

Alt-Nation: New Biscuits and Shows That Don't Blow

It is a challenge when you start a column late and it's your brother's birthday, your best friend may have bought a bar and your very good friend Mario, who is in from out of town, insists you buy two pizzas at 3am and then promptly falls asleep. Left in the cold of the night, I think of Motorhead's "Rock 'N' Roll" and Lemmy's words make me feel less alone in Trump's America. So for Lemmy, Joey Ramone and Joe Strummer, here we go!

The Dustbowl Revival - Self-Titled

I heard the name The Dustbowl Revival and was hoping for a tribute to the music in the era of the HBO show "Carnivale." They are not. They have nothing to do with it. So I was understandably skeptical, but when the beat of "If You Could See Me Now" kicks in like what Dr. Dre created for Tupac's "California Love" meets '60s R&B soul, I'm all ears. The Dustbowl Revival swings even harder when powered by Liz Beebe's get-on-the-dance-floor vocals on "Good Egg." The party gets more lit when "Gonna Fix You" comes on like soul jam juggernaut. Keep in mind I've been doing this a long time and I hate hippies, but I love The Dustbowl Revival. The Dustbowl Revival nail it on crossover appeal matrix, where unlike my good friend Mario's pizza request of extra cheese, they offer up a pie of R&B, soul and Americana that nobody is going to fall asleep to.

The Dustbowl Revival and Town Meeting will rock the Narrows Center for the Arts in Fall River on March 15.

Mr. Airplane Man - Jacaranda Blue

I remembered Mr. Airplane Man as a millennial Boston-based two-woman blues jukebox that was interesting, but not essential. They were kind of out of sight, out of mind for a decade-plus when I started to see new shows pop up. Last summer, I caught one in Providence in a place that doesn't exist. Mr. Airplane Man provides the sexy rhythms that make graveyards shake. I recently got a sneak listen of their new biscuit, *Jacaranda Blue*, and one of the tracks, "Blood From A Stone," has a bone-scraping slink of The Cramps. "(Do You Wanna) Hang Out" starts with the rhythm of Del Shannon's "Runaway," but veers away from the pop direction to a sultry blues waltz. "Believe" waddles forth with one foot in the swamp blues of Dr. John, just far enough to make Jack White jealous. "Never Break" is the John Spencer stomp number here that sounds desperate enough to stomp everything else that's out this year into oblivion.

To celebrate the release of Jacaranda Blue, Mr. Airplane Man, Tall Teenagers and Alec K Redfearn & the Eyesores will rock the roof off of The Parlour on March 22.

Hope Anchor - Beautiful Corpses

I did a half review of this album last fall when I only had access to three songs. I don't think I did it justice. Jams that have been rocking my world on this biscuit include the primal "Primal Mover," which just makes me think of the band Magazine Meets Wire on amphetamines. Before it came out, guitarist Terry Linehan warned me this was their goth record, but I grew up on that shit in the '80s. The

creeping "Skeleton Waltz" takes me down some dark hallways of my past; Paul Everett acts like a tour guide, leading you through an extended doom. The guitars on "Xoxosos" jump out like the sunlight hitting you exiting a bar at 6am. The piano outré duet between Everett and Lolita Black's Scarlett Delgado leaves a haunting touch. One of my favorite local bands, The Lincoln Tunnel, is opening this show. They are great despite the presence of my mortal enemy, Christian Caldarone.

Hope Anchor, The Lincoln Tunnel, The Shakes and Dirty Laundry will rock The Met Café on March 22.

Shovels and Rope - *Busted Jukebox Volume 2*

I got to see the Evening With Shovels and Rope experience last October at the Columbus Theatre, and it is a more intimate experience than what people might be accustomed to from their Newport Folk Fest appearances. The husband and wife duo switch off from guitar and drums while telling great stories that crisscross sonic highways from folk to country to rock 'n' roll. *Busted Jukebox Volume 2* finds them reinventing the haunting vocals of Concrete Blonde's "Joey" to Leonard Cohen's "I'm Your Man" with friends. There is a rollicking version of The Clash's "Death or Glory" and a yearning version of The Breeders's "Do You Love Me Now." *Busted Jukebox* and all, Shovels and Rope are a must-see band right now.

