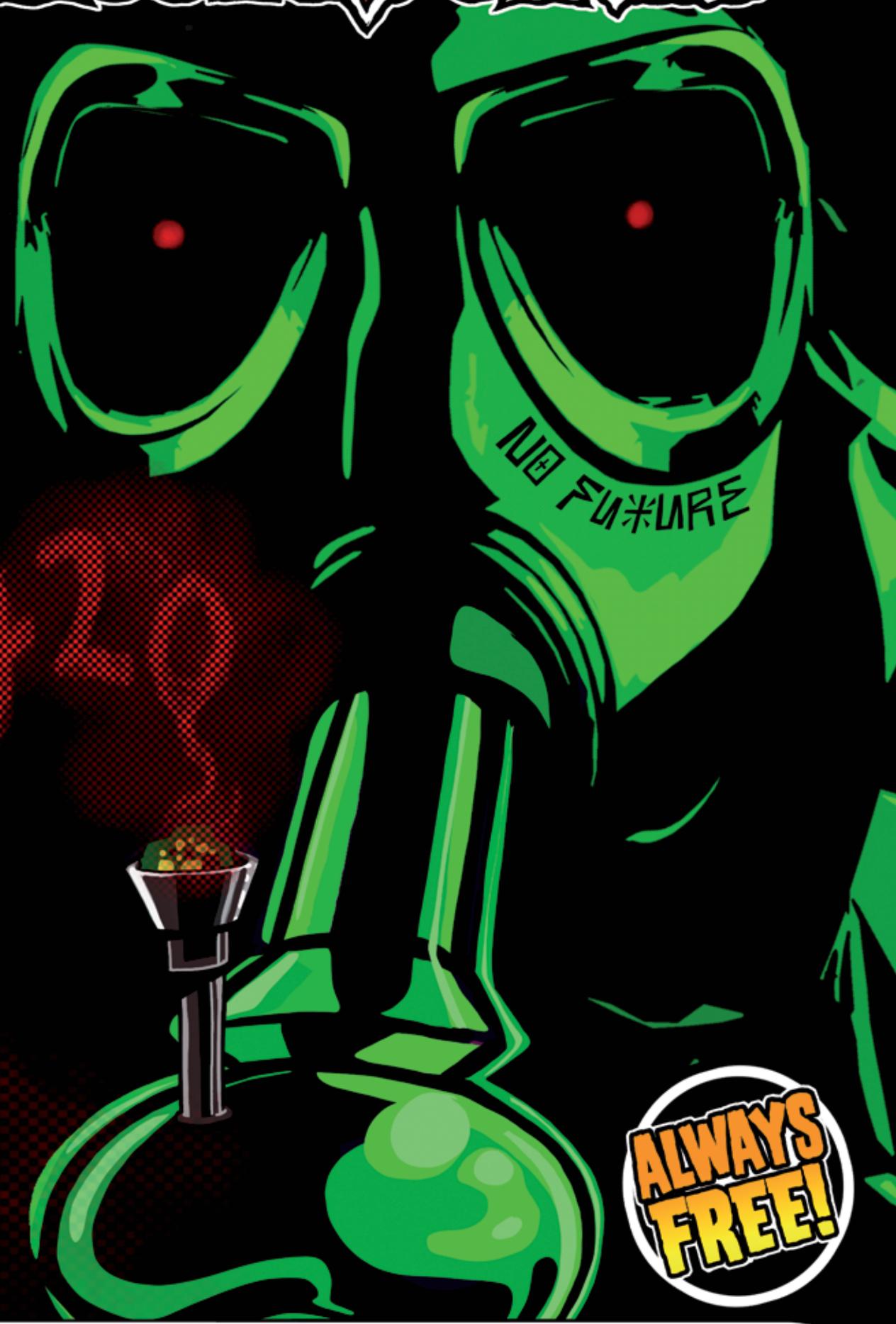


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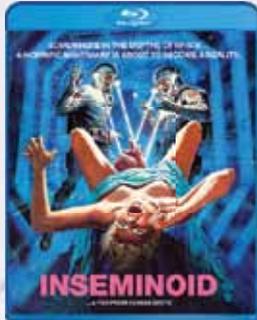


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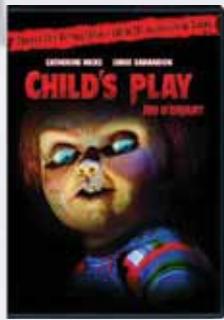
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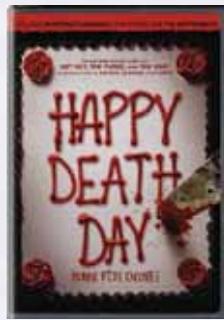
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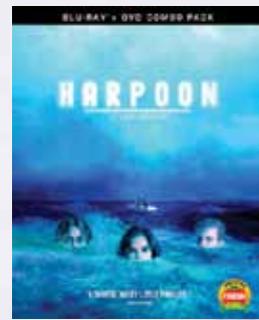
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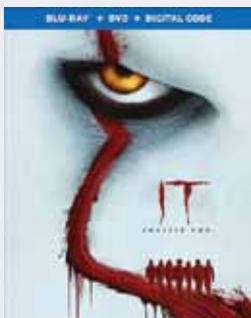
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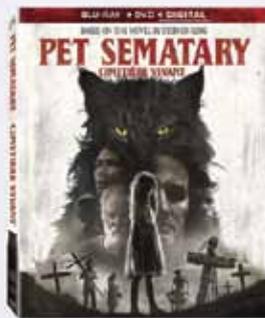
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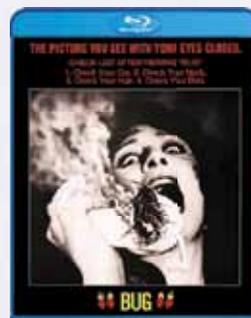
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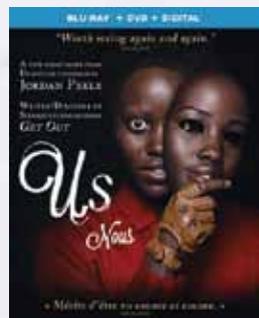
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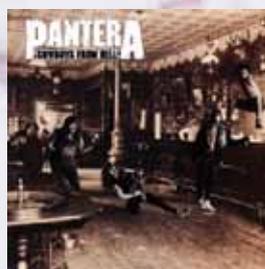
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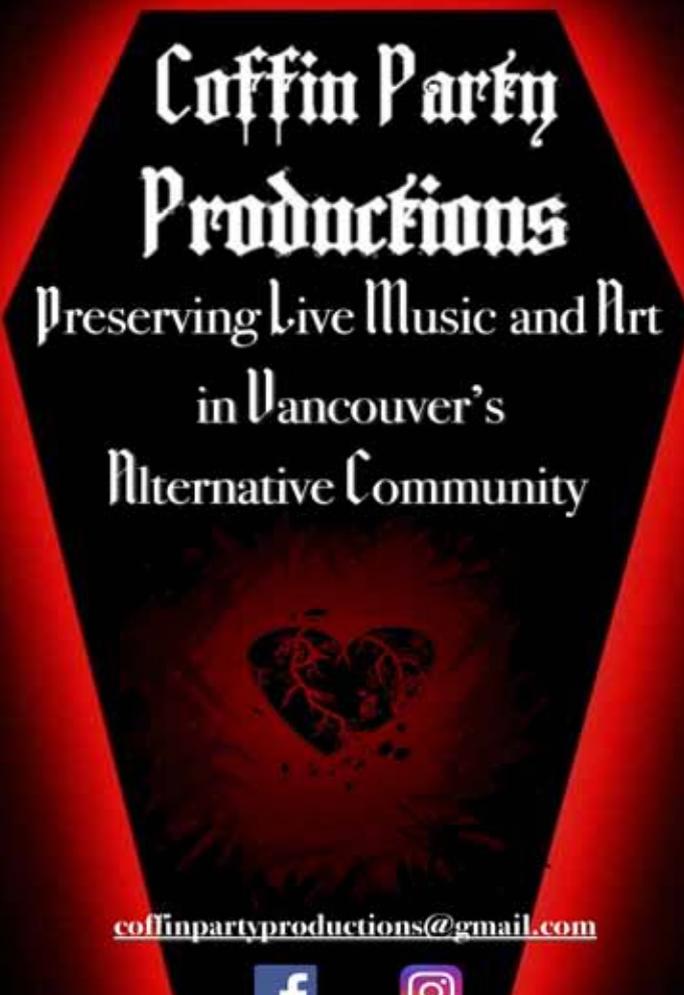
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

KELLY WATSON-SCHUTZ MEMORIAL	PAGE 5
VANCOUVER VENGEANCE - CHAIN WHIP	PAGE 6
VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY - THE DEAF AND DISOBEDIENT	PAGE 7
WEED OLYMPICS	PAGE 11
SUBCULTURE	PAGE 12
ABSOLUTE HORROR	PAGE 16
SASKATUNES - UNTIMELY DEMISE	PAGE 17
MONTREAL MASSACRE - THE LEF7OVERS	PAGE 18
BLAST FROM THE PAST - URIAH HEEP	PAGES 20-21
PURE PUNK - THE DICTATORS - ANDY SHERNOFF	PAGES 22-23
MICHAEL ALAGO -	PAGE 24
420 - THE REAL ORIGINS OF 420	PAGE 26
420 - ENDOCANNABINOID SYSTEM	PAGE 27
420 - SHARING WEED. NOT GERMS -	PAGE 28
420- SEVEN LIVESTREAMS TO WATCH THIS 420	PAGE 30
420 - HOW TO CLEAN WITHOUT ISO	PAGE 31
420 - CANNABIS CORNER	PAGE 32
SOUNDTRACKS FROM HELL - CHRISTOPHER YOUNG	PAGE 33
SICK AND TWISTED COLOURING PAGE BY SPYDER	PAGE 34
PSYCHO FEST - ROYAL THUNDER	PAGE 35
PSYCHO FEST - MONOPHONICS	PAGE 36
DRUMMERS CORNER - RIP	PAGE 38
420 - TITTY TITTY BONG BONG	PAGE 39
JESUS LOVES - JESUS HATES	PAGE 40
ABSOLUTE ASIA	PAGE 41
DNR - DO NOT RESUSCITATE	PAGE 49
COMIC-GEDDON	PAGE 50
CORONA ZOMBIES	PAGE 51
PUNK ROCK SAFETY WITH RATBOY ROY	PAGE 54
ABSOLUTE METAL - RITUAL DICTATES	PAGE 55
SASQUATCH BROTHERS	PAGE 56
ABSOLUTE ALBUM REVIEWS	PAGE 58



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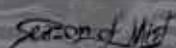
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The Deaf and Disobedient

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are you talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Gawen McFarland: Hey, I'm Gawen McFarland, the guitarist and vocalist of The Deaf and Disobedient! Apparently, I'm most infamous for screaming too much and being too loud.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and what are you all about?

GM: So it all started off when I met my drummer Luke at summer camp about six years ago. I

convinced him to learn how to play bass and play in the talent show with me. We managed to recruit my long-time friend Merrick on bass so we could start doing gigs. Merrick and I met when we were about 12 or 13 in Army Cadets. We went snowboarding with our cadet corp, got in a bunch of shit for getting lost on the mountain. Merrick never even did do the apology letter they made us write. As to our music and who were are, we are three friends that want to do what we're passionate about and that's making the best music that we possibly can.

AU: What's new in the Deaf and Disobedient camp? Are you working on new material right now?

GM: Well shit, it's less of a camp and more of a shed. We've been writing a lot of new songs and have also been doing a lot of shows in comparison to when we got going last year.

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

AU: When can we expect to hear it?

GM: We're not 100% sure when the recording process will begin, but this year we should have some polished recordings to publish.

AU: What themes/topics does your music explore?

GM: The topics of the music we write can vary song to song, ie. personal experiences, messages to people, politics, stories, emotions or just an overall middle finger. We've recently finished a song that talks about a girl that died at the age of ten because of something called reattachment therapy, but you'll have to come to one of our shows to hear that.

AU: When can we see you play live next?

GM: We have a show on the 25th of February at the Langford Legion Auditorium and two this week (Thursday January 30th with Don Tan Band at Logan's Pub on Cook Street and then Friday the 31st at the Langford Legion with Mk5, fast Hatchet and Lost Gold, an all original show that Benefits Victoria Women's Shelter and the Mustard Seed).

AU: What else does 2020 hold for you as a band? Will you be recording? Touring?

GM: Well, we will definitely be recording this year. I don't think a tour will happen this year, that would be sick as hell if we got the chance to!

AU: It seems like you guys have played a few benefit shows lately - are there any particular causes that are near and dear to you?

GM: Yeah, we did a show at Logans the other week that was for Solid Outreach. That benefit was a lot of fun and it was great knowing that we might have made a bit of a difference in someone's life. I'm particularly excited about the gig we're doing this week for Victoria Women's Shelter, it's going to be great because they helped people in my life when it was needed most.

AU: What's the Victoria heavy scene looking like these days? Any up and coming bands or

venues you'd like to give a shout out to?

GM: I'm not too sure what to say because I haven't been going to very many metal shows this year. I really liked Metal Fest last year, there was some gnarly riffage and decent mosh pits later on in the event. As for shouts, I'd like to give it out to (hands down) Kings and Cobras, they're young musicians with a burning passion, full of piss and vinegar, and they kill it up there.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

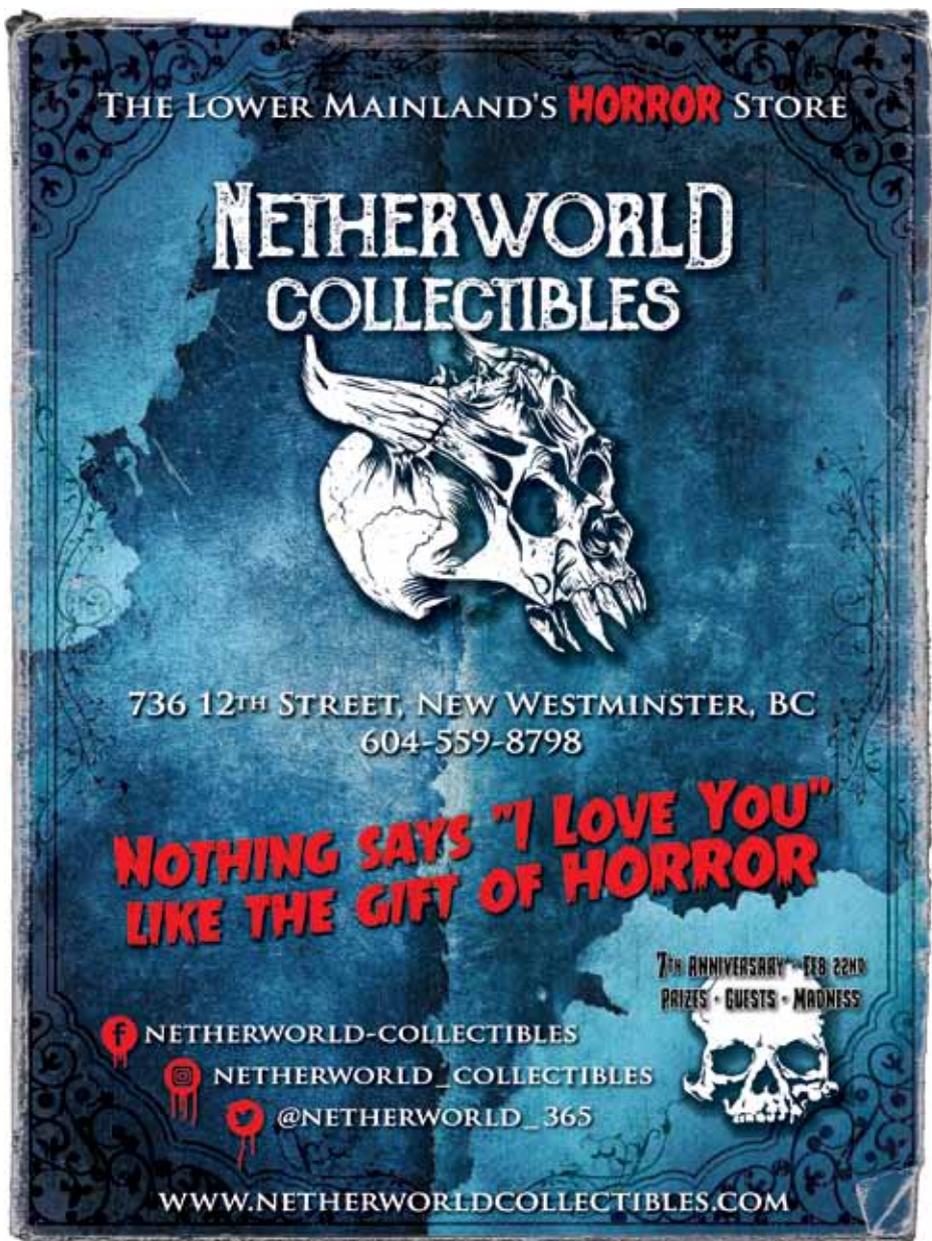
GM: Well, I thought you'd never ask... I like going out for dinner, playing with puppies and waking up in the drunk tank.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

GM: Fuck...

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KING TUT



DEATH BUBBA



KING KUSH

CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	EFFECTS	score 1-10	COMMENTS
KING TUT (80% SATIVA)	WELL TRIMMED TIGHT LIGHT GREEN NUGGETS OF JOY	VERY UNIQUE HARD TO PUT MY NOSE ON IT	SMOOTH UPLIFTING TASTY SMOKE	CAME ON FAST AND STRONG	TED LOST HIS ARM I HOPE HE FINDS IT	8	CEREBRAL PERMA-GRIN GIGGLING HYENA
DEATH BUBBA (INDICA)	CLASSIC KUSH LOOK MEDIUM DARK GREEN BUDLETS	BLACK LICORICE	SURPRISING STRANGE FLAVOUR	COUCH CALLING	THE KING TUT SATIVA AND THE DEATH BUBBA MIXING IN MY DRAIN TO FORM A PLEASANT SNAKE DITE	7	REALLY GRABS YOU BY THE BOO-BOO
KING KUSH (INDICA)	SUPER WHITE GLISTENING CRYSTALS	REFRESHING & PINEY	TICKLING MY TASTE BUDS	JUMPED ME UP ANOTHER LEVEL OF EUPHORIA	DOMINATED MY DOGO WITH A UNIQUE FLAVOUR I HAVE NEVER TASTED BEFORE. EUPHORIA NEED	8	A LEFT HOOK TO MY DOME A REAL WHOPPER
RASPBERRY KUSH (INDICA)	COATED TRICHOMES OF FURRY TIC	GASSY & DIESELY	HAPPY STELLAR TASTE	INSTANT HIGH-KICK TO MY BRAIN-PAN	TOP NOTCH ALL AROUND FRUITY RASPBERRY CREAM FILLING	10	GAVE ME WET-MOUTH NOT DRY-MOUTH. BLAST OFF TO NIRVANA!
VIOLATOR (INDICA)	MINI X-MAS TREES OF TIGHTLY TRIMMED GOODNESS	ALIEN SMELL FROM OUTER SPACE	SMOOTH ENJOYABLE TASTE BUD EXPLOSIONS	CRANKED TO ELEVEN	TOOK ME TO STRATOSPHERE. TIME TO VACUUM THE CEILING TIL 5 AM	10	I'VE BEEN VIOLATED! SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND!
WEDDING CAKE (HYBRID)	SPLENDID IMMACULATE MANICURE	SWEET CUPCAKE AROMA	LIKE SMOKING A FRUIT FILLED DONUT	BLENDED WELL WITH THE OTHER 5 STRAINS	WEED BLING THAT BLENDED MY BRAIN INTO A SMOOTHIE.	10	MOUTH WATERING HEAVEN. TASTED BETTER AND BETTER AS THE JOINT BURNT DOWN.



POT SNOB



RASPBERRY KUSH



VIOLATOR



WEDDING CAKE



@SAVVYSTONEDGIRL & SAVVYSTONEDMOM

CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	EFFECTS	score 1-10	COMMENTS
KING TUT (80% SATIVA)	NICE TIGHT BUD. VERY BRIGHT GREEN COLOR	FRUITY PLURGENT FULL SMALL SUPER FRAGRANT	SWEET SMOOTH & FRUITY	MEDIUM NOT SUPER STRONG AT FIRST	THE HAPPY PILL! HEAD BUZZ	7	SUPER SATIVA CREEPS UP ON YOU!! LIFTED ME UP!
DEATH BUBBA (INDICA)	LOOSER BUD DARKER GREEN	SKUNKY EARTHY	HARSH DIRTY TASTE	POTENT AF	ZERO TO STONED REAL QUICK	5	DARKER ASH SUPER HARSH BUT GREAT STONED EFFECT.
KING KUSH (INDICA)	SUPER FROSTY BRIGHT GREEN	PINE FULL DEEP EARTHY LIME	SMOOTH STRONG HARSH	STRONG! HEAVY! MADE ME SHIT!	HEAVY INDICA	7	CLEAN BURN. THIS ONE DEFINITELY GOT ME BAKED!!
RASPBERRY KUSH (INDICA)	FRESH! FRUITY! DELISH! CRYSTAL!	FRUITY GASSY PLURGENT	LIGHT FRUITY HARSH AFTERTASTE	FOUND IT STRONG	DISAPPOINTED IN THE BURN. HAD BIG EXPECTATIONS	6	HARSH AFTERTASTE. END OF THE DOOB WAS GROSS TASTE.
VIOLATOR (INDICA)	TIGHTER BUDS, LIGHT GREEN	LIGHT FLORAL MUSKY	SWEET EARTHY	BALANCED & UPLIFTING	ENERGIZING, BRINGING ME BACK UP!!	9	SMOKED BEAUTIFULLY! INDICA HEAVY STONE VIOLATED ME
WEDDING CAKE (HYBRID)	DENSE BUD MIX OF DARK / LIGHT GREEN	CITRUS LEMON PINE	CITRUSY SMOOTH	MEH, SUPER BALANCED HYBRID	AFTER 6 JOINTS WHO KNOWS!?	7	SMELLS LIKE LEMON PLEDGE. DARK ASH



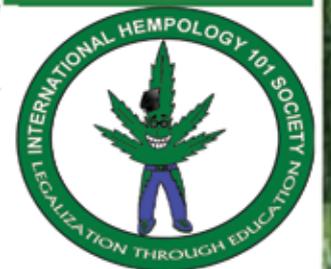
THE JUDGES



CANNABIS STRAIN	Appearance	smell	taste	potency	EFFECTS	score 1-10	COMMENTS
KING TUT (80% SATIVA)	DENSE NICE CRYSTALS	FRUITY	SMOOTH	MODERATE	WHERE IS MY ARM?	8	HEMPOLOGY 101
DEATH BUBBA (INDICA)	LIGHT	OLD SCHOOL DANK	DRY DIRTY HARSH	EXCELLENT	THE PARTS I REMEMBER WERE FUN	7	CAN'T WE ALL GET A BONG
KING KUSH (INDICA)	VERY FROSTY	STRONG PLURGENT	SUPER SWEET	SEDUCTIVE	MELTING MELTING MELTING	9	CLEAN BURN
RASPBERRY KUSH (INDICA)	DENSE TRICHOMES	BEAUTIFUL SWEET	GOOD TO THE LAST TORE	KICK ASS	JESUS WOULD LOVE IT	8	STRONG THROAT HIT
VIOLATOR (INDICA)	TIGHT, DENSE, LIGHT GREEN	FULL BOUQUET	LEAVES A YUMMY TASTE ON YOUR LIPS	MORE PLEASE?	CAN I HAVE MORE?	9	WORLD SOCIETY OF CANNABIS RESEARCH
WEDDING CAKE (HYBRID)	SPARKLING	PERFUME OF LOVE	MAKES MY MOUTH WET	GOT ME HIGH AFTER 5 OTHER JOINTS	COMFORTABLY NUMB	8	LEGALIZATION BY EDUCATION



Tedsmith420



GOLD MEDAL: VIOLATOR
SILVER: WEDDING CAKE
BRONZE: TE - KING KUSH AND RASPBERRY KUSH
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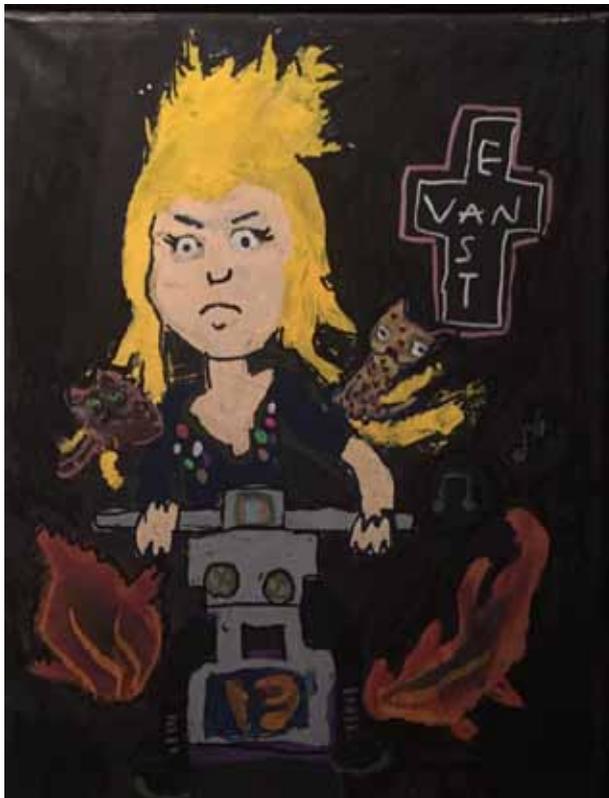
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subculture

by wendythirteen

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Gal. Paused. Punk and metal gigs. Nope. Homebody. Yep. Provisions. Yep. Fucking around nonessentially outside. Fucking NO.

