

# DAS BANDE



I wanted to create a zine about women's experiences with and in punk. Why punk might be a platform for the experience but isn't the only vehicle. How these might contribute to the music industry at large.

There was an honest attempt to avoid painting a diverse demographic with one broad stroke. People involved in the zine didn't necessarily share the same values, or want to manifest the exact same kind of change. There are some obvious and not so obvious complexities inherent to the topics touched on.

That hasn't limited any of the women interviewed here from finding cohesive ways of working together. Any ideas I had about punk, about the women involved, and how they see themselves were seriously challenged while putting this zine together.

Gena

# Jill Bain

Fraser Valley, BC – Guitarist & Vocals – *The Dishrags*

*Who are you?*

Currently Jill Bain, formerly Jade Blade (but my friends from the punk scene still call me Jade)

*What do you do?*

I'm now teaching Art History at a university, but the reason for the interview is what I DID, which was play guitar, sing, and write songs for the *Dishrags*, one of the earliest punk bands on the West Coast.

*When and how did you get involved with the punk scene? What originally attracted you to the music?*

The summer of 1976: my family drove down to Seattle (we lived in Victoria) and I bought the first Ramones album after having read a review of it (and it wasn't available in Canada yet). It was a total revelation and great source of inspiration- raw, fresh, primal, fun and DIY, like nothing I'd ever heard before. I had a band with two friends (the three of us eventually became the Dishrags), but before hearing the Ramones album we didn't have much of a sense of direction or purpose. Once we heard the Ramones, it was like "bingo": this is great, and this could be us! Another major factor in our early development was that my cousin, Chris Arnett, who lived in the "big city" (Vancouver), had also started a punk band, Vancouver's first, called the *Furies*, and he invited us to play with them at Vancouver's first punk gig, which happened on July 30, 1977. We put together a set of mainly cover songs; I think we only had one or two original songs at that point. So I guess the Ramones and the Furies were responsible for getting us started, combined with our desire to escape from our conservative rural community on the outskirts of Victoria, which at the time was a pretty stifling place for three fifteen-year-old girls with rebellious instincts...

*How has your relationship with the punk scene changed since you were a teenager?*

Pretty much entirely. We dropped out of school and moved to Vancouver when we were sixteen to be "full-time" punks, so we really grew up with the punk scene as our big, extended family. We were dead broke and fully committed to the music scene; our songs were about being disenfranchised, disenfranchised teenagers who didn't fit anywhere else. Now I work full-time and have a husband, two kids, a house and a car—all of those predictable, middle-class things I used to make fun of in my songs, so, yes, the relationship is quite different now! I'm still committed to the ideals of that early punk scene, but I can't pretend to be engaged in the same way. It's very odd, as we've done a few reunion gigs recently (one in Vancouver and three in Japan), and it's difficult at age 48 to sing some of the songs that I wrote when I was 16, as I'm clearly not in that place anymore.

*Punk and hardcore are often labeled as male-dominated subcultures. Would you describe contemporary punk as gender-inclusive?*

It's difficult to say from my vantage point outside of the contemporary scene, but it is more-so now than it once was, although punk and all other pop music genres are still male-dominated. While there are plenty of female singers around, it is still sadly rare to find all that many female instrumentalists, even in so-called "women's" tours, like Lilith Fair.

*For you, has punk subculture been about individualism, or a group and collective experience? Or a balance of both?*

Both, and both are important. Bands in the Vancouver scene were very much based on strong individual personalities, but the collective experience was what made it all work and what really drove the scene. The feeling that we were all in it together, with the collective purpose of changing the world through music. And while I don't know that we changed the world, we did change the world of music and in doing so made the world a better place by promoting creativity and originality in popular music. Before punk, bars were places you went to hear bands play "Top 40" covers; now the vast majority of music listings feature bands that are playing original music, and I think that punk was definitely the catalyst for this change. And music, in my opinion, has been better in quality and less elitist since the advent of punk.

*Has the internet and digital technology changed the way you produce the work you do?*

I haven't been involved in music production since my last band, *Volumizer*, dissolved around 2002, so I would say no, except that what I used to produce is now much more accessible.

