

40 OUNCES GETS HIGH — AND MIGHTY

The High and Mighties want you to get your dancing shoes on.

With a new name and new songs ready to go, the Chapel Hill pop-rock-ska outfit — formerly Sublime tribute band 40 Ounces — will perform Friday at Local 506.

The upbeat music from Mark Belk (guitar and vocals), Chris Blount (guitar and vocals), Jeremy Boomer (bass), Matt Brown (drums), Patrick Curran (trumpet), Patrick Smith (trombone) and Brannon Bollinger (sax) promises to be danceable.

Diversions had a chance to chat with the "High and Mighty" Mark Belk to discuss what's in a name, ska music and animal sounds:

Dive: So, you used to be called 40 Ounces, why the name change?

High and Mighties: Our impetus is the fact that now everything we do is our own material, and that gives you so much more energy. We're not a ska band,

but we are ska-esque, and ska shows are always fun. **Dive:** What makes you "not just a ska band?"

H&M: We don't have an attitude. We have a rock or pop vocal attitude. We don't have the tone of most ska songs, as far as lyrics. It's not just defiant; it's not just, you know, "let's get wasted." I would be more comfortable with "a rock band with horns."

Dive: Is there a story behind the name "The High and Mighties?"

H&M: A friend of mine that I work with threw out "The High and Mighties" and it just gave me an image of a really upbeat sound. It made me think of something fun, something upbeat — which our music is — and it's somewhat random, and it's cool sounding.

Dive: Who are your biggest influences as a band?

H&M: I think our biggest influences would be Bob Marley. You gotta say Sublime, after all the time we spent playing their music... Jack Johnson I think has been a big help to my rhythm playing. I'd say old Police is evident in Chris' vocal technique.



COURTESY OF THE HIGH AND MIGHTIES

With an upbeat sound, best described as "ska-esque," Chapel Hill's The High and Mighties are poised to rock Local 506 on Friday night. Lots of dancing — or 'skanking' — is sure to ensue. The Likeables open.

And also probably living in a college town for 10 years. Being around this much energy creates a mood for writing upbeat music.

Dive: What got you into ska music in the first place?

H&M: When I realized that that off-beat rhythm in Sublime — the quicker songs — was ska rhythm, I started delving into other ska bands. I'm a new fan of ska... Ska makes you move. If you can't dance, you can dance to ska.

Dive: So, why should people

come to your show?

H&M: We have more enthusiasm than we've ever had. We have everyone in the band in sync right now.

Dive: Would you guarantee that I'll have a good time?

H&M: I guarantee you'll have a good time. (laughs)

Dive: If The High and Mighties was an animal, what animal would it be, and why?

H&M: It would be a cricket or

an elephant. And I know those are radically different animals, but the reason is, I can make a pretty sweet cricket sound and my elephant is awesome.

Dive: Will you make your elephant and/or cricket sounds at the show?

H&M: Sure. Absolutely.

— compiled by Bryan Reed

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

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7. M. Ward | Post-War (Merge)
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Saturday — Will Hoge, Local 506

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Stefy's first a guilty pop pleasure

Get ready for personal dance party

BY BETH DOZIER

From ABBA to A-Ha, pop music always has been a bastion for the guilty pleasure. And the California electro outfit, Stefy, is no exception.

Music snobs might scoff at the band's bouncy, adolescent sound, but *The Orange Album* will be the CD they blast in their cars with the windows up and dance around to when no one is watching.

With its debut album, Stefy has accomplished what most young bands only dream of: a pop record that's accessible to adults while still holding onto the teens and tweens that keep the gravy train rolling.

The electro-infused pop rock

band follows the same path No Doubt forged when it released *Tragic Kingdom*: to create an album with youthful lyrics and catchy and surprisingly complex music.

In the band's first single, "Chelsea," lead singer Stefy Rae's voice sounds uncannily like Gwen Stefani's as she moans about a boyfriend-stealing girl while the band provides endless new wave-inspired riffs.

Most of the album follows the same formula. The electro-pop pays homage to bands such as the Eurythmics and Devo, while Rae's fresh voice belts lyrics that the average 13-year-old could appreciate.

In fact, for listeners who don't

speak English, Stefy probably won't be such a guilty pleasure, but for the rest of us, the lyrics might make Stefy sound too much like the soundtrack for a Disney Channel original movie.

"Hey school boy," Rae sings in the track of the same name, "You're only 17/You live down the street/ I think you know what I mean."

Enough said. The chorus to "Orange County"—a song that supposedly lambastes materialism — sounds more like a commercial than a tirade, as Rae sings:

"We still got our MTV/Jay-Z and Gwen Stefani/TiVo for 'My Sweet Sixteen' and pre-paid AT&T."

