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The Music Magazine for
Local Bands & Fans

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SUITE MADAME BLUE
TOO MUCH TIME ON MY
HANDS
BEST OF TIMES
RENEGADE
COME SAIL AWAY

BLUE COLLAR MEN

THE MUSIC OF STYX



Bill Capone
Vocals/Keyboards



John Britton
Vocals/Guitar



Don Mousseau
Vocals/Guitar



Mike Walsh
Vocals/Bass



Jim Turmel
Drums

Come sail away with the talented Blue Collar Men as Paperjam goes backstage as their special guests for a full pre-show interview at The Rochester Opera House



Blue Collar Men - The Music of Styx

Blue Collar Men is a Tribute to the Music of Styx. Formed with this lineup in 2024, the band is focused on performing the album versions of your favorite Styx songs and some deep cuts. The band consists of five experienced and talented musicians each bringing their individual reverence for Styx's legacy, and joined in a combined mission to faithfully represent Styx's music in live performance.

Q. Don, as the founder of Blue Collar Men, can you tell us how this all came together?

DON: My first objective was to put together a group of great singing musicians. My first addition was Bill Capone, our main vocalist and keyboard player. Bill is one of the most talented singing keyboard players I've ever met, and to do a Styx band, that's the first thing you need. So I really lucked out! He's our "Dennis DeYoung" which is no small task. Tonight, Bill will sing seven or eight songs, I will sing four, guitarist John Britton will do four, and our bassist Mike Walsh will sing two songs. That's four lead vocalists, and we all sing backups. It took about six months to find all the right pieces as we went through several second guitarists and drummers. We hit the ground running in January 2024 and have been booked throughout 2025.



Q. Was there something specific that made you want to perform the music of Styx?

DON: I was in high school in the late 70s. The music coming out around that time was probably the best in my lifetime. I love songs with cool hooks and changes, memorable lead solos and big harmony vocals. As I surveyed the New England area for potential tribute ideas, I noticed Styx wasn't represented, and they aligned with everything I liked about rock music. I made a bet with myself that it would be well-received because it's music that transports you to that time in history. At present, we've done 5 nearly sold-out venues and have been asked to return.

Q. The vocals and musicianship in this band are truly outstanding. To put it simply, you sound exactly like Styx! How have you managed to capture the music so authentically?

JOHN: We are often asked if we use backing tracks. The answer is, we DON'T! We have spent an immense amount of time working on the intricate harmony parts that Styx music demands. While we use pre-recorded intros on some songs, the multi-part vocals you're hearing are 100% live. The a cappella "pause" that we do in "Babe" is a great example of our abilities.

Continued...

"Blue Collar Men - The Music of Styx is more than just another band project for me. It's about elevating and achieving a level of success I haven't reached before. The band consists of 5 talented musicians, 2 sound engineers, a guitar tech and 2 road crew members. That's 10 people to put on a 60 or 90 minute performance of the Music of Styx. I'm having a blast!"

—Don Mousseau, Founder, Guitars/Vocals

Blue Collar Men - The Music of Styx

MIKE: Everyone is willing to listen to each other, which is essential to faithfully executing our set list. For some of the more hard-to-hear harmony arrangements, we practice together a cappella before putting them together with the instruments. At our first rehearsal when the voices came together for the first time, it sounded great. I have not played in another group with three lead voices (Don, Bill and John) who can all sing on key. Plus, it's always a highlight to witness the guys execute their instrumental parts so well.

DON: Our goal is to present the music of Styx just like you remember it from the albums and radio. We don't do any live versions of anything. We only occasionally make tweaks like adding endings to fade outs or using a moment in a song to display our abilities vocally. We've added a spot in the middle of "Babe" where the entire band rests musically, and we do part of the second chorus "a capella." The response to this has been amazing!

Q. As big fans of Styx, we listen to Grand Illusion and other Styx albums to this day. Why do you think the music of Styx still appeals to people decades later?

MIKE: I think fans never get tired of the music they love and will seek out the chance to see it performed live, if done well.

JIM: I grew up listening to Styx and am a huge fan of the music. The progressive style and hooks make it interesting to me. It stands the test of time.

JOHN: I remember hearing "Lady" on AM Radio growing up and liked it then. They were certainly different...progressive, complex, but not overly complex such as other prog bands like Yes, etc. They are among a handful of bands that can still sell out 10,000 seat venues, which amazes me. It's a testament to how good, "classic", and relevant their music is, even today.

Q. Have you ever seen Styx live or met any of the members?

JIM: I've seen Styx live a couple of times. I've attended a few of Todd Sucherman's drum clinics. He is an amazing drummer and very personable as well. He will graciously spend time talking to you and even answer an occasional question through social media.

JOHN: I saw Styx for the first time a few summers ago, and again last summer (2024). I have not met any of the members.

BILL: I saw Styx live at Great Woods in 1997. I bought a block of tickets, and there were about 10 of us who went. We had 7th row seats in the center, and Pat Benatar was the opening act. Needless to say, it was a great concert with artists at the top of their game. It was that tour that I considered Styx to be at their peak. They were older, much more polished, and Dennis DeYoung's voice had matured quite a bit. That is always the sound I am striving for, but no one can come close to matching the color and depth of his voice from that time, certainly not me.

DON: I saw them in 2006 and again last August 2024. I did get back stage, however, it was just after the meet-and-greet ended.

Q. Do you have a crew who helps out?

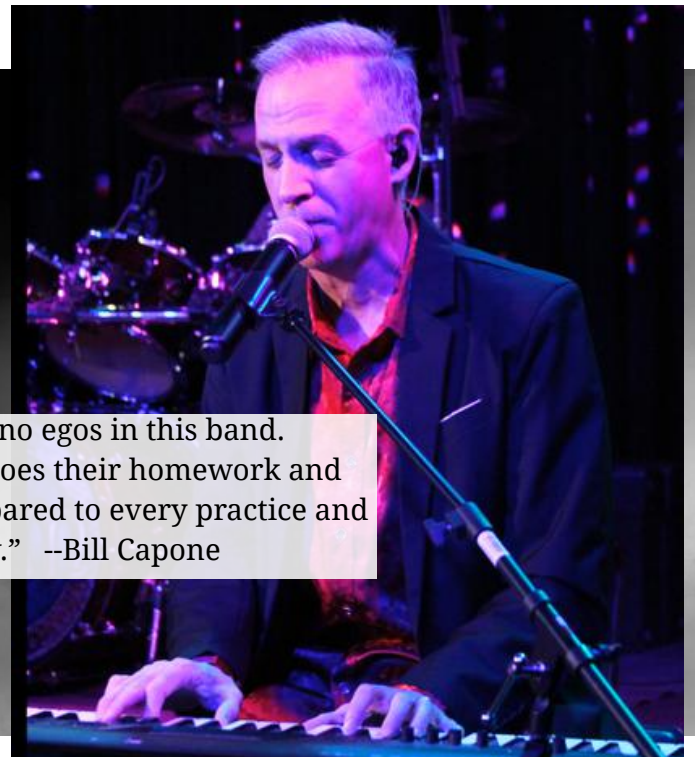
DON: We have five crew members: Bob Bouchard does front of house sound, Paul Trepanier on stage/monitor mixers, and Bill's son Jarrod Capone is our guitar tech. We do a number of guitar switches during the show, switching from electric to electric, or to acoustic and back again, so having someone keeping those in tune and powered up is a must for keeping the time short between songs.

Continued...



"We made the comment the other day, we can't believe we're doing this at our age. Yes, it's as fun as it looks!"

- John Britton



"There are no egos in this band. Everyone does their homework and comes prepared to every practice and every show." --Bill Capone

DON: We also have our road crew, Bruce Berard, and my son, Zachary Mousseau; a lot of manpower to help the show move.

Having people like Bob and Paul at the helm means we're going to be very consistent as far as how we sound from show to show. There's going to be a lot of consistency there. These guys are both big Styx fans, and all that stuff really matters. They're not just the sound support, they're in the band.

Q. Have there been any challenges to putting on a show this big?

Don: We are very prepared all the time for every gig. There's always something you can't count on, so having guys like Bob and Paul on the sound, they can overcome anything that's been thrown at us so far. They are both pro sound people, they've been working the circuit for decades. There's always a cord that goes bad or a channel that goes bad or a snake thing goes off, or the house has an issue, we have the best people on earth. By design; it's all by design. I've been in this business for a long time, and you just can't count on everything. We're so fortunate to have our crew.

