

wrfl

RIFLE

FREE!

2024

SUMMER





88.1 FM
wrfl

RiFLe



linktr.ee/WRFL



wrfl.fm



@wrfl881



wrfl



@WRFL



@wrfl881



@wrfl881



wrfl881

WRFL MISSION STATEMENT

as an FCC-licensed, non-commercial, educational radio station at 88.1 FM in Lexington since March 7, 1988, and a student organization of the University of Kentucky, is to:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| PROVIDE ITS MEMBERS | professional training and guidance in radio operations management, program development, and quality broadcast performance, |
| OFFER ITS LISTENERS | a source of music, news, and other programming not regularly found through other media outlets in central Kentucky, and |
| SUPPORT | arts and music in the Lexington area. |

become a part of WRFL

JOIN WRFL

WRFL is open to both UK students, faculty, and staff.
Become a DJ or volunteer today.

88.1 FM

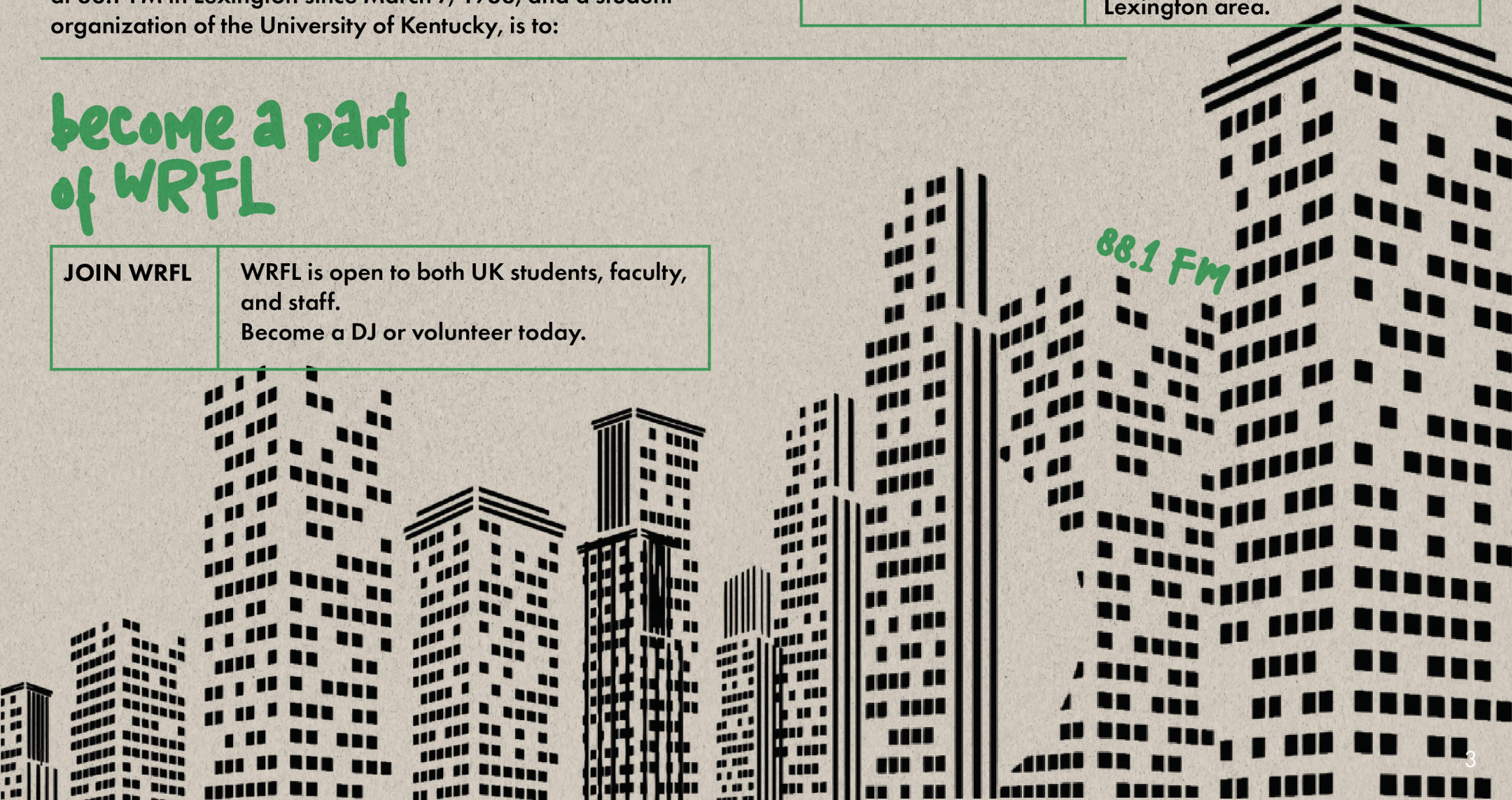


Table of Contents

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| Letter from the General Manager..... | 7 | 6 |
| Letter from the Design Director..... | 7 | 8 |
| Meet the Board of Directors..... | 14 | 8 |
| Summer 2024 Programming..... | 14 | 22 |
| Writing Submissions..... | 24 | 22 |
| Things You Don't Care About..... | 24 | |
| Whalerus & Naptaker Album Release Weekends..... | 32 | 29 |
| Tojo Yamamoto Band Q&A..... | 37 | 32 |
| Remembering Steve Albini..... | 37 | 44 |
| Interview with Biff Byford..... | 46 | 44 |
| Bittersweet Symphony..... | 46 | 48 |
| Family and Fluid Dynamics..... | 50 | 48 |
| Poetry Submissions..... | 50 | 54 |
| Mad Lib: Best Night Ever!..... | 50 | 56 |
| Visual Art Submissions..... | 74 | 56 |
| Film Club..... | 74 | |

LETTER FROM WRFL'S GENERAL MANAGER

What's up all of you loyal WRFL fanatics!

The moment we've been waiting for is finally here. The long awaited release of WRFL's summer 2024 edition of the RiFLe is upon us and now the zine is in your hands right now in real life! (Or maybe you're reading it digitally on our website. That works too.) You know, many people over the last few weeks have been crazy about this RiFLe. They've been stopping me out in the streets, invading my privacy, screaming in my face, "LUKE!" and I've been like "Hi, random individual that I don't know. How do you know my name?" and then they respond with, "No time to explain! All we need to know is when the next RiFLe is coming out! We NEED that!" and then I respond with, "Uuuuuuhhhhhh I don't know but if I had to guess, probably summer 2024." Thank god I was right.

In all seriousness, I'm so happy to be writing this little message to all of you as the new General Manager of WRFL. I've been at the station just under two years now and compared to all the other positions I've held at the station, this is definitely the biggest task I've had to take on so far. With that being said, I don't want to let any of you down and I will try to do my best. Oh, and here's a trade for you: if for whatever reason I am not doing my best, any one of you can slap me in the face as long as I have a 7 day notice beforehand! Deal? Deal.

If there's anyone I want to address in this letter, it would be anyone who is only kind of interested in WRFL, anyone who has heard WRFL in the bathrooms of Gatton Student Center but not thought of it outside of that setting, and anyone who knows literally nothing about WRFL. I can already tell what you're thinking: What makes WRFL so damn special? Well, let me tell you, it definitely is NOT the pasty white sock puppet of a dude that we call a General Manager (Hey, that's me!). What truly makes WRFL so special is all the amazingly weird and incredible group of oddballs that choose to be a part of this crazy awesome radio station. Whether that is the hardworking and talented Board of Directors that run the place on a daily basis, all of our listeners and fans in Lexington and around the world that tune in every day, and of course the beautiful DJs that play their eccentric music on the air. I know it's basic to say this about a radio station you work at, but I truly love the variety of music on our station so much. At one moment you can hear some insane emoviolence like Orchid, the next you can hear the electronic bliss of groups like Boards of Canada or Casino Versus Japan, and don't even get me started about how much we love TAYLOR SWIFT! (That last part is a joke. Sorry not sorry, Swifties. Go to a different station. #real #truefeelings)

To sum it up as simply as I can, WRFL is for the punks. WRFL is for the posers. WRFL is for the rock kids. WRFL is for anyone who thinks guitar music isn't real music. WRFL is for anyone who had an unironic Imagine Dragons phase in middle school and are too embarrassed to tell anyone about it. Finally, WRFL is for ALL OF US. And, most

importantly, WRFL is for ALL OF YOU. WRFL is here for you, and WRFL loves you. If you need a place to express yourself and feel wanted and loved, this station is the perfect place for you. I have met some of my favorite people in the entire world at this radio station, and if you choose to get involved here, I hope you are able to make those connections as well. I promise, it will just come naturally. It's almost too easy!

Sincerely,
Luke Stone
WRFL General Manager

P.S. Shoutout to our awesome new Design Director, Haley, for making this RiFLe! She is so great and I hope all of you appreciate the hard work she has put into this zine!

LETTER FROM WRFL'S DESIGN DIRECTOR

Hello trustworthy RFLiens,

I just want to start off by saying, I am so grateful for the opportunity I've been given as the new Design Director for WRFL! It is an honor to be able to give back to the Lexington community, along with continuing the tradition of the RiFLe. This position has allowed my creativity to flourish to new heights. As someone with a deep appreciation for music and art, I have loved every moment so far working at WRFL!! Coming into this role, I had no idea how sincere, authentic, enthusiastic, and truly unique this community is. I have learned that WRFL is a place where creative expression is valued and is deemed of the highest importance. With that, I look forward to continuing this creative journey together.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported me in creating this edition of the RiFLe, and express my deep appreciation to all the artists who dedicated their time and effort to submit their incredible work. Your contributions have truly enriched this edition.

I hope that in my role, I have managed to honor the unique tradition of the RiFLe while infusing it with my own creative vision. This position has been so rewarding, and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such a vibrant and dynamic publication.

The RiFLe would not be possible without the Board of Directors, DJs, listeners, and YOU, the reader, whose support has made this possible and kept the beauty of the RiFLe alive! So sit back, relax, and dive into this issue of the RiFLe that has been crafted just for YOU!

