

(top) The Double Door Inn, mid-1970s
photo courtesy of THE DOUBLE DOOR INN ARCHIVES

(bottom right) Eric Clapton with the
Legendary Blues Band, June 24, 1982
photo PAT SHANKLIN/DOUBLE DOOR INN ARCHIVES

(bottom left) Leon Russell, 1998
photo DANIEL COSTON



Farewell to ...

The Double Door Inn

By Daniel Coston

An old house sits at 218 Charlottetowne Avenue, just across from Central Piedmont Community College. When the building that has housed The Double Door Inn was first built in 1911, those that built the house could not have imagined the life that the place would have. Originally built as a residence on a dirt road, several blocks from the hospital that dwarfed the neighborhood in those early days, the house went through many changes. As did the city that it looked out over. In time, it would be a home, a business, a clothing store. Its neighbors would first include Central High, then Charlotte College (now UNC-Charlotte), and later, Central Piedmont Community College.

By 1973, the area around the home was changing. A series of small shops littered around the CPCC area. They included Cronosynclasticinfidibulum, one of Charlotte's first headshops, which sat next to the house on what is now 218 Charlottetowne. After being a clothing store for a while, the house sat empty for some time, until two brothers saw it as a place to attract locals and college students.

Nick Karres and Matthew Karres opened The Double Door Inn on December 22, 1973. They had been looking to open a bar for some time. Their father was not thrilled with their sons' idea, but he supported them financially, and took some of the first ever photos of The Double Door's interior. The brothers named the venue for its double

doored entrance, not realizing that a music venue in Chicago had the exact name. But music was not in the brothers' plan in those early days. "The college bar you've been waiting for," proclaimed their hand-drawn early ads. They hoped to draw college students, and folks from the nearby Stanleyville (now part of Elizabeth) neighborhood.

In the early 1970s, music venues in Charlotte were at a low ebb. Larger venues such as Phantasmagoria had been driven out of business, and only a few bars provided live music. Slowly, musicians came into The Double Door asking for a place to play. Originally, Nick and Matthew set acoustic musicians in the game room area of the club. Over time, musicians helped Nick and Matthew build a stage near the front of the venue. Just in time for the Dixie Dregs to show up, and throw the venue's focus into another place.

According to who tells the story, a couple of regulars at The Double Door happened to offer a ride to two long-haired men that were hitchhiking from the airport. It turned out to be Steve Morse and one other member of the Rock band Dixie Dregs, who were on their way to Reliable Music. When the musicians inquired as to where they should play in Charlotte, they replied, "The Double Door Inn." The band promptly booked two nights at The Double Door, and to their credit, the Karres brothers pulled off a show on a scale that they had never attempted before. At the end of the second night, Morse gave Nick

Karres a list of 12 bands that he said needed a place to play between Washington and Atlanta. And until January 3rd of 2017, The Double Door Inn has never stopped.

"I have been playing at The Double Door since 1979 and I will always think of the dozens of gigs, hundreds of songs, and every good time I had in that club. I watched friendships, romances, and endless good times there for 2 generations. The sound of my guitar will echo in that spot forever, even after it's gone."

— Bob Margolin

"The Double Door is where we grew up as a band. The first few gigs were spotty appearances, separated by a year or so. The Double Door became our home, where we tried out new material, and when Jamie joined the band, where we tried out originals. I love memories of the place being so packed, you couldn't move, everyone smiling and singing back at us. I always stood on the same spot (the one I still stand on now), and I can almost feel my footprint today. I loved watching Cruise-O-matic. I loved the Skip Castro band a lot. We never had a bad gig; the crowds always pushed us to do our best."

— Steve Stoeckel
(The Spongetones, Jamie & Steve)

"For 40 years, every single group I've been involved with has played at The Double Door Inn. It has been the longest running gig I've had, and the countless musical moments we have all experienced on that stage will never be replaced or forgotten. Though the cast of characters has changed many times through the decades, there was always a feeling of stability that Nick and the staff provided. Just knowing it was there was comforting. Thank you, Nick. Save me a brick! My last note on that stage was filled with as much joy as the first one!"

— Jimmy Thackery
(The Nighthawks, The Assassins, The Drivers)

The Double Door established itself as one of the few places for blues music in the Southeast. Along with the national touring acts that filled the calendar, the Karres brothers never forgot that they were a Charlotte music venue. When The Spongetones began to coalesce in 1980, they immediately made The Double Door their primary home. That would be same for The Belmont Playboys, Extraordinaires, Lou Ford and a host of local bands through the 1980s and 1990s.

The Double Door Inn also established itself as what Nick referred to as a "turnkey venue." A venue where acts could build up a fanbase and come back to Charlotte in larger venues. When Stevie Ray Vaughn first played the venue in 1979, it was mostly emp-

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ty. When he returned for his third and final show there in 1982, the line was out the door.

Another artist showed up at The Double Door Inn that same year. Harmonica player Jerry Portnoy was friends with Eric Clapton. Portnoy and the Legendary Blues Band, made up of former members of Muddy Waters' band, had done some recording with Clapton. Portnoy and Clapton agreed that in return for recording, Clapton would guest one night with the band, so that the band could use it in their promotion.

Clapton was basing his summer U.S. tour out of Charlotte in 1982. The Legendary Blues Band set up a show at The Double Door Inn. Everything was set, and Clapton did not show. Plans were then tentatively made to have Clapton guest with the band in Memphis that Thursday. Soon after, the venue in Memphis closed, and the band needed another venue on that night. They called Nick Karres. Nick agreed to have a local band that was booked for that night, featuring Bill Noonan and Dillard Richardson, play a first set, and then have the Legendary Blues Band play the second set, unannounced. Clapton showed up with his whole band in tow, and after watching the band play for some time, took to the stage for five songs, and an encore. How many people were actually there that night? It's hard to say. Maybe we all were there, at least emotionally.

"I spent a spring, summer and fall of Saturday nights and sometimes Fridays there in 1996. I went with a friend once and just kept going back on my own. I felt welcomed and comfortable and, of course, the music was great. In October of that year, I met my husband there, and we were married the following June. We are still in love and will always give the DDI the credit for bringing us together. Hope to be there on the 8th for a final goodbye."

— Caryl Williams Mitchell

"I went the night it opened. For the first several years, we'd go back and forth to the Road House next door. The best show I saw was in the early '80s when the Turtles played. They played a two and a half hour song that included all their hits along with the great humor/sarcasm that only Flo & Eddie could deliver! I've seen/played in many bands there. I remember all the duct tape on the shag carpet on the stage."

— Mike Long

"Spent many Sunday nights there with the Federal Bureau of Rock-N-Roll. Also remember seeing Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown."

— Steve Davidson

"March 19, 2003. Sea of Cortez's first show. U.S. initiates war with Iraq. Airstrikes on Baghdad were on the TV as we played. Rodney gave an impassioned speech about world peace and the ingredients of a 'perfect burrito.'"

— Tylerius Baum

"August 23, 1991 at The Double Door Inn. Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks show was when I met Neil Elam. We like to say that he slurred at me and I slurred back and the rest is history. We were married on March 19th, 1994."

— Laura Fortson Elam

"I was at The Double Door the week of operation desert storm to get Iraq out of Kuwait. The Spongetones were playing and, as usual, were great. You could tell there was a bit of anxiety. After all, our last military action before that was Vietnam and therefore there was fear we might be making a colossal mistake. In the middle of the show, just as they were about to play Under My Thumb by the Stones, a patron screamed 'F___ Saddam Hussein.' A big roar erupted."

— George Walker

"By far the most important DD gigs of my life hands-down was the very first gig there when I was asked to be a member of The Spongetones. I had wanted to be in this band since I'd heard about the combination of players and the material they did — British Invasion from the '60s and early '70s! I saw them on several of their early (three or four) gigs 'pre-me' and *wanted in badly!* The rest is 'our history' together. It's been a wonderful marriage. Still together too!"

"A side but Important-to-me DD related memory: Alan Kaufman and I had just finished a recording session with Mark Williams at Bob Davis studios in Charlotte — a Christmas 45 for Thomas Moore. Allen said to me, 'Let's head over to The Double Door — there's something I want you to know about.' When I got there, the band was on break. I walked over to say hello to Pat Walters. Pat said, 'Hey Jaimie — our guitarist Keith Brooks is leaving the band and well ... hey, You're in!' I nearly fell over. My dreams had just come true. I'm still living the dream! Alan knew all the time ... :-)"

— Jamie Hoover

"My first night at The Double Door Inn was when my boyfriend took me to see Arhooly in the mid-'80s. I was instantly hooked on the band, the blues, and The Double Door Inn. He also gave me a camera, which turned into a hobby of taking many, many pictures of regional and international bands who came through the DDI" Luther Allison, Lonnie & Ronnie Brooks, Deana Bogart, Maria Muldaur, Joanna Connor, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Leon Russell and many more! To this day, going to The Double Door Inn never gets old!"

— Rita Miller

"Truly Dangerous Swamp Band!!! They played for our deb party in 1987 but we had first seen them at the 'dirty floor,' as we called it!"

— Marty Viser Clontz

"I also have great memories from the early days: Arhooly, Federal Bros, then Fred Eaglesmith in the middle years, but one of my favs was Pegi Young and the Survivors — with Spooner Oldham and Rick the Bass Player Rosas. I had a drink with Rick at the bar in the restaurant next door and got a selfie. The night was topped off by having my pic taken with Pegi."

— Gary Black

"Met my husband Jem Crossland there ... his first trip to the U.S...at a Belmont Playboys show ... and ... he learned about tipping your bartender!"

— Lauren Crossland

Through 43 years, The Double Door has seen a lot of changes. Over time, the venue became the second oldest blues music venue in the United States and oldest on this side of the Mississippi River. The only one that is older is Antone's, in Austin, TX, which has been renovated a number of times. About the only physical things that have changed over those 43 years are the removal of the old clothing store display on the second floor, and the bathrooms that were added in the early 1990s. But the people, the music, the Dirty Floor — as it was sometimes known — remained.

I first went to The Double Door Inn in 1994. It was part of a Sunday night meeting of a local video and film group. I soon left the video group, but I started going regularly to the venue over the next two years. By the late 1990s, The Double Door started hosting an Americana Night on Tuesday nights, for the regional and national acts that were playing country, rock and folk music during that time. There was no other series like that in Charlotte back then. How many bands that I still listen to, work with, am friends with, still connected to, that I saw in that series? Thankfully, too many to count. A Tuesday night there also led you to shows on Friday and Saturday night. To the All-Stars on Monday night. One great show and night led to the next.

The shows I saw there? Levon Helm with the Barn Burners. Alejandro Escovedo with a string section. Leon Russell, with a set-up that was bigger than The Double Door stage. More Lou Ford shows that many of us can remember, for different reasons. David Childers, with a young Concord band called the Avett Brothers opening? Pinetop Perkins. Nappy Brown. Hubert Sumlin. Thankfully, my camera was with me for all these adventures. I never thought that I would be looking at these photos, and thinking, "I'm glad that I documented this while they, and the building was there." It was life. My life, my friends' lives. The Double Door was part of our collective life adventure.

Nick Karres introduced me to Debby Wallace, with whom I co-wrote the first edition of The Double Door book. She needed a photographer for an interview she was doing with Nick, and Nick called me from his office. Somehow I happened to be home when Nick called, and then drove to The Double Door. Later that day, Debby said that she always wanted to write a book on the history of The Double Door, and I immediately told her that she should, and that I would help her. I wanted to see that story told, and in print. The fact that I was the one involved with the book was almost happenstance. I wanted to see it happen, so I helped to bring it to fruition. When Debby passed away a month about publication, I became the person that carried the book's story on. Through a second edition in 2014, and a third and final edition next year. Because the story deserves to be told, and I still believe in it. Whether the building is standing or not. And regardless of my involvement with the book, I am like many that hold the venue in a special place in my heart. The story of The Double Door is the story of many of us, all in love with the dream that the venue allowed us to have.

"Been going to The Double Door Inn since about 1981. Been booking bands there since 1991. Have seen countless great concerts at The Double Door, as well as booked countless great musicians there, the likes of Jimmy Thackery, Johnny 'Clyde' Copeland, Walter Trout, Tinsley Ellis, Tab Benoit, Chubby Carrier & The Bayou Swamp Band, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Chris Duarte, Curtis Salgado, Eric Gales and Kenny Neal, just to name a few. The Double Door has been a Charlotte Institution since 1973, a place where all true music fans go to get their fix. She will surely be missed when she's gone! Nick Karres, the owner of The Double Door since day one has ALWAYS been a welcoming soul and someone who I love doing business with and will miss dearly. It gives me comfort in knowing I will still know where and how to find him! I wish Nick all the best that Life can bring to him and his family! Thanks for all the memories!"

— Rick Booth

(President/owner Intrepid Artists Int'l)

"I've been playing The Double Door Inn since 1979, which is basically when I started my life as a touring musician. Nick has stuck with me through every band change (Alley Cats, Heartfixers, Tinsley Ellis) and through every band personnel change. Never once did he criticize the 'new band guy' or compare him to the previous one. He knew it would work itself out over time. And it always does when you're in it for the long haul.

"Nick's been like a big brother to me when I needed advice, whether it be personal or professional in nature. His staff has been like siblings to me. And you know how siblings can be!

"I'll really miss The Double Door and The Double Door family. I wish someone would put the building on a flatbed truck, drive it slowly through the city streets in the middle of the night, and plop it down somewhere."

— Tinsley Ellis

(The Double Door Inn musician, 1979-2016)

"When my brother Matt and I started The Double Door, we wanted to provide a place for young people to go. We didn't realize that the live music thing was going to happen, but when we did, we committed ourselves to bringing the best music we could to Charlotte. There were many styles of music — reggae, Zydeco and others — that were introduced to people at our club. We committed ourselves to doing that for as long as we could.

