

## CD REVIEW

## 'Broken Bells' could use a little fixing

Anna Johnson  
Managing Editor

Brian Burton, a.k.a. Danger Mouse, was an early follower of trip-hop and rose to the attention of the music world after releasing "The Grey Album", a mixing of Jay Z's "Black Album" and The Beatles' "White Album." James Mercer has helped The Shins stay consistent as the lead singer/songwriter and guitarist, and pushed the band to become one of the leading indie-rock groups of the late '90s.

Burton and Mercer have a few things in common: they are both known for collaboration and side projects, and they are fan of each other's work. And now the two are united under one flag: Broken Bells.

The self-titled debut album of Broken Bells was kept a secret until September 2009, despite the fact the two met and discussed working together as early as 2004 and actual recording of the album began in 2008.

The 10-track album was released March 9. Throughout the album, elements of both artists can be found, whether it's in the ethereal and space-psychedelic sounds of the album's two singles "The High Road" and "Vaporize," or in the overlapping and swelling voices in "Trap Doors."

For the majority of the album, pop-airy melodies with slight overtones of experimental soft beats fill the listener's ear. There is little variation within the album with the exception of the more somber tracks "Mongrel Heart" and "Citizen."

In "Mongrel Heart," the song is interrupted by static played over rising ominous hums and trumpets, creating an eerie western feeling in the middle of the song before jumping back to the chorus.

"Trap Doors" teases the listener with slight raises throughout the verses before reaching the height of the song. And, all the while, the song makes the ear fight between the competing lyrics during the chorus. The lyrics attempt to go beyond the obvious: "And close your

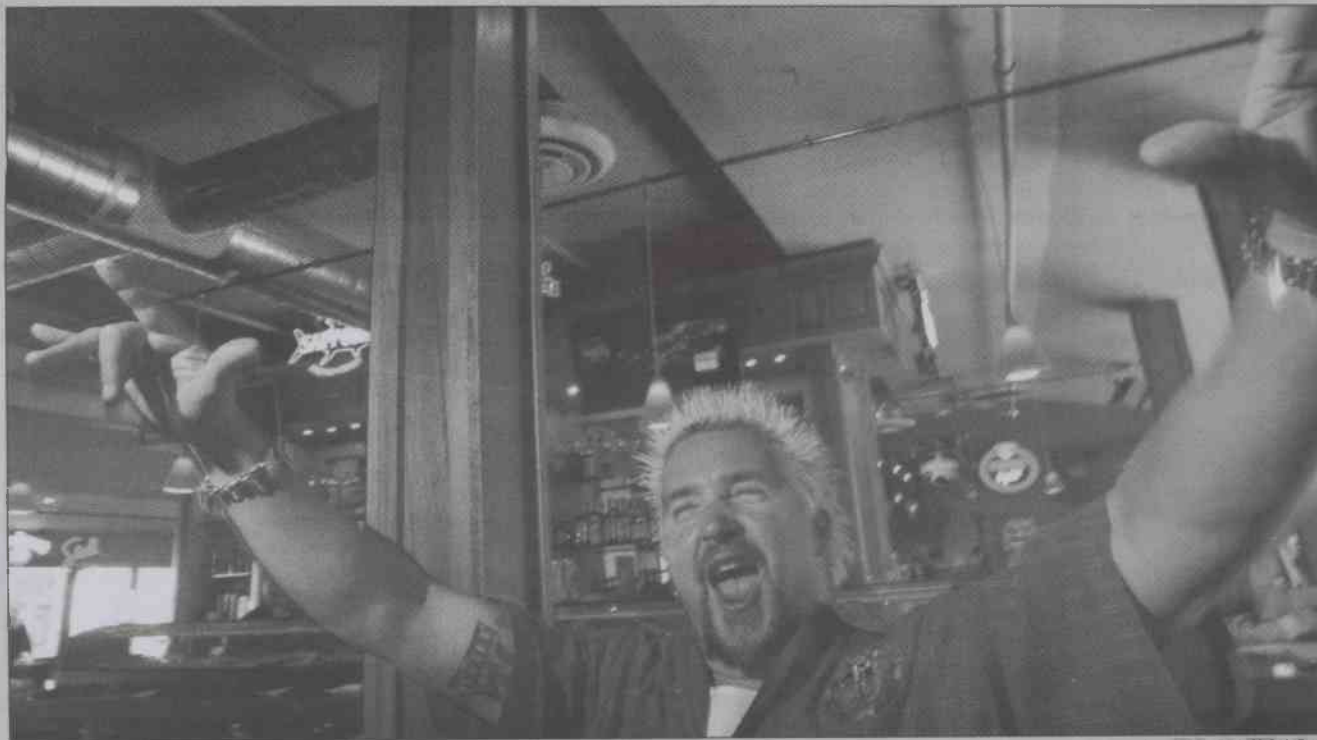


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eyes to us/fight fire/trap doors to endless wisdom/young lad/have we grown too tired/longing to find."

