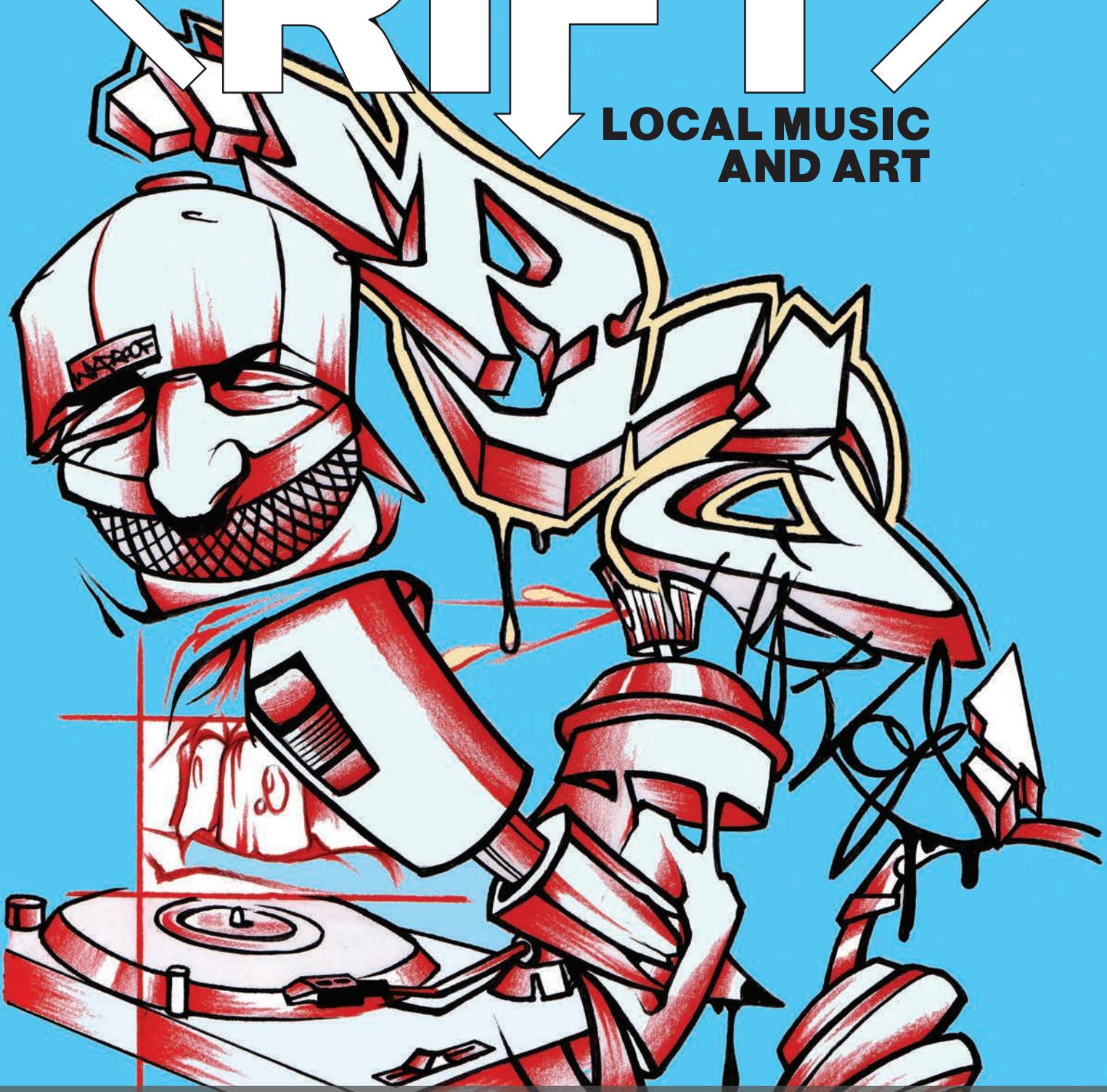


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MUSIC SCENE / ART

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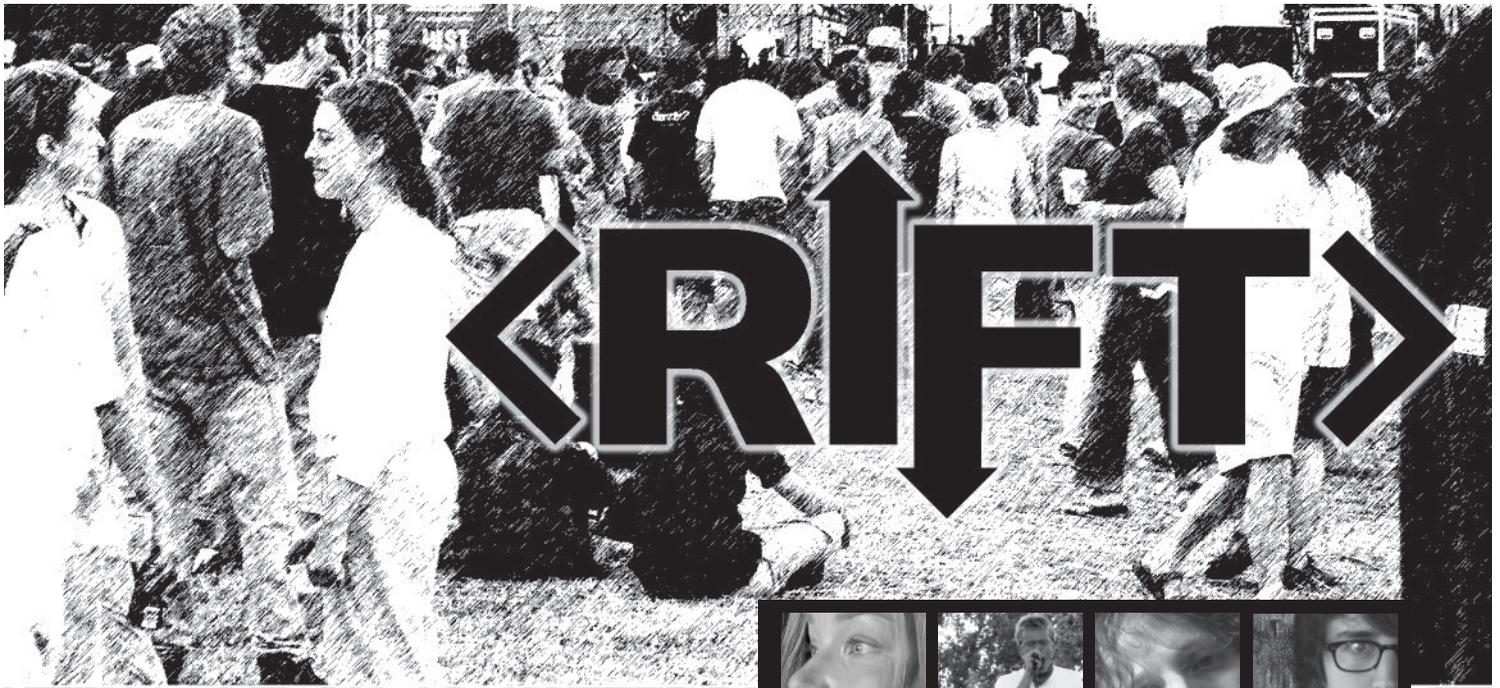


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AUGUST 2006



CONTENTS

INTRO 002

MUSIC FEATURES

WHAT'S GOING ON? by Gentry Boeckel 004

ANDRA SUCHY by Brandon Broxey 006

ZIBAZIBRA by Rich Horton 007

MARK MALLMAN by David Brusie 008

IAN ANDERSON by Kristen Mueller 009

MUSIC AND ART SCENE/COLUMNS

ARTIST PROFILE: CHRIS ALLEN by Rich Horton 010

BILL MIKE ON GUITAR by Bill Mike 012

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL by Galen Eagle Bull 015

AUDIO INSERT by Chris Mara 016

CD REVIEWS 018

INTRO

BY RICH HORTON

The Dangerous Infrastructure of the Music Festival

I don't attend too many music festivals. I'm not sure if it's because of the crowds or waiting around for the bands I want to hear. And I can't think of many festivals I'd gone to before this summer, but I'm definitely making up for it this year.