Is it a cultural statement or shameless product placement?

Yes, the members of Stefy walk the blurry line between respectable

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STEFY
THE ORANGE ALBUM



music and teeny-bopping without gnawing off the young, spoiled hand that feeds them, resulting in pure ear candy. The band doesn't spout sonnets but combines teeny-bop mantras with music anyone with ears will enjoy.

With the same infectious beat and emotional delivery, Stefy is like a Pat Benatar for those in the no-man's land between the Disney Channel and MTV, reminding its Abercrombie-clad listeners that love is still a battlefield.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

Snakes and Music are not on a Plane

But folk rock mix is a winner

BY ADAM WRIGHT

Depending upon your priorities in life, the fact that Snakes and Music has nothing to do with the "Snakes on a Plane" soundtrack either could be good news or bad news.

Let's consider it to be the former, and just go ahead and put a stop to the obvious Snakes and "Snakes" comparisons.

With Snakes and Music's new album, *Isabelle*, the Philadelphia band mixes folk rock intimacy with hipster instrumentals for a fulfilling and unique sound that crosses the genre board time and time again.

Album opener "Isabelle" is the first sign that Snakes and Music is an act that can't quite be pegged into one corner.

Lead singer Andrew Low warbles like the best of the pop-punk kids while alt-country influences linger in the background, later busting out into an aching happy-meets-sad tone reminiscent of early Bright Eyes.

Following is "Please Explain," the album's first standout, blending early '90s chords with a chorus rooted in depression, drug addiction and the search for a way out.

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SNAKES AND MUSIC
ISABELLE



"Can I just get a little of whatever you're on?" moans Low on repeat, and out comes your standard self-deprecating indie rock song.

And that's when — in the immortal words of Samuel L. Jackson — you get Snakes on crack.

Banjoes ignite, harmonies explode and cobras viciously attack the jugulars of unsuspecting listeners for a dose of adrenaline that remains prominent throughout the remainder of the album.

Fusing blues with '80s mall rock and grunge with Southern rock, Snakes and Music keeps the audience guessing no matter the track.

The stomper, "Sinking Ships," plays like a Springsteen song in an emo era, while "Treading Water" adds a dash of new wave bass lines to the hodge-podge album.

Yet, as the group slithers through another string of styles, it manages to create a sound that is distinctly its own.

And just like that, Snakes and Music transforms an ill-timed band name into a wise and fitting choice.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

'3' may or may not be magic, but worth a try

ActionReaction rocks adequately

BY BETH MECHUM

3 is the Magic Number, but for what?

Maybe for the number of bands lead singer Jason Gleason's been in. Maybe for the number of members in ActionReaction. Or maybe it's the number of tracks it takes to get to a good song.

Well, we might never know for sure, but it definitely fits two of those choices.

Jason Gleason, the former lead singer of Further Seems Forever, has a new group and is ready to take the scene by storm — a melodic rock storm.

Much different than the emo/pop-punk style of Further Seems Forever, ActionReaction slows down and either confuses or tantalizes with its seemingly nonsense lyrics.

They're confusing to those who look deeper, tantalizing to those who take it for face value. A read through leaves one scratching his head, but just listening is quite enjoyable.

In "March On" one lyric stands

out, not for its poignancy, but for its "what the hell does that mean?" shock value:

"We dance like fire/When we suck each other's blood."

Trying to look for a deeper meaning makes it hard to enjoy the record, but give it a chance — it is fun to listen to.

Rock and melody together make it easy to forget the lyrics because it's catchy and very danceable.

3 is the Magic Number is not the most upbeat record, but Gleason does not have the voice for happiness — a great voice, but not one that's going to be announcing prize winnings anytime soon.

The LP is finished before there is a chance to even judge it that much. The songs are normal length, but they all kind of run into one another, so it's done before you even give it your seal of approval or disapproval.

"The 21 Gun Salute" — which stands out after the halfway mark — is the best song on the record.

The last half of *Magic Number* is substantially better than the first, and it doesn't get good until the third song. Probably not foreshadowing by the album title, but ironic nonetheless.

It could be that Gleason never

has felt he belonged in Further Seems Forever. The band's former lead singer, Chris Carraba, might have made a mark so strong on the group that it was impossible to take his place.

ActionReaction is Gleason's baby, and he is willing to nurture it. Citing influences such as ELO, Pearl Jam, U2 and others, he understands what it takes to make a group stick around.

The band is his lifeline, even more since his wife is also a member, along with bassist from

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ACTIONREACTION
3 IS THE MAGIC NUMBER



Element 101, Salvatore Ciaravino. 3 is the Magic Number might not be the best record of the year, but it's worth a listen. Perseverance through the first few songs results in a pleasant reward.

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