Q. You each have a wealth of experience in the music business. Tell us about your backgrounds.

DON: I took interest in guitar around age 15 after hearing "Detroit Rock City" from the basement of a friend's house. I began learning from a few friends, but was able to learn by ear as well. I eventually took some lessons and learned music theory. I began playing in bands at 17 and have played in both cover and original bands most of my life. I also began singing out of necessity as it was hard to find good vocalists.

I also write, arrange, record and produce music for myself and other local artists. I've released 3 albums under my name and produced dozens of collaboration music videos with artists all over the world!

JOHN: My playing experience began as a drummer. I joined the Jr. High Band program in 7th grade. They gave me a little wooden/rubber pad to practice on. I remember thinking... This is rock 'n roll?? I played drums for six years, then transitioned to guitar. I'm primarily self-taught. I also play bass and dabble with keyboards.

In the mid-80's, I played in a Bob Seger-themed band called "Night Moves" (way before tribute bands were a thing). In the late 80's, early 90's I was in a band called "Friends in Blue" - a group of Manchester Police Officers who performed rock and alternative music at various schools as part of the D.A.R.E. program. We performed at events throughout New England.

MIKE: As a kid, I had piano lessons from my mother, then played saxophone throughout middle- and high-school in jazz and concert bands. I got into guitar in 8th grade, later traded to bass, and studied music theory in college. I took bass lessons from Rick Beato when he was a grad student at Ithaca College (my alma mater), and have played in several rock/pop cover and original music groups over the years.

Continued...

"I've attended a couple of Todd Sucherman's drum clinics. He is an amazing drummer and very personable as well. He will graciously spend time talking to you and even answer an occasional question through social media." -Jim Turmel



"I have been transcribing some of the more hard-to-hear harmony arrangements, so each member can know and learn their parts, which we then practice together a cappella before putting them together with the instruments." -Mike Walsh



Taking a bow for elated fans at The Rochester Opera House

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JIM: I got my start in 5th grade when a local drum teacher dropped off fliers at my school. After taking lessons for about a year, I would practice and learn at my own pace. At the age of 15, I joined The Showstopper Orchestra in Hudson NH. We played at malls and even Epcot Center in 1985. In 1993, I joined Tristan Park, a Hudson based Prog/Rock original band. We toured Europe twice. One highlight was opening for Marillion at the Somerville Theater.

BILL: I always wanted to play piano since I was little. I saved up my allowance and bought a \$300 Casio. The first real one was a Roland in 1984. That changed everything. I started playing in cover bands. The first piece of a song I learned to play was the intro to "Don't Stop Believin'." I had taken some lessons over the years, but I'm mainly self-taught and learned by ear. It wasn't until I was in my early twenties that I really started working on my singing voice and performing lead vocals.

Q. How many shows does Blue Collar Men perform each year?

DON: This year we have about 7-9 shows. We are aiming to be at 10 shows per year, all over New England. The thing is, you can't oversaturate in a specific area. Some venues we've played at include The Boat in Dracut, MA, and Blue Ocean Music Hall in Salisbury. We've also played at venues in Taunton, Worcester, and will be heading to Woonsocket, RI and Plymouth, NH. We are looking forward to the show here tonight at The Rochester Opera House. We like to spread it out and move around to draw from different areas.

Q. What keeps you motivated? Is this as fun as it looks?

BILL: For me, it's the final product, and how we come together to execute Don's vision for this band. There are no egos and Donnie in particular brings never-ending energy and enthusiasm to every practice. His positive attitude never wavers.

JOHN: We made the comment the other day; we can't believe we're doing this at our age. Yes, it's as fun as it looks!

DON: They've taken my vision and they've all owned it, which is super important. I've had total buy-in for these guys. I told them, don't worry about the money, the money will come. Even when the money is really good, it's not the motivation. My motivation is when we're on stage and everybody's doing their job and everything's clicking, there's nothing better than that for me.

Q. Is there anything you guys want your fans to know?

DON: We appreciate the fans so much! I would just drive home the point that our goal is to represent the music the way it was recorded by Styx. We know that's what the fans want to hear!

Paperjam would like to thank Blue Collar Men for generously having us as their special guests at The Rochester Opera House. It was nothing short of spectacular; truly the best of times! ■

BLUE COLLAR MEN
CREW

Bruce Berard - Road Crew
Zachary Mousseau - Road Crew

Bob Bouchard - FOH Sound
Paul Trepanier - Stage/Monitor Mixes
Jarrold Capone - Guitar Tech



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Panorama: Performing the Music of The Cars
with **Blue Collar Men:** The Music of Styx
Don't miss this spectacular show - November 15, 2025!
The Flying Monkey, 39 Main St., Plymouth, NH





Top row:
 Sean Harris - Lead guitar, vocals
 Billy Moe - Bass
 Tommy Haraburda - Guitar, vocals, piano

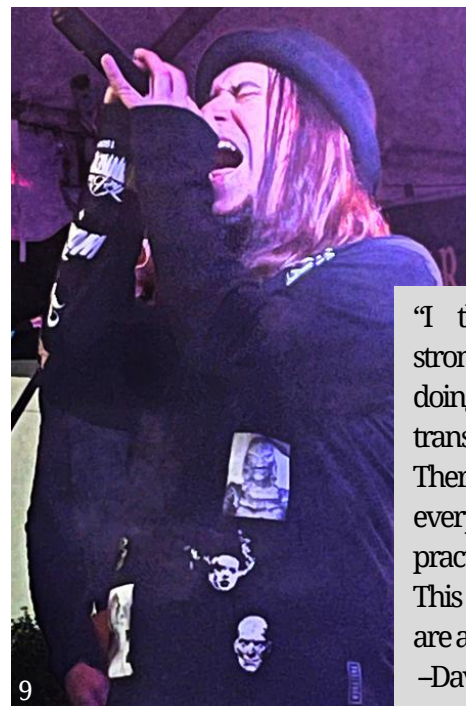
Bottom row:
 Dave Malcom - Lead Vocals
 Rob Phaneuf - Drums

Southern NH based original rock infused with heavy, grooving riffs and drawing lyrical inspiration from Mark Twain, Creature Double Feature and everything in between.

ELJER P. SLOAN is a rising rock band that immediately commands attention with their confident presence and tight musicianship. From the moment they arrive, their energy is unmistakable—equal parts laid-back cool and serious talent. The five members—Dave, Sean, Tommy, Billy, and Rob—are quickly making a name for themselves among the area’s original rock acts, proud of the momentum they’ve built in such a short time.

Dave Malcolm, the founder of the band, said he began concentrating on songwriting and recording in the early 2000's and sought out musicians to turn his ideas into a live band experience. “I knew that in order to get these songs to reach their full potential, I would need to recruit some of my favorite local musicians to help me make this happen,” Dave told us. After some lineup changes, and a few lucky responses to a Craigslist ad, the current group came together in January of 2025.

Within half a year, the band has found themselves joining the bill with other popular groups for shows around NH and ME, including two rock festivals at Charleez Hill in Maine. They quickly caught the attention of local music fans, as well as fellow players. Specifically, Nathan Hill of the Nathan Hill Trio had this to say after sharing the stage: “Been a long time since I’ve seen a band that really moved me. Eljer P. Sloan just blew my mind last night and set the bar real high. Best band I’ve seen all summer hands down.”



“I think we all believe strongly in what we are doing, and I hope that translates to the audience. There’s an energy that I feel every time we are in a practice room or on stage. This is what I hope people are able to tap into.”
 –Dave Malcom, Lead Vocals

When asked what kind of music they play, Eljer P. Sloan admits they try not to get hung up on genre. “We’re a rock band,” Dave said. “We all connect with different genres—what we listen to and what resonates with us is deeply personal.”

“The music we play is hard to put into a specific genre, which gives the audience a variety,” Sean added.

Continued...

Each member brings experience and talent that began at a young age. When asked about beginnings, Dave joked, “Does strumming a tennis racket along to AC/DC count?” He said that in his early teens, he realized how important music was in his life. His brother, John taught him how to play a bar chord on his first guitar, a Gibson Explorer that his parents purchased out of a Sears catalog.

“I never took lessons but just continued to mess around until I had enough grasp of what I was doing to start writing songs,” Dave said. “After watching my brother’s band, the Bottled Goblins, play live for the first time, I had such a rush of adrenaline I knew right away that I wanted to be a part of something like that.”