"Thank you to all of the people over the years who supported us. Thank you to all of the entertainers and customers over the years who have passed on, and thank you to all of the entertainers who have come in and graced our stage and played hard. They gave great shows. and they gave it their all."

— Nick Karres

It is sad to see The Double Door go. There is no easier way to say it. Its loss has been one of the few things over my 33 years in Charlotte that made me question why I am still living here. And when it goes, an era of Charlotte will go. Once again, this city talks about preserving what little history we have left, and then we don't. That being said, Nick Karres and The Double Door staff, many of whom have been with the venue for over 30 to 40 years, have given us the chance to go out with grace, and the chance to come to terms with the loss.

The documentation of life is often the attempt to capture or speak to the experiences that we are having. With a pen, with a camera. With a thought or a scribble on the upstairs green room wall. When it all is said and done, I'm glad I was there, and I'm glad that so many of you were also. And for those who never walked through The Double Door Inn, I will always say, I wish you had been.

Thank you, Nick, Thank you, Matt. Thank you, everyone.

Long live The Double Door Inn.



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I DID THE THING

Volunteering for the Democratic party

by Cindy Sites-Wooley

To put it bluntly, I am lazy and not overly fond of talking to people I don't know, so volunteering isn't usually my thing. Given a choice between volunteering and donating, I'd always prefer to give a few bucks to the cause. In the 2016 election, I did both for the first time. From September through Election Day I summoned up more courage than I thought I possessed to put in the work for Democrats up and down the ballot every weekend. It had never felt more crucial to me before.

On the first day I was given a list of people to call for volunteer recruiting, which I thought would be the hardest thing I was willing to do. I've worked in jobs where I've had to answer phone calls, and those were stressful, but at least in those situations people actually chose to talk to me. As it happened, most of the people on my list didn't answer their phones, and if anyone we talked to wasn't supportive of our efforts then we didn't have to try convincing them.

That first day I talked to a woman whose ex-husband was the one I was calling for, and although she was disappointed that I wasn't a bill collector coming after him, she was interested in becoming a volunteer herself. It was by far the most entertaining phone conversation I had, and I succeeded in recruiting someone who wasn't even on the list.

The third weekend I volunteered, Asheville native Bellamy Young from the TV show *Scandal* came by the office to fire up the troops before phone banking. A TV cameraman was there to shoot some footage and to briefly interview Bellamy for the evening news. I got my photo taken with Bellamy and if you didn't blink, you could see the top of my head on the news that night as I stood behind one other person in line to meet her.

One weekend I was asked to register voters — finally, the thing that I had most wanted to do. All I had to do was stand outside the Savers grocery store on Sunset Road one afternoon to ask passersby if they were registered to vote at their current address. If they said yes, I handed them the clipboard and helped them if they had questions. It was simple, but the most rewarding and important task of all. Out of dozens of people, do you know who was happy to see me? It was not my fellow white people, who hurried past me while avoiding eye contact. (Based on the results, I can guess how they might have voted.) The vast majority of the customers entering and leaving the store were people of color. Some were in a hurry, but none were rude and nearly all were fired up, already registered, and thanked me for what



I was doing. Most of them already knew why I was there ("I knew there wouldn't be any other reason a white lady would be standing out here with a clipboard," one woman joked, and we both had a good laugh). In the end, only a couple of people needed to update their address. No one got testy with me.

The most difficult thing I did, and one of the hardest things I've done in my life, was knocking on doors. It was the last thing I wanted to do when I signed up to volunteer, but one weekend it was needed. That Sunday in mid-October felt like August. Alone, I trudged up and down an apartment complex parking lot and many flights of stairs to knock on doors, knowing that these people wouldn't want to be bothered. Out of about three dozen doors, only one person who answered the door was actually on the list. I stumbled through my script, but at least she was a Hillary supporter who was already planning to vote early. Most of the doors I knocked on, no one answered. One door was marked with what appeared to be an eviction notice. Out of those who answered their doors, several were confused and annoyed. Mercifully, I wasn't asked to do that again. Taking rejection face to face is harder,

and I never knew if someone would get belligerent or even violent.

I went back to phone banking for the last three weekends of the campaign, plus Election Day itself. The phone banking moved to a private home, as other groups of volunteers needed to use the campaign office. In those three weeks I had more conversations with other volunteers and organizers. Most of the organizers were young law students, diverse in gender and ethnicity, while nearly all of the volunteers were older women of color. On the last weekend before the election, there was a group of volunteers who flew from the UK to help—a sign of how invested other parts

of the world are. They were young Labour Party members. Everyone was friendly but determined, and we were cautiously optimistic. Right now I can't let myself think about how that felt, because it's painful when I see what's on the horizon.

No matter how much work I put in, I felt I could have done more. A part of me feels like it was all for nothing, but I know it would have been worse if I sat at home and we lost. I would have to live with a sense of regret on top of this devastation that I now feel.

Another part of me knows that I grew as a person. Just being able to do those things is a huge accomplishment. Every evening after I volunteered I drove home elated, the buzz of enthusiasm still carrying me. By the time I got home I'd need to be alone in front of the TV to recuperate. I'm an introvert with chronic pain, so it took a lot out of me, but it didn't stop me from showing up to every shift I signed up for.

I anticipated each weekend with both anxiety (my natural resting state, only this time with an external cause) and determination. Even though it wasn't easy and I wanted to be lazy, I wasn't going to give up. It felt like I was making a difference, and the sense of

camaraderie was motivational. There were also some would-be volunteers who never show up for whatever reason, and I wanted to pick up some of their slack. My organizer, the most mature 20-year-old I've ever met, told me that I was his "super volunteer," one of the most committed. And to think I thought I wasn't doing enough.

In the last days, everyone I called was sick of getting phone calls. Part of the reason voters get so many calls is that every organization — parties, PACs, organizations like the Human Rights Coalition — has its own list and they aren't cross-referenced. You might get a call from the party's coordinated campaign (which is who I volunteered for) one day, and then another from a group like the one that the Daily Kos website put together, and so on. One woman shouted at me that she had gotten multiple calls a day, several hung up, and one begged to know if there was a do-not-call list. On Election Day, a man answered his wife's phone and wouldn't let me talk to her. "I'm not interested," he said. Not "she," but himself. I hope that man doesn't screen all of his wife's calls, and I hope she voted how she wanted to. Most people were still determined, and one man was already in line when I called him on Election Day. Another woman was about to head out the door.

The best thing that happened was on my first day. I was sitting in the campaign office, waiting for my list of numbers to call, when a young couple walked through the door. In an Irish lilt the woman said they were on their way to the airport to fly home to Ireland, and they wanted a badge for a souvenir. The organizers couldn't find one, but I owned two and had been thinking about what to do with the spare that was in my bag. There could never be a better use for it, so I gave it to the woman. I hope that little blue Clinton-Kaine badge found a good home across the Atlantic.

Even though Hillary lost, there's still more fighting to do and not every battle I fought in was lost. Roy Cooper may yet unseat our local nemesis, Pat McCrory, in the governor's race (assuming Pat doesn't just keep challenging everything about it forever). Jeff Jackson will return to fight on in the NC Senate. John Autry will move from Charlotte City Council to the NC House. Judge Michael Morgan won his race for North Carolina Supreme Court. Alma Adams and her many fabulous hats will return to the House of Representatives. The things that I learned about campaigning will stick with me as I get ready to do it again the next time there's a candidate who needs my help.

Based on what I've seen, help will always be needed again and the world is watching.

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Well ... damn.

When highfaluting people look back on 2016, they will describe this year as Charlotte's Annus Horribilis. The Queen City's horrible year, and the year that our big city aspirations came crashing down. For the rest of us, 2016 will be Charlotte's great year of all around suckdom. This year sucked so bad in Charlotte, people all over the world looked at us and said, "Damn, that sucks." CNN came through and said, "They had riots here, and not in Tulsa? Damn, this place sucks." Aliens riding on asteroids headed towards earth saw how bad things were around here, and said, "Damn, it sucks there. Let's crash elsewhere," and kept going.

It all started so well. All of our Christmas-es came at once in the NFC championship. The Panthers scored so many touchdowns, they were too exhausted to score any in the Super Bowl, and the following season. And the hits have kept on coming since. Becoming the role model of how one law can kill millions of dollars, jobs and how the global market will view us for years to come. It was so bad, South Carolina looked at us and said, "Man. Pat McCrory, Dan Bishop. What do you have against the town you live in? We're freaking South Carolina, and even we aren't going there with this."

Then there was the loss of the Double Door Inn, the Common Market, and more Panther wankiness. The Grim Reaper drinking way too much vodka and Red Bull, and taking way too many good people with him. Then the police went and shot somebody, and people got really pissed off. The Mayor (or specifically, the mayor's Twitter-happy corporate communications department, otherwise known as Millennials Gone Wild) has thrown the police chief under the bus so many times, Chief Putney needs to run for school board chair, because he's seen the underside of more school buses than any-

one in Charlotte. And what good came from it all? A lot of screaming, a lot of broken glass, and a lot of finger-pointing that all seems to point to a giant circle of blame. And just when you think that Charlotte has done sucking, the Panthers blow another game, and there's a human blob named Donald Trump that's coming into the White House. Charlotte, you once thought that only McCrory and the state legislature exacerbated this suckiness. Guess what? Now, Trump and Congress will help 2017 suck even more.

As I said, this year really sucked. Have I mentioned that before?

Two months ago, we suggested that a revolution was brewing in Charlotte. Unfortunately, it was a revolution that was brewing around us, throughout the country. People want change, even if they don't know what change they want. And then they complain that the change that happens isn't the change that they wanted, even if they didn't know what they wanted in the first place. It's times like this that I'm glad that I have my offices in Bahrain. You should visit it sometime, if you're ever able to scale the wall around the United States.

As we say goodbye to 2016, we can't say goodbye to this year fast enough. With the exception of saying goodbye to the Double Door Inn. This, we wish, could go on forever. And the staff here at Tangents has tried to help with that long goodbye. The Double Door was founded on great music by great people. And, somewhere else in Charlotte, those stories and people will hopefully help Charlotte find things in 2017 that will not suck so bad, and help us find our way to a future that is better than what 2016 has been for many of us.

Here's to all of you, and hoping that your future won't suck. Too much.

— Dickie Typoe



Karla Holland
TheGorgonTransplant.wordpress.com

This Is Where the World Goes

We have fallen away from where we were
Walking forward in unison
has been turned away,
and the damage we left in our absences
has begun to take root,
in ourselves,
and in the ground.

Sides will be chosen, and we will separate ourselves
from those we once held dear.
Hands have acted out what we thought in anger
for a moment
and the ripples of emotion
has begun to pull the current at our feet.
We have tripped over the axes
that have cut us off from communication,
and where we were.

We will claim that others made the choices
and yes,
all those words were not your own
but the color of the aftermath
shades us all
clouds our memories
strains our judgment
more than the past ever thought
we would go.
Yet we will not allow ourselves
to repair the motions,
and leaving where we were
behind
is sometimes the hardest fall,
of all.

We are nearly there
to where we soon will be,
yet so far away
from where we were.

— Daniel Coston



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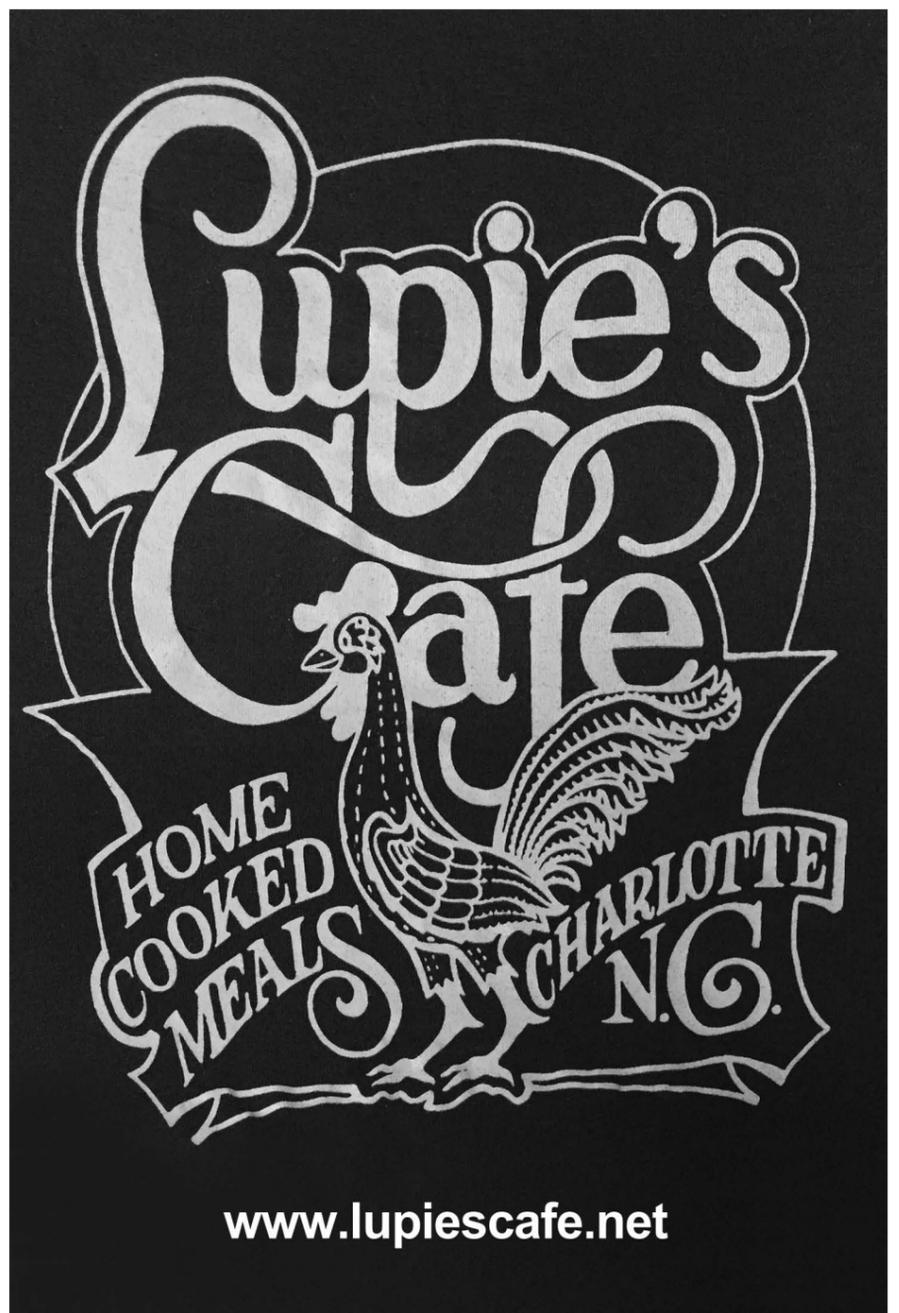
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JOINTS, DIVES & HANGOUTS

The Last Christmas Dinner

I never see you
in my dreams,
only
in my memories.
And in a moment,
as the first sight
of snow
begins to fall,
I can still see you,
all those years
in the past.

