



ON THE COVER

Rubblebucket Photographed February 2018 by Adam Antalek

WRITERS

Steve DaSilva

Nicholas Toth

Steve Bass

Ellie Hughes

Wes Musgrove

Jessica Rubenstien Julia Abbonizzio

Cassidy Karpovage

Christopher Snyder

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Harrison O'Brien lan Hyland Krit Upra Frankie Bonn Adam Antalek Joel Beckwith

COPY EDITORS

Rebeca Posadas

ILLUSTRATOR

Shaemus Spencer

DESIGNER

Megan Serrano

LOGO

Rowan Rosenthal

COMMUNICATIONS

Collin Van Bork Hillary Bosy 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 whats dope right now, and whats 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.

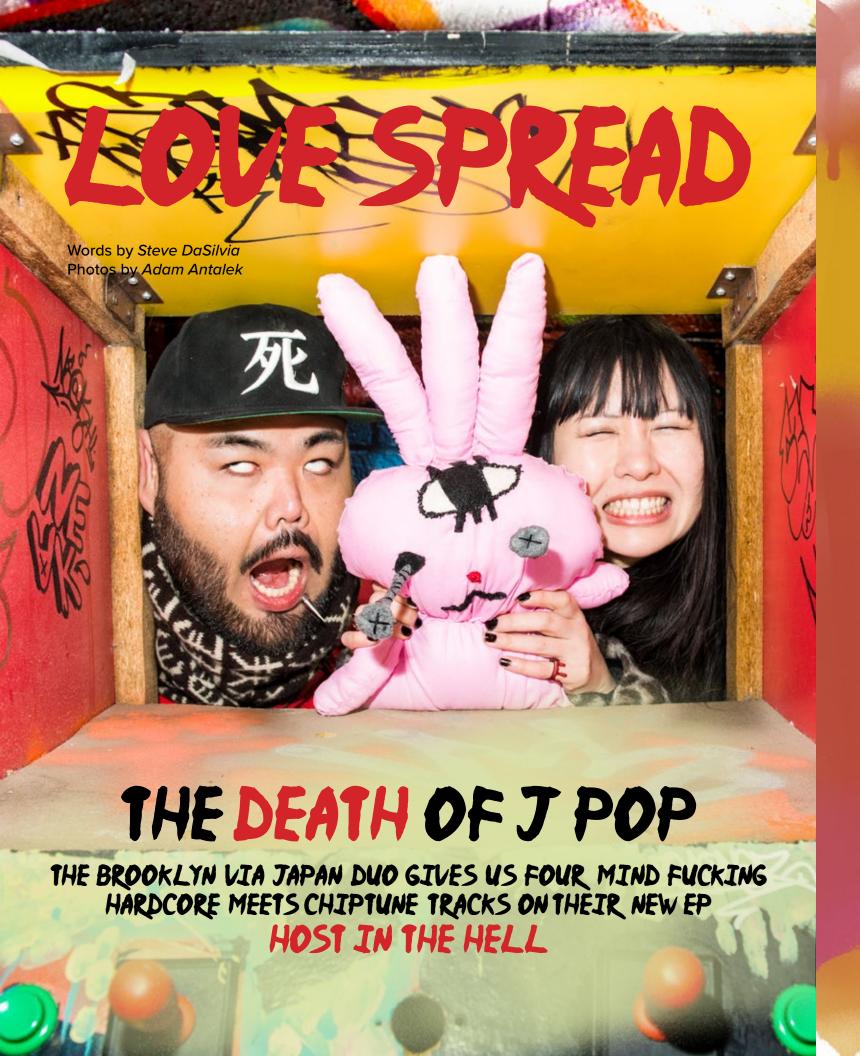
-The Floated Team

3

CONTENT

6..... LOVE SPREAD 10 ... AMERICAN STANDARDS 14 X AMBASSADORS 20 THE ABLE BODIES 28..... RUBBLEBUCKET **36.....YOKE LORE** 40 GHOSTS & ALIENS 44 PETROL GIRLS **52.....VEN ROPIK** 58 IRON TOM 64.. ROSES & REVOLUTIONS 68 FLOATED PLAYLIST 70 RADKEY





WE'RE ALWAYS ABOUT DESTROYING OUR INSTRUMENTS, GETTING SWEATY, GOING APESHIT"

>> Nestled between the coffee shops and DIY venues of Brooklyn, two Japanese expats are developing a completely new genre of music. Describing themselves as "post-JPop", Ryota Machida and Narumi Iyama have built a sound unlike any other. Rather than choosing between hardcore and chiptune, they blended their influences into a new musical language. Bringing together wailing guitars, screaming vocals, and video game controllers, Ryota and Narumi have moved past English and Japanese and created the dialect of Love Spread.

Love Spread's latest release, Host in the Hell, is an in-your-face assault on the ears. It's uncompromising, it's aggressive, and it pulls no punches. Picture Coheed and Cambria covering Pokemon battle music, and you'll have a vague idea of what to expect.

Host in the Hell may be only six tracks, but at nearly four minutes each there's time to explore the nuances of their genre. Each track shifts between moods, from somber melodies to banshee wailing. It may not be for everyone, but Love Spread is easily the best at what they do.

Boy Meets Girl

Ryota and Narumi met like romcom characters.

A Beck tribute show in LA brought them together, with some help from a mutual friend. Ryota was living in San Diego, bored out of his mind after dropping out of college, and Narumi needed a ride to the show. In Ryota's words, "When we went to that concert together, that was the beginning of the band."

Getting The Band Back Together

Two years later. Ryota's earlier band broke up, and his thoughts turned to New York.

"I randomly remembered that girl, that I went to the Beck concert with, she lives in Brooklyn." With a New York connection made, Ryota sent Narumi some of the music he'd been working on to see what she thought.

When she approved of his demos, Ryota thought one step further.

"I didn't want to do it alone. I always thought being a solo artist, and having a MacBook and a fucking MIDI controller, I've never enjoyed that. Going to a show, watching that, it's always boring." When Narumi agreed, "I went back to Cali, packed my shit up and moved here."

Growing Pains

"At first it was really hard. One of the main focuses of this band is to do something completely different." Love Spread evolved over the course of their first live shows, growing from a more traditional electronic vibe to their current live setup.

"At first we decided to go electronic, and have fancy MIDI controllers, we were setting everything up kind of like Kraftwerk." Turns out, a straight-laced German group isn't the best model for a group so heavily influenced by hardcore. Ryota and Narumi felt disconnected and pretentious, not part of the D.I.Y. community or even their own shows. So, they changed their setup.

"We decided 'Fuck this shit, we're gonna do whatever the fuck we want." Love Spread's stage design shifted. All equipment was shoved aside to make room for the group's energy.

Narumi and Ryota went from Kraftwerk to a basement show, bringing stage dives and crowdsurfing into the mix.

Brooklyn, Boston, and Beyond

That high-intensity action brought Love Spread further into the D.I.Y. community.

"Eventually, we were playing 100 shows in like half a year."
Other artists may not have understood Love Spread's sound, but their love for their music is undeniable. Ryota and Narumi were looking for an outlet, a way to go crazy, and Love Spread gave them that opportunity. It also gave them the opportunity to meet new people in the scene.

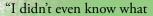
Love Spread started expanding beyond the Brooklyn scene, meeting up with artists from Boston, New Jersey...pretty much everywhere, up and down the East Coast. "Everyone's connected through the Internet, so we were able to find those kinds of people." Those connections, as it turns out, would go a little further than New Jersey.

Love Spreads Abroad

If Japan has a Coachella, it's the Fuji Rock Festival. When toying with the idea of touring over in Japan, Ryota and Narumi figured their sound was too crazy. With little knowledge of Japanese underground culture, they thought Love Spread would be too much of a departure from mainstream Japanese music.

As a goal to strive towards, they decided not to make the trip unless they could play Fuji Rock.

"But this one random day, Fuji Rock actually called us." Narumi and Ryota, slightly stunned at the chance to play Fuji, agreed to the show. Not wanting to make the trip just to play one set, though, they ended up scheduling a three-week tour of Japan.



to expect, I grew up watching videos of Fuji Rock." Love Spread was booked to a small stage, but Fuji Rock has a loose definition of small. "We went up on stage, and there were like five thousand people in the audience." With a crowd like that, Ryota and Narumi decided to go big before going home.

"We evolved in the Brooklyn D.I.Y. community. We're always about destroying our instruments, getting sweaty, going apeshit." Nothing could've prepared those five thousand

people for what Love Spread is like live. "I was throwing my mic and everything. After that they were really pissed off." Though, one intense live show may not be the only thing that traditional Japanese audiences take issue with.

The Death of J-Pop

For Ryota and Narumi, J-Pop isn't a genre; it's a shiny box hiding a dark secret.

"We would always see fellow Japanese artists trying to market themselves as J-Pop or kawaii." Love Spread, always ready to go against the grain, wants to subvert this trend. By applying that label to themselves, they're defining their brand of brash

> intensity as authentically Japanese. While it may sound like Ryota and Narumi just don't like the label, there's more to it than that.

"There's actually a really dark side to Japan." After losing friends to Japan's high suicide rates, Ryota and Narumi want to show the darkness of Japanese culture. Labeling Love Spread as The Death of J-Pop doesn't mean they're killing the genre. Instead, they want to represent the death, to show off the shadow behind all the pop culture.

From their piercing sound to their intense live show, Love Spread isn't here to make people happy. Ryota and Narumi are about telling their stories, getting emotions out into sound. They're unshakably authentic, working to make every aspect of the band into something that drips with feeling. In this age of assembly-line Top 40 hits, we could all use a little more Love Spread. <<



SEND US YOUR SHIT!



GET IT FEATURED!

CONTACT@FLOATEDMAG.COM WWW.FLOATEDMAG.COM



AERICAN

Words by Cassidy Karpovage

>> In a society that measures a person's worth in likes and followers, hardcore music has got caught up in the bullshit. The POTUS is tweeting from the Oval Office; children are recording mass shootings with their phones. In a culture where emotional expression comes in the form of emojis and memes, where do hardcore musicians make their voices heard?

