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AMERICA'S ROOTS
MUSIC MAGAZINE
From New Orleans & Louisiana

BLACKFIRE REVELATION • TELEFON TEL ANNE
JAZZ FEST SCHEDULE

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WORLD
HOW A NEW ORLEANS
LEADER
ROCK BAND
PRETENDO
SEALED THE DEAL

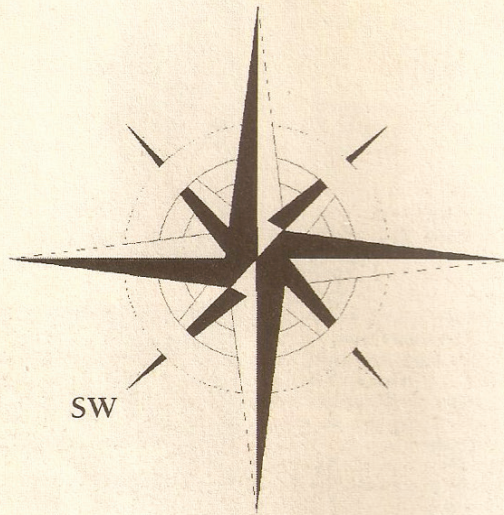
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Go Southwest, Young Bands



In March of each year, the South By Southwest Music and Media Conference (a.k.a. SXSW) temporarily transforms Austin, Texas into the planet's music industry headquarters with countless musical acts showcased to thousands of attendees. Among those hoping to become The Next Big Rock Thing is a contingent of New Orleans bands including Blackfire Revelation, Telefon Tel Aviv, and World Leader Pretend. Members of all three ensembles were interviewed by Associate Editor Michael Jastroch.



John Fields of Blackfire Revelation

“While many artists would coast the middle of the road in mediocre lyrics and unassuming chords, Blackfire Revelation treated the dividing line like the Plague. One must have an opinion of the soulful rock ‘n’ roll of the Blackfire Revelation.” So reads the bio of this two-person, New Orleans hard rock revival. Mindful of his Mississippi roots, singer/guitarist John Fields churns out solid, riff-heavy rock without overindulging over the top guitar heroics while drummer Hank Haney pounds out an earth shattering groove—an essential element missing from most bands of their ilk.

How did the band get together?

I decided to come here for film school at UNO. I was writing songs and doing four track projects—drummerless noise rock stuff for the films I was doing. I met this guy at UNO who had this friend that was moving down here who played drums. Hank [Haney] wound up moving down from Richmond, Virginia. The first time we played was on a borrowed drum set in this warehouse in the Warehouse District. We had this awesome practice, and were like, “Okay, this’ll work.” The next day, the guy came back and took his drum set back. It took us four or five months to scrape together enough money to get a new drum set. When we started, I just wanted a drummer. I figured if I could get one

other person—a drummer—to go for what I was doing, then I could make something happen. Once we got things together, we could start adding people—another guitarist and a bassist. After a while, we decided to just leave it a two-piece. We could play with all these different bass players if we wanted to just have a revolving lineup of musicians. Sean Yseult [White Zombie, Rock City Morgue] was just on the EP [Gold and Guns on 51] that we released ourselves last summer. We did a couple of hundred copies, hand made, and sold ‘em at shows.

That EP is coming out on Fat Possum, I hear?

They want to do distribution for it, but not as a Fat Possum release. They paid to have 5,000 copies made, and they’re going to be available worldwide. A couple of thousand go to the U.K., Australia and Canada. And a bunch will be available throughout the U.S. as well. We got hooked up with Fat Possum through this guy Matt Sweeney who played guitar in this band Chavez that was on Matador Records. He caught our show opening for Nashville Pussy, and he just happened to be in town touring with Will Oldham. We ended up hanging out and shooting the shit all night. I guess he ran into Matthew Johnson who heads Fat Possum a week later in New York and said, “These guys are great. You should sign them.” It was just kind of luck of the draw, really. You would think that kind of thing would happen in New York or L.A., but the fact that he just happened to be at One Eyed Jacks where we happen to play religiously is weird. They say that all major business decisions are made on the golf course. With rock ‘n’ roll, they’re all made in bars.

What’s the worst thing about living in New Orleans?

