

AUSTIN

NO. 70



**WE'VE GOT THE
GOOD STUFF HERE
SWISS MISS CANDY**

WELCOME TO AUSTIN! "WE ARE ALL HERE, CAUSE WE ARE NOT ALL THERE!"

Hello my friends and welcome to another fun filled issue of the Austin Daze.

These are very busy days for us and yet nary a complaint. I love this. I mean, would I do it if I didn't? I'd have to be some kind of maniac. Well, there are some that say I am, some that say they have seen me on rooftops, lurking in the shadows, ready to pounce on...

WAIT...WAIT...WAIT...damn you Fantastic Fest!

Damn you! Not only has that little celluloid extravaganza seeped into the very core of my subconscious, infested every orifice, it has also spread its wings, extended its incisors, and ripped the throat out of the competition.

Fantastic Fest isn't the only talent that goes bump in the night. There was the wildly successful NIKE + HUMAN RACE, and a multitude of artists and musicians, some new and some old, doing their thing. As always we were there to offer support, hash it out, and bring them the best coverage Austin has to offer.

Speaking of coverage, we had one hell of a dusty hot time at ACL and we will feature several bands from the 3 day extravaganza in Issue #71. We will also feature Bill Murray, who wasn't in a band but was at

ACL and preoccupied with a mascot that...oh just pick up our next issue too—you'll be glad you did. Can't wait? Go to www.austindaze.com right now. Hope to see all of you at the SPI FEST (ad on back-page) and then FUN FUN FUN FEST.

As for us? Our path has been laid and we continue to follow it, leaving the nay-says and witty yelps to the wolves.

Ahem.

With the economy in the dumps, the environment in peril and our administration in chaos, we thought now would be a good time to introduce another new feature: The Local Business Feature. Each issue we will feature two businesses that we think are doing a fine job of contributing to Austin's economy, social fiber, and whatever else makes this place so great. We know there are many to cover so send us your suggestions on who you think we should talk to next. We're all ears.

In other New Feature news...our website has been redone and let me tell you, that thing can dance. Check out our video interviews and coverage, blogs, and much more happening daily. Like the paper, it contains all the stuff we love and more. Special thanks to Dustin and Evan for making that happen.

And finally, we bid a fond fare-well to our Cd Reviewer, Daisy Riprock, and make a new space for her cousin, Hux. New blood keeps it all rolling.

So enjoy...get reacquainted with the folks you know, meet the ones you haven't. Always something to dig into.

And remember, the next time you here a rustling in the basement take a Daze and a flashlight before you head down the stairs. Monsters like the Austin Daze. It could just save your life.

See you again in 71.

Namaste, Russ

Great Conversations With...

KEVIN SMITH Pgs 2,6 & 7	Pgs 18 & 19
MICHAEL FRANTI Pgs 3, 4 & 5	RAKS HELWA Pg 20
TOPAZ & MUDPHONIC Pgs 8 & 9	NACHITO HERRERA Pg 21
CAFEMUNDI, JESSICA NIERI Pgs 10 & 11	AIRLINE Pg 21
BOULDIN CREEK, LESLIE MARTIN Pg 17	NICK D Pgs 22 & 23
GRAHAM WILLIAMS	COLIN CLARK Pgs 24 & 25
	KALU JAMES Pgs 26 & 27

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KEVIN SMITH



Kevin Smith is the guy you want around when your girlfriend dumps you, you have to bury your dog, or find a couch when your parents cut you off and make you move out of their basement. He's also the guy you want to keep making movies, particularly the ones that involve porn. Read on.

AUSTIN DAZE: We loved this film. Did you have to struggle this time with the MPAA?

KEVIN SMITH: I don't think they ever fully came around on the movie. Ever since they got involved it was one problem after another. First they gave the movie an NC 17, then we went to the appeals screening and flipped it without having to cut anything, so that was good, we go the R. But then, maybe because of that or maybe just in general, they were very stringent when it came to the marketing. We submitted trailers and they kicked them all back. We submitted Red Ban and Green Ban and they had issues with them—tiny issues too. There was this one shot where Craig Robinson was sitting on the bed and behind him is a poster, and you have to be looking ridiculously hard to see the poster, and it has a drawing of two little kids, a boy and a girl holding their diapers out and looking down into their diapers. It's a play and it's called, "Girl Parts for Boys". So tame--it's got clip art—

nothing offensive. And they kicked that back in the trailer saying, "It depicts children looking at their genitalia." I'm like, "What are you talking about? Yes, that's what they are doing, but it's hardly offensive." They kicked all the posters back. Because we had the word "Porno" in the title, they definitely paid a lot more attention to the movie than they would if it was called anything else. It eventually led to the poster that we have now which is just two stick figures and a camera. We finally made a joke of it, it was out of frustration more than anything else, that we came up with a poster that was like, "The movie is so titillating this is all we can show you." It's been problematic.

AD: Do you think they have you marked?

KS: I don't know if it is me specifically that they are giving a hard time but I have had run-ins with them twice before so maybe they are just used to it. I know having "porno" in the title really f**ked us this time around because it made them pay more attention to it. continued on pg 6

The Austin Daze

“Entertainment paper that supports the Austin Scene”

The Austin Daze is free speech. We are a publication of and for the community. We put an issue together every other month in Austin, TX. We distribute in over 200 locations around our town. Our interviews are great conversations that the reader is invited to partake in. The Austin Daze exhibits some of the lesser known treasures and mixes them with more well known names, which helps expand our community's interest. The Austin Daze is made up of a well-rounded mix of local, national, international, art, music, interviews, pictures, editorials, politics, comics and humor. We have a nice website: www.austindaze.com. You can look at all of our issues on the site. We are always looking for coverage suggestions AND FEEDBACK.

If you want to get involved with us, send us an email at involved@austindaze.com. Or call us. Complaints as well as monkey questions should be sent to MrJangles@austindaze.com. Love and good feedback can be sent to the Editor@austindaze.com. Picture submissions to rockslide@austindaze.com. Sacrificial chickens to bree@austindaze.com. We have a secret HQ at the moment. Send all mail, cd's and love letters to: Austin Daze P.O. Box 40425 Austin, TX 78704.

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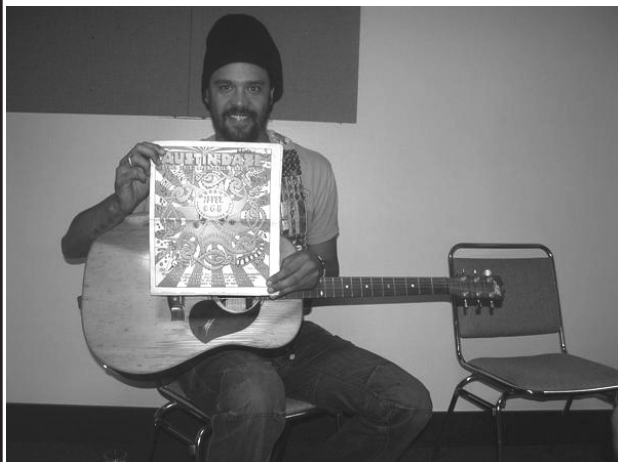
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Issue #70 Cast List

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John Grubbs - Photo Editor
Lori Stevensen - Operations Manager, Interview contributor
Eric Lindstrom -Reviewer, Interview contributor
John Warner- Cover
Daisy Riprock - CD Reviews
Big Dave - Inspiration and Motivation
Allen Larsen - Mail Department
Outcasters - Website Design
Sweet Snob - Sweet Snob
Josh Cole - advertising
Michele Williams- Web blog and videos
Christine Thompson- Web videos
“Stretchy Baddy” - Damage Control
Everyone Else We Forgot

**MORE INTERVIEWS, BLOGS,
ARTICLES, PICTURES, ARTWORK,
HUMOR AND GOODNESS (& A LITTLE
BADNESS) ON OUR WEBSITE.....**

MICHAEL FRANTI



Michael Franti is a musician, activist and filmmaker dedicated to making the world a better place. An inspiration to anybody that comes in contact with him, we were lucky enough to grab an interview while he was in town for the World Wellness Weekend . Here he talks about the spirit that drives him and how he has dedicated his life to communicating it.

AUSTIN DAZE: Tell me about the Power to the Peaceful Festival. What is your philosophy on that? How did you get involved?

MICHAEL FRANTI: In 1999, I started this event called Mumia 911. It was 150 artists around the country and we did this day of art and action for Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is a man

on death row. So we decided to do this concert in the park and called it 911 because of the emergency number. So we did it in '99 and 2000. And then in 2001, the attacks of September 11th occurred, and suddenly this concert that was about Mumia and the prison industry and the death penalty became this day of remembrance for the attacks. And what we said in our community was that we wanted to remember not as a day to call for war and more violence but a day to call to end all political violence. So we galvanized support in our community amongst spiritual leaders, people that work with domestic violence, gang violence, veterans groups and we put on this big Power to the Peaceful movement. It's now grown to 50,000 people. It's predominately a day of awareness about ending violence - not just with people but also with the environment. So we have over a hundred and fifty social justice organizations come and environmental justice organizations come and speak and we have bands play in between.

AD: It's started in one place and now it's where?

MF: It started in San Francisco and last year we did the first one in Brazil. That one was a little bit different because in Brazil the issue is really social violence. In the Favelas, the poorest parts of Sao Paolo, there are wars between the police and the gangs over drugs, there are wars between the different drug gangs, rich

people and poor people. We did one concert that was a concert which was to raise money for to teach kids art and music and get them out of the drug trade. This year we are doing one in Tanzania and then we will also be doing another one in Brazil in January.

AD: When you were young, do you remember being aware of what was wrong with the world?

MF: When I was born I was given up for adoption--father is black and my mother is white—and was raised in a family of white parents. They adopted me and another black son, and I always felt like I didn't fit in, like I was an outsider. My father was also an alcoholic, so there was always a lot of turmoil in the household. So I always had this feeling that I wanted to speak up for the underdog - whoever it is, wherever they are. That has always informed my music, my politics, and my compassion. And to this day, it's really the same. I just feel like wherever I go in the world I gravitate towards the communities and the people who don't have a voice. I try to bring my love and spirit to the music and listen to their concerns.

AD: Was there something about music that you were inspired by that helped you do this?

MF: When I was a kid I had a crush on this girl in the fourth grade. And there

continued next pg

was this song,

*"My name is Michael,
I've got a nickel,
I've got a nickel shiny and new."*

If I didn't have that song, I never would have been able to get out my feelings for that girl in my fourth grade class. I was so in love with her. Through all these silly love songs, I was able to express what was inside of me. I couldn't talk to my parents, I couldn't talk to my teachers, and lord knows I couldn't talk to her about it, so those songs meant so much to me--that's really when I found the power of music. Also, in church, my mom played organ and I remember there were certain songs that made me cry and open up my heart in a way that I had never felt before. In church, I was the tallest kid in the choir, so I stood in the back and I didn't have to sing--I could just mouth the words. This is what I did. Which is good training for begin a lip synching pop star in the future. I've always loved music. When I got to be a teenager I started to hear music that had a political voice to it--Bob Marley, the Clash, early rap songs that had the message like Grandmaster Flash. Those started to really mean something to me because it was given this voice. I was feeling these things and then there were these artists that were singing about it--Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder. And then when I started playing music myself, I was writing lyrics before I was putting music to them--just writing poetry.

AD: Can you tell us about your experience making the movie, *I Know I'm Not Alone*?

MF: One day I was watching the news on CNN with this friend of mine, and I was listening to this general talk about trying to find Saddam. And the newscaster said to this general, "Well what if Saddam is hiding underground? What are you going to do to find him?" And the general says, "Well we have these bombs called Bunker Busters, and we know that Saddam has these bunkers hidden around Baghdad and we know where they are and we are just going to bomb them." **And I thought, "This bomb is so big. It's five tons and can blow up five stories below the earth." God, if I was in San Francisco where I live and somebody was coming to drop**

these bombs on my city, what would I tell my kids? At

the time my youngest son was 5 and my other son was 16. And what would I tell my 5 year-old who doesn't know anything about war? Would I say, "You are just going to hear loud noises that are fireworks"? You know, make up some wild fantasy story to put his mind at ease. And then what would I tell my 16 year-old, who knows all about war? We have to prepare. I just started thinking about these families and these kids in Baghdad; I had this curiosity about them, how they were handling it. A year later I took my guitar and a video camera and I just flew to Bagdad and played music on the streets. I asked three different people that I had played music for to take me to their houses and tell me where they hid during the bombings. I remember the first family said they got everybody in the middle of the room, away from the windows, and put blankets on top of everybody and just laid there and prayed that they wouldn't be hit. Baghdad is a city of five million people. How can you not be blowing people up? And that's what our government was telling us: they are smart bombs and they just avoid people. They are OK. And then I got there and found out that in the first wave of bombing there were over 150,000 people killed in Iraq. I was just devastated. So I was filming everything and I didn't really think I'd make a movie. I just thought that I would film this and show people back home. But we ended up having so much video footage that we decided to put it together into a film.

AD: We interviewed Phil Donahue for *Body of War* and understand you contributed a song to that film.

