

Aquabear Reader

Spring 2008
Issue 1

Interview with
Adam Torres & Brian Wiebe

Aquabear Rants

Venue Spotlight: ARTS/West

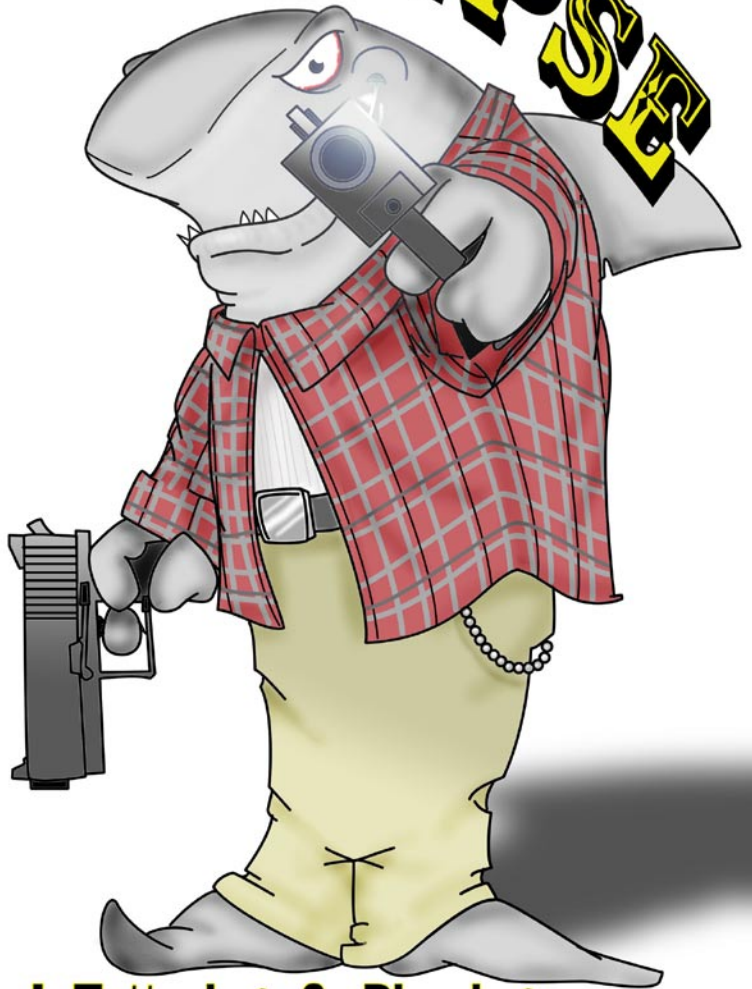


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Nelsonville Art & Music Festival

Cleveland Lottery
170 musicians create 33 new bands

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Interview with

Adam Torres & Brian Wiebe

Making of the video *Breakneck Jane's Fifteen Minute Escape*

by Brian Koscho

Adam, tell me about the song “Breakneck Jane’s Fifteen Minute Escape”

AT: It’s a murder ballad about an escape artist whose stage name is Breakneck Jane. I wrote the song in no more than an hour a couple years ago when I was backpacking in Europe. I had been obsessed with Bob Dylan’s *Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts*. To me, Dylan’s song is some sort of country western short film in song form. I wanted to do that with Breakneck Jane, but fool around with a different genre. At the time, I was feeling good about what it turned out to be, so that’s how it turned out.

And how did Brian become involved with the making of the video?

AT: When I met Brian about a year or so ago at Casa Cantina, he had told me that he was interested in making a video based on Breakneck Jane’s *Fifteen Minute Escape* so that’s how it happened to be originally. We became friends and sent e-mails to each other about making a video and it eventually came together. I would like to say on a side note that Brian was the driving force behind this whole project. I did not really do a whole lot except think about wizards and flap my hands like an overgrown chicken. Brian made it all come together in the end and I am amazed at it all.

BW: I expressed my love for his album, and the subject of making a music video came up, but only in very vague terms. I interviewed Adam for a potential Aquabear podcast—that may still see the light of day. Interviewing Adam was a very good experience—he really illuminated the thoughts behind the songs. We kept talking about doing a



video in vague terms—until I struck up a conversation with Adam at the Aquabear County Fair 2007. He told me he had seen an old film at Carabar and wanted to do something with “menacing wizards.” He had some different activities for the wizards to do and that got my mind going.

What kind of imagery jumped out at you when hearing the song?

BW: The story that song tells was incredibly vivid in my head. It was all I could see when I listened to the song for the longest time. It really took Adam uttering those magic words --“menacing wizards”--to break me from the spell. The way I said that is ridiculous, but I am completely serious.

AT: The only thing I could think of was black and white photography and silent cinema sort of ideas.

Brian why don’t you tell us about your background in film.

BW: I graduated from the HTC school of film at OU. I focused primarily on narrative film and video, but I have also made some more experimental items. I currently do video work for the farm bureau which pays the bills (sort of). The OU school of film was a great experience—it's a dysfunctional family, hideous and majestic all in one. I miss it.

