

The Observer



Issue 1

Welcome to The Observer
a newsletter dedicated to

ALL are welcome Here

This newsletter was created by fans, for fans,
and is in no way affiliated with
The Flaming Lips or their management.

By signing up you will only receive this monthly newsletter and no
other promotions or solicitations. Furthermore, your email address will
never be sold, or given to any outside organization or entity, ever.

Issue 1:

The Interview:

SANTA CELEBRATES 100

...

A Look Back On 2024

...

Great Reads

...

WATCH:

...

Editor's Message

THE OBSERVER FIRST ISSUE IS DEDICATED IN LOVING MEMORY:

NELL PEGGY CLINE SMITH

JULY 17, 2007 - OCTOBER 6, 2024



“Then Nell picked up a guitar and taught herself, writing her own songs, from about the age of 12. Her passion, sparkling persona and outgoing nature was noticed by Wayne Coyne, who catapulted her into the world through working together in 2020. At 14 she was touring the world and performing in front of thousands of people, but Nell has so much more than the music.”

NELL SMITH OBITUARY

Upcoming shows

[JAN. 30](#)

HINDMARSH, SA,
AUSTRALIA
[TICKETS](#)

[FEB. 1](#)

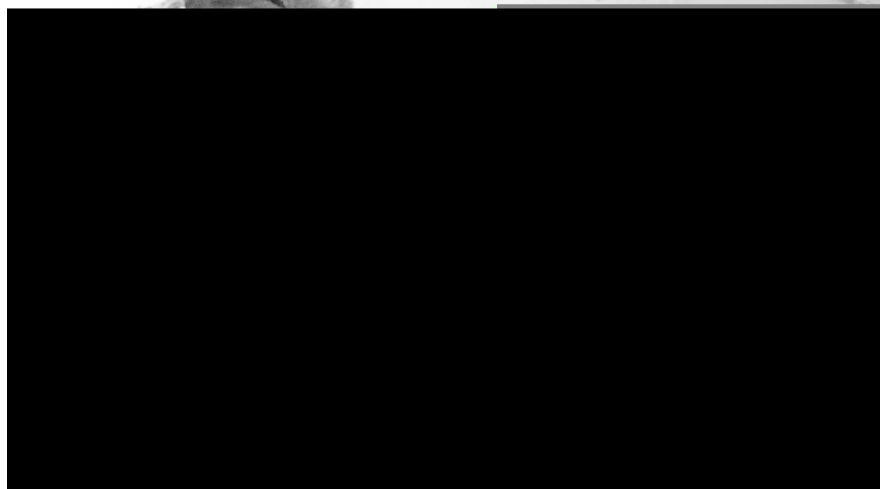
WEST MELBOURNE,
VIC, AUSTRALIA
[TICKETS](#)

[FEB. 2](#)

WEST MELBOURNE,
VIC, AUSTRALIA
[TICKETS](#)

[FEB. 5](#)

WEST MELBOURNE,
VIC, AUSTRALIA
[TICKETS](#)



From THE archives: JANUARY

10 years ago:



January 2-3, 2015: Belly Up Aspen
[VIDEO: Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds](#)

- Music release: January 3, 1989
The 3rd studio album: Telepathic Surgery

- Music release: January 6, 1987
The 2nd studio album: Oh My Gawd!!!

- Music release: January 13, 2017:
The 14th studio album: Oczy Mlody

Music release: January 21, 1986:
The 1st full-length album: Hear It Is

30 years ago:

VIDEO: January 28, 1995



Venue: Water Palace

Location: Norman Ok

[VIDEO: thesatellitehead](#)

Setlist:

Shine On Sweet Jesus

Unconsciously Screamin'

Rainin' Babies

Take Meta Mars

Five Stop Mother Superior Rain

Stand in Line

God Walks Among Us Now

There You Are

Mountain Side

What a Wonderful World

THE INTERVIEW

SANTA CELEBRATES 100 SHOWS

**Q: When did you first see The Flaming Lips?
(year, venue etc..)**

A. BASS

First show: 11-13-02 Jones Hall Houston TX

“I had heard of the Lips but hadn’t listened to them until a friend played Yoshimi for me when it first came out. From the first squishy

synth bass, later opening Fight Ten. I was entranced with the psych pop beauty, played the album nonstop for months, also got Soft Bulletin pretty quickly. Then within a couple months of the Yoshimi release, they announced the Beck tour with the Lips opening and serving as his backing band. I always say I went to that show a Beck fan and came home a Lips fan. Became obsessed and worked my way back through their discography and listened to all of it nonstop for a few years.

