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Oct 24 2011

Voodoo Fest Preview

By: **Where Y'at**



Friday, Oct. 28

The Wombats

Friday, October 28 - 2:15 p.m.

Le Carnival: Bingo! Parlor

The Liverpool, England band, The Wombats, is undoubtedly one of the most hardworking bands currently touring. Before their first single “Kill The Director” was released in 2007, the band played 50 shows in about 50 days. Then, the group went out on tour for 18 months, which nearly broke the band physically and mentally. Just like you can’t keep a good man down, you also can’t keep a good band off of the road. After some time off, the band started touring again, playing smash singles like “Backfire at the Disco” and “Let’s Dance to Joy Division” to adoring audiences. The Wombats include singer Matthew Murphy, guitarist Tord Overland-Knudsen and drummer Dan Haggis. The Wombats nearly lost two members in two separate accidents. Murphy almost lost control and flipped his car on an icy roadway, and Haggis crashed going too fast on a dune buggy. These near-death experiences resulted in some pretty depressing lyrics from Murphy, which caused a bit of concern at the band’s record label. The lyrics took grunge to a whole new level – more angry and heavy. The rest of the music that the band was coming out with became a combination of pop, alternative and disco. Songs like “Fog” and “Tokyo (Vampires and Wolves)” are catchy, fun and purely The Wombats. The new album *This Modern Glitch*, the first since the debut *The Wombats EP*, was released this year just in time for the Voodoo Experience. Between the two albums the band released a couple of singles, including the off-kilter Christmas song “Is This Christmas” and the catchy “My Circuitboard City”. Check out this high-energy band, and get your dance on.—
Misty Faucheux

Peelander-Z

Friday, October 28 - 3:45 p.m.

Le Carnival: Bingo! Parlor

Peelander-Z’s Peelander-Z is not a band. They are not Japanese, or American, or even human. They do eat smiles, jump and hang upside-down from stage setups and scenery, play irresistibly catchy and silly pop punk, love getting the crowd onstage with them, and finish out performances even after breaking bones and teeth mid-set. Hailing from sector Z of the Planet Peelander and based on Earth in New York City, Peelander-Z has been collecting enough smiles at venue and festival performances around the world to sustain their planet for more than a decade. And with their recent greatest hits album, *Super DX Hits* (August 2011), and their upcoming untitled full-length due out next spring, it seems the Planet Peelander will continue to survive thanks to their Japanese action comic punk superheroes.

Because they live off smiles and thrive on crowd participation, Peelander-Z has established a special relationship with New Orleans, and is excitedly making their Voodoo Music Experience debut this year. Guitarist and vocalist Peelander Yellow—there’s also Peelander Red, Peelandeer Green, Peelander Black and Peelander Pink, and known for the color of their P-skins, not costumes—had this to say.

Where Y’at: What brought you here to Planet Earth?

Peelander Yellow: We came here to eat your smiles. Our planet Peelander needs more smiles to eat, so we came to Earth to make you smile, capture your smiles and send them back to Peelander. We come back every three weeks.

WYAT: So is there a Peelander language that you sing in? Or do you use a mixture of English, Japanese or something in between?

PY: Yeah yeah, almost like English, but sometimes I scream Japanese because we love Japanese food. And sometimes in a Peelander language, like this: Whinchaw whinchaw-whinchaw! Whinchooo Whinchaw-whinchawwhinchaw! That is Peelander language.

WYAT: How did y’all come to play this genre—is it common in Peelander or inspired by your experiences on

Earth?

PY: Ooohh yeah we cannot play music very well. We just play three chords —E, D and A—but always very very happy. Hit the three chord, hit the two chord, hit the one chord. But we really wanna do the whole stage where we're jumping rope, rainbow dance, human bowling—have you seen our show before? You need to come to our show, don't be hesitating. Come on stage, we wanna make a party, a kindergarten party—to play like in preschool, and then dance with me, scream with me, smile with me.

WYAT: What are your memories like from New Orleans?

PY: We love New Orleans, we have like a family here. We used to play at Dixie Tavern all the time, but they closed after Katrina and we were very sad. So we played at One Eyed Jacks last time [in April]. People in New Orleans are crazy. We are crazy. But people in New Orleans are even more crazy. They love to dance and scream and come on stage with us, and that makes us very happy.

WYAT: Anything special planned for Voodoo?

PY: We really really really really wanted to play Voodoo Fest for a long time, and finally got a spot—we are so so so so happy. So maybe we want to make Voodoo Dolls, big voodoo dolls, and we'll dance with them.

WYAT: What characters can we expect? I've heard about the squid, the tiger, a banana, human bowling pins...

PY: Yeah yeah, I think big squid come there, human bowling, and why don't you bring your costume? It's Halloween-time. Bring your costume, come up on stage and take a picture with us. And we love etoufee. Crawfish Etoufee. Favorite food in New Orleans. Etoufee. Yeah yeah we love it, we love it.

WYAT: Any other favorites?

PY: Jambalaya! Gumbo! Gumbo! Everything. Everything New Orleans.

WYAT: That's great—so you can get food and smiles while you're here. It's perfect.

PY: Yeah yeah yeah yeah, we will make you smile, and you bring all the food for us.

WYAT: Will you be able to stay and visit New Orleans for longer than just Voodoo?

PY: Yeah, we want to make it two days because me, Peelanders Yellow, and Peelanders Red love fishing. We play at the park and then we go fishing, we love bass fishing. So we wanna do the fishing and then we want to see the alligators.

