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ANTI/MATTERS

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Jeff "Lightning" Lewis'
special comic tribute to
Hamell On Trial

PLUS:

Randi Russo's not-so-secret shame •
Give the sound tech some \$love\$ •
What, oh what, do you (yes you) want out of AM? •
Tony Hightower • King Missile • Grey Revell •
and more stuff too cool to fit in this guy's armpit

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AM

ANTI/MATTERS

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We always need more contributors.
Reviewers & scenesters, come get
some free records in exchange for
seeing your name in print!

What are you going to be
for Halloween?

THE FORT IN OCT.

Tues. Sept.5 7:30- Eric Adams, 8-Sylvia Mann,
8:30- Shanna Sharp, 9-Andrew Heller & The Boy
Wonder, 10- Yosip, 11-Charles Aceto

Wed.Oct.4 8-Dave Deporis, 9-Paleface, 10-
Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Oct.5 7-CD/Book Release Party for
Blythe with Ferdinand the Bull and Damien of
Veritcal Blind, 10- The Subcommittee, 11-Tony
Hightower, 12-Philly Antifolk Invasion featuring
Adam Brodsky and Butch Ross

Fri.Oct.6 8-Scotland, 9-The Costellos, 10-Earl
Pickens and the Black Mountain Marauders, 11-
Lach 12- Bill Popp and The Tapes

Sat.Oct.7 8-Ekayani and The Healing Band, 9-
Johnny Seven, 10- Gregg Hodde and The Blue
Miracles, 11-The Voyces, 12- Lunchin'

Sun.Oct.8 8-Rob Getzschamm, 8:30- Seela, 9-
Desdemona Finch, 9:30- Matthew Jones, 10- Ahab
Seamus, 11-Bleu

Mon.Oct.9 *The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at*
7:30 PM.

Tues.Oct.10 8-Dani Linnetz, 8:30-James
O'Brien, 9-Elza, 9:30-Something To Say Tour with
Christine Hajjar, Serena Andrews, Kelly Walsh, 11-
Bill Grady

Wed.Oct.11 7:30- Pat Donaher, 8:30-Al Lee
Wyer, 9-Biff Rose, 10-Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Oct.12 8-Randi Russo, 9-Peg Simone,
10- Diane Cluck, 11- Thunderbolt, 12-Dufus

Fri.Oct.13 7:30- Paul Winston, 8:30-Lezlee, 9-
Steve Espinola 10- Earl Pickens and The Black
Mountain Marauders, 12- God

Sat.Oct.14 8-No Artificial Colors, 9-Curtis
Eller and The American Circus, 10- German Cars
VS. American Homes, 11- Jonas Grumby, 12-The
Gelatin Boys

Sun.Oct.15 8-The Molly Magoonis Band,
8:30- Jenni Alpert, 9-Helen Stratford, 9:30- Adam
Weiner, 10-John Kessel, 11- Fragile Male Ego

Mon.Oct.16 *The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at*
7:30 PM.

Tues.Oct.17 7- Club 47- Trad Singwriter's
Circle 8-Linda Draper, 8:30-Joe Giacoio, 9-Barry
Bliss, 9:30-Celia, 10-Jessie White Band, 11-Dots
Will Echo

Wed.Oct.18 8-Jon Berger, 8:30-Prewar
YardSale- 9-Roxanne Beck, 10-Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Oct.19 CMJ MusicMarathon! 8-Howie
Beck, 9-The Court and Spark, 10-Golden Rough,
11- Joe Bendik and The Heathens, 12-Drew Blood

Fri.Oct.20 CMJ MusicMarathon! 7- Amy
Fairchild, 8-Chris Crofton, 9-Michal Towber, 10-

The Pony Express, 11- The Humans, 12- The
Swimmies

Sat.Oct.21 CMJ Music Marathon! Fortified
Records Antifolk Night with: 8-Paleface, 9-Major
Matt Mason USA, 10-Lach Solo Stylee!, 11- King
Missile III, 12- Bree Sharp, 1- Joie Dead Blonde
Girlfriend

Sun.Oct.22 CMJ MusicMarathon! 8-
Testosterone Kills, 9-Dina Dean, 10- Matt
Keating, 11- Chris Barron (of The Spin Doctors),
12- CMJ Closing Party SuperAntihoot!

Mon.Oct.23 *The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at*
7:30 PM.

Tues.Oct.24 7:30-LoriJo Manley, 8:30-Ward
White, 9-Dave Deporis., 10- Daniel Johnston, 11-
TBA

Wed.Oct.25 Regina Spektor, 9-Brian Charette
and Pinch, 10- Rick Shapiro

Thurs.Oct.26 7:30- Bruce Balmer, 8-The
Suckers, 9-Ben Eyley, 10-Ahab Seamus, 11-Renara,
12- Ruth Gerson

Fri.Oct.27 7:30-Derek Richmond, 8-Kenny
Young and The Eggplants, 9-Ben Arnold, 10-Earl
Pickens and The Black Mountain Marauders, 11-
The Humming, 12- Halle

Sat.Oct.28 8-Matt Sherwin, 9-Lunchin, 10-
Das Phrogge, 11- Patsy Grace, 12- Grey Revell

Sun.Oct.29 5-7-Halloween Art Party, 8-Izzy
Milano, 9-Ben Bryer, 9-Andy Hunt, 10-Andrew
Heller and The Boy Wonder, 11- Lisa Fishman

Mon.Oct.30 *The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at*
7:30 PM.