I'll have to figure something out. I've worked exclusively in the underground music scene for over two decades. Wanna buy a painting?

Just before my enforced by pandemic work stoppage, I helped throw a memorial show for Kelly Watson Schutz on March 6th. It was amazing to see so many in the music community come together. We raised at least \$8000 for the Vokra kitties in Kelly's name. There were big plans to have a giant cheque made and a presentation to Vokra once all the auction and raffle funds were collected by mid-April. I'm not sure how it ends now. That's in merch handler extraordinaire Kate's capable hands.

Kelly would have been proud. It was a great tribute. The love in the air was huge. It was also

the culmination of the many fundraisers in the previous 9 months that ended up with this memorial.

So many people came together.

They planned.

They donated their creations.

They bought it back.

They bid.

They threw shows.

They played the shows.

They attended the shows.

They paid cover.

They made buttons, pins, patches, posters and

skateboards.

They made art.

They made music.

They hugged.

They cried.

They celebrated.

They remembered.

And we loved.

A community, together for Kelly.

My last live show was the Dayglo Abortions also at Pats, where I work(ed). I was also throwing the show. It was by then, March 14th, and I was already feeling uneasy about participating in public events. All three bands were on a mini tour from the island. The pub was still open. No restrictions. The Provincial limitations came into effect a day or so later.

As I was promoting the show on social media I stated a free will blurb. This gig is for the congregating comfortable only, bring cash, and don't touch me! Of course, an 'always a nightmare' attendee, having a booze fuelled conniption, fucked that shift wishlist regulation, and quickly became the Door Gal Diaries, loser pissed, Grand Poobah of the night. Doing a lap around the venue complete with vitriolic spittle and getting doused with road pop cider was splendid touch. She had long ago deleted me off Facebook so she didn't get the message. Hahaha fuck.

This last pre-pandemic gig checked almost all the total shitshow boxes. The only cherry on top would have been a long ago and far away, shower of shitwater.

Luckily, I'm already adept at social distancing and a germaphobe to boot. I stock hand sanitizer at my ticket wicket and haven't shaken hands for ages. Gone will be the perplexed looks as I slather myself after an encounter, as these new germ guard social nuances will now be the norm.

Ahead of my time, I was already a homebody, a loner, and somewhat of an introvert. I'm sure social butterflies, recreational drug users, right

ABSOLUTE SUBCULTURE

wingnuts and audience seeking narcissists are having a really hard time in these anti-socialization conditions. You see them in the parks picnicking, lounging on beaches, crowding nearby trails and now protesting self-isolating. Seriously. Fuck you.

You are the people that will make this lockdown longer. What is it with humans that couldn't be bothered ever taking a walk, a bike ride, or going to a local show that suddenly feel the urge to be out unnecessarily threatening their community.

You go out for provisions, or to work if you're in essential service. If you need to be outside, stay in your yard or your neighbourhood. Stop loitering, Period.

Selfish assholes hogging that limited space on public transit to get to far off locations to simply fuck around 'enjoying nature' are endangering essential workers that need to be using the system safely.

Life will not be normal for quite a while and hopefully will shift the world out of this death defying capitalist dance altogether.

Time to stop living beyond your means.

Time to redefine needs and wants.

Consumerism is over rated, fuels false fulfillment and its strangulation may be the answer to climate change.

You're going to learn to be alone without being lonely.

I guess I will enter some semblance of cave mode until my cultural aptitudes that require physical presence are reinstated, while the rest of the hip and tech savvy culturists adapt. Zoom away. Online gigs await.

Thanks to those keeping us alive and supplied.

Stay safe.

XO.



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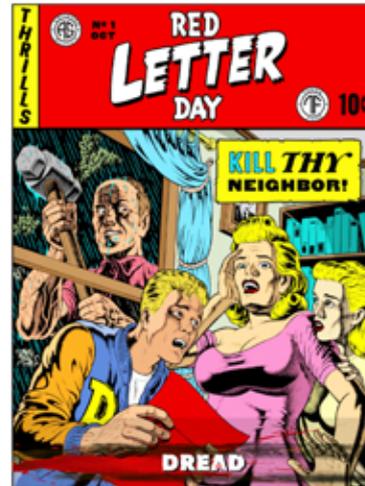
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The Golden Age of 1990s Hollywood Horror

The year? 1996 – smack-dab in the middle of the nineties. The nineties' Golden Age of Hollywood-produced horror films had its catalyst a couple of years prior to this, when Wes Craven took a swipe at melting his horror fans' minds by throwing us *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*, a wild and shockingly elevated meta-genre horror ride that twisted our expectations when, at that time,



we were expecting him to come out with the Eddie Murphy horror vehicle *A Vampire in Brooklyn* (which ended up being released a year later). Also prone to this release-date switch-around was John Carpenter, whose fans were expecting *In the Mouth of Madness* in 1994, only to receive nothing until the following year, when his take on *Village of the Damned* was widely released into the cinemas... *In the Mouth of Madness* would eventually quietly creep out sometime in 1995 without much advertising or fanfare, even though it was miles superior to *Village*, which Carpenter himself admitted, "I fucked that up."



However, even though these Hollywood genre giants were still rabidly active in the filmmaking system of the mid-nineties, it would be a couple of films from the arthouse and foreign side of the horror genre that would really grab the attention of horror fanatics – Alex Proyas' *The Crow* and Michele Soavi's *Cemetery Man* (aka "Dellamorte Dellamore", which was a take on the popular Italian comic series, "Dylan Dog"). Not only did these films grab horror fans' attention by using dark and inspired visuals and by twisting the horror genre on its head, they also grabbed our imaginations and practically rejuvenated the entire cinematic horror genre. Perhaps, then, it was a bit of a blessing that Carpenter's later-career masterpiece *In the Mouth of Madness* had been delayed and was ultimately released on the tails of these game-changing horror films...

Cut to 1995, where one would think that the ground-breaking visions of the previous year's arthouse and international horror films would



continue to supplement the rising wave of 1990s horror... when in fact, it would actually be a cinematic re-launch of *Tales from the Crypt*. 1995 saw the release of the first non-anthology full-length TFC movie, *Demon Knight* (William Sadler, Billy Zane, Jada Pinkett, Dick Miller), which, since 1995, has incredibly only gotten better with age. *Tales From the Crypt presents: Demon Knight* never pretended to be anything more than what its horror-comic

inspirational roots ever were; and the producers, with new director Ernest Dickerson on board, delivered a funny, balls-out action-horror flick with old school horror-exploitation expectations firmly delivered on but with a fully renewed sense of humor and gusto. Not only did *Demon Knight* set up an enjoyably long genre career for its director Ernest Dickerson, who would go on to



direct the adrenalized genre movies *Surviving the Game* and *Bones* along with several top episodes of *The Walking Dead*, *Masters of Horror*, and *Dexter* (he had also been George Romero's second unit director on *Day of the Dead* and cinematographer on several episodes of *Tales from the Darkside*), but the inaugural *Tales from the Crypt* film also blew open the doorway to a handful of extremely impactful horror films the following year. And at one time, two of these films had originally been considered as TFC follow-ups to *Demon Knight* – the bonkers vampire cult movie from Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez, *From Dusk till Dawn*, and Peter Jackson's pre-*Lord of the Rings* genre opus *The Frighteners* (the latter which was still produced by HBO's *Tales from the Crypt* producers).

From Dusk till Dawn was the first of these horror films released in 1996, which is where the Golden Age of 90s Hollywood Horror really began. As 1996 went forward there was such a surge in mainstream audience's appetite for horror that Universal Studios rushed to move the release date of *The Frighteners* from an originally-

intended Halloween release to throwing it smack in the middle of an action-packed blockbuster



summer – in a year that saw the likes of *Mission: Impossible*, *Twister*, *The Rock*, and *Independence Day*. Between all of this, there was also release of the popular "surprise hit" (and now also cult-status) PG-13 emo/alt take on the supernatural genre *The Craft* and also

its nearly immediate direct-to-video rip-off *Little Witches*, which is really *The Craft* for the R-rated exploitation crowd. *The Craft* starred up-and-coming starlet Neve Campbell, who would also finish off 1996 by starring in horror maverick Wes Craven's most celebrated

and sequel-churning film since his original *A*

Nightmare on Elm Street, the Kevin Williamson-penned *Scream*, which wrangled \$173 million US on a budget of \$15 million. And in a very weird and unforeseeable way, it would also be *Scream* that would ultimately be the catalyst for the decline in creative and edgy horror post-1996...

But let's certainly not let a little thing like the decline of creative horror in the late nineties detract from some of the other gems that had been released in that time period, which came in under the mainstream radar (or in other words the mostly direct-to-video films or movies with a very limited theatrical release in '95-'96), such as Anthony Waller's *Mute Witness*, Stuart Gordon's long-tied-up gothic-Lovecraftian pseudo-adaptation *Castle Freak*, which finally reunited *Re-Animator* actors Jeffrey Combs and Barbara Crampton and screenwriter Dennis Paoli; and Matthew Bright's totally off-the-wall take on "Little Red Riding Hood" *Freeway*, which starred Keifer Sutherland as a maniacal pedophile, Brook Shields as his secret-keeping wife, and then-unknown Reese Witherspoon as the young unexpected heroine.



But following *Scream*, which had been released in December of 1996, screenwriter Kevin Williamson's career blasted off into the stratosphere, and Hollywood wasted no time in green-lighting his more mediocre efforts post-'96, including *Scream 2*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, and *Teaching Mrs. Tingle*, which all seemed to satiate the horror fans at the time, but never

had the lasting power of the prior films that have since become cult staples. By the end of the 90s horror mavens Wes Craven and Sam Raimi had both publicly expressed a burning desire to move away from the genre, possibly permanently, and Craven would see his one and only opportunity at a "prestige picture", choosing to film *Music from the Heart*, which starred Meryl Streep as an inner-city music teacher and Aidan Quinn as her love interest. Craven's attempt at a "serious" picture was at least several miles

Absolute Horror



better than Raimi's dubious and somewhat desperate Kevin Costner baseball movie *For the Love of the Game*, a pretty disappointing turn that sat right in the middle of his otherwise exceptional low-key thrillers *A Simple Plan* and *The Gift* at the turn of the millennium. But by this time, it was too late to recover the magic of the mid-nineties' horror movies; Peter Jackson had clearly moved on, as had most of the original *Tales from the Crypt* producers; Brandon Lee had died, dissipating any hope of a decent *Crow* follow-up, and even the 1996 *Tales from the Crypt* movie sequel *Bordello of Blood* wasn't going to save anything, no matter how many naked bloodsucking vampire hookers were exploding across the silver screen.

By Vince D'Amato

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Blind Beggar Pub

Untimely Demise

interview by Demonika

AU: Who are we speaking to?

UD: Hello AU team! You are speaking with Untimely Demise bassist, co-manager and lyricist, Murray Cuthbertson

AU: How long has Untimely Demise been around, where are you from, and what are you guys about?

UD: My brother (Matt Cuthbertson) and I started playing together in our hometown of Saskatoon in late 1999 and the band began performing under the UD moniker in 2000. We were originally a metal punk band and then reemerged with the intentions of becoming a serious metal band in 2006. This included the addition of Scott Cross on drums (played on the first 3 albums recorded with Glen Drover). Our band's ethos has always been to play whatever style/subgenre of music we want and we believe that if it captivates us it will resonate with fans as well. Every album of our's has had a slightly different sound but old school thrash is our sonic meat and potatoes. We believe in having respect for all and creating unity through the universal vernacular of music.

AU: Tell us about the members and any other projects they are involved in.

UD: We have Matt Cuthbertson, the band's composer, lead guitarist and lead vocalist, who also plays guitar in Into Eternity, Ravenwitch and has done guest vocals for Glen Drover's Walls of Blood project, as well as playing solos on Generichrist's 'Loss For Words'. He also has his own guitar teaching school, Matt Cuthbertson Guitar Academy. Then we have Adam Sweeney, our rhythm guitarist hailing from Edmonton. He also plays in Tessitura and

Lucifer Project. Last, but not least, we have Bryan Newbury on the drums. He is involved in a plethora of bands including Into Eternity, Sadistic Embodiment, and more. Bryan also dedicates his time to teaching percussion as well being an avid powerlifter.

AU: How is the thrash scene in Saskatchewan?

UD: Haha, well it is small at the moment in terms of thrash bands, I think we are the only one that is currently active, but we have a great all round metal family here, which features hard-hitters like Planet Eater, Kelevra, Wasted Heretics, Diehearted, Agony Spawn, Side Step The Crow, Pythonic, Ravenwitch, etc. Thrash is still a huge part of our mosaic scene and we are very pleased with the up and coming bands we are seeing and sharing stages with. Venues like The Black Cat and Amigos in Saskatoon, as well as Zandra and everyone at the Exchange in Regina, make for a inclusive, safe and mosh-friendly scene. SaskMusic and Creative Sask have been extremely supportive in our plans for world thrash domination.

AU: How many albums do you have currently? (Including Themes, art work, sound, etc)

UD: We have 4 LPs and 1 EP thus far in our career. First there was Full Speed Metal EP 2009, followed up by our first full-length City Of Steel 2010/2011, and then Systematic Eradication 2013. These first 3 were produced by ex-Megadeth/King Diamond guitarist, Glen Drover and really helped launch our band to the world. Then we brought Bryan into the band for Black Widow 2016 and released our most current album No Promise Of Tomorrow in late 2018. All of our releases have been graced by the stunning post-apocalyptic illustrations of Ed Repka (Rust In Peace, Leprosy) and they all have been visual personifications of each album title.

AU: What have some highlights been in the past few years for UD?

UD: So many to list, but I would say playing in Europe have been the greatest moments. We played England, Belgium and Germany in 2014 with Massacre (and Pestilence for a show) then played Germany last summer at Headbangers Open Air with Exciter, Sanctuary, and more legendary old school acts. Touring with DTA, Obituary and Massacre in 2014, and with Obituary and Skeletonwitch in 2018 were also dream come true moments.

AU: You recently were due to play at one of the largest shows in Canada, the Juno Awards, tell us about that.

UD: Basically, our Alberta members came out a few days before the show to begin rehearsals and the second day we received word from organizers that the COVID crisis had scuttled the awards and Junofest event that we were supposed to play with our friends in Striker. Definitely a huge disappointment, but we realize that people's lives are in jeopardy and music can take a backseat to addressing this pandemic.

AU: What is on the horizon for UD?

UD: The next full-length album has already been written and demoed by Matt, I am in the process of completing lyrics and next step is to have Bryan lay down some incendiary beats. I'm sure by Fall we should have something released, if not sooner. Being focused on the present, we are all just rehearsing hard, learning new chops and keeping our eyes on the prize.

AU: Anything further you want to promote?

UD: We want to promote peace, prosperity and hope through music and hope everyone stays safe and healthy out there.

Photo Credit : Erin Lindsay Cuthbertson.



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URIAH HEEP

interview with lead guitarist
and founding member Mick Box

by Ira Hunter and Clark Mantei

Intro by Clark Mantei

Hi everyone. Welcome to Blast From The Past.

In this issue of Absolute Underground we look at the legendary band URIAH HEEP.

This time we venture all the way back to 1970 when a band from London, England entered the Rock n Roll scene with their debut album entitled ...Very 'Eavy ...Very 'Umble, which was released in June of 1970. For a band to reach a milestone of 50 years is nothing short of amazing. The group have recorded and toured endlessly with a prolific catalogue of 25 albums to date along with an amazing 25 musicians within these past 50 years.

That's actually poetic being that their manager at the time of their formation penned the name Uriah Heep from a Charles Dickens play he saw performed in London in 1969, which was also the 100th anniversary of Mr. Dickens passing in 1869. The play was called David Copperfield and featured a character named Uriah Heep. Ironic as that seems, the Uriah Heep band took the dark stingy character that Dickens portrayed and turned the characters name into a positive passionate musical group that captured a formula of spellbinding hypnotic original music within their own compositions. They seem to encompass their original Rock n Roll and blend it with the styles of progressive, psychedelic, folk, pop, blues and boogie woogie music as well. All mixed up into a wonderous catalogue of music. Put simply... Uriah Heep music. And they do it effortlessly. Well, at least they make it seem that way. The band are indeed seasoned professionals. I encourage you to delve deep into their catalogue.

In this article, Ira Hunter caught up with 2 of their members while they were on tour supporting Judas Priest. The first interview is with original member and guitarist Mick Box. Mick is the originator of the group and has been there since day one. Also Ira interviewed Phil Lanzon. Phil has played keyboards with the band since 1986. Both interviews takes a deeper look at the magic and wizardry of this very special band.

In 1983 my friend handed me a copy of Demons and Wizards from Uriah Heep. I immediately learned 'The Wizard' on guitar and discovered Drop D tuning. What an album and what a cool tune. Later that summer I personally saw Uriah Heep perform live in my home town arena in Victoria B.C. when they were supporting another English band that were new on the scene (that band was none other than Def Leppard) and to this day I always think Uriah Heep should have headlined.

Just sayin'! Uriah Heep left a huge impression on me as I was a 15 year old teenager at the time.

Now, in 2020 they've arrived at a very special anniversary and it's right on time. What's the quote from Lord of the Rings?..

"A wizard is never late, nor is he early, he arrives precisely when he means to."

OK readers... Enjoy.

Rock Out... Roll on.

Clarko SuperMantei.

Your wild mannered reporter.

AU: Who are we talking to and what do you most famous or infamous for?

Mick Box: Oh, what am I best known for? I have no idea really. haha. I'm from a band called Uriah Heep I guess, you know, it's been nearly 49 years now coming up to our 50th anniversary. We're playing concerts in 61 countries around the world and it's all going very well. Thank you. {laughs}

AU: So take me through the very beginning of Uriah heep. Just briefly, how did you step into that musical landscape and secure yourself a spot?

MB: I think it was just a complete rebellious thing that was happening at the time you know with bands like Deep Purple, Jethro Tull, Led Zeppelin



and Black Sabbath. We came out of the 60s where it was very sweet music, nice choruses all sound beautifully with everyone wearing suits and doing dance moves. We come out as a complete rebellion to that you know, we had big Marshall stacks, long hair, stack shoes, bell bottoms. It was all very rebellious but of course out of that came some really great music. That music has stood the test of time that people still like hearing in the live arena which is fantastic. Which is why we're still here today.

AU: That's amazing. What are some of your most standout tracks that are the most timeless?

MB: I think over the years probably in Canada and America probably 'Easy Livin' would be a big one, 'July Morning' and 'Stealin' was a very big one... 'The Wizard', we've had quite a few over time.

AU: Not many other bands have 25 albums. What is it about the longevity of Uriah Heep?

MB: I think it's because we always look forward to it. You know, we're very proud of our history but, we still kept recording new albums, which is what living the dream is all about. The nice thing about that is people are saying that the new album is one of the best albums of our career. And that's not a bad thing is it? When you're done, you're 49 years on and it's your 25th album so it's quite good that we can still produce good music that people still love.

AU: That's amazing, and how has this tour been with Judas Priest?

MB: It's a great combination, because we don't touch each other's toes. We come out and play classic rock and they come out and play the metal that they're known for, and they do it very, very well.

AU: How important was album artwork to you back in the day?

MB: I think it was very important in those days, because when people bought albums quite often they're thumbing through the racks of the album's and something catches your eye, you pick it up and you put it on. If you like the music you'd buy it, so it was a very important part of it. And it still is for us today, we still take pride in the artwork that we have, even with 'Living the Dream' the new album.

AU: Through the whole time as a band, everything changed around you, but do you feel like you're still Uriah heep?

MB: Well, we established a template of how we wanted to sound and look back in 1970 and we continue with that, we don't follow trends and fads. We call it 'There's new wave and there's old wave and then there is us, which is permanent wave.

AU: I live in Victoria BC and that's where your singer is from. So we're hoping that you'll come and play a show.

MB: Yeah! But we did! We played there once. I can't remember where it was and it was a very small venue.

AU: Anything else you want to promote that's coming up?

BLAST FROM THE PAST

MB: When we finish this tour and get back to England in July we do all the festivals and then we have a huge Scandinavian tour that'll take us through a bit of Europe and then we go to South America. Then we break for Christmas and New Year. And then we start again in Germany with a long tour in 2020. So it's just endless.

AU: Any final words for Canadian fans?

MB: Canadian fans thank you for your support over the years and without you guys and I would be nothing so here's to you and we thank you very much for buying the albums, supporting the band and buying the tickets to come to see us. It means a lot to us and, and I think you can see that when we go on stage.

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URIAH HEEP

interview with keyboardist Phil Lanzon
by Ira Hunter and Clark Mantei

AU: Who are we talking with?

Phil Lanzon: I'm Phil Lanzon from Uriah Heep and saying hi to you guys out there reading this.

AU: How did you first get in with Uriah Heep?

PL: Well I was, I was on tour with SWEET, 'Ballroom Blitz' and all that. Back in the mid 80s. And it was folding up at the time and they were going to break the band up for a while. And I decided I wanted to get out and so I spoke to a sound manager who I knew who said that 'Heep' was looking for a keyboard player. And I said, 'Well, you know, put me in touch.' So I was in Tasmania and down in Australia, and I got a call from Mick Box. We talked about the songs. And soon as I got back from the tour with Sweet. We went into rehearsals, and that was that. 1986.

AU: Can you fill it in a bit of the earlier history of Uriah Heep, just to get to that point, because they've been going since 69, I believe.

PL: It was 1970. It was the birth of Uriah Heep. That's the actual date of the debut album. That's why we're celebrating our 50th next year. Yeah, the band went through early great successes all around the world in the early 70s. The band then changed its personnel a few times. Some left and some unfortunately passed away. Moving up into the 80's there was another lineup with Mick Box, Trevor Bolder and Lee Kerslake still in the band. Then that went apart, but Mick kept it together and that's how I came around in the mid 80s. Bernie Shaw joined just after me, and that lineup lasted about 20 years. So we're into 2006 and around that time is when Russ Gilbrooke joined the band. Then six years ago Dave Rimmer joined the band and then here we are in 2020. Boom!

AU: Uriah Heep has like 25 studio albums over that time. I don't think there's any other band with that many except maybe Frank Zappa?

PL: Yeah really! I'd say you're probably right. Yes, it's a lot of studio albums. I mean, of course, there's thousands of bootlegs and there's thousands of other releases, dvd's and compilations made. I can't even count them. It's impossible as there's so many. {laughs}

AU: What was Mick Box's original vision when he started the band? Was it influence or was it something new at that time?

PL: No. Yet the bands that were around at that time we're obviously highly influential in the rock world. It was Sabbath and Zeppelin. And there was a band called 'Vanilla Fudge' from America who had created that new sound with harmonies and all with a hammond organ and did it like that. And that's the kind of thing that's still present in the memory today. So that's where the influences came from.



AU: Do you still have a Hammond organ on stage?

PL: No, we can't. We don't truck a Hammond as it's too dangerous and is too costly. I don't have that set up because we don't tour at that level. Until we do?...Well, you know I won't bore you with all the details, but I started to learn piano when I was 8 years old. I went through the whole gamut of learning and studying and doing all that and I left that when I was about 14. I then joined my first band when I was at school and it just went on from there. I kept playing and working in bands through my early days as a teenager. And then it became serious bands and then we went on the road in the mid to late 60's. And then, come the 70's I had a family, but I still played and then I got into a touring band. It was my own band in the early 80's called 'Grand Prix'. That band came to an end. Then I joined Sweet and finally I joined Uriah Heep. So it's been musical the whole time. Plus I write a lot of songs and I do a lot of songwriting. Also for the band and for myself as a solo artist.

