



**R.E.M. in  
Perspective:  
An Athens History**

Sunday, October 21, 2007

Senev-Stovall Chapel

Athens, Georgia

Sponsored by the  
Athens Historical Society, Inc.

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***The Program***

- Welcome*** Mary Anne Abbe, President of AHS
- Introductions*** Blair Dorminey, Vice President of AHS
- Featured Speaker*** Tony Fletcher
- Introduction and Screening of Featured Videos***  
Mark Methe and Dan Wall  
R.E.M. practice session at Wuxtry Records, Atlanta  
and R.E.M. show at 688, Atlanta
- R.E.M.'s Musical and Artistic Roots in Athens***  
Panelists: Paul Butchart, Curtis Crowe, Tony Fletcher,  
John Keane, Kathleen O'Brien Layson,  
Maureen McLaughlin, Dan Wall, Frank White  
and Mark Mobley, moderator
- Intermission with Slideshow***
- R.E.M.'s Social, Civic, Political, Preservation and Economic  
Impact on Athens***  
Panelists: Jared Bailey, Tim Johnson, Gwen O'Looney,  
Dexter Weaver, Smith Wilson and Milton Leathers,  
moderator
- Archival footage of R.E.M.'s Political and Social Involvement***  
Courtesy of R.E.M. and Digima24
- Closing*** Blair Dorminey

## Our Panelists

Jared Bailey	Kathleen O'Brien Layson	Gwen O'Looney
Paul Butchart	John Keane	Dan Wall
Curtis Crowe	Milton Leathers	Dexter Weaver
Tony Fletcher	Maureen McLaughlin	Frank White
Tim Johnson	Mark Mobley	Smith Wilson

**Jared Bailey** moved to Athens in 1977 to attend UGA, and covered the local music scene for *The Red & Black*. He once owned the 40 Watt Club, founded *Flagpole Magazine* in 1987, and founded AthFest in 1997, which he continues to run. Jared has been involved in numerous local organizations, including the Athens Area Arts Council, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce Arts-As-Industry Task Force, Athens Bar and Restaurant Association, Athens Music History Project, Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation, Canopy Studios, ACC Police Alcohol Issues Committee, Downtown Athens Business Association, Independent Business Council, Mental Health Association of Northeast Georgia, Morton Theatre Board, and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Task Force. He is currently Small Business Resource Coordinator for the Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation. In 2006, Jared received the Key to the City of Athens and the *Flagpole* Athens Music Awards' Lifetime Achievement Award for his work promoting the Athens music and arts scene. He is currently editing a documentary on Athens music he filmed 20 years ago.

**Paul Butchart** came to Athens in 1977 to attend UGA and soon heard about the B-52's, who had just played their first show that spring. Before long Paul was going to the shows of all the New Wave bands in town. By 1980, he was in a band himself – the Side Effects, with Jimmy Ellison and Kit Swartz. On April 5, 1980, Paul's band opened for a then-unnamed band that eventually called itself R.E.M. Later that year, Paul traveled to England with another local band, Pylon, and was their roadie for the next three years. He also moved into the house where the B-52's played their first show, and still lives there. In 1989, he ran for mayor of Athens on a platform of environmental protection, recycling and bike paths. He currently works restoring historic homes, and gives tours of various sites related to the Athens music scene when called to do so by the Athens Welcome Center.

**Curtis Crowe** is the drummer for Pylon. He moved to Athens in 1976 to attend UGA's art school, and there met the future members of his band. Pylon made its debut, Athens-style, at a party in March 1979, and was a major force in the

creative explosion of the Athens music scene in 1980. In the years since, Pylon has played many shows with R.E.M., and has just re-released its first album *Gyrate* as *Gyrate Plus* on DFA Records, and is starting a tour. Curtis has the distinction of having started the 40 Watt Club, which took its name from the single bulb that lit his loft apartment on College Avenue downtown. He is currently a construction coordinator in the film industry. He has built sets for the movies *We Are Marshall* and *Cool Runnings*, and for the television show *Lost*, among many others.

**Tony Fletcher's** biography of the Who's drummer Keith Moon has been a UK best-seller; in 2001, *Q* magazine cited it as one of the 'The 50 Best Music Books Ever Written.' *Remarks: The Story of R.E.M.*, originally published in 1989, was the first biography on the band; it has been updated twice, most recently in 2002, and has been translated into five languages. *Never Stop: The Echo and The Bunnymen Story* was the official biography of that British rock group. His song-by-song mini-book on the *Clash* was published in 2005. Born in England in 1964, Tony was inspired to start his own music publication *Jamming!* during the punk rock explosion of 1977. It became a monthly magazine and, briefly, a record label before its closure in 1986. During this period, Tony appeared on the British television show *The Tube* and various BBC Radio shows. He moved to New York in 1988, and contributed to a wide range of media, including *New York Newsday*, *New York Press*, *Spin*, *Details*, *Elle*, *Revolver*, and *SonicNet*. He also worked as American producer for the European TV shows *Rapido* and *Passengers*. Presently, he is working on a history, to be published by Norton in 2009, of the various New York music scenes, from the jazz days onwards, told from the perspective of the different neighborhoods that spawned them. Tony regularly deejays for clubs in New York, and consults for major and independent record labels. His website is [www.ijamming.net](http://www.ijamming.net).

