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ISSUE#6



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Letter from the Founder:

Hey, everyone. Thanks for picking up Issue Six! There is a lot of stuff going on in the Seattle PA camp - great things I'm looking forward to announcing. We've had a successful last few shows we put on and plan on putting on many more. Thanks to all the bands, venues, and people who have come out. Looking forward to doing more soon. Even though we only put out a new issue every two months, we supplement reviews, show previews, and other things on our webpage to keep things active and current. This seems to have worked well for us. Our website (www.theseattlepa.com) is getting tons of traffic, and the zines constantly have to be restocked at locations throughout our print run - around 2,000 copies each issue. We would really like to keep expanding to surrounding areas all over Seattle, and Washington in general. This issue will be in Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, and more. We are in the middle of putting together a Street Team to help us keep this stocked and get in your hands all over. If you think you'd be interested in helping us, just email me at theseattlepa@gmail.com. Thank you to everyone who has helped us out so far. This wouldn't be what it is today without you, and it's much appreciated. Sincerely, James Ballinger



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By Pamela Sternin

Photos by Invisible Hour

It's hard to believe that Skarp has been a band for almost 13 years. This fact is commendable and inspiring. Few things in life are as everlasting. Their music has evolved over the years, starting out as a ska/punk band and turning ultimately into the Skarp we are familiar with today - grindcore to the hilt or as drummer Joe Axler's kick drum head plainly reads "Blackout Grind." Previous to Skarp, singer Renee Betts (at that time a youngin' at 15-16 years old) and guitarist Robert Daniels lead the band David Koresh Choir. After DKC broke up Betts and Daniels created Skarp, prompting a permanent move for the two from Bremerton to Seattle in order to be closer to drummer and bassist, Eric Brosy and Brent McKnight. Through a handful of internal lineup changes (Axler as the earliest addition taking over for Brosy on drums close to a year after its inception, and Andy Kress jumping in on bass later) Skarp has become a staple in Seattle's metal/crust community as well as the DIY scene.

It is to be expected that this world is anything but static, and balancing a band for over a decade on top of life's bounty of trials and endeavors would bring most bands to an end, but this has never been the case for Skarp. There has never been talk of having a last show. Between Daniels attending University of Washington, Axler with his other percussive projects and Betts becoming a mom Skarp still finds the time to play shows and tour for a couple weeks at least once a year.

Freshly back from a small hiatus, Skarp's calendar is quickly filling up! Their first show back is going to be this April 18th for Choice Fest and after that it's the LoFi with Deathraid and The Loss to be

followed up with the honor of being flown down to California in June where they'll borrow a van, play a major festival coupled with a few more shows in the vicinity. There has been talk of going to Australia to grind the face off the Aussie's and teach koala's how to cuss and throw down, but that's still in the works.



© Invisible Hour

Touring is the dessert of being in a band, and Skarp have always been big advocates of getting the fuck outta dodge and hitting the road. Just last summer they blazed a trail through Mexico. "We did some sight-seeing, stood on top of pyramids! The shows were great. Kids would go crazy in mosh pits and they were all super inviting," says Betts.



"The language barrier was difficult but luckily Robert speaks some Spanish, and Andy knows a little, too. That being said communication was mostly body language. We stayed at the houses of the people that would put on the shows. We once got pulled aside at a checkpoint and the Policia went through our stuff, but that was about it. It was so punk rock, and I miss that about going on tour. Totally DIY, staying on floors, eating whatever food people would make for us, not always making money, not having hotels every night. Back in 2004 we went to Europe. Joe hurt his left foot in Germany not three days in. He wasn't wearing shoes in a bar, and he sliced his foot open stepping on broken glass, so he couldn't play double kick, and he had to use crutches for the remainder of the tour. I'd like to go back because I was pretty young at the time and in "party mode." I barely drink anymore, and I think if we did return to Europe I'd be able to appreciate it more."

Over the years Skarp has shared the stage with many a top shelf band - Phobia and Leftover Crack being one of their favorites. "Playing with the Melvins was pretty cool, and at that time they were doing a mash up with Jello Biafra on vocals. That's also when Skarp got signed to Alternative Tentacles," Betts recounts. "I appreciate all the bands I play with, and I try to watch openers and stick around at shows, be available too. It's no good for the scene to be a curmudgeon or snobby. I try to be a welcoming person in the scene and be supportive of other people's music."