First, I went to the Taste of Minnesota. I know it's not a true music festival, but more of a bunch of bad-for-you foods, a few rides and some musical acts thrown in between the food and rides. While I was there, I judged a battle of the bands, hung around with my family after the judging and got a sunburn on my face and neck.

I drove up to the Green Man Festival in Duluth, which was a little under-attended, partly due to heat and rumblings by Duluthians who'd enjoyed camping at Spirit Mountain in years past.

Next, it was on to the 10,000 Lakes Festival in Detroit Lakes. It was a two hour wait just to get into the campground (which I've been told isn't very long for this festival) and then on to finding a nice slanted hill where I could park my van and call home for the next couple of nights.

There was no shortage of people at 10,000 Lakes; large crowds hung around the multiple stages and even more people milled throughout the campgrounds.

Even though I'm not a jam band connoisseur, the music was good. Most of the bands played mixes of rock and beat-driven music, with the occasional extended guitar solo or extra music used as filler in between songs.

I went to 10,000 Lakes for the music, but the people watching was probably the best part. Especially when the people are on some sort of substance and they wander around thinking they have to be somewhere, but don't know where to go or how to get there. There are the hippies who do that hippie flowing dance, as well as the music fans who simply listen to the music, hands stuffed in their pockets.

The 10,000 Lakes Festival is a well-oiled machine, with an incredible infrastructure of Porta Potty engineers, security, sound engineers, stage hands and clean-up crews. There are little roads to bring band equipment in and out, and to move people from here to there on little golf carts.

So what's my point, you ask?

These music festivals are the engines driving the jam band economy and I can't think of any other genre of music that's had this longevity. Bands such as the Grateful Dead, to now just the members of the Grateful Dead, and numerous other bands have built an empire playing to an audience that just wants to have a good time and will pay \$150 a ticket to have it.

Independent music festivals only date back to the 1980s, but each year it seems like they have a harder time selling tickets. Maybe the interest simply isn't there anymore? Even so, Pitchfork Media is having a pretty big festival this summer, as is Lollapalooza just a week later in the same city.

In the 1990s, alternative music had its Lollapalooza and Warp Tours, and metal had its Ozzfest. Today, there's a pretty big indie music fan base and it seems to be growing, but will there ever be a community of fans who will support it, like the jam band fans?

Only time will tell, but it does seem we're a little behind the curve.

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EDITOR IN CHIEF

<RIFT>

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Festivals and Events: BY GENTRY BOECKEL



Twin Cities Celebration Of Hip-Hop August 18-20, 2006

The foliage-faced Green Man will make his annual summer appearance in Duluth, July 14-16, but this time he'll be at the Festival's new location at Duluth's Bayfront Park. The eco-friendly festival will begin with a Cruiser Bike Rally around Duluth at 2pm. Speaking of bikes, the Peace Coffee served at the Festival is made using a bike-powered blender. Low, the Honeydogs and Trampled by Turtles are headlining. Advance weekend passes are \$30.
www.yothemovement.org

Log Jam 2006 July 19 and 20th, 2006

The 10,000 Lakes Festival motto reads: "Music: Nature: Euphoria." With four unique stages and more than 45 bands, the Festival looks to be just that. Phil Lesh (Grateful Dead) and Trey Anastasio (Phish) headline, along with String Cheese Incident and O.A.R. scheduled to perform, expect a mellow experience. The Festival's located at the Soo Pass Ranch and Amphitheater in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

www.logjamfestival.com

Riftmagazine.com more articles and reviews



If you can't find a copy of Rift Magazine in September, don't worry we'll be back in October looking better than ever. In the meantime keep checking our website for new articles and new reviews.

Upcoming Web Articles will include - Birthday Suits, Loon-atix Productions, Local Bands at the 10,000 Lakes Festival and Screaming Mechanical Brain's not so much fun tour story.

New CD reviews on the web will include - Complex Zero, Kubla Khan, Middlepicker, Paul Christian, The Fountainheads, The Smarts, Thunder In The Valley, Ty Morse and More.

NEW CD RELEASES -

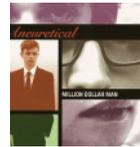


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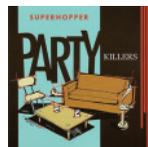
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ANDRA SUCHY

BY BRANDON BROXEY

Singer Andra Suchy moved to the Twin Cities from North Dakota in 1996 and since her arrival, Suchy's powerful, crystal-clear voice has been heard on albums by Soul Asylum, the Honeydogs, Billy Johnson's Roadshow and many more.

She makes weekly appearances with The Dollys at Stasiu's on Tuesdays and with Hookers and Blow on Thursday nights at Gluek's; she also lends her vocals to commercial work.

In the midst of the madness, Suchy found time to record her debut solo album, "Patchwork Story," due to be released August 18, 2006.

Suchy talked with Rift and offered a few insights into the upcoming album, the Thompson Twins and impersonating an 8-year-old boy.

Rift: What kind of sound can we expect from "Patchwork Story?"

Andra Suchy: This is always a hard question. I would say "Patchwork Story" revolves around the realm of organic, rootsy Americana rock with variances among different songs.

Rift: Which, if any, bands or artists directly inspired the album or your appreciation for music?

AS: There are a lot of inspirations for the way we wanted the album to sound, as well as songwriting influences, but I think that happens naturally. We talked about some specific albums we loved the sound of, or why we loved them, and kept that in mind throughout the process, but I wouldn't say we were exactly emulating anyone in particular.

Rift: You've played with just about every established musician in the Twin Cities area. Will any of them be making an appearance on "Patchwork Story?"

AS: I am totally knocked out by the musicians on my album, as well as everyone I play with live. It is humbling and a great honor. But that didn't really answer the question. Yes.

Rift: How long have you been working on your album and where did you record it?

AS: I think we did the first song demo about four years ago. We recorded the drums, piano and organ at "Splice Hear" and "It's A Secret" with David J. Russ as engineer. He's been an amazing catalyst. Andrew Pierzina did pretty much the rest at our home studio, ASAProcks.

Rift: How do you market or promote an album?

AS: I am hoping to work with New Artist Direct and Tinderbox for radio and distribution. They've come highly recommended and work very hard for their artists. Of course live shows help, but having outside professional help is almost necessary when it comes to cracking unfamiliar audiences and getting your music in the stores and on the radio.

Rift: What are some of your favorite Twin Cities venues to play at and why?

AS: Hmm ... this is hard. First Avenue is an amazing place to play. I love the vibe at Mayslack's. The Fine Line has wonderful sound. Stasiu's is a new cool music bar. Gluek's has been a great place to

Live shows help, but having outside professional help is almost necessary when it comes to cracking unfamiliar audiences and getting your music in the stores and on the radio.

play. Bunker's has good sound as well. I am forgetting a lot, but these come to mind right away.

Rift: Tell us about your experiences doing commercial jingles.

AS: I love doing jingles. It has taught me to leave my self-consciousness at the door and realize I'm there for the job and not to worry about looking ridiculous. You can't dwell on whether you'll get the job or you'll go crazy wondering what you did wrong. Sessions can take 15 minutes or all day, they're all different and yes, there are some strange ones. We don't need to get too far into that. There's an educational Web site for young girls called mypopstudio.com I recently did that was pretty fun. Oh, and once I did the voice of an 8-year-old boy for a *Rugrats* movie promo. That was a weird one.

Rift: You've recently created The Dollys. Who else is in the band and what has that experience been like?

AS: Actually, Kari Shaw is the creator of The Dollys. It is sooo choice. I get to sing with Kari Shaw and Joanna Jahn. Trent Norton plays bass, Joe Savage plays

pedal steel, dobro, lap slide and banjo, Peter J. Sands plays keys and Andrew Pierzina plays guitar. We do a lot of fun country music covers from Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris.

Rift: What are your three desert island albums?

AS: Oh Lord, that's impossible.

Rift: What was the first album you ever bought?

