

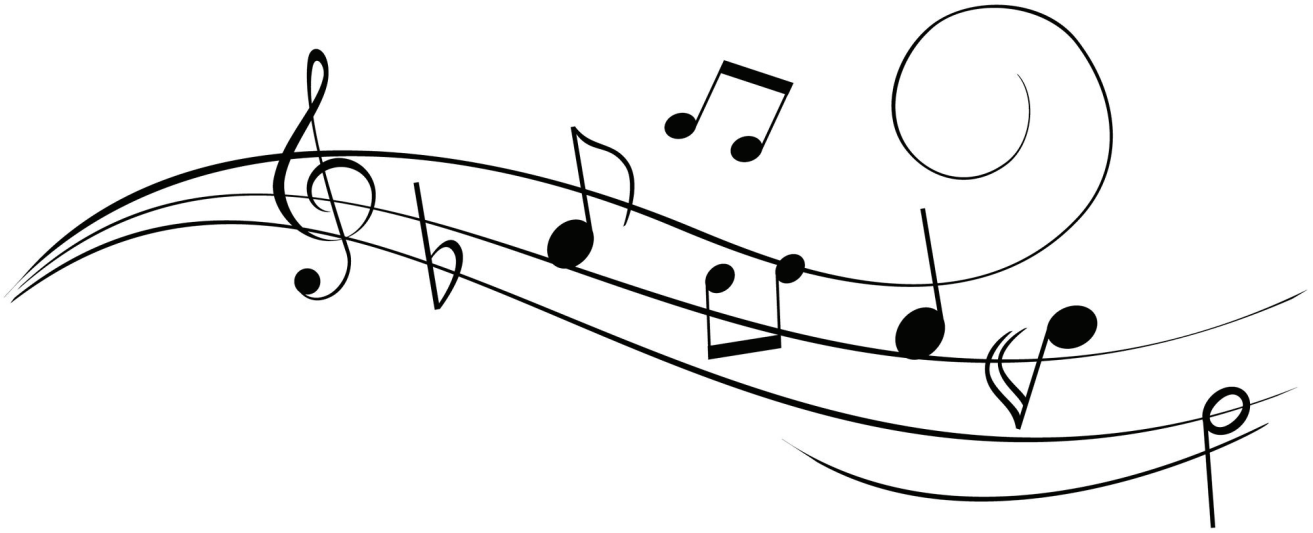


THEE ILLUSION AND BRASS
A LEGEND IN OUR OWN MINDS
50 YEARS LATER

ALBION, NY | 1965-1972

COMPILED BY JIM KRISS, ORLANDO, FL

PREFACE



As articulated by John Blacking of King's College, Cambridge, a known scholar on music and musicology, "...Music is inseparable from our humanity. It fills a need at the center of our being. No human society, present or past, has lacked music. It can thereby be considered one of the very few human universals, which puts it on the same level as food and sex." Even Plato has espoused that music is an "indispensable cornerstone" of the life experience. While I personally might not equate it to food and sex, I will agree with Plato that it has been a most indispensable cornerstone of my life experiences.

I am fortunate to have lived a life enveloped in music, blessed to have music in my world in many forms: my sister Janet who filled our home with music from an early age; Moses Sherman of the Albion Central School Bands who, among his many quirks, gave me a real education in music and a desire to embrace music as a key element of my personality; and last but not least, my mates in Thee Illusion and Brass. Without our many years of rock and roll, my overall life existence would not have been nearly as colorful and joyful as it would have been otherwise. I treasure these memories to this day as reflected in this anthem.

Finally, I want to dedicate this work to the love of my life Cheryl who has allowed me to live vicariously in my dreams of rock and roll, still playing with my newest band mates here in Orlando. She has been both supportive and patient as I worked to compile the memorabilia of this book over the past five years. It was just never complete, but now....time to publish or perish.

Always let music be in your ears, your mind, and your heart. For as we all know, music is what feelings sound like.

Thee Illusion and Brass – Albion, NY 1966-1972

Tom McNall – (original member of the Misfits and Thee Illusion – Rhythm/Lead guitar and vocals

T. Slate Raymond – (original member of the Misfits and Thee Illusion) - Lead Guitar

Alan Farnsworth – (original member of the Misfits and Thee Illusion – Drums, Bass Guitar and Vocals

Jim Kriss – (original member of Thee Illusion) - Drums and Vocals

Mark Heard – (second generation member of Thee Illusion) - Keyboards

Ray Colonna – (second generation member of Thee Illusion and Brass) – Percussion and Roadie

Steve Rustay – (first generation member of Thee Illusion and Brass) Trumpet and Percussion

Bob Mathes – (first generation, former member of Thee Illusion and Brass) - Trumpet

Chuck Lafferty – (second generation member of Thee Illusion and Brass) - Trumpet and Percussion

1. Early Years.

It can be said that everything has a beginning and an end. So it was with one of Albion, New York's early rock bands. Having grown up in a small village, virtually everyone knew each other from "the dawn of Tom." This was clearly the case of a group of lads that later came to be known as Thee Illusion. In 1954, Jim Kriss was among the earliest of the group to take root on Clover Heights, later known as Meadowbrook Drive. He was joined on the circle by Tom McNall in the late 50's. Jim remembers McNall's new house all too well as he tried to help Dodger Vagg in building the McNall house, by carrying bricks (successfully) around the site and later being threatened with entombment in concrete after helping to undo a perfect finish job in the driveway construction (not so successful) – perhaps a prelude to his future construction and engineering career. Tom and Jim became lifelong friends perhaps around age 7 or 8.

