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New York State Music Guide

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Welcome to the UpstateLIVE Music Guide. It was created to help promote LIVE MUSIC and MUSICIANS in Upstate New York. It gives fans a chance to see what is happening in different regions of the state, and gives industry insiders some much needed networking.

It is distributed to live music bars and theatres, music stores and shops, cafes and restaurants, and circulated by staff, street team members, bands and fans at concerts and festivals throughout the Upstate New York Region.

The goal of UpstateLIVE is to create a statewide Live Music Community, joining each of the state’s local music scenes into one regional network. We are on our way!

UpstateLIVE’s main objective is to showcase all of the outstanding local, regional, and national bands playing Upstate New York. Festivals, concerts, music venues, music shops and sponsors are also highlighted.

UpstateLIVE is published 6 times per year (every 2 months), and is an everlasting archive of the great music we share in Upstate NY. For more information visit us on the internet at www.upstatelive.net and at myspace.com/upstatelivenet. Feel free to contact us at homebase@upstatelive.net
Hello Friends! Erik Jensen here. I have written a ton of stuff about Upstate area bands, venues and events in this issue, but must start with 2 national releases I just cant say enough about.

MY MORNING JACKET - “EVIL URGES”
Watching a great young band evolve into true artists is a great thing! Watching that same band morph into legendary status after two albums is awe inspiring. In the grand spirit of Wilco and Radiohead, two bands that challenged record labels by crafting great art, My Morning Jacket has made one of the best albums of this decade.

Evil Urges is a beautifully designed mess of an album. It is an album that will have you in total shock that you are listening to the same band on most of the tracks. If you are a fan, you will be shocked by the direction on some of these songs. Initially, you will be distrested by the grand departure of the norm. After a second listen, you may very well be blown away by the risks taken here. To me, I wonder how a band can go into the studio and make a masterpiece of this magnitude, unless they are really focused on doing so. I don't think that is the case here.

This is the most evenly musically cohesive set of wide ranging songs that has been released in some time. It seems natural as all hell. None of this songs contrived at all. It is the evolution of the great songwriting of Jim James and company, but it is also the obvious display of sleeve wearing influence dispersal. Evil Urges has it all! You could always see the obvious Crazy Horse influence in everything My Morning Jacket did up until “Z”.

This record is a culmination of all things the band has digested as fans. "Highly Suspicious" is both the greatest departure for the band, and the strangest moment of self victory ever proclaimed on record. Jim James comes out of nowhere with a falsetto pitch and shriek that has you thinking Prince. It sounds like something straight off of the "1999" record. If you had no idea who you were listening to, My Morning Jacket would be the last band you would think is performing. He puts the new falsetto touch on the album's title song as well. This touch of craziness does not end there!

"Two Halves" has doo-wop choruses that are reminiscent of the Frankie Valli era. "Thank You Too" evokes the Timothy B. Schmidt lead vocals of '70's Eagles albums. "Aluminum Park", my favorite track on the record, sounds like a cross between the E Street Band and Paul Westerburg (The Replacements) getting nuts in the studio together. It is endless, I could make comparisons on every track this record offers. The one thing that can be said, is that throughout all of these love letters to everything that ever influenced the band, the signature MMJ sound makes it's way out! "I'm Amazed", the first single from this record, shows that off in grand force. I have never been so happy for a band just listening to their record. My Morning Jacket has done it! This is their masterwork!

PORTISHEAD - “THIRD”
Straight up darkness. Some of the best albums of the last 25 years have had an eerie, dark, other-world like sound to them. When I think of records like that, Nine Inch Nails' "The Downward Spiral" instantly comes to mind. So does "Loveless" by My Bloody Valentine, "Kid A" by Radiohead, and "Grace" by Jeff Buckley. Those were albums that were beautifully dark and melodically perfect. They were albums that transported you to another place. This album is on par with those fine releases of the last 25 years.

The story behind the making of the record is a magnificent one as well. Sick of the grind from touring and recording, the band went their seperate ways for awhile, with one record still left on their contract. When Beth Gibbons and the guys went on to do separate side projects to occupy their time, their was no intent of re-uniting to finish out the contract. Then 2005 came along, and the band went into the studio to start work up on their studio album. Many of us long time fans thought the band was gone forever. Not only did they return, but they are back with a machine gun wallop. Just like My Morning Jacket above, the band has crafted their masterwork!

This record can be defined in a couple of choice words and phrases. The first word would be claustrophobic, the second - confused, and lastly - dark and unforgiving! This album is a disorganized improperly sequenced nightmare that is hard to swallow in your first listen. That is the beauty of it! The narcotic symptom induced drive of the opening track, "Silence" sets the bar high. Beth Gibbon moaning," Did you know what I lost, did you know what I wanted" makes you feel the desperation and haphazard anxiety from the get-go. She seems out of element and scared by the frightening array of blips and ultra-strange sonic craftwork going on around her at any given time. The strange thing is that if not for her presence, the album would lose it's emotionally distraught edge.

The greatest and strangest song of the year by anyone on earth is on this record as well. "We Carry On" is a sonic assault with casio sounding reverb funneling over uneven drum loops. You feel trapped in an elevator, while hearing moans of despair and uneasiness from our friend Ms. Gibbon. All of the tracks are rooted in the Portishead sound of old, but never have they sounded so urgent and concise in their torture level. This album put me into a trance the first time I heard it. It is the re-invention of trip-hop! It is cautionary, dark, and brooding. Most importantly, it is a healthy sign of artists ridding themselves of angst for a greater cause!

All this makes Portishead's vision of chaos one of the best albums in the history of recent recorded history. We can only hope that the band has more to offer us. If not, you may not hear a better send off from a band of this quality.

www.UpstateLIVE.net
BAND PROFILES:  by Erik Jensen

THE BLUE SUNS
The Blue Suns represent everything great about experimentation in modern music today. With great creativity, and the channeling of an unbelievable array of past greats, including the Velvet Underground, Nick Cave, Sonic Youth, and most notably, The Jesus and Mary Chain, this band’s sound is nothing short of startling! The Cortland four piece is starting to open the eyes and ears of hipsters on the Upstate music scene. Formed in September of 2007, the band’s sound is accurately described on their Sonic Bids biography page: "integrating psychedelia, warm vintage sound, and raw, ethereal melody in their quest to unearth rock-n-roll from its untimely martyrdom." Their first album, the very musically complete "New Soul Uptempo," has been stirring up quite the buzz for the band. The album has had such a warm reception, that the band is currently a finalist in the search for unsigned acts vying for a spot at Lollapalooza. Check these guys out as soon as possible at www.myspace.com/bluesunsclassicrock. If you like what you hear, and I am sure most of you will, click on the link to get them on to that huge festival we all know and love. The band currently plays alot of great venues in Upstate. Some of the storied venues are: The Nines in Ithaca, Station 58 in Syracuse, Lucky’s in Cortland, and Underscore in New York City, where they will perform on August 23rd. See what all the talk is about!

STONE SOUL FOUNDATION
Stone Soul Foundation is kicking ass and taking names! This great Auburn / Syracuse based band is one of the quiet storms on the Upstate music scene. The Foundation is a funky, soulful, blues injected hard rock band that resembles many bands that you may catch on an Ozzfest stage. When first hearing their wonderful new track, "Christian," the first band I thought of was Zakk Wylde’s Black Label Society. I also can hear the AC-DC influence, and everything else remotely late 80’s that was in that boogie woogie hard rock shuffle mode. The band, consisting of the insanely talented Sean Muldoon on vocals, Jeff Wiggins and Dan Dennis on guitar, Shane Stillman on drums, and Seneca Falls native Doug Paradise on bass, have been hitting up the Finger Lakes music scene for years. They are ready to bust right on out of this place, like several other bands that have been toiling around here for way too long. The band is currently working on new material for a new album. If it is as good as that current single "Christian" (which is available as a free download at their my space page, www.myspace.com/stonesoulfoundation), it could help them ink a well deserved record contract. You can also download the band’s amazing 2006 release, "Into The Flames", which helped earn the band a Sammy Award for Best Rock Band in CNY last year. The band is playing several shows in Upstate over the next couple of months. Check out the their myspace for complete show and band information.

