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9/15- Boy Harsher; Olivia Neutron-John
9/16- Boy & Bear; Stu Larsen
9/17- Black Pumas
9/18- The Man Who
9/19- Ross From Friends
9/20- Guerilla Toss; DJ Carbo
9/21- Bleached; The Paranoyds; DJ Carbo
9/22- flor; Joan; lostboycrew
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9/26- The Samples
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9/7- Marcia Ball
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9/21- Words Change Everything (Poetry Reading); Suzy
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9/22- Buskin & Batteau (Ballroom)
9/27- The Pousette-Dart Band
9/29- Fred Eaglesmith
9/30- Jimmie Vaughan

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9/1- Jim Gaffigan: Secrets and Pies Tour

**CLUB CASINO BALLROOM
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9/5- An Evening with Dweezil Zappa
9/14- Tesla; Bad Marriage; Voices of Extreme
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9/20- Michael Franti & Spearhead
9/26- Candlebox
9/28- Comedian Brian Regan

**CHAN'S
Woonsocket, R.I.
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9/6- C Jammer with the Cadillac Horns
9/7- Sugar Ray & the Bluetones
9/14- Mark Hummel and Blues Survivors: Dean Shot,
Wes Starr & RW Grigsby
9/20- James Montgomery Band
9/21- Blue FO's
9/27- Brazilia 20th Anniversary
9/28- Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson & the Magic Rockers

**CHEVALIER THEATER
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(781) 391-7469**

9/11- Jethro Tull 50th Anniversary Tour
9/13- Andrew Dice Clay
9/14- Eric Andre

9/17- Gipsy Kings
9/21- Kevin James
9/28- Wynonna & The Big Noise

**EMERALD ROSE
Billerica, MA.
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9/7- Bird Mancini
9/14- Half Way to St. Patty's Day (Irish Music)
9/21- Everett Pendleton
9/28- Seth Connelly

**HOUSE OF BLUES
Boston, MA.
(888) 693-BLUE**

9/1- Dalton & The Sheriffs
9/3- Phantogram with special guests Bob Moses
9/6- Banks - The Ill Tour
9/7- dodie
9/8- Daniela Mercury
9/9 & 10- The Raconteurs
9/11- Babymetal
9/12- Periphery
9/14- Judah & the Lion
9/16- Two Door Cinema Club
9/17- Rainbow Kitten Surprise
9/19- Bloc Party performing Silent Alarm
9/20- Nahko & Medicine for The People
9/21- STS9
9/22- Country 102.5 Street Party 2
9/23- Daniel Caesar
9/25- Brittany Howard of Alabama Shakes
9/26- Glow Boston
9/27- Experience The Sensation Tour Pt 2
9/28- Dean Lewis:
9/30- The Boulet Brothers

**IRON HORSE MUSIC HALL
Northampton, MA.
(413) 584-0610**

9/5- Weyes Blood; The Grass Is Dead: Performing The
Grateful Dead in a Bluegrass Style
9/6- Davy Knowles; Sammy Rae & The Friends
9/7- Samirah Evans & Her Handsome Devils
9/8- Rainy Day People: The Gordon Lightfoot and Jim
Croce Tribute
9/12- Boyfriend
9/13- Riders on the Storm: The Resurrection of The
Doors
9/14- Dacey Riley feat. Zoe Darrow; Black Pumas

9/15- The Wanda Houston Band, Juke Joint Jazz
9/20- Vanessa Collier; City of the Sun
9/21- Quinn Sullivan; Over Under; Bela Hays
9/27- Vance Gilbert; Kerri Powers; Shakedown- Grateful
Dead Tribute
9/28- Journeyman: A Tribute To Eric Clapton

**MAIN STREETS MARKET & CAFE
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(978) 369-9948**

9/2- Brukelele Night
9/3- Open Mic w/Tom Langlais
9/4- Jake Swamp & the Pine
9/5- The Acton Music Project
9/6- Connect 4
9/7- BJ Magoon & Driving Sideways
9/10- Open Mic w/Tim Fiehler
9/11- Al Cath & Bob Calla
9/12- The Lori Z Jazz Trio
9/13- Bobby Kane
9/14- Swamptones
9/16- Bonnie - Celtic Music Rehearsal
9/17- Open Mic w/Bruce Marshall
9/18- Bruce Marshall Sessions
9/19- Silvertone and Ms. G.
9/20- Becky & The Swinging Bards
9/21- Workingman's Band
9/24- Open Mic w/Stacy and Chris Swider
9/25- Mark West on Piano
9/26- Blues Watch
9/27- Digney Fignus
9/28- Social No.11

**MARION MUSIC HALL
Marion, MA.
(508) 353-2150**

9/29- Giocosa Quartet

**MIDDLE EAST RESTAURANT & NIGHTCLUB
Cambridge, MA.
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Upstairs

9/1- Ceschi; sweetcream; Do it for Johnny; Jarva Land
9/4- R.A.P. Ferreira (fka MILO)
9/5- Problematik "Sounds of the City Vol 2 Release
Party" w/ Sewaside Squad, Madd Maxxx, Outland
Camp, Kraeyzie Payne, K.Daver, Dylirium, Official
M.I.C., Young Hook
9/6- Super Doppler; Pyramid Thieves (album release);
Pineapple Jam; Brother Guy

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9/7- And Then There Were None
 9/8- QuadraFunk; Joe Benjamin; Jeb Bush Orchestra
 9/11- Stop Light Observations; Morningbird
 9/13- blindspot; Tzivia & theband Vú; Exit 18; Baabes
 9/14- Retrowave Electropop Synthwave Dance Party ft. Nina
 9/16- Rose of the West
 9/17- Michigander; Izzy Heitai
 9/18- Brant Bjork; Ecstatic Vision
 9/19- Pathogenic (album release); Hivesmasher; Aversed; Viviseulpture
 9/20- Supersuckers 30th Anniversary; The Hangmen; Diablogato
 9/21- Marlon Craft; Binary ft. Worthy (Dirtybird); Detour
 9/22- Fathom Farewell; Gannon; Eminent; No Eye Has Seen; Autumn's Funeral
 9/23- David Leonard (All Sons & Daughters); Jen Aldana; FayTheBankai
 9/25- Stoop Kids; The Cotones
 9/26- Sober Rob
 9/27- Mallrat; Allday
 9/28- Mind is the Maker; Executive Order; Coo & Howl; The Lights Out
 9/29- Mizmor; Hell; Churchburn

Downstairs

9/5- PJ Sin Suela
 9/6- The Doorbeen (Lamberghini Night)
 9/7- Ape Sh*t
 9/11- Quando Rondo
 9/12- Bury Your Dead; Upon a Burning Body; Great American Ghost; Born A New
 9/14- Stackin' Stylez Vol. III
 9/20- H20 25th Anniversary Show; Comeback Kid; Abuse of Power
 9/25- Snow Tha Product
 9/27- Scarlxrd
 9/28- The Crystal Method

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

9/1- Midway or the Highway Open Mic
 9/2- The Benji's; Lunar Throne; Freaking; Non-Stop Disco
 9/3- Minx; Amy Mantis & the Space Between
 9/4- Slark Moan; Ray Liriano; Golf Weapons
 9/5- Richie Parsons
 9/6- Mystical Misfits; Love Love; The Shellye Valauskas Experience; Rocky Ludden; Jeffrey Perrin; Larry Andersen
 9/7- The McGunks; Jason Bennett & The Resistance; Lilac City Low Lives; Triggered; Jamie Payette; Dioniso, Último Minuto; Camino N' Exceso
 9/8- Private Instigators; Color Killer; Jonee Earthquake Band; Degenerates of Punk
 9/9- Bad-ass Burlesque Punk Rock Dance Party 9/10- Them Fantasies, Indiana Heights, Serena Z
 9/11- Fully Celebrated Orchestra; Shalashaska
 9/12- Britt Walsh

9/13- Uncle Johnny's Band; Purple Moon (Pink Floyd tribute); The Keith Curbow Studio Band
 9/14- The Gypsy Moths; Club Linehan A-Go-Go; Doug MacDonald Band; Matt Charette and the Truer Sound; Cook Bag; Courtiers
 9/15- Midway or the Highway Open Mic
 9/16- Inspector 34; The Brankas; Shake The Baby Til The Love Comes Out; Brown Lasers
 9/18- Lex the Lexicon Artist; Super Smack; Minusworld; Sarah Donner
 9/19- Kristofer Saint Aubyn
 9/20- Mystical Misfits; Priors; Black Beach; Far Corners; Andy California
 9/21- The Inebriations; The Low Sparks; Possum
 9/23- Mercury On Mars; Ghost:Hello; Summer Cult
 9/26- Paper Vampire
 9/27- Uncle Johnny's Band; Box of Records; The Grommets
 9/29- Half-Astronaut; Foley; Erin Vadala and her brother Charles Vadala and their band

ONCE! Somerville, MA. (617) 285-0167

9/4- As Cities Burn; All Get Out; Many Rooms
 9/6- Neil Hamburger; Major Entertainer
 9/7- So Long Summer Buzz Market; Meyhem Lauren's Vegetarian Cookout
 9/8- Black Widow Yoga; Bay Faction; Queen Of Jeans; Carol
 9/9- Subhumans; FEA; Savageheads
 9/10- Wovenhand; Jaye Jayle
 9/11- Joe Hertler & The Rainbow Seekers; Los Elk
 9/12- The Selector 40th Anniversary (1979-2019)
 9/13- Joe Mandé
 9/14- The National Parks; Wild
 9/15- Steve 'n' Seagulls; ClusterPuck
 9/16- Venom Prison; Homewrecker; Call of The Void; Joy
 9/17- Dude York; Edge Petal Burn; Peach Fuzz
 9/18- Raveena
 9/19- Orville Peck;/ Le Ren
 9/20- Jerry Paper
 9/21- Lyres; Glider; Speak Low If You Speak Love; Elder Brother
 9/22- Ritt Momney; Bowling Shoes; Raavi & The Houseplants
 9/23- Meg & Dia
 9/25- Patrick Sweany; GA - 20
 9/26- Sir Babygirl; Nyssa
 9/27- The Rocket Summer; Royal Teeth
 9/28- The Faim; Stand Atlantic
 9/30- Greyhounds

ORPHEUM THEATER Boston, MA. (617) 482-0106

9/15- Day6

9/20- Koyaanisqatsi Live performed by Philip Glass & Ensemble
 9/22- Mac DeMarco, Dustin Wong & Takako Minekawa