Of course, in the music. But amidst the fuckery of social media, the music industry has drastically changed. Despite changes in the music industry, metalcore and hardcore music prevail.

The Phoenix-based band American Standards have navigated their way through the music industry on their own terms and emerged as a hardcore band true to its roots in the digital age. Lead vocalist Brandon Kellum recently sat down with Floated Magazine. Here's what he had to say...

Pacific Northwest Tour & Promoting "Anti-Melody"

For the first half of 2018, American Standards will wrap up promoting their fourth studio album, "Anti-Melody."

They'll conclude the tour in their home state of Arizona after making their way through Oregon and Washington.

Earlier in the year, the band had a blast touring around the Midwest, where hardcore/metalcore shows aren't as frequent as they are on the East and West Coasts. The excitement all came after spending two years getting "Anti-Melody" officially out on the Internet sound waves.

Like scores of other artists and musicians, American Standards have decided to make their fourth album available at no cost to listeners. As vocalist Brandon Kellum puts it, "We don't need your money. We just want people to hear it."

It's refreshing to hear. If you're a millennial reading this, you can probably recall the time Metallica sued Napster back in 2000. In the wake of Spotify, Top 40 musicians have made their frustrations heard. They've done so by discontinuing their music on Spotify and other music streaming sites, forcing fans to sign up for exclusive sites like Apple Music and Tidal.

Yet, there are more musicians who recognize and embrace the benefits of free to low-cost music streaming sites than those who shun it all away. Because to these musicians, it's more about making the music heard than gaining profit.

In the future, Generation Z will look at CDs, MP3 players, and iPods as relics of the past. But because of streaming sites like Spotify and SoundCloud, bands can put themselves on the map and connect with eager ears from all corners of the globe.

That's what American Standards have embraced since their formation in 2011.

Rewind Eight Years

Once upon a time, musicians connected with one another by hanging up flyers on telephone poles. During the dawn of the Internet, Craigslist graced the world and changed the nature of classifieds forever.

Corey Skowronski soon joined the lineup, and in true punk fashion, the bass guitarist designed the band's album artwork. Amidst Skowronski's artistic contributions and the band's free-for-all, no-strings-attached approach to playing, American Standards made serious headway on the Arizona hardcore scene. They gained a huge underground following and the attention of local Phoenix radio shows and magazines. They also garnered the attention of their mentors, Every Time I Die from Buffalo, New York.

Making It Hardcore

"It's like when you say you don't want to be in a relationship, and then all of a sudden, it seems like everybody likes you."
- Brandon Kellum

It wasn't long before they started touring on the mainstream hardcore scene, headlining for bands like Emery, Norma Jean, and Stray from the Path.

"its like when you say you don't want to be in a relationship, and then all of a sudden, it seems like everybody likes you."

On New Year's Eve 2010, guitarist Cody Conrad reached out to vocalist Brandon Kellum and asked if he wanted to "jam out." Kellum had recently left a band after playing hardcore music for nearly 12 years. He wasn't particularly interested in joining a new one. But when he tried out for Conrad's band, he found that their music was exactly what he had always aspired to play.

"No one ever wanted to do this raw, more chaotic and less technical style. There was more passion behind it. So it just clicked right away." -Brandon Kellum, vocalist of American Standards

It started off as a fun time. Like Kellum, the original members of American Standards had also played in other bands. They also weren't interested in touring, making it big or rolling in the dough. They wanted to play the music they wanted to play, wherever and whenever they wanted.

But in the end, it turned out to be more than they had bargained for.

It also wasn't long until Victory Records signed them on to their distributed label, We Are Triumphant.

The band's first studio album, "Still Life," came out in 2012 under the We Are Triumphant label. However, the band soon grew disillusioned by their relationship with Victory Records. According to Kellum, the band had to foot the bill for most of their recording time, album releases, and music videos. They even had to schedule their own tour dates.

Signing on with a record company was already more than what the band had originally anticipated. They all started off in their mid- to late 20s and had already played for years as hardcore/metalcore musicians. The time and energy they devoted to maintaining their relationship with the record company was not reciprocated. Understandably, they parted ways with Victory Records.

Since then, American Standards have played somewhere between 300 and 400 live shows independently and under other labels. They've had lineup changes over the years and have seen their share of young musicians come and go.

As Kellum puts it, it's the natural ebb and flow of being in a band. Younger members in their early 20s want to keep pushing their limits. Members in their late 20s and early 30s, like Kellum, Skowronski, drummer Mitch Hosier and bass guitarist Steven Mandell, just want to play music to crowds who want to hear it. Founding bass guitarist Cody Conrad committed suicide in 2015, and the effect of his suicide echoes throughout "Anti-Melody".

"In the digital realm of likes, upvotes and retweets, American Standards have managed to promote and network themselves all while producing their own music and videos."

Navigating Their Way Through the Music Industry

After going through a string of labels, American Standards have honored the founding fathers of punk by becoming self-sustainable in the music biz. Of course, in true hardcore fashion, they've strayed away from music labels.

Because it's 2018, American Standards have also learned to cultivate social media culture to get their music out to devoted listeners. In the digital realm of likes, upvotes and retweets, American Standards have managed to promote and network themselves all while producing their own music and videos.

Still, social media is both a blessing and a curse. While social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook make it easy to share new music, the trouble arises when outreaching to devoted fans through all of Google's algorithm changes and the shameless noise of self-promotion.

The band's following has grown vastly outside Phoenix and beyond. Yet, Kellum, who completes all the band's logistical work, has found it difficult to translate his social media followers into attending concert goers.

The reason?

There are probably a few. Most notably, Instagram, which is

easily the most happening social media platform right now, has received a lot of flack recently for its algorithm. Many businesses - bands included - have found that their fresh content gets lost in the sea of old, repetitive feeds.

When this happens to bands, fans might not always get proper notice about their favorite musicians coming to town. Instagram's algorithm change should pull up more recent posts into people's feeds. Hopefully, this will make it easier for bands like American Standards to reach out to their fanbases. Kellum and the rest of the crew are still, like many other musicians, learning how to navigate the technicalities of social media. Despite the fuckery of social media and the Internet, American Standards have proven that they're more than willing to go the DIY route.

The band recognizes that the days of buying band CDs are long over, and they rely on merchandise to generate funds. For hardcore/metalcore musicians, this is all the more reason to get creative, go independent and stick it to the man.

Meanwhile, Kellum tells us more about his experiences on the road. In light of the digital age, the band has seen older musicians coming out of the woodwork, struggling to live off album sales from years past.

While it means more opportunity to headline reunion shows, it's also very telling of the times and how much the music industry has transformed.

The Takeaway?

Like the men and women who defined hardcore punk back in the 1970s and 1980s, American Standards stay true to their genre.

"For hardcore/metalcore musicians, this is all the more reason to get creative, go independent and stick it to the man."

They spent nearly two years getting "Anti-Melody" to where it is today — all on their own. Now, when they listen to the finished album again, American Standards can hear the music that they want to play in the future.

After tearing up the Pacific Northwest, American Standards will make their way over to the East Coast. In the meantime, stay tuned to Floated to hear when American Standards will grace us in New York! <<



>> X Ambassadors are an alternative rock band with an indie twist. The band consists of: Sam Harris (lead vocalist, guitarist, saxophonist, bassist, drummer, percussionist), Casey Harris (pianist, keyboardist, backing vocalist), Adam Levin (drummer, percussionist). The band has been on a mission to unite New York State through music. We had the opportunity to sit down and talk to Adam about their first successful Cayuga Music Festival, the pressure to overcome hurdles, and their coffee addiction.

Let's talk about staying fresh!

X Ambassadors: I try to diet and exercise and to do that on the road, as well. I think it's good to have a liking for music. I like to play golf. I like to eat, going out and eating...I love food. You know, keeping a balance of normalcy when you can because when you're out it's just crazy.

How much energy do you put into the live performances?

X Ambassadors: I burn through a lot man. It's hard to do every night. Sam especially, he's really doing a lot more than everyone else. He has a strict diet and works out every day, really works hard to keep in shape and keep his voice healthy. He really is dedicated.

What has changed so far in the band's career? The harshest thing to overcome?

X Ambassadors: I mean it's still kind of hard. Now there's pressure to follow up, whereas before it was, can we make it? The early pressure was like, how do we book a show? Then

that turned into booking a little tour. We'd be on tour for like two weeks, every three months and we wanted to be on the road all the time. So, slowly we overcome these hurdles and figured out how to steer ourselves in the right direction. There is so much political stuff with making music and releasing music. Travel is hard on your body and voice, but you know we love it. Without it, it is less fun. You just gotta work hard.

"We have always welcomed collaboration. It helps us get out of our comfort zone so we can try something new."

Where did the idea of Cayuga Fest come from?

X Ambassadors: I think like two or three years ago, our manager approached us with the idea, but it wasn't the right time for us. We were on an endless tour cycle, and when we got off the road we got to reassess...we played a ton of shows and we sat down with our manager. I think the first step was reaching out to The Roots, who were friends, once we got them onboard we figured everything else out.

Could you elaborate on your experience with collaboration?

X Ambassadors: We do a lot of collaborations. On our records, we're collaborating with different producers and songwriters. We have always welcomed collaboration. It helps us get out of our comfort zone so we can try something new.

We heard rumors that you guys are coffee nerds, and that the band carries around a crazy setup.

X Ambassadors: There is, it's a pour over setup. Perfectly carved out with the gooseneck kettle, the grinder, filters...the whole thing. It's really cool. It's hard, it takes a long time to make 12 pour overs. So if you wake up and there's a line of people it might be while...the only downside. We need to get one of those espresso machines, that's all thanks to one of our techs, Connor. When we are on the road we see some that are way crazier.

What is the expereince like in the studio?

