

Soun **Magazin**

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An
Interview
with

ERIN HARPE

Waves

Plus

- Joyann Parker
- Lake Street Dive
- Aris Paul Band
- Shakin' Woods
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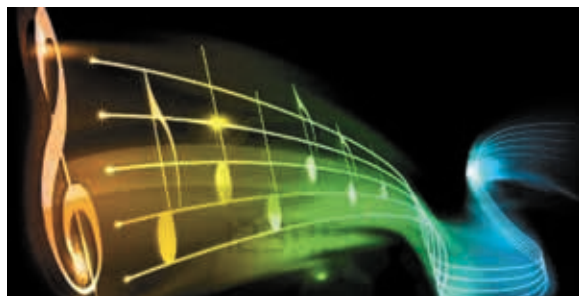
2nd vaccine shot done! Now I wait 2 weeks before I'll feel more comfortable to get out more. This is what most Americans are thinking. People are itching to get out and see others and listen to live music. The venues are starting to book the bands and everyone is excited to be able and get out! There are still some restrictions, but the summer is looking bright. Just remember to still follow the rules and stay safe, we are not out of the woods yet.

Because many advertisers are feeling more confident about this coming summer, Sound Waves Magazine might finally be back to printing the issue! It's been a tough year. We have only been on-line because we couldn't afford to pay the printer and make a living. Even though we do average over 20,000 on-line viewers a month, I do prefer holding the magazine and reading it. Hopefully May will be the printing.

Also this summer we might finally celebrate 30 years of publication! We will call it 30+1. We had a lot planned for last summer, but we all know how that went.

Stay Safe & Peace

David Pottie
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MUSIC NOTES

“Finally, A New Rolling Stones Album, (Sort of)”

By Mark T. Gould

For a band that’s certainly toyed with us enough, this may be the ultimate tease.

It’s been 14 years since the release of the Rolling Stones’ last studio album, “A Bigger Bang,” their 63rd album, if you count the innumerable live releases and maddeningly repackaged hits collections that seem to pop up before and after every tour.

The questions fans keep asking, though, is when are we getting a real new Stones album?

That inquiry is compounded by the Greatest Rock ‘n’ Roll Band In The World continuing to flaunt the rumor mill with a smorgasbord of contemporaneous videos from the studio posted on social media, occasional single releases, and from plumbing and pumping their seemingly vast vault of material from the myriad album sessions of yesteryear.

Since “The Big Bang” in ‘05, fans have been subjected to such varied fare as “Shine A Light,” documenting a live show at New York’s famed Beacon Theatre (and directed by none

other than Martin Scorsese); the 40th Anniversary re-release of “Get Your Ya-Yas Out,” the live album that pretty much caught them at the height of their powers in the late Sixties; “Some Girls Live in Texas ’78,” documenting their all-too-brief “punk tour,” and live releases from the L.A. Forum, Tokyo Dome, Leeds, Buenos Aires, the Fonda Theatre, San Jose, Brussels.... well, you get the idea.

Add to that the single releases of



“Living in A Ghost Town,” and “Criss Cross” and “Scarlet” from their “Goats Head Soup” re-release, and you can’t really argue that there hasn’t been much Stones product in the market.

The problem, though, is that other than “Ghost Town,” there’s been little that’s new, as in really new, not regurgitated live gems and un-



released tracks recorded at the time of their classic (all right, sometimes less than classic) studio albums.

Now, thanks to some enterprising soul who must be close to the band’s unreleased material in the can, that may have changed.

While it’s not really new, it’s sort of is.

From what’s being termed as a “Japanese fan club release,” fans now have access to a new, three-disc release of 50 previously unreleased

Rolling Stones songs, formerly and somewhat stiffly titled “Fully Finished Studio Outtakes,” released on something called “Black Frisco Records.”

The package, mysteriously dropped without any fanfare or publicity in March, includes high quality studio recordings from the 1960s with band founder member Brian Jones, through the 70s with guitarist Mick Taylor, right up to the current era with Ronnie Wood.

While, at least as of this writing, there’s been no official word from the band about the source or reason for the release, it serves, if listened to a certain way, as a new Stones record, and, ironically for what is commonly termed a bootleg, it has similar studio-level quality sound, and arguably better songs, than any of their albums since

1978’s “Some Girls.”

The crown jewel of the release is the long-rumored, but never-uncovered, demo of “It’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll,” featuring contributions by soon-to-be-Stone Ronnie Wood and none other than David Bowie, both of which were erased from

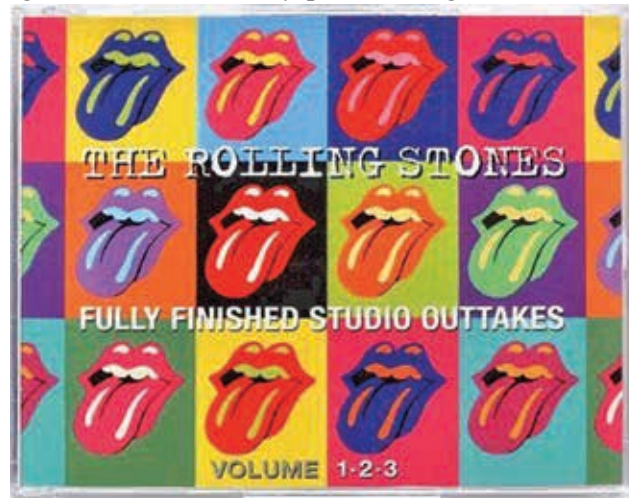
the final, album-titled track released in 1974.