Yours Truly,
Haley Wade
WRFL Design Director

meet the

BOARD of DIRECTORS

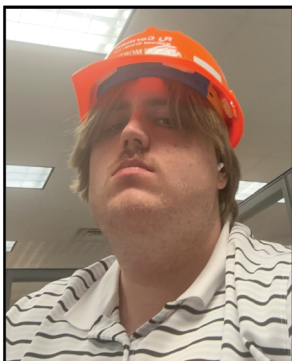
Questions for the board:

1. Name
2. Position
3. Hometown
4. Go to Guilty Pleasure Song



1. Luke Stone

2. General Manager
3. Lexington, KY
4. "I Gotta Feeling"
- The Black Eyed Peas

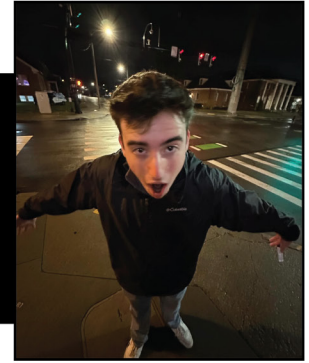


1. Andrew Mortimer

2. Operations Director
3. Salyersville, KY
4. "Break My Heart" - Dua Lipa

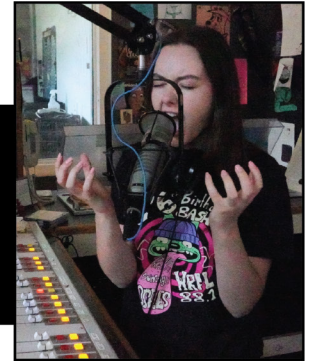
1. Aidan Greenwall

2. Programming Director
3. Newport, KY
4. I know every single word of every single song on "The OF Tape, Vol. 2". IT WAS NEVER A PHASE MOM OFWGKA



1. Valerie Wright

2. Promotions Director
3. Shelbyville, KY
4. "Fergalicious" - Fergie



1. Caroline West

2. Community Engagement Director
3. Lexington, KY
4. Anything One Direction



1. Haley Wade

2. Design Director
3. Atlanta, GA
4. "Feel So Close" - Calvin Harris





1. Will Majors

- 2. Events Director
- 3. Lexington, KY
- 4. "Better in Stereo" - Dove Cameron



1. Jake Butler

- 2. Library Director
- 3. Lititz, PA
- 4. Most definitely "Call Me Maybe" - Carly Rae Jepsen



1. Maddie Wallen

- 2. Local Music Director
- 3. Louisville, KY
- 4. "Habits (Stay High) [Hippie Sabotage Remix]" - Tove Lo

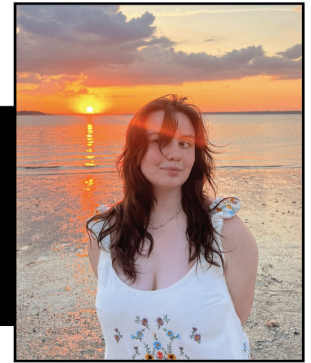


1. Evon Oliver

- 2. Membership Director
- 3. Louisville, KY
- 4. "Only Girl (In the World)" - Rihanna

1. Rebekah New

- 2. Music Director
- 3. Beckley, WV
- 4. "Margaritaville" - Jimmy Buffett



1. Edward Smith

- 2. Promotions Director
- 3. Shelbyville, KY
- 4. "Once in a Lifetime" - Talking Heads



1. Sam Wallace-Smith

- 2. Production Director I
- 3. Lexington, KY
- 4. "Cowboy Song Live" - Thin Lizzy (I don't feel guilty about it at all)



1. Gavin Probus

- 2. Production Director II
- 3. Oldham County, KY
- 4. "Goodbye Stranger" - Supertramp





1. Mary Clark

- 2. Station Advisor
- 3. Lexington, KY
- 4. "Maneater" - Nelly Furtado



1. Nicole Greene


- 2. Station Coordinator
- 3. Lexington, KY
- 4. "Timber" - Pitbull ft. Ke\$ha



Special media
books
gifts
curiosities
since 1972

✦ SUMMER 2024 ✦ PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

| | monday | tuesday | wednesday |
|-------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 12 am | loose change | Matt's Metal Mortuary | Good Grief |
| 2 am | Inside the Box | Manic Pixie Dreams | People I'd like to meet |
| 5 am | Music for the LEFT of us. | members only. | Fillin' and Chillin' |
| 7 am | Fun Times | Crazy Cat Lady Hour | Office Hours |
| 9 am | Democracy Now | | |
| 10 am | Semilla Sagrada Radio | The Creek | Dave's Deep Dives |
| 11 am | | The Gray Area | |
| 12 pm | guestroom | Easy Tiger | The Humpday Bump! |
| 2 pm | DJs and Dragons | Traffic Jams | Your Fathers Music Program |
| 4 pm | Asleep at the Wheel | Sludgefeast | Cutting Room Floor |
| 6 pm | GRIDLOCK | Knock Knock! | The Last Resort |
| 8 pm | The Pacobilly Hour | Dogs Out in the Studio | WRFL Live |
| 10 pm | Old School Hip-Hop | BTU | houseplants! |

| thursday | friday | saturday | sunday |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---|---------------------|
| scram! | Radio Rebel | Vampire Hours | The Onion Router |
| The Sins of the Father | In the Works | TONE SHIFT! | Rat Race |
| Dissident Discord | Frank and Friends |  | Predawn Hours |
| the juice hut | Easily Suggestible | Working Title | Kentucky Soundscape |
| Democracy Now | | Unhinged Reality Show | Neverland Ballroom |
| Slow Blink | Alternative Midwest Grunge | | |
| Lukie Goes Green | Love Love Love | Blue Yodel #9 | Down the Hatch |
| BUGSNOT | Live on Hare | Something Completely Different | Union Break |
| Man Without Ties | The Cool Pool | All Things Heavy! | The World Beat |
| The Matterhorn Mix | Phantom Power Double Hour | El Tren Latino | Generations of Jazz |
| Mars Voyager | Giddy Up | WRFL Psychedelicatessen | Next Level Radio |
| The Musical Box | Signal Boost | Serious Moonlite | The Lab |



LUSSI BROWN
COFFEE BAR EST. 2017

LEXINGTON'S OG BOOZY COFFEE BAR LUSSIBROWNCOFFEE.COM



Street Scene

vintage ✦ modern ✦ gifts

2575 Regency Road
Lexington, Kentucky 40503
[@streetscenevintage](https://www.instagram.com/streetscenevintage)

SINGLETARY CENTER FOR THE ARTS
PRESENTS

Aja Monet

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2024 17:30PM

SINGLETARY CENTER RECITAL HALL

TICKETS: \$29 ADULTS / \$15 STUDENTS (UK STUDENTS GET A FREE TICKET!)

VISIT SINGLETARYCENTER.COM

30 ДНЕЙ

17 ДНЕЙ

wrfl
Psychedelicates

84 МИНУТЫ

85 ДНЕЙ

2 ДНЯ

Saturday Nights
8-10

280 ДНЕЙ

88.1 fm - wrfl.fm



May until August ONLY
Long-term Summer Fill Pickup

"OFFICE HOURS"
THE RADIO SHOW

KAKIE URCH
HOSTING



7-9 AM WEDNESDAYS
WRFL 88.1 FM



WRFL.FM
**SERIOUS
MOONLITE**
A POP MUSIC MIXTAPE
SATURDAYS, TEN - MIDNIGHT



Writing Submissions

photograph by Evie Lunsford

Things You Don't Care About

A Series of Rambling Reviews on Somewhat Obscure Pieces of Media (vol. 2)

Well, Isn't This Awkward by Charles Hamilton



A Mixtape Review by C.J. Jones

Charles Hamilton is an odd case of a rapper in every category. He's been lurking on the edge of mainstream fame several times throughout his extended career, and somehow, it's always eluded his grasp. He's got more strangely specific industry connections than you can count on two hands, yet somehow, he still ended up a manic homeless blogger and a distant memory in the minds of hip-hop fans worldwide. He's the cousin of MC Lyte, he used to date Mary J. Blige's stepdaughter, he once rapped side by side on stage together with a young Kendrick Lamar, he was in XXL Magazine's 2009 Freshman Class lineup, he's toured with Lupe Fiasco, Pharrell Williams himself introduced him to his first label, he worked on several beats with Eminem, he contributed a song to the soundtrack of FX's hit drama show Empire, he was in an incredibly short-lived rap clique with J. Cole and Blu, he and B.O.B. once planned a collaborative mixtape, he's produced tracks for artists like Aesop Rock and Homeboy Sandman, and he's been on at least five different major labels since 2008. With a track record like that, you may be asking why he isn't a near household name by now. Yet you'd be hard pressed to find very many people that remember him at all. This can be traced back to his various struggles with his mental health (his long-undiagnosed bipolar disorder) and his on-and-off battles with drug addiction.

Hamilton's discography, similar to some other veterans of the blog rap era (Lil B and Ruben Slikk), is stuffed to the brim with both pure no-effort garbage and once-in-a-lifetime revolutionary masterpieces that took hip-hop as a genre to a new level. Deep dives are not recommended. Take it from me. The guy has 70+ albums and mixtapes and EPs under his belt. I'll save you some time. Most Hamilton fans will tell you to check out his infamous 2008 debut studio album *The Pink Lavalamp*. I would not necessarily disagree with those fans. That album is an all-time classic for sure, and is definitely worth checking out, but if you only had enough time or curiosity to give one Hamilton's projects a chance, I'd point you in a different direction. Behold: Hamilton's magnum opus, *Well Isn't This Awkward*, a true oddity of an album, yet one that captivated my attention like no other once I first discovered it in the deep dark depths of RateYourMusic.com. The album, very appropriately released two days before Valentine's Day of 2009, will instantly strike you as interesting upon your first glance at the cover. Upon it, SEGA's champion character Sonic the Hedgehog (in his golden Super Sonic form) offers the listener a beautiful bouquet of pink flowers. Why thank you, Sonic! Quite a romantic gesture, which fits quite well with the general concept and subject matter of the tape, which revolves around Hamilton's semi-fictionalized and parasocial romantic obsession with world famous pop star Rihanna. A bit of a strange concept to build an entire musical project around? Perhaps, but Hamilton has his various peculiar fixations (most famously SEGA video games and the color pink). You get used to it. The album itself is framed as a sort of documentary about a fictional romantic comedy film entitled *Well Isn't This Awkward* (same as the album of course), and you can probably guess who the narrator introduces as the "super famous" main star. Charles Hamilton himself, of course! It's like three different levels of metacommentary. As to what it's commentating on? It's a bit hard to say. It's unsure how much of Hamilton's lyrics (mostly focused on his unrequited passions for Rihanna) are meant to be part of the album's multilayered storyline and how much are supposed to reflect his genuine mental state and his sincere perspective on romance. Are his lyrics being delivered by a character, or by Hamilton himself? It's hard to say. Regardless of how fictional they are, Hamilton masterfully delivers these equally disturbing and relatable lyrics of heartbreak and longing with a laid-back swagger laid upon 3 that creates a genius juxtaposition between sound and lyrical substance throughout the entire album's runtime.

The album starts off with a delicately chopped up guitar loop as Hamilton takes up his role as narrator, delivering us a silky-smooth spoken word introduction to the concept and story of the album, which makes a very elegant transition into the true beginning of the album, the track titled "Scorpion" (which makes use of a sample of a voice line crying out "GET OVER HERE!" from the titular character of Mortal Kombat fame). This voice line is a perfect way to start off this track, as it's entirely devoted to setting up the differences and disparities in the lives of the protagonist and his love interest, as he (somewhat) confidently raps to her over glitched out soul loops about why she should consider giving him a romantic chance (he promises he can try and be a better boyfriend than her current one, even though that guy's resume may be better than this...). She lives in a luxurious penthouse at the top of a looming apartment building, far away from his reach in the poverty-stricken streets where he spends his days. Could two people of such different upbringings build a solid relationship together? We will have to wait and see where Hamilton takes us.

On the second track, "Neverland," Hamilton uses a backdrop of hard-hitting drums and chipmunk soul style sample vocals to depict his fantasies about his imaginary life with the woman his sights have been set upon. He's created an entire fantasy world inside his mind where the love of his life is waiting for his arrival to give him kisses and ask him how his day was, and he's willing to embrace these delusions to pursue whatever chance with her he can achieve, realistic or not. He wants the girl in the penthouse to be his lover so badly, but he is too afraid and self-conscious to actually try and spark up a conversation with her, so he instead turns to fantasy and science fiction for comfort instead.