MF: Right before that I had been to Walter Reed hospital, that same week, to play music for guys that had been injured. When I was in Iraq, you meet kids that have had their arms blown off and their legs blown off and then later that night I would go play for the soldiers - and they had been the ones who did this to these kids. And I'm thinking, "What can I say to these guys?" I'm angry, I'm hurt, I'm scared, I'm worried they are going to fucking shoot me if I sing about something they don't like. And a friend of mine who is older and wiser than me said, "It's not important what you sing or what you choose to say. It's that these guys know you came all the way over, 15,000 miles, just to be with them right here, right now." I think that was the biggest lesson that I learned: it's not always about going to a

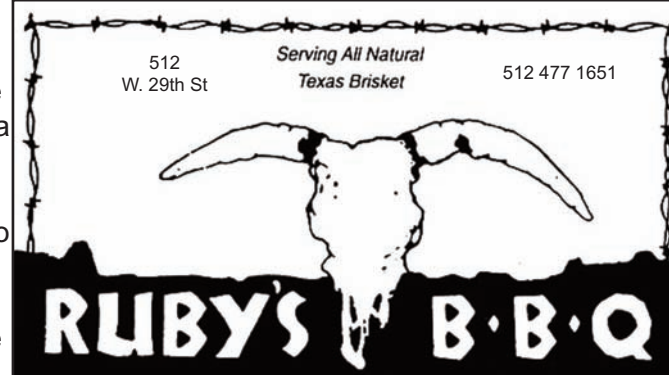
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place of judgment; that I don't always have to be proving that my opinion or somebody else's opinion is right just because I'm trying to prove that somebody else's is wrong. As a matter of fact, you get a lot closer to understanding, a lot closer to eventual peace, if we just reserve judgment. That's the same thing when we went to Israel and Palestine and spoke to both people there, and then coming back to America and touring around the country at a time when the war was still quite popular. I would show this film and play and then afterwards I'd have people yelling at me and screaming at me, really from their heart, about what they believe. I just had to learn to hold space and not try to say I'm right or you are wrong.

AD: It's interesting because when you talk about that underdog instinct, there are all these innocent people in Iraq and then at the same time you see a film like *Body of War* and you can't help but feel compassion for the soldiers.

MF: It's complicated. When I went to meet with soldiers, active soldiers, they are in a bar with a beer in one hand and their M16s in the other hand, and here I come with my little folk guitar to sing songs about peace and love and they are looking at me like, "Who the fuck is this motherfucker?" But I sang this song, "Bomb the World" which says,

*We can chase down all our enemies
bring them to their knees
We can bomb the world to pieces
but we can't bomb it into peace*

And after I sang that song I was thinking, these guys are going to string me up. But something really miraculous happened: they opened up to me. They said, "You know, I'm from San Jose, California", "I'm from Birmingham, Alabama", "I'm from Albany, New York." They said, "I came here thinking we were doing something good and I find out Saddam's not involved in 911 and he doesn't have weapons of mass destruction, and now I'm here breaking into families' homes and just feeling like a sitting duck everyday just waiting for a grenade to get thrown in my lap or to get shot on the streets. More than anything else I just want to get the fuck out of here." And I had never heard that before. I had heard the Administration saying, "We have to support the troops. If we say we are going to withdraw, it's going to blow their morale." And these guys are like, "Are you kidding me? If they said we were going to withdraw, we would have the biggest party ever. We want to get the fuck out of here." Then going to Walter Reed I met this kid from Tennessee who I had to talk to through his laptop because his entire jaw was blown off. He just had his tongue hanging out and he couldn't speak and could make a little bit of sound. I asked him what happened and he told me he got shot in the jaw and it just blew it off. And I asked him if he felt glad to be out of there now and he said, "Yeah I feel glad to be out of there now but this is the second time. The first time I got shot in the back of the neck and the bullet went in my jaw and broke it but didn't knock it out. I healed up and then they sent me back." He said at the time he was ready to go back and felt patriotic and wanted to go back to his homies. Now he said he's married and he has a little girl and he can't talk to her. He doesn't

know what his wife is going to do with him. . . . Just to see the severity of it. Every soldier has a Kevlar vest and helmet. If it was Vietnam, they would have been dead but now it's just these horrible injuries. These guys are still totally spirited. They support America and "we have to do our job over there." Another one says they would do everything they can to stop this war.

AD: We need a regime change. What do you think is going to happen?

MF: Well I'm very excited. I've never ever endorsed a candidate and I probably never will. But I always endorse ideas. And the idea that I endorse is to bring our troops and our tax dollars home as soon as possible.

That to me is not a partisan issue. Even Scott McClellan came out and said, "Hey, they are fucking lying and I was the one that was the mouthpiece for it." So what more do we need in this country to hear when he says that? I think there is an incredible time that is happening right now. If it had been four years ago there would have been no chance in hell that Obama would have been elected. And maybe four years from now he may not get elected. And the thing that I like about who he is, that he is the mold of a 21st century candidate: white mom, black father, Christian mom, Muslim father. He lived in Indonesia for part of his life. He's from a broken home, so he didn't have the best things his whole life. He's not from an oil family. And there's something to be said for that. What I think his candidacy has done is symbolize something to a lot of people. It says, "We want something different." He's not going to be the ideal candidate for everybody, but he's going to tell people in the rest of the world and in this country that the way we have been going so far is not the way we want to be going anymore.

AD: What's next for you?

MF: We have a new record coming out called "All Rebel Rockers," and it's really an invitation to dance in this world that feels so full of chaos. What I mean by dance is not to just forget about your troubles but for people to find that inspiration again, that playfulness, that joy, that excitement, that youthfulness to stay in this fight. There are so many things that you see on the news everyday that just get us down and make you say, "Man, it's not worth it." But I really believe that if the system is



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bringing us negativity, war, and environmental destruction, then to be a rebel today is to bring positivity, to find solutions to war and sustainability. It used to be to throw a brick through a window at McDonalds and that's 1.0. Now it's 2.0—we have to find these solutions. That's what this record is about.

**AUSTIN DAZE
IS
9 YEARS
OLD
IN
OCTO-OBER**

I couldn't even put up the little online trailers like I normally do because it has to be rated--even though it had no footage from the movie in it. We had a bunch of behind the scenes footage for *Clerks II* we called *Train Wreck* and we are doing another round for this movie called *Money Shots* and they said they had to approve all these things. So I don't think it's me specifically, I think more than anything else it had to do with the title this time.

AD: Is the back and forth generally pleasant with them?

KS: They are very polite. It's never an adversarial relationship. It's not like, "You are a f**king bitch." And she's like, "You're a f**king immature baby." It's very cordial but at the same time they are doing their job. I don't think they are evil but it's like, "You guys have to lighten up. Watch the movie; it's not that dirty." When we did the screening the woman from the MPAA was very up front. She was like, "Look, nobody is saying the movie isn't funny and nobody is saying the movie isn't sweet. We are just saying that nobody under 18 should see this movie."

AD: I bet there is a great script in you about the MPAA.

KS: I don't think anybody would be interested in that flick. I think there would be an audience of 1 for that movie.

AD: Where did the story come from?

KS: It's been kind of kicking around since *Chasing Amy*. There were various permutations of a porn story that I wanted to do. It wasn't until I saw Seth in the *40 Year Old Virgin* that I was like, "I want this dude to be the lead." Everything trickled down from there.

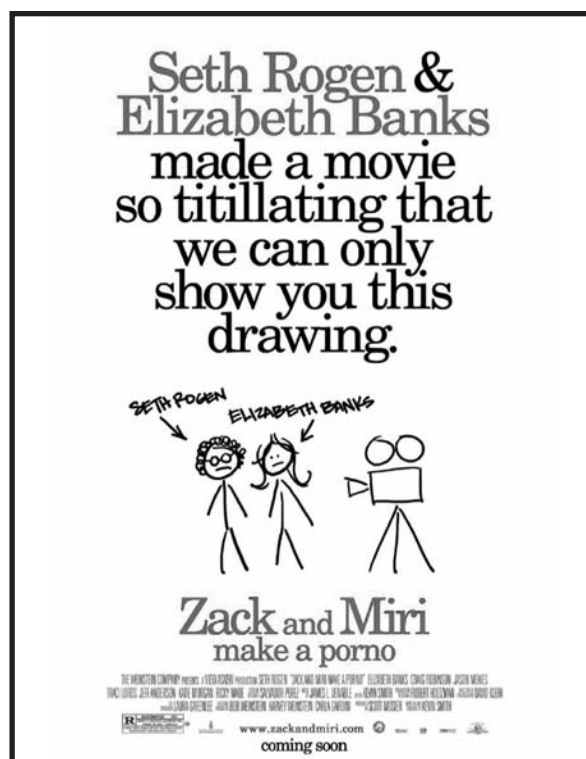
AD: Is this story based on a personal romance?

KS: No. But if you scrape away the porno trappings it's the story of how we made *Clerks*. It's the story of people making their first film and not knowing what they are doing. I used our whole *Clerks* experience as the model and porn-ed it up.

AD: How did you get Tracy Lords involved?

KS: I think she was the last of the main characters cast. We were trying to figure out who could play Bubbles and we decided to go the Cougar route with it. So we thought, OK, who are the chicks we love in the 80s? Like the

chick from *Weird Science*, Kelly LeBrock. There was a book that our production designer had given me, and it was all porn stars photographed in non porn settings. Like Katie Morgan was in the book as well. We went through the whole book and noticed that Tracy was noticeably absent. Suddenly we started talking about how Tracy would be perfect. Dave Klein, our DP, had shot a movie with her once and said, "She ain't going to do it, dude. You know she don't want to have anything top do with her porn past. You can't even talk about porn with her. We had a love scene in our movie and she would not take any of her gear off. She's not that person." I thought, Maybe that works in our favor. It's a comedy and we kind of poke fun at that world. So we called her agent and her agent said, "I don't know with that title, I doubt she is going to do it." And then



I guess she heard about it from him and she likes me or something I had done in the past and she likes Seth so she agreed to come over and read it. So she came to my house and I sat there talking to her for 3 hours about that and everything in general. And she was like, "I always try to keep the porn stuff at arm's length because I haven't made a porn film in 20 years but still that's what people identify me with. Maybe it's time to embrace it and make fun of it."

AD: What is she doing now?

KS: She was on a TV show called *Profiler* that was on for awhile. There is another TV show she had a recurring role on. She does a ton of movies and worked consistently for the past 20 years. It was a weird meeting because she's a lovely human being—very adult, very mature—

but the whole time I'm sitting there going, "If I could go back in time and tell the 16 year old version of me that we are sitting around in our house talking to Tracy Lords, the 16 year old version of me would be like, 'Did we fuck her?' But naturally that doesn't happen. Let's be honest, she's a pop icon. There's Stan Lee, Johnny Rotten, Tracy Lords. It's a name that instantly calls to mind some sort of massive pop culture moment or movement. It was kind of cool to have her in the cast for that reason alone. And she's a good actress—really concentrates on her stuff and takes it really seriously.

AD: The cast is amazing.

KS: Everyone brought an A-game to it. It was nice. You just fall in love with not just the main characters but the whack pack that surrounds them.

AD: I noticed that Silent Bob didn't make an appearance. Why?

KS: I felt like after *Clerks II* it was time to get out of that universe. I like that movie so much I don't want to touch it again—at least for awhile. I always leave the option open, that if I'm in my mid to late 40s and I want to make a movie about how I feel about being in my mid to late 40s, I would think about Dante and Randal again. But it felt like it was time to put that aside. We haven't done that since *Jersey Girl*—that was completely outside of that interlock series of movies--and we got beat the shit out of. This one was so much outside that we moved it to Pittsburgh.

AD: Pittsburgh was the perfect setting.

KS: It just worked. I liked it so much because it seemed like the last place in the world anyone would want to make a porn movie. It's so cold. It just lends itself to bundling up.

AD: There's nothing sexy about Pittsburgh.

KS: Not at all. The city itself closes down at 6 O'clock. When I say closes down, it's a financial district and everyone goes home from work. You can walk the streets of Pittsburgh at seven or eight O'clock at night, in the middle of the city, and by yourself. There aren't even homeless people. It's a ghost town as of 6 o'clock.

AD: Tell us about Seth Rogen.

KS: I hadn't seen *40 Year Old Virgin* in theaters because we were filming and then I fi-

nally caught it on DVD and I was like, this kid sounds like one of my characters. He would be awesome to work with. I started thinking about writing the script for him right about then. By the time we got around to making the movie he went from being a supporting actor to a movie star and suddenly we got real lucky because we had the comedy guy of the moment in the cast. It's a reputation he has earned because that dude is funny. He's an insanely consummate professional while being laid back and very funny. He's always thinking about the movie as a whole--not just his part--and ways to improve it and ways to push it further. Even the marketing stuff, I've never met another actor who stayed as involved in the marketing. He's the goods. He's the real deal.

AD: Judd Apatow's world is based on a world that you created awhile ago.

KS: Yeah, it was actually nice. When I first saw *40 Year Old Virgin*, it was like, Wow, somebody made a movie that I would make. Because for a while I would see comedies but they were never of the same genre. And he kept doing it and it was nice not to be alone out there. Not only did they do it, but they took it into the stratosphere and turned it into blockbuster material which I was floored by because we've been doing it since '94 and we never made more than 30 million on any given movie. I always thought if you are going to mix raunchy and sentimentality you are only going to get this many people to go see it. Judd's shit took it into the mainstream. So for me it was wow, the kind of thing that I do is now commercially viable. And who knows what will happen with *Zack and Miri* but it looks like it's going to do some business. I know the guy that financed it is very happy about that. I'm just glad people like it. It was so nice to take it to Toronto and screen it and people just went nuts for it. That was cool. It could have gone either way. Some people could have been like, "Ugh, it's not Judd Apatow."

