

# RFT

RIVERFRONT TIMES



A HEROIN-ADDICTED HAIRSTYLIST GUARANTEED  
TO SCARE THE ST. LOUIS FILM FEST STRAIGHT

## horse & scissors

BY MIKE SEELY

November 9-15, 2005

FREE

Volume 29, Number 45

riverfronttimes.com

# Music



## Black Celebration

### Welcome to Harkonin's metal smorgasbord

BY PAUL FRISWOLD

**H**arkonin vocalist Jason Barron laughs explosively, interrupts himself mid-sentence and surreptitiously palms the lighter his son Braden has been using to singe table-top debris. He smiles at Braden, who's unaware that the lighter he's looking for is hidden in his father's hand — the hand with "blut" tattooed across the knuckles in thickly serif-ed letters. Braden, a wiry kid who can't be more than twelve, gives up looking and resumes agitating for a quick run to KFC, but he knows he's outnumbered by the rest of Harkonin: bassist Tom Quach, guitarist Matt Coyle and drummer Clayton Gore.

Still, his mention of The Colonel reminds the elder Barron of a recent discovery at another fast-food joint.

"The Long John Silver's off of St. Charles Rock Road has the baddest jukebox there, dude," Barron testifies. "Everything in it is good."

"There's a jukebox at Long John Silver's?" Coyle asks.

"Yes! It was a bunch of Frankie Valli and Chuck Berry and James Brown and I'm just like pickin' all this shit," Barron says. "My girlfriend is like, 'Are we gonna go?' I told her, 'I'm still eatin' a hush puppy!' I'm playin' all this shit." He laughs again, louder this time.

Chuck Berry may be an odd choice for a vocalist, but Frankie Valli and James Brown make more sense. The latter's earthy grunts and syncopated yelps have clearly rubbed off on Barron, who howls with feral delight in his own song "Heksenbränd," right before he grates out, "Heksenbränd, the witches' fire/Demon princess, whore of the undead/I pump you full of sin."

Behind Barron's acidic rasp, Gore stomps out a lung-flattening double-bass pattern, with Quach's guttural bass sliding deeper into the abyss with every riff. Coyle shreds an inverted scale of nasally sharp notes between Barron's outbursts, and then Harkonin collectively leap forward into the galloping race against death that causes heads to snap with vicious glee; just when your neck is good and warmed up, they rein it back to a dangerous, martial lurch.

Three gut-churning riffs in just under four minutes — any one of them worth their weight in pure, unadulterated metal — show how the band has staked out a territory somewhere between the raw, immediate

roar of the Scandinavian hordes and the groove of classic death/thrash. It's the sort of visceral assault that aficionados of the form endlessly seek out, and Harkonin's *Sermons of Anguish* is absolutely filthy with them.

*Anguish's* dark majesty is all the more remarkable because half of this Harkonin is relatively new to the band since its 2003 release, *Seductress of the Unlight*. Drummer Mike Evans and guitarists Drake Poeschel and Lael Clark have been replaced by Gore and Coyle, respectively. Some of those departures were amicable — and some weren't.

"Drake went to medical school; Mike's



Harkonin: "I do want to please metalheads."

becoming a lawyer in Chicago," Gore explains. "I was just playing drums by myself, and the opportunity to play with these guys came up. When Drake left we were looking for a second guitarist, and Matt came in. Little did we know he'd be the only guitarist."

Lael Clark's reasons for no longer being part of Harkonin are not really open for discussion. "Ask Warghoul about him," Coyle says, referring to the Illinois band Clark joined and has since been "excommunicated" from, according to the latest posting on Warghoul's Web site. No other explanation for Clark's exit is offered.

The changes in personnel have definitely altered Harkonin's songwriting process. Quach notes that before, "Drake wrote the majority of the songs, and Lael wrote some. I was kinda the guy who was like, 'OK. I'll play that song.'"

"Drake was very specific with his stuff," Barron adds. "He could play those black-metal riffs like crazy."

