

With a bit of meditation, an open mind to contemplation, and a dash observation... One could define music in the following manner: The science or art of ordering vocal, instrumental, and/or mechanical sounds and tones, having rhythm and melody in succession and in temporal relationships in order to generate a composition having unity and continuity, combined in such a way as to produce, in harmony, beauty of form and expression of emotion...

Welcome Angels and Gentle Beasts

to this edition of:

∞ The Dragon Line ∞

Open Stages... Open Doors

Chapter 1: An Acoustic Angel

Nestled in a rural cut adjacent to the County Airport upon the hills of the southern portion of the city of *Pittsburgh Pennsylvania* is a little place known to the locals as *Mulligan's*...and once a month it plays host to one of the oldest forms of artistic expression known to humanity...

This inventive collaboration is the Creative Brainchild of *Jason Novak*, who along with *Steve O'Toole*, founded *The Munhall Music Academy*, a Music Store which specializes in offering Music Lessons & Instruction.

Jason is an amazingly adept Lead Guitarist. He and his band, an ensemble of local talent known as; *The Valley Kings*, are host to this monthly expedition into the unexplored domains of Pittsburgh's unique and Original Music scene, and on this, *the 8th night of the first month of the year of Our Lord: Two-Thousand-Sixteen*, we will be treated to an awe-inspiring exhibit of showmanship and united desire, that seeks only to further display this raw and as of yet undiscovered treasure trove of creative and inspirational thought.



Upon arriving, we are greeted at the door by *Mulligan's Resident Security Man John*, who immediately recognizes us and welcomes us to the event. We grab a quick pic before show time as the mood of anticipation rises for what is sure to be an immense night of music and fun.

The scene is one of mutual respect and encouragement as artists and musicians, along with dinner guests and good time party seekers settle in for acoustic open stage that welcomes musicians and music fans alike who are here to show their love and support for music itself and for the Artists that are here to perform.

The house band, *The Valley Kings*, consisting of *Al, Brian, Mike, and Jason*, hit the stage around 9:15 pm and they immediately set the pace for the evening with an exceptional display as they journey us through a wide variety of acoustic harmony in classic rock form.



Filling out the stage with three acoustic guitars and a make shift beat box style drum called a *Cajon*, cleverly and intricately played by Mike, we are treated to Brian's lead vocal display on such songs as *Pure Prairie League's "Amie"*, *Eric Clapton's "Layla"*, and the *Allman's Brother's "Sweet Melissa."* They close their set with a rhythmically perfect rendition of the hit *"Blue on Black"*, from the 1999 album of the year

"Trouble is..." by Kenny Wayne Sheppard. The precise bluesy leads of this song are intricately played by Lead Guitarist Jason Novak. The Valley Kings thank those in attendance and address the crowd with a heartfelt welcome as behind the scenes the next act...

Al Lesutis readies himself for his time on stage. Al showcases an upbeat rhythmic style. As a Guitarist and Vocalist he warms the audience with an original work, {the first original of the night}, a song entitled "My Rock", on which he is accompanied by Jason on Guitar. He continues his all original set with a little tune called "Breath", followed by some really great vocal work on a song entitled "Got to Be Crazy." He finishes out his set with two more of Original songs... "Only One" and "Still Me".

As the crowd gives Al a rousing round of applause Jason returns to the stage to introduce the next act... A Duet known as Steve and Amy. They start off with a haunting rendition of Cyndi Lauper's classic 1980's hit "Time after Time" and with transitional fluidity they



fluently move into an acoustic rendition of Pat Benetar's "We Belong", giving Amy a chance to showcase her wide vocal range while Steve plays an arrangement on guitar that makes it sound as if they are backed by a full band. They then proceed to captivate all in attendance with a fun version of the rock and roll standard, "Stop Draggin' My Heart Around" by Stevie Nicks, and they further uplift our spirits with their own renditions of... "In a Moment" and "Believe in Me."



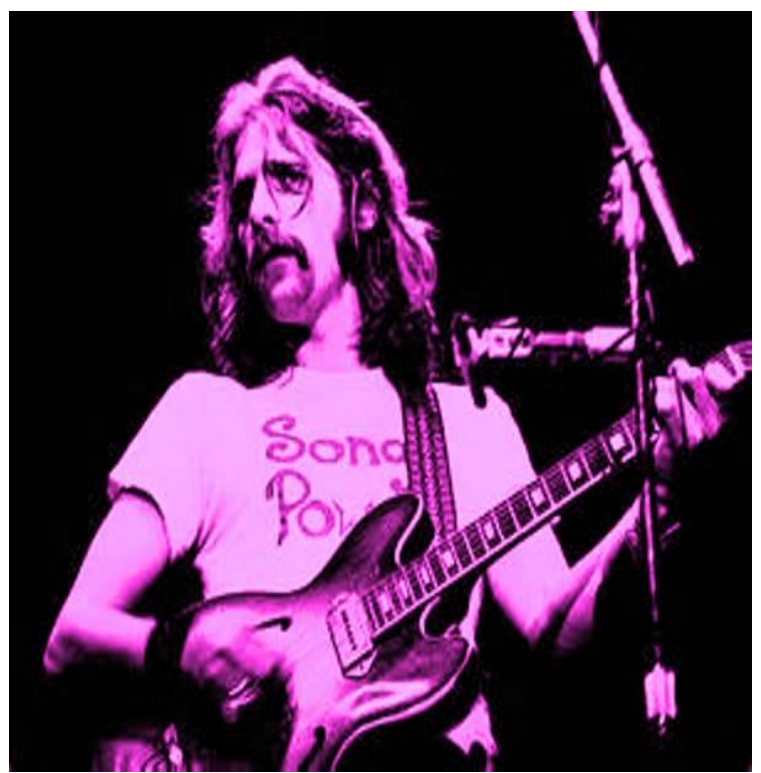
For their closing number, the duo treats us to a breathy rendition of Jewel's "Who Will Save Your Soul" ending with Amy performing a vocally powerful scat.



