



Vol 1 Issue 3

The Local Music Network compendium

FREE PUBLICATION

Ruder Than You



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The Ray Gradys



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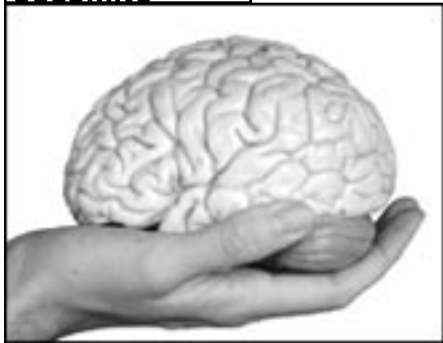
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By Brain Jennings

A lot has been happening in the past month. We welcome some fresh blood to our ranks: Amanda K. Williamson, who has just finished a stint at "Philadelphia Weekly" and Daniela Starr, an old friend that takes the prettiest pictures you've ever seen. Unfortunately you're going to have to wait until next issue to see them.

I'm also trying to get Phillyhiphop.com to do some writing for us. These guys are really immersed in the Philly hip hop scene and it would be a great honor to work with them. Check them out at www.phillyhiphop.com and tell 'em I sent ya.

We have just set up a myspace account under local music network as another means of keeping the people informed and building this network. We honor all friend requests so don't be shy.

Thanks to Joanna Marmon of Intrepid Jam Productions we now have a nifty little party at the Grape Street to celebrate the release of this issue.

There is no Advice? section this month. It seems that there was a general lack of interest so we pulled it. If you have no idea what

Editors page

I'm talking about go to www.localmusicnetwork.com, download one of the past issues and if you like it, submit something.

This may be the last issue featuring the horrorscopes as well. My friends are burnt out and no-one has contributed. If you want to see it saved either email me or go on our site and submit some horrorscopes that we can post.

Some strange interviews this month. Part of the Ruder Than You interview was conducted while changing the tire I blew on the curb. Not sleeping causes Brain vehicular damage. The next day I interviewed the Ray Gradys at Tattooed Moms. I walk in and the place is packed with people dressed in Santa suits. The Santa Crawl had gathered at moms and I had a horrible flashback to the beginning of the movie "City Of Lost Children". One drunk Santa is funny. One hundred drunken Santas is panic-inducing. Luckily Mike broke the tension with his holiday advances towards the ladies. Chivalrously asking "Wanna sit on my face and tell me what you want for Christmas?" in the most humble way possible. He's so damn suave.

Lastly, I went to a Pollyanna and received an "I deserve a beer" t-shirt. I wish it said "I deserve a nap"

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On the cover: Ruder Than You

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Greetings. By the time this goes to press it will officially be the new year, but as I compile these thoughts we are still in the last breaths of 2004. Being as it is, I'd like to reflect on some of the happenings of this past year in an effort to highlight some things to look for in the coming year.

You may recall that in the last *Riddims* we discussed the rich tradition of percussion here in the city. That discussion was largely concerned with music that we might refer to as being to a large degree "in the traditions"; that is to say that many of the performers that I spoke of concentrate on the retention of cultural musical practices in contemporary times. This is not to be misunderstood as a criticism. Ancient musical traditions are invaluable and by striving to retain them, we keep the sound tradition alive. We can think of the whole of musical ideas as a living library that is transferred from

Rootsy's Riddims

generation to generation. Certainly pieces are lost (although this occurs less and less due to modern recording technology) and new submissions are made to this library over time. However, it is the existence of this library that allows us to be creative as musicians; because we don't have to spend time inventing things over and over—they are a part of the collective musical memory. If we were mathematicians we wouldn't want to have to reinvent arithmetic every time we did algebra. That being said, I'd like to look now to a couple of the performers in the city that are stepping a bit further out of the traditions.

One performer that I feel is of particular merit in this category is Xande Cruz. Brazilian born, Xande lived for a while in New York before moving to Philly about three years ago. In his ensemble, *Batukis*, Xande marries the percussion traditions of Brazil with contemporary forms. You'll find elements of hip hop, reggae and even rock and roll mixed together. The result is often very danceable and always lively. In fact one of the things that was evident to me at the live performance was Cruz's insistence on playing pieces that the Brazilian community would find appropriate for dancing. You will always hear some samba at his shows. In 2004

he played every couple months at Silk City, and I expect to see him return there in the new year. He also plays cultural events at universities, etc. Look for a new album early in 2005. You can check him at www.xandecruz.com.

Another group that is mixing things up is a hip hop duo known as the Dialects. Hailing originally from the midwest, these cats started their performance careers in Florida before relocating to Philadelphia a little over two years ago. The overall sound here is largely a mix of hip hop and reggae. Both of these styles have been around long enough that we are beginning to discuss the difference between "traditional" forms and more contemporary forms. Indeed, even Bob Marley's form of reggae has been considered by some to deviate from straight roots reggae. What I feel is of particular interest with the Dialects is that their vocal style is largely an American hip hop style (that is to say they don't rhyme in the dancehall vocal style that is heard in the "reggae" music played on hip hop stations). They are both United States born and have come up through American hip hop music, while embracing the tenets of Rastafari. Another important element to the sound is the use of a live band. In this sense, the Dialects follow in the Philadelphia tradition of live hip hop established by the Roots. Every second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, the group hosts an open event at the Aqua Lounge in the Northern Liberties. Live sets are interspersed with selector sets from the Royal Majestic Sound djs. The event is free and MCs and instrumentalists are welcome to sit in. You can find the Dialects on the web at www.dialectsmusic.com. They have released two albums to date and are working on a third. They also collaborate with the folks from Burndown Studios, a collective of MCs and musicians (www.burndownstudios.com).

Until next time, may you move in rhythm and hear the songs of the wind in your ears. Blessings and Love.

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PUNK ROCK RAMBLINGS

by Fish

So it's a New Year for music in Philadelphia and the scene is really starting to shape up. Bands like Trash Light Vision, The Union Dead, Primadonnaz, and my personal favorite Loafass are drawing larger crowds and more dedicated fans not only in Philly and the burbs, but also starting to build fan bases in other citys such as New York. Any success that one or all of these bands achieve can only help the local scene. A couple bands you should to make it a point to check out are the Ray Gradys, Famous in Vegas, and the Low Budgets (featuring ex-members of the Dead Milkmen). I've seen them all and they all fucking rock, although I'm sure the Ray Gradys will make fun of me for saying they "rock".

I'm really looking to make this stupid article I write each month more interactive so If you have a band send me a CD or email me and let me know when you have a show. I'll try to get out and see ya.

In the meantime however, I've been intrigued as of late by the use of the term "Punk Rock".

