

Capture the flag

Mar 21, 2009 11:46PM

I've lived in London for ten years; I've done urban exploration, squatted, been in riots, been to countless punk shows, but I've never had as much fun as I did last night. Last night I finally got to play capture the flag for the first time; a game I've been wanting to play since I first read about it in American zines a few years ago.

(For those who don't know the game, or at least the alternative version of the game, it takes place in a section of the city with two teams. The teams each have a flag and a jail. The goal is to steal the opponents flag, whilst keeping yours. If you get caught trying to steal the flag you get put in jail. There's more details of the rules here)

Standing outside Liverpool street station I was beginning to regret showing up. The game had been publicly announced a week before the G20 protests were to happen in exactly the same spot. Perhaps they thought it was a ruse rather than a game so the City police were out in force with a couple of evidence gatherers wandering around pointing cameras at anyone dressed in black.

The teams gather at the start of the game

I shouldn't have worried though, the police - though a few stayed for the rest of the night - started to melt away soon after the rules of the game were explained and the teams split roughly in two.

Bandanas were passed out: red and black teams; lines drawn, and maps given to everyone.

Bandanas were passed out: red and black teams; lines drawn, and maps given to everyone. Our black team, of about 60, streamed through the backstreets of the Square Mile confusing and surprising city workers out for an evening drink.

A jail and space for the flag were decided on. Chalk circles drawn around the two and we're off. The team isn't organised enough to come up with a strategy, or if it is my friend and I have caught the competitive bug so badly that we don't notice it. We just want to run headlong into enemy territory.

Five minutes later and eight of us are hidden behind pillars working out what on earth to do next. I'm not sure any of us have played the game before. We don't know where the flag is, or much about the geography of the space. We creep forward along the main road trying to act nonchalantly.

< Sneaking into enemy territory

We decide on headlong attack. We're rumbled almost instantly; thankfully we're far enough a way to make a getaway and regroup. Under the Gherkin (a large skyscraper in the Square Mile) a few of us try a more subtle approach to see if we can at least find the flag.

Spotted! Racing backwards I end up in a dead end street. I try rushing my captor but I'm firmly tagged. As he escorts me by the arm I almost forget it is a game, it feels so close to a real arrest that I almost try and de-arrest myself. Remembering it's a game I introduce myself and try and have a fun conversation trying to second guess where their flag is.

Not that it'll do me any good languishing in jail. 15 others from my team are stuck there too; all had tried a headlong attack and got caught. Clearly subtlety is the name of the game.

A City cop comes over to the jail, "Okay, here's the update. The black team have the flag and are running back to your side," Whoops go up...

Just as I'm getting my breath back a City cop comes over to the jail, "Okay, here's the update. The black team have the flag and are running back to your side," Whoops go up, "But the red team also just grabbed your flag and were trying to make a dash for it", our grins turn to fixtures of concern, "But don't worry about it they were caught almost straight away." And with that he wanders off. "Jokes!" laughs one of my other arrestees as others text our location to team mates.

And then it comes: the jailbreak! I'm still not sure how she slipped through, but tagging us out we all make a dash for it. Chaos ensues: I should have used my time in jail to at least look at a map! Within two minutes I'm down another dead end being captured again. But not long in jail this time, breaking out we disappear in the right direction back beyond the Gherkin.

We split up, and myself and another woman decide to take a subtle approach. Acting as tourists we slip along the far side of the playing area to behind the court where they're holding the flag. A group of tourists on the Jack the Ripper trail act as the perfect cover. Seconds later other team mates try a head-on assault distracting the guards and allowing me to reach the flag. I scoop it up and sprint off. But not only am I heading in the wrong direction towards two red team members the flag is also double the length I expected it to be. I thankfully get caught before I send myself flying through the air tripping on the fabric!

Back in jail. But this time it's half time that saves me. Wandering back to no-man's land it's still a 0-0 draw.

Trapped in jail!

After a twenty minute break the two teams swapped ends and in the black team the offensive swaps with defensive. The rules have changed slightly this time too. In the first half you could just be tagged out and had to go to jail, this time you have to be physically escorted. So every person nicked takes one of their opponents out of the game for as long as it takes to get to the jail.

