

[Alt-Nation: Interview with The Viennagram and Haunted Happenings](#)



The Viennagram - Learn To Tame The Patterns

Over the years I've probably described The Viennagram as anything from carnival blues to haunted cabaret to murder mystery rock 'n' roll. They were always the local band big on visuals, whether it was blurring the line between rock 'n' roll and theater with over 20 people on stage in the Finals of the WBRU Rock Hunt with glitter raining down, or performing while someone did body painting on two nearly nude models. Through all the hoopla, The Viennagram provided plenty of memories for the attendee to take with them, but there was never really a good recording to listen to. But now, appropriately on Halloween, The Viennagram will release the 21 track, *Learn To Tame The Patterns*.

Learn To Tame The Patterns is the perfect record to lose one's mind to while listening. I mean that in a good way. It all feels like part of a sinister narrative with just enough left unsaid for the listeners' imagination. "The Immaculate Fire" sounds like it's describing some witches meeting out in the woods. "Doom Patrol" has the feel of a murder mystery with the intensity club banger that samples Bugs Bunny among other things and makes it work. The next song, "Vulture Star," might as well be a coal mining folk song. That's just taking three of the 21 songs that are sequenced together. That's the way it goes in the frantic, you-never-know-what's-behind-the-next-door world of The Viennagram. "Long Way Back to Paradise" skirts the line between show tune and catchy rock anthem. Their performance of this song as a set closer at WBRU Rock Hunt years ago is still the single most memorable performance I've witnessed at that event. I could go on about *Learn To Tame The Patterns*, but what I'd say about one song isn't going to be true of the tune after it. Instead, I'll pose a couple of questions to singer/drummer AV Vienna on the band, the six years in the making of *Learn To Tame The Patterns*, and what to expect at the CD release party on Halloween at the Columbus Theatre.

Marc Clarkin: The Viennagram has been together for a decade, yet other than a handful of random recordings, *Learn To Tame The Patterns* is really your first "official" release. What was the hardest part in the six years of working on the record to bring it to fruition? How did the band evolve over the years while working on the record?

AV Vienna: Fact: 80% of people who know of The Viennagram don't know we've ever recorded anything and 5% think we broke up in 2007. In reality, I have been recording since the very beginning and have completed the following, in a DIY odyssey with a lot of help from my friends, which will soon be (re?)released in glorious hi-fi mastering magic:

[*DEATH TO THE CLASSICS:*] (2006) The “Love is Dead” collection features the original teaming of AV Vienna and Scott Peloquin. Partially through the album, Scott freaked out and locked himself in his Mirror Mansion, vowing never to return. Left with an unfinished epic, I ventured into psychic resonance and strange synth. The outcome is a tender terror hell ride dreamscape captured in a basement. What joy there is to be found in the sound of the unknown!

[*FUTURE IZ DEAD MAGIC:*] (2008) One day this will be considered a masterpiece. It is an uncompromising prediction of the impending gentrification of imagination. Phil Spector with rabies vs. Brian Wilson’s LSD Horror Space Sideshow. Made from Popsicle sticks and digital distortion and recorded in places we weren’t supposed to be in. Surrealist soundscapes through rock ‘n’ roll graveyards. A collage menagerie of samples from Citizen Kane to Adam Ant.

[*MADNESS IZ AND MORE/RELEASE THE BEAST-EYES:*] (2010) The most Musically Mutated mix tape! A buffet of Audio Oddities! From failed experiments, outtakes and demos to dubs and things I forgot we even recorded! [NOTE: the title is based on a dream wherein Taylor Swift ascended from the sea, surrounded by searing orbs. Sphinx like, she then revealed a panorama of fragmented shapes and repeated the phrase “RELEASE THE BEAST EYES.” Which, Irrational Solutions applied, could only mean “Release the B-sides”]

All of this, of course, has led up to now, The Chapter of *Learn to Tame the Patterns*. Perhaps this could be our “official” release because we’ve gotten it together (kinda), paid some dues, made a lot of mistakes and tried to make something to the very best of our abilities. It’s taken 10 years for people to catch on and in that time we have grown/mutated into a tight, three-piece unit and generally have put everything we’ve got into this crazy vision dream.

The hardest part of which, for me, was having the exact idea of what the sound/feel/content/images for the songs [should be] from the very beginning; sort of like working backwards through many obstacles to get the final product to get the sound/look/idea as a complete and uncompromising presentation. Over the course of the years as nomads, moving from studio to studio was the only constant. Effectively, the existing sounds are but a living memory; the making of the album is the album approach, a strange time capsule collage from the times and places in the process. After all, the process is almost as important as the end result.

