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5/16- Five Dollar Dance Party "Spring Fling"
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5/8- Stillwater; The Winehouse Project
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5/10- R&B Singalong w/Rey Royale; The Backburners featuring Danny Kortchmar; 5th Annual Mother's Day Swing & Soul Revue with the Rubin Brothers
5/11- EMF; Sonja Morgan
5/12- Vanessa Carlton
5/13- Boston - Vinofile Plus Pick Up Party; Vanessa Carlton
5/14- PureSoul
5/15- paris_monster; Chantal Kreviazuk
5/16- Comedy and Cabernet; Lotus Land (Rush Tribute)
5/17- Dan Rodriguez; Lissie
5/18- Gilmore Girls Trivia
5/21- In Conversation with Clint Black
5/22 & 23- Challenge Mania Live
5/24- Tacarra Williams
5/26- Creep & Hallelujah
5/28- The Klezmatiks
5/29- Marc E. Bassy; Happy Couples Game Show
5/30- Chelsea Berry

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5/2- Dinty Child
5/3- É.T.É
5/5 & 6- Joe Pernice
5/7- Sloan Wainwright, Susan Cattaneo and Cosy Sheridan
5/8- Gary Louris

5/9- Kipling Drozek and the Chaperones album release; Margaret Drozek
5/9- Lyle Brewer
5/10- Porch Party Mamas; Jane Grondin
5/12- 30th Anniversary Celebration of Matt Smith at Arrow Street Arts hosted by Rose Cousins
5/14- Case Oats; Henry True
5/15- Caiola; Jack Fortune
5/16- Rachael Kilgour & Jean Rohe; Abigail Lapell
5/17- Chris & Meredith Thompson; Joia Mukherjee
5/18- Sprig of That
5/19- Cat Clyde; Boy Golden
5/20- The April Fools; Buskin & Batteau, Christine Lavin, John Forster, Carla Ulbrich
5/21- Elizabeth & The Catapult Album Release
5/27- Sweet Petunia Album Release
5/28- Rachel McCartney Album Release; Teddy Goldstein
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5/9- Colin James
5/13- Dezron Douglas Quartet
5/14- Joey Alexander
5/15- Anthony Gomes
5/16- Yasmin Williams
5/20- Mark Walker
5/22- John Pizzarelli
5/24- Ladies of Blues and Soul

All Things Music Since 1985!



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5/22- Franc Graham Band

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5/2- Eric Knopf's 50th featuring The Manglers, Larseny & Box of Records; The Macrotones; Jinxland; Ruby Grove
5/3- Martin/Morell/Fredette residency
5/4- Jazz night w/Ritmo Eterno; The Hip(!) Replacements; Keep The Changes
5/6- Daydream; Felicity's Hubris
5/8- Catfish
5/9- Irish Goodbyes; Truckers Atlas; Church & Puppets; Ghostlander
5/10- The Lazarus Band; Weepin & A Wailin'; Sam Offutt Band; Jack Monteleone
5/11- Bad-ass Burlesque Punk Rock Dance Party
5/12- Topical Popsicle: Improv Comedy Show; The Inkwell Open Mic
5/13- Fully Celebrated Orchestra
5/15- Promised Land; The Femmes
5/16- Stay At Home Dads; Warm Blooded Mammal; Bog Berries; Ugly Moon
5/17- Shadows; Skeleton Priest; Erlking; Noisebox
5/18- Chamber: Goth & Industrial Night
5/22- Smile Lines (emo & pop punk covers)
5/24- Crow Follow; Connor Storms & His Bouquet; Coffin Salesman; Lou Mace
5/26- Tiger Math; The Relegated; Wild Velvet; Frameless
5/27- Diamond Blues Jam (Jerry Garcia Tribute)
5/29- Mystical Misfits
5/29- Promised Land
5/30- Road Soldier; Larseny; Zipper; Eddy Dyer
5/31- Midway or the Highway Open Mic

PALLADIUM
Worcester, MA.
(508) 797-9696

5/1- Behemoth
5/2- Fleshwater & julie
5/3- Archspire
5/8- House of Heavy
5/9- Arankai

5/13- Kottonmouth Kings - 30 Years of Underground
5/14- Kreator
5/15- Augxst
5/16- Chaos & Carnage Festival: Thy Art Is Murder, Shadow Of Intent, Snuffed on Sight & more
5/17- Wheatus; Sparks the Rescue; Between the Buried and Me
5/22- Wage War
5/23- All That Remains; Born of Osiris; Dead Eyes
5/28- Citizen Soldier
5/29- Sevalynn; Gasolina Reggaeton Party
5/30- Black Veil Brides

PARADISE ROCK CLUB
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5/1- White Reaper; Drug Church; Public Opinion
5/2- NewDad; Freak Slug
5/4- Bloodywood; The Pretty Wild; Ladrones; Ankor
5/5- Dry Cleaning; YHWH Nailgun
5/7- Free Throw; Macseal; TRSH; Wakelee
5/8- Purity Ring
5/15- Bahamas; Sister Ray
5/16- Big Wreck

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5/6- Earfull
5/7 & 8- Mike Stern Band w/Dennis Chambers, Gary Grainger, Bob Franceschini, Leni Stern
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5/14- Keyon Harrold
5/15- The Dirty Dozen Brass Band
5/21- Frank Vignola's Birdland Guitar Trio featuring special guest Pasquale Grasso
5/22- Juan Fer Ruiz & Camila Cortina Jazz Quintet
5/29- Kurt Rosenwinkel Quintet
5/30- Duke Robillard and His All-Star Band

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5/2- Little Miss and the Boom
5/8- Eric Darius
5/15- Darryl Yokley Quartet
5/16- Brandon "Swingman" Sanders Record Release featuring Warren Wolf and Gregory Groover, Jr. & Briana Swan
5/30- The Levin Brothers w/Pat Labarbera

SINCLAIR
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5/1- The Glitter Boys
5/2 & 3- The Hold Steady

5/4- Yumi Zouma; Ducks Ltd
5/5- Katie Tupper; Ety
5/6- Hasan Raheem
5/7- Muse: A Salute to Divas of the 90s
5/8- Earlybirds Club
5/9- Winyah; Edgehill
5/10- The Cribbs; Jeffrey Lewis
5/11- Flyte
5/12- Ray Bull; Babehoven
5/13- Failure; All Under Heaven
5/15- Cut Worms; Tchotchke
5/16- Dave Hause & The Mermaid; roofTops; Apes Of The State
5/17- Ambar Lucid & maye; judith
5/19- Chapterhouse; she's green
5/20- Grace Ives
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5/29- Supersonic Oasis Tribute; Scotia Rose

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5/9- Cometa; GaruPower!!; Off-Knowneous; IchiRockU; Scarlet Beacon
5/12- ChRocktikal
5/13- Rickshaw Billie's Burger Patrol; American Sharks
5/14- Emerson Woolf and The Wishbones
5/15- The Brokes
5/16- Elysium
5/17- Shayfer James; Katacombs
5/21- The Black Queen; Ghost Cop; Trace Amount
5/24- Oranssi Pazuzu; Wayfarer
5/26- By Storm; Lerado Khalil
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5/30- KB; Flawless; Gio; Miles Minnick
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SQUARE ROOT
Roslindale, MA.
(617) 477-3392

5/1- RnB 3
5/2- Monterey Mountain
5/3- Royer's One Man Band; Clear Audience
5/4- Trivia with Ticco and Matt
5/6- Rozzie Old Time Session
5/7- Singer Songwriter Night with Brad Pillen, Tad Overbaugh and Chris Roussin
5/8- 4 Piece Suit and Fran McConville Trio
5/9- Aidan Parkinson, Crystal McSunshine and Three at Home
5/10- Sado Domestic; Gypsy Jazz Featuring Tomoko Iwamoto and 440
5/11- Pillow Talk: Sex Poetry & Open Mic
5/15- Scott Hsu, Taylor Hurd and Fenwa Teryen

5/16- Past Life Crisis and Guests
5/17- Mess Around; Manduca Sexta Jazz
5/18- Trivia with Ticco and Matt
5/20- Jazz with Hellbender
5/21- Roslindale Comedy
5/22- Ramona Silver
5/23- oPen Decks
5/24- Gavin Connolly Trio; Mostly Bones
5/28- Hold for The Melt
5/29- Nicole Dobberpuhl; Quenby
5/30- Truancy; Red n Gray

TDGARDEN
Boston, MA.
(617) 624-1000

5/7, 8 & 9- Shane Gillis
5/24- Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band
5/30- Don Toliver

THEODORE'S
BLUES, BREWS & BBQ
Springfield, MA.
(413) 736-6000

5/1- The Eric Ducoff Band
5/2- The Willie J. Laws Band
5/6- Jazz Series with Jason Schwartz
5/7- Rockstar Karaoke
5/8- The Amplifiers
5/13- Juke Joint Blues with Brother Sal
5/15- Pat Halpin and the 351's
5/16- Professor Harp
5/20- Justin "jabbo" Martin
5/21- Madison Humel
5/22- Rockin Johnny Burgin
5/23- Petey Hop
5/27- Acoustic Wednesdays with Tom Whalen
5/29- Orb Mellon Trio
5/30- The Love Dogs

WILBUR THEATER
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(617) 248-9700

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5/14- Buckethead
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Duke Robillard

Grammy nominated and W.C. Handy award winner, Duke Robillard is one of America's elite guitar players. His work spans multiple styles from traditional blues to jazz and swing while his impressive discography is proof positive of a master musician. His thirty-eight solo records and countless appearances on other artists recordings have cemented him as one of the most revered players of our time.

Riding the wave of a debut album, Blast Off! on his new record label, Nola Blue, it was high time to see what the Rhode Island player was up to. The following is a transcript from our conversation...

METRONOME: I dig your new album, Blast Off! You covered all your bases. What prompted you to record the album?

Duke Robillard: Basically, I make a new album every year, so it was time. I wanted to showcase all the different styles of music that I play and love.

METRONOME: This is your debut album for Nola Blue Records. How did you meet Sallie Bengtson?

When Stony Plain Records stopped existing, I had been with them for 30 years, I was very worried. I spoke with my guy who has been my publicist for years, Mark Pucci, and he gave me a few suggestions about labels. When I did some investigating, I found that Nola Blue had a lot of people from genres that I really love. It seemed like they would be a perfect home for my music.

METRONOME: Did you reach out to Sallie or did she reach out to you?

I think Mark Pucci might have put in a word for me and then I reached out to her, and we talked about music that we loved and what are musical goals were. We were just lined up perfectly in what we believe in and what we wanted to accomplish.

METRONOME: Did you write all new material for Blast Off! or did you have some songs in the can?

The material was all recorded for the album at that time. One tune however called, "Feel My Cares," I wrote when I was seventeen. I just happened to never have recorded it. There were a lot of songs in the very beginning of Roomful of Blues that didn't get recorded because we didn't get recorded for many years after we started.

