

UpstateLIVE

FREE

NEW YORK STATE MUSIC GUIDE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1 (#31)

JANUARY 17 - FEBRUARY 29, 2012



ROOTS COLLIDER



Photo by Joe Koch

STEPHEN KELLOGG AND THE SIXERS



Photo by Richard Martin

NEW YORK FUNK EXCHANGE



UPSTATE METAL CRY TO THE BLIND

DIVOT



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APRIL 10 - SAY ANYTHING *HALL
APRIL 10 - JAMES HUNTER *CLUB
APRIL 20 - FUN

UpstateLIVE

VOLUME 5 - ISSUE 1 # 3 1

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UpstateLIVE Music Guide™ is owned and operated by
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MUSIC FESTIVALS
POLITICS
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SOCIAL AWARENESS LIFE

+ CONCERT REVIEW +
**HOT BUTTERED RUM
AND CORNMEAL**

12/02/2011 - JILLIAN'S - ALBANY, NY

BY TABITHA CLANCY AND PETE MASON

While there is a bluegrass presence in the Northeast, sometimes it seems as though we never get bands to come through the area. Yonder Mountain String Band has been making yearly stops here and Bela Fleck comes to The Egg once a year but that's about it. Well, aside from Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, one of the biggest in the country, being held 45 minutes south of Albany every July but touring wise, it can sometimes feel as though there is a bluegrass drought, but when it rains, it pours. In a span of 5 weeks, Yonder Mountain String Band, The Infamous Stringdusters and now Hot Buttered Rum and Cornmeal have all graced the stages of the Capital District. The latter two took the stage at Jillian's on S. Pearl St. in Albany for a night of pickin' and dancin'.

HOT BUTTERED RUM BY TABITHA CLANCY

Opening for Cornmeal December 2, 2011 was Hot Buttered Rum. The five fellows that formed the electrified acoustic band from San Francisco rarely visit the Northeast. Indeed we were in for a treat. Playing hard they brought their west coast flare. It would seem most modern bluegrass bands develop a niche. As if the San Fran influence wasn't enough for these fine players, the extensive musical training of their collective backgrounds has manifested with an infusion of a slight, not-too-much, not-too-little, element of jazz.

The unification of musical styling creates space within the jams where Erik Yates can throw in a flute solo, or Aaron Redner can fill with a violin improvisational piece. And surely, each band member makes an equal contribution to the integrated and overall sound. As a relatively unknown band in these parts, they appropriately adapted their set list. While most of the songs were new to the crowd, they included new songs from the album, *Limbs Akimbo*. Without skipping a beat they head for the studio this month for another recording. Steve Berlin (Los Lobos) will be producing the new album. Appealing to the captivated audience, they tossed in a few covers such as The Band's "Up on Cripple Creek." A good musician knows when his crowd is unfamiliar with their sound, so he will include a familiar tune or two. An up beat tempo with a solo bass and a jam stuck in the middle, the crowd went wild. They were sold on Hot Buttered Rum and ready for Cornmeal.

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CORNMEAL BY PETE MASON

Cornmeal has been playing Jamgrass for more than ten years, playing nearly 150 shows a year and spending a majority of their time on the road. The effort has paid off, with a fanbase that stretches coast to coast and following them whenever they pay a visit to a nearby town. Wavy Dave Burlingame and Chris Gangi remarked that "It's great to be back on east coast, great to see some old friends, we've got a whole crew out here, tonight's pretty exciting" before heading to play for the faithful gathered downstairs. The quintet's danceable-bluegrass sound is augmented with a gift for improvisation that allows the band to explore the potential their compositions hold, as well as create a vibe among the room that motivates fans to their feet and gets hips swaying. Tonight was no exception. Starting out the gate with *Johnny Put Down Your Gun*, the crowd rose back up after taking a break from the excellent Hot Buttered Rum set. *River Gap* has a foot-stompin' ho-down beat to it, encouraging fans to sing along with Wavy Dave on banjo and vocals with the catchy lyrics:

"Well it's three long miles till I hit the river gap, slippin' down the highway sleepin' in the back, Got a hand on the wheel and another on the phone, 30 more days til I'm comin' back home."

The song accelerates at times with gusto, moving the tempo up a notch and taking time to air out the song before returning to the composed sections. Other solid highlights from the evening included *Callin' Me Back Home* and *The Road* were invigorating with intensity and put the Jam in Jamgrass by extending the songs to fit their potential.

