



Bio information: **GUTBUCKET**

Title: **A MODEST PROPOSAL** (Cuneiform Rune 281)

Cuneiform publicity/promotion dept.: (301) 589-8894 / fax (301) 589-1819

email: joyce [-at-] cuneiformrecords.com [Press & world radio]; radio [-at-] cuneiformrecords.com [North American radio]

www.cuneiformrecords.com

**FILE UNDER: JAZZ / PUNK-JAZZ / ART-ROCK**

"Gutbucket continues to play with the frantic intensity of a punk band while exhibiting dazzling turn-on-dime chops." – *JazzWeek*

"A classic case of a band that defies categorization." – *The Washington Post*

"There is something smart, sleek and assured about Gutbucket, and when they begin firing on all cylinders it makes for an exhilarating, intelligently performed racket." – *The Guardian (UK)*

Having blown out **Carnegie Hall** with an orchestra ("a density worthy of... a Led Zeppelin epic," raved *The New York Times*), been proclaimed accidental forefathers of the death jazz movement by *The London Guardian*, and called "clearly out of their minds" by *Guitar Player*, it is perhaps not surprising that **Gutbucket's** new album should be about eating babies. For the culturally skewed New York quartet, it seemed only natural.

Filled with whirling dervish freak-outs and a fresh emphasis on orchestral layerings, it is food, politics, and children that unify Gutbucket and their latest album. A nod to **Jonathan Swift's** 1729 satirical treatise on classist cannibalism, **A Modest Proposal** is the Brooklyn quartet's fourth album. Slowing down occasionally (as on the opening *Head Goes Thud*), the band's interests are as far-reaching as ever, peppering songs with cosmic-skunk guitar (*Carnivore*), double-quartet call-and-response (*Side Effects May Include*), and string quartet arrangements now re-done for bass clarinet and band (*More More Bigger Better Faster with Cheese*).

Joined for the first time in the studio by new drummer (but longtime friend) **Adam D Gold**, the decade-old Gutbucket decamped to Minneapolis in early spring 2008, their latest venture into destination recording. Renting a house and tracking to analog tape, the band's improvisation came not in endless solos but in the spontaneous in-studio arrangements. Though bassist **Eric Rockwin** wrote half of the disc's 10 tunes (occasionally writing charts in on the computer at three in the morning with his newborn daughter sleeping in his lap) the constructions were born of the striking and strong musical communication the band has honed on the road: a vibraphone here (Gold on *Carnivore*), a B3 organ there (Rockwin on *Doppelgänger's Requiem*), and occasionally a baritone sax replacing their trademark alto (**Ken Thomson** on *Brain Born Outside Of Its Head*).

*A Modest Proposal* solidifies Gutbucket's place at the forefront of a revitalized avant-garde music scene in New York, where sparkling new venues pack in 20-somethings at **Steve Reich** gigs and **Bang on a Can's** all-night music marathons draw crowds for 'Stockhausen at Sunrise'. In orbit around the venerable Bang collective--for whom Thomson composed *seasonal.disorder*, performed at their 2008 People's Commissioning Fund Concert--Gutbucket's downtown pedigree is vast.

Founded by Rockwin, saxophonist Ken Thomson, guitarist **Ty Citerman**, and drummer **Paul Chuffo** between shifts at Columbia University's vital radio station, **WKCR**, Gutbucket built their all-important live rep in New York clubs before spreading across east coast college towns like a hoard of freethinking barbarians. Trips to Europe soon followed, with over a dozen tours in 19 countries.

The group attacks their music with the ferocity usually reserved for punk, and the humorous abstraction of art-rock, despite having earned their jazz bona fides. Though the band might seem rooted in the genre exploding of New York's downtown (their 2001 debut, *InsomniacsDream*, was released on the **Knitting Factory** house imprint), their shift to louder sounds began with their controversially titled *Dry Humping the American Dream* (released in 2003 in Europe on the legendary **Enja** label and domestically in 2004 on Bang on a Can's acclaimed **Cantaloupe** label).

It was an easier move than it might at first seem - bassist Eric Rockwin claims to have learned every **Paul McCartney** bassline by heart before his father humbled him with a **Ray Brown** CD. Guitarist Ty Citerman was "into everything that was Hendrix and Van Halen and Led Zeppelin." With the release of *Sludge Test* in 2006 (released on Cantaloupe in the US and **NRW Records** in Europe), Gutbucket pushed even further into avant-rock with a mix of tunes -- some short, exclamatory bursts of aggression, others long-form sonic explorations with surprising twists and turns -- that kept listeners on their toes, and never receded into the background.

(This press release is continued on the next page...)

Their rigorous touring schedule is equally without boundary, ranging from anarcho-punk houseboat collectives in Germany to concert halls uptown to jazz festivals in Croatia to beer-stained college bars in Ohio. "They think we're jazz over there," Ty says of the idyllic trips. "We like to go there. We're art over there. I'm not sure what we are over here."

If Gutbucket themselves don't know, it can be forgiven. Though they've built up an American following in towns from Hattiesburg to Santa Fe, San Francisco to Wichita -- not to mention a few intense passes across the festival circuit -- their work has remained far broader than a simple touring itinerary suggests. They have engaged in numerous projects -- many of them more akin to the art-rock stage antics of **The Flaming Lips** or even **Phish** than the somber-minded blowing of the downtown atonalists. While their shows are legendarily frenzied ("Keep all limbs, drinks and small children well clear of manic sax dervish Ken Thomson," *Time Out New York* warned), they are also events unto themselves.

For special gigs, the band has sometimes presented its scores to classic films, including the 1936 British doc "Night Mail" and their heralded performance to the French animation "**Johnny the Giant Killer**" (1950), in which a group of kids take over a giant's castle assisted by a bee army, and "Johnny suppresses his sexual attraction to the Queen Bee and fends off the jealous bee guards." It is perfectly bizarre and perfectly Gutbucket, soundly capturing the kinds of narratives one might envision while listening to the band's already cinematic charts.

There have been specially prepared collaborations with distortion pedal wielding string quartet **Ethel**, live volleyball games, blindfolds, Dixie cups filled with rice, and master classes in American high schools, a teacher's college in Serbia, and a self-described "underground workshop" in Germany. There have been live collaborations with British artists at the **London Jazz Festival**. "We like having [musical] conversations with each other and seeing where that goes," Rockwin says. "But we like engaging the audience in that conversation, too."

And then there are the master classes, in schools around the United States and Europe, where they teach everything from how to book a gig to 'what is a B-flat?' to the relationship between composition and improvisation. There are a lot of miles in between, and plenty of time to talk about children (Citerman and Rockwin have young daughters) and food (they swear by Jane and Michael Stern's Roadfood), and they still find much in left-wing politics to argue about.

Joined in 2007 by longtime friend Adam D Gold on drums following Chuffo's departure, Gold's musical voice was quickly deemed a necessity. A close comrade, he's also good for van conversation. Which is good. Because there are miles to go before Gutbucket sleeps.

– Press release / Bio sheet written by Gutbucket 2009

for more information on Gutbucket, please see:  
[www.gutweb.com](http://www.gutweb.com) - [www.myspace.com/gutbucket](http://www.myspace.com/gutbucket)

## PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS:



(credit [both]: Natascha Rockwin)

DIGITAL [HIGH-RESOLUTION / COLOR] VERSIONS OF THESE IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD ON  
[WWW.CUNEIFORMRECORDS.COM](http://WWW.CUNEIFORMRECORDS.COM) IN THE "PRESS" SECTION.