




# Makar Is Causing A Scene In New York City

The duo gear up to release their third record, "Fancy Hercules," later this year. We have the scoop here....

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MAKAR, have made quite an impression on music listeners in recent years. Makar's most recent record, "Funeral Genius" is their most innovative to date, but things are about to be taken up a notch with the eclectic upcoming record, "Fancy Hercules" due out later this year. Voted as one of the Top NYC Indie Bands on The Deli Magazine, the group has been featured on MTV2, as well as countless music outlets and radio shows. Makar is the brainchild of husband-wife duo Andrea DeAngelis and Mark Purnell. With her ethereal beauty and angelic voice, DeAngelis, who is also an accomplished poet and writer, has a magnetic presence that makes her a joy to see and hear. With his deep, haunting vocals, Purnell calls to mind a young John Cale. The combination of the two is a prominent and noteworthy sound.

Find out more about Makar in our exclusive interview below!

**How would you describe being musicians in the current New York scene? Is there still a 'family' feel around a good portion of the music community?**

**Mark:** Musicians on the whole, at least in our folk/rock scene, are pretty cool, warm, supportive and loving of what they do and each other, but there have been big changes to the NY scene recently and the biggest change of all is that so many venues have closed as the rents in NY have gone insane. Our dear friend just lost her wonderful tapas bar restaurant in Williamsburg when the landlord raised her rent from \$7,500/month to \$23,000/month, destroying an incredible local hangout and a livelihood she had built over the last ten years. Seeing CBGBs close and become a clothing store was very hard to take as well. Passing by would send waves of nausea crashing down upon Andrea and me because we played there several times and it was like the Mecca for so many musicians. Of the venues still around, we dig playing at Planos, Knitting Factory, Pyramid Club, Freddy's Backroom, An Beal Bocht, Local 269, Leftfield, R Bar, Lovecraft. Other places that closed that we loved either playing at or going to hear bands at besides, CBGBs, were Galapagos, Bar East, The Hook,

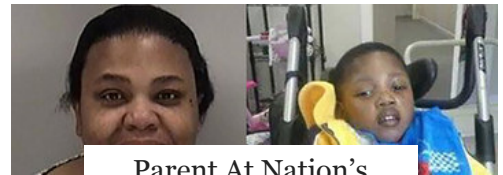
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Kenny's Castaways, and Luna Lounge. Some re-opened in other parts of the city but some are gone for good which is both good and bad. Good because nothing stays the same and change is always refreshing and exciting, but bad because you get attached and it breaks your heart to see beloved places move on to new spaces or just end.

**Andrea:** Usually when you play a show, even with folks you don't know, there's a cool comradary, a "we're all in it together vibe." You try to catch the set of the people before you and after you. Some of the nicest and most inspiring comments after a show were from fellow musicians. And their feedback resonates with you because they're also in the thick of it. Sadly, there are those that are competitive in a really silly and unproductive way and honestly, they don't last long because they burn up with spite.

"Funeral Genius," has been a record that has been on my radar for the past several months. I recently learned that you are working on a new record. How will the new record differ from "Funeral Genius," in any form?

**Mark:** "Fancy Hercules", our third full length album, will be out Fall/Winter 2016 just in time to submit to the Grammys! "Funeral Genius" was on the 55th Grammy ballot under pop of all categories, sandwiched between Madonna and Maroon 5. What chance did a little indie band with a small budget stand there we wondered. Answer... not much. Maybe they'll put us in folk/rock or Americana this time for a more accurate category, although it's been said, many times in the past, that Makar is hard to categorize.

The similarities between "Funeral Genius" and "Fancy Hercules" can be found in Makar's usual poet, pop, folk, rock, blues, punk mix, but the difference is that Fancy Hercules veers into weirdest album yet territory with the addition of wacky musical theater musings, songs about insomnia, depression, brain tumors, the meaning of time, family problems, the old ball and chain, a reworking of Devil in a Dream and very strange horror film/Mars Attacks type chords. Not to mention an examination of the myth of Hercules and how he slaughtered his whole family as our title track. We're also planning on doing this album acoustically. No drums, no bass, just piano, guitar and vocals, so that's a huge and exciting departure for us. It's Makar stripped down to the bare essentials, which is scary because you wonder if radio will care that there is very little production, but it's just how we want to record this one, especially the song, Devil in a Dream, which has been reworked with a big chorus and more structure than the first time around on Funeral Genius, when we recorded it on a hand held recorder in the dark attic of Andrea's parent's house with Robert Johnson's hell hounds on our trail.