What made you want to work on this project Brian?

BW: That's an easy one—Adam's amazing, beautiful music. I don't want to come across as a shameless ego stroker, but that is one of my favorite albums of all time. And Adam backs it up live. If I go on, we will all start blushing.

Each of you should tell me your idea behind the video.

AT: I don't remember what I was thinking back then. Looking back now I think that I was thinking about wizards, black and white film, super 8mm film, and no visible signs of society in the video. I wanted to have some sort of secret wizard society – I thought it would be fitting if the tone of the video leaned more toward sinister than playful. It turned out to be both...which is great. I was really into the idea of this group of wizards murdering and burying the leading actress (Jane) and I was also into the idea of throwing tires, passing tires, and rolling tires around like sacred cows.

BW: Hard to say. I believe there are a lot of different ways of making films, and—for that matter—great films (which is what all filmmakers want to make). There are no hard and fast rules. Sometimes being very formal and rigid works, and other

times flying by the seat of your pants works. I have learned to be open to accidents, luck, mistakes. Most of the time I don't understand the meaning until after the smoke has cleared. I didn't know what this video was going to look like or what it was going to be about until all was said and done. I think the "method" used in the creation of this video really lent itself to that idea. We had costumes, scenarios, and rules in mind, but no shot list that was set in stone. It was really a documentary approach. Also, it should be noted that Ryan Bajornas, the cinematographer, brought so much to this video.

Why wizards?

BW: That's on Adam.

AT: Wizards are concrete, powerful, and interesting folklore figures. The recording of Breakneck Jane has a mystical quality to it, I think, and the idea and concept of a secret wizard community fit well with the tone of the song.

There also seems to be an underlying theme of nature in the video, was that intentional?

AT: Yes, that was intentional. One of our objectives of the film was to create a removed little fantasy world. I expressed to Brian that I thought in order to do that we should not have any recognizable landmarks or hints of the real world.

BW: This came about for a couple of reasons. Adam didn't want anything modern in the video; anything that people would immediately reference as part of their day to day life—a car for example. Nature is really the only escape from that. Rocks, water, smoke, and various elements became



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the props. Some modern elements managed to sneak into the video, but a lot of those were referencing water or air, balloons for instance. And again, Ryan Bajornas played a big role in this. As I mentioned, we had scenarios in mind but we took sort of a documentary approach. A lot of times, I would be positioning people or getting them in costume, and Ryan would be rolling on all the bugs, grass, etc. that surrounded us. Also the video was shot in stages, so after I watching some footage, I would say to myself, "Well that water splashing looked amazing, why don't I go get some more of that!" So that is sort of how it came about being captured, but how it came to be a theme goes back to the idea I was talking about of the meaning revealing itself after the fact. I want people to take away from this video whatever they want, but for me it really came to be about the destruction of purity. Man versus nature or perhaps his own nature. There is also the whole idea that an act of destruction is an act of creation. Humanity has a love/hate relationship with explosions.

How did you get people involved? Were the actors professional?

AT: All of the casting was voluntary and were friends of Brian or me. I was surprised to see how

many people were willing to dress up as wizards, jump out of trees, swim in the river, etc. The acting was also surprisingly good. I might be wrong but I don't think we had any professional actors here but the performances were great...especially Sherri Oliver who played Jane.

BW: No actors were members of the screen actors guild, but some of them sure could be. Everyone was a friend. Sherri ended up as the main character by accident—she was there to help and be a wizard, but she ended up being 'Jane' because the dress fit her. She was amazing. Most of the time I said "wizards," and people responded with a, "hell yeah, I want to

be a wizard!"

What were some of the places you shot at?

AT: Brian knows this better than me. I was only at two of the shoots. I don't know how many shoots he did but I know he did a good bit of filming. I was at Stroud's Run – it was just Brian and me for that one and I was also at a shoot out off of Second Street here in Athens.

BW: My good friend JJ, an MVP wizard, suggested his parents' place outside of Athens. It was a great spot. Another place was Stroud's Run. Another place is where I now live—along the Little Miami River.

There were other songs and performances shot around the same time period as the "Breakneck Jane" video, how did that come about?

AT: The original idea was to just make a video for Breakneck Jane but as the filming progressed I thought it would be a good idea to shoot more footage of me playing some of the Nostra Nova songs solo at an old strip mine in Meigs county. Brian was great...and went along with the idea.

BW: I think these came about because we wanted to have some other items to go with the video—we wanted people to go home happy.

Were the songs chosen specifically?

AT: Not really...I thought about the songs maybe the week of the shooting or so. There is a song on the DVD that is not on the Nostra Nova album called Como un Pato – and that song was chosen specifically for this DVD (and was a main reason why I wanted to shoot these solo songs).

I understand there is a DVD for “Breakneck Jane” complete with all of the other videos.

Tell us more about that and how to get a hold of one...

