

When trouble finds you, just keep on truckin'

Bucket Truck are a band that believe in the maxim "ask and ye shall receive"

by Alex Pope

For every five independent bands struggling to make a name for themselves in a challenging industry, perhaps only one will actually make it. Newfoundland punk rock veterans Bucket Truck count themselves lucky to be among the select few bands to be enjoying a successful career defined completely on their own terms.

"As an independent artist, you don't need a major label, you don't need an indie label to put money into you if you really have the heart and the desire to do it yourself," says lead singer and voice of experience Matt Wells. Bucket Truck have been playing together for ten years, and have in

that time nationally released only two albums – 2001's *Waiting To Talk* and this year's seminal work *Favour The Bull* – but what they lack in recorded material, they more than make up for with the significance and professionalism of their existing body of work.

Six years ago, the band – having garnered themselves something of a cult following and coveted spots on the Summersault and Warped Tours – made a move to Halifax. "In that time, we started working on our music and our writing and working towards making this album that we just put out," explains Wells.

Then, in October 2002, after two years of "working hard at getting our music out to the rest of Canada and the rest of the world," the band "decided we wanted to try to work with a producer who represented what we loved about music." According to Wells, they put together a package containing their first album, a letter of introduction, and a collection of press clippings, and sent it to every hard rock producer they could think of. Among them were legendary Swedish producers Pelle Henricsson and Eskil Lovstrom, the geniuses behind the album *The Shape of Punk to Come* by Swedish band The Refused.

As a testament to the wide appeal of Henricsson and Lovstrom's work, "We, collectively as a band, listen to completely different music, and this was one album that we all individually owned," explains Wells. "We thought to ourselves, 'why can't we record with this guy?'"

The band got replies from just about everybody they contacted, but at the end of the day, says Wells, "[Henricsson and Lovstrom] were the guys we wanted to work with."

In January 2003, Bucket Truck received an email from Henricsson informing them that he'd be in their "neck of the woods" and

inviting them to meet with him in Los Angeles ("obviously he'd never been to Canada," Wells laughs). Despite the short notice and cost of airfare, the band went to L.A., where Henricsson was in the process of recording an album with Poison The Well.

"He told us that he saw potential in our music, but he thought that our record was horrible and that he never would have released it the way it was," Wells recalls. "He said, 'I want to hear new songs, and if I like the way you've progressed, then we'll do this.'"

In June of that year, Henricsson agreed to record the band's album in August and September, which gave Bucket Truck a little over two months to prepare their material for production and raise the funds necessary to pay Henricsson and Lovstrom. Although time was short, "we said yes, absolutely," says Wells. "We couldn't turn it down."

Favour The Bull was recorded in Newfoundland and Sweden, and though at the end of the day, the band could have bought "a nice, bungalow-style house with two bedrooms and one and a half bathrooms" for roughly the same amount it cost them to attach Henricsson and Lovstrom to the album, Wells in particular is grateful for the learning opportunities the experience afforded them in return.

"I think that, especially in Atlantic Canada ... people think, 'why would this big-time record producer want to hear from me?' or 'why would this big-time musician want to play on my album?' What we don't realize is that just because they're from L.A. or New York or England doesn't mean that they're not just regular people who love music," says Wells. "As an independent artist, you don't need a major label, you don't need an indie label to put money into you if you really have the heart and the desire to do it yourself."

You never know what you get until you ask."

What's next for Bucket Truck? "We're just six guys with jobs who

love making music and wanted to do something that we thought for ourselves would be an extraordinary adventure," says Wells. One

can only assume that their next great adventure is already in the works. For info, check out www.buckettruckmusic.com.



Peter Diamond/www.blackboxpro.com

Squash thy enemies! Above is a promotional illustration done for Bucket Truck by Peter Diamond.

Derailed stays on the tracks

by Josh O'Kane

Last weekend, a couple of friends showed up at my place and forced me to go to a movie. Several minutes later, I found myself in line at the theatres, paying for a ticket to *Derailed* with a handful of tweekies I got from putting a \$20 bill in a vending machine.