BURNING DAYLIGHT
Fans of the alt-country movement in Upstate New York, we have been blessed with a dose of greatness! If you are a fan of the great icons of the genre, artists such as the Old 97’s, Wilco, and most notably, Whiskeytown, you will love Burning Daylight. Based out of Rochester, this great band is fronted by dynamic singer-songwriter Nick Young. Burning Daylight is a great studio band. This is evident on their wonderful new record “Whiskey and Romances”. The band’s penchant for writing superior pop infused americana is on par with the greats of the day! The songwriting is beautiful yet dark. It is countrified, yet owing to Stephen Malkmus. And it is undeniably as catchy as a commercial jingle. These guys run the gamut here! Young and the rest of the band, consisting of Tim Mroz on bass and vocals, and Jesse Sprinle on drums and vocals, pulled out all the stops to bring you their quality sound on record. They traveled to Hoboken, New Jersey to record with Dan McLoughlin of The Push Stars. Among McLoughlin’s producing credits are Weezer and Dinosaur Jr. If you think the recording is stellar, you should see the amazing and powerful live show that the band has honed. It is countrified, yet owing to Stephen Malkmus. It is undeniably as catchy as a commercial jingle. These guys run the gamut here! Young and the rest of the band, consisting of Tim Mroz on bass and vocals, and Jesse Sprinle on drums and vocals, pulled out all the stops to bring you their quality sound on record. They traveled to Hoboken, New Jersey to record with Dan McLoughlin of The Push Stars. Among McLoughlin’s producing credits are Weezer and Dinosaur Jr. If you think the recording is stellar, you should see the amazing and powerful live show that the band has honed. Along the way, while on tour in the Northeast, the band has shared the stage with such luminaries as The Push Stars, Mike Doughty, Tim Easton and Steve Forbert. Burning Daylight is garnering quite a buzz, and is one of the most talked about unsigned bands on the eastern seaboard. You should definitely check out what all the talk is about. The band will be playing a couple of Upstate New York shows in the month of July. They will be stopping in for a date at the Bug Jar in Rochester on July 6th, and the Fat Tire Fest in Victor on July 19th. You can also check out some of the tasty and remarkable tracks on their new record at www.myspace.com/burningdaylight
RANDOM NOTES

The Gym Class Heroes' brand new album "The Quilt" will be dropping in music stores sometime in August. As of press time, there was no release date for the record. Word is this record is going to blow minds. Stay tuned for the next chapter in this upstate saga! www.gymclassheroes.com

Childhood's End - A Tribute To Pink Floyd brings it's multi-media show to two of CNY's finest concert venues: Friday July 11th at The Legendary Lost Horizon, and Saturday August 16th at The Budweiser Amphitheater on beautiful Paper Mill Island in Baldwinsville. “Combining note perfect renditions of the classic Pink Floyd catalog, video projection on Mr. Screen and a high tech intelligent light show, Childhood's End reflects the true essence of Pink Floyd.” For more info check out their website : www.childhoodsend.net

The Shameless Strangers are a comedic jam band from Plattsburgh! There is alot of buzz coming out of the north country in regards to this hilarious act. They will be playing several shows in the upcoming month in Plattsburgh as well as Higher Ground In Burlington,Vermont. They are definitely worth checking out. Dates to note, July 4th and 12th at one of our favorite north country venues - The Monopole. Look for a feature in upcoming issues, as the band will be releasing it's first CD, and expanding it's touring base.

Check out Mastodon, the local boys from Rochester who have done very well for themselves, as they bring their metal mayhem back to Western New York this summer. The band will play August 19th at the Darien Lake Performing Arts Center near Buffalo. Sounds like there are some other good bands on the bill for that show, maybe you have heard of them?? Disturbed and Slipknot!

Hot Day AtThe Zoo is releasing their first record on INTA Records July 11th called "Long Way Home" It will be available in stores, at live shows, and through CD Baby which you can access through their website: www.hotdayatthezoo.com. Look for HDATZ at Sterling’s String Fling July 4th & 5th, and the Empire Brewing and Music Festival in Syracuse July 11th.

If you are a fan of The Strokes, it is time to rejoice. Albert Hammond Jr. will release his new record on July 8th. His solo band will be touring in support of "Como Te Llama"so keep your ear to the ground for tour dates. When are we going to get a new Strokes record? Hopefully real soon!

Let me just say, the guys in Rochester Alt-country band Blue Jimmy are great dudes! On June 14th, they played a SIDS benefit at Cheap Charlies in Bloomfield (south of Canandaigua). This is the third year that they have participated in the event. This event touches my heart due to knowing these people personally. Jerry Rayburn, the owner of Cheap Charlies, lost his grand-daughter Olivia Jean to SIDS. His daughter Keara (Olivia’s mother) has thrown a SIDS benefit every year for the last three, and vows to never stop unless a cure is found. It is because of people like you that we do find cures. Your resiliency is inspiring! Check out Blue Jimmy July 18th at The Club @ Water Street.
High Falls Brewery JAMS 2008

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FRIDAY, JULY 11

AN EVENING WITH
MELISSA ETHERIDGE
SUNDAY, JULY 13

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
THE SECRET MACHINES
TUESDAY, JULY 15

KENNY CHESNEY
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
LEANN RIMES
TUESDAY, JULY 22

GARY ALLAN
AND SARA EVANS
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
LUKE BRYAN
FRIDAY, JULY 25

SHERYL CROW
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
JAMES BLUNT AND
TOOTS & THE MAYTALS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 3

JOHN FOGERTY
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7

AN EVENING WITH
KATHY GRIFFIN
SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

BOB DYLAN
& HIS BAND
TUESDAY, AUGUST 19

KID ROCK
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
REV RUN
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND
BOB WEIR & RATDOG
FRIDAY, AUGUST 22

Wegmans Reggae Fest
UB40 • MATISYAHU
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GIANT PANDA GUERRILLA DUB SQUAD
SUNDAY, AUGUST 24

Tickets available at cmacevents.com, ticketmaster locations, ticketmaster.com, concertstonight.com or call 585-232-1900. Produced by John Scher/Metropolitan Talent Presents.
The Party In The Park series, produced by Up All Night Presents, has headed to a new section of town, at the corner of Exchange and Court Streets. If you are familiar with Rochester, it is in the primary parking area of the Blue Cross Arena, and the area has been renamed the ‘Riverside Festival Site.’ Gerard Fisher and crew have upped the ante this year with more great music and an enthusiastic party environment! Some of the great acts that will be coming to the site in July and August are Joe Beard, Los Lobos, Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, Duke Robillard, Eddie Money, and the great Dickey Betts. Most importantly, they are all free shows! That is a great thing in this time of the depreciating dollar folks! Herby and I were recently at the site to catch moe, with guest Reid Genauer! The crowd was enthusiastic, and overall the new location has great promise. We strongly recommend that you get down there and tip your glass, and shake your ass in the coming weeks.

On July 12th, the Grateful Dead’s Phil Lesh will be taking the stage at the Highland Bowl in Rochester, as part of the BigCitySummerfest. Phil’s band will be joined by the amazing Levon Helm Band. The gates open at 3:00, with the show starting at 4:00. This show will be like no other Upstate show you have probably seen. The Highland Bowl is a band stand in a natural depression in Highland Park, located near the corner of Robinson Dr. & South Ave in the cities South Wedge. It will definitely have a west coast feel to it, so I’m sure Phil will feel right at home there!! Tickets are on sale now, so get them before they dry up! DO NOT MISS THIS SHOW!!
Sterling Stage, located 15 minutes west of Oswego and minutes from Lake Ontario, host their first annual String Fling July 3rd-6th. The buzz on Sterling’s first event this year Folkfest was felt statewide as the music park never looked better, and attendance was at an all-time high for the opening weekend. String Fling brings the “hippy bluegrass” movement that is spreading across the nation to Upstate NY. Headlining the event will be Jazz Mandolin Project featuring Jamie Masefield, and we had a chance to interview Jamie (keep reading it appears later in this issue). Also on the bill is Boris Garcia, who with the help of Grateful Dead publicist Dennis McNally have started to make a name for themselves nationally. Gordon Stone Band, Hot Day at the Zoo, Free Grass Union, Cabinet and many others round out the lineup.

Sterling Stage will present another show September 12th-14th dubbed the “Last Daze of Summer” Festival. As the most important election in US history approaches, I am happy to announce that Last Daze will be an official “Rock The Vote” event. The headlining act will be none other than Donna Jean Godchaux of the Grateful Dead. Donna Jean and the Tricksters have recorded a new album and are touring in support of it, mixing great new songs with Grateful Dead classics in their live sets. U-Melt, Giant Panda Guerrilla Dub Squad, Buzz Universe, The Buddhahood and many more are scheduled to perform. For all show information visit www.SterlingStage.com or www.myspace.com/sterlingstage.

The weekend of July 11th-13th in Syracuse may be hard to top this summer in CNY. Does it get any better than Jambalaya, good microbrew, and great American Roots Music one day, and then 2 days straight days of tasty barbeque and national blues band? I doubt it!! On Friday July 11th, Empire Brewing Company in Syracuse is proud to announce the Empire Brewing and Music Festival in Clinton Square. The festival will feature Donna The Buffalo, Big Leg Emma, and Hot Day at The Zoo, among others. There will also be several New York brewers present with all of your favorite suds. It will be held from 5 to 11 PM, but don’t worry the party will go long after that in Armory Square’s entertainment district. Do us a favor, don’t forget to visit the food vendors. Grab a Black Magic Stout, a cup of gumbo, and shake your ass!

