

# 519

Where the Stars Hang Out in Southwestern Ontario



## KATHY VALENTINE

*The Go-Go's founding member and bassist opens up about her revealing rock 'n roll memoir*



**STEVE HACKETT**



**DAEMON GREY**

**CARYS | TIM & THE GLORY BOYS | JESSIA | ELLEN HOLLMAN  
LEAVE THEM KIDS ALONE | WINDSOR THEATRE | CHARLIE WEBER**

# THE CONDUIT

BY TONY GRAY

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**NEXT MONTH:** WILL THE CONDUIT CHOOSE TO SAVE THE WORLD?... OR WILL HE DESTROY IT?!?



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A man wearing a brown flat cap, a blue tweed jacket over a patterned sweater, and brown trousers is sitting on a large log. A small pink piglet with a brown collar is sitting on his lap, looking up at him. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and a blue sky.

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# Windsor Feminist Theatre Teams Up With Local Production House

Although 2020 was a grim year for theatre due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two local theatre companies have entered into a new partnership in a shared spirit of optimism and collaboration. With the dawn of 2021 drawing near, Post Productions and Windsor Feminist Theatre have joined forces.

“We at Post Productions have long admired Windsor Feminist Theatre for their creative risk-taking, their interdisciplinary approach to theatre, and their commitment to a respectful and collaborative arts community,” says Post Productions managing director Michael K. Potter. “We share so many values that the Venn diagram of these two companies has a lot of overlap.” This sentiment is echoed by Windsor Feminist Theatre artistic director, Patricia Fell. “We have the same values of mutual respect for all involved in our productions: there are no divas. We also share programming ideals: we produce thought-provoking stories about socio-political issues” she emphasizes, adding that the companies are the only two organizational members of The Lollipop Guild, a group that advocates for better pay and working conditions for artists. Trevor Malcolm, board member of Windsor Feminist Theatre concurs, adding, “The

profile of the productions of each company reflect a seriousness of approach, a depth of understanding, and a courage of execution. Obviously there’s going to be fellowship in regards to all the minutia of organizing theatre around difficult and uncomfortable subjects”.

Executives with both companies are excited about the potential of the new partnership. According to Windsor Feminist Theatre board member Kianna Porter, “This relationship is a great start to building a better arts community – one where artists can brainstorm and come up with innovative ways to keep theatre alive in these times. Two companies who believe in producing thought-provoking, unique pieces, and paying artists for their work. This shows community and hopefully inspires some change and real action towards a better future for artists”. Post Productions outreach director Nikolas Prsa couldn’t agree more, adding, “Both Post Productions and Windsor Feminist Theatre want to engage audiences with stories that are not only entertaining, but leave patrons thinking and discussing what they’ve just seen. We both aim to transport audiences to unique worlds and lives quite unlike their own, and offer perspectives that audiences may not otherwise experience. Plus, we can learn a lot

from their forty years of experience, which brings with it a breadth of unique and diverse insights, not to mention experience with a plethora of community partners, including the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre”.

Collette Broeders, Windsor Feminist Theatre Vice-President, sees tremendous potential ahead. “This exciting partnership will encourage new and diverse forms of theatre in the spirit of supporting artists with unique visions,” she explains. “It brings interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches together, with programming drawn from a broad range of theatrical disciplines, bringing forward and merging works from theatre, literary arts, music, community arts, and dance.” Each company will continue as is, as Prsa notes. “I foresee plenty of holistic exchange between our organizations while each of us stays true to our values and missions” – now bolstered and enhanced by collaboration, mutual support, and shared resources.

Both companies plan to become involved with each other’s programs and venues in the years to come. As Fell puts it, “We both bring a solid production history and fundraising capacity.

On a more practical business level, Windsor Feminist Theatre brings registered charitable organization status and partnerships with other important organizations such as Optimist International and Supporting Performing Arts in Rural & Remote Communities. We both operate unique performance venues (Shadowbox Theatre and The Suzanne Turnbull Memorial Amphitheatre on Pelee Island) which we will share with each other. WFT brings extensive grant-writing experience, and Post Productions also brings very effective marketing and advertising capabilities. I see the benefits of this partnership blossoming into shared space, professional programming ideals, and mutual participation in courageous programming, such as the Windsor-Essex Playwrighting Contest and the Greek Revival Theatre Festival. This partnership will also strengthen the reputation of professional theatre in Windsor-Essex County through the expanded provision of quality, relevant, and thought-provoking theatre in accessible venues”.

The first publicly visible result of the partnership will arrive in the spring of 2021, when Windsor Feminist Theatre stages its brand-new play, *Dominatrix on Trial*, at The Shadowbox Theatre.



Terri-Jean Bedford is the inspiration behind the new play *Dominatrix on Trial*.



**Daemon Grey**

Bowing Down Before The  
**KING OF SIN**

BY APRIL SAVOIE

ARTIST  
TO WATCH  
FOR  
IN 2021

In an overly saturated world of political correctness comes Toronto hard rockers Daemon Grey who preach the words of sex, drugs and rock and roll.

The up-and-coming band is actually fronted by a singer who adopted the band name as his own. As Daemon Grey, the intelligent and well-spoken singer works his ass off on stage and in the studio to project as much evil, horror and good ol' sex, drug and rock and roll to the music.

The band's debut album, *Follow Your Nightmares*, is primed and ready for release on January 22. It's an album packed with some punch and a whole lot of attitude.

Daemon checked in with 519 to shoot the shit before the album's release.

**COVID life obviously hasn't slowed you down - with 3 singles and music videos released since May. What's your take on the virus and how has it affected you?**

Well, I've been told to keep somewhat of my opinions close to myself but fundamentally, I think that there's some fishy business going on right now and there's a lot of corruption in the world, unfortunately, but for me, I know that what I need to do is just to stay focused on making music and bringing authentic emotion and soul and everything to the world. I think that's why I'm alive and the purpose of my life. So, I try not to get too hung up on all the details, just try to stay focused and with all of the COVID virus stuff, it's given me a lot of time to write music and really focus. So, it's been some blessings underneath everything.

**You mentioned on Facebook that you're writing songs about the pandemic and the system. Are these just screw the system type songs or do they specifically target COVID?**

Yeah, I'm writing one. It's all early days but I'm basically writing one which is going to have some anger in it associated with people essentially telling you how to live your life and getting to the point where you can't even do a lot of the things that you want to do in your life. It's like don't you dare tell me how I'm supposed to take care of myself and how I'm supposed to take care of my health and what I'm allowed to do and what I'm not allowed to do, right? So it's kind of that vibe.

**Awesome, I can't wait to hear it.**

It's called, *Don't You Dare*. I'm a death metal fan and a deathcore fan but Daemon Grey stuff isn't super heavy. It's nowhere near deathcore, death metal but this one I'm like, fuck it, I'm going to make it basically as heavy and angry as I physically can. So we'll see how it goes.

**Your debut album "Follow Your Nightmares" comes out this month. What does Follow Your Nightmare mean to you?**

*Follow Your Nightmares* means to me, basically following your fear and going into your fear instead of avoiding your fear. And my opinion is love in its truest sense is the absence of fear. Love is strong and it requires courage and I

think to truly be a loving being, you have to legitimately go into your fears directly, whatever scares you, fight it, attack it, go into it, face it, and confront it. You can't just avoid these things, so it's a double meaning. *Follow Your Nightmare*, it's a bit of a spooky seductive vibe but it's also in a deeper meaning, it's really uncovering your truth, uncovering your purpose, uncovering love. And I think that's what's so attractive about dark music and heavy things and horror and all of that is it's about going into the darker parts but the flip side of that is it's really about going into love as well.

**The cover features a pretty powerful image. Was it COVID inspired?**

No, that was just some photo shoots I do. And we just had cool pics in the masks, but that was before all the COVID stuff, actually.

**For those that haven't experienced Daemon Grey yet, how would you describe your music?**

It's a good question. I mean, for me, the most important thing is I'm just trying to bring authentic and energy and authentic soul into music. When you think about music, there's almost two distinctions, there's laboratory created music or music created with an agenda in mind and that sort of stuff. And then there's the authentic soul music that is really from your deepest emotions and your deepest heart. And for me, a lot of heavy music is that and I would say that soul music was the most important aspect of my life ever growing up. So regardless of what I'm making, if it's just a song about sex or whiskey or the devil or something fun, it's still coming from a place of authenticity that I would never, ever negate. So, I mean, for me, it's like, okay, let's make some fun badass music, let's make some rock music we can dance and we can party to but always making sure it's coming from a real place. I'd say that's how I would describe it.

**Tell me about the song King of Sin. What inspired that?**

Well, I was actually writing a ballad originally and the ballad was pretty cool but it was just too slow. So we kept trying to speed it up, speed it up, speed it up and then eventually I was like, let's make it heavier, heavier, heavier. And we ended up having to completely remake the song from being a ballad to a heavy headbang and rock and roll song. And then I had to rewrite the lyrics and the melodies because it was no longer like the sad ballad we're trying to make. And I just wanted to come up with something to enter the scene with a bang, I wanted to think of something really badass that had never to my knowledge been a thing. And a little bit tricky because almost every single thing has been used in heavy metal, you look at every Rob Zombie or Marilyn Manson song, it's like every single type of statement about like the devil or this and that is in use. And I was like, what is something cool and unique and *King Of Sin* came to mind.

So it was like a semi-drunk dream that

I had. When I think about sin, I mean, in the classic form, as in the adversary to Christian beliefs, I think about sin as just living your true life and living a life of freedom, doing what feels good. Obviously there's a million definitions of the word sin but for me, that's what it represents, that's what the song represents.

**In the music video, you sit in a throne chair, did you feel like a badass sitting in that chair?**

That day was one of the best days of my life and I honestly felt ridiculously grateful for my life because I went from just never being taken seriously for my music writing abilities and my ideas and concepts to being in LA with a fully funded music video, top class factors and models on a fucking throne and I was like, it wasn't even like an ego thing for me. I was actually just grateful to have these people around me and to finally be creating what I've always wanted to create and what I would deem as the purpose of my life. So, yeah, it was a pretty sweet day.

**Well, I have to say the chair does give the song that added dose of evil to it.**

Well, I mean, its right in the song, so it's hard to make a video to *King Of Sin* without a big ass throne.

**Do you have a favourite evil character from history or fiction?**

Ooh, that is a very good question. I would have to say *Dracula* because he's the first horror character that really combined seduction with horror and he really took things to a new level, like combining the scary with the sexual components, which is my favorite part about horror. If you read the original *Dracula* book, it's legitimately frightening and it's a legitimate horror book and it came out of nowhere, this whole concept of the vampire and being redone obviously a bunch of times.

**You've got three killer producers at the helm on Follow Your Nightmare. What did each one bring to the album and how did you connect with them?**

Gavin Brown, he was the first guy that I ever met that really saw what I was trying to do and saw the vision instantly. Before him, I had been working with people I could afford myself and just running around but then I finally decided like, okay, I really need to step it up. And I knew I wouldn't be able to afford some big, hot shot producer but I just decided to swing for the fences anyways. And I was really lucky to meet Gavin, I just basically cold called him and he took a meeting with me, from some demos that I sent him and I had *Stoned & Alone* and *I Don't Want To Grow Up*. I wrote these songs with my mouth and I basically just showed him and sang for him on the spot. And yeah, it was a really special day. He just looked at me and he gave me the head nod, he brought some other people in the room and it was a thing from there.

So Gavin taught me a lot about writing music. He basically killed the OCD

perfectionism aspect of probably every new artist trying to make music like, over thinking things and he taught me how to simplify music and simplify lyrics, he showed me so much about making music and we just really had a deep, deep bond in every aspect of melodies and lyrics. I had never experienced that with someone before and that was really, really awesome and special. From there, the album moved towards working with Mike Riley, who is out of LA. He basically makes them produce half the album along with Gavin Brown. Mike did, he brought another element, more of an industrial modern sound and element.

He's worked with a lot of the top pop and trap producers but also people like Marilyn Manson and I just learned a lot from him as well. Totally different style and totally more raw edgy vibe. So both those guys taught me so much and they both really added a cool dynamic flare to the album and that's why each song is its own vibe and has its own flare and production value.

**Why did you choose to embrace the darker side of your music?**

Well, I've always been into dark and heavy music since I was 10 years old, I just became obsessed with it. For me, the counterculture of having music was everything, like in elementary school, to me it resonated to me on a soul level, it was resonated as truth and power and strength and attitude. What I saw around me with friends, family and kids in grade five, the music was so much stronger and felt more real than everything around me and it was and still is just the most powerful influence. And from a darker element, when I think about black metal, I think about Satanism or counterculture stuff. For me growing up, that was all very positive and classic Satanism, like the Satanic Bible type thing. If you read that, it's actually a pretty loving book.

It's just about the fact that, it's really just an add in opposition to the corruption of monotheistic Christianity. So, I've always viewed Satanism as a positive thing in celebrating our freedom, celebrating our truth and celebrating our independence away from the corruption of monotheistic religions and I also just find evil art to be really beautiful and just awesome. So yeah, the evil stuff for me has always just been positive. Yeah, it's always been a really positive aspect to me.

**Sex, drugs, rock and roll and even touches of horror run throughout the music. Does the horror and energy transfer over to your live shows?**

Yeah, totally. I think horror is connected to who we are as primal human beings. Getting closer to our mortality and getting closer to death is very positive and beneficial to us as human beings, like ignoring scary things and ignoring death. It's kind of the opposite of going into your fear, it's the opposite of following your nightmares. In terms of a live show, whatever the song is, I just go into a flow state of that song and adopt that energy.