I kind of never wanted to finish it because I always knew things would change after it was completed, as it was the one constant guiding force for us for such a long time. But now it exists, for anyone and everyone to hear and that’s a really exciting concept — the idea of someone hearing it for the first time. It lives...

MC: For those uninitiated in The Viennagram, what should they expect at the Columbus Theatre this Halloween?

AV: Neon Bats! Ghosts of Rats! Spooky Beauties! Magic Eyeballs! Bizarre Prophecies! A Person’s Head! Romance! Terror from Beyond! ???Mystery Guests??? AMAZING MERCHANDISE! Siamese Twins conjoined by the! No Jason Costumes! The Future! Astral Projection! Rock and Roll Rise from The Dead! The Future!

The Viennagram, Ravi Shavi, and Sugar Honey Iced Tea celebrate the release of Learn To Tame The

Patterns and Halloween at the Columbus Theatre on October 31.

13 Folds Presents: The Frighteners Bash

13 Folds Magazine is throwing another party to celebrate the release of their new issue. For those not familiar with *13 Folds*, it's an alternative publication that specializes in marijuana legalization, hemp-related politics, and whatever else they feel the need to discuss any given issue. Head honcho/publisher and *Motif* contributor, Dave (Death) Sorgman, is a long-time supporter of the local music scene and knows how to throw a one hell of a party. For this month's release, Sorgman has Rebel Son Rise coming down from Maine, *Motif* Award Winners Viking Jesus, funk gurus Poppasquash, and The Sweet Release to play the wild card unpredictable rock 'n' roll element. Viking Jesus, who are a collection of talented musicians playing straight forward rock with a heavy Beatles influence, have a new CD on the way that is due next month, last I heard. I haven't heard the new biscuit yet, but they're always reliable for a good time on the dance floor. The Sweet Release released their debut EP, *We're Coming*, digitally online at thesweetrelease.bandcamp.com. *We're Coming* starts off with a blast of sleazy '70s rock 'n' roll with "So Good." "Bottles and Models" has a kind of superhero anathematic sounding lead guitar before grinding down and dirty into a punk rock chorus. The Sweet Release is all about the live performance because you never know what's going to happen. Halloween is just a double whammy with these guys. Something memorable is going to go down.

13 Folds Presents: The Frighteners Bash will feature performances by Rebel Son Rise, Viking Jesus, Poppasquash, and The Sweet Release. It all goes down at Fatt Squirrel on October 31.

The Briefs

After a successful tour opening up for The Damned and TSOL, The Briefs return to Providence for what is probably the first time a decade. The Briefs blast out power-pop rock in the vein of the Buzzcocks. The music is dirty and loud, but the hooks are so damn infectious that you can't stop humming it. This is really the last night of the fall concert season where there is anything I'm particularly excited for coming to town between this show and Pentagonum below. The local support here is great with the garage rock of Fabulous Itchies, The Sleazies who are cut from the same cloth as The Briefs playing a rare show, and the staff of The Scurvy Dog's X Tribute band called J. I heard they killed it a few weeks ago at their debut show. More importantly than that, it is just great that Jenny Hurricane of Midnight Creeps fame is back performing after recovering from breast cancer.

The Briefs, The Fabulous Itchies, The Sleazies, and J (X Tribute band) will rock Dusk on November 2.

Pentagram

Pentagram are one of those rock 'n' roll tragedies that has been revived late in life. Pentagram started as a '70s stoner metal rock 'n' roll band. They should have been huge, but it took 16 years to release their debut, which will stall anyone's momentum. Drugs and more drugs capsized the band's commercial potential. In the movie *Last Days Here*, a documentary of the band picks up with singer Bobby Liebling living in his elderly parents' basement and addicted to crack. Liebling gets sober and married during the film and since then Pentagram has become active again. If you ever want a reason not to do crack, check out Pentagram live because Liebling is one grotesque looking fellow. If that's not enough of a reason to go, the band rocks, too! The only bad part of this show is that it's the same night as The Briefs.

Pentagram, Radio Moscow, Bang, and Kings Destroy will rock the Met Café on November 2.

WBRU Birthday Bash

WBRU celebrates another birthday with what's sure to be a rocking ruckus headlined by Dirty Heads. Dirty Heads are kind of similar to Sublime as far as writing breezy catchy modern rock. Don't miss this year's Rock Hunt winner, The Rare Occasions, who will open the show.

Dirty Heads, Rome, Knox Hamilton, and The Rare Occasions toast yet another birthday for WBRU on November 3.

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