AU: So how did you first get into music?

PL: Well, there's a funny thing about that is when my mom...bless her, said to me one day: 'You're going to have piano lessons.' I was horrified! I was horrified because at school those days and I'm talking about the late 50's... No kid...very few kids learned the piano. It was mainly guitar, because guitar was just growing into this massive rock and roll thing in the early rock and roll days and I just couldn't handle the idea of it. And on the same day of my first lesson, I also had a dentist appointment as a kid. Now, I said to my mom, 'I'd rather go to the dentist and stay there.' laughs .. but you know? She was right!

AU: It paid off. The band has had lots of members, does it feel like a big family?

PL: It looks that way, doesn't it? I mean, you know, we have a lot of changes in personnel over the years even though we did have that 20 year span of the same lineup. I think a lot of people don't tend to realize that. But yes, it is like that really.

AU: Back to the the Hammond organ. You were saying about adding in that keyboard was what made Uriah Heep a little different because not every band was doing that.

PL: Back then no. Yet there were a few bands doing it. I mean, there's the Purple obviously. And also Atomic Rooster was another band from that period as well with Vince Crane, who played Hammond. So there were a few but not many. It was mainly guitar based bands.

AU: Maybe you inspired Geddy Lee to start to put the keyboard in the RUSH albums? That's what he is saying. Okay, it was back in the day that RUSH went on their first tour and opened for Uriah Heep.

PL: That's right. I wasn't there, but yes they did.

AU: That's pretty legendary. Do you guys think you will come to Victoria, because I know that your singer is from Victoria.

PL: He's from Victoria, yes. Yeah, he's from Victoria. He joined just after me in 1987.

AU: Do you know how a guy from Victoria ended up in Uriah Heep?

PL: Yes, I do. What we did back then when I first joined the band, we auditioned a lot of singers to do the first tour that I was part of. And we settled on an American singer, Stefan Tate. And we did the first tour at the end of 1986 with him, but it didn't work out. So while we were on tour, we contacted Bernie and we said "Look .. Are you still up for the gig?" And he was up for it, so that's how he got in. He got in six months after me.



AU: We're hoping you guys will play Victoria.

PL: Well, we did play, we did play Victoria on that tour in 86. And Bernie wasn't with us. {laughs}

AU: How is this tour with Judas Priest?

PL: Fantastic! The audience's reception has been amazing every night. Every show has been fantastic. No complaints at all. Yeah, I mean, they don't know what to expect when we play the first song. By the time we come to the end of the second song they are all in. So it's really a great time and they're really appreciative. Which is fantastic. It's been a great tour.

AU: As Uriah Heep is known for having some heavy elements. Do you play a set that's geared towards the Judas Priest crowd?

PL: Well yeah because it's a Priest tour. You have to adhere a little bit to that because the people who are going to see Priest want noise. Obviously. I mean you can drop it a little but you gotta bring it back up so yeah! I think you understand. {laughs}

AU: You've been in it a long time. Have you found that the musical landscape has changed? Yet Uriah Heep seems to be a constant through it all.

PL: Yes, yes, it does because every time we write a new studio album we bear that in mind. There's a blueprint of sound that Uriah Heep has from history. So, we bear that in mind as we write songs. So we bring in that element and make sure it's there. And then we very carefully choose the right lyrics because lyric writing is very important. So we make sure that the lyrics have a certain standard, and we stick to that as well.

AU: What was the first album that you were on?

PL: Raging Silence, which was '89?

BLAST FROM THE PAST

AU: The name of the band Uriah Heep, where did it originate from?

PL: It's from Charles Dickens. A book called David Copperfield. And Uriah Heep was the accountant in the story. And the manager at the time of the band before it was debuting; the band was then called Spice, and he took his son to see a theater show. It was the David Copperfield play celebrating Charles Dickens, who had died 100 years earlier to that day. The theater was celebrating Charles Dickens and the manager picked up on the character's name and really liked it. He came back and told the band. "Look, what do you think of this name?" And everyone went 'Yeah, okay!' So it was unanimous.

AU: People say that the Mr. Burns from the Simpsons is based on that character, Uriah Heep. Was he like an old curmudgeon?



PL: Yeah yeah, you could say that. There's a lot of characters based on Uriah Heep.

AU: Yeah. And then also, there's a Simpsons reference to Uriah Heep in the show.

PL: Yeah, Uriah's Heap!

AU: Yeah, Uriah's Heap the recycling depot.

PL: H E A P. Yeah, that's the Simpsons. Fame at last. laughs

AU: Do you have anything else to promote?

PL: Yeah. My solo album. Well I've got two albums out now. The first one is called 'If you think I'm crazy', and the second album is called '48 Seconds'. The title of 48 Seconds refers to a song which is dedicated to the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. And it's the story about what happened. The earthquake lasted 48 seconds and it set fire to the city for three and a half days. And most of the city was flattened like an atomic bomb. Some people escaped, some didn't. It was pretty bad. A terrible catastrophe, but the city was built up again as we know. And I like to work with orchestra and choir. So on both those albums I've put quite a lot of arrangement into all of it and you can hear it if you get a hold of the copy.

AU: And then will there be a 26th Uriah Heep album?

PL: Oh yeah, no doubt there will be talk of that very soon. Number 26 here we come!

AU: Until then you'll just keep on truckin' down the road with Judas Priest for a while?

PL: Yeah and then it's festivals throughout the summer. Then we're rehearsing in December and January for the 50th year anniversary, which is 2020. 2020 guys!

www.uriah-heep.com

The Dictators

The Dictators

interview with founding member Andy Shernoff
by Ira Hunter and Dustin Jak

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous of infamous for?

Andy Shernoff also known as the Christopher Columbus of Punk. I'm famous for inventing punk rock,... you're welcome!

Hopeful I'm not infamous for anything... I avoid the limelight and I'm not particularly interested in celebrity. I'm interested in making music which is it's own reward. I want people to appreciate my work but the nuts and bolts of writing and recording is not sensational stuff. My motto is, "every day you make music, is a good day" and life has been good!



AU: How did you first get into music?

My mother's side was musical and my parents listened to records all the time, they made me take piano lessons, I listened to the radio then BAM!!!!... The Beatles were on Ed Sullivan and I saw the light at the end of the tunnel of my life... rock and roll became my passion. A week after one of the Beatles Ed Sullivan appearances some classmates and I decided to do a Beatles performance for show and tell in school. We mimed to a Beatles record and pandemonium ensued. The girls started screaming and the teacher freaked out halting our performance but I immediately understood that girls liked bad boy musicians.

AU: Is it true you started as a rock journalist?

Way back in the day, when I was a teenager, before I even thought of becoming a musician, I had aspirations of being a rock writer. I published a satirical fanzine called Teenage Wasteland Gazette and contributed to numerous rock magazines including the notorious Creem. My idols were Richard Meltzer, Nick Tosches and Lester Bangs. They all supported my rock venture and eventually became my friends. To be honest the whole thing was a scheme to get free records by getting on record company mailing lists as a rock reviewer... it worked. Everyday there were 5 or 6 records left by the mailman on my front door.

AU: What was the genesis and origin of your band The Dictators?

I was attending State University at New Paltz, NY and my roommate was friends with Scott. In those days if you met another person who liked The Stooges you immediately became friends, so we were rock and roll buddies.

Ross was playing in a local band called Total Crudd who hosted crazy, over the top parties that I regularly attended. One day Ross tells me he wants to quit Total Crudd and start a new band, I said great, I'll play bass - even though I didn't even own a bass, had never played a bass and had never even been in a band! Scott joined up and we signed a record contract with Epic Records a year and a half later.

By the way, our first show was opening for The Stooges and The Blue Oyster Cult at Prince George Community College in Maryland.

AU: Who else formed the band with you and what did they bring to the table?

It was Ross, Scott and myself. Ross was the only

skilled musician at the time, his musical skills gave us credibility. Scott and I were ambitious amateurs. Scott had a great record collection and excellent knowledge and perspective on rock and roll. He eventually became an excellent songwriter and guitar player with the band The Del Lords.

They were both very supportive of my early songwriting but the important thing is we all shared a dream and a vision of the kind of band we wanted to be.

AU: How did your singer get the name Handsome Dick Manitoba? Is he Canadian?

No he's from the Bronx. I gave him the name because I thought Handsome Dick Manitoba was cooler than his real name... I wish I was as concerned about the coolness of my own name but it's too late now! (-)

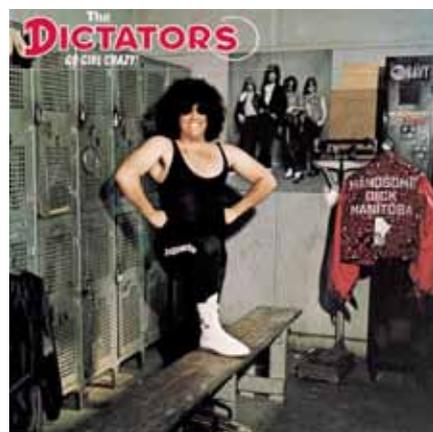
AU: What made you guys want to be a band in the mid-seventies in New York city? What were your major influences then with bands like KISS and the New York Dolls already going?

I was peripherally in the music business putting out a fanzine and writing reviews and articles for a rock magazine. We were young and directionless, basically it seemed like a fun thing to do. I dropped out of college and my parents weren't happy. Starting a band wasn't a career choice at the time. Now you can go to school to learn how to be a success in the music business. That did not exist in the 70's...

The musical influences were The MC5, The Who, The Beach Boys and I was listening to the Nuggets record put together by Lenny Kaye a lot at the time. As a songwriter I was inspired by the way Ray Davies used London and Brian Wilson used Los Angeles as a location for their songs... I wanted to create my own world in New York City.

AU: What other influences did New York city provided besides the music?

Well, New York was a cultural and media center, we were exposed to more music than other parts of the country. I was able to buy English music magazines like Melody Maker, hear obscure English bands that somebody in a less media centric city couldn't. Every touring band came through New York so I saw everybody!!



AU: How did you get your first record Go Girl Crazy! out back in 1975?

Our friend Richard Meltzer went to college with Sandy Pearlman who was managing the Blue Oyster Cult. We really liked their albums so we invited Sandy up to hear us in the house we shared and rehearsed in. He liked us and got us a record deal very quickly... probably a little too quickly but it allowed us to release our first album a year before The Ramones.

AU: Do you agree that the first album was part of the blueprint for the punk explosion that happened later?

I would agree... we started playing when glam and the NY Dolls were kings of NYC. We went for the sneakers and leather jacket look, which the

Ramones later adopted.

Music is a constantly evolving and everybody is influenced by what came before. The Stooges and The MC5 influenced us; The Ramones were influenced by us. The Ramones then influenced everybody and changed rock and roll.

I think we set a standard with sarcastic lyrics about teenage life that other punk bands followed up on but musically it was the Ramones who turned things upside down.

I believe the musical revolution we call punk rock would have happened with or without us. There was a musical vacuum that inevitably was going to be filled by somebody.

AU: What albums did The Dictators release after that? Any themes or stories behind them?

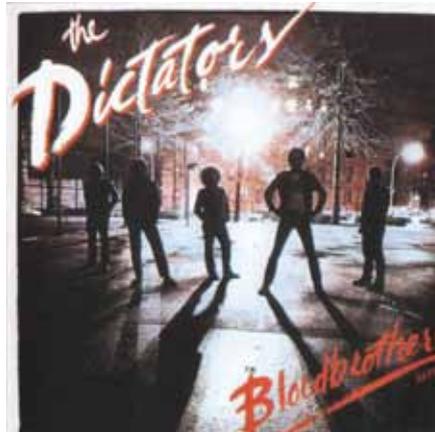
Our first album was a complete failure so we wanted to make our second record more "commercial". Big mistake!!... Even though there were quite a few good songs, it was the wrong record to make in 1977. That was the year that punk started to make inroads. We tried to become something we weren't, a 'commercial' rock band, 1977 was actually the year to make a quirky record like our first album. Bad timing on our part, which is a mistake, many young bands make bowing to commercial pressures. I have tried to only make honest records since. We set the ship back on course with our third record Bloodbrothers but we sort of missed the boat in 1977.

We recorded Bloodbrothers after touring the UK with The Stranglers. We met all the bands and were there the week the Sex Pistols record was released. It was big news and I saw how punk was more than just music, it was a cultural force making inroads in fashion, art and politics. In America it was still a sideshow ignored by the culture at large.

AU: How did the song writing process work? Did you write all the music and lyrics?

I've written about 95% of the music and lyrics. Ross and Scott are excellent writers but my songwriting style became the Dictators style.

I don't have a process, I like to start with a good title or a good riff, but I'm not always that lucky. If I get a chorus melody and lyrics in my head at the same time, I'm off to the races but I'm not always that lucky. Sometimes it takes 10 minutes but the truth is it usually takes weeks if not months for me to put all the pieces in place till I'm happy. If I feel I have something worthwhile, I will be very patient. I heard a story about Leonard Cohen, somebody praised a song he wrote and he replied, "oh that one took a year to write". I haven't rushed a song since.



AU: The cover to The Dictators third album Bloodbrothers is reminiscent of something from the movie the Warriors but pre-dates the film. Was being in The Dictators like being in a gang?

Aren't all of the great bands reminiscent of a gang. Actually we were more influenced by the movie The Wanderers that was written by Richard Price. We named Bloodbrothers after his second novel and shot the cover in the playground where the gangs that inspired The Wanderers actually hung out!

AU: What's the secret to writing such anthemic songs like I Stand Tall.

Thanks, much appreciated I wish I knew the secret

PURE PUNK

but I know the process and I really enjoy the process of songwriting.

I wrote I Stand Tall after we returned from our UK tour opening for The Stranglers in 1977. In those days touring the UK was bit rough, no modern hotels and warm beer and coca cola. So that was my glad to be home in the good ole USA song!

AU: With the song Faster and Louder, what message were you trying to get across?

These days every band plays faster and louder than the next band but at the time I thought the title was hilarious. No message, just a song about the joys of playing faster and louder.

AU: Did having Ross "The Boss" on guitars ever start to bring a metal element to The Dictators before he went on to form Manowar?

Ross has always liked Black Sabbath but before Manowar I never thought of him as a heavy metal guitar player and I still don't. The guy wrote the music for the Dictators song 16 Forever which is a mini pop masterpiece. I don't really write metal riffs. I like to write songs around riffs as the core of a song but more like the Rolling Stones. I'd like to think I've come up with a few good ones, I actually know a few well known bands that have "borrowed" a some of mine.

AU: What was the notorious event that transpired between Handsome Dick Manitoba and Jayne County?

I think, I'll pass on this question.

AU: Did the notoriety and controversy help the band back then?

There no really no such thing as bad publicity.

- Good publicity is good publicity,

- Bad publicity is good publicity...

- No publicity is bad publicity



AU: You guys seemed to have a more harder edge especially when seeing the White Castle picture. What's the story behind that picture?

I grew up across the street from a White Castle on Northern Blvd in Jackson Heights, Queens, "the borough of rock". I ate their burgers all throughout my childhood and I still love them. Everybody else in the band felt the same way. I don't even think there was a discussion. We knew we were going to pay tribute to White Castle somewhere on the album.

AU: What were some of your favourite bars to play at back in the day?

Well, CBGB's was like the clubhouse. I hung out there even when I wasn't performing. There was the legendary Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco and Bottom of The Hill is a viable modern day successor in Frisco. We played the Whiskey A Go Go in LA, the Bottom Line in NYC, so many classic rock clubs.

AU: When you guys played Max's Kansas City and CBGB's, who are some of your favourite New York City punk bands to play with?

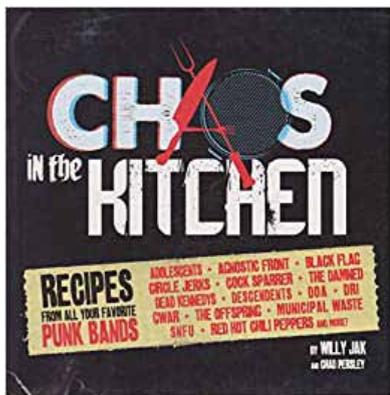
I'd say we were most simpatico with The Dead Boys and The Ramones. We all shared the same "fuck art, let's rock" attitude that would always make a cool double bill!

AU: What were some great bands you saw growing up in New York City?

A better question might be what bands didn't I see. Every great band came through New York. I saw the Stones, Bowie, T-Rex, The Kinks, The Stooges, The MC5, Alice Cooper. When I was a kid I used to go to the Fillmore East where I saw all the San Francisco hippie bands like Quicksilver and the Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe and The Fish. I think I saw every band I ever wanted to see except The Velvet Underground or the Beatles, though I did see Paul McCartney solo and Lennon solo

AU: Who are some of your favourite bands nowadays to play with or listen to?

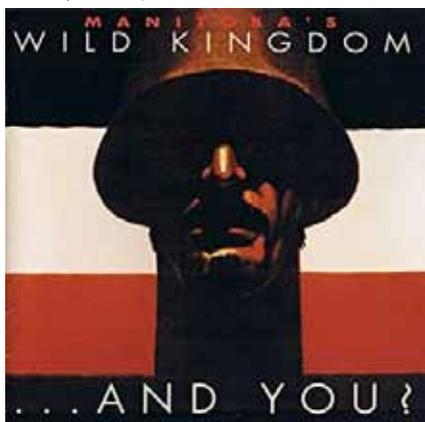
I mostly listen to Spotify because they have my entire record collection online. I love vinyl but convenience rules. I'm a big fan of the Spotify playlist "Your Discover Weekly". They have an algorithm that analyzes what you listen to and comes up with stuff they think I will like and they are often right on the mark.



AU: What recipe did you submit to Willy Jak's punk rock cookbook Chaos in the Kitchen?

I think I gave him my Gazpacho recipe, which I picked up in Spain and still make all the time. I whip up a big batch and stick in the fridge. I'll have some for breakfast, lunch, dinner or as a

snack. An easy way to get your vegetables, super healthy and super delicious!!



AU: What was the band Wild Kingdom you were in all about?

I was inspired by how the bands like Metallica, Anthrax and Slayer took punk rock and revved it up with heavy metal. It was a pretty exciting scene early on and I thought I could add something to it. It led to my the only radio and MTV success I had in America with the song The Party Starts Now.

AU: Will The Dictators ever play shows again? Maybe for a special event like Punk Rock Bowling in Vegas?

Ross, Scott and I just started working on songs for a new recording. It's in the early stages but I have a new batch of cool tunes and we got our old buddy Albert Bouchard from the Blue Oyster Cult to play drums. We needed a healthy, creative atmosphere so we didn't ask Manitoba, who has been going through some personal, financial and legal problems to join us. After the recordings are done we'll look at doing some shows

AU: What was it like working with Joey Ramone on his first solo album?

Joey and I had already worked together on

numerous bands and projects over the years. He had been talking about a solo record for years but I think he was a little fearful of going off on his own until the Ramones ended. The end of the band gave him the nudge he needed to take the leap.

It took awhile to finish because he was battling leukemia and we could only record when he felt up to the task. By the end of 2000 he felt well enough to do 2 shows in New York. Things were looking good when he tragically slipped on an icy sidewalk in December and broke his hip. To treat the broken hip they needed to take him off the cancer medicine. He died before the record was released. Ironically I think it features one of his finest vocals on What a Wonderful World.

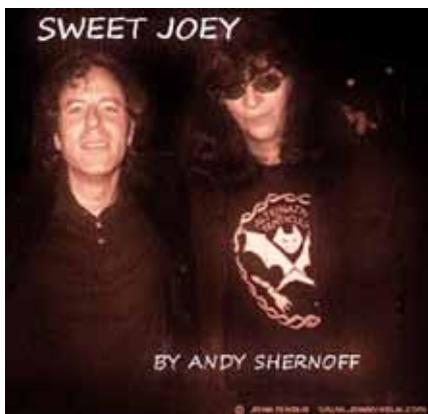
AU: What Ramones songs did you write with Joey?

I co-wrote Stop Thinking About It for his first solo record and Make Me Tremble on the second solo record

For the Ramones I co-wrote It's Gonna Be Alright, Ignorance Is Bliss, I Won't let It Happen and All Screwed Up on various albums.

I would be lax not to mention my Joey tribute song Sweet Joey which is currently in rotation on Little Steven's Underground Garage on Sirius. The video can be seen here...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5415KDw1fso



AU: What current projects are you involved in?

I recently left New York City and moved to the Hudson Valley. I'm enjoying a rural lifestyle after growing up in New York City. I wouldn't say I'm retired but I am in my 60's and certainly not as ambitious as I used to be. I have 190 credits as a musician, producer and songwriter so let my discography speak for itself. <https://andyshernoff.com/discography/>

I still do some production work and play bass with a few local bands but for the next few months my focus will be producing the new Dictators recording.

AU: What's something about you that a lot of people don't know?

I am the Christopher Columbus of Punk Rock!



AndyShernoff.com

www.youtube.com/andyshernoff

Andy Shernoff & Andy Shernoff Appreciation Society on Facebook

thedictators.com

Michael Alago

Who the Fuck Is That Guy?

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Michael Alago: Well you're speaking to Michael Alago, which I think you know, already, and infamous, that's a loaded question. And that could go either way. But I think the reason you're talking to me is because I have a documentary out on Netflix and Amazon Prime called "Who the Fuck Is That Guy? The Fabulous Journey of Michael Alago" and now I have a book that's getting ready to come out March 25. "I Am Michael Alago: Breathing Music. Signing Metallica. Beating Death". So I guess you're talking to me for those two reasons, plus the signing of Metallica, my biggest signing in my A&R career.

AU: Where did you grow up? And what was your first introduction to the punk scene at that time.

MA: Well, I grew up in Brooklyn, New York until I was around 21 years old, then I moved to Manhattan. I was listening to a lot of punk rock and all of the bands coming over from the UK in late 76-77. So I was seeing everyone from Eddie and the Hot Rods, X-Ray Spex, Jet Boys, The Damned, Blondie, The Ramones, Misfits, Wayne County & the Electric Chairs and Suicide, one of my favorite bands. All those people entered my world at a very early age, 15 or 16 years old. So I was listening to that stuff at a very early age before I moved into Manhattan, I always knew I loved music. And I say it on the first page introduction to my book, or the first chapter in my book. I believe I came out of the womb loving music. You know, I always loved music. I wanted to be in the music business at a very early age. I didn't know what that meant but I also knew I had no plan B at all. I breathed music morning, noon, and night. At a very early age I was watching TV and there were these three shows that I remember, Don Kirshner's Midnight Special, Don Cornelius' Soul Train and Dick Clark American Bandstand, and they always had a wide variety of artists on those shows from Aretha Franklin, to David Bowie and on American Bandstand, in later years, Public Image Ltd. So my listening at a very early age was very good and in later years I can say, I was grateful that I wasn't just listening to one type of thing growing up.

AU: The diversity of it all influenced you.

MA: That's correct.

AU: So in those early days you're under age and you're hanging out at CBGB and Max's Kansas City in New York. What was it like to see that scene explode and what do you think the true spark in the history of punk was?

MA: It was dirty old New York, you know? I didn't have any fear as a young person taking the train or subway from Brooklyn to Manhattan. I wanted to get to whatever music was. One of my early Bibles, if you will, was a weekly newspaper called The Village Voice. The Village Voice was filled with music, art, theater, porn, and politics. You could knock off the politics part for me, but everything else was interested in. So I was very lucky, because I just had good instincts to follow the music. Like I said, when the British bands came over here to see CBGB, I got to see Eddie and the Hot Rods, X-Ray Spex, The Damned and Chelsea, all of those bands that were extraordinary.

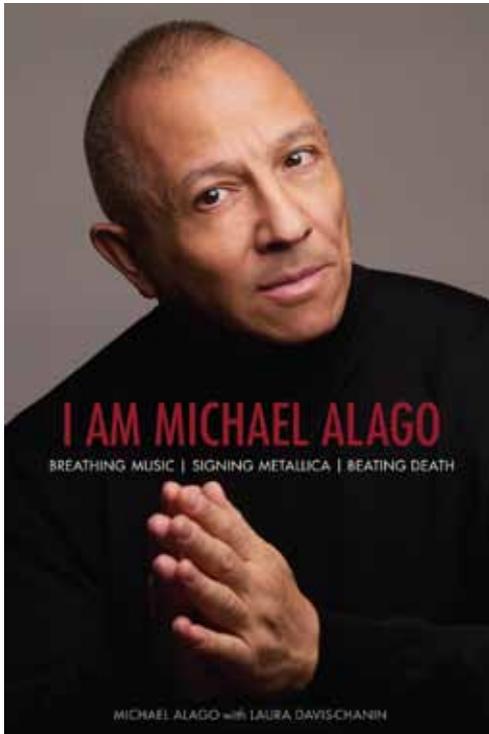
AU: Were you able to see the New York Dolls?

