

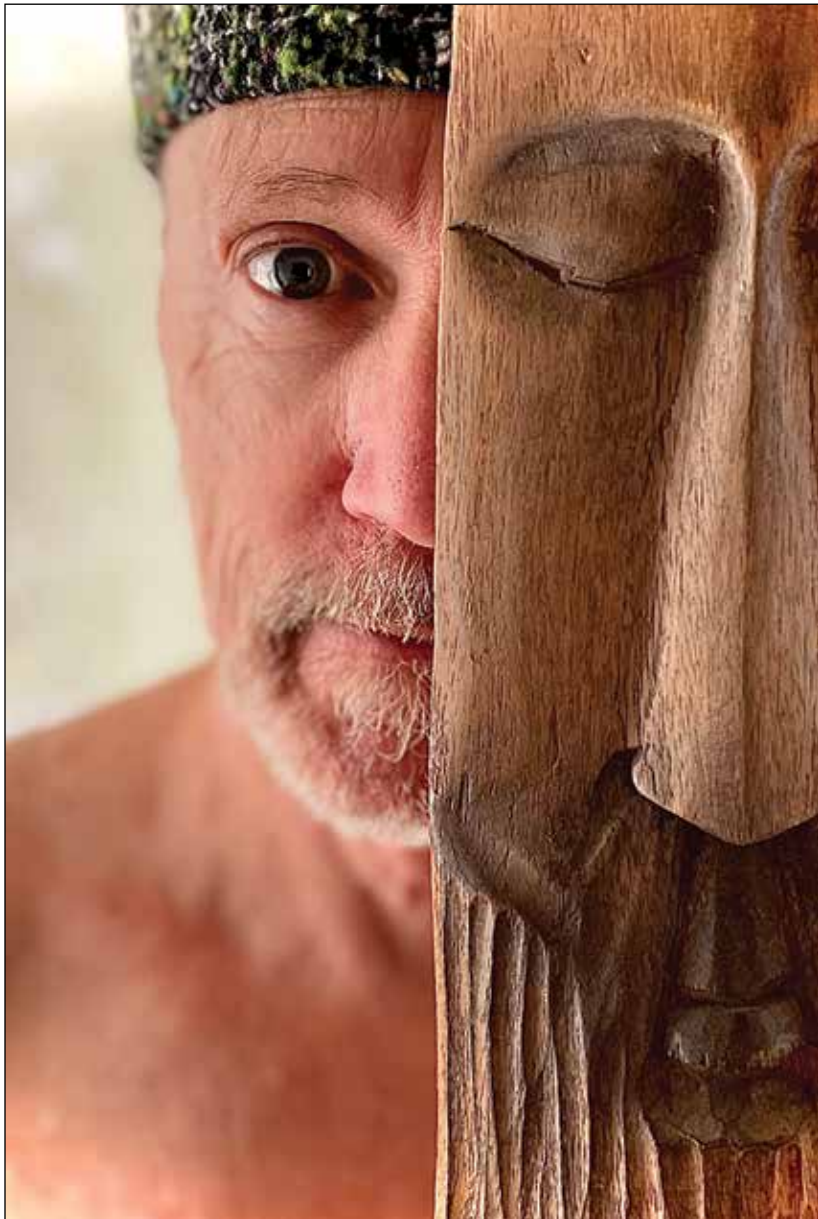
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METRONOME

M A G A Z I N E

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December 2022



Mark Frederick Fisher



Underdog



Max Boras

Hearings

by Doug Sloan, Alex Gecko or Brian M. Owens

Top 5 for December 2022

(In NO Particular Order)

- **Mark Femino**
- **Rory Block**
- **Mark Fisher**
- **Rock House All Stars**
- **Hummingbird Syndicate**

MARK FREDERICK FISHER BEHIND THE MASK 14-SONG CD

- RIVER OF LOVE
- SMOKE SCREEN
- THINGS CHANGE
- HANGIN' WITH THE HEATHENS
- JANUARY HANDS
- NORMA JEAN'S FINAL SCENE
- AMIRA
- BEHIND THE MASK
- STANDING ON HER OWN
- MONEY DON'T CARE
- KEEP ON LOVING YOU

- LAST DANCE WITH DAD
- MY LIFEBOAT
- THE FOX IS IN THE HENHOUSE

Singer-songwriter-guitarist Mark Frederick Fisher boasts an easy-going, friendly, familiar delivery to his songs. Upon listening, you're instantly transported in to his world of lighthearted humor, poignant life observations and clever common-folk prose. On his latest release, Behind The Mask, Fisher returns to Jeff Root's Metrowest recording studio, The Root Cellar, to create 14 fresh compositions laced with country, folk and pop vibrations.

