

There's a

On a crisp November morning in 2007, I found myself driving the back roads and lost highways of Oregon on a long awaited mission to meet with Dan Bazzy founder, songwriter and drummer of the New Dawn. The band recorded and released their album *There's A New Dawn* in 1970. This private press record has been deemed a "masterpiece of music" by Hans Pokora in the seminal *1001 Record Collector Dreams* book series.

It still blows my mind that a garage-psych band from rural Oregon has achieved such prominence in the annals of rock history. When I first heard the band on a bootleg CD in the early 1990s, I was instantly drawn to their dark but uplifting sound. This album encapsulates the rock sound of the Pacific Northwest in the same capacity that the Tweedy Brothers, the Sonics or the Wipers conjure up a distinctive geographic musical perspective. A testament to this is the inclusion of their song "Dark Thoughts" on the *Love, Peace & Poetry: American Psychedelic Music* collection in 1997.

One thing that I find so intriguing about this album is that the songs have such a thread of continuity throughout that really demonstrates a fully realized 'sound.' These tracks weren't demos, but rather the studio output of a tight band that consistently toured. Interestingly, the band's lyrics have sometimes been interpreted as being Christian in theme; however, Bazzy adamantly insists that the New Dawn was never a religious or Christian Rock band. He's proud of all the belated acclaim for his old band, but is also somewhat nonplussed at being defined as a 'psychedelic' group. Asked to define the music of the New Dawn, he says, "Well, I call it dance rock or light rock. A lot of the old timers would call us heavy rock, but I figured we were just rock. Now they call this 'psychedelic rock.' To me it was kinda light compared to some of the stuff. It was heavier than the Archies! Now we're classified as psychedelic and I'm like, 'Wow!'"

Formed in Oregon in 1967, the New Dawn were essentially a nightclub band, touring throughout the north-west part of the country, as well as parts of California and Nevada, and as far north as Alaska. They were never part of the college or festival scene. "In 1970, people thought we had played Woodstock," chuckles Dan, "because if you listen to the tapes [of the Woodstock festival], Grace Slick and Jefferson Airplane take the stage and its just daylight; the sun is just coming up. They do a song or two, and she says, 'Oh, there's a new dawn.' And everybody thought that was us. 'Oh, you were at Woodstock!' No we weren't!"

New Dawn

**They made the music. Their wives made the outfits.
Isaac Slusarenko got their story.**



Bazzy grew up in the Detroit area where he started drumming with bands in the early '60s, including the Shamrocks and Spider & the Webs. "They were unknown bands," he recounts. "Back then you could show up with your instruments and just have an instant Battle of the Bands. You know, the band shows up and you've got it. Walled Lake is probably 30 or 40 miles from Ann Arbor, and that's where Bob Seger was running around with his band. Back then Walled Lake had an amusement park. They had a huge building that was a roller rink and they quit using it for that and called it a casino. They held dances there. All the Motown artists would come to just try their stuff out before going on tour: Little Stevie Wonder, I mean everybody—the Supremes, whoever. It'd cost you a buck to get in and they'd have some of the local groups.

"We weren't there necessarily for that," he adds. "We were looking for girls! But in them days, that was cool. But looking back on it now, I wish I had been paying more attention because some of these people now are legends. You never know who you'd run across. All these groups were running around everywhere! Like I said, it was an instant Battle of the Bands.

"We were doing all instrumentals at the time," he continues. "We had two guys join the band every now and then to sing, you know be our lead singers. One was Bob Robinson. He sounded like BJ Thomas. He actually had a record out. But most of the time it was Ventures and instrumentals because nobody had the guts to sing."

In 1963 Bazzy enlisted in the Marines, serving in Vietnam during 1965. By the time he got out of the service in 1966 his family had relocated to Oregon. "I was gonna move back to Detroit," he says, "but uh...thirty, forty years later, here I am!"