Speaking with Nat from Hot Buttered Rum while Cornmeal got started, he shared a preview of the encore possibilities. Playing a series of dates together, HBR and Cornmeal are old friends and collaboration is a natural occurrence between bluegrass bands. "Today we had a rehearsal/cocktail hour and worked on some songs together for the encore." I kept that in mind and waited for the emergence of all five members of Hot Buttered Rum to take the stage with Cornmeal. The amalgamation of **Hot Buttered Cornmeal** produced a trio of songs in the encore. Starting with *Rockin' in the Free World* by Neil Young and Crazy Horse, it took only a few lines before the crowd recognized the bluegrass beat that took over this rocker. *Rain your Light on Me* was dedicated to Linda, a local fan from Albany who was gracious as she danced to the song in the front row. *Long Journey Home* again featured all eight musicians onstage and rotated in Lucas from HBR on drums. All took a solo during each of the sections of the songs, playing with passion into the mics and squeezing the last bit of energy out of the crowd before sending them into the night.

The Capital District falls short on presenting bands that bring the oh-so-good, but once delivered, these types of bands are more than well received. When all was played and sung, the room was on fire, the crowd, out of breath and sweaty. This was a success.

[Words by Tabitha Clancy and Pete Mason]



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Fri Feb 17th Subsoil w/ Sloppy Joe and Da Juice (The Jukebox)

Fri Feb 24th Jatoba w/ T.A.O. (Dubland)

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Fri March 9th Subsoil w/ Funktional Flow (Dubland)

Fri March 16th RootsCollider w/ Psychedelphia (Dubland)

Fri March 23rd Free Booty Institute w/ House on a Spring (The Haunt)

Fri April 13th Aqueous w/ Twiddle (Dubland)

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+ CONCERT REVIEW +
UPSTATELIVE HOLIDAY PARTY
 12/29/2011 - WATER STREET MUSIC HALL -
 ROCHESTER, NY

BY KAYLA MACLACHLAN

There is something magical about the holiday season. As we close in on a year gone past, we open our hands and hearts to the unpredictable colors and patterns of the road ahead. Good food, drinks, friends, and family bring a sense of warmth to these otherwise frigid months, and we rejoice in what matters most. Here at UpstateLIVE, the season marks a time to celebrate the end (and beginning) of another successful year of supporting and promoting local music. And it goes without saying that if music, Upstate, and HerbyOne are involved, it's going to be a party.

Young, Buffalo-based prog rockers, Aqueous, shared the stage with Rochester juggernaut The Buddhahood, and eclectic dance-party hosts Rubblebucket, providing high quality entertainment for the UpstateLIVE Holiday Party, December 29th at the Water Street Music Hall in Rochester. Hosted by HerbyOne, the holiday extravaganza showcased NY's up-and-coming, along with more nostalgic, reputable sounds, providing a true reflection of the unique scene we've built around the Upstate region over the years.

"The show with Rubblebucket and The Buddhahood through UpstateLIVE was super memorable and one we totally loved," said Mike Gantzer, lead guitarist for the band Aqueous, who performed as the party's opening act. Hitting Water Street's stage for the first time, the boys of **Aqueous** set the tone of the evening with a high-energy performance that showcased several of their originals. "We had a fantastic time opening the night up, the energy from the crowd was fantastic right from the get-go and made for a really fun set," commented Gantzer. Much like Umphrey's McGee, the band has a hodge-podge rock of a sound, yet they draw on inspirations from other "jam favorites," like the Grateful Dead, Phish, and Moe, and the influence is clearly heard. While still a few days shy of New Years Eve, toward the end of the set, the band found room to tease in Auld Lange Syne, gearing the crowd up for the New Year and the anticipation of what's to come for the band in 2012. The talent of the band is undeniable; impressive progressions and complicated signatures hone in on their potential, and once they lock in on their sound, they'll storm in as a force to be reckoned with – both throughout the Upstate scene and beyond.

Following Aqueous' set, I found myself drawn in from the smell of the pizzas being baked in the club section of Water Street and sat down with a couple friends for a brew and a quick bite. (Aside from the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco, I've never been to a venue that sells decent food during shows, so I commend Water Street on their ingenuity in this regard.) I was roused from my seat from a unique blend of percussion and horns permeating from the stage next door – and heading back into the main section of the venue, I couldn't help but find myself emulating the unstoppable energy from the heart-

warming, familiar sounds of **The Buddhahood**. When I think of a holiday happening, more often than not I think of family and, as their name implies, The Buddhahood is just that. This Rochester-based eight-piece has a synergy unlike any other – their heavy emphasis on percussion, mixed with the playful sounds of the trumpet and sax are complimented with steady rhythms from the guitar and bass. Their vocals and lyrics are just as light hearted as the music itself, and in the end they create a sound and presence that is part of us all. The Buddhahood served as the perfect precursor to Rubblebucket, in that by the end of the set, there wasn't an idle soul in the place. And closing with lyrics like, "doesn't it make you feel so good when you're dancing," it's no wonder why, with the presence of The Buddhahood, the party was now in full swing.