Accompanied by a talented troupe of musical compatriots that feature Kris Lucander & Eric Adamson on bass, Jason Sharron, Ted Broughey & Tom Ruckey on drums, Doug MacArthur on electric guitar, Mike Lamere on pedal steel, Brian Chaffee on keyboards, Jeff Root on keyboard, accordion & bass guitar and Donna Russo & Brie Green on vocals, Fisher unveils a well penned collection of feel-good tunes aimed straight for the heart.

Songs of note include the sweetly countrified, "Smoke Screens," the poignant

"Things Change," the humorous "Hangin' With The Heathens," a sentimental nod to Marilyn Monroe, "Norma Jean's Final Scene," the loving "Amira," written for Fisher's granddaughter, the title track to the Covid experience, "Behind The Mask," and a loving sentiment penned for his wife, "Keep On Loving You." Nice. [B.M.O.]

Contact-- markfrederickfisher@gmail.com

BUDDY GUY THE BLUES DON'T LIE 16-SONG CD

- I LET MY GUITAR DO THE TALKING
- BLUES DON'T LIE
- THE WORLD NEEDS LOVE
- WE GO BACK
- SYMPTOMS OF LOVE
- FOLLOW THE MONEY
- WELL ENOUGH ALONE
- WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT
- GUNSMOKE BLUES
- HOUSE PARTY
- SWEET THING
- BACK DOOR SCRATCHIN'
- I'VE GOT A FEELING
- RABBIT BLOOD
- LAST CALL

• KING BEE

At 86 years young, elder bluesman Buddy Guy is still as vital and relevant as the day he first picked up the guitar to play with Junior Wells. On his latest, glorious 14-track album, The Blues Don't Lie, Guy once again teams up with longtime collaborator/producer and former Bostonian, Tom Hambridge to deliver a collection of personal songs close to his heart. And although Buddy hasn't lost a step, it's clear that he's dealing with his mortality. Songs like "I Let My Guitar Do The Talking," the duet with Mavis Staples, "We Go Back," the back & forth with Bobby Rush on "What's Wrong With That," and the poignant "Last Call" reflects a bluesman recounting a full and rewarding life.

Buddy is also very much in the moment as he takes account of the world today. "The World Needs Love," "Follow The Money," and "Gunsmoke Blues," are his musical sirens to be aware of the ever changing landscape around us and what we can do to make it better.

Of course, Guy lets loose on a handful of playful numbers that have become synonymous with his flamboyant stage presence and signature Cheshire grin.



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Underdog

"Modern punk today is said to have gone too pop and sounds whiny. But Boston alternative band, Underdog tarnished the 'punk is dead' phrase with their album *Ether Dome*."

– Rising Artists



"Ether Dome is raw, aggressive and wild. Check out Underdog's Supersonic Alternative Rock."

– Roadie Music

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Underdog

The presiding members and driving force behind Underdog, multi-instrumentalists Bryn Carlson and Scott Ferguson have been musical partners and bandmates since the mid-1980s. Their deep knowledge of one another's strengths and talents not only informs the songwriting, but also dictates the way they interact musically. Despite coming from varied musical backgrounds, the two are able to work seamlessly in a creative musical setting. Blending punk, garage and psychedelic influences to create a unique sound, Underdog pens lyrics that are inspired by their own personal lives while maintaining a universal theme that the masses can relate to. This is *their* story...

METRONOME: How long has Underdog been together?

Scott Ferguson: We got together in 2013. Bryn and I have known each other forever. The early 1980s is when we first crossed paths. This is actually the third or fourth band we've been in together. This is the first time though we've been standing up front playing guitars.

When I met Bryn, he was playing drums and I was playing bass. It came to a point where he wanted to have a project together where he was singing and playing guitar. That band was called The Hackmasters, back in the mid-80s. We released a 45 record in 1988.