I was curious so I had to ask, "How many people have you met that have Skarp tattoos?" which Betts received with a boisterous, "At least 20! Most of them live here in Seattle but I've seen others around the country. It makes me really happy that my band can be something that's so important to them to commit to a tattoo. It means I'm doing something right."

It's been a bit since we've heard any new recorded material from these grindmasters since their last release, Requiem (2005) on Alternative Tentacles, which only leaves you wanting more.

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Princess has declared a goal to "push their songs out from under metal and into other realms," and in their short 3-year career they have succeeded at doing so. No small surprise considering their founding members' pedigree: Rod and Violet's previous band Mobile Slaughter Unit and Andrew's band The Keeper both kicked ass in their own right. Princess is adept at blurring the lines between heavy/hardcore and punk/metal, while being smart enough to keep it interesting and fun.

Less like a fairy tale than a comic book, Princess' origin story reads:

By Jeffery McNulty

Photos by Invisible Hour

It all started with a rushed test flight of an experimental spacecraft. Years before,

*while a student at UW, Andrew began working on plans for one of the first vehicles capable interstellar travel. His fellow student and pal, Rod, jokingly promised to pilot the craft. But Andrew, after studying to be an aeronautical engineer, finally realized his lifelong dream. Exhausting the majority of his vast inheritance, he funded the construction and launch of such a starship and embarked on an immediate test flight, taking Rod with him who had become a successful Air Force pilot. Sam and her pal Gator also joined them after reading about the upcoming test flight in *The Stranger*. The spaceship encountered a bombardment of cosmic radiation, causing both the mission to be aborted and the craft to crash. Emerging from the ruins of the spaceship, they discovered the radiation had mutated their bodies. All four decided to use their powers to better humanity and founded Princess.*

Actually, they became friends after playing many shows together. With a mutual admiration for each other's music, they met Sam and all decided to rock out together. But I like the myth.

While not quite "Spinal Tap-ian," Princess has indeed mutated through a couple different drummers after Violet left, finally settling in with Gator who has proven to have the right stuff. Says Rod about their newest recruit, "As a rookie, he's required to wear a tiara during practice, and he can never let our pint glasses touch the bar empty in addition to his beat-keeping duties. There's always a good opportunity to be found in

change. Each Princess drummer has brought some unique talent and personality to the band and to the tunes, and Gator's no exception. The key to Gator's style is his 'fro. You can hear it."





Like Voltron, Princess truly is greater than the sum of its parts. Rod's guitar riffing is masterful, brutally heavy and insistent. Sam and Gator's pummeling rhythms keep the songs grounded as well as moving forward like a rocket-car pilot barely holding on to control. Everyone uses just enough distortion to keep it real. The slight duskiness of the drums on their

first outing *The Grim Energy* has been dusted away by Conrad Uno during the recording of their last record, *Welcome Winter*, and everything sits right where it needs to be. That's two EP's of really great songs. The most amazing thing for me about the *Welcome Winter* EP is the back-up vocals. The first track, "Kate," comes out swinging with a repetitive one-two punch of vocals and music, but about a minute into the song it calms down and everybody chimes in with a magical droning chorus, and they kick it back up again. Andrews trademark vocals have a dry humor to them and sometimes it's hard to tell if he's being facetious or serious about his lyrics. In either case, his delivery smacks of metal but his story telling style is reminiscent of Big Black in its dark subject matter and matter-of-fact intensity.

This is a good thing.

Princess is really excited to go back into the studio with Conrad, who records at Egg Studio and is a legendary local bad ass. "Dude knows his shit and his space, so he's efficient to work with and pretty matter-of-fact when you're getting down to the business of immortalizing yer noise. We've been asked about what he knows of the heavy, and it seems weird to have to remind folks the man has got albums by the likes of Mudhoney, Gas Huffer, and Murder City Devils under his waistband." Indeed, his congenial website boasts a list that is longer than the day is long including a who's who of local giants. Says Rob, "It was pretty amazing to record with an un-released TAD live recording (the tape reel). The key to recording with Conrad is to treat him like a gremlin: Don't expose him to bright light. Don't ever get him wet. And don't ever, ever ask him to mix after 8pm."