Tues.Oct.31 Halloween Super Costume Party!
8-Fragile Male Ego, 9-The Voyces, 10- German
Cars vsAmerican Homes, 11- UFO vs. The
Mothership

The Fort is at the Sidewalk Cafe
94 Avenue A @ 6th Street
for more info & updates
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(hush!) a *sell-out!* (obviously, only if you are financially successful with this change). You can't really win - you can't please all of the people all of the time.

But, though most of us here are not on that level yet, we still have to contend with the shame of wanting to Make It. To want such a thing makes us feel greedy or arrogant or something that just doesn't feel so good. Punk rock has given us an attitude makeover (thankfully!), but part of this attitude seems not to adhere to the present times. It's like when you go to the Haight-Ashbury area of San Francisco and see these hippies leftover from the sixties: There's something cool about their anarchistic way of life, but there's something about it that seems ridiculous. There's that fine line to holding onto an ideal that is good at the heart and an ideal that just no longer works for the present time. Like I said before, "one way to assure the brevity of your career is not to change," and this goes for having an interesting life as well. So, punk rock is really cool and still influences the way a lot of us work around here. But perhaps the attitude of not wanting money, of not wanting success, has done us a disservice. And it's not that punk rockers didn't want the fame, the money, the glory, but that part of punk rock was to rebel against the established institutions, and the greatest American institution of all is Money.

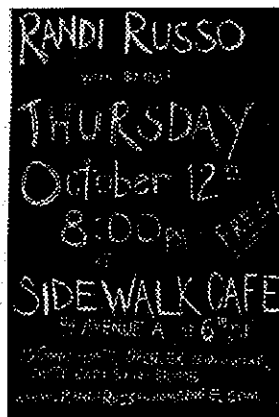
So, punk rock created this schism (and indie-rock followed), in which, on the one hand, you have primitive

desires to be successful by a common standard (to be the alpha male, so to speak), but, on the other hand, you need to rebel against all the things that created this standard, because the present definition of success is pretty fucked up.

I, too, like to think that I rebel against the established institutions, and I, too, have issues with the way the majority of people define success. But why should I feel *ashamed* about wanting to make it? I work hard, and go from job to job, completely unhappy that I'm wasting my days working to the bone to make some other guy richer. I get no satisfaction from that; it adds no meaning to my life. It occasionally gives me good songs, so, in that sense, I can't complain. And I know that these hard times are part of the bigger picture, in that they help us become more feeling and compassionate people, which makes our art/music better and helps us to connect more to people. But, why not just admit what we want? We would like to make a living doing our music. We would like recognition that what we do is good and is appreciated. The shame that we feel just causes conflict, or more so, we have conflicted feelings about success which engenders feelings of shame (if you are not suffering from these conflicted feelings, then, obviously this whole article doesn't apply to you).

Anything we want in life, if we are ashamed of wanting it, we can be sure that we are repelling it away from ourselves at every given moment. Then it's no

wonder why we sabotage our own desires and dreams, or why we see such talented people suddenly self-destruct or choke when a golden opportunity comes their way (well, this looks like a whole new topic to discuss — maybe for next month's issue). It's too easy to make up a thousand excuses of why we haven't made it yet — not enough money, not enough time, no support from family or friends, etc — but the real reason comes from inside ourselves, and that's what needs to be looked at. We cannot let shame get the better of us, because shame implies that we care what other people think (which we do, but there needs to be some healthy limits on that), and caring about what others think will not lead us to the things we want out of life. If you do become successful by caring about what others think, then you will be one of the ones who will have to wrestle with the selling-out dilemma. And who the hell wants to deal with that?



AN HONEST QUESTION

FROM THE EDITORS OF ANTI/MATTERS

No one wants to read real music criticism anymore, do they?

Admit it. You can complain all you want about the whole John Teshization of modern "journalism," that all you ever see is puff pieces about whatever and whoever, all anyone cares about is is so&so so dreamy or what, and how many trees die so all the different variations on phrases like *Hauntingly Beautiful Melodies* and *A Fresh Edgy Variation on Whatever The Hell We Claimed Was Fresh Last Week* can be fleshed out, go on if you like, you can kvetch about 'N Sync getting 5-star reviews at will, that's fine, but really, who really has any interest in reading anything else?

The people in this scene (out of it too) claim to want cultured commentary, spirited back&forth about what's important and what could be better about a particular piece of music or literature or video or whatever, but really, it's not even a dirty little secret anymore. All anyone wants is their opinions about what they'll like to see or hear justified. All most people want is to be told they're right. Right?

"I heard that new Jennifer Lopez movie sucks canal water."

"The new Aerosmith is supposed to be really good."

"I was peaking after the Tricky show at Webster Hall and I heard the new Lou Bega single coming out of this black convertible full of greasy ethnic people and by god, it sounded right smashing! I'd love to read more about how smashing it is so I'll feel good about paying \$20 for the CD Single! The enclosed check is for renewing my subscription to Shit, sorry, Spin."