With the songs spanned the Stones’ lengthy career, from 1966’s “Curtis Meets Smokey,” to two studio jam sessions from 2002, and with, arguably only a handful of clunkers, including the totally-disposable “I Can’t See No One Else,” from 1985-hardly a highlight time in the band’s career-; “Keep It Cool,” basically a jam vamp from 1982, and the meandering “Sanctuary,” from

1994, it’s still a grab bag of treats for devoted fans.

Among the highlights:

*** “You Win Again,” from 1977, a cover of the Hank Williams’ classic, which uber Stones fans have heard sung and performed solo by Keith Richards on a previous boot collection. Here, the lead vocal on the weeper is taken by Mick, with a tasty pedal steel guitar solo from



Ronnie Wood, making it sound much like “Faraway Eyes” from “Some Girls.”

*** “Covered in Bruises,” from 1981, sung by Woody, with Mick on the harmony vocals behind him.

*** “Too Many Cooks,” a 1973 track, far better to my ear than most of the “Goats Head Soup” album of that time, with a tremendous horn section, led, presumably, by the incomparable Bobby Keys.

*** “Low Down,” from 1997, also released as a bonus track, solo, by Mick Jagger in 1973; “Flip The Switch,” from 1998; and “Too Tight,” from 1998, alternate takes of tracks previously released on “Bridges to Babylon,” with lead vocals by the one-and-only Keef.

Long-time Stones aficionados like me will also enjoy trying to figure out just who is playing what on the tracks.

On many of them, particularly those from the 80s and 90s, it sounds to my ears like Keith’s buddy and fellow Wino Steve Jordan, rather than “Cholly” Watts, is on the drums.

In other places, it remains a joy to hear Keith, “The Human Riff,” pound out the rhythm as, depending on the year, Jones, Taylor or Wood

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weaves the lead guitar around him.

Likewise, it's a trip to hear the changes in Mick's vocals over the years, ranging from the earnestness in the 60s, to the "bluesiness" of the early 70s, to the "hurry it up so I can get out of here" playful, self-mocking if you will, tone and inflection from the late 80s and 90s.

God only knows if we will ever get to hear another really new Rolling Stones studio album, with really new songs, in our lifetime. But, in the meantime, this gem will suffice.

After all, It's only rock 'n' roll, and as long as the Rolling Stones keep playing it, I like it.



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All The World's a Stage

"Twist My Arm"

By Sue Menhart

Spring has sprung and so have I. There's a spring in my step, as it were. Could be my new sneakers, or, it could be, everything.

At an outdoor family gathering the other day I was asked to sing a song, any song. "But why?" I said. "Because!" they said. "But what's the point?" I said. "Because you can!" they said. Oh twist my arm. Surprisingly, jubilation ensued. Sheer joy resulted. I had forgotten the feeling.

It got me thinking about the "Framing Britney Spears" documentary from the New York Times. In some weird conservatorship battle with her father where she's unable to have control over her own life, the movie reflects on Britney's career and how she has wound up in this situation. My favorite segment is a 2020 interview from the "As NOT Seen on TV" podcast with her brother Bryan Spears. Bryan Spears says, "The women in this family are very, very strong-minded, and have their own opinion, and they wanna do what they wanna do and as much as I admire that as a guy, being, like one of two guys in this entire family, it kinda sucks man." So the podcast interviewer, in a bit of shock,



repeats for clarity: "They're strong-minded. They want to do what they want to do. Kinda constitutional, you know?"

Yeah, it's our right to do what we want. I got so mad at these comments my face turned into Jennifer Lawrence's at the end of "Hunger Games: Catching Fire" when she's lying on the hospital bed and Gale tells her that there is no more District 12. The camera focuses on her face and the pent-up anger in her eyes; her resolve to do something about it. That's sorta like my face after I saw the clip.

Britney Spears can't do what she wants, locked away in some room, but I sure can.

I'm sure you've heard that for most musicians, performing live is where

we get our air. Well, I'm done suffocating. I'm done with the frown upside down. After all the loss of life, heartbreak and suffering in the past year, we simply have to go on, don't we? (If we're not locked in a room.)

I sure do hope Britney escapes her stronghold because of her strong-mindedness. And I for one look forward to breathing again musically, more honestly, more fervently, with more purpose and love... It is my constitutional right!

SEE YOU SOON !

Peruse more cautionary tales, rants and raves over on my blog "Menhart Musings" at

www.suemenhart.wordpress.com.

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LOCAL BEAT

“Fem-Rap Songs and Videos: Sexism or Female Liberation?”

By Andrew Kerbs

2020 has certainly been the year of the female rap artist as evidenced by a variety of singers. Megan the Stallion has sported black stockings, a hood and an undulating torso in her videos while Saweetie dares her viewers to “tap” her booty with suggestive words written on her short-shorts. Cardi, Saweetie and Stallion are the Fem-Rap Squad of the 2020s in ways that are both empowering while also discriminately stereotypical. Compared to more conservative singers H.E.R, Saweetie and Stallion flaunt their buttocks on videos from their most recent albums. The question that remains is whether such explicit songs and videos are liberating to women or oppressive by sexually objectifying their bodies.

First and foremost, the Squad’s brand of hyper-sexual hip-hop is not new and we must give credit to them for continuing their push for the liberation of female sexual expression. Feminist musicians with a sexual flare reigned supreme in the 1990s when Lil Kim sang “Ladies Night.” Yet it started way back when Madonna performed “Like a Virgin” and Salt N Pepa rapped the lascivious hit “Push It.” Megan takes this ethos a step further by performing the controversial hit W.A.P. (Wet Ass Pussy) at the most recent Grammys. This audio-visual extravaganza culminated in the most in-your-face validation of female ejaculation by a female musician in history. Feminist R&B goes back even as far as Millie Jackson’s 1970s hit the “The Rap.” Thanks to these artists, women have been able to express visceral emotions few people would had thought possible



decades before.

