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One-man Matt

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— Tim Cain @ 12:19 am

I don't often go out of my way to recommend local performers to people. Tastes are too varied. If you suggest one performer over another, feelings can be hurt. I've got friends in bands like The Hitmen, Rock of Ages, Hot Iron Skillet, X-Krush, The Brat Pack and The Oohs, and while I like all of their music, I'm not always sure everyone else will.

And then there's the matter of suggesting one place over another. I don't need an adult beverage lobbed at my head when I walk into a place, hearing the owner scream, "Why did you tell everybody to go to Players last week?"

That said, Matt Livasy (whose name I misspelled as "Livesay" throughout a story I wrote last year) is scheduled to play Lock Stock and Barrel Friday night, and his show is worth checking out.

He's a genuine one-man band. The feat can be pulled off with much work but relatively little difficulty in a studio, where songs can be recorded one piece at a time, with the instruments layered on top of one another. But in person is another matter, and often "one-man band" in performance means an individual with a guitar playing along with pre-recorded backing.

But not Livasy. In fact, the biggest challenge he has is setting up and making sure all of his equipment is in working order.

For most songs, he starts by vocalizing a beat box-style rhythm and putting it on a loop (so it repeats as a backbeat). He'll do the same with a bass guitar, then a rhythm guitar riff, and pick up yet another guitar to play and sing over the top of the repeating bars of the three instruments.

One trick that keeps the sound from being to predictable and repetitive is Livasy's ability to completely cut out the backing track temporarily, heightening suspense and removing monotony.

The first time I saw him, he played an extended musical introduction to a piece, and after 45 seconds or so, I thought, “This sounds like the opening riff to ‘Sweet Home Alabama.’ ”

Sure enough, that’s exactly what it was.

Livasy plays more originals than covers, and it’s just fun to watch someone create that way over and over. Like I say, worth checking out.

As are all the other bands and nightspots with entertainment.

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