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

9/6- D'ussepalooza
 9/10- Barns Courtney; The Hunna
 9/11- Boris; Uniform
 9/12- Vic Mensa; Jesse; Hearts<3
 9/13- Deerhunter; Dirty Projectors
 9/15- Angels & Airwaves
 9/18- The Aquabats; Koo Koo Kanga Roo; MC Lars
 9/20- Ride; Spirit of the Beehive
 9/21- Sigrid; Raffaella
 9/22- Lil Keed featuring Lil Gotit
 9/23- The HU
 9/24- Xavier Rudd
 9/25- Jade Bird; Flyte
 9/26- Lauren Alaina; Filmore
 9/27- Joseph; Deep Sea Diver
 9/28- Senses Fail; Hot Mulligan; Yours Truly
 9/29- God Is An Astronaut; Bat House

ROCKLAND TRUST BANK PAVILION Boston, MA. (617) 728-1600

9/8- Of Monsters And Men
 9/12- Kacey Musgraves:
 9/13- Marina
 9/17- Bastille
 9/18- ZZ Top - 50th Anniversary Tour
 9/20- Shakey Graves & Dr. Dog
 9/21- Andrew Bird; Calexico; Iron & Wine
 9/26- GRIZ

REGATTABAR Cambridge MA. (617) 661-5000

9/6 & 7- Mike Stern/Bill Evans Band
 9/11- Frank Gambale w/D. Chambers, S. Wayland & M. Pope
 9/13- Roomful of Blues
 9/18- Dominique Eade & Ran Blake
 9/21- Sofia Rei & JC Maillard
 9/25- Gilad Hekselman Trio
 9/26- Steve Lehman Trio
 9/28- Kevin Harris Project

SCULLER'S JAZZ CLUB Cambridge, MA. (866) 777-8932

9/6- Jazzmeia Horn

9/7- Steve Turre
 9/13- Christian Sands Quartet
 9/14- Kurt Elling and Danilo Perez
 9/19- Theo Kroker
 9/20 & 21- Kenny Garrett
 9/27- The Midnight Hour

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

9/5- An Evening with Matty in the Morning
 9/6- Lil Duval
 9/7- Christina P
 9/8- Doughboys Podcast Live
 9/12- Anjelah Johnson: Technically Not Stalking
 9/13- Not Another D&D Podcast; Jen Kirkman
 9/14- Pablo Francisco
 9/15- The Second City Greatest Hits (Vol. 59)
 9/17- Criminal Podcast Live
 9/18- The Waterboys
 9/19- Eric B. & Rakim
 9/20- Kevin James
 9/21- Dave Attell
 9/22- Demetri Martin
 9/23- Rick Wakeman
 9/24- Steve Hackett: Genesis Revisted
 9/25, 26, 27, 28 & 29- Jim Gaffigan: Secrets and Pies Tour

XFINITY CENTER (formerly Great Woods) Mansfield, MA. (508) 339-2331

9/1- Mary J. Blige; Nas
 9/8- Meek Mill & Future
 9/10- Game Of Thrones Live Concert Experience with music by Ramin Djawadi
 9/20- Jason Aldean

ZORBA MUSIC HALL Lowell, MA. (978) 569-7233

9/7- Aerochix (Aerosmith tribute)
 9/13- The First Responders Appreciation Night
 9/14- KISS Forever - Kiss Tribute Show
 9/20- Priceless Advice (Nirvana tribute); Just Paranoid (Green Day tribute)
 9/21- Moondance (Van Morrison tribute)
 9/27- Scarab (Journey Experience)
 9/28- Invisible Sun (Music of The Police)

All Things Music Since 1985!



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Delbert McClinton

by Brian M. Owens

At 78 years young, Delbert McClinton still hits the stage with all the vigor and enthusiasm of a modern day musical hero. He's carved out an indelible rootsy, Americana sound that's immediately identifiable to fans and music lovers across the globe. His new album Tall, Dark & Handsome brings more of that to the fold as he and his top shelf band exhibits no signs of slowing down. I got to speak to the music icon at his home in Nashville one day in July, and in a thick Texas drawl, Delbert proceeded to lay out his musical story...

METRONOME: What was it initially that made you want to be a singer?

Delbert McClinton: It was just always there. It was never a conscious thought. There's a song going on in my head all the time. Always has been.

METRONOME: Even as a kid?

Oh yeah. I grew up listening to all the "war" music. The music from WWII. That was the radio back then. Today I still listen mostly to '40s music on Sirius. Big bands and trios. The most trying time in our history was WWII, but the music was so uplifting. It was unbelievable and it still is to me today. It was real people playing music instead of electronics. Real people singing and not using auto-tune. It was real people doing it because that's what they did. The talent was over-the-top, and still is.

METRONOME: Were either one of your parents musical?

No. My Dad did a little soft shoe dance step thing that he used to do all the time and it's exactly the same rhythm that I have. If he were around now, he could dance to my songs.

METRONOME: How old were you when you started singing in public?

When I was in junior high school, I wrote poetry. When I was in high school I wrote a poem every year about Christmas for the school paper. It showed up on the front page of the Christmas edition. It's just

always been there.

METRONOME: That must have naturally turned in to the songwriting thing for you?

Well, of course.

METRONOME: What are some of things that inspires your songwriting?

From my point of view, to write anything, all you have to do is look around. There's more than you could ever finish right in front of you, but you've got to be award of it and care about it.

METRONOME: A lot of people are not

when I was about sixteen or seventeen. It just progressed from there.

I never said to myself, I'm going to have a life in music. I was just always singing and making stuff up. When I was about seventeen my brother and I bought a guitar for \$3.50. The only thing it was good for was firewood (laughs). The neck was warped and we couldn't tune it, but we had a guitar. I tried to play that thing until my fingers bled. It just kept going from there.

I became a family man at eighteen so I had to get a job, but I still played every

leg broke. I thought, Oh my God, he's going to sit back down and fall right over. Instead, he kicked it and it went right by my head and on to the floor (laughs).

We backed up Big Joe Turner a lot. We backed up Jimmy Reed a lot. We backed up Howlin' Wolf a lot. I was there. Those were the guys I learned from. Not just them though... Lefty Frizzell, Hank Williams and all of that music that was going on at the time. That's when black music had their own station in Dallas.

As a matter of fact it was KNOK radio and

I knew one of the DJs over there. He promoted shows in Fort Worth/Dallas. I got to know him. Me and my band recorded "Waco Baby," an old Sonny Boy song. Since I was friends with him, he played our record at 6am in the morning on KNOK and you can bet I was up to hear it. As far as I know, we were the only white band to be played on KNOK radio. They had the best of the best on there.

Freddie King was a good friend of mine. We worked with him a lot too. In fact, I went to his funeral. It was one of the most moving things I've ever seen.

METRONOME: When was the moment that you realized you were starting to hit it big?

I don't know if it's happened yet or not (laughs). I guess the first time I ever gave it a conscious thought was in 1952. I went to Sweetwater, Texas to see

my favorite cousin. It was summer time and my brother Walter and I would sleep outside on a mattress. I was singing one night and my mean uncle Earl came out and yelled, Who is that singing? My blood ran cold. I said, I was. He said, Boy, that's really good. For the two weeks I was there, he was the nicest guy to me. I thought shortly after that, I may be on to something. That's the first time that I had any kind of thought about it.

METRONOME: Over the years, you have always managed to have great players in your band. How have you managed to do that?



aware.

Most people are just so completely unaware.

METRONOME: How old were you when you started performing professionally?

I was playing beer joints in Fort Worth, Texas when I was sixteen. That's how loose the law was. We had an area we had to stay in so we couldn't buy beer. That was nonsense though because there was always a way. On our breaks, we weren't allowed to go out and fraternize with the people. We had to stay in an area. People could come over and talk to us. That was

weekend in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

METRONOME: What kind of music were you playing back then? Covers? Originals? Both?

Back then, I wasn't writing a lot of music. In those days, you had to play dance music because they were all dance halls. The people came to dance. If you couldn't make them dance, you didn't get to come back.

We were doing all the early rock & roll stuff and all the doo-wop stuff. We opened for Jerry Lee Lewis one night and I was standing to his right side. He pushed his stool back and when he did, the rear stool

It's not an easy feat, but it's got to be. I don't care how good the band is, if my performance is not good, none of it is worth anything in my mind.

I've been doing a cruise for 25 years now, and a lot of my friends come on there. Four or five guys come on there and they have all been drummers of mine. I'm really hard on drummers. I hate firing people but you have to do it. You have to seek out the guys that can play. I find them and they find me.

Once I became an adult at eighteen, there was no doubt in my mind that this is what I was going to do. The band that I'm a part of right now is the best band I ever had in my life.

METRONOME: Why is it better now?

Because we all have complete and total admiration for each other. There are no jerks in my band (laughs). We all love each other like brothers. We've been together now for about seven years. The guitar player, Bob Britt, is an absolute genius. Mike Joyce is on bass and plays regularly for me. Jack Bruno plays drums. He played behind Tina Turner and Joe Cocker. He's bad-ass too. I have another friend of mine named Big Joe Maher who is the baddest drummer on earth. He's phenomenal.

I have a home down in Mexico, so we started going down there together and spending a week or ten days writing songs. We've been doing that for the last four years. It just works. We just got back from there three weeks ago. We were there for nine days and wrote six of the best songs I've ever been a part of.

METRONOME: Will that be for the next album?

Oh yeah. We already have about nine songs ready for the next record.

METRONOME: What made you buy a home in Mexico?

When I was in high school I always wanted to be an anthropologist/archaeologist. My plan was to get out of high school, get a job, buy a Jeep and go to Mexico and discover things. Well, I didn't make it. I made it fourteen years ago. I can go down and it's like getting a second chance. You get a chance to be a better person.

METRONOME: How did you meet your keyboard player, Kevin McKendree?

The way I met Kevin was in the studio. Leroy Parnell was recording one day and he called me and said, "I want you to come over to the studio and hear this keyboard player that I have." I walked in and Leroy turned to Kevin and said, "Play." He started playing and I knew right then, I have to have this guy working with me.

METRONOME: How many years ago was that?

Kevin was a teenager back then. We've been playing together for 27 years. Of course I knew all these other guys, Jack and Bob, from around town and started getting them one by one in to the band. That's how

you do it. When you're the guy that won't go away, you get a lot of good players.

METRONOME: When did you come up with the name for the band, "Self Made Men?"

I came up with that about two years ago. It's hard to come up with a name nowadays. The way I feel about all these guys.. they're all self made men. I thought, That's a great name for a band.

METRONOME: For your new album Tall, Dark & Handsome, you have + Dana. Why?

That's Dana Robbins on saxophone. We love Dana and in the event this album might win a Grammy, if you don't say on the record, Joe & the Somethings, Joe is the only one that gets a little guy. This way, they all get a Grammy.

