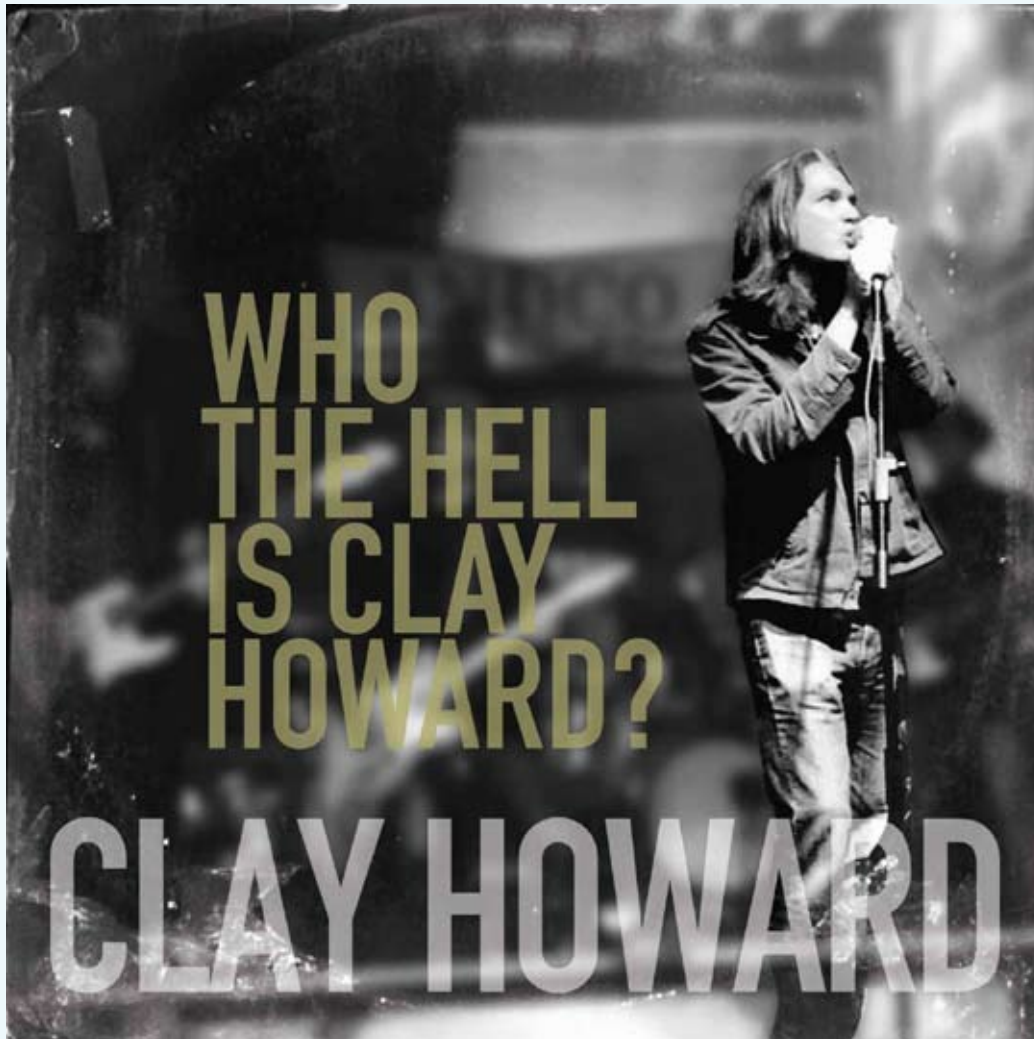


WHO
THE HELL
IS CLAY
HOWARD?

CLAY HOWARD





Contact Info:

Clay Howard
336-501-1432
clay@clayhoward.com

www.clayhoward.com
www.thesilveralerts.com

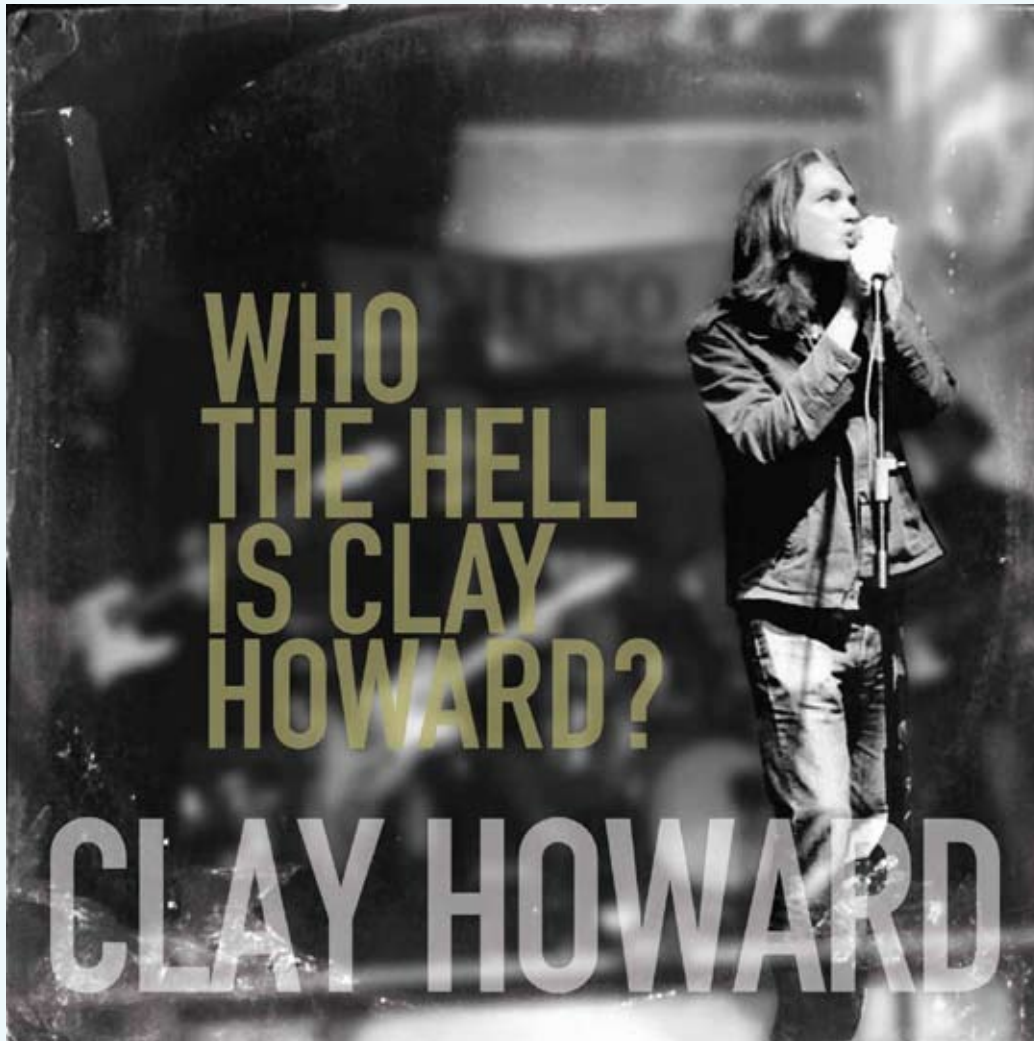
Video links:

Live on the Good Morning Show- Greensboro, NC
April 27, 2015

<http://www.wfmynews2.com/story/life/2015/04/27/local-musician-trending-on-amazon/26449429/>

Lyrics Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05hGTrWfzo>



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"you might not know who Clay is before you spin this, but you will by the end of this record.

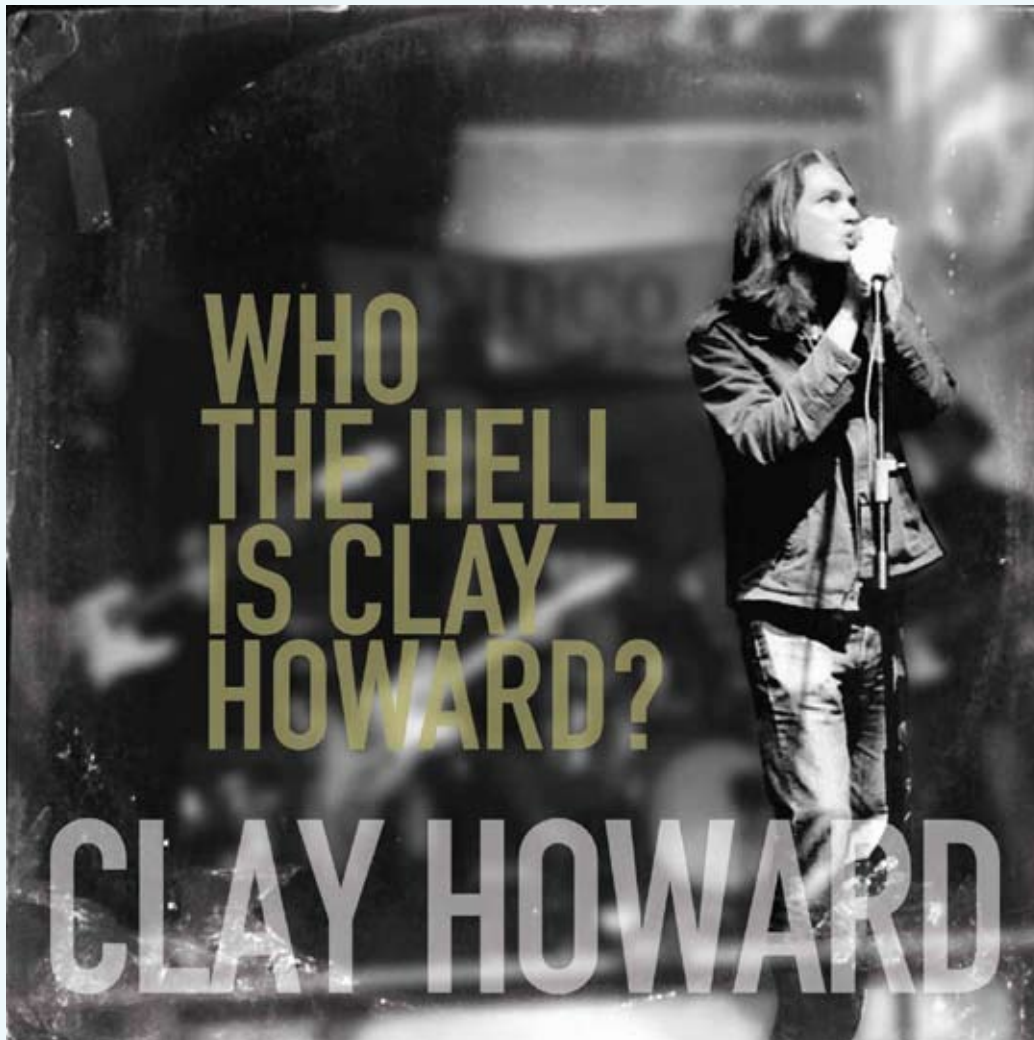
On display is a man that spins out one great song after another.

