

June 2025
vol. 2 issue 6
free. take one.

the dirtbag times



*inside: we are all going to die - glitter, grit, & getting free -
instrumental surf music don't get no respect - creepy
horse gets their medical marijuana card - still musing -
going all the way - pedal pushing goes moog -
record reviews*



**the dirtbag times is a
magazine for dirtbags
by dirtbags.**

editorial bored
kelly menace

art splendidness
katie killer, rowan menace, & wonko
zuckerberg with maren farmer, tishia
jackson, scott sturdy, & william daniel
thompson

print meister
craig wheel werker

folks that write stuff
creepy horse - allan day - mike l. downey
- the drunkard - tishia jackson - pamalyn
rose-beeler - william daniel thompson

on the interwebz
<http://www.thedirtbagtimes.com>
redchapterjubilee@yahoo.com

materials for review & bribery can be
sent to:
the dirtbag times c/o kelly menace
16 foxberry dr.
arden, nc 28704



WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE

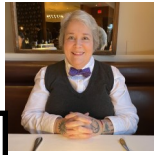
Last month during a meeting with her constituents Republican Iowa Senator Joni Ernst, when told that the cuts that the White House wants to apply to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) would cause people to die, told the assembled crowd, "Well, we're all going to die." The statement caused an uproar in the meeting and became a political football nationally. The next day Ernst offered a non-apology, quantifying the statement with "I made an assumption that everyone ... understood that yes, we are all going to perish from this Earth" and went on with the sarcasm saying she was glad she didn't tell anyone there's no Tooth Fairy too and if they wanna live forever they best get Jesus to save they souls.

Of course, Ernst's nihilism is technically correct. One day we will all die. Everyone does indeed know this. We are designed to die. It is of course what we do, as Joni Mitchell eloquently puts it, "between the forceps and the stone" that matters. That Ernst would refuse to accept any moral obligation for the extraction of a mortal toll on the poor so President Trump can get his "big beautiful bill" passed should come as no surprise. This is political expediency. But it's also very much on brand. The political right in America refuses to entertain exercises in empathy. It informs the decision to gut the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to leave disaster relief entirely in the hands of individual states. Why should the entitled class be taxed to bestow entitlement on the lazy? Why should those who live nowhere near the pathway of tornados or hurricanes foot the bill to rebuild in those areas? It flies in the face of the Trumpist World Order, where one gets theirs at the expense of the most vulnerable members of our society. At least they are consistent. That such an approach harms Trump's voting bloc the most seems to be beside the point for them. Who else are they gonna vote for? A goddamned liberal? Get the fuck outta here.

True, we will all die someday. I personally believe we all go back into the great silence. Many believe in an afterlife for those that did good works on Earth. No one really knows for certain, but everyone will find out eventually. I almost wish I could be wrong, because I would love for Bible-thumping conservative politicians and political activists to one day meet their Maker in ultimate judgment. I would think Christ and His daddy would find Republican hypocrisy an absolute deal breaker for entrance into Heaven and a one-way ticket to H-E-double hockey sticks. Unfortunately, whether that is fantasy or not, it does not excuse the willful torture of the fortunate ones in power legislate onto those without. I have much more hope that a political toll, rather than a religious one, will be exacted on Ernst and her colleagues.
— KELLY MENACE

GLITTER, GRIT, & GETTING FREE: WHY PRIDE MATTERS MORE THAN EVER IN 2025

We are not what other people say we are. We are who we know ourselves to be
—Laverne Cox



Let's get one thing straight — well, not straight, obviously — but clear: Pride is not just a parade. It's not just glitter and drag queens and rainbow-colored cocktails served in overpriced plastic cups (although, let's be honest, I'm not knocking any of those things). Pride is — and always has been — a defiant act of joy, resistance, remembrance, and community. And in 2025, when the world feels more like a fiasco than a festival, Pride isn't just important. It's necessary.

Because this year, the volume of anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation in the U.S. has reached an earsplitting crescendo. Book bans, bathroom bills, drag bans, healthcare restrictions — you name it, somebody in some legislature has tried it. Trans folks are under attack. Queer kids are being told they can't talk about who they are. Teachers are being told to erase themselves from the classroom. And meanwhile, many people are just trying to live their lives, pay their rent, maybe find a little love along the way. And we're still out here arguing about whether they should be allowed to exist?

It's exhausting. It's infuriating. And it makes Pride not just a celebration — but a battle cry.

Here's what I know deep in my bones: Pride is sacred because it says, in the face of all that noise, I am still here. I am worthy. I am whole. I am not going back in the closet just because some people still haven't learned that "difference" doesn't mean "danger."

I mean, have you ever met a queer elder? Someone who came out before it was cool (or even legal)? Someone who survived the AIDS crisis, who lost friends, who showed up anyway and kept dancing? They are walking miracles. They are living history books. And they are part of why we show up every June — not just to party, but to honor.

And yes, the parties are fabulous. Yes, the parades are joyful. But beneath the sequins and face paint is something fierce. Pride is protest wrapped in a feather boa. It's political. It always has been. From Stonewall to Pulse to drag queens reading banned books in small-town

libraries, LGBTQIA+ folks have always known that visibility is a form of resistance. Especially when you're being told to hide.

I think about the young people who are just now discovering who they are. The ones Googling "Am I gay?" at 2 a.m. The ones who don't see themselves represented in their families or their textbooks. The ones who need someone to look them in the eye and say, "You are not broken. You are not alone." Pride is for them. It's a beacon. A lifeline. A street full of strangers shouting, You belong here.

