



Chiemie's Corner Music Reviews & Events

Sean Dennehy cruises along the 'Highway' to success



Multi-tasking musician Sean Dennehy plays both guitar and piano while singing original tunes.

Things are beginning to heat up for local artist Sean Dennehy, who kicked off a new open-microphone night at the City Side Bar & Grill on Jan. 12. Dennehy will host the show there each Thursday at 9 p.m.

"Everyone is welcome to come down and do their thing," said Dennehy, a veteran performer at many local venues. Over the years, he has appeared at Club Passim, The Point by Faneuil Hall in Boston, and The City Side with his band, Mystic Highway (now known as just Highway), with Somerville resident Kyle Mealy on drums and Dave Gagnon on bass.

In his spare time, Dennehy teaches guitar and keyboards at Sarin Studios in Wakefield. He is also proficient in guitar, piano, keyboards, bass, harmonica and flute.

When Dennehy performs solo he may be the only one on stage but there is no lack of activity. At a recent show at The Point, he managed a couple of live-laid keyboard loops, played a separate guitar line while also navigating the words of one of his newer songs, "She's Got Something On Me."

Although a stellar solo performer, Dennehy's talents include being able to accompany others to enhance their music, as opposed to drawing attention to himself as a lead guitar player, which cannot be said of every musician with his level of expertise. That is why other local musicians have requested

his input on their albums. For one, he provided the guitar parts for the recently released album of Somerville resident, Lisa Locke's, "In it for the Drama."

Later this year, Dennehy plans to release a new album. It will include "She's Got Something On Me." The rhythmic and calm intro sets the tone, which lends an aura of serenity to the listener but is catchy and upbeat at the same time.

Dennehy's 2004 release of originals, "Now I Can See the Moon," was recorded at Hope Studios and co-produced by colleague Jim Speranza. It contains contributions from local artists, Jack Osoro (drums and percussion), John Cladett

(bass), Erin Browne and Teri Osoro (backing vocals), but Dennehy himself "did all the rest."

Even at first listen, the songs feel rich and multifaceted, much like their lyrical content. "Ode to Andy Warhol" combines quippy lyrics and a funky groove. In it, the singer describes art and the ways in which the famous iconoclast made it "socially acceptable to be strange."

"What Would the Dalai Lama Do" picks up the relaxed pace of the collection with a rocking beat and Dennehy's spirited and skilled guitar splashes. "Keep Going Forward" is next with a jazzy, samba vibe. The eerie guitar

time we ever met or talked, although he did tell Robb once that he did remember me and that ride. He was a writer of memories and assembling. He was the poet he wanted to be. Death ain't nothing to play with. And I know he's gonna get me. I know I got to join his army...his camp followers. But as long as I keep up my strength and see him coming...as long as I keep up my vigilance...he's gonna have to fight into get me. I ain't going easy. Every goodbye ain't gone. Every shut eye ain't sleep.

*Afaa Michael Weaver's **Multitudes** is one of his recent books of poetry. Rollback is his new play. He teaches at Simmons College.*

Eleanor Traylor, Don Evans, Jaye T. Stewart, and many more, several of whom have lost the wrestling match with Death.

We met two or three times a year in Chicago to see plays in production at ETA and to spend the weekend dissecting the script and all aspects of production, all the way to excruciating details and heated discussions of what works and does not work for black theater and black culture. It was this belief in the necessity of a vital theater for a vital culture and the need of black Americans for a special vitality that Wilson embodied, as is evidenced by his oeuvre, his completion of his cycle of plays, full as they are with characters of mythic proportions.

Ron Milner passed several months before Wilson, and Robb Penny passed away three years ago, in springtime, just four days

Off the shelf: a train ride with August Wilson

continued from page 12

when he was extending biographies in the way mythmakers do, constructing lives so that they rise up from the factual patterns of their actual lives, as subjective as facts come to be. His gestures were embellished by his working class argot, and I could see the figure of one of his mentors, another African-American playwright by the name of Robb Penny, whom I got to know in the ten years I worked with him as a member of a Chicago-based think tank on black theater known as PDI, the brainchild of Abena Joan Brown, founder and director of ETA theater, an institution that has become an icon as one of the remnants of black theater. In its thirty years of operation, ETA has been a working base for many of the great achievers in black theater, including Ron Milner, Woodie King, Vantile Whitfield,

My lunch was not so important to me at this point. Wilson talked more about the city he loved, Pittsburgh, of people he had known, and I could sense

before my own father gave Death a left hook that failed to push the giant specter of endings away.

Penny, a man who had been a surrogate father to Wilson, toward the end would walk out at night under the Pittsburgh sky and gaze on the stars, at the end of a lifetime given to serving the tradition of African-American artists, of honoring what he saw as a need for continuity. He and his wife Betty spoke fondly of Wilson. Once when we were discussing a play of Wilson's that was not a favorite of Betty's, she spoke out of the linguistic quilt that so much made the language of the Wilson's plays.

"I can say anything I want about that boy's plays because I fed him spaghetti in my kitchen."

By the time we got to New Haven I had forgotten about my tuna. It was the only