

# Alt-Nation: Bastards & More

2016 is still only in its infancy but it seems like we've lost a lot of people. I want to send this out to the memory of Joe Moody, the owner/operator of Danger Studios who passed a couple of weeks ago. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Joe personally, but I know his work from the hundreds of bands he recorded over the years. Bands like Less Than a Felony, Drunk Robb & The Shots, The McGunks and many more recorded under Joe's watchful guidance. Everyone I've ever spoken with about Joe raved about his expertise in helping bring their dreams to life. My thoughts and prayers are with Joe's wife and family. As soon as I hear about the rumored benefit show I'll pass details along. Also I'd like to add condolences to the family of Rich Ferrara, Jr., my supervisor when I'm not moonlighting as a writer, who passed suddenly last week. Rich had a great sense of humor and always was willing to help to make the day easier.

## Bastards

Bastards are doing another reunion show after damn near blowing the roof off Aurora last fall. Bastards take their cues from Motorhead and steamroll ahead in that vein. Every Bastards show is pretty much a memorial to their late singer, Chris "Pop" Popoloski, who is universally beloved and missed deeply by everyone he touched. This show should be another banger with juggernauts like The Worried and Sugar Cones kicking out the jams on the undercard.

Bastards, The Worried, Greg Allen's Fringe Religion, & Sugar Cones will rock Firehouse 13 on April 9. Parquet Courts - Human Performance (Rough Trade Records)

Parquet Courts drop their 5th full-length record, Human Performance, this month and come to town to celebrate. Human Performance is jam packed with indie guitar swing glory reminiscent of bands like Pavement and The Pastels. Human Performance kicks off with a quirky number, "Dust," about what else but the mystery of how dust is everywhere. The minimalism of the tune gives it a Velvet Underground-like flair without the sex and drugs. "Outside" and "Pathos Prairie" have upbeat twists wrapped around tight hooks that should garner some radio play consideration. My favorite here is "Berlin Got Blurry" that has a Richard Hell fronting a post-punk band that throws in the occasional flamenco guitar lick vibe. The album closes with a dreamy waltz titled "Already Dead," where a guest female vocalist provides the instrumental break meditation. It's early, of course, but Parquet Courts have moved into the forefront on my charts for album of the year with Human Performance.

Parquet Courts and Soda will rock The Met Café on April 14.

## Eric Bachmann - Self-titled Album (Merge Records)

I've been listening to Eric Bachmann's songwriting for 20 years going back to his time fronting indie legends Archers of Loaf, so I wasn't expecting to be surprised when this record arrived. Bachmann's debut solo album mostly comes off as a stripped-down songwriter album while retaining the wit that his work with Archers of Loaf and Crooked Fingers is known for. "Mercy" reminds me of the Beach Boys' "Don't Worry Baby" while Bachmann sings about forever "loving his friends and family from Alaska to Miami despite the bat shit crazy things they say." My favorite tune here is "Modern Drugs" that starts with piano till the rest of the instruments kick in much like the modern drugs do in Bachmann's lyrics. "Separation Fright" is about as soulful as an indie rock that touches on agoraphobia can get. "Carolina" is an uplifting nugget that feels like a mix of a Neil Diamond backing track mixed with Simple Minds that somehow manages to succeed. The closing "The Old Temptation" is a reflective number that mixes in buried squalls of guitar feedback reminiscent of later Archers works, with Bachmann's comforting narrative. Bachmann has succeeded, with this album, in writing a new chapter in his career that doesn't feel so much of a break from the louder indie rock of his past, but as the next destination down the never-ending highway.

Eric Bachmann and Andrew St. James will rock The Met Café on April 20.

Jordan Everett Associates - Self-Titled Album

Jordan Everett Associates is a songwriting collaboration between two longtime forces in these parts in Kraig Jordan (The Masons, Stan Sobczak, Junior Varsity Arson, Lloyd's Lamas) and Paul "Pip" Everett (Coat of Arms, Blizzard of '78, Hope Anchor, Everett Brothers Moving Company). The songs were written over a 2-year period at Jordan's Plan of a Boy studio. The result is a sometimes dark exploration of 21st century life that works in a gamut of influences. "Stuck In The Driveway" is a meditative take on life over a backdrop of moody post-modern folk. The boys kick it up a notch on "Deep Blue Goodbye," which has a new wave flavor. "Poison" reminds me of rowdy late-'70s power-pop in the vein of The Jam or Elvis Costello. "Never Letting Go" and the ridiculously infectious "The House Up On The Hill" remind me of late '80s alternative rock radio similar to bands like The Church and Love and Rockets. They throw in a couple of covers including a spacey ballad take reminiscent of late '90s Radiohead or The Family Band's "Moonbeams." They also do a stripped-down ethereal cover of Belly's "Super Connected." I don't think it got nominated, but this record was on my nomination ballot for Album of the Year in the Motif Awards. It deserves to be up for consideration because it was one of the best albums to come across my desk from anywhere in the past year. I am stoked that Jordan and Everett are going to be playing the record out live. Well, at least once. For the show they've assembled a top-notch band that in addition to Everett on vocals and Jordan on guitar includes Dan Ulmschneider on drums, Kevin Zahm on bass and Bob Kendall on keyboards.

Jordan Everett Associates will celebrate their CD release with a show with Warbler Roost at the Salvation Café in Newport on April 21. This is an early show from 7 - 10pm.

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