Everybody knows Dana. When I introduce the band every night, she gets the biggest applause. She's great, a wonderful person to be with and everybody loves her. She gives them all the attention in the world. She makes friends with everybody.

METRONOME: The opening track "Mr. Smith" burns white hot. Where did that song come from?

A few years ago in Mexico, I met this guy named Mr. Smith. He's an honest to God, Indiana Jones. We became good friends. I started writing the song about him. He's actually from Mississippi, but has lived in Mexico most of his life. He heard the song.

Once in a lifetime you run in to somebody like him.

METRONOME: What made you come up with the song, "If I Hock My Guitar?"

I don't know. Bob Britt got cancer and that scared the hell out of all of us. When he was going in the hospital, I said, Here's something to think about and a song I need you to write, If I hock my guitar, how am I supposed to play the blues? He laughed. When we went back to Mexico I played that line and we wrote the song. Bob's cancer free now. He and Dana both got cancer at the same time and they're both doing good now.

METRONOME: "No Chicken On The Bone" is a cool number and sounds like a signature Delbert tune. I love it.

I do too. Bob can just start playing something and I start singing. It works for us every time. We were fooling around writing and Bob started playing that rhythm. I started singing and after a while we had a song. That's what happens with people of the same mind. All of these guys are my heroes.

METRONOME: Isn't it nice to be surrounded by that?

It's the best place in the world.

METRONOME: Were you reminiscing when you wrote, "Let's Get Down Like We Used To?"

No. We brought a new songwriter in for that, Pat McLaughlin. He's a major

songwriter out of Nashville. He came over to my house with Big Al Anderson and we just wrote it.

METRONOME: Your voice on that song made me feel like you were looking back on another time in your life.

The theme was obvious and about people getting together and hanging out.

METRONOME: "Loud Mouth" was a great tune. Kevin just lit up the piano on that. What inspired it?

"Loud Mouth" was about me. Kevin's son, Yates McKendree is seventeen years old. He's the guitar player on that. He's a freak. He's in Europe now playing with a band. He bends his thumb over the fingerboard and plays all that stuff with his thumb. He plays piano as good as his daddy does too.

I wrote that song about me because, I hate to admit it, I got real drunk at a pre-cruise party the night before the cruise. I got drunk and passed out. I was talking out of my mind and my daughter was there. She witnessed it all. To this day, I feel horrible about it. I don't drink anymore. I quit.

METRONOME: When "Ruby & Jules" started playing, it reminded me of the "Pink Panther" theme...

That's exactly what I tell everybody. That's Dennis Wage the other keyboard player. He's so completely different than Kevin. He's just a genius. Bob wrote the lyrics, but Dennis made the song. He brought all the magic. I can't wait to record more songs with him. He's got so much class.

METRONOME: The last two songs on Tall, Dark & Handsome are really unusual. Where were you coming from for "Temporarily Insane" and "A Poem?"

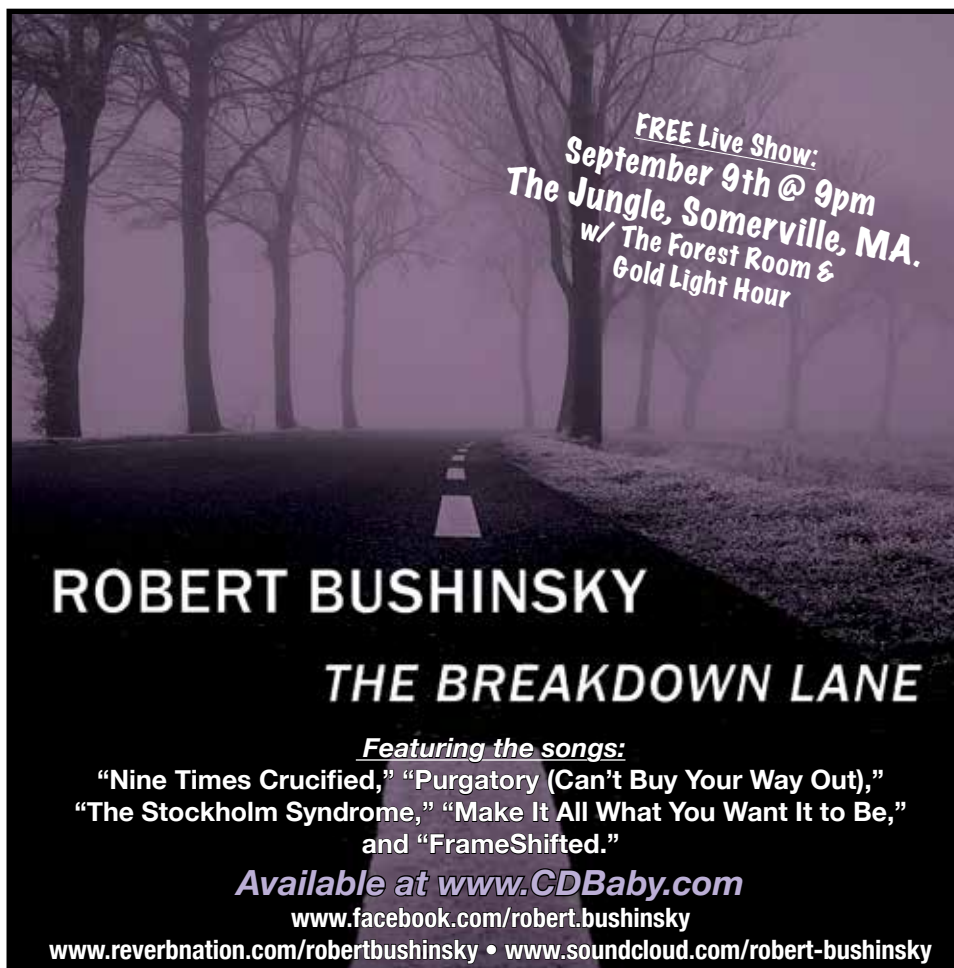
Bob was playing some of that weird guitar stuff you hear in there. We were out on the veranda sitting around talking. He was playing and I was singing and we fooled around with it a bit. Several months later we were in Austin and Bob said, "Let's pull out that song." We were sitting outside in a cafe and all of a sudden we finished it. We liked it and recorded it.

For "A Poem" I had the first verse for that song (recites lyric), then the whole rest of the song jumped in my head.

METRONOME: Are you looking forward to going out on the road?

I love to play, but I can't stand to travel anymore. It's the bus rides and I've got a bad back that I messed up a few years ago. I have a herniated disc.

By the time you play the first gig, you've been on the road for two days. That part of it is not as much fun as it used to be. I need time off between shows now because I'm not a young guy. I just don't want to go at it like I used to. I like to stay home. I love staying home because I never got to stay home. What I do now is I work a week and I'm off eleven days. I can live with that. That satisfies the fans and gives me a private life. How lucky is that?



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by Doug Sloan, Alex Gecko or Brian M. Owens

Top 5 for September 2019

(In NO Particular Order)

- **Chick Corea**
- **Christa Joy**
- **Tommy Castro Band**
- **JR Music Unit**
- **Zac Harmon**

CHICK COREA THE SPANISH HEART BAND ANTIDOTE 11-SONG CD

- ANTIDOTE
- DUENDE
- THE YELLOW NIMBUS - Pt. 1
- THE YELLOW NIMBUS - Pt. 2
- PRELUDE TO MY SPANISH HEART
- MY SPANISH HEART
- ARMANDO'S RHUMBA
- DESAFINADO
- ZYRYAB

- PAS DE DEUX
- ADMIRATION

On his new album *Antidote*, legendary keyboardist Chick Corea reawakens his long standing love of Latin music to deliver a joyous collection of eight original compositions and three covers by masters, Antonio Carlos Jobim/Newton Ferrara de Mendonca, Paco de Lucia/John Albert Amargos/Ramon Algeciras and Igor Stravinsky.

Unveiling his new group, The Spanish Heart Band featuring drummer Marcus Gilmore, bassist Carlitos Del Puerto, flautist/saxophonist Jorge Pardo, guitarist Nino Josele, trombonist Steve Davis, trumpeter Michael Rodriguez, percussionist Luisito Quintero and dancer Nino de los Reyes along with singers Ruben Blades, Gayle Moran Corea and Maria Bianca, Corea and his troupe swing and sway in beautiful musical harmony.

Standouts include the wondrous opening title track, "Antidote," featuring the lead vocals of Ruben Blades "The Yellow Nimbus Pt. 2" highlighted by the brilliant classical fretboard work of Nino Josele, the

gorgeously crafted "My Spanish Heart," with Ruben Blades singing lead, the eight minute Latin/Jazz workout of "Armando's Rhumba," and the winsome album closer "Admiration."

Don't miss this magnificently crafted album by Chick Corea and his stellar Spanish Hearts Band. Bravo! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.chickcorea.com

THE DICKEY BETTS BAND RAMBLIN' MAN LIVE AT THE ST. GEORGE THEATRE 7-SONG CD/10-SONG BLU-RAY DVD

CD

- HOT'LANTA
- BLUE SKY
- MIDNIGHT RIDER
- IN MEMORY OF ELIZABETH REED
- WHIPPING POST
- RAMBLIN' MAN
- JESSICA

BLU-RAY DVD

- HOT'LANTA
- BLUE SKY
- STATESBORO BLUES
- MIDNIGHT RIDER

- MY GETAWAY
- NOTHING YOU CAN DO
- IN MEMORY OF ELIZABETH REED
- WHIPPING POST
- RAMBLIN' MAN
- JESSICA

On this impeccably produced and recorded CD/Blu-Ray DVD of The Dickey Betts Band caught live at The St. George Theatre on Staten Island, NYC, on July 21, 2018, you get the best of Betts and his years with the Allman Brothers Band. Accompanied by his exceptional band that features his son Duane Betts on guitar & vocals (looks and plays just like his father as a young man), Frankie Lombardi & Steve Camilleri on drums, Mike Kach on keyboards & vocals, Pedro Arevalo on bass, and Damon Fowler on lead/slide guitar & vocals, along with Devon Allman (Gregg's son) singing lead vocals on "Midnight Rider," Betts and company give the adoring fans all the hits that he wrote, co-wrote or was associated with during his time with the Allman Brothers.