Equality of women and men has as much to do with educating the public about female sexuality as it does about women’s right to sexual self-expression. On Megan Stallion’s hit “WAP,” she owns her God-given gift for sex and reproduction as she raps “Bring a bucket and a mop for this WAP hop on top . . . I wanna ride and do a Kegel while you’re inside.” Muscular contractions during a woman’s orgasms, for one, pull sperm from her vagina up to her uterus to fertilize her eggs. Conservative pundit Ben Shapiro wouldn’t know this as he admits he remained a virgin until marriage at around 30 years of age. Having had less sexual experience with fewer partners than most couples, it’s no surprise that he and his wife mistake normal female sexuality with disease, even if Shapiro’s wife is a doctor. Both of them equate female arousal in “WAP” with a medical disease like prolapse, infection or diarrhea when in fact females ejaculate just as often as men when properly aroused. Even if Shapiro has been respectably monogamous, hasn’t he ever watched pornography online to understand how the female genitals operate? Conservative critics can scold Stallion and Salt n Pepa for dancing and rapping about orgasms but at best such vice can serve as a springboard for more respectable information regarding

the anatomy of a woman’s body and her capacity for pleasures which are just as important for bearing children as men’s.

Can’t women echo the same sexuality as men without a double standard backlash no matter how vulgar? If men can brag about sexual conquests then women can too. Talk show host Chris Avalis reasons “This is (part) of what feminists fought for: to express themselves as human beings with every bit the same rights as men.” Avalis reports Cardi B. didn’t have a lot of political and social advantage but found ways to sing and strip, using the same sexual power & influence as male performers to support her family. Yet why does such ambition have to mean selling or even advertising one’s body: something most psychologists and the public know increases the risk of abuse by women at the hands of men?

However, the problem with Megan Stallion and similar fem-rappers is that their flagrant prostitution and coopting of sexism represents the very objectification they seek to rise above. The liberating dance moves that comprise their girl-power are largely meant for the male gaze which reduces them to sex objects. Exotic dancers may use their beauty and sex drive to empower themselves but such a class of workers face misogyny and abuse by men at the same time which cancels out any benefit of expressing their sexuality on an equal pedestal with men. Megan wisely speaks up for the violence against and hypersexualization of black women yet she hypocritically sexualizes herself on video. Saweetie’s “Tap In” has a great catchy beat and rap but succumbs to the same hyperfocus on

buttocks as Offspring’s “Pretty Fly” and the fact that she now gets to use the N and B words just as often as her male counterparts doesn’t make the references any less degrading to black

women. Meg Stallion’s lyrics like “Beat it up N-word . . . extra large and hard” or “Put this P-word in your face” play into the same narcissistic misogynistic and phallogocentric cliches that misogynist male rappers have exploited for decades. This includes NWA, whom rock critic Robert Christgau once criticized for gross indecency of rapping about little else but “touching a woman nowhere but between her legs.” “Its not about women being treated as independent full rounded human beings” says Teen Vogue. Even men are victims of discrimination on “Sugar Baby” and “Don’t Stop” in which Stallion is in control as she pressures her boyfriend to “measure up” physically: “I don’t even say what’s up, I just tell im what I want.” Furthermore, she’s a “Freaky Girl” who gets it from her mama. Is this kind of parental role modeling a good thing for women? Is it any wonder that men suffer phallogocentric performance anxiety? Only the 1st song on Meg’s new album doesn’t concern sex (but violence) and beating a genre to death can desensitize the listener & numb the performer, cheapening the sexual experience for both.

Whether this kind of rap star exhibitionism is empowering bulwark against policing of women’s bodies or (as Harvard Professor Goldstein puts it) a dehumanizing “empowerment they have no say in” is an ongoing schism whose resolution remains to be seen.



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By Bill Harriman

Erin Harpe has a timeless quality about her. Maybe it is her signature look with a flower in her hair and the fishnet stockings, a look that would have worked in any decade over the past century. Or maybe it is her virtuoso finger picking guitar style or the way she can play the slide guitar like some of the recent greats such as Bonnie Raitt or Rory Block. Or maybe it is her beautiful singing voice, especially when she is covering the old-time blues music of Memphis Minnie or Sippie Wallace with a confidence and sass that might remind you of Maria Muldaur. Her style is both endearing and enduring.

A perfect example of this is her new CD called “Meet in the Middle.” This new record was recorded in June 2020 in Erin’s 3rd floor apartment in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts. The record features Erin on vocals, acoustic guitar, kazoo, and foot percussion along with her husband, Jim Countryman on ukulele bass and backing vocals. The 10 song CD is a mix of original music, traditionals, and old-time covers. It is a masterclass in country blues. No less than an authority than Living Blues Magazine raved about this CD and in particular Erin’s guitar playing and singing, writing “Few, if any, can do both as well as Harpe, and even fewer can also write such swinging songs.”

Erin grew up in a musical family from Greenbelt, Maryland, before settling in the Boston area. She has been a mainstay in the vibrant southern New England blues scene for over a decade now. When she is not playing the country blues duo with Jim, she fronts the Delta Singers, a fun and funky danceable blues band. Erin’s previous three records, “Love Whip Blues,” “Big Road,” and “The Christmas Swing” were all with the Delta Singers. There is also Lovewhip, an “alter ego” band that Erin formed with Jim that she will describe in this interview which took place by phone on Monday, February 22nd.

BH – Congratulations on your new record.

EH - “Thank you. I’m glad I was able to make use of the pandemic time.”

BH – Does the title of your new record, “Meet Me in The Middle,” refer to how polarized this country is politically?

