Phish Tributes:

Capturing the Feeling I Forgot

By Sydne Kasle; Freeport, FL

Many Phish tribute bands really deliver!

Have you ever avoided seeing a Phish tribute because you were sure they wouldn't be able to do it well? Or gone to see a tribute and left because it was tragically bad? As a devout 1.0 phan, I can say yes to both! HOWEVER, I have also seen some that were spot on! I'm full of JOY writing this piece about talented musicians who honor Phish by playing Phish! Of course, we all know Holly Bowling is in a class by herself. She is busy having a baby right now, so I did not bother her.

Several bands cover Phish well! I could not reach out to all of them. This is a convenience SAMPLE. I'm very grateful to receive replies from a few well-known bands. Chum, based in San Francisco, has been together since 2010. Pink Talking Fish from the Northeast played their first show in 2013. The Last Rewind, based in DC, and Kids Under the Carpet from the metro Detroit area, have been together since 2015. There are others! If a series is required, I'm happy to interview them all!

I've often wondered if there was an unusual amount of pressure placed on Phish tribute bands due to the intricacies of Phish and the hyper-focused Phan. Many people will learn how to climb mountains, but few of them go to Mt. Everest. One thing that always stands out to me at these shows is when a phan yells out something like "Play *Stash*," and the band just smiles and says, "Yeah, we haven't got that one right yet." The musicians know that it is better to avoid a song rather than butcher it. So I asked the bands if they were afraid to play any of the songs. Eric Gould from PTF said, "Absolutely not. Don't be a professional Phish tribute act if you aren't ready and prepared to tackle any and all of their repertoire." And that probably explains why they are so successful as a national act! Chad Kimner from Chum said, "Learning the hard stuff is academic. Learning to create new music in real time is the much more elusive goal."

But what about the pressure? Considering all of the pressure imposed on Phish, which is truly annoying for me, I was curious as to whether tribute bands felt the same pressure - or even more! Dave Salvo from the Last Rewind said, "It's getting the minutiae and nuance of more ordinary songs that separates a run-of-the-mill tribute band from one that really has internalized the music. . . If the guitarist isn't playing an Eb/G on the sixth string [during *Riff*], it just doesn't sound accurate." Ashton Young from Kids said, "The ears of the Phish faithful. They do not just listen; they know. . . The pressure is delivering that sacred, telepathic connection without letting their reverence stiffen your fingers. You cannot play this music with tight shoulders."



When I see a Phish tribute, I often wonder if they were influenced by Phish 1.0 or 2.0, etc. I say this because when I see Dead tributes, I can tell who was influenced by the original formation, who pulls more from Furthur, and these days, many tributes pull from Dead and Co. The replies were fascinating! While Kids and Last Rewind mention 1.0 as their main influence, Chum says, "... it's less about adapting to how Phish has evolved and more about being willing to sample from any of those eras on any given night. It can get a little scattered onstage when one person is thinking this should sound like 1993, and someone else just listened to the Sphere run and is pulling toward where they think it should go now. The only way to have that conversation is through the music, which can be awkward in real time." As a non-musician but devoted phan, I am fascinated and awestruck!

I was also curious about how these bands approach covers done by Phish. Do they play the covers like the original artists, or do they play the covers like Phish did? The answers were like a box of chocolates! Eric Gould from PTF said, "We approach a lot of the covers closer to the original because sometimes the live Phish versions are a little looser and lose some of the magic from the original. Any Beatles songs we play that Phish has done are always focused more on the Beatles' version, for example." Chum, on the other hand, plays the Phish version, "The arrangement choices, the segue points, the inside jokes - those are what the audience came for," said Chad. Ashton from Kids said, "We channel the spirit of the four guys from Vermont pulling someone else's song through their own funhouse mirror, adding our own fingertips to the glass." And Dave from Last Rewind said, "We play [them] as if Phish would perform them with one exception. We jam the hell out of *Frankenstein*. If Phish is reading this, please jam the hell out of *Frankenstein*."

Besides the obvious, I wanted to know what they found to be the most rewarding. Chad from Chum mentioned that **(See TRIBUTES Con'd on Page 47)**

being in the local scene, I think that's exciting because it's not just stopping at camp with this one performance, but mostly exciting for our rockers who want to be musicians and keep this going as a band."

Goodrich said it is important to her to emphasize girls, trans kids and gender-expansive youth through Girls Rock Denver because "there is not equal access and (an) equal spotlight" for these groups in 2026.

"We are giving them that and getting out of their way," Goodrich said, emphasizing that she believes it is important to allow other groups to have "a spot at the table."

"Each of us has agency," she said. "We have the power to turn up the volume on what we want to see more (of) in the world. We have the power to fund or to give attention to what matters to us. I think it's important for us to back things that we think we need more of in the world.