There are moments of bad notes and fractured guitar runs by Betts throughout each song, but you have to keep in mind





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that less than a month later (August 2018), Dickey would suffer a stroke that would see him hospitalized and soon after be operated on. He would also succumb to injuries from an accidental fall the next month (September). Nonetheless, the Staten Island crowd that July evening gave Betts and his stalwart band all the love they deserved for a wealth of influential Southern rock tunes that will last for generations to come. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.dickeybetts.com

ZAC HARMON
MISSISSIPPI BARBQ
11-SONG CD

- GYPSY ROAD
- SO COLD
- SMOKE AND MIRRORS
- MISSISSIPPI BARBQ
- DESPERATE LOVE
- HONEY PLEEZ
- MAKE A DOLLAR OUT OF FIFTEEN CENTS
- SUNDAY MORNING AFTER SATURDAY NIGHT
- LORD SAVE ME FROM L.A.
- SINCE YOU BEEN GONE
- KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

The Mississippi born William "Zac"

Harmon is a real deal bluesman whose resume goes as far back as his early days playing with folks like Z.Z. Hill, Sam Hill and Dorothy Moore. He's also been known for his production skills of Black Uhuru's Grammy nominated album in 1994 The Mystical Truth as well as penning songs for artists like The O'Jays, The Whispers, Karyn White and Alexander O'Neal. It wasn't until 2002 that Harmon would record his debut under his own name. Eight albums later, Harmon continues to be a force on the blues scene.

His latest offering Mississippi BarBQ is an uplifting musical adventure that hints of blues, rock, swing, R&B and soul, all punctuated by Harmon's big bold vocals and toneful single note guitar runs. He's ably assisted throughout by well known players Bob Trenchard on bass, Richy Puga on drums, Johnny McGhee on guitar, Dan Ferguson on keys, and the horn section of trumpeter Mike Middleton, alto saxophonist Andy Roman, tenor & bari sax man Nick Flood & trombone/tuba player Drake Dominique as well as his own band Corey Carmichael on keyboards & vocals, bassist Chris Gipson, drummer Ralph Forrest, rhythm guitarist Texas Slim and singers Janelle Thompson, Shakara Weston & SueAnn Carwell. What do you say? Let's have a Mississippi BarBQ Zac Harmon style. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.zacharmon.com

Solo Artists, Bands & Record Labels are welcome to send CDs and DVDs for some ink along with decals, t-shirts, promo pins, mugs and other cool stuff to:

METRONOME MAGAZINE,
P.O. BOX 921, BILLERICA, MA. 01821

CHRISTA JOY
GET ON, HEART!
11-SONG CD

- GET ON, HEART
- DIDN'T YOU TURN OUT GOOD
- YOU DON'T KNOW
- HONEY BEE
- LITTLE PAWN
- ON THE SHUNPIKE
- LOVE CUTS THROUGH
- I KNEW FIRST THING
- THE ROAD
- YOU'RE NOT THERE
- SHE'S ENOUGH

Western, Massachusetts based Christa Joy delivers a well crafted album of traditional twangin' country songs that ripple with orthodox sentiment from the masters, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette. Growing up in a teacher/

preacher truck driving family, Christa learned well about life, love and everyday simplicities that color our lives.

Tracks of note include the honky tonkin' album title track "Get On, Heart!," the Dolly parton infused "Honey Bee," the meticulously crafted "Little Pawn," the knee slappin' "Love Cuts Through," and the beautifully composed "You're Not There."


Fans of traditional country music should not miss this outstanding release from talented singer-songwriter Christa Joy. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.christajoymusic.com

TOMMY CASTRO & THE PAINKILLERS
KILLIN' IT LIVE
10-SONG CD

- MAKE IT BACK TO MEMPHIS

Continued on next page >>>



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- CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN
- LEAVING TRUNK
- LOSE LOSE
- CALLING SAN FRANCISCO
- SHAKIN' THE HARD TIMES LOOSE
- ANYTIME SOON
- SHE WANTED TO GIVE IT TO ME
- TWO HEARTS
- THEM CHANGES

Tommy Castro and his bands have always delivered the goods when it comes to the live arena and the tracks you hear on his new recording, *Killin' It Live*, is no exception. Shakin' things up with the band at venues in Michigan, Texas, New York and California, Castro and his Painkillers featuring longtime bassist Randy McDonald, drummer Bowen Brown and Mike Emerson on keyboards hand in a razor sharp collection of Castro penned originals along with the Sleepy John Estes tune "Leaving Trunk," and Buddy Miles' "Them Changes."

Castro has always been known for his fine tuned, gritty, blue collar voice and on *Killin' It Live*, his vocals are rivaled only by his incendiary guitar work. In fact, Castro's fretboard excursions have become more adventurous and complete over the years and it's captured here in the guitar driven numbers "Can't Keep A Good Man Down," the bluesy "Lose Lose," the uptempo blues rock of "Calling San Francisco," the hard drivin' "Shakin' The Hard Times Loose," the testifin' "She Wanted To Give It To Me," and the funky blues of Buddy Miles' "Them Changes."

Tommy Castro & The Painkillers surely know how to make a dance floor bounce and *Killin' It Live* is proof positive of the band's power. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- www.tommycastro.com

J.R. MUSIC UNIT WARP SPASM 11-SONG CD

- MY HAIR
- LOCO IN THE COCONUT
- DON'T GIVE ME THAT
- TALL, SEXY GLASS OF WATER
- IT AIN'T THAT EASY
- RETIRE TO MY GRAVE
- FREAKSHOW
- ORDINARY LIFE
- TESTIFYING
- BOOM BOOM BOOM
- ICE CREAM CONE

Singer-drummer Jeff Reynolds is back with his Music Unit featuring the searing guitar work and synth lines of Kenny Craig

and the driving bass playing of Steve Reich for another high octane collection of rock & roll originals. Melding '80s hard rock with English punk, Reynolds and company deliver clever songs ripe with rebellious sentiment and roaring instrumentation. It's not common place to find a lead singing drummer, but Reynolds pulls it off with flying colors from track to track.

Tracks of note include the quirky album opener "My Hair," the post-punk flavored "Loco In The Coconut," the arena rock ballad "Don't Give Me That," the Country Western noir of "It Ain't That Easy," the flat-out punk swagger of "Retire To My Grave" and "Freakshow," the wah-wah fueled "Testifying" and the bombastic album closer "Ice Cream Cone."

Unlike his last album, Jeff Reynolds and his band seem to have found a cohesive chemistry and sound. A good record. [D.S.]

Contact- www.jrmusicunit.com

RAT FANCY STAY COOL 10-SONG LP

- STAY COOL
- MAKING TROUBLE
- NEVER IS FOREVER
- RIP FUTURE
- MUST BE NICE
- BEYOND BELIEF
- DREAMING IS REAL
- FINELY KNITTED
- STUCK WITH YOU
- RIDE OR DIE

Stay Cool gives you a respite from the problems of the universe for only about half an hour or so, but what a pure indie pop moment that is. The Rat Fancy duo have gotten even better than their first EP by having polished their melodies and sharpened their rhythms to a razor sharp edge. The title track delivers the goods with Diana Barraza's enticing voice backed by her own undistorted guitar and Gregory Johnson's subtle keyboard. I'm reminded of the Darling Buds with more sugar frosting.

We get to relive our teenage years with the well crafted "Making Trouble." Johnson bashes on the drums with more torque than usual on "Never Is Forever" to give it more emphasis. Barraza gets all fervent and breathy on the faster paced "RIP Future." "Must Be Nice" down shifts a tad for more well earned pathos. "Beyond Belief" is another emotional ballad that draws you in and then pulls you up again until you get hit by the spoken word middle eight, straight out of 1960s girl band tunes. "Dreaming Is Real" revs up quite a bit while "Finely

Knitted" goes on a long keyboard tangent, before moving back to fervent mode. "Stuck With You" sounding like English 1960s pop, then got more confrontational with the guitar. "Ride Or Die" gets you all sentimental. If you must experiment with twee indie pop, this is your way in. [Gecko]

Contact--

<https://ratfancy.bandcamp.com>

SEABLITE GRASS STAINS NOVOCAINE 11-SONG CD

- WON'T YOU
- PILLBOX
- LOLLIPOP CRUSH
- TIME IS WEIRD
- HEART MOUNTAIN
- HE'S A VACUUM CHAMBER
- THERE WERE ONLY SHADOWS
- HAGGARD
- HOUSE OF PAPER CUTS
- POLYGRAPH
- I TALK TO FROGS

Seablite may claim to come from San Francisco, but in fact got sent to the present day directly from 1990 London, where they were one great missing link in the Shoegaze scene, due to a freak effects pedal malfunction that altered the time space continuum.

"Won't You?" has the charmingly layered vocals from guitarist Lauren Matsui and bassist Galine Tumasyan and the highly complex harmonized noise somewhere between pleasure and pain that is the winning ticket. With "Pillbox" they explore bouncier pop territory, but still ably intertwine the voices.

Seablite test the borderline towards late 1980s Twee with the music of "Lollipop Crush," but the singing has a longing melancholy. "Time is Weird" offers you even more longing. "Heart Mountain" is pure pop with a simple, but effective rhythm and melody that seeks challenges in the vocal gymnastics. "(He's a) Vacuum Chamber" completely slows down and feels almost experimental, while we hear the drummer exert himself some more.

"There Were Only Shadows" is the jazziest of the bunch without getting weird. "Haggard" has a cute little riff, speeds up the tempo and makes well thought out hooks seem simple. Bravo. On "Polygraph," we detect the most overt Lush sonic signature, but it works well due to the emotional feel. For a partial step back to the present, they wade through the waters of Veronica Falls with "I Talk to Frogs," which will be another

classic. [Gecko]

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

61 GHOSTS MERCY 9-SONG CD

- BLACK CADILLAC
- DIRT ON YOUR REGRET
- DON'T FADE AWAY
- DON'T HOLD BACK
- SUPERMAN
- FAYETTEVILLE
- GLIMPSE OF YOU
- SHAKE FOR ME
- NEW YORK COATTAILS

It seems that after more than year on the road, 61 Ghosts are progressing direction wise, but have one foot firmly in the past. "Black Cadillac" has a powerful riff, a bit Peter Gun-ish, and nicely straddles Mazzari's 61 Ghost Americana and his older Two Saints heavy duty Rock N Roll style, hopefully bringing in old fans. With "Dirt On Your Regret," they drop you straight in the badlands with disturbing emotions.

Mazzari is really baring his soul on "Don't Fade Away" but he always was big softy! It just takes big man to expose oneself to this degree. Of the three quieter pieces, I like "Don't Hold Back" the best. Having a rhythm section on it gives it an underlying strength. I'm not overly fond of Superhero comics, which is my personal beef, but after listening to "Superman", I think this song also has clear potential.

