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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Rhythm N’ Blooms Music Festival Announces First Round of Artists**

***Knoxville, Tennessee* [January 12, 2017]**

The music festival that has brought artists like The Decemberists, Jason Isbell, Dawes, Amos Lee, and so many more returns to Knoxville’s historic Old City and Jackson Avenue neighborhood, April 7th – 9th in 2017. Rhythm N’ Blooms is a festival that’s just as much about the city of Knoxville as it is about music. The festival honors the identity and spirit of our rich East Tennessee history while providing a premium listening experience for top-notch musical performances. Knoxville’s story has always been set to music. Rhythm N’ Blooms highlights that soundtrack and celebrates the crossroads of this city’s varied music history by showcasing popular national acts alongside the finest musicians East Tennessee has to offer.

Festival producers, Dogwood Arts and Attack Monkey Productions, are pleased to release the first wave of the 2017 festival lineup. **One more announcement the week of February 13th will fill out the full festival lineup.**

**Web**: [www.rhythmnbloomsfest.com](http://www.rhythmnbloomsfest.com)  
**Twitter**: [@rhythmnblooms](https://twitter.com/rhythmnblooms)  / #RnBKnox

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**Rhythm N’ Blooms Music Festival is presented by Yee-Haw Brewing Company and produced in partnership by Dogwood Arts and Attack Monkey Productions.**

**Young The Giant**

Los Angeles quintet Young the Giant continue to brave new sonic landscapes with their wildly adventurous third album, Home of the Strange. On this new release, the band explores their expansive musicianship with boldly eclectic arrangements anchored by a keen melodic presence.

To direct the band’s continued evolution, they collaborated with producer Alex Salibian (Elle King, Mikky Ekko) and Executive Producer Jeff Bhaskar, 2016 Grammy winner for Producer of the Year. Thematically, Home Of The Strange builds from the opening track “Amerika”, a song inspired by Franz Kafka's posthumously published and unfinished novel of the same name. The poignant message and bold sonics on Home of the Strange have been met with critical acclaim, leading to an NPR interview expanding upon the immigrant experience and Rolling Stone referencing “a new-wave sheen that flatters (the band).”

Young the Giant first broke through with their 2010 self-titled debut album, which featured the RIAA-gold certified hits, "My Body" and "Cough Syrup." This was followed by the release of 2014’s Mind Over Matter, which was both a commercial and critical success and prompted The New York Times to call [Lead singer Sameer Gadhia] “one of the great contemporary rock voices.” Since then, the band has toured the world, with their most recent route featuring sold out performances at Radio City Music Hall, The Greek Theatre, and Aragon Ballroom. They have become a festival mainstay at high profile outings such as Bonnaroo, Austin City Limits, Lollapalooza, Outside Lands, and Governor's Ball among others. Over the course of their career, Young The Giant has charted 5 singles on the Billboard Alternative Top 10.

**Gogol Bordello**

Gogol Bordello’s task is to provoke audience out of post-modern aesthetic swamp onto a neo-optimistic communal movement towards new sources of authentic energy. With acts of music, theatre, chaos and sorcery Gogol Bordello confronts the jaded and irony-deceased. Our treatment of traditional material is frivolous, but is not irony-driven and thus real. Our theatre is chaotic and spontaneous and because of that is alarming and response provoking. From where we stand it is clear that world’s cultures contain material for endless art possibilities and new mind-stretching combinations, raw joy and survival energy. We chose to work with Gypsy, Cabaret and punk traditions. It’s what we know and feel. And many more are possible that can make the beloved statement of post-modernism “everything is been done” sound as an intellectual error. The troubadours of neo-authentics are comin’ as a trans-global art syndicate family that has never been witnessed before. PARTY!

