

Nite Roundup

Local music
& nightlife news

By Michael Witthaus
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• **Rave on:** Mixing stripped-down funk with a retro psychedelic vibe, Durham-based Blacklight Ruckus took second prize in a national battle of the bands sponsored by SmashTour. They pack a lot of power for a trio, succeeding at being danceable in an offbeat, winning way. For a taste, check out their original songs at www.reverbnation.com/blacklightruckus. See Blacklight Ruckus on Saturday, Oct. 23, at 6 p.m. at Auburn Pitts, 167 Rockingham Road in Auburn. For more, call 622-6564.

• **Career change:** The muse found Amber Rubarth soon after she took a job sculpting figures out of chunks of wood with a chainsaw. “Do your most favorite thing, not the second or third,” her boss told her. So she quit to learn guitar and write songs. Good thing, too, as she’s one of the more inventive folk-singers currently on the scene. See Amber Rubarth in a duo with Adam Levy on Sunday, Oct. 24, at 8 p.m. at the Tupelo Music Hall, 2 Young Road in Londonderry. Tickets cost \$15 at www.tupelohall.com.

• **The show goes on:** Phish is making its first New Hampshire appearance in close to 20 years, which is cause for celebration among the tie-dyed set. One of the state’s favorite jam bands, Roots of Creation, will keep the party going downtown, with help on the turntables from a Break, House and Funk master and a Dubstep specialist. See Roots of Creation with DJ Midas and SP1 on Tuesday, Oct. 26, at 10 p.m. at Penuche’s, 96 Hanover St. in Manchester. Go to www.rootsofcreation.com.

• **Blues power:** Peter Parcek got keyboard help from Al Kooper for *The Mathematics of Love*, a wild blend of blues, rockabilly and Parcek’s unique “soul guitar” style. It’s one of the best records of any genre to come out of the local scene this year. On Tuesday, Parcek and his trio make their biweekly appearance at a downtown blues haven. See the Peter Parcek 3 on Tuesday, Oct. 26, at 9 p.m. at Strange Brew Tavern, 88 Market St. in Manchester. For more, go to www.strangebrewtavern.net.

• **Dorm rock:** Hip-hop and pop rock purveyors join forces on a tour sponsored by web sitcom *Late Night Republic* and a chipmaker (snacks, not computers). J. Cole takes a scholarly approach to rapping, while We the Kings favor synth-y love songs like “Check Yes Juliet” from their debut album and the recent “Heaven Can Wait.” See the Pringles Xtreme Campus tour with We the Kings and J. Cole on Sunday, Oct. 24, at 8 p.m. at Keene State College. Call 358-2644 for ticket information.

An old soul with new stories

Jandee Lee Porter sings country comfort

By Michael Witthaus
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When Jandee Lee Porter was a young girl in Charlestown, N.H., she’d sing along with her grandmother’s Patsy Cline records while the two baked cookies together. Porter insists her destiny became clear the first time she held a hairbrush and pretended it was a microphone.

“I have been on the stage since I was probably 3 or 4 years old,” she said recently from her new home in Boston, “and definitely it progressed to become something more substantial since I’ve gotten older.”

The heartache at the core of country music spoke to Porter, and as a teenager she wrote songs to cope with a tough home life. “It was a need to get it out of my system. My parents have married and divorced twice and growing up was difficult at times,” she says. “All families have their own stuff, but I found it to be my best relief.”

Now in her late 20s, Porter draws from other influences like Paul Simon, James Taylor and Bob Dylan. “They have that knack to do the same thing [and] when their songs come on, they take me somewhere else,” she said. “You don’t realize if the song is eight minutes long.”

The title track from Porter’s latest album offers the declaration, “There ain’t no sugar-coated stories here, I write songs about the way my life is... I’m gonna tell it like it is, baby — I got no reason to lie.” Porter says her music reveals the person behind the songs, both good and bad. “If you were to talk to a lot of my closest friends they would say ‘that’s her; I know what she’s singing about.’”

Porter continues, “You know, something my mom said has always stuck with me — I was probably 19 at the time. She said, ‘I really don’t know how you write stuff like this, because I’m 45 years old and you understand my life, too, and you’re a child basically.’ That stuck with me. I was always thought of as an

old soul; I’ve kind of grown up very quickly.”

Released earlier this year, *No Reason To Lie* is Porter’s second long player, and she’s hard at work on a new record. New material arrives at the speed of life.

“I have songs stockpiled for years, but they never stop coming,” Porter said. “I’ve lived in a small town my whole life; now I’m living in the city. I’m having a baby in the spring; there’s a lot going on in my personal life, which is something to write about, and there’s always a story to tell.”

In May, Porter appeared at Boynton’s Taproom as part of a songwriters showcase. On Friday, Oct. 22, she brings her band to the club.

“Manchester is opening up doors for original singer songwriters,” she says. “Cover tunes are a dime a dozen. This is just people that want [music] in a quiet environment that has this cool feel and a cool stage.”