**Andrea:** "Fancy Hercules" does feel like our strangest album to date but the songs still fit and flow together despite or because of their oddball character. It's weird how that kind of synchronicity has happened on "Funeral Genius" and "Fancy Hercules." With "99 Cent Dream"s, our first album, we kinda threw everything out there, every song we had finished, so it ended up being 18 songs! With a more manageable number of songs on "Fancy Hercules," themes, sounds and styles mesh together more fluidly.

"Fancy Hercules" has pretty big extremes of emotion – depression and the manic nature of insomnia and relief at a family member recovering from a serious illness and taking strength from love.

It's freaky that we're recording this new album acoustically. It feels both very vulnerable and empowering. We'll see how it goes, we just started recording this month. We have other plans in place if recording at home (in our kitchen and coat



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closet to be exact) doesn't quite pan out or our neighbors hire hit men.

**What song (or songs) on "Funeral Genius," are the most personal to the band as songwriters, and why?**

**Andrea:** Our single, "I Wanna Know What I Don't Know," is one of the most personal songs I've written. It's about making the choices you want to make and not what other people tell you or expect you to make.

I find, like a lot of people, that all my life people have been trying to tell me what to do. People have assumed certain things about me which have nothing to do with who I am. Like, oh, Andrea, I always thought you'd be a lawyer. I don't know how or why they got that impression especially since I've never had a clear so-called career in my head. I didn't even expect to become a musician. The only thing I always knew I wanted to be was a writer. I knew I had to have a job that paid the bills, but I never pictured myself in a conventional career. I think a lot of people can relate to being thrust onto a path they didn't choose. This song is about the role and oddness of being an artist, of being unconventional, of not fitting. To me, the most important lines in the song are –

*I know you're unhappy but I'm glad  
Because now I can go down that road  
Dreaming of some other kind of gold*

The "other kind of gold" is time – spending as much of it with people you love and doing things you love. The day jobs we've had, have been about carving out time. They're not status jobs, but they pay the bills and they allow us time and energy to pursue our dreams even if those dreams don't turn into financial success. The journey and the creative expression is what's invaluable to us. On the cusp of recording a new album, we're especially terrified of how fragile life is. We don't want to die before we finish this next album. I mean if I get hit by a truck, in the seconds before my death, one of the things I'll be thinking about is damn, I really wanted to get that new album done.

But honestly, there are several songs on "Funeral Genius" that are super personal to me. When I really think about it, a lot of my lyrical contribution on "Funeral Genius" is very personal! The title track, "Funeral Genius," is about pushing against depression and people who bring you down. It's extraordinarily heart-rending when you realize someone you're close to is so detrimentally negative they actually sear you. It's a contagion effect. It's like the ceiling of the subway peeling and falling on you. You have to step back from the yellow line and keep depression at bay if that makes sense. "Funeral Genius" is also an amalgamation of about three different poems of mine along with new material inspired by that emotional collage. It's so strange how words come together sometimes seemingly of their own volition.

"Belong Here" is about coping with stage fright and not feeling like you belong on stage. That "imposter" feeling. It's funny, I read recently that a lot of women have this imposter feeling. We're so worried about how others perceive us, it really gets in the way of what we want to accomplish, but when you're uncomfortable you should just let that spur you on.

I was really shy when I was a kid up through my senior year of high school. I barely spoke. People who didn't know me then are shocked by this admission. They don't believe I was ever shy even though I still feel like that person at times. All of which adds to the unreality of performing live.

**Andrea and Mark – you two are married. How did you meet?**

**Mark:** We met at work of all places, at the College Board, the maker of the SAT. There were a lot of creative types working there at the time, musicians, visual artists, writers, poets. One day the office manager introduced me to Andrea, who had just started. She was wearing an exceedingly short red dress with white patterns of abstract flowers woven into it, a fitted red granny sweater, Eddie Sedgwick tights and tiny black Mary Janes that wrapped her small feet in environmentally conscious pleather. She had dark wavy brown hair cut in a cute bob that reached just past her chin, and she had these beautiful green eyes, hidden behind the cutest oval shaped glasses I'd ever seen. All I could think was, who the hell is this awesome girl? We became best friends in three days, like we'd always known each other, but a few months later at a bar on the upper west side, it was a bartender who told us we were in love with each other. We were too oblivious or too busy having fun to realize it, but once he let the cat out of the bag, we knew he was right. The funniest part, is that when we got married Andrea hadn't played her guitar since she was twelve, was just beginning work on her debut novel, *Pushed*, and had no desire to be a musician. I had unknowingly just married my songwriting partner.