In *Derailed*, Clive Owen plays American businessman Charles Schine, whose life is a bit troublesome: his wife ignores him, he's just lost a major client at his marketing firm, and to top it all off, he must constantly worry about his daughter, who has Type 1 Diabetes, a disease for which the medical costs are phenomenal.

One day on the commuter train to work, Schine runs into the beautiful Lucinda Harris, played by Jennifer Aniston. To cut to the chase, the two basically click and it becomes obvious that the two married individuals are going to have an affair.

They do, but not without a twist: a man catches them just as they begin to do the deed, and the blackmailing begins. Soon Schine is forced to pay off the man to prevent him from harming his family, and Harris refuses to let him call the cops so that word of her infidelity won't spread.

What follows is a series of twists and turns that the writers expect you to not see coming; however, within 20 minutes of the film, I managed to guess exactly what was going to happen. The film is suspenseful and twisted, but it isn't all that hard to see through. It may have just been a good guess – you'll have to see for yourself.

The acting was shiftier than the plotline, though. Clive Owen's English accent shines through in almost every second sentence, breaking his American middle-upper-class exterior. Jennifer Aniston still has that sitcom air to her acting, and doesn't look right in a serious film, let alone in a love scene.

Vincent Cassel plays a pretty decent bad guy, pulling off everything from a pistol-whipping thug to a charming French businessman by the time the movie is half-done. He certainly makes up for his accomplice Dexter, played by the one and only "X to the Z," Xzibit, who plays just as big a thug on the screen as he is in real life (hint: not much of one at all).

Another rapper, The RZA, plays a mail boy in plaid shirts and khakis at Schine's office. He loves hockey but gambles on baseball for cash using stats from Owens' character. That's right, The RZA. They try to even this out by giving his character a past involving drug deals, prison, and... a 4.0 GPA?

I don't mean to draw any racial lines, but come on, look at what he stands for. The RZA. Wu-Tang Clan. Plaid and khakis? Dear RZA: *Wzah?*

When you add it up, though, the film is interesting enough to allow at least one watch. I may have been the only one to see things coming, but I still found it interesting to see. I was even legitimately kept on my toes... whenever Aniston wasn't on the screen.

***1/2 – maybe more if I wasn't able to see through the plot, Clive Owen's accent, and Jennifer Aniston.



The things kids listen to nowadays

What purpose does music serve when you can't discern an actual melody through the noise? One frustrated listener speaks out

by Kevin Lalonde,
The Other Press (Douglas College)

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. (CUP) -- There are certain things in life that I don't understand. Cubist art, reality television, women – none of these things make any sense to me. But the one thing that bothers me the most is, quite simply, noise rock. I just don't get it.

Now, before you grab your pitchforks and call for my head, I should clarify. I never thought of early Sonic Youth as noise rock, for example.

I mean, when was the last time you heard someone say, "Oh my god, man I love Shellac!" or "Dude, the new Butthole Surfers is so amazing"? Alright, to be fair, a lot of people probably did. But that's not what I want to talk about.

I'm talking about new noise rock. Deerhoof, Xiu Xiu, all of it. It makes no goddamn sense to me.

People describe noise rock as big and cacophonous, abrasive, an onslaught of noise meant to shatter the eardrums.

The genre is highlighted by distorted, amateurishly-played guitars and heavy, crashing percussion, often lacking a cohesive rhythm or melody, or a melody altogether.

Reading that description back, it sounds like I'm describing math rock. Well, fuck math rock too, but we'll get to that another time. Right now, I'm pissed about how good people think the new Deerhoof is, or the new Xiu Xiu, or the new whatever. Again, I just don't get it.

When I threw in Deerhoof's new LP *Apple O'* this week, I was excited. I had never really listened to Deerhoof before, aside from a few tracks that some friends had played for me, and the new album was getting hugely positive press from all points. Clearly, it had to be good.

My excitement, however, quickly melted into aggravated irritation.

Not surprising for a guy whose idea of a good time is a bottle of wine, a pan-fried trout, and some old Decemberists while reading Harry Potter. What the fuck was this shit?