Another novel thing Princess did was to put out a remix record. They handed out tracks of their song "Kate" to some of their friends and let them do whatever they wanted. The results are extremely different than what you would first expect. The musical styles of the remixes veer off from standard rock and into darker, more electronic angles. Andrew explains, "We stole the idea from our friends to the North, Sex With Strangers. Remixes are generally thought of as clubby dance tracks, but I like these rock re-thinks. Folks like Aaron Semer and Kyle Michael Porter had basically zero rules and total freedom with these stems. The stuff these guys came up with was amazing. Princess could have a very real future in dubstep or club-core hop-bop music!"
Continued on last page...

BRÉAG NAOFA

By Brian Kim

"Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest."

Seattle post-metal doombringers Bréag Naofa (pronounced Bray-G Nay-Fuh) aptly use this striking quote, attributed to French writer-philosopher Denis Diderot, as their tagline. An accurate representation of this progressive sextet, both the meaning behind the phrase conveys the bands central theme, and the graphic violence of its imagery captures the raw, aggressive energy of their music. Like a group of master alchemists, Breag Naofa miraculously combine machine gun hardcore punk energy, repetitive sludge metal heaviness, and epic anthemic melodies, drifting effortlessly around and between to create desperately bleak yet awe inspiring sonic journeys.

Bréag Naofa began its unholy crusade of destruction in 2010 when guitarist Roger Kilburn and vocalist Rob McFeters, who had been playing music together for some time, decided to begin a new musical endeavor, a band with a unifying ideal which held some greater purpose and significance. "At the outset of the band Rob and I had an idea of doing a band with a message, but one we could all agree on," explains Kilburn. "We are all non-theists in this band, so it made perfect sense to speak about that as a common theme". "The band's message is against all faith-based belief which seeks to affect policy or to control our country's populace," adds McFeters. "For example, belief in anachronistic, Abrahamic ideals is the main obstacle to marriage equality. Faith in beliefs, for which there is no evidence, is backwards thinking and impedes progressive thought and research." The culmination of Bréag Naofa's identity, both thematically and musically, is executed with devilish perfection on their brutally beautiful debut album - untitled, self-released digitally and pressed on 12" vinyl by Panic Records.

Blistering guitar riffs run the gamut of crushing and oppressive to exhilarating and liberating. Bréag Naofa dutifully carry the torch of post-metal with a heavy-handed sort of grace that puts them beyond their peers. Over forty minutes of unrelenting, aggressively enlightening metal is crammed into four untitled tracks, simply labeled with roman numerals.



"I think our original intent was to just be obscure enough and to let the lyrics of the songs themselves tell a story. It's not necessarily a themed album, but we just thought the names weren't as important to worry about as the lyrics," explains Kilburn.

McFeters' savagely screamed words layered over the band's thrashing guitars and pounding rhythms are certainly key to Bréag Naofa's overall theme. Each song builds a microcosm within itself wherein some dark aspect of the world is drawn out, and yet there is also a large window for interpretation, and hopefully, perhaps, personal evaluation. Lines such as "They trade their lives for needless salvation. His truths are forgotten" read like the cup of a carpenter, simple yet effective. After recently completing a short stint on the road with fellow local heavies Cascabel, Bréag Naofa respectfully parted ways with bassist Brian Wilkin and guitarist Ronnie Navarro. "Well, the false story is they were a bunch of cry babies and pain in the asses," Kilburn jokes, "but the true story is they had other life obligations or interests that they felt it was time to go. The new dudes Sam and Dustin were also much more handsome." Bréag Naofa have since regrouped and been busy writing new material to unleash upon the world.



On the horizon are the hazy possibility of a west coast tour, Crucial Fest in Salt Lake City, and a split EP. "I am trying to add a few more things like bowed instrument parts and more drums epicness and weird sound effects," Kilburn says of new Breag Naofa songs. "We all just write what we think will appease the gods to save us from impending doom each time a natural disaster happens." Bréag Naofa's monumental debut untitled 12" LP is available on the Panic Records website, or purchase it at their next show, which will be an epic barn burner of ridiculous proportions - April 28th with Samothrace and Bell Witch at the Comet Tavern.

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

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Local Artist Spotlight

by James Ballinger

Making a record is an art all in itself. A great recording can make or break the songs musicians put their efforts into. Our local spotlight this issue is none other than Matt Bayles. Matt is responsible for some of heavy music's finest records, local and otherwise. After a glance at his full discography at www.mattbayles.com, it's fair to say that he



has one of music's most impressive resumes. Records like Botch's "We are the Romans," Harkonen's "Shake Harder Boy," and Isis' "Oceanic" are absolute classics. I asked Matt a few questions recently about how he got started recording, people and bands he has worked with, and the record industry in general.