The black offensive team decided to mix up the strategy and attack en-masse in the hope of at least a few of them making it through. The only problem being it left us with a scrappy defense. Thankfully the red team didn't try the same tactic because otherwise we wouldn't have stood a chance.

But 20 minutes later it doesn't bode well the message percolates back to the defence team, 'All 20 of the offence are trapped'. Damn! The only chance is a suicide attempt at a jail break. Five of us head off with fixed details of the situation. The jail's at a junction below some stairs if one of us can make it down the stairs and passed the guards we're all free. But I don't make it down the stairs and passed their guards!

I'm slightly embarrassed to discover there's only two other people in the jail when I'm escorted there.

But I hear the cheer in the distance and know we've won.

But suddenly the red's jail is overrun with my other blacks, we're free. And in the distance the cry goes up, "We've got the flag". We charge headlong through the cobbled alley towards our team mates as they stream past with their prize. Up past Tower 43; through the underpass, across no-man's land, back into our territory - is he really going to make it all the way back to our base? By this point I'm crumpled over 300 minutes short gasping for breath, ankles aching, and back stiff. But I hear the cheer in the distance and know we've won. There's only three minutes left on the clock and we're one-nil up; with our flag safe in our territory.

As I cycle away I contemplate about how we just liberated a tiny corner of this city for a tiny parcel of time. A dead area of commerce and law witnessed for two fleeting hours gasping lungs, peels of laughter, and a mad competition. But most important my competitive itch had been scratched, we'd won! Who cares about anything else?

I had the time of my life. Here's hoping this becomes a regular event in the city!

G20 protests kick off series of anti-capitalist action across the globe

Mar 20, 2009 09:37PM

Whilst people in the UK have been busy planning and publicising the upcoming G20 protests in London, others across the globe are planning actions of their own.

In the UK, 2009 kicked off with strong protest against the occupation of Palestine including riots in London and the student occupation movement. As well as this solidarity events have taken place in aid of the struggle in Greece and more recently No Borders protesters have been taking direct action against deportations. This is all set on a backdrop of constant concern over loss of jobs and homes as well as the environmental.

Things look like they will escalate further as mass mobilisations are planned across the globe. Below is just a preview of some of those events.

Spain

On the 28th of March anti-capitalist and anarchist groups will be marching through the streets of Madrid 'contra la crisis' or against the crisis.

NATO

This year's NATO summit takes place in Strasbourg, France and Baden-Baden, Germany on the 3rd-5th April at which 40 heads of state and government leaders will meet. The summit will mark NATO's 60th birthday - 60 years of co-ordinating war and oppression on a global scale. A variety of groups have planned to mobilise and take direct action in protest. For more information check out past news from Last Hours (<http://www.lasthours.org.uk/news/mobilising-against-nato-2009/>)

USA

On April 24-26 the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will be holding their annual spring gathering. Various groups from across the USA have called for protest on the three days including a group calling themselves the 'Self Described Anarchists' who have made a national call out.

We have a choice to make, stay on the sinking ship or turn and fight. The people that structure this destruction have faces and meetings. We intend to take the fight to them, and this is a fight for our world, a fight for our lives. April 24-26 in Washington DC the International Monetary Fund and World Bank will be holding their annual Spring meetings, and we will be in the streets waiting...

We are calling for a an anti-capitalist bloc to strike a blow against the death machine.

Kick it till it breaks!

A communique from the Self-Described Anarchist Collective

selfdescribed.org

UK

Back in the UK the Smash EDO campaign are celebrating the rich anti-capitalist history of Mayday by holding a mass street party at an unconfirmed location in Brighton. The webpage proclaims 'Smash EDO/ITT, Smash Capitalism'

For centuries Mayday has brought people together and out onto the streets. People danced for the coming summer and the fertility of the crops. People marched in remembrance and solidarity with their fellow workers around the world. People gathered in their cities to fight against global capital and exploitation. Smash EDO invites you to a celebration of all these aspects of Mayday.

