Featuring Interviews with:
- Desmond is Amazing
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- The Last Thing You Remember & More!
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A Letter from the Editor:

Dear Readers,

Those of us at the zine— and yes, it’s a humble few: Myself, Lee and Lisa—we are so happy to have you stick with us through so long! A publication is only as good as its readers and we have the best! Thank you for your support over the years. It means a lot to us.

As Editor-in-Chief and the leader in charge of this publication, I do owe you an explanation with what happened with the zine shutting down so abruptly in 2015. In my heart I never wanted that to happen, but my heart was being put through the meat grinder at the time, and I was doing all I could just to survive. The zine, our writers, our readers, our supporters never stopped being important to me. For every day I didn’t do the zine I regretted it. For me, I know it’s my calling, my baby, the thing I’m most proud of doing in my life. It wasn’t a careless abandon and I want our readers to know that.

In this generation of “Me Too”, I too have my own story to share. At the time of the abrupt departure, I was in an abusive relationship with a musician known as James Starbuck. He has Asperger’s and very much used that as a crutch to blame his behavior on. We had known each other for five years previous, and we were in a relationship three years more. I often kept my heart very guarded, but he was my first. And like in any relationship, the beginning was bliss, but at its peak it took a harrowing turn. Dynamics started to change. James developed what seemed to be a multiple personality disorder. He told me stories of being attacked, nearly mugged and I was always at his side as his protector, at the cost of many great things in my life, sometimes even at the cost of the zine or any other creative project I dared to pursue.

When I was first experimenting with video-recording interviews and landed an interview with V-8 Death Car, he threatened suicide if I left the house. It led to me having to re-schedule with them at the last minute. If I left the house at all at night, he would stay awake to know exactly when I got home. He would guilt me for doing anything for myself. I often stayed home for his sake and took on the role of a mother figure in what became a dangerously co-dependent relationship. I was at a precipice; I had ideas for the zine pouring out of my mind like milk, supporters, friends, opportunities galore and he was often the lead anchor that held me down and held me back. At that point in my life I wasn’t very experienced with standing up for myself or being confrontational. When the “multiple personality disorder” episodes began, it was like walking on eggshells trying not to bring out his dark side. The dark side was a narcissistic, violent and abusive personality named Starbuck that pushed me away, that wanted to destroy me as well as himself. I have in possession a series of voicemails he left for me of seemingly “going in and out” of his “multiple personality” on a night I “rebelled” and went out with a friend. And yet, when he said he got help for these things, I believed him. If there was a resource available to help him in any way possible, I was after it. If he had need of any thing I paid for it. I could see no one else ever being in my life or my heart. I thought without James no one else would have me or have use for me. I based my worth in how he felt about me. I refused to see exactly how toxic our relationship had become and it cost me several years of my life.

Fall 2015 took a turn for the worst and 2016 is when everything came to a head. Unbeknownst to me that it was a lie, he told me of a young friend of his who’s mother was dying of cancer. It sent him into a depression. He became distant and unloving. Distracted. I loved him through anything and would’ve done anything it took to grant him happiness, even at the cost of my own. Behind my back for six months he was in another relationship without telling me. He had me give him money — money he used to be with her but to me he lied. When he told me of her all those months later, I had a nervous breakdown. He left me. My world came crumbling down. I invested so much of myself in him that when it was over, I had nothing left. I attempted suicide multiple times, so many times that a close friend called the cops on me.
I didn’t realize it at the time, but it was lucky that I stayed friends with some of his friends. As I recovered, I told two male friends (now ex-friends) of his what happened between us. They told me of how he painted our break-up being my fault with my “emotional problems”. Chapters in our relationship based off of traumatic experiences he claimed to have suffered that he conveyed to me, I learned, never happened. Extended family members he told me were dying of cancer and eventually passed, never happened. Figures in his life that meant so much to him, that sent him into depression spirals, never existed. I had been gaslighted. I discovered this information from people who knew him on a daily basis during these years of these events who categorically denied these events ever happened. Nearly everything in his life he told me was a lie. He had no multiple personality disorder. It was an act; an act they themselves had called him out on it before. I always gave in and believed. And one day just as one of these friends was cutting off contact with him for good, James himself came clean and admitted all of it was a lie. Everything he put me through; people, events, traumas, all an invention. In a desperate bid to save his friendship with this mutual friend, he came clean and blamed himself for having an illness. He never truly sought help either. That was a lie too. Sessions of counseling I helped pay for at times, all a ruse. His friends called him out on all his games, but I fell for them. It took a hell of a long time to recover, but I did.

I began volunteering at a women’s clinic, became politically involved, made friends with social justice workers and put myself back in the dating game. I had spent so many of my prime years totally devoted to someone who constantly lied to me that it felt I was living my twenties for the first time.