Oddly enough, "Shark Attack" was one of the songs that we pulled out for our new album, Ether Dome.

METRONOME: Who else was in the band?

A friend of ours, Glen Sherman was the drummer in the band. It was a trio featuring myself, Bryn and Glen that formed that group.

METRONOME: Did you guys play together during the '90s?

In the early 1990s, I formed a band where I was playing guitar and singing my songs. It was called Fin-de-Siecle which is French for "end of the century." Bryn came in as a drummer in that project.

We did a bunch of recordings in the time we were together. They never got released at that time though, but thanks to the modern miracle of music being released online or streaming, we were able to get those songs out there last year.

METRONOME: What spawned the making of your new album, Ether Dome?

Bryn managed to build a nice home studio at his place. He got in touch with me in 2013, and said, "Hey do you want to come out and track some of the songs you have?" It was very casual. There was no master plan. The great thing was that he's a good guitar player and a good drummer. I held down the bass and rhythm guitar and we were able to get the songs down and

recorded.

METRONOME: Did you guys write the songs together for Ether Dome?

Some of the songs were from back in the day when we played them out live, but never got recorded. The rest of the material is all brand new and fresh. Some of it was written right in the beginning of 2013. As we were recording, new songs were coming out. Then March 2020 happened. We weren't able to see each other and get together.

METRONOME: Did the recording process stop at that point?

We realized it was going to be a while before we could get back together again. We thought, Let's get these songs out there. During that time, I built a studio at home. I got ProTools and ended up running the final mixes here.

METRONOME: Who owns Black Dog Studio?

Black Dog Studio is mine. Suzie, the little black dog that's peering out at you on the back of the CD, is sitting on the couch next to me right now (laughs). The band is named for her. She comes across in some of the songs as well. I dubbed the studio, "Black Dog" in honor of her. Bryn's studio is called AMRD [A Major Rock Dude] Media Studio.

METRONOME: Did you and Bryn grow up together?

No. I grew up in Newton. I was living there at the time with my cousin Aram Heller. He

had a band going called The Dark Cellars. Bryn grew up in the D.C. area. He came up here to go to college at Berklee. Bryn was playing in a band called Secret Word before we met him.

Glen Sherman played with The Dark Cellars, so that's where he and I crossed paths. Everyone rehearsed and hung out at our apartment. Everyone was there. When The Dark Cellars ended, Aram and I started World of Distortion.

METRONOME: Harry MacKenzie played drums on Ether Dome. How did you guys meet Harry?

Harry is my wife, Priscilla's son. He's been helping us out on the drums. He has his own band going which is The Soon to Haves, so he's really not able to dedicate himself to us. They're a great pop band.

METRONOME: You call yourself a "Supersonic Alternative Band," but I hear a lot of post-punk influences in your music. Are you not comfortable being called a punk band?

Oh no, that's fine with us. We have a lot of influences, and definitely that post punk era speaks to us. A lot of people have made the same comment. It's always been hard to classify our music.

METRONOME: Who are some of the bands that you like?

Bands for me were The Beatles, The Byrds, The Yardbirds, Brian Jones era



Rolling Stones, The Jefferson Airplane, 13th Floor Elevators and Syd Barrett era Pink Floyd. They were all formative music for me. I also enjoyed '80s bands like R.E.M., The Pretenders and X... edgy bands. Mission of Burma was also a band that carried me through the 1980s. Nirvana is a large influence for me too and Veruca Salt caught my ear immediately. I'm always out there looking for the next big thing.

Bryn definitely has a different background in music. He has a lot of jazz, blues and world-music in his upbringing. He's a huge Cream fan. His drumming is very influenced by Ginger Baker.

METRONOME: Bryn, who are some of your musical influences?

Bryan Carlson: One of my biggest influences was my guitar teacher, Sam Davis, who is over in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He continues to be a big influence on me. I have a banjo friend in Maryland called Eric Ogata who influenced me to include the guitar in my musical expression. I had another friend in high school named Brian Jones, oddly enough, who was just so into guitar. He was way ahead of all his peers. He was just so dedicated to the instrument. That provided me with a spark.

I was influenced by the big names too like Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton. I lived in Maryland, so there were three guitar players there that were very well known who led me on my quest to learn the guitar. One was the great Danny Gatton. I knew his bass player John Previti. I actually opened for Danny Gatton twice. He was so untouchable because of his abilities and talent. He was very inspirational.

