

GRUNGE MUSICAL



audio DRAMA

GRUNGE MUSICAL IS BASED ON

THE UNRELEASED ALBUM OF THE GROUP "CHARLEY DJANGO"

Book by Leyna d'Ancona
Music & Lyrics by Paul Siegel

Grunge Musical features **26 unreleased originals** songs. The original score was written by Paul Siegel and recorded between 1993-1995 with Jon Evans on bass and Scott Amendola on drums. Other recordings include Jeff Keeran on keyboards and Chadwick Minor on percussion and Ravi Abcarian on bass.

From promo shot of "Charley Django" circa 1995 L to R Scott Amendola, Paul Siegel, and Jon Evans

Grunge Musical

is a jukebox musical by Leyna d'Ancona and Paul Siegel based on the unreleased album "The Warehouse Songs." Immersed in the culture of Vermont, a bastion for writers and independent thinkers, this musical was born. The story was crafted from Leyna's experiences in the 1990's and inspired by an investigation into Paul's songs written in that decade. Comparables are Mamma Mia and Anais Mitchell writer of Hades Town, a singer songwriter putting her songs to stage drama a few steps ahead on the same journey.

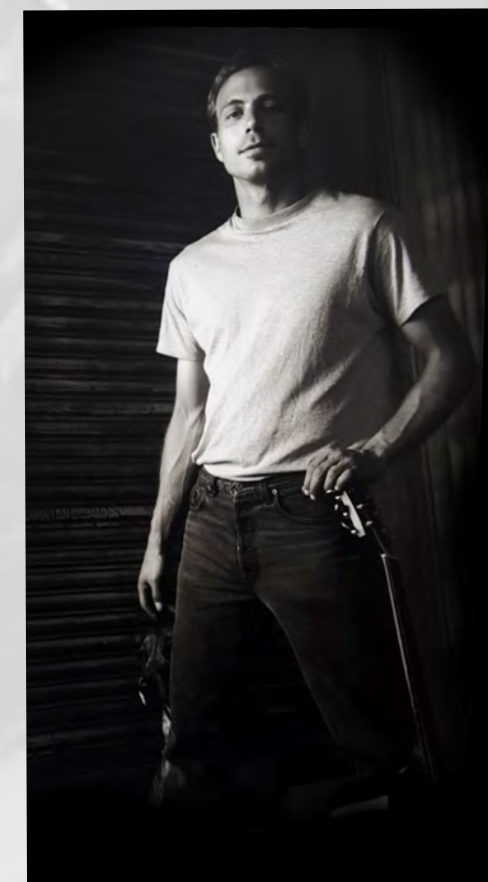


Leyna belly dancing at Cafe Amira on Mission Street in San Francisco, CA

Leyna d'Ancona was born in Berkeley California, the "Summer of Love" in the heyday of the folk-rock scene. Rock stars, ambitious entrepreneurs and justice fighters raised their free-range children to the soundtrack of political chants and live music.

At a young age she learned to push boundaries from the Merry Pranksters, road tripped with "Dead Heads" and danced with her best friends' dad's gold records from his band CCR. This environment-as-normal shaped her worldview. A Cal graduate at the height of the dotcom boom, survivor of two cultural revolutions and witness by happenstance to the rise and fall of arena rock bands, Leyna artfully combines skill with memory to write the story of Grunge Musical..

Paul Siegel grew up in the lower Hudson Valley just outside of New York City where he started writing songs at a young age. Though his tastes leaned more toward Neil young and Led Zeppelin, the background music of his home life and Broadway shows his family frequented were musical soundtracks of "West Side Story" and "Fiddler on the Roof." After graduating from Syracuse University he spent 5 intense years in his band called "Dogtalk." Their independent attitude and political activism reflected in their music and they gained a devoted following. Grooving in odd meters, exploring unique soundscapes and crafting thoughtful narrative lyrics were signatures of the band. Paul expanded on those formative years and devoted himself full time to songwriting. Living in a work-life space warehouse in Oakland California, he formed the band Charley Django with Scott Amendola and Jon Evans, newly arrived to the Bay Area after graduating from Berklee School of Music.



