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Melody, Rhythm and Rice

by Sue Rice

51BassCamp Festival Review

This past weekend, Maple Ski Ridge in Rotterdam, NY, held for the second time a one day, multi-stage, all night rager. 51BassCamp called the summer slopes home that day and night on Saturday August 25th. There was the main stage set up outside, under a tent at the foot of slope surrounded by artists doing live art. The lodge was transformed into a dark, dance cave complete with concession stand and the entertainment corner. With ice cold Magic Hats and hot bass music being pumped out all day, concert goers had it made in the shade. Starting early in the afternoon, a small crowd danced inside and under the main tent, while a number of people enjoyed laying on blankets all over the slopes, soaking up the scene outside.

Besides, the main music attractions, there were plenty of other activities to keep the audiences happy. A hookah lounge was set up by Spiritual Haze from Worcester, Ma, providing multiple flavors and hookahs unlimited all evening. The infamous Tree Shirts had their iconic Winnibaker set up and ready to sell their tasty tee-shirts. One of the more popular booths was Beacon in the Dark Blacklight Collective. The small operation had two areas set up for face and body painting, with both Christian Diaz and Chris VanderEssen providing their creative paint brushes. Christian Diaz enjoys watching his art come to life on people and its a nice reward to see the art work evolve.

Alan Claw Letko was the first act I was able to see on the outside main stage around 4. He is known for his heavy dupstep music with remixes inspired by hip-hop and rap. Together, Claw and Richie August form Hulk, a intense sound of bass and pure rage. It's noise that fills you with an irresponsible anger you never knew you had and must be taken out on the dance floor. Heading inside, I was lucky to catch the ending set of Mikey Parkay, a DJ who has traveled coast to coast in the states as well as Canada. Parkay brings a variety of music to his performances, a great way to ease into the evenings festivities. Heavy on the funk and disco, Parkay mixes classic hits with a fast paced energetic sound.

Everyone could feel the electricity in the air as the sun began to set, the universal sign that it's party time. The slopes were light up by Dutch Masterson Designs and it was truly breathtaking to watch colors and shapes shoot across the hillside, almost like a multi-colored meteor shower. Horizon Wireless took the main stage at 7 and set the bar high for the evening. Horizon Wireless consists of DJ, Harrison Waxenberg, and Drummer, Sol Montoya who blend together a wide variety of sounds that grabs the listener by the chest as they get thrown into the music. A non stop thrill ride that Horizon Wireless can barely control themselves.

As the mountains were laced with lasers, the ski lounge dripped with bright neon lights and paint, proving that the best was yet to come of the festival. Sweatpant\$ Money, recently voted Best Name in Albany's Metroland Best of Issue last month, performed to a packed glowing dance floor. Providing electronic music and noises that had the audience moving in a almost synchronized dance together, proving that Sweatpant\$ Money is more than just a cool name. Cosmic strips, the one man producer from Pennsylvania, knows how to manipulate the crowd with his passionate spinning. Constantly pushing and pulling on the audiences heads and hearts with the sounds that lift you off the ground only to drop you.

51BassCamp was a festival with an ideal location, small crowd and relaxed yet enthusiastic attitude, best described as "The Biggest VIP Party." In such an intimate setting, fans had the chance to interact with their favorite DJs and producers, plus be introduced to up and coming new sounds. The event was also a great opportunity for everyone involved in the industry to come together and create friendly new networks. If concert goers are looking to experience the Bass-sensation without being fully submerged in the beat, 51BassCamp is worth every penny.

Eastbound Jesus Show Review

Capitol Region Americana group Eastbound Jesus played a few weeks past at Albany's popular venue, Red Square. The band announced early in the day on their Facebook page that there would be no opening band and they were excited to play longer sets that night with plenty of music to spare.

The crowd quickly rushed the stage once Eastbound Jesus had started tuning their instruments. To some disappointment, it was only the sound check. Even before their set, the band set the bar high with only warming up and the crowd had a to control their anticipation a bit longer. A quick "Sorry guys, we'll start real soon" reassured the crowd. After a round of drinks, the boys were ready to rock, roll and ramble on.



With Adam Brockway on acoustic guitar wearing his signature hat, Zack Infante rocking the lap steel in his chair, Dave Wright on bass and mandolin, Dylan Robinson playing electric guitar as well as Carl Anderson on drums and Luke Anderson on banjo, Eastbound Jesus has quickly become one of the Capital District's most beloved bands. Each member contributed vocals and lyrics that almost break your heart, making it impossible not to enjoy a performance, with music that stirs your blood and makes you stomp your feet. It should come as no surprise the band was voted 'Best Country Band' in the Metroland's "Best of 2012?" issue this past July. Eastbound Jesus released their second album, *Holy Smokes!* last January and with such chemistry between them, there's nothing but more great music to follow.

For Eastbound Jesus tour dates, news and free tunes, head to their website, eastboundjesus.com than ever before. I think when people are singing 'Only One' they feel like they are part of something larger than themselves and this larger thing is giving them hope that someday they will find the one person they have been dreaming about. I'd be hard pressed to tell you what other songs define the band. I have no perspective on it!