X Ambassadors: When we are in the studio I'm working 90% of the time on a beat machine. I'm producing drum tracks using technology to incorporate and play into sound and track layering. Our thing is to create additional drum layers in the studio, later bringing it live with the guitars, piano setup, along with live drums. Similar to seeing Electric Guest live, they have a lot of beat machines to recreate drum tracks, then playing over that element with actual live instruments. My favorite band, which has put that to use, is Radiohead. That's where we got that idea from.

What brought you guys to film the music video seriers in Upstate NY?

X Ambassadors: The first video, ahead of myself, out of the trio, we did some in Rochester. I'm the only one out from Ithaca, while Sam and Casey have family from Rochester. I've been there and liked the atmosphere, the scenery, and wanted that kind of vibe for the video. We had a good time up there. Sam did all the vocals live.

Is there a reason why Sam went with the live vocals in the video series?

X Ambassadors: Yeah, we were inspired by a Bruce Springsteen music video. He had live vocals and we realized nobody had really done that. We always wanted to be doing something a little different. For the last album, we released some narrative music video...everyone kind of does that...and it's cool....but we've done that before, and we wanted to do something different this time around.

"That's kind of been the vibe of this record. It's really cool because nobody does that."

Is there a plan to tie all the videos into Upstate?

X Ambassadors: Yeah, there is supposed to be a connection between the two. There was a period that we thought that might get messed up because maybe we were gonna release songs in a different order after the fact, but it all worked out in the end. That's kind of been the vibe of this record. It's really cool because nobody does that. We're really proud of all this. It's a performance, Sam working with his live vocals, which is different from the new record. In the new record, we are going with a different direction, adding a backup singer, and even switching up the clothes we were wearing. <<







DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW US ON SPOTIFY FOR A NEW CURATED PLAYLIST EVERY SUNDAY





where we kind of just trigger everything. I don't think we want to sample everything. You want to have that live element where that song is going to sound the same but it's going to have more of a live feel.

John: I'm sure you've heard of LCD Soundsystem. When he makes the records, it's just him. When he plays live it's like a group of musicians performing the greatest LCD Soundsystem cover band on Earth. Whatever we do, we want to be able to create the best show that we can play or playing exactly the record and getting the vibe across. I think the biggest challenge is going to be what to wear.

Eli: Which video are we gonna do costumes from?

John: I'm leaning towards my turtleneck outfit. I've been very surprised by how comfy and utilitarian they are. I've rocked my turtleneck in the days since the shoot, unironically. I got a couple strange looks.

Whats the benefit of learning more than one instrument as an artist?

Eli: It has forced me to become a better player. Yesterday we were working on this track, I had this bass I really wanted to try out. It sounded really really nice for the track and it's the perfect example of being able to try stuff. If it works it works, if it doesn't it doesn't. But being able to have that knowledge, to try something can make an accident turn into a really great song or idea.

John: I agree with all of that and as a songwriter. I was a guitar player for a long time and I got into making beats when I was in my 20's. I didn't really become a full songwriter until my last band, Blue Falcon. Using different instruments is essential to being a good songwriter. Being able to sit down at the keys or the guitar or using drum machines, it is a way to open up your palate...to not doing the same stuff all the time. I almost feel like it is essential to be well rounded and not falling into a trap of playing the same emo 9 chords over and over again.

Eli: It keeps me fresh having to constantly collaborate with multiple music groups. Keeps on top of what I want to bring and what my role is in the band. Keeping my own sound, while keeping the group dynamic.

John: What I've learned is being patient with creativeness and not giving up on ideas. Just getting better all around at writing and arranging. I like variety.

Do you ever find yourself getting into genre loops, playing in multiple bands?

John: Sometimes, but I've been kind of jumping around genres a lot because I get bored easily. I genuinely enjoy so many styles of music. I believe that if you listen to and are inspired by as many different styles as possible, it makes you a better musician. It makes you, if you really love and can play different music, you can wear those different hats.

I also feel too, this is a difficult longer topic. I feel like nowadays when people listen to music, they have a little more room when listening to a band that doesn't only have one specific genre all the time. There's room for an artist to have a rock tune, synthpop, and/or folky sound. When I hear that with artists, as long as there's some continuity to it, I dig that.

We're kind of in a mixtape culture now. People will listen to EDM and then pop. People's brains are hard-wired to listen to music that way, not that you can't sit through an album, but people jump around. I know I do it that way.

Maybe that's reflective in the music. I grew up listening to heavy metal and rap...things people 20 years ago would think were disparate styles like, 'How could you like that and like that?' But now, I feel like that's almost normal.

Eli: There's just so much music these days and everything is so accessible. The listeners are almost forced to [jump genres]

I listen to the radio and you can hear Kendrick Lamar and then immediately after hear Maroon 5. I feel like the top 40s have blended into this thing.

What's the most mindopening piece of music gear you worked with?

Eli: Recently, John just let me borrow this Yamaha.It's a little like almost, toy sort of, 80, or 90s John?

"We're kind of in a mix tape culture now. People will listen to EDM and then pop. People's brains are hard wired to listen to music that way, not that you can't sit through an album, but people jump around, I know I do it that way."

Using an omnichord?

Eli: They have that at Nazareth. I use those in music therapy sessions. It's basically an electronic ribbon sensor so you don't even need to know how to play an instrument. It's like an electric autoharp. So it has on board sounds and rhythm samples even.

John, being in the local scene for so long, how have you seen the scene change?

John: I have seen the scene change. I have been around long enough to see things change, like lots of new venues opening. It seems to be the last few years there are a lot more venues, which I think is pretty cool. I also see a lot of creative people, who are out there and supporting the scene, like Floated.

I'm a fan of it, you guys are documenting the local scene. There are other people who are doing similar things and seem to realize that there is a lot of talent in Rochester. There's been several bands in the last few years that have gotten signed. When I came up, that wasn't as common. I think that the music scene in Rochester, in the time that I have been around, has improved. I hope it keeps getting better and better.

Eli: Big time. Just from what I've seen, documentation is everything...like with Floated and our friends at Golden Road. It is just as important as the music. It's a new age, new version of MTV. You can listen to the music but if you can't really see it, it never really happens. It's super important and I think people are getting wise to that.

When can we expect to see The Able Bodies perform live?

Eli: Yeah. Early fall? We got a lot of new music. A few months ago it felt like, we needed a few more months before we can really play a show. Now we got a lot of songs we're working on and it's just a matter of finding time in both our schedules to get the show. We want the show to be as high quality as the recordings have been. It's not something I want to rush but I don't want to miss out on people who have been anticipating it. <<

John: 80's, I think it's one of their lower priced... I forgot the line...but those things can be bought for, 100 bucks or less.

Eli: It has helped me, in terms of the sound, specifically the sound we're going for...grasp that gear and that concept, it's helped me understand that era. That's an interesting way to see it. On the keyboard, the piano is something I'm getting more comfortable with and accustomed to. It's a really good songwriting tool just because everything is laid out in front of you, it's very linear. It's fun to step back from the guitar and see the music differently, visually, and compositionally.

John: Similar to that, again being a guitar player, I'm a gearhead...I have a lot of gear. I got a Nord, my favorite thing recently. I don't know if you've ever heard of that. It's a keyboard that has incredible sample sounds. Every time I sit down, I find something new out. I'm not a keyboardist, and I can do things on there I can't do on a guitar. It's fun to compose on an instrument like that, go back to my guitar, and flesh this part out. I wrote this song on something that I'm not technically that good at.



>> The hardcore scene in Rochester has been saturated for the Mike and Jordan, the two members that are savvy in the past few years. Metal and heavy groove rock is nothing new to the 585 area, and a lot of band have discovered the algorithm of perfecting the breakdown. REPS is not one of those bands. They continue to set precedence for heavy sounds with dynamic production and precision in their live performances. Floated's own Frankie Bonn sat down with the band to talk about their place in the hardcore arena and their progress as a group thus far.

It's been about two years since their last production was released, but REPS isn't worried about any form of hiatus in delivering content to the public. They are fortunate enough to possess two members that are well versed in audio engineering and production.

(In regards to the new album in progress) Any new concepts?

Jordan: ...the overall theme... is a little bit faster, a little more consistent, a little more dynamic. We also focused on [being] more tonally heavy. The tones of the guitar, the bass the drums. It's just very heavy and raw.

Steve: I would say without an ounce of hesitation, that this [new record] hits harder than anything we've written to date. It's like less heavy [like a different kind of heavy] super fuckin' techy, crazy poly-rhythms. We wanted to get back to groovy... more of a dynamic quality. There are so many heavy bands out there. They're all trying to out-breakdown each other. [Such as] "How many ghost notes can your drummer hit?" We kind of try to approach heavy as more of a dynamic, like an overall soundscape. Mike and Jordan have really taken what they learned at FLCC and turned it into something that has saved us thousands and a has been a great resource to us to be able to track a record at our own leisure. For this one [record in progress], we spent more time crafting five songs than the eleven songs we did for Poisoned Youth. I think that definitely shows.

Jordan: It's definitely more thought out, I would say. Definitely focused.

Steve: While still being chaotic.

" People have a vision of punk rock and hardcore people that are involved in those scenes, who play that kind of music, of being Neanderthals with throat tats."

studio had high praise for the mentors they found at FLCC, and attribute their style and success in the booth to their lessons. Their mantra is to tap into the band's raw ability and sounds in order to capture an ultra-authentic feel that acts as a crisp, clean version of what the band sounds like live.

Have you thought about how you can apply what you learned at school into what you do now?

Steve: The teachers at the community college are the most overqualified staff. So overqualified for a community college in the middle of bumblefuck nowhere, NY.

Jordan: People that stand out to me are Jeff Smith and John Bellick. They were old analog guys.

Mike: Bob Potter.

Colton: I would definitely say they influenced our recording style, and how we went about attacking this record. There wasn't a lot of crazy production.

Steve: Everything is real.

Jordan: ...we have a good idea on how we want to sound. It's just like how we play. To the stuff we use on the album, like the drum kit we use to the guitar stuff. I use my Les Paul and both my amps. I love the sound of it.

