

Mighty bUZZniks Biography.

If Dr Seuss started a rock band - this would be it!

The Mighty bUZZniks are taking the genre of children's music for the 4 to 10 year-old set and infusing it with an original and quirky melange of rock, country, folk and pop. The key to *The bUZZniks* infectious sound is the right mix of meaningful lyrics, rockin' grooves, an eclectic palette of instruments and vocals and a musical energy that connects with children instantly.

The Mighty bUZZniks have been recognized by Eloise Nolan, Head of ABC Publishing as "innovative and fresh and we feel they have the potential to become a unique and dynamic children's band that will provide a sophisticated musical style with great songs."

In the world of music for early primary school children, there is a distinct lack of music that is sophisticated and original. *The Mighty bUZZniks* fill that void. They are motivated by the need to challenge children with intelligent compositions, real instruments and thoughtful lyrics, rather than synthetic homogenous dance music.

Musicians Bios

Jamie Saxe - Composer/Vocals/Guitar/Programming/producer

Jamie has been composing creative film scores for film and television for 10 years and written music for award winning children's programs *The Wayne Manifesto* and *Fergus McPhail*. He composed, played and recorded with the seminal 90's indie band *The Ergot Derivative*, who performed memorably psychedelic gigs all over Australia for 8 years. *The Mighty bUZZniks* became an opportunity for him to apply his expertise in high-end music production and love of theatrical musical performance. He had been writing songs for kids since 2004 but decided the world needed a theatrical, live rock band for kids and founded the group in January 2007, determined to form a band that could thrill kids and bring families together to celebrate together through music.

Razz Mussen – Vocals/Percussion/ukulele

Razz has spent the last 15 years writing & playing a vast spectrum of music with gusto. It all began with A Cappella group *Nude Rain* who toured Australia for 6 years. Since then she has worked in music styles ranging from pop, rock, disco, alternative country and the infamous acoustic punk band *The Bedridden*. Last year she received *Music for the Future* funding for a demo recording for rock band *Cutty Sark*.

She is presently completing an Advanced Diploma in contemporary music. With a hugely

effervescent personality that kids are instantly mesmerized by, she is the perfect front person for *The Mighty bUZZniks* “I can’t imagine any music project that would give more job satisfaction or make me happier than to play excellent music for children.”

Carl Pannuzzo – Vocals/Percussion/Keyboard

Carl is an internationally touring performer and teacher of singing. He is best known from the unique A Cappella trio, Those Acapelicans and as singing drummer from roots-based improvisation band, *Checkerboard Lounge* - whose famed 7 year residency inspired the development of many great musicians and bands.

“Rather than making kids grow up too quickly with the expectations of the modern economic world, we encourage them to indulge in the growth of their senses, an arena still playful enough for them to be as they naturally are, without the pressure to be more.”

More about Carl can be found at www.carlpannuzzo.com.

Tao Kahn – Vocals/Bass/Guitar

Tao played with the *Ergot Derivative* initially as drummer, then as bass player. As a primary school teacher Tao has been composing and recording music with some very talented children. She started up a ‘*School of rock*’ that has grown to more than 40 budding musos. Tao’s rock group recently won Gold104FM ‘Rock ‘n’ Roll Primary’ competition, winning a recording session at The Music Factory.

“My pursuits of the past several years have combined music, kids and education. *The bUZZniks* continues this direction. I see how much the kids love this music and want to learn to play it. That’s the clincher for me.”

Philip McLeod – Vocals/Accordion/Mandolin/Bass

Philip is a multi-instrumentalist, performer and composer. He co-founded *Blue Grassy Knoll*, a group that performs original soundtracks to Buster Keaton films. They have toured everywhere; from New York Broadway season to Brazil and received five star reviews in Edinburgh. Recently he has returned from a North American European tour with the Spaghetti Western Orchestra and has also been playing cello with ARIA award winning vocalist *Missy Higgins* and double bass with Edinburgh favourites *Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen*. He composes for Nuevo Tango ensemble *Bellocq* and plays accordion in the club scene with Dub-Tango band *Tangazo*. He works regularly with Irish Cabaret singer *Camille O’Sullivan* and Russian criminal band *Vulgograd* and has been the resident musician for the Edinburgh and Melbourne seasons of the Famous Spiegeltent’s internationally acclaimed show *La Clique*. He has played on the recordings of many of Australia’s leading musicians and continues to perform and write music for dance and theatre productions.