I have a song called, *I Like to Taste the Blood* and that's a song about horror and when we were playing shows, I'd always bring a knife or my fucking Wolverine claw on stage but I'm not sure if I should do that because I probably could get charged for carrying a deadly weapon but so far so good. If it's a song about horror or song about a sexual vibe or something, I'm definitely trying to just portray the vibe of the music.

**Do you think the band and live shows will develop theatrically? The music and lyrics certainly lend themselves to something very visual.**

Yeah, I think so. The live theatrics, to be honest, I'm pretty new to all of that, I definitely would want to incorporate a lot more of that as we go. I think that'll happen organically, hopefully with touring and bigger shows and bigger audiences and bigger budgets and all that stuff. So I, 100% would love to explore it, one of the ideas, I mean, it's not a super novel idea but having black and white horror playing on a screen behind the band if we're doing a song about horror or take it from there and maybe think of some things that no one else has thought of but I don't necessarily know yet. I know for starters, I like the idea of just letting the music and the musicianship speak for itself at first.

I like how, if you look at how Pantera did it, it was the heaviest most extreme live show ever and it was just people being off struck by Phil and the musicianship of the band just literally blowing people away. And it wasn't really until late '90s, reinventing the steel tour that Pantera really had all the huge flames and everything and by that time they were already considered the best, pretty much live metal band in my opinion, that has ever been in existence. I think focusing on the live just rock at first and then incorporating things organically as we go.

**What's the next single coming up and why did you choose that specific song?**

The next single that's coming out on January 22nd with the album is called *Isolated*. I wrote this song a number of years ago now with a guy named Kevin Thrasher and I think we want it to come with a bit more of a mature song with the album release and just a bit of a different look at the band as opposed to everything being like me running around without a shirt on just screaming. This one, I think it's more timely and especially the lyrics behind the song definitely play into what's going on in the world. I wrote the song obviously before COVID and everything but the song itself is just about choosing a path of strength, which can lead to isolation but being okay with that and pushing through independently. So I think that it's timely and that's why we chose it as well to help people resonate with it and show them a bit more of a mature side of the band.

For the full interview and more photos, visit [519magazine.com](http://519magazine.com)



# ELLEN HOFFMAN

The Matrix 4's Newest Star

## BREAKS OUT

like an Army of One

**BY APRIL AND DAN  
SAVOIE**

Hot on the heels of news that The Matrix 4 wrapped in late November, it's newest main star, Ellen Hoffman, readied her latest film for release - Army Of One, the story of a powerful soldier who seeks revenge against members of a brutal drug cartel who killed her husband and left her for dead.

As exciting as Army of One is as both a film and as a production for Hoffman, she really can't wait until she can actually chat about The Matrix 4 - a career changing opportunity to become a member of one of the biggest franchises in movie history.

We spoke with Hoffman about the new film and her experience filming The Matrix 4

For the full interview and more photos, visit [519magazine.com](https://www.519magazine.com)



**You have a new movie, Army of One. Tell me about the film?**

So it's basically what you get, it's Rambo and Deliverance with the female lead. That's what I keep telling everyone, kind of tongue in cheek and no, it's not an 80s throwback. I'm just being ridiculous, but no, it's a female led action drama, and now we're seeing more and more of those, thank goodness. I think it may not be the movie that everyone needs, but it's the movie we deserve right now.

You're one of the writers on the film, so I was wondering, what did you contribute to the story?

I came on board late in the game. Once I was cast and read the script, I asked if I could contribute, add an additional female perspective to things. Fortunately, Stephen Durham had no ego about it, and he allowed me to essentially rewrite much of my dialogue, and then develop the story in more powerful directions. Shed more light on the human trafficking aspect of things. Talk about a pandemic in its own right, this is something that is happening right now.

I told them it's something that deserves to have light shed on it and as interesting as action drama is, I think basing it in reality will make people take it more seriously and also infusing humor. I really think humor is important to add levity to content. So I was able to have some input there, and then my husband and I completely redesigned the action aspect of the film, even from a directorial standpoint. So, we had a big impact in that category as well.

**It sounds like you being the producer, the writer, the star of the film, you must really love the story and the final product?**

Yes. Fortunately, I was able to spend an additional 130 hours in post-production and have a massive say in the score, so I was able to really bring my vision to light. Like I said, despite coming in late in the game, everyone worked their asses off for this. We didn't have a massive budget. We had a limited amount of time and resources, and we did the absolute best we possibly could with what we had. I think it's an entertaining result, and just given how everything is going in the world right now, it gives you an hour, 40 minutes to not think about how stressful things are in your life, and able to be swept away in this bizarre world that we created for you.

**You play Brenner who becomes one powerful woman, as the film progresses, and it's nice to see powerful women as leads in movies. Is that one thing that drew you to that role?**

Yes. I was involved in a series called Spartacus, my gosh, nearly nine years ago. Ever since that, I find myself being cast in these strong female roles, whether it's as the villain or the heroine, and action is one of my favorite genres. It always has been, and I've fortunately been able to do a lot of my own choreography and stunt work. Given my relationship with the stunt community, including my

husband, who's part of 87eleven Action Design team, the same guys who did Deadpool, John Wick, Atomic Blondes, etcetera. So I've been able to be part of their world, and train alongside them for years now. So it's taking that knowledge and bringing it to the big screen myself.

**You mentioned Spartacus, Saxa, she's a bit of a pop culture curiosity. People love her. What makes Saxa so iconic?**

She's a woman who doesn't apologize for her weaknesses or her strengths. She just is and you can take it or leave it. She's also based in history, female, German warriors actually existed back in those times. It was such an incredible honor to bring that clan to life and see how she grew from a slave, from a rebel, into a warrior part of the rebel forces against the Roman army. She was willing to sacrifice her life for the betterment of her people.

**Do you see yourself in Brenner or Saxa?**

Oh my gosh, absolutely. I definitely have fire running through my veins. I don't know where it comes from, but ever since I was a little girl, I would be the first to run out the door, barefoot, climb trees. I loved wrestling with the boys on the playground. I wasn't a play with Barbie dolls, wear tutus, kind of girl.

**With strong roles like that, you're certainly a role model for young women. Is that an aspect of who you are or strive to be?**

Yes, absolutely. I was raised by an extremely strong, single mother who worked 60 hours a week, and raised four children, without a nanny, without additional help. Growing up in that type of scenario, you don't. Oh, sorry. My cat is crying right now.

**That's okay.**

Did you hear that? Here I am going on and on about, let me tell you about my life and my cat's crying. We have a lot of work being done in the house right now, so I have her in the office with me. She's like, I want to go on play outside. Can we get on? I'm like, "No, you are not going to be part of the HVAC system. Not today, young lady."

I have a bunch of Zoom interviews today, so I can only imagine that she's going to be an epic part of it.

Like I was saying, the strong female influence growing up, certainly impacted the trajectory of my career. Growing up with Xena Warrior Princess and Tomb Raider, those kind of strong female heroines in the cinematic world. I always wanted to be like them, and being the oldest of four, I always had a protective instinct in me and I always wanted to bring that to the screen as well.

**You guest starred in a lot of my favorite shows in the past, like NCIS, Lethal Weapon, CSI, Medium, Criminal Minds. Is there a personal favorite of the guests appearances that you've done?**

Well, one of the more recent ones was NCIS. It was such a pleasant experience

working with all of those veterans. My gosh, it's one of, if not the most successful series in history, just with the collective following it has. I think it has something like 22 million viewers. It's incredible how long they've managed to captivate audiences, week after week.

Honestly, it was only supposed to be a couple episode run, and they were really happy with what was brought to the table, and they allowed me to actually create my own choreography and they're like, "We need to keep this girl around." So they ended up making me the main villain, into more than one season. It was unexpected, but just goes to show you, if you just put your head down and work your tail off, you can see the results of your actions, literally and figuratively.

**I always said that if I was going to be a guest on CSI, I always wanted to be a corpse. I don't know why, I just did.**

Oh trust me, no, you don't. It's terrible. It's so terrible. Oh my gosh. It's so terrible, being a corpse. Especially on the table, when they're dissecting you, because the table is a flat metal surface, and keep in mind what you see on screen may only last three minutes, but that may have taken eight hours to shoot. So you're lying there, stiff as a board. You can't breathe while the camera's on you, and you're lying on a sheet of metal hour after hour, after hour, doing nothing. Believe it or not, doing nothing is really hard, especially when you like to run around and be physical, like I do. Being still is actually an extremely difficult thing to do.

**Have you had a chance to live one of your fun goals, through any of the roles that you've played?**

Oh my gosh, yes. As of recently, in fact, I don't know how I'm going to be able to top this. I was able to be part of The Matrix franchise. In fact, we just wrapped in Berlin, and not only was I able to be part of the franchise, I got to share the screen with my husband. I got to share the experience with my husband, Stephen Dunlevy, who was not only in a cast role, but he's also part of the stunt team, and rigging coordinator. So, that was something that was, out of the two

decades of my career, probably one of the top three moments. I don't know how I'm going to actually surpass that. Maybe by asking that question, the universe will throw something my way, but Oh my gosh, it was incredible.

**How did you get to be part of The Matrix family with Matrix 4?**

Coincidentally, I have been training with my husband's stunt team for six years or so. My background is Jiu-Jitsu and I've learned a lot of the action choreography, through Chad Stahelski and the 87eleven Action Design team, and I just became addicted to it. Just what they've managed to do on screen, because of that, I was in there all the time. I would train for my own films and television shows, with the incredible stunt team, and because I was in there all the time, the stunt coordinator, Scott Rogers put me up for a role.

My husband, who is part of the rigging team, part of the stunt team also of course, put in a good word. He better, otherwise he's sleeping on the couch, but I actually ended up having a meeting with Lana Wachowski. I thought I was going to have to audition and I was prepared to do whatever I had to do, but Lana Wachowski just wanted to meet me. What I thought was just going to be a handshake, turned into an hour, deep and meaningful conversation. At the end of it, she gave me a hug and said, "Welcome to the family." It was quite surreal. The next thing I know, I'm in San Francisco and then in Berlin.

**I know you probably can't talk about the movie itself, but can you talk about your character at all?**

I cannot talk about or reveal anything. As part of The Matrix Universe, they like to keep everything tight lipped. So unfortunately, I'm not able to mention any details. It's amazing, because things can kind of slip and then, all of a sudden, there's a snowball effect, and then people start making assumptions and I'm like, "Oh God, I don't want to get in trouble." I don't want to get in trouble.

**I bet you can't wait to see it on screen?**

Just from what I've been able to see in

playback, and what we managed to do, practically on rooftops in San Francisco, these are things that are public. People have managed to take photos. Like Passerby's have managed to take photos of some of the things that we did, but Lana likes to shoot things practically.

So if that means flying helicopters through the streets of San Francisco, and jumping off buildings, then, well, guess what you're doing? You're doing just that. I will say it's a highly physical role, probably one of the most challenging of my entire career, which makes it that much more fulfilling.

**I wanted to ask, where did you meet Stephen (Dunlevy)?**

We met on the set of Spartacus.

Yeah, he was on the stunt team. He played the role of the Egyptian.

**Did sparks fly from that point on?**

You know, they actually didn't. I was friends with all the stunt guys. We were all very close and same with the cast. In fact, we're all still close with one another. I just congratulated Simon Merrells and Cynthia Addai-Robinson, who are our dear friends. They just both starred in Lord of the Rings. So we are beyond elated for them, and we're still near and dear to Liam McIntyre, Anna Hutchison, Todd Lasance and Christian Antidormi. We're such a close knit family, and Stephen became part of that close-knit family. It wasn't until he was in Los Angeles, that all of a sudden, you look at someone in a different light. You think, "Oh wait, you're not actually a six foot four, bald guy with a mullet, who's trying to kill us. You're actually a really nice Australian guy. Okay." He looks much different with hair, I'll tell you that much.

**What's up for you in 2021?**

More producing, writing, creating, and development. I want to get more in the leadership aspect of things. Obviously, still keeping up the skillset for whatever job may come next, but to see a project stem from an idea, into a full fledged product on screen, is more the trajectory of where I'm moving now. More than ever, women have incredible opportunities to have a seat at the table, and I plan on being at the head of it.



