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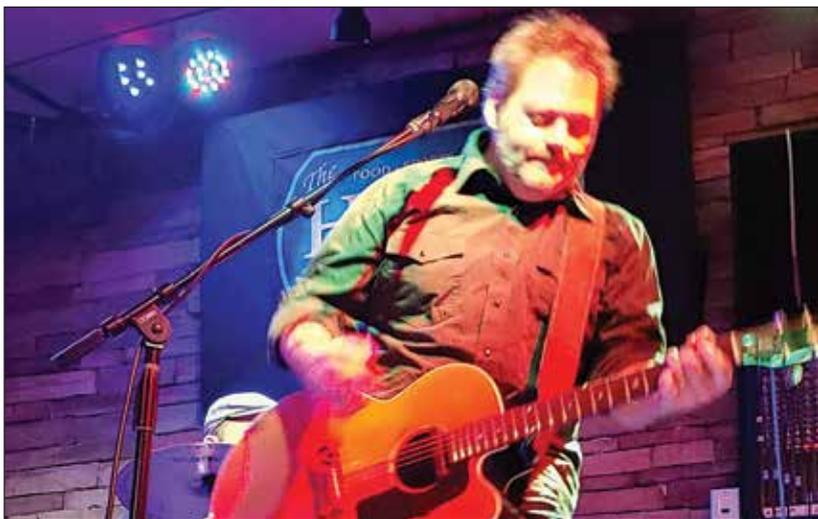
October 2020



**The Midnight Callers**



**Unnamed Colors**



**Bobbo Byrnes**



**One Dime Band**

# Reboot: Taj Mahal - January 2009

Taj Mahal has lived a charmed life indeed. Born Henry Saint Clair Fredericks in Harlem and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts, the world renowned blues troubadour celebrates his 40th year as a solo performer with an outstanding new album aptly titled *Maestro*. After living in Hawaii for more than twenty years, Mahal has returned to the mainland and resumes a vigorous touring schedule that takes him to all corners of the world. I talked with him at length one sunny afternoon in November and he enlightened me on his amazing career.

**METRONOME: Congratulations on your 40th year in the music business. Did you ever think that you would still be doing what you love, making music?**

Taj Mahal: Yeah, because I didn't care whether I was going to be as popular as it to the point I became. There was definitely a line between being popular and playing music for what you personally enjoy out of it. What music was to different cultures, outside of the popular music scene, although I still don't claim to know all the inside moves of the music business in the United States, but the general popular music in the world, I have some understanding of it because I've been successful at what I've been doing for a long time. Reaching a larger audience, there's a breakdown between quality and quantity, and that's been an elusive equation with me, but as far as quality is concerned, I've always been able to come up with that. Good quality music. Sometimes it's not been in vogue, or popular, or ahead of the game, but most of all I was interested in playing music. The most important thing for me was not letting the popular music dictate what it was that I played. I think I've accomplished that.

**METRONOME: You followed your own path all these years and it proved to be successful...**

Yeah, I was lucky because my interest has always been the music. I never had to say, Okay music, I love you, but we got to go out there and jump up and down like monkeys for these people (laughs). I've never had to make that compromise. I've always been my own man and my own person.

**METRONOME: What have you enjoyed doing the most through the years, recording or**

**playing live?**

Oh, all of it! Not every recording you do is really great, sometimes because of the equipment and sometimes because of the musicians. The same thing with live. One of the things about live playing that happened to me about twelve years ago is that I got my own sound man that I travel with all the time. I'm telling you, I understand why guys



like Marvin Gaye and Ry Cooder didn't like to travel live because they couldn't guarantee night after night their sound and what they did. Between 97 and 99% of the time, we have the sound the way we want it. We can adjust to any situation and get the best out of it so the audience has a wonderful audio and visual experience.

**METRONOME: Who is the soundman that has helped you so much? What's his name?**

Richard Bink who's from upper New York state. He worked with Public Enemy and did a lot of work in the studios and then went out on the road with Blues Traveler and worked with them a lot. We met on the lawn of the White House during the Clinton inauguration. He was working with Widespread

Panic. We talked and found that we had fishing in common. Then I checked in with him and he came out and did a couple of gigs for me and then it was like, what a difference.

So he started working with me and we said this is going to be a part of the equation that's going to make it a lot easier for me. We know everyday the strength and weakness of the sound system.

stuff man. I'm constantly finding various versions of compilations that Columbia Records have made of my stuff that I never saw before. I just saw one the other night... the first album I ever did for Columbia. I pulled the vinyl out and looked at it and it was a lineup that I had no idea, I never saw it before.

Unfortunately in my case, when I came in to the business, one thing that I wasn't able to do was own my own publishing. If I had a little more money to deal with that coming in, I would have worked out a better deal with the record company. But you learn as time goes on.

**METRONOME: Do you do that now?**

Oh yeah, that's exactly what's happening with the present *Maestro* release and we've done that before with other recordings. We've taken a page out of the rapper's book. That's how they do it.

**METRONOME: How did you come up with the name for your new album, *Maestro*?**

That name was actually given to me by the Argentinians. I had gone two or three time down to Argentina to play. I went down there solo a few times. Then I went down there with Albert King one time and with Albert Collins one time. It turned out that there were a lot of musicians in South America who were familiar with my work. The blues is felt real deeply all around the world by lots of different people. They think of it as being a product that's exported out of this country, so in South America there were a lot of players who were just starting to find their way through the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton to Muddy Waters and Howlin Wolf and those artists, and saying, "Wow, who inspired these guys?" Somewhere along the line, they came across me. So when I went to do some playing down there, that's when I noticed that they started calling me Maestro. I said, this is quite honorary!

**METRONOME: What kind of guitars are you playing?**

After years of being away, I came back to the Bay area. I've been living in Berkeley. There's a great guitar store/shop called Subway Guitars. They have a lot of old fashioned, antique guitars and instruments and they build instruments. They make a lot of different guitars for Ry Cooder, Mark Knopfler, Rick Nielsen [Cheap Trick], Jackson Brown, David Lindley, Green Day, Bob Weir, me

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and lots of other people. It's a cool, down-to-earth thing. Now, I have a guitar called the Maestro.

**METRONOME: Is it an acoustic guitar or an electric?**

It's an electric guitar. There's not that much volume on it. It's a Howard Roberts body with a Danelectro neck and a Bill Lawrence pickup. It has one volume knob and I play it out of a Fender Bassman amp. That's what really makes the sound. Then I've got a tuner, volume pedal and a chorus pedal.

**METRONOME: I noticed on the new album, that you recorded in several different recording studios with several different engineers and producers. Why was that?**

The point of it was that as a working guitar player and as a touring musician I'm both fortunate to be able to make a living touring and playing, but it's also difficult because you don't get enough time to do other kinds of things. Last year was pretty much double duty for me trying to pull off stuff while I was moving. A lot of times the recording would get done some place then the mixing and whatever vocal overdubs were needed we did down at Ultratone in Hollywood.

The whole thing started out with a session in New Orleans with the New Orleans Social Club, then we did a session out of Johnny Lee's studio in L.A. with the Phantom Blues Band. Then we did some recording with Los Lobos at Sonikwire Studio in Irvine, California and then we did some sessions in Capitol Studios in Los Angeles with Ben Harper. I also did tracks with Ziggy Marley's Band at Westlake Studio.

What's makes this album different is that we're all friends, we all admire one another, we all are active musicians. Everybody on this album is a working player. We had all spoken about doing something together so it was an opportunity to pull that off without having to do whole albums. It was exciting. These are people that I really love what they do.

Then there's a song that my daughter, Deva Mahal sings on, "Never Let You Go." I was just on the phone with her when you called in. I started playing around with a ukulele and playing around and finally a song started coming up out of it. Pretty soon I had a great sounding song but no lyrics. I didn't want to write some lame lyrics to what I thought was a potentially really good tune, so I thought about my daughter and asked her if she'd write that for me. Help your dad out here. I gave it to her and it came back and I was blown away with what she wrote and what she gave

me to sing. I gave her the melody but how she embraced the melody was very interesting.

**METRONOME: Warren Haynes produced both songs that you recorded with the New Orleans Social Club. How did you meet Warren?**

My current sound guy was really good friends with him. Like anybody who is out there playing, they've all come across what I've been doing. I knew Warren was with Gov't Mule and we played on all kinds of festivals together. Then Warren started inviting us down to his Christmas Benefit.

What I like about the jams is that the man knows the music, he knows the players and he does an awful lot for his community. He's a wonderful man, a great player and he did some production stuff on two songs for the album, "I Can Make You Happy," and "Hello Josephine."

There's also something else I have to talk about. Angelique Kidjo, who played on the song "Zanzibar," is very popular in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. She took one of the choruses that I played on the guitar and turned that in to a back chorus that she sang in a triple tracked harmony. It was beautiful. I was just thrilled, thrilled. On the 180 gram vinyl release of Maestro we have two other songs that are extras.

**METRONOME: How did you meet Angelique?**

I met her while touring in Australia. Then I started seeing her quite a bit on this Link TV, which comes in on channel 375 on satellite. She's put out some incredibly inventive videos. It's an incredible station that shows all these other videos that you'll never see on MTV or VH-1. People from all over the world that you would never see or hear from.

**METRONOME: Did you make a limited number of vinyl records for this release?**

Right now we pressed about 2000, but they're moving quite briskly, so it looks like we might continue as long as there's demand for it.

**METRONOME: Have you moved back to the mainland from Hawaii?**

I'm back on the continent again just because my kids are just about all grown up. There are only two who are younger than twenty, but the rest are all grown. I've been touring quite a lot and that's part of the reason too because it's easier to jump off from here.

**METRONOME: Did you do a lot of playing in Hawaii?**

Quite a bit, but not so much as in the professional sense, although we did some concerts and I had some really good shows. I didn't want to be home and also have a place

where I had to play to and dunk in and out of the whole thing. I just wanted to be the local guy with his kids in school and people saying, "Oh that guy plays guitar."

**METRONOME: Did you move to Hawaii for your children?**

Yeah, I had an opportunity to either have them on concrete or on dirt roads with palm trees, bananas, fruit and water. It was a great thing. They're very optimistic, good looking, smart, intelligent kids. Musically artistic, down-to-earth, real people. We got a chance to be a part of a very interesting family style vibe that doesn't usually happen to a lot of people that go to Hawaii for the tourist side of the equation. I'm always knocked out by how deeply involved all my kids were with everybody there.

Aside from that, the music scene over there, there's an amazing transformation going on. Hawaiians started out as a Pacific culture that chanted, drummed and danced. Their percussion was rocks, boards, rattles, shakers, split pieces of bamboo and logs that were hollowed out. This was Hawaiian music. They didn't have any kinds of horns and they assimilated everything from Western culture that they liked in to themselves and created the modern day music.

**METRONOME: You're sitting in a beautifully restored red Chevrolet Impala on your album cover. Is that your car?**

No, I wish. I was talking to the guy from Subway Guitars and he has a bunch of old cars. He knows I've been looking for an older fastback Cadillac, Buick, Pontiac or Oldsmobile. It's something I would really enjoy doing, restoring one or two of those vehicles. I said I wasn't going to be bothered with that stuff because I've bought a lot of that stuff, but here I am a bunch of years later saying, Hey, I'm going to buy that old car back there. I think I have to have it (laughs).

But no, that's not my car man on the cover. It's funny, I didn't see a picture of the vehicle. I had no idea who was going to have a vehicle there for me. The guy who came over was from Oakland and I talked to him and he had a couple of different cars. He said, "I think I've got the car for you." When that bad boy rolled up I was like, okay! As much as you can appreciate the car on the CD cover, wait until you see it on the vinyl jacket cover.

