

Sound *Magazine*

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**Volume 31
Issue 2
February 2021**

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Plus

- Viagra Boys
- James Yorkston

**An
Interview
with**

VERONICA LEWIS

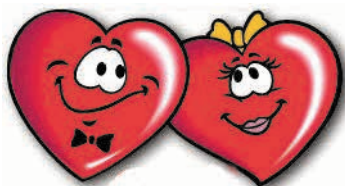
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INSIDE THE WAVE

Music Notes	Pg. 4
Band Dates	Pg. 6
World's A Stage	Pg. 7
Cover Story.....	Pg. 8
Local Beat.....	Pg. 10
Hearing Aid.....	Pg. 12
Blues Cooking	Pg. 14
Classified.....	Pg. 18



Dear Readers,

Again we are just online, this crisis we are in has hurt many of the venues and restaurants that advertise(d) in Sound Waves Magazine. No one is sure of the future. They don't know if there will be more restrictions or if the people are willing to go out and gather to listen to music. The only way for this publication to survive is to stay online only until we get through this situation. But don't fret, print WILL come back.

One thing we all can do is try and support the restaurants and the musicians that are struggling through all this. Order take out from your favorite restaurant if you are unsure about eating there in person. Support the musicians that are streaming their music on the web. Most have a tip icon that you can donate too. And if your comfortable with it, go out and see the rare live performances that are taking place at a selection few locations. But most of all, stay Safe! Follow the safety protocols. We can get through this together.

On an upbeat note, and something to celebrate, Sound Waves Magazine has reached another milestone. We have been in publication for 31 years! I have no idea where the time went, but it doesn't seem that long ago that we started this venture. Thank you to all our readers and the support of our advertisers. This was possible because of all of you! Maybe soon we can all get together and celebrate.

Stay Safe Everyone and lend a helping hand to those in need.

Peace

David L. Pottie
Publisher

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning how to dance in the rain." – Vivian Greene

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Sound Waves

February 2021

VOLUME 31, 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

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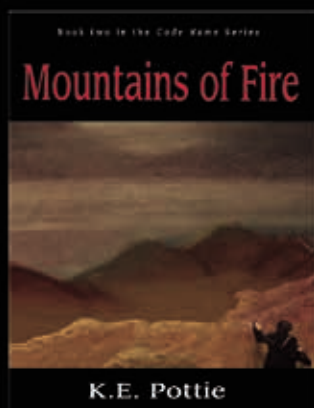
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Reviewed by Alice D. for Readers Favorite***

"The books, engrossing spy thrillers, masterfully interweave past and present with the story of "Sonny" who idealistically joins up in 1944." - By Stacy Trevenon; Half Moon Bay Review.

Ken is the award winning author of The Code Name Series of books. The series is based on his father's experiences behind enemy lines in World War II. He has won awards in the Readers' Favorite contest, The NABE Pinnacle Awards in Military Fiction, and Hollywood, Paris, and New York Book Festivals.

Author Kenneth Pottie



MUSIC NOTES

“The Needle and the Damage Done”

By Mark T. Gould

I hate needles.

I mean, I really hate needles.

It all started when I was eight years old, and my pediatrician, Dr. Grainger in Pawcatuck (how’s that, trivia buffs?) injected me with some sort of liquid courage, probably a booster shot of some kind.

It was all fine and dandy until I got home, and my right, master arm went numb.....for three days.....

57-some odd years later, I have still never forgotten it.

So, when I go for a blood test, or for a dreaded shot, I have to lie down. For the medically inclined, it’s called “vasovagal syncope.”

For me, it means, after the dastardly procedure, it’s two or three lovely minutes by which I alternately feel faint, sweat and get hot flashes.

Loads of fun, that.

OK, we pause here so that those of my female friends who have undergone the miracle of childbirth may have a moment to laugh their collective heads off at me.

Sure, have your fun. But, that’s what happens to me.

Which brings me to Covid-19 and the Moderna vaccine.

For weeks, ever since Operation Warp Speed went to, well, warp speed, it’s seemed that every time I look at the TV, I see someone with a needle stuck in his or her arm.

Reality TV at its highest.

And, for me, queasiness at its lowest.

Still, I knew the inevitable was coming. Our guardian bureaucratic angel, Dr. Fauci, told us several months ago that there would be a vaccine.



And, it didn’t take my four years of college and three years of law school to figure out that it wasn’t going to be in pill form.

Nope, the big, bad needle, followed by the “vaso-whatever.”

No matter, though. I want to get on with my life.

‘OK,’ so I thought, ‘I’ll be first in line, after the health care workers, first responders, and the elderly, the ones who really need it and deserve it.’

Then, I heard it was two vaccinations.

Er, uh.....”vaso-whatever.” My heart started to pound, and it really wasn’t stopping.

Then, I stepped back and thought for a minute.

There were 400,000 (as of this writing) reasons to do this. Yet, for me, perhaps selfishly, there was one reason to do this, the beautiful, intelligent woman in my life, who, like me, wants to get out there and live her life again, with lucky me in tow.

That was enough to give me pause to forget the “vaso-whatever,” man up, and do what needed to be done.

But, I still had my history in my mind. Look, it ain’t a big deal to anyone else, but it is HUGE to me.

You might not understand.

Still, I was determined to do it.

Thanks to my employer, with my age group thrust belatedly into Group 1B (Connecticut-speak for “fast, but not so fast, after the oth-

ers who really need it and deserve it, bub!!”), I got an e-mail very early one morning, giving me a link to sign up.

