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Hamilton Music Notes

by Ric Taylor
February 13 - 19, 2014

Graphic Underground: London 1977-1990

'Lucky' Pete Lambert's history in punk began in South Western Ontario's Forest City. At 14, Lambert fronted his first band called Cruiser in London, Ontario but became a punk when he saw the Demics in August of 1978. Six months later, he'd be drummer for NFG — a band that would come to prominence in the '80s with a name change to '63 Monroe. He'd since travel the world in similar punk rock circles to a post-Clash Joe Strummer and more recently make his musical mark in alt-country and punk in the last decade or two with acts like the Kensington Hillbillies. Lambert now makes his home in east end Hamilton and has become a major force in the annual Good Friday local Joe Strummer tribute, Steel City Rockers, but this weekend, Lucky Pete is helping to celebrate his own punk roots in the form of a new book put together by his brother Brian.

"My brother is one of the most talented people I've ever met and he can do everything really well, it's ridiculous — he's a painter, musician, and he spent two and a half years of his life putting together this book," explains Lucky Pete on Brian Lambert's book *Graphic Underground: London 1977 - 1990*. "As one of the curators at the McIntosh Gallery at the University of Western Ontario, my brother wanted to honour the poster art of the era. He gathered poster art together from friends and people involved in the scene and sure enough they got five to six hundred posters going all the way back to the first Demics gig in 1977 to shows in 1990. The book compiles the highlights of the posters and the [independent do-it-yourself magazines] 'zines' of the time and some great old photographs including me, I'm on the back cover. Brian took that photo back in the days of NFG so it was nice little tribute from my brother and kind of sums up the time."

A coffee table art book and a collection of punk rock artefacts, *Graphic Underground* includes some 500 entries from the aforementioned London and international underground bands that visited London at the time. As part of a shared punk culture, it was Toronto, Hamilton and London that traded like-minded aesthetics and the book includes homage to the likes of Hamilton's Simply Saucer, Teenage Head, the Forgotten Rebels and the Florida Razors as well.

"A lot of the Hamilton bands would play Hamilton because at the time it was one of the few places you could go and be appreciated," says Lambert. "The music was very outlaw and outside so there was a lot of derision for being involved in the punk rock scene from 'normal' people. It was an isolated and small scene. So bands like Teenage Head would come down and play four nights in a row, three sets a night and I would be there every night. They were my favourite band at the time — them and the Demics. I probably saw each of them a hundred times.

"We wanted to launch the book and have a little party and it will be for sale at Hammer City Records on James Street North so we're having a party to celebrate," adds Lambert. "I will be deejaying as part of this as DJ Lucky Pete playing some punk of the time from Hamilton, London, and Toronto all on vinyl. The author himself will be there as well to sign this beautiful document of the time. It sums up a scene and a vibe of an important scene that passed. The Hamilton/Toronto/ London scene was strong and all of those bands involved in this small outsider group of people played in those three cities around and around. Those three cities are tied into the book although it is London-centric. There are a lot of Hamilton bands and a Hamilton vibe to this book. If you want to see some great punk art history then this book should be part of your collection."

The Graphic Underground 1977-1990 book launch happens on Friday February 14 as part of the James Street North Art Crawl at Hammer City Records (228 James St N at Rear off Robert Street Alley) from 7pm to 11pm. Click on [graphicundergroundlondon.ca](#)

Good Food Rocks – A Fundraiser for the Good Food Box

While Hamiltonians have always shown character helping our less fortunate citizens, the Good Food Box aims to help Hamilton's hungry with something healthier than just Kraft dinner and cans of tuna. For the last three years, the Good Food Box has helped people get quality fruits and vegetables into their diets a little more affordably and this weekend hopes to raise some awareness and funds with a special two-day concert.

"It started about three years ago when we delivered our first boxes," recalls Good Food Box Project Manager Karen Burson. "The idea started back in Toronto back in 1994 when people were having hard times and the food banks were still kind of new. The one thing they were not doing and still struggle with is providing fresh fruits and vegetables to people in need. The food isn't given away for free but because it's a non-profit business, we make fruits and vegetables more affordable for people. There is the economic fact to the food as well as the physical aspect to the food. There are some areas in big cities that are often called food deserts because it's hard to get good quality, affordable food there. So if we're delivering food to those communities, it helps close that gap.

"It's hard to get projects funded particularly one like this," adds Burson. "We're an environmental organization that has a social service dimension so environmental funders don't get what we do and social services don't. We get a little bit of help but we're looking at making this project more self-sufficient and resilient over the years.

So Burson helped develop the event Good Food Rocks — a fundraiser happening on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon with live music, yoga, burlesque and more.

"There was an overwhelming number of yeses to my requests to play so we had to do two shows — plus some of the GFB fans are into rock and roll but some not so much — so we have a really rocking Saturday night and a slightly more laid back Sunday afternoon so hopefully that will appeal to a more broad range of people," notes Burson. "We're also really fortunate that the business community has stepped forward with

donations for our raffles and there will be a mini farmers market on Sunday afternoon. Admission to the event is a sliding scale from five to fifteen dollars to help make it affordable for people but if people are able to contribute more, they can be generous as they can."

