

# Gnu

a brief history....

Once in a while comes along a band that unconsciously offers new possibilities, adding expression and breathing new life into a genre of music that many critics consider exhausted. Once in a while comes along a band that reaches beyond the predictability of rock music. This time, that band is Gnu.

Eleven years of musical discovery, which has led them to their present position at the forefront of the domestic alternative music scene, has seen a consistent and committed evolution in sound and spirit. Early releases had foreshadowed the good things to come: the SKALP EP gained the band their first taste of unanimous critical acclaim both domestically and abroad, admired by MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL for 'unique sounding music...different than the usual...cohesive drive...memorable song structure.' 1997 saw the band teaming up with AMPHETAMINE REPTILE RECORDS legends LOVE 666 for a split single.

The last year of the twentieth century saw Gnu record their first full-length recording SRDCE V KUSECH ZVUKU, lauded not only in the long enthusiastic underground music press, but the 'mainstream' press also found that they couldn't ignore the genre-bending significance of Gnu. A great deal of reviews and articles spent countless words racing to define the sound. Is it hardcore? Noise? Punk? Alternative rock? No one was quite able to label it, but the fact that so much space was devoted to this very theme proves the prominence of the sound: Not confined enough for any school of hardcore, much too unexaggerated for the consciously experimental area of noise, far too intelligent to be associated with punk.



Gnu live is an unforgettable, addictive experience. Two bass guitars, one providing thundering, deep bass lines, the second creating a higher, unrelentless earthquake of power which an electric guitar could simply never do, carried along by intense, precise, atypical drum patterns, and surrounded by mood-changing, colour-enhancing guitar, bent on sophisticated atmospheric images and solidification as opposed to story-telling, rounded off by style-revolutionary, where-the-heart-meets-the-brain vocals. The sheer energy and intensity of the music is held together by an extremely rare chemistry, an unexaggerated controlled chaos, combined with a subtle intelligence which makes the stage acrobatics of weak-musically-yet-aesthetically-pleasing contemporary bands seem simply ridiculous in comparison. The experience of hundreds of live performances across many countries with alternative music legends both domestic (LVMEN, SUNSHINE) and foreign (GIRLS AGAINST BOYS, ROLLINS BAND, MELVINS, UNSANE etc.), has led the band to a level of seasoned authority in the area of live music.

In February of 2002 the world was graced with MILIMETRY TICHA, the long-awaited follow-up to 1999's debut LP. Those (im)patiently awaiting another taste of dynamically controlled aggression and unbridled intensity will be rewarded on one hand, and astonished on the other. Gnu has returned with a triumphant blend of maturity and vision: as if they realized that by weeding out the 'control' in the concept of 'controlled chaos', and allowing emotion and passion to steer them in wiser, more sensitive directions heretofore unexplored, they would reach the next stop on their journey. Riddled with corners and empty spaces, but maintaining elements of the winning aggression-melody-aggression formula they are known for, the music fits perfectly and naturally.

As with their previous releases, Gnu has provided us with another great adventure. An adventure more than simply 'worthwhile' taking, but rather necessary to take, that is, should you need to be convinced that there is still room for innovation in modern music. There is, and Gnu has found it in millimetres of silence.

## Actual album:



## Gnu "Milimetry ticha" CD/LP

1. Zlo zblizka
2. Minus cy.
3. Mossad
4. Terra nova
5. Hrbet
6. Nase pribehy starnou
7. J. Boam
8. Kdyz horis
9. Napadne jasny dalky
10. 3/3
11. Zapad

## Sound samples available at:

[www.minorityrecords.com](http://www.minorityrecords.com)

## Label address:

Minority Records, Post Office Box 113, 110 01 Prague 1 Czech Republic  
website: <http://www.minorityrecords.com>  
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## REVIEWS

"It's amazing how powerful a band can sound, even if they bring quite soft music. Gnu, around for 11 years, is one of a kind. Rock music with a driving roll touch that hardly ever really explodes but the more you listen to it the more you know this album is an explosion in se. Gnu's sound is shaped by the combination of two bass guitars, creating a musical experience you can't create with only one bass guitar I guess. Still it's quite moody and experimental rock music with an emo touch. Lyrics are sung in Czech, I don't really understand what this is all about but anyway, I'm not really struck by the voice here as well. Musically this is cooler. Give it a chance!" **Semtex#6**