As Steve and Amy leave the stage the next act sets up to play, So I spread wing over to the bar in order to acquire for myself a Pitcher of the local Nectar... For you see *My Younglings*, back in November of 2015 all of us here at *Dragon Line Central* were inspired by this next act to bring to light this coming together of talented *Pittsburgh Musicians*. We had settled in for a night of playing and social commentary and after viewing her exemplary performance that night we decided then and there that we would begin to venture into this untapped, uncharted course that is so prevalent and yet so unknown within the confines of these three rivers...

Now for those of you who are new to these proceedings...let it be stated, as it has been stated in all of our previous endeavors...Dragon Line reviews are not your typically normal, *{please, excuse the following expression, {after all...I am a Dragon}, "fly by night"* reviews, we are not by any definition a sort of critics choice, and we most assuredly are not encamped within the confines of journalistic political correctness...We call it as we see it, and at times we may appear to give it to you in a way that may not be familiar to the average blogger or wannabe journalist living in his or hers Moms basement.

We instead choose to present to you in its rawest and most uniquely truthful form, an intrinsic, principled and exploratory rendition of what we see and how we see it...With that being said, may we at this time take a moment to consider and reflect on the careers of two of Rock Histories greatest Singer/Songwriters who have passed on since this night that we now speak of... For the era of Classic Rock and its history has been drastically and sadly altered by the passing of two of the most iconic Musical Legends of Our time...David Bowie...and Glenn Frey...



*Desperado... why don't you come to your senses... come down from your fences...
Open the gate... it may be rainin' ...but there's a rainbow above you...
You better let somebody love you... before it's too late...*



*Prodigal son... Come back to my love... You are the only one that my heart seeks for...
Whatever you've done... I cannot remember... Although there are many in my house
fulfill my joy... and come to me... prodigal son...
Please hurry home... Because I love you...
May their memory and their Music live on... and may they Rest In Peace...*

Understand Dear Reader, we here at The DragonLine are not in this for anything other than the pursuit towards the discovery of the source of that ever elusive curiosity that inspires all of us to create from nothing that which gives others the something that they need in their initial moment of trial or circumstance. We seek to discover that which helps to see the human condition through to its successful conclusion, and we respect the fact that inspiration, when in its most human form, *that of expression of emotion through music*, is still inspiring to those that we leave behind... These two Icons remind us that we are as Star-Man Desperados... Composed of the elements of the cosmos in a universal dance of creation brought about by a loving and giving Creator that created us in his image... Therefore we must create as well... and we must endeavor to continue to inspire.

We ask that you engage in this quest with us over the next twelve months, so that together we may bring to light the talent and resolve of Local Pittsburgh Artists, and while doing so, discover the driving force that lies beneath that which flows from within when instrumental and/or vocal sounds are combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion... and it is our reverent hope that these reviews will not disappoint, but that they will inspire and touch that place of solitude within us all where the music waits to be born...





Each month throughout the coming year we will be bringing you an in-depth study of the Artists performing at Mulligan's Sports Bar and Grill, and with each review we will introduce to you one of those acts as our Featured Artist of the month.

Our first Featured Artist, as stated earlier, is the inspiration for this undertaking and she is an Angelic spectral. At 24, Ashley Puckett is a Solo act who combines the talents of skillful Guitar playing and Vocal presence in a way that brings to mind the singer/songwriters of the early days of the birth of Rock from its parents, Mr. Rhythm and Mama Blues.

Accompanied by Her Boyfriend and #1 fan Frank, she tells us that she sometimes takes Gigs as a Marilyn Monroe impersonator and that she has been singing since the age of five. She started to learn to play the guitar when she was sixteen and she says that she draws influence from such artists as Leanne Womack and Carrie Underwood...and Trust me my young Padawans, it is very evident in her performance on this night, that she draws from an immense well whose waters are seasoned with the sultry and soothing flavors of many other well known artists.

