

Alt-Nation: Some New Discs and Shows to Bid 2013 Goodbye

Rock in RI: Clarkin's top shows of December

Throwing Muses - *Purgatory/Paradise*

It's been a decade since Newport's own Throwing Muses have released a record and *Purgatory/Paradise* shows that it wasn't spent being idle. *Purgatory/Paradise* is a 32-track record that comes with a book that includes audio commentary and even more tracks! Because of the sheer volume, it is impossible to compare it to anything the band has done before. Taken on number of good songs, it's the band's best release to date. Of course, technically they could have 20 stinkers and still accomplish that. There are multiple versions of some songs, like "Cherry Candy 1 & 2," but it doesn't feel excessive. Listen to it on shuffle and it doesn't seem overdone at all. "Morning Birds 1" starts as a fuzz fest that reminds me of *The Real Ramona* era Muses while "Morning Birds 2" is quiet, like an expansion on the first version, which quiets down at the end. "Sleepwalking 1" is another great guitar romp in vintage Muses style. "Glass Cats" is a dirty piano-driven number that feels like it's going to explode into something else at any moment from the tension. Singer/guitarist Kristin Hersh's lyrics are as haunted and biting as ever. "Static" is another hypnotic indie guitar psychedelic romp that nobody can quite do like the Muses. I was skeptical going in about *Purgatory/Paradise* because I only liked one song off their last album, but *Purgatory/Paradise* is one of the Muses' best records yet. Unlike many of their contemporaries, Throwing Muses aren't together to play the hits for the money. On *Purgatory/Paradise* the Throwing Muses come off as band still challenging themselves and pushing the envelope on noise and melody.

Six Star General - *Hair Supply* (75orLess Records)

Six Star General has had a difficult year that forced them to be on the sidelines for several months due to various medical maladies. In the meantime, they managed to finish another album, *Hair Supply*. In addition to being my motto, "I Don't Know Where We're Going (But I Know That It's Not Good)" is a return to form noisy rocker that has been missing from the last couple of Six Star records. "Christopher Walken" and "I'm Expanding Slowly" are like stoner indie rock powered by hypnotic grooves. "Way Out of Control" is a noisy fun punk romp. "Life in Vain" is an infectious ditty powered by a cool hook and probably the closest thing to a single on *Hair Supply*. I look forward to hearing the new tunes live at the CD Release for *Hair Supply* at The Parlour on January 4.

Dan Baker - *Pistol in My Pocket* (75orLess Records)

I didn't know what to make of Dan Baker at first on the title track of *Pistol in My Pocket* that comes off as a howling Beck imitation on one of his independent albums. Then things started to get good. "Threw Me Down the Well" is a blues number that comes across as an Americanized version of Nick Cave, thanks to the violin from Rob Flax. "Never Alone" and "Up On the Roof" are winners as spacey piano ballads that remind me of sitting out on my porch staring up at the stars. "Down in the Canyon" has kind of a later-day Dylan feel at times. On "She's Not Going To Call," Baker channels his inner Tom

Waits with an added Americana touch on the outro. Baker's best material is so raw it hits you straight in the gut on tracks like "Coming Home." I didn't know anything about Dan Baker before, but after listening to *Pistol in My Pocket*, I certainly want to know more!

Atlantic Thrills

The thumpin' garage beat with a sprinkle of surf guitar sound of the Atlantic Thrills headlines this great all local show. Atlantic Thrills released their debut a few months ago and hopefully in 2014 will see an expanded release with the other songs from the session. I'm actually excited to see every band on this bill. TEAZER is making their debut and the word on the street is there a sleazy rock 'n' roll band that pays homage to '80s hair metal. I hear they'll be doing a cover of W.A.S.P. and have an original number titled "Sexxx Tape." I've caught both of Lincoln Tunnel's local shows and they remind me of bands like Sebadoh and The Replacements. VapoRubs channel punk with a little bit of a '90s pop punk.

Atlantic Thrills, TEAZER, The Lincoln Tunnel, and VapoRubs are at The Parlour on December 7.

Rock 4 X-Mas 17

The holidays are always a ripe time for charity events. Rock 4 X-Mas is now in its 17th year as an accredited charity that raises money by doing benefit concerts around the country. Rock 4 X-Mas' mission is to bring food, gifts and holiday spirit to less fortunate families around the country. This year, Rock 4 X-Mas lineup is heavy on '80s rock 'n' roll thunder with members of ZEBRA, W.A.S.P., Lita Ford's band, Danger Danger, New England and Holy Diver all scheduled to perform! All for a good cause, this show is the perfect way to pre-game the above mentioned TEAZER debut. For more information on Rock 4 X-Mas check out their website at rock4xmas.com.

Rock 4 X-Mas 17 featuring performances by Randy Jackson, Stet Howland, Terry Iloos, Hirsh Gardener, John Mellini, Ted Poley and The Rock 4 X-Mas All Stars will rock to raise money for the less fortunate at Lupo's Heart Break Hotel on December 7. The show runs from 7 pm to 10 pm.

Big D and The Kids Table

Big D and The Kids Table come back to town to play some ska from the holidays. There is nothing like putting on your best Santa suit and going out to skank off a few of those holiday pounds and share a few laughs with friends.

Big D and The Kids Table, The Fighting Jamesons and Short Handed Goal will skank it up at Fete on December 7.

NRBQ

NRBQ are having their 46th anniversary party at The Met Café. NRBQ runs across the gamut of all things rock, pop, jazz and blues. NRBQ are respected in the industry and are admired by legends like Paul McCartney, Elvis Costello and Keith Richards. Their music has been on shows like The Simpsons. Don't miss this rare chance to catch a legendary band in an early evening Sunday show in an intimate environment.