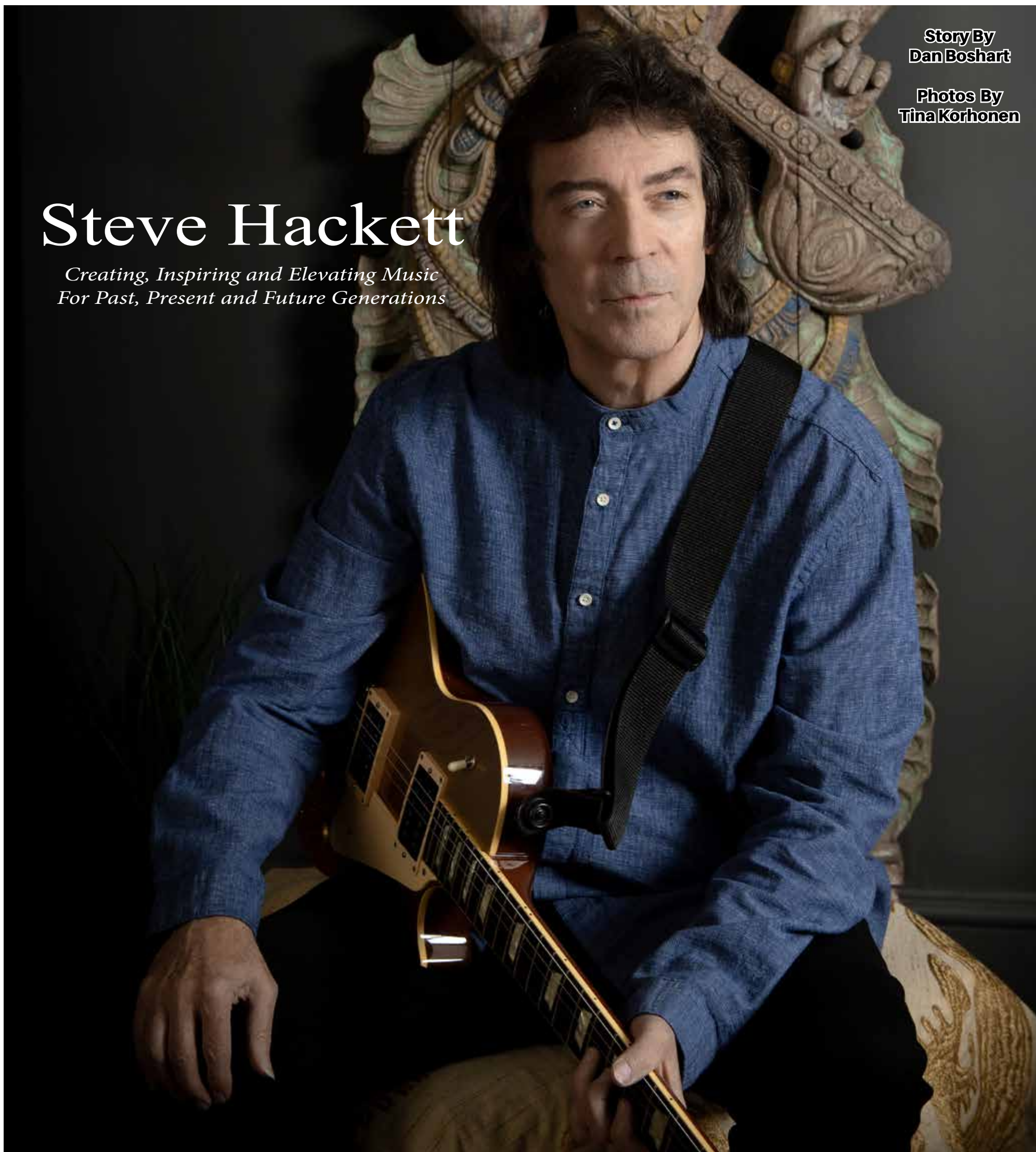
Ellen Hoffman stars as Brenner in Army of One

Story By  
Dan Boshart

Photos By  
Tina Korhonen

# Steve Hackett

*Creating, Inspiring and Elevating Music  
For Past, Present and Future Generations*



As an original member of Genesis during the Peter Gabriel era and a successful solo artist for nearly fifty years, Steve Hackett has been an innovative and creative juggernaut in the world of music. Steve has collaborated with some of the greatest names in music and influenced countless others. His latest release, *Under a Mediterranean Sky*, is a great example of his talent for bringing together a diverse collection of musicians and sounds to create something unique and beautiful. We were very fortunate to chat with him recently about the new album and much more.

**You've been very busy this year haven't you?**

Yes I have, not to busy in terms of gigs but very busy recording, still making noise for a living.

**You were in the midst of a tour when everything went down.**

We were, we had sixty shows that were cancelled when the world got cancelled but we hope next year that we're going to be back in the saddle.

**You also have a new album coming out, *Under a Mediterranean Sky*, tell us about that.**

Well you know, I wanted to make lots of different albums in the lockdown. I felt that because I couldn't appear in front of people, I did some live playing to the camera of just playing nylon string guitar because it was the easiest thing to do. My equipment was stranded in America for months because we got the last flight back from Philadelphia and the stuff was being delivered to Liverpool, then to London and all I had was an acoustic guitar for several months. So I made this album with an acoustic guitar, it took a couple of months to make and basically the idea of *Under a Mediterranean Sky* is visiting various countries that border the Mediterranean and visiting them in a virtual sense and trying to describe them in a landscape.

We have one track that sounds very Spanish, something that sounds French, another that sounds more Egyptian, Greek and so forth. It was great to work with instruments from all around the Mediterranean and even further a field so I had a great time doing the album and by the time I finished that my rock instruments were returned to me and I started recording rock things as well. In the meantime I have *Under a Mediterranean Sky* which has not just acoustic stuff but it has orchestral appearances as well. I worked with two people who were putting the album together and a small team of musicians to try and create a big sound.

I worked with Roger King who's a fabulous keyboard player, arranger and engineer. He's been working with me for many years, and I also was writing stuff with my wife Jo. In a way, it was a perfect time without interruption because you could only work in a small bubble, I could only work with one other person face to face. All of the other people on the album worked virtually from home and sent in their contributions like the

guy from Armenia, Arsen Petrosyan and our sax and flute player, Rob Townsend. He moved to Denmark so he was sending us performances live from Denmark. It all sounds like everyone is in the same room but it didn't quite get put together that way.

**That seems to be the new way to work this year but I imagine you miss being together and being able to bounce things off each other. How do you like the process?**

I think you have to trust the people that you work with and give them space and say, I know that you're good at what you do and whatever you send me I'm going to use in one form or another. If I get more than one take then I have more choice in what I'm going to use. Of course it's not quite the same as working face to face with people but I found that the better people are at playing their instrument, if they come in to do a solo you have to give them space to do it, you can't really write that.

The one person we actually did get in was Christine Townsend, no relation to Rob, and Christine plays violin and viola and she happens to be brilliant on both. So we stretched that working bubble to two people, Roger and Christine and I were very happy to get her input on the album because she's been a big part of the orchestral stuff we've used in recent years.

**You really enjoy producing orchestral music, don't you?**

Well I do, it's funny isn't it? This very day I was watching something on the Sky Arts channel and it was *Hollywood Goes to Vienna* and I think it was a Viennese orchestra and they were playing stuff from well known film composers including right at the end, the *Gone with the Wind* theme and it works very well. I must admit I enjoy film music, it's the nearest thing to classical music that orchestras are making these days. Some film music is very good indeed, because I'm very selective and I like the romantic stuff I must admit.

**The idea of doing *Under a Mediterranean Sky* materialized over the last few years while travelling with your wife Jo, correct?**

Yeah, I had the idea, for instance when we were in Egypt which isn't that long ago, we took a trip up The Nile and I had my notebook out the whole time. I didn't have a guitar with me, far too difficult to travel around with all that luggage but it is a travel log to some degree and an imaginary journey, an inner journey.

Really it's like an imaginary landscape of those areas. My dad was a painter and he was very good at landscapes among other things and my version of doing that because I didn't inherit his visual skills, was to do it with music and come up with stuff that sounds convincingly Spanish or convincingly Greek and I had a great time doing it. It practically wrote itself.

There were a couple of pieces I had played live beforehand, like *Casa del Fauno*. I played that one quite a bit with a heavy flute feature on it with

two flute players, my brother John and Rob Townsend. That was great fun, and there's a track called *Joie de Vivre* which I've been playing that or a variation of it live for quite some time but I fleshed it out a little bit more because when you're playing on an album there's a chance to finish things whereas when I'm playing acoustic guitar live I tend to do medleys of things and mix things up and do an overall impression of all the things I'm into. Making an album, it's a different process.

**Your wife Jo is a real creative force in your life.**

That's right, yes! She's been variously different things in the course of her life. She's been a film maker, an author, and she was trained as a kid to play violin. Her father and grandfather were brilliant violinists but although she loved music, she never thought that she was going to be a virtuoso so she put that to one side but she said to me she loved music and always felt that when she would listen to orchestral music in particular that she would sometimes get frustrated when musicians would repeat things without variation.

She always thought instinctively that she knew where some things should go. Time and time again, I'll be playing something and she'll go, "have you thought of this variation?" or indeed if I get stuck on something and I say I want a certain melody, she'll sing it as a top line and I'll write that down. I've been amazed at some of the things she's come up with, not just top lines but bass lines as well, very powerful and very masculine and not the sort of thing you'd think would come from a woman.

I'm very happy to have that input and usually we arrive at something we're both happy with. We have to both be satisfied with something and luckily she likes most of what I do. It's very rare that she doesn't understand what I'm driving at with a particular thing.

**You have a very organic creative relationship with each other.**

Yeah, it's been a really good partnership in that way. She's been a song writing partner for me as has Roger King. You can't force it, it has to come naturally. I've found in the past you can't just stick two people together who've never worked together and expect that they're going to come up with something. There has to be a chemistry there and an understanding of what the other person gets moved by and what their capabilities and limitations are.

**You also this year released *Selling England by the Pound* and *Spectral Mornings Live at Hammersmith*. You've said that's your favourite album.**

It's my favourite Genesis album from a time, 1973, when we heard that John Lennon had given an interview and said we were one of the bands he was listening to at that time. So it holds special significance to me as I can't think of any higher sanction we could have had but he didn't always see eye to eye with classical people. I remember that

he was on TV being interviewed and Yehudi Menuhin was on, the violinist, and they were arguing about something and they weren't getting on at all but the irony is that things that I did several years apart, both of them gave the sanction to separate things that I've been involved with.

Often the worlds of pop and rock and classical have been at loggerheads but I always think there's some common ground that I ought to be involved with and try and reconcile the differences between the various schools. I'm very instinctive, I'm no purist, I like the collision of the two.

**Isn't that sort of the sound Genesis was built on?**

Well, you know, in the early days there was a lot of competition that went on with that band and you couldn't always guarantee that you'd get something done by the band because founding members did tend to hold sway and brilliant though they were, there were times when rehearsal sessions ended up being drawn swords or handbags at dawn as we often say.

Not always smooth but sufficient that a lot of the time if you think of Peter Gabriel's last album with Genesis which was *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, it's almost the contest between rock meets Rachmaninoff really in terms of you've got all that keyboard work that's very articulate and really is classically based.

I also loved classical keyboard work and I always wanted the guitar to be able to do things that they keyboard could do more naturally. Ever since I heard Segovia Plays Bach and to hear all those convolutions that sound impossible on one guitar I ended up years later recording some of that stuff I heard Segovia do and I always wanted to take some of those techniques forward with a nylon guitar and invent new techniques that hadn't been quite utilized. Lots of things happened and one thing led to another and I ended up doing this thing that people call tapping and I did that in 71 and there were other techniques too. Some of them become part of the glossary of terms for shredders and on the other hand there's the other stuff that maybe owes a little bit more to flamenco or classical guitar work.

**Eddie Van Halen has said he picked up the tapping technique from watching you.**

Yeah, well it's a very interesting thing, I think he was a very influential guitarist himself and obviously absolutely brilliant. I'm very sorry I didn't get to meet him before his passing. It's been an extraordinary year for the passing of great guitarists.

On British soil we had the passing of Peter Green who I used to go see before he was in Fleetwood Mac. I probably saw him once a month when he was working with John Mayall's Blues Breakers and he was a brilliant successor to the young Eric Clapton's work with John Mayall and I learned a lot watching him and I admired him tremendously.

It's very sad that we've said goodbye to two luminaries who've really influenced the world of electric guitar playing.

**Do you prepare or warm up any differently than you did when you were younger?**

I've been very lucky, I had an elbow problem at one point and the more I used to go the more it hurt and luckily I had a very good physiotherapist and he said you've got something like a tennis elbow. He was an ex sportsman, a footballer and he fixed it and I've never had it again.

Luckily the fingers are all working as of today as long as the nails are right and it does take a bit of warm up time to get centered enough to be able to do the right thing. I think playing with the nails, it can be very unforgiving and I find that when I first pick up the acoustic guitar it takes me a while to get aligned, it doesn't happen straight away whereas I think with electric I can tear into it, the angle of the hand isn't as important.

You have to be really centered with acoustic and you've got to love it and be in the moment and the nails have to be trimmed right so you need to honour it really. You can never have too much technique when you're playing acoustic nylon, I don't know anyone who's terribly satisfied with their technique.

**When you solo during a recording do you improvise and play on the fly or do you go in with it written and rehearsed?**

With nylon guitar, especially if you're playing with other instruments, you need to have a script, you need a plot and you need to be very precise but I think with electric I've often just gone in and if I can get it first take then that's wonderful, otherwise I might stop and have another go.

Put it this way, nobody gets any points for finishing early, nobody knows how long it took you to achieve. I've had many frustrating moments, believe me and it doesn't always sound great when I first start because it's not just a case of getting the notes right, the guitar has got to sing. Even though you might play something exactly the same way, there will come a moment where the guitar will do something surprising itself and if you got that thing under control, it starts to do it as well so I'm always waiting for that magic moment when it comes alive and you hit the sweet spot.

It's always frustrated me that it doesn't sound great from the word go, at least not the kind of great I'm looking for. When you're looking for that upper harmonic, that local sound that guitars can do, and there's an infinite variety of tones involved with it so I just keep going at it. It's like playing roulette, you're waiting for your winning number to come up so I do a lot of repeats.

**Do you still use tube amps or do you use modelling amps?**

For live I use ENGL amps and I've been very happy with those. When I'm recording I use a mixture. I sometimes use modelling, or I use a little practice amp. I've used a variety of things and

I would say the 100 watt ENGL amps are really good and very responsive but I don't need to be always moving air to get a powerful sound. I think you can fool people into believing it's a big amp cranked up in a corner. I remember when I first started using amp modelling with Roger King and he had an array of software and when I had my last studio we were recording upstairs and we would hear the thump of the amp coming up through the floor. I remember when I was recording yet another version of a Genesis classic, Musical Box, I was playing that same solo which is well known I like to think and I said to him, I cannot believe we're not hearing the thump coming up through the floor and he said yeah, same for me. He felt the same, that it was just amazing what you could do and also, in recent years I've been using Fernandes guitars that have the built in sustainer.

