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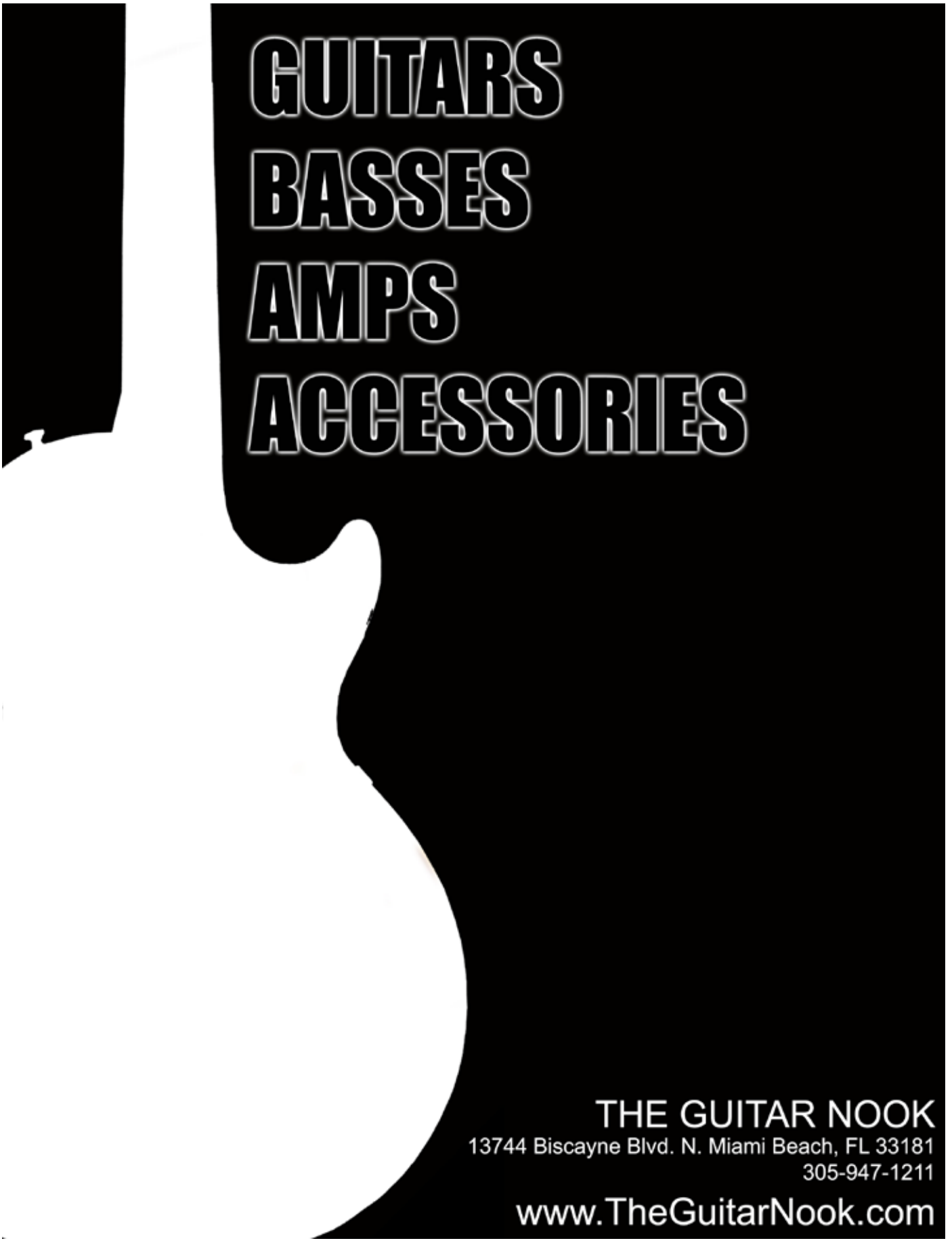

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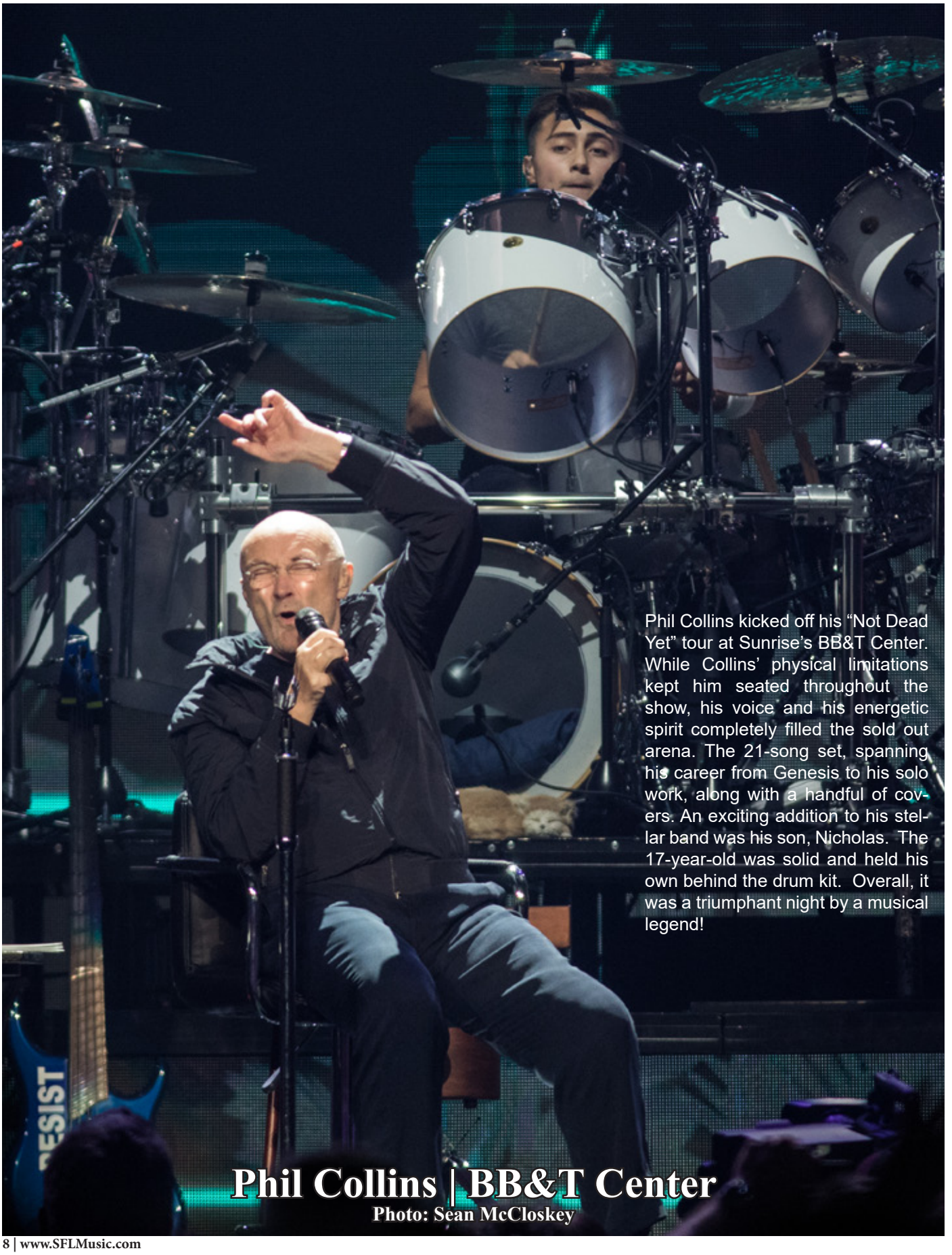