I am ashamed I let that relationship take over my life like it did and especially robbing so many of our zine team their platform for writing and our readers of our publication. One among many great opportunities that cost me due to my deteriorated mental state was a great interview with Jerry Trainor’s (iCarly, Drake & Josh) band, Nice Enough People. I was the first to interview them. I didn’t publish because of the downward spiral in my life thanks to the relationship I was in. It has taken me a few years, but I have learned to live again. I learned the importance of not wasting a second of the life we’re given. We must use it for good while we have it. As the Editor-in-Chief of this publication (and soon to be website), I want to bring to the forefront the greatest nonprofits, rock bands, artists, poets, writers and creators and support their work. There’s so much bad in the world – so much to stress over – and yet in the face of all that we have tremendously great artists coloring the world through every medium imaginable and we need to hang onto that. I firmly believe a great artistic renaissance can change a society for the better. Our jobs at the zine are a labor of love. What’s foremost important to us is that we have fun doing what we do. The day it becomes “work” is the day we cease to exist. We are honored by your support and by your readership. Here’s to everyone who dares to follow their dreams!

Photo by: Meggy-Kate Gutermuth
Desmond, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us! To be your age and having made such an invaluable impact on the world is nothing short of historic. What has been your crowning achievement thus far?

My crowning achievement so far has been inspiring a lot of people around the world to express themselves. I’ve also just finished writing my children's book called "be Amazing" that will teach kids to accept themselves and have self confidence. Also, I really liked cutting the opening ceremony ribbon with RuPaul at DragCon NYC 2017.

Describe your current project, Haus of Amazing. How can we find it? Are there plans to open a physical location one day?

Right now, the Haus of Amazing is a network of drag kids. My parents are working on a creating a social network that would be like Facebook where members can log-in and connect with each other all around the world. I don't think there will be a physical location but I do want to do meet-ups.
What are your favorite places to shop for your wardrobe and fabrics? What was the first outfit you made with your mother? Who is your favorite designer? Do you see becoming a model or designer yourself?

My favorite place to shop for outfits is the LGBTQ thrift store called Out of the Closet in Brooklyn. I like to shop in the Garment District for fabrics and stuff like that. The first outfit I think we created together was for the 2016 NYC Pride March. It was a Marie Antoinette inspired dress made out of Pride flags. My favorite designer is Alexander McQueen. I already do modeling for photo shoots, magazines, and I've walked in NYFW. I design almost all of my costumes. I would like to be a professional fashion designer one day. I would call my fashion line Amazement because it would be an Amazing Statement.

Who are your favorite musicians as of late? Who do you dream of performing with one day? What song would you consider to be your theme song? Do you have one?

I love Madonna, No Doubt, Hole, and Deee Lite. I would love to perform with all of them, but it would be super cool to perform with Madonna or Lady Gaga because they are literal icons. I recorded my own song called "We Are All Amazing" but it hasn't been released yet. I guess that would be my theme song.

One of many of your admirable qualities is not just your bravery but your conviction to stand up against bullies and to promote acceptance and inclusion. In recent interviews you’ve said you want to continue to champion this cause throughout your life. This next question comes to you from another kid very much like you, named Jason. He wants to know what advice you would give to someone who has been bullied at school and faces that problem everyday? How do you keep them from hurting you inside and not go in swinging? What would you say to bullies themselves? How can we make this world a better place?

I would tell him to pay the haters no mind because they will never be as fierce as you and I. Don’t let them hurt you because they are probably getting bullied by someone themselves and they are taking it out on others. Or they might be jealous or just miserable. Someone called me "Barbie Boy" at school and I just said, "is that supposed to be an insult?" and I laughed and walked away. I think bullies want attention and to get a reaction, like they want to hurt people. If you don't let them hurt you they will get bored of trying I think. To bullies I would say that they need to look in their hearts and find out why they want to hurt others and maybe get some help. I think the world will be a better place once people learn to love more and hate less.

Thank you so much for being a part of our zine! Is there anything you would like to add?

I'd like to add my motto which is "Be Yourself, Always".
Those of us at the zine are incredibly impressed with your debut EP, “Citrus Grove”. You’re making an exciting impact along the west coast. You are twin sisters, both only 16 and only just began this band last year! Your success is a testament to your talent. Tell us how you started your band. Do you both write lyrics? How do you record your music? What was your first gig like?

Hi, this is Zoe. My dad's a musician, and my identical twin, Rio, and I sang back up vocals for his band since we were 11 or 12. We also were in our church youth group band as vocalist and bass player in our freshman year of high school. I always dreamt of starting a band and Strawberry Army began in my living room the summer before my sophomore year of high school when Rio and I were just 14. Unfortunately, we got in a HUGE fight day one, and Rio quit. I still continued on without her and started playing songs with some girls I met at school.

I have always been super into poetry and would write all these poems that would eventually just turn into songs. I played the stand-up bass in my middle school orchestra, so I would play bass and sing my poems and they just became songs. Pretty much every Strawberry Army song was written on the bass with rhythm guitar and drums added later. For the first 4 months of Strawberry Army, I played the bass and sang vocals. Rio eventually asked to join Strawberry Army again and I was stoked to finally be in a band together with my sister.

