



Seven lessons from seven years of The Midgetmen



The Midgetmen raise a glass to seven years, and manage to not spill it on themselves. Julie Zahn

By Erik Adams April 30, 2009

The members of The Midgetmen are quick to point out that in their seven years of playing together, they've outlasted several Austin clubs (The Back Room, The Vibe, Emo's Lounge), and sunk at least one magazine (the women's monthly *Jane*, which profiled singer-bassist Marc Perlman, drummer Justin Petro, and singer-guitarist Alex Victoria for a "Where the hell are all the hot guys?" piece in its March 2007 issue). In anticipation of the band's seventh anniversary show at the Mohawk, *Decider* asked Perlman, Petro, Victoria, and singer-guitarist Jon Loyens to share seven lessons they've learned in their time as Austin's hardest working, hardest drinking slop-punks.

1. People love free shit.

Marc Perlman: If you can't win friends and fans, just buy 'em.

Alex Victoria: As a joke once, we had free fried chicken at a show. There were people at that show who we had never met before scarfing down this disgusting, grocery store fried chicken. We met a guy at that show that put us on a compilation, and we played many shows with him.

MP: We do free everything—usually free beer. At worst we just tell our friends, "If you show up, we'll buy you the first round of drinks."

2. Making money is easy. Keeping it is hard.

MP: Our first show at Beerland, Alex just went up to Randall [Stockton, owner] and was like, "Dude, we've got to get fucking out of here. Do you have our money?" They had the cash register drawer at the door, and it was overflowing with singles. They were trying to figure out what to do with these handfuls of money, so they counted out, Alex left, and I got the money. We immediately took our \$300—this was the most money we've ever made at a show—walked over to Club DeVille, put it on the bar and were like, "Give it to us all in Lone Star!"

3. Home recording is killing music(ians' desire to pay for studio time).

Jon Loyens: Get a subscription to *Tape Op Magazine*. It's free. Anyone that's interested in recording should have a subscription. Learn how to do it yourself. You can make great recordings at home on whatever computer you have. Don't get all caught up in "my recording's going to be awesome, and I have to do it on tape in a studio." Because you know what? That guy recording you on tape, which costs an exorbitant amount of money per foot, really doesn't know your shit and doesn't give a shit about you.

MP: A lot of bands have self-importance or self-worth, so they're like, "It needs to sound professional." But you're *not* a professional band. Most bands aren't. We're not a professional band. If you can afford a \$10,000 studio, then hopefully you're also really good, or you're like The Black Crowes when they first formed, and they couldn't play their instruments, so they hired a bunch of guys to play for them in a \$10,000 studio.

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4. Coworkers = fanbase.

MP: Too many people are embarrassed about playing in a band to tell their coworkers about it. I know people in other bands who also work for tech companies, and I'd run into them in the elevator at my old job, and I'd be talking to them and their coworkers wouldn't know that they're in a band.

Justin Petro: And they're usually way better bands.

MP: Your coworkers are going to come pay \$5 to see you at least once for the novelty, but a lot of times those people might actually like you.

5. Leave the local food for the locals.

MP: People romanticize it: "When you go on tour, you eat at local places." It's really not like that. Most cities don't really have any cool places. Use your fucking phone and try and find a place in Wichita that's cool. When you ask the bartender, the bartender says, "I eat at fucking Applebee's every night."

6. Learn to camouflage.

AV: We just saw [Bruce] Springsteen, and he didn't leave the stage for two-and-a-half hours. Most 60-year-old men have to pee every five minutes. And there was a point where he just poured water over his legs. I think it's because he's pissing himself.

Jon Loyens: If you have to piss yourself onstage, just pour water or beer or something all over yourself first.

MP: [To Victoria] This is why *you're* always spilling beer on yourself.

7. Trenton, N.J. ain't nothin' to fuck wit'.

MP: They told us to park the van under a streetlight, because if you park between the streetlights, all of your windows will be smashed, and people will loot all of your shit. The bar itself was really nice. We played in the basement part of this bar, which was a dive, but the upstairs was an upscale lounge. But the bar owners were like, "If you go outside, don't wander more than two blocks in any direction."

JP: Fuckin' Jersey. I don't want to die in Jersey.

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