The party is just getting started, as The New York State Blues Festival takes over Saturday July 12th and Sunday July 13th. The blues festival will be showcasing some regional and national greats in many different genres, but will definitely have an emphasis on the blues. On Saturday night, The Fabulous Thunderbirds will be headlining the Main Stage, while Sunday will be headlined by Jimmy Vaughan, brother of the immortal Stevie Ray. This will be a weekend Syracuse residents and fans across the state will be talking about for months! For more information on this ultra cool weekend, please check out the event websites: Brews: www.empirebrewfest.com and Blues: www.nysbluesfest.com.
The 9th annual Musefest returns to Newhart Lodge in Enfield Aug 22nd-24th. This event supports arts and music in the Ithaca region, and showcases some of the area’s finest performers. This year, organizers have dipped outside the local zone, bringing in Ekoostik Hookah as one of their headlining acts. Upstate favorites Jsan and the Analogue Sons, Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, Revision and Blue Sky Mission Club are also on the bill. For Musefest information check out their website: www.musefest.org

North Fork Music Park in the WNY town of Warsaw will provide the scenery for the ATMA Rising Music and arts Festival. The festival will take place August 8th-10th and will play host to some extremely sick bands that we have some serious old school ties to. The New Deal, The Bridge, Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, Kill The Noise, Schleigho, Revision, J-san and the Analogue Sons, Lazzlo Hollyfield, Rhubarb, Sonic Garden and many more will perform. For more info check out www.atmarising.com

Mark Legott knew he was hearing something special when his daughter came home from school seven years ago with an idea. His daughter Marissa, who was then an 8 year old student at Cady Stanton Elementary school in Seneca Falls, had an idea of throwing a special concert in their historic old town. The town of Seneca Falls has a rich history, and is well known for being the Birthplace of the Women’s Rights Movement in the middle 1800’s. This event is celebrated annually during ‘Convention Days’, a festival that honored the movement with re-enactments, free tours of historic sights, and a free concert in People’s Park. After dwindling numbers forced the organizers to cut back on the budget of the festival, the free concerts in the park went by the wayside! Seven year old Marissa’s idea was to “throw a concert in the park with only Female bands during the Convention Days festival.” So that year, the first annual Women’s Right To Rock Festival was introduced to Seneca Falls. Since it’s inception, the festival has been a growing success. The first year, the show had four female fronted bands perform in a one day event. After two years, it grew to twelve bands in two days. Now in it’s seventh year, the festival has grown to host 30 bands in 3 days. It features all different kinds of genres, and the performers are from all over the country. Some past performers at this event have included: Bee-Eater, The Atomic Swindlers, Haunted By Angels, Five 2, Molly Shea, and Lushwell just to name a few! This year, Marissa and Mark have raised the bar with performances from Ashley Cox, El Ka Bong, Static Cling, Jane Evil, and Deep Blue Dream along with many other talented artists. This is a really good time, and you can not beat the cost - it’s FREE! For more info check out www.myspace.com/womensrightstorock.com
Folks, there is new venue alert in this issue of Upstate Live. Located in Saugerties, the Cantine Veterans Memorial Complex (or as locals know it, Cantine Field) will be host to an exciting new live music venture - Concerts in The Fields. It will host all kinds of Regional and National touring acts in its pursuit of becoming one of the elite concert series’ in the Northeast. The fun starts on August 9th, as the venue will host its first ever live concert at the complex. Dickey Betts, former Allman Brother, and quite frankly, one of the best guitarists to ever step foot on any stage, will bring his band Great Southern to the venue. Tickets for the event are on sale now, and are only $20 in advance, and are sure to go up at the time of the show! Stay posted as I am sure they will be announcing more shows to the inaugural season at Cantine Field. For more information, please check out www.concertsinthefield.com, as more details will surely be posted soon!

Special thanks are in order for the staff and patrons of Saranac Lake’s The Waterhole. DeVito and friends are one of the state’s most dedicated live music supporters, and the Waterhole’s Upstairs Music Lounge is one of the premier places to play in all of Upstate NY! Check out their weekly ‘Party On The Patio’ series. The kind acts include Elephantbear on July 5th, Slow Natives on the 17th, Japhy Ryder on July 19th, Pie Boys Flat on August 2nd, Jamie Notarthomas on the 16th, and Dana Monteith and the Flying Jays on August 21st. It is sure to be a great old time in the North Country.

Speaking of Saranac Lake, The Mountain Music Meltdown will be taking place on August 9th and 10th at the North Country Community College Soccer Field. The two day line-up features Chris Hillman, Donna The Buffalo, Juggling Suns, Dark Star Orchestra, The Zen Tricksters, Raisinhead, and The Horseflies among many other great artists. Now you have two great reasons to head toward the mountains!

Over the last 20 years, if you were a regional or national touring band in your infancy stage, you had a condensed view of the venues that were absolutely necessary to play. In Albany, that place has always been Valentine’s. Located at 17 New Scotland Ave., this place is a crucial fixture in the Upstate scene. The venue houses two different stages on two different floors. One, a much larger concert hall type of stage, the other a smaller stage in a mid-sized bar area. If you are lucky enough to land a show there, you are getting somewhere within your touring plans. For a fan of live music, it is a great place to see a show, and hang out with the locals. They have a very diverse array of bands that are booked in the club, but the theme is definitely rock based. On Thursday and Friday, they have one of the most generous happy hours that I have ever seen - 3pm to 8 pm. Something else that is completely unique is the bar/restaurant/band happy hour that takes place from midnight to 4 AM on Saturday nights. They encourage you to “bring your pay stub, cd, etc” to join the fun. That’s a great deal and a great networking opportunity!! If you are a local who has never been there, or you are a visiting someone in the Capital District, check this place out. You will not be disappointed.
The F.X. Matt’s Brewery in Utica, famous for making Saranac Beer, was dealt a huge setback last month when a fire started at the factory’s canning plant just before their first “Saranac Thursday’s” of the year was to begin. Luckily, no one was seriously injured, and in true Upstate NY fashion, the Matt’s promised to rebound and rebuild even before the fire was out. Their music series returned the next week on schedule with incredible support from the locals. Then moe. kicked off their summer concert series June 13th-14th with back to back rocking shows. Besides the weekly Thursday series, the schedule continues with performances by Rob Randolph and the Family Band on Friday July 18th. Dark Star Orchestra celebrates Jerry Garcia’s Birthday Friday August 1st, and Pittsburgh’s Rusted Root returns on Friday September 19th. For information on all the brewery shows check out www.saranac.com/events

Do you want to dance a jig? How about celebrate simple Irish Tradition? Then my friends, an event of great times is heading our way! The Great American Irish Festival is celebrating it’s fifth anniversary! The show takes place at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds in Frankfort just east of Utica July 25th through the 27th. Come and check out bands steeped in all forms of Irish Music. If you are into contemporary, traditional, or regional acts, there is a little of everything here. I personally recommend Enter The Haggis, The Glengarry Bhoys, and Eileen Evers, but there is much, much more to choose from! This is sure to be one of the great parties of the summer in Upstate New York! For info visit their website www.gaif.us

Guthrie Bell continues to bring in the best regional talent to the Albany area. Promoter Greg Bell eases up a little during the summer months, but does have a big show with the Benevento Russo Duo at Revolution Hall Friday July 11th. Look for many upcoming show announcement for the fall season at www.myspace.com/guthriebell

Headed down into Pennsylvania July 18th and 19th?? Maybe you should consider it! The Dam Show in Austin, PA takes place at the legendary Austin Dam Memorial Park. The park is a natural outdoor wonder and was quoted by Groovin Lumens as being “The Best Place we’ve ever done lights.” If you know Andy, you know that is a sick statement! Some bands that will be playing on those two days are The Ryan Montbleau Band, Free Grass Union, Blue Sky Mission Club, The Buddahood, the Hackensaw Boys and Redheaded Stepchild, among others. Come down and see what all of the buzz is about!

How about Vermont? We love Vermont here at UpstateLive! Good vibes are on the bound!. EMP has announced their first annual Liberate Music and Arts Festival. The event will be taking place August 23rd at the Bundy Center in Waitsfield. Some of the fantastic artists on the bill include the Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, Spiritual Rez, Rubblebucket Orchestra, The Gordon Stone Band. There will be alot of other nice things there as well, a children’s tent, Eco Awareness exhibits, Fresh Art, and Organic food and drinks! Yum and yay! Check out the first edition of what is sure to become an annual event! And if you haven’t before, make sure to visit Church St. in Burlington and their array of gift shops and restaurants.
ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL
Featured Upstate Review  BY ERIK JENSEN

First, let me start off by saying this is easily one of the most well organized concert events that I have ever seen. In the three years that I have frequented this event, everything is in line, and everything goes off without a glitch. John Nugent, Marc Iacona, and company have truly put together one of the elite Jazz festivals in the world. They should all be commended on what they have done for the jazz community and the City of Rochester.