Phil Collins kicked off his “Not Dead Yet” tour at Sunrise’s BB&T Center. While Collins’ physical limitations kept him seated throughout the show, his voice and his energetic spirit completely filled the sold out arena. The 21-song set, spanning his career from Genesis to his solo work, along with a handful of covers. An exciting addition to his stellar band was his son, Nicholas. The 17-year-old was solid and held his own behind the drum kit. Overall, it was a triumphant night by a musical legend!

Phil Collins | BB&T Center

Photo: Sean McCloskey

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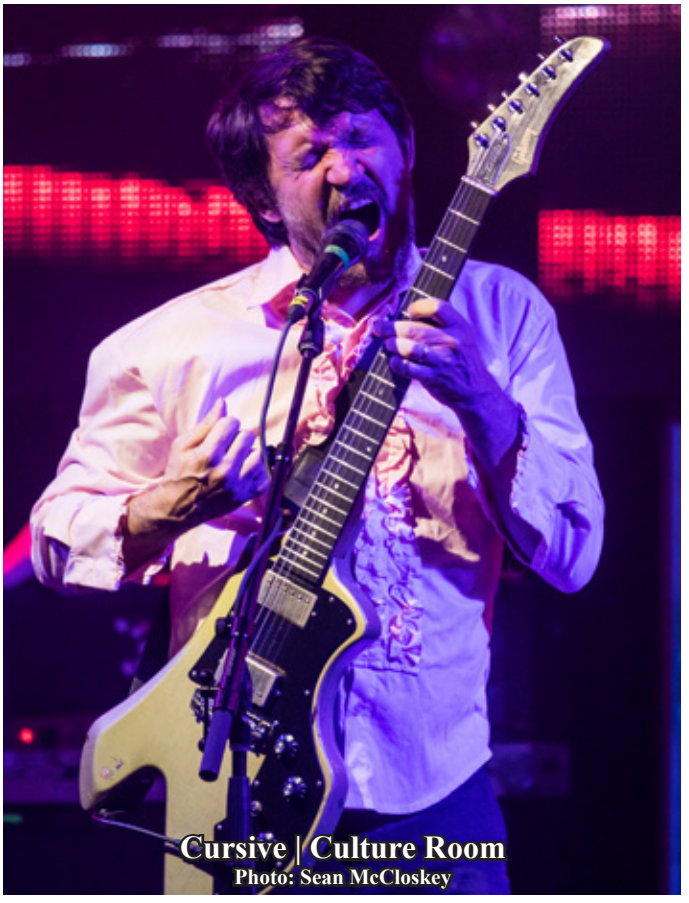

Cursive | Culture Room
Photo: Sean McCloskey

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Lady Antebellum
Darius Rucker
Russell Dickerson
Coral Sky Amphitheater

Despite that wonderful South Florida heat, thousands of people packed the Coral Sky Amphitheater in West Palm Beach, Florida to enjoy the Summer Plays On tour with co-headliners Lady Antebellum and Darius Rucker and energetic newcomer Russell Dickerson.

Russell Dickerson was a ball of energy from the moment he stepped onto the stage. He opened the show with his song "twentysomething". Around his fifth song was when I noticed the audience became truly captivated by him. He started the song off with covers of "In My Feelings", "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and then went into his song "MGNO" followed by a cover of "I Wanna to Dance With Somebody". The mix was fantastic as it allowed him to not only show off his vocal ability but also his dance moves. He entertained the crowd by doing *The Floss*, *the Shoot* and a few more current moves. His entire set was fun to watch and I enjoyed getting to become a fan of his. Dickerson ended with his first number one hit, "Yours", which was inspired by his relationship with his wife. Dickerson showed country fans that while he may be a newcomer, he is here to stay.

Darius Rucker was up next. Just like Russell Dickerson, Rucker was so full of energy and excitement. You could feel his sincerity in every song he sang and in every word he spoke. He opened his hour-long set with "Homegrown Honey" which was a nice feel-good song. Darius continued his night with songs like, "Don't Think I Don't Think About It", "If I Told You" and "Alright".

As his amazing set continued, he brought us all back to 1996 when he sang "No Diggity" by Blackstreet. His cover was very entertaining and everyone sang along. In the end, we all *liked the way he worked it*. While bringing the past to present was ex-

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citing, Darius made all the parents in the audience feel nostalgic when he sang “It Won’t Be Like This for Long”. During the song, he had a montage of photographs of him with his children, playing in the background. As I looked around, there were definitely many parents tearing up and hugging their children, who were in attendance with them.

However, some of the best moments were when Rucker sang “Let Her Cry” and “Only Wanna Be WIth You” from his Hootie & the Blowfish days. Every person in the crowd was on their feet, singing along. Who doesn’t love a little Hootie? Darius would be back later in the show to sing another fan favorite.

After singing with his band, Darius brought out Charles Kelley of Lady Antebellum to sing their single (a cover by Drivin’ N’ Cryin’) “Straight to Hell”. They had the music video playing in the background, Jason Aldean and Luke Bryan were in the video as well. Of course, no better song to end Rucker’s set with than “Wagon Wheel” (Old Crow Medicine Show, cover). Rucker’s energy and charm definitely were the best part of the night, he definitely could have headlined the show on his own.

Lady Antebellum hit the stage after a short intermission. They hit the ground running with a few high-energy songs, “You Look Good” and “Bartender”. They slowed it down a bit to sing one of their newest songs, “Heart Break”, which they did with a nice mashup of Dua Lipa’s “New Rules”. They also mashed up their song “Compass” and Diamond Rio’s “Meet in the Middle”. However, during the song “American Honey”, one the sweetest moments was had on the stage when Hillary Scott of Lady Antebellum invited her oldest “American Honey”, her 5-year-old daughter Eisele Kaye, to come on stage and say “hi”. She ended up singing the alphabet and the audience obliged and sang along.

