. Everything from quick, random distortion effects, to their contrasting and unexpected arrangements showed that the band put a lot of time and effort into perfecting their artistic vision.

Production and songwriting aside, the absolute best thing about this album is the band themselves. All the band members have clearly perfected their craft over their many years in the industry.

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try. James Michael's raw vocals carry emotion in a way that makes me feel like I'm in the room with him, while the masterful playing of the other members shock me with their intricate rhythms and expressive energy.

All things considered, Sixx:AM is clearly a band that has a true passion for music. That passion shines brightly through this album's execution, creating a sound that not only brings immense joy to fans of the genre, but also stuns and interests newcomers. I'm highly looking forward to seeing what adventures the band takes us on with their next album.

- Niles Wilson



Foxygen "Hang" Jagjaguar

Foxygen stormed the indie-rock scene a few years ago with their popular album "We Are the 21st Century Ambassadors of Peace & Magic". Hailing from the San Francisco area, they combined psychedelic sounds of the 70's and a Mick Jagger style vocal braggadocio to create some really stunning tracks.

Foxygen's new LP "Hang" really moves the band into new territory. They've incorporated a 40-piece orchestra for many of the songs, putting a heavy 70's theatrical spin on many of the tracks. They can get pretty wacky, at times showcasing Zappa-like chord movement and wildly changing motifs.

The album opens up with "Follow the Leader", featuring singer Sam France's emotional vocals from the start. Honestly, it sounds like a mash-up of ABBA and the Rolling Stones. The hook has a nice swing, and it all works together very nicely for a nostalgic yet unique sound.

The next track "Avalon" kicks off with a ragtime piano feel. There's a definite Broadway influence throughout the album, which you really don't hear a lot

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of in indie-rock these days. It seems like they've traded in some of their psychedelic influences in favor of more camp and drama.

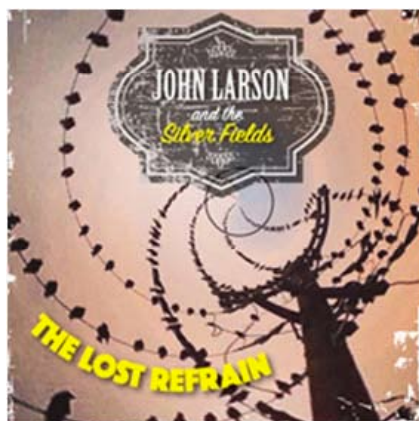
"On Lankershim" almost has an alt-country feel in the onset before going through several changes in feel, continually pushing the rhythm in new directions while Sam France croons out in various styles of voice. It's rather schizophrenic, but really interesting.

Frank Zappa's influence is strongly evident in "Upon a Hill", reminding me of Frank's earlier work. The vocals get a little silly at times, overdoing the dramatic vocal effects on purpose, creating what is almost a parody of a showtune.

The mood gets heavy and dramatic on "Trauma", with timpanis banging in the background and the backing vocal section punctuating the title lyric as Sam France wails out about the various difficulties of life. It comes off as mock trauma though.

This is a rather silly album, truth be told. Having said that, I've really enjoyed this surprising direction that Foxygen has gone in. They're mashing up some really interesting styles and exhibiting a lot of creativity in their homage to the sounds of the past.

- Tom Matthew
Two Ton Music



John Larson and the Silver Fields "The Lost Refrain" Shiny Fly Recordings

Providence, Rhode Island power pop front man, guitarist and songwriter John Larson's second solo effort "The Lost Refrain" fuses his many musical influences resulting in an original, highly marketable, thought-provoking and relevant work of art.

He wrote all the songs and is supported by an array of musicians (dubbed The Silver Fields) including members of his

old band the Marlowes, which he fronted for eight years. The full and well-produced sound on the album includes guitars, drums, bass, keys, strings, cello, mandolin, trumpet, sax and pedal steel while Larson's out-front vocals are a mix of Brian Wilson and Jackson Browne. With its brilliant songwriting, catchy and irresistible melodies and loads of harmonies, it could compete right alongside "Pet Sounds."

"Glassful of Sand" features a huge wall of sound with poetic lyrics and a catchy chorus. "Sinking In" is radio-ready with driving, modern keys. The Beach Boys-like harmonies on Lydia are just a feast for the ears. Larson makes it all look easy but obviously years of experience and reflection went into each and every song. The horn-infused duet with Rachel Gavaletz on "I'm Not Spartacus," whose voices blend perfectly, is a humble gem.

The CD slows down a bit with the Avett Brothers-like "River in a Raindrop." It's a tribute to under-appreciated school teachers everywhere with some sweet guitar licks, strings and pedal steel. Here's a sampling of the profound and vivid lyrics:

"She sings like Oklahoma

She can waltz like Tennessee

Where everybody sees a dead end stop

She sees a river in a raindrop."

"Urban Symphony" could be the soundtrack to our modern lives with his observations of a typical city while "Track You Down" is a rockin' number

with a myriad of harmonies and catchy hooks. "Noah Sent Out a Dove" is purposeful in the minor key. "South of the Stars" is soothing and magical with trumpet and pedal steel and a unique chord progression. I can hear this in a movie soundtrack right now. The tempo picks up again with "Dexter and Broad," an ode to a bankrupt hometown. Haunting cello drives the beautiful "Reading in the Dark," which reminds me of the Beach Boys' "In My Room." Meticulous care is taken with each instrument, note, vocal harmony, melody line and chord change in the catchy "Split The Difference." The CD closes with a Spanish-like tribute to none other than Evel Knievel with "Happy Landings." I used to have the doll and motorcycle and carried him everywhere I went making him jump over everything so hearing a song in his honor actually made my day.

The tunes on "The Lost Refrain" are chock-full of unexpected and non-traditional chord changes and poetry, you know, the kind of thing The Beatles did. Which kind of changed everything. I'll be watching out for this guy.

Link:

<http://johnlarsonri.com>

- Sue Menhart



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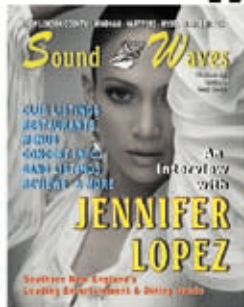
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