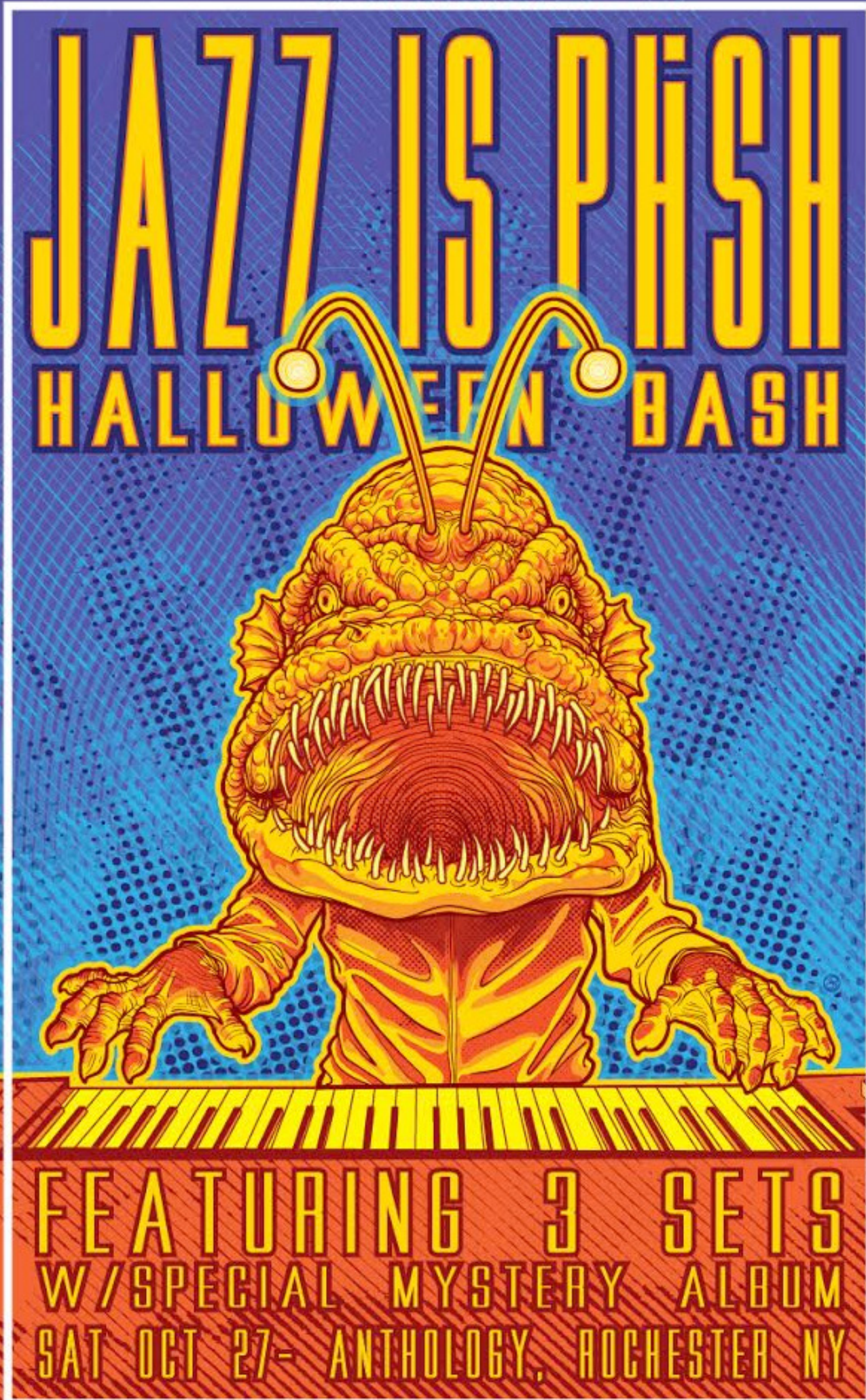


# *floated*

ISSUE 5

ALTERNATIVE CULTURE MAGAZINE





Floated Mag is a culture magazine largely focused on music, with extended reach into the visual arts, edgy lifestyles and red-hot social topics.

**We're here to show the world what's dope right now, and what's going to kick ass tomorrow.**

Who is Floated? We are a collective of artists, designers, writers, and music lovers who are here to make sure our friends around the world are well-informed and entertained by the best of the best in music, art, and culture. Our audience is made up of both fans, and artists alike, all of whom are brutally supportive of the culture as a whole.



# *floated*

CONTRIBUTORS

## ON THE COVER

Grandson shot in North Carolina, Oct. 2018  
Photographed by Krit Upra

## DESIGNERS

Hillary Bosy  
Krit Upra

## CO-FOUNDERS/EDITORS IN CHIEF

Krit Upra  
kritupra.com

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Hillary Bosy

Hillary Bosy

Teagan West

Paula Cummings

## ART DIRECTOR

Krit Upra

Steph Smith

Jordan Oscar

## PHOTO EDITOR

Krit Upra

Taylor Monteleone

Claire Caverly

## CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Frankie Bonn

Che Holloway

Nia Shea

Lloyd McCullough

Taylor Howarth

Ian Hyland

Steve DaSilva

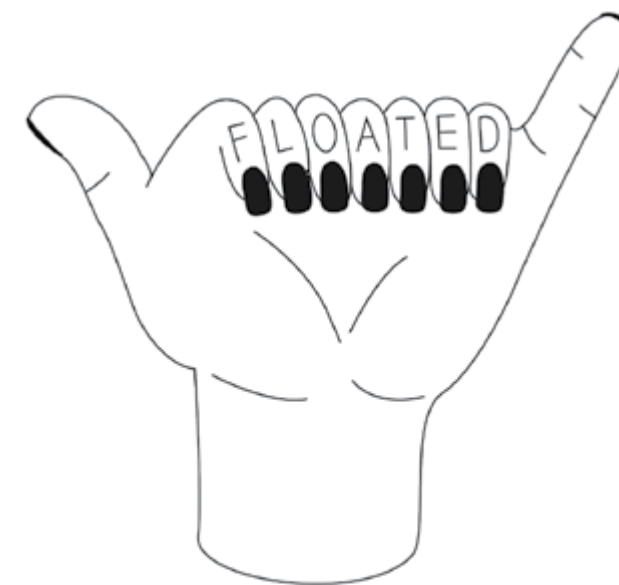
Catherine Sharp

## COPY EDITOR

Holly Ferguson

## LOGO

Rowan Rosenthal



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# THE DEMOS

## NOW YOU KNOW

Words by Paula Cummings

Photos by Frankie Bonn ( page 7 ) ; Krit Upra ( page 9, 11 )





The Demos are all about the love. The indie pop band's body of music includes ballads with titles like "If You Only Knew" and "Lonesome No More." The upbeat melodies go hand in hand with positive messages about love. Fostering relationships is an overarching theme not only in their music but in their lives. As one of their lyrics goes, "Don't we all live for each other?"

Floated turned to The Demos for some expert advice on love, relationships, and dealing with heartbreak. We sat down with lead singer Jay Milton, bassist Callan Saunders, keyboardist Caela Moore, and guitarist Jeremiah O'Reilley to talk about matters of the heart, starting with the definition of love.

"Love is an intense and continuous adoration for a person, place, thing, or idea that inspires the best in you," Callan begins. "Love is surrender. Love is desire. Love is the answer. Love is all you need."

Jeremiah adds, "I think of love as this inescapable feeling that transcends reason. It's hard to explain, but for me it never makes sense, and yet is the foundation for all my pursuits in life."

Caela has another take on it: "Love is like a Warhead (candy). It's just so bittersweet."

It would be hard to work together as a band without the foundation of caring and respect for each other, and their friends in the music industry. From Jay's perspective, The Demos wouldn't still be making music today if it wasn't for Callan and their friend Alex Northrup, who was the third founding member of the group. "If it wasn't for their encouragement, I'm not sure I would have kept up with it," says Jay. "I think it's really hard to put yourself out there and they always made me feel confident."

"Caela was also a huge influence on me," continues Jay. "She's such a badass and just SO naturally good at writing and playing. I'm always striving to be as cool as she is."

Jay and Caela's relationship blossomed into a marriage that's now five years strong. If you've seen The Demos play live in the past couple of years, you may have heard a love song called 'Bobby Pins,' which is a duet Jay and Caela sing to each other.

Jay also credits their friend Mike James with having an impact on his passion for creating music. "He really taught me how to embrace recording in the studio and experiment as much as possible."

The Demos have also had a long-time camaraderie with the members of Joywave, and have supported them at local shows and out on tour. Joywave's Daniel Armbruster even produced their latest EP 'If You Only Knew.' Their deep appreciation for the local music scene is just one aspect of their adoration for their hometown as a whole. The Demos have even written a ballad for Rochester called "My City." They serenaded the city with it last year from an outdoor stage during the Fringe Festival, in front of a crowd of thousands. And the love was mutual, as they won over the hearts of listeners.

Love is a two-way street, and relationships need to be fostered in order to thrive. The Demos have some tips for strengthening relationships.

"I think communication is key," Jay says. "People are constantly changing and evolving. If you aren't communicating your thoughts and feelings regularly it can be easy to drift apart."

Jeremiah agrees. "Like Jay said, communication is key, but just as important is learning to understand one another's passions and spark. That, and doing the dishes."

But love isn't just about your relationship with others, it's also a spiritual journey into your own soul. Age-old sayings go, in order to find love, we need to start by loving our own person. Lately, there's a re-emerging trend to treat yo'self. Members of The Demos regularly take time out of their busy schedules to nurture their spirits.

"What little time we aren't spending making music, I try to do things I enjoy," says Jay. "I love skiing, hiking, camping." Caela also likes to take trips.

Jeremiah enjoys taking photos, especially when he's on vaca with his wife. When he can't get away, Jeremiah scrolls through the internet looking at guitars for sale. He also adds, "You really can't beat pizza and a good Netflix binge."

Carving out time for themselves also helps to feed that creative spark. For Caela and Jay, that means indulging in their love for reading.

"I love reading, especially when we are on the road," says Jay.

"Reading is big for me." Caela adds, "Keeping a diary helps."

A photograph of the four members of The Demos band sitting in a grassy field at night. From left to right: a woman in a red patterned dress, a man in a red and white baseball shirt, a man in a denim jacket and cap, and a man in a plaid shirt and red bandana. Several large, pink, inflatable flamingo lawn ornaments are scattered around them. The background is dark, suggesting a night setting.