READ MORE FROM SUE RICE AT
UpstateLIVE.com

Black Abbey and Hair of the Dog on The Captain J.P. Cruise Line

Friday August 24th, two local Irish rock bands set sail down the Hudson River on The Captain J.P. Cruise Line. It was an ideal summer evening, with soft breezes as passengers floated by layers of landscape, adrift on the water. The Captain J.P. is one of the largest cruise ships in the capital area, with the space to accommodate 600 passengers and can make for one heck of a party. Black Abbey occupied the 2nd floor outdoor patio underneath the stars, while Hair of the Dog had the indoor, air conditioned 3rd floor.

This was Black Abbey's 3rd year playing aboard The Captain J.P. and said it was the events biggest crowd yet. This Celtic and Contemporary Rock group from Saratoga Springs, NY is made up of Rick Russo on guitar, Mark Lewis playing fiddle, Les Swinton on bass and Robert Daly on drums. They have a desire to bring classic Irish tunes as well as fresh hits to their audience. Black Abbey got the night rolling with "Whiskey in the Jar" and "Shippin' off to Boston." The band took advantage in between songs to crack jokes with each other as well as the audience, encouraging laughter and more dancing. Mark Lewis took a break from fiddle playing to sing "Run Around" by Blues Traveler. A pleasant surprise was hearing "Bones of Lazarus" by moe, the harmonization of which would have made moe. proud.

Hair of the Dog has been playing together for almost 20 years and they show no sign of slowing down. Heavy on the bass, was Rick Bedrosian, Mike DeAngelis playing acoustic guitar, John Haggerty strumming the banjo, Larry Packer blasting the fiddle, Eric

Finn rocking the electric guitar and Scott Apicelli playing drums, makes up the Irish harmonizing storm that gets everyone on the dance floor. After a few drinks and songs, everyone is an Irish step dancer. One of the highlights was Eric Clapton's "Lay Down Sally" which was jammed outside of the box. It wasn't just strictly textbook Eric Clapton with an Irish twist, the band had made the song their own, not accomplished with every band who covers classic rock. Each band member has their own individual talent that comes shining thru and blends beautifully with the rest of the group. One of the songs that ended the night was the classic Irish tune, "Drunken Sailor" which played into the lyric, "Give 'em a hair of the dog that bit him!" Whether it's a night full of music or enjoying a drink or two, maybe even both, everyone needs a bit of the Hair of the Dog.

For details about The Captain J.P. Cruise line, go to their website, captainjp.com. Like Black Abbey on Facebook for more show dates. For more information on Hair of the Dog, visit hair-of-the-dog.com

MUSIC is LIFE

moe.down 13: Home Again

by Tim O'Shea // Photos by Shaun Seip

The 13th edition of moe.'s annual summer party saw the festival return to a very familiar place, Snow Ridge Resort in rural Turin, NY. The first 10 installments of this upstate New York party were held here and everything seemed to be in their right place, with familiar faces once again inhabiting the familiar Lewis County ski mountain for a long weekend. The only difference this year other than the return home was the festival was held three weeks earlier than its customary Labor Day weekend slot. Festival organizers cited an effort to attract more college-aged kids by holding the event on a weekend other than one more typically associated with 'back to school' for college student. It remains to be seen if this tactic was as effective as hoped as the overall attendance and crowd seemed little lighter than in years past. Never the less, moe.down once again treated everyone who was present to a weekend of good times with friends along with the customary musical highlights.

Grace Potter and the Nocturnals really seemed to ignite the fire that was moe.down 13. Their Friday early evening set could have easily served as a short late night set elsewhere as it was full of energy, stirring covers and powerful rock. The Burlington, VT based group entertained everyone with new songs from their latest album *The Lion The Beast The Beat* as well as a musical nod to Led Zeppelin and a well executed Neil Young cover; "Cortez the Killer" closed their set as a light rain began to saturate the grounds. All of this, combined with a "Happy Birthday" sing-a-long dedicated to a fan up front, made for a fun set overall and kicked off the festival in fine fashion.

Another familiar name served up music on the second stage Friday night as Kyle Hollingsworth took his band out to the East Coast for some festival love. The String Cheese Incident keyboardist led his group through songs that incorporated elements of funk, jazz, improv and the like, with String Cheese songs "The Way That it Goes" and "Rosie" and Paul Simon's "Kodachrome". Talented for sure, this seems to be a group just getting their feet wet that could very well be on the regular music festival docket for years to come. Their sets, both with and without the rain, served as a great break between acts on the nearby main stage.

As the rain began to lessen ever so slightly, it was time for moe.'s first set of the weekend. It opened with a rousing version of "Plane Crash" with Al Schnier flaunting a double neck guitar. This segued nicely into the popular musical combination of "Not Coming Down -> Wormwood -> Okayalright" as the band showed it was clearly on its collective game early.

Sit-ins with other bands and musicians are almost expected at moe.down as the hosts never seem to have a problem sharing the stage with their friends. Based on this, it was no surprise Grace Potter was invited on stage to join moe. during the first set; it was just a matter of what song they chose to do together. They chose to have Potter channel her inner Jagger and delivered a great version of "Gimme Shelter". The rest of the first set was highlighted by a phenomenal "Puebla -> Timmy Tucker" segue that featured the bass playing and vocal prowess of Rob Derhak that moe.rons everywhere have grown to love. While some slight lyric flubs arose, the overall playing and demeanor of the band was on point. Although it was still early, there was already a prevailing sense of 'there's no place like home' brewing throughout moe.down.