Now onto the music! My journey started with The Spam All Stars, who completely rocked the Big Tent on opening night. The crowd was enthusiastic to say the least. The All-Stars, based out of Miami, have a weird mix of Latin jazz and electronic pulsation running rampant in their music. It was a heck of a way to kick off the week! I figured that I had better get it out of the way early in the week, so I did. That task was going to see local legend Bob Sneider and his trio rip it up at the State St. Bar and Grill. I was bummed that I would not be able to catch any of the walk-on guests that seem to find their way to his jam sessions each evening, but he is always amazing and that is all that mattered to us on this night!!

The next night, we made our way to the free outdoor stages of the festival. First, we made our way to the Stage at East and Chestnut to catch Downchild Blues Band. If you are not familiar with them, think Big Bad Voodoo blues licks! They set the tone for what would be coming next on the main stage. But before the main event of the evening, we made our way over to the Jazz Street stage to catch local favorite The Buddahood! I have to tell you, the energy this band puts out is like being witness to an erupting volcano. They had the peak crowd of the night jammed into this little section of Gibb St. Awesome! The band has overcome such great adversity, and deserve the recognition they are garnering as of late! Next up was Cross Canadian Ragweed, who were listed as a country band on the informational pamphlet. I am not sure how anyone came to that opinion. The band was balls out in your face southern rock mashed up with boogie-woogiefied blues riffs. This Texas based "monster" of a band ripped the top off the Main Stage to close out the first weekend of outdoor shows for the festival!

I had a ton of commitments during the work week that did not allow me time to catch some of the great acts that would take the stage. From reports I received, artists that deserve recognition include, Devon Allman’s Honeytribe, Jake Shimabikuro, Cindy Blackman, John Scofield, Filthy Funk, and an endless list of greats.

Friday night June 20th had me really excited. First, we started off with The Skatalites. This legendary ska and reggae based machine ripped out several of their classics. I was happy to catch this ‘once in a lifetime’ type performance. We had to move quickly down to the stage at East and Chestnut, where I only got to catch one song by Buffalo based Crittenden. I have known Eric Crittenden for years, from several bands he played with in the Buffalo area. It is nice to know that he has rose to national prominence with his blend of slick soul and upbeat rock jazz. Next up was Soulive! I had not seen them live in years, and I was just hoping mother nature would cooperate. The Evans brothers and Mr. Krasno came out and had the whole Avenue hopping. It was like Jimmy Smith was alive and well and living in Rochester! Pure funking energy! Half way through the show, the band welcomed out sax god and former member Sam Kininger. Then the sky opened up! On our way back to our vehicle we did see a few minutes of reggae legends Third World. We were forced into retirement for the night!

The next night for me was all about the East Ave. / Alexander St. Stage! It started off with Joe Bonamassa. The one time child prodigy has grown into the blues legend that many believed he would be. He played a very enthusiastic and crowd pleasing hour of great blues. All of the great acts of the past week prepared everyone for Goliath! Goliath is Medeski, Martin, and Wood! If you are into them, the free form experimentation and weird electronic rants that they delve into are exhilarating! If they were new to you, (like about half of the crowd that was there) then they probably had you quite confused. In any case, they were the perfect closer for the festival. This is one of those bands that cross so many genre boundaries that they are at times a perfect mess! Most in the jazz community love and appreciate them for that fact alone! Count me as one of them!

The Rochester International Jazz Festival continues to grow in size and strength every year! The organizers have put together a benchmark festival experience that is only rivaled by a few worldwide. I can not wait to see what next year’s edition will bring to the table. www.rochesterjazz.com
LOS LOBOS  JULY 10
GIANT PANDA  JULY 17
GUERILLA DUB SQUAD  JULY 24
DUKE ROBILLARD  JULY 31
EDDIE MONEY  AUGUST 7
DICKEY BETTS

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HANSDOME JACK  DJ FIXX  ARM CANNON
J-SAN AND THE ANALOGUE SONS
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AT THE NORTH FORK MUSIC PARK IN WARSAW, NY
JEFF BUJAK

Syracuse native Jeff Bujak has made quite a name for himself lately as a solo act headlining live music venues throughout the northeast. Now stationed in Massachusetts, The Buj is not only a performer way ahead of his time musically, but he is also a one man operation that gets more done than 5 member bands with a full management team. The Buj handles his own booking, management and publicity, and is his own archivist and webmaster as well. Oh yeah he writes all the music and drives the van to the shows!! All in a days work right??

Herby: Tell me a little about your musical training??

Buj: Well, I was born and grew up in Syracuse, NY. I started playing piano and keyboards when I was 6 or 7... give or take a year to compensate for tinkering, and not really playing. I started classical lessons soon after and quickly found a love for instrumental compositions. At 15, I took what I learned and I ended my lessons to started writing my own solo pieces. By 18, I wrote over 200 musical pieces ranging from a minute to 20 minutes long... none of which had lyrics. I felt that writing and spending all my time on the music itself, and not on lyrics allowed me to be more free with my writing techniques and not to have to worry about fitting in vocal melodies. And to this day, I prefer not to write lyrics. It wasn't until my 20's that I found a love for jazz improv and self taught myself the basics.

Herby: You joined the band Somebody's Closet soon after right??

Buj: After I graduated college, my wife and I (my girlfriend then) took off to Tempe, AZ to start a life. I went to school for Business Technology and had a dream of starting a nightclub. I actually wanted to start the nightclub down there, but instead joined the band Somebody's Closet. They just lost their bassist and were looking for a bassist and maybe a keyboardist. I could do both, so that was one less mouth to feed on the road. And with 7 people and 4 dogs on a bus across country, that one extra mouth would have been a little too many. But, those tours are a book in itself... fun (crazy) times!!

Herby: When did you decide to give the solo thing a try?? How has the transition been??

Buj: From the time I started writing solo pieces, I always wanted to play solo on stage. I actually formed a one man nu-metal band with me on guitar and screaming vocals, and beats being played on cassette that were created on my keyboard. So, I guess the solo electronica project was about 15 years in the making, but I just had to wait for the technology to get there.

So far everything is working to plan, and I've gotta say that I love running my own business. Learning the trade is more cost effective in the end, which allows for more possibilities. And doing it yourself leaves nothing to be worried about - you make sure it gets done. I learned, all the trials and errors of being on the road, and put them to the test with this brand new project.
My computer runs all my rhythms. I program my rhythm loops and beats before a show or before a studio session, and figure out how I want the song to run. Then, I play live everything over that... piano, bass, effects, vocals, solos, samples, loops... anything I can reach with my 2 hands and 2 feet... and sometimes my elbows and I’m working on my forehead. I even take the computer that runs rhythm samples and patch those through effects to do some beat manipulation on the fly. For keyboards, I currently use a 1974 Fender Rhodes Stage Piano and an 88 key Yamaha Motif 8 Workstation. My exact setup is very complicated and might bore most people so I will leave it at that, but if you’re very curious, come to a show and I’ll definitely run you through what’s going on.

Herby: So what’s on the horizon for The Buj??

Buj: 2007 was all about getting to know my music and what I wanted to do. I had no idea when I started back then that I would be remixing Pump Up the Volume by M/A/R/R/S or that I would be running my Rhodes through crazy effects loops and triggers. I honestly thought that I would be a listening room musician with people sitting and sipping wine and not a progressive IDM (Intelligent Dance Music) artist raging until 5am at festivals.

2008 until now has been about building an arsenal of road equipment, touring the northeast opening for great bands, making great useful contacts, cashing in favors with agents and pretty much doing everything I can to promote the name. This summer will be about gearing up for what’s to come in the fall. In September, I start my full time touring schedule. I’ll be sticking around the northeast doing 4-5 shows a week including a big Monday night residency at Nectar’s in Burlington, VT, then heading down the coast to North Carolina for a 3 week stint, ending the year with 2 months of crazy touring back up here. I have a new album coming out in March 2009, a remix album hitting around the same time, as well as releasing every live show I play to download online. So, new music will be plentiful.

But, who’s to tell what I’ll sound like next year. I am influenced musically every day of my life, and I can recall many points of my life where one event changed my whole thinking on music. All it takes is one major event to throw your creative juices into a blender, and then who knows what will come of it.

With the economy the way it is right now, and with not as many people traveling to see shows, I have to make every show that I play become an event in itself. It’s not the old days (for me the mid-90’s) where you would hit a show in Buffalo, then following the band to Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Albany then ending at The Wetlands where everyone that you met at all the shows that week end up to have a good old family show-down! Back then, the event was a week long journey, and for some other fans a month long journey. So, that’s exactly what I try to do... make every live performance an event and leave people with a sense of musical saturation when they leave.

