

*At some point between the years 385 and 461 Anno Domini, a Man of Scottish descent named Maewyn Succat was quoted as saying the following: "No one should ever say that it was my ignorance if I did or showed forth anything, however small, according to God's good pleasure...but let this be your conclusion, and let it be so thought that as is the perfect truth...It was...The gift of God"...*

*Welcome Angels and Gentle Beasts*

*to this edition of:*

# *∞ The Dragon Line ∞*

*Open Stages... Open Doors*

*Chapter III: Pot Luck of The Irish*

**Hello Dear Readers...We hope you are all well and in comfort...Let us begin Chapter III of The Dragon Line's "Open Stages... Open Doors" monthly review by saying that we are sorry for the lateness of this month's edition, but as the old Irish Proverb states..." God made time, but man, made haste" ... With Saint Patrick's Day, and the Easter/Passover Holiday running in succession, it has been a busy few weeks for all of us and we thank you for your patience...and with that...so shall we begin...**

**This month, in lieu of circumstances beyond our control, instead of our usual review of a featured attraction, we have for you a pot luck banquet of entertainers and artists served up for consumption via the eyes and ears of all in attendance...So grab yourself a tall glass of your favorite Irish Stout and while you're at it call up Ol' Mr. Finnegan down the road and ask if he has a few potatoes you can borrow to make up a crispy batch of cheese fries... {p.s. the cheese whiz is either on the right side of the bottom shelf of the fridge, or on the top shelf of the kitchen cabinet where you keep the dog food and the duct tape}...**

**Ask any good and noble Creature of Irish decent for just about anything, and if he has it to share you may well consider it your own. Such is the generous heart of those of said lineage, and in the same manner, if you were to ask him about his ancestry he would undoubtedly regale you with an almost all but forgotten memory of the smells and aromas, {pleasurable and otherwise}, that he recalls wafting through his Grandmother's house on any given Sunday during his childhood; the pleasing scent**

of an Irish Stew being potted on the stove containing an array of produce and stocked with generous amounts of either Lamb or Beef, or the not so pleasing redolent scent of a big steaming pot of Corned beef and Cabbage.

Perhaps you may hear of a tale of revelry that begins with the over-indulgence of spirits, and ends with lessons learned in regards to the consequences of their festive actions... Well on this night, *the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month in the year of our Lord 2016* we sit with you to tell a tale as well...A tale of entertainment and enlightenment brought to us all courtesy of Mulligan's Sports Bar and Grill and the fine folks at The Munhall Music Academy...and perchance it too, may one day be told as legend.

The House Band the Valley Kings, *{our featured Artist last month}*, open our evening with Lead Singer *Brian Loosz* dressed in a pair of St. Patrick's Day Zany Zapper sunglasses and a light up four leaf clover necklace. This fanatical getup sets the tone for the night...Jason Novak and Al Simm accompany him on Acoustic Guitar and Bass *{respectively}*, and they open up with the *America* classic...*"Horse with No Name."* Jason and Brian strum with percussive synchronicity and we are treated to three part harmony on the well known chorus.



*Brian* addresses us all and welcomes us to *Mulligan's* with a Happy St. Patrick's Day salute as they transition nicely into an old *Marshall Tucker* favorite, *"Heard it in a Love Song"*, *Brian's* deep warm voice interspersed with *Jason's* country style leads



brings a sort of vigor to the 1977 hit, and Jason adds a beautiful two part harmony in the chorus. Next Brian engages the crowd to sing along to Poison's "Every Rose has its Thorn" as we are treated to more precise leads from Jason.



We then hear a fitting local tribute to Pittsburgh's own *Gathering Field* with their song "Lost in America." This song has a nice melody with a nineties sentiment of loneliness and despair. Ahhh the nineties, a lost pre-millennial generation lost in the mistakes of past generations...They were sick of all the eighties materialism and they were desperately in search of an outlet, spiritual or otherwise. It was the decade that brought us the *Grunge sound*, the *Goth Kids*, and the long awaited farewell to *Puffed-Up Sto-Rox Hair*. The Valley Kings end their set with the now classic hit by the *Doobie Brothers* from their 1974 Album *What Were Once Vices Are Now Habits*.

The guitar licks for the song "Black Water" were chanced upon by guitarist Patrick Simmons while the Doobie Brothers were recording their 1973 Album, "The Captain and Me" at Warner Bros. Recording Studio, and true to its original form, Mr. Loosz hits the vocal perfectly and has the crowd singing along to the famous bridge, "I'd like to hear some funky Dixieland, Pretty Mama come and take me by the hand."