*Do you feel that making/doing creative work within a punk context has served as a springboard to larger projects that have reached a broader audience?*

More personally, yes, as punk has informed and influenced everything I do.



amy leigh



Jax

# Juls Generic

St. John's, NF - Vocalist - *Margaret Thrasher*

I'm Juls Generic. I'm 26 and I live in St. John's, Newfoundland but I am from the Vancouver/Fraser Valley area. If people know who I am, it's usually because I sang in a band called *Margaret Thrasher* but also maybe from doing vocals in *Totally Stoked* or *Rumours*.

I play a lot of guitar (in two new bands: I play guitar and sing in a pop-punk band and play guitar in a hardcore punk band) and I just started putting on shows in St. John's after a show-break for two years. I work out twice daily in order to fulfill my goal of being able to do push-ups during breakdowns. I'm part of a community bike shop collective. I write a column for *Maximum Rock 'n Roll* and reviews for *Give Me Back* (post-Heartattack). I also work full-time as a child & youth care worker.

I watched a lot of Much Music at my friend's house in grade six, which I wasn't allowed to do at home because of my extreme Pentecostal upbringing. I thought The Sign by Ace Of Base was catchy, and I liked it, but something about Basket Case by Green Day had me bouncing off the walls and super intrigued. Everyone in my class liked Green Day, but got over it by the time we switched to junior high. I got made fun of about the Green Day posters in my locker. I eventually obtained the Dookie tape and I knew that one day, I must move to Oakland. I didn't move to Oakland and probably won't, but I now know that Oakland (although I have been there and like it) was more of a concept of growing up and being with my people.

I started doing shows when I was 16 after I was invited to be part of a youth arts council. There was a room I could use for free and I was stoked! I started my own punk house in Vancouver when I was 18 and had shows there monthly, sometimes weekly, for years. I've moved, but the house is still there.

I still hate sleazy creeps and deal with them around. I still feel shy as fuck. I still prefer dubbed tapes, live shows, and bootleg t-shirts over throwing all my money into a record collection (although I do like records too, but I move too often to sustain that shit). I still put on shows, although my music taste, posters, and concept of strategic line-up have evolved a lot. I still feel like a lot of people respect me because of all the hard work I do, but there's a whole group of people in punk/hardcore who will never talk about bands with me because I'm a girl.

It seems like girls in hardcore always have the same roles: zines, photography, show promotion, and sometimes bass-playing. It's a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Each city I go to is different.

though, in the amount of lady-involvement. For me, it is really important to feel like girls are taken seriously in music-playing where I live. I don't like feeling like I have to try extra hard to not be a shitty-girl-musician stereotype, especially where we all play a pretty rudimentary, sloppy style of music anyways. A shitty dude guitarist doesn't promote a stereotype that all dudes suck at guitar, you know? I don't want to be a token, like the one girl who plays music and holds her own. I would never be the only girl in a band; for this reason, I am really into playing up a different kind of tokenism. Whenever I start a band, I embark on girl-recruitment. Even if it means an extra few months in the basement practicing so someone can feel more comfortable on the drums or on the mic, it's worth it to me to live within a community of raging ladies.

In 2004/2005, when I took advantage of a lot of paid-positions for kids provided by the government by way of local Vancouver artists and intellectuals, I was encouraged by many job counselors and mentors to turn my hard work and skills I had gained from the punk scene into a career. No thanks. Yes, I am good at booking tours. But do I want to be paid by some douche bags to book their uninspired band across the country? No. Do I want to be involved in a tour that needs to have nightly guarantees in order to pay the booking agent? No.

Once in awhile, I'll forget and try making punk a job. I once did zine workshops for little girls at a centre for home-schooled kids, but it was very weird having to make lesson plans with learning outcomes written in school-speak. I would much rather try to give relevant zines and band-recordings to young girls I know. I figured out how to make zines on my own-that's the simplicity of it. You don't need classes to make zines. If it strikes you, it strikes you, and that's the beauty of it: a whole genre of publication done for print-loving, passionate reasons.

