



## Homage to a Rock Revolution

*The Mercyfunks will celebrate the album's release with a free in-store performance at Innersleeve Records in Amagansett on Saturday from 5 to 7 p.m.*

By Christopher Walsh | November 26, 2014 - 1:30pm

Forty-six years to the day after the Beatles released the eponymous album that is commonly known as "The White Album," a most interesting and perhaps unusual homage to that sprawling, 30-track work of genius followed it into the world and the collective consciousness. Last Saturday, another rock 'n' roll quartet, this one known as the Mercyfunks, released "Don't Pet the White Dog," a sort of New Wave version of "The White Album."



Kevin Teare brought together musicians such as Jewlee Trudden and Pony Thompson for "Don't Pet the White Dog," an homage to the Beatles' "White Album."

Axel D'Lobita

Led by Kevin Teare, a visual artist who lives in Noyac, the Mercyfunks will celebrate the album's release with a free in-store performance at Innersleeve Records in Amagansett on Saturday from 5 to 7 p.m. Vinyl and compact-disc editions of the album, and other merchandise, will be available.

Seventy percent of the album and merchandise sales from the band's website, themrcyfks.com, will be donated to Lyme Nation, which Mr. Teare, who was diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease, described as the most progressive clearinghouse for information and treatment protocols concerning the global epidemic of tick-borne diseases.

"Don't Pet the White Dog" is replete with solid and rocking songs like "We Was Transformed," "I'm in Love (With the Secret Government)," and "South Tower Screensaver," none of which directly recall the Beatles. Also included, however, are more experimental tracks like the cryptically titled "39°10'N 78°10'W (DICK on the Headstone)," a musique concrete piece and clear homage to "The White Album's" abstract and experimental "Revolution 9." Each LP and CD is individually numbered and includes a full-color poster that is itself an homage to Richard Hamilton's poster that was included with "The White Album."

Mr. Teare, who played drums, is accompanied by Pony Thompson on vocals, Keelan James on piano, and Jewlee Trudden on guitar, who fronts the band InCircles and was previously Mr. Teare's studio assistant. Guest performers include John Sebastian of the Lovin' Spoonful; Jay Daugherty, who performs with Patti Smith; the composer Carter Burwell; Sara Lee of Gang of Four and the B-52's, and Peter Stampfel of the Fugs.

An artistic creation inspired by the Beatles is not new to Mr. Teare. “I’ve been working on art about the Beatles for a long time,” he said. “The paintings and art I’ve been doing over last 10 to 15 years have to do with deification of the Beatles — I don’t mean that in an ironic or cynical way, just as a matter of course. There’s a case to be made that, in terms of art, the Beatles were the most influential event of the last half of the 20th century.”

“Don’t Pet the White Dog,” Mr. Teare said, was not meant as a tribute, as such, but “I wanted it to be a sort of dedication to something that was incredibly meaningful to me. The Beatles are one of the most interesting things that have happened, sociologically, in my lifetime.”

The album does recall the rock ‘n’ roll music of the Beatles’ era, as well as the process by which that music was made. The basic tracks were recorded live, meaning the core group of musicians performed together, at the same time and in the same room. The music was recorded to an analog tape machine, largely a relic in the digital age, and the sonic attributes of tape are apparent.

Mr. Teare mixed the music for the vinyl release. Ms. Trudden, with Cynthia Daniels, the producer and engineer, mixed and mastered the CD version at Ms. Daniels’s MonkMusic Studios in East Hampton. “They’re very different sounding,” Mr. Teare observed. “Vinyl is pretty . . . primitive, in some ways.”

“The White Album’s” recording, taking place in the early days of the Beatles’ slow dissolution, was characterized by growing tension, its members beginning to work in isolation. While the Mercyfunks recorded “Don’t Pet the White Dog” together, Mr. Teare was enduring a struggle of his own. “This project was ongoing during the whole time I was being treated for chronic Lyme,” he said. “I was doing drum tracks with a PICC line,” or peripherally inserted central catheter, “in my arm, getting daily infusions. I had that for six weeks.”

Chronic Lyme, he said, is often misdiagnosed, and he decried a “troubling conflict of interest between the infectious-disease industry, which writes protocols doctors have to use, and the insurance companies. None of the insurance companies want to pay for this, because how to cure it is still a mystery once it gets to the central nervous system.”

Fortunately, Mr. Teare said, “I feel better than I did two years ago, but am still being treated.”



Kevin Teare and his dog, Zeke