She opens her set haloed beautifully beneath the blue lights of the stage, and with a soulful and stirring approach she shares her rendition of *"Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow"* {written by Gerry Goffin and Carol King and originally recorded by the Shirelles in 1960}, and she displays vibrant elements in her Vocals that leave the listener to dwell on personal reflection. She effortlessly glides over the melodies with the presence of a professional as she commands the stage with an innocence of beauty and grace.



Pulling still more emotion from the fountains of her Spirit, she gives us a bluesy take on the 1995 Jewel hit "You Were Meant for me"...and in her owning of the song Ashley shows that she is comfortable with the audience. She extends that confidence further as she ventures into "Girl Crush" from Little Big Town. Ashley then speaks to the crowd, thanking them for their support and then she blesses us with an original entitled "Take Me", enhanced with melodies like that of a song bird her vocals ride gently over the soft upbeat rhythm.

With an optimistic cadence she ends her set with "To Make You Feel My Love", a song written by Bob Dylan and recorded by other artists such as Kelly Clarkson, Adele and Garth Brooks.

Ashley Puckett is an amazing talent with an inspiring Singing voice, Emotional Songwriting skill, Bluesy guitar playing ability and a beauty that will transmit her far along the road that takes us onward through the explorative journey that is the Original Pittsburgh music scene, and we look forward to being witness to the rise of this young Starlet.



You can hear and see more of Ashley and learn more about her by going to her YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz5kfv5Ri5soX0xGeLUkCTg>

Jason once again returns to the stage as the next act sets up to play. We venture over to the sound booth for a quick visit with Al Simm the Bassist for our hosting House Band, "The Valley Kings". Mark is also the in-house Soundman for this evening's festivities.

We grab a couple of quick Pics as he sets up to mix the next act...Who happen to also Be My Mom and Dad {Lori and David G. of SpunJacked}. They start off with two Originals, "Merlynz Opus" and "Travelin' Greyhound Blues" both were written by Lori, the first song is about a meeting with an old sage in the woods and the second song is about the bad bus trip from hell that took place years later. They then pay tribute to David's late Songwriting partner and dear friend Brian Boone with an interesting rendition of one of his Original works entitled "Callin' IBM."

Jason comes to the Mic to introduce Jake and Jim, a 21st century Folk Duo that features Jake on Lead Vocals and Jim on Guitar. Their first song is called "Days like this" and it has some very humorous lyrics. They follow that up with a song entitled "How's Your Heart" which they dedicate to Charles Bukowski. We assume they mean the German Born American Poet and Novelist who passed away in 1994. This song caught the ear of many in attendance due to its memorable chorus.



Their next song *"How well you walk through the fire"* contained a memorable hook as well with an impressive underlying guitar melody.

A personal favorite among many was a song that most everybody could relate to called *"I hate my Job."* This song carried with it a catchy guitar melody and the vocal line sang about what we would rather be doing instead of participating in the daily drudge of a mundane existence. We snapped a fast Pic with them outside after their set.

At that point Al Lesutis came back up and showcased his vocal ability with Dale Wesley on guitar. They give us a two song set consisting of the Who's *"Behind Blue Eyes"* and Savatage's *"Sleep."* Al's voice shines as Dale accompanies him. In their performance of these songs, which both represent an undefined purpose in regards to reaching out from and reaching out to emotional solitude, these two guys showcase their ability to engage the audience.

Matt and Stash came to the stage next and showed us just how much fun music can be, especially at an Open Stage. They start out by creating a medley bringing together two songs, *One Iconic and the other Ironic...* Within an instant we know the opening chords into *Jack Black's "Best Song in the World"*, but before the last verse of the song they cross over into the Classic *Led Zeppelin* song *"Stairway to Heaven"* with which they rally the fan base once more. In a show of great musical diversity and ingenuity they intrigue us with an acoustic version of the 1977 hit by The Commodore's *"Easy"*, or as it's known parenthetically *"Easy like Sunday Morning."* Finally, the duo throws us for another rousing loop with the song, *"Your Ex-Girlfriend"*.

...and with that our evening comes to a close...We must say, we appreciate the opportunity to share our works with this group of talented musicians and artists, but we also welcome the blessing of each of their individual performances and we thank them for their presence this night...



We give a special Thank You shout to the folks at *The Munhall Music Academy* for the wonderful work that they are doing attracting superb Local Talent to the inner lying villages in the south. It is a beautiful thing to behold, and it is long overdue.

The energy at *Mulligan's* is positive and supportive and it is the place for Local Pittsburgh Artists to showcase their original talent, music and artistic expression... Please check them out for more information by going to: facebook.com/MunhallMusicAcademy ...and we invite you to peruse our other endeavors into the field of Entertainment Review as well by going to: Wordpress.com/DragonLine...

...and with that we say goodnight to all of the *Angels and Gentle Beasts*,
and we ask that you take a moment of pause before you go to sleep

What lies Beyond the coming dawn is hidden and yet to Rise

Remember My Younglings.....Life is SpunJacked...

...Soak it up.....Live it LIVE !!!