The first gig we played with Rio in the band was at The Smell in L.A. March 3, 2018. The Smell show was my first time fronting the band, with my badass sister on the bass. That night, everything kinda just clicked. From then on, I knew what I wanted and I knew how to get it, and I got it. I definitely discovered the sound I wanted out of Strawberry Army.

Who inspires you musically? What are your favorite albums? Do they influence you lyrically more or sonically?

My sister and I grew up listening to a really eclectic variety of music. We were raised on everything from The Velvet Underground to The Beatles, Carol King, Joni Mitchell, The Stooges, the Bee Gees, Amy Winehouse, Cub, Nirvana, The Cure, David Bowie, The Clash, X, Blondie, and Shonen Knife,
Nora Jones, The Rolling Stones, Duran Duran, Lenny Kravitz, the Grateful Dead, the list goes on and on.


What are the strengths both of you bring to your band?

Rio is such a badass on the bass. No matter what's happening at a live show with the sound, or bandmates, or technical difficulties, Rio nails it and keeps the song together every time. She’s really calm and gifted and she can always deliver.

I’m really passionate about the band. I push us to play more and do more and record more. I also don’t give a fuck about what anyone thinks, which is a good thing.

Do you have plans to record a full-length album or release a second EP? Has your songwriting process changed as you evolved and gained experience?

We first recorded our music on May 2, 2018, in this recording space in Riverside, Ca. called “Broken Dreams.” That was an incredible experience for us. All 12 of our songs were recorded on that same day, but we released the first five in July of 2018 and the remaining seven songs this month, February 2019. We have plans to release all 12 together on vinyl hopefully by this summer.

Do you enjoy performing covers at your gigs? If so, who are your favorites? If not, do you plan to?

We’ve only ever played one cover, Rapture by Blondie. Deborah Harry is an idol of mine. I think it’d be so sick to record it and release it as a single.

Are there any plans to record a music video?

Yes! Were dying to make a music video! Hopefully, it will happen very, very soon.

What are your goals for the band? Do you see yourselves pursuing music professionally down the line or do you have other career interests?

We just want to play as many shows as we can in as many cities and as we can. We dream of touring and playing music all around the world, especially Japan. We may never come back from Japan.

What are your plans for the band this year?

In 2019 we want to play a ton of shows, write a bunch of songs, release another EP and/or album, and make a few music videos.

What advice would you give to other girls your age who want to start a band?

My advice to other girls is to be brave and bold and just put yourself out there, even if you get ridiculed. Honestly, when we first started Strawberry Army, our peers definitely laughed about it. In their defense, it was easy to make fun of, since we wrote songs and immediately recorded them in my bathroom on my phone. If we could get all the way through a song one time without messing up or laughing we’d put it up on Soundcloud. Haha. It was pretty cheesy and unprofessional sounding, but it was a start and ALL of those songs are on our album now. One song, in particular, that people would make fun of was Melancholy Burger. We almost didn’t put it on the album, but I’m glad we did because ironically, legendary DJ Rodney Bingenheimer (Rodney on the Rock) has played it the last 2 weeks in a row on his SiriusXM show on Little Steven’s Underground Garage, Channel 21.
For those out there who may be living under a rock and may be new to your music, tell us about your band. How were each of you introduced to rock n roll growing up? What did it offer you creatively that other genres or artistic expressions could not? What were the first instruments you learned? What was the first song you wrote together?

Jarrett: Both of my parents are musicians. My dad is a great songwriter and recording engineer. My mother plays a dozen instruments and worked for years as a music therapist. So music has always been there. Mike’s dad was always into cool music like The Clash and Mike’s older brother is a rocker as well. Marissa’s dad helped her learn some guitar chords. She loved Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins, and Hole which gave her access to punk.

I don’t think rock music gave me access to anything in particular that another artistic outlet couldn’t have. It was just what was around. I’m 35 so I grew up with more than a decade in which a big part of pop music was rock music. But I’ve always been interested in many genres of music. I’m a huge hip hop and reggae fan. Over the last few years I’ve gotten really into experimental synthesizer based music.

I took lessons on a few different instruments but nothing stuck until percussion. I took classical percussion lessons for 10 years. I know how to play all kinds of percussion instruments, not just drum set. The first song we wrote together was Henry’s Embryo. Mike and Marissa were in a band together called Surgery On TV. I joined a version of that band for a few months. The first practice we had as just the three of us something clicked. We wrote Henry’s Embryo in a few minutes. It felt great.