EH - “Well it didn’t start out that way. It was just an idea that I had that actually came from a guitar part where it was kind of going up and down and it just reminded me opposites, but I guess it ended up feeling like a song about people coming back together with their differences, politically and everything but also physically because we’ve been apart and not able to meet anybody anywhere. But the first line of that song (“you say up I say down, you say flat I say round) it was the first lines I thought of with these opposites was referring to flat earthers. It’s unbelievable that people could believe that.

BH – The was a stunning review you got in Living Blues. I just might be the most positive review I’ve ever read.

EH - “Me too. I was almost embarrassed by how good it was. But that was really fun to read. I am friends with the writer. He gave me one other review a few years back and it wasn’t as good, but I do know that he’s a specific blues aficionado of the acoustic Piedmont Blues and that’s my genre with my acoustic stuff.”

BH – I sure most of those writers are friends with various blues musicians.

EH - “He just wrote a book with Phil Wiggins and I grew up listening to Phil Wiggins play. He was in the scene with my dad. He just wrote a book that I get mentioned in! So that was exciting, like you said, Living Blues! I was just very surprised the first time I got into Living Blues and didn’t know if I ever would again. We also got written up in Mojo Magazine which is huge. That was a very small little review but hey, three out of four stars. And then we got a really nice one from Blues Matters, also in the U.K. We were supposed to go to the U.K. in September but that got moved

off until next spring.”

BH – You mentioned your father. How much of an influence was he on the music you play?

EH – I would say he’s my biggest influence, especially for this new album because he plays country blues guitar and he taught me how to play it. He gave me this love for finger style blues and all these old records from the 1920’s and 1930’s like Memphis Minnie, Tommy Johnson, and all these originators of the blues. I also went around and watched his group called Franklin Harpe and Usilton. They would play at folk festivals and blues festivals and Bar-B-Q’s, and house parties. I remember house parties at John Cephas’ home. Every year they had one on New Year’s. So yeah, he was a big part of why I started playing guitar and why I play this finger style that I do.”

BH – What about your husband Jim Countryman who made this record with you. Did the two of you meet through music?

EH – We met very strangely, and it wasn’t through music. He had roommates who were friends of mine. One night after hanging out with them I ended up on sleeping on his couch. I met him the next morning when he asked me to write down my number on the inside of a matchbook. He called me up the next day. We started hanging out and I played some guitar for him. He’s a bass player and we started playing around and ended up starting our band Lovewhip which is an electro-funk world music rock dance band.”

BH – Is it frustrating to have this great new record and not be able to go out on tour to support it?

EH – “It is. It would be great to do an acoustic tour right now especially going outside the U.S. and spreading the word farther. The biggest thing that suffers to me is the record sales. We do sell stuff on our web store but it’s at concerts where we get our biggest sales for selling hard copy CD’s. Especially if you toured through last time with a different CD and you come back and you got the new CD everybody wants to get it. We definitely had a lot of fans buying them online, but we used to play so many gigs, like a hundred and fifty gigs a year or more. Even if you sold only one or two at each show it’s going to be better.”

BH – Let’s talk about some of the songs on the new record. One name I’ve never heard of before is Geeshie Wiley who wrote “Pick Poor Robin Clean” which is also a song that was included on your “Love Whip Blues” album with the Delta Swingers. Tell me about her and that song in particular.

EH – “I actually learned that song from my dad. Like I said before, he taught me a lot of these old blues songs. He’s just such a great finger style picker that a lot of my style is based around his playing. I went back and listened to my dad’s record collection which has a lot of great songs in it. That song I originally heard on a compilation album called ‘Country Girls.’ She had two recording sessions in the early forties, but she was playing in the twenties and thirties. She was not just a blues singer like most of the famous blues women you know, she was a fantastic guitar player too. She went into the studio and did that song as a duet with another woman named Elvie Thomas. They were a duo, Geeshie Wiley and Elvie Thomas. There’s not a lot known about their lives. My friend Valerie Turner just wrote an article for Acoustic Guitar Magazine and she wrote all about these unsung women of the acoustic blues guitar. So back in the 1920’s and 30’s, not a lot of women played the guitar and actually a lot of these women who did play weren’t as well-known because they had families and they didn’t even get out to start playing until they were a little bit older. They only did a couple of recording sessions and nobody ever wrote about them, so people don’t necessarily know what else they did in their lives. So Geeshie Wiley was one of those. I actually did a DVD about women of the country blues and it’s got some other of the littler known players on it. Memphis Minnie is the one who everybody knows and she’s my favorite. She’s got so many

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songs to choose from, she did over two hundred songs that she wrote and recorded.”

BH – I liked your original song “All Night Long,” especially the video you and Jim made.

EH – “We recorded that right up the street in Franklin Park in Boston.”

BH – Tell me about the recent “Christmas Swing” record and the “Jingle Bells” video.

EH – “I’ve been getting into producing my own stuff and I set up a recording studio in my house here in Jamaica Plains. So that was the impetus for the Christmas album. It was early summer, and I just thought I’d like to do a Christmas album. I don’t like Christmas music that much but there was this mixed tape that was made when I was a little kid by one of my dad’s friends and it had some fantastic old blues songs on it that were Christmas songs. So, I was inspired by that. I was researching songs and I was playing around with writing some songs and it started to come together really quickly so I did the whole album. I did the whole album in my studio and then we did the drums down in my basement. It was me scratching that producer itch.”

BH – It’s a great title because it reminds listeners of the Delta Swingers.

EH – “It’s a re-write of our song ‘The Delta Swing’ which is kind of our theme song. It was fun and I thought it was a great title.”

BH – When touring starts again do you want to push the new record or go out with the Delta Swingers?

