

# A SLICE OF PEVEN ANGELA DANSBY

It's 11:30 pm on a Wednesday at the Funky Buddha Lounge and you think, "When is this band going to start?" Then Peven Everett and his band, Séance Divine, take over the small stage, edging out the DJ that's been spinning house tunes for the past hour and a half. After five minutes of hearing Everett's "Soul Carnaval," you realize the music was well worth the wait.

## MUSIC SCENE

Your body moves to the sultry, rhythmic beat created by Everett on the keyboards, using his voice like an accompanying instrument, along with a bass guitarist, drummer, and percussionist. The music is smoky and delicious to the soul. It's also complete improvisation. "The gig is a free for all," Everett said. "Improv is my main focus in the show and what I'm excited about. I give people exactly what they want and don't have to worry if I can play it. I don't want to play what's on my records. Why pay to see me then?"

How does Everett know what his audience wants? He talks to people in the room before playing to "get their energies" and invents a style of music accordingly. The style determines which instrument he plays. This means selecting among nine instruments – guitar, keyboards, vocals, bass, trombone, trumpet, woodwinds, drums, and percussion – all of which he plays proficiently.



"I actively play all nine instruments because I'm promoted as such," Everett said. "It was common folklore that I could play them all." Just like his mastery of many instruments, he can play several musical genres, including jazz, soul, house, bossa nova, R&B, rock, Latin, and dance. Most of his albums fall into several categories. His music overall is difficult to categorize, but that's the way he likes it.

"I don't mind categorization as long as it doesn't stifle my ability to be in many categories," he said. "It's boring and limiting to play the same style of music all the time. Plus there are a lot of things that different genres give you. For example, I like the freedom of jazz and the angst of rock. All of the records I've produced are based on what I know, rather than what I could be promoted as." With his various styles of music, Everett takes you on a journey of human emotion. He communicates through music as if fluent in nine languages. "You must be wary of what you're feeding people," he said. "People are open to fusion in music – they just need to hear a common sound. So why not give them different flavors? Music has a lot of outlets to speak to people. It washes over their souls, so they want a variety of it. There's a language barrier with musicians who are not versatile with multiple genres. They need different recipes to hit at least half of the crowd every time. "In addition, musicians shouldn't cut themselves off from learning, Everett noted. "Not everyone's a composer, so different styles of music can bring new twists to old songs," he said. "Why put a cap on your brain? Musicians are communicators."

## THE POWER OF ONE

Not only is he a multi-talented musician, Everett is also a songwriter, producer, and grassroots distributor. In the past, Peven has single-handedly managed the production and distribution of his recordings; now, with his new CD, "Power of One," his music will be internationally distributed under a major label. This included hand-crafting and bar-coding CD covers, etching title abbreviations on CDs, selling recordings online and in person, and distributing them via the Internet. "All of my credibility as a musician has come from the street, performing, and online," he said. "The internet doesn't talk back to you. People just care that you're talking to them at some point... but it better be good."

Good indeed is this underground artist. For all of his elusiveness, Peven was still discovered by Los Angeles producers, who will be heavily promoting "Power of One," including a





European tour for Everett this summer. Last year, New York producers started getting a piece of him on NBC's "Carson Daily," which airs at 12:30 am. He first appeared on the show on Nov. 30, 2004, and will be featured again a few times in 2005.

Unlike most musicians, who are often driven by money and fame, Everett enjoys a low profile. He wants his music known, not himself.

"I'm not in music for fame," he said. "I want to touch people with my music. The rock star dreamer is the guy who wants companionship and chicks, not a connection with people through music. You've got to fortify yourself inside, not with chicks, and avoid putting worthless people in your life."

The "Power of One" encompasses this thinking. It's a double entendre – Everett is the solo artist, who speaks to an individual's soul. "It embraces the idea that we're all distraught, so empower yourself and realize your worth," he said. "One person can change the world through what they do. Whatever you're doing, do it well and know you've got the power of influence."

### THE POWER OF FUSION

The power of one artist is evident in Everett's numerous recordings. Though his own production company, Studio Confessions, he has released many albums and single tracks under different labels, including Studio Confessions, Mogul, Samba Kid, Feather Plume, Satellite Sound, Muchalo, and Loud Mouth. He has also recorded songs with well-known artists.

First a renowned trumpeter, Everett recorded solo cuts on Curtis Lundy's album, "Against All Odds" (1999). He collaborated with Roy Davis Jr. on the U.K. garage hits "Gabrielle" and "Watch Them Come" (1996-97), then released several hit 12-inch solos, including "I Can't Believe I Loved Her," "Soul Tempura," "Speed of Light," "Kissing Game," "Someday,"



and "Dust Tracks" (2002-04). In 2003, "I Can't Believe I Loved Her" was number one on dance music charts in the U.S. and U.K.

In 2002, Peven released his first full-length album, "Studio Confessions," which was licensed by record companies in the U.S. and U.K. The album created a huge buzz in the urban community and was followed by several remixes. Next came the albums "Speed of Light" and "Satellite Soundscape" (2002); "Star Studded" with Upper Esh, "Summer Solstice," "My Brazil," "Swing Dirty Dirty," and "Black Champalgn" (2003) with Upper Esh; "Scapes in Modern Blue," "Latest Craze," and "Bigger Picture" with Nicholas Barron on guitar (2004); and "Power of One" (2005).

Everett issues a record about every quarter these days. He is refreshingly rare as an artist that creates his own music and lyrics. All of his recordings are solo, unless specified otherwise.

"Other musicians get in the way," he said. "Time is money and I don't want to wait for someone to show up at studio." According to Everett, the "starter kit" for his music includes the CDs "Speed of Light," "Latest Craze," and "Power of One." Of course, the latter CD is the latest craze, with its official release forthcoming on May 13.

"Power of One is unique from my other CDs in its level of musical fusion," he noted. "Tempos range from slow ballad to folk to rock. It's gritty ..." so gritty that the CD will get a parental advisory rating for some of its lyrics. "People must listen with adult thinking to understand them," Everett said. "Power of One has in it a lot of my heart, philosophy, and humor - a full spectrum of things that I think about."

"Power of One" will be available in Chicago at Dusty Groove, Tower Records, and Virgin Records. Dusty Groove has all of his CDs. Tower and Virgin also have "Studio Confessions." Everett sells CDs at the Funky Buddha Lounge on performance nights as well.

See Everett on Wednesday nights at the Funky Buddha, 728 W. Grand, except when he's on tour this summer. Doors open at 10 pm. For more information, go to [www.peveneverett.com](http://www.peveneverett.com) or [www.funkybuddha.com](http://www.funkybuddha.com). **scene**

Photos: Marc Goldstein