WYAT: Any last words for why people should come see y'all at Voodoo Fest?

PY: Actually, we are not a band. We are like a theater, like a happy preschool. Walk to preschool with us, join us, play with us, dance with us, scream with us—don't be shy. Just come out!

WYAT: And any preferences for costumes out in the audience?

PY: Anything! Because we want you to wear the costume and we want to have you on stage dancing with us—Peelanders Silver, Peelanders Orange, Peelanders Purple, Peelanders Rabbit, Peelanders Spiderman, anything! So pick your costume and come on stage and take a picture and scream with us. Peelanders Etoufee!—Carolyn Heneghan

Mates of State

Friday, October 28 - 4:15 p.m.

Le Ritual: Voodoo

Indie pop duo Mates of State have been making sweet music together since 1997. Originally formed in Lawrence, Kansas, the husband-wife band lived in San Francisco for a spell before settling in Connecticut, where they now live with their children and still craft sweet, harmonious music. Their latest release, Mountaintops, offers an aural ascension of eerie synth mixed with effortless vocals. We sat down with Kori Gardner, one half of Mates of State, to discuss what the band's been up to since playing Voodoo Fest in 2009 and just how kid-friendly their music is.

WYAT: Welcome back! I know it's been a few years since Mates of State played Voodoo Fest. What are your thoughts going into this year's fest?

MOS: We played it in 2009 and know what to expect now. It's a little marshy so we'll be bringing our rain boots but Voodoo Fest is one of those festivals where everyone's in good spirits and there's a great vibe. The whole festival seems more like a party. The only trouble we had was trying to trick-or-treat during the festival, because we played on Halloween last time. We wanted to go through some of the neighborhoods but didn't know the area well enough.

WYAT: With your latest record, Mountaintops, you included some awesome pre-order packages, including taking karate lessons with the band and playing a house party. How'd you come up with them?

MOS: I almost can't believe people have bought them! The ones that get me excited are playing someone's random party. We came up with a bunch of different ideas but this was our management's idea. They pretty much said, "Wouldn't it be fun if you had your favorite band playing at one of your parties?" One of our pre-order packages is teaching someone to play one of our songs, then playing in their backyard and having them do a song during the set.

WYAT: I understand you tried to play Escape to New York right before Hurricane Irene hit. What happened?

MOS: We made it up to Escape to New York fest but it was totally cancelled. This is the first cancelled fest we'd ever played. We ended up walking around the grounds until someone finally told us that all of these Indian grounds were getting ruined by storms. I feel like New Orleans is really on top of that and Voodoo Fest is one of those festivals that will never stop. I mean, we play pretty much on marshes.

WYAT: How was it working on the video to "Palomino," the first single off Mountaintops?

MOS: We finished our work with "Palomino" pretty fast; all we had to do was put on outfits and pretend we were climbing mountains but we've got a guy animating it who's been working 18 hours a day for three months. It's a lot of work, working insane hours but him and his two artists have a vision for this and have been tinting every frame so that it looks great. Jason and I have had a chance to look at it and it looks amazing.

WYAT: Mates of State was recently on the kids show Yo Gabba Gabba. What was it like being a part of that? Do you ever think you'd make the jump to releasing kids' albums?

MOS: Having kids hasn't really affected our music. I mean, it's not like we'd put out a kids' album. When we first started having kids, I realized that I don't want to make children's records. It still works though, because most kids like our music. Our new fans are younger and we'll get people who come up to us and say, "I haven't seen you guys in ten years and now I've got kids of my own!" Playing Yo Gabba Gabba was huge; it's very respected in the art community. I know a lot of huge artists call them [Yo Gabba Gabba] and are turned down because it doesn't fit the formatting of the show. They're very selective.

WYAT: Who are you looking forward to seeing most at Voodoo Fest?

MOS: I'm really looking forward to Soundgarden because that's a reminder of my college years. I wasn't a huge fan but it definitely dates me. Hearing the lineup for Voodoo Fest makes me feel like we're on the same record cycle as most of these bands, since we've played alongside them before. Voodoo Fest is a great fest to wander around. You don't have to have an agenda and if you play early enough you can really happen upon a lot of awesome bands, maybe some you've only heard of and were slightly interested in.

WYAT: What will you be doing for Halloween? Got any costume ideas?

MOS: Halloween-time in New Orleans is fun. The last time we were there, we were riding on one of the festival golf carts and I looked over and there were three zombies holding onto the golf cart riding with us, all wearing rollerskates. I know last year for Halloween we tried to put together a Captain and Tennile costume but this year our theme is Orphan Annie. My youngest daughter wants to be Annie so I was thinking that I could be an older version and my husband [Jason Hammel] could be Daddy Warbucks but I don't think he's down with that idea just yet.

—April Seise

Fitz and the Tantrums

Friday, October 28 - 5:15 p.m.

Le Carnival: Bingo! Parlor

The Los Angeles-based Fitz and the Tantrums have only released one album but the neo-soul darlings work like they've amassed a catalogue of thousands. Coming off the success of their debut, *Pickin' Up The Pieces*, last year saw Fitz and the Tantrums play Voodoo Fest for the first time. Their performance was such a success that they were brought back for their second year in a row playing the festival. We sat down with Fitz himself, Michael Fitzpatrick, to discuss just how much has happened in a year and what fans can expect from the band as they take the stage at the end of October.

WYAT: Welcome back to Voodoo Fest! I can't believe it's only been a year. What has Fitz and the Tantrums been up to?