Practically every guitar tone I've gotten with an amp I've managed to get with modelling. It's nice to be in control of it yourself. There's nothing like here's my amp and here's my sound, this is it, whereas if I'm going through amp modelling I'm waiting for someone else to do the eq so there'll be a delay, we confer and then once the sound is right you can go anywhere with it. When you get a great sound that's half the battle. It's a bit like a racing car driver, once you've got the right car the vehicle is there. If the sound isn't there, I can't do it.

I'm always fussed about with the sound, actually paranoid about it, I'm a real pain to work with because of that. I can't do that magic thing until the sound is right.

Recently I've been using my Les Paul more, I've been going back to that early thing that doesn't have that tremolo arm on it, it doesn't have the sustainer but it's got that gutsy thing, it's got that big sound that I always looked for in the early days and that killer sound that you've heard so many people get, you just got to get the tone right with it, you've got to get the distortion right.

I tend to use a SansAmp 150 to get that kind of tube overdrive and then we might add something in the virtual department to give it some extra edge as well. I don't always use as much distortion as I once did. I sometimes find that treble is a good substitute for that and then you can get a cleaner sound but it still sounds just as powerful unless you're after that brassy overdrive sound. I haven't got a fixed policy regarding sound, I'm open to different things.

**Isn't that why you left Genesis? Because you wanted to try different things and the core members were more focused on their sound?**

Well that wasn't a reason for leaving, it was more that I was hindered from doing anything outside the group and I didn't want to give anyone the impression that they owned me. I play with a group because I'm a volunteer, not a captive.

Genesis was a great group, there's no doubt about it. In all its incarnations it had something extraordinary to offer.

Both with the Peter Gabriel era and when we were four piece and then what they did subsequently which had great production values and all that, but autonomy is the big thing. If you've got something to say you can't afford to be hamstrung by the limitations of others.

**So you followed your heart and put your music and creativity first and the rest just happened.**

Yeah, I didn't want to be pensioned off, music was more important to me than money, and I know that a lot of people were like that. You go back to for instance, Eric Clapton's decision to leave The Yardbirds and going with John Mayall.

The Yardbirds were having hit singles and were a hugely famous pop group at that time but he wanted to become more of a virtuoso and dedicate himself to the blues. All the sonic development that happened with the electric guitar really happened around blues. Clapton was at the forefront of that as was his successor in the Yardbirds, Jeff Beck.

Basically when I was growing up in the mid 60's it was three guys who had the sound, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Peter Green. Hendrix was to come along a year or two later and of course was absolutely stunning but it shows there was fire on both sides of the pond.

**Voyage of the Acolyte was brilliant. I read that's when you first started really making money with your music. You were only getting £100 a week with Genesis.**

Yeah, probably even less I think. We were all on salaries with Charisma Records which were also management and publishing, it was all under the same roof.

I didn't object to that, I was very happy to work with this great band and have some influence over it but it wasn't really till I did that solo album but that wasn't the motivation, to make money, I just wanted to let rip with some ideas that I'd been amassing for some time and I wanted to be able to work with my brother John who was in the process of becoming a great flute player, and to explore those ideas we had been kicking around the bedroom when we were kids growing up.

It was wonderful to work with him and other people as well as Phil and Mike from Genesis, and John Acock. There are several people who've passed on when we made that album. John Gustafson, John Acock and Robin Miller who played oboe and cor anglais on the album and of course they were all brilliant in their own way. It's a sign, the passing of time is a sobering thought so I tend to make albums rather more quickly these days than I used to.

**You have been very active and I've noticed a tremendous creative output the last several years.**

I think it's literally the fear of your number being called in a cosmic sense of the word. Even though I lead a healthy lifestyle that doesn't mean that something can come along from one moment to the next and take you out.

Everyone of my generation, when I confer with my friends they say I've had this operation and I had that and I'm recovering from this, that and the other and we've all been the same, we've had to check the vehicle into the garage from time to time and that's just how it goes. So that's probably why I work rather quickly, I don't want to have any unfinished symphonies or even doodles at this point. I want to get them done but you know, get them done to a certain standard.

**That leads me to a question I really wanted to ask. There was a point in time where there was talk of you doing a project with Jack Bruce and Keith Emerson. This seems like it would have been an amazing collaboration. Tell me about what happened and do you have regrets that it didn't materialize?**

I thought they were both absolutely amazing and we rehearsed together for three or four days along with Simon Phillips who is an amazing drummer himself. We took Christmas off and we reconvened only to find that Jack and Keith suddenly didn't have any common ground. Having been writing songs together for about six months, they suddenly fell out and there was something quite trivial I gather and so I had to pass up the chance of working

with them in the same band but it would have been quite a band.

They were brilliant but it doesn't mean they're necessarily going to get on very well. Witness Walt Disney trying to work with Salvador Dali, it didn't quite come off. I'm sure it would have come off as something quite amazing if someone had been prepared to yield perhaps.

**Was there anything recorded?**

There are some tapes that we did that were in a germinating stage. If I was being cynical I'd probably say there's gold in the tapes and perhaps I ought to finish them off and if people were prepared to give them to me I could go and turn it into something that I think might thrill people but I don't want to dangle the carrot too much because it was at the point when I think Jack was yet to sing it in a full throated kind of way, it was more in a formative stage so people would probably shoot it down in flames and say hey well those guys weren't so great all together. We'll never know how it would have been had it been taken to completion.

**I agree, I don't think it would be as good without Jack in full form.**

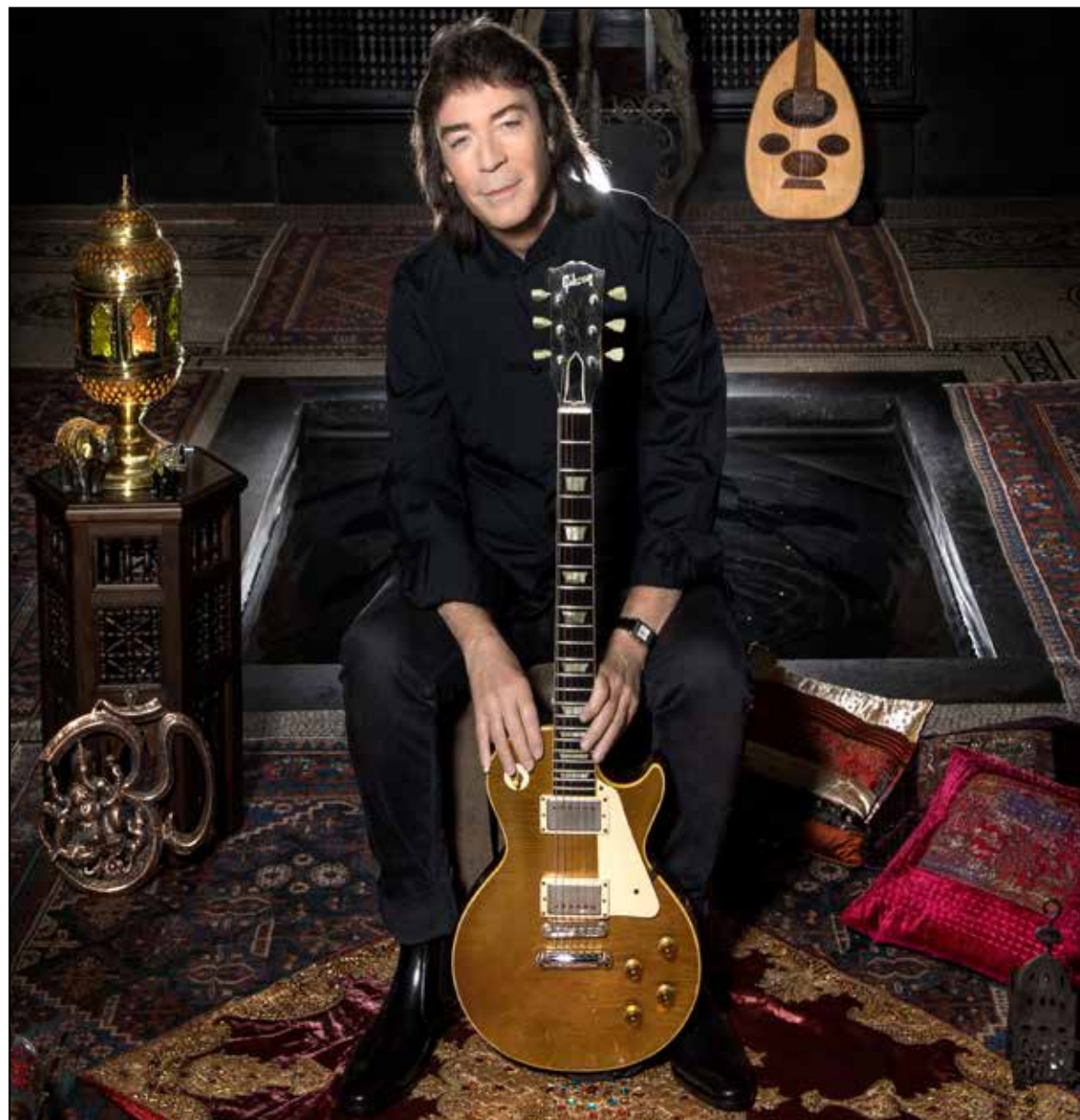
Exactly, Jack Bruce in full form was a fabulous voice, bass player and a musical force to be reckoned with. Keith was the nearest thing to the Hendrix

of the keyboard, leaping all over the place throwing knives into it, whipping it, playing it upside down, he was a showman par excellence.

You've got those two British heavyweights and I was looking forward to working with them. It wasn't my fault that it didn't work out but hey, it was fun for a few days jamming with those greats.

**It's been really great talking with you, what can we expect in the New Year?**

Well there is Under a Mediterranean Sky which satisfies the urge to do orchestral/acoustic stuff with some world music influences thrown in. Beyond that, I have about forty-five minutes of rock stuff that's been recorded to a certain standard and it has some friends who are well known on it as well as the band that I've been touring with so at some point in January I'll be back recording again. Hopefully everyone is going to be in one piece after the holidays. I know my guys have been isolating themselves and being very careful. I'm supposed to be talking with them on Skype or Zoom tonight so it'll be nice to connect with the band that was a while back and that will be again in the future. I'm looking forward to when everyone's open for business, we'll be back in the saddle, I'll be looking forward to that.



# Tim and the Glory Boys Thrive In Pandemic Times With Sony Music Canada Record Deal

By Dan Savoie

For many artists, COVID-19 has been harsh, but not for Tim & The Glory Boys. The band, which is transitioning from Christian to contemporary country, landed a record deal with Sony Music and has been getting attention for hit singles like When You Know You Know and Without A Prayer - all while the world was under attack from COVID-19.

The resulting new music is a powerful blend of country, bluegrass and positivity - a bit like country favourites Washboard Union.

Frontman Tim Neufeld was so excited about the change and their quick growth that he called 519 before Christmas to check in.

**A lot of the entertainment industry has kind of gone downhill with COVID, but a lot has happened for you guys. We'll start with the change from independent to major label.**

The pandemic happened and all I got was a record deal out of it. It was very unexpected. And when you think about these things as a young musician, or even as you're starting a band, it's like nobody would guess it would happen during this apocalyptic time that we're living in right now. But as it turns out, it allows you to focus on it in ways that I think we would have been hard-pressed to do had we been keeping up our rigorous touring schedule. When we're stuck at home and all we can do is make videos and the online shows and all the things that go into developing a brand with a record label, we had nothing but time. So it was kind of wonderful.

**You just got... Normally, I would say off the road, but you just probably got off the cheapest road trip you've ever had.**

Yeah. We did the cheapest tour of all time in that it was free. And we actually made money and that there was some people that generously filled up our tip jar here and there. And that was wonderful. But yes, we decided to try to tour virtually, but still make it exclusive to the places that we were touring. So it wasn't our whole list. Every time that we went online with Facebook live or whatever, it turned out in a roundabout way. There were certainly smaller shows than they could have been, but all people ever want is exclusivity. And they want to feel like VIP's and they want to have their own essentially kind of a private show. And that's what we were able to give them.

We would geo tag the place that we were playing. So nobody outside of say Windsor, Ontario could be a part of it, or London show, and it worked wonderfully and it was just such a cool give back. We've also never done anything online until this year. That's also been just rewarding in ways that we didn't think it could be. And as it turns out doing these shows, whether it's in-person or online, that human connection is the same. And that's all we're really looking for is just to engage in that ancient ritual of singing and performing and entertaining

and laughing together. And it works when we're sitting on our tour bus in Chilliwack, BC, and we're doing it for 10 or 20 screens in places like Windsor, Ontario.

**Were there rituals that you would do in a sense where, on the road, you have a routine that you do every day. Is there a routine to a virtual tour?**

Well, we developed some, we invited one of our Halloween decorations who plays banjo at the skeleton to join all of our shows. It was a developing character. I'll put it that way. And it's kind of nice too, because we're on the bus and we're sitting down. So we had a bottle of wine for almost all the shows and we would just slowly go through it. And that was a different element for me. I've done so much stuff in churches. I guess mine is the only acceptable alcoholic drink, but not on stage obviously. We never do that. But it was just cool to be able to do that and just be like, we're hanging out in the living room versus on stage with the lights on us. And everybody is expecting us to do our song and dance. It was a very casual feeling, which just makes us more relaxed and ultimately makes the show better.

**You guys mostly toured in churches before. If this was a real tour where do you think it would have been?**

We're trying to move to mostly neutral venues, theaters, lots of soft suitor theaters. We really enjoy that versus a partial arena or a mega church that can hold a lot of people. Ultimately, we want people to feel comfortable at our shows, no matter their background. And that has seemed to be a resounding neutral venue kind of a response. And so we've tried to do that. We're not afraid of playing in churches. We love playing for church folks and in a lot of the places that we played, the only venue and therefore, the biggest venue is the church. And they've been so gracious to us. They were so good to us over the years. I believe we'll always continue to play churches here and there as they make sense. Sure.

