

entertainment

'6 Sick Hipsters' is captivating and cynical

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Take any story ever written, even all the brainless crap romance and self-help books that somehow sustain an equally brainless crap audience, throw in a monkey or an ape and it instantly becomes funnier and more interesting. Take a well written, already compelling, fast-paced, hilarious, page-turning, poignant, commentary on modern consumerism, gore-fest of a story and toss in a blood-thirsty, trained-to-attack-the-face baboon – you know, the ones with the bright red and chewed-up looking rear ends that you can't help giggling about at the zoo – then you have something worth plunking down your hard-earned \$12.50.

Rayo Casablanca's "6 Sick Hipsters" provides all of the above-mentioned adjectives mentioned after the brainless crap part. Casablanca's debut novel also features a wide array

of highly original characters developed just enough so that you care when they meet a senselessly violent demise – some due to the sharp, dirty claws of the baboon. Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the newly anointed center for uber-hipsters, serves as the setting.

The name Rayo Casablanca sounds like a pseudonym and

the fact that one of his main characters named Harrison writes paleontological-themed pornography, also known as fossil erotica, in an anthropological publication called "Mazon Creek Mixopterygium" under the penname of Cloverly confirms this suspicion. The name Rayo Casablanca is just too hip for a book called "6 Sick Hipsters."

Aside from filling this unique niche in the porn market, Harrison works as a museum curator. On his off hours, he spends time with a group of friends dubbed the Whole Sick Crew. The Whole Sick Crew consists of an ER doctor who creates much-sought-after mix tapes of early '80s electropop; a renowned blogger and editor of an underground art magazine; a mescaline popping, peyote eating and absinthe drinking neo-hippie; a heavy

metal playing high school guidance counselor who sells cocaine to his students; an owner of an ultra-trendy restaurant that exclusively employs mentally handicapped servers; and Harrison himself.

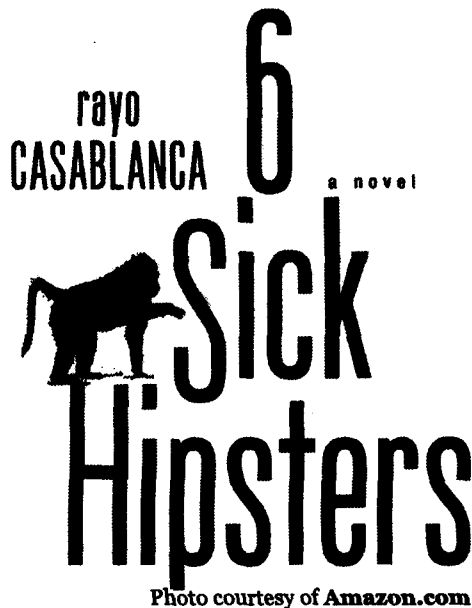
The other main character goes by the much-less-hip name of Beth Ann. Beth Ann knits afghans, scarves and potholders for a living. She also enjoys wearing a hand-knitted sweater with swastikas and the letters C-O-C-O stitched across the front. Apparently, Coco Chanel had a Nazi boyfriend during WWII and Beth Ann feels the world should know. Eventually, Beth Ann and Harrison meet on a train to Manhattan and quickly become a couple. Beth Ann then gets assimilated into the Whole Sick Crew.

In the midst of all this character development, a serial killer by the name of Doctor Jeep has been murdering some of the best and brightest artists in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Since the cops don't have a clue,

the Whole Sick Crew takes it upon themselves to prevent any further murdering by doing a little murdering of their own. Their target, of course, is Doctor Jeep. Unfortunately for some of the characters and even after recruiting some local members of the 88th Street Crips, Doctor Jeep proves not so easy to kill.

By this point in the novel you won't be able to turn the pages fast enough to see what happens next. The plot takes so many unexpected turns that you'll find yourself mentally out of breath at times. I won't spoil the ending but rest assured that the killer baboon makes several appearances. For those who don't like stories with killer baboons or even any other type of rampaging primate then "6 Sick Hipsters" is not for you.

Few authors have the ability to make such a grand debut, and fewer still can recreate the same magic in their sophomore effort. Let's all hope Rayo Casablanca doesn't make us wait too long to find out.



The Raveonettes experiment with new EP

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The Raveonettes rave on once again with trance inducing distorted guitar melodies, the right amount of synthesizer, and wispy ghost-like vocals in their latest EP 'Beauty Dies'. After the success of their U.S. release of "Lust Lust Lust" in February the band announced a release of four digital-only EPs. 'Beauty Dies' released Oct. 21 making it the third out four planned releases.

The Raveonettes sound has changed dramatically since their debut album 'Whip It On' which the entire album's key is B-flat minor. In 'Beauty Dies', the music is far more creative and has an air of romanticism in it. The melodies are sometimes

reminiscent of the 1960s and yet grinding and modern at the same time.

Danish indie rock duo Sune Rose Wagner and Sharin Foo have broadened their musical palate experimenting with jazzy sounds as well as different darker melodies. Some of their influences include Buddy Holly, The Clash, The Smiths, My Bloody Valentine, David Bowie, Atari Teenage Riot, The Cookies, The Ronettes, Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, Silver Apples, Primal Scream and much more.

'Beauty Dies' is a quick and inexpensive listen. The EP only contains four tracks and only cost 99 cents each. Musically, the album is fantastic. Each track melts with each other, which creates a fluid album. In the last song, "Here Comes the End," the guitar melodies

almost resemble 1950s surfer rock, but not in a cheesy aspect. The tones in the songs are darker, morose, and a little slower. Equally as grim are the lyrics, "Hard to take/Beauty dies/ And I know it's hard for you to get/ Yeah I know it's

hard for you to get."

The Raveonettes may not be for everyone. Some may find the music too reminiscent of rock from the 1960s. Music goes who are not into indie rock or if electronic beats are bothersome they may not find

this album enjoyable. The image of garage rock hipster mod leather jackets, smudged black eyeliner, and motorcycles may not impress everyone.

The plus side for those looking for something new and open minded to whatever may want to give this album a try. It only cost \$3.96 and it's easy to purchase online. 'Beauty Dies' can be purchased at Amazon, Rhapsody, Napster, and I-tunes. The fourth EP to complete the series of digital-only releases is set to come out around the holidays. The Raveonettes modernize their favorite Christmas songs.

The band also plans to go on a short tour to follow up their series of EPs. In Jan. of 2009, the band will make six stops from Los Angeles to New York City from Jan. 15 to Jan 24.



Photo courtesy of Somelovemusic.com