Paul at Dutch Boy Warehouse in his Live/Work Space in Oakland, CA. Photo by Randi Baird

ACT I SYNOPSIS

The musical opens to a concert of an up-and-coming indie rock band, Jump Like Django, performing in an "Upstate" New York bar & grill called The Cellar ("Sworn by Secrecy"). It is February 28th, 1993 and Charley, the lead singer, with hard pounding vocals carries a message of perseverance, and sets the tone of the band as post-punk alternative rock, begrudgingly referred to as "grunge." The band is the gravitational force that binds his circle of friends. Happy together, they live in the moment with shared purpose ("Young Enough"). Jump Like Django is positioned for success having gained a loyal and devoted regional following, but there is tension on which road to take: stay true to their independent roots or get signed by one of the major record labels.

Charley and Boomer, the drummer, live in the apartment above the Cellar where they rehearse and Charley writes songs ("Scarecrow"). Their world revolves around the Cellar where they work and play, venturing out only for a gig. Doc, their manager, sees in grunge a kindred era of freedom, and independence to the hippie movement of his own coming-of-age. In the band's new union that includes Lucy, a natural front woman in the brotherhood of rock bands, Doc sees differentiation and a window of opportunity that he fears will soon close.

His determination to get the band a break pays off. He is contacted by Sonic Youth's manager to invite Jump Like Django to open for their last-minute west coast Spring mini-tour. After receiving the news, the band and friends feel excited anticipation. This was not just a big break for them in terms of exposure, but that they are finally catching a wave on the soaring indie rock movement. Doc encourages them to relocate to Seattle despite an already over-saturated scene because this is where they'll get exposure to all the A&R reps avidly scouting for "the next big thing."

Lucy goes to check in with Charley back at his apartment for assurances that they are not going to return to Albany after the last day of the tour. She is also looking for a commitment from him, that would also signal a commitment to their relationship ("Pride").

Doc was an aspiring singer-songwriter but he lost his chance to a band member's drug addiction. Doc knows Boomer is using even if it goes unsaid by everyone else. He sees this as a threat to the band and reaches out to Boomer's girlfriend Molly looking for him ("Boomer"). Doc fires Boomer from the band.

Charley doesn't live far from Schenectady where he grew up. Every year, Charley's long-suffering alcoholic mother, Flo, gives a toast to Albert, his father, on the same day he left the family. She calls it "Albert Day" to Charley's chagrin. Charley tells her the news of their west coast tour. Flo knows that Albert's disappearance, and the need of her only child, is holding Charley back ("Leave New York Behind"). With his mother's blessing, Charley feels the courage to let go and decides to move to Seattle after the tour. He feels a taste of freedom that allows his vulnerability to show. He goes to the Cellar where they have their last gig and gives Lucy the news ("Reckless Abandon").

The show is about to start but Boomer hasn't shown up. The friends help to save the gig by jammin' ("Lucky") in celebration of their great venture ahead. Doc comes in, without revealing the truth, and tells Charley that Boomer is gone.

The band misses the tour.

Charley and some friends look for Boomer ("If Only"). Doc shares the latest with Lucy that he is leaving to go back to New York City where he has been offered a job as an A&R rep with Polygram. It is no secret that's a highly coveted position, yet Doc acts nonplussed. His casual and smug confidence that he was right all along shakes Lucy's confidence and shatters what remains of her impression of him as a wash-up riding Charley, the brilliant misunderstood artist's, coat tails. As her ambition hits head on into her loyal affections, Doc senses the moment and, on the spot, offers to sign her with the label.