Taking a breather from the heightened energy of The Buddhahood's set, the crowd waited anxiously, yet patiently for the much-anticipated performance from the Ver-Brook-Ston (Vermont/Brooklyn/Boston) touring act we have come to love and know as **Rubblebucket**. With the release of a new album, *Omega La La*, and an expanded national repertoire, the band has created quite the name for themselves in the past year, and as I scanned the crowd pre-set, I couldn't help but notice a stark difference in the colorful pattern surrounding the stage. Many of the attendees, I realized, were very young in age – the fact that I felt "old" was disheartening, but nevertheless it was humbling, for it centered in on the co-existential space locked into Rubblebucket's unique sound.

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Watching Rubblebucket perform live is more than just a concert, rather it is a theatrical act. With colorful props and over-active kinesthetics, Rubblebucket creates a concert-going experience unlike any other. Not only are they, arguably, one of the most solidified, talented touring acts to come out of the Upstate region, they know how to speak to a crowd – infusing eclectic worldly sounds with a heightened sense of energy and musical integrity that keeps fans on the balls of their feet, moving to the beat, overly satisfied with the intensity and virtuosity of the performance, but deep down secretly wanting more. *“Their songs are so well crafted and eclectic that I am constantly surprised, yet equally familiar with each melody,”* said Syracuse-native Phil Smolinski, who made the trek to Rochester for a chance to catch the well-rumored Rubblebucket live.

Hitting the stage shortly before midnight, the band primarily showcased songs from their new album, but older tunes from their days of touring and recording as *Rubblebucket Orchestra* made their way into the set, creating space to speak to both fans old and new. Mid-set, giant child-like constructed robots danced through the crowd, high-fiving fans and moving

to the earthy rhythms of Rubblebucket’s enchanting sound. The band showcased a new song, “More Deeper Rage,” and although the crowd wasn’t overly impressed, the energy returned when they busted into fan favorite, “Came Out of a Lady” and the party was once again in full swing. Of course no Rubblebucket performance is complete unless fore-fronting power-woman Annakalmia Trevor, Alex Troth, and Adam Dotson work their way into the crowd. Joined by their horns and robot friends, the band members danced throughout the energized crowd, transcending fan-performer boundaries that are often so stiffly set during live performances.

“Working with Herby and everyone involved with Upstate-LIVE has been such a great experience this entire year, and we have really felt the love and support on all levels” reflects Gantzer. I can’t help but echo his love and appreciation as I, too, reflect on, yet again, another memorable Upstate performance and the opportunity to be part of such a magical, community-driven scene. I’m looking forward to what’s to come in 2012. See you at the shows!

[Words by Kayla MacLachlan]

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MARCH 7



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W/ HOUSE ON A SPRING

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THE VIEW FROM HERE

BY GREG JACKSON

The View From Here has some catching up to do! Most of these submissions should have been in our last issue but an unexpected household move threw a wrench into those gears. I apologize to the artists and hope this will make it up to them!

+ALBUM REVIEWS+



FORMERLY UN-NAMED - "WARNING! CATCHY TUNES..."

Formerly Un-Named has released their second cd, challenging the idea of a thematic album and throwing their guts on the floor in the process. They bring in a nice group of guests including *Joe Altier*, *Robyn Stockdale*, *Mike Walls* and *Tim "SullyFong" Sullivan* to enhance their heavy self-expose.

The opener "Overtime" sets the tone with *Craig Costello's* solid vocals riding over the crunch chords of *Dave Springall* and the rhythm sections driving bottom end provided by *Dave Huyck's* bass lines and *Eric Field's* timekeeping.

"Just Joe" Altier jumps in on "I Am Alright" as the protagonist confronts his own individuality deciding to be accepting of himself rather than conform. The journey ensues with "The Beaten Path" as the band slips in a little grit and funk feel, traveling music so to speak. The acoustic guitar brings a different feel here and takes you to another genre stretch, which is pretty cool.

"Springfield Badger Hike" is a piece in four movements starting with "Pickin'" leading the listener off into the country feel of the suite. "Moonshine Valentine" goes at least a bit over the top as the story gets a bit hazy, but perhaps that's the point. Falling for the prettiest girl in the bar while under the influence only to have her taken away by a local yokel, the "Honky-Tonk Hero", the corn-fed boy keeping the corn-fed girl on the hometown track. "Hell Toupee" loosens the story once again, is this self-descriptive or another turn in the road for the protagonist? We'll see as the character returns to the city.

"Minimum Wage Woman" features the sultry vocals of *Robyn Stockdale* in a call and response setting with *Craig's* character. Careful, it gets a bit steamy here! The band grooves along underneath with the horns provided by *Craig* and guest *Mike Walls* on sax. The extra layers of music really fatten this track, *Mike "SullyFong" Sullivan's* *Fender Rhodes* and guitar filling out the sound with the horns and *Stockdale's* vocals. "I May

Offend" opens up the disillusionment of the character as he expresses his newfound posture, in your face, obnoxious and self-serving.