EH – “It’s hard to make plans right now because we don’t really know what’s happening. We’re looking at not getting vaccinated for quite a while because we’re not in the group that is going to go first. And our drummer actually got Covid, but he has recovered. I don’t know what he’s thinking about getting out there. But we don’t actually currently have anywhere to rehearse because we used to rehearse in our basement and now everybody in our building is home so we can’t do those daytime rehearsals anymore. But we’ll figure something out for that. However, I heard that there are some rehearsal studios that are opening back up though. But here’s the thing, we’re very well-rehearsed with the duo right now and we would love to go out and do a duo tour or some gigs but we were supposed to do some really great shows last year with the Delta Swingers, so I am hoping some of them are re-booked.”

BH – The Delta Swingers really captures the southern New England blues sound.

EH – “Well they did call us Charles River Delta Blues even though I’m from Maryland. Yeah, I feel like there actually is a bit of a community and we do feel part of it. We talked about collaborating with some of the musicians in the area. Anthony Geraci was supposed to do something with me. Hopefully, we’ll be able to do that once things open up a little bit and people feel safer.”

BH – Will the next CD be a continuation of “Meet Me in The Middle?”

EH – “That was the first idea I had but we keep having other ideas. Right now, I’m in the middle of working on a totally different project. Next thing I’m going to do is write some more songs and put together another acoustic blues album. I should always be doing acoustic blues albums I guess at this point in thinking because it was so easy to do it right here in my studio. And we’ve had a lot of time at home! I also recently did an interview with John Guregian at WMUL up in Lowell. He shared with me a recording I did on his show in 2008 and it’s just me playing my guitar solo acoustic. It’s a great recording and Jim wants to put it out. So, I think it’s going to be the next thing that we put out. It will be sooner than you think, and it will be that, a live recording. It will have some of the same songs people heard from me. It’s just like an early version of what I sounded like when I was first starting out. And then the next project that people will be able to check out is I’m launching an online music school called ‘Country Blues Academy.’ It’s going to be lessons on finger style guitar.”

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BH – Tell me more about that?

EH - “I’m leaving it open that I might be teaching some other things beyond guitar at some point like vocals and things like that. On my website there will be a way to sign up for my new mailing list for ‘Country Blues Academy.’”

Erin’s website is www.erinharpe.com. Besides information about the Country Blues Academy, there is also a store where you can purchase her CDs, including signed copies of “Meet in the Middle,” vinyl, face-masks, kazoos, t-shirts, and all other kinds of cool stuff.

Just recently it was announced that Erin and Jim have been invited to Portugal to play in their first international festival called the Vila do Conde Blues Festival. Then on May 15th they are scheduled to play that other international hotspot called Northampton, Massachusetts where they are booked with the Adam Ezra Group at the Iron Horse. We’re all itching to hear some live music, and musicians like Erin Harpe and Jim Countryman are certainly itching to play in front of a live audience.

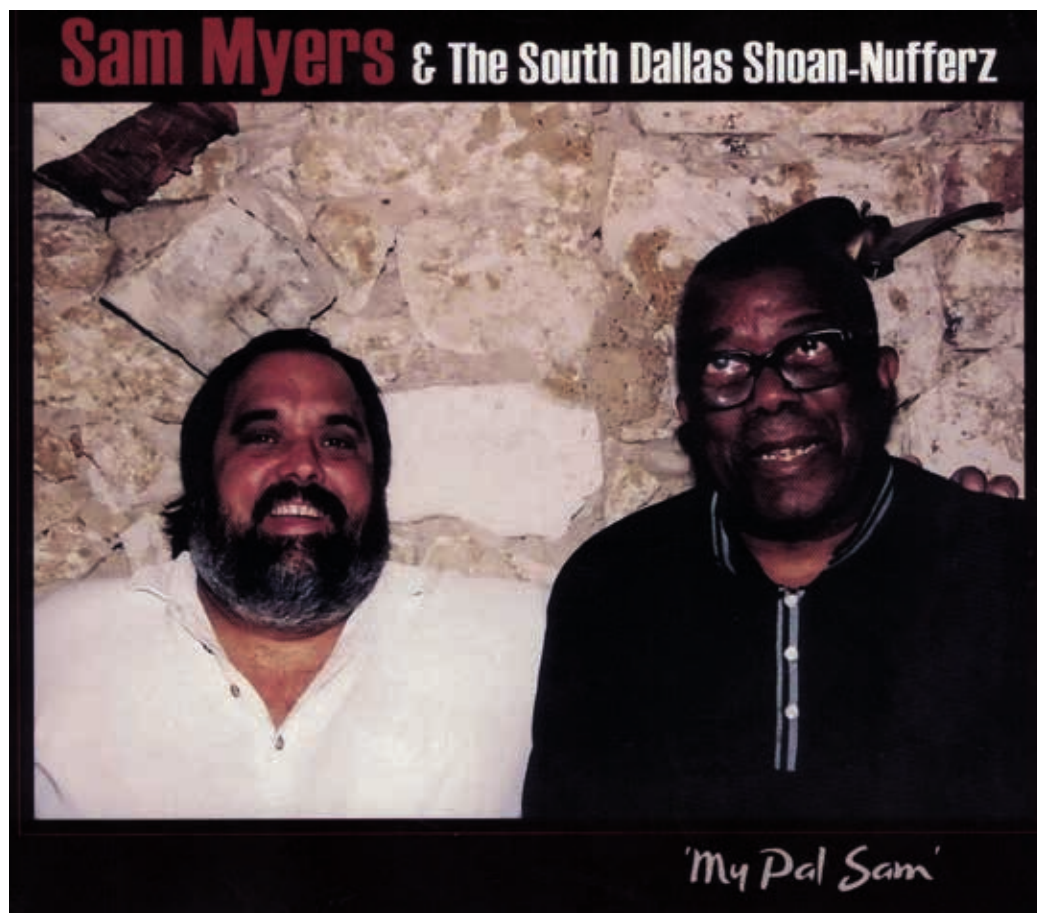
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Lake Street Dive "Obviously" Nonesuch Records

Lake Street Dive is well known here in the Northeast. After forming at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston close to 20 years ago, they've been frequent performers here and all over the country.