The second set of moe.'s Friday night performance opened with a rocking version of "Tailspin", a song that had been shelved by the band for a little while. This was met with a great reception and the segue into "Head" only increased the energy. Kyle Hollingsworth filled the second set cover slot as he joined the band for their classic "Happy Hour Hero". Perhaps the musical highlight of the night was the seamless "McBain->Skrunk->Brent Black" that closed out the second set as icing on the cake. Afterwards, soaked revelers either returned back to camp and sought rest or continued the party with The Everyone Orchestra which kept the music going until 2 a.m. The addition of late night musical acts was another slight new twist to the festival and one that made perfect sense.

Saturday saw the temperatures increase a little with some drier ground on the hill for dancers. SOJA opened up things in the afternoon with a fun set on the main stage. The Arlington, VA band's brand of reggae and folk music with soulful lyrics served as a great way to start the day. The band seemed truly honored to be playing at moe.down and undoubtedly made a few new fans with their performance.

Other notable main stage acts on Saturday were The Wood Brothers and Galactic. There was a little difficulty setting up the stage at first for The Wood Brothers set, but this was the one of the few slight music delays all weekend. Otherwise, organizers did a fantastic job of keeping the music on schedule with no sets overlapping one another – a tradition of moe.down.

Another tradition of sorts moe.down offers is a Kids Tent with its family friendly atmosphere. The band has always been cognizant of the growing family around themselves, their friends and festival attendees and they continue to do their best to make sure the festival is fun for all ages. This year, the band delivered a stealth performance of sorts in the Kids Tent for kids and their parents lucky enough to be present. A slower, bouncier version of "Crab Eyes" could be heard and, afterwards, band members hung around to talk and socialize which was nice to see. The next day, the kids returned the favor and kept another moe.down tradition alive with a parade on stage during "Bring It Back Home". Each child was wielding a photo of a different band member's face with sizes ranging from mask size to extremely oversized (think of the 'big' heads popularized in college basketball these days.) All of this created a truly surreal, yet fun, scene that served as a testament to the family vibe that was alive and well.

Saturday night brought perhaps the best moe.ments of the weekend with two memorable sets. The first set opened with another "Crab Eyes", this one being in the more traditional style. There were no breathers early as this segued into "Down Boy" and then "Lazarus". The second set was a tale of two sets, so to speak. Early highlights included an intricate "Zed Nought Zee->Don't Fuck With Flo->Zed Nought Zee" that saw the band at its improvisational best. Crowd energy was riding high when the hosts decided to invite their friends from Galactic to the stage. They chose to cover "Up On Cripple Creek", an odd choice considering some of the more funky and uptempo tunes in moe's catalog. This seemed to halt some of the momentum that had been building all night. A partial band switch brought Galactic to the stage with Vinny Amico and Jim Loughlin still on percussion for a rousing cover of Led Zeppelin's "How Many More Times". moe. returned and dug deep and then some with a killer one-two punch of "George" and "Recreational Chemistry" to close out the night. These psychedelic staples were so intense and full of musical peaks the band was met with little argument from fans when no encore was played.

**To read the current
and past issues online visit
<http://upstatelive.net/archive>**

Bright Light Social Hour filled the Saturday late night slot and even featured a sit in from moe. guitarist Chuck Garvey. Every festival seems to have a band that comes out of nowhere and steals the show a little, and this group may fit that role here. Their catchy rhythms and unique rock sound were well received by the late night crowd and surely won them some new fans as well.

Sunday had a more relaxed feel to it for sure as some people began to slowly pack up cars and take down camp sites. With no Labor Day Monday off this year, this was not a surprising development. Albany's own Timbre Coup held court on the second stage throughout the afternoon and delivered their infectious and unique music spanning multiple genres and styles for which they have become known. They added to the cover total for the weekend with a fun take on Cake's "Never There". Elements of prog rock were heard throughout both of their sets which set the table nicely for a more prominent band later in the day that features something similar.

The relationship between moe. and Umphrey's McGee goes back many years at this point and is fairly well known. Ever since the original Bonnaroo in 2002, when moe. invited a young guitarist named Brendan Bayliss to sit in on "Rebubula", the two bands have been almost joined at the hip. Umphrey's has been a part of multiple moe.down's and the two bands also co-host another annual summer festival, SummerCamp in Chillicothe, IL.

Umphrey's treated the Sunday late afternoon crowd to a set full of intricate musicianship and telepathic improvisation. "Booth Love", a hit off of their latest album Death by Stereo was well played and preceded a tight run through of one of their older songs, "Jajunk". The Midwesterners then brought out guitar virtuoso Stanley Jordan to join them on a version of "40's Theme" that left mouths agape. Seeing Jordan trade guitar licks with Bayliss and Jake Cinninger was a true treat for both the eyes and ears.





moe. wrapped a bow around the weekend and the return to Turin with an elongated second set and double encore of sorts. Yet another well woven segue opened the final set as "Bullet -> Deep This Time" kicked things off. As expected, the hosts were later joined by their friends in Umphrey's for, you guessed it, a cover song. They chose to do the Pink Floyd classic "Time" and as this wound down, members of moe. slowly started to leave the stage. Umphrey's then once again had the stage to themselves and treated fans to a dub take on "Breathe" completing the Pink Floyd cover block.