KEVIN KINSELLA

Kevin Kinsella is one of the most recognizable and influential musicians to ever walk the streets of Ithaca! In the last 20 years he has fronted the great Tribulations and up until recent times, John Brown’s Body. The latter being called one of the best reggae bands of the last 25 years by many publications. On top of his life as a musician, he is also the founder of I-Town Records. That collective has produced many albums from countless amounts of fine musicians in Ithaca. Kevein Kinsella is a local legend to many, and count me as one of them. He currently has his hands dipped in many different projects. I was able to catch up with Kevin recently, to talk shop about all of things that the dynamic front man has been up to, and his past endeavors.

Erik: Since the beginning of your musical career, all the way back with the Tribulations, what and or whom turned you on to the magical world of reggae music?

Kevin: The defining moment in my life occurred in 1983 when I was driving in the car with my Father in Ireland, land of his birth, when we heard "One Love/People Get Ready" by Bob Marley and the Wailers. It was a life changing moment. When I returned to the U.S. the next year I bought "Legend" on Cassette and was deeply intrigued. I thought Bob Marley was like a christian Rick James. I recognized the lyrics from Church, but the music was something I had never experienced. Then My Brother explained to me about the Rastafari, Marcus Garvey and the history of Jamaica. Needless to say, the mind blowing continued.
Erik: Who were your biggest musical influences as a child?

Kevin: The Radio.... I was a big radio listener as a child. I remember this old dock we used to dance on as kids and make it shake....to songs like "Don't rock the boat". I was always way into doo-wop music from the 50's and 60's. My brother used to order those 8 record sets off the late night T.V. that had all those "golden oldies". My mom would love when he'd put those records on and we'd all dance. She was real good at the Twist. The first cassette I bought on my own was Elvis's Greatest hits when I was like 10 years old.

Erik: What was it like having that kind of admiration shown for your musical craft at such a young age? Describe to me the feelings of being selected in those early years to play in Japan due to your band winning the Yamaha competition?

Kevin: I felt we were always Blessed with so much positive feedback and encouragement. Back when my friend Josh Neuman and I started Tribulations it was 1986. We were in 10th grade in High school, there wasn't alot of Reggae happening at large, plus we were so young, and obviously we weren't Jamaican....People were surprised and excited by what we were setting out to do. Looking back on those days I can still feel all the Love - from the Granny's all the way to our peers.

Erik: After forming JBB, tell me about how you were signed to the king of all reggae labels, Shanachie?

Kevin: John Brown's Body was the phoenix that arose from the ashes of my first band Tribulations. I was looking to have a more Roots Reggae feeling in the music and less Reggae Rock. We recorded our first two records primarily at my cousin's apartment in Boston and then did overdubs at a couple different houses in I-Town. At the time, we weren't touring beyond a couple of shows every couple months in Ithaca and NYC. The band was comprised of past Tribulations members located in Ithaca, NYC and Boston. It was on the strength of those two recordings that we garnered the interest of the people over at Shanachie. Being signed to that label was like a dream come true. A lot of the first, and my favorite, reggae lp's were Shanachie releases. "Two Seven's Clash" by Culture and "Greatest Hits" of The Meditations to name a couple. Signing to Shanachie was like a dream come true. Being signed to Shanachie was like a dream come true.

Erik: Ithaca, is in my opinion, the most musically gifted well of knowledge in the U.S. How does it feel having that many talented people within walking distance at any given second? What does Ithaca symbolize to you?

Kevin: The flowing Water is a great gift to creativity. Some people talk about the progressive politics, but I think that is questionable. What I love, and have always loved about this area is the Land.

Erik: Why did you choose to walk away from John Brown's Body? I can tell you, it left many people (including myself) feeling quite empty for some time?

Kevin: 5 records and 12 years later I was ready for a change. I am still alive and playing Music. Thanks be to God.

Erik: The Grassroots and Blue Heron festivals have been a major driving force in the promotion of americana and ethnically diverse talent bases in the Northeast. What do you think has made those festivals the success they are today?

Kevin: Again, the land. When people gather to celebrate music outside on the land, a great spirit comes forth. This is an ancient ritual celebrated by all the peoples of the Earth from the beginning of humankind.

Erik: You have so many different projects going on right now. Which one is your main focus at the present time?

Kevin: As of June 2008 I am playing about 20 shows this summer with my new group Food, Clothes and Shelter- which is all original music from my life's songbook-drawing from the first five John Brown's Body records, the first four 10 Ft. Ganja Plant records and my two solo Records, as well as more and more of my newest songs--We've all been enjoying playing those alot! 10 Ft. Ganja Plant is currently finishing up on our next release. The working title is "Bush Rock" !!! We Hope to have that out in September of this year on ROIR records.

Erik: Do you plan on going into the studio at any time soon with any of the your current projects?

Kevin: Millionaires of Love is strictly a fun, once a week gig- an opportunity to have fun with friends and play some irie jams. Nothing serious there. I do hope to record my newest original material with Food, Clothes and Shelter when the right time comes.

Erik: Are there any new recording projects that are being worked on for the I-Town label, and are you currently recruiting any other talent for the label?

Kevin: The music never stops....we just released a handful of winners recently....Malang Diabate, 1,000's of One, IY, GoodStuff!
DROPCLUTCH

Dropclutch is one of the premier alternative metal bands in the northeast. Based out of Binghamton, the band has been spreading out on a national level. The band has recently started gaining the attention of national labels. They are one those bands that has built solid loyalty with their proud Do It Yourself work ethic. It is starting to pay massive dividends. The band is getting heavy radio airplay in New York and Pennsylvania, and have been frequenting music industry conferences to show off the goods. With the signing of Upstate talent starting to pick up, I would not be surprised if it happened for this great group of guys. I recently had the chance to catch up with Landon, one of the great guitarists in this band, to get the divvy on all things Dropclutch.

Erik: How did you meet up with the guys and form Dropclutch?

Landon: Well I met Josh and Bill in my first year of college, and we were all heading down our own respective paths, but as things go, we somehow ended up in the middle all working together. They started working together about 4 or 5 years ago on the music, and I was playing in a different band at the time. We actually shared the stage together on several shows and it was always a blast. Well while working on preproduction for the new record producer Billy Grazadei suggested the addition of another guitar player, I got the call, and here we are 50 something shows later. I cant believe how fast the time has passed.

Erik: Who were your biggest musical influences in your formative years?

Landon: There are so many. I really like Faith No More alot when I was first starting. Alice in Chains, and then it turned over to alot of the alternative stuff from the 90’s - Really I have picked from everything. It doesn’t matter what style of music or who wrote it. When you listen to it and it takes you somewhere other than where you are when you are hearing it, you are going to like it.

Erik: Tell me how exciting it was to go from regional touring, to your gradual spreading out and touring of the Northeast?

Landon: It has definitely been a blast, and very unpredictable. We love coming into new venues for the first time, and especially love meeting every new person along the way!

Erik: We know you have played many important shows like the IMC in Philadelphia and you have opened for many great national bands. To this date, what is the most important break that the band has caught, in your opinion?

Landon: I think that it is hard to pinpoint one. Or maybe we are still waiting for it. I think every show for us has been important. This business is all about pounding the pavement, consistency, and never promising more than you can deliver. The people you meet along the way could potentially determine what path you head down in the long run. They just never seem to intermix at one show!

Erik: The Southern Tier is very rich on good alternative metal bands. Is there something in the water down there?

Landon: Well more or less it has to be the lack of good drinking water. Which leads to severe dehydration ( no pun to Shawn who just got out the hospital with that) which can only lead to an extreme thirst to create!

Erik: What are your favorite venues to play in Upstate New York?

Landon: Lets see. Magic City Music Hall in our home town has to be our top pick, and they take great care of their artists. The Penny Arcade for having the beach right outside, Station 58 for their gear, and the Lost Horizon for coming back and continuing their legacy.

Erik: Do you guys currently have any plans to do any more recording?

Landon: Yeah we actually went back in to the studio a few weeks back to demo out some songs for preproduction on the next record. It is more a challenge to find time to dedicate solely to recording. When our focus does switch over to that though it seems to take no time at all.

Erik: I recently was told by an A and R rep that you guys are starting to get some label attention? How true is this, and is it as serious as I am hearing?

Landon: We have been approached by a few labels, we are hitting it hard getting as much press and experience under our belt as we can, and really just doing as much as we can on our own at this point and if they want to get involved to take it to the next level then that is a new topic for discussion when it happens!

Erik: What are your plans for the next year?

