

# SCENE



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**SECTION D**

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## AMY BIANCOLLI

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## Not ready to let the music stop

Jim Gaudet had a record player and a radio in his childhood bedroom on Albany's Kakely Street, a cozy nook with pitched ceilings and walls covered with images of his beloved New York Giants.

Upstairs in his room, he listened to music — Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Steve Gillett.

"This is where I first heard them," he says. And this is where he first sat with his guitar, late

last year, to lay down tracks for his newest album: "Real Stories and Other Tall Tales," the fourth solo project for the longtime singer-songwriter-guitarist and frontman with the Railroad Boys.

"This was recorded in the bedroom that I grew up in," Gaudet says, sitting downstairs from the room in question, a copy of the CD on the table beside him. "It's crazy, yes. Yes. It's a little different, I know. And it wasn't planned. It just

happened."

He and his wife of 37 years, Peg, still live in that white brick house on Kakely. There they raised their kids, Jimmy and Mary. And it's there, on a sunny Tuesday morning, that Gaudet sits down to talk about his lat-

Please see **BIANCOLLI D2**

Photo by Amy Biancolli  
Jim Gaudet in his childhood bedroom on Kakely Street



## VISUAL ART

By William Jaeger

# Flights of fancy

"Patterns of Engagement" offers fresh views of airport



Tasha Depp, digital sketch, 2019.



Richard Garrison, "Parking Space Color Scheme," 2017. Watercolor, gouache, graphite on paper.

Laini Nemett, "Model for 163rd St. Mural," 2018. Collage and acrylic on balsa wood and cardboard.



Tasha Depp, "Terminal Moment," 2019. Oil on canvas and materials found at airport.



Photos by William Jaeger

The always sparkling and impressive Albany Airport Gallery has had to plan its extensive shows carefully since its founding 21 years ago. Nothing unsuitable for children, no shocking anything, and of course, never a hint of aviation mishap. This might seem a formula for drab decoration, but every exhibition has found ways to punctuate all constrictions.

So here we have "Patterns of Engagement," a new enterprise stunning in conception, a socio-physical self-portrait of the airport and the people in it. Of the eight area artists included, an example from Richard Garrison sets the tone.

In his trademark fashion, Garrison distills basic color information from the environment into a chart or grid, often with watercolor and gouache on paper. And here his array,

mostly of shades of gray, represents short and long term parking areas at the airport, showing positions of cars and their colors against the plain pavement. These "en plein air" works were made in May, and combine traditional observational painting with a homebrew methodical analysis of something that might not matter one bit — until you see it reduced so thoughtfully.

The three floor-to-ceiling, exuberant, geometric murals by Deborah Zlotsky are based on paper airplanes folded by airport employees. Zlotsky unfolded them and from the triangular shapes compiled new compositions that are painted directly on the walls. Two of these require strolling to the curved observation area, which also gives a view of planes landing and taking off, so don't miss them.

A projected video by Jack Magal in the small room in the center of the show is disarmingly tender.

You might think it's dull — it shows people listlessly walking through the wide corridors. The voiceover intones ways to pay attention to how you are walking, to how you are holding yourself. It elevates the insignificant, but after awhile you might discover that what we do as we wait and pace is the basis of our truest nature.

Adam Frelin's series of nearly

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## ► MOVIES

In "Gemini Man," Will Smith faces his own worst enemy—himself, much younger./D2



## COMING SUNDAY

Veronica Swift uses gift of song to tell stories./Unwind



## MOVIE REVIEW

# In 'Gemini,' he's met the enemy

**Two Will Smiths pursue each other in Ang Lee's thriller**

By Mick LaSalle  
Hearst Newspapers

In "Gemini Man," there are two Will Smiths, and one is trying to kill the other. To make things potentially more interesting, one is middle-aged and one is in his early twenties. So, automatically, there are possibilities here — a movie about a psyche at war with itself or perhaps a movie about the contrasts between youth and middle age.

But no. What we got here is the basic situation: Two Will Smiths, one trying to kill the other. Nothing fancy, just that.