**"I don't think you overcome heartbreak. I think you replace it with something else."**



Jay also enjoys listening to music and watching movies. “Anything that makes me feel something deeply is great for my creative mind.”

For Jeremiah, inspiration comes most often during nighttime walks and early morning runs. His love for running inspired in a promo video for a show earlier this year. In the ad, he jogged through a residential neighborhood in a mustard suit, along to the theme song from Chariots of Fire.

All joking aside, Jeremiah does find the solitude of walking & running awakens his inner muse. “I feel that removing myself from the mundane distractions of the day to day in quiet solidarity really gives me a fresh perspective.”

He’s quick to add, “Oh, and nothing, I mean nothing, is more inspiring than waking up in the Adirondacks before anyone else and stealing someone’s canoe for a good ol’ romp on the lake.”

Love for themselves and each other helps to fuel their songwriting. “Jay and I have written some of our most compelling and emotional lyrics based on the feelings we have for one another. It’s not unusual for us to be particularly inspired when we find ourselves embroiled in one of our notorious Oasis-esque clashes. Songs like ‘Make It Better,’ ‘Tell Me How It Feels,’ and ‘We Could Do Anything’ are prime examples.”

Unlike the insoluble conflict between Liam and Noel Gallagher of Oasis, members of The Demos have managed to find ways to work out differences.

“I think relationships are at the forefront of our emotional experiences,” says Jay. “As a songwriter, it would be impossible for relationships not to affect the songs I write. Like Cal said, there are definitely songs we have written to or about each other’s conflicts. There are also love songs I’ve written about Caela... There are also aspects of the relationships I see around me that make it into songs.”

“I would argue that most songs, at their core, are about relationships in some way,” he concludes.

So getting back to the bittersweet Warhead candy aspect of love, what about the flip side, when there’s heartbreak?

“This is a hard one for me,” says Jay. “I’m not sure I’ve felt truly heartbroken in a long time. I feel like when I was younger I used to drink a lot.. but now I imagine I would throw myself into something creative that would distract my mind.”

“I don’t feel that losing something as significant as love is something that every really

goes away,” Jeremiah ponders. “I don’t think you overcome heartbreak. I think you replace it with something else.”

“Anyone who is fortunate enough to have fallen in love will understand and surely agree with Katherine Hepburn’s famous quotation: ‘Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to receive - only with what you are expecting to give, which is everything.’”

“I agree with Cal,” says Jay, “You can’t MAKE someone love you... and just the same... no one can take the love you feel away from you.”

Jeremiah shares the same sentiment. “As the old adage goes, it’s better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.”

When heartbreak strikes and the love is gone, The Demos have some advice on how to mend a broken heart.

“Embrace the times you are really down,” advises Jay. “Because without bad times... the good times aren’t nearly as good. Love is everywhere. It will make its way to you if you keep putting it out into the world.”

Jeremiah has another cure for a broken heart. “Pizza. Lots and lots of pizza.”

There you have it: all you need is love, and a tasty deep dish! If listening to music helps you find inspiration about love be sure to pick up a copy of The Demo’s latest EP ‘If You Only Knew.’





# JOSE GIL:

## No more cheek kisses

Artwork by Jose Gil  
Words by Jordan Oscar

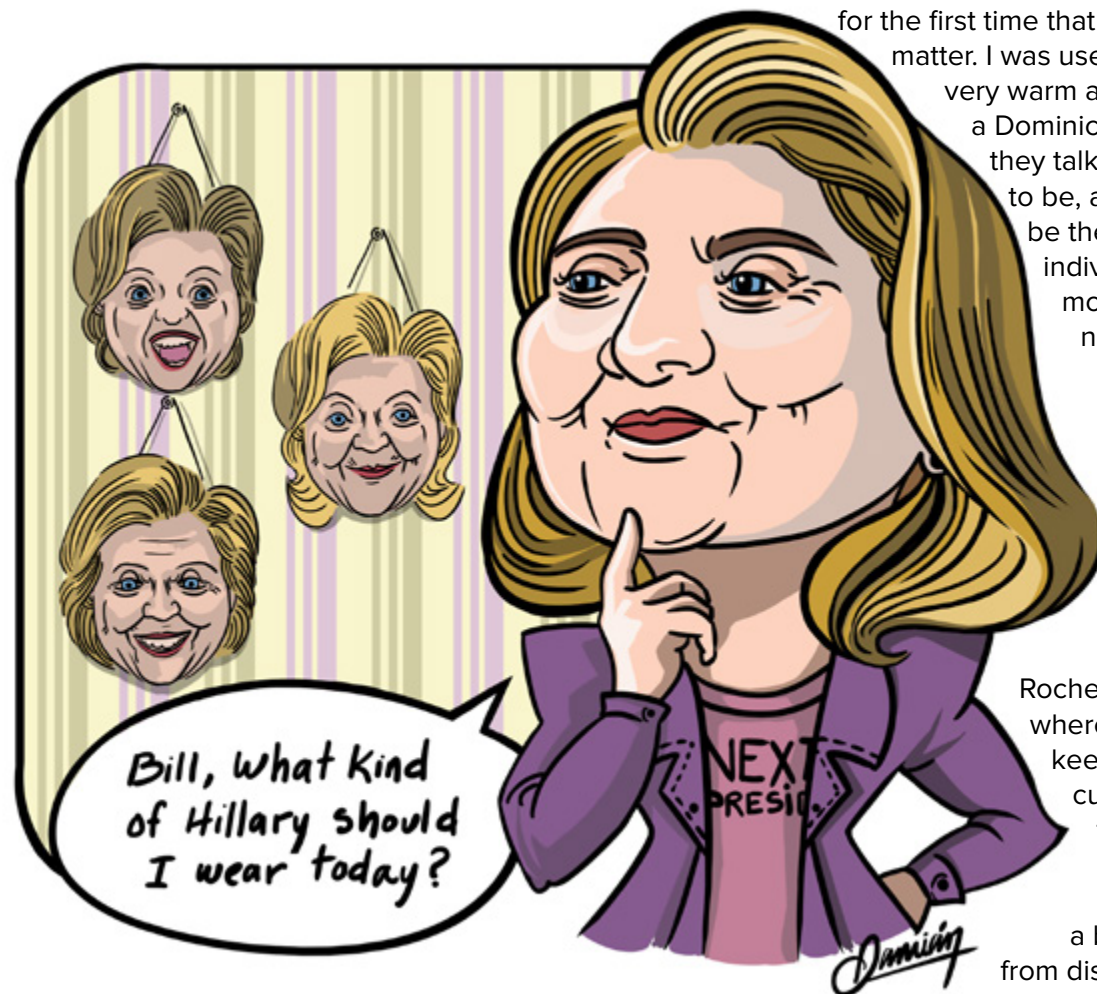
"When you meet someone in DR you normally give a kiss in the cheek, which Americans don't do at all, so I had to restructure some things and study people constantly to try to fit in."

Artist Jose Gil reflects on moving to the US and creating politically charged artwork in a politically polarized society.

When Jose Gil moved to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic to study art at RIT in 2012, the first thing he had to learn was living in American society - a far colder and closed off culture than the one he grew up in.

"When you meet someone in DR you normally give a kiss in the cheek, which Americans don't do at all, so I had to restructure some things and study people constantly to try to fit in," Gil said. "The experience also made me realize for the first time that cultural backgrounds do matter. I was used to Dominicans being very warm and talkative - you know a Dominican by how loud and fast they talk and how open they seem to be, and Americans tend to be the opposite. They're more individual and quiet and feel more cold, maybe, which is not a bad thing because Dominicans sometimes are too much. It's just a different approach to life I guess, so I had to relearn everything in a way."

Gil moved to the United States in 2012 to study illustration at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where he quickly developed a keen sense of the American cultural landscape and a fondness for political cartoons. Though his arrival to America was a bit disillusioning, it was far from discouraging.





"America was very foreign to me, in the sense that I thought I knew the vibe because I've been consuming the American lifestyle through TV and [other mediums], but I think it's quite different when you experience it first hand," Gil said. "Everyone thinks from the outside that America is perfect, and it has some of that, but it's a bit of a facade."

He pointed to consumer culture and the struggle of minorities and immigrants as some of the ways America doesn't really "match what they sell you on TV." As he began adapting to being in the states he kept a close watch on politics and the news, constantly listening to podcasts and looking to global issues as well as those facing the United States. All of this helped fuel his love of political artwork, which often began as scribbles or notes he would jot down as he was "drowning ideas." Some ideas were eventually fine-tuned into detailed and colorful illustrations, while others never left the notepad.

As a liberal-leaning man, his experience as part of the LGBTQIA community has helped mold his worldview rather than consume it.

"I think my head is somewhere else, which doesn't mean that I leave behind matters related to the LGBTQIA community, but I think we have so many political issues recently that is almost impossible to think that World War 3 couldn't happen tomorrow," he said.

Though he is enjoying the progress made for the LGBTQIA community in recent years, Jose is far more focused on issues like global warming, economic inequality, and poverty - issues that are continuing to be more problematic as time goes on. But Jose doesn't seem too worried, so long as younger generations continue to do their part to remain vocal and active.

He's followed the career, and recent success of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez closely as a promising figure that he likens to a younger Bernie Sanders - ideologically at least.

"I think the future of any nation resides in the younger generation, so I'm glad people like her are starting to appear in the political spectrum," Jose said, but it's remaining vocal and present that's key. "You can't live in a society being ruled by people you don't believe in. Whether we like it or not this is the way we work as a whole, so we need to be involved in every way I can"

Jose isn't hoping people act radically or pursue anarchy; just that they express themselves through voting and protesting issues they're passionate about, or expressing yourself through your career choices or work - it's just about reflecting yourself in a respectful way.

When he discusses his work, the one great take away Jose had from his time at RIT was learning to work through the "the ugly phase," and embrace it and power through rather than let fear discourage him. As an immigrant, Jose views people as citizens of the world, not of a country. Immigration policies are among the other issues

currently facing the country that Jose tackles through his work. With diligence and patience, his pieces slowly iron their way out, from chaotic scribbles and notes to a finished political cartoon or satire piece; it's a process just as politics and resolving global issues is, taking time, passion and diligence to resolve things bit by bit until they're improved. It's all about avoiding the ugly phase.



