

Johnny Vinyl: 'Bryan's Super Happy Fun Time!'

By Johnny Vinyl
For Go! Magazine

College radio of the 1980s, which eventually evolved into the "indie" scene of the new millennium, was heavily influenced by the underground/college music coming out of the American South. Bands like R.E.M., the B-52s, Pylon, Green on Red, Love Tractor, Let's Active and more took the punk and new wave of the day and put their "Southern" stamp on — and in the process changed the music as we knew it.

One can certainly take an artist out of the area, but there is something inherently unique once music is infused with that Southern vibe.

North Carolina native Bryan Bielanski, formerly of the punk band Angwish, now performing as a solo artist, continues in that



Bryan Bielanski/Contributed

Bryan Bielanski will perform April 28 at 7 p.m. at 40 Taps in Pendleton. The North Carolina musician is on tour promoting his recent releases, "Bryan's Super Happy Fun Time!" and "Bryan's Super Happy Fun Time! II."

tradition with his 12th release, "Bryan's Super Happy Fun Time!"

On his website, Bielanski describes his music as: If The Beatles and Nirvana had a kid together. That's a pretty bold statement, but by the end of the 73-plus minutes, the listener has been given ample proof that the description is actually very accurate.

While Bielanski may not im-

mediately sound like either of the iconic bands, their influences are subtly highlighted yet never imitating.

Kurt Cobain's songwriting is what set him apart from most of his contemporaries. He wrote what he knew or witnessed, often with concise brevity. Bielanski follows a similar format.

"My lyrics are largely autobiographical but there's also a bit of

fiction thrown in here and there if it serves the song," he said. "I am a firm adherent of Mark Twain's 'write what you know' — if I'm not writing about things important to me in my life I feel it comes across as insincere, which to me is the biggest sin in music."

And that is one of the things that make "Super Happy" such a great listen — there is very little "happy" about the subject matter on the album. Catharsis can happen by getting things out in the open. Many listeners might consider this a "therapy" album.

Case in point: "About My Life" may be the perfect breakup song, with lyrics like, "There's nothing right about my wife, like a loser with no life. There's nothing right with my divorce, like a killer with no corpse" — there is little confusion as to the writer's stance, but somehow the pain is what makes it such a compelling track.

The Beatles connection is also apt. For many, The Beatles' eponymous album, more commonly known as the "White

Album," is their best because it offers the widest variety of music. "Bryan's Super Happy Fun Time!" provides the same eclecticism musically. Everything from acoustic ballads to punk to electronica and all points in between are given equal time on the album. Literally something for everyone.

Bryan Bielanski will perform on April 28 at 7 p.m. at 40 Taps, 337 SW Emigrant Ave. in Pendleton. By the time he hits the Round-Up City, he will have released "Bryan's Super Happy Fun Time! II." While it will be a little more concise at 12 tracks versus the 20 tracks on Part I, it promises more of the same.

Take a little time with the music and come to understand how Bryan's pain can be everyone's gain.

A retired educator, Johnny Vinyl spends his days with his two German shepherds, reading and riding the vibe. His column focuses on music. Contact him via tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com.

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