

The Gay Blades are a rising “trash pop” band comprised of handsome, formerly pretentious rock-and-rollers who know how to play a vicious game of “would you rather.” What more do you need to know?

We caught up with the band’s guitarist and vocalist, Clark Westfield, so he could prep us on what kind of charm to expect from their show.

College Times: I saw on the band’s Twitter account that you guys were having a bit of a dilemma. You couldn’t decide if you’d rather eat a cup of finger nails or hair. Have you come to a decision?

Westfield: [Laughs] You know, that’s Mike Abiuso, our new keyboard player. He’s taking control of the Twitter at the moment. I don’t know. What did we say? Oh, actually, to clarify, it was a milkshake of hair or a cup of fingernails. I think everyone decided fingernails.

I’m sure you’re asked this all the time, but what’s the story behind the band name?

It’s a Lou Reed song called “Vicious.” In the song he goes “Hey, why don’t you swallow razorblades/ you must think I’m some sort of gay blade.” So, we thought this band, a New York duo, and Lou Reed being the godfather of rock and roll, it would be a nice homage, if you will.

You basically invented a new genre, or at least a new label for a genre. What is “trash pop”? That’s right. I think we did invent it. There’s probably not too many other bands calling themselves trash pop, but if they want to rally under our ban-

ner, the trash pop banner, they sure can.

How would you define the genre, then?

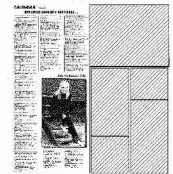
I guess it’s just like continuing the tradition of great pop songwriting. What we aspire to be is great [songwriters]. And then just playing with a little more indie rock, rock-and-roll, blues, trashy, sexy, sleazy swagger.

I saw that you’re writing a song for every stop on your tour. So, quick, what are the first things that pop into your head about Phoenix?

The song that I wrote for Phoenix I think is appropriate. It’s calling “Phoenix Rising,” which we should be releasing with the second group of the songs [December 2]. When we first started playing in The Gay Blades, before we had a deal or whatever, there was a radio station, 103.9 The Edge, and they starting playing some of our songs and brought us out to play their big festival. That was the first place where we ever got any legitimacy as a band, so the song I wrote was just about how Phoenix is always number one in our hearts because, even in New York, there’s so much competition, but it was like we had a home 3,000 miles away from New York City.

I tend to think your real name, James Dean Wells, is pretty badass. What’s the deal with the stage names? Why use them?

When we first started the band, we were in another band that was like a fun art project. Like, legitimately, an arts and crafts project. We just made this band up. We used to dress up and do all sorts of stuff. We just decided to have fake names and



bring a whole different level of theatrics. We used to not talk, which is a big difference from these days. I tend to run my mouth a lot. When we first started, we didn't speak at all. We had a character ... who would tell the story between the songs. It was pretty pretentious and ridiculous at the same time. Someone said it was between Radiohead and "Rocky Horror." But that eventually just got really tiring, to do that for every show. So then we were like "Let's just be a rock band," so that's the current incarnation of The Gay Blades.

What's the story behind your stage name, Clark Westfield, and your band mate Puppy Mills?

When I was right out of college, I worked at a promotion house and this cat called Andy said, "If you ever make a stage name, make it Clark Westfield." He was a funny guy. There was this exit on the New Jersey Parkway that's to two towns and one is called Westfield, so it just sounded like a great name. And Puppy Mills ... He was born with a small birthmark that looks like a symbol of an animal on the sole of his foot, so ... Puppy Mills.

What makes a Gay Blades show awesome?

It's a rock-and-roll revival, sister. We play really fast and really loud and we put our guts and stomachs and ballsacks ... we put as much as we possibly can into every show. We just want to put up an entertaining experience so people will put up money to come see us. And we're handsome! Oh my gosh. We're handsome and smart. We're the full package, really. [Laughs.]

The Gay Blades w/Gardening, Not Architecture, The Rogue, December 11, 8 p.m., \$8