Steve: A super important thing for all of us. If someone listened to a REPS song or record for the first time, I want that person to hear that and go to a show and hear the exact same thing. We wanted the live experience to be transcribed in our records. You know we do everything ourselves; It's just four dudes fuckin' screaming and hittin' shit and playing shit really hard and really loud because it's fun and we're angry.

Despite showing an immense level of ingenuity and spending time on delivering a genuine experience in the form of a record, REPS, like any artist in the public's eye, has faced its share of skeptics. Like true rocking musicians though, they barely spend time thinking about such negativity and explain that they already have enough to be angry about.

Do you guys face any criticisms surrounding hardcore stereotypes?

Mike: They're like, "Oh, it's just a lifestyle," but it's not. We actually give a shit.

Colton: People have a vision of punk rock and hardcore people that are involved in those scenes, who play that kind of music, of being Neanderthals with throat tats. That's obviously not [always] the case.

Jordan: It's definitely angry. [But] we're super passive... we let it out in our music. We're just being creative. I feel like being a UFC fighter would be a great way to let it all out...

Part of the creativity that is being referenced here is aided by the production process, as mentioned earlier. REPS also takes pride in their knowledge of other music technology when cultivating their sound. While they don't consider themselves to be tightly coupled to the gear they use, they have a great appreciation for certain tools in that domain.

Thought process with pedals, Anything you want to talk

Mike: Pedals are cool. Shout out to my boys at Stryman; make some damn good pedals. And Boss, gotta give it to them (obviously), Line Six too and TC Electronics. Dark Glass, shout out to them. Also, shout out to our Rochester What's your favorite pedal?

Jordan: Desert Island pedal: the PS6, the Harmonist.

Colton: That's one thing that a lot of people talk about with all of our music, is the fuckin' guitar sounds that you come up with. Like how the fuck does that happen? It's one dude, he's a wizard. Like I don't know.

Jordan: I'm always a student in the craft of music and gear. I'm always learning about stuff. The people that make this stuff, like [the ones] that build pedals and amps, always blow my mind.

REPS' full length album, Poisoned Youth, can be found online at their band camp page and in Spotify's library. Those who find themselves resonating with this powerful shredding should follow REPS on all online channels <<







>> Live tattooing on stage, giant buckets of confetti, crowd surfing inflatable pool animals, and a farewell march through the crowd while still performing just skims the surface of the live Rubblebucket experience.

"Peacockin" is how the indie band chose to describe themselves during our photoshoot and interview. We had the chance to speak to Kalmia "Kal" Traver, lead vocalist and saxophonist, and Alex Toth, band leader and trumpet player (and proof my own last name wasn't an Ellis Island fuck-up). Floated picked their brains about anything and everything our tiny brains could think of — from fashion and touring to the modern political moments affecting our lives.

Rubblebucket, an indie dance-pop group, is based in Brooklyn, N.Y. The group has its roots in Burlington, Vt., where Kal and Alex met at the University of Vermont and began playing music together. Eventually the pair moved to Boston in 2006, did odd jobs and made their own style of music at every opportunity.

Rubblebucket came into existence after Traver and Toth started playing with other musicians in 2007, releasing their first album in 2008 as the Rubblebucket

Orchestra. (What a dope name, right?)

Currently, the group's nine members tour the world, but most of their time is spent in a 15-seat van affectionately known as "Puppy."

For you poor souls who have never experienced the sound, lights and colors of Rubblebucket, buy a tent, camp out in Williamsburg and head to the Brooklyn Steel or The Bowery for the band's next life-changing show. They are loud, upbeat and ready to kick ass. Whether "Came Out of a Lady" leaves you comatose on the couch or a live performance of "If U C My Enemies" leaves you stunned, Rubblebucket is always guaranteed to rock the house.

On this sunny, bitterly cold day in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, we began our photo shoot by discussing fashion. When asked what inspired his onstage apparel choices, Toth told us he liked the authentic street styles of Bill Cunningham and described his "anti-shopping" method: "You go to like, Salvation Army and thrift stores [...] You pick out an item and you don't look at the price tag. You only buy it if it's below a certain price."

Traver went on to tell us about her fascination with fashion shows and her appreciation for Marc Jacobs. "In the past few years I've started watching runway shows because they're ridiculous and so entertaining [...] I like Marc Jacobs the most. His are the most weird."

These creative sentiments do not stop with the clothes on Toth's and Traver's backs; their individuality comes across in the group's music, as well. Rubblebucker's sound is definitely unique, indie pop that leans heavily on synth alongside a kick ass horn section. It's not the "normal" mix for a band, sure, but where's the fun in normal? Toth commented that sometimes he wonders if the band's music is too strange. "Maybe I should make it less weird, because I want to be successful," he said. "[But] it never really feels good when you compromise like that. Even if it does do well, it doesn't feel honest. And if it doesn't, you're like, 'Fuck, why didn't I just do the thing I wanted to do?'" Toth continued, "What I've learned, 100 percent, is [to] notice the self-doubt and go with your own thing."

"What I've learned,
100 percent, is [to]
notice the self-doubt
and go with your own
thing." - Kal Traver

This sentiment was echoed by Toth's description of his creative process. "For me, creativity and the way music comes to me is... I wish I could really paint it or describe it. It's often so multi-sensory though. It's pretty vivid. [...] I don't know if that's the synesthesia but there's something with my music that's so visual."

This attitude might not make Rubblebucket billionaires, but that's okay with them. "I don't have to make all 7 billion hearts on earth weaken," said Traver. "We can kind of build the world that we want on a smaller scale, like [a] more manageable human scale." And this doctrine of kicking ass





#metoo and #timesup movements, a topic that both Traver and "I want to play in more bands, with more women." Toth had plenty to talk about. "I feel like it's a gateway to a lot of healing," remarked Traver. "Alex and I talk about stances, and how the best way to deal with opposition is to be more fluid and never really have a stance and be more open-minded."

and she was a feminist and she

Traver was hopeful that the movements would remain positive. She said, "I'm hoping [...] that this conversation won't be, like, an us against them or men against women. Gender is such an illusion, ultimately."

Traver elaborated on this idea of gender as an illusion, stating clothes they wear, the tunes they write, or the company they that the movement should not only cover those who identify as women, but also "anyone who doesn't have [a] masculine identity." However, going back to the idea that it should never become a us-and-them issue, Traver stated, "That's delicate must be made by the artists, of the artists and for the artists, lest 'cause I could have a masculine identity, too. Like, I love to express the male part of myself. But that's a whole other shade of nuance."

Building on this, Toth added, "It's really powerful. It reminds me of my mindfulness practice and my meditation with Buddhism and stuff like that. I sat with this 70-year-old nun, and she was a feminist and she went and ordained against he Buddhist patriarchy in Thailand. The nun lineage had ran out and she went and ordained a bunch of these women. And before the #metoo movement, it brings it back to being mindful about our speech and how we call people out and how we hold ourselves in all areas of life".

The movement has been part of a greater cultural trend towards equality in the music and entertainment industries, which have so constantly and cruelly excluded the voices of women and non-binary individuals. It's a seriously dick move, considering that it excludes more than half the population. As Toth put it, keeping the gender dynamic balanced creates a "better touring vibe. Better conversations. We tour with , nine people. It's good to have all these different perspectives." Toth continued,

This feat is not always easily accomplished, thanks in part to societal ideas on who should be a musician. "As a band leader through the ages, like, you go to college, [and] it's privileged white kids for the most part," Toth said. "You have to go the extra step to find that [...] it's white males for the most part. It takes extra effort to, you know, diversify the presence on stage." Bands consisting solely of white dudes are so ubiquitous that it's easy to overlook the problem.

Traver admits that all of the blame cannot be placed on the powers that be. Getting to a solution takes some soul-searching and personal reflection. "One thing I really found coming up against my own ingrained prejudice, is when I'm in that space, am I actually listening, or am I just expecting them to be a certain way, and that can be true of any person." Traver continued, "It's really helping me open up my mind and be passively surprised at what someone may say or what notes they play and not prescribe them, like, 'Oh, I'm gonna put you in a box right when I meet you." Toth echoed this sentiment, telling us, "I've watched in the musician community and among my friends. Everyone is checking themselves out, everyone is like, 'How have I been holding myself."

This constant need for change and creativity has defined Rubblebucket since the band's inception. Whether it's the keep, Toth and Traver are always pushing the envelope as artists. The rules laid forth by the musical authorities don't matter. Fuck those rules: those rules are for posers. The rules for art the powerful medium we call music perish from this earth. <<

"One thing I really found coming up agaisnt my own ingrained predjudice, is when I'm in that space, am I actually listening, or am I just expecting them to be a certain way, and that can be true of any person."

- Kal Traver



are ideas and conceptions we hold onto, that after a while don't make sense anymore," Galvin said "For self-betterment, the individual must kill these off."

creative impulse with his ongoing

spiritual education. By studying







INANTTOBELIEVE

INFILTRATING ROCHESTER, NY'S PREMIER GHOST & ALIEN COMMUNITY

>> Rochester Ghost Society: First Contact

As a hobby I've located, infiltrated, and befriended fringe communities. I have spoken at tea party rallies, visited a cult that worships Korean Jesus, and smoked with Indian gamblers. Most recently, I visited a group of people who hunt and actively banish ghosts and other supernatural entities.

I decided to research ghost hunters after hearing a spot on an independent Rochester radio program. The program was interview-based. A host asked a ghost hunter about his ghost removal service, and the ghost hunter replied with the utmost sincerity, that he would get rid of them for the right price. (If ghosts were an actual problem, I like to imagine that ghost insurance would also be a thing.) "I'm sorry, sir, I can't remove your ghost. Your insurance will not cover the removal of a ghost from a home with a preexisting ghost."

Surprisingly, Rochester is home to many ghost hunting communities. In fact, ghost hunting has a cult following here in Rochester. I found over eight active and countless more inactive ghost hunting groups while looking for the perfect one to infiltrate. Ultimately, we decided to visit what we determined to be the most serious and eccentric group in all of Rochester. We decided on the ghost group that demanded a list of requirements, a list so outrageous that we knew we had a winner.

