In the 1990’s Royal Trux established themselves as one of the greatest rock groups of that hallowed era. With albums of extrasensory scope ranging from 1990s Twin Infinitives (which belongs to the special category of albums whose impact may take decades to be measured), to 1993’s Cats and Dogs (with its seamless blend of classic roots, grunge, and punk) to 2000’s Pound for Pound (inhabiting a well-worn coat of southern hard-rock boogie), they reinvented the group concept born with the Rolling Stones (whose music inspired the duo with a definitive template with which to fuck), accepting nothing less than “The World’s Greatest Rock and Roll band” as an opening proposition!

Jennifer Herrema (vocals, moog, guitar, melodica, sticks and stones, pots and pans) and Neil Hagerty (vocals and guitarist) were both in the Washington, D.C. area where they met and, as teenagers, formed Royal Trux while living in an abandoned warehouse space near the New York Avenue bridge a few miles from Union Station. The name was an evocation of their omnidirectional headspace and abilities — plus, Jennifer grew up skateboarding, moving to roller skating after removing the trux and wheels off her board grafting them onto a pair of skates, giving her an unequaled ability to maneuver . . . even then, it was all about the TRUX. The idea was to play with what little equipment and resources they had and make the most of it by starting musically with the simplicity of blues progressions. The blues also happened to fit the bill for a band called “Pussy Galore” that recruited Hagerty to fill the position of guitarist and tutor (teaching them all how to play the Rolling Stones’ Exile on Main Street album) in exchange for money, equipment and a place to stay in New York. The move to NYC (Jennifer into the YMCA, Neil with the band) was fortuitous, but the perceived similarities between the two acts weren’t much beyond initial chord progressions and of course the unmistakable sound of Hagerty’s unparalleled guitar style. The Trux walked a different talk, one with a more elusive, at times counter-intuitive attitude. Hagerty and Herrema were by nature loners, drug abusers and intellectuals; they stood out among the many art school “bands” in NYC in the late 80s. Playing with a revolving cast of freaks, fellow-travelers, and influences allowed them to discard the tradition of a “band” with “members.” Listening to the records nobody else cared to play anymore, they chose to stake out a post no-wave stance shot through with aspects of classic New Yorkia — Godz, Lovin’ Spoonful, Lou Reed and Television all fit the bill — sifting it through in a personal manner that eventually became known as the “lo-fi” genre. In this tactile fashion, they gained notoriety for their unconventional music and ideas, presenting themselves at live shows and elsewhere with an aesthetic marked by indifference and debauchery.

Royal Trux’s first tangible music releases were a song credited to them on Pussy Galore’s Right Now LP (“Fix-It”) (1987) and two tracks, “Luminous Dolphin” and “Cut You Loose,” (1988) on a ROIR cassette compilation . . . but it was the end of 1988 that saw them release their own, self-titled LP for not much more than $500. With no label or distribution in place it was the music that propelled their trajectory (not money, nepotism, or connections) — this was what it took to launch new beginnings in the music world/landscape at that time. Not long after, Drag City and Domino came calling, and an attempt to dominate worldwide was undertaken. Up through 1995, via several records, tours, a film (What is Royal Trux?) and a relentless promotion campaign (including placing their “art” as TV adverts on the sci-fi network and others), their portfolio expanded, leading to a contract with Virgin Records, who evaluated them to be necessary listening on a big-time level. It could only have been done with fresh eyes and ears and the understanding that new realms of possibility could be accessed by Truxian imagination and vision.

After signing with Virgin in 1994 for a three-album stint, Royal Trux began calling themselves the “World’s Greatest Royal Trux Boogie Band.” Who could argue with that? Few even knew what it meant. After the Virgin albums they returned to Drag City with a diverse series of sounds on Accelerator, Veterans of Disorder and Pound for Pound. As always, they were open for business and taking offers, confronting the world from where they stood on the street, and seeking to jack it for all they could. Over a decade has passed and the pair’s music continues to sound just as progressive, vital, and confounding. Beyond the genre-setting and –defying music and the genius of Hagerty’s playing, they were fronted by a willfully non-archetypal female singer whose stance became it’s own archetype over the years, as the world caught on to the need for a new breed. Subsequently, a generation of females looked to Jennifer Herrema for inspiration, emulation and commodification.

When they finally parted ways- following the release of ***Pound for Pound*** in 2000 - they did so just as they do everything: spectacularly. Their hiatus lasted 15 years, with little to no communication between them in the interim. It was to their fans enormous surprise - and delight - that they announced a run of new shows in 2015. Shortly after the release of their live album ***Platinum Tips + Ice Cream*** in 2017, they inked a new deal with veritable Mississippi indie **Fat Possum.**As part of that deal, earlier recordings from Royal Trux were reissued, many of which had been absent from streaming services. With the catalog readily available, and the appetite for the live shows undiminished, Jennifer and Neil recorded ***White Stuff*** - their first new material in in 19 years-  on the industrial fringes of Los Angeles in the summer of 2018. The new music delivers all of the intoxicating alchemy one would expect from Royal Trux. Their lengthy recording break has done nothing to diminish their visionary, visceral intensity and enduring influence.

Royal Trux have done as much to define the look, attitude and sound of rock & roll as any other group in the rock & roll era. This is due to their Bitches Brew approach: “everything in the pot whether you like it or not,” deriving from world music, punk rock, jazz, metal, electronic, southern, teeny-bop and all the rest. In the tradition of the blues, through appropriation and evaluation, Royal Trux changed the way we think of music — it is no surprise that their Truxian language has been further absconded with and recited uncredited for years. Such organic perpetuation only happens with original thought worthy of its own definition. This was and is Royal Trux: innovators and dedicated lifers among the sounds they love. Odds are, whether you know it or not, if you find yourself reading this you’ve been touched by Royal Trux. But only in the right places!