The other guy that I really loved from that area was Jimmy Thackery who played guitar for The Nighthawks. The third guy was Nils Lofgren. When I was young, he was the kid prodigy electric guitar player. One of the very first shows I went to see was Grin. I've tried to keep a really broad listening palette going on.

Scott and I have known each other for a really, really long time. He's turned me on to a lot of stuff too. His cousin Aram is really a good guitar player. He's been very inspiring to me. I need people like that to inspire me to keep going and light the way.

METRONOME: How did you guys come up with a name for the new album, Ether Dome?

Bryn: That's my buddy Scott's brainchild. He's out and about in the city of Boston and he picks up all kinds of vibes out there.

Scott: My dad was a doctor and I remember as a kid him talking about having gone to the ether dome at Mass General Hospital in Boston. I thought, That sounds pretty cool.

Bryn: Tell him about the inscription...

Scott: There's a monument in the Ether Garden and there's an inscription on one of the four sides that says, "And there shall be

no more pain." I thought, That may be cool, although it may not be true after you listen to the album (laughs). I always appreciated it when the album title didn't bare any relationship to the songs.

We also wanted to let people know, subtly or overtly, that we were from Boston. It's a nice little nod to the city for anyone who actually knows what it is.

Bryn: We try to have a little bit of hometown pride. There have been some really amazing musicians and bands that have called Boston home. We're trying to claim some of our share of the turf.

Scott: There's such a great college radio scene here and that's very helpful to bands who are trying to get out there.

METRONOME: The song "Everything I Can" was a great tune. It had a Kinks vibe to it. Who wrote that one?

Scott: I wrote that. My little pooch Suzie, is one of the inspirational factors for that one as well as my wife Priscilla. The song is written to both of them, although there are some intentional puns directed because of Suzie. The bridge lyrics were intended to have a double entendre about them. They come off as dirty and then you realize it's about a dog and so it's okay.

METRONOME: What was the inspiration for the song "Underground Rock Band Blues" and who wrote it?

Bryn: That's my song. That was born out of frustration honestly. I've been

involved with music since I was quite young and one of my big dreams was to be a success, but that hasn't come to pass at all. "Underground Rock Band Blues" is my story, but it's also a universal story of young artists who have dreams of making the big time. The lyrics of the song reflect that type of feeling. In terms of the music, I wanted something unique and explosive.

Scott and I have both gotten to a point in life where we're just going to do this because we've been doing it for so long and it's really what drives us and keeps us getting up in the morning. If we make money, wonderful, if we don't, we're just going to keep at it.

METRONOME: The song "Shark Attack" had some really unusual guitar sounds. How did you get those sounds?

Bryn: I wrote that song a long time ago. It's based on a local character that we know, in fact, he may still be alive. His name was Captain PJ. He would show up at various rock shows and bring a bag of puppets. He would be right up at the front of the stage doing his thing with his puppets. He was a wild and nutty dude. He had a shark puppet named Sharkey. That song is all about Captain PJ and his shark puppet.

In terms of what was going on with all the guitars, I wanted to introduce the song with a Jaws reference in it. That real ominous buildup. In this version on Ether Dome, the sound came about as an

accident because we were recording and I couldn't quite hear the queue. I was doing something with the wah-wah. The way it was recorded was misaligned. It sounded like it was underwater. Scott convinced me to let it ride. I used a fuzz box, a wah-wah and an MXR Phase 90 to get that sound.

METRONOME: Was this a song that you did years ago and re-recorded it for the album?

Bryn: Yes. There are a couple of other versions of the song out there. The first time I recorded it, I was in a band called The Time Beings. It had a scorching guitar sound. I played drums on that track and sang lead. Subsequently, I got together with Scott and our late friend Glen, on drums, and recorded a version of it with our band, The Hackmasters. Our version was a little more refined and focused. We put that out on a vinyl 45. That was on Aram Heller's label, Stanton Park Records in 1987.

METRONOME: Ether Dome is a post punk party that has a really cool, original bent to it. Was that planned from the beginning?

Bryn: A lot of the stuff is tried and true. I don't have the guitar chops like some of the guys who play heavy metal. I just try to play something that sounds cool.