AT: Ok. They will be available at four places. One is at Nostra Nova shows. Two is at Haffa's Records in Athens. Three is at Donkey Coffee in Athens. Four is online at myspace.com/nostranova. Just e-mail me there and I will send a DVD in the mail. They are seven smackers, unless you want to make a deal with Brian or me.

BW: Go to an Adam Torres/Nostra Nova show. Go to the Aquabear Legion website. Go to Donkey. Go to Haffas. And if none of those work, give me a call at 740 590 4338.

What are you working on next?

BW: I am currently working on a performance piece/documentary about the Aquabear Legion County Fair. I also want to get back into narrative filmmaking. I'm working on an idea called “Butt Smoker” which I hope to have Adam involved in. I'd like to work with Adam again for sure. I would like to record some more music under my ‘Bukskin Lubershine’ moniker. I want to start a web page for all of my work to date. I want to paint more. I have some other ideas/potential projects, but I don't know what will stick. I can't guarantee any of these items or set a timetable or anything like that. Time is relentless pursuing us all—sleep on that one. I need some more coffee.

AT: I spend most of my time with Southeast Engine these days but...we'll see. There might be some surprises for Nostra Nova in 2008. No promises..

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The Aquabear Rant #1: Burn Baby Burn

by Rick Dodgson,
Foreign Legion Correspondent



It's been a long time coming music lovers, but the end is nigh so raise your glasses and rejoice over the passing of the music industry as we have known it. Sony BMG, Universal, Warner Music and all the other corporate music money-pigs have been condemned to die, guilty of exces-

sive greed and staggering cluelessness. 2008 will be the year of their destruction and I for one will be shedding no tears over their passing. Let's face it, the major labels have been hanging around like rotting corpses for the past decade or more, putrid, wide-eyed and helpless in the face of new technologies and a disinterested MySpace generation. Stuck in an outmoded model of consumption, the majors have been desperate to recover the golden age of the 1970s with its pass-me-down groupies, mounds of cocaine and cash-cow platinum albums. But those days are long gone (unless you happen to be in Skeletonwitch). In 2007 you could make the top forty by selling just 20,000 CDs. That might sound like a lot to a Casual Future or a Southeast Engine, but in corporate terms those numbers speak only of failure.

Signs of the coming apocalypse are everywhere: Sony and the other majors are laying off

workers left and right, Warner Music's stock is down close to 50 percent—leading the pack in terms of its decline, but not by much—and CD sales are in the toilet, down 19 percent from the previous (disastrous) year. The first week of September 2007 marked the worst sales week in the industry's history. Only one album sold more than 50,000 copies that week—High School Musical 2, the year's top selling record—but no-one over twelve bought much of anything else. The Xmas season brought some respite—Josh Groban anyone?—but not enough to offer any salvation for the industry. Were it not for manufactured crap like High School Musical and American Idol, the whole thing might have withered and died a year or two ago but as I write, the kindling is bone-dry and the pyre has been built. Now all that's left to do is sit back and watch the bastards burn. Bring it on baby, burn baby burn.



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The Aquabear Rant #2: Your Band Is At Least that Lame, Too

by Dan Majesky



I guess I'm supposed to tell everybody why local music is the new black. 3 years ago, I would have shot myself in the face for even thinking about defending that position. Now? Fuck it, I'm riding the wave of the future.

The hey-day of the low-level music tour is over. Gas prices were

kept artificially low here for years, and now we eat the back-lash with A1 sauce. Used to be, anyone could tour for nothing and get paid decent.

Your average band on the road these days bleeds cash out their eyes. Mid-to-low-level touring bands usually have aces up their sleeves (aka cash cows back home or mounting credit card debt) if they go out for more than one week a year.

There's just no use in trying to tour up a following. You don't have to, anyway. Bands get famous on the internet. It's just a hurry-up version of old-skool hipsterism. No more ltd 500 7" and scotch tape zines. Rock into your laptop, upload that shit to myspace and wait.

No one will like it since you suck, but they might like it *even though* you suck and they'll blog you and quicker than you can say Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, you're on tour and all the critics hate your second album because they can now say you suck without tipping their hands and letting on

that that first album ate their ass out, too, but they wanted that one girl to like them, so... But, whatever. You're already rich off t-shirt sales; at least enough to not work for like, 3 years, which, in my book, makes you Richard Branson.

Anyhoo, no one worth a poop is coming to your town. Positive counter vibration: the talented people in your town don't need to move to Portland, Chicago, or New York City to make it. Hell, it's probably cooler to live in Wooster or some shit anyway since towns that are worth a squat are played out, right? Right?

The good bands will condense and co-mingle and become better bands. The rebirth of regional sounds is happening right now.

Outside of porn and theft and instant fame, the main reason the internet wins is that it gives us the ability to better understand what's going on around our dumb asses. Stacks of paper flyers used to rot while friends came to shows. Check it: you can actually find what's ripping in your town without shelling out 3 bucks and a canned good to see bad metal.

Don't be fooled. Don't complain. Don't stay at home and wait for the next national act to come through. You probably could use the sun, anyway..

