

Stones Tribute Band Won't Leave The Piggy Bank "Shattered, Shattered"

Tribute bands have the look and the sound but not the price.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

There's only one rock god that struts around on stage, wrapped in the Union Jack, singing about girls named Angie, or Ruby Tuesday. And then there's Christopher LeGrand, the singer in the Rolling Stones tribute band "Satisfaction," who takes on the persona of Mick Jagger when they play at Birchmere on April 8.

To get the Mick Jagger look down, LeGrand spent six months watching videos, long before YouTube, and worked on the songs and singing mannerisms. "Having the looks or moves wouldn't mean a thing if I couldn't nail that down first," LeGrand said.

Their full name is "Satisfaction/The International Rolling Stones Tribute Show." LeGrand is the engine behind the band, and he has a business degree. LeGrand is joined by Dom Lanzo as Keith Richards,



Rolling Stones tribute band "Satisfaction," is coming to the Birchmere April 8.

Satisfaction

April 8, 7:30 at the Birchmere.

3701 Mt Vernon Ave, Alexandria, VA 22305

For tickets, go to <http://birchmere.musichall-va.org> or call (703) 549-7500

Jimmy Babu as Ron Wood, John Wade as Bill Wyman and Joe Rondo as Charlie Watts. The band performs 150 shows a year. To be in a tribute band of the Rolling Stones, a musician can't



On stage with his tribute band, Christopher LeGrand is Mick Jagger.

just learn the licks on any one guitar or drum set. According to LeGrand, "our key for any joining member has always been authenticity with all details studied and

covered. Look, sound and attitude." He seems to have it all covered.

They do three different versions of a Stone's show, including the competition-like show with the Beatles, a show called "Sympathy for the Devil," where they are accompanied by an orchestra, and "Gimme Abbey," a play on the 1969 period where the Stone's and the Beatles rocked the world.

Their song list is long, like the Rolling Stones, who have been around since the early 1960s, challenging the Beatles along the way for the title of the "world's greatest rock and roll band." Satisfaction delves into that Beatles competition with their own challenge called the "Beatles vs the Stones from 1965." In the showdown, they're up against a Beatles tribute band "Abbey Road." Although the real bands never performed on stage together back in the day, this dabbles with "what if." Satisfaction describes it as "A one night show

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ESP Tea and Coffee Brings New Faces and Focus to King Street

BY HOPE NELSON
ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE

About two months ago, King Street saw the re-birth of a familiar coffee shop with a renewed name, all set to rise from the ashes. ESP Tea and Coffee at 1012 King Street is the phoenix in question, back on the scene with new ownership, some familiar faces in day-to-day operations and the same comfortable surroundings that had drawn so many customers in years ago.

Let's address the elephant in the room straight-away: ESP's new owner, Erik Muendel, has no ties to Killer ESP's former owner, Rob Shelton.

Muendel has rescued ESP because he enjoyed going there so much.

"I very selfishly interjected myself... because I didn't want (ESP) to go away," he said.

"I don't blame people for being skeptical. It's very natural," Muendel said, adding that he only knew Shelton from brief conversations inside the café.



"I've never even seen him outside of our block."

Shelton drew controversy last year in the wake of allegations of harassment by former employees and some politically charged posts from the shop's Twitter account. But he is no longer involved in ESP. Muendel says that other than occasionally seeing one another in the coffee shop, there is no relationship between the two.

WITH THAT out of the way: It's time for tea.

Whereas most cafes in Alexandria are coffee-forward, Muendel is looking to flip the script a bit at ESP to give tea top billing. He's starting with Puerh tea, sourced from one vendor in Yunnan Province, China, and served largely in cakes rather than loose-leaf. Selections range in flavor from citrusy orange peel, to a bitterness that is almost like a cooking chocolate, to a smooth variety, to an earthy tone.

"It's a really good product for the shop and a really unique offering," he said.

For Muendel, the entire concept of owning a coffee and tea shop is a new endeavor. The founder of Brightline Interactive <https://brightlineinteractive.com/>, this is his first time in the food and beverage industry. Thanks to both his business experience and some reliable hands-on help, he's learning quickly.