"My roommate's ex-partner Esmeralda says that Vader's 'Bach is a Fascist' is the theme song for the new Harry Potter movie, and that it sounds perfect!"

Really, you don't need to think about this mundane entertainment stuff, do you? Thinking is kind of overrated. Most of us think too much as it is.

I'm not being facetious here. Most of us are already wasting way too many brain cells worrying about *is that person as good as I think she is* to actually devote any effort to actually being entertained. It's enterTAINment, fergawdsake, there shouldn't be any effort involved at all in trying to actually seek out the meanings. Unless that's what turns your crank. But even then, great, let it turn your crank, whatever. If you like it, like it, if you hate it, leave. No one's stopping you.

My question to you, Dear Reader, is this: how much does an article in AM (or

Puff Piece Monthly or whatever) change your mind about what to buy or see or experience? And how much does it convince you that what you like is really worth liking? Think about this. I'm not talking about something reinforcing what you already know or want to know. I'm really curious about who actually reads this fucking thing, aside from the people that are in it or write for it.

I'm asking because I don't want to waste someone's time by writing what I think is an honest and thoughtful review when all they really want is a puff piece from their neighborhood scene rag saying "[Local Antifolk Deity]'s stark realizations are perfectly rendered snapshots that never ring less than deeply true. A stunning piece of work by a hot young up-&-coming talent about to reach the height of their powers," so they can stuff it in their kits in hopes of luring similar quotes from shinier rags with larger circulations, and climb that ladder!

Because if that's what y'all want, I understand. I'll stop with the cultured criticism bit. Even in my short time around here writing these review things, I've gotten more than a few cold shoulders, because somehow everyone I write about believes they deserve at least one rave review, regardless of what their record sounds like, because that's the way this



Tony Hightower

Thursday October 5 - 11:00

Sidewalk Cafe

2 Ave R at 6th St

Nervous Negro Music

nervousnegro.com

whole music biz schlemazel works. And hey, how is Access Hollywood gonna take you seriously if your hometown rag isn't proclaiming you the next Dylan/Ani/Korn/Judds/[insert icon here]?

Up until recently, dismissing people who thought like that was easy for me. *No way, dude, don't you want to be the best you can be? Because once you get out into the great big world, they'll rip you to shreds right quick unless your shit's top notch.* And all that.

And not like I really feel hurt by anyone snubbing me or anything (no, really, especially for something as meaningless as this), but maybe these people have a point. If the purpose of a magazine like this one is to support the scene, shouldn't it do exactly that? Would it not serve the scene better to never say a discouraging word about anyone & tell the world how heart-wrenching songwriter X's latest meisterwerk is, how I could

listen to it again and again, and will, forever, and how there's a whole boat load of hits?

There's more & more people in this scene that are really career-driven, and well, why *shouldn't* AM do what it can to advance their cause? Why should the first printed review most people in this scene will get of their work be **ANYTHING OTHER** than an absolute encouragement to take it outside & show the rest of the world what they can do? Why be anything other than a cheerleader? I mean, no one reads reviews about people they don't know anyways, right? Right? Do you read reviews of people you don't know or have ever heard of?

I thought it was important to reflect what I honestly heard in the clubs and coming out of my speakers, filtered through my experience and my knowledge (such as it is) of literature and the world around me, to try and put these CDs and performances

into a bigger context. And sometimes, things didn't work in my ears the way I thought they might, and yeah, people have just plain sucked sometimes too. But maybe writing reviews requiring some thought is merely masturbation on the part of the reviewer. I don't know if it serves a purpose.

But face it, most people in this scene are outcasts of one kind or another, and we've bonded together here in the East Village (and in similar pockets of freakdom all over the world) because this way we can be among our fellow freaks and maybe find something to make ourselves feel better, so we can take our improved mindset and go do something great with it. Why cut ourselves down at the roots?

I really want to know: do we want honest opinions about what we're all doing here? Or do we want to be reassured that everything's alright?

THE SHAME OF MAKING IT

by Randi Russo

I wrote an article a couple of months ago for Anti/Matters called "Schtick City," and had noticed a little blurb on the upper right hand corner of the page which said, "Randi Russo has been thinking a lot about what constitutes success. This could very easily become a regular column on the mindset and thought processes that make up 'making it.'" I freaked! I cringed. Tony Hightower (the editor and writer of the above statement) and I had spoken about me doing a monthly column, and I said that I would explore the emotional territory of self-doubts, but when I saw the words "making it," I had an uneasy feeling in my stomach. Yes, my last article did touch upon Making It... my last paragraph even had the dreaded phrase "selling out."

I suddenly didn't want to be a part of anything that talked about Making It; the whole idea just made me feel queasy, ashamed, and unqualified. Modern publications seem to throw experts at us. We don't know who these people are, but we trust them because someone has labeled them *expert*. So, I thought to myself, I'm certainly in no position to write anything that has to do with Making It. People like to read success stories; they want the home run in the end. Do they really want to read about their own doubts (subconscious or conscious) reflected back at them? But then I thought of why I do music,

why I'm a songwriter. I really try to excavate those dark places of insecurity, so that the people that refuse to go there, will go there (if they listen, that is), and that the people who already go there will find some solace. So maybe I am somewhat qualified to write about this. Certainly I'm qualified in the arena of self-doubt.

