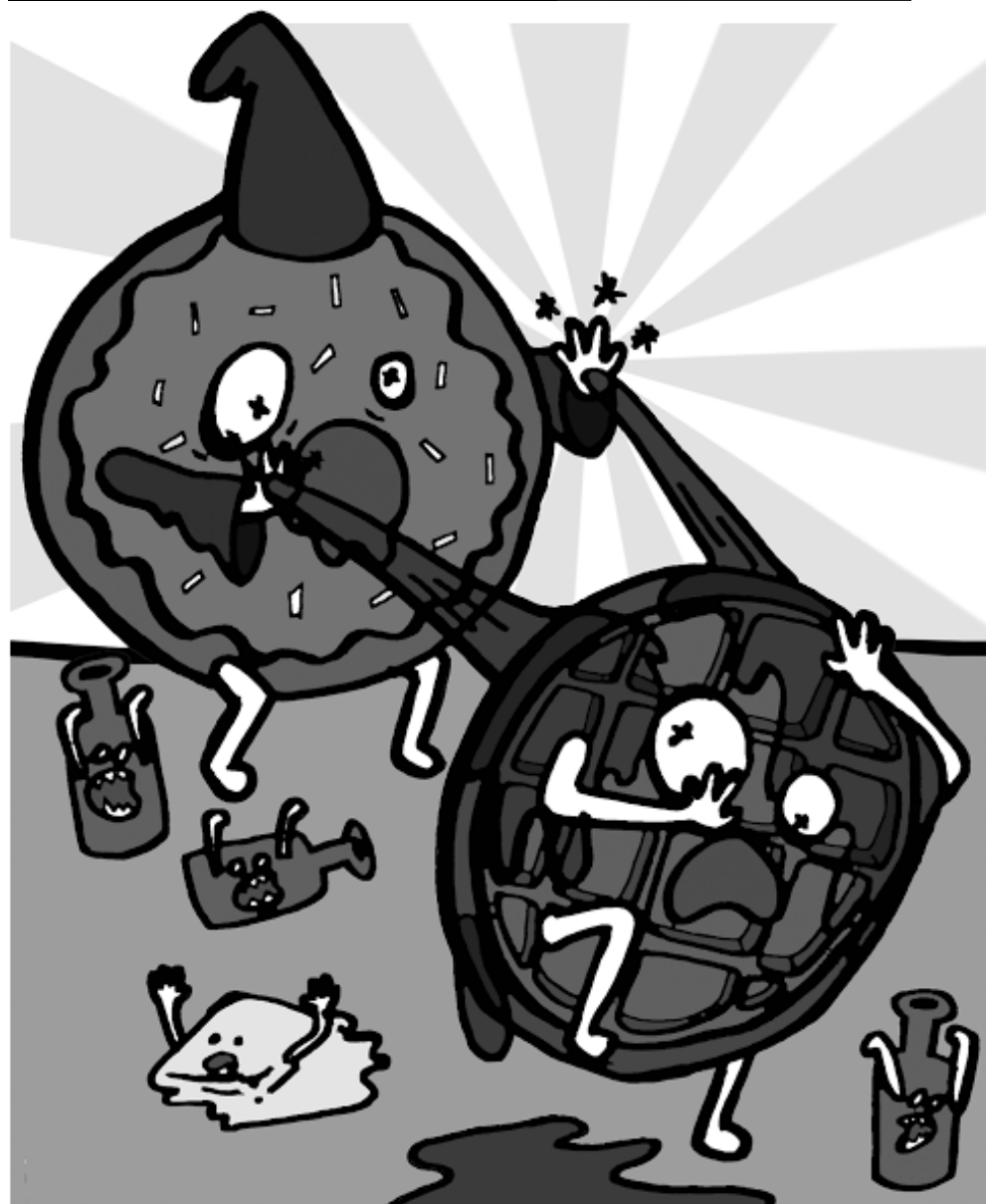


979 REPRESENT



January 2014
vol. 6 issue 1



inside: the story of god - lorde & racism - best films of 2013 -
viciously vile - in due time - pedal pushing - new year's day - record
reviews - concert calendar



**979represent is a local magazine
for the discerning dirtbag.**

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HOW THE EFF DID WE MAKE IT FIVE YEARS?

FIVE YEARS?!?! That may surprise many of you who have discovered 979Represent somewhat recently, but we are entering into our sixth year of publication in Bryan/College Station. Now might be a good time for a little history lesson and perhaps a restatement of our mission. Let's start with the way-back stuff.

In early 2008 Atarimatt, Wonko, and I began running a record label called Sinkhole Texas Inc. (we still run it BTW) and one of our earliest releases was to be a B/C/S hip-hop compilation to be called 979Represent. At about the same time we also decided to put together a local scene blog that would chronicle the younger arts scene. All the hip-hop artists we were talking to then moved away to Dallas or Houston and we decided to steal the compilation name for the blog. We ran 979rep as a blog for the first eight months. Meanwhile, I had begun a three year sojourn writing for our local newspaper *The Eagle's* entertainment insert *The Spotlight*. I wrote feature stories as well as a weekly column called *Poptones*. That year *The Eagle* discontinued *The Spotlight* and we were left without any coverage of the non-Tom Turbeville set. So we talked about turning 979rep into a print publication and, a quick web search would confirm, we could do newsprint and do it relatively cheap! So we put our first issue into print in November 2008 (with coverage of the planning for what became College Station's Garrett Hysmith Skate Park as the feature story).

By the summer of 2011 we discovered that while none of us were all that great at writing it turns out that we were even worse at selling advertisement. 979Represent was siphoning off the small profits we had made from Sinkhole Texas Inc. and we were about to run out of money. October 2011 was the first time we had missed an issue and I was pretty sure that was the end of the road for our humble scene paper. But not quite yet, sports fans. During that month the three of us attended a viewing of the Karp documentary at DOMA Books in Houston. Whilst perusing the wares at the bookstore we saw many old school Xeroxed 'zines. And I was immediately inspired. "Hey, we could do 979Represent like this!" And, starting in November 2011, that's exactly what we did. And are still doing.

At first our paper was meant to be very much the anti-*Spotlight*. I was running off the example of Seattle's rich tradition of alternative newspapers such as *The Stranger* and the now-defunct *The Rocket* as well as *The Nashville Scene* which I grew up reading. Our paper was meant to be taken as a legitimate chronicle of Bryan/College Station's music scene with a little bit of a taste of the flavor of the young non-Aggie artistic underbelly culture. In a way, going from newsprint to photocopy freed me from the restrictions I'd placed on what 979Represent could be. It no longer had to be anything other than what we had to publish that month. Band interviews? Record reviews? Opinion pieces? Exposés? Art and literary journal? Blog in print? Concert Calendar? A guide to downtown Bryan? Whatever. 979Represent is what it is, a place for local writers and artists to present their works with the (very loose) theme of representing the Brazos Valley and its townies.

