

Japandroids reach end of a journey

What: Japandroids with Tough Age

When: Friday, 9 p.m. (doors at 8)

Where: Sugar Nightclub

Tickets: \$15 at Lyle's Place, Ditch Records and ticketweb.ca

MIKE DEVLIN

Times Colonist

Never-ending tours are nothing new for Japandroids, the Vancouver duo whose hard-charging ways have made bandmates Brian King and David Prowse road warriors of the highest order.

But there is a point when every group hits a wall, has enough of touring and makes a conscious decision to take some time off.

It would appear that time is now for Japandroids. The popular rock outfit has no other dates on its calendar following its Nov. 8 appearance in Lima, Peru. That isn't to say other dates won't be added next year, but the short-term story is that the band is burned out. As they should be: The final leg of its current tour caps a run activity that stretches back 18 months.

The Nanaimo-born King, who sings and plays guitar, and Prowse, who sings and plays drums, have earned their respite. The band throws itself into each and every concert; for two musicians, Japandroids make the noise of twice that, and with excessive amounts of energy.

The band has been touring at an alarming rate since the release of 2009's *Post-Nothing*, after which activity accelerated (to that point, Japandroids were seen as a short-term project for the group). Its two full-length recordings have netted scores of accolades, including a pair of Juno Award nominations. *Post-Nothing* and its follow-up, 2012's *Celebration Rock*, which earned a spot on the Polaris Music Prize shortlist, amassed a litany of best-of and year-end mentions in some of the most prestigious publications around.

Spin magazine named Japandroids band of the year in 2012, one of many publications

that praised the recording's impeccable mix of emotion and angst. In all, *Celebration Rock* was named to more than 20 year-end Top 10 lists in 2012. Not bad for two friends who have been playing together for only six years, and who, despite it all, remain a strictly independent outfit.

King and Prowse make a concerted effort to keep their careers in perspective. Nothing is done that would ultimately take away from the impact of the music itself. The only mainstreaming of the group came earlier this year when its song, *The House That Heaven Built*, was chosen by the Vancouver Canucks as the entrance music during home games for the NHL club.

The band has kept its concerts affordable through it all. Its concert Friday at Sugar — which some feel could have been staged at a venue twice its size — costs a mere \$15.

King first met Prowse in 2005 when they were both students at the University of Victoria. Prowse (anthropology) and King (Earth and ocean sciences) were avid music fans but not performing music as a group at the time.

King moved to Vancouver after graduation and reconnected with Prowse, who had transferred to Simon Fraser University. It was then that Japandroids were born.

The band has played Victoria numerous times in the years since, beginning with an all-ages show in 2008 at Little Fernwood. They have played Lucky Bar and Logan's Pub since then, to rapturous receptions.

Japandroids will be similarly received Friday in Victoria. And for those with a keen eye, or who brave the sweat-soaked front of the stage during Japandroids gigs, look for a photograph affixed to King's guitar. That's where he keeps an ever-changing set of photos — usually his family and friends — that keep him company when he's on a seemingly never-ending tour.

"Not every day is the greatest day of your life on tour," King told the *Times Colonist* in 2010, prior to playing Logan's Pub. "Some days those photos are a lifesaver." mdevlin@timescolonist.com



PHOTOS BY DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

Carolynne Yardley, former creative director at Star Global Advanced IT Corp., is represented in a show called #Strangelings: Paintings by Pixel Wizards at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's Massey Gallery. Yardley typically paints detailed portraits where the human figure is replaced with a squirrel.

Creative process shines, digitally and otherwise

What: #Strangelings: Paintings by Pixel Wizards

Where: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's Massey Gallery

When: Today through Nov. 10, opening reception Oct. 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

AMY SMART

Times Colonist

When you make art for the digital world, the public may not recognize it as such.

That's a lesson that Carolynne Yardley learned when she first made the switch to painting full-time, after a career as creative director at Star Global Advanced IT Corp., a company she co-founded.

"That was a big surprise for me when I had my career change three years ago," Yardley said. "A lot of my old clients were like, 'I didn't know you were artistic.' And I thought that was a surprise and a great tragedy."

But creativity has been part of the job description for all three of the local artists represented in #Strangelings: Paintings by Pixel Wizards, a show that runs today through Nov. 10 at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's Massey Gallery.

KANO/APPS lead concept artist Jose Brand and Paul Dowd, who spent six years as lead artist for Zynga (which included overseeing the creation of the creatures for social networking game FarmVille) are "going analogue" with the show of paintings, alongside Yardley.

Art directors can play many roles, but they generally take charge of the look and feel of software interfaces and content. For Yardley, that has meant everything from branding to designing templates based on psychological studies about what attracts clicks.

For Dowd and Brand, it has meant drawing the in-game art and building worlds for FarmVille and now Tiny Mod Games (Dowd), as well as Zombie Slayer, Pirate Clan and Viking Clan (Brand).

"It's slowly changing, but I do agree.

People think that computers are almost a trick: Not necessarily a tool, like a paintbrush," Brand said. "But the techniques are actually very similar."

Brand follows the same process when creating a painting that he does with his digital art: beginning with silhouettes, then filling out details, lighting and shadows.

"It's all technique that I've used in digital artwork, which helps me build up my traditional paintings."

Dowd says his digital work has made him work a lot faster. Although he began painting in high school, he said he hasn't done it in years. After spending the first two years as the sole artist for Zynga, then advancing to lead a team of artists for four years at FarmVille, he has redirected his professional energies to creating mobile games for Tiny Mod Games. Recently, he returned to the canvas.

"It's been a long time since I picked up a paintbrush, so that's been really fun," Dowd said.

And for Yardley, the attention to detail she developed working with software — down to the tiniest pixel — as well as the ability to visualize how those details will come together to make a bigger picture, has translated into her paintings.

Yardley typically paints detailed portraits where the human figure is replaced with a squirrel.

While Yardley, Dowd and Brand each said they incorporated processes and elements of their digital art in their painting, they also said they get something different out of fine art.

"It's all creative, whatever I like. The fine-art stuff is quite expressive," said Dowd.

Brand said he feels like his digital art goes hand-in-hand with his painting. Most of his paintings now begin with a digital mock up — rarely does he begin by picking up a pencil and paper anymore.

But the product is different. "I really love having that finished work in the end — something to hold up and put on the wall. It's definitely a different feeling."

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Former University of Victoria students Brian King, left, and David Prowse make up Japandroids, named band of the year in 2012 by *Spin* Magazine.

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Jose Brand, left, lead concept artist for KANO/APPS, and Paul Dowd, former art director for Zynga (which helped create the creatures in the game Farmville), sit in front of their works in #Strangelings: Paintings by Pixel Wizards.