Afterwards, moe. returned to the stage and there was one order of business left to take care of: the mayoral election. Although no candidate debates were scheduled this year, that didn't stop people for running for the 'unofficial' mayor of the festival for 2012. In a heated race, Rex (a regular candidate who has been seeking the office for years now) lost a nail biter to GoldBond aka "the stuff people rub on their balls" as so deftly put by Derhak. With another moe.down tradition in the bag, there was time for just one more – a Sunday night "Rebubula". The band busted out their classic hit that has all too often served as the final musical chapter of the weekend.

This year, the band had a little trick up their sleeve. The final chords of "Rebubula" gave way to the customary fireworks set off from atop the giant hill that serves as the iconic landmark of the festival. Instead of shutting it down after the fireworks ended, the hosts decided to "play until they tell us to stop" and treated everyone to a final musical pairing of "Billy Goat -> Meat" that capped a weekend full of memorable sights and sounds.

While the band never mentioned anything directly, it was clear after three days back in Turin, NY that was moe.down was back home where it belonged. Familiar faces were seen, traditions were upheld and it was almost as if the festival had never changed locations at all. Let's hope moe.down is here to stay for good and that the traditions and great music continue.

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Interview: Dave Schools of Widespread Panic

by *Lauren Lagowski*

Dave Schools, bassist for Widespread Panic for the past 26 years, has found a new role in the time that Panic has taken off, bassist for Mickey Hart Band. Playing with Hart, one of two original drummers for the Grateful Dead, has been a new venture for the bassist who has spent the vast majority of his career playing with Panic. I talked with Schools prior to the Mickey Hart Band's recent performance at The Tralf in Buffalo.

Lauren Lagowski: You recently moved to San Francisco and soon linked up with Mickey Hart, what was the first meeting with Mickey like and how did he invite you to join the band?

Dave Schools: Turns out that we are neighbors in the beautiful western part of Sonoma County. Seemed like a good idea to the both of us that we got together to see how far we could push mutual love of outer space and rhythm. Obviously, it went pretty far because we now have this killer band and a great album, *Mysterium Tremendum*.

LL: Bassists play in tandem with drummers, how has playing with Mickey and Ian Herman differed from playing with Todd and Sonny from Panic?

DS: I look forward to playing with different drummers because I always learn something new that I can add to my arsenal. The Mickey Hart Band experience has been especially fruitful in that I have three unique drummers to learn from. Mickey combines shamanism and science with a natural born love of all things membranophonic. Ian (Inx) Herman is simply a beautiful person and truly communicative drummer. And then there is Sikiru Adepoju, the master of the talking drum. I can't even begin to tell you what I have learned from him. If I did I'd have to kill you and then he would have to kill me.

LL: What role did The Grateful Dead have on the early development of Widespread Panic?

DS: We all grew up in the 70's loving classic and psychedelic rock so it was only natural that we played some classics as we learned how to be a band. Grateful Dead tunes were part of that canon because they were the only band from that era that were still touring and creating viable new sounds when we were coming of age. Their music was a great starting point for us because there was an inherent looseness to the tunes. From this we learned how to listen to each other and from there we began to craft our own songs and sounds.

LL: Recently at Gathering of the Vibes, the band played a handful of Grateful Dead classics intertwined with some songs off the new album *Mysterium Tremendum*. How did the band determine the Dead songs they would cover over the course of the tour, and how much input do you and other band members have in the setlist each night?

DS: We really love the Tremendum material and obviously enjoy playing. After all, we are the ones who assembled it in real time. Playing the Dead material is more like a celebration of Mickey's musical legacy. It gives a second dimension to the set as well as a chance to showcase the talents of the newer faces of the band in a familiar setting for long time Dead Heads. We chose the Grateful Dead tunes that seemed to fit this group's natural abilities. We don't want to be a cover band....we want to continue to evolution of the legacy of Mickey Hart. Everybody has input in the setlist, but Mickey gets final approval. And as always things can change at anytime during the show!

LL: In Burlington last weekend, Mike Gordon sat in with Mickey Hart Band. What was it like playing with him and have you kept in touch with Mike since filming 2002's *Rising Low*?

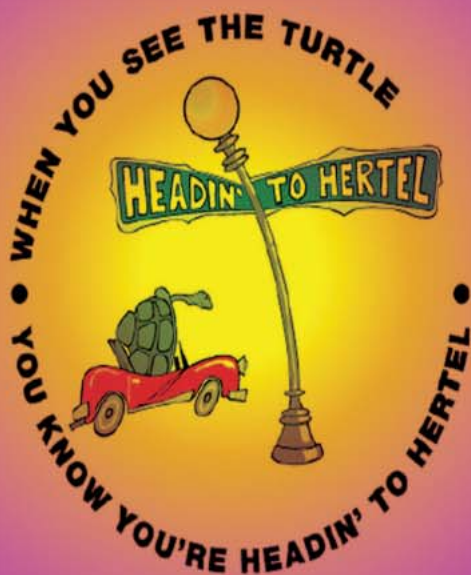
DS: I've known Mike since Panic and Phish played their first show together down south in the late 80's or sometime in those days. We would switch off opening and heading slots depending on where we were. So we've always kept in touch but it had been awhile since we had a chance to hang out. But that's the wonderful thing about playing on the road: seeing your friends and catching up.