On the (in my opinion) standout track "Re-Anna," Hamilton flips a fairly simple looped sample of the chorus of Fleetwood Mac's hit song Rhiannon (no doubt a tongue-in-cheek reference to Hamilton's fantasy lover, heavily hinted throughout the album to be Rihanna) and raps a very strange yet incredibly well-crafted verse about using a sci-fi-like laboratory to create an artificial girlfriend for himself (which ends up going horribly wrong after she gains sentience and rises against her creator after realizing that our protagonist is unable to keep up with her preferred luxurious lifestyle). He warns the listener against the idea ("a major mistake is to date a lady that you created") and instead turns to a dating website (Match.com) for his romantic connections (we actually hear the advertisement for it at the end of Re-Anna), a venture that is explored in depth on the next song, titled "Match.com (Commercial Break)." This song is a melodically upbeat piano loop-based track where Hamilton expresses his frustration with the hedonism and casual hookups inspired by services that dating websites promote, expressing his desire for real romance and genuine connections. There is plenty of physical pleasure in this strange relationship, but they are not boyfriend and girlfriend, and the lack of official ties and romantic interactions is something the protagonist is not able to cope with, so he is forced to break it off with this girl in pursuit of something more real. He realizes that the love he has tried to fill the hole in his heart with is all artificial (whether the love was artificially created in a lab or artificially created by the algorithm of a dating website), and that there is only one girl who could truly fulfill his longing for love.

Next comes "You Too," a much more somber track (sampling the piano loop and the chorus from Rihanna's "Rehab"). In this song, Hamilton claims that "people lead you to the needle," a theory that he supports by telling the story of three different people/groups that he blames for sending him down his path of drug addiction and madness. Again, it's unclear how much of this is meant to be a genuine reflection on actual events, or more fictional tales meant

to give backstory and context to the character of the album's protagonist. For the first verse of the song, Hamilton unravels a story of generational drug abuse, comparing his own experience with addiction to his mother's tragic life story and exploring the effects of her addiction on his broken childhood. He reveals that she was an undiagnosed schizophrenic, which he uses to reflect his own struggles with mental illness, and that her stashes of drugs that she kept around the home is what introduced him to the world of intoxication. For his next verse, he explores the ways in which his ex-girlfriend and his ungrateful fans and critics pushed him further down the rabbit hole of addiction, with his bender eventually climaxing in a cocaine-fueled car crash.

Our fantastic and insane love story meets its climax in the form of "The Penthouse Elevator," the penultimate track with a lush R&B-inspired instrumental built off of a stuttering and delayed Chris Brown sample (no doubt another reference to Rihanna, as this album was released when Chris Brown and Rihanna were dating). After a tearjerking chorus delivered by a crooning Hamilton expressing his longing to look up at the stars side by side with the girl in the penthouse, the protagonist decides to boldly face his fears and take the long elevator ride to her residence in order to confess his feelings to her. He makes it to her door and she invites him inside, but the verse ends before he gets to hear her reaction to his confession, leaving us with a cliffhanger of two minutes of open instrumental. What happens next? What is the ending? Does the protagonist get the girl he's pined after for so long? Well, Hamilton has given us the luxury of deciding for ourselves.



There are two tracks that are both possible endings for the story. "In Case It Doesn't Work Out" and "In Case I Actually Get Her." The first finale, as the title suggests, gives us a look into the version of the story where the protagonist is rejected by the girl of his dreams. This track is a soulful cut with booming bass where Hamilton tries to keep up a hollow persona of self-confidence to spite the woman who rejected him and forced him out of the apartment, claiming that he's doing perfectly fine without her (but thinking to himself how he'll never know what it even means to be without her, since he never had her in the first place). The voices in his head jeer and taunt at his failure and his stalker-like obsession with her, as the beat begins to fade away and a somber piano takes its place for the song's outro. We hear the noises of a distant crowd shuffling out. The movie is over, and its ending was tragic. Our protagonist is back where he started, caught in a cycle of fantasies and heartbreak never to end. But if sad endings aren't really your thing, listen to the next track. The second finale, as the title suggests, gives us a look into the version of the story where the girl in the penthouse actually accepts the protagonist's advances, and becomes his girlfriend, just as he had dreamed about for so long. This track is built over a layered drumless sample of the guitar from Rihanna's "P.S. I'm Still Not Over You," where Hamilton explores the complexities and strange emotions associated with a blossoming relationship. He raps about how dangerous she is to him now that he has given her his heart, surely to cut him like a knife if she leaves. But regardless of the newfound emotional threat she poses to him, he can't help but be entranced by her and how lucky he was to earn her affections ("You shine bright enough to blind any man"). It's up to you which ending you want to choose for the album's protagonist, and I must say, it's hard not to want a happy ending for this guy after spending an entire album with him.

To me, this album is one of the most underrated of all time. With its beautiful selection of lush chipmunk soul and R&B-inspired instrumentals and tragically poetic lyrics delivered via one of the smoothest backpack rap-style flows I've ever heard I would put it up there with some of the greatest hip hop albums ever made. Unfortunately, the rise of the streaming era has made certain mixtapes and projects like this pretty inaccessible. Gems like this album get lost to time when they aren't available on platforms like Spotify or Apple Music. But if you think what I've just described here sounds like an interesting listen, I would highly implore you to open up YouTube, SoundCloud, Soulseek, or whatever else you can use to find it, and give this album the attention it deserves. If not for me, do it for Hamilton: the misunderstood mastermind of our time who, in my opinion, has to this day yet to receive his flowers.

**Check out this album if you're a fan of:
Kanye West, Lil B, Lupe Fiasco, or Ruben Slikk!**

**Favorite Songs:
Re-Anna, The Penthouse Elevator,
In Case I Actually Get Her**

Rating: 9/10

Whalerus & Naptaker

Album Release Weekends

by Trenton Upchurch

I KNOW, I KNOW!

I don't shut up about Whalerus or Naptaker, but this time I have a really good reason!

Picture this: It's the very end of the semester, you've got three papers, an exam, and two presentations all due the same day, and you aren't sure you're gonna survive to even finish it all. You're sitting at your desk, and a notification from one of your favorite local bands that you follow (and has been on hiatus for over two years) pops up on your feed.

You open it.

And they announce they're coming back and dropping a brand-new album the weekend after the semester ends.

And then.

You get another notification in your DMs that your other favorite local band is dropping their long-awaited first full-length album?

And *then*.

BOTH BANDS ANNOUNCE SHOWS ON BACK-TO-BACK DAYS THAT VERY SAME WEEKEND?!

Now I don't know about you, but that gave me some great motivation to power through

the rest of the semester. I had a pair of shows to go to, two new whole albums to devour, and I'd be damned if I let little things like 'a lack of restful sleep' or 'sixteen straight hours of swearing at quantitative methods analytics' get in the way of my good time. And hot **DAMN** did these shows deliver.

Whalerus and Naptaker have been a huge part of the local music scene in Lexington for me. I met Dean, Dylan, and Naz when filling in for the Local Music Director at a WRFL Live, got to experience their *Round 2 EP* in the studio, and I was instantly hooked. Unfortunately, they only had two more shows that I got to see before they took an indefinite hiatus (one of which was a show WRFL got to run for UK's K-Week festivities!). Naptaker is a bit more winding; I met Jordan and Warren through the Smash community in Lexington, where we got to talking about music, WRFL, and more. They invited me to a show they were doing later that month, and it was similarly an instant appreciation for the Midwest math rock and post-punk they produced alongside Reid and Tyler. Needless to say, both album drops and shows happening in a 48-hour period was the best possible way to kick off a desperately needed summer break.

First up? Whalerus at the Burl for their new album *Stare at the Sun*, alongside Killa Kaiju, Urameshi, and Townsel Turner. The third of May in 2024 will forever be etched into my



Whalerus

memory as one of the most amplified moments of my life, and that's saying something for an already wired person. Killa Kaiju opened a barn burner, and their phenomenal momentum carried that through Urameshi's shredding and Townsel Turner's rhythmic hits to a MASSIVE crescendo with Whalerus' renditions of 'Feel Good Inc.' and 'Break Stuff' that included both leads of Killa Kaiju and Urameshi taking part. Whalerus' set was nothing short of a masterwork on either end of that crescendo, tying both their newest album and their earliest hits into a set that began and ended in a fashion that befit the band: The crowd losing their minds when the choruses hit, Dylan nearly tearing the strings off his guitar with solos, and me jumping so much I probably tore every muscle in my legs. The most memorable moment of the whole night was a personal one. When Whalerus played K-Week for WRFL, I asked a huge favor: Would they play 'I Don't Think About You,' my favorite song from their *Round 2 EP*? They offered to oblige but didn't get to play it when I was begging for an encore in the Cat's Den (hysterical, in retrospect). They said they'd play it in the future, and Whalerus delivered

in a massive way when they did. I'd completely forgotten about it until the second chord hit, and the memory flooded back, and I was in 2022 all over again, singing as loud as I possibly could alongside a packed and white-hot crowd at the Burl, an unforgettable moment in the most electric set of the year. Here's hoping Whalerus doesn't take another two years to bless the Bluegrass, but even if they never play a set again, they'll always have fans waiting to hear one of the greatest bands to come out of Lexington.

From an atmosphere of pure energy to a more introspective post-punk show, Naptaker's newest album *deconstruct, reconstruct, repeat* was one I had hands on early and was eager to hear the band play live. Brighton Place opened with "Ashes" (always a great song, and a personal favorite!), and Skunch followed in their typical heavy rock ways, both working to create the atmosphere in a more intimate Al's Bar that would set up well for the split takes in Naptaker's first album. The whole album is a great flow, rising and falling across the exploration of things that never

will be at all, and things that will never be the same again, and it played phenomenally live. 'Grand Marquis,' 'C(ouch),' 'Name Brand Sodas,' and 'Mutton' kept the energy up in their spots before mellowing to the other half of the album as they appear, keeping the audience on their feet and moving every time the pace picked up. 'Strange Things Are Afoot at Circle K' ended the set in their usual fashion, with a red-hot crowd clapping in time where the classic tambourine should've been, much a reminder how the more things change, the more they stay the same. Naptaker uniquely didn't finish off the show, giving that to the touring Dreaded Laramie, who finished off the night in supreme fashion (to a very enthusiastically exhausted midnight crowd), finishing their set with an incredible rendition of Ke\$ha's 'Tik Tok' that had the whole venue bumping until the very end. Naptaker's first full-length album debut marks a high point for the band creatively and lyrically, with the bands and

show itself making for a very satisfying parallel to the content of the album, and bringing together crowds from across Kentucky to enjoy an unforgettable start to the summer.

For me that weekend might as well have been Louder than Life, Railbird, Coachella, Exit 111, Burning Man, and Woodstock all rolled into one and tailor made specifically for local music lovers. Eight bands that have helped grow both themselves and the scene Kentucky is building combined into a huge pair of shows that made sure that the end of something is just the beginning of something else. If you missed it, I'm sorry you did, really, I am. All you're getting is this article telling you about it. Me? I got front row standing room only for two of the best shows Kentucky has ever had to offer and **damn** was that month of writing papers before it made worth it!



Naptaker

photographed by Gail Ray (@Gfray24)

TOJO YAMAMOTO BAND Q&A

ELWOOD FRANCIS, GUITARS

with Kakie Urch



KAKIE URCH: Let's get the strange factual out there first. You are a punk rock kid from Lexington, Kentucky, the greatest guitar tech in the world, half of ZZ Top AND the best guitarist in this new Tojo Yamamoto band? Could you just flesh those sentences out a bit for folks -- how you got from one place to the next?

ELWOOD FRANCIS: That's a lot of explaining to do.

Yes, I'm proudly from the punk rock generation. I was 16 in 1977, so it was perfect timing. While I was already playing guitar and had taken bass lessons for a short time, being in a band wasn't anywhere in my mind. Until punk rock. Then it was like...ahhh ok... I can do this.

In '76 I started working for a local show band that played all over KY, OH, and into TN. A 9-piece band with a horn section. I helped set up all the gear. Sound, lights and backline.