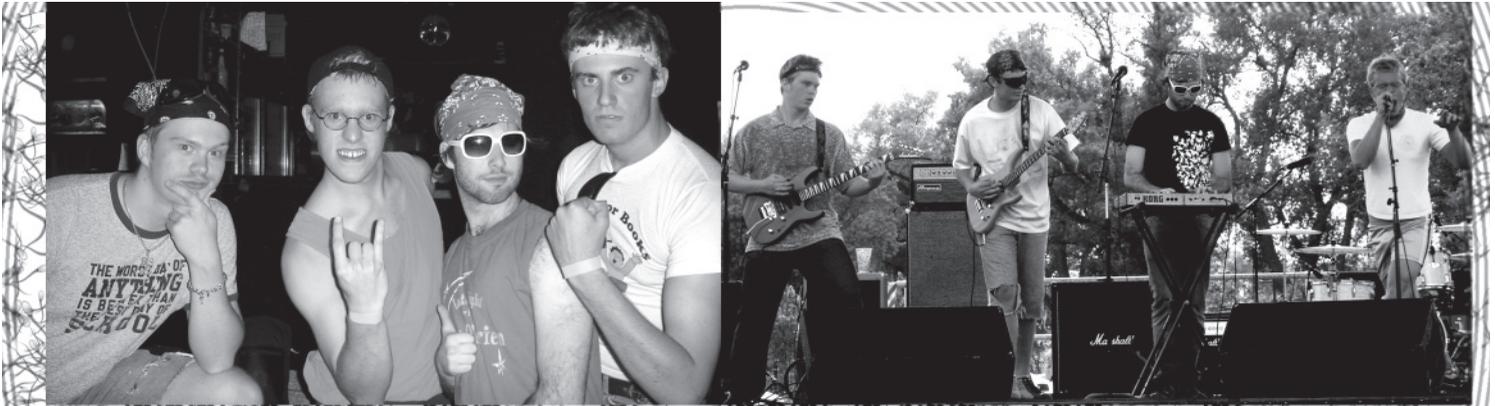
AS: Well, my folks had quite a few albums I loved – Linda Ronstadt, Judy Collins, Gordon Lightfoot – but I think with my own money I bought either the Thompson Twins or Heart's "Bad Animals." I don't think I'd actually heard much of either; I must've liked the artwork or something.

Rift: Your CD release party is scheduled for August 18, 2006, at Mayslack's. Can you tell us if any special guests are scheduled to perform?

AS: I am so excited! I can say that The Dollys, Billy Johnson and my band will all play sets. Beyond that, who knows?

www.andrasuchy.com





ZIBRA ZIBRA

BY RICH HORTON

Think of any battle of the bands contest (at least those here in Minnesota) and it's safe to say most of the bands playing will offer up their version of straightforward rock and nothing much different.

ZibraZibra, on the other hand, is quickly shattering that mold with their mix of electronic, '80s pop and hair metal, and it's no surprise ZibraZibra is the 2006 king – or maybe queen – of Radio K's Battle of the Underage Underground.

The band's live shows are a bouncy, flamboyant, entertaining affair. If lead singer Z's bright fluorescent shirts don't make you take notice, then the way he'll jump into the audience at a moment's notice probably will. ZibraZibra's live shows are filled with solid songs and a chemistry making them seem like they've been playing together for years, when in fact, they played their first live show back in February 2006. And the band members are all 18 years old and 2006 graduates of Perpich Arts High School.

ZibraZibra is Z (Neil Zumwalde), vocals, programming, guitar and synth; The Atomic Wolf (Aaron Baum), synth, bass and vocals; Vanilla (Henry Olavi Mikkonen), guitar and vocals; and McMayhem (Mitch McCarthy), synth and guitar.

Z discovered dorm room-mates McMayhem and Vanilla at the same time; the two were harmonizing guitar lines, metal style.

"I found myself fascinated with their style, basking warmly in the cheese of it all," Z said. "I quickly realized Vanilla had a fascination with guitar heroes, such as Yngwie Malmsteen and Steve Vai."

McMayhem, on the other hand, worshipped Jimmy Page, but found himself drawn into the mysterious world of synthetic sound, becoming a skilled circuit bender and keyboard player. The Atomic Wolf had a soft spot for classical cello and pursued it vigorously. He was also a member of Towers Thick Walls, a fiercely aggressive indie rock band signed to Afternoon Records. Z's primary influences include art pop bands such as the Animal Collective and Belle and Sebastian.

"At first, our styles didn't seem compatible, but trial after trial, we combined Motley Crue with Kraftwerk and finally found our sound: '80s hair/glam metal/techno/pop," Z said. "We had a sound we all agreed was unique and fun. It's a combination that in less than five months propelled us to being regarded by many as the 'band to watch.'"

The name ZibraZibra comes from a Greek phrase, "zebra zebra," which means just how it sounds – two zebras – but the band felt it had it a deeper meaning for them.

"We thought the imagery was appropriate. We see the zebras – two creatures of indiscernible sex – as a good metaphor for sexual ambiguity; it ties in nicely with our sexually deviant themes," Z explained.

In one of their songs, Z strongly shouts out "I'm gay." I asked Z about the band's sexual orientation and if there'd been any adverse affects since that proclamation.

"Homosexuality versus heterosexuality is a concept that will hopefully be obliterated in the future," he said. "In the meantime, we'll play on the audience's expectations, announcing that being gay is really fucking badass! Which members of ZibraZibra are gay? That's for us to know and for you to speculate about. As for homophobia, don't fuck with me – call me a fag and I'll kick your sorry, straight ass."

The live show is important to the band, but the music is equally important and they believe they couldn't put on the quality show they do without the music being good.

"Our live shows are outrageous because the narrative structure of many of our songs insists on being acted out with ferocious intensity, and the arrangement makes for concise songs to be mulled over and analyzed, or just danced to," Z said. "We've been criticized as being all show and no depth musically, but I'm certain our

songs stand up on their own. Yes, our live show is important and we want people to have fun and remember us, but ultimately, ZibraZibra is what you make of it and we're leaving it up to you to decide whether the music or the show is better."

ZibraZibra's already played at First Avenue, released a CD and won three battle of the band contests. So what does the future hold as its band members head to college?

"We're all going to various colleges around Minnesota, so ZibraZibra will continue recording and playing. We'd operate best as a national act playing arenas rather than bars. That's not to say we don't like playing small venues, but we'd like to have the budget and fan base to perform outrageous stage acts and incorporate multimedia visual effects such as film, theatre, the cyber arts, dance and television into our stage show. Doing that could potentially conceptualize ZibraZibra far beyond the confines of the word 'band,'" Z said.

"But for now, we're starting small," he continued. "We just signed a record contract with local indie label Royalty Etc. Records and we'll be releasing a second LP spring 2007, then touring the country on our days off from school. Class of '06 fuckazzz!"

www.myspace.com/zibrazibra

"A hhh, breakfast," Mark Mallman said, easing onto the stool. It's 5pm. His hair is tousled, and he looks like he was up all night. He takes off his sunglasses, gets comfortable and puts down his Budweiser.

Despite his apparent fatigue, however, Mallman is excited. He's known for his endless supply of energy – displayed in his famous 52-hour gig in 2004 – but he's especially thrilled to be talking about his new album. "Between the Devil and Middle C" is Mallman's seventh record and it's auditory proof he isn't about to give up on his classic rock-influenced sound. After all, this would amount to quitting a very important job.

Musicians, he said, "are public servants, like cops," who show up so "people who work jobs can have a good Friday."

Though this sounds like Mallman was fated to serve in the name of rock, this wasn't so. Before the two-day-long gigs and opening slots for Guided By Voices and Linda Ronstadt, there was art.

Mallman, like his brother before him, went to Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where he studied performance art and painting.

"In high school, I figured that's what you do, you go to art school," Mallman said, sipping his beer. "It seemed more important for me to think creatively than to think mathematically."

