



Chiemi's Corner

MUSIC
REVIEWS
&
EVENTS

Somerville resident Max Glantzman (Max G) and his band, Max G and the Spots, will be performing at Copperfields in Boston at 9:00pm Oct. 13. You can also catch Max G and the Spots rocking out Nov. 15 at The Burren in Somerville at 9:00 p.m.

Aside from Max G (singer/songwriter/guitarist), the consistent Spots members are: Mark Lipman (vocal harmonies); Lance Vallis (lead guitar); Steve Breman (bass); Shawn Leonard (drums); and Deep C (percussion/djembe).

Introducing Max G and the Spots

Lipman and Max G met in college at Brandeis. Said Max G, "He's a spectacular singer-songwriter and I remember watching him silence a packed house at the Brandeis Coffeehouse, Chums, one night while doing a set. The audience was completely spellbound, he's just amazing. I knew right then he could do the job and well beyond that."

The two, however, did not perform together until recently. Max G said it started with them

hanging out at a party one night and jamming. Also, "[Lipman] is a true source of fun and comfort on stage. If I'm nervous, I usually look to my left where Mark is and somehow he makes it easier."

Vallis and Max G met at local artist Hugh McGowan's house, "just passing guitars around in a circle one night." Vallis asked if he could borrow a guitar to play some lead and both shocked and impressed Max G.

Max G said, "As quiet and mild mannered as Lance is, he can speak volumes with that guitar. Truly the most tasteful player I have ever encountered in my life. You can go for a long time play-

ing with great guitar players who play the guitar and not the song. Lance always has the song and the overall sound in mind."

The first time Vallis and Max G performed together, was at the Burren on open mike night, impromptu. Max G said, "He hadn't even heard the songs before playing them live that night, but I knew he was the guy." Vallis also plays in another local band, Savin fill.

Breman recently took over playing bass for Craig Debrigard who performed in a few shows early on. Breman is also the bassist for Shiner Jones, a popular local band who will be playing their final show in October. With his free time, Breman decided to join a few new projects, playing for Ryan Fitzsimmons, and Hugh McGowan as well. Max G had met Breman in Rock City Guitars a few times before they jammed together. Max G said, "I was honored that he expressed the desire to join us. His style suits what I do really well and playing with him has been a blast. As he put it, he can play a 'neanderthal' style of bass when playing with us, and that's really what I want. This is rock music after all."

Deep C is a legend in the area, both as a singer/songwriter and the house percussion/djembe player at Burren Open Mike night (where Max G first met him). When Max G and the Spots was forming, DeepC played a few shows on a full drum kit too. Max G said he would like to have DeepC back behind the djembe and seek out someone else for the kit to make the sound even bigger. He said, "Anyone who has seen DeepC play percussion knows what he brings to the table."

Leonard, the newest addition to the group, also plays in pretty well-known Northeast band, Stefan Couture and The Campfire Orchestra.

The Spots, in different lineups and variations, have played a number of open mikes and

smaller gigs. The first real one was down in Rockland, MA opening for Phoenix Readers Poll Best Local Band winners, the Cassavettes. They also had a show with no drums at Kennedy's Midtown in June with local bands/artists, Parker (Pete Spiegel, John Mileham, Ryan Hickox & DeepC) and Jesse Dee, where they played to a packed house. Recently, MG&S played at TT The Bears and Somerville's PA's Lounge.

Max G Musical Beginnings and Groovy Style

Max G said the first time he picked up a guitar was the day after he saw Neil Young in '99 doing a solo acoustic tour. He said, "The show completely blew me away. It was at a small venue, and the performance was so accessible. At the time I thought, 'Wow, that's just a guy with a guitar, I can do that!' Now I know it's not so simple to be Neil Young, but I've been playing/writing/singing ever since."

Wednesday Open Mike at Starbucks, Davis Square

Max G's housemate worked at the Starbucks in Davis Square, so he was acquainted with the staff. After they would close up, the Starbucks folks frequently came over to the Burren and saw Max G perform at that open mike. Max G said, "The manager approached me about starting an open mike in the Starbucks to help show that they care about the community — and they do — and are not an evil corporate empire, as many assume." Max G's Open Mike has been happening ever since.

This Open Mike starts at 7:15 pm on Wednesdays with signup, and the music starts right away. It goes until 10pm currently, but they are expanding the hours soon so it will go until 11. The plan for now is to start having featured acts once we have the extra time, who will get a longer slot. Each artist does 2-3 songs each, depending on how many people show up.

Rock with Max!