**Dave Barnes**

We all have music that transports us back in time. The song your family sings every holiday. The track that makes you reminisce about a first love. The music that instantly reminds you of where you came from but also of how far you've come. For Dave Barnes, that music is from the 1970s Los Angeles scene where the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac and Jackson Browne left the greatest mark. It is these early influences’ sounds that encapsulate the direction of Barnes’ latest release, Carry On, San Vicente. "This is one of the most true versions of myself that I've probably ever made." says Barnes. Barnes is a respected Nashville songwriter who received Grammy and CMA nominations for Blake Shelton's recording of his song "God Gave Me You," and has also penned songs for Tim McGraw, Marc Broussard, Billy Currington, Hunter Hayes, Matt Wertz, Ben Rector and many others. He has toured extensively over the past 14 years as an artist showcasing his catalog of nine full-length albums, including his latest nine-track release Carry On, San Vicente as well as opening for artists including Bonnie Raitt, Taylor Swift, John Mayer, Lady Antebellum, One Republic and more. Dave approached the creation of Carry On, San Vicente differently than past releases, wanting to craft a specific sound and an easy listening experience where fans could keep the album on repeat all day long as they go about their lives. "I sat over a couple of weeks thinking about what the next move was in my career. I figured what would be fun to do now in this stage, where I have enough of a bedrock of music that people know what I do and who I'm about, would be to venture out a bit. Or in this case, return to the roots of what inspired me in the first place," he says. After watching the Eagles documentary History of the Eagles, he thought it'd be fun to create a piece of work that embodied the 1970s Los Angeles music scene and started writing songs that he planned to release in the form of an EP. Pretty soon he had more songs than an EP typically offers. “I had a couple of prerequisites – I really wanted it to feel desert-y and sparse and evoke that kind of imagery. I also wanted it to be something you could sing to pretty easily –on the first listen, the second and third chorus you can sing along. That was the biggest deal. The singability factor was key," he explains. "When you hear those Eagles songs, Jackson Browne songs, Fleetwood Mac, so much of that stuff is so memorable melodically. They're really difficult to write but they're so easy to sing and participate in and that was important to me to try and pull that off.”

Songs like album opener "She's the One I Love" embody the catchiness and musicality of the aforementioned era of music with its layered guitar parts and vocal harmonies. Meanwhile, the soaring "Sunset Santa Fe" with wavering pedal steel accompaniment and slowed guitar parts paints a vivid landscape for the listener. A thank you letter to his wife for allowing him to create a space to live out his dream, it's a song he calls one of the most honest tracks on the record. "I do feel like every time I listen to 'Sunset Santa Fe' it becomes more potent," he admits. Highlights on Carry On, San Vicente include the country leaning "Glow Like the Moon," complete with banjo accompaniment. Barnes says it's the closest he's ever come to making a country record. Meanwhile, piano ballad "Wildflower" has him channeling Billy Joel once again as well as Elton John with piano as the focal point of the song alongside memorable lyrics and electric guitar riffs. "It was more of an indulgence," he says of the guitar interlude. “It’s a fun musical moment on the record. ”Title track, "Carry On, San Vicente," is a song of encouragement that sounds like it would fit perfectly in an Eagles’ set list. It's a song that Barnes' hopes uplifts the listener. "Memories don't make us who we are/ There's a silver lining in every scar/ Everything's forgiven/ Forgettin's up to you/ Carry on, San Vicente," he sings. A constant creator, Barnes says he is always trying to expand how people view what he does. "I think it's cool for people to go, 'I really didn't know that he could do this.' As people give you the grace to push the edges of what you do, you create more space to continue to do that." Barnes concludes that Carry On, San Vicente is a return to the beginning, confessing that the music shared in the nine songs is as honest as he has ever been in showcasing himself. "It's so much of what I grew up listening to. This is the kind of music that if I have to listen to something all day without hitting pause or forward, this is the music - it's so innate to me," he concedes. "It's so much of my soundtrack growing up, this world, this genre of music. ”Carry On, San Vicente is a departure from the sound that fans have become used to from his past eight albums but it is an album Barnes stands behind and he is sure his fans will embrace and enjoy. So whether you grew up a fan of the 1970s Los Angeles music scene like Barnes, or have your own personal soundtrack that transports you back in time, Dave Barnes' Carry On, San Vicente will fit perfectly in any music collection.

**John Paul White**

*Beulah.* It’s a small, complicated word with a tangle of meanings. It’s the title of John Paul White’s new album, his first in nearly a decade, a remarkably and assuredly diverse collection spanning plaintive folk balladry, swampy southern rock, lonesome campfire songs, and dark acoustic pop. Gothic and ambitious, with a rustic, lived-in sound, it’s a meditation on love

curdling into its opposite, on recrimination defining relationships, on hope finally filtering through doubt. Beulah is also a White family nickname. “It’s a term of endearment

around our house,” White explains, “like you would call someone ‘Honey.’ My dad used to call my little sister Beulah, and I call my daughter Beulah. It’s something I’ve always been around.”