Lady Antebellum sang all their hits, even though the stage lacked in decoration, no one seemed to mind as they were all having a wonderful time singing along to each and every song. Lady A’s cover of The Rolling Stones “Honky Tonk Woman”, had everyone out of their seats and on their feet belting out the lyrics. They continued and ended their set with “Need You Now” and “We Own the Night”.

Just when we thought the show couldn’t get any better, it did! It was encore time! The music started up and those oh so familiar chords were met with thousands of cheers from the crowd. Immediately everyone knew we were about to hear another wonderful Hootie & the Blowfish song, “Hold My Hand”. Darius Rucker joined Lady A. on stage and they all started singing. Russell Dickerson came out after and joined Hillary Scott in singing the cover of Deana Carter’s country classic “Strawberry Wine”. To end the night, Russell Dickerson, Darius Rucker and Lady Antebellum all stayed on stage to perform Lady A’s first hit “Love Don’t Live Here Anymore”. Based on the reaction of the audience, the love never went away. - Erin Mogul • Photos Sean McCloskey

Toto | Pompano Beach Amphitheater
Photo: Sean McCloskey

Nick Cave | Barclays Center
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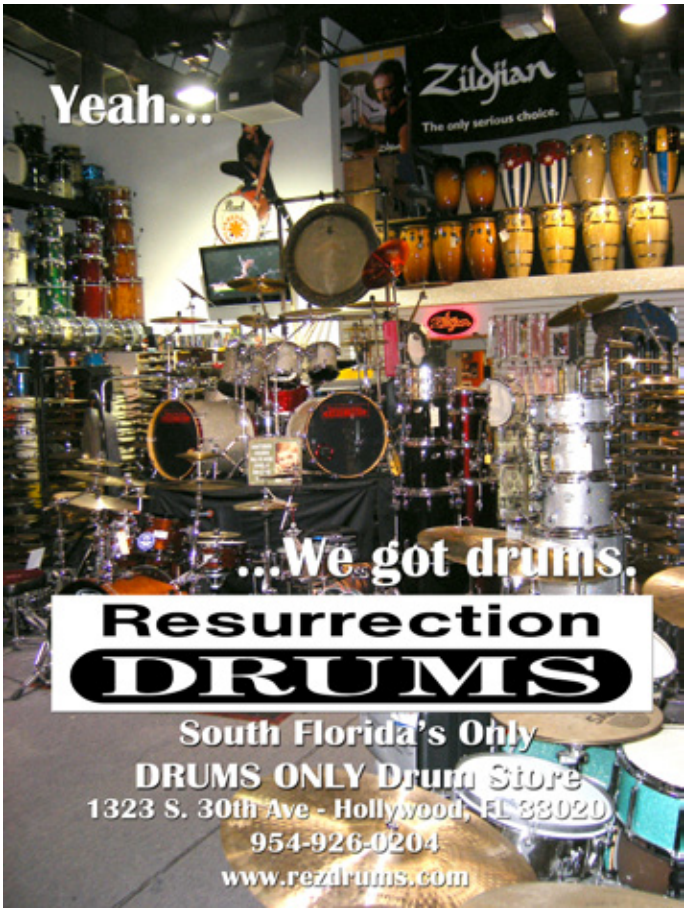

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The Floyd Experience | Mizner Park Amphitheater

By: Todd McFliker | Photos: Jay Skolnick

Known as "The Ultimate U.S. Pink Floyd Experience," the 10-piece The Floyd Experience delivered 90 minutes of brilliant music and a vivid light show to fortunate spectators at Boca Raton's Mizner Park Amphitheater on Saturday, October 13th. With a little help from sound engineer Ray Rivard of Audio Events, The Floyd Experience creates a gorgeous mix of electric, acoustic, classical and lap steel guitars, along with two keyboardists, drums, a bass, a sax and spectacular backup singers. *SFL Music* and I had the pleasure of sitting down with The Floyd Experience to discuss their history and playing such timeless gems, as well as their future just before the talented ensemble took the stage.

***SFL Music*: How did The Floyd Experience originate?**

Tommy Strowd (Guitarist): A little more than two years ago, the core members and I were just practicing for our jam band and trying to figure out what direction to go in. We came up with a Pink Floyd tribute band as an idea. None of us believed we would be able to pull it off. This was in DC Rehearsal Studios in West Palm Beach. After a year of practicing, TC (guitarist Tom Christopher) gave it a 50/50 chance of being able to do anything with it. And here we are on those odds.

Dennis Freireich (Bassist): I've been with Tommy and TC since the beginning. The three of us had a band. We were rehearsing and our wheels were spinning. We weren't getting anywhere. That's when somebody came up with the idea of a Pink Floyd tribute. TC already had some experience with the original guys in Pink Floyd. Personally, I was never a big Pink Floyd fan, but I decided to give it a shot and I really got into the music and the story of the band. Now I'm loving it.

Tom "TC" Christopher (Lead Guitarist, Vocalist, Musical Director): When Jeff (Leone on keyboards) came along, I thought we could actually pull this off because he was the Waters to the Gilmour. We've recreated the rivalry and the general distaste of each other. (*Laughs*). We are continuing that organic feeling between us. There is respect for each other, but we just don't tolerate each other very well. (*More laughs*).

Jeff Leone (Keyboardist, Guitarist, Vocalist): All that laughter is a bunch of good friends and fellow musicians having a great time before our show at Mizner. I was in a successful Pink Floyd cover band about 25 years ago called Off the Wall. But for the next 20 years, I focused on original music. Then one day, I was cruising Craigslist. I was probably looking for a motorcycle. I came across an ad for a new Pink Floyd tribute act that was looking for a singer. I was so intrigued, I called right away and talked to the Manager, Barbara Strowd. It turned out to be an excellent group of musicians striving to make the project a reality. But there was a piece of the puzzle missing. It turned out that I was an ideal fit… It has been a fabulous experience. I just hope that it goes on for a long time. We are like one big family.

Stanley Bernstein (Keyboardist): I had just gotten back from Colorado where I had attended a Brit Floyd concert at Red Rocks. I was blown away by the production. It gave me goosebumps. So I came back home a week later and got a call from our drummer Roy Fantel. He asked me if I would be interested in working with a Pink Floyd tribute band. It was really weird because I had just seen a Pink Floyd tribute band's show. I said *'Sure, why not?'* It was fate. This is stuff that I grew up on and had never played. Now I get the chance to do it with some really fine musicians.