**METRONOME: Vinyl has really made a comeback...**

I know. That's how I partitioned the guys over at Heads Up. The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, USA Today

and Rolling Stone, all of them had articles about it. I guess Elvis Costello, John Cougar Mellencamp, Radiohead and Mark Knopfler are pushing it. The point is, if you put it out on vinyl, you can't download it. You can't download vinyl (laughs). I was shocked at the young people between 20, 24 and older who have just the vinyl album. That's the new thing. People are starting to restore old record machines. We sold out two or three times on our tour of the vinyl. I was signing 100 to 120 every few days.

**METRONOME: Your music has always been very joyous, uptempo, and upbeat. Is that a manifestation of your personality?**

I think it's cultural as well as deliberate on my part. Number one... there are enough people singing sad songs. The real joy of what the blues is about is that it came at a time when people didn't have the opportunities they have today. One hundred years ago, that wasn't what was happening. The energy that created that tone and the object of that music was to lift the sadness off of people.

The other side of it is, the other half of my family is from the Caribbean. The Caribbean is a very positive, pro-active, get involved, can-do spirit. That's why my record company is called Kan-du Records. So what you hear inside my music is that it always goes up [starts singing]. The piano, the horns, the bass, the drum, whatever, will end up.

Plus I'm a fisherman, so you can't fish and play music without being optimistic. I'm always optimistic. There are a lot of people playing down to their audience and looking down on their audience, I don't do any of that. I expect people coming together because they know what the music is and it's something we're all enjoying. That isn't me as much as it's us. No matter how much I would want to make you hear what I'm playing, you can't hear it if I'm trying to make you hear it. But if I'm open so that it comes through, then you're open too.

**METRONOME: Why did you take the name Taj Mahal? What significance does it have for you?**

That's probably my least favorite question to try to answer. It has to do with a higher level of consciousness in getting people to look and say, "Where is that coming from?" That's all really, in the short story. And being profoundly affected by Mahatma Gandhi in the '40s and in to the '50s. The great leaders of the world have always said, "You might be focusing on me, but you're going to have to do this work."

-- Brian M. Owens

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# Bobbo Byrnes

by Brian M. Owens

Bobbo Byrnes grew up in Massachusetts. These days he calls California home where he lives with his wife, Tracy. However, this traveling troubadour doesn't spend much time there. Touring Europe, making yearly sojourns to the East Coast and performing up and down the West coast has kept this musical diarist of life busy indeed. I had a chance to track Byrnes down during the Covid epidemic and we had a long talk about life, songwriting and some of the friends he's made along the way.

**METRONOME: You're forever growing and it really shows on your new album, *SeaGreenNumber5*. It's outstanding. Did you write all new songs for this record?**

Bobbo Byrnes: This is a brand new recording, mostly songs I've written and some I co-wrote with friends. I started it in November 2019 and finished it in February/March of this year.

**METRONOME: Were you back from your European tour when you started recording?**

Yes.

**METRONOME: When you're on the road, do you bring a recording rig with you?**

I do. I end up carrying around a Focusrite Scarlett and a laptop, but I hardly ever use it. While you're touring there's rarely any time where you feel like setting something else up. More than that, I just use the memos thing on my iPhone. I have a mic that plugs in to my iPhone and I use that for most of my ideas.

**METRONOME: You've been touring for a while now. What is it that makes you stay on the road?**

I love experiencing new things and meeting new people. I remember reading a Springsteen thing where he went back to somebody's house after going to the movies and he got the entire family and the back story in an hour. You get little bits of people's lives as you travel. It's obviously not a complete picture, but it's a snapshot and you can carry that with you where ever you go. I love that idea.

**METRONOME: When did the traveling troubadour bug hit you?**

In the 1990s, when I was in the Gypsy Mechanics, locally in Massachusetts there, we had done a couple of small tours to Canada. I remember the first time I was on tour, it just felt like home. I thought, This is what feels natural to me. Traveling, playing music, doing this. This is what I feel like I

was meant to do. When you find those things, you want more of it. It's very much like a drug.

**METRONOME: When you were with the Gypsy Mechanics, how did you travel to gigs? In a van?**

Yes. An Astro van. There were four guys and our guitar tech in an Astro van.

**METRONOME: Did you stay in hotels and at friend's houses?**

(laughs) Oh, there was so much

pandemonium and staying in punk rock houses. One night I got chased by a First Nations native in Canada. Some drunk folks were chasing us and we were staying at this punk rock house.

**METRONOME: Really?**

The stories never end. They just keep going on and on. We were opening up for an Iggy Pop Tribute band once and all of our stuff got covered in peanut butter.

**METRONOME: Peanut butter?**

The lead singer of the band covered himself in peanut butter and flung it everywhere and we were sharing equipment (laughs). For years, there was this greasy slime on our drummer's kick drum. It was from that peanut butter. It never fully came off.

**METRONOME: How long were the Gypsy Mechanics together?**

I was with them for a decade. They were together one or two years before I joined and a year after I left.

**METRONOME: Wow, a decade.**

That was all of the 1990s. We had between 300 and 400 originals in the Gypsy Mechanics.

**METRONOME: Were you part of the songwriting team?**

I was. For every song that I wrote, my buddy Morgan wrote four. He's a fantastic singer and songwriter. One of my biggest influences is the time I spent playing with him.

**METRONOME: What is Morgan doing now?**

He just released a new CD under the band name, Russell Hill. They're based in Milford, N.H.

**METRONOME: After the Gypsy Mechanics, did you put together your own band(s)?**

I did two solo albums at the end of the Gypsy Mechanics time, then I moved to California. When I got out here, I tried to find bands to be in. I just wanted to be the guitar player and songwriter. I didn't want to be the singer. For a while I played with a guy named Sonny Mone who was the singer in Crazy Horse when Neil Young wasn't. Sonny's from the South shore of Massachusetts.

I hooked up with him when I first got out here. I did a short tour with him last year as well. From there, I started doing another solo album and my wife Tracy, who plays bass and is a songwriter, started becoming more involved in it. That's when we came up with our band, The Fallen Stars. Then we did albums as The Fallen Stars.

**METRONOME: Does Tracy still tour with you?**

My wife has a regular job and she's super talented at that. That's where her passion is. She likes touring and playing shows, but she doesn't love touring. I was doing more of it, so I just reverted back to solo again. We still do shows as The Fallen Stars and she comes and meets in me in Europe most



of the time when I'm playing solo shows.

**METRONOME: How did you come up with the name The Fallen Stars?**

There was a song I had written that had the lyric, "I'm just a fallen star that never shone." At some point we said, The song's not that great, but the name Fallen Stars is pretty cool. We were surprised that nobody else had been using it. We actually did the paperwork and trademarked the name. It was just in time too, because a band in Vancouver started calling themselves The Fallen Stars (laughs).

**METRONOME: Did you send them a letter?**

I did and they changed their name to Fallen Stars BC (British Columbia).

**METRONOME: That band was electric. Did you find it hard making the shift to solo acoustic?**

I've always loved acoustic guitar mixed with electric guitar. Going back to the Gypsy Mechanics time, I've been pushing for more acoustic guitar in the stuff that we do. The reason [SeaGreenNumber5](#) ended up being so acoustic was, the last album I did, [The Red Wheelbarrow](#) was very rock. Then I went out and toured it by myself with an acoustic guitar (laughs). I thought, I painted myself in to a corner with this one. I said, What am I doing here? I'm doing mostly acoustic stuff, let's make the acoustic guitar front and center on this one.

I've always played acoustic in every band that I was in and in recent years have figured out how to blend them in a way that no one else that I know of is doing. It's a bit technical and guitar geeky, but I have two pickups in my acoustic guitar- the acoustic bridge pickup, that goes to the PA system, and the soundhole magnetic pickup that I feed through a guitar amplifier with distortion and delay. I swell that in with a volume pedal so it sounds like two guitar players playing.

**METRONOME: What made you discover that combination?**

Everytime I picked up the electric guitar, I found myself missing the sound of the acoustic in the mix. Whenever I played the acoustic guitar solely, it felt like it was missing some of the oomph.

There are guitars that do that sort of thing, but never did it correctly. It was an electric guitar trying to sound acoustic. It doesn't have the same feel, the strings are different and it doesn't react the same. I found I could get a bigger sound with a good sounding acoustic guitar and making the acoustic sound electric as well.

**METRONOME: What kind of acoustic guitar are you playing these days?**

I have a pair of Gibson J-100s. I have Fishman pickups in the bridge and a Fishman Rare Earth in the soundhole. It's taken a while to figure out what overdrive pedals and distortion things work well with the soundhole pickup. It's been a bit of a

challenge over the years, but everytime I play a show, I have some guitar player come up to me and ask, "Okay, how did you do that?" I feel like it's kinda my thing.

**METRONOME: Did someone inspire you to go that route?**

Ray Wylie Hubbard. I saw him perform on Letterman one night and I could see a pickup mounted between the soundhole and the bridge of his acoustic guitar with two knobs. I saw two cords coming off his guitar and said, Wait, what's he doing?

So I wrote to him and had a whole guitar conversation with him. He uses an old Gold Pro or Silvertone pickup and does it just for filling out the sound. I thought, If I did this I could use the volume pedal to bring it in when I wanted to.

**METRONOME: Do you record like that?**

I have.

**METRONOME: Would you agree that getting a good acoustic/electric sound is very difficult?**

If you start chasing "the best acoustic sound," it's a vast rabbit hole of time and money and it can get in the way of creativity. At some point you have to go, Okay, I can work with this. Time to move on.

**METRONOME: Do you mix yourself off the stage at your shows?**

Sometimes I have a soundman, but whenever I have to do the sound by myself, I set up the PA and my monitors so that my monitor mix is the same as the main mix. When I'm playing something, I'm hearing it how everyone else is hearing it.

**METRONOME: When you tour Europe, do you bring gear with you?**

(Laughs) No. Most of the stuff stays there. I have brought stuff over and purchased stuff while I was there.

**METRONOME: Can you get the things that you need over there?**

It's much easier to buy an amp over there because the power is different. The next time I go, there will have to be a bit of purchasing before I get there because last year I got robbed again.

**METRONOME: Wow... what did they do, follow you out of the club?**

I got robbed on the same street that I got robbed last time. Four years apart, but yeah, same street.

**METRONOME: Do you think it's the same people?**

I don't know. This time everything was hidden in the trunk and I was clearly watched. Same neighborhood. They cleared me out of about \$7,000 worth of gear. They took all my CDs. I had to have more CDs printed in Poland and sent to me.

**METRONOME: Were you covered by insurance?**

For some of it, but not for all of it. I borrowed a PA system from a booking agency and that was stolen. They stole microphones and receipts. I've never been cleaned out that much before. They didn't

get any of my guitars though.

**METRONOME: Where did that happen?**

I was in Germany.

**METRONOME: How do you find musicians around the world to accompany you when you go to their country?**

It's happens by going out and seeing other folks playing and just meeting people. The two guys that play with me in Germany I met while I was in Germany doing a recording session with Simon Hudson from Australia. They were the bass player and drummer on the session. I thought, These guys are pretty damn good. So I asked, Next year, do you guys want to do some shows with me? They said, "Sure." It was a no brainer.

In Massachusetts and New Hampshire, my friends Gary Young and Dave Ballou will sit in and play with me. They are both in the band Russell Hill, my old buddies from The Gypsy Mechanics. Like anything else, it's just networking, and networking is a fancy word for friendships.

Clearly, the one thing that I have going for me is that I have great friends that have helped and supported me. Apparently I'm doing something right because they still want to hang out and play music with me (laughs).

**METRONOME: How did you meet Ben Riddle?**

We got booked to play ten or twelve shows together in Germany and we just hit it off. It doesn't take long to learn someone else's set when you're touring with them. He started coming up and singing and playing with us and we started singing and playing with him. We said, We should do more of this. It kinda ended there, then the label we were on in Germany said, "You guys should do an album together." It took someone else saying that for the two of us to say, That would be a good idea (laughs). It hadn't even occurred to us. He flew out to California and we spent 14 or 15 days together and did the first Riddle & The Stars album.