The event is the third national protest called for by Smash EDO in the last two years. Previous demonstrations have been heavily policed resulting in the use of pepper spray, police dogs and batons against protesters. (Visit Last Hours coverage of the Smash ITT protest - <http://www.lasthours.org.uk/news/immediate-thoughts-on-the-shut-itt-demonstration/> and <http://www.lasthours.org.uk/news/analysis-on-shut-itt-demo/>)

www.smashedo.org.uk/mayday-09.htm

Podcasts on Last Hours

Mar 20, 2009 01:14AM

Yes, Last Hours has finally entered the new millennium and is entering the world of podcasts with the help of Phil Chokeword, and his monthly podcast '10 Songs'. As part of Last Hours expanding content you'll now be able to listen to, and download the podcast through Last Hours. The other good news is that there's more coming - but you'll just have to wait another month for details of all the other audio goodness you'll be able to get on Last Hours soon!

Ten songs podcast #3 audio stream

Or you can download it by right clicking here.

This month's ten songs was more epic than usual with xHannahx of South Coast cooking zine (and soon to be one of the cookery corner duo on Last Hours) coming in to guest present some of her choice acoustic punk rock songs.

Track listing

- 1. Off With Their Heads - Theme Song (From the "Hospitals" MCD on Recess Records)

Guest set with xHannahx:

- 2. PJ & Gabby - A Collection Of Thoughts (From the "Alarm Clocks Kill Dreams" CD on Cottage Records in the USA, Tiki Records and NC Records in Europe and available from them

in the UK

- 3. Kelly Kemp - Misanthrope (From the S/T CD on This Ones For The Crew Records)
- 4. El Morgan - Six Weeks (From the self released 6 Hours In Queens Park" CD)
- 5. Sam Russo - Your Parents Sins (From the self released EP "Darkened Doors")
- 6. Fucked Up - Colour Removal (From the "Epics In Minutes" CD on Deranged Records)
- 7. Uniform Choice - Screaming For Change (From the "Screaming For Change" CD on Wishing Well and available from Revhq)
- 8. School Jerks - Problems (From their self released demo tape)
- 9. Parade Of Enemies - Anti-youth Culture (From their self released demo tape)
- 10. Tranzmitors - Beating Up My Heart (From their S/T CD on Deranged Records)

Footnote stuff from phil!

1. I still don't know what I'm doing. Sorry. I even bought a book on podcasting. This was put together on my family's PC using Audacity and a USB record player, some over played CDs and 7"s and a cheap Internet microphone. Plus this MP3 is a lower bit rate than most in order to keep it at a manageable size. So if there's a song on here that you dig and want to buy the record it came off, don't be put off if it sounds kinda rough or scuzzy. I can guarantee it'll sound better in the original format. I hope that makes sense!
2. I either asked the bands (PJ & Gabby, Kelly Kemp, El Morgan, Sam Russo, Uniform Choice, Parade Of Enemies, School Jerks) or the record label who put out the record I was playing (Recess, Deranged) if it was OK to podcast their songs and they were cool with it. I think one of the great things about the Internet is that its really easy to get in contact with people whose music you dig and I'd like to take time to thank them for allowing me to play their songs. Cheers!
3. If you dug the Parade of Enemies song, good luck finding a tape copy... I'm uploading the whole demo though in a few weeks so you'll be able to download and stream it then. Woo.
4. It goes without saying that if you like this podcast, let your friends know about it! Please? Thank you. And get in touch too if you dig it/hate it/have any tips. [tensongspodcast \[at\] googlemail \[dot\] com](mailto:tensongspodcast[at]googlemail[dot]com)

Posi Matt's cheese cake

Mar 20, 2009 12:18AM

Welcome to the first Last Hours cookery corner! Every couple of weeks we are going to write you lovely people a vegan recipe or two (hopefully complete with photos to help you decide if you like the look of it and see if yours turned out better than ours) and a bit of a rant! This week we will be

showing you how to make Posi Matt's delectable cheese cake.