FTT: We've been so incredibly busy. Just trying to hold onto that rocket ship; we've been touring everywhere and have recently been to Australia, Chicago, Denver, Vermont, Belgium... all in about a month. It's great that

we can come back and play Voodoo Fest because we really enjoyed it last year. Last year we played early in the day and had a bit of a crowd but still got people dancing. This year we'll be playing at night and we're really looking forward to it.

WYAT: You've recently been hitting the talk show circuit as well. How's that been?

FTT: It's great. We've been on a bunch of shows. We're playing Leno again, for the second time to promote our second single from the album [Pickin' Up The Pieces], "Don't Gotta Work It Out". Leno and his staff really loved us last time and it's such a big deal to be playing the show a second time. We really feel honored.

WYAT: What are you looking forward to most in coming back to New Orleans?

FTT: Besides the beignets? Oh, so much, but definitely the beignets. New Orleans is a special place for us; our drummer's from New Orleans and our label manager, his wife is from New Orleans. I remember last time she took us to a really nice restaurant not too far from downtown. It was great.

WYAT: What can fans expect in this year's performance at Voodoo Fest?

FTT: Lately we've been trying out our two new songs; really just road-testing them and we do a new cover too. The guys in the band are such amazing musicians, each night we just let our creativity flow. Because of that we never play the same set twice. The new songs that were written on the road are "Wake Up" and "6am" and we do a great cover of the Raconteurs' "Steady, As She Goes". We're very excited to have the Raconteurs be at Voodoo Fest and we really hope they check us out and like it.

WYAT: Speaking of artists playing at Voodoo Fest, are there any you'd really like to collaborate with?

FTT: I don't know the full line-up but as for collaborations, The Meters, of course and I definitely wouldn't say no to Snoop Dogg. I've hung out with Mark Hoppus (of Blink-182) and we've been on his TV show a few times, so that would be fun. And if Girl Talk wants to do a mash-up of one of our songs, we'd definitely be in the front row cheering them on.

WYAT: I know you only recently embarked on your fall tour. Can you tell me a bit more about that?

FTT: Of course! Our fall tour has us going back to areas that have really shown us some love and heading to some new places too. Places like Philly, New York, Boston, Columbus have been great to us and we're working on touring in more of the South. We'll be playing Florida for the first time. We've never been there and we're playing three shows. This is the big tour though. It's really exciting to be playing these 3,000 seaters and 2,500 seaters. With all the hard work we've put in, it's really rewarding to be going to the cities we've played that've been so good to us and filling up venues of that size.

WYAT: What comes after the fall tour? A new Fitz and the Tantrums album?

FTT: Well, we've already started on some recording and have been throwing around ideas, trying to be as creative as we can on the road. We definitely have a lot of ideas and the workings of a new record. We'll be touring right on through the wintertime and December. Hopefully in January we can just lock ourselves in a room and hibernate for a few months and by the time we're done, have a record to release in the summer.

My Chemical Romance

Friday, October 28 - 7:15 p.m.

Le Ritual:Voodoo

My Chemical Romance is a band that is meant to be experienced live. It's for this reason the New Jersey-rockers past two break out albums were each followed by live discs of their respective tours. These albums not only captured the zeitgeist of their show, but offered deconstructed song performances, smudging off the polished production of their singles to reveal the black heart at MCR's core—raw, visceral, unadulterated punk rock. My Chemical Romance broke into the mainstream in 2004 (they also performed during the Voodoo Music Experience that year) following the success of their sophomore effort Three Cheers For Sweet Revenge. The album spawning rock radio hits such as "Helena," "I'm Not OK (I Promise)," and "Thank You for the Venom," as well as a legion of like-sounding bands.

My Chemical Romance continued their successful climb with 2006's rock opera The Black Parade. Regarded a concept album, the record recounts the death of a terminal cancer patient who is greeted at death's door by The Black Parade. The band renewed their musical repertoire for this grandiose effort, sweetening their familiar emo/punk hooks with flavors of '70s glam, classic rock and even blues. The album's throwback sounds are most apparent in their Queen-esque lead single, "Welcome to the Black Parade," as well as "Teenagers," "Dead!" and "Mama."

On their latest album, Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Kill Joys, MCR have left the black parade

in favor of blinding pastels and '70s glam. Another narrative album (not surprisingly, frontman Gerard Way is also a comic author), *Danger Days* recounts the lives of a group of bandits known as the Fabulous Killjoys in a post-apocalyptic California during 2019 as they attempt to take down an evil entity known as The Corporation. The album ditches the doom and gloom of previous efforts for a heavily sugar-coated synth-punk sound. The second single, "Sing," was even poppy enough to be covered on an episode of "Glee." MCR haven't gone totally soft though—the same song also erupted the ire of fiery right-wing flamethrower Glen Beck, who decried it as "propaganda."

Catch my Chemical Romance Saturday, October 29 at 7:15 p.m. at the Le Ritual: Voodoo Stage—Greg Roques

Saturday, Oct. 29

Soul Rebels Brass Band

Saturday, October 29 - 1:45 p.m.

Le Flambeau: WWOZ

"What we usually have to tweak when we go away is to start with classic New Orleans music, and then we'll end up where we wanna be: at a purely Soul Rebels-type show," says Soul Rebels snare drummer and co-founder Lumar Leblanc. He's joined me on a bench along the outer wall of Le Bon Temps just before their boisterous Thursday night weekly dance party. He continues, "Whereas here, like you'll see tonight, we'll come out the gate with strictly Rebel music."