We all arrived
that night
for our Christmas dinner
in that nice restaurant,
before they tore
it all into
something else,
and turned it into
something you
wouldn't recognize.
The flocks of tour buses
that line their gates
now stumble
through the doors
in their praise,
but
you and I know
what they
really missed.

You sat
near the window,
backlit by the holiday,
where you can see us
all,
looking back
at you
with love
and guarded
optimism.
You believed
in the doctors
as much as
you believed
in us.
Did they fail you?
Did we fail you
for not trying
to change your
decision?

— Daniel Coston

Cigars + whiskey = bliss

by Lewd

On a good night, a blind man can tell exactly where he is when he walks by the unassuming, small white brick building at 9007 Monroe Road. The building is so small and unassuming, you might miss it as you drive around the bend. Fortunately, Cigars Etc. 2 has a cigar store Indian statue parked out front and a flashing red "open" sign that always seems to be on when you want it to be.

The original incarnation of the shop was in the Galleria Shopping Center down the street at Monroe Road and Sardis Road North. I stopped in once to check it out. It was just a typical cigar store. I never returned.

A few years later, I noticed that the new location had opened and stopped in to buy a cigar. I was sucked in by the atmosphere and the friendliness of the staff and customers.

At the current location, a cacophony of cigar smells smack you in the face before you even approach the door. But once inside, the air in the narrow, shotgun lounge is surprisingly smoke-free and clear. The ventilation system is very well-designed.

As you step inside, smiling patrons are watching a movie or sports on a widescreen television, chatting, or playing cards or dominoes. I learned of the glories of "John Wick" at Cigars Etc. 2.

Once you pass these happy campers, you will find a large humidor behind a sliding glass door to your left. Inside, you will encounter a huge variety of cigars. It can be quite intimidating. There are so many sizes, shapes and flavors to choose from.

If you linger there for more than a couple of minutes, one of the extremely friendly staff members will gladly help you pick the perfect cigar.

I recently witnessed a local cigar maker bringing his samples to the owner, so I know locally-made cigars are sold as well as the great international brands.

My cigar of choice for this report was a Nub 460 Madura. I like the Nubs because they are short and stout, and I may be able to finish one in a single sitting. They burn well too. The coffee flavors are to die for.

The bar and the cashier are on the right side of the lounge. There, you will encounter a respectable collection of liquor, beer and wine. Many cigar shops allow customers to bring their own alcohol, but as far as I know, this is the only one in the area that sells liquor. And that is why I come here!

I went for a Woodford Reserve ... neat. Lewd likes a glass of whiskey once in a while to mellow him out. And it complemented the cigar nicely.

Not sure of what you want? A member of the staff will happily make suggestions and offer free samples.

In the event that you imbibe a bit more than you expect, small bags of chips are for sale to help absorb the alcohol before you head on your way.

In the event that you happen to fall in love with this place and decide to become a regular, you need not worry about lugging around your favorite collection of cigars. Lockers are available to store your cigars or individual humidor for future visits.

If you are a newbie, you need not feel intimidated when you go to pay for your purchase. The cashier will give you tips on how to properly light your cigar. They will even offer to cut it and light it for you. And the best part is they will let you keep one of their high-powered lighters for the duration of your visit.

Heavy duty ashtrays are on all of the tables in front of cushy leather chairs and sofas. This is a place to take your time, sit back, relax and enjoy your purchase. It's yoga for gentlemen like me.

The atmosphere is laid-back and friendly. This definitely qualifies as one of the best joints, dives and hangouts in Charlotte.

There are often a good number of female patrons who love cigars as much as the men, and everyone there has an interesting story. I have met radio DJs, nurses, contractors and members of popular local bands there.

Just past the bar and the cashier is the DJ booth. During the day, you will probably be treated to some smooth R&B. In the evening, a DJ may be playing old school rap. The sound system is really good and is piped outside on the deck overlooking McAlpine Creek



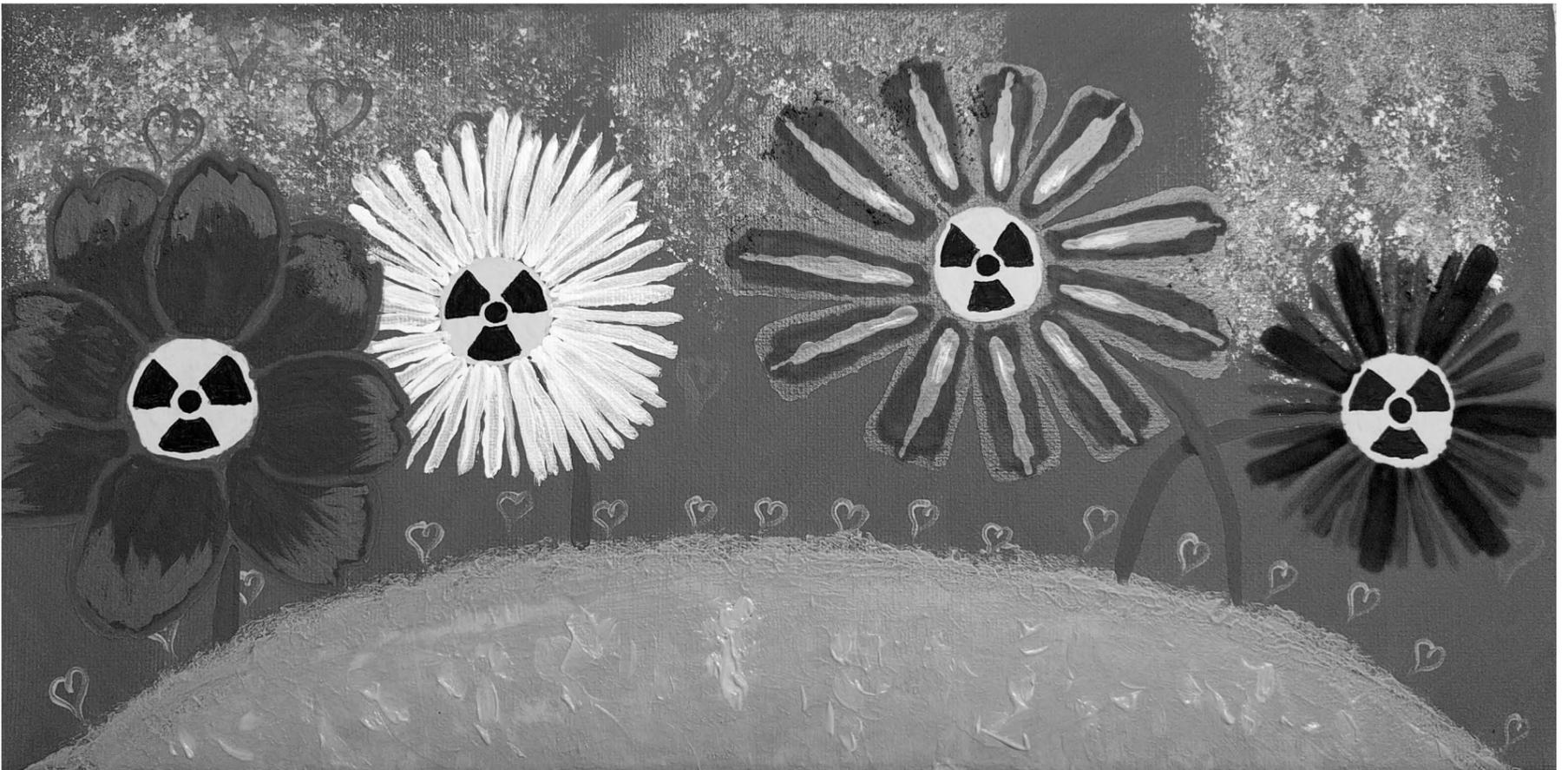
photo LEWD

Cigars Etc. 2

9007 Monroe Rd.
(704) 321-0342
www.facebook.com/CigarsEtc2

Park Greenway where you may see fauna scurrying by or a freight train rumbling past.

Every time I go to Cigars Etc. 2, they have made some improvement such as adding television screens, the DJ booth or game tables. I have been told that the owner is looking for a location in North Charlotte. I'm positive that will be a popular addition to that part of town. I look forward to seeing how this place continues to improve.



"Fallout Flowers" by Brian Trotter

MUSIC

Preoccupations veer from 'Anxiety' to 'Fever'

Formed as Viet Cong in 2012, the Canadian band released its debut in 2015 and changed its name to Preoccupations in 2016 following a minor controversy involving its initial moniker. Their follow-up eponymous album builds on their debut (also eponymous; if the members change the name again, perhaps they can release Eponymous 3!), further showcasing the band's ability to integrate noise, post-punk approaches, and quasi-improvisational drone jams into a cohesive gestalt. With the new album, the band additionally utilizes melodic and dream-pop elements, forging a multifaceted sound that may well appeal to a wide range of listeners.

The opening track, "Anxiety," begins with a trebly hum that swells portentously, conjuring images of sterile laboratories and robot sentinels standing about with automatic rifles. At approximately one minute into the song, Matt Flegel establishes the lyrical tone of the album, invoking "a nightmare so cryptic and incomprehensible." However, as we're drawn into an inhospitable sonic cosmos a la Spectres, Swans, or Hookworms, as well as Orwell's 1984, melodic flourishes surface that wouldn't be out of place in a Joy Division, Broken Bells, or TV on the Radio recording. Throughout the song, regardless of instrumental fluctuations in tone and volume, the vocal remains constrained, even monotonous, occasionally reminiscent of Iggy Pop.

The album builds on the foundational hybridizations accomplished on the first track, a dynamic blend of avant garde, noise, and dream-pop elements. The second track highlights Mike Wallace's electronic-sounding drums, a storm of swirling and concentric atmospheres, and a vocal that reminds

me of Kiss Me-era Robert Smith or "Berlin Trilogy"-Bowie. With the third track, "Zodiac," Flegel channels Richard Butler of the Psychedelic Furs, the band's mechanized rhythms and synthesized subtleties cresting over his vocal.

The long track, "Memory," is a more focused study of noise, industrial rhythms, and dream-pop melodies. The instrumental segment is exemplary post-punk / art-punk, reminiscent of a jam you might hear at a Cloud Nothings show and illustrating Preoccupations' absorption and recasting of such bands as Television and Sonic Youth as well as noise-pop pioneers My Bloody Valentine and The Jesus and Mary Chain.

The closing song's synthesized and hooky instrumental progression is exemplary late '70s/early '80s Brit-pop a la Human League or Duran Duran. Concurrently a metallic ambience transports the song into prog-industrial realms, the piece ending with the repeated lyric: "You're not scared / carry your fever away from here." In this way, the album follows a thematic or conceptual arc, albeit represented sonically (lyrically to a lesser degree); the contained and paralytic "Anxiety" segueing into the explorative stases and flux of the middle tracks, the set culminating with the sober but still transcendent "Fever."

To be widely influenced, yet to absorb and reconfigure these influences in such a way as to assert a unique or signature style is itself an art. With their sophomore release, Preoccupations offer a multilayered synthesis of some of the finer moments of rock music's past, creatively navigating the relationship between derivation and originality.

— John Amen



Discovering '70s English/Irish folk rock band Steeleye Span

After years of a steady diet of indie rock and garage rock, I've become what some would consider heresy. Over the last two years, I've become a full-fledged English folk/rock fan. Fairport Convention, Incredible String Band, Trees, Heron and many more that you can readily find on Youtube. But none captured my attention more than the legendary British band Steeleye Span.

Last spring, I was driving home, and the band's "Parcel of Rogues" came on XM's folk channel. Its lyrics were written in 1707 as an anti-English song of rebellion and lament. It is all a capella group vocals save for a mournful bass drum and an amazing double-tracked violin solo that brings it all home. I sat in my car, unable to turn it off. Soon after, I found "Parcel of Rogues" on the 1972 album of the same name, and I was hooked.

Steeleye Span formed in 1969 after founder Ashley Hutchings left Fairport Convention fresh off of that band's classic album "Liege and Lief." Pairing with the duo of Maddy Prior and Tim Hart, the band was a true experiment, marrying English and Irish folk music to a more electric rock sound. Several members have come and gone including Hutchings, who left after three

albums to form the heralded Albion Band. But Steeleye has always seemed resilient, even scoring a top ten hit in 1975 with the folk/rock hybrid "All Around My Hat." But it's their more traditional, harmony-based songs that always draw me back, like a voice that I have heard all of my life.

