

Capital Sounds

Musical happenings in and around the Capital City

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By Ed DuFresne

Greetings, live music fans. This week appears to be the calm before the storm. While there is not a whole heckuva lot going on this weekend outside



of Montpeuliar, the coming weeks will bring a plethora of events as mud season gives way to full-on spring (which I think is happening now as it feels more like summer already). Toward the end of the column, I'll summarize a few upcoming events so those of you that think ahead can mark them on your calendars.

As for this weekend, tonight up at The Black Door on Main Street, local soul-folk band Sara Grace and the Suits takes the third-floor stage. The band has developed a loyal following as people recognize Sara's great songwriting and percussive guitar style, Andy Suits' rock-solid rhythms and the band's tasty cover renditions of favorites such as "Dear Prudence." Sara has soul to burn, and in this project she really shines. Catch it starting at 9:30. The Saturday night show at the Door cancelled and the replacement was not announced by press time, but check their Web site (www.blackdoorvt.com) or the board out front to see if they have a last minute surprise in store.

Around the corner at Langdon Street Café tonight, a very special show happens when Fuzz and Carrie's Caravan of Thieves comes to the smallest state capital in the U.S. of A. Fuzz originally made a name for himself as an electric player as guitarist for Deep Banana Blackout and The Tom Tom Club (The Talking Heads minus David Byrne). That's quite the resume, and this latest project with wife Carrie is a departure from his playing with those bands as this is an acoustic act, born out of Rolla, the first band the husband-and-wife duo formed together. Caravan of Thieves has a decidedly Gypsy-swing-pop feel to it, but the real strength here lies in Fuzz's incredible guitar prowess and the beautiful vocal harmonies, borne of the undeniable romantic chemistry the duo shares. This is bound to be one sweet show starting at 9 p.m., and it's for donations – can't beat that deal with a stick.

Tomorrow night at LSC, one of my favorite bands, which has been making the rounds of our fair capital, returns. Rusty Belle, an enigmatic foursome out of Amherst, Mass., has been building a steady following for their whimsical tunes, excellent musicianship and great brother-sister vocal harmonies. The band augments their multi-instrumental approach with a variety of junk instruments, making for a wholly original new-folk sound. There's quite a bit of humor as well, with songs about genetic male-pattern baldness, mustaches, being sleazy and the love certain animals have for their symbiotic parasites. They also have one of the best accordion players ever. This band is so endearing, you'll want to take them all home with you. Catch something new starting at 9 p.m. for the usual donations.

And, on Sunday on the corner of Elm and Langdon, an excellent weekend of music wraps

up with Jason Wilbur, guitarist for John Prine's band (which plays at the Flynn Center in Burlington Saturday). Though not as well-known as his iconographic bandleader, or others he's played lead guitar for (including Greg Brown, Hank Ketchum, Todd Snider and Iris DeMent), the guy's got quite the solo career himself, playing music in the vein of his cohorts. He'll wind up the Mud Season Concert Series starting at 3 p.m. Who knows, maybe the man himself will show up if he's got the day off (one can dream ...). Later on Sunday, The Moroz-Harvey-Santor Trio plays some of the best jazz the state has to offer starting at 7 p.m., once again all for donations.

Up the road in Morrisville tonight, The Eames Brothers Band bring their bluesy funk to The Bees Knees on Lower Main. A Vermont institution at this point, the Bros have been a local favorite for years and are always a good time. Tomorrow night, The North Star Amblers bring their folk-abilly sound to the diminutive café-cum-venue. Both shows start off at 7:30 – unlike its desert counterpart, Mo-Vegas goes to bed early.

On Wednesday, The Prodigal String Band and their gritty old-time sound come to the Langdon Street Café. The band's washtub bassist is Jason Gerish, one of the capital city's favorite bartenders, who incidentally just became a father last Sunday. Come on down and congratulate him starting at 8 p.m.-ish.

On Thursday night, Vermont percussionist Steve Ferraris brings Dr. Gam, featuring a couple of Italian dudes up to The Black Door for a night of reggae music – not sure how "Irie" it will be, but you can expect the musicianship to be topnotch starting at 8:30. Around the corner at LSC, The Stereofidelics from the musical hotbed of Asheville, N.C., bring their infectious and energetic indie jazz rock to town starting at 8 p.m.

As stated in the beginning of the column, May has lots to offer. Here are some things you may want to mark on your calendar so you don't get carried away in the garden and miss a great show"

The Old Meeting House in East Montpelier Center kicks off its spring/summer programming on Friday, May 9, with Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas. Fraser is one of the most respected Scottish fiddlers in the world, and the Juilliard-schooled Haas is a topnotch cellist. The unlikely pairing returns the cello to its historical role at the rhythmic heart of Scottish dance music. On Friday, May 16, Grammy Award-winning acoustic guitarist Pat Donohue plays the OMH. The guy made his name with the "Prairie Home Companion" house band, and has been called by none other than Chet Atkins "one of the greatest finger pickers in the world today." Both shows start at 7:30 and tickets are available at Bear Pond Books in Montpelier, or online at www.oldmeetinghouse.org/omham events.htm.

From the shores of Nova Scotia comes the musicians and step-dancers that comprise Grand Derangement, who will play the Chandler Music Hall in Randolph on Friday, May 2. The band fuses Cajun and Irish rhythms with traditional Acadian music, jazz and rock to forge their unique sound. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets and more info can be had at www.chandler-arts.org.

Until next week, when there is more live music happening, and flowers are pokin' through the recently thawed ground, enjoy the weather and support your local live music scene!