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METRONOME

MAGAZINE

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June 2025



Andrew Duncanson



Kier Byrnes & The Kettle Burners



Johnny Williams Band



Tim Gartland

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6/12- The Weight Band (Songs of The Band)

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6/27- The Breakers

6/28- Robin Trower

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6/1- Jillian Dawn; Dylan Rockoff

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6/14- The Fall of Troy; A Lot Like Birds; Closure
In Moscow

6/19- Julia Wolf; Worry Club; Ellis

6/21- Gin Wigmore; Diana DeMuth

6/26- Boldy James

6/27- Fantastic Negrito; Chance Emerson

6/28- Tree; Incendiary Device; Scumbari

6/29- Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs

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6/1- Kirchen Does Dylan

6/6- Jimmy Cash Comedy

6/7- The Fools

6/12- Ruthie Foster

6/13- Albert Castiglia

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(Ballroom)

6/15- Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams

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6/28- DizzyFish & The Uptown Horns

6/29- Dailey and Vincent

CHAN'S RESTAURANT

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(401) 765-1900

6/6- Carolyn Wonderland

6/7- Neal And The Vipers

6/13- The Knickerbocker Allstars

6/14- Daryl Sherman with Duke Robillard

6/19- Parker Barrow

6/20- Scott Brown & The Diplomats

6/21- Diane Blue & The Allstar Band w/Laura
Chavez

6/24- Sue Foley

6/27- Three Great Tributes: Cale, Tedeschi &
Vaughan

6/28- Popa Chubby

CITY WINERY

Boston, MA.

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6/1- Kids Rock for MGH Sickle Cell Disease
Center

6/2- California Guitar Trio; Kaki King

6/3- Two Jews Comedy

6/5- Fahir Atakoglu; Ara Dinkjian

6/6- SoleTies Live

6/8- Come Together: Paul McCartney Birthday
Celebration; Daruma

6/11- Eilen Jewell

6/13- Lisa Bello x MikeMRF; Max Muscato

6/14- Boy Band Brunch; Tupelo Honey

6/16- Junior Brown

6/17- Larry Campbell & Teresa William; Lily Hiatt

6/19- The Linda Ronstadt Experience

6/20- The Card Magic of Jason Ladanye

6/21- Raynes; The Dick Show

6/22- Tatiana Eva-Marie

6/23- Babatunde HipHopera

6/24- The Floacist (of Floetry)

6/25- Mohanad Elshieky

6/26- Benmont Tench (The Heartbreakers)

6/27- Will Downing

6/28- Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters

6/29- Cousin Tiera

CLUB PASSIM

Cambridge, MA.

(617) 492-7679

6/1- Jill Sobule

6/3- K.C. Jones

6/4- Veronica Lewis

6/5- An Evening of Americana and Bluegrass
Music with Level Best & Mitch Greenhill

6/6- Guy Davis

6/11- Tim and James

6/12- Mother Tree – Sloan Wainwright, Cosy
Sheridan and Susan Cattaneo

6/13- Susan Werner

6/14- Abigail Lapell; Emily Haviland

6/15- Clover-Lynn, becks; Kayla Blackburn

6/16- Anna Moss

6/18- Theo Kandel

6/20- Sarah Klang

6/21- The Folk Collective: Annual Pride Month
Show

6/22- Anne Heaton

6/26- Seán Dagher

6/27- Kalliope Jones acoustic trio

THE CUT

Gloucester, MA.

(978) 515-0000

6/6- Little Lies A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac

6/4- Reckoners; Jesse Dee

6/20- Entrain

6/27- A Night of Comedy w/Steve Sweeney and
Jody Sloane

6/28- Dub Tone Orchestra

HOUSE OF BLUES

Boston, MA.

(888) 693-2583

6/2- Switchfoot; Phantom Planet; Dogpark

6/5- The Dogist and Special Guests

6/10- Key Glock

6/11- Turnover

6/13- Locash

6/19- Less Than Jake

6/22- Banks

6/28 & 29- Jessie Reyez

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6/2- Ruby & The Evolutionist

6/4- Carolyn Wonderland

6/5- Avery*Sunshine

6/6- Alexa Tarantino Quartet

6/8- Gillian Margot & Geoffrey Keezer

6/11- Mason Jennings

6/12- House of Waters

6/18- Parker Barrow

6/19- Steve Smith and Vital Information

6/21- The Brandee Younger Trio

6/22- Club D'elf

6/26- Ghost-Note

6/27- DJ Logic

6/29- Kenny Garrett

MENINO ARTS CENTER

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6/13- Bird Mancini

MGM MUSIC HALL

Boston, MA.

(617) 960-8333

6/1- One OK Rock Detox

6/3- O.A.R., The Dip; The Brook & The Bluff

6/4- Biniberse

6/5- The Head And The Heart; Futurebirds; Anna
Graves

6/7- Bibi

6/10 & 11- Queens of the Stone Age; The Kills

6/14 & 15- Caamp; Whitney

6/16- James Blunt; Forest Blakk

6/20- Hauser

6/24- Peach Pit & Briston Maroney; Briston
Maroney; Bnny

6/25- Babymetal; Black Veil Brides; Bloodywood

6/26- Counting Crows; The Gaslight Anthem

6/29- Live With Jake Shane; Connor Wood

All Things Music Since 1985!



Direct all correspondence to:

P.O. Box 921, Billerica, MA. 01821

(978) 957-0925

MetronomeMagazine@verizon.net

• **Publisher/Editor** •

Brian M. Owens

• **Contributors** •

*Douglas Sloan, Alex Gecko,
Avery Shea, Grayson Owens*

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Upstairs

6/1- Chris Moreno; Joshua Gleave; Patrick Kearns
 6/3- The Atlas Moth; Oriska
 6/5- John Wiese; Lana Del Rabies; Harpy; Pleasure Coffin
 6/6- The Ghouls; The Roscoes; Mike's Carwash; Ron's Car
 6/8- Haunt Me; Stare Away
 6/9- Contrast Attitude; Physique; Lifeless Dark; Diabolus; Phagocyte
 6/11- Tom Springer Band; Bricks of Boston; Mike Messina
 6/12- Man V Ghost; Robotic Hawks; Trailer Swift; Falsely Accused
 6/13- Dom Dior; ISHA!; Yung Treyskii; Haawws; Max Moody
 6/14- Civic
 6/17- The Gold Dinar
 6/18- Yuno
 6/19- Savage Master; NITE; Abaroth
 6/20- The Supervillians; Jwadi
 6/22- Softcult; She's Green
 6/26- Murphy's Law; The Take; Duck & Cover
 6/27- The Gruesomes; Muck & The Mires; The Chelsea Curve
 6/28- The F.U.'s, Stay Out; Rockin Bob Punk Band; Scott Saints & The True Believers; Color Killer
 6/29- Preoccupations; Goon

Downstairs

6/6- Harms Way; Full of Hell; Krueity; Jarhead Fertilizer; Clique
 6/7- Friends In Real Life; Mr Michael Motorcycle; Julio IV; Alyssa Kai
 6/12- One Step Closer; Magnitude; Footballhead
 6/14- Bug Hunter & The Narcissistic Cook Book
 6/21- Weekend Nachos; Dropdead; Wound Man; Peace Test; American Ethos
 6/28- Ecostyle 2025

MIDWAY CAFE
Jamaica Plain, MA.
(617) 524-9038

6/1- Martin Morell Fredette; Bob Bradshaw Band; The Thigh Scrapers; Dark Side of the B00b
 6/3- 90s Sex Jamz (Burlesque show)
 6/6- Owlsey's Owls; Felicity's Hubris; Dusty & The Brakes

6/7- Crushed Vinyl; Bricks of Boston; Jack Monteleone; Miss Julia Violet; Jean Paul Jean Paul; The Big Lonesome; Molly O'Leary & Justin Arena
 6/8- Larseny; Kungj; Harry and the Hot Flashes; Acoustic Education
 6/9- Bad-ass Burlesque Punk Rock Dance Party
 6/10- Topical Popsicle; The Inkwell Open Mic
 6/11- Fully Celebrated Orchestras; Charlie Kohlhas's Explorers Club; Saxophone Support Group
 6/13- Uncle Johnny's Band; Tyler Tuttle
 6/16- Chamber: Goth & Industrial Night
 6/17- T - Valley (Trans & POC Drag)
 6/20- Promised Land
 6/21- Chandler Travis Philharmonic; The McGunks; Pleasure Wheel; The Welch Boys
 6/22- Midway or the Highway Open Mic
 6/23- Corkscrew Cabaret (A live variety show)
 6/25- Diamond Blues Jam
 6/27- Uncle Johnny's Band
 6/28- Blue Manic; Thick Fuzz; The Under; Obliterati
 6/30- Botch Job; Krona; See You at Rogers; In Use

THE MUSIC ROOM
West Yarmouth, MA.
(508) 694-6125

6/1 Patricia Griffin (Medium)
 6/14- Monster Mike Welch
 6/20- Once An Outlaw
 6/26- Alan Arena & The Believers Album Release
 6/27- Draw The Line (Aerosmith tribute)
 6/28- Slim Jim Phantom (Stray Cats); Jittery Jack; Sasquatch & The Sick-A-Billys

PALLADIUM
Worcester, MA.
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6/14- Honey Revenge; Daisy Grenade; Vana; Nightlife
 6/21- I Love R&B Party

PARADISE ROCK CLUB
Boston, MA.
(617) 562-8800

6/6- Sleigh Bells; Sophie Hunter; Atomic Life
 6/7- Lyn Lapid; Fig
 6/8- Eem Triplin; DC the Don
 6/9- Billy Corgan and The Machines of God; Return to Dust

6/13- Tropideli; Ballyhoo
 6/14- Feral; Tara Dikhof
 6/20 & 21- Luisa Sonza
 6/27- Murder by Death; Laura Jane Grace

SCULLER'S JAZZ CLUB
Boston, MA.
(617) 562-411

6/7- Dave Stryker Quartet
 6/13- Gabrielle Stravelli
 6/14- Anthony Geraci & The Boston Blues All-Stars
 6/20 & 21- Walter Beasley
 6/27- Patrick Lamb
 6/28- Celebrating The Men of R&B and Souls

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Cambridge, MA.
(617) 547-5200

6/5- Dean Wareham
 6/6- Yola
 6/7- Sara Kays; Landon Conrath; Eli Wilson
 6/10- Provoker; RIP Swirl; Faerybabyy
 6/11- Lenny Pearce
 6/12- Allison Ponthier; Hank Heaven
 6/13- The Glitter Boys
 6/14- Gallant
 6/15- Karate
 6/17- Loving; Ora Cogan
 6/19- Sleep Theory; Nevertel; Oxymorrns; Stray View
 6/20- Skavovvie and The Epitones; The Amazing Royal Crowns; Spring Heeled Jack; The Lady Hatchet Quartet
 6/21- Cults; Zzzahara
 6/22- Charlie Cunningham
 6/26- Pecos & The Rooftops
 6/27- Andrew Belle performing Black Bear (Acoustic); Amy Stroup

SONIA
Cambridge, MA.
(617) 354-8238

6/4- The Halluci Nation
 6/5- Black Party
 6/6- The Wankers
 6/10- Red Leather
 6/19- This Will Destroy You; Jesse Beaman
 6/20- JerkMonsey Stackz
 6/21- The Rumjacks; Crazy & The Brains; Mickey Rickshaw
 6/22- Toni Romiti

6/24- Vopli Vidoplyassova
 6/28- Mourning Night

SPIRE CENTER
Plymouth, MA.
(508) 746-4488

6/6- Total Strangers
 6/7- Carolyn Wonderland
 6/12- Steve Earle
 6/13- Eilen Jewel
 6/14- Chrisette Michele
 6/19- Cara Brindisi
 6/20- Jorma Kaukonen
 6/21- Stanley Jordan Plays Jimi
 6/22- Swingin' Affair Big Band plays Sinatra
 6/26- Les Sampou
 6/27- Floydian Trip
 6/28- The Fat City Band
 6/29- Echoes of Fusion

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

6/7- Night Train
 6/14- The Worthy Craft Beer Showcase
 6/20- The Amplifiers
 6/21- The Willie J. Laws Band
 6/26- Alex Rohan and Claire Liparulo
 6/27- Ed Peabody and The Big Blue Thang
 6/28- The Patty Tuite Band

WILBUR THEATER
Boston, MA.
(617) 248-9700

6/1- Randy Rainbow
 6/5- Nate Jackson
 6/6- Aimee Mann; Jonathan Coulton
 6/7- Get the Led Out
 6/8- Yohay Sponder
 6/12- Kate Berlant
 6/13- Nemr
 6/14- Two Dykes and a Mic
 6/15- Sammy Obeid
 6/19- Henry Cho
 6/20- Neil Forever
 6/21- Mike Epps
 6/22- Pub Choir
 6/25- Robin Trower
 6/26- The Artimus Pyle Band Honoring Ronnie Van Zant's Lynyrd Skynyrd
 6/27- Justin Silva
 6/28- Demetri Martin

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Kier Byrnes *and* The Kettle Burners

Kier Byrnes & The Kettle Burners are a rowdy sextet of players making themselves known on the local and national scene. Featuring accordion, electric/acoustic guitar, washboard, a tight rhythm section and vocals by frontman Kier Byrnes, it's no wonder they won "Americana Act of the Year" at the New England Music Awards. In their short time together they've performed at festivals and shared stages with Willie Nelson, Old Crow Medicine Show, Hank Williams Jr., John Mellencamp, The Mavericks and Fastball. I queried the band in late March about their formation and some of their musical plans. Here comes The Kettle Burners...

