



Random Rules: The New Year

by **Josh Modell**
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The shuffler: Matt Kadane of The New Year, the not-too-active band born from the ashes of the great '90s sadcore outfit Bedhead. The New Year just released its second album, a self-titled set that once again features Kadane and his brother Bubba exploring the darker side of life via layered guitars and world-weary vocals. It's a sleeper, but an excellent one. The New Year is on tour now.

Griffin Technology, "iTrip"

Matt Kadane: I got this adapter so I could play this in the car, so it would transmit a signal to the car stereo. And what you do—I think it downloaded a bunch of different bandwidths on the radio station, and each one is five seconds long, and you let this thing play and you pause it in the middle. I don't even know if I'm explaining it well, but it doesn't work anymore anyway.

The A.V. Club: How old is this iPod?

MK: First generation. My wife bought this for me when they came out, so I guess this is six or seven years old.

AVC: That's ancient in iPod land.

MK: It's gigantic, it's bigger than computers are now. It probably weighs a pound, takes up a lot of room. And it gets really, really hot. I don't think it's safe.

The Velvet Underground, "White Light/White Heat"

MK: This is kind of the classics iPod. There's some stuff I put on here when I was still using this—I honestly haven't used this in a few years—but this does have some things I really like. This has everything on it that I put on there when I first got it. And when I first got it, I was thinking, "Okay, I need to have this ultimate sound machine." I like this record—I think I probably have listened to this record more in recent years than the other Velvet Underground records, and that may be because I didn't listen to it as much a long time ago. There were some songs on it I may have listened to a lot, like "Here She Comes Now." I really like this song in particular, the way it all comes in and everything's just sort of banging along. And it sounds terrible, I can't imagine a worse-sounding record, but it's the perfect sound for what they were doing.

AVC: You've never written a drug song, have you?

MK: I don't know if I've ever really written a song about a particular drug, but I've maybe thought of drugs while writing some songs, or thought about people on drugs. I've never written a drug song—and drug songs are pretty good. [The Stranglers'] "Golden Brown" is a great song. This is a good song. I don't know what else is a drug song... "Heroin" is not a bad song. Maybe I *should* write a drug song.

Wire, "Options R"

MK: Hold on, I have to remind myself which song this is. That's one of the more Firehose-y, Minutemen songs on this record. Very Mike Watt-sounding bass on that record. And something is really wrong with my iPod, because it's giving me a

little delta sign. I think this might be the end of my iPod. Well, this is a good way for it to go out. This is another classic record. I think I probably know *Chairs Missing* more, and I think I liked more songs on that record, but I do like the incredible brevity of a lot of songs on *Pink Flag*. It comes and goes so fast, and has such an immediate sound, like so much of that music that came out of England in the late '70s. The guitar sounds so good, and the drums sound so dry and driving.

AVC: Are you ever tempted to play that sort of thing at practice, just to shake off the longer, slower stuff?

MK: We used to do a cover of "Outdoor Miner," which is actually one of the more subdued Wire songs, I guess. So that maybe didn't really do what playing a Wire cover should have done. But you know, it was one of those songs that was incredibly fun to play, I think that's probably why so many other people have covered it. But we never really break out serious covers. In those few chances that we actually have to practice, or on those few occasions when we can fuck around while we're practicing, we play bits and pieces of Led Zeppelin songs or Van Halen songs or something. The thing we remember least. But we never really break out serious covers.

AVC: So you and Bubba are capable of shredding if you want to?

MK: I'm not, Bubba is. If the two of us are playing and we start doing that, it's because I'm playing drums and he's playing guitar. I can approximate John Bonham, I mean barely, and he can come closer to approximating Jimmy Page or Eddie Van Halen or whatever. But [The New Year's Chris] Brokaw can shred. Bubba and Brokaw can both actually shred, and Brokaw knows an incredible amount of Van Halen songs.

AVC: Are you guys still spread out all across the country?

MK: Yeah, Chris just moved to New York City, so he's no longer in Boston. I'm here, so I guess two of us are in New York State now. Bubba and Peter [Schmidt] are down in Texas and Mike [Donofrio] is in Vermont. We did just reduce it from four to three states, so that felt good, but we're still pretty spread out.