***SFL Music*: What's in store for South Florida music lovers here tonight at Mizner?**

Roy Fantel (Drummer): At the show tonight, the fans are going to see as close a recreation to the original Pink Floyd material as humanly possible. We try to do the original recorded material note for note. We have all done our homework to do Pink Floyd justice.

***SFL Music*: Is tonight's show considered work or play?**

Lucie Pierro (Backup Vocalist): It's a little of both. Playing at Mizner is always a lot of fun. I mean, here we are in a huge dressing room with air conditioning. It's an exciting place to be, and we are ready for it. There are such brilliant musicians in this band. They all play so well together. The fact that we are all local South Florida musicians makes it even better. I am just happy to be a part of it. I get the amazing treat of singing "Great Gig in the Sky." (Lucie's phenomenal voice earned a standing ovation).

***SFL Music*: Mervyn, is "Money" your favorite song to play sax onstage?**

Johnston: No. I think "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" is the highlight for me. I like playing all of it. I like listening to it all as well. It's as close to the real thing as anyone's going to get. Everyone in the band puts in a tremendous amount of work to make the show authentic. They are terrific musicians and they are marvelous to work with.

***SFL Music*: What's next for The Floyd Experience?**

April French (Backup Vocalist): The future of the band looks bright. We are looking forward to a concert on Saturday, December 1st, at The Fillmore on Miami Beach. Getting out of the state and touring the nation would be fantastic. We have all the right components.

***SFL Music*: How does The Floyd Experience's performance stand up against to the original Pink Floyd?**

Bernstein: To compare our show to the real Pink Floyd, we are doing everything they did in the studio. Only we are doing it live.

Leone: It all comes down to the live show. When you've got your monitors on, the house music is up loud and the audience is hot out there, that's when all the practice pays off. This is the best part of it for us.

Onstage two hours later, Johnston delivered a monologue before The Floyd Experience's closing number, "High Hopes." "Thank you all for coming out to this wonderful venue and supporting live music," he said. "Big shout out to Nick Mason, Roger Waters, Richard Wright, Syd Barrett and David Gilmour (Pink Floyd) for bringing this legacy. Also to the (American) blues artists, Pink Anderson and Floyd Counsil for inspiring the name. Growing up in England, I couldn't help feeling the impact of this giant among bands. From humble beginnings in the London underground scene to two of the bestselling records in history (1973's *The Dark Side of the Moon* and 1979's *The Wall*). Yes, real records that all of us old geezers remember buying. A progressive band with live shows that extend the song forms, philosophical lyrics and iconic album covers. As a sax player, I was drawn to the defining solos of 'Money,' 'Us + Them' and 'Crazy Diamond.' I suppose you could say I am over the moon and on the dark side. Our goal is to pay tribute to that legacy."

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KIP WINGER

By Lori Smerlson Carson • Live Photo Larry Marano

They've been "Miles Away" working on various other projects, but no need to be "Headed for a Heartbreak" because Winger is bringing their entertaining music "Down Incognito." Well, they will actually be playing on stage at the Miramar Amphitheater as part of the 80's Rock Fest Sunday November 11th. This annual festival starts Saturday November 10th and will rock the weekend through Sunday with music that ruled the airways three decades ago.

Any 80's enthusiast knows the words to the above mentioned three Winger hits and realizes how much they influenced the sounds and dynamics of that time period. Lead Vocalist/Bassist Kip Winger, Lead Guitarist Reb Beach, Guitarist John Roth and Drummer Rod Morgenstein still have a strong impact on the music industry and know how to put on a fun, memorable show.

SFL Music: What is the secret to Winger staying so strong? You all still put on such great shows and you're really tight. Is it that you're good friends?

Kip Winger: We're very good friends. The level of musicianship in the band is really good. We all take it real seriously, but I think there are a lot of other bands that are very tight. You know, I don't think we're out of the ordinary in terms of being a super amazing live band. I think we're really good. What people don't know about our band is the music is way more difficult than it seems. So there's a lot going on under the hood in songs even like "Seventeen" it's not easy to play the stuff. We have a comradery because we just dig each other so much. So the secret to our thing is just we're really good friends.

SFL MUSIC: Is there anything special you look forward to doing when you come to Florida since Rod went to school in Miami and both you and Reb have lived in South Florida?

Winger: I never do anything. We come into town, do our show and split. I lived in Florida for a while. I lived in Miami so I love it, but when you're touring its like, you go in, do the gig and then you split." He continued explaining his busy schedule starts with a solo tour with four shows in a row, then the band tour begins just prior to this 80's festival.

SFL MUSIC How do you make that transition from doing the solo tour to the band tour, and then the orchestra show coming up in December?

Winger: So I don't really have much to do

with the orchestra shows. I show up and listen to them and that's fun to hear and to watch as they have a performance (of the music he composed like "Conversations with Nijinsky" which he received a Grammy Nomination in 2017). "I'm not involved in the logistics of putting on those performances. As far as the band goes, I've been doing it for thirty five years so it's just another day at the office and the same with the solo stuff.

SFL MUSIC: What is it that you most look forward to with this show?

Winger: We just have a great time, like you say we're really good friends and we all take our playing very seriously. Except for John, it's the original members and so we like to experience the whole thing with the other bands. It's kind of just fun to be at the event and celebrate the music that we've liked playing for so long.

SFL MUSIC: Is there anyone in particular that you are looking forward to seeing?

Winger: I don't even know who's on the bill.

SFL MUSIC: Ace Frehely, Vince Neil, Nigh Ranger, Tom Keifer, Trixter….

Winger: I haven't seen Night Ranger in a while and I love Tom Keifer. I mean, I like all of them, so yeah that sounds like a great bill actually. I like hanging out. It's like a high school reunion.

SFL MUSIC: Is there any craziness, prankster type stuff?

Winger: "There always could be. I'm always pulling a prank on Reb.

SFL MUSIC: Like what kind of prank?

Winger: Like putting water in his vodka bottle or I don't know, just funny stuff. Yeah you know, we enjoy the hang. Listen it's been thirty years, we're lucky to be still doing it.

SFL MUSIC: Are there any new projects coming up with Winger. Any talk about making a new album?

Winger: Well, we're talking about it. It's very difficult because Reb's in Whitesnake and they're touring a lot. I'm busy doing a musical called Get Jack and John does Starship. We're all extremely busy, so when the schedule clears Reb and I will write for a new album. You know, I'm the type of artist that doesn't want to just crank out albums for the sake of cranking them out. I feel like I only want to do them when I know I have something to say, whether it be lyrically or musically. Something that will be a little bit different than what I have done in the past, rather than just cranking out another album that sounds exactly the same as the last one.