METRONOME: Who is currently in the group and what instruments does everyone play?

Kier Byrnes: I do the lead vocals and acoustic guitar (with some banjo, mandolin, and harmonica occasionally). The Kettle Burners are Dan DiBacco on co-lead vocals and lead guitar, Jason McGorty on accordion, Monica Sager on the washboard, Joe Miller on bass and Brian Lilienthal on drums.

METRONOME: How long have The Kettle Burners been together now?

Kier: We're a relatively new band, so it's been a little over a year since we've been "facebook official." That being said, we've been fortunate. We won "Americana Act of the Year" in this year's New England Music Awards and were lucky enough to have played some pretty big gigs. We headlined The New England Americana Fest, played second stage on the Outlaw Music Fest and shared bills with acts like Willie Nelson, Old Crow Medicine Show, Hank Williams Jr., Fastball, John Mellencamp, The Mavericks and Charley Crockett.

METRONOME: How did you come up with the name for the band? What does it mean?

Jason McGorty: The name came out of a late night brainstorm session in Kier's kitchen in 2023. We wanted a better name than "Kier Byrnes & Friends" which we had been using up until that point. The first requirement was that the name of the band had the initials of K.B. so we could use the acronym KB&KB. The term "Kettle Burners" just sounded good and we all instantly took to it, even if we weren't quite sure what it meant at the time.

Dan DiBacco: Yeah, I think I suggested it as a literal example of what a good, alliterative band name incorporating Kier's full name could be. A week or so later, that was our name. It definitely fits our unique blend of Americana rock, which draws influence from traditional folk genres such as Celtic, Romani, Polka, etc.

METRONOME: How did you all meet?

Brian Lilienthal: I answered an ad on Craigslist that Kier had taken out. I subbed in on one gig (with no rehearsals), and then a few weeks later went in for a full band rehearsal and never left.

Jason: I met Kier at a neighborhood clambake where our kids had some mutual friends. We found some guitars and accompanied our kids with an impromptu sing-a-long of the pop hits of 2019. I think "Old Town Road" was on the set list. In that short encounter we found some musical chemistry and began playing some bars as a duo or trio. Covid got in the way, but we were able to reconnect when Covid simmered down and venues

slowly re-opened.

Dan: I was out at the Plough & Stars in Cambridge celebrating my birthday in February of 2023, when I happened to strike up a serendipitous conversation with Kier & Joe. So it's not inaccurate to say they picked me up at a bar.

Joe: I met Kier through Craigslist back in 2022 and maybe a week later we were cranking out classic country covers in a bar

Monica: I had played in jazz bands throughout high school and college, but during my masters and first year back in Massachusetts, I kind of let music go. I really missed it last fall and posted in a Boston music Facebook group about looking for people to play with. Kier reached out, and the next thing I knew I was playing in the band.

METRONOME: Do some of the members play



in other Boston bands?

Brian: I play drums in sunfisher, Waylon & Co. and with songwriter, Laney Ryan.

Dan: I front alt/indie rock band Jack Slaw (which started as a Somerville Porch Fest band), as well as Utah-based pop-punk/rock band, 19 Miles Per Hour.

Joe: I play guitar in a death metal band called Stone the Oracle

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

Kier: Gogol Bordello, Robert Earl Keen Jr., Tommy Makem and The Clancy Brothers.

Dan: Tyler Childers, Paul Simon, Django Reinhardt, The Pogues and Johnny Cash.

Joe: Hank Sr, Hank III, Chris Knight and John Moreland

METRONOME: Kier, you were the leader of Three Day Threshold for years. What happened to that band?

Kier: Like many other things, the band didn't make it through the pandemic, but when it was all over, I still wanted to play music so I connected with Jason and we started up this group.

METRONOME: What was the initial plan for The Kettle Burners? Live act? Recording project? Something else?

Brian: When I joined, it was about playing as

our 5th EP, Closer to the Fire on June 28th at the New England Americana Festival.

METRONOME: Your new live album at WMFO sounds great. Did you do any overdubs after the fact?

Kier: No, that was all live, recorded by Joel Simches on air. We did some small adjustments with the EQ in post production, but it's pretty much "you see what you get." That EP is exclusively for sale on our bandcamp site.

METRONOME: Did you use any unusual instrumentation for the new EP?

Jason: It's hard to define an unusual instrument when the accordion and washboard are current staples. The recording obviously features a lot of accordion, but being at Q Division Studios in Cambridge gave us access to a playground full of musical toys. I was able to add some Hammond organ through a Leslie speaker on a few tunes.

Dan: There are also some foreboding choral chants and merry gang vocals on a few tracks, which may or may not have been performed by the Kettle Burners and a slew of drunk friends in Kier's basement, just to keep things interesting.

METRONOME: After listening, I heard a Celtic vibe to the music. Was that your intention?

Dan: That was definitely the aim of our In The Key of Guinness EP we released for the St. Patrick's Day season. It's our interpretation of several classic Irish singalongs with more of the aforementioned drunk friends providing backup vocals on select songs. But our upcoming EP Before the Fall is more a mix of Americana rock, alt-country and traditional Romani music.

METRONOME: If someone was unfamiliar with the band, how would you describe your music to them?

Brian: I say we sound like the Pogues if they were a country band.

METRONOME: Kier, how long have you been playing and singing?

Kier: I was writing original material back in high school and played just about every weekend in bars in college, even though I was underage.

METRONOME: What got you into music?

Kier: Growing up I kept to myself. Music not only gave me an outlet to work some of my own issues out, but it became a great source of community for me. I feel lucky to have made the friends I have through music over the years.

METRONOME: Jason, how long have you been playing the accordion?

Jason: I picked up an accordion from Alex Accordions in Time Square in 2006. I've played piano my entire life, but I treated the accordion like a novelty party trick. It wasn't until I met Kier in 2019 that it came out of storage and it slowly became my primary instrument for the band.

METRONOME: What made you pick up the instrument initially?

Jason: Keyboards don't really make sense in the Kettle Burners. There's a raw and timeliness sound to us and synthesizers would reduce the authenticity we're going for. The accordion fits in so well with all the different seasonal niches that influence the band. We can play a polka gig, or an Irish gig, but both of those genres bleed into

our songwriting and playing in general. Plus the keyboard won't fit in the van or the small corners of the bars we play.

I play the accordion like an organ at times. It provides swells and background layers to songs adding a layer of depth behind the strings. But more often I think I'm another guitar player playing leads, solos and fills. The accordion rarely takes a backseat in our live performances.

METRONOME: Dan, how long have you been playing guitar?

Dan: Since I was but a wee lil' lad... like 10 or something? I played saxophone a couple of years prior, which laid a really solid foundation on which to build my guitar studies.

METRONOME: Who are some of your guitar heroes?

Dan: Historically, it was: Jimmy Page, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan and John Mayer... but I would strangely say I don't really have any now. Maybe that comes with growth, and trying to develop my own sound, rather than playing like one of my heroes.

I'll add my dad and Uncle Bobby were my first guitar heroes. Had they never convinced me it was "cool" as a kid, I never would have taken such a liking to it, and so obsessively dedicated myself to it over the years.

METRONOME: Joe, what kind of bass do you play?

Joe: I've played a couple different five-strings with the Kettleburners, but most recently I picked up a four string Sire P5 that's become my go-to.

METRONOME: How long have you been playing?

Joe: I first picked up bass about 8 or 9 years ago when my metal band needed a bass player but I've played guitar about 20 years now.

METRONOME: Brian, how long have you been playing the drums?

Brian: I started out in grade school, and started gigging when I was 15 (almost 35 years ago).

METRONOME: Who are some of your favorite drummers?

Brian: Jay Bellerose, Levon Helm, Charlie Watts and Earl Palmer.

METRONOME: Monica, How did you get into playing the washboard?

Monica: I have actually only started playing washboard with the band, so it's been about six months now. I have a music background since I was little, playing guitar and bass, so going into a new instrument wasn't too daunting. You just have to get the hang of it.

METRONOME: What are the secrets to playing the washboard? Do you have any influences?

Monica: The washboard is super unique in that there's no "perfect way" to play it. I started out by trying it with bottle caps and spoons. We've evolved now to drum sticks we actually broke to become smaller nubs. It's all about the scrapping and rubbing against the board, though, along with the timing. I typically play along with Brian's snare drum - so on the two and four beats. It sounds more syncopated that way and accents the rest of the band.

For influences, washboard actually has a rich history in the early jazz movement in addition to the more thought of folk songs. Washboard Sam in the 1930s and 1940s helped bring the instrument to the forefront of bands at the time. He had the energy and rhythmic mastery I hope to accomplish with Kier Byrnes & the Kettle Burners.

For more of a contemporary reference, I also really love Robin Rapuzzi who is able to help the Tuba Skinny band with blending jazz and blues and

folk all together. Her washboard though isn't just for percussion. It adds personality and uniqueness to the band, which I hope to also exude.

METRONOME: How often does the band play live?

Brian: It varies from month to month, but on average 4-6 dates a month

Kier: I want to keep us in the 50-100 gigs a year range.

METRONOME: Where are some of the venues you perform?

Kier: We get around the Northeast a lot. Up north, we'll do places like BankNH Pavilion (Gilford, NH) and The Waterhorse Irish Pub (Franklin, NH).

Brian: Plough and Stars (Cambridge), The Square Root (Roslindale), and we're just starting a new relationship with Vincents in Worcester, and a whole slew of breweries.

Jason: The Rhumb Line in Gloucester has become a recent favorite of ours. We've developed a local following of local folks who just want to see good live music. They treat us well, and we hope we're able to return the favor.

METRONOME: You are headed out to Europe to play a few weeks soon. What are you each most excited about?

Jason: I'm excited to play our music to a brand new audience. While we've played many shows over the past few years they've been limited to New England. I'm excited to see parts of the world I may otherwise never get to see. I'm looking forward to spending time in these local bars and venues, sampling local food and beer, and getting to know some of the local folks.

METRONOME: Have you done a lot of international touring before?

Dan: Apart from a short stint I did in the UK with 19 Miles Per Hour this past Fall, I've never

done an international tour- so I'm super stoked. I speak French, so at first I was excited to learn we'll be in Belgium... but I've since been informed it's the more Germanic-speaking part of Belgium, so unfortunately I may need to keep my secret talent under wraps.