I quit writing for the local weekly entertainment newspaper-every major city has one, right? My only qualification for getting hired was my Maximum Rock 'n Roll column. But I wasn't writing about punk or even music, really. I was doing arts events. I love writing, so it would be cool doing it for a job, right? No. I couldn't get the format down. I'd read my published articles and they would be rearranged to the point of being unrecognizable. The editors would pretty much rewrite my sentences. There would be misspelled words, put in by them. I think they were really frustrated with how much work they have to put into re-formatting them. I was sick of writing cute, concise sentences full of alliteration. Peace out! Peace out trying to commodify what I love doing.

I'm really stoked on making my living by working with kids waiting to be placed in foster homes. I spend three days a week with them, filling the adult role for them: making breakfast, taking them to doctor's appointment, changing diapers, arranging fun outings. I'm really good at it. I never expected that. It's hilarious.





*Candice Skullian*



Zoe Dodd

# Emily Kendy

Vancouver, BC – Editor – *Absolute Underground*

I write, mostly. I've self-published a book about a girl in the underground music scene of Vancouver. Completely fictional (*wink wink*). I also lend a hand to *Absolute Underground* magazine, writing and editing. I'm currently maintaining the website. I was also the production assistant on the *3 Inches of Blood* music video for "Battles and Brotherhood". Brilliant East Van director Rick Podd was the great creator behind the project.

Jim Carroll was a big [influence] when I was first getting really serious about writing. I loved how he could be extremely funny in a very real way with his stories, and then go and be incredibly creative and write really beautiful poetry. That's a full package writer, in my mind. I really loved that guy. I was sad to hear of his passing.

I have paid some dues at the Cobalt, which no longer exists in Vancouver sadly. I have always admired Wendy 13, and helped her clean that place up with the *Cobalt Volunteer Army*. I have a huge respect for the punk mentality and the idea of doing what you love regardless of how people perceive you.

I really see the word “punk” as more of a statement of beliefs; the idea that you do what you want to do and shout it out and be proud of who you are regardless of perceptions and opinions of others. I see it as something that transcends gender.

For Absolute Underground, technology has helped. Ira, the editor, launched AUTV, which is available for people to watch on YouTube, and the websites we use for the TV and magazine are tools to promote shows and events of those who advertise with us, our friends, bands we love. It's all just another way to get yourself out there and get heard and start communities based on interests.

Absolute Underground was a starting point where I honed skills and practiced the great art of interviewing. It was a great schooling to roll up my sleeves and write about bands that did what they loved regardless of money and fame, amongst murky back alleys and east side bars. It gave me a great perspective on my own creativity and toughened me up. Once you interview the Neo Nasties at the Astoria while Ashtray's bleeding from a self-inflicted wound and wearing a wig he stole after doing a body shot off of a transvestite hooker, you can pretty much do anything.



Sandy



*Siantense*

# Sandy Miranda

Toronto, ON - Bassist - *Fucked Up*

I am a thirty year old female, born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. I'm the bass player in a band called *Fucked Up*.

I started playing bass in 1996 when I was in grade 10. A couple of friends of mine wanted to form a band and needed a bass player, so I rented a bass for a month and taught myself how to play by listening to some of my favourite songs by the likes of Rancid and Green Day. A year later, I was kicked out of the band because I didn't fit the skate-punk image that my band mates wanted to personify. Four years after that, in 2001, I found myself playing again in a dingy rehearsal room in an industrial part of Toronto with Mike, Jonah, and Josh – all of whom I had known from going to shows in the latter part of my adolescent years.

Inspiration comes at me from all sides. My mom inspires me to be a better person; when I was young, bands like Bad Religion and Green Day inspired me to get into music; the world around me inspires me to capture pictures of it. It's kind of hard to say what inspires me because I don't really think about why I do the things I do: I just do them because they are fun and bring me some level of satisfaction.

I remember listening to "The Cause" by NOFX and thinking it was rippin'. To my amazement, that album still holds up to my ears. Eventually I started playing in a band with these friends, and it was great fun. What attracted to me was the speed and energy of the music, because all my life I was a hyper-active child. I learned about zines through punk, so because of my hyper-energy and enthusiasm, I decided to do a zine for a couple years. Looking back, it was one of the best things I could have done as a teenager.