**Tim Johnson**, an Athens native, is founding Executive Director of the Athens-Clarke County Family Connection Partnership/Communities In Schools of Athens, created in 1991, a position he continues. He is also an instructor with UGA's Institute for Nonprofit Organizations. He has more than thirty years of administrative experience in government, private nonprofit, and private for-profit firms. His articles have been published in a variety of national, regional, and local publications. He has served on more than twenty nonprofit boards and a variety of federal, state, and local government advisory committees. His consulting clients have included the Carter Presidential Center, the U.S.-Korea People's Friendship Association, the Southern Regional Council, the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute, the U.S. Department of Energy, and many others. He received the Key to the City of Athens-Clarke County in 1998; the Junior League of Athens Lifetime Community Service Award in 2000; the Martin

Luther King, Jr. Award for promoting race relations from the Athens Human Relations Council in 2003; and “Super Citizen” designation by the *Athens Banner-Herald* in 2005.

**John Keane** is a producer, engineer, and musician. His studio in Athens has been host to a variety of artists, including R.E.M., the B-52's, Cowboy Junkies, The Indigo Girls, and Widespread Panic. An Athens native, John began making records in his studio in 1981. He started working with R.E.M. in 1984 and has been involved in many of their albums and side projects. John has participated in many music conference panels as an expert on subjects such as record production, home recording, and Pro Tools. He also teaches a Pro Tools course for the Music Business Program at UGA.

**Kathleen O'Brien Layson** resided in Athens, Georgia from 1978 to 1987. As an aspiring journalist, she lived in Reed Hall where she met Bill Berry. In the fall of 1979, she moved into The Church on Oconee with Peter Buck as her roommate. She introduced Peter to Bill at a party that fall and they started practicing at The Church with Michael Stipe and Mike Mills. As a special gift for her twentieth birthday, Kathleen persuaded the group to debut at her birthday party with the Side Effects and Men in Trees. The band was unnamed at the time and played to a charged audience of 500 people. A month later, REM booked their first club gig at Tyrone's. Kathleen also worked at WUOG as a DJ from her pre-freshman summer of 1978 until the ill-fated mass firing of all volunteers in 1981. Kathleen (aka KO) was an original proud member of the WUOGGERZ, the crazy costumed musicians and dancers of the WUOG band who performed at Memorial Hall in 1979 with Bill Berry as the guest drummer. She developed and hosted the weekly New Wave show "Purely Physical" during this tenure. Kathleen worked at several alternative music venues, including Tyrone's OC and the I&I Club. She also bartended at the 40 Watt Club for many years, and hosted its weekly dance parties alongside Paul Butchart and Kurt Wood. In 1987, she moved back to her native Decatur where she currently lives. Kathleen and her husband of ten years, Allen, co-own a successful and nationally award-winning renovation company, Constructive Innovations, Inc. They have two (wonderful) children- Liam, 9, and Kiera, 5.

**Milton Leathers** is a former president of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, a former president of the Family Counseling Board, and current board member of Athens Historical Society. He followed Phinizy Spalding as chairman of the Historic Cobbham Foundation. He says his claim to fame is that the T.R.R. Cobb house went to Stone Mountain for a dollar during his presidency of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation. He has worked on ten houses in the Cobbham Historic District, including his own residence, the 1849

“little Howell Cobb house” that he and his wife Kammy bought on an acre of in-town land in 1985 for \$125,000! Milton has taught several history of Athens courses at UGA and other places.

The first time **Maureen McLaughlin** moved to Athens, the local library was located across from City Hall in the small building next to the Presbyterian Church, and Elvis was burning up the charts with *Jailhouse Rock*. After a hiatus of nearly ten years, she returned. The library was located on Dougherty Street, and The Beatles floored their fans with *Strawberry Fields Forever*. She left again, and returned in time for Anarchy in the U.K. One more time out, she flew home to find the ARL on Baxter Street, and nothing memorable on the radio. Maureen's “day job” is as a jury consultant on high-profile death penalty cases. She was the B-52's first manager, and helped many Athens bands make their way to New York.

