

MUSIC

"Don't you stop. We won't stop."

Le Tigre moves up in the world

BY CORI TARATOOT



From left, JD Samson, Kathleen Hanna and Joanna Fateman are the feminist crime fighters known as Le Tigre

That's why the latest chapter in Le Tigre's biography promises so much—and scares the hell out of mainstream America and (un-doubtedly) the religious right. Amid the turmoil of 9/11 and Iraq, "red" states and "blue" states and an emerging fascist state, Le Tigre is upping the ante.

To me, the heart and soul of the Pacific Northwest beats loudest in Portland and Olympia. Maybe it's the coffee, or the tattooed masses, maybe it's the native rock bands, but all I know is I've never danced harder and felt less inhibited than in a dark hole in Portland or Olympia, at the feet of some punk-rock trio or two dykes and a DJ.

So that's why it makes sense to me that Le Tigre can get my ass in motion like no other band can. Le Tigre: Kathleen Hanna. Kathleen Hanna: Bikini Kill. Bikini Kill: Olympia. As is often the case, we can thank our fine Olympians for helping Portland get our party on.

When I hear Le Tigre, my entire world changes. I can't help it: My body reacts involuntarily. It's a physiological response, whether I like it or not. And I know other people, like me, who don't dance yet find themselves in the crowd at a Le Tigre show, moving closer and closer to the stage, until they're lost in the crowd, shaking their shit.

Part of what makes Le Tigre so substantial, unlike most electronic-punk-dance music on iPods these days—Ratatat and !!! come to mind—is their message. You can call them feminist crime fighters, you can call them queer-friendly champions of social justice. Whether it's the complicated issues surrounding sexual abuse or the inherent misogyny of the American political and judicial systems, Le Tigre forces the audience to remain awake and wide-eyed to the injustices of our daily lives.

From her sonic beginnings in Bikini Kill, one of the early riot-grrl bands to achieve name recognition outside the Pacific Northwest, Kathleen Hanna has been a loud voice of revolt. Now as a New Yorker and a primary vocalist in Le Tigre, she's taking her megaphone and blasting her view of things to the largest audience yet: Planet Earth.

When independent, feminist-run Mr. Lady Records folded last year, Le Tigre found themselves looking for a new record label to call home. Consistently selling out shows at medium-sized venues, the band knew they had a steady following, but they wanted more.

Hanna had spoken freely in interviews about yearning for mainstream success and wanting it for her peers, like Sleater-Kinney. To misunderstand her motives as greedy reveals the ignorance of any critic who makes that accusation—Hanna is fighting for social justice; if she can get her music out to more people, then right has a chance of winning out over wrong.

So she and her bandmates signed to Universal/Strummer, a major label with global reach, and this month released their third full-length album, *This Island*. During the recording process, "I was, I still am, politically depressed. I really need to cling to the sound of people marching," Hanna said in an October interview with *PopMatters*. "And this record is going to go all over the world. It's gonna be really easy for people to get their hands on...and I really want

people all over the world to know that everyone in North America does not agree with this administration."

So if you're going to drag yourself out to one show this winter, if you find yourself plummeting into a post-election funk, or if the darkness and rain are starting to sink into your bones, heading to the Roseland on Nov. 22 might just shake you up. Because not only will Le Tigre be headlining, but here's your chance to surround yourself for an entire night with kindred spirits. The audience, the queer openers (Robosapien and Lesbians on Ecstasy) and the heroic headliners will be creating a safe space for you. Girl, boy, grrl, boi, transitioning, transi-

tioned, bisexual, bi-curious or nothing at all. Whoever you are, if you need communion, if you need to feel like yourself again, if you feel like you don't belong in your own country, come join the dance party and sweat it out of you. **J**

LE TIGRE plays 8 p.m. Nov. 22 at Roseland Theater, 8 N.W. Sixth Ave. Tickets are \$15 from TicketsWest.

CORI TARATOOT is a record collector, a PDX-POP Now! organizer, a Wilco stalker and a music writer. She can be reached at ctaratoot@comcast.net.

Punk'd

Now more than ever, we need Queercore Blitz

BY CORI TARATOOT



Legendary Brazilian hardcore feminists Dominatrix are part of the first tour to showcase an all-queer lineup of punk, rock and hardcore bands from around the world

The Clash and the Sex Pistols in the mid-1970s. Bikini Kill and L7 in the early 1990s. There are times when the world needs punk rock, with its revolt and anger and liberation. And, more often than not, punk rock delivers.

Right now it feels as if we've never needed anything more. Anna Jacobsen-Leong, the organizer and founder of Queercore Blitz—a seven-city West Coast tour of queer-identified punk bands—knows the power of outrageous music. She's lived it.

"I've been into the punk scene since I was a kid," says Jacobsen-Leong, a native Oregonian. "And I'm queer, and there's not too many places where those two things intersect anymore. In the early 1990s I felt like things were happening, with the riot-grrl stuff. Then I felt a void. So as I found myself managing queer punk bands and taking them on the road, bringing a bunch of bands together for a tour just seemed like a natural evolution for me."

Speaking to Jacobsen-Leong via telephone at her home in New York, it's clear that Queercore Blitz is a labor of love. Hauling six bands' gear down the West Coast, playing for dirt-cheap in all-ages venues—it's the kind of work

that pulls you into debt, the kind of work that derails your day job.

But Jacobsen-Leong feels uniquely compelled to follow her dream. "I want to get us to Texas. I'm pissed off about the election, and I want to take the music to the kids, bring it to them, all ages, so the kids who can't afford to travel can still see us and know that there's something better out there."

Performing will be Brazilian hardcore feminists Dominatrix, NYC metal-grrls Triple Creme, art-rock trio The Dead Betties and Portland's own Jack Queen featuring Emily Kingan, formerly of The Haggard. After a successful East Coast leg in April, Queercore Blitz will tour the Midwest and Canada in May and June 2005. **J**

QUEERCORE BLITZ starts 8:30 p.m. Dec. 3 at the Meow Meow, 320 S.E. Second Ave., and 8 p.m. Dec. 5 at Eugene's WOW Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave. Tickets are \$7-\$8 at the door.

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