Which is where you come in. You have at least some fleeting interest in what's going on around town outside of A&M's campus. We are happy that you pick this paper up and read it, or at least carry it around in your back pocket for an evening to impress your date into thinking that you read. If'n you are of the artistic variety, hit me up at redchapterjubilee@yahoo.com with what you've got, because I am always on the lookout for content creators and I almost never reject what you give me (unless it's like toddler scat unicorn porn...and well, I'd probably print that too). So here's to Year Six of this lovely 'zine.—KELLY MINNIS

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THE STORY OF GOD

Man was created by God in his own image. God was lonely and wanted company in the vast nothingness of space. God wanted something to love; as well as something to return that love.

Through the passing of time man began evolving. This process was sped up once language, verbal and written, took form. With established forms of communication, information was now able to be passed from one generation to the next, which later led to the births of things such as literature, mathematics, written history and advanced sciences, such as metaphysics. Subsequently, with the development of science, man felt a new found necessity to prove its all-powerful, all seeing God non-existent in a vain attempt to further fuel the egocentric self towards further scientific discovery.

Man had finally reached its height of evolution. Verbal communication had practically ceased. However, Latin survived as the unifying scientific language and was mostly used to lighten up even the dulllest telepathic debates. As man's natural world slowly halted altogether, a new one sprung up in its place. An industrialized Mecca soon stood where once only nature thrived. Where once there were trees, now stood oxygen production facilities. All natural functions of life from the predating world that had served use to man was automatized, synthesized, and its predecessor eradicated.

This of course, helped boast man's ego. Sometime shortly after evolving to a state of nigh-perfection, very close to that of the Angels in Christian theology, One of the Chief scientists in charge of the S. E. C. [Special Evolution Council] decided it would be in man's best interest to attempt to replicate and place its oldest and only sun, which had once been praised by countless ancient cultures as being the source of all life, God if you will. At once the top scientists in life the world were working together in space to create a replicate sun that would theoretically never burn out. By also being solar powered it could store enough power to burn twice it's original life span. After tedious, meticulous experimenting and meddling, a formula for the appropriate chemical and compositional ratio was completed.

The ultimate testament to the greatness of man was about to be. Having replaced all other natural functions of the predating world man had managed to do quite well. However, man had never before attempted to replace its own burning sun. It was the last sentiment to moral religion. With the push of a button man had placed itself once again into an Ice Age.

Though our known galaxy was blackened, Man-kind had managed to survive due mostly to contraptions previously built. Human life continued on in the dark. The greatest blow was to the human spirit. Man had shown itself that it was fallible and not the paramount of perfection it had thought itself to be.

No one really knows why the human race died off so quickly. Some attribute it to their diminished egos and soulless natures. The world began to fall apart. A select few sought life elsewhere in the universe. Most stayed and stood their ground stubbornly as the world imploded, leaving a black hole in it's place. A majority of those fleeing the implosion were pulled in by the intense gravitational pull of the Black Hole and reversed genetically. Only to be shot out a White Hole elsewhere in the cosmos, one survived.

That survivor was a child named Jehovah. It symbolized the height of human evolution. Jehovah was a very lonely child and wanted some company to love and adore. The child soon set out to create miniature beings in it's own image to cherish and admire... - WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON

BEST FILMS OF 2013

1. GRAVITY—We walked into the theater thinking this was a movie about people stuck in space. We were wrong. My wife sobbed most of the film. We went with two friends and we all huddled in the lobby afterwards and declared viewing this film one of the more powerful cinematic experiences we'd ever had. IMAX 3D didn't hurt. If Sandra Bullock does not win an Oscar for this, I will puke on my own shoes.

2. MUD—Loved this for obvious Arkansan reasons. Local boy. Local scenery. The character of Neckbone. The return of Matthew McDougeaney. This film is perfect. PER-FECT. Nichols could only improve on this film by putting it twice on one DVD.

3. FRANCES HA—This was the last film we saw on our Netflix, and it was a gorgeous punctuation on a slippery chute of slothfulness. God, I loved this movie. And for multiple reasons. But the main two: one, i can't get enough of Greta Gerwig. When I saw her in *The House of the Devil* I thought, "oh crap, i might have a new favorite". And she owned *Frances Ha* in incredible, old-school Hollywood great actress ways; two, i think Noah Baumbach - minus his last two films - is the shit. He's so dedgum pretentious that I can't help but feel drastically endeared to him. I think my pretentiousness is drawn to his pretentiousness. We would coffee well together. So good. I can't wait to see it again.

4. 12 YEARS A SLAVE—It lives up to the hype. Steve McQueen is a beast. I'll watch anything he makes, even as soul-pulverizing as it may be. I've seen his other films, but this is the first one I felt comfortable recommending. There are several scenes here that make you want to recoil, record, and applaud everything on the screen simultaneously. Masterpiece.

5. THE CONJURING—Yes! this blew my mind! And it's not just a solidly amazing horror film: it's a solidly amazing film. Everything falls into place here creating a new genre classic that easily transcends the genre. With that being said, *The Conjuring* did freak my shit out. I was all over my theater chair, gripping the arm rest, covering my eyes, even squealing a little bit. I love a film that makes me want a cigarette and a nap afterwards.

6. THE WAY WAY BACK—My all-time favorite cinematic genre is the coming-of-age story. And this one is near the top of my list. There's not a lot of coming-of-age stories where the kid and the parent grow up together. But it happens here. Also, I'm cuckoo for cocoa puffs for both Toni Collette and Allison Janney. They do no wrong in my book.

7. FRUITVALE STATION—The fact that this no-name filmmaker could make a feature length film, in which the entire audience already knows the ending, completely enthralling from beginning to end is a huge feat of storytelling and artistic confidence. Yes, Michael B. Jordan killed it here. But Ryan Coogler's filmmaking is what immortalized Oscar Grant's story and created a prophetically day-numbering experience for audiences.

8. THIS IS THE END—It's no secret that I dearly love Seth Rogen and bathe in his laughers. He's my number one Hollywood dude crush. And now that I've watched the first three seasons of *East-bound and Down*, Danny McBride is a close second. With that being said, I walked into this movie with some raging nepotism. Still, *This Is the End* is honestly one of the top ten films of the year. Super funny. Super dorky. Super dirty. And super more theologically sound than any of that *Left Behind* bull-shonkish. This is the apocalypse done right: with the Earth ending before Michael Cera becomes the next Hugh Hefner.

9. AMERICAN HUSTLE—Best thing Christian Bale has done since *American Psycho*. Best thing Amy Adams has ever done. And best reality show housewife performance in a major picture by that glorious hot mess, Jennifer Lawrence. This movie was fucking delightful.