Every thing is punk rock now days "Dude those shoes are so punk rock" "Man that new Good Charlotte web site is so punk rock". What? First of all shoes, web sites, and especially Good Charlotte are not punk rock. Things or possessions may be associated with, or look punk but that does not make them punk rock. Punk Rock is attitude, some have it and some don't. Piercing your nose, wearing safety pins on your sweatshirt, and shopping at your local Hot Topic does not automatically make you or anyone else punk rock. Punk rock is eating your own shit on stage like G.G. Allin or writing your own book on notebook paper, photocopying it at Kinko's and selling it in front of Tower Records like Mikey Wilde. Most of the rest

of us are just paying homage. So in the tradition of honoring the truly "Punk Rock" among us I'm having a little contest. Write me with true punk rock stories. If I really like the story I'll put it in the next article I write so we can share it with the world and as a reward in true punk rock fashion you will receive nothing except the knowledge of knowing you did something. Send CD's, hate mail, and Asian mail-order brides to Fish at Local Music Network 112A Bala Ave Bala Cynwyd PA 19004 or email me at fish@localmusicnetwork.com. The views in this article are not necessarily shared by the other losers at LMN but they should be because I'm right.

Rock on Fish.

fish@localmusicnetwork.com

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Welcome to 2005. How many resolutions have you broken yet; hopefully all of them. I for one broke all of mine before the New Year began and would like to break more. I'd be happy to break yours for you if you'd like.

Last column I said I'd review that recent Diplo album, but I won't because I listened to it once and have no desire to listen again. A standard electronic hipster affair for the rich white kids who need to rebel against their trust funds... exciting!

Arrg! I've been listening to the Pixies for literally half my life. If I hear Monkey Gone to Heaven one more time I might cut my ears off. So what? Kim & Black are making nice so they can headline big venues and get nice shiny cars. I can't say I blame 'em, and they probably deserve it. But at the same time, there can always be too much of a good thing.

Recently, I was in New York for a Loafass show and met up with an old friend afterwards. Waiting for my friend outside of CBGB's I heard another band covering Debaser or something; brought a smile to my face, but...

the Slut Monkey Circus Cotton Candy Revue

Ten minutes later I'm in my friend Matt's car and a Surfa Rosa song comes spitting out of his tape deck. "Odd," I scribble on mental scrap paper. Another fifteen minutes later I'm at the hipster watering hole called The Library. Gosh be damned, but the Pixies best-of CD is being played at random. Yes, yes; too much of a good thing. Arg! Makes me want to burn my Pixie bootlegs and start listening to Vanilla Ice. Apparently, he's punk rock now.

But what does it matter? It's 2005 I belong to the Blank Generation. Thirty years ago Richard Hell coined that term, but I think it's more relevant today. At least by

the mid-seventies, musicians and writers had SOMETHING to sing and scream and spit about. They had a voice. Today, what we have is delegated by Clear Channel and blogs: Re-heated, left-over instant-mash potatoes. And that's about it. Oh, and some really clever Pixies covers.

If you're mad because this is a little short this month, go to hell. I don't care! I'm mad and hungry and going to be late for work.

If you would like to tell me to go to hell or ask me out on a date, you can find me. Storibook@earthlink.net



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Written by: Kristoffe Brodeur

The Production company IntrepidJAM first came to you in July 2004 when they brought international recording artists Lacuna Coil to the Trocadero. The Philadelphia based Goth rock band, Tapping the Vein, supported, while the up and coming alt rockers, Head, opened the show. This all came together deliciously during the competing buzz of the hectic Ozzfest schedule.

The show was a huge success and earned accolades from fans and industry members alike, including officials from House of Blues Concerts.

The makings of IntrepidJAM began long before, in a club on an otherwise typical Wednesday night, when Erik Levinson was introduced to JoAnna Marmon. The team became fast friends and started talking about their love of music right away. Discussing their common desire to be a part of the music and not just an audience member left a seed inside them both for something larger. Several years passed before the two were able to follow through on their dreams to bring something different not just to Philadelphia, but to the world. Through their music industry connections, positive attitude, and good

business sense, IntrepidJAM has become a success story. Things always have a way of starting out small and exploding into something great when people like this pair pay attention to detail.

When asked what sets them apart from other promoters in the industry, the team responded that they have been through a lot together and are "like family". If you don't take their word for it, ask Lacuna Coil, My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult, or Eddie Razor from Ministry. These bands are not only respected, but are supportive of IntrepidJAM and what both sides have brought to each other. JoAnna and Erik both agree, "We treat our artists really well and we love bringing fans and music together. The happier everyone else is, the happier we are."

Their background and attitude are probably their keys to success. Prior to moving back home to Philadelphia, Erik studied Arts management in Chicago. After school, he ventured out West to the bright City of Las Vegas where he ran his own entertainment company. While running his company he successfully assisted in booking shows and events at major casinos. JoAnna's background compliments Erik's as it

includes everything from grass roots marketing to radio advertising for a major radio station in the Philadelphia market. With this strong foothold in so many needed aspects of the promotions and presentations industries, it's no wonder these two can get any exciting job done with time to spare and every bit of energy put to good use.

Since the Lacuna Coil show they have kept busy promoting for smaller shows all across the map in the Philadelphia area, and now the partnership is adding a monthly event at the Grape Street in Philadelphia to their busy schedules. To keep the interest level up, "Second Sundays" will be in full rotation every month in 2005. Not only will this monthly night keep the patrons coming back, but so will the constantly changing DJs, exciting up and coming bands, enthralling live performances, artists, vendors, and featured/themed events. The concept of combining their talents with this multi-tiered environment keeps IntrepidJAM's beat hitting on through the night.

So, if you're in the mood to do something out of the ordinary, and want to feel like you did more than just get out of the house, keep your eyes peeled for IntrepidJAM's list of varying events. It's pretty clear that you won't be anything but fully satisfied when you make the right decision and sway to a more seductive dark set of events that will make you grin with pleasure. Stay tuned to this gruesome two-some and their legions of talent... rumor has it that some big plans are on the horizon, and coming your way soon.

For more information on IntrepidJAM and for additional event information visit their Website: <http://www.IntrepidJAM.com>

Bohemian Fifth



Bo Fifth

by Amanda K Williamson

Bohemian Fifth calls Philly their “ground zero.” They hail from various places—New Jersey, Atlanta, and Brooklyn—but they came together here for the permanent good of all underground citizens about three years ago. They spit rhymes about everything from sex to poverty to stuff you find in your couch. Their lyrical bite has left them branded as “conscious rap” but they buck the label every chance they get. Their musical versatility (every track is like a fresh helping of homage to a different tradition, dancehall, reggae, spoken word, R&B, jazz) allows them to range confidently over diverse yet interwoven subjects. A generous spirit of collaboration with such local groups and artists as Byrd2Banks, Versus, Misty Sol, and Electric Lady, to name a few, gives their debut album *We The People* an unusual depth, accessibility, and above all, effervescence.

We The People was two years in development and here’s why: production and presentation are as polished as the Cadillac in their signature song “Fleetwood.” The album cover satirizes record and magazine industry with superbly tight photography and clever design. As they put it in their dedication page:

“We are not trying to ‘change the game’ like so many new artists claim. Instead, we humbly submit this contribution in hopes that you see how we see, hear how we hear, walk where we walk.

