

Artist Spotlight: Tem Blessed



by
Eric
Bayli
es

Tem Blessed is an iconic figure of Hip Hop in New Bedford and beyond. Recently, I had the good fortune of sitting down the with man to discuss his life and his music.

New Bedford Guide: How long have you been performing?

Tem Blessed: I've been performing since my freshman year at Umass Amherst. That would be spring of 1993.

What drew you into music?

I've always loved music. Music is a key element of the Cape Verdean culture. My older brother was a DJ and after listening to Slick Rick's "La-Di-Da-Di," I was inspired to write my first rhyme.



Besides the show you did in New Orleans with Dead Prez, have you done much traveling or touring?

Yes. I have had the opportunity to perform across the United States and overseas. I have performed in Lisbon, Portugal and Praia, Sao Vincente, and Sal in Cape Verde. In the U.S. I have performed in New York, New Jersey, D.C., Florida, Maine, Oakland, and of course, all throughout Massachusetts.

Will you be able to do any touring considering you have a

family and a steady job? Or can you get a leave of absence?

I work for PACE YouthBuild, which is a great organization that understands my need to take leaves of absence. My family also understands and encourages me to follow my passion and live my dream. Working for YouthBuild for the past 12 years has enabled me to grow with my audience and “move the crowd.”

What are some of your main influences, both lyrically and musically?

Life, Liberation, and Hip-Hop culture: this is why I make music. It's more than music to me; its a movement. I make art to shine light and fulfill my purpose on this planet. As far as other artists go? Eric B. & Rakim, A Tribe Called Quest, KRS-1, Chuck D., Intelligent Hoodlum, Wu-Tang Clan, The Roots, Guru, Premier, Nas, Bob Marley, and Iron Maiden. Outside of music, some influences include Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, Julius Ford, and my children, just to name a few.

Where do you record, and with who?

I record throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island. My most recent album, *Blessed Energy*, was mainly recorded at Brian Steele Studios in New Bedford. I work with many independent artists, such as Dje-Dje, Wal-Gee Ice Man, Empress, Grem, First B., Chachie, Outspoken, S-Live, and Random Thought.



What are some of the benefits of performing in the New Bedford area? How about some of the shortcomings?

The main benefit is that I am able to remain close to my family. I usually never leave for longer than one week. The shortcomings are the economy. It is hard to sell music and get pepole out to the area venues when most people that listen to my music are in the struggle themselves, most times living paycheck to paycheck. There is also a city ordinance that doesn't allow most venues to do all ages shows or 18-plus

events. This is a challenge because most of my target audience are the youth.

What's coming up in the next year for Tem Blessed?

I'm working on a cross-country tour to help promote the new project with my band Blessed Energy, which features Calvin Grace on drums, Corey Jones on bass, and Ian Hamel on keys. The new album is due out in spring of 2011.


The Artificial Marketplace



by
Eric
Bayli
es

The Artificial Marketplace is located on William Street in Downtown New Bedford next to Solstice skateboard shop. It has been described as an antiques shop, but after I spoke with owner Jared Vasconcellos, I found out its more of a vintage, mid-century shop.

There has been a bit of a turnover with ownership at the store. What got you into the business?

Jared: I am the third owner. I've owned the store for two and a half years now, and have transformed it from a junk/consignment shop into a vintage mid-century shop. All  items at Artificial Marketplace are hand-picked by myself; I've always been a collector of sorts. I try to purchase things in the best possible condition, but some things I have

to refinish.

I fix iPhones and iPods as well...pretty much anything Apple. I also fix smart phones and some PC laptops.

Did working at your brother's skate shop next door to prepare you to deal with the public?

Jared: Yes it did. I worked at Solstice for awhile, and I still do whenever I have time.

Do you plan to start an online store at some point?

Jared: An online store would be nice, but being just one person, doing what I do would be pretty hard to maintain.



Inside The Artificial Marketplace.

