

What's Happenin': Thursday, May 15, through Wednesday, May 28

Written by Mike Schulz
Tuesday, 13 May 2014 06:00

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Music

Laura Jane Grace

Rock Island Brewing Company

Friday, May 16, 8 p.m.

On May 16, the Rock Island Brewing Company presents a special concert with Laura Jane Grace, the lead vocalist of the punk-rock ensemble Against Me! who famously came out as a transgender woman in 2012. But anyone who worried that the band might have consequently softened its touch on the songs for January's *Transgender Dysphoria Blues* needn't fear. "Two Coffins"? "F---mylife666"? "Osama bin Laden as the Crucified Christ"? Sounds pretty damned punk to me.

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Grace's Rock Island engagement will find her performing solo, which will only be a slight departure for the artist formerly known as Tom Gabel, considering that Against Me! itself began as a solo endeavor in 1997. By the following year, Against Me! added friend Kevin Mahon as an occasional accompanist – Gabel would sing and Mahon would drum alongside him on pickle buckets – and by 2002, the artist had recruited guitarist James Bowman, bassist Dustin Fridkin, and drummer Warren Oakes for the band's debut album, *Against Me! Is Reinventing Axl Rose*.

2005's

Searching for a Former Clarity

, the group's third CD, became its first to land on the

Billboard

200 charts, and mainstream success arrived a mere two years later for Against Me!, when

2007's

New Wave

debuted at number 57 and scored a smash single with "Thrash Unreal." (The CD itself was also named

Spin

magazine's album of the year.)

After the release of 2010's *White Crosses* – Against Me!'s biggest hit to date, reaching number 34 on the *Billboard* 200 – the band took a sabbatical while Grace was in the process of coming out as a woman, and also writing songs for

Transgender Dysphoria

Blues

. The wait,

according to the album's reviewers, was worth it, and especially for the new soulfulness and freedom heard in Grace's expressive vocals. Calling the album "a series of bracing songs,"

Rolling Stone

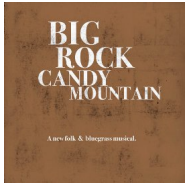
described Against Me!'s latest as "an inspiring LP" of "warrior-cry punk metal," while

Spin

praised Grace by raving, "There is an ocean in her soul."

That, and a great sense of humor. "Accomplishing small goals when transitioning has a cumulative effect," Grace told *Cosmopolitan* magazine. "The confidence you gain from reaching one carries you to the next. Face your fears, I say, but choose the right skirt to do it in."

Laura Jane Grace's local concert opens with sets by Big Eyes and Bedroom Shrine, and more information on the night is available by calling (309)793-4060 or visiting RIBCO.com.



Theatre

Big Rock Candy Mountain

District Theatre

Friday, May 23, through Saturday, June 7

From May 23 through June 7, the District Theatre will host a celebration of familiar, beloved songs in the debuting musical *Big Rock Candy Mountain*. *Mmmm ... Big Rock Candy Mountain*

... .

How does my Homer Simpson impersonation come off in print? 'Cause in my head, it sounds *a awesome*

.

With its original book by show director Tristan Tapscott and music arranged by Danny White –

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whose musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is now a popular, annual staple in the District – *Big*

Rock Candy Mountain

finds a five-piece outfit on the run from the law, and forced to disguise themselves as the touring Good Ole Boys Bluegrass Band after landing at a run-down, small-town theatre. Complications involving a wannabe vaudeville star, a drunken cop, a politician's crooked wife, and others soon follow, and what results, Tapscott and White promise, is a feel-good entertainment in the style of the theatrical hits

Smoke on the Mountain

and

Southern Crossroads

, and one featuring more than a dozen favorites in the genres of bluegrass, folk, and gospel.