This is truly just a great rock record.

I am sure that many will try and call this Alternative or Indie but this is just an awesome rock record. Clay has a voice that is just made for great rock songs. His searing voice has the ability to soar into the heavens while possessing the grit of a soul that has lived life the hard way.

While nay sayers of the rock quote cliché cracks about how "it all sounds the same" obviously they haven't heard Clay and his band in action. "

Michael Smith,
Freelance Music Writer,
Canada



www.clayhoward.com
www.thesilveralerts.com

"Clay built a formidable reputation with his band Stratocruiser, which spent years making some of the best original rock music to roll out of North Carolina.

Now Clay has a solo album, "Who The Hell Is Clay Howard" and it is a MONSTROUSLY GREAT disc.

Howard has long been one of the great under-recognized rock vocalists, and on this disc he marries that great voice to a batch of terrific original songs that stick the big hooks that are the hallmarks of grand power-pop within sparse-but-perfect arrangements that rock hard without sacrificing one smidgen of melodic allure.

It is one of the best albums I have heard this year. "

Ed Bumgardner,
Freelance Music Writer,
Former Contributor, Rolling Stone Magazine

MUSIC »

FOR MORE ON WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE TRIAD, VISIT WWW.NEWS-RECORD.COM/GOTRIAD

Clay Howard proves rock music isn't dead

BY EDDIE HUFFMAN
Special to Go Triad

Triad rocker Clay Howard's solo debut album showed up between two Led Zeppelin LPs on Amazon's list of Classic Rock best-sellers last week, exactly where he and his producer, Brynn Arens, would have wanted it.

"(Arens) said, 'Rock music's dead — why am I doing this?'" Howard said during a recent interview at his Kernersville home. "It's funny — he often says that he's the guy in the bushes that nobody told the war was over."

Arens, who lives in Minneapolis, produced "Who the Hell is Clay Howard?" He leads the Oddfathers and fronted Flipp in the 1990s. The Internet allowed him to produce and play most of the instruments on Howard's solo debut album from 1,100 miles away.

"It's really not rocket science when you've got somebody as good as him," Arens said.

Howard, 46, will showcase his new album May 8 at the Garage in Winston-Salem, backed by an all-star band of Triad rockers: Doug Davis, Jerry Chapman, Aaron Burkey and Corky McClellan. Davis runs a home studio, plays in multiple bands and organizes several Vagabond Saints Society's cover-show extravaganzas every year, with Howard one of many guest vocalists.

"He had originally talked to me about producing an album," Davis said. "This guy made a totally different album than I would have made, and I think it suits him to a tee."

Davis also organizes the Monday Morning 3AM Music Club, where some of the best songwriters in the Triad (and beyond) commit to writing, recording and posting a new song



COURTESY OF BILL HUTCHINS

Singer-songwriter Clay Howard of Kernersville, who just released his first solo album, will perform May 8 at The Garage in Winston-Salem.

online every week.

"I blame Doug Davis for this whole record," Howard said. "I thought, 'That's a great idea — make yourself write a whole song a week.'"

He ended up writing 17 songs in 17 weeks, striving to match the standard set by his fellow club members. The album's first track, a blistering rocker called "LOL," was written for the club.

Howard and Arens share a love for classic rock by the likes of Alice Cooper, Mott the Hoople and Cheap Trick. "Who the Hell is Clay Howard?" has echoes of KISS, Van Halen, the Cult and Billy Squier. There are synthesizers, power ballads, lyrics about a crazy train and big, nasty guitars.

"Doug said it was an even mix of Cheap Trick, Rick Springfield, Foreigner and the Osmonds," Howard said with a laugh.

Singer and producer spent plenty of time conferring online via FaceTime, but they have yet to occupy the same room since they started working together.

The two met briefly about 20 years ago when Howard saw Flipp open for Cheap Trick, then reconnected when Arens expressed interest in buying a Waterstone guitar.

Howard markets and distributes guitars for the Nashville-based instrument maker from the Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship in Greensboro, where he is vice president. He first asked Arens to play a guitar solo on one song, but the project quickly snowballed when Arens liked what he heard and juiced up Howard's recording, then asked him to send more.

"God has certainly decided to give Clay Howard a great voice," Arens said.

Howard honed that voice in a series of Piedmont bands dating back to the late 1980s. His previous groups include Society's Child, Digg'n' Taters and Barely White. But Howard spent the most time in the power-pop band Stratocruiser with guitarist-songwriter Mike Nicholson, a Greensboro native. Nicholson wrote music and Howard wrote lyrics, and they recorded six albums during an 11-year run.

Recording and marketing his first solo album is only a small fraction of how Howard occupies

Want to go?

What: Clay Howard and the Silver Alerts in concert

When: 9 p.m. May 8

Where: The Garage, 110 W. Seventh St., Winston-Salem

Admission: \$7

Information: www.the-garage.ws or www.clayhoward.com

his time. He regularly performs solo acoustic cover shows at local bars and restaurants, including WineStyles in Greensboro and J.P. Looney's in Oak Ridge and Kernersville. He also has written two children's books: "Escaping the Naughty List" and "The Energy Thief."