The "Lumbersaur" suite opens with the industrial grind of "Drill Hammer", pushing the definition of a tool, which can be a metaphor as well. It smashes away at the listener, driving the mentality of the character home. "Love Her And Leave Her" paints an interesting beginning, then expresses the real feelings of desperation and fear of commitment when you can't decide whether to stay or go or fumble along in disenchantment. *Joe Altier's* vocals rip through the track, his distinctive voice finding a place to shine through as they usually do in whatever he does. "Tug The Plug" ends this suite of songs hard and fast. This seems to be the true comfort zone of the band, raw and exposed.

The spacey opening to "Garage" hints at another genre-bend by the writers while setting the tone for the ending, but leaving it to the listener to figure it all out. Ambiguity can either be strength or a weakness depending on the strength of the material. Oblique is fine and actually compelling in most cases, here it seems the protagonist has either lost his way or is gender-changing. A bit tough to follow here is all I can really say.

"Minimum Wage Woman" (reprise) expresses the true superficial posture of the character, compelled by his self-satisfaction rather than wanting to go deeper. Although he finds in this case he's met his match as he's played as hard as he's playing. He'd like to think he has the upper hand, but like so many relationships, he's mistaken.

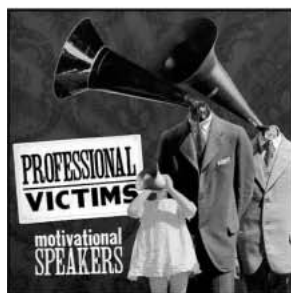
"The Title Track" starts off like *Primus* bizarre, syncopated, semi-industrial and nearly directionless unless it's trying to be the voices in the protagonist's brain. Handling the pictures of missing women from the garage ceiling, preparing to add to the list. I'm absolutely sure I'm wrong here, but who knows besides the writer?

Overall this release is strong musically and vocally, the guests are outstanding, the composition/story is interesting, but a bit much to follow. Suites of songs need to relate on a more comprehensible level in order to compel the listener back again and again, imho the only weakness on this cd. Quite well done production-wise, *WARNING! Catchy Tunes...* is a very good local release. It attempts to go places not often trodden with the scene and that in itself is a major accomplishment. Well done guys!

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[Words by Greg Jackson]





PROFESSIONAL VICTIMS "MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS"

Professional Victims have released their much anticipated follow up to 2009's debut "Penalties and Punishment"! The trio of *Ashley Cox* (vox and keys), *Shawn Sullivan* (guitar and vox) and *Evan Figiel* (drums) with *Chris Sweet* on

bass let this one rip right out of the gate, "*One Nation Under Fraud*" is a fine example of the steps forward this outfit continues to make. With most able hands on the console, *Jeff "Mole" Moleski @ Moletrax East* and *Jocko @ More Sound* this and "*Love Suicide*" (the only track not penned by Sullivan/Cox) co-written by *Corey Koniz* jump out as potential singles. The latter has an "*Attractions*" feel with the keyboard sound and grab you by the neck hook, fantastic stuff, but not unusual for them.

Honestly there isn't a track here that couldn't carry the weight of being a single, each expresses an individual feel while still being unmistakably theirs. Ashley's distinctive voice provides such a great diversity to the overall picture, "*Tiny Harmless Storm*" layers her voice over itself so smoothly that the breathy finish makes you want the song to go on.

"*Worth The Time*" almost feels, dare I say, anthemic as Shawn's guitar rips open the chorus. "*Wrong All The Right*" just flat out rocks, you can imagine a crowd just going wild dancing and singing along. This songwriting team is such a brilliant combination, well beyond what others would turn into cliché, they turn it into a hook-fest and thrive on each other. It's quite phenomenal really.

"*All Time Heavyweight*" casts a darker emphasis, remaining oblique like a well crafted lyric should, leaving the listener to decide where the heart of it comes from. The chorus, with Ashley and Shawn harmonizing paints desperation and anger with a large brush while keeping the potential for neck injury alive with it's driving rhythm.

"*Spider In The Birdhouse*" is a cool twist, with Ashley throwing so many analogies you'll miss the best of the song if you spend too much time dissecting it and it's far too good for that.

"*Relapse*" is a straight rave-up rocker with Shawn's vocal straining to release the feelings he's expressing, I can't wait to hear this one live, much like the rest of this release, these songs are fantastic in headphones, but surely will explode in a live format.

"*Magic and Miracles*" is another great example of how well Ashley and Shawn's voices compliment each other and add different emotional facets while still binding the original thought together. The dynamic rhyming structure alone is worth the listen, this is pervasive with Pro Vics, a huge strength.

