

# Titillating our musical taste buds in 2016



Courtesy of Jackson Boone and the Ocean Ghosts

By GAIL HENRIKSON  
For The Daily Astorian

Anyone who has ever been a partner in a long-term relationship, whether platonic, romantic or professional, understands that continual growth and involvement are required to keep the relationship alive and thriving.

This same principle applies to life in an “arts town” such as Astoria.

When you are surrounded by a plethora of painters, sculptors, jewelry-makers, writers, actors, crafters and musicians it is easy to grow complacent and comfortable with the artists and media we already know.

Over time, as with any type of relationship, you can often begin to take this cornucopia of creativity for granted.

This stagnation is not necessarily a case of familiarity breeding contempt, but rather a natural tendency to follow the path of least resistance. After all, seeking out up-and-coming talent is hard work — even when those artists are swirling all around us every day — baking our pizzas or serving us a double latte (without whipped cream, of course).

I have personally found this to be particularly true with regard to music. What we traditionally think of as “art” — painting, sculpture, even jewelry — is readily accessible. Galleries are open standard business hours and art walks and other special events serve to conveniently introduce the public to new artists and works.

The Internet notwithstanding, unless you are an avid reader of *Rolling Stone* or a night owl willing to sit in a bar until the wee hours of the morning, new bands are much more difficult to experience.

Additionally, I am sure I am not alone in admitting that I sometimes become mired in a musical rut — content to listen to the albums that are comfort food for my auditory soul.

Therefore, it was very serendipitous to have encountered the band Jackson Boone and the Ocean Ghosts.

While billing themselves as being based out of Portland, lead singer Jackson Boone is an Astoria resident and a lifeguard at the Astoria Aquatic Center — when he’s not out playing gigs or recording.

The five-member band (Jackson Boone, Eric Broestl, Parker Hall, Wolfgang Warneke, and Tyler James) performs frequently in Portland and Seattle, and was featured as one of Portland’s best emerging bands of 2014.

However, when it comes time to record their music, they leave the hipster scene behind and come to Cannon Beach.

A self-styled psych-rock group of A20-somethings, this band channels chords and harmonies reminiscent of The Beatles, Pink Floyd, Robyn Hitchcock and the Egyptians, Fleet Foxes, Talking Heads and many, many more.

That combination, while eclectic and multi-generational, is combined together with restrained energy to create haunting, flowing and echoing songs such as “Heavy Lovers” and “The Moon in You”. Shades of Neil Young’s “Harvest Moon” can be heard

## Writer’s Notebook



Gail Henrikson

on Natural Changes’ “Lovely Low.” Lyrics such as “she cuts her hair in a temporal rift” offer a bit of whimsy and intrigue, as do song titles such as “The Dolphin Turned Into a Cat”.

To date, Jackson Boone and the Ocean Ghosts have released two albums — “Starlit” (2014) and “Natural Changes” (2015). Both albums were released on vinyl (clear, bubble gum pink and

Coke bottle green) a novelty in and of itself.

The band’s music videos from “Natural Changes” were shot on location in Cannon Beach and surrounding environs. The behind-the-scenes outtakes of the making of this album are a time warp of music and home film. The group utilized vintage tube amps and recording equipment to recreate a sound that likely hasn’t been trendy since “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” was popular.

It would be easy to dismiss Jackson Boone and the Ocean Ghosts as merely a retro-throwback. But, their odd blend of the psychedelic and the modern creates a sound that is at the same time both unique and vaguely familiar.

The band recently wrapped up work on their third album — Organic Light Factory, and is in the process of searching for an independent label for this project. According to Boone, this is the album that could “put the band over the edge.”

For anyone that either missed out on the original psychedelic era of music or for anyone who wants to recapture their youth and move forward into the 21st musical century, Jackson Boone and the Ocean Ghosts offers that opportunity. The band’s offerings can be easily located in the ubiquitous 21st century concert hall of cyberspace.

Also, if you like what you hear, the band will be performing at the Festival of Dark Arts at Fort George on Feb. 13 — a very accessible location and at a very convenient time for those non-night owls in the crowd.

There is a kernel of truth in the old adage that all waitstaff are aspiring actors, writers or musicians.

The next time that you are in the checkout line or out for dinner, take the time to really listen to what your server has to tell you. And, maybe get their autograph. After all, you never know where they might be in 10 years.

Gail Henrikson is a born-again dancer, aspiring writer, and former city planner. She recently relocated to Astoria from New Smyrna Beach, Florida.



Courtesy of Jackson Boone and the Ocean Ghosts

Chicago 2015



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