The downside of the album is it lacks real substance and variation. While containing some great tracks, the album lasts a mere 37 minutes and offers little real difference in sound amongst the different tracks. The two artists are currently touring across the nation and it can be expected the songs will change and grow as they continue to play with each other. Both artists are talented and experienced, but it may take a long time for them to settle into their own and put Broken Bells on the music scene map.

## TV SHOW REVIEW



Guy Fieri, Food Network chef and now host of "Minute to Win It," at his new restaurant, Tex Wasabi's in Sacramento, Calif.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCTCAMPUS

## 'Minute to Win It' misses the mark

Rachel Southmayd  
Senior Reporter

During the Winter Olympics in February, NBC used copious amounts of commercial time to hype the new game show "Minute to Win It." While in theory the show seems entertaining, it is a waste of sixty minutes, and nobody wins.

The concept of the show is simple and a sort of Cinderella story. Any person can come on, chat with Guy Fieri (most well known for his work on several Food Network shows including "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives") and then play a few games that are each 60 seconds long, using regular household objects to try and score cash.

The idea of minute-long games seemed like a great idea for the attention-challenged. Shorter games should mean more games per show and therefore less banter and filler. No such luck with "Minute."

In the first hour-long segment, the contestant only played five games, repeating two of the same challenges because he failed the first time and lost a life. The rest of the time was filled with mindless

chit-chat between Fieri and the contestant, and annoying NBC.com promos.

Before and after each commercial break, a two-to-three minute promotion for the "Minute to Win It" Web site would play, advertising people playing the games at home. It made the entire show more like one long commercial than an actual game show.

The games themselves run the gamut from amusing to just plain stupid. While stacking washers with only a chopstick definitely requires a great deal of skill and precision, there was nothing compelling about watching the contestant try to empty an entire box of tissues with just one hand. And while the triple ping-pong bounce into a fishbowl was mildly amusing, watching the contestant try to bob his head 135 times in the 60-second period just seemed painful for him and the audience.

The entire episode of "Minute to Win It" was also over-dramatized with a surreal, cool female voice describing each game while a computerized animation was displayed, and then counting down

to the start of each minute. It was very reminiscent of the voice that one might hear as they wait for the start of a ride in Disney World.

Another bizarre feature of the show was the projection screens at the back of the audience that continually changed appearance. While this may not have seemed odd when it was showing a swirl of colors or numbers counting down the minute, it was very strange when it actually projected images of audience members cheering enthusiastically for the contestant. That's right, they created fake people to make the actual studio audience seem larger.

While some game shows can owe a great deal of their success to their host, "Minute to Win It" is not going to be one of them. Fieri is forgettable and odd, and charismatically indistinguishable from contestants, unlike his better work on Food Network.

NBC may have hyped up "Minute to Win It," but viewership will likely drop within a few weeks. It is an interesting concept, but overall the show fails to follow through.

## New life for spring trends



Alexandra Johnston  
Fashion Columnist

Since the economy still isn't back to what it was, shopping secondhand, vintage and thrift stores is a viable alternative to department stores and expensive retail. Not

only are the prices significantly lower, but it also is much easier to find one-of-a-kind current or vintage pieces.

**Unexpected Trends:** Thrift stores can be a great way to get the season's trends without springing for the designer price tag. One trend this season is high-waisted pleated pants for women, a throw back to 1940s styles, worn around the natural waist with a belt and flowy blouse. At thrift stores, try looking for men's pleated pants. The cut of the pants are smaller at the waist, but curve out in the hips and taper back off significantly near the ankle. If the right fit can be found, these pants create a great silhouette.

Another trend this spring is denim shirts, which are common on the shelves of thrift and secondhand stores. Look for one made of a light-weight denim, it will become softer with every wash and wear. Just beware of tacky holiday embroidered denim shirts.

**Buyer Beware:** Shopping secondhand is not an easy task and there are challenges that come with it. First, look out for variations in sizing. If buying vintage, or even clothes from 10 years ago, make sure to try them on. In 1940 a size 12 was more similar to the present-day size four or six. Second, be sure to look for holes, stains or snags in the garment, which may render them unwearable. If it seems fixable, be sure to ask for a slight price reduction.

Most secondhand stores will also buy gently used clothing and provide the owner with either cash or store credit. This is a great way to trade some old things for something "new." If the stores won't take the garments, donate them to an organization in need such as Goodwill or The Salvation Army.

**Locations:** There are several great thrift and secondhand stores in the Burlington area. The Salvation Army Family Store, located just off Church Street in the Davis Street Plaza, is a great store that has men's, women's and children's apparel as well as housewares and accessories. Twice is Nice Vintage and Consignment down the street from Elon on Saint Marks Church Road is another great location. This more boutique style shop has clothes ranging from the '30s and '40s to today. While the prices are a little higher, the quality of the product is also better.

Other thrift stores include Goodwill and Good Samaritan Super Thrift both on North Church Street. Keep in mind that the stock in the stores changes frequently so it is a good idea to check back in every few weeks to see what's new.

Whether shopping for the best new trends at affordable prices, or the perfect costume for the next party, thrift and vintage shopping can be the answer to many shopping needs. Keep in mind these tips and ideas to ensure that each trip is successful.