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Issue 7
July 2009

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Contents:

p.3: *Editor's Letter:* Summertime

p.4: *Profile:* Spokane Skeptic

p.6: *Profile:* Spokanearama

p.8: *Portrait Series:* Focal Point

p.16: *First Friday Art Walk:* July

p.22: *Compulsive Chronicles:* The Marquee

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SPOKE(a)N(e)

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Cover Image from Gabriel Brown's show "Great Tasting Goodness" at the MAC. Photo by Tyson Habein
Photo Illustration for Compulsive Chronicles by Sara Habein*

*We do our best to make sure all items are accurate and complete, if you notice a mistake, let us know at
spokenspokane@gmail.com. We will do our best to rectify the error.*

S

The cursor is blinking at me from a blank page. It's mocking me, I tell you. Mocking me and my inability to come up with something to say. I'm looking out the window above my computer monitor and thinking about how nice it is outside, and how in less than 24 hours I will officially be on vacation. My mind's not in the game. This issue will likely be uploaded from the road.

U

I guess that's the nature of summer. We long to be outside. We desire that sense of freedom we had as children when school let out for those long summer days. Now, as adults, the roadtrip has become almost as important. It allows us to step away from the standard, day-to-day shuffle. It allows us a bit of that childhood summer. Uploading the magazine from the road will be interesting, if only for the fact that we'll be publishing a Spokane-specific magazine from somewhere other than the Spokane region. An odd concept, that.

M

That's the other side of the roadtrip; it makes you think about your home differently. You think about what you have at home that you don't or can't have elsewhere. You think about the things you wish you had at home. If you're the enterprising sort, maybe you come home after a long road-trip and you create those things that you don't have. I hope so. I hope you all come back from long roadtrips and bring back the things Spokane needs.

M

I hope you bring back new art.

I hope you bring back new ideas.

E

I hope you bring back great snapshots of you and your family enjoying yourselves.

I hope you return with a sense of that summer freedom.

Welcome back to summer, welcome back to Spokane.

R

This issue is short. It's July. Get out and enjoy the season and all the art and creativity that comes with it.

Well look at that, I came up with something to say.

T

-Tyson
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I

P.S. I'd like to remind everyone that this magazine is best viewed in two page spread (with a cover) format. It allows you to see the entire photo when we spread it over two pages, and maybe some layout detail that you would have otherwise missed. It's not necessary, but it doesn't hurt to look at a magazine like a magazine.

M

E



Photo by Sara Habein

For this month's profiles, SPOKE(a)N(e) wanted to talk to some of the local bloggers. Rather than the usual question/answer format, we asked only a few questions and let the bloggers interpret them how they chose.

For that reason, the two profiles are different from each other this month, much as the subjects' blogs differ from one another. Both sites are sources of news, events, humor, and local perspectives for the Spokane community.

The bloggers were asked about their favorite spots in Spokane, and how they thought it related to the area. They then stood for a portrait at the chosen location.

Photos by Tyson Habein





SPOKANE SKEPTIC

www.spokaneskeptic.blogspot.com

Where is your favorite spot in Spokane?

One of my favorite spots in Spokane is the STA Plaza. I know it has a bit of a troubled history politically and isn't exactly the most aesthetically-pleasing structure in Spokane, but I can't help but to be fascinated by it.

Why is it a favorite?

I think one of the main reasons it's a favorite for me is the sheer amount of diversity that exists in that one little downtown block. You see people standing shoulder to shoulder everyday that you would not typically see together anywhere else in Spokane. It's really a great place to people watch. In fact, I just had the privilege of watching a middle aged man (who bore a slight resemblance to pro wrestling legend Terry Funk) tell another man he was going to "put a contract out" on him over a dispute involving \$140 and someone's mother. Two minutes later a guy in a shirt and tie walked by talking business on his cell phone. What a place.

How do you think it relates to the city as a whole?

Politically, it's kind of this albatross that reminds people of past political "failures" and financial mismanagement. Socially, it's a mixed bag. For some, it is their social center. For others, it is just another stop on their daily commute. And for others, it's the place where you stop and cross to the other side of the street while walking downtown.

