

now in COLOR!

STACKS

a monthly review of records from my collection



\$6.66

Issue #8

May 2024

Record Store Day

I hope everyone had a wonderful record store day! I spent my Record Store Day waiting in line for Rattleback Records, and the line curved well around the block. I ended up picking up the Rocky Horror Demos, The Hives' Black and White Album and Alan Parsons Project "Pyramid in Progress". However I'm not 100% sure if I'll be attending next year.

It's not that I didn't have a good time, far from it. But every year when that album list drops, there's always a chance nothing I want will be on it. So there's that. I also learned that I'm not one for waiting in lines for 3 hours, even if those hours were well spent thanks to the folks I got to talk to waiting in line with me. But who knows, maybe there's gonna be some really cool records coming out again that will get me back in that line.

I've been tumultuously busy. I just attended C2E2 which was a wonderful time, saw the Death Becomes Her musical (which was great), and I have Anime Central coming up next week as of writing. I hope to get this out as soon as possible. That being said, there hasn't been much time for writing nor spinning. So there may or may not be a June issue. Either that or there will be a combo June/July issue. We'll see how I fill that gap when I come to it. I do try to stick to a schedule with these but being a bit more loosey-goosey with the publication may be to my benefit. But if you don't see a new issue grace Quimby's or Uncharted Books shelves next month, fear not! I'll be back!

- Lennon McCrea

Want to send album recommendations?

Reach out on my guestbook at
zinesbylennon.neocities.org

or shoot me an ask or a message on tumblr at
zinesbylennon

If I end up reviewing it, I'll make sure you're credited for the recommendation and send you a free copy!

Lennon's Top-Ten Spun Albums

...According to Last.fm. I excluded any albums from the list that I do not own on vinyl. (There may be interference from digital listens as well, but I do track vinyl plays thru my Last.fm)

#1: Saviors - Green Day

#2: Tommy - The Who

#3: The Bells - Expert in a Dying Field

#5: The Alan Parsons Project - Eye in The Sky

#6: Marc With a C - Please Believe In Yourself, Alright

#7: Green Day - 21st Century Breakdown

#8: Green Day - American Idiot

#9: Marc With a C - Thanatophobia

#10: Marc With a C - Pop! Pop! Pop!

-Bonus Top 10 Artists-

#1: Green Day

#2: Marc With a C

#3: The Beatles

#4: The Alan Parsons Project

#5: The Bells

#6: The Who

#7: Alanis Morissette

#8: Twenty-One Pilots

#9: Blink-182

#10: My Chemical Romance

PINKSHIFT SACCHARINE

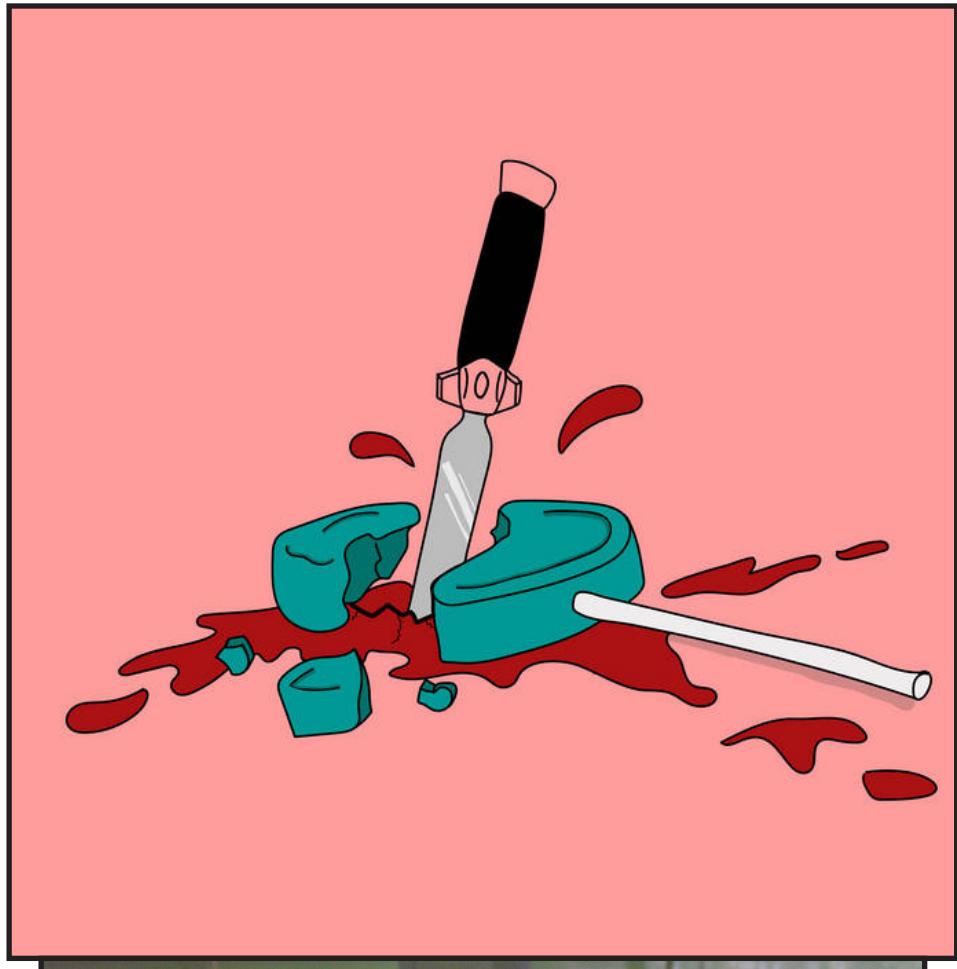
(2021)

