

RUKUS

RUKUSmag.com

20

QUESTIONS WITH
Melissa Riso

Exclusive Coverage
Augustines,
Phantogram &
We Were Promised
Jetpacks

15 GAMES REVIEWED



Broken Bells
After the Disco



Kid Ink
My Own Lane



February 2014



IT'S HERE



Enjoy RUKUS on your iPad and iPhone!
Subscribe now at RUKUSmag.com

6

Melissa Riso

February Cover Model

20 questions with Melissa

Photography by Andrew Gates

Makeup & hair by Kimberly Hill

14

All Access

The Latest Albums Reviewed

Albums Reviewed:

Kid Ink

My Own Lane

By Jeremy Weeden

Broken Bells

After the Disco

By Silas Valentino

18

All Access Spotlight

Artist/Bands Featured:

Bastille, Of Mice and Men &

Jonny Lang

By Samuel Wendel

On The Cover

Photo by Andrew Gates

Make-up & hair by Kimberly Hill

20

Live & Loud

Live Show Reviews

Featured Artists/Shows:

Augustines, Phantogram &
We Were Promised Jetpacks
By Nicolas Bates and Dan Sinclair

28

Coming Up

Models To Keep An Eye On

Featured Models:

Tanya Love

San Diego, CA

32

Game On

The Latest Games Reviewed

Games Reviewed:

Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII

By Jesse Seilhan

The Lego Movie Videogame

By Josh Schilling

This Page

Photo by Andrew Gates

Make-up & hair by Kimberly Hill



Shoot. The Messenger.

A sleek, lightweight, street-smart satchel that hugs your body, moves with you, and doesn't cramp your style. Carries a DSLR, 3-4 lenses, laptop and accessories. Removable photo insert lets you convert it quickly from a camera bag to a book bag, school bag, briefcase or general-purpose carryall. Available in small and large sizes to hold laptops up to 15 and 17 inches. Pack what you need. Shoot what you want. **Tenba Messenger.**

 See it for yourself at TenbaTV.com



Available at:

Samy's Camera

www.samys.com | 800.321.4726

RUKUS®

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Andrew Gates

Live & Loud Editor

Nicolas Bates

All Access Editor

Silas Valentino

Games Editor

Jesse Seilhan

Art Director

Andrew Gates

All Access Contributors

Silas Valentino, Jeremy Weeden & Samuel Wendel

Live & Loud Contributors

Nicolas Bates & Dan Sinclair

Pit Pass Contributor

Andrew Gates

Game On Contributors

Jesse Seilhan & Josh Schilling

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Gates & Nicolas Bates

Contributing Videographers

Nate Olson

Contributing Make-up Artists

Bioanca Robinson & Kim Hill

Contributing Hair Stylists

Bioanca Robinson & Kim Hill

Advertising

Andrew Gates

advertise@RUKUSmag.com

Mailing Address

RUKUS MAGAZINE

11304 Chandler Blvd. #6131

North Hollywood, CA 91603

20 QUESTIONS

Get To Know Your Cover Model

Melissa Riso

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up & hair by Kimberly Hill



Melissa Riso is back for her second shoot with *RUKUS magazine*, this time snagging the cover. Her first shoot with us was July 2011 and nearly three years later this beauty has not aged a bit and actually looks better than ever. Melissa was born in Monterey, California, but grew up in the small town of Salinas, California. She got into modeling after a news reporter saw her at a salon where she was working and suggested she talk to his agent. Since that chance meeting, Melissa has been hard at work shooting magazine covers, films and commercials. She has booked lead roles in a number of music videos for artist such as; Xzibit, T.I., Tyga, Daft Punk, Pharrell and Krewella. Melissa is also booking roles for skin care, hair and makeup commercials as well as some film projects and TV shows. We are expecting some big things from this girl and we'll be keeping an eye out on her steady rise.



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

1. What's your Ethnicity?

My ethnicity is Italian and Guamanian. My dad is Italian and my mom is Guamanian.

2. What's your zodiac sign?

I'm a Cancer.

3. Where are you from originally?

I was born in Monterey, California and raised in Salinas, California.

4. What did you like most about growing up in Salinas?

It taught me how to be tough and independent. The small town of Salinas had a lot of gangs and it wasn't a real safe place to raise kids, but you learn how to be street smart and how to defend yourself.

5. What kind of mischief did you get into while growing up?

I got into so much trouble growing up. I was a bad little girl, always getting called into the principal's office at school. I used to get into fights with the boys a lot. I was a feisty little Italian girl.

6. What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

I would say the craziest thing I've ever done is bungee jump off of a 700 foot bridge. I also paraglided off of a 10,000 foot mountain before, that was scary but so beautiful. I love taking risks.

7. What's your favorite hobby and why?

I love cooking, it relaxes me when I have a long day at work. I also just love cooking to entertain my friends when they come to visit.