Dave joined his first band at age 20 and played mostly covers at that time. “With my limited guitar abilities, I knew that my only options were to either smack a tambourine or learn how to sing,” he told us. “Unfortunately, my tambourine was in the shop at the time, so I decided to give singing a shot. I played in a couple of short-lived bands in my twenties playing a mix of covers and a few originals I had written.”

For Sean Harris, his start in music emerged from growing up in a musical family. His mother played piano and his grandfather was a choir director and music teacher for many years. Sean was exposed to bands such as Chicago, Seals & Croft, and The Beatles, as well as classical. “My Dad was more into Gordon Lightfoot and Queen,” he said. “I learned a lot of music theory from my grandfather who recently passed away at the age of 102. My uncle Mike was a big influence on me. He was a guitarist and taught me how to play Bach’s Bourrée (BWV 996).”

At age 13, Sean picked up the guitar. “My first guitar was a Drifter Les Paul copy bought at Daddy’s Junky Music in Portsmouth NH,” he said. “Later I got a Peavey Backstage amp and this started my musical journey.”

Out of High School, Sean began giving guitar and bass lessons at Exeter Music for a living from 1986 to 1999. “It’s also where I met my wife,” he said. “I studied classical guitar for many years, and although I have since abandoned it, I still have a great appreciation for it and the dedication it takes to be good at it. These days, I just stick to the art of shred on the electric guitar.”

Interestingly, Sean used to have a custom guitar business in the mid 90’s called The Luthier’s Image where he and a friend built guitars from scratch. “I want to start getting back into giving guitar lessons and doing repairs for a living as I reach my golden years,” Sean told us.

Guitarist Tommy Haraburda told us his interest in music began with saxophone lessons in the fourth grade, along with instruction in music theory. “When I was around 13, I got an old very used, but much appreciated, hand-me-down Del Ray electric guitar from my uncle that I used to plug into a shitty 70s stereo,” Tommy said, “but the guitar had a distortion switch in it, so that’s how guitar started for me. I’m self-taught.”

For drummer Rob Phaneuf, growing up with a father who was a drummer in 50s/60s rock bands led to his interest in playing, and he began to take it seriously around 1978. “I was influenced by classic hard rock, heavy blues, and metal,” Rob said, adding that he also gave drum lessons for a while. “I’m thinking about getting back into it, because I work at a school now, and I see the band teacher all the time.” *Continued...*



Photo: Pam Thomas

“I studied classical guitar for many years, and although I have since abandoned it, I still have a great appreciation for it and the dedication it takes to be good at it. These days, I just stick to the art of shred on the electric guitar.” –Sean Harris



Photo: Pam Thomas

“I started out with saxophone...then I heard an A chord high on a guitar and it just resonated. Music has to catch you. If it doesn’t, maybe you’re on the wrong instrument. There was something about that guitar chord...that was it.”
–Tommy Haraburda

Billy Moe, the Bringer of Groove and Thunder, told us that, as with many bassists, he started off as a guitar player. “I received my first guitar around 1982, an acoustic that my grandfather gave me. By 1985, I switched fully to electric guitar and bass,” Billy said.

For a time, around 1986, Billy took lessons with Richie Scarlett, who was Ace Frehley's original co-guitarist in Frehley's Comet after he left Kiss. “Very early on in my playing journey, it became obvious to me that I was better suited as a rhythm guitarist, so that's what I focused on through the rest of the 80s,” Billy said. “My bands at this time were primarily hard rock and hair bands. With the onslaught of grunge in the early 90s, I took a break from playing actively for several years. In the mid 90s, I re-emerged in a soul/funk/disco big band, playing the club circuit in southwestern CT and NY.”

In the late '90s, Billy relocated to New Hampshire and switched entirely to bass. “Stylistically, I was more versatile as a bassist, and because everyone seems to play guitar, it was much easier for me to get gigs,” he said. “I would go on to play for several years with the Gray Zone, a southern NH classic rock and blues cover band. Later, I had a semi-pro stint with the Shana Stack Band, a new-country act based in Keene, NH. We played all over the northeast, including a gig opening for the Band Perry in front of approximately 10,000 up at Meadowbrook. I recorded the album “Then and Now” with the band in 2014.

With the members of Eljer P. Sloan feeling more motivated than ever, we wanted to know, why do some people stick with learning an instrument, while others give up?

“Sometimes they get discouraged,” Sean said. “When I gave lessons, I would show people what they wanted to learn as far as songs go, and then slide in the theory behind it, and also, I was trying to get them to read notes. It takes commitment and a lot of work.”

“I started out with saxophone lessons,” Tommy told us, “but the first time I heard an A chord up high on guitar, it just resonated with me. Music has to catch you. If it doesn't, maybe you're on the wrong instrument. There was something about that guitar chord...that was it. If you've got that spark as a kid, it has to grab you.”

Billy agreed, saying, “The music we grew up with had such an important place in pop culture and on MTV...we were all influenced by it, and that made us want to learn to do it. It was easier to not only start, but to stick with it.”

At shows, Eljer P. Sloan performs a range of originals that are both catchy and creative. “Let's Start a Fire” has a grooving rock vibe, while other tunes, “The Rabbit and the Wolf” and “All You Zombies” come in slow and slinky - all with impressive technical skill from the guitars and backbeat. One of the band's newest songs, “My Parasite” was recently played on 104.9 The Hawk's Backstage show. The band said while they are excited to collaborate on new material, the current songbook is mostly written by Dave. “I really like the songs we play. Dave writes great stuff,” said Sean.

Continued...



Photo: Amanda Cook

“I'm a heavy-hitter drummer. That has its ups and downs—you'll always be able to hear me. We're a loud band.” --Rob Phaneuf



Photo: Pam Thomas

“I have the honor of playing with VERY talented players who have a great love for the Eljer songbook. Like us on Facebook, come to our shows...you just might get blown away!” --Billy Moe

A notable aspect of Eljer P. Sloan is Dave's use of a megaphone to enhance various vocal parts, as in their song "Woof," a blast of high energy that opens with the memorable lyric, *It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog*. Lyrically, the song takes inspiration from Mark Twain, referencing one's strength from within.

When asked about the process of songwriting, Dave remarked that, for him, it's not really a specific process at all. "I don't just sit down and try to write something because that would feel so unnatural," he explained. "I usually come up with a lyric idea or song riff by chance, and it sticks with me enough to try to connect the dots until it becomes a complete thought. I like to be able to say something that is impactful but still true to who I am."

Dave said further that, "Two of my biggest songwriting influences have been Mike Patton and Chris Cornell. Patton's writing encouraged me to look beyond myself and my own experiences and instead pretend to be someone else or use a third person narrative to tell a story from a different perspective, while Cornell's writing inspired me to be less literal and more metaphoric. So sometimes I try intentionally to write with an element of vagueness in hopes the reader/listener can come up with their own interpretation, allowing them to create a more personal connection with the lyrics."

He went on to say that their song, "What's the Fuss, Pythagoras?" is math based, but it's really about having your heart broken. "Everybody Loves a Car Crash" is not about a car crash. It's about how everybody loves to see people fail. Dave also told us that lyrics keep him up at night. "I hate it when the lyrical idea comes to me at 2 a.m. on a Tuesday. Sometimes I wish creativity had a punch clock."

Tommy agreed that songwriting is something that can't be forced. "Usually the best stuff comes out of a particular type of emotion that is really strong on a given day, and the stuff just flows out of me," Tommy said.

What can fans expect at a show with Eljer P. Sloan? Tommy said it's actually more of the "unexpected" that counts. "I think another way to reword that is how our performance can be unexpected, in a good way," he said. "The comments that have been coming in have been positive, like 'You guys kicked the door in' or 'I was blown away by the transition in 'Wrong.' We've also received comments about sounding tight. That's really great feedback for a band that just got together in January." Tommy added that the magic always happens live on stage when they get together for a performance. "The fact that we're getting positive feedback makes me wonder how far we can go," he said.

Rob remarked on his experience by saying, "Everyone has professional attitudes and a sense of direction."

"I think we are an entertaining band to watch," said Sean. "We have fun being on stage together."

For Billy, the best thing about being in this band is the line-up of talent. "I have the honor of playing with VERY talented players, who have a great love for the Eljer songbook," he said.

