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## Healing Blues Band hits the road

By Grant Britt Special to Go Triad Apr 6, 2017



Fox  
Courtesy of Ted Efremoff

It's not just your imagination. They really are out there, interstellar pod people slumming intergalactically, disguised as musicians. Representatives of their three-mooned planet, Teronus, ambassadors of their country Meldavia's musical culture, these Meldavians are led on this expedition by Dr. Drave, who by day assumes the human guise of Dr. Dave Fox, professor of music at Greensboro College.

But by nightfall, and with the help of fellow pod manipulators inhabiting the formerly human husks of guitarist Scott Sawyer, guitarist/vocalist Mellissa Reaves and drummer Ian Pasquini, the Meldavians emanate deep-space vibrations with an unearthly mix of rootsy rock and wildly improvisational jazz that Fox labels "quasi-progressive type music."

It's a lot to take in, as a concept as well as sound.

Fox created the imaginary country for a science fiction book he's writing, "The Illustrated Tales of Meldavia," illustrated by Emet Williams. The book is tied to the Meldavians musical debut on their CD, "Farewell Arigemon." Arigemon is the country the Meldavians got kicked out of before they found the land of Meldavia.

The concept is that Scott, Melissa, and Dave were part of a Meldavian expedition that came to Earth, landed off the coast of Chile in the 1600s and have been in these pods until their emergence two decades ago.

Even in their Earthly configuration, the Meldavians live presentations are otherworldly. Reaves is responsible for most of the space goods delivered onstage, rocketing around the stratosphere, scattin around a looped track on her guitar, bending the concept of time and space to create a warped alternative dimension. Sawyer scuttles alongside, firing off booster rockets that help keep Reaves' vehicle from wobbling too far out of orbit.

In addition to trying to provide a launch pad and a piano framework for the Meldavians, Fox has taken on additional duties for a more Earth-bound cause.

The Healing Blues project was initiated in 2014 to help clients of the Interactive Resources Center, which aids homeless and struggling individuals and families. A who's-who of local song writers teamed up with the center's clients to write an album of original blues creations based on their life stories as told to the musicians.

"The money we raise goes to the Interactive Resources Center, off Washington street right down from the train station," Fox says. "They got a really big building donated to them, and they use that as their offices. But there are places in there where people can just hang out during the day because lots of the places they sleep at night are not open during the day. But they can also take classes, have access to showers, and bathrooms, phones, computers. They can get counseling on different things, get some medical exams lined up, things like that."

Fox and friends have just released a second recording, this one a spoken-word album once again based on center members' trials and tribulations.

"Between the first two albums, we've raised somewhere like \$16,000, and half of that has gone directly to the people who we use on our album," Fox says. "The first album was just a songwriting combination, like I partner up a songwriter with a homeless person, they would talk, get to know each other, then write a song. Each of those homeless people who partnered with us received some money. On the second album, I interviewed all these people and then we took their words and used them in songs, all of them received some money also, so about half of what we raised has gone directly to them as stipends for participating in the artistic endeavor."

Fox set up a Healing Blues Band, played some local shows, toured a bit and is putting another tour together.

The band will be playing from both albums.

"The first show we're doing in Greensboro is going to be a Healing Blues Band concert and the Meldavians," he says.

The Healing Blues Band for the show will feature Unknown Hinson bassist Roger Kohrs, drummer Chuck Cotton, bassist Sheila Kleinfelter and Melissa Reaves on vocals and guitar.

"We're doing five or six songs from both of the albums, then just some other blues standards. We've done a couple of concerts already just as the Healing Blues Band. Last year, (we) played for the Levitt Amp series that ArtsGreensboro did in Barber Park. But what we haven't done before is bring Donald Miller with us. He's going to do all these shows with us, so these shows will be Healing Blues songs, plus some standard blues songs, plus some spoken word stuff, where Miller's doing some poetry and we're playing some riffs behind him."

It's the best of both worlds, grounded in Earthly values while zipping through the ozone defying the laws of space and time for an interstellar adventure you won't find anywhere else.

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### Want to go?

**What:** Kick-off concert for The Healing Blues Hits the Road, featuring The Healing Blues Band and The Meldavians

**When:** 8-10 p.m. April 16

**Where:** Karonda's Sports Bar and Grill, 2036 Rankin Mill Road, Greensboro

**Admission:** Free, but donations will be accepted.

**Information:** [www.facebook.com/healingblues](http://www.facebook.com/healingblues)

**Etc:** Karonda's has a Sunday Blues Jam from 6 to 8 p.m.