8. What's your guilty pleasure?

Crepes with strawberries and nutella.

9. Who do you admire and why?

I Admire Angelina Jolie, I think she's sexy and classy. I also think she's a great actress and I would like to be her replacement in the future. I love how she does action movies and I look up to her a lot.

10. If you could change one thing in the world what would it be and why?

If I could change one thing in the world it would be to find the cure for cancer. I think it's so sad how little kids get cancer and have to suffer, it truly breaks my heart, even when adults get cancer. They are suffering so much

and their life ends so quickly. I would want to cure them all.

11. What's one of your personal goals?

One of my personal goals in life is to be a lead actress in an action film, I would love to show off my talent and Krav Maga fighting skills.

12. What do guys compliment you on the most?

I would say guys compliment me on my eyes the most. They are honey color so it's a unique eye color compared to most people.

13. What's your favorite body part on yourself?

My favorite body part are my boobs, I paid a lot for them when I turned 18. I think my doctor did a great job! [laugh]

14. What do you look for in a guy?

What I look for in a guy is a real man. He has to be a true gentleman, with a career and confidence. I love a man that is romantic but can also be my bodyguard. He needs to also be healthy and fit.

15. What's the first thing you notice about a guy?

The first thing I notice about a guy is his eyes. I read people very well and I like to see if this guy is full of shit or a true genuine person, eyes tell all.

16. What's your ideal first date?

Taking me to a nice dinner then a comedy show. Then they show me romance and fun without getting drunk and stupid to soon. [laugh]

17. What turns you on?

I like a guy with a nice ass. [smile] I'm a total ass girl, I love guys with great booties.

18. What turns you off?

I hate guys that lie or cheat. I've learned that these guys are very insecure about themselves so they feel the need to lie or cheat to feel better about themselves.

19. What's your biggest pet peeve?

My biggest pet peeve is a messy guy. If you're house and car are messy, then it shows he's lazy and has bad hygiene.

20. Who's your celebrity crush?

My Celebrity crush was Paul Walker, I'm so sad he died. He was so hot and I heard he was a good person.

RM

20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd

I like
a guy
with a
nice ass.

20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



STATS:

Birthday: June 27
Height: 5'2"
Weight: 105lb
Measurements: 34C-24-34

See more of Melissa at
[instagram.com/RealMelissaRiso](https://www.instagram.com/RealMelissaRiso)

ALL ACCESS

The Latest Albums Reviewed

Makin' His Way

Written by Jeremy Weeden

Kid Ink is back on the scene with his latest album *My Own Lane*. As the title states, Kid Ink is finding his niche with his own brand of radio friendly, melodic hip-hop. "Show Me" with Chris Brown is the album's first single and peaked on the *Billboard Hot 100* at #19 and Kid Ink hopes to continue this success with *My Own Lane*.

The opening track, "Hello World" is a catchy tune that Kid Ink's sing-song flow goes perfectly over. This upbeat song is perfect for Top 40 radio and is a prime example of Kid Ink's lane. Kid Ink celebrates his successes with lyrics like "You ain't gotta wait no more I got what you came for/I said fucking with me promise that you'll wake up with a hangover/Champagne, we celebrating for every day that we never ate/It's evident Imma never change gonna be this way forever baby."

The album continues with "The Movement" a bass-heavy track produced by Danja, Timbaland's former protégé. The beat is classic hip-hop with hard drums and synths while Kid Ink raps about his movement and what he is about. Things get freaky on "Iz U Down" Kid Ink's ode to bisexual girls. He raps "I could tell by the way you've been lookin' at yo girlfriend/I could tell by the way you've been dancing wit yo girlfriend/Can I ask?/Iz u down? Iz u down?"

My Own Lane slows down with "We just Came to Party" featuring New Orleans crooner August Alsina. "We Just Came to Party" is a smooth flowing song that sounds perfect for the clubs or cruising in the summertime. This track, produced by The Runners, has an excellent hook that is sure to have everyone singing along.

The next song finds Kid Ink linking back up with Chris Brown for "Main Chick." This song produced by DJ Mustard showcases his signature sound also featured on "Show Me." "Main Chick" is in a similar vein to "Show Me" and while the beat is slower, it has all the makings of a hit as well.

"No Option" featuring King Los finds the two rappers trading bars and is one of the standout tracks on *My Own Lane*. King Los proves the hype surrounding him is well warranted with a scathing verse: "I might have dropped outta college, but I mastered cash/I get the old school scratch Grand Master Flash/You looking like Kris Kross with a bag of hash/Because you must be high with yo backwards ass/ballin niggas work at Walmart, where they play at/Turn em into a Target when I show them where the K at/Say jack I'm wheelin in the fortune lay back/Rain like April but I might bring May back or my back/Cause my neck and my back aching/My mack and my tech for my slab of bacon...Damn Ink, what these niggas ain't learned it before/I make home look good like the furniture store."

