

*We are born to a time such as this... Rising from the ruins of the past... Our reason for being here is simple...  
It is a clear cut case of direction... Whichever road we choose; there is one thing that remains certain...  
The fires will persist in their pursuit of us as long as we continue to maintain a belief that holds us  
to the position which states that Life is all about running from the storm...  
...Instead of realizing that we all must learn to dance in the rain...*

*Welcome Angels and Gentle Beasts*

*to this edition of:*

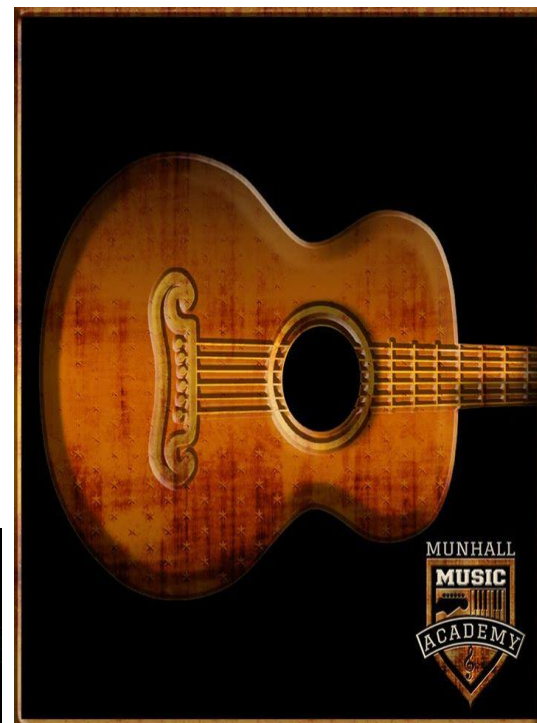
# *∞ The Dragon Line ∞*

*Open Stages... Open Doors*

*Chapter IV: A Ring of Iron... Forged in Fire*

A little over eight years ago, when we first set out on the path towards the road that leads to the outstretched highway into Review-ville, it was our declaration that in doing so we must maintain, in all sincerity, a Spirit of positive reception and an unrelenting resolve to put into the proper words our most inward understanding of the experiences that we, and most times, you as well, had participated in. Our goal of intention has always been to bring to you, Dear Reader, a more comprehensive study of the art of performance artistry.

There have at times, due to these conditions which we have placed on ourselves, been moments, and yes, even days and weeks when the precise measure of words could not be found within the time frames of a deadline. We here at *DragonLine Central* whole heartedly apologize to you, our loyal readers, for the length of delay in regards to this particular review which covers what we now know to be the final *Munhall Music Academy Open Stage* at *Mulligan's Sports Bar* in *April* of 2016. Upon finding out this fact, we felt an urging call upon our Spirits that this review required a more in-depth breakdown and we have elected to delve into an even deeper explanation in its long awaited final edit. So, My Young Padawans sit back and give eye and open understanding to the overall manifestation of our shared creativity as we capture the moments that we all have chosen to spend together on a monthly night out in the company of friends and family.



As we transitioned into the spring of the year of our Lord 2016, we found that Mother Nature's sense of humor had not abated in the slightest as she honored us with a new fallen blanket of white in the first week of April. Her actions seemed to negate the theories put forth by all of the climate change advocates on the theory and speculations of Global warming.

To say the least, it is definitively, as of yet, an unknown conjecture...and as the debates are debated across the states to reevaluate our nations state...we wait...ever so patiently for the break... that we take in the wake of the turmoil...So that we may once again venture into that undiscovered treasure trove of creative and inspirational thought that is revealed in *The Munhall Music Academy's Open Stage* held each month at the *Mulligan's Sports Bar and Grill* in the South Hills of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. Friends, Family and Fans had been waiting a fortnight times two for a relaxing night out and a break from the everyday tasks associated with life in this post millennial age...and on this night they were not disappointed.

