

STUDENT LIFE

Music Column: Q&A with Giant Drag's Annie Hardy

Hardy chats about upcoming CD "Hearts and Unicorns"

By Sean Mihlo
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She's got a tough-cookie attitude and a dangerously biting voice. Born and raised in California's Orange County, 24-year-old Annie Hardy grew up eschewing the drug-induced lifestyles of her peers and focusing her attention on writing and playing music. In 1998, at the age of 18, Hardy escaped from the O.C.'s magnetic grip and moved to L.A., catching a few gigs here and there as keyboardist for bands like Shrinkwrap and Radio 4 (no, not that Radio 4). Eventually, she decided to go solo with her own musical brainchild, Giant Drag, in 2003. In the summer of 2003, along with 27-year-old percussionist Micah Calabrese, the duo played their first show at the Scene Bar, accepted residencies at various venues throughout L.A. and put out "Lemona," a five-song E.P. Over two years later, the band signed with Interscope-subsiary Kickball Records and released their debut full-length, "Hearts and Unicorns," with critics proclaiming the rebirth of a grunge nation. Songs like "Cordial Invitation" and "This Isn't It" affirm the band's sound somewhere amongst the dirty riffs of Nirvana, the lethargic vocals of Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval and the drone-saturation of My Bloody Valentine.

The Behrend Beacon: Giant Drag, it's just you and Micah.

When and how did you two meet? Was Giant Drag originally intended as a solo project?

Annie Hardy: We met in 2001 when both of our best friends were dating each other. At first, Micah was helping me record my songs at his home recording studio. Then, I asked him to be my drummer. He said yes and then one day started playing the synthesizer as a bass at the same time as he played drums, only as a joke, but it worked. So, we didn't need a bass player.

BB: What was the recording process like for "Hearts and Unicorns"? Did you have most of the songs written already?

AH: Some of them were old and some were new. We recorded every Giant Drag song that we had (18 all together), and the ones that we thought turned out the best ended up on the record.

BB: What made you decide to include most of the songs from the "Lemona" E.P. on the new album? I definitely approve of the new version of "This Isn't It," which emphasizes the role of the synthesizer more than the original does. How important are the synthesizers?

AH: We decided to put those three songs from the E.P. because they are songs that a lot of people like, including us. It just seemed right. We have synthesizers on every song. That's what we do live. They were there on the E.P., too. They are on every song and always have been. The synthesizer acts as a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The two-man band "Giant Drag" is made up of Annie Hardy and Micah Calabrese (left to right)

bass.

BB: One music critic recently described the band as "Mazzy Star for perverts," which is pretty accurate. I know this question can get pretty monotonous, but what are your favorite bands? Who have you been influenced by?

AH: Neil Young is one of my all-time favorites, and the Beatles of course. I guess I must have been influenced by 90s music, since that's what was going on when I was growing up. I started getting into music more than just listening to it. I remember listening to a lot of

Guns N' Roses when I was in grade school...I guess I never really stopped listening.

BB: Have you taken the new material out on the road yet? And are you totally excited about playing live?

AH: We've been playing the material from the record for a

long time already. We have a handful of new material that we have been playing already, and we're more excited about that. We're excited about touring but also nervous. We're leaving for two months straight and that's a really long time.

Sex Column: What constitutes cheating?

By Michelle Vera Surovich
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First, let's try to define what constitutes cheating. Hundreds of years ago it was much easier to explain. To simplify things and to possibly offend all lovers, anthropologists and historians, let's just say cheating can be defined as relations with someone other than a predetermined partner beyond courting, involving some level of physicality. Call it a kiss or more, but some sort of physical exchange is necessary.

Cheating is a purely physical act. Someone cannot think his or her way into adultery. In the realm of the inner mind, many thoughts, both clean and dirty, stream across and present themselves. Everyone has their own fantasies, but not acting on these impulses is what counts as faithfulness. For example, if someone wishes someone ill will or even death, they are not a murderer.