This is for work-a-holics who get off just in time to see their seeds sleep. This

is for the children of the hard knock life. For the ghetto heroes, playas, sayers, and saviors. This is for err’body. For those of us that work 40 plus hours a muthaphuckin’ week. This is for our Mamas. This is for our Mama’s Mamas. This is for We...the People.”

So who are the people who made *We The People*? When Obsydian (Kinté McDaniel), LuckyLiveWire (Demetrius Brown), LastWord (Jerrold Randall), and English (Marvin Benjamin) talk about the rap scene locally and nationally, it’s clear that they hate pretense as much as they hate prejudice, but they never seem to have a bad word to say about fellow recording artists. They would sooner call themselves “hustlers of rhyme” than be associated with the primadonna image their album cover ridicules.

Kinté McDaniel: The group and their fans refer to him as the “energetic” one. No stranger to theatrics, at a recent show at Tragos, 38 S. 19th St., he charges the stage and kneels, spread-eagled, before the cameras. This posture is more than a part of his stage presence, though. Listening to him speak on the national rap scene, you can tell he conceives of himself as something of a poet/philosopher/prophet.

“It’s like I’m Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, right, and, looking down on the people, the hip hop scene now, it’s idolatry,” he intones. More seriously, he adds, “I know we really can’t stand when people say hip hop is dead. We really don’t want nothing to do with that whole hypothesis.”

Another reason they know hip hop is not dead is that Philly is fertile ground for artistic collaborations with other artists. Their album credits read like a guest book of local hip hop heads.

He says that the highly competitive nature of battling and battle-rhyming, once it’s been coopted by industry labels, effectively “severs connections” for groups trying to expand and reach out to their local bases.

“We always look locally first because they’re the most attainable. Those are the people we rub out elbows with in this community, so when we meet somebody and we think they’re talented we reach out. I know that’s habitual because we always reach out say ‘Yo, let’s work on some songs,’” McDaniel says.

BoFifth grew out of just such a collaboration between two groups of spoken word acts, Nat Burn and Ghetto Hero. After seeing each other perform in all of the same circles, coming together to make unique but marketable music just seemed like a natural progression for the four members. Each of them has had to adapt their own writing styles to suit the group’s creative goals, but none more so than McDaniel who struggled in his poetry with accessibility.

“I had to adapt my style so that people could grasp it. I used to want to write in such a way that as soon as you read my verse you gotta go to the dictionary. That’s not all that realistic. People don’t have dictionaries in their cribs. So I toned that down, and I had to tone up my imagery and my metaphors. I’ve gotten a lot better at expressing my point since I decided to make my things more pliable so people can ingest them a lot better,” he says.

Now McDaniel raps caustically about the sometimes monotonous and amateurish poetry scene: I go to sleep to them boring-ass po-ets/ No disrespect to those I have not met yet/ But, as usual, your ass is suspect...

The album is choked full of nostalgic and sophisticated language plays. Bleeding edge slang mixes with folk expressions, aphorisms and meditations on historic racist palaver. “Crowbars”

with Misty Sol is just such a lyrical meditation.

Jerrold Randall: If McDaniel is the “energetic” one, Randall is definitely the brooding one. Humble and quiet to a fault, Randall says he didn’t really want anything to do with music until he got to college. Perhaps that attitude came from having to share his bedroom with his father’s recording equipment.

“My father raised me until I was fifteen. He had a studio at the crib. In the living room, half was my room, half was the studio. I rebelled until I was in college, but once I got into music, I really appreciated having a dad. He taught me the basics, but if you ask him he would say that I showed him some stuff,” Randall says. He plans to collaborate with his Dad, who plays jazz, on BoFifth’s next album.

But Randall says it was his childhood peers who inspired him to write the song on which the group’s first video is based. “Pacemaker” tells the story of Youngblood, a young, low-level drug pusher who grew up without a father. Youngblood comes between a drug dealer named Blaze and a cop named Jake.

None of the characters know that Blaze is the son Jake abandoned in his youth. Looking back on his years in Brooklyn, Randall recalls street corners flooded with “fatherless” children.

“I wrote the first draft in one night. I stayed up all night writing it. The basis of Youngblood’s life just came right out of the pen,” Randall says.

He had just read Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*. Like that novel, the song explores irony and fate.

“Irony, that was one big thing I really want to touch on. In a lot of my rhymes, there’s a big play on irony, a big play on karma, change that doesn’t change. Once you make it, you get shot, once you get a job, you get fired. The cycle of life, too. In the lyrics, we use kids playing red light, green light as a metaphor because in the game you turn around and people are supposed to look just exactly like they were, so they’re frozen,” Randall says.

Randall doesn’t seem bothered by critics who pigeonhole his rap by

labeling it “conscious.” He wears the super-serious, starving artist image like a comfortable coat, but he is also responsible for producing the group’s more savory beats and songs. He looks forward to shooting the video for the single “Fleetwood,” adding that there will definitely be girls and cars in that video. With the group’s eclecticism, there really isn’t anything too daring to attempt. Nor is there anything subject too hackneyed for the group to put an original, classy spin on it.

“Even the most ‘conscious’ person still thinks about sex and making it,” Randall says.

Judging from the turnout at the “Pacemaker” video screening party on Dec. 16th at Tragos, the song and the video has gotten more than the ears of the Philly hip hop community. Shot in Kensington and blistered with images of street life, the video has a raw, super-condensed feel to it. The director, Temple senior Araeia Robinson, drew inspiration from independent films more than current music videos.

“That’s what BoFifth digs. That’s the dynamic. You gonna get an independent film style video, you gonna get a ride-out video. Sometimes you gotta be a rebel, sometimes you gotta be hard, sometimes you gotta hustle. Or even if you’re just painting pictures, I feel that there’s no reason why you gotta paint just one type of picture, do you?” Randall says.

Marvin Benjamin: Inside the album’s cover, Benjamin poses with nothing draped over his torso but a half-lit, fur-sporting woman in a mock perfume ad. The fake copy reads “English: For Women. Sexy in any language. Introducing English, the new women’s fragrance.” The satire couldn’t be more dead on because Benjamin is about as far from a cold, cocky player as you can get. A new father, a college drop out, and an aspiring fiction writer, Benjamin maintains a strict division between art and life. Explaining that BoFifth favors the acapella tradition known as po-hop, he favors lyricism over more confessional modes that assume a common experience between artist and audience.

“That style of poetry is more focused

on lyricism, not the experience. We’re not trying to have people walk in the parkway with us on a Sunday afternoon. We’re trying to evoke an emotion,” he says.

Demetrius Brown: The oldest member of the group, this Jersey native is seasoned, sagacious, and perpetually unruffled. Extremely pragmatic in his outlook, he’s disturbed by the statistics that surround the hip hop industry. He traces the highly competitive nature of the industry and the ever precarious, short-lived careers of its artists to the fact that there are only six major labels for the aspiring MC to sign on to. Six channels, countless acts.

