

BY VIJITH ASSAR
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Don't panic Rolling into town at #9



DRIVEN by the provocative rhythm work of keyboardist John Herman and meandering lead guitar of the late Mike Houser, and then fueled by the notoriously fertile music culture of early '90s Athens, Georgia, Widespread Panic began building to their current critical mass after a 1992 run as part of the Blues Traveler-backed H.O.R.D.E. tour. That traveling festival brought together a variety pack of improv-happy rockers.

Flash forward a decade or so, and in a scene populated by bands that routinely inspire fanatical fans to actually wander the country following their favorite tours, Widespread has risen to the top of the heap: last week, they were listed at #9 on the rankings run by Pollstar.com, a leading authority on live music and ticket sales.

The local show September 17 at the Pavilion could send them in either direction, but *The Hook* was lucky enough to catch percussionist Domingo "Sunny" Ortiz while he was on top of the world to talk about how he ended up there.

The Hook: So Phish threw in the towel a while back...

Ortiz: They did? When?

The Hook: Yeah, a little over a year ago. Does that leave you guys with some big shoes to fill, since you're one of the most popular jambands around?

Ortiz: When Miles passed away, was Wynton Marsalis going to fill his shoes? You can't put that into perspective. It's a blow to the industry, but I don't think any band looks at it as filling their shoes. If people want to see that as us taking the torch, they can, but we don't see it that way.

The Hook: Everybody needs a figurehead.

Ortiz: I don't think we're the leaders in any movement right now. When we first started this, we were lucky enough to run into some great bands— The Spin Doctors, Phish, and the Dave Matthews Band. Blues Traveler's H.O.R.D.E. festival is really what made the jamband scene take off. And now you have so many great up-and-coming bands— Donna the Buffalo, Mofro, and so many others— that are going to go so far beyond what we're ever going to touch.

The Hook: You guys have had a little success with mainstream radio as well, though, which is unusual for jambands.

Ortiz: We did? When?

The Hook: "Aunt Avis" and "Hope In A Hopeless World" got some play.

Ortiz: Those weren't our songs, though.

Those were covers. We've never had anything original that's been a mainstream radio staple. You turn on the radio, and you don't hear Widespread Panic— unless you're listening to XM or Sirius, maybe, or if you listen to some college stations you might find some renegades. I wish I could say we have radio success, but I can't. Everyone yearns for that, but we're not sitting on pins and needles waiting to sell that pop radio song. We've never depended on radio airplay to make our decisions for us. It's all touring, merchandise, and whatever luck the Good Doctor gives us.

The Hook: What was it like being part of the Athens scene at its peak?

Ortiz: It was a lot of fun for us back then, and it still is. I remember R.E.M., Love Tractor, the B-52's, the Indigo Girls, and so on, were all in town playing the same clubs: the Uptown Lounge, the 40 Watt, or private fraternity and sorority parties. And back then, everyone from out of town used to want to play Athens. But if you saturate a market too much, people are going to get sick of you. So we started to expand our horizons— instead of just doing rock and roll, we started to add blues, jazz, and Latin to keep people on their toes.

The Hook: Around that same time, there was also a pretty intense music scene in Charlottesville.

Ortiz: We go way back with Dave Matthews, and Tim Reynolds is an incredible guitarist. For us, Athens was like the holy land. It was a very good time for us, and we learned from many folks what it was going to take to survive. It's a great honor for us to have continued success thanks to what Athens gave to us, and I think Tim and Dave would say the same about Charlottesville.

Catch Widespread Panic at the Charlottesville Pavilion September 20... before Mofro catches up.