# ANGRY BERNIE 2016





# BRICK

+

# MORTAR

## The Underdog's Wonderland

Words by Taylor Monteleone  
Photos by Lloyd McCullough





What do you do when you're walking around in a world that seems to have no place for you? Brandon Asraf and John Tacon decided to craft one of their own. The two met and began playing music together in middle school. After a few projects with additional band members, they came to the conclusion that they were meant to be a duo and are now celebrating a ten-year run under the band name Brick+Mortar. Not easily defined, the band has a unique sound that incorporates indie and electric rock with the catchy undertones of pop. This eclectic style has carved them an outsider's throne that has gained them a loyal following that stretches far beyond their kingdom in Ashbury Park.

So what does this underdog's wonderland look like? In an exclusive interview, they gave us a glimpse, "It's definitely an honest world. Lots of beautiful creatures to hear and see. In our world, you can become intoxicated with our sights and sounds, but watch out for the dangerous dark truths lurking around the corner." This vision peers out at us through their latest music video for Saturday Night off of Meta Meta Ect. which takes the viewer on a backwards trip through the transformation of a businessman as we contemplate being strange among strangers. "Our world is full of symbolism reflecting the earth we live on."

With their new album Meta Meta Ect. released just over a month ago the duo admits they've already started writing the next one.

"For us making Meta Meta Ect. was a proving ground of sorts. The experience of making this record really reassured us that we know what we are doing and have actually grown as songwriters." The band has worked under a few record labels over the years, but this album was released independently. Brandon's focus in his writing has often been a darker observation of the human condition he told us, "I really wanted to dive into the topics and themes I didn't see people singing about. It's a personal record and looking back, it's a lot of my problems with myself and how I have thought in the past."

The band speaks to the feelings of abandonment and alienation through their music. While these themes have run deep in their childhoods and adult lives, they hope to encourage understanding and empathy as well. Brandon explains, "I just try to convey the pointlessness of hate in some of our music. Everyone gets upset and strong feelings are hard to

overcome, but hate will rot you from the inside out." It's no easy task to tackle the life of an underdog, but these two do it with purpose and a style all their own never forgetting to leave a message of love. John told Floated, "I spread positivity in my own way through talking to fans while on tour. The idea that these strangers take time out of their day to come and watch us because they love our songs is pretty amazing. The fact that we can talk about what's happening in their life and maybe offer them a solution to a problem they are having is something money can't buy."

Their sound cannot be prescribed to one genre which helps them reach a diverse audience but has also alienated them from the status quo. Brandon tells us, "The most important thing to me is to be artistically daring. It feels like even within the music industry we are still kind of the outsiders." But what does it mean to be the underdog with your own spin on musical genre?

**"I just try to convey the pointlessness of hate in some of our music. Everyone gets**

**upset and strong feelings are hard to overcome, but hate will rot you from the inside out."**



**“To me, that logic gives us freedom and doesn’t force us into writing a certain way. I love that we have our own thing going on and I like to think of each song as an album”**

“To me, that logic gives us freedom and doesn’t force us into writing a certain way. I love that we have our own thing going on and I like to think of each song as an album,” explains John. This dedication to each song and to their own sound is what gained Brick+Mortar a title as one of the best live bands in Ashbury, a band to never underestimate in the studio or on stage.

When prompted to tell us a story they left us with an anecdote about perspective and little something to think about...

“Once upon a time, there lived a stone cutter. Every day, the stone cutter would spend all day cutting stones. He worked very hard but was very poor. One day, the village held a parade and the prince and princess rode into town. The stone cutter saw the prince and wished he was him because he was rich, had a beautiful wife, lived in a castle. All of a sudden, he was the prince. As he rode down the road with his new beautiful wife, he waved to all the fellow villagers. They were waving and praising him. He thought he had everything. Then, he started sweating. It was so hot outside that day.

He looked up at the sun and saw how powerful it was, shining the sun down on all the villagers. He wished he was the sun then boom, he became the sun. He loved shining down all the sunshine on his village, making everyone hot and lending a helping hand to farmers. But then a cloud appeared and went right in front of him. No matter how hard he tried he couldn’t get his sunlight out, the cloud would just absorb it all. He became tired of this and wanted to become the cloud. Just like that, he was the cloud. He then brought all the weather he could on all the villagers, making them run for shelter. He came across a big rock that wouldn’t budge when he blew his wind on it. No matter how hard he tried he couldn’t move it. So, he then wanted to become the rock. No more than a second later, he became the rock. He absorbed all the sunlight, nothing could budge him. He was definitely the most powerful...until he heard a “clink-clink-clink” noise of a stone cutter.”

Though Brick+Mortar are not currently touring, their new album Meta Meta Ect. is a must listen! You can download the album and keep up with them on social media on Tumblr, Instagram, and Facebook.







# Talking inspiration, identity, and musical passion with Boy Jr.

“What the fuck is your deal!?”

“My friend was doing an impression of a granddad-type character talking to a younger fella like, ‘Sonny Boy Jr. someday you’ll understand everything.’ And I stopped right in the middle of her joke and I was like, ‘Boy Jr.’ ... That would be a cool band name.’ And I checked to see if anyone had it on Bandcamp and no one had it, so I took it!”

**Enter Erica Allen-Lubman.**

*Hailing from Rochester, N.Y., Erica leads Boy Jr. – a ‘sorta glamorous, arm flailing garage pop’ band – and she is very passionate about her music and the art, effort, and experimentation that go into it.*

*When it comes to the Boy Jr. name, she ultimately liked how it sounded and how it was a “blank slate”.*

*“I really wanted something, and a name that wasn’t already attached to anything,” she said. “I wanted something that could be a vehicle for whatever changes I go through, throughout the upcoming years.”*

*She feels like the band has really been that for her, a vehicle for self-expression. She likes to dye her hair and wear costumes; whatever suits her in that moment. While other people are afraid of being different, she embraces it.*

“I’ve had quite a few different hairstyles and hair colors in the time that I’ve been making music under Boy Jr.,” she said. “Last year, in the winter, I had the ‘Bowie phase’ with the red mullet, the bleached eyebrows. It was just something I had to try.”

“People are so over-secure. I feel that way especially about changing my hair. It’s always, like, a big deal. For example, I had it bleached blond, so I was like, ‘you know what? I’m just going to dye it all red. It’ll take one dye-job and I’ll just feel fresh and different,’ ” she said. “But I feel like there’s always the mini-crisis of ‘I AM my hair.’ I feel like I wind up defining myself so hard based

on my ‘look of the moment’, that changing it is like a huge identity crisis. I feel like it shouldn’t be that way, I wish it wasn’t like that.”

*Erica also just enjoys being herself, and she doesn’t care to think so much about gender identity or the boxes that people want to put her in.*

## “You could put on a whole Spotify curated playlist of indie garage rock revival and I’ll just go ape shit!”

“[The band] was quite fitting during the ‘gender identity crisis of 2016’ where I was like, ‘fuck everybody! I’m going to be really androgynous!’ And people are going to be like, ‘Who’s Boy Jr.? What does that mean?’ And then it’s me,” she said. “And they’re like, ‘What the fuck is your deal!? What are you supposed to be?’ and that was fitting and good.”

“I’m a character. I know that’s just me,” she said. “One time a guy was like, ‘so, why Boy Jr.? ‘Cause I see you up there and you’re clearly a girl; you’re a very beautiful girl, so why ‘Boy Jr.’? And I was like, “Cause it made you stop and think about the name, now you’re never gonna forget it! You’ve said the name out loud and now you’re gonna remember it.”

“The other day I played a show looking like I do now; my hair is longer, and I’ve been doing really glamorous



makeup,” she said. “I look more femme and just not thinking about gender identity. I’m just like, ‘that’s something for another day.’ ”

“If you’re not that interested in my music at all, or if you’ve seen my set before and you’re like, ‘Pfft. I know what she does; I don’t need to go. It’s just gonna be a bunch of riffs, and solos, and flailing around.’ At least come to see what kind of look I’m going to pull out!”

*She and her music have grown a lot in the past two years. From self-expression to musical experimentation, she has been making, writing, and playing music all on her own from the very beginning (even though Boy Jr. started as a multi-piece band). She experiments a lot with riffs, melodies, and chord progressions that work themselves into eventual songs*

“For years, I was just writing things by starting with a chord progression, or maybe starting with a melody, and figuring out a chord progression that made sense underneath it,” she said. “I’ve seen that change in that I haven’t been writing as much stuff recently that starts with a chord progression, rather I’ve been writing a lot of riff-based stuff, and that’s really just come from experiments and trying to get more comfortable learning my recording technology and software.”

“I’ve been doing a lot more writing where I’ve built the track first, or I write the track while I’m coming up with the lyrical and melodic material. So that’s been interesting,” she said. “In the past few weeks, I’ve tried to write some stuff just by sitting with a guitar and coming up with a melody that works with some chords underneath it. ‘Cause sometimes that’s just a classic way – you can’t go wrong.”

*According to Erica, transitioning from playing with others to working more as a solo act has definitely been the most significant change to her music.*

“Boy Jr. has always just been my songwriting, with whomever I could get to play my songs,” she said. “I love the fact that nothing should be unexpected sonically [from playing solo], that’s comforting to me. I feel like playing by myself on a stage has led me to want flail around even more.”

“The downside to that is that a lot of people love the live band, full band experience when they go to a show,” she added. “I think people have a sense of that magic being taken away from their expectations [when everything is digital].”

*Outside of all that, Erica said she has been really enjoying the fact that she can present her audiences with a finished product of what she wants her music to sound like, and that it’s all still crafted by hand, where she programs and decides on it all.*

*She said she really didn’t want to start out and have people get the wrong idea or have a “skewed sense” of what the sound of Boy Jr. was supposed to be. Working solo and electronically has really helped her to achieve that.*

“I like the sense that I feel confident in what I am presenting people with,” she said. “I am finally playing some of the songs that I was playing two, three years ago, but they are exactly how I want them to sound, and so I feel like people are walking away with a solid sense of what Boy Jr. is about, which feels really essential at this point in my music career.”

