

Not siff Newski



By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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American power folk artist Brett Newski seems to have fallen in love with our charming South Africa, so much so that he is visiting and touring SA for the third time while promoting his new album: "American Folk Armageddon". We emailed him a few questions to find out more.

■ ***This is your third time touring SA; what keeps you coming back?***

Brett Newski: SA is always a big morale boost. South Africans have such a great jive to their vocab: 'rad', 'kiff', 'lekker'. I named this tour the 'not siff' tour.

■ ***Are the SA musos and fans showing you lots of lovelies?***

It's a pretty unpretentious place for music. There's an unexplainable magic to the country; I think the constant sun and good food are factors, but it's mainly the people. The people always make the places. It's my third time touring ZA, I plan to return each year I'm alive.

■ ***How would you describe album "American Folk Armageddon" if it was a meal?***

Meat and Potatoes - sliced into potato wedges, not mashed taters. Less is more. Keep it simple. Let the songs show their colours and not gloss them up with a bunch of layers and over-production.



■ ***After a quick glance through the CD sleeve it would seem the lyrics do have rather an apocalyptic sentiment and generally downer vibe. This seems in contrast to your light-hearted and humorous online presence and communications. Would you agree and are these just different facets of Brett Newski?***

It's easy to get pessimistic, especially playing music as a career. The beat downs keep coming; your van gets stolen, you puke on your shoes from food poisoning, no one shows up in Pittsburgh, etc. Lyrically, the songs are mostly optimistic, but

I love the minor key so much, so some grim moments trickle in.

It's crazy to think that we're the last people on Earth to witness the world before the internet. We're going thru the largest generational age gap of all time. I believe that's why generations of kids and parents don't understand each other so well. Now, it's more important than ever to follow your guts and do what you want to do with your short time here, as there have never been so many distractions and biased opinions thrown at us.

❑ ***Ever considered compiling all the stories seen on your blog into a book? It would make a riveting read.***

[Homeless in Narnia](#) is a blog I have: Bizarro tales from life on the road, mostly in Asia. Yes, I would love to do a full book version some day.



❑ ***Why the decision to live/record in South East Asia?***

Complete wandering. I moved to Vietnam on a whim in 2011 for no real reason other than to get lost and start afresh. Things had started to fall apart back home with my girlfriend and band. I didn't have much going and was really in a deep rut. It was time to move on and erase the past.

❑ ***Was there one particular moment in your life when you realised you wanted it to be a musical life?***

When I was flipping burgers at McDonald's some years back, I worked with these two brothers who loved to rock. I went to their house and we jammed Weezer and Green Day covers all day; my first experience playing with other people. I nearly shat my pants. This had to happen all the time. I got addicted to playing and sold my soul for rock 'n roll. Then I took a small French fry after my shift and didn't pay for it, like an asshole. I did pay for the fish fillet at employee discount.

■ ***If your sound could be characterised as an animal, what would it be and why?***

Baby hippo. For no reason other than they look weird and cool.

■ ***Do you have a favourite South African city or venue/festival to perform in/at?***

Durban offers the craziest shows. They are "next level" cats. Love that place so much. White Mountain Festival is a great fest that got me started in SA three years ago.

■ ***Best and worst things about touring?***

Soul crushers: food poisoning, flat tyres, drunken dude talking over you, eating McDonald's.

■ ***After the SA tour is completed, what's next?***

Regroup. Eat lots of vegetables. I've thought a lot about moving to SA. I can't do it this year due to scheduling, but it's a constant thought.

■ ***Quick-fire questions***

What are the first things that come to mind when you see the following words:

- **Wardrobe:** Wizard Cloak and funny dunce cap
- **Happy endings:** Shady district in Bangkok
- **Cereal:** Greatest thing since sliced bread
- **Selfies:** We are all fuc***

Not siff SA tour info

NEW RECORD : AMERICAN FOLK ARMAGEDDON

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SOUTH AFRICA 2014



NOT SIFF!!

19 SEPT	CHEERS PUB		KIMBERLY, ZA
20 SEPT	LIBRARY @ BRAZENHEAD	(VERY LIMITED SEATING)	JOHANNESBURG, ZA
23 SEPT	RUMOURS w/ FUZIGISH, NAMING JAMES	(FULL BAND)	JOHANNESBURG, ZA
26 SEPT	RAILWAYS CAFE	(FULL BAND)	PRETORIA, ZA
27 SEPT	WHITE MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL	(FULL BAND)	ESTCOURT, ZA
28 SEPT	PARK ACOUSTICS	(FULL BAND)	PRETORIA, ZA
1 OCT	PABLO ESCO BAR @ GEORGE HOTEL		ESHOWE, ZA
3 OCT	MUSIC KITCHEN w/ JON SHABAN		PORT ELIZABETH, ZA
4 OCT	CHAMPS w/ JON SHABAN		GRAHAMSTOWN, ZA
10 OCT	GECKO BAR w/ JON SHABAN		HERMANUS, ZA
11 OCT	ANNEX	(VERY LIMITED SEATING)	CAPE TOWN, ZA
17 OCT	ALMA CAFE w/ JON SHABAN	(VERY LIMITED SEATING)	CAPE TOWN, ZA

brettnewski.com

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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