I do occasionally sell items on eBay, mostly things' that normally wouldn't move for a certain price in-store, like a brand new aluminum Christmas tree still in the box.

Jared: If mom asked what kind of shop it is I'd say... I'd have to say its a store filled with items carefully picked from the 50's, 60's, and 70's and strategically placed to look like it would in a house. Anything from glassware, couches, books, records...pretty much anything you can think of-minus planes, trains, and automobiles.

You can visit The Artificial Marketplace seven days a week, from 11-5pm.

Sharks Come Cruisin' Interview



by
Eric
Bayli
es

Sharks Come Cruisin' is a hard band to categorize. A land-based band singing songs of the sea with rocking drums and banjos, they frequently ply their musical trade around New Bedford. I recently spoke with lead singer Mark about the group.

How did the band start?

Mark: I was watching Jaws in 2003 and heard Quint singing "Spanish Ladies". That's when I started researching sea shanties. Originally I performed the songs solo, singing mostly at open mic nights. As the years went by, more members were added to the mix. In 2006 we released a live record recorded at Jakes in Providence. In 2008 we released *Four Years Before the Mast*, and we just got finished recording a full length record, *A Past We Forget That We Need to Know*. We'll be releasing that soon.

Were you originally a rock band or was it always The Shanties etc?

Mark: I had been playing in bands around Providence for a while, mostly punk/hardcore bands. When Return Around broke up around 1998, I took a long break from playing in bands until I found The Shanties. I had been searching for these kind of songs for a long time. When I found folk songs from

New England about New England, I knew exactly what I wanted to do.

✘ Where did this fascination come from? Did you grow up by the sea?

Mark: The fascination comes from growing up in Rhode Island and feeling a real connection with the songs. I grew up listening to a lot of late 80's, early 90's hardcore and going to a lot of shows. The crew call vocal style has always really appealed to me. It made me feel like I was part of something bigger, like a community. When I heard the big sing-a-longs of The Shanties it seemed very familiar. I like to think Sharks Come Cruisin' shows have the same sense of community and celebration that I experienced at those shows as a kid.

We always have a good time playing in New Bedford. Our friends in the O'Tooles have been good enough to put us on a bunch of shows in New Bedford, and we've had the opportunity to play at the Working Waterfront festival a couple of times.

Have you ever been to the Whaling Museum in New Bedford?

Mark: I have been to the Whaling Museum a few times. It is an amazing place and an amazing resource. I remember stopping there alone on a trip back from Nantucket and getting lost for hours.

Do you have any New Bedford shows coming up?

Mark: We will be playing at the Black Watch Pub with the O'Tooles on Friday November 19th. Be sure to come out and sing along.

Share

Sara Shaughnessy Interview



by
Eric
Bayli
es

Nestled in between New Bedford and Fall River, WUMD 89.3 of UMass, Dartmouth has been broadcasting alternatives to the mainstream for roughly 40 years. I spoke to Sara Shaughnessy (radio name Shaugy) recently about the spirit of radio.

How did you get into radio at such a young age? What are some of the changes you have witnessed?

Sara: I got into it so that I could play all sorts of music—especially more than the music that was being played on the big stations. I have been a DJ at WUMD for approximately 12 years. College radio has changed a little bit as has all music with the accessibility of music with computers and the internet. We have been keeping up with the “Joneses”. We are streaming online here. When I started at the station, it was 91.1 WSMU and changed in June of 2006 to 89.3 WUMD expanding the broadcast area and boosting our wattage from 1,200 to 9,600. During my show you will hear a lot of rock, some reggae, some techno, some blues, celtic, and anything else I might be feeling frisky with at the time.



For many years you hosted the local show. You now host more of a regular show, which is fine, but how come there is no local show when there are now more bands than ever?

Sara: I do try to play a good amount of local stuff throughout the show. There is no Local Anesthesia running at this time, however I do not know sure if there are any shows specifically devoted to playing music from the local area. I believe there is a training class in session right now. The training courses usually run at the beginning of each semester.