Dave summed it up well: "I can't express how grateful and humbling it is to have these guys invest so much time and energy into songs I've written. With that said, from day one, no one is just learning the songs the exact way they were recorded. Everyone is bringing their very own herbs and spices to the original recipe. Although the songs are structurally the same, they are all being taken in new and exciting directions. I'm super stoked to see what we come up with when we start collaborating together." ■

*MORE!
with Eljer P. Sloan*



Ready to perform at the Paperjam interview

GEAR

ROB: Sonor and Ludwig drums, with mostly Zildjian cymbals

TOMMY:
Marshall, ESP, Jackson, Epiphone, Ibanez.

SEAN:
Charvel Guitars, Orange Amps and EVH Amps

BILLY:
Precision and Jazz basses, sometimes Rickenbackers. Fender and Ampeg amps. I'm primarily a pick-style player, and my go-to picks are Micks Picks, 3.0mm rubber/synthetic. Generally, I don't use any effects.

DAVE:
Shure Beta 58A wireless microphone, and a Sondery kazoo. For recording, I use a custom Woronko electric guitar and a Taylor GS mini acoustic guitar.

MUSIC

WOOF
LET'S START A FIRE
A BETTER DAY
EVERYBODY LOVES A CAR
CRASH
WHAT'S THE FUSS,
PYTHAGORAS?
ALL YOU ZOMBIES
BOB
THE RABBIT AND THE
WOLF
SPIDERS IN MY SHOES
MY PARASITE



ELJER P. SLOAN

Q. Outside of music, do you have any other hobbies & interests? What else do you do for fun?

Rob: What I like to do is collect and listen to live recordings and memorabilia, posters, programs, bootlegs. Thousands of them. There is nothing I'm interested in that isn't music. That's my answer. :)

Billy: Old cars and driving, classic chase, blaxploitation and Kung Fu movies. Historical documentaries. Owls. Spirituality/tarot/astrology. Stoicism, Spongebob, golf.

Tommy: I collect spores, molds, and fungus.

Sean: I like playing World of Warcraft, recording, collecting and repairing guitars, and watching horror movies.

Dave: Monsters. From my fascination with the cinematic ones to my compassion for society's perceived ones. Escapism. In many forms. Two of my favorite things are snorkeling in the waters off the coast of Hawaii and hiking the trails within the Green Mountains of Vermont. My need to escape is what led to my passion for music.

Comedy. I love to laugh. but I find even more enjoyment in trying to make others crack up. It's also been a way for me to cope with my social anxiety. I've always tried to incorporate humor into my writing and when I'm up on stage.

Although one time in a previous band, this backfired magnificently. It was a Battle of the Bands, and one of the things we were being judged on was our stage presence. For some reason I thought it would be hilarious if one of our stage "presents" was to offer everyone a treat. So I tossed a bunch of Pop Tarts into the crowd. I was blissfully unaware of the consequences of these actions until I witnessed some of the Pop Tarts coming back at us at a much higher velocity, with one nearly decapitating our drummer. I learned two things that night. One: Not everyone sees the humor in things.

Two: Never throw pastries with sharp corners.



Photo: Pam Thomas



Brandon Gauthier

LEE & DR. G



Nominated for
2025 New England
Music Awards for
RISING STAR:
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Lee Durham



Photo: Grace Howe

Putting on one of the best rock shows in New England, their high energy performances leave crowds pulsating.

LEE & DR. G's infectious rock/blues/funk vibes ripple through halls as concertgoers (who thought they had ordered water) joyfully realize that they've been served a shot of lightning--and it goes down easy.

In addition to a dozen original songs--biggest hits are "Something Just Ain't Right," "Big Show," and "You Know it"--LEE & DR. G blend eclectic genres with original renditions of Coltrane, Pink Floyd, and Booker T. & the M.G.'s. Come get your soul turned on, and remember that you're already free.

Over the last year, LEE & DR. G have impressed crowds at Bank of NH Stage (Concord), Pembroke City Limits (Pembroke), The Press Room (Portsmouth), The Stone Church (Newmarket), and the Jungle (Somerville, MA), among other premier venues in New England.

--Band Bio

Continued..

LEE & DR. G

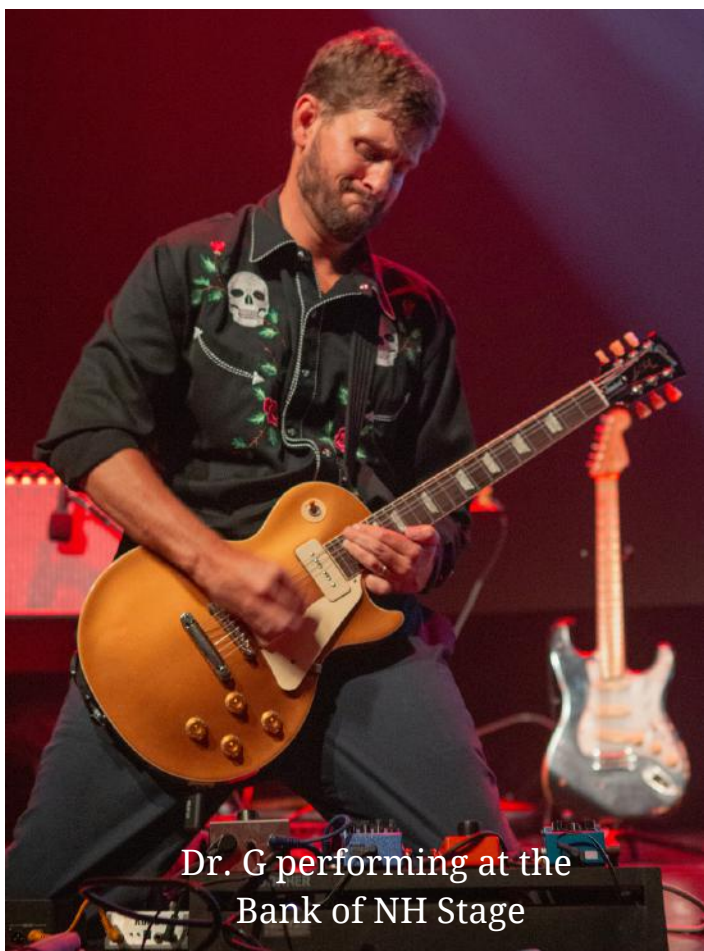
Rock and Roll Dynamite

Perhaps Brandon Gauthier (Dr. G) described himself and bandmate Lee Durham perfectly when he quoted Ozzy Osbourne: "Let the madness begin." The two guitarists are both madly passionate about writing and performing music, and it all came together from an online ad that they refer to as "a Craigslist adventure gone right."

"Our first meeting was in Livingston Park in Manchester where we performed songs on acoustic in front of a crowd," Lee told us. "Instantly, we had a connection despite our very different musical backgrounds."

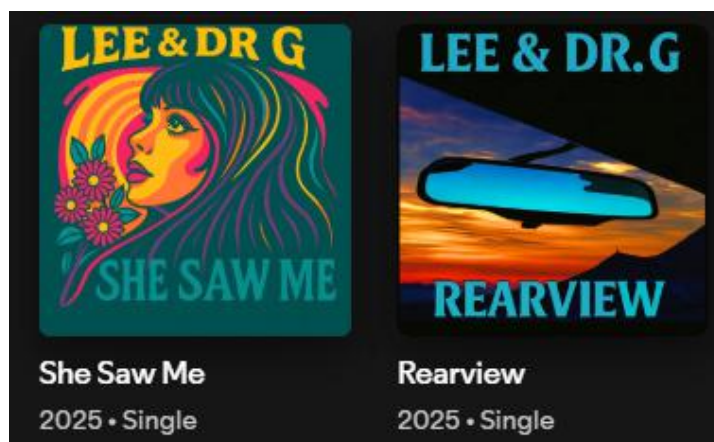
Lee & Dr. G describe their style as one that mixes rock, blues, and funk. As Lee explained: "The different guitar styles of Lee & Dr. G complement each other perfectly and add layers of guitars to a solid groove of drums, bass and vocals with well-crafted lyrics. In the end, the music blends a variety of music styles that make it completely original."

Dr. G said he's always been interested in versions of rock that blur genres and audience expectations while not sounding like everything else.