*She also added that using her digital audio workshop and laptop has opened up numerous possibilities of where her sound and music can go. One of the big things for her is mixing electronic sound more with traditional rock/indie-rock styles.*

“I used to feel very limited in my writing, especially in high school when I was still playing an acoustic. I’ve been experimenting and trying to get more comfortable learning my recording technology and software,” she said. “I feel like when I started the band in 2016 I was like, ‘I’m gonna be like The Strokes, but cuter.’ ”

*When it comes to her inspirations, she said “early-2000s garage-rock-revival and indie pop music” are very influential to her.*

“You could put on a whole Spotify curated playlist of indie garage rock revival and I’ll just go ape shit,” she said. “I love listening to some of the Foster the People arrangements; their recordings just sound so. fucking. crisp. I love Bleachers, LCD Soundsystem, Gorillaz, OK Go, Janelle Monáe ... I feel like I’m literally just listing every indie kid’s ‘weekend party playlist’, haha.”

*She also adores St. Vincent and described an intimate concert that she had the pleasure of seeing last winter. She said she and her friend waited for hours out in the cold and it was worth it because they were first in and got to be front and center at the edge of the stage.*

“It was really beautiful and kind of intimate,” she said. “She did a set just singing with a pianist and they did almost every song on ‘Mass Seduction’. They did a bunch of songs from the new album and some older works too. We got to hear all these new, stripped to their bare bones, arrangements of songs that were initially released as these bangin’, textural, pop masterpieces. That was very exciting because I am a slut for a good arrangement! So that was a little music-nerd-excitement-experience.”

*She said it was also just incredible to see St. Vincent just sing and play up the crowd.*

“At the end of the show, she did ‘New York’ and walked into the crowd,” she said. “Because we were at the front and my friend and I were super, super into it, she looked in our direction and I said, ‘hey, I made this for you!’ and handed her my little demo CD with a personalized love note, and she’s like, ‘thanks, baby!’ and hugged me,

and I’m thinking, ‘wow, did that really happen!?’ ”

*When it comes to the future, she said she would love to eventually play with live musicians again, like she had when she first started out with Boy Jr., and play larger stages and venues.*

“I’d like to just be able to do what I’m already doing now, and do it with more people, and for more people; I want to play in a lot of different venues, in a lot of different places. I want to meet more people, make music with them, make memories with them, as cheesy as that sounds,” she said. “But I want to be a point where what I do generates my ability to keep doing what I do; to be working on enough different projects, ideally that generates enough of an income so that I have more time to make music and collaborate with people, and release music and play it.”





# Kiki BanannaHammock

## Growth Within The Drag Community

Words by Ben Cain  
Photos by Krit Upa

When Anthony Bizzarro started his freshman year of college at R.I.T, he didn't realize that he would soon also be starting a career of a completely different nature.

At his first ever college party, clad in a banana hammock, he competed against fellow Rochester drag queen Kandi Kouture in a dance battle to the popular queer hit "Let's Have a Kiki" by Scissor Sisters. While Bizzarro may have lost the battle, he gained an alter ego, aptly named Kiki BananaHammock.

"I had never worn makeup or wigs before, just heels here and there for fun," says Bizzarro of his start in drag. He enlisted the help of a dear friend and makeup artist to teach him the fundamentals. "Now six years later, it's practically muscle memory."

Over that six-year period, Bizzarro has made Kiki BananaHammock a staple within the Rochester drag community, thanks to the support of fellow local queens such as DeeDee Dubois and Wednesday Westwood.

*Seeing what started out  
as a thought in my head  
come to life fills my  
heart with so much glee  
that I watch over and  
over for hours*

"DeeDee has been doing drag longer than I've been alive, and has mastered the craft of running a full-fledged drag business," says Bizzarro, adding that Dubois has taught him valuable lessons on merchandising. He also added that Dubois and Westwood have helped him immensely by consistently booking Kiki as a performer for events around Rochester.

*She got to see me in my element  
She got to see my chosen family and  
she got to see me being the star  
she knew I was meant to be*

Despite recent events such as the closing of Tilt Nightclub, one of the most prominent gay nightlife establishments and drag outlets in the Rochester area, Bizzarro claims that the drag community - and LGBTQIA community en masse - in the area is ample in size and eager to support one another.

"The LGBTQIA community really has amped up their support of the local queens," said Bizzarro regarding the club's closing.

Bizzarro also found similar support from his own family. He recalls coming out as gay to his family as being a "very easy" affair when compared to others' coming out experiences.

"My parents were worried for my safety because our world isn't always the nicest place, but I assured them that they raised me strong and that no one could knock me down," says Bizzarro.



*People assume all drag queens are transgender women or want to live their daily life as a woman That's like assuming a football player wants to wear their pads and helmet all day everyday*

His parents are equally as supportive of Kiki BananaHammock, and his mother attended her first Kiki drag show recently as well.

"It was awesome," recalls Bizzarro of the event. "She got to see me in my element, she got to see my chosen family, and she got to see me being the star she knew I was meant to be."

As Bizzarro takes Kiki into the future, he wants people to understand certain aspects about drag that he feels often get misconstrued, especially with regards to gender identity.

"I am a boy just like any other when the makeup and wigs come off," says Bizzarro. "People assume all drag queens are transgender women or want to live their daily life as a woman. That's like assuming a football player wants to wear their pads and helmet all day every day."

Bizzarro added that he wishes fans of drag would stop comparing his drag persona to past contestants of "RuPaul's Drag Race".

"Not every drag queen aspires to be on that show," Bizzarro claims, adding that such comparisons "take away from [his] personal creativity."

Bizzarro is proud of Kiki BananaHammock and how he has grown both as himself and as the aforementioned persona. He is now able to command an audience with poise and ease.

"I'm borderline obsessed with watching my own performances videos back again and again," says Bizzarro. "Seeing what started out as a thought in my head come to life, fills my heart with so much glee that I watch over and over for hours."

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# [GRANDSON TAKES ON THE WORLD!

CREATING A DIALOGUE THROUGH MUSIC

Words by Teagan West  
Photos by Krit Upra





Music is undoubtedly one of the world's most powerful forms of media when it comes to uniting humans and shaping culture. Not only can relating to an artist form bonds between fans from all over the globe, but it can also act as an outlet for understanding our own emotional journeys, as we move through this shared experience together. Grandson seeks to create a foundation for this kind of dialogue through his music and cultivate a community among his fans where they feel understood in their own struggles. By breaking down the taboos of discussing mental health and societal issues, Grandson is working to create an open conversation and reminding us all that no one is truly alone in the fight.

For Grandson, writing has always been a reflexive reaction to processing his own emotions. It became a frequent practice for him to respond to his own mental health through writing, especially when facing difficult issues that had to do with relationships, self-love, or even larger-scale problems regarding political and social affairs.

It wasn't until recently that these thoughts and experiences had been heard by anyone else. When Grandson began touring, it added a new level of reflection to his own mental state and emotional battles. Sharing his music live allowed for him to watch how his thoughts and emotions actually lived in the world, seeing how these experiences resonated with others around him. This feedback allowed for his experiences to be seen in a fresh new context, enabling him to reframe what he was going through and see his struggles in within the bigger picture. This made everything seem much less monstrous and insurmountable, bringing his troubles down to a more manageable state.

As his music has spread and the community of Grandkids has grown, Grandson has been able to see the myriad of ways his words actually reach and help individuals process struggles similar to his own. There is an overwhelming sense of doubt when combating emotional fights on one's own, which seems to dissolve when feeling strengthened and supported

by those going through similar experiences. Seeing his own stories resonate and be so heavily responded to instills Grandson with a sense of hope and reassurance that none of us are alone in this fight, and that we are all facing these battles together as one.

Having so many passionate fans is not an easy cross to bear, especially when realizing the degree to which your words resonate with so many different individuals. Grandson has realized with his recent fame also comes a sense of duty to his fans, and an overwhelming want to satisfy every individual that considers themselves a fellow Grandkid. He is very aware that he can't always please everyone all at once, though this does not hold him back from striving to make genuine connections with all his fans. It has been a careful process of establishing boundaries for himself while navigating the highs and lows with this perspective in mind. Attempting to please every individual that attends his shows or reaches out through social media can be as exhausting as it is exciting, a balance that Grandson has to remember to stay grounded in.

Although his tour has brought him into contact with an incredible amount of Grandkids, Grandson still makes it a priority to keep in contact with his fans through social media. He feels it is especially important to keep an active dialogue going, learning about the thoughts and perspectives of others that think differently than himself. This keeps him rooted in realizing that what he's doing is coming from a genuine and important place, and it echoes throughout humanity in a myriad of ways. It is easy to get lost in the numbers of followers, but Grandson knows how important it is to remember that every single one of those numbers is an actual human, whose thoughts and perspectives are just as real and profound as his own.

Grandson figures that if he doesn't use social media for the connection he is able to cultivate with humans worldwide, he might as well be "shouting into a big empty cave". Social media is an opportunity to form bridges and make connections not only between himself and his fans but also for connecting fellow

grandkids from all around the globe. It is incredibly important to be able to help humans connect through relating to stories like Grandson's, and his music provides a platform for these vital interactions.

When considering the roles of artists and musicians roles in society, Grandson greatly values the importance of honesty, sincerity, and integrity, especially from an artistic perspective. Although he seeks to stand by all of these values, although this is no easy feat to uphold. He acknowledges these are all fluid, dynamic states, influenced by the world around oneself at any point in time. These values are more of a constant practice rather than a destination, held up by a sincere commitment to oneself.

Grandson acknowledges how easy it is to turn to self-destructive behaviors without a space for this conversation. There is undoubtedly a connection to the drug abuse and suicide rates present in our society today, that can potentially be mediated by a sincere sense of feeling heard and understood. Grandson hopes to create a platform where people can feel like their problems are appreciated and relate to one another through his music.

The subject matter of mental health is somewhat taboo in our society, but Grandson believes in the importance of keeping an open discussion around these issues, especially for those who may not have outlets available to them to talk about their own anxieties.

It is important to remember that although we may feel alone, none of us are ever truly fighting our own battles solo; everything we do echoes throughout humanity, and there is always another human out there who can understand your struggles. Grandson wants to remind those struggling that "just because there are things that are wrong, that doesn't mean that something's wrong WITH you".

Being able to see these struggles from a larger perspective can help us to feel at ease as we navigate these highs and lows together.





Conversations of mental health aren't solely targeted for struggling audiences; Grandson believes this is a constructive conversation for those who are on the upswing as well. Talking about these issues makes them less taboo, helping to normalize and process the highs as well as the lows. Grandson tries to take moments to share when he's feeling good, cultivating it in a way that is healthy and can help keep himself lifted in more difficult times. There is a huge spectrum to our emotional experiences, and every part of it is just as important as it's counterpoint.