First, let's consider the words Making It. Unless we are trying to become some manufactured act like Britney Spears or 'N Sync, then we probably would have some unsettled feeling about even muttering the words, particularly to our songwriting colleagues. There's a lot of shame around those two words. They imply a certain amount of egoism, ambition, lack of humility, and something that has nothing to do with the reasons why we started writing songs in the first place (unless you're the type that has always been hell-bent on being famous). So, we write songs and we realize that we enjoy this particular activity more than anything else. Then we realize that we're pretty good at what we do and feel like we have something important to say, or more importantly, something to give back to the world. We have a unique contribution. Then that contribution begins to take on a quality of responsibility, so now we have a *responsibility* to be a songwriter. So, this songwriting thing we do has

taken on a whole new weight. And as the years go by, and after countless meaningless jobs to pay the bills, comes the realization of how much better life would be if we could make money doing the thing we love. We deserve it, right? Well, here's where things get tricky. Yeah, we deserve it, but do we feel like we deserve it? Are we being too egotistical by wanting to make it? Are we selling out?

In order to address the Making It phenomenon, we should look at what it means to "Sell Out." I never thought that making money off of music was selling out (well, I thought that when I was teenager, but the financial realities of life have made me see that there is nothing wrong with making money doing what you love. And besides, what about that responsibility you have to get your music out there? It's not going to get out there if you don't put it out there on some grander scale). Selling Out is if you change what you're doing in order to please some record executive who says the 18-24 demographic is not going to get this. Selling Out is changing the core of what you do to bring in the big bucks or the big fame. But, then again, this gets tricky. As an artist, you change (in fact, the one way to assure the brevity of your career is to not change). So, if you change, you'll probably lose some fans along the way; you may even have some of them label you as

GETTING GOOD SOUND AT YOUR GIG

Lach insists he did not write this piece out of self-interest.

1) Don't piss off the soundman.

How Not To Piss Off The Soundman
By Lach

2) Tip him. This is so obvious and so true. When I play out of town I tip before the set. I always get better sound, more chance of an encore, better chance of the soundguy giving a good report to the booking guy etc. When I play locally, where I know the soundguy or know I will be back again, I tip after the set. How much to tip? Well, how good do you want to sound? A basic rule is \$5 if you are solo and \$10 for a band.

3) Never ask the audience how it sounds. People will yell "More Guitar!" the same way they yell "Free Bird!". Asking the audience is an insult to the soundman. A better idea is to have one person you trust in the audience who can give you a covert hand signal if anything needs to be fixed. You can then suggest politely to the soundman (off-mic!) to make the

correction. He'll usually be happy to oblige (You did tip him, right?)

4) When first checking the vocal mics just say, "Check one".

Don't ever acknowledge the audience or they will think the show is starting. Don't get cute and say "Testing, testicles, testes" etc. We've all heard it before and it's dumb [I laughed at it. -Ed.]. When checking other instruments play them at the volume you will play them during the set and play something from the set. Don't just strum lightly or play one note over and over again. Never plug or unplug an instrument without first warning the soundguy so he can mute it. That awful crunchy popping sound you hear if the soundguy hasn't had the chance to mute you is the sound of the PA being destroyed and the soundguy's blood pressure rising.

5) Let the soundguy know what equipment you need when he asks.

Cords, mics etc. Don't wait until

you are on stage to start remembering that you don't have cords or the ask the famous "You guys got any extra drum seats?" Make sure any guitar cords you have with you are already untangled, guitars are tuned, and pedals have fresh batteries before you get onstage.

6) Thank the sound guy from the stage.

They all have egos. **7) Don't knock over mic stands, throw mics down, or abuse the equipment in anyway.** Punk is dead (or at least smells like it is) and no one believes those moves anymore. If you want to make destruction your statement bring your own equipment and have a field day.

8) Don't leave drinks onstage.

You will knock them over and soak the mic cords.

9) And last but not least, and this is very important: tip the soundman!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor-

There has been an ongoing discussion initiated by Dina Levy of the band Prewar YardSale about whether Sidewalk Cafe and the Antifolk scene is "conductive" to women. In her article and follow-up interview Dina says she doesn't have answers but is only raising questions. I'd like to start there. This is a very loaded question she asks and I feel that if she is going to write an article she should at least state her opinion. Otherwise it comes off as a passive-aggressive jab at men. If her only interest is to raise questions then don't write an article. A short two sentence letter to the editor asking the question would suffice. The act of writing the article in and of itself is answering her question. Of course she feels that the atmosphere on the scene is not conducive to women or she would never even think to ask the question!


OK, next, the question itself. Let's look at what "conductive" means. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary conducive is described as: "tending to promote or assist <an atmosphere - to education>". Taken this way I cannot think of a music scene that has inspired and educated women more than the Antifolk scene. It is here that so many women have overcome their fear of performing, have learned what it takes to make it in the business and have developed their own unique style of playing. The scene is cited by such major label artists as Michelle Shocked, Brenda Kahn, Kim Fox, Michal Towber, Cindy Lee Berryhill and Casey Scott as the only place where they felt comfortable

evolving their craft.