And out the gate they surged with every register of horns and percussion at full-blast, much to the enjoyment of the packed back room of one of Uptown's prized live music hot spots. All ages and races were represented in the bouncing, bustling crowd in front of them, a majority of whom were in their 20s and 30s with plastic cups in hand, only half-full to prevent spilling while dancing.

The members of the Soul Rebels themselves are in the upper tier of this age group, but nights like these had been made possible more than two decades before, when the Rebels were still in high school. Graduates of St. Augustine and other prominent marching band high schools, they cite their band directors and section leaders as major early influences.

"You wouldn't believe how serious it was," says Leblanc. "You can see it in the college marching bands—that's the type of precision and effort that was incorporated into it. So the seed was already planted young." They were also taken under the wings of the Olympia Brass Band—actually first performing as the "Young Olympia Brass Band"—and such local legends as Harold Dejean, Milton Batiste, Tuba Fats and Doc Watson. "They helped us to perfect our sound."

But another seed planted in those formative years, "in the days of Public Enemy"—was a love for hip-hop, its beats, its movement and its poetry.

"We were reared in the rap era, so that music was a part of us also," says Leblanc. "We basically incorporated that within our [marching band] music—not to make it something separate, but as an accompaniment."

After years of perfecting their fresh, youthful take on brass band music, the Soul Rebels had their "big break" performance at Tipitina's, opening for the Neville Brothers. But in 1991, as young, eager players, this opportunity to perform seemed like any other before it—except to the evening's headlining percussionist/vocalist, Cyril Neville.

"We really looked at it as business—it's another gig, we're gonna play our hearts out, and that's it," says Leblanc. "But Cyril knew. He was a veteran. He told us, 'Y'all doin' somethin'."

And so began the Soul Rebels' legacy. But after a decade of acclaimed performance, their debut album, *Rebellion* (2005), was received with mixed reviews—the most common complaint: "overproduced." This criticism points out a common problem for brass bands and other ensembles revered for their authenticity and musical spontaneity: how exactly does one capture the true energy and vitality of a live brass band on a studio recording?

“You have to focus more on playing in tune with the other horns and play correctly with the play clock,” says Leblanc. “When we’re playing live, it’s more of a free-flowing exchange between yourself and myself. It actually probably takes more thought on the live circuit cause people wanna see your soul and what’s inside of you when you’re performing. But on the road, people really want the best-sounding piece.”

But, as we all know, “the best-sounding piece” can be a fairly subjective and even controversial subject—critics versus music aficionados versus musicians versus consumers. This all-out civil war over music review and production has often resulted in a very formulaic, least-common-denominator approach to studio albums.

“It’s really now been broken down to a science, fortunately or unfortunately,” says Leblanc. “Records all have a certain time frame, bpm, all different things. And all of this industry, from Lady Gaga to Jay-Z to Black Eyed Peas, they all kinda have to fall in this structure because in the commercial world, that’s what people call for.” And such is the hotly debated “criminality” of the commercialization of art. Some feel that art loses some of its originality, truth or uniqueness when a genre, group or song becomes popular on the “main” stage—a concept better known as “selling out.” However, when that art is something as wholly representative and respectful of New Orleans as brass band music, would its commercialization and mass distribution really be all that bad?

“We’ve always wanted to bring brass band music more financially and commercially to that level,” says Leblanc. “But we don’t wanna cheapen what brass band music is. Our mentality is that we’re always gonna be considered organic and rootsy because of our instrumentation. We’re still always gonna be people physically blowing our horns, beating the drums.”

Assuming the roles of international cultural ambassadors for New Orleans and brass band music, the Soul Rebels have proven that this genre deserves to be respected and supported internationally as much as any other genre or art form. And as any good international cultural ambassadors would, they even go to lengths adjusting the content and order of their set lists to ease fresh faces and curious ears from the assumed, familiar New Orleans tunes into the sweaty intensity of Thursday nights at Le Bon Temps.

“At home they accept you as far as what Soul Rebels are about, so they know at any time we can pull a rabbit out the hat,” says Leblanc. “But when you go on tour, they build you up as a New Orleans act, so they expect you to play all they know of New Orleans music: Fats Domino, Neville Brothers, Allen Toussaint, Rebirth, Dirty Dozen—the regular repertoire.”

He continues, “The magical part is when you go to a place where they never experienced you before and a person will come up to you and say, ‘Man, when I heard it was a brass band, I didn’t know what to expect—I didn’t know it would sound that full and entertaining without amps, guitars and DJs.’ And that’s when it kinda touches you, and you see it can be done. You love that reaction on someone’s face who’s never heard you before—it’s a powerful thing.”

From San Francisco to the 2008 Democratic Convention in Denver, from Germany to the UK, the crowd and sense of place still most special to the Soul Rebels is right back home in the Crescent City. Here they’re able to recharge, spend time with their families, catch up on sports, practice new material and “get their food in.”

“We learned that at a young age, this business can burn you out—you go out all night, eat Popeyes every day, drink free liquor, but you gotta watch it,” says Leblanc. “Soul Rebels, we try to not eat a lot of greasy foods, try to eat a lot of veggies, always have plenty of water at the gigs. And when we come home, we rest.”

It is this complete, multi-faceted approach and dedication to their music that has kept this group together and regularly performing for two decades. After spending the summer touring all over the U.S. and the UK, they’re gearing up for their performance at this year’s Voodoo Music Experience back home in New Orleans—where, like their packed shows at Le Bon Temps, you can expect the hottest and the best strictly Rebel music.