Soon after arriving in Oregon, Dan ran into bass player Bob Justin and guitarists Larry Davis and Joe Smith, local garage band musicians who had been struggling to find a suitable drummer. "I said, 'You know, I used to play in groups as a drummer,'" recounts Dan. "And they were, 'Oh wow! We need a drummer!'"

With Dan on board, the group was soon up and running. "We practiced a little bit and played a couple parties," recalls Bazzy. "We played first at a high school, so we picked a name quickly. At that time we all had short hair and we had black pants and white shirts with a black tie. I don't know who came up with the name, but we came up with the Sound Citizens."



The Sound Citizens, ca. 1966.



**Left: Early New Dawn, June 1967.
Above and right: September 1968.
Below: Richland, Washington, 1970.**

The Sound Citizens name didn't last long. "We were the Sound Citizens for one dance," laughs Dan, "and everybody said, 'That sucks.' So we just brainstormed one night and came up with the New Dawn. We picked the name in March or April of '67.

"This is before the Dawn dish soap and Tony Orlando & Dawn came out," he adds. "Later, when we were on the road and they were having some hits people would come up to us request these songs. And we'd say, 'We don't do that one.' And they'd get all upset: 'What do you mean you don't play 'Tie A Yellow Ribbon?'" he laughs. "'Knock Three Times'? They'd actually get upset with us because we wouldn't play those songs."

By early 1967, when they became the New Dawn, they'd also added a singer, Bob Green. Green would sing lead on about half the songs, and Bazy would sing on the other half. This lineup of the group—Dan Bazy (vocals, drums), Joe Smith (lead guitar), Larry Davis (keyboards, guitar), Bob Justin (bass) and Bob Green (vocals)—lasted through the end of 1969, playing nightclubs throughout the northwest. "We'd play Corvallis [Oregon] in the wintertime for four or five months," explains Bazy, "and then we'd come to Salem [Oregon] and play at Andy's Club for two or three months. Then in the spring we'd take off and go to Washington, Montana, Idaho, California, Nevada—at any clubs that would book us—and in the wintertime we would be back and winter out in Corvallis or Salem.

"We turned professional in the summer of '69," he continues. "Everybody quit their jobs and we went to doing it then. That's when we started traveling. We'd play all over the place. Sometimes it'd be a good deal and sometimes not. Like we'd follow an acid rock band, and we were not acid rock; we were more Top 40; we were learning. We did a lot of Stones, we had a whole set of Creedence—they were hot in '69—we did a little bit of everything, but we didn't do the Vanilla Fudge—still we weren't heavy enough."

For some reason, the band never did well in Portland. "We played at Embers, the Turquoise Room, the Palm Gardens, or something like that. I didn't like Portland. Didn't like the people. It was just weird, compared to other towns we played in. They didn't react the way people in other towns did. So we never felt real comfortable. That's why we didn't play there too often. There's a big difference between Salem and Portland. Night and day. In Salem, they'd go crazy."

Reno, Nevada was another big town for the

New Dawn. "Reno was fantastic," remembers Dan. "They made you feel like you were a star! We played a club that was part of a bowling alley/lounge in this shopping center. They had probably four or five bouncers, people lining up—there were probably two or three hundred people packed in there, and several hundred people trying to get in. We always joked that the mob owned it, because the guy that ran it, the club manager, looked like the kind of guy that would cut your throat in a heartbeat! He was an older guy. We'd play for fifteen minutes and then he'd [give a signal] and then we'd be like, 'Okay. Time to take a break.' So, we'd go out in the bowling alley and play pinball for twenty minutes and then he'd say to go back on stage. The club doesn't make any money when they're dancing [the audience]. So he'd have them sit down and order drinks and wait until they get restless to have us go on again. He loved us!"

Towards the end of 1969 the band decided

they wanted to get rid of Bob Green. "He was a good singer," remembers Dan, "but he went on a super ego trip. We had trouble. And being the leader of the group, it was up to me to make decisions. Some of the guys would come up to me and say he was doing this or that. He was singing off key and he'd insist that the rest of the band was *playing* off key—that's how big his ego was! Him and I would butt heads; he was upset with me. Which is fine; I'd rather have him upset with *me* rather than the whole band fighting, you know?"