Nick, Spokane Skeptic



SPOKANARAMA

www.spokanarama.blogspot.com

As a firefighter I get to go into some places that many aren't allowed. Sometimes they are places that I wish I wasn't allowed either. But when asked what is my favorite place in Spokane, it's not any of these "secret" places. It is one open to the public and close to my house. My favorite place is the Nishinomiya Japanese Garden at Manito Park.

Not exactly a place of natural beauty, the Garden is as manufactured as the Matterhorn at Disneyland. However, there is a big difference. At Nishinomiya, you never get the feeling that your subconscious is the victim of some sort of con job. The Japanese Garden doesn't try to Epcot you into thinking that you are in Japan, or that it is a natural occurring phenomenon. On the contrary, the intent of any Japanese garden is to take natural elements and pound them into a device designed to connect with our human consciousness and create peace, contemplation and happiness. It's meticulously planned. It's unapologetically brutal.

By itself, when I am by myself, Nishinomiya has caused me to surrender to its peace via its manufactured, manicured charms. However, it's more interesting to be there when the place is swarming. In short, it's fun to watch the struggle.

Parents screaming at their kids to show some respect and to "shut the hell up." Cigarettes and gum laid to rest in the bridge's makeshift ashtray --a hole created when someone pried off one of the bridge's brass adornments. Near collision and catastrophe on the stepping stones by the waterfall. Bamboo barriers overcome by triumphant plant-trampling pilgrims whose manifest destiny will not be denied -- the source of the waterfall beckons!

I once saw a family eat a very large KFC bucket dinner by the banks of the pond on a fragrant summer's evening. The koi showed little interest in the chicken bones kindly deposited in their habitat. Maybe the sacrificial carcasses should have been flung with more fanfare. Uppity South Hill fish.

The long list of unread rules at the garden entrance somehow morph into a to-do list for many of its patrons. Yet, the Nishinomiya Zen-Machine valiantly struggles with them and their actions, never wavering from its blatant intent. As they careen to the exit, contemplative seeds have been planted in these marauding Spokaneites. Poor, unsuspecting bastards. They should have read the sign. The garden will win. It's what it was designed to do.