Being on a road presents its own challenges for checking in and keeping track of his own mental health, but Grandson finds it extremely useful to keep a journal, allowing him to maintain this self-reflection in a productive way. Journaling and therapy allows him to keep this conversation with himself going, checking in with himself in a healthy manner that keeps his own emotional stamina strengthened. He also uses the music itself and connections with fans as a form of reflection, meeting fans and nurturing an external conversation about all of these experiences.

Grandson's interactions with fans also give him moments of reflection, helping him to realize the point he has reached in his career, and reflect upon how badly he wanted to get to this place years ago. He must constantly remind himself of what he is building, to ensure it is "coming from a place of gratitude and love". This also strengthens his emotional foundation and enables him to be better prepared to come from a more wholesome place as he navigates this point in his life and career. Working hard to not take any ounce of love for granted, Grandson takes time to reflect daily upon how grateful he is for how far he's come.

Speaking about even more metaphysical subjects that are all interconnected, Grandson describes his relationship to love in a very similar passion not only between humans but within oneself and the path we're treading. Love is a very ambiguous and somewhat abstract concept, that at times can seem so complex that we find it hard to wrap our head around. Grandson acknowledges that we all form our own individual relationship to love, and have to figure out what it means to us in all of its varying forms. For himself, love is a form of deep trust, and deep belief in something, whether it be a person, your passions, or yourself. As Grandson expressed himself; "when I love it, I believe in it, and I'm personally invested in it and it being its

best self, whatever that is". There is a passion to this outlook that is palpable and absolutely echoes through his music.

The future of our society is definitely on Grandson's mind, with sincere concern for our relationship to one another and the world at large. Grandson hopes that we, as a collective entity, continue to expand on liberal philosophies of human rights being sacrosanct. It is extremely important that every single human beings voice having the opportunity to be heard, and that starts in finding a more sustainable, holistic relationship to one another, to ourselves and to the environment.

Grandson believes in the importance of trying to "find more effective ways to combat this sort of short-sighted, corrupt, morally-bankrupt thinking that

seems to creep up every so often". Instead of letting it fester and repeatedly stunt our communal growth, we have to nip this evil in the bud. It is vital that we maintain the perspective of the inherent value of helping one another, flourishing as a society without trading today for tomorrow.

Love, mental health, and social change are undoubtedly all interconnected, and Grandson's music is lighting the way for us to support each other in these journeys together. Nothing is mutually exclusive, and in order to have a healthy and productive society, we must first start with ourselves. Advocating for a space to talk about these issues and no longer make anything seem taboo is such a powerful and honest mission, founded in the forward-thinking that Grandson seeks to instill in his fans. It is quite a magnanimous feat to attempt to connect humans in such a genuine way, yet Grandson is proving that music can be the perfect outlet to cultivate this sense of unity.







# *Phony Ppl* *Spearheading a* *Musical Movement*

*A No Boundaries Mentality*

Words by Teagan West  
Photos by Frankie Bonn

The creative process of Brooklyn-grown group Phony Ppl is one of sheer musical liberation, injected with the rebellious spirit that defies to be boxed into any possible category. Always striving to push boundaries, this quintet of artists have been cultivating a sound and vision that resists being limited to any one genre. Each of the members, Elbee Thrie, Aja Grant, Matt Byas, Elijah Rawk, and Bari Bass, bring their own unique style and influences to the table, mixing them together to create a sound that's as much punk as it is soul. Phony Ppl has their roots in a fusion of Hip-hop, Neo-pop, R&B, and Soul, all mixed into one passionate symphony of sound. But don't be mistaken, these musical rebels defy to be categorized by any one genre; their viewpoint on life and music remains limitless.



The group’s vision is anything but phony and actually stems from a very sincere desire to translate something that’s never been felt before. The source of their fuel to create comes from pure inspiration itself, searching for new ways to produce that “moment that touches you and takes your breath away”. Constantly searching for new sounds, patterns, topics, and lyrics that they haven’t heard before, this quest for originality actually becomes a driving force of their inspiration to create. This passion is undoubtedly contagious and comes across in the rawness of their sound.

Finding originality for any band is obviously a tall order, in a world that’s heavily saturated in a million different sounds that are all working simultaneously to achieve their own vision. But Phony Ppl seem to have found the secret to the search; the key to emitting such an authentic tone is more than just having a passion to create something new. “You have to believe in the music you’re giving to the people. Music, to us, is much bigger than just listening to some sounds and some words - it should affect lives, your days, your emotions - it has to make you feel something”.

They’re clearly onto something.

This ingenuity combined with their no-boundaries mentality has allowed the group to keep the entire field open to all possible routes and directions their music could take, and allows for a fresh canvas each time they begin their next venture. “By not settling on a genre we, in turn, started pushing our boundaries because there were none. We were able to create whatever we thought in our head and put it to our instruments.” Instead of trying to please the masses or go for a more “hip-hop” or “soul” sound, the group has stripped themselves free of inhibitions and is, in turn, working from a place of complete creative freedom.

Not only does their music strive for relief from limitations, but the group also works to translate more sincere and somewhat meta topics. Their music definitely has an informative aspect, nurtured by each individual’s awareness and extensive research into their own interests. A lot of their writings reference communication and expression, which they look at through both micro and macro lenses. This perspective has given the group a more objective understanding and approach to these concepts of communication within humanity, helping them to “start to see communication tactics and people’s steps to decision making from a less personal angle and more of an unbiased angle on a ‘human’ level”. They work hard to ensure their lyrics aren’t projecting nonsense, and really truly show that they have something to say.

For their upcoming album mō’zā-ik, which comes out October 19th, the group dove back into the archives to find songs that hadn’t gotten the attention they deserved. This goldmine of an archive had been gathering “digital dust”, and it felt like the time had come for these songs to “gain legs and live in the world”. Between the 5 of them, a massive amount of work had accumulated over the years, so this album was really a process of pulling out sounds and ideas that had never gotten fully rounded out. It was a matter of really honing in on the tracks they had once started, and deciding how to further improve and embellish them.

A really dope twist the group put on this next album is that, if you listen close enough, you can identify which strain of Mary Jane each of the songs relates to. Whether it be in the literal words or the overall tone of the song, each of these tracks play upon the vibe of a different strain. If this doesn’t sound like isn’t clever songwriting approach of the century so far, wait until you hear about the specificities of what the band is thinking about while writing these songs. For example, the brighter and more uplifting feel of “SAYL” captures the spirit of the brighter sativa strain, while “OMB” definitely has a more indica feel.

To bring it to an even more complex playing field, the moody and deep sound of a tune like “BYGAB” disguises lighter lyrics, much like the indica-sativa hybrid - a vibe that feels so smooth while still keeping you uplifted. They play upon this duality in another hybrid song, “TYM”; indica on the outside but sativa on the inside, “the words are heavy but they’re being delivered in such a calm musical fashion overall”. A personal favorite from the bunch - “EW”, which no one can describe better than how the band put it; “what the eff is happening with the music on this one? Something’s weird, But I like it. A lot.”

Agreed.

Don’t worry, they didn’t forget to include a tune for our sober friends out there - “OEIL” is so real, almost “too real to distort the harsh reality of”. Sober or not, these tracks are sure to provide you with a transcendent yet chill experience.

If you haven’t done yourself the favor of sitting back and relaxing for a rip while jamming to Phony Ppl’s soulful sounds, get on it. They provide everything you need for a truly spiritual music experience. In the spirit of the rebellious nature within us all that defies to be boxed in, Phony Ppl is definitely onto something with their creative process, and we’re taking notes.





PHONY PPL

mō'zā-ik.



# Phony Ppl

## The Status Is Not Quo

Words by Steve DaSilva

**Phony Ppl are all about going against the flow.** With their latest release, “mō’zā-ik.”, they’re upsetting more than just the status quo.

### The Good:

“mō’zā-ik.” is nothing if not innovative. With its lo-fi samples and unnatural beats, it truly makes an effort to be different from everything else. The ambient genre gives Phony Ppl a lot of room to explore, and they take full advantage of the opportunity. It’ll be a while before you hear anything else like “mō’zā-ik.”.

### The Bad:

That said, Phony Ppl aren’t quick to change up their own formula. Each track on “mō’zā-ik.” would sound totally unique in a playlist, but they start to blur when listening straight through the album. It’s almost like a release written for your Discover Weekly: similar enough to find its way into your playlist, but different enough to stand out.

That desire to stand out seems to go past the songwriting and find its way into the album’s mixing. It sounds like Phony Ppl noticed the bass-forward tone of modern headphones, but decided they wanted an even EQ. On balanced speakers, “mō’zā-ik.” comes across as leaning very heavily on treble and midrange. It’s almost as if it was mixed on Beats, and can only sound right through them.

### Review:

“mō’zā-ik.” is first and foremost an attack on what’s normal in ambient music. It’s got a unique synthesis of genres that wouldn’t be easy for anyone else to replicate, and it sticks to its guns in the face of normalcy. It may not always work, and it could stand to have a touch more diversity of sound, but it’s an excellent step towards an amazing ambient feel. **7/10**

# GLACIAL ZENITH II

Adventure Audio unveils a new approach to overdrive pedal stacking, gain staging, and gain stacking. The Glacial Zenith II provides guitar, bass, and electric keyboard players the ability to shape their tone the way they hear it in their head.

At its most basic, the GZII is a Drive, a 3-band EQ, and a Boost, all in a box together. What really takes it to the peak is the ability to put them in effectively whatever order you want.

Much like a real glacier, the many parts of the Glacial Zenith II are able to shift past one another, allowing the pedal to take many forms.