**Mark Mobley** is a writer and performer in Athens, and a contributor to the *Star-Ledger* of Newark, New Jersey and the *Cadillac of ...* website on the MSN Entertainment website (<http://cadillacof.msn.com/entertainment/>). He is also the former musical head of public radio's “Performance Today.” While serving as music critic for the *Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, he won the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award for distinguished music journalism and hosted, with Carol Taylor, the alternative music show *Defenestration 895*. He has been known to DJ locally at the Go Bar.

**Gwen O'Looney's** relationship with R.E.M. began with dancing at Tyrone's O.C. in the early '80s, but was solidified by commitments she shared with R.E.M. to living in revitalized historic neighborhoods and community change. Gwen spent six years on the Athens City Council before serving eight years as head of the newly-created Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County. She retained R.E.M.'s political support throughout, a fact that is often noted nationally and in *Wikipedia*. Gwen observes that while R.E.M.'s political involvement is well known, their local public radio ads for Community Connection and Family Connection reflect a partnership in a broader realm of community change.

**Dan Wall** moved to Athens in 1975 and is the co-owner with Mark Methe of Wuxtry Records, the oldest record store in Georgia, which they started in Athens in 1976. Wuxtry has been a mecca for record hounds, including celebrity visitors over the years, such as Bob Dylan, Kurt Cobain, and Fred Schneider. Dan's partner Mark legendarily hired Pete Buck to work for a new Wuxtry store on Baxter Street in Athens in late 1977. With Mark, Dan videotaped R.E.M. practicing in the Atlanta Wuxtry store, and again at a performance at the 688 club in Atlanta. The video of the Wuxtry practice session is likely the earliest

existing footage of R.E.M. Pete Buck and Kathleen O'Brien took over the lease on the Oconee Street church from Dan, who had cleaned it up enough so his own band could practice. Dan played guitar and keyboards with the Skin Kings, Elephant's Gerald, and the Carlisles, among others. He has been an R.E.M. fan since hearing their first performance in the Oconee Street church.

**Dexter Weaver** is the owner of Weaver D's Delicious Fine Foods in Athens, which he opened in 1986. His restaurant has become a magnet for music tourists and lovers of fine soul food since R.E.M. named their 1984 Grammy-nominated album, *Automatic for the People*, after his personal slogan. Weaver's has long been a band hang-out, feeding members of R.E.M., The B-52's, Love Tractor, Widespread Panic, and many others besides. Dexter was named the Georgia Author of the Year in 2000 by Mercer University Press for his book, *Automatic, Y'all: Weaver D's Guide to the Soul*. He received the James Beard Award in 2007, and has been written up in countless major magazines and newspapers around the world. He was born in Athens and grew up in Baltimore.

**Frank White** grew up in Atlanta just in time to be a ground-floor R.E.M. fan. From the time he read about the band in the local *Muzik* fanzine in 1981, purchased his copy of the Hib-Tone *Radio Free Europe / Sitting Still* single and then saw his first show in Piedmont Park in May 1982, he was hooked for life. At Duke University in the mid-80s, he was a DJ at the student radio station and music critic for *The Chronicle*, interviewed the band on local cable access TV, attended the legendary shows at Page Auditorium in 1984, and preached the gospel of R.E.M. to anyone who would listen. After graduation from college, Frank attended law school at UGA, where – in 1989 – he took the first entertainment law class taught by Bertis Downs. He then moved back to Atlanta and watched with pride as R.E.M. conquered the world. Frank is currently a partner at the law firm Arnall Golden Gregory LLP in Atlanta, where he practices (among other things) copyright and music law. He also runs and contributes to the music blog *That Truncheon Thing* (<http://thattruncheonthing.blogspot.com>).

**Smith Wilson** is President of S & W Development. He began building solar homes, and started preservation work in Athens in 1985 with the Presbyterian Manse behind the bus station. Smith continues today with dozens of completed projects, such as the Bottleworks, the Camak House, and many others in Athens' historically-designated neighborhoods. Smith has been involved with the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation and currently serves on the board of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and the Commission for the Preservation of the State Capitol.

## **Our Sponsor**

The Athens Historical Society was founded in 1959 and is dedicated to preserving the history of Athens, Clarke County and the surrounding area. The Society is a non-profit organization under federal 501(c)(3) regulations.

Membership in the Society offers informative quarterly meetings (third Sunday of January, March, May and October), interesting projects, newsletters and the annual volume of papers presented to the Society, the *Athens Historian*. Other publications issued by the Society include ten books, a map and a color video tour of 21 historic homes.

We welcome to our membership anyone interested in documenting and preserving the history and heritage of the Athens area. Please visit our website at [www.rootsweb.com/~gaahs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~gaahs) for more information on our programs and activities.

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