"Fayetteville" is their strongest song and suitably ends the disk. It flows really nicely and has a cool yet supple riff and has you looking up the map of the US. Mazzari has one of his genius fluid guitar riffs to slide "Glimpse Of You" under your fingernails, and then offers up his entire vulnerability. He then has a 1970s Deep Purple guitar moment on "Shake For Me" before asking for answers and still taking you on a wild roller coaster ride. Mazzari has flashbacks of his moving beginnings with Johnny Thunders in "New York Coattails" which has a complex dynamics and certainly a lot of pent up frustrations.

Overall, 61 Ghosts have moved away from the alt Southern blues of their first disc to the prairie states country rock. I'm a little reminded of very early Springsteen and some Mellencamp in a non-commercial way. 61 Ghosts and their OTTO Records are releasing this in dribs and drabs and eventually on a full length record. [Gecko]

Contact--

<https://61ghosts.bandcamp.com>

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Elizabeth Steen

by Brian M. Owens

You may recognize Elizabeth Steen from playing in a number of different band configurations throughout the greater Boston area. Over the years, her accordion playing and keyboard work has landed her many high profile gigs with the likes of Natalie Merchant, Tanya Donelly, Billy Bragg and others. These days, you can find Elizabeth playing with the group, Sneaky Pint as well as her own alter-ego acts, Betty & The Bellhops and Betty James Roulette. We queried the talented Steen about her long standing career in the music business and she responded with witty answers and inspired enthusiasm. Dig in...

METRANOME: Are you a native New Englander? If not, where are you from originally?

Elizabeth Steen: No, I'm originally from Pittsburgh, PA—polka country.

METRANOME: Did you grow up in a musical family?

I did. Both my parents were musicians who met in music school at Carnegie Mellon. My mom was a professional violinist who was in the Pittsburgh Symphony for many years. She freelanced all over Western Pennsylvania and beyond. She did a tour with Tony Bennett, before I was born. She was a gig dog into her 80's.

My dad was a singer, who sang art song repertoire and in a church choir and was in a dance band that was on a weekly TV show in Pittsburgh, again, before I was born.

METRANOME: Who were some of your musical influences when you were young?

My dad would bring home records from the dollar bin at Woolworth's. Music of every genre. It was all fresh to my young ears and I didn't categorize. Some of my favorites were Peggy Lee, Si Zener's Big Band and Offenbach. Then I started buying 45s and went all in with Top 40, back when the format was much wider. Stevie Wonder, Queen, The Doobies Brothers, Steely Dan, then eventually Zeppelin and serious rock. I was enthralled with Abbey Road.

METRANOME: What brought you to Boston?

I was living in L.A. after music school and

nothing was clicking. I kept thinking about the record stores in Boston I had visited. One day I called my old college roommate and said, Let's move to Boston. I arrived at a rich moment in Boston's music history and started waitressing at Nightstage. I heard everything: The Zulus, the Pixies and Dumptruck, along with a full banquet of Zydeco, Reggae, Jazz, Tango, Folk and Blues.

I started playing in my first band with a

Bragg on Mermaid Ave, where I met Natalie Merchant who sang on the same track, "Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key." That began an 8 year stint as her keyboardist/accordionist.

The accordion seems to open doors for me. I know the accordion's reputation as a polarizing instrument and the butt of many a joke, but if someone is looking for that sound, then they just might be my kind of people.



photo by
joshuapickering.com

friend who was very patient. The band was a surf band called the Beachmasters and I played a Vox Continental organ.

METRANOME: How long have you been playing accordion?

I've hacked on it for decades, but became serious a few years ago when I subbed for a friend during Oktoberfest. I got to wear a Tyrolean hat and play happy music to people drinking boots full of beer. I was enchanted.

METRANOME: What got you interested in the instrument?

I started because I played keyboards with Tanya Donelly and she used it on one song. Then I got a music teaching job in the Boston Public Schools. I liked that I could be more mobile in the classroom playing accordion rather than just piano.

Then I was called to do a session with Billy

METRANOME: Did you take formal lessons?

I took one lesson with my friend Sonny Barbato, a wonderful accordionist and pianist. He made it look easy and when I realized it wasn't, I decided it was beyond me and didn't pick it up for a few years.

METRANOME: Do you play any other instruments?

I've played piano since I was 4 years old. I studied intensively and sadly, haven't learned to play anything other than keyboard instruments. I taught recorder in school and stayed one lesson ahead of the 3rd graders (laughs).

METRANOME: Did you go to college for music?

Yes, I did both an undergrad and masters degree in piano performance. All classical.

METRANOME: When did you start singing?

I sang backups in bands, but when I started writing more, I had to start singing more.

METRANOME: What came naturally to you, singing or playing keys/accordion?

I was drawn to the piano at the age of 3. We had a baby grand and it made music so visible, the sounds laid out in a grid. It was easy for me to understand. Singing only came naturally when I was being a ham. Accordion took a lot of work and still does. I have chronic wrist, elbow, arm and finger pain from playing it.

METRANOME: Who are some of the bands you've played with over the years?

Well, as I mentioned, there were the Beachmasters—a really good surf band. After that, I played here and there, some solo piano GB work at hotels. I used to wear a gown to play at the Ritz Carlton. Then I played with some Nightstage folks, and that led to my joining Count Zero as a keyboard player for many years. Around the same time, I joined Tanya Donelly for her first solo tour, and have played with Juliana Hatfield, Catie Curtis, LoveLove, Franc Graham and many other slammin' musicians around town.

METRANOME: Did you release any albums?

Yes. I had a project called Fritter. We released a full length CD and

an EP.

METRANOME: Are you currently playing in a band(s)?

Yes. I play in a lot of bands of rotating personnel. I play a lot of Irish gigs. I have a solo project called Famous Grouse with my friend Jude Heichelbech. We play mostly our originals. I am playing in two bands bearing my name (actually a nickname for Elizabeth)—one called Betty and the Bellhops and another called Betty James Roulette. Mostly old Jazz, R&R, Swing, Zydeco and Americana. I also play in a band called Sneaky Pint, which does a lot of the same type of music with some originals by Jim Coyle, the guitar player.

METRANOME: Who's in Betty and The Bellhops?

Betty is myself. Mark Earley and

Kevin Byrne are very talented multi-instrumentalists from the Busted Jug Band among other projects who are the Bellhops.

METRONOME: What kind of music do The Bellhops play?

We call it popular songs and obscure chestnuts from early to mid-20th century America. Anything from Hank Williams to Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee to Irving Berlin.

METRONOME: Who's in Betty James Roulette?

Betty James Roulette is by definition (the roulette part) a spin of the wheel, musical roster-wise. Betty is, once again, moi, and James is Jim Coyle. Dan Kellar is often in attendance, as well as Joe MacMahon on bass.

METRONOME: What does the name signify?

I arrived at the Betty James part because of a singer by that name who made records (not a lot), for Chess Records in the 1960's - R&B in the Etta James vein. We cover her best known song, "Little Mixed Up." It just happened that we have two band members who can use her moniker, but she's the original and an inspiration as well.

METRONOME: What musical genres fuels that band?

Zydeco, old country, swing, Latin, and songs of a romantic nature for dancing. It was conceived as a function band, but we don't do any Peaches and Herb covers, for

which I offer no apology (laughs).

METRONOME: How long have you been in Sneaky Pint?

We've been playing together for 2 years or so.

METRONOME: Who else is in the group?

There are various permutations depending on the venue and availability scenario, but the core is Jim Coyle, Frank Drake on bass, Dan Kellar on fiddle and Andy Plaisted on drums.

METRONOME: How did you all meet?

I met everyone from playing at Sally O'Briens. There's so much amazing music in this town and a lot of it comes through Sally's.

METRONOME: Sneaky Pint's Facebook page describes the group as playing "Music in the tradition of Rocky and Bullwinkle. Rhumba, twist, cha-cha, and the occasional mashed potato. Sincere, motivated, fun-driven, insinuating." It all sounds like clever fun. Can you elaborate?

Well, we like danceable grooves. I gravitate toward the Latin sphere, and I also love to use the accordion to reinforce the rhythmic backbone of a song. The bass buttons kind of dork it up a bit, so I guess that nostalgia for the goofy cartoons of childhood came through in my description.

The accordion does not always conjure the most graceful image, but people really do dance at our gigs and they are so

charming.

METRONOME: Where are some of the places you play?

Depending on the style of music, I play pubs and clubs and ale houses and the occasional art gallery. I play at Sally O'Brien's and Toad. Sneaky Pint plays every 4th Wednesday at the Plough & Stars. I just played a duo concert with a wonderful sax player named Arni Cheatham at an Improvisational Jazz series at the Boiler House in Waltham—part of the Charles River Museum of Industry. It's a very cool venue. The audience sits amid old cars and giant antique sewing machines and printing presses.

METRONOME: Do you have any recorded music out?

I mentioned Fritter. That's from the mid 2000's, so it's been awhile since I've done a CD of my original music. I hope to change that this year. I play on other people's CDs and love to do recording sessions.

METRONOME: Do you play solo?

I do private events on solo piano and accordion. I would like to do a lot more solo accordion work. I think it would be a great fit in a lot of restaurants in town, but I'm not doing enough guerrilla flash tangobomb appearances, so I'm not sure how to get their attention.

METRONOME: How often do you play live (band and/or solo)?

Something like a dozen or so gigs a

month is probably about average. I also do a lot of teaching.

METRONOME: Where are some of the venues you play solo?

Generally, private events are where I play solo, but as I say, I'm hoping to get into a restaurant to serenade diners with some tarantelli. I played for a garden tour in the South End and was very happy playing solo accordion under a tree in the community gardens.

METRONOME: Are there any live YouTube videos of you that people can watch?

Betty James Roulette has a YouTube compilation video, and Jim Coyle has a bunch of stuff that Sneaky Pint plays on his YouTube page. In the ancient archives of YouTube, I may appear on Natalie or Tanya's TV appearances or concert videos. Vintage 90's stuff. I'm in some Count Zero footage from live shows too.

METRONOME: Can folks find you on the internet?

Yes, as Betty James Roulette, on YouTube and also on the GigMasters site. However, I am not nearly as visible as I should be. My PR gene seems to be dormant in this lifetime. Sneaky Pint has a Facebook page as well. I mostly promote through Facebook.

METRONOME: Is there anything you'd like to add before we close out?

I don't think I've mentioned that in my spare time I like to chew gum. Generally mint flavors.

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Jimi Hendrix

Celebrating The 50th Anniversary of Woodstock

Photo circa: Early morning, August 18, 1969

Band Members: Jimi Hendrix (Vocals & Guitar), Larry Lee (Guitar), Billy Cox (Bass Guitar), Mitch Mitchell (Drums), Juma Sultan (Congas) & Gerardo "Jerry" Velez (Congas).

