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ISSUE : #4



Merry Ties



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Letter From the Founder:

Thanks for picking up Issue Four of The Seattle Passive Aggressive! This has been one of the most stressful issues to put out for one reason or another, I'm glad it's finally out there. We've got a lot going on right now, and lots of things to report. First, our new website is up, and I'm really happy with the way it looks. I'd like to thank Ryan Adams for his hard work putting it together. We have links to our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and a map with all of the locations to pick up a copy of the zine. Each time a new issue comes out we will have PDF versions of the previous issue available to check out. We will feature local and national record reviews, and tons of content from national and local bands too. Also, we have finished booking our first show, as a joint effort with the Seattle Rock Guy crew, on Halloween night at the Comet Tavern. This is only the beginning; we plan on doing many more. When I had the idea of starting this last October, I had no idea what was in store. I can't tell you how happy I am with the great crew of people working with us, and donating their free time supporting this venture. I just want to thank everyone who has been involved one way or another; this wouldn't have been possible without you. As for the future, we will update the shows on the back cover mid November, and that will be it for this year as far as the print edition is concerned. Our website will remain updated, but we are going to focus on getting Issue Five out for mid January, and have a one year anniversary show sometime late February. Once again, thanks for reading, and if you can please check out the website, Twitter, Facebook, and get out there to a show too. Thanks for supporting local and independent music.

Sincerely,
James Ballinger



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NW NOISE

By Nik Christofferson



Seattle and Portland make friends...

For the past 2 years I've had the pleasure of booking numerous shows that have featured the best bands in Seattle paired with the best bands from our sister city Portland, Oregon. Getting the opportunity to interview Portland band Red Fang on a memorable SRG crew road trip in early 2010 really opened my eyes and ears to a thriving Portland heavy music scene I didn't know existed, and set in motion a discovery process that eventually formed relationships with a number of great bands from the area. A bond has been formed with Portland, which has resulted in quite a few SRG shows featuring many great Portland bands including Diesto, Lord Dying, Nether Regions, Wizard Rifle, Shelter Red, White Orange, and eventually led to the signings of both Gaytheist and Rabbits to my Good to Die imprint. This bond has also fostered strong relationships between bands from Seattle and Portland most notably the "bromances" between Monogamy Party and Gaytheist, and Ancient Warlocks and White Orange, who have now played numerous shows together in both cities.

There's exciting energy in the heavy and noisy music being made all over the NW right now. The fact that the gap between the Seattle and Portland music scenes is closing due to bloggers, label owners, and independent promoters like myself, Adam Bass, and Portland's Carly Henry shining a light on our respective music scenes and creating opportunities for them to intermingle, we now are on the verge of a much more cohesive NW music scene based not only on mutual respect but a strong overall passion for underground music. I love Seattle, it's my home and I love the bands here, but I also love visiting Portland and love the bands there too.

- Nik Christofferson

Owner, Good to Die Records

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Mercy Ties

By Brian Kim

Band photo by Mike Leask

Live shots by Taylor Jones



These days, particularly in heavy music, raw emotional power can be a rare commodity in music, a black market item innocuously traded in Seattle's shadows, oftentimes bleeding through the cracks into permanent obscurity and only ever so occasionally floating to the top to be revered and worshipped. That being said, when a group of passionate musicians emerge from the sleepy depths, performing their craft with their whole being, dripping with sweat, flushed with an uncontrollable energy perpetually churning out from within the depths of their very souls, the denizens of this fair city would do well to take notice.

Unleashing a volatile cocktail of jarringly abrasive rhythms and intricately taut leads, Mercy Ties caustically reimagine the goldmine of early 2000s post-hardcore. Their songs are an amalgamation of flagrant aggression and fervid desperation, not to be noticed or popularized but to simply survive. There is neither flair nor filler, only the sense of a deep conviction towards creating a space shared between them and the listener, a world for them to boldly inhabit.