Send your rant to
reader@aquabearlegion.com

The Way It All Must End

by Bram Riddlebarger

Your head bursting from sleep and sickness, you sit at the kitchen table and listen to Hank Williams moan from the stereo in the living room. Hank had just kicked it a week ago. His voice was more ghostly than ever.

You shake your head.

You wonder why Tom Robbins ended his books the way he does. Then you wonder why you thought Hank Williams had died just one week ago. Tom Robbins may have invaded your skull. It was possible. Telepathy or some crazy shit, you reckon. Maybe Tom Robbins is the cause of your throbbing brain. He could be up there, lurking like the ghost of Hank Williams between your ears.

You flip the station on the stereo until you find something loud. Thoughts of exorcism run through the sickness in your head. Is Robbins dancing? The throbbing, you notice, does have a slow, two-four backbeat-like pattern. Almost rockabilly, but surely this couldn't be true. Have Hank Williams and his Drifting Cowboys decided to play One Last Show, Exclusive, for One Night Only, with Tom Robbins as the entire audience, inside your head? Why you ask? Even cowboys get the blues or what?

You think you hear the old Lovesick Blues Boy crooning away from your medulla oblongata right this second. Meanwhile, you feel Tom Robbins still kicking the beat, apparently complete with cowboy boots on his feet. You turn the stereo



Bram Riddlebarger is a writer and musician from Southeastern Ohio. He has written seven collections of poems and short stories, including [The Way It All Must End](#) and his latest [Belly Up For Fun](#). Bram is currently at work on

his first novel. He can be contacted at sneedenshotel@gmail.com.

up as loud as it will go, but to no effect. The boot stompin' rages on as Tom Robbins perfects his Texas two-step.

Through the pain that is your head, small questions begin to arise from your frontal lobes. Small neuro-electrical torpedoes firing away like hopeless sperm racing against the PILL. The bastards. Who sold that Robbins a ticket anyway? You suspect you know the answer to that question. Hank hadn't led the purest of lives and Robbins never missed a chance to bash the Almighty. Then again . . . anything was possible after this, right? Maybe old Hank's been sittin' in purgatory this whole time and now he's got to show Tom Robbins what he's got. Maybe it's his only chance. Heaven or hell, baby, which side are you on? If Tom Robbins's cowboy boots are any indication, looks like Hank might be singing with an angel band after all. Maybe God's going to kill two kooks with one banana. If Robbins can kick out a good two-step and Williams can yodel till he really does see the light, He'll let 'em both in. Meanwhile, the Old Man gets a free Hank Williams concert (everyone knows God loves country music) as well as the pleasure of watching that sinner Tom Robbins stomp around in cowboy boots, skinny legs and all.

Of course, how your brain became the venue for such a visitation of the otherworldly is the part you aren't getting. Wasn't St. Peter supposed to take care of these matters? Hank Williams plays the Pearly Gates? Shit. There are probably people dying to see this show.

As you complete this thought, Tom Robbins bears down on your corpus callosum. You can't take much more. Your skull was not intended to be the Holy Ghost's honky-tonk. Or was it? You turn the stereo off and sit back down at the kitchen table; nausea grips your stomach. You're afraid that if you barf you may see a tiny fiddle bow or maybe a six-shooter swirling around in the oatmeal you ate for breakfast. You try it anyway. Hell, it might make them stop.

It doesn't. Not even a break in the action. You realize you do not matter in the course of such events. They only need your head. The fact that this is your command central for all functions mental is irrelevant to the divine jig Tom Robbins now performs around your cerebral cortex. Even Hank Williams, spinal distortion and all, shows no mercy. His cowboy boots beat a leather tattoo of two-timin' into your brain stem and you cry for mercy.

There is no such thing. You stumble away from the oatmeal stew floating like a healthy colon inside your toilet bowl and fall down on your knees. In this state of forced supplication, the Drifting Cowboys break into a frantic version of what sounds like 'Sally Goodin' but could be the voice of the Creator Himself for all you care. You hit the floor face down. Oatmeal flecked bile seeps from your mouth like snooze juice as you writhe among the ghosts of broken beer bottles and honky-tonk hardwood floorboards. Tom Robbins hoots and hollers, "DO-CE-DO!" in a trance-like state as the frenzy escalates to near quantum proportions. Hank's bringing down the house tonight. And all you can think is this must be the way it all ends, this must be the way it all ends, this must be ... the way ... it ... all ... ends.



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Venue Spotlight:

ARTS/West

by Kris Poland

Go West, Young Bands

There is a place on West State Street where Athens music lovers can see some of the area's best musicians display their talents. It is a place where engaging local paintings and photographs adorn the walls and where community members meet to consolidate support for the arts. It is a place that has been an invaluable resource for area arts organizations and individual artists since its inception. But its staff is unlikely to serve you vegan burritos.