Hannah's Intro:

I'm xHannahx and I do a vegan cooking zine called 'South coast vegan cooking zine' and I'm also attempting to write a vegan cook book called 'South coast vegan cook book' (you can tell I thought very hard about the title, eh?!) I've been vegetarian my whole life and vegan straight edge for 8 years now... I decided to become vegan after cooking for vegan friends a lot and enjoying the food and then doing a bit of reading about why the dairy industry is nasty. I pretty much lived on oven chips for the first few months as I was a lazy vegetarian who just ate Quorn burgers and chips so I stacked on the weight and got ill. I decided to buy a few vegan cook books and decided I really enjoyed cooking and more importantly EATING the food I was making and it's gone from there.

The recipes I use are all super easy to make (because I'm lazy..) I hate it when I want to make something new but realise I have to buy a million ingredients all of which I need 1 bloody teaspoon of and will never use again! I warn you now that I have a very sweet tooth so don't expect many healthy, nutritious things from me! I'm a junk food addict and love stuffing my chops with sugar! My recipes come from all over too. Some I've made up, some I've got from books/ zines and some have come from friends who have been nice enough to send me them or even better make them for me (my favourite type). I'm always on the lookout for new recipes to try too though so please, please email me any you think I should try (NO DRIED FRUIT THOUGH - YUCK, YUCK, YUCK!)

Isy's Intro:

I'm Isy. I'm involved in a cooking collective, the Anarchist Teapot (www.eco-action.org/teapot) - we've been dishing up at events, conferences, camps, demos and gatherings for over 10 years. I also cook in a volunteer run vegan community cafe (www.cowleyclub.org.uk) and have a small business baking vegan cakes (www.myspace.com/vegancakebakers). In 2008 me and my friend Mike had a cookbook published called *Another Dinner is Possible*, which is going into its 2nd print run later this year! Almost all my recipes are also suited to cooking on a larger scale, whether it's to have a feast with friends or to use in a cafe or in a community meal.

I've been vegan or vegetarian since I was 14 and to me, it's a part of my attempt to live in a way that is true to the values I believe in (solidarity - autonomy/self determination and freedom - co-operation - fighting exploitation). I deeply despise much of what goes on in the food industry, from the destruction caused by industrial agriculture to the mass slaughter of animals to how we are sold lots of unnecessary, unhealthy and expensive crap. And I love food and cooking. I get a lot of satisfaction from it and want to share that with as many people as possible!

I also think dried fruit is yuck.

Posi Matt's cheese cake

by Hannah

Posi Matt made me this when we first started hanging out and I'm pretty sure it's the main reason I like him so much! He also makes a mean Cornish pasty which I will be hassling him for the recipe of.

Cheese cake is very quick to make but needs a few hours to cool down before you can eat it so just make sure you don't leave making this to the last minute!

(MONEY SAVER - Cream cheese can be expensive so Matt suggested I use only half the amount of stuff for the 'middle' and keep the base and topping the same to save cash and it works fine)

What you need:

Base:

- 200g digestive biscuits (most supermarket own brands are vegan)
- 150g margarine
- 400g Cream cheese (I always use Tofutti but you can use any brand or silken tofu if you prefer)
- 1 ripe banana (it has to be ripe or it's a pain to mash)
- 1 cup orange juice (approx. 100ml)
- 4tbs sunflower oil (or any vegetable oil except olive - that'll make it sour!)
- 4tbs sugar (I've used caster and granulated white sugar, it doesn't matter)

Top:

- 1 tin fruit compote or grated chocolate or fresh fruit

What you do:

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C
2. Put the digestives into a food bag and bash the hell out of them with a rolling pin/ hammer/ book etc.)
3. Melt the margarine in a pan on a low heat (keep stirring it!)
4. Mix the digestives in with the melted margarine and push into the bottom of a casserole dish/ cake tin.
5. Put all the 'middle' stuff into a bowl and blend using a whisk or bung in a blender until smooth.
6. Pour the 'middle' over the base.
7. Place in the oven for about 30 minutes - until the top starts to brown.
8. Leave to cool on the side then bung in the fridge for a few hours and pour on topping just before you serve it up!! (YOU MUST LEAVE THIS TO COOL PROPERLY OR THE MIDDLE WILL BE RUNNY!)

And here's the tasty result!

