

WANTS

THE RASMUS
Host of the Month

INTERVIEWS >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

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CORY MARKS



We're very excited to be speaking today with acclaimed Country Rock artist Cory Marks; welcome to Vents Magazine Cory and thanks for carving some time from a very busy schedule to speak with our ever-inquisitive readers! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, how is the latter part of 2025 treating you and yours?

Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate your time. The second half of 2025 was great and filled with more touring in North America and many festivals.

Major kudos and accolades on your eagerly-anticipated fourth studio album Sorry For Nothing Volume 2 which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving globe when it premieres this October 3! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired one of the best LP releases of '25?

Well, thank you very much, I do appreciate that. Let's hope that's exactly what happens with this album! It's the second half of SORRY FOR NOTHING volume one and since Covid, I've had so much time and reason to write and I didn't want to put 24-25 songs on one album so we decided to split it up. SORRY FOR NOTHING VOLUME 2 is what those songs are and in my country rock blended fashion I hope the whole world loves and wants more of!

How is the Sorry For Nothing Volume 2 album similar to 2024's Volume 1? How is it different?

Both albums are songs that I've written and love that represent me best in the last two or three years, and I think we were able to mix that country rock sound perfectly. Some leaning more to one genre than the other, but overall building great albums that blend country rock and hard rock together the way I'd like to hear it.

What was it like reteaming with erstwhile and rightly lauded producers Kevin Churko, Kile Odell and Andrew Baylis on Sorry For Nothing Volume 2?

All these songs were written and recorded in different times between 2021 and 2024, but it's been an absolute pleasure and blast building these albums together and I hope to do it again on the next one!

We're big admirers of the tune Hangman which stands front-and-center on the new Sorry For Nothing Volume 2 album and which also has the distinction of being the first single off the new LP! What's the story behind this gem of a ditty?

It's the story about someone living a little more on the edge, or the outside and being different and it kind of reflects myself and my career. I've been very lucky with a lot of great success, but with that came a lot of slamming doors, opinions, and of course, the gatekeepers with almost a western outlaw twist of how they would have treated me or in better terms "dealt with me" back then. But they can't chain you down and I'm never gonna hangman!

In your humble opinion, what differentiates Sorry For Nothing /Volume 2 from the Distinguished Competition on the current day music scene?

I think we've blended country and rock very nicely and in a unique way, which I don't think no one has done or is doing and I think I'm doing my own thing and have been for a long time. That's what makes it special especially to the first time listeners.

Word 'round industry campfire has it that, hot on the heels of the October 3 release of your stunning new LP Sorry For Nothing Volume 2, you're set for a U.S. tour with Sevendust beginning on November 14 in Columbia, MO- Congrats! How did this new tour come about, and what are some of the key tour dates on this epic shebang?

Yes, and I'm very excited about it. I've heard nothing but great things about those guys and that band, and I just got lucky enough that they selected me as direct support for this tour. I'll be playing many of the cities I have been to on the past several tours I've been on, but there are two places that I've really wanted to visit and better yet play, that being Graceland and New Orleans!

Sorry For Nothing Volume 2 is being released courtesy of the fine folks over at Better Noise Music! What makes Better Noise the perfect home for you and your music?

They gave me the chance back in 2018 when nobody else would so I'm very grateful for that.

We understand that when you're not busy rewriting the play book for Country Rock, you can usually be found behind the wheel of a high-flying plane! How did you develop a passion for flying and what sort of a plane do you fancy when going out for a quick flight?

I've loved Aviation since I was a little kid because of my hometown. We had a military base with fighter jets that would always come in and out and in the summer we had a big airshow that got me fascinated with airplanes. I've flown many different aircraft since I started flying and having my pilots license, but lately I've been logging hours on a beautiful Cessna 172 that has 180 hp. Which is quite a bit more than their average or standard engine, however, if I could have and fly something, it would be a warbird, but probably an old jet trainer, and on the lighter side of things an RV-8. Anything that cruises pretty quick but also has a solid G tolerance when it comes to flying aerobatics or high-performance.

At the end of the day, what do you hope audiophiles walk away with after giving many-a-spin to your drop-the-mic LPSorry For Nothing Volume 2?

I just hope that anybody listening, loves the whole album and shares it with everybody they know, but most of all feel something, connect when they're listening and become a fan of me and my work enough to wanna buy tickets to come to my shows and be excited about the next album and the album after that!





TYLER M EVANS

Tyler, thank you for joining us today. How has the latter part of 2025 been for you so far?

Thanks for having me. Everything's been good as it can be on my end!

Congratulations on the success of your new short film SEA STAR, which just premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. For readers who may not be familiar, can you share what the film is about and what inspired the project?

The film follows an older Black man as he prepares to take his first swimming lesson. The project is inspired by own father who took swimming lessons when he was in his 50s.

SEA STAR explores themes of racism, grief, silence, and generational impact within African American communities, particularly around water. How did you navigate telling such a layered, meaningful story while keeping it engaging within the short film format?

I think making the film focused over the course of a single moment in someone's life felt the best way to approach this film. I think you can tell a lot of story through 24 hours in a person's life. It was always a challenge trying to interweave such important themes over such a short time frame, continuing to revise and make sure every line of dialogue and character decision served a purpose was incredibly important for this story to work and having captivating performances from all my actors really helped with keeping the film engaging.

Swimming plays such a powerful role as the central metaphor in the film. Was this always your vision, or did you consider other ways to frame these themes before deciding on this approach?

This was always what I had in mind. The first image that ever came to fruition in my head was the image of a Black man emerging from the water in a bathtub. I wasn't exactly sure what the film was at this point but I knew it had to do with water, only then when I started having conversations with my dad and going into my own research regarding black people's relationship with water that I knew this story had to be told. The film is ultimately about generational trauma, but we already have so many films about Black people that show those films in such a graphic way that I knew wasn't how I wanted to approach this work. I knew this film had to be approached in a tender way and this is what I came up with.

You assembled an impressive cast, including John Phillips, Joshua Obasi, Andrea Pavlovic, Ewan Wood, Cherene Francis, and Andrea Davis. What was it like collaborating with them and entrusting them with such a personal story?

It was so fantastic working with every single one of these actors. John Phillips came in and his eyes told a thousand stories. He had such a melancholic look to him that I knew that I had to cast him right away. The rest of the cast knew how important this story was and all brought their A-game to their roles, I'm very grateful I was able to work with such talented actors and actresses because they all made my job easier on the day.

How does SEA STAR connect to the rest of your body of work? In what ways does it mark a new direction for you?

Sea Star was very different from the other films I've made because I knew I wanted to challenge myself, making a film with minimal dialogue isn't easy. It was all about showing instead of telling and letting the audience decide for themselves how to interpret certain things that are said or shown. It's definitely something that was at times frustrating to write but it was rewarding in the end.

After TIFF, what's next for SEA STAR? Do you have plans for additional festivals or a broader rollout so audiences can see it?

We are hoping to have a US and European premiere soon in the new year. So time will tell, but once we finish our festival run we plan to release it online in Q4 of 2026!

Who are some of the filmmakers or artists—whether inside or outside of cinema—who have most influenced your creative journey?

Too many to name but here are a few: James Baldwin, Stephen King, Barry Jenkins, Spike Lee, Satoshi Kon, Kiyoshi Kurosawa and Stanley Kubrick.

Looking ahead, can you share what projects you're working on next? What should audiences keep an eye out for from you?

I'm working on a sports horror feature film that I'm pretty excited about, hoping I can get that off the ground next year !

Finally, what do you hope audiences take away from SEA STAR after experiencing it?

I'm hoping people walk away from the film being able to face their fears, be open with their feelings and for my community, the black community to feel seen and heard. Black people not knowing how to swim is very much a stereotype that has become a running joke and I want to show the perspective that this isn't a joke, it's a real issue that needs to be addressed.

Mallie McCown

We're happy to welcome to our-ever humble pages the rightly acclaimed actress, writer, and producer Mallie McCown; greetings and salutations Mallie and thanks for spending some time with our ever-inquisitive readers here at Vents Magazine! Before we shimmy down the proverbial Q&A celluloid-lined rabbit hole, how is the latter-part of 2025 treating you and yours?

Of course! Thanks for having me!! Well it's been exciting gearing up for the release of the film in the past few weeks! Other than that, I'm using my time to start the ball rolling on my next project!

Major kudos and accolades on your star turn in the upcoming Apple TV feature film Dear Luke, Love, Me which is set to captivate audiences when it premieres this October 10! Starting at the top, can you explain to readers what Dear Luke, Love Me is about and how your character of Penny figures into the proceedings?

"Dear Luke, Love, Me" is a coming-of-age indie film about two platonic soulmates who explore who they are together over a 15 year span. People like to call us the "When Harry Met Sally" for the new generation. It really is a love story, but not in the traditional sense. On the outside we see a young man and young woman who fall in love and start dating, so we automatically find ourselves as the audience rooting for them to live out that romantic happy ending! But we live in a society that pedestalizes sex and romance above all other types of relationships, we so often forget to hold space for the other-worldly friendships out there. So this story is about the importance of those non-traditional special bonds. Penny and Luke learn that their bond is not inherently romantic or sexual — and that perhaps there is actually such a thing as a platonic soulmates. And Penny, my character, is our story teller. She is one half of this inseparable duo!

You not only star in Dear Luke, Love Me, but you're also the writer and producer on the film; major congrats! What inspired you to write and ultimately spearhead one of the best films of the year?

Well it was a very personal journey for me. It began loosely inspired by a certain friendship I had from my past. I had a very significant friendship that felt very connected, but we were not at all interested in anything romantic or sexual. And everyone around us didn't understand why we weren't romantically getting together. I felt so isolated, like I was the only person in the world with such a strong platonic friendship with someone. But then I gave the script to my DP to read, and she introduced me to the idea of queer platonic bonds. And that's when I found my own identity on the asexual spectrum. So in a way it's a personal story of self discovery and giving yourself permission to live outside the normal boxes this society gives you.

The director of Dear Luke, Love Me is the extremely talented Law & Order (and

Scandal) actor Guillermo Diaz! What was it like collaborating with Guillermo on this production? Being an actor himself, is he what some actors might call 'an actor's director'?

Oh absolutely! Guillermo was such a natural at directing. I think knowing what an actor goes through, like he does, gives him a huge advantage in getting what he wants in the scenes. He knew exactly how to talk to all of our actors, and he was really able to connect with me on where I was missing the mark. He gave me permission to explore and to try new things — I felt so very comfortable and safe in his hands. I really believe that this is gonna be the first of many amazing projects for Guillermo as a director.

Was there ever a moment where you entertained the notion of also directing Dear Luke, Love Me? Is directing something you might get into at a future time?

Well yes and no. First off, this is a very meaningful story to me personally, so there always was a little desire to have everything in my control. But I knew right off the bat that there was no way that I could feasibly write, direct, produce, and star in this movie. Acting alone is such an enormous feat, especially when the character I play appears on literally every page in the script. I knew with juggling the performance at the same time as producing, it was just gonna be way too much for me to take on in order to create the product that we all saw for the film. Guillermo was a total hero to step in as director, and I wouldn't have it any other way! Having said that, I do 100% intend to direct my next film which is a horror film set in the 1880's called "The Writing Desk." I won't be the star of that one, so that project definitely is a better fit for me for my feature directorial debut.

You work alongside such a talented ensemble of actors in Dear Luke, Love Me, including your co-star Nick Eversman, Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut, Jameson Cherilus! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this amazing cast?