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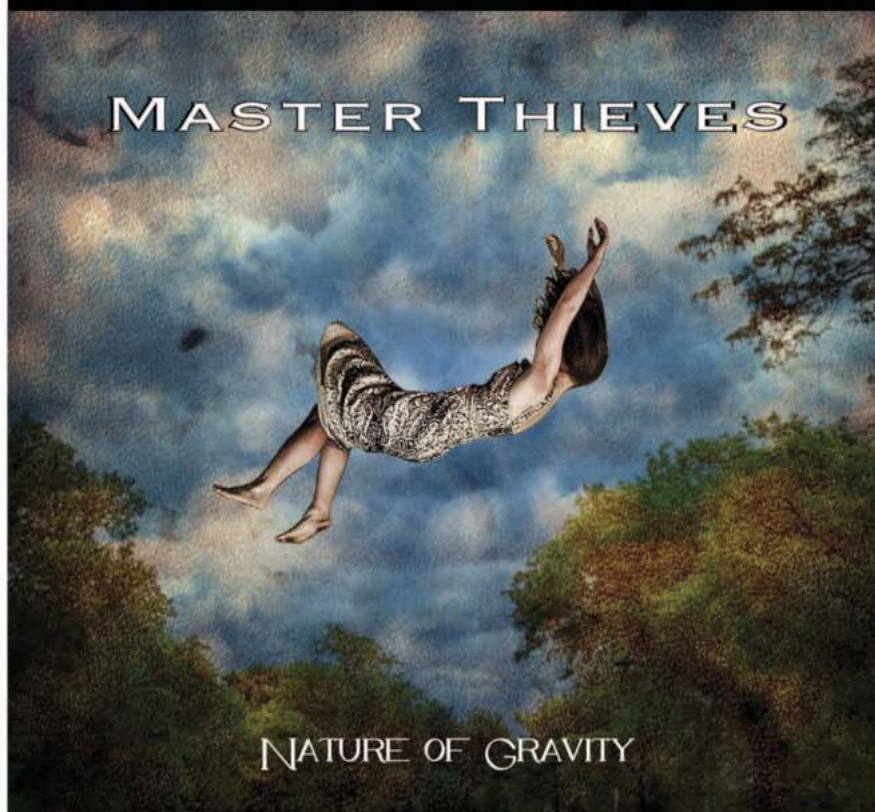
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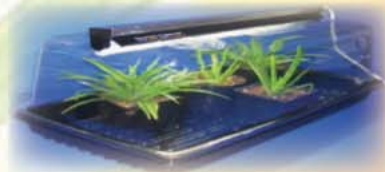
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IN STORE SPECIALS THE 20th OF EVERY MONTH

Interview: Master Thieves

by Ashleigh Dunseath

A chance to sit down with three of the members of Master Thieves – though a wonderful time – felt far too brief. Chuck Dorgan (guitar/vocals), was joined by vocalist Denise Shuart, as well as bassist and vocalist Jacob Alaniz. Sitting across from the three you can feel the closeness, care and admiration they have for one other. That same feeling is also palpable on stage with all five members, which they all agree lends to the joy of creating and performing music together. Dorgan is the first to admit that putting a band together is no easy task, one that takes patience and perseverance. Lately, from what this writer has seen, that patience is finally paying off. Jokingly, he states, “I think the band is on version 4.2.,” noting that he first formed the group in 2006 with an entirely different set of members. There never seemed to be a “meeting of the minds,” however, when it came to the musical aspect.

Dorgan met Shuart at the Syracuse-based Shenanigan's during an open mic hosted by a mutual friend in 2007. From there they decided to perform an open mic at Shifty's, and shortly after the guitarist decided to bring her into the fold, after getting on stage for a tune or two. Shuart herself is a classically trained vocalist (opera) and also studied viola and violin, always a treat to see brought out for a song or two during a gig. With musical influences such as Pat Benetar and K.D. Tundstall, Shuart taken the time to learn the background of the singers she emulates and was surprised to find out they are classically trained – or the product of classically trained parents – as she was. Shuart also laughingly points out that singing in a band like Master Thieves is extremely enjoyable. It's a credit to her talent and dedication as the only woman in a group of musically talented men and the ensemble, as a whole, has a great amount of respect for one other.

Drummer Eric Tozer, first asked to join a bluegrass band due to Dorgan's reluctance with the way things were going with the Thieves, subsequently joined the band. It was an easy transition for the drummer – who joined in the fall of 2009 – bringing along some straight-up funk, with influences including greats such as Galactic, James Brown, Karl Denson, the Meters and the Greyboy Allstars, just to name a few. Songs he would like the band to tackle, said Tozer Deep Banana Blackout's “God Made You Funky”. And while the summer of 2012 has been a bit dry for the band (as far as gigs go), Tozer did get to marry the love of his life, wife Renee. Now that the dust has settled, however, the band is ready to knock some socks off.



