

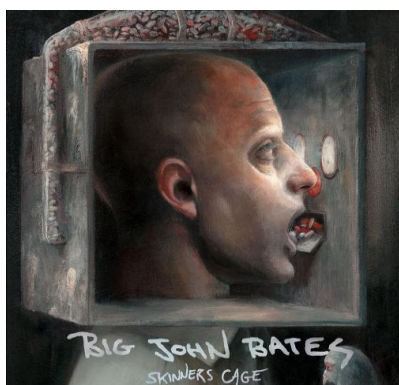
## BIG JOHN BATES: Noirchestra



No chance to stop Big John Bates! If you never had the chance to see this band on stage, you probably have already heard about their amazing live performance. They are a group that has succeeded in finding exciting ways to avoid the mainstream of - what we call - rock'n'roll. They throw "Post-Rock and Symphonic Punk into Americana Noir" to end up with the unique style of the "Big John Bates Noirchestra". In April 2019 they come along with a new album: "Skinners Cage"

The LP cover concept (an original oil painting from Santiago Caruso) reflects the band's vision of social media as a virtual Skinner's Box, a direct feed to the human brain. Starting the LP we find all of the modern Devils rampaging in this newest creation of Hell, while Broken English and cultural conflicts are reflected in Brandy's intense version of Broken English. Tragedy and horror culminate into Big John's lament for Halcyon days just out of reach.

The very careful selected cover songs also include the band's tribute to West Coast punk pioneers Dead Moon. Harrow is a mournful goodbye to a lost father while the title track is the epitaph and the epicenter of the album. Overcoming loss and loneliness is a golden thread running throughout the record and into a duet with Brandy Bones' creepy version of Kurt Weill's original with Big John invoking the darkness and RequiEmily exorcising wandering spirits with eclectic violin.



After working with Vancouver mixer Felix Fung on the 2017 video remix of Bitterroot, the Noirchestra was thrilled to have him breathe his expansive style into every groove on this LP. Drums, upright bass and electric violin were all recorded at Monkee Cage Studios on the waterfront in Wilhelmshaven / Germany with Pete Monkeeman behind the boards. Across the room Ty-Ty pounded his spirits into a drumset the band was gifted from legendary German band Trio. All other recorded on board of John's Boat the Caleuche in Vancouver/Canada.

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## ==Discography==

### Big John Bates:

2019: Skinners Cage (Rookie Records / LP+CD)  
2015: From the Bestiary to the Leathering Room (Rookie Records / LP+CD)  
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### SOUNDTRACKS

..... Devil's Fork (Crankenstein / Mystiki- 2009)  
..... Grilling Bobby Hicks (Voodoo Bar B-Q - 2008)  
..... Chainsaw Sally (Vampire Lezbos / Big Rails / Pure Evil / Take it Off / Whiplash - 2006)  
..... Russ Meyer Documentary - A&E / Discovery (Kitten with a Whip / Knockin' Bones - 2004)  
..... Hellbound.666 (I Got the Creeps - 2003)  
..... UFO Fever (Trailer Hitch - 2002)  
..... Core Culture / Extreme 16 MM - USA Network / FOX TV (Super Chrome Deluxe 2000)  
.....and a few more !

## ==Stuff Cool People Say==

*The mic stands were adorned with animal skulls. The vocal duo of Brandy and John was intricate, and they shared the duties well while the technical skill overall was incredible. Straight up, this was one of the best live sets I have ever seen. Every time something awesome happened, it would get one-upped by something even more insane. It was an "anything goes" show. Every second was a memorable moment, I dreamt about it that night. It was the definition of "putting on a show". Blew my face off with such a sick combination of gritty riffs, interesting vocal arrangements and stage presence.* - The Scene Magazine – Halifax Pop Explosion

*"Headless Fowl is cool indeed"* – Jello Biafra

*"A voodoo guitar player to watch"* - Total Guitar Magazine (London, UK)

*"One of Vancouver's most notorious musicians"* - The Globe & Mail (Toronto)

*"The devil is a Big John Bates groupie, that's for sure"* - SLUG Magazine (SLC)

*"A high-octane musical experience"* - Orange County Music Examiner (Long Beach)

*"Big John Bates is not only a band, they are an infectious lifestyle choice that needs to be absorbed by all of humankind."* - Twin Cities (Minneapolis)

*"Big John Bates has moved to dark roots rock as evidenced by their opening song "Amerkin", a track with a soul-shaking beat. And while the music may have changed, the intensity and fervour of this band's live performance has not. Bones shines in all her sultry, gothic temptress glory. She is the true master of her massive bass, using it as not only a tool to make music but as an instrument of seduction. "Taste the Barrel" showcased Bones' eerily whispery vocals, accompanied by Bates' banjo sounding guitar, giving the song a true dark country feel. Fans lined up outside didn't know what they were missing, and if they did, they were all the sadder for it."* - Music Examiner (Toronto)