The place is ARTS/West, and Emily Prince hopes that it will increase its presence in the regional arts community for years to come. Prince is ARTS/West's program specialist and directs many of this venue's day-to-day activities. She describes her place of work as, "a venue and a little bit more." Indeed. The administrative and artistic support that ARTS/West provides to Athens' performing artists includes establishing press contacts and authoring press releases, organization of events, skilled instruction, technical equipment, as well as additional resources and services. A little bit more than a venue? Prince has a knack for understatement.

Housed in what used to be the Nazarene Church where West State Street and Miller Street converge, ARTS/West is a beautiful venue inside and out. Sunshine filters in through stained-glass windows to light up one of the largest stages in Athens. On this stage ARTS/West has presented numerous plays, diverse cultural presentations,

poetry readings, dance recitals, and musical performances. The commitment of active Athens community members is a critical component of this venue's success so far. "People have great respect for the space," Prince says happily. "Everybody really chips in and treats the space as their own in a very positive way." With support from the City of Athens, The Athens Municipal Arts Commission, and The Ohio Arts Council, ARTS/West has the backing to remain a cornerstone in the local arts community.

It may be young, but ARTS/West is quickly becoming one of the preeminent venues in Athens. Participation increased by 21% to 21,000 people in 2007 (see sidebar), and Prince hopes to increase this figure by at least another 20% this year. Professional theater productions are launching world premieres of new plays only at ARTS/West, and the venue hopes to dramatically increase the number of musical performances it hosts in 2008. This is where the Legion comes in to play.

The Aquabear Legion has supported ARTS/West from the very beginning, and that support has recently evolved into a mutually beneficial partnership. Following in the footsteps of The Studio for Young Actors, the Ki-en Crew, and the Appalachian Progressive Education Center, the Legion is the fourth community arts organization to enroll in ARTS/West's incubation program. Incubation provides the Legion with office space, a temporary address, the use of technical equipment, and additional services. In return and in addition to other burgeoning programs, the Aquabear Legion has agreed to manage the venue's developing recording studio. This will allow all musicians who perform at ARTS/West access to high-fidelity live recordings of their sets. The hope is that recording times will also soon be available to musicians who want recordings without the pressure of having a live audience present. Prince says, "My experience with the Aquabear Legion has been extremely positive. Its members are very dedicated, and its mission of helping local and regional music acts fits with our mission."

By the Numbers

2: The number of employees at ARTS/West

21,000: People who attended ARTS/West events in 2007

0: Noise violations in the history of the venue

243: Sponsored events at ARTS/West so far

1: Wall destroyed at an abnormally rowdy performance

Despite all that ARTS/West has going for it, the venue has yet to become a mainstay for gig-seeking local bands. Now that the Aquabear Legion is incubating there, the hope is that this unfortunate reality will soon change. The Second Annual Aquabear County Fair brought local and out-of-town bands in to the performance space and helped spread the word about the services ARTS/West can offer musicians.

One of the few musical regularities at ARTS/West is Athens' very own monthly Noise Show. The brainchild of

uber-bassist Andrew Lampela, Noise Show brings together musicians off all types who want to forget about rules and structure and come together to create a beautiful racket. Members of Casual

Future, Dinner of Swords, Goodbye Goats, Men of Gentle Birth, Wellbutrin Commission, Weedghost, and more have joined in the improvisational meal. Although attendance is rarely high at such gatherings, this event serves as an example of the sort of community-building ARTS/West can provide to the Athens music scene. Meeting for a potluck dinner and noise-making the last Sunday of every month at 6:00 PM, Noise Show shows no signs of slowing down after taking shape in November of 2005.

In a tip of the hat to her good friend Tim Peacock, Prince sums up her perspective of ARTS/West as a music venue. "Our primary goal is to support performing arts with a focus on theater," she claims, "because no one can top Stuart's Opera House." While Stuart's can boast about bringing legendary musical talent such as Ralph Stanley and Richie Havens to Southeast Ohio, it is an unlikely venue for most local bands. Athens bars and performance spaces like ARTS/West welcome local bands to invite their friends and put on a great show. However, only ARTS/West offers services far beyond a percentage of a cover charge. "Our focus is always on the community and local artists," says Prince. Local musicians would do well to remember that they are, without a doubt, local artists as well.

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Reviews

Casual Future

Footnotes in the City Lights
2006



On their debut album, Casual Future gets into character as musicians from the slacker set, slinging well-penned quips filled with cynicism and absurdity, while keeping pretty level heads. It's a well-balanced act

owing much to lead singer Scott Spice's almost ho-hum delivery, dancing drunkenly over lyrics finely calculated and clever.

This slouchy posture is propped up by the steady hand of Todd Jacops, on double duty as the entirety of the rhythm section. Acoustic strumming throughout is tempered by Dustin Thomas's caustic lead, often following ably, but perhaps foregrounded too infrequently.

Establishing their conceptual cleverness with opener "Abbrev.," momentum threatens to dead-end with similar sounding grooves on "Light Pollution" and "Under the Affluence." It'd be a shame to step off here, as "Bury Me on the Moon" starts a string of standout songs simultaneously left of center and more pop-informed, book-ended by the stellar "Everyone Wants a Debutante."

