

# PORTLAND... ...LAND OF DUMB BAND NAMES



Indie rock is the greatest threat to Western Civilization since the bubonic plague. Indie rock is the worst thing that white civilization has ever produced, and that includes racism, imperialism, and mayonnaise. Indie rock encapsulates all that is effete, sickly, and self-hating about the dead, immoral, apathetic West. Especially West Burnside.

Portland is a magnet for ugly, pimply, malnourished, disaffected youth who possess sufficient drive and trust-fund money to rent cheap houses with moldy basements wherein they live a rock-star fantasy that employs roughly five percent of the creativity as the band they're imitating, which in turn had only five percent of the creativity of the band *they* were imitating, etc. Rock and roll continues to gnaw on its own entrails, forever arrested, forever self-referential, forever doomed to be a paler and paler imitation of what it was when it started.

Since all of the good band names dried up years ago, the hapless rocker-come-lately has been forced onto fallow ground in

**THE DUMB BANDS: Wapeka, Coil Pac, and Punching Festus**  
**THE VENUE: Mt. Tabor Pub**  
**WHEN: A hot June evening**

**Wapeka**...wow, that's an *astorishingly* bad name. Conjures images of dreadlocked hippies blazing on acid setting their crusty ass hairs on fire while small naked African children sing their joyous tribal songs. Just a bad trip all around, buckaroo. **Punching Festus** is saddled with the dishonor of being a "Gerund Rock" band in the sad, sorry tradition of **Throwing Muses, Craving Theo, and Dissing Flatch**. And **Coil Pac** is irksome in its own right, especially the way they spell it without the "k." This triple bill of atrocious band names beat out another triple bill at **Berbaty's** featuring such bad-name stalwarts as **Machine That Flashes**.

As I already mentioned but am going to mention again, it was a hot June evening, and when

we arrived at the ratty, poorly ventilated **Mt. Tabor Pub**, the doorman informed us that Wapeka had broken up and wouldn't be performing. All my hopes and dreams were dashed! He added that Punching Festus hadn't shown up yet and probably weren't going to, which left only Coil Pac to entertain us. *Fuck* Coil Pac! Their name was really starting to get me steamed! We decided that Coil Pac weren't worth the \$3 and walked across the street to the **Space Room**, where my gal friend's girl friend's boyfriend discussed home-refurbishing tips with the girls while I sat there silently.

**THE DUMB BANDS: Science of Yabra, Wet Confetti, Other Men My Age**

**THE VENUE: The Blackbird**  
**WHEN: A hot July evening**

Inconveniently located near an overpass on Sandy Boulevard, **The Blackbird** hosts possibly more dumb bands than any other place in the universe, and for that I believe it deserves to be punished in some way.

As a perhaps-unconscious reflection of how truly shitty their aesthetic is, the indie rocker's fashion color of choice is **BROWN**. Dull, shit-colored brown. The infantile color of smeared doodie-doo. And **The Blackbird** is where the indie satchels and nerd glasses and bird chests all congregate in their brown T-shirts and brown slacks and ironic sneakers and ironic puffball ski caps to embrace the sort of physical and character defects which caused them so much social pain in high school a few years ago.

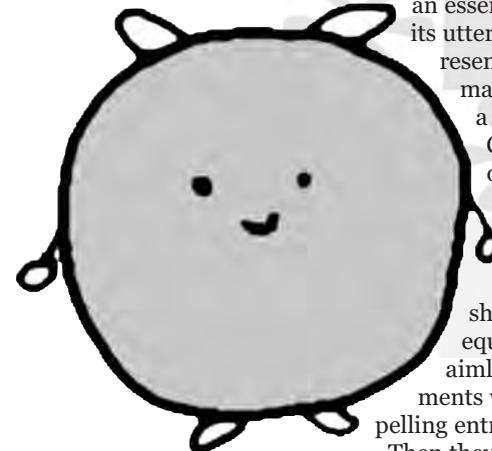
We arrived just after **Wet Confetti** finished what I'm sure was a blistering, seminal, watershed set. The doorman, who was the only other male besides myself in the bar who possessed anything properly resembling biceps, assured us that **Wet Confetti** had been "really good."