SFL MUSIC: I was just going to ask about Get Jack (a musical about Jack the Ripper that Winger collaborated with Script Writer Damien Grey). It's still happening amongst everything else you are doing?

Winger: Oh yeah, Get Jack is still happening. It's a very heavy lift. It takes a lot of time, effort and money to get those up and running. Hamilton for example, took ten years to develop. So it's a long development period, a very diligent exercise and patience. There's a lot of moving parts. For me it's a learning curve because it's another world, so I'm always trying to catch up to everybody I'm working with because they've all been doing it for years. It's very satisfying though to have written a two hour work that's fully orchestrated. I think we have a shot. We'll see. I never set out with an expectation on anything I do. I just do it because I like the idea. I'll pick a project if I think the project's worthy and not if I think it's going to make me a bunch of money. The money would be nice, but it's weird, somehow when I know that I'm going to get paid a certain amount of money to do this thing I'm never as good as if I just do the thing for the love of doing it. Then hope to get paid. The economic component always poisons me artistically so I try to stay away from that.

SFL MUSIC: Because you feel like there's a lot of pressure or it's better for you to just focus creatively and then it all just flows out?

Winger: Yeah I don't like getting paid up front for anything because it poisons the outcome. It either gives the person who's paying me some jurisdiction over my art, or it makes me feel like I have to live up to something that I don't want to do because art can take a left turn unexpectedly, and I don't want to not be able to take that left turn. It's a philosophical declaration that I've made artistically, that it's really critical to the life of me and who I am.

SFL MUSIC: That's probably something that other artists could learn from.

Winger: It could be for people that would be in the same frame of mind as me. Some people do it for the money, and some people thrive that way. I'm not suggesting that my way is right. I know myself very well and that's the way I drive.

SFL MUSIC: Would you have any advice for up and coming musicians?

Winger: In what category? For Writing music or performing or playing live? Because the thing is there are so many aspects of it, but I would just say in general if you're a guy in a band and you want to get somewhere, the number one thing is don't hate yourself and allow yourself to suck if you need to so you can get to the good stuff. Then be very honest about what you are producing. If you write a song, set your bar as high as you can man. Just keep setting your bar as high as you can. If you can play that song next to a Led Zeppelin song and it holds up then that's cool.

Another 'cool' aspect about this talented musician is that he has lent his knowledge to eager students teaching vocals and composition. "I rarely teach," he explained. I will teach people if I feel like what they are looking for is something I can help with and they're going to actually do the work. A lot of people want to take lessons from somebody because they think if they do it's like a magic pill and it never is."

As for his education, the reports of him graduating from Julliard turned out to be false. "I didn't graduate from anywhere. I dropped out of high school." He clarified, "I didn't do any school after that. I studied privately. There's a myth that I went to Julliard."

SFL MUSIC: That's not true?
Winger "No, not true."

SFL MUSIC: So what brought you to New York?

Winger: Get a record deal That he did along with co–songwriter Beach and fellow bandmates to make their first US Platinum album 'Winger' in 1988, through 'Better Days Comin' in 2014 to total (so far) six studio albums, 2 compilations and 1 live LP.

SFL MUSIC: So when did you move to Miami?

Winger: It was between the second and third album ('In the Heart of the Young' and 'Pull'). It was like the peak of my career. I moved to Miami because the weather was better than New York. I already sold a lot of records and I didn't want to be locked in a tiny little apartment anymore. I wish I still owned that house (in Miami). It was an amazing house. I wasn't there much because I was touring all of the time. I actually got hit by hurricane Andrew in '92.

SFL MUSIC: Was there any damage to your house?

Winger: Not really, we were too far north. Miami was a better way of life "he elaborated, "but I only stayed there a year before I moved to New Mexico.

SFL "What made you move to New Mexico?

Winger It was more my vibe. I'm from Colorado, but it was very mystical. Santa Fe's got a lot of spirituality and it's a little bit more solitude and away from society and stuff like that. It's not a party place. It's more of a place where I could really dig into my work and nobody can fuck with me.

SFL MUSIC: Then, how did you end up in Nashville?

Winger: My first wife passed away in Santa Fe, and I was very allergic to the indigenous trees and got sick of being allergic. Felt like I just needed a new start. In Nashville, I had some offers to get some work and it just seemed like a logical choice. It turned out to be a good choice. I don't love Nashville, but it's a great town for musicians.

SFL MUSIC: Do you feel like the Nashville Music scene is like New York was when you first went there? I know Nashville's drawn a lot of musicians.

Winger: Yeah Nashville's the place but, I mean if you're a film composer, LA is the place. You know, Nashville's just easy to live, not so expensive, well it is now, but it wasn't. A lot of studios, a lot of incredible musicians, a lot of resources, easy to travel from. There's a lot of good reasons to be here.

SFL MUSIC: Is there anything that you want South Floridians to know about the upcoming show?

Winger: Just that I love the area and it's quite possible that I could live there again at some point. I just feel like it's really a great environment for a rock festival. We're happy to be a part of it and looking forward to being there.

Seeing Winger play at the Rockfest 80's Festival is one really good reason to go the Miramar Amphitheater in Miramar Florida. He's not counting South Florida out.

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Vanessa Collier
Honey Up

So to say that Vanessa Collier, who is still a few years south of the age of thirty, has done it all would be an outrageously ridiculous statement... or would it? Yeah, it probably would be. But saying she's doing it all would be hitting the nail right on the head. In a genre where recognition usually comes after your social security checks start arriving, the name Vanessa Collier is already common place on many different organizations and foundations awards lists. She's pleasing very large audiences in clubs and festivals all over the world.

She›s talented enough and, equally as important, confident enough to play alongside, and going toe to toe, with some of the genres giants, as her recent stint on The Blues Cruise just proved, and as *Honey Up*, her latest release also proved, besides her already established singing/songwriting/instrumentalist prowess, Vanessa is now quite an accomplished music producer as well. Throw in a glowing personality and ever-present beautiful smile and attitude, and Vanessa Collier's checklist of requirements for success looks like this: check, check, check…

On the opening track, Vanessa takes us to church, and I mean that literally, as well as musically. It's an original of hers that describes what it's like to be singing in a choir, in an non air conditioned church down south. That's exactly why the song is titled "Sweatin' Like A Pig, Singin' Like an Angel." Now I'm assuming that since this track was recorded in a comfortable atmosphere at Hearstudios in Maine, that there was very little sweatin› goin› on. On the other hand, between her lead and own backing vocals, Vanessa›s sure singin› like an angel. With this being one of the five tracks that feature Quinn and Doug making it a full three-piece horn section, Laura, as she always is, kills it on lead guitar.

