

Sound Waves

Magazine

Volume 31
Issue 11
November 2021

An
Interview
with

MARBLE EYES

Plus

- Charlie Barath
- F&Blues Band
- Jennifer Porter
- Neil Berg
- Chris & Susan Mackay

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Dear Readers,

November! I don't know about you, but this year seemed to fly. Maybe because it was a good summer and we were able to gather again. But still, I am having a hard time retiring my shorts for the winter. Time to turn the heat on I guess. And turn the clocks back :(

Even though it's getting colder out, there are some great things happening. Check out this month's Sound Waves. I also want to remind you that this publication is free because of our advertisers. So when your out, make sure you told them you saw their ad here. We have been around now for 31 years! All because of your support. Thank You!

Enjoy your Thanksgiving. Donate if you can to the local food banks and help those in need. This time of year is when they need everyone's help the most.

Happy Thanksgiving

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Sound Waves

November 2021

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 11

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SOUND WAVES is a
monthly publication

Send all inquires,
editorial submissions &
subscription request to

**SOUND WAVES
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SOUND WAVES 3

MUSIC NOTES

“The Only Saint of The Jersey Shore”

By Mark T. Gould

I have seen rock ‘n’ roll memoirs future, and its name is Stevie Van Zandt. Or, Little Steven, or, er, Miami Steve. Or, Silvio, if you prefer.

Whatever you call him, his recently-released memoirs, “Unrequited Infatuations,” has reset the bar to a stratospheric level seldom, if ever, seen (read?) in a far too common, and often tedious, literary genre.

As most music fans and readers are aware, the penned recollections (i.e., memoirs) of those in the business total in the literal, pun intended, thousands.

Clearly, everyone has a story to tell, and an agent to sell it.

As such, many are mediocre, just as many are borderline good, and but a scant few are very good.

I know from where I read, because I have perused so many of them, the good, the bad, and well, the ugly.

And, take it from me, Van Zandt’s is, by leaps and bounds, the best one I have ever read.

If you are familiar with his career, you know the intensity, cleverness, and significance of his work. If you don’t, all you needed to hear are his Hall of Fame introduction of the Rascals, and his opening remarks to their subsequent stage show, “Once Upon a Dream,” to know how he thinks and acts.

And, if, after that, you still need more, here’s a bit of a primer:

To say that Van Zandt, who will be 72 this month, has had a fascinating and diverse life may be one of the least exaggerated observations of all time.

He was schooled in the Jersey Shore music scene, where, in 1965, he met his best friend, Bruce Springsteen. He co-founded Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, in addition to The Miami Horns, who got their name from Van Zandt’s nickname. He produced



the Jukes’ first three albums, and wrote a significant amount of their music, effectively creating the rhythm and blues sound that became an Asbury Jukes trademark.

Van Zandt then alternated between writing for the Jukes, and touring with Springsteen in the E Street Band, which he was asked to join after he was instrumental, pun intended again, in the recording of Springsteen’s masterwork, “Burn to Run,” arranging the horns on “Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out,” and helping create the signature guitar line in the title track, arguably Springsteen’s most famous song. Regrettably, he left E Street in 1984.



Being interested in politics, he released a series of solo albums that reflected, advocated, and critiqued America’s standing and involvement in the world. In 1985, he created the music-industry activist group “Artists United Against Apartheid,” as a musical counter to the Sun City resort in South Africa.

Forty-nine recording artists, including Springsteen, Miles Davis, U2, Bob Dylan, Pete Townshend, Joey Ramone, Tom Petty, Afrika Bambaataa and Run DMC, collaborated on a song called “Sun City,” in which they pledged to never perform at the resort.

In 1999, he rejoined the E Street Band, and began an acting career with one of the core roles in “The Sopranos,” playing mob consigliere and strip club owner Silvio Dante. Van Zandt had no formal acting experience, and the unusual casting choice was made by series creator David Chase, who had seen Van Zandt’s impassioned, yet uproarious, speech inducting The Rascals at the 1997 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremonies.

In 2011, he starred in, co-wrote, and was the executive producer for an English and Norwegian language series entitled “Lilyhammer.” Van Zandt recently appeared as singer Jerry Vale in the Martin Scorsese-produced gangster epic “The Irishman.”

Since 2002, he has hosted “Little Steven’s Underground Garage,” a weekly syndicated radio show that celebrates garage rock and similar rock subgenres from the 1950s to the present day. As of December 2006, the show was heard on over 200 US radio stations and in some international markets. Van Zandt is also the program director for two radio channels for the Sirius Satellite Radio network.

In 2007, he launched the non-profit “Rock and Roll Forever Foundation,” and its “Teach Rock” project, which creates K-12 national curriculum. “Teach Rock” includes interdisciplinary, arts-driven materials designed to keep students engaged and in school. The initiative features lesson plans covering topics in social studies, general music, language arts, media studies, and more while aligning with national and state education standards. The material is available at no cost to educators.

In 2013, he wrote and produced the Broadway production of “Once Upon a Dream,” a multimedia presentation that combines a concert by the original Rascals with video reminiscences of young actors playing the parts of the band members, along with a light show designed and produced by Philadelphia native Marc Brickman, who has done

lighting and production design for Paul McCartney, Pink Floyd, and Springsteen. The production later toured the United States.

Van Zandt riffs on all that, and more, in his remarkable book, relating it in equal parts of pure unadulterated genius, sagaciousness, creativity, poignancy, innovation, originality, and, oh yeah, laugh-out-loud hilarity.

Want some examples?

On the music of his youth in Middletown, New Jersey: "When you were a kid in the 60s, the right song completed you. Owing a great record wasn't optional. You had to have it."

On his Protestant upbringing: "(I) got baptized at nine or 10. That's how (we) did it, as opposed to Catholics, who baptize at birth. They don't take any chances.

On being a kid in Jersey: "(We rode) our bikes behind the mosquito man's truck, its thick chemical toxic pouring out the back. I have no idea why I'm still alive.

On seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan: "The Big Bang that gave birth to the Universe did not happen 10 million

CONTINUED PAGE 15



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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

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GRAMMA'S ATTIC REVUE

Chris & Susan MacKay "Jitterbug"

By Gramma

In a small city such as New London it is nice to see love come together in such a way that it involves a whole lifetime of community. Chris and Sue both grew up in this area Chris in Groton and Sue in Mystic. It seems that their love story has been fated since the beginning of time. Even though Chris did not really know Sue, she knew who he was as he was a big track star in high school. The night that they met Chris was out on a blind date that was not going so well. He got involved in a conversation with Sue and her sister Kathy. Sue could not be-



him to pose for a portrait for her. They gave that portrait to Chris's parents and now it hangs in Chris and Sue's home.