According to White, the songs came to him unbidden—and not entirely welcome. “When these songs started popping into my head, I had been home for a while and I was perfectly happy. I wasn’t looking for songs. I didn’t know whether any would pop back in my head again, and I was honestly okay with that. I’m a very happy father and husband, and I love where I live. I love working with artists for a label that I think is doing good work.” Far from the grind and glamour of Nashville—where he worked for years as a working songwriter before stepping into the spotlight himself—White settled in his hometown of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, a wellspring of gritty Southern rock and soul since the 1960s. Together with Alabama Shakes keyboard player Ben Tanner and Shoals native Will Trapp, he founded and runs Single Lock Records, a local indie label that has released records by some of the Yellowhammer State’s finest, including Dylan LeBlanc, St. Paul & the Broken Bones, and legendary songwriter and keyboard player Donnie Fritts. The label is based in a small ranch house a stone’s throw from White’s own home, which would come in handy when those songs started invading his head.

“Honestly, I tried to avoid them, but then I realized the only way I was going to get rid of them

was if I wrote them down. I got my phone out and I’d sing these little bits of melody, then put it

away and move on. But eventually I got to a place where it was a roar in my head, and that

pissed me off.” Due to his experiences as a gun-for-hire in Nashville, White was reluctant to

romanticize the creative process, to turn it into a spiritual pursuit. “Then one day I told my wife I think I’m going to go write a song. She was as surprised as I was. I went and wrote probably

eight songs in three days. It was like turning on a faucet.”

White threw himself into the project, no longer the reluctant songwriter but a craftsman

determined to make the best album possible—to do these songs justice. He cut several songs at the renowned FAME Studios in his hometown, where Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, the

Allmans, the Osmonds, Bobbie Gentry, Arthur Conley, and Clarence Carter recorded some of

their most popular hits. One product of those sessions is “What’s So,” which introduces itself by way of a fire-and brimstone riff, as heavy as a guilty conscience—the kind of riff you wouldn’t be surprised to hear on a Sabbath album. But White’s vocals are gritty and soulful, a product of the Shoals, almost preacherly as he sings about earthly and eternal damnation: “Sell your damn soul or get right with the man, keep treading water as long as you can,” he exhorts the listener. “But before you do, you must understand that you don’t get above your raisin’.” It’s the heaviest moment on the record, perhaps the darkest in White’s career.

At the other end of the spectrum is “The Martyr,” one of the catchiest tunes White has ever

penned. The spryness of the melody imagines Elliott Smith wandering the banks of the

Tennessee River, yet the song is shot through with a pervasive melancholy as White wrestles

with his own demons. “Keep falling on your sword, sink down a little more,” he sings over a

dexterous acoustic guitar theme. This is not, however, a song about some unnamed person, but rather a pained self-diagnosis: “These are the wounds that I will not let heal, the ones that I deserve and seem so real.” White knows he’s playing the martyr, but he leaves the song

hauntingly open-ended, as though he isn’t sure what to do with this epiphany beyond putting it in a song.

Once White had everything assembled and sequenced, it was time to give the album a title, to

wrap everything up for the listener. *Beulah* stuck—not only because of family history, but because White realized that making music was his own trip to Beulah. “If you had to sum up what music is for most people in this world, it’s that. It’s that escape. It’s that refuge. You go there and you come back and you use that to help you with your life. You always have that as a place to go.”

**Cruz Contreras**

Multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, songwriter and producer Cruz Contreras has roots in Tennessee and Michigan, but has impacted Americana music worldwide.

The frontman, founder, and driving force behind The Black Lillies’ raw and rootsy sound also co-founded Robinella and the CCstringband, and has collaborated with musicians ranging from John Oates and Jim Lauderdale to Langhorne Slim and The Turnpike Troubadours. Cruz’s projects have topped both the Billboard and Americana radio charts, won Independent Music Awards, and been nominated for the Americana Music Association’s Emerging Artist of the Year award.

Cruz has appeared on nationally broadcast television including Late Night with Conan O’Brien, CMT, VH-1, GAC, Bluegrass Underground and PBS Television’s Sun Studio Sessions. Cruz writes and arranges all of The Black Lillies’ material, which has been lauded by outlets as diverse as American Songwriter Magazine, Rolling Stone, NPR’s Morning Edition and Vanity Fair.

**Parker Millsap**

At only 23 years of age, Oklahoma native Parker Millsap is quickly making a name for himself with his captivating live performances, soulful sound, and character-driven narratives. He recently wrapped up a banner year in 2016, which included his network television debut on CONAN, an invitation to play with Elton John at the Apple Music Festival, an Austin City Limits taping and an Americana Music Association nomination for Album of the Year. Parker's most recent release, The Very Last Day, has received praise from The New York Times, The Boston Globe, LA Times, Austin Chronicle and Rolling Stone to name a few.