10. THE GREAT GATSBY—Skip everything in the movie before and after Gatsby. Nick Carraway is not that interesting and neither is Baz Luhrmann's ego. But all the stuff with Gatsby is golden. And the Lana Del Rey montage of Daisy and Gatsby swimming and golfing and throwing shirts is reason enough for me to own the DVD. There's plenty of crap in this picture, but luckily it's all sandwiched on the outer edges for easy avoidance. But the stuff here that works worked better than the entirety of most films I saw this year.

WORST FILMS OF 2013:

1. TRANCE—God bless Danny Boyle, but not even a fully cherubic Rosario Dawson could make this film one bit titillating.

2. SPRING BREAKERS—Pointless and overly glorifying of the gluttony it hoped to demonize. And, no, i'm not getting old. This movie just sucked.

3. ELYSIUM—Shamefully obvious and paper-thin. *The Purge* preached the superior "anti-1% sermon" this year.—KEVIN STILL

T ON FACEBOOK AND
PRESENT.COM

I don't get to drive my wife's car very often, but when I do, one of the highlights is listening to pop radio. It's not something I'd really choose to do on my own and, because we let Sirius XM lapse in her car, pop radio is what I've got. One morning late last year I was listening to Ryan Seacrest's version of *America Top 40* (he's no Casey Kasem IMHO) I heard this minimalist pop masterpiece called "Royals" about rejecting the overconsumerist trappings of pop music culture sung by a 16 year old girl from New Zealand who calls herself Lorde. I thought, "Huh, damn, that's a good song" and filed it away. It's totally an earworm though and I found myself wanting to hear the song again. So I watched some Youtube videos of that song and other songs from her debut album *Heroine*, mostly live videos from her U.S. TV performances. I posted something on my Facebook timeline about how I couldn't quite make up my mind about her. It was then brought to my attention that Lorde's "Royals" is racist. Say what? I didn't get that. So I decided to Google "Lorde" and "racist" and boy did I get an eyeful. And it was very thought-provoking.

The claims were made by Veronica Flores, who posted these views on the feminist blog *Feministing*. The gist of Flores's point can be summed up in her own words:

"While I love a good critique of wealth accumulation and inequity, this song is not one; in fact, it is deeply racist. Because we all know who she's thinking when we're talking gold teeth, Cristal and Maybachs. So

why shit on black folks? Why shit on rappers?" This post on *Feministing* went viral on social media and was eventually picked up by the mainstream media and has become a little bit of an arguing point, a vehicle for people to lightly discuss racism, pop music and affluenza. Lorde has had nothing else to say on the matter.

Hmm, damn. I didn't realize that only black people have gold teeth (my granny sported a few and she weren't black); Cristal is made by white people and consumed by the rich and those who want people to think they are rich both young and old, black, white and whatever; Maybachs are expensive European vehicles made predominantly by whites and consumed predominantly by rich people of all hues. Yes, it is true, however, that rap music is rife with references to consumerism and the trappings of the super rich, which usually include all of the above. Rap music is pop music these days, so even non-hip hop is lousy with references to the trappings of being ultra rich. Seems a lot like 1983 more so than 2013, when we were in a deep recession and the images of Robin Leech and Duran Duran on our TV sets spoke of a separate world from ours full of yachts, mansions, caviar and glamour. In 1983 I lived in the projects of Owensboro, KY on food stamps and disability checks. In 2013 I'm doing a bit better but a good portion of our yearly income came from unemployment insurance. In 1983 my longing for the life of champagne wishes was naked; in 2013 I scoff at it but would more than happily take the money it costs to have such a life and roll with it in a different fashion. I get the feeling from Lorde that she is of the latter persuasion, but that she might secretly long to live in a pop rap video full of affluenza...and might just hate herself a little for it but channel that self-hate outward rather than inward. To me, that is "Royals".

It is, however, amusing to me that Flores and many others believe that criticism of the trappings of rap videos constitutes racism. For starters, as I mentioned before, a product is not consumed specifically by a single race. You may have a product, such as clothing by FUBU perhaps, that is made by a certain ethnicity intended for consumption by the same ethnicity, but once you issue a product to the marketplace you cannot control who partakes of it. Henry Ford was a super anti-Semite but he couldn't stop Jews from buying his automobiles. I have no idea what the makers of gold teeth, Maybachs or Cristal think about who their consumers should be. I have a feeling the only color they care about is green. That is not the most offensive part of this though. Flores is suggesting that the black experience is encapsulated in hip-hop videos, like a roadmap for How To Be Black 2013. That is like suggesting that if you watch *Duck Dynasty* you know exactly what it is like to be white in America, or that because you are a devotee of *Glee* that you know all about the gay experience; or even that because you've watched Telemundo you know exactly what it's like to be Latino. Very ridiculous. Blacks come in as many different personal iterations as any other race or creed. Black people don't all look or act like people on rap videos, nor do they all aspire to those designs. It is a stereotype that is as harmful as any Uncle Tom'ing or Sambo'ing one might conjure up from deep in America's past. That makes Ms. Flores the racist in this equation, not Lorde.

Now, had Ms. Flores taken the time to consider that Lorde is 16 and from New Zealand she might have had another tactic to take that perhaps could have more bite and substance to it. You could say "Royals" is anti-Western. New Zealand is rich in its own culture. However, mainstream media has been overtaken by American artists. Kiwi radio plays mostly American and British music (and would only play those artists if their own laws didn't require New Zealand stations to

LORDE'S "ROYALS"



play Kiwi artists' music...that); they require such a law is telling). American culture moves and the world taps its toes. "Royals" is as much a reaction to the ubiquity of American cultural colonialism as The Clash's "I'm So Bored (With the U.S.A.)" is. I can't imagine a rap video being sent out to the world as an example of what America is all about. It certainly doesn't represent me! To call that representation into question has zero parts racism. However, perhaps a Jay-Z or Lil Wayne video represents America a little bit *too* closely. We are obsessed with the trappings of the rich and famous. We have elevated Kardashians and Hiltons, pop music and film stars into America's royalty. Lorde speaks as a young New Zealander inundated with American excess as a model for existence, and she and her friends reject it. That the Americans in the videos happen to be black matters not. It could be seen as a success for civil rights, as the color of those rude and gauche Americans doesn't really count.