My brother is also in the business and mixes FOH for popsters like Kanye', Ariana Grande and things like that. Currently mixing RHCP. We both just starting hearing about jobs and it led us to Boston. I met Joe Perry in my travels and we got on well, always talked about guitars. At one point he needed a guitar tech and asked me to do it. This would be around '81-'82, with The Joe Perry Project. It never entered my mind before that. However, I had always taken my guitars apart to modify them. I'd built fuzz boxes out of mailorder kits, and had the crap shocked out of me trying to modify an amp. So I figured I could handle the job.

It worked out and when Joe rejoined Aerosmith, I took a job with Steve Vai. This was early in his career, after he left Frank Zappa's band. So, I moved to his hippy ranch in California and just kept working. I am nowhere near the greatest guitar tech but I've quietly been around the block and work well with "artists."

I was offered the ZZ Top guitar tech job in '94. I went down to Texas for a visit and have been there ever since. About 12 years ago I started looking after Dusty's basses as well. Along the way, I started jamming around with Billy and played guitar in his Big Bad Blues Band.

Ted Bundy's Volkswagen was one of my absolute favorite Lex bands. Larry randomly reached out on IG to say "hey" and both asked the same question: What are you doing musically?

We both replied: Nothing.

We had not seen each other in 27 years or something. I then started writing songs and about 10 months later we went in the studio to record the first EP. It's been another 12 months since then and we're going to record what will be the third EP next month. The second EP is already recorded. Now we can

start working on the live show. We're just about there.

KAKIE: Your longtime band that people in Lexington know is hard hard punk metal The Mighty Skullhead, which has been playing in Lexington clubs and skateparks since the 1980s/90s, with different personnel. What do Tojo (or ZZ) fans need to know about Skullhead, how to be a Skullhead fan, how to hear them and maybe a next gig?

ELWOOD: The 2 constant members are me and Will Parker, with Will Pieratt also having been there 75% of the time. Music made by knuckleheads, for knuckleheads. I'd say it's a "feel good" party band that is associated with drinking too much and causing trouble. Will Parker now lives in the Keys, so shows are few and far inbetween. We are going to record some later this year but no talk of shows or anything. Shows these days come off like a high school reunion, which is cool, but you can't do that a lot.

KAKIE: Tojo Yamamoto the band is multigenerational, with folks of different musical eras in Lexington, folks who do some recording engineer work, your daughter, Billi, who is still in her teens, picking up some serious backing vocal duties on the first EP and on the cover of David Bowie's "Heroes" released. How did this all come together?

ELWOOD: Jason Groves at Sneak Attack Studio is very hands on when recording us and will also be playing in the live band. Billi will be doing vocals and triggering the samples in real time. She loves being around the studio and can sing.... It was a no brainer. Her voice is a great contrast to Tread's. We'll get her singing lead on a song before too long. We need to ease her into it.

We have a group text that we use to send each other songs, ideas, and wrestling clips. Larry sent out "Heroes" and we all thought it

could be a cool song for us to attempt. It came together very easy and sparked a conversation about randomly releasing covers as limited single sided 45s. Because, why not?

KAKIE: What's your Rig Rundown for Tojo?

ELWOOD: Oh Boy!!! Gear talk.

So far I've been using dept. store guitars from the 60s and 70s. Guitars from Sears, Western Auto, Montgomery Wards, and the type. Those guitars paired up with various fuzztone circuits from the same era played through small amps turned up to 10.

These dept. store guitars have low output and are usually a shorter scale. Short scale guitars have a certain "growl" and the low output pickups bring out the best of the fuzzboxes. You hear more of the fuzz circuit by hitting the front end softer.

I use a few different open tunings, add bass strings to the guitar, use tenor guitars and ukuleles.....anything that makes a noise.

KAKIE: You are pretty famous worldwide for guitar stuff. The first time I became aware of you being from Lexington, I think, was when I worked one of those early

Aerosmith "comeback" shows at an outside venue in Evansville. You were teching Joe Perry's guitar? Ted Nugent was on that tour and one other act. Then a few years later, I look up at a Van Halen 5150 tour show and you're Eddie Van Halen's tech. Then you were with ZZ Top for years and years, as a guitar tech, not a bass player. What are the things that make a good guitar tech and how does touring as a high-level instrument tech differ from being the headliner? I mean do you do your OWN soundcheck? Do you have a guitar tech? How did you build the relationship you have with guitars, where you really seem to know and talk to and train and feed them?

ELWOOD: ZZ Top doesn't do soundchecks. In the 30 years I've been there, we've done probably less than 20. Since I've been playing bass, we've done about 3. They do not like to do soundchecks. lol

Most "band tech" jobs are filled by word of mouth. Band techs have to deal with "personalities," so you have to think of that along with the basic technical skills.

I just called one of my friends and asked him to take the job. We techs mostly all know each other. It's a great steady gig, at least 9 months touring a year. Obviously ZZ is old

school. Touring is what they have always done and it's still what they do. Dare I say, it's all they know.

Teching is just a different mindset. It's all about being prepared for worst case scenarios. Things are changing in modern world with AI technology and modeling capabilities. So, these days, a guitar tech is as much a computer tech as a guitar technician.

I still build guitars in my off time and always have some new avenue I'm going down.

KAKIE: Who are some of the best musicians and bands you've known to come out of Lexington? Does Tojo have any "competitors?"

ELWOOD: Fred Sexton, Ben Lacy and Wendell Rodgers are 3 incredible guitarists. Ben is in his own category. Marty Chambers was mind blowing to me. I love his music so much. The world lost a great one there. Ted Bundy's Volkswagen was one of my fave Lex bands ever. NP Presley and anything Nasty Nate does is top drawer. The Yonders are a treasure. Hannah Sturgill has a great band right now. The Thrusters, Active Ingredients, Happy Death, Slum Lords, are all important to me. BrassKnuckle Boys, Loaded Nuns, The Infected....That's all good stuff too.

I could just keep on going....I'll always overlook someone. Lex always had a healthy scene.

As far as competitors...that can be settled in a wrestling ring. A cage match with no holds barred.

KAKIE: What is the essence of a Tojo song? (Larry Joe Treadway plant question)



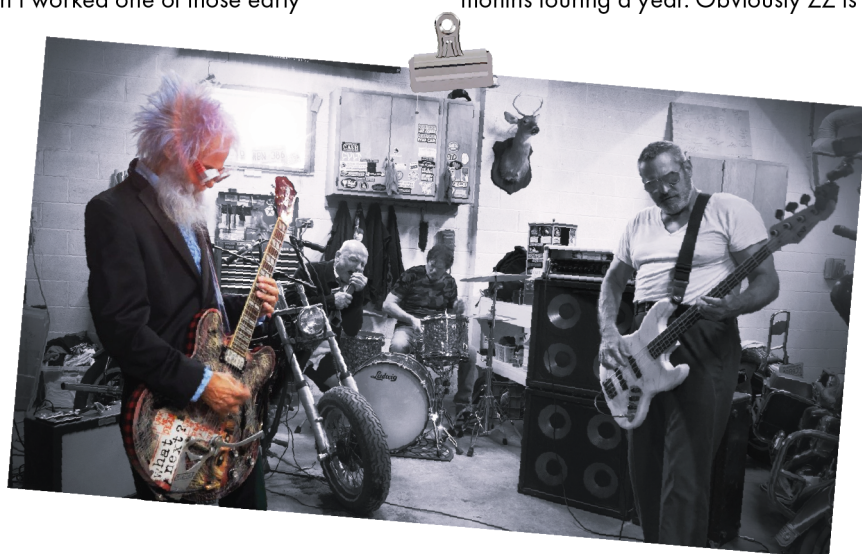
ELWOOD: Simple music that's very distorted and has what appears to be a disturbed man narrating a weird story, while simultaneously watching wrestling on the television.

KAKIE: Is there a chance for any live gigs or even a performance on the WRFL LIVE program that features a local band playing live on air in studio on Wednesdays?

ELWOOD: We should be playing live before the end of the year. It really depends on when ZZ pulls to the curb for the year. People were asking about shows when we only had 5 songs, so we're catching up as fast as we can.

KAKIE: What was it like to be out on tour with ZZ Top and look at the itinerary and see you're booked at Rupp Arena and then the Herald-Leader's Walter Tunis is doing a huge feature story on you and then you're playing in the hometown arena?

ELWOOD: To be honest, I instantly thought that dealing with my guests is going to suck. I had 67. Hometown gigs are stressful if only for that reason. It was really cool once it was over and I could finally relax.



KAKIE: What is some music that has made a big difference in your life?

ELWOOD: Frank Zappa. It all comes back to FZ. Sex Pistols, Killing Joke, New Order, Bow Wow Wow, Jesus and Mary Chain..... The Wildhearts are the greatest unknown RnR band in the world! I'm absolutely crazy about Motown.

KAKIE: How do people follow ELWOODisKing on social media?

ELWOOD: The only social media I have is ELWOODisKING on IG.

I despise Facebook and got off Twitter around the time Red Hat was chosen dictator. They are useful tools for promotion, but I've always had a problem self-promoting. It feels unnatural.

KAKIE: Other than the ZZTop at Rupp Arena show, the other week, what are some of the most memorable gigs you've played or seen in Lexington?

ELWOOD: DOA at Carver Center in '78. Killing Joke at the Wrocklage (94?) Skullhead at Rupp Arena opening for Joan Jett and Aerosmith '89. Skullhead at Wrocklage with the Skid Row guys sitting in '91.

KAKIE: If there's anything else you want to say, (about the Talking Heads or anything else, Larry Joe advised me to ask), definitely do so.

ELWOOD: Ah David Byrne. That track he did with X Press 2, "Lazy" is brilliant. So good. Billi and I were recently listening to that.

KAKIE: What question should I ask Tojo frontman Larry Joe Treadway?

ELWOOD: Does he actually sleep? There doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to listen to as much music as he does. I can send him links to 500 songs and he's already heard 499 of them. It blows my mind.

KAKIE: You can ask Billi to help you on any of these questions. :) She's just super on the records and the videos.

ELWOOD: I can't tell you how awesome it is for her to be part of it. It happened naturally and Larry works so well with her. She has an infectious energy that's great to be around.



remembering

STEVE

ALBINI

By Mary Clark, WRFL Chief Operator

I first became aware of Steve Albini about a decade ago while in college. I was enrolled in a course called Music Industry Management and early in the semester we were presented with an article titled "The Problem With Music," followed by a statement: "Imagine a trench filled with decaying shit." As a hopeful-yet-already-cynical aspiring music industry professional, I was both surprised by and refreshed by how blunt and brutally honest the writer was. And of course, the writer was none other than Steve Albini. [Note: you can find this article if you Google it – it is from December 1993 and is very much still relevant]

Albini was known for being no-nonsense which came through not only in his writing but also how he ran his business and how he engineered music. Everything he touched feels raw and honest, as if you were in the room with the band while the recording was happening. That is largely due to the fact that he prioritized recording bands together, live, as much as possible, and he used little compression in order to encapsulate a full range of dynamics. This worked particularly well for the punk, grunge, and rock genres, which are all of course genres we love here in college radio. Albums like Pixies' *Surfer Rosa*, Slint's *Tweez*, The Breeders' *Pod*, and PJ Harvey's *Rid of Me* were all released in the early years of WRFL and helped define the identity of the station. They also turned out to be truly iconic albums that stood the test of time and are just as much fun to listen to today.