**The music is definitely taking a more non-religious direction. Not that there's not messages in the song, it's just not as upfront.**

Yeah. Not as overtly gospel, which I think is a lot more how we live our lives too. I would say our faith inspires the music and the lyrics and it is a reflection of who we are as people. So it's in the songs, but again, our goal is not to proselytize or try to win people over to any kind of religion. It's, honestly just to see who we are and to entertain.

We weren't sure how that would go, if people would believe us, but overwhelmingly country music fans have. And it's been such a cool thing to feel now, like we're part of a new family in country music that we really didn't know we had. And it's been fun to try to merge the two families, and so far for nothing, but just harmony and everybody gets it.

We're not losing fans. We're not having the new fans approach us really with caution and trepidation. It's just been



awesome.

It's worked. And most importantly, we're having the time of our lives and being in music for as long as I have, I just feel like I finally found my voice in country music and literally, and figuratively in that I'm a baritone and I have this deep voice that suits the genre and I've grown up mimicking some of these great baritone artists like Johnny Cash and, and figuratively, because I feel like this is the music I was brought up on. And I'm full circle coming back to it and just falling in love with it all over again. Bluegrass Country music and the industry that fuels it.

We just love every opportunity we get. We're giddy, like a brand new band playing out of their parents' garage. And we just can't wait for what, 2021 and 22 brings for sure.

**I can't see the Christian fans not liking the new music. The music is still bluegrass at heart and it's all positive stuff. So it's a win-win. It's not like you became a heavy metal band.**

Well, there are the heavy metal bands in Christian music, too. I grew up listening to back up Stryper, which you should look up if you get a chance. Because it is ridiculousness in a good way, in a playful way, in the same way that we look back on the hair metal bands of the eighties and their spandex and their teased hair and laugh. It's just the Christian version of that. But yeah, we're not much different.

I think the one thing that maybe for the church it's taken a little bit to navigate it. It's just that we're singing these love songs, which is fully acceptable to be in love and to have long lasting, healthy relationships.

Traditionally in the church, there hasn't been any romantic music that has made its way into worship services or anything.

It's just always been a separate thing where it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. It never has to me. And we're having so much fun if we're stirring it up, it's with these wholesome love songs.

I feel like that's a pretty good way to stir

it up and feel pretty necessary in that there's no reason why it shouldn't be celebrated. And that's not really what we're trying to do, but it is as effective making this switch to more mainstream country music. It's been fun to watch people squirm a little bit, but then like you said, be accepting of it in the long run.

**Why don't we talk about the most obvious love song "When You Know You Know"?**

Yes, obvious a love song. It is a song about that moment of just realizing that you are in love and there was someone in love with you. And that's why that expression exists. Because it's hard to put mask to it or to use logic. It's one of those things that really takes following your gut.

When I first heard the song, and recorded it, one of the most rewarding things has been, just incorporating my parents' love into the branding of it. We found a picture of them from one of those old family albums with the cellophane. We peel it off and pull the five by seven photo out of it. And it was from their wedding day, just coming off the alter, confetti spill on their shoulders and just looking so in love with this gorgeous couple in 1971, it's Thunder Bay, Ontario.

And we just thought, man, they have to be the cover art for the single. It's exactly what comes up if you listen to the song in Spotify or Apple. I think that's so cool.

They'll be married 50 years in June of this coming year. So less than a year. I can't think of a better example of knowing that two people sticking together that long through the thick and thin. And I have to say, they've been an amazing example for me. I've now been married 17 years, have three kids, 11, 10, and 7, and it just works. And that's not everybody's experience. I totally understand that. There's no judgment at all. It's just that we might go celebrate when it happens. And it happens in a way that is healthy and that becomes a legacy for the generations that are up and coming to follow and to be inspired by.

**And that kind of person doesn't sound like a man who is "Without a Prayer", as I slowly kind of segue into your newest hit song.**

Yes. So here's the truth about it though. We need our team, we need our crew, or we need our partner, our spouse to truly realize whatever relationship you're in. It needs to be a two-way street. And there needs to be that honesty to say like, "Hey, I really can't do this on my own." And that's the whole point of partnering up with somebody long-term. It's a commitment to say, I'm going to be humble and eat my words when I need to. I'm going to admit when I'm wrong, I'm going to play my part. And I need you to sharpen me to keep me better. And that's an appropriate posture to go into a relationship with.

So Without a Prayer is basically saying that I'm lost without you, I need you and together there's synergy there. And that's what this song plays out. I feel like I'm giving the very emotional relational explanation for these songs. But I suppose I should consider that as I'm thinking these romantic scenes now, I joked with my band mate, Colin that we should put together a relationship therapy online kind of YouTube show where we can take calls. And now that we're experts on the subject after releasing two mediocrely successful songs about the subject we can speak through without our doctorate.

**So are the new songs going to be part of an upcoming album or EP?**

They are. I think that's in the works. Everything's changing by the month as songs do unexpectedly well, and we have to scramble and take seriously, all the things that could go one way or the other. But yes, there has been very serious talk about an EP, seven, eight songs, and then more music getting recorded and, and lots of fun, exciting, entertaining things into 2022. For sure.

For the full interview and more photos, visit [519magazine.com](http://519magazine.com)

# Indie Profile: London Punk Rocker Charlie Weber

**Tell us about your band, including your history, where you are from and how you started?**

I started playing guitar in 2003 when I got an acoustic for my birthday. I picked up the idea of playing music after watching an episode of The Simpsons where Bart attends his first concert and gets a guitar and immediately quits. Luckily my attention span was a little bit longer than his and I stuck with it. I started playing in bands at South Huron District High School in Exeter Ontario. My bands ranged from 3rd Wave Ska to Acoustic Pop Punk to Metal. I didn't start playing solo until I went to college for radio broadcasting in Welland and started doing Open Mic's in St. Catharines in 2013. Something about talking about other people's music never really sat right with me and I wanted to do more creatively.

**Why did you decide to be a solo artist rather than form a band?**

Before I got started as a solo artist, I had a couple of bad experiences with bandmates. Either they were not who I thought they were as people or the unfortunate lack of dedication to music in the same way that I felt it. People grow up in different ways and grow apart, it's a bummer but it's also just a fact of life. I just wish I didn't still have all the CD's stashed away in my closet.

So when I finally decided to start writing songs again I wanted to see if I could do it on my own. I wanted to see what stories I had to tell. It's a scary thing to do not only write songs about your struggles and fears and insecurities but also to realize in your second year of college that you're probably not gonna use your fancy diploma for anything more than a wall decoration. I started playing solo to prove to myself that I could do something that was just purely me, not outside influence, just building something from nothing and putting it out in the world.

**Do you have any recorded music available for fans?**

Most recently I have put out my debut full length record "Old Habits" under my own name via Forest City Records, a small indie label out of London Ontario. They

approached me after hearing one of my songs Carter & Cash that I had recorded under the band name Major/Minor. You can find that available for streaming on Spotify and Apple music as well as for purchase digitally on Charlieweber.Bandcamp.com and Physically (Vinyl/ CD) on my own personal website Charlie-Weber.ca. I generally try to hand deliver/mail those personally as affordably as possible. I sent a vinyl record to Madrid Spain earlier this year which was pretty cool.

**How would you describe your music?**

Elevator Pitch: It's like Tom Petty if he grew up on punk rock.

Long answer: if I had describe and dissect it, I would say it is a mixture of Americana meets pop punk, meets outlaw country. I've taken a lot of inspiration from artists like Frank Turner (my favourite artist of all time) The Gaslight Anthem, Tom Petty, The Offspring, and Into It. Over It. Blink 182, Townes VanZandt. It's kind of a mixed bag, and I think Old Habits as a record reads that way, it's very much a reflection of my attention span.

As of late I've been working on being more focused, looking for specific through lines, paying attention to some of my favourite records and seeing what makes them work. Mixing sounds from records like "Darkness on the Edge of Town" with punk rock rhythms to really make a style all my own.

**What makes your music stand out from the others?**

I think its dedication more than anything. Just like any career path you have to really push yourself to achieve your dreams, they wouldn't be called dreams if you could just reach out and grab them. If you look at someone who wants to be a Doctor, they're not just a "doctor on the weekends" they've been working at their goal for 7-10 years before they ever get into a hospital.

They commit themselves to it fully and completely. It's not about wanting it, it's not about being good, it's about being both those things and so much more. You need to have that DIY mentality because no one is going to do it for you.

**What do you like to do outside of music that contributes to your music?**

Honestly I think I'm pretty boring as a person because my life basically revolves around one thing. If I'm not playing, I'm writing, if I'm not writing I'm recording, if I'm not recording I'm listening. And because I am not a robot, I play video games, I watch copious amounts of television and movies, but I have conditioned my life around playing music. I work a job that I hate because it gives me ample time to play music, I keep my expenses low so I am free to live the life that I want to live. It's all about the dedication and sacrifices that you make to achieve the goals you want. The closest I get to an alternate outlet is D&D, I play with my brother and some old friends from high school maybe every other week. It's a great way to be creative and dramatic and not take yourself too seriously.

**Name your two biggest musical influences and why?**

When I was 15/16 years old my dad bought my brother and I tickets to see our favourite band The Offspring at the Molson Amphitheatre (now Budweiser Stage). My dad had gotten us into them so long ago I couldn't tell you how long I've been listening. When we got there the opening act was this skinny British guy with an acoustic guitar playing folk songs, screaming his head off with more intensity than I've seen from actual band and he conveyed that with just his voice and a guitar. I instantly felt a connection and it was at that point that I thought "I could do that." Luckily my dad was smart enough to buy his record and figure out what his name was, "Love, Ire and Song" By Frank Turner, and we listened to that record on repeat the entire way home in bumper to bumper traffic from Toronto to Exeter.

My Dad knows his stuff, I can probably credit him a lot for everything that I listen to whether he showed it to me or not.

**Who writes your songs? What are the main themes or topics for most of your songs?**

I'm an autobiographical artist, so when I write a song it's generally about a feeling



or an event that I'm going through or more likely have gone through and come out the other side. I've never been much for metaphors so basically what you hear is what you get. It always makes me a little self conscious both in presentation and when I compare it to other artists who sound like they're all going for their doctorates in literature studies. But I had to learn the hard way that you have to be true to yourself, nobody wants to sound like a carbon copy of a better band, unless you're one of those nostalgia rock bands who are more likely in it for the money rather than the love of music.

At the end of the day, there is very little handling of the songs, I write the main idea, basically ¾ finished, then I bring it to my backing band "The Glorious Failures" they punch it up and fill in the instruments. I don't know how to play and then they mock me for my musical illiteracy. After that, we take it to a producer who tells us it's crap and I start all over again.

**What has been your biggest challenge as a band/artist? Have you been able to overcome that challenge? If so, how?**

I'd say the biggest challenge I've had to deal with is probably working around my ADHD. In art, focus is very important, when you play music focus comes down to basic mathematics. This is a very new concept that has come to my attention that my specific ADHD has been holding me back. I CAN'T PLAY TO A CLICK TRACK. (for those who don't know, a click track is a thing used in recording to keep the musician on beat) I never understood why until recently but it has to do with the rhythm in my head and the ability to focus on multiple things at once which isn't the case for everyone with ADHD, but that is how it is for me. It's been an issue for me in every band I've been part of. Most people think I'm being lazy or faking it for whatever reason even after I've told them what the deal is. If they can't understand it, it doesn't exist. I've railway played by feel vs. "how many beats are in this measure." Over time I've learned that

putting a fake drum beat vs. a digital beep in my headphone fixes the problem like magic, but I don't think there will ever come a day where I don't have to explain to bandmates or producers that I can't use a click track without them trying to see if they can fix me first. It's frustrating for sure, but if that's the worst thing I have to overcome then I think I've lived a pretty charmed life so far.

**What current projects are you working on at the moment?**

Back in September, I did a full band live stream that I and released it as a ticketed event as a farewell show for Nich, the drummer of the Glorious Failures as a way to play one final show together before he moved 20 hours away to start the next chapter of his life. I think we'll be releasing that for public viewing on our YouTube channel in early 2021. As of right now, I'm currently working on the demo tracks for our sophomore LP, the release date is still unknown but we got some funding behind it thanks to the fold at the Community Arts Investment Program out of London Ontario. Unfortunately, I can't tell you too much without actually having to back up what I've said. And I released a lo-fi Folk Punk EP that I wrote over quarantine near the beginning of December which is available for "pay what you can" over on my bandcamp site.

I've been working on a series of socially distant house concert/backyard parties throughout Ontario, where fans hire me to play at their house and they invite 10-12 people they trust and have vetted to come over for a concert. If anyone wants to contact me about that, they can message me through my website or email me anytime at CharlieWeberMusic@gmail.com.

But we're honestly just itching to get back on the road, so we're hoping to do more touring soon as safely as possible, whenever that may be

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# Jessia Breaks Free of EDM Bond To Create Captivating Pop Songs

By April Savoie

We thought we should check in and see what one of our artists to watch in 2021 is up to.

Vancouver's Jessia is a bit of a musical experimenter. In a very short period of time she's left behind a career as a singer for EDM songs to become a bonafide pop singer, having recently teamed up with songwriter and producer Elijah Wood. Since then her sound has blossomed into a blast of pop sensations.

I sat down on the phone with the one-named singer to see what's ahead.

**You recently shared your Spotify results from 2020. Congrats on a great year.**

Yeah, it's pretty crazy. I was incredibly surprised when those numbers came up. I was like, "This is how many people are actually listening to me?" It was insane, but next year, I'm excited for those numbers to just keep going up. And I'm really, really excited to see what happens next year. I'm really, really proud of what's going on this year.