Prison Stories

Mar 19, 2009 02:02PM

This is a revelation. I've never heard of Igor Hofbauer before; but this may be the best book I've read so far in 2009. Prison Stories is a rolling narrative of seven interlocking stories exploring imprisoned characters. The book is frankly terrifying. Not in a 'goblins are going to eat my skull' way, but a 'humanity has deserted all bonds of allegiance' way.

In terms of mood imagine Charles Burn's Black Hole turned up to 11 and you're getting close to the futility and despair exuded by every character in this book. Terrifying but strangely beautiful at the same time.

The book starts with 'Nail story', a short silent comic about an attempted murder and the revenge which has a sense of Jim Woodwring about it. In many ways the story is filled with non-sequiturs, but where as others may use the technique for comic timing here it just adds to the terror.

In many ways, 'Olympia story', the second story and the longest in the book by far is more traditionally structured and if you've enjoyed anything by Charles Burns or Daniel Clowes you're in for a treat. I took it as a metaphor for the suffering of a failed celebrity and the anguish the final fan must feel.

The remaining stories continue the theme. All use a stripped down palette of heavy blacks, dark grey and an iridescent orange. Many use no, or very few words, with people inhabiting near soundless, and apparently deserted, cages. Even if that cage is a city. I'd strongly recommend finding a copy. My new aspiration is to create a story that's halfway towards being as good as these.

G20 protesters guide to the law

Mar 18, 2009 01:27AM

The upcoming G20 protests have already been targeted by a police smear campaign. And it seems likely that the G20 protests will see heavy handed police tactics like those used at Climate Camp in 2008. In this sort of situation knowing your legal rights is vital in protecting yourself from intimidation and to help forge a stronger movement.

It's common that police know little about the law at these sorts of events, and have often been known to lie in an attempt to coerce information from protesters. Learning your rights before an event can save you becoming a victim to police intimidation. What follows is a very brief guide answering a few common questions on your legal rights as a protester.

Can the police take my name and address?

Generally the police have no powers to obtain your personal details

so in most circumstances it's not an offence to refuse to give the police your name and address. There are some exceptions though such as: when you are the driver of a vehicle (an offence under the Road Traffic Act) or if the police suspect you engaging in 'antisocial behavior' (behavior which has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress). In these circumstances refusing to give your name and address is an offence (section 50 Police Reform Act 2002) and could lead to your arrest. Before giving your details though ask what 'antisocial behaviour' they suspect you have committed, as they could just be trying it on in order to get your details.

It's not an offence to refuse to give your details if the police say you have committed a criminal offence, but it may make it more likely that you will get arrested if you don't. If they can't tell you what offence they think you have committed or it doesn't sound at all plausible then they may just be trying to get your details for evidence gathering purposes, in which case don't give them the pleasure. It has recently been reported that the police have a database on information on protesters so it may be in your interest to withhold your details where possible. More information about the database can be found in the Guardian article: [how police keep tabs on activists](#)).

Can the police stop and search me?

There are a number of different pieces of legislation that permit the police to search you:

Under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 you and your vehicle can be stopped and searched if the police have a 'reasonable suspicion' that you're carrying drugs, weapons, stolen items (tools etc) to carry out theft, burglary or criminal damage.

Police perform a 'stop and search' only to find a pair of gloves and a dirty tissue

You and your vehicle can be stopped and searched if the police have 'reasonable suspicion' that you are a 'terrorist' (section 43 Terrorism Act 2000). The search is for any items that will constitute evidence that you are a terrorist e.g. laptops, paperwork, address books, or phones. Under the Act, 'terrorism' is very broadly defined, it includes serious damage to property as well as violence to people. Your action must also be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and must be for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

You and your vehicle can be stopped and searched if a search has been specifically authorised by a senior police officer (section 60, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994). The search can only be for offensive weapons and dangerous instruments.

This is a blanket search power, the police don't need any grounds to suspect you of carrying weapons or dangerous instruments. The definition of these is wide-ranging, it could include a flick knife, a broken bottle, a pair of scissors, a spanner or an umbrella. But it's not a right to search for anything else e.g. an address book, diary, or camera film. It is an offence to refuse to be searched under this power. Sometimes when they use this search power the police

surround a group of people and search them one at a time before release. It is also not unheard of for them to use this power as an excuse to examine your wallet for identification. They will claim they are looking for razor blades.

