

AdChoices 

Nexus 7
play.google.com
 Now more portable than ever with mobile data. Shop now from \$199.



Jerks at work

by [JOHNSON CUMMINS](#) on Feb 26, 2013 in [Hammer of the Mods](#) | [View comments](#)



As I hipped you squares in this lil' column a couple weeks back, my favourite punk rock/hardcore band of all time — Black Flag — are indeed reforming. More exciting is the formation of a band called simply Flag, featuring BF alumni Chuck Dukowski, Dez Cadena, Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton filling in for original guitarist Greg Ginn, with one of punk rock's greatest frontmen, Keith Morris, leading the charge.

This recent news had me digging back into the Morris files: his current teeth-gnashing and caterwauling in Off!, his amazing work in the early days of Black Flag (*Nervous Breakdown*, *Everything Went Black*) and ultimately his most famous work, with the Circle Jerks.

Then I noticed that a documentary on the seminal Circle Jerks, [My Career as a Jerk](#) (MVD), is now available on DVD, and ordered it right away.

Along with Black Flag, it was the speed and intensity of the Circle Jerks and their particularly violent crowd from Orange County that defined what L.A. punk was in the early '80s, and eventually what hardcore would become a short year later. Director Dave Markey (*The Year Punk Broke*) gains an all-access pass as the surviving band members get equal time and talking heads like J. Mascis and Henry Rollins weigh in on this legendary hardcore band.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with Black Flag's *Damaged* and Bad Brains' self-titled ROIR tape, the Circle Jerks' 1981 debut, *Group Sex*, is rightfully considered a stone-cold classic of the era. Beginning just a mere week after Morris left Black Flag, the Jerks were already hitting the ground running and managed to outdo his old band with an intensity and ferocious speed that was unheard of in 1980. Considering the portable video camera had yet to become commonplace, this rare archival footage of the band at their zenith is nothing short of phenomenal.

The biggest revelation of *My Career as a Jerk* is documentation of the early, unrecorded line-up of drummer Chuck Biscuits (D.O.A., Black Flag, Danzig, Social Distortion) and bassist Earl Liberty (Saccharine Trust) flanking Morris and guitarist Greg Hetson (Redd Kross, Bad Religion). Biscuits is considered the John Bonham of punk, and when he takes on the warp speed of the Circle Jerks' setlist, his flailing limbs are nothing short of incredible to watch. Although this line-up would be short-lived due to internal ego problems, this doc proves that they were easily one of the best hardcore bands of the early '80s.

Unfortunately, by the time of their second record, 1982's *Wild in the Streets*, cracks were already starting to form. After attempting mid-tempo rock in an obvious, desperate attempt to climb out of their musical bankruptcy, the band became a shell of their former selves.

As the music starts to limp at the film's halfway point, Markey is forced to step up the pace by including tales of inner-band turmoil, managerial and label woes, substance abuse, original bass player Roger Rogerson's death by overdose and a heaping amount of band-member squabbling that continues to this day. Markey also helps save us by barely giving post-1986 songs a glimpse.

If you're a fan of early '80s American hardcore, this documentary is a must-see. Well, at least the first half of it.

Gigs.Here.Go!

Tuesday — For some decidedly lo-tech hip hop, head down to the Barfly to catch [Chuggo](#) and Taylor "Hoodlum" Stevenson. Bring extra tip money, as UBT's Mikey Heppner will be slinging the suds.

Already underway and running until Saturday is the art installation/automated sound piece [Speaking Tent/Music Temple](#), constructed by Elfin Saddle duo Emi Honda and Jordan cultmontreal.com/2013/02/jerks-at-work/

McKenzie. The installation/sound piece includes video projections, prepared reed organs, record players, tape loops, motors and found objects. On Friday and Saturday, Honda and McKenzie will also give a live performance with contributions from Nick Kuepfer, Jonah Fortune and sound by Radwan Ghazi Moumneh. This is all at the MAI.

Thursday – For a night of punk rock and rock ‘n’ roll mayhem, catch the debut vinyl release from [Crimes](#) with Rock Hard, H.G.M. and Bearmace at Katacombes.

If you’re digging on the Arbutus wave right now, you won’t want to miss the launch of their newest releases [Doldrums and Blue Hawaii](#) at the Plant.

At one of the coolest venues in town, CFC (ex-Zoobizarre), the cavernous walls will echo with the sound of [Ernie Coombs](#), the punk/krautrock of Longships and the ‘60s pop and shoegaze of *Femme Accident*.

Friday – The beginning of the weekend is playing possum with the only worthwhile gig being the myopic nerd-fest happening at Il Motore: [Mouse on Mars](#) does the indie soft-shoe with DJ CFCF. Expect a reunion of ex-poli-sci students and art grads, former Stillepost trollers, ex-screenprinters, web designers and condo dwellers, hot yoga enthusiasts and Ikea shoppers lamenting ye olde Arcade Fire loft shows and the days when they actually thought they were hip. Uh...yeah.

Returning to her bi-monthly [Save Us](#) night at Notre Dame des Quilles, DJ Pascha will run the gamut from sultry soul and gospel to good ol’ punk rock.

Saturday – As part of Nuit Blanche, Arprim invites you to step into Philippe Blanchard’s sound installation piece *New Troglodytes*. Blanchard will set off pulsations and rhythms of numerous strobe lights through triggered instruments. Opening will be the psych/noise of Drainolith, the nerdy new wave of [the World Provider](#) (featuring *Cult MTL*’s own Malcolm Fraser!) and Hobo Cubes.

Sunday – Finally, cap off the weekend with a cinematic [punk rock double feature](#) at Cagibi. First up is Penelope Spheeris’s 1983 howler *Suburbia*, followed by Alex Cox’s 1984 masterpiece *Repo Man*. Screening starts at 7 p.m. and it’s absolutely free. Cagibi asks that if you do order sushi, you also pay for it. ■

Current Obsession: Earth, Angels of Darkness, *Demons of Light II*
Jonathan.cummings@gmail.com

Related posts:

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Soul music's high-water mark | Friday, Jan. 4 | Photo gallery: Nuit Blanche |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|





Facebook social plugin


Related Ads  [Indie Bands](#) [Image](#) [Pop Rock](#) [Music Bands](#)

Nexus 7
play.google.com

Now more portable than ever
with mobile data. Shop now from
\$199.



AdChoices 



TO-DO LIST:

- [Tuesday, March 5](#)
 - * *This Must Be the Place* screens at PHI Centre
 - * *Bliss* opens at Théâtre aux Écuries
 - * Camp Lo plays le Belmont
 - * Korova trivia night

[>> Click to read more...](#)