But what I feel that Dina is talking about is something else. I'm not sure because she never really comes out and states anything but I think she is talking about some sort of "comfortability" factor. A sense of feeling sexually safe either emotionally or physically. However, I think it is the new kid at school factor. Everyone feels a little unsafe, nervous and put-upon when they first enter the scene. It is a scary thing. Not only from the artistic viewpoint of exposing your work to a critical, rowdy New York audience but also from the social angle. There are a lot of hormones running wildly in that backroom. There is no denying the sexual vibe of the scene. But how you experience that is much more indicative of your own mental filters and hang-ups then any sort of condoned oppressiveness. The audience on the scene is just as quick to bark at a male performer as it is to catcall a female performer (and vice-versa). Furthermore, it is the hyper-politically correct atmosphere of lefty folkie clubs that is in actuality more oppressive by the mere fact of denying true sexuality to begin with.

The Antifolk scene embraces all musical and social misfits and it is conducive to all performers regardless of gender, race, ethnic background or religion. What any individual does with the opportunities this unique scene offers is up to them and their own willingness to grow.

Lach Doggy Dogg



Peter Dinosza's multi-media dance play,
THE LAST DOGO, premieres October 20th
and 21st, 2000, at the
Historic WAB Center, across
from Peter Lager's.
Choreography by Suzanne
Cooper
Sets and Costumes by
Patricia Grace.

Admission: \$10.00.

The Williamsburg Art and Historic (WAB)
Center, 135 Broadway at the corner of
Bedford Avenue, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.
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SITE://WWW.CINEMAXXX.COM

as written by viewers like you

REPORT

FROM THE FORT & BABY JUPITER.

Thu. Sept. 7th Sidewalk Cafe

Okay, so that was **Tony Hightower**, the Canadian Conduit. Captain Quebec came to the Fortress at the Sidewalk Cafe here in New York City (at the corner of Ave A and 6th St.) and ROCKED the joint. After declining to take up the acoustic guitar so urgently proffered to him, Tony merely vocalized throughout the set with the aid of those faithful boys that call themselves **Lunchin'**. "Look Ma, no guitar."

"Tony's melodies are great," says **Ken D'Amato**, a singer/songwriter himself who watched Tonto of Toronto lambaste us with great song after great song. "I can't help but sing harmonies from my seat in the audience, and at Tony's shows I always can hear I'm not alone," he adds.

I should say that Monsieur Montreal also revised one of his songs in my honor. I had duly noted to the "T" man that a track called "So The Hell What" from his record *A Single Angry Word* (Nervous Nero Music, 1999) had a lyric printed in the album booklet that reads "a spritz of CHLOE", yet thru the hi-fi I hear him singing "a spritz of CHARLIE". In recent live versions I have observed Tony Hightower intoning "a spritz of CHANEL". I, then, Dave of "Dave's Place" then suggested "a spritz of SANJAY". (Being too modest to men-

tion that "spritz of 'Dave's Place'" could make the song very popular) Pierre Trudeau (RIP)'s long-lost grandson then, that night, sang out boldly "a spritz of 'Dave of Dave's Place'" (psst Tony, too many syllables)

Talking of contributions, King Canada appreciates my brilliant ideas almost as much as Jon Berger. For example, Berger LOVED my suggestion of the all-Regis Philbin issue of A/M, so definitely shower him with ways to improve this rag. He'll thank both you and me :)

So Mister Maple Leaf and his Merry Mounties then turned it up so loud that the neighbors called in. "Hey, turn down that infernal rock 'n' roll, you kids. Why i oughtta ...". Nevertheless, Tony and the Lunchin' lads tore through such staples such as "A Song For Leyna," "The Waves," "A Single Angry Word," "Dina Doesn't Talk To Boys," "Annex In February" and a few other rare chestnuts (some from *Messiah's Gabbre*, a previous release) Also from the land where February is all-year round was Tony Hightower's Canadian country-partner, **Drew Blood**. Emceeing, mixing sound, controlling lights and collecting tips. (is it true that someone put Canadian postage stamps in the tip jar? Stay tuned...)

And who are these people that shared the stage with our Friend from the Frozen

North? **Sanjay Kaul**, ordinarily seen on the Djembe while playing in Lunchin' was playing the electric bass guitar that night. **Alan Brock**, also a Lunchin' veteran, was stationed at his recognizable post as lead guitarist. **Ashish Pathak**, the backbeat, was the steadfast drummer. These Lunchin' Lunatics and the Head Nut from Nunavut totally drive it home.

Do not miss Tony Hightower. Solo or with band, this guy now overturns Triumph to number two in the book of Canadian rockers. Fly faster than a Canadian Goose to this person and pick up your copy of his album *A Single Angry Word*. Claim your seat like a grain of wheat at the next performance of Tony Hightower. You will not be sorry.

(Dave from Dave's Place)

Thu. Sept. 28th Baby Jupiter

I don't know if he put it together, but he was certainly the central element.

John S Hall, poet extraordinaire, was the focal point of all of the performers at Baby Jupiter at a night that no one has yet to call the John-O-Thon.

