

Alt-Nation: Fresh Biscuits

If one had to guess where in Rhode Island The Beach Boys Way was located, Pawtucket is probably not the first place that comes to mind. Nevertheless the City of Pawtucket did recently rename a section of Narragansett Park Drive, where the Narragansett Park Racetrack once stood, "The Beach Boys Way." The name change commemorates the largest concert to ever take place in Rhode Island, which was when The Beach Boys played to 40,000 people at Narragansett Race Track on September 2, 1977. It is hard to believe that a Beach Boys concert could garner such headlines as "Chaos Fails to Unravel 40,000 at Concert." The racetrack would close the following year and after a suspicious fire, most of the land went unused except for the grandstand, which was converted into a Building 19 store. The name change came about through the efforts of Al Gomes and Connie Watrous of Big Noise, a music publicity, marketing and development company. Gomes and Watrous were looking for Beach Boys memorabilia at POP: The Emporium of Pop Culture in Providence where they came across what they later found out to be the original box office poster from the 1977 concert. After researching the details further, Gomes and Watrous thought the event deserved to be commemorated, and reached out to state and local officials who agreed. So if someone ever says to meet up at The Beach Boys Way, now you'll know to go to Pawtucket, not South County.

Deer Tick - Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 (Partisan Records)

Four years is a long time for anything these days, but in the flavor-of-the-week world of the music business, it might as well be an eternity. Four years is also how long it has been since the last new music from Deer Tick, the album *Negativity*. Deer Tick are back in a big way with two very different albums that showcase the roots and raucousness of the band. *Vol. 1* is an acoustic record that really showcases the band's chops as their playing has never sounded so smooth. Dreamy love songs like "Sea of Clouds" and "Only Love" channel Big Star with a smidge of AM Gold maturity that really go beyond anything Deer Tick has ever done before. Guitarist Ian O'Neil takes over the vocals on the stirring folk styled "Hope is Big" with the lovable loser refrain — "hope is big but we're always gonna lose." John McCauley's "Cocktail" has a lounge swing as he reminisces in lines like, "I spent the time that you took giving me dirty looks with a cocktail." The track is one of the many where the contributions of former keyboardist Robbie Crowell, who left the group to pursue other projects shortly after the *Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2* were completed, shine through. Drummer Dennis Ryan takes over the vocals on "Me and My Man," which manages to be a weirdly infectious slab of gold.

Vol. 2 starts off with loud ringing chords of "Don't Hurt" as McCauley, perhaps wrestling with emotions to get going again, sings "come on John, sing your stupid song." O'Neil channels the sarcasm of Lou Reed over deliberate garage rock on "Look How Clean I Am." Ryan's "Wants" has kind of a Mick Jones Clash circa *Give Em Enough Rope/London Calling* punch. "S.M.F." (Shitty Music Festival) swings like a sledgehammer of arena rock with big everything while recounting sardonic tales from playing the festival circuit. McCauley's "It's a Whale" comes racing out of the gate like a punk rock thoroughbred with lines like, "heading nowhere with the last of my kind, I'm a martyr and I live on borrowed time." Maybe so, but I'm sure that just like both *Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*, wherever McCauley and Deer Tick go, it promises to be one hell of a ride.

Bill Keough - You'll Disappear, Just Like They All Do (75OrLess Records)

Veteran local music Bill Keough kicks off his second solo album, *You'll Disappear, Just Like They All Do*, with a storm of foreboding uneasiness in "I Am the Lighthouse." On "Gentle Smile," Keough drops a shimmering slab of noise-pop guitar. "Drinking Myself into the Pavement" has an early '90s grunge vibe with lyrics about, believe it not, drinking too much. "Maybe It's You" has kind of a freewheeling '80s indie guitar swing feel with vocals functioning as a prayer-like outré. The closing title track is not just my favorite here, it is one of my favorite tunes for 2017. It reminds me of a Dinosaur Jr. circa *Green Mind*-era guitar collage. On *You'll Disappear, Just Like They All Do*, Keough builds upon 2014's *The Slow Get Up* (75OrLess Records) while dragging the listener deeper down into a fuzz tone squall.

Must See Shows:

Route .44 with Torn Shorts and Ghosts of Industry @ The Parlour on October 7: Route .44 blend elements of gypsy jazz, blues and rock, which makes for the perfect haunting vibe on October nights.

Bash & Pop, Tall Teenagers and Gymshorts @ The Met Café on October 12: Tommy Stinson is the only person on the planet who can actually answer the question as to who is more difficult to work with: Paul Westerberg or Axl Rose. The ex-Replacement/GNR/Soul Asylum bassist reunited his early '90s band, Bash & Pop (with completely different members), and released a really cool album in *Anything Could Happen* earlier this year.

Sick Pills CD Release Party with Monument Thief and Nick Sundman @ The Pour Farm on October 13: The Sick Pills have a new CD coming out for the occasion called *Mettle* that I'll have a review of the future. They are a good indie punk band with the skills to thrill.

Shovels and Rope @ Columbus Theatre on October 13: Spend Friday the 13th with this husband and wife duo that are really as good as anyone out there when it comes to telling a story through song. For this tour, they are both digging deep into their catalog to play some rarely performed tracks and road testing new material, including a new nugget called "Come on Utah."

Mr. Airplane Man at The Parlour on October 19: This garage rock with a touch of twang female duo seems to have come out of the woodwork after a decade off the grid, and now are playing here every other month. That isn't a complaint, though, because they are pretty good.

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