"More Than a King" is another one of the strongest songs on the album. The beats and movie samples on this creative song recall that of classic Wu-Tang tracks. Kid Ink also notes this as he raps, "Let somebody else check the check/In my city protect yo neck/It's more than a method, man of the year I'm the man of the hour/Sold-out shows before I sold one album."

With *My Own Lane* Kid Ink proves he has successfully made the jump from the underground mixtape circuit to the main stream. The album has excellent production and a lot of catchy, melodic club ready songs. Kid Ink should be able to fill the airwaves with singles from *My Own Lane* as well as continuing to pave his own way.

Artist: Kid Ink
Album: My Own Lane
Website: kidinkmyownlane.com

★★★★★

Label: RCA

Release Date: January 7, 2014



ALL ACCESS
The Album Reviews Cont'd



Game Over

Written by Silas Valentino

Disco is dead, or sucks—depending on which bumper sticker you're reading. Rock n' Roll won the war back in the summer of 1979 when heaps of disco records were destroyed in a planned explosion during a Chicago White Sox's game. After the famed Disco Demolition Night, disco music was left to stagger away like a Studio 54 bass player heading home alone after realizing the party is over. But on its way out, disco found the 1980s and a new breed of music was crafted. We know it as pop music.

Broken Bells make pop music for people who do not like pop music. Comprised of indie music's prince James Mercer and Danger Mouse, the producer behind Gnarl's Barkley's "Crazy" and that Black Keys' song your mom likes. The duo met years ago at the 2004 Roskilde Festival in Denmark but they wouldn't release any music together until 2010's *Broken Bells*, their self-titled debut album. The record was met with a Grammy nomination and included the group's instantly enjoyable song, "The High Road." After a sold out tour and an EP release, Broken Bells return with their sophomore release. *After the Disco* is an album that embraces the success of disco mixed with its successor of '80's pop.

"Perfect World" sets a spacey tone as the album's introduction and features multiple modified synthesizers bouncing off each other as if there was no gravity in the recording studio. The main synth melody soon enters and binds all the sounds together, but you can't deny the Flock of Seagulls resemblance. Danger Mouse, or Brian Burton, is known for producing tight drumming on his tracks and this beat is no different—like a metronome set to party. "Perfect World" really shines with the guitar solo that kicks in at the 3:39 mark. It has enough pure '80s mojo to reinstate Reagan.

The album's lead single is the Bee Gee's comparison "Holding On for Life." But this isn't the Travolta *Saturday Night Fever* dance, it feels more as if the cocaine has run low but everyone is still hanging out.

This theme of melancholy but still socializing is fairly consistent throughout *After the Disco*. Mercer's lyrics can dabble into the kind of commentary usually reserved for a lonesome early morning walk home. "Oh London moon/ Help me stumble home/ Let me lose myself along the way," sings Mercer on "Perfect World." While it can be heard as sad or depressing, Mercer quickly finds the silver linings in the following lyrics, "I've got nothing left/ It's kind of wonderful/ Cause there's nothing they can take away from me."

Broken Bells spoke with NPR Music last November and the topic of their lyrics and their inspiration arose. Burton responded with, "You know that movie *Usual Suspects*, where the guy is looking at all the things around the room and describing a whole story based on that? And then, next thing you know, you have this whole story that came from everything he saw. It's kind of the way the lyrics were done here, where all of the conversations and hanging out James and I do outside the studio winds up finding its way into the record."

James Mercer and Danger Mouse are a double threat in music production. Danger Mouse is well known for his quality producing and Mercer wrote the song that made us fall in love with Garden State. Together they make fairly perfect pop music and *After the Disco* is a collection of the sounds and thoughts these two make in midst of a Sunday sunrise.

Artist: Broken Bells

Album: After the Disco

Website: brokenbells.com

★★★★★

Label: Columbia

Release Date: February 4, 2014

ALL ACCESS SPOTLIGHT

Written by Samuel Wendel

Facebook.com/bastilleuk



Bastille, *All This Bad Blood*

Though it's packaged as a double album, *All This Bad Blood* is really more of an extended version of alternative group Bastille's debut album *Bad Blood*. The first disc consists of the original *Bad Blood* track listing and the second is filled with new material. The new songs are of the same vein as their original debut, featuring the alternative "Coldplay with more synthesizer and electro influences" sound that has catapulted them to radio-stardom. Unfortunately, while not bad, this extended version seems to go to show that Bastille new from the get go that they'd struck alternative radio gold with songs "Pompeii," "Things We Lost in the Fire" and "Flaws." The new songs on *All This* are catchy, fun and worth a listen if you're a Bastille fan, but they aren't quite as good as the their *Bad Blood* counterparts. The lead single from the new batch of songs, entitled "Of the Night," is subtly catching and features a danceable beat and chorus, but it pales in comparison to the soaring power of the band's other singles. This album should delight existing Bastille fans, but the new material doesn't expand their sound much or top their radio singles.