Kier: It will be my third time touring Belgium/The Netherlands, but first time with this band. Overall, I've played in 17 different countries. A great way to experience a new country is by performing in it. I'm not big on typical tourist experiences, I'd rather be closer to the locals.

METRONOME: Do you have a booking agent?

Kier: In New England, we work with a few booking agencies, but there are some venue booking agents we work directly with, depending on the gig and what's involved. Overseas we are using a tour manager I've worked with before. He knows all the hot spots and has the connections to get us in.

Brian: As many of us have been in the music scene for a while, we also help with booking through our own contacts, so we cast a pretty wide net, but Kier definitely does the lion's share when not working with an agent.

METRONOME: Have you shot any music videos?

Brian: We have a video out for "Gypsy Moon" (from our first EP) on YouTube.

Dan: The plan is to shoot a video for the single on our upcoming Before the Fall EP release. We're currently in the planning stages.

METRONOME: Where can people go to find out more about you and your music on the Internet?

Brian: www.kierbyrnes.com links to our music on Spotify, Apple Music and Bandcamp. Insta: #kettleburners facebook: #kettleburners

-- Brian M. Owens



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Top 5 for June 2025

(In NO Particular Order)

- **Dudley Taft**
- **Alan Arena**
- **Christopher Wyze**
- **Reid Parsons**
- **Jennifer Lyn & The Groove Revival**

DUDLEY TAFT **THE SPEED OF LIFE** **12-SONG CD**

- WANTED MAN
- MILES AND MILES TO GO
- WORK IT OUT
- BURN IT DOWN
- SET ME ON FIRE
- PRETTY LITTLE THINGS
- TOPAZ BLUE
- SAME MISTAKES
- NO YESTERDAY
- THE TRAVELER
- INTO THE BLUE
- NO TIME LEFT (Long Live The King)

If you're a fan of blazing guitar licks & riffs, then singer-songwriter-guitarist Dudley Taft is the man for you. Taft grew up in the American Midwest and went to Berklee College of Music and has proven to be a sophisticated blues rock player with plenty of swagger. You'll hear Delta roots mingling with Seattle grunge alongside a southern twang with lots of high-octane crunch.

Taft began his solo journey in 2008, when he formed Dudley Taft Blues Overkill. He's recorded and released a total of nine studio albums and one live CD, recorded on the European tours of 2014 and 2015. After his debut, Left for Dead (2010) came Deep Deep Blue (2012), Screaming In The Wind (2014), Skin and Bones (2015), Live In Europe (2016), Summer Rain (2017), Simple Life (2019), Cosmic Radio (2020), Guitar Kingdom (2023) and now his latest, The Speed of Light (2025).

For The Speed of Light, Taft recorded the disc in the Czech Republic at Studio Svarov and came home to his Muchmore Studio in Cincinnati, Ohio that he bought from Peter Frampton, to put finishing touches on it. Loaded with infectious guitar hooks and memorable tunes, Taft is at the top of his game in the songwriting and playing department.

Best tracks include the funky groove of the opening track, "Wanted Man," the riff-filled "Work It Out," the blazing "Burn

It Down," the blues-rock anthem, "Topaz Blue," and the acoustic workout of "Into The Blue." A great showing by one of America's finest guitar players. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- info@dudleytaft.com

HUMMINGBIRD SYNDICATE **POPTIMYSTIC** **10-SONG CD**

- SOUND AND LIGHT
- WHILE ROME BURNS
- BRING THE RAIN
- GOING GOING
- MAYBE
- FOR ELIZABETH LONGMEADOW
- DOS LADOS
- UP AND DOWN
- THEN AND NOW
- WHEN WILL YOU LAND

Poptimystic is Hummingbird Syndicate's fourth album and a good one it is. With great vocals, chiming guitars, and a focus on well-crafted lyrics and melody, Hummingbird Syndicate marries '60s folk rock to '70s pop to create a contemporary sound all their own. Singer-songwriter Lynn Shipley and singer-songwriter-guitarist Jon Macey are the heart and soul behind H.S. along with guitarist Mike Pyle, bassist-singer Steve Gilligan, keyboardist Paul Zablotzky and drummer Clark Goodpaster. Together this seasoned sextet delivers beautifully executed songs that writhe with a sweet musicality.

Best tracks include the catchy "While Rome Burns," the bouncing "Going Going," the bounding "Maybe," the magnificent cadence of "Up and Down," the mesmerizing "Then and Now," and the wistful "When Will You Land." Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact--

hummingbirdsyndicate.bandcamp.com

WILL WILDE **BLUES IS STILL ALIVE** **10-SONG CD**

- BLUES IS STILL ALIVE
- WILD MAN
- DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE
- GYPSY WOMAN
- TROUBLE OF THAT GIRL
- STOLE MY LOVE
- GIRL'S GOT SOUL
- LEARN HOW TO LOVE
- BROKEN DREAM BLUES
- DON'T TRUST ME

The English based Will Wilde picked up his first harmonica at a house party when he was sixteen. "I basically nicked it," he says.

"It was a cheap plastic Guinness harmonica just lying amongst the drink bottles and cigarette butts, but I was drawn to it." From then on playing became an obsession for the teenage Wilde. "I used to play along to old Muddy Waters records for hours every day. Sometimes I played so much my lips bled," he says. "I couldn't get enough of it. After a while it became an extension of me."

After guitarist Walter Trout caught Wilde on YouTube with his harmonica covers of classic rock guitar solos such as Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Free Bird," Trout invited him to play on his album Broken, that went to #1 on the Billboard Blues Album Chart. To return the favor, Walter plays guitar on the title track of this album, "The Blues Is Still Alive." From there, you get the heaviest blues-rock in the land punctuated by Wilde's powerhouse harp playing and singing.

Song of note include the album's title track featuring Walter Trout, "Blues Is Still Alive," the roadhouse anthem "Wild Man," the pensive "Gypsy Woman," the bluesy "Stole My Love" and the radio-friendly "Learn How To Love."

Contact-- willharmonica.wilde.com

DARK CHAPEL **SPIRIT IN THE GLASS** **10-SONG CD**

- AFTERGLOW
- HOLLOW SMILE
- WE ARE REMADE
- CORPSE FLOWER
- GLASS HEART
- DEAD WEIGHT
- DARK WATERS
- ALL THAT REMAINS
- GRAVESTONED HUMANITY
- BULLET IN OUR CHAMBER

Dark Chapel is fronted by singer-songwriter-guitarist Dario Lorina of Black Label Society. Blending blazing guitar work, hook-filled grooves and melodic hooks with touches of the blues melded to a grunge allure, Dark Chapel creates the next chapter of metal mayhem on their debut album, Spirit in the Glass.

Lorina began his professional career at 16 as the touring guitarist with the late Jani Lane (ex-Warrant) and later joined Lizzy Borden. In 2014 he joined Black Label Society, logging thousands of miles with the band, shredding alongside Zakk Wylde. During that time, Lorina also unleashed two instrumental solo albums on Shrapnel Records, Dario Lorina (2013) and Death Grip Tribulations (2017) before putting together Dark Chapel in 2024.

Featuring a collection of Lorina's musician

friends, the guitarist wails supreme on this well-crafted cache of originals.

Best tracks include the blistering "Afterglow," the hypnotic "We Are Remade," the grind of "Glass Heart," the well-played piano and vocals of "Dead Weight," the acoustic lilt of "Dark Waters" and the heavy blues riffs of "All That Remains." An excellent debut from Dario and company! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.dariolorina.com

CHRISTOPHER WYZE & THE TELLERS **LIVE IN CLARKSDALE** **10-SONG CD**

- THREE HOURS FROM MEMPHIS
- BACK TO CLARKSDALE
- MONEY SPENT BLUES
- HARD WORK DON'T PAY
- STUCK IN THE MUD
- COTTON AIN'T KING
- LOOKING FOR MY BABY
- GOOD FRIEND GONE
- HOW LONG, HOW LONG BLUES
- NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN YOU'RE DOWN AND OUT

After recording sessions in Muscle Shoals and the Mississippi Delta, Christopher Wyze & The Tellers hit the blues world with their debut 13-track album of originals entitled, Stuck in the Mud. Now Wyze and company return with a live album of those songs that were created at the very place they were recorded, the Juke Joint Chapel at the Shack Up Inn in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Running the recording machine while being video-taped by Coop Cooper, Wyze came up with this revealing CD/DVD collection that includes his band John Boyle on guitar, Gerry Murphy on bass, Mark Yacavone on keyboards, Douglas Banks on drums, Ralph Carter on vocals, percussion and the album's production, and Irene Smits on backing vocals. With the mojo of he Delta guiding them, Wyze and his band delivered a soul-stirring collection of songs that will fit on blues radio throughout the planet. Watch for an in-depth interview with Christopher in the July issue. Oh yeah! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.ChristopherWyze.com

RA'SHAD THE BLUES KID **LIVE IN CLARKSDALE** **13-SONG CD**

- FEEL ALRIGHT
- JUKE JOINT
- DO IT RIGHT
- AH SHYT
- BAD GIRL
- THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE
- GET HIGH

- SINGING THE BLUES
- HEY BABY
- HEY Y'ALL
- TIM PAN ALLEY
- MOVE SUMTHING
- JUKE

Larry McGill, a.k.a. Ra'Shad the Blues Kid, was born in the Piney Woods region of the southern United States, Laurel, Mississippi. Ra'Shad was exposed to music that included soul and gospel at an early age. He built a relationship with local blues musician, L. C. Ulmer, from Ellisville, MS. Ra'Shad would ask Ulmer, what you gonna teach me today, and Ulmer would say, "I ain't teaching you nothing, we just gonna play." He gave Ra'Shad advice by saying "You need to put something on that paper," so he could make his million dollars like B.B. King. After Ulmer died in 2016, Ra'Shad adopted the name Ra'Shad the Blues Kid in his honor.

On his new album, Live In Clarksdale, Ra'Shad gives an appreciative crowd a dose of Piney Woods Blues and it works! Songs that stand-out include the moody album opener "Feel Alright," the bouncing "Juke Joint," the swinging "Bad Girl," the funky "Get High," the lament of "Singing The Blues," the jumpin' "Hey Baby," the movin' groovin' "Move Sumthing" & "Juke."

Contact- www.rtbkblues.com

ALAN ARENA DECEIVED 10-SONG CD

- RAISED ON RADIO
- BELIEVE IN YOURSELF
- DECEIVED
- BIG BLACK CAT
- DEVIL IN THE BOTTLE
- MOTHER EARTH
- SPEED OF LIFE
- HYPNOTIZED
- BELIEVE IN YOURSELF (Radio Edit)
- DECEIVED (Instrumental)

Singer-songwriter-guitarist Alan Arena returns to the recording realm with his outstanding new album, Deceived. Produced by longtime Johnny Winter guitarist, Paul Nelson, he captured and nurtured the best of what Arena had to offer.

Alan's vocals are powerful and emotive as he enlists an A-list of players in Nelson on guitar, Brad Hallen on bass, Marty Richards on drums, Brooks Milgate on piano & organ, Stephen Clements on percussion, Allyssa Jones on vocals, Joe Russo on vocals, Jerry Portnoy on harmonica, Milton Smith on strings, Gordon Beadle on saxophone and Jamie Brown on vocals to help him realize his well-crafted musical dream.

Radio friendly tracks include the hip album opener, "Raised On Radio," the well penned

"Deceived," the raucous "Big Black Cat," the funky, hook-filled "Devil In The Bottle," and the instrumental version of "Deceived" featuring the saxophone work of Gordon "Sax" Beadle, and the defined piano chops of Brooks Milgate. A great album not to be missed. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- alanarenasongs.bandcamp.com

MIKE DANGEROUX EMPTY CHAIR 6-SONG CD

- END LIKE THIS
- MONEY BACK
- PLAY MY CARDS RIGHT
- NO GOOD FOR ME
- EMPTY CHAIR
- WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG

Mike Dangeroux was born in Chicago, Illinois and graduated from Berklee College of Music. A longtime veteran of the Chicago Blues scene, Dangeroux is just as comfortable playing his original Blues to a festival audience as he is performing at a wedding (which he plays many).