Landon: Play, tour, write, record, all that good stuff. We have been talking about doing a dvd for some time so we will probably put that in motion as well. Hopefully it will be our busiest year yet.
RaRa Riot

Milo Bonacci is another fine musician from Upstate New York who is doing well on the international music scene. A Geneva native, he was one of the founding members of Gym Class Heroes. Several years ago, Milo made the decision to leave GCH right as they were in the middle of signing a recording contract. His judgement, in choosing the certainty of education, over the sometimes fleeting dream of rock stardom, is one to be applauded on the highest level. That is what lead him to his latest project: the highly eclectic, and invigoratingly original, Ra Ra Riot. Based out of Syracuse, this band has seen success in the States, the U.K., and even Iceland. They were recently signed to Barsuk Records. I had an opportunity to catch up with Milo, to talk about the past, and everything Ra Ra Riot.

Erik: What a whirlwind five years you have had. Five years ago, did you ever think you would be in the life position that you are in now?

Milo: Five years ago I would have been surprised to learn that every difficult decision you're faced with usually leads to a whole set of new difficult decisions you have to make. Back when I was first debating with myself with the whole school verse band issue, I don't think I ever thought that I'd be playing in another band. Let alone, having to make the same decision all over again.

Erik: How tough was it to leave GCH knowing the great situation they were soon entering?

Milo: It was definitely tough to leave the band, but I was pretty focused on my long-term goals at the time… I was about to go to Italy for the year, and I really wanted to finish school. I was out of the band for almost a year before I got the band itch again. I definitely missed the collaborative process that you get by working in a band, but an entire year went by before I thought to myself "hey, you know what? I should start a new band!" At the time, I think I just wanted to do everything that I wasn't able to do in Gym Class Heroes - I wanted to expand the sonic palette and work with as many instrumentalists as I could find. I became less ambitious when I started actually looking for potential band mates though. I was pretty psyched to find a couple of able and willing string players.

Erik: How did you meet the people that would eventually be your current band mates?

Milo: I had met Wes a few years back at a party at my house. I remembered he had been really enthusiastic about the Wurlitzer that I had, and I think I initially thought of him when I was looking for people to make music with because of that. I was in an electronic music composition class with Rebecca, and throughout the semester I got the sense that she played some sort of stringed instrument… it wasn't until the last day of class that I actually asked her about it, and subsequently asked if she be interested in trying to make some music. She then recommended Allie, who she knew from various string ensembles and what not through the university. As for Mathieu… I met him after a show that I had played in with another side-project type band. He came up to me and said "If you ever need a bass player, here is my number." And it just so happened that I did need a bass player. I met John because we had a lot of mutual friends. I had always heard good things about him, and it seemed only natural to ask if he would like to be in this band that I was starting.

Erik: The buzz on you guys has happened fast and your rise to great things, even quicker? Were you surprised at how quickly this has all taken off?

Milo: At first things did seem to happen really, really quickly. After our first show outside of Syracuse, we were talking with a record label… nothing ever came of it, but it seemed to spark something in us. We went into play CMJ the following fall, and were totally shocked by the sort of response we were getting. We were one of a thousand bands and we had very low expectations for ourselves… after that festival, with the attention we started to get it was sort of like "what would happen if we tried to do this full time?"

Erik: The band has really been widely accepted in Europe. What do you think has helped you gain such momentum over there.

Milo: Well, actually we've only played in the UK and Iceland… we have yet to go to continental Europe. I think the shows we have played, the audience is attracted to the same sorts of things that they are in the states… we have a lot of fun playing our music, and I think that translates to the crowd.

Erik: Congrats to your signing to the Barsuk label. When does the record drop, and what should we expect on it?
Milo: Thanks! The expected release date is set for August 19th. There are a few songs from the EP as well as a few new songs. Everything was recorded with Ryan Hadlock who has worked on some pretty amazing records by bands like Blonde Redhead, The Gossip, Stephen Malkmus and Islands. It was our first time working with a producer and I think the songs are a little more focused. It is a very dynamic record though, it is wide-ranging. It is huge, and intimate, and glossy and raw all at the same time.

Erik: What are your touring plans behind this record?

Milo: Nonstop!

Erik: The loss of John Pike left everyone devastated. I know it had to be one of the toughest things you have ever had to endure. Do you guys have anything in the works to pay tribute to the life of your extremely talented friend?

Milo: You're right… although I think it would be more accurate to talk about enduring this in the present tense. The past year has been so difficult for everybody, in countless, intangible ways. It still is difficult, and I don't think it will ever cease being difficult. We put together an event to celebrate his life in Boston this past December and invited Tokyo Police Club and Vampire Weekend to come play—friends of ours, and both bands that John adored. We hope to turn that into an annual thing… all the money is donated to a foundation set up in his name and a musical instrument lending library.

Erik: Milo, what does Upstate New York mean to you?

Milo: Upstate is often over-shadowed by the New York City area. We’re more or less equidistant from two major cosmopolitan areas, which generally get the most of the attention. I think there is a lot of untapped talent upstate, and unfortunately there are fewer outlets for it to flourish. It is somewhat of a struggle trying to "make it" when you're Upstate, but I think that definitely makes for a unique perspective on what it is you're trying to do.

SAME BLOOD FOLK
Jenny Collins is the startling lead voice for the Hamilton based Same Blood Folk. This amazing, (and let me emphasize amazing) three piece Americana band, is one of the best kept secrets in the Upstate music scene. The trio made up of Jenny Collins on vocals, guitar, harmonica, and stochastic box, Zach Collins on banjo, mandolin, guitar and vocals, and James Whyte on percussion and vocals, is the real deal for sure! Very swampy, incredibly catchy, and unbelievably adept, vocally and musically - this band has Grassroots Festival written all over it! The band is starting to spread out, and is currently looking to add more dates all over the Upstate region! You will be adding alot more about them soon, but let me introduce to you to the amazingly gifted Jenny Collins.

Erik: Who are your biggest musical influences?

Jenny: As a musician, I don’t really have influences per se, but I do have inspirations. As far as people, I’d have to say mainly my brother Leif James and my cousin Zachary Collins. When I was younger, I’d listen and watch them play right in front of me. It was so real. I wanted to be able to play just like they could. Ani Difranco was also an inspiration, because I never before heard a woman rock the guitar the way she did and it made me want to play that much more. Even things like birds singing or the sound of a distant car as it fades in and out can spark an idea, as simple as that may sound.

Erik: What is your musical background? Background of other members? I saw that you opened for some pretty high profile shows?

Jenny: I started singing at age 17 and picked up the guitar around the same time. It took me almost a year to start taking the idea of making music seriously. At that time I started writing originals, all with the same three chords. Boy...did I annoy my family. Whenever my brother Leif was playing, I would watch and soak in his rhythms and chord progressions. He got me to play at an open-mic in Syracuse and it was at that point I was hooked. I had no issue with playing in front of others, except when it came to Zach. Though he was only 13 he was far more advanced than me. He has been playing since age 6. Crazy! I’ve never had formal guitar lessons, and I taught myself through watching my brother and fumbling through chords. I have played with several amazing musicians over the years who have also taught me a thing or two, especially my cousin Zach. Within a few years I started playing with Tillorson Creek. With them I had the honor of opening for national acts. The band competed in a Battle of the Bands, where the winner would open for one national act. Though we came in 3rd place, the owners really liked us and asked us to open for Blues Traveler twice, as well as Little Feat and Vince Welnick. Over the 2 years playing with Tillorson Creek, I had a lot of fun. They are great musicians and friends and taught me a lot, but I felt a need for change. I started playing solo for a while, and it was shortly after this that Zachary, Leif and I started jammin’ together.
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Rusted Root

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JAMIE MASEFIELD
Jamie Masefield, is in many people's eyes, a musical legend! With an endearing love for music from the time of his childhood, to the present, Mr. Masefield has pushed the boundaries of jazz and roots music in America today. From his humble beginnings in the best college town in America, Burlington, VT; to his ultimate musical project, the Jazz Mandolin Project, he has always been about exploring new roads of musical glory! I recently had a chance to catch up with Jamie, and shoot the breeze about many topics that die-hard fans want to know. From his own projects, to his sharing the stage with his buddies from Phish, I left no facet uncovered.

Erik: How did you get involved in music as a child, and what was the first instrument you learned how to play?

Jamie: I grew up in a musical family. There was always music being played at family functions. I started on the tenor banjo which is tuned similarly to the mandolin. I took lessons every Saturday for 7 years.

Erik: What were some of your earliest projects like? In your formative years as a musician, what types of bands were you involved in?

Jamie: My brother and two cousins and I had a band called The Celtic Swamp Band. We entered some school talent shows and played at family parties and on the street corner; but mostly we were rehearsing, jamming and just having alot of fun. The music was a combination of old bluegrass/hillbilly music and simple jazz tunes

Erik: When you were at University Of Vermont, I understand that the hot spot downtown was Nectar's. You were doing something slightly different than most of those cats down there? Tell me about your Dixieland experience while at UVM?

Jamie: When I arrived at UVM it turned out much to my surprise that there were a number of dixieland bands that were in need of a banjo player. I suddenly had alot of jobs. It wasnt exactly the "cool" thing but I was playing alot of music and making money at it which was a real thrill. The guys I was playing with were alot older and I learned an awful lot from them. They could read music very well and I learned a whole new repertoire of music.