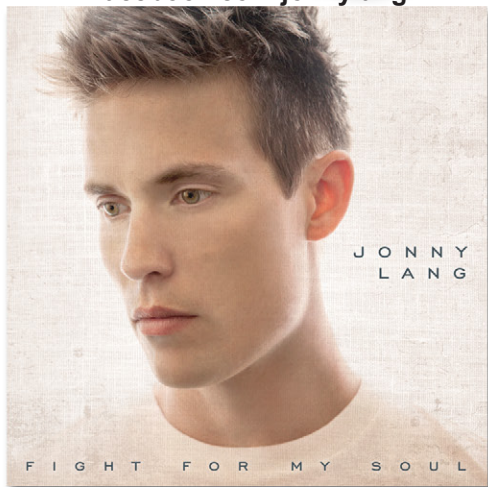
Of Mice and Men, *Restoring Peace*

On their third full-length album *Restoring Force*, American metalcore band Of Mice and Men sound like they're gearing up for baseball season by throwing their fans a meaty change-up. In fact, soon it might be hard to call them "metalcore" at all. *Restoring Force* is a major departure in sound for the group compared to their previous efforts, 2011's *The Flood*, and their self-titled 2010 debut album. *Force* finds Of Mice and Men veering more towards a "nu-metal" type of sound — think Lincoln Park or Slipknot. While it still features plenty of aspects of metalcore, this album finds them more polished and experimental, and should appeal more to listeners usually turned-off by the genre's more punishing sonic assault. Some of this can be attributed to the arrival of a new bassist, Aaron Pauley, and how his cleaner, more melodic, vocal delivery pairs with front man Austin Carlile, who has completely changed his vocal delivery. While on previous albums Carlile generally stuck to a metalcore scream vocal, *Force* finds his vocals more intelligible and melodic. In the end, *Force* might turn off existing fans with its genre experimentation, but it should open the band up to more exposure with an expanded sound. Standout tracks are "Public Service Announcement," and "Feels like a Fever."

Facebook.com/ofmice



Facebook.com/jonnylang



Jonny Lang, *Fight for my Soul*

Try as he might, Jonny Lang will never escape from being pigeonholed by his most marketable asset: his voice. Since he broke into the modern blues scene in 1997 at the tender age of 16, Lang's voice has always stood out as impossibly well suited for singing the blues, owning an intangible quality that made him sound 30 years older than he really was. And that doesn't change with *Fight for My Soul*, his first album in seven years. Lang has always been an impressive guitar player as well vocalist, but he doesn't flex as much muscle here, preferring to let his voice take center stage. On *Soul*, Lang shows that his voice hasn't deteriorated at all, instead becoming even more powerful. He dips into some experimental directions with some soul and R&B tinged moments, but *Soul* is mostly a blues and gospel indebted album. His last album, *Turn Around*, was pretty heavy-handed in expressing Lang's Christian beliefs, but he for the most part avoids that here, singing about all the usual suspects in a blues/gospel themed album. Overall it's a solid comeback Lang after a long hiatus.

Going Green

Has Never Looked So Good!

Enjoy RUKUS on your iPad and iPhone!



Subscribe Now!

RUKUS MAG.COM

For advertising rates email us at:
Advertise@RUKUSmag.com



LIVE & LOUD

The Live Show Reviews

Augustines

Photos by Nicolas Bates
Written by Dan Sinclair

Here at West Hollywood's famous Troubadour, it's time to kick off 2014 in live music for photographer Mr. Nicolas Bates and your humble writer. Oh, and what a start it is with New York City's Augustines in town. Even Julia Stiles thinks so. I saw her stumbling around, looking for the ladies' room only moments before Augustines took stage.

Frontman Billy McCarthy waves before picking up his guitar. He's wearing a fairly heavy wool coat. Isn't he fucking warm in that thing? The multi-instrument-playing Eric Sanderson takes stage, also bundled up in a winter jacket. Drummer Rob Allen seems to be the only smart one with his T-shirt and jeans.

Augustines waste little time and go headlong into, well, "Headlong Into the Abyss." It was McCarthy's raspy, passionate vocals over the hypnotic, almost dreamy music, driven hard by the steady bass drum on this very song that turned yours truly onto Augustines a few years back, so I know at least one guy in the crowd who couldn't be happier with the opening choice.

What's even more impressive about Augustines is how much better everything is live! The passion you hear in McCarthy's voice and lyrics can be seen in every inch of his face throughout the entire performance. The pure talent as musicians both McCarthy and Sanderson possess is on full display in a way that a studio album just can't do proper justice. And give Mr. Allen his props, too. I'm pretty sure my heart has adjusted its rhythm to his pounding bass thumps.