I'm not an angry kid trying to change the world. Unfortunately, I have become more apathetic. I feel like there's nothing I can change, so I just focus on making my life the best it can be. I never really identified myself as a punk kid, ever. Never dressed the part, save for band t-shirts. I was just an odd girl with a lot of energy and an insatiable curiosity. As an adult, I'm still odd and very curious, but with less energy and fervour. I might be in a punk band, as I was when I was 16, but I'm not doing it to rebel: I'm doing it to bring pleasure, for myself and the kids that like our band. That sounds lame, but it's the truth.

Punk and hardcore are male-dominated, but I don't think it's that big of an issue. There isn't going to be a perfect balance of both men and women in all communities; certain things interest certain people for specific reasons that don't relate to people's sex. That said, I find that there are a ton of girls going to shows and performing nowadays, making punk and hardcore less male-dominated. I also find that I'm being asked the question of the male domination in punk and hardcore, so that's a sign things are shifting.

Punk brings together the people that feel alienated by greater society, people that have no interest in following the great trends of the day. You can be a unique weirdo in a group of other weirdos that are unique in a way different from you. What I like about punk is that it embraces the nerds, and in my mind, nerds are way cooler than cool kids.

Technology has always played a part in our music. The majority of our work has been recorded directly to computer and edited digitally simply because it is the cheapest and the easiest thing to do. Granted, recording to tape is a very romanticized notion, and it does good, too, but I can't fault something that makes my life easier. Technology is not the devil.

The first punk-related thing I did was help out a local punk label in the mid-90s called Raw Energy Records. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I wanted to do something, so I'd help the label at the office once in a while. Then I decided that I wanted to do radio, so I wrote an impassioned 5-page letter to Jeff Cohen, who hosted "Mods n Rockers" on CIUT 89.5 FM, asking him to let me go on. I ended up doing that radio show for four years, while doing a zine as well. And now, I've been in this band for nine years that has taken me around the world. It's kind of crazy, but I think all those steps I had taken as a teen, from the label, to the radio show, to the zine, has led me to be in this successful band. It makes me believe in manifestation: that with enough will and hard work and luck, you can create your own future.





Kausley



*Alanna + Alden*

# Catherine Roussel

Quebec City – Vocalist - *Striver*

My name is Catherine Roussel. I grew up in Rivière-du Loup (eastern Quebec) and now live in Quebec City. I do the vocals in the hardcore-punk band *Striver*, since 2007. We've recorded one E.P, one album and we are working on our second full length album. I'm also a sous-chef.

I have a family background that is all musicians; I was interested in every kind of music. When I grew up I found punk, grunge, metal music very attractive but I was the kind of teen that, sadly, didn't go out to gigs. At that time skate punk gigs happened at a local all ages venue. I had a friend who "screamed" in a band at a young age, and maybe I was inspired by what he was doing at the time, so I started to do some hardcore vocals at the age of 20.

I used to write songs when I was young and I was always down for any music project. A lot of kids listened to skate punk in my school. I kept my open-minded attitude towards music even though I had no access to information, radio or internet to learn more about it (staying in a small town didn't help for that I think). When I moved in Quebec City I started to really learn about the scene and more music.

The contemporary punk music must not be misogynous. In our era there is no reason to classify bands that way anymore. This is for those who enjoy it, and want to play it, girls or dudes or whatever. I don't like to be labelled by the fact that I'm female. More and more women, now, get involved in punk music and I'm happy that it is not that rare anymore. I think we just hesitate less to get involved and that is a good sign! I prefer to show off the latest tracks I've done, the lyrics I've written a lot more than my appearance.

Touring, recording, getting along with band mates, practising, facing the unknown and solving problems... all of that gave me tools that will help me for the future. Meeting people, learning about new bands, booking shows, just doing something for the scene is good for every punk fan. I love the ying and yang factor: I feel balanced in what I do. It's easy to contact promoters, promote your own gig, and share videos.

I'll always cherish the dream to perform in a country-folk project. With the experience I carry on each time I perform with *Striver*, I have learned to reach people and I think this is a must when you want to perform folk. You've got to deliver substance, not just a pretty package because if you are lacking it, this is fake and it shows quickly.