In the early 60's Jim began his subliminal not-so-illustrious music career by collecting paper drums from the local Lipton Soup plant and starting to work out his earliest rudimentary drumming skills, like many drummers, just banging out whatever he could. As drums go, he could go through the cardboard heads in record time, and Lipton's provided an unceasing supply for his needs. Around this same time, he began a neighborhood lawn mowing venture with a no-so-fashionable Homko walk behind lawn mower. It was hard to believe with numerous kids around the neighborhood that Jim was the one that sought out these earliest of his accounts and began his work career. After a couple of years of hoofing it, Mr. Kriss (uncle Toy-Toy) purchased one of the street's first riding lawnmowers, an Ariens orange and white beauty with a rear engine. One can remember the boys often challenging Jim to a "wheelie." Jim worked to hone his skills following the great mowing prowess shown at Yankee Stadium with stripes and checks often seen on TV. During this time, Jim began to stash away his earnings, knowing what they could buy in the future.

Around this same time, Jim and Tom, and a new friend Alan Farnsworth all teamed up on the Lions Little League Baseball team, where Jim's dad served as manager. Over the next several years, the three became close friends on the baseball team, although Alan lived "north of the canal," and was not a regular on Meadowbrook Drive. It so happened that during this same little league career, Jim, Tom and Alan also met up with Mark Heard who played for the Rotary Club Team. Although not frequently engaged in day-to-day baseball, they ran across each other multiple times each year as it was a small village.

Around 1962, when the song Blue Moon by the Marcells became a hit, Tom McNall began his life-long affair with electronic gizmos, radios, Heathkit amps and more. Jim remembers one day being knocked right to the ground by a discharge capacitor handed to him by Tom. After Jim brushed himself off the ground, Tom was howling in laughter. More importantly, the Heathkit amp was a success. Tom later commandeered a vertical speaker cabinet (Wurlitzer I recall vaguely) from his family's funeral home, along with a classic Shure 55 microphone that may have been used by his mother in her big band days. This mic and Tom's homemade amplifier running through the speaker cabinet was one of the first electrified elements of the developing musician. Ah yes, the exciting times befriending Tom McNall.

As Jim had stayed in St. Joseph's catholic school in Albion through the 7th grade, he was not actually a classmate in the earlier years of this budding association. However, Tom, Alan and another villager Tod Raymond (now Slate per his request as he "never liked the name Tod with one D") from the "lower west end" were in fact classmates through the Albion School District. Slate's mother and Alan's mother were best childhood friends, and Slate and Alan were buddies through their formative years, so when the real cultural shift to Rock and Roll music took place, their foray into music together was a natural. Mark's mother and Alan's mother (and their respective parents) were also friends of long-standing. Also, Mark lived next to Alan's grandfather's farm where Alan and Mark often worked in the summer (pre-Agway). From their homes, they could go cross-lots/back lots to get to each other's house and play, so they had that in common long before the advent of the Rock 'n Roll era.

2. The Original Misfits.

As the rock and roll revolution grew around the country, the neighbors, little league chums, and now classmates began to form all the rudimentary skills to take on the Rock and Roll mantra. Around late '63 and early '64, several of our village acquaintances from high school formed a band called The Humans, a name allegedly taken in partial retaliation to the preponderance of other insect and animal names that had recently been spawned by the rock industry, such as the Crickets, Nightcrawlers, Beatles, Animals, Byrds, and others. The Humans in some small way became partial role models (both from high school marching band as well as their rock band status).

Around this same time-frame, Tom, Alan and Tod formed a three-piece band of well – Misfits. The original Misfits band members were Tod (Slate) Raymond (Lead Guitar), Alan Farnsworth (Drums) and Tom McNall (Rhythm Guitar). The original Misfits began by playing for a variety of teen social events in the Albion area. Slate served as “quasi-manager” for the band during his playing days. Slate was one of the original young entrepreneurs in Albion.

Slate states he began his rock career with a self-proclaimed “cheap no-name Japanese solid body” which you can see in the photos above and below of the early Misfits (1965). No one can recollect where Alan scored the Blue and Silver Rogers Duco set, although Alan claims it was Slate’s and Slate has no such recollection (way before the loss of memory stages of our lives).



Tom and Slate – Halloween 1965



Vintage Shure 555 Mic

In order to cobble together adequate sound and electronic equipment necessary to advance the musical trek of the band, all types of equipment were “sourced” to create adequate electric amplification and PA capabilities.

Three of the earliest elements of the collection included the McNall funeral home vertical organ speaker cabinet, Jackie McNall’s historic big band Shure 555A mic, and Tom McNall’s first or second Heathkit amplifier.



(Tommy McNall) Slate Raymond, Alan Farnsworth, The Misfits

3. The Birth of Thee Illusion.

In early, 1966, the band evolved from the Misfits. Alan, already an accomplished drummer in the Misfits and the Albion High School band, broke into the bass role featuring an early model Kent F-hole hollow body electric bass with matching Kent amp. From this early beginning, Alan began adding his bass lines to the band with strong percussion background for years to come, upgrading his bass and amplification along the way.



Alan and Kent Bass and Amp



Alan Farnsworth, First Bass

Slate upgraded his gear to a deep burgundy Gretsch Tennessean guitar around 1966 after a year or two of his initial dabling in the music field.