After the Troubadour's appreciative screams die down a little, Billy says, "We're Augustines from New York City. Hello." This has got to be much easier than saying "We're We Are Augustines," and most likely the reason "We Are" was dropped from the band's name between rookie and sophomore albums. He then goes on to say, "This song's about a church," and I'm pretty sure almost everyone present recognized "Chapel Song" right away and started screaming again, happy to hear to hear another song off *Rise Ye Sunken Ships*.

Billy loses his coat. "It's fucking warm in here." Mm-hmm, told you. Some girl yells, "Take it off!" to which he replies, "You don't have to tell me twice!" And the band really seems to appreciate the support. Billy asks the packed house, "What is this, a Tuesday? That's so cool so many of you came out, thanks so much!"

He dedicates the first song off their new self-titled album "Cruel City" to anyone from New York, before Sanderson switches to keyboards for "Juarez." It's during this song where I notice a tall brunette woman who dances hard to every beat and shouts out every word. She even adds some jumping for the chorus of "Lord, I see red and it's storming in my head/I've got cathedrals in my ears and I think my daddy's dead."

After the rare song, "Ballad of a Patient Man," a woman buys the band whiskey. And she makes sure that everyone gets one. "The third one's for the drummer!" McCarthy makes sure to deliver said drink to the thirsty Allen.

Next up is a very cool slow version of "Philadelphia," followed by "Kid, You're on Your Own." Then right before "Strange Days," McCarthy mentions that he went to bed the other night with wet underwear, but never quite explains how exactly they got that way. Strange days indeed... Augustines closes out the set with stellar renditions of "Walkabout" and "Nothing to Lose but Your Head."

McCarthy returns alone for the encore to play "Now You Are Free." Sanderson picks up an acoustic guitar and joins his bandmate up who sings "East Los Angeles" without a microphone. The crowd goes insane for the up-close-and-personal performance.

Things get electric again as Augustines play "a dancing song" in "Hold on to Anything," before finishing the evening with one of their best in "Book of James." The last song is a tribute to McCarthy's brother James who took his own life after struggling for many years with schizophrenia. "And here lies my green eyes/Rolled back in my head but they're alive/And all the words can all get spoken/ Just know we tried/And you're forgiven."

Thank you, Augustines, for a fucking brilliant kick off into 2014!

Venue: The Troubadour
Website: weareaugustines.com

Date: February 11, 2014
City: West Hollywood, CA



Rob Allen



Billy McCarthy



Eric Sanderson

LIVE & LOUD
Live Show Reviews Cont'd

We Were Promised Jetpacks

Photos by Nicolas Bates
Written by Dan Sinclair

Before the main event ever takes place at the world famous El Rey Theatre, this writer can already tell he's in for quite a treat. After all, it's a sold-out show here for Edinburgh, Scotland's own We Were Promised Jetpacks. But on top of that, an angry dude is escorted out of the building while an even drunker woman laughs after falling by the bar. I hope nobody promised either of them jetpacks.

Before long the Scottish lads get the show started. Darren Lackie's steady-pumping drum beat is the first sound heard after the loud cheers from the crowd, joined by Sean Smith's smooth bass line. Shortly thereafter the whole gang's in on the fun with Michael Palmer on guitar, Stuart McGachan manning both keyboards and guitar and lead singer/guitar man Adam Thompson standing front and center. And this mounting symphony of feedback-heavy harmony is not only the beginning, it's a microcosm of what the band does best.

We Were Promised Jetpacks (WWJP) are one of those joys to see live. Much like Augustines (this month's previous RUKUS show at the Troubadour), WWJP add an amazing element to their sound playing live that just simply cannot be captured on record. Though they will certainly try it with their new live album *E Rey: Live in Philadelphia*. There's a certain passion and love for what they do that comes through when these guys play their instruments and sing their lungs out in front of dedicated fans that many bands just cannot duplicate.

Soon after the introductory song, Thompson sings, "If I was a writer/I'd write my opinions/Save them for later/Just to see how wrong I could be." It's "Human Error" off of *In the Pit of the Stomach*, which the true fans in the audience recognize instantly and start to sing along. Even the drunk people here just for the party can't help but dance to the catchy beat.

And just to keep things going, the next song is "Quiet Little Voices," and the whole place erupts as it seems to be everyone in the El Rey's favorite song in the world. And why shouldn't it be? It's an amazing poppy, punky bit of rock and roll that makes you sing along and tap your foot even if you don't know the words and can't dance. Seriously, if you don't like this song, you probably lead a very miserable life and hate yourself—and that's a fact. The best part of seeing the live version of "Quiet Little Voices" is watching Michael Palmer patiently wait, standing still until the chorus comes and he attacks his guitar as if it killed his family. Fucking intense!

Next up WWJP plays "Peace Sign" and "Wee Guy" before Thompson says to the happy crowd, "We're We Were Promised Jetpacks and we're from Scotland. Thanks for coming out." It's at this point where the writer ponders what would happen if all bands were from Scotland? Well, then all vocals would sound awesome, that's what would happen. Because aside from that unique sound that's somewhere between Sonic Youth and Fat Cat label buddies/fellow Scots Frightened Rabbit, it's that deeply emotional voice of the lead singer that really allows WWJP to stand apart from all others in the music world.