That is also, not to mention, that the song is entitled "Royals" and not "Black Hip Hoppers", or even "American Pop Imperialists". The song addresses royals, which would lead my synapses to make the connection with the British monarchy and not anything American at all! Of course, I tend to think symbolically and I take liberties with the term "royals" and apply it to my situation (white dude from outside the mainstream [though not THAT far out the mainstream] commenting on the goofiness and sometimes rewards of the American mainstream). Having grown up poor and, although I think I've ascended to a middle class life, I still tend to identify as the scrappy project kid in 1983 in awe at wealth crossed with the 2014 version of the same kid who despised the privilege and permission for bad behavior that comes with the wealth. I am hard-wired by my existence to be moved by a song like "Royals". Lorde sings:

"My friends and I - we've cracked the code.

We count our dollars on the train to the party.

And everyone who knows us knows that we're fine with this, We didn't come from money."

My readers, I'm guessing the predominance of you know how that feels. That is the reality of your existence: hand to mouth. Everything you see in pop culture around you is like, as Lorde continues:

"But every song's like gold teeth, grey goose, trippin' in the bathroom. Blood stains, ball gowns, trashin' the hotel room. We don't care, we're driving Cadillacs in our dreams.

But everybody's like Cristal, Maybach, diamonds on your time piece. Jet planes, islands, tigers on a gold leash

We don't care, we aren't caught up in your love affair"

Again, this is not me. I don't drive a Cadillac or a Maybach (though I could probably afford a Cadillac), no ball gowns, I don't trash hotel rooms like a rock star, not so sure about the blood stains (coke nose, perhaps? I'm not dusting either), I don't drink Cristal (though, truthfully, microbrews ain't exactly drinking Big K cola), I own no diamonds (my does though...though they are smaller than she deserves) and I got no

ALS" & RACISM



timepiece (well, I do own a smartphone and that is certainly not cheap), I own no jet planes or private islands, got no tigers on a leash...this is not me. Nor is it any black person I am friends with. Nor is that any typical American's experience. Nor, truthfully, is it the typical rap musician's experience. They can't afford any of that shit either! Video producers rent all that stuff for the videos. If this is what I was told being an American was like and what it represented, I'd be all "fuck the American way" too! But I also get a little bit of a sullen desire under the surface from Lorde that she might deep down inside wish to be like these Americans. Those who oppose something the loudest tend to be those who desire it the most secretly. Which I also find in myself, but I'm also projecting myself onto this song.

Which comes to my final point. Pop music is a sturdy cipher that is meant to hang your hang-ups upon. It is a mirror that reflects back what you project onto it. What "Royals" says to you is what "Royals" means. Lorde may have meant the song to be about one thing, but once it becomes a part of our pop culture tapestry its meaning and intent are entirely out of its creators' hands. I once wrote a song entitled "Husbands" that was meant to be a celebration of gay marriage but, once I had time to think about the lyrics and the possibility the song could be misunderstood, I rewrote the lyrics to ensure there would be no misunderstandings. And my audience consists of dozens of people. My guess is that Lorde's intended audience for this song was also her dozens of friends. But then the song became a worldwide phenomenon and now bazillions of people are rocking it, parsing it, talking about it, dismissing it, championing it. That's a lot to hang on a dorky 16 year old girl's head. I'm sorry, Veronica Flores, Lorde's song "Royals" is not racist. That's your racism that you are flying up the flagpole for the world to see. I'm sorry to say it's none too pretty—**KELLY MINNIS**

Perhaps I have voice in this Lorde racism debate because some of my best in-laws are Black. Surprise! I ain't married to no White-y. Wouldn't dream of it. At least, not now. Heck, we've even got bi-racial pugs: one fawn and one black. We are truly progressive people—the wife and I—even if we walk our dogs on traditionally gender specific colored leashes

To begin, I would like to share a story from my marriage that, I feel, speaks directly to this Lorde fiasco. Shortly after we married, I began feeling greatly awkward by the frequency and flippancy with which my wife's family used the "N-word". For Whites, the "N-word" is possibly the most offensive, most off-limits word in the English language. It trumps the "C-word" by a mile and makes "Mo-fo" sound as innocent as a whistled plural on the lipped lips of Cindy Brady. But I quickly learned that, for whatever reason, the "N-word" intones something significantly communal for my Black relatives. At the very least, the "N-word" is to my Black relatives as "dude" or "gluten free" is to my White friends: it makes them feel cozy.

Of course, I do not join in such coziness, even when I come across delicious, new versions of the "N-word", such as when my brother-in-law refers to his children as "niglets" and my wife answers her siblings' calls, "What's up, Niggerachi!" As a rule, Whites do not use the "N-word" (except in recounting humorous anecdotes).

Admittedly, this is a weird rule. I did not institute this rule, nor will I ever change it. Rather, I have grown to fear its righteousness as another bizarre natural law directly alongside "babies should not drink bleach" and "men should never rush a zipper fly."

Early on, I felt alienated by this strange vernacular divide. No where else did the difference of my race reveal itself except in this: they used a specific term I could not use. Unfortunately, I chose to respond to my own awkwardness by warring against the "N-word" altogether. My argument stated that if I felt alienated by this word, then my wife's entire family should feel alienated by it. This is a ridiculously flawed argument for several reasons: the primary flaw being that I sought personal relief through the re-working of other people. Notice I did not hope to heal or change my own interpretation of this word or its family usage. The easiest response was to get everyone else on board with my associations. This is the knee jerk reaction for people who speak/feel first and maybe think later, which is what this article is about anyway.

Segue to the Lorde fiasco, specifically to Veronica Flores' indictment of Lorde's song "Royals" on Feministing.com. Personally, I love this song (and have ever since a Black friend introduced me to it). And I would sign my name to the bottom of everything Kelly Minnis already said about this song. I'm mostly concerned here with Flores, especially her insistence—as a non-Black person—that Black people should take an offense (as she took an offense) with a White girls' song.

Which is precisely what roasted Phil Robertson in the pages of *QO* recently. I'm not talking about his comments regarding gay people but his comments regarding Black field workers: "I never heard one of them, not one black person say, 'these doggone white people!' Not a word!" It appears that Robertson wanted to say, simply, that he grew up around other races. That he has not lived a homogenized life, even in a Southern, traditionally segregated society. However, Robertson took his comments a step too far by suggesting he knew how Blacks felt about their employers, or even how they should have felt, which most likely mirrored his own. Our ignorance and discomfort with others is most notable when we try to equate our differences ("America's a melting pot") or when we negate those differences altogether ("I'm colorblind and don't see race"). Robertson discredits and devalues the Black workers surrounding his youth by assuming their emotions matched his own ("Of course they were happy because I was happy!") simply because they all shared similar working experiences and spaces.

Flores' comments, in some way, echo Robertson's. By calling Lorde a racist, specifically against Blacks - "Because we all know who she's thinking when [she's] talking gold-teeth, Cristal, and Maybachs. So why shit on black people?" - Flores, in essence, attempts to speak for Blacks. She suggests how the Black race feels, or should feel, about Lorde's song (ie. exactly how Flores feels) and even with what products Blacks identify or should identify (ie. because that's how Flores identifies Black people). In attempting to expose Lorde a racist, Flores instead exposes her own confusion and inability to engage a healthy race based conversation.

