

Curiosity bridged the gap

Concert Preview

Power pop trio plays Lincoln

By SEAN MCCARTHY
Assignment Reporter

When guitarist Jon Ginoli misheard a newscast six years ago, a band name was born.

Chris Freeman, lead singer and bassist of the power pop band Pansy Division, said Ginoli was watching footage of the Gulf War when he heard "Panzer Division." The Panzer Division was a German army unit in WWII.

"Jon misread it, but we thought it would be a really cool name for a band," Freeman said.

Tonight, Pansy Division will play at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St., along with Fagatron and Chris Becerra.

Ginoli and Freeman met up in 1991 after Ginoli placed an ad in the San Francisco Weekly looking for "queer musicians into Ramones, Buzzcocks and early Beatles."

Pansy Division was signed to Lookout! records and released its first album, "Undressed," in 1993. The band quickly made a name for itself on Lookout! Within a year, it opened for Lookout!'s most famous band, Green Day.

"Opening for Green Day was a great experience for us," Freeman said. "We thought we did a good job."

However, not all was well during the Green Day tour. Most of the people in the audience looked like Guns N' Roses fans with haircuts, Freeman said. Still, Pansy Division managed to win some fans over.

"We were watching a certain number of people flip us off and a smaller number of people flipping them off," Freeman said.

Playing in an arena was a childhood dream for Freeman. However, the lack



PANSY DIVISION (from left, Chris Freeman, Jon Ginoli and Luis) plays Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St., tonight with Fagatron and Chris Becerra. PHOTO COURTESY OF PANSY DIVISION

of intimacy did affect the way the band performed.

"The first person in front of you is 20 feet away," Freeman said.

On the road

Pansy Division has played more than 500 shows and toured in 11 countries since they formed in 1991. Australia, Spain, Italy and England were some of the more receptive countries. Amsterdam was memorable just because the band got to sample some of the hash bars there, Freeman said.

Perhaps the strangest experiences the band encountered were when it toured the Czech Republic, he said. Just outside of a small town in the republic, the band was pulled over by the police and ordered to pay a fine on the spot.

The troubles didn't stop there,

though. When they finally got to performing, they were surrounded by some very intimidating fans.

"We thought we were going to get torn apart," Freeman said.

By the time they played their fifth song, the band wound up stripping. Soon after, the audience members started stripping to their skivvies. Freeman said not to expect a repeat performance of the one-time strip act for this tour.

"I told our performance manager that was soooo last year. We're over that gimmick," Freeman said.

Aside from vowing to keep its clothes on, Pansy Division underwent some other changes earlier this year. Patrick Goodwin was hired as a second guitarist and the band also hired Luis, the new drummer.

"It feels like a completely different band," Freeman said. "It feels like some-

thing we can go forward with."

Are you curious?

Pansy Division released "More Lovin' From Our Oven" in August. The album is a semiretrospective look at the band's six-year history. The album includes some rare songs as well as new material.

Some of the songs were recorded with producer Steve Albini, who produced PJ Harvey's "Rid of Me" and Nirvana's "In Utero."

"The guy's a recording genius," Freeman said. "He's great with microphones."

The band is expected to record with Albini and release a new album in January.

Until then, the band plans to tour through December. Tuesday marks the second time the band has played at

Duffy's. The first time was in summer 1995.

"We got a decent turnout then; we'll see if it improves this time," Freeman said.

Though Pansy Division sings about homosexual experiences, Freeman said he did not want the band to be known as gay activists.

"We're (for) human rights, not gay rights," Freeman said.

Freeman said that curiosity was an element that brought in fans to see Pansy Division's live shows. Playing in smaller venues does have setbacks though, Freeman said.

"Some audiences in a bar are very apathetic; they don't move," Freeman said. "We want to get a rise out of people."

Tonight's show starts at 9:30 and costs \$4.

'Gattaca' lacks gene for entertainment

By GERRY BELTZ
Film Critic

Movie Review

To call "Gattaca" boring would be akin to calling the recent weather "annoying."

In the tradition of films such as "THX-1138" and "Logan's Run," "Gattaca" sets up a futuristic society where people can be genetically engineered, shaped and formed in any way their parents desire. The choices

range from gender and eye color to the ability to erase all feelings of racism and inequality.

(Apparently, this also means that perfect people have no emotion whatsoever, because I've been served fish dinners that had more personality than these people did.)

But Vincent Freeman (Ethan

Hawke) wasn't born through this process, and it shows. His physique is less than ideal, his vision is pathetic and he has a heart condition; all add up to his being labeled "In-Valid" — these genetic letdowns are destined to be stuck with jobs such as janitors, police officers and student loan collectors.

However, Vincent has great spirit, and he wants to achieve his dream of traveling in the stars. He works through less-than-legal channels and

obtains a partnership with Eugene (Jude Law), a "Valid" who has been crippled because of an accident, but is willing to sell his genetic material to Vincent to help him achieve his goal.

The ruse does work. Vincent passes his "interview" (i.e., a urine test) at Gattaca, a space control center, and thus comes closer and closer to flying amid the stars. Along with this, he starts a relationship with Irene (Uma Thurman), whose minor heart defect will keep her from space travel.

However, the requisite cinematic monkey wrench is thrown in when a brutal murder is committed at Gattaca, and one of Vincent's eyelashes is picked up at the murder scene.

Naturally, Vincent has nothing to do with the crime, but as the eyelash is identified as belonging to an "In-Valid," the wheels of justice are swift.

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