Their style is a kind of blend between jazz, pop, funk and soul. The band is chock full of talent, and they're able to show it off while remaining tasteful and catchy. Lake Street Dive recently released a new album entitled "Obviously" and it's great fun.

An upbeat feel permeates the music on here and they showcase how tight they've become as musicians. The songs run the gamut from soulful and lively to jazzy. They also bring it down to a lighter pace with ballads and more pensive works.

The album opens up with "Hypotheticals", a pop-funk tune with a sharp rhythm and strong vocals from their talented front woman Rachael Price. It's a lighthearted tune with a great feel and lets you know just what kind of album this is going to be. The band swings the groove while remaining tight and funky.

The swagger continues on the next track, "Hush Money". Featuring a steady beat and a lot of attitude, they sound confident and a bit brash. I couldn't help but think of Chrissie Hynde of The Pretenders when listening to Price's tone and timber.

A lot of the album has a soul feel as exemplified by the next track "Same Old News", a duet featuring keyboardist

and singer Akie Bermiss. They demonstrate their mastery of interesting chord progressions and a bit of that jazz flair that is a big part of their foundation.

One of the highlights on here for me is "Nobody's Stopping You Now". It's a piano-driven ballad with a strong melody and great movement. The lyrics deal with overcoming challenges and stereotypes on a personal journey towards satisfaction.

The whole album has a generally light and upbeat feel. As we round the corner into spring and make plans for the summer, it's great to have Lake Street Dive giving us a strong taste of fun and dance to help usher in the good times. Check out "Obviously" for an obvious good time.

- Tom Matthew
Two Ton Music



Joyann Parker "Out Of The Dark" Hopeless Romantic

I couldn't say it any better than when fellow reviewer Jim Hynes said; "Serious singing, and simmering musician-ship... She's got the pipes that comes across honestly and passionately" I guess with that said I let the cat out of the bag by saying how impressed I am at one of the best talents that no one has heard of. Joyann Parker is a singer/songwriter/guitarist who hails from the Minnesota Twin Cities region with her roots in the church and a solid foundation of musical education. Joyann Parker found her authentic voice later in life and created her own blend of roots music that combines soul, R&B, gospel, jazz and traditional blues styles. It really surprises

me that her talent hasn't gotten her more exposure and radio play. With today's "Country" music more open minded in sub-genres than ever before I can easily see Parker's music embraced there with open arms. Parker's latest album "Out Of The Dark" is her second album. All songs written by Joyann Parker with several "assists" from her lead guitarist and husband Mark Lamoine. Her great music with her seasoned and talented backup band alone is worth the price of admission but when you really listen beyond the music to the lyrics and to what Parker is saying you become amazed at the raw depth of feelings and life's personal experiences Parker brings to the table and is willing to share. I also want to give kudos to Kevin Bowe who produced, engineered and mixed this album. It's his efforts that makes the music jump out of the speakers and come alive.

The 11 track album opens with a sultry and bluesy track "Gone So Long" which immediately has Parker saying to her listeners; "I'm here to entertain you and you're in for a treat!!" By the time you listen to her wailing blues voice on the second track "Carry On" you are absolutely hooked as I was. No sense beating around the bush, I am enamored with this lady's talent. Her rich and satiny smooth voice is perfect for the genre she represents and with the right representation I see her career really taking off. On "Predator" you'll find something different all together, a modern style rockin Cha-Cha style tune describing the smokey happy hour single bar scene which made me reminisce because Parker takes you where we've all been before. In "Dirty Rotten Guy" you find yourself in New Orleans where her band plays in Nau'Leans fashion and Parker's vocals reminiscent of the late great Aretha Franklin. On the track "Come On Baby" the music takes you to a different era, the 1950's American Bandstand and get ready to dance because you won't be able to sit still.

In "Fool For You" you'll find yourself in the court yard when the Jets and Sharks faced off in West Side Story ready for battle. That's how diverse Parker's music is and how she truly transports you. And the last track ends with the title song "Out Of The Dark" where Parker sings a deep and soulful blues ballad of an abused woman who takes stock in herself and comes out of the dark. You can feel the passion and hurt in Parker's voice as she bares all for her listeners to witness. Very emotional and very real. I give this album a very strong BUY recommendation.

"Out Of The Dark" debuts at #11 on the Billboard Charts, and #1 on the NACC Radio Charts. Now available at JoyannParker.com/Store

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb



Shakin' Woods "A Trilogy of Blues"

Out of the long shadow of the global pandemic there is emerging a flood of pent up creativity, perhaps a result of the freedom which this slow isolation has provided. One such example, being presented in the first two of a trilogy of EP's, comes to us from Rich Russman and his newly joined band, called Shakin' Woods. Russman had previously recorded as a solo artist, but felt the need to fill out his sound with more instruments, vocals, and undeniably, talent. The third EP has at this date also been recorded and awaits release.

First to be released was The Blues Groove Sessions #1, a four song set that came about when "we had been jamming together and it really clicked," says Russman; with guitar licks that draw on the iconic three Kings to the Allman Brothers, Shakin' Woods adds an element of funk with the bass play of George Belton. This is immediately heard in the first notes of track one, Like A Superman, accented by Paul Dudley's percussion. Russman provides lead vocals and guitar, breaking into a solo that adds to the sound while not distracting from the whole. Austin Day plays keyboards and guitar throughout the set of original songs. The third track, Cayman Review, ramps up the funky bass and adds some color with a fiery keyboard solo.