"*Mirror Highway*" and "*Sinking Ceiling*" give Ashley tremendous range for her vocal skills as the cd closes. The latter is

beautifully crafted, almost a salute to where this individual voice found itself and flowered. Homage is a great fuel for the fire that burns in this band, very impressive work that flies above what most offer. The genuine heart and blood they put into their music is completely reflected in the beauty of the disc as a whole.

I just messaged Shawn that they should be extremely proud of their work and I'm telling you all you're missing out if you don't own it.

More info at: www.professionalvictims.com. Check it out and pass it along.

[Words by Greg Jackson]

MARK DOYLE AND THE MANIACS

SbN Management and Media and Mark Doyle and the Maniacs announce

procedures for application/audition at both **bass/vocals** and **second guitar/vocals** positions. There will be no "open" auditions, auditions will be held individually after initial screening.

Vocals are a must! A multi-instrumental second guitarist with skills on keyboards and/or harp is highly desirable. Applicants MUST have the chops, gear, positive, pro attitude and look to fit the band. Please provide current bio with info on who you've played with and are playing with, as well as how flexible your "day job" is. A current picture and a youtube or similar link to video of you performing live is mandatory. MP3s or a CD featuring examples of your playing and singing in the British Blues style is also strongly suggested.

Applications can be sent to The Maniacs management, at management@twcny.rr.com. Applicants will be contacted for a phone interview prior to auditions.

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NOTES FROM THE EDGE

BY ERIK JENSEN

+INNER VIEWS+



New York Funk Exchange - Photo by Richard Martin

RAY HOLMAN AND JAMEY ZEBRACK OF NEW YORK FUNK EXCHANGE

Hailing from Brooklyn, but with roots in the booming scene of Boston; the New York Funk Exchange has grown into one of the most exciting acts in the Northeast. The band's uncanny ability to fuse elements of rock, soul, jazz, R&B, and funk, is right up there with some of the biggest in the scene. I was highly excited to catch up with Ray Holman and Jamey Zebrack to talk about the humble beginnings and immediate future of the band. If you are not familiar with this band, check them out now! They are a smorgasbord of grooves and hooks.

Erik Jensen: *I was wondering if you could tell me about the band got together in the beginning?*

Ray Holman: Myself (drums), Jamey Z (keys) and Fox (bass) were playing together in another band that was breaking up in 2007. I met Fox years before that, at a club I was playing at in an earlier band. Fox and I met Jamey Z through a Craig's List ad in 2005. After the three of us jammed with some local guys for a few months in 2007, Jamey Z brought in Matty G (guitar) and Serena (vocals). They both went to Berklee with Jamey and were good friends. Fox worked w/ Nick Martino (trumpet) at a local music store and he joined after our first few shows. Mo (trombone) and Mike (sax) joined about year later, fall 2008. We met them through Fox and his wife, who went to school with them. We threw them right into the fire and they were playing shows before they even knew the names of the shows. As far as RJ (trumpet) joining the band, he's the last to join. He's been in the band for about a year, but I

haven't a clue how he joined. I just looked up from the drums one day and saw four horn players. Just kidding!

EJ: *Jamey, I see that you are a past student of the great Berklee. Tell me about being able to attend this great school, and the opportunities it has afforded you along the way?*

Jamey Zebrack: Berklee College of music was an amazing school to be at, mostly because it is in Boston and is surrounded by college partys and music clubs. This let's you get your feet wet and develop your sound in a friendly/heady atmosphere. So we definitely cut our feet jamming at the local bars (All Asia, Middle East, Johnny D's, Reel Bar, Wally's) and people in Boston love to hear bands open up and jam.

EJ: *I know you probably have many, but who were your biggest influences in regards to how you were going to approach the project. Who are some your favorite bands to play with?*

RH: When we started playing with just the three of us, Soulive was a big influence, but our influences have definitely grown and have changed as we have grown and gotten older. Individually, I have to say Galactic/Stanton Moore, and many of the New Orleans musicians are major influences for me as a musician. I try to make it down to Jazz Fest as much as possible to get my fill of that sound. I'm sure that every person in this band would have different influences. Collectively, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, J5, Prince, The JB's, Lettuce, and probably a dozen I'm missing. We were able to play with Fred Wesley once and that was a lot of fun. We've done a few shows w/ Melvin Seals and JGB and that's always a good time. Whenever we play with Erin Barra's band, Serena will jump on stage for a song or two. Serena and Erin went to school together and used to write together too.

EJ: *Funkonomic Stimulus Plan is a great record... How was the recording process, and what edge do you best possess when going into the studio?*

JZ: The album was a lot of fun to make. We did most of it in 3 sessions at Chung King studios in NYC. The rest was overdubbed at my home studio in Brooklyn and Avatar studio in Hells Kitchen, NYC. I studied engineering and production at Berklee, where I learned the tricks on how to get the sounds and the takes that I need to make the record. This saved us a lot of time and money.