Harkening back to my time in college, the year I started was the year that Cloud Nothings' *Attack on Memory* was released. Through DJing at WRFL I also fell in love with Scout Niblett who Albini worked with previously, and Ty Segall who Albini worked with later on. The sounds of these artists helped shaped my own musical identity, and what I'm really getting at here is that Steve Albini played such a large role in shaping the lives of alternative music fans across generations. When the news of his death broke there is no doubt that we all felt it here at WRFL. I know quite a few of our DJs did tribute shows, and I also wanted to offer some space for folks to share their favorite albums and memories.

May we all rock on in Albini's honor.

WRFL staff, DJ, & community faves

black midi *Sugar/Tzu* (Live at Electrical Audio) (2022)

Deciding on a favorite album that Steve Albini worked on is such a difficult task. I feel like choosing only one record can come off as dismissive to the rest of his amazing catalog of credits, so instead of listing off an album, I'll shout out the time that Albini worked with my favorite band black midi to record some new takes of a handful of songs they had previously made to put onto flexi discs, all live at Electrical Audio. The discs were given out as extra items if you bought a physical record of black midi's third album *Hellfire*, and I am lucky enough to say I own a copy of the 'Sugar/Tzu' flexi disc. Albini definitely put his own unique spin on all of these tracks, and it shows that even late into his life he was looking to work with new artists that were pushing creative boundaries.

—Luke Stone, WRFL General Manager, host of *guestroom*

Cloud Nothings *Attack on Memory* (2012)

Attack on Memory is an incredibly solid album and it also has one of my favorite songs of all-time, 'Wasted Days,' which is a frenetic, angsty, 9-minute masterpiece. Albini's classic mixing style shines here: the drums are very forward in the mix and the guitars swirl all around. In the instrumental midsection of the song, this leads to you getting lost in the rhythm like it is a heartbeat, the guitars dancing with psychedelia to a disorienting effect. You are then jolted back out to reality to Dylan Baldi shouting "I thought I would be more than this" over and over, and it sounds like he is yelling it right into your face due to Albini's use of close miking and his raw approach to mixing. The band is quoted in saying Albini spent a good chunk of time playing Scrabble on his phone while they recorded which further shows he always knew his place and refrained from overproducing. The dynamics and emotions on this album are real, not programmed, and for that I absolutely love it.

—Mary Clark, WRFL Chief Operator

The Pixies *Surfer Rosa* (1988)

My favorite album Steve Albini worked on was *Surfer Rosa* by The Pixies. My dad showed it to me while we were in bumper to bumper traffic in Knoxville. The production and sound was so good it made the traffic bearable, with my personal highlight being 'Broken Face.'

—Cayce Jones, host of *Rat Race*

Songs: Ohia *The Magnolia Electric Co.* (2003)

Absolutely one of the greatest alt-country albums ever made. This album has some of the greatest and most textured production and instrumentation that I have ever heard. This, combined with the legendary writing and vocals of the late Jason Molina, makes for one of the best listens I have ever experienced.

—Andrew Mortimer, WRFL Operations Director, host of *Working Title*

Shellac *1000 Hurts* (2000)

The first time I was aware of Steve Albini was when he recorded Nirvana's *In Utero*. I didn't know much about him, but I knew that *In Utero* sounded and felt way more raw and honest than *Nevermind*, but also much cleaner and well-done than *Bleach*. But the moment that I'd never ever forget Steve Albini ever again is when I heard 'Prayer to God' off *1000 Hurts*. It was the fall of 2001 and I moved off campus to live with a friend who had an excellent record collection and turntable. I had never heard Shellac before, and I was converted instantly.

—Matt Gibson, WRFL alumni, Executive Director of Singletary Center for the Arts

On PJ Harvey

By: John Clark, host of *Phantom Power Double Hour*

In the late 1990s I met a group of guys who were all about 20-22 years younger than I. I little suspected at the time that this group of guys would become some of the closest friends in my life, for the rest of my life. The core of the group at the time was the legendary Lexington band, The Fakes. Later, several of them were in the Lexington Fayette Urban County Supergroup (the LFUCS), who I ran sound for scores of times and recorded many times. And years later, I played in two bands with these guys, in different iterations, in *Real Numbers* and *Bad Dad*, and recorded quite a few songs with them.

When I met them they were in the formative years of developing their playing styles and their musical tastes, just like I had been 20 years earlier. They introduced me to bands I might not have encountered otherwise, except possibly through WRFL. These included Sleater-Kinney, the Breeders, Pixies, Shellac, Dinosaur Jr., Sonic Youth, Slint, and many more. One such artist was a young English woman named Polly Jean, who came from a musical family and played several instruments. She was roughly the same age as these guys I knew. When she was about 22 or so, she founded her own band, a trio that went by her name, PJ Harvey. They recorded two albums together before she went solo.



PJ Harvey quickly became known for her innovative songwriting, her expressive and idiosyncratic singing, and her guitar playing. After the first album, and the touring that followed, she was in a bad way, having just endured a busted relationship, depressed and ill from the rigors of the road and bad food, and discovering that she had lost her place in the art school she wanted to attend. She was in a dark place, and her music turned darker. That made her a perfect candidate to collaborate with Steve Albini on her second album, *Rid of Me*.

Rid of Me went on to be acclaimed as one of the best albums of the 1990s, and perhaps one of the best albums of all time. Steve Albini, whose recording methods and personal views of the music industry were often controversial, cut an unusual figure in the business. He was a member of the noise bands Big Black, Rapeman, and Shellac. While numerous bands hired him as a producer, he refused to call himself that, and said that he was merely a recording engineer. His job, he said, was to make a recording that sounded as much like the band playing live as he could make it. So, he always worked for a flat fee, and never availed himself of the "producer points" that every other producer claimed, and thus lost out on a ton of money over the course of his career, which tragically ended too soon.

When PJ Harvey was asked in an interview why she chose Albini to record *Rid of Me*, she said, "He's the only person I know that can record a drum kit and it sounds like you're standing in front of a drum kit. It doesn't sound like it's gone through a recording process or it's coming out of speakers. You can feel the sound he records, and that is why I wanted to work with him, 'cause all I ever wanted is for us to be recorded and to sound like we do when we're playing together in a room." And indeed, the whole album was recorded basically live in three days. But it was the way it was recorded that was significant. According to Harvey, "The way that some people think of producing is to sort of help you to arrange or contributing or playing instruments, he does none of that. He just sets up his microphones in a completely different way from which I've ever seen anyone set up mics before, and that was astonishing. He'd have them on the floor, on the walls, on the windows, on the ceiling, twenty feet away from where you were sitting... He's very good at getting the right atmosphere to get the best take."

If you have never heard any of Albini's work (I'm kind of talking to all the students here), or all you have heard is Nirvana's *In Utero*, and especially if you have never heard PJ Harvey, her album *Rid of Me* is where you start. You are going to like it.

Steve Albini & 1 Play Six Degrees of Squirrel Bait

By: Kacie Urch, WRFL Faculty Advisor, host of *Office Hours*

Steve Albini was in Evanston (where Northwestern University and its top ranked Medill School of Journalism is) in the 1980s. At that time, we were not yet building the station, and the Northwestern-Kentucky connection was through Louisville's scene darlings Squirrel Bait (Main players David Grubbs, Clark Johnson were at Northwestern.)

Squirrel Bait was an amazing Louisville punk band made up of teenage boys who just put such POWER into their two records. I had reviewed those records for the Kentucky Kernel and was close to their "sixth man" in the band, Steve Driesler, their very good friend from Louisville. He also wrote for the Kernel and really introduced a lot of us in Lexington to the good, goodness of the Louisville scene, which was getting featured in the Village Voice (Antietam on the cover of the Voice!) and so on.

And here we were, in Central Kentucky, no WRFL, no Internet, no email really, music discovery through live shows, zines like Maximum Rock N Roll and Forced Exposure and word of mouth. And Steve Albini is up in Evanston, writing these razor-sharp, hardcore music pieces for Forced Exposure and starting Big Black and starting to record people and palling around with the "Louisville Hardcore Army" as they jokingly called themselves.

The thing about Steve Albini becoming a full-time yeoman-like respectful to all customers, paid like a plumber recording

engineer and band frontman is that we lost so much of Steve Albini, the perfect, perfect music journalist. I would read his pieces over and over. They were just brilliant.

So, the first Albini encounter I had was a Six Degrees of Squirrel Bait encounter. We had gotten the license to construct the WRFL station and were working on that in 1986 and 1987 and at the same time I was booking bands into a punk rock/alt rock beer bar club called Babylon Babylon on North Limestone Street, where Crossings is now.

So I hear from Driesler that some of the guys from Squirrel Bait have put together this new band called Slint and they are looking for club gigs. So, I decide, well hell, I will book them and because they are ex-Squirrel Bait, I'll pay them a respectable guarantee, you know like what I would pay The Flaming Lips. Which was \$300.

So, we have this Slint show coming in to Babylon and we're sitting there in the club and I'm talking to this kid who was a friend of theirs from Louisville who had just finished a role in this movie called "Matewan" by John Sayles and I am telling him "Hell, No!" he cannot have a beer and neither can these Slints because they are TEENS.

And then I go to the bar to grab some soft drinks in cans and to stress to the bartender that we are not serving beer cans to that blonde kid or the band members onstage and this very cool looking dark haired





couple (of age) in vintage black and red clothes is standing at the bar, drinking beers and the man is talking about some guy I'd never heard of, very seriously, this Nikola Tesla. And the girl is nodding. Turns out, they are the band that is playing the bar around the corner. They are from Detroit. And the band name is worse than "Slint." It's "Goober and The Peas." They are very attractive punk vibe people.

And so, Slint plays the show at Babylon. And some months later they put out their first recording, called "Tweez," with cool graphic design in reverse Helvetica bold on it and I'm thanked in the liners. It turns out, I was told, that the guarantee on that gig that was more like a glorified practice at Babylon in front of me, Mark Beaty, Bonnie "Prince" Billie (Will Oldham), 40 WRFL OGs, and Jack and Meg White, paid for the studio time with "Some Fucking Derd Niffer," or Steve Albini. Who also did the Tweez graphic design.

The second Steve Albini encounter in those early days was another Six Degrees of Squirrel Bait and a TORNADO.

Remember, there's no Internet. We hear of a show being put on at some Louisville adjacent VFW post. And it's Big Black, Urge

Overkill (this tells you how long ago it was) and Naked Raygun. So, a bunch of us get in my mother's car and drive to Louisville and there are tornado watches on. A tornado watch means that conditions are right for a tornado. A tornado warning means that a tornado has been sighted and to take cover immediately.

But we go to this VFW post and the Louisville scene has it all set up and we're just watching and Urge Overkill and Naked Raygun do their sets and I guess Albini ran

their sound, whatever. Then Big Black is up and onstage and they can't find anyone to run sound. Like they got the PA and the board from Lexington, but they didn't hire a sound engineer.

So, people are like coming up to me and saying "Kakie, you have to run sound! You can do it. You book bands! You are starting a radio station!" and literally push me over in front of the board. I am saying NO, I CANNOT run sound. And am looking frantically around for someone I know who I know CAN run sound. But, nobody tells Albini. He's up onstage with Big Black, guitar strapped around his waist and a TORNADO WATCH is being reported.

So, I'm frozen there standing in front of the board. They start playing. They are loud, loud, loud, too loud for that board. Steve Albini is onstage with Big Black screaming at me what to do on the soundboard. And he is NOT happy.