Why do I hate noise rock so much? It's usually discordant and

unpleasantly unmelodic. It's annoying. You can't sing along to the words (if there are any), and even if you can understand the lyrics, they rarely make any sense. It's so dissonant and harsh, and you can't even get high to it because it just agitates you and freaks you out.

Case in point: the song "Saturn" by celebrated noise rock "innovators" Xiu Xiu.

Theoretically, you should be able to light a joint and listen to damn near anything. But that? I don't fucking think so. Again, I just don't understand it.

That said, not all noise rock is so unlistenable for me that I can't stomach it.

However, it is kind of sad that the only half-melodic tracks on *La Foret* sound unmistakably like Depeche Mode. What does that say about the genre?

Indeed, the term "noise rock" has been thrown around like an old pair of socks so much recently that it's hard to make distinctions as to who is actually playing noise rock and who isn't. No, I won't try to give any clarity in that regard;

remember, I don't understand it. However, it frightens me when I hear people labeling bands like Wolf Parade as noise rock. Sure, for the first

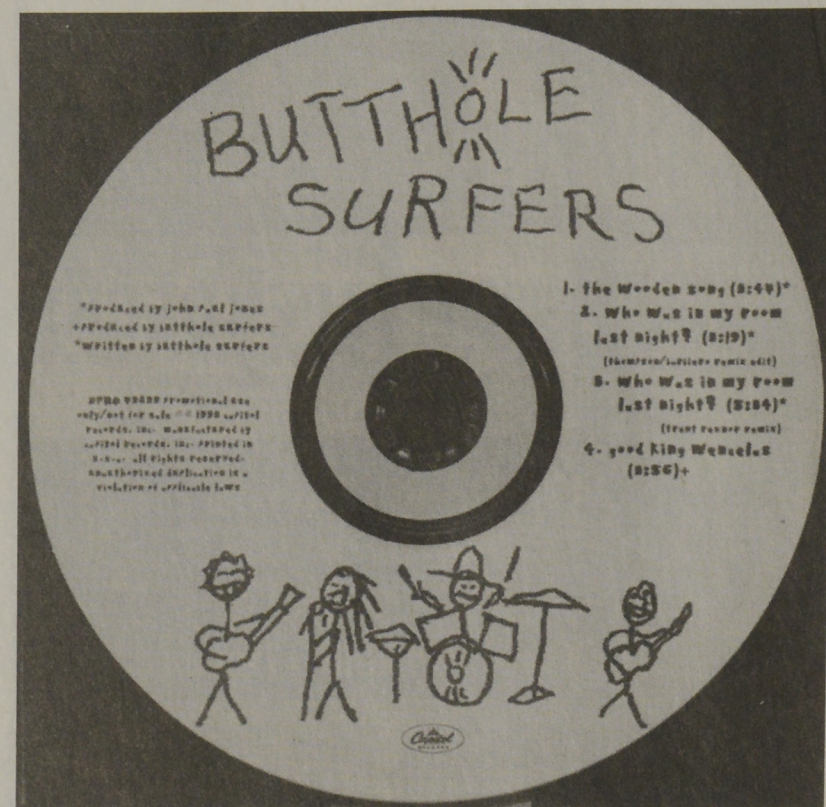
12 seconds of "You Are a Runner," you might think the song a bit grating. But then, seemingly out of nowhere, you hear...what's that, a melody? Is that so fucking hard to play?

It's cohesive, it's pleasant, and it's goddamn catchy is what it is! And it causes me to say to myself, "yeah, I really want to put that on," and not have to suffer through it in any way.

So the real question is, why the hell do people who like noise rock like noise rock? Is it because they're angry? Were they not hugged enough when they were little? Have they been drinking too much?

Frankly – and I know someone is gonna hit me for saying it – I think it's because they have a metal plate in their head or something.

Either that or they're deaf. Otherwise, I simply can't explain it.



When was the last time you heard someone say "Dude, the new Butthole Surfers is so amazing"? Ever wonder why?