Musical Achievements: For the brief time Jimi Hendrix walked the planet, he changed the course of the way the electric guitar was played forever. His band, The Experience, that featured bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, released three albums that shook the world of rock. Those albums are still shaking it today. For the Woodstock show, Hendrix assembled a group he called Gypsy Suns and Rainbows. He would also call them a "Band of Gypsies" during the intro. His largest group ever, it included two musicians he played with at the start of his career, bassist Billy Cox and guitarist Larry Lee. It also featured Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell and two percussionists, Juma Sultan and Jerry Velez. That morning they performed the songs: Message to Love, Hear My Train a-Comin', Spanish Castle Magic, Red House, Mastermind, Lover Man, Foxey Lady, Jam Back at the House, Izabella, Gypsy Woman, Fire, Voodoo Child (Slight Return), Stepping Stone, The Star Spangled Banner, Purple Haze, Woodstock Improvisation, Villanova Junction and Hey Joe. Hendrix would perform "The Star Bangled Banner" that would go down in Rock & Roll history books as one of the most revolutionary versions of the song. Gypsy Sons and Rainbows only performed two more shows before disbanding.



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Peter Poirier

by Brian M. Owens

Peter Poirier is the consummate bluesman. During the 1990s and early 2000s, you could catch his incendiary guitar playing while fronting his own band City Pete & The Eels or backing up blues belter Shirley Lewis throughout night clubs in the Northeast. However in 2004 he disappeared from the Boston scene and hadn't been heard from... until now.

Moving to the small western, Massachusetts town of Monterey in 2006, Poirier kept a low profile playing solo shows and the occasional band gig. However it wasn't until recently that well known bassist and friend, Brad Hallen (Duke Robillard Band) suggested to Poirier that he should record a new album. The flood gates came roaring open for Poirier. The result is a well played and produced compact disc entitled, Empty Arms, that finds Poirier back with a renewed energy doing what he does best, playing and singing the blues...

METRONOME: Where are you from?

Peter Poirier: I was born in Waltham, and grew up in West Newton.

METRONOME: What made you want to be a guitar player?

I'd say from as young as I can remember... about three years old, I loved music. I had an older brother thirteen years older than me, so when The Beatles came along, I was aware of them right away. I watched them on Ed Sullivan. I was given some Beatles singles by my brother, probably in an effort to keep me away from his records (laughs). I listened very intently to music from a very young age, but I was really against studying an instrument.

METRONOME: Why?

Do you remember the TV show, "Leave It To Beaver?" In one episode Beaver had to sit at home and practice the piano while his friends were outside playing. Right away I said, That is never happening (laughs).

When I hit my teenage years, I had friends in bands and that was it. I said, Okay, my friends are doing it. I got a really cheap acoustic guitar. The light just came on and I started playing.

METRONOME: When did you get in to the Blues?

Very early on, I felt drawn to the blues. I wasn't really sure why.

METRONOME: Was your brother listening to the Blues?

No. He was listening to The Beatles, The Doors, Chicago, Blood, Sweat & Tears and all that stuff. Of course, a big staple of '70s radio was blues based. At one point, during my junior high years, there was a '50s music nostalgia era and my friend and I got really in to it. In the early '70s I was listening to Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Elvis and Doo-Wop, so I think that fit in to it.

Once I started playing guitar, I said, Man I really like this music. What really moved it in to high gear was when George Thorogood first came out and had the hit



single originally done by Hank Williams, "Movin' On Over." I said, I really dig this guy, because it was rootsy. It reminded me of Chuck Berry.

I got curious about George Thorogood and found out he was all about Hound Dog Taylor. He said, "Hound Dog Taylor is the guy for me." I said, Who is this guy? That was right around the time when Alligator Records gave Hound Dog a record deal. I went in to the Harvard Coop and found the album and brought it home. That really turned the light on for me. It was a real authentic blues record. I started listening to the blues at that point.

Shortly after that, I was working with a guy who was a real blues fan. He had a great record collection. He said, "Come over to my apartment some day and I'll make you a mix tape. I think back on that tape now and remember he picked Buddy Guy doing

"Sweet Little Angel," B.B. King playing "Everyday I Have The Blues," some John Lee Hooker and Reverend Gary Davis... I started listening to all those guys.

Around that time period, late '70s, early '80s, you could go see those guys play in Boston too. I got a chance to see Buddy Guy and Junior Wells at Jonathan Swift's.

METRONOME: How old were you at that point?

I was probably in my early 20's. At the time, I still had the idea that I would have an original rock band. I was really in to bands

Blues in Cambridge by that point?

That was coming up. By that time, I had already started my own blues band, City Pete & The Eels.

METRONOME: What year was that?

We played our first show in 1992 at a God forsaken place called The Atlantic Lounge on Revere Beach. It was basically a Metal bar. Now we had a place to play. Let's go.

We did that for a while, but it was soon clear to me that the guys in the band weren't really in to the blues. I was very serious about it, and by going to the jams, I was meeting real blues musicians. I became friends with Richard Malcolm who was a drummer. He was playing with Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson at the time. So I was hanging out with him and Jacques Raymond, a great bass player, and Forrest Padgett who was playing with Rick Russell at the time. Then I met Brad Hallen.

I started doing gigs with those guys and started doing my own thing under my name City Pete. That was from the late 1990's to 2003. In the middle of all that, I was in Shirley Lewis' band for 4 years. She hired me around 1997. That was a great period for her because we immediately went out on the road. We played at Manny's in NYC, we played Madam's Organ and other rooms in the D.C. area, Buddy Guy's Legends in Chicago and a few rooms down in Florida...

METRONOME: Was the band being treated well at that time?

Oh yeah, definitely. It wasn't always the same band, but it was always me for the four years I was with her. For a good stint it included Jacques Raymond and Richard Malcolm. When I left, Chris "Stovall" Brown came in and played with Shirley up until her death.

That was a really great experience for me. She was great to work with. I got to travel and play with a lot of different people. We did a great festival in Chattanooga, Tennessee with Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets.

METRONOME: Did you release a CD under The City Pete & The Eels name?

No. I did a 4-song EP under my name City Pete Poirier. I did it at Bobby Keyes recording studio with Richard Malcolm, Jacques Raymond and Dave Limina on keys. It was just us.

I was sad that nothing was recorded

like Los Lobos and that type of stuff, but that wasn't going so well.

METRONOME: What were you calling the act and was it your band?

Yes, it was my band called Popular Option. We played The Rat and T.T. The Bear's etc, etc, but it wasn't for very long... maybe two years at the most. At that point, I just wanted to play Blues. I went out and bought a B.B. King record, a Freddie King record, and a Muddy Waters record and just sat at home shedding trying to learn what they were doing.

At that time too (mid-late '80s), there were so many blues jams. I thought, Wow, I can just show up and play? So I would go to three or four jams a week. I would go to The Cantab, Johnny D's, Club Ill in Somerville, Harper's Ferry, Wally's... I went to all those jams.

METRONOME: Was Teo at The House of

with Shirley. She didn't do a lot of recording though. Working with Shirley helped me get in to rooms that I otherwise would never have been able to play. I think the last club date I did in the Boston area with Shirley and my band was in 2004.

METRONOME: During that time you only put out an EP?

Yeah.

METRONOME: I thought you had more recordings back then.

No. Not until recently with my new record, Empty Arms. From that point, to when I moved out to the Berkshires, I wasn't doing band stuff at all. I was playing solo shows. I started studying jazz during my last years in Boston with a really great guitar player named Richie Hart. He's a teacher at Berklee. He studied with George Benson. He's a real hard bop guy. I studied with him for a couple of years. It was an amazing experience. I had designs that I was going to go in that direction.

At that time, I was and still do, make a good living playing music in Nursing Homes. For different reasons, it was something that resonated with me. I felt there was a need for it.

METRONOME: What made you move to Western, MA.?

My wife (not at the time) and I were living in Everett and that place is really crowded (laughs). We were thinking about moving out of the city (2006). Real estate was crazy.

It was expensive and we had a desire to find some place quiet. We looked in to the Berkshires, took a chance and moved out to Western, MA. and have been here ever since.

METRONOME: What made you decide to record a new album?

Somewhere along the line, The Blues was calling me. I felt like, This is what I do. I would do pickup gigs here and there in Western, MA., but it wasn't until Brad Hallen suggested that I do a record that I jumped back in.

METRONOME: What year was that?

We started about two years ago. He mentioned it, so I started doing some research on songs and getting my chops really happening. When I got a handful of tunes together, we booked some studio time at Lakewest Recording with Jack Gauthier and he and drummer Mark Teixeira went down there and we did basics. Then Matt McCabe came in and did his bit on piano. Mark Earley did all the horns on the record. He did all that in one day.

I've always respected Brad Hallen's musical opinions and opinions in general. He's a very knowledgeable guy who's made hundreds of records. He's really excited about the album. He said, "You should see if you can get it on a label." A few days later I got a text from him and it said, "Duke [Robillard] loves your record. I was playing it for him in the van and he really liked it."

Duke ended up writing the liner notes for the album.

METRONOME: I loved the song "No More Alcohol." Can you tell us about that tune?

It's originally a Jimmy Liggins tune. I first came across it on a Kid Ramos record. That song just grabbed me. I liked the energy of it and the protagonist is telling you how convinced he is of quitting drinking. He says, "I put the bottle on the table, but one more drink and that's all." I understand that dynamic for sure (laughs). It's one of my favorite tunes on the record.

METRONOME: I love the jump blues of "And Like That." How did that song come to you?

Years ago when I was still going to jams, a guy I met named Tommy Weeden had an amazing record collection. He lent me a bunch of records along with a B.B. King compilation. It was on that record. I loved the tune and started playing it immediately. I gave him his record back, but couldn't find the song after that on anything recorded by B.B. King. I finally got a copy of a 6-CD set from everything B.B. did on the label Modern, and it was on there. Then I relearned it. That's where that came from. I really felt like I needed to find tunes that I could sing well and that was one of them.

METRONOME: The guitar playing and tone was excellent on "I'm Tore Up." Where did you find that song?

That was from an original Ike Turner record that had a singer named Billy Gayles. Again I liked the dynamic of that song. It's so about alcohol obviously. As far as I know, Ike was playing a Strat which for a long time was my main guitar. I really loved his sound and tried to capture that.

METRONOME: I don't think a lot of people realize how good a guitar player Ike Turner really was?

Oh yeah, a really good guitar player. He's on a lot of blues records either playing guitar or piano. Howlin' Wolf stuff... He was kinda like the A&R guy for Sam Phillips at Sun Records. I thought that would be a good song to tear it up a bit.