Thankfully someone who could run sound came up and I finally was able to step away. They played three songs and they called the show on account of tornado. We all went out to my mom's car and raced the tornado down I-64 back to Frankfort

Kakie Urch's Top Steve Albini Records

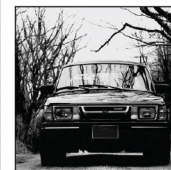
1985 -
Big Black - Racer X



1988 -
The Pixies
- Surfer Rosa



1989 -
Slint - Tweez



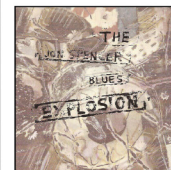
1990 -
The Breeders - Pod



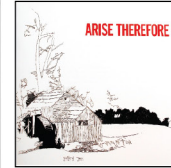
1991 -
The Jesus Lizard
- Goat



1992 -
The Jon Spencer
Blues Explosion
- The Jon Spencer
Blues Explosion



1996 -
Palace Music
- Arise Therefore



2001 -
Low
- Things We Lost
in the Fire



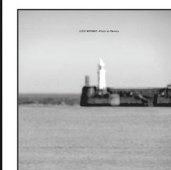
2002 -
Godspeed You!
Black Emperor
- Yanqui U.X.O.



2003 -
Songs: Ohia
- The Magnolia
Electric Co.



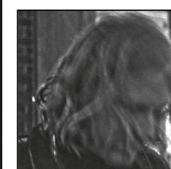
2012 -
Cloud Nothings
- Attack
on Memory



2013 -
Man or Astro-Man
- Defcon
5...4...3...2...1



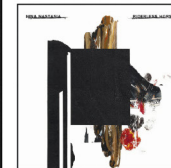
2017 -
Ty Segall
- Ty Segall



2017 -
Metz
- Strange Pieces



2022 -
Nina Nastasia
- Riderless Horse



2024 -
Shellac
- To All Trains



INTERVIEW WITH BIFF BYFORD

Lead Vocalist of Saxon

by Matt Dacey

Originally formed in 1979, the legendary British heavy metal band Saxon recently embarked on their first post-pandemic tour of the United States, which included their first appearance in Kentucky since 1983. I caught up with lead vocalist Biff Byford, who shows no signs of slowing down at age 73, prior to the show at the Mercury Ballroom in Louisville on April 28. (Note: Some answers edited for brevity.)

Q: With the release of *Hell, Fire, and Damnation*, along with the two covers albums (*Inspirations and More Inspirations*), *Carpe Diem*, the solo album in 2019 (*School of Hard Knocks*), and the *Heavy Water* album, that's six records in five years...

A: Yeah, I guess that's pretty prolific, but if you've got the ideas flowing...

Q: Where do you find the energy?

A: Just in the music, you know?

Q: So (Diamond Head guitarist) Brian Tatler was a pretty amazing replacement for (retired guitarist) Paul Quinn.

A: Yeah, he was. We're lucky, really, to have him on board after Paul retired.



Q: So Brian fits in pretty well with the band?

A: Yeah, he's just a regular guy.

Q: Do you plan to record more albums with him?

A: Definitely.

Q: Are you thinking ahead yet about the next record?

A: Yeah, we're thinking about it. We're not writing anything yet, but it's in our minds.

Q: It seems like the new record is getting quite a bit more attention than *Carpe Diem* did.

A: Yeah, it has. I think it's probably a better album. I think it's a bit more focused, a bit more what people want to hear. I think it's a good album, and Brian already co-wrote three songs on it.

Q: How long are you going to be touring in the States with Uriah Heep?

A: Six weeks. You know, we're not doing all the States. I think the furthest we go over is Texas, but we don't go over to Las Vegas or across, but I think we might be coming back in November for that.

Q: Do you think you'll be with Uriah Heep again?

A: I don't think so, no.

Q: One more thing I want to ask you about. Way before the *Inspirations* albums, one of the first covers you did, way back when, was Christopher Cross's "Ride Like the Wind."

A: Yeah, it's a great track. We did a great version of it. Our version is a bit more AC/DC style. Yeah, it worked out really well. It's gotten more popular as time's gone on. It's got a good groove to it. And Christopher, his version is more yacht rock, and ours is more loud rock. You know, we were thinking about a guy riding a motorcycle, and Christopher, he was probably thinking about a cowboy on a horse (laughs).

We then exchanged a few pleasantries, and I went upstairs to watch Saxon deliver a thunderous career-spanning 15 song set.



The Bittersweet Symphony

when underground artists go mainstream

by Nicole Greene



Victoria Monet at the 2024 Grammy Awards

As I scrolled through my Twitter timeline on the night of the 2024 Grammy Awards, my emotions were all over the place – I felt both pride and a sinking feeling. Victoria Monet, an artist I’ve championed for years, was finally being recognized by an audience of 16.9 million as she accepted her fourth Grammy of the night, including the prestigious Best New Artist award. At that moment, her dreams came true. She is no longer a hidden gem cherished by a cult audience that I have proudly been part of. She is now on track to become a mainstream star.

After years of following her career, introducing her music to others, and rooting for her success, this moment felt like a long-awaited triumph. The world had finally caught on, albeit late, to her immense talent. While I beamed with pride, there was also a pang of regret knowing that the exclusivity of being a “true” fan would soon be diluted as new listeners jumped on the bandwagon.

For avid music enthusiasts, the charm of underground artists lies in their authenticity and the resistance to the commercial pressures that often render mainstream pop music mundane and formulaic. Not that I don’t appreciate a catchy pop song, but there’s something uniquely captivating about

artists who operate outside the purview of major labels. They have the freedom to create experimental, challenging, and deeply personal music. Fans are drawn to this sincerity, finding solace and solidarity in songs that address experiences and emotions overlooked by commercial acts.

Discovering an underground artist feels like uncovering a hidden treasure. Fans take pride in supporting musicians known only to a select few, fostering a sense of community and shared secret knowledge. Following an artist’s journey from obscurity creates an intimate connection that fans deeply cherish. When an underground artist breaks into the mainstream, it’s often seen as a testament to their talent and hard work. This transition can bring financial stability and allow their music to reach a broader audience. For many fans, this success is initially a cause for celebration, proof that good music can still triumph in a saturated market.

However, this joy is often tinged with trepidation. The path to mainstream success typically involves changes in the artist’s sound, image, and overall approach to their craft. Record labels, driven by market demands, may push for a more polished and radio-friendly sound. The unique quirks and experimental elements that defined the artist’s underground persona may be smoothed over to appeal to a broader audience.

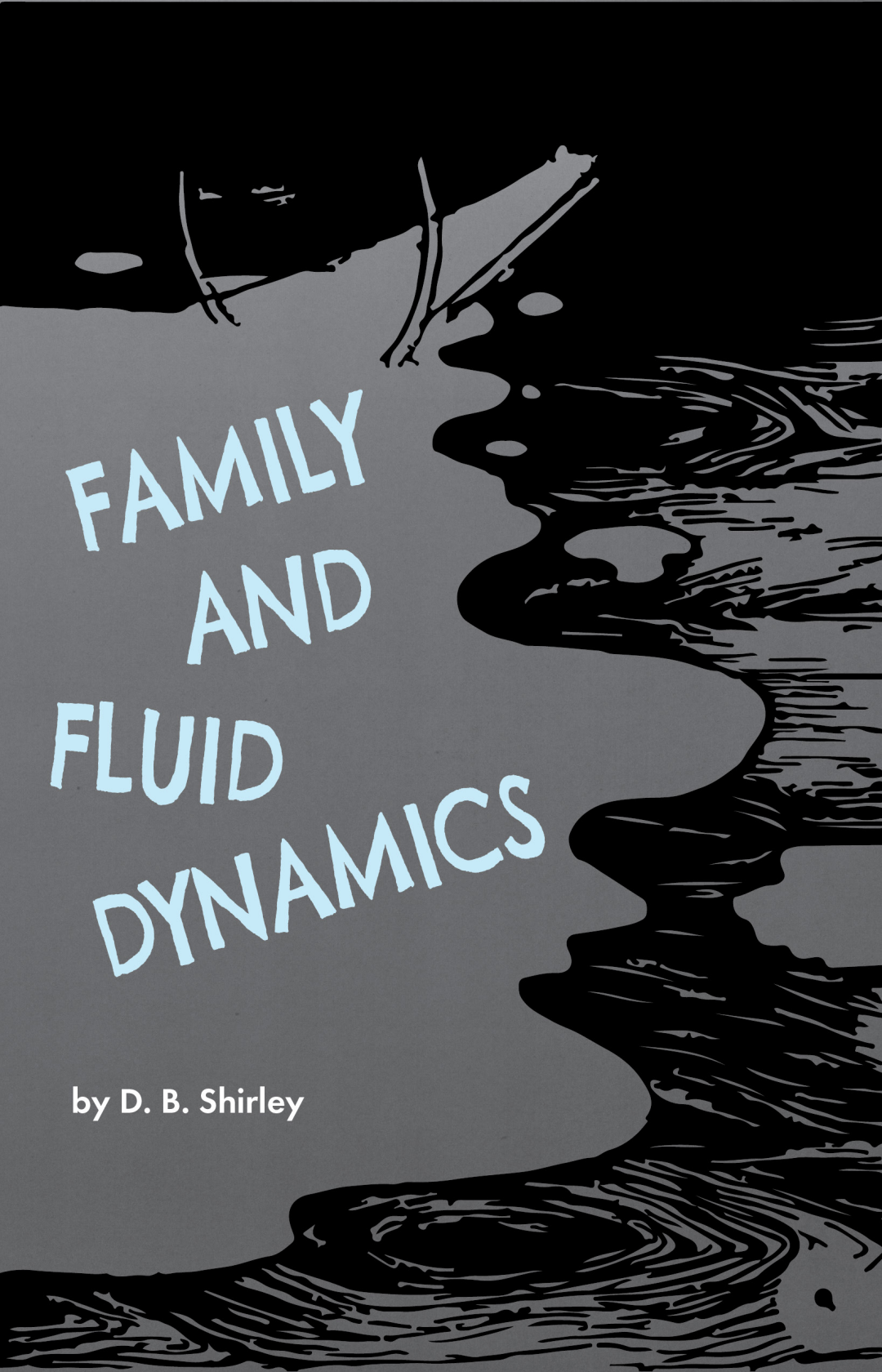
The grief that fans experience when their beloved underground artist goes mainstream is multi-faceted. Allow me to introduce the four-stage nightmare of losing an artist to the mainstream:

- 1. Loss of Exclusivity:** Fans often feel a sense of ownership over the music and the artist. When the artist becomes mainstream, their music is now a public commodity. As the fanbase grows, and the music becomes something to be shared with the masses.
- 2. Fear of Artistic Compromise:** Fans worry that commercial success will lead to a compromise in artistic integrity, resulting in music that feels less genuine and more formulaic.
- 3. Cultural Shift:** Underground scenes are often defined by their opposition to mainstream culture. When an artist crosses over, it can feel like a betrayal of the values and ethos that the scene stands for. The music, once a form of resistance, becomes part of the very system it once opposed.
- 4. Identity Crisis:** Fans often identify closely with the music they love. When an artist changes their style to fit mainstream tastes, it can feel like a personal loss. The songs that once resonated with fans may no longer feel as relatable or poignant.

Despite the grief, many fans continue to support their favorite artists, hoping that mainstream success won’t completely strip away the qualities they fell in love with. Some artists manage to strike a balance, retaining their core essence while appealing to a wider audience. This can offer solace, showing that commercial success does not necessarily equate to artistic compromise.

The rise of digital platforms has allowed for greater artist autonomy, enabling some musicians to maintain their unique voice even as they achieve broader recognition. Independent music production and distribution channels can help mitigate the pressures of conforming to mainstream expectations, providing a middle ground where artists can thrive without losing their distinct identity.