“What really bugs me about when people talk about hip hop is that it’s definitely a culture, but it seems like the MCs are being overlooked by the spoken word part of it. But one of the central, core units of hip hop for me has always been the word, and it seems like that’s being overlooked. The people want a movement, but the movement can only be started from the words. If the words don’t mean anything, then the movement doesn’t mean anything,” Brown says.

In a scene where fans demand a package deal consisting of three parts image, one part substance, Brown definitely goes against the grain. In fact, BoFifth’s music tests the mettle of the very industry it seeks to penetrate. Their album ends with a little, ragtime ditty called “And That Was It.” Two old men, the projected incarnations of the group’s members, are chatting, reminiscing about the long-vanished, whirlwind success of the BoFifth. It’s a bittersweet, prophetic vision of possibility. And then the dust cleared, and we realized we were being left out of a dream... For Philly’s hip hop scene, BoFifth may be left of center, but, for the time being, they are definitely not left out of this city’s dream.

RUDER

THAN

YOU

After A Three Year Hiatus...

After Conquering Loss & Tragedy...

*Ruder Than You Is Back!
Armed With
Their New Album*

Philly Stylee

By Brain

Ruder Than You- Offer You Cant Refuse



For those not familiar with Ruder Than You, what kind of music do you play?

Doug: We've always considered ourselves a Ska band but really our sound has never been pure Ska. We've always drawn upon a lot of different influences; a lot of Reggae, and all different forms of Reggae like Dancehall and Rub-a-dub, and we try to incorporate that into the music as much as we can cause that's stuff we love and love to listen to. We also incorporate a lot of other sounds like hip hop... punk type of stuff. Philly Stylee is our sound. That's what we're calling our sound. It's the sound of Ruder Than You because of the stuff that we listen to, the stuff that we hear, the stuff that's influential around us... I can't give you a real easy answer but if you look at the front cover of our new upcoming record Philly Stylee you'll see we put on there a little bit of everything. We kind of throw it all out there and let people decide because what it comes down to is that every song we do can be described a little bit differently.

What about your history?

Doug: Ruder Than You evolved out of the depths of Ska darkness somewhere between the second and the third wave

in 1989. After we were a few years into it then the third wave started happening and we considered ourselves a third wave band. It was basically myself and John Woodman our drummer. We were students at Penn State University. We were both advertising trying to get together bands. We found each other and with that nucleus we brought together others. We had a five piece band; the band that recorded our first CD big step was the first incarnation of Ruder Than You. We moved to Philadelphia right around the winter of '91 from State College PA. We started doing some shows ; trying to start a following primarily in 21+ venues. At Penn State we got a fantastic response; it just seemed like college kids at that time were really into the energy. People at that point really didn't know what Ska was. Everybody that asked a question about your band and you said the word Ska...everybody said "What! What is that?" That's a huge difference between back then and right now.

We built a nice little following. Around the mid '90s we really started to be able to tap into the all ages scene in Philadelphia and started playing the Trocadero on a routine basis; started opening for some bands. We had two or three great opportunities to open for the Bosstones; that really helped us quite a

bit, and really between Ruder Than You and Public Service, in Philadelphia we were really the main bands. And when touring bands wanted to come through we would do our best to help them.

The Philadelphia Ska scene really grew up around Ruder Than You and Public Service. We were bringing in bands from New York. There was a show that we did at the TLA: it was Ruder Than You, Mephaskaphales, Skafflaws, and Skitterbox, and we sold out the TLA. There was a line around the block! It sold out early in the evening, and that was really fantastic. That opened up amazing opportunities in Philadelphia for Ska shows and for Ruder Than You. We were able to headline the Troc and the TLA for two or three years. During that time period we were able to tour to promote our second record "Horny For Ska" that came out on Moon Records. We did a moderate amount of national touring, a lot of regional touring. Moon Records was helpful for getting distribution so we were able to walk into a bunch of towns across the country and kids would know about us.

Where have you been the past few years?

Doug: We took about a three and a half year hiatus and then we've been back playing for about a year and a half now. I think it was summer of 2003 that we did our first comeback show, but it's true we haven't been doing a lot of playing. The third wave of Ska came crashing down and things became difficult, from a business perspective, to do what we were doing and maintain the band, our income, and the standard of living we had at one point. Shortly after that time, Moon Records, our label, went out of business for the same reasons. When that ship went down it went down with a lot of our product. It kind of cut our feet out from under us. We haven't seen any royalties at all from Moon Records in four or five years now.

There were some personal issues that several of the members went through at that time. I have a family with two young kids so I was doing a lot of that stuff, trying to do what I needed to do to support my family.

And we had some changes within the band, some membership changes, people wanted to pursue some different, maybe better paying, opportunities in their lives.

And we had one loss... our sax player Trish Johnson passed away around that time in an automobile accident coming back from the Jersey shore; she was doing a jazz concert down there.

And Freddie spent three years in jail. Freddie is an essential part of Ruder than you, he's our lead singer, our toaster and one of our main influential musical contributors...and as a performer, spiritually, and just the way we like to bring a lot of positive energy to performances, he's crucial. We did a couple of shows without him, but it just wasn't Ruder Than You without Freddie.

A lot of changes, a lot of loss and that forced us to take some time off. We at that point had been playing for about ten years and I think we were ready for some time off. And in that time I think it's given us an opportunity to realize how important music is and how important the band is to us, gave us time to write and think about a lot of material and I think we were ready to come back stronger than ever.

A three year sentence is pretty serious.

Freddie: I was being threatened by someone. An ex-girlfriend's boyfriend was coming up and threatening me. I didn't know who he was until he mentioned her name. He let me go after saying what he had to say. I was hot headed and I came back to the house, loaded up my car with my guns, went to his house, kicked his door in and just started shooting up his house. A whole lot of things were going on with me then. If I could have just sat down and talked to somebody, which I could cause I have a loving family like that, I could have gotten a lot of frustration out. .

I was also engaged to be married at that time and I ended up losing my fiancé because she was from California and I moved her here to Philly with me, but I couldn't keep her here, I'm in jail...I couldn't keep her here.