Oh it was so joyous! Working with Ashlei was a total dream. She makes the job look easy! I learned a great deal on set from her; my experience is in indies (mostly non-studio projects) which is amazing in its own right, but Ashlei, as a seasoned studio actor, she definitely brought the chops! And sharing my scenes with Nick Eversman was an absolute ride! We had both met on the set of Showtime's "A Good Lord Bird" a few years back and became fast friends. So when we got to play best friends in "Dear Luke," it all came very naturally to us. And also, not only are my costar's amazingly talented performers, but they're also just genuinely great people. They were so fun to work with and still so supportive to this day. It was just a fantastic team. We all knew we were trying to get up an impossible hill, and they all helped make it happen! Shout out to Jameson for being my Number 1 hype man!!

What makes Apple TV the perfect home for Dear Luke, Love Me? Do they get the picture in a way that no one else has?

We think landing on Apple TV is perfect. Recently, Apple has come out with some really amazing films and shows with a lot of artistic integrity, and we feel very proud that they saw something in "Dear Luke." And before the release on the 10th, the only people who have seen it have been the people who have gone to the festivals. And in those renditions in the theaters, I don't even think the sound was fully mixed yet, so when you watch it on Apple TV, it 100% is going to be the first time this film is going to be able to be seen in its full entirety the way it was meant to be seen. So definitely check it out!

Can you give our ever-inquisitive readers a hint or three as to what you have coming up in the near future?

Oh sure! So I think I mentioned this before, but I'm currently working on my next project which is a period horror film called "The Writing Desk" about a mixed raced family, raising a little girl with Albinism. Right now we are in its embryonic stages, looking for production companies, investors, and producers to come on board. So my life is inundated with a lot of emails right now, I will say that! My goal is to secure its funding for the \$2.5 million budget by this time next year!

Dear Luke, Love Me had a successful festival run which culminated with a win for Best Feature at the Hollywood Reel Independent Film Festival; congrats again! How did it feel to receive this type of recognition from your peers and contemporaries?

Well, it always feels good to get validated with awards. And we're very proud to have collected a multitude of awards from a variety of different festivals around the country. But to be honest, I think what means more is the feedback that we've been getting from the audiences that have seen the film. They've taken the time to reach out to me personally to let me know how much of an impact this film has had on their lives. People are really resonating with the characters and with the story, and a lot of people have reached out to me saying that this film has really helped them heal in a lot of ways. I think that's the best case scenario for any kind of art. We're meant to tell stories in order to collectively heal in a way. To maybe not feel so alone. To feel seen. I think that's the whole point of this movie, so yes, it's been very validating.

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, Bowfinger, The Player, The Big Picture, or Once Upon a Time in Hollywood?

Haha, oh man Bowfinger is a throwback! I mean you gotta love Eddie Murphy and Steve Martin! But I think I'd have to go with Once Upon a Time in Hollywood. Tarantino may be a jerk, but damn, he makes good movies. I love romanticizing the idea of old Hollywood in the 70's — definitely a time that anything was possible in this city!

Setl Deer



We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor as well as a digital content phenomenon, Seth Edeen; greetings and salutations Seth and thanks for taking time from a busy schedule to speak with us and our readers here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid-lined rabbit hole, how is the latter-part of 2025 finding you and yours?

It's been very busy! I've been working on a lot of super cool projects that will be coming out later this year and the start of 2026! Very happy and blessed to be able to this for a living!

Major kudos and accolades on a VERY busy 2025 for you! Glancing at your handy IMDb page, we count no less than ten film and television productions of which you and your bravura acting were a part of! First of all, is there more than one Seth Edeen working on the big and small screens and, if not, how have you cracked the code to successfully juggle so many quality film and television roles?

There's only one Seth Edeen and I've been super fortunate that all these amazing projects have managed a way to work around each other. It gets tough sometimes and I've had to miss my fair share of social events but I wouldn't trade it for the world! I'm so lucky to have had the opportunities that I've had. Making a living as an actor is tough business and I'm very grateful for the recent success I've had.

As we noted at the top, you've managed to properly combine a traditional acting career with the ever-kooky world of digital content, clocking in with over three hundred million views across your most popular projects; WOW and major congrats! What's the E! True Hollywood Story on how you crafted this game-changing map on how to cultivate a career in Hollywood? Was there real thought and purpose put into walking both the traditional and the digital, or was it a bit more organic than all of that?

I was super fortunate to have gotten into the world of Vertical Microdramas early on. It's crazy the fan base I've been able to build in just the last two years. When I first started doing vertical microdramas I had no idea that they would have this

big of a reach. So grateful for all the fans all around the world who continue to watch and support me.

Going forward, do you feel that the route you've managed to navigate and trailblaze in Hollywood is ultimately bound to become more of the norm than an anomaly for budding thespians out there?

Everyone's route in the industry is different but I do think the emergence of vertical microdramas will be a great avenue to give up and coming actors an amazing platform to build their careers while simultaneously continuing to practice and hone in on the craft of acting!

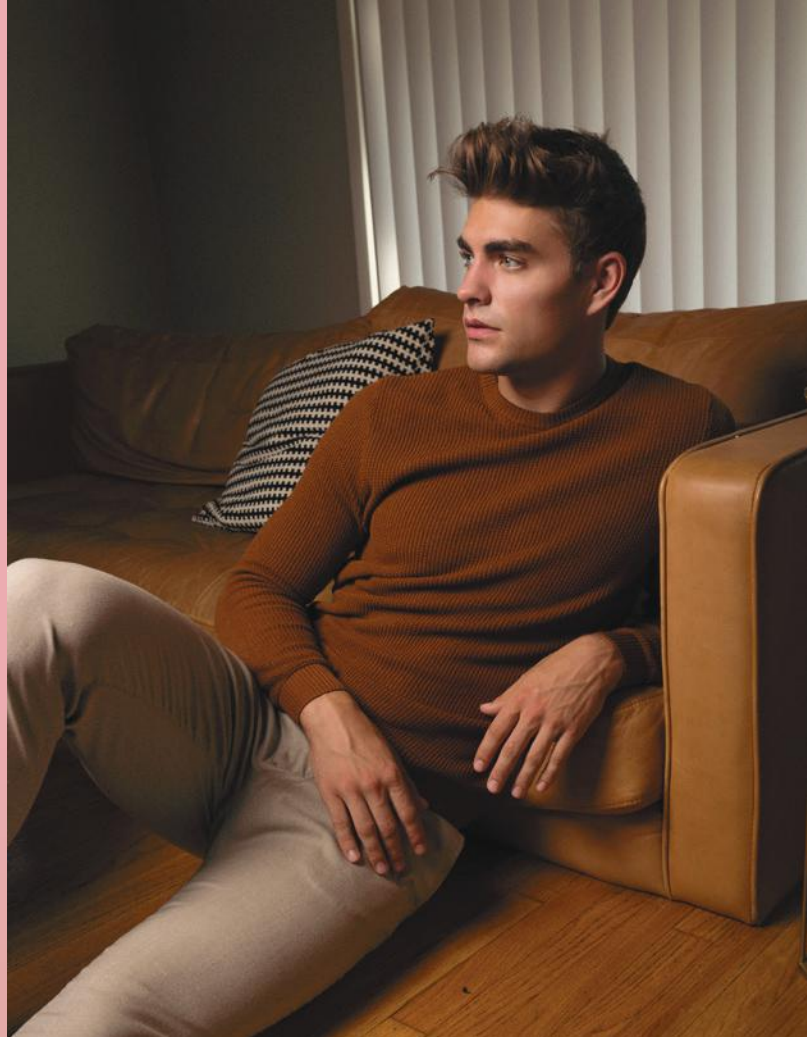
What's coming up for you in the near future as far as film and digital goes? Word 'round industry campfire has it that you're filming a new vertical project through early October...Can you give our ever-inquisitive readers a hint or three about that project and whatever else you might have on your professional dance card? And, for the uninitiated out there, what precisely is the emerging vertical film scene all about?

I just wrapped my TWENTY FIFTH vertical microdrama! I can't spill the tea on any details sadly :(but I know the fans are going to love it! It was one of my more challenging acting roles! And I will begin production on my next vertical at the end of October that will be a whole new character I've never played before! And I'll also begin shooting a couple feature films in November so there will lots of exciting projects coming out in 2026!

Are there any specific actors in the world –living or otherwise – who have sort of served as North Stars for you and your own indelible acting?

Oh there are so many I don't even know where to begin! I've always been a big Brad Pitt fan but who isn't! I've always enjoyed Bradley Cooper as well as Matthew McConaughey!

Speaking of word 'round campfires and such, we have it on good authority that you're about to turn the world of high-fashion on its proverbial ear with some pretty exclusive modeling campaigns and the like – Congratulations! What



can you tell us about this facet of your career?

Modeling is how I originally got started in entertainment! I even booked one of my first viral vertical microdrama through my modeling agency!

Your first credited television/ film production was the 2023/24 tv miniseries Call Me Alpha. Any special memories of that freshman production?

Man, that's how this whole thing started! My roommate actually met the director on set of a horror film he was shooting and referred me as a potential candidate for 'Alpha Aiden' and the rest is history!

You hail from Cheyenne, Wyoming. How do those specific roots inform you not only as an actor, but also as a person?

I think growing up in a place like Wyoming has made me very grounded as a person and very grateful for this incredible life I get to live. People where I grew up are very tough and blue collared, not many if any venture out to Southern California in pursuit of a career

in entertainment. I believe that grounded and humble life I've come from helps me in my acting because a lot of my characters I play are pretty grounded individuals so I get to draw upon those Wyoming roots.

You're well-versed buy this point in the dual yet similar worlds of digital and film and television. How are they alike and how are they different? And do you have a preference?

They are very similar! The style of film/television is much different than the digital/vertical microdrama style but at the end of the day it's still acting! I love them both for different reasons! I love getting to play the high emotional roller coaster of a microdrama while also really a joy getting to play my gritty grounded characters in film/tv.

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, Barton Fink, Bowfinger, or Swimming with Sharks?

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood! Brad Pitt baby!



**SHERVIN
KERMANI**

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*I don't
want to
be a man
without
dreams...*
”

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us, Shervin. How has the latter half of 2025 been treating you so far?

It's been a great year so far. I feel very lucky!

Congratulations on your new short film *Ramón Who Speaks to Ghosts*, which had its world premiere at the 2025 Toronto International Film Festival and is now heading to more festivals this fall. Can you tell us what the film is about and what inspired the story?

After a volcanic eruption, a quirky man named Ramón wanders the island of La Palma with his microphone, looking for ghosts.

I made the film during a ten day film accelerator on the island of La Palma under the direct mentorship of Werner Herzog. He had asked participants not to come to the island with preconceived ideas, but to engage with a theme he would provide on Q the first day. The idea of the film emerged gradually while walking through landscapes that were destroyed by the eruption. This image of a man with his microphone listening for ghosts felt like the right key to unlocking the larger themes of the tragedy.

What made *Ramón Who Speaks to Ghosts* the right follow-up to your previous film *Bibi's Dog is Dead*? Did it feel like a natural next step for you as a filmmaker?

Bibi's Dog is Dead is the first comedy I made. I not only wanted to prove that I could, but to see how I would approach the genre in terms of craft, visual storytelling and a raw performance style. With *Ramón Who Speaks to Ghosts*, I wanted to synthesize this new comedic element in my work with the lyrical, tragic elements of my previous films and see if I could hold all three together. I think it worked. I plan to continue exploring this synthesis of tones, and the ways comedy, tragedy and lyricism can overlap.