Tom's First Rickenbacker

Not to be left behind, Tommy sought out and purchased a new blond Rickenbacker 360-12, Guitar to support his playing and rhythm guitar support. Tom may have had an earlier guitar, but one that is recalled from "the beginning" is the blonde Rickey 12-string. I can almost recall its birthday on Meadowbrook Drive. He later traded for a Fire Burst Model.



Slate's Cherry Red Gretsch Tennessean



***Tommy, Alan, Jim and Slate,
Erie Canal Fest, August 1967***

Jim Kriss was enlisted to join Thee Illusion in late 1965 during his stint with Alan and Tom in the Albion High School Marching and Concert band. His original drum kit was a compilation of borrowed equipment from the high school to establish a workable sound with concert snare, timbales, 14" x 16" tenor drum and 36" bass drum (had he only known) along with borrowed cymbals. A couple of the earlier gigs featured a borrowed Red Sparkle kit, but no one recalls the owner of that kit. During the gig to the right, Tommy, Alan, Jim and Slate, Erie Canal Fest August 1967 one of Jim's borrowed cymbals blew into the canal. It was later retrieved during the winter.

During the initial organizational days of both The Misfits and The Illusion, band practice was held in the McNall Furniture store basement. Without diverging from the band history, safe it to say that the furniture store had an entire history of its own. The era was very much reminiscent of the appliance store featured in the film "That Thing You Do." Despite an aggressive campaign to promote the band, no one has any recollection of the origin of the band's new name according to the original members.

Due to the young age of the group, cash was always in short supply. Jim was still mowing lawns to obtain a little investment capital, but almost no handouts were forthcoming. All the original gear was acquired using the beg, borrow, or (borrow long term) resources of the day. The first PA speaker system was acquired from the parents McNall under an indenture note, where every member of the band had to sign away his life in exchange for a loan to purchase our first VOX PA speakers.

Although they were very stylish at the time, they could hardly be heard against the cacophony of sound created from the rag-tag make up of Heathkit amplifiers, speakers, piano, and drums borrowed from the local high school. The Red Sparkle Kit in these photos remains a mystery. No one recalls from where they came. Notwithstanding the developing performance capabilities of the newly formed quartet, transportation for the band was sometimes challenging.

The players were all adequately accomplished to play in venues long before they were able to drive, let alone set foot in the establishments. But supported by the parents McNall, both former big band musicians in the 40's and 50's, the band was able to make the necessary arrangements to meet its appearances.

The McNall's were also proudly part of the carpool to take in a concert or two in nearby Rochester. Among the first featured Vanilla Fudge, Steppenwolf, Three Dog Night and others (Cream canceled). Due in part to these live connections with the bands, music from all these acts became part of Thee Illusion repertoire.



*Alan, Tommy, Jim and Slate (Vox Column Speaker Right)
Erie Canal Fest, August 1967*



Press Report from Canal Fest - 1967

4. The Middle Years.

During the very early days of the band, Thee Illusion started their commercial concert opportunities, and were found playing the breaks for some of the more accomplished bands at Oak Orchard Lanes in Albion. These included the Humans, Gunther's Bus, Copperpenny, the Cult and others of the time. Some of Thee Illusion members were particularly impressed with the great sounds of Gunther's Bus as they appeared regularly at the Oak Orchard Lanes. Drummer Jerry Cummings was actually a teacher in the Rochester area, and wore a wig to the envy of Illusion drummer, Jim Kriss.



Gunther's Bus, Rochester, New York (note Jerry's XL 'Fro)

As we came to know, Gunther's Bus played out of Duffy's Hotel in downtown Rochester. The band broke up in 1969, and changed drummers. Word is they re-appeared and recompiled the band on multiple occasions for local gigs. A favorite sound of the "Bus" was a very tight set featuring Beatles tunes with complimentary great Beatle attire.

Along with Gunther's Bus, another favorite of the Albion and WNY area was the band Copperpenny. The band made numerous appearance at the Albion venue. After several occasions of playing breaks for Copperpenny at the Lanes, the locals broke into international relations and hosted the visitors to a Western New York outdoor social hosted by Aunt and Uncle Toy-Toy at Jim's house on Clover Heights.

Apparently, Aunt and Uncle Toy-Toy had finally conceded that the Albion boys were fairly good at their craft, and that the guys from Ontario did not really offer a real threat to their social growth. The meal included great WNY hospitality of white hots and burgers. Jim recalls that Genesee was likely the beer of choice, although some Molson's may have been available for the lads from the North. Several beers were hoisted during the afternoon prior to the evening show. Jim recall's his relatively nice home being declared a cottage using the Canadian vernacular.



*Copperpenny
Kitchner, Ontario*

The evening show that night was to begin around 8:00 or so, and the evening was a great success. Jim recalls one of the highlight tunes being "I Love You More Today than Yesterday," a cover of the Spiral Staircase. Kenny Hollis and Rich Wamil had great vocals with excellent range. As per the recent "normal," Thee Illusion was allowed to play the breaks and generally able to use the upper class Copperpenny gear. Thousands, hundreds (or dozens) of fans were dancing the night away in the Oak Orchard Lanes converted concert venue for the summer which covered the bowling alleys.