Lucy recruits Django for his help to convince Charley to go to Doc and get a deal as a band without Boomer. Charley feels torn and they argue (Crossfires"). Later, Charley gets word that Lucy is leaving. He goes to find her to see if it is true ("Say You'll Be Back.") Although Charley is never the one to initiate anything other than a song, he promises her he will come to her when the time is right. Lucy doubts it, but has hope.

Boomer is standing on a roof top in despair and looks down over the edge ("Reckless Abandon (Reprise)").

...SOME CONTEXT

In 1993, internet service provider America Online (AOL) expansion of Usenet access, referred to as the "Eternal September," is considered the "big bang" of the age of the internet. The population of online user groups to the public exploded. By the following year, the first commercial web, Netscape, was released. The dotcom boom was to shape cultural globally, revolutionize the media landscape and upend the corporate music industry. By the turn of the new millennium, a battle for control of distribution was so fierce that even mainstream bands would sue their own fans (Napster users), and Y2K legislation and corporations desperately grappled with the new challenges and control over the digital age. Our opening scene is set on February 28, 1993. The band is unaware of the tsunami of change that is about to come.

Time Will Come Around

In the early 90's the power of high-tech studio recording and distribution were still in the hands of the record labels. Doc and the band mates see the importance of being signed, except for Charley. In the 1980's he embraced the underground movement of independent music and saw self-publishing via Indie and underground Record Labels as the new paradigm for artists as the best way to control not just the money but the music production. The age of DIY was still nascent and powerful home recording tools and distribution channels were yet to come. When the day came with the promise of total independence, it was not to be a joyous turn for Charley. Self-determination and autonomy turned into isolation. The age of solo performers arrived but he knew the heart of music will always be in live performances with others who together bring the spirit of the song to life.

Doc

In 1980, Doc stopped playing music and channeled his passion scouting underground NYC music scenes as a band manager. He met Thurston Moore, founder of Sonic Youth in the early '80's at the Noisefest at White Columns (a venue to showcase alternative up-and-coming artists) in the LES. After a decade, he built up a network and enough success with bands and venue owners to create a steady income, but what drives him is redemption from his own lost opportunity.

The Last Era of the Band

WOODSTOCK '99 was supposed to celebrate the 30th anniversary of 'peace, love and happiness.' Instead, the Rome, New York festival earned the infamous distinction of 'the day the Nineties died.' There were tons of contributing factors that made the fest the anti-Woodstock: Organizers trying to wring every last dollar from festival-goers from exorbitant ticket prices to costly water bottles, a festival site built atop hot tarmac in late-July heat, a poorly curated and scheduled lineup and an angry, aggressive crowd that left a charred festival site and sexual assaults in its wake.' - Daniel Kreps, Reporter, Rolling Stone - July 31, 2014

ACT II SYNOPSIS

Five years have passed. The Cellar was sold and became a Chinese restaurant called Lucky's. Charley is still living in the apartment above it writing songs, recording and producing them himself as demos on the newly released blue iMAC. Everyone else moved on except for Henry, the Vietnam War vet who still sits at the bar. Lost in his own world, with his passion becoming an obsession, Charley works on a song he imagines Boomer singing accompanied by a choir and orchestra ("Underexposure").

Lucy relocated to the city with Doc, and is dubbing her music video for her new single ("Parachute"). She is unhappy with how it turned out. Doc finally opens up and shares his experiences to get her to understand once and for all that some compromises are essential for success ("I Believe").

With his friends gone, Charley no longer answered the phone until it went quiet and got shut off. In a lonely funk, Charley sits nightly at the bar drinking with Henry. Charley reflects on his situation out loud ("Pride (Reprise)") and questions the state of things. Django, moved back to Brooklyn with their friends Larry and Mark and formed a band called Factory Throw Outs. Django heads back upstate from time to time to look out for Boomer ("Brother Someday"). After his last search, Django decided to go visit Flo and ask about Charley. Flo tells about Charley's childhood and how his father's departure affected him ("Everybody Knew"). Django asks the obvious question that has been unanswered in Charley's life: "What happened to Albert?" She finally opens up and shares Albert's last request of her and the secret she kept from Charley.