AD: There wouldn't be a Judd Apatow if you weren't around.

KS: That's kind. Really what it is, when you get into the nitty gritty of the Judd Apatow stuff, Seth seems to be the engine for the raunch factor in those movies. I've read an interview where he said that Steve Carrel just wanted to do a PG 13 film and Seth

was the one that was like, "No, let's go for the R. Let's get out there and curse and shit like they do in *Clerks*." That was kind of cool. I got to work with a guy who was inspired by the shit I used to do and now he's in the shit we are doing now. It's weird—kind of a snake eating its tail, kind of thing.

AD: He seems like he should have always been there.

KS: Yeah, I know. Sitting there watching him, I'm like, "Where the f**k has he been?"

AD: Will you work together again?

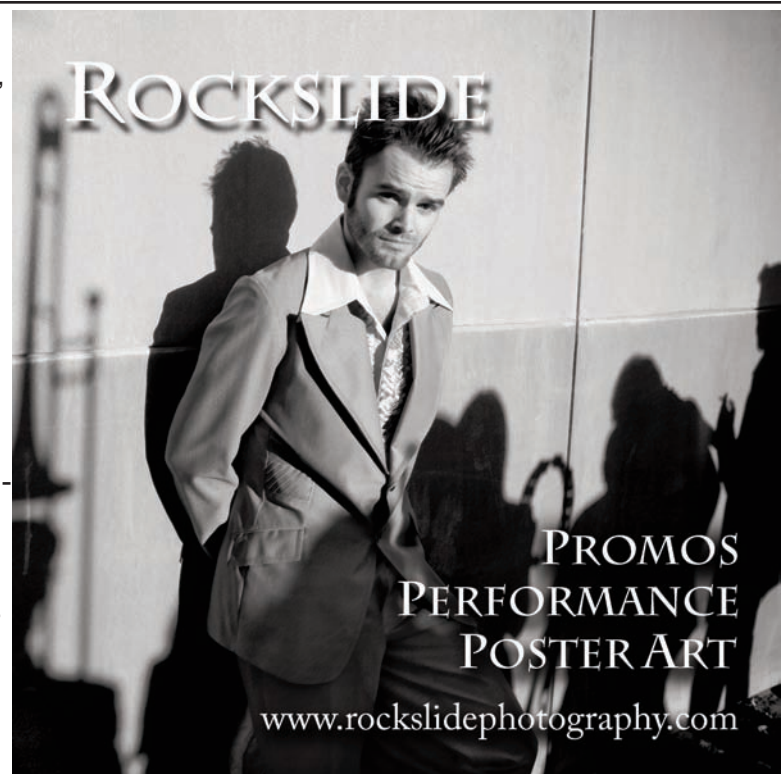
KS: I hope so. That kid's schedule gets crazy.

AD: What's next?

KS: I'm going to do this little horror movie called, *Red State*. It's a bleak little political horror movie. It's the opposite of everything we have done so far. There is no levity to it; it's just straight out creepy thriller. I'm not quite sure what to call it: it's not a standard cut and slash kind of thing but to me the content is truly horrific.

AD: What's it about?

KS: It's about fundamentalism gone awry. It's set in Middle America and uses the Fred Phelps Westboro Baptist church—God hates Fags people—as a focal point. A fictionalized version of that. And it's just kind of very dark and there is nobody to route for and everybody dies. Most days I don't feel like a filmmaker—I feel like I'm a writer who directs his own stuff. So I felt like maybe if I stepped out of my comfort zone and did a movie that was different



than anything I had ever done, maybe I would feel like a filmmaker when it was all said and done. If it works, I can say, "Wow I'm a filmmaker." If it doesn't, I can say, "Alright I get it, I'm a dick-and-fart joke guy and I'll just stick to that."

AD: What does being a filmmaker mean?

KS: I don't know. I think some people are just born with it in their genes; they are born to make film. I don't feel like that guy, I feel like I just kind of backed into it by virtue of the fact that I wanted to write a flick and make an independent flick. Like Rick Linklater, he is a born filmmaker; he came out of the womb ready to make a film and lives, breathes and eats cinema. I enjoy doing it, I think it's fun, but I'm not as hard-wired into it as he is.*****

Buddy and Hopkins

By Jason Nocera (www.buddyandhopkins.com)



TOPAZ & MUDPHONIC



Tenor Saxophonist, Topaz McGarrigle is back with a new sound, new band and new album. The band, Mudphonic gathers inspiration from the rugged Texas landscape. The album, "Music for Dorothy" is steeped in the soul of the humid southern air. We caught up with the quartet before they headed out on a month long CD release tour. They'll be back in Austin on October 10th to celebrate their homecoming with a post-Panic show at Antone's.

AUSTIN DAZE: You guys have all been in different projects before. What makes Mudphonic different or better than the rest? How do you know?

ALEX MARRERO: For me musically, it's a new start in a new instrument. In Ghandia, I was the head of the thing. I was the singer and the guitar player and it was my baby. My role was different. In Mudphonic, I'm the drummer, so my approach is very different. I can't compare them. I'm enjoying the experience tremendously and I'm happy to be playing with just about everybody in the room. Topaz gets on my nerves.

TOPAZ MCGARRIGLE: I think that's the main thing, that it is something new for all of us. We are all pushing our boundaries, so to speak. For me it was starting to sing and play guitar and harmonica, whereas before I just played saxophone. The project is about putting yourself out there and pushing what you would normally do and not worrying about it. I hope that's what makes it better—I hope that some of that energy is portrayed to the crowd, that we are really putting ourselves out there and doing something that we really shouldn't be doing. Something that is exciting for us that is so fresh and new.

BOBBY PERKINS: With the previous Topaz band we were doing more funk and instrumental acid jazz, and now we are writing tunes and doing more vocals.

JOHN BRANCH: The main difference for me is just how I'm playing guitar. I started playing slide guitar before I moved back to town and was looking for an outfit where I could do that, so it was sort of

serendipitous that I met Topaz right when I got back and that he was interested in doing more blues. I wanted to start playing music that was more stripped down, no effects, straight guitar straight into the amp. It's way more natural for me. It's something I should have been doing a lot sooner.

AD: Did you all write the songs together or individually and then get together? How does that work?

TM: It's a mixture. Some I had written before we even started. John had written a song before we started as well. Some of them are more collaborative. We are definitely becoming more and more of a collaborative effort as we go.

AD: How did you all get together? Did you put an ad on Craig's list?

AM: I met Topaz at a Ghandia gig. I was playing and there was this whole, "Topaz is in town, Topaz is in town" and I was like, "Who the fuck is Topaz? What is this Topaz business?" He ended up sitting in with the band that night and I hired him for some gigs and we became friends. John came back to town from San Francisco and he was the original guitar player in Ghandia, and he and I always had a really good musical connection. We wanted to start a new project and we started going to Topaz gigs and sitting-in in different scenarios, and then there was a Headhunters gig.

TM: I find experimenting on stage can be the best way to do it—find a small club with a small audience and improvise. So we did. Bobby was out of town at the time so we tried a couple of bass players and then he came back and started playing with us.

AM: And then we did a Halloween party—that sort of cemented it.

TM: A bonding experience for sure. I was dressed as a fairy, John was Jesus, Alex was dressed as Alex, and Bobby was a fine lass in a mini skirt.

BP: A very revealing mini skirt.

JB: It had nothing to do with the music.

AD: Who is Dorothy?

JB: My mother.

TM: She passed away shortly before we recorded the album—it's a tribute to her.

AD: And the picture on the cover of the album? Where's that?

TM: That's where we recorded it. Patty's barn.

AD: Tell us a little bit about the recording process.

JB: It was very hot.

AD: It looks like it was in a swamp.

TM: The a.c. was so loud we could only use it in between takes. Lots of sweating. We hardly used any multi-tracking—everything was recorded live—so any mistakes that were made basically are what we had to live with. We were all in a circle without headphones—very interactive. A very freeing way to record.

JB: Slightly nerve-wracking because you get three or four minutes into a take and it's like, "This one feels pretty good. Oh wait, no." It's just trying to keep together.

AD: Why did you guys decide to go that route?

JB: At that point, we had been playing together 8, 9 months at the most and a lot of what we do is so improvisational based; a lot of the stuff that we would do, it was very hard to map out, say, a solo is going to be a certain length. What we do on stage is all based on visual cueing.

AM: What we first intended to go for, we just wanted something on disc. It wasn't going to be as involved, as I remember it. It was just supposed to be a rough interpretation of what we do live.

BP: Which it is.

TM: I think our engineer, Craig Brock, wanted that. When there's "bleed," something different happens. When you are separating each instrument in a traditional recording studio, there is no cross bleed. There is something that is different. I talked to him about it—that it's a controlled bleed—like with the bass and bass drum, he wanted that, this organic sound.

AM: It fit the music that we are doing—that old school approach. All these old records that we love are just people sitting in a room and everyone just playing together and creating music in the moment. Palpable.

AD: (To Topaz) So are your funk fans still liking what you are doing? Do you get any feedback from people missing the funk sound? And why did you pick up the guitar?

BP: Yeah why?

TM: John made me do it.

JB: I did not.

TM: I would definitely say that not everybody responds well to it.

AM: To the guitar?

TM: No, not to the guitar. Well, the guitar too, in the beginning. No, I'm talking about the funk issue. There have been occasions where I have to listen to people screaming from the audience to play more sax and stuff like that. I'm really gracious to

the people that have followed the path along with me and have been open-minded. It definitely is difficult to change and people expect something out of you, and it's hard to get up there and know that they are expecting something and then do something totally different and knowing that some people don't like it. But I've been doing the same thing for about 10 years. Sometimes I talk to people and I'm like, "Have you been in the same job for ten years?" Sometimes you feel like changing it up. Sometimes you just need a different form of expression—your life changes. Especially if you are creative, you can't always express your feelings in the same genre or the same medium. That's sort of where the guitar came from. There are certain limitations of the saxophone that I just felt the need to expand my palette a little bit—have more colors to play with.

AD: I like it man. It's creative. It keeps it fresh and alive. Bob Dylan did the same sort of thing when he switched from acoustic to electric but he stuck with it and...

TM: It worked out alright for him.

AM: People are still getting used to the fact that it's Topaz and Mudphonic. People are like, "What's with the weird long name?" It's just natural. A lot of people don't know that Topaz is a guy and that's his name. We thought Mudphonic was a very clear description of the sound. And we needed to let people know that Topaz is involved but that this is not the Topaz of old—it's a new sound, a new band, something else. It's a matter of time; it's getting there. People are starting to respond and realize.

TM: The plan was that when the record came out to make it very clear that it is Topaz and Mudphonic. We weren't too concerned about it before.

AD: Where did Mudphonic come from? How did it happen? Did you all sit around and come up with names?

TM: It's so hard because you come up with a really good name and then you Google it and there are so many bands with that name. You pretty much have to make up a word.

AM: We were Texican for a minute.

BP: I'm glad that didn't work out.

AD: Do you do better in Austin or on the road?

TM: We are about to find out.

BP: Certain markets are better. New Orleans and San Francisco have done us well.

TM: We definitely built up this town on our own.

AD: We know that you are a big Kirk Whalum fan. Is that when you decided to play sax?

TM: My mom used to take me to see him play when

I was in 3rd or 4th grade at a place on Sixth Street that's not there anymore. I started on the violin. This was back when kids could go to Sixth Street. I was like, "Screw the violin. I want to play saxophone." I was much more comfortable on the sax.

AD: Alex, did you have anyone that influenced you when you were growing up?

AM: Kirk Whalum. No, ever since I was a little kid I sang and performed for my siblings. Paco de Lucia was my ultimate—when I finally got a guitar I was OK that I didn't get a drum set because Paco de Lucia is the man.

JB: Still working on incorporating that.



BP: My dad. He was the band director at my school and played upright bass and jazz. He was my biggest influence. And then a friend of mine's older brother - he played bass for the gospel church and he was just funky. He would play in the high school band room. He definitely was a big influence—he turned me onto everything from Parliament Funkadelic to gospel music. Between he and my dad is where I picked up the bass.

JB: Earliest memory of guitar players - my dad took me when I was nine years old to see Jeff Healey. We were right in the front row.

BP: The West End free show?

JB: Yeah.

BP: I was there.

JB: The stuff he was doing then was more blues rock. The earliest records in the house were blues and the Beatles. Both my parents are from Mississippi, so I was into the blues and then also more modern rock.

AM: You made me think of something: when I moved to Austin is what made it seem attainable. Playing music was something that could be done. Growing up in Mexico, I had never seen shows the way that I saw shows here. You'd see these amazing musicians three feet away from you. That completely changed my perspective on being a musician and the quality of music that you present and wanting to play music for a living. In Mexico,

you go to a show and there are fifty, sixty thousand people.

AD: Tell us about the new record. Tell us about the sound.