**Andrea:** It wasn't that short of a dress! The first thing I said to Mark was "Have you always been this rude?" He wasn't rude to me, but to the office manager who walked me around introducing me to everyone. She was like, "and this is Mark." And Mark waved her off as he stood over the copier, saying something like, "Not now, I'm busy." He was joking, but I was taken aback by his cavaliness. It was my first job, so I was nervous. Then when my boss told me he was a singer I thought she meant a classical singer like the voice majors I was used to back at Oberlin. Which is funny that I associated singing with voice majors because I'm not a classical music buff and come from more of a punk / riot grrl point of view.

Mark quickly became the best friend I always wished I had and then more! ;)

**What is the theme or inspiration behind the name of the upcoming record, "Fancy Hercules"?**

**Mark:** Ah, Hercules, so strong, so fancy, and yet no one focuses on the fact that he slaughtered his entire family. Yet Hera put a spell on him that made him go crazy and do just that. Our album's title track, "Fancy Hercules," is a re-imagined Hercules in a blues song living as a hobo/vagrant tramp following the train lines, trying to come to terms with what he's done, circling the void, which is illustrated by the weirdest chord in Makar history D7b5th, rarely used in music at all, but of course Makar had to bring it out of hibernation. The train is gonna come means he's going to pay for his crimes and penny on the track felt like a natural addition, an urban legend that a penny placed on the tracks will derail a train. It doesn't, but still seems to be a potent part of modern mythology. "Fancy Hercules" is not a concept album, but strangely, many songs can be seen as an extension of Hercules' tormented psyche. "I'm Alright" is a song about insomnia which he undoubtedly suffers from, living with the guilt of his actions. Andrea suffers from insomnia as well, and wrote this song out of pure frustration. "Devil in a Dream: could be seen as the harpies on his trail much like the hellhounds on Robert Johnson's, "Devil Don't Do Me" In is about depression, which he feels over losing his family. "Time Flies" is the first song Makar ever wrote and talks about the void again and wanting to see the end of night, which surely Hercules hoped to see after his 12 labors were completed. Ridge Rider is about a fictional character riding along a mystical and haunted ridge in search of meaning and redemption, but could easily be Hercules doing the same, all inadvertent, yet subconscious connections, which aided in choosing the songs for this album.

**Andrea:** I have never seen it this way, as an extension of Hercules' psyche. It might be a stretch but I'll let Mark stretch it. It is a very emotional and blues-infused album for sure. One of the songs, I'm Glad, is about my relief that my mom recovered from a

brain tumor. But the album title came from a strange place, a grocery store on the lower east side. It was named "Fancy Hercules" or at least that's how I read it, sometimes I misread things. Like a sign in an antiques store in New Jersey that said 'We Buy Antiques', I misread as 'We Buy Angels'. So the title of the album came from that misreading. For the longest time we only had the music for the song. Then the words came from the title. It's funny our first album, "99 Cent Dreams," was also inspired by a store name in Hackensack and that title track sprang up around the same. Sometimes a title is all you need to inspire the lyrics. My poetry works like that as well.

