

Arts (/Arts/)

# Sounds Local: Austin & Elliott offer a healthy dose of dark humor

By SHERYL HUNTER  
For The Recorder

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If you have ever seen Lisa Austin and Chris Elliott in concert, you know that their shows are lively affairs. The Montague duo plays harmony-laced folk songs that have a tendency to be on the dark side. Which, to me, is all for the better. Austin sings and plays hand drum, while Elliott also sings and plays acoustic guitar. When they take the stage at Mocha Maya's in Shelburne Falls on Saturday at 8 p.m., it is going to be a special night of music. Not only will they treat the crowd to an evening of their self-proclaimed "love gone wrong and death done right songs," but both Austin and Elliott will each take a solo turn on the mic. Michael Metivier, a poet/singer/songwriter who goes by the stage name Oweihops, will be on hand as the opening act.

Elliott will be performing a brief set of material off his newly released self-titled solo album — a collection of 11 cheeky tunes that feature smart, witty lyrics and equally inspiring melodies. He treads down an offbeat path on "Cinderella's Midnight Surprise," where Cinderella is given a bullet and has to find the gun that it fits. "Star Trek, Star Wars, the Holy Bible" is a humorous narrative about the three that finds Abraham parting the sea with a golden light saber. On "Cheat on You," when the narrator discovers that their lover has been unfaithful, they view it as a free pass to have a fling of their own.

Religion is a topic on more than one track here. The standout track is "Jesus, My Son," in which God questions the career choices that his son Jesus is making. "Jesus, my son/Your mother and I disapprove/This business of love is a bad career move/ You'd better think twice," sings Elliott as he strums a pretty melody on acoustic guitar.

His song "Home for the Holidays" is a spot-on take of a family holiday dinner. The gathering party may have blood in common, but not much else as they try to veer away from any conversation that includes politics or religion. Most of us can relate to

the song's closing line, "Say goodbye until next year/Unless Christ returns by then/You'll have to go through this again."

Keeping with his "death done right" theme of many of the songs, Elliott updates the old murder ballad, "Frankie and Johnny," and aptly titles it, "New Frankie and Johnny," setting a banjo against some gritty electric guitar. Austin helps out with some vocals on this song. This story about a woman done wrong, evokes a dark, menacing feeling as it depicts a couple having a final meal at Burger King.

Elliott, who self-produced the album, uses sound samples from vintage PSA's and old commercials throughout the disc to create effect. It adds to the wonderful weirdness of the work and expands the boundaries of traditional folk music. Elliott's dark sense of humor is firmly intact on this album. Remember that time Gillian Welch and Robyn Hitchcock collaborated? This is what that project should have sounded like.

Elliott is just starting to introduce this disc to an audience. He released it for free for a limited time on the website: [noisetrade.com](http://noisetrade.com)

"Like other artists I know, I decided to make the album available free for a limited time to get the music out there and generate interest. The aim is to get people listening so that they recommend it to friends and come to shows," he said.

Oweihops, the moniker that Metivier has worked under for most of the 2000s, has shared the stage with such artists as Kristin Hersh, Grand Archives and Red Heart the Ticker. Metivier, who resides in southern Vermont, is a respected poet whose work has been featured in numerous publications. He currently is an associate editor at Chelsea Green Publishing in southern Vermont.

Mocha Maya's is at 47 Bridge St. in Shelburne Falls. This show is free, but there is a suggested donation of \$7.

For more information about Lisa Austin and Chris Elliott, visit: [www.austinandelliott.com](http://www.austinandelliott.com)

## St. Patrick's Day events

You didn't think we would forget St. Patrick's Day did you? Tomorrow is the big day where you get a chance to don some green and soak up some of your favorite Irish tunes.

The biggest St. Patrick's Day party is going to happen at the Arts Block tomorrow night with local party band Jimmy Just Quit. This quartet from Greenfield is not a Celtic band, but rather a popular cover band that plays all types of music — everything from Weezer to Dr. Dre. St. Patrick's Day is about celebrating and having a great time and this band is all about that.

And this is not going to be your average run of the mill St. Patrick's Day party. As the band gears up to release its third album, they are making a music video and are giving you the opportunity to be in it. The quartet will be filming at this show, and they want as many people as possible in attendance. Their goal is to capture the energy and party vibe of their live shows. Come on out and dance the night away and while starring in a music video.

"We want this music video to feature the best of the best that a JJQ party has to offer — you guys and girls! We want to capture a dance party atmosphere and are prepared to bring on the jams all night long," said the band.

Before the show, Scott Kuzmeskus, aka Scotty K, will be playing a solo acoustic set downstairs in the Wheelhouse. Kuzmeskus is one of the founding members and director of entertainment for the Franklin County Pumpkinfest. He covers the music of everyone from Jack Johnson to Bob Marley.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and music begins at 9 p.m. \$5 admission at the door. The Arts Block is at 289 Main St. in Greenfield.

Looking for a holiday happening that's more on the traditional side? Tomorrow night, the Shutesbury Athletic Club will be hosting a traditional corn beef and cabbage meal followed by traditional Celtic music performed by the Boys of the Landfill. Dinner is from 6 to 8 p.m. Following the dinner, the band promises that it will play into the wee hours of the night. Dinner is sliding scale donation of \$6 to \$9 per person. The Shutesbury Athletic Club is at 282 Wendell Road.

Deja Brew in Wendell will also host a St. Patrick's Day show on Friday at 9 p.m. with the Irish Twisters. Enjoy a night of Irish Craic with JT McKenna and Sean Callaghan. This event is free. Deja Brew is at 57A Lockes Village Road.

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