"If that's important to Phish fans across the world - get involved!" Goodrich continued. "Help your local Girls Rock chapter out!"

For more information, follow Girls Rock Denver on Instagram/Facebook and visit the organization's website: **www.girlsrockdenver.org**.

(TRIBUTES Con'd from Page 36) now his nine-year-old son, Quincy, has started sitting in with the band on drums. "It's the kind of thing that reminds you why you started doing any of this in the first place." AWW! That warms my heart! Ashton from Kids said, "When the crowd catches that wave, and the room lifts three inches off its foundation - there is no drug, no prayer, no poetry that can match that high." Love that! Similarly, Brian Dodds from The Last Rewind said, "For me, the reward is when the audience connection is deep, and you take them on a ride to a destination still unknown to everyone, and in the end, it all pulls together. That feeling of nailing the jam is the best." Eric said, "Everyone in PTF is so incredibly grateful for the Phan support, and it fuels our fire to make our experience something special in the live music world." And they sure do!

If you have been reluctant to catch a show, change your mind! Tributes are a great way to honor Phish, fill the void when they are not on tour, provide an experience at a reasonable cost, and connect with your local Phan community!

(SILENT SKY Con'd from Page 37) feeling together. Just like the three lizards who crawled up the Rhombus in Trey's narration in Love Auditorium on 11/13/91. The lizard people are singing *Divided Sky* in thanks to the gods in heaven for the fields, mountains and forests. What if we also gave thanks to the universe for this moment?

Pipe dreams, I know. I think the "cheer louder" camp is on to me. The last two *Divided Sky*s I've seen live were 4/17/26 and 9/4/22. I have seen *Divided Sky* ten times and the cheer is the overwhelming choice by this community. I am in the minority. I only find a few select phans willing to keep the silence. Most naysayers say a silent pause seems counter to what Trey is asking us to do. They say he is asking for our cheers. And maybe they're right.

Some recent livestreams show Trey purposefully looking at each section of the venue to engage with the audience. You can tell he enjoys the cheers for sure. I wonder if the pause fills a different part for Trey now. In the Silberman article from 1994 Trey mentions the pause is filled with "music going through me and coming out through the guitar, but without making any noticeable sound." Now over 3 decades later, is he still jamming in silence while he takes it all in? Maybe.

I know the next time I see *Divided Sky* the cheer will be louder than ever, but I will still commit to a moment of silence. It will be my time of prayer, my humble thankfulness. This band has been the soundtrack to my life. My one-person campaign will continue, one sticker at a time. My sticker is a pledge. A pledge for phans who want to listen to the music in our heads for a moment. Together. Where the jam continues in silence and is sent to the people we love in the *Divided Sky*. A moment for those gone before and a moment to give thanks for the breath we share in a small moment of space and time. #dividedsilentsky

"Join Me Now"
A Phish song title poem for *Surrender to the Flow*
By Jeff Amato with thanks to Tom Marshall and all the other lyricists

Join me now, for a tale of possums and wombats
Lizards and llamas, ocelots and languedocs
I'll tell you about the story of the ghost in the forest
I'll make it as simple as a sample in a jar

So step right up Wilson and Walfredo, Wendy and Katy, Suzy and Monica,
Reba and McGrupp, oblivious Olivia, Julius and Jennifer, Frankie and Halley,
Brian and Robert, the Wolfman's brother and even you, Buffalo Bill

Will you say something to me S.A.N.T.O.S.?
Share the scents of subtle mule sounds?
Maybe sing a Mike song or a mock song? Or even a Spock's brain song?
Then stash that steep steam and watch the vultures of a feather flock together

Are those waves in the velvet sea or is it water in the (divided) sky?
We can taste and waste bathtub gin with your Mexican cousin
Because tequila is where it starts and where it ends
Let's reconsider all of these things and all of these dreams
You can get your ass handed to you at an Asse festival

Shall we rift and drift (while you're sleeping)
Do you want meat or just a meatstick? Or are you an herbivore?
Maybe eat some egg in a hole?
The dog-faced life boy is eating a mango with gumbo
Somebody pass me a taco!

So don't get down with disease, we aim to please. Or at least tweeze!

***How many songs can you find?**

Dick's Puzzle Solution (From Page 54):

1) 1995 2) 1993 3) 1991 4) 2014 5) 2016 6) 2002 7) 1999 8) 1989 9) 2010 10) 1987 11) 1997 12) 2023 13) 2018 14) 2004 15) 1985 16) 2021 17) 2019 18) 1984 19) 2013 20) 1992 21) 2009 22) 1996 23) 1988 24) 1990 25) 2017 26) 1986 27) 1998 28) 2022 29) 2000 30) 2003 31) 2026 32) 2024 33) 2015 34) 2011 35) 1994