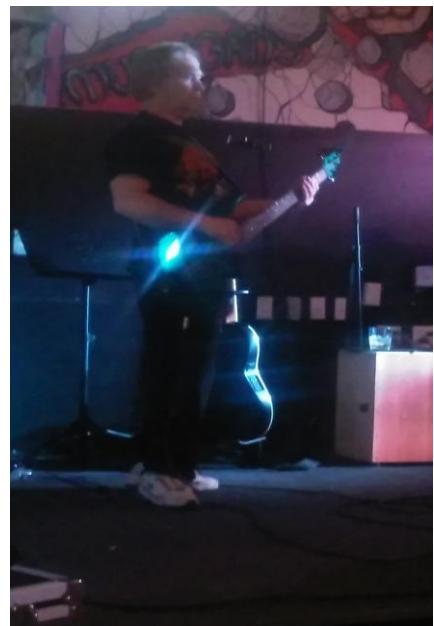
As is par for our monthly festive eve, we get started on this night with Our House band, *The Valley Kings*, a group of talented and dedicated musicians founded and put together by *Jason Novak* of the *Munhall Music Academy*. You may recall that "*The Valley Kings*" were our featured artists of the month back in February.

Their opening song this evening is a fun and much loved Beatles classic, "*You've got to hide Your Love Away*", originally written and sung by *John Lennon* and released on the *Beatles* 1965 "*Help*" album.

They then transition into a rendition of *Bad Company's "Shooting Star"* where Jason showcased his lead guitar skills and Lead Singer *Brian Loosz* gave us a warm vocal very reminiscent of the original performance. They follow with a stirring interpretation of *Neil Young's "Heart of Gold"*.



The band then changed gears with a song written by *Billie Joe Armstrong* of the punk rock band *Green Day* in 1990 and released on their fifth album *Nimrod* in 1997 called "*Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)*". *The Valley Kings* with *Jason* and *Brian* on guitar and *Al Simm* on bass, show us a sort of percussive bliss while performing this tune about quiet reflection.



They end their set with the *Stone Temple Pilots* 1994 hit "*Conversations Kill*", in which we hear the signature slide guitar chords of the song played gracefully by *Mr. Loosz*, showing us the diversity of his skill as *Al* displays his musicianship with an intricate grunge rock bass line.

*Jason* then introduces the next act of the night, *Lori* and *David G*... They open up their set with a prog rock favorite by the band *RUSH*, a song about the chemistry that exists between a man and his machine and the thrill of the open road. With quiet arpeggios and a driving contrasting rhythm by *Lori*, this song "*The Red Barchetta*" encompasses the enthusiasm of preserving an antique sports car with the adrenaline *Rush* and freedom of driving it full speed ahead while maintaining total control.

Next they take us into the realm of the prophetic with a song by the late *Brian Boone* titled "*Callin' IBM*". *Brian* wrote the song in 1998 after a rather lengthy discussion with *David* regarding different theories of end times prophecies and the rise of global governance. Ah...1998... No



social networking sites such as *Twitter* or *Facebook*, no shop on line sites like *Overstock* and *Amazon*, and there were no ever so intrusive drones flying about gathering video of our wives sunbathin' on the back deck next to the coy pond that we installed near the garden that our Uncle Russ helped us plant so that we could have rutabagas and squash in time for Thanksgiving, cause face it man...its either that or Green Bean Casserole and Cranberry Sauce in a can.

I can't help but wonder as we write this review... Now that we have wandered through the years since Brian's shuffling off of the mortal coil in 2009, what would he have to say today regarding the growing influence of the world wide web and the rise of all of the social networking programs...Not to mention all of the global insertion of the all knowing and all seeing GPS systems that we all seem to take for granted today...I mean...C'mon...This was a cellular phone in 1998...Tell me it doesn't look like something out of the Star Trek universe,



*"Kirk to Enterprise... Beam us up Scotty... There is no intelligent life down here" ...{Sorry for the interruption ... I kind of went Rouge there for a minute... Now back to our regularly scheduled programming}...*

From there we hop a ride on a greyhound bus for a break from the everyday tyranny of technology with Lori's original titled *"Travelin' Greyhound Blues."*

A song about a bus trip from Pittsburgh to Florida...The opening line says it all... *"Thirty-four hours without a shower...riding on this stinkin' bus...Sittin in the back by the bathroom door... The smell got the best of us"*. Next up is an old Bruce Springsteen crowd favorite called *"The River"*...and to all of the younger readers out there...Yes this is a *Springsteen* song, not a *Clark's* song...But I must say...The *Clark's* did that jam some serious justice....

