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HAMILTON MUSIC NOTES

By Ric Taylor

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savouring it.

"Wendy and I put on a performance that is not just the sound but incorporates a strong visual aspect," Lester offers on what to expect at his return to the Hamilton stage. "Playing our instruments includes using a knife, string, a pop can and a nail file. In one piece I play the guitar with one hand. The music is at times experimental, pop rock, and moody film score. Our album should be out next year. Our performance is very entertaining in a live setting, so I hope it opens up an audience for us. We have unusual fun with simply bass and guitar."

Lester and Atkinson play this Thursday, September 15, at The Corktown

As Hamilton prides itself on being Canada's Steel City, so too do our American counterparts in Pittsburgh maintain their own claim to the title in that country. But is there a connection between the sister cities?

This weekend, one of Pittsburgh's finest hopes to bridge the two towns' penchants for hard, loud and gritty rock and roll may answer that question.

"We've played a lot around the northeastern United States and the Midwest, but this is our first venture into Canada," says Pam Simmons of The Motorpsychos.

"Ironically, Pittsburgh is the American Steel Town. We've got a lot of great bands in Pittsburgh. As far as famous Pittsburgh music goes, though, we're down to Rusted Root, the Jaggerz, and Perry Como."

Featuring Simmons (guitar, vocals), Amy Bianco (bass, vocals), Abby Krizner (guitar, vocals), and Dennis Brown (drums), The Motorpsychos are completely unlike Perry Como. More likely to opt for Lycra and latex than a cardigan or caftan, the three three frontwomen offer a wealth of vocals, riffs, talent and relentless rocking on their recently released sophomore CD, Pistol Whipped. So infectious is their rock and roll raucous that they easily defeated 107 other bands in a recent battle of the bands. And like many a Hamiltonian, these Pittsburghians are concerned about driving metal—the music, that is—laced with a punk attitude.

"We're allergic to cookie cutter rock because there are so many bands around today, you really have to set yourself apart to be memorable," reasons Simmons.

"There are a lot of metal influences working behind the scenes in the Motorpsychos. Punk is also a prominent influence. To cite bands who have left their mark on our writing, I'd have to say Slayer, The Misfits, and L7, to name a few. We all write together, so every influence and idea gets thrown into our creative crock-pot and

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Motor-psychos songs come out.

"If we hit obstacles, they were early on, when we attempted to break the glass ceiling of the local rock scene. Typically, the gender situation works to our advantage, as far as getting our foot in the door, but when we deliver the goods, we hear that we're good, more often than we hear that we're good for a girl band. "We set ourselves apart," Simmons laughs on their recent contest winning. "We aim to score tens in every category—songs, performance, delivery, timing, visuals, promotion, et cetera. Our live show is loud, hard, fast and fun. It's a really fun rock show, and besides that, we're nice people."

The Steel Cities collide when The Motorpsychos play The Corktown this Friday, September 16.

At the turn of the century, Vile Richard and Rice were two fledgling bands trying to make their mark. Releasing CDs and adding songs to area comps on Hot Tub Records, the two bands ended up amalgamating their resources to form one unit.

Over time the band changed from a Hamilton/Burlington unit to a Toronto/Kingston outfit, and underwent a number of member changes. Now, the core duo of Olaf Alders (vocals, guitar, harmonica, glockenspiel) and Andrew Van Horne (vocals, guitar, harmonica, glockenspiel, bass), return to their old stomping grounds with their new CD, *How to Find and Fascinate a Mistress*.

"Andrew was working as a prison guard at Millhaven Maximum in Kingston, so he was able to be flexible enough to come down and work on an album, but that didn't leave a lot of time for playing," offers Alders on the band's time out of the spotlight. "It was a choice between playing and recording, so we opted out of playing. Some songs on HTFAFAM will be recognizable to older fans as they get a new life with the new CD. Rice's "Transfalmagoria And The Hockey Song," a ditty penned specifically for a contest they opted out of, was going to capitalize on the nation's pastime last year—until the strike ended this past season, that is.

The new songs continue in VR's tradition of intellectually driven, quirky folk songs that can be simultaneously cute and bittersweet, fraught with literary allusion and sung with sentimentality.

Vile Richard has had its share of guest membership, including the likes of Mike Trebilcock (Killjoys) and Ashton Price (Kazzer), but Alders and Van Horne (with bassist Chris St. Pierre and drummer Franz Nangle for this outing) are unwavering in their resolve to simply create their music.

"The line-up changes all the time—it always has," laughs Alders. "I'm not sure why that is. I once tried to make a list, and I think I got to something like 20 names before I stopped. Basically, if you're in this band it's because you can play.

"Still, the music is still stuck somewhere between folk and rock, but it feels like we're saying goodbye to rock. I got the guys in the band to listen to some Gram Parsons and a lot of Jayhawks while we were recording this, and I think that filtered into the album.

"It's sometimes hard to look forward when you have songs that you really like that you haven't put to bed," muses the singer on the new disc and the future. "Now

that we've finally done some of these songs justice, we're looking to do something else. We'll probably start demos on the new album soon after we get home from the tour. At this point, I really don't care if people listen to it and hate it. I really just want to be able to do my own thing and give it the treatment I think it should have." Vile Richard celebrates their new CD this Wednesday, September 21, at The Corktown.



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