IN REVIEW

The Trentonian

Sunday, January 16, 2005

Bringing songs and spirits together Drunk or not, The Pietasters know how to make a party hot

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By SCOTT FROST Staff Writer Punks and fraternity boys have always been the Hathelds and McCoys of the musical tree.

McGoys of the musical tree. Never do they get along and rarely do they share the same style of musical tastes. Each, under stereotypical terms, remains on separate planes of the musical spectrum. Greeks tend to concentrate on Billy Joel piano rock, classic rock standards, '80s party anthems and Dave Matthews Band bootlegs. Punks, meanwhile, stick to brash politically-minded noise-icals with rare commercial appeal. Thankfully we have ska/soul leg-ends The Pietasters to keep the peace.

In a world that, at times, is seg-regated by musical allegiances, the Washington D.C.-based outfit use a drunken party atmosphere to finally bound the two factions

to finally bound the two factions orgether. "Just shut up already, get along and the enjoy the music," singer Steve Jackson, 35, says when punk fans complain about how jocks tend to embrace the band now. "Td like to think we are enter-taining and that's why people like us," he said. The Pietasters do topple certain boundaries with a blend of basic ska rhythms, upbeat darce num-bers and white-boy soul that's easy on the ears and fun to sing along to.

to, Their addiction to beer and par-tying is legendary, but it's their Irish-drunk lyrics and horn-squawk ipsanity that induce sweat-stained Tshirts and early-morning hangovers. It doesn't matter if you're into keg stands or political bombing, The Pietasters are here to rock the party without any time for inter-pretation.

pretation.

It's the kind of rock 'n' roll you can't help to shake your bum to. Double-fisting drinks is ideal.

And if, in the meantime, you spill one of those tasty pieces of carbon-ation, don't worry there's plenty of alcohol-entrenched rocking forthcoming. "We are still acting like fools. It's

"We are still acting like fools. It's a way to stay young and run from tax collectors," Jackson joked. Survivors of the late '90s ska boom, Jackson, guitarist Tom Goodin, saxophone player Alan Makranczy, trumpeter Toby Hansen, trombone player Jeremy Roberts, bassist Todd Eckhardt and drummer Rob Steward were always the band you needed to hear live at least once. And even in 2005, the band shares that same intensity no matter how neglected intensity no matter how neglected the genre is nationwide now.

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The Pietasters play the Trocadero in Philadelphia on Friday.

Ska shows were always about peace and fun. The idea was that anyone with a pair of dancing shoes was welcome to the party as long as personal agendas were left by the merch table. But somehow The Pietasters have made a spectacle of their live performance by overcoming any inhibitions by chugging large quantities of brew. A 14-member assault, before dropping two well-received albums on Epitaph Records' imprint Hellcat, the guys use a tight hom section, two-tone style and third-wave ska appeal (where and third-wave ska appeal (where punk elements fuse with the genre's reggae past) to keep audiences moving.

ences moving. And in ska terms it's always cool to have the fans join the band on stage to dance and sing along to classics like "Out All Night,"

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hiladelphia on Friday. "Drinking and Driving" and the uber-popular cover of the Rod Stewart classic "Maggie Mae." "Each show has to be wilder then the next show or nobody will come out next time," is the band's phi-losophy, Jackson said. "We've been fortunate to be at the next show or nobody will come out next time," is the band's phi-losophy, Jackson said. "We've been fortunate to be at the right place at the right time and back it up with good music and a good live performance," he said, noting stints with the Mighty Might Bosstones and on the Warp Tour brought their music to a wider audience. "If we didn't, we'd have no busis-mess playing in 2005." It's no scret where the guys get the energy. The Pietasters are legendary drinkers who party with fans and groupies in each town they infest. That's a ton of sobering experi-merses considering the guys toured

ences considering the guys toured

non-stop from 1995 to 2001, Jackson said

It's the alcohol abuse and gener-al all-out party appeal that brought in the frat herd. Though,

however strange, the punks became fans for the same reasons. It's funny how a couple of drunk-en nights at the club can bridge tho

nose gaps. Maybe we're all part of the same

gang anyway? The Pietasters are the Zen lead-ers of these misfits in training, and if a few beers knock down the bar-

It a tew beers knock down the bar-riers between jocks and punks, than that's just OK with them. — The ska survivors rock the Trocadero (1003 Arch St., Philadelphia) Friday night. Their brand-new DVD, "The Pietasters Performing Live at the 9:30 Club" is available on Music Video Distributions. Distributions

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■ Catch 22, Tonight, Starland Ballroom (570 Jernee Mill Rd., Sayreville) — The New Brunswick ska-punk stud-muffins join fellow mainstream local rockers Midtown, Early November, The Starting Line and nine other bands for the sec-ond K. Beck Teunami Balief con ond K-Rock Tsunami Relief con-Cert. It's aim is to raise money for Music For Relief and UNICEF for those left homeless after last month's disaster in Southeast

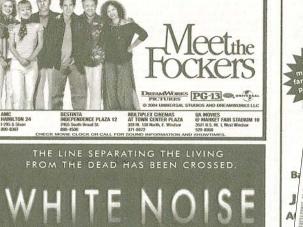
Month's disaster in Sourceast Asia. Sister Hazel, Tuesday, Trocadero (1003 Arch St., Philadelphia) — Florida-based post-grunge rockers with cute radio appeal released "Liff" in August. Zolof the Rock & Roll Destrover, Wednesday.

Ecolor the Rock & Holl Destroyer, Wednesday, Hamilton Street Cafe (22 Hamilton St., Bound Brook) — Lovable chick-fronted Philly indie poppers recently released their "The Popsicle" EP on North

their 'i he Popsicle' EP on North Jersey's Eyeball Records. ■ Planet Smashers, Wednesday, Bloomfield Avenue Cafe (347 Bloomfield Ave., Montclair) — For those aboot to skank-dance, these Canadians

Monicali) — For these aboot to skank-dance, these Canadians salute you.
38 Special, Thursday, Starland Ballroom (570 Jernee Mill Rd., Sayreville) — Classic rockers with a southern twang headline the state's best venue.
George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic, Friday, Starland Ballroom (570 Jernee Mill Rd., Sayreville) — The fathers of '70s interplanetary funk can still tear the roof off live.
Big D and the Kids Table, Saturday, Bloomfield Avenue Cate (347 Bloomfield Avenue Anotheri Jevenile) — Bas purch encompass the band's new "How It Goes" CD.

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