Featuring the exact same ensemble with the pace amped up a bit, the music segues into another original track titled "Don't Nobody Got Time to Waste." The only differences are that it's the organ that William's sounding crazy good on and the monster rhythm is being fueled by some fierce drum and percussion work by Nick Stevens. Very hot stuff.

So when something percolates, it permeates gradually and gains energy along the way. If, like me, you're old enough to remember that Maxwell House Coffee commercial where the coffee perks real slow at first them morphs into full throttle percussion, that›s a perfect example. So is "Percolatin'," a very funky instrumental that builds up slowly as it goes along. Nick Trautmann's dominating bass lines, William's enthusiastic organ leads and Vanessa'a tenor sax solos all highlight this one.

Don't call me sweetheart. Don't call me baby. Don't call me anything but my name. You must be foolish, because I ain't your woman, your daughter or your friend. There's a saying in the south and the south's real sweet, bless your heart you poor thing."

Now Vanessa may be saying "*Bless Your Heart*" to this poor dude, but with lyrics like those - and the subsequent verses - I'm getting the feeling she really mean "kiss my ass and get the hell out of here!" Although somewhat mellow, with Vanessa on the resonator and Laura on the electric guitar, the guitar work on this one is absolutely beautiful. So is the smooth and sassy way Vanessa's telling this guy to get lost.

The title of *"Love Me like A Man"* pretty much suggests it will lean towards a seductive direction and just about every rendition I've ever heard has lived up to that suggestion. So, don't let that innocent smile on that youthful face of hers fool you - Vanessa will give you all the sultry and seductive you can handle, both vocally and with her sax. Being one of only three tracks he appears on, Sparky does a hell of a job on an extended lead guitar run midway through the track.

By now, most of the blues radio host should already be spinning *Honey Up*. With that said, should you need a copy for airplay, or are a fan who'd like to purchase a copy, go to Vanessa's website, www.vanessacollier.com. When you do, tell her that her friend the Blewzzman sent you. See more at www.Mary4Music.com. - Peter "Blewzzman" Lauro

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Gov't Mule | Florida Jam

Concertgoers were ecstatic to experience Florida Jam 2018 with touring phenomenon Gov't Mule on Saturday, October 20th at Sunset Cove Amphitheater in Boca Raton. Led by Warren Haynes of the Allman Brothers Band and Grateful Dead, Mule's 150-minute set of Southern blues rock was spectacular. On their 13-show journey to promote 2017's *Revolution Come… Revolution Go,* the concert was much more intimate than the Summer Tour. On that trek, Mule shared their bill with different talent, including Soulive, Chris Robinson Brotherhood and Galactic throughout multiple festivals across the nation. This time around, the legendary Elvin Bishop Band and Eric Gales warmed up the stage for the amazing quartet.

Playing live since 1994, a Mule set is known to be one long jam. At the only South Florida performance of the Fall Tour, all ages ran amuck in the humidity. Toddlers swirled vivid light sticks, while grandparents danced on the grass in tie dyes and Birkenstocks. When the time came for the headliners to take charge, the audience heard an audio file of a listener scrolling through an FM radio dial. Spectators recognized familiar titles reminiscent of *Revolution Come… Revolution Go.* There were a couple versions of the Beatles' "Revolution," along with Bob Marley's "Revolution." We heard a few seconds of "The Times They Are A-Changin'" by Dylan and Gil Scott-Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." We also caught a bit of Neil Young's modern classic, "Keep On Rockin' in the Free World." I found the selection rather odd, as Haynes opened his 2015 *Ashes & Dust* show at the Fillmore Miami Beach with young Neil's fitting "Revolution Blues."

Under a giant Florida Jam backdrop and between gorgeous palm trees on each side of the stage, Gov't Mule appeared. Haynes, drummer Matt Abts, keyboardist/guitarist Danny Louis and bassist Jorgen Carlsson kicked into "Hammer & Nails." As always, Warren sported a black shirt and long white hair.

The man's sensational slide work on a '58 Les Paul meshed bits of rock and psychedelia. As Haynes did with every awe-inspiring solo, he looked up and clenched his eyes shut, slowly swaying to the beat. Hundreds of people danced on their feet up front, while turquoise, violet, olive green and ruby red spotlights danced over the crew from multiple angles and various speeds. All the while, Haynes' astonishing fingerwork shredded.

"We're going to try to get through a little bit of everything tonight," Warren explained. The night consisted of minimal talking from Haynes. Of course, the frontman occasionally asked folks how they were doing and introduced his mates. Rather than relying solely on their latest release, the four-piece delivered older selections. An undeniable highlight of the evening was when Warren created majestic distortion on "Broke Down on the Brazos" with a bit of Jimi's "Voodoo Chile." As the divine piece was winding down, Haynes directed the show-goers to "Make it funky one time."

Ticketholders heard some timeless covers, such Tom Petty's "Breakdown" and The Allman Brothers' "Come and Go Blues." There was even a bit of Muddy Waters' "Who Do You Love," as well as Bob Seger's "I've Been Working."

Finally, we experienced Mule's take on Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen" before Eric Gales appeared to conclude the encore with the James "Beale Street" Clark cover "Look on Yonder Wall." Once again, Gov't Mule proved their undeniable skills for performing live with two and a half hours of extraordinary musicianship onstage. - Todd McFliker • Photo Jay Skolnick

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In The Studio - Vol. 3 with Day 4

By: Lori Smerilson Carson

Last month *SFL Music Magazine* revealed how an unsigned, local South Florida band recorded their first professional single at PowerStation Recording Studios in Pompano Beach. They experienced what signed, label artists receive when recording and now Day 4's single "Save Me" is completed.

Phase Three – Fulfilling

At this present time Day 4 (lead vocalist Heather Curi, guitarist Adam Armaganian, bassist Harley Mitchell and drummer Justin Marsch) are putting the finishing touches on two other singles, "Let Me Know" and "Show Me" to finalize this initial recording experience led by PowerStation Producer, Co-Owner (with Tony Bongiovi) Rob Roy. "When a band comes in," Roy explained of how he (and his team of engineers) worked with Day 4 through their recording process, "they've arranged the song. They've practiced and performed it. They have a certain vision because they're in the fox hole of the song. Once you go into the studio you're looking at it from a different prospective, so you get pulled out of the fox hole. Then you're actually hearing things back within different context and that gives you other ideas." He further explained, "that's one of the great things about the studio. All of the sudden your mind opens up, then inspiration happens. Then your guard goes down. That's what happened. We created a good environment and the creativity just started blossoming from there. This also comes from trust and comfortability."

