

ISSUE #10

THE MYSTERY OF TUNES

The Schizophonics

We spoke with Lety and Pat Beers about great clubs in their hometown, the danger of vanishing, early musical influences, and how a song's chorus was inspired by Prince.★



? As you're from San Diego, how is the scene there? Is everyone fine, or are the clubs and musicians also struggling like everywhere else?

Lety Beers (LB): During Covid, it was really hard. We did lose some clubs. Currently, it's like in every town. You have smaller clubs and the regular rock ones.

Pat Beers (PB): The Casbah is one of my favorite clubs in the world.

LB: A lot of it is the vibe. Sometimes I come home from tour and tell the owner it's so nice to be back.

PB: When we eventually got to play the Casbah, it was a big deal for us. It became kind of our home. Then we started touring and realized that we are really lucky because there aren't many places like that, especially independent clubs. Everywhere, a lot of clubs have already vanished. Like in Cologne, the Sonic Ballroom is one of the last independent clubs.

LB: In San Diego, we also have a handful of little cool clubs, like the Till-Two, the Tower Bar, or the Black Cat.

PB: Compared to a lot of other cities, the music scene in San Diego is still a good place to be, if you're an upcoming band.

? Let's talk about 'Hoof It', the current record. There is one song that, for me,

stands out: 'Dance at the End of Time'.

LB: I like that song, too.

? What were you inspired by when writing that song? What is it about?

PB: We haven't played it in a while, but did it in Berlin last time we were there. Lyrically, it feels like the world ended three months ago, and everyone's just still going. It's this idea that we just keep playing regardless and do what we do. I feel like dancing and moving around is probably the most sane thing to do in this day and age. The little chorus thing was kind of inspired by this one Prince song called 'All the Critics Love U in New York'. Just a dance song.

? You'll fly back to the States soon. What are your major concerns regarding the current situation (Editor's note: The interview took place before the recent ICE murders.)

LB: Being a city on the border right next to Tijuana, it's kind of scary seeing that some of my friends' parents are concerned about whether they're going to get picked up off the street, certain friends or extended family members going to get harassed and disappear.

PB: ICE agents are basically a secret police, wearing their masks. It's very Orwellian. We've seen them in our neighborhood, presumably just to

catch people who don't have their IDs. It's very weird and definitely not legal or constitutional.

LB: They're pushing the limits of what they can get away with. It's dumbfounding. I don't know how this is happening, and I can't keep up with it.

? The last time I saw you was at the Sjock festival in Belgium. I immediately fell in love with your raw live-energy, but also asked myself: How often does this guy get hurt on stage?

PB: Not as often as you might think. I've had a few things happen before that took me out of commission, but nothing that ended a tour or anything. It's just like an adrenaline thing when I'm up there - but of course I have to stretch out and prepare myself before the show.

? What were the bands that you grew up with?

LB: I was a teenager in the late 90s, listening to a lot of Punk music. There was this alternative channel on Saturday nights from 11 to 1 a.m. They'd play punk, like Black Flag, Dead Kennedys. I also got into bands like The Muffs or the Ramones. Then I started going to shows. Seeing it live changed everything.

PB: When I was a kid, my family was kind of an agricultural type. We raised sheep and stuff. I listened to a lot of early 90s country music: Garth Brooks, Dwight Yoakam, and Alan Jackson. That's when I first really got into music. And about the different influences of the band: it helped a lot when Sarah started playing bass with us. She's a big Black Sabbath fan. Having a bit more bite and growl is like having another guitar player.

? Did you ever have a chance to meet some of your heroes, like for example Wayne Kramer?

LB: Well, we got to meet him.

? How was that?

PB: Awesome but also very brief. We went to see the MC50 thing he was doing, and met him after the show. He was so nice. We also recorded their song 'Black to Comm'. Our friend then gave him the 45, and he said he knew of us. That made me really happy - knowing he's actually heard of us. So I'm glad we got to meet him before he passed.

? The last record was released in 2022. Any plans for a new record, and will it be on Pig Baby Records again?

LB: We've been on tour so much with so little time in between. So when we get home, that's going to be our main focus: just trying to get this new record done. Unfortunately, our friend from Pig Baby Records lost everything in the LA fires in early 2025. So as of now, he's not doing anything. Maybe one day he will, but he's taken a break from all that for a moment.

? Are you still closing your show with 'Whole Lot Of Shakin' Going On' by Jerry Lee Lewis?