**METRONOME: Where is he from?**

Just outside of Melbourne, Australia.

**METRONOME: Do you do all your own bookings?**

I'm still doing all my own booking here in the states. In Europe, I have a couple of different people that book me there.

**METRONOME: "Queen of The Party" is a great tune from your new album. What was the genesis of that song?**

That was a Gypsy Mechanics song. My buddy Morgan Keating and I would do that one together. I wanted to change the story, so I wrote it around a daydream I had about going on the road as the guitar player in Lucinda Williams' band. That was the genesis of the song for me.

**METRONOME: "Eveline" is a really good tune. What inspired that?**

I had a dream where I was playing this song. I woke up and picked up the guitar and played the first two verses to it. The

back story to it is, years ago I had a song where in the bridge, I made fun of Paul McCartney. In the dream, Paul McCartney came up to me and said, "Hey, I heard that song you wrote," and he punched me in the face. I figured, I had that coming to me.

The bridge of the song is about a friend of mine who found out his wife was having an affair because his kid started calling him by a different first name. The first name was the wife's new boyfriend's name. You can't make these things up.

**METRONOME: "Every Sound That Crashes" was a beautiful song. What's that about?**

I was in an active shooter situation about two years ago in Nashville when I was on tour. I woke up one day here and there had been a shooting at my college in New Hampshire. The shooting happened where friends of mine lived and the shooter hid in a dorm room in the dorm that I lived in. It all came together in that moment. I wrote that song in about fifteen minutes one morning.

It's just about PTSD that doesn't go away. I wasn't in a war or even being shot at. I was in a space that was shot at. When you hear fireworks go off or a loud bang, your brain jumps back to those moments. There's nothing you can do about it.

I didn't want to put it on the album, but my wife convinced me to. It felt too personal and too precious, but she said, "You gotta put that on."

**METRONOME: "Geo's Jig" is a cool instrumental featuring Georgiana Hennessy and yourself. How did that come together?**

Georgiana has a band with her partner Matt and I recorded their album last year. I was really taken by the Celtic vibe they were playing. I just loved it. I told Geo that I wanted to write an Irish jig. She and I came up with that one together.

It's like a mental sorbet after the song "Every Sound That Crashes." It needed something light and airy and I hadn't played accordion yet on the album, so I needed a song to play accordion on (laughs).

**METRONOME: "Running Back To You" really struck me (in a good way). Can you tell us about that tune?**

I wrote that one with Ben Riddle. That's an older one. I wrote the chorus about always coming back to my wife Tracy.

**METRONOME: Your radar is always up when it comes to songwriting. Do songs come quickly for you?**

Yeah. There's obviously some things that will bug you, but here's something my wife is actually fantastic with. I'll play something for her and she'll say, "You know that word in the second verse? You should change it to this." I'm like, Oh, of course. She really helps a lot.

Last week, I wrote four songs. Two of them no one will ever hear because they're bad, but two of them are pretty good.

# Hearings

by Doug Sloan, Alex Gecko or Brian M. Owens

## Top 5 for October 2020

(In NO Particular Order)

- Maceo Parker
- Scott Cook
- Barrett Anderson Band
- Eric Johanson
- Rob Silverman

**ANTHONY GERACI**  
with DENNIS BRENNAN  
**DAYDREAMS IN BLUE**  
12-SONG CD

- LOVE CHANGES EVERYTHING
- TOMORROW MAY NEVER COME
- NO ONE HEARS MY PRAYERS
- DAYDREAMS OF A BROKEN FOOL
- TUTTI FRUTTI BOOTY
- JELLY, JELLY
- DEAD MAN'S SHOES
- HARD TO SAY I LOVE YOU
- LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF THE BLUES
- CRAZY BLUES/MISSISSIPPI WOMAN

- ODE TO TODD, ELLA AND MIKE
- LEDBETTER

Pianist and bandleader Anthony Geraci assembles an A-list of Boston area players for his rousing new honky tonk record Daydreams In Blue. Veteran singer Dennis Brennan partners with Geraci for the album along with guitarist Monster Mike Welch, bassist Mudcat Ward, drummer Jeff Armstrong, horn players Scott Aruda (trumpet) and Mark Early (saxophone), and guest guitarists Walter Trout (track 3), Troy Gonyea (tracks 5, 6, 8 & 11) and Peter Ward (track 3).

Brennan's travel worn vocals are the perfect foil to Geraci's barrelhouse piano playing from track to track while Welch, Trout and Gonyea punctuate the proceedings with their respective six string shenanigans. Tracks of note include the uplifting "Love Changes Everything," the barnburner "No One Hears My Prayers" featuring Walter Trout, the high steppin' swagger of "mister," the dance floor shaker "Tutti Frutti Booty," and the cleverly offbeat "Dead Man's Shoes." Listeners near and far will agree that Daydreams In Blue is a

joyous record worthy of endless play time. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- [www.anthonnygeraciblue.com](http://www.anthonnygeraciblue.com)

**REVEREND FREAKCHILD**  
**THE BODHISATTVA BLUES**  
12-SONG CD

- OM MANI PADME HUM
- I CAN'T BE SATISFIED
- BIG BOSS MAN
- LITTLE RED ROOSTER
- FRIEND OF THE DEVIL
- I KNOW YOU RIDER
- BLACK PETER
- YER BLUES
- IMAGINE
- SWEET SWEET YOU
- DEATH DON'T HAVE NO MERCY
- AND WE BID YOU GOODNIGHT

With wild looking album artwork leading the charge, what you see is what you get when the Reverend Freakchild gets to singing and wailing on his slide guitar. Accompanied by an army of players that include Chris Parker on drums, Melvin Seals on organ, Hugh Pool on harmonica and

lap steel, Robin Sylvester on bass, Mark Karan on lead guitar, Malcolm Oliver on bass, Scott Hackler on piano, Jason Hann on percussion, AJ Fullerton on slide guitar, Paul Soderman on vocals, Phil Marino on bass, Alex the Dragon on lead guitar, Gregor on drums, Sean Condron & Marnie Mench on vocals, Jon "Bones Richie" Robinson on bass, Patrick Carmichael on drums, Drew Glackin on lap steel and Jay Collins on Bansuri flute, the Reverend lets it all hang out in an entertaining, trippy, uptempo, jam style while covering tunes by greats like Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Jerry Garcia, Lennon & McCartney and Reverend Gary Davis. A great party album to complement your guest's favored choices of intoxication. [D.S.]

Contact--

[www.treatedandreleasedrecords.com](http://www.treatedandreleasedrecords.com)

**MACEO PARKER**  
**SOUL FOOD: COOKING WITH MACEO**  
10-SONG CD

- CROSS THE TRACK
- JUST KISSED MY BABY
- YES WE CAN





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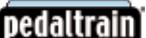
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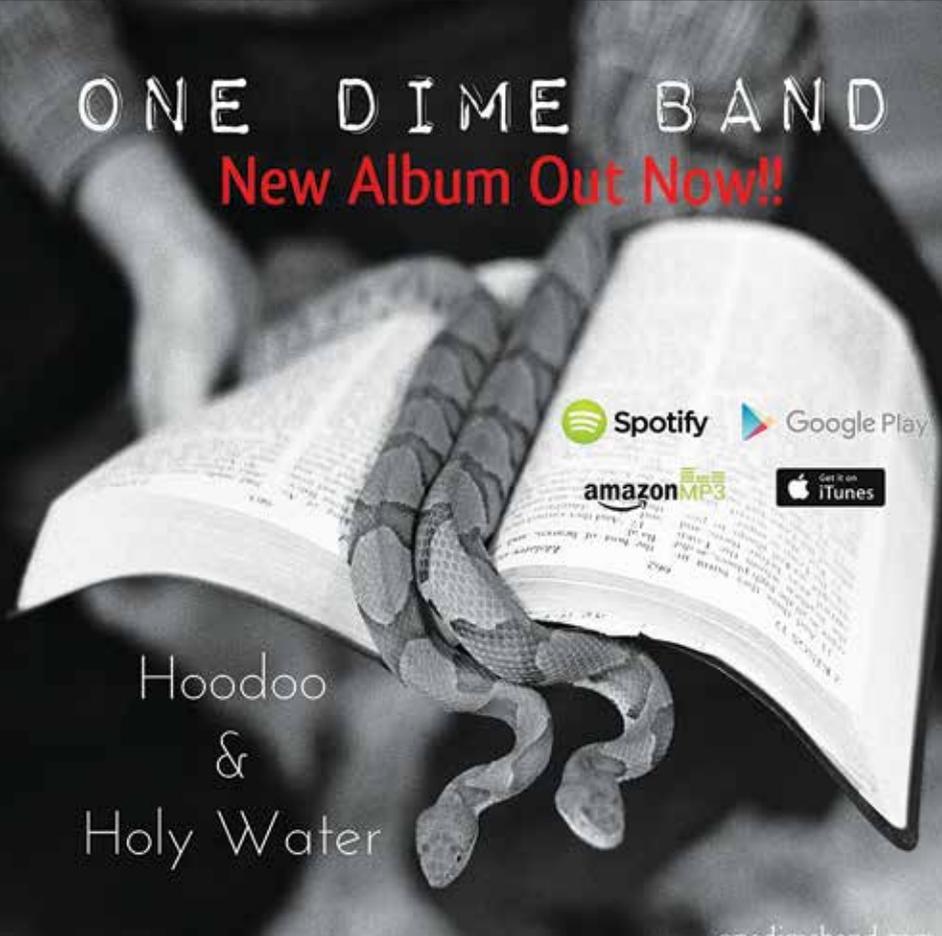






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Hoodoo  
&  
Holy Water

[onedimeband.com](http://onedimeband.com)

- MACEO
- HARD TIMES
- ROCK STEADY
- COMPARED TO WHAT
- RIGHT PLACE WRONG TIME
- OTHER SIDE OF THE PILLOW
- GRAZING IN THE GRASS

You better believe when Maceo's in town things are going to get funky! On his new album, Soul Food: Cookin' With Maceo, the title says it all. This album moves and grooves from the sizzling album opener, "Cross The Track," to the sultry CD closer, "Grazing In The Grass." Joined by Ashlin Parker on trumpet, Mark Mullins on trombone, Steve Sigmund on trombone, Jason Mingledorff on saxophones, Ivan Neville on Hammond, Rhodes, Piano, Nord synth & vocals, Derwin Perkins on guitar, Tony Hall on bass & vocals, Nikki Glaspie on drums & vocals, Angelamia Bachemin on congas, along with DJ Soul Sister, Erica Falls, Tishi, LA Shaun and Ziggy on vocals, Maceo settled in to the House of 1000HZ in New Orleans to lay down the tracks for this funk-filled songfest.

Delivering fiery takes on songs by folks like Allen Toussaint, Aretha Franklin, Bo Diddley, Dr. John, Prince and Art Neville alongside two sizzling originals, Parker lights the musical fireworks and lets them soar for everyone to see (and hear).

The heralded horn man for James Brown and Parliament-Funkadelic, Maceo Parker is still kicking out the jams and Soul Food finds him *still* at the top of his game. Bravo!  
Contact-- [www.maceo.com](http://www.maceo.com)

**SCOTT COOK**  
**TANGLE OF SOULS**  
**12-SONG CD & 240 PAGE BOOK**

- PUT YOUR GOOD FOOT IN THE ROAD
- LEAVE A LIGHT ON
- JUST ENOUGH EMPTIES
- SAY CAN YOU SEE ME
- TULSA
- WHAT TO KEEP
- PASSIN' THROUGH
- ROLLIN' TO YOU
- LET LOVE HAVE ITS WAY
- WHY AM I LEAVING MY HOME AGAIN?
- TANGLE OF SOULS
- RIGHT TO ROAM

For Scott Cook's seventh release, this modern day Canadian *trouvere* delivers an engaging 12-song CD alongside a monumental 240 page hard cover book chronicling each song's introduction to the world, musical tab and Cook's fascinating life.

