



Local band CYOD makes the kind of racket we need to hear more of in Nashville.

Local band CYOD makes the kind of racket we need to hear more of in Nashville.

JIM RIDLEY AND MICHAEL MCCALL JUL 24, 1997



Ghost in the Machine

Why is anybody optimistic about this town's underground rock scene? Venues that book daring, original music have a hard time drawing crowds, and stores selling independent recordings and publications have a hard time drawing customers. When somebody cool moves here, he gets ignored until he moves away—which is exactly what happened when former MCS guitarist Wayne Kramer relocated here a few years ago. If Nashville were a factory town that produced cars, planes, or oil, it would have kick-ass bands, clubs with personality, and listeners who weren't jaded by the hundred other things they could be doing. Unfortunately, Nashville is a factory town that produces music.

The best way to fight this pessimism is to do something—to set off collisions between as many different talents as possible, to light fuses that might one day trigger a blast. It could happen on the street, in the studio, in somebody's house. It was starting to happen at Victor/Victoria's until the club burned down.

If anything gets going here, though, it'll be because this city can't seem to chase away the likes of Mark Nevers. Yes, he engineers mainstream country albums—most recently he worked on the latest by John Anderson. But he also, with his band **CYOD**, makes a spontaneously combustive racket that is mad, bad, dangerous to know, and provocative as hell—creating an extreme for Nashville music that goes beyond facile shock effects or taboo tweaking.

On their new cassette-only release *glamour drinking*, Nevers and CYOD build on the white-noise assaults of late-'60s punk—the Velvet Underground of “Sister Ray,” the Stooges of “L.A. Blues”—with an arsenal of tape loops, found sounds, and audio manipulation. The result is confounding, sometimes infuriating, and often remarkable. Waves of static buzz at the forefront of the mix, pierced by shrill metallic sounds; surprisingly hooky grooves and choruses take shape underneath, often created on the spot by Nevers and his fellow musicians—an adventurous bunch that includes former Clockhammer members Matt Swanson and Ken Coomer, guitarist Paul Booker, bassist Matt Bach, Lambchop members Paul Niehaus and Kurt Wagner, and Tony Crow on Juno synthesizer.

The Beastie Boys, Public Enemy, Beck, DJ Shadow, and legions of DJs and raveheads have already defined audio collage as the soundtrack for the end of the century. But their work, however chaotic it gets, is assembled too meticulously to self-destruct—it's carefully crafted anarchy, the aural equivalent of *Natural Born Killers*. CYOD is the real deal: The tape starts rolling, and the whole thing could fall apart in a second. The harsh noise is offset by Nevers' spookily quiet vocals and by guitar solos that drone like touch-tone dialing. When *glamour drinking* really connects, as on the incendiary “Aimless & Blue” and the ambient “Maxfield Parrish Moon Above the Mapco,” CYOD does for punk what Public Enemy did for hip-hop and Beck sometimes does for country—it reinvents the music for a world besotted by inconspicuous broadcasting.

“I'm really trying to rip off the Ramones more than anything else,” says Mark Nevers, distracted momentarily by the burbling of his 20-month-old daughter, Lily. Without making much fuss about it, Nevers has been making punk music here for more than a decade. His first band, Marky and the Unexplained Stains, formed in 1986 and played together for seven years, but it wasn't until 1990 that they got around to releasing a CD on Carlyle Records. “They tried to market me as Tom Waits on acid,” Nevers recalls ruefully. “At least they had the balls to try.”

Even then, Nevers conceived of his band as a studio entity, a tack he has followed with CYOD. Nevers says he seldom enters the studio with fully formed songs, in the hope that his bandmates will come up with something “really inspired sounding.” That helps to explain why CYOD's songs defy the verse-chorus strictures that most Nashville bands absorb through osmosis—the songs veer off into unfamiliar melodic paths or avalanche into rumbling grooves. The group has been recording with various lineups for about three years, but it wasn't until last year that CYOD made its live debut at the NEA Extravaganza. Before the gig, Nevers and his bandmates sat around stymied, trying to learn their spontaneous songs off tapes; it took an outsider, bassist Bach, to show them how to play their own material.

Nevers has eschewed the established indie-rock route by forming his own label, Bloodsucker Records, which thus far has released *glamour drinking*, two CYOD EPs, and 45s by several other local bands. His logo depicts a mosquito plunging its proboscis into a slab of vinyl. “Indie rock is a little snobby thing—if they don't know your name, they'll let your record sit in the warehouse just like a major label,” Nevers says.