The love story goes on to include Chris's parents, their 50th wedding anniversary was approaching and somehow Chris decided that marrying Sue on his parent's special day would be a wonderful way to celebrate. One week before the special day was to happen, Chris asked Sue if she would like to get married that weekend. The rest is pretty much musical history.

Sue started to draw portraits when she was 3. Her artistic nature was inborn, and she has never stopped creating. You can see some of her



lieve that "Chris MacKay" was talking to her and later wrote about it in her diary. Let's fast forward 17 years later... The story goes on that Chris's brother persisted in talking to Chris about a girl that was playing in the that he was Playing drums for. That band was going to a concert together and had an extra ticket. Chris and Sue spent the whole night at that show conversing. Sue knew that she needed to figure out a way to see this amazing guy again, so she asked

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art on Exhibit now at the Garde Art Center. She does amazingly beautiful work and she also takes commissions. To find out more about her art you may email her at sasmac@conncoll.edu. Susan went on to start playing the piano at the age of 7. She also plays the accordion and joined her first band when she started playing with a local band called Ken Atkins and the Honky Tonk Kind. This band can still be seen today. Look

for them in your local concert calendar.

Chris was extremely influenced by his siblings as he was growing up. His oldest brother was into 60's music, the middle brother was an actor and very into 50's music and still to this day collects Jukeboxes. Chris wrote a song for his current band, The Toneshifters called Jitterbug for this brother. The 3rd brother down was a Black Sabbath, Grand Funk, Metal head and Chris's oldest sister was into mellow folk type of stuff and his youngest sister was into Punk. She is the one that brought him to Baba's. As you can see Chris had very eclectic exposure to the music scene. By the early 80's he was doing Roadie work with a local band by the name of New Johnny 5, you may have heard of them. The story goes that they kept losing their percussion player. By this time Chris knew all their songs so he offered to play with them. Dwight Baldwin was a local talent and helped Chris to learn what he would need to know to play percussion for the band. Chris's first unofficial gig with them was on a Cruise to Nowhere. The second Gig was at Toads Place. The New Johnny 5 gained some popularity when their song Push Comes to Shove got quite a bit of air-play on WPLR. Chris went on to be involved in several bands including Shackhounds, Freudian Slap, Groove



Junkie and KNV 55 Black, Paisley Jungle and Joy Buzzer. In 2009 Chris started jamming with some other musicians as their front man this was the band that came to be called Chris MacKay and the Toneshifters. Sue became a part of that band later that

year and they are still making beautiful music together.

In 2020, two weeks before the world as we know it would go into Covid-19 shutdown, Chris took his band to Memphis to the Sun Session Recording Studio and made their latest record. I have a copy of this recording and it is in my regular rotation of things that I listen to. It is a great record and has several amazing songs on it including that song

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Jitterbug that I spoke of earlier. It was when they were in Memphis that Chris decided to take his name of the title of their band and just be known as The Toneshifters. As many of you know this band is a local favorite and they play out often. You can find them on your local concert calendar. If you have not seen The Toneshifters you will be pleasantly surprised. They have a sound that is uniquely their own which they call "Swinginrockabluesabilly! This "word" completely describes their sound to the fullest. It is a fun band to watch and the Love that is between Chris and his beautiful wife Sue is clear to see as they play off each other on the stage.



If you would like to get ahold of Chris or Sue, you can reach them both on Facebook and they can also be reached at www.ToneShifters.com, or pinkybooking@gmail.com. I hope that you have all enjoyed getting to know this wonderful and talented couple. Until next month stay safe and stay healthy.

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20 - Sneekers, Groton, CT

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By Bill Harriman

The height of the pandemic was not a great time for musicians, venues, or anyone involved in the music business for that matter. The entertainment industry, especially live music, was shut down. Factor in social distancing and the unrelenting threat of actually coming down with the coronavirus and it's fair to assume that forming a new band in the middle of all this makes no sense and is a crazy idea. Crazier still is to be able to pull it off with spectacular results.

The band is Marble Eyes, the brainchild of Eric Gould who is best known as the vocalist and bass player for Pink Talking Fish. As Eric will explain in this interview, he got on a serious writing spree and was able to get together with like-minded musicians Mike Carter and Max Chase for some impromptu jam sessions.

Mike, who is the lead guitarist for The Indobox, has been part of the jam scene for some time now. Max, a brilliant young keyboardist, is best known for his work in Idlewild – A Celebration of the Allman Brothers Band, now has this new opportunity to showcase his prodigious talents. As things started to unfold the trio needed a drummer and they were able to recruit Adrian Tramontano, one of the best improvisational drummers in the country.

Adrian, who is best known for his work with The Breakfast and Kung Fu just happened to get a call from Eric at a time when he was looking for something to do. As he recently said, “none of the guys in my other bands wanted to get together and write songs or record or do anything. So, this is the only person that really wanted to get together and do things.” There's more to the story here. The musician most closely associated with Adrian is lead guitarist Tim Palmieri. Recently Tim was hired as the new guitar player for Lotus, an instrumental progressive jam band. Lotus is a band that is, to use a phrase Eric uses in this interview, an “established national.” Adrian was ready for something new, and Marble Eyes is it.

On October 21st Marble Eyes released their debut album called “Return to the Roses.” This is a generous 14 song set of original music and Marble Eyes has wasted no time getting out there and playing this new music up and down the east coast. A second album will undoubtedly be released next year. This is a two part interview with the loquacious, enthusiastic, and all around great guy Eric Gould.

BH – You've had a lot of success with Pink Talking Fish, but they're a cover band. Is one of the main reasons for the

formation of Marble Eyes is the opportunity to play original music?