Guitarist Brian Golden, of Norwich, NY, Tozer's best friend, best man and long-time fellow musician, was brought into the fold shortly after the group's then-lead guitarist exited to pursue other avenues. Golden, said Dorgan, brings “a very bluesy feel to his music,” much of which is influenced by the artistry of Hendrix, Clapton, Derek Trucks and Stevie Ray Vaughan, to name a few. As for a tune Golden would like to cover with the group ... Hendrix's “Bold As Love.”

The band, added Dorgan, would love to see its lead guitarist relocate to the Syracuse area (where the various other members are based), a sentiment shared by Golden himself.

Bassist Jake Alaniz, who stepped in at a crucial time in the band's development (the recording of its first album, *Robbing the Blind*) said it was tough to step in and re-record someone else's bass lines, yet it was necessary for consistency in the album. Once completed, Dorgan said it was like trying to give up a cute puppy; it was just too hard to do. Alaniz's bandmates all agreed it only made sense to add the inspirational bassist to the group. Alaniz – who also performs with the popular CNY, Grateful Dead tribute band Dark Hollow – has been more than willing to share his musical talents. With a strong background in music – much thanks to his father the late David ‘Ese’ Alaniz – Alaniz said he finds inspiration in all different types of music, encompassing a wide range of artists. When asked, he couldn't name just one song he would love to cover, because it changes so often. He did say, however, that he walked into rehearsal one day and proclaimed the band needed a reggae song, a genre that's a clear focus on the group's latest release, *Nature of Gravity*.

A true sign of a natural leader, Dorgan spent most of the interview highlighting his fellow bandmates' talents. To be fair, Master Thieves is a labor of love for the guitarist, singer and songwriter. His inspiration, he added, was The Band, and he modeled much of his hopes on what the band could accomplish on that group's success. Other inspirations? The Grateful Dead, Phish, and every other band that takes the stage knowing that soul – more than anything – makes for good music.

On Nature of Gravity, the band also has two other members who step-in for much of the album. Young saxophonist and guitarist Mikey Dufresne (I was very impressed considering he is in his mid to late teens) and keyboardist Mark Nanni (known best for his work with Los Blancos) both added their talent to the new release; something that truly creates an amazing, dynamic sound.

And while Master Thieves' debut recording, the aforementioned Robbing the Blind, was a good start, Nature of Gravity is much more of a collaborative effort, said Dorgan. From blues to rock, reggae to Americana, the songs have the ability to make you laugh, cry or inspire one to dance (or hula hoop!) Camaraderie, said Shuart, is the most important element of the band.

"We can be playing ... and we know each other well enough to know that each member is given the ability to have some freedom to freestyle, but when necessary there are moments to hold back," she added. "Yet there is never a feeling that we are stepping on each others' toes. When there is a disagreement, the issue is dealt with and [we] move on. The band works very hard to make sure they know the sound we are going for ... we thoroughly practice, and are fully prepared, before stepping into the studio."

Dorgan said he feels that Subcat Studios really enjoys having the band record there because its members arrive "fully prepared to knock out each tune. The Nature of Gravity CD release party, kindly hosted at the Redhouse, was a wonderful experience, said the band's members (during the show, the band teased fans by telling them about a seventeen minute jam near the end of the album, what I consider the icing on the already rich red velvet cake).

Most of all there is a palpable sense of love, joy and kinship shared among this group that makes it feel more like a tight-knit – and functional – family unit. Such feelings are translated beautifully to their music and their performances.

The band has a few favorite places they like to play in the CNY area, by the way, including The Westcott Theater, Bull and Bear, Thunderbird Lanes and Coleman's. The band is hoping to make it to more locations around CNY, such as Al's Wine and Whiskey Lounge and Dinosaur BBQ, among many others. The Thieves most recent CD is on sale at the Soundgarden (and at every gig they play) and don't forget to pick up your very own t-shirt (and other merchandise) that the group has for sale. Be sure to look up Master Thieves on Facebook and Reverb Nation to catch a taste of the group's unique sound and stay up to date with what's going on by visiting masterthieves.net.

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“LIVE FREE BUT DIE DIGITAL” AN INTERVIEW WITH JIMKATA’S FRONTMAN EVAN FRIEDEL by Johnny Goff

Nearly exactly four and half years ago, I drove up to Ithaca to interview 4 young musicians making local waves as an up and coming college band called Jimkata. They had barely released a 5-track LP and were playing Friday nights in Ithaca and Oneonta. Fast forward to today, that same foursome has caught the attention of more than just Ithacans or regional Upstate New York jam fans. On the heels of releasing their 4th album “Die Digital” and a 10-week national fall tour, I caught back up with Jimkata’s front man and guitarist Evan Friedell. The following is the transcript of our recent discussion covering everything from sharing the stage w/ Umphrey’s McGee, their new fan-funded album, and how the uniquely infectious sound Jimkata has patented continues to evolve.

Johnny Goff: So I believe it was 2008 when I came over to your house in Ithaca and sat down to interview you guys. You guys were just getting going. What’s changed in the past 4 and half years as a band?