"The group advised me to buy a specific stone ring to keep the dark energy away, as well as to spread sage around my living area."

"We specifically ask you for a full-face photo of just yourself! No couples photos — even if you're both joining. This helps organizers and members put a face with your name. No sunglasses, photoshopping, ghosts, babies, cars, bikes, pets/animals, cartoons, children, landscapes. Please use your real First Name, last if you want. No initials and no 'popular character' name. Please answer the five profile questions in detail, not just one word. Be specific in your answers."

Naturally, we said "fuck the rules" and we just showed up, turned on the charm and invented personal ghost stories. Inventing our own stories was a very clever move, because these people are skeptical and gaining their trust is hard.

My ghost story involved a specter that has followed me since I was 14. My friend said that his family lived in a haunted house that makes funny noises and occasionally produces a ghost. They loved our stories, probably a bit too much. The group advised me to buy a specific stone ring to keep the dark energy away, as well as to spread sage around my living area. They desperately wanted to visit my friend's imaginary home and conduct a ghost survey. They came to the point of harassment by pressuring him to reveal its location and owner. He kept saying he did not want to give away personal information like that to strangers.

While conjuring my story, I started to feel like I was 10 years old again playing make believe. But instead of pretending to hunt magical creatures, I was huntingt supernatural ghosts and aliens with middle-aged suburbanites.

The Garrulous Garrison of Ghost Hunters

From a distance, they looked like a bunch of basement-dwelling, middle-aged virgins playing Dungeons & Dragons (D&D). They sat around a table and took turns explaining their alien and ghost encounters with immense enthusiasm, each one attempting to one-up the others in their supernatural experience.

The Dungeon Master of the group was an older woman who enveloped herself in a shawl-like garment that gave her the impression of a shaman. She commanded an aura of superiority over the other members, who, with a motion of this women's mystically plump hand, would fall silent and listen like mesmerized school children. I must admit she did the mystic role justice. In a different life, she could have been a preacher or a monk. Second-in-command and primary alien authority

was an overweight English man. He gave the group a sense of authenticity. He spoke with the confidence and fluidity of a college intellectual, but sadly, no university needs a ghost and alien expert. He was also the only member who entertained the existence of the Illuminati.

There was another new member besides us. A middle-aged housewife who talked like she had taken a handful of Ambien, who had a story about finding ghosts near her summer home. Her story dragged on for what seemed like an eternity. When someone asked her a question her face would make an expression was something in-between annoyance and exhilaration, probably an Ambien thing.

Another member was a very old man who was likely alive during the "ancient" part of "Ancient Aliens." He carried an oxygen tank

"It was like listening to a fantasy monster manual on audiobook with conflicting information and incomplete descriptions."

and was the chief technology expert. He was married to a woman with purple hair who was considered best at contacting the ghosts since she could speak in tongues. She demonstrated this ability and we honestly thought she'd forgotten how to use words altogether for about 45 seconds.

The group's tech could have been scavenged from any 12-year-old's bedroom. It comprised some recording devices, a few inexpensive cameras and some dowsing rods. For those of you not well versed in ghost hunting tech, dowsing rods are bits of metal you can use to ask ghosts yes or no questions. Basically, a way less cool version of a Ouija board. In fact, the more high-tech the equipment is, the more probing of humans. They are likely it is to disturb the ghosts. Cell phones are banned on all ghost hunts and upgrading is considered risky because the new technology might scare the ghosts. We learned that if you want to catch a ghost, you won't need anything more than what the kids from "Stranger Things" had. A bicycle and a Walkman recording device are all we need to combat the unknown. Most remarkably, we were told that this group also holds alien hunting meetings, which are attended regularly by Richard M. Dolan.

Don't know who Dr. Dolan is? Neither did I, but he is a big fucking deal in alien hunting circles. He has his own Wikipedia page and is listed on "Famous Rochester Residents." He even went on to become a Rhodes Scholarship finalist and, most importantly, was a regular on the History channel show "Ancient Aliens."

Dr. Dolan was a religious figure to these ghost and alien groups. They would say things like, "Oh, but recall what Dr. Dolan said" and "Ya, Dr. Dolan would know all about that." Or they gave their most common response, which was also my favorite: "I'll have to inquire with Dr. Dolan on that." I never met the man, but I heard so much about him during the meeting that I feel like I kind of know the guy. I presume most of the information I heard regarding aliens came from the authority of this Dr. Dolan.

The wild world of ghost hunting was certainly fascinating, but it was made even more interesting because of its connection to the more exotic sphere of interstellar space monsters. That's right: not only are ghosts and aliens real, but I would never have guessed how they complement each other, so here's your essential guide to the ghost-alien-human overlap.

The Types of Aliens

(I am briefly researching the aliens myself. Most of this information is what I heard during the meeting and not necessarily an accurate view of any yet-to-be-discovered creature.) As it turns out, the ghost hunters are the exact same people who attend the alien meetings. The only difference is that the alien meetings are more popular due to the presence of Dr. Dolan, which explains why the ghost hunters talked mostly about how aliens affect ghosts, rather than the ghosts themselves. The gathering began with the leader, in her mystic voice, explaining the five main types of aliens in detail. The entire congregation of believers listened as eagerly as a 12-year-old might after swallowing his first Adderall tablet.

The Grays

The first species she described are called the Grays, or as I will call them, The Graybacks. they look most like the Hollywood aliens we know and love, the very same aliens that are said to be hidden in Roswell, N.M.. The Graybacks are the most diverse alien species, as there are two subspecies.

The first type of Grayback is smaller, only about 3 to 4 feet tall. The short gray aliens are the primary Roswell type and are most responsible for abductions and the anal a mischievous alien species; unlike their tall counterparts, they can't be reasoned with. They have eyes like visors, which give them the appearance of wearing the ugliest pair of Oakley sunglasses — as if Oakley sunglasses couldn't get any uglier.

The tall Graybacks are very tall — about 7 feet —and have gangly limbs. Contrary to their smaller counterparts, they are quite docile and friendly. Well, not completely friendly. Apparently, they also used to take part in the abduction and probing of people, but stopped after government officials made contact. They did not intend to harm people, they just aren't able to understand feelings and didn't realize they were causing harm. Now they only observe us and infiltrate

I had heard of this kind of alien before. About four years ago, while waiting in line to ride a roller coaster, a man started telling me all about the Graybacks. He contended that they mated with humans and created a superhuman race called the blue bloods. Blue bloods,

he claimed, have ruled over human civilization since its conception. The alien fanatics told me that the blue blood thing was a ridiculous notion that Dr. Dolan had disproved. Interestingly enough, they also reject the idea of a flat earth. They entertained the idea for a period, but eventually decided that a flat earth was absurd and went back to UFO hunting. In fact, they recently had to dismiss a member who refused to stop believing in a flat earth. Perspective is everything.

The Reptile Aliens

Next, we learned about the reptile aliens, who are nothing but evil. Reptile aliens are the most malicious and uncaring of the alien species who act as manipulators. They can shapeshift and cause all kinds of trouble for people and ghosts alike. For this reason, a lot of alien theorists think that the reptile aliens are possibly the Illuminati. The group was conflicted on this issue, with only the fat British man believing such a thing.

The reptiles use a kind of telepathic communication to affect psychology. They use this ability to induce trauma, which they feed off of. They are like secret agent vampires who feed on stress instead of blood. For this reason, it was suggested that they can use this negative energy field to fuck with ghosts and antagonize them. This would cause a haunting or a spiritual anomaly, so haunted homes could actually just be reptile aliens making trouble.

Additionally, the reptilian aliens are rumored to enter people's dreams Freddy Krueger-style and induce the idea of a haunting or supernatural activity. The British guy said that 80% of the false reports they get on possible ghosts are probably because of the reptile aliens and their dream tricks.

The Nordic Aliens

The Nordic aliens are by far the most interesting. While all the other aliens are described as monster-like creatures, the Nordic aliens are described as being, well, Nordic. Nordic aliens look most like Scandinavian people and have a sort of holy presence. They arrived on earth sometime during the 1950s and have been doing research here ever

since, mostly on ghosts and spirits. The group of ghost hunters described them as explorers who are constantly seeking new knowledge. They are very friendly but keep a distance from the affairs of people. They are primarily interested in the supernatural and spiritual parts of humanity.

Unfortunately, they can really rattle the ghosts, too. During the meeting, the woman who had taken too much Ambien mentioned a group of tall red-robed people conducting a ceremony around a haunted cave. The leader women said, without hesitation, that they must be Nordic aliens and that they were investigating a strange spiritual energy around the cave. However, the Nordic aliens don't always understand the nature of human spirits and typically will disturb ghosts accidentally with their investigation. That being said, I was told you should never interfere with the Nordic aliens because they are so rare and so pure. So, next time you see a group of robed people conducting a strange ceremony in the woods, do not call the police! They are not trained to handle Nordic aliens.

Insectoid Aliens

Finally, the insect race of aliens. I know the least about this race because I was told the least about them. According to this group, they are the oldest and most peaceful of all the alien races; in fact, they are the wisest and most knowledgeable. They look like giant praying mantises and can travel through time and space using a telepathic bubble.

The group told me the insectoid race was the most concerned with peace and tranquility in the universe, but unlike all the other information they fed me, this description contradicted basic online research. Maybe Dr. Dolan knows more about insect aliens then the amateur alien theorists online. After all, he has a master's degree. More than anything, these insectoid aliens proved to me how silly it is to describe aliens. It was like listening to a fantasy monster manual on audiobook with conflicting information and incomplete descriptions. Actually, a roleplaying game based on being alien/ghost hunters would be really cool.

Take Away

After observing the group, being cleansed of negative energy, summoning a ghost and watching a woman with purple hair talk to the ghost using two bits of metal, I was finally starting to figure out what this was all about.