"Yeah, he was picky about his music,"

Quach agrees. "There's a lot of metal out there, but Drake only listened to, like, five bands."

Not that Quach and Barron are knocking the earlier incarnation of their band; *Seductress of the Unlight* still packs an impressive wallop, after all. But the current version of Harkonin isn't afraid to break off from a riff to explore something that lies beneath the surface of the song, finding dark places that yield much more rewarding thrills. You can bang your head to *Seductress*, but you can throw your whole body into *Sermons'* horrific maelstrom.

And in the hinterlands of extreme metal, that sort of power gets you noticed — but not as quickly as Harkonin would like. "We're entirely self-funded," Gore explains. "We put out both CDs on our own, send 'em out all over the place just like any other band. Labels, like the big labels, are more interested in signing stuff they know is gonna sell, that sounds like everybody else. Like joke metal or mall metal. Or metalcore. They'll sign anybody if you're a metalcore band." He sniffs.

"But eventually, as much as word's getting around, somebody's gonna knock on our door and we'll get the right deal. We can continue to do this ourselves, as long as it takes [to get signed]. Matt works at a studio, we can get a good rate there, and we can always record. And Lee [Skyles] from Chunks of

Meat does good putting the package [shows] together and that's right in town. But ideally we'd like to get the hell out of here."

Coyle agrees that extensive touring is the dream, but not financially possible right now. "We can book our own shows out of town, but it'd be nice to get some support so we could tour for a couple months and come back."

"Do we have to come back?" Barron asks. (Probably, if they want to see their drummer again — Gore has two kids and a job.)

Still, even if they lock up a record deal, the members of Harkonin have no illusions about the commercial viability of their music. In the marginalized world of extreme metal, where bloody-guts intensity and liver-scorching blasphemy win fans' black hearts, there's little promise of radio play or even mainstream exposure on the level of a more commercial band such as Slipknot — and Harkonin knows it.

"This kind of music is always going to be underground," Gore **continued on page 52**

## A to Z

BY ANNIE ZALESKI

**O**r a rainy Halloween afternoon, two-thirds of the Vultures — guitarist-vocalist Ryan Koenig and bassist-vocalist Ashley Hohman — munch on fries and chili at the Courtesy Diner. As the Doors and Johnny Cash croon ve'vet from the jukebox, Koenig and Hohman frequently finish each other's sentences and chime in excitedly while discussing their favorite music.

"I've been really big into girl groups all my life," Hohman says. "When we [motions to Koenig] first started hanging out, that's when we really got into music —"

"—That's when Oldies 1430 was still around — that station got me into a lot of different stuff," Koenig interjects.

"Yeah, and we just started getting into more rockabilly," Hohman says.

"When I was a kid, I was listening to Dylan and [Captain] Beefheart and the Beatles," Koenig continues. "When I got to high school, I listened to more punk rock: Adicts—"

"—Ramones, of course," Hohman adds. "I really got into the Cramps and X. Screaming Lord Sutch has been a big influence on us. He does 'Jack the Ripper' — we got that song from him."

"He was pretty much the English answer to Screamin' Jay Hawkins," Koenig puts in.

The golden-oldie preferences might not betray their young ages (Hohman's seventeen, Koenig twenty-one), but it certainly goes a long way toward explaining what the Vultures are all about. A little bit punk, a little bit rockabilly and a lot of fuzzy, Nuggets-inspired garage rock and "Surf's up!" licks, the trio is passionate about music and music history — both preserving and playing it.

Formed by Koenig and Hohman in December 2003, the band used a drum machine before adding a real drummer the following spring and spent summer 2004 in the (literal) garage practicing for hours a day.

Although its first show wasn't until last year's Halloween, the band earned its biggest local break when St. Louis musician Bob Reuter had them play on his radio show, *Bob's Scratchy Records*, on KDHX (88.1 FM) in January.