With a hushed contemplation, David and Lori continue their set with another collaborative original called *"What do you believe"*, they follow with another original song written by *Lori* titled *"Merlynz Opus*, which introduces us to an old man, in an even older forest, who helps us to understand the underlying revelation that reveals to us the reasoning behind maintaining our individual heritages and cultures while retaining respect for those whose said histories differ from our own.

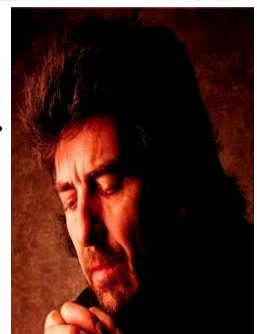
Our next act up is a young man named Jason Minkus. He has been a regular at Mulligan's Open Stage and we have seen him grow as an Artist/Performer throughout the course of several months. In his first song, *Chris Stapelton's "Traveler"*, we see from him a strong vocal dynamic with this folk song about taking a journey. Then *Jason* shows his confidence as he relates to the audience with the song "*Lost Stars*" by *Adam Levine*, making the song his own with his warmly inviting baritone voice.



He chooses to follow that up by giving us a taste of his own writing ability with an original called "*Fields of Love*", and then a little *Willie Nelson* humor with the 1990 release "*Ten with a Two*", a song that Mr. Nelson wrote about the blinders that alcohol can put on us when our guard is down and we are surprised in the morning about the choices we have made the night before. *Jason* leaves us with a little more humor in *The Bellamy Brother's* 1985 single "*Old Hippie*", a song about a guy who stays true to his 1960s way of life despite the ever changing culture around him.

*Dan Dubios* takes the stage next, opening with a fun upbeat performance of *Tom Petty's "You're so bad."* Then, with *America's* classic 1972 hit "*Horse with No Name*", he incorporates his own take on the archetypal leads into the rhythmic structure of the song. *Dan* takes a moment to thank the *Munhall Music Academy* along with its owners *Steve O'Toole* and *Jason Novak* as he dedicates his next song to an old friend named *Rick*. *Dan* handles the *Neil Young* classic "*Old Man- {Look at my life}*" with a vocal ability outshined only by that of the original artist.

*David Bowie's* psychedelic, "*Space Oddity*" {"*Major Tom*"} is his next endeavor, and his rendition of this fan favorite is captivating and room stopping, he fills the stage like a full band with a fluent vocal and skilled guitar playing. He then graces us all with one of his own, an original titled "*I Gotta Look Out for Myself*", a song about self sufficiency in this world of "free handouts". *Pink Floyd's* "*Wish you were here*" is next on the menu followed by an uplifting rendition of *George Harrison's* "*Here Comes the Sun*". You can check him out on the web by going to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBJCabM2h2A> ...



Next up, *My Younglings*, is our *Featured Artist of the month*...A young Man named *Justin Ringeisen*...*Justin* began his musical journey as a freshman in high school, and it was there that he met a guidance counselor, The "*Valley Kings*" own, *Jason Novak* who encouraged him to join *The Steel Valley Guitar Club*, a group of musicians who would gather together once a week to shoot the breeze and jam, and as we stated in our *March 2016 review* titled "*Pot luck of the Irish*", *Jason* said that even back then *Justin* was the loudest of all of his students and he knew then that he had potential.

*Justin* told us that he decided to become a serious musician at the age of 16, and that his Mom was in opposition to this choice due to the fact that his biological father was also a guitarist, However, *Justin* could not shake the urge to play guitar and he found that when he did...it was as natural to him as breathing.

After graduating from *Steel Valley High School* in 2008, He attended *Clarion University*. It was while attending here that he trained as an opera vocalist and although his passion were more focused on perfecting the guitar, He found himself fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to take lessons on the side from the head jazz professor at *Duquesne University*.

