

From the Music Section
Oversight Committee
By Patrick Rapa

It's time we cleared up a few things around here:

1. The Donuts are not a joke. Yes, they've got some silly lyrics and goofball stage names (Johnny Taint, J. Bearclaw et al.). And, OK, yes, they like to duct tape their CDs to boxes of Krispy Kremes before delivering them to newspaper offices. But, they're also contenders. The brand new Buckley (Chapter 7) is a twangy, smart-ass rock 'n' roll record where just about every track hovers around the two-minute mark. Want more adjectives? Neil Young-ian. Cracker-ish. Elvis Costello-esque. Get up close to the stage at the CD-release party on Saturday and scream for "Shake" — it's a straight-up power-pop anthem with no punchline.
Sat., Dec. 4, 9 p.m., \$8, Mondo Topless and THIS, North Star, 27th and Poplar sts., 215-684-0808.



'Donuts' are tasty offering

METRO INTERVIEW

Philly pop/garage rockers The Donuts try to pass themselves off as a big inside joke — including pseudonyms designed to protect their innocent day-job personas. But J. Bearclaw (vocals/guitar), Johnny Taint (guitar/vocals), Peter Extraganza (bass) and Fathead (drums) come dangerously close to musical respectability with The Donuts' new CD, "Buckley" (Chapter 7 Records). It's the band's second 2004 release, following the rougher-around-the-edges "Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill," and it features big-time hooks, some choice horn arrangements, and



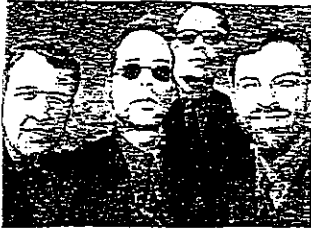
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

strong production from Mike "Slo-Mo" Brenner. Still, joked guitarist Taint in an interview with Metro, "Most of the songs are second or third takes at the most — as you might be able to tell."

► Where does the



PHILADELPHIA WEEKLY



Let the Donuts love

Matching suits, fake names and Beatles spoofs may sound silly, but that's the Donuts, for better or worse. A one-time offshoot of the folksy Philly band John Train, the Donuts have succeeded surprisingly well on the basis of their hooky power-pop and hokey humor. The band's debut Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill was a wry nod to you-know-what, while their new Buckley's smoother and sweeter. No joke.
Upcoming

icepack

By A.D. Amorosi

On a nearly related note, Philly foodie/Beatle-y band the Donuts release their new, sweeter CD (Buckley) after the spiciness of their debut (Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill) Debut at the North Star.



If you don't get those...
options: The Donuts record release party for the Mike-Brenner produced "Buckley," a mix of skin-tight tie-era Elvis Costello and '60s nuggets.
By SARA SHERR
For the Daily News



The Donuts

The Donuts:

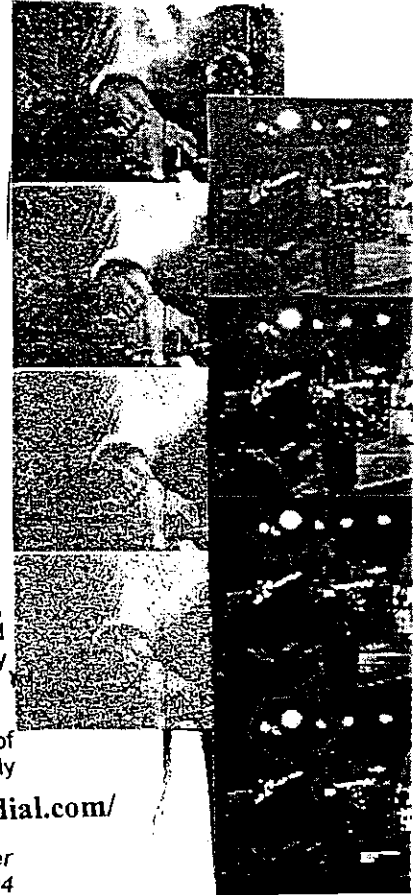
POPPIN' FRESH: Philadelphia's twang-infused garage-pop rockers the Donuts offer their fresh-baked set "Buckley" (Chapter 7), nicely glazed by producer Mike Brenner. Think Guided by Voices, Elvis Costello and the Kinks (in their "Muswell Hillbillies" phase). Think Philadelphia, especially on the band's punky, politicized warnings of an undermined "Liberty Bell." And don't forget to think cream-filled and chocolate-covered.