He's a keen songcrafter that cleverly captures the deep meaning of every

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experience he's had the good chance to be a part of. His voice is equally as convincing while he sells his vivid tales of life, love, and the world in a well wrapped song. Best tracks worthy of world wide radioplay include the beautiful "Leave A Light On," the revealing "Just Enough Empties," the hopeful promise of "Say Can You See," the magnificence of "Passing Through," the introspective "Let Love Have Its Way," and the album's title track "Tangle of Souls."

You may have never heard of Scott Cook before, but seek him out. His music will speak to you. Outstanding. [B.M.O.]  
Contact-- [www.scottcook.net](http://www.scottcook.net)

**ERIC JOHANSON**  
**BELOW SEA LEVEL**  
**12-SONG CD**

- BURIED ABOVE GROUND
- DOWN TO THE BOTTOM

- CHANGES THE UNIVERSE
- NEVER TOMORROW
- HAMMER ON THE STONE
- HAVE MERCY
- RIVER OF OBLIVION
- NOWHERE TO GO
- OPEN HEARTED WOMAN
- DOSE OF FORGET
- LOVE IS REBELLION
- RIVERBEND BLUES

Louisiana native Eric Johanson has spent years on the road as a guitarist performing with Cyril Neville, Anders Osborne, JJ Grey, Eric Lindell and the Neville Brothers. Discovered by Louisiana blues-rock icon Tab Benoit, Tab signed Johanson to his Whiskey Bayou Record label in 2017.

Johanson's debut album, Burn It Down, was produced by Benoit and released in October of 2017. Following the release, Eric

*Continued on next page >>>*

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# Hearings

continued

spent the next two years on Benoit's tour bus opening most of his shows, as well as performing festivals and doing short tours of his own.

During the 2019 New Orleans Jazz Fest, Johanson was invited to perform with Luther Dickinson at an all-star jam concert. The two devised plans to record Eric's next project at Dickinson's Zebra Ranch Studios, with Luther producing and brother Cody Dickinson of North Mississippi Allstars on drums. The result is this well penned and played sophomore release, Below Sea Level for the Nola Blue record label.

Staying primarily in a trio format along with bassist Terrence Grayson and drummer Cody Dickinson throughout the album, Johanson enlists Ray Jacildo to add organ for the song "Changes In The Universe" to give some added dimension.

Johanson's guitar playing is skillful and tone-filled as Grayson & Dickinson keep the safety net firmly tethered for Eric's blazing solo excursions. Best tracks: the urgency of the album opener "Buried Above Ground," the rowdy roadhouse grit of "Down To The Bottom," the Hendrixian "Hammer On The Stone," and the head shakin' rocker "Nowhere To Go."

When things start to open up for live performing, be sure to catch Johanson live and in action when he comes to town. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- [www.ericjohanson.com](http://www.ericjohanson.com)

## ROB SILVERMAN DRUMOLOGY 7-SONG CD

- INFERNO
- WAVERUNNERS
- KONNAKOL
- BRAVE NEW WORLD
- TEN TIMES TEN
- DRUM DUET IN C MINOR
- SPARK

Holding down the drum chores for the Eric Marienthal Band and Bach To The Future, world-class drummer Rob Silverman steps out for this electrifying solo effort that includes performances with a who's who of drum giants like Gregg Bissonette, Simon Phillips, Steve Smith, Dave Weckl, John Blackwell and Casey Adams.

Silverman boasts the best of both worlds as he enlists saxophonist Eric

Marienthal, bassist John Patitucci, violinist Jerry Goodman, keyboardist Jay Oliver and guitarist Buzz Feitin as recording bandmates to create an inventive playground of drums and musical sound. The outcome is a buoyant collection of songs that roar with joyous fervor.

Check out the tracks "Konnakol," "Ten Times Ten," and "Drum Duet in C Minor" and prepare to be staggered. Good stuff! [B.M.O.]

Contact-- [www.robsilvermandrums.net](http://www.robsilvermandrums.net)

## GUM COUNTRY SOMEWHERE 12-SONG CD

- SOMEWHERE
- THE QUEEN RULES
- TENNIS (I FEEL OK)
- THERE'S A CRUMB
- I DON'T STAY UP
- PILLS
- BRAIN SONG
- IT LIVES IT BREEDS IT FEEDS
- WHOA OH
- TALKING TO MY PLANTS
- JUNGLE BOY

## • WATERFALL

This Canadian band consists of singer and guitarist Courtney Garvin of The Courtneys and multi-instrumentalist Connor Mayer on drums, keyboard and bass. The record was recorded about 3 years ago before the Courtneys became a big ticket item via Flying Nun records. "Somewhere" retains the dreamy relaxed vocal quality one would expect from Courtney, but has an edgier and more determined rhythm and a sharper less reverby mix. "The Queen Rules" maintains the mesmerizing and fuzzy Sensurround experience.

The mechanical rhythm and synth intro as well as the distorted production detracted a bit from "Tennis," but Courtney's vocals eventually sold me on it. At first, with the simplified guitar parts, "There's A Crumb" sounded a lot like Beat Happening, but soon expanded into a more 3 dimensional and enticing structure while attempting a less-is-more ethos which makes for nice diversity.

The dynamic duo reverted back to full-on dreamy for "I Don't Stay Up," but slowed down for "Pills" where an elongated shoegazer solo takes pride of place. The



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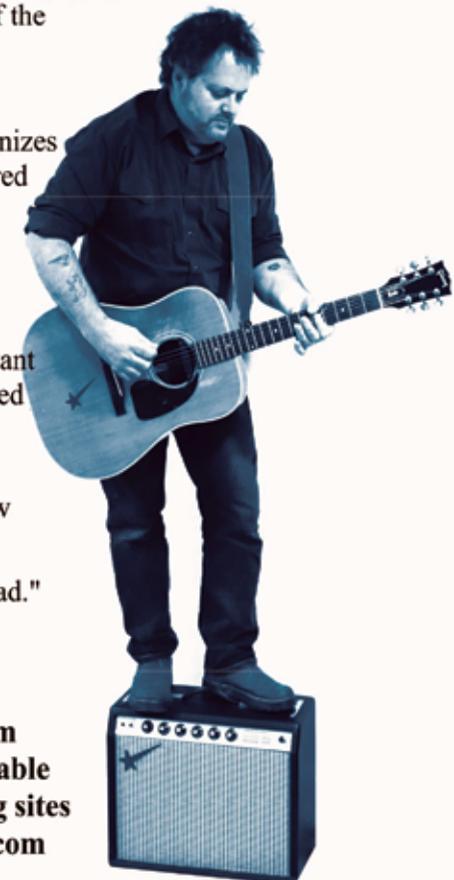
~ The Daily Ripple

"It only takes a cursory listen recognize the fact that an important and essential new artist has indeed arrived." ~ Goldmine Magazine

"I like singing along to your new album." ~ Bobbo's Mom

"My Mom's cooking isn't that bad."  
~ Bobbo

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ongoing distortion will have its fans, but also reflects the budget this was recorded under.

They take a nifty melody for the intro of "Brain Song" and then lull you straight back to the comfort zone with Courtney's voice. "It Lives It Breeds It Feeds" is disturbing in the nicest possible way thanks to the simplified beat and remoteness in the voice. The most addictive song of the batch is "Talking To My Plants" where guitar and synth battle it out in between verses without ever losing the melody within the fuzzy rhythm guitar line. "Jungle Boy" then becomes a joyfully self-indulgent jam for the pair. The bass comes to the forefront for the first time on the intro on "Waterfall" while the band essentially deconstructs their sound to a more staccato orientation with narrated vocals, but mercifully they rock out for one final blast. Gum Country certainly provides another solid reason to like Canada. [Gecko]

Contact-- <https://gumcountry.bandcamp.com/album/somewhere>

#### **THE BARRETT ANDERSON BAND HYPNOBOOGIE 11-SONG CD**

- MONA
- GOOD MAN

- LOOKIN' GOOD
- NOT YOUR BABY
- EMMA LEE
- THE LONG FALL
- GRINNIN' IN YOUR FACE
- BLIND FAITH
- BROKEN DOWN
- GONE
- HOUSE PARTY

Recorded live at The Fallout Shelter in Norwood, MA. a month before Covid-19 hit U.S. shores, The Barrett Anderson Band took the stage and blew things wide open with the infectious Bo Diddley jaunt "Mona." Next up, the mesmerizing hook of Anderson's "Good Man," kept things rollin' at a frenzied clip. The group is hot.

Time for a fretboard workout as Barrett and the band keep things jumpin' with Magic Sam's sizzling instrumental, "Lookin' Good." Not only does the group get to show off their chops, but they do it in collective fashion. Things begin to settle down as Anderson unveils the measured tunes "Not Your Baby" and "Emma Lee" featuring emotive vibes you can't escape.

Anderson pays homage to Son House by delivering a rousing instrumental version of Son's "The Long Fall." "Grinnin' In Your Face" finds Anderson working the slide guitar alongside a stark soul-stirring vocal while the stripped down "Blind Faith" paints

the aural canvas with mesmerizing imagery.

"Broken Down" breaks the ice and gets things quakin' again with prolific slide work and testosterone filled vocals from Anderson. "Gone" finds Anderson displaying his six string chops with a country blues rockin' ditty that gets things shaking. Barrett and the band end the set with a number that became synonymous with J. Geils, "House Party."

As soon as the night club scene opens back up, expect to see The Barrett Anderson Band rockin' stages throughout New England and beyond. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- [www.barrettandersonband.com](http://www.barrettandersonband.com)

#### **CONTROL FUTURE CTRL FUTURE 7 SONG EP**

- EDI'S DREAM
- DIGITAL LOVE
- SELF IN DESTRUCTION
- THE RIGHT ONE
- NOS VEMOS EN LOS SUEÑOS
- TOXIC OUTBREAK
- GRETA'S TRUTH

Dutch based concert promoter and music journalist Neus Ruiz collected enough instruments and inspiration to put together this clever but unpretentious EP

of lo-fi bedroom industrial pop. With "Edi's Dream" she puts herself in the mind frame of a teenager in feverish subconscious mode while a main section rocks out in gothic disco fashion and rather muffled vocals. Surprisingly, it works.

For the more polished "Digital Love," we get a dreamy hit contender with gorgeous singing in front of a tightly packaged masterpiece. "Self In Destruction" pushes minimalism to a new level of introverted self-reflection. "The Right One" has more of a pop rock approach with neat melodies and a memorable chorus yet jarring production. The vocals are heartfelt, endearing, but totally raw on different levels. For "Los Sueños," Ruiz switches to her native Spanish and brings the recording levels to a new low while an intriguing guitar riff and some found noise keep up the momentum.

"Toxic Outbreak" could have become a classical doleful cantata, but refuses to go for the kill, by going below the waterline. Ruiz pulls out the synths to underpin the slow moving repetitive mantra of "Greta's Truth." This record isn't going to win the best producer of the year award, but the rough demo-like edges combined with the sophisticated melodies will charm a new legion of fans looking for something fresh. [Gecko]

Contact-- <https://controlfuture.bandcamp.com/album/ctrl-future>

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# One Dime Band

by Brian M. Owens

Some things are forces of nature and just can't be contained even in an environment that includes the Covid-19 virus and civil unrest. One Dime Band's new album Hoodoo & Holy Water is one of those welcomed forces. Joyous, uplifting and a well executed, ephemeral escape from the craziness in the world today, the One Dime Band has generated one of the finest blues records of the year.

I spoke to singer-songwriter-harmonica man Paul Gallucci one hot summer evening and he guided me through the process of Hoodoo & Holy Water's design and what the unsteady future looks like amidst a global pandemic...

