

**DANGER
SHALLOW WATER**

RATTRAP BUMPKIN

★ PRESS KIT ★

RATTRAP BUMPKIN
MUSIC FOR ASPIRING PIRATES

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THE BAND:

★ **BIO:** Residing in the quaint little boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn, in the obscure city of New York, the members of RTB try to make a living and contribution to the world in the realms of construction, helping the blind, and economic statistics. Between the three of them, Bryan, Mike and Chris, MUSIC is the common ground (that and they all get each other's jokes, which is no small task). The unspoken agreement and goal is to make refreshing music incorporating their influences, which include forests, Tom Waits, good beer, beaches, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Violent Femmes, cigars, and the Pixies. In their latest recording efforts, they squatted in an abandoned house to lay down 7 tracks in 2 days. Two of those plus two previously recorded tracks are on the demo for your listening pleasure.

It's a fact that once the band hits the stage, they are a force. The only uncertainty is the mystery of the name which was bestowed upon them, which will remain exactly that... a mystery.

Born with a guitar in one hand and a pick in the other, Mike B. came out of the womb strumming a 6-string. There're no worries for this man because music is what he's gonna do and that's all there is to it. With never-ending lyrics, melodies, ideas, and visions, he scrambles to get it all down on paper, which would explain his handwriting and organizational skills. Influenced by country, blues, rock, and Joey Santiago's "guitars from mars" mentality, Mike B. strums to the beat of an eclectic drummer.

And that eclectic drummer would be Chris. Probably the most disciplined and learned of the band, he's always striving to learn new styles and techniques (some of which aren't even used in the band, he just wants them in his bank). With Danny Carey, of Tool, as his drum hero, you know he tries to raise the bar high every time he plays. The only thing he lacks is an onstage smile (but let it be known that the lack of smile is not due to a lack of fun being had - it's his immense focus while playing).

Last but not least, Bryan, the self-proclaimed Beethoven of Bass (emphasis on self-proclaimed), holds down the low end. Between the three, he takes the traditional role of the glue for the guitar and drums, yet on stage he is anything but the traditional "stay in the back" bassist. Taking cues from Flea, Kurt Cobain, and Tom Waits, he lets his fingers, body and energy fly leaving nothing for himself. The drums are the heartbeat, the guitar is the veins and blood flow, and Bryan and his bass are the backbone of the beast.



MICHAEL BENEDETTO

- ★ Vocals, lyrics, guitar
- ★ Far Rockaway, NY



BRYAN FRASER

- ★ Vocals, lyrics, bass
- ★ Queens, NY



CHRIS STANIS

- ★ Drums
- ★ New York, NY

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FACT SHEET:

- Over 30 original songs
- Cover songs (Bob Dylan, White Stripes, Pixies, Tom Waits, Amy Winehouse, Ramones, Elvis)
- Full-length album self-released in October
- Shows mentioned in Time Out New York, the Village Voice, Daily News, and FreeNYC.com
- Two page feature Interview with The Wave of Rockaway (12/19/08 issue, p.2;76 - attached)

★ GIG LIST:

- Mar. 6, 2009 : National Underground, NYC
- Feb. 28, 2009 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- Feb. 27, 2009 : The Underscore, NYC
- Feb. 6, 2009 : Otto's Shrunken Head, NYC
- Jan. 28, 2009 : Public Assembly, Brooklyn
- Jan. 10, 2009 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- Jan. 9, 2009 : National Underground, NYC
- Dec. 22, 2008 : Trash Bar, Brooklyn
- Dec. 20, 2008 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- Dec. 5, 2008 : Tap N Grill, Rockaway
- Nov. 28, 2008 : Connolly's Club 45, NYC
- Oct. 31, 2008 : Connolly's Club 45, NYC
- Oct. 18, 2008 : Desmond's Tavern, NYC
- Sept. 11, 2008 : Otto's Shrunken Head, NYC
- Aug. 23, 2008 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- July 18, 2008 : Red Star, Greenpoint, Brooklyn
- June 21, 2008 : Make Music NY, Rockaway Beach Boardwalk
- June 14, 2008 : Rockaway Skate Park, Rockaway
- June 6, 2008 : Connolly's Club 45, NYC
- May 24, 2008 : Connolly's Club 45, NYC
- May 3, 2008 : R Bar, NYC
- Apr. 18, 2008 : Connolly's Club 45, NYC
- Mar. 7, 2008 : R Bar, NYC
- Feb. 9, 2008 : Lobster House, Rockaway
- Dec. 21, 2007 : R Bar, NYC
- Dec. 20, 2007 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- Nov. 24, 2007 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- Nov. 1, 2007 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- Sept. 28, 2007 : R Bar, NYC
- Aug. 23, 2007 : Rockaway Artist Alliance
- July 13, 2007 : - The Underscore, NYC
- June 7, 2007 : Alphabet Lounge, New York City
- May 19, 2007 : Rock Star Bar, Brooklyn, NY
- Apr. 14 2007 : Hope Lounge, Brooklyn, NY
- Mar. 24 2007 : The Underscore, NYC
- Mar. 9 2007 : Siberia, NYC
- Feb. 3 2007 : Desmond's Tavern, NYC
- Jan. 5 2007 : The Underscore, NYC
- Dec. 21 2006 : R&R, NYC
- Oct. 23 2006 : *Acoustic* Pussycat Lounge
- Oct. 10 2006 : The Pussycat Lounge, NYC
- Sept. 29 2006 : Desmond's Tavern, NYC
- Aug. 19 2006 : CBGB's Lounge, NYC
- June 30 2006 : CBGB's Lounge, NYC
- May 11 2006 : The Hook, Brooklyn, NY
- Apr. 14 2006 : The Hook, Brooklyn, NY
- Feb. 25 2006 : The Hook, Brooklyn, NY
- Jan. 6 2006 : The Pussycat Lounge, NYC
- Nov. 22 2005 : The Continental, NYC
- Nov. 5 2005 : CBGB's Gallery, NYC
- Oct. 3 2005 : CBGB's Main Stage, NYC
- Sept. 28 2005 : CBGB's Lounge, NYC
- Sept. 7 2005 : Don Hill's, NYC
- Aug. 28 2005 : Continental, NYC
- Aug. 2 2005 : Continental, NYC
- July 22 2005 : CBGB's Lounge, NYC
- June 25 2005 : The Red Zone, Queens
- May 1 2005 : SKaTe BLoCK PaRTY, Queens
- Mar. 25 2005 : The Red Zone, Queens
- Feb. 19 2005 : CBGB's Lounge, NYC

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PRESS:

Rattrap Captures The Local Music Scene

By Michelle Romano

The guitarist for the local band Rattrap Bumpkin, Mike Benedetto, 23, leans back in his swivel chair. From behind his black-rimmed Ray Bans, his eyes are tired. When speaking, his heavily New York-accented voice is low and his words are drawn out.

"I'm exhausted, sorry," he explains. "I haven't slept all weekend. I've been all over. I went out Friday for a show and just got back this morning. Today [early this morning] I was recording with a bunch of people from Rockaway."

Right now Benedetto and the band, comprising longtime friend Bryan Frasier on bass and his cousin Chris Stanis on drums, are hustling. Besides juggling everyday life and full-time jobs, Rattrap meets twice weekly at their recording space in Astoria to rehearse and are booking gigs two to three times a month. On top of that, the band must self promote.

After years of hard work, Rattrap just released their first self-titled album under their own label, "Make It Hurt."



Like many local bands that create for a love of music, the album's production was independently funded. The members paid for the CDs out of pocket, Benedetto recorded the tracks on his digital 16-track recorder, Stanis' girlfriend designed the CD jacket and the band and their friends collaborated on its promotion. Earlier this month, Rattrap assembled in native Rockaway to play a two-to-three-hour set at the Tap and Grill for an album release party.

"When we come to Rockaway we get

our Rockaway friends that don't take the train all the way out to the city most of the time," Benedetto says. "We get to hang out with a lot of people and have fun. It's just fun coming down here."