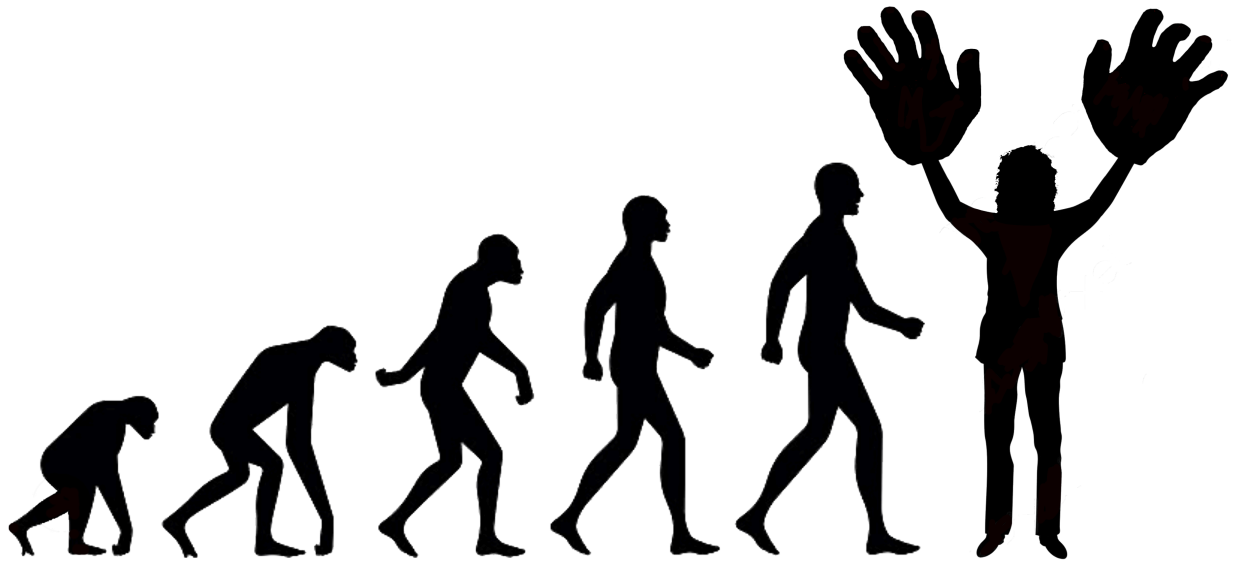
Around the time Mystics came out, 2006-2007, I got to know a bunch of folks from the salmon-colored chat board on the old Warner Brothers Flaming Lips website, still good friends with a bunch of those people. Didn't see the Lips live again until the run of New Year's Eve shows in OKC from 2007-2011. I got divorced in early 2010, saw a bunch of shows that year, and since then I've seen multiple shows a year other than during Covid."

Q: What was it about their music that drew you in as a fan?

A. BASS

"What grabbed me about the music?

That's the toughest question. I love different periods of their music for different reasons. I don't even have a favorite album. I'd be hard pressed to name a top 5. Musically and lyrically, some of it is achingly beautiful, some of it rocks the fuck out, some of it is profound. I can't think of any other band or artist with the diversity of their catalog or who arguably made their best music in their second decade or even third decade."



Q: How long have you been wearing the Santa costume to shows, and what is the story behind that choice?