MA: I got to see the New York Dolls every time they play Max's Kansas City. They were a staple there. I saw them in a couple of different versions. There's probably so many people I'm forgetting at the moment. But like I said earlier, there was a whole host of bands that I'm so grateful that I got to see, especially the Dead Boys who were like my favorites. I was 14-15 when I first saw them, I decided I was gonna run their Fan Club, which really, what do you know at 14-15 about business? I mean, I didn't know about business. I just wanted to be close to the band. So I made this one little fanzine called "All This and More". It was this cut and paste affair of pictures and crazy

lettering, and it just had this punk aesthetic to it. I just saw everybody in the early days, if you mentioned them, I probably saw them.

AU: I just read the Harley Flanagan book ("Hard-Core: Life of My Own") from Cro-Mags and he mentions he was underage hanging out at those same places, would you have been the same age?

MA: No, I'm definitely a bit older than he is, but I remember him as a very, very...VERY young person playing drums for The Stimulators back in the day. He was friends with everybody on the punk scene and then also his mom was friends with the famed poet Allen Ginsberg. He ran the gamut of knowing a lot of different types of people back in the day.



AU: Were you ever in any bands?

MA: Well, I made an attempt to be in a band called Multiple Exposure in '78-79 it was like a new wave band, and we petered out after about six months. Because then I kind of officially got busy in 1980, when my career started by working at the Ritz.

AU: Tell us more about that and then how that led to getting the A&R job for Elektra Records?

MA: It's 1980, It's the beginning of MTV. I was taking lunch one day in the East Village, and I saw a beautiful building that was a Spanish dance hall called Casa Garcia. There was a sign on the door that said video club opening and it was opening as the Ritz, a lot of people may know it at present day as Webster Hall. So I went into the beautiful building, the inside was decorated like the 20s Art Deco. There was a man on the balcony, I tell the story like it was like the Wizard of Oz. He looked down at me and said, "Kid, what do you want? We're not open." I said, "Well, I'd like a job. I've always wanted to work in music." And he said, "Well, can I have a resume?" I said, "Oh, no, I don't have a resume. I go to the School of Visual Arts and I work in a pharmacy down the block." He thought there was some kind of humor in that so I went to his office, and we started talking about everything from the Great American Songbook to popular music of the day. He liked me and he said, "You know what, I'm going to give you a job. You're going to open my mail, you're going to get my lunch, and you're going to answer my phone." And I thought, oh my god, I'm in the music business. Well, you know, that is a germ that is a beginning of being in the music business and I was grateful and excited for that. It was the beginning of everything I knew I wanted. I worked there for three years. The man who hired me, his name is Jerry Brandt he really is a visionary. He opened up the The Electric Circus on St. Marks Place in the 60s. Everyone played there, it was infamous. So he worked with Sam Cooke and Muhammad Ali and discovered Carly Simon. I didn't know any of this going into our interview. So he hired me and I listened to all of his phone calls and I got to learn how to speak to booking agents and how to book a room that held about

approximately 1500 seats. So I became the assistant booking director there and we booked everyone from Black Flag, Evildead, the Misfits, Tina Turner and Prince, Divine, showing John Waters' films the nights Divine would play. The Ritz ran the gamut of entertainment that we were booking. I did that for three years, I knew I wanted more. A friend of mine, Mitchell Krasnow, said "you know Michael, my dad is leaving Warner Brothers, and he's going

to restart Elektra," which was in the crapper back then. So Mitchell introduced me to his dad, Bob Krasnow, the new chairman of Elektra. I had that same conversation with Bob, that I had with Jerry, we talked about all kinds of music. With Bob, the added feature to that interview was that he was an art major and an art collector. He had all types of art on his walls in his office that I was familiar with. So I think he appreciated that on top of all the music, I had this almost vast knowledge of art. So we met, he said, He's gonna call me back in a few weeks. A few weeks later, he called me back, he said, "I'm going to give you a job. You're going to be in the A&R department." Well, I had no idea what A&R meant, nevermind, getting a job. So I asked my friends in the industry, and they said, well, in it stands for artists and repertoire, I found out being in the A&R department is the most important department at a record company, if you don't have great records, and you don't have great artists.

Now I'm one of the few people in the A&R department. I'm listening to music every day. There are boxes of unsolicited cassettes coming into the office. I was getting music magazines and newspapers from all over the United States, London, Germany, Toronto, and Montreal - all over Canada. I had my assistant cut out everything that sounded interesting to us. We would call all those people, it was also like back in the day it was almost like cut and paste, and that's how I did my job in the early days. I did A&R for almost 25 years.

AU: Wow. So tell us how the signing of Metallica came about? Were you hanging out in the Bay Area with the whole thrash scene?

MA: No I never hangout in the Bay Area, it all happened in New York City. Prior to Elektra, me and my friend Phil Caivano from Monster Magnet, we went to see Metallica in Brooklyn at L'Amour and it was incredible. I thought about maybe booking them at the Ritz. I don't know what happened. It never came to be. I started Elektra in 1983, I started talking to Jonny Z from Megaforce Records. He has a couple of records he wants me to hear, Metallica, Raven, and Anthrax. They were a little label, and they were looking for agent distribution. They had low funds at that point in time. I was going to do something with Raven, I gave them some demo money, but the problem was, I heard Kill 'Em All by Metallica, and it blew my mind, but they were on the label. I was going to the west coast one day to see a bunch of bands, but I specifically went to The Stone in San Francisco to see Metallica. I saw them, they blew my mind. I thought James Hetfield was the greatest frontman I had ever seen. He had this radiant smile. He was a ringleader on stage. He knew how to whip a crowd into a frenzy, and that my friend, is how you do it. I went backstage and I said hi to Lars, it was very simple. I was also the same age as them, maybe if they were 21, I was 23 and I certainly didn't look like a record executive. They appreciated that I came to see them and I gave him my card. I said, call me when you're on the east coast. They were still on Megaforce records. Lars calls the beginning of '84 and says "that we're coming to New York City in August to play as part of a triple act bill at Roseland. Are you even interested in us still?". Absolutely. So I go see them the Roseland they blow the roof off the fucking place. By then, Kill 'Em All was out, I believe, for one moment before Elektra picked it up, and everybody was at the venue to see Metallica. They were like the newest thing, the greatest thing out there at the time when nobody



else sounded like that at all. So I go backstage after the show. I say hello. The next day they're at my office in the conference room having beer and Chinese food. I give them cassettes and vinyl of the Stooges, MC5, The Doors. Cliff Burton wanted some esoteric music from a label we distributed called Nonesuch, and it felt like from that day on, they never left my office, but they were still signed to Megaforce and Jonny Z was not happy with me in the beginning. But you know what, money talks and their business affairs people talked to our business affairs people and a deal was struck. And all I could tell you the rest is history as we know. That signing helped change the course of metal, hard rock and what people were listening to. All the other labels wanted their own version of Metallica. But you know, that just doesn't happen. It's a very special thing that a band like that comes along and just takes over and here we are in 2020 talking about them, and they're still playing stadiums. They're still fabulous. And I don't know what else to tell you.

AU: What other bands did you work with that you're proud of?

MA: Well, I've worked for a lot of people that I'm proud of. I never signed anyone that I didn't feel something for. So even if all the other A&R people were like "oh my God, this band is going to be big". If I didn't like them, if I couldn't feel something from them, I didn't sign them. I loved working with White Zombie. I made a record with Swans that was very different from all other other records because it was very quiet and atmospheric. I worked with John Lydon and Public Image Ltd, Metal Church and Flotsam and Jetsam. I've worked with Cyndi Lauper and Nina Simone and in recent years, I just got a band from South Florida signed to Century Media called Ether Coven, they're very heavy, very dark. Erik Rutan from Morbid Angel produced their record, and it's extraordinary.

AU: What can people expect from your book "I Am Michael Alago: Breathing Music. Signing Metallica. Beating Death"?

MA: People can expect a lot of rock and roll stories. It also speaks about addiction and recovery, asking for help when you need help in this crazy world that we live in. I'm a person in all aspects of my life that tells the truth and I think when you tell the truth to people they appreciate that. And I hope they learn certain things about what to do and not to do in their life. I had an addiction problem for a very long time. I've been clean and sober 12 years now. So I appreciate my new life, because I show up for everything in my life. When you show up for people and you're responsible, people know they can rely on you, that's a wonderful thing. So I hope the takeaway is rock and roll, ask for help and follow your dreams. Do you remember that the seeing the dictators

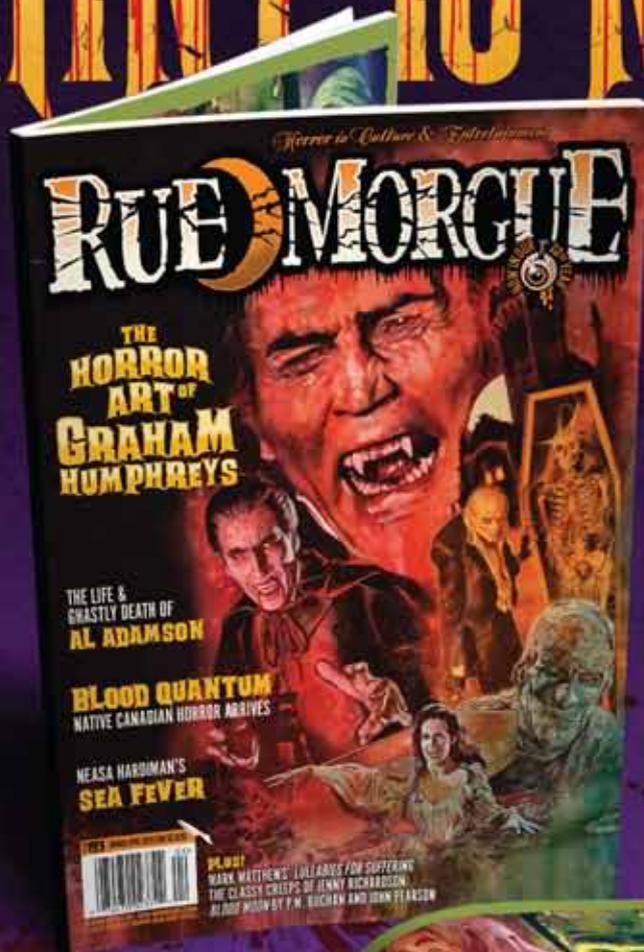
AU: What does the future hold? Are you still out there looking for fresh talent?

MA: I still go out not as often as I used to. I'm always doing something that's involved with either music or photography and art. People can find me on Instagram under Michael Anthony Alago and the same thing on Facebook.

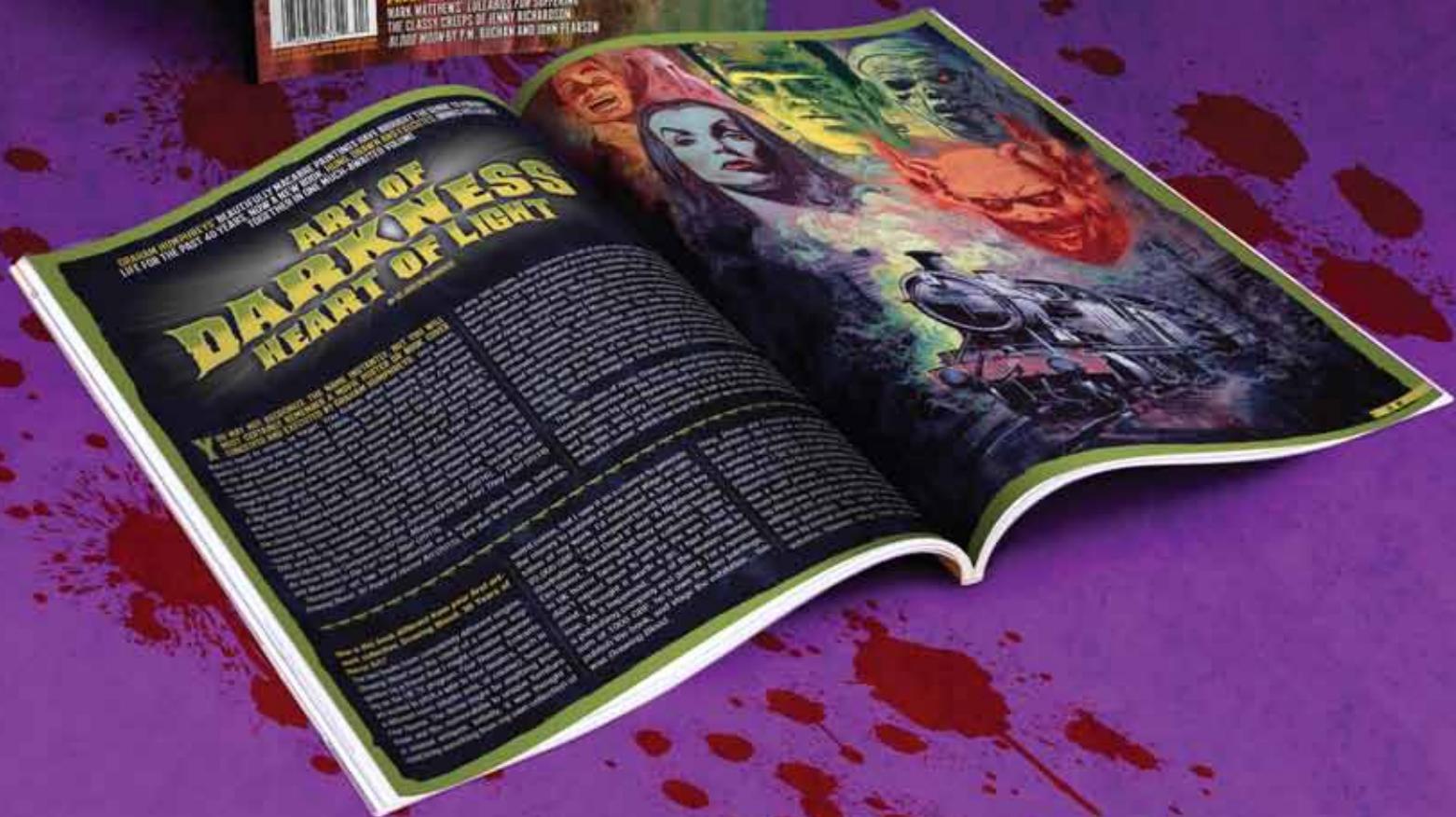
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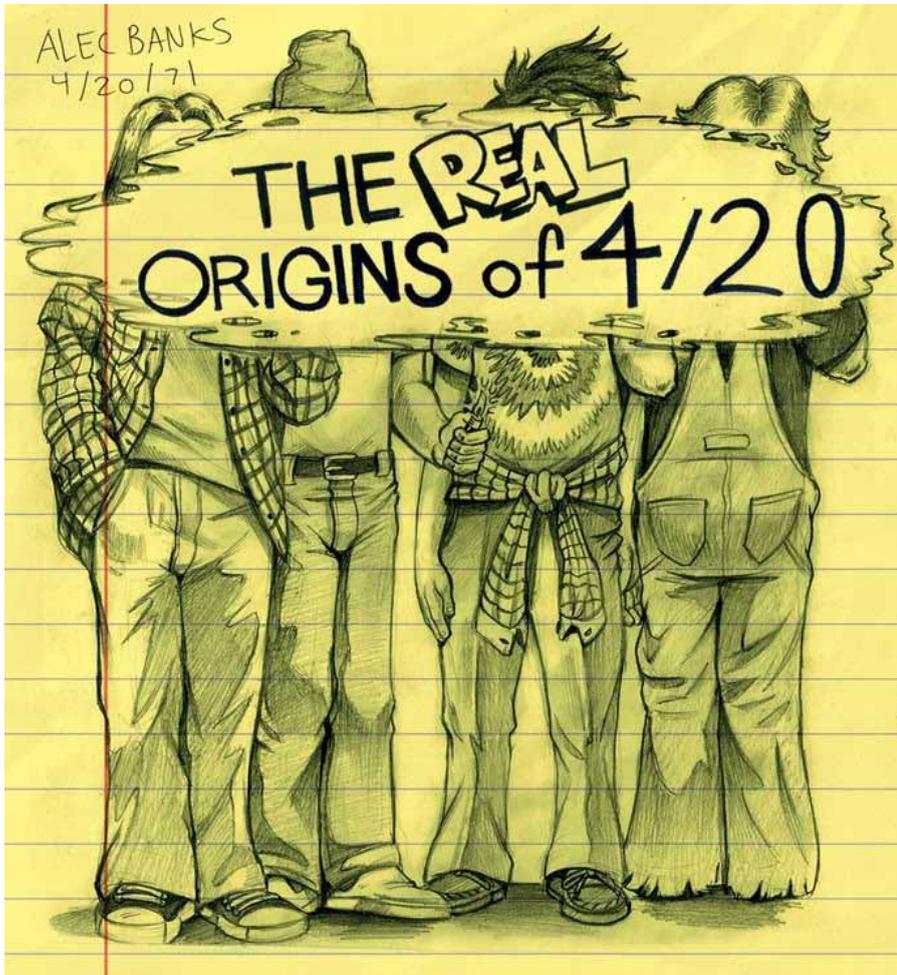


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The police code for smoking pot, the amount of active constituents within the plant or oddly, Hitler's birthday (considering pot and hate don't mix well)... ask where the term 420 came from and you may hear the rumors listed above. Plus, there are many more. For this festive day of cannabis celebration, let's set the record with the 420 origin story.



420 - Meet The Waldo's...



Picture California in the 1970's; a group of pot smoking high school students happen to stumble on a treasure map leading to a lush cannabis crop, abandoned by a member of the coast guard.

Once a week, the group would meet by the wall of their high school, near the Louis Pasteur Statue to get stoned before embarking on an epic journey through the Point Reyes Forest to find the lost green treasure.

Week after week, the location of the hidden crop remained a mystery. Valiant and unperturbed, the group would saturate themselves in THC and forge on in their quest. Known as "the Waldo's" on account of their meeting place, the group soon realized that they needed a secret code before anyone such as their parents caught on... (or worse, another band of stoners learning of their intentions and finding the secret plants first!)

With the Waldo's always meeting at 4:20pm, the code word seemed natural and fitting...

420 meets the Grateful Dead

Picture California in the 1970's.... Backstage at a Grateful Dead Concert, the Waldo's grown up, smoking joints and still referring to reefer by 420 . When your dad manages the bands real estate and one of your friend's older brothers just happens to be close friends with the bass player, it is not hard to spend time in the VIP section.

It didn't take long before the term 420 was being used regularly by the Grateful Dead and their fans. Reporter Steve Bloom went to a show and stumbled upon a flyer all about 420 and the reference. Writing for High Times, he immediately latched on to it and the rest is up in smoke.

- Julia Veintrop

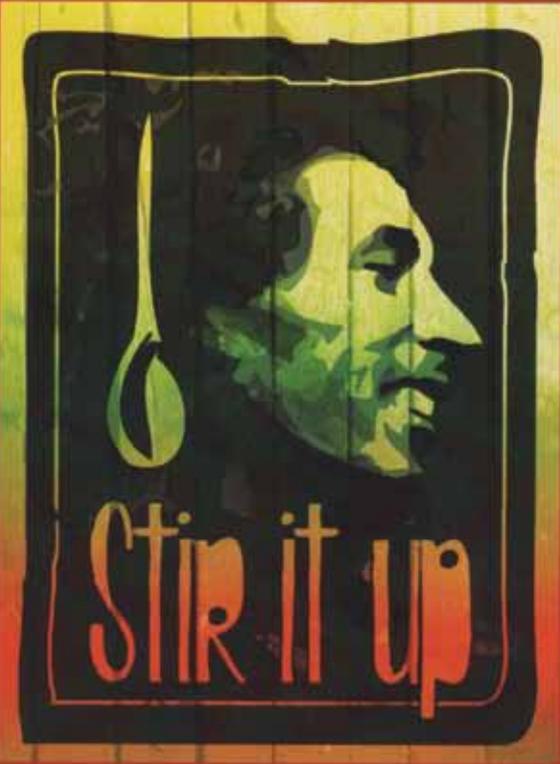
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Boosting Your Endocannabinoid System Without Cannabis

By Julia Veintrop

The World is facing some pretty big problems right now And it's hard to think about little else. At a time like this, Why Should anyone turn their attention to their endocannabinoid system? Not only does it help regulate your immune system, it also helps to manage stress, pain, inflammation and the body's response to it. Compounds within cannabis interact directly with it, creating the effects we love and appreciate. Put a little bit of energy into your ECS and activate it with some other options! A solid system boost can help you feel good, inside and out; on top of that, you might find you conserve a bit of your chronic. Here's a look at the endocannabinoid system and ways to pump it up without using pot!

The Endocannabinoid System

Think of it as the body's signal communication system, maintaining the balance within every structure. It works by interacting with cannabinoids we make ourselves, known as Endocannabinoids, or phytocannabinoids we ingest from plants. These compounds interact with our neuroreceptors, playing a role in body functions such as:

- Sleep
- Appetite
- Mood regulation
- Metabolism
- Immune Response and system function
- Pain and inflammation
- Many more - basically, its present everywhere

Eat your green and cook with spice!

Pot may provide a potent source of many different cannabinoids and terpenes but it's not alone. B-caryophyllene is a terpene found in both the

cannabis plant and a variety of leafy veggies, such as spinach, kale and swiss chard. On a molecular level, studies have shown that this terpene acts as an antagonist to our CB2 receptors, promoting an anti-inflammatory, relaxed response. In addition to that, B-caryophyllene is extremely neuroprotective and can be highly effective in treating diabetic complications. Another great source of this terpene can be found in a number of different spices. Create a relaxing dinner with some help from herbs; add some black pepper, cloves, rosemary, oregano and basil as your secret ingredient.

Cold Exposure

We all heard our grandparents tell us that they used to walk for miles in the snow to get to school because it built character. As it turns out, research has proved them right. When we expose ourselves to the cold, the body takes action to regulate heat. In order to do this, endocannabinoids get released from our fat tissues, triggering the needed neurotransmission

How to do it - Add a 30 second cold blast to the end of your shower or bath.

Exercise

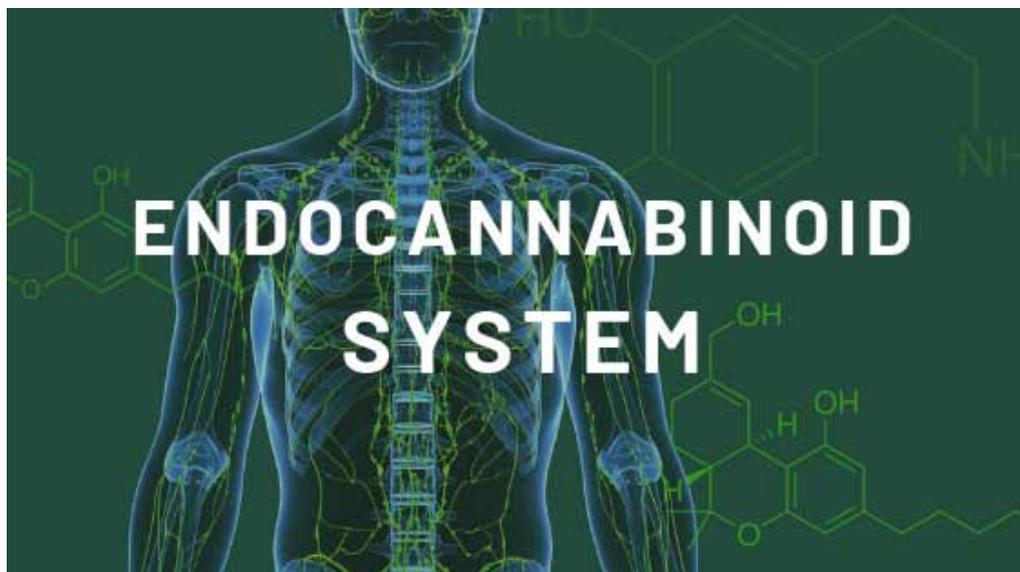
No doubt about it, exercise stimulates the endocannabinoid system in a multitude of ways. Think about all the systems of the body that become engaged when you're active. No matter what you like to do, getting physical boosts your immune system, relieves pain, activates a variety of organ systems such as digestion and can even give a feeling of euphoria. Why? Research has shown that any form of exercise that gives you pleasure, activates your CB1 receptors, cannabinoid signalling and anandamide production.

How to do it - Find any form of exercise that you actually enjoy. Anything that is forced is interpreted as stress and can actually decrease CB1 transmission.

