

ISSUE 3: OCTOBER
2012



ZINE!

contributors:

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HOW TO JOIN A BAND

Not Right has now existed for over a year. We've a whole load of songs, played in London and Nottingham as well as in our local corner of the Midlands, produced three zines, and recorded an EP. People appear to enjoy our music and think we have something productive to say. This continues to amaze me!

My memory of the band forming basically consists of Snowy and I being badgered into it by Kirsty. We were all at Rock It, a short-lived band night I ran and did DJ sets for in Coventry. I don't think any of us had much of an idea that it'd actually take off.

I always wanted to join a band when I was small. I think this was because I knew the rock bands on Top Of The Pops were cool, and I wanted to be cool. I never managed to translate this desire into actually learning an instrument though, even when I got thoroughly into metal during my late teens. In my early twenties I bought a bass guitar and proceeded let it gather dust in the corner of my room for the next few years.

I kept telling myself that I was too busy, that I didn't have enough time to learn how to play it, that I didn't have any musical talent, that I couldn't be any good. Maybe I could get good but it would take a long time. All of these thoughts and feelings became self-reinforcing.

I convinced myself that, were I ever to join a band, lead vocals would be the way forward. I've never really been able to sing but I figured that it wouldn't really matter too much if I joined an extreme metal or punk group. I've become good at hiding my deeply-ingrained shyness, and figured my public speaking skills could translate well into doing ridiculous things on a stage if I could appropriately manage my fear.

This odd kind of self-belief was strengthened when I won a small "punk idol" competition at a local pub in my hometown of Bath, singing (read: shouting) a Sex Pistols song in front of a live band I'd never met before. I'm still not sure how I had the confidence to do that. The landlady - who can't have known I was trans, let alone pre-op - described me as "Ruth, the lady who rocks without a cock". I still find that funny to this day. 

Eventually I somehow became involved in an attempt to form a punk band during my final year as an undergraduate student. I was put on vocals, Kirsty (who I barely knew) was on lead guitar, our friend Kate on drums and the reliably punk Ginger Al on bass. I think we only had one practice/jam/whatever session, in which we played a shoddy cover of The Distillers' "City of Angels" and I attempted to tackle some dodgy lyrics Al wrote about hating the police. It was kinda fun, but I wasn't really feeling it. None of us had the motivation to push things further. Al later became known as a massive sell-out after getting a job with weapons manufacturer BAE Systems.

Kirsty's proposal for a new band came around four years later, a snatched conversation in a dark, busy room. I don't think I necessarily expected to find myself in a practice room shortly afterwards, but the idea certainly resonated with me. To be in a band! There were conversations about recruiting a fourth member. Kirsty had a guitar, Snowy would learn to play drums, and I could be on vocals.

It was suggested that, since I had a bass guitar, I could also play bass. The very thought was both exciting and scary. I insisted on many occasions that we find someone else to play the bass. There were also conversations about getting a second guitarist, but that never happened.

For the first few, tentative sessions in the practice room I just did vocals. After a while, my bass came with me and spent most of the time propped up in the corner, alternately tempting me with its sexy curves and worrying me with its many frets and strings. How was I meant to tackle this musical machine?

I think three factors led to my finally picking up the bass. One of these was, of course, the support and gentle pestering I received from my bandmates. Another was the knowledge that I'd be in the same boat as Snowy, who'd never played percussion before. But arguably the most important was that in the four years since my last attempt at being in a band, I'd discovered riot grrrl.

I'd known for a long time that punk could sound really cool in spite of (because of!) the simplicity of the music. But it didn't really do much for me. Riot grrrl took the spirit of punk and *spoke to me* In the language of roaring guitar and feminist rage. And, importantly, it could be really straightforward. The very first song we properly learned to play was "Rebel Girl" by Bikini Kill. The bass part is ridiculously simple, and pretty much repeated on loop throughout the entire song. This simplicity

provided me with the impetus to pick up my bass, knowing that just a small amount of effort would enable me to play a tune I enjoyed.

My bass may have sat idle at practice sessions, but I was regularly playing it at home, gradually gaining in both confidence and eloquence. Eventually I was playing the bass regularly with the band. We became firmly established as a unit of three, and began writing songs: Balls, Intersectionality Song, Kirsty's PhD.

I don't think there was originally any intention for me to become the group's primary lyricist, but I began to churn out lyrics. Meanwhile Kirsty and Snowy - more musically proficient than I - were (broadly speaking) coming up with the actual music. Snowy came up with the name Not Right, and we collaboratively designed the logo.