And let's not forget the joy. My God, the joy. Queer joy is one of the most radical things I've ever seen. It's expansive. It's unapologetic. It's contagious. The laughter that happens when you've spent years hiding, and then suddenly you're surrounded by people who get you? That kind of joy doesn't just lift you — it liberates you. And in a year where so many are feeling crushed under the weight of political despair, queer joy is resistance. Queer joy is power.

So, if you're wondering whether we still need Pride in 2025, the answer is: More than ever. We need it for the kids who don't feel safe in their own schools. We need it for the parents trying to protect their trans children in hostile states. We need it for the teachers, artists, drag queens, and activists who are fighting just to be seen. And we need it for all the queer folks — out, questioning, closeted, loud, quiet, fabulous, awkward — who are trying to live their truth in a world that keeps trying to silence them.

Pride is not a luxury. It's not a marketing gimmick. It's a lifeline.

And if you, like me, have walked this road a while — through personal revelations and cultural revolutions — then you already know: Pride isn't just a moment. It's a movement. The fight for dignity, freedom, and love? That's worth showing up for. This year. Every year.

Happy Pride, y'all! — **PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER**

**FIND THE DIRTBAQ TIMES
ON FACEBOOK AND
THEDIRTBAGTIMES.COM**

And the
Cat



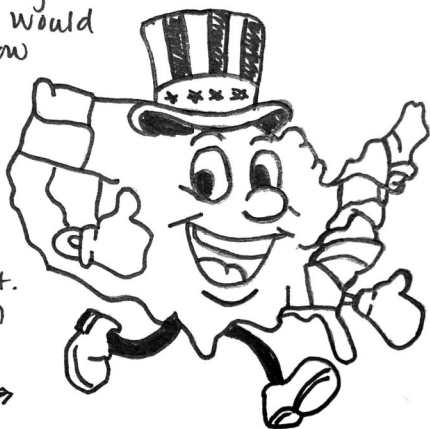
Was
happy

TISHIA JACKSON

if I were to write something
political (which i'm not) it would
be a comment about how
the United States has
become a caricatured
microcosm of what's
happening in the
world.

But again, no comment.
Just minding my own
business.

Nothing to see here ➔





SCOTT STURDY
PHOTOGRAPHY

SCOTT STURDY PHOTOGRAPHY
scottsturdyphotography.com
SUBJECT: EMILY THOMAS



SCOTT STURDY
PHOTOGRAPHY



INSTRUMENTAL SURF MUSIC DON'T GET NO RESPECT

My first surf instrumental record was *Golden Greats* by the Ventures in 1967 (yes, I'm that old). The album cover (back when everything was vinyl or 8-track) famously featured a woman reclining in a gold bikini. My mother was appalled, to say the least. The only way she would let me buy it and keep in the house (I had two younger brothers) was after she used a black magic marker to cover up the bikini-clad model. A few years ago, I bought another copy-sans the magic marker.

That treatment is somewhat indicative of the history of surf instrumental music since its Sixties heyday. It just doesn't get any respect. Ask the casual music fan, and most will answer either "You mean the Beach Boys?" (which always makes me shudder) or "Uh, like the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack?"

Now I love that Quentin Tarantino prominently featured some classic surf instrumentals (most notably 1962's "Miserlou" by Dick Dale) on the soundtrack which temporarily revived the popularity of the genre, but hey, that was 1994. Instrumental surf bands were around then and still are to this day.

One of my favorite shows of the past few years was December of last year that featured Los Straitjackets, an instrumental guitar band that's been around since the late Eighties. They perform in Mexican wrestling masks, something a number of fans sported as well. Being the holiday season, they did a spirited version of "Linus and Lucy" from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

Earlier this year, I discovered this music label in Brazil called Brasil Reverb that specializes in — you guessed it — instrumental surf music. Talk about a genre that recognizes no borders. One of my favorite recordings of Brasil Reverb is a compilation of surf instrumental versions of songs popularized by the punk band The Ramones. Now granted, The Ramones have become normalized

over the years (their tunes are now featured in such diverse media as the *Date Night* and *Spider-Man* and *Pet Semetary* movies as well as Taco Bell commercials.) That a punk band like The Ramones gets more airplay (albeit deservedly so) than instrumental surf bands just doesn't seem fair. Again, no respect.



There used to be this club about two hours drive from me that had a Second Saturday Surf night featuring three surf instrumental bands. One problem was once a month made timing an issue, so that I was only able to make one show in the years before the pandemic. Another problem is they always started at 9 or 10 p.m., so after three bands played, it was early morning before beginning the long drive home. I just saw that they've revived the Second Saturday Surf there. Naturally, the

next show is when I'll be out of state. If surf instrumental music was appreciated more, there'd be demand for more shows at better hours. Yes, I know a great many music shows don't start until late, but once a month at 10 p.m.,? No respect.

Also earlier this year, I was emailing with the owner of an independent music label that specializes in surf and instrumental rock about a variety of topics ranging from woodworking to the Great Depression to our disposable society. At one point, I was whining about my inability to get any of the fiction I'd written published anywhere over the past two years, and he responded that "Sounds like writing pays about as well as surf music. We're in it for the love of it." Amen to that.

Of course, he plays in an instrumental surf band. He'll keep playing; I'll keep listening. What more can a fan do?