The evening began with the bald-headed, hat-wearing poet boy reading - from notes

tiring, I mean we got the feeling that nothing was going to change, and all we did was go up there and feel shitty and feel full of hate, and the thing about this was that we overcame a general fear internally and externally, meaning that we could go up and be comfortable saying it.

Tim: There are people that know us now.

Pablo: There was a time where we could not stand up on a stage and do that. And that's happened in the course of being here.

Tim: That's true. We went to Adam Brodsky's place [in Philadelphia] last week or two weeks ago, and we were weirded out about what songs we should sing, whether or not we should open with this song because people might think, Oh my god. We were in a foreign environment, it's scary. We had to get over it. We played "Fuck You" to open the set. You said something that made me think... I think activism is activism, but we're musicians and music is such a more powerful medium than — nobody goes to marches anymore. Music covers everyone. Everyone. And it's not like we chose it, but it's really interesting to note that, I guess you could say Activism, but we're not, we want to be, we want to be on the edge of that, because we've got something, the way we write it, it's not just prose that we're just handing out. We're writing songs that are very passionate. And coffee makes me feel much more passionate.

Pablo: I just think that we write — I write what I'm thinking about, what I'm

feeling, and a lot of times those songs come out — I feel like I've been writing with a one track mind because most of my songs are about that now. And there's a part of me that doesn't necessarily want to be known as ...

AM: Are you afraid that you're going to burn out on it?

Tim: No, I don't think it's necessary, because he's got me, we've got the dualists in here. I don't write songs like that, I write songs about my existential dilemma.

Pablo: Which I do too. That's really the original connection here.

Tim: Yeah, we were both living in an existential hell.

AM: That's enough. That's more than enough.

Pablo: But basically we just write about what we're feeling and we don't change the pronouns. That's really all it is.

Tim: We're not going to be, like, He or She or...

Pablo: We're not really afraid to say what we really feel anymore. I used to be afraid of really offending people. One of the biggest issues in my life is that I have huge resentment for — I don't know any other way to put it, but, the Christian Community. I feel a lot of resentment because they're the driving force behind sustaining the sense of homophobia in this country, and you know they're the ones lobbying in the White House and they're the ones lobbying all over, and don't they just have

anything fucking better to do? Just let me go to hell, for chrissake, leave me the fuck alone.

Tim: Take your perfect straight life and go to heaven, because there's no such place, and I'll do my thing. I don't go around yelling at people who are procreating like crazy and they're overpopulating the world, I'm not mad about that. In 20 years we'll have overpopulated the world, but I don't care. Who am I to say what you're supposed to do with your life? Who am I? Nobody.

AM: You're one of god's children, Tim.

Tim: (laughs)

This is an excerpt from an exhaustive interview of Tim & Pablo, covering their unique approaches to songwriting, the ins & outs of being both in a band together and a couple, some serious insights into being a gay performer in America, Pablo's take on the whole Rick Shapiro situation, as well as a heated discussion about Jon Bon Jovi's hair and the new dirty lyrics to one of Brian Piltin's songs.

The entire interview (this is about a sixth of it) will be online at

<http://damnfine.org/am>

Testosterone Kills' new album is available from the band. It's awesome.

INTERVIEW EXCERPT: TESTOSTERONE KILLS

by Chico Bangs

AM: At what point did you decide that you wanted to become a bit more ... activist in your outlook, as opposed to just being two guys and a guitar?

Tim: I don't think it was a conscious thing, like "This is how it is," but I know I can speak from my point of view, that I have a tendency to write about what I'm feeling right now, and only upon inspiration. I never say, "I'm going to write a song right now," I have no choice but to, and it might take me six months, it might come out in half an hour, but it's a matter of necessity. But I noticed that during the course of the Matthew Shepard trials, our attention to the media, especially Pablo's attention to the media, and witnessing what people felt about it, seeing the photographs of people at people's funerals, and just becoming angry about the fact that, y'know, what's wrong with me? What's wrong with the world? What have I done, what am I doing that offends people so badly that they have to threaten my life, and make me feel like I am just a horrible thing, when they're the ones that believe that God creates this world, and their god created me, and why is that wrong? What's wrong with that? What gives them the right to judge me? It's upsetting because I grew up feeling inferior to everyone because of this thing that I knew was

there and I didn't want because I knew it wasn't right because I knew people wouldn't accept it. So it was really a need, and as it manifested itself, we realized that it's not happening anywhere. No one's doing this, not pushing it like we are, not saying it, like "This is what's up," in such a way, you know?

AM: I guess you're right, but that's curious. When you say that, my first reaction is, "Naw, there's tons of bands doing that, like... like..." and I can't think of any.

Tim: Yeah, musicians that are, like the Indigo Girls, you look at them, they say things in a roundabout way, they're not as open.

AM: There's bands that are technically out and doing stuff, but they're not...

Pablo: But if you look at the bands that we know, the closest thing I can think of, actually they're friends of mine, Pansy Division, I don't even really understand what they're about, they're really a joke band. I don't actually know their material, I don't listen to them all that much. I don't like them that much. Sure, they're friends of mine, but...