Other band appearances at Oak Orchard included a stop by the "The Zombies" of "Time of the Season" fame. There was some skepticism of the band members if this was the original Zombies or musical imposters. Yellow Brick Road (later the Road) were also frequent visitors along with Albion's own Humans. Jim still recalls the moving of Gar's original B3 Hammond which took a small army. Oh the joys of today's versatile synthesizers.



Humans, Courthouse Steps, Albion, New York

Whether for real interest of the owners or on a lark, the band was asked (allowed) to play this large venue on their own. The venue was the almost pitch-black former Rialto Theater, with a massive 60-foot wide stage and a perch for the drums up and over the rest of the band members.

The young Illusion brought out their array of equipment including the yellow polka dot speaker cabinet (no doubt fashioned based on the song) and borrowed Jack Dumrese' in-place drums) and wailed to an enthusiastic crowd of teens.

The band may recall this as the best venue they had played. Unfortunately, the band had only a few gigs at Happiness Is due to its closing only a few months after its opening.

Slate left the band later in 1968, and drifted off into other musical interests and other social circles. He remained a friend of the band and avid promoter of Thee Illusion and Brass. He also continued to support the band as a part time business manager.

Although the band had yet to really set out on its own, they were fairly accomplished, and gained valuable experiences in playing for the breaks of these older bands over the first year or so of their existence. Then - **DRUM ROLL PLEASE!!** - following a series of fervent requests (aka begging), and due to an opening in the club lineup, the band finally took the stage at "Happiness Is" in Albion, owned and operated by the members of the Humans.

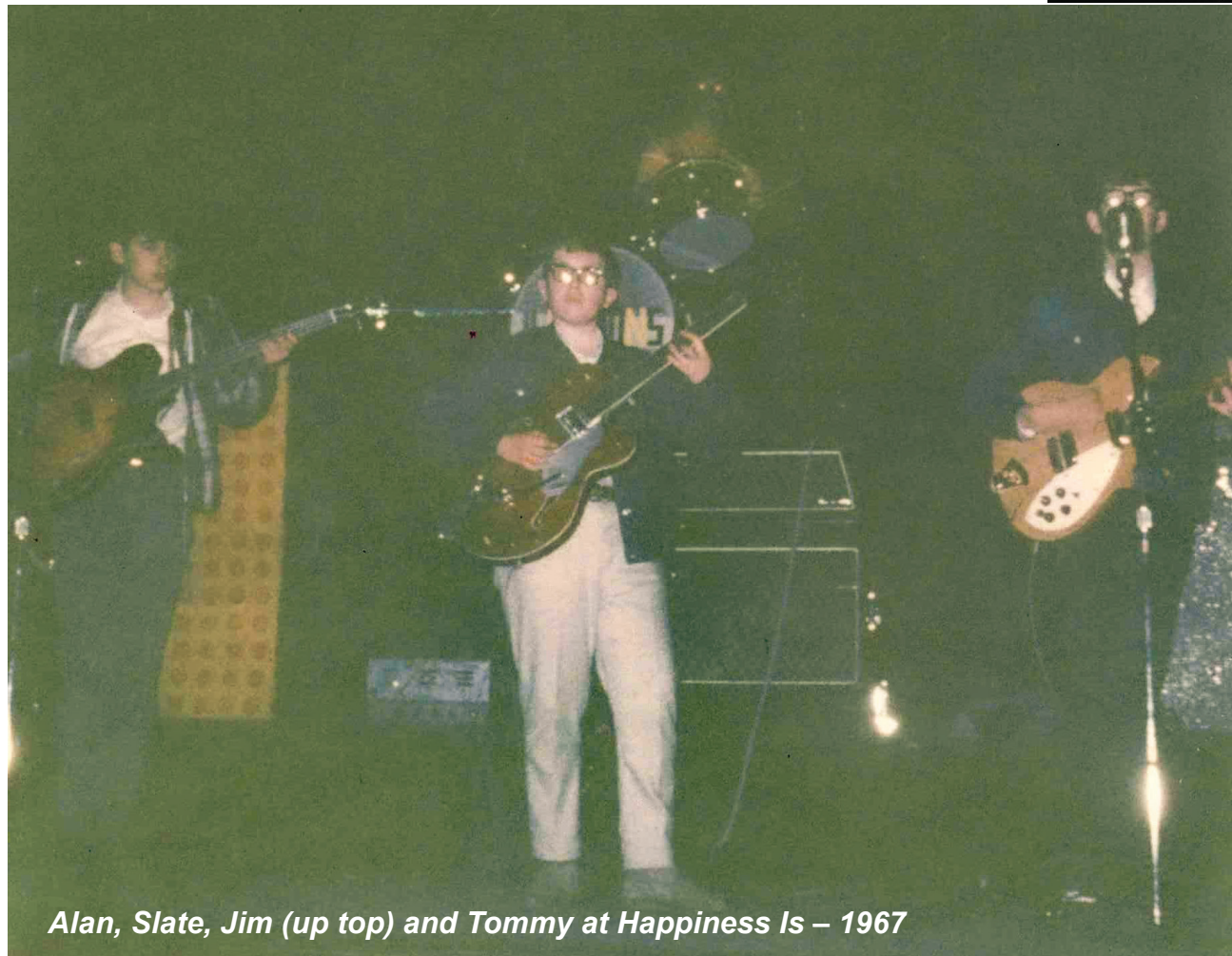


The Cult, Albion, New York

Prior to Slate leaving the band, Thee Illusion had enlisted long-time friend Mark Heard and one of the early supporters of the band to complete the new Illusion sound. Mark joined the group on organ. Mark added plenty of sound and new fullness to the sound as Tom moved on to lead guitar. Mark started with the orange and black Farfisa electronic organ shown to the right, playing through the original McNall vertical Wurlitzer speaker cabinet.