And one final note about instrumental surf music: it is the perfect soundtrack for writing, bar none, and I've tried them all over the decades. Keep riding the surf. — MIKE L. DOWNEY

**FIND THE DIRTBAG TIMES ON FACEBOOK
AND THEDIRTBAGTIMES.COM**

CREEPY HORSE GETS THEIR MEDICAL MARIJUANA CARD



Most people that come to know me have no idea I have chronic pain that plagues my feet. That being said, I've always "lived with it". Well, that was before I moved to a walkable city. Walking everywhere is great until my right foot decides it doesn't want to walk anymore leaving me looking like a pirate walking on a peg leg. Don't get me wrong, I love walking but these short chihuahua legs were never meant for long distances.

Luckily I live in a city that has legalized marijuana for Recreational Use. Unluckily, the taxes on recreational weed are fucking stupid. Practically 2/3 of the payment is taxes. My only choices were to either grin and bear it or wait til the kids here pool together for trips to Michigan to buy all the shit you need in bulk due to much more lax laws.

Well, there's a third option and one that Illinois is very much behind. The Medical Marijuana card. Why didn't I do this immediately when I got here? I don't know. It seemed like a convoluted process. It wasn't until I spoke with a mental health professional out here that recommended it for me due to my addiction history. They have a program out here to fight the opioid crisis and people with previous opioid addiction are getting their medical marijuana license to help with chronic pain.

I finally "had enough money" to apply. I went through the Leafly app. This led to a company search for places in my area. I chose and selected a meeting time for 10:30 am the following morning. In the meantime, I was to get all medical paperwork together and miscellaneous documents of verification.

The following day, the "Dr" was an hour late. When we spoke he sounded like he was reading from a script of how it works and that he has questions for me. I'm ready and waiting, I got all my paperwork and everything I'm going to say.

This is the conversation that followed:

Dr: I'm going to ask you some questions to see if you qualify for your medical marijuana card.

Me: Okay.

Dr: Do you have chronic pain?

Me: Yes.

Dr: Congratulations you qualify for your medical marijuana card. Give it two days to clear and once it comes in, you can go to your favorite dispensary and they can assist you in your medical needs.

Click.

That was it. Now I'm waiting.

In the meantime, I've found a few underground marijuana social groups. One was for a "Terp Trading" (dabs) group. I had been wanting to start dabs as the kids at school tell me the flower I smoke is

loud as fuck. That means it smells strongly. Also, anyone that knows me knows I'm a cougher so I'm hoping dabs will be easier on me.

The event starts at 3pm and I show up 20 minutes early for a grab bag for the first 25 people in line. There are well over a hundred people when I arrive lined up wrapping around the house that's been transformed for social gatherings. An entire family I would meet, that all had a bag, got there at 9am and were 8th-12th in the line.

My favorite part is when a very WASP'y, affluent couple pulled up on their bikes to ask us what was going on but not in a nice way. I was the only one that responded as it's an on the down low meet up. I said "a social event!" All the people around me laughed and the unamused white people biked away. We joked in line I should've said we've come to do drugs in your neighborhood or that it's a gang bang. You see a hundred stoners that look like stoners and ask dumb questions, you might get dumb answers.

There's a cop taking ID's and tickets at the door but once inside there's the buzzing pandemonium around the tables people are selling their wares.

This is not an event for the weary stoner. This is like marijuana Wall Street. There are slangs and vernaculars I just don't know or am able to understand. People are grabbing jars and smelling the contents. "Oh I'll take 8 of these and do you have any of these in a first wash?" I have no cash on me, but the men (it was very male dominant) had STACKS OF \$20s. I pull up a tiny 2g jar. How much I ask? They ask if I want 1st or 2nd wash. I say 2nd. I'm just getting into this. Bitches ain't shit. I wouldn't appreciate anything great starting out so I come in humble.

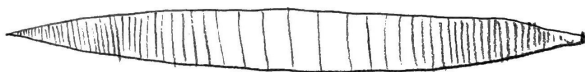
\$150. For just that one little jar.

I'm realizing I am an amoeba in a much bigger pond. People are walking around flashing \$12,000+ rigs. I went outside for my complimentary dab. The lady behind the table asks an assortment of questions like "What temp do I prefer" and quickly ascertains that I am incredibly new to this. She mother birded me.

I do my hit and head to the boba bar inside. I'm making small talk to the men that made my drink sipping my boba tea (they ran out of boba itself so it was just the drink.) They say, You realize there's 100mg of weed in that right?

I decide to hit up their food. They had pork BBQ sliders, Mac n Cheese and strawberry cake. All you can drink soda and water. After some small talk with some of the dealers there (always network), I decide for my last dab before heading out.

After smoking as much as I did, eating edibles that were being sampled and drinking taro with 100mg of THC, I came back to my room and had the best sleep for the next 13 hours. — *CREEPY HORSE*



WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON



It's the bottom of the third. Look out, baby, 'cause no matter what, I'm scaling home. Swift feet, mighty bat, & my eye on the ball! ♡ I'll knock it outta the park! High & outside, just the way I like.

