



**Out
There**

Don't touch that dial

The Big Rock Show offers a way to avoid the dreaded "drunk dial" during the holidays

It's 2:11am, you're out on the street, and looking for the next stop on an all-night bender. Your friends had the good sense to go home hours ago, and that bottle you kept buying drinks someone vanished into thin air. Instead of scrolling through your phone book and making a mistake you might regret in the morning, call the Big Rock Show's Drunk Dial Contest Hotline.

The contest is the brainchild of Scotty Iseri, frontman of the Big Rock Show, "The World's Smallest Stadium Concert." Joined by Tim the Roadie, Iseri performs songs on guitar like "Scotty Goes Home Alone Part 2 (Vaporish)" and "Laundromat Girl" at less-than-impeccable volumes.

The Drunk Dial Contest ends on New Year's Day (to capture all those year-end moments of desperation), and the three best messages will be posted on scottyiseri.com, where listeners can vote for the winner. The prize—a hip-hop or house track incorporating the winning message mixed by the Big Rock Show's DJ Japalicious—will be available for download and included on the B-side to TPRS' next single, "I'm Sorry, Mr. President (I Just Fucked Your Daughter)."

While the drunk-dial hotline might be most useful if you're tempted to call your ex, Iseri—the recipient of many a drunk dial—notes that there are many types.

The "Stinky Call" (which often



I JUST CALLED, TO SAY... Stop right there! Call the Drunk Dial Hotline for all your late-night emotional-release needs.

involves an ex) is, of course, the most popular. But then there are the more underrated drunk dials. Like the "Long Lost Connection," when a college roommate you haven't spoken to in years calls and leaves a rambling message. "I sometimes glean a little bit of information from these things like 'me and the wife' and I find out they're married now," he says. "[These are] like the Christmas newsletter of drunk dial." And then there are the calls where you can hardly understand what the person is saying or who it is. "It's slurry and they're saying words that are technically English but they're not making any sense, like, 'Hey, I'm taxicab and there's a man Kentucky Fried Chicken,'" he explains. "It's like the ESL of drunk dial."

Iseri—who both bows down to include the basic elements of the arena concert experience, i.e. confetti pyrotechnics, a tear-off suit and a "flame-throwing guitar"—says he's not out to save the world with the contest. "We're trying to protect our fans from themselves." —*Andee Zima*

E-mail drunkdial@scottyiseri.com to receive the Secret Drunk Dial Contest Hotline number. Catch the Big Rock Show at the Neo-Futurarium, 11553 W. Ashland Ave. at Foster Ave., 773.275.8295, for a hurricane-relief food-raiser on Wednesday 30 at 8pm.

**TIME OUT
CHICAGO**

**DECEMBER
2005**



The List

This week's Critic's Choices
and other good bets

By Martha Bayne martha@chicagoreader.com



CHICAGO READER

FREE BIRD!

After the American Theater Company's performance of *Kid-Simple*, **Scotty Iseri** takes the stage to perform his musical comedy, **The Big Rock Show**. With sidekick Tim the Roadie, Iseri pokes fun at arena-rock clichés with songs ("Dance Like a Cracker") and antics, like Tim the Roadie's efforts at "groupie procurement." | 10 PM | American Theater Company | 1909 W. Byron | 773-929-1031 | \$25 includes a ticket to *Kid-Simple*, which starts at 8 PM; \$6 for the musical only



CHICAGO
READER

MARCH 2005



BEST BETS

By Rebecca Palmore

...ing in favor of a fete that recognize booze as one of the four food groups. **Lo Lan's 2006 Two-Course Celebration Menu** includes an entree, an accompanying side and dessert for, yes, \$20.06. Opens 5:30 p.m. Through Jan. 19. 749 N. Clark St. 312-280-9100.

Cans-do attitude

Looking to trade in a slightly smaller pile of change for a cheap date out? Swing by Bucktown spot **Cans Bar and Canteen** and load up on \$4 vodka cocktails, \$6 martinis and a rotating \$5 dinner special while DJs spin. On the menu: meatball subs. Opens 4 p.m. No cover. 1640 N. Damen Ave. 773-227-2277.

