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VOLUME 12 ISSUE 11

JUNE 2018

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ATTENTION ALL JEEP AND TRAGICALLY HIP FANS

MAPLE STOCK
JULY 21 2018

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North Country

KIDS
EXPO

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SATURDAY AUGUST 4TH, 2018



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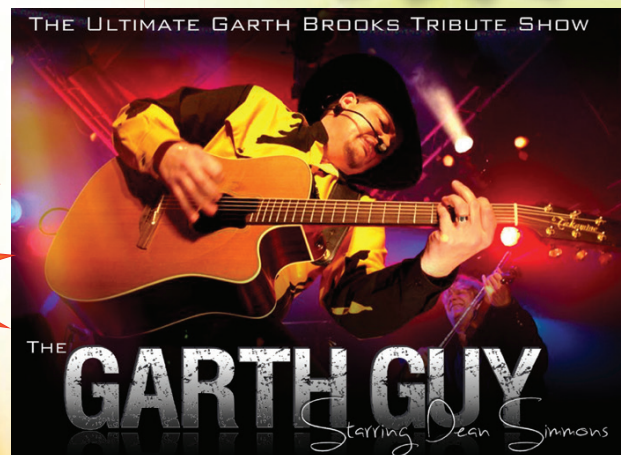
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- Little Women on Masterpiece Marathon - 6/3 - 2pm
- Forever Painless w/ Miranda Esmonde-White - 6/4 - 1:30pm
- Celtic Gold: An Irish Song & Dance Journey - 6/4 - 9pm
- Easy Yoga for Diabetes - 6/5 - 1pm
- Johnny Cash: Folsom Prison Blues - 6/5 - 7:30pm
- Brain Secrets - 6/6 - 1:30pm
- Suze Orman's Financial Solutions for You - 6/7 - 1:30pm
- Fleetwood Mac: Dance - 6/7 - 7:30pm
- Rick Steves Guide to Cuba - 6/8 - 1:30pm
- Rick Steves Festive Europe - 6/8 - 2:30pm
- Endeavour Season 4 on Masterpiece Marathon - 6/10 - 4pm
- * MASTERPIECE MYSTERY MARATHON featuring Edward Gorey Pledge Premiums!

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BREAKING GROUND

BY VALERIE HARRINGTON

Hard ground
 Needs breaking
 Seeds pressing
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 Roots stretching
 Breaking ground
 Sprouting anew
 Growing strong
 Reaching high
 Sun shining
 Rain falling
 Ground breaking

Life giving
 Strengthening vines
 Plants growing
 Flower blooming
 Fruit bearing
 Nature's mixture
 Sweet taste
 Sour flavor
 Ground broken
 Fruits pressed
 Soul's nourishment



POETRY

GATHERING OF FRIENDS

BY LUCIA JOHNSON

When we gather with our friends,
 At a local meeting place,
 We enjoy the friendship of-
 Many a happy face.

There are times when we chat
 About frivolous things.
 And other times we talk about,
 The news that our day brings.

Or maybe just to have a drink,
 And sing a happy song.
 We always ask the others,
 If they want to sing along.

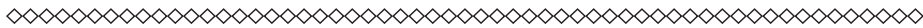
People where we congregate,
 Sometimes pass by and say,

We know you are enjoying yourselves,
 And you've made our day.

I do hope this brings a smile,
 To the gentleman who questioned why,
 I didn't write a poem about
 Our times, and why he says goodbye.

He only stays to join in the fun
 For a brief minute or two.
 Why not stick around
 As the rest of us do?

So anyway, here's the poem,
 Does it fill the spot
 That you had wondered why I hadn't
 Done it before - no I haven't forgot.