"Roll Up Your Sleeves," "Sore Thumb," "Boy in the Backseat," "Ships with Holes Will Sink," "Keeping Warm," "Pocket Vomit"... every song starts with a mounting, bonding beginning and finishes with a big wow as if each one could possibly be the one the band likes to play most.

But it's the final song of the set, "It's Thunder and It's Lightning," that stands tall as the highlight of the night. It's the epitome of the kind of song that's just so much better live than what you can hear on a studio album. As the song builds, you can practically hear the hearts pounding inside each and every audience member ready to explode for Thompson to belt out, "Your body was black and blue!" It's not as much a song as a life moment no true music fan in attendance will forget.

Just think: if more bands were promised jetpacks, more bands would be amazing live.

Venue: El Rey Theatre
Website: wewerepromisedjetpacks.com


Date: February 21, 2014
City: Los Angeles, CA

A photograph of a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt, playing a drum set. He has a focused and intense expression, with his mouth open as if shouting or singing. A large cymbal is in the foreground, partially obscuring his face.

Darren Lackie

A photograph of a man with wavy brown hair, wearing a blue t-shirt with white polka dots, playing a dark electric guitar. He is singing into a microphone, with his mouth wide open. The background is dark with blue stage lighting.


Adam Thompson

A photograph of a young man with short brown hair, wearing a maroon t-shirt, playing a light-colored bass guitar. He is looking off to the side with a neutral expression. The background is dark with blue lighting.

Sean Smith

A photograph of a man with a beard and long brown hair, wearing a red and black plaid shirt over a grey t-shirt with a graphic. He is playing a dark electric guitar and looking upwards. The background is dark with blue lighting.

Michael Palmer

A photograph of a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a red, white, and blue striped t-shirt, playing a light-colored electric guitar. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark with blue lighting.

Stuart McGachan

Phantogram

Photos by Nicolas Bates
Written by Dan Sinclair

Your humble writer never realized how shady he looked until asked by several fans how much he was selling tickets for while standing outside the Palladium. One desperate, dedicated Phantogram fan offered to buy my drinks for the night in exchange for getting her on "the list." Oh, you poor girl. You have no idea just how little clout this sad writer has. He couldn't get on a grocery list.

Not sure if she ever got in or not, but Adrian Grenier sure did. Vinny Chase and his lady friend hurried past me to the VIP section upstairs. Didn't see any entoures though.

The show starts with the very moody, psychedelic "Intro" as Sarah Barthel takes her spot by keyboards and Josh Carter picks up his guitar. The duo is joined by drummer Chris Carhart and Nick Shelestak, who plays a few instruments including keyboard. The different colored lights start to dance and the writer is reminded just how on-point the sights and sounds are for an electronic show here at the Palladium.

Barthel sings and plays the tambourine over a steady drum beat for "Nothing but Trouble" as Carter continues to whale out his psychedelic guitar riffs. Much of the dance floor slowly starts to sway back and forth, gradually coming to the realization that the show has finally started.

A drum beat starts, then suddenly stops. Then it comes in again for "Running from the Cops." Barthel loses her black jacket, revealing a tiny, partially see-through black tube top to match her tight-fitting black leather pants. She gives a few sexy "Oohs" before Carter takes over the vocals on this one. From where the writer stands, his clothing appears to much more loose-fitting than hers.

On "As Far as I Can See" both singers walk around on stage, both equally demonstrating their best musical talents, Carter on his guitar and Barthel with her vocal chords. The song ends to loud cheers from the crowd who have finally come to life.

Barthel is thrilled with the response. "Los Angeles, oh, shit! This is insane, how nice!" She then explains that Phantogram has a new album called Voices and tonight is the first stop on their very first world tour. They then go into "Black Out Days" and the place goes absolutely nuts. People jump up and down, pumping their hands in the air during the chorus.

Carter takes over vocals again for "Turning Into Stone" as Barthel gets down on her keyboard. It's quite fascinating how her awkward gyrations can look so passionate and sexy as she plays her keys.

Some drunk dude yells to another drunk dude, "I fucking love this band" during "Bad Dreams." Then they dance with some equally drunk ladies who are just as awful dancers as they are. But they're not alone as the majority of tonight's attendees lack the proper coordination to move with the tight beats and rhythms Phantogram kicks out loudly from the stage.

"Don't Move" and "The Day You Died" come next, then Barthel introduces a downer in "Bill Murray." She explains "Bill's a great actor, but this is a sad song."

During "I Don't Blame You" the guy next to me taps me on the shoulder. Though he's shouting, it comes out as a whisper over the bass and drums blaring from up front. He asks me if Carter is wearing a mask and then yells, "Fuck!" when I give him the bad news that Carter's face is bare.