METRONOME: What kind of an amp did you play through?

I used a clone of a Fender Tweed Deluxe. They get pretty dirty when you turn them up. Jack was really great at capturing that.

METRONOME: "You Know That You Love Me" was a superb, uptempo number. What made you choose that?

That was one of my favorite Freddie King songs for a long time. I played it live for many years. He's so well known for all his instrumentals. Then one day someone lent me a record called Freddie King Sings. I was like, Really? I assumed that he didn't sing. I was, Yeah, he can sing, holy cow!

METRONOME: The album closer, "Heads Up" is a cool instrumental. How did you find that?

That's a Freddie King tune as well. One of

the reasons I chose it was that I wanted to keep some variety in the feels. It's got some nice interplay between the guitar and the bass. I wanted something with a different feel and to have an instrumental as well.

METRONOME: Was it your plan to record these traditional songs and not record any originals?

Yeah. At one point I said, If I'm going to do some original material, it's going to take me a while. I'm not prolific by any stretch and Blues is hard to write without being cliché. Right away I said, I'm just going to pick songs I love to play.

For the next record, I'm definitely planning on doing as much original material as I can produce.

METRONOME: So there will be a next record?

Yeah. I'm still getting this one off the ground, but that's the plan.

METRONOME: Are you performing this material out live?

Oh yeah. I'll be at Mulligan's in Torrington, Connecticut on August 23, The Grindstone Tavern August 24 in Collinsville, Connecticut and at Strange Brew Tavern in Manchester, NH on November 2. You can check out my web site for more info & shows at www.peterpoirier.com.

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Metronome Madness

Hello friends of **Metronome** and to new arrivals to our the city of Boston and welcome to the **September** installment of **Metronome Madness**. There's a bit of music news to tell you about, so get comfortable and please read on... New England-based guitarist/singer **Paul Gabriel** announced the release of his latest CD, **Man of Many Blues**, on **Smoke Ring Records**. Produced by **Duke Robillard** (who also guests on the new CD), **Man of Many Blues** was recorded at Lake West Studio in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, by **Jack Gauthier**, and includes perennial Blues Music Award nominee **Sugar Ray Norcia** as a special guest. "This is one of the most special recordings I have ever done," Gabriel says about the new album. "It's being dedicated to my dear friend, **Georgia Louis**, the great 1960s Gospel and Blues singer. It's also special in that this is my sophomore recording with **Duke Robillard** producing." **Man of Many Blues** contains 13 all-original songs featuring Gabriel backed by an large ensemble cast of players that includes **Duke Robillard** on acoustic archtop & electric guitar, **Scott Spray**, **Frank Davis** and **Paul Opalach** on



Paul Gabriel

bass, **Mark Teixeira** on drums, **Sugar Ray Norcia** on harmonica, **Bruce Bears** playing piano and Hammond organ, **Lonnie Gasperini** on Hammond organ, **Howard Eldridge** on vocals, **Christine Ohlman** on backing vocals, **Mark Earley** playing tenor and baritone sax and **Doug James** on baritone sax. **Paul Gabriel** is a Blues Music Award-nominated guitarist, singer and songwriter. In March, 2018, Gabriel was

presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the **Connecticut Blues Society** for excellence in guitar playing, singing and songwriting; and in July of that year, he was also inducted into the **Connecticut Blues Hall of Fame** as a Master Blues Artist. He appeared on three **Harry Chapin** albums, played slide guitar on **Rory Block's** Grammy-nominated album, **Mama's Blues**, and toured with Michael Bolton. His last release, **Paul Gabriel - What's The Chance**, was produced by **Duke Robillard** for Shining Stone Records and was nominated for a Blues Music Award in 2014. **The Nick Moss Band** featuring **Dennis Gruenling** has announced the release of their highly anticipated new **Alligator** album, **Lucky Guy!** **Lucky Guy!** features the classic Chicago blues sound the band is known for, but, as Moss himself notes, there are also "a few other flavors," including Louisiana swamp pop, West Coast blues, New Orleans funk, and even some proto-rock and roll. All but one of the 14 songs are originals, with 11 by Moss and two by Gruenling. Although Moss and Gruenling had known each other for 20 years and had jammed together often, it wasn't until 2016 that they decided to team up full time. On stage, the two communicate seemingly telepathically, as Moss' raw, fiery guitar and Gruenling's whisper-to-a-roar harmonica feed energy to each other and the band. "When the band and I get on stage," says Moss, "the music takes over. We can't hold back and the energy just comes pouring out. We get carried away and the audience gets carried away with us." **Tim Casey** and his label **Lowbudget Records** will soon be unveiling 42 songs from 22 acts that features 2 hours and 40 minutes of **Beatles'** covers. It will be available as a 2-CD set, a high-resolution DVD in stereo and surround and downloadable as 256kbps MP3s, 24-bit stereo WAVs, and surround-sound 24-bit FLACs. Stay tuned. Eight-time Blues Music



Motorhead Estates release Box Sets

Award-nominated singer-songwriter-cornet player **Al Basile** announced a September 20 release date for his latest CD, **B's Hot House**, on Sweetspot Records. **Basile** is joined on **B's Hot House** by his former **Roomful of Blues** boss, guitarist **Duke Robillard** (who also produced), and members of Duke's band, along with several other Roomful alums. After several years of planning, **Motorhead** and **BMG** have announced the start of a detailed ultra-fan-friendly release program spanning the band's career from the 70s, '80's, 90's, and beyond. Kicking things off with the **Motörhead '79** campaign - which celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the incredible **Overkill** and **Bomber** albums with fantastic new deluxe editions, both as hardbound bookpacs in two CD and triple LP format. They will feature previously unheard concerts from the '79 tours,

interviews and many unseen photos. Also, the '79 campaign will see the release of the spectacular ultimate fan / collectors "1979" Box-Set. All three of these releases have been created with the full cooperation and involvement of the estates of **Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister**, "Fast" **Eddie Clarke** and **Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor**. When **Hiromi** recorded her solo piano debut, **Place to Be**, in 2009, she was on the eve of her 30th birthday. She realized that the album would offer a snapshot of the chapter just ending, the ways in which her experiences and personal growth had shaped her sound over the course of her 20s. She decided then that she would revisit the solo format at least once a decade, building a sonic portrait of her evolution and artistry. Ten years later, the prolific pianist goes it alone once again on the stunning new album **Spectrum**, a dazzling evocation of the vibrant array of colors that imbue her music. Due for release October 4, 2019 on Telarc, a division of Concord Records, **Spectrum** celebrates the maturity and depth that have enriched **Hiromi's** composing and playing over the course of her 30s, years in which she's crisscrossed the globe thrilling audiences and embarked on collaborations with some of jazz's most inventive artists, including **Chick Corea**, **Stanley Clarke**, **Michel Camilo**, **Anthony Jackson**, **Simon Phillips**, **Steve Smith**, **Akiko Yano** and **Edmar Castañeda**. As a whole, **Spectrum** is a vibrant tour of the rainbow panorama of **Hiromi's** sound and an enthralling encapsulation of her musical maturity. "I feel I'm a little closer to the piano," **Hiromi** concludes. "All the pianists that I really

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respect not only love but are loved by the piano, and that's the relationship that I would love to build through my life." **Somerville Songwriter Sessions at the Armory Cafe** presents a concert on Saturday, September 7 with singer/songwriters **Ro Colegrove**, **Gary Goldsmith** and **Sam Bayer**. The concert will feature a solo set by each artist, followed by a round robin song swap. The show begins at 7:30 pm with an open mic. The Armory Cafe is at 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville. For more information call (617) 718-2191 or visit artsatthearmory.org/cafe or www.facebook.com/SomervilleSongwriterSessions. Interest in performing? Email SomervilleSongwriter@gmail.com to reserve an open mic slot. Award-winning blues band **Rick Estrin & The Nightcats** will release their fifth **Alligator Records** album, **Contemporary**, on Friday, September 20, 2019. With Estrin's harmonica virtuosity and sly soulful vocals, **Christoffer "Kid" Andersen's** wildly inventive guitar, **Lorenzo Farrell's** masterful keyboards and **Derrick "D'Mar" Martin's** funky, creative drumming, the band takes Estrin's ingenious, original songs to new and unexpected places. With these musically fearless players kicking everything up a notch, **Contemporary** explores some different sounds, instrumentation and grooves from their previous releases, as they continue to reinvent traditional blues styles. **Christone "Kingfish" Ingram**, the head-turning 20-year-old blues guitarist and vocalist from Clarksdale, Mississippi, will celebrate the release of his Alligator Records debut album, **Kingfish**, with performances at the Agganis Arena in Boston on Tuesday, September 3 (w/ Vampire Weekend) and The Porch in Medford on Friday, September 6, 2019. With his eye-popping guitar playing and his reach-out-and-grab-you-by-the-collar vocals, **Kingfish** delivers each song with unmatched

passion and precision. **Kingfish** was produced by two-time Grammy winner **Tom Hambridge** (Buddy Guy, Susan Tedeschi, Joe Louis Walker, George Thorogood). The album showcases Ingram's blistering, raw and inspired guitar playing, soulful, deep vocals and memorable songwriting. He co-wrote eight of the album's twelve tracks. "A lot of folks know me for my covers," he says of his many YouTube videos, some with millions of views each. "That's why it's important for me to release original music." Sprung from the same earth as so many of the Delta blues masters, **Kingfish** comes bursting out of Clarksdale, Mississippi, just ten miles from the legendary crossroads of Highways 61 and 49. A student of the Delta's musical history, he is acutely aware of the musicians and the music that emerged from his corner of the world. "I do think I have an old soul, that I've been here before," he says. "I'm moving forward with one foot in the past. You don't see too many kids into blues music. In my town, every kid wants to be a rapper - I wanted to do something no one else was doing." And although he grew up near the crossroads where **Robert Johnson** allegedly cut a deal with the devil, **Kingfish** insists he didn't do any of that to make his guitar howl the blues. "I just practice all the time," he says, "that's the only deal I made, and it's with myself." Funk music superstar **Bootsy Collins** began sharing **Kingfish's** YouTube videos online, telling his followers, "this is how a child can influence others." **Rapper The Game** did the same. Christone's appeal beyond blues was immediate. He appeared on **The Rachael Ray Show** as well as **The Steve Harvey Show**. He was cast in season two of the Netflix program **Luke Cage** after the series lead producer saw one of his videos. Two of his cover songs appear on the show's soundtrack album, which immediately introduced him to a young audience. With