What is it about any creative endeavor that draws you in? What makes you like something that you used to be afraid of at Renaissance festivals? Sometimes you can't question it, you can only go with what you like. I drove six and a half hours to see the current lineup play last year, and to have the band sign my copy of "Parcel of Rogues." While I personally would've liked to have heard the band play more of the songs I knew from the early '70s the band has continued making music, evolving from the ideas that originally drove their ideas, which is something that all should hope to do after forty years of anything.

The signed copy of "Parcel of Rogues" sits proudly on my desk next to my autographed Sonics album and my signed Rutles CD. See, all of this music can live together, in harmony.

— Daniel Coston

Colours

What you showed me was not what you told me when you asked me to sing "Jesus Loves the Little Children" — red, yellow, black, white — a notable exception of brown. You told me of a rainbow but not a rainbow flag. You showed me Jerusalem on a map, but not Yerushalayim. Nor did you tell me of the brown blood in our own veins, not enough to see in my face, but enough that I wish you wanted it to show.

— Cindy Sites-Wooley

Safety Pin

We move in bubbles but they can pop with a safety pin I wonder if we can hold them

Together against the breaking surface tension and I hope you believe

You're safe with me

— Cindy Sites-Wooley

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MUSIC

Lee McCorkle wants to recreate the music industry

For over 20 years, Lee McCorkle has been pounding the power pop pavement in Charlotte. After years of working with other musicians and getting a degree in anthropology, McCorkle has returned with his original bandmates for a new album and new plans for the future.

McCorkle stopped in via email to talk to Daniel Coston about his new record, the new record after that, and what happened on the way to now.

TANGENTS: What made you want to be a musician?

LEE MCCORKLE: My father gave me an acoustic guitar when I was 5. My mom and I used to listen to beach music and '50s music in the car. Around the time of Billy Joel's "Saturday Night Live" appearance performing "It's Still Rock and Roll to Me" ... I knew I was in all the way.

I played guitar and ukulele early on, but I wasn't very good. It wasn't until I picked up the bass that I started singing.

I would spend hours in my room listening to music and couldn't really learn the songs, so I started to write my own tunes. I am really a product of the late '70s and

early '80s new wave. My music today has that influence.

TANGENTS: Describe the Charlotte music scene then compared to now.

MCCORKLE: The music scene here has kinda come full circle. I was coming into the scene in the Ronald Reagan era when we all went to The Milestone and whatever club popped up at the time. Corporate America didn't really give a shit about our generation. They were all about the money. We were all about the passion and experiences.

I can't say Charlotte has ever really had a sound. It could be one of the reasons this town never really blew up like an Athens or Seattle.

Now The Milestone and Snug Harbor are where underground music goes to flourish. And we have places like the Visulite Theatre which bring fantastic touring bands to town. I think we have grown as a city.

We don't have the numbers like we did in the late '80s and '90s. Local bands could draw hundreds and hundreds of people back then.

Now that the election is over with and we have a new president elect, it reminds me of those early Reagan years. I can almost guarantee that the music and art in this town will be amazing during this ride.

TANGENTS: Tell me about the new album.

MCCORKLE: This is the first album by the full "classic" lineup (myself, Big Mike Mitschele, Grainger Gilbert, Gary Guthrie and Justin Faircloth) since 1999's "American Ghetto Pop Machine" album. We have played together in various forms over the years, but I have mainly toured as Leisure McCorkle.

We were asked to get together to play Sir Edmond Halley's 20th anniversary party back in the summer since we had our first record release there in '97 for "Nappy Superstar" by owner Svend Deal. It was basically our HQ back in the day. We had a lot of fun, so I asked Big Mike if he would be interested in producing another Leisure McCorkle band album.

The name of the album is "5000 Light Years Beyond the Speed of Sound." We went for a more emotive British pop feel

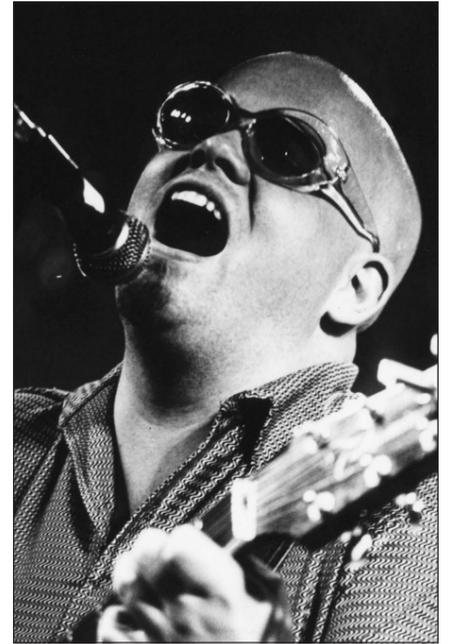


photo DANIEL COSTON

this time. I will be putting this album out on my new non-profit experimental label NappyStar Chocolates.

I kinda sped things up a bit when I saw a chance to play one of the final shows at The Double Door Inn. We are releasing the new album at that show on December 30, and everyone who buys a ticket will get a free copy of the album.

TANGENTS: What else are you working on?

MCCORKLE: I am also currently working on a new electronic project called "The Electronic Park" with Whitney Bridges (who played piano and vocals with the Leisure McCorkle band). Mike Mitschele and I worked together as a team on this album.

I plan to re-release "Nappy Superstar" for the 20th anniversary in gold sparkle, release the DVD from Double Door, and release a "b-side" album of Leisure tunes with some extras.

TANGENTS: Tell me about your non-profit label.

MCCORKLE: I have been thinking about the present state of music and the future. I am currently working on an electronic project which I hope to introduce to the world in 2017. We are not going to follow any of the corporate/commercial pathways. We are going to think about songs differently than I have ever done before. I thought about people like Prince and Steve Jobs and Richard Branson and like-minded futurists. What will music look like in the future? Is rock 'n' roll dead as an art form?

My new non-profit label will be called NappyStar Chocolates, and my vision is to transform music from commodity to experience. I realize that there will still be musical artists who want to win Grammys and be superstars, etc., but this label will concentrate on bending genres. I am starting with my own new release, but I plan to help bands that don't really fit into mainstream models. I hope to approach it like someone who is promoting culture rather than a product.

The high arts are able to earn grants and a lot of funding from external sources. I am hopeful that I will be able to apply for grants to push music that isn't considered "high art" in mainstream society. And not just musical artists but also visual and spoken word artists. I am still really searching for a vocabulary for what I am trying to do, because I don't want to use corporate music's categories and narratives. I really want original music to thrive. I know first hand how difficult it is to be a musician trying to eke out a living in the modern world.



by Brian Trotter



GregRussell.us

"Wizard of Ooze" by Greg Russell

GregRussell.us

MUSIC

Jay Garrigan is just starting to have fun

For 20 years, Jay Garrigan has been a part of Charlotte's most popular bands: Violet Strange, Laburnum, Poprocket, Temperance League, Transmission Fields and Garrigan. After recording two unreleased albums with Garrigan, he has returned with the Eyebrows. All of the hallmarks of Garrigan's songwriting and vocals are on full display with this new band but with a renewed sense of purpose and fun. Garrigan checked in with Daniel Coston via email to talk about all things old and new.

TANGENTS: How did this band come together?

JAY GARRIGAN: I wanted to do something in the rock genre with a band that had several layers of voices yet had an immediate and worldly feel that could move people's feet and make them dance.

Shawn Lynch is the drummer. Yes, he's a drummer and not a drummer.

Jon Lock of the magnificent Bleeps brings a worldly feel as he has toured internationally in reggae/ska punk bands.

Molly Poe adds exactly what we need for keys and synth textures. This is her first band, but she's not new to music as she's classically trained and tour managed other bands. I appreciate a new person in the band because she makes us question a lot of the things we assume are universal truths. I always thought the best bands had 1-2 people who were learning and a few others who were experienced.

TANGENTS: You seem to be having more fun with this band.

GARRIGAN: I'm trying to focus on writing songs that have an odd retro dance vibe, and I think fun is an essential element of this type of creativity and music. I see bands like B-52s, Talking Heads and Pylon having a lot of fun, and I'd like to carry on that sort of thing.

We still play some of my singer-songwriter muck, but I think that's because I have a back catalog of these types of songs, and I still like to write a good mopey downer of a song. But, I'm trying to evolve away from that ... habit.

TANGENTS: Describe your new single and the forthcoming album.

GARRIGAN: The other day I was listening to one of my favorite records, "Murmur" by REM, which was recorded by Mitch Easter here in Charlotte at the former Reflection studio and mastered by Greg Calbi up at Sterling Sound in NYC. It hit me kind of funny, staring at this marvelous record cover, listening to the tones and thinking that The Eyebrows also worked with both of these legends on the upcoming single. It's something that I always thought was out of reach, and I kick myself for not doing something like this sooner.

We recorded two songs, "It Comes Down Hard" and "The Sun" with Easter.

We recorded and mixed a total of ten songs, which should all go on our full-length



photo DANIEL COSTON

record once we can afford it. But, we gotta work to pay for the mastering and production, and that's no easy task for a new band that doesn't believe in crowdsourcing. We believe in working partnerships with labels.

TANGENTS: How do you balance this group and playing with Temperance League?

GARRIGAN: I like staying out of balance. It keeps me on my toes. I can find a center, or balance, for a brief period of time, but I always get bored and screw that all up.

Sometimes it's hard to fit everything in my head when both bands are playing during the week, plus I have a serious day job. With Temperance League, I've learned how to play a support role rather than a leading front man. It takes a certain comfort in yourself to play a support role.

I also play in Amigo sometimes, and there are a few other bands I side in from time to time.

I'm most proud of The Eyebrows because these are my songs.

TANGENTS: Talk about the two albums that you recorded as Garrigan for Spectra Records and how that project led to the Eyebrows?

GARRIGAN: I don't like saying anything negative about anyone, but signing to a label for three years that never paid me a cent for record sales, streaming or publishing was disappointing. Perhaps I'm most disappointed in myself because I really believed in what the label told me regarding film and TV placement, radio play and retail distribution. I totally believed they were going to deliver what they sold me and what I signed for. I treated it as a professional relationship and got thrown one cool live show, but, unfortunately, this scenario falls into the songwriter-held-hostage category. I couldn't release anything new, and the band didn't understand why we weren't making any money.

The second record with Garrigan, "Kiss This Broken Star," never got published. The

label dangled a carrot, saying they would put this record out if I signed for three more years. The band at that time was also having personnel challenges, and one lineup had such a bad show, it was probably the worst show of my entire career. I decided to take a break from performing live, and didn't play a show for about a year until Temperance League invited me into their fold to play bass guitar. I never stopped writing songs though.

We had a great opportunity, and we tried to make the best of it. The songs were overwrought, overthought and perhaps over-arranged. But, I'm proud of the work although I don't play a lot of those songs anymore, and I don't shed a tear or lose sleep over that batch of lost songs. I've moved on.

TANGENTS: Where do the songs come from? And do they come from different places than they did ten years ago? Twenty years ago?

GARRIGAN: Writing music is a way I deal with abuse and betrayal, enticement and excitability, mania and depression.

Writing songs helped me figure out my feelings, who I am, and often gave me something to feel good about when I had little to nothing else. I was often called an asshole for being creative and trying express myself as a child. Maybe that's why I'm such a dramatic performer ... because the child in me is terrified. Maybe that's also why I often feel confrontational when I'm performing. I'm not smiling because I'm dealing with a lot of conflicting feelings and reliving those every time I get onstage.

Ten and twenty years ago, I wrote a lot of songs about relationships, which were fuel to my songwriting fires. I had a habit of growing toxic relationships, perhaps conditioned by my upbringing. I guess I had a lot to write about in a confessional type of way.

As for the newest batch of songs, I've been lyrically challenging myself to go outside of the relationship paradigm. Often I just make up stupid sounding shit. It's a lot of fun to sing about avocados and cows because life's enough ... love's too much.

CENTERSPREAD ARTWORK

"The Collective Disquiet"
by Chelsea Chao
www.seachao.com

Chelsea Chao (pronounced "ciao"), at the fresh age of 22, is a recent graduate from Winthrop University. Armed with a degree in Illustration and a fierce love for drawing, she adamantly refuses to go down as a starving artist. She keeps busy by honing her craft in sweet Spartanburg while optimistically searching for something to occupy the hours between 9 and 5. Corgi enthusiast and serial hobbyist, Chelsea is still searching for the things that make her Chelsea.

A Laugh at a Funeral

I laughed in a Costco on a Friday, the eleventh of November 2016, shoppers all around me in bubbles, eyes never meeting it felt as wrong as a smile after my mom died and something else is dead now

— Cindy Sites-Wooley



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MUSIC

Three Amigos say 'It's only rock 'n' roll'

Over the past few years, Amigo (guitarist and singer Slade Baird, bassist Thomas Alverson, and drummer Adam Phillips) have hit the road throughout Charlotte and towns far and wide in search of rock 'n' roll glory. With a new single available and a second LP coming soon, Daniel Coston decided to hang out with Baird and Phillips and talk about all things Amigo.



photo DANIEL COSTON

TANGENTS: How and where did you record your new single?

SLADE BAIRD: We recorded with Mitch Easter at his Fidelitorium. We went to him because Temperance League has been doing so much with him. We brought our friends John Teer and Jay Garrigan. It was recorded practically live with a few overdubs. It's like you're in the room with us.

TANGENTS: What are the plans for the new album?

BAIRD: We did it again at the Fidelitorium with Mitch behind the controls. We'll have a release sometime in the new year.

TANGENTS: How would you describe the sound of Amigo?

BAIRD: It's just rock 'n' roll with a little bit of country and a little bit of punk.

TANGENTS: Do you hope that audiences don't separate out your songs as rock songs or country songs and just say, "That's an Amigo song?"

ADAM PHILLIPS: Yes. The goal is that they would leave a show with a song stuck in their head and not this larger conversation about what song is what.

TANGENTS: Was it a conscious decision to play as a 3-piece when Amigo started?