*The Valley Kings* hand the stage over to *Brian Loosz*, and he showcases his talent as a solo performer. He sings one of My Mom's personal favorites, "Family Tradition" by *Hank Williams Jr.* This is a fun interactive song, which asks three poignant questions "Why do you drink"- "Why do you roll smoke"- "why must you live out the songs that you wrote"... Mom has told me some tales about her college years in which she recalls partying with the *Bama Band* and drinking the *Booker*...She said she never met a better bunch of guys than those in Hank's band. Not only were they a lot of fun but that they showed forth a gentlemanly southern respect, and at the end of the night they gave her a guitar autographed by *BoSeefus* himself...



Brian decides to stay in Country mode as he gives us another gem, *Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues"*, in which he possesses an element of old country charm, this is the type of country song that I myself enjoy listening to in contrast to much of the new country pop of today...It seems at times so mundane and cliché, with lyrics about losing your dog, your women and your truck all on the same day... {Hey...look at that...I just wrote one...}... *Cliché: By Nebby and the Blues Bears*

*I know at times it seems... So mundane and cliché...*

*Losing your dog, losing your woman... and your truck in the same day...*

*But hold on just a minute while I call my friend collect...*

*Aw hell why bother... it would just be as fodder...*

*He's probably shackled up with my Ex...*

I don't know 'bout you, but I think it's a hit...at the very least it's a work in progress.



Brian then changes gears with *Adam Sandler's "Lunch Lady Land"* and engages the audience with the chorus *"Sloppy Joe Slop-Sloppy Joe"*, and follows it up with another audience participation song in the form of hand claps and an A-capella lead vocal performance in the fun loving song...*"The Scotsman."* *"Ring ding diddle-ity-Eye-de Oh-Ring ding diddley eye oh... Well, Lad I don't know where ya been... but I see you won 1st prize..."*

Jason returns to the stage with a new comer to the fold... *Bob Dukart* starts off his set on guitar while Jason sings the Lead vocal on *James Taylor's "Sweet Baby James"*. We must Pause here a moment to testify to a truth...*Mulligan's Open Stage* is without a doubt one of the most welcoming and positive places for artists, musicians and entertainers to showcase and perfect their craft and performance, and we look forward to seeing *Mr. Bob Dukart* again.

Up next are *Steve and Amy O'Toole*, a married couple, with perfect pitch and harmony. Their first song, an original titled *"Happiness"* features Steve on Lead Vocal strumming his guitar while Amy joins him on some really resolutely tight vocal harmony. Their next tune, is a fun upbeat rhythmic Jewel song called *"Stay Here Forever"*, that features Amy's sweet alto voice and her accompanying captivating smile. We see professional polished vocal control as she arpeggiates through their next original song *"Run away."*



The next song *"Ho"*, another original, showcases the blend and contrast of the harmony between this dynamic duo, and their acoustic version of the 1984 *Cyndi Lauper* hit *"Time After Time"* sounds like a full band with some clever guitar playing by Steve and tight harmonies between them. Amy picks up the tambourine and adds a percussive element to Steve's

rhythmic playing with their final original *"Sweetest Lil"*, and they end their set with *Taylor Swift's* new pop hit *"Wildest Dreams"*.

Another married couple, *Lori and David G*, takes the stage next, and they too choose to take an Original road as they open with a work titled *"Merlynz Opus"* written by *Lori*. We are then invited to go along with them for a ride in one of the coolest of transports, an antique sports car with an alluring flair and a subtle yet rebellious presence, *Rush's "Red Barchetta"* is an intricate panorama of guitar work. Playing and singing it is no easy task, but *Lori* carries the rhythm along with skill and perfection. After all, she has been playing *Rush* tunes ever since she was 14 years old, and I myself am a product of her love for the band. {Regarding this matter...please stay tuned to *The Dragon Line* for more details in an upcoming edition}... We leave *"The Red Barchetta"* stranded by the one lane bridge on the riverside, and hop on another means of transportation, a Greyhound Bus. As our frequent readers may already be aware, *"Travelin' Greyhound Blues"* is a song that *Lori* wrote on a bus trip that apparently passed through hell on its way to Florida, she *did not* enjoy the bus trip but she is forever grateful for the song that it inspired. David and Lori end their set with the late great *Brian Boone's "Callin' IBM"*. Brian wrote this song in the late nineties, before the internet and Big Brother were anything like they are today. In it he is telling us all that we should be cautious as we become more plugged in than ever, and that we must retain our individuality and privacy.