Tim: It's going to be the year 2001 in a couple of months, and — I'm sick of gay people being so passive about all of this oppression, and I want to

be able to get married and my taxes should be fine. They say we have equal rights. No, we do not. That is bullshit. And I'm not going to back down until I feel that we're just as equal as everybody else. People still have to think if it's going to cause a riot because they say the word "faggot" in public. If we were talking about white and black, you'd know those words would not be acceptable anymore. And there was a period in time where it was like, "Nope, you have to think twice before you use that word now." Now, people call each other Faggot, and that's Gay and that's Queer and all this, and it has such a connotation that they don't even think about it. And I'm sick of feeling like that. I'm sick of hearing it.

Pablo: It's totally true. Going back to the original statement, I have to question your use of the word "Activism," because it's not really necessary...

AM: Well, okay, at least when it started working itself into the agenda of your shows. I mean, it's not like you're carrying around placards or anything.

Pablo: Personally, I've always been that way. I was active in truly political arenas,

Tim: ...AIDS rights activism, ACT Up, all that stuff...

Pablo: And it was all so

and memory - some of those poems that made him semi-famous with his band **King Missile** in the late eighties, early nineties.

Like always, he read quickly, and faux nervously. He said he wanted to get off quickly, because there were so many other great acts coming up. "Schwervon, then Bionic Finger, and Dogbowl, then Bradford Reed. Then there's King Missile the Third / Dog Fly Religion and Toilet Mouth. It's gonna be a great evening."

True to his word, John S Hall fled the stage at eight thirty, to make room for the next act. Before he left, though, he closed with "The Miracle of Childbirth," a piece he said he'd do later with the band, but because it was his favorite, "I'm gonna do it now, too. Don't worry, though, it'll sound entirely different with the band." And he began the piece. The charge that hit the room was staggering when he read the introductory line: "Your father fucked your mother."

The man, John S Hall, takes concepts that you thought you knew, like sex, and politics, in his Giuliani piece, and he stands them, if not on their end, on a terribly skewed line that makes you see them as familiar yet violently different. The man, John S Hall, with just a sheaf of papers and sometimes a microphone, is one of the most electrifying performers in the East Village, which means, of course, the universe.

So when he turned the stage over to **Schwervon**, it

was something of a let-down. Don't get me wrong, the duo of **Nan Turner** and **Matt Roth**, each excellent artists in their independent pursuits, are great. Their minimalist rock and roll needs no further instrumentation than guitar and drums, and their songs, simple and primitive, are incredibly enjoyable (sometimes more viscerally, rhythmically fun than their other bands), but they ain't no John S Hall. For one thing, they ain't poets...

As soon as Schwervon finished, **Bionic Finger** hit the stage. It was the first time that Nan Turner, an integral member of each of the groups, had done the double duty of playing with both bands in one evening, but she didn't seem to care about the wear and tear she was experiencing. Playing primarily older Bionic Finger material, and, I think, some newer, exploratory cuts, the four-girl band rocked out like they hadn't since ... their last gig.

Following Bionic Finger was the original **King Missile / Dog Fly Religion**, who played with a DAT and guitar, and harangued the audience for not listening more carefully. At points, the diminishing crowd (Bionic Finger had quite a draw) became really attentive, like during his dirty rant, "I Shot the President Today." Dogbowl was funny, and quite a strong performer - at least, I think he was (I was talking a lot).

King Missile III's drummer and, I think, pencilina player, **Bradford Reed**, played a

phenomenal set with his home-made instrument. I have no idea how the pencilina, which looks like some kind of a sitar but sounds like an industrial orchestra, plays what it does. But he looks so busy and sounds so good, hands flying everywhere, percussing and rhythming and... Bradford Reed rocked. And he stayed on stage as King Missile III / Dog Fly Religion began their set.

John S Hall was the vocalist, with Dogbowl back on guitar and humorous asides. **Sasha Forte** played bass while Reed continue to hit things, sometimes with strings and sometimes with skins.

They did all the hits: "Detachable Penis," "Jesus Was Way Cool," "Martin Scorsese." They did every song that a semi-famous band should do, to assure they were remembered. As a big fan of John S Hall's words, I've seen him on any number of occasions, both solo and with a band. I'd never seen him with his oldest compatriot Dogbowl, though, and the difference was staggering. Hall was having fun on stage, and he was acting like a rock star, of a sort - a self-degrading, modest sort - but still, it was cool. The King Missile show was transcendent. A very powerful performer at the top of his form with very powerful performers at the top of their form. It was good.

Then **Toilet Mouth** hit the stage, and it all went to crap.

Maybe it was the late hour -

Toilet Mouth didn't start 'til well after one. Maybe it was the newness of the material. Maybe it wasn't enough rehearsals, or maybe it was too many rehearsals. But most of the artists of the evening again congregated on-stage. Matt Roth from Schwervon on guitar, Nan and Pam Weis from Bionic Finger on keys and drums respectively, and all of the King Missile players at their respective instruments, only in masks. Maybe they were

embarrassed as John Ass Hall in an alien mask and wig began singing scatological songs, all dealing with toilets and shit.

It sounded all right, but it didn't have, far as I could tell, the wit and wonder that goes into a typical John S Hall piece. They were traditional songs about fairly mundane subject matter. It was all right, and perhaps a subject of great fecundity for all to

grasp, but it relative to the rest of the night, it kinda stank.