On his new album, Empty Chair, Dangeroux teams up with keyboardist Vincent Varco and drummer Daron Casper Walker to deliver an album of contemporary blues numbers with a distinctive traditional bent. If you like down-and-dirty blues

played well, you're going to dig his songs "Money Back," "Play My Cards Right," and the album's catchy title track, "Empty Chair." Good stuff! [D.S.]

Contact-- mikedangeroux@comcast.net

THE DUSTAPHONICS GASOLINA 12-SONG CD

- LA FILLE DE PICCADILLY STREET
- GASOLINA
- HEY SISTER HEY
- ROCKIN' BOOGALOO
- LA PASTILLA
- COMME DANS LES FILMS DE FELLINI
- R.A.M.O.N.E.S
- TEN GALLON MILES
- VODOO LOVE JINX
- LA CHICA ROCKAROLLA
- SINGALING CALYPSO
- SALLY LOU

The mix of Anglo Garage Rock culture with Latin stylings puts a lot of swing and party atmosphere into a classic genre, making it ready for center stage Las Vegas and even your own home. "La Fille De Piccadilly Street," sung in French with a Spanish accent, redefines Rock & Roll to back in the '60s when there was the optionality between

Continued on next page >>>

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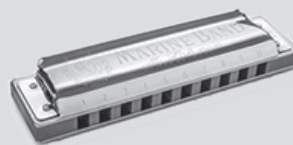
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feel and cool, as perceived by non-Anglo Saxons, here winning both prizes. For extra points, you get a bit of James Bond sound bytes.

The surf guitar of "Gasolina" works extremely well with Lise De Luck's sensuous vocals, though they lose, voluntarily, the groove on the spoken word break. It gets a little grittier on the very rhythmic "Hey Sister Hey." "Rockin' Boogaloo" has you doing the Mambo, but could just be a fun little interlude. "La Pastilla" is just an instrumental, but offers a lot of rhythmic and guitar counterpoints. The kids deliver "Comme Dans Les Films De Fellini" in French as the guitarist expounds the charms of Italian films of the golden era.

"R.A.M.O.N.E.S" is a cute, surf instrumental too clean for CBGBs, but done as if interpreted by Buddy Holly. Bo Diddley guitar riffs always could have used a woman's touch and "Ten Gallon Miles" does just that while repetitively building a lot of tension. "Voodoo Love Jinx" takes a lighter, more agile guitar style with loads of backbeat and has the singer do a bit of that Janis Joplin raunch.

The main protagonist, Yvan Serrano-Fontova teams up with singer Lisa to

provide the vocals to "La Chica Rockarolla" in a call and answer extravaganza. "Singaling Calypso" offers us a well-deserved Caribbean holiday with plenty of warmth and swing. To polish it all off, they turn "Sally Lou" into a longish jam, largely just repeating the title. This is way too good for just a Frat Shack. [Gecko]

Contact--

<https://thedustaphonics.bandcamp.com>

THE DERELLAS TRUST ME THIS IS GOING TO HURT 11-SONG CD/LP

- JUST BECAUSE I SMILE, IT DOESN'T MEAN I LIKE YOU
- THIS IS GOING TO HURT
- LOVELESS LANDSLIDE OF LOVE
- NIGHT TIME
- FAKE IT TIL YOU MAKE IT
- A SHOT OF FEELINGS
- IF YOUR WORLD FALLS APART
- EMPIRE VULTURES
- WE AIN'T SATISFIED
- TOUCH-A TOUCH-A TOUCH-A TOUCH ME
- STOP LIVING IN MY BRAIN

These London hard rocker rockers seek to reclaim the golden era of Wardour Street

glam with a vengeance and go in all guns blazing on the opener as if they had a score to settle. They ably blend 1976 Punk with 1989 Glam while the singer gargled some broken glass, channeling his inner Stiv Bator together on the first 2 songs. The rest of the gang have the Johnny Thunders and Gerry Nolan thing down pat.

For "Loveless Landslide of Love" they are reinventing Berthold Brecht's 3 Penny Opera in 3 chords for extra gutter flavor. For "Night Time" the 4 miscreants take a little more time to build the momentum, all while the singer rolls his Rs like Johnny Rotten.

They actually permit a little melody on "Fake It Til You Make It," while giving the tune a Los Angeles flavor in the style of the late Mötley Crüe. The DeRelas leave a little more space within the arrangement of the still manic "A Shot of Feelings." Overall the production is full on in-your-face with a live feel and plenty of dirt under the fingernails all while the individual instruments can be distinctly heard. "If Your World Falls Apart" has a little less momentum, but plenty of spit and venom. They chose to build an epic power ballad build up for "Empire Vultures."

There's plenty of Pistols flashbacks on "We Ain't Satisfied," but this tune could have

used a little more swing. "Touch-a Touch-a Touch-a Touch Me" goes in for some heavy petting with a creature of the night. Discender, "Stop Living in My Brain," is a bit of a throwaway, but sees them mellowing the sound with a bit more treble. This a perfect record for a self indulgent evening with little or no subtlety if you can't afford to attend the next Sex Pistols reunion gig in a stadium. [Gecko]

Contact--

<https://thederellas.bandcamp.com>

BART AND THE BRATS ONLY FAIR 4-SONG 7" SINGLE

- ONLY FAIR
- HARDEST THINGS IN THE WORLD
- WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?
- WHEN THE S*#T HITS

From the picturesque French sea side town of La Rochelle, we get this full on punk 7 inch via London's Dirty Water label. The 3 piece put the petal to the metal and riff themselves into a humorless frenzy, while staying well away from Oi. The closest comparison would be Gino and The Goons.



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The solo on the opener really hits you in the guts. The lads work out some rhythmical challenging tricks to make “What’s In It For Us?” even heavier. The Brats put a smirk on your face with the Ramones-like intro of “When The Sh*t Hits” where they had a really solid groove. One more reason to put the French Atlantic coast on your travel plans. [Gecko]

Contact-- bartandthebrats.bandcamp.com

SORROWS **PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW** **14-SONG CD**

- NEVER MIND
- HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR MOTHER, BABY, STANDING IN THE SHADOW
- WHAT A GOOD BOY!
- OUT OF MY HEAD
- LET ME KNOW
- KISS YOU LATER
- SLO’ SURFIN’
- CRICKET MAN
- JUST ONE FOOL TO BLAME
- THAT’S YOUR PROBLEM
- TOO MUCH LOVE
- SOMETHIN’ ELSE
- LOVE AIN’T NOTHIN’ (Without You)
- YOU DON’T OWN ME

The California label, Big Stir, unearthed the unreleased 1981 mastertapes of long lost NYC band, The Sorrows, and it’s a good thing they did. At the time, the band fell out with their London producer and their label, thereby killing their career. Nevertheless, these boys actually rocked and had the required narrow New Wave tie. Think along the lines of the Fleshtones, just a bit less retro garage and more rock than The Knack.

Right from the start its as if Cheap Trick jammed with AC/DC to deliver a hook-laden boogie masterpiece and then sealed the deal with maracas. Hard as nails, but with more than enough sensitivity. The lads then cover the Stones 1964 toe tapper and really do it justice with just the right feel. “What A Good Boy!” has nothing to do with the Bare Naked Ladies and still has a classic rock ambience of the era. “Out Of My Head” showcases their poppier side and is transported by lots of rhythm and energy.

For “Let Me Know” they go into complete manic mode and underline this with a Stray Cats beat. “Kiss You Later” could have come from the pen of Buddy Holly and is quite charming. For “Slo’ Surfin’” they deliver a quirky instrumental that showcases the lead guitarists chops. “Cricket Man” is a timely and well thought out homage to the murdered John Lennon where the singer even sounds like Lennon.

“Just One Fool To Blame” returns to a cool New Wave sound for a sorrowful power ballad of sorts. Having already hinted towards Rockabilly, “That’s Your Problem” goes all the way in a convincing manner

until the sound mellows out towards the end. “Too Much Love” could pass off as early pop Beatles pastiche, where the singer does a decent Paul.

The boys version of “Somethin’ Else” is more reminiscent of the Sex Pistols than Eddie Cochran thanks to the charming, yet venomous delivery. With “Love Ain’t Nothin’” they initially soften their tone, but more than make up for it with emotional intensity.

Having tried everything else and gotten away with it, Sorrows infuse “You Don’t Own Me” with a dose of funk to fully round out this lost jewel. It’s strange that no one in the literature ever mentioned seeing them at CBGBs or Max’s Kansas City. They must have been a blast. [Gecko]

Contact--

www.bigstirrecords.bandcamp.com

REID PARSONS **BACK TO BACK** **10-SONG CD**

- BACK TO BACK
- GET OUT OF BED
- LIGHTBULB
- HEAVY LOAD
- SHOW ME YOU LOVE ME
- HOLIDAY
- I’M ON FIRE
- FIGURE IT OUT
- SAME OLD SHIT
- WHERE ARE YOU NOW

The Burlington, Vermont-based artist Reid Parsons produced, arranged, and wrote all the songs on her debut album, Back To Back (save for Bruce Springsteen’s “I’m On Fire.”) Engineer Ben Collette (Trey Anastasio, Susan Tedeschi, Sharon Jones) tracked the record direct to tape with no effects at Burlington, Vermont’s iconic Tank Recording Studio. Melding folk, singer-songwriter, classical, pop and country with tender grace, Parsons proves her mettle with her sweetly alluring vocals and poignant songcrafting. The album was

partially funded through a crowdfunding campaign, with the remainder cobbled together from Parsons’s day jobs in farming and food systems. Gotta like her hustle.

The beautifully crafted “Back To Back” starts the album off with its laid back lilt fueled by Reid’s casual vocals. This is Vermont art at its finest. Great horn work abounds in “Get Out of Bed” as Reid gets more adventurous with her voice. “Lightbulb” is a breath of fresh air reminding listeners of the winds blowing through the Vermont landscape. The bouncing “Show Me You Love Me” demands you prove your sentiments and why wouldn’t you?

Reid delivers a gorgeous interpretation of Springsteen’s “I’m On Fire” and then waxes sultry on “Figure It Out.” The album closes with the questioning “Where Are You Now.” A magnificently crafted debut record. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- reidparsons.com

JOHNNY RAWLS **MAKE THEM DANCE** **10-SONG CD**

- SO COLD
- DREAMS OF YOU
- MAKE THEM DANCE
- MOVE IN MY DIRECTION
- COSTS TOO MUCH
- GIVE IT TO ME
- RIP OFF THE BANDAGE
- SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
- SWIMMING WITH THE SHARKS
- THE LONG ROAD

At 73 years young, Johnny Rawls still delivers a healthy dose of Soul on his latest release, Make Them Dance. Born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi in 1951, the young Rawls was schooled on the guitar by his blind grandfather. By his teen years he was playing with Z.Z. Hill and Joe Tex before joining O.V. Wright’s band as music director. He played with him until his death. He would later move on to Little Johnny Taylor’s Band.

With a deeply soulful voice, Rawls makes you believe everything he sings. Fronting a crack band that includes guitarist Will McFarlane, keyboardist Dan Ferguson, bassist Bob Trenchard (and owner of Catfood Records), drummer Steve Potts, and horn players Mike Middleton on the trumpet, Andy Roman on saxophone solos, Nick Flood on saxophones and Frank Otero on trombone along with backing singers Kimberly Horton and Trinecia Butler, the group lays down a collective big band sound that’s hard to deny.