Police search a vehicle

If a search has been authorised under section 44, Terrorism Act 2000, you and your vehicle can be searched for articles that could be used in connection with terrorism. Again its a blanket search power and there is no need for the police to have any grounds for the search. It is an offense to refuse to be searched under this power.

Under all the above stop and search provisions the following apply:

There is no need to give your name and address, unless you are the driver of a vehicle being searched.

You only have to remove outer clothing for searches in public places. They can 'pat you down' but this must be done by a same-sex officer. They can check bags and pockets.

If they find any weapons or other items, that they are entitled to search for, these can be seized.

They must provide you with written record of the search and a list of anything they seize. If you have not provided them with any personal details it is likely they will ask you to sign the form in an attempt to find out your name.

If you are arrested

In the unlucky event that you are arrested you are only obliged to give your name and address to the police. They will also ask for your date of birth to confirm exactly who you are - you don't have to give them this information, though it sometimes speeds things up if you do. The police can use 'reasonable force' to acquire your DNA and fingerprints at the police station. The best advice is to say, 'No comment' to anything they ask beyond your name and address. You have the right to ring a solicitor and you should not allow the police to interview you until the solicitor arrives. Advise your solicitor that you wish to make a 'no comment' interview if the police want to interview there and then. 'No comment! The defendant's guide to arrest ' is a very thorough resource that the Legal Defence and Monitoring group published in 2004.

Find out more

The above information has been adapted from a pamphlet created by a The Activists Legal Project titled 'Know Your Rights: A Climate Activists Guide to the Law'. The pamphlet also covers what to do if you are arrested as well as other information on laws that may affect you on a protest.

Visit The Activists Legal Project website at www.activistslegalproject.org.uk where you can download the complete pamphlet.

On the days of protest themselves in is also advisable to look out for legal observers from the Legal Defence and Monitoring group who will be handing out information on your rights as well as contact details for solicitors should you be arrested.

Scotland Yard aid quelling of dissent in Greece

Mar 17, 2009 03:38PM

The Greek mainstream news source Kathimerini announced yesterday that an appeal to Scotland Yard was made by Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis to aid Greek authorities in stamping out dissent in the country.

Greece has seen a wave of politically motivated rioting, occupations and direct action since the killing of a teenage boy by a police officer in December last year. The situation remains tense as protests have continued into 2009.

According to the article key figures from the British police force will be offering advice on dealing with dissent across the spectrum from bombings to low level vandalism.

Related links

www.occupiedlondon.org/blog

Greece in flames and a London blockade - Last Hours news report

CrimethInc inside report on Greece uprising

Defiance, Ohio

Mar 16, 2009 01:50PM

Defiance, Ohio released these 4 tracks for download on their website as a fundraiser for The Icarus Project. There is talk of them being released on 7" though no confirmed release date at the moment.

The Icarus Project is an inspiring initiative aiming to redefine the way we perceive mental health. Will from the D,O states on the bands website "All of us are affected by mental health, either personally or in relation to our loved ones. The power structures that dominate our lives can be so insidious that they dominate the ways we seek to be sound of mind and body."

One of the most inspiring things about Defiance, Ohio is their ability to encourage strength and solidarity even when things are hard as well as promoting honesty about who we are. They manage to merge political and personal perfectly, which in reality is the way things should be.

First track 'The Reason' is a nice pop rock affair. Since the release of 'The Fear, The Fear, The Fear' (their most recent studio album)

Defiance, Ohio have shaped a more gentle sound for themselves and this track proceeds on the same path nicely. The violin, piano and vocals play off each other nicely creating a tune so catchy it will make you smile.

'You Are Loved' plods along nicely. Musically it is not the most interesting of the four tracks but the the end of the song finishes in crescendo with the vocals reclaiming 'You are loved, You are loved, You are loved, You are really loved'.

'Everyone Else on the Other Side' again sees D,O bringing things down a notch. The song has a melancholy feel to it which contrasts nicely against the other tracks.