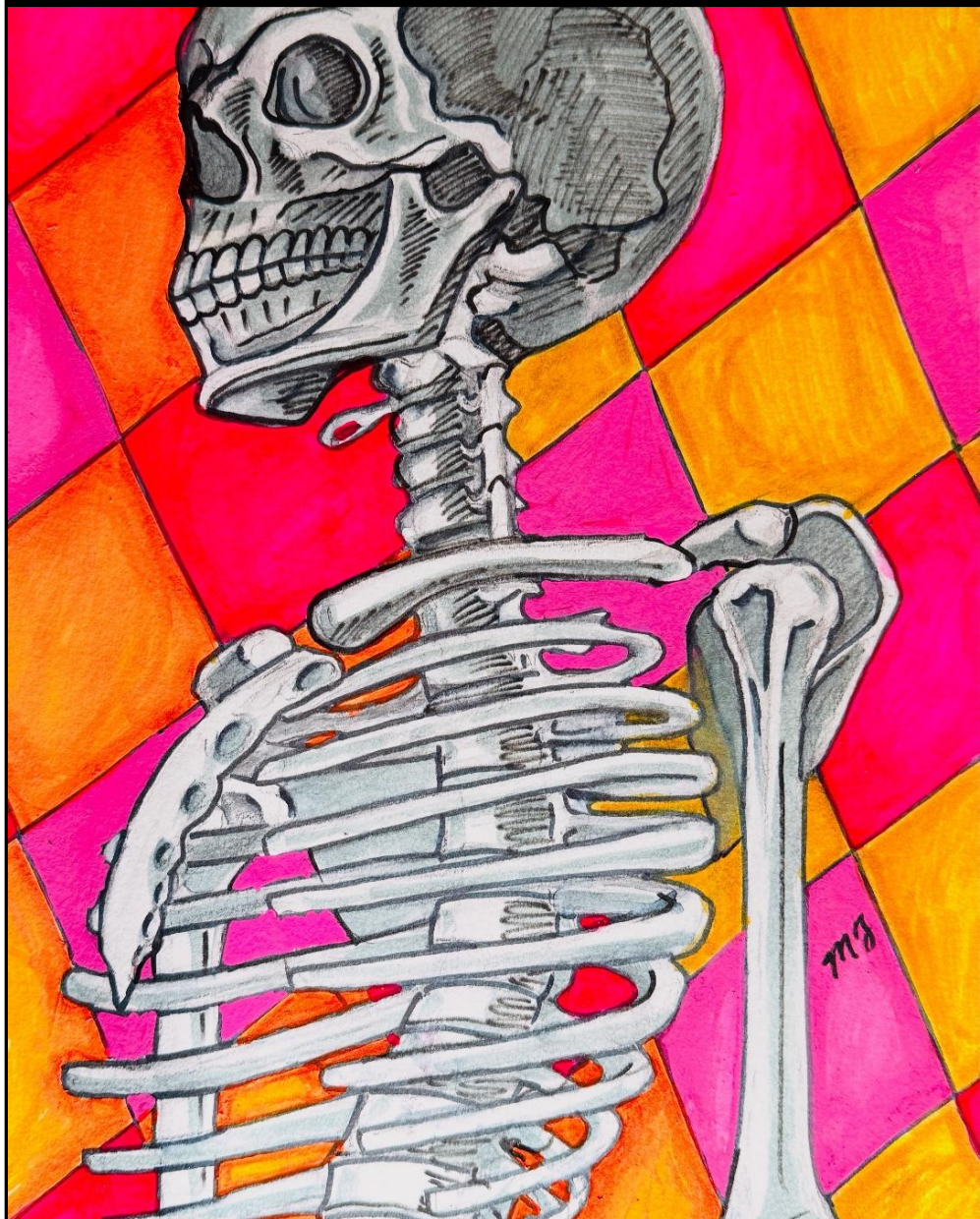


Can you feel it? It feels so good! Sweet crack of a perfect connection, the beautiful arc of unstoppable trajectory. WATCH IT SOAR, BABY!!! Listen to the wild crowd! THAT is the ballgame!

Dedicated to the ever smiley, Shewho.

-TJ

TISHIA JACKSON



MAREN FARMER. <http://marenfarmer.net>

GOING ALL THE WAY

The first rock and roll song that truly caught my attention and captured my imagination occurred while sitting atop the sticky leather back seat of my dad's beige ocean-liner-on-wheels Chrysler, the one he bought from a neighbor simply known as Shukrey in Bayside, Queens, NY for a song, as it were. Our atomic family — mom, dad, and myself — were en route to our prized summer getaway, a ninety-minute jaunt down the stench-ridden New Jersey Turnpike to The Cherry Hill Inn, a middle-class resort-cum-nightclub in South Jersey right outside Philadelphia that my mother fancied when she ignited a supposed multi-year fling with its resident musician Danny Mento, an Oldsmobile salesman-cum-jazz saxophonist. The jury is still out on whether mom's smitteness preceded our frequent junkets to The Inn, or whether the band's residency activated her southward propulsion, as it were. Regardless, we were on our way one Saturday morning in the summer of '73.

Amidst the din of rubber-hitting-asphalt and the eloquences between my mom and dad, the song leapt from our transport's tinny stock stereo speakers with an initial fuzzy, staccato electric guitar urgency — the likes I hadn't heard until that point — frenetically dancing above the simple kick-snare 4/4 drum pattern that immediately perked my tender, uninitiated ten-year-old ears. After the bass ushers in the song proper and the drums complete a frenzied full-kit fill, the song drops in amplitude as singer-songwriter-guitarist Eric Carmen — who would later have a more seismic solo hit with "All By Myself" in 1975 (a song that still activates my tear ducts), along with others in subsequent years — croons an aching post-adolescent lustful longing over a lush, sweeping chord progression that hits in all the right places: head, heart, and groin. As the extraordinary chorus barrels in — succeeded by a few tasty breaks that dip in and out of intensity — "Go All The Way" crosses the finish line akin to how it started, though much more delectable for the effort.