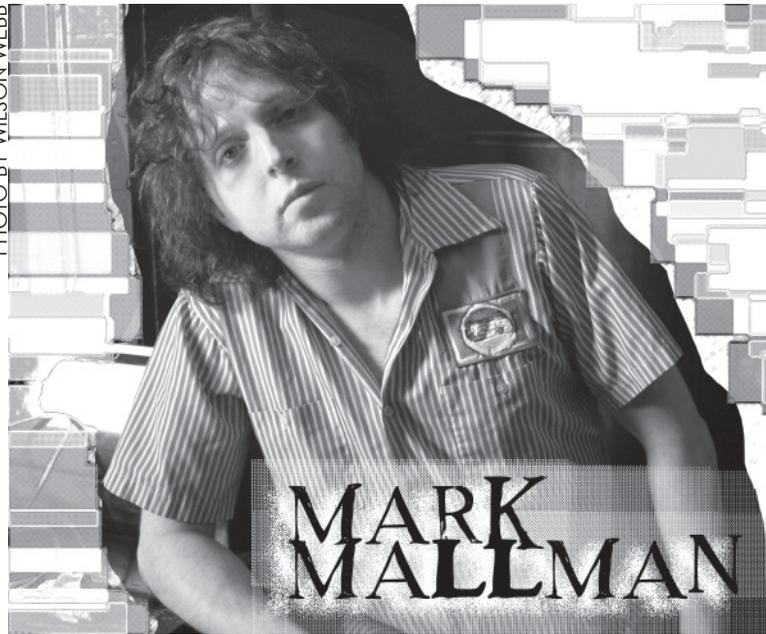
But music was always in his life, including the high school garage band that Mallman said sounded like "Soundgarden with a PiL [Public Image Ltd.] element." He studied art seriously for a few years, which helped him develop his alter ego "The Madman," a character specializing in spoken word and dark poetry.

From this experience – as well as his undying love of '70s rock – grew his passion for performing rock for the masses. Along the way, Mallman has garnered national attention and a cult-like following for his live performances, a nod in City Pages for writing one of "Minnesota's Fifty Greatest Hits" ("Kissing the Knife," from his record "The Tourist") and a reputation for being unpredictable.

"Between The Devil and Middle C" is another exercise in pure rock, from the unrelenting Foreigner synth of leadoff track "Death Wish" to the Clarence Clemons sax of the glorious "Knockout on 22nd St." The result is 14 tight, focused tracks, but Mallman said it started the way all his records do: With many more songs than he needed.

"The hardest thing is *not* writing tunes," he explained, since he's in his post-album break from composing. The process of narrowing down the songs was "diplomatic" this time, he said. He recorded 40 demos, picked 25 favorites and handed these

PHOTO BY WILSON WEBB



BY DAVID BRUSIE

Musicians ... "are public servants, like cops," who show up so "people who work jobs can have a good Friday."

his head.

If this sounds unlike a man known for donning a wolf mask onstage and lighting a piano on fire, so might the fact that Mallman much prefers recording to performing live.

"The live show is just snake oil. It's, 'let's get on the back of the horse and carriage and sell this shit'," he said.

And sell it he does. He even "sold that shit" for days at a time, on a couple of occasions.

Known now as Marathon and Marathon 2, Mallman performed a single song for 26.2 hours straight at St. Paul's Turf Club in 1999 and doubled the feat five years later. Both stunts gave Mallman national exposure, but it all began humbly as a joke with friends about playing music whose sole function is to be ignored. This, he argued, would require playing for a day

straight. A dare was born.

"If you wanna get me to do something," Mallman said, "tell me I can't do it."

So, with Red Bull cans and shot glasses piled on stage, he played for a day. His 2004 show reportedly consisted of more than 600 pages of handwritten lyrics.

"In three years, we'll do it for 72 hours," he said, with no hint of kidding around.

Due out in September 2006, "Between the Devil and Middle C" is another clear declaration of his musical loves, and Mallman is nothing but straightforward about wanting to sound like his idols.

"You end up sounding like what you listen to ... rock peaked in the '70s, the form was at its best," he said, matter-of-factly.

At this point in the conversation, Mallman's face brightens and his eyes light up as he mentions the joys of Bowie and early John Hiatt. But it's time to leave, because he has a lunch appointment. In the Rock Time Zone, where the King of Beers is the breakfast of champions, lunch is at 6pm. Mallman gives a gracious goodbye, grabs his beer and ambles out of the room.

off to friends, colleagues and a few loyal fans to see which ones stuck.

Before that, however, "Middle C" was pretty different than how it turned out.

"I had in mind a metal album – Sabbath, Thin Lizzy, real heavy. I wrote probably 15 songs like that, with titles like 'The Black Witch' and 'Nuclear Hunt.' They were cool, but it just wasn't me," Mallman said.

The problem, essentially, was that there was a lot of Madman but not enough Mallman.

"There's two sides and there's gotta be a balance for me," he said, shaking

www.mallman.com



IAN ANDERSON

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BY KRISTEN MUELLER

Ian Anderson grabs me by the hair and spins me around the floor of the Triple Rock Social Club. Or at least that's what happens in a dream I have the morning before I meet the 21-year-old record label owner/musician/journalist/entrepreneur/student at Muddy Waters café.

It's no surprise this is the mental image my subconscious stirs regarding Anderson, considering the whirlwind surrounding him. He spins from frequent gigs and recording sessions with his three bands: One for the Team, Aneuretical and Girls Not Boys; he manages more than a dozen local acts on Afternoon Records, the label he co-founded at 19; co-edits a start-up Internet publication, *Sliver* magazine, the Minnesotan *Pitchfork* rip-off; edits three small newspapers (two of which he began); and studies English at St. Olaf College during the school year.

In person, the wunderkind is perfectly professional. Leaning across a table, stubby chin propped up in one hand, Anderson is both attentive and at ease, an attribute reflected in his attire: Casual jeans with the cuffs rolled up, a baby blue "Built to Spill" T-shirt and the obligatory hipster glasses topped by a swath of brown hair sweeping casually over his forehead.

Anderson recites the laundry list of tasks he's completed in recent days: Hammering out discs at One Stop, a distributor under the Electric Fetus; booking shows for the upcoming Squareshooters, One for the Team and the Plagiarists tours; ironing out T-shirts for Superdancer at Anderson's own T-shirt company; dropping off artwork for the recently mastered Squareshooters record; and keeping Look Down – the first Afternoon Records band to tour – alive.

"I just called those guys to make sure they're eating enough and not dying," Anderson said. "I'm a little nervous. It's my responsibility to get things going."

Luckily for Anderson, getting things going is his expertise. Even in high school, he was always on the run. Anderson's been in a band since his freshman year, edited the school paper, started yet another magazine and began a lacrosse team.

"I guess down time makes me a little uncomfortable," he admitted.

It shouldn't come as a surprise to learn he recently started Girls Not Boys with Battle Royale's bassist and vocalist, Grace Fiddler and One for the Team's drummer, Elliot Manthey.

"It's called Girls Not Boys because I sound like a girl. And so does Grace," Anderson explained.

Then there's Afternoon Studios, the recording studio Anderson

and One for the Team's bassist, John Krueger, plan on opening August 22, 2006 – three days after they return from a nine city tour.

"I thought it would be simple," Anderson said with the non-chalance of someone who's been there, done that and is looking forward to the future.

One for the Team's tour will span 11 days in mid-August, as long as their ride, a big brown van that "looks like poop and is terrible – and awesome – at the same time" doesn't die.

These "prep school cowboys" will stop in New York City and cross the Rockies for the first time, but it's Indianapolis that causes Anderson's voice to animate like a comic strip brought to life.

"There's an awkward in-between space of kids that can't really drive to Indianapolis or Columbus or Cincinnati. So there's just a big pocket of a hundred kids hanging out and bands just don't come there."

Playing for crowds with limited access to shows is one of Afternoon Record's main goals, and Anderson is careful to book all-ages shows as often as possible, even when it means playing twice in one night.

"We never really do just ID stuff. We usually have an all-ages show and an ID show," Anderson explained. "That was infuriating growing up – not being able to go to a show."

