

JOE BURCAW: EAT, SLEEP, BASS, REPEAT

by Samantha Apicella

This man breathes and sleeps rock 'n' roll. His bass guitar is the automobile and rock music is the path in which he drives on. He is Joseph "Bearclaw" Burcaw, 41. Currently, Burcaw is the bassist in the well-established Irish rock band, Black 47. He tours across the country and has played shows with the Dropkick Murphys and other famous bands.

Although Burcaw has always had a passion for playing bass, it was not his first instrument. During his years of elementary school in New Milford, Connecticut, Burcaw played the trumpet. But soon, his uncle would show him a different genre of music: rock 'n' roll. In addition, MTV played music videos 24 hours a day. Rock music was swimming all around Burcaw's life. And he could not get enough of it.

"It was Planet Earth by Duran Duran," said Burcaw, recalling the first music video he had ever seen on MTV. What Burcaw especially noticed about Duran Duran, was their bassist, John Taylor. Around the age of ten, he began to learn how to play bass guitar. Taylor inspired him.

"He fused funk, R&B, and punk together when he played," said Burcaw. "If it wasn't for [Taylor], I wouldn't have learned how to play bass."

Being a bassist, Burcaw would soon need a band to accompany his playing. He recalled a memory of his very first band when he was a kid.

"In fifth grade, I had a band on the school

bus," Burcaw said with a chuckle. Even though this band did not consist of any instruments, Burcaw said he and the other kids would clap and bang on the seats to create a song of sorts. This was just the beginning on Burcaw's path of rock 'n' roll.

Once eighth grade hit, Burcaw decided to create a band with his friends that included instruments this time. They were initially called Images. Burcaw described Images as a garage band that sounded like a mixture of the Cults, the Sex Pistols, and Billy Idol. However, Burcaw and his bandmates soon decided to change the name of the band to, Free Fall, since another band had the name Images already. Burcaw enjoyed being a part of Free Fall. He learned a lot about himself and music.

"...I loved the stage and putting a smile on people's faces," Burcaw said.

Free Fall stayed together for about seven years including college. Soon, tragedy would strike Burcaw and his fellow bandmates. The lead singer of Free Fall would die in a car accident. This forced each of the band members to sing together.

"I paid more attention to vocals," said Burcaw.

At this point, Free Fall had been in Boston. However, things were about to turn around for the better. Burcaw found out about a John Taylor solo show. It turned out that Free Fall's guitarist knew Taylor's publicist. Burcaw figured it would be a great oppor-

tunity to show his inspiration Free Fall's music demo. He sent the demo to Taylor and things brightened from there.

"He sold our music through his website," Burcaw said. "This opened us up to Duran Duran fans."

PHOTO: DAN KANE



Free Fall soon changed their name to Azurtech and went to London. As it turned out, Burcaw found a promotion deal with a company in London that put him in contact with Taylor once again. Things were going well for Azurtech. But after six months of playing gigs in the UK, Azurtech felt it was time to break up. Just because Burcaw was without a band, did not mean he was done with music. He moved to where he always wanted to live because he felt that he was finally ready for it: Manhattan.

"I had a five year plan," said Burcaw. "I had no idea what plan b was."

In other words, music was and still is Burcaw's life. He went to shows in NYC every

night and promoted himself. He was never worried about not succeeding.

"I knew I would make it," said Burcaw. "'Perseverance' is my middle name."

His five year plan was almost up when he suddenly received a response to his interest in a Craigslist ad for a professional, touring band seeking a bassist. Initially, Burcaw had no idea that the band was Black 47. After first seeing the band during the mid-90s on MTV's *120 Minutes*, he fell in love with their sound. For eight years, Burcaw has been Black 47's bassist.

"It's always a pleasure," he said about being in the band. But after 25 years, Black 47 has decided to stop playing together after this year.

"It's just the right time," said Burcaw. "We want to go out on top. Things change."

Black 47's farewell album *Last Call* is set to be released as of now. They will be playing a St. Patrick's Day show March 17th at BB King's in New York City.