Dr. G performing at the
Bank of NH Stage

Photo: Birch & Fern Photography



"I like music that gets almost tribal in terms of going down the rabbit hole with a vibe and a phrase that could go on for hours," Dr. G. said. "Our music reflects clear influences of blues with shred guitar vibes. We like to find a new edge, so to speak, where a given sound is being pushed in a new direction...feels a little bit dangerous...put vanilla in a headlock and wrestle it to the ground, make it tap out."

Both musicians have a long resume of combined experience in teaching, recording, and performing. "I have been playing guitar since age 10, playing stages from Louisiana to North Carolina to New York City," said Dr. G. He earned a Ph.D in history and works as a historian and a teacher.

Lee said his first instrument growing up was piano. He added guitar at age 13 and then picked up the bass. "Bass was my primary instrument for a long time," said Lee. "When I was in Nashville and Colorado, I made my living playing bass." Eventually, he moved to New Hampshire to pursue a law degree.

"I kind of retired from music in Nashville and they have a good IP Intellectual Property program here, so with my technical background and music it was a good fit to get into law school. Now my day job is patents and trademarks, and I have a couple of entertainment clients. I teach entertainment law up at the law school as well, so I kind of mix it all together from technical to creative."

When it comes to filling out the rest of the band, Lee & Dr. G have a rather unique approach: hiring supportive players who may change from show to show. As co-founders of the project, the two men do all of the writing, bookings, and business side of things, as well as financing.

Continued...

"We're so deep into the gear sickness. Here's the real back story about Lee and Dr. G. It's me and Lee traveling in long car rides talking nonstop about gear...like dude, if I trade this in, and I talk to my wife, I think I can make it happen." --Dr. G

“We hire rotating players to support us; the drummer, bass player, and now a keyboard player,” Lee explained, “because we have found that people quit 5 minutes before a show, or something explodes, someone can’t make it, etc. The bottom line is that the two of us are making sure the show must go on, no matter what.”

Lee said they have worked with seven bass players and multiple drummers. “Throughout that process we’ve met so many nice people,” he said. “We’ve also recognized that it’s not always a musical fit, and that’s OK too. We try to be respectful and kind and get along with everyone. It makes us appreciate each other more.”

Dr. G agreed, adding, “When we play live, everybody gets paid, they are part of the crew. It has to be a good fit; people need to be pumped up and involved. But at its core, the project is me and Lee. We really have invested a lot of resources, time, and money into promoting the band. With that approach, it gives us confidence that this band will continue.”

The current full-band line up consists of Mark Baldosaro on drums, Nathan Sanel on bass, and Chris Gardner on keys. Lee & Dr. G said they are grateful for all the musicians who have contributed so much to their project.

Lee & Dr. G have played around 30 shows in the past two years, sometimes sharing a bill with other bands. However, more often it’s just Lee & Dr. G for the long haul, and they are fine with that. “Our pitch to the venues is, we can go as long as you need us to go,” Dr. G told us. “We can do 3 or 4 hours with no breaks, and the drummer’s like, can I please get a beer? Please stop...ha ha.”

One notable aspect we found when watching a performance with Lee & Dr. G is that they not only sound great together musically, but they tell a visual story on stage; it seems effortless, engaging to watch, and draws people in further. It’s almost as if the two guitars are having a conversation.

“Our two different guitar styles are very different, and they work well together. We just have this thing you can’t manufacture. It’s one of the things that has made this band a pleasure for our fans to come see. They comment on that a lot,” said Lee.

“It depends what instrument I’m playing. If it’s bass, then I like jazz, reggae and funk. If it’s guitar, then blues and rock. What speaks to me is the groove; if it’s got a solid drum and bass groove, that’s what I look for.”

--Lee Durham
commenting on favorite styles to play

Dr. G explained that “there are transcendent moments where playing on stage is communicating without talking. You can’t reproduce that on your own at home. I play every day. There’s no comparison to playing actively with someone who challenges you. When you’re playing for a large group of people, and they’re into it, that’s as good as it gets.”

Dr. G. said he loves the idea of going to work, living his normal life, but then come Friday or Saturday, there’s always rock and roll to offer an outlet in a way that’s positive. “The beauty of music,” Dr. G said, “is that you can experience a little edge in a way that’s good for you. It’s powerful. Iggy Pop once said ‘Rock and roll should be a little dangerous.’ You don’t know what’s going to happen on any given night, and that’s what I like about it.”

When it comes to songwriting and collaborating on original material, Lee told us, “I do a lot of the lyric writing. Dr. G has written some lyrics as well; there’s a cut on GIRL FOR ME that was written by Dr. G,” he said. “Going back to the origins of the band, one of the reasons I was looking for someone to collaborate with was, I had some songs in the works. A lot of the material was already written, and we collaborated on other stuff. Dr. G will come up with a groove, other times it will be a more organic creation on the spot, a cool jam that becomes a song.”

At this point in the interview, Dr. G said, “Here, let me grab a guitar...”

Continued...



With guitar in hand, Dr. G continued, “Lee is the common sense one, because I’ll start like this....[high-energy jam] and Lee will say, whoa dude, let it have some air. Let it breathe.” [groovy vibe]. This is how it goes on for hours. We just play off each other. We want people lost in the trance.”

We then asked if they’d play “Rearview” for us. Lee grabbed his guitar and the two treated us to a fun performance on the spot that gained our applause.

Whether playing for the two of us, or a packed room, Lee & Dr. G said it doesn’t change their passion for what they do. “We played a show up in Intervale, NH in April when it was mud season up there; we had a couple of tables with about 10 people who stayed the entire night,” Lee said. “It’s always awesome to have a room full of people vibing, we’ve had some great shows...We did one at the Press Room that was packed. But as long as you’ve got a handful of people that are into it and appreciate what you do, that’s motivation to keep going.”

Interesting, Lee has played professionally in over 13 countries, and travel is something they both list as a future goal. “I used to do this full time; I’ve probably played in 200 bands over the course of my career,” Lee told us. “I did a couple of tours with the US Dept of Defense as entertainment for those troops, Air Force and Army etc. Cruise ships. When I was in Nashville, I did a lot of recording, and in Colorado too, more album projects in Colorado. It’s given me a long list of music that I’ve learned, everything from jazz, funk, punk, rock, reggae, soul, and classical, I’ve done a little bit of everything along the way.”

They are hoping to travel again after the release of their album. “Coming off the new record, we’re hoping this will gain a little traction, and help promote us in places that we have never been.”

Specifically, Dr. G mentioned they have set their sights on Europe. “There are 4 or 5 specific Scandinavian festivals that we’ve applied to. One is in Finland, there’s another one in France called Rockin’ the Barn, there’s a Swedish one, so we’re just pitching all the time, trying to find our way to the coolest stages possible.”

We have no doubt they will continue reaching success. LEE & DR. G will celebrate the release of their debut album “GIRL FOR ME” on December 2nd on both vinyl and streaming. The album will contain seven originals which they describe as “ZZ Top meets Stevie Ray Vaughan.” Yes, we want a copy.

Don’t miss the album release show for “Girl For Me” on December 4 at the Bank of NH stage in Concord! ■



Fans can see a current list of shows on the website and on Facebook. The album will soon be available on about 30 streaming platforms, including Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube.



UPCOMING SHOWS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025 LIVE AT THE MIDDLE EAST, 472 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025, ALBUM RELEASE SHOW AT BANK OF NEW HAMPSHIRE STAGE, Concord, NH

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026, Cantab Lounge, Cambridge MA

SATURDAY, February 21, 2026 6-9 PM, AT LEDGE BREWING, 15 Town Hall Rd, Intervale, NH

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, AT STONE CHURCH W/SPECIAL GUEST RABBIT'S FOOT, NEWMARKET, NH

“We are pitching all the time, trying to find our way to the coolest stages possible.” - Dr. G

Fridays Alibi



Ron Karr
Bass

Paul Cascio
Guitar, Lead vocals

Joe Brancato
Guitar, vocals, mandolin

Don Davis
Drums

Fridays Alibi is a four-piece classic rock & blues band based in Concord, New Hampshire. We play a variety of danceable hits from such artists as: The Rolling Stones, CCR, The Wallflowers, REM and more, as well as blues standards from B.B. King, Robert Cray, Eric Clapton and others. Over the past 19 years the group has evolved into a cohesive musical component of the capital area music scene.