Pinkshift has been a favorite artist of mine ever since I found them a few years ago. “I’m Gonna Tell My Therapist On You” is the song I was recommended, and it happens to be off this EP.

If you ever get the chance to see Pinkshift live, take it. They are absolutely electric. I originally wrote about them, albeit far too briefly, in my zine “A Little Punk Music” following my experience seeing them live. I have never seen someone jump around on a stage nearly as much as Ashrita Kumar did that day at Riot Fest, and their performance of “Mars” (from this EP) was astounding.

There are some things to note if you pick this up on vinyl. It is a quick listen. The five tracks go by in absolutely no time whatsoever. That isn’t a surprise, considering it’s an EP. Additionally, there was the strange choice of cutting it at 33 1/3 RPM; typically, EPs on 12” records are cut at 45 RPM in my experience, so it’s more of a minor gripe, if anything. Maybe the audio quality could have benefitted a bit, but I’m unsure. Thirdly, the alternate cover art. The cover to the right is the original EP art, but the vinyl copy has a skeleton sucking on a lollipop with a knife to its throat. I tried to find a good scan of that, but for whatever reason, whatever art I found of it was a strange aspect ratio.

Still, as a pop-punk record, I’d recommend this. However, I wouldn’t say it’s required to pick it up on vinyl. Maybe wait until they do another pressing. I had some weird experiences with this one that I wasn’t quite able to pin down. Still, the music is stellar that if collecting EPs isn’t for you, then giving it a listen to digitally will be. And I cannot reiterate enough, if you have any opportunity to see them perform live, do it. Pinkshift is an absolute blast.



STEREO

FOXBORO HOT TUBS

**STOP DROP
AND ROLL!!!**

CONTAINS 12 HITS INCLUDING...
MOTHER MARY



It's totally not secretly Green Day; though it took my girlfriend a few tracks to realize. Originally released under the name Foxboro Bathtubs just to mess with their fans, I really consider this to be the 'secret' Green Day album.

That being said, it has much more of a traditional rock n' roll influence compared to other Green Day releases. Billie Joe's unmistakable vocals are still present, but there's a bit more of a peppy-ness here to the songs that aren't present in releases like American Idiot or Nimrod. The closest you might get would be some tracks from the Uno Dos Tre trilogy of albums. All around, it's a solid album. For me, the title track, "Mother Mary," "Ruby Room," and "The Pedestrian," really stand out the most from this album. I find myself singing "The Pedestrian" after every time I listen to this album. And that ending drum section on "Ruby Room" from Tre Cool kicks absolute ass. It's impossible not to love.