**METRANOME: Hoodoo & Holy Water is a great record. How long was the album in the making?**

Paul Gallucci: We started the recording of that on May 20, 2018. We finished it, believe it or not, one day less than a year on May 19, 2019. The funny thing about all the time that passed was we really weren't recording the whole time. We literally did three lockouts at Woolly Mammoth. We did the first two lockouts with our original rhythm section which was Jay Gillies on drums and John Grube on bass. Those two sessions happened over the course of the first few months. Then those bands things happened. Nothing bad, but we had a long respite there where we weren't sure what was going to happen.

John [Brauchler] and I had invested all the money in the record which was modest. For what the session players did on that record it was so good from the first song.

We did a third session and that's when Rob Ignazio helped us recruit Chris Anzalone on drums, Paul Kochanski on bass, Alizon Lissance on piano, organ & accordion, and John Moriconi and Mario Perrett on horns. For that session, it crazy trying to get all those people there the same day, but I booked them throughout the course of the day. We did the rhythm tracks live with Chris and Paul, then Alizon came in and did piano and then Mario and John came in and played horns on the three songs they did. It was really something else. We called it a twenty-four hour lockout, but we didn't really record for twenty-four hours.

John and I would stay and do our overdubs. The difference with this record was that we did have a little bit of a budget

and we went in to a real, amazing studio. The first album was done in my basement with John and I basically.

When we had a band and these musicians behind us for the second record, that was the real significant thing about it- the vibe. We had more of a band feel and things fell together like that.

**METRANOME: Was Rob Ignazio helpful**

**in the recording process?**

I give Rob all the credit for being the ringmaster. He brought all these people together that he worked with before and introduced them to us, except for Alizon. That's how things came together with the musicians. I keep saying how grateful I am that these amazing musicians gave this to us.



They were real complimentary too. They liked the songs and that meant a lot to us. That's how things came about with this record. It was a labor of love and we paid with it from all our gig money. That's what funded the record.

**METRANOME: How did the mixing portion of the album go?**

Rob did all the mixing, as they say, in the box at home on his computer. Rob is now living in Albany, New York and has a home studio there. He can be reached at robignazio@gmail.com.

**METRANOME: When did he move to Albany?**

Last year. He got married to a wonderful gal and moved to that area. Now, he has a beautiful home studio. Hopefully, when we do our third record, that's where we will record it. It's a beautiful area. It will be like our little Big Pink situation.

**METRANOME: How did you get David Gordon Jr., Jackie Damsky and Donna Tritico involved with the project?**

David Gordon Jr. is an unbelievably talented guy. He's in mid-state New York. He has a small recording studio setup in the Albany area. Rob said, "I know a guy that can put a little organ on the song, "Witch Child." He sent the song to David and he laid down that B3 organ on that. That was killer. This guy's main instrument is drums, but his organ playing was just phenomenal.

Jackie Damsky is a friend of Rob. We were thinking of putting some violin on "Mama's Chair" and he gave me the names of two or three violinists. Jackie is from Peekskill, New York. John and I are from very neighboring towns. We grew up in Yorktown. When I talked to her on the phone I said, You're from Peekskill, you've got to play on it. It's got to be you. She came to my place and I tracked her here and then sent it to Rob.

Donna is a great singer. She has the Donna Tritico Band, also in that Albany area. Her husband plays drums in the band. They wanted to play "Hoodoo & Holy Water" in their set. We said, Absolutely. You're welcome to it. They really like the song. They play all over the place in that mid-state New York area.

**METRANOME: Did you and John know any of these New York folks from your days growing up there?**

No. It was all coincidental. It was very cool stuff. That's why I want to give Rob a lot of props with this record for bringing it all together.

**METRONOME: How did the songwriting process work for you and John on Hoodoo & Holy Water?**

Most all of the songs come in from different ways. For instance, "Witch Child" was something that John and I wrote together, going back decades. That song has gone through a little evolution. It's changed hands. After I left The Roadhouse Sheiks which was John's and my first blues band that we put together, that featured John Moriconi singing and playing trumpet after I left. That's how John and I met John Moriconi. They did a version of that song. The title and lyrics were slightly different, but mainly it was similar to what John and I wrote. We brought it back to life for this album.

"We Needed The Rain" from the first CD was one of those songs. That's how the whole thing got started with us even recording again. John said, "Let's archive the songs that we wrote all those years ago in your home studio. That was fun, then we started writing together again. Lo and behold, that's how things started.

So "Witch Child" was from 1990 originally. We changed the lyrics and wanted to talk about New Orleans a little bit. That's what that song is all about.

Usually I might write a verse feel and chorus feel and bring it to John, then we finish it together. For something like "Mama's Chair," I had the idea and the title and something with the melody and verse. I brought it to John and he put in that amazing bridge and ending outro.

We even enjoy sitting down and writing lyrics together. We definitely write as a partnership. The majority of the songs on Hoodoo & Holy Water we collaborated on which was a lot of fun.

**METRONOME: Who mastered the album?**

We have to give props to Dave Locke at JP Masters. He mastered the record and did a great job.

**METRONOME: Did you guys have some kind of musical plan going in to recording the last two albums? Country blues? Americana? Folk rock?**

We love it all as long as it has roots to it. We're also big fans of songwriters and bands that write songs. That for me is the main focus. I'm not so much a player as I want to be a songwriter. John is more of a player I would say, but he definitely has great writing abilities for sure. But the man is a player. He knows his way around the guitar.

The two of us have specific influences that we go to with this project and our partnership. For John and I, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry is like our acoustic thing. Buddy Guy and Junior Wells... If we could be that, that would be our ultimate thing.

We both love Taj Mahal and stuff that's more like country blues. When the two of us

play together- just harp & guitar & singing- that's the zone we're in for what we want to do.

**METRONOME: Did you feel like you were in a different head space between this album and the last? This album was really joyous and uplifting.**

I'm so happy that you say that because in all honesty we really didn't want it to be just another blues record. Everyone associates blues with sadness. I always say that it can be mournful music, but it's more about the celebration of life. For some of the songs, with everything going on in the world, we really wanted to have some positive, upbeat things. We didn't want it to be cheesy or corny. We wanted some positivity in there.

Recording the other record, we really hadn't even played live. At the end of recording that record, we started playing coffeehouses live. For this album, we had been playing live for a couple of years before we started recording. We had continued to write, but we were doing a lot of playing and then putting a band together with our new bass player Neil McEvoy. Neil is fantastic and a great guy.

**METRONOME: How did you enlist Neil in to the band?**

We found Neil through Bandmix. It's kinda like a dating site for musicians. Coincidentally he lives in Malden and John lives in Malden. He played in a Bluegrass band and also plays with a fellow named

Billy Dodge Moody. They play in Cambridge. He's been with him for a few years.

**METRONOME: How did you come up with the name, One Dime Band?**

We had a CD of covers by Taj Mahal, Howlin' Wolf & Muddy Waters. We printed some up ourselves and at the time we were calling it One Dime. That came from an old Blind Lemon Jefferson song.

**METRONOME: Are you able to go out live in an acoustic and electric setting?**

Yeah, full electric because we really love playing electric. That's where we want to take it. Personally I feel that not enough people have heard John play guitar. He's a Tele master and he's phenomenal. I've really pushed for us to play electric gigs and we started with a 4 piece and we had an audition with a young guy, a Berklee student, to play keys. We had a gig we were going to play with him in New Hampshire then everything hit the fan. We played one last gig here in Swampscott and have not played since.

**METRONOME: Everyone needs to hear your new album because it's very uplifting. It should take people's minds off of what's currently going on in the world.**

We've had some blips on the global map with it. We have something in Scandinavia going on now. A guy got in touch with us from Belgium through Bandzoogle that wanted CDs. John just sent me some



iTunes rankings from Finland. We're getting more interest with this record.

I think the difference between a lot of straight blues and who we are is the songwriting. I don't always want an album of all shuffles. For us it's about writing songs. We want to write good songs that lyrically and musically attract listeners. And we want some diversity. If we do a shuffle on the record, every other song is not going to be a shuffle. It will have a different feel. A good example is, we took an exploration with a reggae blues vibe with "Salaryman." We wanted some diversity.

**METRONOME: Did you guys consciously plan it that way?**

Oh yeah, yeah. The two of us are huge Beatles fans. We're both huge Queen fans and many artists that when they made an album, song to song to song, that was a big influence for John and I with songwriting. These people did not repeat themselves. In our own way, that's what we go for. Let's make each song very different so you're getting some kind of listening experience.

**METRONOME: You mentioned you wanted to record a third album with Rob. Have you started writing for that?**

The thing that's happened with this whole Covid thing is we haven't been able to do a lot of writing. You'd think we would have four more albums of material now, but that's not the case. The writing usually happens between John and I face to face. We have a few tunes, but we need another eight or ten songs. We have tried to do some acapella split-screen videos on social media just to stay out there.

**METRONOME: What do you think the future holds for you guys?**

If we do get back to some kind of normalcy, getting bookings and some kind of management would be huge for us. We do all of the work ourselves, but that would be a big help.

We'd also like to find a solid rhythm section core. Neil is great and we have some drummers that we're looking at, but it has to be right. Right now the core is John, myself and Neil McEvoy.

**METRONOME: Is anyone playing the record?**

Holly Harris has been spinning us on WUMB. There have been a few internet radio DJs that really like the record too. We've sent it out to a lot of stations and are getting really good feedback.

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# The Time Machine



## Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers

**Photo circa:** 1980

**Band Members:** L to R- Stan Lynch (Drums), Mike Campbell (Lead Guitar), Benmont Tench (Keyboards), Tom Petty (Vocals & Guitar), Ron Blair (Bass).

**Musical Achievements:** Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers formed in 1976 in Gainesville, Florida. The original band comprised of Petty, Mike Campbell, Ron Blair, Stan Lynch and Benmont Tench. In 1981, Blair, weary of touring, left the band and was replaced by Howie Epstein. In 1991, Scott Thurston joined the band as a multi-instrumentalist. The band released thirteen albums, wrote a long string of hit singles over the band's 40+ year existence and became one of America's most beloved rock bands. Petty would release 3 solo albums, resurrect his early band Mudcrutch and become an integral member of The Traveling Wilbury's.

**Where Are They Now:** Tom Petty died of cardiac arrest on October 2, 2017. He was 66 years old. The news stunned family, friends and fans around the world. Bassist Howie Epstein died in 2003 from a heroin overdose. He was 47. Original bassist Ron Blair rejoined the band until Petty's death. Stan Lynch left The Heartbreakers in 1994 and went on to write, play and produce music for The Eagles, The Band, Scotty Moore, Sister Hazel, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, The Jeff Healey Band, Eddie Money, Toto, Ringo Starr and others. Steve Ferrone replaced Lynch and remained in the band until Petty's death. The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2002, their first year of eligibility.

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# The Midnight Callers

by Brian M. Owens

What began as a side project for The Midnight Callers frontman, Chris Paine, has blossomed in to a very *real* band situation based in New York city. The former Massachusetts resident along with bandmates Martin Stubbs on guitar, Marley Myrianthopoulos on bass and Julien Budrino on drums, recently signed with the New Jersey based Jem Records label and have a highly anticipated October 23rd release date for their debut album, Red Letter Glow.

Filled with contemporary power-pop songs bolstered by Paine's soul-drenched vocals and the band's electrifying rhythms, The Midnight Callers are poised to be one of the finest rock & roll outfits to hit the scene in a very long time. Let's fill you in...

**METRONOME: You changed the name of the band from Chris Paine & The Lettertrain to The Midnight Callers. What prompted the change?**

Chris: Really it was when we started recording this first full-length album. The more we started fleshing out the song ideas, it became clear that this wasn't just one guy's side project anymore. We were acting like a band and wanted the name to reflect that.

**METRONOME: Who's in The Midnight Callers?**

Chris: Currently, we have Martin Stubbs on lead guitar, Julien Budrino on drums, Marley Myrianthopoulos on bass, and myself on vocals and rhythm guitar.

**METRONOME: How did you guys meet?**

Chris: Julien and I were actually in a '60s mod-rock band together called "London Egg." We recorded some great stuff with that project. Two brothers from the Bronx had that band going for a long time and it was their baby essentially. I contributed songs to London Egg, but then I had other material that didn't really fit that mold. I didn't know what to do with these songs. I felt they were pretty good rock/power pop tunes.