An evening with Shovels and Rope goes down at the Narrows Center for the Arts in Fall River on March 22.

Brian McKenzie and Always September - *Bruising From the Fall*

A few months ago I wrote about the new Kilgore Smudge record, and now I've got Kilgore's guitarist Brian McKenzie's solo album. McKenzie's solo jams are a different world from the thunder of Kilgore. "Someday" has the relaxed strum of stepping out on the porch door on a Sunday contemplating how all your friends have started families. McKenzie has a deep voice that carries the harmonies on "Later On." "On With the Sun" kicks off with a power pop burst that plays out like a stripped-down Hollywood theme. McKenzie proved with the new Kilgore record he could still write power metal riffs. On *Bruising From the Fall*, McKenzie proves he can blaze another path to Nirvana.

Shows That Don't Blow

Southside Johnny is one of the great bar rock 'n' rollers. In Rhode Island, we have John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band as that kind of Springsteen, take-you-to-a-higher-soul rock 'n' roller. Southside Johnny is New Jersey's answer ... if they didn't already have a Springsteen. Okay I give up. The takeaway is the guy is good.

Southside Johnny & The Ashbury Jukes will rock the Greenwich Odeum in East Greenwich on March 16.

The Smithereens were one of the few great rock bands to make it on mainstream airwaves when I was growing up. All bets are kind of off with the unfortunate passing of singer Pat DiNizio last December. They have so many great tunes, though, so it is great to see The Smithereens keeping DiNizio's legacy alive.

The Smithereens rock the Narrows Center for the Arts on March 24.

I first saw The English Beat at an expensive Save The Bay fundraiser like 10 years ago when they were

redoing The Foundry building. Now I go there for physical therapy twice a week, but such is the circle of life. The English Beat always put on a good show. When The English Beat are in town, it is money that you are going to have a good time dancing around. But The Copacetics are secret artillery here; get there early!

The English Beat and The Copacetics will skank it up at the Greenwich Odeum on March 24.

One year into the depravity of the Trump Administration seems like a good time to make America swing like the roaring '20s, or, at the very least, like the Clinton administration. Their big hit was called "Hell" and nobody has yet accused Vladimir Putin of writing it.

Squirrel Nut Zippers will have the Narrows Center for the Arts swing on March 30.

Body art and loud rock 'n' roll! I don't know to say it other than: top tattoo artists from around the world and Hatebreed! Obviously, we have some of the best tattoo artists here in Rhode Island so ... Hatebreed!

The Providence Tattoo & Music Festival 4, featuring Hatebreed, is at Fete on March 30. Doors are at 2pm, and the festival will rage into the night.

Don't fear the legacy act; I saw Blue Oyster Cult last year in Woonsocket and I can attest they are still "Burnin' For You." A great show that will make you stop saying Christopher Walken's "More cowbell." I mean, unless you are really into sick shit like that.

Blue Oyster Cult rock the Narrows Center for the Arts on March 31.

I'm told Kool Keith is one of the most interesting personalities around. I'm going just because Eminem names checks him in the rhyme "maybe I'm as crazy as Kool Keith." Sold.

Kool Keith, Jetty, Keytar Bear, G.U.M. Entertainment and Sean Sinatra get weird at The Met Café on March 31.

Marshall Crenshaw is a legend in his own right; my dad has CDs by him. My dad is pretty cool, but I keep going to see this bill for The Bottle Rockets. Look up The Bottle Rockets' "Gravity Fails," and I think you'll be joining me at The Met.

Marshall Crenshaw and The Bottle Rockets rock The Met Café on April 1.

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