FRI 1/6

Mock jock

We overdosed on sentimental rounds of singing "White Christmas" with the fam; now we want irreverence, shirtless men and flame-throwing guitars, dammit! With mere moments to spare before we lose it for good, **"Scotty Iseri and The Big Rock Show"** kicks off a four-week run at Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret. The award-winning "musical daredevil" and sidekick Tim the Roadie explore politics, celebrity and the realities of being single. Original songs include "Scotty Goes Home Alone" and "Band that Never Gets Laid." 10:30 p.m. Through Jan. 27. \$10 plus a two-drink minimum. 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-278-1830.



GROUPIES WANTED A rock star and his roadie lament the lack of swooning fans in "Scotty Iseri and The Big Rock Show," now on stage at Davenport's.

piled their brews and are ready to join the risks: Get schooled in bartending with a three-week **Discovery Center** course led by pro bartender Christopher Krause. Learn how to mix two dozen basic drinks and set up shop, plus practice proper pouring and presentation techniques. Best part: Final



CHICAGO SUN-TIMES



SPEAKING WITH
SCOTTY ISERI

Writer/composer/performer Scotty Iseri plans to blow the roof off of Davenport's with "The Big Rock Show." Iseri packs his performance piece with all of the lights and sounds of arena-style rock shows in a much more intimate venue.

The 26-year-old is perhaps better known as the silent performance artist L riders call "Paper Hat Guy"

for his public performances in which he quickly makes hats out of discarded newspapers and hands them out

to fellow train riders.

Here's what Iseri had to say:

Q. You've developed quite a reputation for riding the Brown and Red lines and passing out paper hats. How did that all come about?

A. People are always trying to apply some higher meaning to the Paper Hat Game. The truth is it came about one day on my way home from work because I was bored. I just made a paper hat and handed it to somebody. I kept making and handing out paper hats until everyone in the car had one.

**'THE BIG
ROCK SHOW'**

- 10:30 p.m. Fridays in January
 - Davenport's, 1383 N. Milwaukee
 - Tickets, \$10
 - (773) 278-1830
-

Q. There are rules, though, right?

A. After that first time, I got home and tried to figure it all out. I came up with the three rules of the Paper Hat Game. No. 1: You can't talk. No. 2: You can't force anyone to play — so no putting hats on drunks or people sleeping. And the third rule is, in the Paper Hat Game you always win.

Q. How many hats have you made?

A. Hundreds. I was doing it every day for a while.

Q. How does it tie into your show at Davenport's?

A. Well, it's not a marketing campaign for it or anything. Both are related. Both break out of the public's fear of things and what is generally acceptable behavior, and each in their own way challenges what it means to be the public in a public space.

Q. Tell us a little bit about "The Big Rock Show."

A. We play all original songs in what we're calling the world's smallest stadium rock concert. Everything you expect at a \$75-a-ticker stadium rock concert, you get with us. All the pyrotechnics and costume changes wrapped into a musical comedy theater piece.

Q. Is there any significance to the lightning bolt you paint on your bare chest?

A. I'm skinny and anything that can add some definition is welcomed. It's also about the larger-than-life-ness of rock 'n' roll. It's a little Ziggy Stardust. The music is still the music, but it helps to add some theatricality.

— Misha Davenport



DON'T MISS



The Big Rock Show

Cultural Madness Comedy Jam
(See Thu 26) The January lineup at this monthly stand-up showcase is particularly solid, with sets by TOC favorites Frank Townsend and Kumail.

The Big Rock Show
(See Fri 27) It's your last chance (at least for a while) to catch the lightning-boltingest rock parody around.