Technologically, "Gemini Man" is borderline miraculous. We might think we're watching two Smiths, one regular and one de-aged. In fact, the younger (cloned) Smith doesn't really exist, except as a 100-percent digital creation that's just dropped into the frame. That's remarkable, but as with everything that's technologically remarkable, you can only say wow for five minutes. Then

**★ 1/2 Review****"Gemini Man"**

■ Rated: PG-13 for violence and action throughout, and brief strong language  
■ Length: 117 minutes  
■ ★★★ Excellent ■★★ Good  
■ ★ Fair ■★ Poor

you get used to it, and you're back to watching a particular story with a particular actor.

A small part of the film's problem is Smith himself, nothing he does, just something intrinsic to him as a screen actor. We don't need two of him. That's a flip way of saying something a little deeper, that this is not an actor with a riddle to his personality. Imagine, for example, the Jessica Chastain of today starring opposite a CGI version of herself at 70. You can almost write the scenes. You can imagine the possibilities for conflict and revelation.

Within his sphere, Smith is an entirely engaging actor, but the screenplay doesn't capitalize on the central gimmick's possibilities. Mostly, the presence of two Smiths just gives us scenes of them shooting at or fighting each



Paramount Pictures via AP

Clive Owen, left, and Will Smith star in the Ang Lee film "Gemini Man."

other, but you know that no one will get seriously hurt.

The one place where director Ang Lee's touch can be felt is in the casting. He puts the talented Mary Elizabeth Winstead as the second lead, doesn't glamour her up and doesn't devise some obligatory romance. He makes Clive Owen the nervous, driven villain of the piece, who dreams of a "Star Wars"-style cloned army. And he casts an interesting character actor, Benedict Wong, as our hero's war buddy. Now, if only these actors were given something worth saying to each other.

Before the clone aspect kicks in, "Gemini Man" is humming along as a brisk, competent action movie. Henry (Smith) works for the government as a master assassin, killing only bad guys. And then one day, he shoots a guy in the neck, not the head, and he realizes: He's losing a step. So he announces his retirement and settles down. That's when he finds out that the government has been using him, that his last supposed bad guy/victim was actually a good guy and a victim of a diabolical American plot.

Once he knows that, well, he knows too much.

Had "Gemini Man" continued on that line, Lee might have had something more diverting than two hours of watching Will Smith try not to shoot himself.

**BIANCOLLI**

▼ CONTINUED FROM D1

est album and his eight years of living with Parkinson's, a disease that less confines him than kicks him out the door to live in spite of it.

"I've been so fortunate in the way it's progressed for me, because it's been a fairly slow progression, thank God. I do what they say to do — and it's keep moving. One of the great quotes is the disease has a difficult time hitting a moving target," he says. "So I try to keep moving."

He gets out. Connects with people. Exercises as much as possible, sometimes with CD-PHP's Silver Sneakers program, sometimes with the Hope Soars organization that offers aid and community to people with Parkinson's. He's done yoga. Craniosacral therapy, a meditative, light-touched approach that puts him in a state of deep calm. Boxing, which he loved and fantasized about as a kid but hadn't even tried. Not until Parkinson's.

At first, he just flailed at the heavy bags. Now he hits the speed bags. "I'm great now," he says of his pugilistic skills. "I can knock anybody out."

He and Peg laugh. Gaudet is, as she points out, a lifelong athlete. An alumnus of the long-gone Cardinal McCloskey High School, he played football for Siena, then basketball at the University of New England in Maine (formerly St. Francis College). After graduating he taught a bit,

then coached a bit of football, then took a temporary job with New York state social services. "I was never gonna work for the state — 'not gonna do a state job, not gonna do it' — so I go into the six-month position, and, like, 30 years later, I retire."

All along, he's made music — launching into a singer-songwriter career in the 1980s, then forming the Railroad Boys in 2006. Featuring Bobby Ristau on bass, Sten Isachsen on mandolin and guest fiddlers, including Sara Milovich and Tucker Callander, the band has churned out multiple albums filled with catchy, twangy tunes that defy pat categorization.

Call it Americana-roots, Gaudet says. Or "hillbilly rock 'n' roll." Whatever it is, it's earned a devoted local fan base, international airplay and appearances at bluegrass festivals — even though they don't play bluegrass — around the country. Locally they gig all over, including a Hope Soars benefit at Caffe Lena a few weeks back, a monthly first Monday at McGahey's in Albany and an upcoming show Oct. 25 at the Cook and Bull in Galway.