Julien and I had become buddies and I ended up playing this new stuff for him. He started pushing me to record it and that he would lay down the drums. It took off big-time from there. We wouldn't be talking if it wasn't for Julien.

When it came down to filling the band out, we had a good friend of ours jump in on bass. We started trying out a bunch of different lead players for months and just



couldn't find the right fit. In a desperate move we posted an ad on Craigslist. A couple of days later, I got a response from this guy who said he was looking for a new project and that he dug "Big Star" as much as we did. Being a "Big Star" fan alone told us that Martin was the guy.

Marley came to us at just about the perfect time. Here we are with a brand-new record finished, we just signed with JEM, and our current bass player breaks the news to us that he's moving. It was definitely a bit defeating, but we started networking and Marley ended up walking through the door. He understood perfectly what we were trying to do from the get-go and learned all of the material in a matter of a couple weeks before playing his first show with us.

**METRONOME: How long have you been based in New York City now?**

Chris: I've been here since the summer of 2012, right after I got out of college. The band itself has been together in some form or another for about 3 years.

**METRONOME: Can you name some of the acts that inspire the musical direction of The Midnight Callers?**

Chris: For me personally, Tom Petty and The Beatles are my constant top two, but we collectively have a ton of influences. As I mentioned, Martin and I bonded over our love of Big Star and those early power-pop bands of the 1970s: Raspberries, Badfinger, Cheap Trick, etc. We also grew up in the era of iTunes where the entire world of music was at your fingertips. In one bus ride to school, you might hear The Ramones, The Raconteurs, a Queen Tune, and then one little bit of Abbey Road Side Two.

I think that type of widespread influence stuck with us all and comes through on the record. I'm coining the phrase "Millennial

Rock" because there's a whole generation of bands who grew up like that- you hear the influences, but there's too many to just peg one.

**METRONOME: How many albums has the band released collectively as The Lettertrain & Midnight Callers?**

Chris: This will be our first full-length album. We did independently release a 3-song EP as the Lettertrain called Indiscriminate Chatter. You can still find it on Spotify and iTunes.

**METRONOME: Who's the principal songwriter(s) for the band?**

Chris: Primarily, it's me and Martin. We come up with our own ideas and demos, but we always try to get together and do the Lennon-McCartney thing. We sit down face-to-face and work through the parts and pull the best music out of each other.



**METRONOME: How does the song crafting work for you? Observational? Personal? Off-The-Wall?**

Martin: Musically, inspiration comes from a lot of places. Usually it starts with a simple concept - a guitar riff, a beat, a musical vibe, a style of vocal harmony or songwriting, a melody, etc. I'll then be inspired to craft something of my own. Lyrically, I tend to make up stories that are based on experiences in my life, and abstract them from actual people. I've never been a fan of people asking me, "Hey, what was that song about?" So I tend to create made-up characters.

Chris: Honestly, it's a mix for me. Most of the time I hear something in conversation with friends or on the subway and I get this little 'ping' in my mind that says, "Keep that thought!" I'll pull out my phone or notebook and just jot down whatever thoughts and

phrases are swirling around.

I'm typically a batch writer though. Either it all comes pouring out at once, or it's nothing for weeks. I have always envied the kind of songwriter who can just sit down and write something whenever they want.

**METRONOME: You have a new album slated for an October release on JEM Records called Red Letter Glow. How did you strike up a relationship with Jem?**

Chris: It came together through two different avenues. We had befriended a couple of YouTubers, Matthew Street and Stephen Schnee who started posting and talking about us on their channels. This happened to catch the ear of Marty Scott, the owner of Jem. From there, he reached out to our producer, Kurt Riel, of the Grip Weeds who happened to be signed to JEM too. He got a hold of some early mixes and the rest is history. Joining the JEM family was definitely the best decision we've made as a band. Marty and his team have been amazing to work with.

**METRONOME: How long did it take to record the album?**

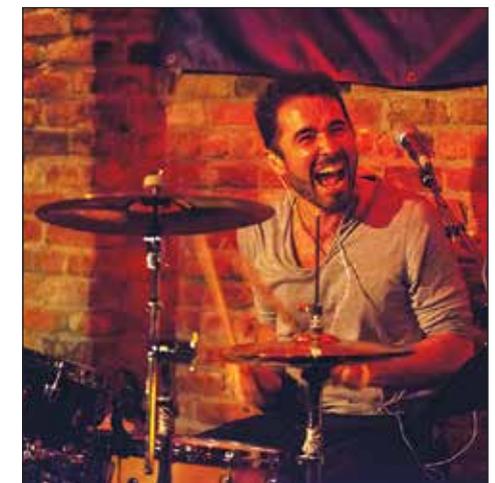
Chris: That depends who you ask (laughs). All in all, it took us about six months.

**METRONOME: How many songs are on it?**

Chris: There are 10 of our own original songs as well as a cover of "Use Me" by Bill Withers. We wanted to include it as our homage to Bill. (We just keep adding more to the list of influences).

**METRONOME: Where did you record the project?**

Chris: We tracked all of the base tracks in the middle of my parent's living room. We were talking about where we could go to get a good drum sound and how we



needed some high ceilings. So I called up my parents and basically said, Mom Dad, we're coming over... plug your ears!

After we finished tracking, we knew we needed to take vocals to the next level, so my first thought was Kurt and the House of Vibes in Highland Park, NJ. Kurt was instrumental in tying this record all together. We came to him with our DIY tracks and he turned it into something we're all super proud of.

**METRONOME: Who engineered?**

Chris: Kurt engineered all of the vocals and ended up mixing and mastering as well. All of the instrumentation was engineered by Martin.

**METRONOME: Chris, what kind of guitar rig did you use for the album?**

Chris: I kept it pretty straightforward for this one since I wanted it to mirror my live sound. Most of the album is played on my old Rickenbacker 360 straight into a cranked Vox AC-15. We dabbled with an Epiphone Sheraton and a Danelectro for a few things as well to add some different textures, but I'd say 90% of it is the Rick.

**METRONOME: Martin, what kind of guitar and amplifier are you playing?**

Martin: My mainstay is a Gibson Les Paul, but I have an Epiphone G-1275 double-neck for when I need a 12 string and a 6 string in the same track. I'm usually playing out of either an '80s era Marshall JCM-800, or a Fender Princeton Reverb. Recently, I've

been favoring more of the latter.

**METRONOME: Marley, who are some of your favorite bass players?**

Marley: I have a lot of admiration for the session folks who have the flexibility to meet the demands of a lot of songs, artists, styles, or even genres. Obviously, famous examples are the old-school studio players like James Jamerson, Duck Dunn, and Carol Kaye. Some of the more modern session folks I've been checking out recently are Pino Palladino, Tim Lefebvre, Sean Hurley and Julia Adamy. I've also been really appreciating YouTubers like Adam Neely, Davie504, and juliaplaysgroove. They're tremendous players, and I really respect the way they've utilized the modern media landscape to spread the love of the low end.

**METRONOME: Did you guys play any unusual instrumentation for the record?**

Chris: Nothing terribly unusual, but we did add a harmonica solo and organ (played by Kurt) to "Do We Need It." I'm always looking for ways to break out the harmonica when I can. It's just something you don't hear as much on newer records.

**METRONOME: You're part of a John Lennon Tribute album that will celebrate his would-be 80th birthday in October. How did you get involved with that project?**

Martin: Our label spearheaded the concept and asked if we would record a cover. Being massive Beatles fans, it was a

pretty easy yes.

**METRONOME: Is it a compilation?**

Martin: It's a compilation of all the bands on JEM Records, all of whom are Beatles fanatics. Each band took a shot at re-imagining their favorite Lennon tracks from across his musical career. We went with a rocked-up version of "It Won't Be Long," a '60s folk take on the first verse of "Child of Nature," and a southern-rock/soul version of "Jealous Guy."

**METRONOME: Who else in on the album?**

Chris: You'll definitely hear Kurt all over the album on backing vocals. When you have a guy as good as he is at harmony singing, you have to have him join in. He was finding parts that Martin and I had no clue were even there. We also have our original bass player, Anthony Bernier, and our good friend, Julien Enjalbert (who played on the original EP) plunk away on bass on a few tracks. We wanted to keep it all in the family and have the people who helped us get to this point play on the album.

**METRONOME: What are some of the New York venues that the band has performed in before Covid hit?**

Chris: Prior to all this madness, we were playing regularly at venues such as the Bitter End, the Bowery Electric and Mercury Lounge. We were even in talks about doing a residency at another venue, but then lockdown happened. We're definitely chomping at the bit to get out there again

and do what we love most, playing live.

**METRONOME: With the Covid event shutting down live music, what have you been doing musically to stay sane?**

Martin: Lots of little projects and songwriting for our next record. We released a few video covers that were super fun to pull together and allowed us to flex some of our home-recording and production skills. I don't know what I'd be doing without a home studio setup.

Marley: The remote recordings that The Midnight Callers have been doing were a ton of fun. I've also spent some time practicing reading sheet music. It's something I've been trying to find time to work on for a while. I find that reading sheet music helps to develop my consistency, precision, and pattern and variation recognition, which makes my playing better even if I'm not reading music for a particular song or gig.

**METRONOME: Where can people find out more about the band on the internet?**

Chris: You can definitely go to [www.themidnightcallers.com](http://www.themidnightcallers.com) to find out more about the band and where to listen, but definitely give us a follow on Facebook or Instagram @themidnightcallers. We're always posting updates, behind the scenes footage, and other random stuff we're into. If you get a chance, also head over to [jemrecordings.com](http://jemrecordings.com) and check out all the other great bands on our label.

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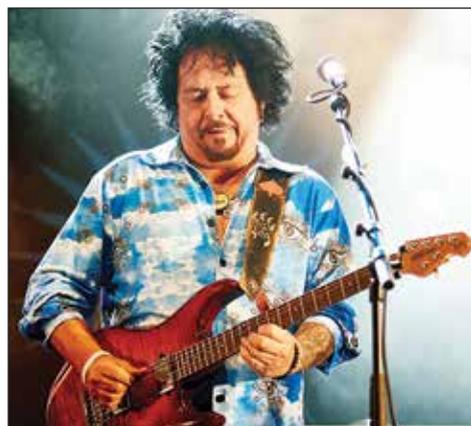
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# Metronome Madness

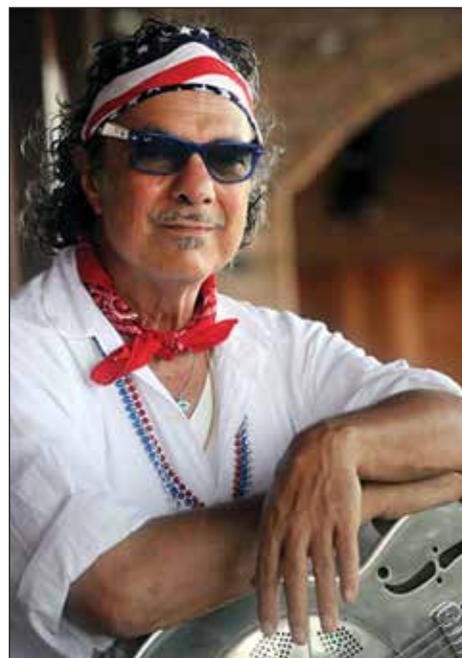
Hello ladies, gents, boys and girls and welcome to the October 2020 issue of **Metronome Magazine**. The **Covid-19 pandemic** continues to wreak havoc on our lives and businesses. It's been challenging to say the least. We at Metronome, hope you all remain upbeat and healthy through these unsettling times. Together we WILL get through this! As usual there's plenty of music news to tell you about, so pull up an easy chair and do read on... The **C-Note** in Hull was scheduled to close their doors due to Covid after owner **Charlie Fruzzetti** and his crew announced it on social media in July. However, a new fund raising effort is in the works to keep the club open until things resume some kind of normalcy. The popular **Nantasket Beach** mainstay hosted countless blues, soul, rock, country and swing acts over its 30-year run. **Fruzzetti** bought the old **Sea Note** from **Joe Phillips** and **Paula Dillon** in 2008 and opened it as the **C-Note**. The popular beach-side venue at 159 Nantasket Avenue closed under the state's nonessential coronavirus shutdown order on March 14. Let's all hope things get back to normal sooner than later. **Toto** guitarist **Steve Lukather** and Mascot Records have released a newly recorded composition titled "Run To Me," and an accompanying video. The song is heavily influenced by Lukather's connection to music from the late 1960's. The track was co-written by **David**