Demo Videos can be found here:  
[www.adventurepedals.com/videos](http://www.adventurepedals.com/videos)

### Features include:

- 3 Band EQ
- Low - Deep and earthy rumble of the shifting glacier - 250Hz
- Mid - Crunch and clatter of ice and stone, caught up in the flow - 830Hz
- High - Crackle and fizz of the ice, breaking and giving way - 2.9kHz
- Independently Engageable Boost - Raise the peak to colossal heights
- Pre Drive Toggle - Left = Boost pre Drive/EQ, Right = Boost post Drive/EQ
- EQ Post Drive Toggle - Left = EQ pre Drive, Right = EQ post Drive
- Shape Toggle - Right: less clipped, like crystalline snowflakes, Left: more clipped, like a fine powder

The Glacial Zenith II - MSRP is \$189.00 USD each and is available at select retailers world wide as well as:  
[WWW.ADVENTUREPEDALS.COM](http://WWW.ADVENTUREPEDALS.COM)

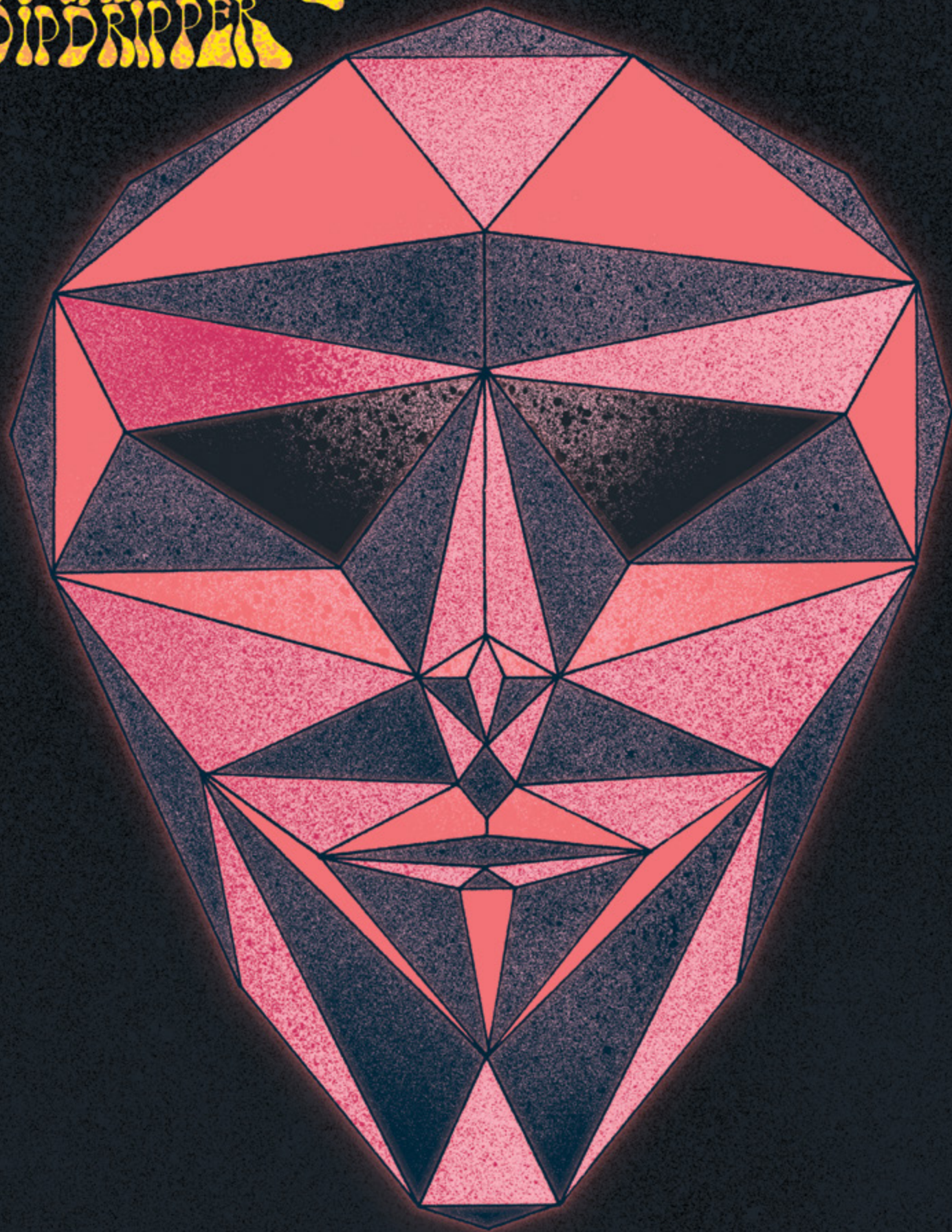


Adventure Audio is based in Rochester, NY and has been designing, manufacturing and selling pedals since 2014. The company is expanding its range of products from boutique guitar pedals to modular synthesizers and 3D printed tools for musicians. Working in a warehouse down the street from Kodak Headquarters, this team of audio engineers continue to push the boundaries of traditional audio effects.



# LOCAL LEGEND: DIPDRIPPER

Design and Artwork by Mike Turzanski  
Words by Nia Shea



You might not know his name, but if you live in Rochester NY, you've probably seen his art, and you've definitely snapped a gram in everyone's favorite selfie bathroom at Swillburger. Mike Turzanski, also known by the handle DipDripper has been a fixture of the Rochester art scene for almost a decade. His instantly recognizable mazes of shape and color grace record covers, t-shirts, and yes, that kick-ass bathroom. Ever seen the band CD-ROM play a show? You've seen Mike. Ever watched a Green Dreams music video? Chances are good he made it. From lush, moody portraits of Rochester favorites like Mikaela Davis and Hot Mayonnaise, to headshots for Tyra Banks, Mike has his hand in a little bit of everything going on in Rochester, and he believes in this city.

Turzanski is the first to praise the ever-growing, ever-changing artistic community in Rochester. A place where you can afford to create full time and still pay your rent. "That's why we have friends that own boutiques, and furniture stores, and restaurants, because, we're not gonna go to fucking Chili's in our K-Mart pants. We're gonna get our cool custom thing from our buddy, and we're gonna go out to eat our cool restaurant, with our friends working there, and our friends who own it. It's nice." It feels like you're part of a big family, that everyone is supporting and nurturing each other. Turzanski, not a native Rochesterian, chose the area eight years ago because his wife attended RIT, and they wanted to relocate upstate. Also, he says, "It's the best of the upstate cities for sure, easily."

Turzanski grew up in Utica, NY and went to art school for photography in New York City. "Do you need to go to school to make art? No, but you need to fully immerse yourself in art people." But for Mike, there is such a thing as too much immersion. He casually tells a story about his roommates at The School of Visual Arts in NYC sneaking into the premiere of Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*. Despite being caught at the door, they were given tickets to the show and ended the night eating dinner with Tarantino. "That's like the kind of stuff that happens there, which is cool, but it's also wildly distracting." The big city can be inspiring, but for Mike, it stole the focus he needed for his art. "I feel like I didn't really make good stuff until I left. I was distracted for years." The tight-knit vibe of Rochester opened up a unique world of opportunity. "Art exists everywhere, but we really have a good thing here."

Rochester is a hub of DIY culture, from house shows just about every day of the week, to emerging creative spaces like The Psychic Garden. Fitting right into the "do it yourself" style is Turzanski's current band, CD-ROM. Featuring members Leus Zeus and Green Dreams, this five-piece power group's synth-driven sound is a force to be reckoned with. "We play and record everything in the basement," Turzanski says. CD-ROM is scheduled to play their new album in its entirety later this month at Radio Social. Just in time for Halloween, the event description promises a cult feel and a strange time:

## CONGRATULATIONS!

JOIN US! Shake the hand of the new you. October 22nd is the perfect night to celebrate the coming leader. Let the leader wash your troubles and show you the way of The New Program. (please wear red as the leader WILL be present) Live sets by ARC IRIS and CD-ROM. No debate, starts at 8.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

In Mike's words, "It's gonna be real wild. The whole story is about this girl who gets inducted into this cult, and it's the story of her losing grip on the outside world, and then finding her way out, only to become the leader of a new cult herself. It's a wild ride"

So what is spinning on Mike's personal record player, (his preferred method of listening) while he creates? "I like to put on records because you have to get up every 15 minutes, it keeps you from getting burnt out...When I'm working, I love it when it's deep. Something like John Mouse, when I'm working or, something like Soft Hair, something you don't have to think too hard about, that just gets you in the groove" Mike is a champion of sustaining physical recordings and has designed the artwork for 30+ records. His favorite music? "The question you love to answer until it's asked. The Garden, The Oh Sees, Ariel Pink...there's just no rules to that guy's music, no rules, and it's perfection, every time. Waiting a long time for a record, or waiting not time at all. Or if it's gonna be pop music, or if it's gonna be, unlistenable music, it's always on point."

So what's up next for Turzanski? "The future? I plan on making 3 billion dollars next year. I'll probably make \$3,000. It would be nice to get some bigger projects but, any project is a good project."





# SLUGS IN L.A.

Words by Claire Caverly  
Photos by SLUGS

Perhaps one of the hippest bands from Rochester, SLUGS sat down with us to discuss their music and their unique approach to partying. The group creates a specific sound within an alternative vibe, plus cool girl harmonies. Their visual inspiration is a curated collection of simple, clean-cut graphics and choice memes, and their genius parties have earned SLUGS a (“dreaded”) place of honor in the party planning scene. Screen-printing has also become a new medium of creation that is moving towards being a cool addition to their repertoire.

SLUGS moved from Rochester to Los Angeles and compares it to going on a 2,100-day vacation. When still in Rochester, SLUGS was sneaking into Bug Jar shows long before having the luxury of showing I.D. They fondly remember living on Goodman Street, walking to catch shows a few times a week. Even in L.A. walking to venues remains a favorite activity. Rochester still holds a treasured spot in SLUGS’ heart. They say, “I loved going to The Public Market on Saturday’s, hitting up house shows, reading a book

with some coffee in a corner at Java’s, and I had a free pass to the Planetarium where I would frequent. I loved Rochester.” But RG&E is bananas and Rochester is fucking freezing, so when the opportunity to deuce presented itself, SLUGS packed their car and made an indefinite road trip out to California. They set up shop in a brother’s music/art studio space in a converted warehouse, and six years later, are still cranking out work out in the city of angels. The change in city – from the cold-as-shit, grey Rochester, to the palm tree studded postcard of Los Angeles – has been reflected in a change in sound. SLUGS describes the change as “still writing sad-boy songs lyrically, but the music itself acting as an illusion of happiness.”