Gena



# Megan Speers

Toronto, ON – Visual Artist - *Wanderlust*

*Who are you?*

Megan Speers

*What do you do?*

I do a lot of stuff. By day I pack cookies at a vegan cookie factory. The rest of the time I make art, mostly. I 'wrote' a graphic novel that is getting published, *Wanderlust*, and I've recently started doing some drawings for *The Molotov Rag*, a Toronto anarchist quarterly. I also crochet, and make zines, among other things.

*Who or what are your influences?*

I'm influenced by day-to-day life and my best friends, as well as beer and good music.

*When and how did you get involved with the punk scene? What originally attracted you to the music?*

I started going to shows when I was around 14. My two best friends and I went to a \$2 locals show at a bar called Koolies and Cues in Sault Ste. Marie because this dude we knew was playing it. I had listened to punk rock before then but I had no idea that there were actual shows in the Sault until that point. I was attracted to the music because of the energy, power, and speed of it-- even more so when I went to my first show. I was in the pit from the get go.

*How has your relationship with the punk scene changed since you were a teenager?*

I definitely go to fewer shows these days. When I was a teenager I went to pretty much every single one, usually at least once a week, but these days I'm more into staying home and making stuff. I'm probably more into the politics of anarchism and socialism than when I was younger, too.

*Punk and hardcore are often labeled as male-dominated subcultures. Would you describe contemporary punk as gender-inclusive?*

I think it varies from place to place and scene to scene. I've been to metal shows where I was one of five women in the place (and the only one in the pit), and I've been to punk shows where the women nearly outnumbered the dudes. It's been my experience that on the whole there's a lot less hatred and hierarchy between genders in the punk scene than elsewhere, but there are also assholes everywhere, no matter where you look-- just maybe not as many in punk.

*For you, has punk subculture been about individualism, or a group/collective experience? Or a balance of both?*

Definitely a group experience. Everybody kind of has each other's backs, and nearly everyone has gone through similar experiences-- both as kids and as adults or teens. There is this amazing collective memory that people of the same subculture have. Everyone has gone to the same shows, knows the same folks, and was at the same parties. There is also this sense of communality; everyone shares their beer and their food, if they have it. That's an important part of what my book is about--the generosity and tightness of the community. I don't mean to say that punk isn't about individualism at all, most punks are very strong individuals, but the individualists together form a strong group.

*Has the internet and digital technology changed the way you produce the work you do?*

I use a little bit of digital technology with my art but only in the editing process, and even then it's pretty minimal. If I have an illustration and I can bump up the contrast and do some editing to make it look a bit sharper I will but I'm not too savvy with the new technology stuff.

The internet has also made it a lot easier to get your work out there to a broad audience, which is pretty awesome. I have a website and an Etsy shop, but am still trying to figure out the internet and its ways.

*Do you feel that making/doing creative work within a punk context has served as a springboard to larger projects that have reached a broader audience?*

Kind of. When I drew my graphic novel (which is based on my teenage years in the punk scene in the Sault), it was just a project that I really wanted to make. But then I found out that one of my professors from OCAD was putting together a series of similar work-- graphic novels without words done in old school print mediums-- for the small press publisher the Porcupine's Quill. When they saw my book they were into it and decided to publish it. I felt pretty great about the book even before they decided to publish it but it was great to see that the story appealed to more people than just myself and my friends. It's also opened doors to some other potential opportunities for after it is published. I'm interested to see where it will take me.



# Janick Varning

Montreal, QC – Founder – *The Katakombes*

My name is Janick. I'm from Montreal, Canada. I run an underground D.I.Y. venue called the *Katakombes*, organize an annual festival *A Varning from Montreal Festival* and 2011 is the 4<sup>th</sup> edition. I'm also trying to start a new band.

An inspiration for me is Chris Boarts-Larson, who has been involved for more than 20 years doing her fanzine *Slug and Lettuce*. I met her when I was 17 when I lived in NYC. It was more in a musical perspective that I discovered female influence. My main influence was and still is Amy Miret from Nausea. I remember the first time I heard her voice, I thought: "wow this girl can scream" and the lyrics were awesome! I knew I wanted to sing and be in a band myself. I discovered Sacrilege, and later Détente. These 3 women are my main influence in music.