JB: It's southern funk with a gritty edge and rock & roll attitude.

BP: Bad ass.

AD: Alex, tell us about your transition from guitar to drums.

AM: I've always wanted to be a drummer.

AD: And for you guys, Bobby and John, are there any other instruments you wished you played? Any secret instrument fantasies?

JB: I have this fantasy of wanting to play keyboards, of throwing the guitar behind my back and playing the keys.

AM: He's going to have a keytar strap.

JB: No, it's not going to be keytar and it's not going to be a ZZ Top thing. I definitely get a lot of comments that the way I play the chords sounds a lot like a keyboard.

BP: I've always wanted to play more guitar but not for stage—so I could entertain my friends around the campfire. And the banjo.

AD: What wisdom would you offer to up and coming musicians?

BP: Let the dream die.

AM: What was Zappa's quote? "Get a real estate license."

JB: Yeah, that doesn't hold any water now.

TM: Now the real estate agents are telling each other, "Pick up the guitar."

AM: I don't have any advice for anybody. Do it for the passion and the love of it.

TM: Playing music, you'll get lots of chicks, free drugs, and you'll get rich as hell.***

CAFE MUNDI OWNER, JESSICA NIERI



Welcome to the first installment of our LOCAL BUSINESS FEATURE where we, you guessed it, feature a local business. We are particularly interested in ones that positively contribute to the economic, social, and all around fiber of Austin, Texas. Cafe Mundi owner, Jessica Nieri, was somewhat of a pioneer, conquering what was not too long ago considered a new frontier--East Austin. She took a chance on the "other side" of I 35 and its residents have been singing her praises ever since.

An editor's note. Cafe Mundi has a special place in my heart. Way back, in the day, Jess and Hans brought me in as a friend and opened up many doors for me. Many friendships I have to this day, came out of that spot. Some of the greatest parties I have had were in that parking lot. Dave, Jess and I folded and stapled many of the first editions on that porch. I even had an octopus painted in the lot, it faded but the memory and what it represents is strong within me. Jess and Hans believed in what I could do, whether I failed or succeeded, it was their support of my efforts that gave me confidence. Thanks for the love guys. I will stop in for a Chai one of these daze soon.....

AUSTIN DAZE: What brought you to Austin and why did you stay?

CAFE MUNDI: We planned a winter trip from Milwaukee to Texas, bypassed Dallas and made Austin our first stop. We drove through town and headed straight to Barton Springs and pretty much decided from there. We moved to Austin 10 months later with the crazy

thought of opening a coffee shop.

AD: So did you always have a plan to do what you do?

CM: Pretty much. Jessica's father, Jano, had some connections with some folks over in East Austin from when he used to live in Crystal City. So, we planned another trip down in the spring and focused on the eastside. At the time there was only 1 other coffee shop, Manor Road Coffeehouse, then and we thought that is what the East side needed a place where people could form a great community.

AD: What made you decide to make the dive?

CM: All the support we received from family and friends. We had a shoestring budget but decided it's what we wanted to do. Hans and I were very determined to make it work. We were also tired of working for other people and just knew we wanted to start our own business.

AD: Why a coffee shop?

CM: (Hans) I loved hanging out at the many coffee shops while attending architecture school at UW-Milwaukee. Spent a couple years in Madison doing the same. A dream was to design and build one, this idea of a



community space. (Jess) My 2nd job when I was 15 was in a tiny coffee shop I loved. Since then I've either worked in or managed coffee shops. I truly cared about the coffee shops. I worked hard and enjoyed being there. I've also been part of an artist community and wanted to create a space that would allow amazing things to transpire. I also think coffee houses today have lost that charm of the old world café that allowed for the meeting of the minds.

AD: Why the east side? Was it considered a risky business choice in the beginning?

CM: I grew up in a very similar side of town in Milwaukee. The small little Café's thrived within a very diverse and "risky" community. Just about everyone I asked, said we were crazy for opening a café on the East side and said it was too risky. That just motivated us that much more. Don't get me wrong 10 years ago East 5th St. wasn't even a paved road. The whole property had to be cleaned up, painted, gardens put in, the space built out, and the residents on the roof asked to move out. So yes it was a risky move, you really had to be adventurous to come to Café Mundi. Our motto is hard to find but easy to love. We spent the first couple of years going business to business, door-to-door meeting our neighbors and inviting them to the Café.

AD: If I remember, you guys were one of the first coffee shops on the east side. Now the area is covered in them. How do you feel about the competition?

CM: It's great. It sucks. It's puzzling. It's a whole bunch of things, but really it's motivating. We all offer a similar service with a different twist, and there are surely a bunch of new folks around the area now and get new people in everyday.

AD: How has it affected your business?

CM: It really helps our business more than actually affects our business in any negative way. It has provided the eastside with just a few more options than it already had.

Just the other day, an individual who I did not recognize, asked me a few questions about our coffee. Later, as he sat outside, I asked

him "Is this the first time at Mundi?" and he said, "Yes." I then asked him how he found out about us and he replied "I was just having coffee down the street and then started

driving around and I just noticed the sign, so I pulled in.” He came back the next day.

AD: Many things have changed over the past 10 years in Austin; did you ever imagine the eastside would be what it is becoming?

CM: Yes, it was inevitable, with it's proximity to downtown. It was really the last part of town to experience any real growth and development.

AD: It is a double edge sword of a question, but how do you feel about the changing growth of Austin? I am conflicted because more people =new ideas, but we have also lost much of our unique culture due to change. What are your thoughts?

CM: That is also inevitable so we really have to be smart about the fast changes happening in Austin. Buy local and teach people to buy local. If we want to see a

change for the better we can't just talk about it we have to do it!

AD: What is the greatest lesson or lessons you've learned over the past ten years?

CM: Stay true to yourself and your vision, but also be flexible.

AD: What are some of the challenges of having a biz in Austin?

CM: Staying competitive, staying unique, and surviving.

AD: What is next for yall?

CM: A second location and securing our current location for the many years to come. We would love to see Café Mundi grow into more avenues.

AD: In your eyes, what sets Café Mundi apart from other coffee shops? What is the unique experience you can have at Mundi?

CM: Location. Location. Location. The location is so unique for an urban area. It feels hidden. You have the rails; view of downtown, monk

parakeets in the microwave tower, a grove of crepe myrtles, a style of architecture, which represents the culture and history of the neighborhood, church bells in the background reminding you of time...it's a great place to decompress.

We have a wide range of events happening at the café; free movies, kids school performances, East Austin studio tour, Dork Bot, Art bazaars, Cycle side, Live music, clothes swaps, soccer games, plant sales, monthly art openings, and of course filter less Fridays. It also has a hub for many people who live and work in the area. You can ask us if we know an electrician, tile layer, professor, painter, graphic designer, lawyer, nanny, fire dancer, or carpenter, and chances are all they have to do is take a look around the café and point them out. We really get to know our customers.

AD: What is the best part to you about being in Austin?

CM: The people we met and will continue to meet. In our eyes it's like no other place. We really have met some of the most amazing, caring, smart, talented people in Austin. I feel so fortunate that most of those connections happened through Café Mundi. Like Meeting Russ from the Austin Daze which seems like so many, many years ago.***



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DAISY RIPROCK'S CD REVIEWS



Hello Darlings,

Well, there's a bit in the good news/bad news department here. This is my last column of reviewing CDs, but the good news is that I will still be doing interviews and doing some live show reviews for the Daze.

In the last two years, I have been exposed to so much great music that I would have never heard otherwise, this issue included. I have discovered a lot of great new bands like the Frontier Brothers and the Steps, as well as keeping up on the latest of bands I already knew and loved like Reckless Kelly.

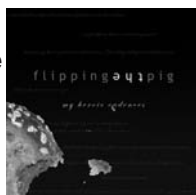
I have also gotten to make a lot of new friends, and meeting all of you lovelies out there who have said hello in person has been priceless. I look forward to continue to see you as we flower the town together.

Bands, you can keep sending your music into us at PO Box 40425, Austin, TX, 78704. Everything gets listened to at the Daze World Headquarters.

May I see all of you beautiful people on down the line....this is by no means Goodbye Darlings.....

FLIPPING THE PIG – My Heroic Cadences

Is flipping pigs similar to the cow tipping we saw in the movie "Heathers?" Or is it something that you do when flipping the bird just isn't enough?



Whatever the case, this quirky experimental album was written and recorded in a month (February even!), although it came out better than some albums people spend a year on. Very interesting sounds and unique vocals make this something you want to listen to several times just to discover all that is there.

Melodic and quite original, this CD recalls a bit of They Might Be Giants in the approach. As one of my musician friends likes to say, "Let's have fun with this one." A good time indeed.

8.5 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric: "Don't throw the rock in the water, you're going to hate the ripple"

ANTHONY SMITH'S TRUNK FULLA FUNK – "Life As We Know It"



Karl Denson's keyboardist's all-star funk band puts out an album that at times reminded me of – and I never thought I'd ever write this – Stevie Wonder's Songs in the Key of Life. The vibe, the real life lyrics, the melodies and the organ sounds are all reminiscent of that landmark album.

Once I put it in my CD player, I found that there was a problem. My stereo wouldn't go loud enough. Seriously. I wanted to turn it up and up. This is a pure R and B record, and if that's your thing, this could immediately become a favorite new album. It has become that for me, fueled by the smooth, in the groove vocals of Walt Williams. If my CD changer gets stuck and I can only have a handful of albums to listen to, I hope this one is in there. Now that I have found that my stereo needs a volume push, let's pray that doesn't happen.

If this CD were released when I was a teenager, I would have excitedly run over to your house with to share it with you. Have I mentioned that I'm knocked out by it? Let me condense this to a two-word review to make it clear. "Hot Shit."

9.5 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric: "Don't be making assumptions, don't be thinking you got me all figured out"



MARK AMBROSE – Put the Hammer Down

With songs covered by such Austin luminaries as Jane Bond and Toni Price, chances are that you know Mark Ambrose better than you think. If you listen to KGSR, you've probably heard his rhythm guitar playing on Gillian Welch singles as well.

This twelve-song collection gives clues to where one of Austin's best-kept secrets may hide. With too many standout tracks to name in just a couple of paragraphs, Put The Hammer Down is a good reminder of how much fun great songs can be. While many songwriters are known for their use of melody or for their lyrics, Mr. Ambrose excels at both. His

tunes and his words can stick in your head and bring a smile to your face hours after listening.

This album was produced by David Rawlings, features his lead guitar playing, as well as Ms. Welch on bass. If you're looking for a new artist to discover for yourself, this album is a perfect pick.

9.5 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric: "Hallelujah for the morning light"



THE STEPS – The Steps

This debut gives us a glimpse of a promising young group. Remember that band you loved in high school and you were sure they were going to be rock stars? That is the same feeling I get from these boys, and hey, that was the feeling that Van Halen's classmates had at one time.

Merging together influences such as the Rolling Stones and the Strokes, the band comes off sounding a bit like Jet or the mid-60's Kinks, but certainly aren't clones. The rhythm guitars are pounding, the leads melodic, and the songwriting mature despite the fact none of the members are old enough to drink alcohol – legally at least.

This is an exceptional first appearance, and for a young group to play so well together is indeed rare. Certainly producer Frenchie Smith may have had a hand in that but like every major league baseball manager will tell you, the players have to go out and execute. Keep your eyes (and ears!) on The Steps; this is a band that could accomplish quite a bit in the next few years.

8.5 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric: "You see these outlaws, they try to rob you, steal your heart and your money too"

RUBY DEE AND THE SNAKEHANDLERS – Miles From Home

So Love, what is rock n roll to you? I adore my ZZ Top and



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Metallica as much as the next "For Those About To Rock" t-shirt wearer, but rock n roll in its purist form is often called rockabilly.

This group recalls plenty of the sound to fall into that category, although I wouldn't completely limit them to it. Ruby Dee Phillipa's vocals are reminiscent of Wanda Jackson, but the band also mixes in Bakersfield, California and Hank Williams as influences too. The songs have quite a bit of originality to them despite the retro feel, and that set them apart for me.

This very danceable disc had me consider filling the living room with hay and inviting some friends over for a swing dance party on the spot. My roommate Lily was either the voice of reason or party pooper depending on how you look at it, and suggested we go to the Broken Spoke instead. I think she just didn't want to clean up. At least we still had a good time, though.

Word on the street says this outfit is moving to Austin near the end of the year, leaving Seattle heartbroken and perhaps leaving us the happiest town since Bop City. I personally can't wait to see this band live.

9 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric: "You sing loud and I'll sing louder, now we're settin' the woods on fire!"

RECKLESS KELLY – Bulletproof

Reckless Kelly's fifth album features some cool cover art of Australian bandit Ned "Reckless" Kelly. In it, they tackle some difficult topics such as the war in Iraq and victims of Hurricane Katrina,



while throwing in the dusty outlaw type tunes that has endeared them to many of us.

The first few listens were a bit more Nashville than Texas to my ears, but after hearing it a few times, the songwriting started to stand out through the production. The songs themselves are very well written, and some are becoming some of my personal favorites of theirs. Now when I play it I do hear a bit of an edge as well, it just took a bit for the polish to wear off for me.