Produced by the great Jim Gaines right before his death, the songs “So Cold,” the groovin’ title track “Make Them Dance,” the uptempo “Costs Too Much,” the testifyin’ “Say That You Love Me,” the smolderin’ funk of “Swimming With The Sharks,” and the introspective “The Long Road” prove to have captured Johnny Rawls and his band at the top of their game. Nice! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- johnnyrawlsblues.com

JENNIFER LYN & THE GROOVE REVIVAL **RETROGRADE** **10-SONG CD**

- LIGHT THE FIRE
- SEARCHING FOR SOLID GROUND
- SUCKER FOR THE PAIN
- REFUGE
- DO BAD THINGS TO YOU
- SOUL SAVER
- BAGGAGE
- ‘59 CADILLAC
- BREAKING CHAINS
- DO IT ALL AGAIN

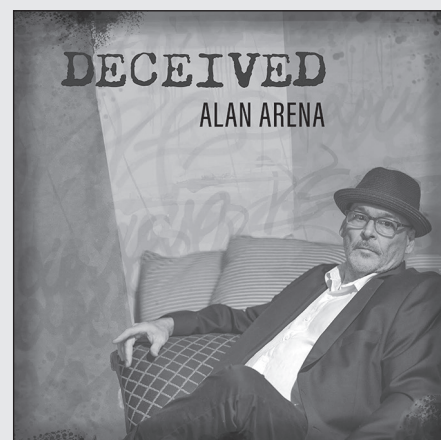
Born and raised in a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Jennifer Lyn made her way to North Dakota by way of New York City and Worcester, Massachusetts. Nowadays, the singer-songwriter-guitarist calls Bismarck, North Dakota home and fronts a rockin’ blues band called Jennifer Lyn & The Groove Revival.

On her latest album, Retrograde, Lyn is ably accompanied by her bandmates, guitarist Richard Torrance, keyboardist Barb Jiskra, bassist Nolyn Falcon and drummer Jim Anderson. Collectively, this band knows how to kick out a song. Fueled by Jen’s great rock & roll voice, she and Torrance’s twin guitar work soars above Jiskra’s superb keyboard work and Falcon and Anderson’s dynamite rhythm playing. This band is tight as it gets.

Songs of note include the uber original opening cut “Light The Fire,” the rollicking roadhouse track “Sucker For The Pain,” the arena-rock ballad “Refuge,” Torrance’s slick slide guitar work in “Baggage,” and the revealing album closer, “Do It All Again.” A great sounding release from J.L. and her Groove Revival. [B.M.O.]

Contact--

www.jlynandthegroove revival.com



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Andrew Duncanson

Andrew Duncanson is one of America's finest singers. His ability to move from raw and gritty to soulful and heartfelt has punctuated all of his project's recordings that include The Kilborn Alley Blues Band, the Dig 3 Trio and his solo efforts.

A well known and respected performer in the Central Illinois area, Duncanson trekked out to California to record his latest album with engineer, Kid Andersen. Featuring ten originals and three covers of songs penned by Michael Peloquin, Woody Guthrie and Mighty Mike Schermer, Duncanson, along with an all-star lineup of world-class players knocked it out of the park. I spoke with Andrew on April 2nd and we discussed his busy musical schedule and the making of his new record, California Trap. You're going to dig what he had to say...

METRONOME: You're well known for being a member of The Kilborn Alley Blues Band and the group, The Dig 3. What made you decide to record a solo album?

Andrew Duncanson: When Covid came around, we had to wait for restrictions to be lifted and because I wasn't doing any playing, I was writing a lot. So I had all these songs that I wanted to get recorded. It was just a very opportune thing for me.

METRONOME: The songs you had written didn't work for the Dig 3 or Kilborn Alley projects?

No. They felt like something different.

METRONOME: How did you write the tunes? On a piano? On a guitar?

I start with some lyric ideas. I usually have a couple of verses written on paper, and then I try to find the musical accompaniment for it.

METRONOME: Do the lyrics always come first for you?

Not always, but probably 75% of the time. Then I start playing around with different things – major chords, minor chords, three chords, seventh chords... I try to fit in more chords that work.

METRONOME: If you get stuck on a song, do you ever reach out to anyone and say, Hey, can you help me with this?

It works out best if it's just me for some reason. Actually, I have had some great collaborations with Gerry Hundt though. It has worked out.

Do you know what, I shouldn't say that. Sometimes it does help. When you get into the studio, the songs take on a life of their own and when you get a producer like Kid

Andersen, like the first song, "Relearning To Climb," he put one chord in there that to me makes a big difference in the song.

So I like to mold it mostly as I like it, but as we get into the studio, and one of these really smart musicians has something to add, Sure, I'm very open to all that.

METRONOME: How did you meet Kid Andersen?

I had met kid a couple of different times. One time in Denmark and once in Chicago,

more Greaseland/Andersen recordings. So that was the plan between us. We were pretty much going to go to San Jose and go to Greaseland and work with Kid and some of his musicians.

METRONOME: How long were you in California?

We really didn't know what we were going to do. At first we thought I might be a guest star on Michael Peloquin's album. So I went out for two days and for those two days we

to California.

METRONOME: This was an ambitious effort too, because there are three covers and ten originals. "Naw Naw Naw" started everything for you. Can you tell us about that tune?

Yeah, that was the first song that we cut in the studio. "Naw Naw Naw" is one of the oldest songs on the recording. I think I wrote that in 2019. It's a song about somebody who is very broken up that this relationship didn't work out and in their head they're saying, This is not the way it's supposed to be. They're shaking their head saying, naw naw naw.

I had a simple acoustic guitar scratch out of how that was going to sound and Kid and D'mar (on the drums) took that song straight to Memphis (laughs). That was a song where the arrangement was really done by my friends out in California. It was wonderful.

METRONOME: Were you happy when you heard what they had done to it?

I thought it was cool as heck. I loved it. I didn't really know how it was going to go because I had never played it with a band before. I only played it at solo acoustic shows. It was just beautiful when the band came in on it.

METRONOME: "Hold Me Back" had a great uptown swagger. Can you tell us more about that song?

It's a rocker, and I like to say simply that it's about nepotism. It's about some of these folks talking when they shouldn't be talking. They're running their mouths and they don't have the experience to do that (laughs).

METRONOME: Did you know someone like that who influenced you in to writing the song?

No, no. That song has some layers to it because one of the parts of that song says, "If I ever see you in a Tavern Jack/ It'll take all 12 apostles to hold me back." A friend of mine's drinking buddy used to say that back in the '70s. He would say, Oh man, if I ever see that famous celebrity in a tavern, I'll whip their ass (laughs). I kinda found a way to fit that into the song because I just love that story from my friend Rod. Yeah.

METRONOME: I loved the album's title track, "California Trap." What does that song mean?

The tune is about the sunshine, sucking you in and then not being able to stay there because it's not financially possible for most people. The allure of the California sunshine



but I didn't know him really well, so this was my introduction into really meeting him. We went to his studio and his place in California and recorded California Trap.

METRONOME: Did you know you wanted Kid to engineer and produce the project for you?

Not really. The saxophone player, Michael Peloquin is from the Bay Area and he's on, in different horn sections, probably 100 or

got eight really good songs recorded. I was singing all the lead, and had written most of them. We thought, we have to finish this, so I flew back home, got another batch of songs together, went out again and had one day of recording, and we got another five or six songs recorded.

I flew out one more time to do some tracking. So all in all, three days of band recording and one day of tracking, flying out

and the Coast. That last line says, "That California sun ain't nothing but a trap."

METRONOME: Did you write the song when you were in the studio?

I wrote some of that song when I was on tour in California. I did not write anything while I was in the studio, no. I've been on three tours of California. I've been out there enough to realize, This place is really nice.

METRONOME: Your song, "Feeling Better Now" had a great bounce to it. What inspired the writing of that?

It's kind of based on a Big Bill Broonzy song. That's where that comes from. Muddy Waters used to do that a lot. That's where I got the rhythm and the feel of it from. I had some hard times there for a minute. I lost some really good friends all right in a row. By the time I wrote the song, I think I was starting to get over some grief.

METRONOME: You absolutely killed Mighty Mike Schermer's tune, "It's A Pleasure." What made you decide to cover it?

I didn't choose that. That was Kid Andersen's choice. We got along really good and Kid really dug what we were doing. He put that song together from tracks that he previously had. He Frankenstein-ed that thing. Kid really wanted to give me a crack at singing the song. So that's where that came from.

I had heard Frank Bey's version of it, and I saw a video of Mike Schermer doing

it, but I just gave it my own feel. I like how it came out.

METRONOME: Did you know the lyrics to the song? How did you handle that?

I kept pretty straightforward on Mike's lyrics. We practiced the song a few times. I sat down, listened to it two or three times, sang it, and then we started recording it. It was done in an hour.

METRONOME: You were in the recording room with some real heavy weights. I also really like Kid's wife, Lisa. She's a great singer.

Yeah, I like Lisa too. We went to Switzerland two years ago. It was me, Jerry Jemmott, D'mar, Jim Pugh, Kid and Lisa and we had a really nice show there. She's a great singer and their double album is fantastic. It's just very tender and beautiful and well thought out. Really well done.

METRONOME: I looked at your web page and you were playing a hollow or semi-hollow electric guitar. What kind of guitar is that?

That guitar is called a B.P. Rose. That was a local Elgin, Illinois guitar maker. The guy passed away, so there's no longer a B.P. Rose. That guitar was given to me. It was Michael Ledbetter's guitar. He was a really good friend of mine. He was one of my best friends.

A couple of years back, I was doing some gigs with Nick Moss and he said, "The family says this guitar needs to be played. Just play

it." So I've had it about three years and I love playing it. It's nice to have a piece of Mike riding around with me too.

Rose gave Michael that guitar. He was sponsored by them. They gave him a few guitars.

METRONOME: You perform in California, you play in Memphis, and you play a lot in Illinois. Do you have an agent that books your shows?

No, I don't have an agent. I'm just taking what comes. I've been around Central Illinois and Chicago for 25 years working the whole time. People know me. I'm lucky and they want to hear me play.

I could sit here in Central Illinois and play three nights a week if I wanted to without ever picking up the damn phone. That's why touring is kind of a lost art now. I used to go to New England every year. I could get gigs when I was out there, but getting there was so damn hard. Doing the road dog thing is too hard now, but doing the Dig 3 thing is kinda easy because we all fit in my Subaru.

METRONOME: Who's in the Dig 3 Trio now?

Myself, Gerry Hundt and pianist Lee Kanehire. She also plays with the Cashbox Kings. When we get together with Lee, we do a lot of old school blues. It's great.

METRONOME: Are you going to tour this California Trap album?

Yeah. Because this is coming out in April though, I don't think we're going to get any

festivals this summer. For next summer though, we ought to have a whole slew of festivals. I've put together some local horn players from Illinois to do the album parts. We're working now to reach out to people and get some gigs, so yes, I'd like to work this album.

METRONOME: So what's the plan for this summer?

I have a full plate of stuff this summer. It's going to be a balance between my three acts: The Dig 3, The Kilborn Blues Band and Andrew Duncanson. I play acoustic gigs as well.

METRONOME: Is it just solo or do you play a duo?

It's me solo or a duo and sometimes three... we call it Andy and Friends a lot of times. I have a female singer around here too that I work with named Lizzie Lilly. She's really cool. I work with her on some of that acoustic stuff. I have a lot of nice gigs around here and in Chicago land and Milwaukee. I'm going to Europe twice in May. We'll see what happens.

METRONOME: How did meet you meet your publicist Betsie Brown?

I asked a few of my friends in the Blues industry who I should use for a publicist and overwhelmingly she was considered the best. She's been fantastic. I've used publicists in the past, but with Betsie, early on, I'm just thrilled with the experience. She got me a review in Downbeat!

-- Brian M. Owens

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The Time Machine



The Smithereens

Photo circa: 1994

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

Musical Achievements: Founded in New Jersey in 1980, Jim Babjak (guitar) Dennis Diken (drums) and Mike Mesaros (bass) grew up together in Carteret while lead singer, the late Pat DiNizio, hailed from Scotch Plains. The band paid its dues in clubs all over the NYC tri-state area. Their take no prisoners sound, reflecting their Garden State roots, resonated with fans worldwide over the course of 17 albums and 2500+ live shows. Their most recent release, The Lost Album, released September of 2023 on CD and gold vinyl, features 12 unreleased songs recorded in the Fall of 1993 when the band was in between contracts with Capitol and RCA.