I understand the benefits of an artist going mainstream, and since I tend to get fully invested in my favorite artist’s journey, I truly want the best for them. Victoria Monet broke through, in both an industry and world that creates countless barriers for people that sound and look like her. Her perseverance alone brings me peace, but the transition can still be bittersweet. I think many people in this situation have to remember that our love for music and open-mindedness (and ears in this case) is what ultimately makes us so passionate in the first place.



FAMILY AND FLUID DYNAMICS

by D. B. Shirley

It is always unsettling when I hear someone mention their family and alcohol in the same sentence. I have never seen mine drink. I know there are a certain few who do—the grizzled veterans and wounded wives. At select family functions, every so often, one or two will slink away only to come swaggering back—as if no one noticed their absence or change in behavior. They return all rowdy, upsetting the entire equilibrium of the environment; intruding, invading personal space with jarring jagged movements, preceded by the reek of liquor. Their hot breath doesn't just stink; it smells wrong. The closer they get, the more claustrophobia creeps in. Every interaction under the influence is warped, a corrupted normalcy that they conveniently never recognize—or remember.

Their arm—and by extension, their whole bowing body—looms overhead, braced against the wall to support their sagging frame. Humid heat radiates off their flushed skin, with sweat that beads on ruddy foreheads and splatters onto the ground below or exposed skin. Their dippings are warmer than tears. The closest air to them grows sour with the stench leaking from their pores. Every interaction makes each inch of skin crawl—its attempts to get away. Soulless eyes leer above a grimace that distorts and twists their familiar features. "Sorry." They choke out that bitter word on repeat but continue all the same.

I haven't been alone with my mother's oldest brother since I was six years old. When I was five, his house burned down with his wife inside. Officially, the authorities ruled it an accident. A lamp fell over in the night, most likely. The whole town agrees that it was a "crying shame" that my aunt didn't make it out. Once, I overheard a cousin whisper to another, telling them that there was more to the story, but because the fire

marshall and him were drafted together, they look out for each other - or look the other way.

I wish that man was reduced to ashes. I prayed to my father's God, the one that I no longer believed in, begging for that man to burn—eternally and early—for his actions. Unfortunately, he's still alive, still invited to and attending holidays, celebrations, and funerals. Maybe my lack of faith in protective powers is the problem.

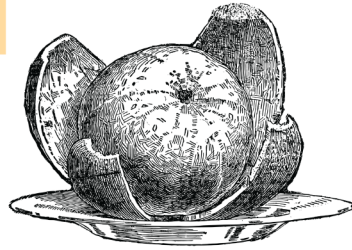
The years carried me further from that side of the family, from the people who claimed "we're here for family. No matter what." No matter what they do. No matter who they do it to. No matter what they would continue to do, if intoxicated and unsupervised.

I heard once that a drunk man's actions are a sober man's desires. Inhibition and restraint simply dissolve with varying amounts of alcohol. If that is true, then that means that this man has walked around for decades with abhorrent urges on his mind—only succumbing to those animalistic compulsions when he is wasted.

Does that make him more of a monster, or less?

You remind me of a fresh peeled orange

Bethany M. Robinson



You remind me of a fresh peeled orange

The sweet tartness like the bite of your tongue the jester you are
Though soft and delicate hidden behind your peel

Your tenderness I long to have rolled along the valleys of my tongue
You allow me to breathe in this refreshing spark of something I've longed for all

day, all my life

The acidic sweetness of your skin upon my skin
Dried into the ridges of my fingerprints
I wonder if you hunger for me the same
Desire to peel away at my hardened peel
To nestle me within your hands

My sweet smell lingering still on your own fingertips
The simplest of juice sliding down to your palm

the gunk-gunk

Nate Baker

he won't drink it right...

are you drowning in it?

i've heard something about the poor...

they drink violently when the opportunity arrives...

oh, poor folks and their charms...

great, now i've lost my appetite!

you are absolutely disgusting.

why does he sound like that?

it isn't that hard to swallow...

gunk-gunk, gunk-gunk

just take your time!

it ain't goin' anywhere!

gunk-gunk, gunk-gunk

i hope he chokes on it...

do it like a normal person!

gunk-gunk, gunk-gunk
gunk-gunk, gunk-gunk

Walking at 3

Chase Myers

The low hum of nighttime,
it's a single, strained cough caused by
puffing on shadows.
And the crickets are mocking me, so out I'll go.
Check, jingle, and smack the lock for good measure.
Then out he comes again, emerging from nothingness
between two bricks.

Now there's a man outside my door and he's
pointing me the other way,
his face is blank, his hat is bold, and his
stance is all sort of wrong.
He refuses to speak, simply cutting night's tension
with an index finger.
No name, no face, no voice.
None of my concern, I just walk as he tells.

So, I'm walking now, I walk, and I walk.
I round streetlamps consumed in a mangle of
boughs and split limbs.
The Hickories, the Persimmons, the whoever else
are angry.
"Usurper of metal and sin, do not stretch to the
heavens as we do. You cannot become the God you worship."

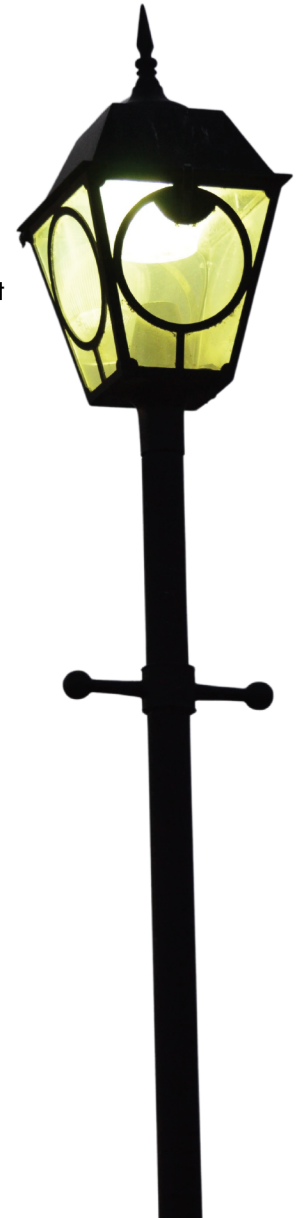
And so, it consumes.
And I walk now to a fountain bleeding
onto the pavement.
The neon lights expose the suffering,
broken and drowning, but alive.
It will exist long after I can confirm this and forever afterwards.
And so, it bleeds.

And I walk now past the disheveled factories with men on
break and their backs backed against brick
winking in cigarette drags.
They're sad and they hurt and they hold their
smokes delicately like pool cues.
It all makes the night grey.
But it's none of my concern.

Finally, I walk in the neighborhood
now, adorned in new birth of blossoms.
Great oaks are shy because they were never meant
to have shadows.
And from the shrubbery I spot you,
10,000 miles straight away from me
on the other end of all things.
You just wave. Just wave, just wave.

The wind peels your skin away, your
muscle is torn right from you.
Your bone fibers, once mingled so tightly like
those on Makalu's crest,
now evaporated by God's gale.
I wish to pick up your stitches,
reassemble your carnage,
but I just round the corner.
It was never my concern.

And now I'm home. The brick swallows
the man and I escape inside
and slowly wither and sleep.
It's all just dreams of pools and limbs.
The crickets stopped years ago.
Now, only the man's finger taps on my window.



MAD LIB:

Best night ever!

by Nicole Greene

Last night, I went to a _____ concert at the _____. I felt _____, wearing my favorite _____. I saw my favorite artist, _____, and they were absolutely _____. They opened with their hit song "_____" and the crowd went _____ wild.

During the concert, I couldn't help but _____ to the beat. My friend _____ and I sang along to every _____. We even got to go backstage! Everyone was incredibly _____ and signed our _____.

The guitarist told us a funny story about how they once _____ on stage during a show in _____. The drummer showed off some _____ tricks, and the bassist gave us a sneak peek of their new song "_____."

In the middle of the show, the lights dimmed and a giant _____ descended from the ceiling. The audience gasped as it started to _____. Then, the band played an acoustic version of "_____" which made everyone feel _____.

After that, there was an epic _____ solo that lasted for _____ minutes. People in the crowd were _____ and _____, completely lost in the music. I even saw someone wearing a _____ covered in _____!

Towards the end of the concert, they performed my favorite song, "_____" and the entire _____ sang along. It was a moment of pure _____. The encore was spectacular, with fireworks and _____ flying everywhere.

By the end of the night, we were all _____ and exhausted. As we left the venue, we couldn't stop talking about how _____ the show was. It was a _____ experience that I will never forget. I can't wait to see _____ perform again!

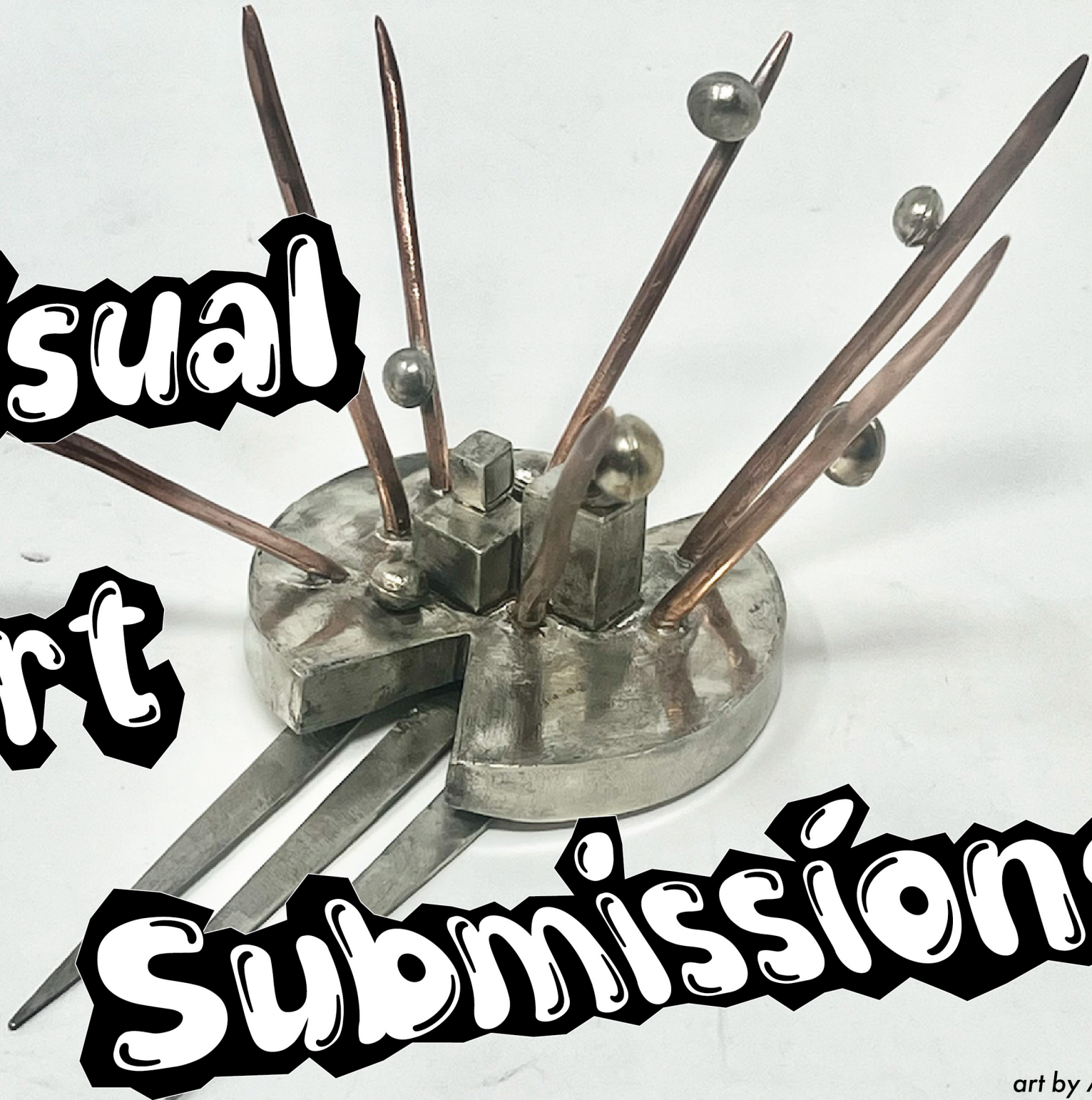
On the way home, we stopped at _____ and ate _____ while reminiscing about the concert. We agreed that the highlight was definitely when the lead singer _____ into the crowd and everyone went crazy.