Howard, a native of Tupelo, Miss., is married and has four children. He also coaches his son's basketball team. (Howard is 6-foot-9 and briefly played basketball for an NCAA Division I team in college after making a name for himself at Southeast Guilford High School.) It was Arens's idea to have his children sing backup on "LOL," a la the chorus of kids in Alice Cooper's "School's Out."

"We had been talking about Alice Cooper," Howard said. "We talk about classic rock all the time. He said, 'You know, man, that would be perfect for the end of "LOL"! I said, 'I don't hear it, but OK.' He goes, 'I want 'em to sing, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, whoo!'" Having a father who works in a business incubator has apparently had an impact on Howard's children.

"Ava, who's my 11-year-old, she goes, 'We're not gonna do it unless you pay us,'" he said. "I went, 'Well, how much?' And she went, 'Five bucks — apiece.'"

Contact Eddie Huffman at huffman.eddie@gmail.com and follow @eddiehuffman on Twitter.

HOWARD ASSUMES CONTROL

BY JEFF SYKES | jeff@yesweekly.com | @jeffreysykes

Veteran Triad rocker Clay Howard is known for his booming voice and his years as the front man for bands like stratocruiser and Diggin' Taters. He's a regular on the acoustic-cover circuit as well, having earned his stripes over the years, honing his guitar playing and vocal delivery both on the road and in cross-town solo gigs.

Howard, 46, puts every bit of his talent and experience into his first solo album, *Who the Hell is Clay Howard*, set to hit the streets April 17 at a release party at Ziggy's Rock House Tavern in Winston-Salem.

Howard said he's been lucky to always be in bands with great guitar players, songwriting partners who split the writing duties in half on each record. He picked up the guitar somewhere around 1990 in order to flesh out song ideas on his own, but primarily contributed lyrics and melodies to songs for the bands. He left the music writing duties to Mike Nicholson in stratocruiser, Benji Johnson in Diggin' Taters and George Wagner in his first band, Society's Child.

A native of Tupelo, Mississippi, Howard moved to Greensboro with his family when he was in middle school. He first got the notion when he was in fourth grade, telling his brother that he was going to be a rock star someday. It wasn't until his teenage years that he began taking steps in that direction, penning simple rhyming lyrics while in detention at Southeast Guilford High School, and later recording overdubs to 'Jesse's Girl' and 'Surfin' USA' at a vocal booth at Carowinds.

After working with so many quality musicians over the years, Howard said he wanted the challenge of producing an album in which he composed both the music and the lyrics. He was curious what the process would be like.

"This one was just me, the music and the melodies and the lyrics," Howard said. "After 10 years of doing it the other way, where I didn't write any music, I didn't know if I could do it or not. I just didn't have to. (They) wrote great music and didn't need me to write anything. This one was a lot of fun and it was all on me."

Who the Hell is Clay Howard is a 10-song collection of straight rock tunes, the kind of

tunes Howard grew up admiring in bands like Cheap Trick, Electric Light Orchestra and others. Howard wrote seven songs on the album and co-wrote three with producer Brynn Arens, a Minneapolis-based rocker who is the lead singer and guitarist for The Oddfathers, and former lead singer of 90's favorites, Flipp.

Howard reached out to Arens "on a lark," he says, to see if Arens would play one lead solo on a track. The relationship grew from there, with the two collaborating on one song, and then another, until Arens told him to keep sending stuff "until it wasn't fun anymore."

The two collaborate via filesharing and Facetime, with Howard recording tracks at home or in Benji Johnson's studio, and sending them up to Arens, who often re-tracks guitars.

Howard credits Arens and a songwriting group, the Monday Morning 3 a.m. Songwriters Group, with helping him continue to grow as a lyricist and musician.

One of Howard's favorite tracks on the album began as an acoustic lullaby to his children, which Arens turned into an orchestrated rock anthem.

'It's All in Front of You' is a big, Led Zeppelin-esque journey that starts off slow and sparse, building into a wall of layered guitars, complete with tempo shifts and a complex bridge.

The songwriting group forces him to focus on his craft in those hours he can carve away from his job responsibilities at The Nussbaum Center in Greensboro and his duties as a husband and father to four children.

"You have to write a song a week or you are eliminated," Howard said. "That has really kept me on task. The caliber of those writers is fantastic, so you don't want to throw crappy songs out there into the mix because they are going to call you on it. It's not really competitive, but it is in that you don't want to put out something bad. That really kept me on my game."

Arens, in turn, was often unforgiving, serving as both a taskmaster and a mentor. Howard admits he's the worst at writing bridges — tempo and key shifts that add depth to rock and pop tracks — but that Arens wouldn't let him slide, forcing him to rewrite material until the idea became fully fleshed out.

"He put a lot of pressure on me to make



COURTESY PHOTO

Clay Howard will release his solo CD April 17 at Ziggy's Rock House Tavern.

that happen on these songs," Howard said. "It can be kind of freeing for someone to say 'hey man, you can do better.'"

After more than 20 years on the rock and roll stage, Howard retains that early swagger, but with an eye for the future.

"A lot of it now has to do with the challenge," Howard said. "Can I write another song? Can I write another decent song that impresses me first and then put it in front of people?"

Arens said that he enjoys working with Howard, who he described as having a voice that "legends are made of."