"Gig-wise, date-wise, I didn't think I'd be performing at this point in time, but I still am," he says. "And I'm gonna keep going until the wheels come off."

Music is healing, he says. Singing helps.

"Vocally, eventually I'll lose my voice. And they say, 'Well, what you need to do is screaming therapy.' So I sing, you know. Which isn't that much different

from screaming therapy." He laughs again.

Sometimes — as on this Tuesday morning — Gaudet's body is tranquil. At other times, without warning, Parkinson's rears its head. "It's so unpredictable, this disease. You know, one day I'll go through my medications on schedule, and everything will be fine. I won't really show the tremors, the medicine won't wear off. And other days, it's not working. And my biggest fear is when I get onstage and my left hand has got the tremors.... I mean, my forearm cramps up."

When that happens, he can still play — but it bothers him, and he can't speak as well. "I get defused. I lose my — you know, whoever I thought I was. A big star. A rock star." But he soldiers through.

"Real Stories" is Gaudet's first solo project since 2007's "Re-calling It Quits," and it's warm, gravelly and wise. *Runaway, runaway, runaway train / It's the only thing left when there's nothing left to blame.* Some of the songs were written years ago, pre-Parkinson's. Some were written after. The album came to be when Gaudet, singing a tune in a songwriter's circle at the Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival in Greene County, snagged the attention of Beacon-based producer Greg Anderson, who later drove up to record Gaudet at Kakeley Street.

"He goes around the house, and he's clappin' and makin' sounds" — to decide which room had the best acoustics — "and

he found the back bedroom. So, you know, I said, 'great.' And we recorded in there, and it wasn't until later that it dawned on me that it was actually the room I grew up in."

That was back in November 2018. For the next three months, Gaudet's vocal and guitar tracks were laid down right there, up in that space now bright with sun and stacked with books. The other tracks were added later, back at the studio: Milovich on fiddle, Tommy McDonell on percussion and harmonica, Rich Pagano on piano, Anderson on various instruments.

Did it feel weird, recording in his old room? "No," Gaudet says. "No. Nope." Did it feel natural? "Yes. Yes, I would say. Because I was very calm and relaxed — and that's what, I think, he was looking for."

Gaudet has no idea how long he's got before the Parkinson's sidelines him, but in the time he has left, he plans to go for it. Up next: A new album with the Railroad Boys, which they'll probably start recording early next year. Beyond that, a collaboration with Nashville songwriters he met a few weeks ago at a meeting of the International Bluegrass Music Association down in Raleigh. That could be a massive break.

Meanwhile, he just keeps writing. He's always at the computer, Peg says. Always churning out songs. A big fan of "Hamilton," she quotes the tune "Non-Stop": *Why do you write like you're running out of time?* "That's how Jim

**AIRPORT**

▼ CONTINUED FROM D1

identical photographs showing a green landscape down below has been framed to make it feel like you're actually in an airplane staring out a row of seascape windows. The line of white, dimensional surrounds (complete with pretend window shades) and the clean, clear view of the land are disarmingly convincing, even though you know better. Plain observation takes a turn for Laini Nemett, who has made a formalist series of paintings and 3-D maquettes of construction sites outside the terminals that are spatially forceful.

The many oil paintings by Tasha Depp include a rather large and complex work, "Terminal Moment," that is a layered, beautifully rendered snapshot of people moving through an airport. The tapestry of subjects is as varied as the materials behind them — ads, a map, carpet samples, and the terminal space itself. And it is based on live sketches made over many visits leading up to this painterly, rich work, which is still "in progress."

You might say the entire show is a work in progress, with artists continuing their engagement with the environment around them. Frelin, for example, is preparing a row of windows with larger photographs to be installed in Concourse B. Chris Victor has made seemingly messy accretions of small consumer materials like straws and bags for the gallery and is working on another piece also destined for Concourse B. The first floor ticketing area will soon see a Zlotsky design some 27 feet in size, also based on folded airplane geometries.

Curator Kathy Greenwood has pulled out all the stops here, making the main third floor gallery come alive, and spreading aesthetic tentacles into the heavily trafficked spaces below. Lucky Albany. Go see it.

► William Jaeger is a frequent contributor to the Times Union.

# COMING Sunday

PENSIONS.

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