Between scenes, Django found Charley at Lucky's and delivered the news to him. Charley is drunk when Molly comes to support him ("Forgotten").

Having hit rock bottom, Charley finally makes peace with his father ("Séance"). Despite the years that have passed, seeking redemption, Charley had not given up on the promise he made to Lucy. The best way Charley knows how to connect is through his music. Lucy gets a package from Charley with a CD of what he had been working on since the band's demise: A tape simply titled "Warehouse Songs." Using a new Sony discman, Lucy puts on headphones and plays the tape ("Moonshine"). Back in Albany, NY, (upstage) Charley is playing the song at an open mic while Lucy is listening to the tape (downstage). Meanwhile, Django, Larry and Mark find Boomer (stage left). Flo has connected with Henry (stage right) and they sit at her table having coffee together. The one song was enough and Lucy takes off the headphones and breaks her contract with Doc.

The band has reunited and are playing Charley's song ("Scarecrow") on the emerging artists showcase stage at Woodstock '99. Backstage, all their friends have also reunited. Doc shows up. Time and absence reveal Doc to have been a father figure all along. Charley has the revelation that Doc is not the antagonist trying to sell him out, but it was his own obsession and fear of loss that was the real enemy. Together they all sing about the life still ahead of them, with the "love of what has been and the wonders of what's to come." ("Young Enough").

Fin

PRODUCTION PREVIEW

THE ROGUE VALLEY has a long history of theater arts, drawing visitors from all over the world.

"Founded in 1935, the Tony Award-winning Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) in Ashland OR, is among the oldest and largest professional non-profit theatres in the nation. Oregon Shakespeare Festival has paved the way for other theatre companies to grow and succeed. Ashland New Plays Festival, Oregon Cabaret Theatre, Ashland Contemporary Theatre, Livia Genise Productions, and Camelot Theatre, located in nearby Talent, collectively offer a vibrant community theatre experience for visitors and locals. SOU's Oregon Center for the Arts present award-winning drama, comedy, and musicals in the 300-seat Center Stage Theatre and the 100-seat Center Square Theatre, located on the Southern Oregon University campus in Ashland. In Medford, the Craterian Theatre at the Collier Center for the Performing Arts hosts music, theatre and dance from around the world year-round and the Holly Theatre is currently undergoing a complete restoration and should add another exciting venue to southern Oregon in 2018."

Ashland Chamber of Commerce - AshlandChamber.com



FACILITY

CAMELOT THEATRE,

a professional theater company renowned for performing high-quality plays, musicals, and musical events year round, is now housed in the brand-new intimate 164-seat state-of-the-art James Morrison Collier Theatre Building in down-town Talent, OR, just 5 miles north of Ashland.

ONLINE

Podcast distribution to Spotify, Apple music and other podcast platforms

WHY this musical? WHY NOW?

We have reached the 50th year anniversary of the last major American cultural revolution: Woodstock, the Beatles album, landing on the moon. A generation since the first web page was launched on the Netscape browser and Nirvana toured their album Nevermind.

It's time to revisit the pivotal moment the internet launched publicly and we opened Pandora's box.

There have been rock musicals but when have you seen a musical about a rock band? And, by the way, has anyone stopped to ask "what ever happened to bands?" It's all about independent artists .The look, the hook and the synth."

What is the most watched streaming show of our time? "Friends" from the 90's, What are we missing that only "Friends" can address?

Grunge Musical takes us back to the last era of grandma's NYC rent control, live arena rock bands and the dawn of the digital age when everything changed. Art is the light in a dark theater. As the pandemic rages Grunge Musical launches its premier performance in the spirit of the radio play.

WHAT IS Grunge Musical ABOUT?

Change.

WHY us?

This is the first hand account of my hella punk-ass youth.

We aren't Boomers and we aren't even really Gen-X. We are Generation Jones.

Peace out.



Featuring Nakia

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