

## True punk is back

By JOE WILBUR  
The Tattoo

The Dropkick Murphys are easily the most successful Boston punk band in a decade. Their anti-ska, heavy guitar hardcore/revivalist punk sound and stridently working class, socially conscious lyrics conjure up early Clash and remind you that, though we have, in the last decade, been barraged by more Offspring/Green Day style California-pop-punk than you can shake an MTV Video Music Award at, this is what Punk is SUPPOSED to be all about.

On their first full length album, "Do Or Die" (Hellcat, 1997) DMK established themselves as blue collar Irish-American Boston boys who know their roots — both musically and culturally.

Produced by Rancid's Lars Fredrikson, the album offered acoustic ballads, bagpipes, flutes and re-workings of traditional Irish drinking songs woven into an early-hardcore punk foundation.

Matt McClogan's vocal style — not a growl but a hearty, Boston tinged howl, was raw but not unlistenable — at times even warm and always a wonderful compliment to the material.

Bassist/songwriter Ken Casey penned "Boys on The Docks," a heartwarming pub singalong about his grandfather, who had been instrumental in organizing Boston's dock workers' union during the Depression along with the hardcore anthem "Fightstarter Karaoke."

The Murphys' debut was a gotsend, a beautiful return to punk as it was intended: sincere, urgent, socially conscious, infectious.

A constant theme of that album, and one inexorably tied to the Murphys themselves, was friendship, brotherhood, a bond evolved through years of dedication to one another and their scene.

That may be why I was so surprised to learn that, at some point before the recent Vans sponsored Warped Tour and the recording of their new album, "The Gang's All Here" (Hellcat), the group split with vocalist Matt McClogan. While the split was somewhat shrouded in mystery, DMK released a statement saying Matt no longer felt that he could, in good conscience, continue with the band and that the band is "part of a movement that Matt no longer feels a part of."

Sounds suspiciously as though McClogan didn't want to sell out, though the consensus among fans seems to be that he couldn't handle the touring. Whatever the reason — the Gang's All New.

Replacing McClogan on the new album is Al Barr, the heavily tattooed, high octave vocalist formerly of Boston's The Bruisers. Barr's vocal style is much more hardcore — more a growl than McClogan's, but, again, not unpleasant. He lacks the Boston accent that was half the Murphys' charm and certainly a trademark, but he does do wonderful things with what he has.

"The Gang's All Here" expands on "Do Or Die" — going in a more punk and less hardcore direction.

While the Murphys admit to trying to attract a wider audience, they've far from sold their souls for rock and roll.

Although I initially found myself a bit thrown by the new sound, the album grew on me like a fungus.

"Ten Years of Service," which includes the socialist musings "Who's gonna save us from this lonely picket line?" and "The status of our future in both past and present time/ is relegated to member of a higher class than mine" is much catchier than it sounds and the controversial "Pipe Bomb on Landsdowne" is an old school Boston hardcore assault on the city's drug addled rave culture.

Also offered are the Murphys' punked out arrangements of the traditional songs "Amazing Grace" and "The Fighting 69th."

All in all a very satisfying album from a band on its way up who has clearly already conquered two dreaded musical states — responsible for killing more punk bands than bad contracts and heroin combined — change and growth.

## Even sex won't sell Body Shots

By AMANDA LEHMERT  
The Tattoo

There's "foreplay." Then there is "good sex and bad sex," followed relentlessly by "afterplay." What's left is a pathetic comedic drama that passes as a thinly veiled 60-year-old Hemingway novel. They call it, "Body Shots."

The film details one wild night in the lives of eight horny heterosexual twenty-somethings. Using a series of intimate confessionals, disorienting flashbacks, and skewed camera angles, you delve deep into the lives of these mixed-up Gen Xers. Only we find out that it isn't so deep at all. Each professes to understand the difference between love and sex. They know they want sex, but they may not be ready to love.

After an excruciatingly long, although visually interesting, night club scene, the crew pairs off to get exactly what they can't stop talking about. It's looking like they are all about to get what they deserve, when one intoxicated pair has to mess up everything by bringing up the

issue that sex may not be the answer if it isn't consensual.

In the end, as viewers, we are praying that the last sexless couple can come together and save love in the 90s as we know it.

### At the movies

But they can't because no one knows how to love anymore. The characters have gotten what they wanted, but they are still aren't happy. Now they are unhappy and confused.

It seems Hemingway said the same thing years ago when he had his characters traipsing around Italy, drinking and chasing women in *The Sun Also Rises*. They too found that, even when they saw just what they wanted before their eyes, it wasn't enough. Only Hemingway, sadly enough, said it better.

After all is said and done, the film falls quite short of defining the past decade as it alludes to on its posters. Even sex is not enough to sell this picture.