Sadly, as I've learned the hard way, speaking on behalf of others gets real weird real quick as it usually stems from a place of inadequacy, from a position of wanting to understand others but not quite knowing how. Rather than shutting the heck up and listening to people speak for themselves, we often grab the microphone and—in classic Michael Scott or Leslie Knope prime time fashion—project our own misguided impressions of a situation onto others. Like Phil Robertson. Like Veronica Flores.

Like Kevin Still.

Obviously, Flores feels offended by Lorde's song, as she has every right to, but she approached her offense in a rhetorically inappropriate way. How should she have presented her offense? Lorde(e), I don't know. The only offense I can find with "Royals" is that it's too short. I could use another solid minute or so with that hook. What I do know is that race is still a delicate subject in our society. And our words regarding race—defining and defending and supporting race: our own race and other races—will often be greatly scrutinized. For this reason, we should be cautious how we take up our rhetorical arms. Or else Phil Robertson. Or else Veronica Flores.

Or else Kevin Still.—**KEVIN STILL**



tion too that
OLOGIST...

made a bad
about being in
that little brat
didn't already
d'em over at
NIGHT...

THIS IS WHAT FOLLOWED.

HA!
BABE,
CALM DOWN.
HA!

... THAT'S THE
SADDEST THING!
WORSE... THEN KILLING
TREES!!!

*DO YOU KNOW HOW
LONG IT TAKES FOR
MARBLE TO GROW?! *

By William Daniel Thompson

xeffects.com





IN DUE TIME

The new thing in headlines across our newspapers and internet news are the images of people who have realized that revolution has sparked a fire in other countries. Like a tidal wave made of an uprising of human beings, the realization of rights as a person is becoming more and more clear. People are beginning to understand that there are new ideas of life and the way it could be made, a life that could be lived in the most beautiful way.

In Kiev, Ukraine, over 100,000 people are protesting in Independence Square for a new democracy and a desire for a simpler, easier life that they know is out there but is almost unreachable. Ukrainians want to denounce their president, they know that corrupt government and crony capitalism has brought their country down and has them on the verge of bankruptcy. They protest for the end of Communism, the end of the Soviet occupation. Ukraine's president Viktor Yanukovich is in the process of distancing Ukraine from the Europe, and is pushing for closer ties with Russia; the people of Ukraine say that an EU agreement would have opened borders to trade and set the stage for modernization and inclusion. One of the main reasons Ukraine is in the business of become closer to Russia is because Russian President Vladimir Putin has threatened to restrict trade and raise gas bill price, due to the fact that Russia supply Europe with 25% of gas used, and 80% of that gas travel through Ukraine. Turns out there have been disputes over gas for a while now. The people of Ukraine insist they are a part of Europe, not Russia. U.S. senators John McCain and Christopher S. Murphy made a special trip to Ukraine in mid-December to encourage protesters and to reassure them that if the people of Ukraine want a better government then they stand tall and exalt their ideas of equality and opportunity.

Almost the entire Middle East is in an uproar for change. They want to vote and breathe equality, they want an education for their children and freedom to live a life they choose. Protesting in the streets, taking city roads by thousands, the Middle Eastern people have a chance to bring their ideas of life and their ideas of freedom into reality. This revolution has been in the making for years and finally the newer generation has mustered up the courage to speak for what they want and believe in. With a war that's been alive for a little over 10 years, the Middle Eastern people have pushed the lines of religion and dictation.

In Bangkok, Thailand, protesters have shut down the Finance Ministry Building, have cut off power to the Department of Special Investigations (equivalent to our F.B.I.), and have managed to shut down about eleven schools. Why? The last straw was a bill to be passed that would bring back an ousted prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. Because of crony capitalism, because of big government controlling and oppressing the seeming small people of Thailand, this strike has gone on for days. People of Thailand want a cleaner and more ethical system of government.

What has caused this eruption of political protest? What has caused this enlightenment of human rights and the ideas of a fair world? The age, the time, the media, the desensitization of authority and the courage built up from the exhaustion of bullshit? Maybe. It seems as though the rest of the world has caught on, but where is America in this run for freedom and change? We're caught behind the screen of our computers making stupid fucking political memes for Facebook and Pinterest. We are murmuring out rights and whispering our desires, it's bullshit that Americans have been distracted by unimportant fads and icons that have no intelligence nor dignity. Will we ever speak out as a whole, as a unit, or as a country in general? Maybe if one person stands, maybe if one person screams. It only takes one, yet none of us are willing to begin. What a shame, what a waste.—JESSICA LITTLE

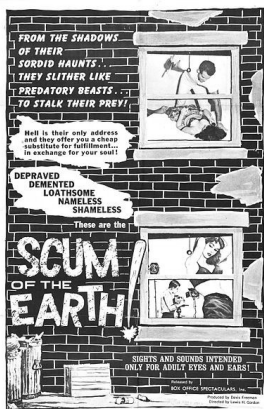
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VICIOUSLY VILE: scum of the earth



The era of the 60s was a fabulous time in movie making, a time right before the great grindhouse explosion. The underground films were raw, low budget, and downright silly with the phoned-in acting. When you see a gritty black and white flick with people who look like their only acting chops come from high school plays, you know you're in for something good. Few filmmakers back then pushed the buttons, and among my favorites of such button pushers is Herschell Gordon Lewis.

In Lewis' *Scum of the Earth*, we have a modeling agency that hires "models" to do some Bettie Page type photos for wound up, horny college guys. One model named Sylvia wants to get out of the business, but instead she's blackmailed into doing some recruiting. In comes our sweet and naive Kim. Daddy can't afford college, so she's persuaded reluctantly by Sylvia to pose in a bikini by sleazy photographer Harmon. Nothing too risqué at first, but the price of college is just too budget busting at \$500 a semester (oh, the 60s). Harmon convinces her to pose topless for \$500 a session, which Kim just can't say no to. After one session, she tells the boss man that she's done, but he says he'll send the nude pictures to Daddy unless she does one more shoot. Of course, she has to oblige because she's a good 60s girl. During this last shoot, another sleazebag guy named Ajax (the importance of his character is not mentioned throughout the film) comes in and wants to rape all the naked women in the shoot. Harmon, who by this time has taken a liking to Kim, takes a bat to Ajax's head and kills him. Harmon then destroys all the nude pictures of Kim and tells her to leave. The cops come and find that Harmon killed Ajax out of self-defense, and Kim goes diddy bopping to college with her reputation still intact.