We had this idea about entering the University of Warwick Battle of the Bands in February 2012. The competition had been a major part of my life for the past few years, as I'd first attended religiously before eventually becoming a judge (something about running gigs in the local area and being a rock DJ qualified me, apparently). For me, at least, entering the competition - not to win, but for a laugh - was a central aim with Not Right. I didn't really think about what might happen after that. Maybe, hopefully some more gigs?

We first played live in December 2011, in front of a small audience of fellow PhD students in a University bar. Over the course of around ten minutes we nervously performed the three songs we'd written, along with Rebel Girl. I think it was shoddy, but fun, and people seemed to appreciate what we doing (or trying to do!)

It had taken us around six months to write our first three songs: the next three emerged over a frantic three weeks in the run-up to Battle of the Bands, at which we intended to perform a 15-minute set comprised entirely of our own material. Each time we talked about doing a straightforward, one-riff punk song, before somehow doing something new with structure or timing.

To the surprise of everyone present (ourselves included!) we not only didn't come last in our Battle of the Bands heat, but got through to the semi-final. Something about not having any real ability on our instruments but being extremely punk.

We had an extra five minutes to play with in the semi, so we frantically wrote a couple more tunes in order to thrash out an eight-song set. It was glorious: we stormed triumphantly into sixth place (out of six bands), bewildering and/or exciting all who stood before us.

After that, it only seemed natural to carry on. We did a bunch of gigs in local pubs, performed a memorable set at a mock academic conference in the University of Warwick library (no doubt irritating a whole load of scholars) and were invited to play in London and Nottingham. A second (more upbeat!) zine followed the first, and we began to talk about recording music.

I have no illusions about the extent of our musical ability, but am quite surprised by how much we've improved over the past year. We've benefited from working broadly within our limitations whilst always pushing very slightly into new territory with each new thing we do. Our songs have got faster and more complex, we've relaxed more on stage and we're still always talking about what ridiculous thing to do next. There's a lot to be said for just plugging away at something.

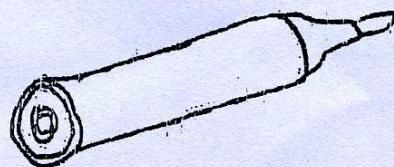
Not Right won't be around forever. We're all going to be finishing our respective PhDs in the coming months/years, and will inevitably be looking for work beyond this particular corner of the Midlands. I hope we can at least play occasional gigs when this happens. It'd certainly be entertaining to introduce the whole band as doctors! In the meanwhile, we're going to continue having as much fun as possible. And, y'know, shout at people about politics and stuff.

—RUTH

REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING AT UNI

IT FEELS STRANGE TO WRITE ON THE WHITEBOARD
WITH MY PEN

SUDDENLY



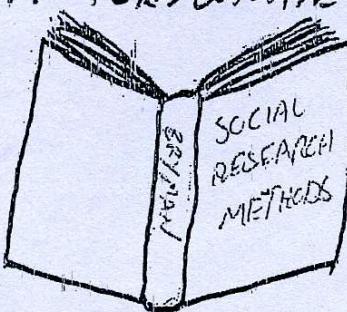
I AM THE IMPORTANT ONE AT THE FRONT,
DISPENSING GREAT WISDOM.



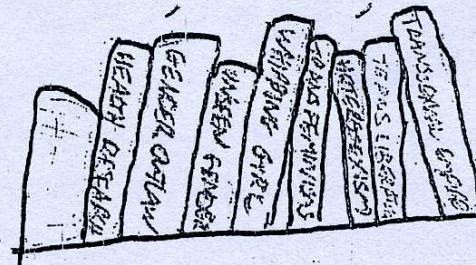
ALTHOUGH, ACTUALLY, GROUP WORK ISN'T ABOUT THIS.



I'M FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF
PARTICULAR SUBJECTS.



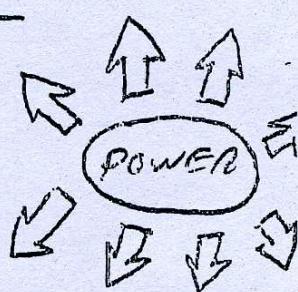
AM FAMILIAR WITH IDEAS, IDEALS, CONCEPTS.



I'M HERE TO SHARE THIS WITH OTHERS

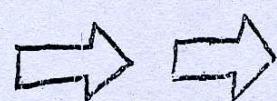
AND FACILITATE PRODUCTIVE ~~DISCUSSION~~ DISCUSSION -
NOT TO TALK AT PEOPLE.