SFL Music: How did you and your staff accomplish Recording "Save Me" and make it comfortable for the band?

Rob Roy: "My Chief Engineer (Paul Kronk) was running the console and made sure everything stayed intact during the session and monitored performance tempos. My pro-tools engineer (Brennan Fulton) focused on making sure all twenty some-odd tracks were being recorded to proper levels. Lastly, my production assistants made sure the musicians had everything they needed to make for a perfect take and keep the momentum of the session moving. Most other studios only have an engineer that can only focus on the tracks getting to tape. All the other aspects get lost in the shuffle. The big difference here at Power Station is that our engineers are also trained producers. We have assistant engineers on all big sessions and even interns on deck. We can deliver many of the label budget session tasks in real-time as we work. The other obvious advantages we offer our clients every day that are only found in big-label budget productions is the room, the equipment and client services. Most local studios don't have an acoustical design that has been proven not only successful but has gotten more awards than any other studio design in the world. Our million-dollar Neve console, and outboard gear worth hundreds of thousands of dollars all available for the local artist without the major label cost. Lastly, the client services we offer from snacks, coffee to techs and administrative services. Most only found at the big label corporate level – Power Station offers to all our clients. Both local and label!"

So how did all of these specialties translate to the final product – the mix? As the band gathered to chat in PowerStation's Studio B, they explained. Starting with Mitchell and Armaganian who heard it first…

SFL Music: How do you feel about how your bass and your guitars came out?

Harley Mitchell: "When Rob had me sit right in front of the mixing board it was overwhelming. I knew he was watching my reaction because I was like 'I'm not going to tear up in front of you,' but I felt it. Obviously coming in here we knew what we were getting but, at the same time when you actually hear it, it's different than a vision. You know my bass starts that song "Save Me" so

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as soon as I heard that, I was just wow. It's indescribable. I knew how I wanted my bass to sound and he nailed it."

Adam Armaganian: "It's huge and powerful."

Mitchell: "Yeah, it was overwhelming, I was wow, this is our song!"

SFL Music: And how did you feel – I know there was a lot of work with the layering?

Armaganian: "Well the main thing for me was it wasn't when you like your own song. Oh wow, they got the guitars kind of how I like em.

Mitchell: "Oh good enough, like we're there"

Armaganian: "That's pretty much what I wanted, cool. That's what you're really happy with from an ok studio. What he (Roy) was able to do was take what I had in mind or what I wanted, mix it in a way so it worked and with the other instruments so that way it wasn't just the guitar tone I wanted and some totally foreign sounding bass. He was able to take the type of tone that I wanted, maneuver it and message it so it sounded like it fit the band as a whole and the song better. It captured the aggressiveness I wanted and the tightness, but still left an attitude, because the band has an alternative rock, alternative metal, a little bit even of a punk side to it. It just happened to sound perfect."

Mitchell: "To add onto that, Adam's influences are definitely heavier than mine and Heather has different influences and Justin so it's kind of like well, how are we going to mesh all of this together without sounding like Adam has a metal guitar, Harley has a punk rock bass and Heather's clean vocals or something. So when we all heard this together, I was like wow, just like he said Rob messaged it and made it so we actually sounded like a band together and it just gelled."

Aramganian: "Yeah. It was *gelling like Magellan*. It is very impressive though to get an artist to actually get the tone that they believe they want to hear and to work it in. That itself is very hard and he got there."

"We modified the drum rhythms and the bass lines to build a foundation that gave support to the lyrics and constructed the guitar parts to add dimension and embellished the lyrical component," Roy explained of how important the pre-production played into the production. "We made sure the band were solid on their new ways to perform their parts. Due to the nature of style with "Save Me" the guitar tones would become a pivotal point in the overall sound of the song. We spent a day with the Adam auditioning several options for guitar tones. Different guitars, amps, mics, speaker cabinets, etc., until we found the combination of items that made the sound that made us all light up! Most bands don't have this option. This however, saved us hours in the recording process and kept the recording part moving fast and fun for everyone. In many cases, because of our studio facilities setup, option of instruments, amps and strength of our engineering team, PowerStation can capture this task quickly. This step was done to let Day 4 experience the label budget process specifically. Usually the last element of the recording process are the vocals, "he continued. "While we were building the instruments, there was a recorded vocal Heather performed on the initial tracking day. That was used as a guide to build the song around. Once the instruments are complete and the song has developed the proper sound, energy, vibe and movement; we use all these recorded elements to sing the final vocal performances to. This is important because all the production we did were tools for Heather to vibe with while she's recording her final vocal parts. It's kind of like a romance for the singer. Everything is new, exciting and creates the intended musical emotion while she's singing. Her final performance reflects this emotion and helps translate such to the listener. "Save Me" has a huge sounding chorus with a big vocal part. Heather's ability to double and triple her performances with such precision allowed us to help build the size of those parts and made them stand out as a features passage of the song."

Vocalist Heather Curi entered Studio B.

SFL Music: What was your overall take from hearing the final mix?

Heather Curi: "It was exciting. It was really cool to hear a song that started in my bedroom at 3 in the morning to this. IIs a pretty crazy thing to wrap my head around. They really nailed it. They took a lot of the suggestions that I had mentioned and ran with it so that's really awesome. It really turned out amazing. It's important to me that the songs as much as they are able to change to be better, that there is still the integrity of what was there in the beginning. They made sure to keep the integrity. The whole process was very cool. We were in the right place at the right time. What band wouldn't want to do what we were able to do?

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The song for free and all this coverage and all the publicity with the social media and everything. It's just been really cool we're so very lucky." Mitchell agreed.

SFL Music: How did you feel about the vocals?

Curi: "I think it sounds great. I noticed that they opted not to put a whole lot of effects on my voice. I know right now that's a big thing in modern rock music. There's a lot of artists that are using or the producers use a lot of vocal effects and stuff like that. I noticed they opted to not do that so that's pretty cool. It actually sounds like me. It doesn't sound like some processed version of me."

SFL Music: What would you recommend to other vocalists that want to come to PowerStation to record?

Curi: "Just come prepared and if they are looking to do what we did, kind of have a little bit of production with the song. Be open to the ideas that the guys in the control room have. Like on days that were vocal performances and days that we were recording come in warmed up and ready to go and just kill it."

SFL Music: What would you recommend to other musicians going into a professional session like this?

Mitchell: I think you should have an idea of how would want it to sound first. Have that vision.