The second EP in the set opens with another Russman original, Enemy, followed by covers selected by his three bandmates. Austin Day provides vocals and slide guitar on I Believe I'll Dust My Broom; an unexpected track, chosen by drummer Dudley, is Fleetwood Mac's The Chain, performed here with

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a deep, dark, bluesy tone, bringing an immediate understanding of the song that pop music longs to convey. The second EP adds another element, Rob Paparozzi's harmonica, present on each track to skillfully fill out the sound, with flourishes of well-placed solos.

Throughout both EP's, the ability of this band to ramp up with rhythm and soul, setting off on original riffs anchored in the traditions of the revered bluesmen, is a pleasure to indulge in, heightened by the anticipation for Sessions #3 and the promises held therein. More info may be found at www.shakinwoods.com.

- Jon Persson



Aris Paul Band "Ghosts"

Red Caiman Media

From the Aris Paul Band website: "You'd be hard-pressed to find another band that embodies Pittsburgh Rock and Southside Blues like APB...Aris, Aaron, and Matt refer to what they do as "red-eyed, road rock" - and that's accurate. It's a culmination of fierce guitar, moving bass lines, and remarkably technical drumming that evoke bands of yesteryear while throwing in some jam-ish nuances. Their music has the gypsy soul of the Allman Bros., the blues swagger of Freddie King, the rowdy rock 'n' roll of the Stones, and the heavy metal roar of Hendrix and Sabbath. Spanning funk to country, hard rock to blues, APB puts on a rock show that has opened them up to the national spotlight. Influenced by blues, funk, soul, folk, alt. country, and hard rock, APB's music is hard to pin down".

Although the band describes itself as players of several musical genres, I find the primary overall category of the "Ghosts" album is southern rock. Very much get up and go with a great fit of excellent musicians especially Aris Paul's talented guitar playing. He

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always offers his listeners great leads with well placed notes that adds to the character of the music and one should also take note that Aris Paul wrote and arranged all his music and directs his band-mates how to interpreted and play it. Southern rockers will love it but all is not perfect.

The overall sound engineering quality is lacking and unfortunately this is prevalent throughout the album. The instruments have a slight muddy tone like a blanket placed over a speaker. As for the vocals, they fall flat on the listener's ear as well. Again, another sign of less than perfect sound engineering. When it comes to Aris Paul's singing voice, it's a perfect fit for the southern rock, heavy metal genre but it's constant, without variation, and drone-like. I found it not only took away from his music but after a while his vocals gave me a headache. Maybe adding a little reverb to his vocals, or maybe adding backup singers for another layer of depth and variety? The best suggestion I can offer is for Aris Paul and his band-mates go back to the studio and figure it out. This situation reminds me of when I reviewed a female vocalist from Canada who had a pitch perfect, angelic voice but couldn't get out of her own way. By the 3rd song you already knew what the rest of the album was going to sound like... I offered her the very same suggestions.

To my readers who are fans of southern rock, you will likely love this album. I will be the first to say that Aris Paul Band does provides excellent music played by excellent musicians. Just don't look under the hood. The Aris Paul Band album GHOSTS, available at ArisPaulBand.com

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb



Slowthai "TYRON"

Methods Records

Full of idiosyncrasies and hard-hit-

ting cuts and jabs, the latest album by slowthai only serves to reaffirm his place among the top of British hip-hop. Combining with some of the biggest names in rap and beyond, slowthai leaves no stone unturned by confronting cancel culture, childhood in Northamptonshire, and Britain's National Health Service.

Joining up with Skepta on the track "CANCELLED", slowthai responds to cancel culture. The controversial musician is no doubt familiar with the concept as his offensive comments at the NME awards and his notorious performance brandishing a fake severed head of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the Mercury Prize award ceremony have caused him to often be at the receiving end of criticism. As a part of grime royalty, Skepta asks "how you gonna cancel me?" before listing his accolades as if to boast that he is too big to be taken down. The track continues in traditional grime form with a quick beat that ebbs and flows around the chorus. Continuing is slowthai making jabs at award shows and those that have tried to cancel him. As one of the singles from the album, the song does not disappoint, bringing forward everything that made slowthai and Skepta's collaboration on "Inglorious" great.

Sounding like a feel-good anthem for a delusional man, "i tried" captures a sense of misunderstanding of one's own abilities along with feeling neglected and underestimated. Nevertheless, the song meanders through ups and down, hopes and downfalls, all while maintaining an optimistic feeling surrounded by an upbeat and infectious sound.

Now in the wake of the British government recommending a measly 1% pay rise for nurses and other members of the National Health Service, slowthai's "nhs" speaks to the underappreciated and overlooked value of the nation's health workers. Declaring "this one's for the NHS," slowthai targets the "Clap for Our Carers" movement in Britain as the embodiment of a long-held trend of taking health care workers for granted prior to the pandemic. The song's somber, reflective tone over a relaxed yet unremitting rhythm highlight the lyrics' focus on being drained but having to persist, mirroring the feelings of care workers during the pandemic.

James Blake joins on the following track about a man left to deal with heartache and to reflect on the relationship just ended. While slowthai's lyrics resonate and push the story of the song

along, it is Blake's soft but powerful vocals that bring the song to its emotional peak. The musicians' contemplation of a love lost provides an acceptance that he was not all that he could have been. The melodic nature of Blake's voice, combined with an outro sampling of Mariah Carey, make this one of the more mature tracks on slowthai's latest release.

Following up from the success of Nothing Great About Britain, slowthai's TYRON continues to make jabs at British culture and society while packing a smooth and entirely unique slowthai sound. It's no secret why slowthai stands out; his commentary and ability to conquer the grime sound while incorporating the likes of other genres makes him entirely his own.