'Cigarettes' is more reminiscent of older material, with crashing symbols and shouted vocals in places. It's short and to the point coming in at around the minuet and a half mark.

The four tracks presented here show the true diversity of the band. Each one individual and with it's own story to tell. Fans of the band should not be disappointing by this release but more importantly the band have shown their dedication to social change by supporting a more than worth while organisation.

defianceohio.terrorware.com
theicarusproject.net

Defiance, Ohio mp3 release in aid of The Icarus Project

Mar 14, 2009 09:55PM

Folk punk band Defiance, Ohio have released 4 tracks from their website as a means of fund raising for The Icarus Project. To acquire the tracks all you have to do is make a donation via paypal with the minimum donation being \$2 (around £1.40 with current exchange rates).

The Icarus Project is a cool initiative aiming to re-evaluate understanding of so called 'mental illness'. It questions the use of psychiatric drugs that have become endemic in many countries world wide.

From the bands website

All of us are affected by mental health, either personally or in relation to our loved ones. The power structures that dominate our lives can be so insidious that they dominate the ways we seek to be sound of mind and body. The work the Icarus Project does is important because a fresh, non-judgemental perspective on what makes us brilliant or what makes us mad is sorely needed in a world as confusing and distracting as the one we inhabit. I hope that you are able to donate to their project, but more so I hope that you can get interested in their content and their organization as a whole. It was a revelation to me, I hope it can be for you as well.

You can find out what Last Hours thought on the four tracks here

Defiance Ohio will be visiting the UK in May.

defianceohio.terrorware.com

theicarusproject.net

Gina Young interview

Mar 14, 2009 02:44PM

Gina Young is a Seattle based singer/writer/playwrite and one half of electro hop hop outfit Team Gina. She has done three solo albums, *She's so Androgynous*, *Intractable* and *3am Voice*. Her solo music is powerful post riot grrrl, with deeply intelligent and personal lyrics covering politics, activism and gay rights. She has penned several plays, the latest, *Salt Water*, has just been released. She's an utterly fascinating and driven individual, steeped in DIY.

This February I was fortunate enough to interview Gina with the conversation ranging from her recent play, and upcoming plans through to Proposition 8 and the changing forms of homophobia in the United States.

LH: How have the initial reactions to Salt Water been?

Gina Young: Everyone who has read the script has been really intrigued. One thing that has been fun for me is that there is one monologue towards the end of the show- "I will never love you"- kind of a big dramatic monologue, and everyone I showed the script to thought it was about them! It's been the same in performance! Hopefully that means it resonates: people take it personally.

Salt Water is, in so many ways, a play about unrequited love and sacrifice, and those are pretty universal themes at the end of the day I guess.

LH: Did you write it with that in mind?

Gina Young: I write from a very personal perspective. I don't really think about writing universally or anything, because that's such a skewed concept that rests on normativity. But I like that it seems to resonate, and tap into something bigger.

Salt Water is, in so many ways, a play about unrequited love and sacrifice, and those are pretty universal themes at the end of the day I guess.

LH: Has any of your stuff been performed outside of the US?

Gina Young: Never. Team Gina's videos have screened all over Europe, but so far my plays have only been seen in New York and Seattle.

LH: That's a shame - it's a little too far for me to go to see them. Have you any plans to get them performed elsewhere?

Gina Young: Someday. Ideally as a play they will be produced all over, maybe even published. But at this juncture I'm still really hands-on and DIY about stuff. I've never even really spent time in Europe, save 10 days in Paris in 2007. I hope to change that this

year.

"Touring solo is no fun. I don't have a driver's license, so when I've toured solo it has involved a lot of Greyhound busses"

LH: What have you got planned this year?

Gina Young: There's the Team Gina European Tour, this October! Plus I might do a little travelling this summer. we'll see.

LH: Do you see yourself touring solo in the near future, or will it be more as part of Team Gina?

Gina Young: Well, I really enjoy working on my solo project, and I have ideas for it constantly, but touring solo is no fun. I don't have a driver's license, so when I've toured solo it has involved a lot of Greyhound busses and mooching rides off of friends, not to mention carrying heavy equipment all by myself and getting up on stage alone every night.