"Red Tide" is a bit of a talking point on this album. It feels like it's inspired by tracks by bands like the Doors, with its slower pace and languish vocal lines. Taking its time as the track moves along at its own pace. But it never really necessarily has a climax for me, but it certainly feels like Billie is channeling his inner psychedelia.

I would argue that out of all of Green Day's side projects, this is the one I'd go out of the way to recommend the most. The Longshot is also great, but The Network is a bit out there when compared to the band's usual fare. And much like Roger Daltrey's McVicar is a secret Who album (featuring all members of The Who at the time), this album is just as much the 'secret' Green Day album. So if you're a fan of pop-punk, or even just Green Day, go give this one a listen if you haven't already.

**FOXBORO HOT TUBS
STOP DROP AND ROLL!!!**

(2008)

ANDREW POWELL AND THE PHILHARMONIA PLAY THE BEST OF THE ALAN PARSONS PROJECT

(1983)

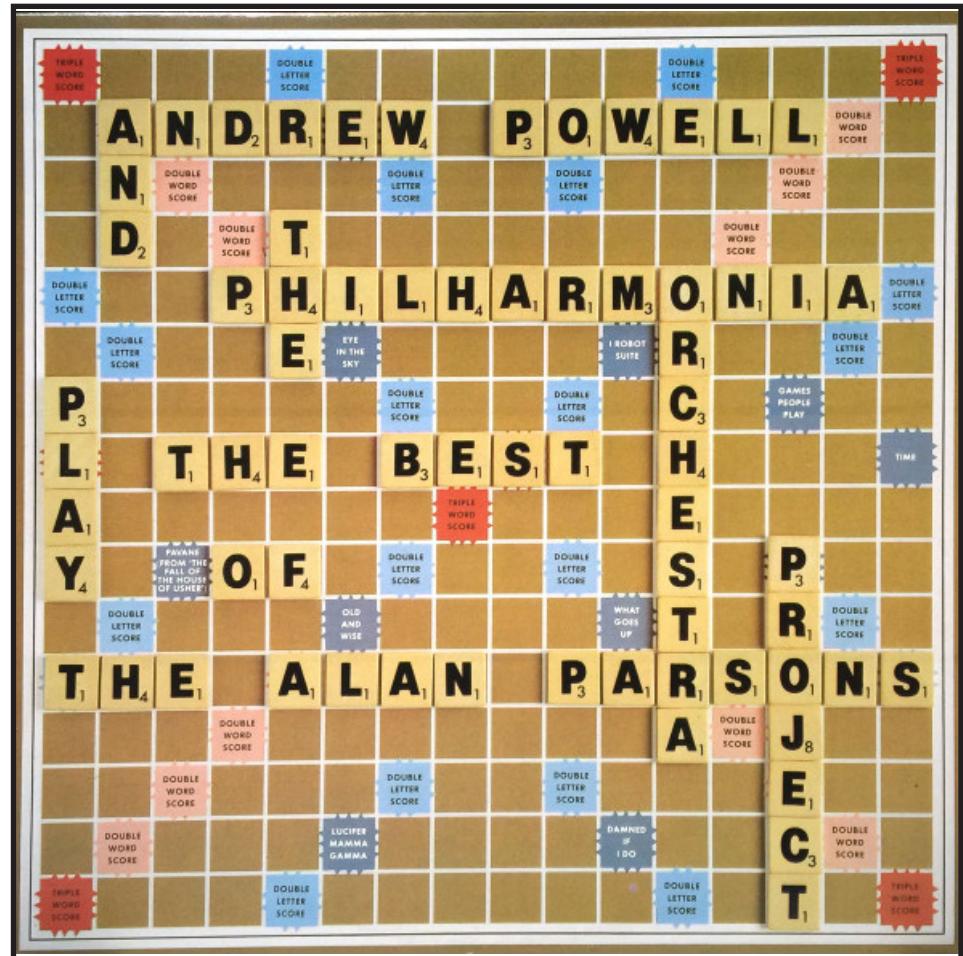
Somehow, this album is quickly becoming my most played album featuring music from the Alan Parsons Project, and they don't even perform on it.