**Your new single Really Nice To Think About is doing well. Tell me about the song and what it means to you.**

It's kind of a bitter song. It's mostly about being in a situation or a relationship that you don't really see going anywhere, and it's literally just, "You're really nice to think about, but that's it." And you like the idea of the person and you're too scared to be alone and you want to just stay with them because it sounds perfect, but there's just something that's saying no, that it's not the one.

**Was there a specific person you had in mind when you wrote it?**

I wrote it during quarantine and it's actually written about a couple of different situations. I've had a couple of conversations with some close friends who are like, "Yeah, he's cool and all, but I don't know. I don't really see it. There's just a lot of the back and forth." And so I was in a similar situation when I was younger, and I was like, "You know what? This song just needs to be written." So I sat down. And I sent it to a couple of my girlfriends that I had written it about, and I asked, "What do you guys think?" And they said, "Yes, that's exactly how I'm feeling." So it's dedicated to them.

**You wrote it with Elijah Woods. How did you hook up with him? Do you think you'll do more together?**

Yes. Elijah's amazing. I can't say enough good things about him. He is a total rock star. Oh my goodness. Yeah, we connected on Instagram actually. I've found that Jamie and Elijah, they were doing an Instagram Live talent show, and I just reached out and asked, "Hey, can I sing a song?" And I sang the song Really Nice To Think About just on my ukulele and Elijah ended up loving it. And he was like, "Yo, can I produce this?" And I, of course said, "Yes, yes, you can."

We ended up making it completely work during quarantine. We did it all at a

distance because he's in Ottawa and I'm in Vancouver, and I'm so proud of it. I'm so, so impressed by everything that he did. He just heard my little baby of a song and turned it into now what you guys here. So I'm definitely going to be working with him again in the future. I am hoping that when travel starts lifting up a little bit, I will be able to go out and meet up with him in person and write some new stuff for the EP.

**Do you find it's more difficult, when you're writing the songs with social distancing, because you're so far apart?**

Definitely. There's nothing like just sitting in a room and getting a vibe with a producer. It's just a lot more laid back, and I'm able to see the screen and what he's doing and we're able to actually be in real time and it's not the constant, "Okay, no, you go. No, no, no, no." You know what I mean? That you have on any sort of Zoom situation. I've found that that writing with other topline writers and just writing the lyrics and the melody has been okay. Writing with a producer over Zoom is a little bit challenging. So I can't wait until we can actually be in a room together and write some really cool stuff. It's pretty much just been me sending him stuff and then him sending me stuff and us both being like, "You're amazing." "Okay, cool. Talk to you soon."

**Your career seems to have amplified in 2020. Take me through your musical change from working with the EDM crowd to creating songs like Really Nice To Think About and Conviction.**

My last two years, I've just been writing as a topline writer for EDM artists. And so it's kind of prepared me for writing at a distance with other people because I've been writing with producers from all over the world, but they usually send me the tracks and then I just write the topline on top of an already written track. And so, yeah, I've been doing that for two years. I realized that I like the spotlight. I looked and I realized that I was feeling, "Oh, I want to be the one who's getting my lyrics actually heard." I felt like I was a little bit more of just treated as a melodic part of the EDM world, because it's all about the producer, is what EDM is. That's the main focus in that genre. And so I decided to take a step back from that and take more of a minimalistic, wholesome approach and write some indie pop songs.

I decided, in the heat of quarantine, to launch this independent brand and this career, and it's crazy that I've released my first independent song in April, of this year. It feels like it was 10 years ago that I did that. Every single time that I've been releasing something, it's just more and more people are hearing it. And I'm definitely feeling the climbing up the ladder. It's incredibly rewarding and pushing me to keep on releasing songs. People seem to be liking what I'm doing. So that's good.

**At one point you made the switch to using Jessia. That's a unique take on your name.**

Jessica was taken. I spell my name with a K and I was like, "Oh, this is so unique."



But unfortunately that was taken. But, I just started playing around with my name and I was like, "Oh, Jessia is cool." And I took out the K. And then also at the time my two biggest inspirations were Jesse J and Sia. And so I was like, "This just makes perfect sense. So let's do Jessia." And it just kind of stuck. It was like the first name that I identified with. I was like, "Okay, I can see myself calling myself that."

**This year you won the 2020 Canadian Songwriter Challenge.**

It was really, really cool. I ended up coming up with my good friend, and I shouldn't even be saying this, but it was six hours before the deadline, and I was like, "You know what? We're just going to submit this." And I sent him the song and we quickly drew up this little demo and we submitted it. And then we started working with the team and it was absolutely insane.

I learned so, so much. And thank you to Music BC and Bell Media for putting this on because it was a huge growing opportunity, and very validating too, because it was the next thing that happened after my first release, and I was still wishy-washy on whether people liked my music or whether I was a good artist or anything. And for somebody to recognize my song writing and say, "You're actually kind of good at writing words", I was like, "Okay, thank you." It was really good. Really validating.

**Let's chat about Conviction. Tell me about that song.**

Conviction. I was just at the gym one day and I was like, "Oh, I just want a song that just gets me pumped", kind of thing. And so then later on that week, I was

supposed to meet this producer, Wavy, the guy that actually won the Canadian Songwriting Challenge, I was going to go and meet him, and I didn't want to show up unprepared to the writing session. So I just ended up writing Conviction on the subway while I was going to his place. And I showed up and I was like, "Yo, I kind of just want this for myself, I guess, just to listen to at the gym." And then he ended up producing it and I said, "No, this definitely needs to be released." I end up doing that a lot, just writing songs, selfishly thinking "Oh, I want a song that sounds like this." Then I end up writing it and then Conviction just ended up happening and I was proud of it, so it ended up released to the public and the rest is history.

For the full interview and more photos, visit [519magazine.com](http://519magazine.com)



# KATHY VALENTINE

The Go-Go's founding member and  
bassist opens up about  
revealing rock 'n roll memoir

By Dan Savoie  
Main photo by Ruby Matheu



Kathy Valentine is a rock pioneer and visionary. The avant-garde musician is a founding member and bassist of The Go-Go's, as well as being one of the few young women of the 1970s who decided to pursue a career in music - and her latest biography is a testament to that challenge.

She sat down with 529 to talk about her 45-year music career, The Go-Go's and her new biography *All I Ever Wanted*.

**With your biography, you could have covered 45 years of music business history. That's a lot to cover.**

Yeah, it's only a 20 year span that I really concentrated on. It covers the '70s and the '80s. It seemed like a very natural and good story arc. I read a lot, I've taken creative writing classes. I was well aware of the classic structures of storytelling. And I thought like my book really followed that with that particular arc. And a memoir is often a slice of life rather than the full life. Mary Carr has written three or four memoirs about her life and other memoirs. That just take over sections that tell a story within the big overarching story.

So I feel like I could write another one. That was my intention when I got this and I wasn't going to tell it all. It doesn't cover 45 years really. It covers the '70s and '80s from the time I'm 12, 11 years old, lost, confused, not a good path, messed up and how music saves me and gives me a dream I pursue and achieve that I end up losing and have to find myself. So it covers my career, getting started, learning an instrument, joining the Go-Go's and then having to find myself after.

**In some ways, along with being your story, I think this book is a real testament to the women who play the music, not just the ones who sing it but the ones who play it.**

I wanted to tell that story exactly. Because I do feel like it's important for women in music to make their stories visible and put them out there. I think that there are a lot of women who have done music in the past few stories, we don't know. And we can seek out now because we have YouTube and the internet. But in the '70s, when I first started playing, I thought I was the only 15 year old girl in the world that had ever wanted to play an electric guitar and be in a band.

If it wasn't for Suzi Quatro, I wouldn't even thought of doing that. So that visibility was so important to me. And other stories of women like Fannie and the bands in the '60s. I mean, if you just go on YouTube, now you can look up female bands from the '60s and there's just so many of them.

And I just wonder how many other young girls in the '70s might've started bands if they've known those stories and known the names system. It's almost like you didn't know someone unless they were a big top selling, well-known act, which is fine understandable. But at the same time, I don't think somebody has to be a big multi-platinum app to inspire someone else.

**The Go-Go's are kind of in that same position where they're inspiring a different generation of people to be girls and women to play instruments and write their own songs and do it all.**

Yeah. I think we did. I think a lot of the

bands that came in our wake or females that were saying I mean, I've directly heard from Tanya Donnelly from Throwing Muses and Belly and Kathleen Hanna from Bikini Kill and Louise and Nina from Brooke assault.

A lot of those bands in the '90s featured women. So prominently that Kevin County Deal, Courtney love said the Go-Go's were a big influence and inspiration. And not only girls, but I've heard this from guys too. And this is actually a real direct line even from some of the punk power hits of Blink-182, Good Charlotte, Green Bay. To trace back to the Go-Go's having songs with a kind of a punky pop sound to it. So I think our contribution is already being recognized.

**In the book you talk about trying so hard to get somebody to actually sign the band. Most people don't realize how hard it is, but you point out just how hard it was for an all female band at the time. Tell me about that journey.**

Yes. We were rejected by every major label and they didn't say we're not going to sign them because they don't have good songs. They didn't say we're not going to sign the Go-Go's because people don't seem to like them. Quite the opposite, we had great songs and people were lining up to see if Go-Go's in the clubs of Los Angeles.

But they have one reason to reject our band. And that was they said, "There's never been a successful all female band. We don't want to put our time and effort and money behind an all female band, because it's never been successful before."

So contrary to making us just pass them and go away, we went with a smaller label with Miles Copeland who did see the potential.

And it was a really exciting and wonderful thing not only for our band, but for that small label taking a chance with our success. We also kind of paved the way for a small indie label to have hits. And our success I.R.S went on to sign, Fine Young Cannibals and R.E.M. Just because there hasn't been one before doesn't mean it can't happen. It was satisfying that we had evolved.

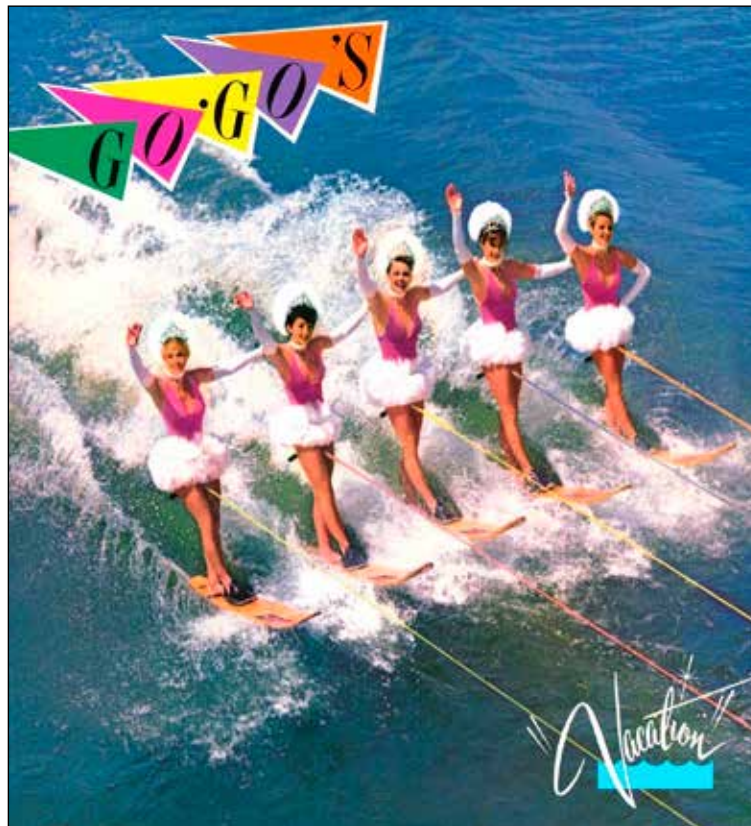
**You guys accomplished so much, there were tons of hits, lots of record sales, but the entire time you kept having to fight that male sexist industry.**

We weren't assaulted, people weren't saying, "Hey, sleep with me and you can move up into the success rail more." It wasn't that kind of sexism.

Starting with having an unwillingness

to give us a chance, we also met a lot of sexism. I don't know what else it could have been from radio programmers who didn't add our record, even though we were selling records. And we were touring and getting lots of press, the radio programmers just wouldn't add us.

It was only when the sales and the exposure from MTV and TV shows started pushing the sales up that they had to add our record. But also we got pigeon-holed a lot by the press or the media that liked to categorize successful women as either you're this kind of woman or that kind of woman. And they just made us out to be like the Girls Next Door, rather than fully dimensional character people. We weren't



the Girls Next Door, we weren't the other stereotypes that people like to box women into. We were five different individuals that happened to be women that wrote great songs and worked really hard for everything we achieved.

**The Rolling Stone cover really threw a punch at you guys and not because you were posing in your underwear, but because of the headline. I mean, I can't imagine the frustration, being typecast in a certain way and then going through a photo shoot like that and then seeing the headline (The Go-Go's Put Out).**

Yeah, that was a shock and it was bad enough when a photographer that was iconic that we looked up to was dictating what we should wear. Normally we just wore whatever we wanted every now and then we'd go into a photo shoot and there would be a stylist and a photographer saying, "Hey, we thought you could wear this."

And sometimes it's just part of a job and you're tired and we'd be like yeah whatever. Maybe it seemed fun to dress up in someone else's clothes. But no one had ever brought packages of underclothes, and we were very against it, but you have to realize we're a young band just

breaking. And this is Rolling Stone, which is the prominent and only respected and legitimate, huge nationwide, maybe even internationally wide, wisely-read music paper and photographer.

We agreed to it, but like you say, the shock was when it said "The Go-Go's Put Out" and we couldn't figure out what the point of that was, it definitely felt like a put down.