Drew Caldwell - Drums/percussion

Drew played with The Ergot Derivative followed by a chain of indie Melbourne bands including; Sickbay and Disaster Plan. As a father of two youngsters, The Mighty bUZZniks has been an opportunity for him to play drums again, go on tour and bring the

whole family along. He is the resident 'Neon Cowboy' in the band and, with Tao, provides a solid rhythm section to this group.

Performance Summary

15 April 2007 Aztec Bar, Belgrave
28 April 2007 Wesley Ann, Northcote
6 July 2007 School Holiday Program, Organ Factory
29 July 2007 Emerald Winterfest
18 November 2007 The Famous Spiegelent
24 November 2007 Queenscliff Music Festival
25 November 2007 The Famous Spiegelent
2 December 2007 The Famous Spiegelent
8 December 2007 The Famous Spiegelent
31 December 2007 Federation Square World NYE Party
13, 14, 15, & 16 January 2008 BMW Edge Fed Square School Holiday Program
27 January 2008 Footscray Arts Festival
14 February 2008 St Kilda Festival
7/8/9 March 2008 Port Fairy Folk Festival
1 & 2 April 2008 Gasworks Theatre
17 & 19 April 2008 Alcoa Poppykettle Festival

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Musical Idea: *The Mighty bUZZniks* weave a range of musical genres and cultural influences into their music. Beginning with a tango inspired number *To Be a Bug*, the musical journey continues with a pumping hip hop song, flamenco, funk, country, indie rock and a Tom Waits inspired dirge about the dark.

Children have sophisticated ears and they relate to 'real' contemporary music and interesting rhythms. We take that premise and create surreal musical stories that are relevant to them. The content and humour seems to amuse parents as well.

In many cases, children's music is considered a choreographed dance routine to a backing track, where the colour, dance and zaniness is more important than the music. For *The bUZZniks* it's about bringing a broader language of music to children with a lyrical content that appeals to them.

Lyrics: The songwriter, Jamie Saxe draws from his own memories of childhood and his daily interaction with children as a father to find a unique language to speak to children and connect with what they are going through. The lyrics are based strongly on stories and humour, designed to evoke the imagination. Lessons are interwoven into these stories in an allegorical and non-preachy way. For instance, *Nighttime is the Daytime with the Lights Turned Out* is about helping children cope with their fears of the dark.

Some songs have strong emotional and social concepts told with quirky stories. For instance, *Cowboy Dan* helps children understand and accept difference. ie you can do things in your own way and be unique. *Katie and the Spider* helps teach empathy.

“But what if she saw what the spider sees? I may be small and hairy and I could go away. But just before you squish me hear what I have to say. I could live in your room and maybe you'd forget that spiders can seem creepy and I could be your pet.”

Other songs have an educational element. For Instance *ABC Rap* has kids learning the alphabet at a beat bopping speed. *Around my House* simply celebrates the many forms of life that exist in one's home and evokes an awareness of life all around us.

THE ALBUM: The Great Space Circus

'Really it is just a collection of songs that are designed to appeal to kids and for parents to be able to cope with hearing over and over then realise they too enjoy them.'

There are elements of the concept album in *The Great Space Circus* however. In the tradition of Sgt Peppers, we have a band that has evoked a mythical group for inspiration. Rather than a brass band from 'twenty years ago today', it is a group of alien bugs from another dimension that have asked these musicians to spread the word of music and to 'Be Mighty!'

There is a range of styles and stories throughout the album. There is the cut up circus organ pastiche of 'Around My House' referencing 'Mr Kite' for Mums and Dads that are Beatles fans and even the 'inner groove' hidden track at the end with a message from the alien buzzniks that fades into sounds of circus music from outer space.

Does this mean anything to kids of today? Well it is about creating a world of imagination. A world where the universe entwines with the everyday and they are invited to be themselves and Be Mighty.