EG - “Absolutely! You know it's so interesting because my start in professional music was with my first band, my first national touring act Particle, which was primarily original music. We did a few covers here and there but for the most part we played our originals. And then when I got into Pink Talking Fish, I took a departure from original music for a while because with Pink Talking Fish there was a lot of originality within the concept utilizing those song books. But there was also just that some original music creativity was still inside of me and it was for years I had some ideas that wanted to come out and life just kept getting in the way. I was man-

aging some other acts and I was devoting a lot of time to PTF which is extremely important to me. There were a few different times that I tried to get a group together or something on the original end and we all know how busy life can get, the rat race of life for whatever reasons whether it would be professional or personal, whatever it is. And

the pandemic allowed everything to stop and I think a lot of good was found in that stopped time that happened for a lot of people. As hard as it was during the shutdown and the pandemic, there was a lot that was found within ourselves. Everyone changed to a degree and some things were born. Some things were re-realized and original music, for me, was one of those things where there was finally a place to explore it. And once I popped the cork I realized how much of that original music energy was inside me. We all got super inspired. The original songs just started coming. The ideas just started coming out, it was amazing, absolutely amazing, and so inspiring. It felt so good during a time that was so challenging. So that's a long answer for you! We've been together a little over a year now and we're close to sixty songs that we've written together. That's pretty good over the course of a year. That's more than the average bear when it comes to this stuff. And a big part of it is inspiration within the formation of this and we've developed this sound. I was talking to my wife about it the other day, my wife and my mother-in-law who have sort of seen this because a lot of this happened in my front yard with a PA setup and we're all just doing this, six feet apart in the driveway. That was the birth of this band and how it all got going. Them and my kids, they were the only real audience to see this formation going on. It was really interesting and we were just talking about how there's something about the sound, maybe it's just within us ran-



domly. Maybe it's the product of the times. But there's this feel good energy that even in songs where the lyrics aren't feel good lyrics but there's this energy within the rock and roll that we have. There's something called 'the rock and roll for the soul.' It's just uplifting. There's a real uplifting sound that we have within here that just makes you straighten your posture and breathe deeply. That's what I get when I listen to this music, when it comes out of me. I think a big part of that cork popping per se does have to do with the fact that I took a break from cultivating original songs, at least for me personally I can't speak for the other guys. But a lot of it has to do with the connection, the times, and the moment. And that's where it's at."

"With a brand new band, we want to tour with intent. We want to make sure that we have shows that are meaningful and that matter around the art that we're producing"

BH - Tell me about how Max Chase and Mike Carter got involved.

EG - "How this started off was Mike, Max, and I did a couple of sessions together and then when I realized that there was something to this, we invited Adrian. He was there with us most of the time. So it was all four of us. I moved up to Portsmouth, New Hampshire a little over five years ago. And when I did I was coming from Massachusetts, not too far away. But I was looking around for likeminded musicians in the area and one of the only ones that I had had a history with was Mike Carter. His band, The Indobox, had supported Particle years back and they've also supported PTF. And we've just been a part of the Boston music scene together so we've just sort of known each other a little bit. So we touched base right when I first moved up there and got together and hung out a bit. And it was like 'yeah, let's just make some music.' It's a 'life got in the way thing' you know? Life was so busy. I've said this a lot. It took a pandemic for us to finally get together. We probably tried to get together over the course of those years many times and it just fell through for whatever reasons. When we were all shut down, it was a no-brainer for us to come by. Mike and Max had been playing together. They had been just jamming out for fun, some Grateful Dead tunes. Max was in another group, an Allman Brothers tribute band so they had a little fun. I think Mike invited Max when he formed the Mike Carter band. So they had played a little bit together. It was just 'come on over and let's just play some songs.' We were just talking about some cover songs and having some fun. We played a few tunes and when we did, the connection immediately felt like something, we knew there was a connection there. So we said 'does anyone have any original songs?' And the first song that we realized together was called 'Return to the Roses' and that's the title track of the album potentially because that was the song that made us realize wow, original music really works for us here. And so we put 'Return to the Roses' together and the entire song is harmonized vocally and there's two-part harmony on

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the verses with Mike and Max and there's three-part harmony on the choruses and the energy and the feel of the song, you know Mike came in with the form and the lyrics and the lyrical melody. And then we created that extra enhancement that feel that energy around it together. All of the sudden it was like 'man we have something very cool going on here.' What's happened is we brought certain original ideas to the table that we had in our back pockets to start off with that weren't realized with a band yet. And we did that. And that was the first handful of songs that had sort of been in our repertoire waiting to live somewhere. That was the first handful and we all put our stamp into it. And then from there we just got on a writing spree. The next thing you know I called the guys I'm like 'I have three new songs that just popped out of me, let's get this together.' So we just sent certain bare-bones demo, for me as a bass player it's about as bare-bones as it gets. The guys still make fun of me because it would just be on my acoustic bass and vocals and I would just have a scratch pad like that. I hear all this stuff in my head and also just know that there'll be some greatness that's going to come out of all the rest of them that I just put my trust in to. But you hear the demos on their own with just acoustic bass and vocals, raw is an understatement. It's pretty funny. So that is sort of what went on with us.

BH – It must be nice having Adrian in the band.

EG – “Adrian and I have a great friendship and we have a long relationship together. Adrian is part of a band called The Breakfast which I know you know about. And one of Particle's biggest landmarks was at the first Bonnaroo Festival. We had our regular stage slot and we rocked out during the daytime. And the guys who ran the cinema stage wanted to throw a morning show after the late night. They wanted Particle and we were totally ready to do that but we needed a PA. And The Breakfast happened to be there with a PA so they could set up in the campgrounds. So we connected with them and that was our first real connection. We all knew of each other but that was our first real connection. They loaned us their PA and it was awesome because it helped facilitate this really special set that a lot of people still hold dear in Bonnaroo history and in Particle history. Tim Palmieri sat in with us and it was great. And I've put together a lot of fun side acts. I had Adrian in them. I was managing Kung Fu for a little while too. So we've had a lot of great experiences together. And we've developed a great friendship and respect with each other. So I had thought about my original music through the years, even during the time I was managing Kung Fu, I had said to Adrian 'hey, if I can ever get some of my songs together I would love for you to play on it.' It had been a conversation that we had had before. So once Max, Mike, and I had a couple of sessions and knew there was something there with their blessing I gave Adrian a call. It was kind of interesting. He was on a down streak during the pandemic thinking maybe he shouldn't bother with music because we're all shut down anyway. It was at that time when I was giving him a call saying 'hey dude I got something for you. Come on out here and play with these guys. I think I'm actually finally getting some original music together.' It was ironic, the timing there. So he came out, it felt great and all of the sudden we had something we could grasp on to and do

something with. This band saved our musical souls over the pandemic. It really did. And it formed a new inspiration for us that was something different than what we already have. I can't be more thankful for this silver lining among the pandemic.”