You collaborated with legendary auteur Werner Herzog on this project. How did that collaboration come about, and what was it like to work with someone who has had such a profound impact on cinema?

Herzog has done these workshops before, but the last time I applied, I was rejected. So this time, I threw my hat in the ring with no expectations, and was surprised when I got in. Sometimes people tell you not to meet your heroes, but in this case, I found Herzog to be genuinely invested in our growth as filmmakers. To him, these workshops are part of his duty as a "soldier of cinema."

He was there every day, giving talks about his films, how he approached working with specific actors or documentary subjects, or how he directed particular scenes. He also guided us through location scouts, gave feedback on our pitches, joined us on set, and reviewed the rough cuts of our films. In my case, he offered a few notes that helped me figure out things I wasn't sure about. It was one of those great, once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

You also worked closely with acclaimed cinematographer Karla Reyes. What do you feel she brought to the film that made the visual storytelling unique?

Karla is an exceptional camera operator, which was perfect for the run-and-gun guerrilla style we needed for a film with no crew. She also has rock-solid steady hands and great stamina. I grabbed the camera on a couple occasions for inserts and then just passed it back to her, because I couldn't mimic the gimbal-like solidity of her handheld work.

So much of the shoot was about discovering the visual language as we shot, and she was a nimble collaborator in terms of iterating quickly on ideas until we got something interesting. She also did double duty as a translator on set, and I'd look to her in the middle of interviews to see if it was safe to cut and redirect.

The film features a great cast, including Pedro Moisés Herrera Concepción, Ida Joa Langer López, Tamara Batista Moreno, and Tiziano Maio. What was it like to direct them?

We got very lucky with Pedro. He knew exactly what I was going for from the start. That doesn't always happen with actors, and it can sometimes be a challenge to get on the same page. But he did an exceptional job synthesizing the fictional elements of the story with his own personal experiences, so that the character became a hybrid creation. Ramón is fiction, but he's also Pedro. So much of the magic of the film comes from him.

Premiering at TIFF is a major milestone. How did it feel to share *Ramón Who Speaks to Ghosts* with audiences for the first time on such a prestigious stage?

It was an amazing experience. Our premiere screening was on the Ultra AVX screen at the Scotiabank Theatre, and it was a joy to see it projected on such a gigantic screen.

Do you have plans for a wider release of the film beyond the festival circuit?

After the festival circuit, I plan on releasing the film online.

Looking ahead, can you share what's next for you after *Ramón Who Speaks to Ghosts*? Are there new projects already in motion?

I'm excited to start rehearsals on my next short, a morally complex crime thriller, after which I plan to make a feature in the same genre.

On a lighter note, do you have a favorite film about filmmaking itself — something like *The Player*, *Living in Oblivion*, or *Barton Fink*?

There are so many great films about filmmaking. But while we're on the topic of Herzog, I love *Burden of Dreams*, about the making of *Fitzcarraldo*. There's a very memorable scene where Herzog, faced with the disastrous production of the film, says: "If I abandon this project, I would be a man without dreams, and I don't want to live like that." I think of this often. I don't want to be a man without dreams...



Samora Smallwood

Samora, thank you for joining us at Vents Magazine. Before we dive into Coming Home, how has the second half of 2025 been treating you so far?

2025 has been a wild ride so far! Three words I'd use for 2025 so far: transformation, elevation, and realization

Congratulations on your new series Coming Home airing on Bell Fibe TV1. You wrote, directed, and starred in it, can you tell us what the series is about and what inspired you to create it?

Thank you. Coming Home is an adult-coming of age romantic comedy about one woman's fall from grace that lands her in exactly the right place. I've always loved romantic comedies and when the opportunity came up for me to create my own I thought about how many themes of authenticity, self love, and growing into the person you were always meant to matter to me. That's the double entendre of Coming Home and the meaning behind it. Sammy, the character I play, is coming home to her small town from Hollywood, but she's also and most importantly coming home to herself.

You play the lead character, Sammy Smalls. How much of yourself do you see in Sammy? Were there aspects of your own life that influenced how you shaped the role?

You don't even want to know how many aspects of Sammy's life were pulled from my own experiences! The parts of Sammy I love most: her beautiful heart, her indefatigable spirit, her sense of humour, her resilience, her belief in love even after it's broken her heart are all the parts I've learned to love most about myself. As a creator it's always rewarding to make what you always wanted to see, so as a biracial kid, it's meaningful to me to have an interracial family on-screen: so in coming home we have a black dad and white mom like how I grew up. They're played in Coming Home by the hilarious and heartfelt Kevin Hanchard and Susan Coyne.

Coming Home explores themes of reinvention, self-worth, community, and resilience. Did you set out with these ideas from the beginning, or did they emerge naturally as you developed the story?

Both! My favourite stories are underdog stories, where someone gets knocked down and we

go along on their journey of coming home to themselves, and figuring out how to stand on their own two feet. So it's the story I set out to tell and as I wrote and began creating characters and the story arc I found ways to amplify those themes within each character. As a writer I never create throwaway characters, or ones that simply serve a plot point. It matters to me that everyone has their own rich history and backstory. For example, Bee the star of the Elder Talent Show was a dancer/showgirl in New York City in her youth, and she's forgotten how much she loves to dance. So when Sammy gets hired at the local old age home, she meets a disgruntled unhappy Bee who's forgotten what makes her feel alive (much like Sammy has) and it's through this intergenerational friendship and Sammy's empowerment energy that Bee rediscovers her spark and in turn helps Sammy do the same.

Balancing such layered themes can be tricky. How do you ensure the show stays authentic and emotionally resonant?

By being honest, and writing to the strengths of the times and the actors themselves. In our story Sammy bumps into the high school mean girls who grew up to be the local "mean mommies". I wrote the role of the main mean mommy with Degraasi's Paula Brancati in mind, who is so funny, and it reads as really authentic and emotionally resonant because we all know the feeling of seeing high school or college people and wanting to have our ish together and not fall back into old patterns. And since Paula and I are such good friends in real life, there was heart and truth under all the banter and barb-slinging in our scene. This always makes female rivalries on-screen so much more interesting to watch. They did a great job of that in one of the best rom-coms of all time "My Best Friend's Wedding" with Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz/ characters

Did any past works influence you while creating the tone and style of Coming Home?

Yes! I watched many rom-coms to prepare, and read scripts and then decided how the genre could inform the unique story I wanted to tell. What's so special and relevant about Coming Home is that our hero Sammy Smalls is a social media influencer living in LA who wears a mask of people pleasing and façade and it all comes crumbling down when she catches her husband cheating on her and loses her fancy house and cars because it was all in his name. She's forced to move back to her small town into her parents house, and rebuild

from scratch. It's humbling, and I think a relevant social message: who are you really under the mask, do you love or even know your authentic self? And the bigger question for us all: do any of us know who we really are under the masks we wear to be liked and accepted?

The cast includes Paula Brancati, Kevin Hanchard, Karen LeBlanc, Susan Coyne, and Naomi Snieckus, an incredible lineup. What was the casting process like, and how did you know these were the right people for the story?

We were so lucky to have such major talents join Coming Home. I wrote the parts for many of them as they're actors I've worked with and am friends with. Susan Coyne who plays my mom is the only person we did a search for and it was a matter of talking to reps, checking out demo reels and making an offer. Susan is the perfect blend of tough love and mirth. All of the actors are the perfect blend of heart and humour which is Coming Home's sweet spot.

Coming Home also marks the launch of your production company, Samora Gloria Entertainment. What was the vision behind starting it, and what do you hope to achieve with the company?

Lots of exciting stuff cooking up. My main goal is to grow the company and be known for commercially and critically acclaimed projects that entertain and provoke meaningful conversation. As a multi-hyphenate who started as an actor I really admire what Phoebe Waller Bridge, Issa Rae, Donald Glover, Quinta Brunson and Margot Robbie have done. Those are the footsteps I'm aiming to follow in, and for Canada it's long overdue for us to have powerhouse, breakthrough multi-hyphenates in TV & Film.

Without giving too much away, what can audiences expect from Coming Home?

The perfect blend of warmth and wit, heart and humour. Cuddle up on the couch with family, friends, your snacks and escape to a world of second chances in life and love.

Beyond Coming Home, what other projects are you excited about for 2025 and 2026?

I led a Lifetime thriller called "Murder at the Hotel" which just premiered in the US and will be released in Canada soon. I do all my own stunts in the film, and it's just a really solid, entertaining thriller with a fantastic cast and kick-ass director Alexandre Carrière. An ensemble Christmas Murder Mystery for OVN wrapped this summer and is coming out this holiday season. It's really funny!! Directed by Winnifred Jong, it's so great and our cast is hilarious and heartfelt. I star alongside Matt Murray in "Drifters", Adrian Bobb's latest sci-fi short and it's taking the festival circuit by storm. On top of all that, my own slate of TV & Film projects is in active development. Career-wise it's an extremely busy and abundant time.

DANIEL STOLFI



Daniel, thanks for joining us — how has 2025 been treating you so far?

Thanks for having me! 2025 has been a wild and strange year so far. Lots of new beginnings and big changes happening. Is it just me? Are we all feeling this? HA. But overall, I'm feeling healthy and I'm grateful for so much right now.

Congratulations on your new solo show RUINED! Can you share what sparked the idea for this show and what personal experiences influenced it?

Yes, my new show RUINED! What sparked the idea for this show was actually a wedding speech my dad made at our wedding 12 years ago! He basically had a list of all the things he and my mother had done to "ruin" my childhood... and they were all the result of being brought up in an Italian household. The speech crushed, but I honestly didn't think much of it until a couple of years ago when my wife and producing partner, Jennifer De Lucia, were floating around show ideas to pitch for a series. This idea of being the child of immigrant parents kept coming up, and we decided to mine humor from true stories of my childhood and how my parents "RUINED" my life! Haha. I was itching to get on stage and do another solo comedy special, and I thought it would be great to work some of this material into a live show! And RUINED! was born.

How long has RUINED been in the works from first idea to stage? What does your creative process usually look like when shaping a new show?

You could say 12 years in the making from the moment my dad made that speech, but as mentioned previously, I didn't think of it as a show concept until much later. The actual live show didn't start percolating until January or February of this year! Six or seven months ago, I honestly didn't have much in terms of a show. I had ideas on paper and some fun stories to tell, but it was really a big mess, haha. My process can be messy, if I'm being honest. We often book the theater space and then work from there. When you have a set date and time that something needs to be done by, it pushes you to get it done. So, over the past six months, I've been writing, rewriting, and rehearsing bits as I go. It's in a constant state of flux, edit and re-edit, and is continually evolving. Eventually, something clicks and I find a structure that works, and then I try to tie it all together so it flows from one piece to the next. Sometimes this means cutting jokes that I really love but don't serve the piece as a whole. It's a bit of a dangerous dance overall, but it's actually quite freeing, and when it all comes together it's pretty magical.

When developing new material, do you like to workshop it in front of small audiences or trusted friends, or do you prefer to keep it under wraps until opening night?

I am a big fan of keeping it under wraps until opening night. I've workshoped the odd story

or joke here and there, but even when rehearsing in front of my wife and stage manager, I don't give it all away. I like to save things for the audience and let it live in the moment. The show will likely change from Tuesday's opening night to Saturday's closing because in comedy, you're always shifting, finding new things, and working jokes as you go.