Outside of playing music, Matt didn't get started recording until he decided to study it in college. "I released a 7" when I was 16, and while I didn't record it, I was definitely interested with what went in to it. I actually didn't start to play an instrument until I was 16 and didn't start learning about recording until I was 19. It was just something that felt right after I started to delve into it," Bayles says. "I did a project for a class when I was in college where there were a lot of ideas I had, and I managed to make them all come together. I had some sampler malfunctions that created some happy accidents sonically, and that was when I knew I had at least a sense of when something interesting was happening no matter how incorrect it was and how to capitalize on it." He also had some help learning, thanks to some mentors, so to speak, "...even though some of them may not know it. I got to assist Brendan O'Brien, Terry Date, Adam Kasper, Steve Fisk and more who showed me how to make records rather than just recording a band."

Even though Matt has recorded some of heavy music's finest, I asked him what bands he would really like to work with. "I was really happy to get the chance to work with my friends in Cursive. I will say that I miss working with some of the younger heavy bands because I think the scene has been revitalized the last few years. I think it would be fun to work with Deftones, as I have known them since they recorded their first record at Bad Animals and assisted on Around the Fur. I think doing something with Ben Gibbard would be fun as well. Foals, The Twilight Sad, Doves, etc.

Finally, I asked Matt his opinion on the resurgence of vinyl and the record industry as a whole. "The whole thing is a mess," Bayles said. "I am glad there is a resurgence of vinyl and therefore people who value being able to hold the music in their hands. I am more afraid of the streaming sites and the vastly diminished royalties they pay artists, and therefore a bit downstream, producers. I am not a fan of the 360 deals that artists are often forced into these days, and those are a result of labels trying to find a way to survive in this time of decreased sales. The landscape will continue to shift for a while longer; I'm not sure what it will look like when it all settles down."

Princess continued...

"Club-Core Hop-Bop"? OK, Andrew. After a series of great shows opening up for the likes of Red Fang, Helms Alee, Black Elk, Akimbo and many more, Princess continue to gain momentum. They intend to "...write new songs, play more shows, and we plan to play some outside gigs as well. We know we are an unusual band and have a unique sound, and that helps us to fit a variety of bills. This is our third year together, and we intend to shred far more!"

