

# Staten Island's Anthony Babino Band is the talk of the 'Town'

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## THE ANTHONY BABINO BAND

Performing original songs from its attention-getting new CD, "Desolate Town"

STATEN ISLAND, NY -- Like any other vocation, music often runs in the family. For rising local musician **Anthony Babino**, that posed both problems and solutions.

"I was doing a gig in the city when I was in college, at this place called the A & M Roadhouse on Murray Street," says Babino, a fresh-faced 22-year-old from New Springville who exudes a sort of quiet confidence on and off stage. "My dad had been playing bass for me, but he had to go play his own shows a lot, so I started teaching my brother, Steve, to fill in."

These days the Anthony Babino Band usually sees dad in the audience — when **Tony B., Sr.**, doesn't have his own gig performing crooner and big band standards from cruise ships to the Poconos. But it may be Anthony and **Steve**, 19, who make it to the big time: The brothers' professional-grade album "**Desolate Town**" seems ready for the masses, and is already getting attention from radio stations and live audiences in the Tri-state

area. The group performs tonight at **Alor Cafe**, followed soon by a Dec. 3 gig at rock legendary village spot **The Bitter End** in Manhattan.

Anthony Babino and his band as they perform at the AWE Rock in the Ruins stage at the Richmond County Fair. 9/4/10

**“I get a lot of music coming across the table at the radio station as you can imagine,” says Lou Russo, a Staten-raised DJ who co-hosts “Lou and Liz in the Morning,” a show on 94.3 FM heard by 200,000 listeners in Monmouth, New Jersey. “Rarely does something jump out at me. I had the CD on and people around the station — people who have been in the music business a long time sticking their head into my office saying ‘Who’s that?’”**

Babino’s maturity and songwriting reminded Russo of Eric Clapton. Other comparisons could be made as well, to The Beatles’ guitar picking or even Bruce Springsteen’s community-focused narratives.

Anthony and Steve Babino performing a recent show at Cargo Cafe in St. George. “Springsteen’s a great storyteller, and I grew up listening to a lot of songwriters who wrote like that: McCartney, Paul Simon, Bob Dylan, they all told stories through



songs,” says Babino, who first started playing guitar at age 9, when he got a knock-off Fender Stratocaster for Christmas. “But I’m into a wide range of stuff, from Sinatra to ragtime and Led Zeppelin.”

A good example of Babino’s creative ease on the guitar from his new album, recorded at **Fenix Studios** in Charleston, is the song **“Just Another Sunday Morning.”** Inspired by The Beatles’ “Penny Lane,” the look at a small neighborhood from the paper boy’s perspective (delivering the Sunday Advance, of course), is darkly comic. A father addicted to prescription pills doesn’t realize that on the way to an audition, his daughter has been in a car accident.

A music major and graduate of **Wagner College**, Babino first started playing with friends from the jazz band at **Susan Wagner High School** as a sophomore. As his own skills grew, the young troubadour began writing more of his own songs along with learning covers of Van Morrison and George Harrison. **Dan Gallagher**, a longtime Island



musician (Nick Williams and the Anteaters), added his own skills on various stringed instruments from the beginning, and recent drummer **Toby Ralph** has been replaced by various other professional sit-ins since going on tour with larger acts like Lauryn Hill. Little brother Steve, seeing his dad and big brother on stage, got interested.

“Watching my dad sing and perform, I knew that’s what I wanted to do,” says Steve, who along with playing the bass sings two-part harmonies with his brother. “And my brother, I look up to him. He’s the best I’ve ever seen. We both love writing songs and performing together.”

With a father in the music business, Babino seems aware that it’s hard to break out, but he’s making a go of it. The band is currently working a professional booking agent, who is getting them shows from Southern New Jersey to Long Island.

“We’ve got some labels interested,” says Babino. “This record is the most serious I’ve made since I was in high school. We’re hoping it catches some more people’s attention. For me it’s a culmination of everything I’ve learned as far as musicality. I already feel passed some of that stuff, but that’s just part of the growing experience of artistry, I suppose.”