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BY VIJITH ASSAR
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Navel gazing King's X leave their mark

"PROGRESSIVE Rock" is an intriguing term. It describes the descendents of groups like Pink Floyd and Rush, a lineage that passes through King's X and Genesis on its way to purebred modern practitioners like Opeth and Porcupine Tree, and even into mainstream modern rock, exerting an influence on System Of A Down and the late Smashing Pumpkins.

If these artists seem like strange bedfellows, it's because the genre label only loosely defines its contents: these are bands looking to push the envelope in Rock and save it from 4/4 kick-snare-kick-kick-snare patterns. But beyond that, anything goes. They're defined more by their deviation from the norm than anything else—kind of like "Indie."

Speaking of which, hometown boys Navel must be thrilled about opening the show; bassist Drew Worsley says that King's X is the group that most singularly embodies the inspirations driving his band. We called King's X drummer Jerry Gaskill to ask him about all this.

The Hook: How does one ensure that a progressive rock band stays progressive over the course of 20 years?

Gaskill: I don't know, I never really considered a progressive band. I'm not even sure I know what that means.

The Hook: Okay, let's use a different word, then. How is "Ogre Tones" an... evolution of your previous work?

Gaskill: The biggest difference is that we had someone outside produce it, Michael Wagner. It was a total joy for all of us to let someone legendary be the producer, and just relax and be the artist. That was different. It's just a new progressive thing that we've done.

The Hook: In the song "Freedom," you call for both gay rights and freedom to join the KKK, since that would fall under freedom of expression. Do you feel like that's a risky stance to take?

Gaskill: I'm not speaking for Ty here. We are all free to do anything we want, but there are going to be consequences for anything we do. The easy thing is just blame it on God, when actually it's just us being stupid human beings. I'm not the one who wrote those lyrics, and I only have my own ideas about what's being said.

The Hook: "Ogre Tones" also contains a



few religious references, but most of them come across as dissatisfied. Is that cynicism intentional?

Gaskill: Dissatisfied with the world? With life? I didn't write those lyrics, Ty did. But I think there's a general sort of dissatisfaction that runs through all of us, even when we're content.

The Hook: You qualified both those answers because you didn't write the words; are your roles in the band pretty isolated and well-defined?

Gaskill: We don't really discuss the lyrics among ourselves. Throughout the years, we've just believed in each other. If it's something you have to say, we just go with it, unless it's something that we horribly disagree with.

The Hook: Who influenced you when you were younger?

Gaskill: When the Beatles came to America, everything to me became about them. Through them, I found Led Zeppelin, and John Bonham became a huge influence on me.

The Hook: What about collective influences for the whole band?

Gaskill: We all had totally different inspirations growing up. The only collective influence I can think of was a band called The Producers.

The Hook: So then what is it like for you to look at a band like Navel and realize that you've influenced the next generation of rock?

Gaskill: It's always an honor. Sometimes it's hard for me to understand, and it's hard for me to grasp that this is a reality for people. It happens literally everywhere we go, even with people we admire ourselves.

The Hook: What's the next, er, progression for your band to take?

Gaskill: I don't know yet. We're as curious as anyone. We're on the same evolutionary path as everyone else to find out what the heck we're gonna be.