

BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES



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Funky Puppets: The Greyboy Allstars have returned, and they've brought the Muppets with them

Written by Mike Bookey

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The recently released video (which you absolutely must check out on the band's site: www.greyboyallstars.com) was made by puppeteers who've worked with Jim Henson, as well as Crank Yankers, and puts a nice cap on a year that saw GBA return to the spotlight after more than six years in the shadows. During this time, the band released a well-received record, *What Happened to Television*, and has played a series of successful tours. While some GBA fans likely missed the band's purist funk vibes, bassist Chris Stillwell emphasizes that the band never actually broke up.

"We probably played 20 to 30 shows over those six years. We decided we've waited long enough, and decided to start playing and concentrate on making another record," Stillwell says.

When the band resurfaced with *Television*, it didn't take long for word to spread that GBA was back on the scene ... and they'd made one hell of a record to serve as 'we're-back-in-business' calling card. The album, produced by DJ Greyboy, the namesake funk and soul DJ who hand picked the band along with Denson in the early '90s, is home to a slate of tracks so nostalgically soulful that you want to throw a party in your basement just to play the tracks in their appropriate setting.

Stillwell says there are major differences between what GBA is doing now and what Brown and his band did in their late '60s early '70s heyday, but proudly concedes that the *Godfather* is a prime influence on the band. And you can tell he's given some thought to the man's music.

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“The groove on like, ‘Sex Machine’ is so locked in that it sounds like they were playing that groove for three hours straight before they turned on the recorder – it’s so damn tight,” Stillwell says.

In the late 90s, GBA and its funky vibe had cultivated a niche following and were logging some serious miles on the road. Then they took a break, and it might have been a downer for loyal fans, but from what Stilwell has to say, it seems like GBA is a dish best served in tightly packed proportions.

“We know when to scale back because we basically ran ourselves into the ground in the late ‘90s by touring so much,” Stillwell says, “We want to do it enough so that it’s interesting, but not do it so much that it conflicts with family stuff – we’d like to do it the right amount.”

It’s also worth mentioning that each GBA member also has his hands in a number of other projects. Denson is known for his Karl Denson Trio, and of course his Tiny Universe. Stillwell has played in other bands, including keyboardist Robert Walter’s 20th Congress, while guitarist Elgin Park (real name Mike Andrews) has made a name for himself as the composer for films like Donny Darko.

So, spare time isn’t always at a surplus for the guys of GBA, which could be why they needed puppets to take their stead for a video shoot.

The Greyboy Allstars, Busdriver

8pm Tuesday, March 25. Domino Room, 51 NW Greenwood Ave. 388-1106. \$22/advanced, \$25/day of show. Tickets at Ranch Records or at ticketswest.com. 21 and over.