Though not quite as reckless as some of their previous work, Bulletproof has plenty of fun under the hood, and might best be listened to cranked up with the windows rolled down as you feel the wind through your hair on Highway 290. Now on Yep-Roc Records, look for the Braun brothers and company to reach more fans than ever with this CD.

9 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric: "Just like every place you go Austin, Texas has the blues"

THE FRONTIER BROTHERS – Space Punk Starlet!

The Frontier Brothers are one of my favorite new bands, and their first full length CD did not disappoint.



Recorded with Stuart Sullivan (Okkervill River, Sublime, the Meat Puppets), Space Punk Starlet! has the characteristics of a group releasing their third or fourth album, as they have already crafted their own recognizable sound and feel. Combining honest to goodness fun with Bowie like musicality, the record goes from sounding big and happy to raw to downright luscious and

beautiful. The added texture from the "Intergalactic Orchestra" is done tastefully and just not to say, "Hey man, we put a French horn on our album because we're that cool."

Their obvious enthusiasm is prevalent on the album, and the energy of their live shows comes through. I attended a recent show, shortly after their photo session with SPIN magazine, and the floor was shaking from the madness of the dancers. Quite a few people are becoming hip to this Austin trio, and my humble guess is many more will be after this release.

9.5 Daisy Stars

Daisy's Favorite Lyric "I wish I could solve all the popular problems our day, so that you and I could waste away someplace nice"

DAISY'S RED RYDER BB GUNSHOTS

Eric Hisaw – Nature of the Blues: Mr. Hisaw continues to put out gritty records that epitomize Austin music. 9 shots.

Chad Tracy – Honeymoon Classics: Prolific Chad Tracy puts out another fine album that covers a lot of ground. From smooth and soulful to country swing. 9 shots

Full Service – The Dig: Some good ol' in your face rock with loud guitars. They mix some reggae feel in too. Much coolness. 8 shots.

The Grownup Noise – Self-Titled: Imagine James Taylor playing with Elvis Costello's band. Pretty swell, huh? Mellow, poppy sound. 8.5 shots.

Bob Simpson - Self-Titled: Great vocals plus sweet songs equals one very fine album from this West Texas artist. 9 shots.

Christine Albert – Paris, Texafrance: Beautifully crafted mix of French and Texas music. You have to hear it to believe it. The lyrics in francais make it sexy. 8.5 shots.

Kellye Gray Three – KG3 Live at the Bugle Boy: Some jazz singers sing. Others pour out the lyrics as naturally as breathing. Ms. Gray is definitely a natural. This is the best jazz vocal album I've heard all year. Easy. 9.5 shots.

Shelia Harrison - Self-Titled: This pop country 19 year old has the vocal power of a seasoned veteran. Look out if the right people hear her. 8.5 shots.

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LESLIE MARTIN, OWNER OF BOULDIN CREEK COFFEEHOUSE



PIC BY: Kyle Woods.

In case you haven't read our interview with Jessica Nieri yet...

Welcome to the second installment of our LOCAL BUSINESS FEATURE where, you guessed it, we feature a local business. We are particularly interested in ones that positively contribute to the economic, social, and all around fiber of Austin, Texas. Leslie Martin 's Bouldin Creek isn't just a coffeehouse, it's a way of life. This vegetarian "second home" is dedicated to doing their part to help reduce our carbon imprint and are achieving this important goal one coffee mug at a time.

editors note- Bouldin has long been a supporter of the Daze. The food is great. The vibe and the people are the best. I am known to eat their veggie burger with cheese, weekly. Thanks Leslie...

AUSTIN DAZE: What made you want to start Bouldin?

LESLIE MARTIN: Honestly, I just wanted to be a part of keeping the local flavor--that drew me to love Austin, alive and kicking. I saw some of my favorite places close and thought something had to be done to put back what had been lost.

AD: When you started out, did you have a specific image in mind for sense of how you wanted it to be?

LM: Being a long-time Austinite, I "grew up" from the time I was 18 hanging out at places like Les Amis, Quack's on the drag, and the original Tom's Tabouli on the UT campus. I really liked the authentic character of these places; down to earth not white-washed and slick. Beyond knowing the feeling I wanted Bouldin to have, I really had no idea what I was doing at first.

AD: So much has changed and is changing in Austin. How do you feel about the changes?

LM: I believe change is inevitable and not all bad. I do miss the simplicity of Austin back when I moved here in the late 80's. Everyone lived central easily walked or biked to do stuff. It felt like this magical place where everyone was an artist or creative in some way. Rent was cheap so it was easier to have a bohemian lifestyle. Though I am sad to see things change to the degree they have, I think it has been a shift across the whole country, not just Austin. I see so many people move to from Austin to places where the locals are complaining about the changes we're complaining about here. I hope the whole country has a mind-shift, and I hope Austinites will stay and continue to work to keep Austin a great place to live. There are some changes that really concern me, like the population doubling, the lack affordable housing, and the development on Town Lake. I am not ready to throw in the towel, though!!!

AD: What makes hanging at Bouldin a unique experience?

LM: A lot of our customers and staff call Bouldin their second home. At Bouldin, you are part of a community and not just a table to be turned. I think this particular energy that makes Bouldin unique. There also is a hustle you don't see at a lot of other coffee shops, and people notice this. I promote this kind of service because I want customers to know we realize they have other options. Over the past years, we have made great strides and are always trying to improve. I think the size of our food and drink menu also really sets us apart.

AD: I know you are concerned about the environment and have tried to incorporate some things into Bouldin to help limit the negative effects on this planet. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

LM: This has been a hard pill for me to swallow. No matter what you do a restaurant is an environmental nightmare. So many restaurants and bars don't even recycle. We have always purchased recycled paper products. For seven years we used a reusable coffee filter. We reuse grocery bags for to-go orders and only offer bags when people ask. We reuse six-pack holders for to-go drink carriers. We have switched to compostable cups, straws and to-go utensils. We have always worked hard to reduce waste. It is just in my nature. Our new goal is to take it to the next level and find new ways to reduce our use of electricity and water. This is really

where we make the biggest impact. It really is mind blowing and we are just a small-time operation.

AD: What made the all veg. menu happen?

LM: I guess because I started out only knowing how I wanted the place to feel, the food menu was just an afterthought. I decided to open a coffeehouse because I knew they were good places to build community. I decided to serve food because I had always loved that about Les Amis, back I the day, and, honestly, I thought that would be a sound business decision, setting us apart from other places. I decided to go vegetarian for many reasons. One, it seemed weird to be a vegetarian and serve meat. Two, I didn't know the first thing about cooking, especially meat. Three, I thought it would be easy in a coffeehouse environment because most people would be happy you served food at all. Most of our customers aren't even vegetarian. I am happy because both non-veg and veg people are getting exposed to veg. food they actually like. I'm proud of the food and am really glad I made the decision to go veg.

AD: What lessons have you learned about running a coffee shop in ATX?

LM: Never take business for granted. Always be forward thinking. I really love serving people and feel like the secret to success is catching a spark with your customers. Let them know you enjoy serving them. I think that is how you get customers for life, and this kind of positive energy exchange helps motivate the worker. I have also realized serving so much food makes things sooooo much harder. I would keep it simple if I were to do it over, but I am happy people like it.

AD: What is your favorite drink to make?

LM: I love making all drinks. I am kind of a barista nerd that way. I would have to say my favorite drink to make is the one that makes your face light up!!!

AD: What's next?

LM: More square footage !!! Not sure how. I really would like the place to be able to get food out faster. I also realize that sometimes, when it gets really busy, the place just isn't really always as comfortable as I'd like. In the last two years, with the help of my staff and manager, we have seen such an upswing in business that I hope to be able to focus my energies again on other community efforts like our free bike shop, free classes at Bouldin, and using the space as a forum for activism and customer networking.***

GRAHAM WILLIAMS

Move over ACL, there's an indie kid in



town. Fun Fun Fun Fest is almost here and we can't wait (well, November, but hey). A weekend full of bands "your parents wouldn't go see" this year promises to offer an alternative music experience that won't disappoint. Graham Williams explains.

AUSTIN DAZE: Tell our readers what Fun Fun Fun Fest is.

GRAHAM WILLIAMS: I think it's a festival that definitely goes after a specific audience that likes progressive and underground music, so folks like my parents wouldn't normally go--although they will go because it's mine. But I do think there are a lot of people who haven't gone and may not have heard of a lot of the bands that would love it because it's a great time of year, the weather is perfect; it's much more intimate setting than most festivals - you're not a mile away from a band. It's a very Austin festival—it's cool, cutting edge music. It's local vendors, local food and art.

It's pretty diverse and nothing typical that you would have heard a million times over. It's fresh and new but a wide enough spectrum that you can pop around and still find something you would enjoy.

AD: And great parking.

GW: There is a lot of parking.

AD: How would a local Austin band get involved?

GW: I tell them to email or myspace me. I respond to everyone. We don't have that much room of course. Most of the responses I'm unable to fill only because there are only so many slots on the festival

AD: How many bands this year?

GW: 80. 40 a day--roughly.

AD: Have you ever taken a blind submission?

GW: Not for the festival but I have for many of the clubs where there is some random band that ends up being this amazing group. Bands get bigger later and get agents. I worked at Emo's for ten years. I can't think of how many times I booked bands that just had a demo tape and were just trying to get a show on tour. They all start out trying to get their name out there and get some gas money. Most of those bands end up breaking up, but every once in awhile one goes on to be the next big thing.

AD: Are you feeling the festival competition yet?

GW: A little bit but not really. The majority of the bands we book are not in the other fests. There is a little bit of crossover, like there are a few bands that I went after that are going to be on ACL and other festivals that were too close together, and of course I didn't want to book them if they are playing in another festival. But I would say that was only 15%. ACL doesn't do hip hop—maybe one—the Roots because they are safe and were on a Gap commercial. They put one hip hop act maybe and then punk is the same thing. Most of the indie bands we

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have only cross over a little bit.

AD: Does production cross over?

GW: We try to do everything in house as opposed to farming out to a big company. We try and have our staff be people that are in the music scene anyway. The festival is more like a big club than it is a big festival.

AD: What did you learn from last year's festival?

GW: A few things we will probably do differently but most of it is structured similarly. Everybody seemed really happy with it.

AD: Same amount of stages?

GW: We are going to add one more stage, a fourth stage, which is going to be a little bit quieter. The singer songwriters are going to be on that stage and some of the comedy stuff. It's in an area of the park that is quieter.

AD: You didn't do the comedy last year.

GW: No. This is new. I've been doing comedy at clubs here and there, and it's been going over really well. And then we did an event during SXSW that we had a lot of comedy at and it was really good; people really enjoyed it. You get a break from the music and get to go watch someone tell jokes for awhile.

AD: It's an interesting mix, the comedy with some of that music.

GW: For sure. But we are going after comedians that are still part of that scene--that tour in that world and play live music venues instead of comedy clubs.

AD: How did last year turn out?

GW: Everybody seemed to have a great time. It gets easier every time you do it.

AD: The music seems a little different.

GW: A little bit. The main stage is pretty much the indie stuff, and then one stage is mostly heavier music, and then there is a stage that has the improv and DJ stuff, and then that fourth stage is a little bit quieter.

AD: The line up this year seems to have a wider array of bands. Are there more locals this year?

GW: It's probably about the same. Maybe a little bit less just because there are so many touring bands coming through. I'm going to add a couple of more bands at the end of the month—there are a couple that we can't announce until we get a little closer to the dates—but 95% of the lineup is already out there.

AD: What bands are you excited about this year?

GW: The National will be great, I'm excited about that. The Dead Milkmen, which is an 80s band, I'm really excited about that. That's one of my favorite bands. On the hip hop stage, Dr. Octagon—he's really fun to watch. There's something on every single stage this year that I'm excited about so I'm pretty happy with that.

AD: Last year you guys turned me on to Okkervil River.

GW: Yeah, that was right before they blew up. Now they are the main act on a lot of big festivals.

AD: Tell us about how you find the bands? Is there a staff?

GW: It's just me. I'll just email around SXSW all the agents and let them know what the dates are and ask if anyone is touring around that time, and I'll tell them to keep this date in mind. Then I'll start hitting up agents and bands specifically that I want. It's a mix of them coming to me and me going to them and asking if they want to play. It's come together nicely.

AD: Do you get any requests from fans for bands?

GW: This year we sent out a big email/my-space blog asking people to give us their advice, a "Who do you want to see?" kind of thing. I was proud to say a good chunk of the bands that people really wanted to see we

were able to make happen. There are a lot of pipe dreams out there that will probably never happen, but it's always good to try. But yeah, I definitely wanted to hear what people had to say.

AD: Can you remember some of the bands that fans asked for?

GW: Bad Brains was one. A lot of the bands that are on the best clips were requested. A lot of the bands that people saw last year and were excited about like, Murder City Devils, but I specifically made a rule that we wouldn't do anyone this year that we did last year. I might do something next year that I did a couple of years before. I'm definitely not doing anything back to back so that everyone that goes feels

and handling the sound and stuff like that. And those folks will be working further out too—they will probably start working December. I really don't start working too hard on it until after SXSW because everybody is tied up and it's hard to get a straight answer. But there are a couple of bands I'm working on this year to try and get for next year.

AD: What else are you doing these days?

GW: Booking the clubs—we have a few that we book a lot.

AD: Do you ever get music fatigue?