Dark Chocolate

Feel good about eating chocolate because it's actually going to improve your health. Compounds within cocoa mimic other cannabinoids, thus, increasing neurotransmission and anandamide levels. Eating chocolate will stimulate your endocannabinoid system so efficiently that it has even been used as a defense in court. In 2000, a lawyer argued that when his client tested positive for cannabis, it was the result of a huge chocolate binge. Unfortunately for the defendant, it could not be proven to be the cause. But, it goes to show how effectively chocolate can affect your endocannabinoid system.

If your endocannabinoid system needs a boost, you can always find some relief... regardless of whether you got pot or not!



SHARING WEED, NOT GERMS

By Julia Veintrop

Cannabis is a plant and it's meant to be shared. But, when a serious virus is spreading globally, the situation changes. In order to wipe out the threat to everybody, it becomes each individual's responsibility to take precautions. By protecting ourselves, we protect one another and this is especially critical for the cannabis community. After all, we share a lot of doobies...but with a threat like the Coronavirus, toking together is dangerous, irresponsible and potentially deadly. Let's set a good example for the entire community by taking some steps to turn our sessions into safety meetings.

Please note - These steps do not guarantee any protection from the coronavirus. The best thing that you can do to protect yourself from contracting anything, is smoking your own weed. But many close friends and partners don't have the will to tok solo and these tips are meant to limit the risk of exposure for those people. If you're going to smoke with a group of people, here are some ways to be smarter about it.

Coughing

According to the CDC, The coronavirus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Considering the way that the coronavirus spreads, coughing from your tok is going to impact the entire environment. Be aware that a coughing fit might trigger a lot of fear, especially if you break into dab sweats.

Even though it's just a canna cough, starting a panic is not acceptable and furthermore, it makes every stoner look bad. There is an age old saying, you gotta cough to get off. If that's the case, try to do so privately. Even so, keep a scarf handy so that you have something to cough into.

If you are concerned that you could have the coronavirus or any other illness, don't share your weed with anyone and contact your doctor.

Change is coming...

Is it worth it? Is sharing a doobie or having a communal dab rig really worth the risk? Every one of us has to take the initiative to protect our community; it's not just about you getting sick, it's about everyone else getting sick too. Stoners love to share but not in this case so get ready for that. If you are about to have a session in a group, establish right away that you don't plan on sharing. Lets get used to it and make this the norm. Before you light up your joint, announce the intention. If you are hearing someone else say this, support their message and set an example for your other buddies.



If you can't just smoke your own...smoke your own together

It's understandable...Nobody wants to smoke weed by themselves. Some people even swear that they do not get as stoned! Plus, cannabis is medicine but not everyone understands that; there is a lot of strength in numbers, especially when defending

your use. If you really want the communal experience, grind all the buds together and use one hitters. But, be aware, you just might tok and pass without realizing it; especially if you get super baked and forget. Here are some ways you can smoke by yourself while having a session:

Have everyone bring their own dab rig or nectar collector

Keep a communal torch handy or bottle of butane for anyone who brings their own
Roll multiple joints with long filters - have everyone smoke one to their dome

Making a chamber with your hand

One of the best old school methods of sharing a joint is making a chamber with your own hand. However, using this method puts your mouth on your hands so wash them beforehand. For the best results, keep every lip off the joint and have everyone smoking the joint tok through their hands.

How to do it

Place the unlit end of the joint between your middle and ring finger, right where your hand and fingers meet

Curl both hands into a 'C' shape

Bring both hands together, leaving a space between your palms and an opening with your thumbs

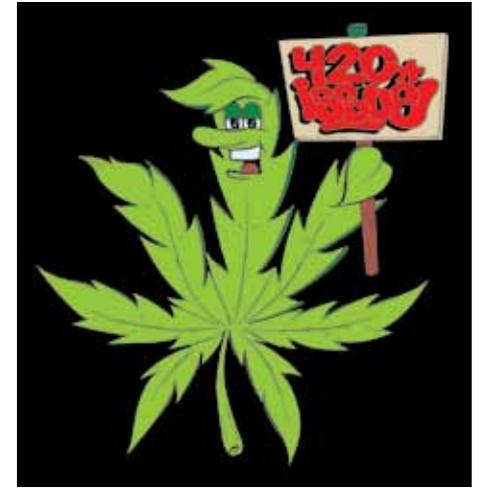
Seal your lips around your thumb hole and suck through the hand chamber

Tip - Play around and adjust what you need in order to create the right seal. If your fingers and hands are airtight, you will be able to pull a hoot through your hand.

Create barriers between your lips and the joint

Some situations make it really difficult to keep a doobie to yourself; for example, limited access. If everyone is going to share a single joint, there are a number of tools you can use that can greatly reduce the risk of spreading germs.

Keep business cards handy for both you and the other people smoking with you; they can be rolled into a tube that you can wrap around the joint and inhale through. Plus, they are easily discarded, cost effective and recyclable.



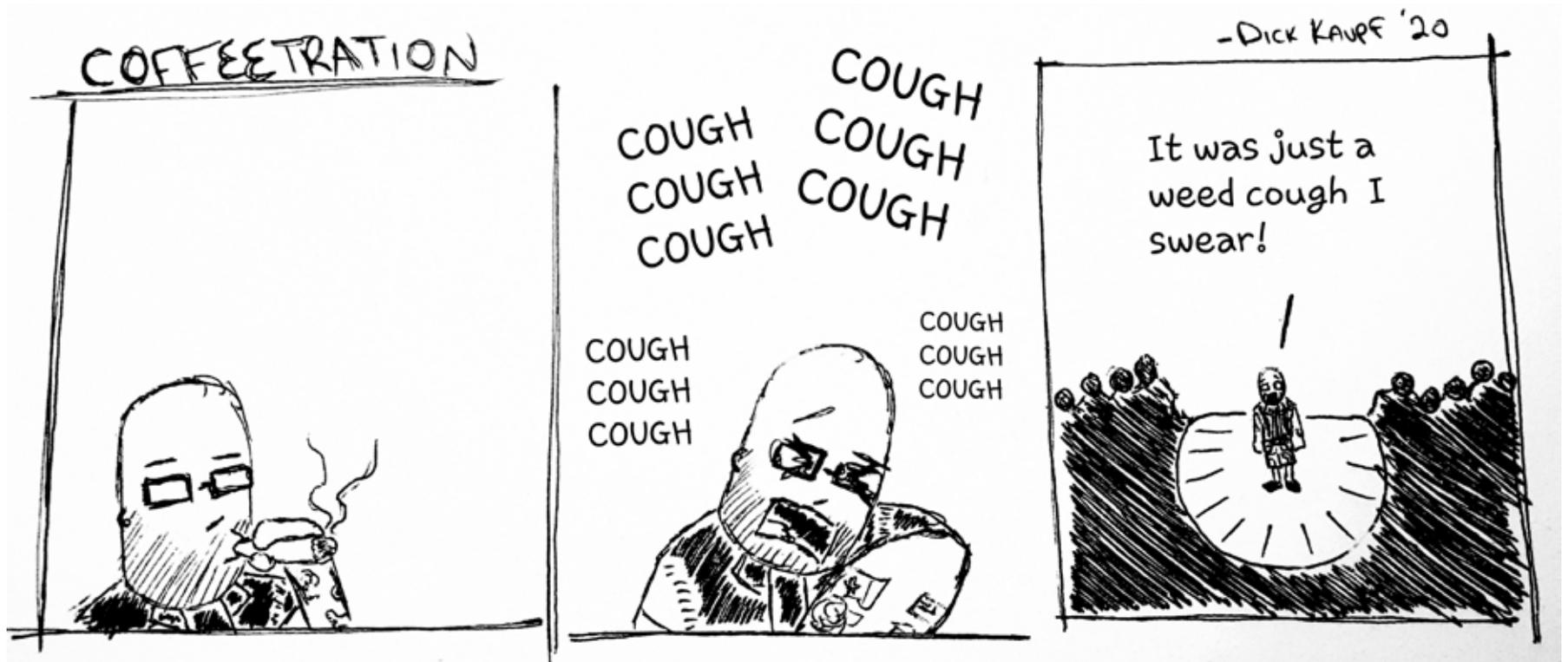
Check in with your local glass blowers and see what kind of funky accessories they make. Glass is easy to sanitize and there are a lot of beautiful options out there. Plus, it's a great opportunity to support the local art community at a truly beneficial time. There are a great deal of concerns surrounding the economy

If you need a durable, heat resistant option, look into silicone. Thanks to bubble tea, silicone straws come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, making them easy to slip into a dab rig. The goal is to keep your lips off the rig or doobie. If the straw is not the right size enough, you can always use your hand to help create a seal. If you want to go further, there are silicone accessories specifically made for sanitary stoner.

Colloidal silver

Colloidal silver is a suspension of silver particles in a liquid. It has been hailed for its antimicrobial, antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties yet is mild, gentle, odorless and tasteless. Safe enough to use in a newborn baby's eyes yet strong enough to attack the HIV virus, colloidal silver is versatile and effective. A cheap option you can find at the health food store, it can be added to bong water and used to disinfect surfaces, tools, hands and mouths.

In order to stop the spread of the coronavirus, the cannabis community needs to step up their game to protect each other. If we don't, the situation can get really bad, really quickly. Cannabis is an incredible plant with so many medical benefits; use it in the right way, at the right time.



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7 Livestreams to watch this 4/20

Months ago, stoners everywhere were looking forward to a full month of 420; the parties and planning was well in the works. Unfortunately, the corona virus had other ideas. Thankfully, the cannabis community adapted quickly, moving the party indoors and online. The lineup of live streams are getting really good. For those of you partaking in the 4/20 festivities, here's what's happening online.



420 Vancouver

Start time - 'high noon' (11:50am Pacific or 4:20pm Newfoundland Daylight Time)

Streaming from Studio710 in Vancouver BC

This year, tune in and bring 420 Vancouver to your living room! On top of the blunts and bong rips, some of the line up includes good tunes, cannabis activists and see clips from Vancouver's previous years. This year, 420 Vancouver will be hosted by The Cannabis Life Network, Pot TV and Studio710. If you are missing the local community and you need a taste of that West Coast, BC Bud, join 420 Vancouver for a smoking session.



The Great American Sesh In

Start time - To be announced

Streaming from The San Francisco Bay area

With the feel of a Telethon, 'The Great American Sesh In' will feature B-Real, Tommy Chong, Rob Garza of Thievery Corporation, David Gans and other guests. All the money raised will go to support first responders dealing with the Covid crisis. The mission of this Festival is to celebrate 420 with music, the arts and cannabis, all while promoting social distancing and safety.



Berner

Streaming from San Francisco

In partnership with the national cannabis festival and emerald cup, San Francisco rapper Berner is hosting a virtual smoke session. Tune in for a session with Berner and his other celebrity buddies.

B-Real

Streaming on Instagram

Cypress Hill is streaming a live 4/20 session and he's invited you to join him. Tune in for some hits from the bong with B-Real; who knows, you may win one of the prizes or promos!



4/20 World Record Zoom

Starts at 4:20 PDT

Streaming from California

Tony Diepenbrock is a cannabis enthusiast from California and this year, he has invited you to smoke weed with him. At 4:20pm PDT, he will attempt to break the Guinness World Record for "Most People Consuming Cannabis on Video Chat." An engineer with a background in the cannabis industry, Tony can smoothly set up a zoom conference for 1,000 people. If you have ever dreamed of breaking a Guinness World Record, reserve your spot. Profits from the event will go to helping free inmates convicted with cannabis related charges.

Cooked With Cannabis



Debut on Netflix

A six-part series hosted by singer Kelis, 'Cooked With Cannabis' will air on Netflix. Featuring dinner guests such as Ricki Lake, Too \$hort and EL-P, as of 4/20, you can tune in.

Shambhala 420 Live Music Stream

Start time - 3pm PDT



Streaming from BC

Westwood Recordings, Shambhala Music Festival and Your EDM have teamed up to provide us stoners with some jamming beats! Featuring some of Shambhala favorites such as Skiitour, The Funk Hunters, Stickybuds, Defunk, A.Skrillz, Mat The Alien and Skratz Bastid. Log in for some killer tunes, invite your buddies online and turn your living room into a 420 dance party!

- Julia Veintrop



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HOW TO CLEAN WITHOUT ISO



Thanks to the coronavirus, we are all stuck inside as self-isolation has become the order of the day. With all the cleaning and sanitizing going on, isopropyl alcohol has become a hot commodity. Stoners everywhere are facing the choice, toke dirty or risk wasting precious iso. Save it because there is another way! In fact, there are a few options you can use to keep your bongs and rigs clean.

Silicone

Silicone accessories are easy to transport and hard to break, making them popular amongst cannabis enthusiasts. If you have a silicone piece that you want to clean, put it in the freezer. The resin within the pipe or bong will freeze, but the silicone won't be affected by the temperature. By twisting and bending your silicone accessory, you can pop all the resin out of your pipe.

Dusty glass

Do you have a beautiful glass collection that's starting to get a little grimey? Dusting your glass pieces can be extra tricky when you can't get paper towels and other supplies. In fact, you might be asking yourself, why bother? Simple, mental health. Maintaining your standards for the glass you love is an important part of feeling

normal and happy. Here are some tips to make that piece sparkle:

Use compressed air - firmly hold the piece and use an air compressor or can of computer duster to blast all those bits off

Vacuum - Use a brush attachment to sweep and vacuum up the dust and dirt. If you are cleaning a small piece want to make sure that you don't suck it into the vacuum, put a nylon stocking over the hose and brush before you start to vacuum.

Cleaning off your hands or small tools

Use oil and a bit of sugar to scrub and exfoliate any sticky stuff. Cannabis molecules like to bind with lipids and this can be used as a cleaning advantage. Once the resin is gone, rinse with soap and water.

Resin coated glass

According to the Oxford Dictionary, resin is defined as a sticky flammable organic substance, insoluble in water, exuded by some trees and other plants. If you ask a stoner, it's that sticky goo that gunks up your bong. During the pre corona days, Isopropyl alcohol was the easy answer to dirty tools. But with supply being so scarce, few pot enthusiasts would waste Iso to clean. Thankfully there are a number of different options and tips to clean your rig, helping you conserve your Iso use or avoid it all together.

Before you begin:

Have oven mitts, rubber gloves, tongs and other tools available to protect your hands
Boil a kettle of water so that you have lots of hot water ready to go

If you are planning on using any chemicals, open windows and turn on any fans available

Glass pre-cleaning process:

Warm up your glass and the resin inside it before using any solvents. There are two simple ways to do this:

A, Pour hot water into the piece - If you clean your piece often and it's not too dirty to begin with, this may be all you need. The flow of the water might agitate the resin enough to dislodge it. One of the best ways to do this is in your kitchen or bathroom sink:

- position an opening right under the flow of your tap
 - crank up the heat as hot as you can
 - every minute or so, pick up your glass, plug the holes and shake it with some hot water inside
- For tougher cleaning jobs, soak the glass and resin for 15 minutes in hot water; change the water every few minutes to maintain a high temperature (this is where boiling a kettle ahead of time pays off).

Put your dab rig in the oven

As long as it's dry, place your piece on a baking sheet in a cold oven and turn the temperature up to the minimum oven setting. As it warms up, the reclaim will melt, run down the walls and pool in the bottom of the piece. Once it does, use a pair of oven mitts to tip it upside down and pour out the puddle.

Upside - Dab reclaim is a gift from the plant; cleaning a rig in the oven, is a great way to harvest it. Some people like to save it to smoke while others prefer to bake with it; one thing that is certain, if ingested, what comes out of your rig can be quite potent. If you are going to use it, make edibles, proceed slowly and think of it like an imperfect distillate. No matter what recipe you make or how much reclaim you use, expect it to have a mild cannabis taste or be absent of it entirely. Because of that, combined with the

potency factor, it's very easy to forget that you are eating a cannabis edible, and green yourself out.



Downside - This method has a larger margin for error but as long as the glass was tempered properly and you don't act like an idiot, heating your glass in the oven is safe.

At home solvent - Acetone

Acetone is the main ingredient in nail polish remover and will dissolve resin without question. Thanks to the popularity of gel nail polish, you can find very strong nail polish remover or even 100% acetone at the dollar store.

Note - Make sure you do this in a well ventilated area because no one likes to self isolate in a chemical cloud. Don't forget to pre-clean your dab rig or bong!

To use acetone:

- Pour in enough acetone to coat the inside and pool a bit on the bottom
- Plug all openings with scraps of clean cloth (dish towel or old t-shirt)
- Shake it like a polaroid picture
- Repeat this process three times
- Rinse out the inside with soap and water once
- Rinse using water only until no soap remains

Hot tip for pot heads - Acetone or nail polish remover will wipe your sink clean after cleaning your bong!

- Julia Veintrop

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The Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club Moves One Step Closer to Cannabis Act Exemption with Mayor and Council Vote

By Julia Veintrop

The Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club can't fit into the box that our current legal framework has created. It would be impossible for the VCBC to comply with the current regulations and still offer the same life-saving products at non-profit prices. Two options become available. The club can either shut down or stay open. If they close, they will cut off cannabis access for critically ill members that depend on their medicine. If they remain open, they risk further persecution from the government. One option will lead to devastation, hardship and avoidable death and

while the other could result in fines or jail. For the VCBC, the choice to remain illegally open is not hard to make.

Thinking outside the box

Ted Smith, the founder of the VCBC, is no stranger to fighting the law. A veteran in the war on drugs, Ted has been through six raids and still finds a way to keep on keeping on. When it comes to regulations, he will tell you that it's important to read them if you want to find ways around the rules.

Section 130 of the Cannabis Act states that The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations exempting the following from all or part of one or more provisions of this Act:

- (a) a person or entity;
- (b) a class of cannabis;
- (c) a form of consumption of cannabis;
- (d) a thing
- (e) an action, transaction or circumstance;
- (f) a place.

How to get an Exemption

Basically, what this means is that a total and sweeping Cannabis Act Exemption is attainable. To get one, you need to have it approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. A neutral role, the Lieutenant Governor does not get involved with the countries politics, issues or laws. For approval, the Provincial Executive Council makes a decision that the Lieutenant Governor agrees with. If that happens, it's calling an approval from the Lieutenant Governor in Council. In order for the VCBC to stay open, they need to garner the support of the Provincial Executive Council and then use that for leverage.

Last Thursday, the Mayor and City Council of Victoria voted unanimously to put forward a cannabis exemption recommendation on behalf of the VCBC. While it may be a massive step in the right direction, the battle is still far from won. The next step for the organization will be to secure support from Provincial MPs such as Carole James and Mike Farnworth, and Premier John Horgan. Once that's been done, the Provincial Executive Council can officially recommend an exemption

to the Lieutenant Governor, thus, making it a decision approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. When that happens, it's home free.

So why are the Mayor and City Council of Victoria helping the VCBC to get Cannabis Act Exemption?

Having the support of the city speaks volumes and without it, the VCBC would struggle to get the recommendation needed from the Provincial Executive Council. When dealing with the law, it's very important to remain open and polite while you stick to your guns, and while you come up with solutions. The reason that the Mayor and City Council of Victoria are helping the VCBC get an exemption is simply that the effort has been made to build the relationship. Thanks to the work put into communicating with one another, they have come around on understanding what the club is actually doing and can speak confidently when doing so on their behalf.

What this could mean

Considering the way that the regulations are written, the right wording can nullify the entire act. The VCBC is hoping for an exemption that would enable them to keep on making, providing and educating about their products. It would also mean they could keep using their private, safe inhalation room; another essential service unregulated by the government.

The Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club can use all the support it can get in applying for this exemption. If you would like to help their cause or find yourself frustrated with the state of cannabis legalization, please contact these politicians:

- Carole James – carole.james.MLA@leg.bc.ca – 250 952 4211
- Mike Farnworth – mike.farnworth.mla@leg.bc.ca – 604 927 2088
- John Horgan- john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca – 250 391 2801

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CHRISTOPHER YOUNG - Part 2

AU: How did you approach the A Nightmare on Elm Street 2 Freddy's Revenge soundtrack, seeing as a different composer had scored the original and it had such an iconic score already. How did you evolve it for the second film?

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG: The original score was done by Charles Bernstein. The strange thing about the Nightmare series is that they had so many different composers on that. Did any composer ever return to that series?

AU: No, not that I know of.

CY: I don't think they did. Why didn't they? Because apparently, every time another director came in to film the sequel, the feeling was whatever the person did on the last movie, and the movies before it, forget it. It was no good. So when I came on board it was like that too. I agree with you. I think Charles Bernstein's score is great. It's really the best of the lot. It really set the tone, it was a novel synth score at the time in which synth scores were just starting off. But when I came on board I was told that the studio kind of felt like they had been ripped off, you know, by giving Charles some money and he turns up with a synth score. They wanted me to come on board because they wanted to get a big bang for their buck. They had me promised them that whatever money they gave me that I would turn over an orchestra score. So I promised them I'd write a score that included at least 35 musicians or something. Of course when I finally recorded the score, Bob Shaye, who ran New Line pictures came into the recording studio. It was recorded at Mad Hatter which was Chick Corea's studio. It's out of business now. He came in and I remember that room was stuffed like a sardine can with musicians. They claim they never had that many people in that studio before or after. He came in and he actually counted the heads of the people in the room and I remember he turned around and smiled at me because he felt like I wasn't ripping them off or something like that. I went ahead and did the score for that movie. You know, I don't think I was encouraged to write a new Freddy theme. It was just don't use the old Freddy theme. Then of course on the following Nightmare movie, whatever composer was brought in on that one, he was told whatever you do, don't pay any attention to what Chris Young did. These scores don't have any real continuity. Some scores that do have continuity that came out in the 80s like Friday the 13th they were all done by Harry Manfredini and so there is definitely one composer voice that ties them together. The Halloween series, same thing with John Carpenter. But the Nightmare movies and Hellraiser. I mean, I did the first two, I would have done the third but they had less money for the third score than they had for the first one. I knew going into it there's no point in me doing this if I can't outdo myself. When you're doing sequels, you want to make sure that the next one in line you're doing better than the last one you did.

AU: Were you working on any music for Nightbreed knowing that it was Clive's next film, before Danny Elfman got to do that one? Then later Sam Raimi replaced Elfman with you on Spider Man 3, so it was it like a weird karma thing? Do you and Elfman get along after that happened or do you shoot daggers at each other at parties?

CY: I think Elfman and I get along, yeah, I mean, I have tremendous respect for him. After Hellraiser Clive said he would always use me but you know

how that goes. He got Nightbreed and I guess I wasn't big enough for that movie and Danny had an interest in Clive's work and apparently liked the score I had done for Hellbound. So no, I never wrote any music for that. I didn't touch that film, because I wasn't asked to. And I cannot tell a lie. I was brokenhearted. I was crushed. Not pissed at Danny. I just was sad because I felt I really had created a bond with Clive that was going to last for eternity. Well, we have created a bond that will last for eternity. He and I are best

of buddies and we've moved beyond that, you know, but I was kind of crushed. Going on in the future now with Spider-Man 3 and Spider-Man 2. I was called in to replace some of Danny's stuff. Then he and Sam had a tremendous falling out during that process, and Danny swore he would never do Spider Man 3. So lo and behold, I was brought in only because there was a falling out between the two of them. Had there not been a falling out would I have been called in? I don't know. I doubt it.

AU: You also worked with Sam Raimi on Drag Me To Hell?

CY: Yeah, I've worked with Sam Raimi on a bunch of other films. The first was The Gift and the last one was Drag Me To Hell. Of course Drag Me To Hell was a dream come true, as was The Gift for different reasons. The Gift is a dramatic mystery with horrific elements whereas Drag Me To Hell is an over the top madhouse of a story. In that great Raimi Evil Dead, kinda of tongue in cheek tradition. So that was an absolute gas to work on. It allowed me once again to address this element of the Devil in a score. In this case it was through manipulating the violin. The violin became the instrument of the Devil, as has been often used in not only classical music, popular music, but in films as well.

AU: Are you a fan of the Italian band Goblin?

CY: You better believe it! I think Goblin is absolutely fantastic. I know Claudio and the rest of the band pretty well or his version of the band pretty well. I think what Claudio brought to horror is so unique, you know with an entirely new take on the genre. Different than mine entirely, but so riveting. What I love about his music and love about any music for that matter. I love focused dramatic music especially in horror films. The best of it is focused, it's dramatic, it jumps out at you, it bites you. It is a celebration of life even though it's dealing often with death. There's something about it that devours you, it chomps at you like a meat grinder. It's exciting to listen to, I can't find the right adjectives, but I see it in his music. At the end of the day, that's what's so attractive about it to me, even though it's horror music.

AU: What do you think is behind the resurgence of vinyl records and vinyl collecting? Many horror movie soundtracks are being re-released with new art. Are you a collector as well?

