

# GENRECIDE

MICHAEL EDWARDS

## THE FUTURE OF ROCK AND ROLL

Maybe I am getting old. You see, I seem to have gotten to the point where I really can't be bothered with a band who just put out the same kind of album again and again. Whatever happened to developing as an artist? At first their sound may be new and exciting, but after a few records of the same old thing, my attention span dwindles to practically non-existent (unless, of course, the original sound was just the most incredible sound ever; unusual I'll grant you, but it could happen). And so that is why I think I get so excited by so many debut albums - they represent some new talent who could be the saviour of rock and roll as we know it. You know me - forever the optimist.



Anyway, another debut has grabbed me quite firmly and just won't let me escape its hold. And that it fine by me, as I want to listen to Jonny Polonsky's *Hi My Name Is Jonny* again and again. The likelihood of that happening is also quite high as it clocks in at a mere twenty-five minutes for ten songs. Does that upset me? Nope, not at all. It simply means that I can fit more listens of it into a twenty-four hour day. Almost fifty-nine to be precise. But enough of this petty math; what does Jonny sound like? Well, guitar pop music that gets occasionally loud is a good place to

start, and if reference points of Nick Lowe and Frank Black are added, you might have a bit of an idea of what I mean. For a debut, it has some of the strongest songs I have heard in a long, long time that deal with such joys as relationships, napping and astral projection (or so it says in the press release). The overall feeling is pop though, and pop of the catchiest variety. Mr. Black is a fan, and he also helped produce some demos for Jonny, I can really hear his influence in some guitar parts. All I can really say is that although it is only March, this could very well be one of the best albums I will hear all year, and that is high praise indeed.

A Canadian songwriter who appears to have gone from relative obscurity to being almost famous is Bob Snider. He must be almost famous, as there was a tribute concert for him last March in Toronto featuring a wealth of Canadian talent, including the man himself. Fortunately, the whole thing was taped so the rest of the world could enjoy it, and it has been released under the title *Poetreason*, just so you know. Bob's songs fall into one of two categories - first, there are the quirky little songs that have the wittiest of lyrics and make you laugh out loud (such as 'Arch Support Blues'). And secondly, there are the tender songs which are just plain lovely and tug at your heart ('Ancient Eyes'). *Poetreason* includes its fair share of both, performed by the likes of Change Of Heart, Jughead, Leslie Spit Treeo, Meryn Cadell & Veda Hille, Hhead and a whole bunch of others. But the highlight of the whole show was hearing Bob himself deliver a couple of songs in his own special way - there simply is no substitute for the real thing.

If you were fortunate enough to attend the Farmer's Market for the best show of last year, you would have observed Pansy Division in all their glory. Hardly the most subtle band in the world, they have so much fun with the fact that they are gay, you wonder why everybody isn't that way. Or something like that. *Wish I'd Taken Pictures* starts off with 'Horny In The Morning', and continues at pretty much breakneck speed for thirteen more songs of the punky variety although there are even some (shock horror!) acoustic guitars trying their best to be heard. While there are the now-familiar songs take a tongue-in-cheek look at being gay, there are also more serious songs about relationships that could apply to just about anyone. But above everything else, their sense of humour comes shining through. A lot of fun.



Next up, a brace of releases from that most fashionable label of last year, Epitaph. *All Ages* is a compilation of songs from Bad Religion's Epitaph albums, with some unreleased live tracks thrown in to offer some value for money for the hardcore fans. It sounds just like Bad Religion (no surprise there...), but it also shows how their sound has changed a bit over the years. Matured even. Anyway, it has all your favourites, or rather if you know the band it does. If you don't, then this is a pretty good introduction to one of the more important West coast hardcore bands. *Heavy Petting Zoo* is the brand new album from NOFX, and it sounds just like, well, NOFX. Umm - that's just what I said about Bad Religion too. Maybe it's just me, but it seems like punk hasn't changed too much over the past couple of decades. I suppose that Bad Religion and NOFX are to the kids

of today what The Sex Pistols and The Clash were to me. That doesn't mean that *Heavy Petting Zoo* is a bad album, it just means that it probably won't surprise you. Except maybe the occasional trumpet. And the tasteless cover. Some songs try to address serious issues, but do it in such a superficial way that you can't help but wonder why they bothered. One for the fans.