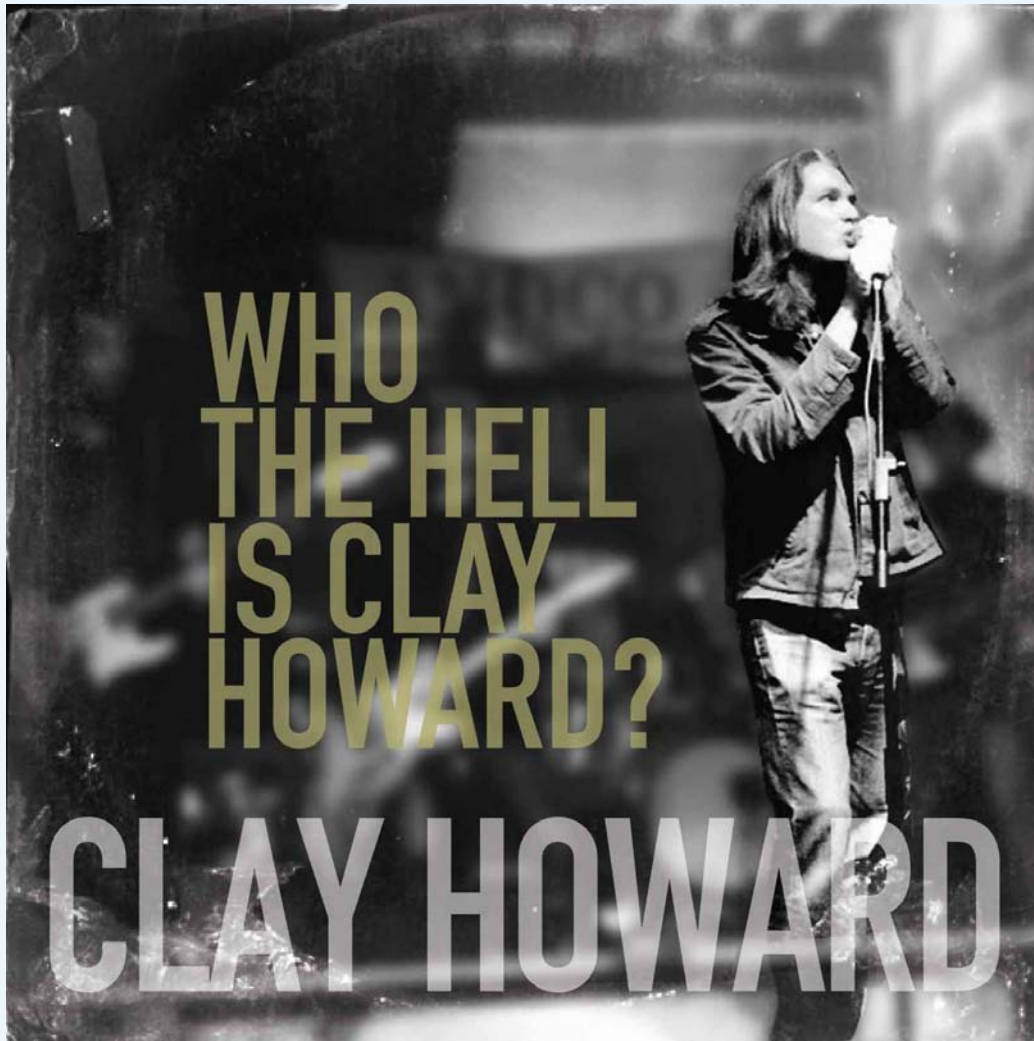
"The effortless delivery and tone in his voice is something only God can make happen," Arens said. "It reminds me a bit of Billy Squire, or maybe Loy Gramm minus the cheese."

Fans of rock will delight in what Howard and Arens have produced, with the variety of straight rock, rock ballads, and retro anthems delivering a solid listening experience. 🍷

WANNA go?

Clay Howard will debut tracks from *Who the Hell is Clay Howard* at Ziggy's Rock House Tavern, 170 W. 9th St. in Winston-Salem, on Friday, April 17. Howard will be backed by The Silver Alerts (Doug Davis, Jerry Chapman, Aaron Burkey, Corkey McClellan). Tickets are \$7 and the show starts at 9 p.m.