Andrew Powell, however, has had a hand in the Alan Parsons Project, becoming the beloved act it is today, primarily through arranging and playing various instruments in orchestral bits found in the music of the Alan Parsons Project. Here, he has put his own absolutely wonderful orchestral spin on some beloved classics by The Alan Parsons Project.

Now, this album was only ever released on vinyl in the US by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, which results in one of the best-sounding Alan Parsons records out there. The beautiful orchestration on "Time" absolutely shines through. I'm not one that's usually up for albums like this outside of movie soundtracks, but being able to sit back and pick apart each individual instrument in the orchestra on this piece is an absolute delight. And the violin in "Time" that takes the melody (I think it's a violin, not too well-versed in classical instruments) is utterly breathtaking.

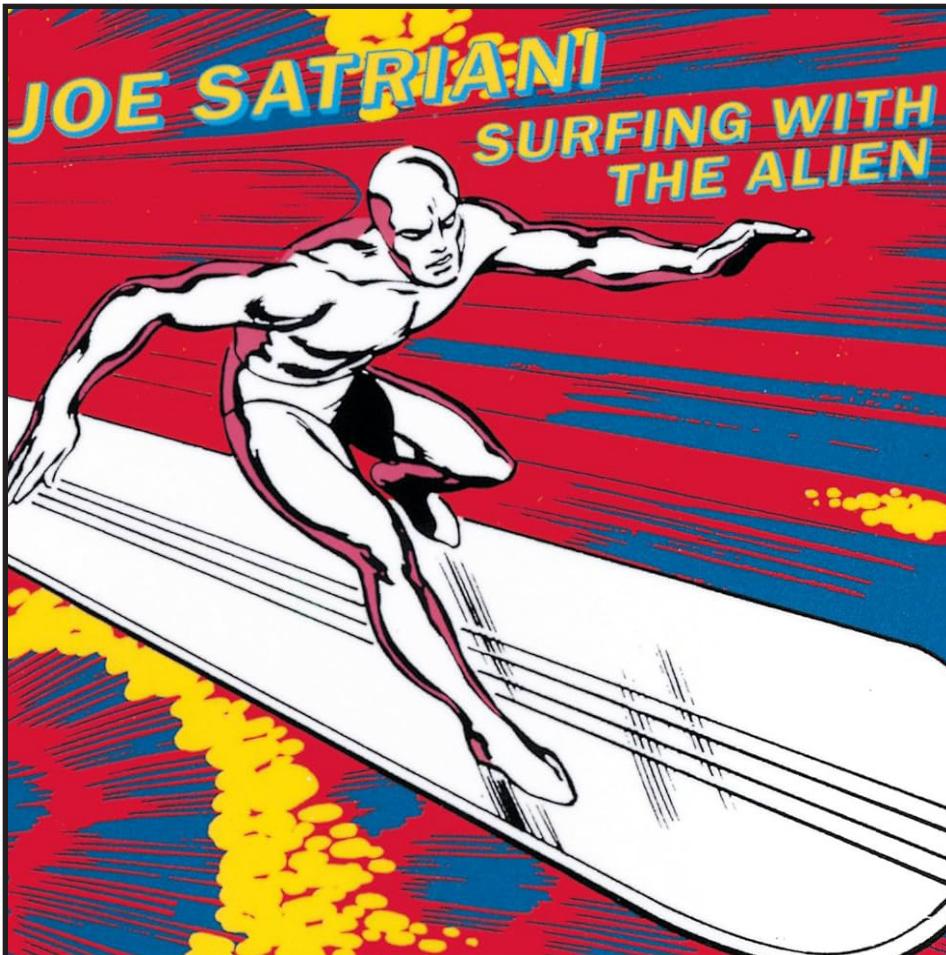
One of the more interesting things Powell does with his interpretations is obfuscate some of the openings of these well-known tracks. For example, "Games People Play" starts with a completely different opening to the song than we are used to (until it really starts going, of course, with that fantastic saxophone lead), initially sounding like something off the Back to the Future score.

If you are as big a fan of The Alan Parsons Project as I am, I implore you to seek this one out. It can be a bit tricky to find, given that it's only had one US vinyl pressing, but it's well worth the effort. Worse, there are rips of the MOFI CD release floating around on the internet.