After swimming through Nerd Ocean up to the bar, I told my lady friend, "I wanna beat up everyone in this place...and I think I could!"

**Science of Yabra** spent about fifteen minutes setting up their equipment and doing a sound check right in front of us. This is an essential flaw of indie rock—

its utter disdain for anything resembling drama or showmanship. Can't they afford a curtain here? I believe Charlie Chaplin was the one who said showbiz is all about entrances and exits, and watching a bunch of bored-looking, scraggly indie-boy shlubs set up their own equipment and twiddle aimlessly with their instruments was a less-than-compelling entrance.

Then they played a generic, decipherable set of screeching post-hardcore so fucking LOUD that half of the audience was either holding their fingers in their ears or wearing impromptu earplugs made from cocktail napkins. All I remember about their music is that it was loud. Otherwise, it had the personality of corrugated paper.



We decided that one band was enough and rushed out of the Blackbird before giving **Other Men My Age** a chance. We hailed a bus downtown, our ears ringing, our moods soured, vowing that vengeance would one day be ours.

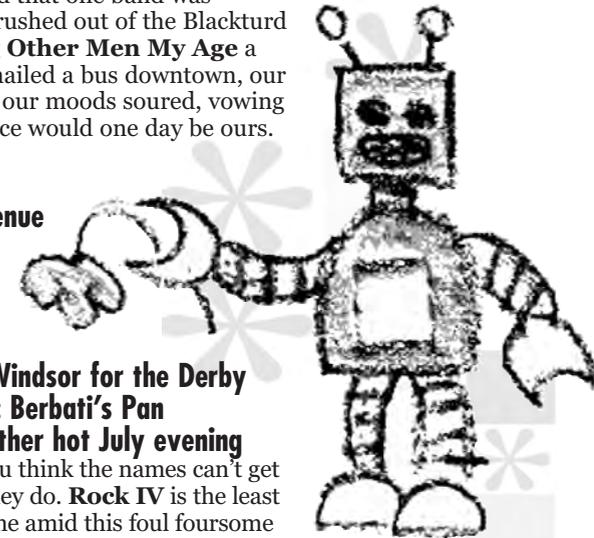
**THE DUMB BANDS: Avenue of the Strongest, Rock IV, Swords Project, & Windsor for the Derby**  
**THE VENUE: Berbaty's Pan**  
**WHEN: Another hot July evening**

Just when you think the names can't get any worse, they do. **Rock IV** is the least offensive name amid this foul foursome of stupidly named bands...sort of dull and generic. But those other three bands—where do you start? **Windsor for the Derby?** Windsor for the FUCKING Derby? They didn't tell me how to handle a band name like this in my anger-management class. And anything with "Project" tacked on the end is bad, especially if it sounds as gay as **Swords Project**...conjures images of nude teen boys with boners, "sword-fighting" one another.

We initially balked at the \$7 cover price, but that short guy with the big head from Thrasher kicked us down a 2-for-1 deal. My sparkling lassie ordered a beer, I ordered a fake beer, and we sat at a small table about forty feet from the stage as the PA bled with some raja sitar clangy collegiate bullshit.

**Avenue of the Strongest** took the stage without much fanfare and without any sort of introduction whatsoever (I hate that). They featured a red-haired, big-nosed singer with a tiny guitar who resembled Reuben Kincaid from the Partridge Family. Their first song was an instrumental that started all moody and slow, then suddenly ROCKED OUT. When Reuben Kincaid started herky-jerkin' and poppin' blood vessels with his strident, uptight-guy, makes-ya-ashamed-to-be-white-just-watchin'-it dance moves, both me and my gal couldn't help but laugh. This band blew elephant cock, and we couldn't wait to get out of that place! Before leaving, we watched the next band (they, too, weren't identified) setting up their equipment. Every band member was wearing something brown.

We flushed the lifesized turds out of our consciousness and left Indieland once and for all.



**"Indie Rock is the worst thing that white civilization has ever produced, and that includes racism, imperialism, and mayonnaise."**

search of a band name to call his own. The band names get worse and worse, and the bands get worse and worse, until, according to some projections, all possible band-name combinations will have been used by the year 2013, signaling the silent, shameful, overdue death of a musical genre which has been dying for decades.