—Carolyn Heneghan

Social Distortion

An Interview with Frontman Mike Ness

Saturday October 29 - 5:45 p.m.

Le Ritual: Voodoo

Where Y'at: Through the years, tough and tougher times, you've persevered, and your fans love you for it.

What do your tattoos mean to you? How have they evolved through the years?

Mike Ness: I think the tattooing thing has honestly changed. I mean, it's gotten very very popular, and, you know, sometimes when cool things become popular they tend to become uncool. I try not to pay attention to the trends and what's going on. I mean, I started doing this when I was 17. I had kind of a vision, and I'm just kind of still working on it. It takes a lot of time and thought. Although it is, you know, kind of public and visible to the public it is also deeply personal and how I express myself.

WYAT: New Orleans is becoming a Halloween mecca. What do you most look forward to coming down to the Big Easy for Halloween and Voodoo Fest? Do you believe in voodoo, witchcraft, vampires?

Ness: I come from the old school of vampires when all they sucked back then was blood.

I definitely believe in spiritual practices of many kinds, the supernatural. I believe in the power of the mind. I have an open mind to all of that stuff.

WYAT: Do you have any special rituals that you perform before going onstage?

Ness: No, but my whole day is kind of a ritual, you know. From the moment I wake up the whole day is spent preparing for the night ahead. So, whether it's exercise or how I'm eating, or just what I do to get some peace of mind. It's all preparation for the show. It's all a ritual...nothing crazy. Sometimes it involves going to junk stores and looking for some sort of treasure to buy, or finding a vegetarian restaurant, which, in my past experience, has been very hard to find in New Orleans. Anywhere I am I have to try and avoid that at all costs.

WYAT: My cousin Jamey met you after a show years ago, maybe 1990. You told him that you couldn't wait to hit this "big ass yard sale" in South Carolina the next day. Do you still take in any yard sales? Any interesting finds to add to your collection?

Ness: I do, but where I live now, garage sales and yard sales are just kind of...it used to be old people, old neighborhoods, stuff that used to be in their home for 50 years. Now, sometimes, it's like people selling their IKEA, or baby clothes, and you know. It's kind of become a thing of the past. I mean, I'll still stop to look... but I have been such a collector for so long know I have color and shape identification that I can see from far away whether it is worth even stopping. I spent years going to flea markets, antique stores and yard sales. I also collect jewelry, you know, vintage watches, old estate jewelry, diamonds and stuff and I do remember finding some good stuff in New Orleans.

WYAT: Over the past 30 years, the music industry has evolved. What are some of your feelings towards music downloads?

Ness: Well, I mean I appreciate the convenience of being able to Google something, being able to go to iTunes and look for something and not have to get in the car and drive to a record store. However, one of my favorite record stores is in New Orleans right across the street from the House of Blues. Every time I'm in town I go there and I buy something because it's a specialty store and I appreciate it. I personally buy all of my music. I buy it. I want to support the artists. I have a couple of gold records hanging on my wall but to sell 500,000 units now seems to be a very hard thing and that's very frustrating, for this last album in particular. I spent a lot of money to record this album old school analog. We used tape. We did this record as old school as possible so that sonically it would stand out from your typical digital approach to recording. It's a little disappointing. You know, people don't really buy CDs anymore. It's like...really. Well, it just makes you wonder if you should even make them anymore.

You put your heart and soul into something for half of a year and make the best record you could make. You want people to buy it and enjoy it, you know, and it's ten bucks. I mean, it's not like you're asking an arm and a leg. That's three coffees at Starbucks.

WYAT Charlet: Are you still skateboarding?

Ness: No. No. As a matter of fact, when I had my accident five or six years ago I hadn't skateboarded for 30 years. It was one time, and that was the only time. I did surf once in a while but I get my exercise other ways now. You don't heal like you used to.

WYAT: How is your arm? Is it still hurting?

Ness: It's great. I had an excellent surgeon. It healed perfectly. It couldn't be better.

WYAT: Would you like to share your reflections and memories on the infamous Black Hole?

Ness: Oh, geez. I don't know, other than it being my first apartment as an adult, I guess. I don't know. I mean, it was a lot of fun but it was also very dark and a very dark part of my life. I am lucky to have actually survived it. It was a great place to network and nurture a very small punk rock scene back in the day."

WYAT: What do you see as the best source of social media for getting your message and music to fans?

Ness: Well, that's hard to say because I am not a real media guy. I mean, you're talking to a guy who still listens to an old tube stereo with big speakers and a turntable and a CD player. I don't go to the computer every day. In fact, sometimes months go by and I haven't even looked at a computer. But I do know that there are great forums. YouTube of course...

We just did the Guitar Center sessions recently that is being aired right now. They basically have bigger bands play a small stage at a Guitar Center in Hollywood and then its shown on some sort of network TV. Little things like that really help. We like to find things that we think are cool but also that get good exposure.

WYAT: What inspiring words would you like to give to other musicians who look up to, especially with this retro feel that you are going for these days?

Ness: The biggest advice I could have to give

to any young musician is just that if you truly love this and have the passion for it, you will not give up on this often discouraging world. But your passion for it and your love for it will overpower any negative, and, you know, it's that not giving up that I really attribute to raw perseverance and not wiling to give up, ever.

Would you like to offer a personal welcome to the Voodoo Fest show for your fans?

Ness: Yes, well, we are thrilled to play it again. We played it before and it's one of my favorite places to play. I hope they are looking forward to it as much as we are.