Chicago

Friday 27

★ *The Big Rock Show*

*Davenport's, 1383 N Milwaukee Ave at Wolcott Ave (773-278-1830). El: Blue to Division. Bus: 9, 56, 70. 10:30pm, \$10. Scotty Iseri's rock & roll parody might not be quite as sharp and well-observed as *Spinal Tap*, but the comedian puts on a fun, energetic show.*



CHICAGO FEATURE • FOOD • CALENDAR • THEATER

THE BIG ROCK SHOW

Mocking ridiculous rock isn't anything new—witness the enduring popularity of This Is Spinal Tap—because as long as there are bad bands, there will be good source material. Part concert and part sketch comedy, The Big Rock Show takes aim at the usual suspects—namely singer-songwriters, old-headed cock-rockers, the meaningless pomp of arena concerts—and adds acerbic sociopolitical commentary. The show, which returns for a monthlong stint at Davenport's in April, features the music of singer-songwriter Scotty Ben and his semiregic sidekick, Tim The Roadie. The setup is pretty simple: Ben sings and plays guitar while Tim sits next to him, getting drunk and doing little that resembles actual roadie work. The duo recently spoke with The A.V. Club about embracing and subverting rock 'n' roll clichés.

The A.V. Club: Where did the idea for the show come from?

Scotty Ben: We talk about it in the show, but literally we were sitting on the couch. We were both unemployed into summer, but we had cable, and we were watching VH1 videos, and we're like "We can do that." Our first gig was at the Best Kitchen in 2003, I said to Tim, "Do you want to come and roadie for me?" And he said something like, "Will there be girls there?" I had to buy him a drink to get him to come play with me.

Tim The Roadie: We got like 120 apiece.

So Not bad for the outpouring of our souls.

AVC: How has the act changed?

TTR: The first one, what I did was sit in a chair and get as drunk as I could and just say random shit through a megaphone. And now I sit in a chair and get as drunk as I can and say random shit through a megaphone, but there are a lot more gags.

AVC: What are some of the songs you draw on?

TTR: I think we're both influenced by Mike Doughty. We both really appreciate his humor and his music. I'm so fucking sick of the throw-back Def Leppard thing, 'cause I worked at a shitty bar that played that every single day but maybe when we started, it was a little bit of the kitsch from AC/DC and Def Leppard and that kind of shit.

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think a lot of the Rock Show is changing the expectations of what you get from either theater or a rock concert.

AVC: You both have a lot of experience in theater, so which do you draw from more, being music fans or your theater background?

AVC: The rock clichés that we play with are as much theater as anything else. In theater, it's recognized that that's phony. If you go and see a concert, there's gonna be shit talk between the audience and the band. Sometimes they're drunk, and they'll be like, "Oh, I fuckin' hate Chicago! Woo!" But there's these tropes and these ideas that you can find anywhere, like "Goodnight, Chicago!" or "Hello, Chicago!"—things that just get said that are theatrical in their own sense, but because it's a rock concert, it's not seen as bullshit.

TTR: I draw equally from both ideas, because all the jokes that I make have to do with the rock clichés. I draw on a lot of rock clichés and rock knowledge to make jokes, like, "Oh, Scotty, aren't you being so Bright Eyes right now?"

AVC: Do audience members understand that you're occasionally mocking them? Like in the song "Coffeehop Writer," with its references to Lincoln Park Dicks.

TTR: We are kind of mocking you, but we're not trying to be mean about it, and people will laugh along. It's never a laughing-at... Sometimes it's a laughing-at.

AVC: Especially with that song, I think people think that they know the stereotype, but of course that's not them. I've done open mics, and "Coffeehop Writer" goes over great in those places. I can see the dude with the black stringy hair that's hunched over his journal, and he'll dig it 'cause it's not about him, obviously it's about the guy over there, the guy with the blonde dreadlocks and the patchouli stink.

TTR: [At one show] the guy that opened for us was a very sincere singer-songwriter who covered a Beatles song, and he also had a seven-minute epic song about the movie *Westworld*, about an amusement park going crazy where all the robots start killing people. It's kind of hard playing those shows where really sincere singer-songwriters will play, and then we get up five minutes after them and start making fun of sincere singer-songwriters. Then we feel kind of bad—but not really. —Kyle Ryan

The Big Rock Show runs Fridays at 10:30 p.m. at Davenport's cabaret room. Tickets cost \$15, and there's a two-drink minimum.