GW: A little bit. Sometimes you don't want to go downtown.

AD: How do you do it?

GW: This girl Rosa works for us and she books a lot of the bands at Mohawk. And Jared, he is the manager at Red 7, and he books the local bands there. That disperses a lot of the stuff. And Will handles a lot of the stuff at Club Deville. And then I handle the bigger touring acts so that's just a couple of shows a week, and then they fill the calendar. And then of course the festival—hopefully by next year we will have someone else on board helping out. It's mostly a balancing act between what I'm doing and what everybody else is doing.

AD: I remember last year we talked about the vision of Transmission Entertainment. How is that shaping up?

GW: It's coming together nicely. We are doing a lot of online stuff—our website has a lot of features where you can watch videos and stuff like that, so I'm definitely happy with the way it is coming together.

We've grown in a year way, way faster than we expected. If anything, it's a question of trying to keep up with how fast the name Transmission has grown. That's a good thing.

AD: Could be worse.

GW: No complaints here.



like they got their money's worth.

AD: So you haven't repeated a band yet?

GW: There are a couple that played the first year that we might add on to this year.

AD: Is this turning into an all year planning thing yet?

GW: Yeah, kind of. I have more people working with me to help on production and sponsors

RAKS HELWA



Belly dancing is good for the soul. I recommend a viewing as often as possible. These girls do it right.

AUSTIN DAZE: TELL US FOR THOSE THAT DON'T KNOW WHAT IS BELLY DANCING?

RAKS HELWA: One of the first things to know is the term "belly dance" is only used in the United States, Britain, Australia, and a few other English-speaking regions. This is a popular, but debatable term as some may feel this term to be sexist, while others relate the belly with maternal, goddess and world beliefs. In countries of the dance's origin, it is mostly known as Raks Sharki (dance of the East). Other terms and styles include Oriental Dance (refers to dance of the Orient or the East), Middle Eastern Dance, American Tribal Style (created in California using dances and costume styles from a multitude of Eastern countries), and Cabaret (an American term for the Egyptian nightclub style of dance). Belly dance is considered a derivative of the world's oldest known documented dance forms. Going way back, it is believed that early civilizations used dance to worship deities as well as in religious ceremonies. Dance was, and still is today, used to pantomime the sowing and harvesting of crops, to bless and heal, to prepare for childbirth and the wedding bed, and for secular entertainment. From its inception, belly dancing has traces of influences from many cultures and many dance styles, so in a sense you can call belly dancing, a dance of history. Today, the dance in many variations is alive and well all over the world, and in great many interpretations. Despite all the different stylization this dance form has picked up from different countries and different dance influences, simply put, belly dancing is a dance form that includes a series of beautiful and

sensual movements that are controlled, contained, fluid, and elegant, and takes years of practice, commitment, dedication and experience to master. There are also many folkloric forms of belly dancing where the dancers use canes and other props. They also are known to dance with a sword balanced on their head, candles, veil, wings and fingers cymbals. The beauty of belly dancing today is the fact that dancers in the United States and elsewhere have kept alive the world's Oldest Dance, which is in danger of extinction in its native countries due to religious, political and social mores. Knowing these facts makes any form of belly dance all the more precious.

AD: WHAT DOES RAKS HELWA MEAN?

RH: Raks, pronounced "R-ah-sa" in Arabic means "dance". Helwa (feminine), pronounced "Hill-wah" in Arabic means "something thing sweet, or nice." Although in the Arabic language it may not be fully proper to say R-ah-sa Hill-wah, we decided since this is a belly dance troupe that is blending six different styles of dance together, we wanted the troupe's name to also be a blend of modern with traditional. So we fused the popular modern American adapted pronunciation of Raks "rocks" with the Arabic pronunciation if Hill-wa.

AD: WHAT BROUGHT RAKS HELWA TOGETHER?

RH: The desire to dance with friends who inspire each other, are strong belly dancers, and who also shared the same belief that although they all possessed very different belly dance styles, they could work together to educate the community on six of today's most popular belly dance styles alive in the U.S., in one show.

AD: IS AUSTIN A GOOD TOWN TO BELLY DANCE IN? WHY?

RH: In one way Austin is a good town to belly dance in since it's so accepting of entertainment; however, on the other hand, there's not a big Arabic community and very few Arabic venues.

AD: THERE ARE A LOT OF BELLY DANCERS IN TOWN, DO YALL FEEL THE COMPETITION?

RH: Although there are a lot of belly dancers in town, there are very few well-trained, professional dancers who own a multitude of professional belly dance costumes. Also, dancers who are well trained have been dancing long enough to mature out of the insecurities of competitiveness, and actually promote the growth of belly dancing, and share their passion with other dancers. Most everyone in Raks Helwa is a belly dance teacher.

AD: WHAT GOES ON IN A SHOW?

RH: In Egypt, belly dancers almost always dance to a 26-piece live band. However, since there are no Arabic bands in Austin, the belly dance shows consist of solo and group performances to CD music,

followed by dancing to a live local band or DJ. In the right setting, dancers end the show by getting audience members up to dance for the rest of the event.

AD: WHAT MAKES A GOOD BELLY DANCE SHOW FOR YOU?

RH: A good belly dance show is a show that consists of a variety of good dancers that know how to keep a large audience engaged and entertained the whole time, for the music to fit the dance and run smooth from beginning to the end with no skipping or long pauses between dances, and for choreographies to be flawless with no costume mishaps.

AD: WHAT ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BELLY DANCE SHOWS AND BURLESQUE SHOWS?

RH: In Burlesque shows, the entertainers almost always at some point strip down to their panties and pasties. The very theme of their shows is meant to be, although playful, sexual. Belly dancing is much more conservative. Belly dancers never dance with pasties or in their panties. The only reason the midriff is exposed is to display the muscular isolation that plays such a big part of this dance. Also, since belly dance music is almost always very deep and carries so much emotion with it, the dance is more sensual and about love than sexual. A well trained, educated belly dancer dances to celebrate the moment with the audience, rather than to arouse them.

AD: WHERE CAN SOMEONE LEARN TO BELLY DANCE? CAN IT BE TAUGHT?

RH: There are many belly dance teachers in Austin. Students interested in learning can go to the Raks Helwa website <http://www.rakshelwa.com> for information about members of Raks Helwa who teach, and also to the Austin Bellydance Association's website at <http://www.abda.org> for a full list of teachers around town.

AD: WHAT IS NEXT FOR YALL?

RH: Raks Helwa wants to continue to grow as a performing troupe. With six talented dancers with such different styles working together, it is exciting to see what will evolve. More Choreography for group performances, new matching troupe costumes, and collaboration with different musical acts around Austin is the goal for 2009.

AD: ANYTHING ELSE?

RH: Raks Helwa consists of (in alphabetical order): Angie (American Raks Shari), Angela Nations (American Tribal), Michelle Mannox (American Pin-up Belly Dance), Rania (Classical Egyptian), Sherry (Bellydance Jazz), and Sonya (Gypsy). All have been dancing for over 8 years, teach belly dancing, and still continue to take lessons from teachers from all over the world.

Nachito Herrera brings Cuba to Austin



Mr. Herrera and his band of all star musicians will be visited Austin City Limits music festival and brought both virtuoso talent and high energy Cuban dance music to Austin. I had the opportunity to speak with this man who has a personality that is instantly engaging, energetic, yet relaxed as if sitting on a veranda one steamy Havana afternoon.

Austin Daze: Could you tell us a little about your background and musical path?

Nachito Herrera: I am originally from Cuba. I was born in a little town southwest of Havana. I started to study piano at the age of 7 with a concentration on the classical styles of the great composers. I was hearing many things as I grew up. There were many influences. My dad was a jazz player also. At the age of 16 or 17 I became interested in the world and in the traditional Cuban music. I began to think about it and began to take classes and play with my father. The rhythms and the

music really interested me. At the age of 23 I became the musical director of the Tropicana Orchestra in Havana. (The Tropicana is the premier club in Havana. It is rich in musical and cultural history and has been the launching point of Cuban music to the world.) As musical director I had the chance to play with many of the worlds best musicians and to work on my music. In 1996 I had the opportunity to play with Ruben Gonzalez and Cubanissimo and to really develop everything I was learning about Cuban music. We were very traditional Cuban music. We played all the styles, Cha Cha Cha, Mambo, Rhumba, and so on. We traveled the world promoting this music. It was an incredible experience. We played Austin and had a great time. There is a big Latino and Cuban community down there. We had so much fun playing over there. I have a lot of friends and am really excited to come back with my band. We have an all star band with members of great Cuban bands and our trumpet player was the lead trumpet player for Carlos Santana's band. With all my friends down there I hope they like us. We are going to play a lot of different Cuban styles and Latin jazz.

AD: How long have you lived in the U.S.?

NH: I have lived here for a little while, since 2001.

AD: Are the members of your band from Cuba?

NH: Yes, they are all from Cuba but have moved to the United States. They have played in some of the best bands and traveled the world. It's great to have them here.

AD: You live in Minneapolis and play there often, what is the scene there?

NH: I play regularly at the Dakota. We are very lucky. The Dakota has become one of the most important jazz clubs in the whole country. It is big and really beautiful club and the community really supports the music there. It's a great room. I have recorded a wonderful album there, Dakota Live.

AD: Is ACL a part of a tour that you are doing?

NH: We are going to tour, but this group is coming to Austin first then we are going to come back (to Minneapolis) and take some time to record our first album. We hope to release it early next year. And then we are going to Europe in the spring. It looks like we are going to be really busy, but for friends like you we will always make time.

AD: So, ACL is kind of a premier for this project.

NH: Yes, yes, we are very excited to show Austin what we are doing. It's going to be a really high energy show. I wish we had longer to play, but hopefully we will be able to play more soon. We are playing a couple of shows at the Dakota then drive to Austin, so I think the band is going to be really tight and ready to play. My family is very excited, too. My daughter is part of the band. She is singing. My wife is working with the band and managing things. I am going to be traveling with the whole family. I have been telling my family about how good the people are in Austin and we are all looking forward to visiting and to play some really good Cuban music. I just want to say to all the people in Austin that we have been working really hard to put together a really good Cuban show which is going to be really fun and high energy. We look forward so much to seeing you and have a beautiful day.***

AIRLINE

Catch Airline at SPI Fest Halloween weekend!

AUSTIN DAZE: Tell me a little about the sound of the band.

AIRLINE: That's a good question. I don't know how to describe it to be honest with you. I always ask other people to describe it.

AD: A lot of "other people" make Pink Floyd comparisons and Neil Young comparisons. How do you feel about that?

A: That's kind of the fun part about it: I can't describe it myself but I've seen so many band comparisons, it's always interesting to hear it.

AD: Do you have influences that have informed your music along the way?

A: Yeah, it's gone from 60s rock and roll and the Beatles and then also jazz music. Pretty much everything I could get my hands on has had some

sort of impact on how I write.

AD: You started in 2005, how did you get together?

A: I asked my cousin who is a guitar player to start messing around playing with me and we started writing some songs and getting some guys in the band and then shuffled everybody around a little bit and settled on the four guys we are with now. That all happened in 2006.

AD: I've read that you are quite the historian. Is that a passion or something you studied?

A: I studied it in college a little bit and it's more something that's for fun. It's amateur. I like to read.

AD: And is that something that finds it way into your lyrics?

A: On the first record for sure. I just wanted to write something different so ultimately it came across a little bit in the words. When I was writing that I was

reading a lot of ancient history.

AD: The title of our album is, Farewell Republica. What does that mean?

A: It's a long story to explain. There are two views for that album: it's the downfall of society and civilization juxtaposed with the downfall of a relationship—the break up of a relationship. That's my short answer.

AD: What's next?

A: We're actually going to record an EP this summer and get down 5 or 6 new songs--we've been writing a lot. We are going to do something and get it out there. We are planning on doing a tour in the spring. And we are playing the South Padre Island International Music Festival. That will be fun.***

NICK D



I am proud to call Nick D a friend. He has really pulled through for me at tight times. I am becoming a fan of hip hop with every show he does. Thanks Nick

AUSTIN DAZE: FIRST OFF HOW DID YOUR (STAGE) NAME COME ABOUT?

NICK D: REALLY, PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS CALLED ME NICKY D. AND mISTA NICK, BUT I ALWAYS LIKED THE OLD SCHOOL WAY OF USING YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME AND BY THE TIME I GOT REALLY SERIOUS, I JUST SHORTENED IT TO NICK D. A LOT OF MY FRIENDS STILL CALL ME NICKY D.

AD: DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU WOULD ALWAYS BE A PERFORMER? AT WHAT POINT DID YOU SEE THAT THIS COULD BE A PROFESSION?