How does RUINED! build on or differ from your past shows?

My past shows tackle vastly different subjects but always revolve around my life and experiences and often include something about being Italian. It's such a core part of my identity and who I am. "Cancer Can't Dance Like This" was about my experience with cancer at the age of 25; "Finding Funny" was about the first time I made someone laugh and why I do comedy; "Another Trip Around the Sun" was about my view on the world, my love for Michael Jackson, and what it means to be on a big blue marble spinning through space. Now, RUINED! is about being the child of immigrant parents and how they "Ruined" my childhood and how that has made me into the person I am today. All of my shows are story-based and include larger-than-life characters, act-outs, physical comedy, and music! Music is everything!

You explore your Italian heritage and your parents' immigration experience in RUINED! Why did it feel important to bring those themes to the stage now?

The immigrants who came to Canada and North America in the '50s and '60s—that massive wave of Italians, Indians, Filipinos, Asians, etc.—that shaped so much of the North American identity, are, for lack of a better word, getting more mature in their years and they have a story to tell. I really wanted to honor them by sharing these stories (and sort of poking fun at them). I think if you are the child of immigrant parents, you will relate to RUINED!

Which comedians or performers, past or present, have shaped your comedic style?

I'm a big fan of character comedians and physical comedians like Rowan Atkinson, Eugene Levy, and Jim Carrey. I love the showmanship of it all. You can see the work in all the choices being made, the subtle look or expression. It's a bit of clown mixed with stand-up mixed with storytelling. That's what I love.

For audiences who can't make the Toronto run, do you plan to take RUINED! on the road or release it in another format, like a special or album?

I'm hoping to film the show in some capacity and present some clips on social media, @stolficomedy. But I think live shows are meant to be seen live. There is a certain energy that comes with being in the audience and experiencing the same thing at the same time. I mean... I'd love it if a Netflix executive could come along and be like, "this show deserves its own special!" The dream! LOL. I currently



have a comedy album up on all the major audio streaming services called "I'm Doing my Very Best." Check it out!

Comedy today often navigates sensitive and divided times. How do you balance pushing boundaries with connecting audiences across differences?

This is a hot-button issue with comedy these days. I think I have a fairly good sense as to when the boundaries are being pushed too far. It's easy to push the boundaries and offend and disconnect an audience. That's not really comedy at that point. It's much more challenging to walk that line. I think if you're doing comedy to get a reaction other than a genuine laugh, then you're no longer doing comedy but doing something like a rant or a debate. Rants and debates can be funny... but they can be polarizing. Comedy should unite people, not divide them. I'm sure I'll offend someone though HAHA.

Ultimately, what do you hope people take away from RUINED! after seeing it live?

Ultimately, I hope people laugh and have a good time and learn something new. There are often a lot of stereotypes that are associated with being Italian, and some of them are for sure spot on, but there is a nuance to it all and I really want to unlock that for people. I hope it inspires people to share stories with each other about their childhoods and their experiences...and how their parents ruined their childhoods! haha.

And beyond RUINED!, what else can fans look forward to from you in late 2025 and into 2026?

My wife and I are producers as well as actors, and we have two short films that are making their festival runs in 2025/26 through our production company, You & Me Entertainment. Look out for "I AM PLEASED", written and directed by Vanessa Magic and APORIA, written and directed by Adam Langdon and starring Jennifer De Lucia and Miguel Rivas and me. I'm in it too!



Host
of the
Month

THE RASMUS

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed and internationally celebrated Finnish rock band The Rasmus; greetings and salutations gang and thanks for carving some time out of a super-busy schedule to speak with our readers here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you all say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive audience?

Hi guys, my name is Lauri and I'm the singer of The Rasmus. We come from Helsinki, Finland.

Hello everyone, I'm Emppu and I play the guitar. I joined this awesome band four years ago and I've loved every moment!

Hey, my name is Eero, I play bass in our group

My name is Aki, I'm the drummer.

Major kudos and accolades on your drop-the-mic new single Break These Chains which is currently lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe! Lauri, can you talk about what inspired this raw frenzy of rock and roll which is easily one of the very best singles of 2025?

Best and the most touching songs come from real experiences. The ones that got you pissed off, made you cry or laugh till you cried. I keep collecting memories which later, maybe after years turn into music. This is a song about a toxic relationship that you wanna hang onto though you know it's bad for you. Sometimes you have to destroy your past and prioritize yourself. We should all love ourselves more.

Emppu, The Rasmus has a very special musical guest on the new Break These Chains single in the form of Niko Vilhelm of Blind Channel fame! What was it like collaborating with Niko on this powerful track?

I've always loved Niko as a vocalist, but also as a person. He's such a versatile singer and adds so much to the song. Niko is a charismatic performer, but still very easy going which makes working together smooth and pleasant.

Aki, Break These Chains marks the third single which has now dropped in a short span of time from The Rasmus; congratulations! Between Break These Chains, Creatures of Chaos, and Rest In Pieces, do you have a personal favorite? Or is it a bit too much like Sophie's Choice, asking you to choose between your musical children?

I really like all these three tracks, very difficult to pick one! There is a slightly heavier touch in these songs, which I like a lot. All of them are great live tracks too, we have played all of them live already and reaction has been very good, these three go easily to my Top 10 live tracks of the band. If I need to pick one now, I would say "Break These Chains," but this changes daily, hahaha.

And my favorite track from the new album is not released yet, so I'm looking forward to see what you guys think of that one.

Eero, we're absolutely loving the companion music video for the single which dropped right before Break These Chains, Creatures of Chaos – Congrats! How involved were The Rasmus in the overall look and feel of the music video?

We started with "Creatures Of Chaos" almost one year before the other videos/ singles of this album. There was a lot of new inspiration in us, to do stuff that has wild and free feeling. We wanted to have energy of chaos and heavy riffing in that music video. The unruly bears was another idea of ours, we felt like doing the unexpected and different from other rock videos.

The "Break These Chains" video was made much later, and it was built around our idea of Lauri driving away from a relationship/ moment that feels like chains that bind you down. And the performance room feels a bit like Fight Club, which I think fits really well.

Lauri, word 'round industry campfire has it that The Rasmus is poised to drop their eagerly anticipated new album Weirdo this September 12; Wonderful news and congrats! Can you give fans a hint or three as to what they might expect and look forward to with the new LP?

The album title WEIRDO came along with the song "Weirdo" that was one of the first songs written for this album. All my life I've been this strange guy with feathers in my hair, make up or freaky clothes. Our message from the beginng has been: "be yourself and don't give a shit what they say about you." We are all bunch of weirdos depending of the angle you're looking at it. In the song I sing: "I'm just a weirdo, I'll never be a hero," but in fact last week-end I was headlining a festival in Ukraine despite the war, bringing them hope and good vibes. There's so many ways to be a hero and meaningful in this world.

Emppu, The Rasmus is gearing up to perform as headliners at the rightly lauded Atlas Festival this July 19; congrats again! What can you tell us about this specific headlining show and how it might differ from other shows and tours The Rasmus typically perform?

Atlas Festival was magical! The whole trip to Ukraine was something we'll remember forever and the show was full of emotions. Our setlist was pretty usual except for the last song. Kalush Orchestra came on stage with us to perform our collab song, "In The Shadows of Ukraine." Also some of the older songs and lyrics go new meanings due to the circumstances.

Aki, outside of the Atlas Festival on July 19, where else might enterprising fans of The Rasmus catch you in 2025 as far as touring and performing live goes? Will there possibly be a tie-in tour for the upcoming September 12 LP Weirdo?

We have a massive tour starting in September and we are very excited about it! We have already started to plan the set list for the tour. It will include some new tracks from the upcoming WEIRDO album, and also some old songs, maybe some rare ones too which we haven't played in ages. And I think "In The Shadows" needs to be on that set list too, ha. Also, we'll go to cities where we've never played before, like Baku, Tashkent and Limassol. The tour will be visually very interesting. We will have a led screens on the stage and we've been creating material that we're going to use and I can tell it looks soooo cool!

I need to say, don't miss these shows!!! I have a feeling that this will be one of the best tours



we have ever played! And this is just a start, we'll continue touring in 2026, too. We'll go to Australia in January and to Latin America too, and do lots of festivals...All the dates and more info can be found on our webpage: www.therasmus.com and on bands SoMe.

Eero, for folks who will be seeing you performing at the Atlas Festival for the first time, can you give them a hint or three as to what sort of show they can expect and look forward to?

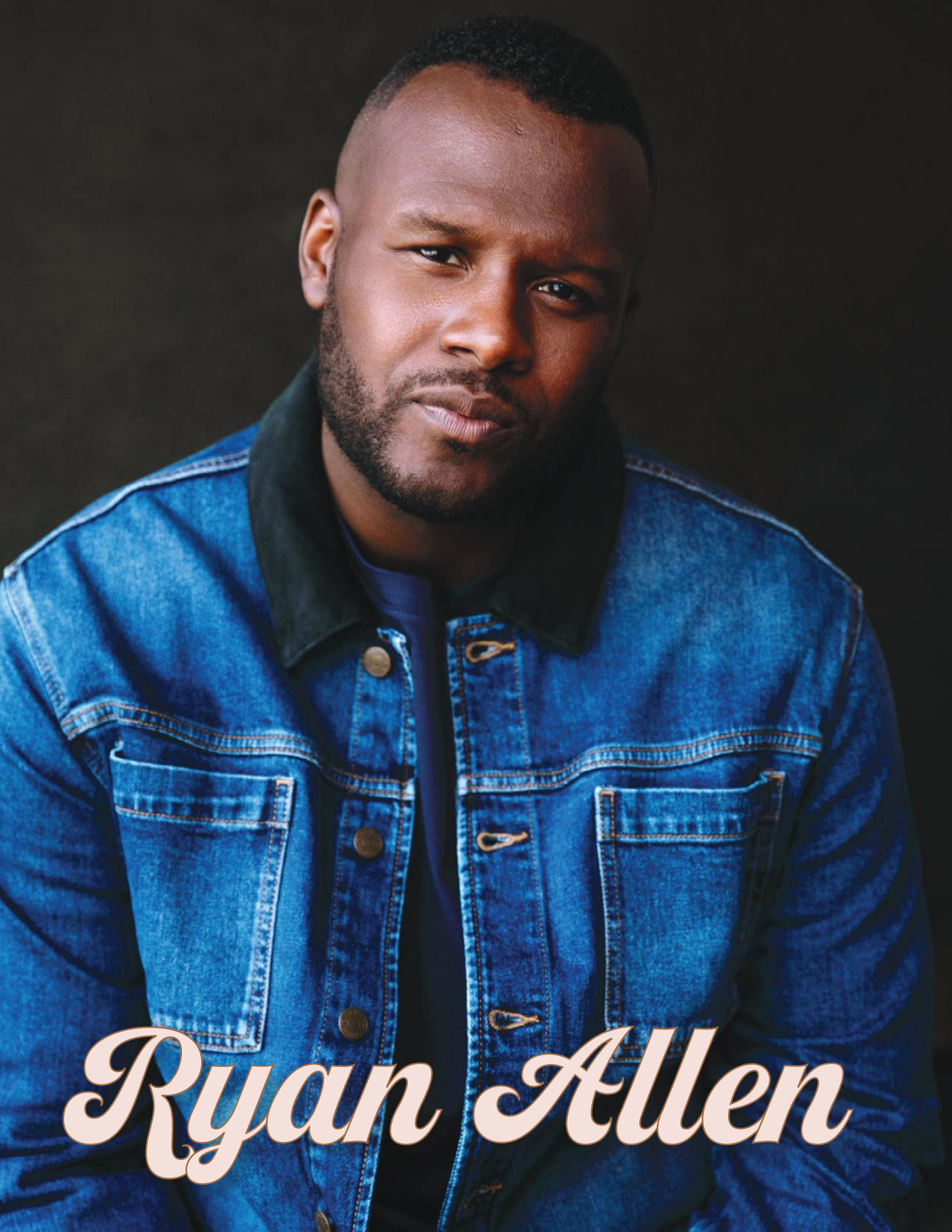
Atlas Festival took place in Kyiv, in the war zone. That in itself is something quite different for us. We were told that the whole festival can be evacuated in five minutes into bomb shelter, if the need arises. Otherwise, we are delivering a rock show with lots of energy, and with the purpose of bringing hope and joy for these people who have been living under constant pressure for the past three (and more) years.