Yves Montand, "Flamenco De Paris"

MK: I think my wife may have put some songs on this thing. What do I think of Yves Montand? It's very flamenco-y.

AVC: Not something you'd probably listen to on your own?

MK: No. I have other French music on here that I like more. I have a Brigitte Bardot record on here that I like a lot. It's very romantic-sounding in the way that this is too—and this is probably not the most representative Yves Montand song, because so far, it's just a guy playing flamenco guitar. Something tells me that's not even Yves Montand himself. I think he was just one of those crooners, I don't know, he was an actor and a crooner. But I do like the way it sounds. I'm assuming this is from the '50s, because it has that immediate sound so many of those records have. With an incredible amount of tape noise.

Griffin Technology, "iTrip"

MK: This is one of my favorite bands. You know, by some law of averages, this is supposed to show up, because there's a song for every single place on the bandwidth. This is 88.1. It's one of my favorites.

T. Rex, "Monolith"

MK: I'm not a huge—when I think about the other music that was produced around the same time... I think T. Rex is my least favorite of that glam stuff. Which is not to say I don't like it. I like the sounds more than I like the substance of the songs. That really nasty-sounding guitar, that—I keep saying this, and maybe it's a reflection of what I put on this iPod—the immediateness of the way the drums sound is really pretty appealing. But I never felt like that band really achieved the transcendence that Roxy Music does on *Stranded* or *For Your Pleasure*, or Brian Eno does all the time, or Bowie does. So I'm not a huge T. Rex fan.

AVC: Do you still actively seek out new music and buy it, or have you gotten to that point where you're just buying a few records a year now?

MK: I got to that point, I guess, a while ago. This is shameful to admit, but I've probably been buying more guilty pleasures than records I might actually like. I've liked a couple of bands—I really, along with everybody, I liked those Deerhoof records a lot, and was following them pretty closely. I think I've been liking music sung by women more than music sung by men. I really like those first two Black Box Recorder records. Those are the last two records I bought. I shamefully bought a Shakira

record, just because I thought maybe it would be good. It was terrible, but I actually went into a store and bought that.

AVC: Full price?

MK: I was out of town, and yeah, I paid full price. I know. I don't know why I did it. I still can't figure out why. I think I just saw the cover and thought, "Maybe it's good." And there was one song that I really like. I've lost touch. I haven't wanted to lose touch. Whenever we play shows, somebody else in the band always has a bunch of new music, and I think I hear more stuff than any other time. And a lot of times, we play with bands who I really like. So I hear new music that way. I did decide at some point that I wouldn't spend my money on new records. And I don't even really know how to download it from the Internet, so that's not really an option.

Herbie Hancock, "You'll Know When You Get There"

MK: This is a song from his *Mwandishi* record. It's actually an incredible record. This is a 10-minute, 22-second song, and I think it's the shortest song on this crazy-ass record. This is from 1969 or 1970, from that era when Miles Davis made *In A Silent Way*, a record that Herbie Hancock played on, and it sounds a lot like that, but it's got much more of a '70s Afro-centric vibe. And it's really, really drawn-out. Lots of atmosphere, cymbal, and electric piano and everything.

AVC: How deeply do you get into jazz?

MK: Not very deeply. I started listening to this record because I heard it somewhere, and I thought, "That's a great record." And I knew—like the Miles Davis record I just mentioned, I knew what it sounded like. I didn't really like it enough to go out and find other things that sounded like it. I like jazz, I would never claim to know a lot about it, but I'm not one of these people who—I just sort of said I've given up buying rock records, but I didn't replace that habit with buying jazz records. I know a thousand times less about jazz than I do about rock.

Cannonball Adderley, "The Chant"

MK: Here's another jazz record. Again, this is one of those records I heard—this is from a live record, *Paris, 1960*. Just an amazing record, which I think has Cannonball Adderley and his brother Nate, but I'm not sure. It sounds like the theme to *The Bob Newhart Show*, super kind of safe, early-'60s jazz. But it has that swing that so much jazz from that era had, and it's instantly likeable. This is about as unrepresentative of my music tastes as anything could possibly be. I'm going to throw this iPod away.