It seems like in our culture these days most of our youth want to break into music through singing contests or “going viral” on the internet. What are your thoughts on this as compared to how you grew up? Does it make you a better musician to have learned an instrument or is there more to it than that?
Jarrett: I’m interested in music subcultures. Dominate forms of popular music can be fun and pleasing but it isn’t where I focus my energy. I think there will always be people pushing into some new territory of music outside of popular culture. So whether it is a few friends in a bedroom recording trap songs on a computer or a group of friends in a basement playing in a hardcore band I don’t really think it changes things too much. I do think that the apparent decentralization of social media has blurred the lines between mainstream and subcultures. It appears that people can become overnight sensations almost out of nowhere. I think that makes a lot more people, especially kids, feel like they should be getting all these hits/likes/plays/etc right from the get-go. And if they don’t get that attention they are failing. A lot of the most interesting and important music ever made wasn’t particularly popular. I think it messes up people’s longterm creative process because they get focused on some nebulous approval rather than their processes and their own scene.

All musicians play instruments, even if that is your voice or a program on a computer.

Tell us about your favorite performances you’ve had on the road over the years. I believe from what I’ve read, that you’ve played near where I live in Auburn, Alabama back in 2011. A few of us that write for the zine live nearby that area. What has been your experience playing in the south? We don’t get a lot of great bands coming through this part of the state very much. How can we fix this to get you guys back here when you tour again?

Jarrett: We’ve had some very memorable experiences in the south! We’ve played every southern state at least twice, many of them we’ve played a dozen times. Shows are smaller in the south. I think most rock/punk bands experience that. I don’t know the whole explanation for that but obviously it seems like a cultural thing. The south has its own cultural interests, such as country music, that aren’t as popular in regions that rock bands do well in like the northeast, midwest, and west coast.

The best way to get touring bands interested in coming to your town is to build a scene. There has to be small venues with low monetary overhead. That could be a cafe or a bookstore or a dive bar or someone’s house. There have to be local bands to play the shows when the touring bands come through. There has to be a network to promote shows so that when a show is happening the people running that show have an idea of who might come and how to let them know. Extras like a nice place to sleep (ie some comfy couches that aren’t disgusting) and some nice homemade food can go a LONG way to convince bands it is worth their time to route in a town. Basically if you can run a show in a small venue that most of the money from the door goes directly to the touring band, have some good locals on the bill, show that you worked to promote the gig, offer up a decent place to sleep and maybe dinner or breakfast you will have more bands than you know what to do with trying to get shows in your town.

What a lot of people may not know about your band is that you, King Mike, have your own record label, State Champion Records. Tell us about how and why you started a label? What are your thoughts on what independent labels can offer that a major label cannot in today’s economy? What are some of your favorite bands you’ve added to your label?

Mike: My partner and I started the label because we wanted to have a way of supporting independent artists and because we love making things with our friends. We only do very limited runs all in hand made packaging. Having noticed more and more independent labels move towards operating more like major labels, we wanted to do something very hands on, personal, and even imperfect at times.
Economically speaking, I don't think that we have any of the tools that make a major label successful, but since major labels mainly put out music that's not-so-good, they need to have a lot more resources to market that music. I think what SCR has going for us is that we aren't really aiming to participate in that same economy. We make media for people who are interested in finding something different than what "The Big Four" or any of the major-indies are spewing out.

Every artist who we've worked with makes things (music, comedy, zines, etc.) that we are genuinely excited about. We are proud of the fact that we've chosen to release things based on 1 criteria -- we honestly love it; we think that it rocks or, it's funny or, whatever, we just like it.

Marissa, you’re an accomplished sketch artist. Not only have your works appeared in your album art, but you’ve also released books of your work, as well as the mural you did in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where you hail from. Why is drawing your medium of choice? How have recent political disruptions in our country affected your creativity? Do you plan to release additional published collections of your work?

Marissa: I'm not entirely sure why drawing is my medium of choice. I'm sure a lot of it has to do with loving comic books and cartoons when I was little.

I imagine that it's pretty hard for any sane person to function in this world given the state of things, not just creative sorts of people. On some days the new is so bad it seems frivolous to bother making much of anything, but I try to remind myself that making things is a mechanism of therapy for me, and even if my work never sees the light of day, the process of making it served the function of healing.

Yes, I plan to release another book of my work.

If this stupid wall gets built along our border with Mexico, would you paint a mural on it? What would be an artist’s response to that wall?

I would never consider contributing anything to the proposed border wall.
It’s such an honor to speak with you! We have been fans of yours since you were on “Democracy Now!” back in early 2016. To us, you revive the best qualities of punk rock; the ability to merge politics and poetry, challenge and critique. Downtown Boys not only can educate an audience in a minute and thirty seconds but possess the ability to change the game of rock n roll itself. When did you look at each other and decide to make music together? Were each of you songwriting on your own prior to the formation of the band?

Joey La Neve DeFrancesco: Thanks for the nice words! We’ve all come to be part of this band via separate paths. I started the band with Victoria while we were working at a hotel and organizing to form a union there. We were both involved in the same labor organizing and both into the music scene in Providence, and the project really became something interesting when we combined these things. Mary had been playing in another band called Neonates when we first met her, Joey Doubek had been playing - and still plays - in a band called Pinkwash, and Joe DeGeorge we met via his band Harry and the Potters. So yeah, everyone came in different ways at different times and also has other musical and writing outlets.