METRONOME: I really liked the last track on the album "Music Box." Who wrote that and what is it about?

Scott: I wrote that, and speaking of Nirvana, I probably had some kind of guitar drone in mind. At that point, I didn't know what we were going to do with the drums and bass. I was unsure of what direction it was going to take. Then Bryn came up with this part. He wasn't sure it was gonna work, but it was perfect. It reminded me of a mid '60s Stones melody.

Bryn: I was trying to be Mick Taylor on that song.

Scott: It was also sort of a memorial for our friend Glen who passed away. It's the only song on the record that cracks the four minute mark.

METRONOME: You guys just played an outdoor show recently. Where was that at?

Scott: We had a nice block party down here on the street that I live on. It's down by Gillette Stadium.

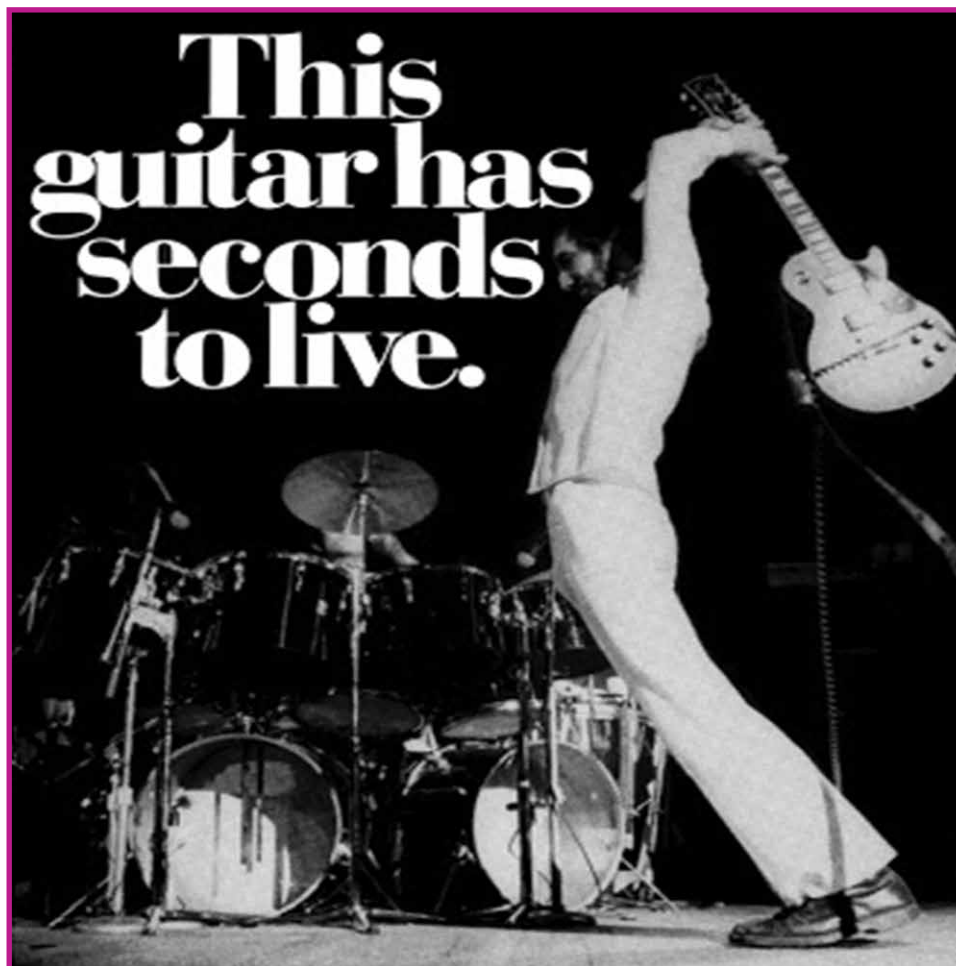
METRONOME: Where did you record Ether Dome?

Bryn: It was all recorded at my home studio in Sudbury.

Scott: It was basically mixed there too and then I did the final mixes at my home studio.

METRONOME: Do you have more new music in the can?

Scott: Yes. We're hoping to have a new album released realistically in the spring time of 2023. It's tentatively titled, Trans Global Amnesia.



-- Brian M. Owens