EJ: *What do you have planned in the new year? Any studio time? Touring Plans?*

JZ: Yes, definitely studio time. We went into the studio a few times in 2011 to put down some tracks. We'll finish it up this year and hopefully have a new record by the summer. We'll try to perform between 65 to 75 shows this year. That's about normal for us. Nothing planned out west yet but we will be pushing into cities we haven't tapped yet. We'll be in Pittsburgh for our show time in February and will be hitting up the southeast. New York is still a primary market though.

[Words by Erik Jensen, Photo by Richard Martin]



Roots Collider (Wil McKenna: right)

WIL MCKENNA OF ROOTS COLLIDER

Roots Collider is the embodiment of a band that refuses to rest on its laurels. With the release of their recent EP, *Supernova*, the band is taking strides towards pushing their wares to the next level of the game! In a recent chat with Wil McKenna, I was able to delve deeper into all things Collider, and see what the band has in store for the immediate future.

Erik Jensen: *Tell me about the recording process with your recent release, **Supernova**?*

Wil McKenna: Well Erik, this time around was like greeting an old friend and picking up the conversation where you last left it. It literally felt like we were all coming back home to the Bunker Studios in Williamsburgh/Brooklyn, NY. We recorded everything again on reel to reel analogue tape and then transferred the recordings to the programs within the computer afterwards.

EJ: *How did things differ with the recording of this album, when compared to the first time around?*

WM: This was our second recording experience at Bunker with John Davis (of Jojo Mayer's Nerve) at the helm. The main difference from our first recording "EP" was that we knew each other by now, the four of us and John. This connection made for a quicker more efficient process within pre and post-production. Basically it was like going to work. Our collaborative ideas mesh completely in regards to the aesthetics of song structure, and John has a wide sonic palette to choose from in regards to approaches on what effects should be on certain layers of melodic phrasing and passages. It should be noted that the wide range of analogue effects pedals at Bunker is nothing short of champion status.

EJ: *How was the overall experience?*

WM: How was the overall experience? We love Nerve and John so much. Getting to record in your favorite international touring band's studio is quite an honor for us. We'll be headed back there in February 2012 to record our next record. We're also very fortunate to have a relative of the band (Dexter's cousin Desmond) with a house in Queens to stay at during our sessions down there, so everything is quite comfortable. Plus we also have multiple friends stopping by the studio while

we're recording offering their critiques of the music too which is insightful when your ears have been listening to the same songs over and over again for hours on end. Inside Bunker itself there's a great "smokers" lounge, a shower, a kitchen, couches to crash on and the internet, so we really are coming home in a sense with all the creature comforts. We will also be debuting at Desmond's Tavern in NYC after our first day/night of recording, as to capitalize on our new and old friends down there, and actualizing the experience to its fullest capacity.

EJ: *I understand the band has been in contact with a couple of different management firms?*

WM: We have one very popular booking agency on the West Coast that is slightly interested in us right now, and another strong jam band booking agency from the South that may sign us in March of 2012. We just received word from a smaller less-known agency in Chicago, IL as well. All three have expressed slight to moderate interest. Only time will tell. As for now, RootsCollider remains completely In-House in all endeavors of Booking, Promotions, and Management. I realized a long time ago that no one would care about us more than us.

EJ: *What do you have coming up with shows in new markets?*

WM: 2012 will see us branching out to Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, Chicago and Asheville primarily. We look forward to returning to all of our favorite cities and venues in NY state as well. And we are eager to entertain at new festivals and return to previous ones for the summer.

EJ: *Tell me about the many successes within the year that have been of major significance?*

WM: In 2011 we were able to get a van and a trailer, which is super huge in regards to getting your product out to different markets in an economical fashion. We also received small acknowledgement from Relix Magazine which was exciting. One of our greatest achievements as a band though was getting on the same page artistically and musically. The music has to be paramount to everything else, for it's the very thing that brings you everywhere in regards to its exposure. Although we are primarily instrumental, we continue to pack out venues in cities where we are popular. Our music is appearing to take on life of its own at certain shows via The Grateful Dead and Phish philosophy. Where we are popular, in cities like Rochester and Buffalo NY, a shakedown is starting to develop outside the venue. A community is starting to form. Our fans have become known as "Colliders." We owe a great deal of our hometown success to our friends Chris Collins and Patrick Gaffney of RIPROC who have supported, nurtured, and helped us become what we are today in Rochester. We are forever indebted.

EJ: *Things seem to be going well in the "gearing up" department. I was wondering if you could elaborate on the new direction in approach?*

WM: We spent so long making sure our songs were air tight in the hard rock fashion for performance that we negated some of our improvisational talent and roots. Now that we have a

powerful launch pad and landing pad for these creative structures, we are starting to improvise again!!! Which is bringing the sound to a whole new level!!!