**It must've felt better for the second cover though, even though the headline is still a little off (The Go-Go's - Women On Top).**

Yeah, I think so. I wrote about this in my book and I really get the feelings across because it felt like that on the second cover. Number one, we got to be on the cover twice, which is phenomenal, but we were wearing clothes that presented us as fierce and empowered women. Again, it wasn't just us, Rolling Stone is notorious for sexualizing women on its covers.

**Out of all that imagery, and some of the things that have happened, is there one thing that stands out the most that you would love to have changed?**

I think it's a really big thing that's unchangeable, but if I could I wish that we had the opportunity to take more time off. I wish we'd known it was okay to say, no, we're going to take some time off for ourselves. I

wish we had enjoyed the success of the first album more and not rushed into our second album. We felt very motivated.

Like we've got it proven again, we've got to show we're not just a one album wonder and it wasn't good guidance. I felt like we thought we were calling the shots. It was all our idea. We weren't forced to do that, but I think we were misguided.

And the smart thing would have been to continue working on that album. It was a huge success and there was no reason to rush through it and rush into a second album. So I think that's my biggest regret on our career.

The other things, there was no way you could change it. I wish we'd been more mature and more capable of communicating and having compassion and empathy for each other. And able to talk out our differences and disagreements better. But I don't know if that could have been any different than we were 23, 22, 23, 24 years old. And hadn't grown up a lot because we weren't in a job that required much growing up. It really just required getting on stage and playing your great songs the best you could. We were able to do that. But yeah, my biggest regret is that we've rushed into the next album. I think

we would have had a lot bigger career and more sustained and maybe had a chance to evaluate ourselves and take it all in, or maybe react a little better.

**Well, that living fast lifestyle is pretty hard on everybody, right?**

Yes, the immaturity, that inability to take care of ourselves. It would have really helped us to take some time off. There's just a lot you can always look back in hindsight and see where this went wrong and where that went wrong. But when you're in the thick of it, it seems like you just need to keep showing up and doing it.

**In the book, you mentioned that your father was against you wanting to pursue music, because it wasn't something that women don't do. He was obviously wrong.**

Well, he didn't raise me and he basically cut me out of his life. So for me, it just felt like more confirmation and verification that I wasn't important to him that he didn't know me. He didn't understand me. And at the same time, I felt like he doesn't get to say or decide what I do because he hasn't been here.

He's not offering me anything else. So looking back, I'm grateful that he wasn't there. At the time it was painful from the time I was a little girl, I had a lot of pain and abandonment that my dad didn't want me in his life, in the middle of writing this book we became close and I helped him through the last stages of his life. And I was the daughter that was there with him.

And we talked about that and he expressed so much regret and I was able to help him let go and say dad, if you had been there raising me, you would've never looked at me or supported me and it would have changed my whole life. And I'm happy that I got to be go after my dream and that my mom, as neglectful and was eloquently parenting me. She was very good at supporting me and saying, "Why not? Why shouldn't we be able to do that?"

**Every good biography tackles the good and the bad, and that is a touchy moment. Were there moments that you thought about excluding from the book because maybe they were just too personal?**

I did. I was very uncomfortable with writing about abortion because it's such a polarizing hot button topic. And I felt like it's personal and any woman's personal decision. But that is the exact reason that I felt like I should write about it -because I think that the stories should be told and it should be out there so that people can understand, even if they don't agree with something that there are reasons very personal to an individual to self determine what their life is going to be about.

I think it's easy to jump to an opinion or a judgment when you don't know the situation or the person or the circumstances. And more people are brave about sharing the same with any of the difficult stuff. I was worried about revealing my mom's missteps and egregious instances of parenting that as a mom myself, I couldn't dream of putting my own daughter through. But I would ask her, I said are you okay if I write about this?

And she would always say, "I want you

to write anything that feels meaningful.” She was part of your story. And that contract really helps my leader understand why I was so single-minded living in my aim and motivation of pursuing a band. And how profoundly important making it in the van was to me and how devastating it was to lose that. Once I had found it, I don’t think without the context of how I was raised and what was both missing in my childhood shaped all my responses.

And that’s what people identify with. So I’m really glad I’ve had so many people write me and say I related so much to what you wrote about how you were raised or how your relationship with your mother or father was that I thought much more interaction and response about the aspects of the story of my joy, then I have, “Oh, I loved when you told this about the girls,” it’s like, people are interested in that. It’s always interesting to see what it’s like to be in a band. Making it and the struggles and the triumphs, but the things that people really relate to are the personal things and what those relationships are like. Because that everyone has had this feeling.

**The Go-Go’s is definitely one of the big draws of why people would get the book because they recognize you from the band. But the content with the Go-Go’s is kind of almost like a foundation for something bigger, which is what makes this an a very interesting read, right?**

Yeah. I felt like that was part of my life. I was really grateful that I got a book deal with University of Texas Press. Because I think a lot of other publishers wouldn’t have said, “Nobody cares about this stuff spill the dirt. Spill the dirt you’re tell all,” I think the Walden Publishers would have wanted it and the University of Texas Press thought like that. And they have so many Call Music Books. I was so excited when they approached me. I wanted my story and the Go-Go’s part of that story and a very compelling part of it. But it’s the overall thing. I think that really makes it a literary memoir rather than just a rock and roll memoir. It is a rock and roll memoir, but it’s also very much a literary coming of age story.

And I was inspired not by the book where people talk about all the famous people they’ve met. I was inspired by, more like not losing memoirs, Just Kids by Patti Smith, or Wild by Cheryl Strayed, or Educated by Tara Westover, or Liars’ by Mary Karr, these were the books that inspired me. Those literary memoirs, they’re not people that are famous. There people that just had stories that people really felt something in common with. So thank you. I’m glad that’s what came across.

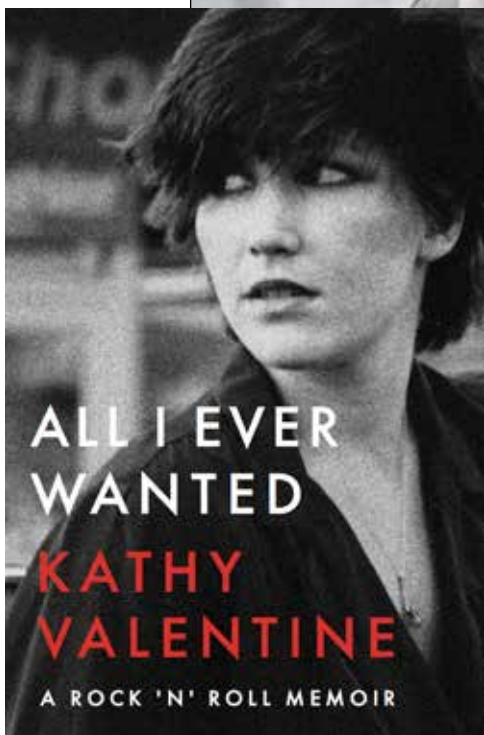
**I want to switch gears for a second. I wanted to ask about the musicals because I love a good musical and I hope I can see it someday. How did the musical come about and are you pleased with the end result?**

It was years in the making, but apparently in the world of musicals, even the years that it wasn’t in the making, it still came about in record time, I think seven years from when we first were approached about it. We were so excited to do it. We didn’t know what the story would be, but we were very interested in what came to us, which was just using the music as a catalog for the front story that told the encompassing Shakespearean tale of love and missed identities.

And it was funny and yet light and had a great positive message that broke through a lot of barriers. And there was so much positive response to it. I wish it could have gone further on Broadway. But before the pandemic,



Photo by Christopher Durst



this musical had been chosen by hundreds of high schools in their theater groups to perform and regional theater. So it was getting a whole life of its own off of Broadway, which was really exciting to see because it really is a great story. It really represented

the Go-Go’s as well.

**Lastly, 2020 was supposed to be a Go-Go’s tour. Will that resume when things are safe again?**

Yeah. The tour that was cancelled for 2020 has been rescheduled for 2021. Now it’s anybody’s guess whether that is going to happen. I have the dates cleared out. I’m not making other plans. I think one thing that the pandemic has done is really put us all square in the moment and made us realize and appreciate what we have in the moment. It’s like game day because you really don’t know where this is going. I mean, it looks hopeful. It looks better, but who knows? So I’m hoping that we will get to do this.

If not there will be a time when we can, and will be excited to. We’re not really active as a band, but when something comes up where it is exciting like the documentary or a chance like in 2018, when we played at the Hollywood ball for four nights with the LA Philharmonic. So when something special comes along, we’ll be really happy to get together and do it. But everybody lives across the world, has families, homes, pads, other careers. It’s the times we get to work together that are special. And I do hope we get to do it this summer.

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**OUT OF LINE**  
MUSIC

# Leave Those Kids Alone Are More Than Just Another Brick In The Wall

By Dan Boshart

One of the more sought after bands in Windsor Essex County the last couple years has been a group of kids ages 10 to 16 years old who are disciples of Pete Palazzolo's Canadian Conservatory of Music. Joining Pete in the mentoring and managing of this group is John-Paul Bonadonna who is also the father of drummer Addisyn and guitarist Alex. The band is rounded out with Timothy Hole and Luca Angelini.

We talked with John-Paul about the story of the kids, new music and changes coming for the band.

## Tell us about the band?

Pete Palazzolo of Canadian Conservatory of Music put bands together with his students but never had he put one together where the lead singer was 11 and the drummer was only seven, because that's what Alex was at the time. Basically that was so the kids could perform two songs at the Christmas recital and two songs come summertime.

What was crazy was the most progress that any of these bands that he would put together, came from this pairing of two kids. Essentially at the time Pete would play lead guitar and there was another kid who played piano but he didn't have the same commitment level that Tim and Alex did. I said to Pete, do you want me to play bass so that the songs can sound that much fuller when we're rehearsing?

So that went on until basically January of 2018 and by that time there had been a revolving door with different kids then finally a piano/keyboard player by the name of John Dorman arrived and Alex switched to guitar and my daughter Addi was playing drums. So now we had Addi in the mix and I think we had the right commitment level from John and Tim and Alex had been waiting for.

So over the next few months, I was just posting Facebook videos of us playing in the basement, Addi on drums and Alex on guitar. Alex liked playing drums but at the same time he was into playing piano, he was taking guitar lessons and the growth of his guitar playing was exponential so it reached the point we knew eight or ten songs and people started asking, would you come play at our event?

At the time they meant would I come with my two kids and I'd been in top 40 bands and wedding bands for twenty years since I was eighteen so I had all the stuff but I thought, if I do this we're going to jump in both feet. I didn't want to be the lead vocalist who brings two kids out, I said let's see if the other two boys are into doing this and they were. Basically the first gig was very much a community type thing, it was the Social Media Day event at Lanspeary Park.

We took the six or seven songs we knew, played them twice and at that point I knew it was going to be more than just that. They played nothing but classic rock so Leave those Kids Alone was a good fit and then we were off to the races. Next thing you know, all these family events that had

stages were asking us to play. Last year we had a very busy schedule of trailer parks, festivals, we played Strawberry Fest and Sunsplash, Belle River Stroll the Street.

2020 was supposed to be the year of all years. We got their work visas, we were going to go stateside, there were summer concerts booked. One was Bay City Michigan, we were going to kick off their summer concert series. Booking House out of Toronto jumped on board. It was going to be an incredible summer where people showed up at venues to see adult bands, tribute acts and they were going to be blown away by these kids but COVID happened so we turned to doing social distancing videos.

We went through our songs and had each kid record their part separately from their own home and I used my abilities to stitch them all together and that ended up being crazy. We had a recording of Comfortably Numb that had almost half a million views when you factor in what we posted and sites that took the video and reposted it so now we have followers literally all around the world.

Come June, we said we gotta get out there. We saw other bands going out and playing in someone's driveway so I said let's just do it. We did it in a way that it was no cost to the host, essentially it was until we were full. If you asked, we pretty much played in your driveway. So we did thirty-four driveway shows in the summer and we also did a fundraiser for Teen Mental Health through Bluesfest Windsor along with a few other things.

As much as we were disappointed about not playing all those shows in the U.S. it turned out great and we had an absolute blast. The gratitude from people in the neighbourhoods we played for was great, people bringing out lawn chairs and being respectful of each other in regards to social distancing, etc. I think things will be better next year with vaccines coming and whatnot but will festivals be back up and running or are they going to say bear with us for one more year?

I see a whole summer or at least part of a summer where it's going to happen again and that doesn't bother me. It worked out really well and gave them a lot of exposure. The degree to which they know the ins and outs of playing live has really developed.

**Obviously you being a musician influenced them.**

Yeah, my wife Michelle too, she was the vocalist in Blonde Tango which was my second band after Icy Red. My brother-in-law got married a few years ago and we had Alex on drums and Addi sang with Michelle and they learned what it was like to learn a set of music and play in front of people. Alex learned all those songs and for the rest of the band it felt normal.

That's when I realized we were dealing with something that was a little bit more



than normal. For Alex it was just something we would always do. We would jam when he was five, I would sing various

Beatles songs and he would just play along. I didn't want Addisyn to be the sibling that just tagged along so I got her involved playing drums. Alex was transitioning into guitar so I asked Addi if she could sit in and just give us the straight beat and next thing you know it transitioned to this song and that song. I brought her to Pete and said you know how we have this thing going with the other kids, I think Addi can sit in. I think he was a little tentative and rightly so because she was eight years old and not a student of his but it became clear right away.

It was six months from the time she sat in and played a standard rock beat to playing on stage with the boys.

**You recently lost a member.**

Like any band, sometimes there's a change in personnel. John decided a few weeks ago that he would be leaving the band. This is an opportunity to fill his void with two players, a bassist and a keyboard player, I'd like to see the full line up be kids. Running the board is an instrument all of its own so if I can transition to that roll I'd be perfectly fine with that.