Erik: I understand that you studied with Ernie Stires, who recently passed away. Trey and yourself have both listed him as an important influence on your musical evolution. What did Ernie bring to the table where your muscial education is concerned? What were some of his theories, composition wise?

Jamie: Ernie died only a few weeks ago. He is very much on my mind. Studying with him was the greatest learning experience I've ever had. He opened my ears to classical music and composition. He gave me great inspiration to expand my music. I would bring a song to him that I was writing and he would sit down at the piano and show me some examples of what I could do with it and I was awestruck. I was in the habit of cutting and pasting a whole bunch of ideas together. He showed me how to expand just a single one, to view it from all different angles, to explore it and kind of relish the dissecting and analyzing of it. These were the basics of "theme and variation" which is a corner stone of classical composition. We would listen to favorite pieces of music or follow it reading the score and my mind was opened to the possibilities. I had to learn the piano to study with him. I started with Bartok's "Music for Childern" and then moved to Bach's 2 and 3 part Inventions. I was starting to get into his Preludes and Fuges but by then I was on the road so much that I never really dug into them. He wanted me to learn piano not to be a performer but simply to compose on and realize the potential of several things happening at once. He is the Yoda that whispers in my ear.

Erik: Tell me about the first time you met the guys in Phish? Did you ever envision, initially, that what they were doing was going to soar like it did?

Jamie: No I never would have imagined what would happen. It has been an amazing event of my time that I'm honored to have witnessed from so close. They were an odd bunch of guys with an odd bunch of characters listening to them. They weren't afraid to try anything. I think that many people don't know that they worked so hard to get where they did. For many years they weren't a celebrated band, they got very little press and somehow persevered with a great love for all kinds of music. I think it was their love of music that helped to keep them going before people caught on. It was very inspiring and really helped me to see how I should attempt to put my own show on the road

Erik: How did you end up initially meeting the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and forming a strong bond with those guys?

Jamie: I met the banjo player, Narvin Kimball at a show in Burlington. He was in his 80's then. He told me to come to Preservation Hall and call him. So a buddy and I drove down in a Jeep and I did call from a payphone on Basin St. He had me over for dinner (he cooked Jambalaya) and we played. He told me to come to Preservation Hall the next night. I played a whole set while he sat on the floor in front of me with some attractive young women who had come. It was very hot and sticky and one of my favorite memories. I played several other times, sitting in, when the Jazz Mandolin Project was in town.

Erik: How did the original line-up of the Jazz Mandolin Project come together?
Erik: What are you listening to these days? Is there any new music that intrigues you right now?

Jamie: I've been enjoying a new cd by saxophonist, Joshua Redman and of course enjoyed Wilco and Radiohead's last albums.

Erik: What was your inspiration to put together the event that became "How Much Land Does A Man Need?" How did the idea to create this multi-media piece come about?

Jamie: It came about through a desire to combine my music with other mediums and to tell a thought provoking story that was old but would have meaning for people today. I wanted to glue my music to some other things that I loved and put myself in some new situations. It's been a fascinating experience that I've already learned so much from.

Erik: Were you a Leo Tolstoy fan before this work was in progress? Or was the idea brought to you?

Jamie: I had been racking my brain for a few years trying to create a show. I read the short fiction of Tolstoy hoping that it would trigger an idea and it did. A friend suggested this, a scholar named Roger Shattuck who wrote a number of books that influenced me. He was another mentor of mine.

Erik: Do you plan on doing any other projects of this scope in the future?

Jamie: Not really. I want to perform this piece and take it abroad. It's a universal story that has meaning anywhere in the world. I think it could be a little repetitious to do something similar.

Erik: Do you have any other musical projects with JMP in the works?

Jamie: No. The climate for making albums is not very good.

Erik: What does Burlington, Vermont represent to you, from a musical and cultural standpoint?

Jamie: Burlington was an ideal place to start a music career. It's a great arts town and college town and I'm very lucky that I happened upon it.

Check out Jamie and the Jazz Mandolin Project, as they will be performing at Sterling Stage's String Fling on July 4th weekend. These guys have never sounded better, so make sure to catch them now, at their peak!

Read The Current and Past Issues On Our Website

www.UpstateLIVE.net
In 2005, drummer Sam Altman announced he was leaving the band to pursue a career in the medical field. One of the great drummers in this scene, one who’s machine like presence was emulated by many want to be’s, was stepping down from the riser. After the fourth installment of Camp Bisco and an exhaustive audition process, Allen Aucoin was announced as Altman’s replacement behind the drums. This was a relief to many in Bisco nation and marked the beginning of a new era!

Since then, the band has released a couple of albums on SCI Fidelity Records, dropped a couple of DVD’s, and continued to tour relentlessly in pursuit of it’s ultimate mission. Guitarist Jon Guttwillig has been quoted as saying, “the goal of the group is to create the wildest or craziest music of all time.” I am not sure how close they are to that! One thing is for certain however, they definitely are on their way to legendary status! They helped create a whole new brand of music, that will always be recognized as innovative and original. They are the Disco Biscuits!

Check them out at this year’s installment of Camp Bisco. The line-up for this year’s edition also features Snoop Dogg, DJ Shadow, The New Deal, Tea Leaf Green and Cut Chemist among many others. The event takes place July 17th through the 19th at Indian Lookout Country Club in Mariaville. Check out www.campbisco.net for more information.

The Disco Biscuits
Since their inception in late 1995, The Disco Biscuits have been one of the most innovative and groundbreaking bands on the alternative music scene. The Original Biscuits: with guitar shredder Jon "The Barber" Gutwillig, bassist Marc Brownstein, drummer extraordinaire Sam Altman, and keys guru Aron Magner, are singlehandedly responsible for forming a new musical style that is often copied but never authentically duplicated!

The band formed at the University of Pennsylvania, playing frat gigs, and small dive venues in their infancy. In 1996, they released the very jamband friendly Encephalous Crime record. The buzz that the band created with that record was huge within the hippies and college kids who were then, the core of The Disco Biscuits’ audience. Then IT happened! Shortly before starting work on their second album, the techno infused "Uncivilized Area," the band started incorporating techno sounds and mini rave sections into the structures of their songs. According to the Wikipedia dictionary of music, "They differ from many jam bands in that they infuse electronic elements into their music. This style is referred to generally as trance fusion or space music without a programmed beat." Bisco was born. The band which seemed like your average run of the mill jamband, was now responsible for a startling crossover. Hippies and progressive rock lovers were now standing alongside rave kids and techno fans at their shows. The shift in sound was one of the most groundbreaking things ever attempted in the history of modern music. You can quote me on that one! While at a Biscuits show, one of their average songs could turn into a 45 minute trance marathon before making it’s way back into it’s original theme and structure. Disco Biscuit songs are often written to compliment the live show, not the record. Their records have always been the by-product of the live show. This is often the other way around in the music industry.

In 1999, the first Camp Bisco took place, a festival which included the band, and many artists of a similar ilk. The festival has been recognized by many music publications as one of the top 10 festivals in the country on an annual basis. In early 2000, bassist Brownstein left the band (or was asked to leave, depending on who you believe), leaving a legion of Bisco fanatics highly disappointed. Many that have seen the band over the years know that Brownie was undoubtedly one of the central figures behind the sound of this genius collective! After months of playing sub par shows, and searching for a new bass player, Brownstein rejoined the group. His triumphant return resulted in one of the best electronic albums in this era of modern music. “They Missed The Perfume,” was an electronic and modern jam derived masterpiece raved by nothing that has been released within either genre. The album cemented their place in the American musical marketplace as an innovator, and further pushed forward the theory that they were in a league of their own. In 2002, the band released the unbelievably catchy "Senor Boombox." It was an album that was loved and hated by it’s split fan base, due to a departure back to a more jam oriented sound. Bottom line, art wise, it was a fantastic record! The album made the entry list on two Billboard Magazine charts, #13 on the Electronic Music chart, and #46 on the Independent Music chart. This was a tribute to the band's diverse fan base. In 2004, bassist Marc Brownstein helped start Headcount, an organization that has been instrumental in registering people to vote.
BEHIND THE SCENES OF CAMP BISCO
Meatcamp Productions

Jonathan Fordin is the CEO of Meatcamp Productions. He is the main figure behind putting together such fine events as Camp Bisco, the Echo Project, and the AMJAM festival. "We just recently finished our annual AMJAM festival in Asheville, which was one of our best festivals" he added "We had over 150 children in our Sunday Kids Parade." With all of the great things that Mr. Fordin has going on, he is very proud of his humble start in the music industry. "The original mission was to have a good time during college, and throw house parties in a small town called ‘Meatcamp’, outside of Boone, NC. We had a huge house we called the “hacienda” and we had friends in a reggae band that played there once a month. 400-500 people would show up, and we would charge a cover and it would pay for all the expenses of the night. Incidentally, we starting making money on it and decided to try to do a bigger show." That bigger show came in the form of the Disco Biscuits. "On April 29, 2002, we had THE DISCO BISCUITS play in that living room, and we definitely did not make our money back that night. It was a private party, and we only invited 145 people from Boone and in the Disco Biscuits community of friends. However, it was one of the best times of our lives up until that moment, and it will certainly go down in history as one of the best house parties ever thrown. It was one of those nights, that if you weren’t there, you have NO IDEA!"

