

# ARTS & VARIETY

## The Coolest Celebration on Earth

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

The year 1886 marked the very first St. Paul Winter Carnival. Following the carnival, a *New York Times* journalist wrote a review of Minnesota in the winter. This journalist called Minnesota "a tundra unfit for human life." This irritated the locals, and they decided to prove New York wrong! Over a hundred years later, here we are celebrating the 134 St. Paul Winter Carnival.

WC follows the story of King Boreas and his royal family and guards: Arora, Queen of Snows; Titan, Prince of the North Wind; Zephyrus, Prince of the West; Euros, prince of the East; and Notos, Prince of the South. They are all accompanied by their princesses. There is also the Prime Minister, Captain of the Guard, Sergeant of the Guard, and the various members of the King's Guard. As the story goes, Boreas is looking for a place to host his eternal winter. Naturally, he chooses Minnesota. Their beautiful celebration is disturbed by the Vulcans, who are out to destroy winter and bring back summer.

Much like a pageant or ambassador's program, the Winter Carnival Troupe travels all over Minnesota and the rest of the country meeting various Carnival/county royalties. They represent our state and use their back stories to encourage tourism and state pride.

Winter Carnival is a ten-day festival hosted in numerous areas around the Twin Cities, but it is focused in Rice Park and the State Fairgrounds. This event is complete with snow sculpting competitions, free hot chocolate, ice skating, and family fun for all. The carnival is a chance for last year's Royal Family to say their farewells and secretly train in the newcomers. The girls campaigning for queen and princesses also use this time to volunteer and put their names out. After the coronation, the rest of the carnival takes place and includes parades and the Vulcan Victory Dance.

Though the Vulcans defeat the royal family, they pop up multiple times over the course of the year. They participate in parades, volunteer at numerous charities, and visit different coronations all over.

The Winter Carnival is a joyous time to be proud of the winter and embrace the snow and have King Boreas to blame for crappy roads. Be sure to check out the coolest celebration on earth next year!

## Bad Bad Hats Return Home

BY ANNA FRITZE

As the stage lights of First Avenue dimmed and the curtain began to stur, audience members began to yell and whoop excitedly from the crowd. Bad Bad Hats was about to come on, and the audience was ready to welcome them home.

Bad Bad Hats, a band that mixes genres of nineties rock and pop-punk frivolity into their music, originated here in the twin cities. Lead singer Kerry Alexander met lead guitarist Chris Hoge at Macalester College and formed the beginnings of Bad Bad Hats in 2012. They were soon joined by friend and bassist Noah Boswell and were signed by Afternoon Records in Minneapolis later that year. They have come out with two albums since then; their debut *Psychic Reader* in 2015 and *Lightning Round* in 2018. Since the release of their first album, they have toured the U.S. extensively with artists like Hippo Campus and Third Eye Blind. In 2017, Bad Bad Hats played solo at 7th Street Entry, the smaller venue attached to the historic First Avenue in Minneapolis. The room was full, but it did not sell out.

Today, the band is about to play in the main room of First Avenue, and if you didn't get your tickets weeks ago, you would not be able to get in. Not only was the show sold out, but the band was chosen to headline the Winter Ball, First Avenue's smaller version of the Xcel Energy Center's Jingle Ball.

The curtain finally opens, and deafening screams arise from the crowd. "Well, howdy!" Alexander says as she smiles out at the crowd. She introduces herself and the band, and they get right into the music. The crowd sings along to the songs happily; some people even shed tears at the ones that hit home. Even though the music could hit deep, Alexander kept the atmosphere happy by telling jokes, stories of her childhood, and the origin of the band name, which came from the name of a trouble-maker in the Madeline children's books. Alexander even brought out her mother for a song, and they sang a heart-moving duet together.

At the end of their set, Bad Bad Hats sang their three most popular songs, "Nothing Gets Me High," "Midway," and "It Hurts," all with an explanation of why the songs came to be before. After the music was over, the band promised to come to the back of the venue and meet fans under the Winter Ball sign set up for photos. The line grew long immediately, and even in the surplus of people, the band had smiles on their faces, and positive remarks for every admirer met. After the music, a moving performance, and kind, personal words from the band, fans of Bad Bad Hats were able to leave the First Avenue happy and with their hearts full.



Mixing 90's rock and pop-punk frivolity. CREDIT: Anne Fritze