Lauri, how is the new Weirdo LP similar to past music from The Rasmus? How is it different?

Musically, WEIRDO shows the heavier side of The Rasmus. In the past, we have been exploring more electronic and lighter sounds but this one is possibly the heaviest we have ever released. I just feels like the situation in the world needs harder music.

Photo credit: Venla Shalin





Ryan Allen

Thanks for joining us, Ryan. Before we dive in, how's the back half of 2025 treating you?

It's been a lovely summer! I got to work on Sian Heder's new film *Being Heumann*, went to Punta Cana with my wonderful wife and my men's league hockey team won the summer championship!

Congrats on *Normal* premiering at TIFF's Midnight Madness on Sept 7. For readers new to it, what's the film about, and where does Deputy Blaine fit in?

Normal is about a small town in Minnesota where Ulysses (played by Bob Odenkirk) is hired to be the interim sheriff, after the current sheriff dies. Ulysses slowly discovers that the seemingly quaint and sleepy town is perhaps not so sleepy with a sinister streak. Deputy Blaine is affable and cooperative with Ulysses but has ambitions of being the Sheriff himself.

You're alongside Bob Odenkirk, Lena Headey, Henry Winkler, Brendan Fletcher, Billy MacLellan, and Jess McLeod in the film. What was it like working alongside this great cast?

It was a joy everyday on set. We worked hard to mine for the most truthful versions of our characters while still taking time to laugh ...a looot!

Did you know as soon as the screenplay for *Normal* hit your desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?

Omg Yes!! When I first got the sides for the audition I thought "i know exactly who Blaine is". I don't think I even really needed to study the lines, it just sort of came to me after reading it twice. Trust me, that doesn't "normally" happen.

How did director Ben Wheatley collaborate with you on tone and character? Would you call him an "actor's director," and why?

Absolutely! Ben is very good at leading actors. He won't say "do this", it'll be more like "what if it was something like.." and then allows you to find. That kind of trust truly empowers the actor.

What prep did you do for Deputy Blaine?

I modelled Deputy Blaine after John Lyght, who was the first ever Black sheriff in Cook County, Minnesota. Like me, he stood 6'3, so quite a presence. I read tons of interviews and articles with him. It was incredibly fascinating to learn how a black Sheriff navigated working in a small town that was predominantly white.



Can you share a hint or two about what's on your slate after TIFF?

You can find me in season 5 of *Shoresy*. A series that is very close to my heart because I'm such an avid hockey fan!

Who are some of your key influences, inside and outside filmmaking?

My favorite actors are Vincent D'nofrio, Denzel Washington and Tom Hardy. But the people I look up to most are my parents. They rock!

Quick closer: favourite movie about making movies—*Living in Oblivion*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, *The Player*, *Barton Fink*, *The Big Picture*, or *Bowfinger*?

I'm gonna go with *Bowfinger* because I'm a huuuuuuge Eddie Murphy fan. I just saw an interview with him where he admits to never auditioning for anything in his life except for SNL.

THE GRAHAMS



We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed Americana-pop duo The Grahams; greetings and salutations you two and thanks for carving time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A music lined rabbit hole, could you both say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?

Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to our new music and spread the word about our new album. We are so proud of this collaborative project.

Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted single "The One Who Remembers," which is lighting up across the ever-loving globe, as well as touching even the hardest of hearts! Alyssa, what's the story behind one of the best single releases of '25?

Thanks for pointing out this track as it is most certainly the most difficult, beautiful and honest song I think we've ever penned. It's interesting, this song started as a conversation about the difficult parts of my life. Stuff I really don't talk about a lot because there is so much positive in my life. We were talking with Kate, Aaron Lee, and Dex (who we co-wrote the album with) saying, "we write a lot of love songs but I would be remiss if I didn't dig a bit deeper and talk about the fact that my father is an addict, (laugh) my husband kind of is too and my mother can't remember my name." That was it. "That's your song," they all said, "you just sang the first line." It's funny though, I thought the song was about our family struggle with Alzheimer's and drug/alcohol addiction. The more I sing it, the more I realize it's an internal struggle or bad habit I have with trying to solve all these problems.



Doug, “The One Who Remembers” is plucked off the eagerly-anticipated new album from The Grahams entitled *The Bridge* which is set to drop this October 10; congratulations! How is this fourth studio album from you and Alyssa different than anything else you’ve done up to this point? How is it similar?

Thanks. The obvious answer is that we worked with some Nashville co-writers on this project and we’ve never done that before. I think, however, the most important difference is how deep we went with the songwriting and how vulnerable we allowed ourselves to be. We’ve tried before but we were always able to change course and protect ourselves. This time, our cowriters didn’t let us hide from the truth.

Alyssa, word ‘round industry campfire has it that no less than three creative ambassadors were an integral part of helping The Grahams craft the upcoming LP *The Bridge*. Can you introduce this talented trio and let readers in on what this collaboration looked like? And, following up on that, who are the brilliant studio musicians who lent their beautiful musical alchemy towards making the new album a reality?

We are incredibly grateful to have found people as talented, supportive and patient as our cowriters for this project. Kate York, Aaron Lee Tasjan, Dex Green, Pat McLaughlin, and Jarrad Kritzstein. It was a surprisingly organic process and one we would absolutely do again. We spent most of the time writing and working with Kate, ALT and Dex. Doug and I would come in with an idea or a few lines from our morning hike and we would share our intention with the group. We would sit in a circle and flesh out the real truth beneath the story or concept. We all contributed and partnered. It was a very shared experience and a safe space. Doug and I felt very supported and heard. We are so grateful. We didn’t know if people would understand our 30 plus years life together but they did.

The band is ridiculous! Matt Chamberlain, Rob Burger, Sebastian Steinberg, ALT, Dex, Patrick Warren, Ray Jacildo, and more. All there to bring their creative best and support these songs. We are so lucky. They made it sound so fucking good!

Alyssa, in the wake of the October 10 release of the new album *The Bridge*, can fans look forward to catching The Grahams on the touring/performing circuit?

We are super excited to bring these songs to the live space. We aren’t touring hundreds of days a year anymore because that wouldn’t be fair to our 6-year-old, but we are getting out there and will hit some of the US and international markets. Tour dates will be announced soon.

Doug, what’s the VH1-*Behind the Music* origin story on how you and Alyssa came together to form The Grahams? How did this bit of vinyl-infused magic transpire?

The minute I first heard Alyssa sing was the first time I ever heard anybody that could sing well. I was already ten years into my own guitar habit. I was already writing songs and performing them but when I found out about Alyssa’s voice, I was beside myself. I knew that she would sing with me because we were friends. But within the first few days of

hearing her sing, we were already plotting our rock bands international take over. Falling in love with her was impossible to avoid. We haven’t stopped loving each other and making music together for more than three decades.

A question for the both of you: Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have inspired you over the years?

I guess it’s easy to point to famous people as inspiration, but I think that the people that have and do inspire me are my friends and family in my everyday life. I get turned on when I see a great band or watch an excellent movie, but it is the way that people in my life who find actual solutions to things and navigate their usually difficult life situations with grace and fortitude. Getting inspired by real people in your life gives you a chance to explore those motivations and curiosities more closely and to be able to apply life lessons to your own life. It is helpful to have your eyes open to the people around you, so in this case I was most influenced and inspired by the people in the room making this record who all have their own complicated lives and are still willing to share their time and creative energy with us.

Alyssa, in your humble opinion what differentiates *The Bridge* LP from the distinguished competition on the current day music scene?

Funny, I was just listening to our Still Woozy playlist which is fun to paint or drive to. I mean, I think this is a great time for music. There is so much out there and so much to access. Sure, there is music I don’t love or music I’m like, “what? We are so much better than that!” lol. However, in general I love living in a time where musicians can get their sound out there and the marketplace isn’t flooded with one style. I can only say that this record is unique to us and our story. I think it took us a while to get to a place where we were really comfortable writing about ourselves. This album is that. *The Bridge* is the first real glimpse into our story.

Doug, any final thoughts you might like to share about the upcoming LP *The Bridge*?

This record tells the story of our life together. The view from New Jersey across the GW Bridge to Manhattan, the struggle with love and family, the desire to disappear, the daily fights, the arduous task of trying to make meaningful art, the birth of our daughter, and the strength to persevere together. Not to be cliché but this, *The Bridge*, is us.

TAZ



Photo Credit : Jen Rosenstein

We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed guitarist, singer and songwriter Brandon Niederauer who is perhaps best known by the far-famed nom de plume of TAZ; greetings and salutations Brandon and thanks for stopping by Vents Magazine today to speak with our ever-inquisitive readers! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

Thanks for having me! 2025 is a hectic year, but an amazing year nonetheless. I'm so excited to talk to you guys!

Major congratulations on your latest out-of-this-world single "Running After You Again," which is riding high even as we speak! Starting at the tip-top, can you talk about what inspired this gem of a ditty?

This song was inspired by watching and experiencing romance in college, but it was crafted with the sonics I grew up listening to in

mind. When I sought out to make this record, I wanted listeners, no matter what age, to feel what young romance feels like to me.

"Running After You Again" really combines and integrates ingredients from pop, R&B, as well as rock and roll to form something completely different and absolutely and wonderfully unforgettable! Was it always your intention to sort of blur the genre lines when recording the new single or did this come about organically?

Thank you so much! It wasn't my direct intention, but my producer - Neff-U - knows how many genres I'm constantly entertaining as a chronic music listener; he made it a point to banish any "genre" barriers which would hinder us from making our art in the studio. We started each day with a blank canvas and directed ourselves through multiple genres until we landed on my sound!

"Running After You Again" was produced by none other than the rightly lauded maestro Theron "Neff-U" Feemster! What was it like collaborating with Theron on this pip of a tune?

It was amazing. Neff-U is a complete virtuoso and visionary. Working with him every day gave me some of my best music-making memories, whether it was making songs or cracking jokes. He created the ultimate safe space for me to be myself.

In your humble opinion, what differentiates "Running After You Again" from the distinguished competition on the 2025 music landscape?

It may be pop, but there are so many hints at other genres in various degrees that give the record a unique sound, when coupled with my voice and guitar playing.

Word 'round industry campfire has it that you're going to very much be

a fixture on the touring/performing circuit across the U.S. this fall; kudos! Can you give fans an idea of some of the venues you'll be performing at across the country?