*"Amerkin" could please the postrock crowd as much as the group's devoted fans. "Wide Open Blues" blends doom-wop piano plinks and down-South accordion runs into a jumped-up swamp stomp. Upright bassist Brandy Bones mans the mike on the back-porch ballad "Taste the Barrel", joining Bates to deliver the rootsy punk number "Fields on Fire". The latter's high point, however, isn't the sweet-versus-sour vocal interplay, but a scorching, off-the-rails solo."* – Georgia Straight (Vancouver)



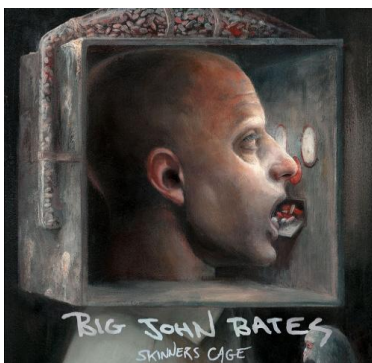
## BIG JOHN BATES *“The Big John Bates Noirchestra”*

**Big John Bates: Noirchestra**, aus Vancouver/Kanada, einer der spannendsten Live-Acts der westlichen Welt, haben auch nach unzähligen Tournéeen durch Kanada/USA, Europa und Japan immer wieder neue Überraschungen parat. Auf der aktuellen Tour wird das im April 2019 veröffentlichte Album **„Skinners Cage“** vorgestellt.

Anders als nur eine Sammlung von Songs, ist „Skinners Cage“ beinahe ein Album mit Konzept, Genre-übergreifend wird der Mainstream alternativer Rockmusik unterwandert und dabei einige unentdeckte Türen in den Gedanken- und Gehörgängen geöffnet. **„Post-Rock und Rock’n’Roll, Symphonic Punk und Americana Noir“** bekommen hier ein Stilvolles Facelifting verpasst. Die Band einzuordnen ist nicht einfach – sind sie doch von jeher eine eigene Klasse. Doch gerade diese musikalische Vielfalt und die fantastische Bühnenpräsenz werden besonders geschätzt.

**JOHN BATES**, Sänger und Gitarrist, teilt sich das Songwriting mit Bassistin **BRANDY BONES**, die auch einen großen Teil der Vocals übernimmt. Brandys oft akrobatischer Umgang mit ihrem riesigen Höfner Upright-Bass und ihre gesanglichen Qualitäten sorgen bei jeder Show für staunende Gesichter im Publikum. Angeheizt werden John und Brandy von Schlagzeuger **Ty-Ty**, der weiss, wie man faszinierende Rhythmen aus seinem Drumkit (ohne Hi-Hat) oder der riesigen Timpani zaubert. Abgerundet wird der Sound des „Noirchestras“ durch die wunderbare **RequEmily**, die aus ihrer Violine und diversen Effektpedalen auch gerne mal Cello- oder Theremin Sounds entlockt.

*“Our style of post-rock’n’roll is something we call Americana Noir. It’s created out of our love of post-rock violins, Nick Cave’s intensity, garage rock, Godspeed’s orchestration, upright bass and soulful vocal melodies. It only takes four of us to put on a dramatic, orchestral and energetic live show that will move you like no other group around.”* (John Bates)



### Das neue Album **„Skinners Cage“** erscheint am 12. April 2019 auf **Rookie Records**.

In der Formation Big John Bates' Noirchestra ist dies der dritte Longplayer des Quartetts, nachdem John Bates seit den 1980ern mehr als ein Dutzend weitere Alben in verschiedenen Band-Formationen veröffentlicht hat. U.a. als Gründungsmitglied der Trash-Metal Legende Anihilator, denen er als Songwriter immer noch zur Seite steht.

Der Name und das Artwork stehen symbolhaft für den musikalischen Kern von **„Skinners Cage“**. (Das Coverartwork zeigt die Vision von Social-Media in Form einer virtuellen Skinner-Box) Wie überwindet man Verlust und Einsamkeit? Mit diesen Fragen befassen sich Big John Bates in ihrer eigenständigen Mischung aus Post-Rock, Rock’n’Roll, Symphonic Punk und Americana Noir und verlangen Aufgeschlossenheit und Genre-übergreifendes Denken von ihren Hörer\*innen.

Im Album-Opener „**All The Devils**“ singt John Bates von den Teufeln einer modernen Welt, die in dieser neuen Art von Hölle toben. Eine typische Up-Tempo Rock'n'Roll Nummer à la Bates mit markantem Theremin-Sound, der an Science-Fiction-Filme der 1950er erinnert.

