

The Music Plays On: Check out some tunes that'll ease you into phase 2



Here we are, once again. I won't pile on to the hundreds of commercials that begin with "In these times of uncertainty," and offer some vague message of togetherness. Suffice to say I hope everybody is staying safe and sane.

U.G.L.Y – *Goons Live Young*

U.G.L.Y: This Providence band ain't got no alibi, but they do have a pretty kick-ass debut record. Like a manic movie montage, *Goons Live Young* brings together the frantic pop-punk energy of the Vandals with the glamour of Panic at the Disco. They manage to put their own spin on the music of the early-aughts rock, and the results are impressive.

This album sounds like a major label quality recording, plenty heavy but goes down smooth like a crisp pilsner. "Space Heater" is the most obvious single, with an addictive hook and a George Costanza sample. "Regret Juice" nimbly takes on the perils of addiction ("Red wine's not gonna drown your demons/it's just gonna water them down/one day you'll be the one to drown").

It's clear that U.G.L.Y have their chops together; there's excellent drumming and wiry riffs, as well as the occasional off-time, stuttering rhythm, showing a slight math rock influence. Their Bandcamp page had no info regarding the names of the reclusive band members, though I did no follow-up research, preferring to assume the drummer is named "J.D. Rage" or something cool like that.

Things do get political, with undertones of nuclear war in the revved-up "Honey, I 8 The Microwave," and the brutal feminist anthem "Kill Your Local Cat Caller" (slice, gut and grind him).

"Minnesota" is another captivating one about getting away, and "Get Mad" is a rap-metal tune along the lines of Sum 41.

U.G.L.Y were nowhere on my radar, but this auspicious start should get them some attention.

Check out *Goons Live Young*.

Dan Blakeslee — *Lincoln Street Roughs* (Reissue)

One upside to the pandemic is the unearthing of once-buried art and music. Providence songwriter Dan Blakeslee's *Lincoln Street Roughs* was released in 2007, but was lost after the original label, Peapod Recordings in Portland, ME, folded. He re-released the eight-song album last month, and it's deserving of a listen.

Blakeslee's brand of pastoral folk is a good relaxing agent during anxious times. The album relies on acoustic instruments — fiddle, cello and others — which make it sound like a sort of impromptu live session. A highlight is some tremendous flugelhorn in "Dear Ladies Of The Night," as well as the fiddle in "Your Spanish Scarf."

Though many of the songs have a standard folk feel, *Lincoln Street* mixes it up enough to stay refreshing, from the swampy blues "He Cannot Take Me" to the waltz "Carrie," which features the great line "I'll get the strength to stand up/if you don't put me down first."

Purchase *Lincoln Street Roughs* [here](#).

Podcast Pandemonium

If you're looking to kill some time, I hear that podcasts are the wave of the future.

Where the Living Room Used To Be

Host and creator James Toomey is just over a year into the WTLRUTB podcast, which boasts a diverse

back catalog of notable local music folks, including Roz Raskin, Rich Lupo, Jen Long, Paul Dube, Keith Munslow and more.

With crisp production and effective promotion, the podcast explores how these artists got started and what they've learned along the way. Toomey's laid-back demeanor leads to long-form interviews that reveal fascinating nuggets of wisdom.

Check out the WTLRUTB podcast [here](#) or wherever you get podcasts.

It's Only Rock And Roll

The new kid on the podcast block is a veteran of the Providence music scene. Don DiMuccio, drummer of the longtime act Black & White Band, recently launched a podcast that's managed to pull in some notable guests in only two episodes.

The first episode has Gary Gramolini and Michael "Tunes" Antunes from Beaver Brown Band, while episode two features big-time British Invasion producer Shel Talmy, whose resume includes early Kinks ("You Really Got Me"), Who ("My Generation") and Cat Stevens. Talmy speaks about the volatile relations between the Davies brothers and working with Keith Moon.

A refreshing voice, Dimuccio approaches the interviews as an experienced performer and unabashed music nerd.

It's Only Rock And Roll is available [here](#).

The RI Repository

To celebrate the area's fertile musical history (and frankly because there are no shows), I'm beginning a possibly-recurring segment that looks at notable, Rhode Island-sourced records.

Velvet Crush — *Teenage Symphonies to God*

Power pop is a nebulous term used primarily by journalists, but is generally agreed to fall somewhere between the Who, Big Star and Fountains of Wayne. A classic example of the genre was birthed right here; Velvet Crush's sophomore effort, *Teenage Symphonies to God* is a masterful mix of hard rock and '60s jangle with some country rock thrown in for good measure.

Paul Chastain (vocals/bass), Jeffrey Underhill (guitar) and Ric Menck (drums) formed Velvet Crush in Providence in 1989 after Chastain and Menck relocated here after playing in multiple acts in Chicago. *Teenage* was released by Sony records in the US, and the band spent a few years following as the backup band for Stephen Duffy.

From the big intro chords of opener "Hold Me Up," you know you're in for a treat. It's an unpretentious sound born of overdriven amps and some chunky classic rock riffs, and there's no deep dive required to find the delicious hooks. Track 2, "My Blank Pages," is another stunner in the same vein.

From there, they break out the pedal steel and strings for the twangy "Why Not Your Baby," a cover of country-rock duo Dillard & Clark (Gene Clark of the Byrds). Further on, "Keep On Lingerin' On" sounds like it could be straight out of *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*.

The warm production is the work of Mitch Easter, known for producing R.E.M. in the early '80s. "Faster Days" is another country-rock one with a Tom Petty Vibe, which contrasts well with the punk "This Life Is Killing Me." The cherry on top of the power pop cake is a raucous cover of Matthew Sweet's "Something's Gotta Give."

A Late Night with Conan O'Brien appearance during the same year was the height of media exposure, but the band continued to release albums into the mid-2000s, and reunited last year with the original lineup for a string of New England shows.

Everybody knows of a band that should've been huge, but I feel that it strongly applies here. The album really holds up, and the songs have an enduring quality; good songwriting never goes out of style.

Check it out on Spotify.