I spent the next 10 or 15 minutes filling out forms on-line (you know, “what’s your favorite color,” “how many eggs did you eat in third grade,” the really important stuff...), and, lo and behold, I got an appointment 48 hours later, less than 10 minutes from my house.

That was the good news. For the bad, “vaso-whatever” immediately, if not sooner, reared its ugly head. When I would think about it too much (which was pretty much every waking moment), I would stress out.

Me, I think the word ‘stress’ is highly overrated, pretty much a verbal excuse or dodge for those who just can’t seem to deal with the stuff that life throws at us.

But, I know that it’s real, and, right then for me, stress it was.

Until, on the day before the shot, when I put on some music. Music. That soothing balm. The one thing that always cools me out.

And, it did, once again. My breathing slowed, and I got to a place where I could handle the thought of an oncoming “vaso-whatever.”

The fateful day arrived. My wife came with me to the vaccination center to support me.

I needn’t have worried. It was easy as pie. A little pinch, and there you go.

No “vaso-whatever.”

I knew why.

The music. Again.

It was piped in while we were there. And, it was good. Creedence, James Taylor, The Beatles.

No Poco, but beggars can’t be choosers, right?

Anyway, with soothing sound in my ears, and feeling a lot lighter after the procedure, I sat up (remember, I lie down for this type of torture). The first thing that I saw was my wife across the room, sitting and waiting for me.

It was then that I heard it.

The music, the glorious music, was still being played.

And, then, karma struck. Glorious, heavenly karma.

I heard Chicago’s “You’re The Inspiration.”

Which just so happens to be our wedding song.



Tears came to my eyes, and they had nothing to do with me beating the “vaso-whatever” that day. I looked at her across the room, and I knew right then that we would come out of this mess, my wife, me, and the rest of us. The shots would work (our second is scheduled for February 19), and life to some extent would return.

It was music, once again, music, that showed me the way, giving me the strength to persevere.

Music.

Take that, “vaso-whatever.” You had no chance.





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All The World's a Stage

"Name That Tune"

By Sue Menhart

The snow falling outside today is beautiful, magical, peaceful, refreshing, mysterious and crystalline, like a Harry Potter movie. Which gets me thinking about movie soundtracks, and you know I love me some movie soundtracks. Those HP movies sure have some nice, memorable scores. Scary, yet hopeful. Eerie and spellbinding. The soundtrack matches each scene which requires the brilliant mind of a music supervisor and a composer to bring it all together. I enjoy breaking a good score down and analyzing the whys and wherefores of what was chosen and when certain pieces play.

Consequently, I have developed this weird skill, maybe you have too, where I can be in another room when a movie starts, and not even peaking at the screen, I know the movie. I can yell out the name of it, much to the chagrin of my housemates, thinking they could stump me for once. Sure, there are the easy ones like Jaws, Jurassic Park, Wizard of Oz, Gone with the Wind, and the like, but like I said, I can name just about any movie in two



notes. Yeah, it's weird.

I suppose there's a file cabinet in my brain that holds these pieces of data, albeit in musical form, that conjures this joyful yet annoying art. It's kinda fun! I've heard they've brought back that old TV show "Name That Tune" which I suppose could be challenging for some, but not I. (Just kidding, I haven't even watched it and I'm sure it's super hard to do, hee hee.)

Sometimes, when I think I want to watch a movie, I hum a piece of the score in order to remember the name. Instead of thinking "I want to watch Forrest Gump," I hear Alan Silvestri's tinkling piano as a feather floats. Not technically a score, but the song "Tiny Dancer" gets me wanting to watch Almost Famous. And don't even get me started on Disney movie scores.



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John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Ennio Morricone and the like, are kind of like gods to me. Movies about film composers, like "The Holiday" with Jack Black are super enjoyable too. I could go on and on.

So, as the snow continues to fall, and I'm stuck within these four walls (grateful I do have four walls mind you), rather than remember the dreadfulness of loading and unloading for winter gigs, or the drudgery of shoveling the white stuff in an icy blustery mess, I will summon the joy of music, and get binging.



Peruse more cautionary tales, rants and raves over on my blog "Menhart Musings" at www.suemenhart.wordpress.com. Get my latest book over on Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/They-Made-Me-Play-Polka/dp/1725534584/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=



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By Ali Kaufman

Sound Waves Magazine has a long history of interviewing up and coming artists that have gone on to great and lasting success, this feels like one of those times. It was a pleasure to speak with Veronica Lewis on the cusp of her highly anticipated debut release, *You Ain't Unlucky*, on Blue Heart Records dropping February 19. While it would be easy to pigeon hole this young woman into the category of overnight successes or childhood phenoms, she is an artist that has already spent many years working on her craft, developing her gift and truly dedicating herself to the passion that she was lucky enough to recognize early on. So when the history books are written about 2020, with all it's struggles and challenges, there will be rays of light that shine thorough, Veronica Lewis is one of them.