While at *Clarion*, He found himself a little gun-shy when it came to projecting his voice, but as it was with the guitar and breathing, it just seemed natural...and to his own surprise he found that he could achieve a four octave singing range. He was two years into his tenure at *Clarion University* when he met a young lady named *Laura Sigmund*, and they got engaged in 2015.

His creative influences include some of the biggest icons in *Rock, Progressive Rock and Heavy metal*...Bands such as *Boston, Queen, Styx, Kansas, Rush, and Metallica*, just to name a few... However, Dear Reader, we mustn't judge the book by even this broad of a cover, for you see, *Jason* holds an avid interest in video game music arrangement and he is an extremely classically influenced musician as well, and it is *this* influence, in combination with those afore mentioned, that show forth mightily in his original works and in his performance of them.



He tells us, in our sit down interview on that April eve before the show, that it was at the age of 16, when he first heard the music of *"Dream Theater"* and *"Avenged Sevenfold"* that he felt propelled into the realm of Creative discovery and he is currently working on a project titled *"Ripped From the Heavens"*, which he says was inspired by the experiences he had while playing for a band in LA in 2012, a band which he says seemed to want nothing more from life than to party and become famous. He opens up to us about this particular part of his journey by telling us that he felt as though his band mates at that time were mistreating him in regards to his ideas and attitude towards projecting a more positive perspective in lieu of their performances and their original works and that because of this he began to suffer from severe depression in that he saw no direction for himself at that time in the continuing onslaught of self indulgence being perpetuated by his band mates.



He says it was as if he was on a highway moving towards inevitable destruction and he could find no exit with which to resume his own individual expedition. It was at that time that he says fate intervened and gave him an out in the form of a burst appendix. He then tells us of an original work that he wrote before going to LA called *"Rise from the Ashes"*, and how that after fate had interceded, he realized, while he was recovering from the medical trauma, that the song had been one of prophetic prediction telling of the horrors that he had experienced with his band in LA.



I was reminded then, as I am now, of an opening paragraph to a chapter from the *Richard Adams* novel *"Watership Down"*, that states: *"To come to the end of a time of anxiety and fear... To feel the cloud that has hung over you lift and disperse ...The cloud that dulled the heart and made happiness no more than a memory... This at least is one joy that must've been known by almost every living creature..."* and in this moment, as I write to you Dear Reader, I am consciously aware of the fact that we must all be thankful to the controller of fate for all of

those times he has and will continue to take what is meant for our detriment and work it to the superior for our advantage...

Jason Novak introduces Justin to the stage as a member of the *Steel Valley Guitar Club*, and we are immediately introduced to his classical background as he opens with a medley consisting of Paganini's "*Crease Flight*" and "*Flight of the Bumblebee*", followed by Mason Williams' song "*Classical Gas*" and an overture of Justin's original material to end the medley, in which he displays his intimate knowledge of the guitar with lightning fast fingers as he ascends and descends the fret board in pleasingly *audiodic* fashion.

His next song is the fore mentioned "*Rise from the Ashes*, in which we find an even deeper understanding of its prophetic vision having been told of it prior to this performance. The song starts off with a driving bass line appetizer, which is in turn responded to by simultaneous leads, and a captivating chorus that feeds our want for a positive solution to the subjects circumstance.

His lighter side appears as he jokes about not being able to pull off the Red Hot Chili Pepper's "*Other Side*." However, he carries the vocal melody fluently while strumming the guitar. The next song is an original, "*Last Words*", where he showcases classical finger picking and a talent for writing not only lyrics

but alluring vocal melodies as well. In his last original of the night, titled "*Hydrate*" he makes the difficult art of finger tapping appear as an intricately beautiful ballet as fingers dance over strings while at the same time producing in concert the music to which they dance. He says that he prefers to and would rather create as a solo composer, writing all of his own instrumental as well as vocal parts for his original works and that his projected goal is "*doing music the way it is intended*", and that when he decides to put a band together, he will seek out musicians who will not only respect him as well as themselves, but they will respect the





vision that he has been granted to create and give life to as well. He believes that it is encoded in his DNA to be who he is, A Man always striving to achieve, giving one hundred percent, who will push to the limits and beyond everything that he faces along the journey, and for this particular classically trained musician who is driven to create and perform...there is no better truth than that.... *Justin Ringeisen* is an inspiring original artist who in his "*Rising from the ashes*" has taken, in those times of trial and circumstance, the best of those lessons learned and allowed them to temper and strengthen rather than hinder or weaken him. To put it plainly, He has the potential for genius for he is truly a "*Ring of Iron...Forged in Fire*".