John Griffith, Spokanarama

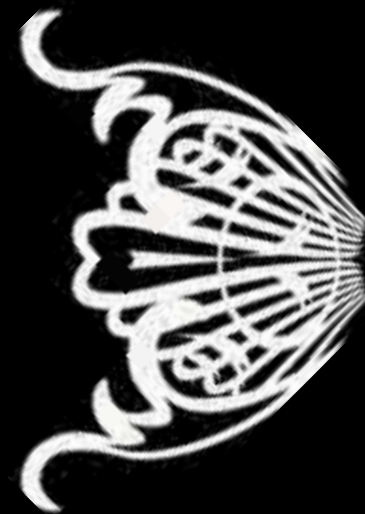


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Focal Point

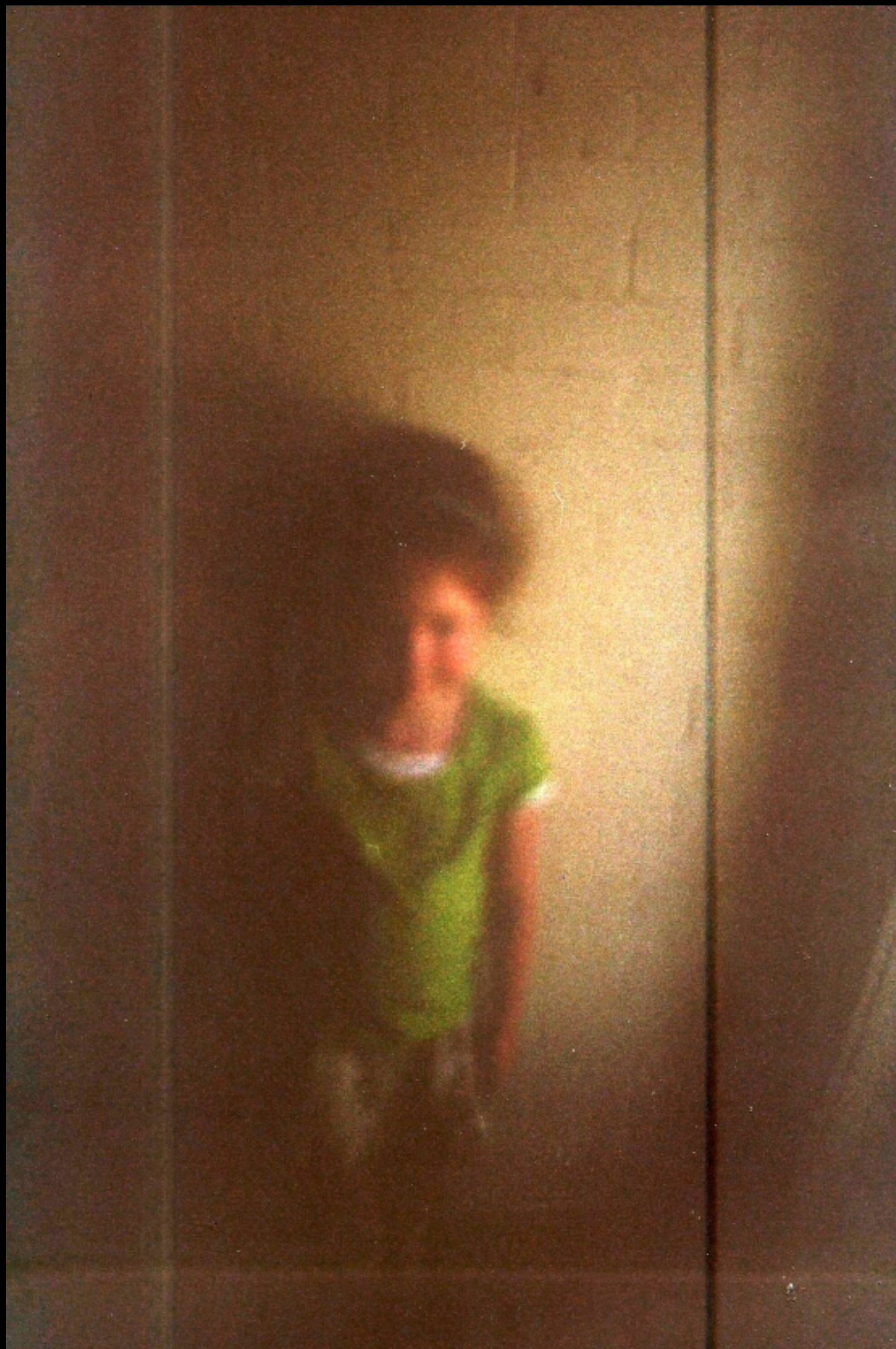
Photos by Tyson Habein



Approximately 1 year ago, I modified a disposable camera. I removed the electronics, cut off the lense and reversed it, reattaching all the necessary elements with glue and gaffers tape. I hand roll film onto its spool under a black jacket in broad daylight, forcing new rolls of film through a camera only meant for one use.

This portrait series was shot with that camera.

“Sharpness is a bourgeois concept.” Henri Cartier-Bresson















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elemenoh
somehow beginnings and ends always turn out to be middles



This month, we began the Art Walk at the Saranac building, where Nickolus Meisel exhibited *Elemenoh*. Though his idea was solid, the show wasn't as impactful as I'd hoped. Maybe the venue wasn't right, or maybe the message was lost in the technical aspects. While the tree in the middle of the room surrounded by rubber pieces looked interesting, it was still somewhat of a let-down. Perhaps any art at the Saranac Building had big shoes to fill after last month's successful *Override Apple Pie*. Still, credit where credit is due for a lot of effort put into this one. (5 W. Main)

A handful of people simply interested in seeing the art of Spokane joined us, including some from the upcoming RiVerSpeAK forum/website/magazine. We were glad to have the company. I hope that the heat wasn't too terrible for everyone. In a way, I suppose it added to the joy of arriving at our next destination. Oh sweet, sweet air conditioning.