Born in New Hampshire and raised in the Boston area, Veronica considers herself a New England gal even though her sound might make you swear she was born on Beale Street or perhaps in the French Quarter. Veronica has been playing since she was just 6 years old, on a rescued upright piano that she affectionally calls Margaret due to the inscription she found on it. This old soul has grown a love for Blues, Boogie Woogie and Roots Rock & Roll that is a gift to all of us. In addition to her mother nurturing Lewis's natural abilities, Veronica speaks reverently about her maternal grandfather who she credits with instilling in her, "a true appreciation for music styles and a curiosity", that set her on a path of discovery. Her Grandfather was 15 years old when he lost his sight, but he never lost his love of music, he played bass until the calluses players get made it difficult to read braille. The title track, "You Ain't Unlucky" holds deep meaning for Veronica for a couple of reasons, one being that she wrote it after one of her idols, Dr. John, had passed, she wanted to create something that was inspired by his spirit but with her own imprint on it, mission accomplished! You can almost feel his fingerprints on this catchy tune, right from the very first notes. The other is that on that day late in February, the 26th to be exact, unbeknownst to Veronica, her beloved grandfather was transitioning as she was recording this song and he passed very unexpectedly she later found out on the ride home from the studio. That day also turned out to be the last one in studio before most of the world came to a screeching halt in the face of a pandemic.

One of the tremendous surprises to come out

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of the conversation I had with Veronica is that she is self taught, learning by ear, finding her sound and improvising as she began to write. By the tender age of 12 she was building a catalog of songs and becoming a student of the greats like Katie Webster, Otis Spann and Jerry Lee Lewis, no relation to the latter, though you would swear there is! She seems to absorb inspiration from the great musicians that came before and weaves that into compositions that are decidedly her own groove. That is not to say there aren't contemporaries that are helping her along the way, one in particular was Mike Ledbetter whom she learned was classically trained. This prompted Lewis to start working with an opera singer about a year ago who she says, "helped me turn a corner and find my voice", she went on to say, "this helped me connect what I wanted to say with the lyrics and how I was able to sing them."

2020 started off for Veronica with a trip to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis after winning the regional competition in the Boston Blues Challenge, Best Solo / Duo with her drummer Mike Walsh. While they did not take home the top prize, there were great rewards, like the luck of the draw to get to perform at Jerry Lee Lewis's club on Beale Street. I took this opportunity to ask about being in the South and what it means to her, clearly the hallowed ground of the blues resonates with her soul. Veronica has participated in the Pinetop Perkins Master Classes held in Clarksdale Mississippi, there she studied with another of her idols Victor Wainwright...and wrote a few songs for the new album, just for good measure. "Being down there was the impetus for writing, "Put Your Wig On Mama" and "Clarksdale Sun". Spurred on by the honor of playing at Morgan Freeman's legendary club, Ground Zero, and some encouraging advice from, Abraham, one of the establishment's long time employees, Veronica soaked it all up and it continues to propel her forward. "Put Your Wig On Mama" is a song Veronica wrote for her Mom, I told her I had to double check the liner notes because it has such a classic feel to it, I couldn't believe it was a new song! Lewis described it to me as a song that is, "where I come from, fused with the deep south feel, inspired by slow blues shuffle...like a pot of something delicious simmering on the stove.... then Don Davis on sax comes in as the pot is about to boil over." I stand by my first impression, this is a song that could have been written 50 years ago and has the staying power to keep people dancing 50 years from now.

Circling back to the beginning of 2020, while much of the album had already been recorded there was still more to complete, so Veronica worked with her sound engineer to be able to record from her home while in lock down. Just like everything else we talked about, Veronica exudes gratitude and looks at things from a glass half full perspective that is contagious. Rather than a set back, this was a chance to learn a new skill set that served her well and added another intimate dimension to the final product. You can hear the smile in her voice as she describes what she calls the wood stove sessions because of how she ended up using an old wood stove to prop her mic. There are also three songs on the album that she actually recorded playing on Margaret her first piano, Fool Me Twice, Whoo Whee Sweet Daddy and The Memphis Train, you just know Margaret is super happy that Veronica found her!!!

The band also upped their game by putting out live and recorded streaming shows while unable to be on stage in front of live audiences. They played whole shows, learned to tape then link up the mixed sound over the video, while everyone's preference is to be immersed in a live audience, these performances are authentic and it's evident that they give it their all and feel connected to their viewers. By the end of the summer several record deals were coming in and after careful consideration the decision was made to go with Blue Heart Records, of which Veronica says, "it is

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the perfect fit, I am really excited to be working with them.", It's a pretty safe bet they feel the same way. The debut album on this label consists of 6 original songs and 2 covers, "Whoo Whee Sweet Daddy" by Katie Webster was chosen in part because of the giant admiration Veronica has for the Queen of the Swamp Blues and her perseverance to never give up on her dreams, even in the face of many obstacles. Also, since Katie passed in 1999 Veronica never had the chance to meet her but through music Veronica is now infused into her story. The other cover by Louis Jordan, "Is You Is My Baby" was first made in 1943 but it has a theme that is just as relevant today. Not just a song about a romantic relationship, she sees the larger picture, the feeling in any relationship of where do I stand? "I knew this song would work well, it is the mix of melancholy and strength. Wondering what's going on but brave enough to confront the question head on." The other six songs are all hers and wonderful, Veronica and her team have already put out a video for the title song, "You Ain't Unlucky", her raw talent and timeless beauty make it incredibly engaging without it being over produced or full of gimmicks. Even the packaging of the music is true to her beliefs, being eco-friendly and minimal stands in line with Lewis's love of nature and commitment to conservation.