Porter began assembling her band somewhat by accident, at a solo show last year in Portsmouth. “There was another girl who I met when I played at the Blue Mermaid,” she said. “I opened for her band, and now two of her guitar players are now my guitar players.”

Mike Groove and Mark Sciascia, who share a love for honky-tonk performers like Dwight Yoakam and Buck Owens, heard something in Porter and offered to produce her on spec. As the sessions progressed, chemistry between the three became apparent. “We realized that something more was building. People started to come and ask, ‘Who is she with, what is she doing?’ The next thing you know [they] came at me with, ‘Do you want a band? And I said yes.’”

The Jandee Lee Porter Band, which also includes Dave Mastroianni on bass and Michael Powers on drums, is coming off a busy season that included everything from small-town farmers markets to a pair of gigs on the second stage at Meadowbrook, opening for Reba and a sold-out Zack Brown show. Porter and her



Jandee Lee Porter.

band also made a pre-show appearance at Joe Dee Messina’s Indian Ranch concert.

“I love to perform, I love to be on stage, I love to bounce around,” Porter said. “I don’t stand still very often when I’m on bigger stages — you get to connect a little bit more with the audience and show that more bubbly side of yourself.”

She plans a blend of rock and acoustic music for the band’s Boynton’s Taproom appearance.

“We’re looking to give a little bit of both and show the versatility — we’ve come together very quickly and become very much a family unit. We’re people that have been playing music their whole lives and love it for what it is... they’re doing it for the right reasons and I couldn’t ask for more than that.”

Jandee Lee Porter Band

Where: Boynton’s Taproom, 155 Dow St. (3rd floor), Manchester

When: Friday, Oct. 22, at 10 p.m. (late show after comedy)

Tickets: \$7 at www.boyntonstaproom.com

Going to nationals

Eric Grant Band finds success at Northeast Country Showdown

By Angel Roy
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One year ago, Eric Grant pulled together a group of musicians and laid out a plan.

“I told them, ‘For the next two years we are going to live the dream. I believe we can do something special, make a hit CD and do this for a living. If you believe that can happen, or want to believe that can happen, you’re in the right place — let’s go for it and do it,’” Grant says.

“No one got up and ran out of the room, so I said, ‘Alright, let’s do it,’” Grant recalls.

Now, a year later, the Eric Grant Band has won Band of the Year, Vocal Group of the Year and Best New Male Vocalist of the Year at the 2010 Northeast Invitational Country Showdown, held Oct. 10 in Bedford, Mass. The regional competition was a follow-up to

the statewide competition, hosted by the New Hampshire Country Music Association, where the band was named Band of the Year, Vocal Group of the Year and Male Vocalist of the Year.

Winning the regional competition, Grant said, is “just another stepping stone.”

“We haven’t gone backwards, that is the exciting part about everything,” Grant said, citing the whirlwind year of headlining shows and awards. “It is a forward momentum that we don’t want to lose.”

The momentum will continue as the Eric Grant Band will take the stage March 7 through March 13 at the national competition in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

“Hopefully we can just represent New Hampshire and get recognized as a new country act that came out of nowhere,” Grant said. “Hopefully we will get some recognition and

make some contacts that are interested in EGB and take us another step further.”

The awards were won not only by the musicians taking the stage but also by the network of people involved with the band, “the people that help you build what you are experiencing and winning,” he said.

In a 365-day period, the Eric Grant Band performed more than 220 times, Grant said.

“That is a lot of time away, so, when you win a Band of the Year award, it is for everybody,” he said.

Before forming a band of his own, Grant, of Gilford, performed with pop and rock and roll cover bands but was seeking an outlet to showcase his original music.

When he found that his recorded ballads brought tears to the eyes of grown men at his studio, Grant realized it was time to get his own music career going.

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"I said, 'If I can make people cry, it's got to be worth something When I saw my music connecting emotions to people, it flipped the switch in my head," Grant said. "It was time to get rid of the cover stuff and go for my original music."

At the same time, the music scene in Nashville, Tenn., shifted from traditional country to a demand for what is referred to as "crossover country," a genre that Grant said gave his sound a home.

His lyrics, Grant said, come at any given moment and are sparked by his emotions.

"They take shape and I put more words and phrasing to it and before you know it, it becomes a song," Grant said. "Without a doubt, it's the emotion that is the trigger for the direction of the music."

Grant serves as the eight-member band's lead singer and acoustic guitarist. His sister, Sherry, also lends her voice to the group.

"Having female and male vocals gives our music a good variety so people don't have to always listen to the same person or same style of voice all night With all of the fans loving her so much we might have to change our name to the Sherry Grant Band," Grant said.

Many people, Grant said, do not know they are ready to like country music.

"I think people hear 'country' and associate it with a very old-school, maybe traditional kind of sound — very twangy," Grant said. "New country is more classic pop rock and



The Eric Grant Band: Paul DiBiao, Dan Haney, Sherry Grant, John Littlefield, Eric Grant and Carlos Flores. Courtesy photo.

roll with typical sprinklings of country — guitars, banjos and fiddles."