Just like a tabletop roleplaying group, the ghost hunters sit in a circle, take turns describing their supernatural experience and compete for supernatural social dominance. They even take on roles like "chief technology expert" and "principle energy finder." They basically do live-action role-playing, but instead of fighting with sticks, they enter abandoned buildings and walk around with a dated audio recorder. They are the goth kids from your high school, all grown-up but with less style. In their own weird way, the members of this alien/ghost hunting group are very genuine and brave about their beliefs. Let's be honest: talking to ghosts is not all that crazy when compared to most New Age religions, and it is almost normal in comparison to the current political climate.

People believe crazy things. In Rochester, that crazy finds a home. The eccentricity takes a different form depending on whom you talk to. But it's important to realize that everyone is a bit strange. Maybe you don't hunt ghosts or believe in aliens, but everyone has something that makes them odd and even a bit crazy.

Stay curious, be remarkable, and hope the little gray aliens leave you un-probed. <<



"I can say I'm a feminist without people acting like I'm about to chop everyone's dick off.
Honestly when I started playing in bands the attitude towards feminism was so hostile. Nobody wanted to be associated with it." - Ren Aldridge

>> "Not to put girls down, but I feel like our conversations are just so much more shallow. My guy friends all talk about stocks and business and their homework — shit that's actually productive." No joke, this is what came of an exchange I had with my roommate — in 2018 — about the difference between male and female conversations. My response? "Find better bitches."

Here's the thing: you can find just as many guys who only talk about their best clit tips and how many wings they can shove down their throats as you can find girls who only talk about what they're wearing tomorrow. More importantly, you can find just as many women discussing the social satire of A Clockwork Orange or future applications of cryptocurrency as you can find men. That's exactly what we love about Petrol Girls, a group of four badass musicians and self-proclaimed "intersectional feminists and anti-fascists". After sitting down with the band, I can sure as hell say that "badass" is a hefty understatement.

For starters, the band name was imagined by way of a mythological story about women in late-19th century Paris "who set fire to private property with molotov cocktails made from milk bottles." Didn't I say that badass was an understatement? But anyway, band members Liepa Kuraitė (bass), Zock (drums), Joe York (guitar) and Ren Aldridge(vocals) took this impassioned indignation, inflated it tenfold, and channeled it straight into their music.

This isn't the kind of shit you fall asleep with or roll your next joint to (well, maybe it is — whatever strikes your fancy, mate). These are the kinds of tunes you throw on when you learn about the realities of sex trafficking or think about how we're burning up our own atmosphere. Instantly, you get the sense that each piece is grounded in the idea of change, tangible, productive change; they're not just "shouting into the void." This grit is especially palpable in the album's first song, "False Peace," which kicks off with audio from a demonstration led by the Sisters Uncut, an activist group that protests the UK government's decision to cut service funds for domestic violence victims. The persistent and repetitive riffs of "False Peace" showcase Ren's tenacity; she really fuckin' does disturb the peace.

The punk music scene seems like a pretty damn conducive grounds for change to us. Ren says that it has always been "an ongoing and developing movement based loosely on anarchist principles." Much like the hippies and skinheads from the latter half of the 20th century, Petrol Girls recognize the value and importance of confrontational tactics in rectifying social ignorance. "Counterculture is a vital form of resistance, and we need to think harder about how to maintain punk as a counterculture."

These days, far too many musicians and artists approach this idea peripherally; they see counterculture as a way to stand out, a way to have their own voice heard above the masses instead of using it for the greater good. Thankfully, Petrol Girls give us the opposite impression. They want to come together. More than anything else, they're pushing for collective reform, which is refreshing as hell. Yet they're also not afraid to reveal the flaws and facades of the genre or to question the scope of its claims. "Punk often runs the risk of just hiding behind slogans," Ren said. "Like, we say 'Refugees Welcome,' but what are we actively doing about that?" And while Petrol Girls may not be making headway on that crisis in particular, there are a whole shit ton of problems that they do actively seek to ameliorate, one of which is the grey area that somehow still clouds the concept of rape. "I just find it worrying that a woman aggressively defending her right to her own body, and speaking openly about consent as what differentiates sex from assault and rape, is seen as scary or intimidating," Ren said. "I have noticed a massive difference in the way I've been treated now that I front Petrol Girls to how I was before, when I played acoustic or sang backing vocals or just attended shows and was less visible, and it





really concerns me." Although she can celebrate for shutting up the ignorant pricks who used to shout at her to "get on with it" or to "get [her] knickers off," she's really concerned about what this decrease in backlash means for the larger conversation. It's a commendable direction to take: what the fuck do those pricks really matter, anyway?

The recent #metoo movement (a campaign that gives voice to previously silenced sexual assault victims) has started an interesting discussion, which Aldridge is eager to chime in on. "Some difficult conversations need to happen about power, consent, gender, violence and accountability. It also really shouldn't just be up to the people who've survived abuse to figure this stuff out; what has happened to survivors is not their fault, so it's certainly not their responsibility to clean up the mess." And while she recognizes the complexity of the issue politically, she has other ideas personally. "I don't see why it's so hard to just make sure that everything is cool and that you have the consent of the person you're having a sexual moment with, whatever that looks like." To sum it up with a lyric from one of their most powerful songs, "Touch me

Again": "My hips my neck my tongue my mind/ Touch me again and I will fucking kill you."

Speaking of lyrics, the song "Deflate" has some killer opening lines. "I want to stick a pin between your eyes" refers to politicians with inflated egos — and yes, this lyric comes straight out of the mouth of a woman whose

destressors are "cups of tea and dogs" (bottoms up for multifaceted women!). You can sense that this stems from a deep place; despite the aggression of the intro, the lyrics are neither rash nor senselessly angry. Petrol Girls don't want to "stick you in the goddamn face, but to deflate the arrogance that blinds many of our most prominent "leaders." Ren said that she has "seen so many things get fucked up because of individuals — often men not thinking about how their behavior

militant mindset, she noted that "the more you get involved, the more phenomenally fucked you realize the world is right now."

The song "Deflate" has a rather introspective provocation running throughout it that really characterizes the band's involvement. Alongside allusions to the patriarchy and 'fake news', Petrol Girls pose questions that are pertinent to our current political climate: "Who is more visible? Who is getting space?" They are asking you to actually confront how power plays such a principal role in issues like gender disparity and migrant solidarity. But as Petrol Girls have clearly argued, recognizing the corrupted state of our society is only half the battle.

"My politics did get a lot more militant the more I became involved in antifascism, anti austerity politics, intersectional feminism, and migrant solidarity stuff because the more you get involved the more phenomenally fucked you realise the world is

right now."

Regarding the gender gap in the music industry, Ren said, "There's a lot of great activism happening that challenges the gender balance of festival line-ups, in the face" just to stick you and also loads of great initiatives encouraging other genders to get into music, like Girls Rock Camp, First Timers, School of Frock, etc." And her righteous advice to these young women trying to play in bands and make music would be to "suck openly and proudly. Guys get to suck or — in my opinion, worse — be blindly mediocre, and it has nothing to do with — making things all about them and their gender, so why should it be any different for us?" This sentiment kicks into overdrive in the song affects other people." As she described "Harpy." In alliance with Liepa's resonant strokes of her shift toward a more politically- frustration over the stereotypical treatment of women

with power, Ren warns men that "witches come out Petrol Girls set shit on fire and talk of "smashing the at night," so "sleep tight sleep tight."

Despite this confrontational tone toward raging — it's militancy — and I certainly think there are misogynists, Ren recognizes how much the scene has actually progressed over the course of her time in "smashing the ceiling," but this is a figurative action music. "Honestly, when I started playing in bands, more than anything. Petrol Girls want you to realize the attitude towards feminism was so hostile. Nobody that "the wider systems of oppression they are wanted to be associated with it. Now, I can say I'm protesting against are actually violent." Misogynistic

ceiling." Again, they're trying to get you to look past this initial indignation. "I don't think that's violence moments when it is necessary," Ren said. Yes, they're

"The first artwork I made for the band, is linked to the origins of our band name, les pétroleuses who were mythical women from the paris commune that set fire to private property with molotov cocktails made from milk bottles. I don't think thats violence - its militancy - and I certainly think there are moments when it is necessary."

a feminist without people acting like I'm about to and sexist platforms are the real villain here, not chop everyone's dick off." (Funny how women the people who are trying to break through their in power can so easily threaten a man's security in strongholds. himself, isn't it?) Anyway, Ren said that "the change has been intense," setting an optimistic tone that Petrol Girls clearly have this whole social makes us fuckin' stoked for all the women realizing point that sometimes it's treated like a badge rather than a political movement." It's important to be aware of the inefficiency of this approach; be a proud supporter of the sisterhood, but don't let the label distract from the purpose of the movement. Don't it the armor you fight with against inequality.

In terms of combating these issues, we asked the band at what point violence becomes necessary to fix political and social concerns, if at all. Their record Talk of Violence "is all about the idea of violence, and the way the word is used." Ren said that "[she does not] think you can be 'violent' towards property or other FUTURE! No, I'm joking." non-sentient objects, yet protesters are constantly described as violent for smashing windows, etc." Some people might even get this impression from so cheers to the fucking future!<< the lyrics and video to the song "Restless," wherein

consciousness thing down pat. Their music is laden the renegades in their own reflections. However, she with passion, tension, and a cold hard rejection of does note that feminism is now "popularized to the senseless ignorance. They constantly strive to "push [themselves] musically and hold true what [they] consider the important values of punk." But the story doesn't end at their own growth; Petrol Girls want to encourage people to make genuine changes in any way they can. "Getting to know your neighbors and make it an empty promise for gender equality, make people in your community is important — society is becoming increasingly alienated and there are a lot of lonely people out there. If you work, are you unionized? What can you change from within your workplace or university?"

> To open this interview, we asked, "Who the fuck are Petrol Girls?" We were told, "THE FUCKING

Well, WE'RE NOT,



FRIENDLY
NEIGHBOOR HOOD
TATTOO ART ST

Words by Cassidy Karpovage Photos by *Krit Upra*

>> Ven Ropik's mother reacted to her son's recent tongue splitting as most mothers would... Not very well, to say the least.