Mercy Ties' first record, a 12" split EP with longtime friends and recent Seattle Passive Aggressive praise earners Grenades, is a white knuckled fist straight to the teeth. Recorded with Chris Proff and released by local label Echolalic Records in March of 2011, these six songs were written and recorded as a three piece with Trevor Bebee and Mike Hanson on guitars and vocals and Jeff King on drums and vocals. From the devastating barrage of mayhem that is the opening track Caves, the record progresses to showcase a calculated juxtaposition of thundering double kick grooves, tense clean guitar entanglements, and thrashing tornados of distortion.

Like a wildfire spreading across a plain in drought, the band immediately completed a west coast tour before moving King over to bass and adding drummer Chris Pereira, formerly of Oakland-based hardcore outfit Tigon. Soon after joining the band and shortly before hitting the road again, the band recorded the three song atom bomb of an EP Under The Gold Rimmed Sky, again with Proff, and self-released it in October of 2011.

Mercy Ties have thus far undertaken four west coast tours in just the past two years, and as of this writing they are midway through their longest tour to date. Spanning three weeks and crossing three different regions, this trek will take the band down the west coast, through the south, and back up the Midwest. "This will be the longest we've spent on the road. I don't think any of us have been to half of these states" states Hanson.



Along for the ride with them will be limited edition tour CDs of Mercy Ties' newest batch of recordings, songs originally from an old "super secret" demo which were significantly revamped before being recorded in Oakland. "We had some days off on our first tour with Chris, a couple shows fell through and we stayed at the Tigon house" explains Hanson. "They let us use their practice space to practice the songs and we went to the studio with Justin where he goes to community college". After their return home from tour, the band plans to release these six songs on 7" vinyl, adding yet another sonic weapon of mass destruction to their quickly growing stockpile.

Next on the agenda will be releasing five new songs that the band have completed writing. Unlike all their previous work, which has been a mix of songs largely written by a single writer, these songs will be the first release to be entirely collaboratively written. "Chris is a songwriter too, and all of us write, so these 5 songs will be a full collaboration of all of us" Bebee says, "it's gonna be the first time that all the songs are gonna be put together front to back with all four of us".

"It's pretty exciting, it's new territory for us as far as songwriting goes" adds Hanson.

Word on the street is the new songs are even heavier and more dynamic than previous material.

Mercy Ties plans on recording these five new aural adventures in the winter and releasing them on a single-sided 12" vinyl.

Mercy Ties will be performing on Nov 7th at the Black Lodge with Burn Your Life Down and Cascabel.

<http://mercyties.bandcamp.com/>





By Dustin Carroll

Band Photo by Jordyn Jones

Live Shot by Invisible Hour

Chaotic, cathartic, mathy post-metal outfit Into The Storm have been raging across Seattle stages, as well as along the rest of the west coast for several years. But despite numerous past releases, most notably the more recent "From Amidst A Sea Of Chaos" and still fairly new "Captains", the band has managed to remain steadily under the radar. On the dawn of the release of their upcoming 7" record, "Light Lovers and Heat Mongers," The Seattle Passive Aggressive sat down with the band to get a first listen, as well as to finally shine some light on a few of this city's hardest working local musicians.

The new EP shows the coming of a new sound for Into The Storm. "Light Lovers and Heat Mongers" takes a more straightforward approach to songwriting than its predecessors. According to drummer, James Reeves, "We are boiling down the process to gain a more focused interaction with our output. An understanding for what is on the horizon shines light on each forward step."

"We tried to make the music more accessible," Guitarist, Matt Jahn, adds, "The return to the roots will refresh the chaos."

While the more experimental sounds heard on "From Amidst A Sea of Chaos" and "Captains" have been toned down on the newest album, the band makes up for it with heavier riffs, catchy hooks, and more complex vocals.

Though overall a heavier, cleaner album, both sides of the EP have a unique feel. "Light Lovers" has a similar sound to the last Into The Storm release, "Captains," while "Heat Mongers" goes in more of a riff-heavy direction. As vocalist, Oliver Reeves, explains it, "Light Lovers and Heat Mongers are polar opposites, but share a common foundation."