BAIRD: It is way easier to get 3-people practices scheduled. The sound of our records is reflective of what we would like to do live, but logistically, we haven't been able to do it. We always wanted to be a touring band. We wanted to be an independent American rock 'n' roll band. We wanted the romance of every punk band since the 1980s. We're going to go out and play every shitty club all over the country. How are you going to find a bigger audience? You have to go to them.

TANGENTS: What recording do you think captures your live sound so far?

BAIRD: I think that the single we just recorded at Mitch Easter's is pretty close. The three of us have been playing together for two years. And that tightness, musically and otherwise, comes across on that single. I'm still like a kid in a candy store in the studio, but I've gotten better at vocalizing what I think we should do.

TANGENTS: What comes first, the music or the lyrics?

BAIRD: It can go either way. A phrase can kind of kickstart it, but most of the time, there are some chords, and you start humming a melody. The life that the songs take on is a result of working them out and making sure that we can do everything we

need to do. If we have a fully-written song, it still takes a good amount of time to make it worthy of sharing with somebody.

TANGENTS: Wildest or weirdest Amigo gigs so far?

BAIRD: I really look forward to playing at the Thirsty Beaver. The place has a vibe about it that tells everyone who comes through the door, "Just be your ideal self at all times and go nuts." It's like you're walking into a wild family reunion.

PHILLIPS: I would be remiss to not mention our CD release party at Snug Harbor. We had a sax player, a keyboard player and a guitar player, and the place was packed. In terms of weird gigs, Anniston, AL was pretty weird.

BAIRD: There were people at that show who were bouncing off the walls but coherent. It was also our last gig on the way home from SXSW after two weeks on the road. There was nobody there, and they made us play for three hours.

TANGENTS: Hypothetical question: You walk into a bar, and you witness a sing-off between Gram Parsons and Jonathan Richman. Who wins, and who is going to win all of the girls that night?

PHILLIPS: Having seen Jonathan Richman live, I'm going to say that he wins the sing-off and gets all the girls.

BAIRD: It depends on the venue. If it's on a college campus, then, yeah, Jojo is gonna win. If it's L.A. circa 1968, it's Gram Parsons. He gets all of the women, the drugs and everybody's money.

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MUSIC

Randy Franklin pens ode to The Double Door Inn

Randy Franklin loves music. Ask him about The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Spongetones or any host of artists, and you'll get a detailed answer about their albums and when he saw that act perform. That love of music has carried him through a life of playing music and 20 years leading the band Crisis.

Franklin has packed The Double Door Inn on many nights and the Evening Muse for his annual benefit concert for Crisis Assistance Ministry. He has written and performed a new song about the end of The Double Door Inn that sums up in less than five minutes what many have thought about the venue for over 43 years.

Franklin is a busy man, but Daniel Coston tracked him down by email to ask him about all of this, and more.

TANGENTS: When did you know that you wanted to be a musician?

RANDY FRANKLIN: Like most baby boomers, I was raised on the music of The Beatles and the music of the 1960s. For Christmas of 1966, my brother Tommy got drums, and I got a guitar. We wanted to be the next Beatles, or at least The Monkees. It was on from there.

TANGENTS: Describe your first concert and your first band.

FRANKLIN: My first gig ever was a duo performance with Ed Leitch, who I still perform with four decades later. We were 13 years old and played a local teen coffee house located in the basement of Myers Park Presbyterian Church called Maxwell's Coffee House. We played about a 20-minute set, and it was a total thrill when the audience applauded. I was hooked on live performances from that point. It wasn't until high school when I played in my first full rock band: The Providence Drive Band.

TANGENTS: How did Crisis originally come together?

FRANKLIN: I played in a variety of bands until my first child was born in 1984. After that, I took 10 years off from the music scene to raise my two children. Although I was still writing and recording, I did not play out live at all during that time. When my kids were more of a self-sufficient age, I got the urge to start playing again. Around this time, I was at a New Year's Eve party where a teen band was playing. When they took a break, I, Ed Leitch and my brother Tommy jumped on their instruments and banged out a 30-minute set

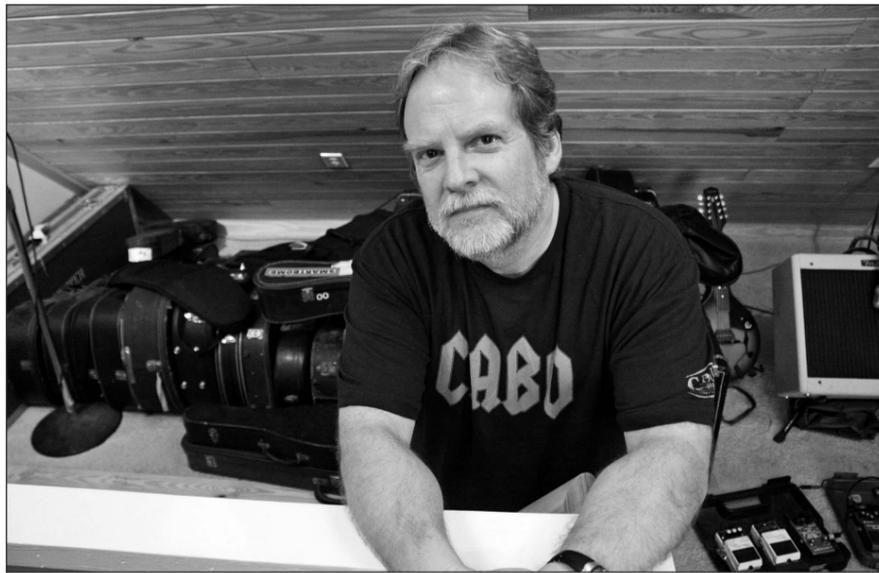


photo DANIEL COSTON

of classic rock. It was a big hit. We called ourselves Midlife Crisis as a joke. We didn't think this would really last. But we just kept playing, dropping the "Midlife."

TANGENTS: How has Crisis changed over the past 20 years?

FRANKLIN: Not much, really. We are the same nucleus. I am the primary songwriter. Ed "Wolf" Leitch on lead guitar. And my brother Tommy Franklin on drums. We have had three bass players over the past 20 years: Bobby Hodges, Henry Pharr and currently Mike Clark. All terrific musicians.

TANGENTS: You also now play with Randy Franklin and the Sardines. How did that come together, and how does that vary from Crisis?

FRANKLIN: About three years ago my brother Tommy was promoted in his day job and needed to slow down the activities of Crisis. We had been hitting it pretty hard up to that point, touring and recording six albums over a 20-year span. I decided to use this break to record my first solo album. I had written a lot of songs that didn't quite fit the Crisis sound. They represented a lot of genres, country, jazz, folk and rock. I recorded the album Bloodlines with producers Jamie Hoover & Eric Lovell.

I needed a band to perform these songs live, so I recruited many old friends who I had known for years. Rob Thorne (Spongetones) on drums, Paul Noble (Halifax) on lead guitar, Bobby Little (Marimoon) on bass, Pat Walters (Spongetones) on keys and my musical partner Ed "Wolf" Leitch from Crisis on second lead guitar.

We started playing all the tracks from my album live, and then started adding deeper classic rock cuts that you don't hear other bands perform. With two lead guitar players, it was fun to select songs with dual harmony leads such as Allman Brothers or Eagles tunes. We have a lot of fun as a band and love to get the crowds up and dancing.

Crisis is primarily an "all originals" band with fewer covers. The Sardines love 1970s classic rock!

TANGENTS: Describe your new song about The Double Door Inn.

FRANKLIN: Back in July, I was scheduled to play at a benefit for local musician Jake Berger at the Double Door. I had just learned of the upcoming closing and was heartbroken. I knew I had to write something to perform at that show, so I just sat down with my acoustic and put my feelings down about how much I would miss it. When I played it live, the crowd went wild. I decided to record it right away and booked Boo English's Knot Hole Studios. Crisis backed me on the recording and we brought Lenny Federal in for additional vocals and guitar. A real thrill for me, I've been a big fan of his for decades.

TANGENTS: Thoughts about The Double Door Inn. Not so much about the closing, but what the place has meant to you.

FRANKLIN: I've always thought of The Double Door as Charlotte's own Ryman Auditorium of Nashville fame. As a musician, it was a place that you had to earn an invitation and the privilege to play there. As a fan, I learned so much about stage pres-

ence and professionalism, as I watched my musical heroes over the years such as The Federal Bureau of Rock & Roll, The Spongetones, Cruis-O-Matic, Don Dixon, Joyous Perrin, Donna Duncan and so many more. And the staff, they are like family to me. Playing that stage is like no other. I call it my "home field" and it is so true. It's the most comfortable place in the world to me.

TANGENTS: What's next for you?

FRANKLIN: I'm five songs in to the follow up to "Bloodlines." Once again, it will be a multi-produced album, utilizing the studios of Boo English, Jamie Hoover and Eric Lovell. It will follow the same casserole style of multiple genres and influences. I will continue to perform a lot of shows with The Sardines and a few shows with Crisis when schedules permit. I also will continue my charity work; I have a passion for helping others through music.

TANGENTS: How often do you write songs? Quickly, slowly or not fast enough?

FRANKLIN: Most of my writing is not a sit down and write something process. Usually a phrase someone speaks, a story I've read, a melody in my head, these are things that start the process. I have found that my best songs usually come quick. The ones that I agonize over and constantly make changes usually don't turn out as well. I've learned to trust my instincts; the first draft is usually the best one.

TANGENTS: Coolest gig you have ever done. Describe.

FRANKLIN: Wow that's a hard one, there have been so many. Playing alongside Don Dixon and Mitch Easter at The Spongetones tribute show would be a highlight. I would have to say I am most proud of my annual tribute shows for Crisis Assistance Ministry. For almost 10 years now (first Saturday of August) I have gathered bands to perform at The Evening Muse as we pay tribute to different iconic recording artists. We have raised a lot of money and awareness to help prevent homelessness in our community. It's an issue I'm very passionate about.

TANGENTS: Finish this sentence. Randy Franklin is ...

FRANKLIN: A man who puts family first, while maintaining a passion for songwriting, music and serving others in need. Not the coolest description, ha ha, but pretty much me in a nutshell.

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MUSIC

Grant Funderburk on 'really smooth' Toleman Randall

Grant Funderburk is a quiet man. He'd rather let his band Toleman Randall do the taking for him. Since 2011, Toleman Randall (guitarist and singer Grant Funderburk, keyboardist Kyle Dussault Carinelli, drummer Charlie Heard and bassist John Licare) has quietly been one of Charlotte's best bands, bringing an understated grace to their songs. The band only has one 5-song EP to show so far, which will hopefully change soon.

Funderburk quietly emailed answers to Daniel Coston's questions, and this is the result.

TANGENTS: What drew you into music?

GRANT FUNDERBURK: I was around 12 or 13 when I got my first guitar. It was a Fender Squire, and ever since then, I haven't been able to put it down. It's an obsession, really. So I guess you could say the guitar really drew me into music. But also from an early age I was exposed to music by my parents and played trumpet in up through junior high.

I started a little band with my bud who lived down the street. We practiced and jammed and really just made a lot of noise,

but you gotta start somewhere. I also would say in high school at West Charlotte there was an excellent jazz program under the direction of M.R. Davenport who was the head band director there at that time, and I learned a great deal about music from him.

TANGENTS: Describe the Charlotte music scene that you came into in the '90s and the music scene now.

FUNDERBURK: Charlotte's music scene has grown and changed a lot over the years. When we first started playing out places back in the late '90s, the scene wasn't as big as it is now. There just weren't that many places to play. Venues come and go, that's for sure, but also I think Charlotte's music scene is a little more diverse now. And with social media, I think people stay more connected and immersed in the local music scene.

TANGENTS: How did Toleman Randall come together?

FUNDERBURK: Charlie Heard (drums) and I met and played in Raised by Wolves,

which was a Charlotte band around 2006-2011. We became friends, and when I was looking to start a new project, I hit him up. At first, we just kinda experimented with some tunes I had written. We were looking for a bass player, and my friend John Licare wasn't doing much at the time so I grabbed him up. Kyle, our keyboardist also played in RBW, and we played together with Jon Lindsay, so I asked her to join us.

TANGENTS: Do you write the songs and present them to the band? Or does the band come up with the songs together?

FUNDERBURK: I write the songs, but the band helps to mold them and shape them. I write a lot on the acoustic guitar, so when I present a new song, it is always the skeleton of the song. The main melody will be there and chord progression perhaps, but I leave a lot of room for experimenting.

TANGENTS: How would you describe the music of Toleman Randall?

FUNDERBURK: I would describe our music as smooth. Like water skiing on a really

calm crisp morning.

TANGENTS: How did the band's debut come together?

FUNDERBURK: Our EP came together about a year ago. It was a learning experience for sure. We recorded it at Sioux Studios here in Charlotte, and we are excited about getting back in the studio very soon.

TANGENTS: What are you working on now?

FUNDERBURK: We are looking to get in the studio this winter. We have new songs that we have been playing live and some that we haven't.

TANGENTS: Do you see Toleman Randall as a band, or an outlet for the music that you're writing?

TANGENTS: Favorite places in town to play?

FUNDERBURK: We like playing everywhere in Charlotte. We don't ever play out of town.

Compression: Tasteful attenuation and tips

It's the topic that won't go away, the most reader-requested subject, the most frequent question I field ... what is compression? Or more exactly, how do I use it without screwing everything up?

Out of all the audio processors in the toolkit (preamps, equalizers, gates, reverbs, delays etc.) none possess the raw destructive power of compressors. Destructive in that you can slowly make things worse with inappropriate compression and not even realize it ... unless you know what to listen for.

Put simply, with compression we are seeking to reduce dynamic range ... even though life presents a wide range of volume, from whisper quiet to thunderclap deafening, we must reduce this wide gulf to a usable span that our processors, speakers, amps, and minds require. Minds? Yes, as our finicky tastes prefer nice steady sounds that don't jump around in volume. Most everything seems better (music, dialogue, film audio, radio, TV, streaming, etc.) if levels remain moderate and dependable.