A. BASS

“I first wore a Santa suit to the Freak Night at the OKC Zoo (10-26-12) Halloween show. I had a bunch of friends who always dressed up and I wanted to fit in so I ordered a suit from SantaSuits.com. It was a nod to Christmas on Mars and also when the Lips had dancers on the sides of the stage. On the Beck tour they had people in animal costumes, and that evolved into Wizard of Oz characters one tour, Santas one tour.

I’m on my third suit. Also I’ve been wearing that Daniel Johnston shirt to Lips shows longer than I’ve been wearing Santa suits, almost every show since 2008.”

Q: Wayne has mentioned you from the stage, when did he first start to recognize that Santa was in the audience?

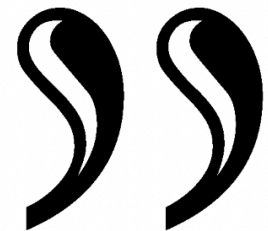
A. BASS

“I honestly can’t remember when Wayne first acknowledged me as Santa, but maybe 2013 or 2014. It became a regular thing pretty quickly, with him introducing me as the real Santa Claus at almost every show since then.”



I like that they’re always exploring, never trying to simply recreate what came before. I kind of think of each album as a stepping stone from the album before it to the album after it. For example, Clouds Taste Metallic sounds like a bridge between Transmissions and Soft Bulletin.

