

Tim Herron Corporation

Contributed by Molly English-Bowers

Growing Up

Tim Herron Corporation brings a new adult attitude to a CD release party upstairs at the Dinosaur

Maturity is tough for a rock musician. Consider Mick Jagger, who many would say has never really grown up or Paul McCartney, who can't seem to devise set lists that are more McCartney and less Beatles. The, ahem, mature artists out there eventually come to grips with their advancing years and instead of whining about adulthood, actually write music that celebrates their newfound wisdom.

The third CD from the Tim Herron Corporation, Trivium (independent), seems to embrace that concept, not fight it like a 16-year-old might. It is named for the medieval educational system, which is broken down into three parts: logic, grammar and rhetoric. "We wanted to call the album Common Sense," Herron says. "We feel there are a lot of songs on the CD about that, but we discovered that John Prine has an album called Common Sense. So we went with Trivium. We feel there are a lot of simple lessons on the album, and the name sounded good."

Nearly as good as the album itself.

Through 11 songs, guitarist and keyboardist Herron and his bandmates—bassist Eric McElveen and drummer Jerritt Wahrendorf—sing about mundane topics in a new way, which is what most decent rock songs do. It's easy to sing about unrequited love, yet it's tough to sing about it in novel ways. In "My Bike," Herron's mellow voice warbles over lyrics like, "I would ride through the scary parts of town for you." Is that true love, or what?

Then he gets plain silly on "CIA Blues," a song about falling in love with a woman in Iran ("She doesn't even know my real name."). Or "A Tipp Hill Love Story," one to which many a Syracusan can relate—falling in love at a Tipperary Hill bar, however fleeting the emotion may be. Herron gives the one-night stand a Salt City twist.

Central New Yorkers will have the opportunity to enjoy the Tim Herron Corporation's newest music at two CD release parties: Friday, Nov. 6, at 9 p.m. upstairs at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, 246 W. Willow St. (doors open at 8 p.m.); and Saturday, Nov. 7, 9 p.m., at Greene's Ale House, 104 W. Bridge St., Oswego. The Dino show has a cover charge of \$10. "We're pretty excited about it," he says about appearing at the city's hippest new venue. "It was tough to book the show because it's such a desirable room."

Unlike the well-attended April show at the Westcott Community Center, Herron promises his of-age fans that beer will be available. "Our friends wanted to drink some beers, so we thought we'd see if we could get the room at the Dinosaur. People will be excited to be there—hanging out on a Friday night, having a few beers."

The opening act will be House on a Spring, a reggae band out of Oswego, where Herron, McElveen and former drummer P.J. Bullock attended college, majoring in music. Special

guests will abound during the show, including Mark Nanni of Los Blancos on keyboards and accordion, saxophonist Jesse Collins, Jay Barady on mandolin, and Bullock, who will sit in on skins for a bit. Bullock retired from the band to help out at home, occupied by his wife and three children. That forced Herron to find a new drummer in advance of recording Trivium, key for a group firmly steeped in jam-band traditions. And Herron is happy with the man they found.

“Jerritt did a good job on the CD. He’s a little different, but he’s been watching the band since he was a kid and he knew all our stuff, which was interesting. He plays it differently, but he knows it. He approached us about getting the band back together, which was interesting. I remember him saying at a music festival, ‘If Eric moves back here I want to be your drummer.’ So we ran with it, and it’s been pretty good so far.”

The Tim Herron Corporation went on unofficial hiatus in 2002, when McElveen moved to Los Angeles and then when Bullock’s house became a child-filled home. McElveen has since moved to Queens, making him more accessible to Syracuse and Herron. Herron himself tried gigs in the corporate world, working for American Music and Guitar Center. “I realized pretty quickly that, man, this is not what I’m cut out for,” says Herron, 37. “So I got to thinking, what was the happiest time of my life? And it was when I was playing music and working at the Boys and Girls Club.”

Currently, Herron works part time at Elmcrest Children’s Center and Pace CNY, which provides long-term elder care options for those who would otherwise have to move to a nursing home. He provides music therapy for the children at Elmcrest and to the older patients who have Alzheimer’s and dementia.

“We do a lot of songwriting therapy, which is super cool,” Herron explains, “to see what they come up with.” For the kids at Elmcrest sometimes that means getting them to rap about their situation. “They put music together and sing about being here: ‘It sucks.’ They want to be home.”

He also has set up a Bridges to Health program at Elmcrest, teaching the kids skill building, so they can thrive in the real world. “It’s not necessarily music-related, which is a good balance for me. If I were doing music all the time, I’d go nuts.”

The group’s fan base remains crazy about the three guys from Central New York who put out a jam band/alt-country/blues-rock sound—“We call it ‘Ameribeat music’”—and Herron professes amazement at how young those fans are these days. “I don’t feel old. It’s a young man’s game in many ways. We played Saranac Lake the other night, and we had a swarm of fans that were 18, 19, and they have our albums, they were shouting out our songs to us. I realized, this is our fan base. There’s something really nice about that and there’s an energy that you can grab from that young audience.

“We still have that jam-band root in us, from that Northeast jam band scene. I play side projects with my friends from moe.,” he says. “But I guess we’ve grown up a little bit, too, where we don’t stretch out our sounds for an hour anymore.”

Trivium is available for purchase at the CD release parties, and is also at Sound Garden, 308 W. Jefferson St., for \$10. Herron is also participating in an Internet experiment, much like Radiohead did for its last release, by inviting fans to download the CD off the Web site, www.timherroncorporation.com, and paying what you choose for it. "And people are actually paying for it," he says. That's a grown-up concept indeed.

Tim Herron now, and, in 2002, flanked by former drummer P.J. Bullock (left) and Eric McElveen: "We still have that jam-band root in us, but we don't stretch out our sounds for an hour anymore."