I'm very blessed to be on tour right now with Jon Batiste! We'll be playing historic venues like Red Rocks in Morrison, Colorado and Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

In the wake of the release of the new single, can fans look forward to even more music from you as the year marches on, perhaps in the form of an EP release?

I'll be consistently dropping music for the foreseeable future, in all shapes and forms :)

You're a native of New York. How do those specific roots inform you as both an artist and as a person?

Being from New York, I absorbed so many different cultures as a child, and this definitely influenced

my music. Additionally, you're taught to be rough on the exterior - a "keep your guard up" lifestyle - so I mostly used songwriting as a tool to channel my vulnerability.

As a singer and songwriter, which generally tends to come to you first - the lyrics or the music?

Usually the music comes first, but I've written songs in many different ways. Either a musical loop or a lyric will enter my head, usually at the most inconvenient time (like in the middle of the night), and I'll try to get it down immediately before I forget it.

At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to your stunner of a new single "Running After You Again"?

I hope they walk away with a bop that they can play on repeat over and over again

Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Hey! Nice talking with you again! We're still underground. Still on fire. Still flipping fatal switches every chance we get.

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

Our latest single, "Apex" is the first track off our upcoming EP Black Sky Anthem – Dusk. We wrote it for Apex Wrestling, and the name perfectly captured what the song's really about: rising to the top no matter what tries to beat you down.

Like watching the sun rise after a night that almost broke you, the whole tone of Dusk and Dawn is all about the comfort you can find in the still darkness before the storm hits, and the promise of light after it rains pain.

How was the recording and writing process?

This one was intense. We approached it with total precision. It was written by Steve Tobin (vocals), Max Rope (guitar), David Vigliotti (bass), Ryann Paqueo (composer), and Kevin Jardine (producer/composer), with Florencio Saint-Thomas on the synths.

We started by mapping out everything from the theme to the target audience, similar bands, genre, tempo, and other reference points. It was like building a song from a blueprint, but with full emotion loaded into every decision.

One emotional moment came after recording. Ryann Paqueo, who was instrumental in shaping the sound of "Apex," stepped away from music to focus on family. That was tough for us; he's a brother. But it made the song even more meaningful.

The chorus was also a moment. We struggled to land it during writing, but I always had the vision and melody in my head. When we hit the studio, I explained it to Kevin, and within five minutes, we had the chorus. A true banger born under pressure.

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

"Apex" was inspired by the world of wrestling. We were tapped to create something for Apex Wrestling, so I dove headfirst into that world, which I loved as a kid.

I even created a whole wrestling-themed alphabet just to make sure every lyric punched like it was coming off the top rope.

Lyricaly, it's rooted in perseverance. Fighting through anything life throws at you. Refusing to stay down. That's what Fatal Switch has always stood for.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

We've already played a handful of shows and are building a live demo reel to pitch to booking agents.

FATAL SWITCH



We've applied to some key festivals, and we're hungry to hit stages across Canada and beyond. Whether it's a club, hall, or arena, we're coming with full energy and no compromise.

What else is happening next in your world?

We're gearing up to drop our two-part EP project:

Black Sky Anthem – Dusk and Black Sky Anthem – Dawn.

Dusk is the fall. Dawn is the rise. It's all about cycles of death and rebirth emotionally, spiritually, and creatively. The next video is scheduled to shoot this month, and we're aiming to release everything before December 1st, 2025.

Our latest video for "Apex" was filmed by Ryan Stick, who absolutely crushed it and will be back on deck for future videos. It features pro wrestlers Flying Frank Milano and Maniacal Mercedes, who brought pure intensity to every frame.

Also, we've got a major artist feature coming on the Dawn EP. Can't reveal who just yet, but it's going to shake things up.

And to all the wrestling fans out there, we see you. We hear you. And we'd love to keep creating music that fuels your entrances, your matches, your mindset.



Karnage Through Crossing

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

The title of our new release is 'The Underground' which is inspired by a couple different things. Not only does this refer to the passionate electrifying scene we have in Calgary, Canada, but it also refers to the dystopian story revealed in the lyrics. A woman born in the slums of a steampunk world, ravaged by municipal class segregation and crime lords with the poverty stricken working class, becomes a pit fighter after being broken down through the journey of protecting her family and community. For more details relating to the song lyrics, go check out bandcamp, YouTube, or our streaming channels for the complete lyrics and artwork.

How was the recording and writing process?

The song was written through the combination of both the message and riffs coming together at the same time. After the first chorus there is a rockin trad metal Lick, which was the first guitar part composed for the song; the rest of the first work was made through a vision inspired by that Lick. At the same time a theme and ideas for the songs message and mood was starting to form in our frontmans mind. Both these aspects came together to create something powerful and United.

When we record these songs coming up for our second album, we record mono track demos to hear what the initial foundation sounds like, to evolve and improve sections of the song, then to create the final product we hired Scott Oliphant at Colossus Audio to be our producer. We spent 3-4 days in his personal studio tracking these latest two singles we have up, then he went to work mastering these tracks with his expertise in death metal to make our Heavy Metal Crossover sound as full and heavy as the legends we love.

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

The academy award winning story Arcane provided a lot of inspiration in the creation of the lyrics. The other inspiration came from a Calgary Canada famous venue the artwork is based off of, influencing atmosphere transitions, and lyrical content with less context and stronger feelings of aggression and conflict in the song. These two themes create this shared relation of uprising resentment, ambitious vengeance, and righteous perseverance.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

With the exception of local shows in our region, we won't be going on any extensive tours until next summer, focusing our energy and time into finishing writing and recording our second album.

What else is happening next in your world?

We have one more single, probably our most technical and powerful song, scheduled to release in the late winter or early fall. This will complete our collection of songs displaying the diversity and evolution of the band to be expected on our second album!



MAY THE MUSE

Hey May The Muse, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

I had an amazing summer!

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release, 'Cruel World'?

The song is about finding your person in a world full of hate and self absorption.

How was the recording and writing process?

Writing the song took me a while. I wrote the first half when I met my partner but then took a break from music. We then finished the song together about 1,5 years later and recorded it in our home studio. I love recording songs. It's my favourite thing to do.

Where did you find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

The inspiration really came from falling in love in a world so focused on war and exploitation.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

No, but hopefully next year!

What else is happening next in your world?

I started a new band and we're currently writing an album!



Non Talkers



The inspiration for "Weight of Doubt" came from those moments when you're chasing a dream or working toward a goal, and suddenly self-doubt creeps in. We wanted to capture that universal feeling, the heaviness of questioning yourself, but also the strength that comes from pushing through it. The lyrics are about resilience, trusting the journey, and finding hope even in uncertainty.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

Yes! We're currently on our Weight of Doubt acoustic theatre tour in Portugal, with a couple more shows lined up for this year. After that, our focus will be on preparing for the European tour in 2026, which will take us to Spain, Belgium and Germany.

What else is happening next in your world?

Besides finishing our acoustic theatre tour in Portugal, we're spending the rest of the year preparing for the Weight of Doubt European tour in 2026. We're also writing and testing new songs live, which we'll be releasing as singles every few months. Little by little, these tracks will grow into our next full album. It's an exciting chapter where performing, creating, and connecting with audiences all come together.

Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Hi, thank you so much for having us! We've been doing really well, busy with our Weight of Doubt tour and excited about releasing new music.

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

Our most recent release, "Weight of Doubt," is about resilience, holding on to your dreams and goals even when uncertainty or self-doubt tries to weigh you down. The title reflects that heaviness we all feel at times, but the song is about pushing through and finding strength in the struggle.

How was the recording and writing process?

The writing of "Weight of Doubt" came together very naturally. I (Marco) usually keep riffs and melodies aside for later, and this song actually started from one of those ideas. When I invited Alex Carvalho, the pianist who plays with us, to join the process, the initial riff ended up taking us in a completely different direction. We loved the vibe so much that we built the whole song around it and the original riff didn't even make it into the track.

The recording process was focused on capturing that balance between intimacy and energy. We wanted the arrangement to grow organically, starting from a stripped-down base and building into something powerful and uplifting. It was about making sure the production carried the same emotional weight as the lyrics.

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

Joe Buchanan



Photo credit: Steven Irwin Jr

Hi Joe, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Thanks a bunch and wow that's a tough question to answer. It's great from a music standpoint and at the same time, it's been a tough year out there in the world.

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release, 'Heaven & Earth'?

We have this phrase in Hebrew, "B'tzelem Elohim" or "made in the image of God". I'm a religious guy and believe that every one of us, no matter what we believe, are that link between Heaven & Earth, like a thread tying the divine to the earthly. By doing good, we put more good into the world. This life is a gift and we have to take great care of that gift and each other. This album is a collection of tunes that echo both a connection to the Divine and to the human experience.

How was the recording and writing process?

It was fantastic! This is my 3rd studio album and the first time stepping fully into the Producer's chair. We put a tremendous band

together for this and everything was handled right here in beautiful Houston, TX at Wire Road Studios. People hear my songs and ask why I chose to make country music and infuse it with our beliefs. I love country music and it's what I grew up on. Country, at its best, is about people and their stories. We have a lot of stories to tell and Judaism helped me get back into my life. None of these songs are parody or satire and I couldn't be prouder of what this team put together.

Where did you find the inspiration for the songs and lyrics?

I have always loved living in Texas. It's where I first learned how to pray, it's where I met my amazing wife, and it's where we raised our wonderful son. I love the land, the people, and the culture. When I think back on the good memories of my youth, it was always in a river or out in the country. I also converted to Judaism 11 years ago and that has done so much healing for me, which is why I started writing music in the first place. I wanted an album that accurately reflected both of those things.

Why does 'My Beloved' stand out so much to you, and what can you tell us about the meaning behind the track?

The tune is inspired by "Ani l'dodi v' dodi li" or "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" from the Song of Songs. My wife and I are celebrating 26 years of marriage this year and we still dance anywhere you'll let us. It's been a life with a lot of struggles but it's been beautiful and I'm thankful every day that I found my dance partner. My Beloved is a classic country love song about finding that partner to dance through your days with.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

Yes, indeed! I spend about 3 weekends a month as a touring artist in residence for Jewish communities and also play festivals, events, and other venues. We just updated our site with tour dates and have some international dates in the UK and Israel this year.

What else is happening next in your world?

On the music front, we're completely focused on what's next for this album and how we can do some good with it. I just got accepted into the Recording Academy and currently working with other Jewish artists to create the first Jewish Music category at the Grammy's. On the home front, April and I are always working on just spending more time together. It's our favorite thing to do.

Pavlov's Dog



We're very happy to have some time today with nigh legendary and acclaimed Prog-Rock legends, Pavlov's Dog; greetings and salutations gentlemen and thanks for carving time from a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the proverbial Q&A mosh-pit, could you all say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?

Hi, I am David Suhrkamp. The singer/ songwriter in Pavlov's dog. I started the band a half century ago. It has been my life's work

Hi, I'm Abbie Steiling, violinist and backup vocalist with Pavlov's Dog since 2008.

Hello, I'm Rick Steiling on bass and backup vocals. My first tour with the band reaches back to 2009.

Major kudos and accolades on your eagerly-anticipated new LP *Wonderlust* which is set to light up record charts and put a smile on listener's faces across the ever-loving globe when it premieres this October 3! David, can you give readers the VH1-Behind the Music origin story of this stunning new album?

There is not a lot of mystery to the recording of *Wonderlust* it simply comes down to having composed a bunch of songs we liked. So went into Red Pill studios and cut it fairly quickly.