Guitarists Paul Cascio and Joe Brancato provide the musical textures for our quartet and offer a variety of electric and acoustic guitar sounds along with guitar synthesizer technology to create a sound much larger than that of a typical four-piece band; while Drummer Donny Davis and Bassist Ron Karr round out our group by providing a solid backbeat and flawless rhythm section. Our lead & harmony vocals add to our bands overall appeal. --Band Bio

Q. Welcome, Fridays Alibi. The four of you are here fresh off back to back shows at Auburn Pitts and Beanie's Bar & Grill. How was that?

Paul: We had a great weekend and two really good shows!

Q. Paul, as the founder of the band, how did you bring Fridays Alibi together?

Paul: I had a blues band, PM Blues in the late 90s thru early 2000. After I broke up that band, I started an acoustic duo that grew into the classic rock & blues group Fridays Alibi. Joe joined soon after in 2002. We continue to attract good players with Bassist Ron Karr joining up in 2019 and Donny on drums this past August 2025.

Q. We like the name, Fridays Alibi, as it has a bit of mystery to it. How did you come up with the name?

Paul: We came up with a few different names. One name was Six Strings Down that I really liked but turned out to be

a group out of Massachusetts; another we were thinking about was The Sleeping Dogs. I thought of Alibi, but there's a song called Alibi by Eric Clapton, and we thought people might think we're a Clapton tribute band. A friend of mine came up with Fridays Alibi and we went with it. I think the good thing about the name is that it didn't put us into any musical category or genre. That is helpful.

Q. Don, you're the newest member. How did you find this band?

Don: I met Paul at an open mike event, and we jammed on Sultans of Swing right off the cuff. That's why I like open jams; they are always a challenge, you never know what's going to get thrown at you, and it's a blast. To me, it's the best kind of atmosphere.

Paul: Don is a strong drummer. The first time we jammed, he told us he was rusty and hasn't been playing much. He sounded great, and later I said to Joe, if Don is rusty now, he's going to be fantastic going forward!

Don: I was fortunate growing up, I had a lot of good music training. In high school, I was in marching bands and orchestra. I was fortunate to have really good teachers. I took lessons until I was 22 years old from Diconzo Studios in Quincy, MA and John Horrigan in Brockton, MA. I got married, had kids, played in Praise and Worship bands at the church in the early 2000s. Once my kids were grown up, I started getting back into playing again, going to all the open mics around the area. Once music gets wired into you, it's there. With me, it's something that comes from deep inside. My love of music is probably attributed to my mother, who was a piano player.

Q. Like Don, did each of you have musical training from a young age?

Paul: I was musically inclined from a very early age. I started playing guitar & taking lessons at age 7 and played in my first band at 13 with friends I met at my youth group. I've played with different groups and different styles of music over the many years; from acoustic, blues, rock & some jazz. Today I play guitar, bass & a little piano. I use piano parts mainly when I record music.

Ron: I started piano at 7 years old, guitar at 16. My first band was in college in 1966. Over the years, I've played bass guitar, rhythm guitar, keys in bands in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

Joe: I began with guitar lessons around 5th grade on Long Island. I've been in several bands over the years, including a wedding band (Lee Taylor) in the '80s and a rock band called Johnny Postal in the late '90s. About 24 years ago, I started teaming up with Paul in Fridays Alibi (also Acoustic Alliance). Of late, playing guitar with a jazz sextet called Gunderfus out of Pembroke. I also play mandolin and electric bass.

Paul: Joe plays mandolin on The Eagles' tune, "Peaceful Easy Feeling."

Q. We are fans of that song, and right off the bat, we love your classic rock setlist featuring top hits we don't often hear from other bands. Tell us about your song choices and how you approach them.

Paul: We cover a lot of ground. We add a lot, there's a lot of instrumentation that adds to the music where if you just did it as a two-guitar band, it's not quite the same. We cover horns and organ, piano, and saxophone so there's a lot going on for a 4-piece band.

One of the things we try to do is pick songs that we can sort of do our own version of; it's not so far from the original that it's unrecognizable. Sometimes bands will take an original song and will change it so much it almost sounds like a new song, but not like the original. We'll take it and just twist it a little bit to add our own identity to it.

Joe: Using the synth for keyboards and horns, I think it gives us a little bit more versatility. We do this tune by Paul Simon, "Late in the Evening," where there's a very syncopated horn part in that, and by accident I hit a steel drum patch on the Roland...We played it at a wedding and the crowd went wild, so I thought, OK from now on I'm going to do the steel drum part instead of the horn section. It's enough of a novelty that people think it's great. If I just played it on guitar, it would be 'yeah ok so what', but the fact that it's a completely unexpected solo sound, it makes the tune work.

Continued...



"As a kid, if there was a song I liked, I tried to emulate it by striking a chord and singing the line. Then I'd strike another chord, and sing the next line. So that's how I learned to sing and play at the same time. Now I can actually play lead guitar on some songs and sing also." —Paul Cascio on singing lead vocals

"I have this book of guitar exercises by Segovia, from the 1940s...What's interesting about it is that in all the exercises, you're constantly changing your fingers to anticipate the notes in the next measure or the following measure. So you struggle through the exercises...but the next time you pick up your guitar, you're suddenly using different fingers. You don't realize that these exercises are un-programming your brain so you're not locked into the same thing. Each time you go to play something, you're approaching it in a different way. So I think that helps. You need to break out of all the old boxes."

—Joe Brancato

Q. What other songs have you tweaked to make your own?

Paul: It's interesting, with Stand By Me, ...it's very soulful on the record, and it's really great, but I thought, let's do something different with it. So I go to rehearsal and say 'I want to do Stand By Me, but I want you to think Tequilla Sunrise.' (laughs) Now it has more of that feel."

Then there's Mustang Sally—one of those songs that you play way too many times. I never wanted to play it again. One day, Joe comes into rehearsal and says, 'I think I have an arrangement of Mustang Sally that you're going to like...'

Joe: I was in Sam's Club listening to the background music and heard the original version of "Knock on Wood." The horn introduction is great, so I thought, we should steal that horn phrase and stick it into Mustang Sally. Later, I was listening to "Drive My Car," which is a very clever Beatles tune with that funny line, *Beep Beep Beep Beep Beep Beep*, followed by the guitar solo. So we ended up using the intro from "Knock on Wood," into Mustang Sally, and before Paul does his guitar solo, we do *Beep Beep Beep Beep Beep Beep*, stealing the Beatles line. It's enough of a challenge to pull it off that we don't hate playing Mustang Sally anymore. Now when somebody requests it, we're thinking, *ok get ready for this!* Haha!

Paul: "Sultans of Swing" is note-for-note. We do "Smooth" by Carlos Santana; Joe plays the lead on that, it's really great. Joe is just a phenomenal player and very natural. Everything he plays sounds like Carlos Santana. In the end solo, there's a piece from Phantom of the Opera.

On "Sweet Child of Mine," that's all note- for-note stuff. Trying to do that song and not play the Slash solo just doesn't work. I do all the leads like Slash does, and we basically play that version, but I happen to be listening to the radio one day and heard Cheryl Crow singing "Sweet Child of Mine" and thought, I can sing it that way. I'm not Axl Rose, but I like the song. I figured if I just sing it in my voice and do all the guitars like the record, we're good. Of course the band does it great. We played it Friday night, and the crowd loved it.

Q. With all the years you've been doing this, what do think has changed over the years? Is it harder or easier than it used to be?

Paul: To me, there's a lot more talent now. I think the bar has been raised; you've got to know what you're doing on stage, and you have to play well. People generally won't stand for bands that are not very good musically, and I think bands shouldn't overplay their ability. The best way for a band to sound good is to not overplay and avoid the stuff they can't play well. I think that's key.

Continued...



"We play songs that most people over a wide range of ages not only know, but like, from bands such as Tom Petty, the Eagles, REM, Dire Straits, and Van Morrison."

--Ron Karr



"I think it's real important for kids, if you want to be a musician, to start out on classical, jazz and blues. I used to go see all the big bands around Boston—I loved it. I didn't even really like rock and roll back then; I liked more of the progressive stuff. By having a classical foundation and not just honing in on one particular style, you learn to appreciate it all and learn how to play it all."

--Don Davis

Paul: We've has been fortunate because, let's face it, we're older guys and people who see us say that they enjoy our music a lot. I think that's one of the best things with Fridays Alibi; we have extremely good talent in the band.