Some of you dear readers may be thinking you might have heard Veronica play before, if you are a regular to Rhode Island's answer to Labor Day Weekend, Rhythm & Roots Festival, you very well may have. Twice Veronica has appeared on the line up with her own sets and at the last one she was part of a very special tribute to Dr. John, sharing the stage with another one of her piano heroes, Marcia Ball. You can't help but get goosebumps when you hear her describe being on that stage at, "one of my very favorite festivals, sitting next to Marcia Ball, our pianos side by side, playing a song I wrote to honor Dr. John." I was there and can attest to the incredible buzz that rippled not only through the crowd but backstage as well.

Chuck Wentworth, the founder of Rhythm & Roots Festival, had this to say about Veronica -"Veronica first appeared at Rhythm and Roots three years ago in a showcase featuring young rising performers in roots music. She has been invited back to the festival every year since. Last year, 2020, she was scheduled to make her debut on the main stage but was cancelled due the pandemic. I believe that Veronica has unlimited potential and will soon be recognized as a major talent as a boogie woogie piano player. The sky's the limit for this wonderful young lady! "

2020 wrapped with perhaps the biggest accolade thus far in Veronica's career, she was not only nominated for a Boston Music Award, which in itself is a huge honor, she WON Best Blues Artist of the Year in a field of incredible talent that consisted of greats like Anthony Geraci & The Boston Blues All-Stars, GA-20 and Sonya Rae Taylor to name a few. All formidable and deserving but she brought it home.

Perhaps most exciting about this win is that it is by popular vote and Veronica brims with appreciation for all that voted for her, she is still not sure how she even garnered the nomination! It is as if the win added rocket fuel to her already star bound trajectory. "It is an incredible honor that I don't take lightly, there's a responsibility that I feel to everyone that has helped me get this far. This is a driving force to stay motivated and ready to go!" Oh the places you'll go my dear, keep those sunglasses handy and your beautiful spirit thriving, you have angels both here on earth and above rocking with and rooting for you!

You can pre-order You Ain't Unlucky by going directly to [Youaintunlucky.com](https://youaintunlucky.com)

Keep up with Veronica, her upcoming events and all her most up to date info at [Veronicalewis.com](https://veronicalewis.com)

LOCAL BEAT

“Where did the 1960s go Just When We Need Them the Most?”

By Andrew Kerbs

“I get what these people are feeling . . . these congress people lock themselves behind their doors and don’t care what we think out here, just as long as they get what they feel this country needs. Its not about the people anymore, its about the people in that building . . . We’re doing this to show what were about as Americans” say Steve and Wendy Meek to an Atlantic Journalist just prior to citizens’ sacking of the US Capitol (for the 1st time in our country’s history). Conspiratorial cultist and red-blooded patriots who marched on the Capitol alike need to answer the question: What is it about the “truth” of Biden’s win in the 2020 election that they fear the most? Will Biden sell more jobs out to China? What is it that they “the people” think and why is what the government feels this country needs not what they also feel they need?

Are people who don’t look or sound American voting here illegally (and how can rightist protesters be sure)? Trump failed to convince the Georgia Governor to “come up” with votes nor did several recounts in various states show any evidence of fraud. His attempts at bribing officials to tip the election in his favor fell on deaf ears as did his loss in the Supreme Court, whose now conservative majority he thought surely would decide in his favor. Marc Anthony tried the same trick 2,000 years ago when he unsuccessfully bribed Cicero into granting him land and a position as Senate consul (Cicero responded by having a scribe dictate a scathing takedown of Anthony on the Senate floor). Alas the dominos began to fall. Fi-



nally, McConnell recognized Biden as our next President and Pence and the Senate chaplain blessed Biden’s win, suggesting the Lord must drive from our hearts all wrong desires and seek a common humanity that reflects His image. That was the last straw for religious right-wingers. Unable to accept the results of the democratic election, Trump rallied citizens from many states to march on the Capitol. Not only did they march, they climbed - using tricks and tactics out of grandpa’s old survivalist field guide like they were all cool (kind of like jumping walls and ducking into mud under electrified barbed wire in some Extreme Sport just to prove one’s own manliness – not because you have to). As Vice President Pence certified the electoral votes for Biden, extremists invaded and vandalized the building, killing several people in the process in perhaps the worst case of anarchy in the Capitol in over 200 years. If this mob had been BLM there would have been a bloodbath, but many vandals (except 1 casualty) had enough white privilege to pose for selfies with officers before they escorted them out.

Both President Madison and French author Tocqueville acknowledged democracy can spill into mob violence if participants do not play by the rules. I could hear dictators in foreign countries snickering that we too have now succumbed to baser instincts of a Banana Republic with

any lingering thought of exceptionalism all but vanished.

Governor Schwarzenegger calls democracy a sword that needs honing for strength while Tucker Carlson calls democracy a pressure relief valve by which citizens remain calm if they think they can change things by talking organizing and voting. On the other hand, voters don’t cooperate if they feel congressmen are “dishonest” or “self-interested” and even the strongest sword can crack if heated and pounded too many times. People on one side complain the government isn’t doing enough to protect the climate, black lives and lives lost due to the pandemic while the other side cries foul on government over-reach which has protected civil rights protesters but banned “non-essential” small businesses, churches and schools that have lost revenue and learning potential due to lockdowns. The climate crisis will also cost many fossil fuel-related jobs. Perhaps not since the Vietnam War has there been so much diametrically opposed discourse.

Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.