"OUR SPRINGTIME MIRROR"

BY JAMES OLIVER RYAN

The making of time and the spending
 The daily grind of life
 Our lives are full of signs and sounds
 Like moving air---unimpeded,

Nature's reflective masterpiece surrounds us
 Chasing down the signs of June---we are
 waiting for a feast
 The possibilities within us are showing
 Nature itself---is showing us it's colorful
 release
 Our springtime mirror is reflecting a part of
 us---it is glowing,

Chasing down the sounds of June
 We can hear springtime singing

A stirring song within the mind---childlike
 and loosened
 Soaring is the beauty of nature---that leaves
 us musing,

Spring in June is a flourishing month from
 Maine to Georgia
 Unfettered and free-flowing
 Spring is seeing ones self in June
 It is a discovery of knowing
 Nature is showing within itself---a part of
 us
 With signs and sounds our springtime
 mirror---implores us
 To be----adventurous

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Blacktop Mojo – Burn The Ships

---Bill Baker

This month's review is from Blacktop Mojo, a Texas band that recently played at Whistlers Tavern in Watertown, NY. Whistlers you say, must be a cover band. Blacktop Mojo is the furthest thing from a cover band as you can get. They took the stage and wowed the packed house for the entire evening. Their torrid live performance exceeded all expectations. This is a band to be reckoned with.

The band was formed in late 2012, followed by their debut *I Am* in 2014. They hit the road hard, touring with the likes of Aaron Lewis, Puddle of Mud and Drowning Pool. They have a fiery blend of post grunge, combined with southern rock and metal. The band's sound has been compared to Sound Garden/Alice in Chains meets Black Stone Cherry with a little bit of Seether thrown in. Don't be fooled, Blacktop Mojo, has a seasoned quality with a definitive sound way beyond their years.

Blacktop Mojo's latest album *Burn The Ships* showcases an extremely talented band. The cast of characters features the soulful vocals of front man Matt James, power house drummer Nathan Gillis, notable bassist Matt Curtis and the dual guitar attack of Ryan Kiefer and Kenneth Irwin. The album seamlessly

blends melody with adrenaline fueled heavy rock riffs, over the top of a rhythm section that doesn't falter. This group of musicians know how to write high caliber songs. Intelligent lyrics and great guitar hooks motivate you to listen from beginning to end. Don't ask me to pick a favorite song. There something for everyone, whether it be the heavy riffs with swagger of *Where The Wind Blows*, *End Of Days* or *Chains* to the soaring ballads of *Prodigal* and *Underneath*. A bonus track in Aerosmith's *Dream On* isn't really a cover, but a killer interpretation, which they make their own.

This is a band to keep an eye on. Blacktop Mojo's first album *I Am* was a very respectable debut. *Burn The Ships* demonstrates the progression of a great band with a consistent climb to the next level. If their next album is as good as *Burn The Ships* and they continue to wow audiences with their high octane live shows, I can't see how they cannot succeed in the music business.

Thank you, AMP Entertainment, for continuing to bring in great musical acts to the North Country.

Not for Amp Entertainment I might not have discovered Blacktop Mojo.

Check out the new Blacktop Mojo – *Burn*

The Ships. As with all my reviews - If you like, what I like, you will either end up buying the cd or streaming the band's latest project on Spotify



Photos by Stage Door Images / Bill Baker

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June 2018 / FOURTH COAST ENTERTAINMENT

Fortnite, PUBG, and Battle Royale: The Video Game Pop Culture Phenomenon of 2018

---Dr. Anthony Betrus
The Game Connoisseur

Fortnite is, without a doubt, the top video game phenomenon of 2018. It currently boasts 45 million active players, with a high of 3.4 million concurrent users, according to game developer Epic Games. Fortnite is a video game version of a "Battle Royale," which most people are familiar with from The Hunger Games books and movies. The basic principle of the game is "last man standing," whereby a group of players are put into a confined space (in Fortnite, an island), and the last person to survive the melee wins. The English term melee (disorganized close combat in battles fought at abnormally close range with little central control) dates back to the 16th century. The term melee itself is a derivative of 12th century french term meslee, or "brawl, confused fight, mixture, blend." The concept that the word embodies is much older, dating back to the time of Bread and Circuses in ancient Rome (or before), where such combat was used for entertainment.