ND: YES. MY PARENTS WERE HIPPIES WHO HUNG AROUND A LOT OF AUSTIN MUSICIANS AND THEY TOOK ME TO ALL OF THE CONCERTS AND BARBEQUES GOING ON BACK IN THE DAY. WHEN NO ONE WAS AROUND AND THE INSTRUMENTS WERE LAYING AROUND AND MICS WERE TURNED ON, I WOULD SEE WHAT IT FELT LIKE IF I WAS ON STAGE. ALSO, I WENT TO DAYCARE ACROSS THE STREET FROM MEADOWBROOK IN THE 1980S SO HIP HOP WAS SOMETHING I SAW EVERYDAY WHEN THE OLDER KIDS CAME TO RICKY GUERRERO PARK AND BUSTED OUT THE CARDBOARD BOXES AND BOOM BOXES. INSTEAD OF RUNNING TO PLAY, I STAYED AND WATCHED THEM RAP AND BREAK DANCE. FROM THAT POINT ON, IT WAS ALWAYS IN ME AND I KNEW I WANTED PUT ON SHOWS JUST LIKE THE OLDER CATS DID. THEN, IN 1993 I STARTED FREE-STYLING

AND I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT COULD BE A PROFESSION. AS TIME WENT ON, I MASTERED THE CRAFT OF FREE-STYLING. BY 2003, WE (THE KRIMINALS) PUT OUT OUR FIRST ALBUM AND THE REST IS HISTORY IN THE MAKING. IN 2005 I RELEASED A SOLO ALBUM AND, TO BRING MORE EXPOSURE TO THE GROUP, I STARTED PROMOTING SHOWS WITH THE KRIMINALS AS THE FEATURED ACT.

AD: TELL ME ABOUT THE HIP HOP SCENE IN AUSTIN TEXAS.

ND: FIRST OFF IT'S VERY DIVERSE AND THERE ARE A GOOD AMOUNT OF TALENTED EMCEE'S. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF CLUBS AND VENUES WHO WILL GIVE RAPPERS A CHANCE TO THROW A SHOW. NOW THAT I HAVE MY FOOT IN THE DOOR WITH A FEW CLUBS, I'M HOPING THAT WORD WILL SPREAD AMONGST CLUB OWNERS HERE IN TOWN ABOUT HOW SUCCESSFUL MY HIP HOP SHOWS ARE AND HOW MUCH MONEY THE BAR IS MAKING OFF OF PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO SEE LIVE HIP HOP & RAP!

AD: THIS IS A MUSIC TOWN, DO YOU FIND THAT HIP HOP IS ACCEPTED BY THE COMMUNITY?

ND: DEPENDS ON WHAT COMMUNITY YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT. IF HIP HOP ARTISTS PERFORMED WITH A LIVE BAND, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE ACCEPTED. I AM TRYING TO BUILD A TRACK RECORD WITH SOME OF THE CLUBS SO I CAN SHOW YOU EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING ON WITH AUSTIN HIP HOP. MY HOPE IS THAT I FIND A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT GROUPS AROUND THE 512 WHO CAN REPRESENT EVERYTHING AUSTIN HAS TO OFFER. I FEEL LIKE THE MORE SHOWS I THROW, AND THE MORE GROUPS I GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THAT THEY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, THEN THE MORE CLUBS I CAN BOOK AND THE MORE I CAN CONTINUE TO GIVE HUNGRY ARTISTS A CHANCE TO PERFORM WHILE EXPOSING THE KRIMINALS TO ALL WALKS OF LIFE HERE IN THE CAP CITY.

AD: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RAP AND HIP HOP?

ND: HONESTLY, I SEE VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE. IT ALL COMES FROM THE SAME PLACE. I'M A BALANCE OF BOTH. I EVEN ASK MYSELF WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RAP AND HIP HOP AND I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND THE ANSWER.

THAT'S WHY I BOOK A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING AT MY SHOWS.

AD: DO YOU WRITE YOUR OWN MATERIAL? WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS?

ND: YES. THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT PROCESSES THAT I USE. WHEN I FEEL LIKE WRITING, I'LL THROW A TRACK ON AND WORK ON WRITING A VERSE UNTIL I DON'T FEEL IT ANYMORE. I PUT IT AWAY AND WHEN I GET THAT URGE TO WRITE, I WORK ON IT SOME MORE UNTIL I GET A 16. THEN, I'LL WRITE THE CHORUS. I ALSO HAVE A BONE YARD OF HALF-WRITTEN RAPS THAT ALWAYS SEEM TO FIND THEIR WAY INTO A SONG. SOMETIMES, THE CHORUSES JUST COME TO ME AT THE WEIRDEST TIMES SO I WORK ON BUILDING THAT CHORUS UP OVER THE NEXT WEEK OR WHATEVER. ONCE I HAVE IT, I SEARCH FOR A BEAT THAT MATCHES WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT. OTHER TIMES, I LISTEN TO THE BEAT AND TRY TO HEAR WHAT THE MUSIC IS SAYING AND THEN WRITE MY CHORUS FROM THAT. I ALMOST ALWAYS WRITE THE CHORUS FIRST SO MY VERSES CORRELATE WITH THE HOOK.

AD: DO YOU IMPROVISE A LOT ON STAGE, HOW DOES THAT WORK?

ND: YES. I ACT OUT A LOT OF KEY



PHRASES OR PUNCH LINES IN ANY SONG. WHATEVER I THINK WILL HAVE THE MOST EFFECT ON THE AUDIENCE. WE DON'T DO A LOT OF CHOREOGRAPHING AS A GROUP SO WE ALL IMPROVISE IN OUR OWN WAY WHEN WE ARE ON STAGE TO BRING A HIGHLY ENERGETIC SHOW.

AD: HOW DID THE KRIMINALS COME TOGETHER?

ND: WE ALL GREW UP TOGETHER IN SOUTH AUSTIN. IN THE EARLY 90S, WE STARTED FREE-STYLING ALMOST EVERY WEEKEND, PERFECTING OUR SKILLS, UNTIL WE REACHED A POINT WHERE WE STARTED MAKING OUR OWN ORIGINAL BEATS (THANKS TO JUAN MCCOOK) AND WRITING OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL VERSES. FROM THAT POINT ON IT WAS ALL ABOUT CREATING DOPE SONGS.

AD: AT LIVE SHOWS HOW DO YALL KNOW WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN?

ND: WE PERFORM ALL OF OUR ORIGINAL SONGS AS RECORDED. SOMETIMES SONGS ARE SHORTENED OR ALTERED TO FIT THE SET BUT **WE ALWAYS REHEARSE AND KNOW WHEN IT'S OUR TURN (EXCEPT WHEN SOME OF US ARE TWISTED)**, THEN WE IMPROVISE UNTIL WE ARE ON POINT. HA,HA,HA

AD: DOES ONE PERSON WRITE THE SONGS OR DO YALL COLABORATE?

ND: WE COLLABORATE ON THE CHORUSES BUT IT'S UP TO EACH PERSON TO WRITE THE CRUNKEST VERSE POSSIBLE, SO WHEN IT COMES TIME TO PERFORM, WE KILL IT.

AD: HOW MANY ALBUMS DO YOU HAVE UNDER YOUR BELT? AND KRIMINALS?

ND: ONE SOLO ALBUM CALLED NICK D - PAYIN DUES (AVAILABLE AT WWW.MYSPACE.COM/NICKDATX.) THE KRIMINALS HAVE FOUR ALBUMS (AVAILABLE AT WWW.MYSPACE.COM/KRIMINALS)

- VOLUME ONE
- KRIMINALISTIC MINDS
- KRIMINALS ON THE LOOSE
- THE GAMES WE PLAY

AD: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ACL FEST?

ND: HONESTLY, I'VE NEVER BEEN BECAUSE THERE WEREN'T ENOUGH HIP/HOP OR RAP GROUPS THAT APPEALED TO ME. HOPEFULLY THAT WILL CHANGE AND THEY WILL PUT THE "A" BACK IN AUSTIN CITY LIMITS AND GIVE AN AUSTIN GROUP LIKE THE KRIMINALS A CHANCE TO REPRESENT THE CAPITAL OF TEXAS.

AD: WHAT IS NEXT FOR YOU?

ND: MY NEXT GOAL IS TO PROMOTE/BOOK TWO TO THREE SHOWS PER MONTH AT AS MANY DIFFERENT VENUES HERE IN AUSTIN AND SURROUNDING TEXAS CITIES IN 2009. THE KRIMINALS WILL BE RELEASING A NEW ALBUM IN EARLY 2009 CALLED "AUSTIN KNIGHTS" AND WILL BE TRYING TO REACH AS MANY PEOPLE IN TEXAS AS POSSIBLE.

AD: WHERE CAN SOMEONE FIND OUT MORE ABOUT U?

WWW.MYSPACE.COM/NICKDATX
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/KRIMINALS

AD: AND WHERE CAN WE SEE YOU LIVE?

ND: CURRENTLY, I AM PROMOTING A MUSIC SERIES CALLED "THE 512" AT RUTA MAYA TWICE PER MONTH THROUGH DECEMBER 2008, WHERE THE KRIMINALS WILL BE PERFORMING LIVE. THE KRIMINALS ARE ALSO PERFORMING AT BIG DIRTY'S (OF P.I.E) ANNUAL B-DAY BASH OCTOBER 11TH AT THE DIRTY DOG ON 6TH ST.

AD: HOW DO YOU PUT YOUR SHOWCASES TOGETHER?

ND: I FIGURE OUT THE CAPACITY OF A CLUB AND TRY TO SELL IT OUT. THERE ARE SO MANY GROUPS THAT WANT TO PERFORM THAT I PUT TOGETHER A LINEUP THAT MAXIMIZES THE TIMEFRAME BETWEEN 10PM-2AM. IN ORDER TO GIVE BACK TO THE 512, I CAME UP WITH THE CONCEPT THAT WOULD FEATURE AS MANY ARTISTS WHO ARE TRYING TO GET EXPOSURE. THE WAITING LIST IS GETTING LONGER. RIGHT NOW, WE ARE ALREADY BOOKED THROUGH DECEMBER. 2009 WILL BRING A BRAND NEW YEAR TO SHINE!

AD: ANYTHING ELSE?

ND: AUSTIN DAZE IS ONE OF THE FIRST BOOKERS WHO SAW WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER! I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO FLOURISH. I APPRECIATE YOU RUSS AND LORI !

BIG THANKS TO ALL OF THE KRIMINALS - JUAN DISCO, X-OTIK, SUN FERN, LIL D, GIGOLO, K-MO-G, MS. CHIEF A-LOT, TEMO, LIL NICK AND KRIMINAL KOMMUNICATIONS - RON 10 & DREW AND TO ALL OF THE OTHER KRIMINALS WHO ALWAYS SUPPORT US, YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE! THANKS BIG JUMBO (P.I.E) FOR JUMPING ON BOARD AND HELPING ME THROW ALL THESE 512 SHOWS!

THANKS TO JAMES DEAN, MR. MATT "SO REAL" SONZALA, AND BMRG FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES THEY HAVE GIVEN US. I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE GROUPS WHO HAVE BEEN PERFORMING AT THE 512 MUSIC SERIES AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO 512 TV & RED DRAGON PROMOTIONS FOR BRINGING US EVEN MORE EXPOSURE!

AND GIVE A SHOUT OUT TO POVERTY ISLAND ENTERTAINMENT, TRAMPIA, AND THA REJECTS. WE ARE ALL WORKING TO BUILD A BETTER PLACE FOR HIP HOP AND RAP HERE IN AUSTIN. IF WE DON'T FIGHT FOR IT... WHO WILL???

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"WE ARE THE KRIMINALS"

**VOTE
FOR A
CHANGE!**

THE AUSTIN DAZE ENVIRONMENTAL GURU ARTICLE AND INTERVIEW COLIN CLARK



Our environmental expert in residence, Colin Clark, writes these words and has contributed many more on environmental subject to the Daze for several years now. His column has always been incredibly informative. We had more questions, though. So we decided to ask. And will continue to from now on. As Ambassadors of the Less Informed-and-Slightly-Cynical, we hope that we might get you thinking. Hell, maybe even doing.

AUSTIN DAZE: What do you have for us this issue?

COLIN CLARK: This time I want to bring to the Austin Daze audience a relatively simple concept: saving the environment saves money. Here are five categories that we can think about: the electricity we use, how we get around (transportation), the food we eat, the

water we use, and our overall consumption.

AD: OK. Let's start with electricity. What can Austinites do help our electricity problem and save money?

CC: Reducing electricity consumption is important because the bulk of our electricity in Austin comes from fossil fuel (air polluting) or nuclear energy (radio-active waste). So the less electricity we use, the less we are relying on dirty energy. Something that people can do that is cheap and easy is to change your light bulbs to the new compact fluorescents. They use so much less electricity than regular light bulbs that you start saving money quickly. You can also get a free "energy audit" to find out what you can do in your home to improve energy efficiency and reduce waste.

AD: Transportation is the next big one. What do you recommend?

CC: Transportation is important when thinking about our environmental footprint because the biggest use of oil is for transportation, and burning oil creates pollution. So anything we can do to reduce our car driving is going to be beneficial to the environment.

AD: Using less gas?

CC: Absolutely. Again, you save money. The less gas you burn, the more money you save. Ask yourself if you've ever been on the bus in Austin. If not, commit to riding the bus at least once a week. Find a route that goes near where you live and where you work, find a connecting route if necessary, and you'll save money. Also, most Capital Metro buses have bike racks, so if you don't live within walking distance of the bus stop you can ride your bike, put your bike on the bus, and take the bus to your destination. If you can add in a bike ride, you can get some exercise, too.

AD: But it's so fucking hot here. It's hard.