Now, just like then, trust is at an all-time low in our country. Conservative pundits Tucker Carlson and Ben Shapiro deflect criticism of the Insurrection by blaming democrats for BLM mayhem which was more about civil rights than about something as serious as overthrowing the government. Tucker conveniently laments the death of MAGA protesters while rationalizing the death of innocent black protesters. Apparently, police are only in the wrong when they defend our nation’s capital against white protesters. According to Carlson, crackdowns against anarchists are the “Romanov Treatment” which just exacerbate tension like a pressure cooker. How can politicians listen back if protesters won’t listen to reason when votes are counted properly and repeatedly reported as such? How are those who refuse to listen to the protesters “unwise fools lacking in awareness?” For a guy who lambasts mob violence, would he rather have a mob running

the country?

There was a time in the 60s and 70s when rock n roll and political protest went hand in hand and evidence of a stark generational divide could not have been clearer. Bob Dylan warned the World War II generation that “your sons and daughters are beyond your command” on The Times They Are a Changing: “The line has been drawn . . . the first one now is soon to be the last.” Similarly, Neil Young and Buffalo Springfield warned of “the battle lines being drawn . . . young people speaking their mind getting so much resistance from behind” on their hit For What Its Worth. Jefferson Starship took a break from ‘shrooming to tackle serious cerebral matters of the Vietnam War draft on their album Volunteers. Country Joe McDonald sang how he didn’t know what American were fighting for (and if they did, he didn’t give a damn), encouraging soldiers to enrich Wall Street’s military industrial complex by giving their lives (and getting the Pearly Gates and coffins in return). Crosby Stills and Nash sang about Ohio college students killed by cops for protesting the Vietnam War. John Lennon sang about giving peace a chance. The end of the War was a relief for many who felt they were throwing away their children’s lives for nothing but divisiveness continued through the 70s with the hands-off approach by boomer-era politicians to fund the armed forces and NASA instead of industries that paid people a living wage and kept them out of trouble with the law. Businesses invested in machinery and computers to replace, not supplement employees which mandated higher taxes on the already shrinking middle class to fund police, prisons and welfare to house laid off employees often involved with drugs. NWA and Public Enemy stood up for black people who were often the largest group of victims of de-industrialization by writing fiery rap songs. Numerous artists, including Madonna taught everybody to “rock the vote” in the 1980s.

The question remains, where are all these singers and protest bands

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now, when we need them now more than ever? Seeing that Justin Bieber and Megan Thee Stallion steal more of the spotlight than protest-rockers (or even protest-rappers), why isn't the music industry doing more to make people aware of what's going on in the world? Seeing how much mainstream music is under corporate influence, is this role even possible or is it the role of the people to cultivate that musical scene from the grassroots up? Finally, who would be protesting what? Abortion and immigration rights? The rights of the working man? The rights to a fair and free election? Where is all the civil rights songwriting about BLM or about the militarization and the Fall of the American Republic?

Like the Stones shouted out on Sympathy for the Devil: "Who killed the Kennedys when after all, it was you and me." This begs the question of whether the insurrectionists were truly evil or just mislead by an incompetent wanna-be dictator. Psychology experiments ranging from Zimbardo's notorious Stanford Prison Study to Milgram's studies in obedience (using electric shock) have proven that perfectly decent citizens can be turned into sadistic monsters in the right setting by just putting on a uniform and submitting to the right kind of training (or brainwashing). Whether the Insurrection at the Capitol boils into a militarized coup or not, one thing remains certain. The decision by voters to elect Trump or the far-right in 2024 will determine whether the best days of our US Democratic Republic lay ahead of us or whether the sun sets on our glorious but aging Republic as it goes the wicked way of Ancient Rome. It hopefully won't be "The end of the world as we know it" but Democrats won't feel fine.



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Viagra Boys "Welfare Jazz" Year0001

Eclectic and erratic defines the latest album by Viagra Boys. The Swedish post-punk outfit dances with a mix of noise rock and satire, interrupted with jazz interludes, producing an original and memorable sophomore album.

Sounding like something from a Death From Above 1979 album, "Ain't Nice" provides an introduction of what is to come. The distorted guitar matches the harsh, yet melodic, vocals of Sebastian Murphy and compliments the lyrics boasting of a man in a relationship who revels in their reputation as cruel. This follows on from the debut album's themes of harmful masculinity. However, this is immediately juxtaposed with an interlude of a saxophone solo which carries on toward the next track.

With a clear Detroit blues rock sound, "Toad" continues with the theme of masculinity in relationships. The track describes, in a semi-speaking voice, a man who becomes flippant as his relationship steers towards domesticity. The man recoils at this perceived domesticity and insists that he is a rebel who cannot and will not be tamed, instead declaring that no one can tell him what to do.

Welfare Jazz continues to jump around with "Into the Sun" providing a slower, vaguely industrial sounding post-punk tale of a man coming to terms with his past grievances only to repent in the hopes of being taken back by one he still loves. "6 shooter" serves as my personal favorite of the album. Post-punk through and through, this song holds its own with the eclectic songs

12 SOUND WAVES

surrounding it and trudges along with a forceful rhythm before dying out halfway through and giving way to background noise. Picking right back up where it left off, the song carries on and joins with a rarely seen post-punk saxophone.

In another turn on this meandering road that is an album, Viagra Boys hit a western tone with "To the Country." This eerie tune brings in earlier references from within the album and focuses on the idea of embracing domesticity by moving towards the countryside to live a simple, easy life. The verses are punctuated by the growing sounds of a saxophone that build as the words sound progressively more desperate, hoping that moving to the country will surely be where "it would all work out."