BH – So now the new album “Return to the Roses” is being released on October 21st. You've been doing them live for a while now. Are any of the tunes mutating into extended jams?

EG – “The nice thing about this is as we were recording the album we'd also done a handful of live shows with some of these songs, not all of them. And now at this point they've all been played live, every song on this album. And they have blossomed. Some of the songs that are three and a half minutes on the album have live reached the ten minute plus mark. A great example, one of our best jam vehicles, is a song called 'Broken Road.' That's the second track on the album. What's great about it is on the album it ends with us just locked in on the groove and the drums sort of take a small feature on it. What we do is in that same spot right there it first goes into a keyboard solo followed by a more open group effort. We wind up locking in and that's where Adrian shines. We lock in and we're his metronome and he takes that drum solo that places that only Adrian Tramontano can take it to. He'll move into all different odd times. He does things that just blow minds completely. And we get to just be the metronome for him, just locking into that groove and not budging gives him the freedom to just go wherever he wants. It's great because it's a full band musical experience with a true feature but it's still interactive as a full unit. And I love stuff like that. We have a couple tunes where we do things like that with Adrian. There are three or four other songs on the album that are shorter on the record that we let breathe a bit.”

BH – Like the song “Breathe Home.” I like that one.

EG – “Yeah, 'Breathe Home' has been a jam vehicle since the beginning and it's pretty cool what we did on the album. That's a song that I wrote and going into the album I intentionally wanted to have the open space on that be slightly different than how we done it live. When we do it live it's a little floatier and a little bit more riff oriented. What I wanted to do with 'Breathe Home' was take an approach where there was a true constant pulse that kept on rising throughout the improv piece and that in the spirit of band like Spiritualized and even some of the post rock bands out there like Explosion in the Sky and some other things around that end. I wanted to really create this sonic landscape that moved in and then... the great thing about Marble Eyes' improv is that it is all very intent. And so we have certain melody structures that bring us back home to the song. Mike's guitar melodies still wound up on there to bring us back which leads into the vocals to take us out of it. It was specifically designed with a really awesome open space where we did a mix between some unique percussion sounds, Adrian had that percussion sound like you had thunder in it. We had different multiple layers. I had a second bass part on it and both melody makers had some nice textures on it. We created something fresh and new for the album and that was a really nice experience. The other thing that we did that was really unique to the album is the final song on it. 'I'm Done Sleeping,' which is not a jam vehicle

at all, it's very much just a written out song. But, the instrumental intro of that song, I came in wanting to design something in the studio. I wanted to create a piece of music for this album in the studio. All these songs came in already written but for the intro of that song I wanted to create something brand new and we did that with the intro of 'I'm Done Sleeping.' We created this chill out massive attack groove armada style rhythm. I was talking to Mike when he was starting to do some guitar lines about some of Neil Young's work in the Dead Man soundtrack with some of those really ethereal riffs that came in and he produced some amazing stuff. I found this synth bass line that just had this open ended piece to it that moved in on some of it and we just created something so cool to kick off that song. And it really tied into the emotion of what that song is which is really about looking back on your life as it is about to end and looking at your accomplishments and looking at the love of your life whether it's someone or whether it's something. So it really worked out very nicely. We also created that rock/gospel outro in the studio. That's something we never did live. Once again it was some concepts that I brought in and we had a lot of fun doing that."

BH - Does Marble Eyes have plans to tour nationally?

EG - "Absolutely, we're taking it as it comes. In this day and age going out and touring just to tour is not quite what it was. Everything is being reinvented now with the pandemic and with us now coming out of it. The established nationals, it's a little bit easier to go out and do something like that. With a brand new band, we want to tour with intent. We want to make sure that we have shows that are meaningful and that matter around the art that we're producing. And so we're getting out there and we're reaching new places. This tour now we're hitting nine different states throughout the northeast. We've already been out to Colorado. We're doing some nice things and I think that the wave of what we create, like any band, is going to take us in the proper touring direction within this. We have every intention of getting this live show out across the country and hopefully across the world. It's what we want to do and we're already working on album number two. We want to keep on writing. Bands aren't recording enough in my opinion. More bands are focused on touring because that's where more money is made in this day and age unfortunately. But this band is all about making records, writing songs and making sure they are realized in the best way possible with the vision that we have for them and getting them going. We're going to be touring with that type of intent."

For more information about Marble Eyes you can check out their website at www.marbleeyes.net. Once there you can purchase the "Return to the Roses" album, check out their tour dates or buy other assorted swag. At least one good thing came out of this pandemic.



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LOCAL BEAT

“Southern New England 2021: From State Line Fair to New London Rap”

By Andrew Kerbs

I had the pleasure of visiting 2 places or events this Fall: Octoberfest in Douglas, Mass and the Y-Knot bar in New London CT: both places which I recommend to readers even though the musical market between 2 distant towns may differ.

The first place I attended was the Douglas fair which was full of vendors selling their wares which included jams, flyers and craft merchandise. There was even a craft beer tent with a nifty band jamming away swell instrumentals. This band was the Brain James Quartet: a beer festival band together for 10 years and whom were nice enough to accept an interview after their show ended. The band consisted of Mike Jacobs on drums, Steve Marcks on bass, Ryan Daley on guitar and Brian James on sax. Brian and Ryan had worked together before and formed an 8-piece to play their 50th high school reunion. The band broke off into pieces that started playing smaller events with their musician friend Seth Hijian. One of those break off bands is James' current lineup.

The band's influences include ethnic South African music, funk and rock music. Bands that have influenced the quartet include local Boston band “Lettuce” and the band also re-arranges covers by Phish and Dave Matthews so they sound a bit different and more original after 5 years of playing them. Most notably, James played such great well-known covers as “When the Levee Breaks” and “Fly Like an Eagle.” However, the Brian James Quartet also plays their own instrumentals beer lovers enjoyed this afternoon as well originals called “Lower 9” and “Something More Than Human.”

When asked about their future, the members replied “We’re going to con-



tinue playing the RI brewery scene (like the Sons of Liberty and the Guild in Pawtucket) as well as play The Treehouse in Charlton, Purgatory (Chasm) Craft Brewery, and fairs on the Mass state line. Playing is just a form of “self-expression” and they’re juggling 35 gigs a year while trying to stay married. They like to evolve wherever the scene is and “do things their way even if that means making less \$.”