Local music followers not of drinking age will especially appreciate Anderson's dedication to youth-oriented concerts when Afternoon Records joins forces with California-based Grape Juice Records to launch a six-day indie music festival in September 2006. Although the lineup's not confirmed, he hopes to see Atmosphere, P.O.S., Brother Ali, Kill the Vultures, Dillinger Four, the Cardinal Sin,

Whisper in the Noise, the Plastic Constellations, Belles of Skin City, the God Damn Doo Wop Band, the Gossip, Aneuretical and One for the Team on the bill.

"It's gonna be nuts," he enthused. "We're hoping to start a South by South-west kind of thing, where we just have a killer show every night."

Anderson hopes to make the festival an annual event – if he sticks around after graduating next spring.

"I have a handful of options," he said.

"Going and writing, staying here and running the label full time. Or else I might just, ya know, say bullocks to it all and go to New York, so it's kind of up in the air."

With two "really big" bands on the verge of signing with Afternoon Records, Anderson might find it the most lucrative to stay in Minneapolis.

"Things are going better than I ever thought they would," Anderson said with a smile of bewildered pride. "We're actually hoping to open a venue at some point, but the studio's the next big step for us. It's gonna be really awesome and way better than anything we've ever done before."

It's been an hour since Anderson first slid into his seat and he's still leaning forward as alert as when he arrived. After exchanging good-byes, he slings a black and white checkered bag across his back, high-fives a member of the God Damn Doo Wop Band and the clatter of keys clipped to his back pocket announces his exit.

www.afternoonrecords.com

"We never really do just ID stuff. We usually have an all-ages show and an ID show ... that was infuriating growing up – not being able to go to a show."

Chris Allen is a local artist who's created CD covers for bands and musicians, murals for events, business logos and tattoo designs.

Rift: When and why did you move to Minnesota?

Chris Allen: I moved here in 1999 to get my life back together and get treatment for drug and alcohol addiction. Since then, things have been going beautifully. I'm blessed to be breathing, considering at one point in my life I almost lost everything.

Rift: What drives you to create art?

CA: It's hard to explain to others, yet very easy for me to understand. Why does an emcee spit? Why does a DJ make new music from music already orchestrated? For me, I think it comes down to what talents people are given. My art is a gift and every artist has that gift to give people. It's not an option for me; if I choose not to do my art, then I'm giving the middle finger to the man upstairs and until I was 21, I did just that with the path my life was on. I have goals with my art and I need to get to work on them. I don't want to look back on the pages of my life and skip pages because they were lacking or boring.



Rift: What mediums do you currently work with and what other mediums would you like to work with?

CA: I work in all types of mediums. My main love has become acrylic paints for my life shows and paintings. Pencil and pen will always be really dope to use in the newborn process of a piece or sketch. I will rock cans, paints or whatever the project at the time calls for. Lately I've really been trying to go out of the box with different techniques and using the mediums separately.

Rift: Are you a full-time artist or do you have a day job as well?

CA: That's a funny question, no doubt. With the art I'm doing and my business, Inkproof, I'm up at all times of the day and night trying to

get my art out there in different ways, outlets, or whatever it may be. I also work occasionally at a chemical dependency treatment center with kids who are unfortunately wearing the same shoes I wore growing up. The goal – and hopefully the outcome – of the sweat and time I put in with my art now is to have my art and Inkproof as a full-time gig in the future. Even though I'm not living completely off my art, sometimes it pays the rent and bills. The "artist's struggle" is definitely in my blood, but I don't wanna be one of these cats who builds a career from talking about how much he struggled and the bullshit he went through to get where he is. Everyone struggles; it's about how we deal with it.



Rift: What do you like about the Twin Cities art and music scene?

CA: I like the drive a lot of the artists have. Don't get me wrong – there are people who do music as well as art, but think they can just sit back and not bust their ass for what they get. That part of it makes me feel bad for those people, but it's all good. I'm really proud to be a part of the hip-hop and art scene. I think it's important for us to make a statement in some way.

Rift: Is our art and music scene lacking anything?

CA: I think it's lacking some individualism. There's definitely certain cats who do their thing and do it really well. As far as the art is concerned, I think there needs to be more organic designs and pieces coming out of the Twin Cities. There are some, but coming from DC and having friends in New York and Los Angeles who do similar things in the art arena, I really think individualism speaks very loudly.

Rift: Any rants you'd like to add?

CA: Not many. I suppose I could say our President can't speak publicly. Or we're in a country that asks the rich if they want seconds and tells the poor they don't deserve firsts. Oh shit. Sorry, those are political views. We won't go there.

www.inkproof.com

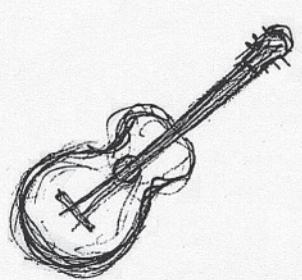
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Film still from BB



Film still from Spook House

Exhibition

Cameron Jamie

Now on view

Backyard teenage wrestlers, spook houses, eating contests, and a winter visitation by mythical beasts are just some of the fringe rituals Cameron Jamie explores through his art. A frequent collaborator with street-portrait artists, celebrity impersonators, and musicians such as the Melvins and Japanese guitarist Keiji Haino, Jamie creates works ranging from drawings to sculptural objects to films that examine contemporary life, our fascination with the outlandish, and our need for escapism—what one critic has identified as “backyard anthropology.”

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The Top Nine Signs Of A Music Store Guitar Jock

Buying your first instrument, one you actually like and not one forced upon you by a parent, is a euphoric experience. I actually describe the feeling to people as "winning the Super Bowl and then some." There's deep respect for a new instrument, it's almost like a new best friend. And ever since I purchased my first guitar from Buddy Rogers Music in Cincinnati, Ohio, I've studied how humans behave in music stores.

I've been lucky to be a professional musician for some time now, which means I frequent music stores for new gear and to try out the latest gadgets. I pick odd hours to make my music purchases, like Mondays at 10:01am. Why? Because a music store run has a possibility of doing permanent damage to one's musical psyche. It's not the store or employees that necessarily do the damage, but a small percentage of the patrons I call "guitar jocks." They can be hell to be around. For all of you musicians out there reading this, you know exactly what I'm talking about. For those people who don't, here are the top nine signs of a music store guitar jock.

1. Token, repetitive blues licks.

First, if you're going to play a blues riff, you better understand what you're playing. The blues isn't cosmetic music; blues is an ancient, spiritually driven form of music created by African-Americans who were enslaved, oppressed and poverty stricken. What gave them strength and inspired them to tell their stories through prose were these wonderful, sacred melodies. The guy in Creed didn't invent blues solos and learning patterns from a Mel Bay book ain't going to show ya the way to feelin' bluesy, neither will a stack of guitar tabs. So consider it a privilege to play this form of music and don't try to show off with it. Some good old-fashioned strumming might be in order here.

2. Out of tune, out of intonation – I'm out of patience.

Hey, I'm not a music snob. There are plenty of classic rock records where some of the songs are slightly out of tune because bands recorded live back in the day. But something sonically goes terribly wrong when these faux guitar heroes pluck those geeetar strings – I'm talking the kind of out of tune where my dog, Gary, would bypass eating his steak snacks if one of these guitar jocks were playing in the same room with him. Today we have digital tuners and tons of technology, but the guitar jocks are so focused on impressing other patrons with their masterful playing, they usually forget to tune their guitars. Oops.

3. Unnecessary volume.

Hey man, have no concern that a music store is a place of business and employees use the phone and their possible customers have questions. Go ahead, turn up the half stack and play a giant E chord. You might feel big and strong, but now I feel agitated and kind of mean.

Maybe music stores could design a special room for these players, like a day care room where they can have their own American Guitar Idol show. Irreverent and unaware of their selfish behavior, few guitar jocks turn down the volume even after they've been asked to the first time.

4. They will never buy anything.

Not even a handful of picks you ask? Nope! Shut down the register and grab a cup of coffee because there's going to be no ringing at that register; 20 silly questions later will still equal no transaction. It's almost like guitar jocks pack their lunch before they head to a music store. If I may quote a famous '80s movie: "Don't you people have homes?"