Original Farfisa



Alan, Slate, Jim (up top) and Tommy at Happiness Is – 1967



**Leslie 122
Speaker Cabinet**

Later, Mark upgraded to the two-tone gray “Compact Duo” model shown to the right. Ultimately, he finished his career with this organ, a Fender Band Master Amp and a Hammond 122 Leslie Speaker system (pictured at left).

Over the next couple years, as practice went on, eventually a very respectable sound was cobbled together, enough to generate about 5 years of regular concert and dance gigs in the local area from Rochester to the Buffalo area of Western New York.



Farfisa Rock Duo

5. The Brass Age.

As the band spread its musical wings to include horns around 1968, the successor band became known as Thee Illusion and Brass. “Thee” was stolen from the Rochester band Thee Rue. This new generation of players included the addition of Bob Mathes and Steve Rustay to provide dueling trumpets to accompany a newfound love of multi-brass music, and some newer trends in the music industry to add accompaniment to the original keyboard, guitar, bass and drum standard. Ray Colonna and Chuck Lafferty were constant companions of the band, although a year behind in school.



Ludwig Catalog Cut, 1967



Mr. Peter M. Spinelli, aka Duke Spinner

In 1968 Chuck replaced Bob Mathes, and Ray (Leech) finally earned his way on stage as a percussionist, mostly due to his early age Fu Manchu. He was a regular in pre-purchasing a beer or two due to his advanced age appearance. Also supporting the band was Bill Dexter who provided what was originally termed “a phantasmagoric light show” dazzling old and young patrons alike with a wide array of stage lights

and strobes. There is nothing finer than drumming out “In-A-Gadda-Da Vida” with perfectly timed strobe and a glistening, buff shirtless drummer on a hot summer night. It can be remembered well, more than once, from all who saw it.

Well after the band had formed, in late 1967 after nearly 10 years of odd jobs, chores and lawns, Jim proudly took his amassed lawn mowing fortune of \$1,000 to Duke Spinner Music on Driving Park Avenue in Rochester to order a new Ludwig Psychedelic Red, double bass drum kit. Jim recalls that after ten-years of savings, the deal was done in about an hour. Despite heart-wrenching delays, the drums finally arrived in July of 1968 and instantly became the envy of wanna-be drummers at every venue.

With their red, green and blue pearl along with the black background, the drums came to life with stage lighting created and operated by Bill Dexter with reds, greens and blues jumping out in the darkness, along with the remarkable staccato drumming movements of Jim in the strobe lights. Due to Jim's regular vocal contributions, a new microphone arrangement was needed to access the drum area. A giant boom stand and microphone set up was established and served the band throughout the remainder of the history of the band.



Original Psychedelic Red Color Drums

Upon procurement of Jim's drums, and due to transportation concerns, the headquarters for the band became "Uncle Toy-Toy's" basement on Meadowbrook Drive, where the band's rehearsals could be shared with most of the residents of Clover Heights in Albion. Uncle Toy-Toy, who was drummer Jim Kriss' dad, was remarkably tolerant of all the shenanigans going on in the cellar for more than 5 years, with kids coming and going most every night. But all things considered, he always knew where we were, he just had to follow his ears. When time was up, the lights went out and that was the clear indication that practice was over. Most of us recall his favorite song request: "Play Shut Up!"



**Tommy's Rickenbacker
12-String Fire Glow**

Guitarist and lead vocalist Tom McNall worked his magic through multiple guitars, including his first Blonde Rickenbacker 12 string noted earlier. He later switched to a Fire Glo Rickey 12 string, and along with this new sound, the band began a new covering Byrds and Hollies among others. Tom may have had an earlier guitar, but the one that is recalled from "the beginning" was the blonde Rickenbacker 360 12-string followed by this Fire Glow version.

Al Farnsworth had continued his bass playing and development (already a gifted rudimentary drummer in marching band). Eventually Al obtained a Fender Precision Bass and Ampeg Base Amp to create pounding bass lines along with Jim's hard rock drumming.



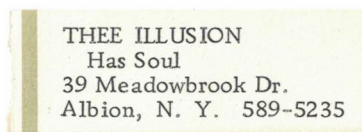
During one of the early gigs the band had earned due to its expanding local reach, The Illusion had been invited to a "College Town" environment in nearby Brockport, New York. At this venue, one of the more colorful stories of the band's early years took place at Barber's Panther's Den in Brockport.

After delivering the "lads" to the venue by Mr. McNall, he made it pretty clear to the Owner that the "lads" were not of age, and not to be part of the bar scene. During this engagement of Thee Illusion, the band received one of its first on-stage coaching tips from Owner, Joe Barber.

Bassist Alan Farnsworth had innocently crossed his legs while standing and rocking the house. The recollection is that Joe told Alan not to cross his legs or he would put a 4" x 4" up his crotch. "Gotta look like a rocker" I recall.



