

MUSIC

Fill your Speedos with song

The north wind blows big queer fun into Portland

BY CORI TARATOOT

If you find yourself surrounded by beautiful men in Speedos and masks, soaked in a sonic shower of sweet angelic indie-pop voices and/or entranced by the forthright lyricism of a charismatic queer Canadian, you just might be at a Hidden Cameras show. Led by frontman Joel Gibb, the Cameras flaunt a definite flair for onstage orchestral excess.

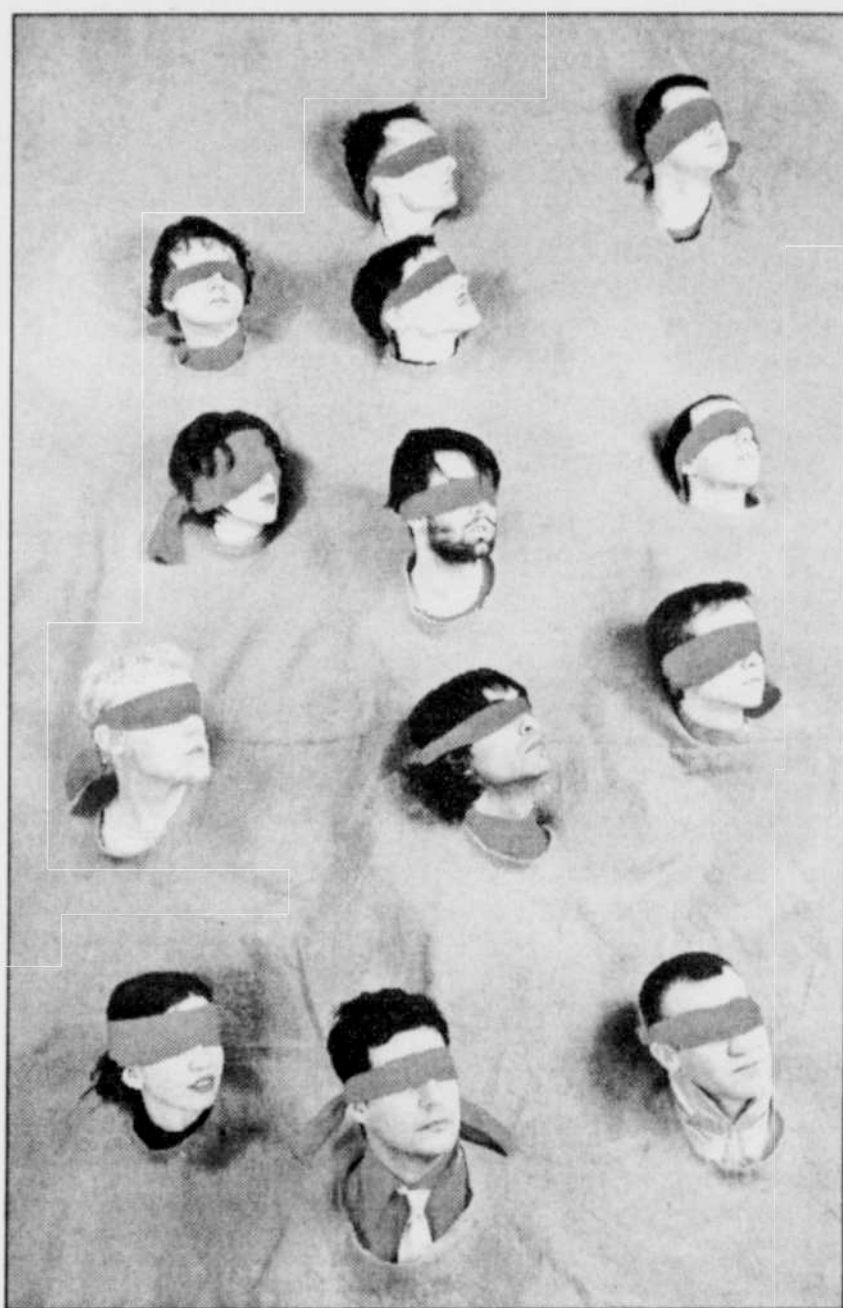
With their debut release seducing the seven continents, The Hidden Cameras have finally imprinted their live performance good vibes onto metal and plastic. The name of the band's virgin recording?

The Smell of Our Own.

You're not alone if you're wondering what exactly that album title means. When weekly *Now Toronto* interviewed Gibb last spring, he explained: "The most relevant metaphor to me is the smells, the things that happen to your body that you're not supposed to talk about.... There's a huge distancing in the way mainstream culture talks about sex. I think things should be addressed in a really candid and innocent and real way, without irony. Like describing some sort of moment of intimacy without taking it all back at the end of the song."