PB: It's kind of a medley with a lot of Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis at the end. I always like to close the show with this 50s version of Rock and Roll. You end it where it began.

? Thank you so much for the chat.

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Repeat

Punkrock straight outta Stockholm. Guitarist and singer Tobbe and drummer Johan open up about their long-lasting friendship, the magic of small clubs and the importance of art.★



? In an interview, you once said that you do hope that people get 20 minutes of revitalisation of your music. Please explain.

Tobbe Hallberg (TH): The whole idea with Repeat has been that we were missing some sort of music out there that had the energy and the short songs that we have. And that's what we've tried to do ever since we started in 2022: Write those songs, find songs with high energy, and hopefully also include some kind of hook. And then, together with the lyrics, find something that people can connect to and hopefully be revitalised through those songs.

? Once there was a formula like shitty times, good Punkrock. Does that still count, or do we have to find another way of responding to, e.g. the rise of the far right everywhere?

Johan Holmberg (JH): Music in general, as well as art and culture, are more important than ever - at least during my lifetime, it's super clear. There is this absurd change in society right now. Not only Sweden, but also the USA and Germany. So, Repeat is a tiny piece of a culture that makes life sort of breathable again.

TH: We had difficult times before, and culture has always been very

important in that. It could be Punkrock, it could be another type of music, but also art and theater.

? Your self-titled album contains eight songs and lasts about eighteen minutes. The Celebration EP holds five songs in twelve minutes. Is shortness, as well as some sort of aggressiveness, part of the deal here?

TH: Yeah, I think so. When we write songs, we spend a lot of time with them, although we have put out an album each year for three years now. Quite a few end up in the trash can, too. And as you've just said, most songs are around two minutes. That's because a guitar solo here or there wouldn't add anything. We try to make those songs meaningful throughout the entire time. That's why they're short and effective. I love bands that release records like that, which are very few nowadays.

? When did you start making music together?

JH: We actually started in the 80s? We met in high school. Those were different times, and it never really ended up in anything. Many years passed, and suddenly, random stuff brought us back together and made it happen.

TH: Somehow, we started to socialise

more again. We didn't have a grand plan to record or play. We just wanted to have some fun. That evolved into doing some songs we then decided to record. Surprisingly, people started to listen to it. That was great fun. And it's just been rolling since then.

JH: I used to tour in the 90s with a different band called Liberator, so I had at least a picture of where we could actually play the music. And it's unbelievable that we actually do it again, some places I've been to 30 years ago.

? How do you distribute your records?

TH: We are very much a do-it-yourself band and don't have a label behind us. Everything is available on Bandcamp, a few streaming sites and as vinyl in selected stores. No global distribution, unfortunately. If anyone reads this and is interested - we're happy, too.

? How do you agree on the band's typical sound?

JH: That has a lot to do with Joakim Lindberg, with whom we've recorded and who produced it. He is a big part of the sound. But the arrangements of the songs and the aggressiveness just evolve. We listen to a lot of the same music, but sometimes also don't. So we bring in a lot of influences.

TH: We never sat down and decided what Repeat should be. There is no formula. We discuss music and other bands a lot. We are both vinyl nerds. We just do it because we like it.

JH: A good example is that he has this whole British punk scene, which never really attracted me. I'm more on the American side. He is, too, but also has all the British stuff. There are influences from that side that are really exciting to listen to because I wasn't familiar with them.

? Regarding your debut, Josh Homme would be jealous.

JH: That's where we started. Queens of the Stone Age were a huge influence on us, but we moved on. Two steps. That part is over.

? Are you fine with playing small clubs, or do you long for bigger stages?

TH: I'm absolutely fine. We do this because we enjoy it so much. Having said that, we are very happy with how our latest EP turned out. Later in March, we will be recording again. Some stuff we think is even better than the last EP. So some more traction wouldn't hurt, but it's not what we are looking for. We just love coming to those venues. That's where the magic happens - when the audience starts moving around from the first song.

JH: It's fun when it's packed. But it doesn't matter as long as there is a connection.

? Name your top three vinyl records of all time.

JH: Stranger Than Fiction by Bad Religion, Master of Reality by Black Sabbath and Time Boom X De Devil Dead by Lee 'Scratch' Perry.

TH: London Calling, The Clash. The first Minor Threat and Miles Davis, Kind of Blue.

? Thank you so much.