NBRQ, Original Jelly Roll Soul and Happiness (featuring members of Deer Tick and Ravi Shavi) will rock The Met Café on December 8. This is an early show with doors at 4 pm and show starting at 5 pm.

Black Oil Incinerator

Black Oil Incinerator are a local no-holds-barred stoner metal monster. Black Oil Incinerator have been kicking around for a few years, but have had no releases. Black Oil Incinerator have exciting plans to change all that by recording a live album at Dusk. It's great chance to rally around a great local band and be part of a live record.

Black Oil Incinerator will be recording a live recording on December 8 at Dusk.

95.5 WBRU's Birthday Bash featuring Grouplove and J Roddy Walston & The Business

95.5 WBRU's Birthday Bash continues as Grouplove rolls into town for a show that had to be postponed last month due to illness. Grouplove is a goodtime alternative dance band that is sure to have the place hopping. An added bonus of the postponement is the addition of J Roddy Walston & The Business to bill who add some grit and balls to this show.

95.5 WBRU Birthday Bash featuring sets by Grouplove, J Roddy Walston & The Business and Bear Hands comes to Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel on December 16. Tickets to the original date last month will be honored.

The McGunks Holiday Party

Truth be told, The McGunks really don't need much of an excuse to throw a party, as anyone who has been to one of their shows can attest. The McGunks are straight-on pub punk with bits of bands like the Supersuckers mixed in. Check out their recent CD, *Highlights for Lowlives* for even more sweaty, booze-drenched rock & roll hi-jinks!

The McGunks and The O'Tooles will throw a punk rock Holiday Bash at Broad Street Tap in Cumberland on December 21.

Afroman

It seems like only yesterday that Afroman had a worldwide hit with the stoner anthem "Because I Got High." Since then I can't say that I've heard anything from Afroman, although he has continued releasing music independently. Then again, who recently wants to hear 2009 Afroman tunes anyway? This show will be a fun place to hear the old Afroman stuff, if that is your bag, and see locals Kris Hansen and Big Jon Tierney perform. There is also a ridiculous amount of other local openers on this band, to the point that I frankly just gave up counting.

Afroman, Kris Hansen and Big Jon Tierney, and like, 37 other bands will ring in Boxing Day at Manchester 65 in West Warwick on December 26.

Narragansett Beer 123rd Anniversary Party



Northern Lands

Narragansett Beer put together a beast of a party to celebrate their 123rd anniversary. Of course, I'd contest the year because they should have to subtract all the years the brand was dormant, but nobody

listens to me anyway. This show has something for almost everyone. You want straight-out rock? Northern Lands and the slightly country tinged Jay Berndt & The Orphans will be there. Want something acoustic? Brian McKenzie will be there to deliver. Jazz? Michelle Lewis for the win! The only thing missing is metal, which is odd considering Berndt and McKenzie were in the '90s local juggernaut, Kilgore. In addition this will be the annual unveiling of the Gansett Girl Calendar.

Narragansett Beer 123rd Anniversary Party featuring live performances by Northern Lands, Jay Berndt & The Orphans, Brian McKenzie Michelle Lewis and Jeff Byrd hits The Met Café on December 27.

Joe Fletcher & The Wrong Reasons

Joe Fletcher will soon be relocating, so these annual New Year's Eve shows may not be a guarantee every year. Good music is something one should always appreciate it while it is there. Fletcher and the Wrong Reason will ring in at least one more year in town with a hootenanny romp through their all things American rock & roll catalogue. This is my pick to ring in the New Year from the listings I've seen so far.

Joe Fletchers & The Wrong Reasons, J.P. Harris & The Tough Choices, and Smith & Weeden will ring in the New Year at The Met Café on December 31.

Odds & Sods

A Wilhem Scream celebrate the release of their new CD, *Partycrasher*, with a show with Half Hearted Hero, The Holy Mess and The Down & Outs at The Met Café on December 7. 990WBOB presents Austin Lucas (featuring Allison Weiss, PJ bond, and Valencourt) at Fete on December 7. Black Pus & Xylouris White (Jim White of The Dirty Three and Giorgos Xylouris) come to the Columbus Theatre in Providence on December 8. Born Cages and NGBRS play Fete on December 11. Azar Swan, Triangle Forest, Delphic Oracle and Winter Line play AS220 on December 12. The Wonder Years, Vinnie Caruana and Young Statues will have a holiday acoustic party at The Met Café on December 14. The Z3 (featuring Frank Zappa percussionist Edward Mann) play the The Spot on December 14. The Mausonic Temple Presents: The White Mice "Do They Know It's Christmas?" also featuring sets by InHeat, and CheeseFace on December 16 at AS220. Fungus Amungus and Johnny Lingo will bust out some jams for the holidays at The Met Café on December 20. I Am The Avalanche, Hostage Calm, Raintance and Foreign Tongues rock The Met Café on December 21. Math The Band celebrates their new CD release and their 1000th show with a gig at AS220 on December 22. Jeff Rosenstock (of Bomb the Music Industry), Lyra and Malportado Kids will also perform. Forever Young, A Tribute to the Music of Neil Young, play The Met Café on December 28. Spiritual Rez and Daddie Long Legs will ring in the New Year with some smokin' jams at The Spot on December 31. Empire Revue and Superchief Trio ring in the New Year at AS220 on December 31. Kiss Forever Kiss Tribute comes to Manchester 65 on January 4.

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