

Catch it While You Can!: Music is live and outside ... for now

Throwing Muses — *Sun Racket* (Fire Records)

It's amazing to think that Newport's Throwing Muses have been together 40 years now. To celebrate, Throwing Muses will release a new album, *Sun Racket*, on September 4. *Sun Racket* is packed with singer/guitarist Kristin Hersh's abstract poetry that floats and flails in the seas of psychedelic guitars echoing into the sunset. David Narcizo's drumming is the glue that holds the ship together while Bernard Georges' driving bass lines push it forward. The album kicks off with the haunting "Dark Blue," which really is one of only two songs with anything resembling a "chorus." On "Maria Laguna," I can't tell if Hersh is singing about someone who has drowned, but I do love the lyric "dotted with sharks, spilling prom dates' videotapes." "Upstairs Dan" is another stormy hypnotic shot where you can't tell if the character is dying or if they are bracing for a hurricane (Hersh's house got destroyed when Katrina hit New Orleans). "Kay Catherine" has a waltz feel that starts off with a line about a terrible secret that the abstract lyrics leaves buried in the sand. *Sun Racket* works as a blast of mysterious noise lying on a bed of uneasy harmony, like a diary that washed up ashore, half destroyed.

Jesse Malin — "Todd Youth"/ "Sally Can't Dance" (Wicked Cool Records)

On his new single, Jesse Malin pays tribute to his late friend Todd Youth, with a tune by the same name. Malin wrote the song by imagining his friend's perspective on his last night before losing his battle with addiction. Some lines in the song like "sold my records and my last guitar, on a night so dark I couldn't see the stars" capture the desperation that Youth was likely experiencing. HR from Bad Brains, who also had a side project with Youth, opens the song and appears throughout, singing lyrics that Malin borrowed from a couple of Bad Brains songs, such as "Leaving This Babylon" and "Sailing On." It works as a fitting tribute because Malin, Youth and HR all came out of the early '80s hardcore scene, even if this track is more at Tom Petty or Mink Deville level of rock. The B-side is a faithful cover of Lou Reed's "Sally Can't Dance."

Live Music Returns!

Live music has started to return, albeit very slowly, at venues that have the means to do outdoor shows. I recommend seeing it while you can because nobody seems particularly optimistic about the prospect for live music once winter hits. Both Dusk and Askew are hosting live music every weekend outdoors. Dusk is having bands play in the parking lot behind the venue, and Askew has been closing down Chestnut St every weekend. Both venues adhere to social distancing recommendations with table seatings. Reservations can be made by contacting either club in advance; check out their respective websites/social media pages for more information. Here are some of the upcoming shows to mark on the calendar.

The Copacetics

The reigning kings of local ska return to get the dance party started on Chestnut Street. Social distancing regulations must be a nightmare for ska bands with horn sections.

The Copacetics play outside Askew on Sep 4.

Steve Smith and The Naked

It would be like the summer of 2020 didn't happen without a Steve Smith and The Naked's concert. This is the 47th year of the band and surely one of the oddest. Steve Smith and The Naked's bring it with a heavy dose of bar rock rock mixed with R&B. I also love going down to the Charlestown Rathskeller, which has their stage out back with chairs and picnic tables.

Steve Smith and The Naked's are at the Charlestown Rathskeller on Sep 12.

Absolute Eddie and Three Points of Madness

Not even a pandemic can kill heavy metal. Absolute Eddie is an Iron Maiden band, so right away I know this show is going to be a hoot. Three Points of Madness mixes metal, heavy alternative and a smidge of prog-rock in their thunder batter.

Absolute Eddie and Three Points of Madness will rock Dusk on Sep 12.

University of Rhode Island Virtual Guitar Festival 2020

University of Rhode Island Virtual Guitar Festival 2020 will take place from September 25 thru 27. Featured artists include Adam Levin, Raphaël Feuillâtre, Bokyung Byun, Derek Gripper, Yacouba Sissoko, Redmond O'Toole, Zaira Meneses, Scott Borg, Matthew Rohde, Eliot Fisk, Corey Harris, William Knuth and Patricia Price, among others. Check it out at uriguitarfestival.org

Ponyboy

Ponyboy make their debut doing two sets (one of original material and a set of covers) outside at Askew. Ponyboy have a three-song single due to come out digitally later on this month. I've heard some of their stuff and it's all over the map where one tune will sound like the Stooges, the next one will harken back to the Faces and third one will be something completely different. The band includes Dave Laros and Vic Foley from Blackletter, Bob Giusti on drums, and Eric Hanson on bass. I'm looking forward to this one!

Ponyboy will play outside at Askew on Sep 26.

Bonus Shows:

New Idols will rock Dusk on Sep 20, and **Sweet Babylon** and others will play Dusk on Sep 27.

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