Parker grew up in the tiny town of Purcell, OK (pop. 5,952) where he attended a Pentecostal church with his family three times a week for most of his youth. Though Parker doesn't consider himself very religious these days, the experiences engraved upon him inform his songwriting. Blending that fire and brimstone preaching with rock, country, blues and Waits-ian imagery, he has created a sound uniquely his own.

Parker first picked up an acoustic guitar at nine, then plugged in and went electric after getting into Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan, eventually starting a cover band, Fever in Blue, with classmate Michael Rose who still plays bass with him today. After graduating high school, he moved to Northern California, where he interned at Prairie Sun Recording, the studio where Tom Waits recorded Bone Machine and Mule Variations. Returning to Oklahoma, he put down the electric guitar and got into songwriting, releasing an indie album in 2012, Palisade, which he sold from the back of his van.

A trip to Nashville found Parker playing at the Tin Pan South songwriter's festival, where his performance impressed Old Crow Medicine Show's manager so much that he invited Parker to open a string of dates for the band, later leading to a slot on their New Year's Eve gig at the Ryman Auditorium. Parker has also opened dates for Jason Isbell, Tedeschi Trucks Band, Lake Street Dive, Lucinda Williams and Shovels & Rope.

“I like to set goals for myself that are impossible to reach,” he explains. “That way, I always have something to aim for, a better song, different characters, new stories. I just want to pay the bills and feed my dog, and maybe buy a new guitar every now and then. That’s all I need. I don’t want to be Elvis Presley, but I wouldn’t complain if a million girls screamed for me, either. Just don’t tell my girlfriend that.” Parker Millsap is ready to share his Oklahoma roots with the rest of the country, and, hopefully, the world.

**John Moreland**

Some days, being John Moreland has to hurt. As others bury experiences and stifle regrets, Moreland pokes old wounds until you’re sure they’ve got to be bleeding again. It’s painful. But in Moreland’s care, it’s also breathtakingly beautiful. With the release of his highly anticipated third solo album High on Tulsa Heat (out April 21st via Thirty Tigers), he offers another round of the lyrics-first, gorgeously plaintive songs that have earned him devoted listeners across the country.

Moreland started writing when he was 10 years old, the same year his family moved from Kentucky, to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he still lives today. He turns 30 this year, but he’s been slinging songs for more than half his life. He started fronting local punk and hardcore bands in high school. After graduation, he had epiphany. “I’d just overexposed myself to punk and hardcore to the point that it just didn’t do anything for me anymore,” he says. The remedy? He ditched his music for his dad’s: CCR, Neil Young, Tom Petty, Steve Earle.

“I think what appealed to me about it was lyrics,” he says. “In hardcore, there might be great lyrics in a song but you have to read them off a piece of paper to know it. I was 19 in 2004, and Steve Earle had put out ‘The Revolution Starts Now,’ and I remember hearing the song ‘Rich Man’s War’ and totally feeling like somebody just punched me in the chest.”

Moreland’s been chasing the chest punch ever since, composing pointedly and prodigiously. “I’ve always written to make myself feel better, I think,” he says. “It’s my way of figuring stuff out -- figuring out where I stand. You can’t do that without emotion. You can’t do that insincerely.”

When Moreland released In the Throes in June of 2013, the album didn’t just charm listeners -- it stunned them. American Songwriter proclaimed that “[t]hose not familiar with the Oklahoma City singer-songwriter should remedy that pronto,” while No Depression declared the collection “isn’t so much songwriting as alchemy with words and music.” MSNBC host Rachel Maddow heard his songs and joined the chorus, tweeting: “If the American music business made any sense, guys like John Moreland would be household names.”

If In the Throes ignited Moreland’s 2013 summer, FX’s Sons of Anarchy poured gasoline all over the fire that fall. The hit series featured three Moreland-penned and -performed gems: “Heaven,” off of his Earthbound Blues, the second of two full-length albums he released in 2011; and “Gospel” and “Your Spell,” both from In the Throes.

As word continued to spread and Moreland played more and more shows, a pattern began to emerge: his songs hit listeners hard. While his precise, evocative lyrics often get the credit, his voice -- a scritchy-scratch baritone capable of soul-shouting but especially potent in its subdued default register -- ensures his lines linger.