Despite the fact that Ven Ropik is a renowned tattoo artist with piercings and 85 tattoos of his own, perhaps nothing could've prepared his mother for this

For a lot of people, the concept of body modification seems strange. Tongue splitting, implants, and ear cropping are still very much submerged in alternative subcultures.

Tattoos and piercings, on the other hand, are more mainstream than ever before. In the last decade alone, a surge of tattoo shows, like Best Ink and Ink Master, have hit multiple major TV networks. And now with Instagram, it's possible to find millions of tattoo content at the tips of your fingers.

Tattoo art has certainly evolved artistically and socially, with a reported 40% of young people in the U.S. having - at least - one tattoo.

But the stigmas surrounding them are as prevalent as ever. Job seekers have to cover their tattoos, and many will continue to do so once hired.

Those who modify their bodies to the extreme often struggle the most. Those with neck and facial tattoos have no other choice but to look for work outside an office setting. Eventually, they find work that suits their lifestyle, getting used to the public, scornful stares in the process. Not to mention, there are probably countless mothers who have cried because their children inked or modified their bodies.





neighborhood of Eastwood, Floated met with Ropik at Vessel Tattoo Shop, an establishment where tattoo designs intersect and form into their own styles. Here's what went down...

When the numbing agent wore off after a couple of days, Ven Ropik describes the pain of having his tongue forked as "Hell on Earth". He didn't expect any type of anesthetic when he went to modify his body. He's had his fair share of tattoos but still wasn't sure if it was enough to prepare him for this kind of body modification.

Excruciating pain and a temporary lisp soon followed. But overall, Ropik doesn't think the experience was all that bad. modification serve as a reflection of his diverse career. It may come as a surprise to learn that tattoos haven't always been Ropik's passion. Nor did he ever anticipate ever becoming a tattoo artist.

In fact, his first passion was and has always been, music. Growing up, Ropik performed as a classical concert pianist, believing he would eventually become a professional. By age 11, he was touring around the country. He performed at the U.N., Moscow, and Carnegie Hall by age 15.

The prestigious role often required him to dress and act in accordance with the conventions of the classical music scene. scouts, and big figures in the scene.

But, as a self-described "oddball", Ropik would look forward to the moment he could shed the tuxedo in exchange for his skater street clothes. The switch between personalities, and the snide reactions it would stir up amused him to no end.

Many of us grow up playing sports or instruments, and some of us even go on to play at the college level. Very few of us ever go on to the professional level, or sign a record deal, or get accepted to play in a philharmonic.

But Ven Ropik is still far from ordinary.

unable to find work. At age 17, he began working in hospitals and private pharmacies as a technician; a job done in isolation that is, ultimately, forgiving of tattoos.

His first tattoo was of a kanji symbol on his forearm. He's had 70 tattoos done in the last 2 years alone. That now makes 85. He recently touched up his ankles, stomach, palms, underarms, and throat. The stomach tattoo hurt the most as he had his belly button blackened. His knuckles hurt, as well.

Last year, he quit the pharmacy technician job, knowing that working in the medical industry wasn't his dream. So, he decided to do what he's always loved... art.





>> Californian natives, IronTom, an eclectic and contagiously high-energy band whose creations are best conveyed through their live performances. The group is made up of four talented homies: Harry Hayes (Lead Vocals), Zach Irons (Guitar), Dylan Williams (Drums), and Daniel Saslow (Keys). We had a chat with Harry about how far the band has come, the band's goals, and their connection with recent tour mates, Awolnation.

"When we started the band I realized that I just wanted to react to the music. I really wanted to let what the guys [were] playing hit me and have myself react to that in a way that could go with the performance. It's fun man!"

How do you guys share Zach Irons (guitarist), playing in both Awolnation and IronTom?

Harry: Yeah man it's exciting! We're like a little family with Awol. Aaron produced parts of our album and after that his own album. We've just all been together. Zach obviously played on "Here Come the Runts" and it sounds great! It's cool to me that our sounds are kind of intermingling. Being out on the road too, we're traveling with them. It's just like a rock n' roll circuit every night! It's fun to be rollin' in with guys you love so much and are inspired by.

Where do you get the inspiration for your extreme energy on stage?

Harry: It just kind of came out of me man! When we started the band I realized that I just wanted to react to the music. I really wanted to let what the guys [were] playing hit me and have myself react to that in a way that could go with the performance. It's fun man! They're great players, Dan, Dylan

and Zach. Every night they inspire me! I just feel so much joy and excitement. The performances are just a moment for me to express myself, whatever I am feeling. I feel things so intensely and they feel good, I just want to share them with everybody. It's just me saying here's how happy I am and you should just take it!

On the latest album"Be Bold like Elijah" has to be one of my favorites. The album as a whole is really great. "Brain Go" is also one of my favorites and "Partners".

Harry: Hell yeah man! Before we hit the road we started working and recording some new songs with Aaron and they sounded really great! We're workin' on them as we are traveling, technology makes so many things possible! We're all just close to each other so we're able to just talk about it all day and figure it out. So there is more coming! I'm hoping in the next couple of months. The sooner the better in my mind! Being creative, it rolls with us. We make a song and it will fulfill us for a second and it is cool, but we want to get a

little bit better on the next one....and a little bit better on the next one. It's just something we are hungry to do. Dan's always working on songs on the road, we all are. We have [all] this time before the shows and shows inspire us to create more and more. It's a great thing, man. I'm just trying to listen to things all day. It all feeds it.

What is your day to day life like on tour?

Harry: Normally we are in our own little bus. We have our roadies taking care of the gear. On this tour we're touring with Awol, we are on their buses. It's a little easier with that aspect, with the gear [rather than] dealing with a lot of the logistical stuff ourselves. Basically, day to day we will finish the show in one city, leave around two am, drive all night, we'll sleep, wake up the next day in the next city, and probably work on some new music a little bit together, have some lunch and soundcheck. After soundcheck it's about an hour or two before we play, then we just listen to music and get excited for the show again!

Do you guys have any pre-show rituals?

Harry: I have a playlist I like to put on that's a lot of Pearl Jam, Queens of the Stone Age, Rolling Stones. Some songs that can't help but excite me! It works too man, gets me goin', and the guys get goin' too!

How do you guys entertain yourselves while driving around and staying on the tour bus?

Harry: We find ways! We can make music on our laptops and we can also watch some Netflix. We can eat, we can drink coffee. We can also wrestle with each other.

Who do you think is your wrestling champ for the tour?

Harry: Dylan is a beast man, he'll just turn into the Hulk on us. Zach is really fast, he's faster than you'd think he'd be. He can get the best of ya!

Zach Attack! What are you currently watching on Netflix?

Harry: Black Mirror is pretty intense. It's a show that is so creative and so well done. Anytime I put it on I can only watch one [episode] cause it's so intense. You never know where they're going too! It's pretty cool to not anticipate a

plot turn, like a lot of things you watch you can kind of sense where it is going.

It's pretty scary, some of it could totally become reality!

Harry: Yeah that's the really heavy part about it! Cause it's like shit this is where we are headed a little bit.

When you guys were just forming the band where did you think you would be in this timeframe? Do you think you guys were able to achieve the goals you set for yourselves?

Harry: Yeah I think we are on a pretty cool timeframe. I think we are maybe two years behind where I thought we would be. Where we are now I thought we would have been two years ago. But that's kind of a silly way to think because I've enjoyed every step of it. It felt like everything we've come to, every new tour and every new place we've been, we've never been ready for that until this moment, you know. Doing something like the Chili Peppers thing, when it came it was...to me an opportunity that came early. I thought it would probably come a few years down the line but when the opportunity came, we're ready to go do our thing on a stage like that and prove ourselves in that way. So it's all working out great!

Where would you like to see yourself five years from now?

Harry: Making recordings and touring regularly and have people know our songs. Having it just be little families in every city in the United States and hopefully abroad too! We haven't played abroad yet, like in Europe. Canada, it's great, everywhere we've played in Canada it's been awesome. But I'm really hoping to grow abroad and start growing our thing in Europe and in England and stuff like that would be so killer! Australia, Japan... anywhere man! Africa, South America...we'll go anywhere! <<







It's free for anyone who RSVPs to their app ahead of time and its packed man.

Next time you're in LA check it out.

Hollywood is just weird, tons of people with all these different mindsets. LA is kind of weirdly the odd one out. Our next stop, Baltimore we played right near a college, and we had a ton of college kids come out and some high school kids come out too, which was kind of interesting. It was cool because it was us and Verite, and it was a pretty packed room and everyone was into the music, a pretty similar scene to Rochester. I feel Charlotte was also really similar to Rochester. The indie pop alternative genre, I think attracts the same type of music lovers. That was just our experience.

"For me, I've always been an advocate and I am continuously working towards becoming an advocate for women just being themselves."

Which venues have been your favorite?

Matt: Charlotte was really cool. It was a big theatre, and it had this stage with really cool architecture. Cool lights and everything. There were 3 tiers of levels the audience could go into, kind of like amphitheater seating, but standing. One level was right in front of the stage, and then, 100 yards back was another level with no railing. Then at the top, you were looking down on the stage, and that's where the bar was. That was a weird one. I think the weirdest one, and our favorite one from this last year was The House

of Blues in Orlando, in support of Kaleo. That was the coolest one by far. Troubadour was another favorite.

[Kaleo] They're so good. They're so cool because we did our first show with them in Toronto and they were just breaking out. Then we did our Oregon show with them and we did House of Blues with them, they sold the place out. They're in Rolling Stone. They're killin' it.

How do you stay connected to the other musicians you have played with?

Matt: Verite we got to hang out quite a bit. We actually share the same producer, so that's cool. We got to hang with K. Flay, we baked her cookies. The House of Blues is part of Disney World, that's how we connected. We went out to the bowling alley with the guys from Kaleo. We have a picture of their guitar player wearing my hat, and he looks better in it than I do.