As altruistic projects take shape, they refine and better the good work needed to make everyone not only be able to live but to perhaps better thrive. Burson and company hope that events like this will help educate the public at large as well as further develop a healthier lifestyle for any and every Hamiltonian and of course help the Good Food Box continue its goals.

"Before we started our Hamilton Good Food Box Network there were only 100 to 200 boxes being packed each month in the West end," says Burson. "We now distribute 500 to 800 Good Food Boxes a month right across the city, plus more through our partners in the network. The more that number grows the more food we can put in each box that we deliver. I'd like us to hit at least 1000 boxes before the next fundraiser, and to offer an 'all local' food box by the end of this year. It's good to have a goal.

"It's not an anti-poverty program, it's a health promotion program, so it is open to absolutely everyone," adds Burson. "We have about 160 volunteers involved, about 30 come out regularly to pack and that's enough to meet the demand. "The GFB will always need at least a little bit of money coming in, to cover costs that the low purchase price doesn't cover on its own and that's why I'd like the Good Food Rocks event to become our annual fundraising event. Everyone should support these performers who are coming out to donate their time and talent and the people who want to help keep this program going."

Good Food Rocks – A Fundraiser for the Good Food Box happens at This Ain't Hollywood this Saturday February 16 (9pm) with Buckshot Bebee, Fry Truck, Sloppy Jalopy, Iron Kitty, Whiskey Sour, Clyde Broox, Chaos Divine and on Sunday February 16 (1pm) with Steve Sinnicks, Evelynna Kay, the Pony Club, Mimi Shaw, Orange McFarland, Kevin Hamilton, Rob Lamothe and Dave Rave. Click on environmenthamilton.org

The Brad Cheeseman Group

View readers might know some of Brad Cheeseman's musical exploits as the bass player has grown up performing on our local stages with the likes of the Infinite Machine, Aetherborn, Andre Bisson and more. He would lend his talents to a wide range of hard rock, progressive alternative

and rhythm and blues but Cheeseman's scholastic endeavors at Mohawk and Humber Colleges have offered a deeper exploration into his instrument and the music he makes. This week, Hamilton fans get to see a different side of Brad Cheeseman's music.

"I really am into a ton of different musical things and the projects that I've been involved with over the last decade or so have reflected the development of those interests," ruminates Cheeseman. "Since I make a living playing music, there are definitely times when a gig is just a gig, but the original music that I'm a part of is always an extension of what rings true for me.

"The time spent studying music in post-secondary and now grad school has been really rewarding all around," adds Cheeseman. "Beyond the actual educational aspects and the theoretical/practical development, the communities that I've been a part of in those schools have opened my eyes to all sorts of new music and inspire me to be better every day. I started getting into jazz around the time that I started at Mohawk in 2006 but it took a few years for it to really grab hold. The more I listened to it and played it, though, the more it became a crucial part of my musical identity. Even during the brief period that I was playing with Aetherborn, I would get home from rehearsal and work on compositions that would eventually become a part of the BCG repertoire. I feel like the BCG is, in some ways, what all of my previous projects have been building towards."

The BGC's CDEP, Mixed Messages was released last April and already garnered the Brad Cheeseman Group a couple of Hamilton Music Awards nominations in the Jazz and Instrumental Recording of the Year — a definite sign that Cheeseman is on to something here.

"The music borrows from a lot of styles and has a number of different things to say," notes Cheeseman. "One person might call it jazz, one might call it progressive, one might call it something else — they'd all be right, at least partially so. I wanted to realize all of these different interests in one place but needed to do it in a way that was coherent and didn't sound like some sort of experiment; it needed to be musical and personal. I suppose that, yes, the intent of the project is serious, but the music can be a number of things — sentimental, playful, dramatic, brooding, etc. and the musicians can also take things in unexpected directions.

"The faces have changed a bit since the first performances two years ago but all of the musicians have been players that I met at either Mohawk or Humber — some I have been playing with for a while and others I really appreciate for their musicality," adds Cheeseman. "While the compositions are my own, it's the players who breathe life into the music and take it to that next level and I'm lucky to have a band like this."

Spending more time in Toronto these days furthering his studies, the Brad Cheeseman Group (featuring Lorenzo Castelli (drums), Robert Chapman (guitar), Sam Kogen (keyboard) and Chelsea McBride (tenor sax)) play Hamilton for the first time in sixteen months and Cheeseman hopes to make the hometown showcase a special event.

"2013 was a weird year for us and while we tried to get at least one Hamilton date going, it just didn't work out," says Cheeseman. "We haven't played Hamilton since October 2012 and because it's been so long since we've been here, I really want to share a bunch of material that I'm proud of that has never been played in Hamilton. Having grown up here, it's important to maintain my roots and I really want to share what we've been up to since the last time we were in town. The one thing I really try to do with each composition is tell a story and not let it become just a vehicle for soloing, so I hope that when audiences come to a performance, they'll recognize something familiar in the music and join us for the ride." V

The Brad Cheeseman Group plays Wednesday February 19 at Homegrown Hamilton with Midcoast. Doors are at 8pm and \$7 gets you in or \$5 with a valid student ID.

Click on bradcheeseman.com

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