Fortnite: Battle Royale represents a recent cultural confluence, inspired and supported by a number of books, movies, and video games, especially those from the last twenty years. It arguably started with the publication of the novel Battle Royale in 1999 by Japanese author Koushun Takami. This may have gone under the radar, were it not produced into a 2000 film of the same name. The book and film are gruesome, as middle school children are forced to fight to the death by the Japanese government. Suzanne Collins then published The Hunger Games in 2008, which largely followed the same formula: a dystopian future, an oppressive government, dream imagery, and of course the last "tribute" standing wins.

Perhaps inspired by these books, but more likely inspired by his grueling service in the New Zealand Army, Dean Hall created a mod for the ultra-realistic combat simulation-game Arma 2 in 2009 called DayZ, in which players had to survive in a zombie infestation on a small island. It was popular, both because of the unique gameplay, but also because it was unapologetically difficult, with the expectation that you will, eventually, die, and success is measured by how long you survive. Some two years later, in 2011, the building/survival game Minecraft was released, a cultural phenomenon in its own right. At this point the stage was set, and a number of things happened in 2012 that set things into motion. First, The Hunger Games



movie was released. Second, and quickly after the movie was released, a mod of Minecraft called "Minecraft Hunger Games" was released (I remember my daughter proudly showing me this at the time). Also in 2012, Brendon Greene (aka PlayerUnknown) created his own DayZ mod: Battle Royale. While this was popular, to play it you needed to purchase Arma 2 and its expansion, and then install a number of mods. This was for PC players only, yet it nonetheless developed a significant hardcore following. Over the next few years Greene continued to polish the game, and in 2017 he released PlayerUnknown's: Battlegrounds (or PUBG) for Windows, Xbox One, iOS and Android. By April, 2018, PUBG boasted an average 1.1 million concurrent players, with a peak of 2.5 million. Greene was asked to share his thoughts at the March 2018 Game Developers Conference about Epic Games copying the Battle Royale mode into their game Fortnite (which originally did not have his mode). He was diplomatic, stating that "It's great that the battle royale space is expanding and Fortnite is getting the battle royale game mode in the hands of a lot more people."

Fortnite itself, a free-to-play game, took in \$126 million in February alone (mostly from optional microtransactions), surpassing PUBG's \$103 million. In March, Fortnite took in \$223 million, and the numbers look to be growing. Arguably, one of the major contrib-

utors to its success is that it can be accessed on just about every platform available (Windows, Xbox One, PS4, iOS, MacOS), as well as the ability, if you choose, to play against players on different platforms. The game is so popular that the livestreamer Ninja is now generating \$500,000 a month playing the game. When he paired up to play with Canadian rapper, singer, and songwriter Drake on March 15, 2018, they set a new record for live Twitch viewers at 628,000. And if that wasn't enough, Epic Games has partnered with Chinese tech giant Tencent to release the game in China (no date set).

And as with every pop culture phenomenon, there will certainly be problems. Mobile phone batteries are forever on their last

legs, teachers are constantly battling their students trying to sneak in games during school hours (many schools have banned Fortnite altogether), and parents have another in a seemingly endless parade of digital distractions for their children. Workplaces are even reporting that they are experiencing decreased productivity, although numbers to support this claim are elusive. None of these problems are particularly new, it is more the size of the phenomenon that makes this significant. Problems or not, it appears that the Battle Royale genre is here to stay.

Finally, if you have not yet played any of the Battle Royale video games, and this inspires you to give it a try, I have four words for you: "Welcome to the Thunderdome."



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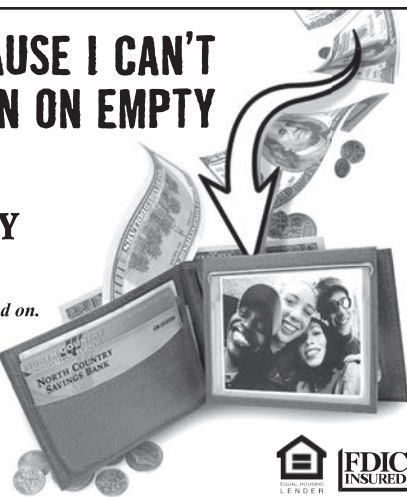


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