

KNOCKOUT DROPS

“Knockout Drops celebrate the CD release of *Killed By The Lights*, which shakes with roots rock and power pop finesse.” **NY POST**

“Knockout Drops are an effusive power-pop band.”
LOS ANGELES TIMES

“Knockout Drops put on exhilarating live shows with psychedelic-pop songs and theatrically entertaining performances from frontman Chris Champion.” **GUITAR MAGAZINE**

Biography

The setting is downtown New York's Mercury Lounge. The Knockout Drops are playing to a sold out house and have just blistered through half a set's worth of material from their newly released debut album, ***Killed By The Lights***. The joint quiets down as lead singer, Chris Champion, takes a pull off his cigarette and introduces the next song, "Always Claire," a sweet but twisted ditty about a troubled young woman from the East Village. After explaining the inspiration for the lyrics, Champion quips, "It serves me right. My mother always told me not to pick up chicks down at the methadone clinic." The crowd breaks up as guitarist Tom Licameli launches into the familiar opening riff of this crowd favorite. That's a Drops show.

Knockout Drops music is dynamic, narrative rock-n-roll. It's mood changing melodies and sophisticated lyrical content that runs the gamut from melancholic to exuberant. From sardonic to intensely serious. The Drops have everything in their arsenal and they use it all. More than your average rock 'n roll singer, Champion entertains and engages his audiences with animated tales and irreverent commentary in between songs. Chris Champion is like Dean Martin meets Bill Hicks, with a Tom Waits chaser.

Chris Champion (Lead Vocalist), Tom Licameli (Guitarist), and Phil Mastrangelo (Bass), first met in the bars of Huntington, Long Island. With a shared passion for books like, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, old Who and Replacements records, and an overall gift for misadventure, the boys soon found themselves in a band and writing their own compositions. They moved into downtown Manhattan and began cutting their teeth with shows at CBGB'S and Brownies. Almost instantly the group garnered a large following and a reputation for forceful live, anything goes-style performances. These early songs became the band's first record. The self-produced album entitled, ***The Burning Bush Chronicles***, helped the band secure a production deal with **producer Joe Blaney** (The Clash, Soul Asylum). With Joe at the helm, the group churned out the incendiary E.P., ***Nowadays***, and cemented their status as one of N.Y.C.'s best rock-n-roll outfits. In support of ***Nowadays***, the **band sold out both Irving Plaza and Bowery Ballroom**. Notably, Knockout Drops were one of only two unsigned bands to headline Irving Plaza in a given year. This led to coveted opening slots with artists such as; Soul Asylum, Pete Yorn, Semisonic, Violent Femmes and Better than Ezra. Other highlights include The Guinness Fleadh Festival and acoustic performances at Jones Beach, opening for The Beach Boys and Jethro Tull.

In the Spring of 2002 Knockout Drops decided to try something new. They took up residency at Siberia Bar in New York City, performing every other Thursday, in order to debut new material and expand the show to include more of Champion's in

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between songs, improvisational shtick. The show caught fire and was embraced by the city's night crawler set (performance artists, musicians, comedians, etc...). This allowed for many special guests to sit in including Gordon Gano of the Violent Femmes, Sid McGuinness (guitar player on the David Letterman show), Mark Pender (horn player on Conan 'O'Brien) and members of the Bogmen and Vic Thrill. Campion's also known for pulling onstage any other vicious freaks (a term of endearment), that he can find in the audience. Occasionally his lack of a "PC" filter can get him into trouble. One night while addressing a couple of flight attendants, Campion made the joke, "I heard you gals don't like to be called stewardesses any more...we have to call you Native Americans now." With that, Campion found himself being accosted by a very inebriated 6'5" Navajo Indian who thought he'd been insulted. To diffuse the situation he then said, "Take it easy Kimosabe I think you're a little hopped up on the firewater." Only to enrage our Native American friend even more. He then said, "I heard you people are good at the drums." With that, the big fella smiled and said, "yeah, I can play drums." Campion invited him onstage to finish out the set. When asked about the incident Campion said it was less about the comedy and more about the self-preservation. The point is anything can happen at a Drop's show. Says Campion, "I don't believe in the straight ahead rock show anymore, it's a bore." I think there's more fun to be had."

Now signed to **Circus Clone Records** (with national distribution through Mayhem Records and ADA), Knockout Drops are celebrating their debut full-length release, ***Killed By The Lights***, which had its' street date **June 17th, 2003**. **The 13-song collection exemplifies the diverse appeal of the Drops**, yet it remains focused and congruous. The album represents a significant leap in the band's writing and recording prowess. Skillfully crafting their songs and constructing rich sonic textures, yet without sacrificing any of the gritty, hard hitting energy that characterizes their live sound. Guitarist, Tom Licameli is a cross-pollination of Pete Townsend, Tom Verlaine and Mike Campbell (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers). When you hear him play, you won't be able to liken it to a single one of them, but that's where he comes from. The rhythm section of Phil Mastrangelo and Vinny Cimino is thunder-locked and loaded and can take the music in any direction at any time. With Campion out front, you stir 'm all together and you get Knockout Drops...one helluva cocktail.....

Knockout Drops will be releasing their second full length album in the early Spring of 2005. The Drops are headed to Finland for a string of dates in November 2004.

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