The album finishes with something completely unexpected that fits perfectly and, in retrospect, seems to be what the entire album was heading towards. The entire theme of the album, relationships, masculinity, and the inability to get out of one's own way, comes together with a cover of John Prine's "In Spite of Ourselves." With Amy Taylor of Amyl and the Sniffers taking the place of Iris Dement, the song matches the spirit of the original. The cover is sung with an artificial twang, playing well with Taylor's Australian accent, and is sung over a synthetic sounding ode to the original before breaking apart from the original completely and changing into a sound entirely Viagra Boys' own.

Ultimately, Welfare Jazz is a decentralized sound unified by centralized themes. Viagra Boys find themselves with a strong album that shows their resistance to conform and their ability to find their own path and sound.

- Nic Hall



James Yorkston "The Wide, Wide River" Domino

James Yorkston is a long-time singer-songwriter from Scotland with a history of compelling work. On his recently released album "The Wide, Wide River" he collaborated with the Swedish string band The Secondhand Orchestra and created something very special.

"The Wide, Wide River" was recorded in Sweden where James Yorkston flew in to record with the group. The Secondhand Orchestra had never heard the material before. He played each song a time or two and asked them to add their creative juices to the mix and hit record. The result is a beautiful, poignant work of art that retains the feel of an intimate jam session with strings, mandolins, accordions and various other folk instruments. Throughout all, his quiet and deep voice tells stories of friendship, love and the human condition with clarity and aplomb.

There are a bunch of songs on here that just noodle their way into your memory and don't leave, as if you've heard them many times before already. Kicking it off is the opening track "Ella Mary Leather" which has a bit of an Elanor Rigby vibe. It features a fast tempo with instruments that slowly build up the mix as the storytelling engages you deeper and deeper.

One of the highlights on here is the fourth track, "Struggle". It is a quiet, easygoing song with somewhat of a Radiohead feel with the soft yet emotional vocals that remind me of Thom Yorke's own style. Behind it is one of the musical themes persistent on many of the songs - droning eighth notes on the cello that function almost like a percussive element of the music.

My favorite on "The Wide, Wide River" is a very catchy tune entitled "There Is No Upside". It has more of a two-chord Irish rock feel than the other

tracks on here. The choral hook has wormed its way into the mind of every member of my household - "There is no downside / What do you mean? / There is no upside / There is no upside". The music builds and builds throughout the track and the work by The Secondhand Orchestra is beautiful and engaging.

Some of the other highlights on this eight song album are the dreamy ballad "Choices, Like Wide Rivers", the string-drone heavy "To Soothe Her Wee Bit Sorrows", and the wide vocal harmonies on one of the closing tracks "A Very Old-Fashioned Blues". Every song on this work is a moving work of art and I find myself finishing it too quickly and starting over at the beginning.

It's hard to put James Yorkston's "The Wide, Wide River" in any kind of category as it is so much more than a folk album or a singer-songwriter work. It is dense with sonic elements and feeling, and the spontaneous nature of The Secondhand Orchestra's music adds an incredible ambience that feels like you're enjoying this from a wooden stool in an old tavern in the British Isles. I highly recommend checking this one out.