Out of all the films I've seen of Lewis, this one is by far his most tame. For a movie that was dubbed as being sexploitation, there's no nakedness, no sex, no nothing. The story line has good flow, and I even liked Harmon's character when he showed he actually had a heart. I even liked poor Kim, cardboard acting and all. As with any Lewis film, it's pretty bare bones when it comes to plot, but at least you get the idea. If you're expecting the regular gore and horror from an H.G. Lewis film, you'll be highly disappointed. However, if you want to see Lewis before the days of his more famous works, I recommend it. The "deep inside, you're dirty" speech by itself is worth a watch.—VAMP VIXEN

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PEDAL PUSHING: ARTURIA MICROBRUTE

I have been after the *perfect* portable analog monophonic synthesizer it seems now for over ten years. One that just exudes the classic sounds of progressive rock bombast, of post-punk skronk, of smooth classic electronic leads and robust '80s funk bass. Analog synthesis went out of favor and out of business in the mid 80s as "bold and powerful" single notes were exchanged for gauzy and polyphonic. Keyboards had to be digital, make chords, arpeggiate and/or sequence, have MIDI and patch memory, emulate other instruments, do digital sampling, etc. Out of favor, no analog monosynths were made for a good ten years. But a curious thing happened in-between 1984 and 1994. A bunch of dudes in Detroit began abusing Roland's curious bass synth sequencer, the TB-303. No one wanted them because it was a horrible little box that didn't do what you wanted it to do. These Detroit DJ's let the 303 do what it wanted to do, and thus an entire new genre, techno, was born. Then everyone *had* to have a 303. In England especially, techno fever begat acid house and the demand was intense for such a synth.

Novation stepped into the chasm with their Bass Station, the first new era commercial analog synthesizer. And eventually other companies stepped into the field, but it was going to cost you \$5 or you could rely on vintage equipment that was slowly deteriorating.

In recent years the analog boom has FINALLY come to the low end of the market. In 2003 Dave Smith Instruments broke the \$500 barrier with the Evolver, and many companies like Doepfer, Vermona, Waldorf, Moog, MFB and others created excellent synthesizers comfortably below \$1000 with a host of features. Korg smashed the price barrier in the past few years with the Monotribe and Volca series. French company Arturia stood alone, however, creating the Minibrute, the first sub \$500 analog synth *keyboard*, as all other companies had created little desktop modules meant for sequencing and computer interface. Arturia took the synthesizer back from the studio and out to the stage. The Minibrute was a huge success. So how does Arturia follow that up? Synth people all expected a Brute, full sized and expanded, or even a Polybrute? Only Dave Smith Instruments has attempted a polyphonic analog synthesizer since the '80s and DS's Prophets are all \$2000 and up. Nay, Arturia doubles down on small and compact with its new keyboard synthesizer, the Microbrute.

This synthesizer sports two octaves of minikeys. Anyone familiar with the Microkorg or the fun Casio toy keyboards of the '80s will know the size we are talking about. Like 1/3 of the size of piano keys. The synthesizer itself is smaller than a full size laptop but crams in controls for 98% of its parameters, wheels for modulation and pitch control, a patch bay for modular style control and a modest sequencer that remembers 8 patterns. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's get to the heart of the Microbrute: its sound engine.

The Microbrute, like the Minibrute before it, is a single oscillator synthesizer. Meaning it is like a trumpet or saxophone. It makes one note at a time. Most heritage analog synthesizers and quite a few of the modern modules have two to three oscillators, meaning you can detune one against each other, subtly for a chorusing/flanging effect or drastically for tuning octaves, fifths, sevenths or clanging dissonance. Most "budget" synthesizers rely only on a single oscillator to make sound. In the case of the Microbrute, this is not a consolation at all. Arturia offers the classic three sawtooth, pulse and triangle waveforms from their oscillator, but each has a little something extra. The sawtooth is divided upon itself for an Ultrasaw that sounds a lot like a second sawtooth oscillator beating

slightly out of tune with the main saw, creating that warm chorusing sound and creating the illusion you've got a two-oscillator synth. The same goes for the pulse wave. It is nearly full scale, from 5% open to 95%, creating hollow squares or nasal pulse waves. Like most classic synths, the Microbrute offers pulse width modulation and sweeping the pulse width does the same for that wave as the Ultrasaw does for the saw tooth. Makes like two oscillators from one. Modulation is handled through the patch bay (more on that later). The triangle wave has what's called a Metallerizer from it, and it takes what is the mellowest of waves and turns it into a howling clangorous mess. Total industrial music nasty. There's also a square wave sub oscillator that tracks an octave below the main oscillator, but it can also be tuned to a 5th, again, making this synth seem much more like a 2-oscillator than one.



The filter is multifunctional and is based on the design of the Steiner Parker filter. What this means for you is that the Microbrute isn't necessarily meant to sound like a Moog or a Roland or a Yamaha or a Prophet. It is its own synth. The filter offers band pass, hi pass and low pass functions with envelope control and pots for cutoff and resonance. You can also control it from the mod wheel and the patch bay. All three filter modes self-oscillate and create a pure sine wave at the

highest resonance settings. It can hollow out and get nasty raunchy or, surprisingly, super creamy and smooth too. There is external access to the filter as well, so you can run any audio through that filter.

The patchbay allows for a few extra controls, like allowing low frequency oscillator and envelope control of the wave forms, the filter or pitch. There is only one envelope but many synthesizers have just one (only the nicer more expensive offer two). The patchbay also allows for interfacing with other modular synthesis gear so you can easily add a second oscillator, more envelopes, LFO's and what have you from a modular synthesizer or other outboard gear with control voltage. And finally, the Microbrute offers a 32-step sequencer with 8 preset memory. It can be clocked onboard or with the LFO and will also take MIDI clock. The synth can also take MIDI in through the old school MIDI port and also via USB (curiously no MIDI out). There's also CV gate/pitch out and gate in so the synth can be interfaced with other CV gear for taking pitch and clock. The "brute factor" control adds a digital bit-reducing graininess to the overall tone and is dependent on filter cutoff for just how much it effects the sound. Judicious use of the brute factor adds a distortion quality but too much and the sound actually disappears (the bit rate cycles too low for audio output).

So it can do all this stuff in a tiny little footprint, but what does it sound like? A lot bigger than its size and specs would have you believe. It is a monster of a tone for a single oscillator, bold like Moog, and Arturia went out of its way to give you so many options with just the one oscillator that you won't miss having two. The sequencer is more than just a toy. Plenty of low end, snarliness, creaminess...it's a jack of all trades styled synthesizer. It has the reputation as being a synth for aggressive styles, but it can be just as smooth as you'd want it to be. Those of you who HAVE to have full size keys could use its big brother the Minibrute or plug in your own MIDI keyboard. Otherwise, this is a LOT of synthesizer. And...drum roll please, for \$299. Holy Christ yes, under \$300 if you are Musicians Friend or others nicely for the 15% off (I got mine for \$240). If you have been curious about adding an analog synthesizer to your instrument collection but they seem too expensive and vintage synths are always half busted...the Microbrute is your gateway drug.

