



PHOTO BY SARAH SCHRIEVER

Greetings From Anywhere, who open for Skyfactor at Garcia's on July 26.

Village bonds yield double-bill debut at Garcia's

By Hilari Graff

REGION — Two Rivertowns-rooted musical groups are bringing their original tunes, acoustic sounds and distinctive styles to one of the newer concert venues in Westchester.

Skyfactor and Greetings From Anywhere (GFA), both established by Rivertowns residents, will perform at Garcia's at The Capitol Theatre in Port Chester next Saturday, July 26, at 9 p.m. It will be the first time the bands are appearing together in this capacity.

"We're thrilled. It's a great new venue and we're all excited that it exists," said Skyfactor co-founder and bass player Cliff Rubin. Named in honor of Jerry Garcia, the late Grateful Dead guitarist and singer, Garcia's,

located in the lobby bar of the vintage playhouse, showcases local and emerging musical talent when the theater is dark. Garcia's opened in May 2013.

"This is a really big show for us," remarked Doug Schneider, who plays drums for GFA and co-founded the group in 2007. "We're honored to take the stage at Garcia's not only because it's a really amazing club booking national touring acts, but also to perform in the same building where so many of our favorite artists have graced the Capitol stage over past decades."

Dating back to 1926, and a regular stop on the rock 'n' roll circuit during the '70s, The Capitol Theatre reopened in September 2012 after being closed for many years. The historic site under-

went extensive renovation, including the installation of state-of-the-art light, sound and video systems.

Rubin, who has lived in Hastings for six years, and Schneider, who moved to Dobbs Ferry in 2005, bonded earlier this year after they were asked by a mutual friend to play together at a party in Hastings. In addition to a mutual love of music, they discovered that they both went to Scarsdale High School, although their years of attendance didn't overlap.

"We talked about music all night and via e-mail over the next few months, particularly about juggling being a musician and a parent in the Rivertowns, sharing leads on gigs, and ultimately floated the idea of sharing a bill sometime," Schneider said.

When Skyfactor was invited to headline at Garcia's, the band opted to bring in their own opening act. "I had just met Doug and really liked him and his music, and I thought how about GFA?" Rubin said. "We proposed it to Garcia's, they listened to GFA and gave a thumbs-up, and the rest is history."

Each group brings their own unique character to the stage, resulting in a show that celebrates personal and insightful lyrics, dynamic rhythms, and the musicians' genuine love of playing together.

Rubin describes Skyfactor's sound as "rockcoustic" — "We're definitely a rock band but driven by an acoustic guitar" — while Schneider character-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Garcia's

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

ized GFA using a band-branded phrase: "Americana Stomp 'n' Twang." "Our style is rich in American roots music, particularly bluegrass, blues, folk and country, but played in the manner of a good old-time garage rock band," Schneider explained.

Embracing the groups' diverse sounds, Rubin said, "We complement each other in that we're both acoustic-based and both passionate about good musicianship and meaningful songwriting." Within each band, the members are collaborative when it comes to arranging music and shaping their shows. Most of their material is original.

Another common thread is the bands' Westchester and Rivertowns history and small-world connections. All members either reside in lower Westchester (Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, New Rochelle, Briarcliff Manor, White Plains and Pleasantville) or grew up here, and half of each group are 1990s graduates of Scarsdale High.

Skyfactor was formed on an East Village rooftop in 2006 when the musical paths of longtime friends Bob Ziegler (vocals) and Jason Taylor (drums) crossed with Rubin and his brother, Jon (guitar). The connection was immediate, songs were developed, and the band unveiled their first album, "Daydream," in 2010: MTV even took notice and chose the track "OK" as the theme song for an episode of their hit show "Teen Mom." Skyfactor's second album, "Signal Strength," was released last summer. The group performs six to eight shows per year in New York City at venues such as The Bitter End and Arlene's Grocery. The show at Garcia's marks Skyfactor's club debut in the county.



PHOTO BY MARC KESLOW

Skyfactor

"Skyfactor plays all-original material, though we will do a cover here and there, where we take an unexpected song and try to put our own spin on it," Rubin shared.

GFA formed in similar fashion to Skyfactor, when pathways intersected. Schneider ran into an old friend from Scarsdale High not long after he and his family settled in Dobbs Ferry. That friend introduced Schneider to her husband, Andrew Schriever (vocalist/acoustic guitarist/banjoist).

In 2007, the two men assembled a small group of local musicians (recent transplants from New York City seeking opportunities to play in the River-

towns) to entertain people at their friend David Unger's "Funkin' Pumpkin" party. This hybrid of veteran musicians with eclectic backgrounds would eventually become GFA, but not before a relabeling.

David's wife, Dana, named the band the Pumpkin Seeds, a nod to the party that brought the musicians together. Realizing that the moniker was geared too much to children's music, the band members knew something more nuanced was in order. "What brought us together originally on a back porch in Dobbs Ferry were jam sessions where all we did was play covers from all these different places [classical, folk, bluegrass,

jam-band, punk alternative, Irish], and the name evolved from that vibe," Schneider observed.

In addition to Schneider and Schriever, GFA features Sheila Noonan-Gorham (lead vocals/acoustic guitar), Adam Friedman (electric bass/vocals), Michael Chatham (baritone guitar/dobro/blues harp) and Liz Mackanesi (fiddle). Noonan-Gorham, Schriever and Schneider are all Dobbs Ferry residents; Mackanesi is a former village resident now living in Pleasantville. The group, popular with crowds at the Hastings Farmers' Market, is in the final stages of recording their first album, still untitled, slated for a fall release.

"The bond you have with other band members and how you pull out each other's creativity is irreplaceable," Schriever said. "I love that the other musicians are so good. It makes me want to be better."

When not creating music, the members of Skyfactor and GFA hold jobs as various as their sounds, running the gamut from photographer and web designer to lawyer and teacher.

"The best part is that I really love the music we make, and I love playing with these guys," Rubin said, "but it's also really special to still be able to play music at a serious level even with the commitments that come from having a family and running a business."

The upcoming Garcia's show is a milestone in the bands' histories. "Performing at Garcia's is a rite of passage," Schriever remarked. "This is a great chance to give a shout-out to the Rivertowns."

Tickets to the show at The Capitol Theatre, 145 Westchester Ave., Port Chester, cost \$10 in advance (\$12 at the door); 21 years of age and older. Call (877) 987-6487.