In der sehr dunklen, intensiven und gleichzeitig tanzbaren Version des Marianne Faithful Hits „**Broken English**“ erzählt Brandy Bones im Mid-Tempo von schwieriger Kommunikation und kulturellen Konflikten. Ein weiterer Cover-Song ist das von Brandy gesungene „**Dead Moon Night**“, eine vor Energie schäumende Hommage an die West-Coast Punk Legende Dead Moon.

Um Abschied geht es in „**Harrow**“, Abschied von einem Vater – schwer, tragisch und trotzdem aufrüttelnd. Hier treffen Einflüsse dunkler, traditioneller nordamerikanischer Musik und eine Nuance orchestraler Anleihen aus Ost-Europa aufeinander, die in Bates' charakteristischem Sound hochkochen.

Der Titelsong „**Skinners Cage**“ bildet das Epizentrum des gesamten Albums, der sich nach einem Morricone-verdächtigem Intro zu einem hypnotischen Gesamtwerk aufbaut. Im abschließenden Duett greifen John und Brandy die Beschäftigung mit Verlust und Einsamkeit noch einmal in einer düsteren und unheimlichen Version des Kurt Weill Klassikers „**Moon Of Alabama**“ auf.

„Skinners Cage“ prägt eine dunkle und schwere Atmosphäre und gleichzeitig sprüht dieses Album vor Energie, die jede\*r, der einmal selbst auf einem Big John Bates Konzert dabei war, von der Band kennt und auch auf Skinners Cage-Tour wiedererleben wird.

Drums, Bass und Violine wurden an der Norddeutschen Küste im Monkeecage Studio in Wilhelmshaven von Ralf Lübke aka Pete Monkeeman aufgenommen. Die Drums spielte Ty-Ty auf dem Equipment des legendären Trio-Schlagzeugers Peter Behrens ein. Gitarren und Gesang hat John auf seinem Boot in Vancouver, der „Caleuche“, aufgenommen. Abgemischt wurde Skinners Cage von Felix Fung, der bereits 2017 den Song „Bitterroot“ für das gleichnamige Video remixte.

## ==Discography==

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.....and a few more !

**Mehr Infos:** [www.bigjohnbates.com](http://www.bigjohnbates.com) + [www.trummerpromotion.de](http://www.trummerpromotion.de)

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**BIG JOHN BATES: Noirchestra** Interviewed by Konstantinos Pamfiliss / Last Day Deaf, April 2018

*Somewhere in Canada, there is a guy who mixes rustic punk, thrash metal, garage rock, americana noir and Southern gothic. His name is ...big! Actually, his name is Big John Bates. From the first note of any single, you'll find yourself moving your leg along with the rhythm, and after a while, you'll catch yourself dancing in a weird way! He is the guy who can take you off to his world, but he is not promising that he will bring you back, he is just Big John Bates.*

**Hello Big John! We see in your music you play styles like southern gothic, garage rock and Americana, etc. Could you tell us as the introductory question how do you describe your music?**

We have been calling our sound americana noir since **Brandy Bones** coined the phrase back in 2012. Around 2010 we were messing around with rustic punk but I think we've refined our songwriting since then and it is less of a verse chorus verse and more of a flow. Our drummer **Ty-Ty** came up with the concept of "what does the song want?" and, though Brandy and I create the song skeletons on our own, we have followed that idea pretty faithfully when we are fleshing things out as a group. Our topics are earthy and real, our settings are more rural than urban and our vision for the band follows the songs.



**Your music has had some alterations all these years, from B.J.B: Noirchestra Americana to B.J.B and the Voodoo Dollz psychobilly. Did it happen by chance, or was it something that you did on purpose, or is it just that you are getting older?**

**The Voodoo Dollz** group was all based around a show, like a psychobilly **Alice Cooper**. As time went on I noticed more burlesque in cities we had been playing for years and it didn't seem as special to keep doing it. Also Brandy had joined in 2009 and we began moving in a different direction with our songwriting. We wanted to do musical pieces that were more orchestral and deeper so we folded the Dollz in 2010 and started experimenting as a trio for a couple of years. By 2012 we felt it had taken on a new life but the **Big John Bates** name was well known so our management thought we should continue using a form of it. We began playing as a quartet, with tuba/keys, mandolin then cellists and now with a post-rock violinist (**RequiEmily**), but the Noirchestra was born from the string section. It's now actually closer to the metal I was playing when I was younger than psychobilly I think.