You have been doing this since high school. How long will you continue and do you have any interest in jumping ship to a commercial station?

Sara: I don't foresee myself leaving anytime soon. I have taken time off before, so that may be a possibility in the future. I do not wish to move on to a bigger station because then I wouldn't be able to play all the great music that I have the freedom to play now. I am my own producer and I choose the playlists. On the bigger stations (the ones that pay you) you don't have that freedom. You are only allowed to play what the music director gives you- which is made up mostly of newer singles given the station by record companies. And I would probably have to sound happy all the time.

You can catch Sara's show Tuesdays from noon to 3pm, or listen anytime for a greater variety than you will hear elsewhere locally. She has probably played more local music than any other DJ in the history of the station and now you can hear her spinning her other favorites as well. Who is the best local dj? Its Shaugy, its Shaugy, its Shaugy!

Share

Musician Spotlight: [The Viennagram:]



by
Eric
Bayli
es

[The Viennagram:] are a punk rock cabaret psychedelic band from New Bedford. I chatted up carnival barker A.V Vienna about the group.

When did it start? How did you come up with the name?

I would say the first performance of [The Viennagram:] occurred in the first week of my first year in school. An ambitious kindergartner, I somehow talked my music teacher, Mrs. Correia, into allowing me a “commercial break” in class. I would improvise songs, select volunteers from the audience, and devise bizarre games; anything to amuse and confuse my classmates. Striving to constantly top myself, my eager imagination was set in motion. Clearly, sharing my insanity with the world was my true calling!

As for the name, [The Viennagram:] it was delivered through me by the divine cosmic wind of madness. With a fever of 103, I managed to scrawl a tome of shivering words, ending with the curious tag “END [VIENNAGRAM:].” Days later, upon finding the

weird note, I realized it was the first [VIENNAGRAM:]. Long live the great muse! Cure the world through IRRATIONAL SOLUTIONS!



How are the songs written? What are they about?

Writing songs is another way to explore a visual idea. Intrinsic lyrics sometimes found backwards. Songs write themselves through a Ouija Board called "You." When you force a song, it will haunt you forever. A song will surely outlive you. Run with scissors. Choose your own adventure.

Do you have any recordings available? If so, with who?

#1) [DEATH TO THE CLASSICS:] 2006

The "Love is Dead" collection. Featuring the original teaming of A.V. Vienna/Scott Peloquin. Partially through the album, Scott freaked out and locked himself in his Mirror Mansion, vowing never to return. Left with an unfinished epic, I ventured into psychic resonance and strange synth. The outcome is a tender terror hell-ride dreamscape captured in a basement. What joy there is to be found in the sound of the unknown!

#2 [FUTURE IZ DEAD MAGIC:] 2008

One day it will be considered a masterpiece. An uncompromising prediction of impending imagination rot. Phil Spector with

rabies vs. Brian Wilson's LSD Horror Space Sideshow. Made from Popsicle sticks and digital distortion. Recorded in places we weren't supposed to be in. Surrealist sounds cape through Rock n' Roll Graveyards. A collage menagerie of samples from Citizen Kane to Adam Ant.

#3 [MADNESS IZ AND MORE/RELEASE THE BEAST-EYES:]

COMING SOON! OUT ON 10-10-10! FREE DOWNLOAD

Behold! The most musically mutated mixtape! A buffet of audio oddities! From failed experiments, outtakes, and demos, to dubs and things I forgot we even recorded! Close your eyes, open your mind. Your mind is open, now look inside...

[NOTE: I recently had a dream wherein Taylor Swift ascended from the sea, surrounded by searing orbs. Sphinx like, she then revealed a panorama of fragmented shapes and repeated the phrase, "RELEASE THE BEAST EYES." Which, Irrational Solutions applied, could only mean, "Release the B-sides."]