CC: But consider the satisfaction of zipping past cars stuck in traffic. If you don't want to ride a bike in the summer, carpooling is something people can do with co-workers and neighbors to save gas. Working from home, if you can convince your boss to let you do that, can save you commute expenses, as well as time in traffic.

AD: How do you feel about the bus system here? Do you think that is something that the city could do more with?

CC: A lot can be done to improve the bus system and Cap metro is looking at some of those things but I think the biggest mistake we are making is investing billions of dollars in expanding highways primarily for individual car driving. And the plan is to use risky debt to pay for the highway expansions – based on the assumption that people will drive more and more. It's an enormous waste of money. We need to build bike lanes and improve sidewalks before adding more highway lanes to the suburbs.

AD: Light Rail?

CC: It's not currently funded. There might be a public vote in the next year or so, but there is no money allocated to light rail right now. There is a commuter rail that is opening soon from Leander to Downtown, but it is only one track that will carry a maximum of a few thousand people a day. But it's a start.

AD: Water use and money?

CC: Water use is really important because water is our most precious resource. It takes a lot of electricity to pump water around the city, so reducing water use reduces electricity use, while saving money. The single biggest way people can reduce water use is to not over-water lawns. We waste enormous amounts of water in the summer months by over-watering lawns. This summer was the first time the city went to a watering schedule that is really simple, and it has reduced our "peak day" water use dramatically, far more than the city projected. If you are an even number address, you can water on Thursday and Sunday. If you are an odd number, you can water on Wednesday and Saturday, and if you are a commercial business, you can water on Tuesday and Friday. So just paying attention to those watering rules can reduce your water use. And you don't have to water your lawn twice a week. Another city rule is to only water in the morning and the evening and not to water from 10am to 7pm, to minimize evaporation.

AD: It seems pretty stupid to me to be worrying about watering your lawn unless you are growing vegetables. We live in Austin: it's all going to die anyway.

CC: That leads to my next point. An even better thing to do is to convert your lawn to a garden. There is a great book called "Food Not Lawns" whose subtitle is "How to Convert Your Lawn to a Garden and Your Neighborhood into a Community." You can rip up your grass and plant vegetables gardens, cut down on water use and have food growing in your front yard,

which is the best we can eat.

AD: What about the watering when it comes to the vegetables?

CC: I've been using the new watering schedule and have kept my vegetables alive without using a lot of water. Check your bill every month to see how much you are using.

AD: We are focusing on the saving money part of this: what about tax breaks or compensation from the city for doing these kinds of things?

CC: Austin Energy has a pretty expansive rebate program and a zero-interest loan program for home energy improvements and upgrades. If you are getting a new, energy-efficient refrigerator, they will give you \$50 and take your old refrigerator away because old refrigerators are horribly inefficient and waste lots of energy. If you go to Austinenergy.com, it's all pretty easy to find. The energy utility here is much more advanced when it comes to conservation than the water utility, but hopefully that is changing some. You can get free low-flow toilets. However, my experience has been that the toilets sometimes actually run, so you end up wasting water with this one type of low-flow toilet. And they have rain-barrels for collecting water discounted, but the barrels are sub-par. There is a Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force that is supposed to keep the water utility on track with new water conservation measures.

AD: And Food?

CC: Three things people can do on the food front: 1) Grow your own food. If you don't have a lawn, you can still grow food in pots and containers. 2) Farm Subscriptions—a great way to get fresh local food that's not expensive. Also known as "Community Supported Agriculture" or CSA. We just signed up for one that's \$25 a week for fresh vegetables—that's something like \$3.50 a day for more vegetables than we will likely be able to eat (our chickens will eat well). 3) Buy food at a Farmers Market, such as the one Saturday mornings downtown at Republic Park.

AD: And then composting...

CC: Yes. Once you have eaten the food, the leftovers can be composted, which is basically making soil: mix your kitchen scraps with leaves and grass clippings, at a ratio of about 1 unit of kitchen scraps to 30 units of dry matter. In a few months you'll have rich compost that you can then use to grow your own food. Instead of sending food scraps, yard trimmings, etc. to the landfill, we can recycle it into nutritious soil to sustain our gardens. Remember to water your compost pile or it will take a long time to decompose.

AD: Overall consumption?

CC: Our country is addicted to new products, often disposable, that require a lot of resources and energy to make and transport. So something we can do is look for things that have already been made rather than buying new ones. You can get a lot of stuff for free on the "Free Section" at Craigslislist.org. There is unbelievable stuff there – and it's free! For clothing and other items, there is a thrift store at 1720 East 12th Street called Treasure City Thrift that is great community resource. It is all volunteer run and the profits go to local nonprofit community groups.

And as far as bicycles, if you aren't sure how to fix one or you don't want to buy a new one, visit the Yellow Bike Project. They are currently located next to Treasure City Thrift before they get their new location set up. They are a resource for people who want to get on a bike—helping people get parts that they need and teaching people how to fix bikes.

AD: Overall, it seems the economy is a pretty big motivator.

CC: That's what is happening with gas prices. For the first time in our nation's history, vehicle miles trav-



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eled went down this year, simply because of high prices. As energy, water, food, and most consumer products get more expensive, we'll be prepared to deal with it if we are accustomed to using less. And by using less, we'll be doing less damage to our only planet.***

KALU JAMES



With the voice of an angel, this Nigerian born song bird is taking Austin by storm. The Daze caught up with him to talk about living the American dream--in Austin, Texas.

AUSTIN DAZE: I didn't know you were from Nigeria. When did you move to the states?

KALU JAMES: That was 2001, August 25th.

AD: I read that you speak 3 languages. Do you do any songs in other languages yet?

KJ: French. I always incorporate French—not always but in some of my songs like the title of my first album, *The Way I Feel*, both choruses are in French. I like doing that but at the same time I still try and bring the meaning or explanation in English so that you still get what I'm saying. My native language which is Ibo, I haven't written anything in it yet, we were colonized by the British and it's been English all my life. I think I flow better, I dream in English or whatever you want to call it.

AD: I understand that Otis Redding and Marvin Gaye were major influences. Anyone else?

KJ: Growing up my dad spun records: we had Otis, we had Marvin Gaye, and we had Bob Marley. In Africa and the rest of the world, Celine Dion is huge. Some people would be like, "Why Celine Dion?" She has an amazing voice. I wasn't writing songs when I was back home, I was singing, so I always kind of related 'cause it was just like she was an instrument. You tell her what to sing or you give her something and then she makes it up and I've always been that way until coming to America when I started writing songs. Then you had R&B, so Boyz II Men was huge. Coming here I got introduced to Jeff Buckley and he hits some high notes that I die for and that became a huge influence. Tracy Chapman

and then Jackie Wilson, Jackie Wilson because of the high notes as well, and then Tracy Chapman because she is conscious of the world and I try and bring that message as well.

AD: Were either of your parents musical?

KJ: My mom was. She had mentioned something about her singing when she was little but that was it. I think my sister can sing too.

AD: Are you the only one here in the States?

KJ: My brother is in New Jersey and my sister is in Connecticut, and my family—my dad and mom and 8 year-old brother - are back home.

AD: How do you feel when someone compares you to Aaron Neville? He's so angelic and I think you are too.

KJ: The first time someone said Aaron Neville, sadly enough I didn't know who Aaron Neville was, so I went and did the research and I heard a couple of the songs, and I was like, "Oh. Ok, I know where you are coming from and thank you." It's a big deal. It's flattering. Not even flattering, it's good—it's good to hear. Like the lady that said that my music was like, "Aaron Neville with Bob Dylan lyrics." That's big. You can't say anything but thank you.

AD: When did you first realize you had this gift of such an amazing voice?

KJ: I was in the choir since I was 9 years old. In school I got voted best singer. I always knew I could sing, but it was a little bit different because I knew that the way that I sounded wasn't like anybody else and that was really hard to come to terms with because in my age, in that point of time, **the most important thing to you in Sixth, Seventh, Eighth grade is that you want to fit in. You want your voice to sound like the radio. I think I've come far enough to say, "This is my voice, this is the style it is, and I'm OK with it."** It did take a while, though.

AD: What's the most rewarding thing, since moving to Austin, that you have accomplished?

KJ: It's been just all bundled up in one. It's been coming to Ruta Maya and meeting Ozzie and then meeting my friends who are amazing musicians and surrounding yourself with all that positive energy. I've met a lot of people who are competitive like I am—but it's a healthy competition; it's a good community and you are happy for the next person who is doing better than you are or you can see striving to get better. The CD release was amazing—the CD sold out and the merchandise sold out. And then getting a gig at Stubbs and Momos—it's just been one of those things that I'm really thankful for. I know I work really hard for it, but it's given me the whole confidence that hard work pays off. So much in life, you see people who work so hard their whole life try their hardest and opportunities don't open up for them; it doesn't work the way it's supposed to work. But it's working so far for me, and I'm working hard and seeing the results, so I'm in a good place right now.

AD: Is that why you moved to Austin?

KJ: It's funny, it was my 25th birthday, quarter life crisis, I'm sitting back in Rochester, New York, and I'm just like, "I can't wait for people any more to try to find me and my music. I have to take it to them." I had a friend since I was five years old—we came to America together—and he had come to Austin for his grad school and he was like, "Why don't you come to Austin?" And I was like, "Why am I going to Texas? Why would I want to go to Texas?" He said, "It's Austin Texas; it's different. Do your research." And he is more calculated than I am. I'm a risk taker. In my mind I was like, "If he feels this way about this place maybe I should do my research." It took me about a week—went online, saw the venues, saw that there were as many venues here as there were in New York and the cost of living was cheaper here and my friend was here. And we always had this dream that we were going to live together. I just wanted to go somewhere else where people were hustling for the music as much as I was going to be. My friends were very nervous. I have to go somewhere where musicians made music or to the drawing board. I need to be around people that I look up to. I wanted to give music a chance full-time, and if it never worked out I could always sit back and say I gave it a shot. I've never been the person who does "ifs, buts, maybes," it's never been me—I just go for it. If it happens, it happens which I think it will, and if it doesn't nobody can throw it back in your face and say that you haven't tried.

AD: Are you prepared for the success that we all feel is going to happen for you?

KJ: I don't know what success means. Success is different for everybody.

AD: What is your ultimate goal?

KJ: My goal is to call my mom one day and say, "Hey, I'm doing it. I'm going against all grains and I'm doing it." So I am ready to drive, fly, swim, wherever I need to go to get the music out there.

AD: I've read that Austin kind of reminds you of Nigeria. Is it the heat?

KJ: The heat for one. People are nice. Maybe it's the whole south and hospitality stuff but people are nice and it feels like more of a community.

AD: Your voice is so different from your persona.

KJ: What makes me different? What is it that makes me stand out?

AD: Your voice. I pictured you as an ethereal, young man and that is what you are. That's what stood out to me at first, hearing your voice from outside the club and never having seen you before, it just amazed me. You have this angelic voice that stands out from everybody else out there right now and that's what is going to take you far I think.

KJ: Thank you.

AD: I read that you were referred to as a "conscious angel." What does that mean to you?

KJ: I don't know what "conscious angel" means. I'm a very spiritual person. Not necessarily religion, coming from Africa I've seen what religion can do--especially if you are a fanatic. It's unfortunate that the so called religion that is supposed to bring peace and love is what tears everybody else down. So I'm very spiritual, very spiritually in touch with myself--I know who I am. And sometimes I wish I wasn't that way. Sometimes I wish I wasn't conscious of everything else around me because to me it's all energy. I feed off of energy--I just know when it's positive and when it's negative and sometimes I ask myself, "How come people don't worry about what I worry about?" There is feel-good music out there that makes you want to dance and then there is music that

makes you want to think. **Music is a journal for me. I think about all this crazy stuff that goes on in the world, and I bring it to the music just because I want to have a meaning,** but then at the same time, there are some songs that are just out there.

AD: I think you represent both.

KJ: Exactly. Back home we have music called hi-life—it talks about everything that goes on but the music is happy. So it's happy music but the words are exactly what's going on in the world and how sad or how good it is.

That's what I try to do: lyrics are maybe explained that are morbid, depressing, but the music behind it brings you up—so it's a balance. You can be rocking to one of the tunes and then it's, "Hang on, maybe this isn't something I should be rocking to."

AD: What's next for you?

KJ: Pushing this album as much as I can and getting it into the right hands. It's something I believe in. I love touring so that's going to be the next big thing. Record labels can come when they come, that's not really a big concern of mine.

AD: Anything else?

KJ: I have an eclectic group of friends on Myspace and I think everyone should check them out. Go to the La Familia link on my www.kalujames.com site and there are a whole bunch of musicians that will blow your mind. Other than that, promote love and peace as much as you can. We need that for a world that is going to...

AD: Hell in a handbasket?

KJ: Yes.

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The peddler now speaks to the count-
ess who's pretending to care for him
Sayin', "Name me someone that's not
a parasite and I'll go out and say a
prayer for him"
But like Louise always says
"Ya can't look at much, can ya man?"
As she, herself, prepares for him
And Madonna, she still has not
showed
We see this empty cage now corrode

Where her cape of the stage once had
flowed
The fiddler, he now steps to the road
He writes ev'rything's been returned
which was owed
On the back of the fish truck that
loads
While my conscience explodes
The harmonicas play the skeleton
keys and the rain
And these visions of Johanna are now
all that remain



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