5. Copying licks they hear in the other room.

There is one thing guitar jocks despise more than anything in a music store and that's an actual good guitar player. Be a fly on a wall the next time you visit a music store; I guarantee you there'll be at least one guitar jock present. They have a keen competitive radar and will always try to copy the licks of another music store patron who might be "shredding" on the other side of the room.

6. Mean game face.

No smiles from these lads, guitar jocks mean business and the competition is on. They all have those faces like the people on the poker championships on ESPN2. Music should make you smile, man.

7. Brought their own ugly guitar.

You're trying out a billion guitars, but you brought your own pink guitar to the music store, a guitar that literally looks like a farm implement. You could cut meat with some of those sharp angles. Was it necessary to airbrush your name on the headstock?

8. Cryptic Bach and Beethoven scales.

I can't think of anything uglier and more un-musical than hearing distorted and broken music scales repeated over and over. The deal is this: Guitar jocks love sweeping up and down music scales, but they always screw up halfway through them because they're trying to play at warp speed. So in turn, they inevitably start the scales over and then botch them again. When an instrument sounds like a sick mammal, I'm outta there!

9. Maybe you have a guitar jock story?

Send me an e-mail at billmike@visi.com.

The moral of the story: Music shouldn't be a triathlon. Music comes from a place of celebration and a place of depth where competition doesn't and shouldn't exist. Find your own identity on your instrument and focus on that. You'll feel great about yourself and have no need to compete.

Musical competitors play out of fear and insecurity. Period. In my opinion, they have a really strange perception of what music is. Music for this small group of people becomes more of a technical and mechanical exercise and lacks any hint of human emotion.

Next time you hit a music store, isolate yourself and shut out the rest of the world so you can hear your real self play your instrument. Listen to your sounds and actually make music in the purist of forms, on the spot.

Bill Mike is a recording and touring artist based in Minneapolis. He fronts his own rock band, the Bill Mike Band, and performs with DJ ESP, MC Carnage and Haley Bonar, as well as teaches composition and guitar at the Linden Hills House of Music.

Contact Bill Mike at:
billmike@visi.com
www.myspace.com/billmikeband

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Q ■ I'm A Graphic Artist. A Local Band Has Offered To Purchase One Of My Works To Use As Their Album Cover. Do I Have To Assign All Rights In My Work To Them?

A:

In my last column, I briefly mentioned the issues that can arise when a band wants to acquire an image from the artist. I received some e-mails from visual artists asking how they can protect their legal interests when selling their work to a band. So I thought I would further address the issue from the visual artists' perspective.

I have always advised my band clients to pay the artist a lump sum of money in exchange for all copyrights and uses of the image. The main reason is because if the band assigns the record to a label, the label will want to own the attached artwork as well.

This flat-fee system is a good deal for the band, but not necessarily for the artist. In addition to using the image for album art, there is merchandise and promotional materials. If you sold your work to a band for \$500 and you see it on records, T-shirts, buttons, stickers and posters, you got the short end of the deal. If you do choose to assign all rights for a flat fee, at least request the continued right to display the work as part of your portfolio and/or Web site.

A slightly better option would allow you to assign all rights in the work to the band, but get paid if the work is used on band merchandise. For example, you can receive a sum of money for every 500 pieces of merchandise sold which contain your work. To further protect yourself, you can insert a provision in the agreement that allows you to request an accounting of the band's finances. This allows you to verify how much merchandise containing your work was actually sold.

In lieu of assigning your work to the band, there are options that allow you to retain copyright ownership. You can grant the limited right to the band to use your work only in connection with the sale, promotion and distribution of their musical recordings. You would retain the right to use the work for all other purposes. This would allow you to place the image on coffee mugs or other non-band related items. You just wouldn't be able to

license use of the work to another band.

If you choose, in addition to granting the limited right above, you can allow the band to use the work on merchandise as well. But, I would advise you receive payment for all merchandise sold containing your work. With this last option, you are retaining copyright ownership and you are getting paid for merchandise sales.

Lastly, you should insist on receiving credit in the CD liner notes. You may even be able to keep your scribbled signature in the work itself. As an artist, you may be apprehensive about allowing your work to be modified. But modification of the work is sometimes necessary for space limitations in advertising.

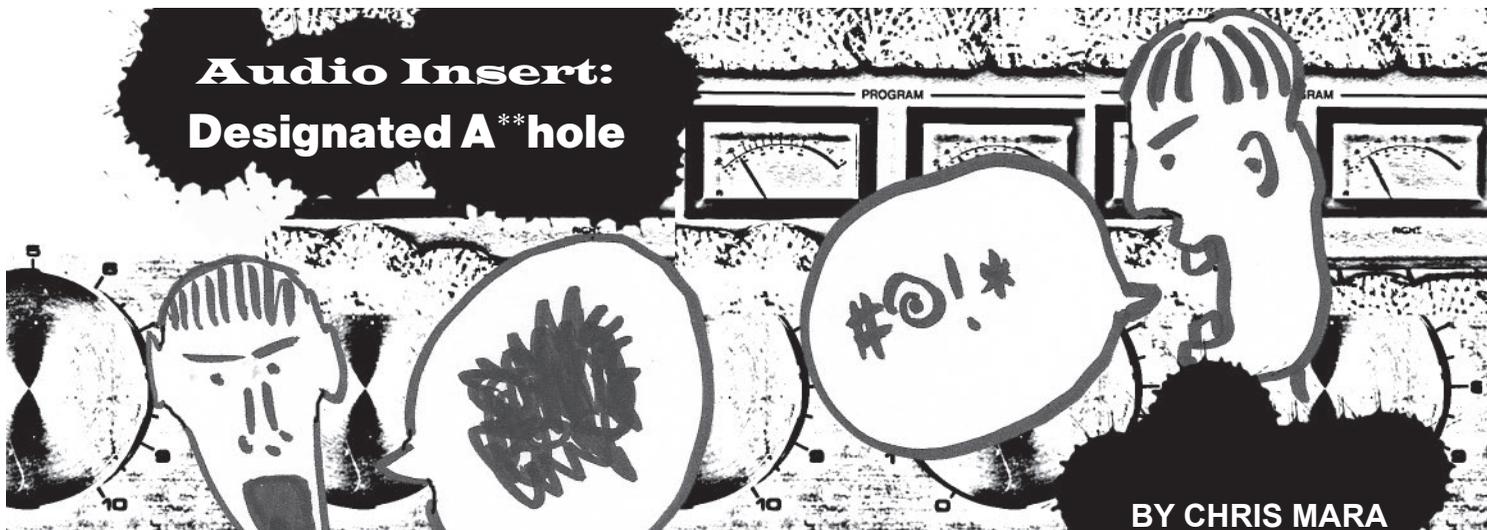
Above all, never underestimate what your artwork can do for a band's popularity and merch sales. Think of what H. R. Giger did for The Dead Kennedys. And there is my favorite rock artist, Heather Hannoura. She's the Chicago native who does the artwork for all of Alkaline Trio's merchandise and you'll always see her quietly working their merch table. She is solely responsible for Trio's aesthetic morbidity and the reason I own every Trio T-shirt that exists.

The information in this column is for general information purposes only. It is not intended to provide advice regarding a specific legal situation. Legal advice can only be obtained after consultation with a specific attorney.

**E-mail your questions to:
galen@riffmagazine.com**



Audio Insert: Designated A**hole



BY CHRIS MARA

This is the first in a series I'm writing on the many roles and responsibilities of a record producer.

It's going to take many articles to delve into the countless producer styles and techniques that are as varied as the bands they produce. Personally, my role as a producer/engineer changes constantly. I often start projects firmly placed in one role (engineer) and am slowly brought into the producer role by the bands I'm working with. Many bands make no distinction between a producer and an engineer and often times put the engineer (who they hired to record and mix their record) into awkward producer-like roles. This can be a lose/lose proposition for everyone involved. The band is asking the engineer to take on the role of the producer (which means a producer was needed), but the engineer wants to make his client (the band) happy and will do his best to jump in and help move the session along, probably not aware he may get the blame for being a bad "producer" down the road.