“I got so used to playing in bars where you’re just kind of in a corner,” he says. “You’re just background music, and nobody gives a fuck about you. It was so soul sucking. I would try to sing in a way that would get people’s attention.”

For Moreland, that didn’t mean screaming or gimmicks. “If you just sing it like you mean it -- like so hard that people can’t ignore it...” He trails off for a second, then concludes: “That’s what I was trying to do.”

These days when Moreland performs, rooms ordinarily buzzing with drunken chatter and clanging glasses fall silent.

When he decided to head back to the studio to record the follow-up to In the Throes, Moreland admits he felt more pressure than in previous sessions. “I just tried to ignore it because I figured it’s probably not a good way to make a record,” he says. “But yeah. It was in the back of my mind.”

High expectations must agree with him. High on Tulsa Heat is a triumphant sequel, pulsing with the sharply drawn imagery and cutting vulnerability that his listeners have come to expect. Produced by Moreland, the 10-song collection features a strong cast of players including Jesse Aycock (Hard Working Americans, Secret Sisters), John Calvin Abney (Samantha Crain, The Damn Quails), Jared Tyler (Malcolm Holcombe), Chris Foster, and Kierston White.

Stripped-down arrangements rooted in gritty rock and roll punctuate and cushion Moreland’s compositions. Tracks including “Hang Me in the Tulsa County Stars,” “Heart’s Too Heavy,” and “Cleveland County Blues” set the tone, trafficking in relentless honesty and folk.

Buoyant lament “Sad Baptist Rain” tackles internal conflict. “I was just trying to grab this scene of being a 16-year-old church kid in the parking lot of the punk rock show trying to reconcile having some fun with my Southern Baptist guilt,” he says, with a hint of a laugh. If “Sad Baptist Rain” is about self-acceptance, “White Flag” warns of self-destruction. “It’s a song about wanting or needing somebody so bad that you’re willing to destroy yourself for it,” he explains.

“American Flags in Black and White,” grapples with nostalgia, and while Moreland initially seems to condemn it, he ends up acknowledging its comfort, framing the past as everyone’s guilty pleasure. He never really condemns or judges anyone -- except himself. “Anytime I do write a song that I feel like is more like pointing a finger at somebody, it never feels good and I always just end up throwing it away,” he says.

The album also includes the first recording of live show staple “Cherokee.” Based on a vivid dream, the song explores longing, shame, forgiveness, and love. “I want it to be open ended,” he says of “Cherokee” and his songs in general. “I don’t want to be told what happened or how to feel.”

“You Don’t Care for Me Enough to Cry” proves once again that Moreland does intoxicatingly sad as well or better than anyone, but the concluding title track rollicks victoriously, relishing the thought of a safe place -- an idea Moreland says serves as a loose theme for the album. “A home is something I’ve really wanted,” he says. “But that means you have to figure out what that really means and what it is. The record is about those questions.”

**William Wild**

William Wild is the moniker of Alternative singer-songwriter Garrett Sale. Born and raised at the foothill of the Appalachian Mountains in Knoxville, TN, Sale began to pursue music while attending The University of Tennessee.

It was there that Sale worked on his first collection of recordings with Knoxville friends and fellow musicians, eventually releasing a self-titled LP under the name “William Wild” (the nickname of a local homeless man).

Sale then embarked on a solo journey through Europe, where he wrote four of the six songs on his new EP, Steady Now. Continuing with the layered vocals, lush strings, dark tones of the debut album, Steady Now explores Sale’s search for peace while wrestling with self-pity, guilt and materialism.

The title track is a beautifully intense experience as he sings “Oh death won’t you give me a second chance. I’m looking for an easy way out. I need it more than the company I’m searching for.”

The album’s most cutting song “When I’ve Been Gone” is also his most personal, written from the perspective of his father who was homeless for 5 years and battling addiction. It’s an emotional experience as he sings “What about those times I almost changed? What do they mean?”

The opening song “Sleeptalk” finds him consumed by anxiety with a romantic relationship to stabilize himself. “Even when you run like a bullet shot out of a gun,” he sings, “I’m gonna let you know where you need to be”.

Hazy guitars, dusty keys, and blurry pedal steel illuminate the recordings of weighty songs immersed in loss, fear of failure, and the worthiness of human existence. With plush nostalgic pop sensibilities, Steady Now radiates tranquility. In an atmosphere of warmth, the listener is invited to delve into psyche of kindred spirits. It is there that unfaltering refuge is found.