Where Are They Now: The Smithereens have been creating electrifying, original rock'n'roll for 45 years. With the 2017 passing of lead singer, Pat DiNizio, the surviving members decided to carry on their shared musical legacy. Using guest vocalists Robin Wilson (Gin Blossoms) Marshall Crenshaw and John Cowsill (The Cowsills/The Beach Boys) the band continues to entertain fans throughout the U.S. and the world.

A promotional image for Tim Gartland. It features a photograph of Tim Gartland, a man with dark hair, smiling and playing a harp. The background is a warm, slightly blurred indoor setting. The text "TIM GARTLAND" is at the top in large, orange, serif font, with "RIGHT AMOUNT OF FUNKY" in smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. At the bottom, the website "www.TimGartland.com" is displayed in white. Two quotes are included: one from the Boston Globe and one from the Nashville Scene.

TIM GARTLAND
RIGHT AMOUNT OF FUNKY

"... emotive vocalist, eloquent harmonica player, and evocative songwriter." -- *Boston Globe*

"Gartland is a clever and talented songwriter, a skilled harp player and a soulful vocalist." -- *Nashville Scene*

www.TimGartland.com

A promotional image for Andrew Duncanson. It features a photograph of Andrew Duncanson, a man with a beard and a hat, singing into a microphone. The background is a solid blue color. The text "ANDREW DUNCANSON" is at the top in large, white, serif font, with "FEATURING MICHAEL PELOQUIN" in smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The website "WWW.ANDREW DUNCANSON.COM" is also present. At the bottom, the text "CALIFORNIA TRAP" and "FEATURING MICHAEL PELOQUIN" are displayed. A quote from Frank-John Hadley is included. The logo "DOWNBEAT" is at the bottom right.

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~Tim Gartland~

Singer-songwriter-harmonica player-educator and producer Tim Gartland is a well respected musician. Inspired by a Muddy Waters concert in his home state of Ohio at age 13, Tim began his musical journey learning the harmonica and the Blues. Through his studies, Tim realized that if the Blues was going to survive, the songs would need to address contemporary themes. However, over time, Gartland's songs have evolved in to so much more than just the Blues. Funk, R&B, Soul, Pop, and of course, the Blues, are all part of his equation when songwriting.

I talked to Tim one March day and we chatted about his new album, Right Amount of Funky and how his music has grown over time. The following is an excerpt from our conversation...

METRONOME: I really dig your new album, Right Amount of Funky. When did you start putting the project together?

Tim Gartland: About three years ago.

METRONOME: When we were coming out of Covid?

I had just released my prior album called Truth. That was in 2022. I just got to writing for the next project then. That was the trigger. Get a work project done, start a new one (laughs).

METRONOME: Was there anything that happened during that time that inspired the writing of the album?

I think it was more of just a general writing progression. As a songwriter and being committed to the craft, in general, I like to keep working at that craft.

For this album, I wrote forty-five songs and recorded twelve. From those twelve, I felt that these eight co-existed the best as a unit.

METRONOME: Let me get this right, you recorded twelve songs, but only kept eight of them for the album?

Yes, sir. I have more in the can that I will probably use, but they just didn't fit together as well.

METRONOME: How long were you in the studio?

Oh man... This time around, I took my time. We were more meticulous than ever. I think we did it over a nine month process. We were way more meticulous.

METRONOME: Did you feel like you were afforded the time to do this project? Were you able to record at a slower pace?

Yeah I did. I got a wonderful deal through my co-producer and engineer, Andy Peake of Biglittle Studio here. It's a small studio and he gave me an outstanding rate. I played harp on his album too. It was this reciprocal thing.

He does a lot of my live gigs too. He's an outstanding drummer, but I didn't use him for

four albums. He played with Big Al & The Heavyweights and Kim Wilson. He's originally from the Washington, D.C. Blues scene.

I was working with Kevin McKendree. I did three albums at his studio, and then moved to this one. It's less keyboard forward than my other albums and more guitar forward. That was by design. Robert is just a wonderful person and a flexible player. He can play anything and he's a great rhythm player.



this project. I didn't want to have a guy with two roles. I wanted just an engineer. Then he evolved as a co-producer because he had so many wonderful ideas.

METRONOME: How did you meet Andy?

I met him through Karen Leipziger. When I told Holly Harris I was leaving Boston, she told me, "You have to meet this woman Karen. She's quite dynamic." When I moved down here, Karen became my publicist. She's Andy's girlfriend.

METRONOME: How did you meet some of the players that you had on the album?

Those were most of my choices starting with Robert Frahm. He's been on my last

METRONOME: Tell me about your keyboard player, Jody Nardone. How did you meet him?

He's a brilliant jazz player and singer. He actually works with King Crimson right now. Do you know how deep their music is? That's how good he is. He's really a jazz player though.

METRONOME: Tell me about your rhythm section Mike Joyce on bass and Jack Bruno on drums. How did you meet them?

Jack Bruno played with Tina Turner and Joe Cocker back in the day. He's a bad-ass and such a pocket drummer. That's what I love. Jack was on a prior album, but he

couldn't be on the last one because of Covid.

There's a couple of guys that I most like to work with and Mike Joyce is one of them. Mike is a veteran here. He's in Delbert McClinton's band. He knows all these styles and can just flat-out play.

METRONOME: How did you meet singer, Nalani Rothrock?

She's my back up singer. Oh my God, I was looking for a singer, and I asked my songwriter friend, Dave Duncan, if he knew anyone. He said, "Yes, Nalani Rothrock." She has a bluesy voice, and that's really important.

For my first couple of albums, I had no back up vocals. I wasn't thinking in those terms. On this one, the back of vocals have been indispensable. This was the most time I listened to those back up vocal. I wrote the charts for her, but she just came in and nailed them. She also had ideas of her own. It was very helpful. So every song has back up vocals. That's just my evolution of trying to make a record better.

METRONOME: Did you get to rehearse this material before you went into the studio?

No rehearsal. To be on my own like I've been, you have to evolve as a band leader. So I've learned how to write really good chord charts. I'm a guitar player and I write on my Taylor 214. I write everything on the Taylor and then use Studio One Artist software with one mic and me.

I will record the rhythm guitar so that they can get the feel of it and the chords. Then I'll put a lead vocal and a harmony and I might add some harmonica. That's it. They have the charts and they just do their stuff. They're so good they don't need to

rehearse really.

METRONOME: Are you happy with the way the album came out?

This is my sixth album and I said to myself, I'm taking my time. I'm going to enjoy this process. Nothing got in there that was unsatisfactory. My mantra was enjoy, take your time, listen and really get it right. I enjoyed the process of making this record because I've had regrets in the past.

METRONOME: Let's talk about some of the songs. I loved "Right Amount of Funky." It was loaded with groove. What did the tune mean to you?

I think the over-arching meaning was,

It's all good man. I used to be way more judgmental about music, but I'm way less now with age. Enjoy whatever you enjoy and don't judge other people. That's what it means. Get what you want. It's not one-size-fits-all. It's whatever makes you happy and feel good. Plus, that's a funk groove that I like (laughs).

METRONOME: "A Better Life," had a Latin Cha-Cha feel to it. What inspired you to write that?

This is a song about an extremely hot topic in America. Immigration. I chose a Latin feel because it seems that that's the focus - Latin Americans coming up here. It felt like a good marriage.

Everybody who has ever come here is searching for a better life. My people came from Ireland during the potato famine while my co-writer, Karen Leipziger, wrote a verse about how her family came to America. The third verse is about a modern family coming across the Rio Grande river.

So the first verse is about a guy from Ireland, the second verse is about a Jew from Poland, and the third verse is about some Latin people. They all came at different times, but they were all coming for a better of life. That's one of our deeper songs.

METRONOME: "If This Ain't Heaven," is a great tune. Can you tell us more about that song?

I really enjoyed playing and recording that song. I love that tune. The inspiration

for that was really from Ry Cooder's albums in the 1970's when he was doing early '60s R&B type stuff. I was listening to that and a lot of Soul and R&B music. That was the inspiration.

METRONOME: You touched down on a universal message in "Alone Times." It had a Reggae thing going on. What did that song mean for you?

Well, I love reggae. So I play groups that I like to play. I wanted to write a Reggae piece and that felt like a pretty good fit. Those lyrics fit really well with the cadence.

METRONOME: This album had everything going for it: Reggae, Soul, R&B, Funk, Jump and Blues.

And the last song was a totally traditional blues tune, "Stop Working Me." Every album that I've done has at least one traditional blues tune. That's really my roots right there. That's the essence of me, but I have evolved. I have interest in lots of different grooves.

METRONOME: Are you doing enough playing these days?

I have landed two really steady gigs that I do all the time. I've been the house band at one place for the last five years and at another one I've been there for three. Those gigs are twice a month. They're my regulars, and then I fill them in with specialty gigs, workshops and really high-end shows. I'm pretty busy.

METRONOME: Are they your bands?

Yes. I have a trio, I have a duo, and I can

even play solo with some recorded tracks. Mostly, I play as a trio though. Bass, guitar and me. I can also do a quartet and a quintet.

METRONOME: Who are the core members in your trio?

The core members are Daniel Seymour on bass and Dennis Drummond on guitar. Dennis went to Berklee College of Music. He was the one that played that Spanish intro on "A Better Life" and he was a Top 10 finalist on The Voice. He's a talented fellow. These are the guys that I play with most of the time. I also play a lot with Andy Peake live.

METRONOME: Are you still teaching people how to play the harmonica?

I've been teaching for fifteen years, but I've pulled back a lot. I only want to work with serious, committed people. I actually have a waiting list. I'm trying to budget my time better. In exchange, I feel like I can give more to fewer people. I'm trying to teach these people how to be a musician and not just a harmonica player. There's a difference you know.

METRONOME: Do you have any plans to shoot any videos for the songs?

Yes. I have nine in queue, but I'm not releasing them yet. I've learned that video is important. Now, I'm doing things because I know they're coming. For most of the album, I have some live versions too. So we have studio versions and live versions.

METRONOME: How many shows are you doing a year?

I'm playing about 75 shows a year. I'm comfortable with that number. You might be interested in this too... I had triple bypass surgery last June during the making of this album. I had to take a break. It came as quite a surprise. I got through it though, and I feel better than ever. We were almost done with the album and then I had to take a two month break.

METRONOME: How did you catch it?

The doctors caught it because I did a gig, and when I came home, I couldn't catch my breath. So I laid down, and when I got up I fainted. I was out. So we went to see the doctor and he said, "Let's get your heart checked." Sure enough, I had blockages.

When I was off, I just wanted to get back. I love playing so much, sharing music and creating music. I was just thinking about getting back and being able to do that again. It's been really good for me to get back to music both mentally and technically.

METRONOME: Are you glad you made the move out of Boston?

It was a brave choice. It was brave because I was 55 years old and I was immersed in the scene there. It was a big change to make in life I think.

It's very competitive here. You just have to work that much harder and have an "A" game everywhere you go. I gave up golf to learn the chromatic harmonica (laughs).

-- Brian M. Owens

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Johnny Williams Band

Johnny Williams is a soulful blues-rock singer-guitarist that boasts an impressive 4 decade career. With influences that vary from Gary Moore and Robin Trower to Duane Allman, Dickie Betts and Ritchie Blackmore and on to Jimi Hendrix, Joe Perry, Peter Frampton and Brian May, Williams covers all the bases while remaining true to himself. I spoke with the six stringer one late March day and he enlightened me on his musical journey...

METRONOME: How did you get into music as a kid?

Johnny Williams: I have older brothers. My oldest brother was a keyboard player, and he was playing with some friends. Of course I was reading the album collection and stuff. I'm hearing Queen for the first time, I'm hearing Frampton and Boston. They were playing music, and one of his friends left a guitar. I was noodling around on the guitar and thought, This is what I want to do.