It costs so much more money to tour being from New Orleans. If you live in the Midwest or the Northeast, you’re within several hours of other major cities that you can play over the weekend with no problem. But in New Orleans, you really have to make a trip out of any kind of touring that you do. Some bands I’ve met touring think that’s one of the reasons that no band can make it out of New Orleans; it’s so hard for them to get out there and hit the major markets repeatedly, because we’re so far down here. Even driving into New Orleans, you drive through hours and hours of Mississippi country, then you hit water and swamp, and in the distance, you see this little patch of civilization. It is a pain in the ass, but at the same time, I really wouldn’t live anywhere else. New Orleans is by far, the freest fucking city in the world. This is the only place where no one is going to tell you what to do or when to do it. If it’s 4 a.m., and you want to take your shirt off and run down the street pouring beer over your head, you can.

There’s an irony there. It’s tough to make it as a touring band, but it’s much easier to get stuff done—in terms of art and music—down here.

I feel sorry for people living in New York who

back

TALK



with
**Holly
Golightly**

Interviewed by Michael Jastroch

Performing In New Orleans:

Tuesday, November 9: One Eyed Jacks

With her lilting British accent and a name straight out of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Holly Golightly is a tailor made introduction paragraph for lazy music writers. But there's much more to this former Billy Childish protégée than movie allusions and cheap metaphors about the timelessness of her music.

Golightly began her career with Childish's garage outfit the Headcoats as a member of the Headcoates—'60s girl group meets three chord garage rock backup singers who eventually splintered off and began playing their own sets. From there, she managed to wrangle some recording time at Toe Rag Studios (where she recorded a duet with the White Stripe's Jack and Meg White on last year's *Elephant*). By way of happy accident, her recordings landed in the lap of British record label, Vinyl Japan, who released her 1995 debut, *The Good Things*.

Whereas the Headcoates performed basic, stripped down rock 'n' roll under the direction of Billy Childish, Holly Golightly's solo career has taken a decidedly more singer/songwriter turn, but not in the Ani DiFranco sense of the word. Golightly deftly

mixes elements of R&B, blues, soul, folk and punk into her originals, while throwing in the occasional cover from Willie Dixon, Ike Turner, Lee Hazelwood, Bill Withers and Wreckless Eric—the quirky late '70s punk who she sights as a major influence. But while her influences are pretty clear, Golightly doesn't wear them on her sleeve or ever succumb to "retro" asphyxiation. The result is often beautiful and sometimes haunting, but most importantly, it is always honest.

Holly Golightly spoke to me by phone from her home in London about interviews, songwriting and her new album.

Do you like playing in New Orleans?

I do. I have a very good British girlfriend who lives down there, Louise [Wehner].

Oh, she has a radio show on WWOZ—Wednesdays from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

[Laughs] Yes, that's her. I also like the Market, the French Market. It's my favorite place in America really. The first time I played there, we were like, "Let's give up everything and just live there." I can't imag-

ine doing what I do based out of there, but if all I wanted to do was to drink and stay out really late, I'd be in heaven. I'm really looking forward to it, because the bass player I had when I first played there is from Texas. Well, he lived in San Francisco when I lived there, so he comes out to New Orleans with me, and he's really excited to go back. He had only been there once before when he was young. He had seen a naked lady through a curtain. I think it was the first naked lady he had ever saw. He was very excited to go back.

I noticed that you frequently get asked the same two questions. Example: "Is Holly Golightly your real name?" In fact, the first line of your bio clearly states, "Yes, that's her real name."

[Sighs] I think that's why the label put it in the press packet. It's not really a story, is it? It's a naming word, isn't it? Like dog or cat or anything else. I would hope they all know the answer to that question now. After a certain number of years, there has to be a point where that isn't the first question. [Laughs]



Michael Jastroch

DIS 'N' DAT whatever's cool

Good Times/ Bad Times

On February 5th of this year, vocalist/bassist/guitarist **Erik Corveaux**, front man and songwriter for New Orleans rock 'n' roll outfit the **Bad Off**, got, in his words, "creamed" by a car while riding his bike to a Carnival parade. The accident, which resulted in massive injuries, put

around the New Orleans scene since 1997 playing with **Orange Eye** as well as backing **New York Dolls** guitarist **Sylvain Sylvain** on tour, started playing with drummer **Jody Smith**. "[Guitarist] **Johnny Foran** [formerly of **Orange Eye**] was also playing with us. I met **Dan Lauricella**



Erik Corveaux: "Having the support system [of playing music] has been the best medicine I could ever have."

Corveaux out of commission for nearly three months.