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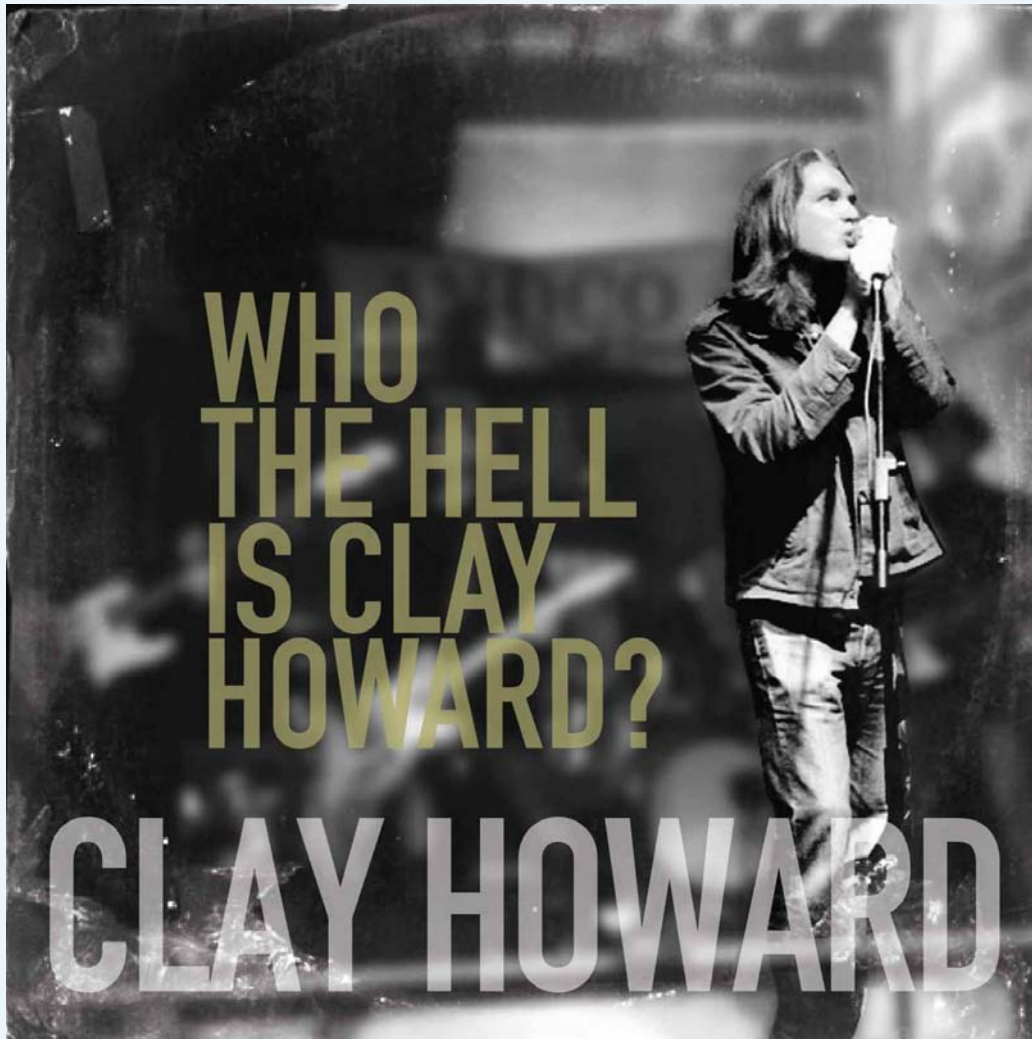
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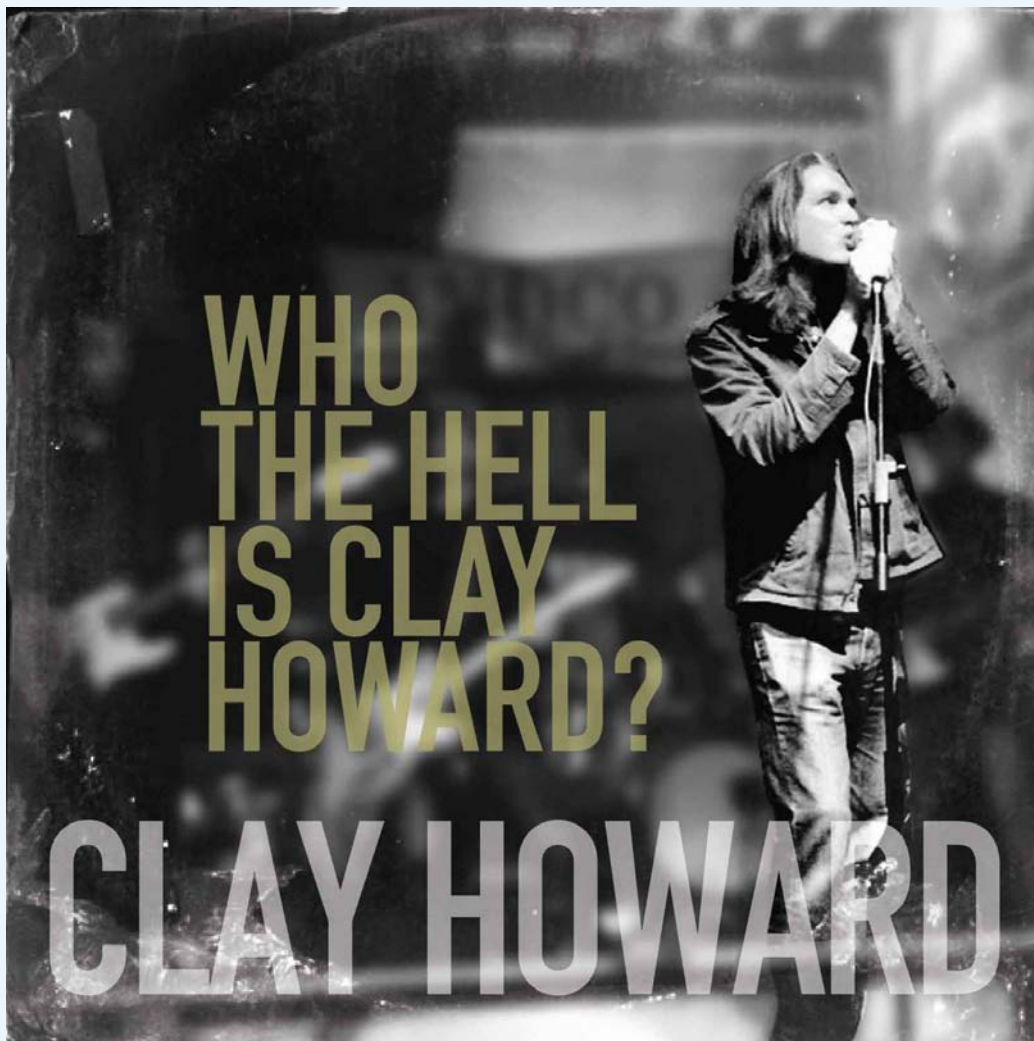