Evan Friedell: We’ve come miles in those 4-5 years. No. 1, we’ve all grown up and changed as individuals. And also, we’re just kind of starting to find our sound. When we started, our sound went many different directions. And now finally, the sound writing, the instrumentation, the use of technology w/ analog/synth and e-drums has really evolved our sound to what it is today. We’ve also started touring more extensively in the past several years and that has helped us grow a fan-base which is awesome. Also, the new record has been entirely fan-funded. So yeah, we’ve come a long way from a scrappy, little college bar band into you know what we are today.

Johnny: So, in attempting to achieve a good fan base, how important is it that you guys, as a band play every night of the week and not just weekends in attempting to win over new fans?

Evan: Well, you know, that’s something that has changed over time too. We’ve realized now that we can’t pick a day here or there and play those dates. We’ve realized that in order to get your name out there, you have to play every day of the week. For example, when we go out to Colorado, we decide to play Michigan on the way. And it’s funny, one of the bi-products we’ve found is when we leave our home area and venture away and then return to our home area, our local fans seem to be more energized and at the same time, we are building new grounds with new fans.

Johnny: So I’ve noticed that recently, you’ve shared the stage with some pretty notable bands. Can you talk about that?

Evan: We’ve played a number of festivals on the same bill as some pretty big acts. And we’ve also had the chance to directly support Umphreys McGee for a few shows in Colorado and in Utah. I think as of right now, it’s pretty inspiring to see how bigger acts work from the inside. The professionalism is a totally different ballgame. Everything’s pretty regimented for them and they are on schedules, etc...and then there’s us...you know, we slept in the van and go on stage. We’d love to be there someday but right now, even though we’re growing, it feels like a different world. The big ones are great too, but I love seeing bands we’ve built the comradery together over the years and seeing them at regional festivals and hanging out before or after our sets.



Johnny: So, considering this interview is for UpstateLive, I’d be remised if I didn’t touch on Upstate New York and its festivals and Jimkata’s plans going forward. Also, if you could, discuss my home festival “Grassroots” in Trumansburg, NY and how Jimkata has taken off there also. It seems like every year, you guys are jumping up to a bigger stage and a better timeslot.

Evan: Yeah, yeah. We are very grateful for that. All of us are. It’s been great for me because I grew up a couple hours from there (Oneonta) and I used to go to Grassroots when I was 16 and I was like Holy Shit, ya know, this would be sick to play at sometimes and then, well, we were. So it was a huge thrill to get that slot after midnight on a Friday and thinking about back when I was 16 and wondering if I was 16 and watching this, what would I be thinking about these guys? So, it’s pretty cool.

note: The band pictures in this article were originally taken in 2008. They are being released for the first time for this article. Enjoy! Johnny Goff

Johnny: So the way your guys' sound has morphed from album to album, I've drawn some other comparisons besides just Umphreys McGee; the way your sound is headed with added synthesizers and e-drums, but how would you describe Jlmkata's evolution of sound?

Evan: First of all, after seeing firsthand what and how Umphrey's does what they do, I don't think we would ever be as virtuosic doing what they do. Their skills are out of the park. But, I think, with this latest album, what we're going for, is we're simply trying to create songs that hit home for people. That hit home for people in two ways: 1) We're trying to drop a beat that's infectious and 2) bust out a melody and chorus that people can bring home with them in their daily lives. I mean that's one thing I've always loved about watching jambands because of they're playing, skills, and live improvisation but that's one thing you miss by not putting out an album, the "Wow! Holy Shit!" Factor of a song where you wanna listen and relisten to the melody or chorus was our focus.

Johnny: If you can, for readers who may not be all that familiar with Jlmkata or reading about you for the first time, drop on us some chronological album history and how your sound has morphed from album to album up to your very latest release.

Evan: So our first album has some of our earliest songs and is way more guitar oriented and some has killer early rippage. And then, "Burn My Money" was after that and that is when we began to gain some of our earliest fans and has some of our songs that we had been working on for years and years and so we had a ton of available possible songs to choose from to put on that album and that had some of our core songs that we still play today and you can start to hear to some of

those synths and e-drums begin to make some appearances and it really was the album where we began to hone a lot of our songwriting. And Next was "Ghosts & Killers" and that came after we had come into some analog synthesizers that we had been playing around with and That was recorded with very little being done to it afterwards post-production. Like with "Burn My Money" we did a lot in the studio to that album but with "Ghosts and Killers", it was almost like it was simpler arrangements but more complicated instrumentation.

Johnny: So, take "Ghosts and Killers" and that simpler approach to album making to this latest album "Die Digital" I just listened to the other day, it's obvious there's a clear delineation now between your album creating philosophies from previous to this latest Jlmkata album. Is that fair to say?

Evan: Our songwriting process has morphed a little bit. The recording process was different also. We recorded w/ a different engineer, a different space and the song writing process, we all started writing music on a laptop to start. So, like If I had an idea, to start the process, I would immediately open the laptop and start putting something down. So, it was like instead of me walking up to see the band and saying I have this great idea for a song and they're like, "What is it?" and I can't describe it...I am able to say, "well, here ya go. Here's an idea for a song," and simply pull out my laptop and immediately give them an audio sample of where we can go with something. We are all were writing on our own and we were touring more too so it was actually an natural adaptation because it meant we had less practice time. This album, there's a couple songs that are straight up Packy, (drums) which is a first for all of our records. There's a couple songs from Aaron as always.

Johnny: So with the help of technology, you are able to get a better picture of what a song could end up becoming?