THIS IS AN EXERCISE IN EMPOWERMENT.



I HOPE THAT MY STUDENTS WILL FEEL EMPOWERED TO SHARE
THEIR IDEAS IN TURN;

AND USE THEIR KNOWLEDGE TO HELP PEOPLE.



WHY 'RIOT GRRRL'?

There's a fair amount of talk about the idea of a riot grrrl revival floating around the Internet, with an apparent increase in interest from 2010 or so. At the same time, there are words of caution from those involved in the original riot grrrl movement: a recent example can be found in a recent interview with former Bikini Kill and Le Tigre frontwoman Kathleen Hanna.

She says: *"Everyone is always asking me, "How do we restart riot grrrl?" And I'm like, "Don't." Because something's organically going to happen on its own; you can't force it. Who wants to restart something that's 20 years old? Start your own fucking thing."*

A more nuanced analysis can be found in a 2010 post from the Side Ponytail blog:

"I feel like there's been a lot of talk about how "original" riot grrrls are protective of/territorial about the riot grrrl movement. That they are, perhaps, trying to keep all of the riot grrrl for themselves. I don't think that is true AT ALL. In fact, I think that they are working to encourage parties who are interested in riot grrrl by telling them, "You are already valuable and should be doing your own thing," and I don't think that there's anything wrong with that message. I think they're also working to make people who weren't a part of the original riot grrrl scene more cognizant of some of riot grrrl's troubled history in the hopes of preventing a scene that blindly and unintentionally reproduces those same failings. While many people speaking out in the interests of having a riot grrrl revival have indicated that they are aware of these issues, there seems to be a general consensus that "we're all more educated now and these things won't be problems anymore," which is an approach that really worries me.

[...] I'm also a little bit troubled by the general attachment to the riot grrrl name. To me, at this point in time, such an attachment suggests more of a brand name identification than anything else. I can be a girl, play a guitar, make a zine, write letters to friends, engage in community building, etc. all without calling myself a riot grrrl. Naming something is a very loaded act and I wonder, if we're all so aware of riot grrrl's problematic history and the bad baggage that the riot grrrl name often carries for working class girls, poors, and transfolk, why we want to carry that name over into a movement that is supposedly more inclusive and aware."

Okay, so here's the deal. I'm a white, middle-class trans woman in my mid-20s, writing in 2012. I never had the opportunity to get involved with riot grrrl because I was way too young. But, in spite of its problematic elements (including cissexism and transphobia) I still find the history of riot grrrl, the music, the language, the very sense of challenge inherent in the term itself, deeply inspirational.

I look beyond riot grrrl. For years I've been inspired by contemporary female-fronted heavy metal bands such as The Gathering and Within Temptation. I'm also into acts who pre-date riot grrrl, like Joan Jett and Girlschool.

But in riot grrrl I find that perfect meeting of punk spirit and feminist politic in the context of furious riffs and brilliantly ragged vocals. Riot grrrl is fascinating because it was, in a sense, a small local scene that hit well above its weight in terms of international influence. Feminist musicians all around the world remain inspired by it.

And in light of this, I do think that it's possible, and positive, to "revive" riot grrrl: in fact, the revival is well underway, and we are doing it differently.

Riot grrrl in 2012 remains feminist, DIY, largely (but not entirely!) punk. But it's now international, facilitating conversations between female musicians around the world: a great example of this can be found in the free compilations released online by the Riot Grrrl Berlin collective. The political focus has shifted towards an intersectional feminism that takes account of diversity along axes such as race, dis/ability, gender identity and sexuality.

We are doing our own thing, but we want to call it "riot grrrl" because of the inspiration we take from the music of a particular time and place. I'd like to think that most of us are aware of the imperfections as well.

We know that riot grrrl didn't get it right. We know that we're not going to get it right. Being aware of these limitations is the only way we stand a chance of gradually becoming more awesome over time.

THIS
REVOLUTION
IS NOT
COMPLETE...



EVERYTHING'S FOR S

A

L

E

RIOT GRRRL HALLOWEEN COSTUME



jeez this screams 'i'm a little girl, come get me', it's awful 😞 the position of feet, the faked agressive hand symbols, the bared legs (very much NOT child-like but woman-like), the hip-belt (as if little girls had hips) and especially the look in her eyes...