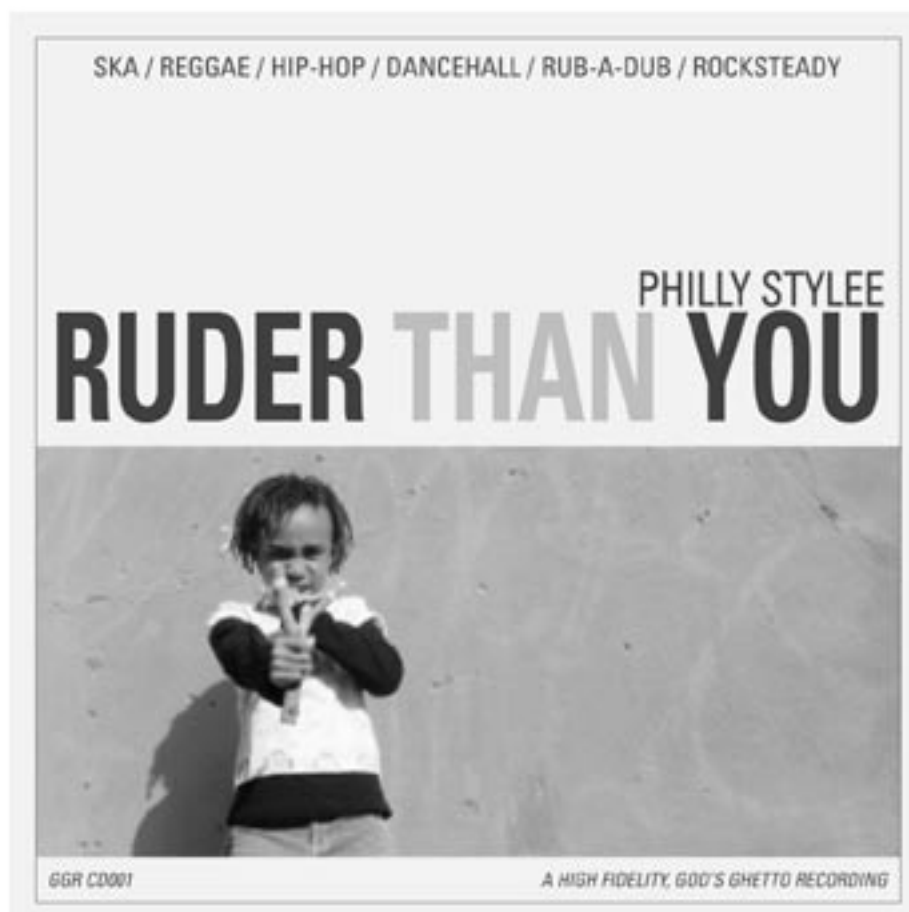
I got great support from everybody:

from my family, and especially from the band. This also showed me who my friends were: who loved me, who didn't love me, who loved me only for the parties that I threw on the weekends. The life that I'm living right now I can count my friends on five fingers and I'm happy about that; life is much better right now. I thought it was going to be a struggle for me but it wasn't a struggle at all. I did what I had to do, did what I was told to do and life goes on. I take responsibility for everything that I've done and that had happened to me. It's a first time experience, going to prison and doing the time, and I didn't think I was going to make it actually. It's like somebody throwing you in the jungle and it's like "get home". Life is about living and learning and that's what you do, you live and learn from it. As of right now I've got nine months left on my parole and all this will be over August 5th 2005, and I just move on with my life.

Did you think your music career was over?

Freddie: It was maybe about a year and a half or two before I really even thought about the band. It took me that long because of the stuff that I was going through and just learning to adapt to the ways. While I was in there I wrote about sixty songs while I was sitting in that cell. I joined the music department while I was there and I played with the Latino guys cause that was the closest to the Ska Reggae that I was going to get. I sat on my bunk and wrote a lot of tunes and just shipped them home to Doug and let Doug check them out and hear them...he loved every bit of it. One of the songs is Reggae Rub-a-dub which you hear on the new CD. I told Doug "As soon as I come out, let's get together man, let's do this thing man".

What Challenges have you faced since you've been back?



Doug: The national Ska scene in general isn't as strong. People still think of us as a Ska band, and that angle was really good for us when the third wave was peaking; it helped get us out and introduce us to a national audience. It's harder for us to ride on the coattails of that. That's a significant change. I think that the music business has changed over the last few years, and that there are fewer opportunities for strong local bands to play larger rooms like the Trocadero in Philadelphia or the TLA or the Electric Factory. A lot of the national acts are touring in packages and locally a lot of our premier rooms are being booked by national booking agencies so it's much more difficult to get in those rooms. We don't have local people with an ear to the ground trying to book the best local talent and promote the scene.

The people out there who aren't musicians and don't have intimate knowledge of what it's like to be a struggling, working musician... It's hard. Even bands that you look at, and you cherish, and respect, and you love, and that you think are really big bands; the people are struggling. Unless you're getting played on commercial radio across the country you're struggling. Those people that are getting played on commercial radio; they're starting to make some money, starting to sell some product, those bands that are really big underground punk bands, really big underground Ska bands, hip hop bands, it's a struggle. They're doing it for the love of the music, and their suffering to do it.

So tell me about the new CD

Freddie: Before I left for "college" we had recorded the entire album. It was just a matter of coming in and doing the mix down, the overdubs and stuff like that.

Doug: We're really, really excited to be releasing the new record. It's called Philly Stylee, and it's going to be out on January 8th, that's the release date. We're releasing it independently on our label Gods Ghetto Records. I can't tell you how excited we are. This

record is something we really started making back in the late nineties; I think 1996. We were going into Third Story Recording studio in west Philly, and doing a bunch of short sessions where we'd do maybe two songs, maybe three songs just to keep the recording flowing. We finished up a handful of songs and then right before Freddie started his jail time around '99, we went in and did a nice little session, about six songs to finish up the CD. We got most of the basic tracks done, but at that point Moon Records crashed, the band stopped performing out, our financial means of finishing the record stopped. There was no income so we couldn't finish, and those basic tracks just sat. We had every intent to finish the record, but it sat for three years without any work being done on it whatsoever. Once Freddie got out and we started playing again, and started moving forward, and getting a little more income, we were able to make our dream a reality, and put some finishing overdubs on this, and get the whole thing mixed and ready to go. Number one we feel like this record is artistically something we are really proud of, But number two it is just extra special because it's taken us so long to get it from start to finish. It's kinda cool because most of the basic tracks; most of the tracks period on this record were written and recorded during the peak of the third wave of Ska, and really during the peak of the busiest time of Ruder Than You's history. We hope that all those people that are Ruder Than You fans of past, and new people that may not of heard us, feel as strongly about this product as we do.

What's on deck?

Doug: We have another record completely written. We have about twelve songs we've written over the last year and a half. We're incredibly anxious to record and get that one out. As much as we're excited about Philly Stylee and proud about how this record sounds, we're all even more excited about getting this next project out, 'cause it's our freshest vision of

what Ruder Than You really is. So the Record Philly Stylee that's coming out is a nice transitional record. It does have a lot of the sounds from the third wave and what we were doing at that point as we were transitioning and now I think we've finally come around the corner and made the transition. So next record you might hear slightly more hip hop sounding things, more Reggae sounding things, your still going to hear some Ska, some really fast driving Ska, but that will be just one aspect of the record. We are all lovers of Ska and Reggae music, and so is most of our fan base, so you're never going to hear us break from that completely, your just going to hear us add some new sounds to the mix.

Any last words?

Freddie: I just want to give a shout out to a lot of people, a lot of fans, a lot of Ruder fans. I just want to say thank you for your support while I was there in "college" learning the hard lesson. I want to keep up the good work and make myself proud and make everyone else proud of me and also the band. Come out and support us 'cause we need your help, we really need your help and we miss you guys and we love all you guys. Peace out, Jah Rastafari.

