

Bite into This

As a band trying to make a memorable impression on various media sources, you have to be particular about what to include in your press kit, aside from the standard bio and CD — should it be candy? A free ticket to a show? In the case of up-and-coming sultry rock group **Mon Frere**, the press kit includes the essentials plus a pair of plastic vampire fangs. Memorable? I think so.

Mon Frere's first disc, the *Real Vampires EP* (hence the fangs), is by all means the embodiment of the sass and night time rock 'n' roll energy that a pair of plastic fangs implies. The album definitely has a bite; lead singer and keyboard player Nouela O. Johnson's vocals are seductive in a brutal kind of way. Combine that with wicked keyboard riffs and guitarist Kyle B. Swisher's mean power chords and you have the recipe for some bloodthirsty rock 'n' roll. (Swisher is also credited with "shrieking" on the album.)

Although Mon Frere definitely has the potential to become one of the year's most badass rock bands, they still have some maturing to do in terms of the dynamics of their music. While similar groups such as the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Pretty Girls Make Graves have enough confidence to add some slow and more melancholy songs to their mix, a lot of Mon Frere's catalogue — although great — ends up sounding too similar. Nonetheless, their live show should be something you don't want to miss. Even though Mon Frere might not be up to the vampire-esque standard of killing with one bite, they're still powerful enough to go for the jugular and transform you into a faithful fan. Mon Frere plays a free show at 4 pm Friday, Aug. 12 at CD World. —Emily Freeman

Stick Up Men

The most interesting musicians often work the seams between genres, which makes it frustrating to try to put their music into the genre pigeonholes that record labels construct. So: how to describe the music of **Jerry Marotta** and **Tom Griesgraber**? Instrumental rock? Yes, their sound is fueled by Marotta's backbeat, but as one of the top session drummers in pop music (Paul McCartney, Indigo Girls, John Mayer, Elvis Costello, Trey Anastasio), Marotta does a lot more than that. Jazz? There's plenty of improvisation between Marotta and Griesgraber, who plays the Chapman stick, a 12-string guitar/bass/synth hybrid played by tapping strings behind frets, enabling him simultaneously make melodies with both hands. But the music feels a bit more composed and compact than what most listeners think of when they hear the J-word. Ambient?

Jerry Marotta and Tom Griesgraber



Most of it's warm and mellow enough to not frighten away any New Age types, but the inventive tunes do more than just conjure an atmosphere. World music? A vet of Peter Gabriel's band, Marotta knows plenty of rhythms. But ultimately, the duo's laid-back prog rock creates its own category, and the best way to understand it is to check samples at www.spottedpeccary.com, or, better yet, hear them in person at Cozmic Pizza at 8 pm on Saturday, Aug. 13 along with their labelmate, Norwegian guitarist/synthmeister Erik Wøllo, whose

pensive, spacious soundscapes will appeal to Hearts of Space heads. \$10. —Brett Campbell

Urban Minstrels

Po' Girl, a three-woman band from Canada, is the kind of stuff you'd be just as likely to hear coming out of a trendy coffee shop as you would on a Bourbon Street corner. Po' Girl takes a hearty dose of Depression blues, old-time country grit and a dash of urban poetry steeped in New Orleans jazz. Vocalist Allison Russell's silky vocals are evolved from the soulful styles of greats like Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday, with the plaintive country lament perfected by the likes of Patsy Cline and Lucinda Williams. Po' Girl knows the inherent power of a wailing harmonica and a deceptively simple melody laced with haunting vocal harmonies.

Po' Girl originally began as a side project started by Be Good Tanyas founding member Trish Klein, who took a hiatus from the Tanyas after her BGT bandmate Frazey Ford gave birth to a baby girl. However, the new band realized that the project had germinated into something more than just a temporary distraction. Po' Girl is a dynamic super-trio, in which all three women have their hands in, or on, a wide variety of different instruments. Klein is schooled on banjo, mandolin, harmonica and guitar, while Diona Davies is a fiddler with skills on the tuba, guitar, piano and trombone, to name a few. And while Russell is usually wowing the audience with her sultry vocals, she's a multi-instrumentalist as well: Her repertoire includes the clarinet, pennywhistle, guitar and bodhran.

After touring extensively throughout the world to promote their self-titled debut album, Po' Girl is on the road again to promote their latest effort, *Vagabond Lullabies*. It's mellow, thick music that flows over the eardrum like molasses dripping from a plate of fresh hotcakes — soothing comfort food guaranteed to satisfy. Po' Girl plays at 9 pm Monday, Aug. 15 at Sam Bond's Garage. \$6. —Sara Brickner

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