Joe DeGeorge: I first saw Downtown Boys when they were playing in the basement of the Scary Door in Providence, and Victoria pulled me out of the crowd and brought me into the pit. I didn’t know it at the time, but I was already in the pit. I was in the chaos, and found myself trying to keep the guitar amps from falling down. Victoria fronted the band in a way I’ve never seen and through the familiar vehicle of music she really helped me understand and relate to her experiences, in a way that’s very strong, honest, and vulnerable. The saxes drums and guitars were wild loose and free. It was a musical vision I wanted to support.

This question is for everyone in the band individually. What was the first rock album you ever received or bought? What does punk rock mean to you?
Mary Regalado: My dad is a rocker and had a pretty decent CD collection when I was growing up so I was exposed to a lot of music and bands. I was particularly drawn to “Staring At The Sea” by The Cure and have a lot of memories staying up late listening to it repeatedly on my walkman. I was also obsessed with “Los Angeles” by X. I grew up in Los Angeles and have a very LA-centric view of punk in the sense that it was formed by women and people of color (like Alice Bag, Teresa Covarrubias from The Brat, Su Tissue of Suburban Lawns, & The Plugz.

DeFrancesco: If we’re going for the classical definition of punk, I have an aunt from Ireland who was a punk there when she was younger who let me borrow (though I think I never returned it) a copy of London Calling, and who showed me a bunch of cool music from that period.

DeGeorge: The first CD I bought was “Apollo 18” by They Might be Giants. There is a lot of fluidity to any punk identity I carry. I found punk rock to be self empowering as a young adult. I’d look to bands like Fugazi as inspiration in my own work and music business, like their championing of all ages shows, and commitment to owning their entire operation and taking on responsibilities most bands at their level of labor did not. I found that empowerment inspiring and found supportive communities traveling around as a musician that had some fluid attachment to a punk rock. But we’ve also seen toxic punk communities. Maybe the most unifying thing I’ve experienced in punk culture at large is that it is reactionary. I mean that in a way how a lot of the architecture a subculture of punk exists in is built around informal venues, that exist out of necessity, love, and community, that strive to exist when the pressures of capital and real estate make it difficult to. It’s largely people who have space and access to space that are willing to share it with peers. But there also exist capitalist punks and nazi punks and what status quo are they reacting to? At this point I’m honestly confused at what punk rock is, since it has such a fluid meaning that changes from place to place and mind to mind, and lacks any underlying unifying manifesto.

What effect does the current administration have on your band? Does it make you more or less creative? What is the most effective way to use dark time in our nation’s history for the greater good?

DeFrancesco: All our records were written during the Obama years, and were hitting on themes and struggles and fights which are just as relevant right now as they were then. The overarching systems of American empire don’t change with who their caretaker happens to be. Of course, Trump is a particularly heinous manifestation of American systems, and has put us in an organizing position of having to play defense on some of the wins we had in previous years, and forced many people into an even more intensified position. I don’t think there’s any benefit to more sinister times making better art or anything like that, it’s just bad. The more stress and anxiety and insecurity people have about healthcare, education, immigration, and so on, the less their full selves are able to flourish, and that goes for artists too. Of course, in any organizing its necessary to take the crisis moment and push things in the right direction. The right has been very successful at seizing this crisis moment, though we are seeing increased leftist forces finally doing the same. We’ve got to speak to peoples justified anger, and not fall back on the tepid moderate nonsense the DNC is still pushing.

We were very impressed to learn two members of your band, Joey and Victoria, co-founded an online magazine, Spark Mag. How did this project come about?
Spark Mag came out of a grassroots organization called Demand Progress, who do all sorts of great political work, mostly recently pushing hard to end US support for the Saudi war in Yemen. We’re good friends with the director of the organization, David Segal, and he pitched to me and Victoria to create a website to feature artists and discuss politics and culture. I still work for Demand Progress, though at the moment Spark Mag is on a hiatus due to shifting priorities, but we hope to bring it back.

Who are some of your literary influences? Do they have any effect on your lyrics?

DeFrancesco: Sometimes directly. The theme and the line in A Wall “a wall is a wall / and nothing more at all” is from a poem by Assata Shakur poem called “i believe in living.” We also draw a lot from other authors, James Baldwin for instance. I also do a lot of work in public history and draw a lot from historians for themes and ideas.

Are you currently working on new music? What creative projects do you have planned for 2019?

DeGeorge: We’ve been practicing some other covers, but mostly just doing a couple of tours, one in Europe this winter and one on the West Coast this spring. This is a big year for some of our other projects. Joey’s been doing a lot with his drag dance project La Neve, and sometimes I’ll accompany playing sax or synths there. Mary is releasing a new record with her band, Gauche. Also she’s been playing a lot with her new band, Clear Channel. I’m releasing a new Harry and the Potters record and will be on tour in libraries with that this summer.

