



SANJOY Narayan

download central



MCT

# Live & Loaded

Some bands are best heard live. Here's how to get them

ONE OF my favourite live rock concerts is a double album by Widespread Panic called *Light Fuse, Get Away*. Like many bands that I like, Panic are best heard live and are among the most itinerant of today's bands, sometimes doing more than 200 shows a year. *Light Fuse, Get Away* is a double album of 19 songs culled from various shows and was released way back in 1998. Most of the songs are long (anyone who's heard Panic knows how they love to jam), many of them clocking over 10 minutes.

That's precisely the reason why they aren't able to release too many live recordings as CDs, which, unless you have two or three-CD sets, can't cover a full Panic show or a two or three-day run that they usually stage. They have a solution to that. Virtually every Widespread Panic concert is uploaded with pristine sound quality on their website (<http://www.livewidespreadpanic.com>) for you to sample or buy.

The Panic, like many other jambands that I like, are best heard live. Like Umphrey's McGee (I've mentioned them before on *Download Central*), Disco Biscuits, Gov't Mule, Ekoostik Hookah, Tea Leaf Green and Soulive, to name just a few. Trouble is these bands don't play a single concert on our shores, touring mainly the US and Europe and, infrequently, Japan.

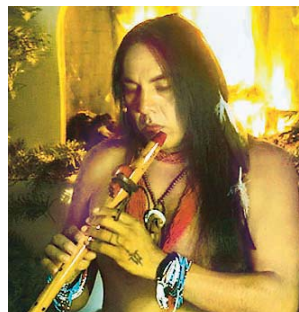
Yet, last week, I got to listen to, not one, but five great bands playing gigs all during the past two months, January to February. First, there was Umphrey's playing a show in early February in Wisconsin, followed by the jazz-funk-rock-hip-hop fusion of Galactic, a New Orleans band, from a gig they played this January aboard a cruise ship to Jamaica. Then came Bob Weir and his band, Ratdog, with an interesting new version of *Hell In A Bucket*. After Weir, came the trance-in-

fused sound of Disco Biscuits playing an 11-minute version of a song called *Digital Buddha*, and the Funky Radiators (also from New Orleans) playing a January gig in their hometown. All of this and more were on a single mp3 track that I downloaded free within weeks of the actual concerts taking place.

The website, Nugs.net ([www.nugs.net](http://www.nugs.net)) is a virtual treasure trove of live concerts by hundreds of bands. While it's partial to jambands, it also has shows by a host of others. I found *Monk 'Round the World* by the Thelonious Monk Quartet, a compilation from the European concerts that the late jazz maestro played between 1961 and 1965. Burrowing through Nugs, I found another concert. This one was by Old & In the Gray, the band that was formed by David Grisman, Peter Rowan and Vassar Clements after Jerry Garcia died and their erstwhile band, Old & In the Way (where Garcia used to play banjo) disbanded.

In case you think Nugs is only about niche bands and esoteric music espoused by people like the author of this column, let me tell you what else I found on the website: almost every concert that Metallica has played since 1982 to, well, last month. Now, I'm no Metallica fan but if you are, you may like to check out the 9.22-minute version of *Disposal Heroes* that they played in Nurburgring, Germany, in June 2006, or the entire gig that they played in 1986 at the Hammersmith Odeon, London.

Nugs, as I realised, is the A to Z of gigs and the one-stop website that you must go to if you want your music live. You're a Barenaked Ladies fan? Nugs has all their gigs. You like the Swedish psychedelic band, Dungen? You'll get them. It's a great place to discover unknown bands too. I got introduced to PUJA, a quartet led by Melvin Seals (formerly of the Jerry Garcia Band) that does thoroughly enjoyable long jams and takes its name from the Indian ritual, and discovered other interesting musicians like Rachael Yamagata (American blues-rock singer-songwriter), Robert Mirabal (Native American flute player) and Patrick Park (folk-rocker) from Nugs.



ALL IN ONE

I discovered musicians like singer-songwriter Rachael Yamagata (top), Native American flute player Robert Mirabal (above) and folk-rocker Patrick Park (below) on Nugs

Besides the concerts that you can buy on Nugs, there are freebies on offer. There is a huge stash of free music by several bands and an occasional Nugscast, which is a smartly edited downloadable mp3 that compiles recent gigs. You can sign up for an alert so that every time there's a new Nugscast, your inbox gets notified.

If, however, you're one of those old school types who doesn't much care about the new (newish) bands that *Download Central* goes on about and would rather fall back on your old favourites from past decades, don't lose heart. On the web, there's always a way. One of those is a website called Wolfgang's Vault ([www.wolfgangsvault.com](http://www.wolfgangsvault.com)), a free live music-streaming site where you can get your fix of anything from Aerosmith and Allman Brothers to Van Morrison and The Who. Oh, and the last time I checked, there were The Beach Boys there too!

(To stream or download the music mentioned in this column, go to [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com). And send feedback to [downloadctrl@gmail.com](mailto:downloadctrl@gmail.com))



**NUGS IS THE ONE-STOP WEBSITE YOU MUST GO TO IF YOU WANT MUSIC LIVE**