**Jeff Burrows of The Tea Party has been a big supporter of the band.**

Yeah, it all started at the first Rocking for Kaleb's Courage fundraiser. We met Jeff there and he was super gracious. I think he likes to say he sees a lot of himself in the band, they would do that very thing when they were young and even his dad John has

commented about enjoying seeing it from his perspective as another musician dad. Just to be invited to perform in The LiUNA Bluesfest series and help raise funds for teen mental health was really great.

He told us we'd be invited to be VIP guests for a Tea Party show during the summer but unfortunately like so many other things it didn't happen this year.

**The musicianship is indeed outstanding. I particularly like their cover of Roll With the Changes, it's spot on and Tim's vocals are perfect for it.**

That's all Pete, he made a point from the beginning that these were not going to be watered down, he wanted everything to be perfect. Trust me, some of those songs were project songs. It took weeks and what we would do is just offset them with some easier songs that we would learn here at the house so all credit to him and all credit to their abilities.

They are committed, they are not music lesson type kids in terms of a half hour a night. Alex is one who when he comes home, it's guitar and you'll get him off it because it's time to eat. He certainly makes time for school but he's always playing it. I make sure that they're a student of music as far as giving them the back story behind these bands because it's fascinating to me. I wasn't into classic rock as a kid, I'd get to everything late but that's a benefit because I got to discover Pink Floyd five years ago. It sounds ridiculous but it's true, I'm having fun discovering all these great songs along with them.

**Why classic rock?**

I think it has to do with the musicianship aspect. If you want something where they're all playing very active parts, it almost has to be. I think along the way there's plenty of classic hits into the eighties and nineties.

**You've just released their first original single, Invisible Enemy.**

Recently Pete said to us, the kids are

reaching an age where let's think about what you ultimately want to do so our focus during our weekly sessions turned to writing. At first it was let's come up with a chord pattern and how would you support that and eventually Alex came up with the music for a song.

got the rest of the kids involved in the lyric writing and that's how our first original single came about which was just released on Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube. I think we were pretty happy with what we had but the parts that Pete's producer mind would help shape, that's where magic happened. So we recorded it in my basement and sent it out to João Carvalho in Toronto to have it mastered. Who knows how the response will be but it'll be cool just to know that it's out there.

**Is there a special memory from this past year?**

We were on Breakfast TV in Toronto which probably wouldn't have happened without COVID. It was a result of making those socially distanced videos that we submitted to their Canadian Families Got Talent competition and we got an honourable mention, along with a ten minute Skype interview which was pretty cool.

The video they really liked was the one where Addi was smiling and looking intensely at the camera and what they don't realize is the reason she's doing that is because she's locked in trying not to make a mistake. She's just solid and all of them, they all have moments where they're just kids and that's ok, but for the majority of the time they're all doing songs that my top 40 band used to do and my band didn't sound anywhere near as good as they do. As much good that happened this year, you never know what would have happened if we had played those gigs in Michigan. The good thing is they are young and time is on their side.

# CARYS

## TICTOK AND SHE DON'T STOP!

Story by  
Dan Savoie

Aviva Mongillo might be known as a TV actress to some, starring in shows like *Backstageand* and *Workin' Moms*, but in the music world she sheds that made-for-TV image and becomes CARYS - a pop music perfectionist who's one to watch out for in 2021.

She recently signed a record deal with Warner Music Canada amidst the online success of her TikTok hit *Princesses Don't Cry*. The early results of that relationship with Warner is the EP *"To Anyone Like Me"*, which appeared in October 2020 with such notable songs as *No More*, *Crush* and her latest *"When A Girl"*.

We marked CARYS as an artist to watch in 2021 for her crafty song writing and musical style - and besides that, I also found out that deep down, she's just as shy as I am.



ARTIST  
TO WATCH  
FOR  
IN 2021

**Sadly, this has become the first question I ask everybody now. And it's kind of depressing, but everybody's curious. So how has the pandemic treated you?**

Personally I feel that I'm in a really lucky position. I got to spend most of the pandemic at home with my family and we just had a lot of time to spend together. And I spent it mostly in my childhood home, which has a lot of space and it's been good. I've been healthy, knock on wood. Of course I want to get back to being able to go outside and hug everybody and be with people. But I feel on the lucky side of it all.

**Yeah. In one sense, you got a double whammy though, because both of the industries that you work in were really hit hard by COVID.**

Yeah, they have. And although it's been at home and a bit of a challenge, I've still been able to pursue opportunities with music and acting. And I know that a lot of productions have been stopped and everything's up in the air, but luckily I've been able to still work as well.

**I want to ask about the name CARYS. Where did that come from and why did you choose to use another name?**

Well, this name is derived from the word love in Welsh, and I just wanted a name that meant something pretty, like love and that was catchy and one word, aesthetically. And that name stuck out to me right away.

**It's cool that it separates your music from your acting.**

Yeah. That wasn't the intention, but naturally, it keeps them in different worlds. I see CARYS and myself as an actress, living in different worlds.

**This year you were able to release "To Anyone Like Me." Tell me about the EP and what it means to you specifically.**

Well, this EP was a huge game changer for me. I used to write a lot of songs with either myself or my guitar or with YouTube. And with this EP, I got to travel to Denmark, LA. We had people fly out to Toronto to write with me for this EP. So it was just a really exciting time of my life writing this EP and then a really honest time as well, because for a long time I was writing honestly, but not with intention. And then with this EP, I was writing with the intention of, "Okay, I want people to know who I am and get a sense of the more fun side of me with this EP." And I think we did that.

**You got to work with a Canadian music legend, Gavin Brown, this time. That's really cool. What was it like working with him?**

Working with Gavin was really fun. We both are very exuberant in the writing room, very animated. And working with him always makes me feel inspired to just push myself a little further with things. If we're writing something he's a very good person to have in the room because he always

seems to push it in the right direction when we're feeling stuck.

**You mentioned that the song writing process has changed. Tell me about how you started writing some of your first songs and how it differs greatly from the new song writing process.**

Well, I used to write songs on my guitar, which in general is very different, more organic vibe and I would just let words come to me and write about whatever, it didn't even have to be something that happened to me or my life.

I would just write, along with a story of whatever came to mind, even if I didn't feel connected to that, I felt like I was writing a lot just for fun. And when it came to working with producers, like working with Gavin Brown, working with other songwriters and getting into rooms with people who I'd never met before, it became a more intentional experience where it felt "Okay, I've got so many incredible resources helping me to tell a story. What story do I want to tell?"

Whereas for a while when I was writing alone, which both are nice. I think they're just different. But one is more of I get to do whatever I want, write whatever I want and just say whatever, no one's going to hear it. And now I feel, "Okay, this is going to go on an EP." And it was an exciting challenge.

**"When A Girl" is your latest single from the EP. Tell me about that song and where it came from.**

So that song was brought to me by my team at Atlantic and was suggested to me as a, "Hey, we heard this song and we think it sounds like you." So I heard it and I loved it. I love the message and I resonate with it. So then we decided to release it is one of the singles and with a music video.

**When a song like that is presented to you, is there something that you contributed to make it your own?**

I think the singing is the delivery of the song, the chance to show my interpretation of it because every singer sings things differently. And I really took this opportunity to, even though I didn't write it. This was the first song I haven't written that I've sang, so I just tried to put myself in the shoes of if I had written it.

**It's a very colorful video. You must find making music videos a little bit easier than the average musician, because you're also an actress.**

You would think that. I actually get so nervous. It's fun because it's a song. So to me, the song is like the script. So I have a script, but it's hard because it's a lot more vulnerable. You're staring dead into the camera for a lot of it and with acting I enjoy pretending that the camera's not there. But when the camera's right in your face and you're sitting right at it, it can be a little more intimidating. But it's true, I do love making music videos.

**I get a real, very Taylor Swift vibe from your videos. Is she an inspiration at all?**

Oh, absolutely. Could you tell? (laughs) I grew up on Taylor Swift. She was one of the reasons I even went into music and songwriting. Her first album made me pick up a guitar and start learning it. So I'm glad the influence is there.

**That was my next question. When and what inspired you to actually take music seriously?**

That's a good question because I've always done it, like I said. I always used to write songs just for myself. And then in the 11th grade, around age 16, 17, I was feeling that I've been doing this for so long and nobody's really heard my songs or I've never put anything out there. So I decided to start posting some of my songs online. And then that happened to lead me to a producer in Toronto that I ended up working with just for fun and to learn, was working with songwriters. So after that time working there where I'd go to the studio every day and I just loved it. I would take the train from Markham to Toronto every morning and stay there all day long writing songs. And I just loved it so much that I just couldn't stop and I kept going.

**"Princesses Don't Cry" sounds like a very personal song when you listen to it. Is it personal and why did you write it?**

I wrote this song when I was 17. I had the intention going into the session to write something... I had the title "Princesses don't cry" and then I had some of the lyrics like, "Over monsters in the night." I had written stuff down. And it is personal but at the time I didn't really know what I was writing it about.

I just was putting words down that resonated with me and made sense to me. And when I look back at it now, what it means is just there were so many expectations for how I felt people expected me to be that I couldn't live up to. And the frustration of feeling, "I'm just a girl, I'm just a young person. I don't know who I am. And I see all these examples of people who seem to have it all together or understand themselves or feel good. And I just feel I'm in the middle of it all," because that's how I felt. But at the time I wasn't even aware of it so deeply to know that's what I was writing about.

**Are you happy that this song became the breakout song? Especially on TikTok.**

I'm happy to even have a breakout song and because it taught me so much. When it first started gaining attention, I really wrote myself off because of the title "Princesses don't cry." I felt, "Oh, it's not cool. I sing about princesses." And I was looking down upon it and upon my own writing. And so to see that song do so well and have so many people connect with it was a reminder to myself that my intuition, my

instincts, my songwriting resonates with people. And this is one of the songs that when I really listened to it after it came back into my life, I felt, "Oh, wow. Yeah, this is really good. I should be proud of this song." And I am.

**Was the music video made after all the TikTok stuff? And if so, you could have went in a million different directions with the video, right?**

Yeah. So the video was made after the TikTok stuff was happening. We re-released a song because I had released it on my very first EP when I was 19. So we re-released it as a single and then made a video. And we had some limitations to make the video, because I was on tour in the States doing some shows and we filmed the video in Atlanta, Georgia.

So we flew out a director and then we had limited options to film the video. So we worked within the ideas of having it in a studio space and me and the director just talked about different visuals and different things we could film. And we came up with the ones that are in the video.

**How does filming a music video differ from film, or even film different from television? Because you've had a chance to do all three.**

Definitely! Looking into the camera versus looking away from the camera, that's a very big difference. Usually with film there's a lot more people on set, with music videos, in my experience, there's less people on set. So it's a more intimate environment and on a set and on a music video you're doing multiple takes. So it's quite similar. It's just a different medium.

**Do you prefer the big crowd watching or the intimate crew?**

Definitely the intimate. If someone has a camera on me, I'm very aware that the camera is on me and I don't behave as naturally as if it's with less people. I'm a very shy person. So with less people, the easier it is to be vulnerable and open up.

**How does a shy person end up choosing music and acting as a career?**

Yeah, this has been a very interesting journey for me. I haven't always been shy. I've grown up from being very, very loud and really extroverted to, as I've been growing up, just more introspective. And especially after this year, being in my head all year because of isolation, naturally. I feel like we're all feeling that. I like to push myself outside of my comfort zone and going down this path of music and acting, I love doing these things so much. I felt, okay, yeah, I'm a little shy, but it's an opportunity to face my fears to do what I love. And I see that as a purposeful action, that if I wasn't a little nervous, then it probably wasn't something I really cared about that much.

**In some ways I can relate. I remember the very first time I**

**ever went on the radio, I was so inexperienced and I didn't even go to school for it. I was just a guy who had a chance to crack a mic on a radio station and I would never want to listen to that show ever. Do you feel like you don't want to do see anything that you did early on?**

Oh man. Yeah. The cringe factor, for sure. I'm glad you said that. That made me feel so understood because it's so true. It's so scary, even though you like it and it's something you know you're good at and that it's fun. The other part, "Okay, just do it. Just speak. It's okay." And afterwards, the high of that, especially performing live for me, right before I go on stage to perform live, I feel like throwing up. I almost feel "I don't want to go out there. Someone else go out and stall." But then as soon as I'm on the stage, you can't get me off.

**Let's go back to that first show then. So what was that like?**

I did some shows when I was younger I did, for my singing lessons, a recital, and we had to perform in a church in front of maybe a hundred people. And that's what I remember being the first time I ever performed. And I just stood there like a stick, just didn't move, lightly swayed, left to right while I avoided eye contact with the crowd and sang a Kelly Clarkson song.

**And again, if you're anything like me, when you were in that moment, somehow, even though you were so stiff and so timid, you knew deep down, "This is what I want to do." It's almost kind of fun.**

Yeah. It is funny because I'm not showing it right now. I'm not really doing all the stuff I really want to be doing, like spinning around and walk you through the crowd, just letting myself go wild. But I knew that I would gain the confidence to really own the stage.

**On the opposite end of this, has there been an acting moment that you're most proud of? The highlight of your career?**

I think I'll go with Backstage because I was so young, it was my very first job ever. And I was one of the leads of this family channel show where we were filming really fast paced and I had a lot of work to do. So I basically went from doing nothing as a 17 year old to learning heaps of lines and practicing and getting to set at 6:00 AM. I went straight to work mode. And I think I look back at that as the proudest time, because I really showed myself how hard I was willing to work for my dreams and how much I really did love it because I'd never been so passionate about anything. If you have to make me work hard to do anything like school, math, I would be complaining at that time. So the fact that I wasn't complaining, waking up at 5:00 AM, getting to set, being there all day long. I look back at that as a really proud moment.

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