

Limelite Sponsors Clinic by Sulton

Famed Bass Player will Teach and Perform in Concert on April 30th

by Julie Hadley

Music aficionados and bass students, really, anyone who has ever dreamed of raising a guitar pick in the air to salute an adoring crowd, will have the chance to hear what it's like from a musician who has been in the business for 35 years. Suzanne Sprague of Limelite Music is sponsoring Kasim Sulton—bassist for Todd Rundgren and Utopia, and a frequent collaborator with acts as diverse as Meat Loaf, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, and Celine Dion—in a clinic and live solo performance to be held on April 30 at Rhino's Union Pub, located at 2339 Union Road in West Seneca.

Sulton has been making music from the time he was young. "I grew up around musicians my entire life. My dad was a hobbyist," he explained in a telephone interview with the *Advertiser*. "He had a guitar that he would fool around with, and I took a little bit of an interest when I was eight or nine years old."

Like so many others of his generation, there was one catalyst that propelled him, like a rocket, to his future musical career. "I saw The Beatles on 'The Ed Sullivan Show,'" he recalled. "And I knew then that I wanted to be a hugely rich, famous rock star." Yet while the name Kasim Sulton doesn't necessarily strike the same chord of recognition that Paul McCartney does, Sulton's story of lifelong success in the

music business is one of talent, hard work, and yes, a little bit of providence.

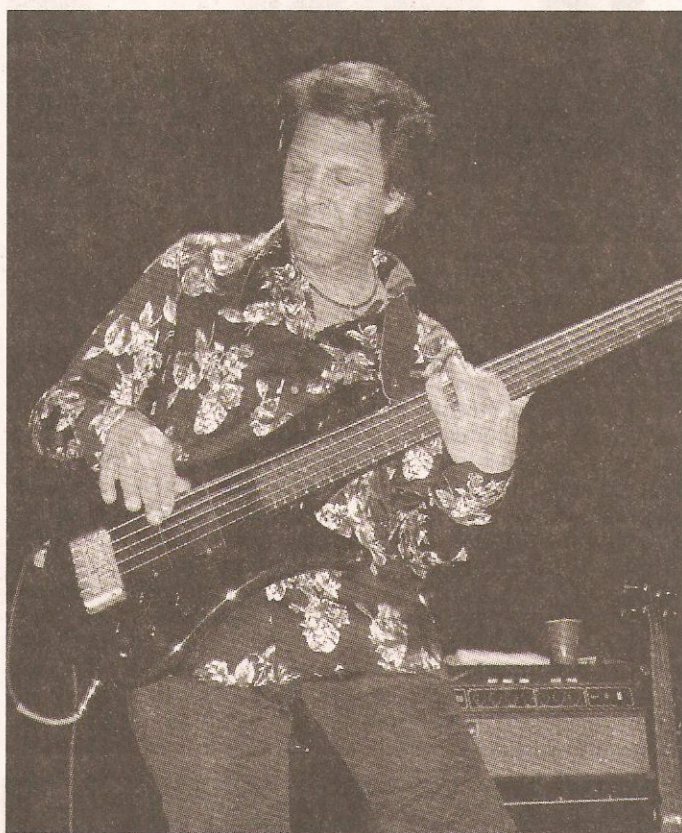
"Eschewing all worldly responsibilities for singing and making music," a sentiment later immortalized in Rundgren's 1983 recording of "Bang On the Drum All Day," Sulton began studying his chosen craft. "I took guitar lessons with a really great teacher," he said. "This guy chewed guitar picks and drove a red Cadillac convertible. In 1966, he shipped off to Vietnam." With the loss of his teacher, Sulton took his future into his own hands at an early age.

"I was determined to have a career in music," the Brooklyn native explained. "I was doing any and everything I could to expand my horizons. I was 14 years old, working as an assistant engineer in a recording studio in Manhattan, and I made myself as visible as I possibly could."

His innate musical abilities were complemented by his drive and ambition. "At 17 or 18, I bought an upright piano and taught myself to play. I got word on an audition with Cherry Vanilla, who was a rock poetess, a mainstay on the New York rock scene," he recalled. Cherry Vanilla "worked with David Bowie, and through her I wound up hanging out with David Bowie's guitar player."

Sulton's big break came because the line between hard work and luck sometimes becomes blurred. "Whenever this group heard of a gig, they would announce it to their friends, and I was one of them." Bowie's guitarist encouraged Kasim to audition for Todd Rundgren. "I borrowed \$20 from my uncle, took a bus to Woodstock and auditioned for Utopia." He's worked with Rundgren off and on, ever since.

In much the same blurring of hard work and luck, the collaboration between Suzanne Sprague and Kasim Sulton came about through her business connections, but also a little bit of kismet. Sprague routinely seeks out specialized lines of instruments to carry in her store on Main Street in East Aurora, "Archer Guitars and Basses carries a signature Kasim Sulton bass," she explained. "I'd always admired it, so I stocked it, and bought a few of his DVDs. Sulton's manager wrote me a very nice note, thanking me. We started e-mailing back and forth, and became friends." Limelite Music has previously sponsored clinics



Kasim Sulton performs.

featuring master musicians, and the idea of inviting Sulton to teach and play appealed to both.

"I don't do clinics as much as I would like to do them, simply because I don't have the time," Sulton explained. "They are extremely fulfilling to me to share what I've learned. I've been on some very successful records. I have a certainly theory about playing your instrument and I love to share it."

The clinic will begin at 4:30 p.m. on Sat., April 30, followed by an all-ages show at 7 p.m. "The clinic will be a lot of fun," Sulton promised. "I tell great stories, and will probably tell a couple stories about life on the road."

Sulton's advice for aspiring musicians can be applied to anyone hoping to achieve success in their chosen field. "It all boils down to playing well with others, just like you learned in kindergarten," he said, "although, in the music business, running with scissors is probably not as widely discouraged."

"The kids that get along with others, who make you feel good, who care about you, who are interested in what you do, those are the people that everyone wants to have around," Sulton said. "I don't know if it's a secret as much as it is a theory. We all felt passionate about music," he

said of his contemporaries. "I just forged on and managed to get a very, very lucky break when I was young."

Sulton continues to work with Todd Rundgren, and has a solo career of his own. "I just finished a short mini-tour with Rundgren, we just did five shows which consisted of playing two of his records top to bottom. I'm working on a new solo record which is to be finished sometime later this year." Sulton explained that even after 35 years, there is still much he can discover. "I'm really excited about the new record," he said. "With each successive song that I write, I learn more about songwriting." His plans include touring again with Rundgren in June and July.

Sulton hopes for a large turnout at the clinic and show. After all, he said, "I make records, I'm charming, cute and pleasant." What more could a music fan want?

Tickets for the April 30 clinic and show are \$20, \$5 for just the clinic, or \$18 for just the show, which begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at Limelite Music, 706 Main St., East Aurora, or through a link on the website www.limelitemusic.com. A discount is available for Limelite Music students. Additional information is available by calling 652-7539.

Kasim Sulton

Has worked with:

Todd Rundgren and Utopia, Meat Loaf, Joan Jett, Hall and Oates, Patti Smith, Patty Smyth, Mick Jagger, Cheap Trick, Indigo Girls, and Celine Dion.

Musical experience:

Bass, keyboards, guitar, vocal harmonies, singing lead, and more.

Solo albums:

Kasim, The Bassment Tapes, Quid Pro Quo, All Sides

Official website:

www.kasimsulton.com

Information compiled from www.kasimsulton.com and www.kasiminfo.com.