Engineer Brennan Fulton added on, "Come in with somewhat of a vision knowing what you want to get done, not just saying here's our song, record it and lets go, but have an idea of what you want to achieve, and just being prepared. A lot of bands don't know what it's like to play to a click track which for drummers, bass players and guitar players it's a new experience. Where coming in and being able to do something like that, adds to the end product mostly."

SFL Music: In what way specifically?

Brennan Fulton: "When you play to a click track it makes mixing things easier as to when you put effects on things, especially time based effects like reverbs and delays. It can respond properly as opposed to something that's a little bit looser. You know you're figuring out what the BPM's you know up and down it sways back and forth, so it's not really a locked in BPM for the music. So you're working on like a little bit of a guessing game. Whereas if they're playing to a click track it makes that guessing game almost non-existent."

Mitchell: "Click is like number one. I feel like people don't realize it. When you go into a studio, you have to play to a click if you want to be professional."

Armaganian: "A neat trick is even on your cell phone have a click playing and just play the riff, listen to it back and think 'is that what I want my rhythm to sound like?' That's very sobering. The studio can fix a lot of things, but the more they fix the less you're really playing and it doesn't sound as good. "He went on to tell a story of how Curi and Mitchell caused phasing during two separate demo tracks. "Now phasing issues only occur when literally the sound waves line up perfectly. So basically, all she has to really do is make sure she's Mitchell) on time, Heather has to nail the pitch and be on time. So there's sections where I'm like 'Heather, you're phasing with your demo track' which is hard to do. That means she was so accurate."

At this point Drummer Justin Marsch entered studio B. He had not heard the final mix yet.

SFL Music: The last time we spoke they added drums to your rig. Is that something you are going to keep going forward?

Justin Marsch: "Yeah, I'm definitely going to keep more cymbals now. It's definitely going to help out because there's a lot of things that I incorporated that I can't pull off without it. I'm probably still going to stick with a five piece instead of a six piece though I can still get away with it."

SFL Music: I know on the day you recorded you had some ideas you wanted to try, were you able to?

Marsch: "Yeah they worked out pretty good. I'm pretty happy with them.

SFL Music: In what way?

Marsh: "Mostly like on some fills when you can kind of feed off something else that changes whether its guitar or a structure which changed the whole feel of something. So I changed a couple of things basically they were subtle, but to me they were big. That worked out pretty good. It's hard to explain. I don't know if you'd call it adrenaline, but when you're really into playing sometimes things will just kind of pop out. A lot of times I'll write some of my best stuff at a show when I'm actually playing live and its working out."

SFL Music: Was there anything you'd recommend to a drummer that wants to record at PowerStation?

Marsch: Listen to Rob because he's a producer that definitely feels drums are the back bone and he loves the drums. I've recorded with other places where they don't care, it is what it is. You're just drowned in the back. He's really big on solid foundation drums. He'll be a drummers dream to anyone who comes in here as a drummer.

Curi: They really pay attention to each instrument. They gave the appropriate time for each instrument to shine. It wasn't like he just cared about the vocals or just cared about the drums or the guitar. Each instrument had a few days' worth of work just for the one song "Save Me". There was just so much that they put into it. Like he (Marsch) was saying before, he (Roy) actually really

cared about the drums and how they sounded and making sure he was happy with how they sounded and he's pretty picky about that." (Laughs). We're all super pretty picky about how we sound and that makes a difference. I think that's why people come to see us and enjoy what they're hearing. Sometimes I'll be looking at them onstage and think it's so cool that people are here to see us, that they like our music.

She and Marsch met on the cover band scene and they were glad to have him join the band to complete this perfect union.

SFL Music: What is the key to getting the perfect band together?

Marsch: "Chemistry. We'll try things. No one's afraid to try anything and no one's afraid to say 'no it didn't work.' Even the person that tried it.' No I hate that,' but we'll try it. We're not holding back and as long as you have good chemistry and you're willing, better things will come out of it if you give it a shot. "

Curi: "Yeah we've grown to become comfortable with each other. Sometimes I try to hit crazy notes and sometimes they come out right and sometimes they don't. Sometimes I'll try a scream here or there. Sometimes it will sound right and sometimes it won't. I will ask them and they usually tell me the truth and that is important, but I wouldn't just do that with anyone.

Marsch: "You've got to be honest if some ones doing something you don't like and then three weeks go by and your like 'I just really don't like that.' Well why didn't you tell me that three weeks ago?"

Curi: "This whole project has really brought the band and the guys here at PowerStation all together. We've been in constant communication and it's just cool the bond that we developed from this."

The experience also led to a personal video that Mitchell took of Curi while she was recording vocals to be released later on u-tube. There was also Curi's affinity to only use the back door of the sound room. "I don't know why I didn't like squeezing between that door (directly into the sound room)," She explained. "It just felt better for me to have to go to the lobby and go around. I feel like it gave me time to gather my thoughts before I had to go see everybody after what I just did. I would take a second and go get some water and be like, ok now I can actually listen to myself."

What struck Fulton the most were the leaders of this band.

SFL Music: What would you say is most unique about Day 4?

Fulton: "Having such prominent female members honestly. Having two girls that will step up and tell you what they like, what they don't like and what they want is definitely different than most of the bands. They are all just good musicians. Harley's a monster on the base, Justin can pound the drums, Adams killer at guitar and Heather can sing, so they're all strong musicians. That's good for them to find each other and be a good strong band."

Finally, the toast to reveal the final mix of 'Save Me' where Roy reiterated how the band came to PowerStation and because they are such great musicians they "rose up to the occasions" where they were challenged. The song was played. Marsch and Mitchell nodded their heads to the music in true head banging fashion. Armaganian listened intently as well as Curi, but she also tapped her leg to the beat. The song ended and everyone clapped. Roy asked Marsch what he thought of the drums since this was his first listen of the final mix. He was pleased. Armaganian who expressed that he was very impressed with the drums jokingly said "Justin, the session drummer we brought in after you left was great!" Everyone laughed, showing just how close knit this group had become.

This project will be coming to a close within the next few weeks. "Save Me" will be available per a link on Day 4's SoundCloud, promoted through Facebook, and after the other two songs are released, all will be available on Spotify, iTunes, Google Play and such.

SFL Music: What in your opinion makes PowerStation stand out for local musicians?

Fulton: "What we focus on is local musicians. We're not focused on just getting the big money spenders in here, the big names. We're more focused on the local community. We want to make sure the local bands are being heard and getting their product out there and doing it as best as we can. Giving them the best sound we possible can for their money and to come in and have a good time while doing it."

"My hope is that the reader of this final article," Roy concluded "will realize how Power Station can deliver a label budget production with a budget they can afford in a way no other facility can.

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