I think the most common producer role I'm first asked to play, while supposedly hired for my engineering skills, is this: The "Designated Asshole." It was very important for me to single out the first producer task asked of me by bands without a producer, because I feel this is the moment I know they need a producer ... whether *they* actually realize it or not.

Now, this whole "Designated Asshole" thing isn't what you think. I don't immediately don a Hitler mustache and gleefully hit the talkback button barking orders in broken English while randomly using words like 'umlaut' and 'glockenspiel.' It's usually more like this: Johnny (the guitar player) lays down a solo and asks the dreaded "so, what do you guys think?" question. Jimmy (the singer) wants him to re-do his solo, but Jimmy's afraid to say anything to Johnny that may be misconstrued as a personal attack. Why? Because Jimmy banged Jenny (Johnny's girlfriend) two years ago and evidently it's still a "touchy" subject. So, Jimmy asks (designates) *me* (now the asshole) to ask Johnny to re-do his solo and something very cool happens: Johnny is so pumped that I (a non-band member) care enough about their project to ask him to do it again that he rocks out a solo so good it will make Jenny want to do 'that thing she does' to Johnny's

'Little Joey' over and over again. On the other side of the glass, Jimmy lets out a sigh of relief after dodging the bullet and heads for the lounge to grab a smoke and return one of Jenny's many text messages.

Why the happy ending? Is it because I'm smart enough to use discretion after banging Johnny's girlfriend? Nope (but I am). It's band psychology 101. There's nothing personal between me and Johnny. I'm just there to make the best record possible, regardless of who's sleeping with whom. All of that stuff is just background noise to me (or any professional) and is not a motivating factor in my decision making process ... and more importantly, my motives won't be questioned by people in Johnny's shoes. I'm sure I don't have to tell you how incredibly

deep bands' relationships can run, often back several years and several "Jennys." All of this baggage is part of being in a band – and can get in the way if you don't have a handy-dandy "Designated Asshole" around to use as a buffer, a tie breaker on tough decisions, someone to take the blame on things from time to time, or redirect

everyone's focus when things get a little ugly.

Now for the nitty-gritty stuff.

Take a guess what suffers if there isn't a professional involved to act as a "Designated Asshole" when needed? That's right: The record, the fans, the sales **and the band**. The "Designated Asshole" is just one of the many parts of a producers' "body" bands can "use" to their "advantage" during the recording process (am I the only one giggling at the accidental sexual undercurrent in my "anal"ogy?). *ANYWAY* – here's the real deal: "The Designated Asshole" may be one of the most trivial tasks a producer handles, yet it's vital to the recording process. If you've been in situations like Johnny and Jimmy's in the past, then you've been in need of a producer. Period. This also means you could've benefited from many, many other far-from-trivial roles producers play during the recording process.

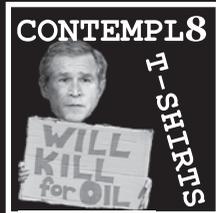
We've only scratched the surface of these roles, but hopefully this will act as a catalyst for your quest to learn more about what (and how) producers' do that thing they do.

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The Cardinal Sin Hurry Up And Wait

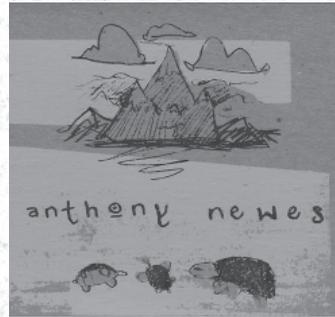
It's not quite rock perfection, it doesn't really have a radio-worthy song either, but on the other hand, do you really want local rockers to aim for just a single?

The full-length debut CD from seasoned rockers the Cardinal Sin shows great flashes of brilliance, yet falls slightly short of fantastic. The quartet, composed of former members of Cadillac Blindside, Song of Zarathustra and the Crush, seem to meld incredibly well musically, giving the record both a fun and complete presence.

The band's sound, something of a mash-up of Alkaline Trio vocals (the album was produced by Alkaline Trio's Matt Allison) over Dashboard Confessional and Bloc Party-styled backgrounds work to give the band a familiar enough sound while still covering new ground. On the opening track "Eye-Opener," the Cardinal Sin uses uncomplicated straightforward lyrics, yet manage to express a rainbow of emotions about a supposedly wasted life in the openly questioning line: "There's many things I hope to see/A wife, child a real family/What kind of father would I be?"

In addition to the simple, yet effective, lyrics, the band has riddled "Hurry Up and Wait" with great little rhythm patterns and guitar riffs. Where the band doesn't achieve rock bliss is in their inability to string those strong elements together. No one song really stood out from the rest with an extremely catchy or repeatable few minutes. It's not like the band did anything wrong by recording a clinker-free album, but a definitive Cardinal Sin track would've really sealed the deal. **BO**

www.thecardinalsin.com



Anthony Newes Self-Titled

There's nothing quite like an acoustic record topped with a healthy layer of dust. A bright acoustic sound can be a little jarring; in contrast, a worn-out guitar can have more character than the newest and nicest Taylor or Martin in the music shop window.

Anthony Newes' self-titled record has plenty of this character throughout its 11 tracks, with very little filler slowing down its jaunty gait. Newes and his band – which includes Charlie Quade on bass and Chad Deboer on drums – keep things simple, which helps these folk-pop songs go down easy.

"Couches" is the record's highlight, emanating both warmth and melancholy. Newes' guitar work is understated and effective and Deboer quietly thumps on his bass drum, giving the song a sense of turmoil. Other songs succeed for similar reasons. "My Friend Ani" is a relatively simple love song, but Newes' careful finger-picking, added to Deboer's clicking drumsticks, brings some urgency.

Then there's Newes' voice, a honey-sweet little thing that catches you by surprise. Like Ron Sexsmith with less of an edge, Newes glides effortlessly through songs without dropping any emotion along the way.

When Newes stumbles, the cause is usually a lack of melody, such as on the forgettable "Golden Sun." Overall, however, Newes has a tight hold on his melodies, whether he's singing about his dog in "Deathsong For Casey," or crooning the short and sweet lullaby "Pleasant Dreams."

The latter is the record-closer and it does a fantastic job. Here, Newes especially sounds like Ron Sexsmith, and this is a very good thing. His strengths – capable but un-showy guitar playing, soft voice, a penchant for catchy melodies – all combine on "Pleasant Dreams" to make a great little goodnight song, and you'd be forgiven if you nod off. In fact, it would probably be a compliment. **DB**

myspace.com/anthonynewes

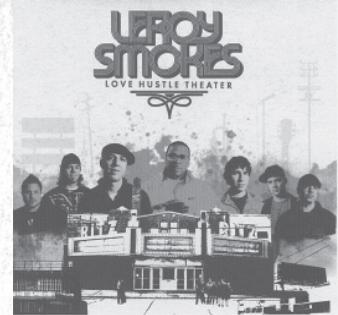


Scarlet Slipping Fire In The Mist

If I didn't review records, I'm sure I'd never have heard of this disc, since it really doesn't fall into any of the different genres of pop/rock music I listen to. In saying that, I expose some of my ignorance to the huge independent world of music, or maybe the independent music world is just too big for anybody to fully absorb. Either way, I'm glad Scarlet Slipping's "Fire in the Mist" came my way. First of all, it enlightens me to a synth-driven, Goth sound I'm not totally clued in to. Although reading Scarlet Slipping's bio on the Web, Dawn Wagner (who is all of Scarlet Slipping) doesn't particularly care for the Goth comparisons. Second, it introduced me to Wagner's angelic voice, which is hypnotizing throughout the whole disc.

Wagner truly embodies DIY. Not only does she compose the tracks, she performs, records and mixes them, too. Outside of mastering the disc, Wagner does it all and when you sit down and listen to the disc, you'll be impressed by the complexities involved in making the record and the talent Wagner possesses. The disc opens up with the lyrics "We are naked, we are scared" before the pounding drum machine and synthesizer drive the song into full gear of the track "We Are." I also dug the tracks "Scissor Candy" and "Snowflakes." I feel there is hint of Mazzy Star and PJ Harvey lingering in her voice and her music. Scarlet Slipping is definitely worth a listen. **NH**

www.scarletslipping.com



Leroy Smokes Love Hustle Theatre

Seven man hip-hop crew Leroy Smokes uses organic instrumentation and two MCs to crank out head bobbin' jams and silky smooth grooves. On "Love Hustle Theater," front men B Ruckus and Buss One both show fair range in delivery and lyrical content, spanning the gamut between Biggie Smalls and Andre 3000, and rapping about things like social injustice and loving relationships with equal emphasis. While the slow jams like "Inscent" and "Moving On" are sure to steam up some bedrooms, I'm in it for the flows and they don't disappoint.