If you wish to listen to *Justin's music* you can check it out by going to:

<https://www.reverbnation.com/rippedfromtheheavens>

As *Justin* steps from the stage *Brian Loosz* and *Jason Novak* return, this time as the acoustic duo *Shake & Bake*. They treat us to a little bit of rhythmic synchronicity as *Brian* strums a 12 string and is joined by *Jason* on guitar and vocals on *Kenny Wayne Sheppard's "Blue on Black."* *Brian* then takes us through *Stevie Ray Vaughn's "Cold Shot"* with an impressive rendition of the opening leads, and they follow it up with one of *John Cougar's* songs "*Pink Houses*."



*Brian* then plays and sings a heartfelt version of the *Lynyrd Skynyrd* classic "*Simple Man*", owning the song with a powerful vocal which he carries over into "*Already Gone*", an *Eagles* tune off of the 1974 "*On the Border*" album. He and *Jason* do this song some serious justice with *Brian* strumming his 12 string and *Jason* playing some sweet country leads as *Brian* hits the onomanopia in the song with perfection. *Brian* then treats us to a melodic version of the band *America's* song "*Sandman*" and then plays one of our personal favorites, the ever mood inducing song by *Garth Brooks* "*The Thunder Rolls.*" He then pays tribute to the Late Great *Merle Haggard*...



It was at this point that some of those in attendance began to notice that the accumulation of snow outside was beginning to become a bit much, and we ourselves had a long journey home ahead of us...and so...we were forced...as many had already been who were in audience...to bid adieu to those remaining in attendance and take leave of the festivities...



Had we known that this would be the last night for the *Munhall Music Academy's Open Stage* at *Mulligan's Bar and Grill* in the southern hills of western Pennsylvania, chances are we would have weathered the weather a little longer in order to enjoy what is now an outing that we reflectively await the return of...

Over these past months we here at *DragonLine Central* have been blessed with the opportunity to not only be a part of an outstanding display of Artistry and creative intellect, we have also been blessed with an array of enlightenment and insight due to the fact that we have become acquainted with some of the best that this town has to offer not only in regards to the music and performances that we were witness to but in the people that we have met as well...In the beginning of this

monthly endeavor we stated to you, *Dear Reader* that *“these DragonLine reviews were not your typically normal, “fly by night” reviews, and 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 then went on to state that, *“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”* ... and now ... We hope with an earnest heart that we have done so to your liking and appreciation. We are grateful to all of you who have shared in this journey with us through this first half of 2016, and we thank you so very much for allowing us to be a part of the experiences that we have shared together ... We will forever look back on these moments with a fond remembering of previous excursions and a longing for their eminent return ...



# Thank You all ... We'll see you soon ...



George Washington



No country upon earth ever had it more in its power to attain these blessings than United America. Wondrously strange, then, and much to be regretted indeed would it be, were we to neglect the means and to depart from the road which Providence has pointed us to so plainly; I cannot believe it will ever come to pass.

For more information about *The Munhall Music Academy* go to:  
[facebook.com/MunhallMusicAcademy](https://facebook.com/MunhallMusicAcademy) ...and we invite you to peruse our other  
endeavors into the field of *Entertainment Review* as well by going to:  
[https://thedragonline.wordpress.com/...](https://thedragonline.wordpress.com/)

# *The Dragon Line*

*...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...  
...For what lies Beyond the coming dawn is hidden and yet to Rise...  
...Remember My Younglings ... Life is SpunJacked...  
...Soak it up... Live it LIVE !!!*