CY: Why vinyl has become a new old or an old new thing thing? I could not tell you. It is a wonderful thing of course. Did I collect vinyl? Well, that's what I was raised on. I have a massive vinyl collection, which I've had to put into storage. I went kicking and screaming into the CD world and now I've made a complete turn around and I live by CDs. You could never play records in your car. I never was a big fan of cassettes as the alternative. With CDs, you had an all in one, you didn't have to buy a duplicate version of the music to play in your car or out of your home system. So yes, I missed vinyl truly, but I made the switch. Now it's coming back. I do have the vinyl copies of my own scores but no I do go out and collect vinyl recordings.

AU: You usually attend San Diego Comic-Con and were on a panel with some up and coming composers last year. What can you tell us about that experience?

CY: To get invited back to Comic-Con as anything but the bathroom attendant is an honour. I had been on panels there before but it had been a while since I've been on a panel there. I'm not as popular as I used to be, I get it. Most of the

composers on that panel were younger. Of course when I was getting called to do panels there all the time I was hot on whatever film or films had been released that year that everyone kinda knew that was in the room. I think it was kinda because of Pet Semetary that I got back in that room. I have a wonderful publicist that helped set that up. So in answer to your question, I was absolutely thrilled to be in that room. To be on the panel with yet a whole new set of composers who were trying to make their mark. That's always exciting. I became friends with a couple of them. I met some of the people in the audience and I gave them my phone number we've become kind of buddies. So all in all that's a wonderful experience. You cannot beat getting asked to be on a panel at Comic-Con. There's nothing more rewarding and making you feel like hey, I'm okay. They don't give us Oscars. But at least they get us on a panel at Comic-Con.

AU: Any advice for young composers who want to get into the film business?

CY: Yes. I teach at USC and I go overseas to teach film music as well, in Spain, Bulgaria, Ireland, England and sometimes in Vienna and Germany as well. I feel like I'm the luckiest guy in the world. Now, when I started off did I have great talent, I would have to say no. When I moved out to LA, I was overwhelmed by the titanic talents of people like Jerry Goldsmith, Elmer Bernstein, Lalo Schifrin, Laurence Rosenthal, Leonard Rosenman, John Williams and David Rakksin who I studied with. I was a guy who had never written a cue before but was madly in love with it. I didn't listen to the advice I was getting from people around me who thought I was crazy, because I was from New Jersey, I shouldn't do it. I didn't listen to them. I decided I had to come out to LA. I went to school at UCLA, and I just worked my ass off. I would say if you've fallen madly in love with film music, please first and foremost, do not try to talk yourself out of it no matter who around you might be trying to talk you out of it. Number two is I would recommend that you think about moving to Los Angeles since it is the capital of film scoring in the universe. Just as long as you don't have expectations that are so unreasonable that you feel like you failed in a very short period of time. My first year out here was murder. I was crying nearly every day thinking I was absolutely a fool to have moved down to LA. Who do I think I am to think I could have a career at this? Thank the Lord I didn't pack up and go back to New Jersey. It's about longevity it's about applying yourself and keep continuously trying. So I would strongly beg of them to hold on, keep the faith. Think about moving to Los Angeles and going to a school. I went to UCLA, USC of course has the best film scoring program in the world, but it's very expensive. For me going to a school was the perfect halfway house into Los Angeles and it gave me the opportunity to meet a lot of young directors. That's what it's all about meeting young directors and what a better place to meet them than either on the UCLA or the USC campus. So maybe you might want to think about taking a class or two there. But I do advise you to come out here. The job that most composers start with after completing their education and moving out here is working as an assistant to a composer. That's where 90% of all students start. I would look into assisting work if I were you. It can be the perfect introduction to starting a career as a writer for that composer you're working with and them opening up the doors for you moving into a show or a movie of your own. That didn't exist when I moved out but now it's a must. So in closing, I would say please move to LA if you think you're madly in love with film music and you think this is where you'd like to be. I encourage you to move out here and look into getting a job as an assistant.

AU: Is there any new or upcoming projects you can share? Anything you're working on right now? Or anything you want to promote?

CY: Two things. One is a film called The Empty Man. It's kind of like Angel Heart. In this case someone is trying to find the missing daughter of a woman with whom he had an affair. During the course of trying to find out where this young woman is, he gets tied up with this bizarre

group of people, of which this daughter has become a part of, and in so doing, discovers that everything that he thought about himself is not true. It's about someone discovering that they are not who they thought at all and there's nothing more horrific than that. Also I just finishing doing a Sam Raimi thing. It's a short episode called the Golden Arm for a show called 50 States of Fear. It's a 30 minute short for this collection of shorts that's going to be featured on this new form of cell phone based entertainment called Quibi. This is the opening episode on a series of episodes in which each director is writing a story and directing a story based on an urban legend, pertaining to the state that they came from. This one comes from Michigan and is an urban legend that Sam knew about. It's called the Golden Arm and it's absolutely remarkable. I think it's got to be Sam's best ever. It's terrifying in a wonderful world that completely absorbed you. It's a perfectly told short story.

AU: Why do you think that soundtrack music is so important in making a movie really come alive or come together?

CY: Film music has been around since the advent of silent films. There's always been this need, it was discovered to further assist the audience in feeling or connecting with their emotions. The appropriate emotion to the appropriate moment in the movie can very well be aided by the addition of music. Music was a part of opera. Before that it was used assisting dramatic works going way back to I guess, Greek theatre. There's always some music being used to help convey the emotional subtext of what was going on. What do I think it has to offer? I think it has everything to offer. It's one of the actors in the movie. It speaks in a language that's universal. It's not words. It doesn't have to be. We don't have to have it translated into a variety of languages. Rather, it stays in its own language and yet we all immediately know what it means. No matter what country no matter what language we speak, there's something extremely special and profound about that. That's why directors and studio departments, and producers know that music is an essential additional language to be incorporated into their films because if you're trying to communicate something to an audience, the best way to do it is on an emotional level really is not what's being said but it's through the notes that's capturing the emotional essence of what they're saying without using words.

AU: How is Clive Barker doing? Do you still speak with him?

CY: I can't say that I speak with him regularly. I know that he's not been well, but you know, he gets up in the morning and he's still productive. I hear he's going to be doing a lot more of these horror conventions now which is exciting news.

AU: Any final words for for Canadian fans?

CY: I cannot thank you all enough, not only on my own behalf, but also on other composers behalf, that you have taken that much of an interest in the music which at the end of the day, its primary purpose is to facilitate another media. Without the picture that we're writing for there would be no film music. Most people go to the movie, and are focused on the dialogue and don't pay a hell of a lot of attention to what's going on with the music. To me, the greatest show music is music that not only accomplishes the needs of the movie, but can be removed from the picture and through the manipulating on the part of the composer hold up on its own. That you have invested a lot of your listening time into following film music means that you must feel the same way. So from the bottom of my heart, I can't thank you enough for giving your ear-time and your attention, your love towards a genre of music which is sort of stuck in purgatory. It's not taken seriously by the classical world, and it has no place in the pop world. So it's sort of floating around aimlessly in a world where there's only a select number of people like yourselves, that really, really care about it. So thank you very, very, very much.

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**SICK
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COLOURING PAGE

by SPYDER YARDLEY-JONES

Psycho Las Vegas

Royal Thunder

Interview w/ Mel (vocals/bass), Josh (guitar), Will (guitar), Kent (drums)
By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: We are sitting here with Royal Thunder, rocking it in Psycho. How's your experience so far in Vegas this day?

Royal Thunder: It's been great. It's very hot, the show today was great. A great response from the crowd.

AU: Did you find some new faces in the crowd that you weren't used to?

RT: Yeah! It was broad. A good mix. We were lucky because we played the open air in the casino, and people just heard it and wandered in. Like, "Oh cool, a band is playing!" so totally, all different – super metalheads to random people who went to Vegas are like, "What the fuck is going on here?"

AU: It's surreal. As we are doing our metal festival, there are people here playing the slot machines. Looking quite confused.

Mel: I had a security guard ask me what was in my bass case. And you walked away in your room, Josh, he asked, "What's in his case?" And he made me open it up and wanted to make sure it wasn't guns and stuff. And he was like, "What is this?" and I told him it was a bass. He was a little confused. He didn't know what it was. I'm like, "It is a bass."

AU: They had an issue with that last year.

RT: Yeah... unfortunately.

AU: Saw a performance you did on NPR which was mind-blowing, and connected you with new fans who could hear the singing and songwriting without the aid of mighty distortion and pounding drums. What new attention and feedback did you get from it?

RT: We did an EP called "CVIA" which was only downloadable online, which was some of the songs we played at NPR. Definitely there were some people we picked up as fans, who we never would have reached otherwise. It was a good thing.

AU: Have you met some new friend bands from that experience? Maybe you are a new fan of a new band?

RT: Oh certainly. I went down the rabbit hole of seeing different people. It's pretty crazy some big

names that do it.

Mel: What was that recent one that you heard that you really liked? On NPR?

RT: I saw the IDLES one, it was really crazy. It is such a weird atmosphere. Even when we did it, we got home from tour – drove up there, did it, drove back. We were there two hours.

Mel: We drove 12 hours there, two hours, 12 hours straight home.

RT: We didn't really practice acoustically. We've done it before for release shows in New York, and guess we just do it by the seat of our pants. Right after the tour... we got home, unpacked all the electric shit, threw the acoustic guitars in and drove up there and did it. And on the way driving back, so sleep deprived, like "What did we just do?" "Did that happen?" It was so strange. A lot of people really connected with that particular performance, and that was their introduction to the band. NPR reaches so many people.

AU: Out of the live performance today, I'm glad to see it live, kept missing it in Vancouver. It's so powerful and emotional live, how do you find the resilience to perform it live, night after night?

Mel: I've learned, that when I spent years and years worrying about it – trying to take care of it, and perfect it – "it" being my voice – that it became a mental thing for me to not be able to pull it off. I'd lose my voice a lot. It was literally when I quit giving a shit. I'm like "I'm just gonna do it, drink my water and do it 'til I can't anymore," and hopefully that won't be the case. Focus on being on stage and playing and enjoying it. Hope for the best! If I can't do it live, I'll find another way.

AU: It was mind-blowing to see you on a small stage, up close. Is this a piece of a current tour?

RT: We just flew out for this, from home in Atlanta, Georgia. It's a one-off.

AU: So imagine you were Canadian, and you were going to Atlanta. What would you see, what would be a cool tourist thing you'd recommend?

RT: Depends what you're into. The Aquarium. The World Of Coca-Cola. Six Flags. How about Clermont Lounge? Gotta go to Varsity and get

some greasy-ass hot dogs... Gotta go to El Mir and get a grizz. Get some burritos. Yeah, El Miriachi and get some good food. Go to the peach orchard and pick peaches. Elan and see some shows. Depends what you like to do. The zoo. Could go to the drive-in.

AU: We're aimed to print this and inspire Canadians to come south and visit festivals.

RT: Ah, I know what to do then. Gotta come to El Miriachi so Mel can kick you some food and then the Imperial and Josh will fix you a beverage. Then Boxcar and Kent will be standing there, standing there looking at you.

AU: We are short on time and wanted to ask...

any advice for 17 year old dudes in Canada reading this magazine?

RT: Do what you love. If it makes ya happy, do it. If it makes you happy keep doing it. If it doesn't, get the fuck out and go find what does. Find what you love and do it. No matter what it takes. Don't quit. Just do it. If you fall down, get back up again.

www.royalthunderofficial.com



Psycho Las Vegas Monophonics

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Good day sir, where are you now? What do you see out the window?

Kelly Finnigan: Good morning! I'm at my studio Transistor Sound in Marin County, California. I'm currently seeing blues skies, green trees and U-Haul trucks as there is a truck rental spot right next door.

AU: We met you at Psycho Las Vegas 2019 – an awesome time! What was it like playing Monophonics' unique style in a mostly metal festival? How did people react?

KF: Yes, that was a good weekend. It was interesting in the best kind of way. As a musician and artist, you want to be put in front of new audiences who hopefully become new fans. It's always challenging but rewarding to be put in situations where you can play your music for folks who might never discover you if it wasn't for that festival. The goal is to convert them and I definitely think we did. We got a great reaction at both performances and people were digging it!

AU: For those listeners who haven't heard you yet... how would you describe your music?

KF: It's heavy soul music that lives in the psychedelic pop world. We are very much influenced by the songwriting and production of 60s and 70s records but always have a foot in the present.

AU: How did you come to form the band, what was your goal?

KF: I didn't form the band. I joined around 2010, 2011. Once I joined, the goal was to write great songs, make classic records that stand the test of time and tour the world.

AU: What are the 'heaviest' bands you like?

KF: David Axelrod, The Bar-Kays, Black Merda, Hi Rhythm Section, the Funk Brothers, the Brothers

of Soul, Curtis Mayfield's touring band in 1972, Sly & The Family Stone, The Band... the list goes on!

AU: What type of organ do you play? It had a full resonant sound!

KF: I play a Hammond Organ. Mostly an A100 but sometimes a B3 or C3. It's an incredible instrument that's been heard on countless classic records.

AU: What's the secret of bringing so much energy to a show, two nights in a row, in frigging 43 degrees with slot machines ringing in your ears?

KF: My commitment to giving 110% at every live show comes from my respect for the people who came before me and always brought the goods, no matter what! Great live acts like James Brown, Frank Sinatra, Otis Redding, BB King, Little Richard and Sam Cooke. I don't go half speed and phone it in. Anyone who does is not a real artist or performer. You gotta leave all out there every time!

AU: What is next for the Monophonics?

KF: We are releasing a new single later this year which will be followed by a new record early next year around late a February. Once it's out, we will hit the road hard and be out for most of the year playing shows and promoting the record.

AU: When are you bringing the soul to Canada?!

KF: 2020 is definitely the year!!

AU: Last words to Canadians working on their tan and listening to Motown music?

KF: Stay true to yourself, try to spread some extra

love to those who need it the most, play your soul music loud and enjoy your coffee cold!

www.monophonics.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Erik Lindholm



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TITTY TITTY BONG BONG



Breast friends, **Larrissa Champagne** and **April Ace** are bringing their love for marijuana and burlesque to Nelson! Titty Titty Bong Bong is a Vancouver Island original annual show, having two shows in Nanaimo (where Larrissa is from) and Victoria (where April previously resided). Having been raised in the Kootaneys, April made the move back and thankfully Larrissa loves a good road trip. So grab two zig-zags and a colt 45 and meet these dopes babes who loves to bring the tits and talent to the stage!

and Chong running the show! We have Larrissa and MC Shane Blaq, coming from the island along with a cast of local performers! You can expect my twerking and anatomy lessons from me (wink wink).



LC - Expect glitz and glam of classic striptease along with the hilarity of pot smoking. Perhaps some girl guides selling cookies but definitely a lotta Mary-Jane and fierce women on stage!

Q&A:

-What brings you to Nelson?

AA - Nelson has a great burlesque community as well as reputation around pot. I love the island but I wanted to stay close to home this year and share the TTBB fun with my mountain friends! Nelson has been very welcoming and it seemed fitting to bring the 4th Annual show in the year 2020 to BC's 420 capital.

LC - I heard there were hot springs out here!

How did you meet?

LC - In Las Vegas at BHO (Burlesque Hall of Fame). April didn't like me at first because I was wearing a tinier bikini than hers! But after smoking a 'j' by the pool we realized we had a lot in common and had the same kind of humour. We've been smoking and stripping ever since!

What inspired TTBB?

AA - Good clean, dirty humour! I think a bare bum is always hilarious! I grew up in a community where kid's knew not to talk about "dad's special garden". It's liberating to grow up and not only be open but bring it to the stage.

LC - Plus we look stellar toplers!

What can we expect at the show?

AA - Weed culture for sure. Imagine a sexy Cheech

Oh I wanted to conclude it with "A friend with weed is a friend indeed but a friend with breasts and all the rest is better"



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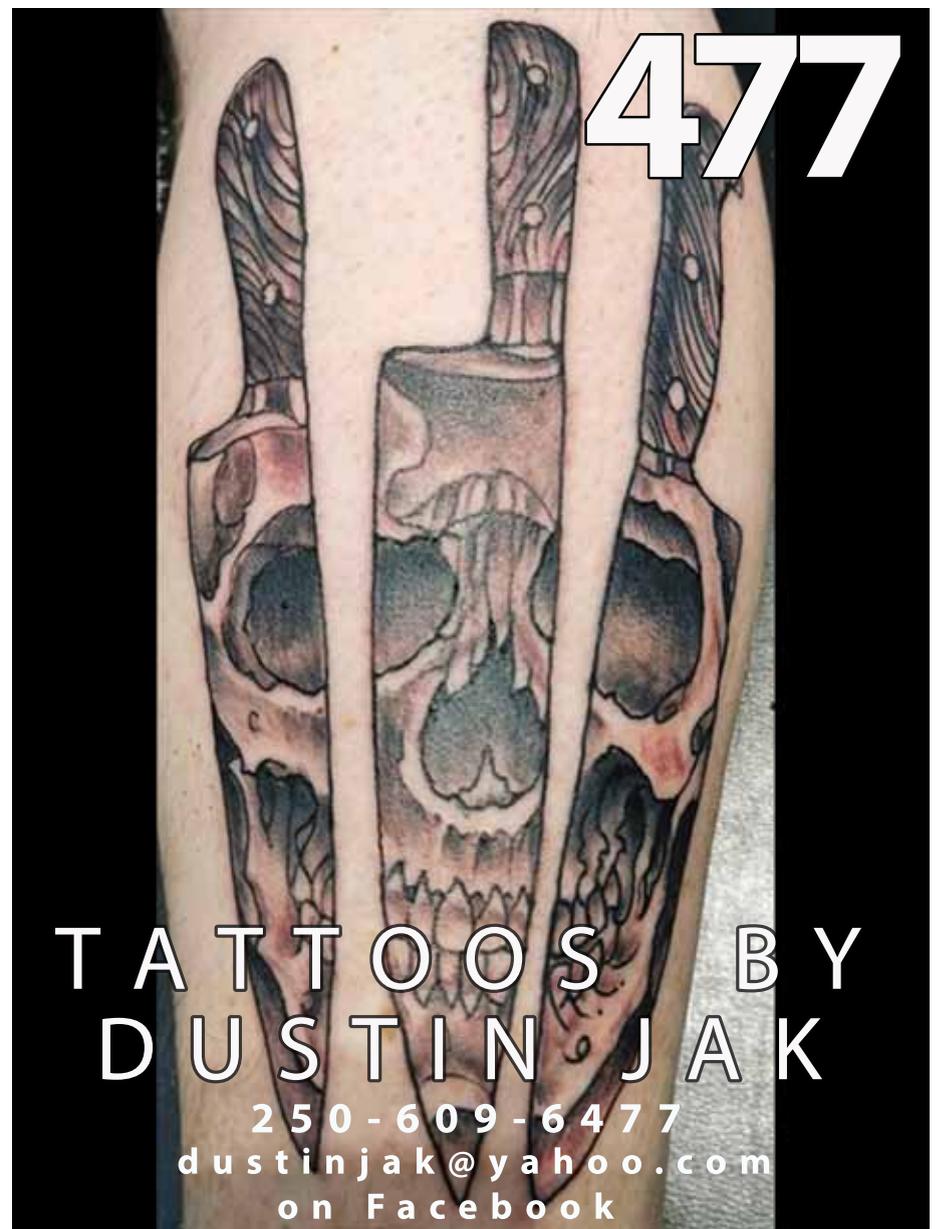
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JEWS LOVES
JEWS HATES

by Jesus Maggot

My children, let's take a moment and take a deep breath. I have spent a fair amount of time on the phone, video chat and social media with a lot of you over the last month. I've heard varying degrees of fear, panic, depression and anger. But thankfully also a sense of community. But right now PLEASE listen to me.

Several things need to happen for us all to get through this time of uncertainty.

1. If you can, STAY AT HOME! You can't catch or pass on the virus if you isolate yourself. I know this is hard and scary for a lot of you. But this is the only way to beat this thing. The odds of saving lives goes up every time you stay at home.

2. Stop posting misinformation! It boggles my brain that a lot of you won't listen to the media yet trust a facebook meme. Seriously STOP IT! You are only adding to the problem. The bottom line is, this thing is killing

thousands of people and more will die. And to those of you who keep saying "Ya but it's mostly old people dying from it." Please think about what you are saying. These people are your parents and grandparents. That is truly a horrific thing to say.

3. Stop playing the blame game. This also helps nothing but fuel more anger. I know a lot of you don't like our leaders,, here in Ontario our Premier, the PM and Trump in the states. But that's who we have right now. Nothing we can do about it. So there is no good purpose for pointing fingers. We all know what some of them have done, or continue to do. And when this is over, a reckoning will need to happen. Take notes, and don't let people forget, but do it a way what doesn't cause your friends and family any extra anxiety. And if you don't like your current leaders, make your voice heard in the next election with your vote, not a social media post. Trust me, whenever you try calling out a Prime Minister, President, Premiere or Governor out on your facebook or twitter, they are not reading it. Why would they?

4. Be there for each other. Video calls and social media are great for keeping in touch with each other. Check in with your loved ones on a consistent basis. Make sure anyone feeling alone and scared right now are aware that they are not alone, and are loved.

5. If you are one of the fortunate few that isn't struggling financially. Please give or volunteer at your local food banks. And please don't hoard. There is a big difference between being stocked and hoarding. Resources are depleting in a lot of areas. So let's make sure everyone gets what they need to survive.

6. Just don't be a dick! A lot of you can get quite vile with your online comments. This was already bullshit, but now it really needs to stop. Most of you are the ones talking about how the media are fear mongers. Which to a degree is sometimes true. But by putting up some of those comments you have become the fear monger. DON'T BE A DICK!!!

And 7. Please keep in mind that this is not all about you! Just because you don't feel sick doesn't mean you don't have the virus, which means you can pass it on to someone who's immune system cannot handle it. You'd be surprised how many people you know with immunity issues. For example, me! And several of the people in my life. We have no choice but to rely on everyone else to not get us sick. So if you have to go out, wear a mask, keep washing your hands, keep 6 feet away from others and for fuck sake's don't touch your face!

Having said all of that... deep breath... I'm so proud of a great many of you. There is still a sense of community and I have seen a lot of people helping out others. Keep it up and keep the positivity flowing. The best thing



we can all do right now is have each others backs. Stop the arguing, stop the blaming, stop the hatred, and just remember, we are all in the same boat. This is a defining moment for us to show that we are good and decent people. And also, unfortunately, a time when others show their true colours. So, one more time. Stay in, wash your hands, don't be a dick and keep in touch with everyone. Stay safe my children. And when this all blows over, we are going to have some of the most epic parties ever! Not to mention, for those of us who are alone through all this, the post pandemic sex is going to be fucking amazing!

Facebook: James Jesus Maggot
Instragam @mrjesusmaggot

Photo Credit: Natalie Hofer



Filthy! Under the Wahuku Brutal Slamming Metal in China

Interviews with Rectal Wench and The Dark Prison Massacre

By Ryan Dyer

At 13 Club in the Wudaokou district of Beijing, China, Brutal Fest, a two day mini-festival showcasing the dirtiest, smelliest, most obscene bands in China, is taking place. On the bill are six acts who have defied the stereotype I had built of the Chinese music scene - that most bands were thrash or punk knockoffs of overseas legends. Wearing butcher's outfits on stage complete with wrestling masks (previously black ski masks), Beijing's Rectal Wench ram out tracks on stage like a knife-embedded dildo and are influenced by extreme fetish films, taking on the style of pornogrind bands Gut, Cock and Ball Torture, and SRRXOXM.

"Plugging up your asshole with my stiffened cock! Stroking with my tadpole, your bunghole smells of rot!" - Named after the infamous pornogrind band Lividity song of the same title, Rectal Wench goes into darker, tighter areas of subjectivity than

they are making their return to the scene after a multi-year hiatus, and will open for US band Waking the Cadaver as well as the UK band Party Cannon on their Asian tour in Beijing in October. Before their hiatus, they had put on shows in Beijing called Gore Feast, which showcased the death, gore and grind metal bands of China.

"When I was young I did not know what pornogrind was. One day I read an interview which said Lividity was the most Niubi (Chinese word for "fucking awesome") brutal death/pornogrind band on the planet," says guitarist Rex Guo, who without his mask, looks like a male hairdresser you'd see in a mall barbershop. "So, I first heard the song "Pussy Lover," which has the lyrics, "Rotting clitoral decay! On your knees now, face to the floor, hands tied together, legs in the air, pray for your virginity as I rape your pink asshole! It made me aware of all of the colours of pussy." He discloses his personal watching habits, "On most Chinese networks there is just Japanese porn. I had to go to other countries' online porn sites. I do not like watching Japanese porn movies, except for some stuff including Altman and monsters. I like to see ones from the United States or Russia or South America where the women are more wild."