## A New York school for engineers

By HILA YOSAFI  
The Tattoo

One of the top schools for engineering in the country is Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute — or RPI. Located in Troy, it's 10 minutes from New York's big-city capital, Albany.

A highly competitive school, its student population is diverse. There are plenty of friends to go bowling, play pool, swim in the pool, or workout with.

The campus is fairly large as well. There's even a bridge to cross.

There are dorms with two to a room and every two rooms share a bathroom.

The university, being an engineering school,

is very up-to-date. There is a large 24-hour computer lab (which you may need a sweater for year-round), with access to anything.

The dining hall serves, well, you know, your typical college meals.

While the Russell Sage Dining Hall was lovely to dine in, the price seemed slightly costly.

One student I spoke with said the students don't like it at the school. However, others said they couldn't be happier!

You'd have to see for yourself. But if you stop to ask for directions, just don't make the mistake of asking how to get to RPI, like I did!

Overall Grade: B

## College Report Card

A new addition to *The Tattoo*, our College Report Card will take our beloved readers along as our staff checks out those illustrious institutions of higher learning. We'll let you in on the inside scoop, as we see it.

### Just the facts...

#### Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Private four-year university  
Total Fees: (includes tuition, room and board, and mandatory laptop) approximately \$34,000

Location: Troy, N.Y.  
Schools: architecture, engineering, interdisciplinary, humanities and social sciences, science, management and technology  
Average SAT: verbal, 614; math, 667; combined, 1281

Top 10% of high school class: 54%  
Average high school GPA: B+/A-  
For more info: www.rpi.edu

## Chicago teens trash tests

By HILA YOSAFI  
The Tattoo

Instead of sitting down for tests, students in Chicago are standing up for themselves. Some high school students are fed up with the myriad of standardized tests that are mandated by the state of Illinois.

"You're learning this 'cause it's on the test, you're not learning it 'cause it's relevant," said Will Tanzman, a senior at Whitney Young High School, a magnet school, in urban Chicago. Tanzman is the moderator of the Organized Students of Chicago, or the OSC.

"In the Chicago public schools, everything needs fixing," said Tanzman.

A group of students from Whitney Young believed they could make a difference. They formed the OSC for this purpose.

"We've been kinda talking about standardized tests...We had five our junior year," said Tanzman. So the student group decided to focus on this cause of stress for students.

Tanzman said multiple choice tests don't reveal anything.

"The tests aren't accurate," said Tanzman. "They're very limited."

The OSC organized a sit-in for

one of the tests last school year. About 10 students purposely failed this test.

They did not break any rules by doing this, but were punished for it.

Tanzman said the chief executive officer of the Chicago school district "didn't say anything about our punishment until it reached the news." The students were to serve 10 hours of community service, which Tanzman said they did not object to.

Phil Hansen, the chief accountability officer of Chicago Public Schools said, "I've grown to respect them. They're very intelligent, very well-spoken young people."

Hansen said in order to attend Whitney Young, a selective high school, students have to take a standardized admissions test.

The director of internal affairs for OSC, Whitney High senior Manuel Rodriguez said, "We just think that they're being abused."

One of the tests is used to determine promotion in the third, sixth, and eighth grades, Hansen said.

About 10 percent of the students fail this exam, and must attend a six-week summer school, he said. After the pro-

gram, a retest, and teachers' recommendations, 5 percent of the students end up repeating a grade, Hansen said.

Tanzman said the "Riverside Publishing Company said the tests were limited and not to be used for the sole purpose of promotion."

However, Tanzman said, the test company then said it was okay because the city is paying it to administer the tests.

Hansen said Tanzman had "a cynical point of view" on this matter.

There is intense test preparation and a lot of class time spent on how to take the tests, such as the five paragraph essay format, Tanzman said.

"The teachers got pressured from the principal to raise the (test) scores," Tanzman said.

Hansen said the lower performance schools do spend more time preparing for the exams. However, the higher performance schools use some class time "working on the skills" such as "inferences and making comparisons," he said.

Rodriguez said while teachers support their endeavors, they "can't say anything publicly 'cause they're afraid they might lose their jobs."

Hansen said parents haven't commented either.

Commissioner Theodore Sergi of the Connecticut Department of Education said all standardized tests "have a purpose of improving teaching and assessing progress of the students. Everyone realizes there is a useful purpose but it can be abused. It hasn't been, yet."

Tanzman and his group do not think the tests are all bad, however. There is something the tests could be useful for, he said.