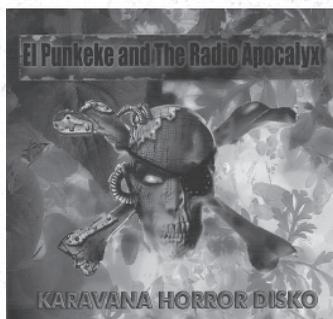
Leroy Smokes has a wealth of talent to draw from, including guest appearances by Jordis Unga, I Self Devine, Serenity and Truth Maze, which helps fill the disc to where there's no need for the brief interludes which litter the album. Both the intro and outro are worthwhile cuts that seem snubbed by their dubious titles. "Intro" is a fully fleshed out and lyricized song based on a catchy ascending melody, while "Outro" has a hint of jam band style jazz fusion, not a style I usually want mingling with my hip-hop, but it develops nicely and has some nice guitar/trumpet interplay.

Falling somewhere between the cool organic grooves of Traditional Methods and the more fiery approach of I Self Devine, it appears Leroy Smokes has finally come into their own with "Love Hustle Theater."

All in all, "Love Hustle Theater" synchs up well with the hip-hop scene Minneapolis is quickly becoming nationally recognized for. **CMJ**

www.leroyismokes.com

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El Punkeke And The Radio Apocalyx Karavana Horror Disko

El Punkeke and the Radio Apocalyx have a scary album cover – a skull and crossbones that looks to be half rotting flesh and half computer. The inside of the album cover is scary as well, featuring photos of the band in action, clad in full Goth-punk regalia, bloody lips, beet-red hair, mohawks, tattoos, cut-off T-shirts and multiple upper-nose piercings.

Oh, and the music on the album is scary in a *Red Dawn* meets *Left Behind* sort of way.

"Karavana Horror Disko" is an intriguing mix of rock, electronica, screamo and punk. It's the evil love child of Prodigy, Nine Inch Nails and Martin Luther King, Jr. – a masochistic album that, if it were a person, would give a compelling speech at the Lincoln Memorial to end poverty while wearing a bloody goat's head around its neck.

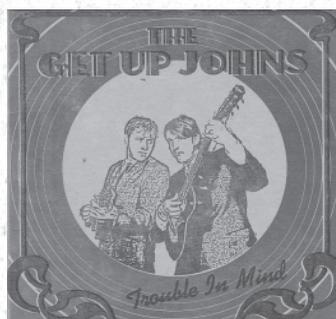
The multicultural influence of lead singer, Gustavo Panke, who originally hails from Argentina, also plays in local bands Apocalypse Theatre and El Punkeke and The Aliens, shines through on this album. There are moments of brilliance when Panke combines heavy metal with Spanish lyrics and vocal overdubs of a faux-president giving apocalyptic orders to a nation.

The album's high point occurs on the fifth track, an instrumental composition that features a Latin beat overlaid with surf guitars and African tribal rhythms.

Despite the scariness of the album, Panke seems to be an upstanding member of the community – he included a handwritten note of appreciation in his promotional packet.

And what's not to like about a bloody, tattooed, pierced guy with such fine manners? **TC**

www.myspace.com/elpunkekeandtheradioapocalyx



The Get Up Johns Trouble In Mind

The talent in this town never ceases to amaze me.

Every month or so, there's a brand new record coming out that's better than most national releases you'll hear. The Twin Cities continues its reign as one of the great music cities and this time it's for the Get Up Johns' new release, "Trouble in Mind."

The Get Up Johns' music is just one example of the different moods and styles the Twin Cities is known for. Their music is old-time country folk music done right and it could've been recorded today or decades ago. Jake Hyer (fiddle, mandolin, vocals) and Josh Wenck (guitar, vocals) have beautifully blended voices, like two people who were born to sing together. The standouts on this album are: "Midnight Special," "Lizard in the Spring" and "Wishful Thinking."

"Trouble In Mind" is an album full of traditional re-workings, but unfortunately only one original. I look forward to the music the Get Up Johns will create together, and I hope they add more originals to their great interpretations of classic folk ballads.

I suggest you pick up this disc if you're into mellow, acoustic-based music with great vocals. And do yourself a favor and check out their live show – it's a must see. **NL**

www.getupjohns.com



Hojas Rojas KILLMEILOVEYOU

First thing's first. I'd heard the name of this band before, but never seen them live or heard their recordings. I checked my trusty mailbox and saw their album cover. It consists of James Bond-esque silhouettes and an early '60s motif. My first thought was pop punk. Oops, I did it again – I was wrong.

This disc is filled with the group's collective love of the Flaming Lips. No guys, I'm not going to criticize you for your love of the Flaming Lips. Lord knows everyone should like the Flaming Lips. The main reason I'm not going to criticize you for the strong influence is because you do it so damn well. The songs on this disc are well written and have a nice dash of weirdness.

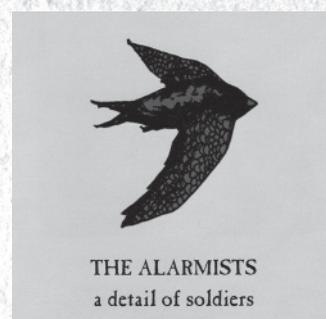
DJ Kukielka (words, guitar, synthesizer, piano, percussion, loops and production) should be commended for his chops at each of his many jobs in this band. Tim Hovanetz (drums and percussion) keeps the different avenues of the songs tight with the help of Manuel Guzman (bass).

My favorite track on "KILLMEILOVEYOU" is the title track with its sentiment of "All I need is your love, your love and music." Well put guys.

If you're a fan of the Flaming Lips and like your music with dashes of Wilco, pick up this record, support this band, hell change the oil in their cars. Talented songwriting and performances like this one should be honored. This band should be, in a matter of time, at the top of the Twin Cities music scene heap.

So what are you waiting for? Stop reading this and go buy "KILLMEILOVEYOU." **NL**

www.hojasrojas.com



The Alarmists A Detail Of Soldiers

"A Detail of Soldiers" has one of those great rock introductions: A few seconds of white noise, followed by a lone thumping bass drum and finally, a Radiohead-esque distorted guitar lick. The song is "Soldados," and not only does it have a great opening, the song itself is a great opening to a great new band.

Though the songs aren't always interesting melodically, "A Detail of Soldiers" is an impressive sonic achievement. While atmospheric swirl unobtrusively through the ballad "New Romans," a pop piano line in "Some Things Never Stop," gives way to full-blown rock 'n' roll, coated in plaintive minor chords.

And speaking of rock 'n' roll, it should be noted that the Alarmists wear their influences proudly on their sleeves. Their press materials specifically note Wilco, Radiohead and David Bowie as inspiration for this debut, and those sounds are certainly present here, but not distracting.

The Alarmists are all about rocking with dulled edges, and this is a good thing. "Coming To Meet Me" has verses that veer slowly towards modern rock posturing, before soaring into a glorious pop chorus. Helping this happen is vocalist and guitarist Eric Lovold, whose voice sweetens the often bittersweet sentiments in these songs. "Call it a lie, or call it obscene/because it's something you've never seen/give me a key for this lock/because some things never stop," Lovold sings on "Some Things Never Stop." Those lines are a pre-chorus to another blissed-out refrain, complete with falsetto "ooh"s in the background.

This is essentially straightforward modern rock for modern rock radio listeners, but there are also many nicely subtle touches that make "A Detail of Soldiers" a uniquely focused, tight record. This is a solid debut EP and it hints of great LPs to come. **DB**

www.myspace.com/thealarmists

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