Thank you so much for being a part of the zine!
Thank you for taking the time to speak with us! Tell us about yourself and your band. Where are you from? How did you meet? How has the environment of where you grew up shaped your music and lyrics?

I'm Nelson Jancaterino and my band mates are Adam and Britt Powell along with Zane Tremontana. We are all from the Montgomery/Prattville area. I met Adam and Britt at a Battle of the Bands I was playing at back in 2017, and I met Zane at Bailey Brothers Music store in Montgomery a little bit before then.

My lyrics come from life lessons I've experienced over time. Mostly about heart break and trying to get out of Alabama, and the political songs come from how I view our society and how I feel things need to change. Being a millennial, and all the existential dread that comes from that, shapes how I view life and the world in general.

At what age did you start playing music? How did you learn? What was the first song you created?

I played clarinet and saxophone through out middle school and high school, where I learned how to read music, and I picked up the guitar when I was 17. I don't really remember the first song I wrote but it was probably about some girl I liked in high school.

Unlike too many artists, a great deal of your work is quite political. How is it that you’re able to turn this harrowing chapter in our nation’s history into art? Do you ever get apathetic about the current state of our country? If so, how do you remedy the disillusionment? If not, what is it that keeps your artistry growing? What are your perspectives on the current state of our country? How can it change? Have you ever received flack for your political leanings?

When it comes to writing about the state of our country, the songs basically write themselves. I can just pick a topic that troubles me and write about how much i can't stand what's going on. We have a new song about the Etowah county detention center, used by ICE, to detain undocumented folks that i think will raise a few eye brows.
I feel very disillusioned by the state of politics in our country right now but it's been a long time coming. We tend to put band aids on problems and not fix them and wonder why people are so angry. I try to remedy the situation like the rest of our generation does by hoping that when the old die off we can build something new and better, but then again past generations have said that and we are still waiting for it. I just keep writing and going along with life at this point and try to become so apathetic to our problems.

Basically, if something doesn't change soon, we are fucked. Spending time outside of the US really helped me see that folks in other countries have it a lot better than we do. They don't have to worry about healthcare or education or child care. Never ending wars and poverty, they get to live and have fun and actually be free unlike the majority of Americans. Really, in my mind, a type a revolution is needed whether it be a violent one, which I hope not, or a political one something grass roots and organic needs to happen for anything to change. We have to fight back like we used to but those in power have ways of keeping us down. Lack of healthcare, student loan debt, and minimum wage jobs force us to sit back and take it instead of going out and protesting like how the French are doing currently.

Yes, the song "Hey Mr. Officer" had gotten flack. I had someone comment that they hope it gets me shot by the police which was lovely. One person didn't get the message and thought I was actually ok with police brutality. Instead of calling them an idiot, I calming explained what certain lyrics meant, and now when I play it live I change it up to be more direct.

What has been your proudest achievement thus far?
My proud achievement was Blank TV premiering Hey Mr Officer which was really cool. Winning 104.9 The Gump's locals showcase was a great feeling. We had a lot of support and it paid off.

What are your plans for 2019?
Our goal for 2019 is to put out a full band album but finding time is always an issue so we'll see.

Who directs your music videos? Are the concepts your own? How long do they take to record?
Cedric Hatcher of Redd Hen films did the video for Hey Mr. Officer and it took a whole day to record due to us having to shoot at multiple locations. He is a great guy and i loved how the video turned out. I hope to work with him again in the future. The concepts are my own but it was a group effort to make the video happen.

Thank you so much for being a part of the zine! Do you have anything you’d like to add?
Check us out on Facebook and Spotify and iTunes for more updates and music.
The American woman. No, it’s not just an old Guess Who? record. It’s not just a classification on a passport or a concept walking down a fashion runway. It’s you, it’s me. It’s the lady working at Wendy’s or checking you out at Walmart. It’s the lady on Fox News arguing against her own interest. It’s the young girl daring to challenge social norms by picking up a guitar and learning to scream. It’s the powerful femininity flowing through our veins whether we are boy or girl. Throughout most of mankind, the strong kinetic feminine being has been conditioned to be subservient to the almighty male. God has always been assumed to be the “man in charge” of all things. At the turn of the century, women were considered “property” of their husbands. Women in the south were not allowed to inherit money or land without a brother, father, uncle or some other male co-signer. To be an American woman is to fight; not just for ourselves, but as a representation of all women. It took committees of brave women to fight for our right to vote, to be heard politically. The stage we share with a man has never been an equal platform. It’s one we fought to have, and one we must fight to keep.

