

Dark Side of Life

Vexium's old school metal blows eardrums and minds.

With the portrait of a skeletal, decaying clown on their demo cover and a popular song that describes a date with Satan himself in erotic detail, it's obvious Vexium represents all that is nasty in metal. They blast your ears with a gritty bass-heavy sound that would make an arena quake, then rip out scathing, screaming vocals.

The group brings together a trio of ex-con rockers and influences from across the rock and metal

spectrum. Guitarist and vocalist Brian the Bastard prefers old-school thrash such as Destruction, Slayer, Exodus and Motörhead, while drummer Sickboy Rick jams out to newer bands like Lamb of God. And then there's vocalist and bassist Pippi Paula, who prefers the laid-back, evil grooves of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. "It's awesome because we come from three different musical backgrounds," she says, "so it really brings together our sound."

Lyricaly, the band vents satirical humor, frustration and anger based on life experiences



VEXIUM, MENTAL CURRENCY, GRIEVING SUN
9 pm Sat. July 29
Samurai Duck • \$5

and the struggles each member has experienced. "Metal is a way for me to get the anger and annoyance out," says Brian. "Our lyrics are

derived from things that happened when we were arrested and things going on in our lives at the time."

"I was a heroin addict for 15 years," Paula says. "My lyrics talk about the pain of that, and what it all entailed. I'm not ashamed of it. It's not a big deal for me to tell people about it."

The band just recently dropped their first demo, and they're heading to the studio to create a full-length album. With the rough patches of their lives hopefully in the past, Vexium isn't ready to let anything bring them down again. **EW**

Turning Heads

Rubberneckers twist genres together.

Brash and raucous, The Rubberneckers are preparing to export their whiskey-soaked blend of country and punk from their home in Blue Lake, Calif. to Eugene and beyond. While the two genres that meld to create "cow punk" might seem an unlikely combination, singer and rhythm guitarist Clay Smith explains that there are more similarities between country and punk than you might expect. "They're really not that much different," Smith says. "Those two crowds of people don't necessarily mix — country fans and punk fans — but the music in its simplest form is based on three- and four-chord progressions, and the songs are typically about being drunk or being broken up with or heartache in general. So they are pretty similar in the construction and subject matter of the music."

The Rubberneckers' uptempo, headbanging incarnation of country, with the slight drawl of a singer who (as the song suggests) may have been "Drunk by Four," is hardly anything new. According to Smith, "cow punk" is a style that is seeing increasing popularity in underground circles, where lines between genres are constantly blurred.

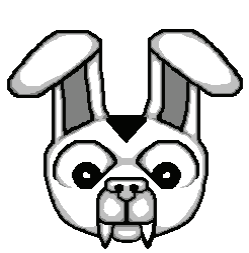
THE RUBBERNECKERS, THE RIFFBROKERS, SID AND FANCY
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On tour to promote their most recent recording, *Live from the Farmhouse*, the follow-up to their first album, *This is the Whiskey Rebellion*, the Rubberneckers will appeal to heavy drinkers, Ramones fans and "anyone who wants to hear upbeat, catchy, hooky music," Smith adds. — *Martha Calhoun*

The Rubberneckers



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