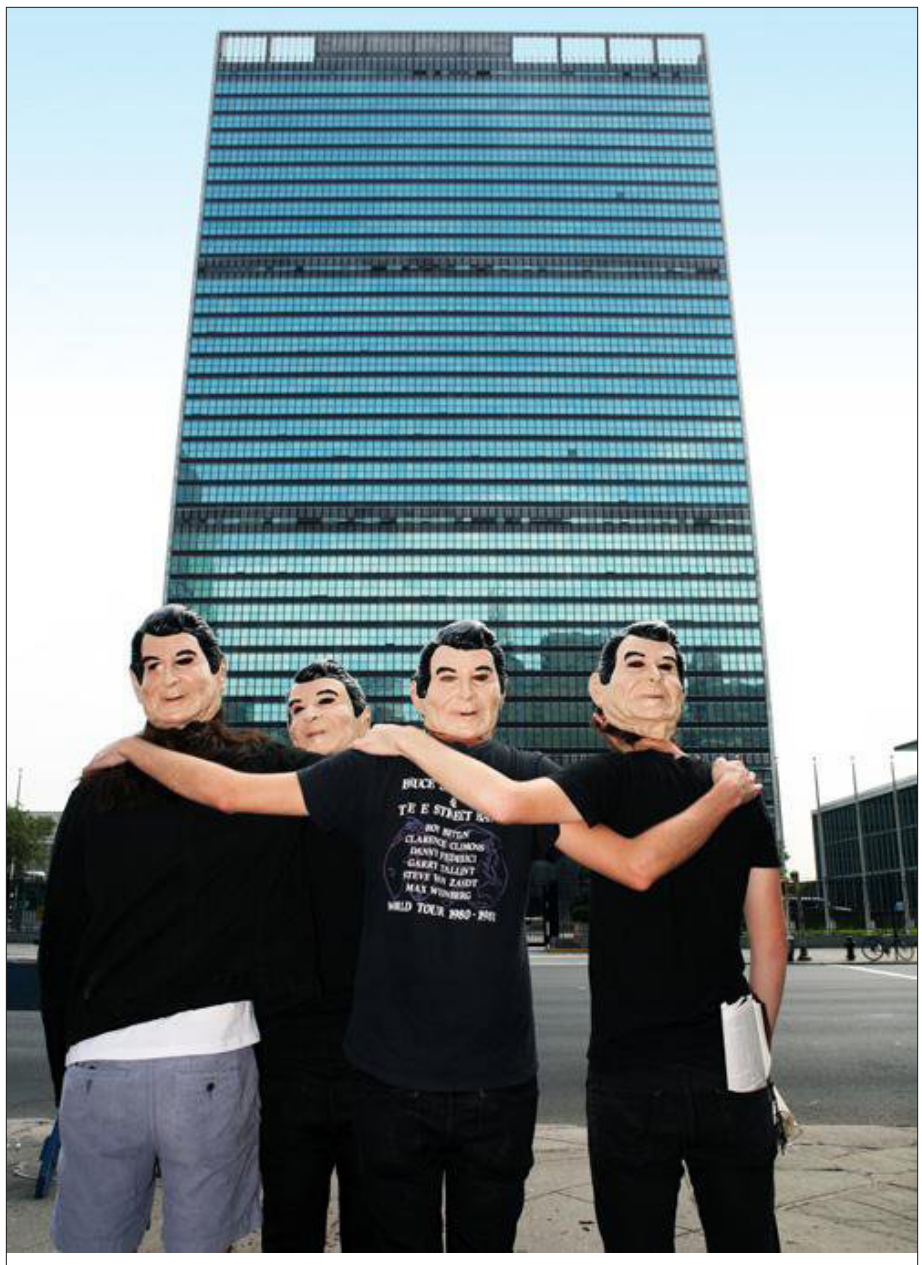

THE BAND THAT WASN'T THERE

United Nations is a punk-rock super group of Ronald Reagan-mask-wearing banditos. Not just any band could get away with standing up to both The Beatles and the *actual* United Nations. But see exhibit A: the cover of the band's 2008 debut featuring The Beatles' famous Abbey Road image (this time with The Fab Four engulfed in flames and crossing right to left). And exhibit B: The real U.N. sent the band a cease-and-desist letter for unauthorized use of the name and U.N. logo on Facebook.

So how did the band fight the law and end up winning? For starters, nothing the band does is copyrighted. United Nations encourages downloading, copying and sharing its work and, except for vocalist Geoff Rickly (formerly of punk-emo darlings Thursday), all members are contractually obligated to remain anonymous. In the eyes of the law, United Nations, *the band*, barely exists.

"I don't feel like many bands take chances anymore," Rickly told *Alternative Press* in 2013. "There's a lot of talk about being punk and revolutionary and this and that, but it's also awfully safe — punk seems awfully safe to me now, so I like the idea of doing something that's actually dangerous."

Musically, United Nations will sandblast your face holes with songs like "False Flags" from 2014's *Four More Years*. A key underpinning of the '90s-era emo-screamo is — underneath all the noise — a lot of melody, particularly in the guitars. And the relatively gentle song "Meanwhile On Main Street" exposes Rickly's roots in Thursday. But overall, United Nations is a pulsating, painful, exhilarating and experimental blast-core collective making interesting political agit-punk statements for our time.

United Nations play with Silver Snakes, Novellas, Cursed Graves and Recluse 8 pm Tuesday, Nov. 11, at The Boreal, 450 W. 3rd Ave; $10 adv., $12 door. — *William Kennedy*

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