It makes sense, then, that CYOD will perform this Friday night not in a club but at a house party and mixed-media event thrown by Nashville photographer Holland Hardin. Hardin, who works a day gig at an Eckerd photo lab, has attracted some attention for her colorful photographs of local rock bands, and this weekend she'll present an exhibit of her most recent work. She has also invited several bands besides CYOD to play throughout the weekend, including Chris Davis' new project, Total Football; former Formula frontman Coleman Pickle; and Trauma Team, led by underground filmmaker Laurel Parton. Filmmakers James Brown and Jonathan Shockley will screen their work all weekend long, and slide shows will run Sunday. Food and drink will be provided also, all at a mere \$3 cover. In short, it's the kind of loose-limbed, instantaneous creative event Nashville needs all year round.

For more info about the house party, call 862-8769. And look for CYOD's cassette at gigs and at Lucy's Record Shop and the Great Escape. It's a challenging introduction to the work of a man who prides himself on being “the ugly stepchild of Nashville rock.”

Just as vital and encouraging as CYOD are **The Methadone Actors**, a group of Louisiana emigrés and Belmont students whose sound is deceptively spacy and minimal. If CYOD's sonic landscape is a concrete wall on the verge of toppling, The Methadone Actors' is an abandoned strip mall flooded by a brilliant sunset—skeletal bass and drums that give way to gorgeous, crashing waves of guitar distortion, with pulsing keyboards and whispered voices that surface when least expected. Lead singer Steve Stubblefield's ghostly croon haunts every song.

The Methadone Actors' new CD *Analog Cabin* shows an ambition and promise far beyond most of the band's peers in the Nashville rock scene. It's a sprawling collection filled with moody texture, bright moments, hidden tracks, and extended non-musical interludes. It's an exciting disc, and there'll be more about the band in this space in coming weeks. In the meantime, don't miss their record-release show Saturday at Lucy's Record Shop. (JR)

Fritz Hayden brings unusual experiences to his musical viewpoint: He's been a military policeman, a strip-joint bouncer, a “motorcycle club member” (as he puts it), and a commercial fisherman. Since 1991, he has lived in the Tennessee countryside in a solar-powered home without running water. He's also a soulful singer-songwriter who creates a syncopated, expansive style of white-boy R&B that he calls “barnyard funk.” His music will likely draw comparisons to Hootie & the Blowfish and Dave Matthews, but his songs are punchier and more immediate. A better reference point would be the churning, blue-eyed soul of such '60s and '70s performers as Leon Russell, Joe Cocker, and Delaney & Bonnie. Hayden performs Sunday at 3rd & Lindsley.

Mike Rayburn creates breezy, acoustic pop songs marked by gentle humor and a crafty touch. He has sold more than 10,000 copies of his self-produced, self-distributed albums, most of them while building a loyal following on the college circuit. He's a classically trained guitarist whose percussive finger-picking is reminiscent of such accomplished players as Leo Kottke and Michael Hedges, and he's a comedian who has performed musical stand-up at Zanies and other clubs. He can also play it simple and straight, as he does on his latest CD, *Better Days*. He performs Thursday at Jack's Guitar Bar.

Bob Cheevers' new *Gettysburg to Graceland* album has connected with an audience—currently, it's hovering just below the Top 10 on the national Americana charts. The Nashville-based singer-songwriter's concept album is an ambitious, folk-based song cycle that, as its title suggests, follows Southern life from the Civil War to modern times. Players on the album include Mike Henderson, Jonell Mosser, John Cowan, Kami Lyle, and Larry Knechtel. Cheevers joins the always reliable Jim Lauderdale and Hazeldine on the weekly Western Beat Roots Rock Revival show Tuesday at Zanies. (MM)



Jim Ridley

★ Follow Jim Ridley



Subscribe Today!
Find out what our editors are covering each week and stay up to date on Nashville Scene events and promotions.

Email Required

SUBSCRIBE

CALENDAR

- Jan 5** Music **'Pictures at an Exhibition'** Fri, Jan 5, 2024
- Jan 5** Music - Dance Party **Shrek Rave & Be Our Guest: The Disney DJ Night** Fri, Jan 5, 2024
- Jan 5** Music **Billy Gibbons** Fri, Jan 5, 2024
- Jan 5** Film **Winter Classics: 'The Shining'** Fri, Jan 5, 2024
- Jan 6** Food & Drink **Kidsville** Sat, Jan 6, 2024
- Jan 6** Sports **Monster Jam** Sat, Jan 6, 2024
- Jan 5** Film **Midnight Movies: 'Serial Mom'** Fri, Jan 5, 2024
- Jan 6** Music **Jazz AM** Sat, Jan 6, 2024