**- Tom Matthew
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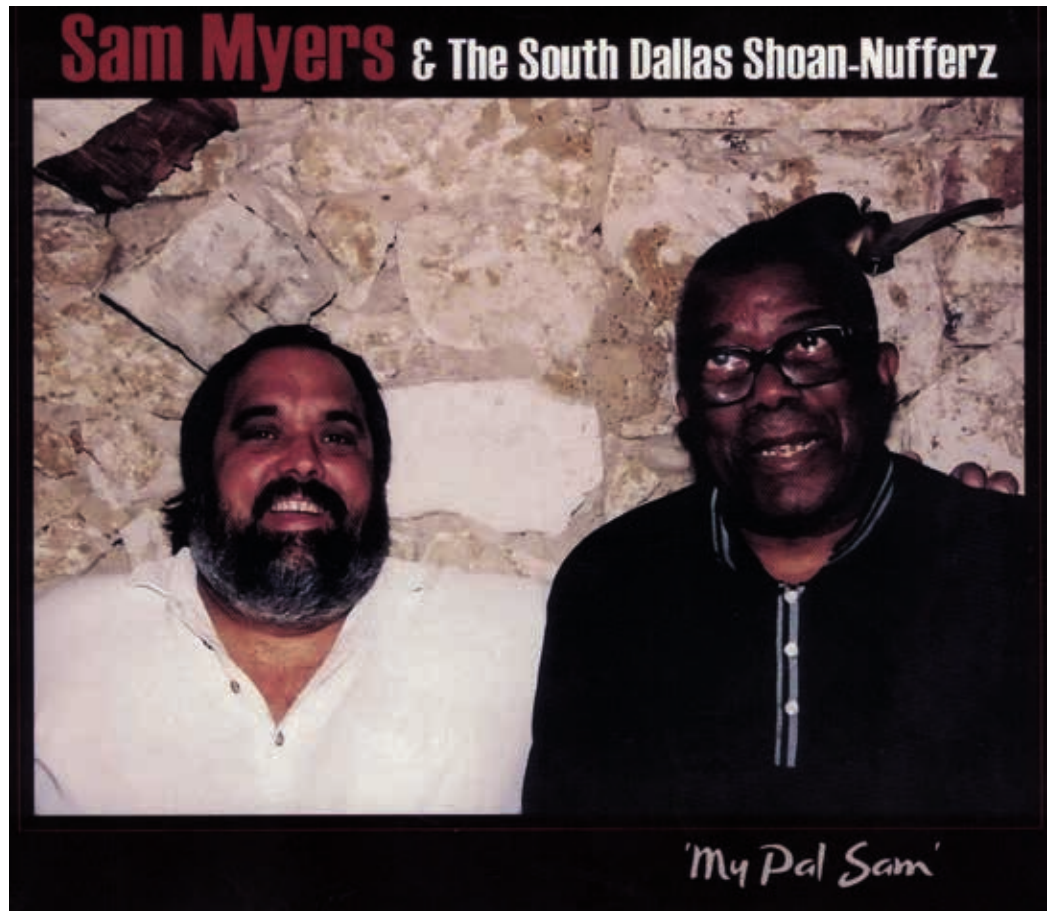


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COOKING WITH THE BLUES

By Jack Chaplin

Well, I sit here writing this on January 31st, 2021, at 4:32 p.m. Nothing like waiting until the last moment to write this column! I do my best work under pressure though! Don't tell our peerless leader Sir Dave Pottie! These are the first words that I am writing in 2021, and it feels great. Great to still be here, great that we are finally getting a handle on this crazy virus! Our world has been turned upside down, like riding the Tilt-A-Whirl as a kid at the town carnival in Vernon. We use to have so much fun until we reached freshmen year, and then things got a little hairy literally, no pun intended. The upper-class men would search us out to do nasty stuff, I guess a high school hazing, but we weren't joining a fraternity. One really nice thing they would do is come up from behind and rub Nair Hair remover (maybe you're too young to remember) in your hair; big clumps would fall out, kids would have to shave it all off. We got our biggest and baddest friends together and roamed everywhere in packs. That's where our farmer friends came in handy and were most valuable! Any jerk came up to us; they would get a thumping! Ah, The Good Ole Days!

It's hard to believe that Covid happened upon us only a year ago, it seems like years. The beauty of our species is that we adapt and adjust rather quickly. It did take a while for the mask necessity to take hold, but now with the new European and African strains upon us people are double and tripling up. I'm just doing what I've been doing for the last ten months, staying away from fellow humans as much as possible. The question had been asked if I'm taking the vaccine, damn straight I am! Hell, I avoided the flu shot for years and just started getting one two years ago; it didn't work for shit! I had two nasty bouts twice last



year, one at the beginning and one bookend at the end in December. Admittedly I am watching the early recipients as guinea pigs to see if there is a pattern of bad reactions! I'll keep you posted; I'll take one for the team!

The thing I am watching is how "well they say" the economy seems to be going. No one is talking much about the unemployment rate, and the stock market is hitting all-time highs. The deficit increased 39% over the last four years, most of it in the last year. Interest rates are at the lowest they have been in years, home mortgages are almost free, 2%, how low can we go. We can forget about putting our money in the bank; the interest rates are close to zero, no incentive to save! Time to be very cautious. That's enough of me up on my soapbox.

My dad use to say that there is just as much money to be made in a bad economy as a good economy. You just have to figure it out. I give so much credit to those still rolling the dice and rolling with the punches during these times. My friend Josh Feldman, who had Lazy Leopard and Noble on Bank, has opened No-

ble Smokehouse in Mystic at his old Rice, Spice, and Noodles location. He and his chef, Chris, are serving up some tasty Q. We went over last week and enjoyed ourselves and Josh's warm hospitality. He did a really nice makeover; he has the eye and ability to create great concepts. They acquired a Myron Mixon Wood Fired Wood Smoker, and it's working magic. We had the Poblano Corn Chowder to start, very tasty. Then we dived into the Pulled Pork, Ribs, Chicken, and Sausage; all basked in the sauna out back for hours. The sides we had were Corn Bread, Baked Sweet Potato and Cole Slaw, all perfectly prepared. LaKisha had the Fried Catfish Po Boy which was redolent of NOLA. The clincher was the Root Beer and other flavors of Hosmer Soda company based in Willimantic. I served Hosmer Soda back in 2001 at Daddy Jack's up in Bozrah, on tap! They use spring water right from their property, natural cane sugar, and natural flavorings. Check them out, really nice people and they

have a store open to the public, tell them I said hi. Noble is positioned for spring and summertime when I think we will see much tourism to their area, the old Cabin Fever!

We revisited Jasmine Thai quite a few times over the last few weeks. We go in for lunch (clean, spread out nicely) and usually order the Shrimp Tempura Bento Box, which comes with a tasty Miso Soup. The other day we changed it up and ordered the Vegetable Coconut Soup. I'm hooked. We also ordered the Vegetable Mango Curry, out of sight. I've also had the Pad Thai, and I'm going to try to make it at home. I just found out Jasmine Thai's owners, Marc and Noi have just opened the Cinnamon Grill a few weeks ago in the old Gaspar's location a few doors down. It's a Sri Lankan concept that is a new concept to the 06320. I wanted to check them out but might not make the deadline due to the big storm coming tomorrow, February 1st. Mark told me he partnered with two chefs from NYC and I can't wait to work my way

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through the menu, it looks amazing! They have Nasi Goreng, a curried rice dish that I haven't had since my Dallas days at the Fairmont. Boonma a great chef who was from Thailand would make us lunch and served this often! My mouth is watering. They have take-out and do delivery. The menu is on-line.