RIOT GRRRL

REVIEW

"BLACK LUNG LOUNGE EP" by CRASH PARIS

From: Bristol, England

Released: April 2012

Price: £3 (*mp3 format*)



My favourite thing about opening track *By The Jar* is the way that the guitars immediately smack you in the face, perfectly setting the tone for the rest of the EP. Crash Paris have a MASSIVE sound. Singer Flo has a fantastic voice, capable of both soaring emotion and gloriously raw rage. Her vocals are bolstered by epic riffs and a rock solid rhythm section. This is music that doesn't speak to you so much as shout boldly at you.

That isn't to say that the band stick to the same formula throughout. The title track has a languid swing; *Vogue India* a frantic urgency; closer *1993* ignores the verse-chorus-verse convention in favour of a somewhat disjointed structure that mirrors the dark personal account that lies at its core.

This is music to turn up loud and scream along to. Grrr.

<http://crashparis.bandcamp.com/>

"KINGS & QUEENS", by JESUS AND HIS JUDGEMENTAL FATHER

From: Leeds, England

Released: February 2012

Price: £0/name your price (*mp3 format*)
£5 + shipping (*CD format*)



This album is one of the most shiny things I've ever had the pleasure to receive in the post.

The physical incarnation manages, like the music itself, to embrace a perfectly appropriate tension between slick professionalism and DIY craftiness. The jewel case won't look at all out of place amongst your CD collection, but the insert booklet that comes with it is something entirely special. It's a full 18 pages long, with artwork for each one of the songs. The content varies from band photographs and lyrics to mini comic strips and silly interviews. The front page is delightfully tactile, with red glitter and an actual playing card lovingly glued into place.

As for the sound - we're talking pop-punk with an edge. Songs such as What Now and Party Hat definitely veer towards the "pop" side of things, channelling a soaring, yearning angsty-but-fun sound that puts me in mind of queer Blink-182. In stark contrast, the band showcase their shouty punk credentials in the 27-second Cunt. Most of the album occupies a comfortably catchy middle-ground though, exemplified in songs such as snarling opener Rockstar and the cheeky Princess Piss. The band also manage to incorporate elements of ska and indie without ever feeling inconsistent.

There are some great and varied lyrics, tackling everything from queer-bashing to robotic superheroes from a broadly good-humoured feminist perspective. Even the inevitable romantic yearning/breakup songs are a delight, with the hilarious About a Straight Girl a particular highlight.

Even if you're not a fan of pop-punk, you're likely to find something to enjoy in *Kings & Queens*. Why not pop onto Jesus and his Judgemental Father's bandcamp page to find out for yourself?

<http://jesusandhisjudgementalfather1.bandcamp.com/>

<http://jesusandhisjudgementalfather.bigcartel.com/>

"DRUNKEN BUTTERFLY" by DRUNKEN BUTTERFLY

From: Bristol, England

Released: July 2010

Price: £4/name your price (mp3 format)

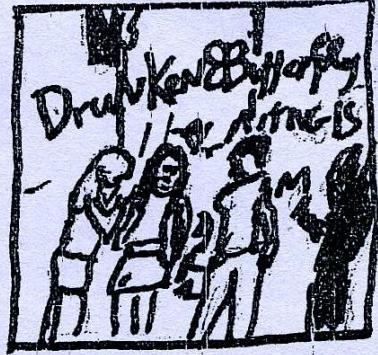
Drunken Butterfly have two main modes of being: twee acoustica, and distorted punk rawk. It's the former style that dominates this lo-fi, seven track recording (is it a mini album? is it a long EP? do such distinctions even matter in this digital age?)

Ukelele and melodica provide the backdrop for a frank and frequently funny take on life both personal and political. The band honestly embrace their detachment from both mainstream parties and radical left groups, creating space for ambivalently located politic of dissent in songs such as An Anarchist's Guide to Personal Hygiene and Ballotpaper Blues. "I just wish I believed in something" they claim in the latter song, but at least we can all agree that "Nick Clegg is a wanker".

There's a hilarious cover of Red Aunts ditty The Vibrator Song, whilst the more thoughtful, ethereal Accidental is reminiscent of Amanda Palmer. There's a warmth and an honesty in the rough edges of all of these pieces.

But lest we forget that a punk spirit underpins Drunken Butterfly's more folky DIY tendencies, they provide us with a thorough aural battering in April the First. Heavy guitar fuzz and screeching vocals condemn police brutality with a furious sarcasm. "Are you taking piss? Are you a terrorist?" With the chorus they strip away all of their ambivalence to deliver blunt statement of intent: "I don't wanna die - I wanna protest!"

<http://drunkenbutterfly.bandcamp.com/>



We're on the Internet!



notrightpunk.com

With: "*Punk Is Not*", lyrics, photos, videos, blog etc.