#4 [LEARN 2 TAME THE PATTERNS:]

We will supposedly begin work on this album in November with acclaimed producer Dave Auchenbach. This will include the highly anticipated version of "Long Way Back to Paradise," amongst many other Post-Apocalyptic pop anthems. I can't wait to get these ideas out of my head! It's starting to really hurt.

Have you done any touring? Any plans to in the future?

We can't wait to tour but we lost our keys somewhere!

What are your favorite things about the New Bedford area?

The greatest feature of the "Belly of the Whale" would have to be the dilapidated ruins of Lincoln Park. A magical and haunted maze boasting the death of fun. One fateful July 4th, while inside it's chain-linked bones, Native American spirits communicated with me explaining how that particular plot of

land was at an energy convex. They peeled back the layers of time to show many terrible things which have happened there, as it was the site of eternal strife and home of many restless spirits. Later, a figure of a woman in white guided me through the remains of the park and pointed down to a bottomless pit located near the rollercoaster. We filmed part of a video there! It's a great place to have a scavenger hunt or a first date! We also really love No Problemo!

What are some of the main influences on the band?

Our influences include: THC, Looney Tunes, The Secret Teachings of All Ages by Manly P. Hall, UFO lore, supernatural occurrence, black lights, Lucky Strikes, Strange & Amazing facts, Spike Jones & his City Slickers, RC Cola, Nina Hagen, Tom Waits, Caligula, Salvador Dali, William S. Burroughs, Halloween decorations, Outkast, Screaming Lord Sutch, Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, The Ventures, eating glass, Brian Eno, Tarot divination, The Joker, Lon Chaney, Astrology, copy machines, Please Kill Me, Psychic power, The Secret Destination of America by Manly P. Hall, and Tuna melts!

What's in the near and far future for the (Viennagram)?

Near Future:

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR TRILOGY:

10/29 NEW BEDFORD, MA @ GALLERY X

10/30 PROVIDENCE, RI @ FIREHOUSE 13-

10/31 NEW YORK City @ Cosmic CAVERN

Far Future:

Upon releasing [LEARN TO TAME THE PATTERNS:], the world will open its heart to the sights and sounds of THE [VIENNAGRAM:] or we will be understood and appreciated only after we are dead. Stay tuned!

Share

Musician Spotlight: Judo Heirs



by
Eric
Bayli
es

The Judo Heirs is a New Bedford all-star band of sorts. The players have played in such groups as Beyond The Embrace, All Chrome, The Tall, Gaskill, The Hidden, and many more. With members working at No Problemo, The Pour Farm, and The Green Bean, you can barely walk downtown New Bedford without tripping over one of them. I spoke with Adam Gonsalves about the band.

How did the band originate? Who plays what?

Adam Gonsalves: The band is: Kevin Grant on vocals, Adam Gonsalves on guitar, Joel Monty on guitar, Drew Taber on Bass and Martin Johnson on drums. (Craig Burns played bass on our first CD " Karate Island"). The Judo Heirs started when So Automatic began a hiatus, due to our Guitarist Chris Kelly leaving for graduate school. Martin and I wanted to start a new band and I decided to play guitar this time, having always been a bass player. All of the members of Judo Heirs have been active in the New Bedford music scene for decades, so we all knew each other for years. Craig Burns and I reconnected on Facebook and we all agreed that the only logical vocalist was our friend Kevin Grant. We played as a four piece for a year

and recorded a full length CD which we put out ourselves. After about a year we got Joel Monty on second guitar who was at all the shows and selling CDs for us at No Problemo and when Craig decided to leave on an extended break from the band we scored Drew Taber on bass (who I play with in Iron Mustache, an Iron Maiden tribute band).



The Judo Heirs seem a lot more political than the average whaling city punk band. How is that working out?

