



## Band Member Bios

P. V. Nunes (keyboards and vocals)

Self-taught on keyboards, Paul Vincent Nunes likes nothing better than a plate of jambalaya with a fresh beignet (gluten free!). Of Portuguese descent, P.V. grew up in a household full of music, but didn't find his voice until he played on Bourbon Street, NOLA. There New Orleans swing and blues overtook his soul like Marie Laveau's hex in Saint Louis cemetery under a full moon. He's been writing, singing and playing New Orleans style music ever since. He has played live and recorded with The Chesterfield Kings, the Dady Brothers, Tommy Brunett, Watkins and the Rapiers, and The Brian Lindsay Band. He also founded the North-Coast Americana ensemble, The P.V. Nunes Band.

Carmen Verzillo (guitar)

Carm "Slow-Hand" Verzillo plays a Fender Strat and a Gibson ES. Hailing from Rochester NY, home of Son House, Carmen has blues and rock and roll in his DNA. Carm's licks are original. His riffs are melodic. His solos are tasty. This ax-man can shred his six-string like a storm off the Gulf parts the waters of Lake Pontchartrain. And his hair is perfect.

Michael Verzillo (drums)

Michael Verzillo knew that drums were in his future when he was dinging silverware on glasses and plates at the dinner table. Since then the glasses turned to cymbals and the plates to drumheads, so yeah, it's an upgrade. The youngest member of the Saints, Michael's always cool in the pocket and hot on the streets. You'll see him behind the natural Tama Rockstar set with the sweet "Occasional Saints" head.

Jay Chaffee (upright and electric bass)

Jay S. Chaffee is a proud husband and father, who calls Rochester NY his home and loves frogs enough to decorate his body with them. He plays a Fender P-bass and an upright bass with handmade Krivo pickups. Among his many accomplishments, he has been played bass in the Crowdiddies (folk) and Mike Scriven's Cotton Toe Three. Jay has also backed Gordon Munding (guitarist, blues & rock) and Phoebe Legere (singer, guitarist).

Rick McRae (trombone)

Rick's escapades with the trombone have been multifaceted. He has performed in blues, rock, orchestral, chamber, salsa, klezmer, African-Latin based, performance-art, and experimental ensembles. He has recorded and performed with They Might Be Giants, and bands devoted to the music of Frank Zappa, Sun Ra and John Zorn. Once he played two gigs on the same day — in New York City and Toronto. An especially

high moment was playing trombone while neck deep in a Maine lake. In addition to The Occasional Saints, Rick also plays with the Outer Circle Orchestra, Hypnotic Clambake, Watkins and the Rapiers, the Cool Club, and anyone else whose standards drop so shamelessly low as to ask him to play with them.

Mark Bradley (saxophone)

The Big Man has been bringing the swing with his saxophone since he was a kid in Rochester NY. His band, the Essentials, performed in legendary clubs, such as Scorgies, Idols and Red Creek. Over the years he's played and recorded with Bo Diddley, Hank Ballard, Bill Doggett, Pee Wee Ellis, Fred Wesley and Bootsy Collins. These days Mark sings and plays his horn with his brothers, Scott and Todd, as well as with the Fox Sisters. He's also been making New Orleans-style blues and swing with the Occasional Saints, an homage to his favorite musicians, Professor Longhair, the Meters and, of course, Fats Domino.

# CITY NEWSPAPER

Rochester City Newspaper, Rochester NY

**Occasional Saints Make Being Bad Sound so Good** by Frank De Blasé

Paul Nunes' hands dance effortlessly up and down the 88's in a powerful polydactyl boogie. It's a sound of big ease, of Louisiana bump and sparkle with dashes of jazz and pop mirth. It's beautiful; it's sanctified. But a saint, he ain't. Nunes has finally hit the scene with his new outfit The Occasional Saints, a band he's dreamed of creating for years. The time was right; he just had to purge his soul and prepare for the judgment.

"The concept of an occasional saint is heresy," he says mid-grin. "As a lapsed Catholic, I at least remember this. The Catholic Church doesn't want you to be an occasional saint. The goal is to be a saint. An occasional saint means bad things."

Bad things that sound pretty goddamn good.

"I love New Orleans piano," he says. "The style and groove really talks to me. I've been thinking of this band 8 to 10 years... thinking about it. It was a big jump to actually do it."

Nunes wasn't necessarily a reluctant saint; other priorities had to be addressed. Family obligations, job obligations, health issues including his own cancer scare, one daughter moving to England, the other launching a music career. The man was spread thin. He couldn't pull the trigger.

"Other life forces began to move," says Nunes. "There were these other priorities, and I didn't have the bandwidth to do it."

It was a few years later that Nunes stumbled upon a virtually abandoned old Steinway at Java's at the Public Market. It was barely in tune and as Nunes puts it, "beat up and left for dead." Nunes took pity and since it wasn't going to play itself, started banging away at it. He did this every Saturday morning for a spell, and folks started to congregate. Other musicians gradually started coming out of the woodwork to sit in. The Public Market Band was born, but Nunes still couldn't commit to the time required.

Flash forward: today. His kids are squared away – one is married, the other is ukulele sensation Julia Nunes – his wife is on the mend, and he has more time to commit to his music. Besides The Occasional Saints, Nunes is also the children's entertainer Vincent. But for the big kids, he's written over 30 songs full of swampy boogie and lackadaisical charm and has secured a solid line-up, too.

The Occasional Saints isn't the impish, cloven-hoofed line-up you'd expect. Guitarist Carmen Verzillo, drummer Michael Verzillo, and bassist Ernie Santoro surround Nunes as they all collectively serve the song. There's no brassy fanfare or histrionics, just appropriate, spot-on renderings as required. They don't show off. At the center is Nunes, as he nurses a narrative full of New Orleans nectar from the piano like a less sardonic Randy Newman or Tom Waits on a chocolate milk bender. He sings matter-of-factly and prefers to showcase the band than to be considered the front man.

He lets the songs speak for themselves. And though they possess their own individual tales, there is a common thread throughout.

"A good time," he says. "I want to bring something positive to the party. I try not to write dark songs. There are many gifted songwriters and performers who can go to the dark edges. I choose not to. Other folks can cover that territory; it's just not me."

Anywhere is perfect for a song to strike, according to Nunes. At the piano, driving, walking, or in something he calls lucid dreaming.

"There's kind of this twilight when you're waking up," he says. "Somewhere between dreaming and waking up – where you're conscious enough to control what's in your mind. I find I can write songs in that space. But then you have to write it down. There are times I've gotten up, buck naked, in my kitchen at the counter writing down the lyrics. Before they go, I've gotta write them down – before, like the bats of night meeting the sun at dawn, they flutter and fly away."

With the line-up solidified and hitting on all eight, Nunes plans on opening the doors up to canonize more Occasional Saints by showcasing guest musicians each show. The band is in the studio now with a completed EP in its sights, and Nunes continues to write naked in his kitchen. If you stop by, you'd better knock first.



## **Venues**

**Photo City Music Hall, 543 Atlantic Ave, Rochester NY**

**Iron Smoke Distillery, 14 Parce Ave, Fairport NY**

**Little Theatre Café, 240 East Ave, Rochester NY**

**Record Archive, 331/3 Rockwood St, Rochester NY**

**Chrome Divas' Benefit, 14 Railroad, Victor NY**

**Abilene Bar, 153 Liberty Pole Way, Rochester NY**

**Sticky Lips Pit BBQ, 625 Culver Rd, Rochester NY**

**Tango Café, 35 S Washington St, Rochester NY**