

# Hard punk, hard rock bands blast into Cat's Cradle

By ALLISON PIKE  
Staff Writer

Just when you thought that there was no other voice like Johnny Rotten's and that heavy rock had succumbed to makeup and leopard-skin pants, along comes Defenestration and The Bags, who promise to blast Cat's Cradle away on Feb. 9.

Webster's Dictionary defines defenestration as a throwing of a person or thing out of a window. The name sounds appropriate for a band whose vocalist croons, critics say, in an undeniably Johnny Rotten fashion. In fact, Rockpool calls Tyson Todd Meade "another graduate of the Rotten School of Vocal Bombast."

Defenestration hails from Norman, Okla., and features vocalist Meade, guitarist Todd Walker, bassist Joe Kollman and drummer Page Roysse. Critics compare their punk-influenced brand of rock to the Who, PIL (Rotten's latest band) and the American Music Club.

The band will stop at the Cradle Tuesday in support of their latest LP, *Dali Does Windows*. The album includes songs like "Tripping Drag Queens," "Bedlam Revisited," and "D.Y. Wanna (bubblegum)."

Johnny Rotten fans can judge for themselves Tuesday whether or not Meade is a vocalist after Johnny's heart, but maybe a taste of Meade's lyrics will help: "Precious stretches of tenderloin. Chicken hanging from the light. This is drag queens ladies night."

Also blowing into the Cradle Tuesday is a powerful trio from Boston, The Bags. The band has only been playing together for a little over two years, but their energetic blend of rock is winning the favor of music critics.

Bassist Jon Hardy, guitarist Crispin

Wood and drummer Jim Janota don't like to use any specific label for their sound, which they call a "hard-rock, garage-pop, heavy-metal-like blend." The March issue of *Playboy* compares The Bags' blend to the Ramones, Husker Du, and early Kiss.

"You wouldn't believe how often we're compared to Kiss," Hardy said, laughing. "But I think we're musically more sophisticated than Kiss. We go for the pure hard rock 'n' roll sound."

Other critics have called them Boston's next Aerosmith, and The Bags don't mind.

"I'm all for it," said Hardy. "They were the first band I was into when I was a kid. I'd heard of them before I'd ever heard of Led Zeppelin. They were a big adolescent influence for me. It's nice to see them doing so well lately."

But The Bags don't like to be lumped in with the commercialized hard rock bands that prevail in the media. The members admit that they have a hard-core influence in their music, and they make it plain that they will never change their sound to attract a huge commercial audience. "We would never do that," says Hardy. "We're not in it to get any audience beyond our musical stylistic means."

"Our sound is more reminiscent of the late '60s-early '70s psychedelic sound than of the '80s soft-focused rock. It's like old Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith — that's what I call hard rock."

The Bags are now on the road supporting their recently released debut LP, *Rock Starve*. The LP is selling well in the Northeast and The Bags hope that the added exposure of their national tour will increase their listeners. This is The Bags' first



Defenestration will play Cat's Cradle Feb. 9

tour out of New England and Hardy says the band is looking forward to coming South. But the Feb. 9 show is their only stop in North Carolina. Afterwards, they will be traveling to South Carolina and other spots east of the Mississippi. In another month they will be heading out to the California-Texas area and finally up to Canada.

Hardy says The Bags don't have any inhibitions about playing down South in R.E.M. territory. "We're just gonna hope that people will like what we do," he says. "We hope that people will open up to our blend of music."

Hardy says that although the band is aggressive, it is far from being the harshest band around.

"We play in an aggressive manner

like Husker Du, the Ramones and Bad Brains," Hardy adds. "We don't want to alienate people. It just so happens that we like distorted sounds and raunchy vocals."

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