About a year later we wanted to do a reunion event called “MEATCAMP” and we rented out a club in downtown Boone. It was a private event, that we sold tickets to by word of mouth only. We sold out in 2 and 1/2 weeks; 500 tickets at $30. When the night was all said and done, we threw another incredible party for our good friends, brought our favorite band to our small town once again, and paid the band a nice little guarantee. I think we even made a nice little profit off of the show. The rest is history," Meatcamp Productions was officially born, and has blossomed into what it is today! The road was long and swift, but was a very good time for Jonathan Fordin. I get the drift that it mirrors somewhat precisely, where he wanted to be today. "I worked for The Disco Biscuits for a couple years, I never really got paid but I always had a place to stay and food to eat. I was young and trying to help them get their Merchandise in line. I was just getting ready to start being a real employee when I decided I didn’t want to live on the road anymore and I wanted to start my own company. We started doing club shows in Boone and throughout NC with local bands, The Duo, Brothers Past, The Disco Biscuits, etc. In the summer of 2003, we produced our first festival that had over 1,000 people in attendance. In 2005, we started producing Camp Bisco. Again the rest is history."

History has been very good for Mr. Fordin, and it looks like it may continue long into the next decade. People like him, who have given so much to the scene, deserve to be recognized. They are the “behind the scenes” heroes that make it all happen. A job well done!
Always check the venue website or call the venue to confirm. All dates subject to change without notice.

July 3-6  String Fling : Sterling Stage - Sterling
July 10  Los Lobos, Tumbao, White Devils : Party in The Park - Rochester
July 11-13  Women's Rights To Rock Festival : People's Park - Seneca Falls
July 11  Empire Brewing & Music Festival : Clinton Square - Syracuse
July 11  Steely Dan : CMAC - Canandaigua
July 11  Derek Trucks / Susan Tedeschi : High Falls Brewery - Rochester
July 12  Phil Lesh and Friends, Levon Helm : Highland Bowl - Rochester
July 12-13  NYS Blues Fest : Clinton Square - Syracuse
July 13  Melissa Etheridge : CMAC - Canandaigua
July 15  Stone Temple Pilots : CMAC - Canandaigua
July 17  Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, Black August, M.G. : Party in The Park - Rochester
July 17-19  Camp Bisco : Indian Lookout Country Club - Mariaville
July 18  Robert Randolph & the Family Band : Saranac Brewery - Utica
July 18-19  The Dam Show - Austin Dam park - Austin, PA
July 22  Kenny Chesney, Leann Rimes : CMAC - Canandaigua
July 25-27  Great American Irish Festival : Herkimer County Fairgrounds - Frankfort
July 26  Jeff Bujak : Downtown Manhattan's - Syracuse
July 31  Eddie Money, Todd Wolfe Blues Project, Park Ave Band : Party in The Park - Rochester
August 1  Dark Star Orchestra : Saranac Brewery - Utica
August 1  New Riders of the Purple Sage : Public Market - Rochester
August 3  Sheryl Crow, James Blunt, Toots & Maytals : CMAC - Canandaigua
August 3  Dark Star Orchestra : High Falls Brewery - Rochester
August 7  John Fogerty : CMAC - Canandaigua
August 7  Dickey Betts and Great Southern, This Other Life : Party in The Park - Rochester
August 8  Donna The Buffalo : Public Market - Rochester
August 8-10  Atma Rising Music & Arts Festival : North Fork Music Park : Warsaw, NY
August 9  Dickey Betts and Great Southern : Cantine Field - Saugerties
August 9-10  Mountain Music Meltdown : NCCC - Saranac Lake
August 10  Kathy Griffin : CMAC - Canandaigua
August 10  G-Love, John Butler Trio, Tristan Prettyman : High Falls Brewery - Rochester
August 19  Bob Dylan & His Band : CMAC - Canandaigua
August 19  John Hiatt & the Ageless Beauties : Water Street Music Hall - Rochester
August 20  Kid Rock, Rev Run : CMAC - Canandaigua
August 22  The Allman Brothers Band, Ratdog : CMAC - Canandaigua
August 22-24  Musefest : Newharts Lodge - Enfield
August 23  Liberate Music & Art Festival : Bundy Center - Waitsfield, VT
August 24  Matisyahu, Culture, UB40, Maxi Priest, GPGDS : CMAC - Canandaigua
September 5-7  Reggae On The Ridge : Lightning Ridge Park - Prattsburgh
September 12-14  Last Daze Of Summer Festival : Sterling Stage - Sterling
September 18-20  Utica Music Fest - Utica
September 19  Rusted Root : Saranac Brewery - Utica

**To view our updated music calendar visit www.UpstateLIVE.net or www.myspace.com/upstatelivenet**
THE UGLY TRUTH by Erik Jensen

I am not really concerned about anyone's political convictions this month, except my own! I am going to speak my mind. You, as a reader, are warned that this is going to be an anti-republican speech. If you don't want to hear it, then tune out now! This may be too controversial for your fragile god fearing ears. Forgive me if this is quite random as well.

I am ready to start swinging when thinking about the prospect of another Republican president plunging this country even further into debt. That's right, simple equation! Republicans in office equals straight up recession! We have not had a chance to recover fully from the chaos of Reaganomics yet! One democrat, Mr. Clinton, had the economy in a full on upswing. This was callously ruined by W., who's infatuation with war and the elitist principals of relaxed taxation for the wealthy. Those two schools of thought alone, war and greed, have lead to what is surely the largest recession of modern times. In inflation adjusted times, the equivalent of the Depression of the 20's and 30's is a likely impending doom! That's right, if you choose to put another Republican in office, get ready for more war. Yes, that is correct, you will continue to pay (out of your hard earned wages) for more innocent young men and women to ship off to their deaths in Iraq. With Mr. McCain's well known bad temper factoring in, who knows who might be next on the slaughter list! It makes total sense that the Europeans despise us wholeheartedly! The representatives of our "free world" are war mongering bureaucrats with the audacity to pad their pockets supplying weapons to our army! Is this enterprise? No, it is a monopoly Mr. Cheney! Make some guns, sell them to our troops, and make millions! This is the ugly truth! War makes money! It doesn't for us common folk who are flipping the bill. It benefits the man who is the President of the United States moonlighting as the vice president! This is twisted and creepy, and many in the Republican Party know it! So Mr McCain is supposed to be the answer! Yet his agenda and policies are almost identical to Mr. Bush. Now, please don't get your feathers in a ruffle you die hard Republican supporters. I do see that he wants to provide tax relief, and I also see that he is in tune with the religious right for the sake of moral goodness! However, no one one will tell me what is morally obligating and correct when dealing with my day to day values. I believe he feels his role as president will include this pushiness of moral fiber bullshit. Too much pompousness, and unethically bankrupt hypocrisy makes this party look like a bunch of well fed buffoons! War hero or not, that does not make you the man for the job. It is time for change in the government. The back to basics of the "For all people," ethos, has been gone for way too long!

Whether you are a Democrat or not, there is only one chance for change. This is how low our personal pride has become. I personally like the promise that Mr. Obama brings to the Democratic party. That shred of new hope, coupled with a great policy partner like Mrs. Clinton, would spell the end of the charade that is the Republican stronghold! Hopefully we will all wise up and see that there is only way we can go with this.

Did you ever wonder why OPEC is so happy to raise the costs on oil? Think about this travelers of the road. Your whole way of life is being thrown into upheaval with the cost of gas. It is a war torn region's major asset and corporations fighting back with psychological warfare! Could it be war, urged on by the current administration that has caused this? I believe so, but who the hell am I? Down with war, down with unwanted taxation, down with government sanctioned monopolies, and down with hypocrisy! When all is said and done, the ultimate leaders this country are seeking, are two plain folk of racial and gender biased pasts. They represent the future of all that is change. We owe it to ourselves and our children to look hate and greed right in the eye, and say "We have had enough, next." In a perfect world, Obama/Clinton, the ticket, exists for all to embrace. Wouldn't it be nice? It would be the end of a tumultuous era and the start of a historically and socially beneficial harmony. A harmony that assists the future of this country, our loved ones, the things we value in our life, our livelihoods, and the world in general!

Let's make that change...Unite...and vote Democrat! If I have offended you, tough shit!
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