

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## "The Commons Celebrate American Ghost At An Old Haunt"

By Uncle Mike

**A**SBURY PARK - The Trenton, New Jersey, based indie rock band The Commons celebrated the release of their fifth and perhaps their best full length recording, *American Ghost*, with an outstanding effort at The Saint last Saturday night. But then again, you really wouldn't expect anything less from one of the state's more talented bands. Since their inception in 1999, Keith Monacchio (lead vocals/electric guitar), Sean Glonek (electric guitar/lap steel guitar), Tom McDonald (bass) and Tom Kale (drums), have consistently turned out some of the finest music on the local scene and this night's performance was no exception.

Accompanied by special guests, Catrina Sparacio on violin and Ceilidh Madigan on saxophone, The Commons performed all ten cuts from *American Ghost*. Opening up with "Big, Big World" (haunting band number featuring an emotionally charged vocal by Keith M.), The Commons were off and running with most memorable renditions of "Emma Rae" (anger, frustration and a hint of cow punk/ great lap steel by Sean Glonek), "Fast Food Parking Lot" (boys muscled up on this off beat ditty), "Isolation Room" (Keith at his best/ heartache & heartbreak/Tom Kale steps up on drums/another hot band number), "Gas Huffin Housewife" (Catrina's violin adds a nice touch/crowd favorite), "Hey Josephine" (Commons outstanding on this song of hope/inspired piece of songwriting/fine fiddle play/big crowd pleaser/best of set), "John Somebody" (murder never

sounded so good as band picks it up and gets down and dirty), "The Greenhorn" (never too old to dream/never too late to start), "Beat Up Car" (Commons waive their no hat rule as Ceilidh Madigan joins in on sax/fine band effort on this way cool moody tune) and "Kate & Joe" (cool sax, hot drums and big bass/boys go down rockin').

I remember the first time I ever heard The Commons, it was back in March of 2004 when they helped kickoff the debut of Joe's Garage at Harry's Roadhouse in Asbury Park. Joe's Garage was a short-lived monthly event dedicated to showcasing up and coming bands from around the state. I was totally impressed with the boys from Trenton, writing that to a man The Commons knew exactly what they were doing up on the stage. From Keith Monacchio's inspired lead vocals to their well crafted songs and tight band play, The Commons shot straight from the heart as they performed songs from their critically acclaimed CD, *Come On Get Gone*, as well as new material from what would eventually become their 2005 release entitled *Dirt Waffle*. Well, here we are four years later and while Harry's Roadhouse and Joe's Garage are no more, The Commons are still plugging away and music fans from Asbury to Trenton are all the better for it!

Look. You can never run out of superlatives when discussing The Commons. Year in and year out Keith, Sean and the two Toms offer up some of the best sounds around. And while The Commons can rock with the

best of them, I like them best when they slow it down with their tales of everyday people and their everyday lives. This is the stuff that Keith Monacchio turns to gold. Whether it's a song of hope, a heartbreak twanger or just a simple longing for a better life in a better time, nobody does it better than The



The Commons, an indie group from Trenton.

Commons. And with this latest studio effort, *American Ghost*, The Commons once again have a lot to be proud of. These guys are just a terrific little band. Always have been. Always will be. End of story!

You can catch The Commons celebrating the release of *American Ghost* this Friday, August 24th, at McGuinn's Place, 1781 Brunswick Avenue, Trenton, N.J. Showtime is set for 9PM.