

The Local Scene with Ozone in the AM This Month: Krooked Knuckles

Greetings fellow Zoners! Hope you and your families are well! There were a ton of great local bands here in the last month since we chatted. I hope you got a chance to get out and see some of our great local talents! Our local music scene is happening right now, and a majority of the gigs I've been to, the bands have all played original tunes. Impressive indeed!

This month I'm going to put a spotlight on the great local band "Krooked Knuckles" or as I call them affectionately "The Knuckles." The Krooked Knuckles are a straight-ahead, no-nonsense rock-and-roll band.... Some might apply the Punk moniker to The Knuckles. But as far as I'm concerned, they are a great Rock Band. And do they ever rock!! The Knuckles do probably 98% original tunes. In fact, the only cover I can think of that The Knuckles do is Folsom Prison Blues! They do an absolutely slamming version of the popular Man In Black tune.

Krooked Knuckles consists of Scotti Knuckles, lead vox and quite possibly THE most dangerous front man I know; Todd Knuckles, lead axe and vox; J. Dog Knuckles, lead and rhythm axe and vox; C Lo Knuckles taking care of everything bottom end; and Jimmy Knuckles on the skins and occasional vox as well.

If you listen to my radio show at WHRW-FM in Binghamton—on the Net at www.whrfm.org—you've heard every single tune on their recently released LP. And guess what? YOU can go and download all of the Krooked Knuckles tunes for free. If it's free, it's for me!! Go to the Krooked Knuckles book of faces page or you can check them out on ReverbNation too. I advise you to go and download all of their tunes. They're all absolutely rippin', and I guarantee you will be groovin' like mad!

When you see The Knuckles live you can immediately sense how much fun they have as a band! I've seen Krooked Knuckles at least a dozen times, and certainly have never been disappointed in any of their performances... ever! As I stated earlier, Mr. Scotti Knuckles (not his real name) is quite possibly the most dangerous front man I know. At one gig he was climbing... check that, at EVERY gig he is climbing! Anyhow, one night at Shitzies, he took a horrific fall requiring I believe 10-12 stitches in his head! Now mind you this "accident"—for lack of a better term—happened during the last set, and Scotti stuck it out and finished the entire rest of the gig. That is the epitome of Rock and Roll in my book! After the gig Scotti was promptly accompanied to the hospital, I believe with his wife. I'm married too. That must have been a long, lonely and quiet ride. I mentioned he should get a wireless mic rig, but was told Scotti would just be more dangerous. I find that extremely hard to believe.

Todd Knuckles is a straight up no nonsense guitar player when it comes to his duties as the lead player in the band. He told me his style is nothing flashy or fancy, and that's just fine with me. For the Knuckles sound you wouldn't want a JoeSatch type of player doing a zillion hammer ons and pull offs until the sun comes up. It just wouldn't fit. It sounds to me that Todd uses a lot of pentatonic type leads, which fit perfectly and seamlessly in this type of heads-up rock music... OK, Punk; whatever, dude! Todd Knuckles told me he really didn't plan on being the lead guitarist, but I'll tell you what, I'm damn glad Todd ended up doing a majority of the leads. He has that natural "it" factor needed to lay down nasty leads in a rock band. It is not easy folks, believe that! Meanwhile, J. Dog Knuckles rips it up as

usual mostly doing the heavy duty chunky rhythms needed to cover their driving sound. J. Dog isn't shy to write and sing a controversial tune on occasion....

Mr. C Lo Knuckles on all bottom end frequencies is an excellent addition to the heavy-duty rhythms this band lays down. Some of the grooves they get into at gigs can traumatize oneself. They completely suck you in with their high-energy performances. I have never seen a low-energy Knuckles gig.... In fact, that's just a really silly thought. Erase that comment from the memory banks, folks.

C Lo is only half of the rhythm section though. Jimmy Knuckles on drums is one of the premiere bass players in this entire region. Did you know that? Spoiler alert. He plays bass in some serious local bands, and I'll just mention The Parlor Cats. Yep, that's Jimmy on bass. I can learn a ton or two of things from Jimmy on bass guitar, easily. Just phenomenal at laying down a bass groove. Yet he enjoys playing drums for the Krooked Knuckles. That's a huge bonus in my book.

The Krooked Knuckles is also one of the most giving, caring, and volunteering bands in this area! They do the All Siders gig, Shelter Slam, etc., which is huge to me. We wouldn't be able to do half of the benefits we do in this great community of ours if it weren't for bands like the Krooked Knuckles. I would like to personally thank all of the gentlemen in the band for all of the volunteer work they do.