It is the flavor of country that drew Grant in.

"I like the big vocal sound, the themes that inspire the songs, the stories that are told — that is my favorite thing about it," he said.

Grant said he had never realized what a fan meant to him until he began seeing people drive two hours just to enjoy his music.

"That is the fuel behind what we are doing," Grant said. "We are receiving these little glass trophies because of those people sitting in that room ... I don't like to call them fans, I like to call them family. At the end of the day we all support each other and push each other to go to the next level and keep the fire burning."

CONCERTS

Venues

Capitol Center for the Performing Arts

44 S. Main St., Concord, 225-1111, ccanh.com

The Colonial Theatre

95 Main St., Keene, 352-2033, thecolonial.org

Dana Humanities Center at Saint Anselm College

100 Saint Anselm Dr., Manchester, 641-7700, anselm.edu/DANA/

Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom

169 Ocean Blvd., Hampton Beach, 929-4100, casinoballroom.com

Leddy Center

38c Ladd's Lane, Epping, 679-2781, ledlycenter.org

Lowell Memorial Auditorium

East Merrimack Street, Lowell, Mass., 978-454-2299, lowellauditorium.com

The Middle Arts & Entertainment Center

316 Central St., Franklin, 934-1901, themiddleh.org

The Music Hall

28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth, 436-2400, themusichall.org

The Old Meeting House,

1 New Boston Rd., Francesstown

Palace Theatre

80 Hanover St., Manchester,

668-5888, palacetheatre.org

Rochester Opera House

31 Wakefield St., Rochester 335-1992, rochesteroperahouse.com

Stockbridge Theatre

Pinkerton Academy, Route 28, Derry, 437-5210, stockbridgetheatre.com

Tupelo Music Hall

2 Young Road, Londonderry, 437-5100, tupelohall.com

Verizon Wireless Arena

555 Elm St., Manchester, 644-5000, www.verizonwirelessarena.com

Whittemore Center Arena UNH

128 Main St., Durham, 862-4000, www.whittcenter.com

- **The Tubes** Thurs., Oct. 21, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Jon Pousette Dart Band** Fri., Oct. 22, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Roomful of Blues** Sat., Oct. 23, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Amber Rubarth** Sun., Oct. 24, at 7 p.m., Tupelo
- **The Black Crowes** Sun., Oct. 24, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **Drake**, Tues., Oct. 26, at 7:30 p.m., Tsongas Center
- **Phish** Tues., Oct. 26, at 7:30 p.m., Verizon
- **Deanna Bogart Band** Fri., Oct. 29, at 8 p.m., Cap Center
- **Indigo Girls** Fri., Oct. 29, at 8 p.m., Music Hall
- **Chad Perrone** Fri., Oct. 29, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Average White Band** Fri., Oct. 30, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Art Garfunkel** Wed., Nov. 1, at 8 p.m., Music Hall
- **Styx** Wed., Nov. 3, at 7:30 p.m., Lowell Auditorium
- **Australian Pink Floyd**, Thurs., Nov. 4, at 7:30 p.m., Verizon
- **Joan Baez** Thurs., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m., Cap Center
- **Dave Mason** Fri., Nov. 5, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Carrie Underwood** Sat., Nov. 6, at 7:30 p.m., Verizon
- **The Weepies** Sat., Nov. 6, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Michael Franti & Spearhead** Sun., Nov. 7, at 7:30 p.m., Cap Center
- **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis**, Wed., Nov. 10, at 8 p.m., Cap Center
- **Paula Cole** Fri., Nov. 12, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Mercy Me with Phil Wickham** Fri., Nov. 12, at 7 p.m., Lowell Auditorium
- **Joe Bonamassa** Sat., Nov. 13, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **Arlo Guthrie** Sun., Nov. 14, at 7 p.m., Palace
- **Darius Rucker** Sun., Nov. 14, at 8 p.m., Casino Ballroom
- **Aimee Mann** Mon., Nov. 15, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Rusted Root**, Sun., Nov. 17, at 7 p.m., Tupelo
- **Tartan Terrors** Fri., Nov. 19, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Jesse Colin Young** Sat., Nov. 20, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson** Sat., Nov. 20, at 8 p.m., Lowell Auditorium
- **The Subdudes** Sun., Nov. 21, at 7 p.m., Tupelo
- **Stephen Kellogg and the Sixers** Fri., Nov. 26, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **NH Philharmonic** Sat., Nov. 27, at 8 p.m., Stockbridge Theatre
- **John Sebastian** Sat., Nov. 27, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Eddie Money** Sun., Nov. 28, at 7 p.m., Tupelo
- **Railroad Earth** Thurs., Dec. 2, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Rush** Fri., Dec. 3, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **ABBA MANIA** Sat., Dec. 4, at 8 p.m., Lowell Auditorium
- **George Winston** Sun., Dec. 5, at 7 p.m., Tupelo
- **Judy Collins**, Dec. 6, at 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Natalie MacMaster** Thurs., Dec. 9, at 7:30 p.m., Palace



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