© Invisible Hour

Though not to be cast into a purely black and white foundation, the records wild card is the second track, "Improbewww", clocking in at only 2:18, and showcasing what happens when a band with this sort of dynamics takes aim at a pop song. While tricking the listener into thinking an epic bridge or climax is on the horizon, the track simply ends on the tail end of a solo from bassist Brant Kay. With drastically different ideas combined into one short album, one has to wonder if this will influence the direction of ITS' future songwriting. "The next release, a proper full length, will focus on a patterned composition between song structures, but each will have its own style and purpose." James says.

It will also be - like all ITS albums before it - self-recorded. The ability to stay in a constant state of pre-production has given the band the opportunity to continue working on new material while recording. Because of this, there are plenty of plans being made for their full length, despite just releasing an EP.

Matt Jahn states, "The full length will be jam packed with material for an internal judging process. Something like twenty songs, picking only the few we deem worthy."

When asked if the constant cycle of writing while recording had any effect on the new album, Jahn adds, "This newly developed ability [to always be in pre-production] has yet to be fully executed, as we are constantly learning. Expect proper execution for the full length." For an opportunity to check out said new material, as well as "Light Lovers and Heat Mongers", the band has plans for a release show December 14th. The location is still TBA, but they are said to be joined by fellow Seattleites Smooth Sailing and Dead River. Can't wait that long? James Reeves suggests, "Go to more local shows. Chances are we'll find you."

<http://intothestorm.bandcamp.com/>



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By Pamela Sternin

Photos by Invisible Hour

I remember the first time I saw Playing Enemy ten years ago at El Corazon. I remember my ears wincing at Demian Johnston's shrill guitar tone, exuding notes that shouldn't work together at all but now have never sounded sweeter with vocals shouting desperately over the sonic derangement, pleading and unsettling. I remember the drastic and ever increasing concern for my well being inspired by Shane Mehling's sadistic and unpredictable bass flailing encountering the small real estate between my face and his belligerent wielding headstock now becoming a weapon in a one sided knife fight, all the while juggling cryptic bass lines and smiling through blood spattered teeth trickled down from a self inflicted forehead hemorrhage.

I remember Andrew Gormley's rhythmic approach was to obfuscate you through complex drum cycles sounding like an intent tribe banging on skins to confuse and direct prey into a prearranged trap. I was so repulsively smitten with their sound that I was moved to gawk in shock and much like a car crash, I haven't been able to look away since. This would be the dawn of Johnston and Mehling's musical coupling and the precursor to what is now, Great Falls.

After Playing Enemy disbanded, Johnston and Mehling continued to play music together expanding their tonal oddities in an experimental-noise band, Hemingway. It wasn't until the duo moved not so much away from creating bipolar soundscapes but as focusing that force more on intentional structuring, they employed a drum machine. With this evolution the Hemingway moniker was given the ax thus paving the way for their new alias, Great Falls. They performed their newly arranged material as a duo for a few shows under the name Great Falls until they decided to pursue a drum machine with a pulse, enlisting the power of Phil Petrocelli of Jesu/Black Noise Cannon.

Great Falls is Heavy, Heavy, Heavy. Petrocelli's metronomic drumming style gives you something you can physically grab onto, grazing your senses like audio braille cementing



© Invisible Hour

the groundwork for Johnston's disorienting riffs while Mehling's cats cradle-esque fingerings and low end lay waste to any hopes of having a solid bowel movement. They've recently recorded at the Vera Project with the help of Jeff McNulty and are in the final stages of putting together a 9-song full length album entitled Accidents Grotesque with one of the tracks hailing back to the Hemingway days



a la noise/drum machine weirdness. Carrying on with the heavy motif, Johnston's guitar tuning dives down to the seismic level of drop A for a few of the newer songs. As opposed to Playing Enemy, Johnston explains that the writing process for Great Falls leans more towards stripped down songs such as playing phrases say three times instead of four, "Should we come back to that riff again? Why?"; Their song length gravitating more towards the 2-4 minute range inciting a formula of slightly "linear" dimension as Johnston puts it which is a pretty humble way of describing their song structure being that it's wholly dynamic no matter how you slice it. In their tradition of "insert humorous quote here" as song title, all tracks for the new record are named after failed candidates from this last election cycle; Jon Huntsman, Herman Cain, Ron Paul....they're all here and enjoying their second wind of an endorsement I can get behind. I suggest if your sweaty palms can't wait for the imminent release of Accidents Grotesque you should pick up the Great Falls/Pink City split released on the label, Tapes Of A Neon God.