And after punk, there is simply nowhere to go but Cuba for some of the finest dance music you will ever hear. Cuba? Dance music? I know, I wasn't really expecting it either, but *Cubanismo!* really is quite wonderful. It features the most irresistible mixture of Latin music with a large horn section and an awful lot of percussion (I swear they even use a whip to keep rhythm on one song...). The finest band of the most famous Cuban musicians was assembled to make this album, including Alfredo Rodriguez on piano and Jesus Alemany (to whom the record is credited) on trumpet, and it really does show. Both musicians have the opportunity to show off their talent in the many solos that punctuate the songs, but it seems almost unfair to pick out only two people for high praise as the entire ensemble work so well together. While I may not know the difference between a guaguanco and a son montuno, I do know that it is impossible to listen to this CD without moving. You don't need to know a thing about Cuban music to enjoy it, as all you have to do is put on this CD and dance yourself silly. This is the kind of album that could give world music a good name.

## Claudius: Everbody dies and uses awful language

by Sam Morgan  
Brunswickan Entertainment

If you're a fan of Shakespeare, then you've wondered what the hell Claudius was thinking in Hamlet. I mean, did he know he was royally screwed and what did he and Gertrude really do behind closed doors?

Thanks to Canadian playwright, Ken Gass and UNB's own production of Claudius, we know.

Claudius is loosely based on the events of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The basic Cliff's Notes plot is as follows; The king of Denmark is dead, Hamlet believes his Uncle Claudius, the king's brother, murdered his father in order to usurp the throne of Denmark. Incidentally Claudius marries Hamlet's mother Gertrude and after that basically, everybody dies.

Dana Nielson cast in the title role as Claudius performed marvelously as the regicidal king but with every great man, there is a great woman. The woman who happened to complement Mr. Nielson is one Hilary Stephenson as Gertrude. Nielson and Stephenson kept the audience at their wit's end by captivating the electricity of their on-stage evolving professionalism. Throughout the show Nielson and Stephenson kept up a front of hostility to mask the characters' true sexual passion for each other. One of the best lines of the play to account for this great duo was "evil seduces." You never knew who was more hell-bent - Claudius or Gertrude. Nielson's regal, but yet menacing mane of hair gave a certain validity to his acting, whereas Stephenson's strong passionate voice and curvaceous mannerisms truly would've shown up even old Queen Elizabeth. What can I say they were a great duo and I hope to see more of their acting in the coming months.

What is Claudius without his antagonist Hamlet. Tony LePage once again surprised the audience with his level of acting abilities. He was able to range his emotions from complete loon to a stoic grin. You never knew Hamlet's frame of mind and LePage did a great job through his Jerry Lewis-like gyrations. Hamlet seemed to provide the majority of the black humour and conflict between characters in the play. Hamlet's love Ophelia played by Roxanne Robinson was disturbing, not because of bad acting, but because her bouts with sanity were too convincing.

The highlight of the evening other than the climax, was the ultra-interesting three person soliloquy performed by Robinson, LePage and Nielson. The silhouette of light and shadows captured a mood that was framed by poignant actions and non-actions.

The comedy relief was provided by Mike Drost as Father Ben and Paul McDonald as Polonius. Father Ben is a cumbrously drunk parson who doles out slurred advice to the masses without thought and recompense to actions. Drost did an adequate job establishing a humorous tone to Ben's nonsensical wit. McDonald's contribution and redeeming quality was if everything is going bad, "throw a war."

It is hard not to mention the sexual overtones of this Freudian piece and the Jungian use of "awful language." However I didn't find this play offensive and it would probably be rated nowadays at PG-13. We're all adults. I did find that sometimes the actor or actress was hesitant to use expletives, but generally they said their curses just like a big old trucker with five miles of gravy on their globular belly.

The play was well directed by Ed Mullaly and you could see the hard work that went into putting it on. I was well entertained and look forward to future English department works.

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