All go crazy again for "Falling in Love." Barthel jokes, "I hear they play that song out here." She then explains that Carter actually wrote the beat for a long time prior in hopes that Jay-Z would someday rap over it. She adds, "Fuck no! Sorry, Jay-Z!"


Then the play "Howling at the Moon" before closing the set out with "When I'm Small." It's easily the best song of the night. Phantogram then leaves the stage without a word, as none are needed.

Coming out for the encore, an emphatic Barthel proclaims, "You're so beautiful, L.A. Every fucking time you bring it!" They then treat those who always bring it to "Mouthful of Diamonds," "Celebrating Nothing" and "Futuristic Casket."


And judging by the looks on the faces leaving the Palladium, it seems the world is in for a hell of a tour.

Venue: Hollywood Palladium
Website: phantogram.com

Date: February 22, 2014
City: Los Angeles, CA

A photograph of Sarah Barthel performing on stage. She is wearing a black sequined jacket over a black mesh crop top and a black belt with a large silver buckle and chain. She is singing into a microphone and has her right hand raised in a gesture. The background is dark with blue and purple stage lighting.

Sarah Barthel

A photograph of Josh Carter performing on stage. He is wearing a white button-down shirt and dark pants. He is playing a red electric guitar and singing into a microphone. His right hand is raised in a gesture. The background is dark with red and blue stage lighting.

Josh Carter

IT IS

Enjoy RUKUS on your iPad and iPhone!



RUKU

RUKUSmag.com

HERE

IS

20

QUESTIONS WITH
HIROMI



COMING UP

Models To Keep An Eye On

Tanya Love

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up & hair by Bioanca Robinson

T

anya Love hails from San Diego. She got started modeling after posting some images online that a friend took one day. As her other friends saw the photos, she started getting modeling offers including a promo gig at a club downtown. She was nineteen at the time and since it was a paying gig she accepted the offer. From there she got hooked up with one of the import car magazines and since has been featured in a variety of other magazines. You can also find Tanya at various car shows including; Sema, Spocom, Dub show and Extreme Auto Fest. In the future she would like to keep doing what she's been doing to get her name out there more than it is already.



COMING UP

Models To Keep An Eye On Cont'd





THE STATS

Birthday:
February 20

Zodiac Sign:
Pisces

Measurements:
36DD-27-36

Height:
5'7"

Weight:
140lb

Ethnicity:
Mexican

Hometown:
San Diego, CA

Turn Ons:
A guy who has good taste in music that's super sexy to me.

Turn Offs:
Bad hygiene.

Ideal first date:
Dinner, drinks and a nice walk on the beach.

Guilty Pleasure:
Chocolate, I always feel guilty after I eat chocolate, but it's so good. [laugh]

Pet Peeves:
When someone mocks me, it's really annoying.

Celebrity Pass:
Channing Tatum, he's so hot.

See more of Tanya at
[instagram.com/tanyalovexo_](https://www.instagram.com/tanyalovexo_)

GAME ON

The Latest Games Reviewed

Finally Over

Written by Jesse Seilhan

Another year, another Final Fantasy XIII game. There was a time in Square-Enix's history that each new FF game was considered an event, a singular moment in gaming that helped define that generation. But, like other stoic franchises such as Resident Evil and Mario, a need for money and a lack of originality have become commonplace and we now find ourselves with the third game in this modern trilogy. The first two titles came out to some controversial fanfare, as the first stripped out mostly everything fans loved about the series. The second added a few of those in, while also going full bore with time travel and an even more insane story. Cut to Lightning Returns and we now have a whole new set of systems, a time requirement, and a singular character for players to use. Yes, there are chocobos and crystals and weird clothes, but this is no Final Fantasy.

The story is as insane as any Final Fantasy game. You are taking up the reigns as Lightning, a character that "died" in this first game and has since become a bit of a harbinger of doom for God. Yes, that God. God has realized that the world is screwed and a new world is going to be created in its place. Anyone that wants on board has to go through Lightning, so your quests, both of the side and main variety, are built around you saving people's souls to get them over to this new world. God is going to destroy the world in six days, so you better hurry up. It's not just a suggestion, as there is a clock counting down to the end of the world ever present under your map. Everyday at 6am, you are transported back to The Ark, a place to reconvene with Hope (a character from the first, but luckily nowhere near as annoying) to see how well you did that day. If you worked hard enough and saved enough souls, you might extend the Rapture by a few days or even a whole week. The whole thing is kind of insane, heavy handed, and really doesn't make sense in the continuity of the trilogy, made even worse by the fact that Lightning is a flat and somewhat boring character to be stuck with for 40+ hours.