I found the lyrics for it, and remembered that I liked it. I recently got the demos from a friend of mine who had them for years. I decided to give it a try, and it worked out perfectly.

The other tunes are all covers of stuff that I love except for two others that my bassist



Marty Ballou and drummer Mark Teixeira and I just came up with in the studio. They're two instrumental guitar tunes.

METRONOME: Your bandmates have been with you for a very long time. How did you meet your singer Chris Cody?

I had heard about Chris Cody before I actually heard him sing. I met him on a session we were doing for a commercial or some kind of thing like that. Chris sang a Muddy Waters tune and he sounded incredible. I remembered that.

When I made my album Ear Worms four or five years ago, my voice was failing partially from age and just abuse over years of singing too hard. So I had different people come in and guest as vocalists. I asked Chris to do a song. He came in and nailed the song in one take. It was perfect. I kept that in mind.

The next album came and I was still having problems singing, so he came in and did five tunes on that record. It just kept building up to the point where I said, You might as well join the band (laughs).

METRONOME: What's going on with your voice? Did you have an accident?

I think it's partially just health things. I'm diabetic and maybe the medication I take dries my throat out. I'm not really sure. I can sing a few tunes a night until I start getting really horse and having trouble. I'm limited to a few songs a night. I've seen a few doctors and they haven't figured out what the problem is.

At 77, I've been singing all my life. It was just getting harder to do.

METRONOME: Where is Chris Cody from?

He lives in Watertown, MA.

METRONOME: He's your lead singer now, right?

Yes, he is.

METRONOME: How did you get Billy Novick involved with the album?

He was really helpful as an arranger. He played on two songs, "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead (You Rascal You)," and "The King." Billy and I have a long history together. I was a fan of his group, The New Black Eagle Jazz Band, in fact, early with Roomful we heard them and really loved them. I've been friends with him ever since. I was a member of the band for a while when our schedules didn't clash. I loved it. Billy is phenomenal.

METRONOME: What guitars did you use for this recording?

As I remember, I used a Squier Stratocaster. I used a Telecaster that I put together myself and I used an Epiphone ES-

335 model on a lot of it. I also used a J.W. Murphy archtop acoustic guitar for rhythm on a couple of songs.

METRONOME: What kind of an amp or amplifiers did you use?

A Fender Blues Jr. and a 1956 Guild Master amp. I had the Master amp restored. **METRONOME: Let's talk about some of the new songs. I loved the album opener, "When I Get Lucky." What made you choose that song?**

That's a Floyd Dixon song. It's a tune I've always loved, and whenever I'm looking for material to record, I go to my record collection and make CDs of my favorite songs that I think would fit the band. That was one of them.

I have a special place in my heart for Floyd Dixon. He was a great songwriter, guitar player and singer and I got to play with him a few times.

METRONOME: I loved your cover of Tom Waits' "Lowdown." How did that come together?

It's a great tune, and I never realized it. I have that three CD box set. I played with Tom and toured with him in 2006 as a guitar player. I never really noticed "Lowdown" for some reason, but a friend of mine suggested that we record it because it was such a good song. I listened to it and said, Yeah, that would fit perfectly.

We listened to it, Chris wrote down the lyrics, we went into the studio, played it once to rehearse it and recorded it in one take. That was it.

METRONOME: I loved your version of "Play Boy Hop." Everyone in the band got to do their thing. Was that fun to play?

That's an old tune that we used to do in Roomful of Blues. It features Doug James on the baritone saxophone. It was a great baritone feature back then when we played it in the 1970s. Doug had remembered it, and found a recording of it on YouTube and sent it to me. I said, Let's do this. We played it for years in the old days.

METRONOME: When I listened to the title track, "Blast Off!," I heard The Ventures.

Are they an influence of yours?

When I was a kid, all those instrumental guitar bands were an inspiration to me. That's how I started learning how to play between Chuck Berry, Duane Eddy, The Ventures and Link Wray.

We were in the studio and usually the rhythm section gets there first. The horns don't need to be there at first. So we just started jamming and Marty had come up with a line. I laid down a rhythm guitar part and we just laid down a basic track to get some sound. Once we had it down, I said, You know, I think we can really do something with this. So I went home and fooled around with it a bit and came back and put the melody with the guitar on the top. That's how it came about. It was just about jamming. It was very different for me.

METRONOME: "Warm and Tender Love" was a beautiful tune. What made you choose that?

I'm a fan of all the soul singers from the 1960s. That was a Percy Sledge tune, but I had never heard it. Chris Cody told me about it. We tried it live one night on a gig and it was just too gorgeous. It was a real good feature for him and it really showed off a different side of his voice.

So when we went into record, I thought, We've got to do this tune. First, it was something different from what we usually do *and* it was good to showcase his voice and his guitar playing. He played the guitar solo in that one.

METRONOME: I also dug, "Galactic Grease." Were you jamming again in the studio and that came about?

That is how it came about, but I also had an idea of doing a tribute to Steve Cropper. When I was a young guitar player, "Green Onions" was the heaviest thing on the radio. When I realized it was Steve Cropper's great guitar playing, I became a big fan of his. It turned out that we just jammed until we came up with an idea and a sound like that. Then Marty, the bass player, came up with the idea of changing keys towards the end to bring up the level of energy for it. It

worked out good. I'm really happy with the way it came out.

METRONOME: How long ago did you record all these songs?

About a year ago.

METRONOME: Did you record without a label deal?

No. We had made a deal with Nola Blue of how we were going to make it work budget-wise and if we agreed in this time period to go in and record it. After we got it recorded, it was just the usual thing. We had to plan it and the label had to plan it for when it was right to come out. It took about another year for everything to come together.

METRONOME: Did the tracks come together quickly initially?

As far as the basic tracks, we did them in two or three days. Then we went back in to do vocals, guitar parts, and the horn lines. We learned the tunes in the studio, which is what I like to do. When we work with a level of musicians like we do, it's just good to let things happen.

Like for "Lowdown," that was the first time we had played it. That's a live vocal. You can't do any better than that. We did decide that day in the studio to try it and we ended up using it.

METRONOME: A while back, you had hurt your shoulder or your hand, and was unable to play. Are you better now?

I had to take a year and a half off because I was having problems with my left shoulder. I had no idea what a rotator cuff was. I had rotator cuff problems, and I thought it was just a bruise that wouldn't go away. What happened was it completely let go. I didn't know enough to get it fixed because I could still play, although it was painful. By the time it had gotten really bad, I found the best sports doctor in Boston and I went and had a rotator cuff operation, but they couldn't fix it because it had atrophied and shrunk up. So I had to go to physical therapy for a long time. They said other muscles will do the job of the rotator cuff if you don't have one.

Also, my other shoulder went a few years ago and I had that fixed because I knew

from the first one I had to have it fixed right away. When you do this your whole life and your shoulders are a function of what you do for a living, I don't think anyone was designed to be still working at age 77 (laughs). I can play around it, but it's not quite as necessary for me to play as fast as I did. I wore them out. I did play guitars that were fairly heavy. Having that weight on your shoulders all those years was not a good thing. I sit when I play now. I sit in a chair and avoid that weight on my shoulders.

METRONOME: Tell me about the album artwork. I thought it was great. Who came up with that idea?

The picture of me in the chair on the cover was taken by a photographer named David Lee Black. He does a lot of my album covers whenever I need a promo shot. A friend of mine, Bruce Dumes from Indiana had been taking photographs. He got into astronomy and started taking pictures of the night sky. He had the idea. I had posted the picture on the Internet and he took it and put me in space basically. I thought, What a great idea. So I kept that in mind when we were getting the album ready. When we came up with a tune called, "Blast Off!," I thought, This is perfect.

METRONOME: How are you finding the music scene since Covid?

For me personally, it's all coming at a time when it's working pretty well. I'm not going to buy a new truck to tour. We all take our own vehicles or we fly. It's coming at a time for me where it's okay that I'm not out there constantly. I have physical issues, I'm getting older, and I don't want to be on the road as much.

We used to work all the time. When you're my age, it's hard to keep that pace up. There are still a few places that I'd like to play in the world though. I've been in an airport in Tokyo, but I've never played in Japan. I'd like to play in Japan. I came close a few times, but it always fell through. I'm really happy though that I've lived through the times I have playing music.

-- Brian M. Owens



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Hearings

by Doug Sloan, Alex Gecko or Brian M. Owens

Top 5 for May 2026

(In NO Particular Order)

- Ed Alstrom
- Robert Ellis Orrall
- Cactus
- Laura Chavez
- Railcard

ED ALSTROM THIS IDEA OF HUMANITY 14-SONG CD

- PUT YOU FIRST
- ALL I'M GONNA DO
- HUMANS
- NOTHING GOOD TO SAY
- BRIDESMAID
- PARTY PLANNER
- UNDERSTANDING
- BLUES KEEP COMING BACK
- GO AHEAD
- INQUIRING MINDS
- THE WAY BACK

- GOT TO STOP
- SO HARD
- WORRY

In his 23rd season as the organist at Yankee Stadium, Ed Alstrom's new album, This Idea of Humanity is an upbeat exercise from a seasoned director of the Blues, Gospel, Shuffles and uptown Swing. Opening with the revelatory "Put You First," Alstrom proves to be in complete control from track to track.

Handling most of the instrumentation throughout the recording with rare appearances from old friend, Jimmy Vivino on vocals & guitar (Trk. 6; Trk. 11), Don Guinta on drums (Trks. 8, 9, 12 & 14), and Ula Hedwig, Maxine Alstrom & Meredith Greenberg on vocals, Alstrom appears to be as adept at playing multiple instruments as he is singing, playing and entertaining the masses.

Songs of particular note include the album opener "Put You First," the two-steppin' swing of "Nothing Good To Say," the infectious groove of "Bridesmaid," the rowdy "Party Planner" featuring the lead vocals of Jimmy Vivino, the uplifting

"Inquiring Minds," and the jumpin' jive of "Got To Stop." This is a wonderful outing from a very talented guy with lots to say. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.edalstrom.com

NUCLEAR MESSIAH BLACK FLAME 11-SONG CD

- THE PROPHET OF FALLOUT
- DEVIL WON'T LET GO
- DEATH OR GLORY
- RIDE THE SKY
- DICE AND THUNDER
- FOR MAD MEN ONLY
- NUCLEAR MESSIAH
- LOOK AT YOURSELF
- SHE'S SO EVIL
- BLACK FLAME
- ELECTRIC BURN

This new hard rock project is the brainchild of guitarist Chris Poland of Megadeth. Bringing together an army of guest players like William Shatner (monologue on opening track, "The Prophet of Fallout"), Vinnie Moore on guitar, Vinny Appice on drums,

Don Airey on keyboards, Rick Wakeman on keyboards, Bumblefoot on guitar, Joe Lynn Turner on vocals, Pat Travers on guitar, Tim "Ripper" Owens on vocals, Lance Lopez on guitar, Sebastian Bach on vocals, Mick Box on guitar, Carmine Appice on drums, Derek Sherinian on keyboards, Dave Ellefson on bass, Jonathan Cain on keyboards, Chris Adler on drums, Marty Friedman on guitars and others, Poland and company keeps things interesting from track to track.