So I went and got a cheap guitar at a local music store, started learning how to play in very shortly after that started my first band. I've been in love with music ever since.

METRONOME: Your bio says that you were into heavy metal. Can you tell me about that?

I was on the heavy-metal scene for quite some time. I made this very quick progression from liking sing a songwriter types like John Denver, Elton John and that kind of stuff. Then I was listening to Peter Frampton and bands like Nazareth. It just got heavier and heavier. Next thing you know I'm listening to Aerosmith, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and all these bands. So I got this real passion for heavy-metal.

The bands that I had in the '80s and '90s were both heavy metal bands. I was in a band that started in high school with Tom Gallo from Bang and Spread Eagle. He and I started this band called Iron Rage, and we played in Boston as a trio probably around until 1988. Then I formed a new trio at the end of the 1980s called Rat Alley. We put out a CD that you can still hear streaming on YouTube. That was from 1988 to 1992.

METRONOME: Who sang in that band?

I was the main singer in Rat Alley and Iron Rage. **METRONOME: How long did the metal era last for you?**

We were most popular in the 80s. We did a lot of club dates. We were an integral part of that metal scene it was going on in the 80s and 90s. Then I wanted to start to play more rhythm and blues, more like the Allman Brothers and jam kind of stuff. The guys I was with were still completely dedicated to just play heavy. So in the 1990s, we fell apart because I wasn't enjoying just playing heavy. Don't get me wrong, I love that stuff but I wanted to play music that had more chord changes and melody to it.

So at the end of the 1990s going into the 2000s I wish on this experimental thing playing with lots of different people, but didn't have a band. At that point, I was just in the jam band stuff. I had a home studio, so I would get together with other musicians and jam for hours on end and record all that stuff. I thought it was interesting stuff.

METRONOME: When did you start playing the

blues?

I didn't really get into the blues until around 2016. I wasn't in a band at the time, so what was around me was these open mic jam sessions. What I realized at these gym sessions was everyone was playing the blues. They were playing a very specific 1-4-5 traditional blues. If I couldn't learn the songs, I couldn't go to the jams and play with these people. So I did a deep dive on straight up blues and really started enjoying it. Around two 2016, I started getting together with some of the players that I had met and doing blues shows. People were enjoying it, and I was enjoying it So I stayed on that path. It's kind of my thing now. I really enjoy the blues especially the heaviest stuff like Gary Moore, Robin Trower and some of The Allman Brothers stuff.

METRONOME: When did The Johnny Williams Band start?

I've had a bunch of different names because the band is very fluid. Even to this day, there are no set members. What I did initially was started a blues band, called Johnny & The Machine with my friends Bob Wessa on guitar and Steve Potts on bass. We had different drummers, but that band ran its course. We ended up, playing the same clubs over and over again and to me that wasn't interesting. I wanted to play with more people.

What I have morphed into at this point, I call everything The Johnny Williams Band, but I'm the only constant in the band. So what I've been doing is meeting remarkable players in the music scene.

METRONOME: How do you meet these people?

When I got into the blue scene, I had a nervousness about approaching these really top players. A friend of mine said to me, "What's the harm of asking?" He said, "The worst they could say to you was no, and then you're right back where you started." So I go to these gyms and I see great players and I just asked him if they want to play. Most of the time, people are very receptive. So I've had the opportunity to play with some fantastic people.

METRONOME: Where are you based?

I'm just 5 miles north of Boston. I can see the city. I've been on the North Shore for 35 years.

METRONOME: Can you tell me about your new CD, Live In Boston?

For that band I was actually calling it The Johnny Williams Trio for a while. I tend to do full of five piece bands, nowadays, but I was neglecting doing my original stuff. Steve and Tim were interested in the original stuff that I write. So we rehearsed for that show. The reason I did it as a trio was just to simplify how many people would have to learn my material. So I kept the

band simple. Those guys were great. They spent a ton of time learning my stuff and making sure it was super tight.

METRONOME: The CD sounded great. I also watched the video of you guys from the Fallout Shelter.

There were a few snafus in the set because that's what happens when you play live. I wasn't able to put everything from that session on the record, but I felt there were some good moments.

METRONOME: How long was your set at the Fallout Shelter?

I was part of a Thursday night, "Listen Local" show. The deal there is they record the show for you with cameras and give you the mix down videos and stuff. That's what your compensation for the show is. It's a super professional outfit there.

They have top end cameras with booms, and they treat everyone there like you're a rockstar. We played an hour set. That was a lot of fun.

METRONOME: Do you play often solo?

I used to do a lot more of it. I haven't been doing much solo stuff lately. I've done a couple of acoustic trio shows recently with Steve Potts on bass and Ken Tolman on cajon. We did the WUML Blues Deluxe show and the Arts Collaborative in Medford. We'll be donating proceeds from that show to their nonprofit.

METRONOME: What kind of guitars are you playing these days?

That's a great question because for 90% of my music career, I've been a Gibson Les Paul guy. I love Gibson, Les Pauls, and always thought they were the most amazing guitar. About three or four years ago, though, I decided to try a Fender Telecaster because I had never owned one. I'll be honest with you, I'm completely stuck on the Telecaster now. It's literally the only guitar I play at most of my shows.

I also have a Flying V and I like to bring that one because it's very versatile. It has coil tabs so you can go between single coil and humbucker. But it ends up, sitting in the stand for most of the night, because I just love the sound of the Telecaster, especially for Blues.

METRONOME: What kind of Telecaster do you own?

It's an American Elite. It has their signature noiseless, single coil pickups and at the top of the volume pot, it has an S1 switch. When you have both the neck and bridge pickups turned on, when you push that button, it combines the two pick ups in a slightly different way, giving you a higher output similar to a humbucker. So you basically get your traditional Telecaster sound and then in S1 mode you get a high-gain pickup sound. I also play with

fairly heavy strings, so I get a lot of comments about my tone.

METRONOME: What kind of amplifier do you play through?

I go back-and-forth between two amps depending on the size of the club. If it's a tight, hard to access, small room, I use an Orange Tiny Terror for those gigs with a reverb pedal. It's only 15 watts but it is loud because of the type of circuitry they use.

The other amp that I have that I just got a year and a half ago, is a Tone King made by a Maryland company. I wanted more wattage, but I still wanted a 1x12 and Tone King has this beautiful amp called a Sky King. It's a two channel amp, and the two channels are voiced differently. The channel with reverb and tremolo are like a Fender Deluxe and the second channel sounds like a Marshall. So you can go back-and-forth between that Marshall grit for solos and that really chiming blues sound. So I am really liking the Tone King. That's my go to amp right now. It's beautiful sounding.

METRONOME: Let's talk about some of the songs on your album... What made you choose to cover the Nick Moss/Mike Ledbetter tune, "Cartwheels On The Sidewalk?"

Shane Sager. Shane knows those guys. When I do shows with Shane, I say, Send me what you want to play. He sent me that one and I thought, This is fantastic especially Michael Ledbetter's singing. He had an amazing vocal ability. A lot of these deep cuts from Shane Sager. He picks some amazing songs. We love doing that tune.

METRONOME: I dug your song, "Dragging You Down." What inspired the writing of that?

"Dragging You Down," comes from a fairly dark point in my life. My daughter was really sick and in the hospital. During this time, the company I was with was not very compassionate about what I was going through. They made things worse for me. So the song is really born out of that dark time for me. I honestly think that's one of the best songs I've ever written, but mostly because of the honesty behind the writing. That song has a deep meaning for me.

METRONOME: You killed Robin Trower's, "Too Rollin' Stoned. What made you cover that?

I love Robin Trower, especially his Bridge of Sighs album.

METRONOME: Your cover of BB Kings "You're Breaking My Heart" was cool. How did you choose that?

That was another Shane Sager one. He just picks monstrously cool stuff. He's the one singing on that too. I get my education of the blues from these guys.

METRONOME: What shows do you have coming up for you?

My gigs are listed on my website: www.JohnnyWilliams.rocks. Our June 6 show at the Plough & Stars will feature some cool players. If Shane is around, he'll be on that one. For the Plough, I usually line up reputable people that the crowd knows. I'm trying to get really great players to come out because I love to play with people that love their music. I'm really in it to playing music with other people. It's the most important thing for me.