## Steve Lukather

**Paich, Joseph Williams** and **Lukather**. Performances include **Steve** on guitar, **Joseph Williams** on keyboards and background vocals, **John Pierce** from **Huey Lewis & The News** on bass, alongside Luke's Allstar band-mate and friend **Ringo Starr** who makes a special appearance in both the video and on the record. **Lukather** shares, "I wanted to release this now because it fits the moment. A time where we all need a happy song for an unhappy time. Musically, the song is absolutely influenced by my growing up in the '60s, inspired by some of my favorite elements of the repertoire that defined that indelible era. And, **Ringo**, what can I say. It is an honor to have his contribution captured on a song of mine, much less his gracious presence in the video. As we all look towards the unknown of this

crazy world we are living in, simply my hope is this tune brings a little peace, love and pleasant distraction to these uncertain times." "Run To Me" can be heard on all streaming services globally, and is available for download and you can view the video here: <https://youtu.be/mvbHYmh7VYY>. Details on **Steve Lukather's** forthcoming solo album coming in early 2021 will be shared in the coming months. Whether it be on the banks of the **Mississippi River** or deep in the heart of the English countryside, rock 'n' roll lives, breathes, and burns on the outskirts. Hailing from **Rome, GA** at the foothills of the **Appalachian Mountains**, **The Georgia Thunderbolts'** boast a scorching signature style steeped in soulful southern swagger, blistering blues, and raw rock. With a wide swath of inspirations, ranging from southern gospel and Hank Williams to Merle Haggard, Neil Young, Little Feat, Ozzy Osbourne, and Lynyrd Skynyrd, the band cut their teeth performing with everyone from The Kentucky Headhunters to Blackberry Smoke. Shortly after, they hit the iconic Barrick Recording Studio in Glasgow, KY to record with producer Richard Young. The resulting EP comprises undeniable anthems steeped in anthemic riffs, wild harmonica, and pulse-pounding drums. From the bluesy blend of "So You Wanna Change The World," to "the first song we ever wrote," the dynamic "Looking For An Old Friend," **The Georgia Thunderbolts** rustle up a new era of rock & roll on their dynamic five song EP. The seven minute-plus "Set Me Free" rolls from a hummable riff towards evocative soloing and an epic final crescendo, while "Lend A Hand" stomps along on a wild lick before a sweeping and soaring refrain. "We're going for that timeless and classic sound with a modern twist and newer attitude," exclaims **TJ Lyle**, the lead vocalist for the group that also features guitarists **Riley Couzzourt & Logan Tolbert**, bassist/keyboardist/harmony singer **Zach Everett** and **Bristol Perry** on drums. "We all grew up on rock music," **Riley** adds. "If I could think of three words to describe us, they would be Hardworking, Determined and Humble." **Bristol** grins, "If I could think of three words, they



## Johnny Nicholas

would be 'Rock and Roll'." Former **Asleep at The Wheel** frontman, **Johnny Nicholas** has released his new album, **Mistaken Identity**, on the Louisiana-based **Valcour Records** imprint. The digital version was made available on August 28 while CD and vinyl formats are being unveiled on October 2. The album was produced, recorded and mixed by Valcour Records co-founder **Joel Savoy**. One listen to **Mistaken Identity** reveals a plethora of roots music sounds showcasing **Johnny Nicholas'** varied influences, ranging from blues ("She Stole My Mojo") and Tex-Mex ("Guadalupe's Prayer"), to Honky-Tonk Country ("Spark to a Flame") and Rockabilly ("Tight Pants"). The album's title track is a paean to New Orleans Rhythm and Blues, awash in second-line rhythms and Crescent City images. All but one of the songs on this album are originals that draw upon his many

influences and experiences that have molded and defined him as a true Blues and Roots music artist. Most of the tracks album, including the vocals, were recorded "live" with very few overdubs. It's jam-packed with great musicianship, story-telling and melodies that were recorded in **Joel Savoy's** studio. "It all started out with the blues for me," Johnny says. "Once that bug bit me, I was infected with a love of what is now called Americana or roots music. No matter what you call it, it all began with the blues and all of its musical manifestations. This album is a homecoming, bringing me back to the place where I cut my teeth and grew up musically on the prairies and bayou country of Southwest Louisiana in the '70s. For more, check out his web site at: [www.johnnynicholasblues.com](http://www.johnnynicholasblues.com). On the eve of the 15th anniversary of **Hurricane Katrina**, **New Orleans'** funk ensemble, **Dumpstaphunk** released "Where Do We Go From Here," the first single and title-track off their forthcoming album. "Many of us from this region who endured the aftermath of **Katrina** were asking ourselves this question 15 years ago, not knowing what the future would hold. Today we stand at another crossroads both in terms of the uncertainty of a worldwide pandemic, the political turmoil surrounding a meaningful social justice movement within a controversial election year, and generally



## Dumpstaphunk

the current climate of our existence. We as human beings are posed with the question once again... "Where do we go from here? **Dumpstaphunk** is putting out a conscious message of optimism in confronting the challenges of the unknown." Over the past 17 years, **Dumpstaphunk** has earned its reputation as the most well-regarded, next-generation **New Orleans** live powerhouses, the type of band whose live shows attract sit-ins from legends like **Carlos Santana**, **Bob Weir**, **Trombone Shorty** and many more. **Dumpstaphunk's** founding members **Ivan Neville** (vocals/keyboards) **Ian Neville** (guitar) **Tony Hall** (bass/guitar/vocals) and **Nick Daniels** (bass/vocals) along with newest members **Alex Wasily** (trombone) and **Deven Trusclair** (drums), have built upon the **Neville** family's iconic **NOLA** legacy as they've transformed into the city's pre-eminent 21st-century funk-fusion export. Modernizing and reinvigorating the **Neville** family groove has been one of the driving forces

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of **Dumpstaphunk** since the band spontaneously formed during **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** in 2003. “Obviously, the New Orleans history is just embedded in us, but we manage to incorporate all the other stuff we’ve listened to over the years,” says Ivan. “We’re representing a legacy, but we’re reimagining a lot of it too.” “Where Do We Go From Here” will be featured on the band’s upcoming 4th studio album, slated for release this Fall 2020 on the Mascot Label Group/The Funk Garage. “We hope people can hear the new songs and are inclined to dance while being inspired to think at the same time,” **Ivan** continues, referring to the band’s balance between topic material and dance-floor rockers.” **Walter Trout** through Provogue Records/Mascot Label Group has released his new studio album entitled, **Ordinary Madness**. Across his five-decade career, the bluesman’s music has always been a lifeline and call-to-arms, reminding listeners they are not alone. Now, as the world seeks solace from a tragedy that has touched us all, he comes armed with a boundary-exploring new studio album and eleven searingly honest songs that bring his fans even closer. “There’s a lot of extraordinary madness going on right now,” considers **Trout**, of the COVID-19 crisis. “This album started because I was dealing with the flaws and weakness inside me. But it ended up being about everyone.” **Ordinary Madness** was completed mere days before the U.S. shutdown, its cathartic songcraft and themes of shared troubles couldn’t chime better with a period in which our souls and spirits are under fire from tumultuous global events. Open about his troubled youth, and his own ongoing struggles with mental health, **Walter Trout** had spent recent tours soothing himself by scribbling down his thoughts and feelings. It was only later he realized he’d just written the most honest lyric-sheet of his career – and felt he had an opportunity to let fans share and identify with him. “Everybody is dealing with something, he says, and I’m no different from anybody else. **Ordinary Madness** doesn’t mean you’re gonna end up in a mental institution. It’s just being human. It’s common humanity.” On November 13th, jazz icon **George Benson** will release **Weekend In London**, his new live album capturing his 2019 performance at London’s intimate **Ronnie Scott’s Jazz Club**. Only a handful of lucky fans were present as the lights went down that magical night in 2019. “We captured a lot of the atmosphere on **Weekend In London**,” says producer Kevin Shirley. “It was very crowded, like it always is at Ronnie Scott’s. A lot of Benson fans were there – and some of the screaming ladies. It was a fantastic night.” The show that became **Weekend In London** was another fabled night to go down in the club’s folklore. “We don’t plan the show out in advance,” explains Benson. “But we know there’s things we gotta play, and if you leave too many out, you’re in for a troubled night. We know what people have come to hear. Basically, the whole show is improvised except the melody itself and the ensemble playing,” he explains. “We play the arrangements, to remind the audience what song they’re listening to, but then we can go crazy and do all the improvisation.” During a six-decade career marked by awards, acclaim and Billboard-



## George Benson

topping output, the Pittsburgh, Hill District-born veteran has earned his place in both the history books and the biggest venues around the world. So it’s a rare treat – and a whole different thrill – to find this megastar going nose-to-nose with the breathless 250-capacity crowd at London’s most prestigious bolthole. “I like that kind of intimacy,” says **Benson**. “I can feel the love when it’s up close and personal.” New Hampshire’s **Melodious Zach** has unveiled a new music video called, “Hum It?” The video was featured on New Hampshire **Chronicle’s Summer Songfest** finale. Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW2TelG1OzQ>. Vocalist **Luba Mason** unveils her new release, **Triangle**, on October 23, 2020 via Blue Canoe Records, with a vibrant new line-up. Captured before an intimate gathering of invited friends, family and fans at Manhattan’s renowned **Power Station** studio, the album features an unprecedented trio of vocals, vibraphone and bass featuring master musicians **Joe Locke** and **James Genus**. The album was produced by longtime **Prince** collaborator **Renato Neto**. **Triangle** exemplifies the passion for fresh perspectives and unexpected choices. The material is jaw-droppingly diverse. From pop classics by **The Beatles** and **Paul Simon** to a **Thelonius Monk** standard, a Slovak folk song and