—Dionne Charlet

Kreayshawn

Saturday, October 29 - 7:20 p.m.

Le Plur: Red Bulletin

In this age of daily Internet sensations, Kreayshawn is one of this year's buzzworthy artists who has elevated her dream and career from the online world to reality. Sporting candy-coated gangsta rap out of the Oakland bay area, Natassia "Kreayshawn" Zolot—pronounced like "creation"—is another YouTube success story, complete with fresh, young talent, recognition from the right people, controversy and a Fred Flintstone sweatshirt.

A third generation Russian-American with a surf punk-rocking mother who toured throughout her childhood, Kreayshawn's proclivity to music and the arts seems only natural, and is a driving facet of her work, hobbies and personality. She embodies the modern, creative Jill of all trades—she is a rapper, DJ, editor, photographer, film director, pixel artist and former student at UC Berkeley now signed to Columbia Records. With a point-and-shoot digital camera, Kreayshawn made music videos with her friends for some of her favorite songs, including one for DJ/producer Diplo, who chose one of her videos for his Mad Decent fan video blog. She calls this moment her final push to take her work—and her own music—to the next level.

Her video for "Bumpin Bumpin" first generated internet buzz in summer 2010, along with her first mixtape, Kittys x Choppas (2010). But it was this past May with the video for her designer label-trashing hit "Gucci Gucci" that boosted Kreayshawn out of film school and the YouTube world and into Columbia Records, concert and festival tours and more widespread press. Some of this press has been more controversial, regarding what critics call "an exploitation of black culture," which cites the use of the hot button "n-word" by V-Nasty, one of her two "sisters" in their rap group, White Girl Mob—though not by Kreayshawn herself. In the Oakland bay area, an environment that often blurs stereotypical racial lines, this kind of cultural appropriation is common and natural, Kreayshawn says in defense of V-Nasty's contentious language style.

Drawing inspiration from the 1990s, Hype Williams and Missy Elliott style of hip hop and large-scale music video production, Kreayshawn seeks to bring the film directing aspect back into hip-hop music videos. And, like Missy, she is a strong, unabashed female voice rising in the all-too-often misogynistic realm of hip-hop. Currently touring the country and working on her upcoming album, Kreayshawn makes her New Orleans debut

this year at Voodoo Music Experience, where fans can expect a lot of dancing, a lot of pink and eclectic fashions and enough no holds barred swagger to charm the Louis Vuitton sweatpants off curious passersby.

—Carolyn Heneghan

Girl Talk

Saturday, October 29 – 8:15 p.m.

Le Plur: Red Bulletin

A Girl Talk show is not completed with instrument and untouchable rock stars. Rather, the stage is a dance party with bodies ripped straight out of the crowd. The fans are the show, and you never know what's going to happen. "The table has been tossed over. I've had a couple laptops smashed. I've had people throw up on the table. I've had every fluid on me or that laptop," Greg Gillis, the one man operation known as Girl Talk, said.

The music that causes this frenzy of intensity has a bit of a deconstructionist twist. Gillis rips samples straight from top 40 hits, or classic rock songs, and then recombines them at a live performance in what is called a mash up.

"I grew up with hip-hop, so I knew sampling as an instrument was something I was a fan of, but I also got into some of the experimental music bands. "I've seen a lot of people perform with laptops, so when I finally got a laptop when I was 18, I knew I wanted to do something like that, but instead of using obscure sources, I used pop radio."

But Girl Talk is not a DJ.

"I wanted to make music that was transformative or new music, I never intended as it being a DJ," Gillis explained. "I don't want to be in a DJ booth."

Nor is Girl Talk a band.

Rather, Girl Talk is a project that "should exist at a concert along with bands," Gillis explained. "I did that and stuck to it and was able to build the show, and now I have something that is a traveling spectacle."

Familiar music presented in an unfamiliar way is only one element that makes Girl Talk so popular. The key ingredient is found in the simplicity of encouraging people to have a good time. Although this may seem like a small task, it's one that's presented a daunting challenge over the years.

"I think in 2006 is when I started getting a lot of press," Gillis recalled. "That's when the show was known for being minimal and it was me with a laptop. There were no rules and people could jump up and do that and that was all good until we hit a point in 2008."

In the initial phase the relaxed atmosphere enhanced the party. As Girl Talk gained massive popularity, the show began getting out of control.

"It just hit that point with a tour in 2008 where it got too big," Gillis explained. "Just looking at the photos and video in retrospect, it was crazy. It was insane.

"A lot of the shows were ending prematurely, things were getting broken or kids were being smashed trying to get on stage for an hour," he continued. "It was losing the essence of the thing.

"Back when they were smaller shows it was all good. You know, I love the chaos but I don't like when it creates an environment that ruins the show for half the people.

"I think that was the breaking point where I said, 'let's do something different and that's when we started upping the production,'" he said. "It was fun while it lasted but the show had to move on."

A Girl Talk show has evolved from a man with a laptop, to a full scale high production, fully equipped with all the bells and whistles. Everything from an LED wall, custom lighting rig, physical props like confetti and balloons, and even a toilet paper launcher can now be seen along with the Girl Talk beats.

Gillis says he's looking forward to bringing the heightened production value for his first performance at the Voodoo Experience.

"I love New Orleans, and Halloween is my favorite holiday, so I thought that was a really cool combo. Plus, it's one of the bigger festivals I've never been a part of. I'm looking forward to it," Gillis said when asked about his upcoming gig at Voodoo.