Foreign horror films also influence the band. A snippet from Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* and the recent Japanese gore film *Grotesque* serve as intros to tracks. Are the musical, horror and pornographic influences more or less the same for every pornogrind band regardless of where they are from?

"I think the music we love and the horror and porn culture is the same in most places, but we may lack some of the skills and experience to properly record music. There are some small Asian ideas in the choreography of the songs."

Tianjin's The Dark Prison Massacre plays a vicious form of brutal death/grind with "beast mode" vocals (garbled, wordless) influenced by bands

playing on a limited live concert within China cause a cathartic frenzy within the audience - it seems the people have waited for a band of this style to cure them of their issues for the 30 or so minutes they play. They have also been noticed by fans worldwide of the slam variety - creating waves on Facebook and Youtube, though they have never toured abroad (visas for Chinese citizens, let alone bands, is another discussion entirely).

Their stance is more political, with some pornographic flavor coming through with their albums *A Blood Clot Ejaculation*, *My Cock is the Truth*, which is a reference to the bassist's incarceration, and their recent offering, *Deformity of Human Consciousness* (which has a seal surrounded by blood on the cover - a message for animals fighting back?). This album also has a cover of the song "Faget" by Korn.

"Our bassist was detained before. Ten years ago he bought a hooker, then the hooker told the police that he raped her," says guitarist Heji. "He was imprisoned for 10 years, so we dedicate our band to him. China's prisons are very brutal. Human rights are all but eliminated there. In a Laogai camp for instance, prisoners are beaten while there is cramped living conditions, bed bugs, roundworms and the spreading of filth is rampant due to limited showers, one latrine per room, and no immediate cleaning supplies like toothbrushes or toilet paper. Because of the limited food, some prisoners have also eaten lice."

Heji cites the country's harsh state as the spiritual reason for creating the band, "This is an extreme state with an extreme government. A dark reign with trench oil, industrial pollution, overpopulation and most of all no human rights. All of these factors come out while the music acts as a catharsis. We don't like China. We would rather live in a place like Canada. If we had the ability, then we would have emigrated there."

Unlike genres which have a more dedicated physical uniform, like mohawks for punk or a form of long hair for metal, the members of the grind bands, besides their stage outfits, like Rex, look



nearly conservative, giving credence to the notion of "living two lives" - the artistic and working class, in China. A teacher and general labourer perform in Rectal Wench.

Though the bands and their fans are highly enthusiastic, with Dark Prison Massacre's popularity growing substantially in the past few years, there is still little interest in the scene from metal lovers as a whole in China. "The grind scene is very small. I feel that I could count listeners and musicians to possibly 1000 (out of a population of 20 million in Beijing alone)," says Rex. "The erotic topics are of interest to people here, but not many people like this kind of music. You will find most young people at generic dance clubs. Because of this, we play very infrequently - once or twice a year, and it is mainly a social gathering with like-minded fans and musicians."

What all bands have in common in China is the inability to tour beyond their immediate area for any long period of time. "Bands rarely tour across China because they will get fired once they get back from their tour. If they take off for two weeks, the workplace will have hired someone else before the musician gets back to work," says Rex. "Extreme metal bands here usually record one album - a flash in the pan, and then fade out due to the high recording costs, lack of interest in the underground scene and uncertainty of the materials being kosher to print without the government interfering."

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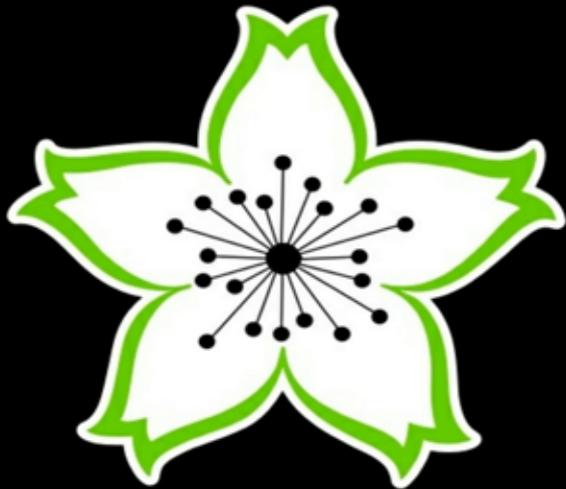
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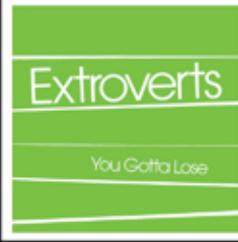
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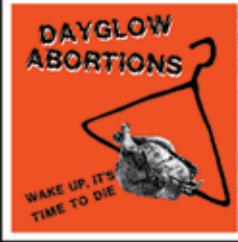
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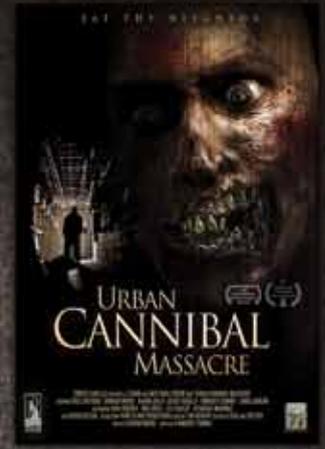
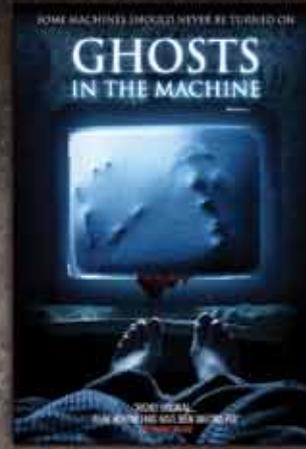
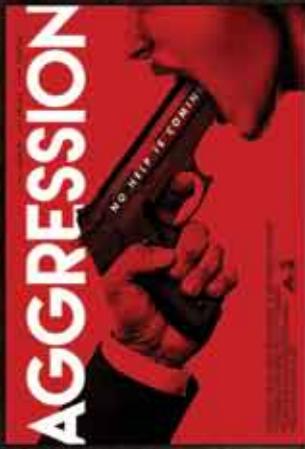
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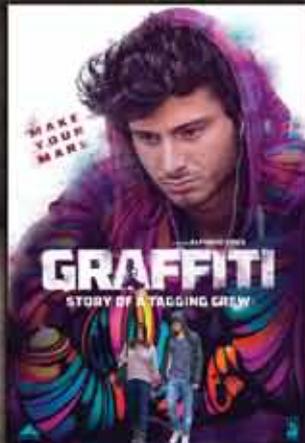
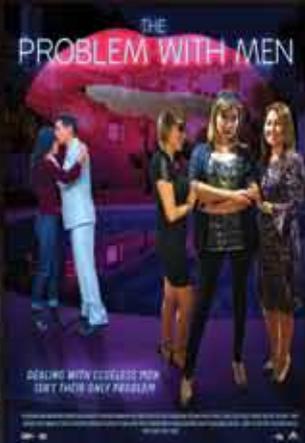
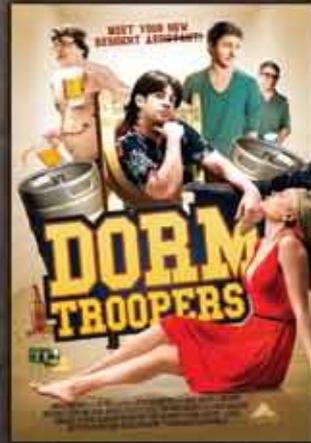
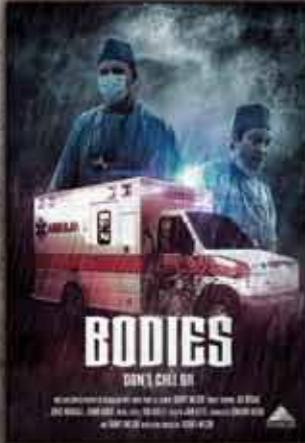
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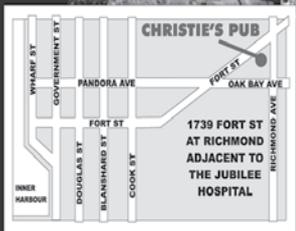
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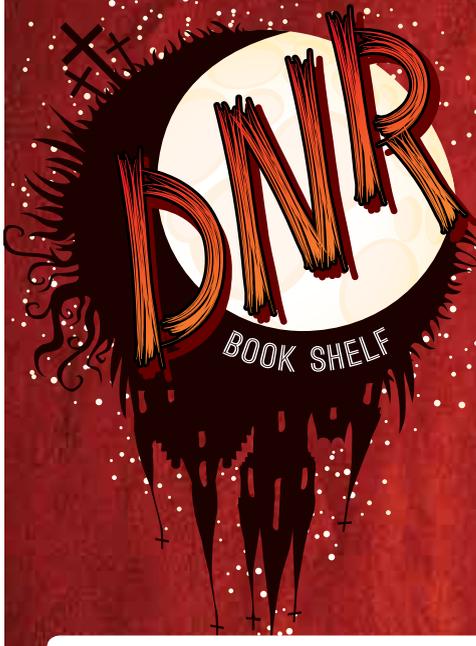
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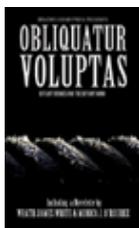
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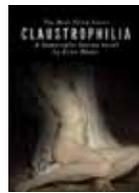
by Wrath James White, Monica J. O'Rourke, Jaap Boekenstein, Sarah Cannavo, Jeremy Wagner, Dani Brown, Lucas Miliron, Sommer Marsden, Michael Patrick Hicks
Death's Head Press
October 31st 2019

With my two favorite genres merged together, Horror and Erotica, and not to mention being banned by Amazon, I had to get my hands on this new Death's Head Press release. Most excited for one of my favorite authors; Wrath James White, starting off the anthology with partner in crime Monic J. O'Rourke.

A surprisingly slow, tough start, but it finally hooks me in and I am satisfied with the feature novelette even though it's not as strong as what we are used to seeing with these two collaborating.

Like any collection, there are a few hits and few misses, thankfully being few and far between. A wide variety for whatever your kink or freaky taste may be, there certainly is something for all us weirdos including some pretty entertaining depravity. From Witch covens, to haunted playrooms, fucked up creatures that only 'come if you want it' to, voodoo sexual aids, pain shows, pig farmers with 15 inch cocks handling business in the middle of a nuclear attack, disappearing acts at anonymous masquerade gatherings, the dark web, brutal torturous office orgies gone awry, and finally capping the book off with an unyielding sex doll. It's got it all I tell ya! Certainly one for the collection.

Demonika



CLAUSTROPHILIA
Ezra Blake
Independent
October 14th 2018

I consider myself a serious fan of extreme horror. There have been many novels that I've read just out of curiosity to see how far the author would go, and they barely phased me. This though... just wow! If you have any triggers whatsoever, please avoid this novel.

Christopher Dour found out early on that he had a forbidden kink; he gets off from studying crime scene photos. Obviously, the perfect profession for somebody like him, other than becoming a serial killer, would be to become a pathologist. It was during graduate school that he gets called in to start studying the Providence Butcher and his victims. While Chris notices and starts studying the Butcher, the Butcher also notices Chris and starts to plan something special for him.

This is one of those novels that you gift to people that you don't like. If people are asking for the most extreme horror novel that you've read, you'll probably point them towards this. Honestly, the less said, the better. It's over 300 pages. As the author's first novel, this is surprisingly good, and there's a lot that you will have wished you didn't see.

The best part about this novel is that the author is giving it away for free right now, through his website. If you head on over to <https://www.ezrablake.com/clostraphilia>, you can submit your email address and have the author email you a free Kindle edition.

Michael Cushing

DEAD AWARE



Eleanor Merry
Amazon/Independent,
August 23rd 2019

This book was a real "record scratch" moment for me. Not sure how in how many decades of zombie books, films, tv shows, etc and there hasn't been one even remotely similar to this idea from the wonderfully talented, Vancouver based writer, Eleanore Merry. A slim, action packed, no extra bullshit book that keeps to the meat and potatoes of intrigue.

Stationed in Vancouver, Surrey and Toronto the story begins with the books main characters, a happy young couple, Max and Clara Jacobs in Surrey. Max, called to Toronto on business at a time when a highly contagious virus dubbed F.I.R.E. sweeps through the country turning most in its path to zombies. However, not zombies that we are used too, the walking dead. But zombies who are "dead aware", very clever. The book is actually told from the pov of the main characters after they turn. Making the story so fresh and interesting while keeping within the zombie sub-genera theme including families just trying to survive, groups attacking zombies, pillaging to live and of course the military and scientists getting involved. But yes, these "dead aware" are sort of a dumbed down, slower version of their previous selves, who can learn to talk again, and control their body, sort of recall their past memories to an extent and yes, even get from Toronto back to Vancouver. A little bit of a Utopian fantasy, but it was so damn entertaining, it didn't turn me off at all. I enjoyed this one from start to finish and now I have to get the second part because I have no doubt it's just as good.

Demonika

THE MIDWIVES



Duncan Ralston
Shadow Work Publishing
February 24, 2020

Just a few months since the release of *Ghostland*, Duncan Ralston returns with *The Midwives*, a novel that reads like *Rosemary's Baby* meets *Midsommar* for the Modern American Reader.

Martin Savage is a man on the run from his past. Since the subject of one of his most infamous novels, a serial killer named the Witch Killer, has escaped from prison, Martin is also now on the run for his life.

He figures his best bet is to return to his roots, which almost nobody knows about, the small island town of Barrows Bay. This small town has been plagued by an ancient evil that predates the arrival of the first Irish settlers to this island community in the 1800s.

Duncan Ralston has quickly become one of my go-to authors for horror. When you pick

up one of his novels, you never quite know what you're getting into, but you know that you're going to enjoy the ride regardless. As with most of his other work, this should come with trigger warnings. There are more than a few scenes here that you'll find really hard to get out of your head.

Michael Cushing

IN DARKNESS DELIGHT



VOLUME 2 : CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

Andrew Lennon, Evans Light, Josh Malerman, Mark Cassell, Richard Chizmar, Tim Curran, Ray Garton, Eddie Generous, Kev Harrison, Curtis

M. Lawson, Adam Light, Chad Lutzke, Mason Lyle Morgan, Christopher Motz, Frank Oreto, Glenn Rolfe, Kristopher Ruffy, Mary SanGiovanni, Jeff Strand, Mikal Trimm, Gregor Xane
Corpus Press

August 2019

Another awesome anthology put together by Corpus Press last year. Part 2 to the In Darkness Delight Collections. This one features horror heavy weights such as Jeff Strand and Ray Garton. I enjoyed this motley crew of stories in a nice large paperback with great cover art.

Stories that stuck out for me started with the books lead story, Mason Morgan's *The People in the Toilet*. I had to laugh as this was a childhood fear of mine brought to life. The *Newel Post* by Eddie Generous, a little bed and breakfast with a corrupted banister post that causes havoc for the family. A *Survivor* by Ray Garton in which a father is bit by some unnamed creature and changes for the worst. Others included creepy stuffed animals, flesh-eating infections complete with maggots, Greenman monsters. traveling in Vietnam gone very wrong, and much more with a mixed bag of other creepy 'creatures of the night'. Definitely something for everyone in this anthology. Looking forward to reading the others.

Hatchetface

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Kickstarting OMG!

By Ed Sum



OMG! is an upcoming horror anthology set to arrive on Kickstarter at the end of April. This series will be published by indie Aequitas Comics and Editor-in-chief Tone Rodriguez would have been championing this baby at a lot more conventions if only the world was not in lockdown. Fortunately, he was able to get a start at shows like Fan Expo Vancouver.

The Emerald City Comic Convention ashan teaser edition has been "cancelled" and appropriately enough, is selling online for those wanting an advance teaser.

This series differs from others in that it draws from urban legends from all around the world, and leaves the finer details up to the imaginations of the writers and artists. The talent pool is huge, and Rodriguez hinted at having not only well-established talents but also newcomers contributing. I had the opportunity to chat with him briefly about this when he was in Canada, and correspond further to see what the plans are given the current situation that's affecting many an industry.

AU: How did the idea for OMG! come about?

Tone Rodriguez: My publishing partner Rob Dieterle and I were on a lengthy drive from Dallas and my place in Lafayette, Louisiana, where we started talking; he had another project with others and nothing really happened. I knew he LOVED horror and so I suggested we try doing an anthology, so that the artists and writers would have an easier time meeting their goals to complete the finished book.

AU: Who will contribute?

TR: I swear it's a long list (just with covers)! We had a great talk with a former collaborator of mine, and he wants to be involved... so I'm super stoked! So far, our list of artists are Candice Dailey, Jake Goodman, Ryan Kincaid, Jose Varese, Jeremy Clark, Mostafa Moussa, Rob Broussard, Peter Smith, Chelcie Dieterle, Albert Morales and Raymund Lee colouring a big portion of this.

AU: Was it difficult to get unknown talents involved versus those who are in the comic book industry?

TR: To be honest, we traded a lot of favours to get a lot of this started. We have some amazing buddies, and as we chug along we find more creators interested in joining us on our journey.

[We also have] big names to help push this book to the next level.

AU: How often will this series be published?

TR: We're getting the Kickstarter going at the end of April and we have plans on doing a single issue to get the "OMG!" train rolling. After that is one of two things—a second standalone issue or a larger OGN-style anthology trade paperback.

But keep in mind, this is only the beginning of what I want to do with Rob D. I mentioned we have several ideas started, so it's not too far out to see other titles and other creators working on books and series under the Aequitas Comics banner. Also, this series is a springboard for several other projects.

AU: What can readers expect in the first issue or two?

TR: I've seen everything coming in, and the pages for our short story titled "Prized Possessions" are amazing, the artwork far exceeded my expectations. It's all quality and beautiful to behold. I assure you, this book will have something for everyone. We covered all our bases, so I'm keeping my fingers crossed, hoping to get it to our supporters and fans of the horror genre alike.

AU: Can we expect to find this work at comic book stores or can we buy direct?

TR: The Kickstarter launches at the end of April, and we were trying to do the whole grassroots promotion by attending as many comic conventions as we could. However, this coronavirus scare has hit us hard! All of March has been wiped off our calendars, so it is making our jobs to spread the word that much more difficult.

COMIC-GEDDON

We have a lot of friends, and Rob D. has made a lot of contacts with shop owners across the U.S.A. so the book will mostly be available via our website using Facebook and Instagram to spread the word. But yeah, I'm hoping to get the book in every shop interested in carrying it. It's not an easy task, but we will do our best.

AU: Which other events will you be attending to market/sell this book?

TR: Again, we had a long list of shows for this year... but this health scare isn't making this easy. We have many of the major cons set up this year. But until this situation can get cleared up, I'm not sure which cons will still be on. I can say we update our schedule constantly, so please keep an eye on our Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/OMGHorrorAnthology



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Corona Zombies!

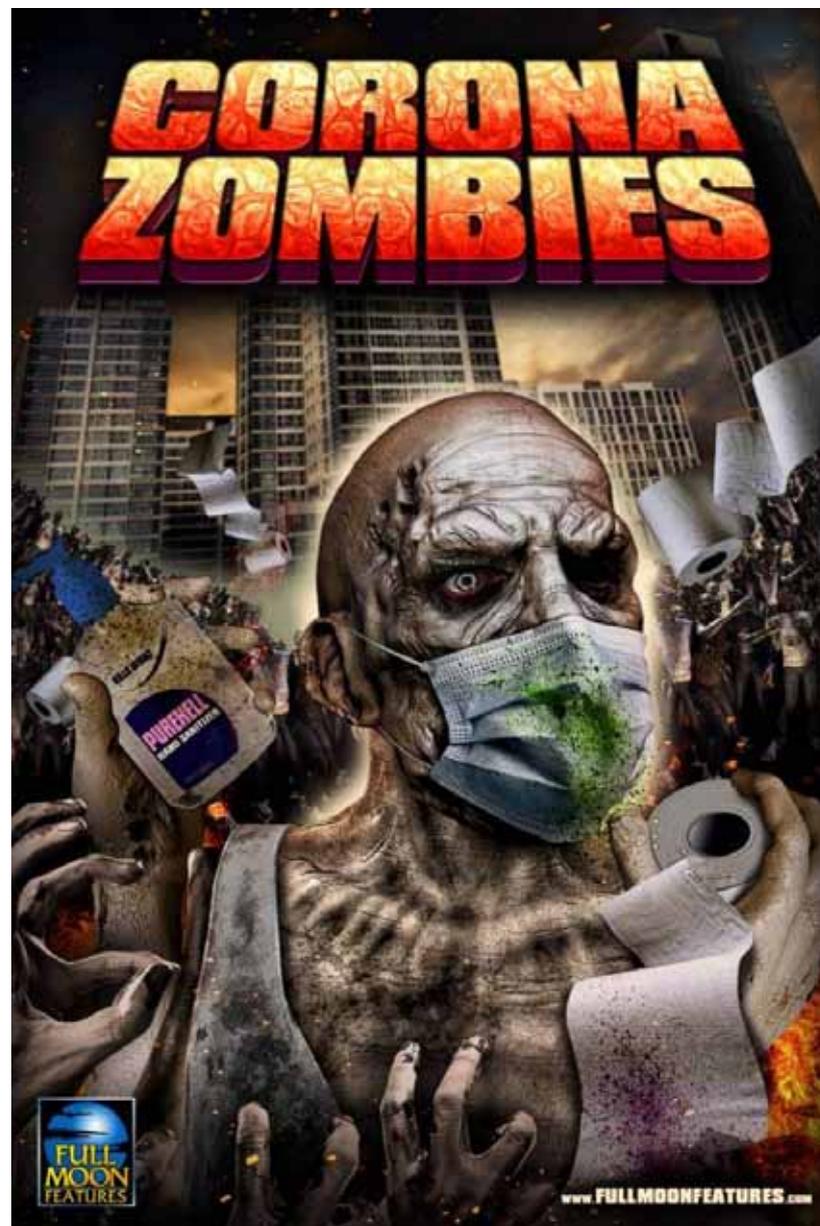
If you are tired of all the Corona-19 misinformation and knew the zombie invasion is coming back in early February, Full Moon Features' *Corona Zombies* is the perfect film needed to break the monotony of our reality. Charles Band is smart to edit *Hell of the Living* and *Zombies vs. Stripper* together to deliver us a satire of current events. He also got his buddies together to re-record a fresh dialogue track and make the story so self aware, it's hard not to laugh! The only thing missing is having a certain premier say "moistly" while live on air. I will not ruin the entire narrative. If you want some adult themed horror comedy, this film has enough T&A

without going overboard and mild gore to satisfy. The joy is in how much fun the guys in the studio are having hamming the story up. It's on par with the silly appeal that *Dynaman* brought to audiences when episodes debuted in the late 80s on USA Network's Night Flight.

When a special team of soldiers, sans individual coloured uniforms, are assembled to save the world, they have enough to deal with. In addition to far too much dialogue going on in the fights and chase sequences, they are still in search for the last roll of toilet paper!

Corona Zombies is streaming EXCLUSIVELY on the Full Moon Features channel and app on www.FullMoonFeatures.com. Enter the code CZ20 on checkout to get a FULL month's subscription for only \$2.37!

-By Ed Sum



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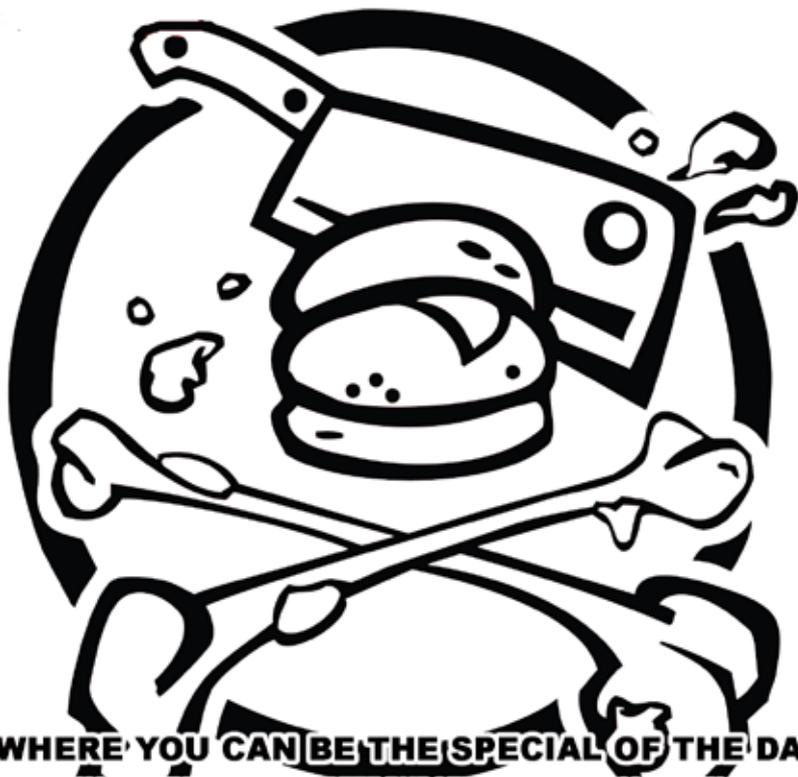
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RITUAL DICTATES

Give In To Despair

interview with guitarist Justin Hagberg
by Erik "Despair" Lindholm

Ritual Dictates, the band featuring guitarist and vocalist Justin Hagberg (ex-3 Inches of Blood) and drummer Ash Pearson (ex-3 Inches of Blood, Revocation), will release their new album Give In To Despair on April 3.