JONATHAN TAKIFF

j. bearclaw – voc/gtr
johnny taint – gtr/"voc"
peter extravaganza – bass
fathead – drums/voc



Do Th



Songs such as "Anymore" from these poppy freaks have the type of melody one might look over the first time they're played, but they gain valuable weight after successive listenings. The hooks are catchy and powerfully delivered, which is why I would disagree with The Donuts' press kit. It modestly frets that the band is "too inept to truly be considered power pop, and too melodic to be considered garage rock." Nice try, boys, but you are guilty on both counts. That, however, is a good thing.

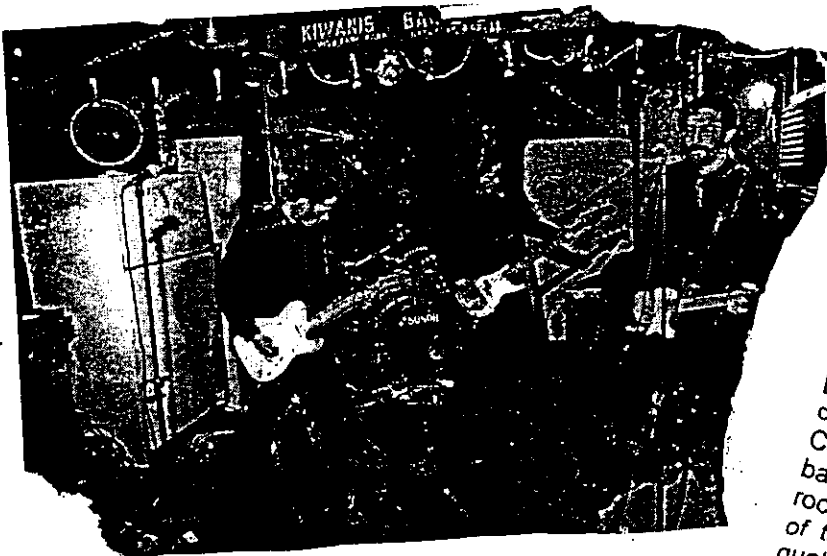
"He's In Love with Her Now" – easy and cool retro sound with a chorus pulled right from 60s Brit-pop radio. "Keepers" is a mellower number worth paying attention to. To me, it's a song that comes out sounding like a remake of some Dire Straits softie...that is, until you hear "fucker" in there. It works, though. It works.

"Mr. & Mrs. Sam Wells" touts more catchy guitar chords and somewhat defines the confident, indie sway and shrill of their lead singer, evident throughout this well-engineered release. "A Bird Like That" slams the entire set shut with a 1:18 minute bang-nod to Johnny Lydon's spitty, throaty style.

Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill proves a couple of things by its title alone: the band has a good sense of humor (just listen to their lyrics and the whimsical variety of this package) and they are rightfully channeling the more legendary spirits of "Donuts" past.

www.leftoffthedial.com/

-Bruno Westover
5/3/04



The Donuts "Sgt Jack's Pepper Mill" (Chapter 7 Records 2004) Available: Now. The Donuts do not take themselves too seriously, for a start they have suspiciously odd names such as J. Bearclaw, and Fathead. Hailing from Philadelphia with Mike 'Slo Mo' Brenner (occasionally of Marah) having the duty of 'Production and Playroom supervision', this is exactly the sort of band you want to nod along to in a packed out bar on a Saturday night. Singer Mr. Bearclaw has been listening carefully to 70-80s Brits of the Elvis Costello/Graham Parker ilk. The rest of the band are part Rockpile part Rumour, but rockier and occasionally punkier than either of those names would suggest. The sound quality isn't great, possibly it was recorded live in that bar, but its great fun.

www.thedonuts.com PW

www.americana-uk.com

The Donuts

WWW.THE DONUTS.COM



citypaper

January 16-22, 2003

Sat., Feb. 28, 8 p.m., \$32-\$38, Scottish Rite Auditorium, 315 White Horse Pike, Collingswood, N.J., 215-336-2000.