What do you have to say to all the haters out there?

Alyssa: For me, I've always been an advocate and I am continuously working towards becoming an advocate for women just being themselves. Not listening to anyone in the industry who says, 'You gotta lose this weight or look this way to be the part." I'm really, really fucking sick of it. It gets really old. It's so sad, younger girls who look up to these women are seeing these perfect bodies, perfect everything, and it's not realistic. I know this is nothing new and nothing that hasn't been said before...but I'm really starting to see that. I've had a manager once, she was a girl, and she was telling me, "You should really try and lose some weight." It just hit me a bit hard. Even if you are really skinny, girls still get body shamed, it's so sad. I'm trying to be more of an advocate for women to do their thing, show

their bodies, and wear whatever they want. I know women all have different things they're trying to fight for.

Do you have any pre-show rituals?

Alyssa: I honestly, I used to have a drink, and I realized I was a blabbermouth on stage and it really wasn't cute.

last few shows, the Verite shows, our music fit really well together. It wasn't that hard, we didn't really have to force anything. We just did a cover or two so people can relate, even though we're an original band. People wanna know the song. That's one thing we'll do. But it's really about getting everybody excited for the main act.

"It's so sad, younger girls who look up to these women are seeing these perfect bodies, perfect everything, and it's not realistic. I know this is nothing new and nothing that hasn't been said before...but I'm really starting to see that."

Now I have to kind of have to have a moment to myself before the show, collect my thoughts. I usually have to go to the bathroom like 13 times. No joke. I really just have to sit there and take deep breaths and pace. I don't eat before shows. I do pig out after. I will find any and everything to eat after, but before shows, I won't eat. Just because, nerves. But that's really it.

What pressures do you face as an up-and-coming band on tour?

Matt: I think the biggest pressure is being an opener and people don't know who you are. You have two jobs, 1. You have to win them over because you're going on tour with these bands. And the 2nd part is, the headliner picked you as their opener, so you have to pump up their audience so that when they come out everyone's already having fun. We've been realizing that when you go and play a show in whatever city, the whole point is to make sure everyone who bought a ticket has an awesome night and give them something to talk about the next day. Those are the people who matter, not the industry people. Industry people think if artists don't sell, or stream, then no one's listening to their music. The

Has the new technology, streaming, helped influence the growth of musicians?

Matt: From the people we've talked to and the stuff we've observed, the majority of a bands income is from touring. Streaming is very important, and that is what labels are looking at, streaming is more important than CD sales and album sales because no one buys those anymore. Streaming is important in that sense, but as a band, I think the live show makes up a majority of your income. We make the most fans touring. We are very lucky with the bands we've opened for, their fans have dug our music, we'll get off stage and we'll have a ton of Instagram notifications, all these people followed you and wanna tag you in their story. It is cool and we appreciate every one. People send us pictures, we post them, we hang out by the merch booth every night, we got to meet everyone in every city and we love that. We get way more reaction and response after people have seen our live show than after they heard us on Spotify, that's just us. <<





AND DREADS. RADKEY ARE THE RADDEST ROCK AND ROLLERS AROUND

Interview by Adam Antalek Photos by Harrison O'Brien

>> Who the fuck is Radkey?

We're Radkey, we're three brothers, we're homeschooled. We grew up on our dad's music, bands like Led Zepplin, Ramones, Nirvana, Weezer, Cheap Trick, stuff like that. We just try to rock it out super hard. I guess that's how we would describe ourselves. Unless 90-year-olds know Cheap Trick, probably not.

Is it weird touring with your dad? Does being family make it easier or harder to deal with problems on the road?

Touring with our dad is not weird. That's the homeschooled thing: we've always been together. It was nice to keep it, a together kind of thing. We're all really into it and we've all known each other for so long, it all works out so perfectly.

What's something crazy thats happened you tried to hide from management (your dad)?

I wouldn't say anything crazy has happened to us that we would try to hide. We pretty much experience everything together. We haven't had a whole lot of crazy, crazy moments, though. I wish I had a better answer for that one.

Dee's voice gets compared to Danzig's by some people. Is this why you guys don't talk about ghouls, zombies and dead babies more in your songs?

Dee's voice does get compared to Danzig a lot. That's something we actually didn't plan for or anything. We didn't really listen to Misfits; we did listen to Danzig's solo stuff. Dad brought that into our lives at one point. But it was always kinda cool, we didn't really start listening to the Misfits until people said Dee sounded like him. Bad Brains as well — we had never heard of [them]. So that's cool.

"IT WAS KIND OF CELEBRATION,
REVENGE, AND JUST PURE EXCITEMENT.
A UNIVERSAL UTILITY
TOOL OF AMAZING
REVENGE HAPPINESS."

Whose playlists are the best out of the three of you? And what are some tunes we'd be surprised you're listening to?

We collaborate on this big [playlist]. It's called "green machine." You just smoke weed and listen to it on repeat. Or even go to the metal section or all acoustic songs. It's a two-day long playlist and we've all collaborated on it. Pretty much everything, including, "Puttin' on the Ritz," "The Taco Song," "Taco Cover," "Taco Covering Fred Whatshisface."

Most important punk rock stage moves?

Stage moves are important, no matter what anyone says. I think playing back-to-back is super fun. Like goin' to the knees? Its so good. [chuckles].

Who's the most likely to be hungover the morning after a show?

Between Sal and I, I guess. I'm [Isaiah] usually the one who's the most hungover. Just because, it's one of those things you just lose control after a while when you're you're rocking out. You don't keep up with the water, don't drink enough water. So yeah, I am the weakest with that.

Basement show or dive bar?

I would say dive bar, we love dive bars. We grew up in dive bars, rockin' those out.

Who has the worst tour van farts?

Man, that's tough. We would each probably pick different people. Farts are special.

If budget was no object, what would be some stuff you guys would like to do in a music video?

We would like to do a video that looks exactly like an anime opening. Whichever one. You gotta be walking and have your history going in the back. The greatest hits of things you've been through. You're falling nowhere.

If you had to fight a superhero/supervillain collectively as a band, who would you stand the best shot against?
What would each of your superpowers be?

We would have the best shot against The Penguin. He would be pretty easy.

If we sneak up on him, it'd probably be easy. Or distract him. So The Penguin it is.

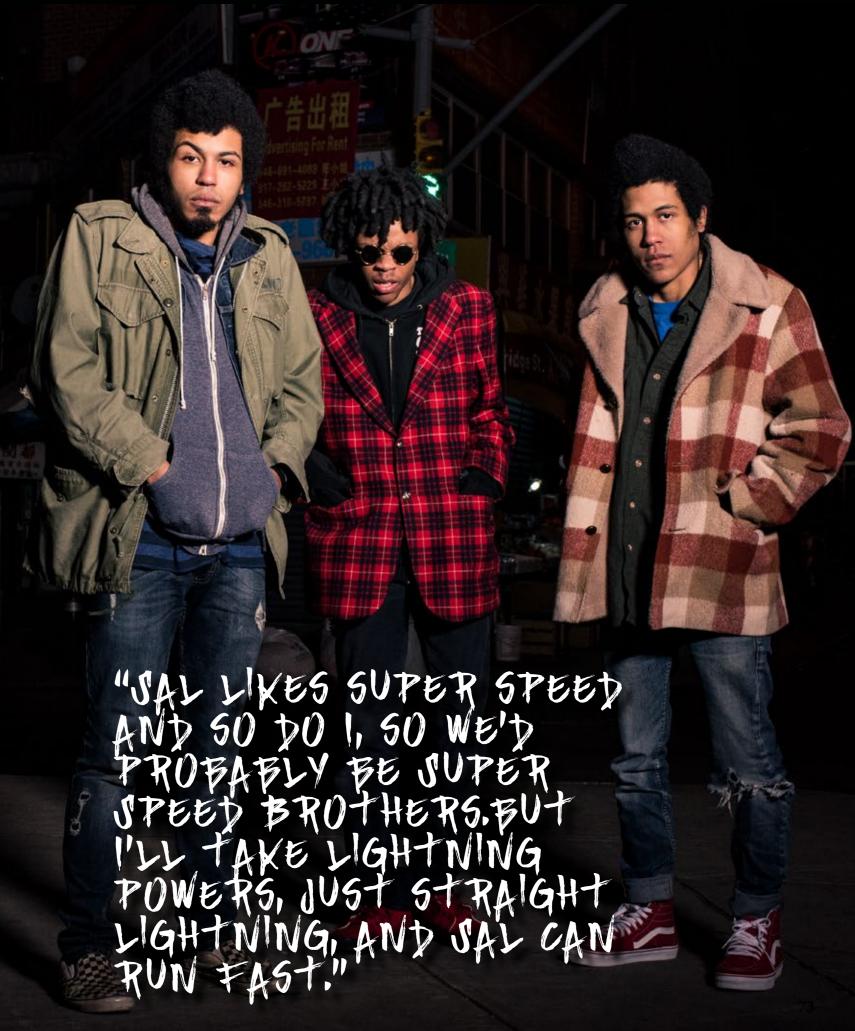
Sal likes super speed and so do I [...] we'd probably be Super Speed Brothers [...] but I'll take lightning powers, just straight lightning, and Sal can run fast. Can't go back in time or anything.

So at what point in your rock career did you figure, "Yeah, Mastercard will call us for an ad campaign"?

Mastercard hit us up kind of randomly, and the reason they hit us up was because of our history. They were looking for bands doing stuff out of the ordinary — if you wanna call black people playing rock "out of the ordinary" — and finding those people out and [saying], "Don't judge a book by its cover." It was really nice, really cool to hear they were looking up bands from wherever and getting them to do something big. It's super nice, super lucky.

Was there anyone that you sent a picture of that billboard to [in order to] rub it in their face? Exes? Teachers that said you wouldn't go anywhere?

I feel just posting it on everyone's actual page was, like, celebration, revenge, proven stuff. It was kind of celebration, revenge, and just pure excitement. A universal utility tool of amazing revenge happiness. <<











www.floatedmag.com