Thursday, September 15
FAT KEYS

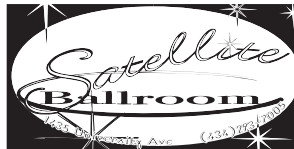
Friday, September 16
**THIS MEANS YOU
W/ BETHLEDEGN
NOVEMBER'S CHILD**

Saturday, September 17
**MACHINE IN THE GARDEN
HEAVEN FALLS HARD**

Friday, September 23
**INSURGENCY
40 BOYS
THE DEAD END KIDS
VOMIT UP BLOOD**

Saturday, September 24
**THE CAPES
FULL MINUTE OF MERCURY
RAVEN'S PLACE**

917 PRESTON AVE • 979-7211
Visit www.outbacklodge.com for
tickets, band links, & info



UPCOMING EVENTS

FRI 9/16
**OF MONTREAL
W/ THE MANAGEMENT**

SAT 9/17
**BLACKALICIOUS
APSCI & BEETNIX**

SUN 9/18
**SADDLE CREEK TEAM LOVE SHOWCASE
TILLY & THE WALL
WITH NEVA DINOVA, ORENDA FINK (AZURE RAY)
& DAVID DONDERO**

MON 9/19 8PM
**CINEMA DRAFT NIGHT
SPAGHETTI WESTERN DINNER ONLY \$5!
THE GOOD,
THE BAD & THE UGLY**

FRI 9/23
**CHARLOTTESVILLE SHELTER FROM THE STORM
BENEFIT FOR VICTIMS
OF KATRINA
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED**

FRI 9/30
**LIVE SCORE TO FILM!
DEVIL MUSIC RETURN FOR NOSFERATU!**

FRI 10/7
**STARR HILL PRESENTS
PIETASTERS
BIG D AND THE KIDS TABLE**

TUE 10/11
**LYRICS BORN
PIGEON JOHN**

FRI 10/14
**CAT POWER!
W/ SPOKANE**

FRI 10/21
**MONTICELLO ROAD
SPARKYS FLAW**

FRI 10/28
**VA FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS
JON LANGFORD'S
EXECUTIONER'S LAST SONGS**

Advance Tickets Available at All
Plan? Locations, Sidetracks &
www.satelliteballroom.com
info@satelliteballroom.com
All events are 18+ unless otherwise stated (+21)



Starr Hill Presents at The Paramount Theater

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5
**NANCI GRIFFITH
AND THE BLUE MOON ORCHESTRA**
Doors at 7pm / Music at 8pm
Tickets on sale now

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22
DAVID GRISMAN QUINTET
Opening: Old School Freight Train
Doors at 7pm / Music at 8pm
Tickets on sale now

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27
**YONDER MOUNTAIN
STRING BAND**
Opening: Todd Snider
Doors at 7pm / Music at 8pm
Tickets on sale now

SPECIAL SHOW!
TUESDAY 11/1
**MIKE GORDON &
LEO KOTTKE**
Doors at 8pm / Music at 9pm / SS

THURSDAY 9/15
SHOOTER JENNINGS
opening: BONEPONY
Doors at 8pm / Music at 9pm / SS

FRIDAY 9/16
**EASY STAR
ALL-STAR**
PERFORMING DUB SIDE OF THE MOON
Opening: DUB IS A WEAPON
Doors at 9pm / Music at 10pm / SS

SUNDAY 9/17
5TH ANNUAL
**PARROTHEADS
FOR PETS**
FEATURING METANOIA
AND FULL MOON SALOON
Doors at 7pm / Music at 8pm / SS

MONDAY, 9/19
PARTICLE
opening: GABBY LA LA
Doors at 8pm / Music at 9pm / SS

THURSDAY, 9/22
TEA LEAF GREEN
opening: CALF MOUNTAIN JAM
Doors at 8pm / Music at 9pm / SS

SATURDAY, 9/24
**JAN SMITH
CD RELEASE PARTY**
opening: DEVON SPROULE
Doors at 7pm / Music at 8pm / LRS

FRIDAY, 9/30
**CHRIS HILLMAN &
HERB PEDERSON**
opening: SLAID CLEAVES
Doors at 9pm / Music at 10pm / LRS

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
Many shows sell out in advance.
Purchase tickets in advance at Plan 5, Sidetracks,
1-800-594-TIXX, or www.starrhill.com

SS - standing / no chairs
LRS - rows of chairs
All ages welcome.
A \$2 surcharge will be collected at the door
from all patrons under 21 years of age.

709 WEST MAIN STREET
CHARLOTTESVILLE
434-977-0017 / WWW.STARRHILL.COM