"It's been great. I've never run a restaurant or retail shop, but I've been in business for myself since I was in college. I have a lot of friends in the restaurant industry who are owners, and I've also been a part of CEO groups, and there's been a lot of restaurateurs in those groups," he said.

And he also has Maggie Maido on the team as general manager. Maido worked at Killer ESP before the COVID-19 pandemic and is back working with Muendel, handling the daily operations, from running the shop to hiring the staff to training the team.

"It would not be working if Maggie wasn't in place," Muendel said.

WHILE THE biggest menu difference in the new shop is the focus on high-end tea (coffee lovers, take heart: There's plenty on the menu

for you as well), customers will also notice some changes within the building itself.

"I took a lot out and I put a lot of new artwork in. I have a passion for photography, I do a lot of band photography, and something I always thought was great about the space was the music. So there's a lot of new photography, a lot of accent lighting I've put in," Muendel said.

He's also removed about half of the interior furniture to keep the area spaced-out in the face of the pandemic.

As locals find their way back in, Muendel says he's looking forward to getting more entrenched in the community — with tea, with coffee and with some charitable events, including the upcoming Spring2Action citywide drive.

"I've enjoyed it, I've really enjoyed it so far," he said.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

St. Elmo's Comes to Old Town (with Cocktails)

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE

Just in time for a January cold snap, Old Town North has gotten a little bit warmer.

Del Ray staple St. Elmo's opened its doors at 529 Montgomery Street earlier this month – a moment of celebration after more than a year of planning.

"We go back awhile here, in April or May of 2019," said co-owner Larry Ponzi. "We

APPETITE started talking and ended up signing a lease by November of

2019. We were moving forward, we were in the architectural design phase, and submitted for permits in February -- and then when we got hit with Covid restrictions and all of the aftermath of the virus, we had to go to [the landlord] and say 'Look, we have to put this on pause until we figure out where we are financially.' ... The landlord was very good about it and helped us financially pause the project."

Once the daily routine of the pandemic set in, Larry and Christine Ponzi were able to continue on with their plans – and the new St. Elmo's came to fruition.

But don't expect the new outpost to be a cookie-cutter version of the Del Ray original. No, instead, the



Some sandwich favorites from @market2market-delray are featured at St. Elmo's Old Town North. For instance the 116: prosciutto di parma, genoa salami, hot capicola, provolone cheese, lettuce, white onions, hot peppers, sweet peppers and house dressing served on a soft french roll.



Coffee will always remain one of the gems of the shop.

Old Town variety brings a little mix of all the Ponzi eateries under one roof.

"This St. Elmo's is really a culmination of our Market 2 Market and St. Elmo's [Del Ray]," Larry Ponzi said. As a result, expect some of the most popular items from both stores, as well as a beer and cocktail bar element. "It's like an all-day coffee shop/cafe."

And while coffee will of course always remain one of the gems of the shop, there's more on the menu to try.

"We love our homemade soups. We have a homemade chicken noodle and a tomato soup. We have a Cuban sub, which is really popular. We're known for our Reubens, and we took our best Italian sub from the market, our 116, and that's

been popular as well," he said.

But the Old Town crowd has brought different requests from Del Ray, Christine Ponzi said. To wit: Gluten-free and vegan options. And as a result, the new St. Elmo's is contoured to fit.

"We were trying to keep them similar, but what we're realizing early on is that we're going to have to tweak the menus a bit," she

said. "We'll share the successes of each location and hopefully end up with a final menu."

And about those cocktails: The new St. Elmo's has a full bar and intends to use it.

"We've developed some fantastic cocktails. I highly recommend the espresso martini and the old fashioned," Christine Ponzi said. As the café continues to evolve over the coming months, look for a mimosa program with all juices made in-house.

To be sure, opening amid a pandemic brings some interesting challenges. Gone is the business-as-usual style of lingering about the coffee house for hours on end. In its place: Grab-and-go.

"We do have some people that will sit down, open their laptop, have a coffee, have a sandwich, but it's probably 85 percent walk in, walk out," Larry Ponzi said.