—KELLY MINNIS



NEW YEAR'S DAY

Grandma Hilda believed that whatever you did on New Year's Day you would do a-plenty in the year to come. With this in mind, Grandma structured the activities of her New Year's Day more carefully than any poser publishing their self-inflating resolutions. For instance, Grandma loved to travel, so on New Year's Day she piled the kids in the car and took a small road-trip around the neighboring countryside. Ever hopeful that her kids would be successful in their ventures, Grandma made certain that each kid built a project or cleaned a room or completed a puzzle on New Year's Day. And Grandma made sure to eat black eyes peas on New Year's, steadying herself for the winds of chance that blow seethingly against even the strongest constitution. Grandma Hilda left us many years ago, but her New Year's tradition lives on as an enduring family legacy.

With Grandma Hilda's memory prodding me into 2014, I decided to keep a New Year's Log, a running predictive commentary of what the approaching year may reflect from the workings of this single day. In retrospect, I feel the year ahead is full of promise, of literature and caffeine, of pugs and long walks. From all accounts, it appears 2014 will be the year my biographers will reference and say, "By God, he finally got it."

*January 1, 2014 : An Inner-Commentary**

8:25-8:45 Wake and immediately berate myself for rising late in the New Year. Consider the entire year a wash. My most Thoreauvian moments of 2014's dawn squandered between flannel sheets rather than leashed to my pugs, gazing on box turtles glistening in the corner creek. What's the use? New Year's snooze-beers. Ah, but nature.

8:46 First shiver of 2014!

8:47-8:55 Make coffee using Starbucks Christmas blend. Berate myself for drinking corporate coffee. Consider tastiness of Starbucks Christmas blend. Consider my previously published rants about stimulating local economy. Consider tastiness of Starbucks French Roast. Recognize first dual of the New Year between shoulder angel and shoulder demon. Resolute myself to be less Republican in 2014.

8:56-9:15 Walk the youngest pug (without a poop bag).

9:16-10:42 Drink aforementioned corporate coffee (not for long!) and begin reading Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. Caffeine slow to act. Have difficulty focusing on story. Mentally rehearse announcement to friends that I began the New Year reading a super important classic that exceeds 600 pages. Caffeine takes hold. Crap, this book is really good and super important. Friends' facial and verbal approvals of my classically steeped literacy annotate the margins of my reading. Resolute myself to read more important books in 2014. At least two. Counting this one. Maybe a shorter one next, though. Send three or four mass text messages announcing my reading of *East of Eden*. Attempt to make domestic tranquility of warm coffee, Arkansas Razorback moccasins, and snoring pugs central to my textual thesis, but I also type EAST OF EDEN in all-caps. No reply.)

10:43 Wife arrives home from running a 3K. Pugs go ape-shit. Wife is smiling and announcing resolutions to run even more in 2014.

10:44 I rise from my reading chair, feel the stiffness in my back, and resolute myself to get a massage in 2014.

10:45-Noon Cook brunch: Applewood smoked pork bacon (per my 2014 resolution to give up turkey bacon because I'm not a little bitch), scrambled eggs with aged whisky cheddar, biscuits, locally produced and manufactured honey (from Democratic bees), and a few of those little Cuties oranges. Consume brunch at dining room table with wife. Marvel at "adulthood" of brunch. Slip pugs a little bacon fat and scrambled eggs. Youngest pug vomits.

12:01-12:30 Walk both pugs. Wave to unknown neighbors. Feel great sense of community and a keen swell of accomplishment to

have exercised so early in the New Year. Resolute myself to celebrate with ginger beer straight from the bottle.

12:31-12:40 Cellular telephone call Otha Graham. Pride myself for being socially gracious on a major holiday. Envision myself in 2014 hosting intellectual forums in local parks, poetry readings in cafes, artistic klatches in the parking lot outside Painting With a Twist. We agree—Otha and I—to have lunch and discuss cinema soon. Chalk up first phone call of 2014 as a blazing success. (Also, I'm happy to report the entire Graham family is in good health.)

12:41-12:47 More coffee. More Steinbeck. Less focus.

12:48-1:55 Ditch *East of Eden* for *Eastbound And Down* (Season 3). Mass text Kenny Powers line about Cabbage Patch Kids fornicating in a dojo. No reply. Begin rough drafting a mass text that plays on *East of Eden* and *Eastbound And Down* titles. Gotta keep a balance. Resolute myself to find the joke there.

1:56-4:30 Nap like a competitive napper. On top of the covers. Wearing my shoes and glasses. Total REM. Ninth rung of sleep ladder and everything. Wake cradling a pug, wondering where the hell I am and where Jamie Lee Curtis ran off to.

4:32-4:47 Stretch. Brag to wife about gold medal napping. (Omit the JLC bits.) Mass text about Best Nap of 2014. (Still omit JLC bits.) Second shiver of 2014! Pour another coffee.

4:48-5:15 Walk pugs. Upon returning to drive-way, resolute myself to wash my car way more in 2014 than the previous year. Count by memory number of times I washed the car in 2013. Realize I only need to wash it twice in 2014.

5:16-6:30 Assist wife in dinner preparations. Clean dining room. Select dinner music. Change pants. Brush teeth. Lift hat and scoff at hairline. Mentally prepare three jokes about dinner that are sure to kill. Practice one joke via mass text. No reply. Resolute myself to give up comedy in 2014. Feed pugs. Set table. Suddenly remember *East of Eden* and *Eastbound And Down* bit. Resolute myself to not give up comedy again in 2014. Prepare beverages. Set out appetizers. Run "to powder" before guests arrive. Resolute myself to meditate on comedic timing and the comedy rule of threes. Third shiver!

6:31-7:05 Welcome dinner guests. Serve prepared beverages (iced water) and appetizers (bowl of Jelly Bellies). Dinner prep takes longer than anticipated—lobster and shrimp! Resolute myself to teach pugs parlor tricks in 2014.

7:06-8:30 Consume meal with the grand Nelsons. Share stories. Ditch previously prepared jokes and work "off the cuff". First two attempts bomb. Slide third joke seamlessly into Courtney's conversation about "Sup to Sup" (Supervising the Supervision) - "You should ask them when they wanna try 'Ass to Ass': Assessing the Assessment" - and it kills. (Comedy rule of threes!) As does another seamlessly slipped line about mistaking a friend's second child for the un-grown version of their first child, which kills harder than the "Ass to Ass" bit. Resolute myself to pursue this art form financially in 2014.