Stand out songs include the driving "Devil Won't Let Go," the radio friendly hit "Dice and Thunder," the ominous title track "Nuclear Messiah," the Uria Heep cover "Look At Yourself" featuring U.H. guitarist Mick Box, the roar of "She's So Evil," and the searing "Electric Burn." A solid metal outing from a stable of notable veterans. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.nuclearmessiah.com

ROBERT ELLIS ORRALL WONDERLAND 10-SONG CD

- WONDERLAND
- BRAND NEW ME



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- I'M COMING WITH YOU
- CAROL ANN
- I DISAPPEAR
- WHEN WILL YOU LOVE ME AGAIN?
- UNDERGROUND
- WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE
- I'M ONLY ME
- END TITLE SONG

Robert Ellis Orrall is a world-class singer, songwriter and keyboardist that hit the New England music scene in 1980. Performing at legendary venues like The Rat, The Paradise and The Orpheum, Orrall was part of a new wave scene in Boston that included The Neighborhoods, Mission Of Burma, 'Til Tuesday and others. He signed with RCA in 1981 and released three critically acclaimed albums with well known Boston area players, Kook Lawry, Don Walden and David Stefanelli. He still plays with these guys today in fact, his new album, Wonderland, features his three old friends sounding better than ever.

First off on Wonderland, Orrall's vocals are soaring and striking throughout. Lyrically, his lyrics are brilliant, painting vivid pictures in the mind. Meanwhile, his band creates a gorgeous tapestry of sound behind the singer that fills the aurasphere with sheer joy. Just listen to the demanding vocal track "Wonderland," the revealing orchestration of "Brand New Me," the

magnificently penned "Carol Ann," the inquiring "When Will You Love Me Again?," the beautiful "Where Do We Go From Here?," or the groovin' "End Title Song" and see if you don't agree Wonderland should be considered for album of the year. Bravo! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.robertellisorrall.com

**CACTUS
TEMPLE OF BLUES II
11-SONG CD**

- BACK DOOR MAN PT. 1 & 2
- 300 POUNDS OF JOY
- MOANIN' AT MIDNIGHT
- DOWN IN THE BOTTOM
- TOKEN CHOKIN'
- BAD STUFF
- TAIL DRAGGER
- THE LITTLE RED ROOSTER
- PURPLE HAZE
- SPOONFUL
- FEEL SO GOOD

Led by brainchild/drummer Carmine Appice, the Cactus All Stars are an ass kicking collection of some of the most famous rockers that were ever spun on a turntable. Opening the album with "Back Door Man Pt. 1 & 2," the track features Eric Gales on vocals & guitar along with bassist Billy Sheehan and Carmine on

drums. Volatile! Next up "300 Pounds of Joy" features King's X guitarist Ty Tabor boasting his otherworldly fretboard antics. Blistering! "Moanin' at Midnight" features one of my personal favorite guitarists, Pat Travers holding court in a stompin' guitar excursion. Fiery! King's X bassist Dug Pinnick grabs "Down In The Bottom" and kicks the tune inside and out. Electrifying! "Token Chokin'" featuring Bumblefoot and features his rollicking, slide guitar. Rockin!

Steve Morse, Joe Lynn Turner, Derek Sherinian and Tony Franklin join up for a gang bang of "Bad Stuff." This is Heavy! Meanwhile, Rudy Sarzo and Alex Skolnick put their musical sorcery on "Tail Dragger." Hot! "The Little Red Rooster" is propelled by Dee Snider, Tracii Guns and Jimmy Haslip as they resurrect this good ole rocker. Bussing! "Purple Haze" featuring singer Melanie turns in a alternative version of Hendrix's world-class anthem. Huh!? "Spoonful" gets the Ted Nugent and Bob Daisley treatment one more time. Roaring! Billy Sheehan and Britt Lightning fire up "Feel So Good." Flammable!

Guitarist Artie Dillon, singer Ed Terry, bassist James Caputo, guitarist Richard Fortus, bassist Phil Sousann, bassist Johnny Rod, keyboardist Derek Sherinian, bassist Rudy Sarzo, harmonica man Rockin' Jake, bassist Jimmy Haslip, singer Rob Caudill, guitarist Tommy Thayer and keyboardist

Marty Paoletta along with percussionists Vinny Appice, Gregg Bissonette, Jerry Gaskill, Nicko McBrain, Roxy Petrucci, Mike Portnoy and Todd Sucherman all weigh in on this well-conceived over-the-top rock project spearheaded by drummer extraordinaire Carmine Appice. A true Rock & Roll extravaganza. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]
Contact-- <https://cactusrockband.bandcamp.com/album/temple-of-blues-ii-all-stars>

**BROTHER JOHN
BLACK CROW
13-SONG CD**

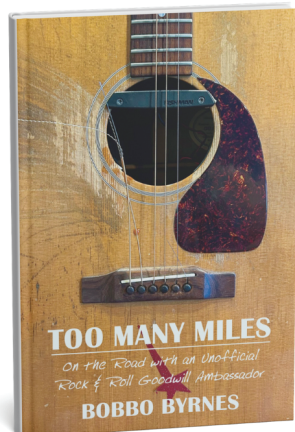
- BREAD AND SALT
- NEW SOVEREIGNS BLUES
- SVELTE MAN BLUES
- BLACK CROW
- DIRT ROAD BLUES
- WANDERING EYE BLUES
- NO PLACE LIKE HOME
- THAT THING YOU DID LAST NIGHT
- OLD MAN MOSE
- SEXY BABY BLUES
- WHISKEY GLASS
- FIVE MILES
- COOK IT TO THE BONE

If you dig traditional acoustic Blues, you're going to want this CD by Brother

Continued on next page >>>

TOO MANY MILES

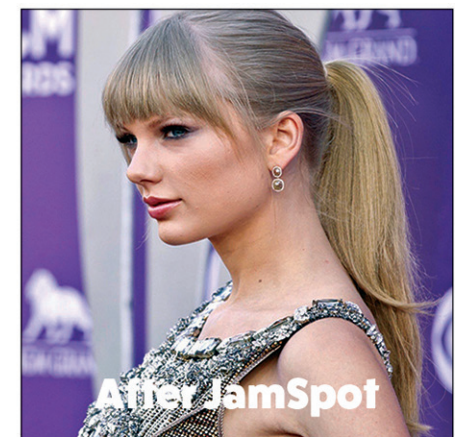
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John. The Philadelphia-based blues duo of Johnny Never and John Colgan-Davis deliver an acoustic collection of traditional Delta and Piedmont blues creations that's hard to ignore. 12 Johnny Never originals and one Charlie Patton number round out the project. Never handles the vocals and acoustic guitar work while Colgan-Davis wails on the harmonica. It's modern day traditional blues played exceptionally, without apology.

Songs of note include the album's buzzing title track "Black Crow," the well played "Old Man Mose," the sultry "Sexy Baby Blues," and the cool album closer "Cook It To The Bone." You're going to dig this material, I guarantee it! [B.M.O.]

Contact- www.johnnynever.com

LAURA CHAVEZ MY VOICE 10-SONG CD

- BORN ON THE BAYOU
- MIND YOUR STEP
- SHOT-ZEE
- WANDERER
- EL CASCABEL
- SO LONG BABY, GOODBYE
- CHINESE CHECKERS
- MAMBA NEGRA
- NAPA STREET
- LA LLORONA

You may remember guitarist, Laura Chavez's name from her years playing with Candy Kane. A decade in to their partnership, Candy died from cancer sending Laura in to a bit of a tailspin for 6 months. Later, Chavez would go on and play in Nikki Hill's backing band. In the same year, Chavez played guitar on Vanessa Collier's album, Meeting My Shadow. That same busy year, Chavez joined Monster Mike Welch and Mike Ledbetter on a Delta Groove Productions release, Right Place, Right Time. She also worked with Big Daddy Wilson, Whitney Shay, The Lucky Losers, Jade Bennett, Ina Forsman, Lindsay Beaver and Katarina Pejak.

Fast forward to the present and Chavez is releasing her debut CD, My Voice, an all-instrumental recording for Ruf Records. Delivering 5 originals and 5 covers by folks like Creedence Clearwater Revival, Dave Alvin, Steve Cropper, Lorenzo Barcelata Castro and a traditional number, Chavez visits all her influences from her humble beginnings. She exudes taste and tone throughout this dynamic outing as she's joined by her great band, Lea Worms on organ & piano, Tomek Germann on bass,

Marty Dodson on drums, Denis Palatin on drums and Antonio Econom on percussion.

Songs of note include "Wanderer," El Cascabel," "Mamba Negra" and "Napa Street." A tasteful outing for Chavez and her excellent band. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact- music.youtube.com/channel/UCjXmPRhrjLE6ttuWk2dCFeQ

EUROPEAN SUN WHEN BRITAIN WAS GREAT 13-SONG CD

- CHOICE PARALYSIS
- GOING VIRAL
- DAD
- THE ANGELS IN THE CLOUDS
- IN BEDFORD FALLS
- THE SPACE SHE LEFT
- FALLING DOWN THE STAIRS WITH ARTHUR SEATON
- THE SEA IS A PIRATE'S BEST FRIEND
- EDWARD COLSTON'S LIKENESS
- WHEN BRITAIN WAS GREAT
- THEIR NCUTI GATWA POSTER
- WHEN I HAVE FEARS
- SCHOOL REPORT

Steve Miles finally proves you can incarnate the sound of Englishness without

sounding like the Kinks or Ray Davies. This middle-aged poet, with the help of the Skepwax gang and some suitable backing vocals from Amelia weaves everyday largely spoken word tales in front of gentle playful melodic interludes. Occasionally, Miles actually competently sings as on the catchy "Falling Down The Stairs With Arthur Seaton" referencing a British actor of years decades gone by. Steve finds just the right level of sentimentality for "Dad" and "The Space She Left" without sinking into any kind of pathos. He generates a more serious tone when reciting the song about historical slave trader Edward Colston. The essence of Scottish poet Ivor Cutler seeps through here and thee, minus the Celtic accent. With the 17 minute epic, "School Report" gingerly outdoes the Velvet Underground's story about Waldo and it's is nicely spiced up via Amelia Fletchers short little choruses. While Miles makes no attempt to rock your socks off, he will transport you to a different yet surprisingly modern universe in the British West Country. [Gecko]

