



Andrew Town, David Prickett, JJ Westfall and Taylor King are Ummm Jr.
PHOTO/JOEY THYNE

Big noise

Ummm Jr.

At the beginning of the second song on Ummm Jr.'s new EP, frontman Taylor King screams. "When I grow up I'm gonna be a goddamn police officer!"

Ummm Jr.'s music is noisy and chaotic. "It comes down to more of an attitude," said guitarist David Prickett. "Fast. In your face. If that comes across as punk rock, then it's fucking punk rock."

Each member has a specific, important role. JJ Westfall, the drummer, is the wild card, a true salt-of-the-Earth punk with a purple mullet and tongue piercing. He looks at the ceiling when he talks to you. Prickett is the dad of the group. He often implores the other members to properly tune the instruments or wear a helmet when they skateboard. As a father of three children, he stepped away from music for awhile.

"Kids, marriage, divorce, remarriage, work, life," Prickett said. "I didn't really touch my guitar for three years."

Andrew Town, bassist, is the sweetheart. "I do what I'm told. Sometimes not very good, but I do it." They all hold on as their frontman, King, charges them into mayhem.

"Taylor is the Kurt Cobain," Westfall said.

This ragtag group of misfits, connected by the magic of Craigslist, released its EP *First Times* on Jan. 27. The bandmates recorded five songs in six hours with Ilya Arbatman.

Tracks like "Lawyers, Doctors, Dentists," "When I Grow Up," and "I'm Your Boss" express an anxiety toward conventional 9-to-5 jobs.

"Lyrics usually happen at work because I have a lot of time to think while I'm working," King said. "It's mostly blue collar irritation. ... I've never been to college. Never will go to college. Always worked mostly warehouse jobs, and I've had some harrowing bosses along the way. But they're also

a huge source of inspiration for me because I like to write from the point of view of what they're thinking."

The band draws influence from high-energy acts like Bad Brains, Beastie Boys and Pissed Jeans. But it seems the band is more defined by what its members don't listen to than what they do.

"I listen to everything that's not on the radio," Prickett said.

"I hate love songs," King said. "Anything that's about relationships or girls or feeling sorry for yourself, just really bugs the shit out of me."

Ummm Jr. has only played a handful of live shows, most recently on March 5 at the Holland Project. The bandmates' first gig was a Halloween show at a "crackhouse warehouse" for around 70 people.

King laments the nationwide crackdown on house shows, a staple of the DIY scene, after the Oakland Ghost Ship warehouse and artspace burned down in 2016. Otherwise, the group appreciate punk's evolution. They do not miss planning a DIY tour pre-internet through zines and postcards.

"Now you can just look up Eugene DIY shows on Facebook and you'll see 20 people, and you'll just message all of them," Westfall said.

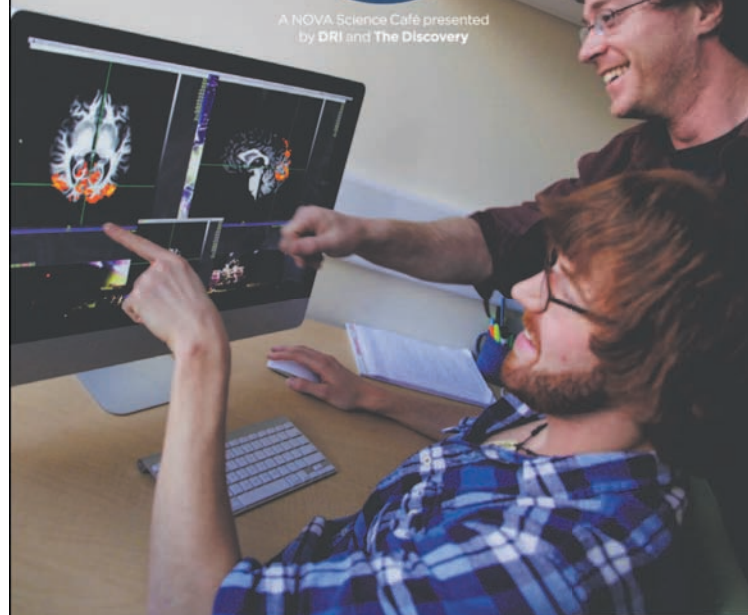
They do not miss the elitism and danger of '90s punk shows. "Whenever I hear old timey punkers romanticizing all that old violence, there's a part of me that thinks 'badass' and all that old teenager shit," Westfall said. "But that's actually pretty lame."

They also do not miss the early-2000s pop-punk explosion, featuring such "frat punk" bands as Blink-182 and All American Rejects. The bandmates think punk has reverted to its rightful home: the underground. □

Listen to Ummm Jr.'s music here: bit.ly/2TdHKYA.



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