Another thing that's changed for the better, I think, is the number of venues. People are playing pizza houses. There seems to be more opportunities for musicians to play. Also, for new musicians, having the ability to pull up stuff on YouTube is a good thing.

Joe: I remember trying to learn guitar solos back in the day. My sister had a record player with a 16-speed, so you could take an album like the Allman Brothers and slow down the guitar solo enough to learn it. You constantly had to slow it down, speed it back up. Now you can just pull up something on YouTube that shows you note-for-note with tabs. I remember I had to learn a guitar solo in F-sharp so I went looking on YouTube and found this guy who not only played it note for note but gave some variations. I'm thinking, does it get any better? Within a half-hour, this guy saved me a day's worth of work. That's definitely one of the differences now.

Q. Before we wrap, do you have any memorable moments from shows that you can share?

Paul: (laughing) Years ago, during a show at The Barley House, we were playing "Start Me Up" by the Rolling Stones...I couldn't sing it in the key of F, so we just moved it down a half-step to E. When the song started, I'm cranking on the guitar and I look over at the bass player who's yelling, "E! E!" I thought, what the heck is wrong with him? Then he holds out his fingers in the shape of an E and I look down and I'm cranking in F. I moved it to the correct key, but it was hysterical on stage. After that, we couldn't stop laughing.

Another time, we were playing "Change the World" by Eric Clapton, and Joe was experimenting with different parts of the synth. When he started to play that guitar lead, it came out as the sound of a Sitar...(more laughing). Joe is such a great player, he doesn't miss a note. Now I'm trying to keep my head down from laughing, and we get through the song and I said, "Gosh, that was unique Joe," and he says, "Yes it was, Paulie."

Joe: The best story for me is a lesson about what counts in terms of entertainment. We once worked with a bass player--a very good friend of ours who passed away--who was getting ragged on by a former drummer after a gig. The guy just kept complaining about his bass playing.

Then, on the following Monday, I'm on a treadmill at The Raquet Club and a stranger comes up to me and says, "Are you the guy from the band on Saturday night?" Now I'm thinking I'm famous or something...then she says, "you know, my husband and I were saying how much we loved the bass player. He made the night for us, he was so into it."

I called up Paul and I said, he's the guy (the bass player) that strangers are complimenting from the show. So one of the things you have to learn is that you're there to make the crowd happy as well as your boss, the club owner. You never know what people are going to relate to. You might think it's your great guitar tone, but you have no idea what they take home and say, "That's what made it for me." The bass player's performance, and his energy, was infectious with the crowd. He was having a good time on stage and people loved it. And because it was still fresh in our minds of one guy bitching about the other, it became a lesson in remembering that.

Well said! We highly recommend you catch a show with these talented, friendly guys for a night of incredible music! ■

GEAR:

Paul: Hardtail Fender Stratocaster & Hybrid Stratocaster w/vibrato bar & EMG pickups into Boss GT3, Quilter 1x12 amp.

Joe: Valley Arts California Pro and Reverend Double Agent guitars both with Roland GK synth pickups; guitar signal goes through a Boss GT 3 into a Quilter 1X12 and the synth signal into a Roland GR 55 into a Fender Rumble 100. Mandolin is a Godin A8.

Ron: I use a Fender MIM Jazz Bass and a MIA Mustang Bass through a Fender Rumble 100 amp or a larger stage rig depending on the size of the venue.

Donny: I use both acoustic and electric drums. I have three pearl drum kits-One early vintage 1960s the other two pearls are from late 80s - Early 90s-vintage early 70s Fibes snare drum and pearl snare drums -Zildjian cymbals, mostly A's - DW, Pearl, vintage Ludwig Speed King and vintage Ghost from the 70s for kick pedals and lastly a set of Roland V-Drums expanded kit.



Visit Fridays Alibi on Facebook
and at: **fridaysalibi.com**



Catch a show with Fridays Alibi at
Smitty's Cinema & Game Lab - Tilton, NH

Friday, December 5 @ 7pm & Friday, December 19 @ 7pm

DOWN BOYS



Bruce Gates
Guitar/Vocals

Jason Sullivan
Lead Vocals

John Clifford
Bass, Vocals

Larry Williams
Drums, percussion

DOWN BOYS from Derry, N.H. is the result of four seasoned New England musicians coming together to blend great classic rock songs (with their own flair) and exciting new original music on all streaming platforms.

DOWN BOYS formed in August of 2024 in Derry, NH and were successfully playing live shows by November that year. Down Boys are in demand with two singles, “My Kind of Animal” and “Do It Again” streaming everywhere and recent radio play.

Join us as we **MEET THE BAND** and sit down with **DOWN BOYS!**

Continued...



Bruce Gates: I always loved music from what my family, especially my mom told me. When I was 16, my mom bought me my first guitar, a Samick Strat copy that came in a starter pack with an amp, cable, picks, all that stuff. I took lessons for about 6 months, but once I learned a few Green Day tunes and the notes on the first couple of strings, I decided to teach myself and did since then with the exception of about a year or so of lessons with R.D. King, who is a phenomenal classical finger-style guitarist. Guitar is my main instrument, but I also took up drums and bass along the way, mostly because I wanted to record my own ideas. I also sing when I have to. Hahaha!

Jason Sullivan:

This is going to sound silly, but in high school I started by playing air guitar. I played air guitar on everything that I picked up; a branch, hockey stick, baseball bat, tennis racquet, rake, shovel, you name it. I had a couple of friends that played guitar. They had some musical family members and before you know it, I was at summer cookouts with live bands, playing by the campfire. I wasn't very good, so I had to wait until most people were in bed and it was just a few people by the fire, but it was epic. Couple that with discovering Metallica "Master of Puppets" and starting to really feel and connect with music in my teen years, I knew I had stumbled onto a lifelong addiction. I went to Guitar Center in Boston to buy my first guitar, an Epiphone Les Paul Standard in cherry burst. I still have it and play it regularly.

Larry Williams: I started playing dashboards and tables in third grade. started playing drums in fourth grade and it was something that seemed easy to me. I got my first Alice Cooper album and started playing to that. My fourth grade music teacher told me to never stop playing. I took her advice.

John Clifford

Music has always been in my blood, I've always loved it. My Mom played guitar and it always fascinated me. My Dad played a lot of great classic rock records which sunk in, too. I begged for drums as a kid, so naturally my parents got me a french horn, solidifying my rock star future! To compensate, I taught myself guitar, drums, and keyboards. A few years later, my friends wanted a bass player for their band, so I taught myself that, too. At that point, my fate was sealed. I fell in love with the low end and never looked back.

Continued...





Q. Welcome, Down Boys! You're from Derry, NH and formed the band in November 2024. How's it been going so far?

Bruce: We've been playing shows, writing a lot, and gearing up to do an album.

Q. You've definitely accomplished a lot in a short amount of time. How did you guys decide on your band name?

Jay: I was driving home one day, and I saw a logo on a company truck that looked like a lowercase D and B. From that, I came up with Down Boys and included the arrow in the logo. Also, Larry has two German Shepards and during our practice, he would always say "down boys!" We were just looking for something that encompassed us as a group. We're down to play anything.

Q. Where do you guys hold rehearsals?

Larry: Once a week at my place. I play on an electronic kit that sounds pretty good actually. Sometimes we go to Jason's, he has a studio set up.

Jay: My studio has a full kit in it and lights, affectionally referred to as the Gig Simulator, a Tenacious D reference there. It has a full PA set up, recording set up, and a computer I only use for music with a double screen set up.

Q. Down Boys plays a mix of both rock cover tunes and originals. What made you decide to go that route?

Jay: I think it's a natural extension when you get together, you talk about your influences and then once you gel, you spin off and put your own creativity in, whether covers or originals. It's super cool when people are dancing to our original music.

Larry: I feel like the songs we're picking are cool. Just having a variety under our belt is good. Last week we had a 2-hour slot, so Jay did an hour of material acoustically, it was amazing...what we're picking is just out of the ordinary, like songs from Chicago and The Who.

Bruce: Obviously, we love being an original band, but we incorporate covers to build up the set list and get the crowd going.

Q. That seems like a smart decision to us, and I'm sure the crowd enjoys the mix. What covers are on your set list?

Bruce: Hold Your Head Up, All Right Now, Rockin' in the Free World, Alive by Pearl Jam, Join Together by The Who, and of course, Down Boys by Warrant.

Q. Let's talk about your originals. You released "Do It Again" and "My Kind of Animal" in June 2025, streaming on all platforms now. What has your process been like for creating those songs?