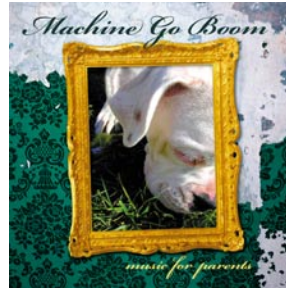
The band does well to stray from their comfort zone, as the culmination of the record dives back into a sonic territory that risks becoming indistinguishable. It's in this portion of the record that the band strikes a genuine emotional chord, achieving more through nuance. Nate Schneible's acumen for production shines here, with studio atmospherics providing a narrative texture for the

album's artful final arc. Closer "Melatonin" is a succinct summation of the album's virtues, a chorus of voices chiming in to help Scott usher the listener out in an eerie, heart warming way.

- by Matt Collander

Machine Go Boom

Music for Parents
Collectible Escalators, 2007



Cleveland's Machine Go Boom has been one of my own personal favorite bands for years. Music For Parents is their second album after 2004's Thank You Captain Obvious, both were recorded by Paul Maccarrone at Cleve-

land's Zombie Proof Studios. Machine Go Boom's music is an audio sugar rush, with band-leader Mikey Machine's voice ranging from a beautiful swoon to the tone of a small child on Christmas morning after twelve cans of soda and an entire birthday cake. Mikey and the rest of MGB make music that really is a breath of fresh air.

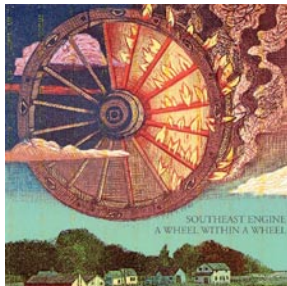
This album reads like a re-telling of adolescence from that sense of insignificance ("Small"), to love ("800 lb. Gorilla," "Mummy"), and even to social awkwardness ("Elmers Glue," "Oh My"). Music For Parents captures the band perfectly and shows the spectrum they cover; from acoustic ballads with clever lyrics and catchy choruses ("800 lb. Gorilla," "Parents") to short pop-punk masterpieces ("Build Me A Ladder," "Gentleman's Reply") and even a huge swelling number complete with brass and strings ("Oh My"). The centerpiece for the album to me would have to be "Niagara Falls" which (like many other MGB songs) is so catchy you'll feel you have heard it a million times before and it will still keep you whistling and humming for months.

- by Brian Koscho

Southeast Engine

Wheel within a Wheel

Misra, 2007



Adam Remnant, Southeast Engine's principle penman and visionary, is a Dayton native living currently in that mythical berg of Athens, OH... a town often described as sleepy, dreamlike... you get the picture. Let me tell

you about the Remnant's house: piano, keyboard, drum here, drum there, harmonica, violin, organ... sounds of guitars. And that is not to mention the collective musical talent of the various characters often to be found lurking in and about the Remnant household on a given day: Adam Torres (backing vocals, guitar) lends a capable hand in the realization of Remnant's musical vision, with distinct vocal harmonies that have become perhaps the most recognizable aspect of the band's sound. Jesse Remnant (bass, keys), another Daytonite and recent addition to the band's live lineup, and Leo DeLuca (drums), co-founding member and major hunk, round out the live band, which has recently completed its first tour as a quartet.

The new album is not exactly a departure from the band's previous sound. It is rather the culmination of efforts, experiments, and emotions that have unfolded since 2005's "Coming To Terms With Gravity". However, "Wheel" differs in that it is a decidedly more cohesive sounding album than its predecessors.. "Wheel", while not a departure, is unarguably an evolution of the Southeast Engine sound. The frequently laid-back melodic alt-country sound that had warranted countless comparisons to Wilco in years past has now evolved to warrant pointed comparisons to Okkervil River and My Morning Jacket--the new songs have a

sense of yearning and importance that was absent on previous releases.

The album is put together in a manner such that the listener remains captivated for the entire 42 minutes... there is no coming up for air when you're submerged in this album. And it's pretty gosh-darned deep. "Wheel" is a veritable clinic in musical and thematic variations, song to song, bridge to chorus, hook to hook to delightful hook; the result is a soundscape as colorful and appealing as the album's cover art. A new fancy is tickled with each lyric, ranging from the depths of despair and alienation ("Oh God...", "Pursuit of Happiness pt. II") to the highest heights of... well... despair and alienation ("Psychoanalysis", "Taking the Fall"), but heights no less. It's not melodrama, it's just all-fired emotion beautifully articulated and sounded-out in a way that only Southeast Engine possesses the ability to do. One thing most people agree on-- it's a damn fine album. Unless you like shitty music.

by jamie rymers

The X Bolex

This Time Next Year You'll Be Oxidizing Stone Tower Control, 2007



The X Bolex began as a solo project for then Small Object a drummer Nate Scheible while he was still living in Athens, Ohio. But, The X Bolex is now a full band made up of some of the greatest

musicians in the Cleveland music scene. Nate also co-runs Zombie Proof Studios and recorded "This Time.." with fellow engineer Paul Maccarrone. In addition to Scheible (who has spent/spends time in Cleveland acts such as Self Destruct Button, Neo Nothing, The Washout Corporation, and Thee Scar-city of Tanks), the band is filled out by Matt Majesky

(State of Ohio), Lou Arocho (Small Object a), and Dale Ursic (Homostupids, State of Ohio). Scheible's songwriting has always been spectacular as have X Bolex's previous albums, but there is something special that develops on their new record.