We made our next stop at Santé Restaurant and Charcuterie, which featured the music of Floating Crowbar and photos by Brian Schrader and Paul K. Haeder. Haeder's photography was strong, with a real sense of place, but I found myself continually drawn back to Schrader's landscapes. His "Pulse" is one of several pieces in which he is unafraid to do what traditional photographers would consider wrong — bringing camera motion intentionally into a stationary landscape. The movement of light and land in the images gives a dreamlike feel and was a welcome change from yet another collection of wheat fields on the Palouse. Everyone loves the Palouse, but these landscapes were in a different class. It's great to see Santé open up their restaurant to art viewers off the street without also making them feel as though they need to sit for dinner. (404 W. Main)



Floating Crowbar at Sante
Opposing: Elemonah by Nickolus Meisel

(All photos and commentary this month by Tyson Habein)



Constant Creations

The tattoo parlor Constant Creations has become a mainstay in the Spokane art scene. We try to visit the establishment at least every other month during our First Friday walks and I was glad we did this month. The intended artist was unable to do the show and we were told that the art they had hanging came together with only a couple of days notice. It was bright, with heavy texture in the paint and an obvious bend towards the three dimensional. It's interesting work that would be at home in any standard gallery as it was in the tattoo parlor. In my rush to hop to the next venue, I forgot to pick up the name of the artist. The work, however, comes highly recommended. (524 W. 1st Ave.)

After Constant Creations, we headed to the STA Plaza. Kristen Dighiera provided the standard acoustic fare for First Friday while the art came from photographer Bobby Wilkins. I was familiar with Wilkins' work via the online world and was pleased to see the prints hold up to the quality I'd seen in his online portfolio. For being only 18 years old, Wilkins is miles ahead of most folks in Spokane in terms of his composition, his creativity and his technical know-how, both with a camera and with a computer. I'm looking forward to seeing great things from this photographer in the future. The only thing that detracted from the experience was the manner in which the prints were mounted. Cheap foam board is fine if done with great care, but the prints seemed to be slapped onto the board in a hurry. Still, the light in the STA center is kind to any artist, and I think that more should consider this venue for solo shows. (701 W. Riverside)



Viewers take in Wilkins' work at the STA Plaza while the artist himself answers questions.



Our final stop in terms of traditional venues was the MAC, where Gabriel Brown debuted his solo show, *Great Tasting Goodness*. Brown's work is always something that makes you think, whether he's standing by the side of the road with a sign, asking for hand-outs to put gas in his hummer (he doesn't actually own one that I'm aware of) or collecting cans for recycling in a business suit, all while talking on a cell phone. In this exhibit, Brown has created what seems like hundreds of tiny houses out of product packaging, all arranged into cul-de-sacs. As is common for him, his work is a commentary on both our consumerist society and the culture of suburbia. The large sculpture in the display, a cul-de-sac literally ripped from the ground and stood on end, took over 300 hours of work to assemble. The labor intensive nature of some of Brown's work often amazes me. You can see it in this piece, and you can see it in the video installation also included. I won't reveal the content of the video installation here; you'll simply have to go see it. I have huge respect for the level of commitment evident in Brown's work. Nothing here is quickly slapped together. This is a man with great dedication to his ideas, which is something I find to very important in my viewing of any art. If you're not committed, you're certainly not going to convince me. This one is a must-see this month. Located on the first floor of the MAC, you don't even have to pay to get into the main area, although I always recommend a trip downstairs. (2316 W. 1st)

One of the beautiful things about a First Friday Art Walk in Spokane, and something that isn't talked about enough, is that the artwork isn't limited to galleries, restaurants and other establishments. The art is also out on the street. It's on the sidewalks and taped to abandoned windows downtown. The artists remain anonymous, but that doesn't take any legitimacy away from their work. Art in Spokane is everywhere. Keep your eyes open.