Bazy intended to fire Green after they'd completed their residency in Corvallis and replace him with Bill "Gart" Gartner before they headed to Salem for their next gig. However, things didn't go according to plan. "We had talked to Gart," remembers Dan. "Gart was a regular, great personality, really eager, always wanted to be in a band. He was a disc jockey and Green always wanted to be a disc jockey. I thought, yeah, that'll

be cool: I'll fire him as soon as we're done here and Gart can join us in Salem. Well, Green somehow got wind of it the week before and basically I had to can him. It was too stressful for Gart to get up on stage so I basically had to be the front man, singer and drummer for that week. Then Gart joined us in Salem after that week.

"Green went and got Gart's job as a disc jockey down in Corvallis," he adds, laughing. "So they just switched positions!"

Gart turned out to be a big asset to the group. Not only was he a good singer, he also played drums, so he and Bazy would switch positions throughout the set.

It was in 1970 that the group first met up with Gary Nieland, a booking agent based in Salem, Oregon. "The guy we had at the time was a guy named Dick Panic," recounts Bazy. "He had a good heart. I think he really wanted to do something with the group but he had such a reputation for being such a crook and a shyster. He didn't do anything bad to us. He got ten percent of what we earned. Every dime he ever made from us—ten percent—he spent it on us: dinner, buying stuff for us; I think he saw the potential in us, but you know he had such a reputation you couldn't hardly get a deal [a gig] with a club. It was killing us. So I heard



about Gary and I went to talk to him. He said he wouldn't take us away from Panic/Rainbow Enterprises. So then I fired Panic and made him tear up the contract. Which he did. He didn't fight it or nothing. He was really upset and he felt really bad about it. We signed with Gary and immediately had all kinds of bookings. He had a pretty good reputation; knew a lot of club owners. They trusted him. He had other groups out there. His other main group was Dart. They were being groomed to be a lounge act, and we were basically headed for recordings, records. Dart has records, too, but their main emphasis was all these elaborate outfits, groomed."

Nieland was Dart's drummer, and had previously played with the Ultimates, as well as the road band for the Champs of "Tequila" fame. He had a recording studio setup in his basement, and proposed that the group record an album, which he would issue on his own label, Hoot Records. "That's Gary's nickname, Hoot," explains Dan. "He looks like an owl. Glasses: big, thick, almost like Roy Orbison glasses. He came up with Hoot Records."

Bazzy and Bill Gartner came up with the original material for the project: 12 songs in all—there were no additional songs left over, as far as Bazzy recalls. Asked about his approach to songwriting, Dan says, "Sometimes I would come up with a line or some words or it might even have a melody and a couple words to it. I never really had any set thing. But, once something started, I'd keep working with it. I wrote a lot of songs that never got [finished]. I'd get three-quarters the way through and think, 'This is horrible! Throw that out!' But once I got it, I'd just show the guys. Most of them are very basic: A-B chords. They'd just play the rhythm or if I had a lead like on 'Hear Me Crying,' I'd show the keyboard player, Larry, how to play it. Practice it a few times and then pretty much just go ahead and record it."

The record ended taking about two months to record during the spring of 1970. "We'd play in Salem from nine to two at night," remembers Dan, "and then after we go off we'd record in the studio until seven in the morning."

The album cover featured a striking shot of the group posed against the dawn sky in matching outfits. The photo was taken by Gart. "Bill, he was like an amateur photographer," explains Dan. "He had a really nice camera. We had the idea, 'Well, let's get a picture of the sun coming up. So we were playing in Corvallis, and he said something about going up to Mary's Peak. So that's where we were at. There's snow on the

The New Dawn in Reno, Nevada, 1971.

L to R:

**Dan Bazzy, Bobby Justen,
Bill Gartner, Joe Smith,
Larry David.**



ground, we hadn't slept because we played the night before, so there we were waiting for the sun to come up!"