### **What artists influenced the sound of Makar? Will the same influences shine through in the new songs?**

**Mark:** The Who, Who's Next, was the first album that I obsessed over and that made me want to be a musician, the vastness, pomp and splendor of it all as well as the Beatles' White Album for its fun, genius and atypical quirkiness, but it wasn't until college and The Doors that I said this is definitely what I want to do. The fact that Jim Morrison was interested in Carl Jung, poetry and intellectualism gave real depth to the music and the creator behind it, without which I wouldn't have been as into it. 80s music had a huge impact on me as well. Groups like Bowie, Blondie, The Cure, Depeche Mode, U2, Joy Division, The Smiths, New Order, the way they completely changed the musical landscape into something almost alien from what came before, but with positive social messages, like People are People, that fought against entrenched bigotry, misogyny and homophobia. I was also influenced by country artists like Patsy Cline and Johnny Cash as well as rock, jazz, soul and blues artists like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Elvis, Robert Johnson and Otis Redding. And even though Elvis was reputed to be a racist by some of the people closest to him, he still bridged white and black people, knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, through the expropriation of black music, which I believe he genuinely loved and admired. I believe he didn't mix as much as he would have liked given the times and living in the South, and at heart wasn't a racist. Many of these early artists' concerts were the first times black and white teenagers were together under one roof celebrating something together which helped defeat segregation and intolerance in a major way. What we don't know we fear, so exposure is always the quickest route out of ignorance. And now I'm influenced by so many new artists, known and unknown like Sharon Van Etten, Sigur Ros, Goldfrapp, Nous Non Plus, the Dead Exs and Hello Nurse. It constantly amazes me that new music can keep being created from those 12 notes. It's like lotto, so many combinations (479,001,600 to be exact with 12 note combinations) and chances to win. You gotta be in it to win it I guess.

**Andrea:** Growing up, I listened to the Beatles pretty exclusively. I saw the Yellow Submarine as an impressionable child and it infected my mind. It wasn't until high school that I expanded my horizons to The Doors, The Rolling Stones and Janis Joplin. Then college, I saw the Pixies perform and punk rock started to speak to me. My parents were always big fans of folk music, having spent time in Greenwich Village at Folk City and other clubs. My dad actually asked Joni Mitchell out on a date. So my brothers and I grew up listening to Peter Paul and Mary, Simon and Garfunkel and Pete Seeger on the old turntable singing this Land is Your Land and Puff the Magic Dragon. My dad plays a mean harmonica and always took me to Beatlefeasts.

My dad is also a big blues fan so I grew up around that influence as well. I think everyone can relate to the blues. This upcoming album is definitely more blues oriented than our previous ones. We delve into the B major and B7 chords quite a bit on Fancy Hercules, which plums strong and out of control emotions like anger, rage, fury and despair and other burdens of the heart. Even the songs that don't contain typical blues structures take on the tone and mood of the blues or at least our

interpretation of them.

And even though I'm still annoyed at my older brother's friend declaring that The Who were better than The Beatles, our song, I'm Glad, has a Whovian quality which I love.

**How is the songwriting for the new record going so far? Has it been an easy process?**

**Mark:** Surprisingly easy actually. Sometimes we both wonder where these songs come from, as we don't have that much time during the week to write them due to our neighbors always complaining if we play too much. So we're really limited to like 3-4 hours/week to rehearse and write new material. We make the most of what we have I guess, and maybe someday we'll buy a house and be able to practice and write whenever we want. That's the dream, but for now we love the city so we're staying.

**Do you tend to write songs together, or is there one main songwriter in the group?**

**Andrea:** We write the songs together. Music and lyrics. Sometimes the lyrics originate with me or with Mark. Same goes for the music. But we work on it together and couldn't do it without each other's input and insight. And it's only become more collaborative over the years.

Personally, I never imagined I would write and perform music even though I played guitar as a child. Mark pulled me or I butted in while he was writing "The Monkey."

**Aside from the upcoming record, what can we expect from Makar in the New Year?**

**Mark:** We may play a festival in Quebec this summer and do a radio show or two over there for CKRL's Illusions Auditives show hosted by Vincent Delisle and Jacques Dulac and Carol Barrett's Ruby Slippers show on CIUT. In the summer of 2014 we did an interview and played a live set on Ruby Slippers and had a blast in Toronto, so we definitely want to get back there and hang with Carol and then on to Quebec to hang with Jacques, who's trying to get us into the festival. Canada has an amazing indie scene and they seem to dig Makar. We were voted #11 on their college charts. And like every band, we're going to continue doing what we love you know. Making music, playing live and trying to get some decent recordings of it all so when we're old we can be like, Andrea, you believe that was us doing that, rocking out and such? And Andrea will be like, that's not us you old fool, and I'll be like damn tarnation woman, it sure as heckfire is. And she'll say you shut your mouth when you're talking to me and don't cuss and I'll say nothing cause a happy wife means a happy life! And if you all take one damn thing from this interview that should be it.

**Andrea:** I still dream we'll get a Grammy someday and I'll end our speech by saying, "Hey to everyone at work, this serves as my two week notice." But with every album, I just want to go further, musically and also reach more people. That's plenty to hope for.

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