— Alan Bass, a.k.a, Santa

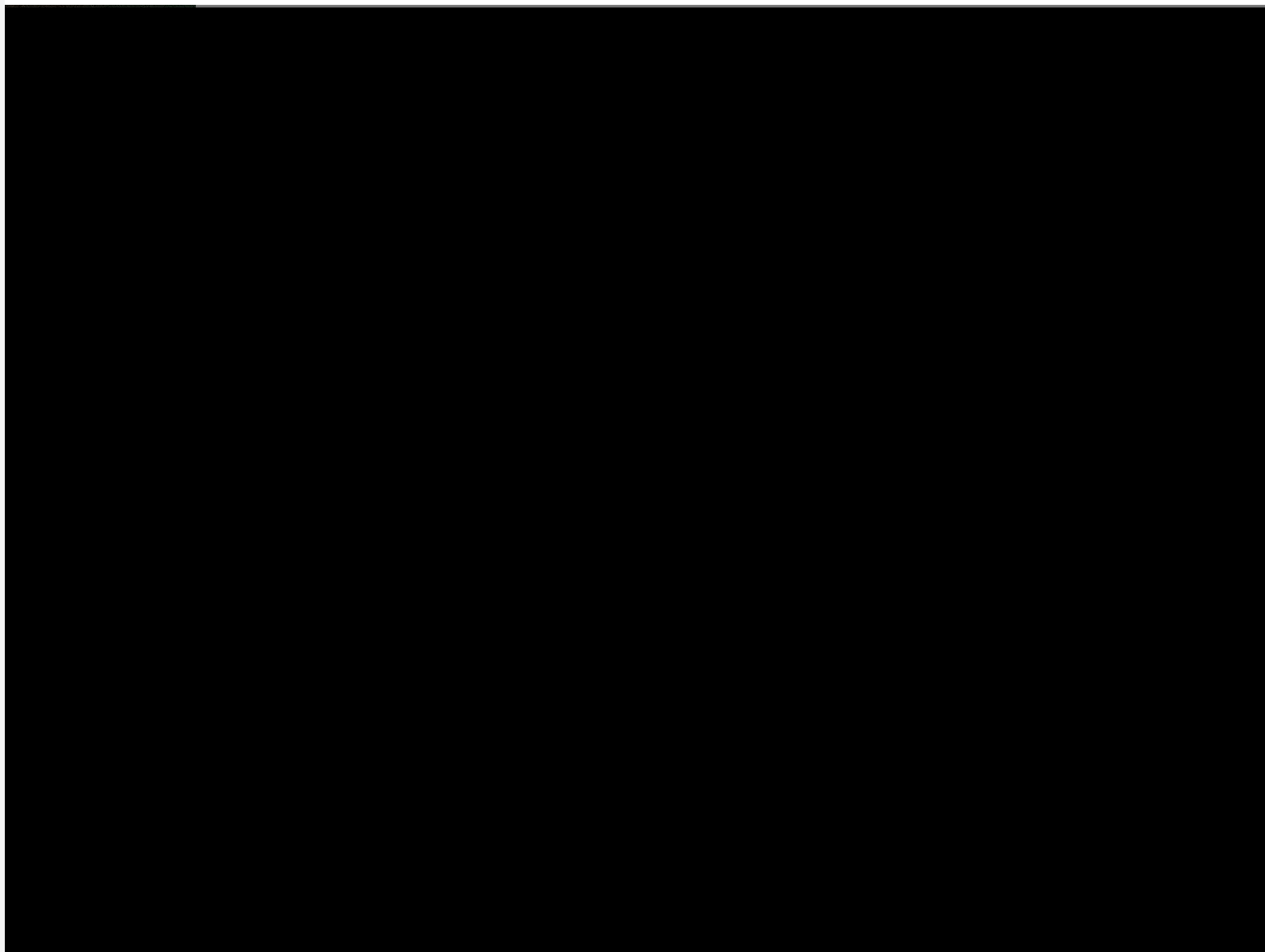


Q: How did it feel standing before the stage at the Oklahoma City Zoo celebrating your 100th show?

A. BASS

“In some ways I’m really shy and having a few thousand people chanting “Santa, Santa” is fairly surreal. What I thought about that

night was how much gratitude I have. The whole Lips family (band crew, fans) have opened doors for me with many adventures that have changed my life in very meaningful ways. I've thanked every member of the band repeatedly for letting me be their Santa."



**Wayne shines a spotlight on Santa to acknowledge his presence during night one of the 2024 summer
Freak Out at the Oklahoma City Amphitheater.**

**NUMBER OF TIMES BASS HAS SEEN
the following albums live:**

**Transmissions from
the Satellite Heart
Clouds Taste Metallic
The Soft Bulletin**

7

**Yoshimi Battles the
Pink Robots**

6

**The Terror
American Head
Dark Side of The Moon**

4

The Observer

Q: Seeing the Lips now over 100 times, is there any specific songs from the band's past eras that you specifically are looking for? If so, what songs and why?

A. BASS

“When I saw the Lips the first time they played a couple tracks off of Zaireeka, which I didn’t know at the time. I’ve never seen them do any of those songs since then, so those are highest on my list. I always love when they play anything I haven’t heard in a while, but I don’t dwell much on worrying about the setlist.”

Q: Do you still feel the same excitement seeing the band now that you did as a younger fan?

A. BASS

“It’s the same level of excitement but it’s different. Sometimes I get completely lost in the moment, just let the experience wash over me. Other times, say I’m seeing a run of shows with a similar setlist every night, I can focus on some specific aspect of what’s going on without worrying I’m missing the bigger experience. Also, any time I’m going to a show now, it’s as much about getting to see all the friends I haven’t seen since last time.”



Musically and lyrically, some of it is

achingly beautiful,

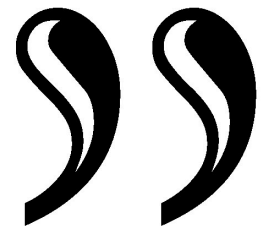
some of it **rocks the fuck out,**

some of it is **profound.**

The Observer

I can’t think of any other band or artist with the diversity of their catalog or who arguably made their best music in their second decade or even third decade

— Alan Bass, a.k.a, Santa



Q: When you meet someone new and explain to them who The Flaming Lips are, what do you say to them?

“I always say they have the most diverse catalog of any band I can think of, so not to make any judgements before you’ve heard stuff from multiple decades. As for the live show, I just tell people to go and experience it, that it’s a sensory overload with a positive vibe.”

Q: From your perspective, how has the music of the band grown over the decades?

A. BASS

“I like that they’re always exploring, never trying to simply recreate what came before. I kind of think of each album as a stepping stone from the album before it to the album after it.

For example, Clouds Taste Metallic sounds like a bridge between Transmissions and Soft Bulletin.”

Q: So, any plans in 2025 to see the band? Where will the next Santa sighting be?