The Donuts

It's hard to tell whether The Donuts are an actual, ambitious, honest-to-the-Christ rock band or just friends making dick jokes. The catchy melodies and pop hooks on their new full length, *Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill*, suggest the former, but the silly pseudonyms (the lead singer is J. Bearclaw, with Johnny Taint on guitar) and general goofy demeanor make you think they're doing it all for giggles. Either way, you have to admit there's a certain skill to that kind of mysteriousness.

Fri., Feb. 27, 9 p.m., \$7, with Boyd Star, 27th and Poplar sts., 215-68

ROCK/POP

4. I e-mailed local jokers The Donuts to ask if the big box of Krispy Kremes they dropped off at the *City Paper* office was an attempt to schmooze me. "Absolutely," came the reply from an unnamed Donut (or maybe it was all of them). Well, the lactose (or would it be laktose?) within the Kremes prevented this music editor from partaking, but the band made momentary fans of the other CP staffers.

Good news for the band: The four-song demo (produced by Mike "Slo-Mo" Brenner) that came with the treats is an excellent bit of catchy rock 'n' roll. The vocals (provided by a "J. Bearclaw") have all the swoon and swagger of They Might Be Giants' John Flansburgh, but the music's more like indie pop with athletic guitars and melodic hooks. ("We worship at the altar of Robert Pollard," they exclaim in unison.) Asked what one should expect at The Donuts' debut gig this Saturday at The Fire, they respond: "A sellout; arrive early."

www.milesOfmusic.com

The Donuts - Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill

Description:

With band member names like J. Bearclaw, Johnny Taint, Peter Extravaganza and Fathead ("One name, just like Cher!", he says), you gotta expect something a bit tongue in cheek from the Donuts. Or perhaps more than a bit. Well, as it turns out it's Elvis Costello's tongue in the Flamin' Groovies' cheek they're playin' at. And not so overdone, either. With a sound that hints at both parties, as perhaps filtered through Guided By Voices, The Donuts serve up a dozen hot and fresh melody heavy, guitar driven pop-nuts. Rumor has it, although unconfirmed, that J. Bearclaw (aka This Year's Chef Brockett) may also be Jon Houlon of John Train, but we're no cogs in any rumor mill. We can verify that the most enjoyable Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill was produced by Mike "Slo-Mo" Brenner, an actual member of John Train. (Chapter 7 Records)

and Clips:

METRO
THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2004

The Donuts come off as an elaborate inside joke, complete with goofy aliases and tongue-in-cheek songs that rarely top 120 seconds. The band's first full-length CD is no joke, however. "Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill" (Chapter 7 Records) is a pop/garage rock gem that gets in your head and won't get out. Metro chatted with J. Bearclaw, Johnny Taint, Peter Extravaganza and Fathead.

Star Hotel and... and...
Friday, April 16, 2004

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

The Donuts. The garage-pop foursome, led by Jon Houlon of John Train, is out now with the fine Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill. With Nixon's Head a... Your...

Dan DeLuca ROCK/POP

citypaper

outs are... actual ambitious honest...
...and friend... making dick jokes... The catchy...
...Mel... suggest... the... new full length... Sgt. Jack's Pepper...
... "Imagine Cheap Trick with hooks... she gave her...
... or The Beatles with staying power," says...
... Chapter 7 Records' Fred Beckley of...
... his label's The Donuts, John Train's...
... produced CD, Sgt. Jack's Pepper Mill. "I...
... don't think it's too much of a stretch to...
... say these guys could be the next Brick...
... lin." That's good? Yes, according to Beck...
... ley. Naked self-interest aside, he says...
... "it's probably the greatest recording ever...
... put out." See for yourself when The Donuts...
... dunk with Trolleyvox and Boyd of...
... London, Feb. 27 at North Star.
(a_amorosi@citypaper.com)