As for my former hometown New London, I was reluctant to enter a Bank Street bar called Y-Knot seeing that the place was nearly empty at 9 pm. However, the bouncer encouraged me: “C’mon in - This is the coolest scene in town, you know what I’m saying?”

The club Y-Knot had a multiracial gay-friendly vibe with a BLM sign floating over the bar draped in black. The bartender blasted Bood Up from the radio (which I didn’t realize was a cover) as she coolly poured her drinks and danced to and fro to the music. There was also breakdancing videos in which dancers did headspins and I had the pleasure of interviewing DJ Dre attached wires between his equipment as the sparse crowd began to thicken with locals eager to hear some chill hip-hop and R&B.

DJ Dre has been a DJ for 8 years at various places between Brooklyn Masonic Temple, Hartford and “Green Room” New London. His set included Cardi B’s “Up,” (perhaps the best rape

tune ever written), sleek soul by HER as well as a song about blue cheese with a thumpy bass beat and Indian chant. He sampled often, switching up beats. He has seen people in different types of moods and claims “It’s my job to keep them moving, playing faves like Dougy Fresh, DMX (who can move a crowd) and political hip hop by Kanye West “Bigger Picture.” The latter tune is about police, gunshots and “I Cant Breathe.” Some guys have to carry guns to survive by fighting fire with fire, Dre suggested.

Whether your interested in an urban coastal vibe or a rural country vibe, the Y-Knot bar and various festivals further inland should appeal to various listeners in the Southern New England area. Be sure to check them both out.



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MUSIC NOTES CONTINUED

years ago. It happened on February 9, 1964. There were no bands in America on February 8, 1964. There was one in every garage on February 10.

On his decision to become a musician: "The Beatles/Stones exacta would change everything. My religion had gone from Catholic to Baptist to Rock and Roll Pagan. Society has never recovered. And neither have I.

On meeting Bruce Springsteen: "In those days, if you met a guy and you both had long hair and were in a band, you were best friends. That was it. No thunder. No lightning. Just two misfit kids who had found a common tribe. It was the beginning of a lifelong brotherly love affair."

On dropping acid for the first time: "Acid affected the mind in ways that gave the user a shortcut to understanding the basics of Eastern philosophy. Think of it as the hippie Google."

On his first nickname: "I fell in love with Miami...I started wearing Hawaiian shirts, even in snowy January in Jersey. Bruce christened me 'Miami Steve.' Later, I would bequeath the entire look to Jimmy Buffett, whom I hear has done quite well with it."

On his trademark headwear: "I had an accident, needed a few operations. After that, my hair never really grew in properly. Bruce said 'you've been wearing those bandanas, just make it a thing.' So, I did."

On Springsteen's approach: "The pioneers of the 50s invented Rock. The Renaissance acts of the 60s elevated it to an Artform. Bruce was determined to create work that not only distract, entertain, and transport, but also educate, stimulate and inspire. Hope. Not hype."

On the reaction to his own music over the years: "I've always had good luck with critics. If they only had bigger families, I would have come closer to breaking even."

On his decision to leave the E Street Band in the mid-80s: "My allergy to money would never allow me to make a decision based on it. I shouldn't have left in the first place. It didn't matter how justified it might have felt at the time, or what I had learned and accomplished since. I interrupted what was supposed to be, and abandoned my best friend when he need me most."

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On rock radio changing its demographic: "Rock radio disregarding the 50s and the 60s because they were too old was the equivalent of a classical music format disregarding Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Tchaikovsky because they were too old."

On Indian casinos and gambling (and Florida's Hard Rock Café): "The Seminoles started Indian gambling in 1979 with high-stakes bingo, and within minutes everybody with an Indian great-grandmother opened a casino."

On (forever) answering how "The Sopranos" really ended: "The Director yelled 'cut' and the actors went home."

On his work ethic: "I need to work constantly. I simply cannot function at the normal speed of this planet. The minute I stop moving, I start dying. I do what I have to do and then try to get paid for it after the fact."

And, my personal favorite, on the book project itself: "This book is only the 10 percent I still remember."

And, believe me, whatever you do, don't miss his anecdote about vacuuming Van Morrison's dressing room.

Or, for that matter, an epilogue that

will bring tears to your eyes.

And, that's just a small sampling of wit, levity, intelligence, compassion, and bonafide chops that emanates from Van Zandt's 375 pages.

Suffice it to say that Stevie Van Zandt was, as his Boss might say, "born to write."

"Unrequited Infatuations" is available at Amazon and other on-line outlets, but, as Stevie himself probably would tell you, "hey, go buy it at a friggin' real, brick and mortar bookstore, will ya?"



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BAR FLY JOURNALS

By Stephanie Shawn

Hello, my Sweet Flies! I gotta tell you, Halloween was a Blast! Went to PHOENIX to see DON'T TELL LISA with BARB, GERI, GINA, DAWN and MICHELLE. Danced the Night Away. Shout out to SAMANTHA STOREY and her Spot On CRUELLA DE VIL costume! Beautiful!



But first! Stopped in to see my sis at the HANDLEBAR CAFE. Ran into Captain America, Ice Queen, Cat Woman and a few others. Pix were hysterical!



16 SOUND WAVES



I was Zombie Sandy from GREASE (kinda) along with a cigarette courtesy of Miss DAWN TOSTI, for the Party. Not as good as MISS PIGGY from the previous year but time got away from me.

I missed AMY and TODD'S HALLOWEEN BASH with DJ DAVE CHRISTINA. Heard it was a crazy good time and Im sorry! I'll make it up to you both!!!



Did a Girl's Night in Newport with Besties NICOLE CHIARADIO and TAMI ALGIERE! Called my old friend PETE THE PEDI CAB Driver!

401.363.1658. Tell him Bar Fly sent ya!

He picked us up on BOWEN'S WHARF, brought us to the packy, then cruised us around Newport. What a freakin hoot!

You missed it! Botox Party at CO-CO'S SALON. All the usual suspects were in attendance and left looking wrinkle free! Thank you KAYLA and ALEX, beauty makers to the Stars!