Adam Gonsalves: Kevin writes all of the lyrics but in my opinion they are all a perfect balance between political and personal. I love that approach. As for the band being political, all I can say is that we are all individuals and that we all have respect for one another, as well as each others respective beliefs. New Bedford is a plus for us. We are proud to represent for New Bedford, and are proud of the fantastic and expansive music scene that the city has had throughout years.

What can we expect to see next?

Adam Gonsalves: We hope to make a new record sometime this winter now that our sound has progressed due to the changes in personnel.

Check the bands myspace for local listings at No Problemo and The Blackwatch Pub, and if you have the wheels, Boston and Providence.

Share

Musician Spotlight: The Blood Moons



by
Eric
Bayli
es

The Blood Moons are one of New Bedford's busiest bands. There are not many original bands in a city this size can boast of playing so often at local venues. They are a mix of roots rock and punk, with murder ballads and rockers. You will enjoy them if you are a fan of Jerry Lee Lewis, Nick Cave, Johnny Cash, The Clash or the Buzzcocks. I spoke with lead singer Chris Evil about getting his hustle on in the Whaling City club scene.

How did the band get started? Who plays what?

Chris Evil: The Blood Moons started a couple of years ago after a long period of Greg Faris and I wanting to do something different from (punk act) Chris Evil & the Taints. Besides me and Greg, the band is rounded out by Mike Almond on drums and Troy Morin on second guitar. All the recordings so far have featured Ethan Weiss on keys. The name came from some late night drunken television viewing. I was watching that crappy Seventh Sign movie with Demi Moore and saw that one of the signs of the apocalypse was the moon turning blood red or something silly like that and came up with the name. I had the band name before I even knew what I was going to do with it. Greg and I have been in Chris Evil & the Taints for around a

decade. Troy has played with us for the past two years or so. Pre-Taints I was in several less than notable local bands. Greg has played with a bunch of different people. I met him when he was doing Too Many Jens, he also played in Chozen Frozen with Sonic Nova. Mike has played in a bunch of different styles. Pre-Blood Moons he was in alternative rockers Rooftop Suicide Club and Junk Lemonade. He also plays with the kids group Toe Jam Puppet Band. Troy played with Immortal Alice for two decades.



How are the songs written and arranged? What are they about?

Chris Evil: The songs are mostly written by me. I come up with most of the music, lyrics, and all that. I show them to the band, and then we arrange it and make it work to our satisfaction. Most of the tunes are nice little love songs about burying lovers in shallow graves.

Are there any Blood Moons recordings available?

Chris Evil: The Blood Moons put out a full length CD with 75 Or Less Records from Providence last year. Hopefully before this year ends we'll have a split 12-inch with our friends Six Star General out. It's all recorded, it's just that getting records pressed takes time.

Between the Blood Moons and Chris Evil & the Taints playing all ages venues and rock shows all over the city, and Chris Evil playing acoustic at fancypants restaurants like Freestones, you seem to be everywhere at once. Is it time to take this show on the road?

Chris Evil: We play a lot of shows but we have no plans to tour. In this day and age, touring is too costly and the reward for a band that nobody knows or cares about is non-existent. If I got an email from someone out in wherever (not New England) and they wanted us to play, we'd probably find a way to do it, but to just leave on a self booked tour is

something I have no interest in.

Any comments on the area in general? You have spent a long time here.

Chris Evil: The New Bedford area is great. Compared to a lot of places in Massachusetts it is a pretty musician/artist friendly community. With the exception of one venue that shall remain nameless, pretty much all the bars that have music take care of the bands. The Blood Moons play twice a month at the Pour Farm Tavern on Purchase St. in New Bedford and it's a great bar. Other bars we play at include the Black Watch Pub, No Problemo, Hibernia, Freestones and Candleworks. There's plenty of great stuff in New Bedford. In terms of bands, there's quite a few good ones in the area. The Dividers are probably the best local band I've ever witnessed around here. They're awesome. Other really good stuff around here includes: the O'Toole's, Judo Heirs, Iron Oak, Mike Mountain, Joel Monty, there's way too much going on in this area that you'd have a hard time not finding a show to see on any weekend or weeknight.