Contact-- europeansunmusic.bandcamp.com

COMET GAIN LETTERS TO ORDINARY OUTSIDERS 12-SONG CD

- THE BALLAD OF THE LIVES WE LED
- IF THEY CAN'T FIND THE WAY THEN THERE'S NO WAY OUT
- BEAT OF THE VEINS
- WE WERE PAINTERMEN
- THREADS!
- YEAH, I KNOW IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, BUT THERE'S ALWAYS FURTHER YOU CAN FALL
- DO YOU REMEMBER 'THE LITES ON THE WATER'
- DANBURY ROAD
- BUILDINGS
- HEARTS OF SCARS
- ASHTRAY CULT
- MAYBE ONE DAY IT'LL REALLY HAPPEN

David Christian and/or Comet Gain have been around since 1992 when they burst upon a welcoming Indie scene. He's released a huge stack of records of various formats and has also changed the line up more than once, still he's now firmly anchored in a niche between urban British Folk, pop and Indie, as befits a singer songwriter best ager. The spoken word intros are an acquired taste for those of not on a first name basis with Christian as they put a brake on the momentum. Nevertheless he eventually launches into the tasteful opener which has him, guitar, piano and Rachel Evans moving into autobiographical territory. "If They Can't Find" is even more melodic and reflects a somewhat nostalgia driven romanticism. I'm also reminded of the Pooh Sticks' Hue Williams and Rob Pursey. He rocks out more on the rhythm driven "Beat Of The Veins" to remind us of classic Comet Gain fare. He eases of the pace for the jangly but whimsical "We Were Paintermen" where the drum fills give it just the right kind of kick to keep it perky. David builds up some bravado for "Threads!" where he explores the mentality behind male fashion, but then loses the plot with the atonal psych middle section. "Yeah, I Know" has Rachel Evans delivering the vocals in a very fervent manner until Christian joins in for the ultra-smooth chorus. Our main man comes back to center stage for "Do You Remember" where he alternates between near spoken word delivery and proper singing without losing momentum. The downbeat sentimental ballad "Danbury Road" takes us down to a thoughtful level where the organ sound dictates the tone. Evans, who's been around since the second line up in 1997, returns to the fray for the slow burning "Buildings." The whole



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gang put some real emotion and sweat into the roller coaster ride of "Hearts Of Scars." "Ashtray Cult" seems rather restrained in comparison but has a bluesier/America riffology driving it. Christian lets us off with the highly personal and tuneful "Maybe One Day It'll Really Happen," which is full of twists and turns that gives us one last burst of excitement. It's nice to see Christian maintaining an entire band instead of just cooking up something on a laptop in his bedroom, like many of this generation have stooped to these days as this actually sounds like a real band effort. [Gecko]

Contact-- <https://comet-gain.bandcamp.com/album/letters-to-ordinary-outsiders>

**RAILCARD
RAILCARD
10 SONG LP/CD**

- NARCISSUS
- BORN IN '62
- CHERRY PLUM
- REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR
- NORTHERN SOUL DANCING
- SLOW TRAIN
- RAILCARD
- DISCO LOADOUT
- DAY DREAM
- THINK ABOUT THAT

A number of Skepwax recording artists and friends in their entourage discovered

they were all born in 1962 and thought that was too much of a coincidence not to do a record together. After 2 EPs, they compiled the lot and gave us two more tracks. The result is a rich and warm pop extravaganza with Rachel Love at the microphone and guitar.

The simplistic 2/2 beat takes you back to 1960s British pop, but the production is very lush and modern day. The raison d'etre, "Born 1962" has the rowdy gang engaging in a bit of nostalgia where Rachel hist vocal highs that give you shivers down your back amid some truly heart warming melodies. Drummer Ian Button provides us with a second voice to wonderfully balance the whole thing out.

"Cherry Plum" is a very short interlude with a downbeat 2/2 rhythm again to take the edge off. "Revolutionary Calendar" shws off a different side of the band. Button takes on most of the vocals for "Revolutionary Calendar" and "Northern Soul Dancing On" where "Northern" is the more adventurous tune with plenty of dynamics and a jangly beat, again with a late 1960s big production sound.

For "Slow Train," with Rachel sharing the mic, a downshift takes place where they subdue the melodies to an almost monotone level, without sucking the life out of the song. On "Railcard," their corporate anthem, a healthy mix of jangly rhythms and an airy chorus have you wafting about

the room on a cloud.

A tense bass line kicks off "Disco Loadout" and as one would expect, "Day Dream" takes you on a gentle reverie as the vocals of the 2 main counterparts are cleverly intertwined in an all too short intermezzo. They leave us on an immensely strong note with the very upbeat and sugary "Think About That" again with jangly drums and short, heavily tweaked trumpet bursts. Rachel Love's very youthful voice is really the ace in this group's equation. [Gecko]

Contact-- <https://railcardband.bandcamp.com/album/railcard>

**SAVAGE BEAT
BRIGHT LIGHTS, TALL SHADOWS
10-SONG CD**

- STREET BOOGIE CONFIDENTIAL
- CUT TO THE CHASE
- UNHINGED
- KILLER INSIDE
- BLOOD ON THE KNEES
- BRIGHT LIGHTS, TALL SHADOWS
- THE SIDE HUSTLE
- WORSE FOR WEAR
- THREE CHORD DISCIPLE
- TOMORROW (Might Never Come)

Amsterdam's Savage Beat already released a powerful compendium of older material on the Dutch Wap Shoo Wap label and now cap it all off with Bright Lights,

Tall Shadows. The carnival like intro is the Trojan horse before the real onslaught, which has strong elements of 1970s boogie rock on the instrumental "Street Boogie Confidential," as the name clearly advertises. Marko Petrovic's gritty vocals and the high energy delivery however remind us more of US West Coast punk bands starting on "Cut To The Chase." The gang vocals on the anthem "Unhinged" all subtly underlined with a bit of keyboards will clearly lift our spirits.

This recipe works again on the dynamic "Killer Inside" where you're reminded of the Dictators due to the singing. The boogie element comes back to the forefront on the joyous "Blood On The Knees," while "Bright Lights, Tall Shadows" squares the circle between anthemic and Oi with style. Status Quo was clearly not lost on them on the basic riff of "The Side Hustle," Petrovic's vocals are obviously more masculine. "Worse For Wear" remains defiantly high energy. "Three Chord Disciple" has elements of Social Distortion in its fast and loose delivery. On "Tomorrow (Might Never Come)" the lads leave us with a powerful mission statement and probably better advice than from most shrinks. This is a band where you have to make the decision of going berserk in the mosh pit or pumping your fist in the air. [Gecko]

Contact-- <https://wapshoowaprecords.bandcamp.com>



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Bobbo Byrnes

Former New Englander Bobbo Byrnes made the sojourn to California more than a decade ago and still calls the West coast his base. An affable, larger-than-life troubadour with a free spirit for adventure, Byrnes trots the globe bringing his songs and tales of life and love to listeners around the world.

Those many years of performing have led him to pen a new book called, *Too Many Miles* and companion CD of the same name chronicling his experiences. Well written and chock full of interesting narratives, Byrnes' writing is just as cathartic as his music. This is his story (so far)...

METRONOME: I dig your new book, *Too Many Miles*. What prompted you to write it?

Bobbo Byrnes: I always kept journals and would put them online every once in a while. My wife said, you should make a cohesive thing about all your writings. Tracy was really supportive and encouraging of that.

METRONOME: How long did it take you to put the whole thing together?

I've been writing it for many years, but it took about 10 or 11 months to edit.

METRONOME: Did you have people helping you with the proofreading and editing and how did you meet those folks?

Yes. My friend Caroline, was the first editor. I was in a band with her in L.A. in the early 2000s. She's a proofreader and ghost writer for other people. She's also written a musical that was off Broadway. I just always stayed friends with her, and she said, "When you're ready to do this, let me have first crack at it." She was fantastic with it.

From there I went to another friend named Peggy. She has 1 million followers on YouTube. In a younger life, she was a book editor. She's still a writer.

METRONOME: How did the whole process work with them?

I am so sick of my words at this point (laughs). When Caroline started, she would say this and that and this is what I would do and I would say, Okay. I would take things out and then Peggy got a hold of it, and said, "You're talking about stuff and I'm going to rearrange things." I was the last eyes on all of it.

METRONOME: How long did it take them to proof the book for you?

I started with Caroline in June 2025. She got through it by August. Then Peggy and I were working from August until November. I gave it to my friend Julie as well, and she did some more corrections.

METRONOME: I loved what you did not having chapters but having particular situation's with different dates starting your story lines...

My journals were kind of like that, but they

were scattered all over the place, especially when I first started writing them.

When I finally got everything together in one word document and formatted, it was up over 3000 pages. Obviously, there were periods of years that were chopped out.

METRONOME: You were able to deliver the meat and potatoes though and that's really all people want to read.

The biggest change that happened was when I started going solo. When you were in a band, you travel in that group and when you're at the gig you are together, but when you're solo, you don't have that comfort. It's more inviting for

people to start talking to you. Then, if you're staying at someone's house, you still have to be on until you go to sleep (laughs).

METRONOME: You self published the book. Did you look around for a publisher first?

I reached out to a handful of publishers. It just seemed like an easier way to lose more money. I had one publisher write back to me and say they weren't interested in a single thing I had to say without reading a word. Then I had another publisher say they wanted to publish it right away without reading a single word. I knew the book I wanted, and I knew the story I wanted to tell.

METRONOME: What made you decide to release a companion CD with the book?

I felt like the songs had to travel along with the book, because they were informing where I was going. They were as much a part of the story as anything else.

I've done a couple of book events now where I'm singing and talking at the same time. The feedback I've gotten from people seems to have added another layer to the performance I wanted to do.

METRONOME: Was it easy to choose the songs that went with the book or was that laborious?

They felt very natural to what was in the book. **METRONOME: What did your wife Tracy have to do with this other than inspiration?**

She was very helpful. We had a big bulletin board with chapter heads and titles, moving them around and seeing where everything fits. There's probably another 200 pages that we cut. There were some things about people that I have toured with and it didn't go well. I thought, I don't need to punch down on this. Who is this for? I don't have any really dirty laundry to air.

I really wanted to make sure I put in a chapter about my buddy, Ronnie though. When I first got to Los Angeles, with him in the studio, he was so uplifting and positive. That was a story that I felt needed to be told. People need to know you can be in the music business without competing. We are all in this together.

METRONOME: That was very clear in the book. Most of the people you met were very kind to you.

No man is an island, right? I do write a little bit about record label stuff too. I even talk about the label I was on in Germany that I had issues with. They also did a lot of good for me. We had our ups and downs. That's the music business. There were good times and there were shit times.

I'm a fan of a writer named Joe Oestreich who wrote a book called *Hitless Wonder* about his time in minor league rock & roll. KISS wanted to help him make a record, but it fell through.

Everybody's got these stories. Anybody who's ever packed up and slept in their car and gone to another town to play gigs, they have a story to tell. Then there's the stories we can't tell. I'm going to put this on paper (laughs)?

METRONOME: I noticed over the last year or two that you're not doing as much touring. Is that true?

I was still doing it, but I wasn't documenting it because I was working on the book. It was hard to write about current things, and then shift to editing. The book goes all the way up to the beginning of 2025 though.