Romper Stomper time,, baby! Happy Birthday to LISA REID, LARS, MARK (JOEY) VICTORIA, (JANINE is making a sweet hat calendar for the family, cuz apparently that's JOEY'S thing??) JANE SHAWN, BILL SOARES, nephew DANNY ROCHA, CHERYL COMEAU, JJ JOHNSON, DIANE CIPRIANO, COLIN DONAHUE, STACEY SULLIVSN, KATHI MURPHY, ANDRE COMEAU, JEFF MILLER, JOAN DEFANTI, JORDAN SLOCUM and Happy Anniversary to DAD and MICHELE! We love love you and appreciate all you do! :)

Heading to AMIGO'S TAQUERIA AND TEQUILA for DIA DE LOS MUERTOS at their Amazing Annual Party. I face paint. Of course I don't do nearly as good of a job as Miss DAWN DINWOODIE, but I do give it the ol' College Try! Let you know how that goes.

So, it's off to do some THANKSGIVING Shopping! Can't wait to get my turkey on! STONINGRON vs WESTERLY football game is a highlight of my Fall Festivities. You see our 2 town rivalry at its finest!

Happy Thanksgiving! Ciao for now, my sweet Flies! Love you long time!



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HEARING AID



F&Blues Band
"Side Hustle"

Out of the depths of the lockdown time emerges a new recording by a band with many years and much depth of experience to draw on. F&Blues Band is representative of the best in local musicians whose calling is music for music's sake, played in local venues along the east coast, with energy and a drive to danceability. The title of their new album, *Side Hustle*, hints at other lives in support of the passion which permeates throughout this collection of songs. Staying true to their roots, the album was recorded at East Haddam's own Riverway Studio over an eight month session of extended creativity.

The first, immediate impression of this band is the strength and virtuosity of the bass player, Tom Purwinis, who, besides providing a precise and consistent foundation for the band, carries the rhythm to the high and low ranges of his instrument. Tim Cuff brings a clear yet raspy feel to the lead vocals, imparting emotions to match the songs, adding an often wailing riff on harmonica. Rick Stannard provides the dual role of rhythm guitar, in tight synch with Purwinis' bass and Bob Tischer's drums, breaking into guitar solos which embellish or soar as fits the musical moment.

On the title track Tim Cuff laments a situation where "I'm part time replaceable, meanwhile you're untraceable, you see me when you please." There are songs of romance gone good or bad, some ending with acrimony, another a sad tale of poverty where "I can't give her Nothing But The Blues." Overall, this is a well produced album which shows off the talent and hard-won cohesiveness of a local band bringing

energy and enjoyment to their music. More info, including upcoming shows and booking contacts, may be found at www.fand-bluesband.com, or on Facebook, F&Blues Band.

- Jon Persson



Marble Eyes
"Return To The Roses"

Color Red Music

I love projects like this, where excellent musicians from different spheres come together by chance or circumstance and make something amazing. This collaboration between Eric Gould (Pink Talking Fish), Mike Carter (Indobox), Adrian Tramontano (Kung Fu) and Max Chase (Amulus) began as a way to fill time in the hiatus created by current times and ended up with a fresh sound with a new album and tour.

I couldn't really pin down a genre on "Return To The Roses" as it really has a rock-and-roll thread tying things together, but each of the songs is distinct from the others as they pull in jam themes, blues, funk and R&B influences to make a fun and ever-changing soundscape.

Add to the mix three different vocalists that rotate through the lead mic or backing vocals and you have these great walls of sound at times. The lyrics are full of energy and themes of pushing forward, fighting hard battles and moving the human race towards progress.

"Return To The Roses" is one of those albums where you can zone in on any particular instrument and enjoy what the artist is bringing to the table. I'll take turns between focusing on Adrian's fills on the drum kit or Eric thumping down runs on the bass, then tune back into the theme and the lyrics. The

keys and the guitar are great and there are plenty of solos to enjoy by Mike and Max.

One of my favorite tracks on here is "Feel Alive". It starts with a repetitive chord progression that features a little cross-key twist and goes on for quite a while, lulling you into a zone. Then as the chorus kicks in they bring the mega-energy with some distortion and volume while the vocals chant out "Leave your footprints in the dust behind/ Now you finally start to feel alive". As the song develops, the sound reminds me of a mash-up between Jane's Addiction and Pearl Jam with it's high level of passion and the guitar-solo crescendo at the end. It's a great song.

"You Can't Fool Me" is another one of my favorites. It has this old-school 60's R&B flavor and a great groove that makes you want to get up and dance. It features some nice vocal harmonies on the chorus and tasteful musical breaks and fills showcasing their talent.

The album closer "I'm Done Sleeping" puts a nice bookend on the collection. It's a mid-tempo ballad featuring more harmonies and themes about waking up and moving forward.

Despite the wide array of sounds the band displays, they tie it all together with a common theme: progress, toughness, perseverance and insight. It's truly an inspiration so see how some people can create a bright vision in these difficult times. We all need to keep our chins up and continue making music within our lives to ensure that light prevails over darkness. Marble Eyes is helping to achieve that with "Return To The Roses".

- Tom Matthew
Two Ton Music



Charlie Barath

"Just Me And My Friends"

Charlie Barath Harmonica Records

In all the years doing music reviews this is one of the first times I find practically

www.swaves.com

no information for my review of Charlie Barath. No bio, no band affiliations, nothing on Wikipedia, his own website says it being constructed with only a splash page, and only from amazon.com I gather this is his 3rd full length album but that's about it. First hand experience tells me he is a singer, song writer, arranger and one heck of a harmonica player with a great backup band. As I write this review I already heard "Just Me And My friends" several times and I would say that Barath's music is a very authentic and organic artist. His Americana goes from Appalachian acoustic to Country to Western Swing, the Blues and beyond. His diversity and commitment to detail in his music truly takes you on a journey. As a reviewer I generally take my readers to where the music transports me. So pack your bags because this album will take us from the field hollers of Tennessee to honky tonk saloons and all points in between. He goes from the blues, then stretches out to several different genres, and never looks back. In the words of Charlie Barath: "I put together this specific collection of songs for two reasons: 1. To demonstrate the diversity in my songwriting as well as my Harmonica playing and Vocals. 2. To shine a spotlight on some of the amazing and talented people that I am fortunate to work with. I truly hope you enjoy listening to it as much as I've enjoyed creating it!"