But post-pandemic, St. Elmo's regulars can look forward to open-mic nights again, as well as other live entertainment.

"We're excited for the future," Larry Ponzi said.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU FEB. 7

Alexandria Restaurant Week To-Go. More than 60 restaurants in Alexandria will offer a \$49 takeout, delivery or curbside pick-up dinner for two during Alexandria Restaurant Week To-Go. New this winter, more than half of these restaurants will offer a \$25 takeout dinner for one in addition to the \$49 for two deal. This expanded offering was created in response to popular demand from single diners during Alexandria's first Restaurant Week To-Go in August 2020. New Alexandria Restaurant Week participants include Aldo's Italian Kitchen, an Italian eatery on Eisenhower Ave.; Barkhaus, Alexandria's new dog bar; Carlyle neighborhood eatery Pasara Thai and The Alexandrian hotel's new restaurant King & Rye. Restaurants offering to-go deals for one and two people include Los Cuates, Rus Uz, Sonoma Cellar, Village Brauhaus and more. View the menu flip-book and make reservations at www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com or 703-838-5005.

JAN. 27 TO MARCH 24

Wednesday Morning Study Group. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Via zoom. Fairlington UMC 3900 King St.,

Alexandria. Join in a nine-week study of Laudato Si: Caring for Our Common Home, the groundbreaking encyclical letter by Pope Francis on climate issues and a Christian faith-based response. Visit the website: www.fairlingtonumc.org.

FEB. 1-FEB. 26

Dreams and Nightmares. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2120 Crystal Drive, Arlington. National Juried Show, compelling artworks on the theme of Dreams and Nightmares, pieces chosen from all over the country.

From the beautiful and sublime to the dark and twisted. Featuring artwork by Colleen Smith, Peter Hargreaves and Lindsay Cronk. Visit the website: <https://galleryunderground.org/>

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

Mindful Happy Hour. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Virtual via WebEx. Join Erin Sonn, owner of eat.YOGA.drink, and the National Landing BID for virtual happy hour flow. Learn the basics of mindfulness and how you can practice throughout your day in a way that is accessible and enjoyable – all while winding down with your drink of choice. Visit the website: <https://nationallanding.org/do/mindful-virtual-happy-hour>

FEB. 5-27

In the "After Edward Hopper: Themes of Solitude and Isolation" exhibit, artists present their interpretations of what makes Hopper's imagery quintessentially American: perseverance, fortitude, diversity, and an egalitarian spirit in spite of adversity, impoverishment, and social injustice. This exhibit expresses the anthem of a new dawn: still we rise as one, stronger together. Runs February 5-27, 2021 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Details: www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY, FEB. 6

Garden Tour: Winter Trunks and Bark. 10-11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) During winter, tree trunks and branches are revealed in all their glory. Explore the gardens with a master gardener docent who highlights a stunning variety of bark color, texture and form and showcases the best trees for ornamental value in the winter landscape. \$15 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code RKS.MIQD) or call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/FEB. 6

Garden Talk: Attracting Butterflies. 10-11 a.m. At Green Spring Gar-

dens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Want to have a stunning garden and attract a variety of butterflies? Learn from Extension Master Gardeners how to incorporate host and nectar plants, the two kinds of plants that are essential for every butterfly, and bring your garden to life with butterflies. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code 2F1.P4HQ) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Family Hilltop Outing. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria. Enjoy a family-friendly tour of Historic Huntley, which was built high atop a hill overlooking the unique Huntley Meadows Park area. On this tour, you will hop back in time to discover what life was like in days past. Learn why this villa was significant to one of our founding fathers. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-768-2525.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Virtual Tea Party: Love Lessons from Jane Austen. 2-3 p.m. During this virtual tea party, you will learn about the strict prohibitions and rules of etiquette surrounding courtship in Jane Austen's day. Treat yourself to an optional

afternoon tea-to-go to enjoy along with the program. Green Spring will provide individual tea boxes available for pickup on the day of the program. The tea boxes include finger sandwiches, assorted cakes/pastries, scone, cream, jam and tea bag. The cost is \$12 for the lecture; \$24 for the optional tea box. Call 703-941-7987.