"I was out of the loop of employment. Out of the loop of playing, everything," says Corveaux over the phone from his Gentilly home. "[Playing] has since arisen again, and having the support system of the guys in the band has been the best medicine I could ever have."

The **Bad Off**, at least in nascent form, came together in August of 2003. Corveaux, who had been

(bass/cello) at the Tennessee Williams Festival. He's a huge literary junky," says Corveaux.

After Foran left town to move to Las Vegas for personal reasons, the three continued to play, moving **Bad Off** HQ to CRS studios in Mid-City, where they started playing with guitarist **Brian Berthiaume**. "He was one of the first cats I met when I moved here. Didn't know a lick; didn't know nobody. I had really no idea of whether I was coming or going," says Corveaux.

But all things back come around. After eight years, leaving New Orleans once, going through several bands and suffering a near-fatal injury, Corveaux is hopeful as the **Bad Off** releases their first EP, *Twilight in Eclipse*—a mix of heavy, yet nuanced guitar rock and theatrical song structure occupying the strange space between rock minimalism and rock overindulgence—amidst a growing buzz and a flurry of press coverage. *Twilight*, which is more eloquently and thoroughly reviewed in these pages, was a long time in the making for Corveaux, who actually gave Lauricella an early rough cut of the songs upon their first meeting. "The only thing salvaged from the original tracking session was the drums. It took a while for us to figure out where the song was actually going. As a result, quite a bit of time had elapsed," says Corveaux.

The evolution of *Twilight* seems to have suited the **Bad Off** just fine, allowing the line-up to solidify, their sound to gel and mature and their live shows to, frankly, rock. "Those songs had a thread to them that was tucked underneath all this other fabric," says Corveaux. "With the current line-up of the band, those guys aren't just playing those parts, they're becoming parts, even though they didn't write them. That's the best thing for music, in terms of popping on a record and going, 'Damn that sounds good. I wonder what they are like live?'"

Good question. In fact, without a record to pimp, the **Bad Off** began making a name for themselves based solely on their performances. New Orleans first took note last Halloween, when the **Bad Off** deftly disguised themselves as **Led Zeppelin** at the Mermaid's Masked Ball—a feat they repeated at the Circle Bar on June 10. The choice was an apt one, as **Zeppelin** too managed to simultaneously be stripped down, dirty rock 'n' roll and indulge in over the top flourishes. **Zeppelin** also knew how to entertain. Aside from actually having a great voice, Corveaux is a natural front man, with an energy and commanding stage pres-

ence sorely lacking in many New Orleans bands. He's making music, but also putting on a show, which may be one reason he gave up guitar duties earlier this year. "I think that has given Brian [Berthiaume] full court," says Corveaux. "He's totally high on the hog. He's got all that weight on that guitar. Each one of us is doing one craft, and that has made a huge impact on the deliverance of the songs. Our material has changed as well. I have a very angular approach to the guitar. Without that, now it's like a very steady two by four, whereas before it might have been shims."

Back in the game and not content to rest on his laurels after the release of *Twilight*, Corveaux is looking ahead to the future. "We're going to get back in the studio. We're working a lot on our live show, but we want to get back to crafting songs. We're going to get into **Voodoo Fest**, mark my word, because I'm pressing them. We're going to get on that bill," says Corveaux. "But after all that, the biggest return of all has been coming out with this record. It's a great snapshot of the songs, in their current state with this lineup."

The Bad Off Perform two shows in July, on July 2 at One Eyed Jacks opening for Atomic Bitch Wax (ex-Monster Magnet) and on July 26 with Bad Wizard and Fu Manchu at the HOB Parish.

VOODOO FEST

The official **Voodoo Music Experience** schedule is, in fact, due out a couple of days after press time. Our inside sources have given us a sneak peek at the illustrious lineup, which includes **Nine Inch Nails**, the **Flaming Lips**, **Cake**, **Queens Of The Stone Age**, **Billy Idol**, **Ryan Adams**, **My Chemical Romance**, the **New York Dolls**, **Handsome Boy Modeling School**, **Louis XIV**, the **Decemberists**, **VHS Or BETA**, **Death From Above 1979**, **World Leader Pretend**, **Prince Paul**, **Ghost**, **Ballzack**, as well as a slew of New Orleans artists from coverboy **Ivan Neville** to **Dr. John**. No word yet on the **Bad Off** being booked, but we're keeping our fingers crossed guys. @