Therefore it is wise to record things with a touch of compression, work them into your mix with a touch more, compress the mix some, compress the mixes some more in mastering, and then find our audio com-

pressed again for broadcast on TV/radio/web. That's a shit-ton of "squeeze," so we have to be careful at each step.

So we pick some volume level that's little above average (the Threshold of compres-

HOME RECORDING

by Rob Tavaglione

sion), we set some amount of level reduction to happen (measured as a Ratio, like 2:1) and then listen/watch ... whenever the signal rises above threshold, it gets reduced by half ... that is, if signal rises four decibels over threshold only two of them pass through, the remaining volume gets reduced (attenuated) by the compressor. Yes, higher ratios result in more compression, as does lowering the threshold too, so experimentation is key. Try creating lots of gain reduction (i.e. -12 dB's or more) and you'll notice the sound gets a little flattened, not-punchy and squishy ... back off to about -6 dB and it will regain some punch but stay very consistently steady ... back off to only -3 dB and you'll

find lively response, maybe not quite steady enough, but without the distortion or artifacts that were created at -12 dB.

Rob's rule of thumb is "you can do no harm at -3 or -4 dB" so feel free to use this amount on vocals, bass, clean guitars, keys, or most anything (both when you track AND when you mix) for more consistency, audibility and focus. Looking to tame a really wild and inconsistent source? Then try ratios between 4:1 and 10:1, play with the threshold and the Attack control (how quickly compression engages after crossing Threshold). If attack is too quick you'll hear a kind of vacuum sucking or distortion, try slowing it just a little. Maybe you're getting the reduction you need, but it's kind of pumping and breathing? Try playing with the Release control (how quickly the compressor lets go after signal falls below threshold) ... too quick is too jerky and pumpky, try slowing it to moderate amounts for more natural behavior without artifacts.

Make sure you've replaced any volume you attenuated with the Make-up Gain or Output control. Now you'll reach the same peak level, but with an average level boosted up. So you're in a post-hardcore band, or doing urban mixtapes and you need that

average to be loud, louder than everybody! Try stringing two compressors together, usually one at a high ratio first and the second one at a lower ratio. You have to set the threshold super carefully on each, so the high one just flashes on peaks and the low one stays compressing constantly, if only gently.

Still having trouble matching the screaming hot average levels found today? You need a compressor so firm it can reduce levels at very high ratios like 10:1 and above, otherwise known as a limiter, or even a brickwall limiter (at infinity:1 levels cannot exceed threshold at all). This used to be the domain of only mastering engineers, but today's affordable plug-ins allow advanced limiters (with frequency filters, look-ahead, variable saturation and auto make-up gain) to be used liberally in mixes too.

So use more compression! Track with it, mix with it (on tracks and subgroups too), squeeze the whole mix and add limiters too. A giant wall of consistent volume can be (carefully) built one little compressed brick at a time.

Rob Tavaglione owns and operates Catalyst Recording in Charlotte, and is a freelance writer and musician.



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Another Sort of Lonesome

A bird sings.
I don't know which one.
Didn't listen to the older women,
the ones who knew.
A sofabed. Almost dawn.
The dark shedding itself in stages,
the lush shadows of trees against
a blue without sun.
A boy's breath beside me, in sleep.
My perpetual reign of insomnia.
Belly grumbling,
hungry for something
other than beers,
boys and cigarettes.

Soon,
I will escape this sleepless place
driving someone else's car through
Virginia's morning curves
returning to another sort of lonesome.
Until then, I listen to the one bird
and watch dark become light.

— Jill Kitchen

Jill Kitchen is a writer who lives in Boulder, Colorado. She has a BA in Romance Languages from Colorado College and has studied creative writing at UCLA, Columbia University and The Poetry Project in New York City.

MUSIC

Carolina Chocolate Drops' Dom Flemons on the link between 'black' and 'white' music

Over the last decade, the Carolina Chocolate Drops have helped bring the music of our past into the present. Sure, there are many that play what is often referred to as old-time music, but very few make it theirs the way that the Drops do, injecting the music with their own heart and spirit. While the band's fan base has steadily grown, and the group received a Grammy for their 2010 album "Genuine Negro Jig," it is this regeneration of the music that puts them ahead of others.

Fans of the band will instantly recognize Dom Flemons, who co-founded the group in 2005. Now touring with his own group, Flemons has a scholarly knowledge of the music he plays. With this knowledge, Daniel Coston set up this story as a less of an interview and more of a conversation about the music. Read on, listen and enjoy.

TANGENTS: How did you first hear some of the music that you play now?

DOM FLEMONS: I first heard folk songs in choir in elementary school, but I didn't really take any interest in playing the music till I was about 22 years old. It was my third year of college and had been playing guitar, harmonica and banjo for about six years and had gone through many musical and artistic phases. I first got into '50s, '60s and '70s rock, and from there I got into Bob Dylan, and that led to me getting into the '60s folk revival.

Looking for new means of expressing myself through writing, I began to write prose and short stories. As it happened, I began to get interested in doing slam poetry and became a part of the local poetry scene in Flagstaff.

I enjoyed performing my poems, but I really wanted to play music again. I began to perform old-time blues, jazz and country music.

TANGENTS: What instruments did you play first?

FLEMONS: I started out playing percussion in the school band. I also played the bass drum in the marching band. When I was 16, I began playing guitar and harmonica.

TANGENTS: Which performers did you hear or see that just blew you away?

FLEMONS: The first musician that made me want to play was Bob Dylan, who I first saw in the documentary "The History of Rock 'n' Roll." Also in that documentary, Louis Jordan and Muddy Waters visually took me to another level. Their exuberant performances made me want to look up their music in the library. In an era of '90s rock, I had never seen such dynamic performers and had to pursue their music.

TANGENTS: Would you say that American music is not a genre per se, but a collection of various sounds and influences, much like America itself?

FLEMONS: I'd say it's both. American music can be very specific in some ways. American music is a collection of various sounds and influences, but those various sounds can come out very different from one another. There is always a thread that goes through each of these styles, but jazz, blues, country, zydeco, native and chicano musics are all very distinct genres of music.

TANGENTS: How did American music change from the era of Stephen Foster and Dan Emmitt to the jugband music of the '20s and '30s?

FLEMONS: There was a huge transition that happened between Stephen Foster and Dan Emmett's era (1850s-1860s) to the jug bands of the '20s and '30s. There were big events that changed the way Americans lived in general, and the music reflected those changes.

The minstrel show had grown from a small string band creating a caricature of what was perceived to be black life on the plantation to an overblown international phenomenon. Though this institution was known as a white musician's institution, blacks all the while were building up ways to express themselves on the popular stage, including making their own minstrel troupes.

Over the years, blacks found different styles of music to adapt to create new forms of music that would influence American culture. Ragtime and coon songs would make way for jazz, blues and black musical theater. There is a great book called "Stomp and Swerve" which talks about this transition.

In the teens, folks like James Reese Europe and WC Handy had established bands and orchestras to play for various events in the communities, and this practice was used all over the country.

The jug bands were an offshoot of this musical practice. Though they were based more on the novelty of using unconventional instruments, these groups were actually well-trained orchestras that were prepared to play at whatever social events were needed for the upper crust of society. These groups were found all over the South in particular, but the most famous ones to record were from Louisville and Memphis.

TANGENTS: How much did the mainstream discovery of American and "hillbilly" music in the 1920s and 1930s, via performers such as the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers and Charlie Poole, change American music itself?

FLEMONS: It changed everything. One thing that is hard to imagine is that at a certain point human beings had no way to preserve their music. Folks had never heard themselves either, so they had no way to know the how they sounded when they sang or played music. With the invention of the audio recording, people had an infinitely useful way to preserve their culture.

Like all technology, the rich and elite were the only ones who had access to this technology. Over time, it made its way into the hands of regular folks, but for the first few decades, the records made were records of classical music and elite music.

It was only by accident that PR people from the record companies began to find out that there was interest in these musicians that were a little rough around the edges. Nowadays, these recordings made in the early part of the century, along with the many field recordings made by scholars over the years, are now the foundation of what we as modern people define as our American folk music.

TANGENTS: It's obvious that while some wanted to separate black and white music, the two shared some similar influences and often converged. What are the common bonds in black music (for lack of a better term) and white music?

FLEMONS: The easier way to approach this question is to make the answer a little broader. Black and white people have had common musical cultures in America just because they have needed to live side-by-side for so long in both hostile and not hostile situations. Because the context of the music-making in American society was and is so varied, you have different combinations of musical cultural everywhere you go.

Before there were definitive musical genres that defined a culture, people played music that reflected their local culture, which in many cases were far more varied than we would think today. The common bonds are the cultures that the musicians came from.

For example, take a song like "John Henry." The song is found in both black and white culture, but the way the song is approached varies based on the function of the musician in their local culture.

Dance bands keep the text at a minimum and the dance beat in the forefront while ballad singers do the opposite. Again, it's all about the function of the musician and the song. The racial implications are not as important as the broader social implications.

TANGENTS: What is it about Joe Thompson and his collection of songs that makes him so special?

FLEMONS: Joe Thompson is special

because he is a living example of a musical style that is rare in the old-time community and even more rare in the black community. He plays a set of tunes that he learned from his family and played in the square dances in his community of Mebane, N.C. He also sings very old primitive Baptist songs that have nuances in the singing that reflect the church singing in his community growing up.

During his lifetime, he saw the way the music in his community changed from the more community-based string band and spiritual styles to the more individualistic blues and gospel styles. The fact that he kept playing the fiddle during that time is a rare and important link to an era that has faded in the black community.

TANGENTS: What do you hope that the kids take away from your shows?

FLEMONS: All I hope for kids to take away from our shows is the experience of seeing this music played live. There's nothing better than experiencing music live. Also, as the teachers are tending to prep the kids for our shows, it is great to be able to give them a history lesson that is accompanied by great music. Also, being black musicians playing this music, it is also great to be able to give kids a real example of blacks playing the music instead of just talking about it.



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HUMOR

COMPLETELY WRONG AND TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE TALES OF CHARLOTTE

Historic theater brought Elvis and porn to Charlotte

THE CAROLINA THEATRE

The Carolina Theatre opened in 1927 as the city's largest and grandest movie palace. The theater hosted the finest movies of the day, and the most popular entertainers from the waning days of vaudeville. The heyday of the Carolina Theatre continued into the 1950s, with Elvis Presley making his first Charlotte appearance at the theater in the spring of 1956.

By the late 1950s, with television taking away patrons from movie theaters, the Carolina Theatre did what many others did to revive their fortunes. They started running porn. Lots of it. Nearly every theater in Charlotte during this time turned into blue theaters (meaning blue movies, not Democratic states) to bring audiences, and especially men, back to the theater. And it worked. Like many southern cities, you could roll a quarter unobstructed through Tryon Street after 5pm, but you could find multiple showings of Big Abner XXX for happy throngs. Turn to page two of The Charlotte Observer during this time, and you'll find large, happy ads of movie theater throughout Charlotte proclaiming that they have the best porn theater around, with all day (and especially night) showings of "Shaving Ryan's Privates," "Splendor in the Ass" and "On Golden Blonde." Everywhere you turned, Charlotte had a sparkling new building to rival the nearby city of Gastonia, and porn on every corner. Yes, Charlotte had finally arrived as a World Class City.

After years of neglect and disrepair, the Theatre will re-open in 2018 as the great

movie palace that it once was. The opening night celebration will conclude with a showing, now restored in HD, I-MAX, 3D, 5.0 Stereo-surround, and digitally color-corrected and enhanced, will be Big Abner XXX. Just like it was in the good old days, but better. And bigger.

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

Throughout much of the 20th century, Charlotte had two daily newspapers to choose from: *The Observer*, and *The Charlotte News*, which published its paper in the afternoon. The news employed some of the most popular writers and photographers in the city, including Kays Gary, Jeep Hunter and many others.

After years of friendly competition, the News and Observer merged when they realized that Charlotte was so boring, it barely needed one newspaper, let alone two. There just wasn't enough going on in Charlotte, apart from the Charlotte Hornets baseball team, the ABA Carolina Cougars (which played mostly to older women) and all of the movie theaters that showed porn. The News eventually closed in 1985, and since that time, *The Observer* has continued its goal of covering as little of Charlotte as possible. Because even they are starting to look elsewhere for the next place to go.

OLDEST BUILDINGS IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Currently, the oldest home in Mecklenburg County is the Hezekiah Alexander home, built in 1774. Latta Plantation was

built in 1800, as were a number of homes scattered throughout the county. Rosedale Plantation is currently the oldest Federal-style home in Charlotte, and was built in 1815.

Originally, all of the great old homes of Charlotte were clustered together in one happy village near what is now CPCC. It was an idyllic existence, with lots of happy Smurfs dancing in the town square from dawn to dusk. One day, a strange man with an Scottish accent appeared suddenly out of a police box. "Villagers," he exclaimed. "You must move from this place. There is a large, boring college coming to this area, and they will flatten this land for large, Georgian brick buildings. Their future leaders will now care about the real history that you have, only fake history, like the Meck Dec."

"How can that be?" people exclaimed. "Even we know that the Meck Dec didn't happen, and we were here for it. That wasn't truth, it was just locker room talk."

"Truth by squatter's rights trumps physical history, in the future," replied the doctor. "It truly is a sad place. Pick up your buildings, and scatter throughout the county. You only have 200 years to do so. Go!"

All of the great homes immediately scattered to the four corners of the county, while a few homes steadfastly remained. Knowing their fate, the remaining homes — the Double Door, the Athens, Jimmie's, Howard's Camera, and others — sent out trolleys to all corners of the earth. On board were the twelve: the poet, the physician, the banker, the developer, the finance manager,

and the other so-called gods of our legends. Though gods they were. And as the elders of our time choose to remain blind, let us rejoice. And let us sing. And dance and ring in the new. Hail Charlotte!