"Just Me And My Friends" opens with "The Forgotten Man" reminiscent of the songs sung by forced labor chain gangs of the early 1900's. His authenticity is so detailed that if you open your ears and close your eyes you not only hear his music but see it too. Next Barath takes us to the rural Appalachians with a friendly acoustic guitar and harmonica duet. Picture sitting on the porch of an Appalachia mountain home with a view of the Tennessee blue mountains and sipping sour mash whiskey with the good ol boys. "Travelin Woman" and "No Smoking" are hard driving blues songs with great harmonica licks ala Barath and an equally great back up band. I find myself already transported to my usual smokey Blues club, sipping on Kentucky Bourbon and taking in all the great music. "Losing My Mind Over You", "Heart Of Mine" and "Little Turtle Night-Lite" are great Western Swing songs. I already see the neighbors gathering, the music playing, and couples cutting up the rug at the local dance hall. In "Have Ourselves A Ball" Barath gets back into his Blues digs with more bluesy harp licks and a quality band to back him. "Ollie Ollie" delves into traditional Country music when it was still Country, and "Drives Me To Drink" is another Barath western swing rendition. Maybe I was born country and

stuck in New England suburbia but something about Western Swing makes me smile ear to ear. Picture Chet Atkins, Johnnie Lee Wills, and PeeWee King performing for you at the local honky tonk with saw dust on the floor, and jugs of home grown moon shine for sale behind the barn reminding us all of a gentler Americana era. I have to say Charlie Barath is so authentic with his music that if you are ready to be transported to a different place, and a different time then I highly recommend you add this CD to your collection. If you like Americana, you will love "Just Me And My Friends". Available at Amazon.com

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb



Jennifer Porter *"Sun Come And Shine"* Cougar Moon Music

Jennifer Porter is an award-winning singer, actor and screenwriter. A musician's musician blessed with a beautiful voice, Jennifer has performed a repertoire that spans from Jazz and Blues to Country and Opera. She has sung with Classical and Jazz Orchestras, including the world-famous Glenn Miller Orchestra. Though trained as an opera singer and classical pianist, she considers herself a Roots Musician at heart. Jennifer has recorded eight albums to date, and has released her newest, Sun Come

And Shine, recorded with legendary drummer and music director Bernard Purdie.

The CD opens with the title track "Sun Come And Shine". Right from her first note I hear the "clean" melodic tones of a pitch perfect voice with touches of reverb that reminds me of Mama Cass, Doris Day, and The Captain & Tenille to name a few. I think you get the idea – the vocal notes are technically correct but overall very vanilla. The second track picked up the pace a little with a couple guitar licks peeking through but nothing giving me hopes that Porter's latest project is going to get any better. By the third track "When It's All Been Said And Done" I was downing my 3rd cup of black coffee to keep me awake. At least in this track her voice is backed with nice horn arrangements. As we approach track four "Satin Shoes" I say to myself; FINALLY, a tune with a little zip but turns out to be the usual Porter vanilla voice. At least now we have a lively band with backup singers. In track 6 "In And Out With You" Purdie gets to show off his "All Star Band" which backs Porter for most of the album with nice guitar licks, back up singers, keys, and horns. In "Bitter New York Night" I hear soulful horns and a bit of nice background keys. In track 8 "You're So Easy To Be With" I hear french street music style accordion playing but could be keys playing through a synth. Either way it adds a nice festive atmosphere to an otherwise lackluster Porter style song. By track 9 "Something On Your Mind", what was on my mind is if my editor was angry at me by making me do this review. This track does have some nice "Kenny-G" style Sax though. In the final track "I'll be here" it starts off Bluesy but as soon as Porter starts singing, you guessed it, but all jesting aside, Porter has a very lovely, melodic voice but lacking any soul or grit. At least the Purdie All Star Band made listening palatable. This CD is available at jennifernicholeporter.com

Until Next Time – Adrian Webb

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NEIL BERG - 50 YEARS OF ROCK & ROLL

By Joby Rogers

Neil Berg is an award-winning, multi-talented entertainer with credits as a director, composer, lyricist, producer, writer, and musician. His past and ongoing endeavors include the Broadway-bound musical *THE 12, Grumpy Old Men: The Musical*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and *Tim and Scrooge*. Neil is the creator and co-producer of the #1 Broadway touring concert 'Neil Berg's 100 Years of Broadway'. Neil's '50 Years of Rock and Roll' is one of the most successful Broadway touring concerts in the United States and for the past decade has played in over 100 venues a year. '50 Years of Rock and Roll' will be coming to the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts in Storrs, CT on November 13th. I talked with Neil about '50 Years' and his prolific Entertainment history... Hi Neil.

Thank you for taking the time.

You're welcome.

"50 Years of Rock & Roll" will be presented at UConn's Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, November 13. It tells the story / history of Rock & Roll, not only through incredible live music adaptations but also your narration as well. On a personal level, what are you trying to communicate to your audience about Rock & Roll?

I think the show works on several different levels. People will enjoy a trip of nostalgia and travel down a memory lane of true Rock & Roll history. They'll have a great time with all these incredible singers, who are made up of Broadway Stars who specialize in Broadway Rock Shows, including cast members from 'Rock Of Ages', Grammy-nominated performer, 'Miss Ya Ya' and other extraordinary talents. I come from two worlds, I made my living on Broadway, Broadway is more storytelling. I also come from Rock & Roll. So I 'speak' Broadway and Rock & Roll. I love storytelling. I've told the story of Broadway in a different show (100 Years of Broadway), but my passion is Rock & Roll. I wanted to tell an authentic story of Rock & Roll. Not just the 'Bill Haley and the Comets' part, where some people think it started. I wanted to go further back than that and I wanted to show the influencers that made Rock & Roll what it is.

This show covers all Rock genres, from Chuck Berry, The Beatles, Journey, and everyone in between. What do you think of your tendency to worship the primitive in Rock?

I don't know if it's worship. It's telling a story. You can't fathom certain artists unless you start at the beginning. If I want-

ed to tell it correctly it would be like a Ken Burns documentary. It would take a week. It's impossible to do that in one show. This show was so successful that it's now called 'Part One'. I've gone back and did 'Part Two' and brought in more songs and gotten a little deeper. Now there's 'Part Three'. All in the same time span. This, at its most important level, is Rock & Roll 101.

I want to go pre-50 years of Rock & Roll for a moment. Blues is arguably the most influential music in American history. It was the first 'Black' music to reach white audiences. The Stones, Beatles, Elvis, and countless other white artists have benefited from it. Most have rarely acknowledged their Blues influences. In your opinion, why has the Blues held such a permanent authority over Rock and Roll?