Ruder Than You Are:

Freddie Weaver - vocals and toasting
Douglas Dubrosky - tenor sax, vocals (original founding member)
Chris Klimchak - trombone
Rod Martino - guitar
Don 'Mango' Pancoe - bass (original founding member)
John Woodman - drums (original founding member)
Dubside - sound

www.ruderthanyou.net

Check Out the review of RTY's new album, Philly Stylee, on page 20



Ray Gradys- Capitalists Curse

By Brain

What are your beginnings?

Earl: The Ray Gradys got started when we decided to start a new band. We kicked our old drummer out in 1996

Mike: He didn't appreciate Earl's advances.

Earl: We just started the band, I don't remember much else.

Jon: We lived in a small town in North Carolina where everybody knows everybody. Everybody goes to church. We came through on tour about five years ago... It was cheaper than New York to live here.

Earl: We moved up here three years ago, and we've been broke ever since.

How did you meet up with Mike?

Earl: I was under the L sucking dick one night...

Mike: And I was looking for a Jon.

Earl: He didn't find Jon; Jon was taking the night off, but I was there. He comes up and says "I'm going to give you fifty bucks". I say "Hey. We're really looking for a drummer. I'm tired of sucking dick under the L".

Mike: So I said "shut up and put your face on the ground" and started banging away.

Earl: And ever since then he's been our drummer.

What do you think of Philadelphia?

Mike: Crap. There are no good bands coming out of it anymore. It's all the same. Not to get on the Union Dead's case, 'cause were all friends and we like them, we're only just poking fun at them 'cause they really take themselves seriously. There's a lot of this glam rock shit coming out, and it's all shitty hardcore and the same stupid punk rock. There's nothing new. And Punk Rock goes through those cycles, and this is what happens when it becomes really commercial; everyone tries to do the same shit so they can get picked. There's parts when Punk Rock is underground-that's when the good stuff comes out- and when the good stuff comes out, that's when it becomes commercial. Right now we're very, very commercial.

What are you doing that's different?

Earl: Well... We're trying to sound

more like the Union Dead now.

Mike: That's our new thing; we're trying to be like the Union Dead.

We want to appeal more to the 30+ homosexual audience of Philadelphia. We're going straight Glam Rock from now on.

Earl: Punk Rock; that's for kids.

We're going straight Glam Rock

Mike: That's for the adults.

Mike: We've got Jon listening to a lot of Kiss and putting his leg up on the monitor; trying to be more like Richie Hell. Earl has been wearing the eye make-up like Eric Dead; puts the guitar between his legs and shakes his head. And I smash like Marty... he's going to beat me up when he hears this.

Seriously now.

Earl: I don't know. Having sex a lot onstage

Mike: Fast, abrasive assholes onstage is what we are, and no-one does that. Everyone wants to kiss ass with the crowd.

Earl: Our music is serious and our lyrics are serious about how phucked-up the world is, but our stage show shows how we deal with it

Mike: How phucked-up we are.

Jon: We use it to vent our own anger. Not take it so serious and have fun.

Earl: We write about...

Mike: God, corporations...

Earl: Religion

Mike: The government. People being mindless and slaves to society

Earl: When we were skater kids in the late eighties we listened to a lot of Operation Ivy, and from them onto Rancid.

Jon: That was probably our biggest influence starting out... Operation Ivy

What are your goals?

Mike: I like to get phucked-up and get laid. So if I can do that for the rest of my life, playing in the Ray Gradys, I would die the happiest man in the world.

Earl: I think you better try a new band.

Mike: Yeah...I'm going to join the Union Dead.

Earl: To get to the point where we don't have to work regular jobs and just play for a living.

How do your shows do?

Jon: Our all ages shows seem to be doing really well

Earl: in NC we're bringing out 150-200 kids a show. We were playing all ages shows all the time, so that's what we gotta do up here.

Mike: These kids love us. They come out in force.

Earl: They're all over us like flies on shit.

Jon: Bars down there are different, you don't have to be 21, just get your hand marked.

Mike: But up here when you're trying to get people that over 21 to come out and hear new music, it's tough. We'll

hand out four or five hundred fliers for one show and maybe one or two people from that will come.

Earl: That's why we're trying to sound more like the Union Dead, because we're trying to attract that 70+ crowd.

Where are the all ages shows?

Mike: The Rotunda, the ALH, FDR, American Jubilee... We, just out of nowhere, on a one day notification, played some kids basement show. No one was over 21. The oldest kid there was like 20. They got two kegs there, they're all drinking, going nuts, it was really fun.

Earl: Before we left they said "we're inviting you to every party we have: you guys make it fun."

Mike: You try antics at a bar and no-one digs it 'cause they all take themselves way too seriously.

Earl: There are too many boring people around. We're here to disrupt

their boringness. Same goes for Tattooed Moms where we're sitting right now. You see people standing by the juke box and their like "ooh, look at me, I'm at Tattooed Moms". Look at this place. This place is a phucking dump.

Mike: If it wasn't for cheap beer I would never come here.

Mike: We don't take ourselves seriously, that's why a lot of people don't like us. See our sticker over there... over the Union Dead Sticker? (pointing towards the bathroom door) Someone crossed it out and instead of saying the Ray Gradys it says the Gay Ladies. Well I think it's great. I think it's hilarious.

The Ray Gradys Are:

Earl-y Gates

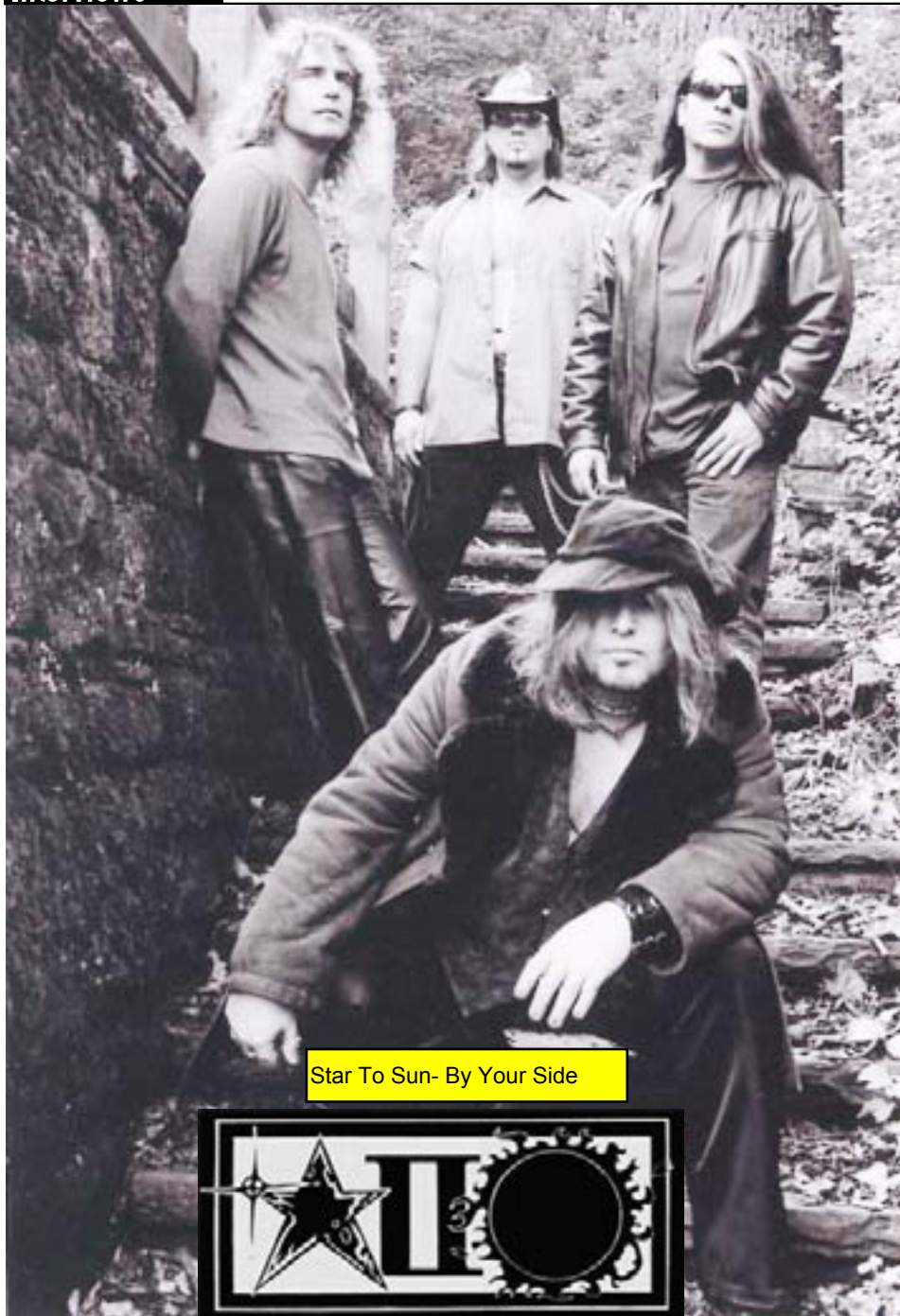
Jon aka Jake

Mike "Yak" Macmero

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Interview with Rob Templeton
By Brain

How do you classify your music?

Every band has their influences. Some are more apparent than others. My element, and really the band's element, came out of the Seattle scene in the '90's: Alice In Chains, Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Stone Temple Pilots. I like to look at us as Seattle wrapped up in a bow. And none of us have

ever been to Seattle. We were able to grasp what was going on there and it was able to come out in our music.

How did you get together?

Star to Sun really started when the original members all got together. This band has been around in different incarnations for about ten years. When I joined the band it became Star To Sun. I had just come out of a project and

I talked to a friend of mine...we used to rehearse in a building in north Philadelphia and there were three rehearsal rooms; two bands rehearsed in every room. I went in to my best friend and said "I just left this other gig. I don't know what I'm going to do." He goes "Ya know the band down the hall is looking for somebody". So I just went and knocked on the door. I walked in and they asked "would you like to sing over a song?" I said "No, no, no. Play me one of your originals", and I made up some lyrics right there, and a melody line 'cause that's the way I like to work; work off the cuff when I'm creating. We've had member changes along the way, basically any band is an evolution. As the band evolves, just like anything in life, some people will go one way some will go other ways.

I miss that room... many creative nights in that room. I really feel that there are rooms that are sterile. There was one time we were rehearsing in this room, and we were only there for a month, but we came up with so many ideas in that month. The room just complimented us. Everything about that room just pulled the best things out of us. We created a lot of the songs that are on our new CD "Samsara" in this room.

Tell me about Samsara.

"Samsara" came out in March. Samsara is the cycle of life; everything comes back around. It was recorded over the period of two years. We went in and recorded four songs as demos, and they turned out really well. We finished four songs in ten hours. It was amazing. We just went in and

everybody gelled.

Two of the songs we recorded were at Temple University. We were a college class project. So we went in and cut two tunes. Then we took those songs back to the studio, and recorded four more. Went to the other four songs and spent a lot more time on those. Then we put a little more into the two that we did at Temple. At that point we looked at the original four and added more to that.

Samsara was basically recorded in three pieces. We were able to meld those to where if you listen to it, I don't think you can tell. It became seamless.

Any new material?

Were going to back in the studio at the end of February and we're going to cut three new songs. We have one ready now which is called "Saving The Empty", and we have a lot of ideas. For the brunt of January, we're going to take all these ideas, we're going to flesh them out as much as we can, get them ready, and take them to the studio, let the producer choose the songs that best represent what we're trying to do.

We've got some people interested in working with us. There are some things in the works and hopefully 2005 will be the year that all this breaks loose, and then everybody will know who Star To Sun is.

What are your ambitions?

I'm hoping that my love for music will be able to help Philadelphia; I'll be able to do something that will make this city stand out, 'cause there's a lot of good music in this city. Every city

has it's time. You have Burning Brides kicking on the charts. You've got Silvertide, which just exploded all over the place. I think that shines a light on the city. If the light is shining on us let's put our best foot forward. Let's show what this city is about. Let's unite and make this the scene we all want it to be. Between the clubs, the bands and the radio stations; they've all got to work together. We've all got to have the same goal. Bands and clubs are just thinking about what's going on tonight, or where am I playing. We don't want people to just come out and see us tonight. We want you to come out to this club, and the club wants you to come out. You need to have people come out and go: "This is my favorite bar. I come here, and I see bands I like. I'm going to come out, and I'm going to see these bands, even if I don't know the bands because I know that this is the place I want to be."

We'll make it larger than life. If you're not going to be larger than life, they're going to see you're not larger than life. They're going out to a show, they want to see a show. They don't want to see a band that's upset because they didn't get their quota of people in a club. They want to see a band that's out there to kick their ass and enjoy it. And that's what it's all about. We're supposed to be having fun as a band and we're supposed to be making sure the people that are out there are having fun too.

What do you say with your lyrics?

I guess I write depressing songs. Somebody said my music is music to slit your wrists to. I'm writing about feelings and emotions. I have issues...everybody has issues

and I don't want people to feel alone so if they listen to me then maybe they won't feel so bad about themselves. The last song on our CD is "Struggle". The chorus is; "it's a struggle everyday, a struggle for your life". People understand that. People want to be happy, they want to have a good life, but they know it doesn't come to you on a silver platter. I write from the heart. We have a song on our second CD called "Space For Rent". It's about: if you're a junkie what do you worship? You worship junk. If you're religious, what do you worship? You worship God. That song is all about the parallels, about how any kind of worship can go too far. You can be obsessed with anything. When I wrote that song I went and hung out in a heroin house and just watched people so I could understand what I was writing about. A friend of the Bass Player asked "Does he use?" and he said no..."then how did he nail it?"