Benedetto, who is also embarking on a solo career, would classify his acoustic solo work as folk. But he is unsure how to describe the band's music. After some deliberation, Benedetto chooses "garage rock" as a suitable genre and

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Rattrap Captures

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adds that a lot of people have called their style "pirate music." He says "everything and everyone" has influenced their style. They're big fans of musicians like Tom Waits, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and The Doors.

Rockaway Artists Alliance (RAA) Board of Directors member Tommy Burke has his own opinion of Rattrap's style. The band mates are members of the RAA and Burke has watched them perform and grow as musicians.

"The music is very much its own," he says. "There's nobody out there that sounds like them."

The passion is there. Benedetto says he and the band are all about music. When they're not working or playing, they're going to shows. In fact, Benedetto struggles to recall what Frasier and Stanis — whom he's known since high school — do for work.

Benedetto, who wears a guitar pin on the collar of his jacket, took 60 credits at Kingsborough Community College, all in music, and worked as a music recorder before he was laid off. Now, he focuses on his career, booking gigs and making music. To make ends meet, he takes side jobs painting houses and working construction. His black jeans and skate sneakers are splattered with white paint.

"What I'm doing now is playing music full time," he says. "That is my job, trying to book as many shows as I can. It's hard to play the bills, you gotta hustle."

Rattrap Bumpkin, whose name was inspired by Frasier's old pet python and Benedetto's fondness for the word "bumpkin" as indicative of a small town, is one of the many bands that comprise the growing Rockaway music scene.

Fostering the movement is the RAA. They have open-mike nights every Thursday in Fort Tilden's sTudio 7 building for musicians to come practice, perform and hang out. And it's growing in popularity. The program was only scheduled for summer and retained its popularity well into the winter months. Burke says the RAA gets up to a dozen musicians on any given night and more than 100 musicians call themselves RAA members. At the open-mike program's inception, Burke recalls, only one band would perform every couple of Thursday nights.

"Now there is a music scene in Rockaway," Burke says. "It was always playing in bars, now there's an element of playing for people who want to hear music [as opposed] to playing in bars and playing over people not listening to you."

Besides their open-mike nights, the RAA also lends equipment and instruments to musicians, and holds larger-scale live-music nights, such as their solstice parties. Saturday, December 20 is the Winter Solstice Music Event, at which 12 bands will perform. Indicative of how the music scene has grown, there will be 15 musicians playing didgeridoo.

Breezy Point summer resident Kieran Duffy Goodman says she likes listening to the artists at the RAA.

"I enjoy the shows at the RAA much more than at the local bars," she says. "They are a lot more relaxed and the atmosphere is usually a lot calmer and cooler, friendlier. There is a different vibe and group of people, also."

Burke says the music, especially that of Rattrap, has a distinct sound he calls "Rockaway Blues." He holds responsible the beach lifestyle and the close proximity to the ocean.

"These are all surfers and lifeguards in the neighborhood whose parents brought them down to the RAA and now they come on their own," Burke says.

Although Benedetto is from Broad Channel and Stanis is originally from New Jersey, Rattrap is a Rockaway band. It was born almost 10 years ago in the bungalows at Beach 101 Street, where Benedetto and Frasier 'messed around' with a bass and an acoustic guitar.

During the summer, Benedetto says the bungalows were filled with everyone's family hanging out, but after Labor Day, it was their "own personal playground." One of their songs, "Come and Go," is about Rockaway and mentions the bungalows at Beach 101 Street. When they were torn down, Rattrap was especially affected.

"It sucks," he says. "You don't even know what it was like. That was our place ... all our families, we grew up right in those places. It was great."

Rattrap has grown since their days in the bungalows. While they've just jumped a hurdle in their latest album release, they're not slowing and settling down anytime soon. Benedetto says he would like to play at the Siren Music Festival in Coney Island, even though getting on the program would be challenging. He also says he wants to go on tour around the U.S. with the band as an opening act for other musicians.

"For them I hope they do everything that they want to do," Burke says. "They absolutely can make it. With a little more time, and help from RAA and friends, they can be on the radio someday."

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