Up next to the stage is *Jason Minkus* a Guitarist/Singer who sings about a different kind of car with a song by David Wilcox called *"Rusty Old American Dream."* A song About a relic, straight off the assembly line in 1958 when Detroit muscle was beginning its heyday and the cars were as individual as the people who owned them. The tail fins and unique paint jobs have been traded in for better than average aerodynamics that result in better gas mileage, but Man, I for one still miss the beauty of them...





Jason showcases some rhythmic syncopated guitar playing with his rendition of Paul Simon's 1980 hit "*Late in the Evening*." from his fifth studio album *One Trick Pony*. Next with Willie Nelson's distinctive brand of love song "*I'd have to be Crazy*", we hear Jason's mellow acoustic sound. A warm baritone vocal accompanies Jason's guitar playing as he makes Adam Levine's "*Lost Stars*" his own. "*Lost Stars*" was nominated for a 2015 Oscar from the *Begin Again* movie's soundtrack. Jason leaves us with a strong message, "*Wherever is Your Heart*" (I call home). This Brandi Carlile tune, resonates a catchy chorus and is a powerful finish to his set, a blend of Americana and country.

We are now graced with a bit of prog rock genius and some classical guitar training with our next act *Justin and Scotty*. With Justin on guitar and Scotty on the cajon, we hear a folk acoustic cover of Styx's "*Come Sail Away*", which is in some ways reminiscent of a Hawaiian beach party version. Justin shows an intricate knowledge of the guitar with his rendering of "*Classical Gas*" written in 1968 by *Mason Williams*. This song has been covered over the years by many artists including *Chet Atkins* and most recently by *Tommy Emmanuel* but *Justin Ringeisen* makes it his own. He then delights us with an original work titled, "*Tapping Song*", with a Spanish flamenco influence and a heartbeat coming from Scotty's cajon that brings out the emotion imbedded in this expression of musical artistry.

Justin was a student of Jason in his music class in high school; Jason told us that Justin was the loudest of all of his students and he knew then that he had potential. His next song "*Rogue Cherry*", is another of Justin's originals, it is reminiscent of the many intros that Alex Lifeson opens up his Rush tunes with, in this case we can hear elements of the "*Broom's Bane*", a tune that opened up Rush's "*The Trees*" on their live album *Exit Stage Left*. Justin closes his set with another great original composition, "*All 'Cause of You*", a song that Justin says he wrote in high school and that has been highly requested over the years. You can listen to Justin's music by going on reverbnation by going to: <https://www.reverbnation.com/rippedfromtheheavens> .



We finish out the night with Mark Chambers singing some fun high energy tunes with Jason Novak on guitar. Mark opens up his set with *Cage the Elephant's "Ain't No Rest for the Wicked"*, a song with a catchy chorus about everyday people struggling to handle the stress of life. He transitions into *"Beverly Hills"*, a Weezer song that longs for the good life. Mark hits the vocal on *Gin Blossom's "Hey Jealousy"* just like the original artist and he arpeggiates *Bush's "The Only Way Out"* with a wide range of pitch and dynamics on his vocals. The next song *"Pork and Beans"* is another Weezer hit about nonconformity and staying true to yourself...A sentiment that now days is so hard to achieve, after all wouldn't you agree that in this day and age, In this skewed and politically correct world, We could use more innovative ideas sparked by individuals with a creative viewpoint.



Mark and Jason ends the night with a memorable version of the *Fall Out Boy's, "Sugar We're Going Down"* with the catchy chorus *"We're going down, down, in earlier an round... And Sugar we're going down swinging..."* Mark Chambers' set reminds us all that no matter how Stressful live can get, with a little bit of Friends, Family and some creative outlet, life is a party worth celebrating.

So there it is my Minions and Padawans...Another one for the archives...We hope you all had a safe and Happy Saint Patrick's Day and a Blessed and Reflective Easter/Passover Holiday...and until next time please enjoy these traditional Irish Proverbs:

*"A drink precedes a story" ... "A scholar's ink lasts longer than a martyr's blood" ... and... "An Irishman is never drunk as long as he can hold onto one blade of grass and not fall off the face of the earth" ... So... "As you ramble through life, whatever be your goal; Keep your eye upon the doughnut, and not upon the hole" ... and...*

*"May the road rise to meet you... May the wind be always at your back... May the sun shine warm upon your face... And rains fall soft upon your fields... And until we meet again... May God hold you in the hollow of His hand" ...*



This month we introduce a new feature to our *"Open Stages Open Doors"* Column...

As we invite you to check out Our Fan Page, and if you wish to peruse our other endeavors into the field of Entertainment Review by going to:

<https://thedragonline.wordpress.com/>

...and with that, as always, 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 !!!





# The Dragon Line Fan Page