Touring with Team Gina is a blast, because first of all it means travelling with my best friend, and also there's the bonus that we have almost no equipment to carry, no guitars or any of that crap. So as much as I love doing solo work, I have to say that I get into way better adventures touring with Team Gina.

Adventure

LH: What kind of adventures?

Gina Young: Oh man, tops was last summer, in Austin, Texas. After our show about 20 punk kids jumped the fence at a public swimming pool, middle of the night under a full moon. A few hours later someone was like, "Shit! Cops!" and we all ran. But there were no cops!

LH: What are the cops like the US? I've had a few friends badly beaten by the cops here.

Gina Young: It varies so greatly by city, when I lived in New York I had such an antagonistic relationship with the cops, there would be so many protests where the cops would instigate violence and then blame it on the activists, like at Matthew Shepard's political funeral.

LH: I feel dumb for asking this, but who?

Gina Young: He was a young gay man who was murdered [in October 1998]. It received so much media attention because of the extreme violence of the act, he was basically crucified on a fence near a farm in Wyoming, and it really galvanized the gay rights movement in this country, much as the Proposition 8 issue is doing now.

Proposition 8

LH: What is Proposition 8? I clearly don't pay enough attention to US politics.

Gina Young: That's okay. Basically, there were three states in the US where gays and lesbians had the right to marry: Massachusetts, Connecticut and California.

...and queers in the US have fucking *had it* with discrimination.

Proposition 8 was a ballot measure in California, largely funded by

the Mormons and other conservative religious groups, that effectively banned gay marriage in that state, and queers in the US have fucking *had it* with discrimination.

LH: Is there a similar thing happening in Massachusetts and Connecticut?

Gina Young: I think those states are pretty safe. But Prop 8 has definitely changed my feelings on the issue for sure, because when I was living in New York, a lot of the radical queers were not working on the gay marriage issue. The sentiment was, "Why would we want to be fighting for the right to be normative?" But now I've come to realize it's so much bigger than that, gay marriage is the watershed issue that could ultimately change everything for queer people in this country.

LH: The Christian right seem very powerful in the US compared with Europe, what other homophobic actions are they involved in?

Gina Young: They are very powerful. I think that most of their influence is social; through church and community. But now they are becoming increasingly active on the legal front, trying to ban gay marriage nationally, and I don't know how a person can sleep at night, knowing that they are devoting their energy to taking away other people's rights.

LH: In the time that you have been making music, how do you feel attitudes over sexism and homophobia have changed within the music scene?

Gina Young: I was thinking about that recently, actually, because I feel like everything has changed, but at the same time, I recognize that it might just be me who has changed.

LH: How so?

Gina Young: Well, I remember being 15 and having a two-girl band, and we wanted to play a gig at this house that did shows, so we talked to the guy in charge and he totally blew us off, basically laughed at us and asked us if we liked some girl band that we didn't even like.

"I don't know if it's because sexism and homophobia have decreased, or if it's because my own personal sense of power has increased"

He then proceeded to talk seriously with some guy right next to us about booking that guy's band, those kind of situations used to happen to me all the time and now they never do.

But I don't know if it's because sexism and homophobia have decreased, or if it's because my own personal sense of power has increased and I don't take no for an answer anymore. Team Gina has never been disrespected on stage - we've never had guys telling us to take off our clothes or things like that. But maybe it's because we don't even leave room for that, we're already in control of our sexuality and how we're coming across and are very aggressively commanding the room.

LH: Yeah, you're much harder to put down than a 15 year old girl. Also the social circles you choose to move in affect your view of the outside world. Like my world is full of activists

and vegans, but I'm sure the outside world isn't like that.

Gina Young: Right, but we don't ghettoize ourselves into certain circles, either. I mean Team Gina, specifically, frequently plays to audiences that are, for all intents and purposes, 'straight' audiences, and it's been great in Seattle we aren't even seen as a 'lesbian band'. We don't just play gay clubs and as much as I love being around like-minded people I still consider the work I do activism, so I wouldn't want to only perform for like-minded people

Many thanks to Gina Young for taking the time to talk to me. Check out Team Gina when they tour Europe in late 2009.

Weblinks:

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