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Old-young duet now a theme; Coquette on fire

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Posted: Thursday, July 10, 2014 8:00 am | Updated: 2:14 pm, Thu Jul 17, 2014.

Vermont perspective: John Wilson | 0 comments



Photo by John Wilson

This is a personal account from firsthand experience from our town's music scene, as seen and heard real recently by this reporter firsthand.

• Papa Grey Beard is Keith Williams, aptly nicknamed and a wonderful musical performer gaining more exposure in Stowe. He's a popular and familiar face on stages throughout the surrounding area, and a well-received June appearance at Burt's Irish Tavern landed him a steady string of Thursdays.

On Sunday he was at Crop for its weekly 4-to-7 with singer Aurora Schein, performing for a more-local-than-the-rest-of-the-weekend crowd, nicely winding down as MoonSchein. The duo was formed in the spring of 2012 when Williams heard Schein in her late teens performing "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay" as a street performer on Burlington's Church Street.

Sunday, I heard classic Bessie Smith blues and, as I was leaving, a version of a song that sounded from them like it could have been written today or a hundred years ago: "For What It's Worth."

• Across a field at the Sunset Grille's new Tiki Bar, another well-known regional performer had also teamed up with a young talent.

Shrimp is named Glenn off stage or still sometimes Shrimp, but you know what I mean. Like Papa Grey, he has a nom de plume as well as being able do things like play guitar and drums at the same time, and has a command and easy authority on stage built on work, talent and the years.

His partner that day was a graduate of North Country Union High, class of 1998, and, like Shrimp, an active area player named Micah Carbonneau. It seems that unlike some things — like, say, sport — age and the generational differences turn out to be a plus in music, or so I've heard.

• I think I have seen the future and I think its name is Coquette. This young three-piece band, made up of two brothers and a friend from southern Vermont, has created a real buzz locally from performances at the Thursday night open mic at

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Aurora Schein and Keith Williams (aka Papa Grey Beard) bridge the gap at the Crop in Stowe.



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Moog's in Morrisville.

"You gotta see these guys!" is the common sentiment, as they've inspired a kind of evangelical response among a multigenerational and growing fan base.

The area is loaded with great talent, but these guys seem like something that is going to happen. They make their Stowe debut at the Rusty Nail this Saturday night.

Some folks call them punk rockers, but even at their young ages you can hear their discipline, smarts and study in their energetic style when a solo break glides from a Led Zeppelin-esque heavy charge to several bars of Paul Desmond's jazz classic "Take Five," followed by the greatest song Joe Jackson never wrote because these kids did.

Fresh, reckless, but never sloppy, they're coming off shows in Burlington and Dartmouth with gigs beginning to pop up all over the state, and even some in Boston.

With their youthful appearance and the bassist's Cub Scout cap, one can easily imagine them as a '50s rock band. It all seemed like something that was gonna stay in the past, this rock 'n' roll, once the royalty — Dylan, the Stones, the Who and the like — put down the strings and sticks, forever wrapped in nostalgia's gauzy web until I saw these guys like a year ago and thought, it's gonna be all right now, Then I thought, "Baby, It's All Right Now."

I saw Coquette most recently down in Montpelier on a warm early summer Tuesday night at Sweet Melissa's open mic. Dozens of young fans and players moved in and out of the busy club, many congregating around Coquette as they worked out a barbershop quartet arrangement with another musician on the sidewalk and under the street light, just like in the movies.

Like it's been said, "You gotta see these guys!" You don't wanna have to lie later and say you were there, dancing and assisting at the rebirthing of rock 'n' roll.

Among those you'll see gravitating to the sound of Coquette will be a number of us who came of age when the music known as rock reigned, trying to keep up with the younglings in a common embrace of music.

John Wilson is a comedian, singer and former lift attendant at Stowe Mountain Resort. Comment on this article at stowetoday.com, or email letters to news@stowereporter.com.



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