

Roots Report April 2022: They ain't what they used to be, but they're still damn good

Okee dokee folks... Back in the '70s I used to read *Creem and Circus Magazine* cover to cover. We didn't have the internet, no MTV, nor any constant source of information about performers. Most of the featured and advertised bands I was already a fan of, but there were a few that I do remember but never really heard much. If it wasn't on the radio, on the turntable at a record store or if a friend didn't have the album, it was more than likely my ears never experienced it. One of these bands was The Sparks — brothers Ron and Russel Mael. Their careers began in the late '60s and though now the brothers are in their mid-70s they are still at it. Recently I found a documentary about them on Netflix called *The Sparks Brothers*. If you have not heard of them you definitely should watch this and get turned on to what they have done: They have inspired many, many bands in their 50+ years of music-making. The Sparks were behind the very bizarre Adam Driver/Marion Cotillard film musical *Annette*. Although their music has seen shifts in style and ups and downs, they are definitely worth a listen not only because some of it is great, but because they never gave up! Read on...

During the early '90s there was a new boom in singer-songwriters. The film *Clueless* introduced many to the work of Jill Sobule, who contributed the song "Supermodel," which led to songs in many more films and TV shows. Long before Katy Perry, Sobule released her own "I Kissed a Girl" that was more cute and flirtatious than the blunt sexuality of Perry's. Sobule's music has the quirkiness and wit of Warren Zevon and Randy Newman as well as the story style of Harry Chapin. She was one of the early pioneers of crowdfunding and made her 2009 recording *California Years* with fan support. Sobule has produced a dozen recordings in her 30+ years as a performer and continues to write, record and tour. I interviewed Sobule for an episode of my *Roots Report Podcast*: Listen to it at [MotifRI.com/rootsreportpodcast](https://www.motifri.com/rootsreportpodcast). Jill Sobule will be at The Greenwich Odeum on April 9. *For more about the show, "Vrbana Bridge" to GreenwichOdeum.com*

When I list my top five concerts of all time, people are always surprised that Weird Al Yankovic is included. He honestly presents one of the most entertaining shows you will ever see. You may think he is goofy but he is a Grammy-winning, world-class musician and his bandmates effortlessly transcend all genres of music. If you have never been to a Weird Al show, now is your chance. Yankovic is bringing "The Unfortunate Return of the Ridiculously Self-Indulgent, Ill-Advised, Vanity Tour" to the Zeiterion in New Bedford on April 29. His special guest this time around is Emo Philips! In past years I have interviewed Al but this time around I spoke to his longtime guitarist, Jim "Kimo" West, who is a star in his own right. West won a Grammy in 2020 for his solo album *More Guitar Stories*. Listen to that interview here: [MotifRI.com/rootsreportpodcast](https://www.motifri.com/rootsreportpodcast). *For more about the show, squeeze box to: Zeiterion.org*

The Jefferson Airplane was one of the best bands to come from the Summer Of Love/ Woodstock era. Although they are down to three surviving members you still have the chance to see two of them in concert. Jorma Kaukonen and Jack Casady formed Hot Tuna in 1969 as a side project while they were still members of The Airplane. Hot Tuna has had many members, including Airplane bandmates, but Jorma and Jack have always been the core. Kaukonen and Casady will bring acoustic Hot Tuna to the Narrows in Fall River on April 23. I spoke with Jorma Kaukonen and you can read that interview here: [MotifRI.com/Jorma2022](https://www.motifri.com/Jorma2022). *For more about the show, "Embryonic Journey" to NarrowsCenter.org*

Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* stayed on the music charts for 962 weeks and sold 45 million copies. Their catalog of music has exceeded 250 million in sales and they are one of the most successful bands in history. Unfortunately the entire band will never reunite as keyboardist Richard Wright passed away in 2008 and band founder Syd Barret died in '06. Various incarnations of the band have toured over the years and the individual members are still making music. Roger Waters will be in Boston over the summer and Nick Mason's postponed show should be rescheduled for this fall. If you want the next best thing to a full-on Floyd experience then Brit Floyd will fix you. They perfectly recreate Pink Floyd's sound and stage show and will present this at Veterans Memorial Auditorium in PVD on April 13. I spoke with band leader Damian Darlington about the show. Listen to that here: MotifRI.com/rootsreportpodcast. For more about the show, "Run Like Hell" to: TheVetsRI.com

In the late 1960s The Boxtops and The Buckingham's had many hits on pop radio: The Buckingham's with "Kind of a Drag," "Don't You Care" and "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy;" The Boxtops with "The Letter," "Soul Deep" and "Neon Rainbow." The two bands have joined forces to bring a night of nostalgic music to the Stadium Theatre in Woonsocket on Friday, April 15. I spoke with the Boxtops' Bill Cunningham about the band and his career. Listen to that here: MotifRI.com/rootsreportpodcast. Constantine Maroulis finished 4th on *American Idol* but he went on to star in *Rock of Ages* and *Jekyll and Hyde* on Broadway. Now he is part of the tribute band Foreigner's Journey. They will "Faithfully" present the music of Foreigner and Journey at the Stadium Theatre on Saturday, April 16. For more about these shows it's "Urgent" that you get to: StadiumTheatre.com

I have been podcasting up a storm and been producing lots of content for *The Roots Report Podcast*. Please give it a listen! I have added another *Look Who's Laughing* podcast (MotifRI.com/lwl) with comedian Vic DiBitetto who will be at The Greenwich Odeum for two nights on April 22 & 23. PHEW!!! Thanks for reading...and listening. www.JohnFuzek.com