Sara, aside from the band members of Pavlov's Dog itself, can you shine a spotlight for readers on the other amazing musical alchemists who contributed their magnificent wares to the creation of the *Wonderlust* LP?

The core of Pavlov's dog (David, Sara, Mark, Rick and Abbie) has been stable for most of two decades. Mark Maher joined nearly 10 years ago. Steve Bunck over five years. Brian Clarke, Steve Barron, and the string quartet are all dear friends. Our daughter Saylor always contributes her own magic to our recording.

Abbie, your string arrangements on the upcoming *Wonderlust* album are truly a thing of beauty and quite rightly out-of-this-world; congratulations! How did you arrive at the arrangements for the new LP? Was there rhyme and reason, was it always planned this way, or did it all come about a little more organically than all of that?

Thank you so much! Writing for strings in this way is something I greatly enjoy. Since the songs were fully formed when I began, I could shape the arrangements around a strong foundation. In some places, the role of the strings was very

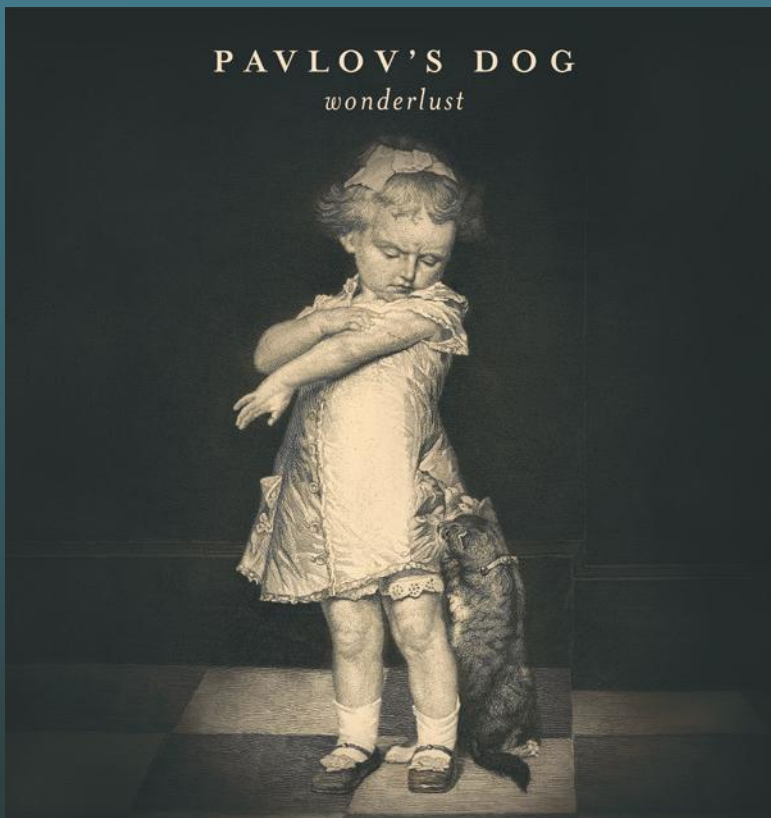
clear—whether it was heightening the drama with texture, reinforcing a hook, or creating a lush backdrop for a solo. There are also melodic ideas throughout the string parts that I may have improvised in a live setting but on the record was able to fully realize them through the fullness of the string ensemble sound. When writing for a string ensemble there is always a level of meticulous planning and care to the voicings, bowings, articulations, and dynamic approach to achieve a unified sound and to meet the expectations of fantastic studio musicians.

Rick, who did the producing honors on the new *Wonderlust* LP and what did the in-studio collaboration between artists and producer look like while fashioning and shaping the LP?

the best show we can everytime. Touring and traveling has been a passion of mine since I was young. I have met so many incredible people, so many people that were "fans" that are now near dear friends of mine that I get to see as we tour.

Sara, we're big fans of all eleven drop-the-mic tunes on the upcoming *Wonderlust* LP, but we're particularly fond of the tune *Another Blood Moon* which feels like a true revelation! What's the scoop on this gem of a ditty and how it came into being?

David is always composing and *Blood Moon* is a wonderful example of his singular vision he just conceived it on one evening on his guild acoustic guitar and jotted it down.



Abbie, speaking of songs off the upcoming *Wonderlust* album we can't get enough of, we're particularly obsessed with *Calling Sigfried* which you penned, and which really captures that classic 'prog' sound that Pavlov's Dog is celebrated for; congrats! What inspired this fully-realized modern day evergreen?

I set out to compose a deeply prog-inspired, epic instrumental for the band—something that could echo the magnitude of *Preludin*, the iconic piece written by Pavlov's Dog's original violinist, Sigfried Carver. Although I didn't get to know him before he passed, his music and sound have been such a significant part of my professional life that I felt compelled to honor his memory through this song. The lineup of the band including Phil Ring, Mark Maher, Steve Bunck, Rick Steiling and of course David Suhrkamp is an inspiring group of musicians with incredible skills which played a huge role in shaping the writing of the song.

Rick, any final thoughts you might like to leave us with regarding Pavlov's Dog exciting new LP *Wonderlust*?

I'm thrilled to be a part of *Wonderlust*! It's been an incredible journey through the creative process, and now to finally share it with the world is so rewarding. It's an honor to contribute to Pavlov's Dog's prog-rock legacy and this album feels like a true continuation of that story while also exploring fresh, new territory. I genuinely feel this is some of our best work, both creatively and in terms of production. I look forward to performing these songs live and sharing the joy and connection they bring to audiences.

David has always had a wonderful way of letting the band members shine, truly valuing each of our strengths, expertise, and creative ideas. Though the official producing credits list a small group, the process of shaping *Wonderlust* was a journey shared.

David, in the wake of the October 3 release of the *Wonderlust* album, can music aficionados look forward to catching Pavlov's Dog on the touring/performing circuit?

We have been touring steadily for over twenty years. In fact, we're performing in Australia in two weeks. Then we head to Europe for more shows. In 2026 we already have fall shows booked in the UK, and working on our first US tour in decades. There will be so many opportunities to come see us. We are all passionate about making and playing our music. It is not about the money, it never has been. It has always been about performing our stories for our fans and giving



Paul Archer



Photo credit: Dan Donovan

Hi, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Hi VENTS, an honour and a pleasure to meet you! I have been great thanks! I am busy working with the wonderful team at Liberty Music PR in the release of my new album called "Art" and my most recent single "Fear Destroyer". This album is a first for me in that it is my first solo album and it features my visual (abstract expressionist art) as well as my sonic art. We've been playing some launch dates over home in Ireland and recording some videos with the brilliant album designer Mark Case and the video for Fear Destroyer was shot by Mark and directed and put together by the brilliant Marry Waterson!

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

Fear Destroyer is written in response to how my journey is changing and has moved towards real, tangible freedom from anxiety and fear to faith and belief in a loving higher power which identifies deeply with each of us and wants to heal, nurture, protect and liberate us from fear by means of profound love.

This love permeates the sub atomic fabric of everything beyond even the quantum level. This song encapsulates my message to the world of the importance in the belief of one divine Creator who alleviates suffering and offers peace and love.

This song is a joyous explosion of light, love and liberation and becoming spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally whole.

For me personally I have a personal relationship with the Logos / Jesus Christ and this is incredibly relevant now more than ever for me.

How was the recording and writing process?

This single and the whole of Side A of the new album were recorded at the beautiful Nave Studios in Leeds with the incredibly talented genius producer Mr. Andy Hawkins. We went to Leeds for a few days last year and it was incredibly fulfilling and productive!

The Nave is a fabulous studio and a beautiful place to work and record. Of all the many studios I've ever been in The Nave is and continues to be my all time favourite studio.

Side B was recorded with another couple of sonic geniuses the brilliant Mr. Rick Bleakley and Mr. Matt McIvor at their studios in Belfast and the album features Nathan Connolly of Snow Patrol, Terri Hooley (Undertones / Teenage Kicks) and Jim Lockhart (of 70's folk rockers Horslips).

Where did you find the inspiration for the songs and lyrics?

My sources of inspiration vary between the internal journey of mind, soul and body and spirit. Other inspirations would include my passion for good mental health and, in particular the power and importance of the mental health Personal Recovery movement. Family and friends would also be strong features in my writing and provide me with constant inspiration in so many ways. Compassion, empathy and empowerment and the transforming potential of love are also strong themes for me.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

Our next show will be at The American Wine Bar in Belfast on 6th September 2025 (2 to 5pm) where I will also be exhibiting and talking about my abstract expressionist art.

What else is happening next in your world?

We are currently booking new dates and I will be exhibiting further. I am also really excited to be going back to The Nave Studios in Leeds in November 2025 to start recording for new releases with Andy Hawkins.

All I can say at this stage is that there will be some exciting concerts which will be filled with both visual and sonic art!

I Am Untitled

Hi Jason, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Currently living on the road full time, touring and loving it!

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release, 'You Are Good'?

I lost 80% of my tongue to stage 4 cancer and was told I'd never sing again. When fighting for my life in the hospital, my wife began singing over me in the room. First, she sang my favorite hymn "Come Thou Fount" but forget the lyrics, so she made up her own lyrics using the same melody. She sang "You are good, God, you are good" over and over until I fell asleep. Years later, once I was declared cancer free, I took the song she sang over me and created this remix!

How was the recording and writing process?

Fast, I think I had so much pent up in me after years of fight cancer, that it just came pouring out.

Where did you find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

My story and my wife's story. We just tell it like it is and hope others can relate.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

We have been on the road for over 600 says, this is month 21 with at least 2 more years to go!

What else is happening next in your world?

We are dropping new singles and music videos every 2 weeks until our new album NO TURNING BACK premieres in the new year with an all new tour: The NO TURNING BACK Tour.





STONE SEA

Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Hey! All good, thanks. It's been quite an exciting time actually — we've been releasing new music from our upcoming album *Ad Astra* and playing shows around Andalusia. The new lineup here in Spain feels solid, and the energy is great.

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

Our latest release is the single *Age of Tears*. The song is about pain, growth, and acceptance — and how they're all part of the same process. The same goes for the album we're releasing in January. *Ad Astra* as a whole is about transformation — falling, evolving, transcending.

How was the recording and writing process?

The songs were written over several years — seven, to be exact — all in Ireland. A whole cycle, as some would say (laughs), which kind of fits the album's concept. I recorded them with Connor Middleton, our previous drummer, during two intense weeks in Dublin before moving to Spain. It

was fast, a little raw, and honest, but I think the results came out great!

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

Musically, it usually comes when my mind is free of thoughts (which, these days, is particularly hard). Lyrically, it's born from introspection — digesting emotions and translating them through metaphors about time, nature, and transformation. There's always a duality in Stone Sea songs — the light and the dark, the pain and the release. *Age of Tears* came out almost like vomiting words out; I didn't fully understand what it meant for a while, although I felt a deep underlying connection to it. In fairness, a year or two after writing the lyrics, I asked chatgpt to give it a try interpreting them and I got quite impressed with its explanation, because it matches very much what I felt through that period of my life — letting a big dream go, bending expectations, aging, maturing and coming out of it stronger.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

Yes! We've been playing regularly across southern Spain — Málaga, Granada, Estepona — and plan to expand into other

European cities in 2026. Right now, we're focused on bringing *Ad Astra* to life on stage, and a live studio session is also in the works.

What else is happening next in your world?