There are so many answers to that. Where the Blues came from was totally authentic. It was music that was telling the honest story of people's struggles at that time. It was being expressed without loud amplifiers. It was just people sitting on the porch telling their frustrations. Rock & Roll was a frustration. It was a revolution. It was a melting pot where all of those influences came together. People don't know that in the '30s a country artist named Buddy Jones sang 'Rockin', Rollin' Mama, which was incredibly

risky at that time in country music, because 'Rockin' Rollin' meant exactly what you think it means. Black artists like Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup, who wrote and performed 'That's All Right Mama'. That was a hit on the 'Race Charts' before Elvis ever touched it.

I always say there was a reason it was Elvis. Yes, he was hand-picked. Yes, Sam Philips saw the opportunity and wanted a white man to sing black music to make money. Elvis was not just a handsome truck driver from Mississippi. Elvis loved juke joints. He would sneak in and watch. He loved this music. To him it was natural, so when he moved and grooved the way he did he was not imitating. It was how he felt the music. I love when people, after this show say, "Wow! I didn't know that."

You've worked with some heavy Broadway hitters, like Michael Crawford, Bernadette Peters, Ben Vereen, and Rita Moreno. What, in your opinion, is the most important quality to guiding such talent to yield the results you're after?

When I was just out of college, There was an actress I revered and she was recording a song I wrote. She said, "So,

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how do you want me to perform this?" I said, nervously, "Whatever you want to do? I couldn't believe I was in the same room with the person I revered. She pulled me aside and said, "Neil. Listen. It's your song. Direct me. Tell me what you want and then I will put my spin on it". It was the greatest lesson a 22-year-old could get. I realized that people want strong direction. It's all about transparency. They may not always agree with it but they appreciate it.

In today's decisive environment, should theater be a reflection of the times or a distraction?

Oh my Gosh, what a great question. No one ever asked me that. Joby, that's great. I talk about that all the time in my '100 Years of Broadway Show'. What attracted me to Broadway was the storytelling and it has always traced and commented on the history of our country. The beauty of Broadway is its scope and that it could do both. You've had shows that went right at it. 'West Side Story' was originally called 'East Side Story'. It was about the conflict between the Jews and the Catholics on the East side of New York City. Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins realized what was going on, on the Westside, with the incoming immigrants in the 50's. The same story we're telling today, which was more prevalent, so they adapted it and were able to entertain as well.

What misperceptions, if any, did you have about this business when you realized it wasn't only about talent?

You better enjoy the journey and not just try to get shows. The show is going to end, and you'll be there crying with the cast. It may last for one day because it bombed or it can go on for years. But at some point, it's going to end. So, love every second of it. It's not the gig, It's what you worked for your whole life to get the gig. I'm a firm believer in the journey. If you get into this business to make money, you're in the wrong business.

You are a very creative person. How has that creativity impacted your life? Has it at times caused you angst, stress, or even depression?

I don't know if I've ever been depressed. That blank page is what I love the most. What am I going to put on that page? I knew that when one chapter ended, another would begin. The reality of your question is the frustration I felt about projects I thought were amazing and I couldn't believe they haven't gotten done. Sometimes those decisions are out of your hands. I've had a lot of projects that worked out incredibly well, but that doesn't mean there hasn't been frustration along the way.

Were there apprehensions at the beginning, that you'd be successful? Was there a plan B?

When I went to college my parents had it all figured out for me. I was going to take over my uncle's law practice. I have always loved music but I knew they would not pay for it. They were great parents, they just didn't understand it. I

wasn't upset in any way. In college, I finally got asked to write a musical (Ghost Story). Unaware that the producer asked everybody else and they all said no. I was the last one. Opening night was over. I sat in a room by myself, crying for 20 minutes. I couldn't believe the exhilaration and the emotional outpouring. That very moment, I discovered what I was meant to do. Goodbye law school, goodbye everything else. But it also meant I had to tell my parents (laughs). I always say that if you have a choice about getting into this business and doing something else, I would take something else. For me, it was never a choice. I had to do this.

This may be a strange question for you. Which fictional character that you gave life to on stage would be the most exciting to meet in real life?

(Laughs) Oh my gosh! No one ever asked me that question either, That's a great one. I wrote the musical version of 'The Prince and the Pauper', by Mark Twain, it terrified me because it brought me back to the time of King Henry VIII, with the religious persecutions. So I don't know if I'd ever want to become one of these characters.

I know this is like picking a favorite child but, which play that you have been involved in is your favorite?

The musical, 'The Twelve' that I wrote, because I saw its genesis from the very beginning to its end. I was able to put a lot of myself into that piece and it paid homage to a lot of the artists that I loved. As long as we're being totally transparent, I write musicals, it's my life, I love it, but I like plays better.

Is the Theatre industry evolving in ways you like or dislike?

I might not like everything, but I understand what's coming. Every generation has to claim their own. Let's keep exploring, only through exploration are we going to find the next big thing. I'm not happy that producers realized that audiences are more frugal with their money and so they want a title they recognize and aren't willing to take a risk.

You're in the audience for the opening night of a new play that you produced. Walk me through that experience.

I'm the worst person to be in the audience of one of my shows because all I'm going to see are the flaws. I'm not going to be able to see the beauty and the totality. I love the creation and I love everything up until opening night lapse. I am not one of those guys who loves being there on opening night. I'm in the back pacing and hiding. But once I get past that and I know it works and I'm happy with it then I like to be in the audience and watch them experience a creation of mine.

Thank you again, Neil.

For more info and tickets regarding Neil Berg visit www.neilberg.com



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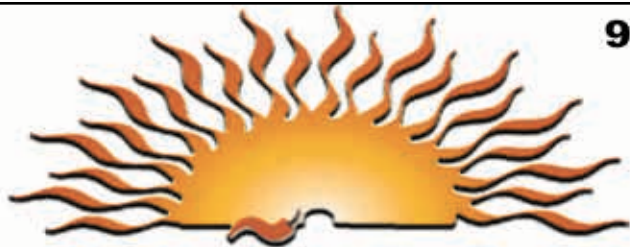
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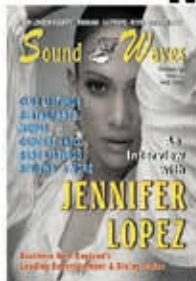


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