AANWire.com

Get the Best Local Journalism in North American in your inbox

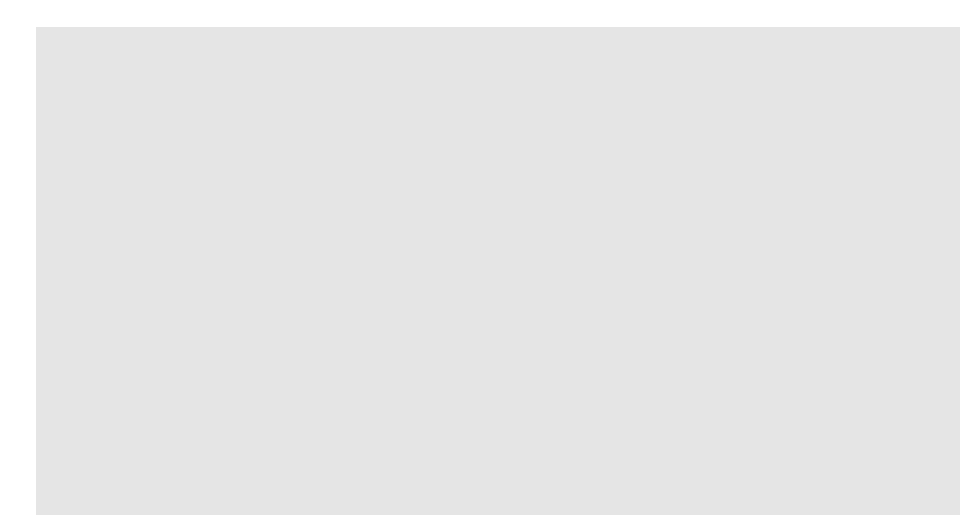
Sign Up Now

- TUCSONWEEKLY** Study: Delta-8-THC on the rise in states... Tucson Weekly / JANUARY 04, 2024
- NewTimes** Cal Poly professors win a patent for thei... New Times (San Luis Obispo) / JANUARY 04, 2024
- SOURCE** The Whys of Federal Legalization: A Recap Source Weekly (Bend, OR) / JANUARY 04, 2024
- ISTHMUS** Vaping down among Wisconsin teens Isthmus / JANUARY 04, 2024
- IllinoisTimes** Focaccia. Easy Illinois Times / JANUARY 04, 2024
- CREATIVE LOAFIN'** College free speech, AI: Here are 10 big... Creative Loafing Tampa / JANUARY 03, 2024

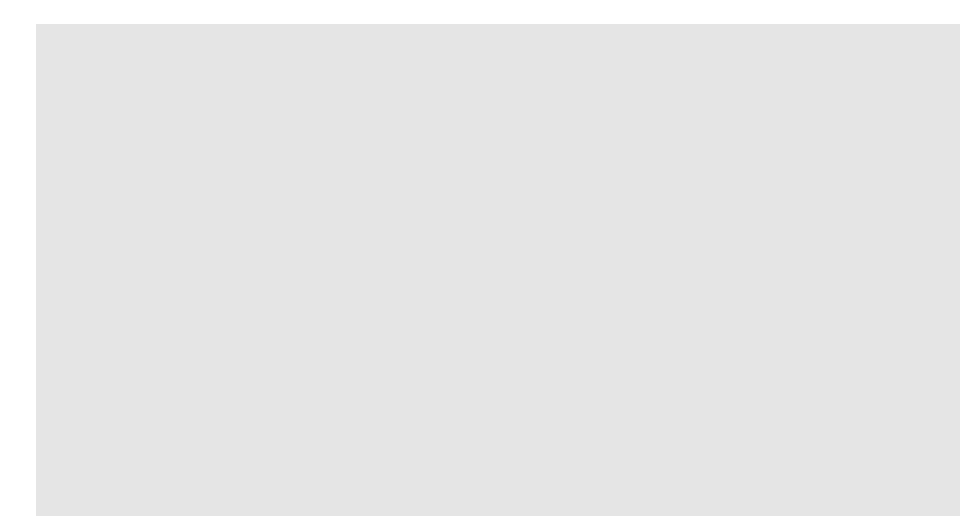
IN PRINT



COVER STORIES



COVER STORY
In Memoriam 2023
SCENE STAFF 8 HRS AGO
Commemorating some of the irreplaceable Nashville figures we lost in 2023



COVER STORY
In Memoriam 2023: Politics
SCENE STAFF 8 HRS AGO
Remembering Rep. Bill Beck, Gov. Don Sundquist, Kathleen Harkey and more



SECTIONS

- HOME
- NEWS
- ARTS & CULTURE
- FOOD & DRINK
- MUSIC
- PODCAST
- PROMO
- BEST OF NASHVILLE
- MULTIMEDIA

SERVICES

- CONTACT US
- CALENDAR
- SEARCH
- WEATHER



nashvillescene.com
210 12th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: 615-244-7989

FOLLOW US