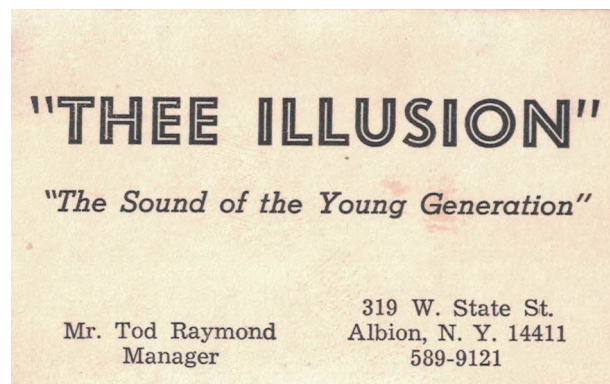
Joe Barber's (Panther's Den)



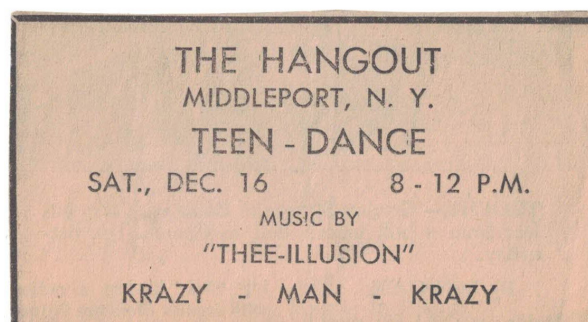
**Early Mailing Label –
1968**



(Mark, Alan, Jim and Tom) at St. Joe's Lyceum, 1968



Thee Illusion Vintage Business Card, Circa 1967



Early Ticket Stub – 1967

The band played throughout Western New York at multiple schools and rock venues generally from Rochester to Buffalo. The band grew and matured playing as a cover band with a blend of hard rock, Motown, and added the horns to accompany such favorites at Chicago's "Beginnings", Electric Flag's "Groovin' is Easy", as well as many of the classic Motown sounds such as "Soul Man" and "Hold-on I'm Coming" by Sam and Dave. Like many of the other local bands of the day, Thee Illusion and Brass played for the complete array of local events, school dances, gymnasiums, lyceums, and generally made the full circuit of potential musical stops anywhere from Rochester to Buffalo.

According to all the band members, the highlight of the performance venues was "Happiness Is," the former Rialto Theater in Albion renovated as a teen music club by the Humans also of Albion. Jim recalls being located about 15 feet above the stage floor in a perch reserved only for drummers. The band also headlined several visits to the Barrelhead in East Aurora south of Buffalo ("I hired a 7-piece band and I want to see 7-asses shakin' on that stage"), Oak Orchard Lanes, Panther's Den in Brockport, the Church at Elmgrove Road, Spencerport and Brockport State College Field House in Brockport. The band also played for fairs, school dances, historical celebrations, and the Erie Canal sesquicentennial celebration, along with numerous other venues.

Among the many gigs played for over 5 years, one of the more interesting stories surrounds the case of the missing bass drum. On a snowy night in January of 1969, the band was enlisted to play for an event at the Kendall High School.

The regular transportation elements had fallen unavailable due to maintenance or other maladies, and the band pressed into action the farm pick up of none other than Earl Harding, Alan's grandfather.

As the story goes, the pickup had a make-shift topper constructed partially for the local cherry season. However, the back of the plywood topper was open. When the boys were finalizing the set up for the show, there appeared only a single bass drum in Jim's Ludwig set up. Despite a whirlwind review and search, the missing bass drum was not found, and the gig started with (only) a single bass drum.

Needless to say, Jim was more than fraught with worry about who came and took the drum. Into the second set, the party was visited by one of the Orleans County sheriff deputies - at first nothing (this time) due to the band's activities. Then, lo and behold, the deputy presented a tan canvas case to the band, which looked like it may belong to the group. Upon opening, the psychedelic red beauty appeared, unscarred, and immediately inserted into its rightful place in front of Jim's left foot. When asked how the deputy knew where to take the drum, he stated he only had to follow his ears. Apparently, the event had made some airplay on the Orleans County Sheriff radio frequency. The rest, as they say, is history.

Throughout the late 60's into 1970/71, the band continued to spread its wings. As driving became less problematic, the big McNall's Furniture delivery truck became the primary mode of transportation to the various gigs. Occasionally, we also "borrowed" the McNall Dodge Van with the "slapstick automatic" shifter on the dash. I can recall many "donuts" were made with this van. As you can imagine, numerous adventures, pranks, tricks, and mishaps occurred over the years, but remarkably the band members all survived, and went on to meaningful careers in various fields.



The Roxbury Inn in Brockport another Band Favorite Venue

C O N T R A C T

For Services of Thee Illusion

Employer: _____
Date: _____
Place: _____
Time: _____
Wage: _____
Terms: _____

S T I P U L A T I O N S

1. Employer shall provide:
 - a. a suitable playing stage
 - b. a private, lockable dressing room for the group, accessible during intermissions.
2. Two set-up men will accompany the group.
3. The group will play for 60 min., break for 15 min., play 45 min., break 15 min., play 45 min., etc...

M E M B E R S O F T H E G R O U P

Tom McNall	Lead Guitar, Lead Vocals
Mark Heard	Organ, Background Vocals
Jim Kriss	Drums, Background Vocals
Al Farnsworth	Bass, Background Vocals, Management
Ray Colonna	Percussion
Steve Rustay	Trumpet
Chuck Lafferty	Trumpet
Jerry Wandetti	Lighting, Equipment Manager

Only Illness or Acts of God shall make this contract void.