EJ: *You have played some really good shows this year, with some highly recognized bands. Tell me about the experiences, and which ones were your favorites?*

WM: We've been blessed to share the stage with some of our personally favorite musicians and bands. In 2011, we supported internationally known bands such as: Dub Trio (Matisyahu's band), Conspirator (members of the Disco Biscuits, Raq, New Deal, and Lotus), BioDiesel (Johnny Rabb's band w/ Clay Parnell of Brother's Past), Telepath (members of ArchneMesis), Rubblebucket, and Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad to name a few. We've also supported internationally known DJ's such as: Kill the Noise (featured on Korn's new record with Skrillex), DieselBoy, and 12th Planet.

EJ: *Tell me a little about this all star record you are going to be showing up on here?*

WM: My old friend and bandmate Jon Petronzio (Keyboardist) from John Brown's Body is currently recording an ALL STAR super reggae/funk record in Ithaca, NY and Boston, MA. that will include some of your readers favorite musicians from: Soulive, Lettuce, John Brown's Body, Sim Redmond Band, RootsCollider, Mosaic Foundation, the Big Mean Sound Machine, and etc... the list goes on. It's an honor to be a part of this record. I only hope we can get one show together where we perform the record in its entirety. It would be great at the State Theater or something like that in Ithaca. Hopefully, we can get everyone on the record, on stage, to kill it for the crowd like a giant musical rotating cast of auditory devastation. A melodic octopus of friends if you will.

EJ: *Do you have any more recording plans for the next year?*

WM: February 2012 is the new 4 track punisher entitled: "Phoenix".

EJ: *What are your other plans?*

WM: As a band we will continue writing, recording, and touring, in our pursuit to change the face of rock music for the better. Personally, I maintain the belief that original music is relevant to all social environments by the implementation of a new direction for an untapped source of vibration. I continue to work on sonic innovations with the guitar and bass, having customized my Fender Stratocaster into a lethal dub weapon. I currently teach at the Music Education Centers in Webster, NY and the Rochester Academy of Music in Brighton, NY and I am attending Nazareth College in Rochester, NY to finish my Bachelor's Degree in Classical Guitar Performance. I am accepting new students all the time and can be emailed in regards to musical instruction in the piano, guitar, bass, drums, and voice at william.ivan.mckenna@gmail.com

EJ: *Tell me about the band lineage of your past, and about the scene you have evolved from?*

WM: My first musical memories are of my Mother singing Elvis, the Beatles, and the Beach Boys to me. I can remember

wanting a saxophone really, really bad in the 3rd grade, but unfortunately my family couldn't afford it. I did, however have my voice, which luckily for me was free. I sang in chorus all throughout elementary, junior, and high school. In junior high I started playing instruments when I was about 13 years old. I come from the age-old tradition of having friends pass down the knowledge of music by playing together. I started on electric bass and gravitated to guitar shortly thereafter. After learning the fundamentals from my friends, I sought out guitar teachers in the Rochester, NY area. In 2004 I graduated from the Monroe Community College Music Program with an Associates Degree in Music Performance with Guitar as my Major. I was First Chair in the program's Guitar Ensemble for three out of the four semesters that I was there. From 2000 until 2006, I founded and was part of a successful touring original act called; "Mountain Mojo Authority". It is during this period of my life that I was introduced to reggae music. Throughout the 6 years I was in this band, I learned to move people in the here and now by combining the humble roots and analogue sounds of the past, with the intensity of contemporary drum and bass. After "Mountain Mojo Authority" disbanded some of the members involved joined John Browns Body: (Matt Goodwin, Alex Toth, Kal Traver) while others joined the Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad: (Aaron Lipp, James Searl, Buddy Honeycutt) RubbleBucket (Alex Toth, Kal Traver), ThunderBody (Jerimiah Pacheco) and J-san and the Analogue Sons (Wil McKenna). During the time span from 2006 until 2007, I took a musical sabbatical in which I learned how to play Piano and Drums as secondary instruments to my primaries being Guitar and Bass. In the late summer of 2007 I started venturing to Ithaca, NY and found more like minded musicians such as: David "Solid" Gould, Lee Hamilton, Jsan Spaker, and Kevin Kinsella, all former JBB alumni. At this point I joined the "Millionaires of Love," which was a 10 piece reggae/ska orchestra masterminded by David "Solid" Gould. I also played guitar for a time in David Gould's current re-vitalized original group: Adonai and I, now called DSG & the Temple Rockers. In the fall of 2007 I was invited to join the national reggae/soul act called J-san and the Analogue Sons. I remained with the group until 2009. Upon returning to Rochester, NY from my extensive Ithacan projects I formed RootsCollider with Jim Grillo. RootsCollider is a project that started on an Abelton program and was a culmination of ideas that I've played with for awhile, combining reggae, funk and jungle beats with soul music at first. But since September of 2010 the band has evolved into thee definitive 21st Century "Dry & Heavy Livetronica DubCore" act that continues to push the sonic envelope toward enlightenment. The future fab four of Wil McKenna, Bill Smith, Jimmy Grillo, and Dexter Redic are dedicated to bringing the listener only the freshest cuts of live original punishing Drum & Bass, crushing Dubstep, destructive Electro-Rock, and fresh Future-Funk, with the destructive elements of crucial Dub Reggae. The band's sole purpose is to collide these roots genres into a single unstoppable aesthetic force, and we are known as one of the last definitive almost completely analogue defenses against the digital 21st Century. RootsCollider has been described as a powerful visceral artistic experience for the mind, body, and soul. The band has quickly become regional favorites for so many and