What are the main influences on the band?

Chris Evil: Our main influences are, but not limited to: old garage rock, older country, power pop, mid to late eighties college rock, old punk, blues, I don't know, how about the Pixies, Roky Erickson, and the Rolling Stones.

What's next for the Blood Moons?

Chris Evil: A split 12-inch, hopefully a 7-inch after that, probably a CD or two or three or five or whatever until we get bored and break up. I'm not that smart or calculated to think long term. At best, I can have ideas that may or may not actually happen and we'll leave it at that.

Check the bands Myspace for upcoming dates. You can barely stroll the cobblestone streets downtown that Melville walked without bumping into a Blood Moons flyer. You have no excuse not to check them out.

Share

Mike Mountain Interview



by
Eric
Bayli
es

Mike Mountain is a well known band from New Bedford. They straddle a fine line between the noise-rock underground and catchy, hook filled tunes. I had a few choice words with lead singer Michael Montagano about cultural diffusion, spontaneous combustion, rock and roll and Portuguese cuisine.

How did Mike Mountain get started?

Michael: I had known (bassist) Jeff for a while. I was impressed he was able to quit his job to make a living playing music. I toured down to Miami in an early version of the band with Jeff and got to know him better. Eventually it coalesced into something more permanent. The guitarist Steve and I had played on and off for years, and Jeff used to play with our drummer (also named Mike).



How do you guys come up with your songs? Is there a magic formula? What's it all about?

Michael: There is no set pattern. Jeff comes up with bass lines first for most of the songs, but some have started with Steve on guitar or my lyrics. A lot of bands jam and make songs from those sessions. We don't really do that. Lyrically I tend to gravitate to open ended meanings that people can attach their own significance to. It is a kind of stream of consciousness. I don't over think it.

I know you are recording a new album. How is that going?

Michael: Great! We are recording at Feedback Studios in Freetown with the New Wave Cafe's main sound engineer Ron Poitras. Ron has been great, very professional but laid back. Its inexpensive but very big sounding. We are almost done, just some some guitar and vocal overdubs left.

What impelled you to play music in the first place?

Michael: Most of my formative years were spent going to shows in the early to mid 1990's. Lyrical influences, well I try to take what influences me from different genres. I like Bob Dylan and The Kinks from the 1960's, Bruce Springsteen and the Swell Maps from the 1970's, Drunks with Guns and the Birthday Party from the 1980's, Pavement, Royal Trux and the Jesus Lizard from the 1990's. A lot of things appeal to me, it is difficult to quantify.

It is obvious from that response that it may be difficult for Mike Mountain to fit in with a certain scene or clique in New Bedford. How do you manage?

Michael: Because we are all in our mid 30's there is a certain desperation to do our best work now, not like we are young kids and will have a lot of future bands. We can't afford to worry about the little stuff. We cover a song by A Stoveboat. All of their songs were about Whaling, its kind of a sea shanty. I feel like a lot of poets come from New England and

we fit in that with a sort of New England perception. We have an original sound but we like to think we can appeal to the average person. it is hard for us to be grouped into one scene but that may be beneficial to us eventually. Our first two CD's have a wide range. We don't want the songs to sound alike.

What do you make of the New Bedford area since you started at nearby U- Mass Dartmouth about 20 years ago?

Michael: Downtown was a ghostland. It is nice to see a cultural renaissance, made all the more remarkable during a recession. There are places to play and hear music, eat and get out in general.

What's coming up for Mike Mountain?

Michael: Jeff and I have the freedom socially to just go out and play and not worry about money, so we will do more touring, but we have to work around the other guys lives. We will have our second album out on 75 Or Less Records soon. We want to tour as much as we can, but you will still see us playing around town.

Mike Mountain will be playing No Problemo and the New Wave soon, so keep a lookout for New Bedford's best kept secret.

Share