Evan: Exactly. And I think our songwriting skills have gotten a lot better also. You know, for example, when to add something or to cut something from a tune. Knowing when to keep things simple is the key. Knowing when to keep things simple when you have a lot of different elements happening...that is key; and we had quite a few of these actually from this latest album. We had a million things going on in this album and we seemed better at knowing when and where to cut something. Another thing that was noticeable from this album is us as a band really embracing our electronica and hip-hop influences we've had. We're children of the 90's...ya know? We've listened to tons of 90's hip-hop and electronica music and that's been huge for us. BUT, we also all love our rock-n-roll. And not just classic rock and jambands but again, being a child of the 90's, our grunge rock music...Nirvana, Weezer and Smashing Pumpkins and all of that stuff....and I think finally, all of those influences, all of those factors are finally beginning to come together to form the sound we have on this album.





Johnny: It's ironic you mentioned you guys were 'Children of the 90's' because a lot of the sounds coming off this new album is almost from the 80's. The combination of the electro and synth-sounds just brings me back to when new-wave was really popular.

Evan: Yeah, it's funny. I thought "Ghosts & Killers" came out sounding like the 80's too. So, I guess, you're right, it'd be fair to say we're products of our generation, whether it be the 90's or the 80's. Music on the radio, commercials on t.v., movie soundtracks, c.d.'s, etc...whatever it was, it apparently influenced us and how we're making music.

Johnny: So, there's a track on your new album "Die Digital" called "Night Shade." I fell in love with this track and the more I listened to the new album again and again in preparation to speak with you, I found myself going back again and again to this track "Night Shade" with its very infectious rhythm.

Evan: So, the song is sort about 'working through hard times and everything turning out all right in the end.'...and now that I'm saying that, I'm realizing I end up writing about that an awful lot. (laughs out loud).

The synth hook was written and then the bass line came around and it took me a while to write some lyrics to it because I didn't want to fuck it up. The track is so epic and fun to begin with so I wanted the hook to be fun and "We don't give a shit" and not to be too serious.

Johnny: So, let's turn the attention to your upcoming tour, your travels in New York and what's immediately ahead for Jimkata.

Evan: We have like 10 straight weeks of touring. We're going, pretty much everywhere but all the way to the west coast. We're going out to Colorado again, the south. We're hitting the Midwest and up to Minnesota so we're basically hitting up everywhere.

Finding a gig is not that hard anymore and we're super thankful for all the work our new agent has put in to get us into some bigger festivals.

Johnny: So, the new album "Die Digital" is about to be released. Tell readers how they can listen to this new Jimkata album.

Evan: It comes out September 18th. A lot of people who donated are going to get a copy in advance. We're going to have it on our website and I-tunes. I also think we're going to have it streaming so I know it's going to be around. We're just about to head into album promotion mode now as a band.



JIMKATA FALL TOUR

9/5 - Akron, OH - Musica*
9/6 - Pittsburgh, PA - Rex Theater*
9/7 - Dayton, OH - J Alan's"
9/8 - Muncie, IN - Skyy's Burning Festival
9/12 - Lancaster, PA - Chameleon Club^
9/13 - Harrisburg, PA - ABC Brewery*
9/14 - Washington, DC - Catholic Univ.
9/14 - Washington, DC - Bayou on Penn%
9/15 - Baltimore, MD - The 8x10\$
9/18 - DIE DIGITAL IS HERE!
9/19 - Philadelphia, PA - The Blockley@
9/20 - Albany, NY - Red Square
9/21 - Ithaca, NY - The Haunt%
9/22 - Rochester, NY - Lovapalooza
@ Lovin Cup

9/25 - Buffalo, NY - The Trail+
9/26 - Kalamazoo, MI - Papa Pete's
9/27 - Cincinnati, OH - The Mad Frog
9/28 - Indianapolis, IN - The Mousetrap
9/29 - Evansville, IN - Lamasco Bar"
10/4 - Fort Collins, CO - Aggie Theatre
10/5 - Winter Park, CO - Ullr's Tavern
10/6 - Durango, CO - The Summit
10/10 - Green Mountain Falls, CO -
Silver Tongue Devil Saloon
10/11 - Boulder, CO - The Fox Theatre~
10/12 - Breckenridge, CO - Three20South
10/13 - Denver, CO - Cervantes' Otherside
10/17 - Minneapolis, MN - Cabooze
10/18 - Mankato, MN - Red Sky Lounge
10/20 - Holland, MI - Groovewalk
10/23 - Lexington, KY - Cosmic Charlie's*
10/24 - Louisville, KY - Gerstle's*
10/25 - Columbus, OH -

Woodlands Tavern
10/26 - Jamestown, NY - MoJo's
10/31 - Syracuse, NY - The Westcott
11/1 - Burlington, VT - Nectar's
11/2 - Northampton, MA - Iron Horse
11/3 - New York, NY - Sullivan Hall
11/6 - Roanoke, VA - Martin's
11/7 - Raleigh, NC - Berkley Cafe
11/8 - Charlotte, NC - Visulite Theatre#
11/9 - Black Mountain, NC -
Pisgah Brewing Company#
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11/14 - Charleston, SC - Pour House#
11/17 - Boone, NC - Murphy's Saloon

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