What makes your band special?

I think it's an entertaining show, and I have a megaphone. Nobody uses a megaphone in Philadelphia. It's a tool of the trade. It works for me. I create a vibe. We do a song called T-Bag. And in the middle of it I recite spoken word and at the end I just scat Doors vocals all the way out. People are always coming up and saying "I felt like I was in a coffee house."

Star To Sun are:

Rob Templeton
Jay Herb
Dan Mcmanus
Mark Ferraro



Disc's & DEMOS

Poor: ★ Moderate: ★★ Good: ★★★ Amazing: ★★★★★



Ruder Than You: Philly Stylee

★★★★
Overall Rating
★★★★★
Musicianship
★★★★
Songwriting
★★★
Originality

It's been a while since we've heard from Ruder Than You. It's certainly refreshing to hear their brand of Reggae, Ska, Pornofunk return. Philly Stylee immediately reminds us that these guys are all top flight musicians with an airtight rhythm section, smooth, crisp drums, clean backbeat guitars, and crescendo building vocals. The horns in RTY are what really stands out, creating that seedy 70's streaky background, and giving depth to all of their grooves. The track "Philly Stylee" introduces us to the psychedelic side of RTY. Their cover of "Tax Man" is also a standout, being vocally dominated with an infectious hook. The thing that makes this CD so enjoyable is that, while busy, it never seems like overkill. Nothing is out of place. To me it sounds like Toots & the Maytalls get into a rumble with Urban Dance Squad. While not re-inventing the wheel, Philly Stylee will give any groove junkie the fix they've needed that is missing from other CD's in this genre.



Loafass: Blaast O' Rock

★★★★
Overall Rating
★★★★
Musicianship
★★★★
Songwriting
★★★★
Originality:

Anyone who has seen a Loafass live performance knows that they are an high energy cocktail best served chilled. Blaast O' Rock is no exception. From "The Enforcer/ Straight to LA's" menacing guitar riffs to the acid surf "Abigail", Loafass combines metal, punk, hardcore elements of a Black Flag, Circle Jerks...I even hear a little Bad Brains in there.

Blaast O' Rock brings you into some leaky shithole that Loafass might be playing at, and spits a beer all over you. Fittingly enough, the CD concludes with the Misfits "She", which Loafass so elegantly pukes all over. They're dirty, loud, and most of all fun. Pound a drink over your head Sandman style and check out Blaast O' Rock.



Case Of The Mondays:
Best Served Chilled

★★★
Overall Rating
★★★★
Musicianship
★★★
Songwriting
★
Originality:

It's really hard for me to review this CD because it is so not my style and yet I have to try and be objective. Best Served Chilled is obviously targeting a much younger audience: ala Less Than Jake, Bosstones. But like the track "About This Situation" it just doesn't stand out enough. The playing is solid and the production is there....it just isn't untamed enough. I'm sure there are Warped Tour promoters that would salivate over "Emily's" simple plannish sound and "Relaxitive" isn't without merit; almost reminding me of the Police for a second. I guess my only issue with Case of the Monday's "Best Served Chilled" is that they just don't gamble enough.



Discs & Demos is brought to you by:

Roger "Rags" Segal

To get your CD reviewed please send Two copies along with your email address to:

Roger Segal 112A Bala Ave. Bala Cynwyd PA 19004



Bloody Wall Of Gore: Demo

★★★★
Overall Rating
★★★★
Musicianship
★★★★
Songwriting
★★★★★
Originality

At first listen I didn't know what to make of Bloody Wall Of Gore. Within the first few seconds of "Insulation Masterbation" I couldn't peel my ears away- the mixture of screaming, hardcore vocals with Reggae melodies catches you off guard. Combo organs layering BWOG's great rythm section starts really penetrating your ears. I'd love to see these guys do the soundtrack to Vincent Gallo's next film. "Killer" to "Day 22" is like walking into David Lynch's living room, with more ambience than Dead Can Dance. I really look forward to seeing these guys live to see what they offer visually, because I can't help but be taken on a trip during every BWOG song. If you have an open mind, and maybe an open bag of mushrooms, BWOG's experimental hybrid rock just might be for you.



Strap: Dead Center Of The Universe Is Here

★★★★
Overall Rating
★★★★
Musicianship
★★★★
Songwriting
★★
Originality

The first thing you notice about Strap's "Dead Center Of The Universe Is Here" is the excellent sound quality and packaging. It really is pro and Milkboy Recording deserves a lot of credit. Track 1 "Backbone" has big guitars and a real arena rock, early Def Leppard feel. It's got Michael Monroeish (Hanoi Rocks) vocals with cool harmonies and could almost be mistaken for an old Sweet song...just a little more metal. "Stiff Little Fingers" is a good power-pop song that reminds me of Michael Hutchence from INXS. Another standout is "Didn't Say It Loud Enough"; catchy, solid, not overwhelming. "Dead Center Of The Universe" is a good, not great, CD. Its production value, catchy hooks, and seemingly cool influences, make it definitely better than your average fair.

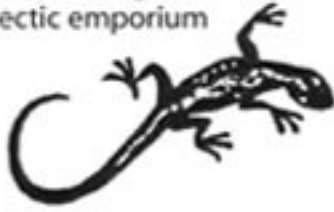


Slumlord: Demo

★★
Overall Rating
★★★★
Musicianship
★★
Songwriting
★★★★
Originality

Right off the bat Slumlord's CD is definitely garage. "Streetsweeper Christ" is Fugazi-like in its controlled chaos. "Hundred Miles" takes you down on the bayou with some of Satan's music. Killer bass on this track with Claypoolish intervals, but I'm always kind of waiting for the payoff. It's a shame the production on this wasn't a little better because Slumlord is really diverse...musically and lyrically. This is a band that I look forward to hearing more from because it sounds really embriotic. I can't say I loved it and I can't say I hated it...It was just, kind of, there. I'll keep my eye on these guys as they are brimming with potential.

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Horrorscopes


Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your lawn will be irrigated for free compliments of the Indian Ocean.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

You know that thing you've been hiding in your room? Well your mom just found it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

That trickle down your leg is not what you think it is.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You suspect your lover is cheating and the neighbor's dog just had puppies....hmmm.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Just hold your nose and swallow.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Your life begins to blossom....a bit like a mushroom cloud.

Gemini (May 21-June 21)

Venus is in Uranus. Uranus is in Woody's.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

"Dammit!! Look at me while I'm hitting you!"

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You will take up the new shitcans diet - Green Apples.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)

Turns out your lover's attitude isn't the only thing "crabby" this month.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Are you going bald?

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

It's all a bad dream
It's all a bad dream
It's all a bad dream
It's all a bad dream

Submit your horrorscopes to:
horror@localmusicnetwork.com

Thanks to this month's contributors: Ransford, Farid Sanders, Jonah Wilson, Jacob Hill, Tim McKenna, and Mary Boardman.

Comix by Hill

HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!



**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE
SIGNED TO GET ★ TREATMENT**



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