As is tradition on the SPOKE(a)N(e) First Friday walks, we ended the night at Empyrean for a drink or two. See that deliciously tempting beer in the picture to the right? You could have one of those if you join us next First Friday.

Mark it on your calendars. August 7th, 5:00 P.M. at The Saranac Building. See you there.



:Compulsive Chronicles:

At minimum, a good band name should pass the “Hi, we’re . . .” test. As in, when a band introduces themselves on stage, the completion of that sentence should flow.

Hi, we’re Cold War Kids
Hi, we’re At the Drive-In
Hi, we’re Of Montreal

I’ve noticed a trend with newer bands where the name better resembles an album or song title. Maybe we can blame . . . And You Will Know Us By The Trail of the Dead, the most ridiculous example of all.

Hi, we’re I’m From Barcelona
Hi, we’re As I Lay Dying
Hi, we’re If I Had

They don’t roll off the tongue, do they? In fact, using the word “I” in a name supposedly describing a group is probably not a good idea at all. Same for using “be verbs” — “we’re” and “is” don’t belong together. Can you imagine if The Strokes decided to call themselves the name of their first album instead? *Hi, we’re Is This It . . .*

That group of words you just dreamed up may sound great, but picture yourself shouting them from stage. Or saying them over the phone to the booking manager at a club who’s just said, “And which one were you guys again?”

And really, take it from a magazine with silly parentheses: Punctuation in your name is not nearly as clever as you think it is. Do you want to be like !!! and have to explain how to pronounce your name until the end of time? Or is it just a smug hipster thing where only the cool kids know? Because I hate to break it to you — the hipsters will be over you in six months. Even Panic at the Disco dropped the exclamation point over time.

There are exceptions: the apostrophe (Jane’s Addiction), the hyphen (Sleater-Kinney) or the ampersand (Echo & The Bunnymen). With groups of letters, I’m not sure it matters if periods are involved (AFI vs. R.E.M.). Any other punctuation is overkill.

So you’ve thought of a name, said it aloud and rid it of question marks. What else? Your name should fit your music at least a little bit. If not the music, fit the attitude. Naming your band “Death Meats” and playing light-hearted pop music probably only works if you’re all a bit silly and self-aware. I’m not a big fan of irony as a gimmick, but there’s bound to be someone who can make it work.

For me, the biggest waste of a good band name is Vampire Weekend. Pretend you’re out of the loop and have never heard them — and if you haven’t, that’s okay too — what might the music with that name sound like? Goth? Kick-ass rock n roll? Brooding folk-punk? Could fit any of those things. But no, it belongs to a Paul Simon/Talking Heads knock-off group who says things like, “I was thinking about this connection between preppiness and the culture of British India.” [Uncut Magazine, September 2008]

I’m not saying you should go the super-literal route (The Beach Boys), but listen to Babyshambles, Whiskeytown or The Chemical Brothers. The attitude and name match.

A sense of humor can work well. One of my all-time favorites comes from a band I saw play just once in Missoula, sometime in 2002. They walked onto the stage at Jay’s Upstairs and said, “Hello, we’re Known For Nothing.” They were a little bit campy — the singer gushed over Filipino clove cigarettes and the band featured a daisy-shaped bass — and I think they only played a handful of shows. Perfect! Another great one? Heartless Bastards. I don’t even know their music, but already, I love the name.

And that’s the thing — Outside of the music itself, your name creates an impression. You may play the greatest music on Earth, so why detract from it with a clunky name? Why make it harder for fans to recommend you to their friends? Make it easy to fit on a T-shirt. Picture your name lit up on the marquee. Imagine a name so fitting, so perfect, it could never be anything else. Above all, show some style. No pressure.



*If Sara Habein had a band, she would totally call it Wedged in Cubby.
Or maybe Sunny Ringo and The Rain. It would all depend on the songs.*

*To see five of Sara’s favorite band names and five song titles that made her say,
“I have to hear a song titled that,” please visit glorifiedloveletters.blogspot.com*

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