The Raspberries, composed of Carmen, underrated guitar hero and singer Wally Bryson, inventive bassist Dave Smalley, and thunder-drummer Jim Bonfanti, formed in the early 70's shortly after Carmen saw The Choir, a local Cleveland rock outfit that housed the other three eventual members. Taken with their swoony harmonies and Beatle-esque songcraft, Carmen joined forces with the others and The Raspberries were born. Inspired by the 1960's British Invasion sound and style — melodic, crunchy guitar-forward songs and Keith Moon-style drumming with matching suits and bouffant hairdos — the band racked up



multiple chart-hitting singles that capitalized on Carmen's libidinous tendencies during their all-too-brief three-year existence with "Ecstasy," "I Wanna Be With You," and "Tonight," with one lineup change for their final offering before Carmen voyaged alone just a few years later.

Released in July 1972 as the second single from their self-titled debut album, "Go All The Way" charted #5 on Billboard's Hot 100 and sold 1.3 copies, ultimately making it The Raspberries' biggest U.S. hit. I still have one of those original 45s; it was the fifth I procured with my chore allowance, trailing other singles like "Beautiful Sunday" by Daniel Boone, "Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)" by Looking Glass, "Alone Again (Naturally)" by Gilbert O'Sullivan, and "Too Late To Turn Back Now" by Cornelius Brothers and Sister Rose, topping this broad spectrum of mood and measure, silently informing my later songful pursuits.

One summer night in 1996 — after a long day sweating rivers playing music in New York City's fabled Washington Square Park — some fellow song-spinners and I made our way a few streets south to The Rock and Roll Cafe on Bleeker St. There, a NJ-based outfit called Sunshine

Revolution would perform rarely-covered AM-radio staples like "To Sir, With Love," "Afternoon Delight," and an "Aquarius/Let The Sunshine In" suite that would surely liven up the ears of any 1970's-nostalgia skeptic, an aspect of music culture at the time, best exemplified by retro-leaning acts like The Black Crowes, Lenny Kravitz, Jellyfish, and many more. Best yet, The Revolution acoustically interpreted every choice nugget in their typical three-set shows with eloquence, flair, and precision. The highlight of the night, though, was their near-faithful rendition of "Go All The Way."

Becoming an instant fan while befriending the members of the band, Sunshine Revolution invited me to cameo on a few songs with them; this became a tradition with every gig I attended, and I was thankful for the chance to add some flavor to the musical mojo they were already spinning. Songs like "Long Train Runnin'" by The Doobie Brothers and "Shambala" by Three Dog Night were a natural fit since they were already part of my weekend repertoire. But it wasn't until they asked me to sing "Go All The Way" that I was graciously afforded the opportunity to showcase my vocal prowess and pay homage to a song and artist that helped shape and propel my music career forward in significant ways, then 15 years

in. Channeling the sexual energy that inspired Carmen to pen the song in the first place, I wrung the song dry performing it, sometimes oversinging (looking back at YouTube videos), but rarely falling short of a robust and kinetic adaptation.

As for my mother's extra-marital entanglements, we would be summoned to Cherry Hill often in the next few years, my father and I shooting copious games of pool in their three-table parlor, while other times wandering solo through the spacious property, immersing myself in outdoor pool life, befriending fellow kid misadventurers and exploring the partially-glass-enclosed elevator shafts otherwise off-limits to guests, waking up at day's dawning and wolfing down an egg sandwich and chocolate milk at the Inn's coffee shop while chatting up the staff who knew me by name, and keeping company in between evening sets of Mento's band with Chet, their youngest member, who was eager to share bass techniques with my musically-curious ten year old self who was practically drooling over his Fender P-bass. Thanks, mom.

As for my father, it's unclear if he knew about his wife's indiscretions, though in a few years he would become embroiled in a "musical partnership" with a much younger keyboard player that my mother eventually squelched. So much for healthy early relationship models.

"Go All The Way" was the first rock song proper I got excited about, replete with all the essential elements that would influence my own songwriting: raucous guitars, indelible hooks, arrangement dynamics, dreamy-to-demonstrative lead vocals, and lavish harmonies, all in a three and a half minute container. In this regard, it was no ordinary song, proving to be an early and enduring blueprint for my development as a songwriter, guitar player, arranger, and front person. Though many acts I discovered in my adolescent years would refine their original framework and claim more immediacy on my development — like Wings, early Kiss, Cheap Trick, Ramones, The Records, Buzzcocks, Matthew Sweet, and Urge Overkill (plus many more) — The Raspberries, particularly Carmen's "Go All The Way" — provided the seed from which every other slice of power pop deliciousness sprang, the perfect amalgamation of passion, movement, and muscle, cementing a lifelong sonic study in dedication to the almighty song as a means to exercise complete, authentic creative expression. — ALLAN DAY

PEDAL PUSHING VS. MOOG MESSENGER

I must admit I was conflicted when I saw the initial announcement about the **Moog Messenger**, Moog Music's new monophonic analog synthesizer, the first of which to hit the market since Moog's sale to InMusic, a European music sales conglomerate. In the latter months of 2023 InMusic fired most of Moog's employees and the remaining staff abandoned the Lexington Ave. location in Asheville, NC to take over a portion of the old ACT building in Weaverville (about 10 miles north of Asheville). The specs looked great but could I feel good about buying a Moog synthesizer? After all, I live in the greater Asheville area and InMusic took jobs away from my community and outsourced the labor to Taiwan. I decided that maybe I'd just wait and see. A few weeks later the price was announced at \$899, which was far cheaper than anyone expected for a Moog synthesizer with that feature set. So I got over my reticence and got in on the preorder. It arrived today and these are my initial thoughts.