the release of **Kingfish**, **Christone "Kingfish" Ingram** is ready to blaze a trail with the blues torch that's been passed to him. Steeped in the rich, vivid history of the blues, he's driven by his burning desire to create contemporary music that speaks to his generation and beyond. **Kingfish** is inspired by the music of **Robert Johnson**, but dreams of one day collaborating with **Kendrick Lamar** and soul-funk bassist **Thundercat**. "My core is blues," he says, "but it's important for me to create a sound and style that is uniquely my own. I have a lot to say, so please stay tuned." The highly-anticipated new **JOHN 5 and The Creatures** album, **Invasion**, was unleashed to the masses on July 31. **Invasion** was produced and mixed by **Barry Pointer** at Riot House Studio and proves to be a diverse progression of the sound that **JOHN 5** fans have grown to expect from the eclectic virtuoso. **PASSING NOTES:** Longtime New England musical instrument representative, **Joe Cardinale** of Westwood, MA, passed away on August 2nd, 2019. Joe was an accomplished jazz bass player and member of **NAM** (National Association of Musicians) as well as the **Boston Musicians Association**. He went to Berkeley and was an Alumni member. Joseph loved his music, and it showed in his soulful singing and superb bass playing. **RIP Joe Cardinale;** South African music legend, **Johnny Clegg**, died Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at the age of 66 from pancreatic cancer. **Clegg** co-founded the multi-racial bands **Juluka** and **Savuka** which combined Zulu, Celtic, and rock music with both bands having international success. His bands promoted racial unity. Later, he released popular solo albums, his most recent being **King of Time** in 2017. After being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2015, he embarked on a self-titled farewell tour in 2017; Keyboardist/singer and founding member of the **Neville Brothers** and the **Meters**, **Art Neville**, died July 22, 2019 at his home in New Orleans. He was 81. Known as "Poppa Funk," Neville was a staple of the New Orleans music scene, who helped shape the city's signature sound. In 1977, Neville founded the **Neville Brothers** along with his brothers Aaron, Charles, and Cyril. In later years, Neville formed the **Funky Meters** along with some members of the original group. He continued playing with them until his retirement in late 2018. **VIDEO PICKS OF THE MONTH: Can't Stand Losing You: Surviving The Police-** Based on the acclaimed memoir by renowned guitarist Andy Summers, **Can't Stand Losing You** follows Summers' journey from his early days in psychedelic 60s music scene, when he played with The Animals, to chance encounters with drummer Stewart Copeland and bassist Sting, which led to the formation of a punk trio, The Police. During the band's phenomenal rise and its dissolution at the height of their popularity in the early 80s, Summers captured history with his candid photographs. Utilizing rare archival footage

and insights from the guitarist's side of the stage, **Can't Stand Losing You** brings together past and present as the band members reunite, thirty years later, for a massive world tour. Don't miss this outstanding documentary! That's a take for this month. Until next issue, keep making, & supporting beautiful music. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY VIRGO, YOU VIRGIN YOU.** Thanks for reading.

--Compiled by Brian O.

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Ariel Strasser

by Brian M. Owens

Singer, songwriter, pianist Ariel Strasser migrated to Boston to attend school at the Boston Conservatory of Music. There she studied musical theater and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in songwriting. Strasser comes from a long line of musicians, so it isn't surprising to see her follow suit, pursuing music as a career.

Her debut album, Crooked Line was released in 2013 and garnered five star reviews from critics. The album featured Nate Tucker on drums and percussion, Max Judelson on upright bass, Adrienne Pope on violin and Chris Trapper (of The Push Stars) on vocals.

Strasser's latest record, Motivation is a beautifully played collection of well-crafted, Strasser-penned originals that features well known Boston area players, Ken Budka on guitar, Steve Clements on drums and Paul Ortolano on bass. We questioned Ariel about her love of songwriting and performing and she outlined her musical sojourn with artful candor...

METRONOME: Where are you from originally?

Ariel Strasser: I'm from the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

METRONOME: Did you grow up in a musical family?

I did, actually. My parents are classical musicians, but I grew up listening to all sorts of musical styles in the house. Of course, there was a lot of classical music, but also The Beatles, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, Blood Sweat & Tears – lots of good stuff. My mom used to play guitar and sing in coffee houses when she was in college too. I studied piano and voice classically first and started experimenting with songwriting around age 13.

METRONOME: Who were some of your musical influences when you were young?

I was always drawn to the artists who played piano and sang – Carole King, Sara Bareilles, Rufus Wainwright, Ben Folds, Norah Jones and others.

METRONOME: What brought you to Boston?

I came out here for college and then I never left. I went to The Boston Conservatory.

METRONOME: What did you study at The

Conservatory?

I studied Musical Theater- voice, acting and dance. I studied some songwriting too.

METRONOME: Did you graduate with a degree?

I have a BFA in Musical Theater with an emphasis in songwriting.

METRONOME: Do you work in the music field now?

Yes. I play shows and tour as often as I can. I also work at a company called ArtsBridge where I run programs and workshops in musical theater, acting, and classical voice.

high school and I still sit down to play Bach or Chopin every now and then.

METRONOME: Did you take vocal lessons?

I did study voice. Both classical and theater.

METRONOME: When did you pick up the guitar?

Not until much later. We had a guitar in the house growing up, so I knew a couple of chords, but I didn't really start playing until after college. I married the guitarist in my band in May 2019, so I'm very happy to report that I now have free guitar lessons

needed to keep going while you're making an album. I suppose that's true of anything creative or really anything personal that means something to you. Sometimes you feel really fired up and other times you feel a little discouraged. Interestingly, I think I feel more connected to a lot of the material on the album after the process of making the record. A lot of the things that came up along the way are things I'm singing about.

METRONOME: Where did you record Motivation?

I recorded it at New Alliance and New Alliance East in Cambridge, MA. The first 75% was recorded at their studio in Central Square in what was called the "EMF Building." There's actually quite a story behind their eviction. We finished the album in an interim studio and as of today they have a brand new, a very cool space in Somerville, MA. I was proud that we finished it and kept on plugging away through all of that.

METRONOME: Who engineered?

The full band (drums, bass, Wurlitzer) sessions were engineered by Jon Taft and the rest (guitar, vocals, etc.) were engineered by Nick Zampello. Nick produced the album as well.

METRONOME: What inspired the writing of the tune, "Running Too Fast?"

That one's truly about running too fast. It's about listening to

yourself along the way. When you have your eyes set on an "end," it's easy to skip over some of the hard stuff and get stuck in your head. It's usually more meaningful to take the time to acknowledge how you're feeling, otherwise you can miss some of the good stuff.

METRONOME: "Hard Not To" is a wonderful song. What is that one about?

This one is about those "forbidden thoughts" or "what ifs." Those things you think about that you probably shouldn't, but you can't really stop them from flooding into your head. There's power in those thoughts, but really only if you let them out of your mouth. Isn't that ominous?

METRONOME: "The Light" is a beautiful composition. How did that song come together?

The album talks a lot about what



METRONOME: How many albums do you have out?

Two albums. I just released my latest album, Motivation in October 2018. My first album, Crooked Line came out in November 2013.

METRONOME: What came first for you, the singing or the piano?

The first instrument I actually studied was piano, but I've been singing since I was able to speak. I think that's true of most kids who grow up in musical households. I used to make up little ditties and hum them around the house.

METRONOME: Did you study classical piano?

Yes, that was my introduction to studying music. I had a classical piano teacher. My musical style doesn't have much classical influence now, but I did study it all through

for life.

METRONOME: When did the songwriting bug get you?

I remember the first song I wrote that I felt really connected to – I think I was 12 or 13. I wrote a bunch after that and then continued writing through high school.

METRONOME: You have a new album out called Motivation. How long was it in the works?

It was about 3 years from start to finish. These things always take longer than you think they're going to. Sometimes there were long stretches between studio time that was due to a combination of scheduling/availability, prep work I needed to make time for in between sessions, and the actual physical studio suddenly having to move locations in the middle of the process.

It's amazing the actual "motivation"

motivation means to me. I've found that it's something you lose and find again over and over. The timing of losing that spark isn't always ideal, but the best thing you can do is keep going even when you don't feel like going and ride the wave as soon as it's under you. This song really encapsulates that feeling for me.

METRONOME: Our favorite cut on the album was "Stay." Is it one of your more popular tracks?

That's a fun one. Yes, people seem to like that track. I think it's one of the more happy, hopeful tracks on the record. It's definitely a feel-good tune.

METRONOME: Who played on the album with you?

It's a pretty stellar line-up. Ken Budka on guitar, Steve Clements on drums, Paul Ortolano on bass and Ian Kennedy on violin.

METRONOME: How did you meet them all?

I met Ken at an open mic at The Burren in Somerville, MA. Ken introduced me to Paul and Steve who were hosting an open mic up in Lowell, MA. Thanks to open mics for providing most of the band (laughs). Nick Zampielo introduced me to Ian Kennedy who had been involved with New Alliance East for a long, long time. Ian actually passed away shortly after recording this with us. This album is dedicated to him.

METRONOME: How often do you play live?



As often as I can. Usually a couple of times a month, or more.

METRONOME: Is it solo or with a band?

A little bit of everything. Depending on the venue, I'll sometimes play solo, duo

(with Ken) or with the full band.

METRONOME: Where are some of the venues you play?

Most recently in New England I've performed at The Burren in Somerville,

Warp & Weft in Lowell and Club Passim in Cambridge, but I play in lots of little venues here and there and do some touring as well.

METRONOME: Are there any live YouTube videos of you that people can watch?

Yes. You can find lots if you search my name, Ariel Strasser. I have a channel, too: [YouTube.com/arielstrassertv](https://www.youtube.com/arielstrassertv)

Here are a couple of my favorites:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUK7fbjklRA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yT-cnlyqjVQ>

METRONOME: Where can folks find out more about you on the internet?

My website is a good place to start: www.arielstrasser.com. You can find my albums there, live shows, etc. You can also follow me on your preferred social media platform- Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. I do my best to keep up with it all.

METRONOME: Is there anything you'd like to add before we close out?

I hope you all come out to a show. It's interesting being a musician in this day and age. So much is done online that it's easy to feel connected to so many people digitally. I think that's pretty cool, but I also think it makes it easy to forget how important it is to *be in the world*. One of my favorite things about being a musician is playing music live, and that's one thing you still can't get on the internet. I hope to see you all out there sometime.

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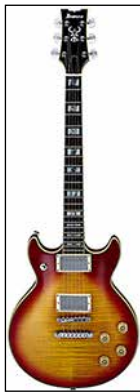
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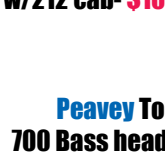
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