Someone who wants to steal a box of chocolates and even if the thought brings a smile to their face, it is not cheating unless they actually do it. Cheating and sex work the same way.

Phone sex has become a lucrative industry, where a person talks with someone else, usually about acts that if actually performed, would cause strenuous back sprains and illegitimate children. The results of the experience may offend the other partner, but the only real harm, in most situations, is the weight on the credit card. A few dollars a minute can wholly support that so-called sexy co-ed's gastric bypass of the month.

One can argue that all phone sex constitutes is the exchange of thoughts. Intellectuals do the same thing over a game of Backgammon.

The next frontier of man, not including outer space, is the Internet, a medium originally designed for defense purposes. Slowly, entrepreneurial minds began to corrupt the intellectual design of the Internet to entertain the foolhardy masses.

With the Internet, things started to get more interesting. A new medium emerged faster than Ron Jeremy's career. In addition to annoying advertisement pop-ups, new websites featuring nude portraits of anorexic women that could double as floatation devices (in case of an emergency) flooded the web.

The unique interactivity of the Internet allowed everyone the opportunity to experiment at a faster pace and show the beauty of the human figure in a variety of ways. Fetishes for the strangest things, such as Lego's or juice boxes, could be explored and satisfied.

Instead of just the audio properties that the phone has to offer, the web cams of the Internet allow visual entertainment as well. Someone could do the raunchiest things in front of millions of others, but is it cheating? There's no physical exchange, and even if there were, former President Clinton already has proven that BJs don't count.

What's new LEB?

By Erin Daquelente
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Do you have creative ideas and can use them in a way to catch people's attention? Do you want to get more involved on campus? If so, the Lion Entertainment Board (LEB) is now accepting applications for a new publicity chair to finish out the rest of the semester and continue through for the following spring semester. This is a paid position, which is in charge of heading a committee and meeting with them each week to publicize original ideas for all the events going on that week. Applications are available in the Student Activities office and will be due Wednesday, Nov. 10. The LEB will be holding interviews and hopefully have a new chairperson selected by Thanksgiving. So come on and join their team.

Here is what is planned for the rest of the semester, check it out.

Spanky is performing this Saturday night at 9 p.m. in Bruno's. He made his first appearance on MTV's Half Hour Comedy Hour, as well as performing on HBO's "The Comedy Channel." Spanky became a published author with his book entitled *Men are Sluts*, a humorous look at the male libido. In 1997, Spanky was seen on the hit shows: ER, The Profiler, and the Jenny McCarthy Show.

Buddy Wakefield will be here Nov. 18 at 9p.m. Wakefield is known for delivering raw, rounded, high vibration performances of humor and heart while shifting social paradigms and assaulting cross-cultural barriers through powerful accounts of release.

Adam Ace is scheduled for Dec. 3 at 9 p.m. in Bruno's. Unlike any comedy show you have seen before, The Adam Ace Crazy Comedy Show has to be seen in order to truly be believed. Combining comedy, music, props, costumes, wacky dancing, improv. and lots of audience participation, Ace excites and energizes crowds with his outrageous look and contagious personality.

In addition to the various comedians scheduled for the upcoming weeks, The LEB Nightclub offers various bands and special events.

Sons of Pitches is planned to play Dec. 8 at 12 p.m. in Bruno's. Sons of Pitches is a group of five classically trained musicians who perform a wide variety of songs from pop, classic rock, country and folk covers to many original songs. Their engaging stage presence along with their humor and energy make them highly charismatic performers. They are now making a full time commitment to pursuing a professional performance career.

The LEB's annual Battle of the Bands will be held April 14, 2006 and is still being planned. For more information or to join the planning committee, e-mail Ben Raymond at bar235@psu.edu.

Also, don't miss the movies shown every week in Reed 117. They cost only \$1 per student and play Wednesday through Saturday night at 10 p.m. Scheduled to play for the next few weeks are:

- Red Eye Nov. 9-12
- Four Brothers Nov. 16-19
- Cinderella Man Nov. 30 - Dec. 2



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