"It surprised me that they were playing music you don't really associate with people that age," Reuter says. "And they so meant it. I've had a bunch of groups on my show, and they're probably my favorite. They captured the spirit of what rock & roll was about. They have a sense of fun about them. That has been missing from rock & roll for such a long time."

The Vultures capture this essence on their new, self-titled debut EP. Hohman's cat-scratch vocals — which Reuter describes as "a nine-year-old throwing a temper tantrum" — work in tandem with Koenig's feral, wizened bluesman singing on a high-energy mix of covers and originals, all thundering with '60s-era musical tricks and B-movie intrigue.

They'll celebrate the album's release at 7 p.m. Friday, November 11, at Vintage Vinyl (6610 Delmar Boulevard, University City; 314-721- **continued on page 52**

# Pabst Blue Ribbon BEER

**PBR is Available At These Fine Establishments**

**CICERO'S - 6691 DELMAR**  
The King of Surf Guitar, Dick Dale, plays the venue Thursday, November 10. Visit [www.ciceros-stl.com](http://www.ciceros-stl.com) for more info.

**CREEPY CRAWL - 412 N. TUCKER**  
Rockin' punk from Street Dogs & River City Rebels Thursday, November 10; early show--7:00pm. and, old school hardcore from Sick Of It All Friday, November 11.

**ST. LOUIS OLD SCHOOL TATTOO EXPO AT THE CITY MUSEUM**  
Hosted by Lyle Tuttle November 10-13, 701 N. 15th St. Featuring live tattooing, tattoo art exhibit, memorabilia, tattoo contests, tattoo film festival, and more! Open 2:00-11:00 Friday and Noon-11:00



[www.PabstBlueRibbon.com](http://www.PabstBlueRibbon.com)

© 2005 PABST BREWING COMPANY

## WILD Country WEDNESDAY

**Dance Lessons &  
Singers on the Edge - Karaoke**

COORS LIGHT .....	\$1.50
ASPEN EDGE .....	\$1.50
SOUTHERN COMFORT .....	\$2.00
JACK DANIEL'S .....	\$2.00

**FRIDAY  
Thong-A-Thon**  
\$1 Longnecks.  
Pool Tournament.

**SATURDAY  
Dance Party**  
w/ 93.7 the Bull  
All Bacardi's \$1.50  
\$3.50 Pitchers • \$1 Schnapps

**FRI., NOV., 11TH & SAT., NOV. 12TH, 2005**

**LIVE MUSIC BY  
RENEGADE**

**COLLINSVILLE, IL 618-346-6775**

IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT...YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO BE HERE!

[WWW.WILDCOUNTRYNIGHTCLUB.COM](http://WWW.WILDCOUNTRYNIGHTCLUB.COM)

## Harkonin

continued from page 51

says. "Success is relative. If you're looking to make money, you're in the wrong genre."

"We could do some Weezer-sounding shit and be rich right now!" Barron laughs.

Coyle leans back from the table. It's getting late. Day and night jobs, kids, girlfriends, wives and Braden's dinner all loom in the middle-future. One more full set looms in the immediate future, and Coyle eyes his matte-black Les Paul like it's the only thing that really matters. But first he wants to make one thing clear.

"We write metal," he says. "I'm not one of those people who says, 'I'm writing this for myself and I don't care if anyone hears it.' I do want to please metalheads. I write for metalheads. I write what I like, and dude, metalheads will like this."

But Coyle's only half-right: Metalheads will love this.

Harkonin at the Creepy Crawl, 412 North Tucker Boulevard. Doors open at 8 p.m. Sunday, November 13. Tickets are \$7 to \$9; call 314-621-9333 for more information.

Contact the author

[paul.friswold@riverfronttimes.com](mailto:paul.friswold@riverfronttimes.com)

## A to Z

continued from page 51

4096), and by returning to Reuter's show at noon that same day. Future months find the Vultures doing their usual multiple-times-a-week gigs around town and contributing a cover of the Sonics' "Don't Believe in Christmas" to the upcoming *A Very Bert Dax Christmas, Volume 4*.