Something to mention and to be appreciated is the fact that Great Falls puts up the majority of their albums on Bandcamp available for free download. As a musician myself, I understand as much as anyone the energy and financial expense it takes to birth, record and release your work. It's a thankless effort but that's not the point. As Johnston puts it, "You can make a product: a CD, a shirt, a record. You put on a show people pay money to experience that art but the actual music itself is such a universal thing. It's invisible and it's magic and it's beautiful and it's the only magic in the world so why are you hoarding it, you fucking Ebenezer?". Truer words were never spoken.

You can catch Great Falls at The Black Lodge October, 20th with Theories, Numb, Don Peyote, Cynarae and Carrion Spring. All proceeds go to benefit the Black Lodge.

<http://greatfalls.bandcamp.com/>



Local Artist Spotlight

by James Ballinger

Every great scene has an equally great photographer there to document it. While this scene has several great photographers, there is none more instantly recognizable than David Choe, better known as Invisible Hour. David moved to Seattle nine years ago, from Minneapolis, MN. When asked what brought him here, David said "I had a chance to own a tattoo shop. And also my parents had moved here one year before I did from Queens, NY.



We haven't lived in the same city since I was in the 7th grade, so I thought it might be time. I had lived in Minneapolis for about 14 years, so I did need the change." As far as tattooing goes, David works at Chrome Ohm Studios in Capitol Hill, but started over 15 years ago in Hawaii. "It was Honolulu, at China Sea Tattoo. It was the shop that was owned by Sailor Jerry that was passed onto my boss when Jerry passed away. Great time. Not 'great time' that Jerry died, but 'great time' when I was there."

David got into taking photos by boredom, around five years ago. "I was always a night owl. So I would just drive around late at night, taking photos of empty buildings. I sometimes wore a bunny mask that I got from a costume shop because the empty building photos got a little boring. The first show I shot I think was Emma Zunes at Wall of Sound. It was just a little in-store. Then I think it was Neon Nights at the Funhouse. I didn't know shit about what I was doing, haha. I think it was with a small point and shoot camera too." Rarely do photos ever catch the grit, sweat, and chaos of shows, but Invisible Hour's photos capture everything. The unique style he uses however happened completely by accident. "It's funny. A lot of people like the swirly color lights that I do, but I actually did that by accident because I am usually quite drunk. And I would get sober the next day and try to figure out how that turned out. In fact, I tried to do it sober and I just didn't get it for a long time. But one night after a very long time, I figured it out somehow. I'm not really a technical photographer by any means, so I had very little idea of how I was getting that effect. To this day, I sometimes still don't know what I have in a camera until the next day because, as I've said, I'm usually drunk when I shoot bands."

When it comes to shooting bands I asked about some of his favorites. "Definitely Monogamy Party, The Family Curse is another one. It's not often that you have a good band that has an attractive lady in a nice dress go fucking nuts on stage, and He Whose Ox Is Gored too. There are definitely bands out there that I really can't get a 'bad shot'".

In closing, David wanted to add this bit of appreciation and advice; "I just wanted to thank all the bands that have been playing great shows for me to document. And more importantly thank all the folks who attend shows in Seattle that have more than once graciously offered me their spot so I can get a better shot. And if I may say something to other photographers here, do try to stay out of the way of the audience at the show. They're not there to stare at the back of your head. Get out of their way. You might even discover a better angle if you move around anyway. Thank you!" Invisible Hour has a showing at the Columbia City Theater on Oct 18th, and two shows in Portland in the works.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/invisiblehour/>

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