**Aaron Lee Tasjan**

Whether playing guitar in the late incarnation of riotous glam-rock innovators the New York Dolls, the gender-bending, envelope-pushing sleaze n’ tease arena rock band Semi Precious Weapons, the Neil Young-signed alt-country act Everest, British roots rock band Alberta Cross, Southern rock stalwarts Drivin’ N’ Cryin’ or even as frontman of the devilishly cleverly-named Heartbreakers meets Replacements rockers Madison Square Gardeners, East Nashville-based musician Aaron Lee Tasjan has always considered himself a songwriter first and foremost, writing his own off-kilter folk-inflected songs since he picked up his first acoustic as a teen guitar prodigy. “A lot of the stuff I did previously was never the main focal point,” Tasjan explains. “It’s all just been pieces along the way.”

While those stints may have never been his main destination, each one has been a stepping stone that has uniquely informed his songwriting and made him a compelling, singular artist. Tasjan’s songs, as first heard on his debut solo EP, 2014’s *Crooked River Burning*, are indebted to great American storytellers like John Prine, Tom Petty, Guy Clark, Steve Goodman, Arlo Guthrie and Todd Snider. They are imbued with wry wit, a sharp tongue and a lot of heart.

Last year’s self-released LP, *In The Blazes*, received accolades from *American Songwriter*, *Rolling Stone*, *Nashville Scene* and *NPR* and suggested Tasjan was an artist to keep an eye on, especially on the strength of album standout, “E.N.S.A.A.T.” The biting gentrification ballad, with its refrain of “Move out to East Nashville and write a song about a train,” got tongues wagging, with the *Scene* describing it as “an eye roll at the notion of musical posturing,” and *NPR* writing in its premiere of the song, “His critique of the Americana music biz is woven within a truly poignant first-person account of the working artist's daily struggle. ‘You can't turn away from your own two feet, or give away what's not yours to keep,’ Tasjan croons in his broken tenor, over a slowly steamrolling guitar line. That's some eternal truth to drop on a changing Nashville landscape.”

While that album hinted at Tasjan’s enormous potential, it’s his sophomore effort, his New West Records debut, *Silver Tears*, that best realizes his artistic ambitions and solidifies him as one of the most intriguing singer/songwriters to emerge in sometime. An inspired and confident set of songs, the 12-track album, which features a cover with Tasjan decked out in a reflective suit and Stetson, careens from woozy pot paeans to brooding, cinematic observations to laid back ‘70s country-rock and galloping anthems to introspective folk and rollicking honky tonk. “I might have made something that will surprise people,” Tasjan admits. “I didn’t completely abandon the recipe, but I really stretched myself and pushed beyond what people might expect from me. Being true as a musician, I’m not just one thing – and a variety of styles is a way to accomplish that."

For*Silver Tears*, Tasjan decamped from Tennessee to Southern California, trading Nashville’s icy winter for Los Angeles’ eternal sunshine in February 2016. Like he did on *In The Blazes*, he enlisted producer and Father John Misty bassist Eli Thomson to helm the production and together they assembled a group of accomplished musicians that included solo artist David Vandervelde on guitar and lap steel, Max Hart on piano and organ, Charlie Peterson on cornet, trumpet and saxophone and drummers Frank Lenz and Dan Bailey on drums and other assorted percussion. Thomson also manned bass and synth. Splitting their time between several studios, the band laid down part of the album at New Monkey, the famed studio in the gritty LA enclave of Van Nuys where Smith recorded his final album, *From A Basement On The Hill*, and at Sonikwire Studios in Irvine and Club Casino in Huntington Beach. “Romantically, I had the idea of Tom Petty in the studio, jamming, trying to capture different feels and see where the day was,” Tasjan reveals. I wanted it to be live, to have that intensity that draws people in.”

Petty’s influence, one that caught hold of Tasjan when he first discovered *Full Moon Fever* as a teenager growing up in Ohio, can be heard in Tasjan’s similar relaxed delivery and nuanced phrasing as well as the album’s varied sounds. Whether the Traveling Wilburys-esque “Dime,” the slink Petty nod “Till The Town Goes Dark” or the plaintive, pedal steel-drenched “On Your Side,” the Gainesville swamp bleeds through. But there also are echoes of Harry Nilsson’s quirky playfulness on album opener, “Hard Life,” and “Little Movies” brings to mind Jeff Lynne and Elliott Smith. Smith is again evoked in the echoey guitar part and “ooh-ooh-ooh” harmonies of the aforementioned “Till The Town Goes Dark,” begging the question, does Smith’s ghost hang out in the hallowed halls of his old studio? Neil Young and Crazy Horse can be heard in “Refugee Blues’” mid-song crescendo while “Success” reminds of Allen Toussaint’s carny barkery and “12 Bar Blues” of Todd Snider’s tongue-in-cheek talking blues.

