



WHY SO SERIOUS?

BRISBANE POST-NOISE DUO AXXONN HAVE ALREADY GARNERED PRAISE FOR THEIR INTELLIGENT AND EGALITARIAN APPROACH TO CONSTRUCTION AND COMPOSITION. TOM HALL IMPRESSES UPON MATT O'NEILL, HOWEVER, THAT THE BAND ARE ABOUT SOMETHING MORE IMMEDIATE THAN IMPRESSING INTELLECTUALS

“At the end of the day – we’re just having a good time. I think that’s priority number one: having fun,” Hall explains of the band’s approaches. “Ian [Rogers] plays the laptop but I think some people get too focused on it. Why do you have to be a pretentious wanker about going out and playing live? Let’s just have fun and enjoy ourselves and help other people enjoy themselves. The only thing you need to be serious about is the sound. If you’re serious about your sound than people will be willing to respect you and I think that is the case with AxxOnn. Everyone knows Ian and I are fucking larrikins.”

Fun, popularly speaking, is given a relatively narrow definition within the musical spectrum. The concept is predominantly tied to wilfully disposable music (e.g. glitzy dance-pop) or purposefully unadventurous music styles (garage-rock, pop-punk et al) as opposed to any genres with a sense of artistry, progression and intellect. It’s an understandable misapprehension; fun is, in many ways, our most powerful link between responsible, considered maturity and youthful, mindless exuberance. It’s difficult to admit to oneself that music that appears thoughtful and experience could actually be fun – it’s like having to admit that you genuinely enjoy drinking coffee and reading the paper.

AxxOnn, however, serve as a fine reminder that maturity and intelligence needn’t be bland, boring and coffee-coloured – nor fun saccharine and mindless. A duo comprising composer, multimedia artist and musician Tom Hall (of psychedelic doom-mongers Secret Birds) and seasonal academic Ian Rogers (of blistering noise-rock outfit No Anchor and defunct indie-rockers Iron On), AxxOnn’s music is a cerebral blend of noise, ambient, metal, post-rock and contemporary composition that bathes its listeners with beautiful abrasion. Hall and Rogers as individuals, however, are ebullient, creative and playful and their seemingly-serious music does little to veil the pair of, as Hall so accurately terms it, “fucking larrikins.”

“It’s interesting – really, when I think about the aesthetic of AxxOnn, if I got up and told everyone what we used to make our music and how we perform live, I think we’d be written off even quicker,” Hall laughs. “But, you know, looking at the most recent promo photos of us with amps, Mötley Crüe shirts and smoke machines, people inevitably end up going, ‘I don’t have a fucking clue what this band sounds like!’ We could be really boring and just have shots of us with our laptops and our MIDI controllers but I think a lot of groups who work with laptops don’t really push the spectrum.”

It’s this dichotomy between anarchic, jocular subversion and intelligent, adventurous evolution that drives AxxOnn’s constant artistic development. The pair’s debut EP *Should You Fear Hell?*, released for free earlier this year, was accurately described as “a rainbow sawing through your cranium” while their debut “film-clip” for ‘The Second Death’ (from their forthcoming sophomore EP) was a freakish visual remix of AFL legend Mark Jackson’s film-clip for 1985 novelty hit ‘I’m An Individual’. The duo’s decision to tour Europe in the coming months, meanwhile – less than 18 months after AxxOnn formed – was driven equally by reckless abandon and careful ambition.

“It’s a combination of mine and Ian’s history,” Hall explains. “I’ve done a bunch of solo tours

overseas and Ian's work in Iron On has seen him tour overseas as well. We just wanted to play a big bunch of gigs and it's not possible to do this scale of touring in Australia. I'm sure it actually looks more significant than it actually is – it might sound a bit ludicrous and excessive but I really think playing out live is the only way for a band to really grow.”

WHO: AxxOnn

WHERE & WHEN: The Step Inn Friday Jul 10