Get out and check out Krooked Knuckles live sometime soon! Go check them out on the book of faces, ReverbNation, etc. for all things Knuckles. And find out where they have some upcoming gigs. As always, thank you very much for taking the time to read my column. I do truly appreciate it!

Tune in every Monday morning from 7:00-8:30 for the rest of this school year for the best in new music, local music, and some more upcoming world premiere music. In the upcoming months WHRW-FM 90.5 Binghamton will be the ONLY station in America playing brand spankin' new local music. Please tune in for that. I'll catch you all out there in the Ozone ASAP! Have a great month gang and I'll catch up in a month! Contact me at ozoneintheam@gmail.com. Thanks!!



MINDFUL MUSIC Tips from Dave Rice

The "Knuckles" Interview

As I glance out the window at a passing school bus from the desk of my office I thank God even after all these years that I'm not on it. Besides the occasional nightmare, my experience with all things scholastic has slowed almost to a standstill. However, I take solace in knowing there are those within the education system who help free the mind instead of reducing it to an entropic worm-infested hollow.

As evidence I present Scotti Graham, aka Scotti Knuckles, singer of the rock and roll band Krooked Knuckles and global-history teacher at Johnson City High School.

DR: So you're a rock and roller by day and teacher by night. What's the big difference?
SG: Cool question, but a little backwards (teacher by day...haha.) I would say that there is little difference between the two. The content is different, sure, but the amount of work, planning, creativity, and passion necessary for both

make these two activities a perfect marriage. Both fall under the category of "if you love what you do, you never work a day in your life!" I think that the necessity of entertainment value is important in both as well; if you bore kids, they become disengaged and tune-out. It's the same with a crowd; if a performer's not entertaining, they leave.

What is "The Golden Rule?" I've always wanted to ask a teacher that.

Hahaha... You know that one, man! Do no harm! Most of the things that you need to know for your life, you learned in kindergarten... keep your hands to yourself, be nice to each other, don't pee your pants....

Can you pinpoint an event growing up that inspired you to form or join bands?

It wasn't a specific event, more of an era. When I was six years old I was into Kiss (and these were the real early days). I remember going into the bathroom when I was in 2nd grade to change-out the shirt that my Mom laid out for me for a KISS iron-on!! The teacher made me change back and my temper tantrum was the beginning of my love for rock-n-roll!

What would you have done differently in your past projects knowing what you know now?

Not a thing! I really don't regret being in any of the projects that I've been in and there's been a lot of them (I'm not going to name-drop 'cause that's a bit cheesy, but shout-outs to all of them). I have been lucky to have had the chance to play with some great musicians and make some great music over the years. Krooked Knuckles is simply an evolution into today and a culmination of all of those experiences.

You run around a lot on stage while singing really really loud. How do you do it without dying?

Hahaha... I don't know how, it just happens. The music makes me move; it takes over, and I just go with it! After rehearsing and recording the songs, we all know how they should sound. So I know that I have to be "on" when it comes to the vocals as well. I mean, I can't sacrifice them for bouncing around.

Should a lead singer "lead" a band, and if so, how?

A band is a socialist kind of entity... equality is a must! It's pure collaboration on everything and that's the only way it works. The best leaders are those who can effectively collaborate towards a common goal. Dictatorships cause conflict and make a band disintegrate.

How is singing in a recording studio different from singing at a live show?

Recording vocals can be a very solitary event. You have to be able to muster-up the energy that you'd bring to a live performance in order to keep the integrity of the song itself and that "live" sound. Then, in-turn, you have to be able to re-create recorded performances live. Kind of weird, trying to make a recording of something that is supposed to be experienced live. I absolutely love both!

In what ways has local music changed for better or worse?

I've seen lots of ebb and flow in the local music scene. I will say that I feel like it's currently going through a peak (not that we've hit the peak at all yet!) There's a lot of different kinds of vibes out there right now, lots of great original music from any genre that you could possibly want. Whatever you want to see, you can find a venue to go see it. The best part about the current music scene is the camaraderie. There's not a lot of pretentious musicians out there right now, just a lot of cool people being supportive to others and each doing his, and her, own thing. *Dave Rice owns and operates Basement Audio Recording Studio in Binghamton, NY. Please send feedback, questions, suggestions for an article or your own tips to BasementAudio@gmail.com.*