First off, I've owned a number of Moogs over the years: a Realistic MG-1 (built by Moog on contract in the late '70s for Radio Shack); a Moog Source (god, do I miss this synthesizer); a Moog Little Phatty (I owned two and both were buggy as fuck); and a Moog Grandmother that I bought at the factory in January 2019. I'm comfortable with the Moog circuit layout, nomenclature, and overall tone set. This synthesizer does look and feel like a Moog, however, like a Moog that has been bred with Korg or Novation design. There are lots of buttons placed around the array of pots. The inputs and outputs are tucked underneath and indented so that one has to angle the synth towards them to see where to plug in what. It is made of metal with an adhesive overlay. It isn't heavy but it also isn't exactly lightweight. Inside the box underneath the synthesizer is an envelope of documents. A quick start guide, a list of presets, a pretty rad poster ... but no print manual. Considering how many buttons and pots there are on this thing I'm kind of surprised. In the bottom of the box there are QR codes for the manual and for warranty registry.

Although I've been using Moog-style synthesizers for decades this synth is not completely straightforward to use right out of the box. If I want to pull up presets that part is easy, but programming the synth from scratch or using the WYSIWYG panel settings is not as intuitive as one would think ... mainly because the pots are placed in weird spots from the factory. It took me a good five minutes to figure out why my patches had some weird things. But eventually I figured it out. I have my own cliché patches and a wide-open double saws portamento lead is pretty much the first patch I program on any analog monosynth to compare to the ideal Moog in my memory (in particular patch 2 I had programmed on The Source). This synthesizer



reminds me a LOT of The Source tonally, but with newer IC's so it is maybe 20% brighter than my old wornout Source. Brighter is better than darker, so backing off the filter cutoff brings me right where I want to be.

I was feeling pretty good about things and decided to attempt to replicate the old Source preset 6 bass. It is not a factory preset, rather one that came programmed in it by a previous owner. It has a certain snap in the filter envelope that gives the synth a plucked bass guitar string twang combined with a little filter resonance to give it a decidedly synthetic sound. It is not a tone I've been able to convincingly program on other analogs I've owned, and impossible to program on the Grandmother due to its single ADSR envelope. I spent probably ten minutes, constantly referring back to recordings I'd made with **great unwashed luminaries** of that particular synth patch. I was able to get 95% of the way there, certainly enough to be quite pleased with it. I saved both these patches over factory patches. Yeah, I think I see a place for the Messenger in my rig. It has THAT sound.

It does lots of other things beyond this simple bit of programming. It has an onboard sequencer and arpeggiator; 256 preset memory; two low frequency oscillators; loopable ASDR envelopes;

a sub oscillator; filter feedback/foldback; two analog oscillators with variable waveforms and oscillator modulation of the filter; the filter is multi-function (two-pole [Oberheim style], 4-pole [Moog style], hi-pass, and bandpass); and the ability to "hocket" presets within the sequencer, a lot like how videogame synth chips allocate voices within sequencers. Meaning that one can automate the sequencer to become a de facto drum machine, not unlike the Moog DFAM module. There is also an online hack that allows two-note paraphony (it requires a computer and software to do but I bet that Moog will figure out how to implement this completely inside the Messenger on a forthcoming firmware update [hint hint Moog, you need to do this]). It does a lot of shit. But it can be used the way one would normally use a less-capable old school analog by using the panel's settings. All at \$899.

There are negatives. If one is looking for just an old school WYSIWYG analog one may be put off by all the other features. I find myself wishing the keyboard had a full three octaves of keys. The panel setting doesn't always give me what I want on the panel immediately so I will have to rely more on presets rather than programming it mid-song. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but a different thing. I find that I liked having all the patch points on the Grandmother that

allowed me to patch in the hi-pass filter in series with the low-pass filter, amongst other things. The Messenger is either/or. The Messenger does not have sample and hold but something that kinda works like it but is not as good as it. The Messenger has no onboard effects.

And then there is the guilt aspect that cannot be ignored.

The Messenger is the first Moog synthesizer to be manufactured in America but American hands did not build this synthesizer in the community I live in. When I purchased my Moog Grandmother in January 2019 I walked into the Moog factory store and bought it right where it was made from people that had something to do with its making. In 2019 I felt like I was buying a piece of community and supporting the home team. In 2025 I feel like I could be buying anyone else's Asian made instrument. That said, Asheville Moogs were often times buggy as hell. I've owned three of them and two of them had to have VCO's replaced because they absolutely refused to track a keyboard. The bugs in the Moog One and Muse have been well documented online. I am interested in seeing if the Messenger stands up better over time than those problematic synths.