SURFING WITH THE ALIEN

JOE SATRIANI



Featuring some amazing cover art, this master-class in guitar work from Joe Satriani comes with a high recommendation. *Surfing with The Alien*, his 1987 effort comes with all the stellar guitarwork that one would expect from Joe Satriani.

I've come to enjoy Joe Satriani for many of the same reasons that I enjoy artists like Masayoshi Takanaka. Both amazing and outstanding guitarists in their own right, both of these guitarists manage to create a sound all their own that remains pretty consistent throughout the albums I've listened to from them thus far. If I'm in the mood for some chill, summer drive music, then Takanaka is your guy. But if you need to hype yourself up, maybe you're getting ready for a party or just really need a little bit more than the caffiene in your coffee one morning, then Joe Satriani has you covered.

Opening with an amazing title track, *Surfing with the Alien* establishes itself as a shred metal album right from the get-go. And it never lets up. For an album made on a budget, one wouldn't know it. I recently found out that the track "Scratch Boogie" is the only track on the album to feature live drums, while all the other tracks use drum machines.

If you find recent releases of this album, they will feature an alternate cover featuring the headstock of a silver guitar as opposed to Marvel's Silver Surfer, due to licensing fees. That being said, as iconic a cover as it is, this album deserves a spot in any rock collection be it digital or analog.

(1987)

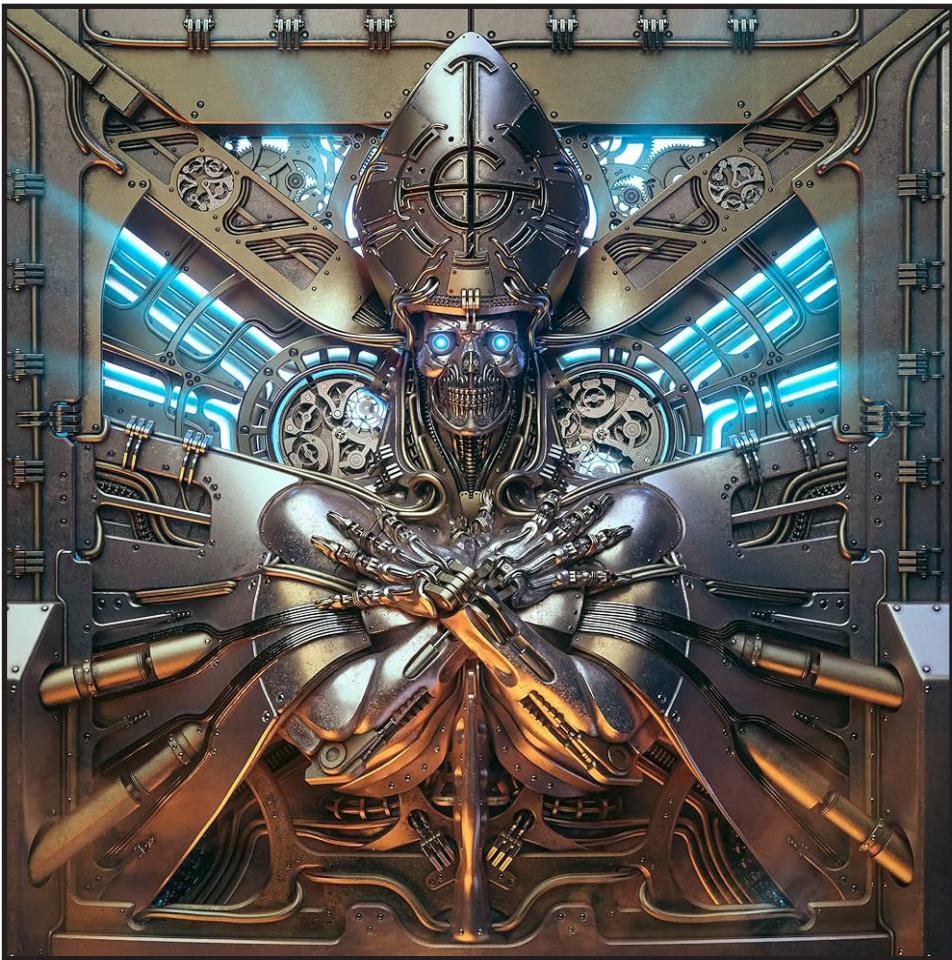
HOST PHANTOMIME

It's not uncommon for lots of the reviews of albums in this zine to also be the first thing I listen to by a given artist. This is another one of those times. I'd encountered Ghost on Tik Tok a whole lot recently, and really wanted to see exactly what all the hubbub was about. And I gotta say from track one, I love what I've heard so far.