And now another major aspect of SLUGS - the parties. This group can throw a fucking rager with zero budget. Think “My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding” meets “Here Comes Honey Boo Boo.” SLUGS discusses a recent theme of “White-Trash Wedding.” Agenda is as follows: party guests arrive in their redneck best, the house and yard are decorated in garland and dozens

of fake flowers. The lucky bride and groom-to-be will be decided by a raffle of fate; all party guest names go into a cowboy hat and there is a lovely ceremony every hour on the hour. The menu includes red solo cups, a trough of PBR, a bowl of Doritos, a grill in the backyard, three-tiered cookie cake, a box of Franzia, and 6 liters of Mountain Dew. Games include a “Shottle Run,” a shuttle run where full shots are tossed back at points A and B, wedding speech Mad-Libs including terms like “jabroni,” “fornication,” and “boobie,” and, of course, mud-wrestling. To add to the elegant vibe of the evening, guests are encouraged to create sloppy cover bands to enhance the white trash reception ambiance. Everyone must learn some rendition of “Kiss From A Rose.” The venue is a good friend’s step dad’s house; don’t worry, he drives out to visit his girlfriend, Peggy, on the weekends. This party has been planned. We’re all invited. BYOBeef Jerky.

They recently had a Residency at The Echo in L.A., throwing a free party for four Mondays at Los Angeles’ sweetheart venue. The resourcefulness

of SLUGS shone in this residency, as decorations were constructed of scotch tape, streamers, string lights, construction paper, plywood and any extra hands possible. SLUGS remarks that the amount of planning for events of this caliber “feels like an unpaid internship.” The parties were centered on vaguely directional themes like “Sweets,” “Blood,” “Magic,” and “Sports.” They were only missing “Sex” for a full-on Red Hot Chili Peppers reference. SLUGS remarks, “I would like to take this opportunity to clarify there was no intended homage to RHCP and I have yet to listen to that album in full. Sarsten does play a Flea bass though...”

SLUGS chiseled their niche in this world through distinct sound and distinct parties. Keep yaour eyes and ears out for their work as they’ve yet to disappoint; watch for some sick shirts dropping soon. And if you get an invitation to the White-Trash Wedding party, be sure to R.S.V.P and consider bringing me as your +1.



GAMES INCLUDE A "SHUTTLE RUN,"  
A SHUTTLE RUN WHERE FULL SHOTS  
ARE TOSSED BACK AT POINTS A AND  
B, WEDDING SPEECH MAD—LIBS  
INCLUDING TERMS LIKE "JABRONI,"  
"FORNICATION," AND "BOOBIE,"  
AND, OF COURSE, MUD—WRESTLING.





FLoated's Issue 5

playLIST

Despicable-GrandSon

Judgement Day-Stealth

Bad Twin-Slugs

Mirror-CD ROM

ANYway-BOY JR.

NASTY woman-Rodes Rollins

SHE lives In Pictures-The Demos

6:00-grANDSON

GOTTA STOP LOVing YOU-STEALTH

FRIENDS-BRICK & MORTAR

blood//water-grANDSON

WAY TOO FAR-PHONY PPL

WeS COME back-rodes ROLL inS

If YOU only KNEW-The DEMOS

Lick My liPS-the

clIMacTics





# Rodes Rollins

## *A Proud Nasty Woman*

Photos by Frankie Bonn  
Words by Hillary Bosy

Rodes Rollins is a powerful musician. Indie-psychedelic music emanates from her very core. Music was just a hobby for her from when she was a child until around 19-years-old when she was studying at NYU's Gallatin School, and where she decided she wanted to pursue music full time. She has experienced much growth throughout the subsequent years. "It took a while for me to start writing music that I actually liked. As an artist, I think one of the frustrating things about the growing process is when your skill set doesn't match your ear. That is when you don't quite have the experience to make something you genuinely love. I started writing and recording music when I was 8-years-old. I think I wrote the first song that I still feel I connect with today at age 16."

*For my whole life, it has been more inspiring for me to collaborate with people who are older and more experienced than me, rather than my peers.*



Since then she has collaborated with huge artists such as Kane from Portugal The Man, Matthew Compton from Electric Guest, Major Lazer, and many many more. When asked about how these collaborations influence her creativity she responded, “It definitely inspires me to be in the room with people who I look up to. I’ve always made an effort to really always try to collaborate with people who I think can teach me something. For my whole life, it has been more inspiring for me to collaborate with people who are older and more experienced than me, rather than my peers.”

*Being a Nasty Woman means doing whatever the fuck you want to do, and being proud of who you are. It means not letting society squash you down and make you feel less of yourself.*

Due to the fact that she collaborates with many other talented musicians, we wanted to know what she does in order to maintain her individuality and stay fresh to herself. Her response was very unexpected, “I try to keep my blinders on just enough to feel like my inspiration and motivation to write is coming from an internal urge rather than an external source. That’s easier said than done, and someone people might argue that it’s nearly impossible in today’s world! But I feel like this combination of inward and outward reflection helps keep my individuality alive.” Self-reflection, both inwards and outwards seems to be a recurring theme with creative individuals and Rodes is no different! If you are struggling with staying true to yourself in this hectic world, take a breath and reflect on yourself!

Curious about which artist she considers her idol, we asked. She replied: “I would say, Lee Hazelwood. He was such a cowboy and his voice takes me to another place every gosh darn time I listen!”. Now we see where she gets those western vibes!

She is currently channeling her intense creative energy into opening up her own creative-artist studio in Brooklyn this October. Frankie Bonn was fortunate enough to get a sneak peek of the space, where he photographed Rodes for this issue. “The space is called Casa Bklyn - it’s essentially a space that individuals can use for their own productions and events. My boyfriend, who is also a musician, will be using the space to work on our music as well. I’m really excited to develop this platform to inject some more artistic and collaborative spirit back into the Brooklyn scene. It’s something that I get a lot of when I go to work in Mexico City - so I’m trying to bring some of that energy back (hence the name Casa Bklyn).”

In this age of gender inequality, we asked her more about her empowering song titled, “Nasty Woman”, to which she responded, “Being a Nasty Woman means doing whatever the fuck you want to do, and being proud of who you are. It means not letting society squash you down and make you feel less of yourself. It means being an equal person in this world.”! You heard her! Stand up for what you believe in and be proud of your differences!

*I am a person who values her alone time to collect thoughts and reflect, so I make sure to excuse myself when I need to.*

As we all know artists, whether they are painters, illustrators, photographers, or musicians, use emotion, specifically heartbreak, as inspiration for their work. We asked Rodes about her journey of overcoming a heartbreak, some advice for those suffering heartbreak, and what she does to show herself love. “I’ve definitely been heartbroken! It’s actually where I’ve gotten a lot of creative fodder for my music. In the moment of heartbreak - really it’s more than a moment - everything tends to feel heavy and confusing. I’ve found that these glimpses of realization come periodically over time and that it really does take time to move forward! I still have realizations about different relationships and letdowns in my life, years later.” Rodes has three pieces of advice for those who are trying to overcome heartbreak.

“Don’t rush it. It’s okay to feel heartbroken. Allow yourself to feel what you are feeling.”

“But, don’t let darkness overcome you. Know that there is light somewhere to be found, just around the corner - even if it feels far away in the moment.”

“Clarity and calm will come with time.”

When it comes to love we have to remember the wise words of RuPaul, “If you don’t love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?”. Rodes told us how she makes sure to show herself love, “I give myself the space and time I need. I am a person who values her alone time to collect thoughts and reflect, so I make sure to excuse myself when I need to.” Self-love is different for everyone but it is very important no matter your occupation, gender, or age!







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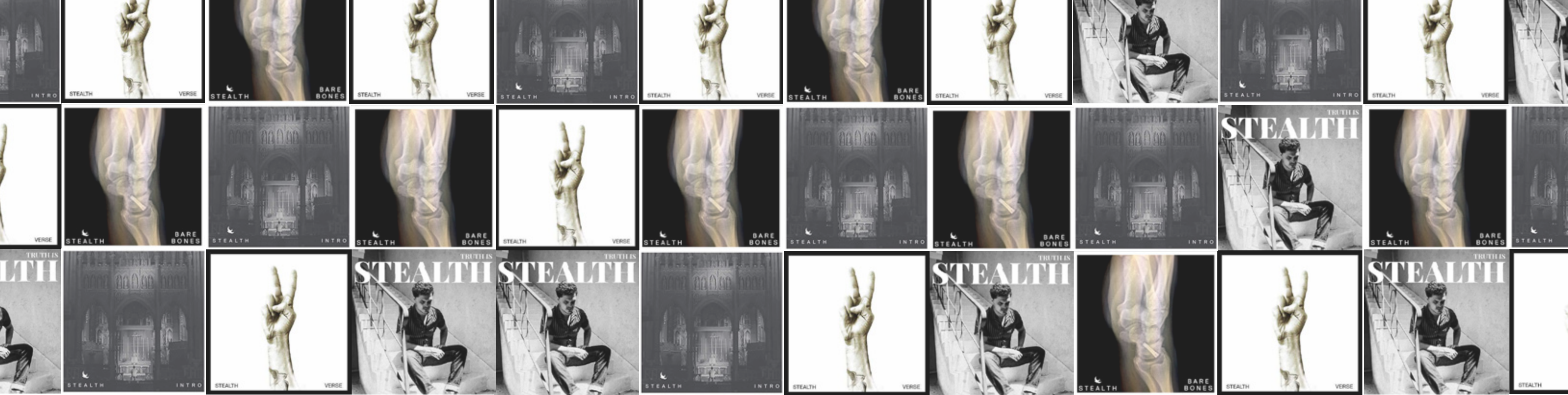
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# Mental Health

# With Stealth

STEALTH is a soul and blues artist from Birmingham. As an insomniac, he lays awake many nights thinking and writing songs. His powerful voice will capture your heart and make your ears yearn for more. Floated had the opportunity to ask him some questions about his life, mental health, and what is valuable to him!

## **Please tell us about your life growing up.**

I am very fortunate - I had and still have parents who love me and an amazing little sister. I grew up in a small town/village outside Birmingham. I had a very normal life. I was a little shit at school, but who wasn't, but I always dreamt big.

## **How was the experience writing your first song?**

It was incredibly terrifying but very liberating. I had a very good coach, Ryan Laubscher, who empowered me to write what I felt and what I liked rather than what I thought others wanted. He made it a far easier experience.

## **How do you use music to amplify your mental health?**

I use music as therapy. I'm very fortunate in the fact that I have a job where I'm essentially paid to unload. It's quite daunting, especially when you're in a session with someone new, but what I've realized is that everyone's got their own troubles and more often than not people are willing to listen and in my case help me write how I feel into a song.

## **How important is mental health to you and how do you make sure to keep in check with yourself?**

It's a big part of everyone's lives - their mental health is just as important as physical fitness. I have had close friends and family who have had battles, as well as myself, and I've found the best way to keep check seems to be staying open. It's not always the easiest because most of the time you just want to shut everyone out but I try to fight that urge and talk.