As for those outfits... "Oh yeah! We had quite a few different outfits," says Dan. "A lot of them the wives would make...custom made. We always pretty much had the same stuff. That was just part of the deal back then."

Bazzy estimates the album was released around July of 1970. "We were down in Reno in July when they shipped out the first batch for us to sell in the clubs." Five hundred copies were pressed, but he estimates that only around 200 may still exist as many of the records were damaged, mostly due to warping.

He recalls they were all a little disappointed with the finished product. "Some of it was fine," he says. "Some of the problems came out after. It was micro-grooved—whatever that means. The bass response. If you didn't have a really good phonograph it would skip all over the place. The needle would come right off. It was explained to me that because we crammed six songs on a side, they had to micro-groove, in other words make the grooves smaller. You had to put a couple quarters on your stylus in order to keep it on [the record]! It was kind of disappointing."

"Anytime you write a song, at least for me, it takes months or years and you're still re-doing it or rearranging. We wrote right in the studio as we were recording. When we went in and started recording, we didn't have anywhere near twelve songs. Actually when you cut them and they're pressed and they're done, you hear all kinds of stuff. It's like, 'Oh I wish we did this here' and 'we should've done that.' A lot of stuff over the years. We were happy with it, but in other ways, no."

The album was sold mostly at the group's club gigs, where several of the songs found their way into their live repertoire. Others were sold in local record stores and a few other area outlets, including some branches of the Fred Meyers grocery store chain, and even a Payless drugstore. "They were there for quite a while," laughs Dan. "As a matter of fact, I don't know what they did with them. There's probably thirty or forty of them—I don't know what Fred Meyer or Payless does with old albums... I went back a few

times and found some in the bargain area for like a buck, probably like a year or so later. Some probably ended up in little record shops in cellophane and all that stuff."

Nieland's resources for distribution and promotion were limited, but the album did receive some local airplay, especially the song "I See A Day." "We did get a few radio stations to play the stuff," relates Bazzy. "One [station] up in Washington actually did really good with it. They dedicated two hours to us, had the whole band in, interviewed us on the air, then they'd play a song. It was pretty cool. Wish I had that interview! I think it was a station up there in Yakima."

Nieland and the group considered the album to be a demo of sorts that might eventually lead to bigger things. "We sent some off to different labels," says Bazzy. "I've got a scrapbook of different stuff. I sent one to Apple and I got a letter back, saying, 'We don't do anything on that side of the Atlantic; get a hold of Capitol.'"

In 1971 the New Dawn recorded a demo of three new "heavier sounding" songs: "Do What You Want To" and "We Need Each Other" by Gart and "Woman" by Bazzy. "We got some weird sound effects on Gart's songs," remembers Bazzy. "We don't know what we did, but we left it on there because the effect was really weird on the guitars. It sounded pretty cool!"

They sent a tape to ABC-Dunhill Records, who expressed a serious interest. Unfortunately, though, according to Bazzy, Nieland didn't bother to pursue the deal. "It was a big mistake we didn't go down there," he opines, "cause they were really interested in the group. They loved the music. It's just like opportunity knocked and Gary told them to come around to the back door instead of just opening the door. All these years I've kicked myself for not being a little more assertive, because I was the leader of the group I should have just put have my foot down."

"Gary had been the group the Champs," he continues, "'Tequila' and all that stuff; he was the drummer of that group. He had been on the road since he was like fifteen with that group back in the '50s. The pictures he had on his walls down in his basement in Salem: Gene Vincent, Righteous Brothers—these were all guys that he knew personally; that they traveled with and played different engagements together. So, I figured the guy really knows his stuff. We were always booked six months in advance. I guess I figured 'he knows what he's doing, so I guess we just trust the agent, he's been in the



business.' But it was a big mistake. As much interest as this album has generated over the years, I really think that if Dunhill had gotten a hold of it and redone it and had re-released it, who knows, we might have had a hit or two off of it and completely changed the whole direction."