Most people know “rock ‘n’ roll” has its roots in American blues and gospel. What most people don’t know, is just who was the first person to pick up that beautiful instrument; the one with the curves and hips that sings melody: the guitar. Her name was Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Because of her and that beautiful Gibson guitar of hers, and “Hound Dog” Big Mama Thornton we have Little Richard. Because of Little Richard, we had Elvis Presley, and later, Elton John and so and so forth goes the trajectory. As with most things in our modern world, many inventions began with a woman but historically were credited to man. It’s almost a running joke in the country, but women are no longer laughing. How many women do you hear on rock radio stations these days? How many women in general do you hear on the radio? Not enough.

I was lucky I suppose. In my generation, I grew up with a number of empowering female figures; Hole, Veruca Salt, Luscious Jackson, Belly, Selena Quintanilla, The Spice Girls, Madonna, Janet Jackson, Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey. In every genre there were powerful women leading the charge and breaking down doors making way for the female artists of today. How many women play on the radio today on the rock stations? As of this typing, Los Angeles’ “world famous” rock station’s current playlist cites these female-oriented bands: lovelytheband and Empire of the Sun. Two. Two bands with female musicians out of an hour of radio broadcasting. Two out of a total of seventeen songs played in a given hour. According to the Billboard rock charts, only five out of fifty Billboard Hot Rock Songs Chart for the week of February 16, 2019 feature female artists. As an Editor, I’ve spoken with and interviewed enough bands to know this does not in any way represent or reflect the entirety of active female American musicians. What it does represent however is the patriarchal corporate interests that shape the society we live in, even in 2019.
I feel sorry for today’s generation. We live in a society that worships surgically altered spray-tanned Hollywood bodies and teaches young women to hate themselves. Kim Kardashian often comments on how her husband Kanye West dresses her, and yet she still proclaims to be a “feminist”. We also live in a dark chapter of our country’s political history: the reign of Donald Trump, another spray tanned creature who shows little – if any – respect for women, just as his father before him.

As much as our post-modern American society wants to depress you however, worry not. Women are still changing our world. Only three years ago did we have but one woman running for President of the United States, we now have six. In the House of Representatives in Congress, we have one hundred two. Women still consistently hold the majority of students on college campuses and dominate in the workforce. “The Future is Female” is an often-used tagline for millennials, but it holds true. We are shifting stereotypes and powerful women are breaking ground in a new era. In the face of the Trump administration, women are fighting not just for themselves but for each other. There’s a famous photo of Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth wearing a shirt that says, “Girls Invented Punk Rock Not England”. Personally, I’d say Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is inventing her own brand of “punk rock” in Congress. Women are also changing Hollywood too. Thanks to the “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” movements, a new standard of behavior is being set and abusive behavior from powerful male entertainment figures is no longer being tolerated. Women are finally able to be heard, understood and supported for the battles they have fought to be the powerful women that they are. That is a significant change we should all be proud of. Women are powerful beings. Here’s to celebrating who we are and how we can change the world.
Kiss and Tell
Recent Musical Rendezvous with Records!

Savant Harde—“Darkness (Demo EP)”
True metal for true metal heads. If you grew up in the era of Headbangers Ball, you will appreciate this record. Hardcore, nails to the wall metal. This is not scream-o, this is not emo—this is break your bones rock n roll. Refreshing and tantalizing. Get this record.

Movie Club—“Kracken (EP)”
Charming surf rock from two Venice beach boys with charisma. Would make for a great soundtrack to a film, but as a band, dangerously borders on having a single sound. I think we’ve yet to hear everything this band has to offer.

The Sonic Dawn—“Eclipse”
Started playing this music on speaker and selfishly put on headphones to have this indulgence all to myself. This album from this Denmark-based band has me borderline angry at them for making better 60s garage rock than my own American brethren. How dare they! Buying this. You should too!

Heartfelt—“Out Of…(EP)”
If you’ve yet to outgrow your circa-2005 emo persona or you want to reminisce, this EP is for you. Embracing melody with dissidence, outrage and sorrow, build-up and delivery. Yes, even in 2019 this vintage genre is alive and well, and deserves a spot on your shelf next to Hawthorne Heights and your Interpol CDs.

Hat’s Off Gentlemen, It’s Adequate—“Out of Mind”
Romantic melodies to caress the ears of girl and boy alike. If you were a fan of love metal back in its heyday, you will fall in inconsequential love with this record and all it has to offer. Uniting both the knife and the kiss, this album of dark lullabies entrenches you in its wrath and you will not want to let go.

Void—Track: “Vile”
A four piece women fronted band from Australia, influenced by bands like Bikini Kill, L7, The Runaways, The Ramones. The song “Vile” begins with a friendly guitar riff that opens up into feeling like I am in front of a small stage in a rock bar, getting my moneys worth at a show. The singer’s voice fits well with the song, and brings a mood of fun and play, yet serious and to the point. The melody is catchy and the back up vocals are placed in perfect timing. By the third time listening to the song, I started to sing along. The song has the right amount of hard, where I could easily listen to it on repeat for the next couple of days. I would love to hang out at a garage party where this band was headlining the show. I look forward to listening to more of their stuff.