METRONOME: What does your mother think about the book?



My mother likes it. I think a lot of it is filling in blanks that she didn't really need filled in. I had toured with my mother, which proved to be challenging as well (laughs).

METRONOME: What else have you been up to?

Something that I'm working on right now, The Kerouac family has become fans of me. I'm trying to work with them about creating a new bit of music that I write inspired by things on the road and following the path.

I'm talking to my friend Ralph [Molina] and Sony [Mone] from Crazyhorse because Ralph still has Danny Whitten's old guitar. I'm trying to get that to write some songs and I'm talking to my friends at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame about dropping the guitar off for them.

METRONOME: The Kerouac camp is doing a lot of things lately. They're going to transform an old church in Lowell into the Jack Kerouac Museum. How cool is that?

When Jack Kerouac died he had \$91. The Kerouac museum in San Francisco has a letter to Marlon Brando and Jack is trying to convince Marlon Brando to buy the movie rights to On The Road. He's writing to him, you and I can be in the movie together. He's trying to convince Marlon Brando, the actor of the day, to do this and Brando's wondering, Who the fuck is this guy? Jack never acted in anything. His only motivation was to have a lasting revenue stream for he and his mother.

METRONOME: Are you on the road right now to do some shows in Arizona?

Yes. Two shows in two days. On Saturday, I'm working at the Glendale Folk & Heritage Festival where I'll be putting on a workshop on "Dynamics and Rhythmic Soloing for Solo Performance." I'll be doing a house concert that night and playing at The Glendale Folk Festival during the day on Sunday.

Then I'm playing Fiddler's Dream Coffeehouse in Phoenix on Monday night.

METRONOME: How did you get those shows?

I coordinated going to the festival and doing those shows. I'm playing the Tucson Book Festival as well.

METRONOME: Will you get to sell your books there?

Yes.

METRONOME: Did you find a distribution company for your book?

I'm using Bookbaby. They're the sister company to CDBaby.com. They're getting it up on Kindle and Amazon and all those places. I also started working on the audio version book of it.

Remember when you recorded and you heard your voice back and you bristled a little bit? It's 10 times worse with an audiobook (laughs).

METRONOME: Are you doing it yourself or did you hire someone to do it?

Oh, it needs to be in my voice. I tried to keep this book under 300 pages, but I failed miserably. I'm at 456. Once I was over the 300 I realized, you know what, I need some photographs in here. Then, when I went to

Kindle they said, "We didn't realize you had pictures in here. It will be three dollars per photograph." I asked, How many pictures do I have? They said, "112." Whatever.

METRONOME: How is your band The Fallen Stars doing? Are you still playing?

We are. We did a show recently and we have another show coming up in March. We have some festivals scheduled for this summer.

METRONOME: Is your wife Tracy and the same drummer still in the band?

Yes, Tracy is still with me and we have the same drummer we've had for a while, Matt Froehlich.

METRONOME: Does Tracy tour with you anymore?

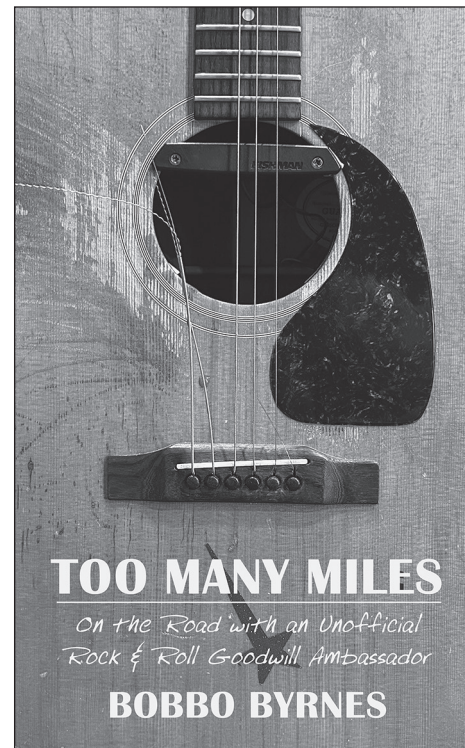
No. She likes doing local things and staying closer to home more than touring.

METRONOME: You just released a CD called Music for Train Stations - Vol. 2. Can you tell us more about that?

This recording is completely new. I used the same piano I used for Volume 1. For this one, I wanted to do something a little more contemplative. It's really something to take a nap to. It's chill out, meditation stuff that I enjoy making when I'm not making other things. It's more in the Brian Eno camp.

Eno has a great documentary out, but you can't stream the documentary. I saw it in a theater in L.A. and I left the theater like I was high.

METRONOME: When will you be back in New England?



I'll be there in April and May. I'm doing some dates around there. I'll be doing a show in Milford, New Hampshire and one in Lowell, MA. I'm going to try to get in some bookstores and libraries too.

-- Brian M. Owens

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The Time Machine

The Smithereens

Photo circa: 1980

Band Members L to R: Pat DiNizio (Vocals & Guitar), Jim Babjak (Guitar), Mike Mesaros (Bass), Dennis Diken (Drums).

Musical Achievements: The Smithereens formed in 1980 in Carteret, New Jersey. The original lineup played until 2006, when Mike Mesaros left the band and Severo Jornacion took over on bass. Mesaros reunited with the band in 2016 and 2017 for select performances and continued to tour in 2018 to the present. The band's name derives from the cartoon character Yosemite Sam who often used the expression "I'm-a-gonna blow ya to smithereens!" The band had a string of hits in the late 1980s through the mid-1990s, including "Only a Memory," "A Girl Like You" and "Too Much Passion." The highest position a Smithereens album attained on the Billboard pop charts was in 1990, when 11 peaked at #41 on the strength of the single "A Girl Like You" (which hit #38). "A Girl Like You" was originally written to be the title track for the 1989 Cameron Crowe film, *Say Anything*. The album also featured a duet between DiNizio and Belinda Carlisle on "Blue Period."

Where Are They Now: After Pat DiNizio died in 2017 at the age of 62, the band continued performing live shows as a trio (Babjak, Mesaros and Diken) with various guest vocalists. The surviving members of the band performed together as The Smithereens in a tribute show to DiNizio on January 13, 2018, at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, N.J. The band continues to play today with two different lead singers, Marshall Crenshaw and John Cowsill.



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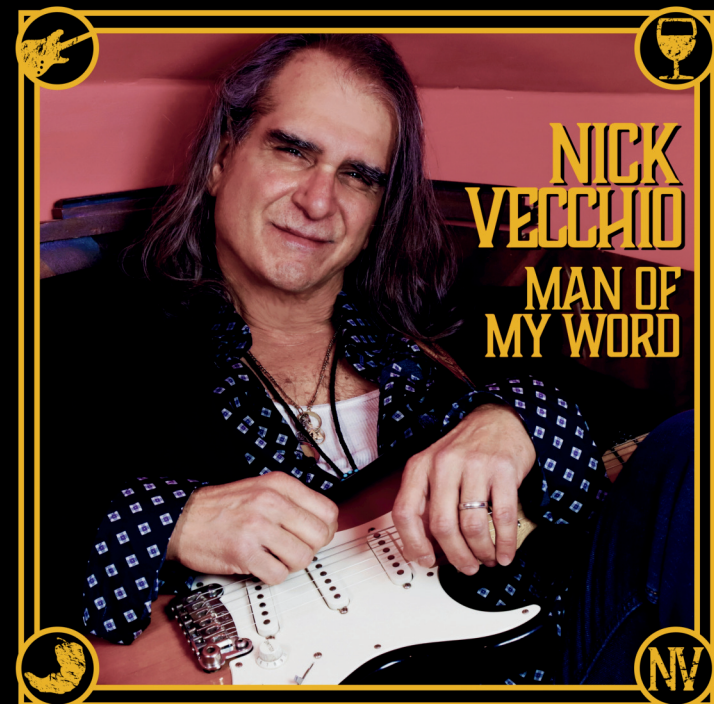
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Consuelo's Revenge

Hailing from Providence, Rhode Island, Consuelo's Revenge was formed in the early 2010s featuring multi-vocals, fiddle, sax, accordion and guitars. Their sound is as worldly as it is wild, melding Folk, Blues, Klezmer, Bluegrass and Americana into an irresistible musical concoction.

Cutting their teeth in dive bars, their infectious energy and musical swagger earned them a reputation as one of Providence's best live acts. Their self-titled 2013 debut and rollicking 2015 follow-up, *Mercy*, boasted the group's uptempo, genre-blending songwriting, earning them multiple honors at the Motif Music Awards.

Guided by a bold artistic vision, the band has cultivated a loyal legion of fans, all while keeping their artistic journey as playful and unpredictable as a manic circus ride.

I tracked the gang down and questioned them about the band and the making of their new release, *Bread & Circuses*...

METRONOME: Where is Consuelo's Revenge based?

Ian Lacombe: The band is based in Providence, Rhode Island.

METRONOME: How long has the band been together?

Ian: Since 2012.

METRONOME: Who is in the band and what is their role?

Kirk Anderson: All seven of us sing, but it's principally Amanda Salemi on lead vocals. Ian Lacombe is on bass, Al Diaz plays drums, Tom Pritchard is on the violin, Matt Swanton plays the saxophone, I play the accordion and electric guitar and Chris Van Booven plays acoustic guitar.

METRONOME: What was the initial plan for the group? Studio project? Live band? Be Rock Stars?

Ian: The initial idea for the project was to be a laid-back folk band. It was started by Ian and Nick Smyth, of The Dreadnoughts. Nick was in Rhode Island for graduate school

and wanted to put together a folk band while he was here.

Ian was pretty busy in a band called "Route .44", an 8-piece original, orchestral rock band. When Ian and Nick started Consuelo's Revenge, both wanted to have a very minimalist, laid-back folk project. Neither Ian nor Nick wanted to be the lead singer, and that's where Amanda came in.

She just brought a soul to the sound that they weren't necessarily anticipating and the band grew and developed around that. Over time it went from a basic, acoustic folk band, to what you hear today.

METRONOME: How did you come up with the name for the band?

Chris Van Booven: To be honest, it was just a silly, and not even particularly funny, inside joke. Somehow it just stuck.

METRONOME: Who are some of the group's musical influences?

Chris: We draw on a wide range of genres from Blues, Klezmer, Balkan/Eastern

European Folk, '70s Rock, '90s Alt-Rock, Prog Metal and even A cappella.

Kirk: Some specific influences, in no particular order, are The Pogues, Tom Waits, Decemberists, Nina Simone, Oi Vai Voi and System of a Down.

METRONOME: How many albums does the band have out?

Kirk: *Consuelo's Revenge* (2013), *Mercy* (2015) and *Bread & Circuses* (2025).

METRONOME: In October of 2025, you released *Bread & Circuses*. How long did it take to record?