"This Time Next Year You'll Be Oxidizing Stone" opens with the schizophrenic "Mastodon" which almost puts the listener to sleep only to wake them right back up before swelling into a haze of Ursic's drums and vibraphone from Kyle Farrell of Youngstown's (the) giants of gender. Scheible's attention to composition pays off with "Ice and Sand" which sits beautifully somewhere between Gastr Del Sol and The Sea and Cake. The album finds its climax with the surging beginning of "Mastoid Process" which sounds almost like something you would find on a Yes record and then turns into a beautiful backdrop for the dueling horns of Lou Arocho and Dan Wenninger. The true gem of the album comes at the very end with the gorgeous "When People Die At The Circus" which captures the band at its finest. The song's lyrics discuss what I (as one who considers Nate to be a very close friend) can only imagine are statements about himself, and his likes and dislikes. Including "horn arrangements from early Chicago," "earl grey tea" and my own personal favorite "a penchant for brown shoes." Listen: www.myspace.com/thexbolex

- by Brian Koscho

We March

**Creator/Destroyer
Non-Prophet, 2007**



Full length number three from Athen's vanguard of punk/hardcore/garage/psyche, WE MARCH's "Creator/Destroyer", ranges from the speed and fury of 80's H/C punk to scrappy garage stomp and murky

psyched-out jams, but don't think for one second that this is anything but the most scathing Punk record you've heard in a long time. While "the kids" are out there trying to recreate the past glory of these genres, WE MARCH manages to destroy them. Whether it's uptempo ragers like "beep beep beep" or "the choice" (from their 7") or slower swaggering numbers like "never compromise" or "wash away" you come away with the feeling that, just like the first wave of punks (who had no reference to what they were creating, unlike so much of the rehash of the past ten years), these guys don't care about emulating their heros, just about creating music on their own terms, and for almost ten years (!) they've done just that. Released on their own NON-PROPHET record label "Creator/Destroyer" proves that even in the



jedcollins@gmail.com

21st century, punk can still be original, exciting and inspirational. Highly recommended. Contact them: wemarch.net, myspace.com/wemarch and wemarchbox@hotmail.com
- by *Pencil*

Percolator

Man is Not a Bird

2007



The relationships we have with music are as varied and complicated as the ones we have with people. Sometimes a song or album is love at first listen—

swooning as I hit repeat for the fifth, sixth, seventh time—enraptured in immediacy. Other times, the relationship takes a little while to develop. Maybe I haven't heard the album in the right setting, or maybe I haven't heard it enough, or maybe I just didn't understand it right away. But I keep listening until eventually a deeper respect forms because of the piece's slowly unraveling mysteries and complexities. Percolator has managed to do both. *Man is Not a Bird* is an album that had me from the get go, and then kept growing on me.

Man is Not a Bird falls under the large banner of "indie" music, and yet it manages to avoid the more obnoxious "indie" signifiers--the morose warbling, the fashionable apathy, the poor me and my existential crisis angst. I enjoy a lot of music that has these characteristics, but I want to have fun too. This album is a lot of fun, and it manages to do so without losing a bit of complexity or sophistication.

The album contains an abundance of dichotomy in both form and content. Percolator has three songwriters with three distinct voices, and yet it is hard to know where one ends and the other begins. The guitar work intertwines

clean and distorted tones seamlessly. The song "Prepared for Disaster" has a somber tone that contrasts with the uplifting lyrics. "Safeward" is the tale of a bored sadomasochist. "Svelte on the Veldt" pits two musical personalities against one another, and then depicts the musical melee that ensues. These collisions of contradictions reward on repeated listens.

Percolator has crafted an album with a wide variety of ideas and sounds. In the hands of lesser musicians, *Man is Not a Bird* may have been a train wreck, but in their more than capable hands the album is as cohesive as it is versatile. Anyone can listen to *Man is Not a Bird* for FREE at www.percolatormusic.com, and everyone should.
- by *Brian Wiebe*



aquabearlegion.com
[myspace.com/
aquabearlegion](http://myspace.com/aquabearlegion)

Lottery League Creates 33 New Bands in Cleveland

From the blog of Cleveland photographer and all around good guy Lou Muenz



Participants include members of Machine Go Boom, Self Destruct Button, Pere Ubu, Cobra Verde, Aloha, X Bolex, This Moment in Black History, Six Parts 7, Roue, State of Ohio, Houseguest and many many more! To find out more about the Lottery League (and for a complete list of bands) visit its official blog at: <http://lotteryleague.blogspot.com/>.