THURSDAY/FEB. 11

The Ramsey Homes. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Via Zoom. The City of Alexandria invites the general public, especially residents of Parker-Gray, to a symposium on the Ramsey Homes, which served as affordable housing units from 1953 to 2018. Originally built as temporary housing for African American war industry workers in the 1940s, the homes served as permanent affordable housing for Alexandria residents for 65 years. The Ramsey Homes were located in the heart of the Parker-Gray Historic District and the African American enclave known as Uptown. This symposium tackles issues of race and equity in housing, of community and community memory, segregation's impact on the African American workforce and the landscape of public housing.

Stomping Ground Owner to Launch New Eatery with Mae's Market and Café

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Sometimes, the time is right even when it doesn't seem like the time is right at all. That's ultimately how Stomping Ground owner Nicole Jones found herself walking with a landlord through the old Society Fair space at 277 S. Washington Street a few months back, knowing in her heart that the location was perfect.

This knowledge was a marked departure from Jones' sentiments in the early spring, as the covid-19 pandemic rained punch after punch down on the restaurant industry and Jones' team at Stomping Ground and Bagel Uprising. In a flash, the eatery was forced to pivot from its normal sit-down fare to a pickup window, making menu adjustments along the way. And on an even more serious note, four of Jones' teammates lost family members to the virus early on in the pandemic.

"In the start of covid in March and April,



Nicole Jones

I was ready to never do another restaurant again," she said. "It's taken a huge emotional toll on all of us."

But time marched on, and with it Jones and her team did too. And when Jones got word of co-working space ALX Community taking up residence on Washington Street, as well as the 6,000-square-foot restaurant

space that was virtually turnkey just waiting for a new tenant, her curiosity got the better of her.

While walking through the restaurant space, "I was like, oh, no," Jones laughed. "I want to do this."

And with that, Mae's Market and Café was born.

Now, Mae's, which is slated to open by early March, is not going to be Stomping Ground Part 2, or an offshoot of Bagel Uprising. No, instead Mae's is bringing in its own flair, its own identity.

"It's not a huge diversion from Society Fair, which was there before," Jones said. "I like to say (it's like) a Dean and DeLuca, but by a neighborhood person."

With that will come a sandwich counter, a salad counter, many takeaway options and some high-quality meats and cheeses. Meats will be brought in by small local farms.

"It's a market in the most original sense of the word," Jones said.

Expect Mae's to grow phase by phase over the next year or so – opening with very scaled-down offerings, then a little more,

then a little more. In these unprecedented times, it's the only way to do it, Jones says.

"You'll see it grow over the next year, and the idea is it will culminate with the opening of the restaurant inside the market." Jones' plan is that in a year's time, Mae's will have a sister: Virginia's Darling, a wine bar.

And Stomping Ground faithful, take heart: There will be biscuits. "We will have biscuits as an option!" Jones said. For instance, diners can pick up a buttermilk biscuit with sausage and concord grape jam for breakfast: A hearty start to a new day.

Jones says she hopes the hard work the team will put into Mae's over the next year will result in something refreshing for Alexandria as the city navigates its way through the next stages of the pandemic and beyond.

"I don't want us just to survive; I want us to flourish when this is all said and done," she said.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU JAN. 30

Hidden World Art Exhibit. Regular gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-6 p.m., and Saturdays 12-4 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The "Hidden World" exhibit challenged artists to look deeply into the world, their emotions or imaginations to uncover something normally unseen. There will also be two workshops: Hidden World: Collage in a Box, with Susan Farrer on Sunday, January 10 from 1:30-4:30 p.m., and Hidden Layers: The Joys of Gel Printing, with Eileen O'Brien on Sunday, January 24 from 3-6 p.m. Visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

NOW THRU JAN. 30

Winter Wonderland. At King & Rye's courtyard (480 King Street, Alexandria) is transforming into a Winter Wonderland. In addition to general courtyard seating with heat lamps and holiday décor, new this year, book an igloo for private dining for up to eight guests. This is ideal for social distancing as you are only in the space with your party, and the area is sanitized between parties. The igloos will each have heaters as well as the option to play your own music via a Bluetooth speaker. The igloos will require reservations with a \$50 rental and \$100 food and beverage minimum. The rental will include a hot cocoa and cookie bar. For food and beverage,

enjoy a tapas style menu with a southern twist and, of course, festive cocktails. Reservations can be booked online or via info@kingandrye.com. Visit kingandrye.com/event/winter-wonderland