You can also check out the slightly-differently-named debut single "Given To Despair", which unlike its artwork is a pretty heavy affair.

Absolute Underground: What's going on? Set a scene for the reader.

Justin Hagberg: I'm in Vancouver right now. I'm semi recovering from a night of jamming last night. My throat is a little bit hoarse, and just getting back in the saddle of things. So, delightfully recovering. Stoked on life these days.

AU: You're saying your hoarse so are you the primary singer with the band?

JH: I anticipated having backing vocals, but I'll be doing the majority of the screaming.

AU: And how does it feel to be in sort of a primary vocalist role? When I think of you in the band you're very familiar for, 3 Inches of Blood, you're working more as a guitar player. So how's it feel to take on the voice of the band?

JH: It's new and it's cool. I'm really enjoying it. I used to do some singing in Allfather but it was more of a backing vocalist role. And the same with the last bit of 3 Inches of Blood, on the last couple of records. I took over singing Jamie's parts but I wasn't the lead vocalist of the band. I've fronted some bands in past but this is a new level for me, creating a record and being the frontman. I've progressed to this level, from singing over the years. It's an awesome challenge to take on this position in the band.

AU: Absolutely. It's awesome. You're finding a new way to challenge yourself musically.

JH: Yeah. I've always liked arranging vocals, even when I was arranging my vocals for 3 Inches of Blood and when I was writing the songs, if Cam were to dish some lyrics or some song titles out to the table I would write riffs based on lyrical arrangements that hear in my head. So I've always liked arranging lyrics and putting lyrics into songs. I'm just really enjoying doing this on a full time level.

AU: When we're trying to visualize the band, you've got Ash on drums and yourself on guitar and vocals. Is there a bass player in the mix? What's your vision for that when you're playing live?

JH: As far as the record, basically I do everything except drums. Shane from 3 Inches of Blood, he played acoustic guitar on the track. Shawn from Mitochondrion, Danko Jones, and we had a couple others, Mike, who's the engineer at Bully's, they loan their voices for a couple of tunes. I'm really stoked to have them on as well. All the electric guitars, bass synthesizers, and then the vocals and gang vocals. So yeah, it was a lot.

It's funny because, when in the studio, it's our first record, and we're unknown to a lot of people, it was really fun to get creative in the studio and try things out and do whatever the fuck we wanted. It was fun getting Shawn and Danko Jones to do vocals as well, that was so fucking awesome. It sounds great on record too and Shane's guitar playing. Yeah, it's all working out so well.

AU: For the uninitiated, how would you describe your band's sound?

JH: I mean, we're a metal band. It is interesting, because we're definitely inspired by many subgenres of metal, you know, obviously, death metal, black metal and thrash metal are pretty apparent in our sound.



I would steer us more towards just being a death metal band. We're definitely inspired by all styles of heavy metal and rock 'n roll as well. So, every song has a little something different. It definitely doesn't steer too far off the Ritual Dictates sound, but you'll hear it and you'll know we're inspired by rock 'n roll if you heard this part. Or you know, we'd be inspired by black metal if you heard this part. So yeah, I mean, I'm kind of hoping when the album comes out, more people will tell me what it sounds like. Hoping to hear what everyone else will classify us as, and then I'll just roll with that.

AU: For what it's worth, I didn't immediately have a genre or a box, and that's a good sign.

JH: One of the pleasures of not having anything out yet, you can just do what the fuck you want. And, it was just really fun to write this record. It's been a little while in the making, but we wanted to go back to the roots of what we were playing. Obviously Ash's doing Revocation full time, so he's more in touch with death metal performance these days. But both Ash and I have played it in heavier bands, before we went into 3 Inches of Blood so it's really nice to go back to that style of writing and find those roots again.

And even to start a band from scratch, I haven't done that since the first band I was in, Allfather. I started it with my friend Paul. And we started that band at high school and I would say 1995 we started jamming. I joined 3 Inches of Blood after Allfather and then I've been in a series of bands that have been established already. They have a sound, they've got their thing going. Basically the whole idea of starting over with everything: new band, just seeing it start from the very beginning it's just awesome to do that again.

AU: It's super cool to have that opportunity to get what you want across. What do you want to get across with the record "Given To Despair" due out April 3rd. What is your aim with the record? What do you want to get across to listeners?

JH: I hope people enjoy listening to the record as much as I enjoyed making the record. Because I had a fucking blast making this record!

AU: Yes!

JH: And, you know, it was getting rather, you know, in a positive way - gruelling - because like I did so much vocals and I wasn't necessarily warmed up. It was basically like singing, with a whiskey bottle in my hand, trying to nurse the pain of my throat. But, I had a really good time writing this record. Ash and I, we go way back, he's one of my best friends so it's awesome to write a record with someone who's not just your friend, but you have a good musical chemistry with.

And then of course, the producers, engineers and guest musicians that were a part of it. All rad

dudes as well. So it's just a fucking awesome, great experience. The entire team of people behind this record, are all great people. So yeah, if anything, I hope people can hear that.

AU: That energy? Yeah.

JH: Yeah, I hope that energy is apparent. I'm very content with the entire process thus far.

AU: You've got the first record coming out. What will the band look like live? Who do you see being in it? What's your trajectory that you're hoping with the band?

JH: We started jamming, there is two guitarists, and a bass player who I'm practising with, which would basically have me doing lead vocals and playing synths. For the time being, we're gonna try that and see how it is. The guys I'm jamming with right now are incredible musicians. I'm very excited to take this for a test drive.

AU: And the goal, as always with this magazine, is to act like a bit of a journal of what's happening for Canadian rock and metal. I also was looking at the history of the band, you would have formed in 2014. And then I would guess this was a side project when you were working with Ash and 3 Inches of Blood. In the last few years, you kept wanting to come back to the idea? You felt like there was a concept there that you wanted to explore and push forward. Where are you at with the band in the last few years since the early shows in 2014?

JH: Yeah. We started in 2014, basically as a side project, and it was because we were both doing 3 Inches of Blood, and I'm pretty sure Ash, I can't remember exactly when Ash joined Revocation, but that was on his plate in the early stages of the Ritual Dictates tunes. And it was just what it was, as far as timing went, Ash is an incredibly busy drummer. I went commercial fishing for a couple of years, and things didn't necessarily fall apart. We just basically pressed pause on the operation.

I think we were both kind of getting antsy because we had all these songs on the back burner. And I had some stuff lined up, some new songs, and just in the last couple of years we got it rolling again and we made we managed our time a little more appropriately for this. So, here we are now. It looks like everything's back on track again.

AU: Sounds like "Everything's coming up Millhouse" to borrow a phrase.

JH: Coming up Millhouse! I was just gonna say that!

AU: With the experience you had and how you described it, with doing the vocals and handling all the instruments short of drums. What did you learn in this recording effort?

Perhaps in a technical side or a creative side? What gear or any kind of tricks that you could pass on to readers who are also recording or going through album production?

JH: I guess I learned, you know, don't be afraid to try anything. Because, for example, there is clean vocals on this record. I'm not too much of a clean singing kind of guy. But I heard it in my head when I was working on the songs and I was like, "Yeah, I want to try this". And I will. You're in the studio, and the first take isn't always "the one". I definitely tried some new stuff in the studio when I was doing it, but honestly, I did try every idea I wanted to try. And you know, some of them didn't work. Some of them did. That was one thing that I learned is that when you're in Vegas, when you're in a studio, when you're recording a record, go all in. If you want to give something a shot, do it. Explore. Go for it. Because, you don't want to look back on your recording and say "I wish I did this instead". That's gonna happen because you're with your music for so long and you think "I could have done this" but that's what the next album is for. So I'm already really excited about recording another record for Ritual Dictates and I'm midway there already.

AU: Look at you go! You just got the first record out, and you got the second one already cooking. What a beast.

JH: Yeah, I'm trying!

AU: It's super cool to hear you're active and moving and shaking with it all. It's a joy to know people are staying creative and working away in the Vancouver scene. It seems like a vital scene right now for rock and metal.

JH: Yeah, it's still happening in Vancouver. There's a really good supportive death metal scene. And just a heavy metal scene altogether. I'm just excited to get back playing again, and the whole process of starting from the very beginning. I'm really excited to see where this goes.

AU: Is there anything that you'd like to touch on that we haven't covered yet?

JH: You know, I'm stoked. I just have the utmost love and appreciation to everyone who took part on the record. Especially, Jesse Gander who mixed it, Jason Corbett who mastered it. Mike from Bully's, we had the Young brothers. Shawn Barnes. Those were the engineers. Rachel Rampage and Artofact Records have executive produced this operation. It's just a killer team. And then not to mention, the guest musicians, who I talked about.

AU: Hundred percent. This is a Vancouver group effort, as it were.

JH: Yeah, with the exception of Danko Jones. Everything was BC! Yeah, just all among friends.

AU: Last words to heavy metal fans dreaming of a warm spring season?

JH: Last words for metal fans dreaming of a warm spring season... I don't know? Give in to despair!

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SASQUATCH BROTHERS

Here Comes The King

lyrics by Ink.d / Mr. Black

They ask us where we got our sound

we said we came straight out the Absolute Underground
we hit like a storm from a thunder cloud
when we cruise into town, the chicks be going down

yeah we started up from the Absolute Underground

we hit em with the hard sound, rocked the crowds
and we stole the show
Absolute Underground

Tell us about ourselves well, hell

we're bigger than Jesus, bigger than diseases
bigger than your penis
the meanest, obscenest, uncleanest
anarchist, a bunch of misfit pricks
we'll kill you with a ratchet, a brick or a hatchet
we don't give a flying shit life is an acid trip
we came out the Absolute Underground now
we're a massive hit

Absolute Underground
we're gonna burn it down
Absolute Underground
we're coming to terrorize the town

Yeah, back to the questions again
What's your opinion on politics man?
what ya think? what ya thinkin about?

Politics, shhmallatics
suck a thousand dicks, fuck that shit
corruption and lies
we despise the question
if I answer correct you may need a resurrection
six albums later they call us the instigators
trouble makers and law breakers

Insanity Theatre didn't do too bad either
one year later back as the instigators
Year of the Goat grabbing em by the throat
killing all the haters
some of the faces had changed, but the game
remained the same

taking over the stage
now we on the front page
WW 333 it was our third CD
yeah, at this point everybody in the crew was rich
but we came from the Absolute Underground
bitch
we started at the Absolute Underground
said to ourselves
lets make our mamas proud, sing it loud
rock the crowds, mutate the sounds
we got to keep it all going and shock em now
Barely Garcia, shit got real real
we got all the money we got a record deal
and they ask us how our lives have changed
since we got all the money and the fame

we empty out the liquor stores
kidnap a producer
grab 100 whores from the street corner and make
some porn
going down to the dealer to score
yeah we're always going back for more
we're always ripped and we're always shitfaced
our repertoire is pure finesse
extraordinary trip days
nothing's going slow it's always fucking quick
days
taking over the Absolute Underground
when we enter the room on shrooms
we blow the doors off the studio
we smoking like Snoop singing like Julio
subliminal messages with the best intentions

Absolute Underground

totally great nothing fake
beyond the best, we lay the others to rest
this is fabulous, tremendous
perfectly structured, the rapture of intense
immense
the perfect structure is sickly satisfying
there's no denying we're beyond high grade
greatness
a spectacle, a universal event
if you're listening the listeners blessed
we're bigger then the devil, god, or death
we're a sedative to the ears, we're meditative
we're seductive to all your fears, totally elevated
we broke out the Absolute Underground
infiltrated the ears made the devil proud
wore a crown of thorns like the good lord had
been reborn
Absolute Underground

this album is 1000 conspiracies becoming reality
for our friends and our families a constant
onslaught of insanity
for our fans, or for our friends, or for our enemies
this is a blithering, intense immersion into
profanity
we'll infiltrate the brain ways, desecrate the norm
perpetuate the strange days
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now days we singing like we have an audience
made of hand grenades

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Absolute Album Reviews



Godthrymm - Reflections

Profound Lore

Big reverberated doom bellows out with massive sludge guitars and low guttural screams on "Among the Exalted." Beckoning guitar leads of gothic proportion cycle over top the icy melodies; the precise layering creates an almost endless horizon of metal fury.

Buckle up for some eternal mourning on "The Sea As My Grave" where a wise man baritone overtop crashing sequences of classic doom metal riffage. Great guitar tones are plenty as the chords ring with a warm bottomless crackle and certain layers emerge with an added midrange to scare the transistors right out of you. A lot of the tracks border on dark ballads but "We Are The Dead" goes full-on Dio, just slowed way down to a disastrous lurch.

This debut album is a treat to the ears and to the darkness inside. Each song is a fist-pumping tribute to a primal state of being.

-Dan Potter



Imoloth - State of Being

Independent

Featuring past members of Noise Therapy, Devin Townsend Project and Econoline Crush, this band sounds hungry for some really heavy but catchy music. On "Becoming the Enemy," the chorus packs a hefty punch as their nu-metal grooves sync up with even heavier Slipknot-influenced dirges.

"Instinct" wraps a Korn-flavored grenade around your neck when you've come to hear some Periphery. Again, this band loves to B-line it to the chorus, but that doesn't mean they won't savour the flappy-stringed riffs that rumble underneath it all. The guitar riffs are definitely a super highlight as they have the tone to pulverize a starving out wolverine on the hunt.

Get ready for some massive chugging and a special guest slot for Jens Kidman on "The Reign," which tips this debut record into legendary territory.

-Dan Potter



Insect Ark - The Vanishing

Profound Lore

Slithering basslines and dusty lapsteel provide a foreboding entrance to this intriguing psychedelic release. A sense of lurking darkness encircles each densely toned track as sludge metal and twisted country atmospheres collide to produce some haunted creations from an alternate

reality.

Their disturbed form of instrumental music takes a creepy turn on a dimly lit desert highway with "Philae," and with the restrained synth bursts it sounds like a place close to Area 51. Unease and various states of delirium flow out from the surf-rock influenced guitar riffs that build up to a crescendo, receding back into the vast ocean of discontent from which they came.

"The Vanishing" at ten minutes in length, is like a long sobering walk through the subconscious mind. As that metal slide draws up and down the fretboard clarity becomes the enemy while a feverish dream enters as the new preferred state.

-Dan Potter



Khost - Buried Steel

Cold String Records

Hypnotizing grooves pummel away exposing fried microchips that offer up a cry for help underneath the tribal beat insanity. After the ritualistic "We Will Win," the industrial mayhem dives even further into the abyss with massive layers of electronic drums and down-tuned out of control guitars on "Blood Gutters 6X4X1."

The sound design is as dense as a nuclear fog rolling in off the poisoned oceans. Full of ricocheting violence and hollowing abstraction, this is definitely an album to process as whole rather than individual tracks. Noise and riffs duel it out for supremacy on "Last Furnace" where the instruments are so mangled its hard to make out what the original sound source is. The horror of a sensory deprived slave existence sets in and Khost quickly becomes your pitiless master.

Vocals are almost whispered out in a forcibly restrained way as clanging guitars full of abuse rage on "December Bureau," bringing the machines to life like the unstoppable beasts they are.

-Dan Potter



Chrome Waves / Gridfailure

Independent

Ominous black clouds of guitar linger in a cooling haze to start out the opening fourteen minute long track "A Fair Wind" by Chrome Waves. As the winding arpeggios pick up steam a haunting melody appears conjured up by saxophone as a distorted vocal cuts through the dense mix to confuse.

Playing a form of blackened shoe-gaze metal, Chrome Waves saunter along with ethereal tones eventually climaxing with a cover of the Joy Division track "The Eternal" with airy guitar playing and funeral-march drum beats. Gridfailure bring a feral explosion of noise to the table. Vocals scream in muted unintelligible insanity above the disturbance-laden canopy of noises on "Day Terrors." Harsh noise fanatics will love the

cover rendition of "Temple of the Morning Star" which is full of discom-bobulating frequencies and horrific screams.

-Dan Potter



Kool Keith x Thetan

Space Gortex

Anti-Corporate Music

Legendary Bronx rapper Kool Keith and Nashville based power-violence duo Thetan team up to bring the listener some crazy hallucinations that could even weird out that clown from the movie *It*.

Sickly beats and high-pitched raygun effects greet new arrivals on "Let's Take a Trip," as rhymes bust out full of bizarre sexual innuendo. Listening to "Dedication" is a bit like seeing the reflection of Korn in a warped funhouse mirror. The storylines are odd and imaginative from the Black Elvis who delights in spewing strange sentences together overtop foreboding metal guitar riffs on "Complicated Trip."

This collaboration is something none of you were expecting to hear so if you're in search of something a bit different then this is a great record that will be sure to put a creepy little smile on your jaded face.

-Dan Potter



Mauduir - Le Temps Peste

Independent

A blizzard of cranked guitars rips up the landscape on "Abuse the Used" performed by this one-man blackened thrash band. Tirades against just about everything reveal the wasteland from which this highly emotional music is coming from.

There is a multitude of guitar playing here as super charged riffs ignite underneath subtle layers of gothic rock textures and there's plenty of Megadeth influenced soloing to show this misanthropic project took a lot of study to produce. Voices wretch out like vicious demons on "Surge of Fire" that is reminiscent of later era Bathory with its huge dissonant layers that squirm and wiggle into your ear canal.

Some really great tracks and precise playing makes this debut EP a note worthy event.

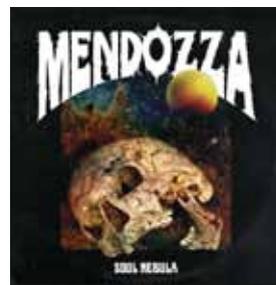
-Dan Potter

Mendoza - Soul Nebula

Independent

Prehistoric riffs bellow out of the cavernous underbelly of human existence on "The Black Sunstone." Getting clobbered by thunderous doom songs is a favorite past time of mine and these guys don't disappoint one bit.

There is a deep bluesy heaviness to this band that is inescapable due to their noted apprenticeship under the



blackened wings of Sabbath. Those sabbathian guitar riffs reach a peak on "Soul Nebula," where lurching grooves threaten to tear the universe in half and release the sadistic candy like some quantum piñata.

The sludge is beautiful and makes the cravings for a scalding tar bath rise up like hair on a startled black cat.

-Dan Potter



Neck Of The Woods - The Annex

of Ire

Pelagic Records

Mixing the sonic depth of bands like Mastodon with the crazed bull out of the gates fury of Dillinger Escape Plan, the opening track "The Annex of Ire," absolutely decimates with blazing segments of nearly every kind of metal imaginable.

Firmly seated in the furious and speedy death metal arena the track "Ambivalence" will bring the swirling pit right to your front door. Jagged riffs and titanium solid drumming propel this angry song into the stratosphere with so much high energy it sounds like the speakers are about to combust. Each selection demonstrates a fine nuance that shows these guys really respect the genres they are melding together and the songs themselves benefit immensely.

With at times an eclectic mix of extreme heaviness, this sophomore album shows a great ambition to push the envelope and really create a unique sound, which for the most part totally inspires.

- Dan Potter



PORNOHELMUT - Bang Lord

Atypeak Music

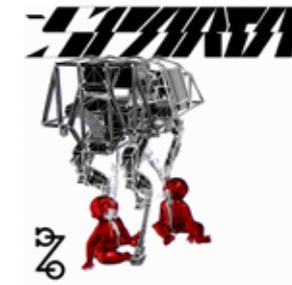
Where does all the sonic trash go when other musicians throw ideas out? It ends up in PORNOHELMUT's studio where he shows us that it's true what people say "one man's junk is another man's treasure."

Delirious noise experiments reach forward to drag you into the mayhem on "Mother Duster," where some of the sickest industrial metal beats reside. Looking to push experimentalism to the sheer extreme for the sake of shocking the listener into a personality crisis is a consist theme throughout these seven tracks. The noisy hip-hop sample loops on "Night Rider" are definitely not for dancing to but provide a perfect soundtrack for cutting your own hair off.

Demented synth-wave, mangled up math rock and tortured goth-metal

are the thought bubbles scrawled on a chalkboard in the back of this very interesting artists mind. You definitely don't hear stuff like this every day.

-Dan Potter



Psalm Zero - Sparta

Last Things Records

As a singer-songwriter style heavy band with serious gothic aesthetics this renowned group bring an atmosphere of hazy delirium, mixing it in with powerful chord changes that thunder like earthquakes. Bringing to mind both Depeche Mode and Type O Negative, their songs cycle between unease and all-out doom; like crisis is a natural state of being.

Passionate vocals on the track "Sparta" and icy synth's search for an answer to the question "Am I strong enough for what's to come?" Though doomed to the core these songs ache with euphoria as if the urge to die is a high that's worth chasing to the ends of this earth for.

"The Last Faith" is one of many tracks that could be best described as a "real listener" because it is full of complex emotional changes using each minute to take you on a blackened trip like no other.

-Dan Potter



Raspberry Bulbs - Before the Age

of Mirrors

Relapse Records

Grungy drama ensues on opening track "Spitting from on High" with a discordant style that bleeds volatility. Guttural screams and razor sharp guitars almost bring to mind a black metal band but the in-your-face, confrontational attitude is definitely more dyed blue hair punk than corpse faced Satan preacher.

The jagged attack doesn't relent as "They're After Me" takes the baton and salutes Mudhoney with a sweaty run through of a darkened hardcore style track that's full of dire foreboding. The guitars are almost bashed out of tune on "Missing Teeth" a song with warped aggression and writhed vocals sounding off on the internal struggle to stay peaceful.

Taking occult punk to the punishment cave isn't a pretty thing to hear, so if you are into ugly wretched things, then this forsaken offering is what you've been scouring the dark web for.

-Dan Potter

Scorn - A Comedic Tragedy

Independent

Whipped into a frenzy on "Frenzy" the beastly metal is charged up to frightening levels. Huge blackened thrash riffs bulldoze the senses and utterly enraged screams cough up the deepest held anger with sheer abandon.

Classic metal song writing skills are on display throughout with a looseness that's very reminiscent

of the early days of death metal. "Demented" has that no-holds-barred feel of Death Strike, where raw brutality is the law.

Overall, a pretty entertaining release with lots of gnarly guitar riffs and guttural snarls making this twisted journey well worth the time.

-Dan Potter



Solothus - Realm of Ash and Blood

20 Buck Spin

A lot of doom metal cycles through the psychedelic spectrum but Finland's Solothus prefer to plant their stake in the horrific. Gut-rumbling cave troll screams bellow out in aggression while explosively heavy guitar riffs surge forth with vile extremes.

The death soaked delirium afflicts "The Watcher" in awesome ways as they take you back to medieval times for some scorching Baroque classical like flourishes. "The Gallows Promise" takes things to an even bleaker level, as the cold guitar melodies seem to be calling for your execution. Massive chugging anchors things deeper as this long playing track shows their momentum for slow paced slaughter is unstoppable.

The brutal form of meditative destruction conjured up on this third album is perfect for macabre trips of isolation. It's an expertly laid-out vision of disorder that will leave listeners shaken but hungry for more.

-Dan Potter



Today Is The Day - No Good To

Anyone

BMG

This classic metal outfit hits back with an eleventh album full of signature derangement and extreme sonic tendencies that blasts out an intensity that's stronger than ever before. Opening track "No Good To Anyone" rips things up with an evil tone expressing a pain that won't relinquish and speaks to Steve Austin's battle with Lyme disease as well as several major surgeries over the years.

As is the genius of this dark band, the misery doesn't go on long before turning into a warped comedy like on "Burn in Hell" where a twisted hillbilly recites a do list of hilarious debauchery. The guitars are obnoxious to the core on "You're All Gonna Die" as vocal howls echo out and some of the most bizarre music transitions TITD are capable of take place.

As it plays out like a destructive trip down memory lane there are many new additions such as the heavily melodic "Born In Blood," which leaks out a sense of hope in very unexplainable ways. Overall, a very sublime entrance into their storied catalogue.

-Dan Potter



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