The long anticipated Lottery League draft was held this past super Saturday at Asterisk Gallery.

Start with 170 willing participants from various bands from Northeast Ohio. Choose teams [bands] by pulling number out of a hopper, go five rounds until all teams are chosen without having a band member that was in a band previously with.

The next part of this process will give the 33 new bands 6+ weeks to write songs, practice/rehearse and the last process will be to perform live at the top clubs in Cleveland.

There may have been doubts by some that were involved in the lottery league if this great idea would ever materialize. But as long as I have known Jae Kristoff I know better than to un-

derestimate his ability to get people involved & motivated [ie: punkrock softball, shitzstock etc.]. Though I would be lying if I said I didn't have doubts of how many of the 170+ invited participants from over [I'm guessing] 80 local bands would show up for the initial draft. I know when your dealing with band dudes & dudettes it easy to get a yes when you see them but to have them still willing to commit to a huge endeavor a few weeks down the road is always another story. I would have to confirm with Jae but my estimate is that there were at least 95% of those invited that did showed up and participated, that in its self is a minor miracle.

4th Nelsonville Art and Music Festival: May 16th-18th

**Akron/Family, Avett Brothers, Hurley, lots of
locals to play Nelsonville Festival!**

by Brian Koscho



Friday, May 16th through Sunday, May 17th Nelsonville Ohio will be the site of a weekend of wonderful music from a national and local level. Stuart's Opera House is putting on the 4th Annual Nelsonville Art and Music Festival at Hocking College, moving their annual one-day summer festival to the weekend and site of the former Hocking Festival, which ran for nine years before ending in 2007. Stuart's decided to expand their one-day summer festival into a whole weekend in May, hoping to continue on the tradition of great live music in this beautiful setting. The Nelsonville Art and Music Festival lineup this year already

includes national acts: The Avett Brothers, Akron/Family, Michael Hurley, O Death, and Uncle Monk (Tommy Ramone's bluegrass duo). There are also lots of local and regional talent, including many Aquabear Legion bands such as Southeast Engine, Silo Circuit, Woody Pines and the Lonesome Two and Casual Future.

Camping will be available at the site and there are many more bands to be announced still. Tickets and more information will be available soon. For updates on lineups and tickets you can visit www.nelsonvillefest.org, www.myspace.com/nelsonvilleartandmusicfestival or www.stuartsopearahouse.org. You can also contact Stuart's Opera House at (740) 753-1924, or stop to visit and I'll give you a tour (52 Public Square, Nelsonville Ohio).

**Advertise in the
Aquabear Reader**
reader@aquabearlegion.com

Events Calendar

3/8	Project ReUse at ARTS/West, Athens / 6pm A sustainable fashion show to benefit Reuse Industries After party at Casa Cantina (10:30pm) with Casual Future, Silo Circuit, Russenorsk More info at: myspace.com/projectreuse
3/28	Final Fridays on the Square, Nelsonville / 6pm-10pm Monthly gallery hop featuring art, music, food and more! / More info at: athensohio.com
3/28	Richie Havens at Stuart's Opera House, Nelsonville / 8pm
3/30	Monthly Noise Show and potluck at ARTS/West, Athens / 6pm-9pm
4/12	Cleveland Band Lottery Show at Beachland Ballroom, Cleveland / More info online.
4/12	Bob Dylan Tribute Show at Casa Cantina, Athens / 10:30pm / All sorts of folks / Benefits March of Dimes!
4/15-4/17	Blackoutfest XII at The Union, Athens / all weekend / Bands TBA For more information: myspace.com/theunionbar
4/18	the everybodyfields at Stuart's Opera House, Nelsonville / 8pm
4/21	International Noise Festival at Now That's Class, Cleveland / all weekend Info: myspace.com/nowthatsclass
4/25-5/1	Athens International Film and Video Festival , Athens / various times and places For more information and schedules visit: athensfest.org
4/25	Final Fridays on the Square, Nelsonville / 6pm-10pm Monthly gallery hop featuring art, music, food and more! / More info at: athensohio.com
4/25-4/26	For Real Fest 2008 at The Union, Athens / all weekend For more information: myspace.com/forrealfest
4/27	Monthly Noise Show and potluck at ARTS/West, Athens / 6pm-9pm
5/10	Athens Music Club at ARTS/West, Athens For more information: myspace.com/artswestathens
5/14	Cherryholmes at Stuart's Opera House, Nelsonville / 8pm
5/16-5/18	4th Annual Nelsonville Art and Music Festival at Hocking College, Nelsonville / all week-end with: The Avett Brothers, Akron/Family, Michael Hurley, O Death, and many many more! More info: myspace.com/nelsonvilleartandmusicfestival or stuartsoperahouse.org

Updated event schedules can be found:

The Union - myspace.com/theunionbar
 Casa Cantina - myspace.com/casacantina
 ARTS/West - myspace.com/artswestathens
 Donkey - myspace.com/donkeycoffee
 Stuart's Opera House - stuartsoperahouse.org