We're continuing the rollout of *Ad Astra*, releasing one song per month until the full album drops in January. The singles *Alien* and *Age of Tears* are already out, and there's more to come. Beyond that, we're writing new material and planning for festivals next summer. Always moving forward, like the sea (laughs).



facebook.com/stoneseaband



[@stoneaseaband](https://www.instagram.com/stoneseaband)



Stone Sea on Spotify



Stone Sea Official



stonesea.bandcamp.com



Don't Tell John



Hey! Welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Amazing, we've been playing, writing and connecting with our fans. How have YOU been?

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release, 'Again'?

Again is about the struggle to avoid those traps we all get into in relationships... where you trust someone because they earnestly mean to change, you know they aren't trying to hurt you...but then you realize that they can't help it and it happens again...sad but true that happens to so many people.

How was the recording and writing process?

The writing process was great, it was one of our first songs ever...where Mark had some music and sketched out the idea and some lyrics for the track and then at a family vacation Mark and Veronica stole away to just play around and the thing jumped off of the page! It was the first song we ever played live as a band for an audience. It's special to us.

Recording was like our other stuff, done in the studio we built during the pandemic. Because we have that studio, it allows us to take our time and really get what we want from a track. So we took some time with it... obviously! lol.

Where did you find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

We write a lot about loss, addiction, the cycle of relationships and how unhealthy they can be, It's not a real life story, but it's an amalgamation of past experiences and imagined ones.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

We're going to do some short stints across different parts of the country this year. We're hoping for Austin in March ;) then the Pacific Northwest in the spring, southern California closer to summer. Then we'll see where the festivals take us!

What else is happening next in your world?

We're planning another record for 2026, much of the writing is done. Need to flesh out a few more tracks and get back into the recording mode. Probably start releasing tracks from that album in the next few months!

'Again' is available to stream right now!



facebook.com/stoneseaband



[@donttell_john](https://www.instagram.com/donttell_john)



[Don't Tell John on Spotify](https://open.spotify.com/album/4uU0tUj0aYUgWUj0aYUgWU)



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[Don't Tell John](https://music.apple.com/album/Don't-Tell-John)

LITTLE KING



Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Hey there, Vents. Always a pleasure to speak with you, and know that we really appreciate your support and ears throughout the years (See...already rhyming!)

We've been GREAT. Busy. New album, new lineup, some moving of domiciles (again), and just a bunch of life stuff happening that is good, challenging, exhausting, and exhilarating, all at the same time. Personally, my son is off to college and I have moved in with my partner, the beautiful and talented Ms. Jessie James (she got her own song on the new album.) Also did some traveling this summer to Spain and Morocco, and that was incredible and inspiring. I had just finished the tracking of the new album and decided to take my son away for a couple weeks to let the music breathe without me hearing it. Definitely came home refreshed and ready to mix.

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

I owned a corporate Team Building company until January of 2024 when I sold my share. I was the founder and CEO, and it was a great 13 year run, but I wanted to do something else and my partner was happy to buy me out. I did NOT get rich, but it did allow me a

little time to recalibrate and focus on family and music, and eventually I started another company. Old habits die hard.

My friend Arielle Alelunas and I met on the video shoot for the "Bombs Away" production at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson in mid-2021. We hit it off as friends and stayed in touch for the last 4 or so years. Arielle is an immensely talented videographer and a great human being, so I kept it in the back of my mind that we might want to work together again on a broader level.

My mom turned 80 last year, and for her birthday, my son and I decided to interview her. She is a pretty private person, but she really opened up for her video memoir. We learned A LOT. As we were finishing, the light bulb just kind of went off. I had that "A-HA!" moment...what a great business this might make! I called Arielle and she said something to the effect of "I have had that idea for YEARS." So...okay, let's do it together. And so we did and we are.

The new company is called LivingLens Memoirs. I have spoken to a ton of Arizonans in the last year, and their stories are amazing and unique, and they always move me. The lenses they see the world through are filtered by experience - work, spouses, children, world events, and on and on. We

are ALL a product of this phenomenon, of course. We can have very different views of the same events because of how we are "jaded," in a sense. Listen to two people tell the same story about an event that they both witnessed, and they oftentimes have very different memories.

It's been 4 years since I recorded our last full-length album, Amuse De Q. We did release a couple singles in 2023, "Silver Tongue" and "Amber Waves (GoodBye)," but after focusing on live performance for the past couple years, it was clear that the time had come to make a new record. Because I am always inspired by my current chaos, the material was right in front of me. "Lente Viviente" is the Spanish translation for "Living Lens," and thus the album is called Lente Viviente. The 7 songs are my interpretation of the many filters and perspectives we bring to the table...be it nostalgia, cultural and personal identity, drugs and homelessness, love and lust, and finally, how we choose to live out our years.

How was the recording and writing process?

As you know, I write all the music first and rehearse and edit until my fingers literally bleed. Then I do it again and again! But this time, I switched up the lineup of Little King, and that changed things in my process a

bit. For starters, our new bass player is David Hamilton, who might be the best bass player in the world. Seriously. Absolute monster. He arranged cello and violin parts for our last couple records, and so he also contributes cello to a couple songs on *Lente Viviente*. Like most of our lineup throughout history, Dave is from El Paso. He and I are of similar age, and we just get along so well. He's a dear friend and an f'ing genius, so I feel lucky to have him as a part of Little King. The bass stands out on this record in a way it never has before, thanks to his skill and my pushing him to play WHATEVER HE WANTED! Seriously..."Go for it, Dave" was uttered more than once.

Eddy Garcia has been the drummer (and engineer) since 2007 when we recorded the *Legacy of Fools* album (and he also engineered *Virus Divine* in 2004, which was then mixed by Terry Brown of Rush fame.) Ed is one of my best friends - a brother, really - and we had started the process of making the new record early this year. But, for whatever reason, I wasn't feeling the energy like I used to. It felt like it was time for a change, and if that was gonna happen, the only logical thing was to find a drummer locally in Tucson who I could rehearse with prior to recording. That was not always the process with Ed, so I wanted to try that out and see if the songs might take a different turn with some intense rehearsal prior to recording.

I met Tony Bojorquez on a message board. He was looking for something interesting, and when we met, it was instant chemistry. He's an incredibly talented drummer and an even nicer person. And... what a resume! I'll let him speak to that, but from Red Rocks to professional busking in the NYC subways, Tony has done it all. He's from Mexico and still lives in the San Carlos/Guaymas area, but his sister and her family are here in Tucson, so he's here often. We started rehearsing in like March or April of this year, and before long, he was MASTERING these songs. I am thrilled with his performances, and even more excited to play live with him and Dave.

We also recorded in Tucson with Ricky Wascher at Cimamusic. His studio is great...informal, packed with fun gear, and he is another great and experienced dude. He pushed me when needed, particularly with vocal harmonies. I've stayed away from harmonizing too much in the past because the guys in my band really weren't comfortable singing and playing LK songs live (it is HARD, trust me). But Dave and Tony both sing beautifully, and so I went for it. My voice is in the best place it's ever been, and I think this record shows that confidence. Big props to Ricky for that!

The rest of the team was a repeat from the past 5 years with Daniel Salcido at Command Space Audio in LA mixing (another dear friend and LK teammate who I trust implicitly) and mastered by the irrepressible legend Maor Appelbaum, also in LA. The end result? A record we are all very proud of.

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

I spoke a little bit about the lyrics, but there are some specifics that I can get into with each song.

Catch and Release - This song was born last year when I went fly fishing with my dad, Len (the Living "Len"s, right?) We spent many years fishing in Montana and Northern California back in my youth, and those are formative memories that I still hold dear. Lots of "lens" references throughout...find the Easter Eggs!

Dawn Villa - I grew up in a neighborhood of the same name just outside of Seattle, WA. I STILL have friends who I speak to weekly almost 50 years later, which is crazy. And not just 1 or 2...there are like 15 of us who are still in touch. It was a fun and crazy and relatively benign upbringing...until it wasn't. This song is another memory dive into the good times and the transition into adulthood. I am well-aware that most of the lyrics will only make sense to those 15 people!

Who's Illegal? - So...I work in downtown Tucson every day. My studio is smack dab in the roughest part of the city, and I see all of the problem with drugs, homelessness, and poverty on a daily basis. I see a lot of good, too, mind you. But it's a no-joke area of the USA that is in my face. Also, it's in the Presidio district, which has changed hands from Spain to Mexico to US and was inhabited by the local native tribes long before that. I am struck by the juxtaposition of these things, and this song speaks to that. "Tell me...who's illegal?" Our current political climate is a big part of this song, too.

Kindness for Weakness - Thats me! I try to be kind, always. It's kinda like my calling card. But DO NOT cross the line. The Other Guy isn't so fun for any of us.

Sweet Jessie James - My love. Been a long road...I'm honestly still pinching myself. She's the best woman I've ever known and I am beyond grateful. So... don't F it up, Ryan.

Pass Through Filters - I have some experience with the devastation of drugs and mental illness. I live with people affected

by it every day by association, avocation, or past history. It's in all of our families, like it or not. But it is particularly devastating to the homeless population around my little "Spot on Pennington." This song explores that filter in detail.

The Living Lens - What are you DOING with your time? I choose love, joy, challenges, and productivity. With a healthy dose of gratitude and perspective, I might add. How do we pass the days? We can't have them back, and they are increasingly precious the older we get. I understand that now in the face of kids leaving home and aging parents with health issues. I love this song, by the way. All of them, really!

Will you be hitting the road this year? What else is happening next in your world?

The plan is to play a few shows in the Southwest this year and then hit up festivals next year. I love Europe and Little King does so well over there. We owe it to ourselves and to our fans to show up and rock their faces! I haven't had the pleasure just yet, so that budget list item is waiting for us. I can't imagine how I will make it work financially, but that's been the story since Day 1, and we've always found a way to make it work.

Our new album is Little King's finest work. Zero doubt, zero debate. So, I am currently hashing out my parts in the woodshed. These songs are HARD to play and sing at the same time (did I already say that?), and I will not play a note in front of anyone until they're close to perfect. I am NOT close at this date, but there is no substitute for hard work and perseverance. I guess that's probably the story of our last 28 years, really. I am a willful Mofo, and that won't change. The live lens is firmly in focus...and we can't wait to share it with our old and new fans.



COLLABORATIONS



Hi, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Thank you, I am doing great and we are excited about our release "You Gotta Know" it has been getting very good reviews and we have over 200,000 views on YouTube of the Video and over 27,000 Spotify streams.

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

The Title "You Gotta Know" came to us when we were recording the Vocals in the studio. When I put the framework for the song together I told MY Co-Writer Anais Preller to write a song questioning why things are the way they are and what can we do to change them for the better.

How was the recording and writing process?

All Collaborations songs are done the same way. I come up with a framework for the song this includes a Melody line, a hook (Chorus), a rhythm guitar track and an overall theme for what I think the song should be about. I then I go to my co-writer(s) to complete the lyrics and at the same time I send it to my Arranger (Matt Oestreicher) to write out all the charts. Once all of that is complete we get the band together including our background Choir to come into the studio and record the song

Where did you find the inspiration for the songs and lyrics?

I find it in everyday life situations. If you look around there is a lot of reasons to get people to think about how they can do better. We try to write uplifting, inspirational songs to do just that.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

We do not perform live that often. We are more of a project than a traditional band with end product being fully orchestrated songs each with a meaning behind them.

What else is happening next in your world?

We are working on a couple of more releases. One being a Holiday song. We are working on getting our music into TV/FILM. In keeping with our project themes one of the things we do is donate all after expenses money to local charities.