Chris: In terms of writing and arranging, it was a gestation of nearly 7 years (including a year and a half or so of remote writing and collaboration during the pandemic). The recording process itself took us about a year. We spent roughly 7 months tracking the album and another 5 months editing, mixing, and mastering.

METRONOME: How did you come up with the name for album?



Kirk: It was a long process. In the end, Chris found a felicitous phrase from “Didja Hear that Bell?” and everyone just said. “Yeah.” Maybe it was due to attrition. Our favorite Vancouver DJ said the title, “Kind of rings true for these days.” But when does it not?

METRANOME: Where did you record the album?

Kirk: We recorded it at Dyerville Recording in Providence, Rhode Island.

METRANOME: Who engineered?

Kirk: Eric Hanson recorded us. Mixing and mastering was done by Sammy D’Ambruoso of Lucky Star Studio in Olneyville R.I.

METRANOME: I really dug the song “Kosmic Klezmer.” How did that come about?

Chris: So glad you dug it! “Kosmic Klezmer” is a special song for the band, because we wrote it the year I joined the band in 2017. It captures the stylistic evolution of the band in its current form. It’s also noteworthy as the only co-authored song on the album, with lead singer Amanda Salemi writing most of the lyrics and myself writing the music and some of the lyrics.

I had fully written the tune start to finish – down to the three-part harmonies – but I had hit a wall and just couldn’t figure out a direction to take with the lyrics. Amanda came to the rescue with some fabulous sci-fi imagery, and the song was born.

METRANOME: “Fool’s Paradise” was a great tune. What was the inspiration behind the writing of that?

Chris: “Fool’s Paradise” is based on the true origin story of my wife and me, and it celebrates the reckless pursuit of love in the face of all but certain catastrophe. It tells the story of how I met and fell in love with a girl in my college songwriting class – just as I was getting out of a serious multi-year relationship. Ignoring the chorus of friends and family who were sensibly encouraging me to take some time and not rush right into something else, I plunged headlong into the new relationship and never looked back. 20 years—and three kids—later, I couldn’t be happier to be a “fool in paradise.”

METRANOME: “Not Even Hope” had a great hook. Who wrote that?

Ian: I wrote “Not Even Hope.” It should be noted there is a lot of pain in the songwriting camp of this band and like many artists they are challenged with channeling their emotions into a pathway through the darkness. “Not Even Hope” was written as my attempt at processing something that nobody should have to process, with the limited tools that I was equipped with.

METRANOME: “Bon Voyage’s” groove was infectious. How was that song borne?

Chris: This song was the result of a conscious, deliberate effort to write the heaviest, highest-energy song in the Consuelo’s Revenge repertoire. I’m a bit of a closet System of a Down fan, and this song was my least successful attempt to conceal that fact. From the syncopated hits of the dueling Middle Eastern sax and violin/accordion intro to the frenetic punk breakdown to the reggae-esque groove of the verses and chorus, the goal was to grip (punish?) the listener with breakneck dynamic shifts from start to finish.

Lyricaly, the song loosely honors the memory of Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier, who manned the first successful, confirmed human flight in history in a Montgolfière-style hot air balloon in 1783.

METRANOME: What informs the band’s songwriting? Is it personal? Observational? Off-the-wall?

Chris: The band’s songwriting draws inspiration from a variety of sources. In some cases, it’s undoubtedly personal. On our most recent album, *Bread & Circuses*, several songs, “Not Even Hope,” “Fool’s Paradise,” and “By & By,” for example, would fall into that category.

In other cases, we draw on real historical events and/or characters that we feel compelled to write about. Some clear

examples of this approach are “Lady Liberty” (*Mercy*, 2015), which describes the assassination of President William McKinley from the vantage point of his assassin. “Dr. Ordinaire” (*Bread & Circuses*, 2025), which is an account of Vincent Van Gogh’s absinthe-induced descent into madness and “The Palatine Light” (*Mercy*, 2015), which is based on the legendary Princess Augusta shipwreck that took place off the coast of Block Island in the 18th century.

METRANOME: Who is the main songwriter or is it collaborative?

Chris: The new album includes songs by four of us: Kirk Anderson, Ian Lacombe, Amanda Salemi and myself. The amount of collaboration varies from one song to another. In some cases, a song will be introduced to the band with nothing but a riff or a hook that the entire band then collectively brings to life through free exploration and improvisation, each member adding their parts and input in real time.

In other cases, a song will get pitched to the group as a full-fledged composition, with all parts precisely mapped out in advance. In these instances, collaboration still plays an important role, but it’s often more about refining and fine tuning than doing from-the-ground-up arranging work.

METRANOME: Who does the band’s

album artwork?

Kirk: Art for this album was done by our friend, Janel Twogood.

METRANOME: If someone was unfamiliar with Consuelo’s Revenge, how would you describe your music to them?

Kirk: Female-fronted, high-energy, Euro-folk inspired “Gypsy Americana” with multi-part harmonies and diverse instrumentation, including fiddle, accordion and saxophone. For something less cumbersome, maybe “Fleetwood Mac meets Gogol Bordello?” For something simpler still, a word used by someone else recently to describe us...“intense!”

METRANOME: How often do you guys play live?

Chris: We try to play live at least once every 6 to 8 weeks, with more frequent performances during the summer months.

METRANOME: Where are some of the places people could see you perform?

Chris: Given our home base in Rhode Island, you’ll most often find us at venues like The Parlour in Providence, Myrtle in East Providence, The Met in Pawtucket, and Buttonwoods Brewery in Providence. We’re actively working to expand into the Worcester and Boston areas, and we’ve been fortunate to take part in several summer festival series, including PVDFest, Foo Fest and the Warren Folks Fest, to name a few.

METRANOME: Have you shot any videos for your songs?

Chris: Yes! We actually just shot a live recording of “Kosmic Klezmer” to enter the NPR Tiny Desk Contest for 2026. The audio was recorded and mixed at Lucky Star Studio by our long-time collaborator, Sammy D’Ambruoso, with videography by the talented and prolific concert photographer, Asim Barakzai. You can find the video on our official Consuelo’s Revenge YouTube Channel.

METRANOME: Is there something you’d like to add before we close out?

Chris: We’re very proud of each of our albums and we obviously hope that everyone reading this goes out and buys our records or listens to all our music on the streaming platform of their choice.

The best way to experience Consuelo’s Revenge is live. We bring big, big energy to every show we play, no matter how big or small, and we make it our mission to ensure that everyone who comes out to see us has a fantastic time. If we’ve piqued your interest, follow us on social media, add yourself to the mailing list on our website at www.consuelosrevenge.com, and then mark your calendars for the next Consuelo’s Revenge show. Come dance with us!

-- Brian M. Owens

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Nick Vecchio

Nick Vecchio is a very busy, driven guy. Along with owning Band Gig School of Music & Performance, teaching full time, writing, recording, and performing his own music, Nick also loves to cook. In 2016, he began filming cooking shows called Nick's Supper Club that showcased recipes and music that can be viewed on twelve local television stations around Massachusetts and Connecticut, as well as on YouTube. He also perfected his own original recipes of Nick's Supper Club Hot Sauces. Not bad for a self-made, guitar playing man...

METRONOME: I was reading your bio, and I remember your band King V back in the day....

Nick Vecchio: Yeah, I was in the band up until the early '90s.

METRONOME: How many albums did you guys put out?

We put out a couple of albums back then and would float a few singles here and there. We got some local airplay with one song that was called, "Lay Low." We were a mix between Bon Jovi and John Mellencamp. It was very American rock music which is kind of what I'm still doing today.

METRONOME: Why did the band break up?

We were all in early to mid 30s. One guy decided to move back home to New York. He had an alcohol problem and moved away. It was just typical band stuff.

METRONOME: You made music your career. Can you tell us about it?

I committed myself to try to do music as a living anyway I could. I started teaching guitar lessons and just fell in love with it. I still love it to this day and it's 30 years later. The only thing that would burn a hole in me is that I would write a song periodically, but I was never doing anything with it. I never felt the burn to get it done because I wasn't gigging a lot and I was only playing an open mic now and again. I just said to myself, you know what, I'm going to record an album. I gotta do it, so I did it. I'm actually working on another one

right now.

METRONOME: When did you start working on, Man of My Word?

2022. It took me a couple of years to get it done, and I released it last year in March. I did a big show at this place in Norwood called the Fallout Shelter. We also played at the Square Root as my warm up show for the Fallout Shelter. We did the shows, I sold them out and people came.

METRONOME: Tell me about your music school.

It's called Band Gig School of Music and Performance. We had a show last



September at the school where the kids were performing. I had my band perform at that too. We did the full set, but we really haven't done anything since because I'm working on the new record.

METRONOME: The folks you had play on the album are all good friends, but it seems like some of them are teachers at your school. Is that right?

That's correct.

METRONOME: That must be convenient for you?

Well, yes. The drummer, his name is Pat Santorelli, he plays in another local band in Boston called Bricks of Boston. A few years ago, I was affiliated with another music school. I merged my

school with them. So I went there for this meeting, and I was looking at this guy [Pat] and said, I know you. He said, "You look familiar too. What's your name?" We realized that we went to college together. We did four years at Berklee. Back in the 1980s we didn't have phones to keep phone numbers. We used to have books and write in them. He sent me a photo of a page in his book from the 1980s and there was my phone number.

We knew each other, and had conversations way back when. Eventually, he came to work for me at my music school. Now, we're really good

store. Eventually, they brought in this other company called The National Music Workshop to run their lesson program. They had a guy there running the program, but he wasn't making any headway. He wasn't being very successful at it.

Daddy's looked at the roster of instructors and thought, Who could we get that's already in with Daddy's to do this and knows everybody? They picked me. They asked, "Would you be interested in being our Director?" I said, Absolutely.

I ended up running the education program for all the Daddys Junky Music stores. Then in 2011, in one conversation, Daddy's went out of business. It was really fast. They just closed up. I'll never forget it.

METRONOME: How did you start your school of music?

Three years prior, I had started Band Gig - Join A Band program on my own. I did it as a separate entity from what I was doing at Daddy's. All it was, was a join a band program. I was able to solicit my clientele at the store. Daddys loved it and thought it was cool. When Daddy's went out of business, I immediately turned it into Band Gig School of Music. I was lucky enough to find a space in the building near to where we were. I moved in within four months to that building.

Of course I was in a panic at first, but the timing worked out. I had been teaching there from 1991 to 2011. I had this great job as director, and all of a sudden, the rug got pulled out from underneath me. I thought, Now what am I going to do? I was thinking that Daddy's would be my lifelong job.

As it worked out, I only missed four days of work. My teachers didn't lose anything. We didn't lose a dime. Call it kismet, call it what you want. Everything fell into place.

METRONOME: Did you write all new songs for Man of My Word or did you have some of them in the can?

I wrote the song, "Shine Your

buddies.

The other guy, the bass player, his name is Justin Kleya. This guy is a mega musician. He was my student in the 1990s. We always stayed in touch and at one point we met a bunch of guys and we're in a band with them. Then I needed an instructor and he was free and was able to do it. He's been with me since 2010 teaching at the school and teaching band gig stuff.