The first time I heard punk music I was at my cousin's house. He was a bit older than me, and he had a lot of punk bands, mostly UK punk such as Exploited, Subhumans, Vice Squad, Crass, Conflict, Sex Pistols. I liked the roughness and rawness of the music. At the time I was very rebellious so it goes without saying that this music was the perfect match to my anger, deception with life, and how I was feeling at the time living in foster home.

I really got involved in the scene when I came back from Europe after living there for a year; I was 19. I thought the squats in Europe were great and wanted something that resembled these, in Montreal. Squats are not legal or tolerated in Canada, so we decide to start an all-ages artistic center with the same services and projects. A show space, info-shop, workshops (silk screening, photo, chain-mail), food bank. It was the first all-ages venue run by punks, for punks, in Montreal. It took 2 years to open the place, in 1998. It was controversial at the time. The residents, police and some organizations didn't want us downtown or anywhere. Luckily, we had support from some people working for the city, who thought it was urgent that we have our own space, create projects, and play shows instead of hanging out on the street. We ran *L'X Center* until 2004, when the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) bought the building and kicked us out. 2 years later we opened the Katakombes, an 18+ D.I.Y. punk/metal bar and venue right in the heart of downtown on St-Laurent Boulevard.

I've been in numerous bands, co-founded and run a couple of venues and booked numerous of shows, tours, and festivals. I co-founded an association to voice the opinions of small underground venues in Montreal called *APLAS*. I'm also at the board meetings of a couple of community organizations. I'm not as rebellious as I was, but more disgusted by everything that I know about this society, government, world. I have a better understanding about a lot of topics and issues that matter to me; like environment, government structures, resources, economy and social-cultural issues as well as different ways to deal with all of that.

It [punk] is a male-dominated subculture. But why? I've asked myself that a lot, being a woman in the punk scene for 20 years. I'm still not sure what the answer is! It might be fucked up for me to say [...] but I didn't meet a lot of women in my life that were really committed to the punk scene; they probably represent a quarter of the man's involvement. That maybe also explains why there's not a lot of woman playing in bands. The women that want to get involved and be recognized need to be strong, perseverant and able to deal with all the prejudices that comes with it. I think there are more and more women involved in the scene nowadays, than ever, which fills me with a lot of pride and happiness.

As for my personal experience as an organizer, I never really thought "Will they accept me, are they going to laugh at me? More like "will they take me seriously?"

I started my first band at 17 so I learned pretty young what team work represented. I also co-founded my first punk center/all ages venue (L'X center) at 19 and this was one of the greatest and toughest experience in my life, but one of the richest. I learned a lot about working with others and to make compromises and adjustments all along the way. But that collective experience also really enriched me as an individual.

Punk always was a precursors of ideas, changes, actions and trends. We are a mass critic movement. We denounce and take part in a lot of protests, direct actions and we say out loud what people dare to think. I've noticed that some organizations take note of our actions and adapt them to their respective problematic, which I think is great! Unfortunately we are never recognized for it, but that's part of living in an ungrateful, greedy, selfish and individualist society.

# Liz Worth

Toronto, ON – Author – *Treat Me Like Dirt*

*Who are you?*

Liz Worth.

*What do you do?*

I write. I'm the author of *Treat Me Like Dirt: An Oral History of Punk in Toronto and Beyond* (Bongo Beat Books) and a weird, experimental spooky punk story called *Eleven: Eleven* (Trainwreck Press).

*Who or what are your influences?*

Girls with smeared makeup, late nights, early mornings, Greyhound bus rides, industrial cities, hangovers, Kurt Cobain, Lydia Lunch, forests, walking alone, Kathy Acker, Daniel Jones, Chandra Mayor.

*When and how did you get involved with the punk scene? What originally attracted you to the music?*

I don't actually consider myself part of any scene, and there are a couple reasons for that. I like what I like. If I'm into a band or a type of music then listening to it is enough for me. I'm happy to go hang out at a show and don't feel a need to be anything more than a fan.