Thee Illusion	Employer	Adult Supervisor
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THE FANTASTIC ILLUSION ELECTRONIC ENSEMBLE

in concert.

Saturday Evening, DEC. 16
Eight to Twelve O'clock

(the) "HANGOUT," Middleport.

HALLUCINOGENIC LIGHTING
PHANTASMAGORIC SOUNDS
by

WM. DEXTER PSYCHEDELIA, INC.

You will thoroughly enjoy this
fun-packed evening for the entire
family.

6. The Final Bow.

Thee Illusion and Brass' final performance was New Year's Eve, 1971 at Nesbitt Motors in Albion, NY for a private party. The night was a bit somber as the members realized that the diverse directions in their lives had taken them to colleges or universities in three different states, and this might in fact be the last hurrah. The night was loud and raucous. As an indication of the passing of an era, one of the patrons even reported a spark or short circuit in the band's lighting system. After a quick investigation, it turned out the arcing was actually the strobe light which the band had somehow "acquired", perhaps through Bill Dexter, and which truly brought the stage movements and Jim's rudimentary sticking to light with perfect synchronicity. The 40-foot flat deck trailer made for an awesome stage some 5-feet above the approving crowd. The sounds rang sweet from the experiences of the previous 7 years of practice, laughs, beers and ice cream sandwiches. Although there was no real fanfare, the night came to an end, and with it the end of an era in Western New York and Orleans County music folklore. Most all have maintained a keen interest in music, hopefully all have the fondest memories of "Thee Illusion and Brass." Maybe one day...that final reunion concert.....



*Jim (Timbale Set) with Mark on
Tambourine circa 1966-1967, Wurlitzer
Upright Speaker in Front*

*Slate, Tom, Jim
and Mark*



*Jim, Alan, Slate, Mark and Tom -
Thee Illusion, 1967, Albion, NY*



One of Jim's First A.D.D. Moments – Sam and Dave



Tom with Telecaster (fake or real)



Alan and Mark "In Search of the Lost Chord"



Tom's New Dance Step??



(Headless) Alan and Mark with Lots of Fender Gear



Ray and "Hairy" out front



Jim Rockin' Out, 1969 (Longest hair ever)



Gotcha! Moment



*Whole gang in one shot
(with light pole—sorry Ray)*



Jim from the Backside, Cymbals All Around



***Alan, Ray and Tom - Front Line Singing
and Ray on Tambourine***



***Tom, Ray, Alan,
Jim and Mark in
Concert (Note no
Dancing)***



Ray, Alan, Jim and Mark from the Back



JB and Tommy (Look at that stack)



Alan's Favorite Vest



Mark, Alan and Ray (vest era) out front



Mark, JB, Alan, TR, and Ray



Jim on the Double Bass Kit with Frank Sinatra

Late History Set List

Set 1

GROOVIN IS EASY
MR. TAMBOURINE MAN
STAND BY ME
MAGIC CARPET RIDE
SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE
EASY TO BE HARD
EYES OF A NY WOMAN
MIDNIGHT HOUR
WHITE ROOM
IT'S ALRIGHT
TO LOVE SOMEBODY
MIDNIGHT CONFESSIONS
LET IT ALL HANG OUT
KNOCK ON WOOD
FUNKY BROADWAY
TICKET TO RIDE
SUSIE Q
FIRE
RAMBLIN GAMBLIN MAN

Set 2

BEGINNINGS
DEAR MR. FANTASY
TURN, TURN, TURN
JUMPIN JACK FLASH
FUNK 49
HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN
BORN TO BE WILD
SING A SIMPLE SONG
HOLD ON, I'M COMING
MASSACHUSETTS
LOUIE, LOUIE
IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR
THE PUSHHER
CELEBRATE
MUSTANG SALLY
EVIL WAYS
SOUTHERN MAN
YESTERDAY
HUSH

Set 3

PROUD MARY
EVERYDAY PEOPLE
TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS
MY BACK PAGES
I'M A MAN
GLORIA
DOWN BY THE RIVER
DON'T LET THE SUN CATCH
YOU CRYING
LOOK THROUGH ANY WINDOW
WORDS
I JUST GOTTA GET A MESSAGE
TO YOU
ALMOST CUT MY HAIR
SITTIN ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY
OHIO
IN A GADDA DA VIDA

Set 4

SOOKIE
SOUL MAN
AS TEARS GO BY
BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP
IT'S THE SAME OLD SONG
WALK AWAY RENE
REACH OUT
CINNAMON GIRL
HEY JOE
ELI'S COMING
I GOT A LINE ON YOU
TOUCH ME
LIGHT MY FIRE
YOU KEEP ME HANGING ON

EPILOGUE

Despite the end of the era for Thee Illusion and Brass, two of the founding members, Tom McNall and Alan Farnsworth continue to dabble with various bands around the Rochester area. They both currently perform on a regular basis, McNall with “Blind Leading the Blind,” and Farnsworth with the “Amy Montros Trio.” Ray had become an archivist for the music recording industry. A visit to his former home in Medina yielded a treasure trove of LP’s, CD’s and tapes of a musical era, long gone by. Ray has since cashed in with his memorabilia.



Jim and Nona Rhythm and Brews, Orlando, FL

Ludwig Psychedelic Red kit in his home studio and writes lyrics for the someday “Life in the Key of C” album on which he works. His retirement goal..... get back into the music business.