At the Voodoo show a crucial element that launched Girl Talk will still be a critical component, too.

"We still allow people on stage, but it's just a lot more organized," Gillis explained. "It's not just a free-for-all. We have to have a barricade, but I never want the people on stage to be VIP. I still want them to be random people."

The big difference, however, is that with the organization and restriction of the number of people on stage comes a better time for all involved.

"Now the amount of people on stage relates to what it was like back in the smaller days," he said. "There's no fight or battle to get on stage. It's more like what it was five years ago rather than two years ago."

—Kaiya Morrison

Blink-182

Saturday, October 29 – 9:00 p.m.

Le Ritual: Voodoo

In 2005, the California punksters of Blink 182, responsible for hits like "What's My Age Again," "The Rock Show" and "Dammit (Growing Up)," went on an indefinite hiatus when Tom DeLonge left the band to form a side project called Angels & Airwaves while Travis Barker and Mark Hoppus formed +44. The break was not the highest point of their friendship or musical career that started in 1992 when they were still in high school.

DeLonge would eventually have a change of heart after a plane crash left Barker and his friend DJ AM as the only survivors. Following the reconciliation and for the fans delight, the trio announced they would be getting back together for a reunion tour and to release their sixth album, *Neighborhoods* (out September 26). Hoppus has recently assured that Blink is their priority and that they're in it for the long haul.

Considered by many the godfathers of the punk-pop generation that includes some Voodoo Experience regulars like Chemical Romance, Good Charlotte and Fall Out Boy, Blink will make their Voodoo debut as they headline the festival's Saturday lineup.

From the word on the streets, New Orleans should expect Blink's trademark potty-mouthed humor, some witty old tunes and their long-promised set list from the reunion album. Although they are not getting any younger, the "boys" can still deliver a rock-solid and lively performance on stage. A lot of the credit goes to Travis Barker who, according to critics, remains Blink's secret weapon, bringing both muscle and finesse to his work.

The band couldn't ask for a more perfect venue than Voodoo to flush out their new content. Everyone in attendance at the festival, from preppy to goth, embraces their "punkness" during Halloween weekend in New Orleans that, as always, should be one hell of a party.—Cristina Wollenberg

Kyle Turley

Saturday, October 29 - 9:30 p.m.

Le Flambeau: WWOZ

Former Saints player Kyle Turley may have turned in his shoulder pads for a guitar, but he's still "Rockin' the Gridiron" like no other. If you thought Turley could only do football, well then you only know one side of Turley. Turley's music pierces your heart and soul with truth in lyrics that range from a fan favorite "My Soul Bleeds Black and Gold" to a little ditty entitled "Flyin' Helmets," which will put a smirk on the face of any Who Dat fan. Where Y'at Magazine had the opportunity to catch up with Kyle Turley before opening for George Jones at the beginning of the month and here's what he had to say about his music and retirement from the NFL.

WHERE Y'AT: What's happening right now with the new CD and tailgating tour?

KYLE TURLEY: The new record is called Death Drugs & the DoubleCross, we're supporting this with a national tour called The Gridiron Tailgate Tour, which is a charitable effort to raise awareness and funds for The Grid Iron Assistance Fund. The record is available on iTunes and at our live shows.

WYAT: How do you and the band prepare for a major US tour? Who's playing with you right now?

KT: Pre-tour prep usually starts in the studio but a tailgate tour starts in the parking lot. We carry our own sound, plug in to the bus generator and get down with the people! Big Rob holds down the low end on bass, Dave K. keeps time on the stix, John D Clay rocks the electric & I'm on acoustic and vocals.

WYAT: Where do you find your musical inspiration?

KT: My inspiration comes from life, I've had some extraordinary opportunities that I've taken advantage of that have lead me to heights of success only imagined but with that has come great consequence & pitfalls, regardless of how green the grass is someone has to mow it.

WYAT: What's your process when writing music and testing out new material?

KT: Writing music always starts with either words or a riff and you take it from there. When I feel like I have something I take it around Nashville to the open mic nights and see what the reaction is, and in this town the audience can be made up of some pretty heavy critics.

WYAT: What's your favorite song to play for an audience right now?

KT: My favorite song to play right now is the title track on my new record Death Drugs & the DoubleCross, it's my ode to the great Lynyrd Skynyrd and it gets your blood flow'n.

WYAT: For those fans that are not familiar with your music, please describe your sound.

KT: I describe my music as rock/country/soul, it isn't like anything out right now which is the way I want to keep it. I grew up on heavy doses of old school country, metal and everything in between.

WYAT: Whether it's football or on stage, you play with passion and give it you all. Who would you like to thank for inspiring those types of values within you?

KT: There are too many people to thank- my outlook on life even makes me thankful for those who have crossed me. My drive and determination pushes me through it all and the people along the way all have a role in my life story, which has been more crazy than not and I've lived more life in 36 years than most.

WYAT: What type of advice would you give to a young musician or football player having experienced both worlds?

KT: The advice I give to any young person is to go for your dreams be realistic and never let anyone or thing stand in your way, life is too short.

WYAT: As a former Saints player and "Gridiron Legend" on the field, I must ask about your feelings towards the NFL and retired players.

KT: To answer the question of my thoughts on the issues facing retired football players in this article would not do the cause justice. I will simply say that with great reward comes a great price and there are a lot of guys struggling out there and if I had control of the massive purse strings set aside to address these issues I wouldn't have them placed in a system that is reactive instead of proactive.—Sheri McKee

Sunday, Oct. 30

Ray Davies

Sunday, October 30 - 4:15 p.m.