- Nic Hall



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COOKING WITH THE BLUES

By Jack Chaplin

Spring Is Springing! It's always nice to see the new season come, but this year more than ever, it brings hope of good things ahead. We emerge from a kind of hibernation after the cold winter, it's always nice to see our neighbors across the fence and across the street, but this year it seems to have more meaning! I think this Covid has made hermits out of most of us. I have a friend that lives a few doors down from his parents and hasn't seen them in person for over a year. Now that sounds extreme, but some are taking it very seriously while others not so much. We've been pretty isolated, with a few exceptions. We went to my niece's wedding but were well distanced and passed on the indoor reception. I finally got my second shot the other day with no major reactions; it is miraculous how quickly they came up with the vaccine. I hope this finally gets a handle on and wipes out this terrible pandemic.

We like to get away for a few days in the winter and head south when the days are coldest, but this year we were later than usual and missed 50 degree days! We headed down to Ft. Lauderdale, and it was Spring Break's start. Back in 78, while I was in cooking school at Johnson and Wales, we had just got over the "Blizzard Of 78" which dumped over 5 feet of snow in 3 days. It had shut the city down for ten days, and we were isolated from the world. One day after the storm had cleared out, and when the mail resumed, my roommate Bobby Wasserman went to the mailbox. There was a large check for a grant he had applied for at the beginning of the school year. He offered to loan us \$300 apiece to take a trip to Lauderdale for a week. We thought we were the coolest. When we got on the plane, they gave us headphones



when the airlines gave away perks. We all tuned in to a station that was playing "Brick House," it was party time. Every time I hear that song, it reminds me of that trip.

I had opened my first restaurant w/ family friends from Ct. back in 82 in Coral Springs, which is inland about 30 min. from the coast. I had moved to Florida from San Francisco, where I had spent the last two years, and loved the weather out there, cool nights, and most days in the '70s. I took the red-eye flight to Florida and slept the whole way. When I exited the plane at 6:00 am the heat, and humid air hit me like a sledgehammer; I started work immediately. It was a Saturday, we all waited out in the dining room for customers; cars would pull in, they would see we were empty, and the cars would pull away. I was thinking, 'what have I gotten myself into.' We were one of the few finer dining restaurants in town; slowly, week by week, our business picked up, and before we knew it, we had lines out the door and around the building. We worked lunch and dinner, 18 hours a day, six days a week. I had no life, and I was only

in for 15% of the business and getting pocket money for wages. That summer back in 82 was the hottest I'd ever experienced, including the 18 years I spent in Texas. It was so humid that you would hang a towel outside, and it would never dry completely. Everything always smelled musty. The Palmetto Bugs were so big you could put a saddle on them! It didn't have the cool ocean breeze that blew closer to the coast. I stayed for about a year, and it was time for an exit; it was on to Atlanta. That's another story!

Back to our recent trip - it had been 40 years since I had been in Coral Springs, and we took a ride over; how it has changed! I didn't recognize any landmark, and I couldn't even find where the old Sample House was. It was crazy to take a walk back down memory lane, and just as Coral Springs had changed over the years, so had my life; what an incredible journey it has been! Back in Ft. Lauderdale, we had an awesome time; the beach, the sunshine, the restaurants, and the energy were just what we needed.

My friend George Z. has a place in Pompano, and he took us to a great Greek restaurant, Greek Islands Taverna. We met up at 5:30 pm, and the restaurant was already packed; they have over 200 seats. We were seated outside, which was perfect, and the food was awesome. It was so good that Lakisha and I went back a few nights later. We figured we'd go at 8:30 after things had died down, wrong! They still had a line out the door and around the corner. I never wait in line to eat, but for food this good, we made an exception. The line moved fast, and before we knew it, we were seated at the same table as before. I had asked the valet what his favorites were; he said we had to have the Broiled Shrimp and the Whole Grilled Snapper; I knew I wanted the Grilled Lamb Chops I had on the first visit. We ordered the Greek Salad to start, and the Shrimp, which came out split down the middle and broiled. Probably the tastiest Shrimp I've ever eaten. LaKisha figured out the critical ingredients: dijon mustard in a garlic, wine, and lemon butter sauce. It was

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so good I sucked on the shells to get all the flavor out and mopped the plate clean. Of course, I ordered the Grilled Lamb Chops, which I had on the previous visit, and LaKisha had the Snapper, a dining experience to remember. We had an after-dinner drink and dessert at the bar and ended up having a great conversation with George, the owner. In all my years in the business, I have never seen such a well-oiled machine, and the place was a beehive of activity. Very few times do you have your server handle your table from start to finish. Usually, it's a food runner dropping off your food, and then you see your waiter when it's time for the check. Our waiter, Spiro, brought us our bread, drinks, appetizers, entrees; he gave us the best service. Being in the restaurant business my whole life, I look for issues and areas to critique but here I was learning and witnessing perfection. No busboys out back on the cell phones or servers catching a smoke. It was nose to the grindstone as it should be. George, the

owner, kindly shared with us some of the stats for the night, over 1100 dinners; it went smooth as silk, like clockwork! If you're within 50 miles of The Greek Isle, I highly recommend visiting for lunch or dinner; they are open seven days a week, 11 am to 10 pm. Opa!

We just started a record label (w/ Jason Banta), JACK DADDY Records, and a "Jack Daddy Records YouTube channel in addition to our "Cooking With The Blues" and "Chaplin's Classics" channels. On the "JACK DADDY Records" channel, we have Sam Myers Album that we recorded over 20 years ago and just re-released the J.D. Hill Album recorded back in 2000. Before and during the Covid lockdown, Jason Banta and I have done numerous live recordings at the restaurant that will soon be released and available for purchase.

Happy Spring and not too many April Fools' jokes please, our nerves are shot! Here's to good health,

peace of mind, and good times ahead! Reach out and help those in need; the little things matter!

Be Nice and Pay It Forward, Jack

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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