The work I've chosen-writing-means I have to be a bit of a loner. And although there is a social aspect to journalism because you have to be out and about and talk to a lot of people, you're often only talking to people for the time it takes to get a story done. When I was working on *Treat Me Like Dirt*, I rarely went out at all. I would show up at a bar, sit with my friends for an hour, feel guilty that I wasn't working instead, and head home. Writing is not a social activity.

What attracted me to punk music and its history was that it gave me a sense of freedom. In the later half of the '90s I was really into goth rock, but many people I knew who were into goth rock or industrial had these stupid rules: "If you don't have every CD single this band has put out you're a poser," or, "you can't like grunge if you like goth, and if you do you're a poser." Everything felt so rigid, and very classist. Kids who couldn't afford every single album could be easily written off. I'm not sure that this is an experience everyone has, but these are the rules I was finding myself up against. When you're a teenager, that peer pressure is everything. I was so sick of it. I found punk and right away it clicked with me that I didn't have to do anything I didn't want to do. I was so insecure before I got into punk that I never realized that I would like myself so much more if I just did what I felt was right, rather than what other people felt was right. Punk was very liberating that way and saved me from a lot of bad teenage angst.

*Punk and hardcore are often labeled as male-dominated subcultures. Would you describe contemporary punk as gender-inclusive?*

Women have found a place in punk. From early on there was Patti Smith and Debbie Harry, X-Ray Spex, The Slits, The Curse, The B-Girls, Exene Cervenka. There were a lot of women in the audience, a lot of women writing about and taking photographs of what was happening around them.

Hardcore is different. Although it derived from punk, the strong female presence didn't integrate itself into the hardcore movement. I interviewed Ian MacKaye from Minor Threat about this. He said that as the Washington hardcore scene attracted more violence, more women disappeared from the audience. They just stopped coming around. I think there's been a strong shift in hardcore, though, where more women are getting involved. Thanks to

bands like Walls of Jericho, Fucks The Facts, Kilbourne, Bloodlined Calligraphy, I Object, decent groundwork is being laid for women to keep carving out a space in hardcore.

*For you, has punk subculture been about individualism, or a group/collective experience? Or a balance of both?*

I think you need both. You need that group or collective mentality from the people who are starting bands, creating spaces, running zines, organizing distros. You need them connecting with each other to create the infrastructure for a scene. But individualism was really important to punk starting. It was individualism that gave punk its wide open mind where anything goes.

*Has the internet and digital technology changed the way you produce the work you do?*

It's changed the way I make zines. When I started making zines in 1996 I didn't have a computer, so I had to handwrite everything. I also had no idea how to contact anyone for an interview, so my zines were a lot more personal. When I finally got a computer, my zines got a lot neater and a lot more interesting because I could type them up and include other people's voices in there.

*Do you feel that making/doing creative work within a punk context has served as a springboard to larger projects that have reached a broader audience?*

***Treat Me Like Dirt*** has been generating a lot of interest from people who wouldn't usually read a music history about punk. I think that has to do with it being a character-driven story, and one that uncovers a lot of local history, too. So people who are interested in Toronto can read it, and people who are interested in other people's stories can get into it, too.

**Thank you to everyone who we interviewed...**

Jill Bain (Former Guitarist & Vocalist, *The Dishrags*)

Juls Generic (Vocalist, *Margaret Thrasher*)

Emily Kendy (Editor, *Absolute Underground*)

Sandy Miranda (Bassist, *Fucked Up*)

Catherine Roussel (Vocalist, *Striver*)

Megan Speers (Artist & Author, *Wanderlust*)

Janick Varning (Founder, *The Catacombes*)

Liz Worth (Author, *Treat Me Like Dirt*)

**...and to the portrait subjects**

Amy (*twelveohtwo zine distro*) // Jax // Candice // Zoe //

Alanna and Alden // Sienteuse (*The Sphinx*) // Kayley

**Portrait Drawings:**

Tara Bursey // <http://www.tarabursey.com>

**Cover art:**

Megan Speers // <http://www.meganspeers.com>

**Contact:**

Gena Meldazy // [gmeldazy@gmail.com](mailto:gmeldazy@gmail.com)

Tara Bursey // [cleanteen@hotmail.com](mailto:cleanteen@hotmail.com)