The Vultures' EP is also the first album released by new label Big Muddy Records ([www.bigmuddyrecords.org](http://www.bigmuddyrecords.org)). Johnny O and the Jerks drummer Chris Baricevic founded the label this summer with friends from high school — the home base is his south-city apartment — on a bare-bones budget, inspired by Detroit's garage-rock label Italy (where the White Stripes got their start).

"We realized there's not a strong label in St. Louis anymore that puts out rock & roll," Baricevic says. "It's mostly a lot of independent artists who have to do everything themselves. We wanted to start something."

"St. Louis used to be widely recognized as a music town — Chuck Berry, Louis Armstrong would always make stops. Miles Davis was from East St. Louis, and Ike and Tina, they would be playing at high school dances. Now it seems like the only bands people hear from St. Louis are the bands that go along with the trends. It's not very representative of what's going on."

To that end, Big Muddy's roster includes fellow anachronisms Casey Reid (a blues guitarist who's recently been playing out with 7 Shot Screamers upright bassist Chris Powers and a cellist) and Future Explorers of Outer Space (think sunny, psychedelic indie-pop). While Baricevic's business model stresses camaraderie over cash money, he wants St. Louis musicians to get their due.

"We'd love to get on a national level, where bands from all across the country know the bands in St. Louis," he says. "Right now if you talk to anyone who's into garage and rock & roll, Detroit is this thriving scene. I think ours is just as thriving, but nobody knows about it."

Contact the author

[annie.zaleski@riverfronttimes.com](mailto:annie.zaleski@riverfronttimes.com)



THE MUSIC CLUB 914 N. FIRST ST.  
ON LACLEDE'S LANDING

THUR. 11/10/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**AGAINST ME!**  
W/ THE EPOXIES, THE SOVIETTES  
& SMOKE OR FIRE

FRI. 11/11/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**OK GO**  
W/ SHE WANTS REVENGE  
PLAYBACK

SAT. 11/12/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**CORE PROJECT** FAREWELL SHOW  
W/ MIDWEST AVENGERS,  
FROZEN FOOD SECTION  
& PERFECT STRANGERS

FRI. 11/18/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**BANDB LOCAL SHOWCASE**  
W/ LOGOS, MIA VENETTA, SPARLAND,  
FLEE THE SEEN & AVA, WAIT

SAT. 11/19/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**BANDB LOCAL SHOWCASE**  
W/ RIVERTON, ADDIEM, DYKER  
THE UPRIGHT ANIMALS & THE HOSPITAL LIFE

TUES. 11/22/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**MY MORNING JACKET**  
W/ WILL JOHNSON  
PLAYBACK

WED. 11/23/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**RUSHMORE ACADEMY**  
W/ PRINCETON, BLINDED BLACK, THE FAMED,  
AMSTERDAM & EYES CATCH FIRE

FRI. 11/25/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**POMEROY**  
DVD RELEASE SHOW  
W/ BUILDING ROME  
& GUNDERSON

SAT. 11/26/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**AMPSTL & STL SCENE**  
WELCOME  
THANKS FOR GIVING ST. LOUIS MUSIC 2005  
W/ ONE LONE CAR, SATORI,  
JOHN HENRY AND THE ENGINE  
NOTHING STILL  
LONGING FOR PROVIDENCE

FRI. 12/2/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**SIDE OF FIVES**

SAT. 12/3/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**VICTOR  
WOOTEN**

TUES. 12/13/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**IRON & WINE**  
W/ CALEXICO

FRI. 12/16/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**BRAVE  
COMBO**

SAT. 12/31/05  
8:00pm - 11:00pm  
All Ages

**ST. LOUIS ENTERTAINMENT  
PRIVATE EVENT**



[mississippinights.com](http://mississippinights.com)

\* \$2 Surcharge for minors unless otherwise noted.

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT ALL **Missouri**

OUTLETS & CHARGE BY PHONE 534-1111

FOR MORE INFORMATION 421-3853