The production's cast features a blend of returning and debuting District Theatre talents, with Wayne Hess, Kyle Jecklin, Rocky Kampling, Mike Kelly, Doug Kutzli, Anthony Natarelli, Mark and Linda Ruebling, Christopher Tracy, and Tom Vaccaro combining to form *Big Rock Candy Mountain*'s

ensemble. And with the show's instrumentals performed on-stage by several of the actors themselves, Tapscott's and White's presentation will offer the thrill of seeing live musicians attack some of the most cherished numbers in the American songbook. Songs such as "Midnight Special" and "Amazing Grace" and "Buffalo Gals," plus wonderful arrangements of tunes including "Alabama Bound," "House of the Rising Sun," "Hard Times Come Again No More," "Dark Holler," "Keep on the Sunny Side"

Mmmm

...

"Sunny Side"

... .

That's a reference to eggs. Which is a bit of a stretch, but hey, any chance to whip out my awesome Homer Simpson impersonation

Big Rock Candy Mountain will be staged Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., and more information and tickets are available by calling (309)235-1654 or visiting DistrictTheatre.com .



Music

Communion Daytrotter Club Night

Codfish Hollow Barn

Thursday, May 22, 8 p.m.

Want to enjoy an amazing club experience with four sets of exciting, up-and-coming indie artists? If so, Communion Records and Daytrotter aim to please with the folk and rock explosion that is May 22's Communion Daytrotter Club Night.

There's just one caveat: This club is actually a barn.

But, oh, *what* a barn! (For proof, see the accompanying photo of the event's Codfish Hollow Barn stage.) And you'll no doubt be saying, "Oh, what a concert!" all throughout Communion Daytrotter Club Night, which will boast performances by some of the country's most quickly ascending stars in, fittingly, a gorgeous Maquoketa facility *under* the stars.

For this special mid-spring event, Communion Records and Daytrotter have secured the talents

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of a quartet of gifted musical outfits: Neulore, Busy Living, Hunterchild, and Bootstraps. You'll likely be clamoring for the groups' CDs and EPs after their collective May 22 engagement, but how much do you know about them right now? Let's find out: Test your indie-music savvy by matching the musicians with some of their biographical info; if you match them all correctly, there's a prize in store!

1) Bootstraps

2) Busy Living

3) Hunterchild

4) Neulore

A) Formed in Los Angeles by vocalist/guitarist/pianist Jordan Beckett; named Amazon MP3 "Rising Stars" in 2013; had songs featured on the TV series *Private Practice* and *Parenthood*.

B) Folk musicians formed in Nashville; released the debut EP *Apples & Eve* in 2010; led by songwriting duo Adam Agin and William T. Cook; had a song featured on *Grey's Anatomy*.

C) Rock/pop musicians formed in Los Angeles; composed of Tim Hutton, Matt Leddy, Mike Moonves, Drew Phillips, and Matt Sohnen; released the debut EP *It's a War Out There!* In

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2012.

D) Composed of musicians Luke Aron Jones and Marty Sprowles; performs eclectic pop indebted to Peter Gabriel, Prince, and Depeche Mode; released their self-titled debut album on May 13.

For more information and tickets to the Communion Daytrotter Club Night at Maquoketa's Codfish Hollow Barn (3437 288th Avenue), visit CodfishHollowBarnstormers.com .

Answers: 1 – A, 2 – C, 3 – D, 4 – B. Didja get 'em all right? Congrats! You win admission to Communion Daytrotter Club Night for only \$9.50 if you buy tickets in advance, and \$15 if you buy at the door! Did you make a mistake or a few? No problem ... at least you tried! You get in for the exact same pricing! And don't say we never did anything for ya!

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1059 - The band's new album, 'You're the Only One', is out now. It's a great album, and it's a great band. The band is called 'The Only One' and they are from Iowa. They are a rock band and they are very talented. They have a great sound and they are very fun to listen to. They are also very hard working and they are always putting out new music. They are a real gem of the Iowa music scene. You can find them on IowaBenFest.com.