By the end of 1971 the New Dawn was starting to fade. "By then everybody was married and a couple of the guys had kids," explains Bazzy. "Larry was actually the oldest in the group, and when we went on the road in '69 his boy was four years old. So within a couple years he and his wife couldn't travel because his boy was in kindergarten. Joe had one or two kids by then; born while we were on the road. The wives, you know, they wanted roots. Settle down. For a while we were livin' in motel to motel. Then we all bought a travel trailer, which was a little better, but still they wanted to settle down. Basically by the last part of '71 everybody went back to work doing whatever they could do work-wise and then we just played weekends."

The group broke up for good in the early '70s and went on with their separate lives. It wasn't until around 2000, when he stumbled upon a bootleg CD reissue, that Bazzy became aware of his old group's reputation in the psychedelic collecting scene. He was especially amazed by some of the comments he's received from fans of the album. "I got an email from a guy in Korea who has three [copies] of the CDs. Two he has put away for collectors, the third he listens to. He names two of the songs that he has played over 1,000 times each! He doesn't speak good English, so he doesn't really know what the song

are about but he really likes how the songs make him feel."

Over the past year I have had the privilege and pleasure of getting to know Bazzy and his family while working with him on the authorized CD release of *There's A New Dawn*. One of the highlights was the January 2008 reunion show in Willamina, Oregon. Bazzy was accompanied by his son Dan (rhythm guitar), Russ Hosley (lead guitar), and Karen Purdom (bass). The band was met by an enthusiastic, over-capacity crowd. It seemed like the whole community came out to sponsor the event: kids, seniors, bikers, soccer moms—everyone was dancing! The set list contained a track from the album and Larry Davis, the band's original guitarist, was rockin' out in the crowd. One track from the reunion show will appear as a bonus track on the upcoming CD, which will also include the unreleased 1971 demos, "Woman," "We Need Each Other" and "Do What You Want to Do."

Bazzy is delighted that the album is finally receiving a legitimate reissue, so more people can discover the exceptional music of the New Dawn. "I'm just amazed at the whole thing!" he enthuses. "Who knew 37 years later people would be interested?" •

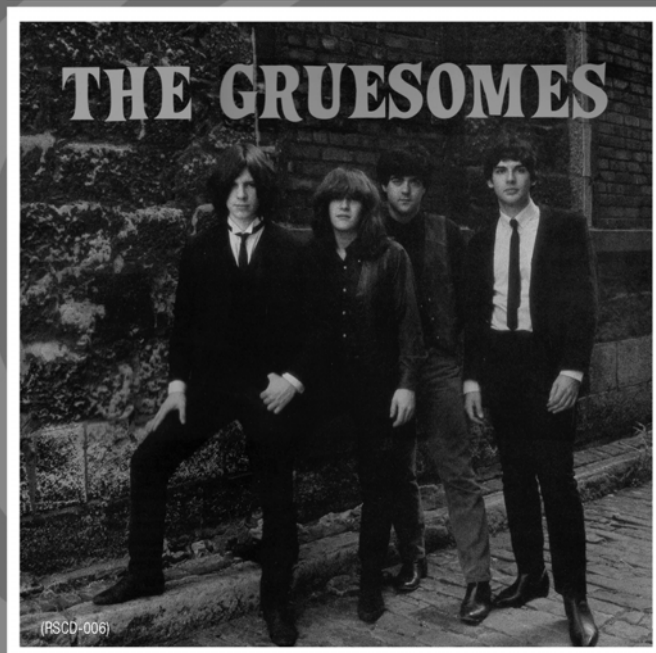
The New Dawn *There's A New Dawn* is available on Jackpot Records (www.jackpotrecords.com). The CD also includes unreleased demos and live track from the 2008 reunion show.

Sadly, Bill "Gart" Gartner lost his battle with cancer in May 2008.



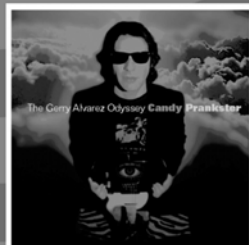
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