**From your first band Annihilator's thrash metal to Big John Bates garage rock and southern gothic etc. is a big step in regards to music style. Why did you choose to make your sound "lighter" than thrash metal?**

When I was in **Annihilator** I was listening to a lot of different music – I still do as I get a lot of inspiration from musical history. I was very involved in the early Annihilator songwriting; writing melodies and helping Jeff with arrangements and picking riffs for songs like '**Alison Hell**', '**I am In Command**', '**Welcome To Your Death**' etc. I was listening to a lot of heavy stuff like **Slayer**, **Venom**, **Metallica** and **Celtic Frost** so it just made sense. The later songs I co-wrote like '**King Of The Kill**' were more just writing lyrics over the music Jeff chose and he is generally not drawn to music as dark as I prefer (though he does continue to write some very tasty stuff.) Anyway that all led to a fascination with punk-esque bands like the **Dead Kennedys**, **The Cramps**, swing and early blues when I was deep into garage rock, so you can see the progression. Sometime in the 90's I stumbled across **16 Horsepower** and added a few of their ideas to my sound palate. Basically I don't really see our current sound as lighter – in some ways it's much heavier than it's ever been – but it's all different shades of black.

**Are there any groups that you liked and influenced your music as B.J.B.?**

These days I think Brandy and I are both influenced by more experimental and sound-scape groups like **Wovenhand**, **Russian Circles**, **Swans**, **Tarantella**, **Alcest**, some black metal and even some folk sounds like **The Decemberists**.

**'Amerkin' is a song that doesn't sound so familiar like the rest of your songs. It could easily be included in A Silver Mt. Zion or Fly Pan Am album. Can you tell us how this song came up?**

'**Amerkin**' is one of my favorite songs to play live – I wish it was 20 minutes long. Brandy came up with a bass riff and the idea of having a sort of **Godspeed You! Black Emperor** style build to it but we didn't have a lot of time to develop the song, we literally wrote it in the studio. I just tried to draw it out with a twangy guitar and a spaghetti western feel and build it into a simple chord change. But man, her screams are so epic – when I first heard them I was blown away.

**I see that you haven't made a lot of videos available on the net (I'm not talking about live ones, nor audio ones) but in these I've seen, you are trying to pass the atmosphere of your songs and you are doing that in a very cool way. Tell us if you are about to share more videos and what these videos will add to your music?**

So far we have done videos with friends of ours that are filmmakers with similar vision to ourselves (we did two with **Reverend Blackclaw** at **The Helm**) but we are always interested in adding sound to vision. We have our songs in a few movies and TV shows as well. Brandy tends to push us towards the vignette style of film as opposed to a standard story-boarded video as you can see from what we have on YouTube.

**Your latest lp ('From The Bestiary To The Leathering Room') got released 3 years ago, in 2015. Is this period of time long enough so that to wait soon for your next record? If so, can you provide us with some information?**

Brandy and I have slowly written over the past 3 years but we haven't wanted to rush anything as we wanted to make sure the direction was natural and we had time to find the right people to work with. We definitely took a few wrong turns before we found our way. The Bestiary LP has a few different drummers and people from different touring groups, which is cool as it had a lot of different feels but she and I had slightly different visions for it. The four of us currently in the Noirchestra have played together for a few years now and have toured Europe, North America and Japan – we even recorded some tracks in Kyoto with **Ultra Bide**. We are planning on recording most of the bed tracks for the next album in Wilhelmshaven (Germany) with our friends from **TRÜMMER** while we are on tour in July/August 2018. We will finish the album on board the Caleuche when we are back in Vancouver and I foresee the LP coming out in Spring 2019.

**I know that writing songs, singing and playing the guitar makes you an one man show. Which one do you think is the most important, the one you cannot stop doing?**

The one thing that I do without thinking is play my guitar. I have been playing since I was 15, though it wasn't long before I started singing and writing songs. I think I developed a somewhat unique style of playing but I always prefer to have a partner in songwriting, to bounce things off or get ideas from or whatever – Jeff in Annihilator, **sCare-online** in the Voodoo Dollz and Brandy in the Noirchestra have been the most important people to me.

**Nowadays we see that music industry but also society has changed a lot. When does a group get more famous now, through live shows, through videos, or through internet?**

I think bands have to give people something special, an experience or feeling, to get noticed and live is the best way to do that. I doubt anyone is really looking through most live bands looking for a hit – those are for pop groups and that is industry not artistry – a great live band has a sound and creates a unique atmosphere. Online playlists are great to find new things as well – I wish there were more of them for music like ours. Video is a terrific way to share music with people and the Internet is a good way to interact with people. I think you need all of these elements to succeed even in the most modest way.

**For the last question, I would like to tell us which albums of yours do you like most, and which are your favourite bands?**

My favourite record of ours is the '***Headless Fowl***' EP, maybe because it was the first one to see the light of day and signify the style change. It still feels very fresh to me and it was mixed by Robert Ferbrache, who worked with 16 Horsepower, Tarantella and our friend **Slim Cessna**. We kept our favorite first 6 songs for that record and released it on our own label. My favorite bands these days are the groups that put on intense live shows, **Nick Cave** for instance, **The Black Angels** are really good as well.

*Photo credits: David Jacklin*

**Konstantinos Pamfiliss**