While Tasjan’s masterful, eclectic songwriting is on full display throughout the album, his spirited guitar playing never takes a backseat. Instead, the acclaimed guitarist, who was named Distinguished Guitarist at the prestigious Ellington Competition at Carnegie Hall as a teenager and who was awarded a jazz-guitar scholarship to the esteemed Berklee College of Music but who fled to Brooklyn after he decided he wanted to do things on his own, tastefully delivers exactly what each song calls for, from hard-strumming acoustics to psychedelic flourishes to feedback-filled freakouts and twangy licks. There’s an edge that comes out in his playing when he really attacks the guitar that could only come from a Midwestern adolescent raised on punk and what used to be called college rock. “I love the bands of the late ‘80s and ‘90s like Dinosaur Jr., Husker Du, The Replacements, all those groups from Minneapolis, Tasjan enthuses. “The two things I listen to the most are those kind of more punk rock bands and songwriter stuff, that’s where that comes together for me. There’s a lot of similarities, there’s underlying social commentary to it, it works on several levels, it engages my mind. At the end of the day I like good songs that are played passionately.”

*Silver Tears* was written over the last year, in between and on tours with Ray Wylie Hubbard, John Moreland, Lilly Hiatt and the Legendary Shack Shakers, which would end up being especially fortuitous. Tasjan, who is no stranger to mind-expanding substances, having written most of the aptly-named *In The Blazes* in a cloud of marijuana smoke, had a chance encounter with a fan that greatly influenced the record. “At a show in Omaha, a guy in the crowd gave me a wadded up napkin that he said I needed. I had forgotten about it but found it awhile later in the pocket of the jacket I was wearing that night,” he recalls. “As it turned out, the napkin had a couple of hits of acid in it. I decided to try this thing called microdosing where you just take little bits all day long, and stay suspended in this slightly altered state. I set up a studio in my living room to record on garage band, went with a classic tambourine/duct tape drum set... suspended a RadioShack mic from the ceiling fan. You know, the essentials. It was amazing and in a creative burst I wrote ‘Little Movies,’ ‘Ready To Die,’ ‘Dime’ and ‘Where The Road Begins and Ends’ all that day.”

Of course not all songs on the record came to Tasjan in a chemically-induced state. “Till The Town Goes Dark,” a song about coming to terms with the future not delivering on its lofty ambitions, was written towards the end of recording in a fit of inspiration. “Frank Lenz and I were driving around and he said the opening line of ‘All we got were TV's in our pockets after being promised rocket ships and flying cars,’ Tasjan offers. “When we got back to his apartment I went in the bedroom and wrote the rest of it looking out of his bedroom window: “One day, they said the future/Was flying cars and a ride on a rocket/Time passed and all I got/Was America today and a TV in my pocket.” “Little Movies” came from pictures he was seeing in his mind. “All those images and the sound of the record worked because it was more melancholic, more beautiful sadness. But also more musical in different ways than expected.”

The gently romantic country-rock tune “Memphis Rain” is half dream, half reality. “I had a dream that late, great Memphis musician, Jay Reatard was singing ‘In the Memphis rain’ on this motorcycle that was on fire. A few days later I played a show at Lafayette’s in Memphis and right before the gig, this lady at the bar was really tearing into me, said she was a jujitsu instructor, could sleep with her eyes open and a descendant of her family was pictured on the Indian head nickel, just really wild stuff. There was a big window looking out onto the street from the bar and during my whole set I watched her standing out in the pouring rain arguing with her boyfriend who kept his motorcycle running the entire time I played. It was a really beautiful and strange moment so I wrote it into the song.”

“I can’t say unequivocally there was a particular thing on my mind when I wrote about this album but when I listen back to it there’s a lot of social commentary on there,” Tasjan confesses. “If there’s a theme to the record it’s just having something to say. These things that are happening in America right now aren’t just fantastical, strange surreal things, they’re things people are really going through and people are connecting with them in a big way. That’s certainly part of the development of society. Everybody has some member of their family that has to deal with gay and straight issues we face in America; they might have a family member that is transgender. I really love people and feel very vested in humanity, I believe in people a great deal. I want to speak to all the stuff I’ve been thinking about as I feel it’s stuff that affects everyone.”