A. BASS

“All my friends know I hate to commit too far in advance, so I have no firm plans. A lot of depends on what’s going on in the rest of my life. Now that I live in Oregon, I try to see any show west of the Rockies, but I also use shows as an excuse to roadtrip.”

###

2024 In Review



The crew putting the final touches on the stage during a 2024 show.

“a worldwide phenomenon”

Starting in Jacksonville Florida, The Flaming Lips criss-crossed the United States and even dipped into Canada before ending their solo tour in their hometown for two nights at the [summer Freak Out](#) at the Oklahoma City Zoo Amphitheater.

The Flaming Lips - With You - The Florida Theatre -
Jacksonville, FL. 4/20/2024



CONCERT REVIEW: Still Keeping the Pink Robots at Bay

SUMMER FREAK OUT!!!

THE FLAMING LIPS

PLAYING NIGHTS AT

OKC Zoo Amphitheatre

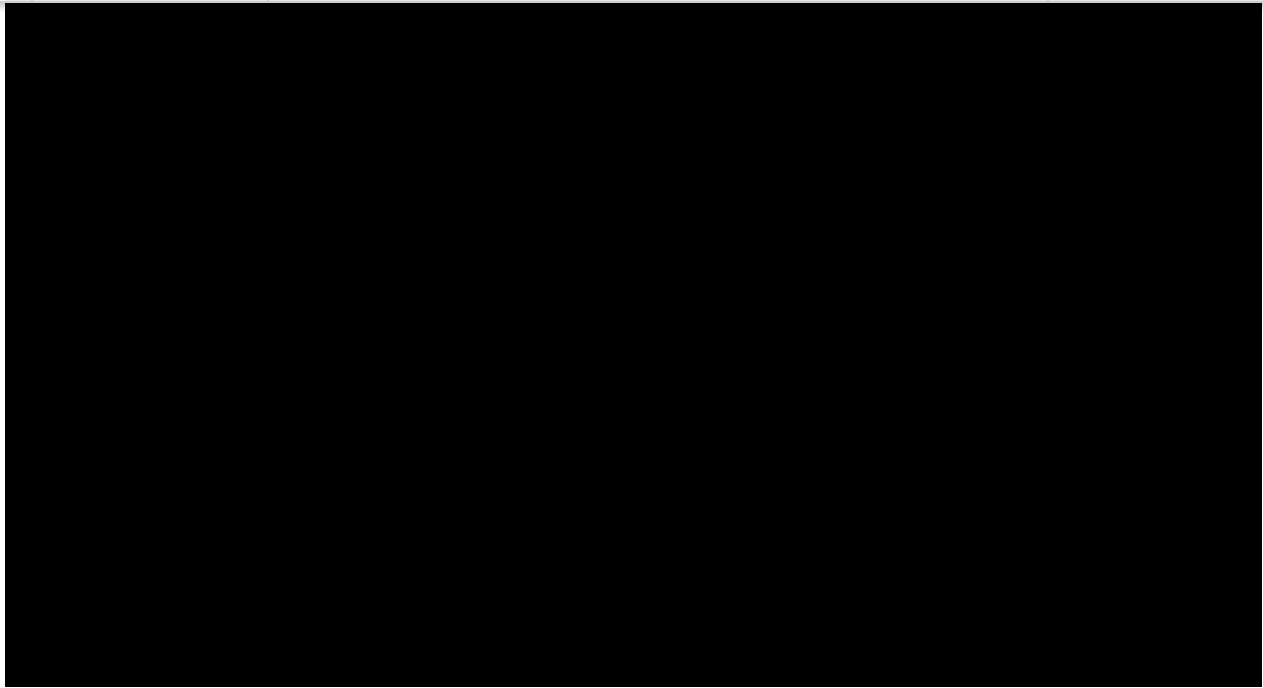
FRIDAY AUG 30

SATURDAY AUG 31

FRIDAY AUGUST 30th
YOSHIMI BATTLES THE PINK ROBOTS
Performing the album in its entirety live in concert

SATURDAY AUGUST 31st
The Soft Bulletin
Performing the album in its entirety live in concert

ALL HUMANS ARE URGED TO ATTEND



The Oklahoma City Zoo amphitheater August 30, 2024.

Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt read an official proclamation from the City of Oklahoma City declaring the band "a worldwide phenomenon and a beloved Oklahoma City institution," and thanking them for their contributions to the city and to fans worldwide.

From left to right, Derek Brown, Tommy McKenzie, Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt, Wayne Coyne, Matt Duckworth Kirksey, and Scott Booker stand for a picture with the official proclamation declaring Friday, August, 30 and Saturday, August, 31, 2024 as "[Flaming Lips Weekend](#)."

Following the Freak Out, the band jumped on tour with Dinosaur Jr. and Weezer for a 20-plus date arena journey ending in Palm Springs California.

GREAT READS:

• FACING MORTALITY, & THE HEALING POWER OF MUSIC

WATCH:

SUNSHIP BALLONS

ISSUE 2 IN PRODUCTION

Release: February 1, 2025

Did you celebrate a milestone with the band?

Have you had an incredible experience that you want to share?

Do you have art, words, or drawings that are inspired by the music?

Issue 2 of The Observer is taking submissions.

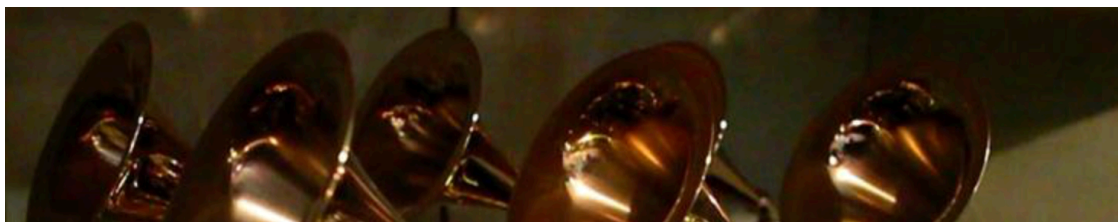
Deadline to submit is Friday, January, 24.

Send to: editorobserver1@gmail.com

COMING IN ISSUE 2:

The Flaming Lips have have been nominated for six Grammy Awards, and have won

three times. We take a look at how the Grammy award itself is made in a small shop in the Rocky Mountains.



ISSUE 1 BACKGROUND IMAGE

This image appears behind each newsletter that viewed via desktop or tablet.

Please submit artwork for this space by reaching out to:

editorobserver1@gmail.com

Editor's Message:

Hello and welcome to The Observer, a newsletter dedicated to the fans of
The Flaming Lips.

The idea for a fan newsletter is the result of years and years of attending shows and the inspiration from the music, the crew, and fans have provided. The idea was born that there are fans who are not on social media and may want to have a different fan experience with engaging stories and visuals.

To be perfectly honest, I don't have any expectations for this newsletter. There are no tightly controlled deadlines, no rules — other than journalistic to ensure accuracy — where people can freely express themselves, their stories and art, that are drawn from inspiration and interaction with the group, into one monthly journal.

There are zero desires to commercialize this newsletter, make a profit etc., or to obtain targeted audience goals.

Like the music, this space is designed to grow naturally and to see what happens.

It would be really awesome if anyone wanted to contribute!

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

Lets keep the positive vibes and love strong for everyone!

The incredibly shy and introverted author by way of a self portrait.

PARTING SHOT:



Notice:

The Observer operates under the same ethics and principles of traditional journalism. All information, including quotes, facts and attributions are verified before publication. All visual components are independently sourced by the contributing artist(s) and The Observer adheres to all copyright instructions and labels.

The Observer will not consider any form of advertising or sponsorship. The mission is to celebrate the music, and the lives of those who cherish it. For anyone wanting to contribute words, pictures, art and essays, please feel free to reach out.

Questions?

editorobserver1@gmail.com

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Send submissions to: editorobserver1@gmail.com

Thank you for being you,

– J. S. Applewhite

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