I decided to comb Portland's local free weeklies in search of the band with the WORST NAME on any given night and to then go witness whether they can possibly be as bad as their name. I was not disappointed. In every case, they were at least as bad as their name...no, they were worse.

## PORTLAND'S DUMBEST:

The Dumb Band Names that follow were all taken from a single issue of the *Portland Mercury*, a publication uniquely devoted to the propagation of Dumb Band Name Culture. I'm sure there are dumber band names out there, but these should be more than sufficient to spoil your appetite to hear any more...that is, if you're a person of discriminating tastes like I am. These clumsy monikers serve as a stark, horrifying reminder of the infamy and public ridicule that will befall anyone stupid enough to

transgress the **Eight Golden Rules of Band-Naming:**

**1) WHEN YOU NAME YOUR BAND AFTER A FAMOUS PERSON, MOVIE, OR SONG...EVEN IF YOU GIVE IT A "CLEVER" TWIST...YOU DECLARE TO ALL THE WORLD THAT YOU ARE INFERIOR TO THE ORIGINAL:**  
Mars Needs Women ★ Colonel Knowledge ★ Velvida Underground ★ Koufax ★ Soilent [sic] Green ★ Onry Ozzborne ★ White Line Fever ★ The Jeffersons ★ Brian Jonestown Massacre ★ Jackie-O Motherfucker ★ MisterClean

**2) THERE IS HARDLY ANYTHING ON EARTH LESS EXCITING THAN HAVING A NUMBER IN YOUR BAND NAME:**

10¢ ★ Reserve 34 ★ The Forty First ★ Twenty-Four Hours ★ 46 ★ No. 3 Breakdown

**3) PRETENTIOUS BAND NAMES REVEAL YOU TO BE DUMBER THAN YOU THINK:**

From Autumn to Ashes ★ Coheed to Cambria ★ Inner ★ A New Land of Me ★ Pangaea ★ Abstraktion ★ Rudement ★ Denote the Apex ★ Fiery Cubist ★ Hidden Under the Hidden Under ★ American Analog Set ★ Her

Space Holiday ★ Dance Imperative ★ Point Line Plane ★ The Planet The ★ The North Magnetic ★ Alter Echo ★ Water ★ Life After Liftoff

**4) LET'S OUTLAW GERUNDS ONCE AND FOR ALL!:**

Naming Asher ★ Dying Californian ★ Woke Up Falling

**5) USING AN "EXOTIC"-SOUNDING FOREIGN NAME ONLY GOES TO SHOW HOW WHITEBREAD YOU REALLY ARE:**

Chango Malo ★ Nada Brahma ★ Tem Eynos Ki ★ Yume Bitso ★ Hochenkeit ★ Zao ★ Shai Halud ★ Zuppa

**6) IF YOUR REAL NAME IS TOO BORING TO NAME A BAND AFTER IT, DON'T NAME A BAND AFTER IT:**

Stan McMahon Band ★ Charles Crosman Duo ★ Jay Purvis Trio ★ Mel Brown Quintet ★ Mel Brown Septet ★ Bobby Torres Ensemble ★ Caleb Klauder Band ★ June Bunton Trio ★ Lee Blake Band ★ Jane Wright Band ★ The Stephen Ashbrook Band ★ John Gross Duo

**7) MAKE SURE THAT YOUR BAND NAME ISN'T SO BORING THAT PEOPLE FALL ASLEEP IMMEDIATELY AFTER HEARING IT:**

Mindframe ★ Under Oath ★ Strongbox ★ Search Engine ★ Greenstar ★ Nice Nice ★ Varsity Finish Line ★ Mel

**8) WHEN YOU TRY TOO HARD, YOU INEVITABLY FAIL:**

Woozy Helmet ★ The Runnamucks ★ Full Moon BBQ ★ Monitgrrrl Bats ★ High on Fire ★ Cajun Gems ★ Hey Mercedes ★ Captain vs. Crew ★ Sleetmute ★ Our Lady Peace ★ Precursor ★ Hookah Stew ★ Charm Particles ★ Kung Pao Chickens ★ Boy Skout ★ Public Groovement ★ Rexsole ★ Dr. Yellow Swans ★ Buds of May ★ RoMarkable