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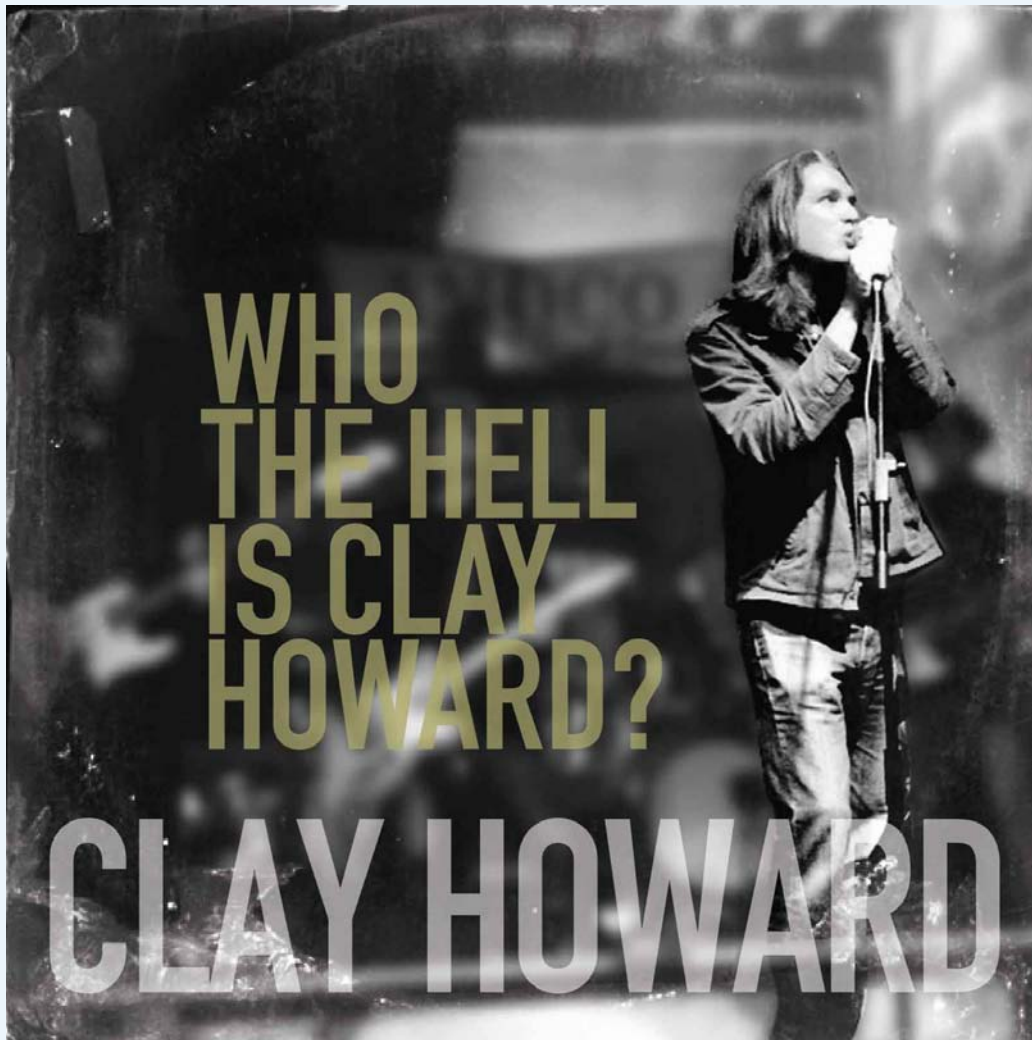
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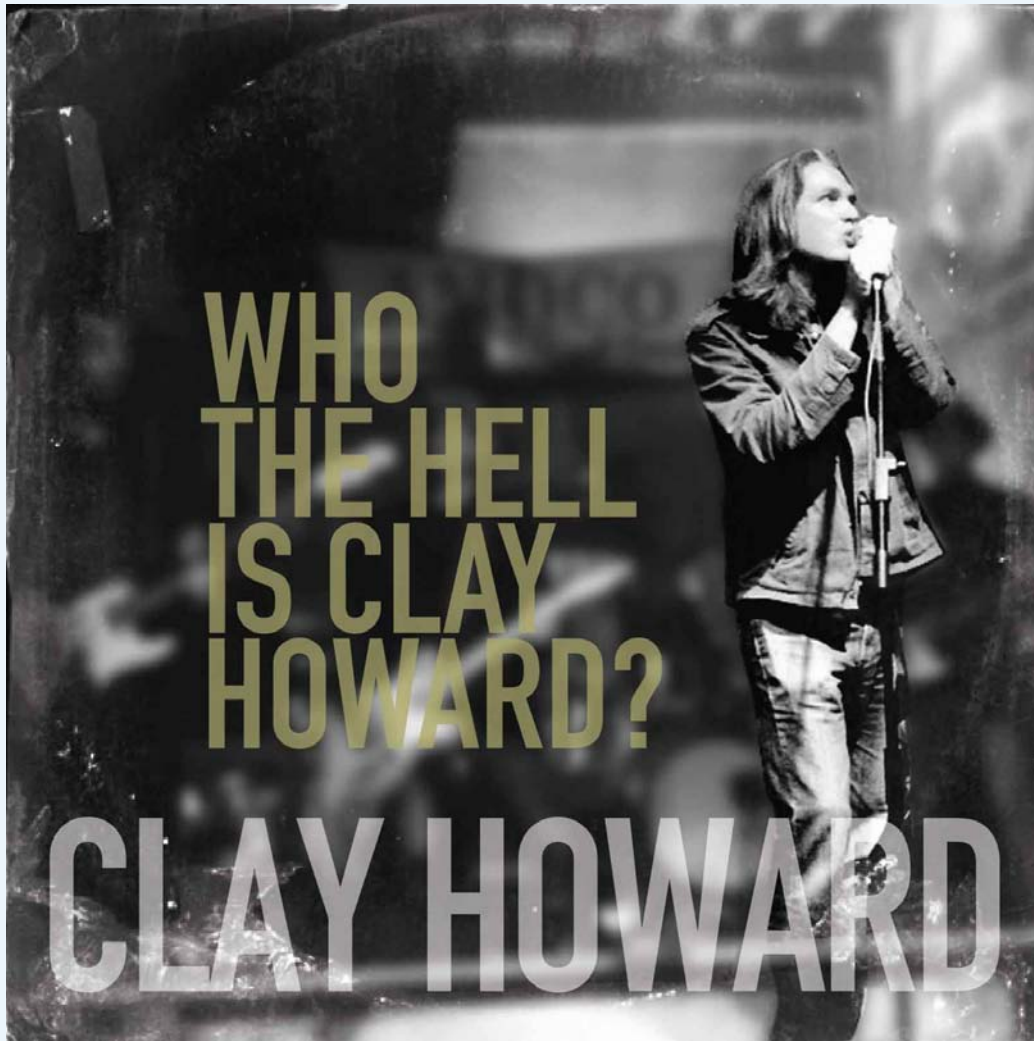