Jay: It's been different and changes every time. That makes it so exciting. Someone can come in with a complete idea or 80% of a song, and we just finish it. John wrote most of one of our upcoming singles, "To Whom it May Concern," and we fell in love with it instantly. All we had to do was add a little Down Boys special sauce to it.

John: "Do It Again" is about the duality of a decision. Is it good, is it bad, do I care, do I not? Like the devil on your shoulder.

Continued...

Jay: We wrote "Do It Again" about being faced with choices, whether it's addiction or a relationship, any time you are faced with a choice, be careful with your choices, sometimes you have to break the cycle and do it again. With that said, sometimes I think it doesn't matter what a song means to us because we want people to have their own ideas, not be flavored by a specific idea.

"My Kind of Animal" is a total true band conglomeration. It was born out of a riff just jamming at a practice. Someone added something new to it, then Bruce changed the tempo a little faster, and it got to be what it is now. I could hear where it was going and I said, I want to make this one a little racy...could you all give me a couple of personal stories? I drew inspiration from ****coughs**** our band members past encounters and crazy nights. Haha!

Bruce: One thing that's cool is that we tend to record a lot of our rehearsals. In the archives, I have a bunch of ideas set aside that someone brought to the table, so there's always stuff in the can. We can always pull from that and try it out.

Jay: It's a conveyor belt style; which ones are on the short list? Those songs get recorded. Which ones are we fine tuning because we're happy with them? Which ones are brand new? We always have something ready to go.

Q. Who does the lyric writing?

Jay: Everybody. If it comes down to it, they are more adept at the music. Most of the time, the music comes first and the lyrics have to play catch up. There are times when whole pieces come, I just listen to the theme and rough draft of the lyrics these guys might have. There are a certain number of syllables and things like that, I try to just edit those phrases.

Q. You guys have been busy building a name on the scene. What shows have you done?

Jay: What's been really cool is that we played a bunch of shows that were totally not in our lane at all. One show was at the Shashkeen with Nu Metal screaming bands; we were

the only straight up rock band that was there, and it was kind of freeing. We won those guys over. We also played a hip hop festival, and we were unlike any other act that was on the bill. We actually enjoyed that a lot. It worked in our favor. We looked at each other and said, *let's go*.

Q. What do guys like most about playing live shows?

John: The adrenaline. Getting ready for the show, your adrenaline is going and then bam, you hit those first couple of chords and you're off and running. What makes it even better is when people come to the front of the stage.

Bruce: It's funny because I don't really view shows and practices separately. I treat them both the same, because I get lost in playing. Whether I'm playing in the room with the guys or in front of a crowd, I'm always lost in the music. A lot of times someone will point out, 'hey I heard that thing you did,' and honestly, I don't remember! haha. I'm so into the playing, and then we go back and rewind, and I say, that was really cool! I just get lost in the moment.

Jay: I like the release and the energy exchange when you're getting it back from the crowd. You just look around and see these guys smiling. It's almost uncontrollable. The four of us are putting out this energy that goes out and people send it back. You spend so much time practicing, especially with originals, then you get to let it all out at a show. It's like letting your baby out into the world. We took the time and created it and now it's time to share. So I really enjoy that piece, and the way people come up after the show and say, 'I really dug this.'

Larry: I would say my favorite thing is driving 2 hours to set up for 1 hour and then play for 45 minutes. I also like the money. Now that we carpool, we can afford to do shows. Hahaha! But honestly, with these guys, it's always a great day, I love being with these guys and I look forward to band practice as much as a show.

Continued...



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Q. What's your best advice to live by when it comes to being in a band?

"In order to be in a band, you need two out of three of the following: 1. you like the music 2. you like the people in it 3. you like the money. Don't expect money out of this so...make sure you're playing music you like with people you like. And learn your damn parts."

--Bruce Gates

"Master the songs as recorded, but for the love of God, put your own stamp on them. There are millions of bands playing the same songs the same way every night. Stand out. Make them remember YOU...not the songs."

--John Clifford

"Play songs that inspire you, find musicians who are inspired by the same artists or influences, take gigs you're not ready for, and practice, practice, practice."

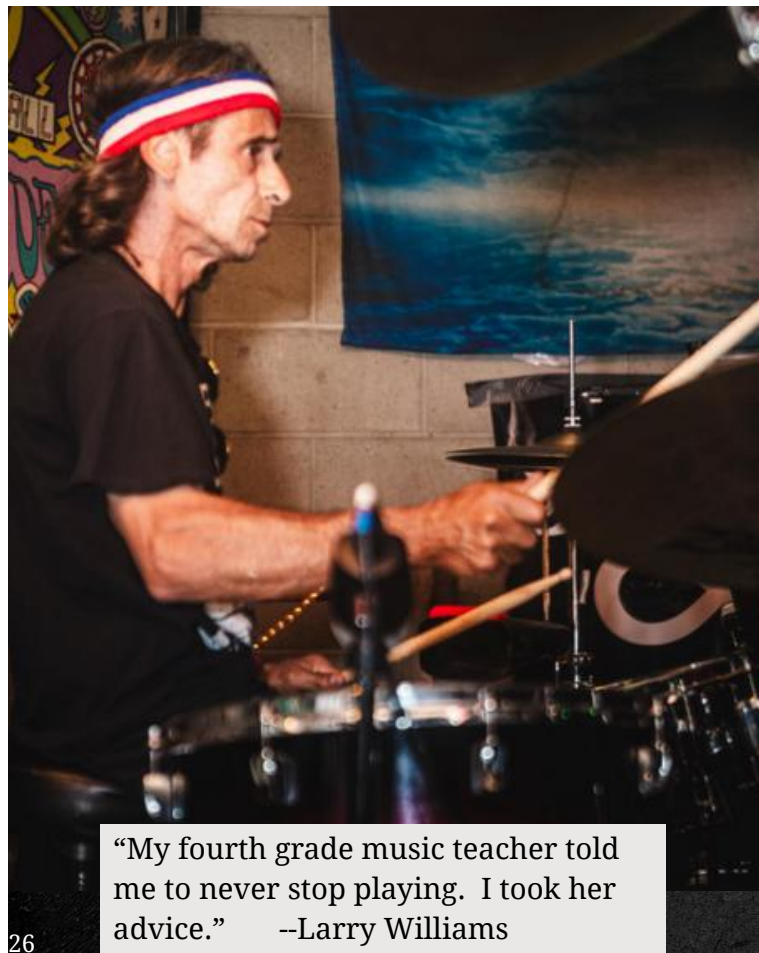
--Jay Sullivan



Photo: Aidan Montagne



Photo: Aidan Montagne



"My fourth grade music teacher told me to never stop playing. I took her advice." --Larry Williams

Q. Obviously we see some familiar faces since we are big fans of Day To Attend with Larry on drums and Bruce on guitar. How's it been juggling both? Have you done any shows together?

Bruce: Any time you're in multiple projects, you have to balance the gigs, it's really just a matter of communication. The first thing we did as Down Boys was at Larry's birthday party. Larry is the heartbeat of any band and a monster on the kit. Down Boys played a set, and Day To Attend did a set.

Q. That sounds like an amazing show to us! What's ahead for Down Boys?

Bruce: There's a lot ahead for us. We have two singles coming out, "To Whom It May Concern" and "Spirits" that we are recording now. We also have two more that aren't recorded yet, "Fear" and "Apology." We're gearing up to do an album. We will also be appearing on Matt Connarton Unleashed radio talk show next month, with some of our originals being played on air.

We came out fast, and we've heard people say we sound better every time. We just started getting in some merch, so come out to our shows, grab some merch, and enjoy a night with Down Boys!

Continued...



Q. John, as an aside, we have to ask: you met Gene Simmons two days ago and got this memorable photo; how did this come about?

John: I have been a lifelong KISS fan for as long as I can remember. I lost my wife a few months ago, and her favorite place was Disney, so I decided now that the dust has settled, I'll go down to Florida to clear my head and relax a little bit.

While I was there, I got a text from my brother asking if I knew about the Fanboy Expo in town. He said Gene Simmons and Bruce Kulik from KISS were going to be there. I don't think I finished reading the text; I went online and bought tickets. It was really cool, I got to go talk to Gene for a few minutes, got a photo, got some signatures, talked to Bruce, and told him how much the band always meant to me. ■

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