Le Flambeau: Preservation Hall

Long after The Kinks disbanded in 1996, one of the founding members of the band Ray Davies is still touring and delighting audiences around the world. Davies was the lead singer and songwriter for the band. The Kinks

started in Muswell Hill in North London and quickly became one of the most influential rock bands of all time. Musical styles of the band were varied, ranging from folk to country to rhythm and blues. Davies had a difficult relationship with his younger brother Dave Davies, who also helped found The Kinks, but the collaboration between the two produced five Top 10 albums on the Billboard charts. The group's best work came between the 1960s and the 1970s with their concept albums. In the late '70s and early '80s, The Kinks tried their hand at theatrical concept albums, but these were not as critically acclaimed as their previous efforts. While their album sales did get a boost from other bands covering their songs, the new albums were financial failures, which led to the eventual breakup of The Kinks. The band's 30 years of music, however, has produced quite a following. Bands like Oasis and Blur have cited The Kinks as one of their influences. Davies has toured around the country, but he has a special love for New Orleans. He played the Meltdown Festival in London, bringing along New Orleans' own Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Ray Davies shows off his songwriting and musical skills in his solo performances. Enjoy classics from The Kinks as well as new classics by Davies. Get out a catch a master at Voodoo.—Misty Fauchoux

A-Trak

Sunday, October 30 – 5:00 pm

Le Plur: red Bulletin

Dirty South meets the Dirty South when Alain “A-Trak” Macklovitch returns to New Orleans for this year's Voodoo Music Experience. A trail-blazing prodigy nearly since birth, the Montreal native bought his first turntables and mixer with his bar mitzvah money at age 13, and became the youngest and first Canadian champion at the DMC World DJ Championship in 1997—at the precocious age of 15. Since then he has performed sold-out concerts and festivals around the world touting his wide range of hip-hop, pop and indie infused dance music, produced and DJed for both upcoming and high profile artists, founded record companies, garnered numerous awards and titles, and ultimately has become a pioneer of DJ technical mastery.

His formula to success includes a broad musical palette combined with a keen sense of his individual style and a virtually unmatched level of technical aptitude harnessed at an impressively young age. His older brother David—of the electro duo Chromeo—ran the Audio Research record label for a decade before he then founded the Fools Gold label with Nick Catchdubs in 2007. It is perhaps this experience that really helped hone his taste for crowd-pleasing dance hits, and his DJ abilities were soon sought out by Kanye West, with whom he has performed and toured for several years. He's lent his production talents to up-and-coming superstars like Lupe Fiasco and Chicago rapper Kid Sister, including her debut album *Ultraviolet*, and has dozens of popular remixes by artists such as the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, MSTRKRFT, Boys Noize, Tiga, Justice, Digitalism and more. His *Dirty South Dance* album (2007) is a revered collaboration of the electronic and hip-hop genres, and he also explores the realm of disco house with collaborator Armand Van Helden under the stage name Duck Sauce—best known for tracks like “aNYway,” “You're Nasty” and “Barbra Streisand.”

A-Trak is no newcomer to the Voodoo Experience, having performed in 2001 and last year in the festival's new official dance space, Le Plur. Whether you're in the mood to kick back to hip-hop, dance around with your friends or be amazed by the scratching and mixing abilities of one of the world's most sought-after DJs, A-Trak's set will be one to catch.—Carolyn Heneghan

Cheap Trick

Sunday, October 30 - 6:15 p.m.

Le Carnival: Bingo! Parlor

Seventeen studio albums into its illustrious 30-plus year career, Cheap Trick remains one of the most recognizable bands in American rock music. Despite escaping a freak stage collapse at a July show in Ottawa unharmed, the band continues to tour the United States and Canada and will bring its distinctive mix of pop, rock and punk to Voodoo Fest. What can the average Voodoo-goer expect from these decorated veterans? Besides Robin Zander's trademark flawless blonde locks and white captains hat, this set is sure to include much-covered classics like “Surrender” and “I Want You to Want Me”, which is certainly not a bad thing. Throwback classics like these are always enjoyable in a festival environment. For those who are simply expecting an hour-long nostalgiafest, however, this set will probably offer a pleasant surprise. The band figures to play a few more recent songs that are not as well know but probably deserve to be. Good bets include “Sick Man of Europe” and “These Days” from its most recent album, 2009's well received *The Latest*. While your hipster friends will probably turn the band into a punch line while on their way to Major Lazer (is mommy all right? Is daddy all right?) I encourage you to take a minute to check out this blue blooded American original. Despite their advancing age, Cheap Trick is still making relevant music and still playing the music that, at the height of their powers, drew Beatles comparisons.—Nick Peruffo

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An amazing thing happened Sunday night at the House of Blues New Orleans: people of all ages and ethnicities came together and flooded the building with positive vibrations. Stephen Robert Nesta “Ragga” Marley came to the venue on his summer tour to promote his new album, Revelation Pt II: The Fruit of Life, which released on the previous Friday, July 22nd. Stephen Marley was born in Delaware in 1972, raised in Jamaica, and...

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New Orleans Concert Reviews

Mark Jonathan Davis, or Richard Cheese as he is known on stage, graced the House of Blues New Orleans with his comedic and musical stylings. Born in New York, Cheese has put out almost twenty albums since he started in 2000. Although he hasn't played in New Orleans for at least 5 years, the venue was packed with loyal fans. Richard Cheese is famous for his musical parodies and his characteristic stage presence. His character is a...

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