Even though the band is ending soon, Burcaw still has future plans.

"I'm approaching other artists," said Burcaw.

A quote of Sting's is something that he will continue to live by, "I will forever and always be a student of music no matter what age."

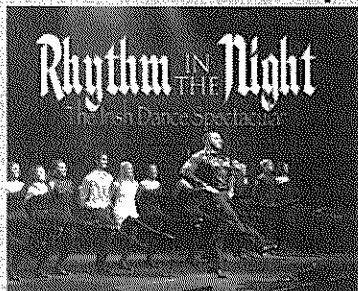
For more information, or to contact Burcaw about bass guitar lessons, visit joeburcaw.com. ♪

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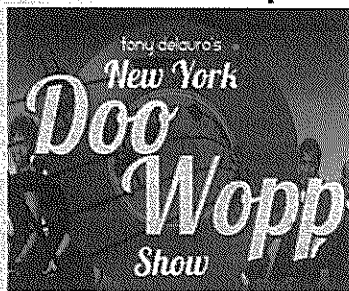
HUDSON VALLEY THEATER Music, Movies and More!

Rhythm in the Night
The Irish Dance Spectacular
March 14th & 15th, 8pm



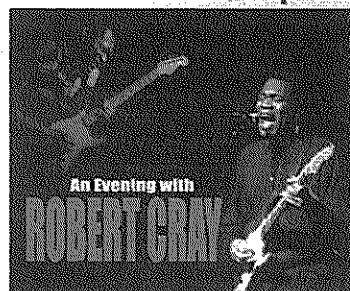
U.S. Premier of Rhythm in the Night is an epic journey derived from a tale of good versus evil where deception reigns and temptation rivals the strongest of wills. Lead by dancer, Justin Boros. Justin is a professional Irish dancer who has toured the United States and Europe with Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance.

The Real New York
Doo Wopp Show
March 21st, 8pm



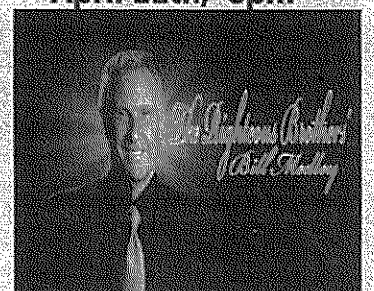
The REAL, ORIGINAL New York DOO WOPP SHOW featuring Judy Mann & the CHIFFONS, Eugene Pitt & the JIVE FIVE Jay Siegel's TOKENS, All groups with their original lead singers and acappella by CLASSIC SOUNDS & THE SHEPS.

An Evening with
Robert Cray
March 30th, 8pm



Touring regularly with the likes of Eric Clapton and Bob Dylan, Cray stays active in the studio as well. He is the guitarist who brought blues back to the charts in the '80s via songs that defined blues themes but added modern and personal twists. His Kevin Shirley-produced Nothin But Love, a strong outing featuring narrative songs that circle around the trials and tribulations of love, appeared in 2012.

The Righteous Brothers'
Bill Medley
April 11th, 8pm

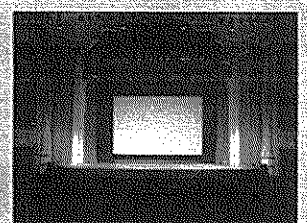


The Righteous Brothers' raw emotional R&B sound not only created the genre "Blue-Eyed Soul", but the very term was coined specifically for them. Combining the density of Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound" production with Bill Medley's deep, rich, powerful baritone created a totally original sound that still resonates today. BMI ranked "YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'" as having had more television and radio airplay than any other song in history!

MOVIES
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March Sunday, March 2nd, 3pm: The Sound of Music
Friday, March 7th, 7pm: Blue is the warmest color
Sunday, March 9th, 3pm: Gone with the Wind
Sunday, March 16th, 3pm: The Tempest
Sunday, March 23rd, 3pm: Aida

April Sunday, April 13th, 3pm: Hello Dolly
Sunday, April 20th, 3pm: The Ten Commandments



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