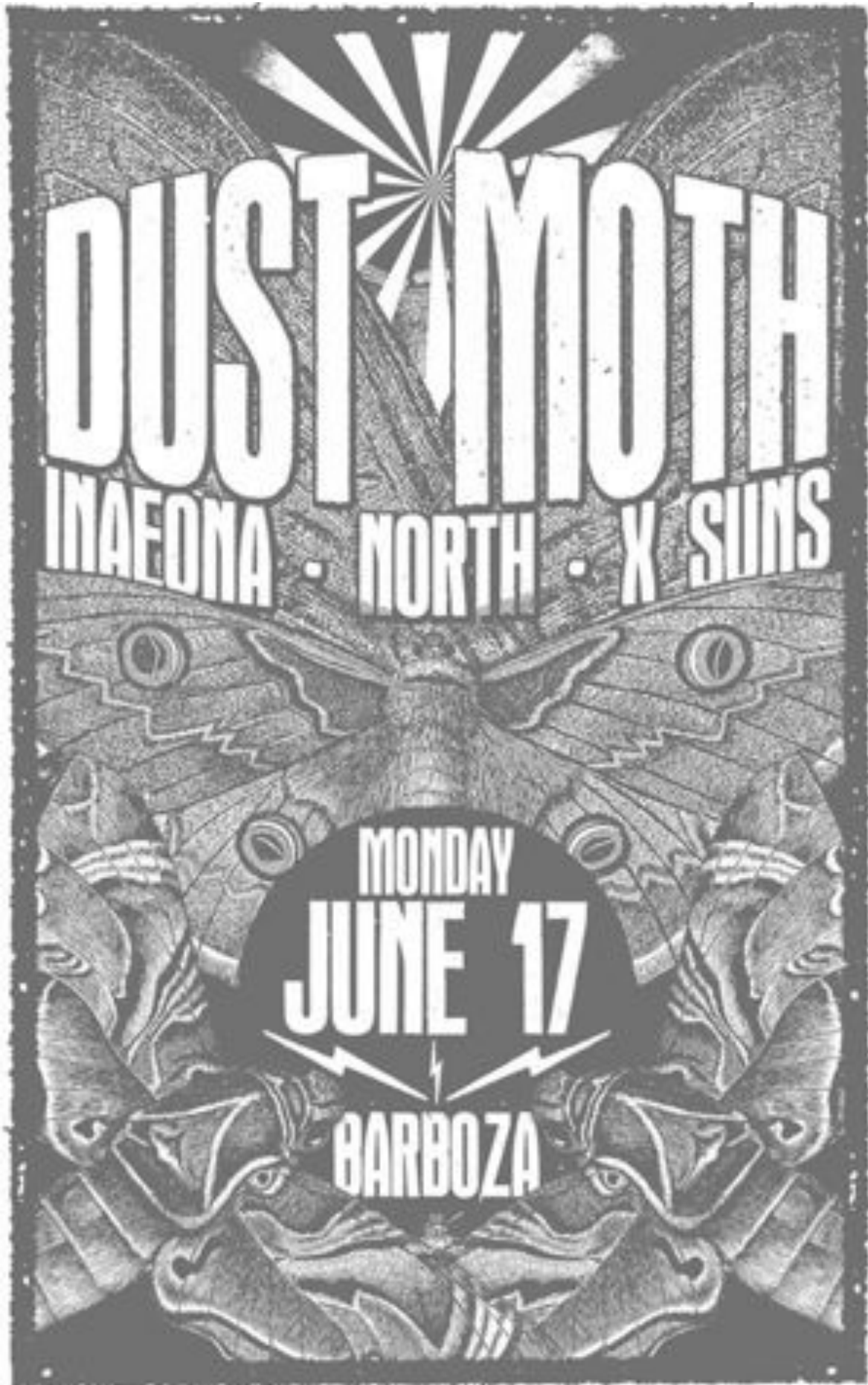
Princess is really fun to watch. Live, as on record, they do indeed shred. Andrew is a consummate front man forging a trail through the audience as Rod, Sam, and Gator do what they do best, tear ass. They have great sounding gear, and their music's intensity is backed up by their stage presence. Come out to one of their shows and see for yourself. Upcoming gigs include a headlining spot at the Black Lodge during Choicefest on April 19th (A series of shows booked by Ladies Choice featuring bands with "not all dude" members) and a spot on the line up during this summer's Capitol Hill Block Party. Please go to <http://princess.bandcamp.com> to listen and <https://www.facebook.com/princessismetal> to like.

Skarp continued...

"Lyrically, Requiem is very meaningful to me. I enjoy playing Turn Away and Cold Blue Serenity; those are the songs people like the most, and they just go crazy," Betts describes. "The lyrics from that album still hold true to my life and even to current situations. A lot of our older songs we don't play anymore because they don't pertain to our current musical style. Musically we've changed throughout the years, and we are very much more grindcore. Our skill level has also developed a lot in this band, it just comes with practice and age." And, get ready for this...we may not have to wait that much longer for new brutal tunes as Betts hints at the inkling of a split 7" with Bay area band, Voetsck possibly coming out this year. Let's cross our fingers!

It's undeniable the impact Skarp has made in the Seattle music scene. You can't go to a metal show without spying at least one Skarp patch stitched onto a backpack or adorning a jean jacket like a badge of honor. When asked the question, "Do you think Skarp has achieved everything it set out for?" Betts had a heartfelt reply, "As a DIY punk band, YES. We've done a lot. We've gone on tours and reached a lot of people. Skarp is a part of my identity, and it's been the biggest part of my life and main focus of my existence for over a decade. It made me who I am today. It's amazing when I play a show and people sing the lyrics on point to the songs I wrote, and it's like 'Wow, this person actually listened, read and absorbed our music,' and that's the best compliment anyone can ever give. It seriously touches me. I'm proud of what we've done and I'm proud of our band.

Alternative Tentacles after all these years support us and let us do what we want to do. They're a bigger label but very much still punk. And, I'd rather sit in a smelly van with a bunch of dudes on the road than sell my soul to some faceless record label. What more can you ask for?"Check out Skarp at Choice Fest, April 18th at the Highline with Transient (pdx), Don Peyote and Murder in the Wood.



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