Ghost was originally described to me as "Scooby-Doo Metal" and they definitely have a bit of a goofy vibe to me, in a similar way to the band Ice Nine Kills. What with the group's flair for the theatrical from their church-goth garb and corpse paint. Don't let any of this write them off for you.

Phantomime is a cover album. Which isn't a bad thing at all, but if I had been aware at the time of purchase, I probably would have chosen something else as my first listen of the artist. Songs like Iron Maiden's "Phantom of The Opera" is great for showing off the stellar guitar-work coming from this band. I also quite like their cover of Tina Turner's "We Don't Need Another Hero" it's fittingly drenched in an 80's sound, from the vocals to that wonderfully poppy guitar sound. "See No Evil" has some more great guitarwork but none of this is that new to me, it being a cover album and all.

Although I like everything that's on this album, I don't feel that I have a good grasp on what Ghost is about just yet. Simply because *Phantomime* is a cover album, it has no original material on it. Although they did do the tracks in their style, and quite well I'd say, it just doesn't paint the picture I was hoping it'd be. I'm sure it's more enjoyable for regular Ghost listeners. It may be time for another trip to the record store, because this has certainly piqued my interest.



MEET ME @ THE ALTAR PAST // PRESENT // FUTURE

(2023)

past // present // future



meet me @ the altar

Meet Me @ The Altar is relatively new to the scene, their music popularized through TikTok. It's also worth noting that the group formed thanks to the internet, as each member of the band originally lived in different states. That being said, *Past // Present // Future* is a wonderful album from start to finish, and errs more on the pop side of pop-punk.

My favorite song off of *Past // Present // Future* has to be “Try”. The whole album has a similar energy with each song, but I just love those little acoustic sections only to be interrupted by the electric guitar. Not to mention Edith Victoria’s vocals really bring those sections and the entire track together. If you were to listen to only one track off of this album it would be this one.

“Need Me” is another track worth listening to if you want to listen to one or two tracks, it’s a good track about shitty partners and has this wonderful early 2000’s pop feel to it that takes me back.

Speaking of early 2000’s pop, that’s really the whole feel of *Past // Present // Future*. While there are a couple songs here and there that feel a bit more on the punk side of things, but don’t go into this album thinking Blink-182, think more Avril Lavinge.

Side Two of the record continues with some more similar tracks. “It’s Over for Me” has some nice guitarwork in between the chorus and verses. “Rocket Science” is another track I could recommend off of Side Two, though I really feel that Side One has the heavy-hitting tracks.

Overall Meet Me @ The Altar’s first full-length effort is a good one. Even if their influences are all out on the table, they’ve managed to come up with a sound that is unabashedly them. Check this one out!



After meeting at Rattleback Records, I had the wonderful opportunity to interview journalist Brian Anderson. Previously having written for Vice and currently working on a book about the Grateful Dead's "Wall of Sound", we chatted about the record collecting hobby, his book and the Grateful Dead.



How long have you been collecting records?

I started purchasing vinyl records in 2004. I had been a child of the compact disc revolution, you know, so like I had hundreds of CDs that I had been purchasing over the years. But yeah, right. In 2003/2004, when I was finishing high school and going into starting my undergrad, that's sort of when I recall, like going to a record store for the first time and purchasing a vinyl record for the first time. So that's like a solid 20 years of collecting records. And of course, like any other collection it's like a living, breathing organism. And it changes shape over the years if you want to shed stuff, if you move apartments or you move cities, which I did a number of times in the past 20 years.

Do you remember the first record that you bought?

You Fail Me, by Converge. I got this at the now defunct Waiting Room Records in Normal, Illinois.

Do you have a record that was particularly hard or tricky to obtain?