Still, the rest of the night was superlative. With all these associated Hall-products together, it was a themed dream for fans of the man. Hopefully, there will be further John-O-Thons in the future.

(Jonathan Berger)

EIGHT TO WATCH

by Lach

A big part of being a songwriter is to hang out and see other performers. Of course this means staying late at The Antihoot and not just leaving as soon as you finish your two songs. Hanging out is a huge part of growing in the scene and that also means coming to see unknown, new artists during the week as well. Here are a few most of you missed that you should try to catch the next time around.

King Kukulele: Imagine Hammel on Ukelele. Sharp, funny, and chops that would make Spencer drool!

Helen Stratford: You've seen her at The Antihoot. Various costumes and characters abound as she sings songs of love and loss. She reminds me of the silent film actress Mary Pickford. A genuine New York eccentric who brings the joy of

creating theatre back into songwriting.

Linda Draper: Witty, clever and the voice of a lead church choir soloist. Suzanne Vega without the pretensions.

Al Lee Wyer: Mr. Brooklyn. Ralph Kramden meets Allan Sherman. Funny stuff from true-life hard (heart, art) ships.

Barry Bliss: His dynamics and vocal control are astonishing. Rarely have I seen such a focused, precise delivery. He is treading a path that brings us back the ice-cool fire of the soul.

Kenny Young and The Eggplants: This is what goofy pop nerd rock is all about. Devo meets the Romantics. High energy and fun.

Paleface: I can't believe you haven't been to his show yet! This is one of the premiere Antifolk acts! The guy has three major releases out, has toured the country, and was managed by Danny Fields (Iggy, Ramones etc.). And now he's back because Antifolk is the only scene left that matters! He matters! So whattsamatter with you that you haven't gone to the show?

Dave Deporis: True, bare bones delivery. You feel him living the song as he sings the guts of his dreams. The songs Paul Westerberg wishes he could still write.

These are just a few of the scores of talented performers currently playing at The Sidewalk Cafe Antifolk scene. Stop reading about Beats, Punks and bygone days and jump into the life around you. Go to the shows!!!

RECORD REVIEWS

Testosterone Kills

(self-titled)

The record opens with Tim almost sneering, "Take a look, boy, I'm the real thing," and it's hard to argue. They certainly pass muster on their queer soul credentials here, and though there has not been a more faithful recording of a live act in this scene (maybe out of it neither) that packs this much emotional wallop. Every line represents like it's the last line of a national anthem, or the final words of an innocent condemned man.

Despite the fact that the songs are presented here without adornments, just one guitar and two voices, it does differ a little from their live act. That might just be because listening to them in the comfort & privacy of your own couch is different. Their voices, while pitch-perfect and divinely intertwined, sound a bit more nasal than they do live. That's just nitpicking, though: joyous anthems ("Alice," "Big Sky") remain hair-raising in their reverie, while their despair in songs like the spectacular closer "Why" and the live "Fertilizer" has a bottomlessness that approaches high opera in its breast-baring anguish.

They play some of the songs for aesthetic beauty as opposed to the righteous rage that is part of why I find them so riveting live. It would seem that they have decided to err on the side of being too perfect, which largely serves them pretty damned well.

Another thing I maybe only noticed now that I never knew before: Pablo is one shit-hot guitar player when he wants to be. Here he wants to a lot.

If this supposed to be a warmup to a "real" record coming out next year sometime, you would think I'd be excited about that one. God damn right I'm excited, but this here is a beautiful document that transcends its own occasional earnestness, and is humbling in its revelation of the depths of this raw soul.

(Tony Hightower)

Grey Revell The Green Train

(www.greyrevell.com)

Little did Grey Revell know when he stepped off the turnip truck from whatever hick town he came from (what, Los Angeles? whatever) that what, two and a half years later he'd have actually gotten hitched with a little howler on the way, and have his third (third!) record (in 18 months!) coming out, and just in time for Christmas too, and by god this is easily his best album yet!

Antifolkdom's squinty-eyed hippie four-chord genius-type has put together a record that succeeds where even *Crazy Like An Ambush* failed, and he did it (get this) by being a little less ambitious than his last two long-players. For the first time, he actually sounds comfortable in his gently moddy guitar rock sound. The songs don't stick around any longer than they have to get under your skin. I don't know if I've adequately mentioned how happy I am that someone's making this stuff, 30 years after the fact.

This album rights an awful lot of wrongs. "Deliver Hell On Me" sounds like "Violent Jack" should have on *Ambush*, all vertical hipster bounce and blow-your-hair-out-of-your-eyes. Spencer Chakedis atones for the overzealous production job on the last record by wielding a truly deft touch throughout here (At least until the vertigo-inducing guitar on the final cut, "First Comes the Lovin'," though I figure Spencer couldn't help himself, and at that point it's cool anyways.) The band is tight and bouncy, from drummer Matt Cusack on out.

This biggest audible leap forward is in the tone of Grey's voice. I'm not sure what happened, maybe it's this whole getting-married thing, but the traces of maturity from *Ambush* have grown until on every track here, he sounds like a full-on grownup. By gum, he sure seems sure of himself, and it sounds wonderful.

Not only do I hope he's happy with his howler, I hope his little howler will be happy with this, easily the best record of 1966.

(Tony Hightower)