METRONOME: Can you tell me how you got involved working for Daddy's Junky Music?

Daddy's Junky Music stores had teaching facilities at thirteen of their locations. I taught in the Dedham

Love Light,” in 2013. I wrote the song “Helpless” around then as well. I tried to do an album around then, but life just got in the way. In 2014, I got throat cancer and it put me out of commission for several months. I recorded those two songs then. While that was happening, I started writing. Over the course of a couple of years, I banged out the rest of the songs.

METRONOME: Where did you record, Man of My Word?

I recorded with a friend of mine named Scott Marucci. He has a studio in Waltham, but it’s not a studio where people can buy studio time. He owns a company up there that makes custom draperies. It’s call Drape It. On the top floor of this factory building, he built a recording studio for himself. It’s a place to rehearse his band and a place to record. Scott knew me because when he was a kid, I recorded his band in the basement of my mother’s house. I met him way back then, but I never saw him again.

METRONOME: How long did it take you to record?

It took me two years. I had to coordinate getting the violinist up there

and doing backing vocals and work up my second guitar parts. It was all about coordinating peoples schedules. It took time. Then, Mike Kyle did the mixing and mastering for me.

METRONOME: Let’s talk about some of the songs on the album. What inspired the writing for “Helpless?”

Everything is about my wife. It’s a love tune.

METRONOME: The song, “Get Me Down” was a great tune. What was that about?

There are things in life that happen to all of us every day that are out of our control. Most people tend to worry about things that haven’t even happened yet. They spend a lot of time worrying, and it impacts their mood. I try my best, never to let that happen to me. I’m not going to let it get me down. You just have to deal with it as it comes to you. That’s what that song is about.

METRONOME: The other song I really liked was the instrumental you played, “Water.” That was cool. What inspired it?

That song has an interesting story. I wrote the basic chord progression of that in 15 minutes. My wife’s father lives out

in Utah on a ranch. We go to visit and one of the interesting things about where they are is they’re in the mountains. What happens is he has 10 acres and water comes onto the property on purpose. They have reservoirs in the mountains. They let the farmers and the ranches know when they’re going to get their water. They have these dugout troughs throughout the property and they have these baffles you pull up to let the water through. He has those. He trains cutting horses there. They have to send water to these pastures so that the grass grows so that the animals have something to eat.

He was out there letting the water into these tributary’s and I was looking at it and thought, I should write a song about this. And I did. That’s where that came from.

METRONOME: “Sleeping In” was a very catchy tune. Can you tell me about that?

It’s just me loving my wife. It’s about a Sunday morning and we don’t have anywhere to be. We’re having a relaxing morning. That’s what it really boils down to. A lot of the love tunes are about my wife. I have such a good relationship and

we’re best buddies.

METRONOME: You said you’re working on a new album. How many songs will be on it?

There’s probably going to be eight songs. It’s the first time ever I’m going to actually record a couple of covers because they’re cover tunes I really love. I’m going to record “Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover” by Paul Simon, but it will be a much more rockin’ version. Then I want to do “Brown Eyed Girl” by Van Morrison. I’m going to do my own acoustic version of it. It will be so completely different than the original. That’s getting recorded too.

METRONOME: Will you do the album with Scott Marucci again?

Yes. Just last week, I recorded three songs with an acoustic guitar and vocal. I’m going to do some over dubs on that. I want to do the recording really quick this year. I’d like to do the basics for all eight songs in one day.

METRONOME: Will you bring it to Mike Kyle, to be mixed and mastered again too?

Absolutely. The guy was great. He did a beautiful job.

-- Brian M. Owens

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Metronome Madness

Hello all and welcome to **May's installment of Metronome Madness**. There's always lots of music news to let you in on, so, lets get on with the show... Boston stoner/fuzz rock outfit **GOZU** will release their long-awaited new full-length, **Gozu VI**, on May 15th through Blacklight Media/Metal Blade Records. "We wanted something that really moved and hit a nerve," says **GOZU** singer/guitarist **Marc Gaffney** on composing the band's sixth studio album. "I was pretty roughed up emotionally while writing. I played guitar more in the past two years than ever before. I would work, go to the gym, come home, eat and then play guitar until I went to bed." The end result is eight action-packed tracks, produced and mixed by **Benny Grotto** at Boston's **Mad Oak Studios**. The band has been praised for their "deep grooves, thick riff mechanics, soulful melodies," and for creating a "musical stew that intoxicates the listener, sweeping them into another aural universe." **GOZU** is: **Marc Gaffney** on vocals & guitars, **Joseph Grotto** on bass, **Doug Sherman** on lead guitar and **Seth Botos** on drums. It's been two years since **Cactus** first unbarred the doors to the **Temple Of Blues**, a 15-track slab of headbanging, hip swinging heavy blues rock



Boston Rockers GOZU Release New Album

whose subtitle, **Influences And Friends**, roped in a host of special guests, all of whom held the band very close to their hearts. Now

the **Temple** opens again, this time for an all-star aggregation that recalls **Ted Nugent**, **Billy Sheehan**, **Bumblefoot**, **Dee Snider**

and **Pat Travers** from volume one, alongside an all-new wave of heavy hitters including **Steve Morse** (Deep Purple), **Tracii Guns** (L.A. Guns), **Joe Lynn Turner** (Rainbow, Deep Purple), **Rudy Sarzo** (Ozzy Osbourne, Quiet Riot), **Alex Skolnick** (Testament), and others. The original **Cactus** grew out of **Appice's** past experiences with **Vanilla Fudge** and **Beck Bogart and Appice**, debuting in 1970 with a self-titled album and an immediate impact on the live circuit. **Temple Of Blues II** takes us back to their birth. That summer, **Cactus** were among the main attractions at the Isle of Wight Festival in England, and the new album's "Purple Haze" reunites them with both another of that bill's audience favorites, **Melanie**, and its headliner, **Jimi Hendrix**. Elsewhere on this thunderous sequel, **Pat Travers** returns for the mighty "Moanin' At Midnight," **Joe Lynn Turner** joins **Morse**, Carmine's **Guitar Zeus** bandmate **Tony Franklin** and **Derek Sherinian** (Dream Theater) for "Bad Stuff," while **Dee Snider** (Twisted Sister) and **Tracii Guns** (L.A. Guns) lead the way for "The Little Red Rooster," and **Ted Nugent** and **Bob Daisley** (Rainbow) join forces for an astonishing "Spoonful." Every track here expands the raw blues rock vision of Volume1 with even more fire, swagger, and

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Jonathan "Boogie" Long

authority. Of course, Carmine, anchors the proceedings with his unmistakable power, groove, and feel, driving every track and reaffirming his status as one of the most influential drummers in rock history. Baton Rouge blues-rock guitarist, singer, and songwriter **Jonathon "Boogie" Long** has released his new album **Courage In The Chaos**, out now via Myrical Media. The 11-song collection arrives as the most honest and fully realized statement of **Long's** career, drawing from decades of experience onstage and off while tracing the winding path of one of Louisiana's most resilient blues voices. At its core, **Courage In The Chaos** is a record about resilience and identity. It gathers pieces of Long's past. Songs, stories, and sounds carried across decades, reshaping them into something present and unflinching. Through it all, his guitar and voice move together as one, reflecting an artist who approaches music as conversation rather than competition. Long learned to make a guitar talk before he learned to make sense of the world. Growing up in Baton Rouge in a gospel-singing family, music was never a hobby so much as a language. By six years old he was carrying a small guitar into churches, nursing homes, and prisons, picking "Amazing Grace" and watching rooms change temperature. "Music is a universal language," he says. "It can make a mad person calm or a calm person crazy." The record reflects the steadiness of an artist who has learned not to outrun his own story. The guitar still screams when it needs to. More often, it sings. On May 1, 2026, Get Hip Records in Pittsburgh, PA. will release **Random Madness** by award-winning soul-blues vocalist **Billy Price**. The new recording, produced by Grammy award-winning producer and drummer **Tony Braunagel**, contains 11 new songs co-written by Price. **Random Madness** was

recorded at The Vault recording studio in Price's hometown of Pittsburgh. "For these songs," says Price, "It was important to me to be able to work at home with the band I've been playing with for decades. In addition to **Jim** on keyboards, we used my longtime bass player **Tom Valentine** and drummer **Dave Dodd**. They've been with me since the late 1970s—and my veteran horn section of trumpet player **Joe Herndon** and sax player **Eric Spaulding**." Award-winning blues-rock guitarist **Colin James'** last US tour in 2024 was cut short due to an automobile accident. Now fully recovered he's bringing his exciting blend of blues and rock music to fans in the States with the upcoming "Coast to Coast Tour" in April and May. Joining him on the tour are **Matt Andersen** and **Terra Lightfoot** to celebrate the rich legacy of electrifying Canadian blues and roots music for an 18-city US Spring 2026 cross-country tour celebrating blues and folk to rock and soul. Audiences can expect powerful individual sets and inspired collaborative performances from three of Canada's most acclaimed and distinctive roots artists. Catch them:

May 9 @ Jimmy's Jazz & Blues Club in Portsmouth, N.H. or May 10 @ The Center for the Arts in Natick in Natick, MA. **The Claypool Lennon Delirium** will release their upcoming album **The Great Parrot-Ox and the Golden Egg of Empathy**, on May 1st via ATO Records. Les Claypool and Sean Ono Lennon spill some of the album's biggest ideas: free will, technological control, and what remains essentially human in a world increasingly shaped by automation. As Lennon explained, the album is "a cautionary tale of what could be in store for humanity if we continue to favor machines over men." Following the album's release, Claypool and Lennon will take this latest chapter on the road with Claypool Gold, a full-evening summer tour that brings together **Primus**, **The Claypool Lennon Delirium**, and **Les Claypool's Fearless Flying Frog Brigade** for one genre-bending night. See them June 10 at the Leader Bank Pavilion in Boston. **Joe Bonamassa** has announced the upcoming release of **The Spirit Of Rory Live From Cork**, a powerful live album and film capturing his deeply personal tribute to Irish blues guitar legend **Rory Gallagher**, recorded during a series of sold-out performances in **Gallagher's** hometown of Cork, Ireland last summer. The album will be released June 19th via Bonamassa's own J&R Adventures.

PASSING NOTES: **Tristram Lozaw** passed away on March 6, 2026. He had cancer for a number of years, but pneumonia got him in the end. He was 72. He was the head man at **Boston Rock** until they went under during the summer of 1995. **Tristram** was a gifted musician and bassist. With the band, **Someone and The Somebodies**, they won the 1981 WBCN Rock and Roll Rumble and issued a couple of releases.