8:31 - 9:15 Dismiss friends. Clean kitchen. Walk pugs. Contemplate the richness of friendship verses the momentary glitter of wealth. Review jokes that bombed.

9:15-10:20 Read more *East of Eden*. Meet Cathy Ames character. Subsequently redefine personal definition of bat-shit crazy. Pride myself about having an inside literary Steinbeckian "bat-shit crazy" joke - "Are you sure you wanna date this girl? She seems to be a regular ol' Cathy Ames, if you know what I mean." Pencil these details in the margins, even though it's not my book.

10:21-10:?? Find a stopping place between chapters. Revise and re-revise and re-re-revise *East of Eden* and *Eastbound And Down* joke. Fire it off in a mass text. No reply.

10:?? Silence phone. Go to bed. Resolute myself not to check message Inbox till morning.

**Times are approximate and rounded to nearest large number on clock face.—KEVIN STILL*

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CONCERT CALENDAR

1/3—Adults @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/11—Danielle Grubb, The Kingfishers, The Feeble Contenders, King & Nation @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

1/11—Vintage Ramekins @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/13—Gungor, Kye Kye @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/14—Back To School Beatdown feat. Stand Your Ground, Nine Minutes, Myra Maybelle, Dsgns, Heroineme, Solomon @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/16—Electric Astronaut, The Docs, The Dames @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/17—Nick Verzosa & The Noble Union, Jess & The Echoes, Daniel Gonzalez Band @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

1/18—Beautiful Eulogy @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/24—Driver Friendly, Wild Party, The Feeble Contenders @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/24—The Black Market Club, Luxley, Skyacre, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/25—Rock 103.9 Homebrew presents The Docs, The Hounds of Jezebel @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/25—Niki Pistols Birthday Night! With Girl Band, TBD @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/30—The Lonely Hunter, Lindsay Harris @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

1/31—Deadhorse, ASS, Signal Rising, Stunt Cock Lou @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/1—Ray Benson, Milkdrive @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/8—The Black & White Years, Pageantry, Scientist @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/8—Mike the Engineer, Adults, Empty Hollow, Lightning Briefs @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

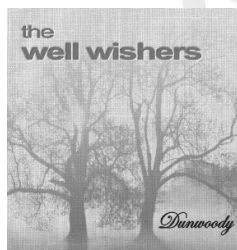
2/11—Fear & Wondering, Lion I Am, As Artifacts, Fire From the Gods, Nominee @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/12—The Weeks, Ranch Ghost, The Docs @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/13—El Ten Eleven, Bronze Whale @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/15—The Hangouts, The Ex-Optimists @ New Republic Brewery, College Station. 8pm

RECORD REVIEWS

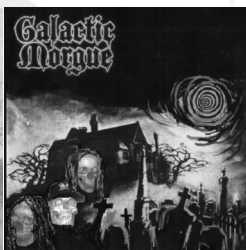


The Well Wishers
Dunwoody

This five-song EP is a slice-of-life look at the possible lives—and loves—of the residents of an area in Georgia. The largely-acoustic-driven pop features the clear voice and the effective melodies of Californian musician Jeff Shelton. He is essentially the Well-Wishers power-pop band that he's fronted for a decade with a half-dozen recordings over the years.

The best tune on *Dunwoody* is the rocking promise of "Open Up Your Eyes" that asks to "Open up the door/ And let the party inside." "Good Luck" and "Butterflies" are basically Shelton and his guitar which puts a heavier burden on the lyrics. However, "Peel Away" and "Real Today" are more layered pop tunes that amp up the EP sonically while lyrically examining the nature of romance.

Shelton also headed the popular California regional power-pop band the Spinning Jennies for a decade after its inception in 1993. *Dunwoody* continues Shelton's experimentation with pop sounds as he enters his third decade of making music.—MIKE L. DOWNEY



Galactic Morgue
Gutter Balls & Rubber Dolls

For those unfamiliar with the band, Galactic Morgue is a hard hitting homebrewed powerhouse of a solid heavy metal rock n roll stoner doom that is certain to leave one's ears drooling. The band merges the sounds of some of the greatest rock and metal acts ever to exist and manages to successfully meld them into unique solid melodies of destruction. Their sound ends up in a mix between Motorhead, early 70's Black Sabbath, and The Melvins with hints of Slayer, SLEEP, and Danzig for added measure. There's also well timed samples.

This all of course brings me to *Gutter Balls & Rubber Dolls*, their latest CD. I could very easily end this review by saying "I FUCKING LOVE EVERY MINUTE OF THIS RECORD!", but I will do my best to tell you just why you should hunt the band down and locate yourself a copy immediately. The 6 song record clocks in at 30 minutes, but seems to fly by once it begins. It starts with the hauntingly thrashy "Breeding the Wolf" which is followed by the Sabbath by thrashy "Caught in the Web" and "Infinite

Hiatus" which also feature some pretty sick breakdowns & solos of their own. Next up we have a slightly reworked version of the song "Guilt Trip" now going under the name "Rude Awakening" but still kicking ass and raising hell. "Hellbound Train" clocks in at #5 on the CD and opens with the sound of a train gaining momentum on the tracks. The song is more anthemic than the others but not in a bad way! Its grooves make you want shake your fist in the air while slamming an ice cold tall boy with the other, all the while tapping your feet like a madman. Needless to say, it's GOOD! "Winged Serpents" comes in last but not least and seems to have only gotten tighter and stronger with time, and now even features a nice subtle orchestral keys part, all the while keeping heavy and in your face. The song is carried over from a previous band of founding member Kobo's "Dual Bozer" and appears on the band's only release. I remember the first time I heard it I fell in love with it, and it was stuck in my head for days on end. So hearing it again here all cleaned up and spiffy is a pleasure that's for sure. Not being one to spoil a good thing, I'll end it there, but I highly advise letting it play to the end. You'll be glad you did! :) - WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON

Pink Smoke
Trash

This 7-inch—naturally hot pink—from the Denton punk group features four tunes that never let up.

The title cut highlights stellar guitar as it powers through its narrative about a girl who takes care of trash, hinting at the sinister. "We're Ready Now" is next, a propulsive tune—"This time you rock/you rock smarter" - that warns "We are going to be the ones/ To decide when we are through" that ends suddenly and too soon.

Side A channels the Ramones, among others, in "Brain Dead Kid" with its clever wordplay: "I was going to be someone/I just haven't got to it yet." ("I'm) Alright" grabs the listener's attention, and just as quickly, it's done.

Two of the tunes on this vinyl offering can be found on Pink Smoke's first CD, but in conjunction with the new songs, they leap off the turntable anew. The group is promising more new music and expanded touring in 2014, something to certainly look forward to.—MIKE L. DOWNEY



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