(Everybody sing!) "Way DOWN below the college. WHERE I want to be, they may be ..."

HAL KEMP

In the late 1930s, Hal Kemp was one of the most popular leaders of the new Big Band sound. After growing up in Charlotte, Kemp left to take his new sound across the world. By the late 1930s, Kemp was having number one hits in the national charts. No one knows how many number one hits that he had during this time, because the national top ten charts hadn't even been invented yet, but we know that he had number one hits. That's how big he was, at the time.

In December of 1940, on his way to a gig in San Francisco on a foggy night, Kemp was bitten by a werewolf. He had been warned to stay off the moors by other bandleaders, but had not listened to them. Realizing what was about to happen, Kemp faked his death, and had his "body" returned to Charlotte for burial. Kemp then went underground to help the US Government find German saboteurs throughout the Carolinas. To this day, Kemp lives on. Undead, walking the streets at night, looking for swing dance clubs, swing dancing parties, or anyone with an old radio, so that he can lead the band again, one more time. Or listen to that Warren Zevon song. He really likes that song.

Panthers announce program of giving needy victories to other teams

With the holidays upon us, the Carolina Panthers have announced that they will continue to make the season bright for others by giving victories to needy football teams around the country.

"We had a great season last year," said Panthers coach Ron Rivera at a press conference. "We gathered up so many victories, that we decided to give back to the

NFL community this year, and give victories to football teams that are in need of a little holiday cheer." Football teams and fans in Tampa Bay, Kansas City, Atlanta, New Orleans, Denver, and Minnesota have already received gift-wrapped victories this season from the Panthers.

Along with giving away victories, the Panthers have also been taking in unwanted

losses throughout the season. "Sure, taking in these many losses is not always easy," said Rivera. "They're not always popular among fans, and they really can mess up a Fantasy League. But, it is Christmas, and while not everyone believes in this kind of generosity, we will see this through, until the last loss of the season is brought back to Charlotte."

As to how long they see this generous program continuing, Rivera added, "As long as there are games to lose, and victories to give away, we'll be there." When reached for a statement, the Charlotte Hornets said, "Hey! We've been giving away victories for years! What about our spirit of giving?"

— J.F. Keaton



SUBMIT!

Tangents is looking for art, poetry, fiction and reviews for our print edition and website. So submit to Dickie!

Send submissions to Lewd@TangentsMag.com.

Art and photos must be at least 300 dpi and 9 inches tall. Fiction should be 1,000 words or less. Reviews should be 500 words or less.

HUMOR

We are so screwed

That loud thumping sound heard last month was half of the country pounding their fist in the ballot box, and the other half pounding their head into the wall as the results came in. "How could this happen?" we all asked. The whole point of comedy and satire is to inflate reality into a shape that reflects the buffoonery of the moment. But when the caricature continues to exceed the satire, reality becomes all the scarier. And Donald Trump lives up to the caricature that the rest of the world has painted of us. Big, bold, brash, and a big mess of contradictions. We're angry, and we don't know why. We just like the way it feels. Anger is an angry. And now, the contradictions are energized, and in charge.

In many ways, Trump simultaneously played into the hands of his supporters and those that feared him. He complained that the system was rigged, until it wasn't. He threatened violence at the voting booth,

just enough to keep the necessary numbers away in certain states. Trump's defense was offense, and in our world that acts more and more on crazed emotion than thought, he simply did what he needed to do to win, instead of the best thing to do at the moment. Many that voted for him will tell you that they were not voting for him. They do not support the violence that his most fervent supporters have embraced. They were voting against Hillary, not for Trump. Or at least, the idea of Hillary. The fact that so many women and minorities voted for Trump suggests that many were not listening, or simply overwhelmed by the day-to-day news of Trump's travails. And that the Democratic Party simply didn't talk to the voters they wanted to court. They simply assumed that they would get it. That the populace could see what was going on, and rationally come to the same conclusion that they had. And we, in turn, are the ones that got it.

So what comes next? Less than 45 percent of the vote is hardly a mandate, but the most extreme members of the Republican party will take it as such. Those that have been gleefully calling our last President a monkey and other names for the last eight years, will now claim that speaking against their President is treason. Scary times are ahead. Cyber-bullying is so bad now that our soon-to-be First Lady wants to take it up as her cause célèbre. She should start with the man on the other side of her bed, and those that will lie at his feet. People have wondered what it would take to unite the Congress, and in two years, Trump might just do that. Much like many did in 2008, we may look back, and start to reverse the damage of the previous years. But for now, the monster in the mirror is us, and the next wave of damage is about to begin. We are so screwed.

— J.F. Keaton



A McCrory Christmas Carol

McCrory's political career was dead, to begin with. Pat McCrory awoke alone in a graveyard at 3am on Christmas Eve, clad only in his nightgown. He looked up in horror to find a headstone emblazoned with the words "Pat McCrory. Governor, 2012 to 2016. Pain in the ass, for all eternity."

"Pat McCrory," said a voice standing in the darkness. "This was once your future. And now, your future has come to pass."

"What do you want with me?" replied McCrory.

"Much," replied the voice. A man stepped out of the darkness, looking down at McCrory. "Once, I was Jacob Marley. I voted for you in 2012, but did not in 2016."

"Hey, you're Alec Guinness. I loved you as Obi Wan Kenobi in Star Wars."

"Silence! Do not speak that name in my presence again, or I will make you serve out eternity at a Black Panther rally dressed as an Illinois Nazi. This is about the wrongs

you committed in life, Patrick McCrory, not mine."

"Why, why did you not vote for me in 2016? Did the liberal media get to you? The media's business ..."

"Mankind should have been your business!" replied Marley. "After 2008, you were so desperate to become Governor, that you were willing to become someone else to take that position. At that moment, the Pat McCrory that many knew died, and a new Pat McCrory took its place. One that did everything that those in Raleigh told you to do. All of the charity that you once held for your home city was gone. Along with their airport, the toll roads, HB2 and a list of deeds that reach out longer than the chains that you will someday wear in the afterlife."

"But the darn media ..."

"The media reported your deeds, but you signed the deeds," bellowed Marley. "Signed the order for HB2, the toll road contract, everything that Western North Carolina want-

ed, you signed it away, with your own hand. Pat McCrory, you whined about the media for years. Then you lost to Bev Perdue, and you suddenly became the media when you did the radio show with WBT. And then, when you finally became Governor, you bullied and name-called all of those that you had kissed up to when you had failed. And you *still* don't understand why the media might be annoyed with that."

"But why did they steal the election from me?"

"They did not steal the election. But in the spirit of Christmas, they gave you the gift that you really wanted. Absolution. Because of this, you will never look at yourself and realize the error of your ways. It will always be someone else's fault. And this is how you will live out your days, Pat McCrory. Sometime, you should ask the man you once mentored, Patrick Cannon, and ask him if everything he did was his doing. And did you lead him astray, the way that you led yourself down

another dark, albeit different path?"

"Those are two different things. And Patrick's prorties ..."

"It's pronounced PRI-OR-I-TEAS, you flatulent fratboy," exclaimed Marley. "Take this moment in the graveyard as a warning, Pat McCrory. Do not go back to politics. Do not go back to the media. Go and rebuild your family, your community, and the life that you once gave up. It is time to repent, or choose again the path of darkness that will lead you back to me." Marley then pushed McCrory into an open grave. McCrory screamed as he reached through the darkness, and soon found his bedpost, which is where he awoke, shivering.

McCrory looked at the clock. It was 6am, Christmas morning. The spirit had returned him, just as he said he would. McCrory rose from his bed, went to his phone, and called WBT Radio, looking to see if he could get Keith Larsen's old time slot.

— J.F. Keaton

Obama announces 'up yours' Christmas

At a special event today at the White House, President Barack Obama announced the theme of this year's holiday season would be "Up Yours Christmas."

"We spent a lot of time with this decision," said the President. "After a lot of deliberation and careful thought, we realized that nothing reflects the spirit of the past year, or

spoke to the mood of the country more than proclaiming 2016 the year of the Up Yours Christmas. We were going to proclaim it the year of the "F--k You Christmas", but some Tangents readers complained that our last issue had too much language, so f--k that."

Adults will join in the streets, join hands, and yell "Up Yours!" at the top of their lungs.

All across America, school children will be singing carols with a candle in one hand, and a raised middle finger in the other. Special pillows will be sold with Ho Ho Up Yours Ho emblazoned on the front. The Rockettes have also announced that Up will be tattooed on the back of one of their legs, and Yours tattooed on the other, so that they can

display the phrase during their famous kick line.

Obama concluded the press conference by saying, "And to those of you that think that a pasty-orange mental patient can lead the free world better than I can, Merry Christmas, Good Night, And Up Yours to all."

— J.F. Keaton

The Wizard of Oz aka The Wizard of Ahhhs

Dorothy is a young, sexually repressed girl who likes to get around. On her bicycle. She likes to occasionally stop and straddle a fence pole and sing about whatever is over the rainbow. Why, oh why, can't I? Soon, she runs into the old sexually repressed woman in town, who really has a thing for small animals. Dorothy is not into sharing her dog in a threesome and runs back home just in time for a large, phallic shaped tornado to arrive and rock her world. In all the excitement, Dorothy gets knocked ... on the head and passes out on the bed, of course having no memory of what just happened.

Dorothy walks out of the house with a renewed sexual awakening. Suddenly ev-

everything seems brighter, like her world is now in color. She immediately discovers that her new understanding of possibilities comes with little people and women under the house with really kinky shoes. The cyclone has also brought about an awakening in the old woman, who shows up dressed in all black, acting more domineering and also wants those kinky shoes. For some reason, Dorothy wants to leave all of this and go back home. Then a giant woman floating around in a thought bubble arrives to tell her about a really big wizard that she can find via the big, long yellow brick road, and Dorothy takes off immediately.

Along the way, Dorothy runs into men with erectile dysfunction problems. Their

straw isn't strong enough, they don't have the nerve, or they don't like women taking their apples. She is intrigued when she meets Steely Dan — I mean, the Tin Man, who like most men, works better when he's extremely lubricated. The trip is going fine until Dorothy and her friends discover opiates that make them sleep. Unfortunately, the poppies are more like brown acid, and the flying monkeys show up to take them all away.

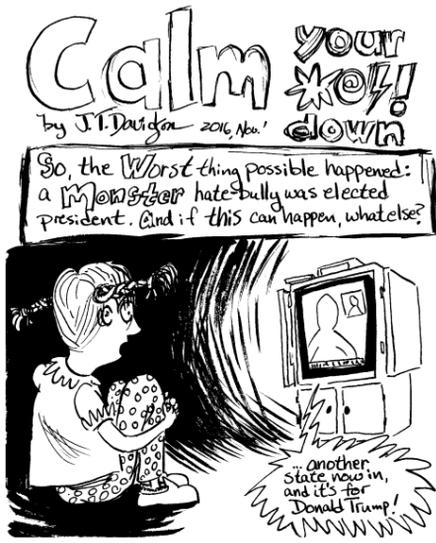
Dorothy and her friends go through all kinds of S&M rituals led by the recently-renamed bondage queen Wicked Witch of the West, who really likes to scream "Surrender, Dorothy!" at the top of her lungs and run around with a broom between her legs. The

fun ends when Dorothy throws water on the Wicked Witch, which causes all of her plastic surgery to melt. Dorothy and her friends then finally get to see the Wizard of Oz, who appears very large upon first glance. However, once they peer behind the curtain, they discover that the wizard isn't as big as he said he was. Saving face and tiny hands, the Wizard gives Dorothy a big balloon ride, promising to take her up, up and away. Dorothy then awakens to discover that all of her friends in Oz look just like her relatives and farm hands, which makes her really wonder about the gene pool in Kansas.

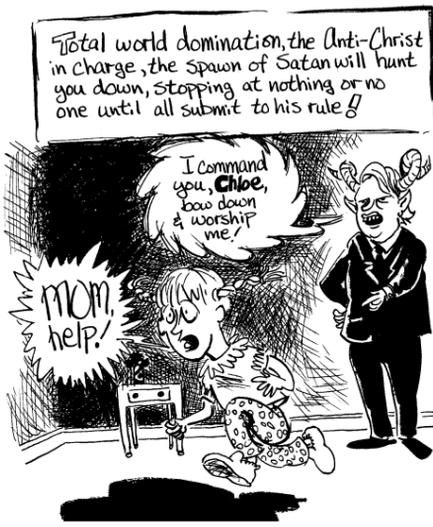
Next episode: Anything by Gilbert & Sullivan, or Lewis Carroll. Enough said.