Additionally, now some 50 years later, Jim Kriss has joined a local band in Orlando, Florida, known in the neighborhood as the “Nona Rhythm and Brews,” where he plays drums and provides lead and backing vocals. He also doubles on keyboards for base lines and various solo lines on a variety of synthesizers.

His most recent musical parody includes a knock off of LOLA, featuring alternate lyrics of his neighborhood of Lake N-O-N-A.

Jim continues to play the same

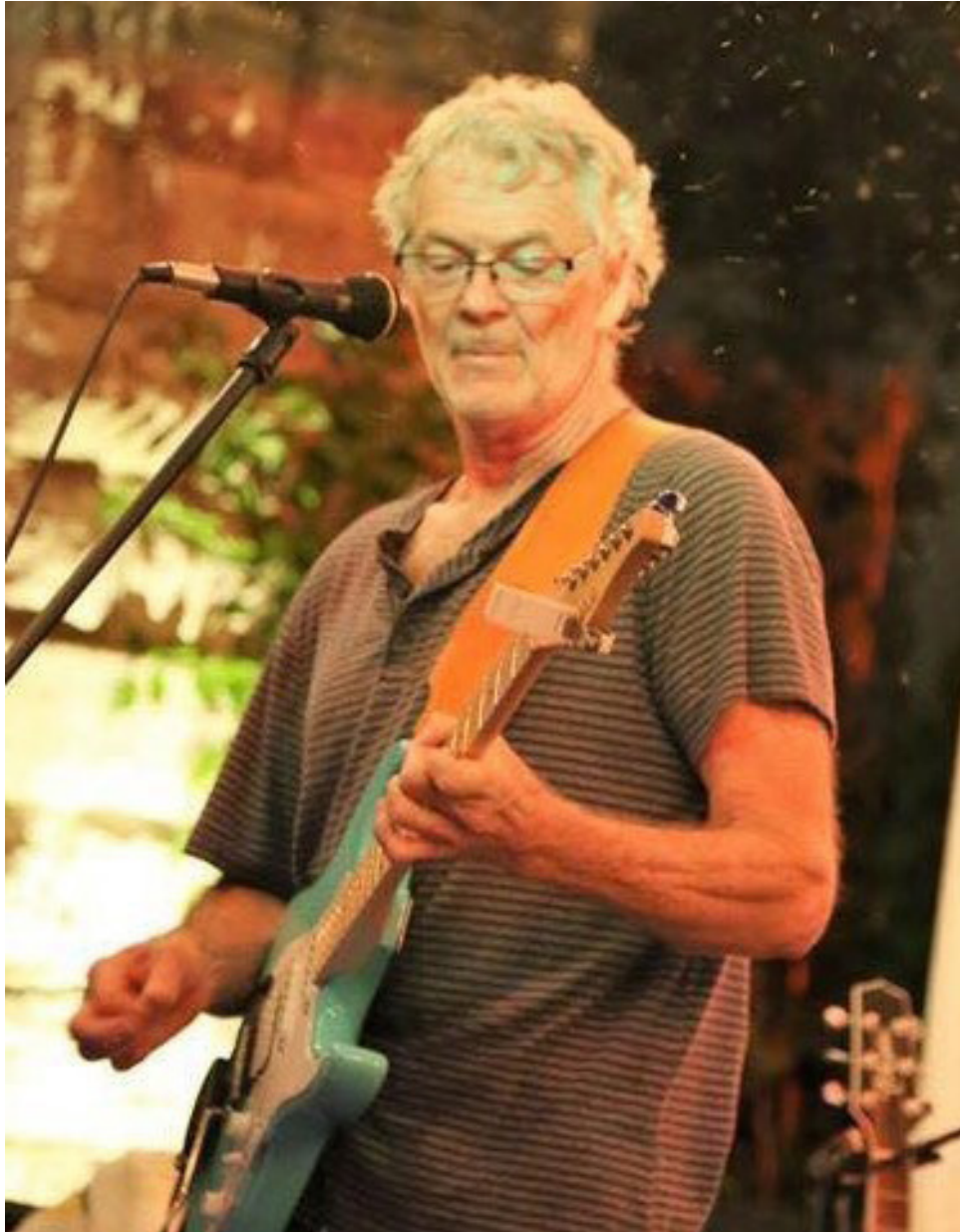


*Jim' 1968 Blue Note Drums in Psychedelic Red – 50-Year Anniversary –
June 2018, Jim's Home Studio, Orlando, FL*

Compiled by Jim Kriss, July 2014 - December 2019



Alan – 2017, Amy Montros Trio



Tommy – 2015, Blind Leading the Blind



Jim sharing the lights with Iron Maiden, Jones Beach, NY 2016



Jim – 2017, Nona Rhythm 'n Brews, Orlando, FL



Jim (left) sporting a Genesee Shirt with Jim Morehead (right) and the House Band – “Peaceful Easy Feeling” – 2017, Lake Nona CC, Orlando, FL



Jim Kriss, Nona Rhythm 'n Brews, Orlando, FL



Jim and MAGA Hat – 2019, Nona Rhythm 'n Brews, Orlando, FL



Thee Illusion 50 Years Later Gathering at the Black North Kent, NY

L-R Back Row: Mark Heard, Chuck "TR" Lafferty, Alan Farnsworth, Tom McNall, Ray Colonna

Front: Cheryl Kriss, Jim Kriss, Noreen Farnsworth, Steve "JB" Rustay, circa 2017