-- Brian M. Owens

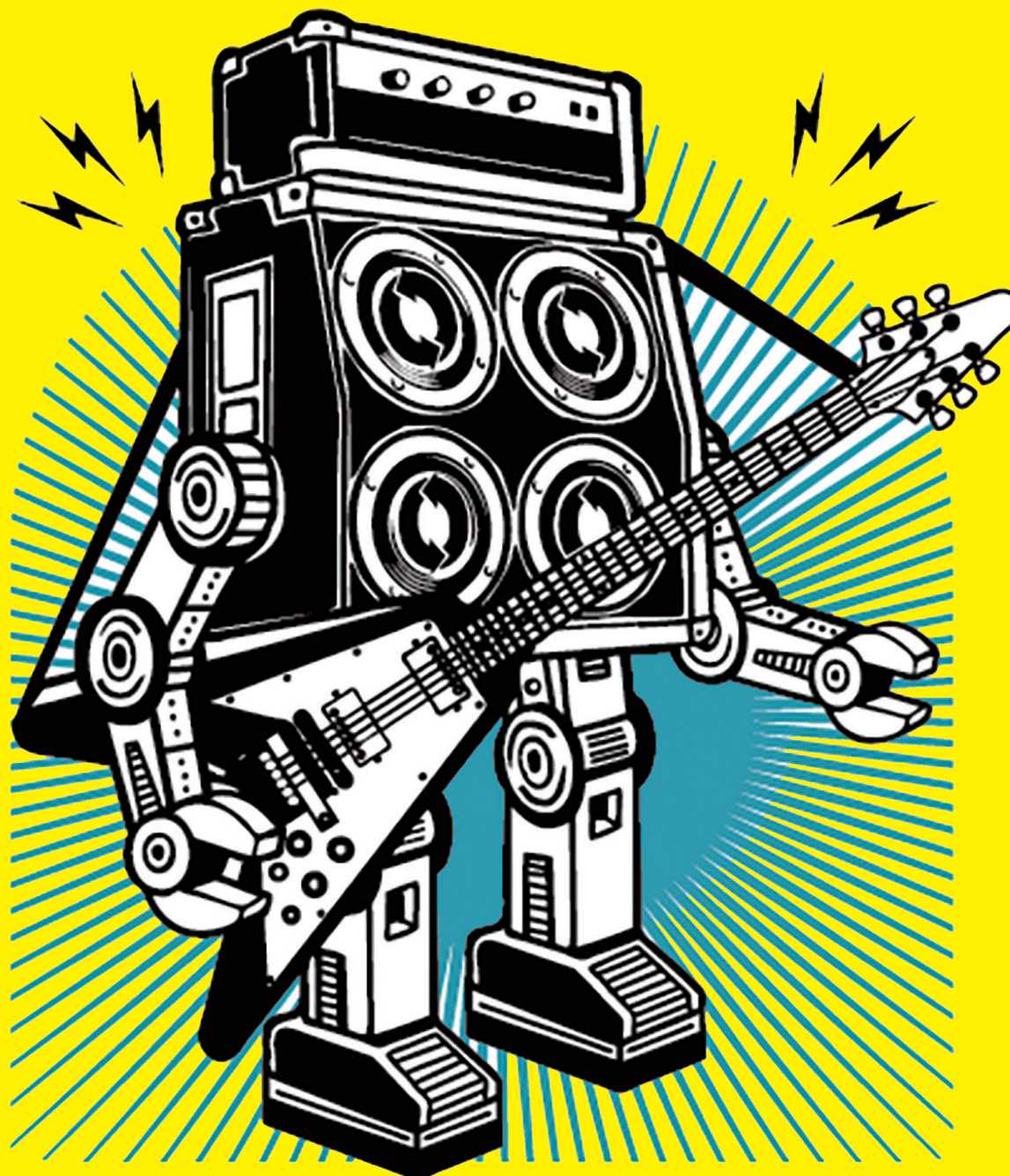


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Metronome Madness

Hello friends of **Metronome** and welcome to the **June** installment of **Metronome Madness**. There's always lots of music happening, so what do you say... let's get on with the show. **The Northeast Guitar Expo** returns to Massachusetts on June 1st at The Sheraton Hotel, Route 9, Framingham from Noon to 4pm. As always, there will be lots to see, do and hear: new & vintage instruments, amplifiers, accessories, music related vendors and plenty of effects pedals. Mark your calendar, you won't want to miss this show. **Joe Bonamassa** has just announced the release of his most adventurous and genre-blending studio album to date, **Breakthrough**. Crafted across multiple continents and infused with a world's worth of inspiration, **Breakthrough** marks a bold new chapter for **Bonomassa**—one that leans on fiery solos, emotionally rich storytelling, groove-driven arrangements, and stylistic exploration. Produced by longtime creative partner **Kevin Shirley**, the album was shaped by sessions in Greece, Egypt, Nashville, and Los Angeles, resulting in a vibrant sonic tapestry that shifts effortlessly from funky blues and Texas swing to acoustic ballads and swaggering hard rock. The album announcement caps a stretch of extraordinary momentum for **Bonomassa**. Recently, **Bonomassa** began his extensive European Spring Tour, followed by a June run with his powerhouse supergroup **Black Country Communion** featuring **Glenn Hughes**, **Jason Bonham** and **Derek Sherinian**. After another round of summer dates across Europe—including sold-out shows in Ireland—he'll return stateside for his 2025 U.S. Summer Tour, a limited amphitheater run featuring stops at The Greek Theatre, Red Rocks and other iconic venues. Blues singer and guitarist **Larry McCray** will release his highly anticipated new album, **Heartbreak City** on June 13, 2025, via KTBA Records, founded by **Joe Bonamassa**. Produced by Grammy-nominated duo Bonamassa and Josh Smith, **Heartbreak City** is a bold, unfiltered collection that finds **McCray** at the height of his powers—fusing raw blues with vintage soul, Southern grit, and a hard-won sense of joy. The ten-track album features standout contributions from **Reese Wynans**, **Kirk Fletcher**, and background vocalists **Jade Macrae** and **Dannielle De Andrea**, as well as guest guitar work from **Bonomassa** himself. The record was recorded at the iconic Sunset Sound in Hollywood and mixed by **Alan Hertz**. "I feel like this album captures all the different sides of who I am," says **McCray**. "It's soul, it's blues, it's truth. It's everything I've lived." Across the album, **McCray** leans into themes of reflection, resilience, and redemption, drawing from



Larry McCray announces New Album

decades of lived experience on and off the stage. His voice—gravelly, weathered, and full of soul—carries the weight of hard-earned wisdom, while his guitar work remains as fiery and fluid as ever. With dynamic arrangements, gospel-tinged harmonies, and a band that matches him punch for punch, **Heartbreak City** doesn't just revisit the blues—it reclaims it, reframing it through the lens of someone who's survived it, played it, and lived it for more than four decades. Catch him live at this year, headlining the **North River Blues Festival** at The Marshfield Fair in Marshfield, MA. on August 24 from 6:30 to 8pm. See you there! Fresh off a year of sold-out shows and critical acclaim, iconic British band **James** will return to North America this Fall for their first full headline

tour in more than 15 years, performing their beloved 1993 album **Laid** in its entirety for the first time ever. Each night will open with a full performance of **Laid**, followed by a second set featuring hits, rarities, deep cuts, and fan favorites from across their formidable catalog—including material from their latest UK chart-topping album **Yummy**. Catch them live, Tuesday, September 9 @ The Paradise Rock Club in Boston, MA. Hard rock band **A-Z** recently announced the release of their sophomore album **A2Z²** which is due out on June 6th, 2025 thru Metal Blade Records. Spearheaded by legendary drummer **Mark Zonder** (Fates Warning, Warlord) and along with former **Fates Warning** bandmate **Ray Alder** on vocals, **A2Z²** builds on the groundwork laid on the acclaimed 2022

self-titled debut album. The writing for the album began when **Zonder** and guitarist **Nick Van Dyk** (Redemption) started working with vocalist **Alder** on the album's first single, "Nothing Is Over." Included in the band are bassist **Philip Bynoe** (Steve Vai/ Ring of Fire/Warlord), guitarist **Simone Mularoni** (A2Z² mixing/mastering, DGM) and keyboard player **Jimmy Waldo** (Alcatrazz/ New England). **Primus** is back with their first new studio track since 2022's **Conspiranoid EP**: the blistering, surrealist anthem "**Little Lord Fentanyl**." A twisted fable steeped in groove and dark humor, the track features a guest appearance from **Maynard James Keenan** (Tool, A Perfect Circle, Puscifer), whose unmistakable voice slithers through the chaos with sinister glee. The single also marks the official studio debut of drummer **John Hoffman**, a Shreveport, Louisiana native who joined the band earlier this year after beating out more than 6,100 applicants in a global audition process dubbed the **Interstellar Drum Derby**. "**Little Lord Fentanyl**" showcases the intricate, playful rhythms of **Hoffman**, whose unconventional style has brought renewed fire to **Primus** since he officially joined the band earlier this year. The release of "**Little Lord Fentanyl**" comes in the midst of **Primus'** spring run on the **Sessanta Tour** and ahead of their **Onward & Upward** summer headline tour which will roll in to **Midway Lawn At Champlain Valley Expo** in Essex Junction, Vermont on Saturday, July 19. Multi-Platinum, GRAMMY-winning artist **Zach Bryan** has purchased the historic former **Saint Jean Baptiste Church** building in **Lowell, Massachusetts**, ensuring its transformation into the **Jack Kerouac Center**. The project was initially announced in November 2022, but stalled amid the COVID-19 pandemic and funding issues. The collaboration between **Bryan** and the **Jack Kerouac Estate** marks a significant step toward honoring the legacy of one of America's most iconic writers while fostering creativity in the heart of **Kerouac's** hometown. The former church, a beloved **Lowell** landmark where **Kerouac** served as an altar boy (and mourners gathered for his 1969 funeral mass), will be converted into a vibrant cultural hub where two creative forces meet. "We're thrilled to be working with **Zach Bryan** and his team to honor **Jack Kerouac** in such a meaningful way," said **Jim Sampas**, the Literary Executor of the **Jack Kerouac Estate**. "**The Jack Kerouac Center** will stand as a lasting symbol of inspiration, forever linking **Jack** and **Zach**. Bryan's Investment is a significant addition to the cultural fabric of Lowell and beyond, and will draw visitors from all over the world." Vermont-based singer-songwriter

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Reid Parsons

Reid Parsons released her long-awaited debut album, **Back to Back**, a lush and emotionally intricate orchestral-folk record praised for its musical depth and poetic clarity. Produced, arranged and written entirely by **Parsons** (save for a cover of Bruce Springsteen's "I'm On Fire"), **Back to Back** was tracked live to tape with no effects at Burlington's, Tank Recording Studio with engineer **Ben Collette**. The result is a warm, analog sound that feels both timeless and personal. A fearless and freewheeling composer, **Parsons** moves fluidly between genres—veering into jazz, classical, blues, soul, country, and chamber pop with reverence and ease. The album's ten tracks explore love, mental health, and creative survival with a rare blend of architectural precision and emotional vulnerability. "Music has always been where I can build a world to embrace all parts of myself," **Parsons** explains. "This album is that world." Look for an in-depth story with **Reid** in the August issue of **Metronome**.

PASSING NOTES: **Jesse Colin Young**, known as the voice of **The Youngbloods'** era-defining song "Get Together," died on

Sunday, March 16, 2025 at his home in Aiken, S.C. No cause of death was given. He was 83. Written by **Dino Valenti**, "Get Together" was a modest hit for **The Youngbloods** upon its initial 1967 release on the band's self-titled debut. But a reissue of the genial folk-rock single reached #5 on the Billboard Hot 100 in September 1969, as anti-war sentiment surged across America due to the Vietnam War. "Get Together" is An Anthem For Every Season. Young's plaintive voice and hopeful delivery embodied the song's optimism that peace and a brighter future were possible; **Roger McLachlan**, an early bass player for **Little River Band** died April 16, 2025 from pancreatic cancer. He was 71 years old. McLachlan appeared on the first two albums **Little River Band** and **After Hours**, and toured extensively, making 311 appearances with the band. He was replaced by George McArdle in 1976; American singer, songwriter, musician and poet based in the United Kingdom, **David Thomas** died on April 23, 2025, at the age of 71 at a hospital in the English city of Brighton and Hove from complications of a kidney disease. He was one of the founding members of the post-punk group **Pere Ubu** from 1975 to 1982, then 1987 through to his death in 2025. The last **Pere Ubu** album and an autobiography will be published posthumously; Welsh musician, best known as the lead vocalist of **The Alarm**, **Michael Peters** died April 29, 2025 from Richter's Syndrome. He was 66 years old. **The Alarm** broke up in 1991, and Peters wrote and released solo work. He revamped **The Alarm** in 2000. Between 2011 and 2013, Peters became the lead vocalist for **Big Country** as well as the Alarm; American singer-songwriter best known for the 1995 single "I Kissed a Girl" and "Supermodel," **Jill Sobule** died in a house fire in Woodbury, Minnesota on May 1, 2025. She was 66 years old. Her folk-inflected compositions alternated between ironic, story-driven character studies and emotive ballads. Autobiographical elements, including her

Jewish heritage and her adolescent battles with anorexia and depression, frequently occurred in Sobule's songwriting.

VIDEO PICKS OF THE MONTH: **Seven Cemeteries-** **Danny Trejo** stars in this dark comedy about crime lord Abuelo who wants the Texas ranch that belongs to Carmela and Matteo. Abuelo stabs Matteo to death and tells Carmela that she has until the end of the day to deliver the ranch to him. Meanwhile, Santana Bravo (Trejo) is released from prison and visits Matteo. He learns what happened to him and then the corrupt Sheriff arrives with his deputies and executes Bravo. A witch brings Bravo's body to her cabin and resurrects him and tells him that his blood can resurrect the dead. Bravo goes to seven cemeteries to bring back his old friends to defeat Abuelo and his men and protect Carmela and her ranch. Lots of mindless action; **Life or Something Like It-** **Angelina Jolie**, **Edward Burns** and **Tony Shalhoub** star in this wacky flick about a reporter, Lanie Kerrigan (Jolie) who interviews psychic homeless man Prophet Jack (Shalhoub) for a football game's score. Instead, he tells her that her life has no meaning and will end in just a few days. This sparks her to change the way she lives her life; **Lift-** Comedian/actor **Kevin Hart** stars as Cyrus, an international thief who along with his crew specialize in stealing costly art pieces. Cyrus's ex girlfriend Abby, an Interpol agent convinces him to steal a huge consignment of gold being sent by plane from London to Zurich in return for immunity from arrest. Cyrus decides to go and do it against all odds; **Trigger Warning-** Starring **Jessica Alba** as a special forces commando on active service who learns her father has died in a mining accident in his New Mexico backyard. She comes home to investigate and finds more than she bargained for; **Wolfman-** Starring **Julia Garner**, **Christopher Abbott** and **Matilda Firth**. When a young boy and his father go hunting in the backwoods of Oregon, the son wanders off to head off a deer. The father panics and tells him not leave his side again. The son also saw a mythical human in the woods that he could not explain. Years later, as a grown, married man, he gets a package in the mail saying his father is deemed officially dead. He went out hunting and never returned. The son goes back with his wife and daughter to clear out the father's home and encounter's the same unexplained animal/human he saw when he was young. This is a creative take on the Wolfman saga and a movie worth seeing. Hey now friends 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 GEMINI, YOU TWIN YOU.** Happy Father's Day to all you hip Dads out there! Thanks for reading.

--Compiled by **Brian O.**



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