At \$899 the Messenger comes in as the highest feature per dollar synthesizer that Moog has ever marketed. It is \$100 cheaper than the Grandmother. It is hard not to want to compare/contrast these two. Neither is outright better than the other. It really gets down to whether one wants more keys and semi-modular patch points versus less keys, a bit more menu driving to dig down into the complexity, and patch memory. I bought the Messenger on a bit of a lark, mainly because the price point versus feature set was too good to at least give a try. I intended for the Grandmother and Messenger to compete in a Thunderdome scenario and only one synth would stay in my rig. I tend to roll with two monos, a poly, and sample based tones from a tablet and a controller. The Grandmother has been my number one main analog mono since it dethroned the Vermona Mono Lancet module plus controller I used for nearly 10 years before. A Korg MS-20 Mini has been my secondary mono for the last few years, replacing the Behringer SH-101 copy that replaced the Arturia Microbrute I also used for nearly 10 years before. I am thinking the Messenger will take over that secondary slot from the MS-20, though it will not entirely replace it. That synth has its own unique voice and feature set that I do not want to be without. I am looking forward to putting its extra features to good use and maybe getting GUL back out as a functioning live performance entity. Pretty sure the Messenger will make that happen. — **KELLY MENACE**

RECORD REVIEWS

STILL MUSING



Billy Morrison

The Morrison Project

For those of you who don't know or haven't heard it yet, and while admittedly not the most underground independent niche release by any means, but still without a doubt a kickass outlier more major much larger major release, long time Billy Idol rhythm guitarist, and former bassist of the Cult – Billy Morrison – has a new solo banger release featuring a slew of heavy hitters from over the entirety of metal generations and even reaches beyond. Being a solo record from an axe man is always a gamble. Will they stick to their chops (i.e. Iommi/Cantrell/King) or reach beyond their established comfort zone (i.e. Wes Borland, Fredrik Throdendal, Scott Ian).

The record titled *The Morrison Project* is on the path of the later and fantastically so at that. There's a little bit everything for everyone here; industrial, metal, alternative, hip hop, nu metal, even some hints of some soul. The albums features a slew of his friends from the industry and the road alike. The album features; Ozzy Osbourne, Billy Idol, Corey Taylor, DMC, Linda Perry, Al Jourgensen, Tommy Clufetos, Steve Vai, Steve Stevens, and John5. Then there's the core who helped Billy start this journey in the midst of the pandemic like former Marilyn Manson and A Perfect Circle bass man extraordinaire Jeordie

White and Erik Eldenius (Billy Idol's Drummer for sometime now).

This as you can image sets the table for one hell of an album! Morrison mentions in interviews that the album is the result of making music for the sake of making music and I feel it really shines as a result. Sure there's some polished schlock in there I'm sure some producer was in-stant on to help give the album some familiarity, but otherwise it's quite rare gem of a solo album. It feels like an album and not just a one man show. The album was released digitally about a year ago but has had a slow and steady build of hype and interest and it seems it is still just getting its momentum. A deluxe version of the album featuring 18 tracks instead of the 12 of the standard version was just released and adds a nice extra layer to this already deluxe audio surprise.

So far there have been a few music videos released to help promote the album starting with a video for the album's first single "Drowning". Other music videos include "Crack Cocaine" (feat. Ozzy Osbourne), "It's come to this" "Just like a movie (feat. DMC & Persia Numan)", "Phenomenon" (feat. Cypress Hill), "Chasing Shadows" (feat. Linda Perry), "Incite the watch (feat. Corey Taylor & Steve Vai)", "The Sound of Freedom", and most recently "We are the Dead" official lyric video just a few weeks ago. There's also the non-album/deluxe deluxe single "Gods of Rock N Roll (feat. Ozzy Osbourne and Steve Stevens)" which is a certified banger. I really admire and love the sheer volume of content that this record has spawned. There are also multiple music videos for some of the songs from the artists featured

on the tracks producing their own accompanying visuals. This is something we don't see enough of that I hope becomes a growing trend going forward.

Personal favorites are "The Ayes have it" which sounds like Ministry banger and features Al Jourgensen (Ministry) and John5 (Marilyn Manson/Rob Zombie/Motely Crue), "Mr Dream" featuring his fellow bandmates Billy Idol and Steve Stevens, "Crack Cocaine" featuring the ever amazing god father of metal the Ozz man himself Ozzy Osbourne, "Puppets on a String", "Dystopia", and ok I'm sorry I really just enjoy both versions of this album from front to back. Picking favorites is hard sometimes and I love when people make albums that challenge me to pick like this. Don't just take my word for it, do yourself a favor and treat yourself to this amazing roller-coaster of a record now streaming everywhere and available through most of your favorite music retailers. — **WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON**



The Prof. Fuzz 63

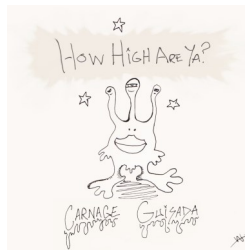
My <3's Still Beating But I'm DEAD2U

The Farmer Family Singers of Richardson, TX have been running around Texas and points east for nearly 15 years now. It seems like at this point they could have written every possible song one could possibly write about asshole animals, fucked-up Coen

brother style slice of life vignettes, shitty places, and iconoclastic character narratives. But the keen observational eye of The Professor Fuzz 63 continues to gaze upon new sights to inspire.