NOW THRU MARCH 29 (MONDAYS)

Yoga for Gardeners I. 9:30-10:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) This class features a gentle introduction to the Vinyasa method, which helps participants increase the strength, flexibility and endurance necessary for gardening. \$129 per person for 11 sessions. Class held indoors. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code 6E6.JNLA) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

THURSDAY/JAN. 14

Carlyle House and the William Syphax FAN Club. 7 p.m. \$5 per link via Zoom. William Syphax rented space in an outbuilding adjacent to the historic Carlyle House in the early 19th century. He was one of the very few African-Americans in Alexandria who was able to free himself and many of his family members. Join Steve Hammond for a Zoom presentation that will share insights on William Syphax and those were a part of his FAN club.

SATURDAY/JAN. 16

Paint, Build, Create Event. 10 a.m. Virtual. Participants of all ages can experience 10 different activity videos focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. Most activities use recycled

or common household items so you can Learn, Grow, and Play in the comfort of your own home. Visit <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/paint-build-create/>

SUNDAY/JAN. 17

Moon Gates — the Power of Circles. 1:30-2:30 p.m. (16-Adult) At Green Spring Gardens 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Historian Debbie Waugh reveals the ancient origins of the moon gate in Chinese gardens and the value of this striking architectural feature today. View stunning moon gates - traditional and contemporary - that form enticing passageways between garden spaces. Consider incorporating one into your home landscape. Hear about Green Spring's 50th anniversary Moon Gate Garden Project, designed to reflect elements of our historic Beatrix Farrand landscape and provide a symbolic connection between our past and our future. Register with code DGJ.O55A.

SATURDAY/JAN. 23

Garden Talk: Easy Houseplants to Grow. 10-11 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Why wait for spring to get your hands back in the soil? You can enjoy beautiful flowering and foliage plants right now, inside your home. Extension Master Gardeners provide you with all the know-how you need to be successful. If you love gardening outdoors, you're going to love it indoors, too! \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code F36.AVD2) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SUNDAY/JAN. 24

Sizzling Succulents. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Colorful and creative succulents are the one of the easiest ways to brighten a patio or garden with little effort. Garden professional Brie Arthur shares growing and propagation advice about her favorite tender and hardy succulents. Learn creative combinations for year-round interest and new introductions for cold hardiness. Low maintenance, drought tolerant and eye catching, Sizzling Succulents will encourage you to indulge in this sustainable growing trend. Register with code 7QN.XCYD.

SUNDAY/JAN. 24

Catch a Critter. Jan. 13 from noon to 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 24 from 1-2:30 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. On these special days, program participants will have the chance to see, touch and study wetland creatures up close under the guidance of a park scientist. Grab a net to see what can be found in the wetland and use magnifying lenses to study the unique characteristics of these little animals. Discover what they can tell us about their home. This rare opportunity to dip-net in the wetland is possible through the guidance of the park naturalists, and the event is designed for nature lovers age 4 to adult. The cost is \$9 per person. Call 703-768-2525.

SUNDAY/JAN. 24

Virtual Tea. 2-3 p.m. Virtual. Sponsored by Green Spring Gardens,

4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria.

This "Virtual Afternoon Tea: Rebellious Royals" will focus on non-conformist royalty through the years. From Henry VIII to Harry and Meghan, royal rebels have flouted traditions of duty and precedence. Hear about some untraditional royals who have broken the rules, sending shock waves through the palace and challenging the monarchy to accept modernity and change. Registrants will be sent a link by e-mail to join the Zoom lecture. The cost is \$24 for the lecture and an individual, take-home tea box that you can pick up in advance to enjoy during the program. The cost is \$12 for the lecture only. Call 703-941-7987.

FEB. 5-27

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THE BIRCHMERE

The Birchmere in Alexandria is

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