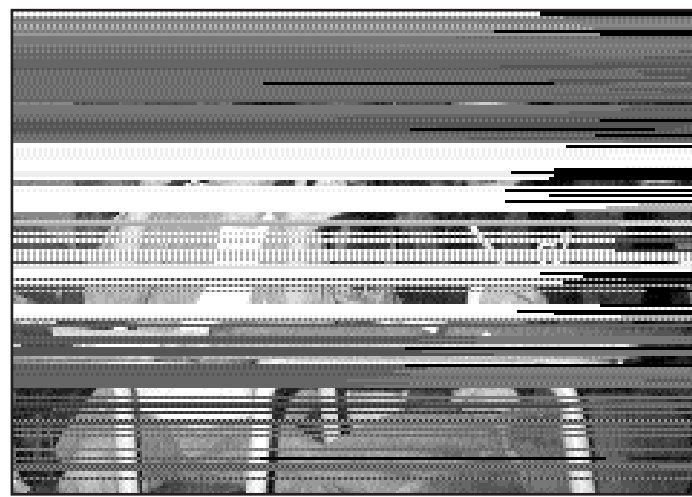
"You can just look inside the classrooms and see the schools are failing. Ninety to 95 percent of Chicago schools' students who go on to Chicago junior colleges end up taking remedial classes," he said. In that case, he said, the tests could determine promotion.

Tanzman ranks among the top 10% of his class and would like to get involved in education policy in the future.

The standardized curriculum throughout Illinois, Tanzman said, "ignores free thinking and creativity and treats students like they're sponges who are supposed to soak up the standardized curriculum and point of view instead of teaching them how to think for themselves."

Tattoo staff writer Chantelle Garzone contributed to this story.

## Making much of their molecules



Bristol Eastern High School sophomores recently made physical models of molecules. Showing off their creations are, in the photo at the left, Lauren Mentasti, with Chris Morse and Dennis Cote in the background, and at the right, Jeremy Reid and Bob Skarvelas.

Heather Pilarcik-Murawski / The Tattoo

## The Odd Couple comes to BEHS

By JESSICA NORTON  
The Tattoo

Odd things are happening at Bristol Eastern High School.

The fall play this year — Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* — will have a male and a female version, with two separate casts.

The BEHS Thespians decided on two shows for two reasons. First, Simon wrote his original version of *The Odd Couple* in March of 1965 for Broadway. It starred Walter Matthau and Art Carney. But Simon rewrote the play in 1975 because he wanted Sally Struthers and Rita Moreno to take part.

Secondly, Al Jones, BEHS drama director, said it would have been unfair to either the boys or the girls if one show were done over the other because the small casts are mostly one sex or the other.

Both plots of the play and the locale are the same, but the jokes and situations are

different.

The *Odd Couple* is about two people who are divorced from their spouses because they can't stand each others' personal habits. One is too neat and the other is a complete slob. They decide to move in with each other and later find out that they cannot live with one another due to the same reasons that they got divorced from their previous mates.

"We think it's a funny play," said senior Molly Scannell, who plays Olive, the slobbish female lead. "We put lots of hard work into it and we hope lots of people come see it."

Jones said each cast gets the opportunity to watch the other cast and gain insight onto each others' jokes, dialect, and humor.

"It has been an educational experience for the kids," said Jones. "It's an exciting production because we've never done two shows at once."

The female cast consists of eight students with the leads of Florence and Olive played

by seniors Sara Madden and Scannell. The other characters are Renee played by senior Colleen Youngmans, Sylvie by senior April Street, Vera by senior Carolyn Choi, Mickey by senior Hila Yosafi, Jesus by junior John Dickman, and Manolo by junior Ken Asensio.

The leads in the male cast are Oscar, played by junior Chris Duprey and Felix, played by senior Joe Wilbur. The rest of the male cast is Speed played by senior Alan Aubin, Murray by senior Dave Skovran, Roy by junior Brendan Sullivan, Vinnie by junior Craig LaRue, Gwendolyn by junior Kelly Osborne, and Cecily by junior Chantelle Garzone.

Tickets are available for \$5 at the door or by calling BEHS music department at 584-7860. One ticket gets you into both shows.

The girls take the stage November 26 and December 3.

The boys are on November 27 and December 4.

## Don't let us scare you



Meet Pat, our pet scarecrow. Pat took first place in the teen division of the Scarecrow Festival at Roberts Orchard this fall. Pat rocks. Never mind that Pat was the only entry in his/her category. Pat still rocks. In the above photo, Pat is flanked by *Tattoo* staffers

Merissa Mastropiero and Sarah Jordan.

This week, *The Tattoo*, a local teen journalism group that publishes on occasional Mondays in this fine newspaper, will make its mark at the Bristol Public Library's Festival of Trees.

Look for our small tree in the

children's library and our bigger tree at the Manross branch in Forestville.

A lot of great groups take part in the festival, whether it's providing music or decorating a tree, so be sure to check it out.

All the trees will be up by Friday.