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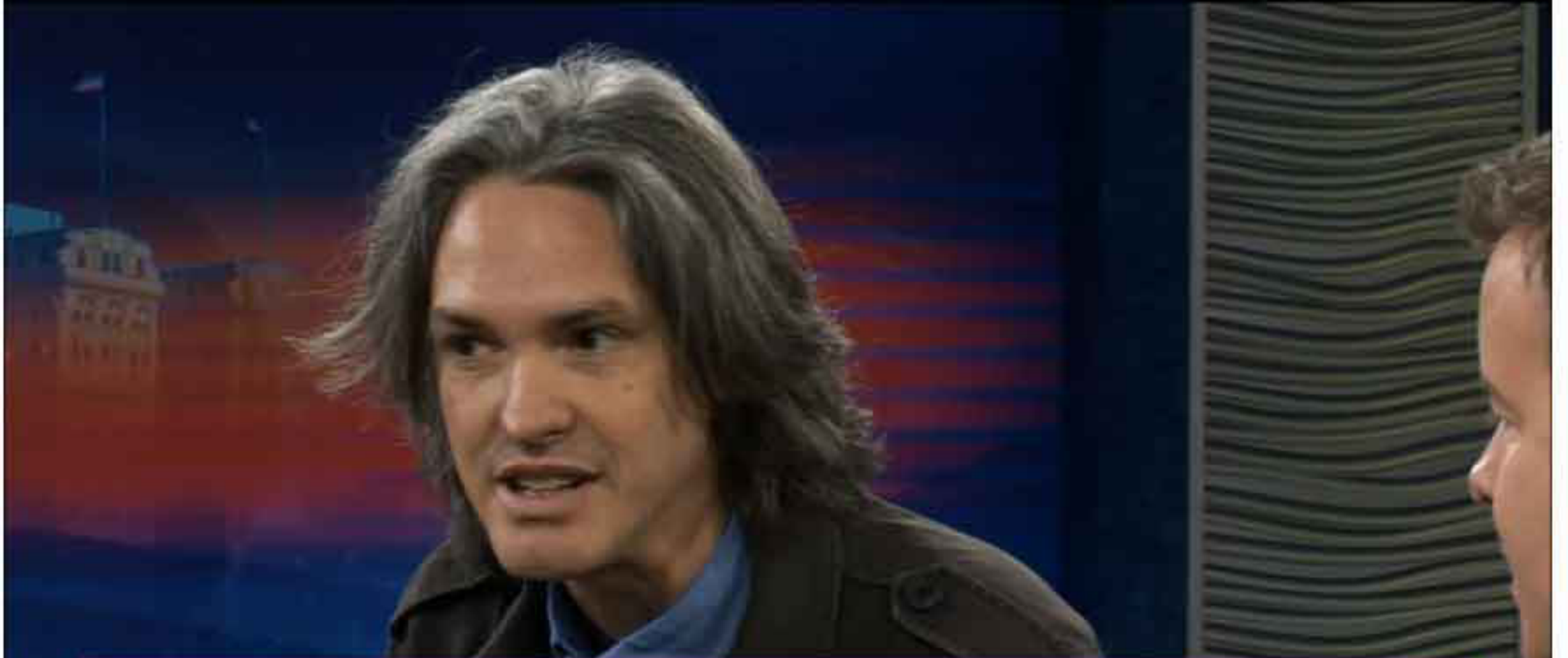
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