

buzz

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**Let's
Get
Channel!**

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MUSIC

Phanus Phallus offers phearlessly phoul brand of pholk

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*"Paducah is the ***hole of the Midwest*

*There's a great big ring of brown crust from east to west
And if you stay here long you're sure to catch the smell*

Going to Paducah is just like going to hell.

Paducah and Eureka are just alike: they both suck

*Prostitutes, Paducah, are one and the same: they're both ****ed."*

—from "Puke O'Paducah," by Phanus Phallus Phobias

For better or worse, that's just a taste of the level of lyric discourse at work in "Greatest Sh!ts," a recently released compilation of 27 years' worth of twisted tracks by the folk/joke band Phanus Phallus Phobias.

The CD opens with a sub-woofer-rattling belch and closes in self-deprecating style with a flushing toilet. In between is a truly scattered collection of songs that few would dispute may be lewd, juvenile and outright repulsive.

But depending on your sense of humor, they could also qualify as irreverently clever, musically ambitious and funny.

While you might think such music might be made purely to get a rise out of people, Edmond resident and Phanus frontman Per Jensen said that in the decades he's been playing this music, the rise it gets isn't always the same.

"We've had a lot of interesting reactions so far," Jensen said. "Some hate it, some love it. Most love it. It's very funny. That's the whole point. It's just down-to-earth, basic in-your-face kind of music and that's what people like so much about it. That's why we love to do it."

There's also a very expressive aspect to the music, an articulation (no matter how crude) of simmering anger, disenfranchised socio-political outrage, and other such subjects you might not expect from a



DREW HARMON/The Edmond Sun

Per Jensen pairs words with mandolin music that the instrument has probably never been paired with before.

band whose songs include "There's a Stranger in My Butt."

Jensen says the band's work can almost be encapsulated by Peter Finch's famous performance as a disgruntled anchor in the 1976 film "Network," and his impassioned plea to the world, "I want you to go to the window, open it, stick your head out and yell, 'I'm as mad

worked very hard. They could go out and do some basic shipping and suddenly, they didn't have much money and had to be careful how they live for the rest of the week."

Then there are the political targets that read like a Who's Who of Tonight Show monologue staples from the last few decades: Ted Kennedy, Dan Quayle, Strom Thurmond,

often completely different than what they do.

"It's sort of like bacon and eggs. Salt and pepper. Politics and corruption. It's just a part of what we all live with every day."

Political outrage isn't the only thing that makes a good target for Phanus. Pete Rose, Jose Canseco and Ricky Henderson are inducted into "The ***hole Hall of Fame" right alongside Donald Trump, Lee Iacocca and Adolf Hitler, who they say "redefined the word ***hole."

Even the band's name is an expression of anger, one echoed in the lyrics at the top of this article.

"We're from a small town in western Kentucky and in the mid-'70s, there was something about good old boys and long-haired rock and rollers that really didn't get along," Jensen explains. "In that part of the world, live music was 95 percent country and that was why it was very difficult (for us) to work as a band. There was this attitude toward us that perhaps we were fa**ots. I hate

to use that word, but we were known as long-haired hippie fa**ots among these people. So Phanus Phallus Phobias to me has been a laugh or a joke against the people we had to exist with, so to speak."

It might come as no surprise to learn that Per Jensen, like the other three members of Phanus, is not using his real name. What is likely to come as a shock is that the pseudonym is not intended to protect those individuals from blame, but from credit.

"We do that because one of the things that all of us have learned at one time or another is that there's this ego problem, not just with musicians but artists in general," Jensen explains. "They have these inflated perspectives of themselves. And we always hated that, so we always used different names so that we wouldn't be able to say 'I, 'me' or 'mine.' It is the entire band's effort."

That handily plays into the band's big payoff, which isn't the fame and fortune that might come from public adulation and individual notoriety, but merely the reaction of an audience.

"The best thing about it and the whole point of it is laughs," Jensen says, "to see people with those smiles on their faces. They know that it's rude, but in a way it's almost a respect for us having the bravery to even do it. That smile on the face, that's the whole key to entertainment, period."

*"Suppositories are lots of fun
I love to masturbate with
sandpaper gloves*

*And I love to wear her panties
for weeks*

*Ooo, I want to know if she can
gargle with dirt*

*I'm pulling down the pants of
life*

I know it, I love it, I'm glad."
—from "Pants," by Phanus Phallus Phobias

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Phanus Phallus Phobias

"Greatest Sh!ts"

Now available through www.MagellanMusic.com

as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!"

That attitude is reflected in politically minded tunes representing a range of values, like "Welfare Sluts" and the Alvin and the Chipmunks-like dirge "I Can't Afford to Puke."

"That one says a lot," Jensen remarks of the latter song. "You hear about the cost of living and the ridiculous prices ... I've known many people who didn't make very much money. They worked for a living. They

Richard Nixon.

Lesser besmirched politicians like Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter also get their fair share of abuse heaped on them, though Jensen admits it's sometimes more about what they do than who they are.

"Politics in general is just bad news," Jensen says. "It's a profession. It's a large industry and how people can make this their lifeblood is amazing to me. Most of these people I really don't trust. What they claim is