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a Broadway hit, and even Brazilian legend **Antonio Carlos Jobim** and heavy metal band **System of a Down**. **Sal Baglio** (of The Stompers fame) has unleashed a new album from his alter-ego outfit, **The Amplifier Heads**. He’s threatening CDs to come, but if you can’t wait, it’s available on line. Download it at Bandcamp: <https://theamplifierheads.bandcamp.com/album/music-for-abandoned-amusement-parks>. The album, **Music For Abandoned Amusement Parks** (or What I Did In Quarantine 2020) is the singer-songwriter-guitarists answer to staying musically sane during the COVID-19 epidemic. **Sal** says, “I make stuff up. I was doing it even before I received a Realistic reel to reel tape recorder for Christmas 1968. A quick tutorial from my brother and I never left my room again. The equipment may have changed, but I’m still recording in my room and making stuff up. I wrote and recorded most all of the 16 songs on **Music For Abandoned Amusement Parks** between March and July. There are songs that hang around for a while before finally finding a home of their own. They stay in their room, eat all the food, leave crumbs, don’t walk the dog. Three of those that were originally written in the mid-90’s are “Funhouse Mirrors,” “The Lonesome Carousel” and “September Song.” Happy to say they have moved out and found a good home in a trailer by the ferris wheel. I do not know if anyone listens to complete songs anymore let alone an entire album but if you do still listen old-world style, enjoy the ride.” **PASSING NOTES:** Singer-guitarist **Trini Lopez** died Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at the age of 83 from COVID-19. **Trinidad Lopez III** was born in Dallas, Texas and started playing in bands as a teenager. In 1963, he released his debut album, **Trini Lopez at PJ’s**, which featured a version of “If I Had a Hammer” that became his first Top-10 hit in the U.S. His 1965 version of the folk song “Lemon Tree” was a Top-20 song on Billboard. **Gibson guitars** asked **Lopez** to design two acoustic guitars, both of which are highly sought after collectibles today. **Lopez** also acted and played one of the **Dirty Dozen** in the 1967 hit movie; **Quiet Riot** drummer, **Frankie Banali**, who also played with **W.A.S.P.**, died August 20, 2020 from pancreatic cancer at age 68. **Banali** joined **Quiet Riot** in 1982 and was the most consistent member and the only one from the classic line-up that still played with the band. **Quiet Riot** had a big hit in 1983 with their cover version of the **Slade** song “Cum On Feel the Noize.” **Banali** also drummed with heavy metal band **W.A.S.P.**, **Billy Idol**, and **Faster Pussycat**; Americana singer-songwriter and son of alternative country musician, **Steve Earle**, **Justin Townes Earle** died Sunday, August 23, 2020 at the age of 38. **Justin** was known for combining roots music with modern Americana featuring authentic storytelling in his lyrics. His song “Harlem River Blues” was awarded Song of the Year at the **Americana Music Awards** in 2011. He released a string of albums, first on Bloodshot Records and more recently on New West Records. He had battled substance addiction during his career. His dad, alternative country musician **Steve Earle**, gave **Justin** the middle name **Townes**, after his friend, singer **Townes Van Zandt**; Musician **Ronald Bell** who co-founded **Kool & the Gang** and wrote and composed songs including their

1980 No. 1 hit, “Celebration,” died September 9, 2020 at his home in the U.S. Virgin Islands at the age of 68. Also known as **Khalis Bayyan**, **Bell** co-founded **Kool & the Gang** along with his brother, **Robert “Kool” Bell**, and several neighborhood friends in 1964. **Bell** played tenor saxophone in the band, as well as synthesizer. He wrote and co-wrote several of the band’s biggest hits, including “Jungle Boogie,” “Ladies Night,” “Get Down on It,” and “Cherish.” **Bell** said “Celebration” was his favorite of **Kool & the Gang’s** songs. Along with his band mates, **Bell** was inducted into the **Songwriters Hall of Fame** and has a star on the **Hollywood Walk of Fame**. **VIDEO PICKS OF THE MONTH: Sahara**- starring Matthew McConaughey, Steve Zahn and Penélope Cruz searching for a civil war ghost ship loaded with gold that sank with its treasure in Africa. This flick tanked at the box office but is a still worth a watch; **One For The Money**- Katherine Heigl, Jason O’Mara, Debbie Reynolds, Daniel Sunjata and Sherri Shepherd star in this well scripted comedic crime flick; **Drunk Parents**- this hilarious comedy features Alec Baldwin, Salma Hayek, Joe Manganiello, Natalia Cigliuti, Jim Gaffigan and Ben Platt in one of the funniest movies you’ll watch this year; **The Gentlemen**-starring Charlie Hunnam, Matthew McConaughey, Colin Farrell, Hugh Grant and Michelle Docker, this outstanding film has tons of twists and turns that will keep you guessing till the end; **The Current War**- Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse engage in a battle of technology and ideas that will determine whose electrical system will power the new century. Backed by J.P. Morgan, Edison dazzles the world by lighting Manhattan, but Westinghouse, aided by Nikola Tesla, sees fatal flaws in Edison’s direct current design. A well documented movie; **Melody Maker**- this outstanding, well researched and produced documentary chronicles the inner workings of the writers, editors and photographers of England’s premier music magazine, **Melody Maker** over its 50+ year existence. The magazine launched the careers of many well known acts. Well ladies and gents, that’s all for this month. Until next issue, please keep making, listening & supporting beautiful music. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY LIBRA, STAY IN BALANCE**. Stay safe. **Happy Halloween?** Thanks for reading.

--Compiled by Brian O.

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# Unnamed Colors

by Brian M. Owens

Fronted by the noteworthy vocals and songwriting of Sienna Partlan coupled to inventive playing from her bandmates Andrew Aghababian on guitar, Michael Martel on bass and Jay Partlan on drums, Unnamed Colors are a breathe of fresh air on the current Boston music scene. Extending the boundaries of the pop-rock idiom as we know it, this creative quartet is incorporating flavors of jazz, rock and pop to create an intriguing, contemporary sound all their own. I reached out to the band and they weighed in on their collective story and the music behind them.

**METRONOME: How long has Unnamed Colors been together?**

Sienna Partlan: About seven years.

**METRONOME: Who's currently in the band?**

Andrew Aghababian is on guitar, Jay Partlan plays drums, Michael Martel is on bass and myself on vocals and keyboard.

**METRONOME: How did you all meet?**

Sierra: Andrew and I met as students at UMass Amherst playing in a rock band together. That band broke up, but we continued on as a duo and have been writing and performing together ever since (now as husband and wife). Jay, who is my father, had been a longtime drummer and started adding drum parts to our songs. He soon joined up permanently to form Unnamed Colors. Michael and I had known each other through mutual friends since high school days. Michael came to a show one day, and asked if the trio was looking for a bass player. He joined a practice and tried out some bass parts on a few of our songs, and that was that.

**METRONOME: What was the game plan when forming Unnamed Colors- live act? Recording band?**

Michael: Though recording was always in our heads as a long-term goal, we tend to craft our music with live performance in mind. If we

were forced to pick between stage and studio, it would have to be the stage.

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

Sierra: The name Unnamed Colors comes from a line in one of our songs. The full line is, "Whirls of inspiration flutter through you in a wild rage, like unnamed colors in peaceful shades."

**METRONOME: Who are some of the musical acts that inspire you?**

Andrew: I'm inspired by great composition and songwriting.

Michael: Do Make Say Think, Pink Floyd, Yes, Jethro Tull, Tool, Feist, The Mars Volta, Sigur Rós...

Sierra: There are just so many. I don't think I can name just a few, so I'll just say, what tends to inspire me most in music is honesty, depth, expressive composition, and thoughtful lyrics.

Jay: The kinds of bands that have always

inspired me are ones that truly love playing their own music, and give it to the audience in a way that makes them feel like part of it.

**METRONOME: How many albums have you released?**

Sierra: We released our first and only album to date in June of 2020.

**METRONOME: Who are the principal songwriters for the band?**

Sierra: Andrew and I are the principal songwriters for this band. Everyone writes their own instrument parts to develop the arrangements.

**METRONOME: How does the songcrafting work for you? Observational? Personal? Off-The-Wall?**

Andrew: Sierra and I do a lot of writing individually, but it is often a collaborative effort as well. We're always sharing ideas, whether it's a finished song or a chord progression/melody/riff.

**METRONOME: Sierra, what inspired you**

**to be a singer?**

Sierra: I grew up in a family of musicians where music was part of daily life. My mom is a singer/songwriter and her music inspired me from a young age. I started making up my own songs when I was little, then writing more seriously when I was a teenager. The feeling of connecting through creative expression is what inspires me to sing.

**METRONOME: How long have you been singing?**

Sierra: As long as I can remember.

**METRONOME: Andrew, how long have you been playing guitar?**

Andrew: I played drums for many years, but always had an interest in guitar. I started playing guitar seriously in 2009, shortly before I met Sierra and we began writing and performing together.

**METRONOME: What kind of guitars do you play?**

Andrew: My main guitars are all made by Karge in Amesbury, MA. I've been fortunate enough to work with Randy Springis (founder/owner) on several T-style guitars - the perfect blend of vintage and modern.

**METRONOME: Michael, who are some of your favorite bass players?**

Michael: Esperanza Spalding, Tal Wilkenfeld, Mitski, Les Claypool, Chris Squire, Jaco Pastorius, Stanley Clarke, Victor Wooten, Mohini Dey and Aimee Mann.

**METRONOME: When did you start playing?**

Michael: I started seriously playing bass when I was in college. I had many jam buddies with guitars and other instruments, but no basses. Naturally, it was my job to fill the void.

**METRONOME: Jay, what made you want to be a drummer?**

Jay: The relationship between melodic, rhythmic and dynamic elements of music drew me to the drums which, though obviously rhythmic, can be tuned and



played to express melodic content as well.

As a teenager, it always seemed like drummers had fun. I took instruction from Eddie Nicholas, a jazz and rock drummer who could make the drum set in his studio sing. I wanted to do that.

I listen to the music of drummers like Joe Morello, John Bonham, Steve Gadd, Billy Cobham, Gene Krupa, Neil Peart, and other players of widely varying styles.

**METRONOME: What kind of kit do you play?**

Jay: For larger venues I play a 70's era 9-ply German Sonor rosewood kit. For shows in smaller spaces, I'm playing a Yamaha Stage Custom five piece 6-ply natural birch set. I augment the high end with a rack of three Roto Toms.

For the recording of Be Where I Am, I combined the two kits for a wide range of tuned toms that works for our music. I recorded the drums wide open without any added reverb or other effects.

**METRONOME: You have a new album out called Be Where I Am. How long did it take to record?**

Sierra: From the time we started recording to the time it was released, about a year.

**METRONOME: How many songs are on it?**

Sierra: Seven.

**METRONOME: Where did you record the project?**

Sierra: We started at The Halo Studio



in Portland, Maine where we laid down the drum, bass, and lead vocal tracks. The piano track was recorded at Futura Productions in Roslindale, MA. on their beautiful in-house full grand. We finished up with tracking backing vocals and guitars at Chillhouse Studio in Charlestown, MA. where the album was also mixed and mastered.

**METRONOME: Who engineered?**

Sierra: Will Holland at Chillhouse Studio

in Charlestown, MA, Travis Karpak at Futura in Roslindale, and Kevin Billingslea at The Halo in Portland, Maine.

**METRONOME: Did you incorporate any unusual instrumentation for the record?**

Sierra: No, nothing unusual.

**METRONOME: When was the official release date for Be Where I Am?**

Sierra: It was this year, June 12, 2020.

**METRONOME: What inspired the name for the record?**

Sierra: There are themes of empathy and connection woven throughout the album. "Be Where I Am" is the title of one of the tracks, and it felt like a good title for the album as a whole.

**METRONOME: Did anyone else play on the recording?**

Sierra: No. Just the four of us.

**METRONOME: How often did the band play live before Covid hit?**

Sierra: Most weekends.

**METRONOME: With Covid pretty much shutting down live music, what have you been doing musically to stay sane?**

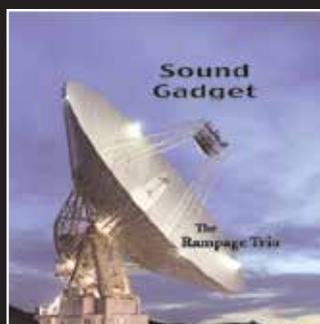
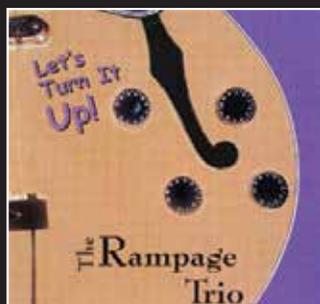
Sierra: During the time everything started shutting down, we were lucky that the album was in a place where all the tracking was done and we could finish it up remotely. We were able to release it on schedule in June despite the pandemic.

Other than the album, we've done some live streams and some impromptu outdoor driveway concerts just for fun. Behind the scenes, there's always songwriting in progress.

**METRONOME: Where can people find out more about Unnamed Colors on the internet?**

Andrew: At our website: [www.unnamedcolors.com](http://www.unnamedcolors.com), our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/UnnamedColorsBand](https://www.facebook.com/UnnamedColorsBand) or on Instagram: @unnamedcolors. You can find the album on Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music and YouTube Music.

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