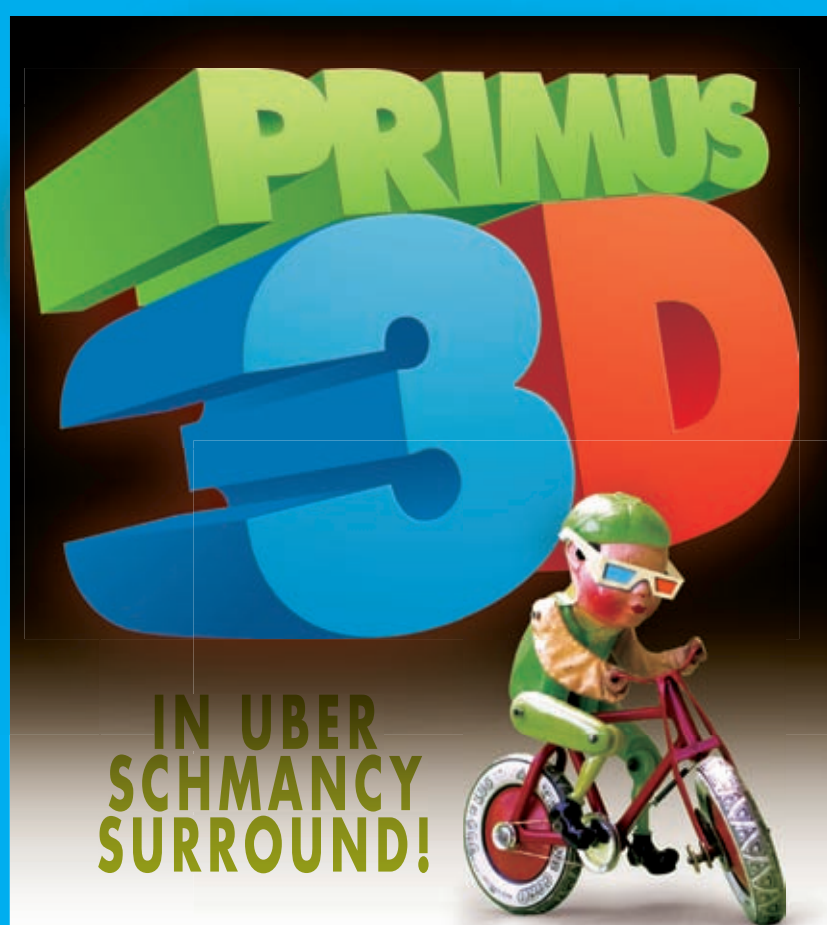




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WHY NOT WHY?

Can vulgarity be artful? Can obscenity be beautiful? Who decides these things anyway? Who knows? Indie hip-hop/rock experiment **Why?** is pushing the boundaries, trying to find out. "I don't see Why? as a hip-hop group," says Josiah Wolf, who forms the core of Why? with his brother Yoni. Josiah says his brother grew up on rap, while his background is in jazz. The two combined these styles with a shared interest in rock 'n' roll to form Why?

Josiah feels hip hop is definitely the blueprint for what the group does, expanding on the rap formula with diverse instrumentation tailored for live performance and showcasing Yoni's words. And while Why? has a lot to offer musically, it's the lyrics that make the group distinctive. Yoni is sometimes crass and vulgar, and other times confessional and layered — mixing Eminem's snot-nosed insolence with the heart-on-the-sleeve emotion of an indie singer.

From "Strawberries" on their latest album, 2012's *Mumps, Etc.*, Yoni starts juvenile: "I don't wear rubbers and I don't wear sunscreen," before he turns introspective: "I want to heat my hide, not hide under something." Later he sums up adolescent angst perfectly with: "The shit I said to high school counselors haunts me," capping it with the melancholy refrain: "and I am not OK, boys."

Why?, Astronautalis and Dream Tiger play 8 pm Monday, March 4, at WOW Hall; \$15 adv., \$18 door. — William Kennedy



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