has gained wide recognition by sweeping upstate NY off of its feet as one of the fastest growing live original acts from Rochester, NY.

EJ: What are your overall thoughts on the Rochester scene, and what makes it so great?

WM: Rochester, NY is the next musical renaissance the world has been waiting for. We saw the first movement in the 1960's in San Francisco. The next movement came in the 1990's in Seattle. And now again we see it in Rochester, NY in the 2010's. All three cities had amazing original bands touring outside of it's own barriers, and all the bands were friends and collaborated on each others art. There is no other city in America that has this thing going on like what we do in ROC. We are ambassadors to the world of our city. We proudly display our hometown bands T-shirts while we rock on stages in other cities. All the stickers on my guitar case are that of all the other touring bands from Rochester. We owe this cross collaboration now to Chris "Hollywood" English from AudioInflux. He is the reason why Rochester, NY's music scene is blossoming right now. He hosts the Pro Jam every other Monday at Abiline's. Chris represents no ego, no bullshit, no "I'm too cool for you to jam with me vibe." Believe me, there are some that still do exhibit this. Chris plays with all players, within all genres, and with all skill levels. It is this kind of integrity, compassion, and love for the art that humbles the rest of the flock and levels the playing field in a non-competitive way. Chris unknowingly made a city of original bands that only cared about what they were doing 4 years ago, into a community based on healing people with creating music together today. He made us into a real family.

[Words by Erik Jensen]

+ ALBUM REVIEW +



**THUNDER BODY -
"WIND BLOWS HARDER"**

Thunder Body is holding nothing back folks! Their first full-length album is not only good, it has become my album of the year. All of this transpired in the last month of the year! Like in most year-end polls, this tends to happen. Never fails

after you have already written your list.

Wind Blows Harder was released on the bands own Medicine Hi Fi label, and is one of the most ambitious sound scape oriented records that I heard in the last few years. The thing that makes it such an essential piece of music is the fact that it merges the live show experimentalism of the band with the highest capabilities possible within a studio. The effect is a successful attempt to inject the slow dubbed out and floating impact that the live show brings to the table. I am not sure if this was the plan. In either case, it is a picture perfect

representation of what Thunder Body is right now! It is a portrait of a band that is at a creative level that most of their peers will find to be elite!

The opening track of Wind Blows Harder, Come What May, is so catchy and bouncy that it truly makes me want to break dance. It is easily one of my favorite tracks on this record, and possibly of the year. Thunder Body gets locked into such transcendent grooves, that the only way for the music to go is out. It is a formula of intuitiveness that seems to be the signature purpose on this track and many other greats here. Another example of this exuberance is captured on a song like Buffalo, where the band gets tight, locked in, and drifting in each passing second. It is an expansion of a sound you may know, but its originality is undeniable. Sonically, it is calming and yet trippy at the same time.

The album is also great from a lyrical standpoint. Some of these songs are fun, and some deliver a message that is spiritual in some way. Thunder Body is great in the examination of universal themes. On Ancestors, Matt O'Brien delivers the soulful homage to family lineage with the delivery of, "and we all want to be remembered some day." Of course, it is about giving respect as he carries on with "This one's for ancestor's spirits. We're gonna build it up strong so they can hear it." A lot of the record includes very intelligent observations on life and the human condition. The message is contagious, infectious, and inspirational in one positive swoop.

Thunder Body has IT! They offer a glowing orb of joy for you, and yet, it is hard to fully explain how they get you to that place. I try my best to put it into words, but it is truly difficult to give it the total justice that it deserves. So I will leave it at this, Wind Blows Harder is a pivotal moment of time within the Rochester music scene. It essentially sets the bar for how high a band should aim to make themselves the best that they can be. Thunder Body has released a classic, and it I feel it will be recognized as such.

[Words by Erik Jensen]

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