

q-music

by Gregg Shapiro :: guest contributor

Dancing in the dark

There are dark days ahead with the Trump/Pence team taking office. As they begin to erode our inalienable rights, let's hope that dancing is not high on the list.

We can all breathe a sigh of relief that neither Trump nor Pence is smart enough to decipher the name of electro-pop band STRFKR. Otherwise, Trump might add the band to the list of those owing him an apology for imagined insults. With its Norman Rockwell homage cover art and perspective of finding our collective place in the universe, the band's fifth full-length album *Being No One, Going Nowhere* (Polyvinyl) does an admirable job of keeping listeners thinking and dancing at the same time. And dance they will to alluring numbers such as "When I'm With You," "Satellites," "Never Ever," "Something Ain't Right," "Open Your Eyes" and the aptly named, albeit luminescent, "Dark Days."

Canadian singer/songwriter Martina Sorbara pulled off one of the most fascinating musical reinventions when she switched gears to become lead vocalist (and co-songwriter) for the electro outfit known as Dragonette. It was a smart move, especially with the steady increase in attention being paid to electronic music. *Royal Blues* (Dragonette, Inc.), Dragonette's fourth full-length in under 10 years, packs on persuasive beats and memorable tunes, including "Sweet Poison," "Lost Teenagers," "Secret Stash," "Let The Night Fall," and the Daft Punky "Darth Vader." Dragonette even dabbles in retro pop on "High Five."

On its third album *Two Vines* (Astralwerks), Australian electronic dance duo Empire of the Sun continues to work its musical spell, not straying too far from its trademark style that recalls the Pet Shop Boys (minus the queer energy), in both the audio and visual capacities. "Before" and "High And Low" set the dancing mood, and songs such as the wonderful "Way To Go," "Friends," "Ride" and "First Crush" keep bodies in motion. "ZZZ" and "To Her Door" provide hints at the kinds of diversions also afoot in the pair's empire.

Of Montreal leader Kevin Barnes has long been coy about his sexuality. Married and divorced, Barnes's 1999 breakthrough album with Of Montreal was titled *The Gay Parade*. "Let's Relate," the EDM song that opens the new Of Montreal disc *Innocence Reaches* (Polyvinyl) poses the musical question "How do you identify/how do you ID?" It's an interesting query in an attention-grabbing tune. "It's Different For Girls," not to be confused with the Joe Jackson song of the same name is another hip-shaker, as is the funky "My Fair Lady," the spare "Def Pacts," and the glitchy "Trashed Exes." Of Montreal also goes retro-glam as all get out on "Gratuitous Abysses."

If you remember *Since I Left You*, the excellent and sample-adelic 2000 debut album by The Avalanches with fondness then you can't help but be disappointed after waiting almost 16 (!) years for its follow-up, *Wildflower* (Astralwerks). Opportunities for dancing aren't as plentiful as they were on these musical collagists' first album, but you can still get in some rump shaking on "Subways," the tasty hip-hop of "The Noisy Eater" (featuring Biz Markie) or "Saturday Night Inside Out." Ultimately,



Two Vines' *'Empire of the Sun'* is the band's third album.

Photo Credit: Jen Campbell

Wildflower works better as chill-out music or as a game in which listeners can try to identify the obscure samples.

For as long as most people can remember, dance music has had an unbreakable link to the queer community. It was always a bonus when it was an actual LGBT person making the music, as in the case of, say, Sylvester or Bronski Beat. Alpha (darioonline.com), the EP, by indie gay performer Dario includes at least one dance-worthy tune, "Try It!," which could go over well with the suitable remix. Meanwhile, pansexual (Google it) diva Aston is all about the dance moves as you can hear on the single "Circles," as well as on "Pulse" and "Freak (Dance With Me)," from her debut EP. :

Tis the Season!

Ways separated or divorced parents can handle stress during the holidays

by Amanda Brisson Cannavo :: guest contributor

The holiday season is upon us. What should be a time of year full of celebration, tradition, and spending quality time with family and friends, full of joy and happiness, can often also create stress and conjure feelings of anxiety. For parents who have recently separated or divorced, sharing time with your children during this season can be particularly emotional and somber, but with a little planning, this does not have to be the case. Instead, as we enter this holiday season, make the holidays with your children a joyous celebration by embracing your new family dynamic, understanding your holiday parenting schedule, and planning ahead.

New Family Dynamic

When couples make the decision to add children to their family, you envision your future, especially LGBT couples who often have to pursue alternative reproductive technologies. You imagine a future full of celebrations—birthdays, holidays, and other momentous events. All of which you imagine celebrating as one family. Rarely, if ever, do couples anticipate the possibility that their family might share custody of their children between two households. But for many separated or divorced parents, this is exactly what you will have to manage this holiday season.

As you embark on this holiday season, whether you are recently separated or have been divorced for some time, it is common to have a few somber moments in which you recall how you imagined the future for your family and consider how different it is from what you had envisioned. This is to be expected and it is important to acknowledge this feeling of loss or disappointment so you can embrace the future. Although the future may not be as you had planned, it does not mean the holidays cannot be full of joy and cheer. Think of this holiday season as an opportunity to create new traditions, to attend different celebrations,

and to create new memories and dreams for the future with your children.

The Holiday Schedule

However, before you begin making plans for your holiday festivities, you should understand and consider your holiday parenting schedule. A Custody Order or Agreement should set forth both "regular" parenting time and "holiday" parenting time. In most Orders and Agreements, holiday parenting time will supersede regular parenting time. This means your typical parenting schedule will be replaced with the holiday schedule and the regular parenting schedule will resume after the holidays.

A typical holiday parenting schedule will alternate the holidays between parents. For example, one parent may have parenting time for the Thanksgiving holiday in even numbered years and the other will have parenting time in odd numbered years. For parents with school-age children, December holiday parenting time will often coincide with school's winter break. Generally, one parent will have holiday parenting time from the time school recesses to sometime on Christmas Day and the other will have parenting time from Christmas Day to the time school resumes. Since most school breaks are different year to year, it is important to compare your Order or Agreement with this year's school calendar.

Understanding your holiday schedule and how it affects your regular parenting time, before the start of the holiday season, will hopefully alleviate some of the anxiety surrounding your holidays. Remember, your attorney is a great resource to answer any questions you may have about your Custody Order or Agreement. If you have concerns, contact your attorney sooner than later. Addressing issues in advance will certainly reduce stress.

Plan Ahead

As you prepare for the holiday season and you are unpacking your decorations, think about also pulling out your Custody Order or Agreement to review your schedule. To help navigate the days ahead, print calendars for the months of November, December, and January. Take a moment to mark your "regular" parenting schedule on the calendars, and then mark over it the "holiday" parenting time. Remember, in most Orders and Agreements, holiday parenting time supersedes (or replaces) regular parenting time; it does not restart regular parenting time. Since a disagreement over the holiday parenting schedule can bring unwanted stress to the holidays, it is important to communicate with the other parent about your time with the children and agree to the upcoming schedule well in advance of the holidays.

Conclusion

Before the holiday season is in full swing, separated or divorced parents should take an opportunity to acknowledge the emotional impact of sharing time with their children during the holidays. Remember to think of this holiday season as an opportunity to create new traditions, and to create great new memories with your children. To reduce anxiety and stress, understand your holiday parenting schedule and plan ahead. Let's make this holiday season a joyous celebration. From our families to yours, we wish you and your family, joy and happiness! :

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