Finally, as I lay in bed, I could still hear the _____ of the music in my head. It was the perfect end to an unforgettable night. Next time, we're planning to see _____, and I just know it will be _____!

Visual

Art

Submissions



art by Abby Bunch



Evie Lunsford

@Evieluv222

Abby Bunch

@abbysartstudio



Orange Crush, 2023

Speedball ink screen printed on heavy paper
6 x 8 inches



The Yellow Wallpaper, 2024

oil on canvas
20 x 24 inches



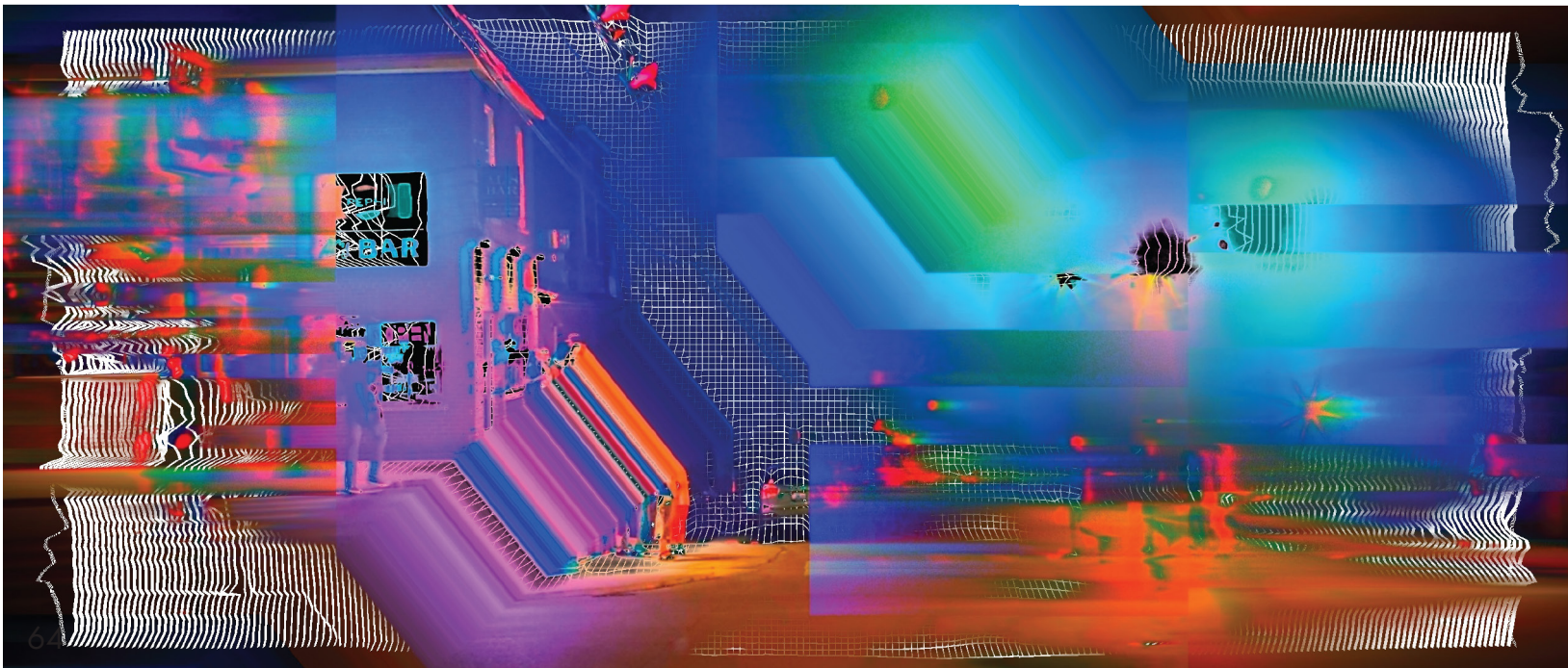
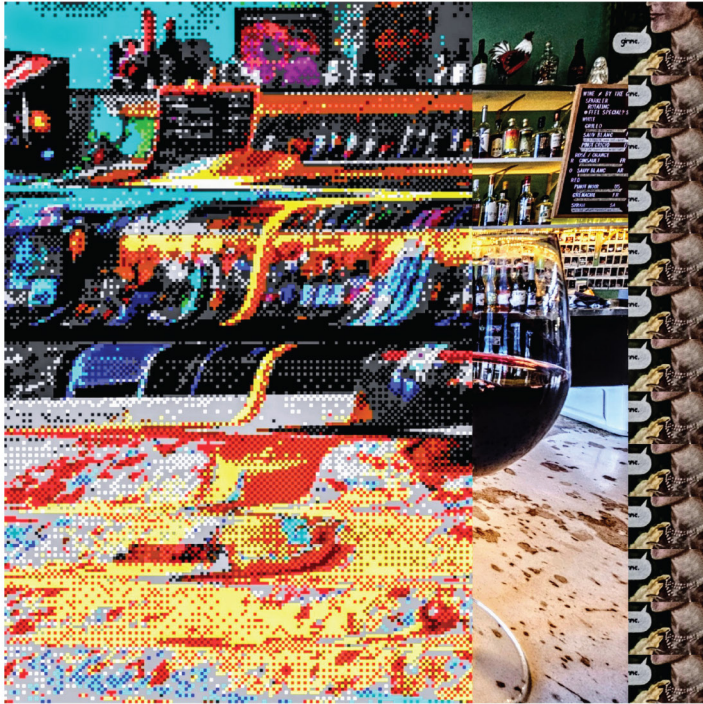
A Melancholic Meal, 2023
oil on canvas
38 x 22 inches



Garden Party, 2022
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches

William Johnson

@tylelessknave



Brian Connors Manke

@bcmanke



Colin Stetson
Singletary Center for the Arts 3.25.24
photographed by Manke



Colin Stetson
Outside The Spotlight #224 - @21C - 4.15.24
photographed by Manke



*Guided By Voices
Madison Theater - Covington, KY 4.26.24
photographed by Manke*



Guided By Voices



*Wussy
Madison Theater - Covington, KY 4.26.24
photographed by Manke*

Haley Wade



VAMPIRE HOURS

A Goth Show.

Saturdays 12-2am.



KO

THE COOL POOL

hip hop
vaporwave
ambient

EVERY FRIDAY

PHANTOM POWER DOUBLE HOUR

With your hosts
JOHN CLARK & BILL WIDENER

FRIDAYS 6-8 PM EST
On WRFL 88.1 FM

wrfl

FILM CLUB

Q: If you could be in a movie, which movie would you live in? And why?

Caroline West



Call Me by Your Name (2017)

dir. Luca Guadagnino

The Northern Italy aesthetic is everything I've ever wanted in my life, and I love Timothee Chalamet.

Luke Stone



Playtime (1967)

dir. Jacques Tati

There's just so many silly people in this movie that I know I would be best friends with.

Will Majors



The Princess and the Frog (2009)

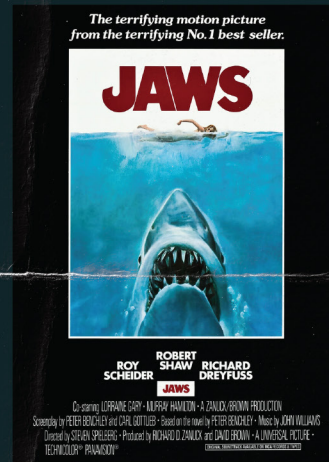
dir. John Musker, Ron Clements

So I could eat the beignets they make in that movie.

Jaws (1975)

dir. Steven Spielberg

It's always seemed like a movie that would have an adventurous mission.



Edward Smith

Twilight (2008)

dir. Catherine Hardwicke

I would live in the *Twilight* universe because I want to have sparkly skin.



Valerie Wright

Halley Wade



Zootopia (2016)

dir. Byron Howard, Rich Moore

I want to travel around the various districts and go to rodent wedding.

Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring (2001)

dir. Peter Jackson

I'm choosing this movie not for the plot but rather for a very specific place. I was so entranced by Lothlórien, the woodland realm of the Galadhrim elves, when I first saw this movie and have remained entranced by it ever since. The juxtaposition of it being a forest of beautiful golden trees while also being dark, mysterious, and magical still very much speaks to me.



Mary Clark

Mamma Mia! (2008)

dir. Phyllida Lloyd

Endless fun in Greece with a seaside hotel Meryl Streep built from the ground up? Unfathomable Aura



Evon Oliver

The Lego Movie (2014)

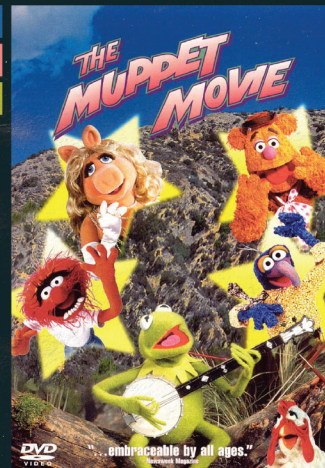
dir. Chris Miller, Phil Lord

I would be in *The Lego Movie* because I'd be a Lego and that's rad.



Gavin Probus

Rebekah New



The Muppet Movie (1979)

dir. James Frawley

I'd want to be an extra passenger in Fozzie's studebaker and go to Hollywood with my favorite celebs.

Chaos Walking (2021)

dir. Doug Liman

Imagine living in a world where everyone can see and hear each other's thoughts. Stories would be more beautiful. We'd be more connected to our memories. People would be forced to be genuine. Let's put it all out on the table. How would social dynamics shift if we knew the true depths of the people around us? Could we handle the truth?



Maddie Wallen



Andrew Mortimer



Tron: Legacy (2010)

dir. Joseph Kosinski

Having a lightcycle would fix all of my problems.

Jake Butler



Blade Runner (1982)

dir. Ridley Scott

I'd probably want to live in Blade Runner. I don't really want a late-stage capitalist hellscape, but at least the fashion is incredible, it'd be sick to walk around in the fashion listening to dark wave all night

Black Panther (2018)

dir. Ryan Coogler

Perfect balance of technological advancement and beautiful countryside. No racism or sexism. Amazing clothes. Wakanda forever!



Nicole Greene



Dawn of the Planet of the Apes (2014)

dir. Matt Reaves

Planet of the Apes because then Caesar would be real and we would be chill with each other probably



Sam Wallace-Smith



Aidan Greenwall



Rango (2011)

dir. Gore Verbinski

I will not elaborate.

SUNDAY 4-6PM



WRFL

88.1 FM



88.1 FM
wifl