## **What are other ways, besides songwriting, that you use to reflect on your mental state/problems in your life?**

Like I said, I try to talk to people. I'm not very good on my own so it helps me get perspective... because in my own head and world, my issues are insurmountable, however in most cases that's just not true and in real terms, my issues are small in comparison to other people's.

## **What do you do when you are feeling down?**

I talk and I write. My favorite thing to do is play rugby to really take some aggression out.

## **Do you believe in destiny?**

I don't believe in an external force that determines our fate. I am the master of my own destiny, I make my fate.

## **How do you stop loving someone?**

It depends on the context. In a relationship, I'd say with time the feeling fades. You still care for the person but don't necessarily love them. When it comes to losing someone really close or important like a family member or a close friend, I don't think you can ever stop loving someone...you just learn to cope with the fact they aren't there anymore and try to focus on what you had when they were.

**Be on the lookout for new music from this talented artist as he recently signed to Ultra Music, which is home to many artists, such as Sofi Tukker, Calvin Harris, and Steve Aoki, to name a few! We can't wait to hear what he comes up with next!**



# FAT CASY

Photos by Krit Upra  
Words by Taylor Howarth

Take a tour through Cobbs Hill Park and tucked around the bend, you will find Old Friends Tattoo residing at 241 Norris Drive in Rochester, New York. Clients strolling in with a tentative idea or day-of-needle jitters are immediately washed with calm by the pristine minimalist decor. The custom shirts stacked neatly in the display case sell out fast, as shows of shop pride are a common occurrence at local venues and family gatherings alike. Personal interaction with the contributing artists only further reveals how they each rose to be immensely successful in their craft.

In the backroom sits co-owner “Fat Casy” Diaz, aged 29, engaging in banter with his longtime best friend and now business partner, Beth Stanley. He is eagerly awaiting his next victim while a muted display of gore and suspense plays out on the TV, carefully selected from an extensive collection of vintage monster classics.

Casy’s career evolved from a disciplined background in graphic design, a field which he truly enjoyed but left him with fewer job options than he had hoped for. After developing a solid base of friendship at

Temple Tattoo on Monroe Avenue in 2009, he was given the opportunity to take an apprenticeship with the owner Kira Hosler when Beth became pregnant with her first child. “I would drive from Canandaigua out to Rochester every day after school and stay out here on the weekends, in my car if I had to or at a homie’s house.” He recalls that despite a period of digging his heels in and feeling apprehensive, his first mentor sprung one of her own appointments onto him in 2011, a cherry blossom on the underboob, which would require not only professionalism but a strategy to execute. Struck with the worry of ensuring sure she was comfortable in a private space and fear that he would it botch it — “I said, ‘Fuck it, I gotta do it.’ So I did.” Upon her departure to Brooklyn, it was under his second mentor Christine Erikson that he really began to establish a solid concept of what to do and what not to do.

Casy will readily admit to starting off young and naïve, in it to make money, but it was one interaction in particular that opened his eyes to the impact of his work. A woman had come in to get a piece in adoration of her son that had autism.

IT WAS MY FIRST TIME REALIZING THAT  
TATTOO ISN'T JUST A JOB IT'S SOMETHING  
THAT CONTINUALLY HOLDS MEANING TO  
SOMEONE THAT MAY BE GETTING THROUGH  
SOMETHING DIFFICULT





At the final result, she broke down in tears. “It was my first time realizing that tattoo isn’t just a job. It’s something that continually [holds meaning] to someone that may be getting through something [difficult].”

These benchmark experiences with women in his early years and their continued patronage is likely what empowered him to take on the siege of walk-ins and begin to carve away at the copycat learning during his later years at Kamikaze Tattoo. What was exposed can

only be described as Traditional blackwork style of the utmost beautifully dark variety. The preferred subject matter, human or creature, emerges from heavy shading and “borderline tribal” geometric components. As he skillfully plays with negative space, medieval imagery, and dichotomous themes, Casy has been able to create several ambigrams and build a portfolio of lazy and sad-eyed “fat fools” that pull inspiration from his daily exposure to horror filmography.

When he’s not soaking up blood and guts or sketching to chill mood music, Casy likes to drink wine and play bass in a band called The Weight We Carry that recently finished up their fourth album together. Initiated by singer-guitarist Paul Cerqone, the guys have also been operating a community outreach program called Hardcore for the Homeless for over five years. “We go around to any one of the music scenes and gather clothes and food and water,

especially during the tougher times of the winter season. All the kids will donate their old band shirts and hoodies that no one wears anymore.” They either get the items to a shelter or distribute it all themselves.

After years of talking about it, Casy Diaz and his friend Colt Bockes, have finally released a line of limited edition apparel deemed HELLWEEK. With only thirty-one shirts available during the month of October, they are already receiving nationwide inquiry and support for their designs.



# The Climactics

Photos by Catherine Sharp  
Words by Che Holloway

In this highlight, we turn our attention to an electric, edgy, undiscovered band named The Climactics. We were able to sit down with this fire band and try to get into the minds of this upbeat and carefree bunch. Not only is this band fresh and unique, their energy is contagious and this interview is genuine proof of this. We're introduced to each member of the band, Liam Enright (Lead Vocalist), Gabriel Becker (Bassist), Shane Saxton (Guitarist), and Alex Fontini (Drums). We asked each of the members a series of quick questions:

**"Kind of a ninja turtles scenario. We were fucking around in the sewer. Somebody poured some green shit on us. And that is how we became a rock band."**

**Who are you?**

LIAM: I am Liam. We are The Climactics.

GABE: Gabe here, resident bass man and wallflower.

SHANE: This is Shane - real-life Dewey Finn: educator of youth by day, guitarist extraordinaire by eve.

Alex: Nervous.

**What is the origin of The Climactics?**

LIAM: Kind of a ninja turtles scenario. We were fucking around in the sewer. Somebody poured some green shit on us. And that is how we became a rock band.

SHANE: Well, Liam and I have known each other since going to middle school in Henrietta and we grew up playing in bands together all around Rochester. Gabe and I got to know each other in college by playing together in the incredibly short-lived group, Gabe and the Babes. We all ended up moving to NYC roughly around the same time, and we met our drummer - the handsome, young Alex Fontini - through a friend of a friend. And it's been one long honeymoon ever since.

**"Freedom, honesty, rage, silliness, ugliness, desire, desperation; Fuck You, YOU LOVE ME."**

**Please tell us about the journey to where you now.**

GABE: Once we started playing together it took us a while to figure out our sound. We've got a diverse range of influences and trying to reconcile them into something coherent was \*quite\* a journey. However, we have a love of 70's music

in general - whether that be pop, rock, jazz, or funk, and I think we all draw on the feel of that time period in our songwriting and performances.

SHANE: Now that we've nailed down a more cohesive sound, we're writing more collaboratively and are hoping to have our first full-length out some time in the next year.

**What does rock n' roll mean to you?**

LIAM: Freedom, honesty, rage, silliness, ugliness, desire, desperation; Fuck You, YOU LOVE ME.

ALEX: A way to sometimes sometimes sometimes get out of my head and safely feel and say things that I struggle with in normal life.

GABE: \*Insert Spinal Tap reference\*

**How do you stay grunge in this time of materialism and overt consumerism?**

LIAM: Every day I light a dollar bill on fire and put my lips up real close to it and scream at it. "IDIOT DOLLAR.....SMARTER THAN YOU, DOLLAR!!"

GABE: Flattered that you think we're a grunge band... You don't choose to be grunge, it chooses you.

SHANE: I fall asleep listening to Karl Marx's Das Kapital on audiobook every night.

**What is the importance of community in the music scene?**

LIAM: I think everybody... well maybe not everybody, but most people are looking for that good feeling of support and understanding, and that's what a good music scene should be about: a bunch of bands and artists who are on the same musical wavelength but are also challenging each other to be better and helping each other find an audience.

GABE: I think technology has really shaped the way the scene presents itself. Fewer people are going out to shows and discovering new bands in person... so much of that stuff is done online now. So the sense of community is always there, it's just less tangible than it once was.

SHANE: Having said that, we're always very eager to connect with other bands in New York and beyond!



**What is the biggest struggle you have had to overcome and how did you go about doing so?**

LIAM: I mean I think the biggest challenge with making music today is just being seen and heard when there’s such an insane volume of artists out there, like more than ever in history. I think the thing that sets us apart and gets people’s attention is that we’re not like a bedroom band, you know? Like we really work hard to put on an exciting, surprising real rock and roll live show.

**Is spirituality important to you?**

LIAM: I’d say I’m Wikipedia spiritual. Like I read the Wikipedia page on Daoism and now I think I’m a Daoist.

ALEX: Definitely, definitely not. My mom forced me to go to Hebrew school when I was little and I think in rebellion I acted out constantly which eventually bled over to regular school. That said, I think some experiences and art are meaningful to me in a way that spirituality or religion might be meaningful to others.

GABE: I believe there is a common connection between all life, human or otherwise. I don’t believe in a higher power beyond ourselves, though. So I’m spiritual but I have no spirituality, if that makes any sense.

SHANE: Nah. Dittoing Alex, I can think of pieces of art (movies like Wings of Desire, or albums like Joanna Newsom’s Have One On Me) that hint at something greater than ourselves,

SHANE: but I ultimately think that has more to do with the beauty of the bonds that we can form between our fellow humans.

**Please tell us the story behind the EP Social Animals.**

LIAM: Well, we were called Social Animals for a little while there until we found out there was another band called Social Animals who had opened for... who was it, Sum 41? So that’s where the title came from. We recorded it in our tiny, sweaty lil practice space in Brooklyn, and Gabe handled all the production and engineering and whatnot. The songs were written years apart, but I think they all fit together rather nicely.  
GABE: The whole thing was DIY. We had no budget

LIAM: and no time constraints so we decided to record it ourselves and see what we could come up with. All things considered... not bad.

Surely this band is going places. Along with their “Out of the Box” thinking, their will and drive to stand out above the crowd is extremely admirable and something that will continue to be the lighthouse guiding them on their way to much more success. If this band is ever playing in a town near you, we highly suggest you grab some tickets if you’re in need of an awesome time. This would be a show that you do not want to miss! We look forward to what this dynamic band has in store for us in the near future!

**“IDIOT DOLLAR.....SMARTER THAN YOU, DOLLAR!!”**





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