The best thing the XIII saga ever did was come up with a badass combat system. You battle enemies that have some sort of weak point, be it regular physical attacks or magic. Once the flaw is discovered, it must be used over and over until the enemy is "staggered," leaving them defenseless to the majority of your offense. Finding these weaknesses, exploiting them, and repeating is as enjoyable as any battle system made in years. It's the crux of this saga and only gets better with Lightning Returns, as you now have the ability to change job classes on the fly. This allows players to put together a string of attacks that follow one discipline, say black magic, and then instantly switch to a bruiser and dole out physical punishment without missing a beat.

I really enjoyed my time with this game, as it puts together a lot of the ideas the first FFXIII tried to accomplish. It's probably the best RPG I've played on a console in years, delivering a combat system and level of variety in its quests that is quite engaging. However, it pains me to see Square-Enix sticking with this somewhat boring character for three full games instead of iterating on the good parts of the first game and delivering a new experience. The insane story with God, the Rapture, murder mysteries, and wacky characters that feel mostly soulless are all keeping people from getting back on board with such a remarkable franchise. They have already shown off what the next generation of Final Fantasy has in store (with FFXIII coming to next-gen only), and it looks to be a vast improvement over this generation's stumbling trilogy.

Game Title: Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII

Producer: Square-Enix

Platform: Xbox 360, PS3

Website: lightningreturns.com

★★★★☆

Ratings: Teen

Genre: Role-Playing Game

Release Date: February 11, 2014



FINAL FANTASY XIII

FINAL FANTASY XIII-2



GAME ON

The Game Reviews CONT'D

THE LEGO MOVIE

Lego Maniac

Written by Josh Schilling

Whether you have played them or not, or whether you like them or not, the Lego videogame franchise is a dominate force in the industry. With over twenty titles in their pocket, they have enabled gamers to smash various colored bricks while playing as Jedi, pirates, wizards, superheroes, and scruffy-looking nerf herders. For the majority of their previous titles, developer TT Games has relied on interesting puzzles, slightly addictive gameplay combined with collectibles, and a humorous spin on an enormously popular movie franchise. With their newest entry The Lego Movie Videogame, the formula is generally the same, however the main story is derived from an original movie appropriately titled The Lego Movie.

The film introduces new characters to the Lego universe and brings back a few familiar ones as well. The story centers on Emmet, a blindly optimistic construction worker that ends up being the central figure on a quest to save the Lego world from the conniving Lord Business. The game directly follows the story and includes multiple clips from the movie as well. It continues the current trend of the Lego games by including voice acting, which is a definite plus as the truly random assortment of characters in the game are voiced excellently. You get to explore and fully experience the different Lego locales, and utilize the character's special abilities to uncover hidden collectibles, or to progress the story. The Lego Movie Videogame even introduces some new aspects to the franchise as well, including a small, piece matching mini-game that rewards quick thinking with heaps of studs.

What sets this Lego game apart from the others is the true out-of-left-field aspects that bombard the player. The characters vary wildly from the straight-laced workers in the early area, to the blind prophet Vetruius and free-spirited Wyldstyle. Then you get historical figures like Shakespeare, Lincoln and Michelangelo playing along with a small cast of DC superheroes including Superman, Wonder Woman and the integral Batman. But then it really gets bizarre with characters like Uni-kitty, Metalbeard, Panda Guy, El Macho Wrestler, The Green Ninja, and the awesomely determined antagonist Bad Cop. These characters should give you a glimpse of what you could expect from this game. A great deal of the humor you experience comes from quick, unexpected sources, and it will keep you on your toes as you wait for the next comedic blindside.

Now I know that the main story of the game mirrors the movie, and you should probably see the film before playing the game, what I enjoyed most about the overall experience was the story. It is incredibly poignant, interesting and unexpected, while remaining appealing to young and old alike. The game is of course more immersive as you get to spend more time in the numerous locales while experiencing nuances that can't be caught in the brief time you have to watch a movie. The game does include co-op, so you can run around, discover new characters, smash thousands of bricks and collect millions of studs with a second player by your side. While the main story is somewhat short, and the replay aspect is limited, there are still many, many hours of game time waiting for the determined player that wants to uncover every secret and collectible that is scattered throughout the worlds. As with the previous Lego titles, completing the main story is only half the fun.

I have played way too many of the Lego games, yet I still had a lot of fun with The Lego Movie Videogame. Instead of reliving a well-known movie, I was treated to an homage to the Lego videogame history, along with a fantastic story that pelted me with shiny studs of comedy and action. I have now become a full-fledged disciple of the Lego franchise, and now truly look forward to the next installment from TT Games. According to their track record, a new Lego game should probably be out next Tuesday.

Game Title: The Lego Movie Videogame

Producer: Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment

Platform: Xbox One, PS4, Xbox 360, PS3, PC, Wii U, 3DS, PS Vita

Website: videogames.lego.com

★★★★★

Ratings: E 10+

Genre: Action-Adventure

Release Date: February 7, 2014



Digital subscriptions at
RUKUS
MAG.COM