— J.F. Keaton

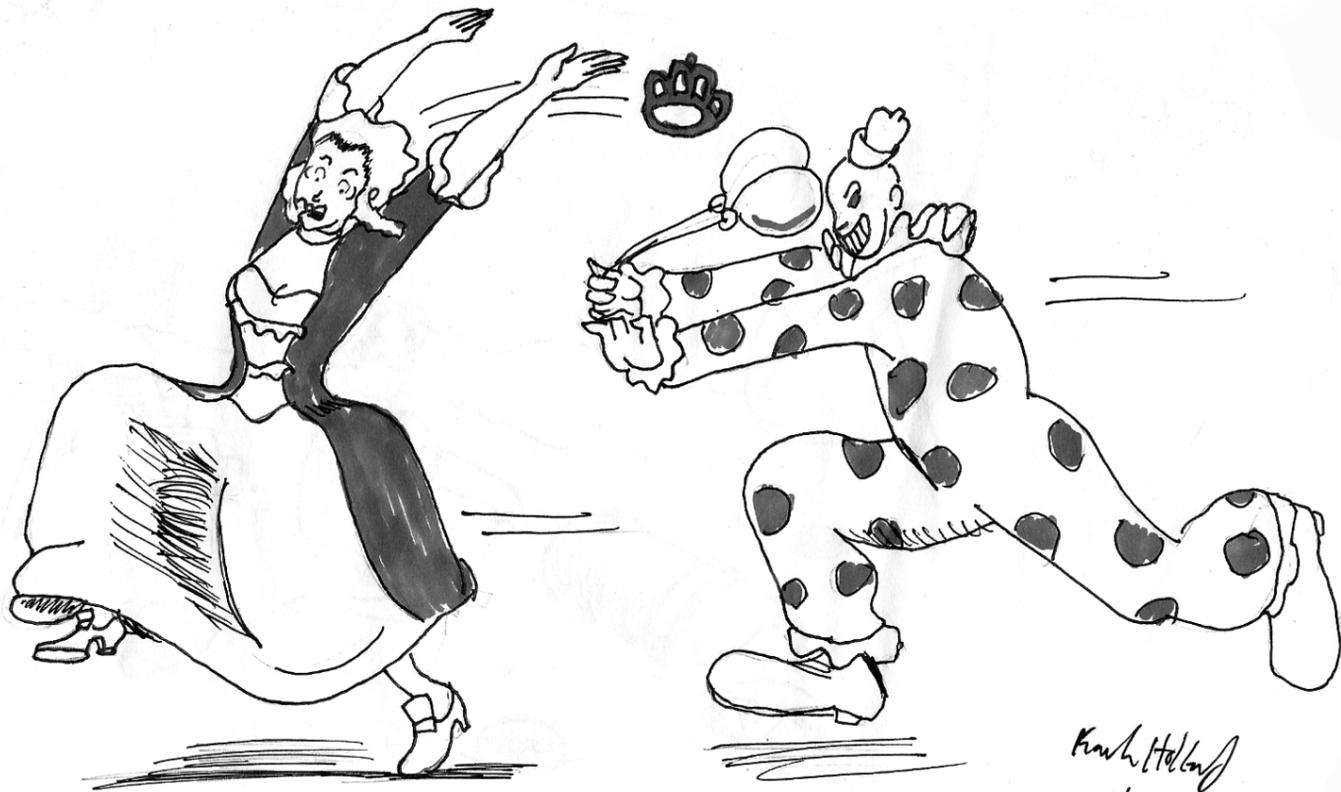
HUMOR



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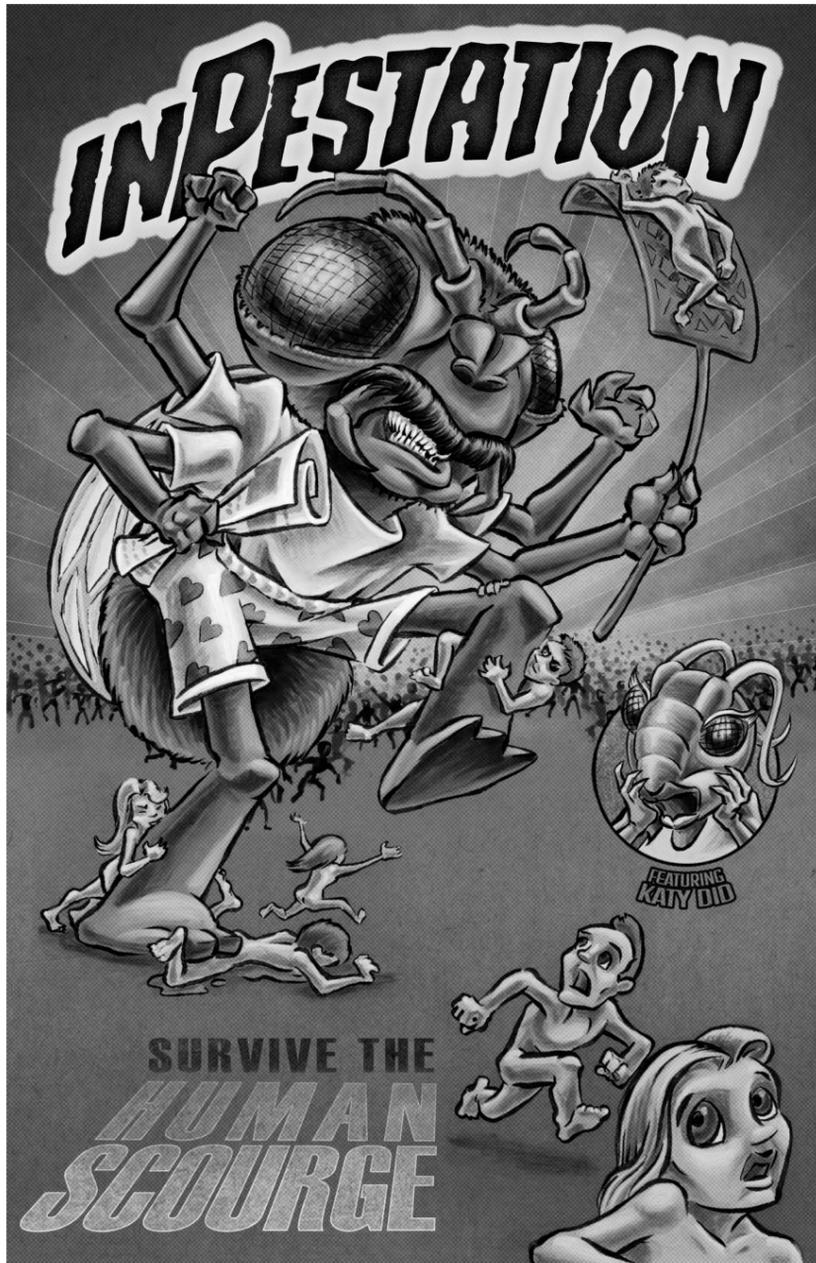
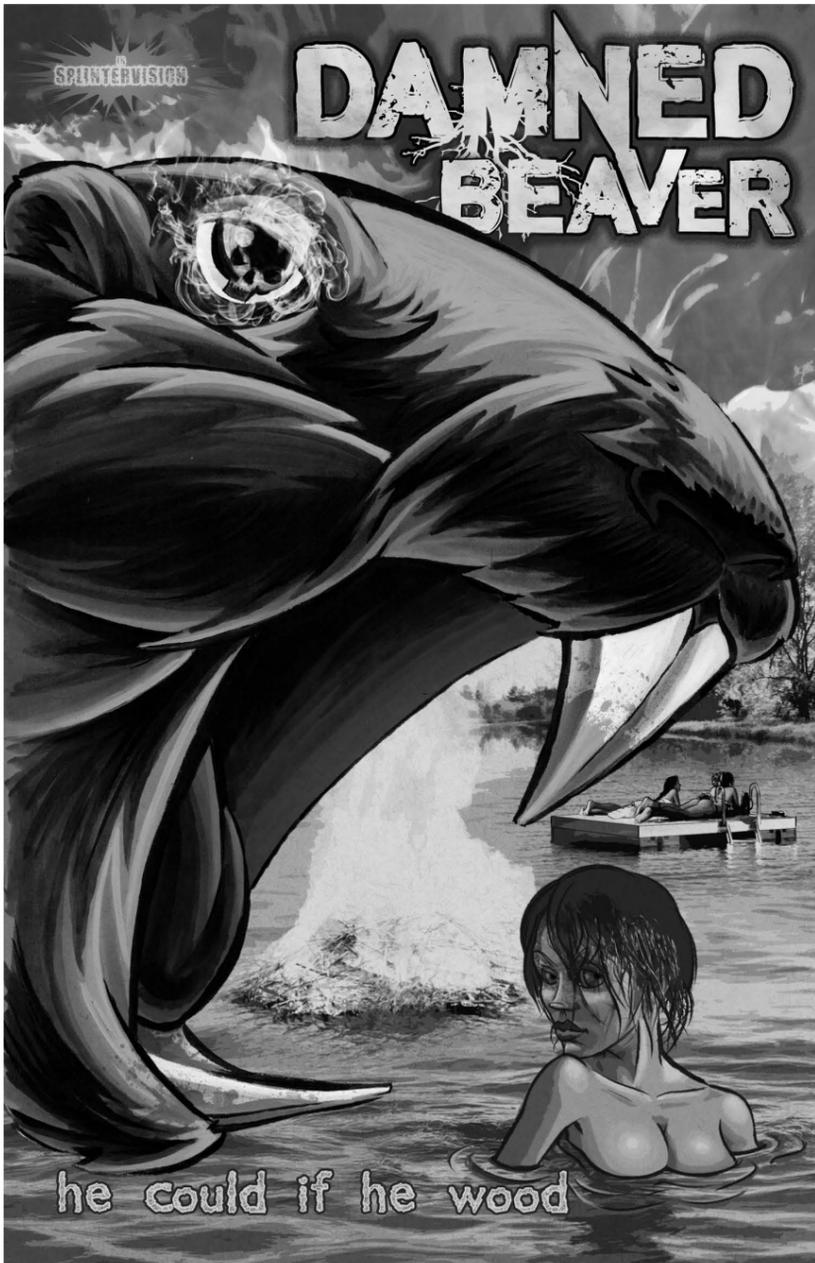
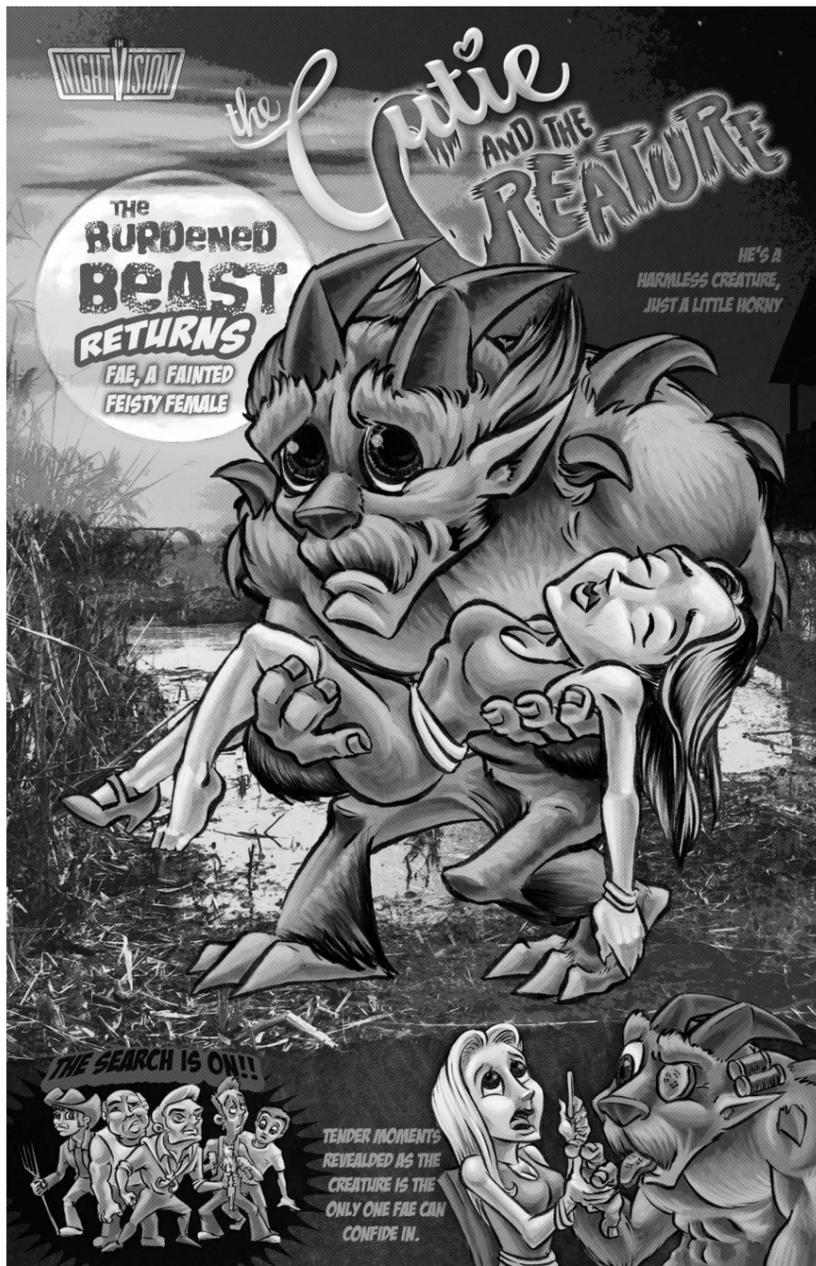
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HUMOR



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Jonathan Rosenbaum

The Comedy Zone

COMEDY TVLINE CENTRAL
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JAMIE KENNEDY
 DECEMBER 1-3
 entourage
 FOX

DECEMBER 8-10
JOSH BLUE
 delete
 YouTube

JEFF DYE
 BETTER CALL SAUL
 DECEMBER 29th - JAN 1st
 & NYE CELEBRATION
 NBC

KICK OFF THE NEW YEAR

FINESSE MITCHELL
 JANUARY 5-7
 SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE
 NBC

JANUARY 19th - 22nd
ANJELAH JOHNSON
 "BON QUI QUI"
 MAD TV
 FOX

JOSH GONDELMAN
 ONE NIGHT ONLY / DECEMBER 4th
 LAST WEEK TONIGHT
 HBO
 JOHN OLIVER

JOE MACHI
 COMIC STANDING
 DECEMBER 15-17
 NBC

JEFF DYE
 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY
 JAN 1st
 BIG SHOWS 7:00 & 10:00
 NBC

Kevin Hart's Plastic Cup Boyz
 SPECIAL EVENT
 JANUARY 12-15
 FOX

Big Jay Oakerson
 January 26-28
 AMY SCHUMER
 THIS IS NOT HAPPENING
 SIRIUS X1 SATELLITE RADIO
 W/ LANE AITEL

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