As in the song “On Your Side,” which sees Tasjan warble, “I sing jokes/And call 'em songs/Nobody knows where they belong/I've come up short/For far too long/And what felt right/Now feels so wrong,” Tasjan often turns the mirror on himself, never afraid to cast himself in a negative light. “One of the reasons I’ve been able to connect with people is by being honest and saying this is a really realistic picture of who I am,” he says. “It’s not always the good but it’s me.”

Tasjan points to an unlikely hero of his as someone he would like to model his career after. “I would love to be the Miley Cyrus of folk singers,” he declares. “I’d love people to feel they can be as free and weird as they are. That’s my favorite thing about her. I love the spirit of what she brings and how she uses her platform to empower people. I want to be the kind of dude where some kid who grew up in a little town in Ohio can feel, if they saw me singing or heard my album, that they could do whatever they wanted to do and transcend their surroundings.”

**Peak Physique**

drum machine + guitar + matters of the heart

Love and Sex are super important. Peak Physique are here to help you through both. The electronic pop duo exists to bring people together...mostly at the face, hands, and bathing suit areas.

Matt Honkonen (Tenderhooks/Llama Train) and Wil Wright (LiL iFFy/Senryu), both veteran East TN songwriters, broke ground on their collaboration with no plan or direction. The group's sound was built on a blending of slow, heavy-handed samples/beats, sparse/delicate vocals and guitar, and by channeling a bit of 1970's soul, schizophrenic modern pop, and sinful living. Honkonen and Wright found themselves with an unexpectedly raw, exotic sound, and the act was formed.

Because Peak Physique exists to encourage people to make each other feel as good as possible, please enjoy the songs responsibly. If you aren't ready to start a family, another band might be more suited to your lifestyle.

Otherwise, let's get comfortable

**Bonnie Bishop**

Most people know me as a singer songwriter, but the truth is I've always been a storyteller. (And no, I don't mean a liar, although I've been accused of that as well...) I remember when I was a little girl, I used to make up these long-winded tales. My Grandma Breaux would always laugh and put her hand over her eyes, "Bonnie where you getting all these STORIES?!" My family was the first to point out that I had a very active imagination...

When I grew up and became a songwriter, the stories shifted from my imagination to personal experience. Nearly all of my songs have been inspired by things that happened to me in real life, beautiful moments as well as heart-wrenching epiphanies, and because of that my music has always felt extremely personal.  Over the last couple years, I got the idea to marry my songwriting and storytelling voices, to further explore where these songs have really come from, and to try to understand the how these forces of inspiration and imagination are both at work in my creative process.

I love this series because it is a way for me to connect with people on a deeper level and to share the true heart behind my art. I see it as a way for me to return to my love of storytelling and to begin exploring my interests in creative writing and filmmaking, and all you people who have always been fans of my music seemed like the perfect guinea pigs for this new endeavor! The best part of this series is that the whole project is being created in real-time. I am sharing my artistic process on a very personal level through a combination of visual, audio, and written story pieces, using narrated podcasts and never-before-heard worktapes to tell the behind-the-scenes story...which ultimately, is the *real* story.

*Are you intrigued yet??*

**About Yee-Haw Brewing Co.:** Founded in July 2015, [**Yee-Haw Brewing Co.**](http://yeehawbrewing.com/)is a production brewery and taproom located in a historic railroad depot in downtown Johnson City, TN. Yee-Haw focuses on brewing approachable and drinkable ales and lagers that celebrate good times and good company. With their passion for using only top-quality ingredients, and their impeccable approach to quality control, Yee-Haw Brewing Co. is growing quickly throughout the Southeast.

**About Dogwood Arts:** Dogwood Arts, presented by ORNL Federal Credit Union, is a 501(c)3 organization with a mission to promote and celebrate our region’s arts, culture, and natural beauty. For more information on Dogwood Arts, visit [www.dogwoodarts.com](file:///\\DOGSERV\Users\2016%20Festival\Rhythm%20N'%20Blooms\Creative\Press%20Releases\www.dogwoodarts.com) or call [865] 637.4561.

**About Attack Monkey Productions:** Founded in 2009, Attack Monkey Productions is a full-service entertainment company specializing in event production and artist management. Attack Monkey Productions seeks out the things that are cool and brings them straight to you. From music to moonshine, the traditional to the avant-garde, AMP specializes in the development and promotion of unique, high quality brands and experiences. For more information, visit [www.attackmonkey.net](http://www.attackmonkey.net/).

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