My <3's *Still Beating But I'm DEAD2U* does not stray much outside of the band's *Nuggets* 12-bar garage blues sound. The drums still pound out a caveman tom-tom and shaker beat; the guitars are still fuzzy and minimalist; and the British Invasion organ tone still holds it all together underneath. This time we get tales of orcas reclaiming the ocean from rich bro yachts ("White Gladis") and more keen character pieces ("The Amazing Adventures of Steak Knife and Biscuit," "Narcoleptic Driver's Ed Teacher," "Hand Grenade Princess," and "Bullshit Anime Cop"), all delivered through a telephone microphone as if the band is the ultimate Mrs. Kravitz, filling one in on the Fuzz's neighborhood gossip. The production has more of a 1980's feel, especially in the drums, giving the sound more of a Cramps vibe (dig that aluminum foil snare drum throughout the record). At times, like on "Bullshit Anime Cop" there is a subtle pitch warble throughout like one is listening to a slightly oblong vinyl pressing that makes for a certain disorientation in a good way.

The Prof. Fuzz 63 is shockingly consistent. There are no surprises here for anyone passingly familiar with what the band does, but one will want to tune in to catch up on the new additions to the Fuzz's Tennessee Williams-esque garage rock character plays. — **KELLY MENACE**



Carnage Guisada

Hi, High Are You?

If you haven't heard of *Carnage Guisada*, don't beat yourself up too bad just yet as they are still on the rise, but you're missing out on one of the most unapologetically raw punk-metal bands tearing through the underground scene. Hailing originally from the heart of the Texas triangle – Bryan-College Station Texas – and are now spread out across the country from WA to FL. During the course of their 5 ½ year musical journey this band has built a reputation for their "ferocious & fun live performances" and a sound that blends hardcore punk, alternative, rock, with elements of industrial and sludge metal into a chaotic whirlwind of distortion, fun, and fury. The group currently consists of Will Thompson – Vox / Guitar, Keith Snook – Guitar / Backup, Moses Gutierrez – Guitar, Austin Gaston – Bass / Guitar, and Mike Ferreira – Drums and they are all currently demoing new material and gearing up for a string of Fall/Winter shows showcasing the new new stuff!

Their latest album, *Hi High Are You?*, out now through the South's Fuck the Mainstream Records, showcases their ability to blend genres seamlessly while still taking their sound in new directions. Tracks like "Beto's Dick" lean into a catchy heavy thick drum and bass dance tongue in cheek

punk song for the books – an instant classic once you hear it you'll be humming it. "Middle Aged Suburban Punk Rock Satanist Dad" showcase the band taking a stab at black metal and minivans, while songs like "Spanish Gold" and the tearjerker "That's Life" showcase a more mature side of the band. They don't disappoint on the heavy stuff either with the metal face smashers "Betrayor" & "Meat Suit". The band even pays tribute to their pals from B/CS The Hangouts with their own take on their friends cult barn burner classic "Rule the World" playfully called "Fool the World". Meanwhile, "Dance & Dose" throws in eerie post-punk elements of radio song from a cult movie you've never seen but that feels familiar, proving that Carnage Guisada isn't afraid to experiment or make finger wag.

So, if you're into bands that push boundaries, while having fun, not conforming to any one scene, embrace chaos, and make you want to throw yourself into a mosh pit, Carnage Guisada is essential listening! Seriously, if you want some rad just start with a little YouTube rabbit hole and go from there, these dudes are fun and the real deal!! Party on, and slay gnarl!

Want to hear them & check them out? You can find their music: www.linktr.ee/carnageguisada or on most any of your favorite preferred music streaming services! — **THE DRUNKARD**

John Adams was the second U.S. president and the first to reside in the "President's House" which later became known as The White House. He famously wrote of the experience in a letter (one of more than a thousand he wrote): "May none but honest and wise Men rule under this roof."

What would he make of the current inhabitant of the White House? Adams might recall something else he wrote about dictators and authoritarian rule: "Those Passions are the same in all Men under all forms of Simple Government, and when unchecked, produce the same Effects of Fraud, Violence, and Cruelty."

— **MIKE L. DOWNEY**

EVERY PRESCRIPTION DRUG AD EVER
"Do you love the great outdoors? Do you want to feel sexy in that little black dress? Are you tired of having low sex drive? Miracle Amazing Pill can help. Miracle Amazing Pill may cause dry, itchy skin, nervousness, night terrors, profuse sweating, overwhelming urges to eat out of the dumpster, spontaneous self immolation, or in some cases, mass murder of everyone everywhere. Call your doctor if you experience loss of appetite, bleeding eyes, diarrhea made out of actual fire, or if your head falls off while driving. Do not take Miracle Amazing Pill if you are breastfeeding, plan to breastfeed, or if you belong to the 100% of the population born with nipples. People with livers and kidneys should not take Miracle Amazing Pill, as it may cause irreparable damage to literally every cell in your body. Wouldn't it be great to feel like yourself again? Call your doctor today to learn if Miracle Amazing Pill is right for you."

Like, is moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis really all the bad??? Are these ads just reverse psychology schemes designed to get you to look on the bright side?

Hey, at least your head is still attached, for now!
— **TISHIA JACKSON**

WORTH IT

When you're worth it you know. Even when you don't.. Those who care let you know and when you really need them they somehow know without saying a word. When you're worth it you feel it even when you don't because love is strong magic and the backbone of most fables
— **WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON**



**SOCKS FOR: WEIRDOS, PUNKS,
JUVENILE DELINQUENTS,
JAZZ MUSICIANS, PIN-UPS,
PERVERTS, PARTY WOLVES,
THE CRIMINAL FRINGE**
WWW.SEXWITHSOCKSON.COM