He also played in the bands, **The Molls** and **World At Play**. Early in the new millennium he did PR for a politician in the South. Most recently he was working on documentaries; Singer-songwriter-pianist **Neil Sedaka** died February 27, 2026 of kidney failure at age 86. Beginning his music career in 1957, he sold millions of records worldwide and wrote or co-wrote over 500 songs for himself and other artists; Blues singer and guitarist **John Hammond** died February 28, 2026 of a heart attack at age 83. His career spanned six decades. He was the son of record producer **John Henry Hammond Jr.**; "**Country Joe**" **McDonald** died March 7, 2026 of Parkinson's disease. He was 84. **McDonald** was the lead singer and co-founder of the 1960s psychedelic folk-rock group **Country Joe and the Fish**; Lead singer **Tommy DeCarlo** passed away March 9, 2026 from brain cancer at the age of 60. He was the lead singer for the rock band, **Boston**, from 2007 until his death in 2026. His death occurred exactly 19 years to the day of former singer **Brad Delp's** death in 2007; Guitarist **Philip Campbell** died March 2026 from complications of surgery. He was 64. He is best known as the guitarist in **Motörhead** from 1984 until its disbandment in 2015 after the death of founder and frontman **Lemmy**. He also toured with his own band **Phil Campbell and the Bastard Sons**, featuring his three boys; **Darrell George "Dash" Crofts** passed on March 25, 2026 from complications of heart surgery. He was 87 years old. **Crofts** was one half of the soft rock duo, **Seals & Crofts** with **Jim Seals**.

VIDEO'S OF THE MONTH: **Greyhound-** Several months after the U.S. entry into World War II, an inexperienced U.S. Navy commander (Tom Hanks) must lead an Allied convoy of ships being stalked by a German submarine wolf pack; **Song Sung Blue-** A Milwaukee-based husband (Hugh Jackman) and wife (Kate Hudson) Neil Diamond tribute act, experience wild success and devastating heartbreak in their musical journey together. Based on a true story; **Train Dreams-** Train Dreams is the moving portrait of a logger and railroad worker who leads a life of unexpected depth and beauty in a rapidly-changing America in the early 20th Century; **Ted Lasso-** This well-scripted Apple TV series finds American college football coach, Ted Lasso (Jason Sudeikis), hired to manage AFC Richmond, a struggling English soccer club, and must win over his players, staff and fans. The entire cast contributes to this outstanding show making it extremely witty and lots of fun. Hey now friends, music fans and fellow musicians, that's all for now, but we'll be back next month with more tales from the world of music. Until then, stay safe, be happy and keep making, listening and supporting beautiful music. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TAURUS, YOU BULL YOU.**

Thanks for reading.

--Compiled by Brian O.

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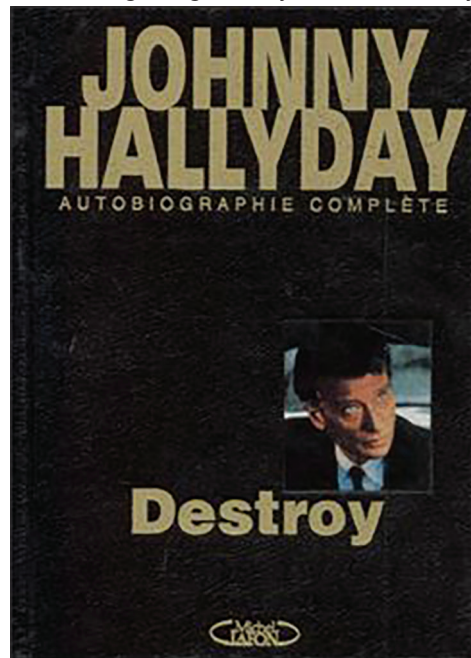
Musician's Autobiographies

• Book reviews by Alex Gecko •

French Rock Musician Autobiographies - Part 1

The French resisted Rock & Roll kicking and screaming, but eventually succumbed, albeit on their own terms. The French music scene was ruled by the chansonniers, singer-songwriters or crooners, with interchangeable orchestras or bands, like Charles Aznavour, Maurice Chevalier, Edith Piaf or Dalida. The antics of Elvis or the Beatles however could not be kept at bay for ever and guitar oriented music eventually found a foothold, albeit with a nod to the old traditions until about the 1980s. French rockers remained "Vedettes," singing stars, without team oriented bands like the classics of the 1960s.

Johnny Hallyday (Jean-Philippe Léo Smet) published **Destroy** with Gilles Lhote in 1999. This regrouped 3 earlier sequels into one big volume. Here the effervescent first real French rocker recounts his life from his humble beginnings in a dysfunctional family



in the middle of war torn Paris until the turn of the millennium in a somewhat sensationalist package. Johnny idolized Pre-Army Elvis, Gene Vincent and that generation and covered their songs in French from 1960 onward until developing his own material, together with many collaborators. 17 year old Johnny did get plenty of coaching from the old guard, though.

Hallyday was known for his powerful stage presence and volatile temper in bar fights but remained a French idol until his passing in 2017. The musical aspects are

more prominent at the beginning of the tome, but take a backseat in the later half as his affairs and sequential marriages take us on a paparazzi detour which may not be foremost in a musicologist's priority.

Johnny's male musical partners remain only 2 dimensional at best. The narrative evolves sequentially, though the nearly interminable 3 intros foreshadow plenty of future events or at least set the scene. The writing reflects the oral transmission via taped interviews with plenty of emotional interjections.

Rather than using dialogue, the ghost-writer includes entire sections of interviews with the relevant counterparties which are often not properly delineated as being separate from the regular plot. Hallyday recounts his despondent blues, loneliness, substance abuse and self-destructive behavior, up to an including a suicide attempt in 1966 that you have to remember that this generation didn't turn to therapist or antidepressants. The drunken antics seem clichéd in Anglo Saxon terms, but were precedent setting in the francophone world. Still you get a larger than life rollercoaster ride of a show on the big stage accented with more expensive sports car crashes than most of us take cab rides.

Johnny Hallyday published **La Terre Promise** with Philippe Manoeuvre in 2015 on the back of his first and last ever American tour. Hallyday, was raised by his uncle, a former US showman, and loved all things American, particularly Rock & Roll and Harleys. Despite a 50+ year career, he had not managed to set foot in the US for a proper tour, other than a one-off 1990s Las Vegas extravaganza mentioned in **Destroy**. So he hired a ghost-writer to accompany him and the band while they were criss-crossing America and Canada.

There are some anecdotes of Hallyday acting like a prima donna and being an absolute purist in terms of the expected performance. They also relate Hallyday's experience with former band member like Mick Jones later of Foreigner or even recording with Jimmy Hendrix in London before the later got famous. Some of the touring band members also added the odd passage. There is little or no dialogue and the style is kept pretty engaging without complex grammar. Nevertheless, this book is little more than upmarket merch. A snack, not a main course. Hallyday, who had serious health issues passed away only 2 years later.

Francoise Hardy published **Chansons Sur**

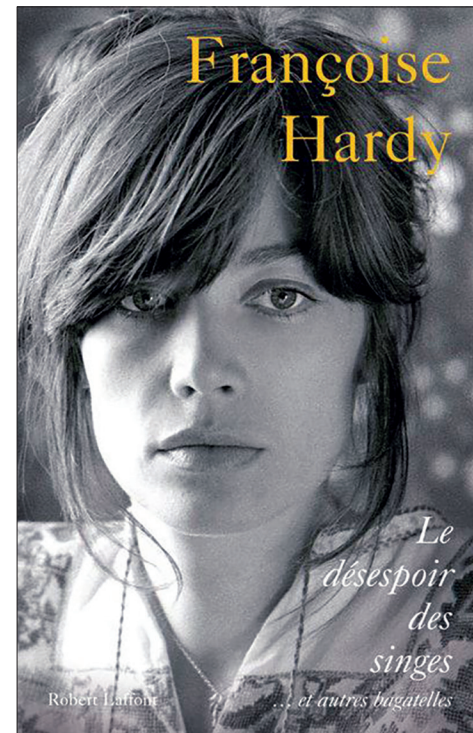
Toi Et Nous in 2021 in which she listed all her song lyrics and wrote a small passage about most pieces. Francoise was also born towards the end of WWII in occupied Paris in a modest single parent household and eventually got an acoustic guitar as a birthday present. Having graduated early from French high school, the shy teenager had time to translate English rock songs in order to play them on her own terms, and eventually started writing her own tunes. With her soft but direct acoustic guitar pop pieces, the young Hardy brought a hitherto unknown freshness and youthfulness to French music in 1962, in what became known as "Ye Ye" movement, as soon as the Beatles became more famous. In 1962, The Vogue record label signed the youngster who's innocent Rock N' Roll captured the imagination of a generation.

Francoise would not have been out of place on K Records in Portland Oregon in the mid-1980s in terms of the aesthetics she brought us. The book follows a strict chronological order with only short prose commentary between longish song texts.

The most interesting anecdote was that French musicians couldn't publish their songs unless they passed a trade exam and could read and write notes, meaning that she lost the publishing rights to her best and most successful tunes. Hardy was however very dismissive of her early material, as she dreamed of big productions, not realizing that her enchanting early simple indie like songs cut through the contemporary background music like a laser.

By the 1970s she started to use composer's backing music and in the song texts you can see the unrequited relationship oriented lyrics getting more complex towards the 1980s. In them she works through the relationship with her manager/lover Jean-Marie Périer and later her musician/husband Jacques Dutronc. The notes tell you of her interaction with co-writers, the vast majority of French musicians of her era, including the degenerate Serge Gainsbourg. Crippling stage fright got the better of her and she gave up live performances in 1968, concentrating on TV appearances. Issues with the recordings, producers and other industry types are all discussed in an effective matter of fact style without dialogue. This is the Francoise Hardy Book for the true musicologist.

Francoise Hardy published **Le Desespoir Des Singes** in 2008. Here she opens up on her private life from her somewhat underprivileged youth to her later years in the shape of something the Paparazzi would



approve of with only rudimentary musical content. Her relationships and her son figure prominently. If anything, this should be read as complementary to Jacques Dutronc's Autobiography.

Her friendships or working arrangement with many French musicians is also covered, particularly the ultimate self-induced demise of Gainsbourg. You get enough material to understand her anxieties and she also reveals her fascination with Astrology, which somehow provided her with a second income. Despite being a 60s icon, Hardy always felt inadequate as a woman, especially when comparing herself to the likes of Brigitte Bardot or the Franco-German actress Romy Schneider, with whom Dutronc had a fling.

The main issue with this tome is the archaic and formalistic 1950s writing style which creates a barrier between author and reader. She uses the imperfectly defined French 'simple past' tense instead of the more spoken oriented perfect past tense. It makes her sound like a real stick in the mud, or at best a 95 year old aristocrat. Her house moves from one end of Paris to the other might tickle the fancy of Paris fans, but are hardly a concern to most Anglo Saxon fans. In the end, she became yet another typical conservative French chanoisnière with a dysfunctional marriage and failing health despite her auspicious beginnings in the swinging sixties. Francoise Hardy only wrote books towards the end due to health issues and passed away in 2024 from cancer.

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