

The National Rifle

Hugh vocals/guitar **Lynna** keyboard/percussion/vocals **Jeremiah** bass/vocals **Buddy** drums/vocals

In 2008, the four Philly kids in **THE NATIONAL RIFLE** released an EP full of such spirited punk vitriol and smart pop acumen that folks on both sides of the DIY divide were grinning in delight. Pop Matters praised the band's "bratty dexterity," while Skyscraper noted that "The National Rifle manage to stay on the right side of the hipster spectrum while still getting the asses shaking."

So what's a band in the **RIFLE's** position to do? Go for GREEN DAY pop-crossover heights? Or listen to the little punk-rock devil on its shoulder and do everything in its power to alienate the establishment?

It was a close fight, but the devil fights dirty, and in the end, **THE NATIONAL RIFLE** came close to tearing the whole sonic building down during the writing and recording of their newest offering, *Man Full of Trouble*. Still present are all of the hallmark signs that fans have come to expect of a **RIFLE** album: The indelible sing-along hooks, the artsy punk riot, the seamless amalgam of politically pocked, Philly-soul-infused rock and oddball punk. But for *Man Full of Trouble*, the foursome deconstruct their sound in a way that challenges, and maybe redefines, convention. The crystalline pop songs are smashed to pieces, melted down and reformed into something creaky, fierce and perfect in its own glaring, jangly imperfections.

"I always admire the bands that can pretty much do what they want creatively and maintain or even increase the excitement that people have for their band," says singer/guitarist Hugh. "That's a tall order in rock-and-roll history sense, but I'd be incredibly satisfied if I could have the type of career that I've seen in the past 10 years with bands like OF MONTREAL, SPOON, THE ARCADE FIRE, and ANIMAL COLLECTIVE."

"We're trying to show that we're not some 'one-style' punk rock band," adds keyboardist/percussionist Lynna. "Even though the first EP was a success and very popular, we want to show that there are other sides of the band that are even better." Ultimately, *Man Full of Trouble* manages to rival the slight-of-hand trickery of a latter-day WILCO or FLAMING LIPS album – in its mischief, its stylistic wanderlust and composition-through-decomposition, it ends up being as captivating and enamoring as its more straightforward, candy-coated predecessors.

While the band's 2008 album railed unflinchingly against the injustices and unfulfilled promises of post-9/11 America, *Man Full of Trouble* finds Hugh turning inwards to explore a weapon of mass destruction a little closer to the heart: love. "It's really about how we're controlled by love or how we use love to control others," he explains. "The album's title itself is from the name of the oldest surviving tavern building in Philadelphia. It made me think of almost this glorification of men as being rebels and troublemakers. I related to that idea with a sense of guilt where I felt like I really screwed up some people's lives because of the way I chose to deal with certain relationships. I think everyone can relate to that feeling where it seems like you're only creating trouble for those around you."

Even as **THE NATIONAL RIFLE's** world continues to expand, the band members are doing their damndest to keep a firm grip on their roots. They did it during an ill-fated stint under the same management group as Pink, who (pre-Lynna) tried to turn them into a boy-band. They did it while playing a series of sold-out shows in Philadelphia with their friend and fan Jackson Rathbone's (from the *Twilight* movies) band. And they'll continue, no matter how bright those spotlights get, to keep both feet planted in the world of sweaty basement shows, DIY ethics and feverish, faithful fans.



BLACK LODGE PUBLICITY

www.blacklodgepr.com • Jeff Breil – jeffb@blacklodgepr.com • Jeff Royer – jeffr@blacklodgepr.com