"It's been a few years since Gnu's last (and, I believe, first) full-length, and they appear to have spent the intervening months taking ice-cold showers and thinking about nuns and baseball. That's the only way I can explain the jaw-dropping outpouring of energy unleashed by Millimetry Ticha; these Czechs have figured out how to dish up punishing intensity without sacrificing the hooks. Credit the band's instrumental configuration for a lot of the power -- there are two basses in the mix as well as the requisite guitar and drums, leading to some pretty complicated low-end maneuvering. However, as enjoyable as the band's ferocious instrumental flare-ups and pounding, metallic rhythms can be, they aren't enough on their own; without some songwriting skills, Gnu would be just another grunge/emo outfit with bigger amps. Fear not. As tunes like "Hrbet" reveal, Gnu aren't all minor-key grimness and raw-throated screeching; when they turn their hands to melody, it comes out just fine. You'll find yourself singing along on a number of occasions -- although you'll probably get the words wrong, as the Gnu guys aren't singing in English (to their credit, the band invite fans to contact them for English translations of their lyrics). As overall songwriting goes, the group is as far from accented emo as it's possible to get -- they have far more in common, sonically speaking, with groups like the Young Gods, Killing Joke and Joy Division than with disaffected twenty-something WASPs. Don't even bother trying to listen to Millimetry Ticha at low volume; the volume knob is best set no lower than eight. You'll either listen with fists and jaw tightly clenched, or sing along in a joyful, wordless howl."

### **Splendid**

"Now, here's an oddball conundrum I had while spinning Milimetry Ticha ... I can't decide whether this disc is caustically grumbling, or just really sensual in a deep, growling sort of way. Yeah, I said 'sensual.' Stop giggling and I'll explain. The Czech Republic's Gnu has a few things going in its favor on this release. First off are the vocals, which aren't sung in English, giving the entire disc a very primal, grunted feel to anyone that doesn't know Czech. Outside of the language difference, vocalist Adam has a very unique sounding voice that initially comes off a bit like the late Mark Sandman of Morphine, though it often morphs into a gritty, abrasive yell very convincingly. The band's sound is intricately deep thanks to the employment of two bass players (one high-end and one low-end, not unlike Cop Shoot Cop and Girls Against Boys before them), which gives the songs a dark, 'smooth' feel. Second guitars generally add melody to a band, but the second bass phenomenon of Gnu adds to the depth of the recording, as all of the bass work on Milimetry Ticha is kept pretty clean. Of course, that added depth is what gives Gnu's music its sultry feel. On "Minus Cy.," for example, the entire rhythm of the track becomes an aggressive groove thanks to the 'gliding note' guitar rhythm and the dual bass part. One bass sticks to a low-end drone while the other peppers the song with an upbeat and spiffy little lead bass line. The bass parts change up slowly, the rhythm slows up slightly, and the guitar begins to grind and turn fuzzy as Adam yells over the mix. Then, courtesy of some more high-end bass work, the song re-evolves itself back into the original opening groove. Altogether, the entire track renders itself as one great big dirty throb that seems to exude as much dark sexuality as it does straight-out aggressiveness. While two-bass concept automatically opens the door for a lot of 'grooves' on Milimetry Ticha, the band can flat out rock, too. "Kdyz Horis" is a driving number with a frantic guitar rhythm that pick up steam before turning into an all out dirge assault, as both basses bellow out low, deep registers that are sliced into by guitar crunches and feedback wails. If there's one downside to Milimetry Ticha, it's that a majority of the material has a very similar sound to it. Apparently, though, the members of Gnu know that, because the band does make a pretty good effort to vary the tempos and song structures to create little musical 'surprises' (such as the balls-out dirge that finishes off "Kdyz Horis"). Still, the band does have some leeway in that department, as Gnu really does manage to keep this material from getting stale based on the execution of the double-bass sound alone. Sure, the songs here tend to blend together a bit - but in the case of Milimetry Ticha, it's definitely not too much of a good thing. As a matter of fact, Gnu seems to offer up just the right amount of two-bass rock goodness on this release." **Delusions of Adequacy**