Photo by: Glenn Brady
**Gygax** — **“Draw Breath”**

The semi harsh vocals go well with the steady melody and the clean guitar sound of the song. The sound of the song plays into fantasy and dream-world, creating a vibe that fits perfect with those elements. However, even though this song goes well with the fantasy theme and is completely catchy, it sounds like I am listening to the first few seconds on repeat. There is not much about the song that sticks out or that would make me feel it is not like 100’s of other songs already out there with the exact same sound. I could see how it can play well within a videogame, but apart from that, it is something already listened to a bunch of times when only hearing it once. The singers vocals do not fall harsh over the music and it is easy to understand what he is singing, which is very nice. Clear, catchy, and simple.

**Versing** — **“Silver Dollar”**

Add this band to your playlists—now! Watch for them to hit your town. This band blends prose and promises and sends the senses soaring to new places. It’s beautiful. If you own a guitar like I do, you’ll want to learn to play it yourself. If you’re looking for a new addiction, with this band you’ve come to the right place! Check out their new album, “10000” dropping May 3.

**The Zygotes** — **“Falling Fruit”**

Dayton, Ohio is home to many creatives and The Zygotes are among some of their finest! “Falling Fruit” takes you on an electrical whirlwind filled with heffalumps and woozles! It’s a high you will not want to come down from or a record you’ll want to stop playing. Key track: “Swallow, Circle, Sleep”. Sexyrock. Dig it!

**standards** — **“Friends”**

Okay, I’ll admit I was attracted to this band because of their adorable cover art, but sonically, they deliver. Whoever says “Rock is dead” has not heard this band, and needs to. Share amongst your friends and the bands you know. Tell them to step up their game because this band is ready to challenge them!

**Dubbed** — **“Withdraws”**

God, how it must suck to live in SLC. At least I know because of this record my punk rockers are keeping shit real. “I Hate You and I Hope You Die” is a favorite track. This album was recorded live and I am pissed and jealous to not have been there. What an incredible band!

**Boob Sweat** — **“EP”**

With a sound as sweet and kickass as this, you KNOW they will be in our next issue! Bubblegum meets punk rock riot! This is a great debut from a girl rock band, what we need more of. One listen and I’m a fan for life. Punk rock girls ready to rip! Kicks ass blaring in the car everywhere you go! 10/10!
Shannon Basalla - Graphic Designer / Artist / Activist

I grew up in the Greater Cleveland area, but currently reside in Ypsilanti, MI where I went to school for art. As a professional graphic designer, my work centers around non-profit organizations and progressive groups. I have always loved the idea of using art for good to help people in need. I grew loving punk rock, which has also influenced my art. When I can, I try to pick up design work from local bands.

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FIGHT STREET HARASSMENT

STOP TELLING ME TO SMILE!

HARASSMENT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!

CAUTION

WOMANIST
GET WOKE
STAY WOKE
CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL
DESTROY the Patriarchy
Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us! Tell us about yourself and your art. Where are you from?

I was born in New Orleans, LA on May 17, 1982, but I grew in Montgomery, AL.

How have the place(s) you’ve lived influenced your work?

Living in a city where art is hardly accepted or appreciated, really hasn't had much of an effect on my art. I tend to create art that has goth undertones and 80s era art.

What are your preferred mediums and materials?

I use a lot of polymer clay when I create a sculpture. It’s easy to paint on when use acrylics or oils.

What was your first creation?

My first art piece was created in 2006. It was a 18x24 canvas painting of a yellow smiley face.

How did you find your own voice as an artist?

I started to find my own voice in my junior year of college in 2010.

Who has been the greatest influence on your creativity?

My sculpture professor from AUM college had a huge influence on me. She inspired me to make sculptures.
Who or what keeps your art alive and replenishes your need to create?

Making art is like breathing to me. If I go too long without making art, I stop feeling normal.

Do you collect art yourself?

I have a couple of art pieces by Victoria Cook.

Who are your favorite artisans?

Victoria Cook, Tim Burton, and Keith Haring.

How do you price your work?

I price my work based on size, materials, and how much time I put into it.

Are your pieces available to order online?

I have a few pieces online, but most of my art is available at Product of Montgomery.

What’s the best way to contact you to purchase your art? I can be contacted by phone, email, or through Instagram (@brandonrawlinsonartwork). 334-399-4977 brandonsartsales@gmail.com

What are your current projects for 2019?

I'm planning to finish up a painting/sculpture for my friends' baby's room, and I'm working on a sculpture called “I took hams away from orphans.” One day I'll be able to actually explain it.

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us!
That’s All, Folks!

Next Issue: March 2019

Stay tuned, new website launching soon!

For Video Interviews, Check us out on YouTube!

Want to join our Team? Want to submit something?

Are you a Nonprofit? Want us to lend a mic to your cause?

Are you a whistleblower? Activist? Ordinary Joe or Jane?

Rock band with a show, album, or just a dream?

It does not matter! Contact us!
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