Now their irony-free "gay church folk" sound (a turn of phrase penned by Gibb) is turning on audiences beyond their hometown of Toronto. And on Nov. 29 at the surreptitiously swank Nocturnal, Portland gets our fair share. Anything might happen. Expect your loosened pelvis to fly free, or maybe your eyeballs will roll blissfully into the back of your skull. Who knows, you might even jump on stage and join in the bawdy bacchanalia. The Hidden Cameras are known to transform audience members from witnesses into participants.

Gibb and his troupe will no doubt shout their love of God and Man and Matter from



Welcome our neighbors to the north The Hidden Cameras to Nocturnal on Nov. 29

the rooftops, but you can also expect them to tackle issues affecting the queer community.

What better way to burn off those tryptophan-stuffed fat cells? The show's on a Saturday night, December is closing in on us, so thank your lucky stars: The Hidden Cameras are here to fill our hearts (and pants) with song. Now all we have to do is show up rested—and ready to fly high. [C]

Queer-fronted band The Divided opens for THE HIDDEN CAMERAS 8 p.m. Nov. 29 at Nocturnal, 1800 E. Burnside St. Tickets are \$7 at the door.

CORI TARATOOT is a Portland free-lance writer.

REVIEWS

D-D-DON'T STOP THE BEAT
Junior Senior • Atlantic

It's official: America LOVES queers. Well, the boys at least. It's *All Relative*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. And weren't we all wishing Italian stud-boy Rocco from *The Restaurant* took it like a man? Well, kids, wear yourself from the television and disco down to the giddy beats of Junior Senior.

A Danish duo riding big homo-waves, Junior Senior (appearing Nov. 21 at Seattle's Crocodile Cafe) mixes dance-aholic sonic cocktails equal parts New Wave, hip-hop, Motown and electroclash.

"Move Your Feet," the first single from *D-D-Don't Stop the Beat*, spent nine weeks on the Top 10 U.K. singles chart. It's *Off the Wall*-era Michael Jackson disco contagion, and now the U.S. press is eating it up, too: Regis and Kelly, Carson Daly, Sharon Osbourne, E!, Jimmy Kimmel, MTV, glossy music mags.

But let's admit it: The music lands secondary to the easy dish. Y'know, Junior is straight (and skinny). Senior is gay (and, um, plump). Favorite band as kids? Wham! Most Americans probably have no idea where Danish people live and don't really care—but man do we need to dance.

To know everything you need to know about Junior Senior's music, just listen to Track 4, "Chicks and Dicks." The two trade lines ("B-b-boys I'm handsome and tall/G-g-girls I'm nasty and small") over hand-claps and a monstrous drum kick.

Attempt to resist the happy pull, and you're missing out on some serious Saturday night shenanigans. Dig out the disco ball, the fog machine, those hazy memories of rafter swinging and line dancing. Succumb!

—CT

TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT!
Pansy Division • Alternative Tentacles

Who wouldn't at least want to like Pansy Division? The San Francisco foursome are a queer band whose album *Total Entertainment!* is their seventh release with an independent punk label. They're earnestly committed to their vision and have exposed a great many people of all sexualities to an enthusiastic and explicit cele-



bration of the intricacies of boy-boy sex.

So why have my feelings about them only ever ranged from indifferent to insulted? It's simple: While I have to acknowledge that they're probably doing something culturally positive, the music itself is unequivocally terrible.

The Pansy Division catalog mostly consists of leering, joyless novelty songs like "Bill and Ted's Homosexual Adventure" and "Beercan Boy"—the latter being a reference to penile dimensions—barked out by undeservedly self-satisfied singer/lyricist Jon Ginoli.

When gay singer/musician Roddy Bottom of the great queer band Imperial Teen discussed Pansy Division in a 1994 *Rolling Stone* article, he likened them to Warrant, a band mainly known for their dumb, single-minded objectification (of women, in their case). The comparison was hardly a compliment, but it was accurate. Imagine "Weird Al" Yankovic singing about gay male sex in a tone mimicking those testosterone-overdosing, straight-boy metal bands of the '80s, all sung over a fairly anonymous punk clatter, and you'll know what Pansy Division sounds like.

I'm happy to report that *Total Entertainment!* contains a higher-than-ever proportion of tolerable tunes to cringe-worthy ones. This is no thanks to Ginoli, whose offerings include the very ill-advised synth-romp "No Protection," which combines the over-imitated vocoder of Cher's "Believe" with a lyric that seems to encapsulate an after-school special about barebacking, and "I Whipped His Ass in Tennis (Then He Fucked My Ass in Bed)," which has all of the cheesiness but none of the hotness the title might lead you to expect.

On the other hand, "When He Comes Home," "Spiral" and "First Betrayal," all written and sung by bassist/singer Chris Freeman, are catchy power pop with straightforward, emotively vocalized lyrics, a combination that pleasantly recalls Weezer or The Smoking Popes.

A potential Freeman solo career is a more realistic cause for optimism than any hope that Pansy Division might someday find even a shred of the inspiration, wit or defiance they've always been so strangely and thoroughly lacking. So I'll be keeping my fingers crossed for that.

—Christopher McQuain [C]



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