I think, late last year, I was flipping through the new arrivals at Rattleback and the record, Things We Lost in the Fire by the band Low, which I had been looking for a copy out in the wild for a long time and could never find one. It's the little endorphin rush you get when you spot something that you're kind of keeping your eye out for.

How many records does your collection sit at currently?

I would say maybe right now probably close to like 500.

Do you have a particular way you like to sort your records?

Straight alphabetized by artist, but I do have one cubby here that is reserved for all of the releases I have from the Numero Group. Because they have a visual aesthetic to them. Shout out Rob Sevier and Ken Shipley at The Numero Group, a great Chicago based archival label.

If you had one tip for people entering the hobby, what would that be?

Don't feel weird about buying new records. I know so many people who are purist types who need to find first pressings of everything, like first pressing or bust, you know? That's great if you have the time and the means to seek that stuff out, and pay for it because some of that stuff ain't cheap. But there's nothing wrong with buying a new version of a classic record.

So you're writing a book on the Grateful Dead's speaker system, tell me about that.

The book has been coming together for a very long time now. I've been laying, laying the groundwork of it for years. It spun off of a story that I wrote when I was an editor and a reporter at Vice for eight years. I wrote this story in 2015 about the Wall of Sound, which is something that I've been obsessed with my whole life. Long story short, I was raised by two really hardcore

Deadheads, who kind of orbited the band and each other in the early 70s. They both got to see this massive sound system, that was technologically groundbreaking in so many ways. The band was touring with it in the early 70s. So my parents would always talk about this giant mountain of speakers, that the band was performing through. So from a young age, the Wall of Sound has kind of just captivated me. In 2021 the Grateful Dead partnered with Sotheby's, the auction house and auctioned off a bunch of decommissioned stuff. There were quite a number of pieces of the Wall of Sound that were in this auction and on a whim, with like 24 hours to go, I put a bid in on a speaker cabinet that wasn't explicitly labeled part of the Wall of Sound. But looking at like the vintage of it I was pretty sure this is from the Wall of sound. So I put a bid in on it and amazingly, I won. And it's sitting here in my living room.



Since we are on the topic of the Grateful Dead, I had asked you back at Rattleback, what is the best place for someone to start with the Grateful Dead?

I feel like there are a number of canonical live Dead recordings that would be ideal for someone who is aware of this cultural phenomenon. But might have no idea where to start, just in terms of, like, listening to their music because there's so much Grateful Dead music out there. I would say that the Dead were never totally a studio band. While I could definitely say: "oh, you're going to want to start with Working Man's Dead or American Beauty, like those two back to back records." I feel like represent the peak Dead in a studio setting, you're going to want to seek out some live recordings. Europe '72 is a perfect onramp to the Dead in terms of kickass, rocking Dead. Also Sunshine Daydream for the same reasons that, like, Europe 72, that release is canonical live Dead. You're getting the best of everything there. Then there's also the whole vast universe of bootleg Grateful Dead recordings. There's so much, I could talk about this for days.

What's next for you?

The book will come out and then there'll be some sort of tour around that, which I am so looking forward to. I feel like any sort of project that you're working on it comes to a point where you have to be okay with letting it go and putting it out into the world, that's going to happen with the book. So there's going to be a tour and that's going to take up a bit of bandwidth, it's going to be kind of a different side of the brain. It's funny, people are already sort of asking me: "what's the next book going to be?" I don't know, like I have some very loose ideas about potentially the next book project. But the one thing you realize when you write a book is stuff just takes time to come together, you know? And like, if something isn't coming to you can't force it. It kind of just comes to you and it's going to come to you.

How do you like your corndogs?

Wow, that's a great question. I like them with a little bit of whole grain mustard, nothing super fancy. And I prefer it to be summertime, and I'm walking around outdoors somewhere in the sunshine.

Thank you so much, for letting me interview you Brian!

This Month:
Wait is that couch inflatable?
I'm gonna tell my therapist on you
Is “Hypergamma” a valid word in Scrabble?
Surf's Up!
Scooby-Doo Metal
I swear they're not Green Day
I learn about the Grateful Dead

*This month's cover image is courtesy of Brian Anderson,
check out our interview with him inside!*

Lennon McCrea (She/Her/They/Them)
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