One more hot spot is Napolitano's Pizza on Bank St., a few doors down from Daddy Jack's. They opened a few years ago, sorry to say I hadn't been down since then, I had all the pizza I could eat at Daddy Jack's. I was walking by the other day, they had a special posted, 2 slices and a soda for \$5.99. That caught my attention and it was pizza for breakfast time. I ordered a slice of Cheese and Pepperoni and grabbed a cold Root Beer. (I was hoping for a Dr. Pepper). The slices were a good size and hot. I ate one and took one for the road. Very tasty w/ a good crust. Victor the owner came out and was real friendly. We talked about all the improvements he has made over the years, the spot looked really nice and has a great feel! He makes the trek to Restaurant Depot weekly like we do, they carry the highest quality goods so that scored high in my book! They

do a lot of take out and deliveries, Victor is holding his own. This winter is slower than normal years but I think if we can hold on until summer, things should improve greatly. Bravo to these entrepreneurs who have the guts to lay it all on the line, especially during these hardest of times! God Bless, Stay Healthy, We Need You Around! Jack

In Just Under The Wire: I stopped in at the Cinnamon Grill for a quick lunch. I wanted to test it out to put something in this article. The decor has been newly remodeled, it looks fantastic. The initial space was nice but now it pops. The wood work shines and the booth along the wall is recovered in a beautiful gold covering. The bar shines like when it was built a few years ago and looks like new. I ordered quick to get this article in under the deadline as I promised Dave. I wanted to try the Nasi Gurung which I haven't had in 30 years, it was tasty and served with a fried egg on top. The star of the show though was the Blackened Pork Curry served with Saf-ron Rice, it was so tasty! I really like when I order a dish and I can't begin to tell what's in it. The menu

mentions Sri Lankan spices, I need to go to the drawing board on this one. One herb I think that is in the dish, Lemon Grass, I'll get to the bottom of it and let you know. Time To Submitt, 2:00.

Ciao For Now!
Jack

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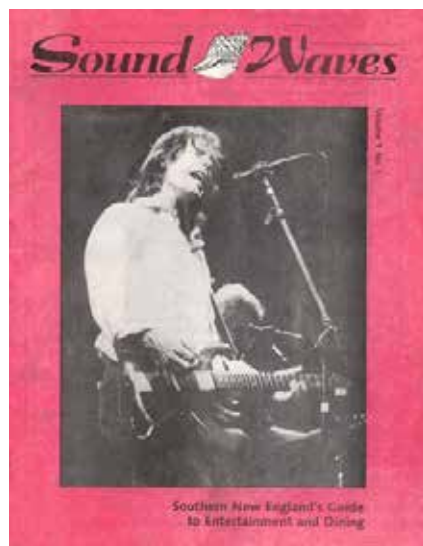
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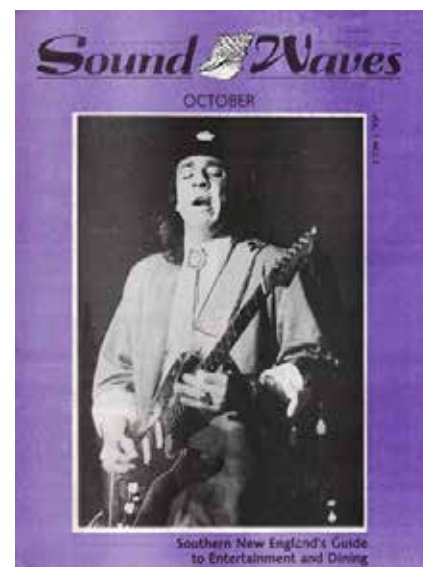
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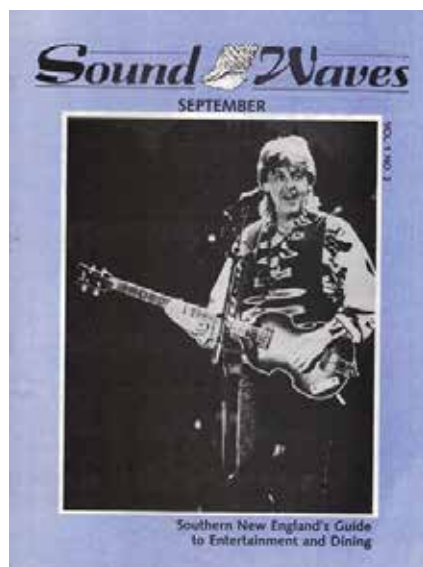
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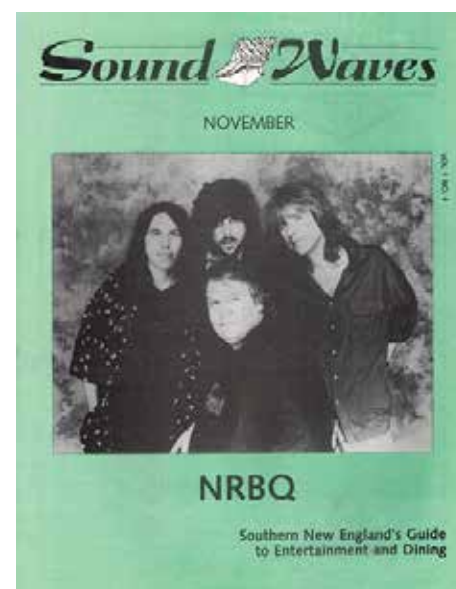
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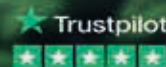


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